

# billboard

NOVEMBER 7, 2020 • BILLBOARD.COM

**40 UNDER 40 + 21 UNDER 21**

EXECS AND ARTISTS  
YOU NEED TO KNOW

**RETURN OF THE MAC**

TIKTOK MAKES  
CLASSIC ROCK 'DREAMS'  
COME TRUE

# MONEY *MOVES*

**JAQUEL KNIGHT'S**  
CHOREOGRAPHY  
POWERS HITS BY STARS  
LIKE BEYONCÉ. NOW  
HE'S ON A CRUSADE TO  
COPYRIGHT HIS WORK





# TURNING UP:

## GENIUS

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KENNY CHESNEY  
GABBY BARRETT  
DEVIN DAWSON  
COLE SWINDELL



WARNER  
MUSIC  
NASHVILLE



# TURNING UP:

*ORIGINALITY*

SHY CARTER  
BEXAR  
INGRID ADDRESS  
DAN + SHAY



WARNER  
MUSIC  
NASHVILLE

★ ★  
CONGRATS TO OUR  
★ 40 UNDER 40

★  
Britney Davis

★  
Steve Carless

★  
Justin Lubliner

★  
Jermi Thomas

★  
Aldo Gonzalez

★  
Frederic Voillemot



UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP

billboard **Hot 100**®



# Grande 'Positions' Herself Back At No. 1

**A**RIANA GRANDE EARNS HER FIFTH BILLBOARD HOT 100 NO. 1 with the arrival of "Positions." She extends her record for the most chart-topping debuts on the tally as all five of her leaders have blasted in at the summit. She pulls further ahead of Justin Bieber, Mariah Carey, Drake and Travis Scott, each with three No. 1 starts.

Grande also becomes the first artist with three such Hot 100 debuts in a single year as "Positions" joins "Rain on Me" (with Lady Gaga) and "Stuck With U" (with Bieber) as her three 2020 chart-topping entrants.

"Positions," which arrived Oct. 23 as the title track to Grande's new album (released Oct. 30), premieres with 35.3 million U.S. streams, 19.9 million radio airplay audience impressions and 34,000 sold, according to Nielsen Music/MRC Data.

Meanwhile, Grande is the first artist to send three songs to the top of the Hot 100 in a single year since Drake tripled up in 2018. She is also the first woman (and only artist other than Drake) to achieve the feat since Rihanna ascended to No. 1 with four songs and Katy Perry did so with three in 2010. The Beatles hold the one-year record with their first six Hot 100 No. 1s in 1964.

—GARY TRUST

WKS. ON CHART	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	TITLE	CERTIFICATION	Artist	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
			PRODUCER (SONGWRITER)	IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL			
		<b>1</b>	<b>#1 POSITIONS</b>	LONDON ON DA TRACI, T. PROWN, MR. FRANKS (A. GRANDE, T. L. BRADY, N. A. A. CHARLES, A. BARRETT, S. FRANKS, B. V. BATES, L. THOMAS, J. JARVIS)	Ariana Grande	1	1
		<b>2</b>	<b>FOREVER AFTER ALL</b>	CHIP MATTHEWS, J.D. SINGLETON, L. COMBS (L. COMBS, D. PARKER, R. WILLIFORD)	Luke Combs	2	1
<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>AIR MOOD</b> ▲	O. F. E. D. I. B., S. L. ATKIN, K. BEAZY (S. L. VON JONES, O. F. E. D. I. B., S. L. ATKIN, K. BEAZY)	24kGoldn Feat. iann dior	1	12
3	3	<b>4</b>	<b>LAUGH NOW CRY LATER</b>	CARDON THE BEAT, O. RY, YUNG EXCLUSIVE, R. CHAHAYA (D. J. GRAHAM, R. LATO, R. A. MARTINEZ, D. JACKSON, R. CHAHAYA, D. D. BANKS)	Drake Feat. Lil Durk	2	11
4	4	<b>5</b>	<b>BLINDING LIGHTS</b> ▲	MAX MARTIN, O. J. HOLTER, THE WEEKND (A. TESFAYE, A. BAL SHE, J. QUEEN VILLE, MAX MARTIN, O. J. HOLTER)	The Weeknd	1	48
8	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>I HOPE</b> ▲	R. COPPERMAN, Z. KALE (Z. KALE, J. H. NITE, G. BARRETT)	Gabby Barrett Feat. Charlie Puth	6	44
2	2	<b>7</b>	<b>WAP</b> ▲	AVO, KEYZ (CAPDI B, M. J. PETE, A. OWENS, J. FOVE III, J. K. LANIER, THORPE F. RODRIGUEZ)	Cardi B Feat. Megan Thee Stallion	1	12
6	5	<b>8</b>	<b>SAVAGE LOVE (LAXED - SIREN BEAT)</b> ▲	JAWSH 685, JASON DERULO (J. NA NAIL, J. J. DESROULEAUX, J. K. HINDLIN, P. GREISS)	Jawsh 685 x Jason Derulo	1	20
10	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>LEMONADE</b>	H. MIRA, A. WOOD, A. H. E. TROU, PHARADH VICE, TAZ TAYLOR (J. Z. TOLIVER, N. S. GORAN, S. G. NICHOLS, J. M. B. A. N. G. D. A. H. L. E. L. A. T. R. O. U. H. N. I. C. H. O. L. S., TAZ TAYLOR)	Internet Money & Gunna Feat. Don Toliver & NAV	9	11
<b>14</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>HOLY</b>	J. DEE GARD, J. BELLICANT, BROWN, MR. FRANKS (J. D. BIBER, J. D. BELLICANT, MR. POLLACK, J. DEE GARD, T. L. BROWN, C. J. BENNETT, A. M. JONES, S. FRANKS)	Justin Bieber Feat. Chance The Rapper	3	6

ROBYN BECK/PIQUETTY IMAGES  
 THE WEEK'S MOST POPULAR CURRENT SONGS ACROSS ALL GENRES, RANKED BY RADIO AIRPLAY AUDIENCE IMPRESSIONS AS MEASURED BY NIELSEN MUSIC/MRC DATA AND STREAMING ACTIVITY DATA BY ONLINE MUSIC SOURCES TRACKED BY NIELSEN MUSIC/MRC DATA. SONGS ARE DEFINED AS CURRENT IF THEY ARE NEWLY RELEASED TITLES, OR SONGS RECEIVING WIDESPREAD AIRPLAY AND/OR SALES ACTIVITY FOR THE FIRST TIME. SEE CHARTS. LEGEND ON BILLBOARD.COM/BIZ FOR COMPLETE RULES AND EXPLANATIONS. © 2020, PROMETHEUS GLOBAL MEDIA, LLC AND NIELSEN MUSIC/MRC DATA, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.  
 SALES, AIRPLAY & STREAMING DATA COMPILED BY NIELSEN MUSIC/MRC DATA





LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	ARTIST IMPRINT/DISTRIBUTING LABEL	CERTIFICATION	Title	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
21	1	<b>#1 GREATEST HITS</b> <b>LUKE COMBS</b> RIVER HOUSE/COLUMBIA NASHVILLE/SMN	▲	What You See Is What You Get	1	51
HOT SHOT DEBUT	2	<b>BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN</b> COLUMBIA		Letter To You	2	1
2	3	<b>POP SMOKE</b> VICTOR VICTOR WORLDWIDE/REPUBLIC		Shoot For The Stars Aim For The Moon	1	17
NEW	4	<b>TY DOLLA \$IGN</b> ATLANTIC/AG		Featuring Ty Dolla Sign	4	1
4	5	<b>JUICE WRLD</b> GRADE A/INTERSCOPE/JGA		Legends Never Die	1	16
3	6	<b>21 SAVAGE &amp; METRO BOOMIN</b> BOOMINAT/SLAUGHTER BOOMIN/REPUBLIC/EPIC		Savage Mode II	1	4
7	7	<b>LIL BABY</b> 2 QUALITY CONTROL/MOTOWN/CAPITOL		My Turn	1	35
8	8	<b>ORIGINAL BROADWAY CAST</b> 7 HAMILTON UPTOWN/ATLANTIC/AG		Hamilton: An American Musical	2	266
9	9	<b>MACHINE GUN KELLY</b> EST19XX/BAD BOY/INTERSCOPE/JGA		Tickets To My Downfall	1	5
20	10	<b>HARRY STYLES</b> ▲ ERSKINE/COLUMBIA		Fine Line	1	46
11	11	<b>YOUNGBOY NEVER BROKE AGAIN</b> NEVER BROKE AGAIN/ARTIST PARTNER GROUP/ATLANTIC/AG		Top	1	7
NEW	12	<b>GORILLAZ</b> PARLOPHONE/WARNER		Song Machine, Season One: Strange Timez	12	1
13	13	<b>POST MALONE</b> REPUBLIC		Hollywood's Bleeding	1	60
15	14	<b>DABABY</b> SOUTHCOAST/INTERSCOPE/JGA		BLAME IT ON BABY	1	28
17	15	<b>ROD WAVE</b> ALAMO/JGA		Pray 4 Love	2	30
14	16	<b>FLEETWOOD MAC</b> 20 WARNER/RHINO		Rumours	1	396
1	17	<b>TAYLOR SWIFT</b> REPUBLIC		Folklore	1	14
19	18	<b>THE WEEKND</b> XO/REPUBLIC		After Hours	1	32
22	19	<b>POLO G</b> ● COLUMBIA		The GOAT	2	24
27	20	<b>LUKE COMBS</b> 3 RIVER HOUSE/COLUMBIA NASHVILLE/SMN		This One's For You	4	178
25	21	<b>JUICE WRLD</b> ● GRADE A/INTERSCOPE/JGA		Goodbye & Good Riddance	4	128
23	22	<b>BAD BUNNY</b> RIMAS		YHLQMDLG	2	35
10	23	<b>BLACKPINK</b> YG/INTERSCOPE/JGA		The Album	2	4
26	24	<b>INTERNET MONEY</b> INTERNET MONEY/TENTHousand PROJECTS		B4 The Storm	10	9
5	25	<b>TOM PETTY</b> 3 TOM PETTY LEGACY/WARNER		Wildflowers	5	59
28	26	<b>MORGAN WALLEN</b> ▲ BIG LOUD		If I Know Me	13	109
31	27	<b>LIL UZI VERT</b> ▲ GENERATION NOW/ATLANTIC/AG		Eternal Atake	1	34
30	28	<b>BILLIE EILISH</b> 3 DARKROOM/INTERSCOPE/JGA		When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?	1	83
32	29	<b>MONEYBAGG YO &amp; BLAC YOUNGSTA</b> HEAVY CAMP/CMG/EPIC/N-LESS/INTERSCOPE/JGA		Code Red	6	6
35	30	<b>JUICE WRLD</b> ● GRADE A/INTERSCOPE/JGA		Death Race For Love	1	86
34	31	<b>LEWIS CAPALDI</b> VERTIGO/CAPITOL		Divinely Uninspired To A Hellish Extent	20	76
33	32	<b>GUNNA</b> YOUNG STONER LIFE/300/AG		Wunna	1	23
6	33	<b>NCT</b> SM		Resonance, Pt. 1	6	2
37	34	<b>LIL DURK</b> ALAMO/GEFFEN/JGA		Just Cause Y'all Waited 2	2	25
40	35	<b>RODDY RICCH</b> ▲ BIRD VISION/ATLANTIC/AG		Please Excuse Me For Being Antisocial	1	47
38	36	<b>POST MALONE</b> 3 REPUBLIC		beerbongs & bentleys	1	131
36	37	<b>QUEEN</b> 8 HOLLYWOOD		Greatest Hits	11	410
41	38	<b>TRAVIS SCOTT</b> 3 CACTUS JACK/GRAND HUSTLE/EPIC		ASTROWORLD	1	117
42	39	<b>JHENE AIKO</b> ● Z FISH/ART CLUB/ARTIUM/DEF JAM		Chilombo	2	34
43	40	<b>SUMMER WALKER</b> ▲ LVRN/INTERSCOPE/JGA		Over It	2	56
NEW	41	<b>JOE BONAMASSA</b> J & R ADVENTURES		Royal Tea	41	1
39	42	<b>JOJI</b> 88RISING/12TONE		Nectar	3	5
44	43	<b>DUA LIPA</b> WARNER		Future Nostalgia	4	30
48	44	<b>DRAKE</b> 5 YOUNG MONEY/CASH MONEY/REPUBLIC		Scorpion	1	122
45	45	<b>FUTURE</b> ▲ FREEBANDZ/EPIC		High Off Life	1	24
49	46	<b>HALSEY</b> ▲ CAPITOL		Manic	2	41
RE	47	<b>PEARL JAM</b> MTV/EPIC/LEGACY		MTV Unplugged	47	2
47	48	<b>ELTON JOHN</b> ▲ ROCKE T/ISLAND/UME		Diamonds	7	155
NEW	49	<b>JOYNER LUCAS</b> TWENTY NINE/TULLY		Evolution	49	1
50	50	<b>POST MALONE</b> 3 REPUBLIC		Stoney	4	203

LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	ARTIST IMPRINT/DISTRIBUTING LABEL	CERTIFICATION	Title	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
52	51	<b>DRAKE</b> OVO SOUND/REPUBLIC		Dark Lane Demo Tapes	2	26
18	52	<b>T.I.</b> GRAND HUSTLE/EMPIRE		The L.I.B.R.A.	18	2
68	53	<b>ARIANA GRANDE</b> 2 REPUBLIC		Thank U, Next	1	90
NEW	54	<b>MAT &amp; SAVANNA SHAW</b> MAT & SAVANNA SHAW		Picture This	54	1
NEW	55	<b>SEVENDUST</b> RISE		Blood & Stone	55	1
55	56	<b>KANE BROWN</b> RCA NASHVILLE/SMN		Mixtape, Vol. 1 (EP)	15	11
60	57	<b>XXXTENTACION</b> 3 BAD VIBES FOREVER		?	1	137
77	58	<b>MICHAEL JACKSON</b> 33 EPIC/LEGACY		Thriller	1	442
58	59	<b>CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL</b> 10 FANTASY/CONCORD		Chronicle The 20 Greatest Hits	22	495
56	60	<b>EMINEM</b> 7 SHADY/AFTERMATH/INTERSCOPE/JGA		Curtain Call: The Hits	1	500
62	61	<b>CHRIS STAPLETON</b> 4 MERCURY NASHVILLE/UMGN		Traveller	1	268
51	62	<b>BRYSON TILLER</b> TRAPSoul/RCA		ANNIVERSARY	5	4
64	63	<b>SOUNDTRACK</b> WALT DISNEY		Frozen II	1	50
NEW	64	<b>BEASTIE BOYS</b> BROOKLYN DUST/CAPITOL		Beastie Boys Music	64	1
53	65	<b>TAYLOR SWIFT</b> 2 REPUBLIC		Lover	1	62
66	66	<b>KENDRICK LAMAR</b> 3 TOP DAWG/AFTERMATH/INTERSCOPE/JGA		good kid, m.A.A.d city	2	418
69	67	<b>ED SHEERAN</b> 4 ATLANTIC/AG		+ (Divide)	1	191
63	68	<b>BILLIE EILISH</b> ▲ DARKROOM/INTERSCOPE/JGA		Dont Smile At Me	14	149
65	69	<b>JOURNEY</b> 15 COLUMBIA/LEGACY		Journey's Greatest Hits	10	640
61	70	<b>BOB MARLEY AND THE WAILERS</b> 15 TUFF GONG/ISLAND/UME		Legend: The Best Of...	5	650
72	71	<b>AC/DC</b> 25 COLUMBIA/LEGACY		Back In Black	4	435
59	72	<b>FLEETWOOD MAC</b> 8 WARNER/RHINO		Greatest Hits	14	166
81	73	<b>LIL UZI VERT</b> ▲ GENERATION NOW/ATLANTIC/AG		Luv Is Rage 2	1	166
75	74	<b>POP SMOKE</b> ● VICTOR VICTOR WORLDWIDE/REPUBLIC		Meet The Woo, V.2	7	38
86	75	<b>DRAKE</b> 6 YOUNG MONEY/CASH MONEY/REPUBLIC		Take Care	1	400
153	76	<b>PACE SETTER</b> ● <b>ADELE</b> 14 XL/COLUMBIA			21	1 489
78	77	<b>JACK HARLOW</b> GENERATION NOW/ATLANTIC/AG		Sweet Action	20	33
111	78	<b>THE KID LAROI</b> COLUMBIA		F*ck Love	8	14
70	79	<b>DOJA CAT</b> KEMOSABE/RCA		Hot Pink	9	52
73	80	<b>GABBY BARRETT</b> WARNER MUSIC NASHVILLE/WMN		Goldmine	27	19
79	81	<b>MONEYBAGG YO</b> ● N-LESS/INTERSCOPE/JGA		Time Served	3	42
80	82	<b>MONEY MAN</b> BLACK CIRCLE/EMPIRE		Epidemic	24	12
87	83	<b>SZA</b> 2 TOP DAWG/RCA		Ctrl	3	177
54	84	<b>BTS</b> RIGHT ENTERTAINMENT		MAP OF THE SOUL : 7	1	36
105	85	<b>NLE CHOPPA</b> NLE CHOPPA/WARNER		Top Shotta	10	12
85	86	<b>ROD WAVE</b> ● ALAMO/JGA		Ghetto Gospel	10	52
142	87	<b>DOLLY PARTON</b> BUTTERFLY RECORDS/12TONE		A Holly Dolly Christmas	16	4
67	88	<b>TOM PETTY AND THE HEARTBREAKERS</b> 12 MCA/GEFFEN/UME		Greatest Hits	2	381
71	89	<b>BIG SEAN</b> G O O D / DEF JAM		Detroit 2	1	8
83	90	<b>GUNS N' ROSES</b> 5 GEFFEN/UME		Greatest Hits	3	509
46	91	<b>GUCCI MANE AND THE NEW 1017</b> GUWOP/ATLANTIC/AG		So Icy Gang, Vol. One	46	2
89	92	<b>KHALID</b> 3 RIGHT HAND/RCA		American Teen	4	191
84	93	<b>KHALID</b> ▲ RIGHT HAND/RCA		Free Spirit	1	82
88	94	<b>JASON ALDEAN</b> MACON/BROKEN BOW/BMG/BBMG			9	2 42
90	95	<b>SOUNDTRACK</b> 2 WALT DISNEY		Moana	2	205
91	96	<b>SOUNDTRACK</b> 3 FOX/20TH CENTURY FOX/ATLANTIC/AG		The Greatest Showman	1	151
94	97	<b>KENDRICK LAMAR</b> 3 TOP DAWG/AFTERMATH/INTERSCOPE/JGA		DAMN.	1	185
93	98	<b>CHRIS BROWN</b> ▲ CBE/RCA		Indigo	1	70
74	99	<b>LINKIN PARK</b> 12 WARNER		[Hybrid Theory]	2	236
102	100	<b>J. COLE</b> 3 DREAMVILLE/ROC NATION/COLUMBIA/LEGACY		2014 Forest Hills Drive	1	308



## Combs Back At No. 1

Luke Combs' *What You See Is What You Get* returns to No. 1 on the Billboard 200 for a second total week following its deluxe reissue on Oct. 23 (with a handful of new songs) — and sets a new weekly streaming record for a country album.

The set, which debuted at No. 1 on Nov. 23, 2019, earned 109,000 equivalent album units in the United States during the week ending Oct. 29 (up 399%), according to Nielsen Music/MRC Data. Of that figure, streaming-equivalent album units comprise 76,000 (up 289%). That equals 102.26 million on-demand streams of the album's songs — a new record for a country album, beating the record set by the album's debut-week tally of 74 million.

*What You See Is What You Get* is the first country set to notch over one week at No. 1 since Chris Stapleton's *Traveller* spent two weeks at No. 1 (Nov. 21-28, 2015).

—KEITH CAULFIELD



LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	ARTIST IMPRINT/DISTRIBUTING LABEL	CERTIFICATION	Title	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
107	101	<b>YOUNGBOY NEVER BROKE AGAIN</b> ▲ NEVER BROKE AGAIN/ATLANTIC/AG		AI YoungBoy 2	1	55
NEW	102	<b>BLUE OCTOBER</b> UP DOWN/BRANCO		This Is What I Live For	102	1
98	103	<b>HARDY</b> BIG LOUD		A Rock	24	8
109	104	<b>YOUNG THUG</b> ▲ YOUNG STONER LIFE/300/ATLANTIC/AG		So Much Fun	1	63
119	105	<b>TRIPPIE REDD</b> ● TENTHOUSAND PROJECTS		A Love Letter To You 4	1	49
95	106	<b>THE BEATLES</b> 11 APPLE/CAPITOL/UME		1	1	444
103	107	<b>THE WEEKND</b> 4 XO/REPUBLIC		Beauty Behind The Madness	1	269
112	108	<b>LIZZO</b> ▲ NICELIFE/ATLANTIC/AG		Cuz I Love You	4	80
108	109	<b>CARDI B</b> 3 THE KSR GROUP/ATLANTIC/AG		Invasion Of Privacy	1	134
97	110	<b>THE WEEKND</b> 3 XO/REPUBLIC		Starboy	1	205
16	111	<b>EAGLES</b> ERC/RHINO		Live From The Forum MMXVIII	16	2
NEW	112	<b>LOONA</b> BLOCKBERRYCREATIVE		[12:00]	112	1
96	113	<b>OZUNA</b> AURA/SONY MUSIC LATIN		ENOC	17	8
127	114	<b>DRAKE</b> 6 YOUNG MONEY/CASH MONEY/REPUBLIC		Views	1	235
114	115	<b>A BOOGIE WIT DA HOODIE</b> ● HIGHBRIDGE THE LABEL/ATLANTIC/AG		Artist 2.0	2	37
101	116	<b>NF</b> ● NF REAL MUSIC/CAROLINE		The Search	1	66
106	117	<b>TOOSII</b> SOUTHCOST/CAPIPOL		Poetic Pain	17	6
126	118	<b>LIL TJAY</b> ▲ COLUMBIA		True 2 Myself	5	55
123	119	<b>SAM HUNT</b> MCA NASHVILLE/UMGN		SOUTHSIDE	5	30
RE	120	<b>SOUNDTRACK</b> WALT DISNEY		Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas	52	13
57	121	<b>TREY SONGZ</b> ATLANTIC/AG		Back Home	15	3
NEW	122	<b>I DONT KNOW HOW BUT THEY FOUND ME</b> FEARLESS/CONCORD		Razzmatazz	122	1
125	123	<b>TAYLOR SWIFT</b> 9 BIG MACHINE/BMLG		1989	1	307
113	124	<b>GEORGE STRAIT</b> 7 MCA NASHVILLE/UMGN		50 Number Ones	1	161
128	125	<b>ANUEL AA</b> REAL HAS LA MUERTE/SONY MUSIC LATIN		Emmanuel	8	22
120	126	<b>JACKBOYS</b> CACTUS JACK/EPIC		JACKBOYS	1	44
118	127	<b>DABABY</b> SOUTHCOST/INTERSCOPE/IGA		KIRK	1	57
116	128	<b>CHRIS BROWN &amp; YOUNG THUG</b> 300/CBE/RCA		Slime & B	24	26
NEW	129	<b>WALLOWS</b> ATLANTIC/AG		Remote (EP)	129	1
92	130	<b>LADY GAGA</b> STREAMLINE/INTERSCOPE/IGA		Chromatica	1	22
104	131	<b>THE BEATLES</b> 12 APPLE/CAPITOL/UME		Abbey Road	1	385
122	132	<b>CONAN GRAY</b> REPUBLIC		Kid Krow	5	20
129	133	<b>THE NOTORIOUS B.I.G.</b> ▲ BAD BOY/RHINO		Greatest Hits	1	246
155	134	<b>JAMES ARTHUR</b> COLUMBIA		Back From The Edge	39	63
143	135	<b>FRANK OCEAN</b> ▲ BOYS DON'T CRY		Blonde	1	202
133	136	<b>BAD BUNNY</b> RIMAS		X100PRE	11	97
12	137	<b>BTS</b> BIGHIT ENTERTAINMENT		Skool Luv Affair	12	2
138	138	<b>MALUMA</b> SONY MUSIC LATIN		Papi Juancho	38	10
124	139	<b>AVA MAX</b> MAX CUT/ARTIST PARTNER GROUP/ATLANTIC/AG		Heaven & Hell	27	6
132	140	<b>BRYSON TILLER</b> 3 TRAPSOUL/RCA		TRAPSOUL	8	226
144	141	<b>POLO G</b> ▲ COLUMBIA		Die A Legend	6	73
115	142	<b>JUSTIN BIEBER</b> ▲ SCHOOLBOY/RAYMOND BRAUN/DEF JAM		Changes	1	37
196	143	<b>H.E.R.</b> ▲ MBK/RCA		H.E.R.	23	153
137	144	<b>2PAC</b> 10 DEATH ROW		All Eyez On Me	1	121
RE	145	<b>ADELE</b> 11 XL/COLUMBIA		25	1	182
134	146	<b>NIRVANA</b> 10 SUB POP/DGC/GEFFEN/UME		Nevermind	1	497
152	147	<b>TRAVIS SCOTT</b> ▲ GRAND HUSTLE/EPIC		Birds In The Trap Sing McKnight	1	216
131	148	<b>IMAGINE DRAGONS</b> 2 KIDINAKORNER/INTERSCOPE/IGA		Evolve	2	175
139	149	<b>LIL MOSEY</b> MOGUL VISION/INTERSCOPE/IGA		Certified Hitmaker	12	48
100	150	<b>CARRIE UNDERWOOD</b> CAPITOL NASHVILLE/UMGN		My Gift	8	5



2

**BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN**  
*Letter to You*

Its 92,000 sold (the week ending Oct. 29, according to Nielsen Music/MRC Data) is his best sales week since *High Hopes*' 99,000 debut in 2016. He's the first artist with top five-charting albums in each decade from the 1970s to the 2020s.



54

**MAT & SAVANNA SHAW**  
*Picture This*

The gone-viral father-daughter singing duo from Kaysville, Utah, bows with 12,000 equivalent album units, almost entirely from album sales (11,500 copies sold). The Salt Lake City area made up 11% of sales.



