

MUSIC CONNECTION

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EXCLUSIVE LISTS
A&R REPS
MUSIC ATTORNEYS
OF CONTACTS

X AMBASSADORS

5 A&R Pro's

... *What Turns 'em On ... What'll Kill a Deal*

5 Packing & Travel Tips p. 78

New Toys p. 10
Alan Parsons ASSR
Session Files



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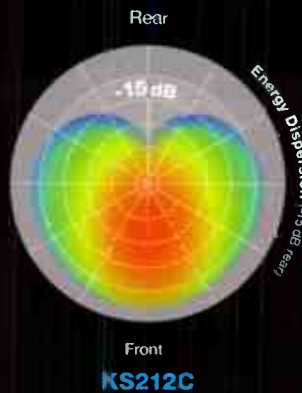
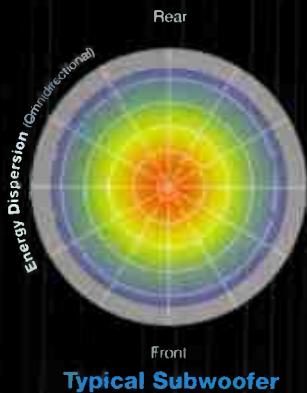
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World Radio History



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X Ambassadors

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By Brett Callwood

All Photos: Catie Laffoon



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5 A&R Pro's

What attracts A&R to an artist? What will kill a deal? If you're looking to get your act hooked up with a major label, first check out our exclusive interviews with these Artist & Repertoire gatekeepers.

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Clarett USB

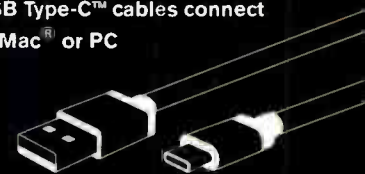


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TUNEDLY

tunedly.com

A Songwriter Helping Other Songwriters (and Vocalists): The concept of Tunedly, a revolutionary marketplace that connects songwriters, vocalists and other music creators with world-class session musicians, evolved from the personal needs of its co-creator. Chris Erhardt was a songwriter living in rural Ireland, frustrated about the difficulty he had hooking up with session musicians to help him record professional demos. Mylene Besancon, an artist manager who handled tours of Ireland for many musicians, pointed out that many of her clients have months of down time when they're off the road—and most had professional home recording studios. Erhardt began using Besancon's clients remotely as session musicians, and the powerful results inspired other songwriters he knew to record songs with them. Sensing a universal need for such connections, the two realized they could turn the concept into a full-fledged online platform. After creating prototype sites and running tests, they relocated to Canada and launched Tunedly in early 2016, ultimately moving the business to St. Louis in the summer of 2017.

How It Works: Designed to help those with limited connections to pro talent and resources, Tunedly allows songwriters and vocalists to give their songs a professional edge with pro musicians—including Grammy winners from around the world—who can help them



attain a high-level pro sound. The interactive platform, which creates an online equivalent to a creative studio environment, allows clients to tell their selected musicians, singers and engineers the exact sonic flavors they need for their music in real time. Each musician can hear the track as it's built and discuss ideas with the others on the session. Services include production, mixing and mastering and the option to hire a pro engineer and project manager to help the session. Tunedly also maximizes song placements through personal song-pluggers.

By the Numbers: Tunedly currently has 60 session musicians on its platform, and keeps the stable small to ensure that nobody sits idle. To date, the growing site has had 300 users and created 2,000 songs. Co-Founder and CEO Erhardt says, "I get the biggest thrill from comparing our clients' original rough demos and the incredible final results. It's an incredible process from start to finish, and I love the way all the elements come together to create amazing work."

Contact Tunedly via tunedly.com

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Julie Sandell

Associate Director, Sound Recording Division
AFM & SAG-AFTRA Intellectual Property
Rights Distribution Fund



The AFM & SAG-AFTRA Intellectual Property Rights Distribution Fund has promoted Julie Sandell to Associate Director of the Sound Recording Division. Sandell will oversee the Sound Recording royalty distributions currently totalling over \$50 million annually. She will direct the Fund's music research department using guidelines set forth in U.S. Copyright laws and Fund policy to ensure performers are fairly compensated for their non-featured performances. Sandell has been at the Fund for eight years and was previously the Manager of the Sound Recording Division. For more, contact Bstewart@afmsagaftorafund.org.

Bret Costin

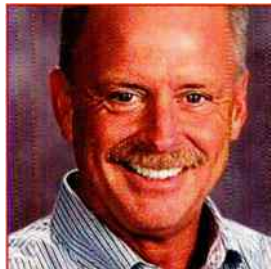
Senior Vice President
of Research and Development
PreSonus



PreSonus has promoted Bret Costin to Senior Vice President of Research and Development. Costin has designed products and managed and directed product development at a variety of companies, ranging from Avid and Compaq to M-Audio and PreSonus. The University of Florida engineering graduate served as PreSonus' Vice President of Research and Development between late 2010 and mid 2012, helping to develop such mainstays as the AudioBox USB® audio/MIDI interface, StudioLive® 16.0.2 digital console and StudioLive AI-series consoles. Contact soppenheimer@presonus.com for more.

Craig Johnson

Chief Executive Officer
Full Compass



Full Compass has appointed multi-platinum producer Craig Johnson to Chief Executive Officer. In his role as CEO, he will be responsible for setting the future strategy and direction of Full Compass Systems, as well as building and leading the senior executive team. Prior to the appointment, Johnson spent more than 12 years at Musician's Friend, where he held several senior positions including President/COO and Chief Executive Officer. He was then appointed Chief Supply Chain Officer and Chief Operating Officer of parent company, Guitar Center. Most recently, Mr. Johnson served as Chief Executive Officer of Nasco. Contact blaine@fullcompass.com.

Randall McMillan

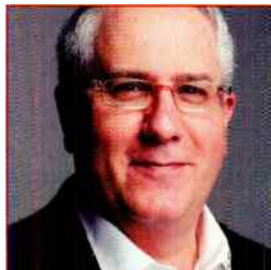
Vice President, Business Affairs,
Creative & Licensing
Broadcast Music, Inc.



Broadcast Music, Inc. (BMI) has appointed Randall McMillan to the newly created position of Vice President, Business Affairs, Creative & Licensing. In his role, McMillan will lead a team of business affairs executives across BMI's Creative and Licensing divisions. He will be a key member of BMI's negotiating team for major industry licenses and will also work closely with BMI's Creative teams on songwriter and composer affiliations. In addition, McMillan will liaise with BMI's Legal department on many fronts, including rate court matters. For more information, contact Jodie Thomas at jthomas@bmi.com.

Jim Roppo

Vice President and General Manager
Republic Records



Republic Records has promoted Jim Roppo to Executive Vice President and General Manager. In this new post, Roppo will oversee label operations for Republic and its various partners. As a 20-year veteran of Universal Music Group, Roppo has been a part of the Republic family since 2012. Most recently, he served as EVP, Marketing & Commerce. Throughout his tenure, he's been at the forefront of campaigns for the likes of Drake, The Weeknd, Ariana Grande, Post Malone, Julia Michaels and more. Prior to Republic, he logged 13 years at Island Def Jam Music Group, becoming Senior Vice President of Sales. For more, contact Joseph.Carozza@umusic.com.

DeDe Burns

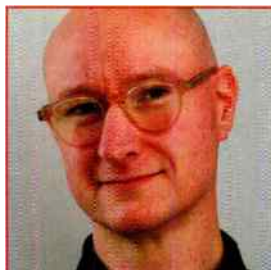
Director of Strategic Services
Royalty Exchange



Royalty Exchange has appointed DeDe Burns as Director of Strategies Services. Based in the Denver headquarters, Burns will play a key role in developing Royalty Exchange's account management and customer service programs, as well as artist and industry relations efforts. She comes to the company after a long history of membership services and strategic operations at performing rights organization ASCAP, culminating in the position of VP of Global Member and Society Services. With ASCAP, Burns modernized key areas of the organization's distribution system and market research activities. Contact hschwartz@shorefire.com.

Ron Entwistle

User Relations and Product Manager
PMC USA



PMC USA has appointed Multi-platinum producer Ron "Spider" Entwistle to User Relations and Product Manager. In this new role, Entwistle will oversee the introduction of the company's new result6 Active Reference Monitors to the US market. As well as the sale and marketing for the company's popular twotwo monitor range. Prior to joining PMC USA, Entwistle's extensive career includes being a songwriter, recording artist, multi-instrumentalist, programmer, editor, sound designer, recording engineer, mixer, DJ, studio owner, and consultant with a list of clients and collaborators including Beyoncé, Lady Gaga, Frank Ocean and more. Contact sue@whitenoisepr.co.uk.

Michael Garbutt

Head of Media
Notting Hill Music Group



Michael Garbutt has been appointed Head of Media at Notting Hill Music Group. Garbutt has had a long career including early roles in retail, at HMV and Our Price in the 1980s, followed by a series of appointments at record labels and PR companies. He worked at Polydor on campaigns for Freddie Mercury, The Style Council and The Really Useful Group, and then at Virgin Records during the '90s. He later joined Alan Edwards at The Outside Organisation, whose clients at the time included David Bowie, The Who and Elton John. In 2003, he launched Lucid Communications with Charlie LycettAttack. For more, contact themichaelgarbutt@gmail.com.

► NEXI INDUSTRIES PHASER EFFECT PEDAL

The **Nexi Phaser (PSR-01)** pedal is from Nexi's Vintage Analog Protection Squad and, like the other 13 Nexi pedals in the line, it runs standalone as any 9-volt guitar pedal or plugs right into any of the eight slots on the Nexi's Solution Pedal board. While plugged into the Solution, Nexi pedals get their audio and power from its own DSub-9 connector mounted underneath.

The Nexi Phaser is a throwback to simpler times; it has just a single control for the speed of the effect as it sweeps through the peaks and dips. In true analog fashion, the guitar signal is delayed through several stages and then recombined with the original signal to produce the sweeping, inside-out effect.

Cranked up fast, the Nexi Phaser creates the swirling, rotary speaker effect perfect for a funky rhythm guitar part. Slowed way down, we got beautifully subtle and pretty pad-like chording sounds for a ballad. We found it very easy to find the sweet spot—there are so many! As with all the Nexi stomp pedals, the super large stomp button makes each of them easy to find and trigger on/off on the Nexi Solution Pedal board. Awesome.

The Nexi Phaser PSR-01 sells for \$110 MSRP.

nexi.eu/products/phaser



◀ SHURE'S THREE NEW BLUETOOTH EARPHONES

On the heels of Shure's RMCE-LTG, comes the new Shure Remote + Mic Earphone Bluetooth Accessory cable. There are three new sets of cable/earphone combinations that use this new Bluetooth cable with three levels of Shure earphones all equipped with MMCX connectors. There are the SE112-BT1 (\$49), SE215-BT1 (\$99) and SE215SPE-BT (\$119) pairs.

I was familiar with the sound of the SE215 earphones from reviewing them with the Remote + Mic Lighting Accessory Cable. The Bluetooth version sounds very much the same. The latest Bluetooth 4.1 spec is used here and I found these to pair nearly instantly with my iPhone 6S and will quickly re-pair if your phone exceeds the maximum 30-foot range temporarily.

I also liked that these worked well for at least 6 hours or more intermittently. The two-piece system is made up of a three-button remote/playback controller and the Bluetooth transceiver that was easy to wear and hide if need be. I wear these on the subway and noisy streets and appreciate the up to 37dB of sound isolation they provide along with plenty of volume and the good voice clarity as callers have commented.

The SE215 earphones fit well in my ear canals, look good and the cables and ear clips are first-rate. The top-of-the-line SE215SPE-BT set come in clear, translucent black, blue or white.

shure.com/americas/news-events/press-releases/shure-introduces-bluetooth-earphones

► ALAN PARSONS ASSR SESSION FILES

Alan Parsons' Art & Science of Sound Recording Session Files Vol.1 are professionally recorded, multi-track recordings that can be loaded into your own digital audio workstation for processing in any way you like. Session Files are taken from the on-going series of live recording master class training sessions with famed engineer/producer Alan Parsons.

These are 10 individual songs produced and recorded by Parsons at studios around the world including EMI Abbey Road—the studio where Parsons started out with the Beatles and went on to engineer *Dark Side Of The Moon* for Pink Floyd. Later, he produced and engineered his own multi-platinum records with The Alan Parsons Project.

You get raw, contiguous multi-tracks recorded at 24-bit/88.2kHz ready to load into any DAW. There is also a detailed track sheet with each session that includes: instrumentation, microphones and positioning plus personal session notes from Parsons.

Musicians featured on the recordings include A-list session players: Vinnie Colaiuta, Simon Phillips, Nathan East, Tim Pierce, Michael Thompson and others.

I received the session files for a song called "Do You Live At All." It was excellently tracked to a click and it comes, "warts and all," ready for a good mix. I especially liked the .pdf file of the track sheet plus notes and details about each track. ASSR's Session Files are going to be a big hit with recording engineering schools, home recording enthusiasts—anyone who wants an inside look while having a great way to practice mixing using awesome sounding music played live by the best players.

Session Files can be purchased by download or pre-loaded onto a USB drive. They are not for resale or publication but you can edit them, remix them, and try your own vocals or other instrumentation freely.

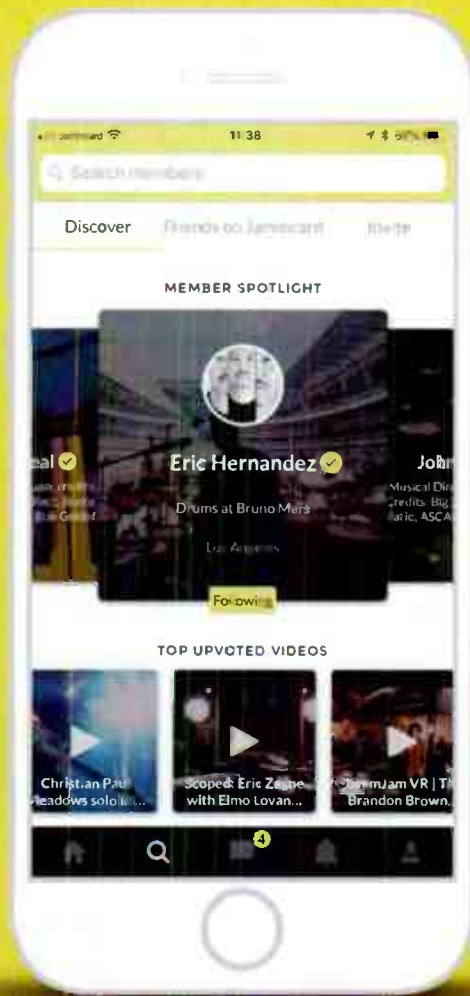
They sell for \$99 each and there are also educational prices with The Complete Collection (all ten songs) pre-loaded onto a custom USB drive.

artandscienceofsound.com/session-files



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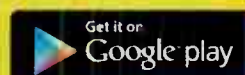
- **Forbes**

"11 music apps every artist needs."

- **GRAMMY.com**

"The Jammcard movement is just beginning. It is already the go-to app for music professionals."

- **Digital Music News**



► **PRESONUS AUDIOBOX USB 96**

The **PreSonus AudioBox USB® 96** is a 2 in and 2 out audio/MIDI recording interface for recording at up to 24-bit and at up to 96kHz sample rates. This is a small, portable bus-powered interface with two front-panel Combo XLR mic/instrument inputs that's perfect for itinerant singer/songwriters, podcasters, and musicians—anyone wanting an “on the go” recording system.

You get switchable +48-volt phantom power for condenser microphones and individual input level controls for guitar, bass or microphones. I also liked the front panel's Mixer control knob to adjust the balance between the live input signal (your guitar or vocal microphone) and your computer's DAW track playback—no delay or latency.

And to hear everything exactly the way you want, on the rear panel are a pair of balanced line-level L/R output jacks for connection to powered monitors plus and a stereo headphone output jack also controlled by a separate volume control. The rear panel finishes with a USB jack and MIDI I/O jacks for connecting your synth or controller, so you can connect your favorite synth or MIDI controller.

The PreSonus AudioBox USB 96 sells for \$99.95 MAP and works with any recording software and includes PreSonus Studio One Artist to get you going.

presonus.com/products/AudioBox-USB-96



◀ **ROCKETT PEDALS ROCKAWAY ARCHER OVERDRIVE EQ PEDAL**

Originally a custom-designed pedal for guitarist Steve Stevens, the Rockaway Archer Overdrive is now available. It is based on the original Archer overdrive pedal but adds a 6-band octave graphic EQ. The six faders allow up to +/- 18dB boost/cut for the following bands: 100, 200, 400, 800, 1,500, and 3,200 Hz. Like the Archer Overdrive, the Overdrive EQ is capable of clean boost and has both Volume and Gain controls. The pedal is powered by an internal 18-volt voltage doubler but runs on standard 9-volt pedal board power and draws 30mA.

I like that, when the pedals are activated, the “tops” of the six faders light up so you can spot a particular EQ “shape” of things looking down at it on the floor—even on a dark stage.

Users find the Rockaway Archer useful at the end of the pedal board signal chain just before the amp—kind of like a mastering processor for your guitar effects/pedal board. Pushing a frequency fader upwards will add volume—up to 18dB so it is easy to push level into the front of your amp to the limit! Rockett Pedals Rockaway Archer Overdrive EQ Pedal sells for \$249 MSRP.

rockettpedals.com/product/rockaway-archer

► **ACOUSTIC GEOMETRY PRO ROOM PACKS**

The **Acoustic Geometry Room Packs** are sets of professional-level room acoustic treatment products. They come in four sizes based on both your room's size and/or the severity of the typical acoustic problems you'll experience in those rooms.

There are packs that come with: 6, 8, 10, and 12 combinations of diffusion, low-frequency absorption (bass traps), and mid/high-frequency sound absorption panels. The Pro Room Packs include fabric-wrapped panels, absorptive overhead ceiling clouds, Acoustic Geometry's Curve Diffusors™ and CornerSorbers™. All mounting hardware is included with these kits. Once you get them, you can get going and put them up using basic hand tools.

Pro Room Packs come in your choice in six stock fabric colors as well as 23 additional special-order colors. Colors range from the most popular onyx, birch, and then there are beautiful color textures such as Beach Glass and Sandy Pebble.

Pro Room Packs are proven acoustical products that will greatly improve the acoustics of recording studios, audio post-production rooms, stereo listening rooms and high-end home theaters.

There are a whole series of informational videos about acoustic treatment and sound isolation guides on the company's Web site and YouTube channel. For the prices and colors of the Acoustic Geometry's Pro Room Packs.

acousticgeometry.com/product-category/room-packs



BARRY RUDOLPH is a recording engineer/mixer who has worked on over 30 gold and platinum records. He has recorded and/or mixed Lynyrd Skynyrd, Hall & Oates, Pat Benatar, Rod Stewart, the Corrs and more. Barry has his own futuristic music mixing facility and loves teaching audio engineering at Musician's Institute, Hollywood, CA. He is a lifetime Grammy-voting member of NARAS and a contributing editor for *Mix Magazine*. barryrudolph.com

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mojaveaudio.com

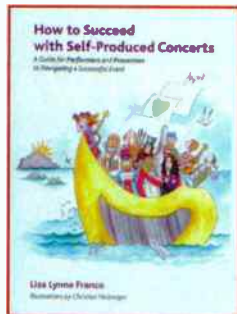


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How to Succeed with Self-Produced Concerts

By Lisa Lynne Franco
(softcover) \$39.00 (.pdf) \$20.00

For musical artists who are just breaking in, or experienced performers who have been at it a long time, this book is a helpful tool to manage the new era of independent music: This guide will show you how to take control of your ability to find or create new places to play, book venues on your own,

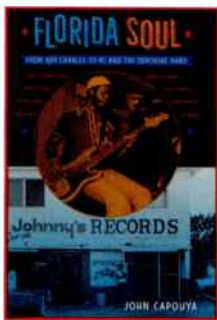


be your own agent, manager, promoter and publicist. The author is an experienced musician who shows how to control all aspects of the touring business and have a system in place to greatly increase your proficiency to make it work.

Florida Soul: From Ray Charles to KC and the Sunshine Band

By John Capouya
(hardcover) \$24.95

Florida Soul is a scholarly excavation of the heretofore under-appreciated role that the Sunshine State played in soul music history. The author covers the usual suspects, of

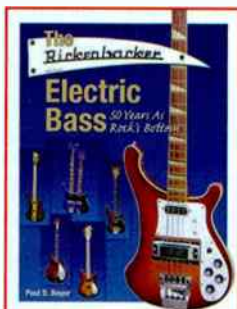


course: Ray Charles, James and Bobby Purify, Sam & Dave, KC and the Sunshine Band. What's most appreciated is how he spotlights lesser-known artists such as Timmy Thomas, Wayne Cochran and Linda Lyndell, as well as influential radio DJ's and prominent record shops.

The Rickenbacker Electric Bass: 50 Years as Rock's Bottom

By Paul D. Boyer
(paperback) \$27.99

In 1961, the Rickenbacker bass became the standard go-to. The Beatles' use of Rickenbacker influenced teen groups everywhere to use the same instruments as their heroes, in the hopes that they could achieve that "right" sound. In this book, readers get to trace the history of the iconic

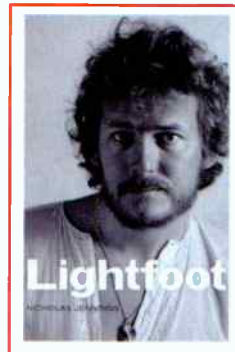


instruments: from prototypes to used from bands like Yes, Deep Purple and Motorhead. Explore the electronic bass through archival photos, up-to-date information on current models and historical passes of vintage Rickenbackers.

Lightfoot

By Nicholas Jennings
(hardcover) \$30.00

In *Lightfoot*, biographer Nick Jennings steps into the world of Canadian singer-songwriter Gordon Lightfoot. With unprecedented access to the usually private musician, Jennings

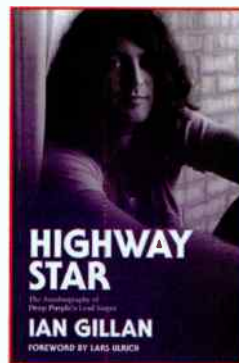


outlines Lightfoot's beginning days as a songwriter, tours across the world, discipline on his craft, and an aortic aneurysm that nearly killed him at 63. With fans like Joni Mitchell and Bob Dylan, the musician's songs remain pillars of the '60s and '70s folk-pop era.

Highway Star: The Autobiography of Deep Purple's Lead Singer

By Ian Gillan
(paperback) \$15.95

In this r&r memoir, Deep Purple lead singer Ian Gillan, recounts the moment he wanted to become a rock star and his rise to stardom in his recent *Highway Star*. The band—known for hits like "Smoke on the Water" and "Highway Star"—stand



as pioneers of heavy metal and hard rock, putting out six albums in four years. But personal issues and alcohol abuse eventually took a toll on the singer and his bandmates. Detailing the highs and lows of his rock & roll career, Gillan never takes himself too seriously.

JUDAS!

