

THE NO. 1s ISSUE

DECEMBER 18, 2021 • BILLBOARD.COM

billboard



FAMILY
BUSINESS

+
DO STREAMING
WINNERS TAKE ALL?

—
THE CHRISTMAS
PLAYLIST WARS

HOW BROTHERS MONTE
AND AVERY LIPMAN TOOK
REPUBLIC RECORDS FROM A
CRAMPED NEW YORK APARTMENT
TO THE TOP LABEL OF 2021

Republic Records founder/COO Avery (left)
and founder/CEO Monte Lipman.



Label of the Year

contents

DEC. 18, 2021

VOLUME 133

NO. 18



64

IT TAKES TWO

Monte and Avery Lipman started **Republic Records** in a tiny basement apartment. Decades later, it's *Billboard's* top label of 2021 — and the brothers' bond is as strong (and lucrative) as ever.

72

MIND OVER MATTER

Growing up, **Kali Uchis** knew she was unique — but felt like she fit in nowhere. With her breakout bilingual hit, “Telepatía,” the industry has finally caught up to her vision.

76

'BABY' BOOMER

Jack Harlow scored his first *Billboard* Hot 100 No. 1 with the **Lil Nas X** team-up “Industry Baby.” Now he wants to give hip-hop the “boost of energy” he thinks it's missing.

BILLBOARD CHARTS

6

Adele's single "Easy on Me" and the album it's on, *30*, add a seventh and a third week atop the Hot 100 and the Billboard 200, respectively.

THE MARKET

29

Forget about the long tail — in the business of music streaming, hits matter more than ever.

32

Holiday music generates over \$170 million a year, a number so big teams work year-round to keep the plays flowing for catalog chestnuts.

THE YEAR IN MUSIC

41

As the world cautiously emerged from last year's pandemic shutdown, the music industry was full of new questions that revolved around vinyl variants and NFTs as new-gen collectibles, country music's efforts to widen its reach, pop-punk's return to the mainstream, what live music looks like today and fan efforts to mobilize and create change.

THE PLAYERS

83

At Harry Styles' opening concert, executives at **UBS Arena** explain how the \$1.5 billion venue and redevelopment of Belmont Park will make Nassau County a live-music destination.

YEAR-END CHARTS

87

Ranking the top performers on this year's charts — including artists, albums, songs and touring.

CHARTBREAKER

120

Why North London native **Mae Muller** was hesitant to record the song that became her breakthrough hit.

ON THE COVER

Avery (left) and Monte Lipman photographed by David Needleman on Nov. 16 in New York.

THIS PAGE

Republic's senior executives photographed in November in New York.

TO OUR READERS

Billboard will publish its next issue on Jan. 15, 2022. For 24/7 music coverage, go to billboard.com.



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Drake

#1 Overall Artist • #1 Overall Male Artist • #1 Hot 100 Male Artist • #1 Billboard 200 Male Artist • #1 R&B/Hip-Hop Artist • #1 R&B/Hip-Hop Male Artist • #1 Rap Artist • #1 Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs Artist • #1 R&B/Hip-Hop Streaming Songs Artist • #1 Rap Streaming Songs Artist • #1 Hot Rap Songs Artist



charts

DATA FOR WEEK OF 12.18.2021



Adele's 'Easy On Me,' 30 Continue No. 1 Runs

HOT 100

1

"Easy on Me"
Adele

LAST WEEK

1

PEAK POSITION

1

WEEKS ON CHART

9

ADELE'S COMMAND OF THE Billboard Hot 100 with "Easy on Me" extends to a seventh week, while the album it appears on, *30*, rules the Billboard 200 for a third week.

On the Hot 100, the British singer-songwriter's run is historic, as she becomes the first artist since the chart originated in 1958 to reign for at least seven weeks with a lead single from three consecutive albums. Prior to "Easy on Me" and *30*, she led for seven weeks in 2011 with "Rolling in the Deep," the first single from *21*, and returned with "Hello," which logged 10 weeks at No. 1 in 2015-16 as the introductory single from *25*.

"Easy on Me" drew 85.4 million radio airplay audience impressions and 20.7 million

U.S. streams and sold 9,200 downloads in the Dec. 3-9 tracking week, according to MRC Data.

30 also maintains its spot atop the Billboard 200, with 193,000 equivalent album units earned in the United States in the tracking week. It captures the largest third week for an album since Drake's *Scorpion* scored 260,000 in its third week in July 2018.

30 additionally passes 1 million copies sold in the United States, with 149,000 in the latest tracking week, upping its total to 1.07 million since its Nov. 21 release. It's the newest album to reach that threshold since Taylor Swift's *folklore*, which arrived in July 2020 and surpassed 1 million sold that October. *30* and *folklore* (whose sales to date stand at 1.56 million) are so far the only albums released this decade to accomplish the feat. —GARY TRUST AND KEITH CAULFIELD

Hot 100

2 WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title PRODUCER (SONGWRITER)	Artist IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
(1)	1	1	#1 for 7 WEEKS Easy On Me G.KURSTIN (A.L.B.ADKINS,G.KURSTIN)	Adele COLUMBIA	1	9
(12)	(3)	2	All I Want For Christmas Is You W.AFANASIEFF,M.CAREY (M.CAREY,W.AFANASIEFF)	Mariah Carey COLUMBIA/LEGACY	1	48
(14)	(4)	3	Rockin' Around The Christmas Tree O.BRADLEY (J.D.MARKS)	Brenda Lee DECCA/MCA NASHVILLE/UME	2	42
2	2	4	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	22
(27)	(7)	5	A Holly Jolly Christmas M.GABLER (J.D.MARKS)	Burl Ives DECCA/MCA SPECIAL PRODUCTS/GEFFEN/UME	4	23
(20)	(5)	6	Jingle Bell Rock O.BRADLEY (J.C.BEAL,J.R.BOOTHE)	Bobby Helms DECCA/MCA NASHVILLE/GEFFEN/UME	3	39
HOT SHOT DEBUT		7	I Hate U R.BISEL,C.LANG,THANKGOD4CODY,D.PATRICE (S.I.ROWE,R.BISEL,C.LANG,C.FAYNE,D.PATRICE) TOP DAWG/RCA TEEKAY	SZA	7	1
3	6	8	Industry Baby YE,TAKE A DAYTRIP,N.LEE (M.L.HILL,D.M.A.BAPTISTE,D.C.SNYDER,N.LEE,J.HARLOW,YE,M.WILLIAMS,R.CUBINA,R.LENZO)	Lil Nas X & Jack Harlow COLUMBIA	1	20
(7)	(8)	9	Heat Waves D.BAYLEY (D.BAYLEY)	Glass Animals WOLFTONE/POLYDOR/REPUBLIC	7	47
(30)	(11)	10	It's The Most Wonderful Time Of The Year R.MERSEY (G.WYLE,E.POLA)	Andy Williams COLUMBIA/LEGACY	5	24
(6)	9	11	Shivers E.SHEERAN,STEVE MAC,FRED (E.C.SHEERAN,J.MCDAID,STEVE MAC,K.LAVELLE)	Ed Sheeran ATLANTIC	5	13
(9)	(10)	12	Need To Know DR. LUKE (A.Z.DLAMINI,L.S.GOTTWALD)	Doja Cat KEMOSABE/RCA	8	26
(40)	(15)	13	Last Christmas G.MICHAEL (G.MICHAEL)	Wham! COLUMBIA/LEGACY	9	22
-	(16)	14	Feliz Navidad R.JARRARD (J.FELICIANO)	Jose Feliciano RCA/LEGACY	6	17
(51)	(24)	15	SAL abcdefu P.NAPPI (GAYLE,D.B.PITTEMBER,S.DAVIS)	GAYLE ARTHOUSE/ATLANTIC	15	3
8	12	16	Bad Habits FRED,J.MCDAID,E.SHEERAN (E.C.SHEERAN,F.GIBSON,J.MCDAID)	Ed Sheeran ATLANTIC	2	24
-	(19)	17	Sleigh Ride P.SPECTOR (L.ANDERSON,M.PARISH)	The Ronettes PHIL SPECTOR/EMI BLACKWOOD/LEGACY	13	13
-	(22)	18	Let It Snow, Let It Snow, Let It Snow L.GILLETTE (J.STYNE,S.CAHN)	Dean Martin CAPITOL/UME	8	16
(11)	13	19	Cold Heart (PNAU Remix) N.LITTLEMORE,P.MAYES,S.LITTLEMORE,C.THOMAS,G.DUDGEON (E.JOHN,B.J.P.TAUPIN,P.MAYES,N.LITTLEMORE,S.LITTLEMORE)	Elton John & Dua Lipa ROCKET/MERCURY/EMI/INTERSCOPE	11	14
-	(18)	20	The Christmas Song (Merry Christmas To You) L.GILLETTE (M.H.TORME,R.WELLS)	Nat King Cole CAPITOL/UME	11	29

Go to the Chart Beat section of billboard.com for complete charts coverage.



Billie Eilish's "Happier Than Ever" — produced and co-written by her brother, FINNEAS (left) — also reaches a new No. 15 high on Mainstream Top 40.

HOT 100

46

"Happier Than Ever"
Billie Eilish

How did "Happier Than Ever" come together?

FINNEAS We were in Denmark in summer 2019 and super jet-lagged. I had this little toy guitar that I got at

Guitar Center for \$80, and we started writing that melody of the first chorus. Eight months after, we're in lockdown and revisited that idea — that was when we wrote part two with an acoustic guitar, which people wouldn't expect from hearing it. We finished writing in June 2020. Usually, songs are written quickly, and I think it's a testament to how long and winding that song is. It was a really fulfilling process.

What inspired the song's multipart format?

I try to produce music the way that I feel the song deserves to sound. The songwriting deserved [something] very dynamic, and I wanted to make sure that the production didn't get in the way of her voice, but helped propel that emotionality — the stuff she's singing about is so vulnerable. Getting that guitar-vocal combination in the beginning of the song to sound perfect was a real challenge, because I wanted it to have a lot of vibe and texture.

Between Grammy nominations, chart accolades and a recent *Saturday Night Live* performance, why do you think it's resonating with people?

I don't think listeners care about what's conventional — what matters to them is how they respond emotionally. That song is really comfortable to perform in an environment like [SNL]. That's where that song is supposed to live. When we made her first album, I feel like we made that in a bedroom, for kids to listen to in their room. We made [*Happier Than Ever*] to play in arenas and at festivals.

I really enjoyed that.

—EJ PANALIGAN

Biggest Sales Gain

15

abcdefu
GAYLE



Biggest Streaming Gain

23

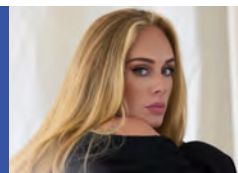
Super Gremlin
Kodak Black



Biggest Airplay Gain

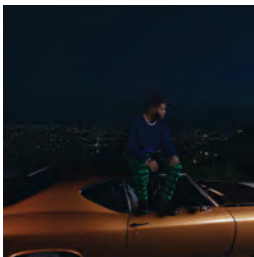
47

Oh My God
Adele



BILLBOARD 200

54



Khalid *Scenic Drive (The Tape)*

The nine-track album starts with 16,000 units earned in the week ending Dec. 9, according to MRC Data (84% of that comes from streaming), and also debuts at No. 8 on the Top R&B Albums chart.

108



Green Day *Greatest Hits: God's Favorite Band*

This reenters the chart (11,000 units; up 428%) for the first time since May 2020 and scores its highest rank since Dec. 16, 2017 – No. 100 – after its Target-exclusive blue vinyl release on Dec. 3.

117



Blake Shelton *Body Language*

The album bounces back to No. 117 on the chart (11,000 units; up 242%) after it was reissued Dec. 3 with four new bonus tracks, including his latest top 20 Country Airplay hit, "Come Back As a Country Boy."

19

Nardo Wick *Who Is Nardo Wick?*



From the Bayou, Alicia Keys' *KEYS*, A Boogie Wit Da Hoodie's *B4 AVA* and Rick Ross' *Richer Than I Ever Been*. —KEITH CAULFIELD

For the second straight week, the chart's highest debut falls outside the top 10 as Nardo Wick's *Who Is Nardo Wick?* debuts at No. 19 (29,000 equivalent album units earned in the United States during the week ending Dec. 9, according to MRC Data). One week earlier, on the Dec. 11 chart, the top debut was Anuel AA's *Las Leyendas Nunca Mueren* at No. 30.

The release calendar was a little light in the two weeks following the Nov. 19 arrival of Adele's *30*, which debuted at No. 1 on the Dec. 4 chart. That said, the next Billboard 200 (dated Dec. 25) could see an influx of notable debuts by albums that were released Dec. 10, including Juice WRLD's *Fighting Demons*, Birdman and YoungBoy Never Broke Again's collaborative album

Billboard 200

2 WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Artist IMPRINT/DISTRIBUTING LABEL	Title	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
		#1 for 3 WEEKS				
1	1	1	Adele COLUMBIA	30	1	3
2	2	2	Taylor Swift REPUBLIC	Red (Taylor's Version)	1	4
67	69	3	GG Polo G COLUMBIA	Hall Of Fame	1	26
9	3	4	Michael Buble LABEL TEEKAY	Christmas	1	97
8	4	5	Olivia Rodrigo Geffen/IGA	Sour	1	29
5	6	6	Morgan Wallen BIG LOUD/REPUBLIC	Dangerous: The Double Album	1	48
3	5	7	Drake OVO SOUND/REPUBLIC	Certified Lover Boy	1	14
22	14	8	Mariah Carey COLUMBIA/LEGACY	Merry Christmas	3	105
21	10	9	Vince Guaraldi Trio FANTASY/CONCORD	A Charlie Brown Christmas (Soundtrack)	9	96
12	12	10	Doja Cat KEMOSABE/RCA	Planet Her	2	24
27	13	11	Nat King Cole CAPITOL/UME	The Christmas Song	6	62
10	9	12	The Weeknd XO/REPUBLIC	The Highlights	2	43
6	7	13	Summer Walker LVRN/INTERSCOPE/IGA	Still Over It	1	5
11	15	14	Ed Sheeran ATLANTIC/AG	=	1	6
29	17	15	Pentatonix RCA	The Best Of Pentatonix Christmas	7	24
37	16	16	Various Artists PHIL SPECTOR/EMI BLACKWOOD/LEGACY	A Christmas Gift For You From Phil Spector	12	20
4	8	17	Silk Sonic (Bruno Mars & Anderson .Paak) AFTERMATH/ATLANTIC/AG	An Evening With Silk Sonic	2	4
13	11	18	Billie Eilish DARKROOM/INTERSCOPE/IGA	Happier Than Ever	1	19
HOT SHOT DEBUT		19	Nardo Wick FLAWLESS ENT./RCA	Who Is Nardo Wick?	19	1
47	18	20	Bing Crosby CAPITOL/UME	Christmas Classics	18	40

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



Taylor Swift

**#1 Billboard 200 Artist • #1 Billboard 200
Female Artist • #1 Album Sales Artist • #1
Alternative Artist • #1 Alternative Albums Artist
• #1 Current Album – *evermore* • #1 Album Sales
- *evermore* • #1 Alternative Album - *evermore***

republic
records



GLOBAL 200

1

"All I Want for Christmas Is You"
Mariah Carey

MARIAH CAREY'S "ALL I WANT for Christmas Is You" returns to No. 1 on the Billboard Global 200, with 76.3 million streams (up 25%) and 14,000 sold (up 28%) worldwide in the Dec. 3-9 tracking week, according to MRC Data. The 1994 Christmas classic topped the chart for four weeks last holiday season.

Wham!'s 1984 single "Last Christmas" revisits the Global 200's top five, dashing 8-4 with 56.4 million streams (up 27%) and 7,400 sold (up 35%) globally. It rose to No. 2 during the 2020 holiday season.

Meanwhile, two other yuletide favorites return to the Global 200's top 10: Brenda Lee's "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree" (from 1958), surging 13-6 (45 million streams, up 25%; 7,900 sold, up 9%) and Bobby Helms' "Jingle Bell Rock" (from 1957), galloping 14-8 (41.7 million streams, up 23%; 4,800 sold, up 60%). The songs reached Nos. 3 and 4, respectively, over the 2020 holidays.

On the Billboard Global Excl. U.S. chart, Carey's "All I Want for Christmas Is You" jumps 7-2 (47.7 million streams, up 29%; 6,900 sold, up 38%, in territories outside the United States), after it led for a week last holiday season.

Amid the haul of holiday songs, GAYLE's nonseasonal "abcdefu" rises 4-3 on each chart. The breakout single from the Dallas-born, Nashville-based 17-year-old singer-songwriter drew 62.6 million streams and 18,000 sold worldwide, up 18% in each metric. Domestically, the track continues its rapid rise, including at radio, as it advances 40-27 in its second week on the Mainstream Top 40 chart, up 197% in plays, with its all-format audience soaring by 436% to 4.9 million.

-GARY TRUST

Global 200

2 WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title	Artist	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
(17)	(2)	(1)	#1 for 5 WEEKS GG All I Want For Christmas Is You	Mariah Carey	1	15
(1)	1	2	Easy On Me	Adele	1	9
(14)	(4)	3	abcdefu	GAYLE	3	4
(32)	(8)	4	Last Christmas	Wham!	2	13
4	3	5	Stay	The Kid LAROI & Justin Bieber	1	22
(39)	(13)	6	Rockin' Around The Christmas Tree	Brenda Lee	3	11
5	5	7	Cold Heart (PNAU Remix)	Elton John & Dua Lipa	5	17
(46)	(14)	8	Jingle Bell Rock	Bobby Helms	4	11
6	6	9	Shivers	Ed Sheeran	3	13
8	10	10	Industry Baby	Lil Nas X & Jack Harlow	2	20
HOT SHOT DEBUT		(11)	I Hate U	SZA	11	1
11	11	12	Heat Waves	Glass Animals	6	49
7	9	13	Love Nwantiti (Ah Ah Ah)	CKay	2	13
9	12	14	Bad Habits	Ed Sheeran	1	24
(48)	(15)	15	It's Beginning To Look A Lot Like Christmas	Michael Buble	6	11
(57)	(21)	16	Santa Tell Me	Ariana Grande	5	11
(23)	(16)	17	Enemy	Imagine Dragons X JID	16	6
(62)	(22)	18	It's The Most Wonderful Time Of The Year	Andy Williams	7	10
2	7	19	All Too Well (Taylor's Version)	Taylor Swift	1	4
NEW		20	Merry Christmas	Ed Sheeran & Elton John	20	1

CAREY: KEVIN MAZUR/GETTY IMAGES FOR MC

THE BILLBOARD GLOBAL 200 CHART RANKS THE TOP SONGS BASED ON STREAMING AND/OR SALES ACTIVITY FROM OVER 200 TERRITORIES AROUND THE WORLD—INCLUDING THE UNITED STATES—AS TRACKED BY MRC DATA. THE RANKING IS BASED ON A COMBINATION OF STREAMING AND SALES DATA FROM SPOTIFY, APPLE MUSIC, TIDAL, DEEZER, PANDORA, IHeartRadio, Amazon Music, YouTube Music, and other streaming services, PLUS DOWNLOAD SALES FROM TOP MUSIC RETAILERS ACROSS THE GLOBE. SEE CHARTS.LEGEND ON BILLBOARD.COM FOR COMPLETE RULES AND EXPLANATIONS. © 2021 BILLBOARD MEDIA LLC AND MRC DATA INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.



The Weeknd



#1 Radio Songs Artist • #1 R&B Artist • #1 R&B Album Artist • #1 R&B/Hip-Hop Digital Song Sales Artist • #1 R&B Digital Song Sales Artist • #1 R&B Streaming Songs Artist • #1 Adult Pop Airplay Artist • #1 R&B Albums Artist • #1 R&B/Hip-Hop Streaming Song - “Blinding Lights” • #1 R&B Digital Song Sales - “Blinding Lights” • #1 R&B Streaming Songs - “Blinding Lights” • #1 Adult Contemporary Song - “Blinding Lights”





ARTIST 100

6

POLO G

WEEKS ON CHART

100

The rapper rises 39-6 on the Billboard Artist 100 as his former Billboard 200 chart-topper, *Hall of Fame*, jumps back to No. 3 on the latter list, up 468% to 78,000 equivalent album units in the week ending Dec. 9. The album was reissued Dec. 3 with 14 additional tracks.



NO. 19

Charlie Brown Sparks New High

The Vince Guaraldi Trio rises to a new No. 19 high on the Artist 100, up two slots from No. 21. The act (whose namesake died in 1976) is powered by its 1965 classic *A Charlie Brown Christmas* soundtrack, which rises 10-9 on the Billboard 200, also a new best, with 39,000 equivalent album units, up 9%, according to MRC Data. The soundtrack — the No. 1 title on *Billboard's* recently revealed Greatest of All Time Top Holiday Albums retrospective, based on historical chart performance — yields two yuletide standards in the top 40 of the latest Holiday 100 chart: “Linus & Lucy” (No. 28) and “Christmastime Is Here” (No. 31). —XANDER ZELLNER



NO. 63

Kodak Black's 'Super' Power

Kodak Black jumps 85-63 on the Artist 100, fueled by his single “Super Gremlin.” The track rises 55-23 in its fifth week on the Billboard Hot 100, up 64% to 20.3 million U.S. streams. It gains 29-8 in its third week on Streaming Songs, becoming the rapper’s fourth top 10, and pushes 6-2 on Hot Rap Songs and 9-4 on Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs, likewise marking his fourth top five entry on each chart. He debuted atop Streaming Songs, Hot Rap Songs and Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs in October 2018 with “ZEZE,” featuring Travis Scott and Offset. —X. Z.

Artist 100

2 WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Artist	IMPRINT/LABEL	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
(1)	1	1	#1 for 15 WEEKS Adele	XL/COLUMBIA	1	263
2	2	2	Taylor Swift	REPUBLIC	1	385
3	3	3	Ed Sheeran	ATLANTIC/AG	1	382
(8)	4	4	Olivia Rodrigo	GEFFEN/IGA	1	48
(5)	5	5	Doja Cat	KEMOSABE/RCA	3	99
25	39	(6)	Polo G	COLUMBIA	2	100
(17)	(7)	7	Michael Buble	REPRISE/WARNER	3	62
(4)	6	8	The Weeknd	XO/REPUBLIC	1	335
(23)	26	(9)	BTS	HYBE/BIGHIT MUSIC	1	270
7	9	10	Drake	OVO SOUND/REPUBLIC	1	389
(22)	(13)	11	Mariah Carey	BUTTERFLY MC/EPIC	5	60
(9)	11	12	Justin Bieber	RAYMOND BRAUN/DEF JAM	1	355
(33)	(15)	13	Bing Crosby	DECCA/MCA/GEFFEN/UME	8	45
(40)	(10)	14	The Beatles	APPLE/CAPITOL/UME	2	212
(38)	(22)	(15)	Kelly Clarkson	ATLANTIC/AG	2	98
(29)	(14)	16	Andy Williams	COLUMBIA/LEGACY	9	39
(58)	(23)	(17)	Pentatonix	RCA	1	83
6	8	18	Luke Combs	RIVER HOUSE/COLUMBIA NASHVILLE/SMN	1	249
(42)	(21)	19	Vince Guaraldi Trio	FANTASY/CONCORD	19	39
(16)	12	20	Billie Eilish	DARKROOM/INTERSCOPE/IGA	1	172

POLO G: ERIKA GOLDING/WIREIMAGE; GUARALDI: MICHAEL OCHS BARRIS/GETTY IMAGES; BUBBLE: THOTHY WIGGS/WIREIMAGE.

THE WEEK'S MOST POPULAR ARTISTS ACROSS ALL GENRES, RANKED BY ALBUM AND TRACK SALES AS MEASURED BY MRC DATA. BUBBLE: AIRPLAY AUDIENCE IMPRESSIONS AS MEASURED BY MRC DATA. STREAMING ACTIVITY DATA FROM ONLINE MUSIC SOURCES TRACKED BY MRC DATA. SEE CHARTS. LEGEND ON BILLBOARD.COM FOR COMPLETE RULES AND EXPLANATIONS. © 2021 BILLBOARD MEDIA LLC AND MRC DATA, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.



ARTIST STREAMING AND SALES DATA COMPILED BY MRC DATA.

Pop Smoke

**#1 Rhythmic Airplay Artist • #1 Rap Airplay Artist •
#1 R&B/Hip-Hop Albums – *Shoot For The Stars
Aim For The Moon* • #1 Rap Albums – *Shoot
For The Stars Aim For The Moon* • #1 Rhythmic
Airplay Song – “What You Know Bout Love” •
#1 Rap Airplay Song – “What You Know Bout Love”**



Pop Smoke Forever



Sheeran, John Bring 'Christmas' Cheer

Elton John (above left) and Ed Sheeran's "Merry Christmas" debuts at No. 43 on the Holiday 100 with 4.9 million all-format radio audience impressions, 4.6 million U.S. streams and 11,800 sold in the week ending Dec. 9, according to MRC Data, following the carol's Dec. 3 release.

Sheeran scores his first Holiday 100 entry, while John adds his second: His 1973 single "Step Into Christmas" ranks at No. 94, having reached a No. 84 best in 2017 (dating to the chart's launch in 2011).

"Merry Christmas" concurrently enters the Billboard Hot 100 at No. 72, where, notably, John earns his 70th career charted title (becoming the 23rd artist to reach the mark) and his third of 2021 — after he had not appeared on the chart since 2000 until this August. The song follows this year's "Cold Heart (PNAU Remix)," with Dua Lipa, and his featured turn on Lil Nas X's "One of Me." —GARY TRUST



Top 40 Tidings

Kelly Clarkson collects her 10th top 40-charting album on the Billboard 200 as *When Christmas Comes Around...* jumps 42-22. On Top Holiday Albums, it rises 12-9 (with 26,000 equivalent album units earned in the week ending Dec. 9, according to MRC Data).

When Christmas Comes Around... is Clarkson's second seasonal album following 2013's *Wrapped in Red*, which debuted and peaked at No. 3 on the Billboard 200 and No. 1 on Top Holiday Albums. The new release contains the Holiday 100 hit "Christmas Isn't Canceled (Just You)," which climbs 76-69 on the latest list. It also holds at No. 5 on the Adult Contemporary airplay chart.

All nine of Clarkson's studio albums have reached the top 40 on the Billboard 200 (including her two holiday releases). She also scored a top 40 set with the 2012 compilation *Greatest Hits: Chapter One*, which reached No. 11.

—KEITH CAULFIELD

Holiday 100				
LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title <small>IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL</small>	Artist	WKS. ON CHART
1	1	#1 for 48 WEEKS All I Want For Christmas Is You <small>COLUMBIA/LEGACY</small>	Mariah Carey	53
2	2	Rockin' Around The Christmas Tree <small>DECCA/MCA NASHVILLE/UME</small>	Brenda Lee	53
4	3	A Holly Jolly Christmas <small>DECCA/MCA SPECIAL PRODUCTS/GEFFEN/UME</small>	Burl Ives	53
3	4	Jingle Bell Rock <small>DECCA/MCA NASHVILLE/UME</small>	Bobby Helms	53
5	5	It's The Most Wonderful Time Of The Year <small>COLUMBIA/LEGACY</small>	Andy Williams	53
6	6	Last Christmas <small>COLUMBIA/LEGACY</small>	Wham!	53
7	7	Feliz Navidad <small>RCA/LEGACY</small>	Jose Feliciano	53
10	8	Sleigh Ride <small>PHIL SPECTOR/EMI BLACKWOOD/LEGACY</small>	The Ronettes	48
12	9	Let It Snow, Let It Snow, Let It Snow <small>CAPITOL/UME</small>	Dean Martin	52
9	10	The Christmas Song (Merry Christmas To You) <small>CAPITOL/UME</small>	Nat King Cole	53

Top Holiday Albums				
LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Artist <small>IMPRINT/DISTRIBUTING LABEL</small>	Title	WKS. ON CHART
1	1	#1 for 33 WEEKS Michael Buble <small>143/REPRISE/WARNER</small>	Christmas	135
4	2	Mariah Carey <small>COLUMBIA/LEGACY</small>	Merry Christmas	292
2	3	Vince Guaraldi Trio <small>FANTASY/CONCORD</small>	A Charlie Brown Christmas (Soundtrack)	301
3	4	Nat King Cole <small>CAPITOL/UME</small>	The Christmas Song	246
6	5	Pentatonix <small>RCA</small>	The Best Of Pentatonix Christmas	35
5	6	Various Artists <small>PHIL SPECTOR/EMI BLACKWOOD/LEGACY</small>	A Christmas Gift For You From Phil Spector	46
7	7	Bing Crosby <small>CAPITOL/UME</small>	Christmas Classics	67
8	8	Andy Williams <small>COLUMBIA/LEGACY</small>	The Andy Williams Christmas Album	37
12	9	Kelly Clarkson <small>ATLANTIC/AG</small>	When Christmas Comes Around...	8
9	10	Carrie Underwood <small>CAPITOL NASHVILLE/UMGN</small>	My Gift	25

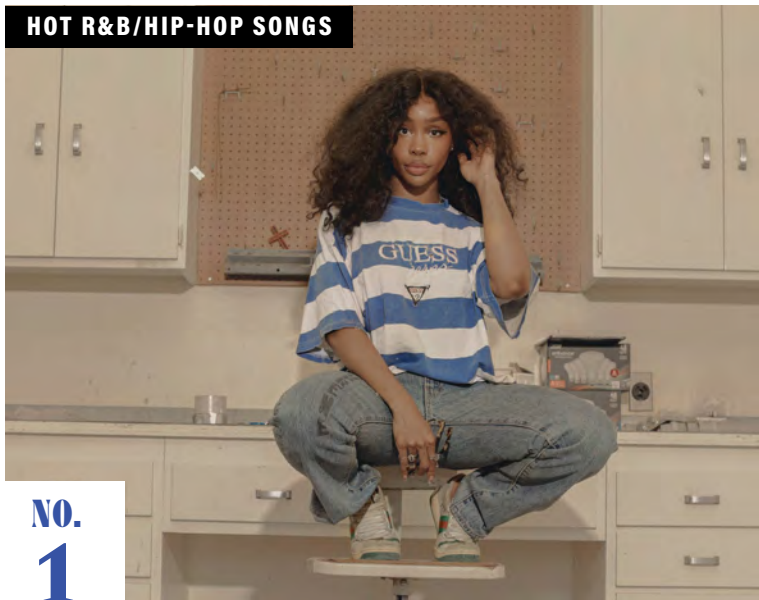
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HOT R&B/HIP-HOP SONGS



NO. 1

Fans Love SZA's 'Hate'

SZA scores her first No. 1 on Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs as "I Hate U" debuts atop the chart. The track received its official release on Dec. 3, months after an earlier version was uploaded to SoundCloud and later circulated on TikTok. The anticipation helped fuel its high streaming start: "Hate" begins with 26.7 million U.S. streams in the week ending Dec. 9, according to MRC Data, and opens at No. 1 on R&B/Hip-Hop Streaming Songs. Notably, the streaming sum is the second-highest weekly count for any SZA song, trailing only the 27.3 million total for the Kendrick Lamar collaboration "All the Stars" for the week ending Feb. 22, 2018.

"Hate" also leads R&B/Hip-Hop Digital Song Sales (5,000 sold). The new single likewise starts at No. 1 on Hot R&B Songs — where it becomes her second chart-topper, after "The Weekend" in 2018 — and begins at No. 7 on the Billboard Hot 100.

—TREVOR ANDERSON

		Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs			
LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title	Artist	WKS. ON CHART	
		IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL			
		#1 for 1 WEEK			
		I Hate U	SZA		1
		TOP DAWG/RCA			
1	2	Industry Baby	Lil Nas X & Jack Harlow		20
		COLUMBIA			
2	3	AIR Smokin Out The Window	Silk Sonic (Bruno Mars & Anderson .Paak)		5
		AFTERMATH/ATLANTIC			
9	4	STM Super Gremlin	Kodak Black		5
		SNIPER GANG/ATLANTIC			
4	5	You Right	Doja Cat & The Weeknd		24
		KEMOSABE/RCA			
3	6	Essence	Wizkid Feat. Justin Bieber & Tems		23
		STARBOY/RCA			
5	7	Way 2 Sexy	Drake Feat. Future & Young Thug		14
		OVO SOUND/REPUBLIC			
6	8	Knife Talk	Drake Feat. 21 Savage & Project Pat		14
		OVO SOUND/REPUBLIC			
NEW	9	Wandered To LA.	Juice WRLD & Justin Bieber		1
		GRADE A/INTERSCOPE			
8	10	Who Want Smoke??	Nardo Wick Feat. G Herbo, Lil Durk & 21 Savage		9
		FLAWLESS ENT./RCA			

MAINSTREAM ROCK AIRPLAY



NO. 9

White 'Back' In Top 10 For First Time

Jack White appears in the top 10 of the Mainstream Rock Airplay chart for the first time, whether solo or with any of his bands, as his song "Taking Me Back" rises 11-9.

White previously peaked at No. 25 as a soloist on the chart with "Lazaretto" in 2014. As half of The White Stripes, he scored two top 20 entries: "Seven Nation Army" (No. 12, 2003) and "Icky Thump" (No. 11, 2007). He reached as high as No. 28 as a member of The Raconteurs with "Salute Your Solution" (2008).

Meanwhile, Volbeat lands its 10th Mainstream Rock Airplay No. 1 with "Shotgun Blues." The Danish band, which first ruled the chart with "Still Counting" in 2012, ties for the seventh-most chart-toppers in its 40-year history, alongside Disturbed, Metallica and Tom Petty (solo and with the Heartbreakers). Shinedown outnumbers all acts with 16 No. 1s on the chart.

—KEVIN RUTHERFORD

		Mainstream Rock Airplay			
LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title	Artist	WKS. ON CHART	
		IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL			
3	1	#1 for 1 WEEK Shotgun Blues	Volbeat		11
		VERTIGO/REPUBLIC/Q PRIME			
4	2	Hunter's Moon	Ghost		10
		LOMA VISTA/CONCORD			
2	3	Supercharged	Ayron Jones		20
		JOHN VARVATOS/BIG MACHINE			
5	4	Lifeline	Bad Wolves		14
		BETTER NOISE			
1	5	Kill The Noise	Papa Roach		14
		NEW NOIZE/ADA			
6	6	Dead Inside	Nita Strauss & David Draiman		8
		SUMERIAN			
7	7	Built By Nations	Greta Van Fleet		18
		LAVA/REPUBLIC			
8	8	Start The Healing	Korn		5
		LOMA VISTA/CONCORD			
11	9	Taking Me Back	Jack White		7
		THIRD MAN			
9	10	Shoulders	Coheed And Cambria		20
		ROADRUNNER/EMG			

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10/09/21	Nissan Stadium
10/14/21	SoFi Stadium
10/17/21	SoFi Stadium
10/24/21	U.S. Bank Stadium
10/29/21	Raymond James Stadium
11/02/21	Cotton Bowl Stadium
11/06/21	Allegiant Stadium
11/11/21	Mercedes-Benz Stadium
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11/20/21	Circuit of the Americas
11/23/21	Hard Rock Live

It was a privilege to bring The Stones back to America in 2021.

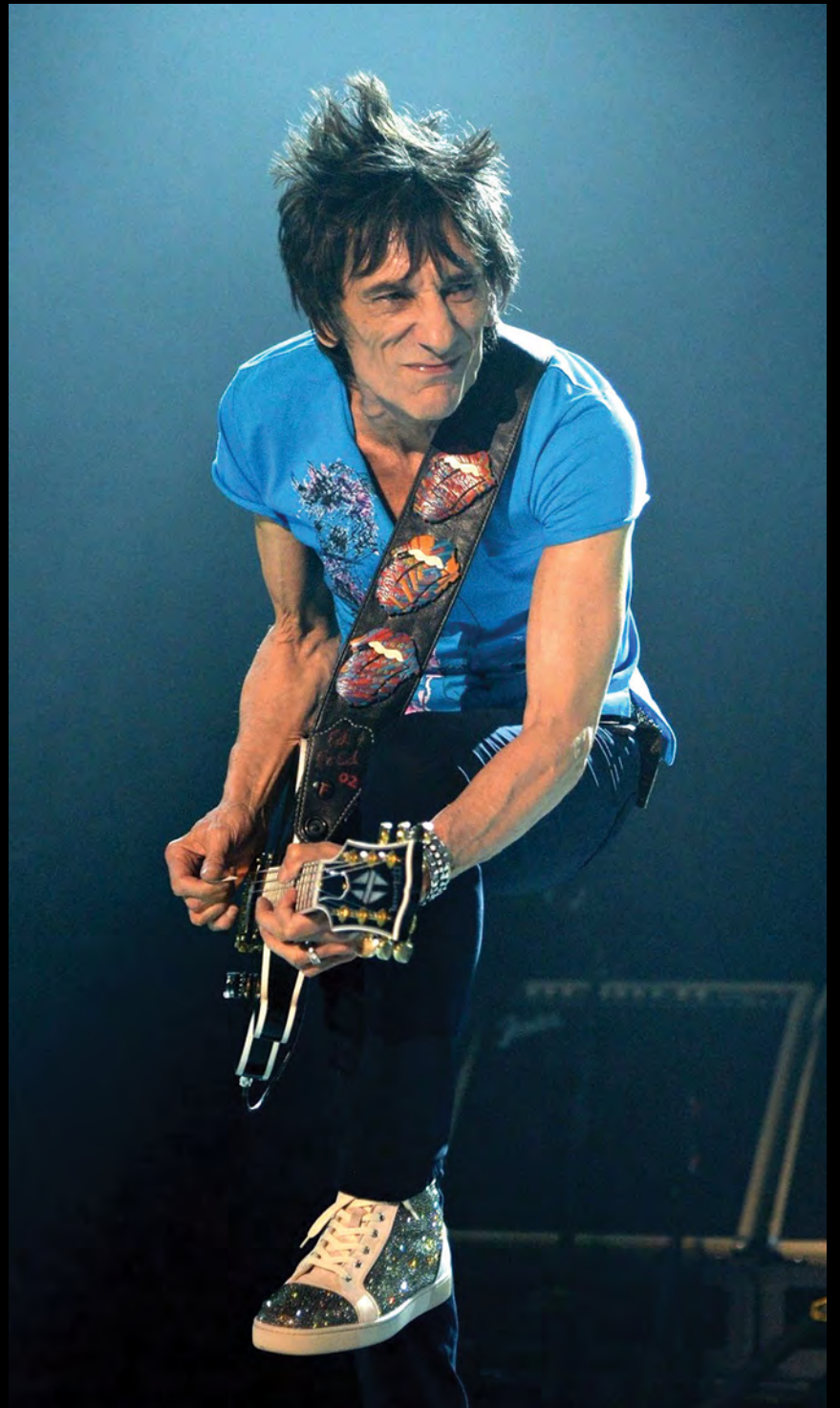
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- This year, NAMWOLF will be celebrating its 20th Anniversary in person at our annual meeting in Baltimore, MD on Oct. 6-9. For two decades, we have been working to achieve equity in legal opportunity through minority and women owned law firms.
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– Los Angeles Times**

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DUA LIPA

#1 Hot 100 Song of 2021 - "Levitating"



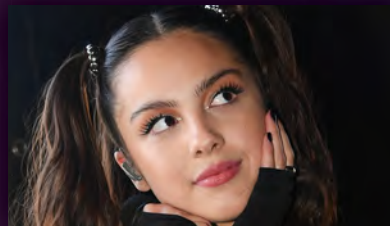
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#1 Hot Latin Song of 2021 - "Dakiti"



LIL DURK

Most Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs entries among all acts in 2021



ASHLEY GORLEY

#1 Hot Country Songwriter of 2021



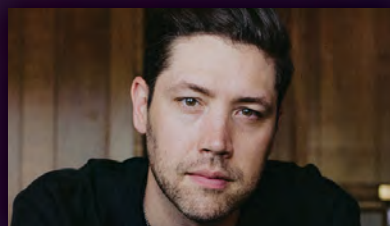
MATTHEW WEST

#1 Hot Christian Songwriter of 2021



KALI UCHIS

First female soloist to top Hot Latin Songs since 2012



COREY CROWDER

Three #1 hits on Billboard's Country Airplay chart this year as a songwriter



THE WEEKND

Biggest Hot 100 hit of all time - "Blinding Lights"

To view the full list of ASCAP's *Billboard* year-end chart toppers, visit www.ascap.com/2021yearend



market

MUSIC AND MONEY

PG. 30 RIP VICENTE FERNÁNDEZ

PG. 32 THE BUSINESS OF CHRISTMAS

PG. 34 U.K. STREAMING REFORM



Clockwise from left: Lil Nas X, Justin Bieber, The Weeknd, Olivia Rodrigo, Drake and Dua Lipa — some of 2021's leading artists.

The Winners Take It All

Forget about the long tail — in the business of music streaming, hits matter more than ever

BY ED CHRISTMAN // ILLUSTRATION BY ALYCEA TINOYAN

FOR YEARS, MEDIA and technology executives have been saying the age of the blockbuster was over. Now that online consumers can choose from among the tens of millions of tracks available online, hits would inevitably become less important relative to the sheer amount of music in what author Chris Anderson termed “the long tail” in 2004. Hits, wrote Anderson, would no longer be “quite the economic force they once were.”

The reality of the music streaming market is

very different. Last year, Drake scored 6.16 billion on-demand audio streams in the United States, according to MRC Data — more than any other artist, and 0.7% of the 877.2 billion total. That exceeds the 4.74 billion streams generated by the 53.69 million tracks that were streamed fewer than 1,000 times each.

For all the changes in the music business — now dominated by digital over physical and streaming rather than sales — hits remain as important as ever. In 2020, nearly half of the 877.2 billion on-demand audio streams in the

United States came from just 13,521 songs that were streamed over 10 million times — or 0.022% of the titles that MRC Data tracked.

To get a sense of whether, or how much, hits dominate the business, *Billboard* used an MRC Data analysis of on-demand streaming to separate the 2020 market into five “buckets”: songs streamed over 10 million times; between 1 million and 10 million times; between 50,000 and 1 million times; between 100 and 50,000 times; and fewer than 100 times. To compare the industry today with that of 25 years ago, *Billboard* then examined a 1995 report from MRC Data's predecessor company, Nielsen SoundScan, which separated that year's sales into albums that sold over 250,000 copies; between 25,000 and 250,000 copies; between 5,000 and 25,000 copies; and fewer than 5,000 copies.

Hits remain important by any measure. Combined, the first two buckets of songs streamed over 1 million times — which includes 96,779 tracks, or just 0.16% of the 61.2 million available — accounted for slightly more than three-quarters of total on-demand streaming. On the other end of the spectrum, even when discounting the 68.72% of avail-

Michelle Jubelirer

was named Capitol Music Group chair and CEO, replacing Jeff Vaughn.

Michael Nesmith

singer, songwriter and guitarist of The Monkees, died at 78.

able tracks that were streamed fewer than 100 times, many of which were presumably uploaded by hobbyists, the 18.26 million songs streamed between 100 and 50,000 times — the much-vaunted long tail that accounts for 29.8% of tracks — only account for 6.25% of total listening. Culturally, the easy accessibility of digital distribution represents a revolution. In music, though, it's just not much of a business.

Back in 1995, the 336 albums that sold over 250,000 copies — 0.2% of the nearly 147,000 releases available at the time — generated almost 40% of sales. Combined with the second bucket of albums that sold between 25,000 and 250,000 copies, that meant 3,328 albums, or 2.2% of releases, accounted for 72.5% of total sales.

At least part of the reason such a small percentage of songs now accounts for such a large percentage of total streaming is that there's so much more music available than there was then. While consumers in 1995 could choose among 146,693 albums — which, combined, probably contained somewhere between 1.5 million and 1.75 million songs — in 2020, MRC Data tracked 61,189,195 songs, the equivalent of about 5 million to 6 mil-

lion albums. But the business of unpopular music isn't exactly exploding. In 1995, the 91.3% of releases that sold fewer than 5,000 copies accounted for 11% of sales, while in 2020, the 98.56% of releases that were streamed fewer than 50,000 times made up 6.34% of streaming consumption.

The idea that the long tail represents a significant business opportunity doesn't hold up, either — at least when it comes to music streaming. In 1995, the bottom bucket of 134,000 albums that sold fewer than 5,000 copies each would have accounted for 67 million in total sales and brought labels about \$536 million in revenue, assuming an average wholesale price of \$8 per album. Last year, however, the 60.3 million songs in the bottom two buckets — which were streamed fewer than 50,000 times each and accounted for 98.6% of available tracks — accounted for a combined total of 55.64 billion streams, or 6.43% of the total, and only generated \$295 million in revenue, assuming a blended per-stream rate of \$0.0053. In other words, even before factoring in inflation, the business of unpopular music is just under half the size it was a quarter of a century ago. Turns out hits still have some life in them after all. **B**



23.39B

↑5.9%

TOTAL ON-DEMAND STREAMS WEEK OVER WEEK

Number of audio and video on-demand streams for the week ending Dec. 9.

18.53M

↑3.9%

ALBUM CONSUMPTION UNITS WEEK OVER WEEK

Album sales plus track-equivalent albums plus streaming-equivalent albums for the week ending Dec. 9.

1.062T

↑9.9%

TOTAL ON-DEMAND STREAMS YEAR OVER YEAR TO DATE

Number of audio and video streams for 2021 so far over the same period in 2020.



THE LAST RANCHERO KING

VICENTE FERNÁNDEZ

1940-2021

BY LEILA COBO

VICENTE FERNÁNDEZ'S DEATH on Dec. 12 at the age of 81 marks the end of the golden age of Mexican *ranchera* music that started in the 1950s and was immortalized in music and film by larger-than-life stars like José Alfredo Jiménez, Javier Solís and Fernández's idol, Pedro Infante. Most of these artists died young — cementing the image of hard-living, hard-loving masculinity that defined the genre — but Fernández had more than six decades to touch millions of lives. “There are many things that make you love your fans to such a degree, that you don't care about the money,” Fernandez told *Billboard* in 2012. “You live for the fans; you don't live from the fans.”

A star who rose from humble origins but never left his Guadalajara rancher roots behind, Fernández sang of love, honor and respect, and literally wore his national pride on his sleeve, performing — like his cohorts — in a traditional, embroidered charro outfit. He was a definitively Mexican artist, but his voice and charisma made him an icon across Latin America, where his renditions of songs like “El Rey” and “Volver Volver” became part of the collective consciousness.