76

**ADELE**  
*21*

In the wake of Adele's hosting turn on *Saturday Night Live* (Oct. 24), her former No. 1 album surges with a 30% unit gain (to 9,500) and its highest rank since March 18, 2017 (No. 76).

LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	ARTIST IMPRINT/DISTRIBUTING LABEL	CERTIFICATION	Title	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
181	151	<b>HARRY STYLES</b> ▲ ERSKINE/COLUMBIA		Harry Styles	1	60
135	152	<b>MEGAN THEE STALLION</b> 1501 CERTIFIED/300/AG		Suga	7	34
130	153	<b>LIL WAYNE</b> ▲ YOUNG MONEY/REPUBLIC		Tha Carter V	1	79
151	154	<b>XXXTENTACION</b> ▲ BAD VIBES FOREVER/EMPIRE		17	2	166
183	155	<b>SAM SMITH</b> 2 CAPITOL		In The Lonely Hour	2	310
140	156	<b>EMINEM</b> ● SHADY/AF TERMATH/INTERSCOPE/IGA		Music To Be Murdered By	1	41
148	157	<b>TYLER CHILDERS</b> HICKMAN HOLLER/THIRTY TIGERS		Purgatory	106	24
192	158	<b>KID CUDI</b> ● DREAM ON/G O O D/REPUBLIC		Man On The Moon: The End Of Day	4	146
166	159	<b>DRAKE</b> 4 YOUNG MONEY/CASH MONEY/REPUBLIC		Nothing Was The Same	1	353
159	160	<b>DRAKE</b> YOUNG MONEY/CASH MONEY/REPUBLIC		More Life	1	188
146	161	<b>MAREN MORRIS</b> ● COLUMBIA NASHVILLE/SMN		GIRL	4	86
NEW	162	<b>THE MOUNTAIN GOATS</b> MERGE		Getting Into Knives	162	1
145	163	<b>LYNYRD SKYNYRD</b> ▲ MCA/GEFFEN/UME		All Time Greatest Hits	56	104
156	164	<b>VARIOUS ARTISTS</b> ▲ DREAMVILLE/INTERSCOPE/IGA		Dreamville & J. Cole: Revenge Of The Dreamers III	1	69
154	165	<b>BRUNO MARS</b> 6 ELEKTRA/EMG		Doo-Wops & Hooligans	3	494
160	166	<b>A BOOGIE WIT DA HOODIE</b> ▲ HIGHBRIDGE THE LABEL/ATLANTIC/AG		Hoodie SZN	1	97
170	167	<b>MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE</b> ● REPRISE/WARNER		Three Cheers For Sweet Revenge	28	81
150	168	<b>SAINT JHN</b> GODD COMPLEX/HITCO		Collection One	50	32
141	169	<b>EAGLES</b> 38 ASYLUM/ELEKTRA/RHINO		Their Greatest Hits 1971-1975	1	350
164	170	<b>BRENT FAIAZ</b> LOST KIDS		Fuck The World	20	14
RE	171	<b>ARIANA GRANDE</b> ▲ REPUBLIC		Sweetener	1	88
165	172	<b>RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS</b> 2 WARNER		Greatest Hits	18	263
175	173	<b>FRANK SINATRA</b> FRANK SINATRA ENTERPRISES/CAPITOL/UME		Ultimate Sinatra	32	127
99	174	<b>PARKER MCCOLLUM</b> MCA NASHVILLE/UMGN		Hollywood Gold (EP)	99	2
158	175	<b>ZAC BROWN BAND</b> HOME GROWN/BMG		Greatest Hits So Far...	20	281
157	176	<b>BILLY JOEL</b> 3 COLUMBIA/LEGACY		The Essential Billy Joel	15	215
NEW	177	<b>COMETHAZINE</b> ALAMO/IGA		Bawskee 4	177	1
29	178	<b>BENNY THE BUTCHER</b> GRISELDA/EMPIRE		Burden Of Proof	29	2
176	179	<b>GUCCI MANE &amp; VARIOUS ARTISTS</b> GUWOP/ATLANTIC/AG		Gucci Mane Presents: Solcity Summer	29	16
191	180	<b>HOZIER</b> 2 RUBYWORKS/COLUMBIA		Hozier	2	190
NEW	181	<b>THE WHO</b> A Quick Live One: Live At The Monterey International Pop Festival (EP) MONTEREY INT'L POP FESTIVAL FOUNDATION		181	1	
162	182	<b>MULATTO</b> STREAMCUT/RCA		Queen Of Da Souf	44	10
180	183	<b>RIHANNA</b> 3 WESTBURY ROAD/ROC NATION		ANTI	1	243
173	184	<b>DON TOLIVER</b> CACTUS JACK/ATLANTIC/AG		Heaven Or Hell	7	33
183	185	<b>DAN + SHAY</b> ▲ WARNER MUSIC NASHVILLE/WMN		Dan + Shay	6	123
172	186	<b>NF</b> ▲ NF REAL MUSIC/CAPITOL/CAROLINE		Perception	1	160
167	187	<b>ED SHEERAN</b> ● ATLANTIC/AG		No.6 Collaborations Project	1	68
174	188	<b>ELVIS PRESLEY</b> ▲ RCA/SONY STRATEGIC MARKETING GROUP/LEGACY		The Essential Elvis Presley	42	70
187	189	<b>LIL BABY &amp; GUNNA</b> ▲ YOUNG STONER LIFE/300/QUALITY CONTROL/MOTOWN/AG/CAPITOL		Drip Harder	4	108
182	190	<b>LAUREN DAIGLE</b> ● CENTRICITY/I21TONE		Look Up Child	3	112
183	191	<b>MAC MILLER</b> ● WARNER		Swimming	3	113
178	192	<b>BLAKE SHELTON</b> ● WARNER MUSIC NASHVILLE/WMN		Fully Loaded: God's Country	2	46
184	193	<b>MAC MILLER</b> WARNER		Circles	3	41
171	194	<b>BLACKBEAR</b> BEAT TRAP/ALAMO/INTERSCOPE/IGA		Everything Means Nothing	15	10
190	195	<b>KANE BROWN</b> 2 ZONE 4/RCA NASHVILLE/SMN		Kane Brown	5	204
169	196	<b>BON JOVI</b> ▲ ISLAND/UME		Greatest Hits: The Ultimate Collection	5	187
186	197	<b>LUKE BRYAN</b> ROW CROP/CAPITOL NASHVILLE/UMGN		Born Here Live Here Die Here	5	12
NEW	198	<b>PUP</b> RISE		This Place Sucks Ass (EP)	198	1
149	199	<b>RASCAL FLATTS</b> Twenty Years Of Rascal Flatts: The Greatest Hits LYRIC STREET/BIG MACHINE/BMLG		87	4	
121	200	<b>BTS</b> ▲ BIGHIT ENTERTAINMENT		Love Yourself: Answer	1	95

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# BILLBOARD GLOBAL 200

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NOV.  
7  
2020

WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	TITLE	Artist	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
		<b>1</b>	<b>#1 POSITIONS</b>	Ariana Grande	1	1
						
			"Positions" soars in at No. 1 on both the Global 200 and Global Excl. U.S. charts. The song is the first to debut atop both tallies simultaneously, while Grande is also the first U.S.-born artist to top the latter list.			
1	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>DYNAMITE</b>	BTS	1	8
2	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>MOOD</b>	24kGoldn Feat. iann dior	2	8
		<b>NEW</b>	<b>4 FOREVER AFTER ALL</b>	Luke Combs	4	1
4	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>LEMONADE</b>	Internet Money & Gunna Feat. Don Toliver & NAV	4	8
3	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>WAP</b>	Cardi B Feat. Megan Thee Stallion	1	8
-	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>LONELY</b>	Justin Bieber & benny blanco	5	2
5	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>SAVAGE LOVE (LAXED - SIREN BEAT)</b>	Jawsh 685 x Jason Derulo	1	8
8	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>BLINDING LIGHTS</b>	The Weeknd	7	8
9	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>HOLY</b>	Justin Bieber Feat. Chance The Rapper	3	6
6	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>HAWAI</b>	Maluma	4	8
<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>WHAT YOU KNOW BOUT LOVE</b>	Pop Smoke	12	8
7	<b>10</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>FOR THE NIGHT</b>	Pop Smoke Feat. Lil Baby & DaBaby	7	8
<b>62</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>HOMURA</b>	LiSA	8	3
14	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>WATERMELON SUGAR</b>	Harry Styles	9	8
<b>19</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>YOU BROKE ME FIRST.</b>	Tate McRae	16	8
15	<b>15</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>RELACION</b>	Sech, Daddy Yankee & J Balvin Feat. ROSALIA & Farruko	13	8
13	<b>16</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>LAUGH NOW CRY LATER</b>	Drake Feat. Lil Durk	5	8
17	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>HEAD &amp; HEART</b>	Joel Corry X MNEK	17	8
16	<b>17</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>ROCKSTAR</b>	DaBaby Feat. Roddy Ricch	8	8
<b>10</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>DREAMS</b>	Fleetwood Mac	10	5
18	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>ROSES</b>	SAINT JHN	14	8
22	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>DANCE MONKEY</b>	Tones And I	18	8
<b>51</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>LA TOXICA</b>	Farruko	24	7
20	<b>23</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>WONDER</b>	Shawn Mendes	13	4
<b>39</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>LEVITATING</b>	Dua Lipa Feat. DaBaby	26	4
31	<b>28</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>MIDNIGHT SKY</b>	Miley Cyrus	23	8
11	<b>20</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>LOVESICK GIRLS</b>	BLACKPINK	2	4
<b>29</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>VIDA DE RICO</b>	Camilo	29	5
21	<b>24</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>MOOD SWINGS</b>	Pop Smoke Feat. Lil Tjay	13	8
28	<b>27</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>SOMEONE YOU LOVED</b>	Lewis Capaldi	27	8
24	<b>25</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>CARAMELO</b>	Ozuna x Karol G x Myke Towers	16	8
25	<b>30</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>POPSTAR</b>	DJ Khaled Feat. Drake	11	8
36	<b>33</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>TAKE YOU DANCING</b>	Jason Derulo	33	8
		<b>NEW</b>	<b>35 I CAN'T STOP ME</b>	TWICE	35	1
30	<b>32</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>WHATS POPPIN</b>	Jack Harlow Feat. DaBaby, Tory Lanez & Lil Wayne	17	8
<b>45</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>PUT YOUR RECORDS ON</b>	Ritt Momney	37	7
23	<b>26</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>ICE CREAM</b>	BLACKPINK X Selena Gomez	8	8
		<b>NEW</b>	<b>39 TYLER HERRO</b>	Jack Harlow	39	1
37	<b>34</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>BEFORE YOU GO</b>	Lewis Capaldi	32	8
		<b>NEW</b>	<b>41 SPICY</b>	Ty Dolla Sign Feat. Post Malone	41	1
34	<b>37</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>HEATHER</b>	Conan Gray	20	8
32	<b>36</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>BREAKING ME</b>	Topic & A7S	21	8
38	<b>40</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>JERUSALEMA</b>	Master KG Feat. Burna Boy & Nomcebo Zikode	38	8

WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	TITLE	Artist	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
35	<b>35</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>HOW YOU LIKE THAT</b>	BLACKPINK	24	8
40	<b>41</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>GO CRAZY</b>	Chris Brown & Young Thug	26	8
43	<b>42</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>COME &amp; GO</b>	Juice WRLD x Marshmello	26	8
<b>84</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>SAID SUM</b>	Moneybagg Yo	46	8
48	<b>45</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>LIFE IS GOOD</b>	Future Feat. Drake	39	8
<b>58</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>SE TE NOTA</b>	Lele Pons X Guaynaa	50	6
42	<b>44</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>UN DIA (ONE DAY)</b>	J Balvin, Dua Lipa, Bad Bunny & Tainy	30	8
55	<b>54</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>BABY SHARK</b>	Pinkfong	52	8
52	<b>55</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>LA CURIOSIDAD</b>	DJ Nelson Presenta Jay Wheeler & Myke Towers	41	8
44	<b>43</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>DON'T START NOW</b>	Dua Lipa	37	8
41	<b>46</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>MY EX'S BEST FRIEND</b>	Machine Gun Kelly X blackbear	25	8
47	<b>50</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>RAIN ON ME</b>	Lady Gaga & Ariana Grande	22	8
50	<b>52</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>TATTOO</b>	Rauw Alejandro x Camilo	28	8
<b>54</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>DESPEINADA</b>	Ozuna x Camilo	54	8
49	<b>48</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>KINGS &amp; QUEENS</b>	Ava Max	31	8
46	<b>51</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>AY, DIOS MIO!</b>	Karol G	25	8
57	<b>57</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>PERFECT</b>	Ed Sheeran	49	8
		<b>NEW</b>	<b>62 GOLDEN</b>	Harry Styles	62	1
<b>61</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>DIAMONDS</b>	Sam Smith	32	6
59	<b>62</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>BE LIKE THAT</b>	Kane Brown With Swae Lee & Khalid	44	8
60	<b>61</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>CIRCLES</b>	Post Malone	49	8
53	<b>58</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>LA JEEPETA</b>	Nio Garcia x Anuel AA x Myke Towers x Bray x Juanka	29	8
64	<b>64</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>SUNFLOWER</b>	Post Malone & Swae Lee	58	8
63	<b>65</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>BAD GUY</b>	Billie Eilish	55	8
<b>88</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>DAISY</b>	Ashnikko	69	7
<b>97</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>PARCE</b>	Maluma Feat. Lenny Tavarez & Justin Quiles	70	8
66	<b>68</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>24</b>	Money Man Feat. Lil Baby	66	8
		<b>NEW</b>	<b>72 SWEET MELODY</b>	Little Mix	72	1
26	<b>47</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>MR. RIGHT NOW</b>	21 Savage & Metro Boomin Feat. Drake	10	4
65	<b>69</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>DEATH BED</b>	Powfu Feat. beabadoobee	43	8
33	<b>56</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>RUNNIN</b>	21 Savage & Metro Boomin	9	4
<b>80</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>UNA LOCURA</b>	Ozuna, J Balvin & Chencho Corleone	74	7
<b>194</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>GURENGE</b>	LiSA	73	3
<b>111</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>JEANS</b>	Justin Quiles	78	6
-	<b>111</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>TRAIN WRECK</b>	James Arthur	79	2
90	<b>93</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>ADORE YOU</b>	Harry Styles	68	8
27	<b>49</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>FRANCHISE</b>	Travis Scott Feat. Young Thug & M.I.A.	7	5
		<b>NEW</b>	<b>82 SO DONE</b>	Kid LAROI	82	1
71	<b>77</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>SHALLOW</b>	Lady Gaga & Bradley Cooper	71	8
78	<b>75</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>YORU NI KAKERU</b>	YOASOBI	62	8
74	<b>76</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>MEMORIES</b>	Maroon 5	72	8
85	<b>85</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>BELIEVER</b>	Imagine Dragons	82	8
-	<b>185</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>GG BETTER TOGETHER</b>	Luke Combs	87	2
81	<b>86</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>MI CUARTO</b>	Jerry Di	81	8
<b>168</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>LA NOTA</b>	Manuel Turizo, Myke Towers & Rauw Alejandro	89	3
75	<b>82</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>DIOR</b>	Pop Smoke	61	8
79	<b>84</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>SHAPE OF YOU</b>	Ed Sheeran	79	8
72	<b>81</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>SEÑORITA</b>	Shawn Mendes & Camila Cabello	67	8
67	<b>72</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>THE WOO</b>	Pop Smoke Feat. 50 Cent & Roddy Ricch	40	8
68	<b>71</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>WISHING WELL</b>	Juice WRLD	46	8
93	<b>94</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>OLD TOWN ROAD</b>	Lil Nas X Feat. Billy Ray Cyrus	75	8
82	<b>80</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>INTENTIONS</b>	Justin Bieber Feat. Quavo	65	8

BILLBOARD GLOBAL 200 RANKS THE TOP SONGS BASED ON STREAMING AND/OR SALES ACTIVITY FROM MORE THAN 200 TERRITORIES AROUND THE WORLD, INCLUDING THE U.S.—AS TRACKED BY MRC DATA. THE RANKING IS BASED ON A WEIGHTED FORMULA INCORPORATING OFFICIAL ONLY STREAMS ON BOTH SUBSCRIPTION AND AD-SUPPORTED TIERS OF LEADING AUDIO AND VIDEO MUSIC SERVICES PLUS DOWNLOAD SALES FROM TOP MUSIC RETAILERS ACROSS THE GLOBE. SEE CHARTS.LEGEND ON BILLBOARD.COM/BBZ FOR COMPLETE RULES AND EXPLANATIONS. © 2020 PROMETHEUS GLOBAL MEDIA, LLC AND NIELSEN MUSIC/MRC DATA, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

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MRC

STREAMING & SALES DATA COMPILED BY



35

TWICE  
"I Can't Stop Me"

The song from the South Korean group's second Korean-language album, *Eyes Wide Open*, released Oct. 26, debuts with 34.4 million streams and 9,000 sales worldwide in the week ending Oct. 9, according to Nielsen Music/MRC Data. It debuts at No. 35 on the Global 200, where it's the act's first entry, and No. 20 on the Global Excl. U.S. survey, where the collective's 2019 single "Feel Special" charted for a week in October.



72

LITTLE MIX  
"Sweet Melody"

The third in a line of singles released in advance of the British group's Nov. 6 album, *Confetti*, was streamed 18.3 million times and sold 11,000 downloads around the world in the first week, following its Oct. 23 re-release. The quartet, which formed in 2011 on its way to winning the U.K. version of *The X Factor*, has sent each of its first five LPs to the top five of the Official UK Albums chart, while, with a No. 8 entrance, "Sweet Melody" marks the act's 16th top 10 on the Official UK Singles survey.

—ERIC FRANKENBERG

WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	TITLE	Artist	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
91	96	97	<b>STUCK WITH U</b>	Ariana Grande & Justin Bieber	60	8
	<b>NEW</b>	98	<b>BICHOTA</b>	Karol G	98	1
86	91	99	<b>THE BOX</b>	Roddy Ricch	66	8
172	105	100	<b>DEEP END</b>	Foushee	100	3
87	87	101	<b>SAY SO</b>	Doja Cat Feat. Nicki Minaj	50	8
108	107	102	<b>TICK TOCK</b>	Clean Bandit & Mabel Feat. 24kGoldn	99	8
76	88	103	<b>ILY</b>	surf mesa Feat. Emilee	56	8
77	89	104	<b>RAGS2RICHES</b>	Rod Wave Feat. ATR Son Son	63	8
110	102	105	<b>LOVELY</b>	Billie Eilish & Khalid	102	8
102	92	106	<b>I HOPE</b>	Gabby Barrett	78	8
117	113	107	<b>SOFIA</b>	Clairo	107	4
125	78	108	<b>IN YOUR EYES</b>	The Weeknd	78	8
92	101	109	<b>BLUEBERRY FAYGO</b>	Lil Mosey	62	8
99	100	110	<b>MAD AT DISNEY</b>	Salem Ilese	67	8
101	106	111	<b>HIGHEST IN THE ROOM</b>	Travis Scott	83	8
195	157	112	<b>MI NINA</b>	Los Legendarios, Wisin & Myke Towers	112	3
83	95	113	<b>BREAK MY HEART</b>	Dua Lipa	47	8
105	110	114	<b>SICKO MODE</b>	Travis Scott	70	8
98	103	115	<b>RIDE IT.</b>	Regard	86	8
141	79	116	<b>YO PERREO SOLA</b>	Bad Bunny	79	8
73	98	117	<b>GREECE</b>	DJ Khaled Feat. Drake	38	8
115	117	118	<b>LUCID DREAMS</b>	Juice WRLD	103	8
151	147	119	<b>MORE THAN MY HOMETOWN</b>	Morgan Wallen	119	8
104	104	120	<b>GOT WHAT I GOT</b>	Jason Aldean	104	8
107	114	121	<b>FALLING</b>	Trevor Daniel	94	8
129	127	122	<b>ALL OF ME</b>	John Legend	122	8
96	108	123	<b>YOU GOT IT</b>	VEDO	80	8
119	120	124	<b>MARTIN &amp; GINA</b>	Polo G	107	8
70	90	125	<b>PRETTY SAVAGE</b>	BLACKPINK	32	4
167	154	126	<b>7 RINGS</b>	Ariana Grande	126	8
103	116	127	<b>OK NOT TO BE OK</b>	Marshmello & Demi Lovato	32	7
95	112	128	<b>SAVAGE</b>	Megan Thee Stallion Feat. Beyonce	52	8
	<b>NEW</b>	129	<b>DAMAGE</b>	H.E.R.	129	1
122	126	130	<b>GOOSEBUMPS</b>	Travis Scott	102	8
118	122	131	<b>IF THE WORLD WAS ENDING</b>	JP Saxe Feat. Julia Michaels	104	8
156	140	132	<b>FALLING</b>	Harry Styles	132	8
116	119	133	<b>I DON'T CARE</b>	Ed Sheeran & Justin Bieber	105	8
165	141	134	<b>SWEATER WEATHER</b>	The Neighbourhood	134	5
94	99	135	<b>ONE OF THEM GIRLS</b>	Lee Brice	94	8
138	135	136	<b>SAY YOU WON'T LET GO</b>	James Arthur	135	8
	<b>NEW</b>	137	<b>ANGEKLAGT</b>	Bonez MC	137	1
	<b>NEW</b>	138	<b>THE OTHER GUY</b>	Luke Combs	138	1
100	115	139	<b>AGUA</b>	Tainy x J Balvin	46	8
131	133	140	<b>EVERYTHING I WANTED</b>	Billie Eilish	116	8
130	137	141	<b>ROBBERY</b>	Juice WRLD	123	8
113	124	142	<b>HELLO</b>	Pop Smoke Feat. A Boogie Wit da Hoodie	102	8
	<b>RE-ENTRY</b>	143	<b>FORGET ME TOO</b>	Machine Gun Kelly & Halsey	39	4
121	132	144	<b>NO GUIDANCE</b>	Chris Brown Feat. Drake	113	8
136	138	145	<b>WITHOUT ME</b>	Halsey	135	8
127	129	146	<b>BANG!</b>	AJR	127	7
120	139	147	<b>TOOSIE SLIDE</b>	Drake	73	8
112	125	148	<b>SMILE</b>	Juice WRLD & The Weeknd	49	8

WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	TITLE	Artist	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
114	130	149	<b>DJADJA</b>	Aya Nakamura Feat. Maluma	57	8
106	123	150	<b>TAP IN</b>	Saweetie	42	8
	67	151	<b>YOU'RE MINES STILL</b>	Yung Bleu Feat. Drake	67	2
	<b>NEW</b>	152	<b>BACK TO THE STREETS</b>	Saweetie Feat. Jhene Aiko	152	1
123	131	153	<b>BE KIND</b>	Marshmello & Halsey	84	8
133	143	154	<b>TUSA</b>	Karol G & Nicki Minaj	109	8
143	146	155	<b>CLOSER</b>	The Chainsmokers Feat. Halsey	138	8
128	134	156	<b>WE PAID</b>	Lil Baby & 42 Dugg	93	8
200	188	157	<b>SOMEONE LIKE YOU</b>	Adele	157	3
134	145	158	<b>BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY</b>	Queen	131	8
124	136	159	<b>PARTY GIRL</b>	StaySolidRocky	69	8
140	144	160	<b>DESPACITO</b>	Luis Fonsi & Daddy Yankee Feat. Justin Bieber	130	8
139	148	161	<b>THINKING OUT LOUD</b>	Ed Sheeran	139	8
162	151	162	<b>BOY WITH LUV</b>	BTS Feat. Halsey	151	8
	<b>NEW</b>	163	<b>THRILLER</b>	Michael Jackson	163	1
148	156	164	<b>ELECTRIC LOVE</b>	BORNS	97	8
155	166	165	<b>7 SUMMERS</b>	Morgan Wallen	105	8
160	159	166	<b>ROCKSTAR</b>	Post Malone Feat. 21 Savage	156	8
	<b>RE-ENTRY</b>	167	<b>LET'S LOVE</b>	David Guetta & Sia	106	2
	<b>NEW</b>	168	<b>WHOOPTY</b>	CJ	168	1
154	162	169	<b>DON'T STOP BELIEVIN'</b>	Journey	150	8
	<b>NEW</b>	170	<b>PROMISCUOUS</b>	Nelly Furtado Feat. Timbaland	170	1
	<b>RE-ENTRY</b>	171	<b>WITHOUT YOU</b>	Luke Combs Feat. Amanda Shires	119	2
153	160	172	<b>HOTEL CALIFORNIA</b>	Eagles	153	8
144	153	173	<b>GIRLS LIKE YOU</b>	Maroon 5 Feat. Cardi B	138	8
	163	174	<b>HEART OF GLASS</b>	Miley Cyrus	150	3
159	165	175	<b>HAPPIER</b>	Marshmello & Bastille	159	8
137	149	176	<b>THE BONES</b>	Maren Morris	137	8
166	164	177	<b>GODZILLA</b>	Eminem Feat. Juice WRLD	142	8
	<b>NEW</b>	178	<b>RECAIREI</b>	Os Baroes da Pisadinha	178	1
126	152	179	<b>ME GUSTA</b>	Anitta Feat. Cardi B & Myke Towers	37	6
177	169	180	<b>LET HER GO</b>	Passenger	169	6
132	155	181	<b>PORFA</b>	Feid, J Balvin, Maluma, Nicky Jam, Sech & Justin Quiles	79	8
149	161	182	<b>SUNDAY BEST</b>	Surfaces	102	8
182	174	183	<b>THUNDER</b>	Imagine Dragons	174	8
	<b>NEW</b>	184	<b>BEER NEVER BROKE MY HEART</b>	Luke Combs	184	1
	187	185	<b>YOU ARE THE REASON</b>	Calum Scott & Leona Lewis	185	2
69	118	186	<b>BET YOU WANNA</b>	BLACKPINK Feat. Cardi B	25	4
	187	187	<b>JULY</b>	Noah Cyrus & Leon Bridges	183	5
	<b>NEW</b>	188	<b>PRACTICE</b>	DaBaby	188	1
	<b>NEW</b>	189	<b>THANK U, NEXT</b>	Ariana Grande	189	1
	<b>NEW</b>	190	<b>COLD AS YOU</b>	Luke Combs	190	1
	157	191	<b>DDU-DU DDU-DU</b>	BLACKPINK	158	2
175	184	192	<b>IN THE END</b>	Linkin Park	163	4
	<b>NEW</b>	193	<b>MADRID</b>	Maluma & Myke Towers	193	1
188	171	194	<b>SIGUES CON EL</b>	Arcangel x Sech	159	7
179	190	195	<b>THUNDERSTRUCK</b>	AC/DC	179	3
	197	196	<b>TAKE ON ME</b>	a-ha	196	2
	<b>NEW</b>	197	<b>CHICA IDEAL</b>	Guaynaa & Sebastian Yatra	197	1
170	173	198	<b>GOT IT ON ME</b>	Pop Smoke	107	8
191	186	199	<b>SOMETHING JUST LIKE THIS</b>	The Chainsmokers & Coldplay	172	7
	<b>NEW</b>	200	<b>COUNTING STARS</b>	OneRepublic	200	1

TWICE: THE CHOSUMI/BOUNSI/MAZINGETTY IMAGES; MIKE COLUMBIA RECORDS. BILLBOARD GLOBAL 200 RANKS THE TOP SONGS BASED ON STREAMING AND SALES ACTIVITY FROM MORE THAN 200 TERRITORIES AROUND THE WORLD, INCLUDING THE U.S. AS TRACKED BY MRC DATA. THE RANKING IS BASED ON A WEIGHTED FORMULA INCORPORATING OFFICIAL ONLY STREAMS ON BOTH SUBSCRIPTION AND AD-SUPPORTED TERMS OF LEADING AUDIO AND VIDEO MUSIC SERVICES, PLUS DOWNLOAD SALES FROM TOP MUSIC RETAILERS ACROSS THE GLOBE. SEE CHARTS. LEGEND ON BILLBOARD.COM/BIZ FOR COMPLETE RULES AND EXPLANATIONS. © 2020 PROMETHEUS GLOBAL MEDIA, LLC AND NIELSEN MUSIC/MRC DATA, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. nielsen MRC

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*We proudly celebrate your 40 Under 40 recognition.*



*History is always being written.<sup>SM</sup>*

# Contents

NOV. 7, 2020 • VOLUME 132 / NO. 15

## ON THE COVER

JaQuel Knight photographed by Djeneba Aduayom on Oct. 9 at Wilhardt & Naud in Los Angeles.