By Clinton Heylin
(softcover) \$18.95

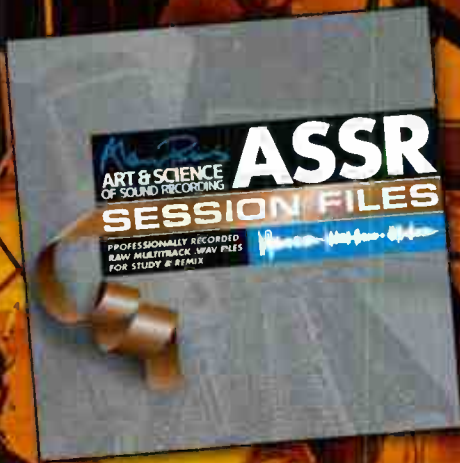
To accompany his book *Live 1966 Recordings, the Bootleg Series Vol. 12*, Heylin brings readers *JUDAS!*, a first full account of the year Bob Dylan went electric and toured around the world



playing sold out shows. *JUDAS!* is the complete story of this period, told from eyewitness accounts and recorded documents. Serving as an esteemed Dylan photographer and historian, the author includes portraits and personal images of Dylan, to bring readers into this intimate time for the artist and his music.

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ABOVE GROUND STUDIOS

abovegroundstudios.com

A Career Built on Great Sound: After attending the Institute of Audio Research and interning at various studios in NYC, Nate Middleman launched his career as a producer and engineer with underground hip-hop artists and others on majors like Def Jam and Atlantic. In 2005, he launched his first studio in his native Baltimore, focusing on recording and mixing. Working with many different mastering studios convinced him to learn the craft and add that service himself. He built Above Ground Studios in a warehouse, launching Above Ground Studios in 2016.

Specialties and Amenities: The full-service facility specializes in audio recording, mixing and mastering, as well as photography, video, CD duplication and promotion. Middleman says of his hands on, full-service operation, "Our name is a play on the concept on the word 'underground' because our philosophy is all about giving indie artists the competitive edge they need to rise from underground status to mainstream success."



The boutique studio, which has a production room, live drum room, vocal booth and mixing and mastering room, was designed by Frank Comentale, who has designed facilities for everyone from Wyclef Jean and Diddy to the Red Bull Recording Academy. Its mastering suite features a tailor made Totem monitoring system installed by visionary acoustician Vince Bruzzese. The large warehouse setting includes

a custom apartment upstairs for lengthy stays and a dedicated creative space filled with his extensive LP collection and equipment for artists to compose, record and listen.

Servicing Multiple Genres: The late six-time Grammy-winning mastering engineer Tom Coyne, who mastered recordings by Taylor Swift, Beyoncé, Adele and Bruno Mars, said of Middleman: "Nate has the ability to bring the energy needed to take your record to the next level." Though grounded in hip-hop, Middleman has mixed and mastered in multiple genres, including R&B, reggae and pop. Recent projects include Tate Kobang's "Bank Rolls Remix" (#4 Spotify #22 Billboard), HBO's *Ballers*, MTV's *Wildin' Out*, Playstation's *Watch Dogs 2*, Lil Mo's "Come See Me" (remix) feat. Party Next Door and Drake, and the track "Chitthi," the title song from a new Bollywood film being used to promote its release on TV and radio in India this year. His clientele includes artists from 15 different countries, including India, Canada, the U.K. and nations in Africa.

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▲ Ascending with Ferdinand

Scottish rock band Franz Ferdinand will release their fifth studio album *Always Ascending*, on Feb. 9 through Domino/ ADA. The album was recorded at RAK Studios in London and Motorbass Studios in Paris, and produced by Philippe Zdar. For more, visit franzferdinand.com. Pictured (l-r): Paul Thompson, drums; Julian Corrie, keys; Alex Kapranos, vox. guitar.



▲ LeGrow in Studio

Canadian singer-songwriter Elise LeGrow will release *Playing Chess* on Feb. 16 through S-Curve Records/Awesome Music. The album was recorded at Mission Sound and The Bunker in Brooklyn, NY and produced by Steve Greenberg, Michael Mangini and Betty Wright. For more, visit eliselegrow.com



▲ Dosik's Studio Games

Singer-songwriter Joey Dosik will release *Game Winner*, on Feb. 23 through Secretly Canadian. The album was recorded at Lucy's Meat Market in Eagle Rock, CA and was engineered by Pete Min. For more, visit joeydosik.com.



▲ METAlliance Academy In Session with Tierney Sutton

The METAlliance is presenting its 2018 immersive recording workshop March 10 and 11 at Capitol Studios in Hollywood. This event follows on the heels of a sold-out weekend at Avatar studios in NYC after AES 2017. "In Session with The Guys" attendees will participate and interact with the METAlliance founders in live recording and mixing sessions. One of the featured artists at the March event is jazz singer and eight-time Grammy nominee Tierney Sutton (pictured). For more information and registration forms visit metalliance.com.

Producer Playback

"You can't just cram a bunch of instruments together and hope for the best. It's a lot of careful carving, weaving and bumping."

— Adam Dutkiewicz (Killswitch Engage, Underoath)





◀ Plot's Fresh Start

Metalcore rockers The Plot In You will release *DISPOSE* on Feb. 16 through their new label Fearless Records. The album was recorded in Los Angeles and was produced by Drew Fulk and Landon Tewers. For more, visit the plotinyou.com. Pictured: (l-r): Josh Childress, Ethan Yoder, Mathis Arnell and Landon Tewers.



YORK TILLYER

▲ Studio Trio

Folk trio I'm With Her will release *See You Around* on Feb. 16 through Rounder Records. The album was recorded in Peter Gabriel's Real World Studios in Bath, England and co-produced by the band and Ethan Johns. Pictured (l-r): Sara Watkins, Sarah Jarosz, Aoife O'Donovan



PHIL SMITHIES

▲ Studio Life with The Wombats

English indie trio The Wombats will release their fourth album *Beautiful People Will Ruin Your Life* on Feb. 9 through Kolbat Music Recordings. The album was recorded at The Pool in London and was produced by Mark Crew and Catherine Marks. For more, visit thewombats.co.uk. Pictured (l-r): Catherine Marks, producer; Matthew Murphy, singer; Dan Haggis, drummer; Mark Crew, producer; Simon Fuller, trumpet.

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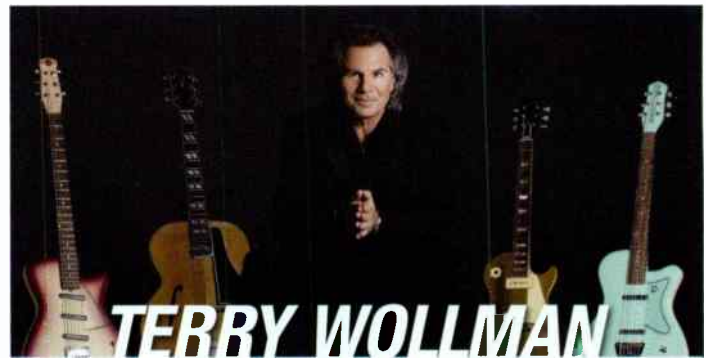
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PRODUCER CROSSTALK

— ROB PUTNAM



Producer, guitarist, arranger and composer Terry Wollman was born and raised in Miami. When names such as Quincy Jones and Dave Grusin began to leap out at him from record jacket credits as a youth, he knew that was the business in which he was born to work. He graduated from Boston's Berklee College of Music with a degree in arranging in 1981 and immediately set out for Los Angeles. In his time, Wollman has worked with a diverse range of artists including Dionne Warwick, Melissa Manchester and even Little Richard.

To draw the best from an artist, Wollman sits down with him or her, has an exchange and explores their aims. "We have a conversation and then it's a journey," he explains. "I also ask them to give me a few examples of records or songs that they love. This gives me an idea sonically of what makes them happy. I'll analyze what things are in common about these pieces of music. It might be that a record sounds organic and natural. Maybe it doesn't have a lot of reverb. It might be that vocals are mixed up front or perhaps tucked in with the band. I analyze the production, arrangement and engineering point of view and then go back and talk to them about it. My goal is to make their album, not mine. I always serve the song, even when I'm the artist."

Whether he's producing for himself or for someone else, he places a high value on acquisition of the strongest talent possible. "I made the decision to use the best musicians I could get for my first record *Bimini* in 1988," Wollman recalls. "I wanted to make the same quality record as other artists I knew with a major budget. So I started at the top of my list. I invited the best musicians I knew and they said yes."

"When I make a record, I'm as prepared and open-minded as possible and I surround myself with greatness," he continues. "That formula continues to work for me. I create an environment that's exciting, stimulating and inspiring for the artists and each of the musicians."

Among his long list of credits (not the least of which is musical director for a pair of late-night shows), Wollman has scored a number of documentaries. The best approach he's found for setting tone and emphasizing scenes across all genres is to apply a technique he learned from composer Jan Stevens while working on the NBC/ABC comedy *Scrubs*. "He explained that if it's a funny scene, it's already funny," he recounts. "You don't need to clobber it over the head with something funny. You can play against that. With documentaries, I take my lead from the director and producer. Then I give them my point of view. A lot of filmmakers have a strong idea about what they want and where they want it. The challenge is to get the emotional content of what they're going for and make it my own. To me, dialogue is king; it's the melody."

Wollman's latest album is a 25-year retrospective of his own music entitled *Silver Collection*. In January, he aims to release a new, blues-influenced single called "No Problem." Music for a number of other documentaries is also in the works and his Internet radio show and podcast "Making It With Terry Wollman" continues to feature interviews with various industry entrepreneurs and artists including Seymour Duncan and Ray Parker, Jr.

Contact Jo-Ann Geffen - JAG Entertainment, 818-905-5511, jgeffen@jagpr.com; terrywollman.com; entertalkradio.com/makingit



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The three most important things he's learned as a producer, musician and arranger are:

- Always serve the music, serve the artist, serve the song. That's primary.
- It's not critical for the producer to know the answer to every question. If someone says "What do you think of what I just played?" it's empowering to say "I don't know. Let's listen again."
- Gratitude. It's a key element in all that I do.

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Scott Page

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BACKGROUND

Best known for playing with Pink Floyd, Supertramp and Toto, Scott Page has created numerous tech media ventures over the years. His latest project, Ignited Network, gives artists a subscription-based, direct-to-consumer platform that reaches fans by integrating existing social media services in a whole new way. He's also championing singer-songwriter Shelita Burke, whose unique perspective on social media is changing how artists approach self-promotion.

Driving Fandom

Shelita [Burke] realized that Uber and Lyft drivers are like DJ's, so she spent an entire week taking five-minute rides and getting to know the driver, playing them stuff, getting them to buy her EP and putting it on their playlists. Then she started doing share rides so she knew she'd have somebody else in the car. One of the guys looked her up online and saw her social numbers were so high. He asked her how she did that. She said, "I'll tell you if you buy my EP." He said, "I'm on my way to USC. I know a bunch of people who'd love to learn this." That guy pulled in like 30 people and she taught everybody how to get 10,000 followers in 90 days. And for that they had to buy her EP. What a hack!

Business Beginnings

I had three things I wanted to do with my life: music, business and documentaries. While I was on the road with Pink Floyd, I started reading everything I could on business. Dave Gilmour used to look at me... "What are you reading?" I said, "Dave, I'm going to build a business."

Between tours, I launched my first company, Walt Tucker, named after my two heroes, Walt Disney and Preston Tucker, the car manufacturer. That was an audio/video post-production facility and merchandise business. In 1990, I did a CD-ROM that was a music disc for computer users to put under their presentations. I was at COMDEX with Jeff Baxter from the Doobie Brothers, who did this with me. I looked across the room and saw something. I walked over and saw this title called Just Grandma and Me. It was a children's title and the first time I saw anyone click on an object and then it would animate. I said, "This is my future."

Cyber Space

I ended up jumping into the cyber scene. I was hanging out with Timothy Leary and all of those guys. And because I was on tour with Pink Floyd everybody wanted to talk to me. It was a great opener because a lot of those computer geeks were big fans.

Then, I started a company with [producer] Bob Ezrin. At COMDEX, I hooked up with a guy named George Grayson, CEO of Micrografx. I brought in Bob and produced a show called The Grand Scientific Musical Theater at the next COMDEX for the National Center for



"You can't sell music, so what do you sell? You sell the relationship and the products that fit your audience. You create value."

Missing and Exploited Children. It's considered the beginning of Hollywood and Silicon Valley coming together.

George Grayson was going to acquire my company and the board said no. He quit to start this company with me and Bob. We took my company, turned it into [CD-ROM maker] Seventh Level and 18 months later took it public.

Direct-To-Consumer Opportunity

I did a radio show called *Business Rock Stars* that went out to about 2.5 million people. I was co-host and music mentor on that show. I did it for about two years and had about 120 artists on.

During that time, I was looking at the marketplace and trying to see how you make money when all this stuff's free. I started realizing there were a number of things changing dramatically because of mobile devices and all the social stuff that gives you an opportunity to build a direct-to-consumer business.

Starting Up

I started a music accelerator similar to Y Combinator or 500 Startups. Lean startup is a methodology used in Silicon Valley for startup companies. It's based on a couple principles—reduce risk and don't run out of resources; test and validate everything; and fail fast. I took those methodologies and kind of designed them for artists. The idea was, if you go through the accelerator, at the end of it we would fund your music startup.

Igniting Super Fans

I realized one of the big issues was there were no platforms to really facilitate what needed to happen. The new model is really around having access to your super fan. The data tells us that super fans are between 60-70% of your revenue, coming from less than 5% of your audience. So, if you could identify those people, that would give you the best opportunity to convert and generate revenue. From that, we realized we had to get back into the tech side and start building out the platform.

All Your Social Media in One Place

When you as an artist [with Ignited] set up a network, which you can do in five minutes, it gives you all your direct access real-time messaging, all the collaborative pieces, but also all the landing pages. Once you plug in all your followers, we then find your super fans for you. It's a platform of platforms, because we connect with all the other social networks. They become funnels to find those super fans and they drive them to the subscription product.

Physical and Virtual

What we're doing is a combination of physical and digital goods. You're going to get a crate delivered to your house every month with limited-edition products and then we also have live streaming shows. It's a combination of goods.

Selling Relationships

You can't sell music, so what do you sell? You sell the relationship and the products that fit your audience. You create value. That's why we built the platform. Once you plug in on your app, you can see all your super fans and invite them to the network. It's for specific types of fans who want a relationship and buy these kinds of products.

Know Your Crowd

Whoever owns the audience wins. Understanding your audience, having audience management and knowing how and what to do is critical. You may have an audience, but if you don't know how to manage that audience you can't convert that audience into paying customers.

Launching Pads

I hear artists say, "I'm working on my record and then I'll get into my social media when I'm ready to launch." That's totally backwards. You want to get that thing rolling before you launch so you have something to launch into.

Let Fans In

The number one thing a super fan wants is a direct, authentic relationship with their artist; so, as an artist you have to think like a media network. You might have multiple shows, so people know you've got a commitment to programming. If you're not going to program it, it's not going to happen. The ones that are killing it on social media are the ones who are pumping out content and letting [fans] into their lives.

Have a Mission

Every artist needs to build purpose into their brand. Have something where you're solving a problem. Look at companies like Toms Shoes; you buy a pair of shoes, they give somebody a pair of shoes. Look at Timberland; they're growing trees, they're creating community. They're doing something. It's important to build purpose and have something you can talk about that's beyond your band.

Once a Musician,...

I'm still constantly playing and recording. I try to play at least three nights a week when I'm in town. I played a couple weeks ago with Gov't Mule. I played with Brit Floyd, the Pink Floyd tribute band. It keeps me in the game.

OPPS

With Spotify playlists becoming one of the most important avenues for music promotion, The Music Industry Connection has just released a brand-new Play List Directory. It includes Streaming Platform Curators (Spotify, Apple, Tidal) and Independently Curated Playlists—over 200 Spotify, Apple Music, Pandora, Amazon Music curators, programmers and editors. Best of all, their new Playlist Directory, as well as The Music Blog Directory and The Indie Radio Directory, can be accessed through their new subscription service. You can get Full Unlimited Access for \$9.99 a month at themicco.com/join-us. There is no contract, no commitment and you can cancel at any time. Included is unlimited access to The Music Blog Directory—with over 3,000 of the most influential Music Blogs from around the world; unlimited access to The Indie Radio Directory—with over 500 Radio Stations in North America who play new music and support new artists; and access to over 200 Spotify, Apple Music, Pandora, Amazon Music playlist curators, programmers and editors.

SoundCloud has debuted its newest stat for creators, which shows plays from algorithmic sources, and offers deeper insight into the sources behind where the plays are coming from. This stat is the latest in SoundCloud's continuing efforts to expand its stats offering, providing a more granular look, with as much insight as possible as to where all of creators' tracks are getting played on the platform, right down to the feature where listeners are engaging with their tracks. You can go to SoundCloud.com for details.

AirPlay Direct has announced open submissions for Volume 5 of their APD "Global Radio Showcase" Series – "Americana Unlimited." This particular showcase will be featuring songs that fall into the very broad category of "Americana Unlimited", i.e., country, Americana, alt. country, folk, roots, rock & roll, bluegrass, blues, Western swing, etc. It's free to enter and submit. **Contest Submission Requirements:** 1. You must be an AirPlay Direct member and submit three songs from your Artist Profile Page, in the order of preference that you would like for us to consider. 2. Your AirPlay Direct Artist Profile Release page must be set up properly to include: contact information, songwriter, publishing, PRO information, lyrics and biography. 3. Submit one to two paragraphs with Artist Profile Release page link on why you should be selected for this opportunity to office@AirPlayDirect.com. The deadline for submissions is Feb. 20. Go to airplaydirect.com for further details.

LABELS • RELEASES SIGNINGS

Steely Dan and the Doobie Brothers have announced their co-headlining North American 2018 summer tour kicking off May 10 in Charlotte, NC, and wrapping July 14 in Bethel, NY. Promoted by Live Nation, the legendary bands will travel to more than 30 cities across the U.S. and Canada including Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, Nashville and Toronto. Go to livenation.com for details and tour dates.

Rod Stewart, the two-time Rock & Roll Hall of Fame-music icon,



▲ SMOKE SEASON SCORES AD CAMPAIGN

Los Angeles indie-electronic duo Smoke Season announced their collaboration with U.K.-based technology brand MQA on an advertising campaign called "Take Me There," featuring the band's single "Good Days." Since forming, Smoke Season has independently released three EP's, a few singles, a short film, half a dozen music videos and toured nationwide. Their millions of Spotify plays and acclaim from major press outlets show that their sound is resonating with fans worldwide. They are also a voice for social change: flying to Standing Rock, North Dakota, to support DAPL protests, and releasing videos focusing on LGBTQ youth ("Loose"), veterans ("When The Smoke Clears"), and immigration reform ("Emilia"). To learn more about this inspirational act, visit smokeseason.com.

has announced plans for an extensive North American summer tour. Following the incredible success and rave reviews for their 2017 summer tour, Stewart has invited the legendary Cyndi Lauper to again join him as the tour's special guest. The 22-date tour begins June 25 at the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles. CA with perfor-

mances scheduled at some of the most storied venues across North America including Madison Square Garden in New York on Aug. 7, Bridgestone Arena in Nashville on Aug. 1, Budweiser Stage in Toronto on Aug. 10, Shoreline Amphitheatre in San Francisco on Aug. 29 and more. Log on to rodstewart.com for more information.

DIY Spotlight

ZOEY G

On the surface, Zoey G seems like your average fun-loving Latin-American teenager, but her passion for writing pop music is otherworldly. Through the use of social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook, Zoey connects directly with her fans.

That allows her to share her hobbies, her love for her pet and display her musical abilities. As such, she has garnered an organic and genuine following based on relatability and authenticity.

As a toddler, Zoey's father was an important influence on her love of music. He would walk around the house while playing guitar and Zoey wanted to do the same. At age four, her hands couldn't reach around the neck of the guitar to form chords, so she began playing piano, and later picked

up the alto sax in middle school. Afterwards came the ukulele, and more recently drums and bass.

Her sources of music? Her family's iPod and her dad's love of 1980s music. While she may have been influenced by her family's musical tastes, "Runaway," the first song of her upcoming EP, is her very own.

Zoey G is the type of artist who believes it's okay to step outside of the norm, and to not always have to fit into society's cookie-cutter mold. Indeed, her new single, "Runaway," is based on her desire to run away from society's standards. Her mantra is that it's not only okay to be different, but also that those differences should always be celebrated.

For more info, go to thezoeyg.com.



Have a successful DIY strategy to share? Email bbatmc@aol.com

PROPS

High-placed sources have revealed, via a variety of media outlets, that Antonio “L.A.” Reid is believed to have raised as much as \$75 million in funding for a new label venture, likely from private equity sources. In fact, it was suggested that the exec has moved into new offices in Beverly Hills—and is already on the hunt for hires. Epic’s roster during Reid’s tenure included the likes of DJ Khaled, Future, Fifth Harmony and Mariah Carey. As the co-founder of LaFace Records—a joint venture with Arista—Reid was involved in the early careers of superstars like Usher, TLC, Toni Braxton, OutKast and Pink.

THE BIZ

Former members of Circle of Fifths Music have rebranded as AMPLIFY Entertainment Group. For over a decade, Circle of Fifths Music LLC was the original free-standing field staff in the industry,

breaking a myriad of records. These familiar names and faces now make up AMPLIFY Entertainment Group whose goal is to deliver the same high level of records and promotion services. AMPLIFY is currently working alt-rock star AWOLNATION, the Aces, Ashanti and more. For complete details, contact President/CEO tracy@amplifyeg.com, 817-421-1042.

Universal Music Group has signed a global licensing deal that will allow users of Facebook, Instagram and Oculus to use UMG music in uploaded videos and other user generated content. As such, UMG has become the first major music group to sign a such a deal with the super-popular social networks.

BERNARD BAUR was voted one of the “Top Music Business Journalists” in the country. Bernard is the connection between the streets and the suites. Credited with over 1,200 features in a variety of publications, he’s a Contributing Editor at *Music Connection*.



▲ DIM MAK RELEASES GREATEST HITS

Dim Mak Greatest Hits 2017 is a stacked compilation of the label’s standout releases from 2017. Bolstered by a dynamic collection of sounds, ranging from hard-hitting trap and melodic future bass to tech-driven bass house bangers (and everything in between), the package features music by Dim Mak favorites Keys N Krates, Prince Fox feat. Bella Thorne, Laidback Luke, Rain Man feat. MAX, QUIX, Garmiani, KRANE, Viceroy, MORTEN, Sam F, Max Styler, BROHUG, Matroda, Henry Fong, Noise Cans, Stööki Sound and many more. For additional information, go to dimmak.com.

The LEGAL Beat

BY GLENN LITWAK



This article will discuss what you can do to license your music for film and TV. It goes without saying that one of the best things you can do is to create great music that people will want to license.

You should educate yourself about the music business by reading books, magazines, etc. And of course, you should have a great website showcasing your music. It is also important to make your music easy to access by using SoundCloud or something similar. Furthermore, there are songwriter organizations (such as The Association of Independent Music Publishers) that you can join and attend their events to learn and make contacts.

For artists who are not signed to a recording and/or a music

publishing contract, you can usually license your music without anyone else’s permission, making it easier and quicker to negotiate a deal. For this reason there is a market for licensing music from unsigned artists, especially since it is less expensive for the licensee.

Films and many TV shows have music supervisors that are in charge of licensing music. The music supervisor will use various resources (music libraries, personal knowledge, contacts and

music supervisor, director or others involved in the entertainment business that could be good contacts for you.