Fernández recorded over 50 albums, setting records for solo regional Mexican acts on *Billboard's* Top Latin Albums and Hot Latin Songs charts, but he was better known for his concerts, which could run more than four hours. Over the past three decades since *Billboard* Boxscore launched until his farewell tour in 2016, he sold over 1.8 million tickets and grossed \$318 million from 238 reported shows alone, but Fernández believed he did more than just get fans into seats. “The fact that I sing for hours has no merit,” he told *Billboard* in 2012. “The trick is to have the audience stay with you for three-and-a-half hours.” **B**

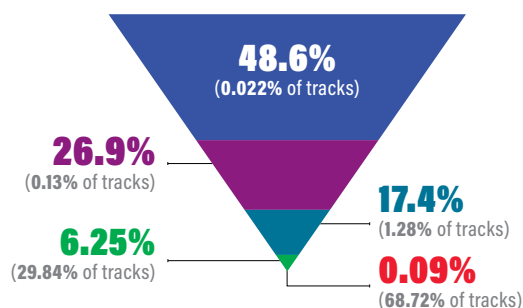
Hits Matter More Than Ever

A small number of titles fuels the industry — even more than 25 years ago

2020 STREAMING

% of Total Plays
(% of Total Tracks)

TOTAL AUDIO STREAMS **877.2 BILLION**
TOTAL TRACKS **61.19 MILLION**



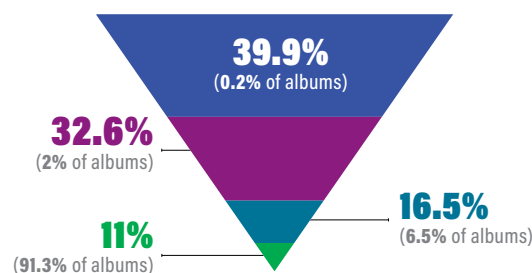
- Tracks streamed over 10 million times
- Tracks streamed between 1 million and 10 million times
- Tracks streamed between 50,000 and 1 million times

- Tracks streamed between 100 and 50,000 times
- Tracks streamed fewer than 100 times

1995 ALBUM SALES

% of Total Sales
(% of Total Albums)

TOTAL ALBUM SALES **615 MILLION**
TOTAL ALBUMS **146,693**



- Albums that sold over 250,000 copies
- Albums that sold between 25,000 and 250,000 copies

- Albums that sold between 5,000 and 25,000 copies
- Albums that sold fewer than 5,000 copies

Sources An MRC Data analysis of 2020 on-demand audio streaming in the United States that *Billboard* separated into five “buckets” (numbers may not total 100% due to rounding) and a 1995 report from MRC Data's predecessor company, Nielsen SoundScan.

Gene Amaury Gutierrez Amber Streeter Anais Oluwatoyin Estelle Anderson Hernandez Andrae Alexander Andres Castro Andrew Holt Andy Bauza Angel Antonio Mosqueda Dominguez Angela Hunte Angus Young Anita Baker Anthony J. Brothony Newley Antonio Fernandez Aretha Franklin Ari Starace Arthur Freed Atia Boggs Austin Davis Austin Owens Autumn Rodeji Ibrahim Balogun Ben King Bennie Moten Bernie Herms Bernie Marsden Berry Gordy Jr Bill Martin Billy Preston Billy Taylor Evgart Brendan Walsh Brian May Bray Bryan Lamar Simmons Bryson Tiller Bud Green Byron Stingily C.Tangana Callum Merritt Calladus Camilo Carlos Efren Reyes Rosado Carole King Carolyn Franklin Casey Smith Cassie Ventura Charlie Wilson Chester Burns Moman Christopher Wallace Christopher Joel Brown Christopher Wallace Chuck Butler Claire Cottrill Cleveland Browne Clifford Cody Tarpley Colby Wedgeworth Coleridge Gardner Tillman Cristian Salazar Dacoury Natche Daddy Yankee Dan Nigro Daniel Hackett Daniel Pringle Daniel Rondon Daniel Stanfill Daniel Traynor Daniella Mason Danny Ocean Darhyl Camper David Bowie David Brown David Harris David Morales David Styles Deke Richards Derek Watson Destin Route Devon Gallaway Terry Dolly Parton Dominic Fike Dominique Cole Dominique Jones Don Harris Don Juan Mancha Doris Tauber Dorothy Fier Harry T Burleigh Drew Parker Duke Ellington Durk Banks Dustin Corbett Dwayne Chin-Quee Dylan Wiggins Earl Powell Ed Sheeran Ed Eddie De Lange Eden Ahbez Edgar Barrera Elena Rose Ella Mai Howell Emily Doty Emmanuel Isong Eric Frederic Ernie Shelby Ernie Wilkins Ethan Hulse Evaluna Montaner Everett Romano Ewan Merritt Felisha King Fernando Osceola Frank Foster Franklin Martinez Fred Ahlert Fred Rose Fred Smith Freddie Mercury Freddie Perren Freddy Wexler Gary Barlow Gene Austin George Harrison George M. Cohan Gerald Marks Gerry Goffin Gian Stone Gianluca Buccellati Giveon Evan Kurstin Gus Arnheim Gustavo Gutierrez Cabello Guy Clark Gwendolyn Gordy Fuqua Hall Johnson Hank Williams Sr. Harlan Harlow Harlon Howard Harry Nilsson Haze Hector Garcia Henry Mancini Henry Nemo Hy Zaret Ian Fitchuk Ilsey Juber Ira Morgan Kahal Irving Mills Ivy Queen Izaak Ortiz J.W. Alexander Jace Jennings Jack Antonoff Jack Harlow Jack Ingram Jacob Greensp Jacob Ludvig Olofsson Jahmal Gwin James A Bland Jamie Harman Jamie Scott Jason Evigan Jason Ingram Jay Wheeler Jay-Z Jean Carlos Santiago Perez Jeff Bhasker Jeff Lynne Jennifer Hanson Jermaine Dupri Jerry Leiber Jerry Salley Jerry West Jesse Harris Jesse Stone Jesus Baez Caballero Jimmy Haslin Jimmy Mchugh Jocelyn Donald Joe Turner Joe Williams John Deacon

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Let It Stream

Holiday music generates over \$170 million a year, a number so big that teams work year-round to keep the plays flowing for catalog chestnuts like Bing Crosby's version of "White Christmas"

BY STEVE KNOPPER

I F YOU SEARCH "Christmas 2021" on Spotify, the top result will be a massive playlist — 124 tracks and six hours long — that opens with Queen's "Thank God It's Christmas," then dips into a range of old and new holiday songs from Bing Crosby, Katy Perry, Ella Fitzgerald, Kacey Musgraves and others before landing on "I Want You Home (#heimnachten)," a track from last year by European relative unknowns Bowie & Pyrah. It's not user-generated. Rather, it's carefully curated by Universal Music Group, using "data, insight, analytics," according to Mike Biggane, UMG's executive vp music strategy and tactics.

"Our hope is somebody's going to discover our playlists by the holidays, put it on and just let it go," he says. "They won't have the urge to change."

The holiday-music streaming season, which unofficially begins the day after Halloween, is big business for labels. Last year, Universal's more than 500 holiday playlists, created by 200 curators in 67 countries, generated over 120 million streams from Nov. 1 to Dec. 21, according to Biggane. In the CD era, some 20 years ago, labels' fourth-quarter strategies centered on turning superstar releases into stocking stuffers. Now that streaming accounts for 83% of industry revenue, as of 2020, however, holiday-music clicks are a bigger focus of fourth-quarter plans. Holiday music generated \$177 million for the U.S. music industry in 2018, *Billboard* estimates.

Vinnie Freda, a former Warner and Universal digital music executive, isn't surprised by UMG's six-hour playlist since holiday music is often a lean back and listen experience. "People put that stuff on repeat," he says, adding that it's a win when listeners can essentially set it and forget it. "Generally, Christmas music is fungible: 'If I can get you to listen to this thing for the next six hours, that means you're not listening to Sony Music.'"

Because the holiday-music streaming numbers are so massive, labels now have year-round project teams and staff to promote catalog evergreens, from the Vince Guaraldi Trio's *A Charlie Brown Christmas* to Bing Crosby's *Christmas Classics* to Phil Spector's *A Christmas Gift to You*. They also encourage contemporary stars to record new holiday albums, like Dolly Parton's *A Holly Dolly Christmas* last year and Kelly Clarkson's recent *When Christmas Comes Around*, whose "Christ-

mas Isn't Canceled (Just You)" went viral and generated 1.5 million Spotify plays and 1.2 million YouTube views by early December.

Even if a recent recording gets lost amid the annual avalanche of holiday content, its use in a Christmas movie or TV special could promote streaming for years to come. Amazon Music has noticed recent streaming spikes for Faith Hill's "Where Are You Christmas," from the 2000 soundtrack to the Jim Carrey movie *Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, as well as Ariana Grande's 2014 single "Santa Tell Me." "Holiday music can grow," says Karen Pettyjohn, Amazon Music's senior music curator. While new releases are expected to deliver instant hits, "that same expectation doesn't apply here, because it's about nostalgia and memory."

In the few days before Christmas 2020, Alexa requests for festive songs on playlists like Merry Mix totaled over 15 million per day. "People use it to soundtrack things, like a party or gingerbread-house making," says Pettyjohn. "It's long listening and it's lean-back listening." Adds UMG's Biggane: "Voice is a major driver of streams for us, and our artists understand what a huge opportunity holiday music is for them."

Craft Recordings, the catalog label owned by Concord Recorded Music, doesn't have to do much to market its biggest holiday release, the Vince Guaraldi Trio's classic *A Charlie Brown Christmas*. According to Concord vp streaming Andrew Woloz, however, label reps try to ensure Guaraldi (and Craft's other holiday songs) winds up on important streaming playlists. Sometimes that's as simple as a label-generated playlist, like Jazz Christmas. It can also be a matter of finding the right playlist title to activate in response to a keyword in a common Alexa request. "People tend to search for what they want to hear thematically. They drink hot chocolate, they sit by the fire, they're wearing sweaters," says Woloz. "You hone in on those words and build in those schematics."

"Holiday is such an evergreen genre, so catalog will take up so much of the real estate," he adds. "New songs, even if they don't hit an algorithm this year, maybe they'll hit a wave in years to come. Art-



Clockwise from top left: Queen's Freddie Mercury, Grande, Crosby, Fitzgerald and Parton.

ists have to keep feeding the content machine."

Labels tend the content machine as well. Concord's Craft, for example, pitches holiday music to music-streaming products like workout giant Peloton, which has a roster of holiday-themed classes and a new Holiday Collection playlist; Sony studies voice-activated streaming requests, looking at how to combine music with popular Alexa games or place strategic Amazon Music advertisements. And every label focuses on pitching holiday songs to top playlists, from Spotify's Christmas Classics, which has 2.3 million likes, or Amazon Music's Merry Mix, which hit the streaming service's list of the top 10 playlists after launching in November.

Sony Music's holiday-music project team is 10 to 15 employees, drawn from the company's content, A&R, marketing and international departments. Unlike the project teams that focus on Valentine's Day and Halloween, the holiday-music team works year-round, with one exception. "They have January off," says Lyn Koppe, executive vp global catalog for the label's catalog division, Legacy Recordings. "It's not like on Halloween, suddenly we say, 'We better start thinking about Christmas!' We think about Christmas all year. We gather data and learn from it and experiment." **b**

Deep Dive: Unwrapping Today's Christmas Music Market In the music industry, holiday music is the gift that keeps on giving — year after year. In 2020, as Dec. 25 approached, over 15 million people worldwide asked Alexa to play Christmas songs. Deep Dive looks at the biggest holiday hits of the streaming era, what strategies helped make them successful and how both online and brick-and-mortar stores are selling physical music products.

READ MORE AT [BILLBOARD.COM/DEEP-DIVE](https://www.billboard.com/deep-dive)



Chrishira Perrier (left) and GRiZ at GRiZMAS 2019 in Detroit.

HOME(TOWN) FOR THE HOLIDAYS

▶ **BEFORE GRANT KWIECINSKI** was headlining festivals with his saxophone-centric electronic-music project, GRiZ, he was just a kid in the Detroit suburbs learning to play the instrument that would become his signature.

"I started playing sax in elementary school, because my school had funding from the state to provide us that education," says Kwiecinski. "But not everyone gets that opportunity."

Since 2014, Kwiecinski has helped raise over \$300,000 to correct that, by providing more music education to Detroit kids with his annual 12 Days of GRiZMAS holiday event. The mini-festival — which ran Dec. 1-12 — spans the city with musical performances, yoga, crafting, caroling, roller-skating and more, with profits from ticket and merchandise sales going to Seven Mile, a Detroit-based organization that provides music, art and coding lessons for kids in underserved local communities.

The GRiZMAS hub is a 900-square-foot retail space in downtown Detroit that's made available through an annual donation by commercial real estate firm Bedrock Detroit. There, Kwiecinski and his core collaborators Jared Berman and Harrison Diskin — Kwiecinski's friends since childhood — and former co-manager Kathryn Griffin transform the empty storefront into a winter wonderland, selling a swath of GRiZMAS merch from coffee to clothing. This year, the store averaged \$15,000 in sales per day. The space also welcomes the volunteer community that supports the event. "I met a woman who drove eight hours from Kentucky just to participate," says Kwiecinski.

That community expanded in 2020, when GRiZMAS went online during the pandemic and raised \$120,000 with livestream events. "It's a regional charity," says Kwiecinski, "so I was impressed people were down to help, even though Detroit might not be in their backyard." This year, with safety protocols in place, GRiZMAS once again culminated with a series of GRiZ performances at Detroit's Masonic Temple.

"My big hope is that what we're doing here motivates people to do it in their own way," says Kwiecinski. "If you're flying first class to play shows and grab bags but you're not doing shit to help your community, you've got to get after it."

—KATIE BAIN

Discord began testing a subscription feature allowing creators to monetize their servers.

The **National Independent Venue Association** announced plans to offer healthcare benefits for members.

Christmas' Real Ever-Greens

MARIAH CAREY IS CONSIDERED THE QUEEN OF CHRISTMAS for good reason: Her 1994 classic "All I Want for Christmas Is You," which she co-wrote with Walter Afanasieff, recently became the first holiday recording to achieve RIAA diamond certification. The King could well be Johnny Marks, a songwriter active in the 1950s and '60s who wrote "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer," "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree" and "A Holly Jolly Christmas," among others. In total, Marks' songs accounted for almost 7% of all holiday on-demand audio streams in the first four weeks of November (Oct. 29-Nov. 25), according to MRC Data and its list of the top 5,000 tracks.

Unsurprisingly, Christmas listening is dominated by a relatively small number of big songs — "Winter Wonderland," "The Christmas Song," "White Christmas" — that have been hits several times over. What is surprising, however, is how thoroughly the consumption of those songs are dominated by what music fans have come to consider the definitive version — not only in the case of pop stars like Carey (whose version of "All I Want for Christmas" accounts for 88% of the song's plays) but for chestnuts like "White Christmas," which gets 48% of its total streams from Bing Crosby's version.

—GLENN PEOPLES

RANK	TITLE (No. of versions in top 5,000)	TOTAL STREAMS (percentage of total holiday streams)	TOP VERSIONS (recording rank, percentage of song streams)	RANK OF TOP VERSION
1	"All I Want For Christmas Is You" (No. 33) By Walter Afanasieff and Mariah Carey	42.4M 2.68%	1. MARIAH CAREY 88% 103. MICHAEL BUBLÉ 6% 195. JUSTIN BIEBER 2%	1
2	"Jingle Bell Rock" (25) By Joseph Beal and James Boothe	35.6M 2.25%	3. BOBBY HELMS 76% 100. ALESSIA CARA 7% 128. DARYL HALL & JOHN OATES 6%	3
3	"Sleigh Ride" (46) By Leroy Anderson and Mitchell Parish	34.1M 2.16%	8. THE RONETTES 55% 93. ELLA FITZGERALD 8% 139. IDINA MENZEL 6%	8
4	"Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas" (79) By Hugh Martin and Ralph Blane	33.9M 2.15%	19. MICHAEL BUBLÉ 33% 62. FRANK SINATRA 14% 75. JUDY GARLAND 11%	19
5	"It's Beginning To Look A Lot Like Christmas" (21) By Meredith Wilson	33.2M 2.1%	7. MICHAEL BUBLÉ 59% 38. PERRY COMO 21% 96. BING CROSBY 8%	7
6	"Rockin' Around The Christmas Tree" (25) By Johnny Marks	33.1M 2.1%	2. BRENDA LEE 85% 143. JUSTIN BIEBER 5% 375. INGRID MICHAELSON 2%	2
7	"Have A Holly Jolly Christmas" (21) By Johnny Marks	32.0M 2.02%	4. BURL IVES 73% 51. MICHAEL BUBLÉ 18% 345. BRETT ELDRIDGE 2%	4
8	"White Christmas" (88) By Irving Berlin	31.6M 2%	13. BING CROSBY 48% 95. MICHAEL BUBLÉ 14% 182. DRIFTERS 4%	13
9	"The Christmas Song" (88) By Mel Tormé and Robert Wells	30.8M 1.95%	12. NAT "KING" COLE 54% 173. LAUREN DAIGLE 5% 185. SHAWN MENDES & CAMILA CABELLO 4%	12
10	"Winter Wonderland" (92) By Felix Bernard and Richard Smith	30.2M 1.91%	35. DARLENE LOVE 25% 70. BING CROSBY 13% 106. PENTATONIX 8%	35

Methodology: Variations of a song title were counted together.

The United Kingdom reintroduced face mask mandates for venues and nightclubs in response to the rapidly spreading omicron COVID-19 variant.

Australia's music industry launched a review into risk factors and drivers of sexual harm, harassment and discrimination.



Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke during a Dec. 1 session at London's House of Commons, which recently debated streaming reform.

CAN THE U.K. REDIRECT STREAMING?

Amid rising concerns about how streaming pays creators, the United Kingdom is exploring legislation to regulate the music business

BY RICHARD SMIRKE



LONDON — Amid controversy over a rule-breaking Christmas party at No. 10 Downing Street during last year's COVID-19 lockdown, the United Kingdom's House of Commons still made time on Dec. 3 to debate an issue important to the music business: how to reform streaming to deliver a greater share of revenue to artists, musicians and songwriters.

The proposed statute, the Copyright (Rights and Remuneration of Musicians) Bill, essentially would have required the industry to pay musicians and songwriters a bigger slice of streaming revenue. It failed to win the support it needed to advance to the next stage in the lawmaking process, but the prospect of government intervention in the U.K. music industry remains on the table.

"We want a fair streaming environment in which the U.K. music industry can thrive and artists are properly rewarded," said Conservative government minister George Freeman during the debate. Freeman, the parliamentary under secretary in the Department for Business, Energy

and Industrial Strategy, warned that the government "has not ruled out legislation" to address imbalances in the streaming economy if the music industry doesn't reform on its own.

For over a year, the United Kingdom, the world's second-biggest exporter of music after the United States, has been leading a global charge to deliver fairer terms to creators, with the support of stars like Paul McCartney, The Rolling Stones and Coldplay frontman Chris Martin. In line with the United Kingdom, the Swedish government recently commissioned a report on the music business there, due out in the spring. And Tom Gray — a member of the British rock band Gomez and founder of the #BrokenRecord campaign — tells *Billboard* that British songwriter advocates have been speaking with artists groups in the United States, France and Germany about launching their own streaming reform movements.

Although U.K. creator groups ignited a debate about several issues, the initial defeat of the copyright bill presented by Kevin Brennan, a member of Parliament from the opposition

Labour Party, shows the uphill battle such laws will face. "There is an acceptance that things need to change," says one senior label executive. "But this is something that the industry needs to sort out. It doesn't need primary legislation."

Already, the adoption of the 2019 European Union Copyright Directive in EU member states has mandated greater transparency and reporting obligations for rights holders, as well as the principle of "appropriate and proportionate remuneration" for creators.

"We believe the answers are already there in Europe, as long as the directive is implemented faithfully," says Helen Smith, executive chair of European independent labels organization IMPALA, which in March published a 10-point plan to reform streaming.

Even without government intervention, industry executives say, royalty rates are rising due to fierce competition among labels for talent, as well as the options available to artists to release music themselves. Royalty rates for traditional U.K. label deals have risen from an average of 15% to 18%

in the CD era to around 25% to 30% for new artist deals today, according to U.K. labels trade organization BPI. The country's Association of Independent Music (AIM) says many indie labels are now paying up to 35% of streaming income to artists or offering 50/50 profit-share deals.

Gray, who launched his #BrokenRecord campaign in April 2020 shortly after the United Kingdom first went into lockdown, says he intentionally targeted politicians. "I knew the only thing the [major] labels were afraid of was regulation," he says.

Artist discontent with streaming payments was reinforced by a report by the Digital, Media, Culture and Sport Committee, which concluded after a nine-month probe the global streaming model led by Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube and Amazon Music was "unsustainable" in its current form. The committee also recommended the United Kingdom's competition enforcer examine how the recorded-music market is "being distorted" by the dominant market share enjoyed by the major labels, Universal Music Group, Sony Music Entertainment and Warner Music Group. In October, the Competition and Markets Authority launched a market study that may last up to 12 months.

The government has also set up working groups with industry stakeholders to research key issues before deciding what, if any, action to take. One area it's studying is the potential impact of bringing streaming in line with U.K. TV and radio broadcasts by obligating record companies to pay performers "equitable remuneration" on streamed music. For U.K. TV and radio broadcasts, the collecting society PPL collects revenue and pays out 50% to performers and 50% to labels, although it's hard to make the case that streaming is more akin to a broadcast than a sale.

Industry groups dispute the financial benefits that equitable remuneration would bring to all but the most popular recording acts and warn that it would greatly reduce the amount of money labels will be able to invest in artists. A version of that equitable remuneration proposal that exists in Spain — although it is paid by streaming platforms, not labels — has been mired in litigation since its introduction in 2006. For small independent labels that already exist on tight margins, the potential loss in streaming revenue could be disastrous. "Equitable remuneration is an analog solution for a digital age," says AIM CEO Paul Pacifico. **B**

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Ambach Caplin photographed Dec. 2 at Verve Label Group in New York.

From The Desk Of... Dahlia Ambach Caplin

**SENIOR VP A&R, VERVE,
VERVE FORECAST AND IMPULSE!**

BY DAN RYS

PHOTOGRAPHED BY MACKENZIE STROH

O **N NOV. 23, DAHLIA** Ambach Caplin was walking through her Brooklyn neighborhood, listening as a series of artists announced the nominations for the 2022 Grammy Awards. Over the course of an hour,

as the genre categories and Big Four honors were revealed, one name kept surfacing again and again: Jon Batiste, the *Late Show With Stephen Colbert* bandleader whom Ambach Caplin had signed to the Verve Label Group in 2018. In all, Batiste

scored 11 nominations, the most of any artist, including nods for record and album of the year for his single “Freedom” and *We Are* album, respectively.

“I was [multitasking] on a Zoom call, on a completely different subject, as all the album and record of the year stuff started coming out, and I was just like, ‘I can’t stay on the phone right now!’” she says. “That’s proof of concept. He’s an incredible artist, and I’m so happy for him because he’s such a hardworking, real talent.”

The nominations were the latest validation for Ambach Caplin, who was born and raised in Antwerp, Belgium, where her uncle ran the concert promotion company Make It Happen (which he sold to SFX in 2001). Having moved to the United States in the 1990s, she has worked for Verve for two decades. Her work identifying and signing artists to

the iconic jazz label — founded in 1956 to release records by Ella Fitzgerald, it also became home to artists like Billie Holiday, Nina Simone and The Velvet Underground — has led to Grammy recognition for acts such as Tank and the Bangas, Ledisi and Herbie Hancock. She executive-produced the lattermost’s *River: The Joni Letters*, which won the album of the year Grammy in 2008. (Arooj Aftab, nominated for best new artist this year, is also distributed by Verve, though she was signed by A&R director Natalie Weber.)

Verve’s success comes as the jazz genre is making gains in sales and streaming — up 11% in album consumption units year over year in 2021 to date, according to MRC Data. It’s a boost in line with the growth of the industry as a whole.

“Verve, historically, has always been about true, original talent,”

she says. “So I think the philosophy is that we look for artists who have voices that don’t sound like anybody else and who are incredible at their craft.”

Congratulations on the Grammy nominations.

What is it like working with Jon Batiste and seeing him develop over the years?

He’s an incredible human being and an incredible artist. And it was very obvious from the first day I met him, which was at his piano teacher’s house many years ago. He was already doing his thing. It was before *Colbert*. He was doing shows and I was going to see him at the Blue Note or Rockwood [Music Hall in New York], and he always had this incredible way of getting the audience to get up and move. I’d never seen people dance to jazz, and he was able to communicate that. It’s very rare to see that.

What kind of impact can Grammy nominations have on an artist's career?

Artists make the music that they make, and no one's making music for awards. But what it does do is help bring opportunities and legitimacy in the business. We sometimes feel the impact like that. But artists just do their art, and we're there to augment it by supporting it and giving it exposure around the world.

This is the second year in a row that Verve has had a best new artist nomination. What is your approach to A&R?

The criteria are that an artist be incredible at their craft and a one and only. I worked with Ledisi when she was a best new artist, and she was a unique voice in R&B. Arooj doesn't sound like anybody else. Tank from Tank and the Bangas is an amazing musician, an incredible singer, rapper, spoken-word artist. She's a triple threat, and then she's supported by this incredible group of musicians. They all did so much work on their own to get traction. I view A&R development as providing the tools needed by the artist to achieve their artistic vision while helping them refine it.

What are some of the keys to breaking a new artist, especially one who's far outside of the pop realm?

The artists whom we choose to work with stand out, and we are very careful to make sure that our artists each have their own lane at Verve. That lets them focus on creativity while we amplify the music to the audience. We don't have a strict template for marketing any more than we do for A&R. Verve is also like a family. We stay very close to what our artists need. Jamie Krentz, who runs Verve, is in touch with everyone on a daily basis.

Has your strategy become more global now that streaming has made the world a smaller place?

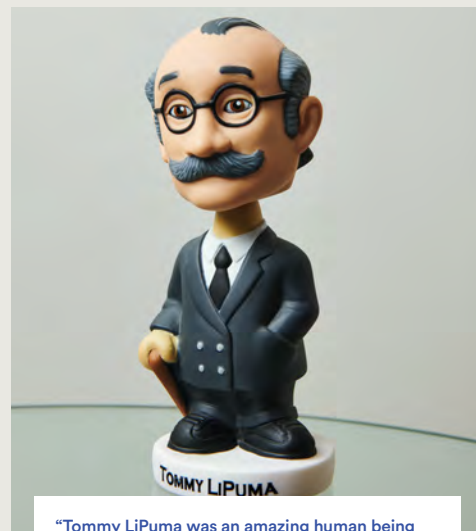
I'm from Belgium initially, so I tend to think quite globally. I started my career by touring around the world with Wayne Shorter, and then I did international, so it's in my DNA. Our worldwide approach to



"These are beautiful pictures of Jon Batiste, The Comet Is Coming and Ondara, taken by the great photographer and former head of creative at Verve Josh Cheuse," says Ambach Caplin.



The Velvet Underground & Nico album art. "I have this hanging at work and at home," she says. "It's an important album, I love listening to it, and it helped shape our vision for the label as it is today."



"Tommy LiPuma was an amazing human being and music genius who led Verve for many years," she says of this bobblehead, which Verve head of sales Michael Kauffman made for a sales convention. "I often feel he's still watching over us and hope we make him proud."



"I find essential oils derived from plants nurturing, so I like having them around the office when calm and focus is needed."

developing artists is key. We're based in the U.S., but we work with so many countries. We're in almost daily touch with our teams in France, Germany, you name it, because you never know where an artist is going to start to get a buzz. Everything is smaller because of the internet. We no longer need to be somewhere to discover someone.

What's the state of the jazz market now?

Exciting. (Laughs.) It's better than it has been in years. There's such a renewed interest — there's an infusion of youthful talent and audience between London, Chicago, New York, Los Angeles. It's amazing to go to festivals

and watch people jumping up and down to Sons of Kemet or Kamasi Washington or The Comet Is Coming. The pool of talent has grown; there have been so many amazing artists to discover. And it's no longer just about going to a jazz club. You can see jazz in many places. And that's a testament to the agents and the bookers worldwide who are doing it.

To what would you attribute that broader acceptance?

One thing I would say is that because it's in the hands of all these newer talents, you have people who are combining different sounds. They grew up listening to hip-hop and R&B in the U.S. and

Caribbean, and Afrobeats in the U.K., and they're channeling that in jazz. So people are just relating to it more. That's an important factor I've noticed from the musicians that we've worked with.

What are some of the challenges and opportunities in the jazz world for Verve?

The opportunity is that there are so many new live avenues. There were always great jazz festivals, but there's a bigger blend happening now at a lot of places around the world, where you can see an R&B artist and a jazz artist at the same festival. Jazz remains a type of music that is challenging to some people, but I see more opportunity

now than ever before because people are more receptive to it. Playlists are also a growing opportunity to expose people to jazz who otherwise wouldn't be exposed to it.

How has the resurgence of vinyl affected Verve?

Jazz doesn't stream like pop, so vinyl is essential for our revenue. We do a lot with Record Store Day — our revenue team works closely with all the accounts on that. The one major challenge we're all facing since COVID-19 is the supply chain. But we're delivering records earlier so we can meet those demands because it's so important.

How has the rise of streaming changed your approach to your job?

A lot of great talent is now discovered by listeners looking around and doing deep dives. On the marketing side, we're fully engaged on all levels, and it's really important to work closely with all those accounts worldwide. It's incredible for the catalog and for new artists, and it's nice to see when cross-pollination happens and an artist that comes from a more jazz place gets onto a different kind of playlist. It has opened so many more avenues for the audience and for me personally — not just as a fan but as an A&R executive. So, on both ends, it has been a win. **B**

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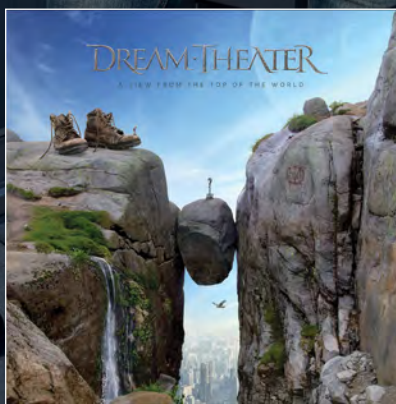
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"A GROUP THAT HAS BLAZED NEW TRAILS CONSISTENTLY"
- **ROLLING STONE**

*"THE BAND HAVE CAPTIVATED GENERATIONS OF FANS
AND INSPIRED SCORES OF INFLUENTIAL PLAYERS"*
- **REVOLVER**

INSIDE OUT
MUSIC

THE
YEAR IN
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This year brimmed with uncertainty as the world cautiously emerged from last year's pandemic shutdown. The music industry was full of new questions that revolved around vinyl variants and NFTs as new-gen collectibles, country music's efforts to widen its reach, pop-punk's return to the mainstream, what live music looks like today and fan efforts to mobilize and create change

TYPE ILLUSTRATIONS BY

MY NAME IS WENDY

THE
YEAR IN
MUSIC

WHEN DID COLLECTIBLES BECOME COOL AGAIN?

THE RISE OF A PHYSICAL FORMAT LIKE VINYL IN TANDEM WITH DIGITAL-FIRST NFTs HAS MADE THE CASE FOR RARITY UNAVOIDABLE — AND EVERYONE WANTS IN

BY **LYNDSAY HAVENS**

The spike in vinyl has been at a steady incline for over a decade, with sales growing year over year since the mid-2000s.

But, during a pandemic in which concerts were canceled and music fans were kept inside, interest in vinyl exploded, dating back to July 2020 and continued with vinyl unit sales in the United States growing 81% as of October 2021, according to MRC Data (compared with 46.2% by the end of 2020). That growth now suggests an estimated year-end 2021 revenue of \$1 billion.

Interestingly, around the same time that a time-honored physical format started to soar, so too did the very intangible, very online non-fungible tokens in the music space. (An NFT is a one-of-a-kind digital token that exists on a blockchain, most often Ethereum, which is the second most popular cryptocurrency after Bitcoin.) No matter where it was happening, the concept and intrigue of collecting singular products became unavoidable.

Vinyl variants — records pressed in specific colorways or with special features like sparkles or tie-dye — skyrocketed in popularity. “This year the number of variants increased dramatically,” says Sean Rutkowski, vp label and client relations, at Independent Record Pressing. “Before, it was pretty common to do two to three different variants, and that became three to five variants. And then by midyear, we had one record where it was 13 different variants. And at that point, I’m just kind of like, ‘What’s going on here?’”

Rutkowski stresses how unsustainable it is for manufacturers to press multiple colored variations of a record, especially at a time when pressing plants are already experiencing supply chain shortages and delays. Each variant, he points out, adds about an hour to the manufacturing turnaround time — so in the case of the record with 13 variants, that can add more than half a day to the entire pressing process.

So why are requests for multiple variants still coming in? Big-box

retailers like Walmart and Target contribute to the demand, since they are more likely to sell and up their orders of a certain title if they are guaranteed an exclusive version of the pressing. Becky Wilson, vp music at gaming studio MELON (who worked as a tech, music and books buyer at Urban Outfitters for over 10 years), previously told *Billboard* that selling multiple variants “helps retailers more than anything, because there’s a differentiator.”

In July, Billie Eilish offered eight different colored vinyl versions of her second album, *Happier Than Ever*, that included retail exclusives for Target, Walmart and Urban Outfitters, as well as Amazon and independent record stores. (More recently, Eilish teamed with Gucci for a version made from recycled vinyl scraps from all colors of the original pressing, promising in an Instagram caption that “each piece is completely unique!”) As a result, the album debuted atop the *Billboard* 200 with 73,000 vinyl copies sold — a stat so staggering that *Happier Than Ever* could have hit No. 1 on the chart from vinyl sales alone. Meanwhile, Olivia Rodrigo’s *Sour* — which arrived on vinyl three months after its May release on streaming platforms and CD, helping it rebound to No. 1 on the *Billboard* 200 — was available in six different variants. And earlier this year, the subscription-based record club Vinyl Me, Please told

Billboard that almost 100% of its sales were of colored or limited-edition releases.

“We’re in the clout era of social media and people wanting to flex,” says Maxwell Dartey, A&R urban catalog, Universal Music Enterprises. “For a certain demographic, I think they look at vinyl the same way they do sneakers. There are definitely some people who buy it because they appreciate it for what it is, but people want something that’s dope. Whether to make themselves look cool or just as an appreciation for the art that the artist put forth.”

The value of an NFT similarly relies on the rarity of a product, but unlike vinyl, ownership is at stake. And while NFTs have been around since the mid-2010s, the music community tapped in more than ever this year, with everyone from deadmau5 and Grimes to Kings of Leon and Shawn Mendes creating such digital offerings (see story, opposite page). Josh Katz, CEO of NFT marketplace Yellowheart, told *Billboard* after the Kings of Leon drop in March that this decentralized, digitized form of ownership is rooted in music fandom. “If you’re into collecting posters and any type of collectible, this is the coolest because it’s a worldwide marketplace. It’s global,” he said. “There’s real scarcity. You wake up the next morning and it might be worth more. One of the significant takeaways [from this drop] was that mainstream fans are super ready for this.”

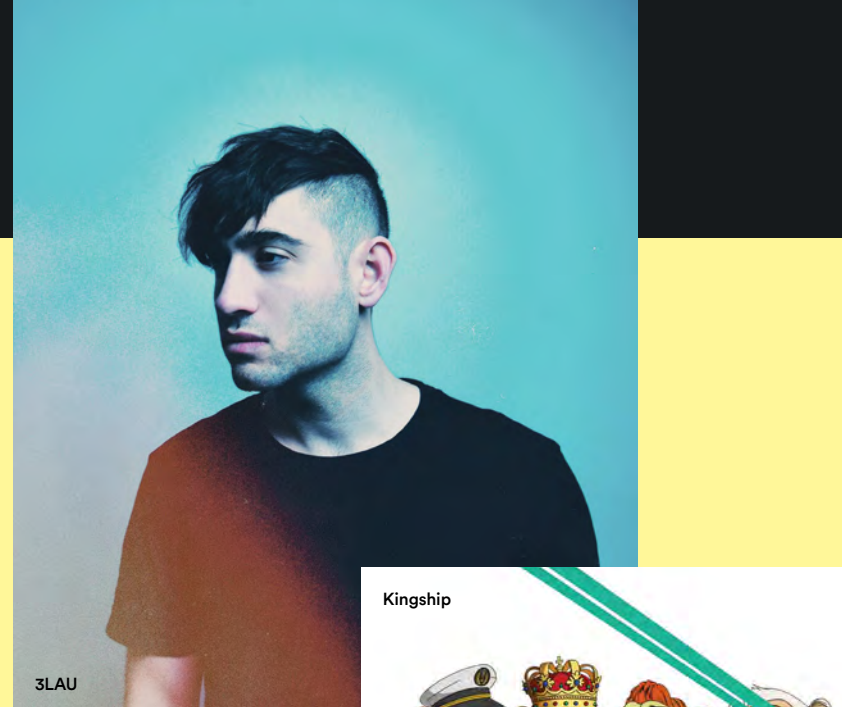
NFTs have often been posited as a companion to physical merchandise; both show signs of growth well into 2022. NFT platform OneOf has already struck a deal with the Recording Academy for the next three Grammy Awards, while pressing plants (which remain backed up) are booked into next year.

“We’re all invested. Every plant I talk to is growing,” says Rutkowski. “There are all these records that are supposed to be in the pipeline, that people want in the pipeline, that I don’t even know if in the heyday of vinyl [plants] could support [such demand]. I think people have to realize: Do you want more colors, or do you want more capacity?”

OLIVIA RODRIGO RELEASED HER DEBUT SINGLE, “DRIVERS LICENSE,” IN JANUARY, WHICH DEBUTED AT NO. 1 ON THE BILLBOARD HOT 100 AND STAYED THERE FOR EIGHT WEEKS.



Grimes' "WarNymph Collection, Vol. 1"



3LAU

NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCKCHAIN

REVISITING SOME OF MUSIC'S BIGGEST NFT MOMENTS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

While non-fungible tokens have been around for years, buying and selling these blockchain-powered collectibles was relegated to cryptocurrency circles. But there was a noticeable shift in early 2021, when the market for music-related NFTs skyrocketed from \$306,000 in sales during December 2020 to \$26,756,243 in March 2021, according to tech newsletter *Water & Music*. The spike proved that what was once a niche, tech-savvy market became music's next revolution — or at least a way for artists to make a quick buck as the pandemic stretched on.

ILLMIND SELLS SAMPLES AND BEATS AS NFTs

Grammy-winning producer Illmind released the first-ever melody/sample loop pack as an NFT, opening a new practical use for the token in the music business. By purchasing this NFT, buyers could use the samples in their own work and release the resulting songs commercially with a royalty-free guarantee from Illmind.

GRIMES UNVEILS SELF-MADE DIGITAL ART

Titled "WarNymph Collection, Vol. 1," Grimes' audiovisual NFT collection proved the value of creating highly personalized products. With sci-fi-inspired art and accompanying music, Grimes and her brother Mac Boucher created everything themselves — earning about \$6 million in total sales.

3LAU ISSUES TOKENIZED ALBUM

Electronic artist 3LAU was one of music's earliest NFT proponents. When he opted to "mint" (to create and affix an item on the blockchain) a copy of his album *Ultraviolet* as an NFT for its third anniversary — which allowed its purchaser to redeem a custom song from the artist-producer, access unreleased music and receive a physical vinyl record — he fetched, at the time, the largest sum to date for a single NFT sale: \$3.6 million.

KINGS OF LEON SELLS NFT ALBUM COPIES

The NFT craze hit its fever pitch in March, reaching a sales height this new, volatile space has yet to surpass.

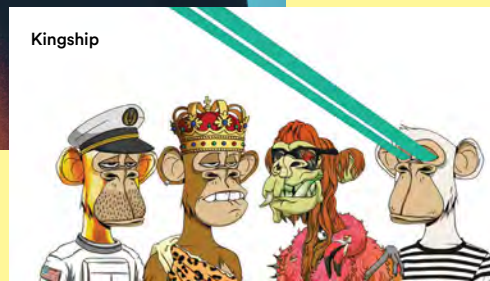
For Kings of Leon, it proved to be the perfect time for an experimental release of its new album, *When You See Yourself*. The album was made available to purchase as an NFT for a set price of \$50 for a limited time, offered with exclusives like limited-edition vinyl and digital art. The move incentivized fan engagement and album sales and became the first time fans could purchase an album on a blockchain the same day it arrived on streaming platforms.

DOGGFACE'S NFT CLIP THWARTED BY COPYRIGHT ISSUES

Nathan "Doggface" Apodaca, the TikTok star who went viral for skateboarding and drinking Ocean Spray cranberry juice to "Dreams" by Fleetwood Mac, hoped to cash in on his 2020 virality by minting the short video as an NFT in 2021. But his attempt revealed the thorniness of intellectual property in NFTs: Due to lack of copyright permissions, Doggface ultimately had to sell the NFT without the song "Dreams" playing in the background and with the Ocean Spray logo blurred out.

PLEASDAO BUYS ONE-OF-A-KIND WU-TANG CLAN ALBUM

PleasDAO, a community of 74 crypto-savvy investors, purchased the mythologized *Once Upon a Time in Shaolin*, Wu-Tang Clan's single-copy physical album. Previously owned by Martin Shkreli, the DAO said it bought *Shaolin* in part because it felt like a predecessor of the NFT ethos: manufactured scarcity and a value driven by hype. Along with the sale, which cost \$4 million, the DAO minted the album as an NFT.



Kingship



Wu-Tang Clan's *Once Upon a Time in Shaolin*



Kings of Leon

UMG LABEL SIGNS FIRST BAND OF NFT CHARACTERS

UMG's new label 10:22PM, which focuses on NFT-related trends, signed Kingship, a musical group of animated characters from Bored Ape Yacht Club. One of the most successful NFT projects to date, BAYC owners hold monetization rights, allowing them to license the likeness of their NFT character for things like T-shirts, mugs and even musical acts — the lattermost of which is exactly what BAYC holder jimmy.eth did. By licensing four of his apes to be the face of a major-label band, Kingship builds upon a growing trend of virtual stars.

—KRISTIN ROBINSON

BAD BUNNY MADE HIS *SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE* DEBUT AS A MUSICAL GUEST IN FEBRUARY, RECRUITING ROSALÍA TO PERFORM THEIR COLLABORATION "LA NOCHE DE ANOCHE."



'IT JUST KEPT GROWING'

HOW RYAN SMITH ENDED UP CUTTING MASTER VINYL FOR THE BIGGEST NAMES IN MUSIC

BY LYNDSY HAVENS

ILLUSTRATION BY RYAN INZANA

M

astering engineer Ryan Smith is often among the very first to hear a highly anticipated new album: From

Adele's *30* to Taylor Swift's *Fearless (Taylor's Version)*, Smith has cut the master lacquers, used to mass-produce vinyl, for some of

the year's biggest-selling albums. Having worked in studios since graduating college, Smith says that when he started at Sterling Sound in 2002, "vinyl was almost dead," but by 2008, "we got a sense in the wind that it was weirdly on an uptick." Around the same time, Smith learned how to operate a lathe, the machine

used to cut master vinyl, primarily working on reissues. A decade later, when Sterling moved from New York's Chelsea Market to New Jersey in 2018, Smith relocated to the new Nashville outpost — the only location that had not one, but two of the machines. "I developed a reputation in the vinyl world as someone who [can cut a record] really well," says Smith. "Now, all of a sudden I'm getting to cut records for all these really high-profile, front-line artists."

How easy is it to learn how to cut vinyl using a lathe?

Honestly, it's really easy to cut a record. It's really hard to cut a good record. Working the equipment is not that hard, but there are a thousand things that can go wrong, and it definitely takes a lot of experience. I learned how to cut from [senior mastering engineer] George Marino, he started in the late '60s and that's all his job was, just cutting records every single day. There

was no digital anything — vinyl was *the* format. And by the time he taught me to, it was almost hard because so much of it was just ingrained in him. To verbally explain it to someone who hadn't done it before? It was tricky.

Now that we're seeing a spike in vinyl, have more people wanted to learn this skill?

I did have to train someone from scratch, our second vinyl cutter. He was an engineer here in Nashville and was somebody who always had a really deep interest in vinyl and was itching for the chance to learn how to do it. There are other people who want to pick our brain about it. A lot of people have bought lathes online. I feel very lucky that I got to [learn] at a place that had institutional knowledge.

With Adele, you had to cut over 20 masters in order to meet the estimated 500,000 vinyl copies ordered for release day. How did you prepare?

When we built our studios here in Nashville back in 2018, we ran lines between the rooms of our two lathes. We were like, "If we ever got in a bind and had to cut multiple parts of something, we could cut two sets simultaneously." At that point, we didn't really have that call to do that. But [with Adele], when they needed to get one set into every plant's hands as soon as possible, we were using both lathes. It was cool to see the idea we had three years ago be successful.

How does it feel to have cut the album with the year's biggest sales debut?

When you cut records, you have to listen top to bottom without stopping. And for this, you do it over and over and over again. I know this record like the back of my hand, and at the time we were doing it, it was still three or four months from anyone in the world even having heard it. You know what a big deal it is — and of course, we were held to serious secrecy, too.

You've also cut masters for Taylor Swift, including her 2020 album *folklore*. What was different about working on a surprise release?

Her team is pretty involved. On *folklore*, they had their own security measures: Either we would drive [the test cuts] over to them in Nashville, or they would send someone to the studio to pick them up. They didn't want anything sent via courier, and everything was with code names. We wouldn't write 'Taylor Swift' on anything.

Why is it such an exciting time to work in vinyl?

When I learned to cut, it was indie and rock bands that wanted something to sell at a merch table. And then it just kept growing. I kept thinking, "At some point it's probably going to crest and we'll be left with club music and jazz reissues." But so far, it hasn't. And the fact that it has climbed to the heights that it has is just mind-boggling. Even as somebody who rooted for [the format], I never would have guessed it was going to get this big.

BEYONCÉ BECAME THE MOST DECORATED WOMAN IN GRAMMYS HISTORY, WITH 28 CAREER WINS, AFTER TAKING HOME THE AWARD FOR BEST R&B PERFORMANCE AT THE 63RD ANNUAL GRAMMY AWARDS IN MARCH.

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HOW DID COUNTRY MUSIC'S CHANGE PLEDGE PLAY OUT?

EXECUTIVES AND ARTISTS ON THE STRIDES THAT HAVE BEEN MADE — AND THE WORK THAT STILL NEEDS TO BE DONE

BY MELINDA NEWMAN

Like much of the nation, following 2020's Black Lives Matter protests, the country music community reckoned with its racially divisive past and current lack of inclusion. Then in February, the spotlight turned its glare on

Nashville after a video of budding country superstar Morgan Wallen using a racial slur emerged.