This page: Pyer Moss coat and pants; Giuseppe Zanotti sneakers; Vitaly choker, bracelet and ring; Maple rings.

## BILLBOARD HOT 100

3

**Ariana Grande's** "Positions" marks her record-extending fifth No. 1 debut.

## THE MARKET

17

TikTok isn't just peddling "Dreams": Classic rock can go viral, too. But old hits can't just skate by — they need smart promotion.

20

Consumers love Spotify. But it's fighting with publishers, upsetting some employees and will soon be the subject of a British Parliament inquiry.

## THE SOUND

27

With the rise of TikTok, it has never been easier to score an inadvertent viral smash. That's exactly what happened to 20-year-old **beabadoobee**, who followed her first Billboard Hot 100 hit with a debut album that sounded nothing like it — and leads this year's list of 21 exciting artists under 21.

## THE PLAYERS

61

As Spirit Music Group celebrates its 25th anniversary, the music publisher's chairman and COO/CFO talk recapitalization, future growth and the pursuit of a \$1 billion valuation.

## CHARTBREAKER

72

Country artist **Priscilla Block** started posting on TikTok out of boredom — and ended up with a record deal.

## FEATURES

40

### MAKING A MOVEMENT

Working with superstars like **Beyoncé** and **Megan Thee Stallion**, choreographer **JaQuel Knight** has created some of the most iconic dance performances of the 21st century. Now he's on another remarkable mission: copyrighting them.

48

### 40 UNDER 40

Darkroom founder/CEO **Justin Lubliner**, who helped guide **Billie Eilish** to stardom, opens *Billboard's* annual list of the young executives pushing the industry forward.

CONGRATULATIONS

# Joanna Noyes



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# Concord Congratulates its 40 Under 40 Honorees

Ashley Calhoun (PULSE)  
Kourtney Kirkpatrick (Concord Music Publishing)



# The Market

PG. 20 SPOTIFY'S NEW HEADACHES \* PG. 22 EUROPE'S CONCERTS PRESS PAUSE (AGAIN) \* PG. 24 WARNER CHAPPELL'S LEADING DUO



## Return Of The Mac

TikTok isn't only peddling "Dreams": Classic rock can go viral, too. But old hits can't just skate by — they need smart promotion **BY STEVE KNOPPER and ANDREW UNTERBERGER**

**N**ATHAN APODACA'S cran-raspberry-sipping skateboard video, set to Fleetwood Mac's "Dreams," became a hit on TikTok soon after he posted it on Sept. 25 — but the 22-second clip didn't really go viral until after the band's managers and record label juiced it. Within days, the band shared the video on its Twitter account ("We love this!") and its label, Warner Music, began paying social influencers to spread the word.

Warner started with what Kevin Gore, president of global catalog for recorded music, calls "basic blocking and tackling": hitting up radio stations and streaming services for airplay and playlist exposure. The label also hired the Nashville startup Songfluencer, which companies employ to pay social media influencers to "add a little kero-

sene to the fire," says co-founder/CEO Johnny Cloherty. Soon, a TikTok user with 12 million followers was wiping out on his skateboard while drinking mayonnaise. (Another, with 2.3 million followers, opted for chocolate syrup.) By Oct. 3, the original clip had made it to TikTok's trending Discover page, and it became a viral sensation — big enough that people who don't use TikTok knew it. Then Shelter Music Group, which manages Fleetwood Mac, convinced drummer Mick Fleetwood to post his own video on Oct. 5. "Dreams" singer-songwriter Stevie Nicks followed a week later; estranged guitarist Lindsey Buckingham made his own clip the week after that.

Serendipity and all of these efforts made "Dreams" the first catalog hit revived by TikTok, which over the past year-and-a-half has consistently broken

new songs, such as recent Billboard Hot 100 chart-toppers "Mood" by 24kGoldn (featuring iann dior) and "Savage Love (Laxed — Siren Beat)" by Jawsh 685 and Jason Derulo. The 1977 single, which also topped the Hot 100 over 40 years ago, has now been used in nearly a half-million TikTok videos, and on-demand audio streams on Spotify and other services have almost quadrupled (while Fleetwood Mac's overall catalog of streams doubled). Warner may have made over \$250,000 in incremental revenue on "Dreams" — plus another \$250,000 on the increased popularity of the rest of the band's catalog. (The label would pay the band royalties on this.) "Dreams" reentered the Hot 100 at No. 21 on the chart dated Oct. 17, then rushed to No. 12 the following week — the group's best performance there since 1987.

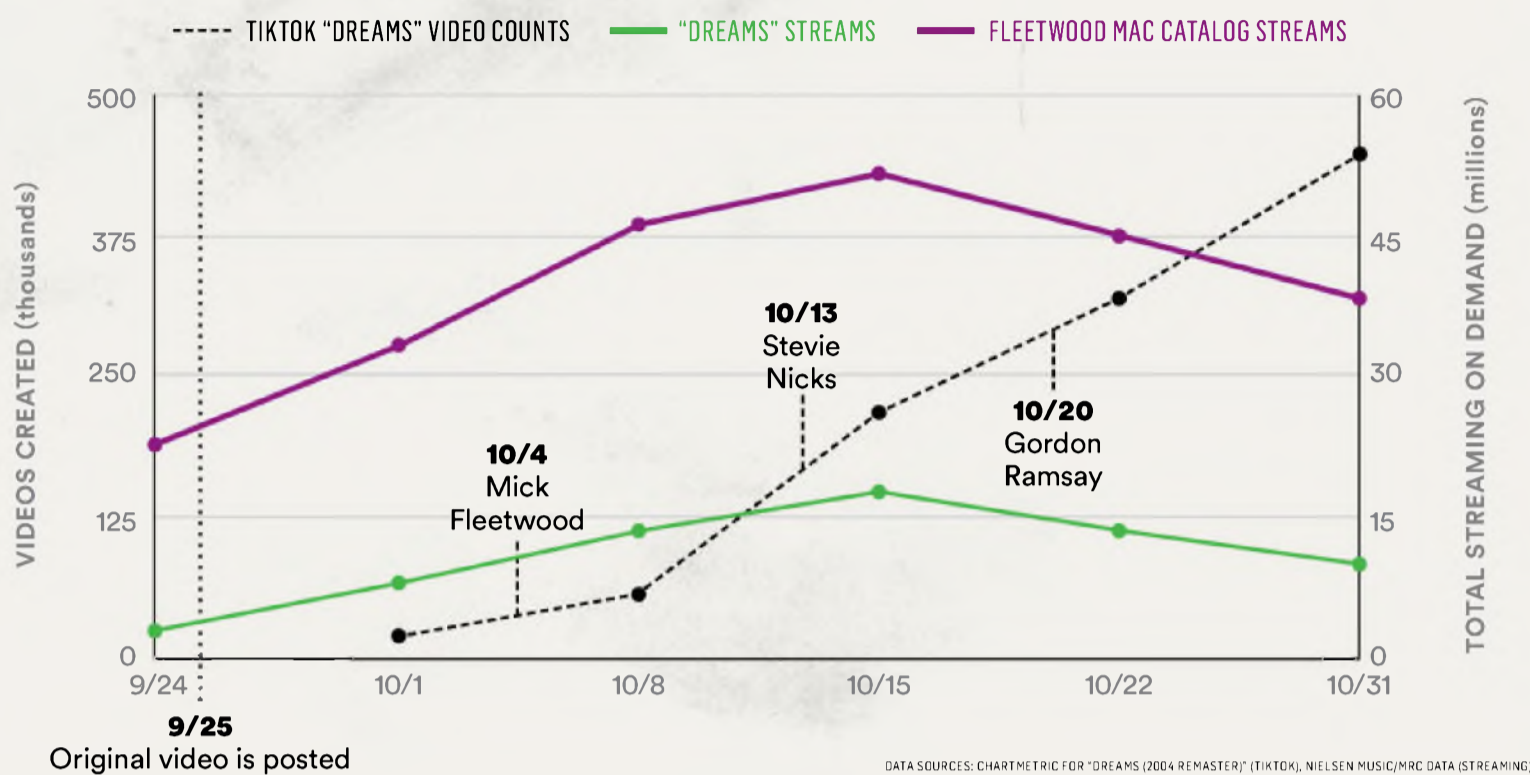
That makes TikTok "the most exciting thing happening in the catalog business in years and years, because of the ability and the opportunity to reach young people," says Bruce Resnikoff, president/CEO of Universal Music Enterprises (UME), which controls recordings by The Beatles, Bob Marley and Motown artists. Other older songs have had TikTok moments — Kesha's 2010 track "Cannibal" took off in early 2020, while Patience and Prudence's 1956 version of "Tonight You Belong to Me" somehow ruled 2019 — but none were nearly as successful.

The surprise popularity of Apodaca's video and "Dreams" comes as catalog listening is growing faster than new music amid the pandemic. For the year to date, as of the week ending Oct. 29, catalog audio on-demand streams were up 18.4% compared with the same

● UNIVERSAL MUSIC PUBLISHING GROUP SIGNED **KENDRICK LAMAR** TO AN ADMINISTRATION DEAL. ● **THE STROKES** SHIFTED TO RED LIGHT MANAGEMENT UNDER FOUNDER CORAN CAPSHAW.

## BIG MAC ATTACK

As “Dreams” was used in more TikTok videos — including posts by Mick Fleetwood (14.9 million views), Stevie Nicks (17.7 million) and chef Gordon Ramsay (51.7 million) — the popularity of the song and the band’s catalog grew



Artists Dillon Francis (left) and Zedd at the Amazon Twitch Prime Crown Cup in Las Vegas in 2019.

## GAME ON

THE LICENSING DISPUTE BETWEEN TWITCH AND THE MAJORS ADVANCES TO THE NEXT LEVEL

### IN 2019, AMAZON'S LIVESTREAM

platform, Twitch, a hub for competitive gamers, was barely on music executives' radar. Then the pandemic brought a surge in popularity — 17.5 million average daily visitors, with artists like Diplo and Mike Shinoda using it to connect with fans and bring in revenue — as well as a burgeoning licensing dispute with major-label executives that became public in late October.

Twitch doesn't have licensing deals with Universal Music Group, Sony Music, Warner Music Group or any of their respective publishing divisions. Users stream music in their videos, and Twitch isn't liable for any resulting copyright infringement as long as it responds to rights holders' takedown requests, in compliance with the 1998 Digital Millennium Copyright Act. On Oct. 20, Twitch responded to a new flurry of notices from the RIAA by removing thousands of clips — and upsetting hundreds of users.

The goal of these notices isn't simply to take clips offline — it's to bring Twitch to the negotiating table. Twitch "wants to try to get away with paying nothing and reaping the benefits of artists using their service," says RIAA chairman/CEO Mitch Glazier. "They're not going to."

The RIAA has sent Twitch 38,500 takedown notices this year. "Legally, we're doing everything correctly, and we are about empowering creators," says Twitch vp/head of music Tracy Chan. In September, the company launched Soundtrack by Twitch, an in-platform service that lets users legally incorporate music into their videos from a library of over 1 million rights-cleared recordings and songs by independent creators.

Both technology and music executives have seen this movie before: Platform uses music, platform doesn't pay for music, platform — after much back-and-forth — licenses music. (Twitch has licensing deals with performance rights organizations, including ASCAP and BMI.) Think YouTube and TikTok. The idea is for rights holders to reach a deal before they depend on the platform more than the platform depends on them. —TATIANA CIRISANO

period last year, according to Nielsen Music/MRC Data. TV commercials have followed the same trend since March, indicating the stay-at-home audience has been searching for “nostalgia and connection,” says Louis Monoyudis, online marketing expert and chief marketing officer of Levo Oil. (Thus, Monoyudis sets the herbal-oil and butter-infusion machine company's TikTok clips to older tracks like Avril Lavigne's “Girlfriend” and Nappy Roots' “Good Day.”) “Pre-pandemic, the perception a lot of marketers had was, ‘TikTok is really great, but it's very Generation Z-focused,’” he says. “But now that a lot of people of all ages and backgrounds are gravitating to TikTok, we're seeing the purchasing power — the way we saw on Facebook.”

Songfluencer is trying to capitalize on this trend, and the company now works on projects for the catalog divisions of all three major

labels. “They were a little hesitant, and I don't think they were fully grasping how they could use the platform yet,” says Cloherty. “As time went on, it became undeniable. This is just the start of the deep-catalog resurgence.”

Fleetwood Mac's TikTok popularity has already inspired other legacy artists to try to create their own viral moments. “You can't script this — it just happened,” says Shelter Music Group CEO Carl Stubner, who adds that other acts the company works with are paying attention. Some rights holders are trying to make something happen: The John Lennon estate launched a TikTok partnership on Oct. 8 by posting its own clips — with modest success, by TikTok standards. Others are taking steps to avoid seeming “manufactured,” as Sony Legacy senior vp marketing Andy McGrath says: “We are not especially focused

on the creation of TikTok moments as much as we are focused on our response and support of organic TikTok moments.” Adds UMe's Resnikoff: “In the past, reactive was fine. The ability to turn on a moment's notice and implement a plan in 24 hours has changed how we market catalog.”

More catalog songs are likely to follow “Dreams” to TikTok success — in part because, contractually, they're finally available to users. The service has spent much of this year finalizing music licenses with Universal Music Group, Warner Music Group and Sony Music (with which it announced a new deal on Nov. 2), as well as independent labels and publishers. The “Dreams” phenomenon is “the first big pop out of catalog” on TikTok, says Ashley Winton, senior vp creative services at publisher Warner Chappell. “There's going to be a lot more.”

### MARKET WATCH

**19.51B**

↓ 2.7%

#### TOTAL ON-DEMAND STREAMS WEEK OVER WEEK

Number of audio and video on-demand streams for the week ending Oct. 29.

**14.64M**

↓ 1.4%

#### ALBUM CONSUMPTION UNITS WEEK OVER WEEK

Album sales plus track-equivalent albums plus streaming-equivalent albums for the week ending Oct. 29.

**\$41.7B**

↓ 9.9%

#### TOTAL ON-DEMAND STREAMS YEAR OVER YEAR TO DATE

Number of audio and video streams for 2020 so far over the same period in 2019.

# ENDLESS

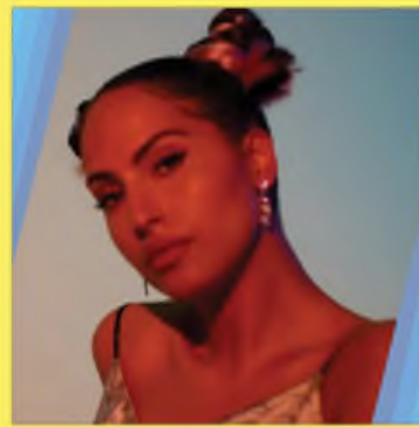
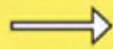
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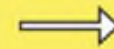
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# In A Tough Spot

Ek (left) and Rogan

Spotify has grown its stock price 57% this year, but it's fighting with publishers, upsetting some employees and will soon be the subject of a British Parliament inquiry

BY STEVE KNOPPER

**S**POTIFY'S OCT. 29 third-quarter earnings call was full of good news. The service now reaches 320 million monthly users with 144 million paid subscribers (up from 299 million and 138 million in the previous quarter, respectively), and its advertising business "returned to growth" after a pandemic-related decline. "There's a significant pent-up demand for Spotify around the world," said co-founder/CEO Daniel Ek, "even in places where our service has yet to launch."

The rest of the month wasn't so sunny. Two days earlier, podcaster Joe Rogan had right-wing conspiracy theorist Alex Jones on his Spotify-exclusive podcast; Jones ranted about how Bill Gates was trafficking in vaccines that spread polio (which he's not), angering Spotify staffers who had already spoken out about previous Rogan episodes that they considered transphobic.

It's a rare public relations problem for a company that consumers tend to love — and it raises questions about whether Spotify considers itself to be more of a platform for creators (like YouTube) or a distributor that exercises some editorial control. The company's \$100 million multiyear deal with Rogan suggests the latter, as does Ek's comment about the matter on the earnings call: "We obviously review all the

content that goes up." (Spotify did not comment for this story.)

These questions come at a time when Spotify is facing increased criticism from musicians who can't tour about the service's low per-stream payouts — roughly \$0.0038 to the label, and just a fraction of that to artists, according to the new Union of Musicians, which recently launched a campaign called Justice at Spotify — and publishers and songwriters with whom it is in a federal court dispute over royalties. They're not limited to the United States, either: A British Parliament committee plans to hold hearings as early as December about how streaming services pay. "We need to examine how appropriate the economic model is," says Kevin Brennan, a member of Parliament who serves on the Select Committee for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. "My starting point is, it can't be fair if the people making the music are reporting getting such a small share of the proceeds."

So far, Spotify has managed to shrug off most criticism from creators: The creators popularized the monthly subscription business model that revived the recorded-music business, and it's one of the biggest sources of revenue for rights holders, paying out \$1 billion per quarter this year. The pandemic has made these issues more urgent, however, and the Rogan controversy

will present new challenges. Even platforms like YouTube and Facebook have struggled to balance free speech (and the need for an audience) with some degree of corporate responsibility, and Spotify could have a tougher time ahead. Two years ago, in response to the #MuteRKelly movement, the company said it would no longer add certain artists' music to its playlists — then reversed the decision within a month. Now, the company could find itself in a no-win situation: Rogan's fans have complained about Spotify not uploading past episodes with far-right guests Milo Yiannopoulos and Gavin McInnes.

This isn't a music-business issue, but it will give industry critics ammunition. "It's hypocritical for the employees at Spotify to be concerned about the content in podcasts but to be silent about the company's efforts to devastate songwriting," says David Israelite, president/CEO of the National Music Publishers' Association. And as Google and Facebook have seen, PR headaches can add up to major migraines.

In the long run, Spotify may have to get used to being seen as less of a startup and more as one of the "ultimate capitalist monsters," like Google and Facebook, says Jim McDermott, a longtime major-label executive who is now a digital-marketing consultant for artists. "It's about making a profit for their shareholders." **b**

## KOBALT'S BIG DEAL

**I**N MID-SEPTEMBER, Bloomberg reported that Kobalt Music, the publishing company, was exploring a sale. So does the Nov. 2 sale of its Copyrights Fund I with 33,000 songs to Hipgnosis Songs for \$323 million suggest that the company might be sold piecemeal?

Probably not. In early October, Kobalt Music Copyrights Fund II acquired songwriter-producer David Hodges' compositions, and in December 2017, it bought the SONGS Music catalog. Just before the SONGS deal, Kobalt announced it had raised \$600 million to buy copyrights, and the Fund I price of \$323 million represents less than 30% of Kobalt Capital's assets under management — so the company almost certainly has cash to spend on acquisitions.

So where does that leave Kobalt, which in September said it was "evaluating the best capital structure for the business"? The sale of Fund I was a significant deal, but the loss of these songs will merely

dent Kobalt's overall revenue. Kobalt says these assets generated \$18 million a year in net publisher's share, which implies that they brought in about \$36 million annually. That's out of \$405 million in publishing revenue for the year ended June 30, 2019 — and out of \$543 million in total.

Kobalt may still be a buyer of publishing assets, as well as a potential seller of its overall operation —



Kobalt CEO Willard Ahdriz



Hipgnosis founder/CEO Merck Mercuriadis

perhaps to an investor that could buy out the company's current backers. "Kobalt Capital has generated good returns for our investors over the years," says Kobalt Capital CEO Johan Ahlström, "and we will continue to be active for them to acquire catalogs."

This deal is the biggest yet for Hipgnosis, which has already spent \$1 billion on music assets (mostly publishing copyrights). Some observers expressed surprise that the deal valued the Kobalt assets at a multiple of 18.3 times net publisher's share, rather than more. That's because Hipgnosis made a preemptive bid before Kobalt shopped them — perhaps saving some money by moving first and fast.

—ED CHRISTMAN

# spirit day



10.15.2020

## Justin Tranter Leading the Music Industry's Celebration of LGBTQ Youth

In lieu of GLAAD's annual Spirit Day Concert, GLAAD Board Member, activist and music industry leader, Justin Tranter issued a \$250,000 challenge in support of LGBTQ youth and called on the industry to join them

If you wish to join with Justin and the thousands who have made a gift in support of LGBTQ youth, please visit [www.glaad.org/billboard](http://www.glaad.org/billboard)

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Music Publishing

Nats Getty &  
Gigi Gorgeous

Nick Jonas & Priyanka Chopra

Joe Jonas & Sophie Turner

Adam Lambert

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Warner Chappell Music  
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BMI  
David Hornik  
Katie Vinten  
Daniel McQueen

Sophie Tweed-Simmons  
Kelvin Chu  
Patricia Kantor

Parvesh S. Cheena, Kathleen Joshua, Eren & Kristen Cannata, Wendy Hales, Joie Svendsen, Heidi Shauger, Vanessa Angiuli, Monica Bowers, Ross Golan, Tim Morta, Julie Pilat, Elizabeth Chambers, Gianluca Lignola, Richard Stambaugh, Gavin Strumpman, Nicholas Van Brunt, Robert Curry, Abby Diamond, Anne Denise Ford, Tom Lescoe, Jake Rogers, Beck Smith, Jennifer Ung, Dorothy Costa, Cullen Denson, Evie Hart, Catherine Katrovitz, Toni Mollo, Linda L Tarli, Richard Garcia, Colleen Rice, Jackson Steele, Bernie Wagenblast, Saphace Asamoah, Judy Brizzolara, Denise Dunn, Karen Izzi I. Gallagher, Sarinya Mahasiri, Stephanie Rossmeisl, Robert Morris, Nanci Van Fleet, Christy Bird



The Waldbühne in Berlin.

## Europe's Live Comeback Hits A Wall

New restrictions in the United Kingdom, Germany, France and Belgium threaten shows throughout 2021, leaving promoters unsure of how to plan ahead

BY ALEXEI BARRIONUEVO and RICHARD SMIRKE

 **LONDON** — When the Scottish rock band Biffy Clyro started planning its 2021 concerts — set to begin April 11 at Liverpool's Mountford Hall — lead singer Simon Neil suggested a title that suits the mood of Europe's live sector: the Fingers Crossed Tour.

Biffy's six-city U.K. tour, with dates set for London, Bristol and Cambridge, is planned for the earliest that most promoters in the country — and elsewhere in Europe — expect to mount full-capacity shows. “We're all adapting, readapting and trying to navigate [the] ever-changing landscape,” says Biffy Clyro manager Paul Craig.

A second wave of COVID-19 outbreaks is forcing European promoters to postpone major tours to the latter half of 2021, and in some cases into 2022 — which could deal a devastating blow to an already beleaguered industry. “We have tours on sale still for February, March and April, but I think one by one they are all going to move,” says Stuart Galbraith, CEO of London-based independent promoter Kilimanjaro Live. “Realistically, both us as an industry and the public now

recognize that there won't be any full-scale, 100% capacity concerts until at least the spring.”

Some major promoters see an even more dire situation developing. In October, Berlin-based Semmel Concerts moved a 24-date European tour by film composer Hans Zimmer from early 2021 to early 2022. “If we lose April and May, then we could lose the whole summer season,” says Semmel CEO Dieter Semmelmann, who thinks promoters need more time to regain the confidence of wary ticket buyers.

The concern comes as European countries are again shutting down their economies due to COVID-19 outbreaks. At the end of October, Belgium, France and the United Kingdom announced new lockdowns until at least December. Spain announced a state of emergency that includes curfews. Germany shut down nonessential businesses to try to relieve strained hospitals, while Italy and the Netherlands have limited gatherings to levels too low for promoters to mount profitable shows.

