

2022 POWER LIST

JANUARY 29, 2022 • BILLBOARD.COM

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WITH POST MALONE**



**SoundCloud's
New Forecast**

**The Industry's
Hottest Job**





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Behind every GRAMMY® nominee, live show, and up-and-coming artist is a community of people working tirelessly to make the music we love possible. MusiCares® programs, services, and financial grants support the health and welfare of everyone in the music community in times of need.

WMG's *Voices of Change* Initiative

Last year, we started donating ad space in *Billboard* to amplify the voices of activists, organizations, and charities that reflect our core values and are creating real change.

We're proud to continue our partnership with MusiCares. Their efforts to provide critical assistance and to support the music community have reverberated through times of crisis.

Congratulations to our *Billboard* Power honorees, leaders in every way.





TIAGO PZK

YEAR ONE... CHAPTER ONE

■ SINGLES

March 2021 - FLOW DE BARRIO

8.4M STREAMS on Spotify, **15.7M VIEWS** on YouTube

June 2021 - HÁZMELO

20.4M STREAMS on Spotify, **26M VIEWS** on YouTube
Gold in Argentina

August 2021 - ENTRE NOSOTROS

221.6M STREAMS on Spotify, **221M VIEWS** on YouTube
Peak Position #31 on Top Global Spotify Chart
3x Platinum in Argentina, 4x Platinum in Perú
Platinum in Chile, Mexico and USA
Gold in Colombia and Spain

October 2021 - LOCO

29M STREAMS on Spotify, **43M VIEWS** on YouTube
Platinum in Argentina

November 2021 - SALIMO DE NOCHE

98M STREAMS on Spotify, **81M VIEWS** on YouTube
Peak Position #60 on Top Global Spotify Chart
2x Platinum in Argentina
Platinum in Spain and Perú

December 2021 - BOMBONA

Tiago PZK: Bzrp Music Sessions, Vol. 48 (Bizarrap)
27M STREAMS on Spotify, **48M VIEWS** on YouTube
Peak Position #19 on Top Global Charts Spotify

January 2022 - ENTRE NOSOTROS (REMIX)

18M STREAMS on Spotify, **40M VIEWS** on YouTube
Peak Position #49 on Top Global Charts Spotify

■ FILM

August 2021 - CATO, THE MOVIE

Lead role

#1 Box Office in Argentina (Domestic film category)

■ LIVE

• November 2021 - COCA-COLA FLOW FESTIVAL 2021 @ Ciudad de México

• December 2021 - VIBRA URBANA FESTIVAL @ Miami

• March 2022 - LOLLAPALOOZA @ Argentina
LOLLAPALOOZA @ Chile

• April 2022 - VIBRA URBANA FESTIVAL @ Las Vegas

THIS STORY HAS JUST BEGUN...



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NO. 1

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2022 BILLBOARD POWER LIST

The past year's unprecedented boom in music assets — such as the launch of Universal Music Group as a publicly traded company — shaped *Billboard*'s biggest list yet of the industry's leaders, including a tally of its top 25 executives, led by UMG chairman/CEO **Sir Lucian Grainge**.

ON THE COVER

Post Malone photographed by Eric Ryan Anderson on Dec. 15, 2021, in Salt Lake City.

TO OUR READERS

Billboard will publish its next issue on Feb. 26. For 24/7 music coverage, go to billboard.com.



ascap

HONORS

Marilyn
BERGMAN

FOR ELEVATING THE CRAFT OF
SONGWRITING WITH YOUR LYRICS

FOR TRANSFORMING ASCAP
WITH YOUR THREE DECADES OF
LEADERSHIP

FOR ENSHRINING THE RIGHTS OF
MUSIC CREATORS WORLDWIDE
WITH YOUR ADVOCACY

*"If we can try with every day / To make it better as it grows
With any luck, then I suppose / The music never ends"*

- "How Do You Keep the Music Playing," lyrics by Marilyn & Alan Bergman

Hannah Karp

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FAMILY

POWER PLAYERS

charts

DATA FOR WEEK OF 1.29.2022



Adele Makes Her Historical Chart Stays Look 'Easy'

HOT 100

1

"Easy On Me"
Adele

LAST WEEK

1

PEAK POSITION

1

WEEKS ON CHART

15

ADELE'S "EASY ON ME" scores a milestone 10th week at No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100, matching her longest run atop the chart, previously set with her 2015-16 hit "Hello."

With "Easy" drawing 99 million radio airplay audience impressions and 14.3 million streams, as well as selling 5,200 downloads in the United States during the Jan. 14-20 tracking week (according to MRC Data), Adele becomes the seventh act with at least two Hot 100 No. 1s that have each led the chart for double-digit weeks. She joins Boyz II Men, Drake (each with three such leaders), the Black Eyed Peas, Mariah Carey, Santana and Pharrell Williams (two each).

Adele also ties for the ninth-most cumulative

weeks spent atop the Hot 100 throughout her career, with 34 total among her five No. 1 hits. Before "Easy" and "Hello," she led the chart with "Rolling in the Deep" (seven weeks, 2011), "Someone Like You" (five, 2011) and "Set Fire to the Rain" (two, 2012).

Notably, Adele is the first artist with both two Hot 100 No. 1s and two Billboard 200 No. 1s that have led for at least 10 weeks. While "Easy" and "Hello" have both topped the Hot 100 for 10 weeks apiece, her albums *21* and *25* dominated the Billboard 200 for 24 and 10 weeks, in 2011-12 and 2015-16, respectively. ("Easy" parent album *30* has led the Billboard 200 for six weeks; it ranks at No. 4 on the latest installment of the chart.)

—GARY TRUST

Hot 100

2 WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title PRODUCER (SONGWRITER)	Artist IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
1	1	1	#1 for 10 WEEKS Easy On Me G.KURSTIN (A.L.B.ADKINS,G.KURSTIN)	Adele COLUMBIA	1	15
5	4	2	SAL We Don't Talk About Bruno L.M.MIRANDA,M.ELIZONDO (L.M.MIRANDA)	Carolina Gaitan, Mauro Castillo, Adassa, Rhenzy Feliz, Diane Guerrero, Stephanie Beatriz & Encanto Cast WALT DISNEY	2	4
3	3	3	Heat Waves D.BAYLEY (D.BAYLEY)	Glass Animals WOLF TONE/POLYDOR/REPUBLIC	3	53
2	2	4	Stay CASHMERE CAT,O.FEDI,B.SLATKIN,C.PUTH (C.K.J.HOWARD,J.D.BIEBER,M.A.HOIBERG,O.FEDI,B.SLATKIN,C.PUTH,M.J.MULE,I.DEBONI,S.RAHMAN)	The Kid LAROI & Justin Bieber RAYMOND BRAUN/COLUMBIA/DEF JAM	1	28
10	6	5	Super Gremlin ATL JACOB (B.K.KAPRI,J.D.CANADY,M.A.TIMMERMANN)	Kodak Black SNIPER GANG/ATLANTIC	5	11
4	5	6	Shivers E.SHEERAN,STEVE MAC,FRED (E.C.SHEERAN,J.MCDAID,STEVE MAC,K.LAVELLE)	Ed Sheeran ATLANTIC	4	19
-	7	7	Pushin P JUKE WONG,WHEEZY (S.G.KITCHENS,N.D.WILBURN,J.L.WILLIAMS,W.T.GLASS,L.DEPANTE)	Gunna & Future Featuring Young Thug GUNNA/YOUNG STONER LIFE/300	7	2
11	9	8	abcdefu P.NAPPI (GAYLE,D.B.PITTENGER,S.DAVIS)	GAYLE ARTHOUSE/ATLANTIC	8	9
7	10	9	Cold Heart (PNAU Remix) N.LITTLEMORE,P.MAYES,S.LITTLEMORE,C.THOMAS,G.DUDGEON (E.JOHN,B.J.P.TAUPIN,P.MAYES,N.LITTLEMORE,S.LITTLEMORE)	Elton John & Dua Lipa ROCKET/MERCURY/EMI/INTERSCOPE	7	20
14	14	10	Surface Pressure L.M.MIRANDA,M.ELIZONDO (L.M.MIRANDA)	Jessica Darrow WALT DISNEY	10	4
9	8	11	Need To Know DR. LUKE (A.Z.DLAMINI,L.S.GOTTWALD)	Doja Cat KEMOSABE/RCA	8	32
8	13	12	Bad Habits FRED,J.MCDAID,E.SHEERAN (E.C.SHEERAN,F.J.P.GIBSON,J.MCDAID)	Ed Sheeran ATLANTIC	2	30
6	12	13	Industry Baby YE,TAKE A DAY TRIP,N.LEE (M.L.HILL,D.M.A.BAPTISTE,D.C.SNYDER,N.LEE,J.HARLOW,YE,M.WILLIAMS,R.CUBINA,R.LENZO)	Lil Nas X & Jack Harlow COLUMBIA	1	26
17	17	14	Ghost THE MONSTERS & STRANGERZ,J.BELLION (J.D.BIEBER,J.D.BELLION,J.K.JOHNSON,S.JOHNSON,M.R.POLLACK)	Justin Bieber RAYMOND BRAUN/DEF JAM	14	17
13	15	15	Smokin Out The Window (Bruno Mars & Anderson .Paak) BRUNO MARS,D'MILE (BRUNO MARS,B.ANDERSON,D.EMILE II)	Silk Sonic AFTERMATH/ATLANTIC	5	11
12	18	16	Levitating KOZ,S.D.PRICE (C.COFFEE JR.,S.KOZMENIUK,S.T.HUDSON,D.LIPA)	Dua Lipa WARNER	2	63
34	25	17	Hrs And Hrs D.GRAHAM,R.TILLER (PRISCILLA RENE,T.HARRELL,H.AAABI,D.GRAHAM,J.N.ZIM,B.JOHN-BAPTISTE)	Muni Long SUPERGIANT	17	4
24	26	18	Oh My God G.KURSTIN (A.L.B.ADKINS,G.KURSTIN)	Adele COLUMBIA	5	9
20	24	19	Thats What I Want O.FEDI,B.SLATKIN,R.B.TEDDER,KBEAZY (M.L.HILL,O.FEDI,B.SLATKIN,R.B.TEDDER,K.C.BACH)	Lil Nas X COLUMBIA	10	18
18	21	20	Save Your Tears MAX MARTIN,O.T.HOLTER,THE WEEKND (A.TESFAYE,A.BALSHE,J.QUENNEVILLE,MAX MARTIN,O.T.HOLTER,A.GRANDE)	The Weeknd & Ariana Grande XO/REPUBLIC	1	55



The 27-year-old Miami native's song from Disney's *Encanto* soundtrack (Darrow voices the character of Luisa Madrigal) is her first Hot 100 entry and ranks at No. 4 on Streaming Songs.

HOT 100

10

"Surface Pressure"
Jessica Darrow

What was the recording process like for "Surface Pressure"?

They gave me so much room to be creative. I did three recordings, [and] the third time, I had a month's space

in between. I realized how much I needed to let myself lean into the lyrics. Lin-Manuel [Miranda] encouraged me to bring out the texture in my voice and what [the song] made me feel viscerally. The beautiful thing about Disney is that they touch on deep messages that will penetrate whether you realize it or not — especially with the writing of Lin-Manuel.

Did you expect this song to be such a big hit?

No! I just hoped that the message and [my character] Luisa resonated with people. I'm very grateful. It has brought music back into my life in an amazing way. I'm currently working on an EP. I wasn't expecting that sentence to come out of my mouth anytime soon, but this movie has made a lot of sentences come out of my mouth that I never expected. I put together a single that I hope I can get out by the end of February, which will also come with a music video.

What has struck you most about the success of *Encanto* and its music?

How universal the message is, no matter what language it's in. People understand why context is everything and why it's so important to talk about how you're feeling. I also think it's amazing that Latinos are at the forefront. We rule the world. I love that in this representation of my Latino culture, you can find yourself regardless of where you come from. The colors, the food, the characters, the type of personalities: It's what it means to coexist.

—GRISELDA FLORES

Biggest Sales Gain	2	"We Don't Talk About Bruno" Carolina Gaitán, Mauro Castillo, Adassa, Rhenzy Feliz, Diane Guerrero, Stephanie Beatriz and <i>Encanto</i> cast	
Biggest Airplay Gain	23	"Sacrifice" The Weeknd	
Biggest Streaming Gain	31	"What Else Can I Do?" Diane Guerrero and Stephanie Beatriz	

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

DARRAW: ALBERTO RODRIGUEZ/GETTY IMAGES FOR DISNEY; ENCANTO: DISNEY; THE WEEKND: BRAIN Z.F.F. THE WEEKS MOST POPULAR CURRENT SONGS ACROSS ALL GENRES, RANKED BY RADIO AIRPLAY, AUDIENCE IMPRESSIONS AS MEASURED BY MRC DATA, SALES DATA AS COMPILED BY MRC DATA AND STREAMING ACTIVITY DATA BY MRC DATA. SONGS ARE RATED AS CURRENT IF THEY ARE NEWLY RELEASED TITLES OR ARE RECEIVING WIDE SPREAD AIRPLAY AND/OR SALES ACTIVITY FOR THE FIRST TIME. SEE CHARTS. LEGEND ON BILLBOARD.COM FOR COMPLETE RULES AND EXPLANATIONS. © 2021 BILLBOARD MEDIA LLC AND MRC DATA INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. THE WEEKS MOST POPULAR CURRENT SONGS ACROSS ALL GENRES, RANKED BY RADIO AIRPLAY, AUDIENCE IMPRESSIONS AS MEASURED BY MRC DATA, SALES DATA AS COMPILED BY MRC DATA AND STREAMING ACTIVITY DATA BY MRC DATA. SONGS ARE RATED AS CURRENT IF THEY ARE NEWLY RELEASED TITLES OR ARE RECEIVING WIDE SPREAD AIRPLAY AND/OR SALES ACTIVITY FOR THE FIRST TIME. SEE CHARTS. LEGEND ON BILLBOARD.COM FOR COMPLETE RULES AND EXPLANATIONS. © 2021 BILLBOARD MEDIA LLC AND MRC DATA INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

BILLBOARD 200

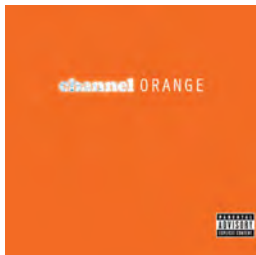
6



The Lumineers *Brightside*

The act scores its fourth top 10 entry on the chart, matching the group's total number of studio albums to date. *Brightside* also debuts as the band's fourth straight leader on Top Rock Albums, Top Alternative Albums and Americana/Folk Albums.

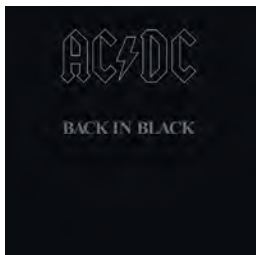
65



Frank Ocean *Channel Orange*

The album surges (up 57% in units in the week ending Jan. 20, according to MRC Data) following its track "Lost" going viral on TikTok. The last time *Channel Orange* rose higher than No. 65 was on Sept. 10, 2016 (No. 27).

123



AC/DC *Back in Black*

Back in Black is one week shy of becoming the 13th album to spend at least 500 weeks on the Billboard 200. Pink Floyd's *The Dark Side of the Moon* still has the most, with 961.

1

SOUNDTRACK *Encanto*



The *Encanto* soundtrack returns to No. 1 on the Billboard 200 for a second nonconsecutive week (3-1) with a new weekly best of 104,000 equivalent album units earned in the United States during the week ending Jan. 20 (up 9%), according to MRC Data. The album — with songs written by Lin-Manuel Miranda — first reached No. 1 on the Jan. 15 chart, following the film's Disney+ premiere on Dec. 24, 2021. "I went on vacation [after the Disney+ launch]," Miranda says, adding that it's "the first I've taken in a very, very, very long time, and when I got back, the soundtrack was just kind of everywhere. It started with texts from my friends of their kids singing the songs, and then it started being like friends

I hadn't heard from since college sending me videos of their kids singing the songs. It has just been incredible." —KEITH CAULFIELD

Billboard 200

2 WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Artist	Title	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
			IMPRINT/DISTRIBUTING LABEL			
1	3	1	#1 for 2 WEEKS GG Soundtrack WALT DISNEY	Encanto	1	8
-	1	2	Gunna GUNNA/YOUNG STONER LIFE/300/AG	DS4EVER	1	2
-	2	3	The Weeknd XO/REPUBLIC	Dawn FM	2	2
2	4	4	Adele COLUMBIA	30	1	9
3	5	5	Morgan Wallen BIG LOUD/REPUBLIC	Dangerous: The Double Album	1	54
HOT SHOT DEBUT		6	The Lumineers DUALTONE	Brightside	6	1
8	6	7	The Weeknd XO/REPUBLIC	The Highlights	2	49
6	8	8	Drake OVO SOUND/REPUBLIC	Certified Lover Boy	1	20
4	7	9	Olivia Rodrigo Geffen/IGA	Sour	1	35
7	9	10	Doja Cat Kemosabe/RCA	Planet Her	2	30
5	10	11	Taylor Swift REPUBLIC	Red (Taylor's Version)	1	10
10	12	12	Polo G COLUMBIA	Hall Of Fame	1	32
NEW		13	Cordae ART@WAR/ATLANTIC/AG	From A Birds Eye View	13	1
NEW		14	ENHYPEN BE:LIFT LAB/GEFFEN/IGA	DIMENSION : ANSWER	14	1
9	11	15	Juice WRLD GRADE A/INTERSCOPE/IGA	Fighting Demons	2	6
11	13	16	Ed Sheeran ATLANTIC/AG	=	1	12
13	15	17	The Kid LAROI COLUMBIA	F*ck Love	1	78
12	14	18	Summer Walker LVRN/INTERSCOPE/IGA	Still Over It	1	11
14	16	19	Billie Eilish DARKROOM/INTERSCOPE/IGA	Happier Than Ever	1	25
19	18	20	Lil Baby QUALITY CONTROL/MOTOWN/CAPITOL	My Turn	1	99

2022 GRAMMY NOMINATIONS IN MULTIPLE CATEGORIES

Best Traditional R&B

Bring It On Home To Me

BJ The Chicago Kid, PJ Morton & Kenyon Dixon Featuring Charlie Bereal

Best Arrangement, Instruments and Vocals

A Change Is Gonna Come

Tehillah Alphonso, arranger

Best Compilation Soundtrack For Visual Media

One Night In Miami...

Leslie Odom, Jr., Terence Blanchard, Jeremy Pope, Keb' Mo',

Tarriona "Tank" Ball, LC Cooke, Billy Preston

Nicholai Baxter, producer

Regina King & Kemp Powers, compilation producers

Randall Poster, music supervisor

Teri Landi, music production coordinator

Best Song Written For Visual Media

Inspired by Sam Cooke

"Speak Now"

Sam Ashworth & Leslie Odom, Jr., songwriters

Joseph Abate and Nicholai Baxter, producers

of his time... ahead of his time...for all time

01/22/31

Sam Cooke





GLOBAL 200

6

"Heat Waves"
Glass Animals

Dave Bayley of Glass Animals

GLASS ANIMALS' "Heat Waves" continues its slow burn, returning to its Nos. 6 and 7 highs on the Billboard Global 200 and Billboard Global Excl. U.S. charts, respectively.

Meanwhile, on the U.S.-based Mainstream Top 40 airplay chart, the song finally reaches No. 1 after its release

in June 2020, first hitting an airplay chart that November and beginning a three-week stay atop Alternative Airplay in March 2021.

During its run, however, "Heat Waves" cooled at pop radio last summer. It originally hit a No. 16 high on Mainstream Top 40 last June before dropping off the chart in July (ironic given its lyrics about "late nights in the middle of June"). It didn't return to the ranking until mid-November, and it reached the top 10 two weeks later.

As its top 40 radio play declined, "Heat Waves" surged on TikTok, playing off the song's "all I think about is you" lyric from the hook. It trended very strongly in late summer, with the band posting a clip on the platform as well.

The song "always felt strong, but once it kicked in on TikTok and never [left] the top tier [in] streaming, radio seemed to realize that it deserved another shot, which is when it kicked into the next gear," says Erik Bradley, assistant program director/music director at WBBM-FM (B96) Chicago. "It has always sounded like a massive hit, which is exactly what it would up becoming."

"My favorite earworm of the year," adds Sue O'Neil, program director of WKSE (Kiss 98.5) Buffalo, N.Y. "I thought it was going to go away or maybe stay as a recurrent, but I loved when we started seeing research and were able to move it into a power rotation."

—GARY TRUST

Global 200

2 WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title	Artist	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
(1)	(1)	1	#1 for 3 WEEKS abcdefu	GAYLE	1	10
(11)	(6)	2	GG We Don't Talk About Bruno	Carolina Gaitan, Mauro Castillo, Adassa, Rhenzy Feliz, Diane Guerrero, Stephanie Beatriz & Encanto Cast	2	4
(3)	4	3	Cold Heart (PNAU Remix)	Elton John & Dua Lipa	3	23
4	3	4	Easy On Me	Adele	1	15
2	5	5	Stay	The Kid LAROI & Justin Bieber	1	28
(6)	7	6	Heat Waves	Glass Animals	6	55
(5)	8	7	Shivers	Ed Sheeran	3	19
(9)	(9)	8	Enemy	Imagine Dragons X JID	8	12
-	(2)	9	Sacrifice	The Weeknd	2	2
8	11	10	Industry Baby	Lil Nas X & Jack Harlow	2	26
7	12	11	Bad Habits	Ed Sheeran	1	30
-	(20)	12	Pushin P	Gunna & Future Featuring Young Thug	12	2
(18)	(21)	13	Surface Pressure	Jessica Darrow	13	4
12	18	14	Love Nwantiti (Ah Ah Ah)	CKay	2	19
13	19	15	Save Your Tears	The Weeknd & Ariana Grande	1	55
10	22	16	Pepas	Farruko	7	27
(15)	23	17	Do It To It	Acraze Featuring Cherish	15	12
(88)	(13)	18	Fingers Crossed	Lauren Spencer-Smith	13	3
22	31	19	Super Gremlin	Kodak Black	19	8
14	25	20	Levitating	Dua Lipa	2	68

AMY HARRIS/INVISION/AP

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



STREAMING AND SALES DATA COMPILED BY

Ultra Music Publishing

congratulates our Grammy Awards Nominees

Wheezy

Album Of The Year - *Donda*
Best Rap Album - *Donda*

Shenseea

Best Dance/Electronic Album - *Music Is The Weapon (Reloaded)*
Best Progressive R&B Album - *Studying Abroad: Extended Stay*
Album Of The Year - *Donda*
Best Rap Album - *Donda*

Pomo

Album Of The Year - *WE ARE*

Kojo

Best Progressive R&B Album - *Studying Abroad: Extended Stay*

Marshall Jefferson

Best Dance/Electronic Album - *Judgement*

Ape Drums

Best Dance/Electronic Album - *Music Is The Weapon (Reloaded)*

Jinadu

Best Dance/Electronic Album - *Subconsciously*

Herb Lawson

Best Dance/Electronic Album - *Judgement*

Kham McPherson

Best Reggae Album - *Pamoja*

Leftside

Best Reggae Album - *Live N Livin*

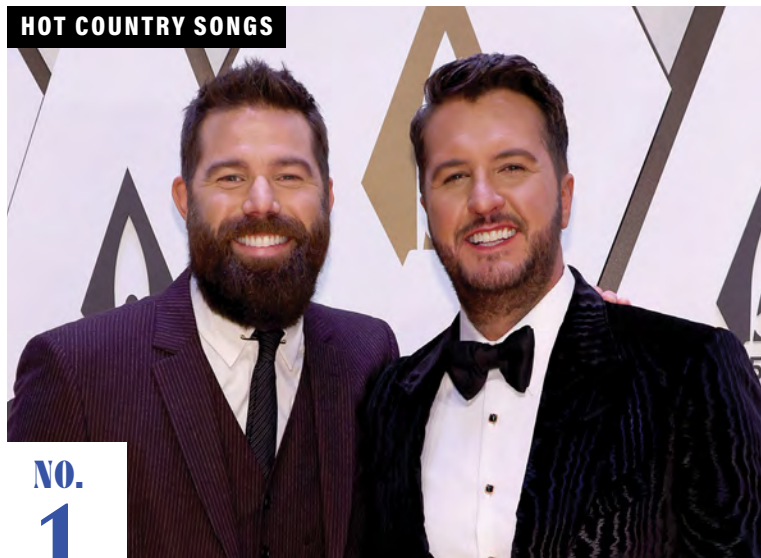
Notnice

Best Reggae Album - *10*



Quality songwriting since 2004

HOT COUNTRY SONGS



NO. 1

'Dirt' Lands At No. 1

"Buy Dirt" by Jordan Davis (above left), which features Luke Bryan (above right), rises to the top of *Billboard's* airplay-, streaming- and sales-based Hot Country Songs and Country Airplay charts. Davis earns his first leader on Hot Country Songs and his third on Country Airplay. Bryan ups his totals to 12 and 26 No. 1s on the respective lists.

Davis, 33, co-wrote "Dirt" with his brother Jacob and fellow sibling duo Josh and Matt Jennings. "The minute we finished this song, we knew we had to get it to Luke [Bryan]," says the Shreveport, La., native Davis. "It was an honor to have him want to be a part of it. I'm so thankful for my [co-writers], my fans and country radio. It takes an army to have these songs connect the way this one has. My promotion team, management and label have believed in my music from day one, and I'm so glad that we all get to celebrate a really special song."

—JIM ASKER

Hot Country Songs				
LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title	Artist	WKS. ON CHART
		<small>IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL</small>		
2	1	#1 for 1 WEEK AIR Buy Dirt <small>MCA NASHVILLE</small>	Jordan Davis Featuring Luke Bryan	35
1	2	Fancy Like <small>MONUMENT</small>	Walker Hayes	32
3	3	You Should Probably Leave <small>MERCURY NASHVILLE</small>	Chris Stapleton	43
6	4	One Mississippi <small>RCA NASHVILLE</small>	Kane Brown	22
5	5	If I Didn't Love You <small>MACON/CAPITOL NASHVILLE/BROKEN BOW</small>	Jason Aldean & Carrie Underwood	26
8	6	Sand In My Boots <small>REPUBLIC/BIG LOUD</small>	Morgan Wallen	49
4	7	Thinking 'Bout You <small>BROKEN BOW</small>	Dustin Lynch Featuring Lauren Alaina Or MacKenzie Porter	31
7	8	Whiskey And Rain <small>WARNER MUSIC NASHVILLE/WEA</small>	Michael Ray	39
12	9	To Be Loved By You <small>MCA NASHVILLE</small>	Parker McCollum	31
10	10	Freedom Was A Highway <small>STONEY CREEK</small>	Jimmie Allen & Brad Paisley	33

HOT R&B/HIP-HOP SONGS



NO. 7

Gunna Hits The Top 10, Again

For the second consecutive week, Gunna scores the highest debut on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart. This time, "P Power" (featuring Drake) arrives at No. 7, one week after "Pushin P" (with Future featuring Young Thug) debuted at No. 2, where it remains on the Jan. 29 chart. "P Power" opens with 14 million U.S. streams in the week ending Jan. 20, according to MRC Data, bringing Gunna to a dozen top 10 hits on Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs, while Drake secures his record-extending 97th visit to the tier.

Meanwhile, Latto scores her first top 10 on Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs with "Big Energy" rising 20-10. Radio drives the charge, registering on three formats. Despite descending from peaks on Mainstream R&B/Hip-Hop Airplay (2-7) and Rhythmic Airplay (down to No. 2 after three weeks at No. 1), the single jumps 29-25 on Mainstream Top 40.

—TREVOR ANDERSON

Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs				
LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title	Artist	WKS. ON CHART
		<small>IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL</small>		
1	1	#1 for 2 WEEKS Super Gremlin <small>SNIPER GANG/ATLANTIC</small>	Kodak Black	11
2	2	Pushin P <small>GUNNA/YOUNG STONER LIFE/300</small>	Gunna & Future Featuring Young Thug	2
4	3	Industry Baby <small>COLUMBIA</small>	Lil Nas X & Jack Harlow	26
5	4	Smokin Out The Window <small>AFTERMATH/ATLANTIC</small>	Silk Sonic (Bruno Mars & Anderson .Paak)	11
8	5	Hrs And Hrs <small>SUPERGIANT</small>	Muni Long	4
3	6	AIR Sacrifice <small>XO/REPUBLIC</small>	The Weeknd	2
HOT SHOT DEBUT	7	P Power <small>GUNNA/YOUNG STONER LIFE/300</small>	Gunna Featuring Drake	1
12	8	I Hate U <small>TOP DAWG/RCA</small>	SZA	7
14	9	Knife Talk <small>OVO SOUND/REPUBLIC</small>	Drake Featuring 21 Savage & Project Pat	20
20	10	Big Energy <small>STREAMCUT/RCA</small>	Latto	14



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CHILL VIBE

Social House is an American musical duo from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In addition to their own work, they have written and produced songs for Ariana Grande, Meghan Trainor, Jennifer Lopez and more.

Visit artist profile

Social House

Gospel Melodics

SING V

Jessica Childress

Darkness

EMATIC VIBE

Tyler Bates

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Joel Hoekstra of Trans-Siberian Orchestra

WINNERS IN WINTER

TRANS-SIBERIAN ORCHESTRA LEADS THE 2021 HOLIDAY SEASON'S LIST OF THE TOP TOURS

A **NOTHER CHRISTMAS, ANOTHER TOP TOURS CHART** win for Trans-Siberian Orchestra. After leading the December 2019 list, the holiday-rock heroes return to No. 1 with a monthly haul of \$42 million and 588,000 tickets sold to 71 shows, according to figures reported to Billboard Boxscore.

TSO employs both an East Coast and a West Coast band, which allows the act to play multiple shows in a single day. As Christmas approached, a matinee and prime-time show on either coast combined to a daily total of \$2.5 million to \$3 million.

Meanwhile, BTS rules the Top Boxscores chart for a second consecutive month, with the final two of four shows from its run at SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, Calif., on Dec. 1 and 2. The South Korean pop stars are followed by fellow international crossover act Bad Bunny, who brought in \$6.5 million for two stadium shows in San Juan, Puerto Rico — 25 miles from his hometown of Vega Baja.

Check billboard.com for more Boxscore coverage, including extended monthly charts.

—ERIC FRANKENBERG

Top Tours			
Artist	Gross	Total Attendees	No. of Shows
1 Trans-Siberian Orchestra	\$42,018,748	588,172	71
2 Genesis	\$22,067,775	107,150	9
3 BTS	\$16,816,785	107,457	2
4 Andrea Bocelli	\$13,794,547	77,637	6
5 Bruno Mars	\$8,443,753	26,206	6
6 James Taylor	\$6,700,493	67,311	8
7 Bad Bunny	\$6,461,098	70,000	2
8 Pentatonix	\$6,376,255	87,126	13
9 Chris Stapleton	\$6,009,846	61,853	5
10 Morgan Wallen	\$4,705,178	41,610	3

Top Boxscores			
Artist(s) VENUE DATE	Gross TICKET PRICES	Total Attendees NO. OF SHOWS	Promoter(s)
1 BTS SOFI STADIUM, INGLEWOOD, CALIF. DEC. 1-2	\$16,816,785 \$155.87	107,150 2	HYBE
2 Bad Bunny HIRAM BITHORN STADIUM, SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO DEC. 10-11	\$6,461,098 \$125/\$30	70,000 2	Move Concerts, Noah Assad LLC
3 Genesis MADISON SQUARE GARDEN, NEW YORK DEC. 5-6	\$5,314,783 \$500/\$75	23,160 2	EMC Presents
4 Genesis WELLS FARGO CENTER, PHILADELPHIA DEC. 2-3	\$5,208,680 \$500/\$75	26,846 2	EMC Presents
5 Morgan Wallen RUPP ARENA, LEXINGTON, KY. DEC. 3-5	\$4,705,178 \$154.50/\$54.50	41,610 3	Outback Concerts
6 Andrea Bocelli MADISON SQUARE GARDEN, NEW YORK DEC. 15-16	\$4,680,171 \$366/\$276/\$206/\$136/\$86	26,111 2	Gelb Productions
7 Decadence New Year's Eve COLORADO CONVENTION CENTER, DENVER DEC. 30-31	\$4,456,665 \$240/\$89	33,113 2	AEG Presents
8 Genesis TD GARDEN, BOSTON DEC. 15-16	\$4,180,975 \$500/\$75	21,746 2	EMC Presents
9 George Strait T-MOBILE ARENA, LAS VEGAS DEC. 3-4	\$4,089,849 \$399/\$50	30,350 2	Messina Touring Group/AEG Presents
10 Z100 Jingle Ball MADISON SQUARE GARDEN, NEW YORK DEC. 10	\$3,289,810 \$757/\$382/\$232/\$107/\$52	17,379 1	iHeartMedia + Entertainment

PAUL CARABEL/GETTY IMAGES

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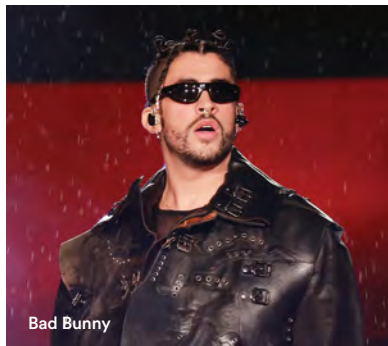


UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP

Top Venues

15,001 OR MORE CAPACITY

	Venue LOCATION	Total Gross	Total Attendees	No. of Shows
1	SoFi Stadium INGLEWOOD, CALIF.	\$16,816,785	107,457	2
2	T-Mobile Arena LAS VEGAS	\$14,552,465	80,299	6
3	Madison Square Garden NEW YORK	\$13,284,764	66,650	5
4	O2 Arena LONDON	\$11,396,960	151,746	15
5	TD Garden BOSTON	\$10,837,815	99,765	8
6	Wells Fargo Center PHILADELPHIA	\$9,305,607	65,543	6
7	Amway Center ORLANDO, FLA.	\$7,623,277	85,614	9
8	Hiram Bithorn Stadium SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO	\$6,461,098	70,000	2
9	Crypto.com Arena LOS ANGELES	\$6,029,711	79,749	11
10	State Farm Arena ATLANTA	\$5,606,655	66,087	7



10,001-15,000 CAPACITY

	Venue LOCATION	Total Gross	Total Attendees	No. of Shows
1	OVO Hydro GLASGOW	\$3,702,132	56,947	8
2	Van Andel Arena GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.	\$3,160,039	42,853	8
3	First Direct Arena LEEDS, ENGLAND	\$2,903,440	47,293	9
4	Utilita Arena NEWCASTLE, ENGLAND	\$2,421,025	55,776	15
5	SSE Arena, Wembley LONDON	\$2,366,598	36,801	5
6	SNHU Arena MANCHESTER, N.H.	\$1,550,528	10,756	1
7	Pechanga Arena San Diego SAN DIEGO	\$1,432,332	20,271	2
8	Footprint Center PHOENIX	\$1,338,945	19,446	2
9	Toyota Arena ONTARIO, CALIF.	\$1,269,081	20,470	3
10	Gas South Arena DULUTH, GA.	\$1,131,116	16,389	2



5,001-10,000 CAPACITY

	Venue LOCATION	Total Gross	Total Attendees	No. of Shows
1	Radio City Music Hall NEW YORK	\$27,492,983	295,678	53
2	Dolby Live LAS VEGAS	\$10,819,948	50,552	8
3	Hulu Theater at Madison Square Garden NEW YORK	\$5,284,283	66,117	29
4	Texas Trust CU Theatre DALLAS	\$4,094,286	61,821	14
5	Bill Graham Civic Auditorium SAN FRANCISCO	\$2,237,138	30,630	4
6	Hard Rock Live at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino HOLLYWOOD, FLA.	\$1,997,241	26,277	7
7	Mohegan Sun Arena UNCASVILLE, CONN.	\$1,992,719	35,723	8
8	Agganis Arena BOSTON	\$1,824,320	37,788	13
9	Smart Financial Centre SUGAR LAND, TEXAS	\$1,128,758	12,117	2
10	Huntington Center TOLEDO, OHIO	\$1,061,225	16,963	3

5,000 OR LESS CAPACITY

	Venue LOCATION	Total Gross	Total Attendees	No. of Shows
1	Orpheum Theatre MINNEAPOLIS	\$2,584,245	33,485	19
2	The Theater at MGM National Harbor OXON HILL, MD.	\$2,430,508	20,609	8
3	Brooklyn Steel BROOKLYN	\$1,866,809	24,855	13
4	McCallum Theatre PALM DESERT, CALIF.	\$1,440,609	5,522	5
5	Masonic Temple Theatre DETROIT	\$1,394,431	26,969	8
6	The Mission Ballroom DENVER	\$1,385,955	35,031	11
7	Chicago Theatre CHICAGO	\$1,267,673	17,255	7
8	Ruth Eckerd Hall CLEARWATER, FLA.	\$996,530	12,318	9
9	Morris Performing Arts Center SOUTH BEND, IND.	\$932,073	14,875	12
10	DeVos Performance Hall GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.	\$885,549	21,714	17

BTS: KEVIN WINTER/GETTY IMAGES; PENTATONIX: CHRIS PIZZELLO/GETTY IMAGES; BAD BUNNY: JEFFREY MATTAR/GETTY IMAGES

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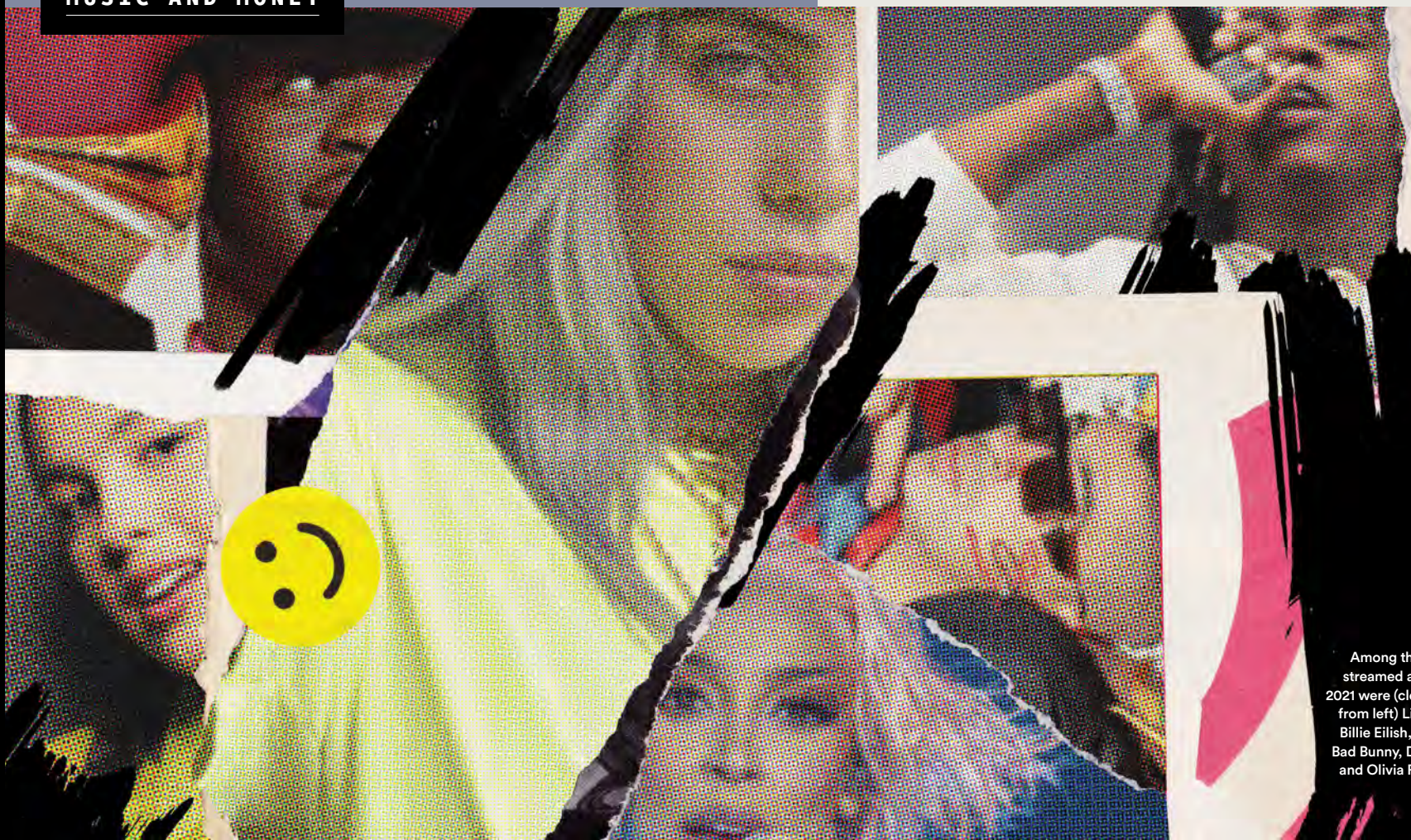
market

MUSIC AND MONEY

PG. 24 STOCKS TO WATCH IN 2022

PG. 26 NOW HIRING: COMMUNITY MANAGERS

PG. 28 CHINA'S COPYRIGHT REFORM



Among the most-streamed artists in 2021 were (clockwise from left) Lil Nas X, Billie Eilish, Polo G, Bad Bunny, Doja Cat and Olivia Rodrigo.