Sometimes music supervisors attend and/or speak at music conferences such as South by Southwest, the ASCAP “I Create Music” EXPO or the Billboard/Hollywood Reporter Music in Film and TV Conference. These can be great opportunities for you to network. Even if you can’t attend a particular conference, you can log onto the confer-

ence website and look for music supervisors and companies involved in licensing music.

approach people/companies that are looking to license songs in that genre. People often ask me how much money they can expect to receive for licensing their songs. It depends on a number of factors including the length of the song, the placement (opening or end credits, theme song, during the film, etc.), the budget, and how popular the artist and song are. Another consideration is whether the original master recording (or a “cover”) is used. But don’t be overly concerned with how much money you will receive. Placing your song in a movie, TV show, commercial, or video game could give you great exposure and lead to other opportunities.

This article is a very brief overview of licensing music for film and TV and does not constitute legal advice.

“People often ask me how much money they can expect to receive for licensing their songs.”

Internet research) to find suitable music. You can research music supervisors and companies that specialize in licensing music. And the market for music is growing with companies such as Netflix and Amazon.

Effective networking is essential in your efforts to find those who might want to license your songs. You should let people know that you are interested in doing so. For instance, perhaps a family member or friend knows a

music supervisor, director or others involved in the entertainment business that could be good contacts for you.

Sometimes music supervisors attend and/or speak at music conferences such as South by Southwest, the ASCAP “I Create Music” EXPO or the Billboard/Hollywood Reporter Music in Film and TV Conference. These can be great opportunities for you to network. Even if you can’t attend a particular conference, you can log onto the confer-

ence website and look for music supervisors and companies involved in licensing music. You should try and think outside the box. For example, let’s say you find a music conference you would like to attend but you can’t afford it. Why not volunteer to work for the conference? You would in all likelihood make some great contacts.

GLENN LITWAK is a veteran entertainment attorney based in Santa Monica, CA. He has represented platinum-selling recording artists, Grammy-winning music producers, hit songwriters, management and production companies, music publishers and independent record labels. Glenn is also a frequent speaker at music industry conferences around the country, such as South by Southwest and the Billboard Music in Film and TV Conference. Email Litwak at glitlaw59@gmail.com or visit glennlitwak.com.

This column is a brief discussion of the topic and does not constitute legal advice.



“I'm a Full-Time Film & TV Music Composer Because of TAXI”

Dave Walton – TAXI Member

My name is Dave Walton and I live in Cape Girardeau, Missouri - 2,042 very long miles from Hollywood.

I became a computer programmer in 1986 and thought my career in music was finished, over, kaput! 18 years later I decided to *return* to my first love and take my shot at becoming a Film and TV music composer.

Music Industry Contacts... *Not!*

If your town is anything like mine, there aren't a lot of movies or TV shows getting produced there. Actually.... none! I had no idea how to make music industry contacts or place my music in films or TV shows until I searched the Internet and found TAXI.

They Show You What Hollywood Needs

Rather than trying to cold call music supervisors and producers in Hollywood, TAXI reverses the process and tells *me* what they currently need. I get tons of Film and TV opportunities for my music and the experts on TAXI's A&R

team also give me helpful, detailed feedback. Finally, a way to make sure my music *gets* competitive and *stays* that way.

You've Got to Have Friends...

TAXI's Forum and online community is second to none. I've made life-long friends who've helped me make my music contemporary and helped me with the business side of the music *business* as well. By building an incredible network of fellow members, I've collaborated, met publishers, signed more deals and learned the skills I needed to branch out and make my own music industry contacts.

I recently finished scoring my 15th Independent Film!



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Living the Dream Getting Paid for My Music

Today, I'm a full-time Film and Television Music composer because of deals, placements and relationships I've made through TAXI. My music has been on ABC, CBS, NBC, ABC Family, Spike TV, the Inspiration Channel, the Hallmark Channel and BET. In 2008 *alone* I had 161 placements on Network Television and my royalties are coming in from the U.S., Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Finland, Sweden, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. I love mailbox money!

TAXI was the *first* tool I found to build my career in the music business, and it's the one I'd *never* give up. Without TAXI, I'd still be working at my day job.

If you've been reading these ads year after year but waiting to join when your music is *ready*, wait no more! Join TAXI now and let them help you *make* it ready.



Date Signed: June 2017

Label: Fearless Records

Band Members: Landon Tewers, vocals; Josh Childress, guitar; Ethan Yoder, bass; Mathis Arnell, drums.

Type of Music: Metalcore

Management: Cody Grup, Andrew Jarrin - Royal Division Entertainment, cody.grup@royaldivisionent.com

Booking: Eric Powell - Spotlight Touring, info@spotlighttouring.com; Marco Walzel - Avocado Booking, info@avocado-booking.com

Legal: N/A

Publicity: alyson.stokes@fearlessrecords.com, 310-730-6655

Web: theplotinyou.com

A&R: Cody Demavivas

Formed in 2010, metalcore band The Plot in You has worked with four labels over its eight-year career. Their latest deal is with L.A.-based Fearless Records, following a one-and-done record with Stay Sick Recordings. Several labels expressed interest in the veteran band once they became available but ultimately the members chose to sign with Fearless for a variety of reasons.

"They know what they're doing and care about their bands," says founder and vocalist Landon Tewers. "They're very hands-on, involved in everything. It's different than any label experience we've ever had. They knew a lot about us and our visions lined up well. That was the biggest thing for us. In the past, we've had bad communication [with labels]."

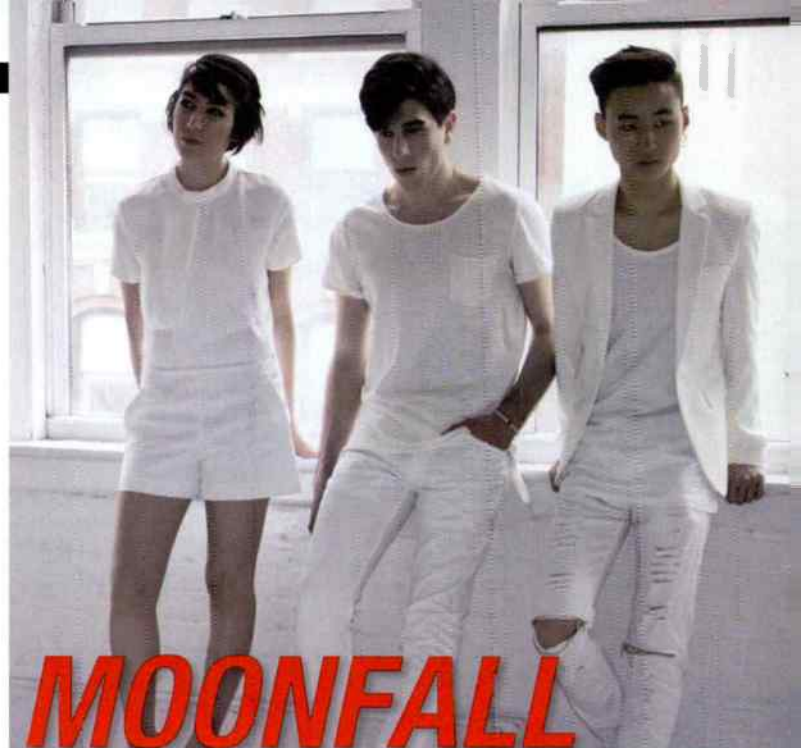
"Before [Fearless], we'd signed a one-record deal with Stay Sick," Tewers continues. "Once that was fulfilled, Fearless approached us. We

"Don't go for the first bite that comes your way."

talked with a couple other labels trying to weigh-out our options. Some of the offers were decent, but nothing that was worth giving over the rights to everything. We even considered self-releasing material for a while. But Fearless had a good vision for us and had a lot to offer things we couldn't do on our own."

With eight years of experience in a band contracted to four labels, Tewers has gained some key industry insights. "Be cautious about what you sign," he urges. "Don't go for the first bite that comes your way. Usually they'll lowball you out of your excitement and desire to do music for a living. I've seen so many friends get in bad contracts and it ruins their career or they have to suffer through a few years of a bad deal. For touring, invest in a reliable van. We went through three or four in the first year. And let good businessmen handle the finances. You're just a bunch of kids and can wind up in a lot of debt."

Dispose, The Plot in You's maiden release with Fearless, drops on Feb. 16. Tour plans include Western Europe and Australia. — **Rob Putnam**



Date Signed: October 2017

Label: Outerloop Records

Band Members: Matthew Howl, vocals/guitar; Mei Moor, bass; Andrew Chow, drums.

Type of Music: Pop/Rock

Booking: Jenny McPhee, Artery Global

Publicity: Jordan Washam - Outerloop Records; Jordan@OuterloopManagement.com

Web: moonfallofficial.com

A&R: Outerloop Records

Living together as bandmates doesn't always lead to demise and destruction, especially for the pop/rock trio Moonfall, a NYC-based band that just signed to Outerloop Records in October.

"We're always there for [and helping] each other, especially when our minds get clouded," explains singer and guitarist Matthew Howl. "It's very important to rely on each other—I feel like a lot of bands don't really have that."

Fortifying such a strong bond (both in and out of the studio) has helped Moonfall build a very down-to-earth relationship with Outerloop based on mutual trust and compassion.

"You just have to be realistic in what you expect. Even if they're really nice guys, you're in charge of keeping the music true to itself. They can't do that for you," says Howl. "You have to negotiate so that you have the conditions to actually create that [environment]."

The band's youthful energy contributes to this air of self-contained confidence and determination. Moonfall functions as a tripod—dependent

"Perseverance is the most important thing."

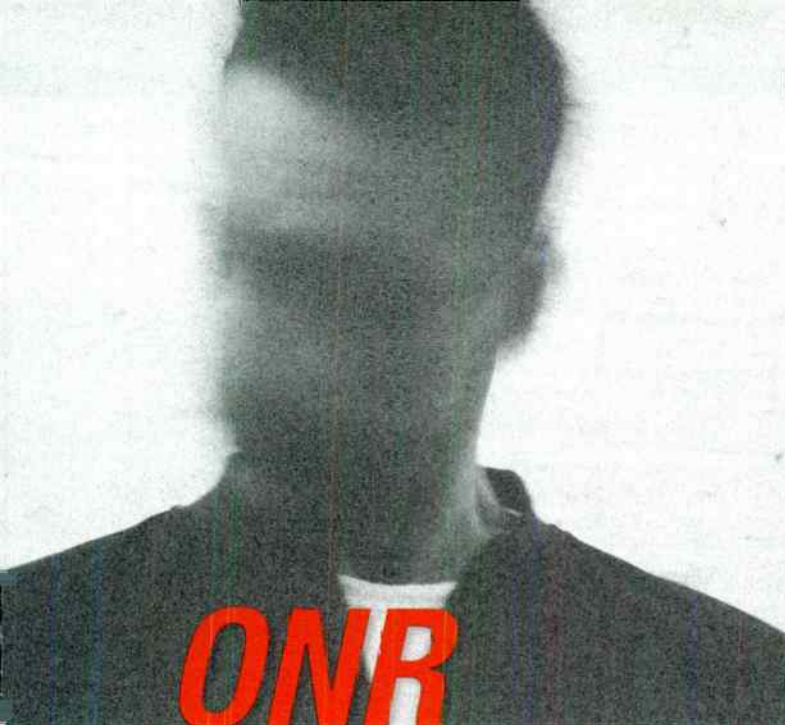
upon on one another for support and creative development—but these three best friends are eagerly willing to embrace change in order to learn what really inspires and resonates with fans. According to Howl, it's crucial to understand and ultimately accept what you're getting yourself into while keeping an open (but still genuine) mind.

"We didn't learn anything that we didn't expect of the industry," he says. "It's there and it's doing its thing. As long as you stay true to who you are, no matter what you deal with, you're going to be okay. Perseverance is the most important thing."

Moving forward, Moonfall hopes to convey this same message through uniquely dynamic onstage performances.

"We've always had this idea of putting on a show," Howl claims. "We get bored, so we like trying new things on stage and trying to reach people in new ways. We're all pretty weird, and we're just embracing our weirdness."

Moonfall's latest EP, entitled *Empty Cage*, which includes the popular singles "Lost" and "Colorless," has been released through Outerloop Records. — **Danica Bellini**



Date Signed: January 2017
Label: Capitol Records
Type of Music: Singer-songwriter/Electronic
Management: Steven Melrose - Leftwing Management
Booking: Corrie Christopher - Paradigm
Legal: Nicky Stein
Publicity: Amanda Blide, Amanda@Lafamos.com
Web: onrhq.com
A&R: Nate Albert

Hailing from Scotland, one of the latest Capitol Records signees to hit the music scene goes by the nom de plume ONR (pronounced "honor"). He is a dynamic singer-songwriter, with a touch of electronica, soul and rock.

ONR has been described as an overnight sensation, but, admittedly, he claims his experience has been quite the contrary. "When I was 16/17, straight out of school, I won a big U.K. songwriting competition, which took me to the U.S., and put me amongst agents and managers," he says. "I had believed I wanted that more than anything else. But I couldn't make it work. I wasn't ready. I took myself completely out of that world for a few years and really worked hard on improving myself; toured with a few bands, wrote for a few projects and whatever I could."

ONR continued to focus on developing his songwriting and maintained contact with Steven Melrose from Leftwing Recordings, whom he had met years earlier. The budding songwriter sent Melrose some rough demos and

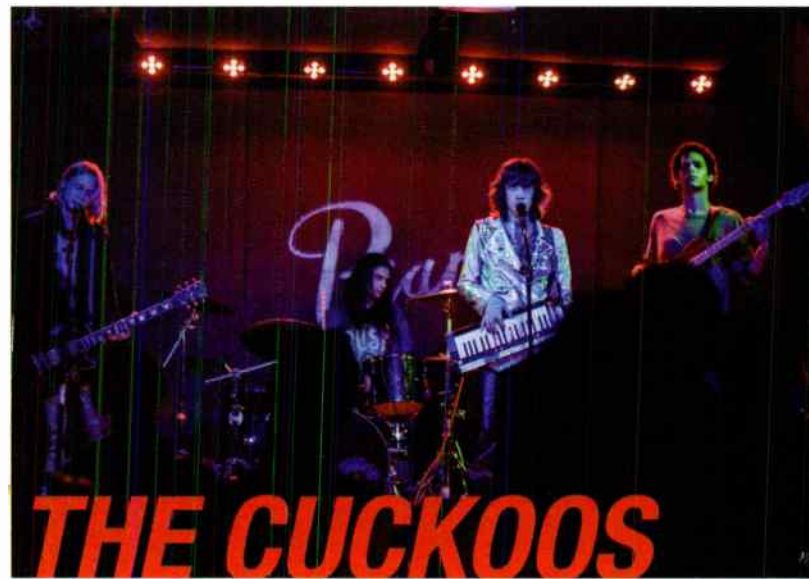
"I took myself completely out of that world for a few years."

that really got their professional relationship going. "It was so fast. Steven loved the demos I sent him," says ONR. "We leaked them out through Leftwing to a few people in the U.K. and U.S. like press guys, radio stations and blogs. We had heavy interest from a few major labels in the U.S. I flew over to meet with them all. But I knew instantly meeting the guys at Capitol that that's where I wanted to be. Their outlook was so genuinely passionate and very much like mine. They wanted to take the time and get things perfect, then push it out there. We've been able to take our time and curate this record properly. I know how lucky I am to do that."

The record in question was the emotionally stirring single "Jericho." The song single-handedly garnered ONR praise in many leading music industry publications and placed him on main stages at some of the top U.K. festivals like Electric Fields, Loopallu and Tartan Heart. Upon ONR's signing with Capitol, the song "Five Years Time" is starting to register with critics and fans as well.

"We're looking to release a full EP around spring 2018," explains ONR. "I'm really looking forward to introducing people to some brighter, more energetic tracks to offset the darker stuff they've already heard."

— Eric A. Harabadian



Date Signed: October 2017
Distributor: Republic of Music
Band Members: Kenneth Frost, lead vocals, keyboards; Dave North, guitar, backing vocals; Eric Ross, bass; Cole Koerming, drums.
Type of Music: Psychedelic Rock/Rock
Management: Maria Hoppe - One Step Management, mashahoppe@icloud.com, 206-661-3258
Booking: Kenneth Frost, thecuckoosaustrin@gmail.com, 512-574-6010
Legal: Mike Tolleson, mike@miketolleson.com, 512-480-8822
Publicity: Hayley Brinkman - Big Picture Media, 212-675-3103, hayley@bigpicturemediaonline.com
Web: thecuckoosaustrin.com
A&R: N/A

"I was immediately drawn to the energy and quality songwriting of the Cuckoos and loved the EP from the first time I heard it. I thought, "I need to work with this band, as they have real potential." That's what Mark McQuillan, music distributor Republic of Music's managing director, thought after attending a summer concert by the Cuckoos in England. It wouldn't have happened without the aid of manager Maria Hoppe, who suggested the distributor check out the fledgling group.

The unsigned psych rockers have only been together for three years, yet they've garnered kudos from outlets like Relix and Classic Rock Magazine. Their independently recorded EP was unleashed in April, but they recalled it after signing so it could be re-released earlier this winter

"You can't forget about the business side of things."

with an additional track. Besides worldwide distribution, the deal also got their videos "New Sunrise" and "A Little Bit of Funk" onto Vevo.

Given their manager's recommendation, the decision to work with Republic of Music was easy. "We looked at some of the artists on their roster and others who've worked with them in the past," says lead singer Kenneth Frost. "And it's important that they're based out of the U.K. It's important to reach people here in the U.S., but doing a distribution deal got things going in other parts of the world." Once the contract was in motion, they let Hoppe handle the details.

While open to label partnerships, the vocalist remains wary of 360 deals. "If a groovy label comes along," Frost philosophically notes, "whether they're huge or an indie, it just depends on what they bring to the table."

Frost's advice for young artists emphasizes finding balance between music and commerce. "The creativity part is the most important, of course," he opines, "but you can't forget about the business side of things. You've got to get up in the morning and sell yourself to people every day." — Andy Kaufmann



▲ Ali Tamposi Channels “Havana”

Congratulations to Song Biz Profile alumni Ali Tamposi on penning the massive hit “Havana” by Camila Cabello ft. Young Thug. Known for co-writing Kelly Clarkson’s “Stronger” and DJ Snake’s “Let Me Love You” ft. Justin Bieber, Tamposi is signed to New York-based indie publisher Reservoir.

► Marni Condro Upped at UMPG

Universal Music Publishing Group (UMPG) has appointed Marni Condro SVP/ Film & Television creative synchronization for the U.S., effective immediately. She will oversee all creative placements of the company’s music catalog in film, trailers, television, TV marketing campaigns, sports and videogames.



▲ Pam Sheyne Boards the Mothership

Los Angeles-based Mothership Music Publishing, LLC, has acquired worldwide rights for the entire Appletreesongs Limited catalog previously owned by songwriter Pam Sheyne and her husband Nigel Rush. Mothership Music Publishing, LLC, is a partnership between Brett Gurewitz (Epitaph Records), Lionel Conway and Hein van der Ree. The most popular song in the catalog is “Genie in a Bottle,” by Christina Aguilera which is listed as one of the biggest selling singles of all time. Pictured (l-r): Brett Gurewitz, Lionel Conway, Pam Sheyne, Hein van der Ree and Michael Eames, PEN Music Group, Inc.

Durango Songwriters Expo In Ventura

Ventura, CA, a town that has survived recent wildfires, floods and mudslides, now invites songwriters to visit the Ventura version of the 13th Annual Durango Songwriters Expo, Feb. 22-24. Over three days, songwriters and artists will meet a broad spectrum of music publishers, record label execs, and sync specialists for classes, panels, workshops and performance opportunities. The event will be held at the Crown Plaza Ventura.

The event is an up-close and personal experience where participants and panelists alike exchange ideas and camaraderie in a relaxed, song friend atmosphere.

For info, visit Durango-songwriters-expo.com, or call event producer Jim Attebery at 970-259-9747.

It All Starts With A Song...

The “It All Starts With A Song” retreat is now accepting applications for a five-day event to be held in Ben Lomond, CA. Participants have a choice of attending either Monday, Mar. 26 - Friday, Mar. 20 or Monday, Apr. 2 - Friday, Apr. 6.

The event is the brainchild of artist development and publishing veteran Judy Stakee and includes specialist workshops, co-writing with on the spot critiques, morning yoga, vocal coaching and guest seminars with multi-platinum songwriters. Sound and video engineers are onsite to record session demos and performances throughout the retreat.

With over 30 years of experience as an executive in the music industry and 20 years as Vice President of Creative at Warner Chappell, Stakee was responsible for developing and signing many of today’s most acclaimed artists, including Grammy winner Sheryl Crow, Katy Perry, Gavin DeGraw and Joy Williams.

Tickets include admission to the retreat, all workshops, four nights and five days luxury accommodation and full catering. A team of specialist master chefs will be on site to prepare beautiful cuisine using

locally sourced organic produce.

To apply, visit judystakee.com/california.

BMI 101 Invites You

BMI 101 is an introductory workshop for writers and publishers. Lasting one hour, BMI 101 covers the history of performing rights, the origins of BMI and the current role BMI plays in the complex world of the music industry. It is an opportunity to not only meet other songwriters, but also educate yourself at the same time. The BMI 101 workshop will be held on the third Thursday of every month from 4:00 - 5:00 p.m. in the BMI conference room at 8730 Sunset Blvd., 3rd Floor West, Los Angeles. Attendance is free, but an RSVP is required as seating is limited. If you are interested in attending the next event on Feb. 15 or following months, please email BM101@bmi.com.

TCMA Songwriter Contest and Awards

The Texas Country Music Association, Inc. has announced that its annual TCMA Songwriter Contest and Awards are open for song submissions in both country and Christian country formats. Entered songs must be original works and are judged on creativity, lyrics, melody, arrangement, originality and overall technique. The winners will have the opportunity to share the stage with top artists to perform their songs at the 2018 Texas Country Music Awards as well as other TCMA Sponsored events throughout the year.

For details visit texascountrymusic.org/songwriter.

Wixen Sues Spotify

Los Angeles-based Wixen Music Publishing is demanding that Spotify pay over \$1.6 billion, alleging that the company’s streaming millions of unlicensed songs is “massive, systemic copyright infringement.” The lawsuit has been filed in U.S. District Court in

► Debra Gussin Wins HMMA Award

Our congratulations to Los Angeles songwriter Debra Gussin who was named Best Lyricist for the second year in a row at the 2017 Hollywood Music in Media Awards. She shares the honor with the late Don Grady for their song “Don’t React.”



Los Angeles and it accuses Spotify USA Inc. of prioritizing record labels at the expense of songwriters and publishers.

While Spotify has worked to track down the rights to the sound recordings of the songs it streams, it has never adequately secured the equivalent rights for the songs themselves as published works, according to the suit that includes a 265-page list of thousands of its songs that Wixen says Spotify is streaming without proper licensing and compensation, including some of the biggest hits from acts like the Beach Boys, Rage Against the Machine, Tom Petty, Journey, Missy Elliott, Santana and the Black Keys. Wixen is demanding \$150,000 apiece for more than 10,000 songs represented that it says are unlicensed. Overall, Wixen alleges, more than six million of Spotify's songs are improperly licensed, representing about a fifth of its catalog.

