

billboard

MARCH 26, 2022 • BILLBOARD.COM

Pop-Punk's CROWN PRINCE

ROCK NEEDED A "DEFIBRILLATOR."

MACHINE GUN KELLY CAME TO THE RESCUE

GOLDEN NOT-SO-OLDIES
THE REAL CATALOG BOOM

PLAYING FOR UKRAINE
LIVE MUSIC RALLIES







Elton,

You've given the world so much
to celebrate... your passion, energy
and dedication continue to inspire us all.
And of course, let's not forget about
THE MUSIC!!!!

Happy 75th! We love you.

AEG
PRESENTS

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MARCH 26, 2022

VOLUME 134

NO. 4

ON THE COVER

Machine Gun Kelly photographed by Vijat Mohindra on March 1 at Pink 1968 in Northridge, Calif.

Dolce & Gabbana shirt and necklace, Chris Habana crown, House of Emmanuele and The Great Frog rings.

THIS PAGE

Hester Chambers (left) and Rhian Teasdale of Wet Leg photographed by Diana King on March 13 at Soho House Nashville in Nashville.

TO OUR READERS

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

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BAD BOY FOR LIFE

With a magnetic mix of glam, grime and guitar, **Machine Gun Kelly** went from also-ran rapper to prince of the pop-punk revival. His new album may be called *Mainstream Sellout*, but he's ready to prove — once and for all — that he's no poseur.

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SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE GOES LIVE

A look at how the live-music industry is rallying around the country with demonstrations of support and benefit concerts across the globe.

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With compact disc sales up in 2021 — marking the first annual increase since 2004 — *Billboard* looks back at its historical coverage of the format.



Jack,

You will be in our
hearts forever.

1980-2022



Photo by Amy Opoka

Hannah Karp

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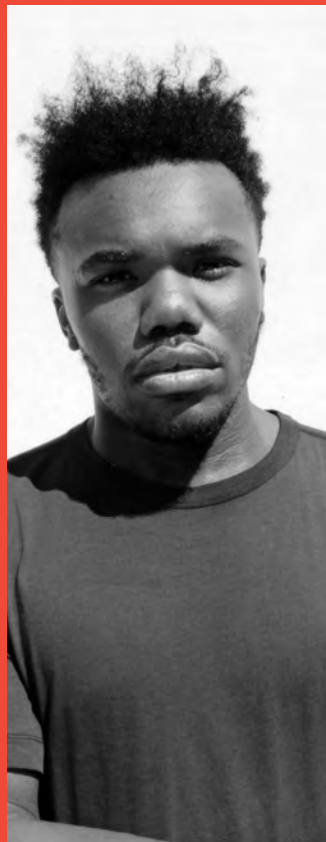
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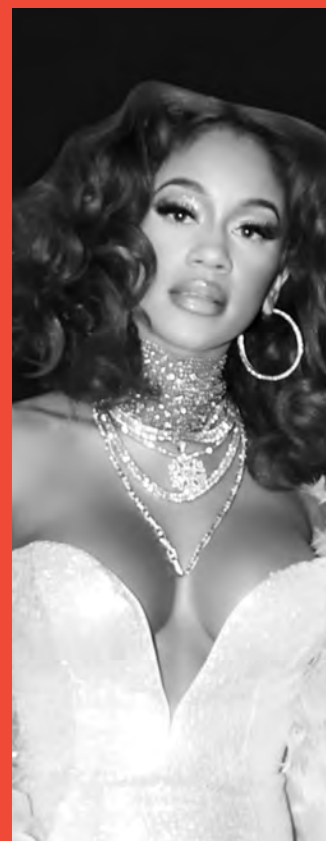
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charts

DATA FOR WEEK OF 3.26.2022



Ghost's Story: *Impera* Scores Biggest Sales Week Of 2022

TOP ALBUM SALES

1

Impera
Ghost

LAST WEEK

-

PEAK POSITION

1

WEEKS ON CHART

1

GHOST'S *IMPERA* debuts at No. 1 on *Billboard*'s Top Album Sales chart (dated March 26) with 2022's biggest sales week for an album: 62,500 copies sold in the United States during its opening week (ending March 17), according to Luminate, formerly MRC Data. The album surges past the 37,000 copies that The Weeknd's *Dawn FM* sold following its release on CD, sparking its reentry atop the Feb. 12 chart.