1 Trillion Holds Strong

On-demand streams continued to surge in 2021, while CDs joined vinyl in the growth column

BY ED CHRISTMAN // ILLUSTRATION BY MEL HAASCH

N EITHER THE DELTA nor the omicron COVID-19 variant slowed the U.S. recorded-music business last year as it continued the upward growth trend maintained even in the early days of the pandemic. For the third consecutive year, on-demand streams topped the 1 trillion mark — a feat accomplished almost solely by audio streams, according to MRC Data's 2021 year-end report.

Combined on-demand streams grew 9.9% to 1.13 trillion, up from 1.03 trillion in 2020, and audio streams drove that overall growth

by surging 12.6% to 988.1 billion plays from 877.2 billion in 2020.

Physical: Dance To The Record

Overall album consumption units grew 11.3% to 893.1 million from 2020's total of 802.5 million units, fueled by streaming's growth and an amazing year for vinyl (albeit on a smaller scale). In 2021, vinyl album sales grew 51.4% to 41.7 million copies, from 27.6 million in 2020, surpassing CDs as the top physical format. At an average list price of \$27.49 per copy, according to calculations based on the

RIAA's midyear 2021 numbers, that means U.S. consumers purchased over \$1 billion worth of vinyl releases, *Billboard* estimates, for the first time in three decades. Their top pick: Adele's *30*, which has sold 318,000 copies. The format has a way to go before it hits that milestone on a wholesale basis: 41.7 million copies translate to nearly \$700 million in revenue for labels.

CD sales appear to have hit bottom in 2020 and rebounded slightly last year. After three consecutive years of decreases that exceeded 20% in 2021, 40.6 million copies of the format were scanned, posting modest growth of 1.1%. In 2020, that total was 40.2 million copies — a far cry from the 89 million logged in 2017, but some industry observers interpret the similar year-to-year numbers as a stabilizing moment for CDs.

Catalog Cha-Ching!

Market share for catalog music consumption gained a remarkable five percentage points in 2021. Defined as anything older than 18 months that has fallen out of the top half of the *Billboard* 200 or is no longer current at radio, catalog music captured 69.8% of the market last year, earning 623.6 million consumption

The Recording Academy

moved the 2022 Grammy Awards to April 3 in Las Vegas amid the surging omicron COVID-19 variant.

Investment manager **Pimco** teamed with BMG to acquire music catalogs.

Melissa Ann Goodwin, the former GM of the T.J. Martell Foundation, was charged with wire fraud for allegedly embezzling nearly \$4 million from the charity.

John Legend sold his share of his song copyrights and recorded-music royalties to BMG and investment firm KKR for music from 2004 to 2021.

units — up from 65.1% and 522.6 million units in 2020. Current music accounted for 30.2%, or 269.5 million units, in 2021.

When CDs were the dominant format, those positions were switched. In 2004, for instance — well before streaming and before downloads became substantial — current albums comprised 64.2% of album sales while catalog's share stood at 35.8%. Technological advances are a significant reason for that shift. Before the advent of streaming, the industry could track only what consumers bought in stores. Today, streaming more fully measures — and monetizes — their listening habits.

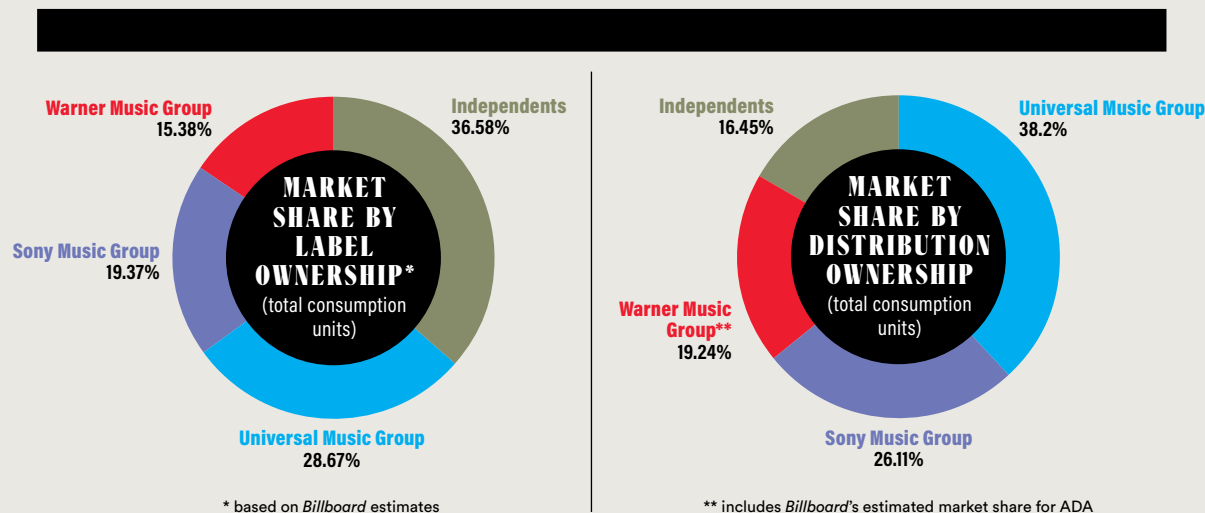
Sony's Swell, Latin's Well

Although Sony Music Group finished second among the majors in market share, it was the only Big Three company to post an increase in 2021, from 25.74% in 2020 to 26.11%, as measured by label distribution, not ownership. (One-tenth of a percentage point represents approximately \$7 million.) Universal Music Group remained at No. 1, but its market share fell marginally to 38.20% last year from 38.52% in 2020. Warner Music Group also declined slightly to 19.24%. The independent sector fell to 16.45%, but when looking at market share in terms of label ownership, indies collectively maintained their lead with 36.58%.

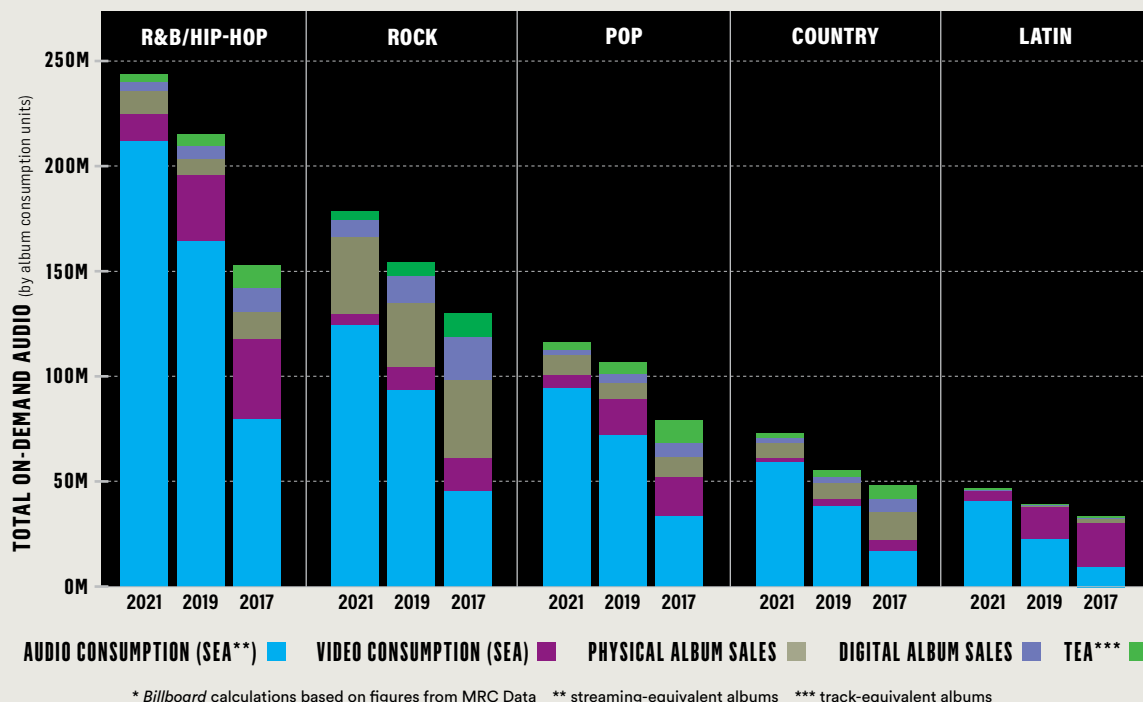
In terms of genre, Latin gained more than any other, growing its market share to 5.39% — up 9% from 4.95% of the market in 2020 — and rebounding to about the same share it held in 2019. Bad Bunny, whose catalog racked up 1.8 million consumption units, was the genre's top seller, accounting for 3.73% of the genre's 48.2 million total. The versatile Puerto Rican artist was *Billboard's* top Latin act of last year (a title he also held in 2019 and 2020) and the No. 24 streaming artist of 2021; worth noting because streaming accounts for 97.2% of Latin music's consumption activity. Physical sales make up the rest.

Country music has also upped its streaming game through the success of Morgan Wallen and Luke Combs, who were, respectively, *Billboard's* No. 11 and No. 20 top streaming songs artists of 2021. Wallen's *Dangerous: The Double Album* was the year's No. 1 album, generating nearly 3.2 million album consumption units — nearly 90% of which were generated from streaming.

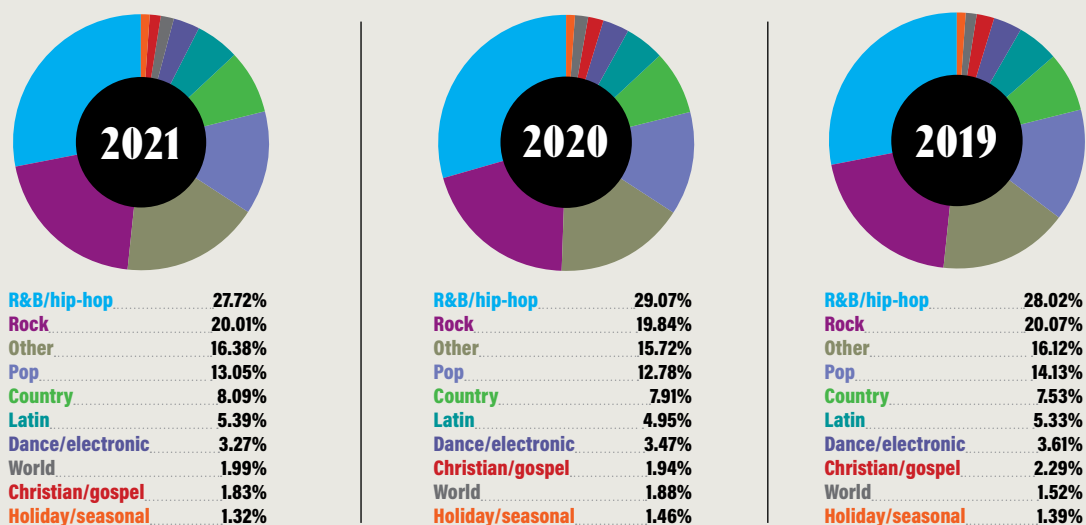
Although BTS did not place among the top 25 streaming songs artists of last year, its popularity is apparent in arguably the unlikeliest of formats: downloads. While the format continues to decline — track sales fell 13.2% to 202.9 million copies; album downloads dropped 23.9% to 26.2 million — BTS' "Butter" sold nearly 1.9 million copies in 2021, 600,000 more than the 1.3 million units that the group's "Dynamite" moved the year before when that track topped *Billboard's* year-end digital song chart. **B**



AUDIO CONSUMPTION BY GENRE AND FORMAT*



GENRE MARKET SHARE*



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their leaders,
who made
Billboard's

2022 POWER LIST



SONY MUSIC GROUP



SONY MUSIC PUBLISHING

Wiz Khalifa launched his Khalifa Kush weed brand in California in partnership with cannabis operator Cresco Labs.

Olivia Rodrigo split with her manager Kristen Smith.

WHAT'S AHEAD FOR MUSIC STOCKS?

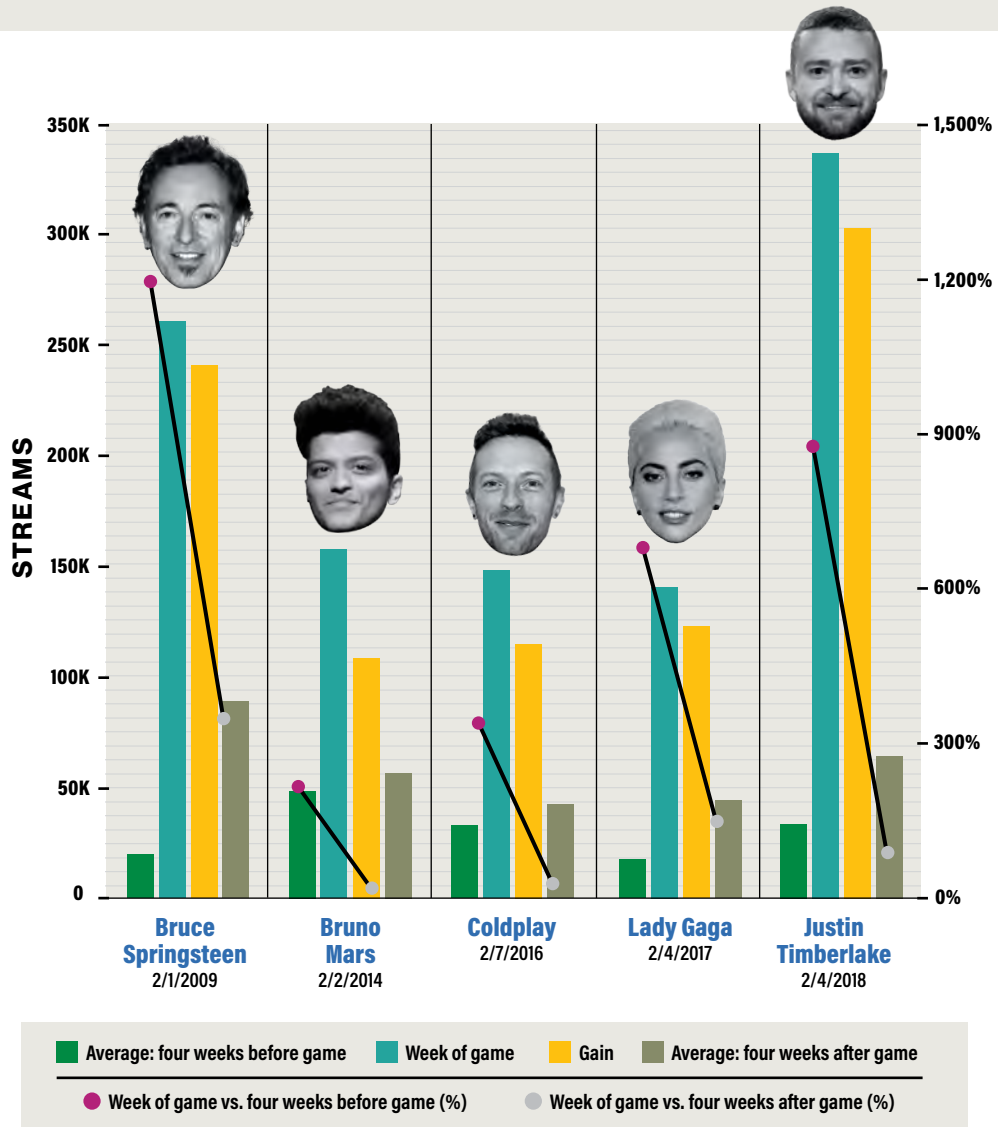
Analysts share their 2022 forecasts

▶ **AS MUSIC COMPANIES PREPARE** to report their 2021 earnings, share prices may have room to grow. How much room? Spotify's Feb. 2 earnings report will likely forecast double-digit growth that could put annual revenue between \$12 billion and \$13 billion. *Billboard* estimates Spotify should improve its subscriber numbers by 20 million to 200 million-plus in 2022. It also has room for additional subscription price increases "even if Apple and Amazon didn't follow," says Russ Crupnick, managing partner of research and analysis firm MusicWatch. Spotify, which will release full-year results on Feb. 2, expects its 2021 annual revenue to have improved by 21% to 23% from the year before, to roughly \$10.9 billion. Additionally, fourth-quarter 2021 earnings will show its subscriber count grew between 14% and 17% during the year.

All that is good news for labels and publishers, which count on streaming services for most of their growth. Shares of Universal Music Group and Warner Music Group have 28% and 30% upside from their current prices, respectively, based on the median of analysts' price targets tracked by Refinitiv. UMG's revenue rose 13% year over year (17% in constant currency) in the nine months ending Sept. 30, 2021. WMG's fiscal 2021 also ended Sept. 30, with 19% revenue growth (15% in constant currency).

Music company margins face pressures elsewhere, though. In November, BofA Securities cut its WMG price target by 21% on the expectation that margins will drop in 2022 as physical product sales rebound from lockdown-era lows. Julien Roch, Barclays managing director of European Media Equity Research, tells *Billboard* that labels and publishers will see "diminishing returns" as musicians receive a greater share of digital spoils. And money that is flooding music investments might leave little benefit in acquisitions. For example, take WMG's purchase of David Bowie's publishing catalog for a reported \$250 million. Going by a *Billboard* estimate that the deal provides WMG annual revenue of \$6 million to \$8 million, Roch calculated the after-tax return is less than 2% annually. "This is crazy" for a publishing deal, he says. "And I think recorded [music] is next." Instead, growth comes from new uses for music. When Morgan Stanley analysts named WMG their top pick in audio entertainment in 2022, they cited its "increased next-generation revenue" from social media, games and fitness apps, not its acquisitions.

Of course, the outlook for some companies will become cloudier the longer the pandemic drags on. Live music was set for a comeback after vaccines took hold and the delta variant ebbed. Instead, the omicron variant swept across the globe, bringing a wave of concert cancellations. Still, Live Nation investors appear to have remained optimistic that fans will show up for a heavy slate of tours in 2022 and 2023. Live Nation's share price reclaimed most of the 23% decline that followed the Astroworld festival tragedy last November. Then again, the shares are only 5% below the median price target, suggesting analysts currently see little upside in 2022. —GLENN PEOPLES



Billboard calculations based on MRC Data statistics.

Who Wins The Halftime Show?

The Super Bowl is the biggest booking in music, but will this year's performance produce results for the hip-hop all-star team?

BY ED CHRISTMAN

H IP-HOP FANS will have plenty to cheer about during 2022's Super Bowl halftime performance as Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg, Eminem, Kendrick Lamar and Mary J. Blige take center stage. But those expecting a significant bump in streaming or sales for the performers should hold their applause until the final tallies are in — the crowded bill might dilute the impact of what has long been considered the premiere booking in the music industry.

According to a *Billboard* analysis of the last 13 years, the event produces bigger gains in music consumption activity when a single performer holds the spotlight. Justin Timberlake and Bruce Springsteen netted the biggest wins in 2018 and 2009, respectively, both benefitting from releasing albums just days before their performances. Timberlake enjoyed a sales explosion that drove

a gain of 300,000 album consumption units (up from 37,000 the week before), while Springsteen's sales jumped from an average of 20,000 units in the weeks leading up to the game to 266,000 the week of the game and 160,000 the week after.

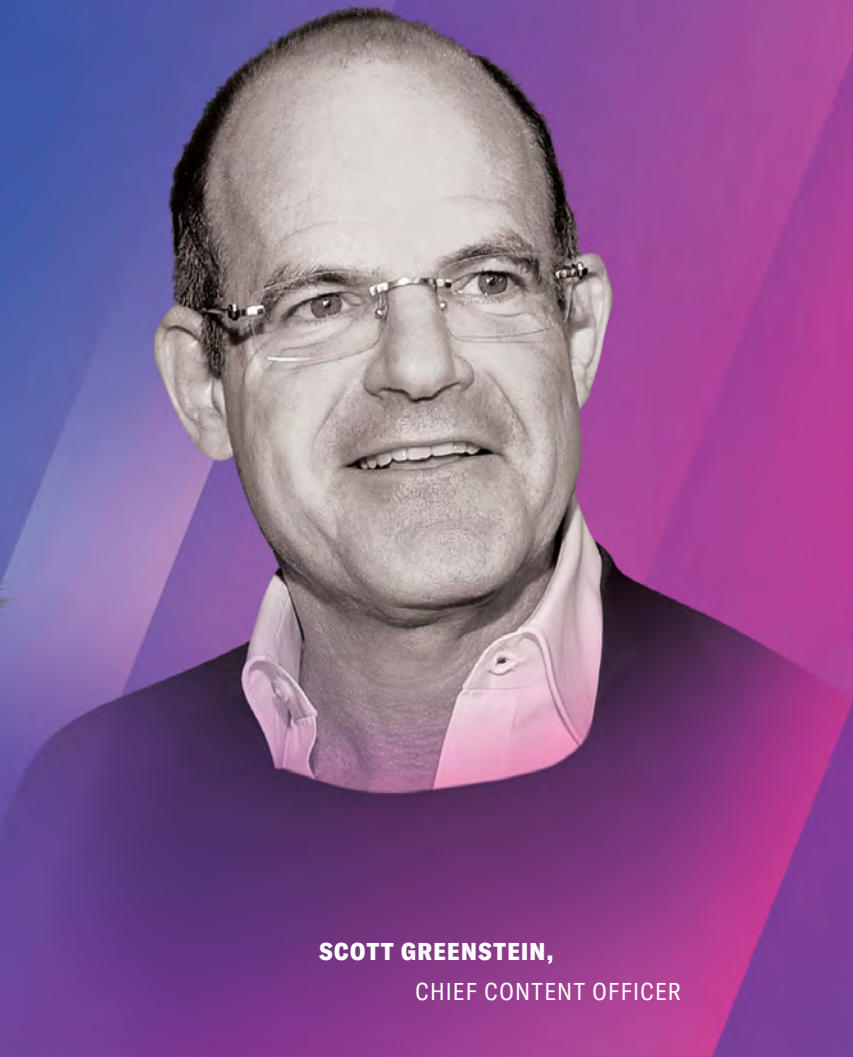
Multiple-artist bills can produce results, though. In 2016, Coldplay made one of the five biggest gains in the 13-year measurement period, up 115,000 album consumption units (from 33,000 to 148,000), when it tapped the star power of Beyoncé, Bruno Mars and Mark Ronson. But the 2012 lineup — a group of five, like 2022's, headlined by Madonna with Nicki Minaj, LMFAO, M.I.A. and Cee Lo Green as guests — did not produce significant results, with Madonna's consumption units only moving from 17,000 to 54,000. Still, if anyone can beat the law of averages, it's explosive performers like Eminem and Lamar. **B**

Congrats to these

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



SCOTT GREENSTEIN,
CHIEF CONTENT OFFICER



There's a reason they made the Billboard Power List, and we get to see it every day.

YOUR TEAM AT SIRIUSXM PANDORA

Sony Music invested in boutique merchandise company Ceremony of Roses to expand its global merch business.

Roc Nation named **Brett Yormark** COO.

Music's Hot New Job Sows Discord

As more artists and producers engage with superfans on the exclusive social platform, they're hiring "community managers" to moderate their channels — and seeking volunteers

BY KRISTIN ROBINSON

FOR YEARS, an artist's team had a static list of roles — with manager, label, publicist, lawyer, agent, publisher and business manager among the most important.

Now, in a decade that began (and remains) in the throes of COVID-19 quarantines and mask mandates, a new, increasingly vital position has emerged: the community manager. With fans still at home due to the pandemic and the live industry still wrestling with safety protocols, online communities — once a supplemental outlet to connect with like-minded people — have become part of many people's social lives.

Community managers are not new themselves. Subreddits, Facebook groups and other chat rooms have used them for years. But they are suddenly in high demand as acts such as Wiz Khalifa, Disclosure, Zedd and Kenny Beats, as well as labels and other music-related businesses, realize the importance of connecting with superfans and their niche audiences in semiprivate forums.

The current app to make these connections is Discord. Founded in 2015 and initially popularized by gamers and Web3 enthusiasts, the platform has become increasingly influential in the music industry. Set up similarly to the business-focused chat tool Slack, a user must receive an invite link to join a Discord server, giving the app more of a gated, intimate feel than traditional social media. Users can toggle among multiple channels of conversation, each centered on a different topic, and listen to voice-only symposiums (similar to the Clubhouse app).

The role of the community manager, some of whom gained experience moderating on Reddit, is "somewhere between customer service and social media management," says community manager Kat Rogers of music and tech publication *Water + Music*. "It involves growing the community, making sure everyone's engaged and moderating and guiding conversations."

To set up a Discord server, the com-

munity manager will establish rules for the group (no slurs or inappropriate memes, for example), program bots to automate certain procedures, create topic-centered channels, moderate discussions and organize town hall meetings. (Community managers also operate on the livestreaming social platform Twitch.)

Though a community manager's responsibilities can be similar to those of a social media manager, there are pronounced differences. "We don't look at audience analytics in the way [a social media manager] would with Twitter or Instagram," says Ryan Abary, who is the community manager/social media manager for Sturdy.Exchange, a non-fungible token marketplace that established its Discord server when the company launched.

Unlike other social sites, Discord is not based on millions of fans following a leader. It has a more "egalitarian feel," says Rogers. "There are no metrics on individuals from Discord, no data collection [and] little public information on members. Everyone's on the same kind of footing," she explains, adding: "No one can become 'Discord famous' in the way people do on Twitter or Instagram. It's more about the popularity of the community."

It is one of the reasons crypto proponents have adopted Discord as a digital meeting place for decentralized autonomous organizations and other Web3-centric groups. For music-business adopters, it is often lauded for its practicality as a digital fan club.

"Discord is where the inside jokes, the memes, the culture and the fandom's identity come from," says Trevor Kaminski, founder of marketing agency TOYBOX Projects and community manager for artist-producer Johan Lenox. Lenox hosts guests and listening parties using Discord's social audio feature and has a channel for fans to ask him questions.

The lack of available user metrics makes it nearly impossible to measure the impact of growing and maintaining a Discord audience, but artists and their teams that use



▲ Clockwise from top: Disclosure, Zedd, Beats (left) and Ryan Marks, and Khalifa.

it say they are convinced of its benefits. "Though it isn't quantifiable, it's another layer of what I call the 'snowball effect,'" says Will Dzombak, manager for Khalifa. "All of it goes into creating a superstar and keeping a superstar."

Beats — who has amassed over 118,000 Discord members and more than 295,000 on Twitch — now has a team that roughly consists of 15 moderators and managers, including about six paid personnel. This includes his lead community manager, Aris Messerer-Chatman, who works for the producer full time. "It seems everyone's trying to curate a community of their own, but it's very important to have someone who knows how to manage [a group] so the artist can focus on the creative," Messerer-Chatman says, adding that artists usually get out of Discord what they put into it. Beats, for example, is "constantly involved" with his Twitch and Discord accounts, giving fans feedback on their original songs, teaching music production skills and more.

"What makes us successful is that Kenny and his manager know how to delegate and have a team big enough to moderate at all times," says Messerer-Chatman. Disclosure's Discord and Twitch administrator, Jordan Butterworth, who works with

a team of approximately 17 volunteers, agrees, adding that, if done properly, a Discord server can help an artist's team gain a direct line to his or her "greatest die-hard fans" and retain fan loyalty over time.

Despite the crucial role they can play for an artist or brand, many community managers are unpaid volunteers. Those who are paid are often freelancers who receive a monthly retainer or an hourly wage.

For those who suspect that community management is another Web3 fad, Duncan Byrne, marketing director at Involved Group and its popular trance label Anjunabeats, says that the online community has been a core part of the company's growth strategy since the early 2000s. After discovering that Anjunabeats fans were congregating in chat rooms and on Reddit, Byrne and his colleagues began participating in these fan-established groups as unofficial community managers.

About two years ago, says Byrne, much of the community made the pilgrimage to Discord, and the Anjunabeats team followed. "After years of doing this, fans trust us a lot more," he says, and they stick around longer. Some fans are now in their "40s and 50s" and are as active in fan meet-ups and online communities as they were a decade ago. "Community management is a really crucial part of how we've sustained momentum and continued to grow the company." **b**

BEATS: MARKS/CHELSEA LAUREN/WIREIMAGE; DISCLOSURE: MATTHEW GESHAN/REDFERNS VIA GETTY IMAGES; KHALIFA: DAVID CROTTY/PATRICK MCKILLIAN VIA GETTY IMAGES; ZEDD: SCOTT ROTH/INVISIONAP



Congrats, Christina

We're proud to honor our own Christina Hull, an advocate for female artists and small businesses, and all of the 2022 Billboard Power 100 honorees.

verizon✓

Merlin announced its newly elected board with representatives from 12 countries across six continents.

Warner Music acquired a majority stake in Africori, an African music distribution and label services company.



A busker plays music outside the Drum Tower in Beijing.

CHINA BOOSTS COPYRIGHT PROTECTIONS

Over the last two years, infringement penalties have strengthened and collection oversight has improved **BY BRYAN GROGAN**

SHANGHAI — Until recently, damages for music copyright infringement in China had been set notoriously low compared with other major music markets. In 2018, for example, Chinese folk singer Li Zhi sued the Tencent Video-distributed online music competition show *The Coming One* for 3 million RMB (\$472,000) when artists on the program performed his music without the proper license. Although episodes of the show were viewed over 400 million times, Li Zhi was ultimately awarded just 200,000 RMB (\$31,400).

In late 2020, though, China amended its Copyright Law (originally adopted in 1990) to give rights holders the ability to sue serial violators for up to 5 million RMB (about \$786,000) — a tenfold increase from the previous 500,000 RMB (\$78,000) maximum. (As in other countries, claimants can receive statutory damages when losses would be difficult to calculate.)

That's not the only change the music business has welcomed. There is now a remuneration right for the public performance of sound recordings, including broadcasts. That puts China ahead of the United States, where terrestrial radio stations don't have to pay to use sound recordings. "The new copyright policies

in 2020 are a turnaround change that will relatively level the playing field for creativity in the music industry," says Leon Lin, head of BMG China.

Challenges persist in growing revenue for artists and songwriters, however. In China, 53% of artists, producers and songwriters earn less than 5,000 RMB (\$784) per month. And while the updated law also gives the government tools to better regulate how China's two music collecting societies operate — one measure requires them to regularly release data on royalties, management fees and undistributed royalties — artists and industry executives continue to doubt their effectiveness.

The Music Copyright Society of China (MCSC), which was established in 1992, collects royalties for publishers and composers but has been criticized for its high tax and management fees, connections to the government and weak management. According to the society, it had just over 10,000 members in 2020. (For context, Netease Cloud Music, one of China's major streaming platforms, says it has over 200,000 registered musicians.)

Similarly, just 10% of musicians surveyed in 2020 were members of the China Audio-Visual Copyright Association, a 17-year-old organization that handles broadcasting rights, performance

rights and internet broadcasting rights for recordings, according to the China Musician Report, compiled by Beijing's Communication University of China. (Until last June, CAVCA also had jurisdiction over music played at China's 112,000 karaoke bars, but no longer does under the amended law.)

Tiangao Lee, founder of Chengdu-based independent hip-hop label Mintone Records, says he chooses not to work with the collecting societies, because he has little confidence that they can effectively track usage and distribute revenue.

MCSC and CAVCA have also struggled for relevance in an environment where Tencent Music Entertainment held exclusive licensing and sublicensing deals with major labels and artists to distribute and stream master recordings, which allowed it to bypass collecting societies.

"The amendments are an important step toward creating a stronger copyright and authors rights environment," says a representative for CISAC, the international confederation of authors societies. "But we believe there is further progress to be made, especially in strengthening the collective management system and the protection of rights online."

Nevertheless, the amended copyright

law shows how even in the face of a government crackdown on tech companies like Tencent — China's most important music company — the country has made strides in paying music creators for their works. A decade ago, almost 100% of China's digital music was pirated, and its biggest search engine, Baidu, was one of its major copyright offenders. Change began around 2011, when Baidu signed licensing agreements with Universal Music, Warner Music and Sony Music Entertainment. Then, in 2015, China's National Copyright Association, a government office that oversees copyright policies, ordered streaming services to remove millions of unlicensed songs from their servers.

By 2020, according to IFPI figures, 97% of Chinese listeners were accessing music through licensed audio streaming services, up slightly from 96% in 2018, with 61% using a paid streaming service (compared with 3% on Tencent platforms in 2017). China also brought in \$2 billion in revenue from digital music in 2020, up from \$1.14 billion in 2018.

But new types of copyright challenges are emerging. The rising popularity of livestream broadcasts and short-video apps such as Douyin (TikTok) and Kuaishou has coincided with an explosion of copyright violations. CAVCA revealed in January 2021 that 155 million videos on Kuaishou were infringing copyrights.

Chinese music companies are working to come up with a plan to better police livestream broadcasts, an industry that generated \$862 billion in revenue in 2019, according to *Forbes*. An amendment to the copyright law refers to "broadcasting via information networks," which means that composers of songs used in livestreaming will be paid, as well as rights holders. And China's state copyright group has called on users to "say no to short-video piracy."

Tencent, in the aftermath of a government order in July to end its exclusive licensing deals with major labels, was the first tech company to respond when it launched its Sonic Engine live-music service, which connects livestreaming artists with an authorization system where users pay fees to use copyrighted content.

To create further oversight, the government is also moving to integrate blockchain and "smart contract" technology into the current copyright system. Last year, the Copyright Association of China, which also implements copyright laws and assists rights holders, launched the China Copyright Chain, which can document proof of digital assets and help monitor copyright infringement.

"Even so," says BMG China's Lin, "it's going to take a long time for the operation to take hold and for people to accept it." **b**



Congratulations Ken

on being named to **Billboard's 2022 Power 100 List!**

from your **Disney** Music Group family

Arjun Pulijal was promoted to president of Capitol Music Group.

Janelle Curtis was hired as Warner Music's chief enterprise transformation officer.

From The Desk Of... Jay Mehta

**MANAGING DIRECTOR,
WARNER MUSIC INDIA**

BY AMIT GURBAXANI

PHOTOGRAPHED BY ABHISHEK ANUPAM

WHEN JAY MEHTA met with Warner Music Group president of emerging markets Alfonso Perez-Soto about establishing an outpost in India for the major, he had a pretty clear idea of what he would be up against. At the time, Mehta was working as the head of digital business at Sony Music India, which, along with Universal Music India, had established beachheads there in the 1990s. (In fact, WMG had previously contracted with Sony to distribute its music there.) And local giant T-Series, an Indi-pop and Bollywood soundtrack label, had been in the market since 1983.

Warner Music India (WMI) would have a lot of catching up to do in order to fulfill Perez-Soto's mandate that it become one of India's "top three" music companies posthaste, but Mehta, who was born and raised in Mumbai, India, says that only intensified his desire to do the job. "I have never wanted to work with a market leader," he says. "It's always more exciting being the challenger."

It's a path Mehta has chosen repeatedly since graduating from business school in 2004. He passed on a job offer from a top retail bank to join Reliance Communications and become part of India's telecom boom. Stints at three more telcos followed before Mehta switched to another rapidly growing sector, the privatization of FM radio in India, which took off in the early 2000s.

A successful run at the station Big FM, where he moved "from sales head to station head to business head," piqued Mehta's interest in knowing "how music is made and what goes into creating an artist's journey." That curiosity led to Sony, where, while running digital business, he emphasized the importance of data in driving decisions.

Mehta's move to WMG came with an unexpected complication that threatened to derail his plans: WMI launched in March 2020 as the pandemic ground the globe to a halt, but the executive, who says his mantra is "Win every day," wasted no time in putting points on the board. Within the first six months of WMI's existence, the fledgling company executed a licensing deal with Mumbai-based label Tips Music, which owns rights to a trove of soundtracks from some of the most popular Bollywood movies of the '90s and 2000s — music that dominates streaming in India. It also quickly closed a series of partnership deals to distribute increasingly popular Indian regional-language music and founded Maati, a label devoted to another emerging genre, Indian folk music.

With those sectors poised for growth, Mehta says WMI is now focused on two goals: "To make international artists household names in India and to take the Indian sound global." He calls the latter his "passion project," while detailing the steps WMI has taken to make inroads on the global charts. As for breaking



Mehta photographed Dec. 13, 2021, at Warner Music India in Mumbai, India.