The latest restrictions come as government furlough programs wind

down in the United Kingdom and other countries, potentially contributing to a new wave of live-industry layoffs. In September, restrictions in the Netherlands led dance promoter ID&T to lay off 40% of its staff. So far, government aid for the live sector is having minimal impact. In Germany, Semmel expects to receive €800,000 (\$937,000) from an €80 million (\$93.7 million) government fund for concert promoters, but it hasn't received anything yet. (Semmel sells over 5 million tickets for nearly 2,000 shows annually.) In the United Kingdom, funds from a £1.57 billion (\$2 billion) aid package for music and entertainment won't be paid out to the majority of promoters until December.

As the situation becomes more challenging, promoters have tried to adapt their business strategies. This fall, Semmel held seven “Back to Live” concerts at Berlin's Waldbühne amphitheater for up to 5,000 people (less than 25% capacity), ostensibly, says Semmelmann, to show government officials that shows can be staged safely. German promoters are also dealing with political squabbling over

coronavirus “hotspot” rules, with local officials sometimes acting more conservatively than national health measures require. “If you want to tour a German act through Germany, we have to look at which rules are [active] at the moment,” says Semmelmann. Virus scares have also forced quick cancellations: In late September, organizers of the Virgin Money Unity Arena festival in Newcastle had to cancel its final three shows — featuring Declan McKenna, Kaiser Chiefs and Jack Savoretti — when northeast England was put under enhanced lockdown measures.

European promoters say they need rapid virus tests to make shows safer. U.K. industry executives are clamoring for a government-backed insurance plan to cover the costs of future show cancellations. (Austria says it will underwrite €300 million [\$351.3 million] for such a plan.) In the Netherlands, promoters want the government “to create clarity before the first of January 2021 so the whole event industry can work toward the summer,” says Ritty van Straalen, CEO of ID&T.

The return of live shows will likely depend on the status of a COVID-19 vaccine, the availability of therapeutics, government policies, testing and contact tracing. Unlike in Asia, European countries have struggled to gain enough adoption of smartphone apps that could help authorities better track outbreaks, largely because of privacy concerns. As of Oct. 29, the official U.K. health service app had been downloaded 19 million times, equating to 40% of adults with smartphones — short of the 60% needed for an effective tracing program.

Some promoters are still moving forward with concerts, albeit with restrictions. London's O2 Arena, which has postponed until 2021 over 115 of the nearly 190 shows planned for 2020, is scheduled to host its first live-music event in over eight months on Dec. 5 when rock band Squeeze plays a socially distanced gig at about 30% capacity. The O2 has become a “fully contactless venue” with enhanced cleaning regimes and a new, hands-free bag-searching policy, says Steve Sayer, vp/GM of the O2 at AEG Europe. “We know this is not the long-term answer. It's not a sustainable business model,” he says, “but it's really important that we are building back to full live.” O2 officials could be forced to scratch the Squeeze show if the virus situation in London gets bad enough. For Biffy Clyro, Craig has his fingers crossed. “I'm going to hope and pray,” he says, “that they still go on.”



*Happy 25th Spirit Music Group*

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*Much love, respect, and appreciation*



LYRIC CAPITAL PARTNERS



Moot (left) and Marshall photographed Oct. 7 at Warner Chappell Music in Los Angeles.

FROM THE DESKS OF

# GUY MOOT and CARIANNE MARSHALL

Co-chair/CEO and co-chair/COO, Warner Chappell Music

BY DAN RYS PHOTOGRAPHED BY MICHELE THOMAS

**W**HEN GUY MOOT AND CARIANNE Marshall took over as co-chairs and CEO and COO, respectively, of Warner Chappell Music in April 2019, they had one overarching goal: to reshape the publisher, which traces its history back to 1811, into a company with its sights set on a global future. So far though, the way forward has been more complicated than the two executives might have hoped, due to a pandemic that forced the company to operate remotely and will almost certainly cause public performance revenue to drop, a public offering for Warner Music and a nationwide reckoning over racial injustice that resonated particularly strongly in the music business.

“It’s a bit like doing your job, but not living your job,” says Moot, referring to the endless Zoom video meetings that fill his days. “It has been exhilarating and exhausting. But when we came

in, we knew we had a company that was asset-rich, that had great people, but we wanted to put some ambition into it and change the culture.”

Moot is a London native who spent a decade at EMI Music Publishing before helping lead its merger with Sony/ATV, where he rose to president of worldwide creative before coming to Warner. Marshall hails from Los Angeles and spent 12 years helping to establish the independent powerhouse SONGS Music Publishing before its 2017 sale to Kobalt. Together, Warner Chappell has two executives with extensive backgrounds on the creative side of the business. So far, they’ve already applied those talents toward big-name signings (Frank Ocean, Thomas Rhett, the Quincy Jones catalog, the Pop Smoke estate); a revamped creative suite with a new department dedicated to creative services; a more prioritized global hierarchy, including new global heads of administration, international

A&R and synchronization; and new offices in Asia, including Shanghai.

“A lot of the writers that have chosen to sign to us, or catalogs that have come here, is because these folks are interested in a suite of services,” says Marshall. “They’re interested in that international collaboration; they care about being connected.”

So far during the pandemic, business is still booming: Warner Music Group’s publishing revenue is expected to grow between 0.3% and 3.4% in 2020, to between \$645 million and \$665 million, according to an advance preview of WMG’s financials that the company disclosed as part of a \$250 million debt offering announced in October. And though Warner Chappell has remained steady at No. 4 on *Billboard*’s Publishers Quarterly rankings — behind Sony/ATV, Universal Music Publishing Group and Kobalt, in terms of market share — Moot and Marshall are optimistic that signing the right creators and making the right deals will pay off down the line.

“Market share comes — it’s the byproduct of doing things right,” says Moot. “So we’re going with our hearts, and most importantly our ears, and signing exciting, culturally relevant, important music. But then we’re going to offer our writers a suite of services that will see them monetize their career in the modern world of publishing, where the uses and licenses and outlets for their songs becomes ever more greater, fractured and diverse.”

**Why are creators like Quincy Jones choosing you to work their catalogs?**

**CARIANNE MARSHALL** We can drive value for a lot

● ED SHEERAN AGENT JON OLLIER ANNOUNCED PLANS TO EXIT CREATIVE ARTISTS AGENCY AND LAUNCH HIS OWN COMPANY. ● BRAVADO CEO MAT VLASIC RESIGNED.

## “MARKET SHARE COMES — IT’S THE BYPRODUCT OF DOING THINGS RIGHT.”

—GUY MOOT

of these catalogs by not just continuing to take good care of the big copyrights but also doing a deep dive. For the first time, we have a global head of synchronization, which is really important: We want to work with anyone who wants to use our songs to try to figure out how to create solutions for them. It’s important to us to be able to search our catalog to find something in every genre and at every price point with a quick turnaround. We’re building a new system that helps us do that. Right now, since the Quincy Jones catalog is new again to us [Jones was previously signed with Warner Chappell from 1987 to 2006], we’re focusing on highlighting some of those hidden gems, creating covers and other creative approaches to present songs in a different way, to make sure we’re not just looking at the typical opportunities. A good song can be cut by almost anybody and still be fabulous. That’s the heart of it. A bunch of our holiday songs we had covered by a female mariachi band, and we publish their original music as well. There’s all sorts of areas to explore.

### What are the growth areas for publishing?

**GUY MOOT** A lot of these services, like TikTok or Peloton, would be nothing without music — all these things we find really exciting. What we really hope is that some of these new sources of revenue — we’re particularly focused on livestreaming, for example, which we think has huge potential — when the more traditional world of live touring, bars and clubs comes back, it’s just going to be continued upside.

**MARSHALL** We can expand our reach in traditional digital media, too, because media is so fractured and there are so many more places to put your song. We just need to make sure that we’re responding as the business changes. And I think what’s important to us as well is that it’s not just about the top songs — it’s about all the songs, but it’s also about production music. If it’s somebody like a Peloton or a new television channel, we can provide a service at every level.

### Why was international such a big priority, and what’s your strategy for it?

**MOOT** Good songs can come from anywhere. There will be international writers and producers coming out of Asia, and we’re already seeing it in Europe. We also need to offer services to local writers in those markets, as well as those who have international ambitions. We’re underpinning this with ARROW, our song-pitching search engine, where all of our songs can be found and licensed wherever in the

world. You have to look at this as within a global economy — music doesn’t do borders and territories — and in terms of emerging markets. We’ve invested a lot in Asian repertoire, which underpins the licensing of local [digital service providers] there. We’ve opened an office in Shanghai because that’s where a lot of the licensing comes from. But we’re looking everywhere. I was talking about the Caribbean recently, about how we’ve got to look at supporting the local collection societies down there.

### With the Mechanical Licensing Collective launching in January, how will the unmatched revenue that becomes available be allocated to songwriters?

**MARSHALL** The Music Modernization Act showed that the entire industry could come together to compromise and build solutions to real problems faced by songwriters. But it’s also a work in progress to figure out how to live harmoniously with all these new services that are coming. So it’s probably better to see six months from now how it’s working. But we’re hopeful.

### Independent companies like Hipgnosis and Primary Wave have been buying song catalogs for prices based on multiples of annual revenue that are very high, compared with what the industry has seen before. Is that driving up prices in general?

**MOOT** I’ve spent most of my publishing career



1



2



3



4

1. “I’m a lifelong Dodgers fan, and the World Series win was exhilarating,” says Marshall. “Some of [manager] Dave Roberts’ decisions, like using seven pitchers in the final game, really made me nervous. The most important thing is that we got the win, so I have to hand it to him!” 2. “I’m a huge University of Southern California football fan, and it’s in the family — I graduated from USC, as did my brother, and my mom has worked there for years,” says Marshall. “She made this mask for me a few months ago.” 3. “Growing up an Arsenal F.C. [soccer] fan — I’m from ‘Norf’ London — I was lucky to experience their glory years from 2003 to 2004, when they were undefeated,” says Moot. “[Star striker] Thierry Henry embodied so many principles I admire: his winning mentality and never taking that moment for granted.” 4. “I was lucky to have worked with Amy Winehouse. She’s a true once-in-a-lifetime artist, and *Back to Black* is special to me,” says Moot. “It was also one of my biggest honors to have Amy play at our wedding, on her 21st birthday.”

advising songwriters never to sell their catalog. It’s the crown jewels — your retirement plan. But multiples are going so high, I can’t blame writers for wanting to sell. I think the writers are happy about it, I think the managers and attorneys are happy about it, and as far as the investors — well, that’s their view of how those multiples support a deal. It reaffirms people’s confidence in the publishing business and our own value and worth, if you like.

Right now, money is cheap and multiples are high. We’ll see where this goes. But if these fund guys go off and invest their money in cement or natural resources or whatever the next safe haven or growth area is, who will look after these synch licenses that come in? In a streaming world, you have to fight to be heard. You have to be really creative with how you keep songs alive. And, no disrespect, that’s not what fund managers do — that’s what publishers do. ■

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# The Sound

PLUS: 7 YOUNG ARTISTS TO WATCH ✦ TIKTOK'S MOST

POPULAR TEEN PERFORMERS

Beabadoobee  
photographed  
Oct. 19 in London.

21 UNDER 21

## 'SHE IS HER TARGET DEMOGRAPHIC'

With the rise of TikTok, it has never been easier to score an inadvertent viral smash. That's exactly what happened to 20-year-old beabadoobee, who followed her first Billboard Hot 100 hit with a debut album that sounded nothing like it

BY CHRISTINE WERTHMAN  
PHOTOGRAPHED BY NICOLE NODLAND

**I**N 2017, BEA LAUS GOT kicked out of her all-girls Catholic school in London over a combination of “grades and behavior,” she says. “They knew I smoked in the toilets a lot, and I guess that was bad.”

She had attended the school since she was 12 and often felt alienated during her time there: “I didn’t have the same hobbies as all the other Asian kids,” she recalls, “and I was ‘too Asian’ to be in the popular group.” The now-20-year-old was born in the Philippines and moved to the United Kingdom with her parents when she was a toddler. While her father always focused on her academics, her mother advocated for music education, encouraging Laus to play the violin starting at age 5 and introducing her to Alanis Morissette and Nirvana, which jump-started a love for 1990s alt-rock.

Getting expelled from school left Laus, then 17, feeling lost. She turned to writing as a therapeutic release and took comfort in the music of Alex G, Elliott Smith and The Moldy Peaches. Her dad bought her a secondhand classical guitar, which she learned how to play by watching YouTube tutorials. The first original track she wrote for guitar was the gentle acoustic love song “Coffee” that she uploaded to streaming services in 2017 and became her breakout single under the name beabadoobee. (The moniker came from the made-up account

name for her Finsta, a secondary Instagram account, because at the time she thought, “No one’s going to care.”)

Soon after, fans began leaving positive feedback about the song on Laus’ public Instagram, which encouraged her to make more music. Three years later, her feelings of isolation are delivered as rock-leaning bedroom pop songs on her debut album, *Fake It Flowers*, a companion piece to the pains of young adulthood. And she’s striking a nerve with a predominantly young female fan base that gravitates toward her as a kindred spirit.

In 2018, two months after releasing a quiet guitar EP called *Lice* that focused on loneliness, depression and teenage angst across four songs in under nine minutes, she shared the tenderhearted “Susie May.” The one-off grabbed the attention of Jamie Osborne, founder of independent label Dirty Hit, home of The 1975, The Japanese House and Rina Sawayama, among others. “I just thought it was extraordinary,” recalls Osborne. “It was like a mashup of Brian Wilson and Elliott Smith.” He emailed Laus, and after a couple of meetings — which also included head of A&R Chris Fraser and Chris Melian, a manager at the label — Laus signed a recording contract.

While Laus explored bolder, more

electrified production on her following three EPs (best heard on “I Wish I Was Stephen Malkmus” off 2019’s *Space Cadet*), “Coffee” continued to bring her the most attention, long after its release. Last year, Canadian rapper Powfu sampled it for his song “death bed (coffee for your head),” turning Laus’ refrain into a hypnotic singsong. The track exploded on TikTok after it was released on Powfu’s label, Columbia, and eventually reached No. 23 on the Billboard Hot 100.

“A lot of people put down her success to that collaboration, but in a sense, because of all the work she’d done building these audiences, she was almost predestined to have success,” says Chaz Jenkins, chief commercial officer of the music data analytics

platform Chartmetric, which shows that over 50% of Laus’ 800,000-plus Instagram followers are females under 24. “She intuitively understands her target demographic because she *is* her target demographic.”

Even before she landed her first Hot 100 hit, Laus had toured with Clairo in the United States and conquered U.K. arenas opening for labelmates The 1975 earlier this year before the coronavirus cut the trek short. She has spent the pandemic at home in London, frequently posting on Instagram and releasing a handful of singles and videos leading up to the release of her ’90s grunge-pop-influenced debut full-length that arrived Oct. 16 and entered at No. 2 on *Billboard’s* Heatseekers Albums chart.

Laus wrote the songs — some of which recollect painful, isolating memories while others look to her hopeful future — in her bedroom before bringing them to the studio with producers Joseph Rodgers and Pete Robertson, her collaborators since 2019’s *Loveworm*. There, they helped refine a range of electric and acoustic guitars that lean heavily on the rock riffs Laus idolized as a kid.

She says *Fake It Flowers* is one of her most honest pieces of writing because it captures her at such a pivotal point not just in her career, but in her life. “I’m still growing and figuring things out and still make loads of mistakes, and I’m still really stupid, but it’s all part of learning,” she says.

Laus still has plenty of dreams to fulfill — including settling down, having children and becoming a nursery school teacher. Until then, she wants “to inspire, or hope to inspire, people just like me. Or girls that used to be like me when I was 15.”



## NO WAY TO ‘FAKE IT’

DIRTY HIT FOUNDER JAMIE OSBORNE ON THE SECRETS TO MANAGING YOUNG TALENT



### Why did you start Dirty Hit?

Dirty Hit was a reaction to two things: One was my perceived loss of control when [my clients] signed to a major label, and the other was I wanted something that superserved the artist across all of their needs, whether they be creative or commercial or even deal structures. We only have 50/50 profit splits with our artists. It’s all about artist facilitation. And I believe that stands, whether you’re a label, publisher, manager, agent, promoter, publicist or plugger. You can probably tell I get quite passionate about it

because too often that is not the case.

### What are the challenges of working with artists just starting out?

I feel like young adults are under an awful lot of pressure right now, growing up with social media and in the modern age. I’ve spoken to a few of my artists as we get closer to albums, and a parallel between a lot of them has been that they’ve released work and feel like it’s an invitation to be judged — and that’s an uncomfortable place to inhabit. From day one, our mantra is, “If we’re

proud of it, we’ve already won. It doesn’t matter what other people think.” I try and instill that into our artists.

### Do you have any tips to offer those who manage younger artists?

Trust your instincts. A lot of people will tell you you can’t do stuff because they want you to commit to working with them, but you can do as much as you believe your artist can do. There’s a lot of scare-mongering in music, but you’re as strong as your creative expression. And yes, I know I’m a terrible idealist. —C.W.

**HOLLY HUMBERSTONE**, a 20-year-old independent British singer-songwriter, scored a breakout hit with “Falling Asleep at the Wheel,” the title track to her debut EP.

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# 24kGoldn

✂ **AGE** 19

✂ **STREAMS** 702.7M

✂ **LABEL** RECORDS/COLUMBIA

Dubbed by RECORDS CEO Barry Weiss as “Post Malone meets Will Smith,” 24kGoldn has quickly become a familiar voice on pop radio after notching his first Billboard Hot 100 No. 1 in October with “Mood,” featuring iann dior. Besides his emo-leaning smash, Goldn’s win-now mentality and bubbly demeanor have made him a favorite on Twitter and TikTok, boasting 3 million followers on the latter. “If people like your Twitter, they like you because of who you are and what you got to say,” he says, “not because you’re flexing expensive cars or watches.” The rising artist is now focused on his upcoming debut album, *El Dorado*, and says his biggest goal for 2021 is to be “better than I was last year.”

**Since your career took off, what’s the biggest business lesson you’ve learned?**

Make sure your team is tight. Nobody can do this by themselves, and it’s essential to have a solid team to focus on the art.

**Which artist’s career do you most admire and why?**

JAY-Z, Drake and Kanye [West]. From Jay, I admire his composure and how he was able to become a business mogul after a strong music career. From Drake, I admire his ability to adapt to the times and make music that’s always relevant and relatable. From Kanye, I admire his willingness to step outside the box and be a true artist, not limiting himself to music and pursuing all art he’s passionate about.

**What’s the most powerful thing about being a young artist in the music industry?**

Having a fresh perspective and not feeling the need to follow rules. Our generation is so experimental and bold, and that reflects in my music. I’m able to make the conscious choice to step outside the box and pave the way for future artists to be themselves.

**Why is it important to explore multiple genres?**

I think that’s just the way the world is moving, you know? We don’t have radio stations that are controlling the way music is made anymore. Back in the day, if you wanted to blow up, you had to make music that would fit in a certain box so they knew what to do with it. Music now is more democratic than ever. I can make a country jazz trap song and blow it up on TikTok tomorrow, and they’ll have to put it on the rap stations, they’ll put it on the country stations, and they’ll put it on the jazz stations. It can go in so many different places. So to be the biggest artist in the world, which is what I want to be, you can’t focus on genre. You have to focus on making the best music in the world.

—CARL LAMARRE



New Zealand producer **JAWSH 685**, 17, topped the Hot 100 when his Jason Derulo team-up “Savage Love (Laxed — Siren Beat)” received a BTS instrumental remix.



24kGoldn photographed  
by Sami Drasin on  
Sept. 25 in Los Angeles.



## Billie Eilish

✂ **AGE** 18

✂ **STREAMS** 12.1B

✂ **LABEL** DARKROOM/  
INTERSCOPE

After scoring 2019's biggest debut album with *When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?* and a historic sweep of the Grammy Awards' Big Four categories in January — the first artist to do so since Christopher Cross 39 years earlier — Billie Eilish has become one of the biggest artists on the planet. And while the pandemic stunted her arena world tour just three dates in, she has still managed to make the most of 2020, with a pair of singles (the sweeping James Bond theme “No Time To Die” and the meditative “My Future”) debuting in the Hot 100's top 20 and an inventive global livestream that fused reality with virtual environments.

## Lunay

✂ **AGE** 20

✂ **STREAMS** 524.5M

✂ **LABEL** STAR ISLAND

After posting videos of himself freestyling on Facebook in 2017, Puerto Rican native Lunay got a call from producers Chris Jedi and Gaby Music. Two years later, Lunay was collaborating with reggaetón superstars Daddy Yankee and Bad Bunny on “Soltera (Remix),” his first top 10 on the Hot Latin Songs chart, peaking at No. 3 and raking in 343.2 million U.S. streams, according to Nielsen Music/MRC Data. Signed to indie label Star Island, the rising artist, who has since scored collaborations with Ozuna and Anuel AA, credits his success to two things: “humility and hard work.”

## Natanael Cano

✂ **AGE** 19

✂ **STREAMS** 905.3M

✂ **LABEL** RANCHO HUMILDE

Six months into 2020, Mexican artist Cano — who only launched his career in 2019 — became the third-most-consumed Latin artist in the United States, according to Nielsen Music/MRC Data's midyear report, ranking just behind Bad Bunny and Ozuna. Since partnering with Bad Bunny on “Soy El Diablo (Remix)” in October 2019, Cano has released four projects, including *Trap Tumbado* in June, cementing his place as a leading force in trap *corridos*. And as his career continues to grow in the United States, by 2021, he says, “I'd love to reach every corner of Mexico.”

In March, 19-year-old Dallas-born R&B singer **KAASH PAIGE** topped the Next Big Sound artist chart and in August released her debut album.



From left:  
NCT Dream,  
Koffee and Cyrus.

## Noah Cyrus

- ✂ AGE 20
- ✂ STREAMS 940.7M
- ✂ LABEL RECORDS/COLUMBIA

On this year's *The End of Everything* EP, Cyrus was eager to explore her softer side, saying, "I definitely set the standard for myself lyrically moving forward." The 2019 single "July" received a remix featuring Leon Bridges, which in May climbed to No. 4 on the Triple A Songs chart; more recently, Cyrus rereleased "I Got So High That I Saw Jesus" as a duet with older sister Miley after the pair performed it on Miley's *Backyard Sessions* virtual tour. The video has nearly 4 million YouTube views.

## Manuel Turizo

- ✂ AGE 20
- ✂ STREAMS 328.1M
- ✂ LABEL LA INDUSTRIA/SONY MUSIC LATIN

In 2017, at 16, Turizo scored a viral hit with debut single "Una Lady Como Tú." Since, he has topped the Mexico Airplay chart with "Quiéreme Mientras Se Pueda" and the Latin Airplay list with his Sebastián Yatra-Rauw Alejandro collaboration "TBT." The Colombian artist says his second album, *Dopamina*, will "dominate" 2021. "I hope that by the time I'm 60, people will still be consuming my music and going to my concerts," he says. "It's not about being at the top. It's about acquiring an audience [that will be] by your side throughout your career."

## Lil Mosey

- ✂ AGE 18
- ✂ STREAMS 2.6B
- ✂ LABEL INTERSCOPE

Washington state native Lil Mosey says that he'll "always remember" his first top 10 single on the Hot 100, as his springy track "Blueberry Faygo" slowly rose up the chart thanks to TikTok clips and reached No. 8 earlier this year. The MC has been prolific since, but wants to eventually transcend music: "I look at Post Malone and Travis Scott because they've hit that arena level of their careers," he says, "but they're also doing more than just music — like, Travis is doing McDonald's deals; Post created his own wine company. Those are the kind of things I'm working toward."

## NCT Dream

- ✂ AGE 18-20
- ✂ STREAMS 142M
- ✂ LABEL SM ENTERTAINMENT

NCT Dream (a subunit of the K-pop group NCT) experienced a first this year: Original member Mark returned, ending the band's long-held rule that members would leave at the Korean age of 20. Prior to his return, NCT Dream led the Emerging Artists chart thanks to its EP *Reload*; since Mark rejoined, all seven members appeared on NCT's second full-length, *NCT Resonance Pt. 1*, which hit No. 6 on the Billboard 200 (and topped the World Albums chart) and was made with the group's NCTzens in mind. Says Haechan: "Since it has been a hard time for many, I hope our songs provide a sense of hope and strength."

## The Kid LAROI

- ✂ AGE 17
- ✂ STREAMS 457.2M
- ✂ LABEL GRADE A PRODUCTIONS/COLUMBIA

The Kid LAROI had doubts that his debut mixtape, *F\*CK LOVE*, would even chart on the Billboard 200, so when the July release entered at No. 8, he was "jumping around the house all fucking day." Since being discovered through Australian station triple j's competition series, the alternative hip-hop artist born Charlton Howard was included on late rapper Juice WRLD's posthumous Hot 100 top 10 hit "Hate the Other Side." Looking ahead, The Kid LAROI points to Drake's impact on Canada to indicate what he hopes to do for Australia's music scene.

## Koffee

- ✂ AGE 20
- ✂ STREAMS 189.2M
- ✂ LABEL PROMISED LAND/RCA

Three weeks before turning 20, the multitalented artist born Mikayla Simpson made history at the 2020 Grammys: She not only became the first female artist to win best reggae album in the award's 35-year history, but also the category's youngest winner of all time. She plans to use her success "to set an example for those who are younger than me — to inspire others to reach their full potential." In the meantime, she's still forging new accomplishments of her own, like a pair of hit collaborations with U.K. star J Hus ("Repeat") and reggae legend Buju Banton (the "Pressure" remix).

**KEEDRON BRYANT**, 13, signed with Warner Records and performed "I Just Wanna Live," a protest song written by his mother, during the virtual BET Awards in June.

# Spirit**MUSIC** G R O U P



# YEARS

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## Benee

✂ AGE 20

✂ STREAMS 318.1M

✂ LABEL REPUBLIC

New Zealand native Benee (born Stella Rose Bennett) broke out this year with her TikTok-fueled alt-pop hit “Supalonely,” featuring Gus Dapperton, as its quirky and colorful music video garnered over 159 million YouTube views and pushed it onto the Hot 100. Benee, who “never imagined” appearing on late-night shows in the United States, delivered virtual performances on *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*, *The Ellen DeGeneres Show* and others; more recently, she played to 24,000 people at two sold-out hometown performances. She also launched her own label, Olive (through Universal Music New Zealand), and will release her debut album on Nov. 13.