At press time, Wixen also claims that Spotify is attempting to confuse affected songwriters by limiting conversations pursuant to a previous lawsuit filed by Melissa Ferrick and others that Spotify has settled facing final approval. Wixen objects to this deal and consequently filed its own lawsuit. With these conflicting suits, Wixen contends that many of their clients likely to believe that the publishing company is representing them and are likely to ignore a new opt-out notice.

Songwriters Support Legislation

Prominent music organizations representing U.S. music publishers, record labels, songwriters, composers, artists and performance rights organizations (PROs) have formally announced their united support

for key pieces of pending music legislation. The Music Modernization Act reforms Section 115 of the U.S. Copyright Act to create a single licensing entity that administers the mechanical reproduction rights for all digital uses of musical compositions—like those used in interactive streaming models offered by Apple, Spotify, Amazon, Pandora, Google and others. It also repeals Section 114(i) and, consistent with most federal litigation, utilizes random assignment of judges to decide ASCAP and BMI rate-setting cases—two provisions that will enable fairer outcomes for songwriters and composers.

The CLASSICS Act (Compensating Legacy Artists for their Songs, Service, & Important Contributions to Society Act) would benefit artists and music creators who recorded music before 1972 by establishing royalty payments whenever their music is played on digital radio. SoundExchange would distribute royalties for pre-'72 recordings played by Internet, cable and satellite radio services just as it does for post-'72 recordings. Currently only sound recordings made after 1972 receive payments from digital radio services under federal law.

The AMP Act (Allocation for Music Producers Act) for the first time adds producers and engineers, who play an indispensable role in the creation of sound recordings, to U.S. copyright law. The bill codifies into law the producer's right to collect digital royalties and provides a consistent, permanent process for studio professionals to receive royalties for their contributions to the creation of music.

DAN KIMPEL, author of six music industry books, is an instructor at Musicians Institute in Hollywood, CA. He lectures at colleges and conferences worldwide.



▲ Joe Walsh: Life is Good with Sony/ATV

Sony/ATV Music Publishing has signed a global publishing deal with Joe Walsh, most recently a member of the Eagles, but also a solo artist and former frontman of the James Gang.



▲ AMP Educates with Danielle Aguirre

Danielle Aguirre, EVP and General Counsel of the NMPA, was on hand at the AIMP premier-members-only event to provide attendees with a deeper understanding of the new rule, which would protect songwriters and publishers by preventing digital service providers from exploiting unregistered works. Pictured (l-r): Alisa Coleman, ABKCD Music, Inc., Executive Director AIMP New York and Danielle Aguirre, EVP & General Counsel of the NMPA.

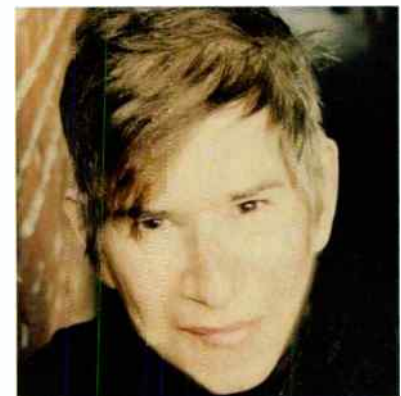


▲ Sleepjust Cuddles Up with Angry Mob

Sleepjust has entered into an exclusive worldwide co-publishing agreement with Angry Mob Music. The deal encompasses past releases as well as future works from both Sleepjust and its member writers including longtime producer/writer Michael Pepe (Taking Back Sunday, Anders Grahn, 1st Vows). Pictured (l-r): David Quan, Angry Mob Sr. Director of Publishing; Debra Delshad, Angry Mob Sr. Director of Sync; Joe Pepe, Sleepjust; Amber Ruthe, Sleepjust; Mike Pepe, Sleepjust; Sarah Luffred, Sleepjust and Ralph Torrefranca, Angry Mob Director of A&R.

► Marsha Malamet Pens for Jason Gould

Multiplatinum songwriter Marsha Malamet co-wrote four songs for Jason Gould's latest release *Dangerous Man*. The prolific and ever-shifting creator, who has written for a roster that stretches from Barbra Streisand (Jason Gould's mother) to Faith Hill, is currently writing a musical based on her life and songs. Visit marshalamamet.com for details



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SONGWRITER PROFILE

— DAN KIMPEL

Geoff Gibbons

Checking in at the Buffalo Hotel

Morrison Hotel, Yankee Hotel, Hotel California—locales that give title to collections of music. Add to this list *Buffalo Hotel*, a 12-song full-length from singer-songwriter Geoff Gibbons. Each of the songs on the album represents a distinct story. The through line is Gibbons' extrasensory capacity for defining characters, and the remarkable empathy that he shares in his portrayals.

Based in Vancouver, BC, Canada, Gibbons has decades of experience as a songwriter, musician, producer and engineer. He also creates songs and scores for television shows, animation and feature films, and he has performed on bills with Emmylou Harris, David Crosby and other artists.

The lyrics that annotate the songs of *Buffalo Hotel* are rich in metaphors and infused with conflict and contradictions. "Two sides of a story/ Double edges of a sword," as Gibbons sings in "The Other Side." While the weathered hotel remains stationary, the characters are transitory: From the hitchhiker in "Ain't Goin' Back" to the unemployed traveler who is "Carolina Bound." On "Me and Buffalo Bill," the protagonist promises, "We've got some ghosts to kill," a deft paradox; ending the existence of forces already dead.

As revealed on *Buffalo Hotel*, Gibbons is a soulful vocalist. "I was a singer from a young age," he explains. "My mum plopped me on the stage with the BC (British Columbia) Boys Choir when I was nine, and I became the soloist after a year. We toured Europe, and I was making records at 10. I can remember being scared shitless, as I was shoved out in front of a thousand people in Rotterdam, Holland."

He also remembers his reaction to the synthesis of rock and country as originated by Gram Parsons, the Byrds and other Southern California creators. "I was smitten by California country when I was a teenager. I couldn't get enough long-haired guys playing country-infused music with a pedal steel guitar player."

Having recorded a string of releases, Gibbons notes that *Buffalo Hotel* is a deeply personal project. It originated with a trip through the American south as Geoff and two friends visited Muscle Shoals and Nashville, and traveled to Memphis where they visited the Lorraine Motel where Dr. Martin Luther King was shot. This immersion in history was intoxicating and inspiring. "To spend time in the belly of modern music was overwhelming," Gibbons says. "It was like going to Mecca."

The soul influences are evidenced on *Buffalo Hotel* as Gibbons vocals are elevated by the backing harmonies of the Sojourners, a trio of vocalists with old-school gospel sanctification. "They help solidify that Memphis vibe we were going through," Gibbons notes.

In performance, Gibbons can present the songs solo. "I'm comfortable sitting with the acoustic and blasting them out, with a percussive style on the guitar. It also sounds good with a bass player. The songs have to move on their own. When I'm singing a song I'm telling a story, and I don't need a lot of instrumentation on top of it. I think the story comes from the delivery, and the delivery needs to come from the humanity."

The opening track on the project titled, "Ain't Goin' Back," sets the stage. Over layered acoustic guitars, a lyrical lead and a whistling pedal steel, the narrator ruminates on the still warm ashes of a love affair through a lens of cinematic clarity. "The wheels thunder by me on this highway/Yeah this rain is a demon." Says Gibbons, "That song always gives me a picture coming back. I almost feel like a third person, and not the artist. I listen to it from an objective view. It allows me to go to the place that I was in when I wrote the song, but it always gets colored a little differently."

While *Buffalo Hotel* represents a milestone in the career of Geoff Gibbons, it also stands as homage to the music that came before, the era when rock and country met at a fabled crossroads. "Those are the guys who shaped what drives me as an artist," says Gibbons. "This is why this record is so important to me. This is my fifth album, but it comes around and represents what my real true love is."



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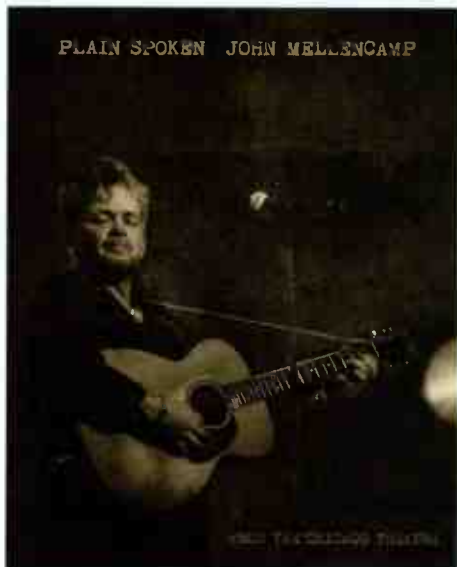
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DROPS

The Greatest Showman soundtrack, out now, hit No. 1 on the Billboard 200 chart (the first non-sequel original music soundtrack to do so since 2009's *Hannah Montana: The Movie*), as well as No. 1 on iTunes in more than 60 countries, with nine songs charting on the Spotify Top 200 Global chart. One track, "This is Me," performed by Keala Settle and covered by Keshha, also took home the award for Best Original Song at the 75th annual Golden Globe Awards. The Michael Gracey-directed musical film starring Hugh Jackman celebrates the birth of show business and tells the story of an artist who rose to stardom from nothing. Songs were co-produced and written by Academy Award-winning and Grammy-nominated duo Benj Pasek and Justin Paul of *La La Land* fame, co-produced by Grammy nominee Greg Wells and executive produced by Grammy-winner Alex Lacamoire (*Hamilton*). For details, contact Ted Sullivan at Ted.Sullivan@AtlanticRecords.com.



John Mellencamp's self-narrated musical odyssey, *Plain Spoken: From The Chicago Theater*, became available on Netflix on Feb. 1, capturing the songwriter with his full band performing just 250 miles from his native Indiana. Footage is underscored by voiceovers by Mellencamp discussing his upbringing, career and observations on life. The film also features special guest Carlene Carter, who was featured



on Mellencamp's latest album *Sad Clowns and Hillbillies*, which reached No. 1 on the Billboard Top American Albums chart. One of the most successful live concert performers in the world, Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee Mellencamp has 13 Grammy nominations and 23 LP's to his name, as well as the 1982 award for "Best Male Rock Vocal Performance." Contact Carol Kaye at Carol@KayosProductions.com.

On Feb. 9, award-winning actor, director and novelist David Duchovny of *The X-Files* fame released sophomore album *Every Third Thought*, a less-folky follow-up to 2015's *Hell or Highwater*, which *Rolling Stone* likened to Wilco. Raised on classic '60s and '70s rock, Duchovny only first picked up a guitar a few years ago for fun, but was soon inspired to write songs. Contact Me@ErikaTooker.com for more information.

On Feb. 23, Toronto indie band (and filmmakers) shy kids release their sophomore album, *in a state*, a follow-up to 2015's *Lofty! in a state* is an audio/visual experience much like the viral music videos, short films and marketing campaigns that put shy kids on the map. Their 2013 short film *Noah* also won "Best Short Film" at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2015, earning praise from *The New Yorker* and *VICE*. Titled after the physical and mental states that a journey to the U.S. left the band members in, *in a state* attempts to "capture the spirit of the places" they were in, with help from an orchestra. For more information, contact Brendan Bourke at Brendan@TheSyn.com.

The newly restored, mixed and mastered *The Bee Gees One For All Tour Live in Australia* dropped on Feb. 2, capturing the career-spanning live recording at The National Tennis Centre, which celebrated the band's 18th studio album, *One*, as well as their first global tour in 10 years. The Bee Gees have

sold more than 200 million records worldwide, placing them among the world's best-selling music artists. Contact Carol Kaye at Carol@KayosProductions.com for details.

The historic last concert ever filmed of the Doors drops Feb. 23. *The Doors: Live At The Isle Of Wight* is the last-known unseen performance of the iconic band, with the footage (originally done by longtime Doors engineer, mixer and co-producer Bruce Botnick) restored and upgraded with the band's permission. The performance took place in August 1970—in the midst of frontman Jim Morrison's obscenity trial—drawing more than 600,000 fans and featuring hits "Break on Through (To the Other Side)" and "Light My Fire." Contact Carol@KayosProductions.com for details.

Bleachers has released a new track called "Alfie's Song (Not So Typical Love Song)," which was recorded for the soundtrack to the upcoming film *Love, Simon*. The album, executive produced by frontman Jack Antonoff, will be released on March 16 via RCA Records and is available for pre-order now at all digital retail providers. Along with "Alfie's Song," the soundtrack includes a duet between Antonoff and Danish singer MØ titled "Never Fall in Love," plus another new Bleachers track called "Keeping a Secret."

OPPS

Rehearsal and recording studio **Swing House Rehearsal & Recording**, is looking for live sound audio engineers who will prep equipment for rentals, mix FOH and monitors, work offsite at gigs, deliver

and set up rentals, work with clients, maintain warehouse equipment and help manage staff. It's a plus if you're a musician and have experience with rental software, Protocols, Avid and Photoshop. Swing House is considering entry-level employees and recent graduates.



Pay will be determined based on experience. For information on applying, contact info@swinghouse.com.

Official Best Of, producer of Best Of television programming, is recruiting full-time associate producer interns for its Hollywood office. Duties include researching top-rated attractions and businesses, and providing company information to potential upcoming attractions and details about travel shows. Interviews will be held at the company's Hollywood office. Send a resume, three references and reason for applying to info@officialbestof.com or [6451310229](tel:6451310229) @ job.craigslislist.org.

Los Angeles entertainment company **Levity** is hiring a booking assistant to provide support to the booking team and EVP of Programming. Responsibilities include answering and directing a high volume of phone calls, scheduling meetings, coordinating travel, handling mail, maintains talent booking databases and greets visitors. Candidates need at least one year of receptionist or office assistant experience, great communication skills and proficiency in Microsoft Excel. Email HR@leg-corp.com for information on applying.

PROPS

Independent distribution platform **Soundrop** is playing a vital role in getting money in the pockets of video game music creators and other independent or underground artists in the music industry today. Growing its catalog by 25 percent and collecting nearly \$600,000 in streaming and download revenue since the start of 2017, Soundrop allows artists to earn money through music distribution on YouTube and other streaming services. Contact Lex Lindsey at Lex@rockpaperscissors.biz.



theater to his name, most recently the **Brett Morgen** documentary *Jane* on the life of **Jane Goodall**. Glass was the first composer to win multi-generational audiences and has collaborated with the likes of **Allen Ginsberg, Woody Allen, David Bowie, Paul Simon** and **Yo Yo Ma**. He continues to present lectures, workshops and solo performances around the world, appearing regularly with the **Philip Glass Ensemble**. Contact Ray Costa at rcosta@costacomm.com.

After eight years of holding the **Edwardian Ball** in Los Angeles, a two-night event debuted this year on Feb. 9 and 10 with the **Edwardian World's Faire** in addition to the **Ninth Annual Edwardian Ball** at L.A.'s historic **Globe Theatre**. The Edwardian Ball is a celebration of the arts including live music, visual arts, theatre, fashion, literature, circus performance and ballroom dancing all set in a Neo-Victorian, romantic steampunk backdrop. For more information about the event, visit EdwardianBall.com and contact Michelle Barnett at MichelleMarieB@gmail.com for details.

The producers of the international music sensation **ROCKTOPIA** have announced that the Grammy-winning and multiplatinum-selling lead singer of **Train**, **Pat Monahan**, will make his Broadway debut during the first three weeks of the run, March 20 - April 8. An explosive musical event that fuses the most iconic 20th Century rock with world-renowned classical compositions, **ROCKTOPIA** features world-class vocalists backed by a full symphony orchestra, an electrifying rock band, and a choir performing the works of **Journey, Mozart, Queen, Handel, U2, Tchaikovsky, Heart, Beethoven, Led Zeppelin, Copland, The Who** and more. **ROCKTOPIA** makes its Broadway premiere for six weeks, March 20 - April 29, 2018, at **The Broadway Theatre** (1681 Broadway), with an opening night



Composer **Philip Glass** was recently bestowed the highest honor of **The Society of Composers and Lyricists, The SCL Lifetime Achievement Award**. The 80-year-old Glass, who has received three Academy Award nominations for his scores for *The Hours*, *Notes on a Scandal* and *Martin Scorsese's Kundun*, has more than 200 projects in film, television, opera and

slated for Tuesday, March 27. See rocktopia.com for complete details.

JESSICA PACE is a music journalist-turned-news-reporter based in Durango, CO. She is from Nashville, where she started a writing career by freelancing for publications including *American Songwriter* and *Music Connection*. Contact her at j.marie.pace@gmail.com.

Out Take



Peter Manning Robinson

Composer, Pianist

Web: PeterManningRobinson.com
Contact: Lynn Tejada, Lynn@GreenGalactic.com

For Emmy and BMI Award-winning composer and pianist Peter Manning Robinson, playing music was intuitive; he sat down in front of a piano at age 3, ran his hands over the keys, and thought, "I've done this before." Cliché as it may sound, he knew from that moment that music was his mission in life, he says. His circumstances were unusual—he was living on the streets of San Francisco at the age of 12—but it led to music gigs, including one that led him to Los Angeles.

"I was very fortunate to be heard by some very influential jazz and blues musicians at an early age: Freddie Hubbard, Phil Woods, B.B. King, Ernie Watts, and was gigging by the age of 12. I got my first major film gig when a director came to one of my concerts," Robinson says.

Perhaps one of Robinson's greatest achievements was not a particular composition or score, but a remarkable instrument he invented with his friend and collaborator Klaus Hoch known as The Refractor piano. Similar to how a prism refracts light, the instrument refracts the sound waves of an acoustic piano to create a unique sound without pre-recorded tracks, synthesizers, samples or virtual elements.

"I have always built and modified instruments, both acoustic and electronic. As technology developed and more musicians and composers implemented synths, samplers, VIs and others to create their music, I decided to, once again, go another direction and create not only an instrument, but a type of music that was completely my own," Robinson says. "The first incarnation was called the Piano Mod or P-Mod. It was very interesting, but I wanted something that could create music with no editing, pre-recorded tracks, or any sounds other than what I could draw from the acoustic piano."

The results are an ethereal, unprecedented style of music with classical and jazz components.

"You will have many detractors who will tell you that it's a waste of time and energy. Thank them for their advice and ignore them!" Robinson says. "One has an internal spiritual voice that will guide you if you only listen."

► North and Viper Team Up

Viper Guitars and musician Ronny North have teamed up to create the Ronny North Signature Series. North will be showing off the guitars and performing every day at 2018 Winter NAMM in at the Anaheim Convention Center in Anaheim, CA.



DANIEL SIWEK

▲ Simmons Opens His Vault at Capitol

KISS front man Gene Simmons kicked off his THE VAULT EXPERIENCE World Tour with a fan meet-and-greet at the Capitol Records Building in Los Angeles. The event celebrated the GENE SIMMONS: THE VAULT EXPERIENCE, valued at \$20,000. The box celebrates Simmons' five-decade journey in rock and roll, offering never-before-released songs, photos, stories and collectible items. Die-hard fans who attended the event also got the bonus of hanging with KISS members Ace Frehley, Bruce Kulick and Eric Singer. Pictured (l-r): KISS fan Randy (and his friends) with Simmons, Frehley and Singer. — Daniel Siwek



◀ Weir and Katiemichal & Ash Collab

National Record Promotion's CEO Larry Weir held court at Studio City Sound recently with the new Country duo Katiemichal & Ash (A-OK). Pictured (l-r): Larry Weir, bassist Paul Bushnell (Tim McGraw) Chris Salas (SCS Engineer), Ash Webb, Katiemichal Pullen, SCS CEO Tom Weir and recording artist Kevin De Nicolo.

► The Snow-Globe Annual Wrap-Up

The SnowGlobe Music Festival returned to South Lake Tahoe, CA for its seventh year. Taking place over three days and nights, SnowGlobe featured 50 diverse artists performing on three stages and included acts such as Khalid, Dillon Francis and Travis Scott (Pictured).



Tidbits From Our Tattered Past



RYAN CAMPBELL

▲ iHeart Goes ALTernative

The first iHeartRadio ALTer Ego concert took place on Jan. 19 at the Forum in Los Angeles, CA. The show featured the biggest names in alternative rock including Mumford & Sons, Cage The Elephant (pictured), Beck and more.



1988—Rod Stewart—#19

In our exclusive interview with Rod Stewart, the rooster-haired rock god recalled how he had been discovered in a railway station by blues luminary Long John Baldry. "John was catching a train on the other platform when he heard me and my drunken mates waiting the blues. He rushed over to me and said, 'Would you like to join my band?'"



◀ Downtown Music's 10th Anniversary

Downtown Music Publishing celebrated its tenth birthday with a three-floor New York City blowout. The party brought together Downtown's global leadership together for the first time ever under one roof. Staff from New York, Nashville, L.A., Tokyo, Amsterdam and London converged. Pictured (l-r): Jedd Katrancha, Andrew Bergman, Sean McGraw, Jumea Park, Roberto Neri, Joe Conyers III, Justin Kalifowitz, Taeko Saito, Andrew Sparkler, Steve Markland and Lucas van Slegtenhorst.



2007—Joss Stone—#11

Singer Joss Stone (Jocelyn Eve Stoker) was excited that her producer Raphael Saadiq advocated live instruments on her tracks. "Yeah, yeah, yeah, that's how I want to make music forever. Why not make it live? All three of my albums have been live." Elsewhere in the issue we explore the ways in which cash-strapped artists could get top-notch studio time at bargain basement prices.



JUDY LAMPPU

▲ CCC Hosts Sunset Strip Panel

On Jan. 16, The California Copyright Conference's ("CCC") held a panel in Studio City, CA called "Welcome to the Jungle (Then and Now): Music, Money and Legalities of Bands That Ruled the Sunset Strip." Pictured (l-r): Jack Russell, vocalist for Jack Russell's Great White; Diane Snyder Ramirez, CCC Board Member; J. Charley Londoño, Esq., CCC President; Wendy Dio, Manager of Niji Entertainment Group; Mikeal Maglieri, Owner, The Whisky A Go-Go & Rainbow Bar & Grill; Frankie Banali, Manager & drummer of Quiet Riot.

X A M B A S S

Straight Outta Ithaca: Three Alt-Rockers Have Broken Out of Their College Town and Are Assaulting the Mainstream Full-On

BY BRETT CALLWOOD

X AMBASSADORS FORMED IN the Upstate New York town of Ithaca in 2009, though the three current members—Sam Harris, his brother Casey Harris, and drummer Adam Levin—were playing together for three years prior to that, messing around with sounds as young friends do.

They eventually formed X Ambassadors alongside childhood friend Noah Feldshuh, who is no longer a member though he continues to inspire the music in a variety of ways. The last couple of years have been big ones for the band though; they signed with Interscope in time to release the 2015 album *VHS*, and now they're all over the radio.

A major-label record deal, massive radio play and enormous tours is a huge first step, and it would be easy for them to sit back now, but it would also be naive and these guys know that. It's their DIY work ethic that has brought them this far and, as Sam Harris told us, they're not about to let complacency take it all away. There's much work still to be done and, as they prepare to release their third album early in 2018, X Ambassadors know that this should be another massive year. We spoke to Harris about the past, the present and the bright future...

Music Connection: As a cultural area, what is Ithaca, NY, like for a band to get its start? What else was going on there?