Warner's global stars in India, Mehta is showing progress. At one point in 2021, he says WMG had 11 of the top 50 songs on the Spotify India chart. "There was Alec Benjamin, Masked Wolf, Dua Lipa — it wasn't just one artist." And then there's Nigerian singer-songwriter CKay, who is signed to Warner South Africa. His hit "Love Nwantiti" recently broke the record for most weeks at No. 1 on the Indian Music Industry (IMI) International Singles chart. India, Mehta adds, accounts for 15% of the track's

global streams on Spotify. "That really makes me happy," he says.

What made WMG finally launch in India?

They had been planning to launch in India for some time. Sony was distributing Warner's content here, and when that deal was up around the end of 2019, they decided to take the plunge.

Why did you want the job?

When I was talking about this role with Alfonso, he told me, "If you're ready to push the bound-

aries, we will give you all the freedom you need to become a top three label." That really excited me. Warner doesn't want to be a small player.

How do you plan to take on established companies?

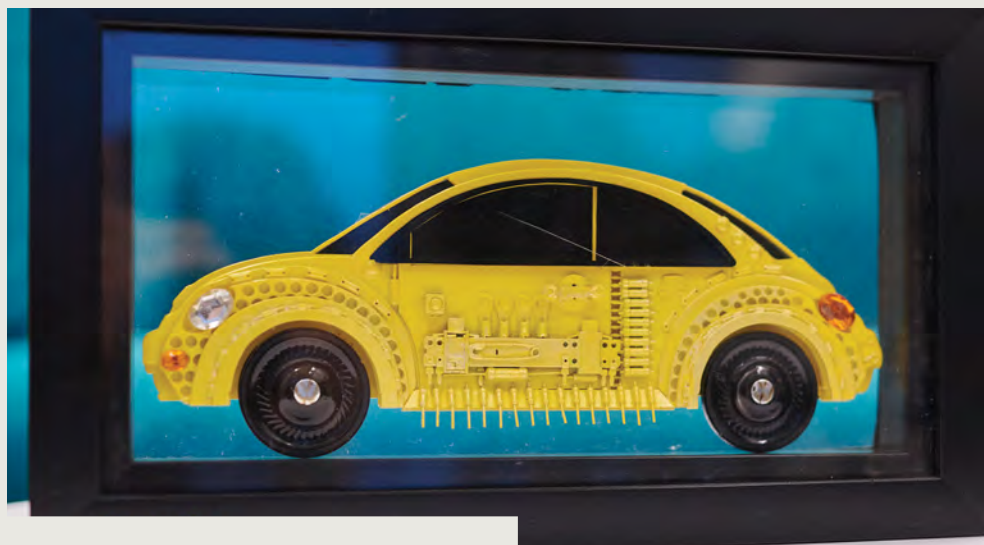
It's going to be a combination of things: inorganic growth through partnerships and acquisitions, signing leading artists and growth from [new and underdeveloped] sectors. The pace at which we've moved in the last 18 months — in spite of spending the majority of

**Congrats to all of
this year's Billboard
Power Players.**



Lanre Gaba was named Atlantic Records co-president of Black music.

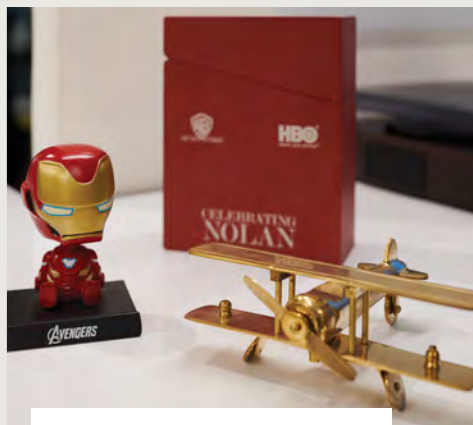
Gabriela Martinez stepped down as managing director of Warner Music Latina.



Mehta says this framed image of the Volkswagen Think Blue Beetle — a detailed replica by the artist Haribaabu Naatesan made from over 2,800 pieces of discarded items — “is a reminder that perfection is nonnegotiable, no matter the scale.”



“As a child, I was able to play instruments by ear, but somewhere along the way, I stopped practicing,” says Mehta, who adds that he has picked up this Hobner rosewood acoustic again.



From left: an Iron Man figurine, a box set of filmmaker Christopher Nolan's movies and a model biplane. Mehta says that one of his mottos is “Aim high, then fly.”



Mehta's cricket bat: “Cricket is much more than a sport to me. It's friends, unwinding and, above all, [legendary cricketer] Sachin Tendulkar, who inspires excellence like no one else.”

music a national platform. Like the track “Phool Khilala” by the artist Priyanka Meher, which a lot of people were telling me doesn't sound commercially appealing. It was trending on Instagram in December.

What are you doing to make Indian music hit globally?

We've taken small steps, like the Amaal Mallik remix of Dua Lipa's “Levitating.” It's an English remix with a Hindi verse, and, initially, the United States was its biggest market. That has never happened for Amaal. We did “Echo” with Armaan Malik, Eric Nam and KSHMR. Markets that were never open for Armaan opened with that release. We've now signed a singles distribution and licensing deal with him for all his Hindi nonfilm music.

Signing [U.K.-based, half-Indian, half-Serbian singer] Rika is an extension of this step. She can sing in Hindi and English fluidly. There are collaborations between her, Sean Paul and Alec Benjamin in the works. Recently, we signed Sunidhi Chauhan [best known as a playback singer who provides vocals for lip-syncing Bollywood actors] for an English album that will have a global release.

What's the biggest challenge facing the Indian music industry today?

For me, it's how soon India becomes a paying market. A few years back, we had the issue of piracy. YouTube, to a large extent, helps with this problem. All the new audio streaming services [such as Spotify and Resso], which have expanded the market, are helping. But a very high percentage of consumers use them for free. How do we transition to a robust return-on-investment business? In our conversations with digital service providers, we are putting additional restrictions by increasing the ad load. The pace at which YouTube is growing subscriptions in India is very encouraging, but the step before that is engagement. Only when consumers start using these platforms for a certain number of hours per day will they start paying for music. **b**

in India]. The other was a partnership with Sky Digital, which has 65 sublabels [with rosters that include singers] Sunanda Sharma, Mankirt Aulakh and Kaka. Which-ever genre or language we want to enter, we'll get 50% of the top 20 artists.

What other regional-language deals have you done?

The next fastest-growing markets are the Bhojpuri and Haryanvi languages. If you look at the top 10 of YouTube's India chart, at least three of the songs are in Bhojpuri or Haryanvi. That's why we partnered with JetSynthesys' Global Music Junction sublabel, which has a library of close to 7,000 songs. Those languages are going through the same journey that Punjabi music did. Almost 90% of their music is only on YouTube; just 10% is available for audio streaming. That's a big focus for me: How can I bridge this gap in India, which has 450 million YouTube users and 180 million audio streaming users?

Why did you start Maati?

If you look at the last three years, the biggest hits have been based on folk melodies, but the original artists have not gotten any recognition. The idea of Maati is to build these artists. The initiative is very close to my heart because it will give folk

it in lockdown — gives me a lot of confidence.

What is your current priority?

Our single-minded focus, and the foundation of our [business strategy] pyramid, is to make international artists household names in India. What I'm most excited about — and what I want artists to take notice of — is that for almost all the top acts across international audio streaming platforms, such as YouTube, Spotify and Apple, India is a top five market. “Levitating” by Dua Lipa is the longest-running song on the IMI International Top 20 Singles chart, and CKay's “Love Nwantiti” broke the record there for the most weeks at No. 1. India

is driving more streams for the song than any other country.

What was the strategy behind your Bollywood play?

The second layer of the pyramid is the huge Hindi-Bollywood belt. Tips has the third-biggest Bollywood catalog after Saregama and T-Series. That's why we partnered with them and distribute their content. They release three to four films a year, which already gives me my Bollywood market share. But we've also signed a long-term deal with Jjust Music and Pooja Films [which are owned by the same family] that have film and nonfilm music. The idea is building nonfilm music on the scale of film music, and since Pooja is a big production house,

they have access to actors [who can record or star in the videos of nonfilm songs] and enable us to make this transition seamlessly. We've also signed a licensing and distribution deal with Vishesh Films [which has a number of hit soundtracks]. Obviously, I don't have a strong enough catalog to compete with a T-Series, but eventually it will build up.

Was that also the thinking behind the regional-language music deals you've made?

Within regional-language music, the biggest is Punjabi. There, we did two big partnerships. One was with the company Ziiki Media, which is also a huge multichannel network on YouTube [with over 35 million subscribers

Congratulations Daniel!

It's a Marathon, not a sprint.



Love, Your Glassnote Family





AT THE HEART OF ENTERTAINMENT, MEDIA AND SPORTS

Helping music industry clients rise to the top. Barnes & Thornburg applauds our own Joel Katz, for being recognized on the Billboard Power List 2022, celebrating the power players in the music industry. Congratulations to you and all the honorees!



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NOW PLAYING

Cordae photographed on
Dec. 16, 2021, at Studio
Walrus in Brooklyn.

TAKING STOCK

Cordae's second album leans more on personal storytelling, which he believes is one piece of a larger professional plan

BY CYDNEY LEE

PHOTOGRAPHED BY HAMADI PRICE

CORDAE HAS NEVER held his tongue when it comes to fighting for racial justice. In 2015, the then-19-year-old rapper participated in protests for Michael Brown and delivered an impromptu freestyle during a Black Lives Matter protest in Washington, D.C., the following year. In 2020, as the movement reached its head, Cordae was arrested at a protest for Breonna Taylor in Louisville, Ky. And yet, he doesn't consider himself an activist, "and I'm not going to pretend to be one," he declares over Zoom from his home studio in Los Angeles. "I just got to speak on what I feel and what I believe, because you're not a true artist if you don't do that."

The year 2020 was full of life experiences and moments of self-discovery for the now 24-year-old, most of which he channeled into his second album, *From a Bird's Eye View*, which arrived Jan. 14. From his arrest at the protest ("I just got that expunged recently," he says) to taking his first trip to Africa (visiting slave dungeons in Egypt and Ghana in 2020) to losing his childhood best friend, Cordae describes the 12-song album as more "memory-driven" than his 2019 debut, *The Lost Boy*, which peaked at No. 13 on the Billboard 200.

"I actually have to live life and go through some shit," he says. "Sometimes I have to go through tragedy, and I just transmute that through songs. Every song [on this album] has an exact memory and experience into creating it."

Born Cordae Dunston, the artist grew up in Suitland, Md., spending a lot of time reading hip-hop lyrics on Genius. By 2017, he became one of three prominent members in the gaming-turned-hip-



hop collective Young Boss N—s. While YBN's origins date back to the mid-2010s when the members met on Xbox Live, the collective didn't release debut album *YBN: The Mixtape* until 2018, a year after Cordae joined. The project, put out by Atlantic, featured each member's then-viral singles: YBN Nahmir's "Rubbin Off the Paint," YBN Almighty Jay's "Chopsticks" and Cordae's "Kung Fu."

But by 2020, a year that demanded distance, the members of YBN started to grow apart. That August, YBN Nahmir cryptically announced on Twitter the disbanding of the collective; Cordae, who was the first to drop the "YBN" acronym from his stage name the following month,

says the decision was mutual. "We were always solo artists," he says. "We weren't a group, we were a collective of individual artists. I don't really feel like I have too much to prove as a solo artist because I've been a solo artist the whole time."

For fans, Cordae always stood out from his YBN peers. Prior to the collective's 2018 debut mixtape, he dropped a response track to J. Cole's searing takedown of rising rappers, "1985." Cordae's "Old N—s" called out the lack of unity between old school and new school — and he was quickly lauded as an artist to help bridge the genre's generational gap.

The online back-and-forth led to him meeting the Dreamville label head and,

soon enough, the two were working together. Cole landed a production credit on Cordae's Anderson .Paak-assisted "RNP" off *The Lost Boy*, an album that earned Cordae two Grammy nominations (best rap album and best rap song for "Bad Idea"). His star power has since continued to rise (bolstered by headlines about his relationship with tennis champ Naomi Osaka) following the acclaim for his first headlining tour in 2020 and the 2021 launch of his own self-funded independent label, Hi Level.

"He's not just an artist, he's an exceptional businessman and young entrepreneur," says Cordae's longtime manager Ace Christian. Through Cordae's own label deal and relationship with Atlantic, he has been taking note of what it takes to run a successful label. With Hi Level, which is not in partnership with Atlantic and has yet to announce any signees after it launched in June, he envisions elevating and developing rising artists by offering in-house PR and marketing services. "I believe the success of Hi Level will be a direct reflection of [the success] we've seen from his early music career," Christian says.

With a new venture, new music and a 28-date headlining tour kicking off Feb. 3, Cordae is making good on the promise he delivers on his new album, rapping on the Lil Wayne-assisted track "Sinister": "I ain't going nowhere/20-year career minimum."

"I think about my legacy all the time, and how every small thing I do builds up and affects it, but also [the importance of] being present," says Cordae. "It's a balance, but [I'm] always just trying to think and look at the bigger picture from a broader perspective. From a bird's-eye view." **D**

BEHIND THE HIT

"We Don't Talk About Bruno"



IN EARLY 2020, Grammy Award-winning producer Mike Elizondo received a "nonchalant" call from Lin-Manuel Miranda asking him to co-produce original music for an upcoming Disney movie. "I didn't even know the [film's] name," recalls Elizondo. "But anytime Lin calls, I'm going to say yes." That film ended up being Disney's latest animated blockbuster, *Encanto* — and trusting his instincts has paid off for Elizondo. The *Encanto* soundtrack climbed to the top of the Billboard 200 in its sixth week on the chart; meanwhile, breakout song "We Don't Talk About Bruno"

entered the Hot 100's top five, also becoming the first Disney title to top the Streaming Songs chart.

Encanto, which centers on the magical Madrigal family in Colombia, incorporates authentic musical stylings from salsa and reggaeton to hip-hop and pop. "Lin encouraged me to not think in terms of Disney," says Elizondo, who has previously worked with 50 Cent, Eminem and Fiona Apple and is up for producer of the year at the 2022 Grammys. He adds that "We Don't Talk About Bruno" allowed him to draw from contemporary drums while also blending in

traditional Colombian rhythms. (Colombian musician Edmar Castañeda consulted and performed on the soundtrack, recruiting fellow New York-based Colombian musicians.) But perhaps the biggest reason the ensemble number about a mysterious uncle stands out is because of what it's not: a power ballad.

"Traditionally, a lot of the bigger Disney songs that cross over tend to be from the main character in a very emotional scenario," says Elizondo. "For this to have become the song that people have gravitated toward predominantly, that's the biggest shocker of all."

He credits the song's success to its "ear candy moments" — like the whooshing sound of falling sand — and various sonic chapters for each character. And, of course, its "perfect tempo" for TikTok, on which the hashtag #wedonttalkaboutbruno has been tagged to 1.4 billion videos. But, above all else, since the track wasn't expected to be "cookie cutter from top to bottom," Elizondo says, he could take more liberties, from its eeriness to the rapid-fire delivery of its second verse, concluding: "It's changing the rules."

—LYNDESEY HAVENS

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'I'M BACK IN FIGHTING MODE'

At work on his final album, Tank isn't letting hearing loss impede the next chapter in his two-decade career



WHEN TANK SIGNED on to sing background vocals for Aaliyah and Ginuwine during the 1997 Budweiser Superfest — a lineup that also included Mary J. Blige, Dru Hill and Bone Thugs-N-Harmony — he didn't know he had registered for a master class in R&B/hip-hop. "I went straight from a church choir rehearsal to going out on that 60-city, sold-out arena tour with some of the best to ever do it," recalls Tank, 46. "There will never be a more pivotal memory of Black excellence for me ... [It] was the ultimate building block." In the 25 years since, the singer-songwriter-producer born Durrell Babbs has left an indelible stamp on the genre through a string of sensual hits, from 2001's self-punishing ballad "Maybe I Deserve" to 2021's remorseful R&B Airplay chart-topper "Can't Let It Show." The latter, plus current single "I Deserve," are on Tank's upcoming 10th album, *R&B Money* (out Feb. 4 on his Atlantic-distributed label of the same name). The milestone release precipitated a difficult decision: Having lost hearing in his right ear in 2021, the five-time Grammy nominee says *R&B Money* will be his final album. Now, in addition to a podcast and YouTube reality show, he's set on mentoring the next generation. "I love and will still fight for R&B," says Tank. "I want to be responsible for putting it back where it belongs: in the mainstream."

When did you first feel something was wrong with your hearing?

I was shooting a movie in Washington, D.C. [in 2021]. On my last day of filming, I'm walking home from the gym and, literally, the ground just started shaking, and I had to grab on to something because I thought I was falling over. Then everything in the air started sounding like it was coming through a distorted walkie-talkie. I went to specialists, who said I may have this thing called sudden sensorineural hearing loss in my right ear. The tough part about being diagnosed with that is there's no why or how this happens. It took a moment

to find my balance in the studio and onstage, but I began to recognize my spirit again. The first song I recorded was "I Deserve," and from there, I started writing again. Now I've got one ear and vertigo, but I'm back in fighting mode.

After 25 years, why is your music resonating with a new generation of R&B fans?

I've always told my truth 100%. That has been the constant: writing about my life at every stage. Happy, sad, heartbroken, feeling nasty ... all of it. I think people who are taking the journey with you don't want the Instagram version where you can crop out and filter things to make [life] how you would like it to seem. People still want the unfiltered truth. They want to hear the mistakes along with the victories. One cool thing that has also happened is that retro has become a thing among young people. My 14-year-old daughter is into vinyl records, as well as watching shows like *Gilmore Girls*. You've got kids in their teens knowing who Nina Simone is. Everything comes back around.

Your former label, Blackground Records, recently released your first three albums to streaming services. How did you react?

The beauty is that I wrote and produced the music on those albums, so my part is solidified. I have no desire to rerecord. I honestly never expected that music to ever come out, but it is what it is. It got me here, and now I'm just concentrating on doing other things. What's coming to me is still coming to me, so I don't really give Blackground a second thought.

Looking back, is there anything you would have done differently in your career?

Everything happens for a reason. There has been so much good and there has been bad, but I've been able to do what I love every day of my life for the last 20-some years. Could I be richer, more famous or more something else? I could be. But that would insinuate that my time's up, and there's still a lot more for me to do.

—GAIL MITCHELL

INSIDE LOOK

Charli XCX: Alone Together



A still taken from Charli XCX: *Alone Together*.

▶ In the early months of pandemic isolation, Charli XCX handled her restlessness with a self-imposed challenge: record an album on her own in just six weeks while filming the process in real time on Zoom and Instagram. By May 2020, her fifth studio album, *how i'm feeling now*, was complete. As Charli XCX started sharing her journey online, directors Bradley Bell and Pablo Jones-Soler (both of whom previously collaborated with the singer on music videos and photography) stumbled across the project. They sent her a text suggesting they expand her documentation to a constant stream of recording. She was in, under one condition: She could pull the plug at any time. Soon, three high-definition Sony camcorders arrived, on which she and her quarantine housemates — boyfriend Huck Kwong and co-managers Sam Pringle and Twiggy Rowley — documented the process for what would become Bell and Jones-Soler's debut long-form feature, *Charli XCX: Alone Together*.

"It was quite a psychological challenge to get inside Charli's head," says Bell. "Why did she feel like it was important to make the album in this way?" The answer didn't begin to reveal itself until Bell and Jones-Soler were sifting through over 4,000 clips of footage from Charli XCX and her fans — who appear almost as co-stars — to build a narrative they hadn't been physically present to shape. "There ended up being three narrative threads running through it," Jones-Soler explains, "each one about connection at a different level."

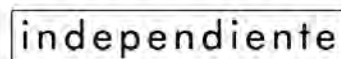
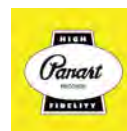
While working on the album, Charli XCX was unpacking feelings of defeat and unworthiness in therapy and navigating a changing seven-year relationship with Kwong. She took solace in connecting online, even welcoming fans to participate in the songwriting process when she felt stuck. One fan's advice made it into the hook of the pulsating "anthem," which describes a yearning for togetherness. "We were all separated and seeing, through all these really innovative forms of music and art, everything was an attempt to come together," Bell says. Come Jan. 28, when the film becomes available to stream and in select theaters, fans will finally be given an opportunity to do just that.

—LARISHA PAUL



Congratulations to the entire Concord team on getting us to where we are today.

- Scott and Bob



Mountain



MAN

Hundreds of miles away
from industry anxiety,
Post Malone is returning
with a new album
and a new mantra: no
more compromising

BY LYNDSEY HAVENS


PHOTOGRAPHED BY

ERIC RYAN ANDERSON



Post Malone photographed
Dec. 15, 2021, in Salt Lake City.

Styling by Catherine Hahn
Catherine Hahn custom shirt and dress,
Tom Ford tie, Ralph Lauren socks,
Dr. Martens shoes, Balenciaga earrings.




IT'S WELL PAST 2 P.M., and nothing seems to wake Post Malone. Not the sound of shovels cracking into his iced-over driveway. Not the stylist assembling racks of designer clothes or the camera flashes lighting up his entryway. Not even the smell of pounds of piping-hot Raising Cane's chicken.

For the 26-year-old superstar, who often stays up until 10 a.m. playing video games when he's not on the road, this is normal. Three years ago, when Post moved from Los Angeles to his near-seven-acre mountainside sanctuary in Utah, his inner circle was hoping he would enjoy this kind of peace. His infectiously positive father, Rich Post, says the move "was a big sigh of relief for the parental figures," while co-manager Dre London, an Olympic-level multitasker who has been with Post since day one, calls it "the best thing for him — he can have a life."

Yet Post — once he does, finally, groggily arise — admits that others in his orbit were less enthused. "People wanted me to stay in L.A. — that's where the work gets done — but I was fed up," he says, cradling a freshly poured beer. (Throughout our near-eight-hour hang, he'll have at least half a dozen.) "There's always something to do, and someone always wants something from ya — and I didn't want to go crazy."

Making big moves, then watching them pay off, is all part of the Posty plan. When he was 18 years old, right after dropping out of community college, he moved from Grapevine, Texas, to L.A. "You try to be as supportive as you can," says Rich, "so I said, 'That's great, son. Whatever you want to do, just be the best at it.'" (He is now Post's unofficial house manager and lives 15 minutes down the road with his wife and stepson.) By the time he turned 20, the artist born Austin Post had a breakout hit: "White Iverson," a hazy, introspective tune he uploaded to SoundCloud in February 2015 that, within a month, had over 1 million streams on the platform. A few weeks after that, Post (then rocking sports jerseys, gold teeth and braids) played in front of a few thousand people at South by Southwest — and soon became a bona fide star.

He takes bold swings through genres, too, jumping from the spacey, melodic hip-hop of "Sunflower" (a Swae Lee team-up from *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*) to the fuzzy alt-pop of "Circles" (from 2019's *Hollywood's Bleeding*, which boasted collaborations with Ozzy Osbourne and Father John Misty). He has collected two Billboard 200 No. 1 albums and four



Bottega Veneta jacket,
Ralph Lauren turtleneck,
Balenciaga earrings.



Big Bud Press shirt, Marni pants, Lucchese boots, Jewels Among Thieves earrings.

Hot 100 No. 1 hits, three of which placed on *Billboard's* Greatest of All Time Hot 100 Songs ranking: "Circles," "Sunflower" and "Rockstar" (featuring 21 Savage). To date, his catalog has amassed 26.5 billion on-demand U.S. streams, according to MRC Data.

Along the way, he became an unlikely fashion star, trading his jerseys for Tom Ford suits and skirts while covering his face in an ever-growing collection of tattoos, including the words "Always Tired" just under his eyes. Hence the sleepy mountain sanctuary.

Tucked away at the end of a steep uphill drive, Post's home offers stunning views of Salt Lake City's mountainous skyline. Inside, it is a 26-year-old's vision of what an alpine man cave should look like: dark decor, a giant taxidermic bear, antler light fixtures, countless pieces of Dallas Cowboys memorabilia and a bar with Bud Light — and only Bud Light — on tap. There are boxes of cards from the fantasy game *Magic: The Gathering* strewn on a desk, a pantry stocked with Costco-size boxes of snacks, a gingerbread house on the kitchen counter and a guest bathroom that's running low on toilet paper.

Post once considered installing 30 bunk beds for the various family and team members who come and go, including his dad; his half-brother, Jordan, who makes a brief appearance during *Billboard's* visit to take Post's German shepherd, Britt, out for a walk; his personal assistant, Ben Bell, who is also the brother of songwriter-producer Louis Bell, Post's main collaborator; his personal photographer, Adam DeGross; two other members of his management team, Jay Santiago and Bobby Greenleaf, whom London calls his "eyes and ears"; and various security personnel, some of whom parade in with bags of Bed Bath & Beyond linens in anticipation of holiday guests.

When Post isn't working, he'll watch *Ghost Adventures*, *Modern Family* or Korean crime shows. (One of his all-time favorite movies is *Walk Hard: The Dewey Cox Story*. He was so taken with John C. Reilly's suits in the film that he sought out its costume designer, Catherine Hahn, and hired her in 2018 as his stylist.) He's hoping to set up a friend date with Paul McCartney soon — "Just to see, 'What are you thinking about, dude? What are you up to?'" — but he mostly hangs with buddies from local gun shop Gallenson's Guns and Ammo. "We go out and just run around in the open country and do cool shit," he says matter-of-factly as he warms up by his fireplace.

But over the past two years, there's one thing Post Malone has hardly done: make music.

In theory, the peace and quiet of Utah was supposed to be good for his creativity. "Here," he says of his abode, "there are very few distractions." But his four-year sprint to the top of the charts, as well as the onset of the pandemic, left him on the brink of burnout and increasingly anxious. "You think about everything at the same time, and it's fucking overload," he says. "There's a lot riding on the music. There's a lot riding on just being able

to keep making songs. And that's hard to do because you're like, 'Fuck — I already talked about everything.' And you kind of run out of ideas, and that's scary shit."

He worried the spark would never return. "I used to love playing the guitar — I hardly play the guitar anymore. I used to love making beats," he says. It took a few low-key visits from Bell, during which they would mess around in his home studio, for him to find his way back. To make his imminent new album, *twelve carat toothache*, Post had to rediscover what made him want to do this in the first place. "There was a switch that flipped, and it felt like I was making *Stoney*," he says, referencing his 2016 debut album. "I lost that, and the hardest part is getting it back. It ebbs and flows. It's figuring out: 'Just because I'm not inspired to do it at the moment doesn't mean I'm giving up.'"

JUST A FEW STEPS from Post Malone's main house is another building: his two-floor home studio. Downstairs, a lounge area is decorated with Louis Vuitton throw blankets and an acrylic foosball table; the second floor is the recording booth, with empty cups and various guitars. Etched into the wooden floor is the word "bullshit," which can be illuminated with a single switch, also labeled "bullshit." It helps take the pressure off: His job, Post sometimes reminds himself, is just "making shitty music."

It's a drastic difference from eight years ago, when Post was one of many creatives sharing space and resources at a San Fernando, Calif., hub dubbed The White House. Technically, it was a mansion, but space was in short supply — Post slept in his closet to devote more of his room to recording equipment. It's there that he crafted "White Iverson," along with housemate/co-writer Rex Kudo and other collaborators. It's also where London, who started managing artists in his native England before moving stateside, first met Post in 2014, just before the song's release.

Early on, London thought about keeping the Post Malone operation trim to build Post as an independent act. "I looked at that Chance and Pat route heavy," he says, referring to Chance the Rapper and his former manager, Pat Corcoran. "But Post said, 'I want to be a millionaire.' So when you hear that and you're grinding — I'm looking ahead two, three years — we made a decision [to sign to a major]. A bidding war started, and it was kind of hard to ignore. He started hearing some numbers, and he was like, 'Yeah, I like the sound of this.' His exact words were 'Daddy likey.'"

Post signed with Republic Records in 2015 after Tyler Arnold, now executive vp of A&R, discovered him online. "I reached out to Dre the day I heard 'White Iverson,'" recalls Arnold, who was 22 at the time. "I remember Dre telling me in that first conversation how Post would be one of the biggest artists in the world." Soon enough, Post and London



were dining with Republic's core team in Beverly Hills, Calif. "When Post ordered a bucket of Bud Light with dinner, I knew he was someone I was going to like," says label co-founder/CEO Monte Lipman. Republic pitched itself as a support system for the vision already in place. "We kept reinforcing [that] Post and Dre rely on their instincts," he adds. "We also crystallized our position that we'd remain incredibly patient and support Post's creative endeavors."

As Post worked on *Stoney* a whole creative community began coalescing around him. Austin Rosen, the founder of management company Electric Feel, known for its roster of hit songwriters and producers, met London just before "White Iverson" blew up; he heard about Post through Kudo, one of his producer clients. "Post was staying at his

STYLING: NIKKA CENTENO; PRODUCTION COORDINATOR: MICHAEL OBE



house, recording, and Rex called me up like, 'You got to come immediately and meet this kid,'” recalls Rosen, standing in the expansive front yard of his Miami home, a few days after the Utah hang. “As soon as I came back out to L.A., I met him — and he was right. I was chasing [London] down because I was like, ‘I’ve got to find this guy and figure out how to get involved.’” (He wasn’t the only one interested in doing so: In 2015, it was reported that 300 Entertainment vp of A&R and research Az Cohen, who brought Post to 300 for a meeting that same year, was co-managing the artist, though no label or management deals materialized. Cohen and 300 did not comment.)

Around the same time Rosen entered the picture, London introduced another of Rosen’s clients to Post: Louis Bell. London had

enlisted Bell to edit vocals for Post’s feature on a 50 Cent track in 2015, and once Post heard what Bell had done, he told London: “I want this guy to do my whole album.” They worked on *Stoney* at Electric Feel’s West Hollywood studio space, and now, says Rosen, the two are “inseparable creatively.”

By 2017, the year after *Stoney* arrived, Post signed a co-management deal with Electric Feel. (Today, the company offers management, label and publishing services.) Having two management companies steering an artist is a little unusual, but to the key players involved, it works just fine. “Electric Feel was always there,” says London. “These guys helped make it easier and formed a nice family around Post in the background.” Rosen, who is credited as a co-writer on some of Post’s biggest hits, says they play different roles: “I’m really in the

music industry because I want to be a part of the creative process more so than the business process, and that’s why I chose to manage writers and producers at first. What I bring is identifying people they can trust, people who can really add value.”

The way Post sees it, “They both do their thing. Dre might be a little bit more of the social aspect and Rosen might be a little more behind the scenes, but everybody carries their load and that’s all you can really ask — and at the same time, having a friend, someone you can talk to.”

That kind of trust has helped Post navigate the sometimes tricky pop machinery around him. “It’s so hard,” he says. “You lose a lot of the artist nowadays because a lot of people have so many genius ideas, but you lose a lot of that through everything that might happen

CELINE shirt, Comme
des Garçons shorts,
Heaven earrings.



“There’s a lot riding on being able to keep making songs. And you kind of run out of ideas, and that’s scary shit.”

—POST MALONE

with the business side — and you lose a little bit of yourself. Every time you change your art and your way of thinking for someone else’s, that takes a little piece of yourself off every time. I feel like I’m trying to rebuild.”

One of the ways he’s doing that is by making his shortest album to date. *Twelve carat toothache* clocks in around 45 minutes — hardly brief, but relatively slim in an era where overstuffed hip-hop albums frequently dominate the charts. For Post, the goal was twofold. He wanted to avoid filler, which he believes he has had on prior releases. The new songs “speak more to how I’m feeling at the moment: the ups and downs and the disarray and the bipolar aspect of being an artist in the mainstream,” he says. Bell describes the record like a synesthiac, calling it a marriage of “molten lava and fire” and “cyan blues and whites.” “The duality, the balance of everything, I think that’s what makes this album feel like it’s glued together,” he says.

Post also wanted to rebuke a numbers-obsessed streaming business that he has come to feel prizes algorithms over artistry. “Trying to shove 20 to 25 songs, it doesn’t work. Talking to the label [it’s like], ‘Oh, if you have less songs, you’re not going to stream as much,’ but the whole thing is that you don’t want to compromise your art and your gut vibe on anything,” he says. (Republic did not respond to questions about the album’s length.) “I’ve made a lot of compromises, especially musically, but now I don’t feel like I want to anymore. I don’t need a No. 1; that doesn’t matter to me no more, and at a point, it did.”

NOT TOO LONG AGO, Post Malone dropped \$800,000 on a rare, non-playable Magic: The Gathering card. “It’s stupid, but I wanted it,” he says, holding it up. But he also knows that, sometimes, he has to spend money to make money. For his 2018 *beerbongs & bentleys* tour, his team dropped \$13,000 on fog alone, his creative director, Lewis James, told *Billboard* in 2020. For his 2020 Billboard Music Awards performance, James estimated they spent \$80,000 on fireworks. “Post is all about having a good time,” London says, “from when I met him when he was 18 years old to now.”

But lately, Post has been thinking a lot more about what a sustainable career — and a sustainable life — looks like. It’s partly what drives him toward so many ventures outside of music: He single-handedly made Crocs cool

again when he partnered with the shoe brand in 2018. (He has since released five collaborations with the company.) In May 2020, he launched a rosé wine, Maison No. 9, and in August 2020, he became a co-owner of Texas-based Envy Gaming. He has a streetwear brand called Trading Post Apparel, and this year, London reveals, Post will launch his very own beer, the flavor profile of which is currently being tested.

“No one knows for sure like, ‘Oh, I’m going to be good [financially],’” Post says, “but I like to hope that with what I have done so far, my family is good, everybody’s good for generations to come — with frugal spending and getting rid of some of the bullshit that I don’t need.”

He and his team have discussed selling his catalog, as many superstars are doing for tens if not hundreds of millions of dollars, though no deals are yet in place. “It’s smart, it’s showing growth, and it’s showing stability in music again,” London says. “So I do like it, and have we thought about it? Of course. But every artist and team has to know when the time is right to make that decision — and there’s always a number.”

“It’s got to be a lot of money,” says Post, taking a long drag from a cigarette in a hand wearing a \$3 million pinky ring pulled for the day’s photo shoot.

His touring business remains lucrative. In 2019, Post had the top R&B/hip-hop tour of the year (and 17th overall), grossing \$75.9 million from 55 shows, according to Billboard Boxscore. Before the pandemic halted live performances, his abbreviated Runaway tour, in support of *Hollywood’s Bleeding*, raked in \$54.9 million — the fifth-top-grossing tour of the year (based on a tracking period between Nov. 1, 2019, and Oct. 31, 2020); he’s working on turning footage from it into an upcoming concert documentary.

Not being able to tour for so long slowed Post’s creative process for the new album, says Bell. “That was always his biggest thing, him saying, ‘I don’t really want to put out music if I can’t tour, and I don’t want it to be old by the time I go on tour.’” He has slowly returned to the road on the festival circuit, headlining Chicago’s Lollapalooza in August and then Day N Vegas in November, after Travis Scott canceled his appearance following the deaths of 10 fans at his Astroworld Festival the previous week. “The promoters were pressing us on Sunday, then Monday, and they needed an answer because it was the next weekend,”

London recalls. “I thought, ‘You know what? Maybe it will be a good break for him to go to Vegas, perform again and fill in for Travis after a horrible situation that we wouldn’t wish for anyone.’ It was showing support to our fellow musicians and our fellow concertgoers.”

Post says he hasn’t been in contact with Scott, with whom he has collaborated in the past, but adds that he hasn’t really been in touch with anyone outside of his inner circle these days. “I got a new phone and have like 30 people in my contacts,” he says. “A lot of my artist friends I haven’t spoken to. Quavo I haven’t seen in forever, but whenever I see Quavo, I’m like, ‘Fuck, dude, let’s go!’ So much love. You really learn to appreciate [those moments together] even more.”

He did recently spend time with Republic labelmate The Weeknd, with whom he released the vengeful “One Right Now,” their first collaboration and the lead single for *twelve carat toothache*. London, who’s credited as a co-writer on the song, hopes it won’t be the last time the two work together, as he has considered booking them on a co-headlining stadium tour. (The Weeknd will embark on his own stadium trek this summer.) “But I want to wait until 2023,” he says of Post’s official return to touring. Rosen thinks a tour could be a launching pad for a deluxe version of the new album. “We’d rather make another moment out of it,” he says, “so people can really dive in.”

Post talks about getting back on the road with some ambivalence. He describes the eventual tour for *twelve carat toothache* as something “looming over” him. “I love touring and I love meeting my fans and singing these songs with them, but at the same time, it’s such an ass-kicker. My back kills me, my neck kills me, my feet kill me. There’s a lot to think about, and there’s a lot to focus on. You kind of have to have chameleon eyes and look every which way and keep track of what’s going on at all times. It’s the give-and-take — you give up so much and you receive it in love, and that’s what everything is about: feeling loved. That’s what everybody wants.”

When asked what he’s most excited about, Post describes something that sounds an awful lot like retirement. “A ranch and solar panels, or a hydro-powered living situation,” he says, a grin spreading across his face. “Kicking it, nothing to do ... I’ve made music for years and years, and down the line, I just want to relax and enjoy the simple things. Be like a kid again. Have no responsibilities and everything is handled: your kids, your family, everybody is set and doesn’t need to worry, so you can just play games and play in the tall grass.”

For now, here in Utah, at least, he’s allowed that dream in doses. As the various crew and team members from the day pack up and load out, Post trades his designer garments for a pair of sweats and an oversize shirt with a cat face. Just before the door to his back room closes, he settles into his ergonomic gaming chair — ready for another long night of playing until the sun comes up. **B**



Can an enthusiastic team of industry veterans turn a platform built as an artist launching pad into a career destination — and a major player in the new creator economy?

SOUNDCLOUD'S

From left: Eliah Seton, Michael Weissman and
Lauren Wirtzer-Seawood photographed on
Dec. 15, 2021, at SoundCloud in New York.



BY DAN RYS

PHOTOGRAPHED BY WESLEY MANN

NEW HORIZON



CAN I BE, LIKE, a huge nerd and draw something on the whiteboard — like a graduate school thing?” asks Eliah Seton, the president of SoundCloud, glancing at one covering the wall of a conference room in the company’s New York office. Standing, he begins drawing a

pyramid sectioned off like Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, with each step, he explains, representing an increased level of support that SoundCloud wants to offer artists.

“You have millions of creators here — one of them could be Ed Sheeran, another could be my dog,” he says, gesturing upward from the pyramid’s base. “But you start to create opportunities to monetize and distribute for them, and whether they’re succeeding or not, they’re accessing tools at scale. It’s about having a solution for artists at all phases of their career. And that’s — in a poorly drawn way — ultimately what the vision is.”