## NLE Choppa

✂ AGE 18

✂ STREAMS 2.9B

✂ LABEL NO LOVE ENTERTAINMENT (NLE)/WARNER

After bursting onto the scene in 2019 with his top 40 hit “Shotta Flow,” NLE Choppa has represented Memphis hip-hop this year by releasing collaborations with Lil Baby, Roddy Ricch and Mulatto during self-isolation. “I guess the pandemic really slowed everything down, but it helped me find myself,” says the rapper, who released his major-label debut, *Top Shotta*, in August, which entered the top 10 on the Billboard 200.

## Mason Ramsey

✂ AGE 13

✂ STREAMS 133.1M

✂ LABEL BIG LOUD/ATLANTIC

It has been nearly three years since Mason Ramsey went viral yodeling Hank Williams’ “Lovesick Blues” inside a Walmart. But the Golconda, Ill., native remains humble (“At the end of the day, I put my boots on just like everybody else,” he says with a laugh) — and in the spotlight. He hopped on a remix of 2019’s record-breaking hit “Old Town Road,” which he performed at this year’s Grammys, and though he hasn’t released any new music yet in 2020, his summer campaign for Burger King that focused on reducing global methane emissions has earned nearly 75,000 views on Twitter.



From left: Barrett, Halle and Chloe Bailey, and Lil Tecca.

## Gabby Barrett

✂ AGE 20

✂ STREAMS 487M

✂ LABEL WARNER MUSIC NASHVILLE

Vindictive breakup hit “I Hope” became Barrett’s first No. 1 on *Billboard*’s Country Airplay chart in April. Six months later, it received a second wind thanks to a new version featuring Charlie Puth that reached the summit on Adult Pop Songs and also entered the Hot 100’s top 10. (It currently sits at No. 6.) Puth had reached out to Barrett on Instagram, her preferred social media platform, about duetting on the track that she now says “completely changed my trajectory. It just happened to be the fourth song I had ever written in Nashville and has opened so many doors for me.”

## Chloe x Halle

✂ AGE 22, 20

✂ STREAMS 344.7M

✂ LABEL PARKWOOD ENTERTAINMENT/COLUMBIA

The Beyoncé-championed sister duo delivered on its promising beginnings this year with acclaimed second album *Ungodly Hour*, which debuted at No. 2 on the Top R&B Albums chart, while lead single “Do It” became the pair’s Hot 100 debut and also reached No. 4 on the Mainstream R&B/Hip-Hop chart. And when the siblings aren’t busy transforming their at-home tennis court into a stage (as they did for their BET Awards virtual performance and others), they’re advocating for the Black Lives Matter movement and voting: “Our parents instilled in us that the power is in our hands.”

## Lil Tecca

✂ AGE 18

✂ STREAMS 2.5B

✂ LABEL GALACTIC/REPUBLIC

Last year, Queens rapper Lil Tecca exploded with his summertime scorcher “Ran\$om,” which hit No. 4 on the Hot 100 and received a remix from the late Juice WRLD. Tecca’s hot streak continued when he released *We Love You Tecca* in August 2019. The mixtape showcased his penchant for melodic rap hooks and reached No. 4 on the Billboard 200, setting the stage for his debut album this year, *Virgo World*, which entered the chart at No. 10 in October. As for what’s in store for 2021, the rapper hopes to “continue elevating and enjoying life.”

In October, 20-year-old singer-songwriter **MXMTOON** released her EP *dusk*, featuring Carly Rae Jepsen and leading with a track named after Bon Iver.



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Jxdn photographed by Ssam Kim on July 27 in Los Angeles.

# jxdn

✂ **AGE** 19

✂ **STREAMS** 96.1M

✂ **LABEL** DTA RECORDS

Since earning a massive audience on TikTok, Jaden Hossler has translated his 8.7 million followers on the app into a fan base that eagerly streams his singles. The rising alt-rocker, who releases music as jxdn, signed to Travis Barker's DTA Records in May; soon after, singles "Angels & Demons" and "So What" both entered the Hot Rock & Alternative Songs chart's top 10. Says jxdn: "A year ago, I was just a consumer, so I feel like I have a good pulse on what people want to hear."

**Since your career took off, what's the biggest business lesson you have learned?**

It sounds cliché, but I've learned that you can't trust everyone. It's so important to keep your circle close. That's definitely something I've learned from working with Travis — DTA literally stands for "Don't trust anyone," and in this business it's so true.

**Why do you think Travis was eager to sign you as his label's first artist?**

I have a lot of faith in my life, and I think that's why Travis really wanted to work with me, because I'm not looking for the gratification of numbers or instant money. I'm definitely looking toward the future and the impact that I could have.

**What artist's career do you most admire and why?**

Machine Gun Kelly. He's the perfect example of not letting people put you in a box. I also admire how much love and passion he puts into his work. He is constantly pushing to be better. I've learned a lot from watching him already.

**How have you been preparing to perform while the live industry remains on hold?**

I've been working hard to stay consistent with my vocal coach and been getting into guitar as well. I also constantly envision and manifest what kind of artist I want to be onstage. I'm so ready to get out there.

**What's your biggest goal for 2021?**

Hopefully, to be able to get out on the road so people can experience my music — and win a Grammy. —LYNDSEY HAVENS

Argentine R&B-trap artist **NICKI NICOLE**, 20, is up for best new artist at the 2020 Latin Grammy Awards, thanks to the hits "Colocao" and "Mamichula."

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## Carlie Hanson

✂ **AGE** 20

✂ **STREAMS** 97.1M

✂ **LABEL** WARNER

Before Hanson signed to Warner Records in 2019, she had already opened on tour for Troye Sivan and Yungblud — the latter of whom, she says, isn't afraid to speak his mind, "which is what every young person should feel like." And before the alt-pop singer had even released her debut EP, she earned a co-sign from Taylor Swift, who had hand-picked Hanson's "Back in My Arms" for her Apple Music playlist. In October, Hanson released her second EP, *DestroyDestroyDestroyDestroy*, which included collaborations with Lil West ("Fires") and rising star iann dior ("ego").

## Lil Tjay

✂ **AGE** 19

✂ **STREAMS** 2.3B

✂ **LABEL** COLUMBIA

With two top 20 Hot 100 features to his name — Polo G's 2019 track "Pop Out" and Pop Smoke's 2020 posthumous hit "Mood Swings" — Lil Tjay has quickly become a go-to collaborator. The Bronx native's harrowing street tales and icy love ballads make up much of his debut album, last year's *True 2 Myself*, which entered the Billboard 200's top five. "We set the tone," he says. "What's hot, who's next up and what the drip is." He plans to do just that with his upcoming second album next year, declaring: "I'm going to have more plaques — and a No. 1 album."

## Moore Kismet

✂ **AGE** 15

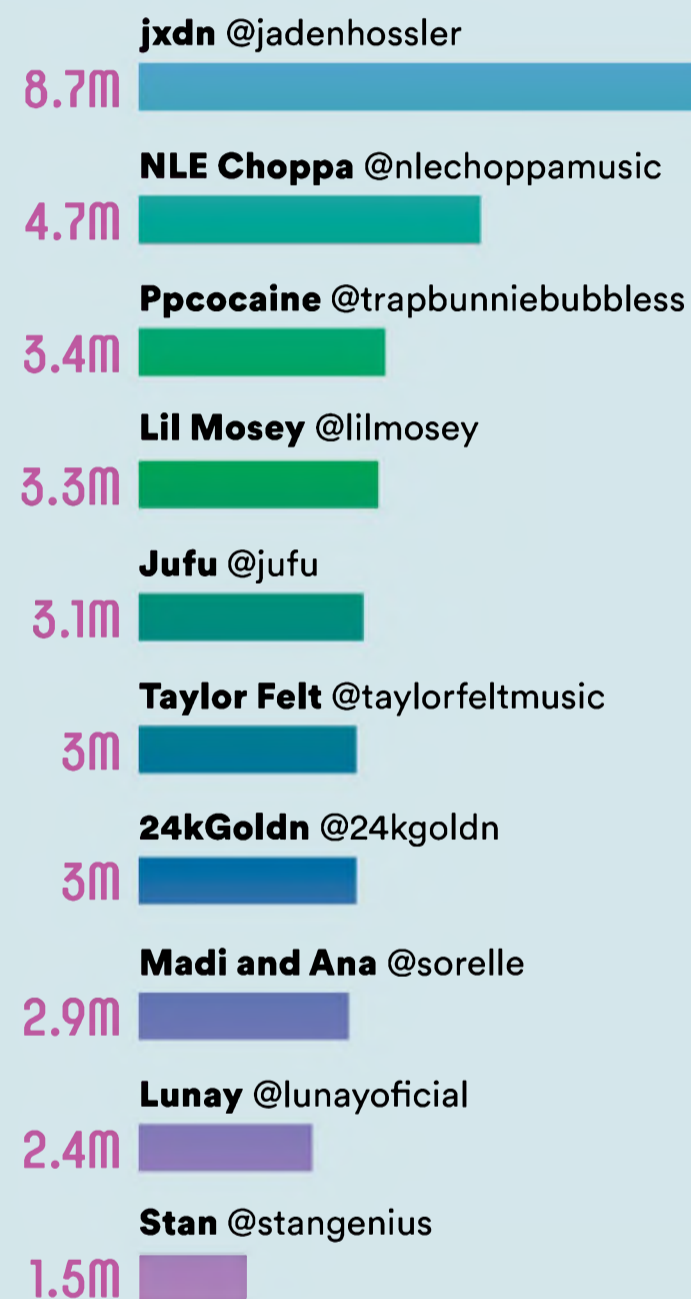
✂ **STREAMS** 769K

✂ **LABEL** N/A

Last November, Kismet was a finalist among Beat Battle Contestants at the 2019 Goldie Awards, presented by A-Trak. Since then, the independent, nonbinary Los Angeles bass producer has released their *Revenge of the Unicorns* EP on Never Day Die. "The most powerful thing about being a young artist is knowing I have more than enough time to chase after any dream," says Kismet — and according to friends and family, the work ethic. "I've been told a number of times that they've never seen anyone their age or older hustle quite like I have."

## TikTok's Teen Sensations

AMONG THOSE WHO ARE UNDER 21 ON THE APP, THESE 10 ARTISTS HAVE RAKED IN THE MOST MILLIONS OF FOLLOWERS



**CONTRIBUTORS** Katie Bain, Griselda Flores, Gab Ginsberg, Josh Glicksman, Lyndsey Havens, Carl Lamarre, Jason Lipshutz, Melinda Newman, Jessica Roiz, Andrew Unterberger

**METHODOLOGY** A committee of *Billboard* editors and reporters weighed a variety of factors in determining the 2020 21Under21 list, including, but not limited to, impact on consumer behavior, as measured by such metrics as album and track sales, streaming volume, social media impressions, and radio and TV audiences reached; career trajectory; reputation among peers; and overall impact in the industry, specifically during the past 12 months. Where required, record-label market share was consulted using Nielsen Music/MRC Data market share for album plus track-equivalent and stream-equivalent album consumption units. Unless otherwise noted, *Billboard* Boxscore and Nielsen Music/MRC Data are the sources for tour grosses and sales/streaming data, respectively.

Canadian alt-pop artist **TATE McRAE**, 17, debuted on the Hot 100 this year with "you broke me first," which she performed at the MTV Video Music Awards preshow in August.



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# MAKING A

# MO

Knight photographed  
Oct. 9 at Wilhardt & Naud  
in Los Angeles.

Styling by Eric Archibald  
Aemcy shirt and pants,  
adidas shoes, Vitaly necklace,  
choker and ring, Maple  
Supply rings.





# V E M E N T

Working with superstars like Beyoncé and Megan Thee Stallion, choreographer **JAQUEL KNIGHT** has created some of the most iconic dance performances of the 21st century. Now he's on another remarkable mission: copyrighting them

BY REBECCA MILZOFF

PHOTOGRAPHED BY  
DJENEBA ADUAYOM



Gucci pants, Hoorsenbuhs necklace, bracelets and rings, Vitaly choker and ring.

**W****HEN JAQUEL**  
Knight was a teenager in Atlanta, he spent his summers at band camp. Not

just any band camp though — marching band camp in the South.

Alumni of his high school, who had gone on to attend historically Black colleges and universities, came home to train students all day under the relentless Georgia sun, drilling them in the precision needed to perform and move as one showstopping unit. As drum major, Knight arranged the intricate ensemble choreography and music — Luther Vandross, Stevie Wonder, a little Crime Mob and Juvenile to represent for ATL. To this day, he still remembers the mantra the entire band would repeat if anyone stepped out of line, and he recites it to me with a sudden ferocity that's startling even over Zoom: "Excuses: Excuses are the tools of the incompetent used to build monuments of nothingness. Those who specialize in them seldom succeed at anything else. Excuses!"

"I mean, that is Beychella," says Knight with a laugh a few weeks later, sitting outside a cafe in lower Manhattan in early October. Even with a mask on, his joy in the memory is palpable. Two years ago, the discipline he learned during those formative summers in Atlanta came in handy when he served as a lead choreographer and co-creative director for Beyoncé's HBCU marching band-inspired Coachella performance, which became the acclaimed Netflix concert film *Homecoming*. He has worked with Beyoncé since he was 18, when his mentor, dancer and choreographer Frank Gatson Jr., brought him in to choreograph for her groundbreaking "Single Ladies (Put a Ring on It)" video. Since then, Knight's extensive work for her has included videos for several songs from her audiovisual projects *Lemonade* and *Black Is King*, plus two Super Bowl performances.

Now 31, Knight is one of the music industry's most sought-after choreographers, a creator of iconic dance-centric visuals at a time when they can propel a song to the top of the charts and even change the course of a career. Executives and managers for artists ranging from pop star Zara Larsson to country icons The Chicks have him on speed dial, hoping his moves — or even simply his "vibe" — will unlock new powers within their artists. Recently, he started working with Megan Thee Stallion as both choreographer and creative

director, elevating the rapper's stage presence and infusing her performances with political urgency, as he did for her October debut on *Saturday Night Live*. For Knight, "every movement has a purpose, and it's about the music but also about the full package of what the dance is interpreting," says Shakira, who worked with him on her Super Bowl halftime show this past year. "A culture, a mood, a visual statement."

That kind of statement goes far beyond the steps he creates. A year before "Single Ladies," Gatson made a prescient comment in *The New York Times*: "If she does it the right way, people won't say, 'Have you heard Beyoncé's new music?' They'll say, 'Have you seen the new Beyoncé?'" Now they do — and Knight's choreography is a big reason why.

In the three years after "Single Ladies" became a pop culture phenomenon and inspired countless imitations

ously and protect myself?" Choreographers are typically hired by an artist's team and often paid either a daily or weekly rate or a project fee; once a project ends, no matter the scope, so does their compensation. But as videos have moved from TV to YouTube and Instagram, the importance of visual spectacle has only grown — and choreography has become a more significant part of an artist's iconography. Some of the most memorable music videos of the past decade — think Sia's "Chandelier," Justin Bieber's "Sorry" or Kanye West's "Fade" — rely almost entirely on dance visuals. Thousands of fans flocked to Britney Spears' Las Vegas residency to witness her bust out the same "I'm a Slave 4 U" dance break she has been doing since 2001. In 2017, Janet Jackson made national news for reuniting her former dancers onstage for her famed "Rhythm Nation" routine. Even if you didn't see them in

it, choreographic works are protectable under copyright law in the United States (and most countries), and choreographers can submit theirs for registration with the U.S. Copyright Office.

There's very little case law on copyright and choreography, and a slew of Los Angeles entertainment lawyers told Knight's manager, Mary Pelloni, that she and Knight would at best face an uphill battle trying to register his work. Then, after two years of searching, they met attorney David Hecht of Hecht Partners in New York, who in 2019 had litigated the most prominent case in years. Hecht represents a group of clients including actor Alfonso Ribeiro, rapper 2 Milly and Russell Horning, the teenager known as Backpack Kid, who alleged Epic Games copied and renamed their signature dances (The Carlton, The Milly Rock and The Floss, respectively) and sold them as emotes, the virtual "expressions" players use on the *Fortnite* battlefield. Those cases were largely withdrawn because, in March 2019, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in an unrelated case that a claim of infringement based on a registered copyright requires first securing that registration. (Since then, some of Hecht's clients have done so; others that were rejected by the Copyright Office are in stages of appeal.)

If Knight could successfully register his work, Hecht knew, he could then license it to others who wanted to use it in public performances, from feature films to global tours. And while the exact details — including who would pay, how much and how he'd enforce his rights against those who don't — are still being figured out, Knight's mission could be revolutionary for the wider dance community. He could help change not just what recognition and compensation look like, but maybe also the arcs of his fellow choreographers' careers.

"This is potentially a seismic event in this space," says Lateef Mtima, the founder and director of the Institute for Intellectual Property and Social Justice and a professor of law at Howard University. "It's potentially as important as the revelation that Ray Charles negotiated back ownership of his masters. At the time he did it, no one knew it. But when it became public knowledge, it awakened modern-day artists to start thinking about their intellectual property from that perspective. The prescience JaQuel has is so important: It's a way to awaken his artistic community, [to tell them]

## **"We're left to Instagram and Twitter to prove we did the work, which is sad. We're getting used and abused."**

—KNIGHT

— including on *SNL*, *Glee* and even in a *Chipmunks* movie — Knight's starting day rate roughly tripled. (Now, it's typically in the four figures, moving into a five-figure fee for a whole project.)

But as time went by, he came to wonder why other creatives' work seemed to garner a different kind of respect than his own. As a choreographer for Beyoncé's 2016 "Formation" video, Knight's powerfully defiant movement helped usher in her politically engaged *Lemonade* era — and generate hundreds of millions of YouTube views. Yet, "Mike WiLL Made-It is making millions, millions [as producer of] 'Formation,'" reasoned Knight. "And I'm still here on a weekly [rate]?" His reputation as one of the industry's top choreographers grew, yet where compensation was concerned, he was still treated like a temporary hire — not an author and owner in his own right.

"How is this happening and [choreographers] are not getting anything?" Knight remembers asking himself. "How can I take my craft more seri-

ously and protect myself?" person, you can now watch these moments on demand — and learn them yourself — as footage of them proliferates online.

"The artist is used to the idea that after you create something for them, it's theirs — that they should be able to perform it around the world for millions of people forever," says Knight. Often, a credit on social media is all a commercial choreographer like him will see as a testament to his work. "We're left to the life of Instagram posts and Twitter to prove we did the work, which is sad," he says, his voice quivering with an intensity that creeps in whenever he speaks about the obstacles in his field. "And credit [on social media] does not come with ownership. We're getting used and abused."

He needed a tool that would empower him to not only get better compensation and credit but also formally recognize him as a capital-C Creator. In other words, he needed copyright protection. Though surprisingly few in the dance world take advantage of

that they are ignoring one of the most important tools in the toolkit.”

Hecht, Knight and Pelloni decided to begin by registering the choreography in the “Single Ladies” video — by now widely acknowledged as an iconic piece of art in its own right, and one that could clearly demonstrate what a copyrightable commercial choreographic work looks like. The Copyright Office approved the registration on July 9, making Knight (as far as the prominent copyright experts interviewed for this story know) the first commercial choreographer in pop music to succeed in doing so for his work. He’s already in the final stages of registering six other pieces, including his choreography for Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion’s “WAP.” Eventually he plans to register his entire catalog.

**L**YNNE WEBER has danced with a professional ballet company and studied hula, Indian mudras and modern dance. But until recently, she had not twerked on her kitchen floor.

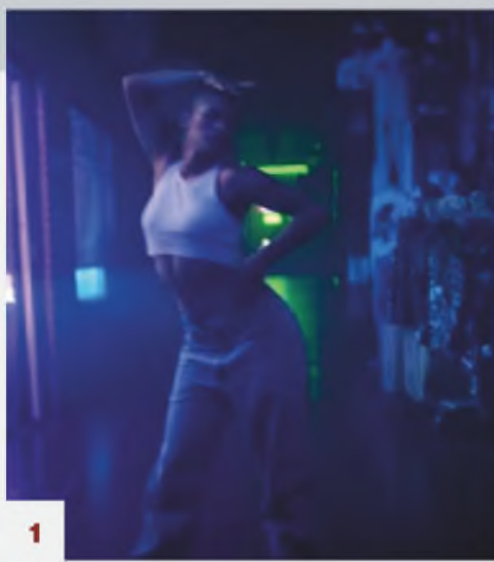
Weber, 68, is a professional dance notator who has been working closely with Knight on his copyright journey. Over the course of five weeks, she completed a 40-page-long score for “Single Ladies,” and she has moved on to “WAP.” “My son sometimes walks in on me,” she says with a laugh. “It’s embarrassing, but he’s gotten used to it.” Knight’s choreography, she says, is “quite important in our dance heritage. He incorporates other dance styles into his work as well as coming up with new ways of moving that really appeal to both dancers and nondancers. We need to have the dances people are interested in seeing, interested in *doing*, recorded for people in the future to see. It’s something that has really grabbed at our souls.”

The Dance Notation Bureau, a nonprofit where Weber is executive director, is the home of Labanotation, the most commonly used form of codified dance notation. It’s a bit like sheet music, if the notes were multidimensional: It uses vertical staves (one per performer) and symbols indicating the body part, direction, length and intent for a movement. Like most choreographers, Knight does not use Labanotation for his own purposes; he records rehearsal footage and makes his own notes on it. When he first saw the “Single Ladies” score, “my jaw dropped,” he says. “It’s out of this

world to see my hard work and sweat put on paper.”

For a Black creator in an industry that has long appropriated Black culture — and who often works with the industry’s most influential Black female artists — the score represented something bigger, too. “You feel like you stand for something,” says Knight, his voice cracking a bit. And because all Dance Notation Bureau scores are recorded on archival paper, that something will last for a very, very long

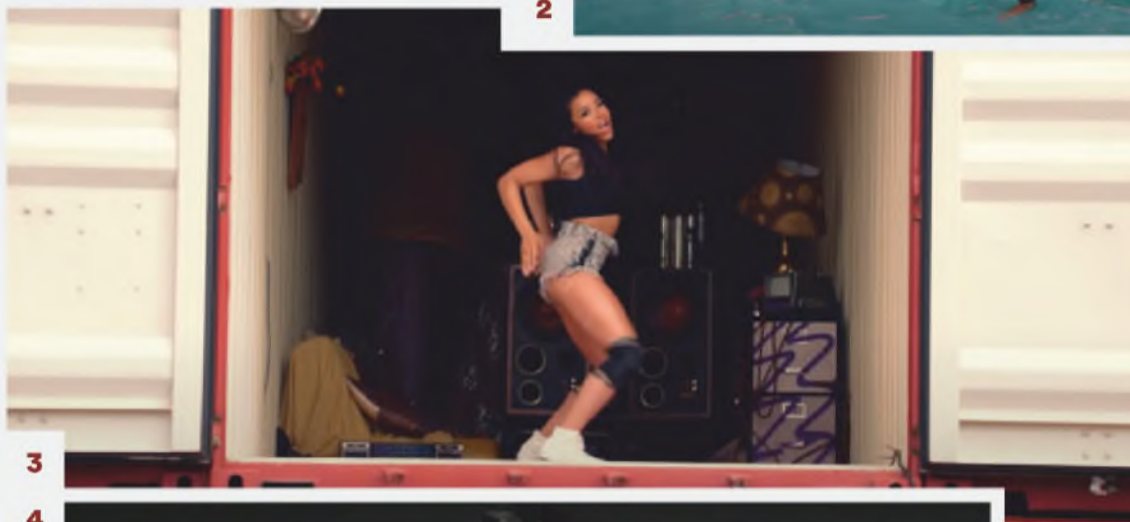
time. The bureau plans to submit its scores of Knight’s work to the Library of Congress for inclusion in its collection. He has, symbolically, joined the canon of important contemporary choreographers: As Weber points out, the bureau has worked on scores for choreographers going back to modern dance pioneer Isadora Duncan — “and, now, through to JaQuel Knight.” After so many years of serving other artists’ visions, Knight can finally claim ownership of his own.



1



2



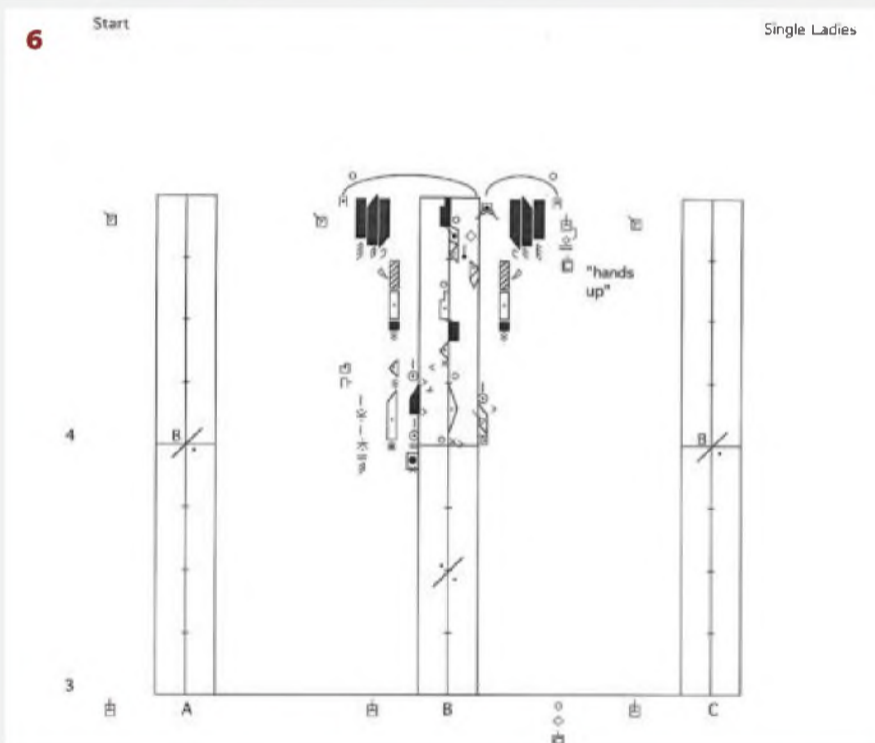
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4



5



6

Knight’s signature music video choreography includes **1.** N\*E\*R\*D and Rihanna’s “Lemon”; **2.** Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion’s “WAP”; **3.** Tinashe’s “All Hands on Deck”; **4.** Beyoncé’s “Single Ladies (Put a Ring on It)”; and **5.** Larsson’s “Love Me Land.” **6.** A page of the Labanotation score for “Single Ladies.”