Sam Harris: It's pretty isolated. It's way up in Upstate New York, and about five hours away [from New York City]. But it's a college town, so there's arts and culture there. So, as kids growing up, Casey and I definitely had resources available to us for music lessons, and had a community that supported us being weird and adventurous in terms of our musical styling.

Not really much of a music scene there when we were growing up. There were a lot of reggae bands and bluegrass bands, and hippie-roots-rock bands. A similar environment to Burlington, Vermont. Very entrenched in the world of academia. The colleges are what keep the town alive. But it's also in the middle of rural upstate New York, so you have this weird melting pot of cultural identity. It was an incredible place to grow up.

MC: How did the members of the band find each other?

Harris: Casey and I are brothers and we've been playing music together since we were young. When we moved to New York, that's when we met Adam and started playing music during our freshman year of college in 2006. We've been playing together ever since. We've been a band now for over 10 years.

MC: Who or what were your early influences?

Harris: We all grew up listening to a lot of hip-hop and R&B, and were heavily influenced by that. But also, we're a band and we loved rock music, alternative and indie rock. Because technologically, as a live act, we were pretty limited to just our guitars, keyboard and

drums. Our sound started in much more of a regular rock genre, just because of the physical limitations of our instruments. Gradually, we learned that we can play to a click track and that will allow us to trigger some electronic elements live. We started to incorporate more of the hip-hop and R&B influences that were so strong in us originally. When we first started out, I listened to a lot of Kings of Leon, Coldplay, I was very influenced by the Red Hot Chili Peppers, I loved Iggy Pop, and I went through a serious obsession with Damon Albarn and Gorillaz. Rage Against the Machine is a huge influence on me, and also Audioslave. I know a lot of people didn't like Audioslave because it wasn't Rage. Chris Cornell was an incredible vocalist, God rest his soul, and as a vocalist, I really loved someone singing his ass off over that heavy instrumentation.

MC: The name changed from Ambassadors to X Ambassadors... why?

Harris: Every band struggles to pick a name at the very beginning, and it's the worst part of being in a band. I think it's the hardest thing we've ever done—pick our name. It boiled down to us sitting in a room, pointing at different objects in the room and trying them out as names. Our drummer, Adam, looked at his drums and he was using a Remo Ambassador Coated drum heads. We were, like, that sounds good.

The "X" came about when we were signing our record deal and had to avoid paying a ton of money to all the other bands or artists using the name Ambassadors. So we experimented with different combinations of words and letters. "X Ambassadors" was a random one that I came up with. It sounded good, everyone liked it, and it gave us a little bit of an edge. Now, I feel like we try our best to be allies and be a voice for anyone who feels disenfranchised or marginalized, and we try to write songs for them. The X Ambassadors name feels appropriate for that.

MC: You self-released the *Litost* album in 2012. Talk about that experience...

Harris: The title is a Czech word that I stole from a Milan Kundera book. It's something very emo and moody. But we really bet on ourselves with that record. We actually convinced a friend who was working in a studio at the time to let us record there and rack up \$60,000 worth of recording time, which we could not afford at all. We basically signed a contract with them saying that we will make money off of this music eventually, we can't pay this now, but we will pay it back. That EP got us a record deal and we were able to pay that money back. But we really put all our money down on that and bet on ourselves. It was quite the risk. But a great payoff.

We have been thriving at Interscope Records. We love our team, and there's been ups and downs, staff changes and we've lost some of the people we were originally working with, but regardless it's been an epic journey.



SADORS

"IT REALLY HELPS WHEN YOU HAVE ANOTHER SONGWRITER IN THE ROOM. YOU'RE BOTH TRYING TO PLEASE EACH OTHER AND TRYING TO WORK TOGETHER TO CREATE SOMETHING."

PHOTO BY COTIE LAFFOON

MC: How did your sound evolve between that indie debut and the *VHS* album for Interscope in 2015?

Harris: It absolutely did evolve. And a lot of that has to do with working with Alex da Kid, who produced *Love Songs Drug Songs*, *The Reason* EP, and then also *VHS*. As a hip-hop producer, he's also a musician himself, so for the first time we almost had another member of the band come in and work on the music side. For me, it was also very interesting to have someone come in and work on the songwriting side, who is very much a filter. I would send him an idea for a verse or a chorus, and he would say, "No, it's not good enough, write something better." So I would go back and write another thing, and it was still, "No," and still, "No," until finally it was a "Yes."

And so to have that sounding board was important to me as a songwriter. I grew a lot and got to know pop structure better, and got to know the limits of pushing myself. I can push myself pretty far until I get a song right. I won't stop until I get it right, and it was working in that way which helped me realize that.

MC: Is it important that the three of you have stayed together since the very beginning?

Harris: Absolutely. It's really important. Now, where we are at, we've gone through a lot together and our brotherhood is stronger than ever. It's really made this next record the best work that we've made up until this point. Look, this industry is really tough. There have been a lot of hurdles for us to navigate. Life is tough. We've had some blows in the last couple of years. But where we are now, the three of us are stronger than ever.

MC: Looking at Oasis and the Black Crowes, being brothers can tear it apart a little harder...

Harris: Oh yeah, when you let your egos really get too involved, I think that can hurt the camaraderie

and that bond. But we try to keep our egos out of the equation as much as possible. Keep them in check.

MC: Who writes the songs? How does the process work?

Harris: I write all the lyrics and melody, and the production side we all work on collectively. We also work with other people. We collaborate, especially on the new record. I've written with other songwriters, which comes back to pushing the ego out of the way a little bit. That really helps, when you have another songwriter in the room. You're both trying to please each other and trying to work together to create something. When it works well. You always come up with the best stuff when you're feeding into each other. If I write something and this other person says, "I love that," I can leave that aside and move onto something new.

MC: The legend is that Dan from Imagine Dragons was in the hospital and heard you, and told Interscope to sign you. When did you become aware of that?

Harris: That was really strange. We released *Litost*, and one of the songs got picked up by a single radio station. They played the hell out of it, which brought us to the attention of a bunch of major labels. We were scouted and had a couple of meetings, but then nothing happened. Out of nowhere, we got an email from Alex da Kid's manager saying he would like to work with the band. That turned into, "he would like to sign the band, and we're going to have a meeting."

We met, and at that meeting was when we got on the phone with Alex, and also Dan Reynolds. Then it was made known to us that Dan had heard us and shown us to Alex and Interscope. Dan, I think, was sick and they were playing a show in that very town where we had the song on the radio station. They were doing a show for the station, and

the driver they had that day was playing our band on the radio. It all happened quickly and it didn't feel real because we had just come off the high of, "Oh my God, all these labels are talking to us and interested in signing us," and the very, very low of, "Oh, nobody wants anything to do with us." So, we were like, "Yeah sure, okay, you want to sign us too? Okay." And then it actually happened and it was, "Oh shit, it's real."

MC: Has it led to a close relationship with the Imagine Dragons?

Harris: Yes, those guys are amazing. They really are the most genuine and sweetest human beings on the planet. They've been there for us since day one. Dan and I speak every once in a while. They're super-busy on tour supporting their new record, which is fantastic. It's so awesome seeing them out there doing their thing and killing it. They were our big brother band in the early stages of our career.

MC: Would you try to pass that on and help out new, unsigned bands down the line?

Harris: Absolutely. To be honest, we're still in a zone where we are very much still trying to make our mark on the music scene as a whole, and I feel like we are so focused on really showing the world what we are doing, as a band and as artists, that I'm not in a space right now to be making my own record label and signing bands. Eventually, that's something I would love to do.

MC: We've heard the new singles—"Ahead of Myself" and "Joyful"—what kind of response have you been getting?

Harris: "Joyful" is not even out yet—we've just been playing it live. People are responding so well to it live, and it's so cool to see that happen. "Ahead of Myself" was a slower climb. It's

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still getting a little radio play, but we are more focused on this new stuff that isn't out yet. I truly believe that this is the best work we've ever done, and I think that this record is going to be an identity-defining record for us.

MC: It's done?

Harris: Yeah, the album's pretty much done. We're just finishing up the production side of things and getting stuff mixed right now. It's slowly coming together. There's always room for something last minute to come up. We all never stop writing. We'll just keep writing until then.

MC: Where was it recorded?

Harris: We recorded all over the place. Mostly in L.A., but some at our individual houses, and a couple of times we rented an Airbnb in town and had that as our home base where we come together and write and record. A couple of times, we recorded at different people's personal studios. Mostly in L.A., though. We're very mobile, the way that we record. We don't do too much live drum tracking, which is really all you need a studio for these days. We're programming a lot of stuff onto our laptops, and I'm recording a lot of stuff onto our laptop with the microphone that I carry around in my backpack. That's how I do all my vocals. We're very mobile, and we learned how to do that by being a touring band and recording on the road. That's how we did all of *VHS*, so we continued that on the next record. But, we were mostly in L.A. for the writing and recording.

MC: Is there a theme or concept to the new record?

Harris: It is a bit of a concept album. Over the last few years, a dear friend of mine, and we've kind of become estranged, they've been struggling with addiction and have been in and out of rehab. It's been a really trying experience for me and them,



- Other notable musical exports from Ithaca, NY, include Buck Dharma of Blue Oyster Cult, Greg Graffin of Bad Religion, Pulitzer-winning composer Karel Husa, and Robert Moog, inventor of the Moog synthesizer.
- In January 2017, Sam Harris participated in the Women's March on Washington official after-party. In March, he performed a benefit show for Planned Parenthood. The band has also donated proceeds for singles and shows

too. This is a person who's very, very close to me, like family, and now I have found myself not really speaking to this person. This record ended up being my way of communicating with them, from far away. In doing so, it was my feelings of betrayal, loss and heartbreak. Also, going deeper and trying to put myself in their shoes. In their mindset, dealing with these demons. That's the concept of the record. These last few years have been a reminder for me of how therapeutic songwriting can be.

MC: Has the band gotten better at the process of producing a record, since *VHS*?

Harris: Absolutely. The process of making this record has really been incredible. I feel like we've found our voice more distinctly than ever before, and that's just been because we've been doing it

FACTS

to the ACLU, and Unity Mississippi, the latter a GLBT charitable organization.

- Keyboardist Casey Harris, Sam's brother, has been visually impaired since birth.
- X Ambassadors have guested on tracks by Eminem, The Knocks, and Skylar Grey, among others.
- Original member Noah Feldshuh played bass and lead guitar in the band, but in 2016 it was announced that he was taking an indefinite hiatus to deal with personal issues.

so much and we've written so many Goddamned songs. I'd say for this record we have three albums worth of material. The songs are all great in their own regard and I feel like they could be three great records. We're choosing the most gut-wrenching one, the one that gets right to the heart, because that's who we are as a band. Just doing it over and over again, and writing so many songs, taught us a lot about how we create, and gave us confidence in ourselves. ... As great of a record as *VHS* is, I feel like this one really speaks to who we are, as performers, as artists and as human beings.

Contact christine.wolff@umusic.com

Check out MC's recent podcast with Sam Harris at podcastone.com/music-connection

LOLLAR PICKUPS™

the Straight Truth About Pickups by Jason Lollar



The "magic" found in some (but not all) classic vintage pickups was created by accident. Don't let anyone tell you different. And over time, some pretty stellar accidents happened. The only way to recreate that magic is to study more than a few exceptional examples of all the classic pickup types, while acquiring a thorough understanding of exactly what materials were used and precisely how each pickup was constructed and wound. Only then is the "magic" repeatable, if you are willing to spend the time and money required to chase the dragon. I am.

I personally design and wind over 30 different pickup models, including all the vintage classics, many obscure works of art known only to lap and pedal steel players like Robert Randolph, and even a few of my own designs that never existed in the past.

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FIVE A & R PRO'S

IN THIS EXCLUSIVE ROUNDTABLE, *Music Connection* speaks candidly with A&R veterans at four major labels, and one independent, to see how they operate, choose acts and sign artists. We also included a legendary A&R executive to give some perspective on the changes Artist & Repertoire executives have experienced due to the evolution of the music business. We're happy to report that the pro's we talked with see a bright future and are looking for unique artists. What each has to say is both informative and inspiring.

BY BERNARD BAUR

MIKE DALY

Executive Director A&R

waitdisneystudios.com
hollywoodrecords.com

Mike Daly started his career in 2008 as a songwriter and producer for Chrysalis Music Group. He then moved into A&R for Disney in 2011, handling acts on Hollywood Records and Buena Vista (Disney's country label). He has worked with various artists, including Imagine Dragons, Lana Del Rey, Jason Mraz, Christina Perri, Young the Giant, Grace Potter and Jimmy Barnes.

How did you get into A&R?

It's funny... As an artist I was pretty successful and, because of that, I was offered opportunities to do other things. I became a producer and eventually got into A&R even though I wasn't sure how to do either of those jobs. But, I wanted to learn so I just went with it.

How do you evaluate talent?

I need to feel something. Online analytics are fine, but are not a deciding factor for me. If an act has millions of streams, but don't move me—I'm not the right guy for them. At the end of the day, it's an emotional business.



ONLINE ANALYTICS ARE FINE, BUT ARE NOT A DECIDING FACTOR FOR ME.

What factors do you consider important?

Everything is important. Artists need to check all the boxes, hit all the bases and connect with as many people as possible. I'm moved by acts with an artistic vision and something to say. I especially like amazing singers with quality songs.

But it's difficult to do everything, and artists sometimes get overwhelmed by it. Well, think about it this way... You eat an elephant one bite at a time.

Do you consider the artist's team?

Nobody can achieve anything big alone. Having an amazing team will raise the bar. If I think a team is not functioning well, it will kill the deal.

What's the main function of your job?

Managing expectations. Some acts may not need to be superstars, but you should target that. In the end, it's about the artist, it's their career.

Do you see any trends on the horizon?

I think rock will come back at some point.

How do you like to be contacted?

I prefer being contacted by people I have a relationship with. •

JOEY ARBAGEY

Executive VP Head of A&R

epicrecords.com

Joey Arbagey oversees the record-making process for all of Epic's artists, including Fifth Harmony, Future, Travi\$ Scott and Meghan Trainor. His influence has helped shape the face and flavor

of R&B, dance, neo soul, hip-hop and pop music. Arbagey was instrumental in breaking many acts, including Eryka Badu, Mary J. Blige, D'Angelo, Outkast and Maxwell, among others. Wanting to play a more active role in production, Arbagey launched Arbadel Productions in 2007. Notable achievements include remixes for Mariah Carey's album *Emancipation of Mimi*, remixes for Rihanna's Grammy-winning hit, "Umbrella," and a Grammy for Aretha Franklin's *So Damn Happy* album, which he worked on side-by-side with the music legend.

How did you get into A&R?

I started at Arista Records in 2000 and discovered that I had "commercial ears." I could pick the hits. That got me my first job in A&R.

How do you evaluate talent?

I look for something unique with a special voice and sound—and that little bit of magic. I have to feel that something is there, something that I can work with.

Does your label develop artists?

We do, but it depends on the act. Every artist is different. We might start from ground zero and try to bring them from nothing to superstars.

How important is social media?

We look at all the platforms. I want to see if [music fans] are paying attention and how they're responding to the artist. Fan engagement is very important.

Do you consider the artist's team?

Very much so. They're super-important. We need to be able to work and grow together.

What is your signing process?

It could take five to six months. I need to be certain that we have the same goals and can achieve them together.



WITH JUST A LITTLE RESEARCH YOU CAN GET TO ALMOST ANYBODY IN THE BUSINESS.

Are you looking for anything in particular?

I'm always looking for the next big thing. It's not genre specific, it could be anything. I recently found a 16-year-old artist (AJ Mitchell) who has millions of followers online. When I see something like that, I'll always check it out.

What would stop you from signing an act?

If they're too aggressive or don't care, I will back off. I want them to be excited with the opportunity they're being offered.

What trends do you see on the horizon?

I like the fact that styles are shifting. I also think that music with a Latin flavor will become more popular.

Can artists contact you?

I prefer to deal with people I know. But, where there's a will there's a way. With just a little research you can get to almost anybody in the business. •

MOLLIE LEHMAN

Sr. Director A&R (Atlantic)
President A&R (Taste and Tone)
atlanticrecords.com
tasteandtone.com

Starting her career in 2004 as an A&R Assistant at RCA Records, Mollie Lehman proceeded to climb the industry ladder and became an A&R Scout at Velvet Hammer where she helped manage acts and scouted for a Columbia Records joint venture. From there she became A&R at Atlantic, then moved to Capitol Records as Director of A&R. In 2014, she rejoined Atlantic as Sr. Director of A&R, the position she currently holds. Over the years, she has worked with a variety of artists in various genres. Lehman is also the President of A&R at Taste and Tone, an independent singles label.

What do you look for when evaluating artists?

I pay a lot of attention to the vocals. My favorite thing is a unique voice, something different. Lyrics are also really important for me, personally.

What is the most important characteristic artists should acquire?

The right attitude... Over time that has become something I focus on. They need to have a strong passion for what they're doing, have a great work ethic and be visionaries. They also need to be able to take a punch and keep going.



IT'S IMPORTANT FOR EVERYONE TO HAVE
SIMILAR GOALS AND WANT TO BE PART
OF THE TEAM.

Do you develop artists?

I tend to sign acts early, so I'm 100% comfortable developing them. In fact, that's what I do with the indie label Taste and Tone.

What is Taste and Tone about?

It's sort of an experiment—it's a monthly singles label. I use it as a "get to know you" type of thing. There's low commitment on both sides. We'll record a song and we have a small budget to play with. Depending on the release, we may hire indie PR, make a music or lyric video, do remixes... etcetera. Whatever we feel is best for that release.

Are live performances important?

I think they are. They're a great way to connect with fans and to learn which songs are working. How the energy connects in a room with real live humans.

How do you use streaming services in your overall approach?

I use them as an A&R tool all the time; we like to watch what fans are naturally responding to. That's one of the cool things about online is that songs can tell you things, like which is a single, and which is a hit.

What's your signing process like?

It depends, every situation is different. Sometimes it happens very quickly in reaction to a song blowing up; sometimes it's just hearing a vocal that I love and then falling in love with that artist and deciding to grow the project together. It's important for everyone to have similar goals and want to be part of the team.

What trends do you see on the horizon?

I like the fact that it's becoming a mixtape culture. Most people like different styles of music, not just one thing. I grew up with that and find it very exciting. It's good to come back to it.

How do you like to be contacted?

At Atlantic, I prefer to be contacted by people I know and trust. At Taste and Tone, there is a submission email. •

KATE CRAIG

VP A&R
warnerbrosrecords.com

Kate Craig began her career as the Executive Assistant to the Chairman of Warner Bros. Records. She then moved into publishing as A&R at Warner Chappell Music. From there she became Sr. Director of A&R at Warner Bros. Records, and eventually VP A&R, a position that she holds today. Craig has signed and/or worked with a variety of artists, including Lukas Graham, Nico & Vinz, Bruno Mars, Brody Brown, Kate Nash and Sasha Sloan.

How is your label different?

This is my first major-label experience, so I can't speak for anyone else, but we are very "artist first." We still believe in developing artists and building life-long careers. There is a lot of support here. It truly feels like a family.

You've been A&R for both a publisher (Warner Chappell) and a record label (Warner Bros.). How are those jobs different?

In publishing my job was to set up songwriters with collaborators, and then pitch the songs for placement. At Warner Brothers, it's more about building artist careers, hopefully long ones.



A GREAT LIVE SHOW IS
SUPER IMPORTANT.

How often do you sign acts?

We sign an act when it feels right. There is no quota. It's about quality over quantity, for sure!

What type of acts attract you? Do they need to be accomplished?

I'm attracted to whatever moves me. I've been a dancer my whole life. I emote and communicate through music. I feel that if a song or artist can move me, they can move the world.

How do you evaluate talent?

I go with my gut, for better or worse. Obviously, today there are analytics involved. But I try to have a balance between what's raising its hand and what feels right.

What qualities do you look for?

I like a unique sound and moving lyrics. I love songs with a story. I love music that has something to say and hits me in the gut.

How important is originality (i.e. a "signature" sound)?

It's "everything" to me. I'm always looking for what sets an artist apart. I want to create new lanes, break boundaries and find what's next.

A&R GURU DON GRIERSON dongrierson.com

Don Grierson is a legendary, internationally acclaimed A&R executive, who has worked with some of the most notable artists in music. To many, he is considered an "A&R Guru." Grierson was involved with The Beatles and Apple Records, receiving the only "Golden Apple Award" ever given by the band. He later became VP, A&R, for EMI America Records, and followed that as head of A&R at Capitol where he signed and guided many superstars, including Heart, Tina Turner, Joe Cocker, Steve Vai, Megadeth, Bob Seger, Duran Duran and others. Later he became head of A&R at Sony/Epic Records, signing and/or working with Celine Dion, Cheap Trick, Bad English, Cyndi Lauper, The Jacksons and Living Colour. A voting member of The Grammys, Grierson currently operates his own music consulting company, is a music supervisor for independent films and an executive producer/A&R. He is also an instructor at the Musicians Institute, and co-authored the book *It All Begins With The Music*.

How has the A&R world changed?

Because of the Internet and social media, there's a lot more information available today. When I was a label A&R executive, we had to make decisions based on limited information. Often, decisions were made based on your gut.

What's the hardest part of being an A&R exec?

Signing any artist is a serious decision, because every signing is a risk, and some don't pay off. Today, that could mean losing your job. You never really know how the public will respond.

For quite a while, A&R has relied heavily upon online analytics, looking for "empirical evidence" that an act would be successful. What's your opinion on that?



There's not one way to make a decision. But, basing it on analytics sounds a little too easy. Acquiring as much information as you can is important, but instinct should also be part of it.

Several A&R execs in our roundtable go with their instinct. That almost seems old-school today.

I'm glad to hear that. That should always be part of it, I think it's crucial. An A&R exec needs to be-

lieve in the artist and their music. And that belief shouldn't just come from facts they've researched. There's an emotional aspect to this business that, I believe, is even more important than analytics.

Do artists need a label today?

Artists can do a lot for themselves nowadays, and achieve a lot of success. But, if they want to be a mainstream pop star they're going to need major support and radio airplay.

How have streaming services changed the business?

They're not good or bad. Technology changes things, but it's important to focus on the positive. They provide a new and different way to discover music and generate a new cash flow.

Artists and managers sometimes complain that they're not getting label support.

That's not uncommon. If you have a lot of acts on the roster, there's no way to handle all of them equally. Often, labels will sign and release acts whether they get support or not. That's why there are so many "label services" companies today.

How has social media affected the business?

The beautiful thing about social media is that it can build things quickly, if it's used properly. Cardi B is a good example of that.

How can an artist become a star?

Great artists are always honing their craft. They're always improving and evolving. Then, often, one hit song can move them that direction.

What trends do you see in the future?

Cross-genre music is exciting. You have Adele and Ed Sheeran exploring their roots. I also think there will be many variations in all areas of the business. And, eventually, rock will come back with the right act. •

How do you measure an act's success?

Nowadays artists can do so much for themselves, I like to see their initiative and vision. A great live show is super-important. I like to see how the crowd reacts and how their fans engage with them.

Do you develop acts (before signing them)?

Development never really ends in this business. No matter what phase the artist is in there's always more work to do and more ways to grow. I've worked with artists before signing them and am always here to help what I believe in.

How important are live performances?