Seton, 40, may not be looking at a future with his artwork hanging in the Met. But alongside the rest of SoundCloud’s newly installed senior executive team — led by CEO Michael Weissman, COO/CFO Drew Wilson, chief marketing and content officer Lauren Wirtzer-Seawood and chief product officer Rohit Agarwal, all new to their roles within the past year — he’s anticipating a future for the music business in which artists are truly independent, and in which SoundCloud can transcend its reputation as a playground for discovering artists who are just emerging from their basements.

That, at least, is the hope. SoundCloud, founded in Berlin in 2007 as an indie-first audio sharing platform where users could upload music for free and connect directly with their fans and fellow creators, has always catered to artists very early in their careers, when they are first casting about for a fan base. “SoundCloud was a pioneer platform — not just the community that was on it, but how they got to interact with the music, with the artists that were posting the music,” says Solomon Sounds, who managed XXXTentacion before the artist’s death in 2018 and is now a senior vp of A&R at Capitol Music Group. “It was way ahead — before the DSPs [digital service providers] were even a thing. Everybody was going there to get this music for free when it cost money to get more professional things elsewhere.”

But now, the company is charting a more ambitious course. If it pans out, SoundCloud could transform from talent incubator to destination for artists looking to grow to any level, from the wide base of SoundCloud’s streaming service — which was at 175 million global monthly users five years ago (the company has not released updated figures since, but says that number has grown) — to the rarefied air atop the music business pyramid, and all points in between. And in a creator economy that encompasses some 50 million people and growing — over 90% of them amateurs — there are plenty of companies, from YouTube to TikTok, also looking to help boost talent.

When Weissman and his Vimeo colleague Kerry

Trainor joined SoundCloud as COO and CEO, respectively, in 2017, the company was at a crossroads. More culturally relevant than ever thanks to the wave of “SoundCloud rap” artists like XXXTentacion, Trippie Redd, Juice WRLD, Post Malone and Lil Uzi Vert — who found audiences and fame by uploading their often rough, unmastered demos to the platform and changed the face of popular hip-hop — SoundCloud was also on the brink of bankruptcy, having laid off 40% of its staff amid a global consolidation, and lost half of its once-\$700 million valuation.

Over the following three years, Trainor and Weissman managed to right the ship, securing a \$170 million infusion led by The Raine Group and Temasek as they arrived in 2017, outsourcing its U.S. ad sales to Pandora in a mutually beneficial partnership in 2018 and accepting a \$75 million investment from Pandora parent SiriusXM in exchange for a minority stake in the company in 2020. SoundCloud also doubled down on artist services in 2019 with the \$15 million acquisition of distributor Repost Network, allowing it to offer Repost’s tools to the 30 million people who have uploaded works to SoundCloud. In the third quarter of 2020, the company announced its first-ever profitable quarter; currently, it says it has an annual revenue run rate of \$300 million through a combination of its creator services offerings, consumer subscriptions and advertising.

Trainor, who retains a seat on the board, stepped aside at the end of 2020, promoting Weissman to take his place — and allowing him to implement a new strategy. “The vision when I came in as CEO was, ‘How do you redefine what a music entertainment company looks like in the future?’” recalls Weissman, 41, who, like his executive colleagues, projects an air of calm and reserved confidence. “You need access to fans, so you can speak to the consumer directly; you need technology, both to speak to those fans but also to help emerging artists distribute their music to all the streaming services; you need incredible amounts of data and analytics on what’s happening all around you; and you need a close relationship with independent, emerging talent. And I looked at SoundCloud and was like, ‘Wow, we have all that in one place.’”

What Weissman didn’t have was a leadership team with the music industry experience to redefine that future — particularly for a tech-focused company that has had its share of licensing run-ins with rights holders. “My view of it was that we had to go deeper into music. A lot of the other streaming services, I think, are moving out of music; Spotify in particular with podcasting,” he says. “So I thought, ‘I need

to build the best team in the music industry.’” In Seton, who spent a dozen years at Warner Music Group, the last six in charge of its indie distributor, Alternative Distribution Alliance (ADA), and Wirtzer-Seawood, an Island Def Jam veteran who also held executive roles at Beyoncé’s Parkwood Entertainment and Instagram and most recently was president of UnitedMasters, Weissman found the expertise he needed.

Over the past year, as that core team came together, SoundCloud has taken several steps toward achieving that vision, expanding the Repost staff — significantly enough that it has already outgrown the Los Angeles office it moved into just before the pandemic — and doubling down on industry outreach. But for a company synonymous with helping artists get their footing before they step up to other, larger platforms, there’s much work to be done and no guarantee of success. “What we’re trying to pull together is the next great, big iconic music company of the future,” says Weissman. “And we have all the pieces. But the story of what we’re building is just being told.”

Weissman



LIL PUMP WAS WEIGHING HIS OPTIONS.

It was summer 2021, and the 21-year-old rapper — who broke out of the SoundCloud rap bubble with his 2017 hit “Gucci Gang” and has since landed two top 10 albums on the Billboard 200 — was at the end of his Warner Music deal and deciding what to do next.

“We had a couple opportunities, and [one was] to go back and sign again with Warner,” says Dooney Battle, founder/CEO of Tha Lights Global, who helped put the SoundCloud deal together for Pump. “We ended up taking a meeting with SoundCloud, and we thought they were the best opportunity for what we were trying to do as an independent artist — that they’re going to help us optimize and take us to the next level.”

In 2022, Pump will be among the first artists participating in what SoundCloud has identified as the top of that pyramid of support Seton drew: its roster. The initial slate of eight artists — ranging from rookies to more established names — also includes Nigerian singer-songwriter Tekno and Atlanta-based MC MadeinTYO, artists who, like Pump, had some experience in the major-label system but wanted to chart a new course by going back to their roots on SoundCloud.

“Our definition of ‘roster’ is not what a traditional label would think of,” Seton says. “It’s about bringing the all-star team to make the best possible solution for an artist at that point in their career.” Artists are signed to various types of deals: some exclusive, most not; some in partnership with other labels and distributors, others joint ventures; and some with advances and marketing budgets from SoundCloud itself. But each is structured as a license, with artists maintaining control of their masters and creativity, and SoundCloud backing them, both creatively and financially.

To a burgeoning act, such deals have an inherent appeal: Rather than leave the SoundCloud nest, they can expand their brand while continuing on the path that got them where they are. “We’ve been using SoundCloud for years, from when we were making music for fun and for the love of it,” says Mario Onoh, founder/CEO of PWRS and Tekno’s manager. “With this, it’s like, ‘All right, we’ve already been using your platform — now you just want us to keep doing it and you’re going to give us money?’ It’s kind of a no-brainer.”

SoundCloud is not the first DSP to venture into label-like waters. In 2018, Spotify rolled out a program allowing independent artists to directly upload their music, bypassing labels and distributors, and began offering six-figure advances and improved royalty payouts to managers to license their artists’ work directly to the platform. The move was met with immediate backlash from labels — which saw it as an affront to their core business — and the program was shuttered in under a year.

SoundCloud is in a different boat than Spotify, which makes up more than a quarter of major labels’ revenue, according to one person familiar with the figures. It is much smaller, and accounts for a small fraction of revenue, making it much less of a threat from an economic standpoint; it has also never positioned itself as a service that can allow artists to bypass the label system. Instead, Seton and Wirtzer-Seawood have emphasized a more collaborative, open approach in moving toward these more “high-touch” relationships, stressing partnerships with other label-services and distribution companies and an open dialogue with the label community to avoid the friction and mistrust that characterized Spotify’s forays, which had caught the labels by surprise.

“We’re a major A&R source for what’s next in music, and there’s a major opportunity for partnering with the majors and other independent distributors and services companies,” says Seton. “We’re working with an EMPIRE, with a Capitol, with a Warner, trying to take a much more flexible approach that is centered around having a bespoke solution to that particular artist relationship. So I don’t think we would be seen as trying to replace Atlantic Records.”

“SoundCloud’s vision for forging artist partnerships and collaboration is truly exciting and fully aligned with CMG’s approach to finding and developing new talent, as well as enhancing the careers of established and superstar artists,” Capitol Music Group chair/CEO Michelle Jubelirer told *Billboard*. “We are always exploring new ways to amplify the voices of our artists and deepening their connections with fans, and SoundCloud is a crucial partner in helping us to achieve those aims.”

The company will also have to balance prioritizing releases on SoundCloud — where it is still trying to grow its fledgling subscription service, SoundCloud Go+ — with marketing on major platforms like Apple, Spotify and Amazon, where the majority of commercial activity for its acts will naturally occur. “We have to do our job for our roster business of making sure that we can market to the universe of fans wherever they may be,” says Wirtzer-Seawood. “But what we know is that we can do that in ways that have never been done before on SoundCloud as well.”

The real dream is to see an artist bubble up from the bottom of the pyramid to its apex — one that emerges from the sandbox of SoundCloud’s free



▲ Wirtzer-Seawood

streaming service, builds a following using some of its creator tools through Repost, grows through its distribution division and graduates to a roster deal.

“If you started a new industry, took a clean sheet of paper and wrote down how music works in the best interests of artists and fans, this is the model you would build,” says Seton. “So I think it’s not just about what’s next for fans. It’s about what’s next for music.”

ON A WARM MID-NOVEMBER AFTERNOON,

SoundCloud’s director of music intelligence and analytics, Wyatt Marshall, is presenting a visual snapshot of what “what’s next in music” actually means on SoundCloud. Dubbed the Creator Network Map, it resembles a world atlas, made up of dots of varying sizes and colors, each of which

corresponds to a creator within a scene bunched together with other users who interact with each other's work, or share genre tags, or who are growing particularly quickly in terms of streams or listeners — a proprietary A&R tool with which SoundCloud can almost literally watch as new sounds and scenes form, evolve and grow.

"We have data that helps us see around the corner a little bit in fascinating ways around micro-genres and new communities that are blossoming in spaces that nobody else really realizes coming down the pipe," says Wirtzer-Seawood. "So we're using access to that data and paying attention to what's happening in the community, where the artist-and-fan interaction happens, to make some interesting bets on some of those artists."

It's those artists that SoundCloud hopes to identify early and bring into the fold — and who could benefit from the company's entry into one of the industry's most protracted debates: how streaming royalties are paid.

In March, SoundCloud launched Fan-Powered Royalties (FPR), a version of the user-centric royalty payment model that has been debated in music-economist circles ever since Spotify made streaming a big business. Unlike the current "pro rata" model — in which streaming income is collected and divvied up among rights holders according to their share of total streams — user-centric royalties are distributed according to which artists a given user listens to, with their subscription dollars divided among those acts.

"It changes streaming from what today is just accessing a catalog of music into truly more of a community platform," says Weissman. "We can provide an enormous amount of information back to artist managers and major labels to actually get at the heart of this, which is, 'Who are the 10,000 people who are my true fans? That over 30% of their listening time is going to that artist?'"

It is a more intuitive way for the streaming royalty model to work, and one that has been explored to varying degrees by TIDAL and Deezer. And even if it's not likely to be adopted by the biggest streaming platforms anytime soon — which would require renegotiating licenses with all rights holders, not to mention a major push, most likely from the artist community, to change the status quo — it would, in theory, help to level the playing field of streaming

payouts, ensuring that fans who only listen to independent artists, for example, won't have some of their \$9.99 per month ending up in Drake's pocket.

In July, SoundCloud helped put the theory to the test in partnership with U.K. trip-hop trio Portishead, which released a cover of ABBA's "S.O.S." on SoundCloud using the FPR model; two months later, the company said streams of "S.O.S." had generated 400% more streaming revenue through FPR than the pro rata model would have. (The money was donated to charity.) On average, SoundCloud says artists using FPR are generating 60% more streaming revenue than they would have otherwise, with payouts of over \$1 million per month and growing.

There is some debate as to whether FPR, or user-centric models generally, would move the needle for many artists. Given the rights agreements tied up in artist contracts, only truly independent artists who own their work can take advantage of FPR, and only for monetization on SoundCloud, significantly restricting the quantity of artists and dollars affected. According to SoundCloud, it had a 50% year-over-year increase in the number of artists using its distribution tools that make them eligible to use FPR, and it is in talks with all three majors and the independent trade group Merlin to renegotiate agreements to allow for FPR. Though none have been completed as of yet, at least one of the majors is close to signing on, while negotiations with the others are said to be progressing well.

Yet, a 2018 study co-authored by former Spotify chief economist Will Page also found that, while user-centric royalties did chip away at the income of music's *crème de la crème*, the other 99.4% of artists in the ecosystem would see an average increase of less than 5% of royalties, a figure that could be offset by the administrative costs required to switch to the model in the first place. (SoundCloud has already made that switch.) Other studies found that any shift would be largely "symbolic" in terms of how much money would change hands. One major-label source says that, while their company is not against a move toward a user-centric model, it would simply equate to moving money from one bucket into another.

SoundCloud, of course, doesn't see it that way. "We want artists to understand that that fan connection that they've built over the entirety of their career, even if they're just starting out, actually

matters on SoundCloud," says Wirtzer-Seawood. Further, and more significantly, the model ensures that if 15% of an artist's listenership is responsible for 65% of his or her streams on the platform, artists and their teams are privy to that information. "Fan-powered royalties give us the ability to have specific data around who those fans are," Wirtzer-Seawood continues, "and we can now unlock those relationships with the superfans and communicate with them, to sell them something or whatnot."

That data, according to the company, is the biggest game-changer in the transition to user-centric payments — and one of its biggest selling points when negotiating with creators. "In a world in which 60,000 tracks a day are being uploaded, it's not enough to rely on streams to feed yourself as an artist," says Seton. "Commercializing that direct artist-to-fan engagement so that there's more than just streams, but merchandise and virtual merch and exclusives, will mean there's a whole lot more commercial opportunity through a fan-powered relationship than a streaming relationship. We're not talking about dividing up a specific pie — we're talking about putting more pies on the table."

And the data creates the foundation for the next step in the pyramid that SoundCloud is trying to build — one that is based on Repost, the distribution company it acquired in 2019 that allows all artists to upload their works to not only SoundCloud but any DSP. In 2022, the company will relaunch Repost and expand the tools it will offer to creators. Currently, Repost has two tiers: one, at \$30 per month, that provides distribution, monetization and playlist pitching; another, which is invite-only, that involves a tailored marketing and promotional plan, with bigger opportunities for artists who need a more hands-on, full-service approach. The new-look Repost will allow creators to graduate up the pyramid with additional resources and services — and stay within the system — stemming the tide of once-inevitable moves off SoundCloud and into label deals and exclusive agreements.

"Repost is the core engine that underlies and underpins a lot of what we're doing," says Weissman. "It's about, 'How do we maintain that relationship and, as talent comes through SoundCloud, put the right relationships in place with that artist and not try to force them into something unnatural?'"

Just in the past year, as artists have gained more leverage, independent distribution has become one of the fastest-growing areas of the music business, with big valuations and new players wanting in. Just this year, TuneCore parent Believe Music listed on the Euronext Paris Stock Exchange at a \$2 billion valuation, DistroKid raised funds from Insight Partners at a \$1.3 billion valuation and UnitedMasters raised two rounds of \$50 million in series B and C funding, one led by Alphabet and Apple in March and another by Andreessen Horowitz in October, valuing it at \$550 million. Meanwhile, Sony announced its intention to purchase AWAL and Kobalt Neighboring Rights for \$430 million (the deal is under regulatory review) in February; Warner overhauled the global leadership structure of ADA to make it "more agile" and efficient over the course of the past year; and Universal rebranded its Caroline division as Virgin Music Label & Artist Services, in part to take advantage of the global name recogni-

"If you started a new industry, took a clean sheet of paper and wrote down how music works in the best interests of artists and fans, this is the model you would build." —Seton



their return on investment. So they'll stay away from SoundCloud. They'll tend to say, 'Let's just go to the DSPs and make a bigger impact.'"

SoundCloud has reinvented itself in the past; its underground roots as the "Wild West of music," as one artist manager puts it, evolved into the fully licensed, subscription-tiered service with formidable behind-the-scenes muscle that it is today. But at its heart, it's still a tool for discovery. Its users can often credibly claim to be ahead of any particular curve in genre shifts, but its reputation as a starting point, not a destination, remains tough to overcome.

"As an A&R, as a manager, I still look for those little niche communities that are on SoundCloud that are growing whatever the next thing is," says Capitol's Sounds. "But I think [artists] get to a space where they've signed some deals, they're in some partnerships and now that music has to be monetized, because so much goes into creating it. I think that's the one downside about it."

The company is well aware of how it is perceived. "We have a good amount of work to do to help strengthen the brand in a way that helps make it as relevant as it was years back when everybody was consuming on SoundCloud first," says Wirtzer-Seawood, who is charged with executing much of that rebranding. "How we message the brand, how we appear in the marketplace, how we talk about how SoundCloud matters, how we make SoundCloud more relevant to younger consumers, how we globalize the brand in ways that can be translated across many different cohorts of users — all those things are really important, and we're really focused on that."

Whether the new SoundCloud team can pull it off remains to be seen. There is a mountain of licensing negotiations, technical details and proofs-of-concept ahead that will determine whether this new iteration of the company succeeds, and whether it can compete with some of the biggest music and entertainment brands in the world. It will roll out new features and products for creators as it builds out from the data gleaned from FPR and the relaunched Repost. It has a partnership with Fortnite, and negotiations for others in the gaming metaverse are in the works as well. Tekno's first release with SoundCloud is set for early February, and Lil Pump's first single is slated for later that month, with a major marketing and radio push behind it.

"They're going to help us a lot. They've got a lot of analytics and data that [Pump is] going to be able to capitalize on, and they're super excited," Battle says. "If he graduated, I guess this is grad school."

There are many measures of success, however, and even with all of its ambition, SoundCloud's executive team is trying to keep it simple.

"The beauty of the independent nature of the future of music is that the artist will continue to be able to have a choice," Seton says. "And if artists keep coming back to us, then we're doing something right. Because the whole point is we're giving them another option, and the nature of the value proposition is that they're going to have that choice again a few years later, and if we haven't done right by them, we won't be able to continue that relationship. And maybe that's how we should define success." **B**

tion of Richard Branson's original Virgin Records.

It's a crowded space, and an increasingly challenging one in which to stand out. But for SoundCloud, building a full distribution service on top of a streaming discovery platform gives it an inherent advantage. "What we're doing is something that has never been done before in music: You've never married a distributor/rights holder to a DSP," says Jeff Ponchick, co-founder of Repost and head of creator at SoundCloud. "What we're going to try and do is take the best of SoundCloud and the best of Repost and bring it all together in a unified product in a way that's super clear, super simple, super digestible and provides value to any artist or label owner at any stage of their career."

ONE SUNDAY MORNING IN LATE AUGUST,

SZA tweeted "dumping random thoughts" with a link to a SoundCloud account titled "." The link turned out to be a collection of three previously unreleased SZA songs, including "I Hate U," which quickly crossed over to and exploded on TikTok, before it was taken down from SoundCloud. By the time she officially released the song through Top Dawg Entertainment/RCA Records in December, the fan frenzy pushed it to a No. 1 debut on *Billboard's* Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart and a No. 7 debut on the Hot 100 — SZA's highest solo mark to date, for a song that she called "an experiment on SoundCloud."

"It was a creative thing — she wanted to put out

music for her fans without the pressures of dropping a 'single,'" says Terrence "Punch" Henderson, SZA's manager and president of TDE. "That's how we used to do it back in the day: We'd just throw something on SoundCloud to feed the people directly. So doing it now was just a return to that. It was about not doing what the norm is, and the norm now is going directly to the DSPs. It built up a lot of anticipation there, and people wanted to hear it [get officially released]."

For the SoundCloud team, SZA's surprise release — essentially an exclusive track from one of R&B's biggest artists — was proof that, no matter how removed from an artist's early career, SoundCloud can still play a significant role in helping break a song. "That just makes it exciting: an artist that's as big as SZA comes here, her day one, where she wants her core fan base that has been there from the beginning to hear it first," says Erika Montes, vp of artist relations at SoundCloud. "It brings some excitement back to where it's not so strategic, like, 'We have to plan it out, give it a month in advance.' Instead, it's just like, 'Here it is!' That's the beauty of music, just being excited to share things as a surprise one day."

Still, SZA's foray back to her roots is not one that many artists have taken of late, preferring to go to the major DSPs, where there's more money to be made.

"Artists tend to 'graduate' from SoundCloud, but I don't think it's by choice," says Daniel "Bird" Desir, CEO of Timeless Music and manager for Internet Money, the production crew behind some of the biggest SoundCloud rap hits by artists like Juice WRLD, Lil Tecca and XXXTentacion. "For the labels, it's a business, so they want to make sure that you can put your music somewhere where they can get

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Seton

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ONEY CHANGES EVERYTHING. Over the past year new types of investors poured record sums into music, reshaping the power dynamics of the business. So *Billboard* decided to take a closer look at how the industry's most powerful executives stack up now. On the list that follows, we rank the top 25 and present the rest in alphabetical order by sector.

The sands have certainly shifted since we made our last power list. Sure, Sir Lucian Grainge is still at the top of the heap, two years after we named him our executive of the last decade. But this year, there's a very different reason for his No. 1 ranking: his leadership of Universal Music Group's historic debut as a public company. It wasn't just the largest direct listing in the history of the music industry, but one that has helped lift the boats of many music companies — including those of Grainge's fiercest rivals.

All three major music groups soared as they raked in record-breaking revenue of their own and snapped up some of the indie world's strongest labels. They also bought back rights to many of their catalogs, both recordings and publishing, in some cases paying a premium for rights they had previously given back to creators in exchange for extending their contracts so they can control more of the music that will drive returns for decades to come.

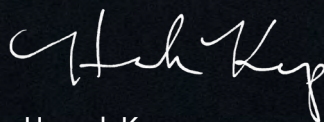
Music's new investors became power players in their own right, too, such as billionaire Bill Ackman, whose investment entities had purchased 10% of Universal by September. Meanwhile, three of the world's biggest private equity firms — KKR, Blackstone and Apollo Global Management — placed billion-dollar bets on music in the fall. KKR closed a deal to buy Kobalt Music Royalty Fund II; Blackstone bought a stake in Merck Mercuriadis' Hipgnosis Song Management, while earmarking an additional \$1 billion to buy music for a separate, private fund; and Apollo committed \$1 billion to help Sherrese Clarke Soares' new HarbourView Equity Partners buy assets like recording and publishing rights.

It was another tough year for the live-music business, of course, as the pandemic persisted and threw wrench after wrench in plans to restart it at full throttle. Touring executives lost some of their swagger on this year's list as a result, while the talent agencies consolidated: Creative Artists Agency announced plans to acquire ICM, UTA grabbed the United Kingdom's Echo Location Talent Agency and expanded its ranks and roster, and Casey Wasserman launched a new agency force — Wasserman Music — after acquiring Paradigm. We look forward to the wide-scale return of concerts — especially for the sake of all the artists and professionals whose livelihoods depend on them — and we applaud the touring leaders on this list who've worked tirelessly to support their clients, customers and employees during such troubled times.

Through it all, managers found new ways to keep their artists flourishing. Red Light Management founder Coran Capshaw kept his jam bands in business on the road last summer, while Scooter Braun rewarded his artists and staff with \$50 million in equity after selling his Ithaca Holdings to South Korea's HYBE for \$1.05 billion in April.

As for streaming's top dogs? The decision-makers atop music's primary revenue engines are certainly forces to be reckoned with. But as music assets continue to trade at eye-popping multiples, it's clear that content — at least for now — is king.

Head to billboard.com/pro for deeper analysis of the power dynamics within the record label and publishing sectors.



Hannah Karp
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

POWER LIST

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Grainge photographed by Austin Hargrave
on Jan. 11 in Los Angeles.



Music Groups

Sir Lucian Grainge

CHAIRMAN/CEO, UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP



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stock exchange, which traces its roots back to 1602, has a tradition of inviting corporate executives celebrating particular milestones — an initial public offering, a merger — to its trading floor to bang a gong, announcing the opening or closing of the day. But for Universal Music Group, which

went public through a direct listing on the exchange in September, the Dutch government's COVID-19 rules forced a rethink of the usual celebration.

"There had been a lot of debate right up until probably a week before as to whether we'd actually be able to fly to Amsterdam for the listing ceremony," says Sir Lucian Grainge, chairman/CEO of UMG. Ultimately,

Grainge and his team trudged to a Santa Monica, Calif., studio to livestream the ceremony at midnight local time, with one festive addition: a gong that executive vp/chief business administrator Will Tanous had airfreighted in. "I had the entire corporate team with me, all the people that had really done the heavy lifting on the work for the listing, and it was very exciting," Grainge says. "But I can assure you, because of the time difference, that when we got home at about 2:30 in the morning, we all slept well."

Universal's direct listing was a watershed moment for both the world's biggest music company and the industry at large, signaling a new era in the value of music as a financial asset. As of press time, UMG's valuation stands at \$53.9 billion. That figure was inconceivable when Grainge took over the top job at Universal in 2011 (just two years later, Vivendi rejected an \$8.5 billion bid from Softbank for

UMG), a time when the music business was approaching its nadir, shaken by a digital revolution that passed it by and not yet rescued by a streaming model that would bring it back to profitability.

It also validates the bold bets on talent and A&R that Grainge made over the past decade, which paid off particularly well in the past year. Universal surpassed its own benchmark from 2020, as albums released by its labels spent 38 weeks at No. 1 on the Billboard 200 in 2021, while UMG ended the year with eight of the top 10 artists on *Billboard's* year-end Top Artists chart and seven of the top 10 albums on the year-end Billboard 200 chart, including the entire top five.

Grainge has also restructured his leadership ranks, elevating Tanous to his new position, while bringing in Richelle Parham as president of global e-commerce and business development and executive vp/chief of people

and inclusion officer Eric Hutcherson as part of UMG's executive board. Grainge also named new label heads at Def Jam (CEO Tunji Balogun), Island (co-CEOs Justin Eshak and Imran Majid) and Capitol (CEO Michelle Jubelirer), while spinning off Motown as a stand-alone, front-line label. It's a balancing act that has, once again, proved to be a winning formula: UMG finished the year at No. 1 in distribution market share, a status it has held for over a decade, accounting for 37.89% of all current album consumption in the United States, according to MRC Data.

"When I joined the company almost 36 years ago, it would have been unimaginable the success, the breadth, the globalization, the quality of the teams and the value that we brought — we've reignited a lot of the creativity," says Grainge, who is quite reinvigorated since being hospitalized with a severe COVID-19 case in March 2020. "If you look at the things that the company pulled off against the simultaneousness of a public listing, I'm proud of that."

What was the period like leading up to Universal's direct listing?

Complex and busy. I've got a phenomenal team working with me at the corporate center — Will Tanous, Boyd Muir, Jeff Harleston, Philippe Flageul. We separated the operating part of the business — artists, marketing, our international development — into a specific task force team just purely to focus on the listing. And they worked with what was, at the time, our majority shareholder, as well as the banks. We broke artists, we ran the business well, we invested all over the world in what I would call the core parts of our business, as well as this simultaneous strategy to create the listing. People always say to me, when they fly into Los Angeles, there are two simultaneous runways and when you're landing you look over to your right or your left and you see another plane on the same trajectory. That's what we achieved.

When that day arrived, what was going through your mind?

It was the culmination of years of talk about strategy and possibility. More than anything, it was a validation of our work, of everyone in the company who touches music and signs and develops and breaks artists, those who work with all the songwriters, and all the work we do digitally to encourage the marketplace, to create competition. And it was just a validation of everything that I stand for and, hopefully, our leadership position within the market.

Universal albums spent 38 weeks at No. 1 on the Billboard 200 this past year. What's the significance of that for you?

The significance is that it wasn't 39. Next year we're going to have to try and do better for our artists. Our company is about what we invent, innovation; and it's about how we execute those ideas. So artist development, writer development and then utilization of capital in the market to promote so that we give those artists the biggest opportunity for a global market.

Those albums came from newer artists and more established names. What does that say about the company right now?

It's how we're programmed. I'm also incredibly proud of what we achieved with ABBA. I've been begging them to write new material for probably 20 years, and for them to have achieved what they've done in the marketplace, with the global campaign, I'm immensely proud of them. And I believe that shows the depth of our networks and our relationships with all sorts of artists, whether it's Elton John or Taylor Swift or Olivia Rodrigo.

In February, you signed a multifaceted deal with HYBE for a joint-venture label, a talent-search TV show and direct-to-fan communications. What will that let you do?

We started to develop a relationship with them on multilevel media several years ago. We worked with them as a group in Japan where we made a deal with them for BTS. And to me, it's an extension of that relationship and

"Companies and labels that need cultural reinvention need to be run by music professionals who understand entrepreneurship."

the networks and the businesses that we've talked about funding with them on live, audiovisual, talent discovery, etc. I like to do multidimensional relationships, and I like entrepreneurs. I respect entrepreneurs. They push us.

Did that deal help pave the way to bring BTS to Universal?

Well, it didn't hurt. It was an extension of our relationship with them and of their trust in us and of our belief in them.

There's new leadership at several of your labels. What stuck out to you about these new CEOs?

Hunger. Ambition. Love of music. Drive. Entrepreneurialism. Competitiveness. We're going into 2022 with a long-term strategy for a new stand-alone Motown under Ethiopia [Habtemariam]'s leadership, with fresh leadership and a new spring in their step at Capitol, fresh ideas and fresh leadership and an investment package for us to really drive forward culturally, musically and creatively at Def Jam and Island.

Did you specifically want executives with an A&R background at Def Jam and Island?

Yes. Because companies and labels that need cultural reinvention need to be run by music professionals that understand entrepreneurship and separating themselves from the pack, people that have the guts to back their own judgment. The music business is about music people, and I also take the view that all of the people within UMG have to be able to run a business, have to be able to say no and make tough decisions; but, at the same time, give real leadership and have followership. Followership as a leader, as a CEO — that's what you need.

You mentioned Motown is now a stand-alone; no longer under the CMG umbrella, it will be able to act more independently. Why did you make that decision?

Because I think there's growth in the marketplace and there's real ability in the company and I wanted them to have a chance to fly. The dream would be to take it back to the powerhouse that it was decades ago. But that will take time and investment of people, of capital on the A&R side, but also capital to actually market these artists around the world. You know, investment isn't just in artist advances. Investment is having the ability to use capital to invest in decisions; to move artists and ideas around the world; to advertise, market and promote. And that is what sometimes is either not discussed or taken for granted. At UMG, we don't take it for granted.

You replaced Jeff Vaughn with Michelle Jubelirer as the head of Capitol after less than a year. Why?

It was just something I felt was necessary. I think very highly of Jeff. I like him very much. He's extremely thoughtful and trustworthy, and I know that Jeff will have hits, and I anticipate he will be successful. He's a very good guy.

[Michelle's] got terrific followership. She has been an independent lawyer, she's got phenomenal relationships with artists, and this is her shot at CEO and putting her stamp on the

business. The staff, the teams, the artists, they're excited about her, and I believe that now is the time for her.

Looking back on this past year, what are you most proud of?

There's a lot to be proud of: the creative performance of the artists, the quality of the music that the artists delivered, the way in which the group continued to react to the pandemic. I think we've done a lot in social issues. Obviously, the listing is incredibly important. We rebranded and reintroduced Virgin as a distribution company operating worldwide. I'm thrilled that we brought in fresh blood, that we reinvented ourselves, that we were able to hire and recruit people from outside the industry at a time when there are far fewer travel and network possibilities. And I'm thrilled with what we've done with the labels. There's a lot. In a very exciting and complex year, we've done it. When one will look back at this period of the company, I'm really proud of everything that everybody achieved. Everybody.

—DAN RYS

POWER LIST

2022





THE TOP 25 2

Music Groups

Rob Stringer

CHAIRMAN, SONY MUSIC GROUP

Under Stringer's leadership of Sony Music Group, the company scored victories on and off the charts. In June, Sony launched Artists Forward, a global initiative that includes forgiving unrecouped balances for qualifying acts signed prior to 2000. Stringer says the plan, several years in the making, was "workshopped with managers and lawyers and artists," and builds on the \$750 million Sony dispersed to artists from the sale of 50% of its Spotify shares in 2018. "This isn't a one-off thing where we decide we're going to be more like a partner for June of 2021," he says. "We have to be more of a partner for the next couple of decades." Adele's blockbuster album *30* helped boost Sony's market share (see page 86), with the release ending 2021 at No. 4 on MRC Data's list of the top 10 most-consumed albums of 2021 in the United States with 1.94 million equivalent album units. "She touches something multigenerational. She's a one-off," Stringer says, adding that the *30* campaign will last two more years. Growth also came from young artists including Lil Nas X ("a cultural spokesman for a generation," says Stringer), H.E.R., Doja Cat (*Planet Her* was No. 6 on MRC Data's top 10 albums list), The Kid LAROI (*F*ck Love* was No. 7) and SZA, all of whom benefit from Sony's ethos of experimentation. "We've got to be there to support them, [including] when they want to make changes to their focus," says Stringer. Outside of the United States, "market share in every country in Europe is better than it was three years ago," he says, while the Latin division also soared. The company also made some important strategic acquisitions, including buying a majority stake in Todd Moscovitz's Alamo Records, purchasing AWAL (in a deal awaiting U.K. regulatory approval) and Kobalt Neighbouring Rights from Kobalt Music Group, and acquiring the master recordings and music publishing of Bruce Springsteen, who has recorded for Columbia for 50 years. "Under my watch," says Stringer, "I wasn't going to allow Bruce Springsteen not to be part of the future of this company." The executive, who will receive the 2022 Grammy Salute to Industry Icons award later this year, relishes the deals and the pace that keeps him and his lieutenants on their toes. "There's no standing still," he says.

—MELINDA NEWMAN

FOR FELLOW 2022 BILLBOARD POWER LIST HONOREES, SEE PAGE 64.

Stringer photographed by Landon Nordeman on Jan. 4 at Tea & Sympathy in New York.

GROOMING BY LAURA COSTA AT EXCLUSIVE ARTISTS



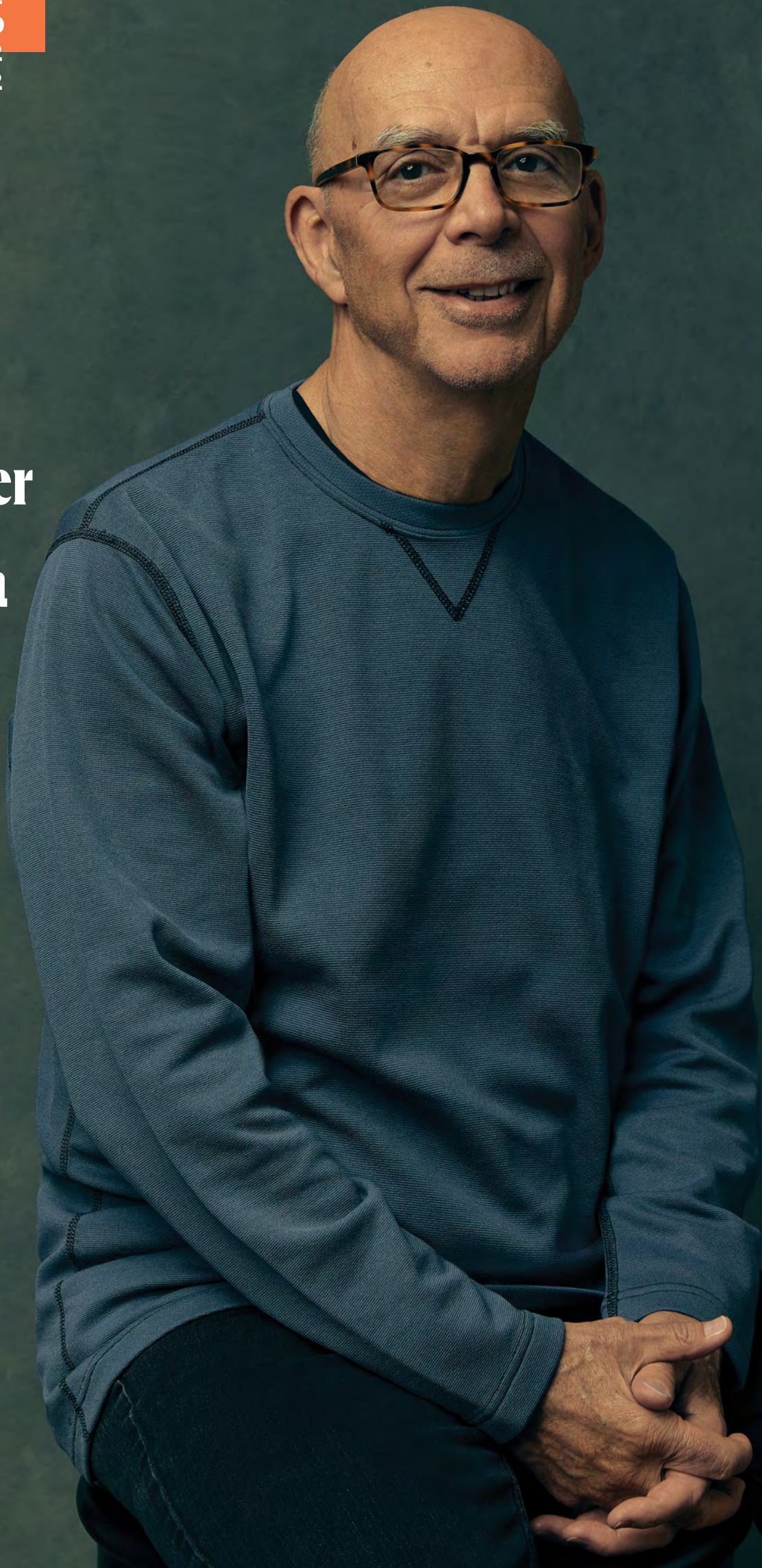
Music Groups

Steven Cooper


CEO, WARNER MUSIC GROUP

Max Lousada

CEO, WARNER RECORDED MUSIC



Cooper and Lousada (opposite page) photographed by Justin Bettman in New York.



Warner Music Group recently announced \$235 million in annual revenue from emerging platforms like video games, social media and the fitness app Peloton, which Cooper credits to “not just anticipating or preparing for what’s coming” but “actively working to create the future of the music business.” Twenty one pilots’ virtual Roblox concert drew millions of fans in September — WMG participated in a \$520 million funding round for the gaming platform in January — and Cardi B’s Instagram “WAP” avatar debuted in fall 2020. “We’re bringing these new opportunities into the center of our creative campaigns,” says Cooper. “It’s incredibly exciting and rewarding to be stretching a bigger canvas for our artists.” During the past 18 months, Warner bought 300 Entertainment, home of Megan Thee Stallion, Young Thug and others, for \$400 million; acquired the Doug Morris-founded independent label 12Tone; expanded its partnership with influential independent Artist Partner Group; and struck new deals with Russia’s Zhara Records and Ying Yang, a Vietnamese entertainment company with a catalog of 60,000 tracks. Warner also continued its global expansion with the launch of Atlantic Records outposts in Germany, Russia and the Benelux region (Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg), as well as Chinese hip-hop label JUUICE and U.K. dance label Signal Supply, while overhauling the executive structures at Alternative Distribution Alliance and WMX. As a result of such “investment in talent, originality, diversity and entrepreneurship,” as Lousada puts it, WMG had a 50% increase in Spotify No. 1s in 2021, according to the company, and launched new stars like Saweetie, GAYLE, France’s Aya Nakamura and Nigeria’s CKay, who reached No. 1 on *Billboard’s* Emerging Artists chart with his “Love Nwantiti” this year. WMG also saw veteran hitmakers Ed Sheeran and Bruno Mars return to the upper reaches of the charts. “We’ve made sure we’re strong in all the places and spaces where the next generation of original music is going to come from,” says Lousada. “When our collective ingenuity, passion and teamwork are channeled into our brilliant artists, they become unstoppable.”