The new album from the dynamic Swedish rock band — synonymous with its members' striking, masked costumes (above) — earns the group its first Top Album Sales leader and its fourth top 10 entry. Of *Impera*'s opening total, physical sales comprise 51,000 copies, with 28,000 on vinyl, 21,000 on CD and 2,000 on cassette. The album was released on Loma Vista/Concord in multiple color-vinyl variants,

including versions available exclusively through Newbury Comics, Target, Walmart, Zia Records and the group's official webstore.

"Where Ghost has always had strong physical sales, we focused heavily on the best possible package for the fans," says Lisa Hopkins, Concord vp of commercial sales.

Rock also shines on the *Billboard* Hot 100, where Glass Animals' "Heat Waves" scores a third week at No. 1 and Imagine Dragons and JID's "Enemy" enters the top 10 (12-8). The former drew 67.3 million airplay audience impressions and 15.2 million U.S. streams and sold 3,100 downloads in the tracking week, while the latter — Imagine Dragons' fifth top 10 and JID's first — logged 42 million in radio reach, 10.6 million streams and 4,000 sold. It also completes Imagine Dragons' fastest flight (five weeks) to the Radio Songs top 10 (14-10).

—KEITH CAULFIELD AND GARY TRUST

Hot 100

2 WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title <small>PRODUCER (SONGWRITER)</small>	Artist <small>IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL</small>	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
(1)	(1)	(1)	#1 for 3 WEEKS Heat Waves <small>D.BAYLEY (D.BAYLEY)</small>	Glass Animals <small>WOLF TONE/POLYDOR/REPUBLIC</small>	1	61
5	5	2	Stay <small>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)</small>	The Kid LAROI & Justin Bieber <small>RAYMOND BRAUN/COLUMBIA/DEF JAM</small>	1	36
(4)	3	3	Super Gremlin <small>ATL JACOB (B.K.KAPRI, J.D.CANADY, M.A.TIMMERMANN)</small>	Kodak Black <small>SNIPER GANG/ATLANTIC</small>	3	19
(3)	4	4	abcdefu <small>P.NAPPI (GAYLE, D.B.PITTENGER, S.DAVIS)</small>	GAYLE <small>ARTHOUSE/ATLANTIC</small>	3	17
2	2	5	We Don't Talk About Bruno <small>L.M.MIRANDA, M.ELIZONDO (L.M.MIRANDA)</small>	Carolina Gaitan, Mauro Castillo, Adassa, Rhenzy Feliz, Diane Guerrero, Stephanie Beatriz & Encanto Cast <small>WALT DISNEY</small>	1	12
7	7	6	Ghost <small>THE MONSTERS & STRANGERZ, J.BELLION (J.D.BIEBER, J.D.BELLION, J.K.JOHNSON, S.JOHNSON, M.R.POLLACK)</small>	Justin Bieber <small>RAYMOND BRAUN/DEF JAM</small>	6	25
6	6	7	Easy On Me <small>G.KURSTIN (A.L.B.ADKINS, G.KURSTIN)</small>	Adele <small>COLUMBIA</small>	1	23
(13)	(12)	(8)	AIR Enemy <small>MATTMAN & ROBIN (D.REYNOLDS, W.SERMON, B.MCKEE, D.PLATZMAN, R.L.FREDRIKSSON, M.PLARSSON, J.D.TRANTER, D.ROUTE)</small>	Imagine Dragons X JID <small>KIDINAKORNER/INTERSCOPE</small>	8	17
(11)	10	(9)	Thats What I Want <small>O.FEDI, B.SLATKIN, R.B.TEDDER, K.BEAZY (M.L.HILL, O.FEDI, B.SLATKIN, R.B.TEDDER, K.C.BACH)</small>	Lil Nas X <small>COLUMBIA</small>	9	26
9	8	10	Bad Habits <small>FRED, J.MCDAID, E.SHEERAN, J.FISH, O.S.SYKES (E.C.SHEERAN, F.J.P.GIBSON, J.MCDAID)</small>	Ed Sheeran <small>ATLANTIC</small>	2	38