The condemnation of Wallen was swift: His label suspended him, country radio dropped him and streaming services removed him from prominent playlists. Some artists quickly stated that his actions did not speak for the genre as a whole. "The news out of Nashville tonight does not represent country music," tweeted Kelsea Ballerini. Others disagreed, arguing that the community was guilty of allowing exclusionary behavior. "It actually IS representative of our town," tweeted Maren Morris.

Not even a year later, Wallen is doing a sold-out arena tour and is back in the top 15 at country radio with "Sand in My Boots." Meanwhile, Blanco Brown — who scored a No. 1 on Country Airplay this year with "Just the Way" with band Parmalee — expressed his frustration on Twitter in November about the stereotyping he still routinely faces as a country artist of color. "I get tired of people asking me why I love country music and why this lane," he wrote. "I don't understand [why] I have to waste energy explaining who I am when a white man doesn't have to ... Don't include me in anything for diversity, include me because I'm simply great!"

It's a sentiment shared by Jimmie Allen, a best new artist Grammy nominee who wants to be judged on his merits. "I understood as a Black man coming into country music that there would be preconceived notions," he says. "But no matter what people think about me, no matter what obstacles I might face, it's still my obligation as a songwriter and artist to create great music and put on a great show."

For some, letting the music lead means dis-

mantling long-held systems that, perhaps inadvertently, encourage exclusion. In November, Color of Change, which helped the Recording Academy craft its inclusion rider for the Grammys, called for the Country Music Association to be held accountable for what the online racial justice organization termed "anti-Black culture." It demanded the CMA Awards revise its nominations eligibility requirements based on *Billboard* and Mediabase's country charts, which, given the paucity of artists of color on mainstream labels, excludes many acts. In a statement, the CMA responded that while it was not working with Color of Change, the organization was "working very closely with a few partners to help us shift the narrative of inclusivity in country music," and, earlier in December, held a seminar on the barriers and drivers for multicultural consumers of country music.

Similarly, the Country Radio Seminar's selection process for its influential New Faces of Country Music showcase, which requires at least one top 25 song on a *Billboard* or Mediabase country chart, continues to come under scrutiny for its lack of representation. (For the 2022 showcase, the five performers include two women and no artists of color.) Last year, the voting criteria for the showcase expanded beyond broadcast radio to include digital service providers, TV outlets and other programmers.

And while RJ Curtis, executive director of Country Radio Broadcasters and Country Radio Seminar, says that "we don't want to be left behind," he adds that [industry] change takes time. "There were people who wanted to flip the switch and say, 'You have a problem, and we want to see results tomorrow,' but I think we're gaining some ground." He points to major-



Guyton

label artists TJ Osborne, Lily Rose and Brooke Eden, all of whom came out this year and garnered support ("Younger Me," by Brothers Osborne about TJ's encouraging letter to his younger self, earned a Grammy nomination for best country duo/group performance), as well as the deep bench of new Black country artists making their mark, including BRELAND (Atlantic), Brittney Spencer, Tiera (Valory), Willie Jones (Sony Nashville) and Reyna Roberts.

Additionally, Latin artists are finding a home in country music. Sony Music Nashville signed married Latin country duo Kat & Alex, who release music in English and Spanish, while BBR Music Group's Stoney Creek imprint inked a deal with bilingual recording artist Frank Ray. In October, Amazon Music launched Whiskey & Tequila, a playlist that combines country and regional Mexican music.

Mickey Guyton is emblematic of a prominent artist of color who is treated very differently across different platforms. While she has received scant terrestrial airplay for her major-label debut, *Remember Her Name* — which arrived 10 years after she signed with Universal Mu-

sic Group Nashville and peaked at No. 47 on the Top Country Albums chart — she has been highly visible, co-hosting the Academy of Country Music Awards in April (all three major country music awards shows had Black co-hosts) and becoming the first Black artist to earn a Grammy nod for best country album since the category relaunched in 1995.

When asked to give the country music industry a letter grade on its progress, CMT senior vp music strategy Leslie Fram opts for a "C." "We've taken baby steps. We're not going to take giant steps," she says. CMT's 2021 class for Next Women of Country, which promotes rising artists across CMT's platforms, is its most diverse yet, with four of 10 acts comprising women of color. And CMT's Equal Play program continues to mandate 50/50 parity for male and female artists across all CMT platforms.

"We have to have an eye toward diversity now in everything that we do," says Fram. "It really is essential to the future of the format to recognize artists that are under-represented ... You have to do your due diligence and find those artists — and then support them."

KEVIN MAZUR/GETTY IMAGES FOR ACM

LEGENDARY RUFF RYDERS RAPPER **DMX** DIED IN APRIL AT THE AGE OF 50 AFTER BEING HOSPITALIZED FOR A HEART ATTACK TRIGGERED BY A DRUG OVERDOSE.

'AN ENTERTAINER COVERS ALL ASPECTS'

JIMMIE ALLEN RAKED IN AWARDS AND COUNTRY HITS THIS YEAR, BUT SAYS 2021 WAS JUST THE START

BY JESSICA NICHOLSON

ILLUSTRATION BY MARK HARRIS



Jimmie Allen didn't technically release a new album in 2021, but his Rolodex still grew significantly: The country singer-songwriter welcomed Monica and Babyface on the deluxe edition of last year's *Bettie James* album and teamed with Elton John on "Beauty in the Bones," which was included on the pop legend's *The Lockdown Sessions*. Allen also earned long-awaited awards recognition, winning new male artist of the year at the Academy of Country Music (ACM) Awards and new artist of the year from the Country Music Association (CMA), as well as snagging a best new artist Grammy nom.

Although he has become one of the most exciting rising artists in the genre, music was just one of an array of creative ventures by him this year: He launched his Bettie James imprint through Sony Music Publishing, along with his own management and production company, JAB Entertainment; he executive-produced music for the Netflix series *Titletown High*; published a children's book; and found time to compete on *Dancing With the Stars*. "When I was a kid, my dream was never to just be a musician," says Allen. "It was to be an entertainer — and an entertainer covers all aspects."

What do these awards mean to you personally?

Especially with the ACM and CMA, to me, those wins were about acceptance. Winning an award that's voted on by the country music industry means they accept me as a creator and an artist. With the Grammy nomination, I was talking to a friend of mine, a writer in pop and R&B. He said, "This nomination is bigger than you because you are a Black man from Delaware having success in country music. Your Grammy nomination came from your success in country music, a genre of music that you don't really associate Black people with too much. Win or lose, you have the ability here to inspire people that want to do something [similar], but they don't see a lot of people who

look like them." That's when it really hit me how big this nomination was.

After earning two No. 1s on *Billboard's Country Airplay* chart, you could score a third with the Brad Paisley collaboration "Freedom Was a Highway." How did that pairing come about?

I wrote that song about growing up in my hometown and recorded it solo over a year before it was on [*Bettie James*]. I've been listening to Brad's music for years, so I reached out and he said yes. To have him on this song means a lot to me, and shout out to country radio for playing it because in country music, without country radio, we don't have a career. There wouldn't be no Grammy nomination without country radio.

Whom else would you love to collaborate with?

Will Smith — I want to get Will back to rapping. I already have a song written that I need to get Drake on. Shania Twain, Lionel Richie, Stevie Wonder... a lot of artists are chasing down artists that are hot right now, but there's something special about working with artists that inspired the artists we listen to today. Beyoncé and JAY-Z are definitely two people on my dream list. There were rumors about her wanting to do a country song or a country record. Listen, Beyoncé: I'm here. Let's get cracking.

You recently launched a music publishing company plus a management and production company. What other business and creative goals do you have?

I signed a [publishing deal for] country duo Neon Union. I want to get my own imprint through a major label and sign them. I want to play Aaron Burr in *Hamilton*. I want to do sitcoms, movies, have my own talk show. So that, and keep touring and putting out music.

ITALIAN ROCKERS **MÅNESKIN** WON THE EUROVISION SONG CONTEST IN MAY, LATER TOPPING THE ROCK STREAMING SONGS CHART WITH "BEGGIN'."

WHO WROTE THE NO. 1 HITS?

As songwriters and producers continue to score management deals, brand partnerships and other front-facing opportunities, the three studio vets below had particularly stellar years — and each topped the Billboard Hot 100.

By working with K-pop superstars BTS through remote technology, Jenna Andrews proved how resourceful the industry could be during the pandemic when she co-wrote the group's record-breaking chart-topper "Butter." Dernst "D'Mile" Emile, who was already coming off a hot year working with Grammy- and Academy Award-winning R&B star H.E.R., continued his winning streak in 2021 by pairing with superduo Silk Sonic (Bruno Mars and Anderson .Paak) on its debut album, including lead single "Leave the Door Open." And reigning producer of the year, non-classical Grammy winner Andrew Watt remained prolific after a dominant 2020, with studio work for artists including Ed Sheeran, Young Thug, Elton John and Justin Bieber, the lattermost for whom he co-wrote the sunny R&B hit "Peaches" from Bieber's Grammy-nominated album *Justice* (*Triple Chucks Deluxe*).

Jenna Andrews



I have a publishing company called TwentySeven Music that goes through Sony/ATV, and one of the guys signed to it, Rob Grimaldi, sent me a demo that he did with Stephen Kirk. I just

thought the chorus was amazing. I played it for [Columbia Records chairman/CEO] Ron Perry, and he loved the hook, melody and production. We went in on Zoom and did a bunch of different co-writes until eventually we came up with the concept for "Butter." After that, everyone came to my house in [New] Jersey for, like, three weeks, and we just grinded until we came up with the song. When we finally sent it to Big Hit, RM added the rap part, which was the icing on the cake.

Coming off [BTS' 2020 smash] "Dynamite," there were so many songs submitted, obviously, but there was something instinctual about "Butter." I felt like it was something they could really dance to. I vocal-produced "Dynamite," so I had the opportunity to understand their voices. Coming into "Butter," it was [about] tapping into the fan base, trying to get in with the older generations and Gen Z. All the nostalgic references, like the Usher line ["Don't need no Usher/To remind me you got it bad"] is something I think the BTS ARMY loved. The Michael Jackson lines, too: "When I look in the mirror" and "High like the moon, rock with me." Little nods to '90s R&B — BTS loves that style of music; that's something that they stress a lot. Restitching those lyrics, they loved that, too.

Having my first No. 1 has been super special. But also, just being able to share it with someone like BTS, considering that they're such a massive band, [they] were so easy to work with. They really trusted us, which was a cool process, considering we did this all over WhatsApp. We didn't even get to see them on Zoom or anything. It's a pretty crazy thing to go through and definitely shows you how people have learned to be so resourceful during the pandemic.

—AS TOLD TO THANIA GARCIA

Dernst "D'Mile" Emile



"Leave the Door Open" was one of the first things [Bruno Mars and I] were playing around with as far as a concept — Silk Sonic wasn't

officially created. The way Bruno works, he tends to have title or hook ideas already, then he'll come in and play us what he has so far. So from the first day I started working with him, I think we were working on a version of that song. But whatever it was, he always had [the lyric] "I'm going to leave the door open." Down the line, when Bruno and [Anderson .Paak] linked up, "Leave the Door Open" was one of those things that [Mars] brought back up — we decided to make it specific for Silk Sonic.

It was me, Bruno, Anderson and Brody [Brown] all in a room together jamming, and we came up with what everybody hears now after I don't know how many versions. Once we figured it out and were laying it down, the [first] take of Anderson on the drums and Brody on the bass is the take that's out — it was like magic. That night we left, and we were fine-tuning for four months. Bruno's engineer just knew how to capture everything the right way. We knew this was a song we [couldn't] make any mistakes on. How it made us feel, we knew it was going to be something special. [Mars and .Paak], they're funny characters. They would go out on the patio and just write these songs. It would be 20% joking around and 80% seriously figuring out the lines.

Every week, I was surprised at how big of a deal it was. When it debuted at No. 4, it was crazy for me to see something as R&B as a song like this be in the top five. When it was No. 1, I couldn't believe it. I haven't seen songs that have so many chord changes and that many complex parts be on the Hot 100 in a long time, let alone No. 1. That was just amazing to see. I'm just doing what I love, and it's working. I can't ask for anything better than that.

—AS TOLD TO NEENA ROUHANI

Andrew Watt



Justin [Bieber] lives pretty close to me, and we've been friends for pretty much a decade now. He came over one day, and I was working on some other stuff. He sat down at my piano

and started playing these chords. He didn't even realize I was recording it, but the chords were awesome. He got on the drums and started playing this amazing beat, and then I picked up a bass and he was telling me the bassline he heard in his head. Then he got on the vocal mic and started freestyling. We weren't supposed to make a song that day — Shawn Mendes came over and hung out on the couch while we were making it, and then Louis Bell came over. Everyone was just vibing together.

That was how the record started, and then Justin's musical director [Bernard "Harv" Harvey] took those elements and turned them into what we know "Peaches" to be. Justin had the idea to get Daniel [Caesar] and Giveon on the record and turn it into a classic. It was all Justin's brain, from start to finish, and it's an amazing thing to watch, one of your friends knowing exactly what they want to that level.

I was completely shocked [when "Peaches" debuted at No. 1] and so excited. Anyone that ever says, "I knew that was going to happen. I knew it'd be No. 1" — you don't know shit; no one knows shit. That's what's so exciting about this time: You don't know how people are going to react. Shoving music down people's throats? You can try, but it doesn't really exist anymore. People go on Spotify, people go on Apple Music, they choose what they want to listen to. You cannot predict people's response, but you can just make what you think is good and what you enjoy. With this song, where it was really Justin's from inception to end, I think everything that [has happened] really means a lot to him. So it's special to all of us because of that.

—AS TOLD TO JASON LIPSHUTZ

TYLER, THE CREATOR PERFORMED "LUMBERJACK," OFF HIS GRAMMY-NOMINATED SIXTH STUDIO ALBUM, *CALL ME IF YOU GET LOST*, FOR HIS FIRST-EVER BET AWARDS PERFORMANCE IN JUNE.



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WHY DID POP-PUNK RETURN TO PROMINENCE?

THE GENRE'S NEXT WAVE IS HERE AND TAKING OFF WITH THE HELP OF AN IMPORTANT VETERAN BY JOSH GLICKSMAN

Johnny Minardi, Elektra Music Group's vp A&R, began a fruitful relationship with Blink-182's Travis Barker in 2019,

when the two worked on projects for EMG acts Fever 333 and nothing.nowhere. The multihyphenate drummer soon started showing Minardi the amount of work he was doing for other labels — and it became increasingly sensible to have a conversation with him about starting his own. By the end of the year, Barker launched DTA Records in a joint-venture agreement with EMG. “I watched how he built songs, treated artists and took time to help their vision get to the next level,” says Minardi. “The idea [for a partnership] was built off him already doing this, but just not having that outlet.”

In the time since the deal, pop-punk has soared to mainstream prominence reminiscent of its early-2000s heyday, with emerging genre stars as well as chart-topping pop artists like Olivia Rodrigo exploring the sound. Yet it's Barker who has become one of the most valuable co-signs, having worked

countless successful releases in the genre over the past year-plus. Last fall, he executive-produced Machine Gun Kelly's *Tickets to My Downfall*, which became the first rock album to top the Billboard 200 in more than a year at the time. This spring, he helped Willow score her first Billboard Hot 100 hit in over a decade with the more uptempo and roaring “transparent soul.” In the following months, he elevated other burgeoning acts among pop-punk's next wave, including LiIHuddy, KennyHoopla and DTA Records' jxdn.

Sonically, artists haven't shied away from dialing up the intensity on some of the genre's biggest hits in 2021. Rollicking guitars, thrashing drums or even full-throated yells — like from KennyHoopla during the bridge of “hollywood sucks//” or jxdn's featured vocals on Nessa Barrett's “la di die” — illustrate angst boiling over, which Gregg Henderson, Spotify's senior editor, Canada, argues has only helped to make pop-punk more appealing.

“Given the state of the world over the past two years, people have been frustrated, anxious and angry,” says Henderson. “The popularity of pop-punk goes hand in hand

with that — the sonics and lyrical themes are a useful tool in an artist's arsenal to create songs that are aggressive, emotional and hopeful all at the same time.” Adds Spotify indie, alternative and rock editor Shannon Carragher: “We're seeing new bands writing songs about going to therapy, queer relationships, the patriarchy, gender identity and sexuality — topics that haven't always been broached in the genre but are important and relatable.”

Pop-punk's resurgence has also been boosted by artists' ability to modernize the sound: Illenium and iann dior's “First Time” features a post-chorus dance drop, while many others have incorporated hip-hop, such as Jasiah's “Right Now,” which gets a lift from Barker. “There's a lot more cross-pollination and collaboration with other genres and artists from multiple genres on the same song,” says Minardi. “Now there are trap drums incorporated. There are more 808s when you wouldn't hear that 20 years ago. The definition of where the music industry is going has moved it forward.”

Barker has played a pivotal role in that push, giving artists the space during sessions to explore areas they haven't previously and, importantly, notes Minardi, pushing them in the direction of their respective visions rather than his own or the label's. “He has a true excitement and passion taking the 25-year knowledge of being in one of the genre's biggest bands of all time into a studio with an 18-year-old kid

who's excited about a similar genre,” he says. “That is something he's passing down.”

For some, that excitement and passion have translated to affectionate interpolations of the work that inspired them to try out the genre in the first place. Rodrigo's tongue-in-cheek “good 4 u,” which finished at No. 5 on *Billboard's* year-end Hot 100 chart, was inspired by Paramore's 2007 smash, “Misery Business” — later updating its credits to add the band's Hayley Williams and Josh Farro. Meanwhile, jxdn drew from Blink-182's 2003 single “Feeling This” on his “A Wasted Year” from his debut album.

“Newer artists that incorporate pop-punk into their music are driving interest in the bands that influenced them,” says Henderson. “Some fans are coming for the nostalgia factor; others are discovering it for the first time.”

Carragher notes that the new wave is “being consumed by particularly young music fans who are growing up online” — and listeners who can easily access decades-old catalogs benefit legacy acts looking to revitalize their careers. They're already doing so: All Time Low's “Monsters” spent 17 weeks on the Hot 100 this year to become one of its biggest mainstream hits since 2007's “Dear Maria, Count Me In.” In November, Avril Lavigne signed to DTA Records and released her high-octane new single, “Bite Me,” featuring Barker on drums. Meanwhile, Williams hinted on social media at a Paramore return in 2022.

Minardi expects the coming year to be filled with more artists trying to stage similar comebacks. But it's not just the legacy acts that will need to keep pace as pop-punk continues to grow, as the new generation is already inspiring the next one.

“I get a ton of demo submissions and can pinpoint the [influence of] MGK and jxdn,” says Minardi. “Hearing things that they're doing make their way into [music from] a 16-year-old kid starting to mess around with instruments is super exciting. When that kid is 19, we're going to get an album that started there. I think all great genres are built off that.”

DABABY SPARKED CONTROVERSY AFTER MAKING HOMOPHOBIC AND MISOGYNISTIC COMMENTS DURING HIS PERFORMANCE AT ROLLING LOUD MIAMI IN JULY.



The Walters



Mitski



The Mountain Goats' Darnielle

COMING BACK FOR MORE

TIKTOK HELPED YEARS-OLD INDIE-ROCK HITS FEEL NEW AGAIN — WITH THESE FOUR SEEING A SIGNIFICANT SPIKE IN STREAMS

Since its impact on music and pop culture first became undeniable at the end of the 2010s, TikTok has created and resurrected hits from nearly all genres. Still, 2021 marked a new frontier for the platform as older indie- and alt-rock songs — most of which never approached “hit” status in their original lifetimes — entered *Billboard*’s streaming charts after becoming ubiquitous on the app.

The ANXIETY (Willow and Tyler Cole), “Meet Me at Our Spot”

While R&B/pop star-turned-alt-rocker Willow first returned to the *Billboard* Hot 100 in 2021 with her Travis Barker-assisted “transparent soul,” it wasn’t that pop-punk missive (or any other tracks from her 2021 album *Lately I Feel Everything*) that marked her year’s biggest hit. That would be the chillier, lower-fi heart-throbber “Meet Me at Our Spot,” released a year earlier as part of her ANXIETY project (in collaboration with singer-songwriter Cole). The song reached No. 21 on the Hot 100 — Willow’s first top 40 entry since “Whip My Hair” in 2010.

The Walters, “I Love You So”

This dreamy 2014 indie ballad arrived so long ago that Chicago quintet The Walters had already been broken up for four years by the time it went viral on TikTok and subsequently appeared on multiple *Billboard* charts, including Hot Alternative Songs (at No. 9) and Rock Streaming Songs (No. 12). But the track’s late success ultimately

proved too much for the band to ignore — in November, the group not only announced it had officially reunited but also signed a major-label deal with Warner Records.

The Mountain Goats, “No Children”

Ranking among the all-time least-likely song resurrections to TikTok’s credit, this signature tune for acclaimed indie singer-songwriter John Darnielle of The Mountain Goats — a bitter divorce waltz from 2002 — rode its unexpected momentum on the app to a 102% streaming spike, according to MRC Data. In October, Darnielle publicly submitted himself to replace a COVID-19-delayed Ed Sheeran on *Saturday Night Live*, advertising The Mountain Goats as “well-loved by the TikTok dancing massive.”

Mitski, “Washing Machine Heart”

While Mitski was one of the biggest indie presences on TikTok, the singer-songwriter’s growth was of a particularly rare kind for the platform — spread across many songs from her catalog. “Washing Machine Heart,” off her 2018 album, *Be the Cowboy*, became her most-streamed song with over 77 million on-demand streams as of October, according to MRC Data. As Steven Pardo of Mitski’s label, Secretly Group, told *Billboard* in November: “[Her catalog] went from a few thousand [streams] a day, which was noticeable at the time, up until we had songs peaking at over 700,000 streams a day. I don’t think we had seen anything like that happen before.” —ANDREW UNTERBERGER

Cole (left) and Willow of The ANXIETY



SAWEETIE TEAMED UP WITH MCDONALD’S IN AUGUST FOR HER SAWEETIE MEAL, BECOMING THE FIRST WOMAN MUSICIAN TO COLLABORATE WITH THE FAST FOOD CHAIN.

'IT'S BECOMING THE COOL KIDS' THING'

POP-PUNK ARTIST JXDN ON WHY THE GENRE IS SEEING SUCH MAINSTREAM GROWTH AND THE IMPORTANCE OF TRAVIS BARKER'S CO-SIGN

BY LINDSEY HAVENS

ILLUSTRATION BY MARK HARRIS

S

ince becoming the first signee to Blink-182 drummer Travis Barker's DTA Records in 2020, jxdn has grown into a pop-punk star, leading a new wave of artists tapping into the genre. This year, the TikTok

star and singer released his debut album, *Tell Me About Tomorrow*; opened on tour for close friend Machine Gun Kelly; played festivals like Lollapalooza; and wrapped 2021 with the deluxe version of his full-length, which includes the aptly titled emo holiday song "Christmas Sucks." By working with Barker, jxdn says he's now better able to "pay respects to the people who have already done this for so long, like the Blinks, Hawthorne Heights, Finch — everybody who came before us and laid down the foundation, that's important to me." Now, after DTA welcomed its newest artist to the roster — none other than Avril Lavigne — the label, and jxdn, are looking ahead to an even more explosive 2022. "Being able to make more music applying what I've learned [this year] is the best feeling," says jxdn, "and I wouldn't be able to do that with anyone else but Travis."

Since you signed with DTA in 2020, pop-punk has become a major genre again. Why do you think so many other young artists are exploring the sound?

Before, [the genre] seemed super niche, but now it's becoming more like the cool kids' thing to do. It just seems so weird because it has been around for

so long and people are looking at it like it has never been done before, so I'm glad I'm in the position I'm in. I think me and [Machine Gun Kelly] both gained success by just giving our respects to the inspirations that we derive our music from.

Why is Travis Barker the person to help bring this sound back to the mainstream?

He had the chance to be [in] the biggest punk band in the world — and that's just music. He has been through such impactful moments in life in general that I don't think he has the time to mess around. In his mind, everything he's doing he wants to be doing with purpose. So when we first met, I remember I felt like he wasn't trying to gain anything from me more than just, "I want to make good music with you."

How does it feel to have Avril Lavigne as a labelmate?

It's literally Avril fucking Lavigne. It's the coolest thing in the world. It makes me feel really special because now that Avril is signed, and whenever he decides to sign whoever else, I think people are starting to realize Travis really believes in these people he's signing. It means a lot to me because I

love small-circle shit, I love small-family shit, and all of them have been so great to me.

Can we expect a collaboration from you three?
That would be so lame if we didn't.

Why was releasing the holiday song "Christmas Sucks" an important benchmark for you?

I was like, "Even if [my career] goes to shit, I can play this in a small bar around town." But I've honestly had shitty Christmases, and Christmas sucks for a lot of people, so I love being the odd one out and giving people a place to feel better. That's the only thing I want to do.

What is your biggest takeaway from touring?

People think I think I deserve to be here, like the douchebag kid who buys his way to the top type of thing, but I'm just blessed, and every person that came up to me [after a show] and said they're a fan of my music, it's almost hard to handle because [while] growing up you doubt everything you hear. I'm just excited to be here — and I think people are starting to realize that. People can say whatever they want, but each kid deserves to find their scene and be able to connect to something.



From left: Barker, jxdn and Lavigne.

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WHAT DID THE RETURN OF TOURING LOOK LIKE?



BREAKING DOWN THE HIGHS AND LOWS OF LIVE MUSIC'S RESTART — AND WHERE IT GOES FROM HERE BY TAYLOR MIMS

In the first year of the pandemic, North America lost over 100 independent music venues due to nationwide bans on mass gatherings following shutdowns in March 2020. But the vaccine rollout in early 2021 changed the course for live entertainment, with COVID-19 cases dropping and ticket sales soaring by the summer, leading to a complex current reality.

FIRST: LATIN LED THE WAY

In April, as vaccines were becoming widely available, Latin superstar Bad Bunny announced his *El Último Tour del Mundo 2022* arena trek in support of the three albums he released in 2020. Over 600,000 tickets sold in the first week — a high not reached since the on-sale for Beyoncé and JAY-Z's *On the Run II Tour* in 2018. Within days, Bad Bunny tickets were averaging 10 times their original price on the secondary market, with ticket data company TicketIQ stating it was “the most expensive tour we've ever tracked.” As TicketIQ CEO Jesse Lawrence said in April: “Between the pent-up COVID demand generated by a first-ever Spanish-only No. 1 LP and his ability to stay visible in pop culture, [it's] the perfect storm for Bad Bunny demand.”

In a truncated year for touring, Latin acts notched nine of the

top 40 tours in 2021, bringing in over \$196 million across 159 shows from Maluma, Pitbull, Grupo Firme and others, according to Billboard Boxscore. Reunited Mexican *gru-pera* band Los Bukis became 2021's sixth-highest-grossing tour of the year, raking in nearly \$50 million from nine concerts.

THEN: FESTIVALS FELT DEMAND

Festival season began with 80,000 fans flocking to Florida, which didn't have statewide, mandated COVID-19 regulations, for Rolling Loud Miami in July. Chicago's Lollapalooza followed in August, bringing almost 400,000 attendees to Grant Park. The first mass gathering of its size since the start of the pandemic, Lollapalooza — in an effort to avoid becoming a “super spreader” event — required fans to show proof of vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test taken within 72 hours of attending. The Chicago Department of Public Health later found only 0.0004% of vaccinated attendees reported testing positive, quelling concerns for outdoor festivals to come.

In October, San Francisco's Outside Lands broke its Billboard Boxscore record by grossing just over \$33 million during its three days. Meanwhile, the third edition of Travis Scott's Astroworld at NRG Park in Houston expanded to two

days this year, doubling the number of tickets sold (100,000) before its lineup was even announced. The first day of the festival, Nov. 5, came to a tragic end after 10 people were killed and hundreds more were injured in a series of crowd surges. The second day was canceled — and the event exposed an alarming security staffing shortage across the industry.

“There's not enough people interested in doing that kind of work,” says Stephen Sternschein, managing partner at the Austin-based event promotion, production and marketing company Heard Presents. “[A lot of] people tried it, realized how much it sucks and don't want to do it anymore.”

NEXT: MANDATES ARRIVED

The country's two largest concert promoters, AEG and Live Nation, announced in August that proof of vaccination or a negative test, respectively, would be required to attend shows at their owned-and-operated venues where legally allowed. The decision followed local governments and independent venues taking a similar stance after spikes in breakthrough COVID-19 cases threatened to reshutter an already struggling industry.

Yet despite such mandates across the United States, cancellations kept occurring. Limp Bizkit, looking to cash in on its show-stealing slot at Lollapalooza, launched a reunion tour but quickly called it off to be “responsible” in combating the virus. Similarly, Garth Brooks, Florida Georgia Line, BTS and Nine Inch Nails canceled

A memorial outside of Scott's Astroworld festival in Houston that tragically ended in multiple deaths and injuries following crowd surges.

or postponed tours out of caution. Zac Brown Band, Korn, Lynyrd Skynyrd and KISS all canceled or rescheduled dates after band members contracted COVID-19 on the road.

A smaller contingent of artists canceled shows in response to vaccine requirements. After a bad experience with the AstraZeneca vaccine, Eric Clapton vowed not to play any shows that required attendees to be inoculated. Country singer Travis Tritt also canceled a handful of shows in October, stating that any COVID-19 safety protocols were “discriminating” against concertgoers, adding, “It's definitely going to cost me money, and that's a sacrifice I'm willing to make.”

NOW: PREPPING FOR A POTENTIAL SPIKE (AGAIN)

Despite capacity limitations lifting in several major markets and artists resuming nationwide touring, uncertainty returned this fall as ticket sales cooled and concerts had higher than normal “no-show” rates — 20% to 30% of ticket holders didn't attend versus 10% pre-pandemic.

Chase Center vp content and programming Sheena Way says the high no-show rate stems from the spate of rescheduled shows, where fans lost track of new dates or even moved away during the pandemic. In contrast, she says 2022 stops at the San Francisco arena from John Mayer, Metallica and Trevor Noah are all sold out.

While Way doesn't expect the concert business to match pre-pandemic numbers until 2023 or later, she anticipates a rise in stadium shows because bigger artists can entertain more people on one night — which also cuts down on the number of days their teams can be exposed. The Weeknd already canceled his 2022 arena tour to retool it for stadiums.

Way also believes the fear of another COVID-19 spike has eased after nearly two years combating the issue, adding that, above all else, the industry has learned to be flexible. “Let's book all this stuff,” she says. “If there has to be a change, we change it.”

WIZKID AND TEMS' "ESSENCE" COLLABORATION REACHED NO. 1 ON BILLBOARD'S ADULT R&B AIRPLAY CHART AND ENTERED THE BILLBOARD HOT 100'S TOP 10 IN OCTOBER.



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CLASS OF 2022



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WHERE DID THEIR BIGGEST BATTLES?

FAN ARMIES WIN



HOW THE DEVOTED RANKS OF FANS BEHIND BTS, TAYLOR SWIFT AND BRITNEY SPEARS STRATEGIZED TO HELP EACH ACT MEET THEIR SPECIFIC GOALS **BY MARIA SHERMAN**

W

hen her decade-plus conservatorship was finally dissolved in November after a prolonged courtroom battle, Britney Spears thanked her entire support system — and first and foremost, her fans — for bringing her plight into the public eye. “The #FreeBritney movement: you guys rock,” Spears wrote on Instagram on Nov. 16, the day after a judge freed her from the conservatorship that controlled her life and finances for 13 years. “Honestly, my voice was muted and threatened for so

long... You guys saved my life.”

The #FreeBritney movement was a yearslong coordinated effort by fans across continents that produced real change — something increasingly commonplace in pop music this year, as music lovers mobilized to encourage artistic freedom, amplify marketing choices and score chart victories.

Clearly, the nature of fandom is changing. Fans are taking participatory roles in the careers of their favorite artists and, as a result, helping them succeed. Individual goals varied — a BTS ARMY member has very different responsibilities than

a Taylor Swift supporter — but no matter their objectives, fandoms have grown more sophisticated to ensure that their artists get the recognition and respect they deserve, as best demonstrated by these three major 2021 wins.

BTS

Any conversation about BTS inevitably leads to the size and breadth of its ARMY. In 2021, ARMY helped the K-pop superstars score three No. 1 hits on the Billboard Hot 100 with “Permission To Dance,” “My Universe” with Coldplay and “Butter,” which

became the longest-running chart-topper, spending 10 nonconsecutive weeks at the summit.

Mark Mulligan, a music industry analyst at the consultancy MIDiA Research, believes that the success of BTS — and the group’s ability to inspire fans to rabidly buy, stream and request hits like “Butter” without having the group explicitly instructing them to do so — is based on the general K-pop idol industry’s understanding that fandom is the music business’ most enduring resource. BTS appeals to “a generation of kids who felt like there was something missing from their musical soul,” he says, fans for whom “music means way more because everything is wrapped into it. Identity is wrapped up into it. Friendship groups are wrapped into it.”

BTS has overcome what Mulligan calls the “fragmentation of fandom” by fostering worship on social media. ARMY members have platforms like V Live, WeVerse and Twitter to communicate with

STRONGER THAN YESTERDAY

Britney Spears hasn’t released new music since 2016, but her fans have been more than occupied with the #FreeBritney movement. After the singer entered the hospital twice in January 2008 under a 5150 psychiatric hold, the Los Angeles Superior Court fulfilled her father Jamie Spears’ request to put her in an emergency temporary conservatorship, and for the next decade continued extending its length. But last fall, Britney argued to make her conservatorship case public for the first time, writing in a court filing, “The whole world is watching.” Since, supporters have closely surveilled the court-ordered conservatorship that has controlled Spears’ personal and financial affairs for the last 13 years — and this year were finally able to celebrate the 40-year-old superstar’s freedom.

Feb. 5

FRAMING BRITNEY SPEARS DOCUMENTARY ARRIVES

The world was indeed watching the FX/Hulu documentary, *The New York Times Presents: Framing Britney Spears*, as it pulled back the curtain on the pop star’s controversial legal arrangement and highlighted how the #FreeBritney movement had long been on the case. Following the film’s premiere, the movement gained A-list members including Kacey Musgraves and Madonna.

June 22

COURT DOCUMENTS REVEAL BRITNEY’S FIGHT TO END CONSERVATORSHIP

Confidential court records obtained by *The New York Times* showed how Spears had been secretly resisting the conservatorship, which “restricted everything from whom she dated to the color of her kitchen cabinets,” as well as her father’s position in it. (Jamie stepped down from his central role in September 2019 while retaining control of her finances.) A court investigator wrote in a 2016 report: “She articulated she feels the conservatorship has become an oppressive and controlling tool against her.”

THE WEEKND MADE HISTORY AS “BLINDING LIGHTS” BECAME THE TOP BILLBOARD HOT 100 SONG OF ALL TIME IN NOVEMBER, SURPASSING CHUBBY CHECKER’S “THE TWIST.”



Fans gathered in support of the #FreeBritney movement during a Los Angeles hearing in November.

one another globally and coordinate actions: Stream here, buy there, showcase your fandom in this way.

Nicole K. Santero, a doctoral student at the University of Nevada's Department of Sociology who runs the Twitter account @ResearchBTS, believes that ARMY's mobilization efforts are often the result of necessity. A few years ago, she says, "fans had grown increasingly frustrated that radio stations were still not playing their music even though the demand and audience was there. Knowing that radio play affects chart positions, ARMY has had to actively work harder in other areas to compensate for the low numbers in this metric." That includes download sales, which helped "Butter" stay atop the Hot 100 (the single has 1.8 million downloads, according to MRC Data) even though it only reached No. 20 on *Billboard's* Radio Songs chart.

Santero also believes ARMY has grown over the past two years in part due to the pandemic, which brought everyone inside and online, and let thou-

sands "fall into the rabbit hole" of discovering the fandom and becoming part of a community. "Many fans feel like their lives changed because of BTS," she says. "The easiest way for fans to give back to their artists is to buy and listen to the music."

Taylor Swift

In 2019, Swift announced she would be rerecording her first six studio albums to regain ownership of her back catalog after her former label, Big Machine, sold it to Scooter Braun and his Ithaca Holdings. By doing so, Swift can control the use of licensing, earn a greater percentage of sales and, most importantly, own her work. Swift's fans immediately supported her: The first

two rerecorded albums, *Fearless (Taylor's Version)* and *Red (Taylor's Version)*, scored two of 2021's biggest debuts on the Billboard 200.

Zainub Amir, who runs the Swift fan account @SwiftNYC, believes the artist's hands-on relationship with her fans inspires them to mobilize and support the rerecording project. "She created Easter eggs and puzzles for fans to solve prior to the release of *Fearless (Taylor's Version)*, which helped boost engagement on Twitter, TikTok and Instagram because there was authentic discussion," says Amir.

Beyond topping the charts, Swifties are having a real impact on the music industry itself. On Nov. 16, iHeartRadio announced that, moving forward, it will only play the "Taylor's Version" of her songs as they are released. "Our priority in programming our stations is to serve our listeners with what they want to hear," says iHeartMedia chief programming officer Tom Poleman. "Taylor's fans have made it clear that they prefer Taylor's versions of her songs, so the decision was easy."

Mulligan believes that Swift's success with her revised albums has a few causes: the moral factor of righting wrongs done to Swift, helping her own her music and the timing. Swift launched her career before music streaming became prominent, and her longtime fans are both nostalgic and loyal, excited to hear the songs of their adolescence again in a new, more mature context. "The life span of a fan is to discover and fall in love," says Mulligan. "Then you either persist, fade or hibernate. It's a case of con-

nection: 'Here's my chance to show Taylor I care.'"

Britney Spears

Originating shortly after her conservatorship began in 2008, the #FreeBritney movement snowballed in 2019 following an episode of comedians Tess Barker and Barbara Gray's *Britney's Gram* podcast, in which an anonymous lawyer, formerly part of the firm that oversees Spears' conservatorship, expressed concern for the pop star's well-being. Fans slowly but surely organized protests at court hearings, rallying both online and in person, in an attempt to free Spears from her conservatorship.

Barker and Gray became a focal point of the #FreeBritney cause, mocking up a bright pink square with the text "#FreeBritney" in order to intrigue and inspire social media users to their cause of making information on Spears' legal battle digestible for the public. And their efforts resulted in deeper media reporting, as well as the FX/Hulu documentary *Framing Britney Spears* and Netflix's *Britney vs. Spears*.

"The bulk of the action that we've seen in Britney's case has been the result of public pressure," says Barker. "In 2019, a couple of weeks after we released the [April 16] #FreeBritney episode, Britney went to court and told the judge what had happened to her. She told them that she had been placed in a mental institution against her will, medicated against her will ... The only difference between [then and now] is the world knew about it."

June 23

BRITNEY TELLS ALL IN EXPLOSIVE COURT HEARING

Spears spoke publicly in court for the first time since entering the conservatorship and passionately pleaded with Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Brenda Penny to terminate it. She provided an excruciating account of how she was forced to continue working, believes her father and team belong in jail, wants to sue her family and isn't allowed to get married, have more children or remove her IUD. "I am not here to be anyone's slave," she said.

July 14

JUDGE ALLOWS BRITNEY TO CHOOSE HER OWN ATTORNEY

During another crucial hearing, Penny granted the pop star permission to appoint Hollywood power attorney Mathew Rosengart after Britney's court-appointed attorney, Samuel D. Ingham III, filed to resign from the conservatorship a week earlier. In the weeks following, Rosengart stuck to his mission of moving "aggressively and expeditiously" to remove Jamie by filing a petition to request his replacement.

Aug. 12

JAMIE AGREES TO STEP DOWN FROM THE CONSERVATORSHIP

He reluctantly agreed to relinquish his duties as conservator of Britney's estate because "he does not believe that a public battle with his daughter over his continuing service as her conservator would be in her best interests," his attorney wrote in a court filing. One month later, Jamie filed to end the conservatorship, and Penny soon after granted Britney's petition to immediately suspend her father.

Nov. 12

JUDGE TERMINATES CONSERVATORSHIP

After the #FreeBritney movement applied pressure to the court system for months, Penny legally ended the arrangement in a Nov. 12-dated hearing. "I think I'm gonna cry the rest of the day !!!! Best day ever #FreedBritney," Spears captioned a pink confetti-filled celebratory Instagram video of her fans outside the L.A. courthouse. —HERAN MAMO

YE AND DRAKE HELD THEIR FREE LARRY HOOVER BENEFIT CONCERT AT THE LOS ANGELES COLISEUM IN DECEMBER, ONE MONTH AFTER OFFICIALLY ENDING THEIR YEARSLONG FEUD.



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THE NO. 1s

IT TAKES TWO

MONTE AND AVERY LIPMAN
STARTED REPUBLIC RECORDS IN
A TINY BASEMENT APARTMENT.
DECADES LATER, IT'S *BILLBOARD*'S
TOP LABEL OF 2021 — AND THE
BROTHERS' BOND IS AS STRONG
(AND LUCRATIVE) AS EVER

BY JASON LIPSHUTZ

PHOTOGRAPHED BY DAVID NEEDLEMAN



Avery (left) and Monte Lipman
photographed Nov. 16 on the East
River Ferry in New York.

THE NO. 1s



THIS IS WHERE it all gets started,” says Avery Lipman, leaning back against a sleek mahogany dining room table in a cramped Upper East Side apartment. “Republic Records.”

On this brisk November afternoon, he’s sitting beside his older brother, Monte, in the little garden apartment where, a quarter century ago, they first hunkered down and started a record label. There’s not much common space, or even room for furniture, and the two “bedrooms” are separated by a single slab of wall. A few feet above the Lipmans’ heads, three rectangular windows offer a peek at the shuffling feet of passersby on 76th Street; because the apartment is below street level, explains Monte, nocturnal pests were often crawling and scratching in the walls.

Back then, the 20-something brothers spent countless hours at this table preparing mailers for a pre-digital music industry. The Lipmans made themselves a mini assembly line inserting, taping and labeling vinyl records and writing personal letters in a desperate attempt to launch their careers. “When we look around, all we remember is just stacks and stacks of vinyl records and cardboard and envelopes,” says Monte, stroking the edge of the table. “This was our postage desk.”

Avery hovers his hand over its center: “This is actually where I filled out my Chapter 11 paperwork.” Roughly two years after launching Republic as an independent label in 1995 — spending every spare moment and penny hustling for a big break — the Lipmans found themselves on the brink of declaring bankruptcy. Then, a few days later, that break came: KROQ, the Los Angeles alternative radio juggernaut, had just played “Fire Water Burn” by the Bloodhound Gang, rap-rock goofballs who were the Lipmans’ first signees. Suddenly the Lipmans’ phones wouldn’t stop ringing with inquiries about the group and partnership deal offers. Finally, the brothers could escape the sidewalk apartment — and, Monte notes with a laugh, upgrade to a Times Square office previously used as a broom closet.

“I think there was probably some benefit in not really knowing how high this mountain was,” recalls Avery with a twinkle in his eye. “We started on a track not realizing it was Mount Everest. But we said, ‘Let’s just go.’ ”

The Lipmans have scaled that peak and then some. In their current offices at the Universal Music Group (UMG) building on Broadway, they’re just a few avenues west — but worlds away — from that dingy first Republic headquarters. They’ve got a breathtaking view of Manhattan’s West Side and the Hudson River, not to mention an array of awards and a collection of memorabilia on par with the Grammy Museum’s. They oversee a roster packed not with novelty acts, but with today’s biggest pop superstars. Yet Monte, 57 (Repub-

lic’s chairman/CEO), and Avery, 55 (the label’s president/COO), talk about their past struggles with an air of reverence. They cap off each other’s hard-luck anecdotes with coy smiles, and nod toward the framed Bloodhound Gang album tucked away in Monte’s office behind a signed Taylor Swift guitar.

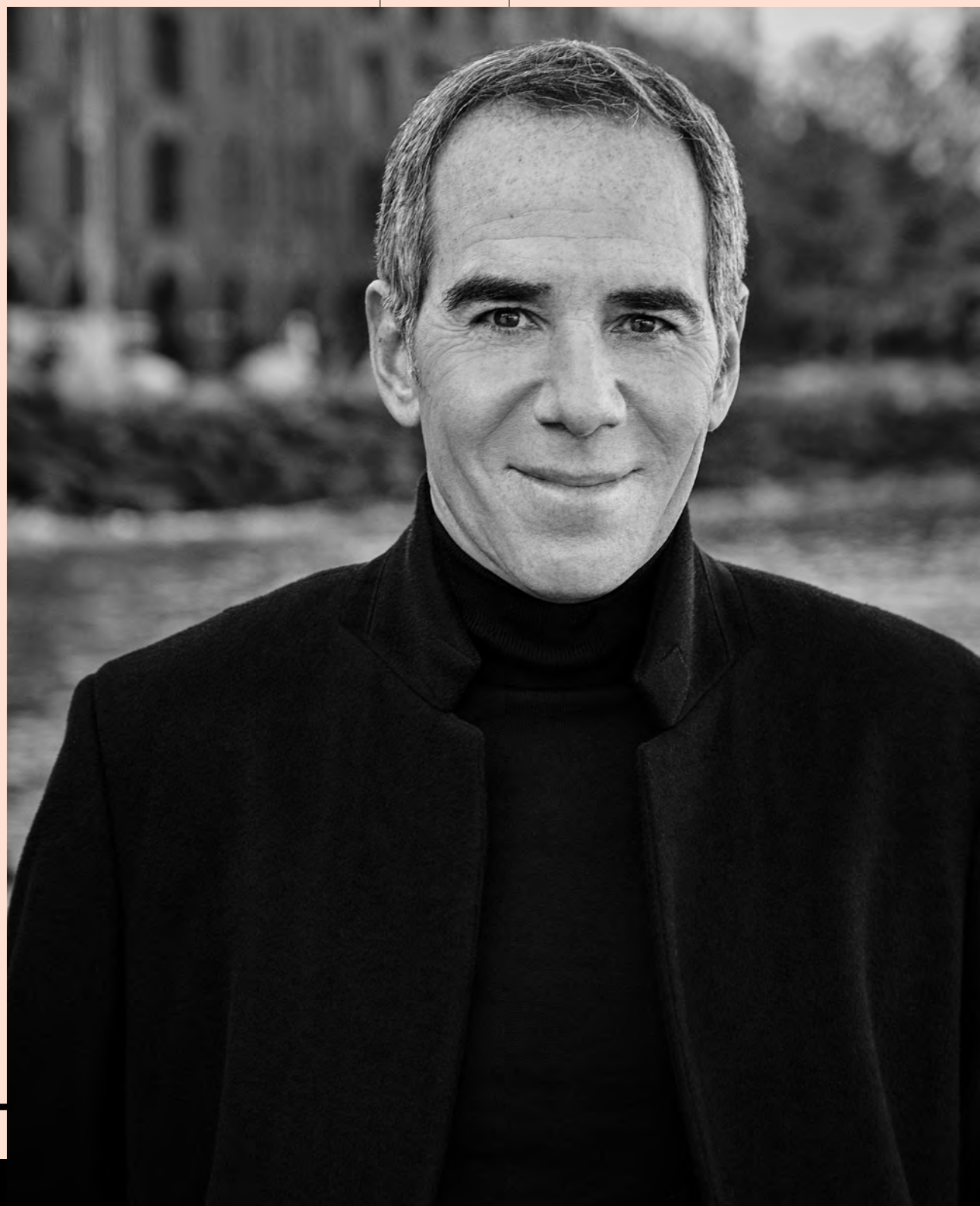
That’s not just because their story has a happy ending, but because it has been shared with each other. As the only current heads of a major label they also founded, their longevity in the industry is unprecedented. Republic ends 2021 as the No. 1 label on *Billboard*’s year-end chart — its fifth time finishing at the top within the past seven years — thanks to a roster studded with stars like Swift, Drake, The Weeknd and Ariana Grande. This year, for the first time, Republic tops all three of *Billboard*’s leading year-end label rankings, placing atop

the Top Labels, Billboard 200 Labels and Billboard Hot 100 Labels charts.