Copyright provides a creator “a level of presumptive validity, and also paternity: ‘This is mine,’” explains Robert Kasunic, the U.S. Copyright Office’s associate register of copyright and director of registration policy and practice. Under federal law, that ownership exists from the moment a creative work is “fixed” — for choreography, preserved in a form of writing like Labanotation or on video — and under the Copyright Act of 1909, choreographers have had the option to do just that. But their reality has been far more complicated. For most of the 20th century, choreographic works could only be registered if they demonstrated a clear narrative and could thus be categorized as “dramatic works” — which left out most anything outside traditional ballet.

As Kara Krakower (a former legal fellow of Hecht’s) wrote in a 2018 paper for Fordham Law School’s intellectual property journal, it wasn’t until the mid-1900s that the reputation of dancers shifted “from prostitutes to artistic geniuses” and distanced itself “from vaudeville and ‘colored’ forms of choreography” — a shift that, not

# **“He teaches you how to walk, how to flick your wrist when you’re hitting that last chorus. He’s giving you an overall aura.”**

—CHRIS ANOKUTE

so coincidentally, paralleled the rise of white, male visionaries like George Balanchine in ballet and Jerome Robbins and Bob Fosse in musical theater. The Copyright Act of 1976 finally recognized choreographic works as a discrete category, but even so, the act did not provide an explicit definition, other than to say that they didn’t include “social dances” (say, the waltz or the hustle) or “simple routines,” neither of which were defined. At best, Congress simply seemed to be creating “a definitional difference between choreography and ‘dance in general,’” says Kasunic.

Today, choreography still feels a bit like the Wild West of copyright. Of the more than 500,000 applications the office receives for millions of works registered each year, says Kasunic, the number for choreographic works is typically less than 20; the office’s electronic system doesn’t even have a separate label for them, still lumping them in with dramatic works.

Several things could account for that. The world of professional dance is a small one built largely on reputation — so, historically, choreographers haven’t been tempted to outright copy each other’s work, resulting in few occasions (until recently, at least) when the idea of infringement litigation even seemed necessary. Providing the requisite material for an ironclad copyright application can also be costly (one Labanotation score can run just under \$5,000). Still, plenty of choreographers have no idea that they can register their work in the first place. “It’s like the choreography world is just warming up to this stuff,” says Hecht. “As crazy as it sounds, the [1976] Copyright Act laid out this protection, but it’s like no one looked at it.”

Knight was aware of copyright for choreography — he saw it mentioned with the credits in ballet programs and Broadway playbills. But within the commercial sphere, he says, “You only know what you see. And if it hasn’t been done, how can you

dream of it?” One of the people most stunned by Knight and his team’s success registering “Single Ladies” was, in fact, his mentor and co-creator, Frank Gatson Jr., an industry veteran who danced in Michael Jackson’s “Smooth Criminal” video. “I was like, ‘Really? They did it?’” recalls Gatson, 62. “What JaQuel and I do, it’s commercial art. That’s why intellectual property is a big deal.”

**F**OR KNIGHT, getting the “Single Ladies” job meant first failing to get another. Gatson was auditioning dancers for Michelle Williams (of *Destiny’s Child*), and Knight — who, in person, has the assured bearing of a performer but a compact build — was considered too short. Still, his freestyle at the audition impressed Gatson. “To this day, he says he came to make sure I noticed him, not to get the job,” recalls Gatson. “Today’s choreography, it all seems like, ‘Do a booty dance, act nasty, walk.’ But this young man had something very fresh and new.” He later hired Knight to choreograph a different Williams project and saw that he could organize a room full of “professional dancers, who are sometimes prima donnas” and clean up their movement without sacrificing its funk and soul. At that point in time, Gatson also worked closely with Beyoncé on both creative direction and choreography, and once the two began conceiving “Single Ladies,” he asked Knight to fly to New York to join the team.

Gatson had a choreographic reference in mind, which he had discussed with Beyoncé before Knight got involved: a Fosse routine called “Mexican Breakfast” that featured three women dancing in a line on a bare stage. He also wanted to incorporate J-setting, a movement style Knight knew in which dancers perform in a

lead-follow format, similar to marching band majorettes. Beyond those initial points of inspiration, Knight had free rein to workshop any ideas he had, in the studio with Beyoncé. He’d teach her a bit each day, then sit down and talk about how they wanted the dance to make women feel. “‘Single Ladies’ for me is like a walk-through of my childhood,” says Knight. “Moments where I remind myself of my grandmothers, of talent shows with my cousins, marching band, everything I’ve done wrapped into one.”

The end product showcases what would become Knight’s stylistic signatures. Like Beyoncé herself, he is a master of precision (he often hires dancers with ballet technique training), so “Single Ladies” has an overall clarity and elegance, regardless of the dancers’ particular movements. “Even in super slo-mo, you can see the dancers are together,” says Weber of the “Single Ladies” video. His blend of influences ranges from African dance — in which the hips and upper torso often move in different rhythmic sequences — to classic musicals. His phrasing isn’t predictable either, moving from moments of intensity to sudden stillness. Often, he’ll ground a choreographic work in a motif like the “Single Ladies” hand flick — something any viewer will remember, and can likely replicate, even if the surrounding movement patterns are more complex.

While there aren’t any explicit criteria for what makes a piece of choreography “copyrightable,” “Single Ladies” could be a textbook example. “The overall artistic mélange — you definitely see creativity, lots of different themes and perspectives melding together for a contemporary urban audience,” Mtima says of the video. If you look online, it is easy to find side-by-side comparisons of the “Single Ladies” and “Mexican Breakfast” videos flagging the very reference points that Gatson and Knight intended, as if there’s a game of choreographic “Gotcha!” going on. (“On social media, right away everyone is an art connoisseur, and as soon as you go up, you’re critiqued,” says Knight with a rueful laugh.) But within the framework of copyright, those references are considered “building blocks” — raw material artists build upon in new work, like certain chord phrasings in music — which are not only acceptable but almost expected in an art form like dance. As an element of the creative process, they can prove essential and, indeed, inescapable.

There’s no exact line denoting how many building blocks it takes for a work to stop qualifying as new and copyrightable — and at any rate, the Copyright Office’s examiners evaluate choreographic submissions as coherent, whole works. (They are also not choreography experts, though they analyze choreographic submissions regularly for consistency’s sake.) On that level, there’s no doubt that Knight’s choreography is very much his own. And he and Hecht deposited with the Copyright Office both the Labanotation score for “Single Ladies” as well as the video, providing an extra level of proof that both the original concept and the dance in the video itself are his work.

Of Gatson’s “Mexican Breakfast” reference, Knight says, “You see the three ladies, you see the inspiration — but the funk, the stylized movement, they’re extremely different. I mean, how I got here as an artist is being inspired by those who came before me. That’s how any of us get anywhere. But as you grow, you learn who you are. [At this point,] people can see something right away and know ‘JaQuel choreographed that.’”

It’s not in his interest to be anyone other than himself. Registering the copyright for “Single Ladies,” and the works that will follow, he says, “is about protecting that voice.”

**W**HEN I FIRST interviewed Knight in September, he was sitting in his live-work loft space in downtown Los Angeles, with a painting of OutKast’s *Stankonia* album cover on the wall behind his desk — the patron saints of his hometown, looking down on him. Even amid the coronavirus pandemic, he’d had a busy past few months. In June, he creative-directed and choreographed Megan Thee Stallion’s virtual performance at the BET Awards, a spectacle of *Mad Max* imagery and glamazon dancers, twerking in unison, in which she seemed more confident than ever before. “It was a turning point in my career,” says Megan today. “I was able to show what I’m capable of. Every performance has been elevated since I started working with JaQuel.”

In July, rapper-singer Tory Lanez shot Megan in both of her feet following a party they’d attended. (He was only charged for the incident in October.) When she reunited with Knight

the following month, it was for her first concert since that traumatic event: a livestream for Tidal produced by Live Nation. “For me it was like getting her to walk again,” recalls Knight. “To get onstage again after being shot in your feet? As an artist, putting yourself onstage is *already* a vulnerable space. I have a huge heart for Megan and what she stands for and means to the community.”

The day before Knight headed to Tampa, Fla., to meet Megan for final rehearsals, news broke of Jacob Blake’s shooting in Kenosha, Wis. He began to think of how to acknowledge those tragedies in the Tidal show and eventually suggested a moment of silence for Black victims of police violence. “Being involved in my community and standing up for what is right is very important to me,” says Megan. “It’s great to have someone on my creative team who has such vision and can bring ideas to life that resonate long after the show.” Mid-performance, the music stopped, and she and her dancers raised their fists in the air as the names of the dead flashed on a screen behind them, followed by the question, “Why is it so hard being Black in America?”

Megan and Knight explored similar themes in her *SNL* appearance. Midway through her hit “Savage,” Megan paused as the sound of gunshots rang out, then stepped forward, her head bowed, while two recordings played: an excerpt from Malcolm X’s iconic 1962 “Who taught you to hate yourself?” speech, and activist Tamika Mallory calling out Kentucky attorney general Daniel Cameron as “no different from the sellout Negroes who sold our people into slavery.” Then Megan took the mic with an urgent message of her own: “We need to protect our Black women, because at the end of the day, we need our Black women. We need to protect our Black men, because at the end of the day, we’re tired of seeing hashtags of our Black men.”

Knight conceived every aspect of the performance — down to the phrase “Protect Black Women” and the names of police violence victims embedded in the set design — after discussing the overall concept with Megan and her team. In the days following, it dominated the cultural conversation (everywhere from the Black Lives Matter Twitter feed to Fox News), proving how Knight’s creative vision can raise even an established star artist’s profile. During



Pyer Moss shirt and pants, Loriblu shoes, Laurel Dewitt crown, Hoorsenbuhs bracelets, necklace and rings, Vitaly choker and ring.



SNL rehearsals, Megan told Knight she wanted to train with him in Los Angeles for a month, just to prepare for whatever their next project may be.

"No one was taking Megan lightly before I came into the picture," says Knight. "But now it's like, how can we polish it?" Her dancing had been twerk-centric for quite a while, so Knight focused on how to take that to the next level. "Now, even Megan's like, 'What the fuck? What kind of synchronized ass shake is this?'" he says, bursting into laughter. Knight describes his current role with her as "more than choreographer or creative director — essentially, the guy who figures out the overall image when it comes to performance."

It's a role he has inhabited before, for artists like Tinashe and Zara Larsson ready to break through to the next level of stardom. And Knight doesn't just give them moves — he sharpens every aspect of their performances. "He teaches you how to walk. He teaches you how to flick your wrist when you're hitting that last chorus onstage," says Chris Anokute, founder of artist-development firm Young Forever and a former Motown Records executive who worked with Knight on Larsson. "He's giving you an overall aura. Most choreographers don't know how to do that because they don't understand artist development."

Knight is well-aware that not every artist has Beyoncé-level stage presence or dance training. Still, he knows that every artist might have an inner Sasha Fierce. "What he sees in people is a matrix of their abilities and untapped potential," says Pharrell Williams, whose 2017 "Lemon" video (by his band N\*E\*R\*D and Rihanna) was built around a piece of Knight choreography, performed by magnetic dancer Mette Towley, that launched a worldwide dance challenge (and helped garner over 120 million YouTube views). "The way in which he navigates such dominions is his choreography — his artwork."

As the centerpiece of culture-changing music videos, that choreography has profoundly changed the way Black women are portrayed. Knight's movement is undeniably sexy, but always on the artist's own terms: A woman dancing his choreography looks like a queen, even when she's twerking in a position that might seem to defy gravity. He's still inspired by the young women in the dance squad that performed in front of his high school marching band. "They carried

themselves well and had high standards," recalls Knight, still sounding a bit in awe.

These themes of his work — uplifting Black entertainers, helping them own their power through statements that are sometimes political — make Knight's own quest to copyright-protect his work as a Black artist something of a political act itself. "Copyright ownership is essential for Black creators to ensure authentic representation and to protect cultural output," says Terrica Carrington, vp legal policy and copyright counsel at the Copyright Alliance. And on a cultural level, it could be paradigm-shifting. "There is this notion throughout much of the Black community that the law can only be used as a tool to exploit people, and

ment, but [another choreographer] may say, 'Take every flash mob down.'" A platform like YouTube might "want the courts to render a populist opinion where it's not enforceable in the first place," the attorney continues, "or else they can be abused by copyright holders." (YouTube declined to comment for this story.)

Where official music videos are concerned, Knight's copyright ownership should not change negotiations much: a label, or the artist in question, could buy his work for a video (much like a film studio buys a script from a screenwriter), discuss points or some percentage of the profit, and he'd be free to collect on uses of the choreography elsewhere. Short-form content in particular — for example,

## **"I don't want to hit steps every day for the rest of my life. How can I start to build something even my kids can live off of?"**

—KNIGHT

there's this notion that copyright is inherently racist and biased," says Howard University's Mtima. "And that's just not true. A lot of the law is not targeted in any particular way; people get confused with discriminatory practices in certain industries. JaQuel is demonstrating, 'Well, if the law is inherently against me, how is it that I'm able to use it to my advantage?'"

Knight's mission may not exactly be a cause for celebration for everyone in the industry — especially video platforms like Twitch, YouTube and TikTok, which depend on user-generated content, much of which involves performing, or essentially appropriating, existing choreography. Knight and Hecht say they don't want to use copyright to police regular folk who love dance — say, a flash mob performing the "Single Ladies" choreography — and just want to collect a licensing fee when his choreography is used for commercial gain (say, livestreams of tours using his choreography). "But that won't be a comfort to YouTube," says one intellectual property attorney who works in the music industry. "JaQuel may be temperate in enforce-

the "WAP" dance challenge on TikTok, which borrows from Knight's choreography and has around 10 million unique videos — is a huge area of commercial growth. TikTok doesn't license choreography, and until it does, Knight's representatives' only way of enforcing their rights, should they choose, might be sending an endless series of takedown notices. But, as the industry attorney points out, "if that's where people are making money, why wouldn't he want to enforce his rights in that area?"

Since Knight's team registered "Single Ladies," it has received requests to license his work in mediums ranging from video games to feature films. Now, they're figuring out what those licenses might look like and cost, along with what back-end opportunities might exist for choreographers with copyright ownership. To do so, they're seeking the advice of contacts both in and outside the music industry — experts like Warner Chappell president of A&R Ryan Press (for the publishing perspective) and Knight's agent, Lucille DiCampli (for the musical theater perspective). Thanks to the

Society of Directors and Choreographers union — which sets minimums for work, including royalties from ticket sales — theater is the only art form in which choreographers can currently see a profit in perpetuity. According to DiCampli, choreographers can get between 0.75 and 3.5 points on a show's gross revenue, depending on their experience and whether the show recoups its investment — a figure that includes future productions and touring companies.

Knight could potentially also consider forming a kind of collecting society — collective rights management organizations, like ASCAP and SESAC in the United States, that license copyrighted works on behalf of their authors. "A collecting society does two very compelling things for creators: It creates a scale whereby they can collect revenues, and it's a force for creative people — a political force and an economic one," says Stanford University Law School's Paul Goldstein, a global authority on intellectual property. "It would be wonderful if choreographers could band together with some collectivity to get what they deserve." None in the United States manage rights for choreographic works, but several across Europe do — and they cover choreography in music videos.

For now, Knight is focused on forming a new entity of his own — a publishing company for choreographers. "I don't want to hit steps every day for the rest of my life," says Knight. "So how can I share this knowledge with everyone else, and start to build something even my kids can live off of? I think now is the time that we recognize choreographers as the gatekeepers of culture." With Pelloni and Hecht, he wants to help his colleagues (including those with whom he co-choreographed routines) register and ultimately license their work, and in the process, maybe prolong their own careers beyond their prime dancing days.

Their first client is already waiting in the wings: Sean Bankhead, a friend of Knight's who has known him since high school in Atlanta, when they were members of rival dance crews. Bankhead choreographed Normani's "Motivation" video, a tour de force of dance that burnished her solo clout last year. "Luckily, JaQuel is making headway and getting answers that are really a huge game-changer," says Bankhead. "I will be second in line right behind him to copyright my work." ■

# 40 UNDER 40

Darkroom founder/CEO  
**JUSTIN LUBLINER**, who helped  
guide **BILLIE EILISH** to stardom,  
opens *Billboard's* annual list  
of the young executives pushing  
the industry forward





**I**N JANUARY, DARKROOM FOUNDER/CEO Justin Lubliner had what he calls “the best day of my life.” He attended the 62nd annual Grammys in Los Angeles, where his label’s star, 18-year-old Billie Eilish, was up for six awards. She went home with five and became only the second musician in the ceremony’s history to sweep the Big Four categories. “I was the craziest person in the crowd, screaming the entire time,” recalls Lubliner, 30.

It was the culmination of years of hard work for Lubliner, who signed Eilish in partnership with Interscope in 2016 and has watched the “bad guy” singer become a next-generation icon: Her triple-platinum 2019 debut, *When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?*, was the first No. 1 album on the Billboard 200 by an artist born in the 21st century. Since then, Lubliner (along with Eilish’s managers, Brandon Goodman and Danny Rukasin) has helped the artist maintain momentum with a dazzling global livestream concert in October (in place of her postponed 2020 arena tour), an Apple documentary (coming to theaters and Apple TV+ in February 2021) and a steady stream of new music from her and FINNEAS, her brother and main collaborator. “What we really wanted to focus on,” says Lubliner, “was being as proactive as possible: not only coming up with concepts and ideas but chasing them to death.”

His drive to be helpful appealed to Eilish from the jump. “When I met Justin, I felt like he was the only person I met that year — and I met a lot of people — who really saw something and believed it,” she says. “He didn’t have some plan to turn me into something different. He just saw me for exactly who I was and wanted to support that.”

Lubliner initially launched Darkroom as a marketing/PR firm in 2011 while enrolled in the University of Southern California’s music business program. Then 21, he was also consulting for Republic Records’ A&R team and starting to amass an enviable contact list. He met Interscope chairman/CEO John Janick in 2014, and the two hit it off; that year, Darkroom became a joint venture with Interscope and signed its first artist, DJ-producer Gryffin. Lubliner, whose roster also includes alternative producer Oliver Malcolm and pop singer-songwriter Max Leone, credits his success to his early start and “kid at heart” enthusiasm. “When you’re younger, you’re connected to the culture, new marketing ideas, new social media platforms,” he says. “It’s a young person’s game at the end of the day, and every day I get older, I feel like I’m slightly less aware.”

Right now, at least, Lubliner still has his finger on the pulse. He’s focused on expanding Darkroom’s international presence and recently hired an analytics expert so the six-person team can approach “our global strategy with data [instead of] just ideas and instincts,” he says. Establishing artists in film is also a priority: Eilish released “No Time To Die,” the theme for the next James Bond movie of the same name, to rave reviews in February.

As for when Eilish will release her next album, Lubliner has no idea — but that hasn’t stopped him from waking up at night and texting colleagues his ideas. “We’re already whiteboarding how that album is going to be marketed,” he says. “That said, 90% is from Billie and Finn. They’re the leaders, and we’re along for the ride. But I think the 10% we contribute is really influential. If you can help an artist have a sustainable career, that’s the best metric of success.” —LYNDSEY HAVENS



ADENIJI



ARRIGO



AYOOLA



TUNDE BALOGUN



TUNJI BALOGUN



BARON

## Temi Adeniji

Senior vp, international strategy and operations, Warner Music Group

Adeniji, 33, has ramped up activities in emerging markets like India and Africa, notably entering into a partnership with Africori, the largest digital music distribution company in sub-Saharan Africa. “The democratization of the playing field is bringing music from so many parts of the world to the forefront,” says Adeniji, though she laments how the pandemic has limited in-person meetings, which are “essential to building trust” in non-Western markets.

**Before I turn 40, I want to...** “Attend all the [tennis] Grand Slams. Only two more to go: the French Open and Australian Open.”

## Adam Arrigo

Co-founder/CEO, Wave

Founded in 2016, Wave is a virtual concert company that draws on video game concepts to let artists like Tinashe and John Legend perform as avatars inside digital worlds. With touring in limbo, 37-year-old Arrigo says, “We’ve had the entire music industry reaching out to us,” including The Weeknd, who teamed with Wave in August for an otherworldly TikTok LIVE concert that reached over 2 million live viewers and raised \$350,000 for the Equal Justice Initiative.

**Key advice from a mentor** “Veteran game designer Gordon Bellamy [told me], ‘Don’t keep your idea secret. Scream it from the mountaintops because you’ll find key team members who will help you.’”

## Linda Ayoola

Services and Africa lead, Platoon

Apple-owned artist services company Platoon doubled down on its efforts in Africa this year, with London-based Ayoola, 32, leading the way. The company has expanded its roster to nearly 100 African acts, for which it provides marketing, distribution, A&R, promotion and now, for South African artists, health insurance. “I see my role as helping artists bring their vision to life,” she says, “and see myself as an extension of the teams they may already have in place.”

**Ten years ago, I was...** “A corporate banker. Crunching numbers and working on accounts — similar to what I do today, but way less fun.”

## Tunde Balogun

President, LVRN

The label (distributed by Interscope) has had major wins with 6LACK and Summer Walker — whose *Over It* LP scored the largest U.S. streaming week for an R&B album by a female artist last fall — but Balogun, 32, counts LVRN’s mental health initiative as its most important victory. “[We offer] free services to our employees, artists and their teams,” he says. “Our intention is to build a support system that grows along with our business.”

**My side hustle** “LVRN is my whole life, but my partner Justice [Baiden, LVRN head of A&R] and I are thinking about starting a DJ collective.”

## Tunji Balogun

Executive vp A&R, RCA Records  
Co-founder, Keep Cool

Balogun, 37, set aside a rap career for the music business after college, leaving him fluent in the creative process. “I compare it to the NBA,” he says. “A lot of the greatest coaches were players. They understand the game.” He has signed or helped sign game-changing talent to RCA — Bryson Tiller, Khalid, SZA, Childish Gambino — and counts the breakthrough of Doja Cat and the four Grammy nods for Lucky Daye (an artist on his Keep Cool joint venture with RCA) as highlights of the last year.

**Before I turn 40, I want to...** “Write a television pilot.”

## Katie Baron

Partner, Alter Kendrick & Baron

From the Music Publishers Association to the estates of iconic songwriters, Baron’s counsel on copyright law, contract negotiations and related digital-rights issues is much sought after. Between December 2019 and February 2020, she closed deals with an aggregate value exceeding \$250 million — all while in her second trimester of pregnancy. Since then, the pandemic has kept her busy with catalog acquisition work. “The influx of new entrants to the market and the [historic] prices being paid make this quite an exciting time,” says Baron, 37.

**If I didn’t work in music, I would...** “Be a human rights lawyer.”

## Lex Borrero

Co-founder/president, NEON16

Overseeing the Miami-based talent incubator’s label, publishing, management and media divisions, Borrero, 34, has helped award-winning producer Tainy rack up a handful of top five Hot Latin Songs hits, including this year’s chart-topper “Un Dia” (with Dua Lipa, J Balvin and Bad Bunny) and “Agua” (a Balvin team-up featured in the latest *SpongeBob SquarePants* movie) — both of which Borrero executive-produced. It’s all part of his mission, he says, to use “media to impact the way the world looks at Latin content and its creators.”

**My side hustle** “Running my Toronto-based restaurant, Regulars.”

## Rob Brown

Vp business affairs, Kobalt Music

Advising on predeal strategy, contract negotiations and broader company operations, Brown says he has the “most occupied couch in the office” with the number of colleagues seeking his counsel at the publisher and rights administrator. The 34-year-old describes his team as “pandemic-proof,” pointing to repped contracts with producer Teddy Walton (Kendrick Lamar, Jay Rock) and DJ-producer Jax Jones as work-from-home successes.

**Ten years ago, I was...** “Folding denim in Gap, working as a part-time office administrator and intern at a music law firm.”

## Amanda Butler

Global head of music marketing, Spotify

When not overseeing the promotion of flagship playlists like RapCaviar and ¡Viva Latino!, Butler, 34, and her team are delivering 50-plus experiential activations for over 40,000 consumers annually. In 2020, Butler led a group of 50 employees to launch Phenomenal Black Music, a series on Spotify’s Black History Is Now hub featuring playlists, merchandise and more in one of Spotify’s biggest campaigns to date. “We all have to make an impact with the work we put out into the world,” says Butler.

**Ten years ago, I was...** “A marketing manager at Microsoft with ambitions to work in music.”



BORRERO



BROWN



BUTLER

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## Ashley Calhoun

Senior vp/head of creative, Pulse Music Group

Pulse has had a banner 2020, with three of Calhoun's songwriters scoring Hot 100 No. 1s: Starrh (Beyoncé's remix of Megan Thee Stallion's "Savage"), Tyler Johnson (Harry Styles' "Watermelon Sugar") and OZ (Drake's "Toosie Slide"). "All of our producers and songwriters have really been coming into their own," says Calhoun, 29. "That's what I'm most proud of: signing these artists and helping put them in positions to achieve these incredible numbers."

**If I didn't work in music, I would...** "Have no backup plan. It was really just this."

## Steve "Steve-O" Carless

A&R executive, Republic Records  
Founder, SC Company

Though his team wasn't expecting the two posthumous Grammys his late business partner Nipsey Hussle won at this year's ceremony, the 37-year-old says that "a lot of sacrifice, failure, trial and tribulations are attached to that success, so it's more than gratifying — it's surreal." He didn't take a break to rest on those laurels though: "My job is about never allowing the train to stop," says Carless, who also co-A&R'd Beyoncé's *The Lion King: The Gift* and her remix of Megan Thee Stallion's "Savage."