They're very important. The energy of a great live show and a great performance is the difference between a talented artist and a superstar.

What about social media?

I'm more about fan engagement than numbers—after all, you can buy them. I want to see how engaged their core fans are. I would rather build die-hard fans slowly and organically, because once you have them you have them forever.

What's your signing process?

I don't rush things, even though things are fast paced and competitive now. Signing an act is about building a partnership—it's a serious rela-

tionship. I want to be 100% sure I can deliver everything I promise them. It's their livelihood, and I'll be damned if I let them down.

What would stop you from signing an act?

If we didn't believe and trust each other, that would kill a deal. There must be mutual trust all around.

What kind of deals do you offer (360, or other)?

Today, with the amount of power artists have, the deal-making process has to be wide open. It's the wild, wild west out here. It depends on a lot of factors, and every deal needs to make sense for all involved.



What do you think of streaming services?

They offer a different way to find new acts. They're a great promotional tool and can even break an artist. They can help artists be discovered and attract new fans.

What trends do you see in the future?

I see more and more cross-genre collaborations. There are no rules anymore.

How about contacting you?

I don't mind people reaching out. I'll listen to anything. Great music can come from anywhere. Email me links to websites and music at kate.craig@wbr.com. •  

Music Audience Exchange (MAX)

For Artists Who Want Their Music in Front of Larger Audiences

One of the challenges music artists face today is promoting their music in an efficient way to garner traction and more fans. Various entities can help contribute to specific aspects of an artist's career—distribution, touring, label deals—but how can an artist get their music promoted? The answer could be found at marketing and promotions company, Music Audience Exchange (MAX), headquartered in Plano, TX. *Music Connection* first collaborated with MAX for the South by Southwest (SXSW) festival in 2017 and recently reconnected with Director of Artist Relations, Jarred Goldner, to discuss how consumer brands and artists can benefit from each other in advantageous co-branded campaigns to further engage their audiences.

engagement, sales, views, audience and more. These individually tailored partnerships can result in brands acquiring new consumers and artists gaining new fans. Other achievements include artists having their own Pandora channel, playlist slots, Grammy nominations, top spots on charts and more.

But with high-profile clients such as Dr. Pepper, Ford, Jack Daniel's, among others, how can artists get matched up to partner? Not just any artist is chosen—the artist must be the right fit. Liking the brand is a positive start; however, Music Audience Exchange works to ensure the two partners are a good match and that the connection is authentic. Primarily, MAX uses the database to determine the audience makeup by looking at demographics, location, social

website, artists can acquire a personal link to a survey for their fans, and once 50+ have taken it, MAX's system will provide insight on what brands and industries are fit for the artist. An example springs to mind, "We had a female country singer take [that] information to sell a golf sponsorship and lock in an episode on HGTV, because her fan [demographic and psychographic] highlighted golf, DIY and specifically HGTV viewers." He goes on to declare, "If an artist can use the information we provide to help influence their own sponsorship, then that is still a win."

Coming up on the agenda, the company is currently gearing up for the 2018 SXSW festival where Goldner will participate in an industry panel alongside Berklee College



Founded in 2014, Music Audience Exchange uses data science and analytics to foster fruitful partnerships. The business model expands on the digital marketing experience of co-founder and CEO, Nathan Hanks, and applies it to the music industry space—an opportunity to utilize data and analytics to identify shared audiences between brands and emerging artists and pair them together. The company dives into psychographics, acquiring first-party data by crowd and fan sourcing their own surveys, thus mapping hundreds of audience demographics into a "Scrooge McDuck vault" database of 2.4 million artists within 765 music genres.

To enrich the artist-brand-audience relationship, Music Audience Exchange advocates partnering with brands. Goldner affirms, "They can help with that promotion if you're releasing a new single, putting out a new album, [or] going on tour." MAX creates call-to-action campaigns in forms of compelling promotional videos, radio/streaming audio, custom content hubs, images, social media posts and live experiences to ensure both sides of a partnership reap the benefits of increased

engagement, streams, touring and more, which is then followed by interviews to further gauge if the artist resonates most with the brand. Also high on the consideration radar is the emphasis on an artist's content. "You have to be tight on what you put out into the world," Goldner asserts. "My team is looking at everything you're doing online, and [if] we can flag things that are highly inappropriate...I might not even contact you. You are being excluded before we even know if you care about that brand."

Artists interested in getting in touch with MAX can visit the company's website where they can fill out a form under the "Artists/Managers" tab, but Goldner alerts that the company may not work with them right away. "Artists reach out daily," he informs, "but that doesn't mean that I have something immediately for them or that they are a fit for a program we are running...It's not IF we work together, it's WHEN, because eventually we'll have a program that makes sense." But don't let that be discouraging. MAX maintains its prerogative by helping artists without officially working together. Upon registering on the

of Music's Associate Professor of Music Business/Management George Howard, ATC Management's Artist Manager Jonny Dawson, Spotify's long-term Publishing Strategist Erik Beijnoff and singer-songwriter Beatie Wolfe. The panel will discuss playlists and how they play a part in the "music industry and gatekeepers" system. In addition, the panelists will offer their opinions on whether playlists are helpful or hurtful, what people should look for and how artists should interact.

At the end of the day, Music Audience Exchange continues its war cry of "more music, less ads." Their goal is to have the artist's music and story told in one-way ad messages that won't get passed on after being screamed at in a used car salesman fashion. "It's still great to have advertising or backing," Goldner says. "But it's important that the message be correct and tightened down to a point where people engage...If you don't have good music and a good story, you can only go so far, right?"

For more information, visit musicaudienceexchange.com.

See us at NAMM January 25-28 - Booth #11348 in Hall A
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Creativity

Where Does It Come From and How Do We Tap Into It?

Spirit or Soul?

Whatever it is that makes us who we are and unique from everyone else—that's where creativity comes from. No matter our culture, nationality, race or musical discipline, we as human beings all have a spiritual connection to the creative process. Whether you believe in God or not there is a fire that burns in our consciousness that drives us to create. We all possess the ability to create. We create ideas to help us work better and faster at our jobs. We do home repairs, fix cars and teach our children their ABC's. Most of us take these things for granted, and in the case of musicians and songwriters, this ability manifests itself in the form of music and lyrics.

A good song should take us on a journey

We are storytellers! Songs, whether sung with lyrics or played instrumentally, are stories. The goal or purpose for most songwriters and composers is to connect and communicate with others on an emotional level. We are trying to convey a feeling or idea and share in the human condition, and life experience is at the core of our ability to tell stories. Some of us live exciting lives and have a pool of first hand encounters to draw ideas from, while some of us are thinkers and observers with great imaginations watching the world around us, documenting things we have witnessed. Either way, we are writing from life experience.

Life experience can come from watching plays, movies, and television shows that inspire us. We hear lectures, read books, and hear conversations on the street that spark our imagination. We don't have to actually live through an experience to be influenced by it. Life is all around us doing curious things. We watch people from café tables, park benches, and when walking down the street. Observation

is the key to good storytelling and songwriting. Paying attention to the small details of life will make you a better storyteller.

Be a good receiver

My father used to say that inventions and ideas are floating around in the cosmos and we are like radio receivers dialing in these ideas. Our job is to be good receivers and listen for the message. As for myself, I sometimes meditate and dream with eyes wide open (my parents and teachers would say I was daydreaming), but this is how I connect with my creative side. I take notes and let the words tumble out at random. I don't worry about whether it makes sense or not. My job at that moment is to record and capture every thought no matter how abstract. Don't squash the muse as she delivers the message. Let it run its course before you try to edit and make sense of it. Think of it as shorthand or code being delivered so that we can go back later to fill in the details and dress it up to be more poetic.

Tap into the stream of ideas floating in the cosmos. Let your mind play a little.

Forcing creativity rarely works for me. I have to find a place both physical and mentally conducive for creating my art and music. I get lost in my thoughts and sit in my office or studio staring at the walls sometimes. Then after some quiet reflection, I begin to see images, stories and characters wandering around in my thoughts. Sometimes an experience from my childhood or even something that happened earlier that day can spark a firestorm of dialogue and images that overload my senses.

Never edit as you receive it. Just let it all fall onto the page, canvas, or through your instrument no matter how crazy it may look or sound at the time. You will have plenty of time later to organize, edit and straighten out

the rough edges and confusion. Stream of consciousness is one way to explain it. Let it flow out like a freestyle rap artist might do. Sling the paint brush and let it drip like Jackson Pollack. Splash it around and make a mess. You will have the opportunity later to look at it with 20/20 hindsight. But for now, just play like a child and let the world around you tumble.

Get quiet—or not!

Meditate! Don't be afraid to go deep into emptiness, because at some point something will come rushing out to meet you. Creativity is sometimes an elusive creature. The muse is shy and will sometimes hide in dark corners if we try to chase it. It's important that we allow the muse to show us where to travel. Get quiet! Turn off your phone, TV, radio and the rest of the world. It's not always a very loud voice that inspiration uses. Listen to your heart. This is where songs come from. They come from quiet places within us and the more you allow yourself to get quiet, the more you allow the song to come to you.

But listen, there are even times when noise and commotion are inspiring. Sometimes public places that are loud and chaotic have the effect of opening up a floodgate of ideas. There are no hard and fast rules where and when to cultivate inspiration. But if you are struggling to find the muse, then maybe meditation will help. The main thing here is to have fun and enjoy the process. Play like a child. Be willing to go wherever the muse takes you.

DALE PETERSON is the author of the book, *Why in the World Would You Want to Start a Band?*, published by Elad Press. As a guitarist, singer and songwriter, he has recorded nine releases with Rhythm Lords and Trouble No More as well as several solo projects with songs placed in major motion pictures and television programs. Peterson has over 45 years of recording and touring experience. Contact him at dale@root66recordingco.com.

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"Anyone that knows me knows I'm not a big fan of doing press, but when *Music Connection* (the only magazine I still read religiously) asked me to do the cover of their biggest issue of the year, what could I say?

I am more than honored."

- Alex da Kid

producer/label owner
(Imagine Dragons, Rihanna, B.o.B)



Björk

Utopia

One Little Indian Records

Producers: Björk/Arca/Rabbit

Björk unleashes a remarkable effort with her latest recording. Coming off of the heart-break depicted on her last album, here she utilizes a woman's flute chorus, bird and jungle noises, layered vocals and plenty of harp and keyboards to introduce us to her rebirth as a happily centered yet explosively creative artist. As usual, Björk loves contrast—one of the most ebullient love songs sounds downright spooky and scary, and some cuts have a gnarly rumbling drone to offset the beauty in the treble registers. This is her most "head-space" recording since her classic *Vespertine*, and she remains one of the most visionary artists of our time. Welcome back! — **David Arnson**



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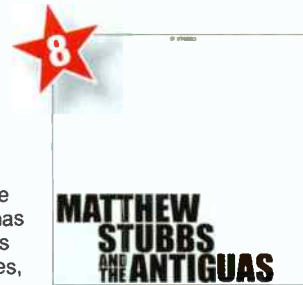
**Matthew Stubbs
And The Antiguas**

Matthew Stubbs and The Antiguas

Yep Roc Records

Producer: Matthew Stubbs/Dave Brophy

AMAZING live-sounding production—like the band is right in front of you! Stubbs has released a classic album of instrumentals that references the best elements of blues, surf, jazz, garage, soul and many other styles, with some of the tunes recalling Los Lobos' borderline atonal clank. This is a record to be played LOUD at a party, and to keep your friends guessing: Santana? Stevie Ray? A Tarantino movie?... Random bursts of electronica and thigh-deep funky keyboards are a big part of the mix here as well. For god's sake track this one down! — **David Arnson**



8

FREEWIFI

Join the Network

Rostrum Records

Producer: DJ Fu, Angelo Bombay, 1DVS, Topper Atwood, Lxudpvck & Rich Lee, Beldondidthat

Minneapolis newcomers Tha Rift, J. Plaza and Daddy Dinero dish an absorbing sampler-sized serving of crackerjack rhymes and oversized beats. Plaza and Rift's lyrical dexterity and deft wordplay make their sound worth noticing, but Dinero's bedrock of dank, viscous instrumentation is what radiates their freaky, sinister glow. Like a three-legged stool, each member provides a critical element, allowing the balance of individual strengths to cobble together a sturdy product. One only imagines if their subject matter transcended predictable hip-hop tropes and memes. — **Andy Kaufmann**



8

Jules Shear

One More Crooked Dance

Funzalo Records

Producer: Jules Shear and Lee Danziger

For nearly 40 years, Jules Shear has been a songwriter's songwriter, with hits recorded by The Bangles, Cyndi Lauper and others. A number of previous projects under his own name have employed the typical guitar, bass and drums onslaught. But for this one he strips 13 tracks down to acoustic piano, vocals and occasional harmonica. The result is a Bob Dylan and Tom Waits folksiness with the whimsy of Randy Newman. Despite the skeletal framework there is plenty of diversity to be had in the self-revelatory "Painkiller" along with the gospel-like "Looking For Me" and the wonderfully harmonic "When It's Right" for proof. — **Eric A. Harabadian**



8

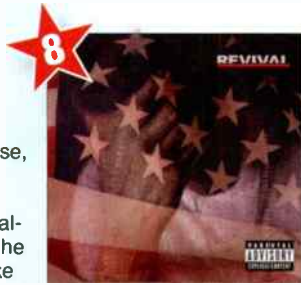
Eminem

Revival

Shady/Aftermath/Interscope

Producers: Various

It has been four years since his last release, and though it's a bit lengthy, *Revival* is still Eminem, Slim Shady, and Marshall Mathers—all in one. On this ninth studio album Em becomes further transparent as he cleans out more of his closet on songs like "River," "Bad Husband," "Need Me," "Castle" and "Arose." One disappointment is "Walk on Water" with Beyoncé; though it's lyrically well put, the beat is completely lackluster. Eminem is a rare artist who, simultaneously, can be both commercial and underground. Nevertheless, he can still put out an acceptable piece of work that people are enthusiastic to hear. — **Adam Seyum**



8

AWOLNATION

Here Come the Runts

Ribbon Music

Producer: Aaron Bruno

Great artists don't abandon their original vision—they grow. Aaron Bruno does just that with *Here Come the Runts*. With this, his heaviest incarnation yet, Bruno maintains the chirpy, Technicolor flavor that made him famous without standing still. And that blend of instant familiarity and glittering newness pays heavy dividends, with delectable lyrics and snappy compositional twists proving ubiquitous. Although Bruno repeatedly shouts "stop that train" during the disc's closer of that name, his latest creation is a locomotive of creativity that's full steam ahead. — **Andy Kaufmann**



10

Django Django

Marble Skies

Ribbon Music

Producer: David Maclean

It's true, good things come to those who wait. While Django Django's obtuse style arguably flirts with pretention, the fragile allure of *Marble Skies* surfaces after copious spins, the London-based art rockers' neopsychedelic tenor deviously seeping into one's subconscious like mustard gas. With their slow-burning dance beats, off-kilter rhythms and subtle dabs of LSD trippery, the group's third disc entrances listeners via surgical subtlety, making that moment when they've finally claimed their audience's imagination that much more potent. — **Andy Kaufmann**



8

DBA

Skyscraper Souls

Cherry Red Records

Producer: Geoff Downes and Christopher Braide

DBA is the collab of keyboardist Geoff Downes (Asia, Buggles) and singer-songwriter-producer Christopher Braide (Beyoncé, Christina Aguilera). On this outing, they take a strong progressive/classic rock path, with plenty of pop flourishes. Top-tier guests, The B-52's Kate Pierson, XTC's Andy Partridge and Big Big Train's David Longdon, augment the tunes. Braide has a strong lead vocal presence and proves to be as significant in front of the mix as behind the scenes. And Downes' great piano and keyboard features emphasize songs and mood over chops. This is thoughtful, conceptual and refreshingly different. — **Eric A. Harabadian**



8

To be considered for review in the Album Reviews section, you must have a record deal with a major label or an independent label with an established distributor. If you do not, please see our New Music Critiques section.

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Natalise + the Sunset

Contact: thsunsetrun@gmail.com
Web: Nataliseandthesunsetrun.com
Seeking: Film/TV, Label
Style: Indie Pop

Blessed with a sweet and youthful voice, Natalie has a quality that will connect with teens and young kids—a perfect fit for the Disney Channel. Driving that point home are songs such as the catchy “Be,” whose sunny, inspirational message allows the singer to trill effortlessly, convincing the listener that no task is impossible. Each song is produced and arranged with a professional touch, right down to the deep drum tone and the subtle build-up of the pensive, piano-driven “Love Unconditional.” The soft, cuddly “One Kiss” has a lovey-dovey sweetness that works because the singer sounds genuine. There are artists with stronger voices, but it’s hard to deny this one’s natural appeal.

- Production 8
- Lyrics 7
- Music 7
- Vocals 9
- Musicianship 8

SCORE: 7.8



GOOD WTHR

Contact: GOODWTHRmusic@gmail.com
Web: facebook.comGOODWTHR
Seeking: Airplay, Playlist Placement
Style: Hip-Hop

Catchy, inventive and consistently clever, the Vermont-based duo GOOD WTHR delivers a brand of hip-hop that’ll appeal more to the college listener than to hard-core headz. “I Promise” deploys a smile-inducing snippet of a children’s group repeating the command “I promise to have fun and just be alive today!” The Chainsmokers-like “April 3rd,” with its memorable chorus, “Wake up, wake up!,” will definitely appeal to teens. Our favorite is “Somewhere Shining” with its grooving track and a smooth amalgam of sounds (including a whiff of reggae) that’s a people-pleaser. It’s the kind of unique song, with a super-catchy chorus, that cannot help but appeal to a wide range of listeners.

- Production 8
- Lyrics 8
- Music 9
- Vocals 7
- Musicianship 7

SCORE: 7.8



Ebb & Flow

Contact: ebbandflowhollywood@gmail.com
Web: ebbandflow.band
Seeking: Booking, Publishing, Film/TV, Label
Style: Pop, Soulful, Electronic

Ebb & Flow is fronted by Gabby Gordon and Morten Kier whose individual strengths are heightened when their voices blend. The band’s songs are fueled by decent hooks that give the pair every opportunity to shine, especially when they emote to each other. The slinky track and vivid lyrics of “Polaroids” is a good example of the group’s work and even allows Gabby to wail a bit. We only wish the hook were somehow catchier. “Touchstone” is a duet that allows the singers to testify to each other’s gratitude. Most unusual is “Edge of the World,” a dreamy, deep-space moodpiece propelled by synthesizers and spiced up with fingersnaps. Ebb & Flow is a confident, wholesome, theatrical sounding act.

- Production 8
- Lyrics 7
- Music 7
- Vocals 8
- Musicianship 7

SCORE: 7.4



The Vindys

Contact: info@thevindys.com
Web: thevindys.com
Seeking: Label, Booking, Film/T, Distrib.
Style: Pop/Rock

Jackie Popvec fronts The Vindys with a voice that exudes confidence and sex appeal. Material will have to improve, however, for this act to lure today’s audience as the group’s pop/rock material (such as “Too Long”) sounds a day past its sell-by date, giving off an early 00’s vibe. “Wrong with Me” shows off Popvec’s range and expressiveness and the band’s lead guitar dazzlement. We hear something pretty promising in the jaunty, jazzed-up R&B tune “Red Wine.” Reminiscent of Amy Winehouse, the song allows Popvec to exude slinky sex appeal amid a sassy arrangement that features a full-on horn section. Seems this Ohio band is truly in its element on this vibrant slice of vintage pop theatre.

- Production 8
- Lyrics 7
- Music 7
- Vocals 9
- Musicianship 8

SCORE: 7.8



SIX&ONE

Contact: sixandone.music@gmail.com
Web: sixandone.eu
Seeking: Label, Manager, Film/TV, Airplay
Style: Classical Crossover, Electro-Pop, Cinematic

A potent combination of ingredients comprise SIX&ONE’s musical cocktail, which incorporates pop, EDM and classical styles. Marius provides a sonic foundation for singer Isabel to give full rein to her vocal skills, whose classical purity shines in the dark, stately slice of chamber pop, “Break Yourself.” Throbbing drumbeats, an evocative keyboard motif and a female chorale enliven the inspirational “All Together.” “Memory” is a scorching, soul-baring burst of defiance: “I’m not afraid!,” sings Isabel—and you believe her. All in all, the singer’s accented English and the music’s dramatic, Continental *brío* make Six&One’s music ideal for a Eurovision competition.

- Production 8
- Lyrics 7
- Music 7
- Vocals 8
- Musicianship 8

SCORE: 7.6



Rooftop

Contact: info@rooftop.band
Web: rooftop.band
Seeking: Film/TV, Distribution
Style: Rock

With solid musicianship and an able-voiced frontman in James Morgan, the only thing holding back this well-produced Bahrain-based triad is their material, which generates an amiable glow but is continually plagued by superficial lyrics and hooks that don’t quite sink in. “Scared Like A Hero” is a decent slice of jangle-pop whose simplistic lyrics and overlong verses are a handicap. Best of the bunch is the Police-influenced “Positive Touch,” but just like the song “Lost” it ultimately flatlines and goes nowhere. Which brings up another area that the band should address: their arrangements neglect to build enough energy and drama that will take the listener to a higher, more compelling place.

- Production 8
- Lyrics 6
- Music 7
- Vocals 8
- Musicianship 8

SCORE: 7.4

Music Connection’s executive committee rates recorded music on a scale of 1 to 10. Number 1 represents the lowest possible score, 10 represents the highest possible score. A final score of 6 denotes a solid, competent artist. For more information, see Submission Guidelines on the next page.



Eva Misle

Contact: Alex Nahai, alex@alexnahai.com
Web: evamusicofficial.com
Seeking: Label, Booking, Film/TV
Style: Pop

Eva Misle is blessed with a strong, husky voice whose tone is well-suited to pop music. And she can really lean into a song's message, as she does on the anthemic "Soul Survivor." Backed by a track that juxtaposes emphatic beats with ambient, calming synthesizers, she gets to the song's chorus quickly and wrests every ounce of meaning from its lyrics. Mid-song she gives way to a rapper who spits encouragement, imploring the listener to "rise above." Perky, buoyant and catchy, "Bad for US" is most definitely a dance track, loaded with stabbing beats and a message of fearlessness. Misle's music is tailor-made for teen listeners who like their messages delivered quick, straight and with a beat.

Production	8
Lyrics	7
Music	7
Vocals	8
Musicianship	7

SCORE: 7.4



Jangling Sparrows

Contact: dougdeutschpr@gmail.com
Web: janglingsparrows.com
Seeking: Label, Booking, Mgmt, Film/TV
Style: Americana, Zyde-Folk

Uneven production values do not derail this seasoned North Carolina outfit fronted by Paul Edelman, a performer who goes for a live, everybody's-in-the-room ethos that embraces the occasional imperfection. On songs such as "Burnin A Hole," "Chase It Down" and the sweet and laidback "New Wheels," Edelman's voice is honest and likeable, showing a genuine character that dovetails with the strumming, jangling thrust of the band. "Chase It Down," in particular, demonstrates some tasty pickin' skills. All in all, we'd urge the band to upgrade the level of its production, retaining the honesty but minimizing the imbalances that occur when featured instruments are poorly mixed.