“What is particularly exceptional about Monte and Avery is their successful evolution from scrappy entrepreneurs to global executives without ever losing sight of what brought them their success in the first place: drive, focus and passion,” says UMG chairman/CEO Lucian Grainge. “The fact that, through the years and market changes and industry shifts, they just keep on building their business, continuing to break global artists, is nothing short of remarkable.”

And though they’re now pragmatic professionals with a storied track record, Monte and Avery still perfectly complement one another — just like they did as kids who, in 1970, first went into business together running a lemonade stand. They’re equally warm

Monte Lipman
photographed
Nov. 16 in
Brooklyn.



and gregarious, although Monte possesses a politician's even-keeled tone and fondness for sports metaphors, while Avery is more whimsical raconteur, his eyebrows bouncing above a mischievous grin.

"Avery can read the tea leaves on a record," says Wendy Goldstein, Republic's co-president who was, until recently, president of West Coast creative. "Avery could see into the future — what's taking off and what's not — and have a very good read. Monte's skill set comes from promotion: understanding how you sometimes have to beat people over the head with something to get them to like it."

One prominent trait the brothers do share, though, is an insatiable drive to come out on top: They run the No. 1 label because, they agree, anything less would be unsatisfactory. "Monte and Avery are A-plus competitors," says UMG executive vp Michele Anthony. "They are scrappy, resourceful yet humble — and they never take anything for granted."

REPUBLIC'S LATEST big year came at a precarious moment. Following last year's COVID-19 pandemic shutdown, the industry has gradually tried to regain its footing, with a new normal not quite figured out yet. Unlike in 2020, when all major in-person events ceased after mid-March, touring resumed in 2021 — with new safety precautions and concerns varying by artist and market. Major Republic acts like The Weeknd had their tour dates postponed and venues shifted; rising roster artists, like New Zealand pop act BENEE, developed new stateside fans during the shutdown, but still haven't been able to play shows for them.

"We know how we used to do it, we know how we do it now, and then there's this area in between that is very gray and hybrid and kind of uncomfortable and being reinvented every single day," says Jim Roppo, Republic's recently named co-president who served as executive vp and GM of the label beginning in 2018. "There are costs that go with that, there are logistical challenges, there are last-minute changes. But we're able to process that, and thankfully, 18 months or even more into it, we've got a lot of experience in that, and we make the best of it."

In 2021, that meant meeting the need for new-world flexibility with old-school persistence. Some of Republic's biggest hits resulted from hard-nosed, monthslong (sometimes yearslong) promotional campaigns. The Weeknd's "Blinding Lights" was released in late 2019, reached No. 1 in early 2020 and became the top Hot 100 hit of all time in late 2021, thanks to a prolonged push that helped keep it on the chart for a record-setting 90 weeks. The achievement is the culmination of Republic's own long-term investment in The Weeknd,



"Monte has a very sharpened gut instinct. He was the one who championed my move from country to pop."

—TAYLOR SWIFT

once a Toronto mixtape artist who obscured his face in press photos and now the headliner of this past year's Super Bowl halftime show, who never veered from his sound or style on the way up.

"Monte and Avery are the best in the business," says The Weeknd, who's signed to Republic through the label's partnership with his own XO Records. "And what I love about partnering with them is their openness to the artist's vision and the lengths they go to uphold that without conforming to the usual industry pressures."

Take another, very different Republic act — the British rock group Glass Animals. The band's "Heat Waves" benefited from a similar slow-burn radio campaign: After bubbling up on TikTok earlier in 2021, the single from last year's *Dreamland* (the band's Republic debut) got a multiformat push and eventually hit the top 10 of the Hot 100 in its 42nd week on the chart in November. Republic was promoting another single from *Dreamland* earlier this year after "Heat Waves" had a run in 2020, but when the Lipmans noticed some of the early data around "Heat Waves" online, they pushed to go back to the rhythmic pop track.

"They saw that when I didn't," says Glass Animals frontman Dave Bayley. "Our A&R guy moved on, which happens sometimes. And I remember Monte and Avery saying, 'We'll do it.' And we're like, 'Whoa, are you sure?' How often does that happen? That's a hands-on approach for you right there."

Throughout Republic, the Lipmans cultivate that kind of work ethic. "The majority of people that work with us have a chip on their shoulder — they've got something to prove," says Monte. He likes to repeat the phrase "It's

not a job, it's a lifestyle," a mantra designed to encourage passion and create an environment in which there's always a new high score to top. In the wrong hands, that could get exhausting. But Goldstein — a longtime hip-hop A&R executive who the Lipmans challenged to help mine pop hits for Republic nearly a decade ago — says that the brothers, particularly Monte, make that competitive streak seem endearing.

"If you watch *Ted Lasso*, you see all these different aspects of what makes a great team," says Goldstein. "Monte is Ted Lasso. He's the inspiration, and he does it with so much love that he makes you work harder."

Monte and Avery have been geeking out about music since the 1970s, when they were kids sitting next to the radio, ranking their favorite songs from their father's record collection or Casey Kasem's countdown. Their mother and father, proud hippies who became parents as teenagers, were divorced and broke. When their dad, laundromat owner Cary Lipman, moved out to Los Angeles from Brooklyn in 1971, their mom, Gilda, a fitness instructor, took the boys and followed, hitchhiking across the country as far as Boulder, Colo., and decided to settle there for two years instead.

"We found ourselves at a very, very young age needing to rely on each other," recalls Avery. In Boulder, the Lipmans fell in love with The Beatles, Stevie Wonder and Marvin Gaye, and continued to devour new music during visits with their father in Malibu, Calif., and when their mother moved back to the East Coast. As teens, some siblings grow apart, but not the Lipmans: They were as close as they are today, spending summers as lifeguards at Brooklyn's Brighton Beach while living in Sheepshead Bay and watching *Mork & Mindy* and *Happy Days* shoulder-to-shoulder. Early in their careers, they'd often share a room on business trips, even when they could well afford their own; as Monte puts it, anything else "seemed foreign to us." Today, adds Avery, "I would say at least once, twice a week, we wear the same clothes. There's a photograph in our mom's Brooklyn apartment of Monte in his bar mitzvah suit. And right next to it, it's my bar mitzvah photo — same suit."

Yet the dream of running a label together wasn't a boyhood scheme — it was borne out of "angst and frustration," says Monte. Before founding Republic, the brothers held various roles at labels like Arista, Atlantic and EMI (including, for Monte, a stint in top 40 radio promotion at Atlantic — making him, now, a rare radio veteran in a sea of major-label heads hailing from A&R). They thought about becoming managers (that's how they started working with the Bloodhound Gang) but realized it wasn't the right role: They didn't have the control they wanted.

"We would spend nearly every day trying to convince the label to do things that we knew were important, that we knew could make a difference, that we knew could serve



Avery (left) and Monte Lipman
photographed Nov. 16 in Brooklyn.





“They have that ambition, when as an artist you sometimes feel a bit weak and don’t necessarily have it yourself.”

—DAVE BAYLEY, GLASS ANIMALS

as a catalyst, and it got to the point where we said, ‘You know what, let’s just prepare the plan,’” recalls Monte. The Lipmans started Republic Records with an enthusiastic attitude, maxing out credit cards and booking a last-minute flight to Switzerland to convince Chumbawamba to sign with them because they thought “Tubthumping” could take over the world (and then, it did). Those early wins yielded a joint venture with UMG in 2000, which allowed the Lipmans to work with an array of best-selling talent, from Prince to Amy Winehouse to Jack Johnson.

Working with Prince on his 2006 album, *3121*, particularly prepared Monte for his current reality managing a roster packed with superstars. Prince had grand ambitions for *3121*’s promotion and commercial prospects, and Monte tried to temper the legend’s expectations. “I was young, I was naive, and I would find myself constantly trying to explain to him why things couldn’t be done,” he says. After nearly a year of disagreements, Monte gave up and stopped trying to stifle Prince’s ideas — and the artist was overjoyed. “It was a great learning experience for me,” says Monte. “When you talk about the big personalities, we embrace the curiosity of the artists that we work with.”

Case in point: Swift, who has spent the past two years releasing a pair of folk-leaning albums recorded in secret with some indie-rock pals, simultaneously started to roll out the ambitious rerecording of her first six records in an effort to control their masters. Those projects may have seemed like commercial and creative gambles even for the biggest star in the world, but they’ve been unequivocal successes, producing four No. 1 albums on the Billboard 200, three Hot 100 chart-toppers, two album of the year Grammy nominations and one win in the category for *folklore* in 2021 (*evermore* competes in 2022).

At a New York fan screening of Swift’s *All Too Well* short film in mid-November, Monte stood in the back of the movie theater, arms crossed, lightly swaying as Swift capped off the screening with an acoustic performance of the new, 10-minute version of the song. When she set down her guitar, he clapped just as wildly as the rest of the fans.

“Monte has a very sharpened gut instinct about projects, and I feel very fortunate to have benefited from that gift of his,” says Swift. “He was the one who championed my move from country to pop, and I’ll never forget him telling me that ‘Shake It Off’ was the one he thought should be the first single. Or calling him to tell him and my Republic team that I’d made a secret album in quarantine called *folklore* and that I wanted to put it out the following week. I had prepared a speech to persuade my label to let me do it. I should’ve known I wouldn’t need to use it, because Monte reacted



as if I’d given him the best news of his life. He gets fired up about music in a way that’s very contagious. Hard work doesn’t scare him. Challenges don’t fatigue him. I’m very lucky to be on his team.”

I

T MAKES SENSE that adaptable, artist-friendly executives like the Lipmans would thrive in today’s music industry, where creatives increasingly control when and how fans can hear

their music. Three years ago, Republic had to call an audible when Ariana Grande wanted to cut her *Sweetener* promotions short in order to roll out her *Thank U, Next* album — which became an even bigger commercial blockbuster, as well as a watershed moment in how pop music is marketed.

“She said, ‘It’s my art, it’s my music, and that’s the way I want to share it with my fans,’” recalls Monte. “And I said, ‘You know what? You’re right. Let’s go.’ And guess what? She changed the paradigm of radio.” In fact, in 2021, Grande made history at radio: Three singles from her *Positions* album (“34+35,” “pov” and the title track) became concurrent top 10 hits on the Pop Airplay chart, the first album to achieve this in the survey’s 29 years.

Drake, another Republic star, is the ultimate example of how an artist can bend the music world to his will. And this year, the Republic team had to remain nimble as he finished his long-awaited *Certified Lover Boy*, releasing the three-song *Scary Hours 2* EP in March before the full album arrived in September. Neither had prerelease singles, but both produced No. 1 hits upon release, and *Certified Lover Boy* scored the largest

“What I love about partnering with them is their openness to the artist’s vision and the lengths they go to uphold that.”

—THE WEEKND

streaming week for an album since Drake's last full-length in 2018, *Scorpion*.

Monte points out that the foundation of Republic's partnership with Drake is the label's long-term alliance with his OVO Sound imprint and Toronto-based brain trust. Such partnerships have become a bedrock for Republic's day-to-day operations over the years — their generation-old deal with Cash Money Records yielded massive releases from Lil Wayne, then Wayne protégés Nicki Minaj and Drake — and now include Swift's 13 Management, The Weeknd's XO and Grande's Schoolboy teams, partners that are looped in on strategic decisions.

Not every partnership has worked out entirely smoothly. Country star Morgan Wallen made his Republic debut in January with *Dangerous: The Double Album*, through a partnership between the label and Big Loud. The album arrived at the top of the Billboard 200; then, mere weeks later, Wallen was caught using the N-word in a video leaked on TMZ. Although he had previously been arrested for drunk and disorderly conduct and disinvented from *Saturday Night Live* for violating its COVID-19 safety protocols, the video prompted swift industry action, with Big Loud/Republic immediately suspending his contract while his songs were removed from streaming and radio playlists. (Wallen remains signed directly to Big Loud, and Republic is in discussions with the label about potential strategy going forward.)

"It's not complicated at all," says Monte of the situation. "What Morgan did was hurtful. It was insensitive and it was disrespectful." Monte and Big Loud CEO Seth England enlisted Eric Hutchinson, executive vp and chief people and inclusion officer at UMG, to work with Wallen, who recently announced a 2022 tour but hasn't quite yet been reembraced by the music business. "He has been working very hard toward bettering himself — his description — and we're just hopeful that it's going to make a difference and there's going to be people that learn from this, most importantly Morgan."

Dangerous still ended 2021 as the Billboard 200's top album of the year, generating \$23.4 million in the United States and \$30.4 million globally for Republic and Big Loud, *Billboard* estimates. And — behavior aside — Wallen's emergence was a bellwether for the ways Republic leadership sees the label expanding in 2022. Roppo expects more focus on country music; singer-songwriter Lily Rose, another Big Loud/Republic artist, recently released her debut album, *Stronger Than I Am*, and will tour with Big Loud labelmate Chris Lane next year. Roppo also says that the success of girl group TWICE hints at a greater investment in K-pop next year, while *Inside (The Songs)* — the best-selling companion album to Bo Burnham's Netflix special *Inside* released through Imperial/Republic — has inspired a harder look into the comedy space.



Regardless of genre, short-form content like TikTok clips will continue to be "a major factor in how we adjust our strategy," says Roppo. "We're marketing music in advance of its release even further and further out now across that short form. Those content platforms are sort of the way the movie industry uses trailers a year or more [before] their big releases, and we find that to be very vital and important in every campaign — longer lead times, more marketing, more prerelease awareness leads to bigger results in many cases, whether those are superstars or developing artists."

The new year will bring the full launch of a just-opened, Republic-owned recording space in Manhattan — a counterpart to the label's Century City studio opened in 2017 — as well as much-awaited albums from Post

Malone and Nicki Minaj. There's also plenty of promise on the artist roster, from L.A.-based rapper Coi Leray, as well as BoyWithUke, a recent signee with a hidden identity but flashy streaming numbers.

"He writes, he produces, he takes a new-school approach with his craft and how to create anticipation," Avery raves of BoyWithUke. This is how the Lipmans still speak about rising artists, as if they're still in that tiny Upper East Side apartment: fully confident in their mass appeal, desperate to get the chance to fight for them.

"Every campaign is an audition — you go after it as if it's the very first one," says Monte. "It always starts with the music. It starts from a creative place and that sense of excitement. There is no ceiling in terms of what we believe we can accomplish with anyone." ■

MIND OVER

THE NO. 1s

GROWING UP, **KALI UCHIS** KNEW SHE WAS UNIQUE — BUT FELT LIKE SHE FIT IN NOWHERE. WITH HER BREAKOUT BILINGUAL HIT, “TELEPATÍA,” THE INDUSTRY HAS FINALLY CAUGHT UP TO HER VISION

BY **LEILA COBO**

“But it feels very generational for people who love genre-ambiguous music and speak many languages. This song is very representative of this artist and this generation.”

Uchis first explored the idea of a song about telepathy following her 2018 major-label debut, *Isolation* (Virgin UK/EMI). But she set it aside to focus on her next album, which she insisted be in Spanish — despite, she says, strong resistance from Virgin UK/EMI. “They literally told my manager, ‘If you guys do the Spanish shit, you’re on your own,’” recalls Uchis.

The label would have had good reason for trepidation. Uchis had always sung and recorded in both languages, but she was relatively unknown in the mainstream Latin market: Her fan base was diverse, but her nascent success came mostly from English-speaking, alternative music (“10%,” her 2019 collaboration with Kaytranada, won the Grammy for best dance recording), not native Spanish speakers.

With Interscope in her corner, however — a label with a long history of pushing Latin acts (like Enrique Iglesias and Daddy Yankee) and that recently opened a Miami office focused on Latin repertoire — Uchis could finally start to bridge that divide. “When you try to market songs in two languages, it’s challenging; there’s an Anglo world and a Latin world and they’re not always aligned,” says José Cedeño, senior vp revenue and strategy for Interscope in Miami. “But Kali is someone who flows in and out of [both] languages as if it were one.”

Finally, she was free to record her longed-for Spanish-language album. And when she was sent a dreamy new instrumental track reminiscent of her 2018 English-language single “After the Storm” (featuring Tyler, The Creator and Bootsy Collins), she realized it could help shape the telepathy concept she had started sketching out months before.

“That type of music sounds really comfortable for me to ride,” says Uchis. “The melodies came super natural, and the words, I didn’t really know where they were coming from, but they came really fast as well. It was such a natural process, and I feel like that’s how my best songs happen.”

Still, no one, least of all Uchis herself, expected much from “Telepatía.” The track almost didn’t even make it onto the album, *Sin Miedo (Del Amor y Otros Demonios)*, when it was released last December. In the many glowing reviews that followed, it often wasn’t even mentioned; attention instead focused on “La Luz,” a single featuring rising reggaetón star Jhay Cortez, and her cover of La Lupe’s “Que Te Pidi” — tracks with more commercial appeal than Uchis’ previously alt-leaning output.

Then, a new year came — and, soon after, the outbreak of the pandemic. Suddenly, a song about keeping long-distance romance alive that had been written long before anyone had heard of COVID-19 felt very timely. And an artist blending English and Spanish didn’t feel so out of place anymore.

W

HEN KALI UCHIS told her father she wanted to skip college to become a professional musician, his answer wasn’t quite what she had hoped for.

“There are a lot of girls prettier than you and that have a better

voice than you,” Uchis recalls him telling her. “What would make you stand out from them?” She wasn’t dissuaded. “Well, there can be a million girls more pretty than me and with a better voice than me,” she answered. “But they’ll never be me.”

Today, it’s precisely that other-ness that has led 27-year-old Uchis — the bilingual, bicultural, genre-bending singer-songwriter whose vocals flow effortlessly between English and Spanish — to become an unlikely star with the song “Telepatía,” a trippy fantasy in which she sings of wanting to “make love through telepathy,” which became her breakout hit earlier this year.

“My motivation has always been to be connected to my culture, to who I am as an artist,” says Uchis, who was born in the United States and grew up between there and Colombia. “At my first shows, I would be singing in Spanglish or Spanish, and people would be so confused and be laughing at me and walking away. They weren’t ready for that at the time. I felt that there wasn’t really a space for me because I’m bilingual, I have dual citizenship, I grew up in two different countries, and also, I don’t stick to just one genre. It was just a lot harder for people to put their money on me.”

While it’s no longer unusual to see crossover Spanish-language hits and bilingual remixes high on the mainstream *Billboard* charts, bilingual solo hits are still very much an anomaly. And yet “Telepatía” rose to No. 1 on three charts, including, notably, both Latin and Rhythmic Airplay — a testament to Uchis’ singularity and versatility.

“A song like ‘Telepatía’ that doesn’t fit in any box, most people would not have expected it to do well in radio,” says Matt Morris, senior vp A&R at Interscope Records. (Uchis is signed to a joint venture between Interscope Geffen A&M in the United States and Virgin UK.)

REVEAL



THE NO.1s

N

I DE AQUÍ, NI DE ALLÁ. “Not from here, not from there” — that’s how the artist born Karly-Marina Loaiza grew up. Born in Virginia but raised between there and the small

city of Pereira, Colombia, Kali Uchis felt slightly disenfranchised in both places.

“In Virginia, people were always saying, ‘You’re not from here, where are you from? Are you from the West Coast or something?’” recalls Uchis today. “And I had never been to the West Coast before. But in Colombia, too, people would always say, ‘De dónde eres?’”

Growing up in Pereira — a city nestled in the country’s mountainous coffee-growing region — felt worlds away from music industry hubs Bogotá, Medellín and Cali. There were ducks, turkeys and chickens in the backyard and cousins, uncles, aunts and Uchis’ four siblings seemingly filling every inch of living space.

“I’ve always lived in a full house,” she says. “When we went back to the United States, our house was the house you passed through coming to America — the place you lived until you were able to get on your feet. My room was the girls’ room, and it literally just had beds for my aunts and my cousins. I guess that’s why now, as an adult, I’m such a private person and I value my space so much.”

In Pereira, Uchis absorbed Colombia’s richly diverse musical traditions and began exploring her own artistic identity, though she never dreamed of asking her parents for financial support. “My dad was literally homeless as a child. He had a fourth-grade education and came to the United States just figuring it out from the bottom,” says Uchis. “So I was raised to be very resourceful and very grateful.” She helped her family with cleaning and construction jobs and eventually found her own hustles: cashier work, customer service, buying and selling vintage clothing, making videos and doing graphic design for others.

At 19, Uchis took her savings and moved to Los Angeles to make a go of it as an artist. Even on her 2015 self-released debut, *Por Vida*, her aesthetic felt remarkably developed — sinuous vocals floating atop lush soul and R&B beats and production. Her video for early single “Ridin Round” caught the attention of marquee Latin acts like fellow Colombian Juanes (who, much to Uchis’ family’s delight, asked her to sing on his 2017 song “El Ratico”) and left-of-mainstream American artists like Tyler, The Creator, an early fan. “He was the only person [in the beginning] who really reached out to me that didn’t ask me for anything [in return], who had an actual, detailed account of the things that were special about what I did,” recalls Uchis. (She ended up featuring on his 2017 single “See You Again,” he on her “After the Storm.”)

Speaking from her new home in Los Angeles, Uchis is disarmingly open and self-aware, recounting the early days of trying to get a

record deal and her music promoted on her own. “I went through my little trauma with the industry,” she says ruefully. “You get kind of jaded because you feel like people just pretend like they care, but really don’t. But I did the work on myself that I needed to do, and I’m still doing the work. I wish that every artist had access to therapy because it’s super, super important.”

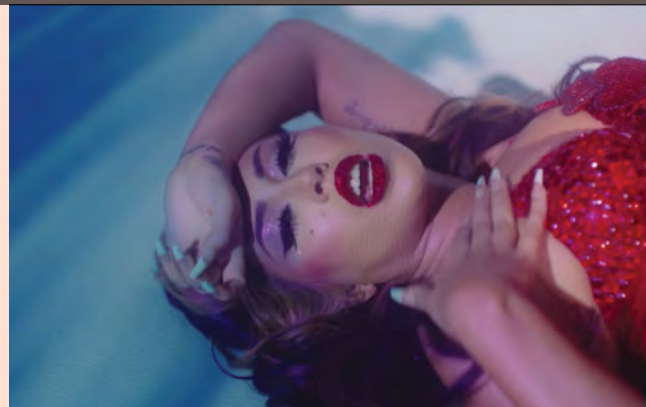
By 2019, Uchis was determined to record an album in Spanish — and frustrated by the intricacies of dealing with a label based overseas. She and her managers, Shakira Kalite and Jon Lieberberg, brought in Latin industry veteran Yamile Fernández to, as he puts it, “connect the dots” with Interscope for the release of *Sin Miedo*. It was a watershed move: The label’s marketing and digital teams could target her loyal U.S. fan base, while its Latin-focused office could help build the Latin American audience that eluded her. “At the beginning, at least, it was a very niche, core, almost cult-ish fan base for Kali,” says Kimberly Barrena, Interscope’s global marketing manager. “So my initial strategy was trying to connect her with a bigger fan base globally.”

Two early singles that preceded *Sin Miedo*’s 2020 release didn’t do particularly well: “Aquí Mando Yo,” with Rico Nasty, didn’t chart, and “La Luz” peaked at No. 15 on Latin Pop Airplay. So in January, Barrena and digital marketing senior manager Murdoc Hardy began scouring social media, YouTube and TikTok to figure out which songs fans were responding to and where. “Telepatía” kept surfacing, especially on TikTok. So they tried out an idea to boost the song into viral-hit territory.

“Success on TikTok doesn’t necessarily mean you get [a superstar] to do your dance,” says Barrena. “Success can mean people want to just make videos and literally watch content with your song attached to it. People just living with the music is always the best scenario.” They selected a lyric segment — “You know I’m just a flight away/If you wanted you can take a private plane/A kilómetros estamos conectando/Y me prendes aunque no me estás tocando” — that they figured would have maximum impact, and, working with Universal’s Mexico and Brazil teams, recruited influencers (first in Mexico, where the song was especially popular on TikTok) to create their own clips.

The response was so instantaneous — a wide variety of content, much of it simply featuring users singing or lip-syncing along to the song — that the label had a music video shot in April in Colombia to further elevate Uchis’ profile there. “You can really tell how impactful a song is to an audience by how long the trend lasts,” says Hardy. “There were three or four different parts of the song that people were [organically] using, and we decided to use this particular one. It was literally a bridge between the two languages [in the song] and between the two cultures.”

By May, “Telepatía” became Uchis’ first



From top: Uchis in the “Telepatía” video and onstage with Tyler, The Creator in 2017.

No. 1 on the Hot Latin Songs chart — making her the first female soloist without an accompanying act to lead the list since 2012 — and *Sin Miedo* reached No. 1 on Latin Pop Albums. By August, “Telepatía” had risen to the top 10 of the all-genre Streaming and Radio Songs charts and peaked at No. 25 on the Billboard Hot 100 — Uchis’ second, and highest, showing there yet. A year after its release, it ends 2021 as the second-most-consumed Latin track of the year, behind only Bad Bunny’s “Dákiti,” with 646 million global on-demand audio streams (of which 241 million were in the United States) as of Dec. 2, according to MRC Data. And Uchis, the girl who once felt like she belonged nowhere, is the fourth-most-consumed Latin artist in the country.

“I never, ever would have imagined that I’d see that happen — like, ever,” she says. “I just never, ever had that type of motive or intention. I think people never really viewed me as marketable, and I always viewed myself as an artist, so I never worried about how I was going to sell or get accolades or anything. I didn’t think that it was possible for somebody like me to have this type of success.”

“I don’t think you can replicate it,” says Morris. “But I think Kali is going to be a beacon for change.” *Sin Miedo* just garnered a Grammy nomination for best musica urbana album, and in February, Uchis will open for Tyler, The Creator on tour. There’s new music on the way, as well as denim, sunglasses and beauty lines.

As for the family who once worried she would have trouble making a name for herself in music? “They’re super proud,” says Uchis. “More than anything, they wish now that they had been supportive when I started. But honestly, I didn’t think too much about whether things were going to work out for me or not. It was, ‘This is my life. These are the cards that I was dealt. I’m going to do the most with what God gave me.’ I always recognized that God made me unique. There aren’t a lot of people that have my background — or my spirit.” **B**

TELEPATÍA: COURTESY OF UMG; TYLER, THE CREATOR: ANDREW LPODUSKY/NBC UNIVERSAL/GETTY IMAGES

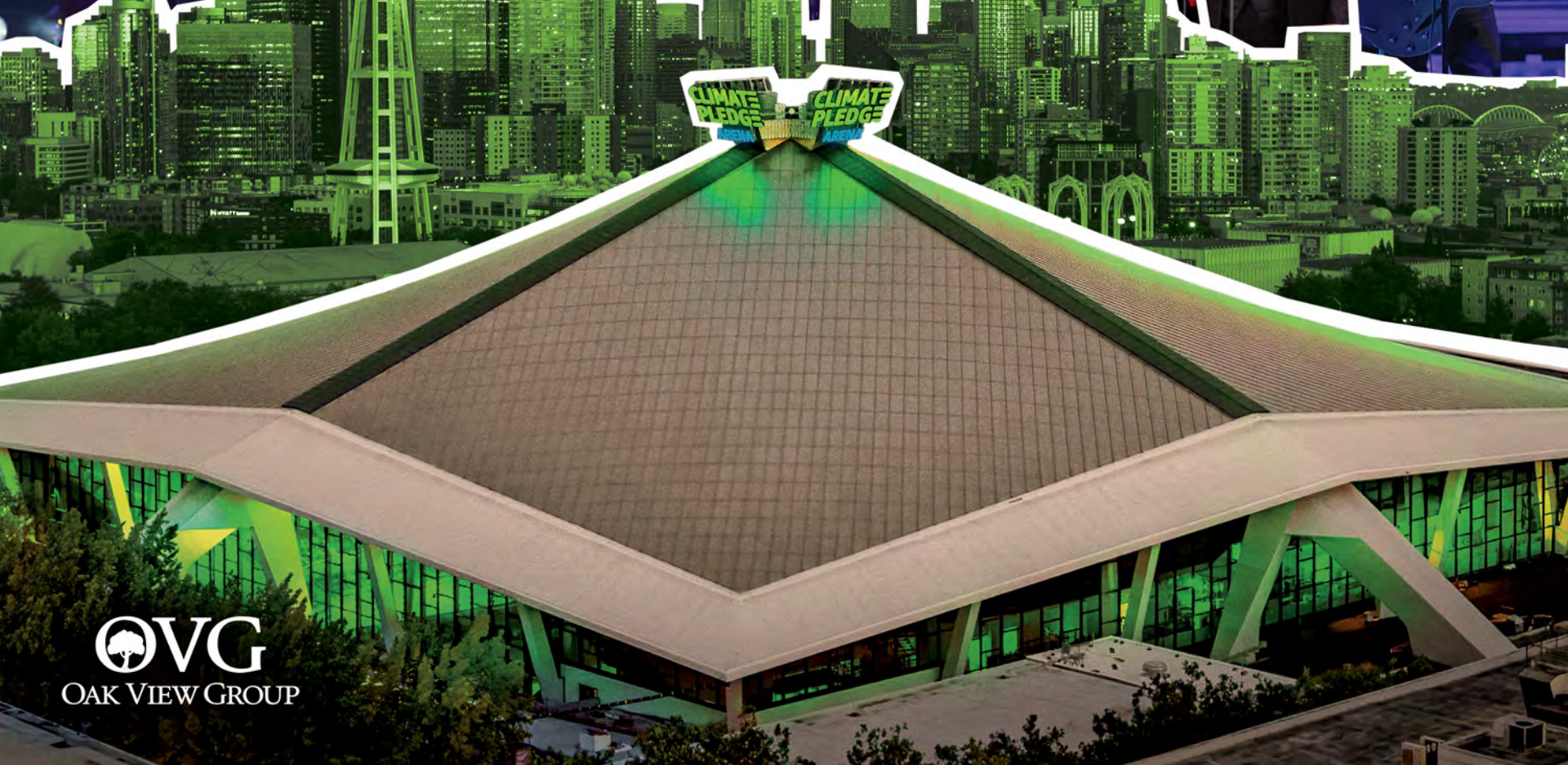
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Thank you to all the artists, promoters, agents, and managers who made our opening a success. We look forward to seeing you in the New Year.

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SEATTLE, WA



Harlow photographed Nov. 30 in Atlanta.
Styling by Metta Conchetta
424 jacket and pants, Dries Van Noten shirt.



'BABY'

THE NO. 1s

JACK HARLOW SCORED HIS FIRST BILLBOARD HOT 100 NO. 1 WITH THE LIL NAS X TEAM-UP "INDUSTRY BABY." NOW HE WANTS TO GIVE HIP-HOP THE "BOOST OF ENERGY" HE THINKS IT'S MISSING

BY CARL LAMARRE // PHOTOGRAPHED BY PEYTON FULFORD

THREE YEARS AGO, an energetic 20-year-old who looked like a young boxer hungry for his big fight stepped onto the tiny stage at Iron City Bham, a historic concert venue in Birmingham, Ala. It was the very first stop on Jack Harlow's very first tour, but it wasn't off to a great start: Only about 20 people had come out for the show. Still, undeterred by the low turnout, the rapper approached his set with the enthusiasm of a Coachella headliner, flashing a cocky grin and cracking jokes with the few people in the audience, even sticking around after to pose for pictures with anybody who wanted one.

Flash forward to November, and Harlow is back in Birmingham, at the same venue — in front of a sold-out crowd of 1,300. Harlow himself is now a platinum-selling rap star who has evolved from a scraggly, glasses-wearing MC to a debonair showman and one of the buzziest names in hip-hop. (Appropriately, the trek is called the *Crème de la Crème Tour*.) The other night, Drake came to one of his shows — the ultimate co-sign for a 23-year-old from Louisville, Ky., who came up idolizing him — but just as exciting for Harlow was the moment he recognized a fan in the crowd from that 2018 concert.

"These moments... they just keep happening," says a still-awestruck Harlow on Zoom days after the show. "It gives so much meaning to the entire journey. I appreciate it more because I know what it felt like when it wasn't there. I'm desperate to keep my fans' attention during shows because it all feels so fragile to me. I think I go extra hard, the extra mile, because it's like I have this fear in the back of my mind of losing them. I remember when I didn't have it."

Harlow could be forgiven if he let himself simply enjoy this moment. But since the June 2020 release of "Whats Poppin" — a Grammy Award-nominated showcase for his quick-witted lyrical prowess that jumped from TikTok to No. 2 on the Billboard Hot 100 thanks to a star-studded remix featuring Lil Wayne, DaBaby and Tory Lanez — Harlow has hardly slowed down. His debut album, *That's What They All Say*, released in 2020 on the burgeoning Atlantic imprint Generation Now, spawned three other charting hits and was recently certified platinum, proving that he not only had a gift for wordplay but also a heartfelt perspective as he rapped about topics like imposter syndrome ("Keep It Light") and white privilege ("Baxter Avenue"). Throughout the past year, he has also whisked through key festival stops — Rolling Loud, Lollapalooza, Austin City Limits — before setting out on his own headlining tour.

"I'm not a novelty act," says Harlow pensively. Though he can appear rambunctious in his songs and videos, in conversation, he is almost meditative, taking time to reflect on his thoughts before he speaks. "There is a certain reality that I am white, and I think there will always be something attached to that. No matter how embraced I am, there will never be a day that I'm Black. With that being said, there's a certain responsibility that comes with being a white man in a Black genre, and there's certain things that have me regarded differently. But there is some-

BOOMER

thing exciting about skipping over any barriers that might be there and creating unity."

And that's exactly what he did as a featured guest on one of the year's most explosive hits: Lil Nas X's "Industry Baby." Co-produced by duo Take A Daytrip and Kanye West, the triumphant anthem about persevering against naysayers topped the Hot 100 in October — Harlow's first No. 1 on the chart, and a victory lap for both him and Nas, hip-hop rookies who had overcome early skepticism around their monster debut hits to become undeniable, multifaceted stars in their own right.

"What impressed me the most about Jack's verse was that before we did it, he reached out directly and let Nas know he wanted to work" with him, recalls Denzel Baptiste, one-half of Take A Daytrip. "When we got the verse back, it was this super-long idea. It wouldn't normally fit a pop-song structure, but there were so many amazing moments in it. We produced around it in a way that made it a huge focal point of the song."

Released in July, "Industry Baby" arrived with the kind of fanfare and eye-popping visuals that have become the norm for a Lil Nas X release. Coming off his "Montero (Call Me by Your Name)" video, in which he pole-danced down to hell and gave Satan a lap dance before killing him, Nas upped the ante for "Industry Baby." In the blockbuster clip, poking fun at the pearl-clutching that "Montero" inspired, Nas is sentenced to time at Montero State Prison, where he takes over a fluorescent pink-clad, all-male prison gang; dances with them in the showers totally nude (save for some strategic pixelation); and finally escapes with the help of his buddy Harlow.

Though Nas attracted the majority of critical attention for the video — both positive and less so from the usual conservative corners — Harlow's scene-stealing verse (with one-liners like "I sent her back to her boyfriend with my handprint on her ass cheek") and lovable-gooftball presence (in the video and in televised performances that followed) sparked plenty of conversation, too. "I had total faith he was going to make a tasteful decision for me," says Harlow, who delivers his verse while the seemingly lone female inmate gets handsy with him. "I felt good about it. For anyone to think that Nas isn't aware or clever enough to create a treatment that wouldn't fit me isn't looking very deeply into it because that was the least of my worries. He knows what it is. He's very aware and knows we're not the same person."

Harlow was the only male rapper to appear on Nas' *Montero* album, which did not go unnoticed by some of the latter's detractors. (When one Twitter user suggested his choice in the album's guest artists, who are all either women or white men, was part of some "agenda" to undermine Black men, Nas replied, "Maybe a lot of them just don't want to work with me.") In subsequent

THE NO.1s

interviews, Nas also revealed he had first tried to get his idol, Nicki Minaj, on “Industry Baby” but that it didn’t work out — “I’m not sure how comfortable Nicki would have felt with that video or whatnot,” he later mused to *GQ*. Harlow, however, had no hesitation. “He has always been an ally while remaining authentically himself,” says Baptiste. “It has never been performative.”

Ultimately, “Industry Baby” allowed Harlow to ascend the mainstream his own way — a crossover without compromise. “It was honestly my first pop moment. I had turned down a few big pop moments, ones that could have potentially been big for my career,” he says. “I wanted to remain hip-hop. People think of white rappers using hip-hop as a vehicle. It’s important that people know I love hip-hop and want to stay in hip-hop and want to be part of hip-hop, and I’m using it as a vehicle to fuel my dreams.”

BACK IN MARCH, fans got a glimpse of what Jack Harlow looked like before pop stardom was even a glimmer in his eye. In a 10-second clip he posted on Instagram, a middle-school-aged Harlow raps and dances alongside his friends (sample lyric: “I mean I’m sorry, I wish I can make it to your birthday party”), showcasing the nerdy yet defiant personality that made him a Louisville wunderkind. It went viral, getting 4.6 million views and catching the attention of Kendrick Lamar — who broke his two-year-long social media hiatus to like the tweet — and Drake, whom Harlow calls “the face of my adolescence.”

When Drake attended the Crème de la Crème Tour’s Toronto stop in November, Harlow paused the show to shout him out and pay homage. “I was raised on Drake. He came out when I was in sixth grade. I remember going into middle school, and ‘Best I Ever Had’ was on the radio nonstop,” he says today. “I can’t even put into words the validation [I felt]. I want to pat myself on the back in a way as [my] 13-year-old [self]: ‘What you thought could happen, happened.’”

Harlow’s affinity for rap music, and his work ethic, developed early. As a 10-year-old growing up in Louisville, he dug into his mother’s A Tribe Called Quest, Public Enemy and N.W.A. albums, then put pen to paper for the first time on his own a year later, recording his first CD, *Rippin and Rappin*, on a *Guitar Hero* microphone. (He later sold copies for \$2 apiece at his middle school.) In seventh grade, he made a mixtape, *Extra Credit*, and gave away 100 copies.

By the time he was a high school freshman, Harlow caught the attention of Def Jam Recordings after a friend put his YouTube videos in front of then-president Joie Manda. But during contract negotiations, Manda exited the label, leaving Harlow uncertain about whether others at Def Jam had the

same enthusiasm for him. He turned down the deal, brushed off the missed opportunity and rebounded. He released more projects independently — 2015’s *The Handsome Harlow* and 2016’s *18*, which captured his magnetic personality and wit as a wordsmith — and built a loyal hometown following, selling out local shows and generating millions of streams thanks to buzzy tracks like “Ice Cream.”

With his 2017 mixtape, *Gazebo*, and its trunk-rattling single “Dark Knight,” Harlow got on the radar of his next champions: DJ Drama and Leighton “Lake” Morrison, the founders of hip-hop label Generation Now, who previously shepherded Lil Uzi Vert to mainstream success. Both had learned about Harlow separately. Drama had started following him on Instagram after a friend talked him up, while Lake heard about him through KY Engineerin’, a famed Louisville engineer who contributed to *Gazebo* and is best known for his work with Lil Wayne, 2 Chainz and Meek Mill. When the two executives finally met up with Harlow in Atlanta in 2018, they knew it was a match right away.

“We liked what was going on, and we saw the potential,” recalls Drama. “We were like, ‘We have to get this kid. He’s special.’”

“Jack’s future has endless potential,” adds Morrison. “He’s the total package, a great artist, creative, charismatic and intelligent. I say this as humbly as I possibly can, but he has the ability to be the *best* in the game if he continues on this path.”

Harlow signed to Generation Now and Atlantic Records in August 2018, and, as usual, didn’t waste time. He released a new single, “Sundown,” the day his signing announcement went out, then dropped the mixtape *Loose* two weeks later. Co-signs poured in, with Diddy dubbing Harlow his “favorite rapper” and fellow Louisvillian Bryson Tiller teaming up with him for 2019’s “Thru the Night,” solidifying Harlow’s grip on his hometown rap scene’s heart.

The same charm on display in his throwback viral video was proving to be his biggest selling point as an emerging star. “I was the fresh 22-year-old kid and knew all the girls in town, and we were throwing parties and shooting videos, and everything was really off the cuff,” says Harlow of this time. “I was drinking and having fun and making myself accessible. I was warm and welcoming. I was very inclusive of the city, and it was a great era. Everyone in my circle looks back on that time with a lot of joy.” Or, as he put it in his “Industry Baby” verse: “I’m just a late bloomer/I didn’t peak in high school, I’m still out here getting cuter.”

OUTSIDE THE MTV Video Music Awards in September, a throng of fans begins howling incessantly. Harlow is making his rounds on the red carpet outside Brooklyn’s Barclays Center, and screams of “Harlow, you’re so hot!” ripple

Salon des Refusés jacket, Commes des Garçons pants, Ermenegildo Zegna shoes.



through the crowd, making the young bachelor stagger momentarily. Lil Nas X — clad in a lilac Versace ensemble that’s half suit, half gown — catches Harlow and gives him a warm hug.

A late addition to the VMAs lineup, Harlow is there to perform “Industry Baby” with Nas for the first time, though earlier in the summer, he had done so solo at Rolling Loud Miami, two days after the song’s release. “This MFer beat me to the first performance of the song,” joked Nas on Twitter after spotting a video from the festival.

“What I admire about Nas is his humor and, [even] more, his rebellious nature, how he really doesn’t give a shit. I think that’s powerful,



and it ages well,” says Harlow. “He’s going to leave a long legacy behind him. I think some people have mistaken him for gimmicky or a novelty, but he’s bigger than that. I think he’s speaking for a lot of kids who don’t often get a voice in pop culture.”

In the wake of “Industry Baby,” the hip-hop world is noticing Harlow’s potential to be a secret weapon on potential hits, too. He has joined another one of his heroes, Eminem, on a remix of his “Killer,” but he’s still making time for rising artists, like when he jumped on a new version of Detroit rapper Babyface Ray’s “Paperwork” in May.

“Great rappers always know how to deliver

hooky quotables within songs. Jack’s amazing at establishing moments within songs that allow for different kinds of crowd response,” says David Biral, the other half of Take A Daytrip. “Those moments also inform what we do as producers, giving us dynamic performance pieces to build around.”

As Harlow works on his next album, which he expects to release in late spring or early summer of 2022, he’s reveling in his own moment — including Grammy nominations for “Industry Baby” in the best melodic rap performance category and for album of the year, as a featured artist on *Montero* — while preparing to give back to Louisville with five

performances at five of the city’s iconic venues in December. He has thought a lot about his place in hip-hop lately, about what he brings to the table, and he plans to deliver accordingly with his new music.

“I think the game needs some urgency, with everything being kind of a vibe right now,” says Harlow. “It will be a boost of energy for people. You’ll be able to hear in my voice that I’m realizing what I am and what I could be and what I need to work hard to be. My star is rising, and I’m kind of documenting that process and showing you where I want to take it next. I’m stepping into being a star comfortably. I want to entertain.” **b**

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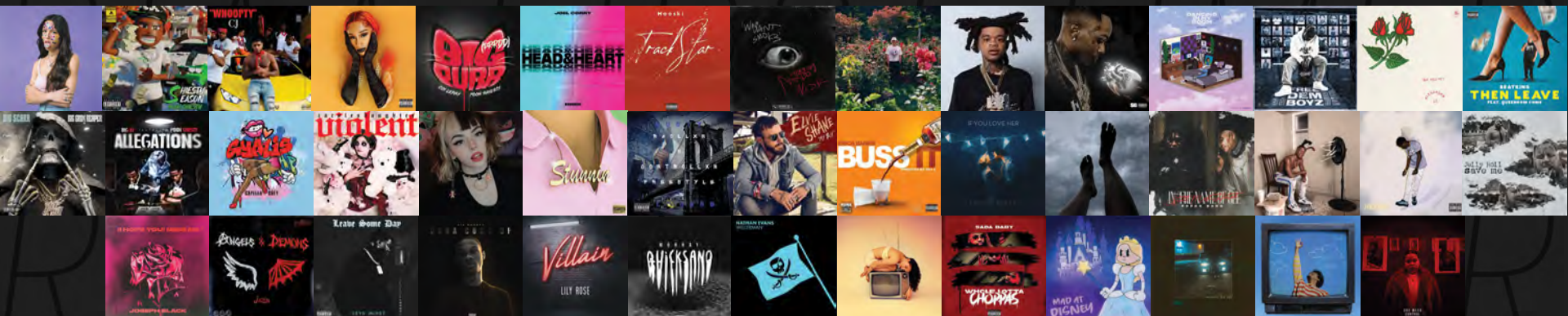
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players

CELEBRATING MUSIC'S MOVERS



INSIDE UBS ARENA, METRO NEW YORK'S IMMERSIVE NEW VENUE

At Harry Styles' opening concert, venue executives discuss how the \$1.5 billion space and redevelopment of Belmont Park will make Nassau County a live-music destination

BY DAVE BROOKS

INSIDE THE NEW \$1.5 BILLION UBS ARENA in Elmont, N.Y., 18,500 fans scream in unison as they await Harry Styles. It's Nov. 28, the last night of the "Watermelon Sugar" singer's Love on Tour trek, and the first concert at the new venue, which took two years to build.

As Styles takes the stage, the screams become a deafening roar — a sound that must be music to the ears of executives from the company hosting him, Oak View Group. The global sports and entertainment company, founded in 2015 by CEO Tim Leiweke and Irving Azoff, is part of a joint venture with Sterling Equities and NHL team the New York Islanders. Together, they make up the New York Arena Partners, which was established in 2017 to build the UBS Arena as part of the redevelopment of 43 acres of Belmont Park.