—STEVE KNOPPER

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MUSIC GROUPS

Sir Lucian Grainge

CHAIRMAN/CEO,
UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP

Boyd Muir

EXECUTIVE VP/CFO/PRESIDENT OF
OPERATIONS, UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP

Michele Anthony

EXECUTIVE VP,
UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP

Jeff Harleston

GENERAL COUNSEL/EXECUTIVE VP
OF BUSINESS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS,
UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP

Michael Nash

EXECUTIVE VP OF DIGITAL STRATEGY,
UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP

Celine Joshua

EXECUTIVE VP OF COMMERCIAL,
INNOVATION AND ARTIST STRATEGY,
UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP

Eric Hutcherson

EXECUTIVE VP/CHIEF PEOPLE
AND INCLUSION OFFICER,
UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP

Richelle Parham

PRESIDENT OF GLOBAL E-COMMERCE
AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT,
UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP

Will Tanous

EXECUTIVE VP/CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE
OFFICER, UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP

See profile, page 56.

Rob Stringer

CHAIRMAN, SONY MUSIC GROUP

Kevin Kelleher

COO, SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT

Dennis Kooker

PRESIDENT OF GLOBAL DIGITAL
BUSINESS AND U.S. SALES, SONY MUSIC
ENTERTAINMENT

Julie Swidler

EXECUTIVE VP OF BUSINESS AFFAIRS/
GENERAL COUNSEL, SONY MUSIC
ENTERTAINMENT

Tom Mackay

PRESIDENT OF PREMIUM CONTENT,
SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT

Andrew Davis

EXECUTIVE VP/GLOBAL CHIEF PEOPLE
EXPERIENCE OFFICER,
SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT

Tiffany R. Warren

EXECUTIVE VP/CHIEF DIVERSITY
AND INCLUSION OFFICER,
SONY MUSIC GROUP

Towalame Austin

EXECUTIVE VP OF PHILANTHROPY AND
SOCIAL IMPACT, SONY MUSIC GROUP

Carmine Coppola

EXECUTIVE VP/CFO,
SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT

See profile, page 60.

Steve Cooper

CEO, WARNER MUSIC GROUP

Max Lousada

CEO, WARNER RECORDED MUSIC

Eric Levin

EXECUTIVE VP/CFO,
WARNER MUSIC GROUP

Masha Osherova

EXECUTIVE VP/CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER,
WARNER MUSIC GROUP

Paul Robinson

EXECUTIVE VP/GENERAL COUNSEL,
WARNER MUSIC GROUP

Oana Ruxandra

CHIEF DIGITAL OFFICER/EXECUTIVE VP
OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT,
WARNER MUSIC GROUP

Dr. Maurice A. Stinnett

GLOBAL HEAD OF EQUITY, DIVERSITY
AND INCLUSION, WARNER MUSIC GROUP

Eric Wong

PRESIDENT/CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER,
WARNER RECORDED MUSIC

See profile, page 62.

MULTISECTOR

Irving Azoff

CHAIRMAN/CEO, THE AZOFF COMPANY

Elizabeth Collins

Susan Genco

CO-PRESIDENTS, THE AZOFF COMPANY



Daniel Ek

CEO, SPOTIFY

Ek has guided Spotify — and indirectly, a good portion of the music industry — during the pandemic, helping artists, rights holders and fans through a turbulent two years. The world's largest streaming service now serves over 381 million users every month across 184 countries. It paid out over \$5 billion in royalties to rights holders in 2020 — enough to account for 20% of all global recorded-music revenue — and over \$23 billion in royalties to date, while its Fans First program generated nearly \$250 million in ticket sales. Some 57,000 artists now represent 90% of the monthly streams on Spotify — a total that has grown four times over since 2014 — and 76,000 artists were added to a playlist for the first time in 2020. “That’s because we’re constantly investing in our editorial,” says vp/global head of music Jeremy Erlich, adding that Spotify is also focused on “elevating new artists and underrepresented voices.” With a rapidly growing podcast division that now hosts over 3.2 million podcasts, including exclusive deals with former President Barack Obama and Michelle Obama; Prince Harry and Meghan, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex; Joe Rogan; and Kim Kardashian, Ek’s goal of turning Spotify into the premier destination for audio online is progressing faster than many expected. “Our team is focused,” says Charlie Hellman, the company’s vp/global head of music product, “on building the most powerful audience development platform to help turn listeners into fans, fans into superfans and, ultimately, help artists earn more.”

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Jon Platt

CHAIRMAN/CEO, SONY MUSIC PUBLISHING

With its rebranding from Sony/ATV to Sony Music Publishing in February 2021, the company doubled down on its commitment to foster a songwriter-centric, inclusive culture. Under Platt's stewardship, the company has secured deals with top songwriters such as Olivia Rodrigo, The Kid LAROI and Kane Brown. President/global chief marketing officer Brian Monaco played an integral role in several top songwriter and catalog deals, most notably Bruce Springsteen, Janelle Monáe and AC/DC. In addition to key renewals with Ilsey, Becky Hill, Keitlyn, Måneskin, Jon Nite and more, the company negotiated several historic catalog deals during 2021 with Paul Simon, Gilberto Gil, the estate of Gregg Allman and River House Artists (which represents a large share of Luke Combs' catalog). Citing inroads made this year by LAROI, Rodrigo, Polo G, Tate McRae, Conan Gray and Lil Nas X, senior vp of creative Jennifer Knoepfle notes their breakthroughs not only made an impact on the charts but also culturally. "It has been a nice

reinforcement," she adds, "of trusting your gut that you're betting on talented people. Then when you see them thrive and have success, there's just no better feeling." For the first time since 2012, both ASCAP and BMI crowned the company's Nashville division country publisher of the year. "It signifies the heart and soul that our songwriters are putting into these songs and how things are growing in the right direction," says Sony Music Publishing Nashville CEO Rusty Gaston. Underscoring that sentiment is the company's Songwriter Forward program, a global initiative that waives legacy unrecouped balances for qualifying songwriters with pre-2000 deals. Adds Gaston: "We have to do everything we can to advocate for songwriters and make sure they're compensated fairly because they're the lifeblood that makes every position in the music business happen." As the industry moves forward in 2022, Knoepfle emphasizes that diversity and inclusion remain crucial issues. "We have to do better," she says. "Our companies should look like the people who are making the music."

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Tim Leiweke

CEO, OAK VIEW GROUP

Jeff Azoff

COO, THE AZOFF COMPANY; CEO, FULL STOP MANAGEMENT

See profile, page 67.

Bang Si-hyuk

CHAIRMAN, HYBE

Scooter Braun

CO-CEO, HYBE AMERICA; FOUNDER, SB PROJECTS

Lenzo Yoon

CO-CEO, HYBE AMERICA

See profile, page 92.

Scott Borchetta

FOUNDER/PRESIDENT/CEO, BIG MACHINE LABEL GROUP

In the past year, Big Machine artist Carly Pearce released her most critically acclaimed music to date, with her album *29: Written in Stone* reaching the top 10 of Top Country Albums. Pearce in August was inducted into the Grand Ole Opry and was named female vocalist of the year at the Country Music Association Awards in November. "She has established herself as one of the most important artists in the format," Borchetta says, "with both feet firmly planted in country music."

Cliff Burnstein

Peter Mensch

CO-FOUNDERS, Q PRIME MANAGEMENT

Q Prime's Burnstein and Mensch rallied during the pandemic to support new releases from The Regrettes, Foals, Three Days Grace and Metallica — whose charity tribute album, *The Metallica Blacklist*, featured 53 artist collaborations and peaked at No. 7 on Top Album Sales in October. The management firm continued to expand in Nashville with Q Prime South, founded and led by John Peets, with new projects from Brothers Osborne, Ashley McBryde and Eric Church. Plus, says Mensch, they did it all while keeping Q Prime "intact with our full staff."

Henry Cárdenas

FOUNDER/CEO, CÁRDENAS MARKETING NETWORK

Landing at No. 4 on *Billboard's* year-end top promoters chart, Cárdenas Marketing Network grossed \$43.2 million from 54 shows. "After almost a year and a half of lockdown, this is a blessing," says the



Jody Gerson

CHAIRMAN/CEO, UNIVERSAL MUSIC PUBLISHING GROUP

Universal Music Publishing Group, under Gerson, closed 2020 with a landmark deal that reverberated throughout 2021: acquiring Bob Dylan's entire 60-year, 600-song catalog — one of the most prestigious in music — for an undisclosed price. But that was just the beginning. Over the last 13 months, UMPG signed deals with hit-making songwriters across the spectrum — Lionel Richie, Holly Humberstone, Clairo, Louis Bell, Tommy Brown and Julia Michaels — while also extending its relationship with Harry Styles. In addition, the company made deals in the digital space, inking licensing deals with TikTok and Triller “to create entirely new revenue streams for songwriters,” says Gerson. The publisher grew geographically, too, opening offices in Shanghai and Israel. For Gerson, the rewards also came in seeing writers-producers that the company invested in early, such as Blake Slatkin and Omer Fedi, have the biggest hits of their careers, including the Billboard Hot 100 No. 1 smash “Stay,” by The Kid LAROI and Justin Bieber (another UMPG artist). “The music industry is growing again, and I’m really proud of the role that our company has taken in returning the industry to growth,” Gerson says, adding that it has happened by dedicating “time and resources, financial and otherwise, to bet on and invest in securing long-term careers for our songwriters.” As the publishing industry becomes even more crowded with private equity-backed companies, Gerson says UMPG and other traditional publishers stand apart. “Now there are these players who are just buying up these rights, and they’re calling these catalogs ‘asset classes.’ But I represent songwriters. I represent them as human beings, and I represent their catalog of music that I believe changes culture... To me, music is not an asset class. It’s an art.”

FOR FELLOW 2022 BILLBOARD POWER LIST HONOREES, SEE PAGE 82.

label and artists have engineered during the pandemic paid off in 2021. Chvrches embarked on a sold-out tour after the 2018 song “Forever” had a recurring synch on a Netflix series and blew up on streaming services. Hamilton Leithauser couldn’t tour behind 2020’s *The Loves*

Chicago-based Cárdenas. Behind top-grossing tours by Maluma (\$25.5 million, 27 shows) and Marc Anthony (\$13.7 million, 16 shows) — both of which made *Billboard*’s top tours of the year list — CMN’s Maestro Cares Foundation annual gala, sidelined by the pandemic last year, returned in person for its eighth edition, which took place in New York in December.

Mike Caren FOUNDER/CEO, ARTIST PUBLISHING GROUP/ARTIST PARTNER GROUP

Artist Publishing Group has been a music publishing force for years, with clients including Charlie Puth, Ava Max, Bazzi and YoungBoy Never Broke Again. But in 2021, Caren, 44, says the company “built most of the architecture for a next-generation independent music company, with every key department and all the systems needed for real artist, writer, executive and entrepreneur development.” Along with its forward-thinking expansions, APG is guiding new signees including Madison Love, 24kGoldn and Amy Allen to create sustainable careers — a process that Caren calls “our trademark.”

Coran Capshaw FOUNDER/CEO, RED LIGHT MANAGEMENT

See profile, page 102.

Seth England PARTNER/CEO, BIG LOUD

Joey Moi PARTNER/PRESIDENT OF A&R, BIG LOUD

Craig Wiseman
PARTNER/SONGWRITER, BIG LOUD
In January 2021, Big Loud released Morgan Wallen’s *Dangerous: The Double Album* in conjunction with Republic Records. It spent 10 weeks atop the Billboard 200, becoming the first title to spend its first 10 weeks at No. 1 since Whitney Houston’s *Whitney* in 1987. *Dangerous* also ended the year as the top Billboard 200 album overall — despite the February appearance of a video showing the singer uttering a racial slur that caused the label to temporarily suspend Wallen’s recording contract. Big Loud scored other successes, too. Artist MacKenzie Porter notched her first chart-

topper on the Country Airplay chart with her Dustin Lynch collaboration “Thinking About You” (on Broken Bow Records), Jake Owen earned a No. 1 on that same chart with “Made for You,” and newcomer Lily Rose made her country radio debut with breakthrough hit “Villain.”

Ghazi FOUNDER/CEO, EMPIRE

Under Ghazi (who professionally uses only his first name), EMPIRE continued to innovate on behalf of a roster that includes Yung Bleu, Key Glock, Fireboy DML and Tyga. EMPIRE has also partnered with Background Records 2.0 to release catalog titles and new posthumous music from Aaliyah. In December, EMPIRE established an artist equity pool from the label’s stake in Riff, the emerging social livestream platform that combines voice and video chat with music. Plus, Ghazi says, “Our new blockchain payment platform will see an aggressive evolution in the years to come.”

Daniel Glass FOUNDER/CEO, GLASSNOTE RECORDS

The creative workarounds that Glass’

of *Your Life*, so he livestreamed at-home performances before returning in front of sold-out crowds. After Aurora's 6-year-old "Runaway" went viral on TikTok, Glassnote worked the song into a playlist staple, generating over 227 million U.S. audio and video streams, which resulted in a 2022 U.S. tour at venues double the capacity of her pre-pandemic shows. "We're now getting to see the fruits of our two-plus years of labor," says Glass, with crowds "hearing our artists play, in person, the songs that carried them through the pandemic."

Shawn "Jay-Z" Carter
FOUNDER/CHAIRMAN, ROC NATION

Jay Brown
VICE CHAIRMAN, ROC NATION

Desiree Perez
CEO, ROC NATION

Roc Nation's partnership with the NFL led to an Emmy nomination for the *Pepsi Super Bowl LV Halftime Show* featuring The Weeknd, while the return of its Made in America Festival marked the 10th anniversary of the event with 60,000 fans

crowding Philadelphia's Benjamin Franklin Parkway. Meanwhile, Roc's management division helped Moneybagg Yo and DJ Khaled score Billboard 200 No. 1 albums, a feat J. Cole matched for its recorded-music division. But, Perez says, the company is "always putting philanthropic endeavors and community initiatives first" — epitomized by the Team Roc Job Fair in November that "hosted over 3,000 attendees, offering close to 10,000 jobs and services."

John Josephson
CHAIRMAN/CEO, SESAC

The nation's third-largest performing rights organization, helmed by Josephson, expanded beyond its core business in August when it acquired digital rights collection agency Audiam from Canadian rights-management group SOCAN. Audiam — which launched in 2013 and whose clients include Round Hill Music, Blackened Recordings, Ruthless Attack Muzick and Country Road Music — has collected \$140 million for songwriters and publishers as of 2021. Along with promoting Malcolm Hawker to COO of SESAC Music Group and Scott Jungmichel to COO of SESAC PRO, SESAC Music Group reports an

anticipated revenue rise of 40% for its current fiscal year, with Josephson adding that the company continues "to create value for its affiliates and customers."

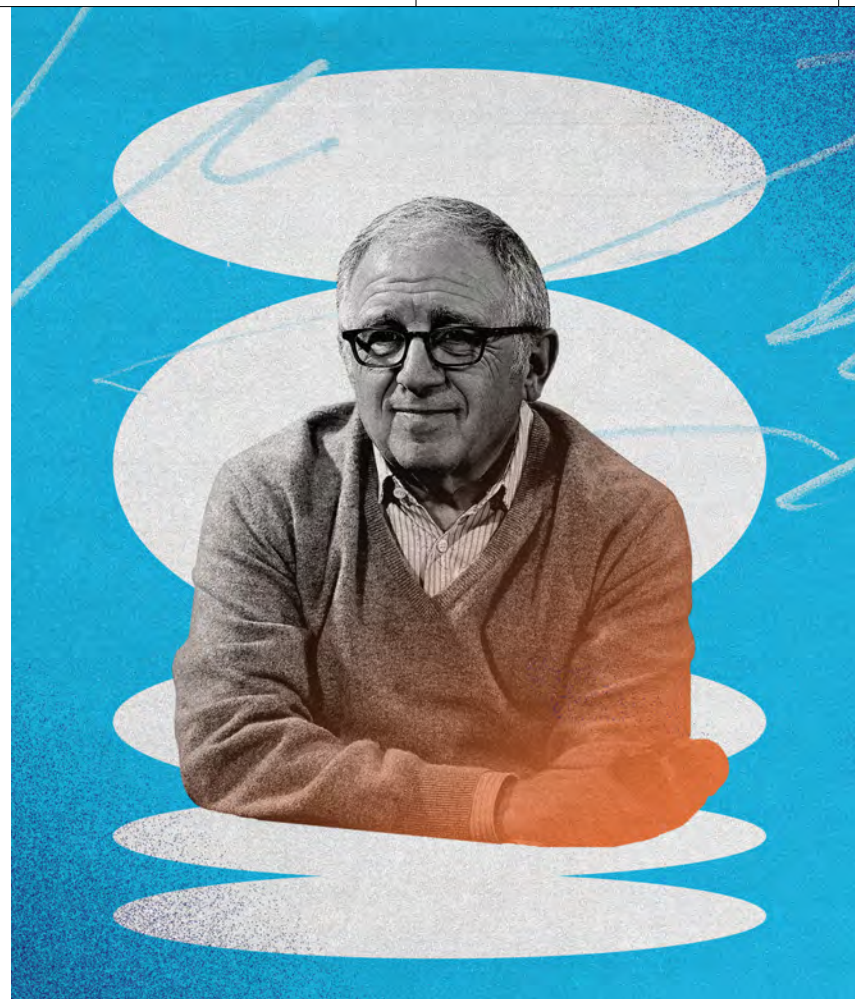
Justin Kalifowitz
FOUNDER/EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN,
DOWNTOWN MUSIC HOLDINGS

"Our decision to focus Downtown exclusively on the fast-growing services segment of our business was the major theme for the company in 2021," says Kalifowitz, who transitioned Sept. 1 to executive chairman of Downtown and was succeeded as CEO by Andrew Bergman. Earlier in the year, in April, Downtown sold its portfolio of 145,000 owned copyrights to Concord in a deal estimated at \$350 million. The moves were part of a strategy "aligning the company around our 1.7 million creator and 2,500 enterprise clients who manage over 23 million music assets on our platforms," says Kalifowitz.

Walter Kolm
FOUNDER/CEO, WK ENTERTAINMENT;
FOUNDER/OWNER, WK RECORDS/WKMX
In 2021, WK Entertainment announced

"Now there are these players calling catalogs 'asset classes.' To me, music is not an asset class. It's an art."

— GERSON



Irving Azoff

CHAIRMAN/CEO, THE AZOFF COMPANY

Over the course of the last decade, Azoff has expanded beyond his power base as one of the industry's top artist managers (the Eagles, Harry Styles, John Mayer, Jon Bon Jovi), with ventures in arena development, music asset investment, music publishing and more. In 2021, Azoff and Oak View Group CEO Tim Leiweke completed the redevelopment of the Climate Pledge Arena in Seattle; opened the UBS Arena in Belmont, N.Y.; moved forward on venues in Palm Springs, Calif.; Austin; Baltimore; and Savannah, Ga.; and acquired Spectra, a live events and entertainment company. Oak View expanded internationally with ongoing development projects for arenas in Manchester, England; Ontario, Canada; São Paulo; and Milan. Azoff launched Iconic Artists Group and is already active in acquiring stakes in the music and other rights of legacy acts such as The Beach Boys, David Crosby and Linda Ronstadt. Global Music Rights, the boutique performing rights organization that Azoff launched in 2013, just announced it has reached a conditional settlement that will both provide long-term licenses and end litigation with the Radio Music Licensing Committee over the royalty rates, which have been at risk during five years of litigation involving countercharges of antitrust practices. The Music Artists Coalition, which Azoff, Coren Capshaw, John Silva and others co-founded in 2019, continues to advocate for the rights of creators by lobbying for legislation that would change the music business and pushing behind the scenes to change industry practices that it sees as unfair to artists.

FOR FELLOW 2022 BILLBOARD POWER LIST HONOREES, SEE PAGE 64.

Maluma's Papi Juancho Tour, the touring industry's most ambitious trek since the pandemic took hold in the United States. After 27 shows, the outing reached No. 14 on *Billboard's* year-end Top Tours chart, grossing \$25.5 million. Meanwhile, Los Legendarios, Wisin and Jhay Cortez's viral hit "Fiel," released by La Base and WK Records — the label Kolm launched in mid-2020 — ended 2021 on *Billboard's* top 10 Hot Latin Songs list. But one of Kolm's most notable successes of the year is landing WK on the year-end top 10 Latin Labels chart, calling it "a huge accomplishment for a label so young."

Ross Liang

CEO, TENCENT MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT

Tencent Music Entertainment's music services division has delivered steady growth and development, says Liang, who was named CEO in April. (He succeeded Cussion Pang, who is now executive chairman of TME's board.) Tencent's music service increased its paid user base to 71.2 million in the third quarter of 2021 and grew its long-form audio category to 140 million monthly users. In November, the company partnered with Apple Music to bring its music content from Chinese labels/creators to the streaming service's global user base for the first time. Liang says the deal will "empower artists and provide users with better services to promote the long-term healthy development of the digital music industry."

Hartwig Masuch

CEO, BMG

See profile, page 78.

Martin Mills

FOUNDER/CHAIRMAN, BEGGARS GROUP

Home to independent labels 4AD, Matador, Rough Trade, XL Recordings and Young, Beggar's Group includes its own publishing division and catalog imprint, with recent releases by Radiohead, Snail Mail and Parquet Courts. The London-based music rights company thrived during lockdown by "successfully developing strategies to create and expose content for artists in the pandemic era," says Mills. It also hired a head of sustainability to establish a new green program, committed to becoming carbon negative by the end of 2024 and took part in the parliamentary hearings in the United Kingdom on the economics of music streaming in 2021.



Guy Moot

CO-CHAIR/CEO, WARNER CHAPPELL MUSIC

Carianne Marshall

CO-CHAIR/COO, WARNER CHAPPELL MUSIC

When Moot and Marshall took over as co-chairs of Warner Chappell Music in 2019, their biggest goal was a clear, unified strategy. Moot believes that big-picture direction has helped the publisher score key signings, including 2021 Hot 100 chart-toppers Cardi B ("Up"), Anderson .Paak ("Leave the Door Open," as part of the duo Silk Sonic) and Daniel Caesar (for his feature on Justin Bieber's "Peaches"), plus high-profile renewals with Madonna and George Michael, as well as the acquisition

of David Bowie's publishing catalog. Meanwhile, Ryan Press, who A&R'd Summer Walker's first *Billboard* 200 No. 1, *Still Over It*, was promoted to president of North America; Gustavo Menendez, president of U.S. Latin and Latin America, signed singer-songwriter Joss Favela to a worldwide administration agreement; and Ben Vaughn, president/CEO of Nashville, orchestrated joint global publishing deals for Rascal Flatts' Jay DeMarcus and former *The Voice* contestant Kyndal Inskeep. Moot also

points to the publisher's international moves, including signing Argentine singer Nathy Peluso and the United Kingdom's Central Cee, and opening new offices in Vietnam and Shanghai. "Wherever you're signing from to Warner Chappell, you're going to get that same level of service," Moot says. Of the rising interest in music publishing assets, Marshall says, "People outside of the traditional music business and publishing business are recognizing something that we've known for a while — that there's real value there." As Moot says, "It's not just a financial investment. It's a financial and a personal investment in songs and songwriters."

FOR FELLOW 2022 *BILLBOARD* POWER LIST HONOREES, SEE PAGE 84.

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Scott Pascucci
CEO, CONCORD

Bob Valentine
PRESIDENT, CONCORD

Concord became the sixth-biggest music publisher in April, when it bought Downtown Music's owned and publishing copyrights, "bringing Concord's owned and controlled music assets to over 600,000 works," Valentine says. In August, the company — which releases recorded music in a renewed partnership with Universal Music Group — launched its narrative content creation division, Concord Originals, which, Valentine explains, will "develop and produce a slate of scripted and unscripted films, television shows and premium podcasts centered around artists and [intellectual property] Concord owns or represents." Concord Originals has already partnered with Jennifer Lopez's Nuyorican Productions and Skydance to co-develop original projects based on Concord's historic catalog of musicals.

Peter Shapiro
CEO, DAYGLO VENTURES

Despite the shutdown of live shows, Shapiro hit his stride during the pandemic, continuing his successful Fans. Live streaming shows that included Tyler Childers at Red Rocks in Colorado and Billy Strings at the Capitol Theater in Port Chester, N.Y. He also opened two more venues in 2021: Brooklyn Bowl Nashville, as a joint venture with Live Nation, and Brooklyn Bowl Philadelphia, in an agreement negotiated with Live Nation Philadelphia president Geoff Gordon. "We've been really well received," says Shapiro, after opening the Nashville club with Old Crow Medicine Show and Rebirth Brass Band from New Orleans. "Power," Shapiro says, "is having the freedom to book the bands I want to book."

Wassim "Sal" Slaiby
FOUNDER/CEO, SALXCO/XO MGMT/
UNIVERSAL ARABIC MUSIC

See profile, page 94.

Steve Stoute
FOUNDER/CEO, UNITEDMASTERS

Stoute led UnitedMasters to a \$550 million valuation in 2021, thanks to recent partnerships that benefit its independent artist base of 1.3 million. It follows the company's plans to offer artists Dolby mastering services for as little as \$5 and cryptocurrency payments through Coinbase. Stoute's aim is to "help independent artists realize the

promise of the creator economy" with all of the necessary resources at their disposal to "distribute their music and earn a meaningful income by marketing themselves effectively," he says. "Artists need to build wealth from their cultural influence, leveraging ownership of their art as a path to success."

Swizz Beatz

Timbaland
CO-FOUNDERS, VERZUZ

After their platform was acquired by the Triller Network in a deal that closed in January 2021, the hip-hop veteran co-founders continued expanding the scope of their streaming battle series — even giving a stake in the company to all *Verzuz* participants who appeared prior to the acquisition. "The artists are the voice for what we as producers and writers create," Swizz says, "and we all deserve to be paid for the work we do." Thanks to their impact, the duo was honored among *Time* magazine's 100 Most Influential People of 2021 and, in March, won the NAACP Image Award for outstanding variety series or special. *Verzuz* has continued to attract millions of virtual viewers and added a number of live shows across the country. "We all have the power to change the world, but we have to use our power to better ourselves so we can inspire and better others," says Timbaland. "That's what it's all about."

LABELS & DISTRIBUTORS

Tunji Balogun
CHAIRMAN/CEO, DEF JAM RECORDINGS

Nicki Farag
GM, DEF JAM RECORDINGS

Def Jam has "continued to put its indelible stamp on the music industry," says newly appointed chairman/CEO Balogun, 38, noting that Justin Bieber's and Kanye West's respective releases — *Justice* and *Donda*, which both debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard 200 in 2021 — are nominated for album of the year at the 2022 Grammy Awards. "Even as the label has undergone massive transition over the past two years," he continues, "the team delivered superstar rollouts for two of the biggest artists in the world, both of whom embody the ethos the label was founded on: artistry, authenticity and culture."



Oliver Schusser

VP OF APPLE MUSIC AND INTERNATIONAL CONTENT, APPLE

When it launched in 2015, Apple Music was late to the music subscription market. Now available in 167 countries, the service — which had a head start by being integrated into iPhone products — is still on the rise, with just 16% of the global market, according to MIDiA Research. Its competitors, including Spotify, YouTube and Amazon, have forced it to innovate. In 2021, Schusser says the company "made the product better in every aspect," noting its premium surround sound tier, Spatial Audio, which launched in June, and its lossless audio quality, a form of compression that preserves all music data listeners can hear. While some of its competitors offered high-quality audio at a premium price tier, Apple instead followed Amazon's lead to make the feature standard. Already, 50 million subscribers have listened to Spatial Audio at least once, says Schusser, who notes, "When was the last time young people talked about sound?" Product aside, Apple has focused sharply on personalities since it hired former BBC Radio 1 DJ Zane Lowe in 2015, and he has since attracted A-list talent to Apple Music 1, one of its three global radio stations. And in November, Apple Music hired WNYU's Tim Sweeney to bring his 22-year-old show *Beats in Space* to the platform. "We are a home for artists to tell their stories," says Schusser.

FOR FELLOW 2022 BILLBOARD POWER LIST HONOREES, SEE PAGE 90.



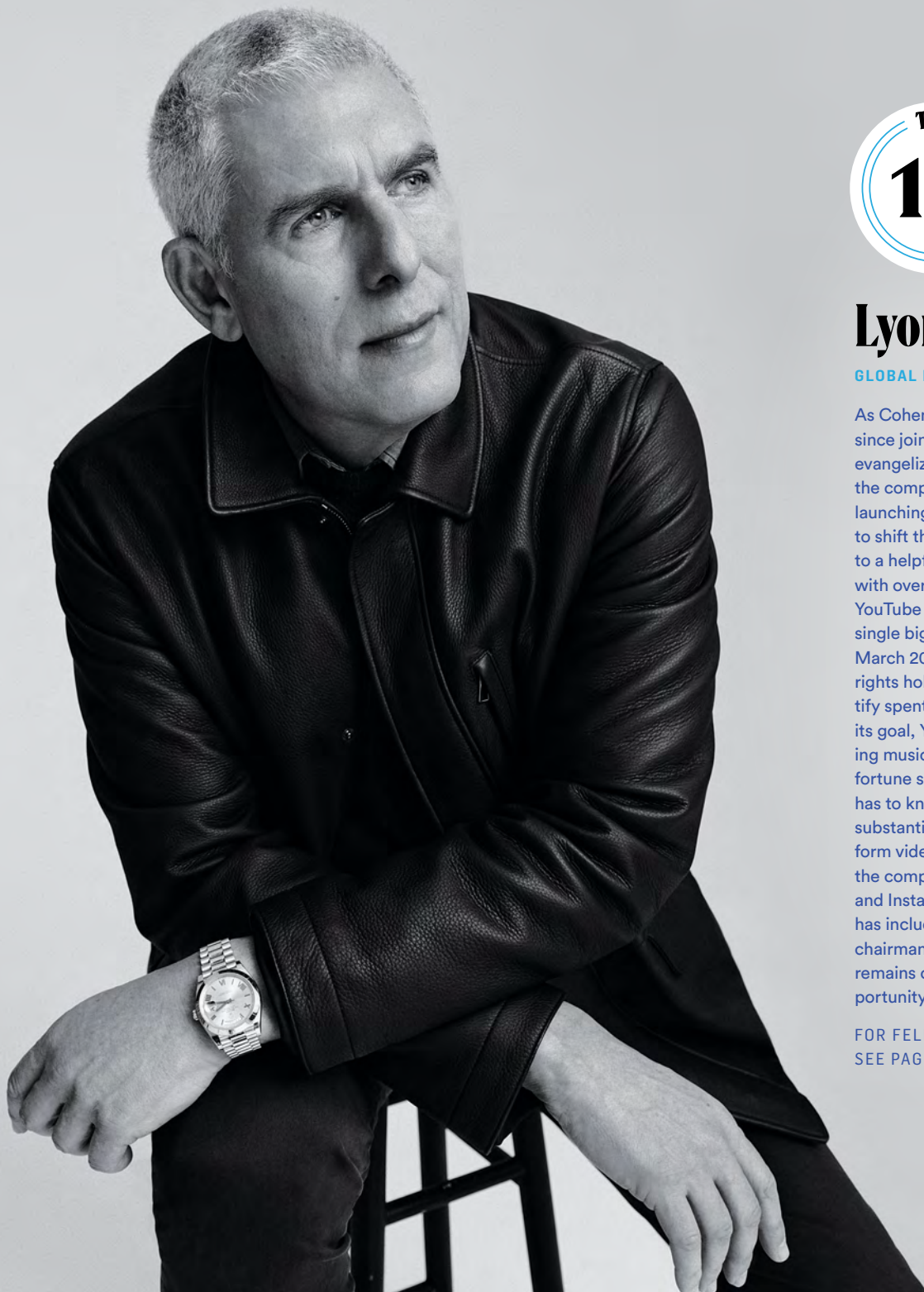
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Lyor Cohen

GLOBAL HEAD OF MUSIC, YOUTUBE

As Cohen describes it, the role he has played at YouTube since joining the company in 2016 is straightforward: “I evangelize music and explain the opportunity” — both inside the company and to the music industry. Initially, that meant launching YouTube’s music subscription service and helping to shift the company’s reputation from a recalcitrant obstacle to a helpful and willing partner of the music business. Now, with over 50 million global subscribers to its music service, YouTube has its sights set on becoming the music industry’s single biggest revenue source by 2025. From April 2020 to March 2021, YouTube paid roughly \$4 billion to creators and rights holders, more than half of the estimated \$7 billion Spotify spent on content costs — including podcasts. To achieve its goal, YouTube must become equally strong at promoting music and paying royalties, says Cohen. “Fame without fortune sucks,” he says, “and fortune without fame ... it all has to knit together.” To appeal to creators, YouTube made substantial investments in new products such as its short-form video platform, YouTube Shorts, “the biggest priority of the company,” he says, and which will compete with TikTok and Instagram’s Reels. Cohen, whose four-decade career has included stints as Run-D.M.C.’s road manager and as chairman/CEO of recorded music at Warner Music Group, remains optimistic about the future, noting, “The entire opportunity for an artist and a song lies at YouTube.”

FOR FELLOW 2022 BILLBOARD POWER LIST HONOREES, SEE PAGE 88.

Aaron Bay-Schuck

CO-CHAIRMAN/CEO, WARNER RECORDS

Tom Corson

CO-CHAIRMAN/COO, WARNER RECORDS

Warner Records celebrated the arrival of “a young superstar” in Saweetie, whose 2022 best new artist Grammy nomination was “the culmination of three years of persistent artist development,” says Bay-Schuck, 40. It was also the label’s fourth nomination in the category in the past four years, following nods for Chika (2021), Bebe Rexha and Dua Lipa (both 2019). This past year, Dua Lipa achieved her first top five album with *Future Nostalgia*, which peaked at No. 3 on the Billboard 200 in March.

Ken Bunt

PRESIDENT, DISNEY MUSIC GROUP

“[We were] thrilled that we were able to help bring live concerts back with three *Black Panther* film concerts at the Hollywood Bowl and two *Nightmare Before Christmas* concerts at Banc of California Stadium,” says Bunt. The company also supported the acclaimed Questlove Hulu documentary *Summer of Soul* and Billie Eilish and Beatles films on Disney+; two Queen specials on ABC and the films *Encanto* and Steven Spielberg’s remake of *West Side Story* were other significant 2021 wins. In addition, Bunt celebrated the launch of a dedicated SiriusXM Disney Hits station, as well as successful campaigns with TINI and Area21 (Martin Garrix and Maejor) and a new partnership with S-Curve Records.

Mike Dungan

CHAIRMAN/CEO, UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP NASHVILLE

Cindy Mabe

PRESIDENT, UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP NASHVILLE

Universal Music Group Nashville claimed Top Country Albums Label honors on *Billboard*’s 2021 year-end charts thanks to stalwarts like Chris Stapleton, Luke Bryan, Eric Church and Carrie Underwood. Such artists have achieved career longevity through development and patience, leading Dungan to caution against “the tendency to overreact to the influence of TikTok metrics in our A&R departments,” which causes “a feeding frenzy unlike any

other ... The financials are insane for a practice that really throws shit up against the wall to see what sticks.”

Alejandro Duque

PRESIDENT, WARNER MUSIC LATIN AMERICA

Duque became president of Warner Music Latin America in October after 15 years at Universal, where he most recently served as managing director of Universal Music Latino, Machete and Capitol Latin. At 39, he’s the youngest head of a Latin multinational music company. The move to Warner was motivated by Warner Music Group’s “truly global focus on developing artists’ careers,” says Duque, citing acts including Anitta, Justin Quiles and Myke Towers



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who “make Warner passionate about evolving the culture of our industry.”

Mike Easterlin

Gregg Nadel
CO-PRESIDENTS, ELEKTRA MUSIC GROUP

Elektra Music Group celebrated a year of wins, from All Time Low’s first Alternative Airplay No. 1 (“Monsters” featuring Blackbear) and twenty one pilots’ “enormous” Roblox album release concert to Brandi Carlile’s five Grammy nods for “In These Silent Days” (including song and record of the year) and new signee Masked Wolf earning a No. 6 Hot 100 hit with “Astronaut in the Ocean.” By pairing veteran stars with younger talent, Easterlin and Nadel have focused on creating a roster of rock and alternative artists for fans of any age. “We’re building career artists with fan bases who will come out to shows, buy merch and fill arenas for years to come,” says Nadel.

Peter Edge
CHAIRMAN/CEO, RCA RECORDS

John Fleckenstein
COO, RCA RECORDS

Mark Pitts
PRESIDENT, RCA RECORDS

RCA is an “incredible artist-development engine,” says Edge. He points to “our work with Doja Cat in 2021,” whose triumphs include a No. 2 debut on the Billboard 200 with *Planet Her*; collaborations with SZA, Saweetie, The Weeknd and Ariana Grande; and starring in a Pepsi ad. “We created and executed a long-term setup and global marketing plan that made her into a superstar artist,” he says. In addition, the label is steering Normani’s rise in R&B with the single “Wild Side” (featuring Cardi B) and signed rising Nigerian star Tems in September.

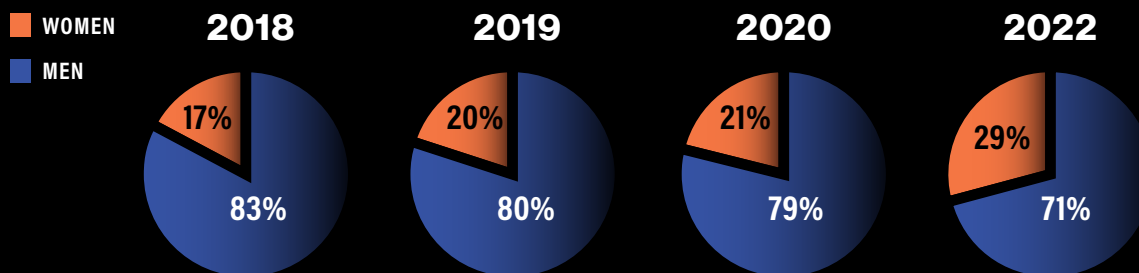
Justin Eshak

Imran Majid
CO-CEOs, ISLAND RECORDS

In June, Universal Music Group named Eshak and Majid the new co-CEOs of Island, effective Jan. 1, to build on the label’s success with Shawn Mendes, Demi Lovato, Nick Jonas and others. The two had served as the co-heads of A&R at Columbia Records since 2018, but their arrival is a UMG homecoming for both: Eshak’s career began with an Island internship, while Majid in 2004 joined Republic Records, where the two first met. Hit-making aside,

THE BILLBOARD POWER LIST BY GENDER

When creating this list, *Billboard* seeks to reflect the music business not just as it is — where men still have most of the top jobs — but also where it could be, by proactively seeking to identify women who deserve recognition for their leadership. As the industry makes progress toward gender parity in its executive suites, the Billboard Power List will reflect and celebrate that shift.