Production	6
Lyrics	7
Music	8
Vocals	8
Musicianship	8

SCORE: 7.4



Charly&Faust

Contact: marie.weill0@gmail.com
Web: charlyandfaust.com
Seeking: Label, Film/TV, Booking
Style: indie, folk, rock, Euro-rock, psychedelic

Vocal duo Charly&Faust and their stalwart backup players show a combination of pluses and minuses. Most promising is "Her," a calming, soothing, '60s psychedelic-folk-influenced tune featuring the singers' pleasant blend of voices set against jangling folk guitars and tribal drums that deliver a consistent, hypnotic groove. Less enticing is the love-gone-bad song "Asshole," which despite its amusing line "I gave you my heart, my love, my soul, asshole!" is ultimately too plodding and not very memorable. The band's deepest, most ambitious composition is "Your Fear"; however, the duo's appealing vocal blend is not enough to make this ambitious song come together. We urge this band to keep working.

Production	7
Lyrics	7
Music	7
Vocals	7
Musicianship	7

SCORE: 7.0



Raine

Contact: soundofraine@gmail.com
Web: soundofraine.com
Seeking: Mgmt, Label, Booking
Style: Americana Rock

Christina Raine has a chesty, Melissa Etheridge quality capable of reaching down deep into her gut to deliver a soulful, sometimes twangy gust of emotion. "Is This All" is a taste of what she and her band do, which is deliver downbeat, soul-searching music that's carried along on a brooding, roiling undercurrent. We only wish the tune were more memorable. More successful is "A Better Place" whose words of determination and fortitude are performed with absolute conviction; and we like how the whole enterprise is carried aloft by a violin that helps fuel the emotional momentum. Piano, organ, everybody in this Charlotte, NC band pitches in. A Southern Rock rendition of the Beatles' "Eleanor Rigby" is a nice bonus.

Production	7
Lyrics	7
Music	7
Vocals	8
Musicianship	8

SCORE: 7.4



MK Virgo

Contact: mkvirgomusic@gmail.com
Web: mkvirgo.com
Seeking: Label, Booking, Film/TV
Style: Hip-Hop, Rap

Oakland, CA hip-hop artist MK Virgo is a thinker, an artist whose lyrics are not the same 'ol same 'ol rap themes. Often, his interior thoughts fill his flows and make them more interesting. "Alchemy" is a good example of this, and the fact that it is complemented by a swirling, hypnotic organ and catchy keyboard motif make it potentially compelling. "Silver and Gold" has a memorable, minimalist, trap-like hook. Some of us liked "Fly Away" best for its kinship to what's happening at radio right now. But at the end of the day it's clear that MK could benefit from being more dynamic at the mic and by enlisting a producer who can enrich the artist's vision, add sonic drama where it's needed most.

Production	6
Lyrics	8
Music	7
Vocals	7
Musicianship	7

SCORE: 7.0



Divided Countries

Contact: info@dividedcountries.com
Web: dividedcountries.com
Seeking: Label, Booking, Festivals, Film/TV
Style: Grunge, Alternative Rock

Montreal duo Divided Countries are fronted by Johnny Frank, whose vocals pack plenty of attitude and are mixed with lots of overmodulation. This makes a strong first impression—Frank's edgy confidence sounds cool—but its overuse wears thin after a while. And his lyrics could be more imaginative. Songs "Rise from the Ashes" and "I've Seen Better Days" are bleak, edgy, angular. Both share a similarly moody slugginess that's powered by drum and bass and accented by an okay guitar solo. Most successful is the duo's lighter tune, "Set Me," which has a bouncy electronic throb and shimmering guitar chords. The song's more playful vibe suggests that this might be the band's true comfort zone.

Production	7
Lyrics	6
Music	6
Vocals	7
Musicianship	6

SCORE: 6.4

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES: There is absolutely no charge for a New Music Critique. We critique recordings that have yet to connect with a label or distributor. To be considered please go to musicconnection.com/get-reviewed. All submissions are randomly selected and reviewed by committee.

Tam O'Shanter Inn Los Angeles, CA

Contact: whiskeyband@gmail.com

Web: whiskeyband.com

The Players: Patrick Joseph Rieger, guitar, bodhran, vocalist; Olivia Sandoval, bass, vocalist; Liam Lewis, mandolin, vocalist; Vito Guilla, fiddle, vocalist.

Material: Whiskey Sunday performed three sets in a row for a full night of music, drawing from an extensive repertoire that is, amazingly, almost entirely up-tempo. Choices within these sets include everything expected to be performed at the Scottish themed restaurant Tam O'Shanter with a few surprises including plenty of originals based upon frontman Patrick Joseph Rieger's family in Minnesota. The ability of the band to make cover songs their own—with very inventive rhythmic compositions—is a real treat to the listener; everything from The Rolling Stones to Creedence Clearwater Revival.

Musicianship: Each musician is given adequate space to perform solos. Dialing down on supporting instrument volume levels would further accentuate these solos. Overall the group has tight breaks and tamarounds. Whiskey Sunday is also great at building up the sounds, keeping things stark on verses with just one or two instruments at a time before building up to a full band on the choruses or finales. Rieger is an impressive percussionist, playing the bodhran while simultaneously stomping on a bass drum without skipping a beat.

Performance: The only thing that slowed the pacing of the performance was the banter,



which was best left to introducing the band, plugging the merch, and introducing songs. Each member of the band had their chance to sing a lead vocal, which says a lot about the level of talent here. The only critique is that Sandoval could stand to back off from the microphone, as her already big voice doesn't need a lot of amplification. Rieger did do a decent job of getting the audience to clap hands, and they did so on several occasions, though primarily toward the end of the set. This is when a few girls decided to dance in pace with the group, stopping abruptly and then

going into slow motion and then triple time, which led the entire room to both laugh and demand an encore.

Summary: It is clear that Whiskey Sunday knows how to put on a fun show that can get the crowd dancing. While the song "Cancion Mixteca" is an interesting choice, it doesn't seem to fit with their overall material, but does illustrate the band's overall flexibility. The only thing that could make their show better would be to set a goal on how much time should be spent on transitioning between songs. — **Brooke Trout**

The Token Lounge Westland, MI

Contact: jmicheli@aomengineering.com

Web: facebook.com/johnnysparkandtheboys

The Players: Johnny Spark, guitar and vocals; Billie Enforcie, lead vocals; Tom Landini, bass; Jason Charboneau, guitar; Mark Kaster, drums.

Material: Johnny Spark & the Boys deliver a timeless brand of music that wears its roots proudly on its sleeve. This is Detroit born and bred rock 'n' roll that puts the emphasis on power chords, tight compact hooks and over the top showmanship. The MC5, Stooges, and even early Mitch Ryder, all factor into the JSB sound. Songs of note include "Chance for Your Love," "Bad Ass Bone" and "Heart in Hand" igniting the set.

Musicianship: This is certainly a veteran outfit, with an interesting dynamic that pits the high energy of frontman Enforcie against the backdrop of solid, albeit pedestrian, support. Spark and Charboneau flank the stage like bookends and create a wall of sound in the process. Spark appears more calculated in his leads, and offers a predominance of chordal framework, while Charboneau seems a lot more freewheeling and up in the mix. Landini provides plenty of warmth and intricate walking lines that roll out the carpet for Kaster's no nonsense four-on-the-floor grooves.

Performance: The band's nine-song set flowed fairly effortlessly from one tune to the



next. Enforcie hit the stage on the opener "This City" and was a whirling dervish of activity for the next thirty minutes. He had a very theatrical approach that seemed to draw from touchstones like Iggy Pop, Glenn Danzig and David Johansen. Spark provided some strong backup vocals, although he occasionally appeared low in the mix. Overall, the band was in sync and the interaction was good, but they really hit their stride about two songs in. The capacity crowd appeared to pick up on that fact and responded in kind.

Summary: Johnny Spark & the Boys is an act with a history that spans over three decades. Their unabashed and unapologetic rough and ready onslaught has held up very well, with the addition of guitarist Charboneau and lead singer Enforcie. Veteran members Spark and Landini hold down the fort with strong songs that have stood the test of time and still sound fresh. With, what seems like, a mild resurgence in "real" rock & roll hitting the airwaves today, JSB's classic attack might be just what the doctor ordered.— **Eric A. Harabadian**



Bardot Hollywood Los Angeles, CA

Contact: nick.bobetsky@redlightmanagement.com

Web: suresuremusic.com

The Players: Chris Beachy, vocals, keyboard; Charlie Glick, vocals, lead guitar; Michael Coleman, bass; Kevin Farzad, drums.

Material: Sure Sure are a rock band that writes their songs, collectively, without a primary songwriter. And, they are four roommates who say they will not be driven apart by self-serving quests for fame or ego trips, in order to get to

the top of the charts. With a playful attitude, Sure Sure twists alternative rock hyperbole into a fun language that music fans of all genres can dance to. And with serious talent to boot, they have beautifully incorporated music from some of their favorite artists (such as Radiohead, The Pixies and Anderson .Paak), into their own original compositions. The versatility in their song structures makes their chord sequences comparable to Arcade Fire, Grizzly Bear and The Beatles.

Musicianship: The combination of the band members' personable demeanor, impeccable

musicianship and humorous stage manner, is inviting as a spectator. And it is a perfect fit for the band's fans, most of whom are in the college student demographic. Vocally, the primary singer (Chris Beachy) serenades like Rivers Cuomo from Weezer. Meanwhile, lead guitarist Charlie Glick complements the band's essential vocalist perfectly, with harmonic vocals reminiscent of former Red Hot Chili Peppers guitarist, John Frusciante.

Performance: On this night, Sure Sure fit the mystical décor and ambiance of Bardot Hollywood like the missing glass slipper from a fabled Cinderella fairytale. The theatrical bravura of Glick and bassist Michael Coleman made it easy for strangers in the audience to suddenly sing along in unison and playfully dance with one another. Sure Sure played an entire set of original songs from their most recent EP, *New Biome*. And that was a daring move, considering that it has become standard for most unsigned artists to cover multiple amounts of popular songs by mainstream bands, as a means of safely familiarizing a new audience with their own music. Nevertheless, the members of Sure Sure debunked that industry precaution with ease.

Summary: Blessed with a knack for writing pop songs, Beachy, Glick, Coleman and Farzad have combined their unique perspectives to form one of the most substantive live acts in the underground indie rock scene. Sure Sure's presentation is impressive and suggests they have excellent prospects of multiplying their current fan base into a throng of devotees that could soon qualify the band as a headlining act for a national tour. — **Miguel Costa**

Swing House Studios Los Angeles CA

Contact: MoyerPR@EarthLink.net. 818-784-7027

Web: Tawneelynn.com/LACRO

Music Director: Antony Bonsera

Material: The Los Angeles Classic Rock Orchestra performed two classic rock albums by the legendary rock group The Beatles: *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* and *Abbey Road*. Both albums were performed in their entirety, including hits like "Come Together," "Oh Darling," "Want You," "Here Comes The Sun," "The End," "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band," "With A Little Help From My Friends," "Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds," and "A Day In The Life." They not only played the hits, but the darker, more obscure (lyrically speaking) tunes were also played, such as "Octopus' Garden," "Because," "Mean Mr. Mustard," "Fixing A Hole," and everyone's all-time favorite "Good Morning Good Morning."

Musicianship: From the cello to violins, vocals, piano, bass, guitars, pedal harp, drums, woodwinds and horns, the Los Angeles Classic Rock Orchestra was on point. Everyone was fired up and ready to play. Most, if not all, are accomplished multi-instrumentalists with college degrees (and not just in music) and many TV/ film placements to their credits. While waiting their turns in the songs, the players sustained and encouraged each other with head bobs and foot taps. A much smaller orchestra than the L.A. Philharmonic, the LACRO came through with a powerful and perfectly captured



performance—superb, all-around team play. (You can check out all the names of the players at the Tawnee Lynn website to see who they are and what they play.)

Performance: Antony Bonsera, who is the musical director and founder of the LACRO is no Gustavo Dudamel when it comes to an animated performance, but he did have a tight, very together team who had both Beatles albums down to a tee. Everyone was on cue and you could tell right away that they have real rehearsal time behind them, and that's what made this production a success. There was also a slide show going on as the music played; images of The Beatles themselves as well as beaches and mountains and images of love

and unity that added a very positive vibe to an already upbeat night.

Summary: From its musicians and directors to the slide show, the Los Angeles Classic Rock Orchestra puts on a grade A production and is well worth the price of a general admission ticket. LACRO has top-notch musicians coming from all walks of life, from all over the country to sit down and do one thing: play music and play it well. Not only did we get treated to a night of pristine classic rock, but we were pleasantly surprised by a question & answer session with three-time Grammy winner, Mr. John Kosh, who just so happens to be the conceptual mastermind behind the *Abbey Road* and *Let It Be* album covers. This was a great night. — **Pierce Brochetti**

Plough & Stars Cambridge, MA

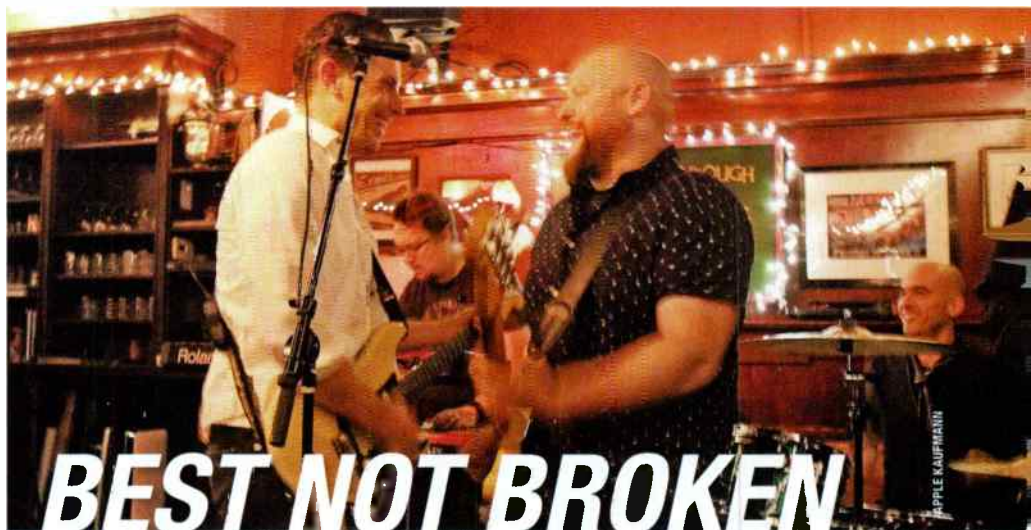
Contact: info@bestnotbroken.com, 603-452-8460

Web: bestnotbroken.com

The Players: Eric Jackson, guitar, vocals; Mark Oslord, bass, vocals; Carlo Carluccio, drums, vocals; Anand Shah, lead guitar; Bryan Eyberg, keyboards, synth.

Material: Stylistically, Best Not Broken play their pop/rock hand straight down the middle. Despite three albums to their credit, cover tunes deliver an effective barometer of their sound—"Mrs. Robinson" by Simon & Garfunkel, "I Would Walk 500 Miles" by The Proclaimers, "Blister in the Sun" by Violent Femmes and "Shape of You" by Ed Sheeran inhabit their repertoire for good reason. Blenderize these songs and you'll get something like their original material. Rhythm guitar and keyboards enhance standard bass, drums and lead guitar, with dueling primary singers allowing for extra color. Post-punk, synth pop, reggae undercurrents and more constitute their musical DNA.

Musicianship: Slicker than a country road in a freezing rain, 2016's New England Music Awards winner hold their own in the competency department. Experience and preparation unite to produce a flawless presentation. Being cut from the mainstream cloth means their music never strays far from choruses, but fleeting moments of fiery guitar and funky keyboard excursions are what deliver



much-needed spice. Vocals, while decent, might be their weakest element.

Performance: Lead performer Eric Jackson handles his duties with all the right moves—repeating their name, calling out other band members, mentioning their merch, etc. His interactions with bassist Mark Oslord provide visual interest, but the ante gets upped when punctuating their set by leaping off barstools. Dance-off contests come complete with quirky prizes like a Wonder Woman doll or a Patriots mask.

Summary: Having performed alongside artists like Pat Benatar, Jefferson Starship, Gin Blossoms and Little River Band, it's no wonder Best Not Broken have carved a name for themselves in the New England territories. Although their song "Tell Me That You Want Me" has received national airplay, a chart-topper continues to elude them. Combining consummate professionalism with a sound that appeals to the widest audience possible, it seems a matter of time before the remainder of the country catches on. — **Andy Kaufmann**



The Saban Theatre Beverly Hills, CA

Contact: rothschild99@att.net

Web: aylineartin.com

The Players: Aylina Artin, guitar, vocalist; Derrick Elliott, bass; Oliver C. Brown, percussionist.

Material: These are thoughtfully crafted acoustic song with clever lyrics. Artin cites Stevie Nicks as a major influence and definitely has a gypsy vibe, at points even

throwing in some snippets of Stevie covers. "I Won't Go" is a definite highlight of Artin's set of originals. This love letter to her wife is a wonderfully uplifting song. The lyrics here and throughout her set contain a positive message on how we create our own reality with the power of positive thinking.

Musicianship: Although the group is a simple trio, the mix becomes something much more sophisticated. The bass is an integral element of the sound too and is

wonderfully crisp and clear thanks to the delicate percussion work by Brown. While wind chimes can be overdone, Brown is very selective with this tool and others, creating dreamy finale fade outs and snappy beats. Artin excels at chunky rhythms and dynamic control, supporting the rest of her group on songs like "I'm Through With You" and "Indulge" where she gives Brown and Elliott the chance to solo with tight breaks from all.

Performance: It is no easy task to open for a headliner like the legendary Kenny Loggins, and Artin was understandably nervous, but this did not hinder the actual performance of each of her songs. Artin's voice has an aching soulfulness almost comparable to the late great Laura Branigan. Like that artist, Artin really knows how to hold a note and let it gently sustain, sometimes aided by sweet harmonies from Elliott. Artin was gracious to Loggins in her segues, but at one point unfortunately got herself heckled by comparing him to Justin Beiber, which met with a collective groan. She started to lose the crowd here primarily because she let that banter go on. All that said she was still able to encourage audience participation and got the crowd clapping.

Summary: Artin is a solid guitarist with a lovely voice. She only stands to grow by limiting her time spent on bantering. For example, by only introducing her songs and band members she'll tighten up her show to really pack a punch and bring the focus back on what is actually strong material. Her voice is also a highlight of her performance and she could really work on playing up that power even more to wow her crowd. — **Brooke Trout**



Gramercy Theater New York, NY

Contact: hayley@bigpicturemediaonline.com
Web: tribalseeds.net

The Players: Steven Rene Jacobo, lyrics, vocals, guitar; Victor Navarro, bass; Ryan Gonzo, guitar; Luis Castillo, keyboards, vocals; Danny Lopilato, keyboards, vocals; Jamey "Zeb" Dekofsky, drums.

Material: Headlining Boomshaka 2018, (a full night of reggae fare) Tribal Seeds delivered what the audience came for: an uplifting and emotive event. Formed by brothers Steven

Jacobo and Tony-Ray Jacobo (producer), they have toured extensively spreading their message of spirituality and good will. Grappling with familiar themes often expressed in reggae music—rebellion, railing against the system, the loss of personal freedoms and, of course, ganja (considered to be a gift from "Jah" the Rastafarian God) aptly described in "Garden": *Sensimilla is a gift from God!...so burn/put your lungs to work/for the ganja smoking/for the ganja.*

While the cornerstone of the band's music is one of peace and healing, many of the songs tend to sound musically similar. More standout

choruses and diverse rhythmic structures will move this act out of their comfort zone.

Musicianship: Tribal Seeds' sound is authentic, and frontman Jacobo's inflection and delivery are genuine. His voice is expressive while his vocal timbre is notably reminiscent of Bob Marley's. The band is tight and they generate a number of interesting sounds and effects from the keyboards as well as guitar riffs that add spice to the arrangements.

Performance: These seasoned pros excelled in this large venue, pulling in a huge and enthusiastic crowd. However, with the benefit of great lighting and an excellent sound system they could have done more with staging, making it more fluid. Changing the players' configuration would have added more interest to a lengthy set, altering the visual landscape. The band moved from song to song without much pause or commentary, which if you were not already a fan, could have helped bridge the gap between audience and performer.

Summary: Reggae music inherently promotes feelings of well-being and positivity, even when the underlying messages are not. From that standpoint, Tribal Seeds succeeds. Greater differentiation in the songwriting, along with revealing a bit more of themselves, will further propel an already polished and popular band. Tribal Seeds is currently recording their fifth album due to be released early this year.

—Ellen Woloshin

"Our Live Review in **Music Connection** opened up opportunities to perform with national acts. The folks at Music Connection are super-approachable and helpful. Plus, we read their articles online every other day to get pro tips." — Westerner

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Here's our latest list of record labels, giving you names, phone numbers, web info and roster details of majors and indies who actively seek new artists for their companies. All 2018 updates have been supplied by the listees.

00:02:59 LLC

P.O. Box 1251
Culver City, CA 90232
718-636-0259
Email: info@259records.com,
info@2minutes59.com
Web: 259records.com

1-2-3-4 GO! RECORDS

420 40th St., Ste. #5
Oakland, CA 94609
510-985-0325
Email: store@1234gorecords.com
Web: 1234gorecords.com
Styles/Specialties: rock, punk

300

112 Madison Ave 4th Fl
New York, NY 10016-7416
646-668-4016
Email: info@threehundred.biz, pete@
threehundred.biz
Web: 300ent.com
Styles/Specialties: all genres
Pete Giberga, Head of A&R

4AD RECORDS

134 Grand St.
New York, NY 10013
212-995-5882
Email: janeabernethy@4AD.com
Web: 4ad.com
Contact: Jane Abernethy, A&R
Roster: the National, Blonde Redhead,
Deerhunter, Eferkang, St. Vincent, Bon Iver,
the Big Pink, Camera Obscura
Styles/Specialties: rock/indie

Additional location:

17-19 Alma Rd., SW18 1AA, UK
44-208-870-9724
Email: 4ad@4ad.com, edhorrox@4ad.com
Contact: Ed Horrox, A&R

18TH & VINE RECORDS ALLEGRO MEDIA GROUP

20048 N.E. San Rafael St.
Portland, OR 97230
503-491-8480, 800-288-2007
Web: allegro-music.com
Styles/Specialties: jazz, bebop, soul-jazz

21ST CENTURY STUDIO

Silver Lake, CA
323-661-3130
Email: 21stcenturystudio@earthlink.net
Web: 21stcenturystudio.com
Styles/Specialties: rock, folk, ethnic,
acoustic groups, books on tape, actor voice
presentations
Burt Levine, A&R

A389 RECORDINGS

P.O. Box 12058
Baltimore, MD 21281
Email: dom@a389records.com
Web: a389records.com
Styles/Specialties: hard rock, metal

AARON RECORDS

P.O. Box 428
Portland, TN 37148
615-325-3340
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Web: aaronrecords.com
Jim Case, A&R

ACCIDENTAL MUZIK, INC.