Oak View Group is leading the venue's development and operations, with input from Live Nation, which helped book 2022 dates for Trans-Siberian Orchestra, Imagine Dragons, Tool, Journey, John Mayer, Los Tigres del Norte, New Kids on the Block and Roger Waters. The arena will also serve as the Islanders' home ice. (Leiweke is the former president/CEO of Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment and Anschutz Entertainment Group, which owned the L.A. Kings; while Azoff is a former chairman of MCA and Live Nation, co-owner of Global Music Rights and the longtime manager of the Eagles, Fleetwood Mac and Mayer.)

OVG has eight divisions across six global offices in Los Angeles, New York, London, Seattle, Austin and Philadelphia, with major development projects in Savannah, Ga.; Austin; Palm Springs, Calif.; Milan; and Manchester, England. Styles, who

Aerial view of the UBS Arena in Elmont, N.Y.; inset: Styles in Las Vegas.

is managed by Azoff's son Jeffrey, is an investor in OVG's latest project, Co-Op Live, a sustainable, all-electric arena in his hometown of Manchester.

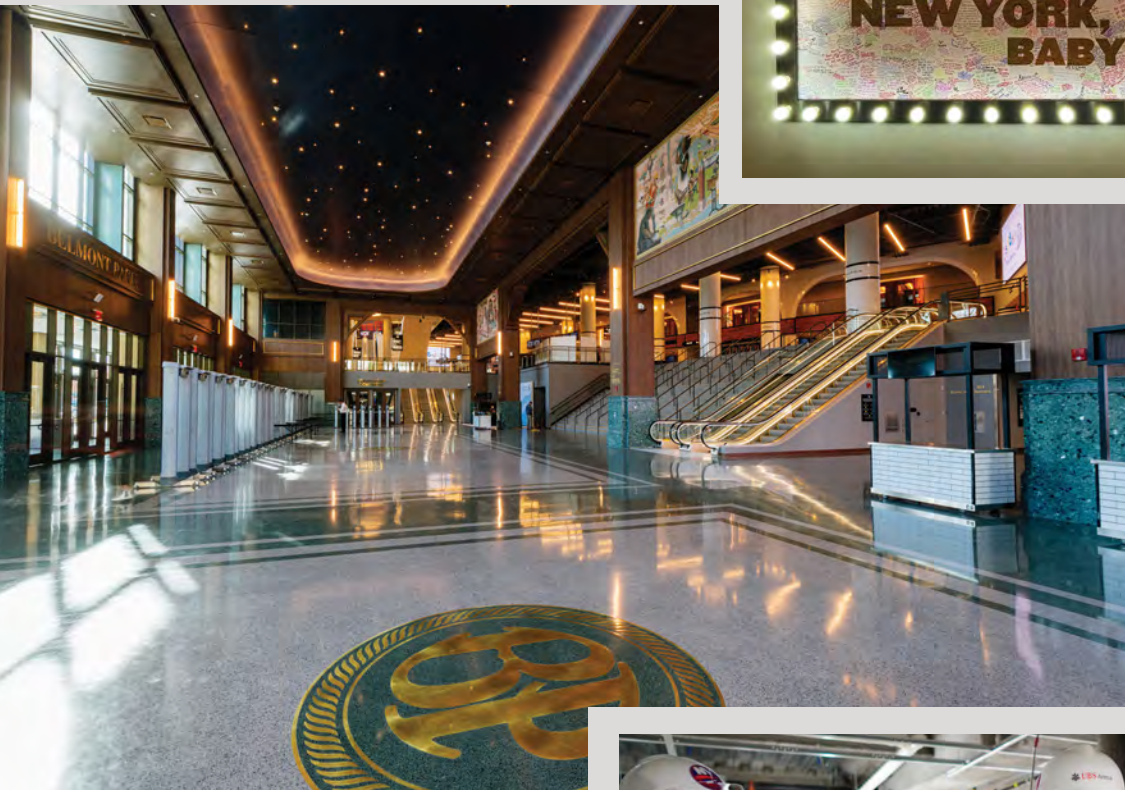
In the past year, UBS Arena's sales and marketing arm, OVG Global Partnerships, secured naming rights deals for Austin's Moody Center, Philadelphia's Subaru Park and Seattle's Climate Pledge Arena. It also brokered the Belmont Park arena's 20-year contract with Swiss bank UBS, and the venue's brand partnership team secured over 60 corporate founding partners, including Verizon, Heineken, Hyundai, BMW, Ticketmaster and American Express.

The morning after Styles' concert, UBS Arena's core leadership team gather at the New York Stock Exchange to cheer on Tom Naratil, president of the Americas for UBS Bank, as he rings the opening bell alongside Leiweke, president of OVG facilities Hank Abate, UBS Arena president Tom Pistore and Islanders co-owner Jon Ledecky.

Outside, a giant banner hangs from the façade of the exchange bearing the arena's slogan, "Made for music, built for hockey."

Location

Located on the border of New York and Nassau County, the arena serves both Long Island and the nearly 2 million residents of Queens, the city's fastest-growing and most diverse borough, according to the 2020 U.S. Census. It competes in



the crowded New York market, which is already home to three major arenas: Madison Square Garden, Barclays Center and Prudential Center in nearby Newark, N.J.

"You can get on a train and be here in 10 minutes," says Allison Canzanella, vp marketing at UBS Arena, who is tasked with community outreach and fan engagement. "We're trying to convince fans to go east instead of west. And if we can do that, it's a game-changer for everyone."

The new arena is not confined by the limitations of the team's former home at the Nassau Coliseum in Uniondale, N.Y., says Mark Shulman, a longtime promoter with AEG and The Bowery Presents, who now serves as UBS Arena's senior vp programming.

"We're closer to a much more diverse population base being in proximity to Queens, Westchester, the Bronx and most of Brooklyn," says Shulman. "Add in the availability of mass transit and there has never been a venue like this this close to the city, and that's going to open up a lot of opportunities for us."

The location is "key," adds Tom Cerasoli, senior vp partnership activation for UBS Arena and the New York Islanders. "You have an incredible access point for every type of target demographic that you would want to hit, from the decision-makers in the financial world all the way to blue-collar, die-hard Islander fans."

Amenities

The venue is designed to cater to the demands of New York's power brokers. "It's one of the few opportunities I've had to create a new space that attracts this level of demand," says Cerasoli, citing AmEx's speakeasy-style lounge and VIP entrance that is exclusive to cardholders, and local institution Dime Community Bank, whose 1,300-member in-arena club allows for an intimate connection to the venue's "premium customers and community leaders from the moment that they enter the building."

Guests have access to ample concessions, two



outdoor terraces and eight bars with views of the stage or ice. It also offers a tier of VIP suites and clubs inspired by classic New York locations such as Central Park, Grand Central Terminal and the Prospect Park Boathouse. The venue also features the largest scoreboard in New York, plus more restrooms per person than any arena in the metro New York area, according to OVG.

Design

UBS Arena's art deco-style architecture pays homage to its famous neighbor, the Belmont Park racetrack, home of the Belmont Stakes, the final leg of thoroughbred horse racing's Triple Crown. Opening the building is the spacious Grand Hall, designed to resemble Manhattan's Grand Central Station with its 35-foot-high ceiling, gold escalator bays and colorful murals. Each concourse level commemorates the region's history with museum-style exhibits and giant portraits of past Nassau Coliseum performers such as Bruce Springsteen, Ray Charles and Blondie's Deborah Harry.

The arena was engineered with input by acoustical design consultant Wrightson, Johnson, Had-don & Williams (WJHW), which added elements that include sound-absorbing barriers below the roof deck and on vertical surfaces to soak up sound, and a "bass trap" in the ceiling bowl to bolster

low-frequency sound. Its low-ceiling, wall-to-wall acoustic treatments and steep, up-close seating make every guitar riff, vocal inflection and drum solo sound crisp and natural. Its 360-degree stage helps give concertgoers a fully immersive experience, with sight lines that are "a product of the building's tight design," says Leiweke. "There's not a single seat that is more than 130 feet from the stage."

The arena's state-of-the-art light rigging system can support 350,000 pounds of gear and includes a catwalk that gives crews and artists complete access to the ceiling. A 65,000-square-foot indoor loading space also allows direct access to the arena floor. "Load-in one of these big shows outside in the winter and you'll understand why indoor loading is so important," says Leiweke. "Harry Styles' crew said it was the fastest load in and out of the tour."

Safety features built with COVID-19 in mind include a 3,300-square-foot artist compound and private back-of-house bubble for talent and their crews that can be sealed entirely from the rest of the space.

Sustainability

UBS Arena's goal is to be entirely carbon neutral in all operations by 2024 or sooner, which would make it the first arena to achieve this on the Eastern Seaboard, according to OVG.

The venue has also committed to being eco-conscious across its health and safety protocols, including the use of ultraviolet light technology and HEPA filtration sanitization methods to improve air quality; electric shuttles to and from the parking lots; 100% LED lighting; and the use of compostable paper and recycled aluminum at its concessions.

The arena partnered with concessionaire Delaware North to distribute unused food to local food banks after all events. And in partnership with green energy solutions company XL Fleet, it has mobilized a 1,000-strong electric vehicle charging site — the largest in the United States — which will serve EVs during events and off-days.

Community Benefit

UBS Arena expects to create 10,000 construction jobs and 3,000 permanent jobs for the greater Long Island and tri-state region. By 2024, the project will produce over \$850 million in annual economic activity and tens of millions of dollars in annual tax revenue for the regional economy, according to the New York State Department of Labor.

The venue is committed to hiring locals for 30% of its permanent jobs and will give 30% of its contracts and construction dollars to state-certified minority- and women-owned businesses. It also established a foundation to help disadvantaged groups overcome barriers to employment and career development locally.

The arena has invested \$100 million in transit and infrastructure enhancements, including the first newly constructed Long Island Railroad station in almost 50 years. New York Arena Partners is also planning to build a 350,000-square-foot shopping center and 250-room hotel on site that will tie in the surrounding racing facilities.

"We want to bring fans here year-round," says Leiweke. "You can explain it to someone, or you can show them what we've built. Once they step inside, the building does all the talking." **b**

Clockwise, from top left: The Great Hall at the UBS Arena; backstage signage at Styles' concert in November; Leiweke (right) at the arena's construction site in April.

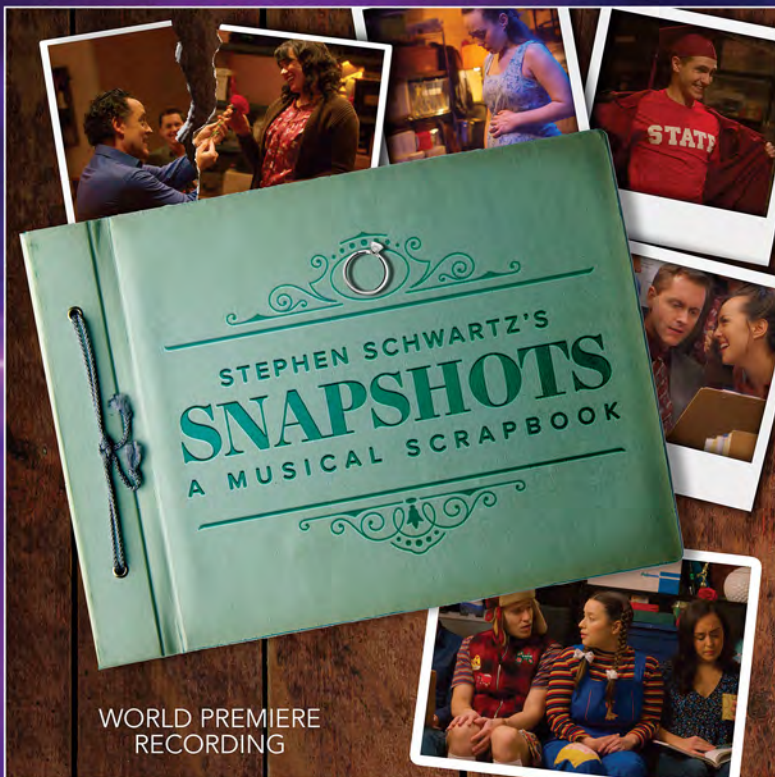
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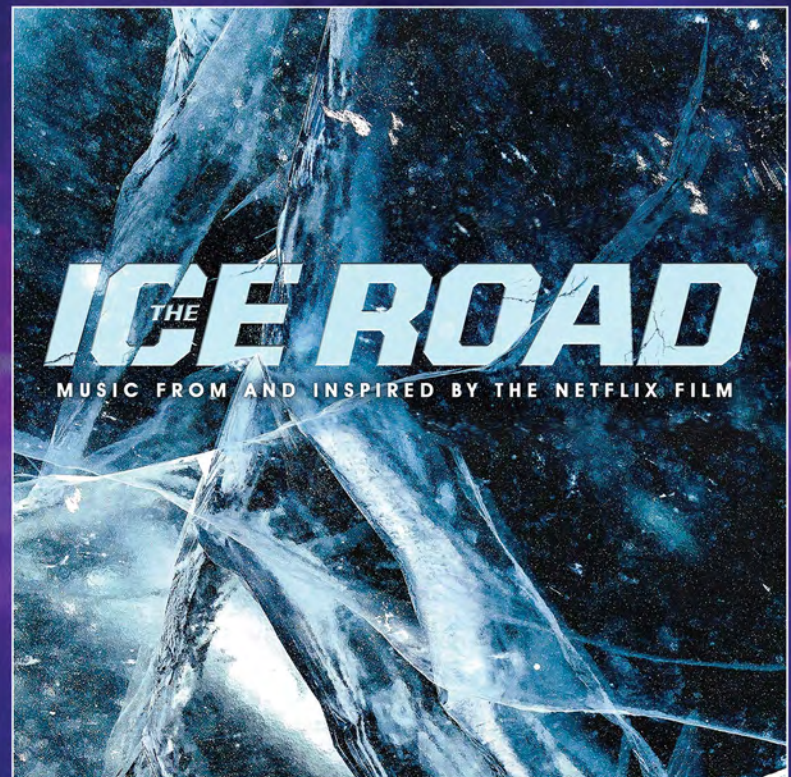
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THE

YEAR

IN

CHARTS



Ranking the top performers on this year's charts —

including artists, albums, songs and touring

SMOKE: BERTRAND BRINDOFF/GETTY IMAGES; RODRIGO: JAY HAWWARD/GETTY IMAGES FOR iHeartMedia; DUA LIPA: SHUTTERSTOCK; JUSTIN BIEBER: JEFF MAYER/WIREIMAGE.COM; LIL NAS X: CINDY ORD/GETTY IMAGES FOR SKIDROW; RECORDS: DANIEL SUANNE CORREIA/AP/GETTY IMAGES; DRAKE: COURTESY OF REPUBLIC RECORDS.

'Certified' Chart King

Drake earns the year's top artist honors, with top new artist Olivia Rodrigo finishing at No. 2

BY KEITH CAULFIELD

DRAKE IS NO. 1 on *Billboard's* year-end Top Artists chart for a second time, while 2021 marks the fifth straight year that a male artist has finished atop the list. Post Malone led the way in both 2019 and 2020, while Drake was the top artist for the first time in 2018 and Ed Sheeran ruled in 2017.

The 35-year-old Drake is this year's top artist thanks not only to the success of his latest *Billboard* 200 No. 1 album, *Certified Lover Boy* (his 10th chart-topper), and its accompanying hits on the *Billboard* Hot 100 — he also holds the top spot thanks to the continued presence of his catalog of previously released albums on the *Billboard* 200.

Certified Lover Boy debuted at No. 1 on the Sept. 18, 2021-dated *Billboard* 200 with 613,000 equivalent album units earned in its first week, according to MRC Data — the largest week of any album during the 2021 chart year (Nov. 21, 2020–Nov. 13, 2021). It made the most of its nine weeks on the chart during the 2021 eligibility period, finishing at No. 5 on the year-end *Billboard* 200 Albums recap.

During the chart year, Drake placed eight albums on the *Billboard* 200 (with *Certified Lover Boy* the sole new release of the bunch). Only Taylor Swift had more albums on the chart in the 2021 chart year, with nine (three of which were new). She finishes at No. 4 on the Top Artists list. Drake also charted 35 songs on the Hot 100 during the chart year — with 13 of those reaching the top 10, including two No. 1s: "What's Next" and "Way 2 Sexy," the latter featuring Future and Young Thug.

Drake is also 2021's top male artist, while BTS scores top duo/group

for a second consecutive year and Olivia Rodrigo earns double honors as both top female artist and top new artist.

Dua Lipa's "Levitating" is the year-end No. 1 on the Hot 100 Songs recap, marking the first time in two decades that a song that didn't reach No. 1 on the weekly Hot 100 is the year's top hit.

The year-end No. 1 on the *Billboard* 200 Albums chart is Morgan Wallen's *Dangerous: The Double Album*. Despite controversy that resulted after a clip circulated in February of Wallen using a racial slur — prompting the removal of his music from many radio stations and streaming playlists — *Dangerous* spent 10 weeks atop the list and remained in the top 10 through the chart year. It's only the fourth country album to earn No. 1 year-end honors on *Billboard* 200 Albums since the list began publishing on a weekly basis in 1956. It follows Taylor Swift's *Fearless* (2009), Carrie Underwood's *Some Hearts* (2006) and Garth Brooks' *Ropin' the Wind* (1992).

Billboard's year-end music recaps represent aggregated metrics for each artist, title, label and music contributor on the weekly charts from Nov. 21, 2020, through Nov. 13, 2021. Rankings for MRC Data-based recaps reflect equivalent album units, airplay, sales or streaming during the weeks that the titles appeared on a respective chart during the tracking year. Any activity registered before or after a title's chart run isn't considered in these rankings. That methodology detail, and the November–November time period, account for some of the difference between these lists and the calendar-year recaps that are independently compiled by MRC Data. The Top Artists category ranks the best-performing acts of the year based on activity on the *Billboard* 200 and *Billboard* Hot 100, as well as *Billboard* Boxscore, for the 2021 tracking period.



Top Artists

POSITION / ARTIST / LABEL

1	Drake	OVO Sound/Republic
2	Olivia Rodrigo	Geffen/IGA
3	The Weeknd	XO/Republic
4	Taylor Swift	Republic
5	Morgan Wallen	Big Loud/Republic
6	Ariana Grande	Republic
7	Doja Cat	Kemosabe/RCA
8	Justin Bieber	Raymond Braun/Def Jam
9	Luke Combs	River House/Columbia Nashville/SMN
10	Pop Smoke	Victor Victor Worldwide/Republic
11	Dua Lipa	Warner
12	BTS	HYBE/BigHit Music
13	Billie Eilish	Darkroom/Interscope/IGA
14	Lil Baby	Quality Control/Motown/Capitol
15	The Kid LAROI	Columbia
16	Bad Bunny	Rimas
17	Lil Durk	Alamo
18	Polo G	Columbia
19	Lil Nas X	Columbia
20	Juice WRLD	Grade A/Interscope/IGA
21	Megan Thee Stallion	1501 Certified/300/AG
22	Rod Wave	Alamo
23	DaBaby	SouthCoast/Interscope/IGA
24	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
25	Moneybagg Yo	CMG/N-Less/Interscope/IGA
26	Post Malone	Republic
27	Chris Stapleton	Mercury Nashville/UMGN
28	Ed Sheeran	Atlantic/AG
29	J. Cole	Dreamville/Roc Nation/Interscope/IGA
30	Harry Styles	Erskine/Columbia
31	YoungBoy Never Broke Again	Never Broke Again/Atlantic/AG
32	Giveon	Not So Fast/Epic
33	SZA	Top Dawg/RCA
34	Young Thug	Young Stoner Life/300/Atlantic/AG
35	Cardi B	Atlantic/AG
36	Jack Harlow	Generation Now/Atlantic/AG
37	Lil Uzi Vert	Generation Now/Atlantic/AG
38	Glass Animals	Wolf Tone/Polydor/Republic
39	Bruno Mars	Atlantic/AG
40	Gabby Barrett	Warner Music Nashville/WMN
41	Machine Gun Kelly	EST19XX/Bad Boy/Interscope/IGA
42	Pooh Shiesty	1017 Global/Atlantic/AG
43	Future	Freebandz/Epic
44	Travis Scott	Cactus Jack/Grand Hustle/Epic
45	24kGoldn	RECORDS/Columbia
46	Lil Tjay	Columbia
47	Eminem	Shady/Aftermath/Interscope/IGA
48	Roddy Ricch	Bird Vision/Atlantic/AG
49	Luke Bryan	Capitol Nashville/UMGN
50	Kendrick Lamar	Top Dawg/Aftermath/Interscope/IGA
51	Walker Hayes	Monument
52	Masked Wolf	Teamwrk/Elektra/EMG
53	Tyler, the Creator	Columbia
54	Dan + Shay	Warner Music Nashville/WMN
55	Fleetwood Mac	Warner/Rhino
56	Thomas Rhett	Valory/BMLG
57	Chris Brown	CBE/RCA
58	AJR	AJR/BMG
59	The Beatles	Apple/Capitol/UME
60	Kid Cudi	Republic



Olivia Rodrigo, who leads the Top New Artists recap, became the first act with two No. 1 debuts on the weekly Billboard Hot 100 from a debut album: "drivers license" and "good 4 u," from her album *Sour*.

61	H.E.R.	MBK/RCA
62	DJ Khaled	We The Best/Epic
63	Florida Georgia Line	BMLG
64	Gunna	Young Stoner Life/300/AG
65	Anderson .Paak	APE SHIT/Aftermath/12Tone/Atlantic/AG
66	Khalid	Right Hand/RCA
67	Maroon 5	222/Interscope/IGA
68	Lewis Capaldi	Vertigo/Capitol
69	Queen	Hollywood
70	Ava Max	Max Cut/Artist Partner Group/Atlantic/AG
71	Tate McRae	RCA
72	Jason Aldean	Macon/Broken Bow/BMG/BBMG
73	Kane Brown	RCA Nashville/SMN
74	Migos	Quality Control/Motown/Capitol
75	Elton John	Rocket/Mercury/EMI/Interscope/IGA
76	Carrie Underwood	Capitol Nashville/UMGN
77	King Von	Only The Family/EMPIRE
78	Saweetie	ICY/Warner
79	Michael Jackson	MJJ/Epic
80	AC/DC	Columbia
81	Kali Uchis	EMI/Interscope/IGA
82	XXXTENTACION	Bad Vibes Forever/EMPIRE

83	Miley Cyrus	RCA
84	blackbear	Beartrap/Alamo/Columbia
85	Lee Brice	Curb
86	Guns N' Roses	Geffen/IGA
87	Mariah Carey	Butterfly MC/Epic
88	Eagles	ERC
89	Sam Smith	Capitol
90	Yung Bleu	Vandross/EMPIRE
91	Miranda Lambert	Vanner/RCA Nashville/SMN
92	Imagine Dragons	KIDinaKORNER/Interscope/IGA
93	Trippie Redd	1400/TenThousand Projects
94	CJ	CJ Music Group/Warner
95	Playboi Carti	AWGE/Interscope/IGA
96	Sam Hunt	MCA Nashville/UMGN
97	Jhene Aiko	2 Fish/ARTclub/ARTium/Def Jam
98	Eric Church	EMI Nashville/UMGN
99	Adele	XL/Columbia
100	Creedence Clearwater Revival	Fantasy/Craft/Concord

See more year-end charts at
[billboard.com/charts/2021/year-end](https://www.billboard.com/charts/2021/year-end)



In March, Giveon scored his first Billboard 200 top 10 with *When It's All Said and Done... Take Time*. A week later, he followed with his first Hot 100 No. 1 as a featured artist, with Daniel Caesar, on Justin Bieber's "Peaches."

Top Artists – Duo/Group

POSITION / ARTIST / LABEL

1	BTS	HYBE/BigHit Music
2	Glass Animals	Wolf Tone/Polydor/Republic
3	Dan + Shay	Warner Music Nashville/WMN
4	Fleetwood Mac	Warner/Rhino
5	AJR	AJR/BMG
6	The Beatles	Apple/Capitol/UMe
7	Florida Georgia Line	BMLG
8	Maroon 5	222/Interscope/IGA
9	Queen	Hollywood
10	Migos	Quality Control/Motown/Capitol

Top Artists – Female

POSITION / ARTIST / LABEL

1	Olivia Rodrigo	Geffen/IGA
2	Taylor Swift	Republic
3	Ariana Grande	Republic
4	Doja Cat	Kemosabe/RCA
5	Dua Lipa	Warner
6	Billie Eilish	Darkroom/Interscope/IGA
7	Megan Thee Stallion	1501 Certified/300/AG
8	SZA	Top Dawg/RCA
9	Cardi B	Atlantic/AG
10	Gabby Barrett	Warner Music Nashville/WMN

Top Artists – Male

POSITION / ARTIST / LABEL

1	Drake	OVO Sound/Republic
2	The Weeknd	XO/Republic
3	Morgan Wallen	Big Loud/Republic
4	Justin Bieber	Raymond Braun/Def Jam
5	Luke Combs	River House/Columbia Nashville/SMN
6	Pop Smoke	Victor Victor Worldwide/Republic
7	Lil Baby	Quality Control/Motown/Capitol
8	The Kid LAROI	Columbia
9	Bad Bunny	Rimas
10	Lil Durk	Alamo

Top Artists – New

POSITION / ARTIST / LABEL

1	Olivia Rodrigo	Geffen/IGA
2	The Kid LAROI	Columbia
3	Giveon	Not So Fast/Epic
4	Pooh Shiesty	1017 Global/Atlantic/AG
5	24kGoldn	RECORDS/Columbia

Top Labels

POSITION / LABEL

1	Republic
2	Interscope Geffen A&M
3	Columbia
4	Atlantic Group
5	RCA
6	Universal Music Enterprises
7	Warner
8	Capitol
9	Def Jam
10	Legacy

THE YEAR IN CHART FEATS Bieber, Swift, Drake, The Weeknd



Bieber

01

Justin Bieber

became the first solo male to debut at No. 1 on the Hot 100 and Billboard 200 in the same week thanks to "Peaches" and *Justice*, respectively, on April 3. Overall, only he, Swift, Drake and BTS have landed the achievement.

10:13

Thanks to its 10-minute, 13-second expansion, **Taylor Swift's** "All Too Well (Taylor's Version)" became the longest Hot 100 No. 1 by run time. It passed Don McLean's 8-minute, 37-second "American Pie (Parts I & II)."

09

On the Sept. 18-dated Hot 100, **Drake** dominated with a record nine songs in the top 10 — including the entire top five, joining only The Beatles, who monopolized the top five on the chart dated April 4, 1964.

90

The Weeknd's No. 1 hit "Blinding Lights" went on to shatter the records for the most weeks spent in the Hot 100's top five (43), top 10 (57), top 40 (86) and on the chart overall (90).
—GARY TRUST



The Weeknd

TOP COUNTRY FEMALE
GABBY BARRETT

TOP COUNTRY DUO/GROUP
DAN + SHAY

#1 HOT COUNTRY SONGS IMPRINT
#1 COUNTRY AIRPLAY IMPRINT
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CONGRATS



Hot 100 Songs

POSITION / TITLE / ARTIST / LABEL

1	Levitating	Dua Lipa	Warner
2	Save Your Tears	The Weeknd & Ariana Grande	XO/Republic
3	Blinding Lights	The Weeknd	XO/Republic
4	Mood	24kGoldn Feat. iann dior	RECORDS/Columbia
5	Good 4 U	Olivia Rodrigo	Geffen/Interscope
6	Kiss Me More	Doja Cat Feat. SZA	Kemosabe/RCA
7	Leave The Door Open	Silk Sonic (Bruno Mars & Anderson .Paak)	Aftermath/Atlantic
8	Drivers License	Olivia Rodrigo	Geffen/Interscope
9	Montero (Call Me By Your Name)	Lil Nas X	Columbia
10	Peaches	Justin Bieber Feat. Daniel Caesar & Giveon	Raymond Braun/Def Jam
11	Butter	BTS	HYBE/BigHit Music/Columbia
12	Stay	The Kid LAROI & Justin Bieber	Raymond Braun/Columbia/Def Jam
13	Deja Vu	Olivia Rodrigo	Geffen/Interscope
14	Positions	Ariana Grande	Republic
15	Bad Habits	Ed Sheeran	Atlantic
16	Heat Waves	Glass Animals	Wolf Tone/Polydor/Republic
17	Without You	The Kid LAROI	Columbia
18	Forever After All	Luke Combs	River House/Columbia Nashville
19	Go Crazy	Chris Brown & Young Thug	300/CBE/RCA
20	Astronaut In The Ocean	Masked Wolf	Teamwrk/Elektra/EMG
21	34+35	Ariana Grande Feat. Doja Cat & Megan Thee Stallion	Republic
22	What You Know Bout Love	Pop Smoke	Victor Victor Worldwide/Republic
23	My Ex's Best Friend	Machine Gun Kelly X blackbear	EST19XX/Bad Boy/Interscope
24	Industry Baby	Lil Nas X & Jack Harlow	Columbia
25	Therefore I Am	Billie Eilish	Darkroom/Interscope
26	Up	Cardi B	Atlantic
27	Fancy Like	Walker Hayes	Monument/RCA
28	Dakiti	Bad Bunny & Jhay Cortez	Rimas
29	Best Friend	Saweezie Feat. Doja Cat	ICY/Warner
30	Rapstar	Polo G	Columbia
31	Heartbreak Anniversary	Giveon	Not So Fast/Epic
32	For The Night	Pop Smoke Feat. Lil Baby & DaBaby	Victor Victor Worldwide/Republic
33	Calling My Phone	Lil Tjay Feat. 6LACK	Columbia
34	Beautiful Mistakes	Maroon 5 Feat. Megan Thee Stallion	222/Interscope
35	Holy	Justin Bieber Feat. Chance The Rapper	Raymond Braun/Def Jam
36	On Me	Lil Baby	Quality Control/Wolpack Global/Motown/Capitol
37	You Broke Me First.	Tate McRae	RCA
38	Traitor	Olivia Rodrigo	Geffen/Interscope
39	Back In Blood	Pooh Shiesty Feat. Lil Durk	1017 Global/Atlantic
40	I Hope	Gabby Barrett Feat. Charlie Puth	Warner Music Nashville/WAR
41	Dynamite	BTS	BigHit Music/Columbia
42	Wockesha	Moneybagg Yo	CMG/N-Less/Interscope
43	You Right	Doja Cat & The Weeknd	Kemosabe/RCA
44	Beat Box	SpoteMGottem Feat. Pooh Shiesty Or DaBaby	SpoteMGottem/Rebel Records/Geffen/Interscope
45	Laugh Now Cry Later	Drake Feat. Lil Durk	OVO Sound/Republic
46	Need To Know	Doja Cat	Kemosabe/RCA
47	Wants And Needs	Drake Feat. Lil Baby	OVO Sound/Republic
48	Way 2 Sexy	Drake Feat. Future & Young Thug	OVO Sound/Republic
49	Telepatia	Kali Uchis	EMI/Interscope
50	Whoopy	CJ	CJ Music Group/T-Series/Warner
51	Lemonade	Internet Money & Gunna Feat. Don Toliver & NAV	Internet Money/TenThousandProjects/Capitol
52	Good Days	SZA	Top Dawg/RCA
53	Starting Over	Chris Stapleton	Mercury Nashville
54	Body	Megan Thee Stallion	1501 Certified/300
55	Willow	Taylor Swift	Republic
56	Bang!	AJR	AJR/BMG/S-Curve
57	Better Together	Luke Combs	River House/Columbia Nashville
58	You're Mines Still	Yung Bleu Feat. Drake	Vandross/OVO Sound/EMPIRE/Warner
59	Every Chance I Get	DJ Khaled Feat. Lil Baby & Lil Durk	We The Best/Epic
60	Essence	Wizkid Feat. Justin Bieber & Tems	Starboy/RCA

61	Chasing After You	Ryan Hurd With Maren Morris	Arista Nashville
62	The Good Ones	Gabby Barrett	Warner Music Nashville/WAR
63	Leave Before You Love Me	Marshmello X Jonas Brothers	Joytime Collective/Republic
64	Glad You Exist	Dan + Shay	Warner Music Nashville/WAR
65	Lonely	Justin Bieber & Benny Blanco	Interscope/Def Jam
66	Beggin'	Maneskin	Sony Music Latin/Arista
67	Streets	Doja Cat	Kemosabe/RCA
68	What's Next	Drake	OVO Sound/Republic
69	Famous Friends	Chris Young + Kane Brown	RCA Nashville
70	Lil Bit	Nelly & Florida Georgia Line	RECORDS/BMLG/Columbia
71	Thot Shit	Megan Thee Stallion	1501 Certified/300
72	Late At Night	Roddy Ricch	Atlantic
73	Kings & Queens	Ava Max	Max Cut/Arista Partner Group/Atlantic
74	Anyone	Justin Bieber	Raymond Braun/Def Jam
75	Track Star	Mooski	Wealthy 4 Life/Capitol
76	Time Today	Moneybagg Yo	CMG/N-Less/Interscope
77	Cry Baby	Megan Thee Stallion Feat. DaBaby	1501 Certified/300
78	All I Want For Christmas Is You	Mariah Carey	Columbia/Legacy
79	No More Parties	Coi Leray Feat. Lil Durk	Republic
80	What's Your Country Song	Thomas Rhett	Valory
81	One Too Many	Keith Urban Duet With Pink	Hit Red/Capitol Nashville/Capitol
82	Arcade	Duncan Laurence	Spark Records/Capitol
83	Yonaguni	Bad Bunny	Rimas
84	Good Time	Niko Moon	RCA Nashville
85	If I Didn't Love You	Jason Aldean & Carrie Underwood	Macon/Capitol Nashville/Broken Bow
86	Knife Talk	Drake Feat. 21 Savage & Project Pat	OVO Sound/Republic
87	pov	Ariana Grande	Republic
88	Just The Way	Parmalee x Blanco Brown	Stoney Creek
89	Take My Breath	The Weeknd	XO/Republic
90	We're Good	Dua Lipa	Warner
91	Hell Of A View	Eric Church	EMI Nashville
92	Rockin' Around The Christmas Tree	Brenda Lee	Decca/MCA Nashville/UMe
93	Put Your Records On	Ritt Momney	Quarter Zip/Disruptor/Columbia
94	Happier Than Ever	Billie Eilish	Darkroom/Interscope
95	Single Saturday Night	Cole Swindell	Warner Music Nashville/WMN
96	Things A Man Oughta Know	Lainey Wilson	Broken Bow
97	Throat Baby (Go Baby)	BRS Kash	Team Lilly/LVRN/Interscope
98	Tombstone	Rod Wave	Alamo
99	Drinkin' Beer, Talkin' God, Amen.	Chase Rice Feat. Florida Georgia Line	Dack Janiels/BMLG/Broken Bow
100	Todo De Ti	Rauw Alejandro	Duars/Sony Music Latin



Walker Hayes' crossover hit, and Applebee's date-night ode, "Fancy Like" became his first Hot Country Songs No. 1 and first Hot 100 top 10.



Shining Just The Way She Likes

"'LEVITATING' DOING ITS THING on the *Billboard* chart is absolutely surreal," marvels Dua Lipa.

The singer-songwriter's '80s-inspired pop smash "Levitating" triumphs as the No. 1 hit on *Billboard*'s 2021 year-end Hot 100 Songs chart following its record-breaking run on the weekly ranking, which blends streaming, radio airplay and sales data. The song peaked at No. 2 on the May 22, 2021-dated chart and placed in the top 40 each week of the 2021 chart year, including 41 in the top 10, a record for a song by a woman in the history of the Hot 100.

"It's nice after you work so hard, especially despite the pandemic, when you've got limited resources," says Lipa of her achievement. "It means a lot to me."

The persistent performance of "Levitating" paid off, as it is only the third song to earn top year-end status on the Hot 100 without having reached No. 1 on the weekly chart since it originated in August 1958. The other two songs to win an entire year without leading the weekly chart are Faith Hill's "Breathe" and Lifehouse's "Hanging by a Moment" — in 2000 and 2001, respectively — after both likewise peaked at No. 2. —K. C.

RIMAS

2021



BAD BUNNY

ACHIEVED #1 15 TIMES

TOP LATIN ARTIST
TOP LATIN ARTIST MALE
HOT LATIN SONGS ARTIST
HOT LATIN SONGS DÁKITI
HOT LATIN SONGS WRITER
TOP LATIN ALBUMS ARTIST
TOP LATIN ALBUMS EL ÚLTIMO TOUR DEL MUNDO
LATIN DIGITAL SONG SALES DÁKITI
LATIN DIGITAL SONG SALES ARTIST
LATIN STREAMING SONGS DÁKITI
LATIN STREAMING SONGS ARTIST
INDEPENDENT ALBUMS ARTIST
INDEPENDENT ALBUM EL ÚLTIMO TOUR DEL MUNDO
LATIN RHYTHM ALBUMS ARTIST
LATIN RHYTHM ALBUMS EL ÚLTIMO TOUR DEL MUNDO

RIMAS

ACHIEVED #1 5 TIMES

INDEPENDENT ALBUMS IMPRINT
HOT LATIN SONGS IMPRINT
TOP LATIN ALBUMS IMPRINT
LATIN RHYTHM ALBUMS IMPRINT
LATIN RHYTHM ALBUMS LABEL

WHAT A YEAR!

Hot 100 Artists

POSITION / ARTIST

1	Olivia Rodrigo
2	Drake
3	The Weeknd
4	Justin Bieber
5	Doja Cat
6	Ariana Grande
7	Dua Lipa
8	BTS
9	Lil Nas X
10	Morgan Wallen
11	Luke Combs
12	The Kid LAROI
13	Pop Smoke
14	Megan Thee Stallion
15	Lil Baby
16	DaBaby
17	Ed Sheeran
18	Billie Eilish
19	Moneybagg Yo
20	Lil Durk
21	Bad Bunny
22	Polo G
23	Cardi B
24	24kGoldn
25	Taylor Swift
26	SZA
27	Giveon
28	Kanye West
29	Glass Animals
30	Masked Wolf
31	Young Thug

32	Gabby Barrett
33	Jack Harlow
34	Rod Wave
35	Anderson .Paak (Tie)
35	Bruno Mars (Tie)
37	Walker Hayes
38	Chris Stapleton
39	Dan + Shay
40	J. Cole
41	Tate McRae
42	AJR
43	Thomas Rhett
44	Saweetie
45	Luke Bryan
46	blackbear
47	Roddy Ricch
48	Pooh Shiesty
49	Chris Brown
50	Ava Max

Hot 100 Labels

POSITION / LABEL

1	Republic
2	Interscope
3	Columbia
4	RCA
5	Atlantic
6	Warner
7	Def Jam
8	Capitol
9	Epic
10	Columbia Nashville

Hot 100 Producers

POSITION / PRODUCER

1	Dan Nigro
2	Joey Moi
3	Omer Fedi
4	Finneas
5	Dr. Luke
6	Koz
7	Max Martin
8	Oscar Holter
9	Blake Slatkin
10	The Weeknd

Hot 100 Songwriters

POSITION / SONGWRITER

1	Olivia Rodrigo
2	Dan Nigro
3	Drake
4	DaBaby
5	Omer Fedi
6	Doja Cat
7	Lil Baby
8	Dave Bayley
9	Lil Durk
10	The Weeknd

Hot 100 Publishers

POSITION / PUBLISHER

1	Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI
2	Sony Tunes, ASCAP
3	WC Music Corp., ASCAP
4	Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI
5	Universal Music Corp., ASCAP
6	Kobalt Songs Music Publishing LLC, ASCAP
7	Songs Of Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc., BMI
8	Song Songs LLC, BMI
9	Liv Laf Luv, ASCAP
10	Beggars Songs, SESAC

Hot 100 Publishing Corporations

POSITION / CORPORATION

1	Sony Music Publishing
2	Warner Chappell Music
3	Universal Music
4	Kobalt Music
5	BMG
6	Prescription Songs LLC
7	Big Machine Music
8	Liv Laf Luv
9	Beggars Music Group
10	Daniel Leonard Nigro Music

See more year-end charts at
billboard.com/charts/2021/year-end



Lil Nas X landed his second and third Hot 100 No. 1s with “Montero (Call Me by Your Name)” and his Jack Harlow team-up “Industry Baby,” respectively. His “Old Town Road,” featuring Billy Ray Cyrus, led for a record 19 weeks in 2019.



Doja Cat joined Ariana Grande as the only acts ever with three concurrent top 10s on the weekly Mainstream Top 40 airplay chart, with the former earning the honor for two weeks in October after the latter achieved the feat for the same amount of time in May.