**If I didn't work in music, I would...** "Be an executive in the NFL."

## Shawnae Corbett-Rice

Vp marketing, Warner Records

As the label's self-described "point guard," Corbett-Rice, 37, runs innovative marketing campaigns to create what she calls "sustainable visibility" for signees. Recent successes include a TikTok campaign with pop-up dance classes that helped propel Saweetie's "My Type" to No. 1 on the Rhythmic airplay chart; a series of "Wale & Chill" fan activations that contributed to Wale's "On Chill" topping Mainstream R&B/Hip-Hop; and a Postmates giveaway for fans of rising rapper NLE Choppa.

**Before I turn 40, I want to...** "Visit every continent and write a book on being a career mom in the entertainment business."

## Isabel De Jesús

Director of A&R and premium content, Sony Music U.S. Latin

As one of the few female A&R directors in Latin music, De Jesús, 34, helped Pedro Capó score his first Latin Airplay No. 1 last year (with the Farruko remix of "Calma") and a Latin Grammy in 2018 for the concert special *En Letra de Otro*, which she co-created and co-produced; the latter has since led her to develop other longform content with HBO, Facebook, YouTube and others: "The opportunities in the audiovisual space are something I'm very excited about."

**Ten years ago, I was...** "An A&R coordinator delivering my first massive project: a live album for Thalía, *Primera Fila*."

## Lisa DeLuca

Senior vp video strategy and content partnership, Epic Records

Steering the YouTube/VEVO strategy for Epic's roster became an especially vital role during lockdown, and DeLuca, 39, has curated over 100 virtual performances in the last eight months. She also worked to keep Future's "Life Is Good" video atop VEVO's U.S. chart for 34-plus weeks and supported Travis Scott's game-changing *Fortnite* event, applauding the industry's "willingness to think outside the box on how you can make compelling visuals."

**Key advice from a mentor** "Sylvia Rhone told me, 'Don't take no for an answer.' There's power in hearing that from someone that has broken through so many barriers."

## Tracy Gardner

Head of label licensing and partnerships, TikTok

After almost a decade at Warner Music Group overseeing licensing, business development and digital strategy, Gardner joined TikTok in 2019 to work the opposite side. She now cuts deals with labels so that the app's 100 million monthly active U.S. users can play music in their posts. "It's exciting to see how quickly the platform adapts," says Gardner, 38, who also helped artists like Jason Derulo and Megan Thee Stallion pivot to livestreaming on TikTok with its #HappyAtHome series in March.

**My side hustle** "I got engaged this summer, so my new part-time job is planning this wedding."



## Britney Davis

VP ARTIST RELATIONS, MARKETING AND SPECIAL PROJECTS, CAPITOL MUSIC GROUP

Lil Baby's visceral protest single, "The Bigger Picture," released at the height of the Black Lives Matter marches in June, hit close to home for Davis, his longtime marketing representative.

"One of my cousins got attacked at a protest the week before Baby put out the song," she says. So when the Atlanta rap star sent her the track, which eventually hit No. 3 on the Hot 100, Davis immediately teared up. "For so many people who don't know how to articulate how they feel — whether it's anger, sadness, frustration — Baby gave them something they can see themselves in," she says. "It's one of those moments where you've been on such a journey with someone and you're proud of what they've become."

In 2020, Lil Baby has become one of hip-hop's dominant figures, with his second album, February's *My Turn*, spending five weeks atop the Billboard 200 and earning 2.4 million equivalent album units, according to Nielsen Music/MRC Data. And Davis, who joined Capitol Music Group in 2018 — a month after Lil Baby signed with Quality Control Music under Motown/Capitol — has been right by his side, working across departments to oversee the rollout of *My Turn* as well as its May deluxe edition, which spawned the top 10 hit "We Paid."

A Howard University graduate who used to plan the college's homecoming concerts, Davis, 34, landed gigs at Creative Artists Agency and The Agency Group before joining Tina Davis' Phase Too team, where she became Chris Brown's day-to-day manager and helped build his record label, CBE. Now at Capitol, she's applying her experience in management, touring and A&R as a liaison between teams. "The artist has a vision, the label has a vision, and they need to be on the same page," she says. "I'm able to buckle down on strategy under the umbrella of marketing."

That also involves elevating rising rap duo City Girls and promoting soundtrack projects for films like last year's *Queen & Slim*. But the work that most excites Davis is increasing opportunities for Black artists and executives: She's a member of Universal Music Group's and Capitol's racial-justice task forces and worked on June's *The Show Must Be Paused* initiative. "I never map out exactly what title I want someday," says Davis, "but I want to keep helping artists, keep helping the culture and make sure that Black executives — especially Black women — have a seat at the table."

—JASON LIPSHUTZ

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## Joojong “JJ” Joe

HEAD OF NORTH AMERICA, YG ENTERTAINMENT

When Joe starts a typical day in Los Angeles, at around 9:30 a.m., a wave of emails from his colleagues at Seoul-based media giant YG Entertainment awaits him. By the time his day winds down around 5 p.m., those same colleagues are just arriving at headquarters — which means calls, meetings and more emails. It's not uncommon for him to stay plugged in past 11 p.m. “You need a balance in your life,” says Joe, 39, with a laugh. “The thing is, if I don't talk to Korea during the evening, the day just goes away. Sometimes I need an approval, and if I don't get it overnight, I can't progress the next day.”

The past few months have required plenty of late nights for Joe, who, by steering the strategy for YG and its roster in the United States and other English-speaking countries, helped propel girl group sensation Blackpink to a historic October: The group's debut LP, *The Album*, hit No. 2 on the Billboard 200 — the highest-charting album ever from a K-pop girl group (and of any girl group since Danity Kane in 2008). The band was also the subject of an acclaimed Netflix documentary, *Blackpink: Light Up the Sky*, an intimate portrait of singers Jennie, Jisoo, Lisa and Rosé and their years as YG trainees prepping for pop stardom. Building the relationships with media firms, streaming services and other companies that make such feats possible — and in a way that fits Blackpink — is at the heart of what Joe does. “If you want to have a broader audience, you have to sing in English,” says Joe — which Blackpink embraced more than ever on tracks like “Ice Cream,” a cheeky team-up with Selena Gomez. “But we're always mindful of maintaining their identity as a Korean group. We don't want to lose that.”

Joe's first musical love while growing up in Seoul wasn't glossy pop but grunge and nu-metal — Nirvana and Rage Against the Machine were early favorites. “At one point I wanted to be a rock star,” he says, “but I realized there were so many people more talented than I was. So I was like, ‘Well, I love every aspect of music — production, promotion, the live show, merchandise.’” After an early job advising Korean investors on entertainment-business opportunities, he got his MBA from the London Business School and made his way to Los Angeles, where he developed U.S. strategy for another Korean media company, CJ E&M. He joined YG in 2014 and started building its U.S. presence from scratch: finding office space, meeting radio DJs, networking with promoters and agencies, talking to labels. “Five years ago, our acts like Big Bang and 2NE1 were doing fine, but not at the scale of Blackpink,” he says. “I still had to explain what our music is and what we want to do.”

Today, thanks to Blackpink's partnership with Interscope Records (inked in 2018) and collaborations with A-listers like Lady Gaga and Cardi B, he doesn't have that problem. But those big breaks didn't just fall into Joe's lap — they're the result of all the time he spent laying a solid groundwork. “We're talking about this stuff every day — it's not like, ‘OK, let's find somebody to pitch,’” he says. “We've been working in the States now for a long time. I got to know more people working with those big [American] artists. It's not really hard to talk to them. And they know how to talk to us — they know we're here.”

—NOLAN FEENEY







Joe photographed by Noah Webb on Oct. 12 in Los Angeles.



GEBRELUL

GONZALEZ

JORDAN

KATOVSKY

KIRKPATRICK

KOHLI

## Simon Gebrelul

CEO/manager, Isla Management

Since founding his company in 2018, the Toronto native, 29, has built up a roster of some of hip-hop's biggest producers, including Boi-1da and OZ. In 2020, he also guided R&B upstart Giveon to his first Hot 100 hit (with Drake's "Chicago Freestyle," a collaboration Gebrelul set up after passing along a voice memo of Giveon singing) and launched Isla Publishing, a joint venture with Sony/ATV. "I feel like it got busier [during the pandemic]," he says. "Everyone is asking for beats."

**My side hustle** "Fashion. I [used to work] with athletes on personal shopping, creative direction, styling, wardrobing."

## Aldo Gonzalez

Vp A&R, Universal Music Latin Entertainment/Capitol Latin/Machete Music

A key talent scout in the reggaeton scene, Gonzalez, 38, helped propel Karol G to global stardom with her second album, *Ocean* (No. 2 on Top Latin Albums), and her Nicki Minaj team-up "Tusa," which topped Hot Latin Songs for four consecutive weeks last fall. He has also signed rising stars Guaynaa and Cauty to the UMLE roster. "Latin music is trending worldwide," he says, "and our label was instrumental for that movement. It kick-started this amazing new momentum in Latin music that's here to stay."

**Before I turn 40, I want to...** "Watch the aurora borealis in Iceland."

## Chris Jordan

Agent, music, UTA

Crucial in building the live careers of hip-hop powerhouses like YG, Tierra Whack and DJ Khaled, Jordan, 33, has spent the past few months finding opportunities for clients in "parts of the business that may not have been a possibility before the pandemic," he says. In April, he booked Young Thug for Offset and Friends, a virtual concert on Oculus and Facebook that featured UTA clients and raised enough money to cover close to 325,000 meals for the Atlanta Community Food Bank.

**Ten years ago, I was...** "About to begin my journey as an assistant at WME."

## Ben Katovsky

COO, BMG

BMG surpassed \$670 million in revenue in 2019, and London-based Katovsky has his hands full keeping it growing as it expands its services for artists and songwriters, including a now-unified global digital team, new data analytics tools and a neighboring rights service. He also chairs BMG's COVID-19 resilience committee. "It has been incredibly intense adding crisis management to the day job," says Katovsky, 39. "But it has also been incredibly rewarding."

**Before I turn 40, I want to...** "Relax. I'd love to travel on a really nice holiday."

## Kourtney Kirkpatrick

Vp synchronization, Concord Music Publishing

When she's not pitching the catalogs of iconic songwriters to music supervisors, Kirkpatrick, 32, works with Concord's A&R team to develop synch-friendly acts like Ruelle (the No. 2 synch artist of 2019, according to Tunefind). In the past year, her team secured placements on HBO (*Big Little Lies*, *Watchmen*), Netflix (*Black Mirror*) and Hulu (the *Big Time Adolescence* trailer) — including songs that came out of a yearly Nashville synch camp she organizes for 70-plus songwriters.

**Key advice from a mentor** "Carla Wallace [co-founder of Big Yellow Dog Music] told me, 'Focus on the writers you work with. Opportunity and success come when you put them first.'"

## Rohan Kohli

Senior director of A&R, Warner Music Nashville

Calling himself a "musical midwife," Kohli, 34, says, "I see projects through until they are ready to meet the world." His biggest "births" since last year include Dan + Shay's "10,000 Hours" with Justin Bieber, a multiplatform smash, and the breakthrough success of Ingrid Andress with "More Hearts Than Mine." Says Kohli: "We're seeing a resurgence of female artists at country radio. About damn time."

**Key advice from a mentor** "The first day I started at Warner, [executive vp A&R] Scott Hendricks said: 'Never for one second feel pressure to sign an artist or agree with us. We're hiring you for your opinion.'"

GEBRELUL: CULLIN TORIN; GONZALEZ: HECTOR TORRES; JORDAN: JOHNNIE MILLER; KATOVSKY: BARBARA DIETL; KIRKPATRICK: COURTESY OF CONCORD; KOHLI: CONNOR OWYER



## Shauna Nep

VP PHILANTHROPY, SB PROJECTS

Musicians always say they want to make a difference in the world, and Nep literally does just that, pairing pop stars with nonprofits and social justice platforms to achieve meaningful — and measurable — results. The 34-year-old explains a job title unlike any other.

### So, what exactly do you do?

With every launch at the company, there's always a question of, "How can we use this moment to give back?" My role is figuring out the best way to do this. What resources do we have to allocate? Who are the best partners to work with? What do we want that to look like? It's designing those initiatives.

### How do you measure success?

To me, a successful campaign has a good [return on investment] — in terms of funds raised, voters registered or petition signatures — along with the impact of changing hearts and minds. The latter is less measurable, but we're responsible for a lot of the culture change that we see. I take that seriously.

### What have been the highlights?

Demi Lovato auctioned off her own artwork and outfits with Propeller. To enter, fans took action on certain issues — petitioning with [racial-justice organization] Color of Change or taking courses on handling a mental health crisis. Fans took over 270,000 actions. But I'm most proud of our partnership with [voter registration nonprofit] HeadCount on Ariana Grande's Sweetener World Tour. It was amazing to design it with Ariana and create something so authentic to what she cares about. It had clear metrics, too, so it was a home run in terms of activating a fan base and working directly with a client. By the end of the tour, [we had] more than 33,000 voter registrations.

### Do these initiatives bring in money?

Scooter [Braun, SB Projects founder] loves to joke that the rest of the team's job is to make money while mine is to give it away. Making money isn't one of my goals. My [return on investment] is really the impact we've created.

### Should every company have a vice president of philanthropy?

Yes. It has never been more important to be thinking about how we use our resources for good. I know these are tough times, but if giving back is everybody's job, then it's nobody's job. It's worth investing in having someone do this work and give it its due diligence. Social good can't be an afterthought. It needs to be front and center. If it's not, your team will know that.

— MIA NAZARENO



LOPEZ



MACKAY



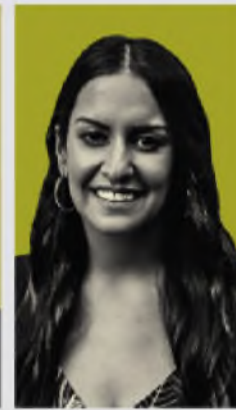
MIYASHIRO



NOYES



NUNEZ



PASRICHA

## Jeremy Lopez

Executive vp business and artist development, SM Entertainment USA

After being tasked two years ago with helping establish a U.S. division of South Korean entertainment giant SM, Lopez has played a major role in introducing American audiences to K-pop acts like supergroup SuperM (who topped the Billboard 200 in 2019) and NCT 127 (who reached the chart's top five). "Our goal is to remove the 'K' from K-pop," says Lopez, 36. "We want these artists to be the biggest pop artists in the world."

**Ten years ago, I was...** "Completing my fourth and final year at Westlake Studios, where I juggled being a full-time runner and assistant engineer."

## Eric Mackay

Executive vp global digital strategy, Warner Chappell Music

During quarantine, Mackay's chief concern has been continuing to close the best deals for the publisher's roster of songwriters, whose recent signings include Quincy Jones and Duran Duran. With the company's third-quarter digital revenue up 41% year-over-year, Mackay, 39, and his team have been laser focused on the livestreaming market, where they've simplified the licensing process for songs, and a newly streamlined plan for podcast clearances.

**If I didn't work in music, I would...** "Be getting paid to read people's tarot cards or be in the circus, like my grandfather."

## Sean Miyashiro

CEO, 88rising

The Asia-focused label/management company made a splash in 2020 with new albums from singer-songwriter NIKI and alt-R&B star Joji (whose *Nectar* LP debuted at No. 3 on the Billboard 200). Miyashiro, 39, also formed an artist-development partnership called Paradise Rising with a Filipino telecom. Next up: launching a multimedia project celebrating hip-hop legends, with 100% of proceeds from new music — including a collaboration with members of Wu-Tang Clan — going to racial-justice initiatives.

**Before I turn 40, I want to...** "Be in the studio making a major motion-picture soundtrack for an action-packed global blockbuster."

## Joanna Noyes

Vp marketing, The Orchard

Working across genres and 45 territories, Noyes oversees YouTube channel management for Latin heavyweights like Daddy Yankee and Ozuna, and she recently supported the release of BTS' latest album with initiatives such as the launch of the group's Soundcheck Sweepstakes; winners gained special access to the band's biggest livestream event to date. "Artist-to-fan engagement has strengthened in the last [eight] months," says Noyes, 36. "The interaction, while fully digital, has become more authentic."

**If I didn't work in music, I would...** "Be working with people with developmental disabilities."

## Adrian Nunez

Vp creative A&R, Sony/ATV Music Publishing

Nunez, 34, made his mark quickly after joining the publisher in late 2019, having signed one of his favorite artists, Playboi Carti, as well as Dominic Fike, Bugz Ronin, Fivio Foreign and TM88. Nunez typically travels three weeks out of every month, but during the pandemic he has found other ways to keep himself and his roster busy: "We've set up multiple songwriting camps through Zoom, secured placements virtually and maintained relationships the best we could."

**Before I turn 40, I want to...** "Contribute to a song that wins a Grammy."

## Rhea Pasricha

Head of A&R, West Coast, Prescription Songs

The 33-year-old compares the publishing company's roster to a family: "We talk to them almost every day and are with them through the ups and downs this crazy industry brings." Even amid a pandemic, there have been plenty of ups: KBeaZy co-produced 24kGoldn and iann dior's Hot 100 chart-topping "Mood," while Emily Warren co-wrote Dua Lipa's No. 2 smash "Don't Start Now." "Instead of doing double sessions every day," says Pasricha, "writers have taken this time to home in on the people they do their best work with."

**If I didn't work in music, I would...** "Work at NASA. I even went to Space Camp in middle school."

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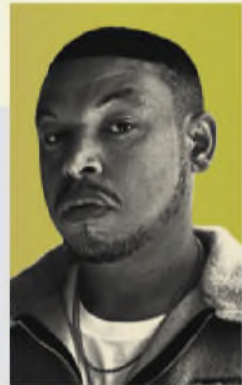
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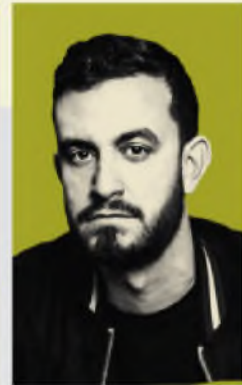
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## Matt Plotnik

**Head of marketing, Apple Music/Apple Podcasts**

Plotnik, 34, is charged with driving growth and increasing listenership, and though the tech giant hasn't released Apple Music subscriber numbers this year, one market research firm claimed double-digit year-over-year gains in an April report. One of Plotnik's campaigns, for the Rap Life playlist and radio show, has featured Cardi B, Future, Roddy Ricch and Gunna. "Our creative shoots started just before the pandemic," he says, "and our teams quickly pivoted, blending filmed footage with a new animated solution that allowed us to bring artists to life without filming those artists live."

**My side hustle** "Volunteering for a nonprofit called Think Elephants International and studying to get my real estate license."

## Anna Plumley

**Senior director of tour marketing, U.S. concerts, Live Nation**

Last year, Plumley stood mesmerized inside Chicago's United Center as Billie Eilish played one of her first arena shows; this year, the 37-year-old helped execute the marketing strategy for what would have been Eilish's biggest North American trek to date. "We don't often have the ability to reflect and evaluate," she says of work amid the pandemic. "While my day-to-day is different, it's rooted in the same entrepreneurial hard-working spirit of serving artists."

**If I didn't work in music, I would...** "Work in theater or Broadway. My first marketing job was for touring productions in Tucson, Ariz."

## Danielle Price

**Senior vp business and legal affairs, 10K Projects**

10K Projects has scored wins with a string of buzzy artists this year — including Surfaces, Internet Money and iann dior — and Price, 39, has been the "fixer" making sure everything runs smoothly behind the scenes. That means negotiating contracts, clearing features or sorting out rights as opportunities come up. "Business and legal are at the center of everything the label does," she says. "It's a lot, but I love it."

**Key advice from a mentor** "Dina LaPolt, who was my former boss when I was in private practice, gave me the best advice during the 21 Savage [U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention] crisis: Trust your gut."

## David Stuart

**Label relations manager, indies, Amazon Music**

A former educator who taught high school history, Stuart, 30, helped Amazon Music launch its Break-through program for emerging artists in July, giving exposure to musicians from country star Gabby Barrett to R&B singer Kiana Ledé. "We use the full weight of Amazon to support these artists through many, many months," says Stuart, who also helped create resources for artists and labels to establish themselves on Twitch during the pandemic.

**My side hustle** "I play drums in an indie band in Seattle."

## Jermi Thomas

**Senior director of A&R, Island Records**

A self-described "artists' champion fighting to protect their integrity," Thomas, 37, guided Skip Marley and Toni Braxton to No. 1 R&B singles in the past year and celebrated Jessie Reyez's No. 4 debut on Top R&B Albums in April. He's also actively nurturing the next wave of Black executives: "So much of our contributions drive the culture, and that needs to be reflected in equity, ownership, compensation and visibility."

**Ten years ago, I was...** "Working as an A&R assistant at Columbia Records and co-managing R&B legend Faith Evans."

## Lindsay Unwin

**Executive vp, SAL&CO**

Ten years ago, when Unwin joined CEO Wassim "Sal" Slaiby's team as an intern, he was just about to sign The Weeknd. Today, when she's not striking deals on behalf of a management roster that now includes acts like Doja Cat and Bebe Rexha, the 34-year-old is trying to champion diverse voices: "Our management team is now 85% women, and we're working to strengthen the pipeline of women and people of color coming up in the music industry."

**If I didn't work in music, I would...** "Be a doctor of naturopathic medicine."

## Frederic Voillemot

**Senior vp corporate development and strategy, Universal Music Group**

Specializing in acquisitions and investments, Voillemot, 39, played an integral part in UMG's late-2019 deal with Tencent Music Entertainment, which gave the Chinese streaming giant 10% of the world's larg-

est record label in exchange for \$3.36 billion. "It was stressful, but not in a bad way," he says. "It was very transforming in terms of what Universal needs in Asia."

**Key advice from a mentor** "This one's coming from my dad, who passed away a few years ago: 'Never underestimate your opponent or judge. Don't be impressed by them, but respect them and who they are.'"

## Alexandre Williams

**Co-founder/COO, Create Music Group**

The rapidly growing distribution/rights management/media company, which collected over \$100 million in revenue last year, saw client 6ix9ine top the Hot 100 this year with the Nicki Minaj team-up "TROLLZ" — the chart's first independent No. 1 in two years. Feats like that are contributing to a "mass exodus of major artists finding more lucrative homes with independent labels," says Williams, 32, who also spearheaded the company's Splits app for songwriters.

**My side hustle** "Day trading in companies that are disruptive in big ways. Tesla has treated me well!"

## Jenn Yacoubian

**Vp booking and strategy, AEG/GoldenVoice**

A talent buyer for several California venues and festivals, Yacoubian — also part of Coachella's core booking team — delivered standout years for spots like L.A.'s Greek Theatre and the Shrine Auditorium & Expo Hall in 2019. As she works to get touring pros back to work, Yacoubian, 36, is also supporting GV BLACK (a resource group for Black employees) by helping develop "distinct pathways for current and future [minority] vendors, entrepreneurs and creatives."

**Key advice from a mentor** "Samantha Kirby Yoh [co-head of UTA Music] told me, 'Be tough but kind.' I think about that every day."

**CONTRIBUTORS** Alexei Barrionuevo, Dave Brooks, Anna Chan, Ed Christman, Tatiana Cirisano, Leila Cobo, Stephen Daw, Griselda Flores, Gab Ginsberg, Josh Glicksman, Steve Knopper, Joe Levy, Jason Lipshutz, Joe Lynch, Taylor Mims, Gail Mitchell, Melinda Newman, Jessica Roiz, Claudia Rosenbaum, Dan Rys, Colin Stutz, Andrew Unterberger, Christine Werthman, Nick Williams

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# The Players

Borrino (left) and Singer

## ‘We’re Buyers, Not Sellers’

AS SPIRIT MUSIC GROUP CELEBRATES ITS 25TH ANNIVERSARY, THE CHAIRMAN AND COO/CFO TALK GROWTH — AND THE PURSUIT OF A \$1 BILLION VALUATION

BY MELINDA NEWMAN



**S**PIRIT MUSIC GROUP chairman Jon Singer and his team have a mantra: “250,000 song copyrights and a valuation of \$1 billion.” As the company celebrates its 25th anniversary, it is on a solid path to reach those goals, due to a smart business plan bolstered by a 2019 recapitalization and buyout by Singer and Ross Cameron, the co-founding partner of Lyric Capital Group. The way forward combines expansion into emerging markets, with a continued focus on catalog acquisition.

At a time when publishers are acquiring other companies, Singer, a former senior label executive at Island Records, Island Def Jam and Decca Label Group who has been at Spirit since 2011, says, “We decided we’re buyers, not sellers.” He and Cameron raised \$350 million with private equity partners to form Lyric Capital Group with Spirit as its first investment, buying out majority owner Pegasus Capital Advisors’ stake and retiring \$50 million in debt.

The New York-based independent publisher — which employs 62 staffers worldwide with offices in London, Los Angeles, Nashville, Miami and the Netherlands — has a 100,000-song

collection that includes shares in over 200 No. 1s. Among its copyrights are songs written by The Who’s Pete Townshend, late T. Rex frontman Marc Bolan, Boz Scaggs, Henry Mancini, Alan and Marilyn Bergman, and Graham Nash.

The company has also signed a number of top contemporary writers, even during the pandemic. In recent months, Spirit has signed deals with writer-producers Christopher “Tricky” Stewart (Beyoncé, Justin Bieber), Gregg Wattenberg (Train, Daughtry), Kara DioGuardi (P!nk, Carrie Underwood) and British songwriter-producer Nick Gale (Dua Lipa, Louis Tomlinson).

Spirit has also moved further into

**“COVID-19 hits, and ... now you’re dealing with a global economic shutdown. That’s not a typical recession.”**

—JON SINGER

the acquisition of master recordings, with a deal that includes publishing rights and masters from Ingrid Michaelson, a stake in some of Tim McGraw’s masters and expanded representation of Bolan’s master and publishing rights. In October, Spirit entered a deal with producer-songwriter Billy Mann to administer his publishing company Green & Bloom/Topline. (The deal does not cover Mann’s copyrights but does include representation of Christian Medice and David Schuler, who have written for P!nk, Halsey, Cher and John Legend.) These deals dovetailed with Singer’s expansion of Spirit’s investment in country and Latin music, as well as the U.K. office’s increased involvement in production music.