NOTE: THE BILLBOARD POWER LIST WAS NOT PUBLISHED IN 2021. IT WAS REPLACED BY THE CHANGE AGENTS FEATURE.

“As an industry that is full of diverse music and artists from around the world,” Majid says, “we collectively need the music companies to reflect the same in diversity and inclusion. If the artists we represent don’t see a reflection of themselves and their values within these companies, it will always put us a step behind.”

John Esposito
CHAIRMAN/CEO, WARNER MUSIC NASHVILLE

In 2021, Warner Music Nashville celebrated Blake Shelton’s 20th year on its roster, as well as career breakthroughs by Gabby Barrett and Cody Johnson, plus the return of Zac Brown Band to the top of the Country Airplay chart after its move to WMN. But the label’s biggest achievement, Esposito says, is one the whole planet can cheer: “We celebrated 87.5% waste diversion at Dan + Shay’s massive album launch concert in Nashville’s Centennial Park by

implementing composting and recycling services, eliminating single-use items wherever possible, working with sustainable vendors and more,” he says.

Randy Goodman
CHAIRMAN/CEO, SONY MUSIC NASHVILLE

Luke Combs landed both the No. 2 and No. 3 slots on *Billboard*’s year-end Top Country Albums chart, but for Goodman, his label’s greatest accomplishment was made by the Nashville Equity Taskforce (NET), comprising staff from Sony Music Nashville, Provident Entertainment and Sony Music Publishing, all dedicated to improving inclusivity among its workforce. But equally important is that the task force is making changes in the community. “We support local organizations that address everything from access to music for young people to helping combat food insecurity in underserved neighborhoods,” Goodman says. “We know there are many strides

to make in terms of tackling equity in our format and how we impact our broader community, but we are approaching our NET work with incredible zeal as a way to begin that process.”

Kevin Gore
PRESIDENT OF GLOBAL CATALOGUE/
PRESIDENT OF ARTS MUSIC, WARNER MUSIC GROUP

After helping strike global partnerships in 2021 with Madonna (for her full catalog, from her earliest albums to *Madame X*) and David Bowie’s estate (also for his catalog, from box sets to *Blackstar*), Gore, 55, calls Warner Music Group’s global catalog division “stronger and set up for the future,” adding, “We’ve continued to be trusted by iconic artists to look after their life’s work.” This year, he expects more industrywide sales of catalog recordings, which reflect recent trends. Says Gore: “We must remember it all starts with people who wrote a song that meant something to a fan in a way that transcends capital and balance sheets.”

Ethiopia Habtemariam
CHAIRWOMAN/CEO, MOTOWN RECORDS

With Habtemariam’s promotion in March to chairwoman/CEO of Motown, the legendary imprint became a stand-alone label once more. Motown has since released Vince Staples’ critically acclaimed eponymous fourth album in partnership with Blacksmith Recordings and expanded its hip-hop roster with new joint ventures with YoungBoy Never Broke Again and his label, and with Smino, in partnership with his Zero Fatigue and EQT (Equative Think-

“This is a pivotal time for everyone to be open to innovation and the evolution of our industry.”

— H A B T E M A R I A M

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ing) labels. Habtemariam also continued a successful partnership with Quality Control with recent projects from Migos, City Girls and current Grammy nominee Lil Baby, who is up for best melodic rap performance. Habtemariam is most proud of “Motown’s evolution [and] the music.”

John Janick
CHAIRMAN/CEO,
INTERSCOPE GEFFEN A&M

Steve Berman
VICE CHAIRMAN,
INTERSCOPE GEFFEN A&M
See profile, page 82.

Michelle Jubelirer
CHAIR/CEO, CAPITOL MUSIC GROUP
A “new” Capitol Music Group began taking shape in 2021 after former chairman/CEO Steve Barnett retired in late 2020. The home of Halsey, Sam Smith and Katy Perry has been aggressively reinvigorating and expanding its roster through signings such as rappers Toosii and Justus Bennetts and electronic musician Surf Mesa. And in December, Jubelirer succeeded Jeff

Vaughn as chair/CEO of CMG, becoming the first woman to helm the label group. Proud of overcoming challenges imposed by the pandemic, Jubelirer, 47, says the team “brought tremendous energy and motivation and continued to keep our artists at the forefront.”

Craig Kallman
CHAIRMAN/CEO, ATLANTIC RECORDS

Julie Greenwald
CHAIRMAN/COO, ATLANTIC RECORDS

Michael Kyser
PRESIDENT OF BLACK MUSIC,
ATLANTIC RECORDS

Kevin Weaver
PRESIDENT, WEST COAST,
ATLANTIC RECORDS
See profile, page 88.

Cat Kreidich
PRESIDENT, ALTERNATIVE
DISTRIBUTION ALLIANCE
After taking over as leader of Warner Music Group’s independent label and artist ser-

vices division in April, Kreidich has helped ADA through a “reinvention,” hiring key players in early December such as Universal marketing executive Sam Juneman and longtime tech product manager Andrea Slobodien. The company also created and hired executives for top data and catalog positions. “We’ve laid the operational and functional foundation to become a truly global company and reimagined our leadership team,” Kreidich says. The business’ challenge is “building a dedicated fan base,” she adds, although not instantly: “It’s a long game, and curating paying audiences pays dividends down the road.”

Kevin Liles
CHAIRMAN/CEO, 300 ENTERTAINMENT;
CHAIRMAN/CEO, ELEKTRA MUSIC GROUP

300 Entertainment has been “laser-focused on redefining what it means to be a true partner in the modern/post-COVID-19 era,” says Liles, acknowledging a successful year headlined by Megan Thee Stallion’s three Grammy wins and two Billboard 200 No. 1s for Young Thug and one for Gunna. In addition, the entertainment company launched distribution entity Sparta and film production house

300 Studios, whose first documentary will premiere on Netflix in 2022. In December, it was announced that Warner Music Group had acquired 300 Entertainment in a deal valued at \$400 million. Liles was named chairman/CEO of both 300 and Elektra Music Group, where Mike Easterlin and Gregg Nadel remain co-presidents.

Monte Lipman
FOUNDER/CEO, REPUBLIC RECORDS

Avery Lipman
FOUNDER/COO, REPUBLIC RECORDS

Wendy Goldstein

Jim Roppo
CO-PRESIDENTS, REPUBLIC RECORDS

Gary Spangler
EXECUTIVE VP, REPUBLIC RECORDS
See profile, page 84.

Jesús López
CHAIRMAN/CEO, UNIVERSAL MUSIC
LATINO AMERICA & IBERIAN PENINSULA,
UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP



Steve Boom

VICE PRESIDENT, AMAZON MUSIC

Amazon Music, led by Boom, has become one of the industry’s top streaming services thanks to consistent leadership, brand-specific tie-ins and a willingness to invest in new sectors like podcasting and livestreaming. Thanks to its ongoing partnership with Amazon subsidiary Twitch, Amazon Music has quickly embraced livestreaming, incorporating the tool directly into its mobile apps and streaming global events with acts including Coldplay, Ed Sheeran, and Kanye West and Drake over the past 12 months. Amazon Music also acquired the podcast studio Wondery in late 2020 and spent the past year establishing a foothold in the podcast market, winning several awards in the process. “In the inaugural Ambies Awards — think of them as the Grammys for podcasting — Wondery/Amazon Music won six, the most of anyone, including podcast of the year,” Boom says. “So really changing the definition of what people do inside of the music service, I think, is our biggest accomplishment.” The division has also enhanced its music service for both creators and listeners, launching in-app merchandise integration for artists to be able to sell directly to fans and rolling out high-definition streaming for all of its Music Unlimited listeners, after cutting its HD tier fee from \$15 per month to \$10. “For us, it’s the evolution of Amazon Music and what it means to be a music service and becoming a much richer, more immersive, fan-forward experience,” Boom says. “I feel like we’ve become the go-to place for livestreaming, which, for me, is about as immersive and fan-forward as you can get.”

FOR FELLOW 2022 BILLBOARD POWER LIST HONOREES, SEE PAGE 88.

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thank you for
emPOWERing
songwriters



103\$ 25*

“Latin music has become a global brand,” says López, a leader of that globalization whose marquee acts include superstars Karol G, who ranked at No. 3 on *Billboard*’s year-end Top Latin Artists chart, and J Balvin, who was No. 5 on the chart. The Universal roster also includes Colombia’s Sebastián Yatra, who is kicking off his U.S. tour in early 2022 and is booked and managed by Universal-owned GTS, and Puerto Rico’s Jhay Cortez, whose hit single “Dákiti” with Bad Bunny was No. 1 on the year-end Hot Latin Songs chart. Says López: “They are at the top of the new generation of transmedia artists who are crossing borders not only with their songs but representing an explosion of Latin lifestyle in different platforms, encompassing acting, clothing, food and all cultural expressions.”

David Massey

PRESIDENT/CEO, ARISTA RECORDS

Arista Records scored with new artists JP Saxe, whose “If the World Was Ending” earned a song of the year nod at the 2022 Grammys and over 1.3 billion global streams, and Italian rockers Måneskin, whose platinum single “Beggins” logged 11 weeks atop Alternative Airplay, the most of any song in 2021. He highlights rising acts including Emmy Meli, the label’s “most recent breakthrough artist,” he says, signed in collaboration with Disruptor, and Tai Verdes, who is “certified gold for singles ‘Stuck in the Middle’ and ‘A-O-K’ and is selling out all shows on his first headlining tour.”

Brad Navin

CEO, THE ORCHARD

Colleen Theis

COO, THE ORCHARD

The Orchard, which marks its 25th anniversary in 2022, struck a global distribution deal last year with Noah Assad’s Rimas Entertainment (home of Bad Bunny) and boosted both its U.S. and global market shares. “The power of streaming means music knows no boundaries,” says Theis, noting the Sony-owned company’s big upcoming milestone. “As we head into our 25th year, we will continue to redefine distribution by expanding our comprehensive suite of services and tackling every challenge with the artist in mind.”

Ron Perry

CHAIRMAN/CEO, COLUMBIA RECORDS

Jenifer Mallory

EXECUTIVE VP/GM, COLUMBIA RECORDS

See profile, page 90.

Bruce Resnikoff

PRESIDENT/CEO, UNIVERSAL MUSIC ENTERPRISES

Universal Music Group’s catalog division, Universal Music Enterprises, closed out 2021 with a “record-high catalog market share for the sixth consecutive year,” says Resnikoff. He credits the gains to Chris Cornell’s posthumous album *No One Sings Like You Anymore* and the 50th-anniversary reissue editions of George Harrison’s *All Things Must Pass*. Both albums were nominated for 2022 Grammys, including best rock album and best boxed or special limited-edition package, respectively. This year will bring a new global alliance with Aerosmith, which includes recorded music, merchandise and audiovisual projects, he says.

Sylvia Rhone

CHAIRMAN/CEO, EPIC RECORDS

Ezekiel Lewis

EXECUTIVE VP/HEAD OF A&R, EPIC RECORDS

Home to established hitmakers Camila Cabello, 21 Savage, Future and DJ Khaled, Epic also celebrated a series of new artist triumphs: Rapper BIA’s breakout “Whole Lotta Money” scored a remix from Nicki Minaj, British pop artist Mimi Webb made waves on TikTok with “Good Without,” and Giveon guested on Justin Bieber’s multiple Grammy-nominated track “Peaches” and counted 2.5 billion on-demand global streams for his own songs in 2021. Says Rhone: “Epic’s focus on breaking new talent in multiple platforms hit new heights.”

Bob Roback

CEO, INGROOVES MUSIC GROUP

Ingrooves Music Group, the Universal Music Group-owned global distribution and marketing company, has been granted two U.S. patents in the past year and a half for pioneering marketing methods “that enable us to identify high-value audiences based on listening behavior,” says Roback. “These audiences are more likely to stream a particular artist’s song with deeper and stronger potential to become long-term fans.” The patents follow “five years of hard work,” he says, “first building the team and then investing the resources to create something very unique in our business. Our goal is to provide the most innovative insights and marketing solutions to our artists and labels.”



Hartwig Masuch

CEO, BMG

Under Masuch, BMG closed out 2021 with the news that it had partnered with the global investment firm KKR to acquire ZZ Top’s music interests, including the band’s publishing catalog and recorded-music royalties, in a deal reported to be valued at \$50 million. For the last four years, ZZ Top’s album catalog has averaged close to 300,000 album consumption units a year. This was only the latest in a string of big moves in the past months for BMG: Its label division has signed Duran Duran, Santana, Louis Tomlinson and Bryan Adams. Other major rights acquisitions included deals with The Rolling Stones, Tina Turner and Fleetwood Mac co-founder Mick Fleetwood. In November, the company acquired Mötley Crüe’s entire recorded-music catalog. The gains further solidified BMG’s position as the fourth major music company. “Most of our most significant artist and songwriter signings and acquisitions are the result of existing client recommendations,” says Masuch. “I remain convinced that the biggest single opportunity for BMG is the behavior of our competitors, but the only guarantor of success is if we do better by artists and songwriters than others do. It’s about developing a service ethic, being efficient and committing not to take advantage of your clients,” he adds. “Most of all, it’s about delivering on artists’ and songwriters’ objectives. They are why we are here.”

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MEISELAS &
SACKS**

ENTERTAINMENT AND MEDIA LAWYERS

Jacqueline Saturn
PRESIDENT, VIRGIN MUSIC LABEL
AND ARTIST SERVICES

Under Saturn, Virgin Music since 2019 has played a part in No. 1 Billboard 200 releases (through its artists and label partnerships) from Lil Baby, Trippie Redd, NF and K-pop act SuperM. It has contributed to gold or platinum sales certifications for SHAED, Clairo, Zoe Wees, iann dior, Brytiago, Internet Money, Masego, Surfaces and Judah & The Lion. Among the partnerships Saturn has been instrumental in signing are deals with Primary Wave/Gaither Music Group, King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard, Soulja Boy, Grupo Diez 4tro and NCT-127. But her proudest achievement in the past year? “Our team unity and how much everyone delivered, no matter what they had to get through,” she says, “and how everyone learned how to ask for help when they needed someone to pick up the slack. We are stronger together now and better than ever as a team.”

Richard Story
PRESIDENT, COMMERCIAL MUSIC GROUP,
SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT

Story oversees influential divisions like Legacy Recordings, which markets Sony’s catalog, and the SyncShop licensing department. He says the past year has been about “communicating, motivating and caring for our staff” and “providing calm and clear leadership to our global community” during the pandemic. Under Story, the Commercial Music Group leverages Sony’s partnerships with the Prince estate, Jack White’s Third Man Records, AC/DC and Philadelphia Records and manages Mariah Carey’s “All I Want for Christmas Is You” holiday campaign.

Afo Verde
CHAIRMAN/CEO, LATIN-IBERIA,
SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT

Alex Gallardo
PRESIDENT, U.S. LATIN,
SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT

Sony Music Latin — home to Maluma, Shakira, Ricky Martin, Romeo Santos and Enrique Iglesias — topped *Billboard’s* year-end Latin label charts thanks to breakout artists like Camilo and hits that sonically broke rank, including Rauw Alejandro’s “Todo de Ti” and Farruko’s

“Pepas.” Gallardo says, “These songs have been remarkable because none of them had collaborations and none of them are reggaetón,” paving new ground within the Latin ecosystem. Sony further expanded its footprint and its status in Latin America with the acquisition of Som Livre, Brazil’s biggest indie label, pending regulatory approval. Still, Verde is eager for recording, promotion and touring cycles to return to normal, noting that “the sheer volume of music means many things get lost.”

Steven Victor
FOUNDER/CEO,
VICTOR VICTOR WORLDWIDE

Pop Smoke posthumously ranked No. 10 on the year-end Top Artists chart after his 2020 No. 1 album, *Shoot for the Stars Aim for the Moon*, released by Victor Victor Worldwide after the rapper’s death in February 2020, spent another 23 weeks inside the top 10 of the Billboard 200 and scored another top 10 Hot 100 hit in “What You Know About Love,” which peaked at No. 9. In July, the label kept up momentum with the release of Pop Smoke’s follow-up, *Faith*, which earned him his

second chart-topping title on *Billboard’s* all-genre albums chart. Victor explains that the goal was “to finish what Pop started and continue to drive it to the success he deserved.”

Maria Weaver
PRESIDENT, WMX

In November, Warner Music Group launched the artist-to-fan service WMX under Weaver “to superserve artists, labels and brand partners,” she says. The division includes a rebranded WEA commercial services and marketing network as well as the company’s media and creative content division, and is part of a reorganization of Weaver’s team to be “more efficient and agile,” she says. Over the past year, adds Weaver, “we saw incredible growth for our e-commerce, merch and ad-sales divisions. It’s an inspiring time in the industry.”

Ronald “Slim” Williams

Bryan “Birdman” Williams
CO-FOUNDERS/CO-CEOS,
CASH MONEY RECORDS

After developing a hip-hop dynasty over



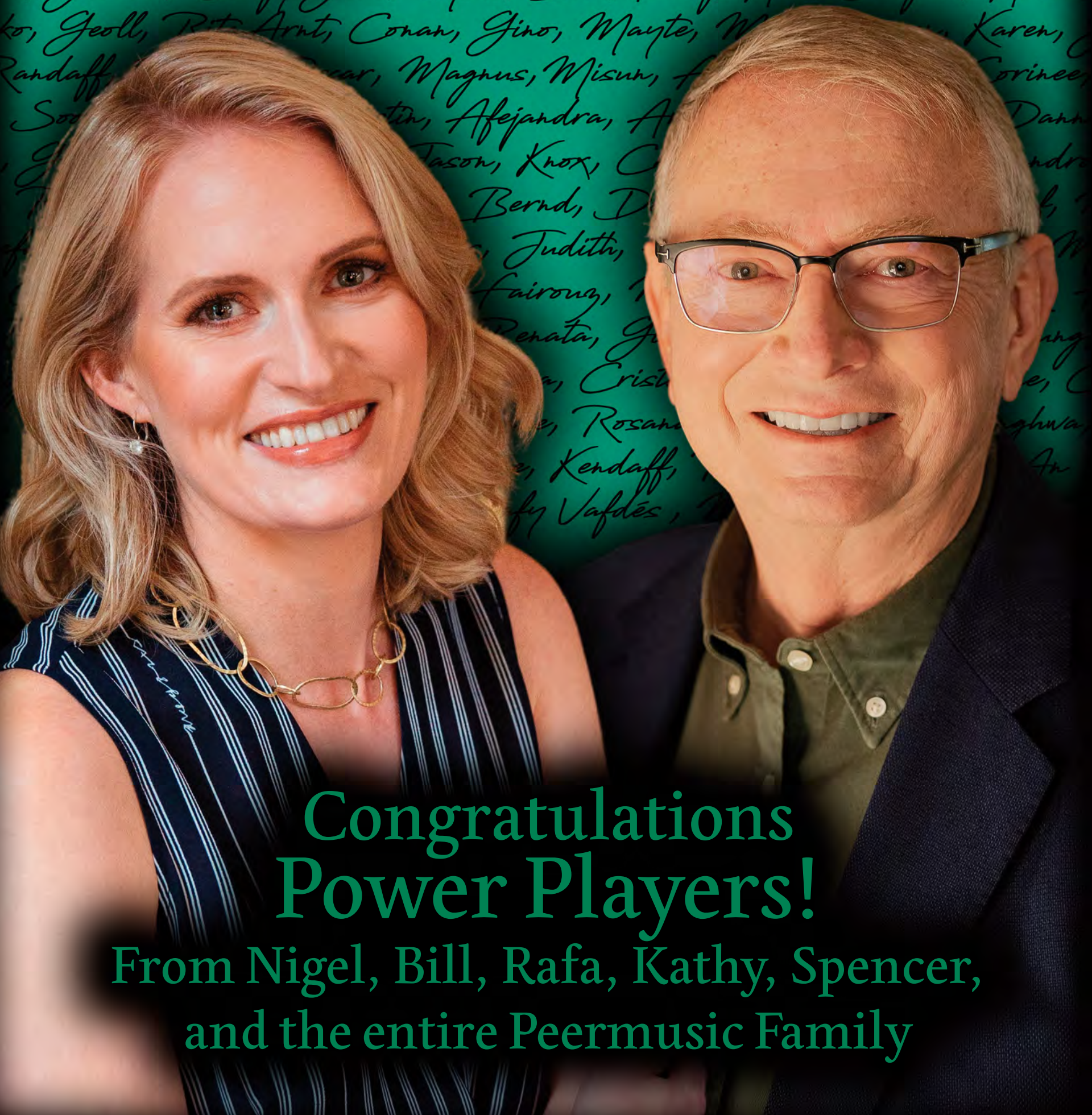
Ole Obermann

GLOBAL HEAD OF MUSIC, TIKTOK

Following deals with both Sony Music Entertainment and Warner Music Group in late 2020, TikTok completed the major-label trifecta in February 2021, signing an expanded global licensing agreement with Universal Music Group — and the influential app’s “commitment to culture and music starting on TikTok” was affirmed, says Obermann. Agreements with independent labels and songwriter royalty associations followed, including multiyear music licensing deals with the rights organizations in Australia. More than 400 songs used as audio on TikTok surpassed 1 billion video views, a threefold increase over 2020, Obermann says — adding that the most popular of those songs often reached or exceeded 20 billion views of the videos they soundtracked. Meanwhile, nearly 200 songs that trended on TikTok in 2021 charted on the Billboard Hot 100 — including No. 1 hits like Olivia Rodrigo’s “drivers license” and Taylor Swift’s “All Too Well (Taylor’s Version) (From the Vault)” — twice as many as in 2020. Acknowledging the importance of the creators driving video consumption on the platform, in December 2021, TikTok unveiled Creator Next, a tool that allows for direct tipping. Not a bad year for an app that clocked more global traffic than any other site — including Google — in 2021, according to data security company Cloudflare.

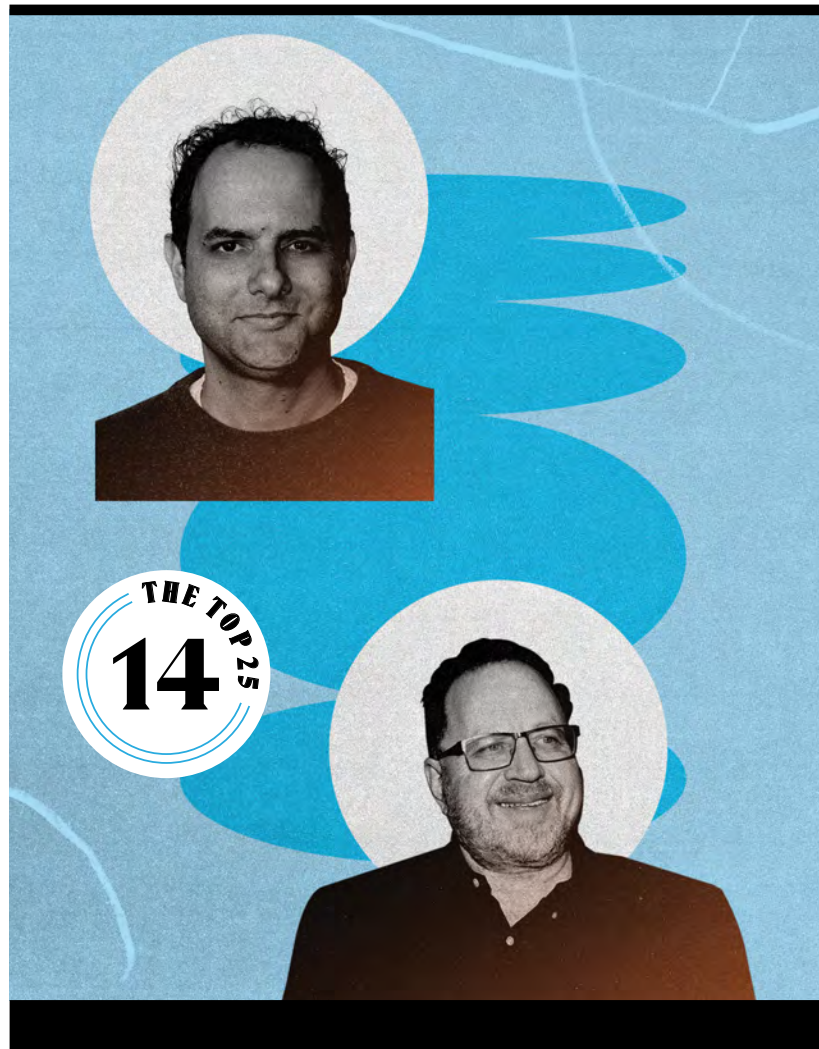


peermusic



Congratulations Power Players!

From Nigel, Bill, Rafa, Kathy, Spencer,
and the entire Peermusic Family



John Janick

CHAIRMAN/CEO, INTERSCOPE GEFGEN A&M

Steve Berman

VICE CHAIRMAN, INTERSCOPE GEFGEN A&M

Janick counts the teamwork that met the challenges of remote work during the pandemic as his company's greatest achievement, a collaboration that drove IGA's multiple success stories, as well as a 2021 industry-leading year-end current market share of 11.05%. "It's exciting to be firing on all cylinders with everyone working together," he says. One example? Geffen drove its way back up the charts with newcomer Olivia Rodrigo's "drivers license" — the first song to hit 1 billion global streams in 2021. "She's the biggest breakout artist of the year," Janick says of the singer-songwriter. "She's an amazing talent who's going to be around for decades." Noting that Interscope is built on "strategic partnerships with great entrepreneurs," he cites Moneybagg Yo as another win through the label's joint venture with rapper-turned-executive Yo Gotti's CMG imprint. On the Latin front, there is Kali Uchis' global Spanish hit, "Telepatía." Adds Janick: "Kali was already doing great prior to that. However, our teams in Miami and Los Angeles came together and have been able to take that song to another level." Expanding into film, IGA teamed with Billie Eilish's label, Darkroom, founded by Justin Lubliner, to produce the artist's Apple+ film, *The World's a Little Blurry*, and her now Grammy-nominated *Happier Than Ever: A Love Letter to Los Angeles* for Disney+. "I talk every day about moving culture with our company," he says. "For any creative company, that's where the power lies. It has been at the heart of Interscope since day one. Moneybagg Yo, Olivia, Billie, Lady Gaga, Juice WRLD ... these artists are moving culture. And that's what's important."

the last 20 years anchored by the successes of Lil Wayne, Drake and Nicki Minaj, Cash Money Records expanded into a new genre in 2020 when it launched a Latin division. Headlined by the release of emerging artist Luis Armando's single "Chica Mala," which it promoted into early 2021, Slim and Birdman are looking forward to their newest foray in the Latin space. Slim says, "We're excited to adapt our lessons in helping develop Latin talent that also stands grounded in the hip-hop world from day one."

PUBLISHING

Willard Ahdritz

FOUNDER/CHAIRMAN, KOBALT

Laurent Hubert

CEO, KOBALT

Jeannette Perez

PRESIDENT/COO, KOBALT

Kobalt flexed its diversity and global reach in 2021, signing or renewing deals with Young Thug, Jazmine Sullivan and Madison Beer, and earning wins for BMI's hip-hop/R&B and gospel publisher of the year, as well as ASCAP's Latin independent publisher of the year. Meanwhile, the company reports that its artists landed 22 Grammys, seven Latin Grammys, nine Australian Recording Industry Association Awards and four Swedish Music Publishers Awards. Its global digital collection society, AMRA, has grown significantly, and now collects in 180 territories around the world.

Jody Gerson

CHAIRMAN/CEO, UNIVERSAL MUSIC PUBLISHING GROUP

Marc Cimino

COO, UNIVERSAL MUSIC PUBLISHING GROUP

JW Beekman

GLOBAL CFO, UNIVERSAL MUSIC PUBLISHING GROUP

Troy Tomlinson

CHAIRMAN/CEO, UNIVERSAL MUSIC PUBLISHING NASHVILLE

Alexandra Lioutikoff

PRESIDENT OF LATIN AMERICA & U.S. LATIN, UNIVERSAL MUSIC PUBLISHING GROUP

See profile, page 66.

Josh Gruss

CHAIRMAN/CEO, ROUND HILL MUSIC

In November 2020, Round Hill led a "very successful" initial public offering for one of its private equity funds on the London Stock Exchange, says Gruss, 47, raising "over \$440 million and [increasing] the stock over 10% in a year." Just 12 years after its founding, the independent music publisher today manages more than 120,000 compositions, including six Beatles tunes, as well as songs from Stephen Sondheim, Keith Sweat, Heart, Whitesnake and others.

Golnar Khosrowshahi

FOUNDER/CEO, RESERVOIR MEDIA

Migos' Offset rang the NASDAQ opening bell on Aug. 30 in Times Square, celebrating Reservoir Media's debut as a public company, trading under the stock symbol RSVR. The publisher's roster includes Joni Mitchell, 2 Chainz, A Boogie Wit Da Hoodie, Migos' Offset and Takeoff, and songwriters Ali Tamposi (Shawn Mendes, Dua Lipa), James Fauntleroy (Beyoncé, Bruno Mars) and Jamie Hartman (Jennifer Hudson, Celeste). After an eventful year, Khosrowshahi, 50, celebrates her company's status as both "the first independent music company to be publicly listed in the United States," she says, and also the "first female-founded and -led" music entity to be listed.

Merck Mercuriadis

FOUNDER/CEO, HIPGNOSIS SONGS MANAGEMENT/HIPGNOSIS SONGS FUND/HIPGNOSIS SONGS CAPITAL

See profile, page 98.

Larry Mestel

FOUNDER/CEO, PRIMARY WAVE MUSIC

Justin Shukat

PRESIDENT, MUSIC PUBLISHING, PRIMARY WAVE MUSIC

In December, Primary Wave announced a deal (that sources value at \$90 million) for multiple rights from the estate of James Brown. Following transactions that made the company the single largest owner of the Prince estate and deals with Sun Records, Chris Isaak, Bing Crosby, Luther Vandross, Toto and others, "We raised our assets under management to over \$2 billion," says Mestel. He also highlights Primary Wave's internal task force launched in 2020, which led to a partnership with the Black Music Action Coalition. The publisher and rights holder raised funds for the BMAC, and its brand

HARBOURVIEW

“Content has the extraordinary power to influence the world.”



Sherrese Clarke Soares

Billboard Power List 2022



Monte Lipman

FOUNDER/CEO, REPUBLIC RECORDS

Avery Lipman

FOUNDER/COO, REPUBLIC RECORDS

Although 2021 marked the fifth time in the past seven years that Republic Records finished at No. 1 on *Billboard's* year-end Top Labels chart, for the first time the label also placed atop the Billboard 200 Labels and Billboard Hot 100 Labels charts. Such dominance resulted from superstars such as Drake, Taylor Swift and Ariana Grande collecting No. 1 Hot 100 hits from Billboard 200-topping albums, as well as success stories like Pop Smoke's posthumous blockbuster project, *Shoot for the Stars Aim for the Moon*, and the slow-growing Glass Animals smash "Heat Waves." "Our core business remains breaking new acts," says Avery. "It's harder than it has ever been. Part of it is just the transition of our industry — we went from selling things to trying to keep people's attention." Fortunately, Republic boasts a roster of stars adept at keeping fans curious.

Swift's endeavor to rerecord her first six studio albums has paid off, with *Fearless (Taylor's Version)* and *Red (Taylor's Version)* scoring two of the biggest No. 1 debuts of 2021. Meanwhile, Drake launched nine songs simultaneously into the top 10 of the Hot 100, including the chart-topping "Way 2 Sexy" from his September release *Certified Lover Boy*. While the Republic team has evolved in recent months — Wendy Goldstein and Jim Roppo were promoted to co-presidents in November, while Dave Rocco was brought in as chief creative officer in December — the Lipmans remain ultracompetitive. "We have a responsibility to our artists, to our executives, the corporation and the competition," says Monte. "They want to know that we're bringing our best every day."

FOR FELLOW 2022 BILLBOARD POWER LIST HONOREES, SEE PAGE 76.

team produced its first awards gala in September.

Guy Moot

CO-CHAIR/CEO,
WARNER CHAPPELL MUSIC

Carianne Marshall

CO-CHAIR/COO,
WARNER CHAPPELL MUSIC

Ryan Press

PRESIDENT OF NORTH AMERICA,
WARNER CHAPPELL MUSIC

Gustavo Menendez

PRESIDENT OF U.S. LATIN AND LATIN
AMERICA, WARNER CHAPPELL MUSIC

Ben Vaughn

PRESIDENT/CEO NASHVILLE,
WARNER CHAPPELL MUSIC
See profile, page 68.

Helen Murphy

CEO, ANTHEM ENTERTAINMENT
Murphy, 59, became Anthem Enter-

tainment's CEO in 2018, succeeding co-founder Robert Ott, and has since focused on legacy artists and new publishing partnerships. Under her leadership, the company released a new master recording of José Feliciano's holiday classic "Feliz Navidad," titled "Feliz Navidad 50th Anniversary (FN50)," guided by Grammy-winning producer Rudy Pérez. Feliciano's revamped song features 30 acts, including CNCO, Isabela Merced, Shaggy, Jon Secada, Jason Mraz, Lin-Manuel Miranda, Gloria Gaynor, Big & Rich, Michael Bolton, Sam Moore and Styx — an all-star ensemble that Anthem compares to the 1985 landmark "We Are the World."

Rhea Pasricha

HEAD OF A&R, WEST COAST,
PRESCRIPTION SONGS

Prescription Songs, which ranked at No. 6 on *Billboard's* Hot 100 Publishing Corporations list for 2021, saw revenue grow 40% last year, says Pasricha, 34, thanks in part to the success of longtime signee Doja Cat, whose *Planet Her* album arrived in June. The rapper-singer earned her first

No. 1 on Top R&B Albums, as well as a Grammy nomination for best rap song for her involvement in Saweetie's "Best Friend," which was co-written by rising Prescription writers-producers Rocco Valdes, A1 LaFlare and Kaine. "Chart success aside, I'm most excited about our newest signings, some of whom haven't even had their first cuts released yet," says Pasricha.

Mary Megan Peer

CEO, PEERMUSIC

Ralph Peer II

EXECUTIVE CHAIR, PEERMUSIC

Mary Megan became the CEO of peermusic in a January 2021 transition that moved Ralph to the role of executive chair after leading the privately held company for 37 years. Peermusic recently moved into neighboring rights, acquiring or partnering with Premier Muzik, All Right Music and Global Master Rights, representing over 300 labels and more than 2,500 performers around the world. For peermusic, which has 38 offices in 31 countries, Mary Megan says the moves have "expanded what we can offer to our



CONGRATULATIONS

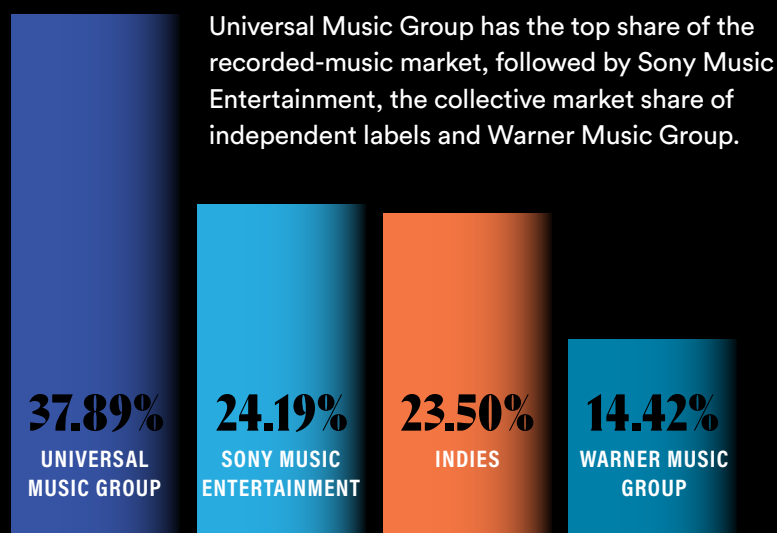
Larry Mestel
&
Justin Shukat

(POWERED BY THE ENTIRE PRIMARY WAVE TEAM)

FOR BEING NAMED IN
BILLBOARD POWER

100 LIST 2022

YEAR-END MARKET SHARE BY GROUP



Alternative Distribution Alliance is not included. MRC Data current market share counts the activity of music released in the last 18 months, or longer for albums that have remained in the top half of the Billboard 200 and songs that are still current at hit radio.

Universal Music Group has the top share of the recorded-music market, followed by Sony Music Entertainment, the collective market share of independent labels and Warner Music Group.

writers while providing growth for many of our offices around the world.”

Jon Platt
CHAIRMAN/CEO,
SONY MUSIC PUBLISHING

Brian Monaco
PRESIDENT/GLOBAL CHIEF MARKETING
OFFICER, SONY MUSIC PUBLISHING

Rusty Gaston
CEO, SONY MUSIC PUBLISHING
NASHVILLE

Jennifer Knoepfle
SENIOR VP OF CREATIVE,
SONY MUSIC PUBLISHING

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

See profile, page 65.

MANAGEMENT

Lydia Asrat

Josh Kaplan
CO-FOUNDERS, 10Q MANAGEMENT
10Q co-founders Asrat and Kaplan

oversaw the year’s breakthrough success of superstar Doja Cat. The rapper-singer blew up thanks to *Planet Her*, which debuted at No. 2 on the Billboard 200. The album spent its first 21 consecutive weeks in the top 10, leading up to eight nominations at the 2022 Grammys for the 26-year-old artist including nods for album, record and song of the year. She also guested on songs by Lil Nas X and Young Thug, hosted the MTV Video Music Awards and starred in a *Grease*-inspired Pepsi ad.