NO. 1 RADIO SONGS ARTISTS

THE WEEKND

Digital Song Sales

POSITION / TITLE / ARTIST / LABEL

1	Butter	BTS	HYBE/BigHit Music
2	Dynamite	BTS	BigHit Music
3	Fancy Like	Walker Hayes	Monument
4	Levitating	Dua Lipa	Warner
5	Permission To Dance	BTS	HYBE/BigHit Music
6	Astronaut In The Ocean	Masked Wolf	Teamwrk/Elektra/EMG
7	Blinding Lights	The Weeknd	XO/Republic
8	Bad Habits	Ed Sheeran	Atlantic/AG
9	Leave The Door Open	Silk Sonic (Bruno Mars & Anderson .Paak)	Aftermath/Atlantic/AG
10	My Universe	Coldplay x BTS	Parlophone/Atlantic/AG
11	Save Your Tears	The Weeknd & Ariana Grande	XO/Republic
12	Lil Bit	Nelly & Florida Georgia Line	RECORDS/Columbia
13	Life Goes On	BTS	BigHit Music
14	Drivers License	Olivia Rodrigo	Geffen/IGA
15	Stay	The Kid LAROI & Justin Bieber	Columbia
16	Best Friend	Saweetie Feat. Doja Cat	ICY/Warner
17	Up	Cardi B	Atlantic/AG
18	Good 4 U	Olivia Rodrigo	Geffen/IGA
19	Drunk (And I Don't Wanna Go Home)	Elle King & Miranda Lambert	RCA
20	Forever After All	Luke Combs	River House/Columbia Nashville/SMN
21	The Good Ones	Gabby Barrett	Warner Music Nashville/WMN
22	Peaches	Justin Bieber Feat. Daniel Caesar & Giveon	Raymond Braun/Def Jam
23	Am I The Only One	Aaron Lewis	Valory/BMLG
24	Bang!	AJR	AJR/BMG
25	Easy On Me	Adele	Columbia
26	Montero (Call Me By Your Name)	Lil Nas X	Columbia
27	Kiss Me More	Doja Cat Feat. SZA	Kemosabe/RCA
28	If I Didn't Love You	Jason Aldean & Carrie Underwood	Macon/Broken Bow/BMG/BBMG
29	Therefore I Am	Billie Eilish	Darkroom/Interscope/IGA
30	Industry Baby	Lil Nas X & Jack Harlow	Columbia
31	Cold Heart (PNAU Remix)	Elton John & Dua Lipa	Rocket/Mercury/EMI/Interscope/IGA
32	Mood	24kGoldn Feat. iann dior	RECORDS/Columbia
33	Starting Over	Chris Stapleton	Mercury Nashville/UMGN
34	Body	Megan Thee Stallion	1501 Certified/300/AG
35	I Hope	Gabby Barrett Feat. Charlie Puth	Warner Music Nashville/WMN
36	Heat Waves	Glass Animals	Wolf Tone/Polydor/Republic
37	Let's Go Brandon	Loza Alexander	Loza Alexander
38	Leave Before You Love Me	Marshmello X Jonas Brothers	Joytime Collective/Republic
39	Beautiful Mistakes	Maroon 5 Feat. Megan Thee Stallion	222/Interscope/IGA
40	Blue & Grey	BTS	BigHit Music
41	Beggin'	Maneskin	RCA/Sony Music Italy/Sony Music Latin
42	Shivers	Ed Sheeran	Atlantic/AG
43	Anyone	Justin Bieber	Raymond Braun/Def Jam
44	Willow	Taylor Swift	Republic
45	Without You	The Kid LAROI & Miley Cyrus	Columbia
46	Holy	Justin Bieber Feat. Chance The Rapper	Raymond Braun/Def Jam
47	Buy Dirt	Jordan Davis Feat. Luke Bryan	MCA Nashville/UMGN
48	Lonely	Justin Bieber & benny blanco	Interscope/Def Jam
49	Deja Vu	Olivia Rodrigo	Geffen/IGA
50	Better Together	Luke Combs	River House/Columbia Nashville/SMN

Radio Songs

POSITION / TITLE / ARTIST / LABEL

1	Levitating	Dua Lipa	Warner
2	Mood	24kGoldn Feat. iann dior	RECORDS/Columbia
3	Save Your Tears	The Weeknd & Ariana Grande	XO/Republic
4	Blinding Lights	The Weeknd	XO/Republic
5	Leave The Door Open	Silk Sonic (Bruno Mars & Anderson .Paak)	Aftermath/Atlantic
6	Go Crazy	Chris Brown & Young Thug	300/CBE/RCA
7	Kiss Me More	Doja Cat Feat. SZA	Kemosabe/RCA
8	Peaches	Justin Bieber Feat. Daniel Caesar & Giveon	Raymond Braun/Def Jam
9	Positions	Ariana Grande	Republic
10	Good 4 U	Olivia Rodrigo	Geffen/Interscope
11	Bad Habits	Ed Sheeran	Atlantic
12	Montero (Call Me By Your Name)	Lil Nas X	Columbia
13	Drivers License	Olivia Rodrigo	Geffen/Interscope
14	Deja Vu	Olivia Rodrigo	Geffen/Interscope
15	Therefore I Am	Billie Eilish	Darkroom/Interscope
16	What You Know Bout Love	Pop Smoke	Victor Victor Worldwide/Republic
17	Stay	The Kid LAROI & Justin Bieber	Raymond Braun/Columbia/Def Jam
18	Holy	Justin Bieber Feat. Chance The Rapper	Raymond Braun/Def Jam
19	34+35	Ariana Grande	Republic
20	Without You	The Kid LAROI	Columbia
21	I Hope	Gabby Barrett Feat. Charlie Puth	Warner Music Nashville/WAR
22	My Ex's Best Friend	Machine Gun Kelly X blackbear	EST19XX/Bad Boy/Interscope
23	Laugh Now Cry Later	Drake Feat. Lil Durk	OVO Sound/Republic

24	Kings & Queens	Ava Max	Max Cut/Artist Partner Group/Atlantic
25	Beautiful Mistakes	Maroon 5 Feat. Megan Thee Stallion	222/Interscope
26	Bang!	AJR	AJR/BMG/S-Curve
27	You Broke Me First.	Tate McRae	RCA
28	Best Friend	Saweetie Feat. Doja Cat	ICY/Warner
29	You Right	Doja Cat & The Weeknd	Kemosabe/RCA
30	For The Night	Pop Smoke Feat. Lil Baby & DaBaby	Victor Victor Worldwide/Republic
31	Forever After All	Luke Combs	River House/Columbia Nashville
32	Lonely	Justin Bieber & benny blanco	Interscope/Def Jam
33	Leave Before You Love Me	Marshmello X Jonas Brothers	Joytime Collective/Republic
34	Industry Baby	Lil Nas X & Jack Harlow	Columbia
35	Heartbreak Anniversary	Giveon	Not So Fast/Epic
36	What's Your Country Song	Thomas Rhett	Valory
37	Better Together	Luke Combs	River House/Columbia Nashville
38	pov	Ariana Grande	Republic
39	Famous Friends	Chris Young + Kane Brown	RCA Nashville
40	Single Saturday Night	Cole Swindell	Warner Music Nashville/WMN
41	Essence	Wizkid Feat. Justin Bieber & Tems	Starboy/RCA
42	Dakiti	Bad Bunny & Jhay Cortez	Rimas
43	Arcade	Duncan Laurence	Spark Records/Capitol
44	Just The Way	Parmalee x Blanco Brown	Stoney Creek
45	Willow	Taylor Swift	Republic
46	Down To One	Luke Bryan	Capitol Nashville
47	Drinkin' Beer, Talkin' God, Amen.	Chase Rice Feat. Florida Georgia Line	Dack Janiels/BMLG/Broken Bow
48	Up	Cardi B	Atlantic
49	Before You Go	Lewis Capaldi	Vertigo/Capitol
50	Telepatia	Kali Uchis	EMI/Interscope

Streaming Songs

POSITION / TITLE / ARTIST / LABEL

1	Levitating	Dua Lipa	Warner
2	Save Your Tears	The Weeknd & Ariana Grande	XO/Republic
3	Good 4 U	Olivia Rodrigo	Geffen/Interscope
4	Drivers License	Olivia Rodrigo	Geffen/Interscope
5	Montero (Call Me By Your Name)	Lil Nas X	Columbia
6	Kiss Me More	Doja Cat Feat. SZA	Kemosabe/RCA
7	Blinding Lights	The Weeknd	XO/Republic
8	Rapstar	Polo G	Columbia
9	Stay	The Kid LAROI & Justin Bieber	Raymond Braun/Columbia/Def Jam
10	Astronaut In The Ocean	Masked Wolf	Teamwrk/Elektra/EMG
11	Heat Waves	Glass Animals	Wolf Tone/Polydor/Republic
12	Mood	24kGoldn Feat. iann dior	RECORDS/Columbia
13	Dakiti	Bad Bunny & Jhay Cortez	Rimas
14	Peaches	Justin Bieber Feat. Daniel Caesar & Giveon	Raymond Braun/Def Jam
15	Leave The Door Open	Silk Sonic (Bruno Mars & Anderson.Paak)	Aftermath/Atlantic
16	Wants And Needs	Drake Feat. Lil Baby	OVO Sound/Republic
17	Industry Baby	Lil Nas X & Jack Harlow	Columbia
18	Up	Cardi B	Atlantic
19	Back In Blood	Pooh Shiesty Feat. Lil Durk	1017 Global/Atlantic
20	Deja Vu	Olivia Rodrigo	Geffen/Interscope
21	Calling My Phone	Lil Tjay Feat. 6LACK	Columbia
22	For The Night	Pop Smoke Feat. Lil Baby & DaBaby	Victor Victor Worldwide/Republic
23	Forever After All	Luke Combs	River House/Columbia Nashville
24	On Me	Lil Baby	Quality Control/Wolpack Global/Motown/Capitol
25	Beat Box	SpotemGottem Feat. Pooh Shiesty Or DaBaby	SpotemGottem/Real Records/Geffen/Interscope
26	Heartbreak Anniversary	Giveon	Not So Fast/Epic
27	Traitor	Olivia Rodrigo	Geffen/Interscope
28	34+35	Ariana Grande Feat. Doja Cat & Megan Thee Stallion	Republic
29	Good Days	SZA	Top Dawg/RCA
30	Fancy Like	Walker Hayes	Monument
31	Bad Habits	Ed Sheeran	Atlantic
32	Need To Know	Doja Cat	Kemosabe/RCA
33	Without You	The Kid LAROI	Columbia
34	Way 2 Sexy	Drake Feat. Future & Young Thug	OVO Sound/Republic
35	Streets	Doja Cat	Kemosabe/RCA
36	Best Friend	Saweetie Feat. Doja Cat	ICY/Warner
37	Lemonade	Internet Money & Gunna Feat. Don Toliver & NAV	Internet Money/TenThousandProjects/Capitol
38	What You Know Bout Love	Pop Smoke	Victor Victor Worldwide/Republic
39	Wockesha	Moneybagg Yo	CMG/N-Less/Interscope
40	Whopty	CJ	CJ Music Group/T-Series/Warner
41	Rockstar	DaBaby Feat. Roddy Ricch	SouthCoast/Interscope
42	Positions	Ariana Grande	Republic
43	Life Is Good	Future Feat. Drake	Freebandz/Epic
44	Knife Talk	Drake Feat. 21 Savage & Project Pat	OVO Sound/Republic
45	Every Chance I Get	DJ Khaled Feat. Lil Baby & Lil Durk	We The Best/Epic
46	Wap	Cardi B Feat. Megan Thee Stallion	Atlantic
47	All I Want For Christmas Is You	Mariah Carey	Columbia/Legacy
48	Happier Than Ever	Billie Eilish	Darkroom/Interscope
49	You're Mines Still	Yung Bleu Feat. Drake	Vandross/OVO Sound/EMPIRE/Warner
50	Whats Poppin	Jack Harlow Feat. DaBaby, Tory Lanez & Lil Wayne	Generation Now/Atlantic



Despite the controversy over the clip that circulated in February of Wallen using a racial slur, prompting his music's removal from many radio stations and streaming playlists, *Dangerous: The Double Album* scored more weeks at No. 1 (10) on the Billboard 200 than any other album in 2021.

Billboard 200 Albums

POSITION / TITLE / ARTIST / LABEL

1	<i>Dangerous: The Double Album</i>	Morgan Wallen	Big Loud/Republic
2	<i>Sour</i>	Olivia Rodrigo	Geffen/IGA
3	<i>Shoot For The Stars Aim For The Moon</i>	Pop Smoke	Victor Victor Worldwide/Republic
4	<i>Evermore</i>	Taylor Swift	Republic
5	<i>Certified Lover Boy</i>	Drake	OVO Sound/Republic
6	<i>F*ck Love</i>	The Kid LAROI	Columbia
7	<i>What You See Is What You Get</i>	Luke Combs	River House/Columbia Nashville/SMN
8	<i>Positions</i>	Ariana Grande	Republic
9	<i>Future Nostalgia</i>	Dua Lipa	Warner
10	<i>My Turn</i>	Lil Baby	Quality Control/Motown/Capitol
11	<i>Legends Never Die</i>	Juice WRLD	Grade A/Interscope/IGA
12	<i>Folklore</i>	Taylor Swift	Republic
13	<i>Hollywood's Bleeding</i>	Post Malone	Republic
14	<i>After Hours</i>	The Weeknd	XO/Republic
15	<i>Justice</i>	Justin Bieber	Raymond Braun/Def Jam
16	<i>Fine Line</i>	Harry Styles	Erskine/Columbia
17	<i>El Ultimo Tour Del Mundo</i>	Bad Bunny	Rimas
18	<i>Good News</i>	Megan Thee Stallion	1501 Certified/300/AG
19	<i>The Voice</i>	Lil Durk	Alamo/Geffen/IGA
20	<i>Planet Her</i>	Doja Cat	Kemosabe/RCA
21	<i>Soufly</i>	Rod Wave	Alamo
22	<i>Goodbye & Good Riddance</i>	Juice WRLD	Grade A/Interscope/IGA
23	<i>Greatest Hits</i>	Queen	Hollywood
24	<i>Tickets To My Downfall</i>	Machine Gun Kelly	EST19XX/Bad Boy/Interscope/IGA

25	<i>Hamilton: An American Musical</i>	Original Broadway Cast	Hamilton Uptown/Atlantic/AG
26	<i>A Gangsta's Pain</i>	Moneybagg Yo	CMG/N-Less/Interscope/IGA
27	<i>When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?</i>	Billie Eilish	Darkroom/Interscope/IGA
28	<i>The Off-Season</i>	J. Cole	Dreamville/Roc-A-Fella/Interscope/IGA
29	<i>This One's For You</i>	Luke Combs	River House/Columbia Nashville/SMN
30	<i>The GOAT</i>	Polo G	Columbia
31	<i>The Highlights</i>	The Weeknd	XO/Republic
32	<i>Starting Over</i>	Chris Stapleton	Mercury Nashville/UMGN
33	<i>Fearless (Taylor's Version)</i>	Taylor Swift	Republic
34	<i>Rumours</i>	Fleetwood Mac	Warner/Rhino
35	<i>YHLQMDLG</i>	Bad Bunny	Rimas
36	<i>If I Know Me</i>	Morgan Wallen	Big Loud
37	<i>Shiesty Season</i>	Pooh Shiesty	1017 Global/Atlantic/AG
38	<i>The Voice Of The Heroes</i>	Lil Baby & Lil Durk	Alamo/Quality Control/Motown/IGA/Capitol
39	<i>Donda</i>	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
40	<i>Be</i>	BTS	BigHit Music
41	<i>Happier Than Ever</i>	Billie Eilish	Darkroom/Interscope/IGA
42	<i>Death Race For Love</i>	Juice WRLD	Grade A/Interscope/IGA
43	<i>Diamonds</i>	Elton John	Rocket/Island/UMe
44	<i>Hot Pink</i>	Doja Cat	Kemosabe/RCA
45	<i>Astroworld</i>	Travis Scott	Cactus Jack/Grand Hustle/Epic
46	<i>Music To Be Murdered By</i>	Eminem	Shady/Aftermath/Interscope/IGA
47	<i>Chronicle The 20 Greatest Hits</i>	Credence Clearwater Revival	Fantasy/Concord
48	<i>Curtain Call: The Hits</i>	Eminem	Shady/Aftermath/Interscope/IGA
49	<i>Pray 4 Love</i>	Rod Wave	Alamo/IGA
50	<i>Beerbongs & Bentleys</i>	Post Malone	Republic
51	<i>Thats What They All Say</i>	Jack Harlow	Generation Now/Atlantic/AG
52	<i>Blame It On Baby</i>	DaBaby	SouthCoast/Interscope/IGA

NO. 1 STREAMING SONGS ARTISTS
OLIVIA RODRIGO

Billboard 200 Artists

POSITION / ARTIST / LABEL

1	Taylor Swift	Republic
2	Drake	Young Money/Cash Money/Republic
3	Morgan Wallen	Big Loud/Republic
4	Juice WRLD	Grade A/Interscope/IGA
5	Pop Smoke	Victor Victor Worldwide/Republic
6	The Weeknd	XO/Republic
7	Post Malone	Republic
8	Luke Combs	River House/Columbia Nashville/SMN
9	Billie Eilish	Darkroom/Interscope/IGA
10	Bad Bunny	Rimas
11	Olivia Rodrigo	Geffen/IGA
12	Rod Wave	Alamo
13	Lil Durk	Alamo/Geffen/IGA
14	Lil Baby	Quality Control/Motown/Capitol
15	Polo G	Columbia
16	Ariana Grande	Republic
17	Doja Cat	Kemosabe/RCA
18	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
19	J. Cole	Dreamville/Roc Nation/Interscope/IGA
20	The Kid LAROI	Columbia
21	Chris Stapleton	Mercury Nashville/UMGN
22	Lil Uzi Vert	Generation Now/Atlantic/AG
23	YoungBoy Never Broke Again	Never Broke Again/Artist Partner Group/Atlantic/AG
24	Eminem	Shady/Aftermath/Interscope/IGA
25	Harry Styles	Erskine/Columbia
26	Dua Lipa	Warner
27	Justin Bieber	Raymond Braun/Def Jam
28	Moneybagg Yo	CMG/N-Less/Interscope/IGA
29	BTS	BigHit Music
30	Kendrick Lamar	Top Dawg/Aftermath/Interscope/IGA
31	Fleetwood Mac	Warner/Rhino
32	Megan Thee Stallion	1501 Certified/300/AG
33	Travis Scott	Cactus Jack/Grand Hustle/Epic
34	The Beatles	Apple/Capitol/UMe
35	Future	Freebandz/Epic

36	Queen	Hollywood
37	DaBaby	SouthCoast/Interscope/IGA
38	Khalid	Right Hand/RCA
39	Machine Gun Kelly	EST19XX/Bad Boy/Interscope/IGA
40	Tyler, The Creator	Columbia
41	AC/DC	Columbia/Legacy
42	Michael Jackson	Epic/Legacy
43	XXXTENTACION	Bad Vibes Forever
44	Kid Cudi	Dream On/G.O.O.D./Republic
45	Pooh Shiesty	1017 Global/Atlantic/AG
46	Lil Tjay	Columbia
47	Elton John	Rocket/Island/UMe
48	Ed Sheeran	Atlantic/AG
49	Jack Harlow	Generation Now/Atlantic/AG
50	Creedence Clearwater Revival	Fantasy/Concord

Billboard 200 Labels

POSITION / LABEL

1	Republic
2	Interscope Geffen A&M
3	Atlantic Group
4	Universal Music Enterprises
5	Columbia
6	RCA
7	Legacy
8	Capitol
9	Warner
10	Def Jam

Billboard 200 Distributors

POSITION / DISTRIBUTORS

1	Universal
2	Sony Music
3	WEA
4	Independents

Billboard Global 200 Songs

POSITION / TITLE / ARTIST

1	Levitating	Dua Lipa
2	Save Your Tears	The Weeknd & Ariana Grande
3	Blinding Lights	The Weeknd
4	Drivers License	Olivia Rodrigo
5	Dynamite	BTS
6	Dakiti	Bad Bunny & Jhay Cortez
7	Montero (Call Me By Your Name)	Lil Nas X
8	Stay	The Kid LAROI & Justin Bieber
9	Good 4 U	Olivia Rodrigo
10	Mood	24kGoldn Feat. iann dior
11	Peaches	Justin Bieber Feat. Daniel Caesar & Giveon
12	Butter	BTS
13	Kiss Me More	Doja Cat Feat. SZA
14	Astronaut In The Ocean	Masked Wolf
15	Bad Habits	Ed Sheeran
16	Leave The Door Open	Silk Sonic (Bruno Mars & Anderson .Paak)
17	Heat Waves	Glass Animals
18	Without You	The Kid LAROI
19	Positions	Ariana Grande
20	The Business	Tiesto
21	34+35	Ariana Grande
22	Dance Monkey	Tones And I
23	Watermelon Sugar	Harry Styles
24	Hawai	Maluma
25	Beggin'	Maneskin
26	Industry Baby	Lil Nas X & Jack Harlow
27	Deja Vu	Olivia Rodrigo
28	Someone You Loved	Lewis Capaldi
29	Perfect	Ed Sheeran
30	Don't Start Now	Dua Lipa
31	Lemonade	Internet Money & Gunna Feat. Don Toliver & NAV
32	Goosebumps	Travis Scott & HVME
33	Todo De Ti	Rauw Alejandro
34	You Broke Me First.	Tate McRae
35	Roses	SAINT JHN
36	Streets	Doja Cat
37	Savage Love (Laxed - Siren Beat)	Jawsh 685 x Jason Derulo
38	Head & Heart	Joel Corry X MNEK
39	Heartbreak Anniversary	Giveon
40	For The Night	Pop Smoke Feat. Lil Baby & DaBaby
41	Sunflower	Post Malone & Swae Lee
42	WAP	Cardi B Feat. Megan Thee Stallion
43	Yonaguni	Bad Bunny
44	Shape Of You	Ed Sheeran
45	La Noche De Anoche	Bad Bunny & Rosalia
46	Rockstar	DaBaby Feat. Roddy Ricch
47	Rapstar	Polo G
48	Baby Shark	Pinkfong
49	Friday	Riton X Nightcrawlers Feat. Mufasa & Hypeman
50	Fiel	Los Legendarios, Wisin & Jhay Cortez
51	What You Know Bout Love	Pop Smoke
52	Whoopy	CJ
53	Believer	Imagine Dragons
54	Up	Cardi B
55	Yoru Ni Kakeru	YOASOBI
56	Therefore I Am	Billie Eilish
57	AM	Nio Garcia X J Balvin X Bad Bunny
58	Bad Guy	Billie Eilish
59	Traitor	Olivia Rodrigo
60	Before You Go	Lewis Capaldi



The year brought Elton John his first top 20 hit on the Hot 100 since 1998 thanks to "Cold Heart (PNAU Remix)," with Dua Lipa, and his 21st top 10 entry on the Billboard 200, *The Lockdown Sessions*.



BTS raised its count to six No. 1s on the weekly Billboard Global 200. No other act has more than two.

NO. 1 BILLBOARD GLOBAL EXCL. U.S. SONGS
“DYNAMITE” — BTS

61	Circles	Post Malone
62	Bichota	Karol G
63	Shallow	Lady Gaga & Bradley Cooper
64	Dreams	Fleetwood Mac
65	Sweater Weather	The Neighbourhood
66	Wellerman	Nathan Evans
67	Whats Poppin	Jack Harlow Feat. DaBaby, Tory Lanez & Lil Wayne
68	Need To Know	Doja Cat
69	Lovely	Billie Eilish & Khalid
70	Pepas	Farruko
71	Permission To Dance	BTS
72	Beautiful Mistakes	Maroon 5 Feat. Megan Thee Stallion
73	Bandido	Myke Towers & Juhn
74	Old Town Road	Lil Nas X Feat. Billy Ray Cyrus
75	Calling My Phone	Lil Tjay Feat. 6LACK
76	I Wanna Be Your Slave	Maneskin
77	Wants And Needs	Drake Feat. Lil Baby
78	Good Days	SZA
79	Memories	Maroon 5
80	Senorita	Shawn Mendes & Camila Cabello
81	Telepatia	Kali Uchis
82	Happier Than Ever	Billie Eilish
83	Arcade	Duncan Laurence
84	La Curiosidad	DJ Nelson Presenta Jay Wheeler & Myke Towers
85	Holy	Justin Bieber Feat. Chance The Rapper
86	Best Friend	Saweetie Feat. Doja Cat
87	Bohemian Rhapsody	Queen
88	Closer	The Chainsmokers Feat. Halsey
89	Lonely	Justin Bieber & benny blanco
90	All I Want For Christmas Is You	Mariah Carey
91	All Of Me	John Legend
92	Que Mas Pues?	J Balvin & Maria Becerra
93	Hold On	Justin Bieber
94	Despacito	Luis Fonsi & Daddy Yankee Feat. Justin Bieber

95	Goosebumps	Travis Scott
96	Pareja Del Ano	Sebastian Yatra X Myke Towers
97	Anyone	Justin Bieber
98	Prisoner	Miley Cyrus Feat. Dua Lipa
99	Woman	Doja Cat
100	Say You Won't Let Go	James Arthur
101	Willow	Taylor Swift
102	Love Nwantiti (Ah Ah Ah)	CKay
103	Happier	Olivia Rodrigo
104	Paradise	Meduza & Dermot Kennedy
105	My Ex's Best Friend	Machine Gun Kelly X blackbear
106	Ride It.	Regard
107	Fancy Like	Walker Hayes
108	Midnight Sky	Miley Cyrus
109	Reloj	Rauw Alejandro & Anuel AA
110	Life Is Good	Future Feat. Drake
111	Don't Stop Believin'	Journey
112	Your Love (9PM)	ATB x Topic x A7S
113	Smells Like Teen Spirit	Nirvana
114	I Don't Care	Ed Sheeran & Justin Bieber
115	911	Sech & Jhay Cortez
116	Forever After All	Luke Combs
117	Cold Heart (PNAU Remix)	Elton John & Dua Lipa
118	Shivers	Ed Sheeran
119	Take Me To Church	Hozier
120	Love Tonight	Shouse
121	Monster	Shawn Mendes & Justin Bieber
122	Dior	Pop Smoke
123	Rain On Me	Lady Gaga & Ariana Grande
124	Thinking Out Loud	Ed Sheeran
125	Way 2 Sexy	Drake Feat. Future & Young Thug
126	Hotel California	Eagles
127	Easy On Me	Adele
128	Say So	Doja Cat
129	Breaking Me	Topic & A7S
130	Favorite Crime	Olivia Rodrigo
131	Laugh Now Cry Later	Drake Feat. Lil Durk
132	We're Good	Dua Lipa
133	Life Goes On	BTS
134	Something Just Like This	The Chainsmokers & Coldplay
135	You Right	Doja Cat & The Weeknd
136	Counting Stars	OneRepublic
137	On Me	Lil Baby
138	Leave Before You Love Me	Marshmello X Jonas Brothers
139	Girl Like Me	Black Eyed Peas X Shakira
140	Botella Tras Botella	Gera MX + Christian Nodal
141	Monster	YOASOBI
142	Sweet Child O' Mine	Guns N' Roses
143	Last Christmas	Wham!
144	El Makinon	Karol G & Mariah Angeliq
145	Adore You	Harry Styles
146	Take My Breath	The Weeknd
147	Relacion	Sech, Daddy Yankee & J Balvin Feat. Rosalia & Farruko
148	Go Crazy	Chris Brown & Young Thug
149	Back In Blood	Pooh Shiesty Feat. Lil Durk
150	Kings & Queens	Ava Max
151	Intentions	Justin Bieber Feat. Quavo
152	Afterglow	Ed Sheeran
153	Volvi	Aventura x Bad Bunny
154	My Universe	Coldplay x BTS
155	Brutal	Olivia Rodrigo
156	Talking To The Moon	Bruno Mars
157	Jealousy, Jealousy	Olivia Rodrigo
158	Ain't Shit	Doja Cat

159	My Head And My Heart	Ava Max
160	Mienteme	TINI X Maria Becerra
161	Bed	Joel Corry X RAYE X David Guetta
162	The Box	Roddy Ricch
163	Cover Me In Sunshine	P!nk + Willow Sage Hart
164	Body	Megan Thee Stallion
165	Beat Box	SpoteMGottem Feat. Pooh Shiesty Or DaBaby
166	Sicko Mode	Travis Scott
167	Fair Trade	Drake Feat. Travis Scott
168	Knife Talk	Drake Feat. 21 Savage & Project Pat
169	Rockin' Around The Christmas Tree	Brenda Lee
170	Girls Want Girls	Drake Feat. Lil Baby
171	Yellow	Coldplay
172	Take You Dancing	Jason Derulo
173	Body	Tion Wayne X Russ Millions
174	Build A Bitch	Bella Poarch
175	Lucid Dreams	Juice WRLD
176	Death Bed	Powfu Feat. beabadoobee
177	Hecha Pa' Mi	Boza
178	Baila Conmigo	Selena Gomez With Rauw Alejandro
179	What's Next	Drake
180	Another Love	Tom Odell
181	Break My Heart	Dua Lipa
182	Jingle Bell Rock	Bobby Helms
183	Dry Flower	Yuuri
184	Jerusalem	Master KG Feat. Burna Boy & Nomcebo Zikode
185	How You Like That	BLACKPINK
186	Highest In The Room	Travis Scott
187	Mood Swings	Pop Smoke Feat. Lil Tjay
188	Love Again	Dua Lipa
189	Holiday	Lil Nas X
190	Golden	Harry Styles
191	Volando	Mora, Bad Bunny & Sech
192	Run	OneRepublic
193	2/Catorce	Rauw Alejandro X Mr. Naisgai
194	Thunderstruck	AC/DC
195	Essence	Wizkid Feat. Justin Bieber & Tems
196	Follow You	Imagine Dragons
197	Starboy	The Weeknd Feat. Daft Punk
198	In Da Getto	J Balvin & Skrillex
199	La Toxica	Farruko
200	La Nota	Manuel Turizo, Myke Towers & Rauw Alejandro

CKay's self-dubbed "emo Afrobeats" hit "Love Nwantiti (Ah Ah Ah)" rose to the top 10 of the Billboard Global 200 in October after it was first released in 2019.



Billboard Global 200 Artists

POSITION / ARTIST

1	Olivia Rodrigo
2	Justin Bieber
3	The Weeknd
4	BTS
5	Ed Sheeran
6	Dua Lipa
7	Doja Cat
8	Ariana Grande
9	Drake
10	Billie Eilish
11	Lil Nas X
12	Bad Bunny
13	Pop Smoke
14	The Kid LAROI
15	Maneskin
16	Rauw Alejandro
17	Harry Styles
18	Megan Thee Stallion
19	Travis Scott
20	Lewis Capaldi
21	Taylor Swift
22	Masked Wolf
23	Karol G

24	Kanye West
25	YOASOBI
26	Post Malone
27	Polo G
28	Jhay Cortez
29	Cardi B
30	Tiesto
31	Jack Harlow
32	Glass Animals
33	Tones And I
34	Maroon 5
35	Imagine Dragons
36	Myke Towers
37	24kGoldn
38	Bruno Mars
39	Giveon
40	SZA
41	DaBaby
42	Lil Baby
43	Farruko
44	Coldplay
45	Morgan Wallen
46	Jason Derulo
47	Tate McRae
48	Miley Cyrus
49	J. Cole
50	J Balvin

Top Country Artists

POSITION / ARTIST / LABEL

1	Morgan Wallen	Big Loud/Republic
2	Luke Combs	River House/Columbia Nashville/SMN
3	Chris Stapleton	Mercury Nashville/UMGN
4	Gabby Barrett	Warner Music Nashville/WMN
5	Luke Bryan	Capitol Nashville/UMGN
6	Kane Brown	RCA Nashville/SMN
7	Dan + Shay	Warner Music Nashville/WMN
8	Blake Shelton	Warner Music Nashville/WMN
9	Florida Georgia Line	BMLG
10	Carrie Underwood	Capitol Nashville/UMGN
11	Jason Aldean	Macon/Broken Bow/BMG/BMG
12	Walker Hayes	Monument/SMN
13	Thomas Rhett	Valory/BMLG
14	Miranda Lambert	Vanner/RCA Nashville/SMN
15	Lee Brice	Curb
16	Sam Hunt	MCA Nashville/UMGN
17	Jordan Davis	MCA Nashville/UMGN
18	Zac Brown Band	Home Grown/Warner Music Nashville/WMN
19	Eric Church	EMI Nashville/UMGN
20	Jon Pardi	Capitol Nashville/UMGN
21	Kenny Chesney	Blue Chair/Warner Music Nashville/WMN
22	Kacey Musgraves	Interscope/MCA Nashville/IGA/UMGN
23	Rascal Flatts	Big Machine/BMLG
24	Niko Moon	RCA Nashville/SMN
25	HARDY	Big Loud

Top Country Labels

POSITION / LABEL

1	Universal Music Group Nashville
2	Sony Music Nashville
3	Warner Music Nashville
4	Big Machine Label Group
5	Big Loud
6	Republic
7	Broken Bow Music Group
8	Curb
9	Legacy
10	Monument

Hot Country Songs

POSITION / TITLE / ARTIST / LABEL

1	Forever After All	Luke Combs	River House/Columbia Nashville
2	Fancy Like	Walker Hayes	Monument
3	I Hope	Gabby Barrett	Warner Music Nashville/WAR
4	Better Together	Luke Combs	River House/Columbia Nashville
5	Famous Friends	Chris Young + Kane Brown	RCA Nashville
6	The Good Ones	Gabby Barrett	Warner Music Nashville/WAR
7	Chasing After You	Ryan Hurd With Maren Morris	Arista Nashville
8	Starting Over	Chris Stapleton	Mercury Nashville
9	Lil Bit	Nelly & Florida Georgia Line	RECORDS/Columbia/BMLG
10	Glad You Exist	Dan + Shay	Warner Music Nashville/WAR
11	One Too Many	Keith Urban Duet With P!nk	Hit Red/Capitol Nashville
12	Drunk (And I Don't Wanna Go Home)	Elle King & Miranda Lambert	RCA/Columbia Nashville
13	What's Your Country Song	Thomas Rhett	Valory
14	Settling Down	Miranda Lambert	Vanner/RCA Nashville
15	Sand In My Boots	Morgan Wallen	Republic/Big Loud



The two most recent Eurovision Song Contest champions both turned in impressive 2021 releases on multiple charts: Italy's Måneskin broke through with the No. 3 weekly Billboard Global 200 hit "Beggin'" after winning this year, while 2019 honoree Duncan Laurence of the Netherlands rose to the top 40 with "Arcade."

NO. 1 COUNTRY AIRPLAY SONGS

"FAMOUS FRIENDS" —

CHRIS YOUNG + KANE BROWN

16	Hell Of A View	Eric Church	EMI Nashville
17	Things A Man Oughta Know	Lainey Wilson	Broken Bow
18	Almost Maybes	Jordan Davis	MCA Nashville
19	Gone	Dierks Bentley	Capitol Nashville
20	Good Time	Niko Moon	RCA Nashville
21	Wasted On You	Morgan Wallen	Republic/Big Loud
22	If I Didn't Love You	Jason Aldean & Carrie Underwood	Macon/Capitol Nashville/Broken Bow
23	Single Saturday Night	Cole Swindell	Warner Music Nashville/WMN
24	Breaking Up Was Easy In The 90's	Sam Hunt	MCA Nashville
25	Country Again	Thomas Rhett	Valory
26	Memory I Don't Mess With	Lee Brice	Curb
27	Waves	Luke Bryan	Capitol Nashville
28	My Boy	Elvie Shane	Wheelhouse
29	Made For You	Jake Owen	Big Loud
30	Drinkin' Beer, Talkin' God, Amen	Chase Rice Feat. Florida Georgia Line	Duck, Janiels/BMLG/Broken Bow
31	Blame It On You	Jason Aldean	Macon/Broken Bow
32	You Should Probably Leave	Chris Stapleton	Mercury Nashville
33	More Than My Hometown	Morgan Wallen	Republic/Big Loud
34	Cold Beer Calling My Name	Jameson Rodgers Feat. Luke Combs	River House/Columbia Nashville
35	Down To One	Luke Bryan	Capitol Nashville
36	I Was On A Boat That Day	Old Dominion	Arista Nashville
37	Long Live	Florida Georgia Line	BMLG
38	Nobody	Dylan Scott	Curb
39	We Didn't Have Much	Justin Moore	Valory
40	Just The Way	Parmalee x Blanco Brown	Stoney Creek
41	Buy Dirt	Jordan Davis Feat. Luke Bryan	MCA Nashville
42	Somebody's Problem	Morgan Wallen	Republic/Big Loud
43	Minimum Wage	Blake Shelton	Warner Music Nashville/WMN
44	Knowing You	Kenny Chesney	Blue Chair/Warner Music Nashville/WEA
45	Somebody Like That	Tenille Arts	19th & Grand
46	7 Summers	Morgan Wallen	Republic/Big Loud
47	Lady	Brett Young	BMLG
48	Next Girl	Carly Pearce	Big Machine
49	Momma's House	Dustin Lynch	Broken Bow
50	You Time	Scotty McCreery	Triple Tigers

Top Country Albums

POSITION / TITLE / ARTIST / LABEL

1	Dangerous: The Double Album	Morgan Wallen	Big Loud/Republic
2	What You See Is What You Get	Luke Combs	River House/Columbia Nashville/SMN
3	This One's For You	Luke Combs	River House/Columbia Nashville/SMN
4	Starting Over	Chris Stapleton	Mercury Nashville/UMGN
5	Fearless (Taylor's Version)	Taylor Swift	Republic
6	If I Know Me	Morgan Wallen	Big Loud
7	Traveller	Chris Stapleton	Mercury Nashville/UMGN
8	Goldmine	Gabby Barrett	Warner Music Nashville/WMN
9	Born Here Live Here Die Here	Luke Bryan	Capitol Nashville/UMGN
10	Hey World	Lee Brice	Curb
11	Greatest Hits So Far...	Zac Brown Band	Home Grown/BMG
12	Southside	Sam Hunt	MCA Nashville/UMGN
13	Hotel California	Eagles	Asylum/Elektra/Rhino
14	Purgatory	Tyler Childers	Hickman Holler/Thirty Tigers



Luke Combs collected four No. 1s on Country Airplay in 2021, becoming only the second artist to achieve the feat in a single year after Garth Brooks in 1993. Combs' fourth, "Cold as You," became his record-extending 13th consecutive career-opening single to lead the chart in November.

15	Red	Taylor Swift	Big Machine/BMLG
16	9	Jason Aldean	Macon/Broken Bow/BMG/BBMG
17	Number One Hits	Tim McGraw	Curb
18	Kane Brown	Kane Brown	Zone 4/RCA Nashville/SMN
19	Life Rolls On	Florida Georgia Line	BMLG
20	Fully Loaded: God's Country	Blake Shelton	Warner Music Nashville/WMN
21	Reloaded: 20 #1 Hits	Blake Shelton	Warner Music Nashville/WMN
22	35 Biggest Hits	Toby Keith	Show Dog-Universal/UMe
23	Twenty Years Of Rascal Flatts	Rascal Flatts	Lyric Street/Big Machine/BMLG
24	The Greatest Hits Collection	Brooks & Dunn	Arista Nashville/Legacy
25	My Gift	Carrie Underwood	Capitol Nashville/UMGN
26	Dan + Shay	Dan + Shay	Warner Music Nashville/WMN
27	Wildcard	Miranda Lambert	Vanner/RCA Nashville/SMN
28	Mixtape, Vol. 1 (EP)	Kane Brown	RCA Nashville/SMN
29	California Sunrise	Jon Pardi	Capitol Nashville/UMGN
30	A Rock	HARDY	Big Loud
31	Greatest Hits: Decade #1	Carrie Underwood	19/Arista Nashville/SMN
32	Country Stuff (EP)	Walker Hayes	Monument

33	My Savior	Carrie Underwood	Capitol Nashville/UMGN
34	Speak Now	Taylor Swift	Big Machine/BMLG
35	Rearview Town	Jason Aldean	Macon/Broken Bow/BMG/BBMG
36	35 Biggest Hits	Hank Williams Jr.	Curb
37	50 Number Ones	George Strait	MCA Nashville/UMGN
38	The Essential Johnny Cash	Johnny Cash	Columbia Nashville/Legacy
39	Greatest Hits	Shania Twain	Mercury Nashville/UMGN
40	Country Again (Side A)	Thomas Rhett	Valory/BMLG
41	Golden Hour	Kacey Musgraves	MCA Nashville/UMGN
42	Here's To The Good Times	Florida Georgia Line	Republic Nashville/BMLG
43	Strait Out Of The Box	George Strait	MCA Nashville/UMGN
44	Fearless	Taylor Swift	Big Machine/BMLG
45	A Holly Dolly Christmas	Dolly Parton	Butterfly Records/12Tone/Warner
46	Star-Crossed	Kacey Musgraves	Interscope/MCA Nashville/IGA/UMGN
47	Buy Dirt (EP)	Jordan Davis	MCA Nashville/UMGN
48	Crash My Party	Luke Bryan	Capitol Nashville/UMGN
49	The Essential Elvis Presley	Elvis Presley	RCA/Sony Strategic Marketing Group/Legacy
50	The Greatest Hits Collection	Alan Jackson	Arista Nashville/Legacy



After forming in 2010 and first appearing on the *Billboard* charts in 2014, Glass Animals — the leading act on Top Rock Artists for 2021 — completed the longest trip to No. 1 on the weekly Hot Rock & Alternative Songs chart when “Heat Waves” held the top slot in its 60th week in September.

Hot Rock & Alternative Songs

POSITION / TITLE / ARTIST / LABEL

1	Mood	24kGoldn Feat. iann dior	RECORDS/Columbia
2	Heat Waves	Glass Animals	Wolf Tone/Polydor/Republic
3	Without You	The Kid LAROI	Columbia
4	My Ex's Best Friend	Machine Gun Kelly X blackbear	EST19XX/Bad Boy/Interscope
5	Therefore I Am	Billie Eilish	Darkroom/Interscope
6	Willow	Taylor Swift	Republic
7	Bang!	AJR	AJR/BMG/S-Curve
8	Beggin'	Måneskin	Sony Music Latin/Arista
9	Drunk (And I Don't Wanna Go Home)	Elle King & Miranda Lambert	RCA
10	A-O-K	Tai Verdes	Arista
11	Happier Than Ever	Billie Eilish	Darkroom/Interscope
12	Brutal	Olivia Rodrigo	Geffen/Interscope
13	Monsters	All Time Low Feat. blackbear	Fueled By Ramen/EMG
14	Way Less Sad	AJR	AJR/BMG/S-Curve
15	Follow You	Imagine Dragons	KIDinaKORNER/Interscope
16	Come & Go	Juice WRLD x Marshmello	Grade A/Interscope
17	Your Power	Billie Eilish	Darkroom/Interscope
18	My Universe	Coldplay x BTS	Parlophone/Atlantic
19	transparentsoul	Willow Feat. Travis Barker	MSFTSMusic/Roc Nation
20	Meet Me At Our Spot	THE ANXIETY:WILLOW & Tyler Cole	MSFTSMusic/Roc Nation
21	Freaks	Surf Curse	Surf Curse/Atlantic
22	Lost Cause	Billie Eilish	Darkroom/Interscope
23	Champagne Problems	Taylor Swift	Republic
24	Higher Power	Coldplay	Parlophone/Atlantic
25	Saturday	twenty one pilots	Fueled By Ramen/EMG
26	I Wanna Be Your Slave	Måneskin	Sony Music Latin/Arista
27	All My Favorite Songs	Weezer	Weezer/Atlantic/EMG/Crush Music
28	Sofia	Claire	FADER Label/Caroline
29	Runaway	AURORA	Glassnote
30	NDA	Billie Eilish	Darkroom/Interscope
31	Shy Away	twenty one pilots	Fueled By Ramen/EMG
32	Forget Me Too	Machine Gun Kelly & Halsey	EST19XX/Bad Boy/Interscope
33	Wrecked	Imagine Dragons	KIDinaKORNER/Interscope
34	Dreams	Fleetwood Mac	Warner/Rhino
35	Someone To You	Banners	Island/Republic
36	Cloud 9	Beach Bunny	Mom + Pop
37	La Di Die	Nessa Barrett Feat. jxdn	Warner
38	Paralyzed	Sueco	Atlantic
39	Fly Away	Tones And I	Bad Batch/Elektra/EMG
40	Gold Rush	Taylor Swift	Republic
41	Serotonin	girl in red	world in red/AWAL-Kobalt
42	Solar Power	Lorde	Republic
43	'Tis The Damn Season	Taylor Swift	Republic
44	Violent	carolesdaughter	last nite/Arista
45	Plastic Hearts	Miley Cyrus	RCA
46	Missing Piece	Vance Joy	Atlantic
47	Tolerate It	Taylor Swift	Republic
48	Sugarcash!	ElyOtto	Otto Dynamite/RCA
49	I Am Not A Woman, I'm A God	Halsey	Capitol
50	Love Race	Machine Gun Kelly Feat. Kellin Quinn	EST19XX/Bad Boy/Interscope

Top Rock Artists

POSITION / ARTIST / LABEL

1	Glass Animals	Wolf Tone/Polydor/Republic
2	Machine Gun Kelly	EST19XX/Bad Boy/Interscope/IGA
3	Imagine Dragons	KIDinaKORNER/Interscope/IGA
4	Fleetwood Mac	Unsigned
5	AJR	AJR/BMG
6	The Beatles	Apple/Capitol/UME
7	Queen	Hollywood
8	Twenty One Pilots	Fueled By Ramen/EMG
9	Maneskin	Sony Music Italy/Sony Music Latin
10	AC/DC	Columbia
11	Creedence Clearwater Revival	Fantasy/Craft/Concord
12	Eagles	ERC
13	Elton John	Rocket/Mercury/EMI/Interscope/IGA
14	Miley Cyrus	RCA
15	Foo Fighters	Roswell/RCA
16	Tom Petty And The Heartbreakers	Tom Petty Legacy/Warner
17	Nirvana	DGC/Geffen/UME
18	Journey	Nomota

19	Guns N' Roses	Geffen/IGA
20	Metallica	Blackened
21	Coldplay	Parlophone/Atlantic/AG
22	Lynyrd Skynyrd	Curtis Loew
23	Arctic Monkeys	Domino
24	Linkin Park	Machine Shop/Warner
25	Pink Floyd	Pink Floyd/Columbia

Top Rock Labels

POSITION / LABEL

1	Interscope Geffen A&M
2	Universal Music Enterprises
3	Republic
4	Columbia
5	Legacy
6	Rhino
7	Elektra Music Group
8	RCA
9	Warner
10	Atlantic Group

no. 1

ROCK & ALTERNATIVE
AIRPLAY SONGS

“FOLLOW YOU”

— IMAGINE DRAGONS



Rapper-turned-rock star Machine Gun Kelly's blackbear collaboration "My Ex's Best Friend" kicked off a 29-week stint at No. 1 on Rock Streaming Songs in August 2020, and, the following March, started a three-week run atop Alternative Airplay.

KELLY: NATHAN JAMES

NO. 1 ROCK STREAMING SONGS

"MY EX'S BEST FRIEND"

— MACHINE GUN KELLY

X BLACKBEAR

Top Rock Albums

POSITION / TITLE / ARTIST / LABEL

1	Greatest Hits	Queen	Hollywood
2	Tickets To My Downfall	Machine Gun Kelly	EST19XX/Bad Boy/Interscope/IGA
3	Rumours	Fleetwood Mac	Warner/Rhino
4	Diamonds	Elton John	Rocket/Island/UMe
5	Chronicle The 20 Greatest Hits	Creedence Clearwater Revival	Fantasy/Concord
6	Journey's Greatest Hits	Journey	Columbia/Legacy
7	Back In Black	AC/DC	Columbia/Legacy
8	Greatest Hits	Tom Petty And The Heartbreakers	MCA/Geffen/UMe
9	Dreamland	Glass Animals	Wolf Tone/Polydor/Republic
10	1	The Beatles	Apple/Capitol/UMe
11	Abbey Road	The Beatles	Apple/Capitol/UMe
12	Plastic Hearts	Miley Cyrus	RCA
13	Metallica	Metallica	Blackened
14	Nevermind	Nirvana	Sub Pop/DGC/Geffen/UMe
15	Evolve	Imagine Dragons	KIDnaKORNER/Interscope/IGA
16	Greatest Hits	Fleetwood Mac	Warner/Rhino
17	Greatest Hits	Bob Seger & The Silver Bullet Band	Hideout/Capitol/UMe
18	AM	Arctic Monkeys	Domino
19	Greatest Hits	Guns N' Roses	Geffen/UMe
20	All Time Greatest Hits	Lynyrd Skynyrd	MCA/Geffen/UMe
21	The Essential Billy Joel	Billy Joel	Columbia/Legacy
22	Born To Die	Lana Del Rey	Polydor/Interscope/IGA
23	Blurryface	twenty one pilots	Fueled By Ramen/EMG
24	Greatest Hits: The Ultimate Collection	Bon Jovi	Island/UMe
25	[Hybrid Theory]	Linkin Park	Warner
26	Hozier	Hozier	Rubyworks/Columbia/Legacy
27	Hotel California	Eagles	Asylum/Elektra/Rhino
28	Their Greatest Hits 1971-1975	Eagles	Asylum/Elektra/Rhino
29	Greatest Hits	Foo Fighters	Roswell/RCA/Legacy
30	A Decade Of Destruction	Five Finger Death Punch	Prospect Park
31	Night Visions	Imagine Dragons	KIDnaKORNER/Interscope/IGA
32	Greatest Hits	Blink-182	Geffen/UMe
33	Greatest Hits	Red Hot Chili Peppers	Warner
34	Power Up	AC/DC	Columbia
35	The Best Of Nickelback: Volume 1	Nickelback	Roadrunner/EMG
36	Sublime	Sublime	Gasoline Alley/MCA/Geffen/UMe
37	Ok Orchestra	AJR	AJR/BMG
38	Hot Rocks 1964-1971	The Rolling Stones	London/ABKCO
39	The Wall	Pink Floyd	Pink Floyd/Legacy
40	Greatest Hits	Motley Crue	Motley/Elven Seven/Better Noise
41	The Black Parade	My Chemical Romance	Reprise/Warner
42	Complete Clapton	Eric Clapton	Duck/Reprise/Warner
43	The Dark Side Of The Moon	Pink Floyd	Pink Floyd/Legacy
44	Aerosmith's Greatest Hits	Aerosmith	Columbia/Legacy
45	The Essential Elvis Presley	Elvis Presley	RCA/Sony Strategic Marketing Group/Legacy
46	Currents	Tame Impala	Modular/Interscope/IGA
47	Scaled And Icy	twenty one pilots	Fueled By Ramen/EMG
48	Sob Rock	John Mayer	Columbia
49	Greatest Hits 1974-78	The Steve Miller Band	Capitol/UMe
50	McCartney III	Paul McCartney	MPL/Capitol

Hot Alternative Songs

POSITION / TITLE / ARTIST / LABEL

1	Mood	24kGoldn Feat. iann dior	RECORDS/Columbia
2	Heat Waves	Glass Animals	Wolf Tone/Polydor/Republic
3	Without You	The Kid LAROI	Columbia
4	My Ex's Best Friend	Machine Gun Kelly X blackbear	EST19XX/Bad Boy/Interscope
5	Therefore I Am	Billie Eilish	Darkroom/Interscope
6	Willow	Taylor Swift	Republic
7	Bang!	AJR	AJR/BMG/S-Curve
8	Happier Than Ever	Billie Eilish	Darkroom/Interscope
9	A-O-K	Tai Verdes	Arista
10	Brutal	Olivia Rodrigo	Geffen/Interscope
11	Beggin'	Maneskin	Sony Music Latin/Arista
12	Monsters	All Time Low Feat. blackbear	Fueled By Ramen/EMG
13	Way Less Sad	AJR	AJR/BMG/S-Curve
14	Follow You	Imagine Dragons	KiDinaKORNER/Interscope
15	Come & Go	Juice WRLD x Marshmello	Grade A/Interscope
16	My Universe	Coldplay x BTS	Parlophone/Atlantic
17	Your Power	Billie Eilish	Darkroom/Interscope
18	transparentsoul	Willow Feat. Travis Barker	MSFTSMusic/Roc Nation
19	Meet Me At Our Spot	THE ANXIETY: WILLOW & Tyler Cole	MSFTSMusic/Roc Nation
20	Freaks	Surf Curse	Surf Curse/Atlantic
21	Champagne Problems	Taylor Swift	Republic
22	Lost Cause	Billie Eilish	Darkroom/Interscope
23	Saturday	twenty one pilots	Fueled By Ramen/EMG
24	Sofia	Claire	FADER Label/Caroline
25	Higher Power	Coldplay	Parlophone/Atlantic

Top Alternative Albums

POSITION / TITLE / ARTIST / LABEL

1	Evermore	Taylor Swift	Republic
2	Folklore	Taylor Swift	Republic
3	Tickets To My Downfall	Machine Gun Kelly	EST19XX/Bad Boy/Interscope/IGA
4	When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?	Billie Eilish	Darkroom/Interscope/IGA
5	Happier Than Ever	Billie Eilish	Darkroom/Interscope/IGA
6	Dont Smile At Me	Billie Eilish	Darkroom/Interscope/IGA
7	Dreamland	Glass Animals	Wolf Tone/Polydor/Republic
8	Nevermind	Nirvana	Sub Pop/DGC/Geffen/UMe
9	Evolve	Imagine Dragons	KiDinaKORNER/Interscope/IGA
10	AM	Arctic Monkeys	Domino
11	Born To Die	Lana Del Rey	Polydor/Interscope/IGA
12	Blurryface	twenty one pilots	Fueled By Ramen/EMG
13	Hozier	Hozier	Rubyworks/Columbia
14	Greatest Hits	Foo Fighters	Roswell/RCA/Legacy
15	[Hybrid Theory]	Linkin Park	Warner
16	Greatest Hits	Red Hot Chili Peppers	Warner
17	The Best Of Nickelback: Volume 1	Nickelback	Roadrunner/EMG
18	Greatest Hits	Blink-182	Geffen/UMe
19	Ok Orchestra	AJR	AJR/BMG
20	Cry Baby	Melanie Martinez	Atlantic/AG
21	If I Can't Have Love, I Want Power	Halsey	Capitol
22	Night Visions	Imagine Dragons	KiDinaKORNER/Interscope/IGA
23	Nectar	Joji	88rising/12Tone
24	Sublime	Sublime	Gasoline Alley/MCA/Geffen/UMe
25	El Dorado	24kGoldn	RECORDS/Columbia

Hot Hard Rock Songs

POSITION / TITLE / ARTIST / LABEL

1	I Wanna Be Your Slave	Maneskin	Sony Music Latin/Arista
2	A Little Bit Off	Five Finger Death Punch	Better Noise
3	Heat Above	Greta Van Fleet	Lava/Republic
4	Waiting On A War	Foo Fighters	Roswell/RCA
5	Teardrops	Bring Me The Horizon	Columbia
6	Last Resort (Reloaded)	Papa Roach x Jeris Johnson	300
7	Nowhere Generation	Rise Against	Loma Vista/Concord
8	Making A Fire	Foo Fighters	Roswell/RCA
9	Shot In The Dark	AC/DC	Columbia
10	Animals	Architects	Epitaph
11	Darkness Settles In	Five Finger Death Punch	Better Noise
12	For The Glory	All Good Things Feat. Johnny 3 Tears & Charlie Scene	Better Noise
13	Every Time You Leave	I Prevail Feat. Delaney Jane	Fearless/Concord
14	Adrenaline	Zero 9:36	Prim8/Atco/Atlantic
15	Self Destructor	Chevelle	Epic
16	Wolf Totem	The Hu Feat. Jacoby Shaddix	Eleven Seven/Better Noise
17	Distance	Mammoth WVH	EX1
18	Living The Dream	Five Finger Death Punch	Better Noise
19	In The End	Linkin Park	Warner
20	And So It Went	The Pretty Reckless Feat. Tom Morello	Goin' Down/Fearless/Concord
21	My Way, Soon	Greta Van Fleet	Lava/Republic
22	Breathe Again	Pop Evil	eOne
23	Heavy Is The Crown	Daughtry	Dogtree/ADA
24	Wait A Minute My Girl	Volbeat	Vertigo/Republic
25	Bruised And Bloodied	Seether	Canine Riot/Fantasy/Concord



Billie Eilish's second studio album, *Happier Than Ever*, built upon her 2019 breakout and sparked her No. 1 ranks on the 2021 year-end Hot Rock & Alternative Songs Artists, Hot Alternative Songs Artists and Alternative Streaming Songs Artists charts.