Singer and Spirit Music Group COO/CFO Joe Borrino — formerly CFO of Island Def Jam Music Group and CFO of Roc Nation — discuss the company’s future and why music is the “sexiest” investment today.

**How has the pandemic affected you?**

**JON SINGER** COVID-19 hits, and people go into lockdown. Now you’re dealing with a global economic shutdown. That’s not a typical recession. Ross and I were out there working on

some deals. We put it all to the side, and we said, “We’ve got to focus on Spirit right now,” because we didn’t know what the shutdown meant. Restaurants were closing. Bars were closing. People weren’t listening to the radio initially, no new television productions. So we buckled down. We spent a lot of time working with Joe and the whole team to get a handle on the business. The stats showed that Spotify and Apple were going through the roof. We met with our synch people and said, “Focus on advertising right now because there’s no more film and television productions happening, and take this time to refresh the catalog so when we come out of this pandemic it will be even better.”

**JOE BORRINO** For me, the biggest challenge of working through COVID-19 is not being able to check in with my team in person. That’s what I miss the most. I’m the kind of person who likes to stop by someone’s desk and say, “Hey, let’s go grab a coffee,” or “Let’s go to the corner store and grab lunch.” You can’t give somebody a high-five over a computer screen.

**What did you do first?**

**BORRINO** When COVID hit, we formed a task force to ensure the



The Who's Roger Daltrey (left) and Townshend at Boston's Fenway Park in 2019.



A plaque wall inside the Spirit Music Nashville offices in October.

safety of our employees. Everyone was set up to work remotely, and we ensured that our creators had a personal liaison on the team to check in with them and make sure they were OK. We also set up weekly calls with our staff and hosted regular guest speakers like David Garcia [co-writer/producer of Bebe Rexha and Florida Georgia Line's hit "Meant To Be," which ruled *Billboard's* Hot Country Songs chart for a record 50 weeks], Kathy Valentine of the Go-Go's and motivational speakers like Olympic gold medalist Scott Hamilton. We've had a comedian, a magician; you name it. Spirit is a family, and we are trying to keep that feeling. For an hour each week, we set aside time together to have a lighthearted moment on Zoom.

**How will the year look financially?**

**SINGER** We're fairly flat with where

we were last year. Come the end of the year, I think we'll be down single digits at most, and that's mainly driven by film and television productions, which are starting to bounce back. So fingers crossed, maybe we'll get a few extra wins and get there.

**When you finished the recapitalization, what steps did you take to make sure Spirit was moving in the right direction?**

**SINGER** When I got to Spirit in 2011, it wasn't in the best shape, so I pretty much reworked the entire company from the top down. From 2011 to 2018, before the recap, I hand-selected the right people in the right places for each of the departments. While that was going on, I was doing a lot of deals for the company as well. When we did the recapitalization, I woke up the happiest guy in the world in January

2019, pulling off what people were telling me would be impossible. It was the same company that I set up. And that's the reason why I bought it.

**What are the biggest changes you have made since the recapitalization?**

**SINGER** We decided it was time for new leadership down in Nashville. In 2015, I did a joint-venture deal with

[top songwriter-producer] Frank Rogers, who's a good friend of mine. I bought his share of Sea Gayle Music [an independent music publisher co-founded by Brad Paisley and songwriter Chris DuBois].

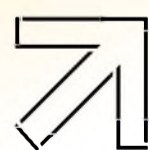
**What drew you to Music City?**

**SINGER** Over the years we had a lot of success together and got to know each



**ALAN ETT**

CEO, SPIRIT PRODUCTION MUSIC



In 2017, Spirit Music Group expanded into the business of film and TV production

music. To launch the service, Spirit purchased the production music division of Alan Ett Creative Group. Ett, 68, now serves as CEO of Spirit Production Music, which maintains a library of over 200,000 precleared tracks and 60 music catalogs serving all manner of visual media. Spirit Production Music has placed tracks in such films as *Girls Trip* and *Despicable Me 3*, TV series

including *This Is Us* and *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*, and advertising campaigns for General Motors and American Express.

While the pandemic halted production on many film and TV projects, Ett says Spirit still found a way to blossom during the shutdown. "Reality shows with one host and a few contestants, training videos and vlogs are all more robust than ever," he says, as are "productions that don't require crews, stages, sets or a cast."

In July, Spirit Production Music launched a new website powered

by Synchtank to make it easier for content creators to find and license music. "There is more content being created and consumed on more platforms than ever before — and it all needs music," says the Los Angeles-based Ett. "As creators of content realize they have to license music and not merely use what they want, either out of simple ignorance about these matters or more nefarious reasons, production music becomes a wonderful solution. It is one-stop simple fulfillment of many music needs." —M.N.





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other really well. I love Nashville. Not only do I love the music, but I love the business of country music. I said, “This is the one market where we got to do much better.” So I was able to convince Frank to become the CEO of Spirit Music Nashville. He went and hired a whole new staff. We have three of the biggest writers in country music down there — Zach Crowell, David Garcia and Jonathan Singleton — and growing.

**Why did you choose creatives to head up these new divisions?**

**SINGER** I like to find creative people with great business minds. It started with Frank. He’s an amazing businessman. And I like to be on the same side of the table with him, not the opposing. Frank Rogers is one, and then

Gregg Wattenberg is another great writer and producer who’s a partner of mine. [*Billboard’s* 2010 Producer of the Decade and Spirit Miami president] Rudy Pérez speaks for himself. If you want to be in Latin music and you want those attributes, you can’t do better than Rudy Pérez.

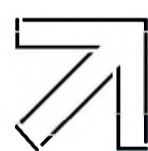
**After the recapitalization, you paid down some debts and had a \$300 million war chest remaining. Is that enough when you’re competing with a company like Hipgnosis, which has \$1 billion?**

**SINGER** It has nothing to do with Hipgnosis — they’re doing their own thing, and they’re doing great. The reason I need more money is because there’s so much great music out there



## RUDY PÉREZ

PRESIDENT, SPIRIT MUSIC MIAMI



In January, Spirit Music Group signed a joint venture with Rudy Pérez, instantly aligning the independent publisher with one of the top figures in Latin music. Pérez, who assumed the title of Spirit Music Miami president, has composed over 300 No. 1 or top 10 songs for such artists as Beyoncé, Christina Aguilera, Luis Fonsi, Luis Miguel, Marco Antonio Solís, Marc Anthony and dozens more.

Despite a schedule that already demanded his full attention, *Billboard’s* 2010 Producer of the Decade couldn’t resist joining Spirit. “Both [Spirit chairman] Jon Singer and I share an incredible passion for Latin music. We talked, and I said, ‘We should open up a branch of Spirit in Miami,’” says Pérez. “Jon’s hands-

on involvement has given Latin songwriters an amazing home. We definitely want to tell the world we’re open for business.”

His division is in the final stages of negotiating several deals, but Pérez stresses that “we want to be very selective. I’m not going to sign 50 songwriters the first year.” He’s also looking for developing songwriters that he can mentor. “You can’t deny a talent. You’ve got to nurture it,” he says. He’s even pursuing classical songwriters, hinting, “I’m looking at a catalog by a legend I would love to have.” Spirit has pegged Latin music as one of its greatest areas for growth. Not that Pérez, who has helped popularize the genre around the globe, needs to be convinced. “Latin Music is not just for Latin America. It’s for the world.” —M.N.



*Kinky Boots* composer Lauper at Broadway’s Al Hirschfeld Theatre in 2018.

to invest in. If I’m running low — and eventually, I will run low — I still want to continue to grow the business.

**Are you looking for more money?**

**SINGER** We’re always looking for more money. I’m getting unsolicited calls from investors on a regular basis, asking me, “When are you looking to take in more money?” At the right time, we’re going to explore that.

**It feels like institutional investors have finally realized what a great asset publishing is.**

**SINGER** I’ve been in this business for a long time. Up until a few years ago, I would sit down with investors and I’d have to teach them the business. Like, “What is NPS [net publisher’s share]? Why does your business trade off of NPS [the royalty amount a publisher retains after paying other rights holders] instead of EBITDA [earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization]? What do you mean it’s uncorrelated?” Some of them understood it, and some didn’t. Today, they all know what NPS is.

**We’re seeing prices of 20 times NPS for some catalogs. Do you see the**

**market settling down, or will those multiples continue to rise?**

**SINGER** There are big multiples flying around. Will they sustain? I think so. Especially now, since there’s a lot of interest in the space and a lot of big investors willing to spend lots of money and interest rates are low. The [Federal Reserve] just announced that they don’t plan on raising it for the next three years, which is unprecedented and is only going to continue to be attractive and keep values up.

**What are the top three things you look for in a catalog for Spirit to buy?**

**BORRINO** For signings in general, we look for songs or writers that capture our attention. There’s a gut reaction when we’re excited about something. It’s about who the writer is as a person, who they are creatively, their vision and how they write songs. That’s what makes it exciting. It’s also about finding songs that can have cultural impact and current relevance as well as classic, iconic songs that are always going to resonate with people. There are so many songs in the Spirit catalog that I can point to that were created years ago and are still synch favorites: New Radicals’ “You Get

**“If you can get masters and publishing together, like T. Rex and Ingrid [Michaelson], that’s a home run. Now you control both sides ... It’s easy to license. We love that.”**

—JON SINGER

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T. Rex's Bolan onstage in London in 1972.

What You Give,” The Who’s “Baba O’Riley” and Toto’s “Hold the Line,” for example. People are still remixing and rerecording these songs because they stand the test of time.

There’s also a balance of creative instinct and financials that we consider. We can’t sign everybody because of pricing and competition in the marketplace, so it’s a balance. You have to have that right mix of iconic songs and new and emerging ones. It’s not always the highest-dollar catalogs that turn out to be the best ones. Sometimes it’s the smaller catalogs that you invest in early, and they surprise everyone. Sometimes you have to go with your gut.

**Jon, in 2012, you oversaw the Pete Townshend catalog acquisition, which was one of the biggest individual catalog acquisitions at the time. What have you learned about catalog deals?**

**SINGER** It’s the gift that keeps giving. We took over that catalog, and my team went to work on it, synching it left and right. When catalogs are with bigger companies, they are harder to manage. There are a few million copyrights, so they can’t spend as much time [pitching for synchs] as a boutique like Spirit can. So when we

took it over, my people were shocked at how much opportunity there was.

Shortly after we bought that catalog, we had a GMC commercial, a Fiat commercial and other synchs. I was watching Jimmy Kimmel’s show one night, and he made a joke in his opening monologue. He said, “I can’t believe it. I just saw a commercial that actually didn’t use the music from The Who.” To me, it was the greatest compliment my team could ever get. The songs are timeless. Catalogs like that don’t come up for sale that often. And when they do, you do your best to get them.

**What is the right balance between mature assets versus immature assets?**

**SINGER** We are a company that focuses on mature copyrights. The catalog is probably 90% mature. How do you define a mature copyright? It depends on the genre, but songs typically level off after five years and you’ll know what you have at that point. I would call that mature.

**Joe, Jon has repeatedly said that Spirit’s goal is to reach 250,000 copyrights and a valuation of \$1 billion. What does the company need to do to get there?**

**“Listen, we know our strengths ... I always preach, ‘When you get comfortable, you fail.’ But I also go by, ‘If it ain’t broken, don’t fix it.’ We’re having a lot of success the way we’re doing it.”**

—JON SINGER

**BORRINO** With Jon and Ross and Lyric Capital, we’ve got the right team to identify strategic opportunities. As values keep climbing, there’s a possibility we’ll even get to a \$1 billion valuation before we get to that number of copyrights. That said, we want quantity, and we are steadily growing our number of copyrights. But we’ve always known that our growth is going to be based on quality first.

**Why has Spirit expanded into the master recordings business?**

**BORRINO** If you can get masters and publishing together, like T. Rex and Ingrid [Michaelson], that’s a home run. Now you have both sides, you control it, you don’t have to worry. It’s easy to license. We love that. We’d do those all day long. They don’t come around that often, mainly because the major record

companies own most of the masters. I’m not interested in signing new artists to a record deal and putting out new albums. That’s not my strategy.

**What are your other areas of growth?**

**SINGER** Latin music was one. I love where it’s going. That’s why we partnered with Rudy Pérez and opened up Spirit Miami. We’re going to get more aggressive in that area.

**BORRINO** Diversifying our roster is an important focus for us. We have a solid reputation as a classic rock and pop publisher, and while we want to continue to dominate in those genres, we’re now going full throttle in country and Latin music.

**Where else?**

**SINGER** The biggest area of growth is on the digital side. We were probably



Rogers (left) and Paisley in Las Vegas in 2006.

## FRANK ROGERS

CEO, SPIRIT MUSIC NASHVILLE



When songwriter-producer Frank Rogers was named CEO of Spirit Music Nashville

in May 2019, he had already won five Country Music Association Awards, including album of the year for producing Brad Paisley’s 2005 release, *Time Well Wasted*. He has also produced/co-written No. 1 hits on *Billboard*’s Hot Country Songs chart including Paisley’s “I’m Gonna Miss Her (The Fishin’ Song)” and Darius Rucker’s “This.” Rogers liked the way Spirit operated, and had already been in business with the publisher through its 2016 acquisition of his share of Sea Gayle Music and a joint venture that allowed him to bring writers to the company. “They have a global reach, yet this is still a small, independent publisher at its core,” says Rogers.

“I want us to be pound for pound, writer for writer, the best publishing company in Nashville.”

Under Rogers, the company has certainly made strides in that direction. Among Spirit Music Nashville’s recent acquisitions: a global publishing deal with songwriter Jonathan Singleton (Luke Combs’ “Beer Never Broke My Heart”); Carly Pearce and Lee Brice’s “I Hope You’re Happy Now”) that includes a portion of Singleton’s catalog; a catalog acquisition deal for material from three Tim McGraw albums; and a catalog acquisition/publishing deal for future works with songwriter David Garcia. “Garcia and Singleton are big catalog deals with a go-forward piece that’s exciting for us,” says Rogers. “It’s important for us to do a few of those so people know we can play ball.” —M.N.

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***Congrats to Jon, Joe, Ross  
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one of the first publishers to do a deal with Peloton, over five years ago. We were proactive, and as a result, we were not part of that lawsuit against them. We make most, if not all, of their background music.

**BORRINO** We are continuing to ramp up our digital services team. COVID has proved that streaming is a dominant force and that music discovery, consumption and distribution is constantly changing. Everybody is on their phones 24/7. Third-party platforms are growing. Beyond our dedicated digital services team, we try to put our entire staff on notice. We are constantly looking to discover new apps and platforms, and we challenge all of our employees to find that new app that is using music so that we can approach them and see what we can make happen. The benefit of being first in is to say, “Hey, we have 100,000 songs, and we want you to be able to utilize them. Let’s work together.”

**What about geographic markets?**

**SINGER** I think there’s a great opportunity in Sweden. There are great music-makers in Sweden and some great businesses. We have our eyes set on that market to find another great company with great executives, a great catalog and a great roster.

**A number of your competitors are expanding into ancillary businesses, like artist management or record labels. What are your plans?**

**SINGER** I wouldn’t rule out artist management, but it’s not for us right now. I thought about buying a synch company where they focus on third-party exploitation of synchronization, but that doesn’t make sense right now.

We’ve obviously looked at the recording side a few times, but I don’t have an appetite for that either. Listen, we know our strengths. We’re having a lot of success, and I never get comfortable. I always preach to the people who work for me, “When you get comfortable, you fail.” But I also go by, “If it ain’t broken, don’t fix it.” We’re having a lot of success the way we’re doing it.

**What genres aren’t a good fit for you right now?**

**SINGER** Classical music, which is unfortunate, because those were my roots at Decca. We’re not set up to manage classical music properly. And Broadway. We don’t have anything there except for the show *Kinky Boots*. [Cyndi Lauper is signed to Spirit as a writer.] We have representation in pretty much every other genre. We got into Christian music in the last handful of years, and we’re now focused on Latin.

**What will the company look like in 2030?**

**SINGER** It’s going to have probably three times the amount of songs and be worth probably three, four times what it is today.

**Whose catalog do you wish you could get your hands on?**

**SINGER** I’m a New Jersey boy. So what do you think I’m going to say?

**Springsteen.**

**SINGER** My wife grew up in Freehold and went to the same high school [Freehold High School]. She was a little younger, but my mother taught him back in the day. I’m just a huge fan. So obviously, he’s the greatest songwriter in the history of modern music in my mind — other than Townshend. **■**



From left: Lyric Capital Group’s Cameron with Pérez and Singer at Spirit Music Miami in 2019.

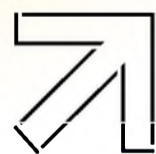


Michaelson at London’s Union Chapel in 2019.



**RAKESH SANGHVI**

GLOBAL PRESIDENT, SPIRIT MUSIC GROUP



Asked what distinguishes Spirit from its competitors, Rakesh Sanghvi uses an old boxing analogy. “Our whole ethos is about moving people up and developing writers to try and get them into a title fight. That’s what music publishing is supposed to be, but it’s having the time, ability and the mandate to go out and do that,” says the 53-year-old executive, who spent 15 years at Sony/ATV (including seven years running its U.K. division) before joining Spirit in 2015 as managing director of U.K./international of Spirit B-Unique.

In April 2019, Sanghvi was upped to global president, responsible for overseeing all creative aspects of Spirit’s worldwide operations. Based in the company’s London office, he works closely

with Borrino on strategy. “Every single deal goes through us,” says Sanghvi, adding that the key is “maintaining strong service levels and providing that bespoke attention. People are now leaning toward that kind of operation, rather than just being part of a huge roster where you don’t necessarily get the attention you deserve or need.”

Much of Spirit’s growth has come in the last five years, although Sanghvi is cautious about rapid expansion. “The thing that I find most appealing about Spirit is our ability to act, be agile and be creative,” he says. “I don’t want to dilute our offering by growing too quickly. As long as we maintain the trajectory that we’re on at the moment and it doesn’t compromise service levels, then I’ll be very happy.” —RICHARD SMIRKE



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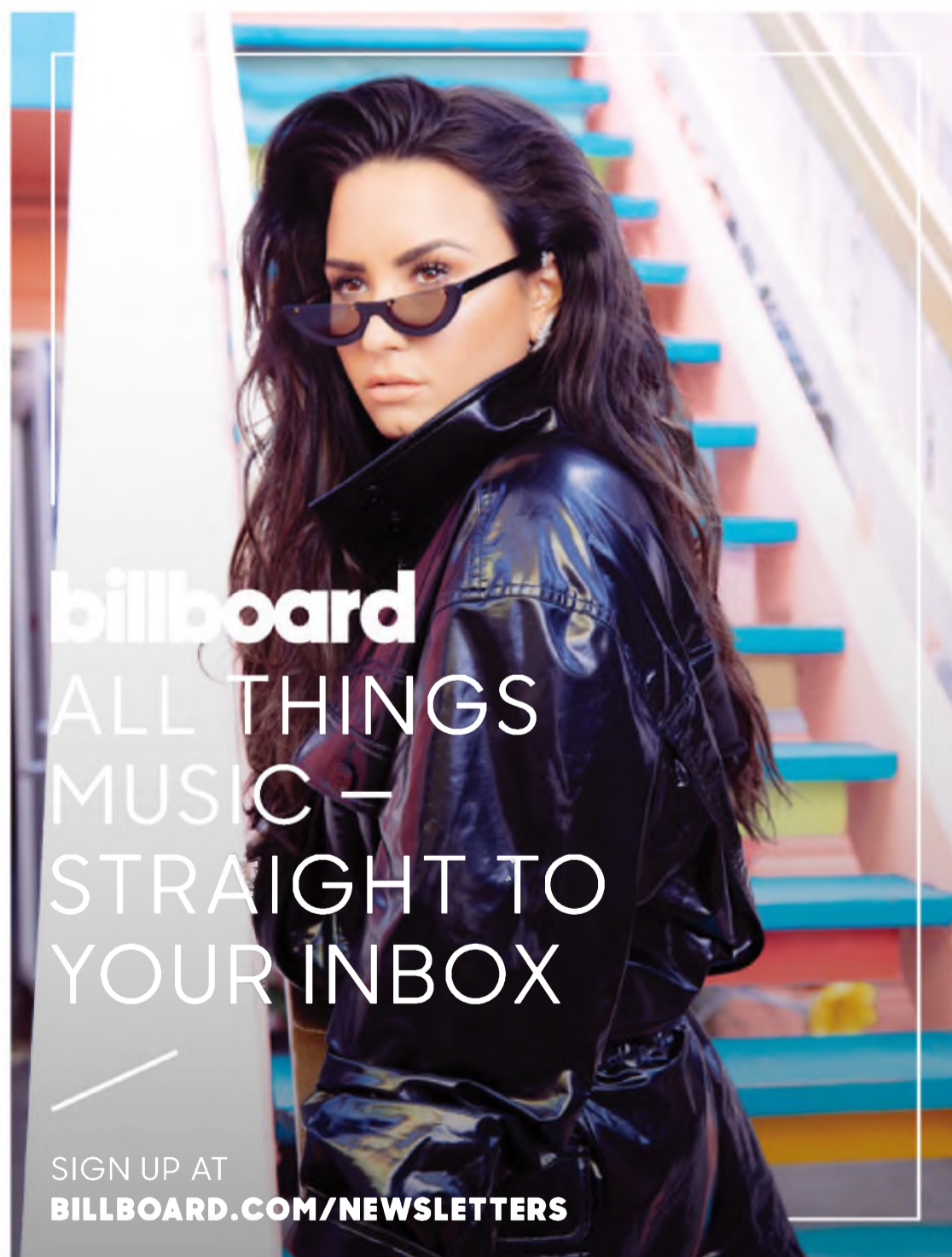
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# Chartbreaker

# No. 42

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## Priscilla Block

How TikTok helped this country artist break out with “Just About Over You” — and land a record deal

🕒 Last December, while visiting family in Raleigh, N.C., for Christmas, Priscilla Block posted her first TikTok. By March, once the pandemic-induced lockdown hit, the 25-year-old started uploading covers and original music to the app on a regular basis. “The most shocking part is my original music was what was exploding,” says Block. “PMS,” a humorous self-penned ode about the woes of premenstrual syndrome, posted in April and garnered over 1 million TikTok views, allowing for an eventual breakthrough.

Two months later, Block shared her breakup-inspired “Just About Over You,” which was so well-received that fans raised \$1,500 for her to make a proper recording. Once complete, Block followed the advice of her then-manager to upload the polished version on streaming services on a Wednesday (Aug. 5) instead of the usual Friday release day. The gambit worked; within 12 hours, “Just About Over You” soared to No. 1 on iTunes’ Country and All Genre charts. “I was speechless,” says Block. “I was like, ‘Oh my gosh, this might be my chance.’” The next day, labels in Nashville, New York and Los Angeles expressed interest, including Universal Music Group Nashville.

The label’s executive vp of A&R, Brian Wright, had alerted chairman/CEO Mike Dungan, who now says, “I went into the whole thing completely skeptical, because it’s TikTok. There were a jillion TikToks [for Block] and there was a lot of twerking, but there was also music that was really solid.” As other labels circled, Dungan brought in additional executives, including Universal Music Group chairman/CEO Lucian Grainge. Block signed to the Nashville major in September. Since then, UMG’s Mercury Nashville imprint serviced a new version of “Just About Over You” that has received play on 55 Country Airplay chart-reporting stations the week ending Oct. 25.

Though Dungan says right now is “without a doubt the worst time to try to introduce a new artist,” the label has organized Zoom meetings and performances “with every possible partner” for Block to maintain momentum. “She’s a TikTok phenomenon, but she is not going to be marketed as a TikTok star,” he adds. “This is the real deal.”

—MELINDA NEWMAN



DUNGAN



Block photographed by  
Eric Ryan Anderson on  
Oct. 21 in Nashville.

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Photos by Danny Clinch

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CH. 20



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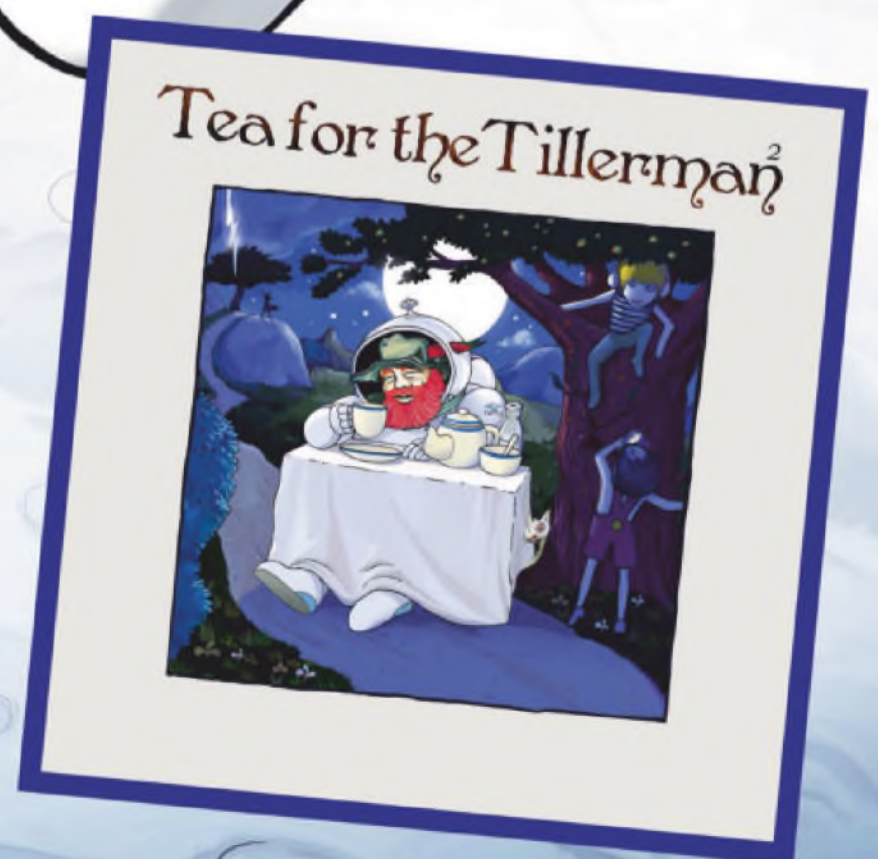
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