E-mail: accmuz@mac.com
Styles: alternative, latin, rock, acoustic, indie,
electronic/pop
Music placement for TV and film
*Please request via email to submit material
Adam Moseley, A&R

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5062 Lankershim Bl. #174
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818-505-0669
Email: info@SoundtrackCentral.net
Web: SoundtrackCentral.net
Contact: Jay Warsinske & Madeleine Smith
How to submit: Mail Cd to address or email
Soundcloud links

ALIAS RECORDS

838 E. High St., #290
Lexington, KY 40502
Email: accounts@aliasrecords.com
Web: aliasrecords.com
Styles/Specialties: indie-rock, singer-
songwriters, electronica
Distribution: Morphiux, Carrot Top, iTunes,
IODA
*No unsolicited material
Delight Jenkins, Owner

ALLIGATOR RECORDS

New Material
P.O. Box 60234
Chicago, IL 60660
773-973-7736
Email: info@allig.com
Web: alligator.com
Styles/Specialties: blues, roots,
contemporary blues
*Please include a letter-sized stamped
envelope so we can reply to your submission.
*Due to the large number of submissions we
receive, response time is approximately three
months. All submissions will be responded to
by mail; if no legible address is on the
demo material, there will be no response.
Please keep submissions to a maximum of four
songs (if we like what we hear, we'll ask
for more).
*Alligator will NOT accept inquiries or phone
calls regarding the receipt or status of
submissions. We do not visit artist website
or listen.
Bruce Iglauer, President

ALTERNATIVE TENTACLES

P.O. Box 419092
San Francisco, CA 94141
510-596-8981 Fax 510-596-8982
Email: jb@alternativetentacles.com
Web: alternativetentacles.com
Styles/Specialties: punk rock, spoken-word,
underground
*ONLY accept physical demos-audio CD,
vinyl, DVD or cassette. No electronic demos
or links to websites.
Jello Biafra, A&R

AMATHUS MUSIC

P.O. Box 95
Hewlett, NY 11557
Email: info@amathusmusic.com,
demo@amathusmusic.com
Web: amathusmusic.com
Contact: Chris Panaghi
Styles/Specialties: dance, electronic, pop

AMERICAN EAGLE RECORDINGS

13001 Dieterle Ln.
St. Louis, MO 63127
888-521-8146, 314-965-5648
Email: info@americaneagle recordings.com
Web: americaneagle recordings.com
Styles/Specialties: country

AMERICAN LAUNDROMAT RECORDS

P.O. Box 85
Mystic, CT 06355
860-460-8903
Email: americanlaundromat@hotmail.com
Web: alr-music.com
Styles/Specialties: indie rock, tribute
compilations
*We do not accept unsolicited materials
Joseph H. Spadaro, Founder, President

AMERICAN RECORDINGS

(Republic Records/Universal)
2200 Colorado Ave.
Santa Monica, CA 90404
310-865-1000
Email: mgoldberg@americanrecordings.com
Web: americanrecordings.com
Styles/Specialties: all genres
*No unsolicited material
Rick Rubin, President
Michael Goldberg, A&R

API RECORDS

P.O. Box 7041
Watchung, NJ 07069
Email: apirecords@verizon.net
Web: apirecords.com

Styles/Specialties: classical, pop-rock

*We do not accept unsolicited submissions

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West Chester, PA 19380
610-701-5755
Email: jim@appleseedmusic.com
Web: appleseedmusic.com
Styles/Specialties: AC
*accepts demo submissions, see website

ASIAN MAN RECORDS

ATTN: Mike
P.O. Box 35585
Monte Soreno, CA 95030

ASTRALWERKS

150 5th Ave.
New York, NY 10011
212-786-8410
Email: ryan.murphy@umusic.com
Web: astralwerks.com
Styles/Specialties: electronic, dance,
alternative, techno
*No Unsolicited material accepted.
Ryan Murphy, Director, A&R

ATLANTIC RECORDS

(Warner Music Group)
3400 W. Olive Ave., 2nd Fl.
Burbank, CA 91505
818-238-6800, 818-238-9222
Email: maureen.kenny@atlanticrecords.com
Web: atlanticrecords.com
*No unsolicited material
Maureen Kenny, SVP, A&R, Mollie
Lehman, Sr. Dir. A&R

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Paramount Plaza
1633 Broadway, 10th & 11th Floor
New York, NY 10019
212-707-2000
Email: pete.ganbarg@atlanticrecords.com
Web: atlantic-records.com
*No unsolicited material
Pete Ganbarg, Pres. A&R

ATO/ RED LIGHT (Sony)

44 Wall Street – 23rd Floor
New York, NY 10016
212-422-4280
Email: will.botwin@redlightmangement.com
Web: atorecords.com
Styles/Specialties: All Genres: pop, rock,
acoustic rock, indie
*Demo Submissions will only be
accepted by mail
Will Botwin, President/CEO

AVERAGE JOE ENTERTAINMENT

3738 Keystone Ave.
Nashville, TN 37211
615-733-9983
Email: info@averagejoesent.com
Web: averagejoesent.com
Roster: Charlie Farley, Lenny Cooper, Cap
Bailey, Colt Ford
Styles/Specialties: country rap

BA DA BING! RECORDS

181 Clermont Ave., Apt. #403
Brooklyn, NY 11205
718-360-5561
Contact: Ben Goldberg, President
Email: hello@badabingrecords.com
Web: badabingrecords.com
Styles/Specialties: Really weird stuff that
can still make you cry

BAR/NONE RECORDS

P.O. Box 1704
Hoboken, NJ 07030
201-770-9090
Email: glenn@bar-none.com
Web: bar-none.com
Styles/Specialties: indie rock
*Unsolicited material accepted
Glenn Morrow, Owner

BARSUK RECORDS

P.O. Box 22546
Seattle, WA 98122
206-322-7785

Email: questions@barsuk.com

Web: barsuk.com
Distribution: ADA/WEA
Styles/Specialties: Indie Rock
*Accepts Demo submission, see website
Josh Rosenfeld, President

BEGGARS GROUP/ROUGH TRADE

(XL Recordings, Beggars Music, 4AD,
Matador, Rough Trade)
134 Grand St.
New York, NY 10013-1012
212-995-5882
Contact: Melanie Sheehan, Label Manager
Email: melaniesheehan@roughtraderecords.
com
Web: beggarsgroupusa.com
Styles/Specialties: indie-rock, pop,
electronic and many more
Roster: Adele, Alabama Shakes, Girl Band,
tobias Jesso, Yo La Tengo
Distribution: ADA

Additional location:

17-19 Alma Rd
London, SW18 1AA England
44-208-870-9912
Email: beggars@almaroad.co.uk
Contact: Martin Mills

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Email: info@bielerbros.com
Web: bielerbros.com
Styles/Specialties: hard rock, metal
*Accepts unsolicited material, EPK only
Jason Bieler, Owner
Aaron Bieler, Owner

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15503 Ventura Blvd, Ste. #300
Encino, CA 91436
818-922-0807
Email: info@bigdealmusic.com
Web: bigdealmusic.com
Styles/Specialties: rock, pop, AC
Distribution: Ryko
*No unsolicited material
Henry Marx, President/CEO
Bill Dern, GM/Head of Business Affairs

Additional locations:

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New York, NY 10010
212-518-2668

115 29th Ave., S.

Nashville, TN 37212
615-942-8328

BIG MACHINE LABEL GROUP

1219 16th Ave., S.
Nashville, TN 37212
615-324-7777
Email: allison.jones@bmg.net, mail@
bigmachine.us
Web: bigmachinelabelgroup.com
Roster: Taylor Swift, Zac Brown Band,
Florida Georgia Line, Brantley Gilbert,
Danielle Bradbery, Drake White, Hank
Williams, Jr., Eli Young Band
Allison Jones, SVP, A&R

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11 S. Angell St., Ste. 336
Providence, RI 02906
401-274-4770
Email: al@bignoiseno.com
Web: bignoiseno.com
Client List: the Beach Boys, Christina
Aguilera, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Chicago,
Katharine McPhee, Jay Geils, Dionne
Warwick and Gregory Porter
*Currently accepting demo submissions.
*Please call or email first.
Al Gomes, A&R

BLACKHEART RECORDS

636 Broadway
New York, NY 10012
212-353-9600 Fax 212-353-8300
Email: blackheart@blackheart.com

601-982-4522
Email: demo@malaco.com
Web: malaco.com
Styles/Specialties: gospel, R&B, spoken word, jazz, blues, soul
 *No unsolicited material
Tommy Couch, Jr., President/R&B, A&R
Wolf Stephenson, VP, A&R
Darrell Luster, Director, Gospel

MATADOR RECORDS
 134 Grand St.
 New York, NY 10013
 212-995-5882 Fax 212-995-5883
Web: matadorrecords.com
Styles/Specialties: all styles
 *No Unsolicited Material
Robby Morris, Director, A&R

Additional location:

Matador Austin
 3005 South Lamar Blvd.
 D109-395
 Austin, TX 78704
 212-995-5882

17-19 Alma Rd.
 London, SW18 1AA U.K.
 +020-8875-6200

MERGE RECORDS
 P.O. Box 1235
 Chapel Hill, NC 27514
 919-688-9969
Email: merge@mergerecords.com
Web: mergerecords.com
Styles/Specialties: alt-rock
Roster: See website for roster

MEROKE SKY RECORDS
 Van Nuys, CA
 818-427-2712
Styles/Specialties: folk/rock/americana
Roster: Barry Goldberg, Alex Del Zoppo, Tony Kaye, Todd Taylor, Alex Sherman, Andrew Wraith
Mike Giangreco, A&R

METAL BLADE RECORDS
 5160 Van Nuys Blvd., #301
 Sherman Oaks, CA 91403

818-597-1964
Email: metalblade@metalblade.com
Web: metalblade.com
Styles/Specialties: heavy metal, progressive, rock
 *See website for Demo Submission
Brian Slagel, President

Additional location:

Metal Blade Records GMBH
 Marstallstrasse 14
 73033 Goppingen, Germany

METROPOLIS RECORDS
 P.O. Box 974
 Media, PA 19063
 Attn: Demos
 610-595-9940
Email: demo@metropolis-records.com
Web: metropolis-records.com
Styles/Specialties: electronic, industrial, goth
 *Accepts unsolicited material by CD or CD-R

MILAN ENTERTAINMENT
 Sherman Oaks, CA
Email: jc.chamboredon@milanrecords.com
Web: milanrecords.com
Styles/Specialties: soundtracks, electronic, world

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 Vancouver, BC Canada V6B 3Y6
 604-669-MINT
Email: info@mintrecs.com
Web: mintrecs.com
Roster: Duotang, Duplex, Fanshaw, Hot Panda, Immaculate Machine
Styles/Specialties: indie
 *Send demos via mail

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 100 E. 23rd St.
 Baltimore, MD 21218
 410-662-0112
Email: info@morphius.com
Web: morphius.com
Styles/Specialties: rock, punk, hip-hop, experimental

MOTOWN (Universal)
 1750 N. Vine St.
 Los Angeles, CA 90028
 323-871-5541
Email: Ezekiel.lewis@umusic.com
Web: motownrecords.com
Ezekiel Lewis, Sr VP A&R
 *No unsolicited material

Additional location:

2100 Colorado Ave., 3rd Fl.
 Santa Monica, CA 90404
 310-235-4903
Web: motownrecords.com

MRG RECORDINGS
 Los Angeles, CA
 310-629-9782
Email: info@mrgrecordings.com, submission@mrgrecordings.com
Web: mrgrecordings.com
Styles/Specialties: rock, electronic, ambient, folk

NETTWERK RECORDS
 575 W. 8th Ave.
 Vancouver, B.C. V5Z 0C4
 604-654-2929 Fax 604-654-1993
Email: info@nettwerk.com
Web: nettwerk.com
 *No unsolicited material
Mark Jowett, VP, A&R - International

Additional locations:
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 Burbank, Ca 91508
 747-241-8619

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 New York, NY 10003
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 Cambridge, MA 02140
 617-497-9988

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Web: newpants.com, oldpants.com
Styles/Specialties: all genre styles considered
Roster: Stephanie Aramburo, Chad Steele, C. Lee Clarke, Tech T. James Becker, Kathy Watson, Lisa Bigwood, George Montalbano, Silence, Sherwin Greenwood, Joel Diehl, John Ellis and Rocky Shaw.
 *Unsolicited material through management or lawyer only. Please call or Email before submitting.
Robert A. Case, A&R

NEW VISION RECORDS
 8801 Fast Park Dr. Suite 301
 Raleigh, NC 27617
 919-747-8950
Email: corporate@newvisionrecords.com
Web: newvisionrecords.com
Styles/Specialties: Christian, Gospel, Inspirational, Country, Pop, R&B/Soul, Indie, Singer/Songwriter
Kevin Smith, A&R
Cecil Wilson, A&R

NEW WEST RECORDS
 2923 Berry Hill Drive
 Nashville, TN 37204
 615-385-4777
Contact: Kim Bule, VP A&R
Email: Kim@newwestrecords.com
Web: newwestrecords.com
Styles/Specialties: country, pop, singer-songwriter

NONESUCH RECORDS
 1633 Broadway, 10th Floor
 New York, NY 10019
 212-707-2900
Email: kris.chen@nonesuch.com
Contact: Kris Chen, Sr. VP A&R
Web: nonesuch.com
Roster: Emmylou Harris, Joni Mitchell, Gipsy Kings, KD Lang, Randy Newman, Wilco, Brian Wilson, Stephen Sondheim, Kronos Quartet, Youssou N'Dour, Buena Vista Social Club, Laurie Anderson and more.
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 Specialty: Intellectual Property

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 1900 Epic Center
 301 N. Main St.
 Wichita, KS 67202
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 Web: fleeson.com
 Contact: Kent A. Meyerhoff
 Specialty: Intellectual Property

FOULSTON SIEFKIN, LLP
 1551 N. Waterfront Pkwy., Ste. 100
 Wichita, KS 67206-4466
 316-291-9556
 Email: bmatthews@foulston.com
 Web: foulston.com
 Contact: William (Bill) P. Matthews, Partner
 Specialty: Intellectual Property

Additional locations:

534 S. Kansas Ave., Ste. 1400
 Topeka, KS 66603-3436
 785-233-3600 Fax 785-233-1610

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 Overland Park, KS 66210
 913-498-2100 Fax 913-498-2101

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 Web: adamsandree.com
 Contact: E. Paige Sensenbrenner
 Specialty: Entertainment Law, Music Law, Intellectual Property

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 Email: william.shea@arlaw.com
 Contact: William D. Shea

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 Contact: Anthony D. Pellegrini
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KEYNOTE BY JIM ROONEY

IMPORTANT DATES
 FEBRUARY 28, 2018
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 MARCH 31, 2018
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 APRIL 1, 2018
 Deadline for Ads in the Program Book
 MAY 9, 2018
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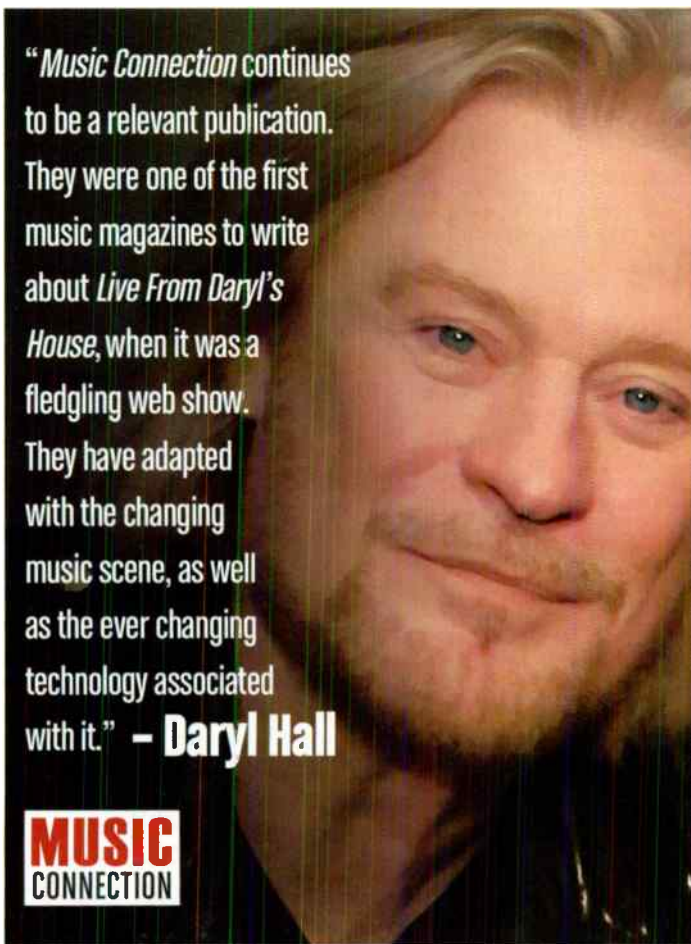
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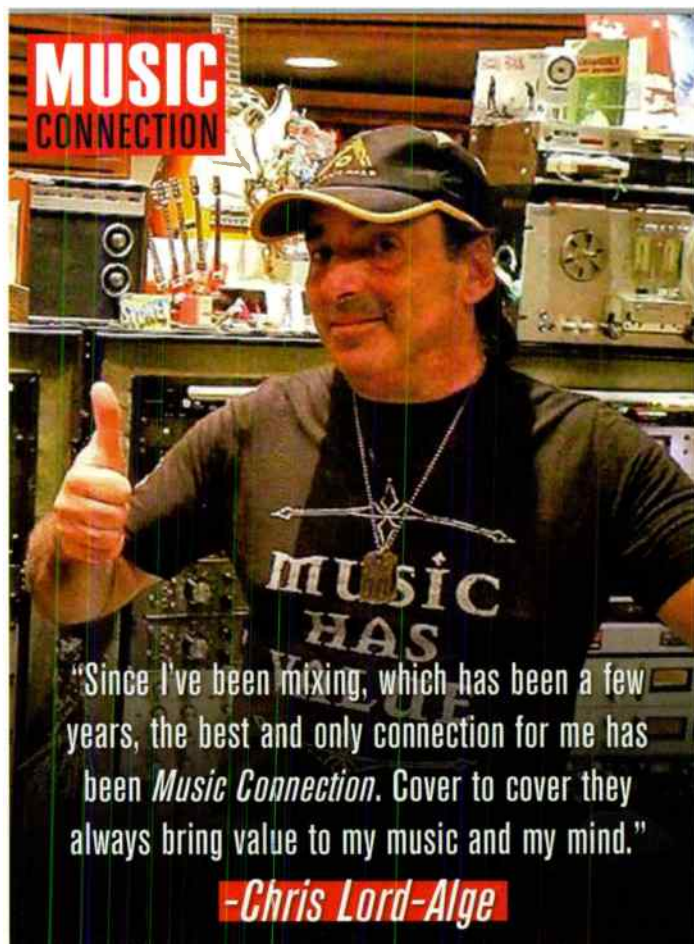
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5 Packing & Travel Tips for Musicians

As a touring musician, I find packing for the road to be an ongoing learning experience. You need clothes for travel days, meet-and-greets, and performances; documents and copies of documents; all of your essential gear; and just enough backup gear to be covered in case of inevitable emergencies. You may have to haul your own bags, so overpacking is not an option. Bottom line? Have items that can multi-task and expect the unexpected. Here are some things to remember as you prepare to hit the road:

1. Copy that!

Keep a copy of your passport and license at home with someone you trust. It also helps to have redundant copies in the cloud. "Lost or stolen" happens, and without proper I.D. you'll have a hell of a time getting to your next destination. Domestically, you won't get past T.S.A. checkpoints. If you're abroad, you won't be able to leave the country at all without your passport. Having a backup that can be emailed to you quickly can prove your citizenship, which is required to get a temporary passport from a U.S. embassy.

*Tip: Always be sure your passport and license are current. Be aware of your expiration dates and plan well in advance for renewal. Allow two months for the passport process, to be safe. If you don't have a passport yet, just get one. Like, NOW. Before you need it. You don't want to be that person who isn't "good to go," especially if you're a hired gun.

extra bag that you can use for a scaled down/essentials version of your luggage can come in handy when dragging your larger luggage everywhere is not a practical option.

For example: on a 2-week/4-city tour of Japan, I found myself spending one night in a capsule hotel. Personal storage was limited to a small locker in the commons area, on the floor that contained all of the capsules (aka, "bunks"). My large luggage was safely kept in the lobby, but having a small duffel bag for my overnight essentials made for easy storage in my locker. This bag also came in handy when our crew drove our gear and large luggage between cities, while the band members traveled by train. And, at the end of the tour, when I was fortunate enough to have to figure out how to bring all of the fan gifts back to the states, guess which bag saved the day?

4. Yes, I can!

Carry and stow your instrument on the plane? Yes, you can. And now it's the law. Read all of this: transportation.gov/airconsumer/air-travel-musical-instruments

And to save you a click, here is the "final ruling" on the matter: transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/docs/Musical%20instruments_FR_final%20rule.pdf

Airlines will often tell you upon boarding that you have to check your instrument, and that it won't fit in an overhead bin. Granted, a tuba



**Bonus Tip: You should also have copies of your itinerary, flight numbers, hotel and venue names and addresses, and pertinent contacts.

2. Emergency Stash

Recently, on a fly-out from Los Angeles > Baltimore > Cincinnati, I was told all overheads were full and was forced to gate check my carry-on suitcase. It contained my drumstick bag, click and stage clothes. The connecting flight in Baltimore was canceled due to weather and the band's only option was to drive to Cincinnati. My checked bag, however, never left Baltimore. So, at my destination I had only the clothes on my back, IEM's and toiletries—no sticks or click. Fortunately, I was able to get some sticks from the backline company and I ran the click from an iPhone app. Playing the show in my travel clothes was of lesser concern, as A) this particular band isn't heavily styled, and B) from behind the kit, I'm mostly only visible to the audience from the waist-up and was already wearing a passable black shirt.

The takeaway? Pack essentials for one day in a personal bag. Even if your only luggage is a carry-on, bring that extra personal bag as well. That way, if you're forced to gate check your carry-on and it gets lost, you'll have some essentials until you get your luggage back. Personal bag essentials: toiletries, IEM's, a pair of socks and underwear. As a drummer, I now also keep a couple of pairs of sticks and a "stage shirt" in that bag, too.

3. The Breakaway Bag

This is mostly for longer tours: if you can, pack an extra smaller bag to use later as a breakaway. Touring situations vary greatly, but having an

probably won't, but your average guitar, bass, or smaller instrument will. Be polite when letting them know the law, and you should be allowed to carry it on without incident.

Increase your odds by boarding as early as possible. At the very least, check in online 24 hours before your flight. It'll give you a better boarding position, in which case there should still be plenty of available overhead space when you board.

*Tip: save the above link to your phone, in case they give you a hard time. You'll be able to quickly bust out the ".gov" as proof.

5. A picture is worth a thousand words

Take photos of every piece of luggage and gear. Many suitcases look the same or similar, so even if your bags aren't lost on the way, there's the chance of someone grabbing your luggage by mistake. If your stuff goes missing, photos will be a big help in reclaiming it. They should clearly show the brand names of the luggage, the contents and, if possible, any serial numbers on packed gear.

The life of a traveling musician is awesome and exciting. So don't trip, just enjoy the journey! A little common sense and preparation can ensure that every tour and fly-out goes great. Safe travels!

STEPHEN MILLS is a Los Angeles-based drummer who tours nationally and internationally with artists including Jack Russell's Great White, Gene Loves Jezebel, Mark Mackay, Bulletboys, Haim and his original band, Alley Cats LV. Follow his activities on Instagram @stephenjude.

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