8	9	11	Shivers <small>E.SHEERAN, STEVE MAC, FRED (E.C.SHEERAN, J.MCDAID, STEVE MAC, K.LAVELLE)</small>	Ed Sheeran <small>ATLANTIC</small>	4	27
(21)	(15)	(12)	Woman <small>YETI BEATS, L.JAY, CRATE CLASSICS, A.JONES (A.Z.DLAMINI, D.SPRECHER, A.HORN, A.JONES, L.JAY, J.T.MOISSON)</small>	Doja Cat <small>KEMOSABE/RCA</small>	12	33
10	11	13	Cold Heart (PNAU Remix) <small>N.LITTLEMORE, P.MAYES, S.LITTLEMORE, C.THOMAS, G.DUDGEON (E.JOHN, B.J.P.TAUPIN, P.MAYES, N.LITTLEMORE, S.LITTLEMORE)</small>	Elton John & Dua Lipa <small>ROCKET/MERCURY/EMI/INTERSCOPE</small>	7	28
(17)	(14)	(14)	Big Energy <small>DR. LUKE, V.OLIVER (A.STEPHENS, L.S.GOTTWALD, V.OLIVER, A.T.R.SMITH, T.THOMAS, KAINE, J.LOWE, A.BELEW, C.FRANTZ, S.STANLEY, T.WEYMOUTH)</small>	Latto <small>STREAMCUT/RCA</small>	14	21
HOT SHOT DEBUT		(15)	Sweetest Pie <small>OG PARKER, KOZ (M.J.PETE, J.I.PARKER, S.KOZMENIUK, N.A.A.CHARLES, C.COFFEE JR., D.LIPA)</small>	Megan Thee Stallion & Dua Lipa <small>1501 CERTIFIED/300</small>	15	1
12	13	16	Need To Know <small>DR. LUKE (A.Z.DLAMINI, L.S.GOTTWALD)</small>	Doja Cat <small>KEMOSABE/RCA</small>	8	40
20	17	17	Save Your Tears <small>MAX MARTIN, O.T.HOLTER, THE WEEKND (A.TESFAYE, A.BALSHE, J.QUENNEVILLE, MAX MARTIN, O.T.HOLTER, A.GRANDE)</small>	The Weeknd & Ariana Grande <small>XO/REPUBLIC</small>	1	63
(19)	34	(18)	STMI Ahhh Ha <small>J.LUJELLEN, TM88, TOO DOPE!, NUKI, NFE PARIS (D.D.BANKS, J.H.LUJELLEN, B.L.SIMMONS, L.C.RAGLAND, K.LATOS, B.ROKE)</small>	Lil Durk <small>ALAMO</small>	18	4
15	16	19	Levitating <small>KOZ, S.D.PRICE (C.COFFEE JR., S.KOZMENIUK, S.T.HUDSON, D.LIPA)</small>	Dua Lipa <small>WARNER</small>	2	71
14	18	20	Pushin P <small>JUKE WONG, WHEEZY (S.G.KITCHENS, N.D.WILBURN, J.L.WILLIAMS, W.T.GLASS, L.DEPANTE)</small>	Gunna & Future Featuring Young Thug <small>GUNNA/YOUNG STONER LIFE/300</small>	7	10

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



The 26-year-old Bainbridge Island, Wash., native's fifth Hot 100 entry also reaches a new No. 23 high on Mainstream Top 40.

HOT 100

49

"Boyfriend"
Dove Cameron

How did you create "Boyfriend"?

I was telling the story of this crazy night I had a couple of weeks before coming off tour, and I casually said to the room, "Fuck, I could be a better boyfriend than this guy." We were all like, "Wait, is this a good hook?" A lot of it became a recount of what it felt like to grow up

queer and be surrounded by women who were famously mistreated and under-celebrated. I'm finding that of all my favorite songs I've written myself, the process is fast. Once you have the concept and have built the world, that's the key.

When the song started taking off, how did your team react?

When I wrote "Boyfriend" in October, they were like, "Why don't you put something on TikTok to show fans you're in the studio?" It was not a grand plan. When it took on a life of its own [on TikTok], we all canceled everything, went in and finished it. Usually, you have three months to prepare for a song, but we all strapped in and have been making up for lost time, which means I'm not ever sleeping.