Top Hard Rock Albums

POSITION / TITLE / ARTIST / LABEL

1	Greatest Hits	Queen	Hollywood
2	Back In Black	AC/DC	Columbia/Legacy
3	Metallica	Metallica	Blackened
4	Greatest Hits	Guns N' Roses	Geffen/UMe
5	Greatest Hits: The Ultimate Collection	Bon Jovi	Island/UMe
6	[Hybrid Theory]	Linkin Park	Warner
7	A Decade Of Destruction	Five Finger Death Punch	Prospect Park
8	The Best Of Nickelback: Volume 1	Nickelback	Roadrunner/EMG
9	Greatest Hits	Foo Fighters	Roswell/RCA/Legacy
10	Greatest Hits	Motley Crue	Motley/Eleven Seven/Better Noise
11	Power Up	AC/DC	Columbia
12	Led Zeppelin IV	Led Zeppelin	Swan Song/Atlantic/Rhino
13	The Greatest Hits	3 Doors Down	Republic/UMe
14	Ten	Pearl Jam	Epic/Legacy
15	Rage Against The Machine	Rage Against The Machine	Epic/Legacy
16	Meteora	Linkin Park	Machine Shop/Warner
17	Aerosmith's Greatest Hits	Aerosmith	Columbia/Legacy
18	Toxicity	System Of A Down	American/Columbia/Legacy
19	The Battle At Garden's Gate	Greta Van Fleet	Lava/Republic
20	Mothership	Led Zeppelin	Swan Song/Atlantic/Rhino
21	Appetite For Destruction	Guns N' Roses	Geffen/UMe
22	Devil's Got A New Disguise: The Very Best Of Aerosmith	Aerosmith	Geffen/Columbia/Legacy
23	Medicine At Midnight	Foo Fighters	Roswell/RCA
24	Greatest Hits I II & III: The Platinum Collection	Queen	Hollywood
25	The Essential Ozzy Osbourne	Ozzy Osbourne	Epic/Legacy

See more year-end charts at [billboard.com/charts/2021/year-end](https://www.billboard.com/charts/2021/year-end)

In a notable showing for R&B, H.E.R. tops the year-end R&B/Hip-Hop Airplay Artists chart, while her single "Damage" is the No. 1 R&B/Hip-Hop Airplay Songs title. She's the first artist to lead both lists in the same year since Bruno Mars in 2017.



Top R&B/Hip-Hop Artists

POSITION / ARTIST / LABEL

1	Drake	OVO Sound/Republic
2	Pop Smoke	Victor Victor Worldwide/Republic
3	Lil Baby	Quality Control/Motown/Capitol
4	Doja Cat	Kemosabe/RCA
5	The Weeknd	XO/Republic
6	Lil Durk	Alamo
7	Juice WRLD	Grade A/Interscope/IGA
8	Polo G	Columbia
9	Rod Wave	Alamo
10	Post Malone	Republic
11	Moneybagg Yo	CMG/N-Less/Interscope/IGA
12	Megan Thee Stallion	1501 Certified/300/AG
13	J. Cole	Dreamville/Roc Nation/Interscope/IGA
14	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
15	Giveon	Not So Fast/Epic
16	DaBaby	SouthCoast/Interscope/IGA
17	The Kid LAROI	Columbia
18	YoungBoy Never Broke Again	Never Broke Again/Atlantic/AG

19	Jack Harlow	Generation Now/Atlantic/AG
20	Lil Uzi Vert	Generation Now/Atlantic/AG
21	Pooh Shiesty	1017 Global/Atlantic/AG
22	Young Thug	Young Stoner Life/300/Atlantic/AG
23	Cardi B	Atlantic/AG
24	Eminem	Shady/Aftermath/Interscope/IGA
25	SZA	Top Dawg/RCA

Top R&B/Hip-Hop Labels

POSITION / LABEL

1	Republic
2	Interscope Geffen A&M
3	Atlantic Group
4	Columbia
5	RCA
6	Capitol
7	Epic
8	Def Jam
9	Warner
10	300

NO. 1 TOP R&B/HIP-HOP ALBUMS ARTISTS

JUICE WRLD

Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums

POSITION / TITLE / ARTIST / LABEL

1	Shoot For The Stars Aim For The Moon	Pop Smoke	Victor Victor Worldwide/Republic
2	Certified Lover Boy	Drake	OVO Sound/Republic
3	F*ck Love	The Kid LAROI	Columbia
4	My Turn	Lil Baby	Quality Control/Motown/Capitol
5	Legends Never Die	Juice WRLD	Grade A/Interscope/IGA
6	Hollywood's Bleeding	Post Malone	Republic
7	After Hours	The Weeknd	XO/Republic
8	Planet Her	Doja Cat	Kemosabe/RCA
9	The Voice	Lil Durk	Alamo/Geffen/IGA
10	Soufly	Rod Wave	Alamo
11	Goodbye & Good Riddance	Juice WRLD	Grade A/Interscope/IGA
12	Good News	Megan Thee Stallion	1501 Certified/300/AG
13	A Gangsta's Pain	Moneybagg Yo	CMG/N-Less/Interscope/IGA
14	The Off-Season	J. Cole	Dreamville/Roc Nation/Interscope/IGA
15	The GOAT	Polo G	Columbia
16	The Highlights	The Weeknd	XO/Republic
17	Shiesty Season	Pooh Shiesty	1017 Global/Atlantic/AG
18	The Voice Of The Heroes	Lil Baby & Lil Durk	Alamo/Quality Control/Motown/IGA/Capitol
19	Donda	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
20	Death Race For Love	Juice WRLD	Grade A/Interscope/IGA
21	Astroworld	Travis Scott	Cactus Jack/Grand Hustle/Epic
22	Curtain Call: The Hits	Eminem	Shady/Aftermath/Interscope/IGA
23	Beerbongs & Bentley's	Post Malone	Republic
24	That's What They All Say	Jack Harlow	Generation Now/Atlantic/AG
25	good kid, m.A.A.d city	Kendrick Lamar	Top Dawg/Aftermath/Interscope/IGA
26	Scorpion	Drake	Young Money/Cash Money/Republic
27	Hot Pink	Doja Cat	Kemosabe/RCA
28	Hall Of Fame	Polo G	Columbia
29	Over It	Summer Walker	LVRN/Interscope/IGA
30	Eternal Atake	Lil Uzi Vert	Generation Now/Atlantic/AG
31	Pray 4 Love	Rod Wave	Alamo/IGA
32	Legend: The Best Of...	Bob Marley And The Wailers	Tuff Gong/Island/UMe
33	2014 Forest Hills Drive	J. Cole	Dreamville/Roc Nation/Columbia/Legacy
34	Stoney	Post Malone	Republic
35	Ctrl	SZA	Top Dawg/RCA
36	When It's All Said And Done... Take Time	Giveon	Not So Fast/Epic
37	Blame It On Baby	DaBaby	SouthCoast/Interscope/IGA
38	Music To Be Murdered By	Eminem	Shady/Aftermath/Interscope/IGA
39	Pluto X Baby Pluto	Future & Lil Uzi Vert	Freebandz/Epic/Generation Now/Atlantic/AG
40	Top	YoungBoy Never Broke Again	Never Broke Again/Artist Partner Group/Atlantic/AG
41	Khaled Khaled	DJ Khaled	We The Best/Epic
42	Please Excuse Me For Being Antisocial	Roddy Ricch	Bird Vision/Atlantic/AG
43	Culture III	Migos	Quality Control/Motown/Capitol
44	Young Stoner Life: Slime Language 2	Young Thug & Various Artists	Young Stoner Life/300/AG
45	Greatest Hits	2Pac	Amaru/Death Row/Interscope/UMe
46	Destined 2 Win	Lil Tjay	Columbia
47	Take Care	Drake	Young Money/Cash Money/Republic
48	Sincerely, Kentrell	YoungBoy Never Broke Again	Never Broke Again/Atlantic/AG
49	Call Me If You Get Lost	Tyler, The Creator	Columbia
50	?	XXXTENTACION	Bad Vibes Forever

NO. 1 R&B/HIP-HOP AIRPLAY SONGS

"DAMAGE" — H.E.R.

Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs

POSITION / TITLE / ARTIST / LABEL

1	Leave The Door Open	Silk Sonic (Bruno Mars & Anderson .Paak)	Aftermath/Atlantic
2	Peaches	Justin Bieber Feat. Daniel Caesar & Giveon	Raymond Braun/Def Jam
3	Astronaut In The Ocean	Masked Wolf	Teamwrk/Elektra/EMG
4	Up	Cardi B	Atlantic
5	Go Crazy	Chris Brown & Young Thug	300/CBE/RCA
6	Industry Baby	Lil Nas X & Jack Harlow	Columbia
7	Rapstar	Polo G	Columbia
8	Blinding Lights	The Weeknd	XO/Republic
9	Calling My Phone	Lil Tjay Feat. 6LACK	Columbia
10	Heartbreak Anniversary	Giveon	Not So Fast/Epic
11	What You Know Bout Love	Pop Smoke	Victor Victor Worldwide/Republic
12	Best Friend	Saweetie Feat. Doja Cat	ICY/Warner
13	Wants And Needs	Drake Feat. Lil Baby	OVO Sound/Republic
14	Beat Box	SpoteMGottem Feat. Pooh Shiesty Or DaBaby	SpoteMGottem/Rebel Records/Geffen/Interscope
15	Wockesha	Moneybagg Yo	CMG/N-Less/Interscope
16	On Me	Lil Baby	Quality Control/Wolfpack Global/Motown/Capitol
17	You Right	Doja Cat & The Weeknd	Kemosabe/RCA
18	For The Night	Pop Smoke Feat. Lil Baby & DaBaby	Victor Victor Worldwide/Republic
19	Way 2 Sexy	Drake Feat. Future & Young Thug	OVO Sound/Republic
20	Whopty	CJ	CJ Music Group/T-Series/Warner
21	Good Days	SZA	Top Dawg/RCA
22	Body	Megan Thee Stallion	1501 Certified/300
23	Back In Blood	Pooh Shiesty Feat. Lil Durk	1017 Global/Atlantic
24	You're Mines Still	Yung Bleu Feat. Drake	Vandross/OVO Sound/EMPIRE/Warner
25	Every Chance I Get	DJ Khaled Feat. Lil Baby & Lil Durk	We The Best/Epic
26	Laugh Now Cry Later	Drake Feat. Lil Durk	OVO Sound/Republic
27	Time Today	Moneybagg Yo	CMG/N-Less/Interscope
28	Essence	Wizkid Feat. Justin Bieber & Tems	Starboy/RCA
29	What's Next	Drake	OVO Sound/Republic
30	Lemonade	Internet Money & Gunna Feat. Don Toliver & NAV	Internet Money/Ten Thousand Projects/Capitol
31	Streets	Doja Cat	Kemosabe/RCA
32	Late At Night	Roddy Ricch	Atlantic
33	Thot Shit	Megan Thee Stallion	1501 Certified/300
34	Cry Baby	Megan Thee Stallion Feat. DaBaby	1501 Certified/300
35	Track Star	Mooski	Wealthy 4 Life/Capitol
36	No More Parties	Coï Leray Feat. Lil Durk	Republic
37	Knife Talk	Drake Feat. 21 Savage & Project Pat	OVO Sound/Republic
38	Tombstone	Rod Wave	Alamo
39	Throat Baby (Go Baby)	BRS Kash	Team Litty/LVRN/Interscope
40	Girls Want Girls	Drake Feat. Lil Baby	OVO Sound/Republic
41	Whole Lotta Money	BIA Feat. Nicki Minaj	Epic
42	WAP	Cardi B Feat. Megan Thee Stallion	Atlantic
43	my.life	J. Cole, 21 Savage & Morray	Dreamville/Roc-A-Fella/Interscope
44	Ski	Young Thug & Gunna	Young Stoner Life/300
45	Damage	H.E.R.	MBK/RCA
46	Wild Side	Normani Feat. Cardi B	Keep Cool/RCA
47	Fair Trade	Drake Feat. Travis Scott	OVO Sound/Republic
48	Ain't Shit	Doja Cat	Kemosabe/RCA
49	Rockstar	DaBaby Feat. Roddy Ricch	SouthCoast/Interscope
50	Tyler Herro	Jack Harlow	Generation Now/Atlantic



"Leave the Door Open" by Silk Sonic — the duo of Anderson .Paak (left) and Bruno Mars — is No. 1 on 2021's Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart and wraps in the top five on the year's corresponding airplay, sales and streaming charts.

SONIC: JOHN SPARZA

Hot R&B Songs

POSITION / TITLE / ARTIST / LABEL

1	Leave The Door Open	Silk Sonic (Bruno Mars & Anderson .Paak)	Aftermath/Atlantic
2	Peaches	Justin Bieber Feat. Daniel Caesar & Giveon	Raymond Braun/Def Jam
3	Go Crazy	Chris Brown & Young Thug	300/CBE/RCA
4	You're Mines Still	Yung Bleu Feat. Drake	Vandross/OVO Sound/EMPIRE/Warner
5	Blinding Lights	The Weeknd	XO/Republic
6	Heartbreak Anniversary	Giveon	Not So Fast/Epic
7	You Right	Doja Cat & The Weeknd	Kemosabe/RCA
8	Good Days	SZA	Top Dawg/RCA
9	Essence	Wizkid Feat. Justin Bieber & Tems	Starboy/RCA
10	Streets	Doja Cat	Kemosabe/RCA
11	Track Star	Mooski	Wealthy 4 Life/Capitol
12	Damage	H.E.R.	MBK/RCA
13	Wild Side	Normani Feat. Cardi B	Keep Cool/RCA
14	Come Through	H.E.R. Feat. Chris Brown	MBK/RCA
15	Like I Want You	Giveon	Not So Fast/Epic
16	Pick Up Your Feelings	Jazmine Sullivan	RCA
17	Not Another Love Song	Ella Mai	10 Summers/Interscope
18	Woman	Doja Cat	Kemosabe/RCA
19	Gyalis	Capella Grey	CAPELLA/Allegac The Family/Capitol
20	You Got It	VEDO	New Wav/Island Prolific/EMPIRE
21	Skate	Silk Sonic (Bruno Mars & Anderson .Paak)	Aftermath/Atlantic
22	U 2 Luv	Ne-Yo & Jeremih	Motown/Capitol
23	B.S.	Jhene Aiko Feat. H.E.R.	MBK/2 Fish/ARTclub/ARTium/RCA/Def Jam
24	I Like Dat	T-Pain & Kehlani	Nappy Boy/EMPIRE
25	Dead Man Walking	Brent Faiyaz	Lost Kids

Top R&B Albums

POSITION / TITLE / ARTIST / LABEL

1	After Hours	The Weeknd	XO/Republic
2	Planet Her	Doja Cat	Kemosabe/RCA
3	The Highlights	The Weeknd	XO/Republic
4	Hot Pink	Doja Cat	Kemosabe/RCA
5	Over It	Summer Walker	LVRN/Interscope/IGA
6	Legend: The Best Of...	Bob Marley And The Wailers	Tuff Gong/Island/UMe
7	Ctrl	SZA	Top Dawg/RCA
8	When It's All Said And Done... Take Time	Giveon	Not So Fast/Epic
9	Thriller	Michael Jackson	Epic/Legacy
10	Chilombo	Jhene Aiko	2 Fish/ARTclub/ARTium/Def Jam
11	American Teen	Khalid	Right Hand/RCA
12	Free Spirit	Khalid	Right Hand/RCA
13	Blonde	Frank Ocean	Boys Don't Cry
14	ANTI	Rihanna	Westbury Road/Roc Nation
15	Indigo	Chris Brown	CBE/RCA
16	17	XXXTENTACION	Bad Vibes Forever/EMPIRE
17	H.E.R.	H.E.R.	MBK/RCA
18	I Will Always Love You: The Best Of...	Whitney Houston	Arista/RCA
19	The Essential Michael Jackson	Michael Jackson	Epic/Legacy
20	Starboy	The Weeknd	XO/Republic
21	TRAPSOUL	Bryson Tiller	TrapSoul/RCA
22	Merry Christmas	Mariah Carey	Columbia/Legacy
23	Back Of My Mind	H.E.R.	MBK/RCA
24	The Christmas Song	Nat King Cole	Capitol/UMe
25	Purple Rain (Soundtrack)	Prince And The New Power Generation	NPG/Warner/Rhino

See more year-end charts at
[billboard.com/charts/2021/year-end](https://www.billboard.com/charts/2021/year-end)

Hot Rap Songs

POSITION / TITLE / ARTIST / LABEL

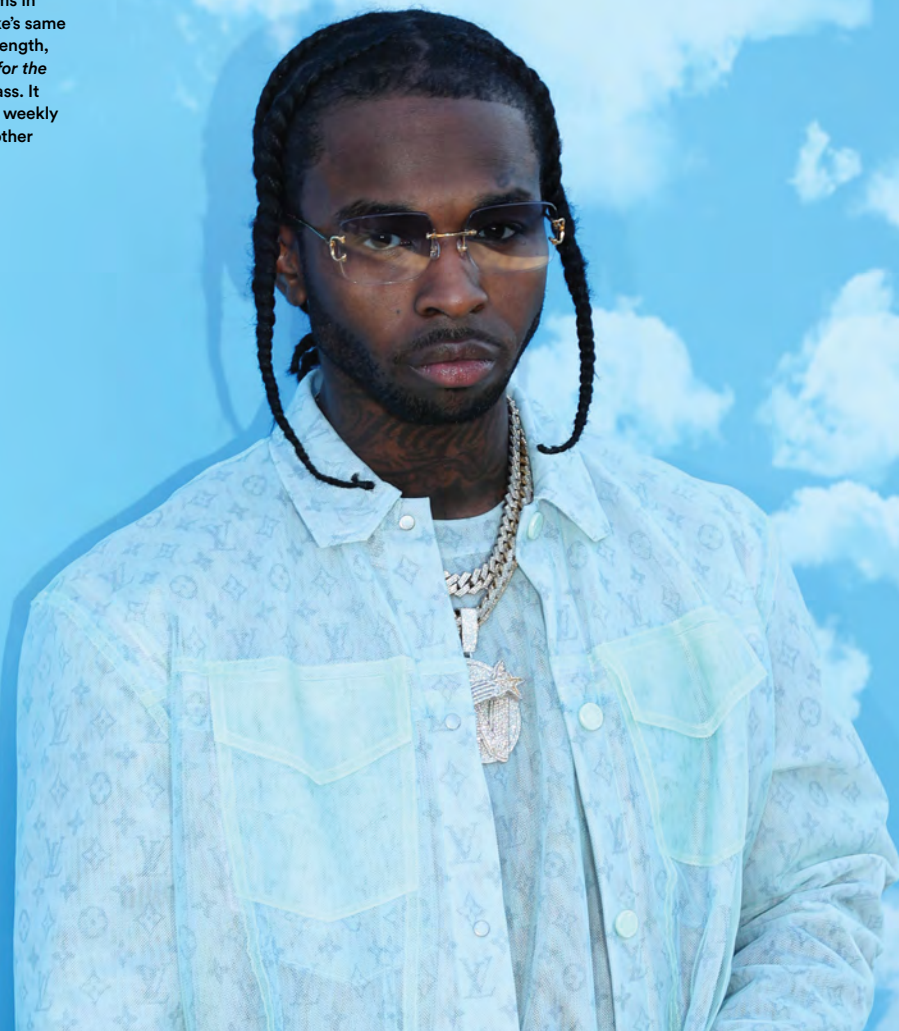
1	Mood	24kGoldn Feat. iann dior	RECORDS/Columbia
2	Astronaut In The Ocean	Masked Wolf	Teamwrk/Elektra/EMG
3	Up	Cardi B	Atlantic
4	Industry Baby	Lil Nas X & Jack Harlow	Columbia
5	Rapstar	Polo G	Columbia
6	Calling My Phone	Lil Tjay Feat. GLACK	Columbia
7	What You Know Bout Love	Pop Smoke	Victor Victor Worldwide/Republic
8	Best Friend	Saweetie Feat. Doja Cat	ICY/Warner
9	Wants And Needs	Drake Feat. Lil Baby	OVO Sound/Republic
10	Beat Box	SpoteMGottem Feat. Pooh Shiesty Or DaBaby	SpoteMGottem/Rebel Records/Geffen/Interscope
11	On Me	Lil Baby	Quality Control/Wolpack Global/Motown/Capitol
12	Wockesha	Moneybagg Yo	CMG/N-Less/Interscope
13	For The Night	Pop Smoke Feat. Lil Baby & DaBaby	Victor Victor Worldwide/Republic
14	Way 2 Sexy	Drake Feat. Future & Young Thug	OVO Sound/Republic
15	Whopty	CJ	CJ Music Group/T-Series/Warner
16	Laugh Now Cry Later	Drake Feat. Lil Durk	OVO Sound/Republic
17	Back In Blood	Pooh Shiesty Feat. Lil Durk	1017 Global/Atlantic
18	Body	Megan Thee Stallion	1501 Certified/300
19	Every Chance I Get	DJ Khaled Feat. Lil Baby & Lil Durk	We The Best/Epic
20	Time Today	Moneybagg Yo	CMG/N-Less/Interscope
21	Lemonade	Internet Money & Gunna Feat. Don Toliver & NAV	Internet Money/TenThousandProjects/Capitol
22	Late At Night	Roddy Ricch	Atlantic
23	Thot Shit	Megan Thee Stallion	1501 Certified/300
24	Cry Baby	Megan Thee Stallion Feat. DaBaby	1501 Certified/300
25	What's Next	Drake	OVO Sound/Republic

Top Rap Albums

POSITION / TITLE / ARTIST / LABEL

1	Shoot For The Stars Aim For The Moon	Pop Smoke	Victor Victor Worldwide/Republic
2	Certified Lover Boy	Drake	OVO Sound/Republic
3	F*ck Love	The Kid LAROI	Columbia
4	My Turn	Lil Baby	Quality Control/Motown/Capitol
5	Legends Never Die	Juice WRLD	Grade A/Interscope/IGA
6	Hollywood's Bleeding	Post Malone	Republic
7	Soufly	Rod Wave	Alamo
8	Goodbye & Good Riddance	Juice WRLD	Grade A/Interscope/IGA
9	Hamilton: An American Musical	Original Broadway Cast	Hamilton Uptown/Atlantic/AG
10	A Gangsta's Pain	Moneybagg Yo	CMG/N-Less/Interscope/IGA
11	Good News	Megan Thee Stallion	1501 Certified/300/AG
12	The GOAT	Polo G	Columbia
13	The Off-Season	J. Cole	Dreamville/Roc Nation/Interscope/IGA
14	The Voice	Lil Durk	Alamo/Geffen/IGA
15	The Voice Of The Heroes	Lil Baby & Lil Durk	Alamo/Quality Control/Motown/IGA/Capitol
16	Donda	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
17	Shiesty Season	Pooh Shiesty	1017 Global/Atlantic/AG
18	Astroworld	Travis Scott	Cactus Jack/Grand Hustle/Epic
19	Hall Of Fame	Polo G	Columbia
20	Curtain Call: The Hits	Eminem	Shady/Aftermath/Interscope/IGA
21	Death Race For Love	Juice WRLD	Grade A/Interscope/IGA
22	Beerbongs & Bentleys	Post Malone	Republic
23	Blame It On Baby	DaBaby	SouthCoast/Interscope/IGA
24	Pray 4 Love	Rod Wave	Alamo/IGA
25	Scorpion	Drake	Young Money/Cash Money/Republic

After a No. 5 year-end finish on Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums in 2020, the late Pop Smoke's same posthumous debut full-length, *Shoot for the Stars Aim for the Moon*, leads the 2021 class. It logged more time in the weekly chart's top 10 than any other album this year.



Top Latin Artists

POSITION / ARTIST / LABEL

1	Bad Bunny	Rimas
2	Rauw Alejandro	Duars/Sony Music Latin
3	Karol G	Universal Music Latino/UMLE
4	Kali Uchis	EMI/Interscope/IGA
5	J Balvin	Universal Music Latino/UMLE
6	Jhay Cortez	Universal Music Latino/UMLE
7	Ozuna	Aura/Sony Music Latin
8	Maluma	WK/Sony Music Latin
9	Myke Towers	White World/GLAD Empire
10	Eslabon Armado	DEL
11	Farruko	Carbon Fiber/Sony Music Latin
12	Anuel AA	Real Hasta La Muerte/Sony Music Latin
13	Sech	Rich
14	Christian Nodal	Producciones Ladon/Bajo/Sony Music Latin
15	Camilo	Hecho A Mano/Sony Music Latin
16	Romeo Santos	Sony Music Latin
17	Selena	Capitol Latin/UMLE
18	Aventura	Premium Latin/The Orchard

19	Los Legendarios	La Base/WK
20	Grupo Firme	Lap/Music VIP
21	Junior H	JHRH/Warner Latina
22	Enrique Iglesias	Sony Music Latin/RCA
23	Rosalía	Columbia
24	Nicky Jam	La Industria/Sony Music Latin
25	Nio Garcia	Flow La Movie/GLAD Empire

Top Latin Labels

POSITION / LABEL

1	Sony Music Latin
2	Rimas
3	Universal Music Latin Entertainment
4	Interscope Geffen A&M
5	Glad Empire
6	DEL
7	Warner Latina
8	Rich
9	WK
10	Rancho Humilde

Hot Latin Songs

POSITION / TITLE / ARTIST / LABEL

1	Dakiti	Bad Bunny & Jhay Cortez	Rimas
2	Telepatía	Kali Uchis	EMI/Interscope
3	Hawái	Maluma & The Weeknd	Sony Music Latin/RCA
4	La Noche De Anoche	Bad Bunny & Rosalía	Rimas
5	Yonaguni	Bad Bunny	Rimas
6	Todo De Ti	Rauw Alejandro	Duars/Sony Music Latin
7	Pepas	Farruko	Carbon Fiber/Sony Music Latin
8	Bichota	Karol G	Universal Music Latino/UMLE
9	Fiel	Los Legendarios, Wisin & Jhay Cortez	La Base/WK
10	Bandido	Myke Towers & Juhn	White World/GLAD Empire
11	AM	Nio Garcia X J Balvin X Bad Bunny	Flow La Movie/GLAD Empire
12	Volvi	Aventura x Bad Bunny	Rimas
13	Botella Tras Botella	Gera MX + Christian Nodal	Virgin
14	El Makinon	Karol G & Mariah Angeliq	Universal Music Latino/UMLE
15	Te Mudaste	Bad Bunny	Rimas
16	La Curiosidad	DJ Nelson Presenta Jay Wheeler & Myke Towers	Elite Media & Marketing
17	In Da Getto	J Balvin & Skrillex	UMLE
18	Pareja Del Año	Sebastian Yatra X Myke Towers	Universal Music Latino/UMLE
19	Baila Conmigo	Selena Gomez With Rauw Alejandro	Interscope
20	La Nota	Manuel Turizo, Myke Towers & Rauw Alejandro	La Industria/Sony Music Latin
21	Reloj	Rauw Alejandro & Anuel AA	Duars/Sony Music Latin
22	911	Sech & Jhay Cortez	Rich
23	Jugaste Y Sufri	Eslabon Armado Feat. DannyLux	DEL
24	2/Catorce	Rauw Alejandro X Mr. Naisgai	Duars/Sony Music Latin
25	De Vuelta Pa' La Vuelta	Daddy Yankee & Marc Anthony	El Cartel
26	El Toxico	Grupo Firme & Carin Leon	Tamarindo Records/Music VIP
27	La Mama De La Mama	El Alfa x CJ x Chael Produciendo Feat. El Cherry Scam	El Alfa
28	Dime Como Quieres	Christian Nodal & Angela Aguilar	Fonovisa/UMLE
29	Ram Pam Pam	Natti Natasha & Becky G	Pina/Sony Music Latin
30	A La Antiguaita	Calibre 50	Andaluz/Disa/UMLE
31	La Casita	Banda MS de Sergio Lizarraga	Lizos
32	Booker T	Bad Bunny	Rimas
33	Vida De Rico	Camilo	Hecho A Mano/Sony Music Latin
34	Ya Superame	Grupo Firme	Music VIP
35	Sobrio	Maluma	WK/Sony Music Latin
36	Que Mas Pues?	J Balvin & Maria Becerra	UMLE
37	Otra Noche Sin Ti	J Balvin & Khalid	UMLE
38	Location	Karol G, Anuel AA & J Balvin	Universal Music Latino/UMLE
39	Fan De Tus Fotos	Nicky Jam X Romeo Santos	Sony Music Latin
40	La Toxica	Farruko	Carbon Fiber/Sony Music Latin
41	Poblado (Remix)	J Balvin x Karol G x Nicky Jam	UMLE
42	Haciendo Que Me Amas	Bad Bunny	Rimas
43	Tu Veneno	J Balvin	UMLE
44	El Buho	Luis R Conriquez	Kartel Music
45	Despeinada	Ozuna x Camilo	Aura/Sony Music Latin
46	Travesuras	Nio Garcia X Casper Magico X Ozuna ...	Flow La Movie/GLAD Empire
47	Volando	Mora, Bad Bunny & Sech	Rimas
48	#Problema	Daddy Yankee	El Cartel/Republic
49	Loco	Justin Quiles, Chimbala X Zion & Lennox	Warner Latina
50	Desde Morro	Justin Morales	Rancho Humilde

Bad Bunny holds the No. 1 spot on the Top Latin Artists list for a third consecutive year. His albums *YHLQMDLG* and *El Último Tour del Mundo* combined to lead the weekly Top Latin Albums chart for 43 of the 52 weeks in the 2021 chart year.

NO. 1 LATIN AIRPLAY SONGS
"HAWÁI" — MALUMA & THE WEEKND

no. 1 REGIONAL MEXICAN ALBUMS

CORTA VENAS,

ESLABON ARMADO

Top Latin Albums

POSITION / TITLE / ARTIST / LABEL

1	El Ultimo Tour Del Mundo	Bad Bunny	Rimas
2	YHLQMDLG	Bad Bunny	Rimas
3	X 100PRE	Bad Bunny	Rimas
4	Ones	Selena	Capitol Latin/UMLE
5	Sin Miedo (Del Amor Y Otros Demonios)	Kali Uchis	EMI/Interscope/IGA
6	KG0615	Karol G	Universal Music Latino/UMLE
7	Afrodisiaco	Rauw Alejandro	Duars/Sony Music Latin
8	Papi Juancho	Maluma	Sony Music Latin
9	Emmanuel	Anuel AA	Real Hasta La Muerte/Sony Music Latin
10	Las Que No Iban A Salir	Bad Bunny	Rimas
11	Vice Versa	Rauw Alejandro	Duars/Sony Music Latin
12	Odisea	Ozuna	VP Entertainment/Dimelo/Universal Music Latin
13	Corta Venas	Eslabon Armado	DEL
14	ENOC	Ozuna	Aura/Sony Music Latin
15	Oasis	J Balvin & Bad Bunny	Universal Music Latino/UMLE
16	Todavía Me Amas: Lo Mejor De Aventura	Aventura	The Orchard/Sony Music Latin
17	Now Or Never	Nio García & Casper Magico	Flow La Movie/GLAD Empire
18	Famouz	Jhay Cortez	N&E/Universal Music Latino/UMLE
19	Translation	The Black Eyed Peas	BEP/Epic
20	Easy Money Baby	Myke Towers	White World/GLAD Empire
21	Formula: Vol. 2	Romeo Santos	Sony Music Latin
22	Los Legendarios 001	Los Legendarios	La Base/WK
23	Greatest Hits (2019)	Enrique Iglesias	Universal Music Latino/UMLE
24	Colores	J Balvin	Universal Music Latino/UMLE
25	Corridos Tumbados	Natanael Cano	Rancho Humilde
26	Vida	Luis Fonsi	Universal Music Latino/UMLE
27	Tu Veneno Mortal	Eslabon Armado	DEL
28	Atrapado En Un Sueño	Junior H	Z Records/Rancho Humilde
29	Mis Manos	Camilo	Hecho A Mano/Sony Music Latin
30	Los Dioses	Anuel AA & Ozuna	Aura/Real Hasta La Muerte/Sony Music Latin
31	42	Sech	Rich
32	1 Of 1	Sech	Rich
33	AYAYAY!	Christian Nodal	Fonovisa/UMLE
34	Platonicos	DJ Nelson Presenta Jay Wheeler	Linked/EMPIRE
35	Me Deje Llevar	Christian Nodal	JG/Fonovisa/UMLE
36	Jose	J Balvin	Suenos Globales/Universal Music Latino/UMLE
37	Gangalee	Farruko	Sony Music Latin
38	Vibras	J Balvin	Universal Music Latino/UMLE
39	Ocean	Karol G	Universal Music Latino/UMLE
40	Golden	Romeo Santos	Sony Music Latin
41	Revelacion (EP)	Selena Gomez	Interscope/IGA
42	Cruisin' With Junior H	Junior H	JHRH/Warner Latina
43	Un Azteca En El Azteca, Volumen 2	Vicente Fernandez	Sony Music Mexico/Televisa/Sony Music Latin
44	Fenix	Nicky Jam	La Industria/Sony Music Latin
45	Primer Dia De Clases	Mora	Rimas
46	Formula: Vol. 1	Romeo Santos	Sony Music Latin
47	Dopamina	Manuel Turizo	La Industria/Sony Music Latin
48	La 167	Farruko	Carbon Fiber/Sony Music Latin
49	Lyke Mike	Myke Towers	One World International/Warner/Warner Latina
50	Los Favoritos 2	Arcangel	Rimas

In May, thanks to "Telepatía," Kali Uchis became the first female soloist without any accompanying acts to lead the weekly Hot Latin Songs chart since Paulina Rubio with "Me Gustas Tanto" in February 2012.



Top Christian Artists

POSITION / ARTIST / LABEL

1	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
2	Lauren Daigle	Centricity
3	Carrie Underwood	Capitol Nashville/UMGN
4	Elevation Worship	Elevation Worship/PLG
5	for KING & COUNTRY	Curb-Word
6	Casting Crowns	Beach Street/Reunion/PLG
7	Zach Williams	Essential/PLG
8	MercyMe	Fair Trade
9	Maverick City Music	Maverick City Music
10	Phil Wickham	Fair Trade
11	Matthew West	Story House Collective/Reunion/PLG
12	Bethel Music	Bethel
13	Skillet	Hear It Loud/Atlantic/AG
14	Chris Tomlin	Sparrow/Capitol CMG
15	Crowder	sixsteps/Sparrow/Capitol CMG
16	Jeremy Camp	Stolen Pride/Sparrow/Capitol CMG
17	We The Kingdom	Sparrow/Capitol CMG
18	tobyMac	ForeFront/Capitol CMG

19	Hillsong UNITED	Hillsong/Sparrow/Capitol CMG
20	NEEDTOBREATHE	Elektra/Curb-Word
21	Tauren Wells	Reunion/PLG
22	CAIN	Essential/PLG
23	Hillsong Worship	Hillsong/Sparrow/Capitol CMG
24	Anne Wilson	Sparrow/Capitol CMG
25	Danny Gokey	Sparrow/Capitol CMG

Top Christian Labels

POSITION / LABEL

1	Capitol Christian Music Group
2	Provident Label Group
3	Def Jam
4	Fair Trade
5	Curb-Word
6	Centricity
7	Universal Music Group Nashville
8	Bethel
9	12Tone
10	Capitol Nashville

Hot Christian Songs

POSITION / TITLE / ARTIST / LABEL

1	You Say	Lauren Daigle	Centricity
2	Hurricane	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
3	Good God Almighty	Crowder	sixsteps/Sparrow/Capitol CMG
4	Battle Belongs	Phil Wickham	Fair Trade
5	Hold On To Me	Lauren Daigle	Centricity
6	My Jesus	Anne Wilson	Sparrow/Capitol CMG
7	Graves Into Gardens	Elevation Worship Feat. Brandon Lake	Elevation Worship/PLG
8	Less Like Me	Zach Williams	Essential/PLG
9	Help Is On The Way	tobyMac	ForeFront/Capitol CMG
10	Moon	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
11	Off The Grid	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
12	Truth Be Told	Matthew West	Story House Collective/Reunion/PLG
13	Say I Won't	MercyMe	Fair Trade
14	Praise God	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
15	Scars In Heaven	Casting Crowns	Beach Street/Reunion/PLG
16	Rattle!	Elevation Worship	Elevation Worship/PLG
17	Be Alright	Evan Craft x Danny Gokey x Redimi2	Evan Craft/55 Promotion
18	Jail	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
19	Amen	for KING & COUNTRY	Curb-Word
20	House Of The Lord	Phil Wickham	Fair Trade
21	Believe For It	CeCe Winans	PureSprings Gospel/Fair Trade
22	Child Of Love	We The Kingdom Feat. Bear Rinehart	Sparrow/Capitol CMG
23	Jireh	Elevation Worship & Maverick City Music	Elevation Worship/PLG
24	Fires	Jordan St. Cyr	BEC/Tooth & Nail
25	Ok Ok	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
26	Hallelujah	Carrie Underwood & John Legend	Capitol Nashville
27	Favorite Time Of Year	Carrie Underwood	Capitol Nashville
28	Rise Up (Lazarus)	CAIN	Essential/PLG
29	Gospel Song	Rhett Walker	Essential/PLG
30	Junya	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
31	Sparrows	Cory Asbury	Bethel
32	Yes He Can	CAIN	Essential/PLG
33	Until Grace	Tauren Wells & Rascal Flatts	Reunion/PLG
34	Jericho	Andrew Ripp	Andrew Ripp/Boxer Poet
35	Promises	Elevation Worship & Maverick City Music	TRIBL
36	Out Of My Hands	Jeremy Camp	Stolen Pride/Sparrow/Capitol CMG
37	What If	Matthew West	Story House Collective/Reunion/PLG
38	Believe What I Say	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
39	Look What You've Done	Tasha Layton	BEC/Tooth & Nail
40	Next To Me	Jordan Feliz	Centricity
41	Jonah	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
42	Jesus Lord	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
43	God Who Listens	Chris Tomlin Feat. Thomas Rhett	Sparrow/Capitol CMG
44	Start Right Here	Casting Crowns	Beach Street/Reunion/PLG
45	Famous For (I Believe)	Tauren Wells Feat. Jenn Johnson	Reunion/PLG
46	When You Speak	Jeremy Camp	Stolen Pride/Sparrow/Capitol CMG
47	Pure Souls	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
48	Remote Control	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
49	Silent Night	Carrie Underwood	Capitol Nashville
50	All Things New	Big Daddy Weave	Curb-Word

Lauren Daigle's crossover smash "You Say," released in 2018, scored its 100th week at No. 1 on Hot Christian Songs in September, becoming the first track to reach the milestone on any of *Billboard's* multimetric song charts.



no. 1 CHRISTIAN AIRPLAY SONGS

"HOLD ON TO ME" —

LAUREN DAIGLE

no. 1 GOSPEL AIRPLAY SONGS

“IN SPITE OF ME” —

TASHA COBBS LEONARD

Top Christian Albums

POSITION / TITLE / ARTIST / LABEL

1	Donda	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
2	My Gift	Carrie Underwood	Capitol Nashville/UMGN
3	Look Up Child	Lauren Daigle	Centricity/12Tone
4	My Savior	Carrie Underwood	Capitol Nashville/UMGN
5	Graves Into Gardens	Elevation Worship	Elevation Worship/PLG
6	Burn The Ships	for KING & COUNTRY	Curb-Word
7	Old Church Basement	Elevation Worship & Maverick City Music	Elevation Worship/PLG
8	Precious Memories Collection	Alan Jackson	ARC/EMI Nashville/Capitol CMG
9	Rescue Story	Zach Williams	Essential/PLG
10	Voice Of Truth	Casting Crowns	Beach Street/Reunion/PLG
11	Holy Water	We The Kingdom	Sparrow/Capitol CMG
12	How Can It Be	Lauren Daigle	Centricity/Capitol CMG
13	Therapy Session	NF	Capitol CMG
14	Jesus Is King (Soundtrack)	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
15	Awake	Skillet	Ardent/Atlantic/Fair Trade
16	I Can Only Imagine	MercyMe	Fair Trade
17	Mansion	NF	Capitol CMG
18	Only Jesus	Casting Crowns	Beach Street/Reunion/PLG
19	Victory: Recorded Live	Bethel Music	Bethel
20	Chain Breaker	Zach Williams	Essential/PLG
21	Chris Tomlin & Friends	Chris Tomlin	Sparrow/Capitol CMG
22	Maverick City, Vol. 3: Part 1	Maverick City Music	Maverick City Music
23	Unleashed	Skillet	Hear It Loud/Atlantic/Curb-Word
24	Here As In Heaven	Elevation Worship	Elevation Worship/Essential Worship/PLG
25	People	Hillsong UNITED	Hillsong/Sparrow/Capitol CMG
26	Brand New	Matthew West	Story House Collective/Reunion/PLG
27	Zion	Hillsong UNITED	Hillsong/Sparrow/Capitol CMG
28	Citizen Of Heaven	Tauren Wells	Reunion/PLG
29	Peace	Bethel Music	Bethel
30	Believe For It	CeCe Winans	PureSprings Gospel/Fair Trade
31	There Is More	Hillsong Worship	Hillsong/Sparrow/Capitol CMG
32	Out Of Body	NEEDTOBREATHE	Elektra/Curb-Word
33	Inhale (Exhale)	MercyMe	Fair Trade
34	A Drummer Boy Christmas	for KING & COUNTRY	Curb-Word/Curb
35	To Love A Fool	Cory Asbury	Bethel
36	100 Sing-Along-Songs For Kids	Cedarment Kids	Cedarment Kids/Cedarment/PLG
37	Let There Be Light	Hillsong Worship	Hillsong/Sparrow/Capitol CMG
38	How Great Is Our God	Chris Tomlin	sixsteps/Sparrow/Capitol CMG
39	Hymn Of Heaven	Phil Wickham	Fair Trade
40	Milk & Honey	Crowder	sixsteps/Sparrow/Capitol CMG
41	Revival's In The Air	Bethel Music	Bethel
42	I Still Believe: The Greatest Hits	Jeremy Camp	Stolen Pride/Sparrow/Capitol CMG
43	Christmas Eve and Other Stories	Trans-Siberian Orchestra	Lava/Atlantic/Curb-Word
44	Haven't Seen It Yet	Danny Gokey	Sparrow/Capitol CMG
45	Victorious	Skillet	Hear It Loud/Atlantic/Curb-Word
46	The Elements	tobyMac	ForeFront/Capitol CMG
47	Behold: A Christmas Collection	Lauren Daigle	Centricity/Capitol CMG
48	Awake	Hillsong Worship	Hillsong/Sparrow/Capitol CMG
49	Into The Mystery	NEEDTOBREATHE	Elektra/Curb-Word
50	Lifer	MercyMe	Fair Trade

Kanye West's *Donda* debuted with 309,000 equivalent album units in September (according to MRC Data), the biggest week on Top Christian Albums and Top Gospel Albums since the charts adopted a multimetric methodology in February 2017.