Noah Assad
CO-FOUNDER/CEO,
RIMAS ENTERTAINMENT

Assad, who was named *Billboard*’s 2021 Latin Power Players Executive of the Year, saw his top management client, Bad Bunny, make history in 2020 with the first all-Spanish album to top the Billboard 200. Last April, the artist sold over 600,000 tickets to his upcoming 2022 tour in a single week, generating between \$64 million and \$84 million in revenue, *Billboard* estimates. With roughly 100 employees globally, Rimas is a full-fledged label, publisher, management and booking firm with a roster that also includes Arcángel, Tommy Torres and newcomers Mora and Eladio Carrión, whose *Sauce Boyz 2* debuted at No. 2 on Top Latin Albums in December. “We collaborate with a lot of people very well; we work with everybody,” says

Assad. For example, new management client Karol G is signed to Universal, and Rimas has a new distribution and development deal with The Orchard to sign and develop new talent.

Shawn Holiday
MANAGER, FULL STOP MANAGEMENT/
GIANT MUSIC

Tommy Bruce

Kevin Beisler

Anna Savage
MANAGERS, FULL STOP MANAGEMENT

In February, it was reported that Holiday, the veteran Columbia Records urban executive, was joining The Azoff Company in a role that would include the launch of a new label and publishing company. Under the Azoff Company umbrella, the Full Stop Management roster includes clients such as the Eagles, Harry Styles, John Mayer, Roddy Ricch, Florida Georgia Line, Anderson. Paak, Jon Bon Jovi, Daniel Caesar, Gwen Stefani, Lizzo, James Blake, Maroon 5, HAIM and Earth, Wind & Fire.

Chris Kappy
CHIEF NAVIGATION OFFICER/OWNER,
MAKE WAKE ARTISTS

Kappy helped longtime client Luke Combs hit a new career peak in 2021: The country star earned his 13th consecutive No. 1 hit on the Country Airplay chart with “Cold As You,” and the Country Music Association named him entertainer of the year, just three years after he won new artist of the year. In September, Combs returned to his home state of North Carolina to perform his first stadium concert. “We truly live the term ‘teamwork,’” says Kappy, 49, “and we celebrate as a family.”

Allison Kaye
PRESIDENT, SB PROJECTS

When Scooter Braun’s Ithaca Holdings (the parent company of SB Projects) and

Bang Si-hyuk’s HYBE joined forces in April, Justin Bieber, Ariana Grande, Demi Lovato and BTS were brought under one roof. With HYBE’s purchase of Braun’s company for \$1.05 billion, the merged businesses will “amplify the voices of some of the biggest artists on earth” with their newly shared “technology and business sources,” says Kaye, 40, adding, “The possibilities are endless.”

Jon Landau
PRESIDENT, JON LANDAU MANAGEMENT

Barbara Carr
PARTNER, JON LANDAU MANAGEMENT

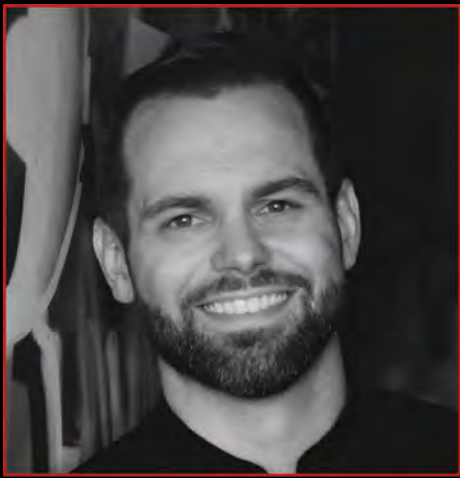
A year after Bruce Springsteen sold his masters to Sony Music and his music publishing to Sony Music Publishing in a combined deal that sources tell *Billboard* is upwards of \$500 million — in what may be the largest deal for an individual body of work in history — Landau and Carr, in a joint statement, had a ready answer for what they considered their top achievement of the year: “supervising the arrangements for the future stewardship of Bruce Springsteen’s music.” This echoes a comment that Springsteen made when the deal was announced: “I’m thrilled that my legacy will continue to be cared for by the company and people I know and trust.”

Rebeca León
FOUNDER/CEO,
LIONFISH ENTERTAINMENT

León, with a management roster of Latin pop stars, helped her clients cross over in more ways than one this year. Rosalía ventured into makeup with the launch of her signature MAC collection while also finishing her highly anticipated third album, *Motomami*, “amid massive expectations and pressure,” León says. Plus, Rosalía’s collaboration with Dominican rapper Tokischa, “LINDA,” hit No. 18 on the Latin Digital Song Sales chart in September. Meanwhile, Lunay stepped into the mainstream U.S. festival market with performances at Chicago’s Lollapalooza and Austin City Limits in Texas.

“As an industry, we are still at the frontier of figuring out touring as new [pandemic] challenges arise each day.” —KAYE

BILLBOARD POWER 100



SETH ENGLAND

CEO
PARTNER



JOEY MOI

RECORD PRODUCER
PARTNER



CRAIG WISEMAN

WRITER
PARTNER

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2022 HONOREES!

BIG LOUD

Ben Mawson

Ed Millett

CO-FOUNDERS/CO-CEOS, TAP MUSIC

The triumph of Dua Lipa's duet with Elton John on "Cold Heart (PNAU Remix)," which recently ascended to the top of the Hot 100, on the heels of her 2020 smash *Future Nostalgia* album, is just one recent highlight at TaP, which also manages Lana Del Rey, Ellie Goulding, Noah Cyrus and a growing roster of songwriters and producers. TaP, with offices in London, Los Angeles, Berlin and Sydney, also runs a label, digital marketing unit and publishing company. Driven "to use any leverage we have to push for greater equality in the industry," says Mawson, he and Millett recently launched TaP Futures to engage with young people from different backgrounds because, Millett says, "Despite all the talk, the most important issue continues to be a lack of equality at all levels of the industry."

Kristen Smith

FOUNDER, CAMP FAR WEST MANAGEMENT

There are few precedents for the speed at which Olivia Rodrigo took pop culture by storm: After her first single, "drivers license," debuted at No. 1 on the Hot 100, follow-ups "deja vu" (No. 3) and "good 4 u" (No. 1) made her the first artist in history to have her first three singles debut in the top 10 of the chart. Rodrigo's debut album, *Sour*, then debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard 200, helping earn the young singer seven Grammy nominations, including record, album and song of the year and best new artist. "Olivia's passion and drive is inspiring, and witnessing her rise to the occasion over and over again is amazing," says Smith, who shepherded the star's career until the two parted ways in January. "Olivia has incredible vision for her art."

STREAMING

Steve Boom

VP, AMAZON MUSIC

Ryan Redington

VP OF MUSIC INDUSTRY, AMAZON MUSIC

Tami Hurwitz

VP OF GLOBAL MARKETING AND GROWTH, AMAZON MUSIC

Rishi Mirchandani

DIRECTOR OF CONTENT ACQUISITION AND STRATEGY, AMAZON MUSIC

See profile, page 76.

Tracy Chan

HEAD OF MUSIC, TWITCH

According to Twitch — which reached an agreement in 2021 with the National Music Publishers' Association to partner with music publishers — the company has done well during the pandemic, as the livestreaming service became a hub for artists, DJs and musicians to reach their audiences while touring wasn't an option. "When venues were shut down and tours were stopped around the world, over 100,000 musicians came to Twitch to build their communities and make real money directly from their fans," Chan says. According to Twitch, the company has supported hundreds of music jobs through partnerships with festivals including Outside Lands and Rolling Loud, both of which streamed on Twitch in 2021.

Lyor Cohen

GLOBAL HEAD OF MUSIC, YOUTUBE

Robert Kyncl

CHIEF BUSINESS OFFICER, YOUTUBE

Christophe Muller

GLOBAL HEAD OF MUSIC PRODUCT AND INDUSTRY MARKETING, YOUTUBE

See profile, page 72.

Daniel Ek

CEO, SPOTIFY

Dawn Ostroff

CHIEF CONTENT AND ADVERTISING BUSINESS OFFICER, SPOTIFY

Jeremy Erlich

VP/GLOBAL HEAD OF MUSIC, SPOTIFY

Charlie Hellman

VP/GLOBAL HEAD OF MUSIC PRODUCT, SPOTIFY

See profile, page 64.

Benji Madden

Joel Madden

CO-FOUNDERS, VEEPS

Since the start of the pandemic in March 2020, Benji and Joel Madden's Veeps has become a livestreaming powerhouse, hosting online shows for artists including Louis Tomlinson, Liam Payne and Brandi Carlile. In January 2021, Live Nation



Craig Kallman

CHAIRMAN/CEO, ATLANTIC RECORDS

Julie Greenwald

CHAIRMAN/COO, ATLANTIC RECORDS

The past year "was about making sure we were able to provide artists the time and the resources to help them go to the next level," says Greenwald. "Because of COVID-19, people pushed things back." That resulted in a goal post-shaped year, with peaks at the start and at the end. Pooh Shiesty's breakthrough debut, *Shiesty Season*, arrived in February, while the fourth quarter was full of album releases from many of the label's major players: Ed Sheeran, Coldplay, Roddy Ricch, Meek Mill, YoungBoy Never Broke Again and the Bruno Mars/Anderson .Paak duo Silk Sonic. In between, says Greenwald, there was the chance to "focus on our babies. Because that's all you want: to make sure your babies have all the sunlight and oxygen and water to grow." Case in point: Dallas-born 17-year-old singer-songwriter GAYLE. Signed at 14, she released her first single, "abcdefu," three years later; it reached No. 11 on the Hot 100 and No. 2 on the Hot Rock & Alternative Songs chart. "So many people talk about how we have to find things through research and TikTok. But she's a real artist-development story of finding someone young and giving them the time they need to hone their craft and work on writing and performing," says Greenwald a week after seeing GAYLE perform at Brooklyn's Knitting Factory. "She's 17, and she can rock the fuck out and manhandle an electric guitar. This is all you dream of."

FOR FELLOW 2022 BILLBOARD POWER LIST HONOREES, SEE PAGE 76.

CONGRATULATIONS

SCOTT BORCHETTA

VISIONARY | LEADER | FOUNDER

2022 billboard POWER 100

NO ONE DRIVES HARDER FOR SUCCESS...
NO ONE CARES MORE FOR THE ARTISTS...

BIG MACHINE
LABEL GROUP



YOUR BIG MACHINE LABEL GROUP FAMILY SALUTES YOU!

purchased a majority stake in the business, marking the first major acquisition of the pandemic livestreaming era. Today, most of the company's concerts are hybrid shows, drawing both in-person and online audiences "that can sometimes eclipse the venue capacity many times over," says Joel Madden, thereby allowing artists "to create additional revenue and reach."

Oliver Schusser
VP OF APPLE MUSIC AND INTERNATIONAL CONTENT, APPLE

Bebhinn Gleeson
GLOBAL DIRECTOR OF ORIGINAL CONTENT, APPLE

Amanda Marks
GLOBAL HEAD OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND MUSIC PARTNERSHIPS, APPLE

Zane Lowe
GLOBAL CREATIVE DIRECTOR/HOST, APPLE MUSIC

Larry Jackson
GLOBAL CREATIVE DIRECTOR, APPLE MUSIC

Rachel Newman
GLOBAL DIRECTOR OF EDITORIAL, APPLE MUSIC

See profile, page 70.

Michael Weissman
CEO, SOUNDCLOUD

Weissman, 41, who took over as CEO in January, strengthened his executive team last year, bringing on former Alternative Distribution Alliance chief Eliah Seton as president in May, UnitedMasters' Lauren Wirtzer-Seawood as chief marketing and content officer in June and Drew Wilson as COO/CFO in April, as well as naming Troy Carter to the board. But the company's biggest achievement was the introduction of Fan-Powered Royalties, which "ties artist payouts directly to fandom," he says, and creates "a more equitable and transparent way for the over 125,000 independent artists who monetize on SoundCloud to get paid directly by their fan base." (For more on SoundCloud, see story, page 48.)

LIVE

Nelson Albareda
CEO, LOUD AND LIVE

When the pandemic hit, Loud and Live was poised for a major expansion,

particularly in its concert-promotion business. After canceling a long list of tours, however, the entertainment marketing and media development firm doubled down by keeping all employees on staff, expanding into audiovisual production and becoming "one of the first promoters to bring back live events in March 2021," says Albareda, 45. Between 2020 and 2021, the company promoted over 400 shows, including dates for Camilo, Carlos Vives, Ruben Blades and Farruko. It's a good problem to have: "We could start to see a routing and venue availability challenge for larger tours," he says.

Ron Bension
PRESIDENT/CEO, ASM GLOBAL

Bension, who joined Los Angeles-based ASM Global as president/CEO in March 2021 after serving as president of Live Nation's House of Blues Entertainment division, oversaw the signing of 27 major deals during the pandemic, from San Antonio to Saudi Arabia. In October, the venue and event management company launched a new corporate social-responsibility platform aimed at combating climate change and helping to diversify the live-entertainment industry.

Paul Gongaware

John Meglen
CO-CHAIRMEN/CO-CEOS, CONCERTS WEST

Concerts West, co-led by Gongaware and Meglen, rebooked the final U.S. dates of The Rolling Stones' No Filter stadium tour that topped the Billboard Boxscore chart for 2021. Over the course of 14 dates, the band grossed \$130.9 million from 577,000 tickets, with an average of \$9.4 million per show. The promoter also took over booking a slate of high-profile residencies for the new theater at Resorts World Las Vegas, including shows from Carrie Underwood, Luke Bryan and Katy Perry, that run through May.

Jay Marciano
CHAIRMAN/CEO, AEG PRESENTS;
COO/OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN, AEG

Gary Gersh
PRESIDENT OF GLOBAL TOURING AND TALENT, AEG PRESENTS

Rick Mueller
PRESIDENT OF NORTH AMERICA, AEG PRESENTS

Melissa Ormond
COO OF FESTIVALS, AEG
See profile, page 104.



Ron Perry

CHAIRMAN/CEO, COLUMBIA RECORDS

On Perry's watch, Columbia enjoyed the view from the top of the Hot 100 in 2021, earning the No. 1 spot for a combined 33 weeks, the most in a year by a label since MRC Data's information began powering the chart in 1991. That included first trips to the summit for breakout stars 24kGoldn, The Kid LAROI and Polo G, and two returns each for established champs Lil Nas X and BTS. "We broke new artists, which is the most gratifying part of this job, and a lot of the names on that list are new," says executive vp/GM Jenifer Mallory, who describes the recent hit streak as "lightning in a bottle" and modestly refers to those 33 weeks at No. 1 as "a metric we can all understand." The focus on tracks in the streaming age means "the emphasis is much less on the gatekeepers and more on the fans," she says, necessitating a shift in marketing. "It's all about telling stories in this attention economy in which we live." But Columbia also deployed that narrative skill in supporting albums from "our artists who want to make full bodies of work rather than feeling like they need to chase viral hits or pander to streams," adds Mallory, mentioning Adele, Harry Styles and Tyler, The Creator, as well as Baby Keem, who reached No. 5 with his debut album, *The Melodic Blue*. It's part of Columbia's "storied history," she says, to allow artists to "continue to promote the album art form."

FOR FELLOW 2022 BILLBOARD POWER LIST HONOREES, SEE PAGE 78.

CONGRATULATIONS

**NELSON
ALBAREDA**

billboard

2022 POWER PLAYER

*Loud
And
Live*



Louis Messina

CEO, MESSINA TOURING GROUP

Messina had nearly his entire roster of touring artists performing live last summer and is cautiously optimistic about the future. He says his biggest accomplishment in 2021 was booking George Strait to headline the Austin City Limits festival in the singer's home state of Texas, a deal that Messina set up in 2019 with promoter Charles Attal of C3 Entertainment. "It was a different audience than he normally performs for, and they sang along to every word," Messina recalls. "It was one of the coolest things we've ever done."

Gregg Perloff

CEO, ANOTHER PLANET ENTERTAINMENT

Under Perloff, the longtime independent concert promotion giant Another Planet Entertainment made it through the pandemic without having to lay off or furlough any staff, then rebounded to promote two of the highest-grossing festivals in 2021: Outside Lands in San Francisco, which leads *Billboard's* year-

end Top Boxscores chart, and Life Is Beautiful in Las Vegas. "This is the most exciting time to be working in music in my career," says Perloff. "Not only is everything selling incredibly well, but there is so much great music coming out of the pandemic, and it's getting people very excited for the comeback of concerts."

Michael Rapino

PRESIDENT/CEO, LIVE NATION ENTERTAINMENT

Denis Desmond

CHAIRMAN, THE UNITED KINGDOM AND IRELAND, LIVE NATION

Arthur Fogel

PRESIDENT OF GLOBAL TOURING/CHAIRMAN OF GLOBAL MUSIC, LIVE NATION

Bob Roux

PRESIDENT OF U.S. CONCERTS, LIVE NATION

Russell Wallach

GLOBAL PRESIDENT OF LIVE NATION MEDIA AND SPONSORSHIPS, LIVE NATION

Lesley Olenik

GLOBAL TOUR PROMOTER, LIVE NATION

Omar Al-Joulani

SENIOR VP OF TOURING, LIVE NATION

Sherri Sosa

PRESIDENT OF VENUE NATION, U.S., LIVE NATION

See profile, page 100.

Pasquale Rotella

FOUNDER/CEO, INSOMNIAC EVENTS

This year, the "unity" aspect of the rave world's long-standing "peace, love, unity, respect" ethic looked different, but Rotella, 47, still found ways to bring people together. With the dance megafestivals typically produced by Rotella's Insomniac Events largely removed from the calendar, the company evolved its offerings by bringing 250,000 visitors to its Electric Mile drive-through experience and producing over 70

Park 'N Rave drive-in events. When live shows returned, Insomniac celebrated the 25th anniversary of its flagship fest, Electric Daisy Carnival, with 775,000 total attendees in Las Vegas and Orlando, Fla., according to Insomniac. The debut of EDC in the Roblox metaverse also created "a huge milestone" for the Los Angeles-based company, says Rotella.

Paul Tollett

PRESIDENT/CEO, GOLDENVOICE

In October, Goldenvoice signed a long-term lease with the owners of the 642-acre Empire Polo Club in Indio, Calif., signaling Tollett's intention to keep the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival and its country music sister, Stagecoach, on the site through 2050. After a two-year hiatus, Goldenvoice plans to open both festivals on successive weekends in April. Swedish House Mafia has announced Coachella as the group's first major festival appearance since it reunited after a nearly 10-year hiatus. In November, Goldenvoice's Day N Vegas also returned for its second year with headlining slots from Kendrick Lamar and Tyler, The Creator.



Bang Si-hyuk

CHAIRMAN, HYBE

Scooter Braun

CO-CEO, HYBE AMERICA; FOUNDER, SB PROJECTS

Lenzo Yoon

CO-CEO, HYBE AMERICA

In July, Bang, who founded the powerhouse K-pop entertainment company HYBE, home to BTS, stepped down as CEO to focus more on production. He was succeeded by Park Ji-won, who joined the South Korea company in May 2020 as HQ CEO. Braun — whose SB Projects last year co-produced a slate of documentaries about his biggest clients, including Demi Lovato's *Dancing With the Devil*, J Balvin's *The Boy From Medellín* and Justin Bieber's *Our World* — struck a \$1.05 billion deal in April under which HYBE acquired and merged with his Ithaca Holdings. The move united HYBE's lineup of BTS, Tomorrow x Together and Seventeen with Braun's superstar management roster of Bieber, Lovato and Ariana Grande, among others. "We were able to do a massive transaction and merger with HYBE to become one company and set a new precedent of creating this global company," says Braun, who personally committed \$50 million that was divvied up among acts and employees who have been with him since he started SB Projects in 2007. With Bang's transition, Braun and Yoon in July were named co-CEOs of HYBE's stateside subsidiary, HYBE AMERICA, where the two will adapt the K-pop business model for the U.S. market while developing new talent, including HYBE and Universal Music Group's first-of-its-kind global girl-group audition. Within the last year, Braun stepped away from the business "for the first time in 20 years" to work on himself, he says. "In that time, the business thrived, and to know that we built such an incredible team, that we were more than OK during this time, makes me incredibly proud."



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Mark Yovich

PRESIDENT, TICKETMASTER

After a grueling year for the touring industry, demand for shows skyrocketed in 2021, and Yovich says Ticketmaster rose to the occasion: “From on-sales through entry, our technology and teams have performed flawlessly at massive scale to bring the industry back to life,” he says. Superstars from Adele to Bad Bunny to Olivia Rodrigo have had record-breaking sales powered by the platform, according to the company, and Live Nation’s third-quarter investor report notes that Ticketmaster achieved its highest operating income and adjusted operating income quarter ever, at \$114 million and \$172 million, respectively. “Ticketing was the first part of the industry to be tested at full strength,” says Yovich. According to Live Nation,

Ticketmaster has already sold 65 million tickets for 2022 concerts.

AGENCIES

Dennis Arfa

FOUNDER/CHAIRMAN, ARTIST GROUP INTERNATIONAL

Marsha Vlasic

PRESIDENT, ARTIST GROUP INTERNATIONAL

Adam Kornfeld

PRESIDENT OF TOURING, ARTIST GROUP INTERNATIONAL

With the partial comeback of live music in

2021, Artist Group International’s executive team seized an opportunity to expand. In August, AGI formed a strategic partnership with U.K. company X-ray Touring following a 2020 deal with London’s K2 Agency, all joining under parent company Y Entertainment Group to bring a newly aligned roster of A-list acts — including Billy Joel, Coldplay and Metallica — to stages around the world. To help sell its new tours, the company also formed a partnership with branding and sponsorship group Brandmark Agency to bolster AGI’s sponsorship opportunities in a post-pandemic market.

Marty Diamond

Lee Anderson

Brent Smith

EXECUTIVE VPS/MANAGING EXECUTIVES, WASSERMAN MUSIC

Sara Bollwinkel

SENIOR VP, WASSERMAN MUSIC

Since Wasserman Media Group assumed control of Paradigm’s North American live-music division in April, the newly launched Wasserman Music has guided the touring plans of clients including Billie Eilish, Ed Sheeran and Coldplay. It has also continued to grow its staff, with the hire of an additional 55 employees and the promotion of 12 others during the year. “Our greatest achievement is that we exist,” says Anderson, who expects the company to maintain its “trend of growth” in 2022. The group will “continue to look for new and improved ways to continue to serve our clients, whom we proudly represent.”

SLAIBY: MICHAE/CARTER

Wassim “Sal” Slaiby

FOUNDER/CEO, SALXCO/XO MGMT/UNIVERSAL ARABIC MUSIC

Playing the Super Bowl halftime show or scoring the biggest Hot 100 hit of all time would each be massive accomplishments in their own right. Slaiby celebrated as his superstar client The Weeknd did both in the past year. In January 2021, The Weeknd put on a halftime spectacle of career-spanning hits, earning an Emmy Award nomination in the process; spent 2021 releasing marquee collaborations; then rounded out the year with his unstoppable 2019 track “Blinding Lights” knocking off Chubby Checker’s “The Twist” to gain the distinction as the Hot 100’s biggest No. 1 hit of all time. On Jan. 7, he released his latest album, *Dawn FM*. Meanwhile, Doja Cat, who is co-represented by SALXCO and 10Q Management, had her most successful year to date with *Planet Her*, which hit No. 2 on the Billboard 200 and earned the breakout star eight 2022 Grammy nominations, including album and record of the year and best new artist. Slaiby also orchestrated release plans around the reunion of EDM trio Swedish House Mafia, which will headline Coachella 2022 before embarking on a global tour. Slaiby and his team didn’t just focus on massive stars, though: In the past year, rising SALXCO client Shenseea became the first Jamaican female dancehall artist to appear on the Hot 100 in 17 years, says Slaiby, solidifying his company’s bona fides in continuing to break new acts — “our passion,” he says. Slaiby’s strategy focuses less on quick hits and more on building artists and catalogs that endure beyond viral trends and album cycles. “I’ve always operated and worked with artists like [The Weeknd] and Doja,” says Slaiby, “where it’s that bigger-picture vision we cultivate.”



CONGRATS!
TO OUR
CHAIRMAN/CEO,
**RAÚL
ALARCÓN**
AND TO ALL THE
**POWER
PLAYERS**



Robert Gibbs
HEAD OF MUSIC, ICM PARTNERS

Mark Siegel

Steve Levine
CO-HEADS OF WORLDWIDE CONCERTS,
ICM PARTNERS

Matt Bates
HEAD OF INTERNATIONAL/HEAD OF
EUROPE, ICM PARTNERS

Over the past year, ICM Partners capitalized on the growth of 2020 when the company partnered with major European agency Primary Talent International, a move that added almost 600 acts to its roster, including Daft Punk, The 1975, Lana Del Rey and Noel Gallagher. This expansion helped revive ICM in a big way as live music returned, with artists in key slots at numerous festivals during the summer. A leadership restructuring elevated Gibbs to head of music; he is believed to be the first Black executive to serve in that role at a major talent firm. The company's team also created a concerts leadership committee to track industry trends while grooming new departmental talent.

Rob Light
MANAGING PARTNER/HEAD OF
WORLDWIDE TOURING, CREATIVE
ARTISTS AGENCY

Darryl Eaton

Mitch Rose

Rick Roskin
CO-HEADS OF CONTEMPORARY MUSIC,
CREATIVE ARTISTS AGENCY

Emma Banks
CO-HEAD OF INTERNATIONAL TOURING
AND THE LONDON OFFICE, CREATIVE
ARTISTS AGENCY

See profile, page 106.

Kirk Sommer

Lucy Dickins
CO-HEADS OF WORLDWIDE MUSIC, WME

Becky Gardenhire

Joey Lee

Jay Williams
CO-HEADS OF NASHVILLE MUSIC, WME
In April, WME parent company Endeavor went public with a valuation of an estimated \$10 million, which Sommer says will position the agency to "grow the department and better serve our clients." WME confirmed more of those clients as headliners for festivals in 2021 than it did in 2019. "We're deep into [festival bookings] for 2023 already," says Sommer. "The early bird gets the worm." Meanwhile, WME helped Adele craft the *Weekends With Adele* Las Vegas residency at Caesars Palace, a 24-night run that sold out im-

mediately — before the singer postponed the shows. And client Olivia Rodrigo announced a 40-date North American and European tour for 2022. Sommer says WME's emerging talent is "really exciting because that's what keeps you motivated. It's why we got into this business in the first place."

David Zedeck

Samantha Kirby Yoh

Scott Clayton
PARTNERS/CO-HEADS OF
GLOBAL MUSIC, UTA

Toni Wallace
CO-HEAD OF GLOBAL MUSIC BRAND
PARTNERSHIPS, UTA

See profile, page 108.

FINANCE

Qasim Abbas

David Kestnbaum
SENIOR MANAGING DIRECTORS,
BLACKSTONE

From opposite sides of the Atlantic, Abbas and Kestnbaum are leading a rapid deployment of capital investments into music

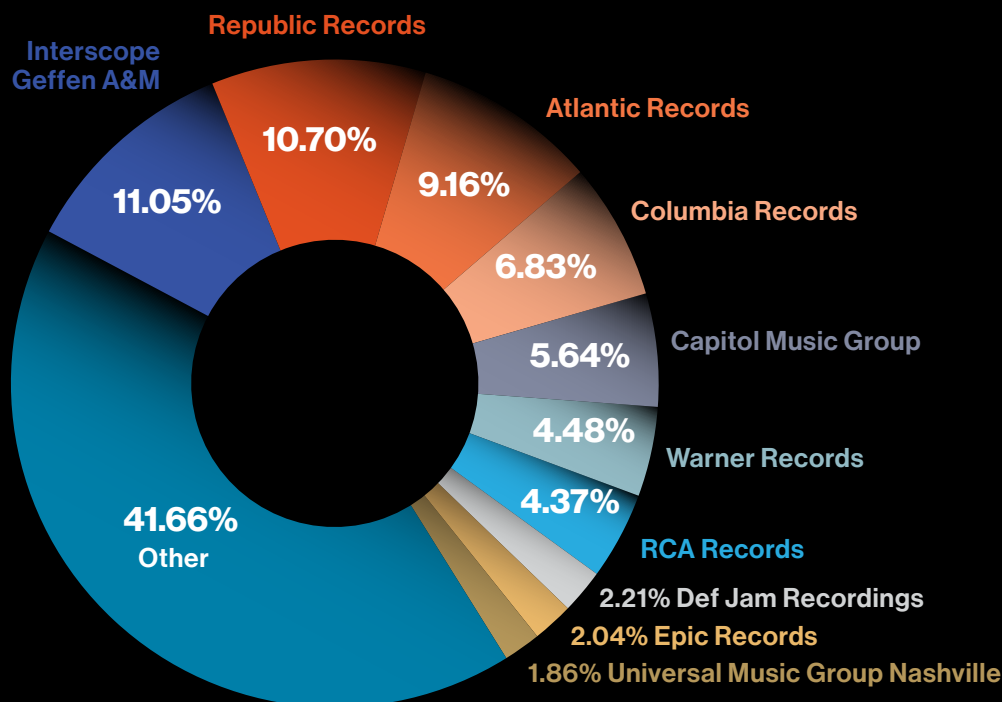
industry assets. In April, Kestnbaum and associates put together a deal to acquire eOne, the label, distributor and management company, and Audio Network, a production music platform, for \$385 million. He then added to Blackstone's 2017 \$1 billion acquisition of SESAC by paying an undisclosed amount (estimated by sources as tens of millions of dollars) to acquire music rights management company Audiam in August. Meanwhile, in October, Abbas closed one of the year's blockbuster deals by buying an undisclosed equity stake in what is now known as Hipgnosis Song Management and agreeing to initially fund \$1 billion to acquire music rights in a play that backs one of the industry's most aggressive music asset buyers, Hipgnosis founder/CEO Merck Mercuriadis. While these are the publicly known deals, there's this to consider: "Blackstone's private equity business has also been highly active pursuing other opportunities in the music ecosystem," according to Kestnbaum.

Bill Ackman
FOUNDER/CEO, PERSHING SQUARE
CAPITAL MANAGEMENT

As private equity and other investment firms flocked to the music industry this year, Pershing Square Capital Management's founder/CEO made the biggest splash of all when he spent nearly \$4 billion for 10% of Universal Music Group ahead of the company's Sept. 21 listing as a publicly traded company. Ackman,

YEAR-END MARKET SHARE BY LABEL

Interscope Geffen A&M is No. 1 among the top 10 major labels of 2021 with a current market share of 11.05%, driven by the success of Olivia Rodrigo, Billie Eilish and Juice WRLD's posthumous album *Legends Never Die*. Republic Records, home to Drake, The Weeknd and Taylor Swift, is No. 2. Atlantic Records is No. 3 thanks to Ed Sheeran, Cardi B and Bruno Mars, among others.



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MITCH
GLAZIER

BILLBOARD'S 2022

POWER
LIST





Merck Mercuriadis

FOUNDER/CEO, HIPGNOSIS SONG MANAGEMENT/HIPGNOSIS SONGS FUND/HIPGNOSIS SONGS CAPITAL

The Hipgnosis spending spree over the past three years, during which the company bought a slew of assets from big-name music artists and left other veteran music-industry asset traders stunned, slowed down a bit last year. But Mercuriadis is looking forward to more of the same in 2022, however, now that his company is backed by mega-financial firm Blackstone. While Hipgnosis did spend \$1 billion in the last 12 months as of December, according to Mercuriadis — acquiring the Red Hot Chili Peppers’ publishing catalog for \$140 million, as well as the song catalogs of Fleetwood Mac’s Christine McVie and Lindsey Buckingham, the publishing for both Kaiser Chiefs and Rhett Atkins, and the song and

recorded-master royalties from Heart’s Ann Wilson — most of those acquisitions occurred in the first six months of 2021. The rest of the year was spent putting together the deal with Blackstone, in which the company acquired a stake in the Hipgnosis Song Management platform and brought in new financial systems to improve operational and financial controls, according to Mercuriadis. So while the second half of 2021 might have been quieter than what the industry has come to expect from Hipgnosis, Mercuriadis says his company has also made other deals in the second half of the year that haven’t been announced yet. Meanwhile, the Blackstone deal, which is expected to provide a minimum of \$1 billion in funding for acquisitions, was still among the biggest announcements of the year. With Blackstone’s backing, “every deal is now possible,” says Mercuriadis, who notes that he hopes to announce and complete a new acquisition every week in 2022.

55, bought in as an anchor investor when UMG had a \$41.3 billion valuation. That move was an “introduction of the company to the investment community that helped facilitate the company’s highly successful public listing in September,” he says. Today, UMG’s market capitalization is \$48.78 billion — an 18.1% increase in value.

Jennifer Box

PARTNER, KKR

The global investment firm KKR unleashed its massive buying power on music assets in 2021, purchasing — in partnership with Dundee Partners in a collaboration called Chord Music Partners, which holds all of KKR’s investments in music royalties — the Kobalt Music Royalties Fund II for \$1.1 billion. But earlier in the year, the firm also announced that it was reuniting with BMG to the tune of \$1 billion, which so far has been publicly deployed, again through Chord, in acquiring ZZ Top’s entire music interests including publishing and recorded-music royalties in a reported \$50 million deal. “We will continue to grow by providing flexible, creative capital to music rights owners,” Box says, noting that the Kobalt acquisition gives the firm significant scale. “Across KKR, we are investing in innovative technology, media and entertainment businesses that are connecting fans to music in new ways,” she says, “and we are excited about how this can enhance the value and reach of these songs.”

Sherrese Clarke Soares

FOUNDER/CEO, HARBOURVIEW EQUITY PARTNERS

Although Clarke Soares only opened the new firm HarbourView Equity in October, she notes that “what my team was able to accomplish in an extremely short period of time is truly inspiring.” A force to be reckoned with in the music industry, she was previously a managing director at Morgan Stanley before founding Tempo Music, where she closed deals on various music assets/rights of the Jonas Brothers, Florida Georgia Line, Jeff Bhasker and more. Upon launching HarbourView — backed by \$1 billion in funding from mega-investment firm Apollo Global Management — Clarke Soares was rumored to be pursuing one of the biggest asset deals of the year, the Bruce Springsteen catalog, which Sony Music purchased for \$500 million.

Fred Davis

PARTNER, THE RAINE GROUP

Through The Raine Group’s roles as investor and investment bank, Davis, 62, played a key role in the trading of music assets in

MERCURIADIS: SPENCER LOWELL

2022
POWER PLAYER

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2022
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POWER PLAYER



2021. He served as an adviser on one of the biggest publishing deals — the sale of Downtown Music Publishing’s owned music publishing copyrights to Concord Music for an estimated \$400 million-plus — and acted as exclusive financial adviser to Todd Moscovitz’s Alamo Records move to Sony Music from Universal Music Group. “Additionally, we continue to grow and make significant impact on two of our music investments, SoundCloud and Amuse,” says Davis. The Raine Group will continue to focus on the “creator economy” in the next year, having already established itself in the sector thanks to its involvement with CD Baby, acquired by Downtown Music, and Songtrust.

David Dunn

CO-FOUNDER/MANAGING PARTNER, SHOT TOWER CAPITAL

Founded in 2012, Dunn’s boutique investment banking operation, Shot Tower Capital, has grown into one of the music industry’s top asset traders. Shot Tower was involved in “just under \$1 billion worth of music financing and merger and acquisition transactions” in 2021, says Dunn, citing his role as adviser on the sale of rights from the James Brown estate to Primary Wave for an estimated \$90 million and the sale of SideOneDummy Records to Exceleation Music for an undisclosed amount. The company continues to serve as financial adviser to the estates of Michael Jackson, Prince and Aretha Franklin.

Martha Henderson

EXECUTIVE VP/HEAD OF ENTERTAINMENT BANKING, CITY NATIONAL BANK

Henderson, a 38-year veteran of City National Bank and one of the most senior leaders at the company (she oversees a team of 250 entertainment bankers in New York, Nashville, Atlanta, Miami and Beverly Hills, Calif.), highlights her staff’s efforts to help clients receive much-needed funds through the federal government’s Paycheck Protection Program in 2020 and 2021. “My incredible team worked around the clock to help our clients obtain critical financing,” she says, noting that it secured nearly 10,000 PPP loans worth over \$1.2 billion. “It was a blizzard [of work] like I’ve never experienced in nearly 40 years since I’ve been in this business.”

Andy Moats

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC, SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT, PINNACLE FINANCIAL PARTNERS

Moats reports that Pinnacle Financial Partners made over \$600 million in new

loan commitments to independent music publishers and labels “of all sizes and genres” in 2021. “We have also supported dozens of our artist clients with the capital they needed to successfully get back on the road in a post-shutdown world,” he says. Noting that the value of music assets “is greater than ever,” he adds: “We can’t forget that music is an art form and not just a financial instrument. The music and the best interests of the artists who create it must remain the primary purpose of our efforts.”

BRANDING

Shana Barry

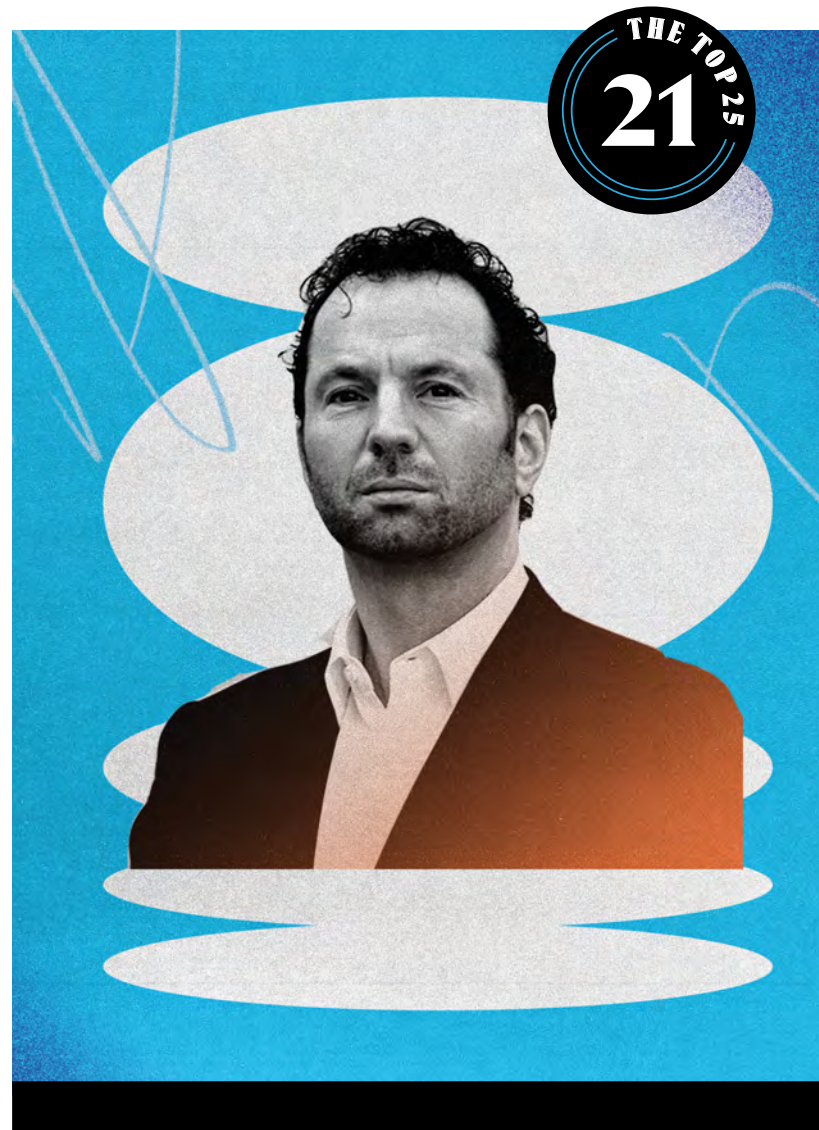
HEAD OF MUSIC, CELEBRITY AND ENTERTAINMENT PARTNERSHIPS, ANHEUSER-BUSCH

Over the past year, Barry prioritized a collaborative approach in the partnerships between Anheuser-Busch and artists despite challenges posed by the pandemic. “When we dream big together, we develop more impactful creative [content], align more quickly on the direction and deliver faster results,” she says. Campaign highlights included The Notorious B.I.G. x Bud, which featured a limited-edition line of Budweiser cans and merchandise that honored the late rapper and a concert during the BRIC Celebrate Brooklyn! festival to salute his legacy. Barry is “proud that we’ve continued to delight consumers with meaningful experiences and build connections with our brands and fans.”