Is it liberating to see a song about queer identity be received so well?

It has been very healing for me to marry who I've always known myself to be with my public career — those things have been separate. But I got incredibly lucky: For the most part, people are kind and receptive. I think that's a testament to where we are now with this younger generation and their own queer experiences. This generation is much more in touch with each other about intentionally building queer circles and opening up the conversation. It's much more open-minded even from when I was in middle school. That means the most to me of anything.

—JOE LYNCH

Biggest Airplay Gain

8

"Enemy"

Imagine Dragons x JID



Biggest Streaming Gain

18

"Ahhh Ha"

Lil Durk



Biggest Sales Gain

22

"'Til You Can't"

Cody Johnson



CAMERON LEVE MOREL AND FORWARD DRAGONS: GABRIEL CATERMOL/ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY; IMAGES: JOHNSON, CHRIS DOUGLAS; DURK: MADON ESTEVES

THE WEEKND: JUSTIN O'NEILL; ARIANA GRANDE: JONATHAN OLLEY; LIL DURK: JEFFREY MATHIAS; IMAGINE DRAGONS: ANDREW HUNTER; ED SHEERAN: ANDREW HUNTER; DOJA CAT: ANDREW HUNTER; MEGAN THEE STALLION: ANDREW HUNTER; DUA LIPA: ANDREW HUNTER; CODY JOHNSON: ANDREW HUNTER; GUNNA: ANDREW HUNTER; YOUNG THUG: ANDREW HUNTER; THE WEEKND & ARIANA GRANDE: ANDREW HUNTER; LIL DURK: ANDREW HUNTER; IMAGINE DRAGONS X JID: ANDREW HUNTER; ED SHEERAN: ANDREW HUNTER; DOJA CAT: ANDREW HUNTER; MEGAN THEE STALLION: ANDREW HUNTER; DUA LIPA: ANDREW HUNTER; CODY JOHNSON: ANDREW HUNTER; GUNNA: ANDREW HUNTER; YOUNG THUG: ANDREW HUNTER. © 2021 BILLBOARD MEDIA LLC AND LUMINATE. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

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ANISH GHOSH



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BILLBOARD 200

5



Rex Orange County *Who Cares?*

The latest set from the bedroom pop singer debuts at No. 1 on Top Alternative Albums (his second chart-topper there) with 35,000 units. Of that sum, album sales comprise 20,000 – bolstered by the album’s availability on vinyl (10,000 sold) and deluxe box sets.

7



for KING & COUNTRY *What Are We Waiting For?*

The brother duo scores its second top 10, matching a career-high rank first achieved with *Burn the Ships* in 2018. *What Are We Waiting For?* also marks its second No. 1 and seventh top 10 entry on Top Christian Albums.

187

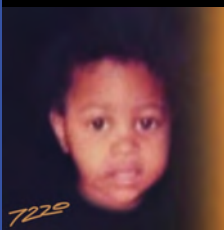


Soundtrack *Turning Red*

While Disney’s *Encanto* falls 1-3 after eight straight weeks atop the Billboard 200 (and nine total at No. 1), the label’s *Turning Red* soundtrack debuts at No. 187, as well as at No. 5 on the Soundtracks chart – where Disney owns half of the top 10.

1

Lil Durk
7220



Lil Durk scores his second No. 1 on the Billboard 200 as 7220 arrives with 120,500 equivalent album units earned in the United States during the week ending March 17, according to Luminate, formerly MRC Data. The total marks Durk’s best week by units for a noncollaborative album: He previously led the chart with the collaborative project *The Voice of the Heroes* with Lil Baby in 2021. 7220, released through Alamo, lands the third-largest week for an album in the 2022 tracking year. Only the debut weeks of Gunna’s *DS4Ever* (150,300; week ending Jan. 13) and The Weeknd’s *Dawn FM* (148,000; the same week) posted larger totals. Durk’s latest studio release is the third No. 1 for Alamo and the first since Sony Music Entertainment acquired the company last June.