Top Gospel Artists

POSITION / ARTIST / LABEL

1	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
2	Maverick City Music	Maverick City Music
3	CeCe Winans	PureSprings Gospel/Fair Trade
4	Kirk Franklin	Fo Yo Soul/RCA/RCA Inspiration/PLG
5	Tasha Cobbs Leonard	TeeLee/Motown Gospel/Capitol CMG
6	Elevation Worship	Elevation Worship/PLG
7	Koryn Hawthorne	RCA Inspiration/PLG
8	Marvin Sapp	Verity/RCA Inspiration/PLG
9	Dante Bowe	Bethel
10	Tamela Mann	TillyMann
11	UPPERROOM	UPPERROOM
12	Travis Greene	RCA Inspiration/PLG
13	Pastor Mike Jr.	Rock City/Blacksmoke
14	Evvie McKinney	Motown Gospel/Capitol CMG
15	Mary Mary	My Block
16	Sunday Service Choir	INC
17	Chandler Moore	MoWorks/Identify Creative Group/PLG
18	Naomi Raine	The Bridge Collective

19	Jekalyn Carr	WayNorth
20	Jonathan McReynolds	MNRK
21	Tye Tribbett	Motown Gospel/Capitol CMG
22	Brian Courtney Wilson	Motown Gospel/Capitol CMG
23	Brandon Lake	Bethel
24	Joe L. Barnes	Creation Music Group
25	Charles Jenkins & Fellowship Chicago	Inspired People

Top Gospel Labels

POSITION / LABEL

1	Def Jam
2	Provident Label Group
3	Capitol Christian Music Group
4	Maverick City Music
5	Legacy
6	Tribl
7	Elevation Worship
8	Fair Trade
9	Puresprings Gospel
10	Tillymann

Hot Gospel Songs

POSITION / TITLE / ARTIST / LABEL

1	Hurricane	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
2	Moon	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
3	Off The Grid	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
4	Believe For It	CeCe Winans	Fair Trade/PureSprings Gospel/RED Alliance
5	Praise God	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
6	Jireh	Elevation Worship & Maverick City Music	Elevation Worship/RCA Inspiration/PLG
7	Jail	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
8	Ok Ok	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
9	Junya	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
10	Believe What I Say	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
11	Promises	Elevation Worship & Maverick City Music	TRIBL
12	Jonah	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
13	Jesus Lord	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
14	Pure Souls	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
15	Remote Control	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
16	Heaven And Hell	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
17	24	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
18	Speak To Me	Koryn Hawthorne	RCA Inspiration/PLG
19	No Child Left Behind	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
20	Joyful	Dante Bowe	Bethel
21	Wait On You	Elevation Worship & Maverick City Music	Elevation Worship/PLG
22	God Breathed	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
23	Keep My Spirit Alive	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
24	Jail Pt 2	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
25	I Got It	Pastor Mike Jr.	Rock City/Blacksmoke

Top Gospel Albums

POSITION / TITLE / ARTIST / LABEL

1	Donda	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
2	Old Church Basement	Elevation Worship & Maverick City Music	Elevation Worship/PLG
3	Jesus Is King (Soundtrack)	Kanye West	G.O.O.D./Def Jam
4	Maverick City, Vol. 3: Part 1	Maverick City Music	Maverick City Music
5	Believe For It: A Live Worship Experience	CeCe Winans	PureSprings Gospel/Fair Trade
6	Heart. Passion. Pursuit	Tasha Cobbs Leonard	Motown Gospel/Capitol CMG
7	Playlist: The Very Best Of Marvin Sapp	Marvin Sapp	Verity/Legacy
8	The Essential Kirk Franklin	Kirk Franklin	Fo Yo Soul/Verity/Legacy
9	Unstoppable	Koryn Hawthorne	RCA Inspiration/PLG
10	Move Your Heart.	Maverick City Music & UPPERROOM	Maverick City Music
11	Hello Fear	Kirk Franklin	Fo Yo Soul/Verity/RCA Inspiration/PLG
12	Maverick City, Vol. 3 - Part 2	Maverick City Music	Maverick City Music
13	Grace (EP)	Tasha Cobbs	Motown Gospel/Capitol CMG
14	One Place: Live	Tasha Cobbs	Motown Gospel/Capitol CMG
15	Go Get It (Soundtrack)	Mary Mary	My Block/Columbia/Legacy
16	Jesus Is Born	Sunday Service	INC
17	Long Live Love	Kirk Franklin	Fo Yo Soul/RCA/RCA Inspiration/PLG
18	The Hill	Travis Greene	RCA Inspiration/PLG
19	You Hold It All Together	Maverick City Music & UPPERROOM	Maverick City Music
20	Best Days	Tamela Mann	TillyMann
21	Jubilee: Juneteenth Edition	Maverick City Music	TRIBL
22	Royalty: Live At The Ryman	Tasha Cobbs Leonard	TeelLee/Motown Gospel/Capitol CMG
23	I Am	Koryn Hawthorne	RCA Inspiration/PLG
24	The Nu Nation Project	Kirk Franklin	Gospo Centric/RCA/RCA Inspiration/PLG
25	Circles	Dante Bowe	Bethel

See more year-end charts at [billboard.com/charts/2021/year-end](https://www.billboard.com/charts/2021/year-end)



Genre cornerstone CeCe Winans topped Hot Gospel Songs for a career-high 12 weeks starting in June with "Believe for It." She previously led with "Pray" for two weeks in 2006.

WINANS: JASON KERRING/GETTY IMAGES

Top Dance/Electronic Artists

POSITION / ARTIST / LABEL

1	Lady Gaga	Streamline/Interscope/IGA
2	The Chainsmokers	Disruptor/Columbia
3	Calvin Harris	Columbia
4	Daft Punk	Daft Life/Columbia
5	David Guetta	icons+giants/Atlantic/AG
6	Tiesto	Musical Freedom/Atlantic/AG
7	Marshmello	Joytime Collective
8	Kygo	Kygo AS/RCA
9	Gorillaz	Parlophone/Warner
10	HVME	Lithuania HQ/B1/Epic
11	ILLENIUUM	Astralwerks
12	Surf Mesa	Astralwerks
13	Disclosure	Island/Capitol
14	Alan Walker	MER Musikk/RCA
15	Avicii	Geffen/IGA
16	Odesza	Foreign Family Collective/Counter
17	M83.	M83/Mute
18	Flo Rida	International/Artist Partner Group
19	DJ Snake	DJ Snake/Geffen/IGA
20	Marina And The Diamonds	Crush Music/Atlantic/AG
21	Major Lazer	Mad Decent
22	Joel Corry	Perfect Havoc/Asylum/Big Beat/AG
23	Regard	Ministry Of Sound/Epic
24	Skrillex	Big Beat/OWSLA/Atlantic/AG
25	MNEK	Digital Teddy/Virgin Rec./EMI/Interscope/IGA

Top Dance/Electronic Labels

POSITION / LABEL

1	Interscope Geffen A&M
2	Columbia
3	Atlantic Group
4	Capitol
5	Epic
6	RCA
7	Elektra Music Group
8	Warner
9	Hitco
10	Republic

Hot Dance/Electronic Songs

POSITION / TITLE / ARTIST / LABEL

1	Goosebumps	Travis Scott & HVME	Lithuania HQ/B1/Cactus Jack/Epic
2	Roses (Imanbek Remix)	SAINT JHN	Godd Complex/HITCO
3	The Business	Tiesto	Musical Freedom/Atlantic
4	Ily	Surf Mesa Feat. Emilee	Astralwerks/Capitol
5	Pepas	Farruko	Carbon Fiber/Sony Music Latin/The Orchard
6	You	Regard x Troye Sivan x Tate McRae	Ministry Of Sound/Epic
7	Rain On Me	Lady Gaga & Ariana Grande	Streamline/Interscope
8	Cold Heart (PNAU Remix)	Elton John & Dua Lipa	Rocket/Mercury/EMI/Interscope
9	Head & Heart	Joel Corry X MNEK	Perfect Havoc/Asylum/Big Beat/EMG
10	In Da Getto	J Balvin & Skrillex	Soncos Globales/Universal Music Latino/UMLE
11	Paradise	Meduza & Dermot Kennedy	Secundo Piano/Cross/Republic
12	Friday	Riton X Nightcrawlers Feat. Mufasa & Hypemam	Ministry Of Sound/RCA
13	Heartbreak Anthem	Galantis, David Guetta & Little Mix	Big Beat/EMG
14	Bed	Joel Corry X RAYE X David Guetta	Perfect Havoc/Asylum/Big Beat/EMG

15	Don't Be Shy	Tiesto & Karol G	Musical Freedom/Atlantic
16	Lasting Lover	Sigala. & James Arthur	Ministry Of Sound/B1/last nite/Arista
17	Love Tonight	Shouse	Hell Beach/ONELOVE
18	Your Love (9PM)	ATB x Topic x A7S	Virgin Rec./Astralwerks/Capitol
19	Breaking Me	Topic & A7S	Astralwerks/Capitol
20	Lose Somebody	Kygo & OneRepublic	Kygo AS/RCA
21	By Your Side	Calvin Harris Feat. Tom Grennan	Columbia
22	Hate You + Love You	Cheat Codes & AJ Mitchell	Epic
23	Ok Not To Be Ok	Marshmello & Demi Lovato	Joytime Collective/Island/Republic
24	You Are My High	DJ Snake	DJ Snake/Interscope
25	Selfish Love	DJ Snake & Selena Gomez	DJ Snake/Interscope
26	Moth To A Flame	Swedish House Mafia & The Weeknd	SSA/Republic
27	Higher	Clean Bandit Feat. iann dior	Big Beat/Atlantic/EMG
28	Used To Be	Steve Aoki & Kiara Feat. Wiz Khalifa	Big Beat/EMG
29	Jenny	Studio Killers	Studio Killers/Atlantic
30	Rasputin	Majestic X Boney M.	NITRON/last nite/Arista
31	Out Out	Joel Corry, Jax Jones, Charli XCX & Saweetie	Perfect Havoc/Asylum/Big Beat/EMG
32	Chasing Stars	Alesso, Marshmello & James Bay	Capitol
33	Sideways	ILLENIUUM, Valerie Broussard & Nurko	12Tone
34	Nightlight	ILLENIUUM	12Tone
35	Where Are You Now	Lost Frequencies & Calum Scott	Lost & Cie/RCA
36	Remember	Becky Hill & David Guetta	Eko/Polydor/Interscope
37	Goodbye	Imanbek & Goodboys	Effective/Positiva/Astralwerks/Capitol
38	En Mi Cuarto	Jhay Cortez & Skrillex	Universal Music Latino/UMLE
39	Lifetime	Swedish House Mafia	SSA/Republic
40	Dandelion	Galantis & JVKE	Big Beat/Atlantic
41	Nobody	NOTD & Catello	Island/Republic
42	Pressure	Martin Garrix Feat. Tove Lo	STMPD RCRDS/RCA

NO. 1 DANCE/ELECTRONIC
STREAMING SONGS

“ROSES (IMANBEK REMIX)”

— SAINT JHN

43	El Incomprendido	Farruko, Victor Cardenas & DJ Adoni	Carbon Fiber/Sony Music Latin
44	Too Much	Marshmello & Imanbek Feat. Usher	Joytime Collective/RCA
45	Tick Tock	Clean Bandit & Mabel Feat. 24kGoldn	Big Beat/Atlantic/EMG
46	Going Dumb	Alesso, CORSAK & Stray Kids	Liquid State
47	More Than A Woman	Bee Gees	Capitol/UME
48	Safe With Me	Gryffin & Audrey Mika	Darkroom/Interscope
49	Love Me Now	Kygo Feat. Zoe Wees	Kygo AS/RCA
50	Hearts On Fire	ILLENIUUM, Dabin & Lights	12Tone

Top Dance/Electronic Albums

POSITION / TITLE / ARTIST / LABEL

1	The Fame	Lady Gaga	Streamline/KorLive/Cherrytree/Interscope/IGA
2	Chromatica	Lady Gaga	Streamline/Interscope/IGA
3	Collage (EP)	The Chainsmokers	Disruptor/Columbia
4	Demon Days	Gorillaz	Parlophone/Warner
5	Marshmello: Fortnite Extended Set	Marshmello	Joytime Collective
6	Golden Hour	Kygo	Kygo AS/RCA
7	Random Access Memories	Daft Punk	Daft Life/Columbia/Legacy
8	Energy	Disclosure	Island/Capitol
9	Memories...Do Not Open	The Chainsmokers	Disruptor/Columbia
10	18 Months	Calvin Harris	deConstruction/Fly Eye/Ultra/Roc Nation/Columbia
11	Different World	Alan Walker	MER Musikk/RCA
12	Born This Way	Lady Gaga	Streamline/KorLive/Interscope/IGA
13	Nothing But The Beat	David Guetta	What A Music/Parlophone/Atlantic/AG
14	True	Avicii	PRMD/Island
15	Funk Wav Bounces Vol. 1	Calvin Harris	Columbia
16	A Moment Apart	ODESZA	Foreign Family Collective/Counter
17	Motion	Calvin Harris	Fly Eye/Columbia
18	Discovery	Daft Punk	Daft Life/Parlophone/Rhino
19	Hurry Up, We're Dreaming.	M83.	M83/Mute
20	Wild Ones	Flo Rida	Poe Boy/Atlantic/AG
21	Electra Heart	Marina And The Diamonds	Elektra/EMG
22	World War Joy	The Chainsmokers	Disruptor/Columbia
23	One Love	David Guetta	Gum/Astralwerks
24	Major Lazer Essentials	Major Lazer	Mad Decent
25	Fallen Embers	ILLENIUUM	12Tone



Lady Gaga leads both the Top Dance/Electronic Artists and Top Dance/Electronic Albums Artists for a second consecutive year. When *Dawn of Chromatica* debuted atop the weekly Top Dance/Electronic Albums chart in September, she scored her seventh No. 1, tying Louie DeVito for the most in its 20-year history.

Concert Biz Gets Back On Track

FESTIVALS, STADIUMS AND THE RISE OF LATIN MEGA-SHOWS PAVE THE WAY FORWARD

BY DAVE BROOKS



WHEN THE CONCERT business unilaterally shut down in March 2020, many executives didn't expect live music to return until after the pandemic ended. But the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccines across North America and the rest of the globe meant that live music's return was within reach, and shows began in early summer and increased in number as more people got the jab.

As the months rolled on, however, vaccination rates stagnated, and the delta variant became the dominant strain in the United States. And a new reality began to settle in — that the pandemic may never end in the definitive sense that many had expected. And fans seem to be OK with that.

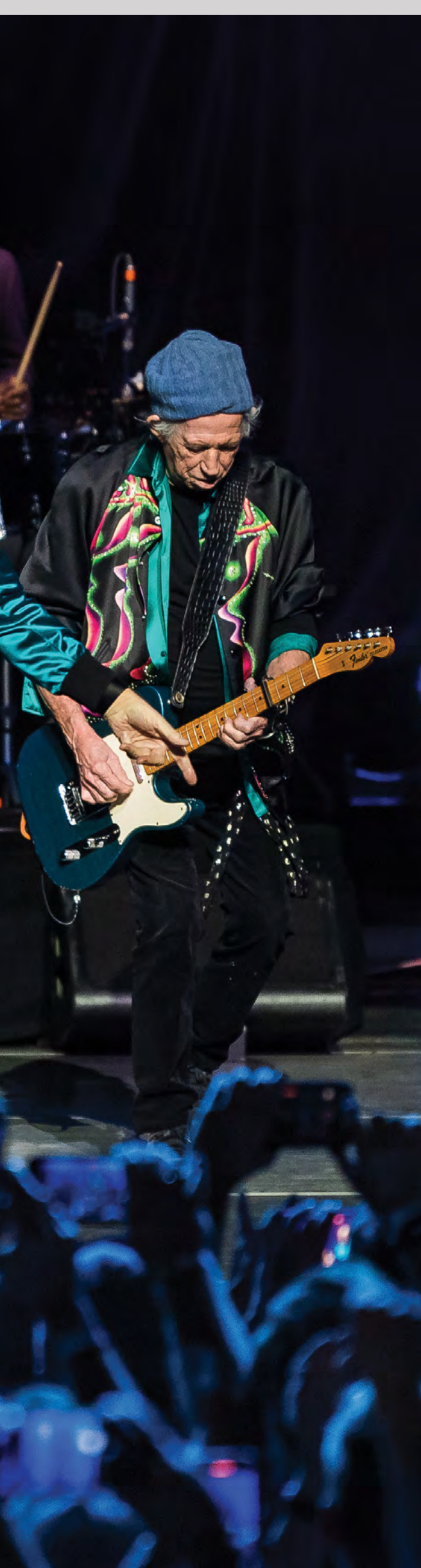
Ticket sales picked up significantly after capacity restrictions were lifted in June and July on arenas and other indoor venues, and they have held fairly steady even after big-name cancellations like the Foo Fighters return show on June 24 at The Forum in Inglewood, Calif., which was delayed after someone connected to the band contracted COVID-19. A rash of cancellations quickly followed, with Garth Brooks, BTS, Florida Georgia Line and Nine Inch Nails announcing they were reassessing their touring plans.

"When originally planned, these shows were intended to be a cathartic and celebratory return to live music," Nine Inch Nails said in a statement about the group's decision to postpone concerts until 2022. "However, with each passing day, it's becoming more apparent we're not at that place yet."

Yet while artists were canceling, fans forged ahead. Promoters signaled their own readiness by moving forward with lower-profile rescheduled concerts for bands like Guns N' Roses, which played their first post-pandemic concert at Hersheypark in Hershey, Pa., on Aug. 1. While tour promoters made a point of not overhypeing the return of live music, major festivals like Rolling Loud couldn't avoid attention when organizers staged their festival on July 23 in Miami. When a full-capacity Lollapalooza was held the following weekend, the concert business watched cautiously to see if the show led to a spike in cases. But in the days afterward, Live Nation issued a report saying transmission at the event had



The Rolling Stones boast the year's biggest tour thanks to just eight shows in the tracking period that averaged a \$9.04 million take each night.



Top Tours

	Artist	Gross	Total Attendees	No. Of Shows
1	The Rolling Stones	\$72,312,475	340,390	8
2	The Hella Mega Tour: Green Day, Fall Out Boy & Weezer	\$67,286,837	659,062	20
3	Harry Styles	\$64,722,417	496,930	29
4	Eagles	\$54,324,095	233,757	20
5	Dead & Company	\$53,739,077	592,975	31
6	Los Bukis	\$49,667,153	357,343	9
7	Guns N' Roses	\$47,341,558	351,339	23
8	Jonas Brothers	\$42,470,102	528,630	42
9	Chris Stapleton	\$33,884,658	511,632	32
10	Luke Bryan	\$33,394,025	514,401	35
11	Maroon 5	\$32,560,582	467,607	30
12	Alanis Morissette	\$29,373,238	493,326	34
13	Jason Aldean	\$28,554,357	398,444	33
14	Maluma	\$25,488,668	240,384	27
15	Bruno Mars	\$24,379,579	74,839	16
16	Zac Brown Band	\$21,852,009	326,991	21
17	Thomas Rhett	\$21,613,233	304,666	23
18	Aventura	\$20,821,596	160,982	4
19	Eric Church	\$20,487,479	197,007	13
20	Pitbull	\$19,837,668	419,238	32
21	Enrique Iglesias & Ricky Martin	\$19,265,066	177,641	15
22	James Taylor	\$18,685,336	162,821	17
23	Grupo Firme	\$18,625,726	203,703	19
24	Luke Combs	\$17,872,491	317,690	22
25	KISS	\$16,923,851	201,852	22
26	Alejandro Fernández	\$16,371,965	157,924	23
27	Phish	\$16,021,625	188,706	12
28	The Gold Over America Tour	\$15,939,468	152,399	28
29	Billy Joel	\$15,143,930	115,198	3
30	Blake Shelton	\$14,619,894	157,033	15
31	J. Cole	\$14,448,258	125,104	10
32	Dan + Shay	\$14,049,631	245,198	23
33	Six60	\$13,729,832	168,761	7
34	Marc Anthony	\$13,648,954	115,454	16
35	Lady Gaga	\$13,101,365	44,371	9
36	Usher	\$12,987,894	58,856	14
37	Eric Clapton	\$12,917,909	79,125	7
38	Pepe Aguilar	\$12,597,948	118,393	14
39	Daryl Hall & John Oates	\$11,235,097	182,783	18
40	Machine Gun Kelly	\$10,980,596	207,518	30

Top Tours By Genre

	Artist	Gross	Total Attendees	No. Of Shows
Country	Chris Stapleton	\$33,884,658	511,632	32
Latin	Los Bukis	\$49,667,153	357,343	9
Pop	Harry Styles	\$64,722,417	496,930	29
R&B/Hip-Hop	Bruno Mars	\$24,379,579	74,839	16
Rock	The Rolling Stones	\$72,312,475	340,390	8

been almost nonexistent, followed by a cascade of headlines detailing both Live Nation's and AEG's aggressive efforts to mandate vaccines or COVID-19 tests for anyone who wanted to attend their events.

Those two moments crystallized a return for a concert business that refused to give up any of the ground it had gained after a devastating year. The vaccines would be the new benchmark for safety at concerts and live events with a mandate that would draw rebuke in some states but would make no measurable difference in terms of ticket sales. When added to shows in states without strong vaccine mandates, most promoters have told *Billboard* that the requirement that attendees be fully vaccinated hasn't significantly affected sales.

The pandemic hit in 2020 just as the concert business was wrapping up its most profitable year ever, with Live Nation reporting a record \$11.5 billion in revenue. That same year, Ed Sheeran's *÷ (Divide)* tour became the highest-grossing tour of all time, scoring \$223.4 million in sales in 2019, while the top 10 touring artists for the year pulled in a combined \$1.5 billion.

Those record heights were nearly wiped out in 2020 when the concert business shut down for 10 months. But the industry inched back in 2021, with the top 10 touring artists generating a respectable \$519 million in sales.

That's a healthy gain for the 2021 *Billboard* Box-score charts, which usually provide a rear-window view of the biggest tours and trends at the end of a given year. This year, the truncated charts offer a



Alanis Morissette celebrated over 25 years of her breakthrough album, *Jagged Little Pill*, returning to many of the amphitheaters she toured in 1996.

Top Boxscores

	Artist(s) LOCATION DATE(S)	Gross TICKET PRICE	Total Attendees NO. OF SHOWS	Promoter(s)
1	Outside Lands Music and Arts Festival Golden Gate Park, San Francisco Oct. 29-31	\$33,200,956 \$375/\$165	222,954 3	Another Planet Entertainment
2	The Rolling Stones SoFi Stadium, Inglewood, Calif. Oct. 14, 17	\$18,887,679 \$499.50/\$225/\$99.50/\$29.50	81,676 2	Concerts West/ AEG Presents
3	Life Is Beautiful Festival Downtown Festival Site, Las Vegas Sept. 17-19	\$18,319,227 \$2,995/\$150	162,436 3	Another Planet Entertainment
4	Los Bukis SoFi Stadium, Inglewood, Calif. Aug. 27-28	\$13,830,647 \$146.09	94,671 2	Live Nation
5	Los Bukis RingCentral Coliseum, Oakland, Calif. Oct. 1-2	\$13,182,222 \$160.65	82,053 2	Live Nation
6	The Rolling Stones Raymond James Stadium, Tampa, Fla. Oct. 29	\$11,378,033 \$499.50/\$175/\$99.50/\$29.50	52,075 1	Concerts West/ AEG Presents
7	Los Bukis Soldier Field, Chicago Sept. 4-5	\$9,356,386 \$116.48	80,335 2	Live Nation
8	The Rolling Stones Bank of America Stadium, Charlotte, N.C. Sept. 30	\$9,074,182 \$499.50/\$149.50/\$99.50/\$29.50	42,577 1	Concerts West/ AEG Presents
9	Eagles The Forum, Inglewood, Calif. Oct. 15-16, 19	\$8,974,221 \$229.57	39,091 3	Live Nation
10	The Rolling Stones Nissan Stadium, Nashville Oct. 9	\$8,947,952 \$499.50/\$150/\$99.50/\$29.50	42,964 1	Concerts West/ AEG Presents
11	The Rolling Stones Heinz Field, Pittsburgh Oct. 4	\$8,781,607 \$499.50/\$149.50/\$99.50/\$29.50	43,702 1	Concerts West/ AEG Presents
12	Harry Styles Madison Square Garden, New York Oct. 3-4, 16	\$8,099,555 \$169.50/\$39.50	56,392 3	Live Nation
13	The Rolling Stones U.S. Bank Stadium, Minneapolis Oct. 24	\$8,039,757 \$499.50/\$150/\$99.50/\$29.50	38,727 1	Concerts West/ AEG Presents
14	Dead & Company Wrigley Field, Chicago Sept. 17-18	\$7,795,972 \$181.50/\$39.50	73,845 2	Live Nation
15	Aventura MetLife Stadium, East Rutherford, N.J. Oct. 9	\$7,339,642 \$149.65	48,327 1	Live Nation
16	The Rolling Stones The Dome at America's Center, St. Louis Sept. 26	\$7,203,265 \$450/\$149.50/\$99.50/\$29.50	38,669 1	Concerts West/ AEG Presents
17	Grupo Firme Staples Center, Los Angeles July 30-Aug. 8	\$6,898,675 \$225/\$175/\$125/\$75/\$55	77,437 9	Nederlander Concerts
18	Eagles Chase Center, San Francisco Oct. 22-23	\$6,332,596 \$270.55	23,406 2	Live Nation
19	Aventura Hard Rock Stadium, Miami Aug. 14	\$6,017,014 \$293.50/\$243/\$193/\$143/\$66	40,538 1	Live Nation
20	Eagles Ball Arena, Denver Sept. 16, 18	\$5,909,719 \$240.03	24,621 2	Live Nation
21	Phish Dick's Sporting Goods Park, Commerce City, Colo. Sept. 3-5	\$5,795,205 \$90/\$75	70,345 3	AEG Presents
22	Harry Styles Madison Square Garden, New York Oct. 30-31	\$5,714,220 \$169.50/\$39.50	37,321 2	Live Nation
23	Grupo Firme MGM Grand Garden, Las Vegas Sept. 10-12	\$5,690,707 \$177.31/\$49	58,069 3	Live Nation
24	Eagles Footprint Center, Phoenix Sept. 24-25	\$5,595,557 \$238.13	23,498 2	Live Nation
25	Phish MGM Grand Garden, Las Vegas Oct. 28-31	\$5,426,815 \$95/\$85	62,851 4	Red Light Management



Harry Styles' Love on Tour leads all pop treks for 2021, having begun in September.

window into both the past and future, showing how concerts that had been announced and put on sale in 2019 were playing out in 2021 and how new events put on sale in 2021 were seeing strong sales.

"I've never seen anything like it before — ticket sales strong across the board and selling much faster than ever before," says Gregg Perloff of Another Planet Entertainment, which has two events in the top five of the Top Boxscores — the Outside Lands Music and Arts Festival in San Francisco and Life Is Beautiful in Las Vegas.

Sales were strong enough that Live Nation president Joe Berchtold told investors in September that 8 million people attended the company's concerts during the pivotal month of August and that 2022 would be "bigger than 2019 was," noting that Live Nation's concert bookings are up double digits from this time two years ago. Consumers, who have been unable to gather at live shows for over a year, are "showing up and spending money," he said.

If Live Nation is going to surpass 2019, it won't be by putting on more concerts in 2022 than it did that year. In terms of the increase in the company's bookings, Berchtold isn't saying that the number of artists who can sell out arenas and stadiums has increased — he's saying that more artists in the upper echelons of music will be available in 2022. The hope is that fans will spend more in 2022 than 2019 to make up for lost time, but this strategy also has the potential to force consumers to choose between artists and, potentially, cannibalize sales in the process.

With consumers ready to spend money on concerts and bands ready to perform in front of huge audiences, Live Nation and other promoters realize that the best way to generate the most revenue in 2022 will be bigger, blockbuster shows that can take in tens of millions of dollars.

It is possible that 2022 could generate greater ticket sales with less overall show volume by embracing the parts of the business that are big moneymakers. Here are three focus areas of the industry as it looks to juice its numbers in 2022.

LAS VEGAS

The concert comeback of 2022 will live or die by the venues that dot the Las Vegas Strip and typically dominate the year-end Billboard Boxscore venue charts, as they continued to do in 2021. This year's charts show that Las Vegas outperformed competitors by getting aggressive early on and prioritizing

Top Promoters

	Promoter	Gross	Total Attendees	No. Of Shows
1	Live Nation	\$916,969,085	10,299,021	1,233
2	AEG Presents	\$397,384,915	5,588,942	1,989
3	Another Planet Entertainment	\$72,314,962	700,834	138
4	Cárdenas Marketing Network	\$43,206,334	397,320	54
5	MGM Resorts International	\$39,972,944	162,124	37
6	Beaver Productions	\$28,366,989	223,014	23
7	Caesars Entertainment	\$26,362,268	228,039	125
8	Nederlander Concerts	\$25,407,366	370,362	105
9	Semmel Concerts	\$15,109,023	301,922	133
10	Eccles Entertainment	\$13,729,832	168,761	7

Top Venues 15,001-Plus

	Venue LOCATION	Gross	Total Attendees	No. Of Shows
1	T-Mobile Arena Las Vegas	\$37,229,362	106,450	8
2	Madison Square Garden New York	\$32,814,383	248,575	17
3	The Forum Las Vegas	\$25,680,031	205,653	17
4	Bridgestone Arena Inglewood, Calif.	\$24,333,397	271,597	34
5	American Airlines Center Nashville	\$20,878,133	198,670	58
6	State Farm Arena Dallas	\$20,829,262	201,729	28
7	Ball Arena Atlanta	\$19,746,249	190,499	17
8	Capital One Arena Washington, D.C.	\$16,382,458	137,364	15



Usher's Caesars Palace residency in Las Vegas earned \$13 million from its first 14 shows.

residency shows, which are seeing the most ticket demand right now.

Since the capacities are smaller depending on the venue, most residencies don't exactly fit the definition of a "big show." But higher-than-average ticket prices and steady, well-marketed performances make these intimate gatherings strong earners.

Leading off the very first Boxscore charts to come back during the pandemic was Bruno Mars and his residency at the Park Theater in Las Vegas. His 12 shows in July and August generated \$19 million of the \$24.4 million he earned for the year from 59,000 fans who bought tickets, with an average price of \$325.

Next was Usher, who returned to Las Vegas in July to play 14 shows at The Colosseum at Caesars Palace, earning him \$13 million for the year with 59,000 tickets sold, the same number of tickets as Mars but with an average ticket price that was over \$100 cheaper.

By October, Sin City was in full swing thanks to the iHeartRadio Music Festival, which grossed \$5 million with 18,600 tickets sold at the T-Mobile Arena on Sept. 17 and 18. And, like Another Planet's San Francisco festival Outside Lands, iHeart's event was up 7% in gross revenue from the 2019 edition.

By the end of 2021, Las Vegas venues made up a significant part of the year-end chart, with the T-Mobile Arena leading the Top Venues (15,001-Plus) chart with \$37.2 million in sales from eight concerts.

Top Venues 15,001-Plus (Continued)

	Venue LOCATION	Gross	Total Attendees	No. Of Shows
9	Staples Center Los Angeles	\$14,096,137	183,272	18
10	Chase Center San Francisco	\$12,840,277	98,927	8
11	FTX Arena Miami	\$12,558,200	158,497	19
12	Amway Center Orlando, Fla.	\$12,259,416	154,394	20
13	Hollywood Bowl Los Angeles	\$12,045,234	115,049	7
14	Fiddler's Green Amphitheatre Englewood, Colo.	\$11,251,353	163,660	13
15	Wells Fargo Center Philadelphia	\$11,214,450	145,377	14
16	Xfinity Center Mansfield, Mass.	\$10,679,056	148,679	10
17	Dick's Sporting Goods Park Commerce City, Colo.	\$10,394,434	105,283	5
18	MidFlorida Credit Union Amphitheatre Tampa, Fla.	\$9,867,718	156,626	11
19	PNC Bank Arts Center Holmdel, N.J.	\$9,809,233	148,722	11
20	Coliseo de Puerto Rico José Miguel Agrelot San Juan, Puerto Rico	\$9,470,131	148,189	20
21	PNC Music Pavilion Charlotte, N.C.	\$9,264,406	155,197	11
22	Amalie Arena Tampa, Fla.	\$9,069,084	101,223	14
23	O2 Arena London	\$9,006,011	116,942	11
24	Ruoff Home Mortgage Music Center Noblesville, Ind.	\$8,934,808	180,472	11
25	Xcel Energy Center St. Paul, Minn.	\$8,924,028	52,156	4

Top Venues 10,001-15,000

	Venue LOCATION	Gross	Total Attendees	No. Of Shows
1	MGM Grand Garden Las Vegas	\$26,688,407	232,705	16
2	Northwell Health at Jones Beach Theater Wantagh, N.Y.	\$10,573,181	124,764	11
3	Footprint Center Phoenix	\$10,073,701	66,295	6
4	Dickies Arena Dallas	\$7,279,761	57,689	6
5	First Direct Arena Leeds, England	\$6,254,908	76,839	11
6	Michelob ULTRA Arena Las Vegas	\$5,847,211	49,557	9
7	Utilita Arena Newcastle, England	\$5,491,464	79,688	14
8	SSE Hydro Glasgow	\$5,344,537	63,817	9
9	Isleta Amphitheater Albuquerque, N.M.	\$5,152,591	96,476	7
10	Gas South Arena Duluth, Ga.	\$5,102,442	41,575	5

Top Venues 5,001-10,000

	Venue LOCATION	Gross	Total Attendees	No. Of Shows
1	Red Rocks Amphitheatre Morrison, Colo.	\$61,682,130	996,570	134
2	Park Theater Las Vegas	\$35,761,782	134,119	27
3	Mohegan Sun Arena Uncasville, Conn.	\$12,161,451	150,006	25
4	Hearst Greek Theatre Berkeley, Calif.	\$10,562,271	160,425	29
5	Radio City Music Hall New York	\$7,631,461	88,652	15
6	Amphitheater at the Wharf Orange Beach, Ala.	\$6,313,602	82,847	10
7	Walmart Arkansas Music Pavilion Rogers, Ark.	\$5,571,082	98,046	12
8	Greek Theatre Los Angeles	\$5,504,855	85,647	16
9	Bank of New Hampshire Pavilion Gilford, N.H.	\$4,799,414	65,121	8
10	Microsoft Theater Los Angeles	\$4,348,794	59,113	12

Top Venues 5,000 Or Less

	Venue LOCATION	Gross	Total Attendees	No. Of Shows
1	Fox Theatre Atlanta	\$22,943,970	183,149	47
2	The Colosseum at Caesars Palace Las Vegas	\$14,916,174	66,243	16
3	The Theater at MGM National Harbor Oxon Hill, Md.	\$8,420,886	47,080	19
4	Encore Theater at Wynn Hotel Las Vegas	\$8,061,082	50,310	36
5	The Mission Ballroom Denver	\$7,779,720	170,308	47
6	Beacon Theatre New York	\$6,960,250	89,102	36
7	Santa Barbara Bowl Santa Barbara, Calif.	\$6,773,502	88,712	20
8	The Mountain Winery Saratoga, Calif.	\$5,895,847	61,956	32
9	Chicago Theatre Chicago	\$4,398,706	71,276	25
10	Orpheum Theatre Minneapolis	\$4,288,126	49,180	25

Top Stadiums

	Stadium LOCATION	Gross	Total Attendees	No. Of Shows
1	SoFi Stadium Inglewood, Calif.	\$32,718,326	176,347	4
2	Fenway Park Boston	\$21,986,917	189,122	6
3	Wrigley Field Chicago	\$20,148,925	192,539	6
4	RingCentral Coliseum Oakland, Calif.	\$13,182,222	82,053	2
5	Hersheypark Stadium Hershey, Pa.	\$12,115,793	151,359	7

Billboard's year-end touring charts are based on Billboard Boxscore data for performances between Nov. 1, 2020, and Oct. 31, 2021.

STADIUMS

Stadium shows are the holy grail of profitability in the concert business — if one can pull them off. The Rolling Stones set a new benchmark for Boxscores with two concerts at SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, Calif., in 2021 that grossed \$18.9 million, making the Oct. 14 and 17 shows the highest-grossing tour stop for any band this year.

Honors for the first returning stadium shows go to Dead & Company, for an Aug. 20 Citi Field concert in New York that played to 36,642 fans and earned an impressive \$4.1 million. The next night, at Philadelphia's Citizens Bank Park, the John Mayer-led band featuring Bob Weir and Mickey Hart played for 39,271 fans and, thanks to a slightly lower ticket price, grossed \$3.3 million.

Billy Joel, George Strait and Zac Brown Band came next, with ZBB upgrading its amphitheater run for August stops at Boston's Fenway Park and Hersheypark Stadium, which combined grossed \$11.1 million and sold 166,000 tickets, briefly holding the title of top country tour of 2021.

With The Weeknd, Kenny Chesney, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Coldplay, Def Leppard with Mötley Crüe and Rammstein planning stadium tours, while bands like The Killers, Foo Fighters and Santana are lining up mixed stadium/arena runs, the outlook for high-grossing stadium shows looks healthy and promising.

LATIN

Few genres have been as important to the return of concerts as Latin, with some of the biggest performances occurring early in the pandemic recovery.

In Los Angeles, the return of arena touring began with a seven-show run in July by Grupo Firme, with one concert, promoted by Nederlander, grossing \$6.9 million and attracting 77,000 fans.

But Grupo Firme was just a warmup compared with the return of Los Bukis. The legendary Mexican group led by Marco Antonio Solís and Joel Solís, which reunited after a 25-year break, earned \$22.1 million and sold 181,000 tickets to five shows combined at Chicago's Soldier Field and AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas. The act followed up with a double-header at SoFi Stadium on Aug. 27 and 28 that grossed \$13.4 million and a concert at RingCentral Coliseum in Oakland, Calif., on Oct. 1 that generated \$12.8 million, making it the sixth-highest-attended concert in the venue's history, behind only The Rolling Stones, Pink Floyd, U2 and The Who.

Other strong Latin performers include Maluma, Marc Anthony and Aventura — another reunited Latin group that banked \$4.9 million in September with a show at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles.

This next year is already shaping up to be a strong one for the fast-growing genre, with tours planned for Bad Bunny, Maluma, Juanes and Café Tacvba as well as an L.A. residency for Maná at The Forum in Inglewood. The one show format Latin is missing: festivals. Expect AEG and Live Nation to each make an announcement in the spring about new large-scale Spanish-language mega-events. **B**

chartbreaker

No. 14

PEAK ON BILLBOARD'S
POP AIRPLAY CHART

MAE MULLER

Why the North London native was hesitant to record the song that became her breakthrough hit

▶ When Mae Muller signed with Capitol Records UK in 2018, she came with a clear vision: "I want to be a pop star. I want to travel the world. I want to be on the charts," she says. "I never shied away from that." Seeing Muller's potential, her team sent her to Los Angeles to work with industry stars like Jimmy Napes (Sam Smith, Tori Kelly) and Blake Slatkin (Lil Nas X, The Kid LAROI), and help her "level up a bit," as Jo Charrington, Capitol Records UK co-president, says. But the pandemic forced a new approach.

Unable to travel to the United States for songwriting sessions, Muller decided to be more open to collaborating on music written by other artists. In November 2020, she traveled to Stockholm for a session with writer-producer NEIKED. (Sweden was open to travelers from the United Kingdom.) He played Muller a track he had written: "Better Days," a buoyant and celebratory single that became her first Billboard Hot 100 hit, reaching No. 29 on the Nov. 13-dated chart following its September release (and has since collected 76.2 million on-demand U.S. streams through Dec. 9, according to MRC Data).

"I'm a songwriter first and foremost, so to me, taking the song was really scary," says Muller, 24. "But I was like, 'This is a banger. If I don't try it, the only person that's going to lose is me.'"

She had the idea of adding a rap feature, suggesting Chicago-born Polo G; he recorded his vocals within a week of Muller's team reaching out. Adding an American artist not only exposed her to Polo's fan base but also made "Better Days" more likely to be played on U.S. radio. Charrington and Capitol Records UK A&R manager Charlie Knox are now working in tandem with Capitol U.S. to bring Muller to American audiences in the same way they did when breaking U.K. stars like Smith.

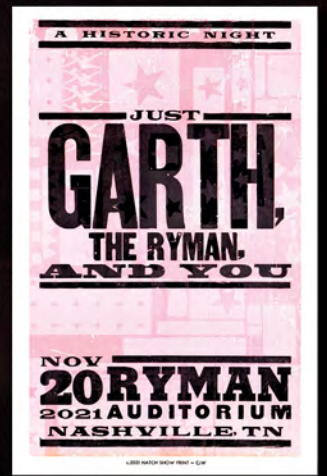
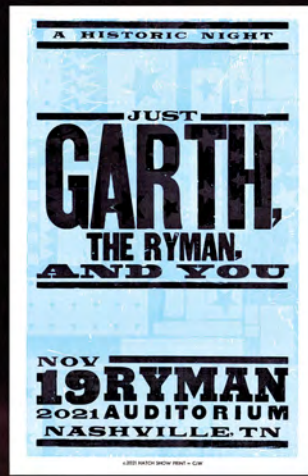
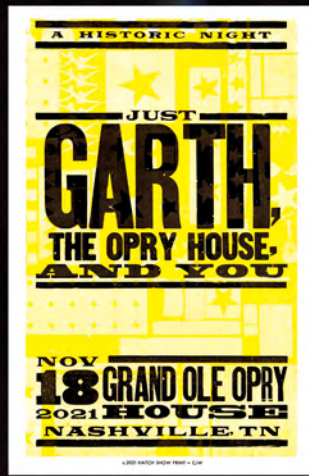
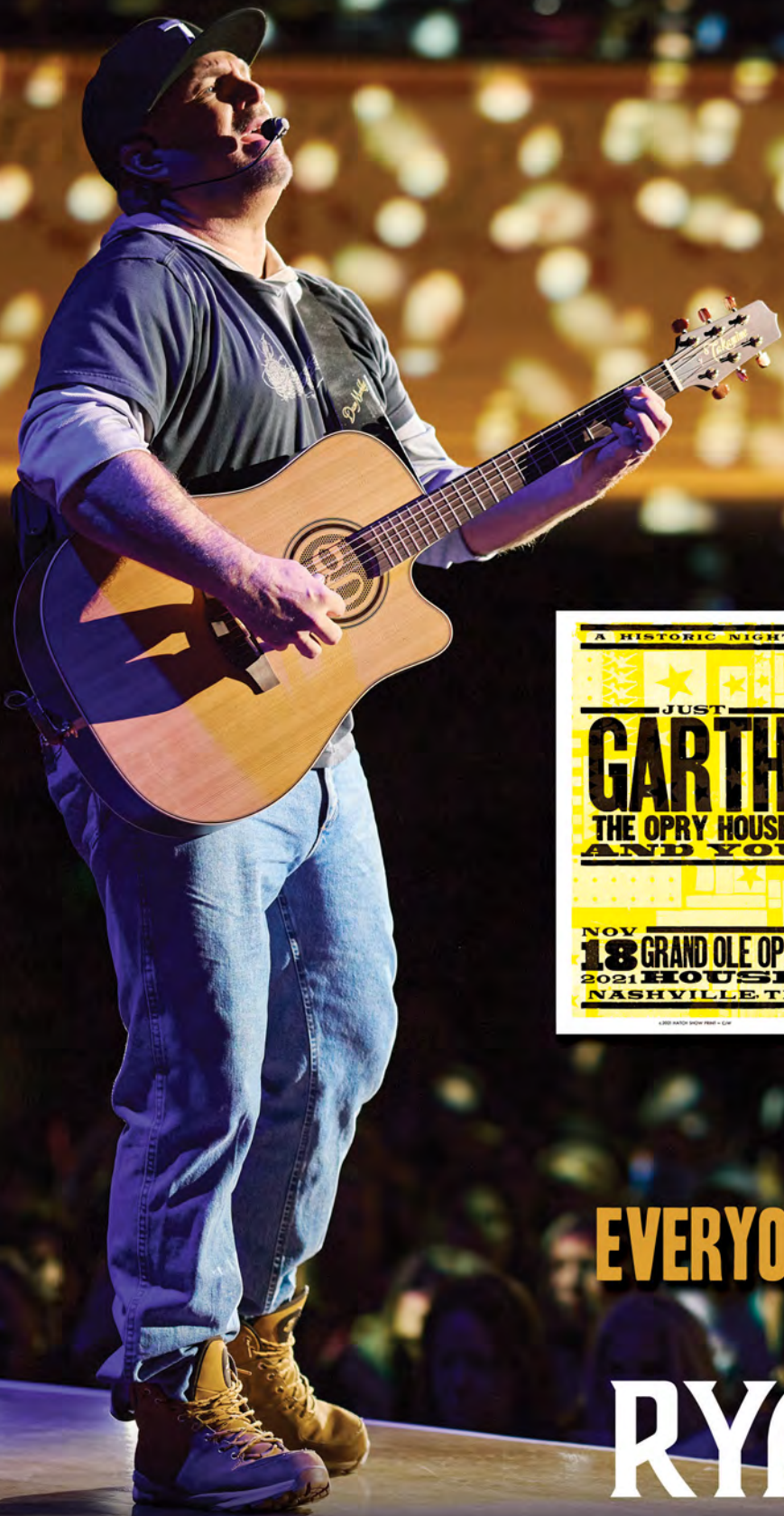
With U.S. travel possible again, Muller has been back in Los Angeles working on new music and leveraging the success of "Better Days" into opportunities like performing on *The Voice*, with other high-profile gigs coming up. "She has been working really hard for three years and knows what it feels like when things aren't going as well as they are now," says Charrington. "We're grinding it out as a team to make sure we make the most of this moment, but also build on the work Mae has already done and turn her into the superstar she deserves to be."

—KATIE BAIN

Charrington (left) and Muller photographed by David Titlow on Nov. 12 at The Queen's in London.

MULLER STYLING BY JANE JARVIS. HAIR BY LUKE BENSON. MAKEUP BY ZARA ALI

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