Morgan Flatley

GLOBAL CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER, MCDONALD’S

The McDonald’s “Famous Orders” promotion, which kicked off in 2021 with a Travis Scott partnership, is Flatley’s latest win for the fast-food giant, immersing the 66-year-old brand in music and pop culture to boost both its sales and social media presence. “No matter how big or famous you are, everyone has a go-to McDonald’s order,” Flatley says of the ongoing campaign, citing J Balvin (Big Mac, fries and an Oreo McFlurry), Saweetie (Big Mac, McNuggets, Sprite, fries and the temporarily named “Saweetie N Sour” sauce) and BTS (McNuggets, fries and a McDonald’s co-branded clothing line on the side). “This is more than just a celebrity endorsement,” says Flatley. “We’re partnering with artists who truly love our brand.”



Michael Rapino

PRESIDENT/CEO, LIVE NATION ENTERTAINMENT

It was a year of triumph and tragedy for Live Nation and Rapino, who guided the world’s largest concert promotion company through a historic financial comeback while cooperating with authorities looking into one of the worst tragedies in company history at Travis Scott’s Astroworld festival. In the aftermath of the latter, Rapino has discussed with Scott the launch of a festival-safety initiative with the U.S. Conference of Mayors to identify new technologies to prevent similar situations. Rapino is also focused on leading Live Nation’s comeback during another year of uncertainty as the pandemic persists. Decisions early on to require vaccines or COVID-19 testing have persuaded governors in states like Florida and Texas to ease up on anti-mandatory vaccine laws, while more liberal municipalities have supported Live Nation festivals as far back as Lollapalooza last July in Chicago. For most of the year, the company’s most arresting story has been its stock rebound, as Live Nation is on track to end the year up 58% over 2020. The company will spend most of 2022 continuing its international expansion by completing the acquisition of Mexican promoter OCESA-CIE, which will offer access to opportunities in Latin America. What hasn’t changed is the number of ticketing competitors ready to chip away at its market share, but with a near 100% renewal rate with Ticketmaster clients, Rapino is unfazed by the latest would-be disrupters. “I worry about who our future competitors might be,” he recently said. “Not the ones chasing our business model.”

FOR FELLOW 2022 BILLBOARD POWER LIST HONOREES, SEE PAGE 92.

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2022

WOMEN IN MUSIC

N O M I N E E



Christina Hull

HEAD OF EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING, VERIZON

For the 2021 Super Bowl, Hull's team at Verizon launched a postgame series called *The Big Concert for Small Business* in an effort to drive donations to grant-based organizations that serve small businesses in need. An audience of 20 million viewers (and potential donors) tuned in to watch performances from Alicia Keys, Brandi Carlile, Brittany Howard, Christina Aguilera, Eric Church, H.E.R., Jazmine Sullivan, Luke Bryan and Miley Cyrus. Verizon also created an eight-week virtual music showcase focusing on women in music — including Maren Morris, Jessie Reyez, Kelsea Ballerini, Karol G, Maggie Rogers and Chloe x Halle — during a time when they were unable to perform in-person due to the pandemic.

Emma Quigley

FOUNDER/PRESIDENT, SHAKERMAKER

As the former head of music and entertainment for PepsiCo, Quigley is a pro at harmonizing music and branding. Since the 2020 launch of her music and market-

ing shop, Shakermaker — which serves as the music agency of record for PepsiCo and its Frito-Lay subsidiary — she has scored big with numerous successful campaigns. Among her recent achievements was Cheetos' comical "It Wasn't Me"-themed Super Bowl LV commercial featuring Shaggy and celebrity couple Mila Kunis and Ashton Kutcher. "There is tremendous power in the right partnerships," Quigley says. "When there is trust on both sides, that's when the magic happens." Career highlights this past year included overseeing Cheetos collaborations with Bad Bunny and MC Hammer and a Pepsi partnership with Doja Cat.

Brandy Sanders

VP OF GLOBAL ENTERTAINMENT EXPERIENCES AND PARTNERSHIPS, AMERICAN EXPRESS

When Sanders, 38, reflects on her achievements in 2021, executing Lizzo's American Express Unstaged performance at Art Basel in Florida is at the top of her list. She says partnering with the "unbelievably powerful and dynamic" artist has been one of her career highlights.

Platinum card members were able to watch the performance live in Miami Beach, while other fans throughout the world could stream the show. SZA and Maroon 5 performed in the series earlier in the year, but Sanders teases the best might be yet to come: "I can't wait to bring music fans even more incredible Unstaged performances from their favorite artists in 2022."

LEGAL

Lisa Alter

FOUNDING PARTNER, ALTER KENDRICK & BARON

In the past year, Alter's firm represented clients in music acquisitions valued at more than \$2 billion. Among the highlights: a blockbuster deal in which Primary Wave Music Publishing bought a stake in the catalog of Stevie Nicks, a deal that is "emblematic of the new wave of acquisitions of the rights of legacy artists," says Alter. The firm also represented Reservoir in the

purchase of iconic hip-hop label Tommy Boy Music as well as Influence Media Partners buying a stake in Julia Michaels' catalog. The latter transaction was exciting "because virtually everyone involved in the deal was a woman," Alter says. "In an industry that is still predominantly male-dominated, the deal represents the refreshing face of the future."

John Branca

PARTNER/MUSIC DEPARTMENT HEAD, ZIFFREN BRITTENHAM

For Branca, the long-serving co-executor for the estate of Michael Jackson, the past year brought progress on several ventures. Highlights included work on the upcoming authorized musical biopic about the King of Pop, plus development of *MJ: The Musical*, which is scheduled to debut on Broadway in 2022 after delays caused by COVID-19. Perhaps most notably, Branca also helped shepherd the Cirque du Soleil show *Michael Jackson ONE* at Las Vegas' Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino through the many complexities of a long pandemic shutdown, scoring a sold-out reopening in August.



Coran Capshaw

FOUNDER/CEO, RED LIGHT MANAGEMENT

As head of the industry's largest independent artist management company, with a roster of some 400 acts, Capshaw says Red Light's biggest achievement of 2021 was working with others in the live sector "to get the touring industry going again in the second half of the year." Red Light acts that returned to the road or performed shows included Dave Matthews Band, Brandi Carlile, Luke Bryan, Evanescence, Brittany Howard, Phish, Chris Stapleton, Lady A, Enrique Iglesias and Dierks Bentley. Meanwhile, the festival circuit restarted, with the return of several events in which Capshaw has a stake — including Outside Lands, the Pilgrimage Music and Cultural Festival and South by Southwest. On the label side, his ATO Records, which he co-owns with Dave Matthews, re-signed Old Crow Medicine Show while Black Pumas landed another pair of Grammy Award nominations, the fifth and sixth of their career. And Red Light artists including Luke Bryan, Lady A and Sam Hunt landed 12 No. 1s on *Billboard's* Country Airplay chart. But it was the return to live shows that resonated most and helped the overall music industry resume the growth it had experienced before the pandemic. "It took a lot of effort, testing and thought, but we are getting through it," Capshaw says of resurrecting live music. "It's all part of learning how to live with the virus because it doesn't seem like it's going away anytime soon."

CAPSHAW ILLUSTRATION REFERENCE PHOTO: SARAH CRAMER/SHELSAP

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the way

AEG
PRESENTS

GARY GERSH

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JOHN MEGLEN

LOUIS MESSINA

MELISSA ORMOND

PAUL GONGAWARE

PAUL TOLLETT

RICK MUELLER

Joel Katz
SENIOR COUNSEL,
BARNES & THORNBURG

During 2021, Katz negotiated a new contract for the Country Music Association that assures the CMA Awards will be broadcast on ABC through 2026 and streamed on Disney-owned Hulu. With a client roster that includes Big Machine's Scott Borchetta, Universal Music Group Nashville's Mike Dungan, Sony Music Nashville's Randy Goodman and Warner Music Nashville's John Esposito, the attorney is a go-to negotiator for senior executives. Katz also changed shops last year, moving to Barnes & Thornburg after 20-plus years at Greenberg Traurig.

Dina LaPolt
FOUNDER/OWNER, LAPOLT LAW

LaPolt has been recognized as an outspoken policy advocate for songwriters, and in 2018, she pushed for the passage of the Music Modernization Act. Her role took on new urgency during the pandemic, when she worked with members of Congress and industry stakeholders to ensure that COVID-19 relief efforts included songwriters. She also helped create an online resource to assist self-employed musicians with applying for such federal aid. The next fight for LaPolt? "Leading an industrywide initiative to remove racist 'master' recording terminology from contracts," she says.

Kenny Meiselas
NAMED PARTNER, GRUBMAN SHIRE
MEISELAS & SACKS

Meiselas was involved in representing Paul Simon, Bruce Springsteen and Lionel Richie in the sale of their music catalogs in deals led by his firm's senior partner, Allen Grubman. He also negotiated the agreement for The Weeknd's Pepsi Super Bowl LV halftime performance, as well as the singer's deal to produce, write and star in the upcoming HBO drama series *The Idol*. For Lady Gaga, Meiselas closed deals for her starring role in *House of Gucci* and her Grammy Award-nominated *Love for Sale* collaborative album with Tony Bennett. Another 2021 career highlight, he says, was representing, along with partner David Jacobs, "next-generation superstars" like The Kid LAROI and Lil Nas X.

Don Passman
PARTNER, GANG TYRE RAMER BROWN
& PASSMAN

Passman and his partners — who are said to represent superstars such as Adele, Taylor Swift, Stevie Wonder and Elton

John — handled the sale of a number of recording and publishing catalogs last year. Though he declined to name specific deals or clients, Passman says the high prices that catalogs now command make it a seller's market. "With the multiples as they are now, [sellers] can get quite a number of years of income at once and do a little bit more simplifying of their lives, so it can make sense," he says, noting that he tries to talk younger clients out of selling. "But it makes more sense for legacy artists and, typically, people who are looking to do estate planning or people who have heirs who aren't interested in running the catalog."

Debbie White
VICE CHAIR, MUSIC INDUSTRY PRACTICE
GROUP, LOEB & LOEB

White added Christina Aguilera to her roster of superstar clients last year, negotiating live engagements at the Hollywood Bowl and Disney World and brand ambassador deals with Nintendo and others. "It's a good year when you sign one of the best female vocalists of all time as a client," she says. She represented Primary Wave in its acquisition of the catalogs of Nicky Chinn, Stephen Marley and Mason Levy, among others; struck music licensing and endorsement deals on behalf of brands like Uber, Verizon and Citi; negotiated songwriter Diane Warren's deal with BMG for her debut album, *The Cave Sessions Vol. 1*; and represented BTS in a deal that put a "BTS Meal" on the menu of McDonald's locations in 86 countries. "I may not get a lot of sleep," says White, "but I work on something new and exciting each day for clients around the globe whom I admire and adore."

MEDIA

Raúl Alarcón Jr.
CHAIRMAN/CEO, SPANISH
BROADCASTING SYSTEM

In June, Spanish Broadcasting System announced that Albert Rodríguez was assuming the role of company president held since 1985 by Alarcón, who remains chairman/CEO. Alarcón says he'll stay focused on "continuing to deliver industry-leading news, entertainment and unparalleled cultural experiences to the Latin community across our top-rated audio, digital, video and live-music platforms." SBS properties include the leading Spanish-language radio stations in the United States and Puerto Rico, such as



Jay Marciano

CHAIRMAN/CEO, AEG PRESENTS; COO/OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN, AEG

Last April, as vaccines became more widely available and touring ramped up, AEG brought back furloughed workers after operating with a reduced staff for nine months. "We hyper-communicated throughout COVID-19," says Marciano, "even when we had nothing to say, which was often the case." By summer, venues reopened nationwide and AEG had announced new shows including The Rolling Stones' No Filter Tour, which became the first post-pandemic trek to earn \$100 million from just 14 dates. The group brought in \$130.9 million from 577,000 tickets, earning the *Billboard* title of top tour of the year. "Five decades later, they're still the biggest band in the world," says Marciano. "There's no question about it, and they've got the numbers to prove it." As the omicron variant spread in the fall of 2021, AEG required proof of vaccination at all owned-and-operated events starting Oct. 1. The decision, according to Marciano, was to keep local governments from implementing more capacity limits on live events, as profits were lower when compared with pre-pandemic metrics. "Generally, you've got to sell 85% of tickets to break even. At 50%, no one is making money," says Marciano. "If [local governments] didn't see that we were acting responsibly, they were going to take actions of their own."

FOR FELLOW 2022 BILLBOARD POWER LIST HONOREES, SEE PAGE 90.

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WSKQ-FM (La Mega) New York. During 2021, SBS secured over \$300 million for recapitalization, which, Alarcón says, “will allow the brand to continue expanding [with the] acquisition of properties and talent as well as audience growth.”

Perry Bashkoff

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC PARTNERSHIPS, INSTAGRAM

Despite competition from new apps like TikTok, Instagram remains a go-to service for artists looking to engage with their fans and tease new music. Looking back at 2021, Bashkoff, 42, highlights the “value-adding products and tools that launched for artists of all levels” to take Instagram beyond a photo-sharing app to one that is useful for both creators and their followers. A new feature is global audio search, which allows users to search for songs used in the platform’s short videos called Reels. Another feature, live scheduling, lets artists notify and remind followers about upcoming live sessions.

Mary Berner

PRESIDENT/CEO, CUMULUS MEDIA

Advertising revenue dropped precipitously across the radio business in 2020 due to the pandemic, according to published reports, but Cumulus adapted and returned to form in part by taking advantage of the myriad ways that the audio experience has changed in recent years. “We met our listeners’ demand by creating new programs, perfecting our streaming services so they could listen in different ways and devising new ways to connect with listeners when we could not engage face-to-face,” Berner says. “When we safely returned our programming talent to the studios, we once again experienced the magic a live studio affords.”

David Field

CHAIRMAN/PRESIDENT/CEO, AUDACY

In March, radio company Entercom rebranded as Audacy “to reflect our transformation into a leading, scaled multi-platform audio content and entertainment company,” says Field. Led by 200-plus radio stations, a growing digital business and a flurry of new podcast content, Audacy’s revenue in the first nine months of 2021 grew 18% from the prior year period. It also restarted its live-events series with a

country concert in New York on 9/11, then flipped the host station, the former WNSH (Country 94.7 FM), to classic hip-hop WXBK a month later. “At a time of great disruption in our world, including changing consumer habits and audience fragmentation,” says Field, “radio’s emergence as the No. 1 reach medium demonstrates the deep and enduring power of its connection to the American public.”

Jesús Lara

PRESIDENT OF RADIO, UNIVISION COMMUNICATIONS

Lara is most proud of “successfully landing on our feet after the disruption from COVID-19,” he says. Univision earned some of its largest attendance numbers at its Uforia Music live events in Houston, Miami and New York, as well as for its portfolio of radio stations in Los Angeles, Dallas and Chicago, among other markets. In late 2020, over 10 million viewers saw Uforia Live’s livestream of Bad Bunny performing atop a moving flatbed truck in New York, according to Univision. The company’s artist development platform, meanwhile, helped break “amazingly talented new

artists,” says Lara, “including Camilo, Rauw Alejandro, Eslabon Armado and Jay Wheeler.”

Ole Obermann

GLOBAL HEAD OF MUSIC, TIKTOK

See profile, page 80.

Bob Pittman

CHAIRMAN/CEO, IHEARTMEDIA

John Sykes

PRESIDENT OF ENTERTAINMENT ENTERPRISES, IHEARTMEDIA

Tom Poleman

CHIEF PROGRAMMING OFFICER/ PRESIDENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMMING, IHEARTMEDIA

With over a quarter-billion monthly listeners through its broadcast assets, iHeartMedia now also reaches more than 32.5 million unique monthly podcast listeners and is the No. 1 podcaster overall in the United States, according to the podcast ranking company Podtrac. Pittman says that iHeart has widened its lead “over everyone else in terms



Rob Light

MANAGING PARTNER/HEAD OF WORLDWIDE TOURING, CREATIVE ARTISTS AGENCY



In September, CAA announced a planned acquisition of competitor ICM Partners in a deal that marks the consolidation of the former “Big Four” agencies of the music business into three, alongside WME and UTA. Between that deal and CAA’s own growth during an unstable time, Light declares that “we are set up in ways we couldn’t have even imagined coming out of COVID-19.” CAA clients hit the road as early as safely possible. The Hella Mega Tour, with Green Day, Fall Out Boy and Weezer, was one of the first stadium shows to return last summer, while Harry Styles, new signee Zac Brown Band and the pairing of James Taylor and Jackson Browne filled venues across the country in the latter half of 2021. Light credits the leadership displayed by his team — in November alone, CAA promoted nine staffers to agent/executive and announced a slew of agents joining the company. Among the roster additions — some brought in by the new hires — over the past 12 months are The Weeknd, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Shawn Mendes, Lil Baby, Mumford & Sons, Miguel, Vampire Weekend, My Chemical Romance and Janet Jackson. A group of 15 to 20 up-and-coming artists including Maggie Rogers, Jorja Smith and Conan Gray is already filling 2,000 to 3,000 seats a night and poised to expand further. “You’ve rarely seen this sort of window of time,” says Light, “where a company that has been so stable for so long has really now seen an opportunity and grown from it.”

LIGHT ILLUSTRATION REFERENCE PHOTO: ALBERTO E. RODRIGUEZ/GETTY IMAGES

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of audience, revenue and earnings,” noting recent partnerships and podcasts launched with the NFL, the NBA, Viacom, the Black Effect Podcast Network and My Cultura podcast network, among others.

Scott Sellwood
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS, META

Malika Quemerai
HEAD OF MUSIC PARTNERSHIPS, META

“We are on the precipice of a new frontier of innovation,” says Quemerai, 36, “and artists are taking advantage of new products and features first.” She points to “everyone from Kehlani and Lil Huddy to Becky G and Tobe Nwigwe” engaging their audiences through Facebook’s new Live Audio Rooms and Sound Bites features. Billie Eilish debuted the artist sticker-pack feature on WhatsApp, while Eilish and Olivia Rodrigo showcased chat themes of customized backgrounds and text bubbles on Facebook Messenger and Instagram. “We anticipate many more partnerships like these,” says Quemerai, “as we continue to develop new opportunities for artists in the metaverse.”

Ted Suh
GLOBAL HEAD OF MUSIC PARTNERSHIPS, SNAP

In the past 18 months, Snap brokered agreements with thousands of rights holders, including the three major-label groups. Those deals provide a wider library of music to choose from while using the Sounds tool, which allows users to soundtrack the Snaps that they’re sharing with friends or Snapchat’s larger Spotlight community. To date, over 1.2 billion videos have been created using the feature, garnering more than 77 billion views in the past year alone, according to Snap. The app reaches 90% of 13- to 24-year-olds in the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Australia and the Netherlands, says Suh, and is “helping change the way Generation Z listens to and discovers new music.”

Jennifer Witz
CEO, SIRIUSXM

Scott Greenstein
PRESIDENT/CHIEF CONTENT OFFICER, SIRIUSXM

Witz, 53, credits the SiriusXM team’s “creativity to deliver exclusive content and experiences for our 150 million listeners in the face of enormous challenges” amid the pandemic. By reintroducing the “special

live-music events that are a SiriusXM hallmark,” she says the company accelerated financial growth and expanded its digital music content. Greenstein adds that “betting on the artists, venues and our subscribers’ love for special live events” allowed SiriusXM to launch its Small Stage Series, which prompted Alicia Keys, Brandi Carlile, Coldplay and J. Cole to deliver “never-before-[experienced]” performances at iconic U.S. venues.

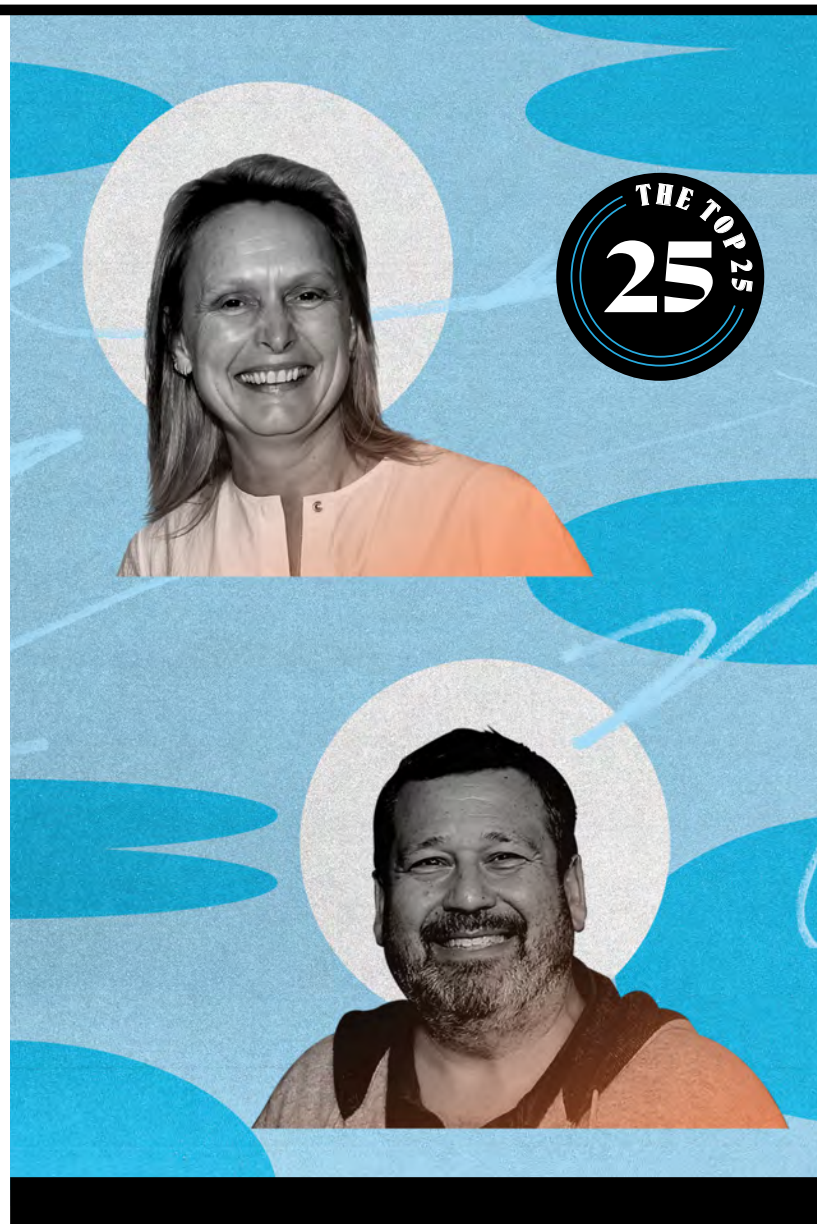
RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS

Kris Ahrend
CEO, MECHANICAL LICENSING COLLECTIVE

During the Mechanical Licensing Collective’s first year of full-fledged operations, Ahrend, 50, guided the organization’s distribution of more than \$280 million in digital audio mechanical royalties to its members. He focused on growing his team by dozens of new staffers to keep up with its monthly royalty distributions and to educate and engage with its membership by hosting or participating in over 250 webinars and offering an in-house support team available by phone, email or online chat. “The MLC’s mission is simple,” he says. “To strive to pay each of our members all of the mechanical royalties they are entitled to receive when their songs are distributed on interactive streaming and download services in the U.S. that operate under the new blanket license.”

Randy Grimm
CO-FOUNDER/CEO, GLOBAL MUSIC RIGHTS

Despite working remotely for over a year and a half — “nearly 20% of the entire time our company has been in existence,” says Grimm, 53 — Global Music Rights “made every distribution, did every licensing deal and signed every client we planned to during this time,” he says. “Being the newest and youngest [performing rights organization] in the U.S. has made us nimble and flexible, able to pivot when circumstances require it.” Looking ahead, Grimm expresses concern over the consolidation of ownership of musical intellectual property assets “in the hands of a concentrated few funds, not all of whom have long-term experience managing those assets. It’s not a good



David Zedeck Samantha Kirby Yoh

PARTNERS/CO-HEADS OF GLOBAL MUSIC, UTA

During the pandemic, UTA grew its staff in London, New York, Nashville and Los Angeles; expanded its client list; and strengthened its ability to support marquee artists, including roster additions like Bad Bunny, Demi Lovato and deadmau5. In 2020, Zedeck was joined as agency co-head by Samantha Kirby Yoh and, in late 2021, by Scott Clayton. Coming from a 16-year run at WME, Kirby Yoh brought to the roster Florence + The Machine, Rosalía, LCD Soundsystem and James Blake, while the Nashville-based Clayton delivered his expertise in that market and beyond. UTA’s acquisition of the U.K.-based Echo Location Talent Agency in March included Obi Asika signing on as the U.K. office co-head alongside industry veteran Neil Warnock. (Founded in 2012, Echo has focused on emerging genres like Afrobeats, grime, drill, hip-hop and electronic music and brings UTA international representation for Alesso, Diplo, Major Lazer, Marshmello and Wizkid, among others.) Says Zedeck: “I know we are all so proud of the excellent work we have executed on behalf of our clients this year, and hopefully, that momentum will continue into 2022.”

FOR FELLOW 2022 BILLBOARD POWER LIST HONOREES, SEE PAGE 96.

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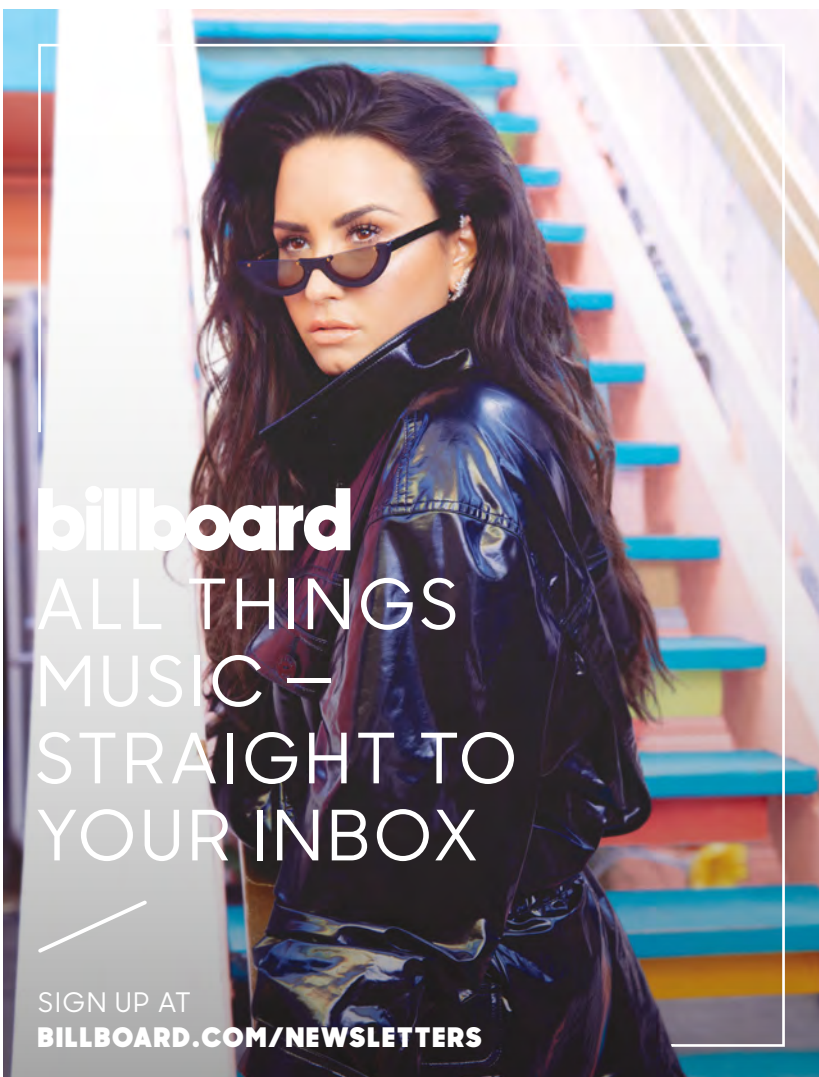
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trend for the overall long-term health of intellectual property rights and creativity.”

Michael Huppe

PRESIDENT/CEO, SOUNDEXCHANGE

Over the past 18 months, SoundExchange distributed “\$1 billion-plus” to its artist and record-label clients, says Huppe, converting data from “over 3,600 digital service providers” to send monthly payments on time to its 250,000 creators. In Congress, the rights organization continued its long-running efforts to close the loophole that exempts AM/FM radio stations from paying royalties on recorded music with the introduction of the American Music Fairness Act in July. “AMFA, if passed, could mean significant royalty income for working artists — local bands, background singers, musicians everywhere — who are in financial need as the pandemic crushes opportunities to perform,” he says. SoundExchange has pursued similar legislative action since 2009.

Elizabeth Matthews

CEO, ASCAP

In March, ASCAP reported that its revenue collections for 2020 during the pandemic were up 4.16% over the previous year to \$1.3 billion, while its distributions to songwriters and publishers grew 2.45% to \$1.2 billion, or \$29 million more than in 2019. Matthews praises “the ASCAP employees who have maintained their grace, goodwill and sense of humor throughout the immense pressure and isolation of the past two years and who consistently give of themselves in order to help songwriters and composers.” The organization ended the year on a high note, celebrating board member and musician Jon Batiste’s 11 Grammy nominations — the most of any nominee — including nods for both record and album of the year.

Mike O’Neill

PRESIDENT/CEO, BMI

For its fiscal year ending June 30, 2021, BMI reported \$1.4 billion in revenue and distributions of \$1.34 billion to songwriters, composers and publishers — record levels for the performing rights organization. Driven by the digital sector, BMI’s total domestic licensing revenue also exceeded \$1 billion for the first time. As a result of a new distribution schedule for 2022, the organization added a one-time fifth distribution in November to help maximize

“[We] need to ensure fair value is returned to rights holders for the use of music in all its forms.”

— MOORE

royalties for songwriters and composers. The BMI team “continued to focus on our priority of mitigating the financial impact of the pandemic on our creative community,” says O’Neill, 60.

ASSOCIATIONS

Richard James Burgess

PRESIDENT/CEO, AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT MUSIC

In January 2021, A2IM launched its Black Independent Music Accelerator grant program, designed to amplify Black voices in the independent music community, with sponsors including Spotify, Amazon Music and Alternative Distribution Alliance. The fellowship initiative was a “long overdue and critical step” in creating “full equity for underrepresented communities” in the music industry, says Burgess, who was reelected to a third term as A2IM’s top executive in December. “BIMA is the start of the beginning,” he adds. “We build from here.”

Mitch Glazier

CHAIRMAN/CEO, RIAA

While COVID-19 affected most businesses, revenue from recorded music grew — and its U.S. trade organization made 2021 “a year of a lot of different things,” Glazier says. The RIAA worked state by state to assist musicians who weren’t eligible for traditional unemployment benefits in accessing coronavirus relief funds and helped push a California police-reform bill that became law in the fall. It also won an important court decision against the

stream-ripping site FLVTO, which set a precedent for how U.S. law can apply to foreign online platforms. Next up: crucial, but probably modest, reform of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act based on the idea of “standard technical measures” to combat piracy, says Glazier.

David Israelite

PRESIDENT/CEO, NATIONAL MUSIC PUBLISHERS’ ASSOCIATION

Under Israelite, in 2021 the NMPA struck precedent-setting deals with Roblox and Twitch that secured new royalties for publishers and songwriters. With the goal of “[paving] the way for music to be used legally” on new digital platforms, Israelite has led the NMPA in forging key agreements to license music for up-and-coming technologies, creating new income streams for music creators. In 2022, songwriters and publishers will be “under a dual assault from streaming services,” Israelite says. “We continue to defend the 44% raise we won in 2018 against Spotify and Amazon’s unprecedented appeal as we enter a new trial at the Copyright Royalty Board to determine mechanical rates for 2023 to 2027.”

Harvey Mason Jr.

CEO, THE RECORDING ACADEMY

The Recording Academy in 2021 made “bold, substantive changes across several areas,” says Mason, who was named CEO in May after serving in the role on an interim basis. He now guides the academy along with co-presidents Valeisha Butterfield Jones and Panos A. Panay, whom he appointed in June. Among the biggest changes for the organization that bestows the Grammy Awards: disbanding the

nominations review committees and letting voters have the final say in all noncraft categories. Mason is also excited about the academy’s decision to expand the number of nominees from eight to 10 in the Big Four categories — album, record and song of the year and best new artist.

Frances Moore

CEO, IFPI

Moore continued to expand the geographical reach of the global recorded-music trade association by opening a Middle East North Africa office and appointing a regional director, Rawan Al-Dabbas. IFPI also won approval from the Vietnamese government to set up an office in Hanoi. “This reflects the ambitions of our member companies for those countries/regions and the truly global nature of today’s music industry,” says Moore, who was honored as a Member of the Order of the British Empire on the Queen’s Birthday Honours List in June for her contributions to the U.K. music industry.

Jeremy Sirota

CEO, MERLIN

Sirota, 45, oversaw Merlin during a year in which 32 independent labels and distributors from 17 countries joined the global digital rights organization, including first-time direct members from 10 new countries. “Merlin is now approaching nearly 40 deals in which our members can benefit from premium terms, access and partnership,” he says. The nonprofit hired more staffers and redesigned its brand with a new website and logo. The revamp culminated in Merlin’s January 2021 Celebrate Music event, which included an announcement about the organization’s commercial relationship with Apple. That partnership now includes 27 members of Merlin from 13 different countries.

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METHODOLOGY Nominations for *Billboard*’s executive lists open no less than 120 days in advance of publication. (For a contact for our editorial calendar, please email thom.duffy@billboard.com.) The online nomination link is sent to press representatives who send a request for notification before the nomination period to thom.duffy@billboard.com. *Billboard* editors chose the industry sectors to be included on each list, the most significant companies within each sector and the maximum number of honorees per company. In choosing honorees, editors weigh a variety of factors including, but not limited to, nominations by peers, colleagues and superiors. For the Power List, we considered the impact of each nominee’s company on consumer behavior, as measured by chart, sales and streaming performance; social media impressions; and radio/TV audiences reached, using data available as of Nov. 22, 2021. We heavily weighed year-end *Billboard* charts for 2021 and also considered career trajectory and industry impact. Where required, U.S. record-label market share was consulted using MRC Data’s current market share for albums, plus track-equivalent and streaming-equivalent album consumption units and *Billboard*’s quarterly top 10 publisher rankings. Unless otherwise noted, *Billboard* Boxscore and MRC Data are the sources for tour grosses and sales/streaming data, respectively, and MRC Data is also the source for radio audience metrics.



Special Issue
ON SALE
FEB. 26, 2022

WOMEN IN MUSIC

On February 26th, *Billboard* will publish its highly anticipated Women in Music special issue, featuring top women in the music industry who are creating excitement and making their mark across labels, publishing and touring.

Coinciding with the issue, *Billboard's* Women in Music awards ceremony will be held March 2nd. This event will bring together music's most prominent female artists and the industry's top female business executives to recognize and celebrate their achievements.

Take this opportunity to congratulate the most powerful and talented women in music and wish them continued success.

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PEAK ON BILLBOARD'S

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GAYLE

How mood-inspired versions of breakout hit “abcdefu” helped the song climb multiple charts

▷ In 2018, Arthouse Music Publishing CEO Kara DioGuardi pulled GAYLE's name out of a hat at a songwriting pop-up event in Nashville and heard the rising star sing for the first time. “She had this presence that I’ve never seen from a 14-year-old,” DioGuardi remembers. By the end of the year, GAYLE signed a record and publishing deal with Arthouse. And after releasing a string of one-offs, she gained global traction in 2020 when a Korean YouTube account uploaded her angsty indie-pop track “Z” with subtitles. It racked up over 700,000 views and piqued the interest of Warner Music’s Korean team and, subsequently, Atlantic Records stateside — the latter label was already helping DioGuardi with distribution for GAYLE. In January 2021, Atlantic president of A&R Pete Ganbarg signed GAYLE to a co-label deal with Atlantic. (Her deal with Arthouse remains intact.)

“I really love the development at Atlantic,” says GAYLE. “They look at somebody’s potential and are like, ‘We want to nurture and build this, and once you’re ready, let’s start putting out music.’” By the summer, GAYLE started teasing her debut single, “abcdefu,” on

TikTok, and the unapologetic middle finger to an ex officially arrived in August. Ganbarg says it broke in South Korea and China first, then Taiwan and Malaysia, and finally Europe and the United States.

GAYLE released three additional versions of “abcdefu” in September (“angrier” and “chill” renditions, as well as its original demo), which extended the song’s staying power. By December, the artist scored her first entry on the Billboard Hot 100, with “abcdefu” debuting at No. 51; it has since reached a No. 9 peak, collecting 149.9 million U.S. on-demand streams through Jan. 13, according to MRC Data. “I came to Atlantic wanting to do [multiple releases],” GAYLE says. “They didn’t question it. They don’t tell me what to do. They were like, ‘Tell us what you want to do, and we’ll help you do it.’”

Fueled by her exponential year-end rise, GAYLE is focused on finishing new music, including her cheeky new single, “ur just horny,” and an EP slated for spring. As DioGuardi says: “If you think that she’s just ‘abcdefu,’ you’re going to be very surprised. She’s much bigger than just one song.”

—MIA NAZARENO

GAYLE photographed by Grace Rivera on Dec. 10, 2021, in Brooklyn.

STYLING BY JASPER GAGGANO AT UNCOMMON ARTISTS. HAIR AND MAKEUP BY SARAH APPLEBY AT ART DEPARTMENT.

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