—KEITH CAULFIELD

Billboard 200

2 WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Artist	Title	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
			IMPRINT/DISTRIBUTING LABEL			
		1	#1 for 1 WEEK Lil Durk	7220	1	1
		2	Ghost	Impera	2	1
1	1	3	Soundtrack	Encanto	1	16
3	3	4	Morgan Wallen	Dangerous: The Double Album	1	62
		5	Rex Orange County	Who Cares?	5	1
5	6	6	The Weeknd	The Highlights	2	57
		7	for KING & COUNTRY	What Are We Waiting For?	7	1
4	5	8	Gunna	DS4EVER	1	10
6	8	9	Drake	Certified Lover Boy	1	28
10	9	10	Doja Cat	Planet Her	2	38
7	7	11	Olivia Rodrigo	Sour	1	43
2	4	12	Kodak Black	Back For Everything	2	3
71	17	13	Nirvana	Nevermind	1	567
-	2	14	King Von	What It Means To Be King	2	2
17	12	15	Bad Bunny	YHLQMDLG	2	107
15	11	16	Lil Baby	My Turn	1	107
13	38	17	PS Eminem	Curtain Call: The Hits	1	572
12	13	18	Adele	30	1	17
16	15	19	The Weeknd	Dawn FM	2	10
21	20	20	Kendrick Lamar	good kid, m.A.A.d city	2	490



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Megan Thee Stallion and Dua Lipa

GLOBAL 200

12

"Sweetest Pie"

Megan Thee Stallion & Dua Lipa

MEGAN THEE STALLION and Dua Lipa's "Sweetest Pie" soars onto the Billboard Global 200 at No. 12. Released March 11, the track starts with 28.4 million streams and 10,000 downloads sold worldwide in the week ending March 17, according to Luminate, formerly MRC Data.

It also enters the Billboard Hot 100 at

No. 15, making for a rare type of high-profile collaboration: It's one of only six titles by multiple best new artist Grammy Award winners to have hit the chart. (Megan Thee Stallion took home the honor in 2021; Dua Lipa did so two years prior.) The Recording Academy has awarded that trophy since 1959 (the second year that the Grammys were held), but team-ups among winners were fairly uncommon in pop music until relatively recently. The first collaboration by a pair of best new artist winners to reach the Hot 100 was Maroon 5's "Moves Like Jagger," featuring Christina Aguilera. It's also the only such pairing to top the chart, having led for four weeks in 2011.

"Sweetest Pie" becomes the fourth such song to reach the top 15 of the Hot 100, joining "Moves Like Jagger," "Like I'm Gonna Lose You" by Meghan Trainor featuring John Legend (No. 8 peak, 2015) and "Beautiful Mistakes" by Maroon 5 featuring Megan Thee Stallion (No. 13, 2021). "Hallelujah" by Carrie Underwood and Legend (No. 54, 2021) and "All Day Long" by Chance the Rapper featuring Legend (No. 94, 2019) are the other two qualifying collaborations that have reached the Hot 100.

Chance the Rapper won best new artist in 2017, after Trainor in 2016, Underwood in 2007, Legend in 2006, Maroon 5 in 2005 and Aguilera in 2000.

-PAUL GREIN AND GARY TRUST

Global 200

2 WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title	Artist	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
1	1	1	#1 for 4 WEEKS Heat Waves	Glass Animals	1	63
2	2	2	abcdefu	GAYLE	1	18
6	4	3	Stay	The Kid LAROI & Justin Bieber	1	36
5	3	4	Enemy	Imagine Dragons X JID	3	20
4	5	5	Cold Heart (PNAU Remix)	Elton John & Dua Lipa	3	31
3	6	6	We Don't Talk About Bruno	Carolina Gaitan, Mauro Castillo, Adassa, Rhenzy Feliz, Diane Guerrero, Stephanie Beatriz & Encanto Cast	1	12
7	7	7	MAMIII	Becky G X Karol G	4	5
8	8	8	Shivers	Ed Sheeran	3	27
9	9	9	Bad Habits	Ed Sheeran	1	38
11	12	10	Save Your Tears	The Weeknd & Ariana Grande	1	63
10	11	11	Easy On Me	Adele	1	23
HOT SHOT DEBUT		12	Sweetest Pie	Megan Thee Stallion & Dua Lipa	12	1
12	13	13	Industry Baby	Lil Nas X & Jack Harlow	2	34
-	10	14	Bam Bam	Camila Cabello Featuring Ed Sheeran	10	2
15	14	15	Levitating	Dua Lipa	2	76
13	18	16	Desesperados	Rauw Alejandro & Chenchó Corleone	13	13
17	16	17	Ghost	Justin Bieber	16	26
14	15	18	Pepas	Farruko	7	35
-	82	19	GG Envolver	Anitta	19	2
19	17	20	Boyfriend	Dove Cameron	17	5

MARCELO CANTU

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 LUMINATE. TOP MUSIC RETAILERS ACROSS THE GLOBE. SEE CHARTS.LEGENDONBILLBOARD.COM FOR COMPLETE RULES AND EXPLANATIONS. © 2021 BILLBOARD MEDIA LLC AND LUMINATE. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. SALES DATA COMPILED BY LUMINATE

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initial → _____

Bad Bunny onstage at Pechanga Arena in San Diego.

BAD BUNNY, GOOD BUSINESS

THE LATIN STAR'S OPENING SHOWS IN SUPPORT OF *EL ÚLTIMO TOUR DEL MUNDO* SET RECORDS ACROSS U.S. ARENAS

AFTER RECORD-LOW GROSSES IN JANUARY, a wave of new arena tours steered the live-music industry back on course in February. Bad Bunny led the way, earning both the month's No. 1 tour and Boxscore: According to figures reported to Billboard Boxscore, the Latin star's *El Último Tour del Mundo* trek — named after his November 2020 studio album — earned \$39.8 million and sold 183,000 tickets.

With an average of \$3.3 million and 15,240 tickets per show, Bad Bunny sets a blistering pace for the year ahead, led by two shows in February at The Forum in Inglewood, Calif. The two-night stint rules the Top Boxscores chart with \$9.6 million, or \$4.8 million each night, setting a new high as the venue's top per-show earnings, surpassing the Eagles' previous record of \$3 million.

Bad Bunny broke the same per-show record in Dallas, Denver and San Diego and, in terms of total gross, in the Texas cities of El Paso and Hidalgo and in Portland, Ore., setting local records in seven of the nine cities he played in February.

Check Billboard.com for the full report and extended monthly Boxscore charts.

—ERIC FRANKENBERG

Top Tours			
Artist	Gross	Total Attendees	No. Of Shows
1 Bad Bunny	\$39,845,291	182,881	12
2 Elton John	\$25,507,176	122,787	9
3 Billie Eilish	\$20,876,134	160,561	13
4 Eric Church	\$13,899,096	122,617	8
5 Dua Lipa	\$13,523,248	138,638	11
6 Imagine Dragons	\$12,975,236	123,637	11
7 Kacey Musgraves	\$12,549,171	104,107	8
8 Tool	\$11,798,257	102,425	9
9 TWICE	\$11,175,207	76,762	6
10 John Mayer	\$9,234,645	62,115	5

Top Boxscores				
	Artist(s) VENUE DATE	Gross TICKET PRICES	Total Attendees NO. OF SHOWS	Promoter(s)
1	Bad Bunny THE FORUM, INGLEWOOD, CALIF. FEB. 25-26	\$9,648,608 \$505/\$62	33,245 2	Cárdenas Marketing Network
2	Electric Daisy Carnival AUTÓDROMO HERMANOS RODRÍGUEZ, MEXICO CITY FEB. 25-27	\$9,488,617 \$41.01	231,361 3	OCESA
3	Bad Bunny AMERICAN AIRLINES CENTER, DALLAS FEB. 18-19	\$8,522,949 \$502/\$51	35,730 2	Cárdenas Marketing Network
4	Elton John MADISON SQUARE GARDEN, NEW YORK FEB. 22-23	\$6,860,968 \$249.50/\$69.50	29,893 2	AEG Presents
5	Billy Joel ALLEGIAN STADIUM, LAS VEGAS FEB. 26	\$6,220,345 \$179.50/\$69.50	35,704 1	Live Nation
6	George Strait T-MOBILE ARENA, LAS VEGAS FEB. 11-12	\$5,985,487 \$399/\$50	34,564 2	Messina Touring Group/AEG Presents
7	Elton John UNITED CENTER, CHICAGO FEB. 4-5	\$5,436,666 \$249.50/\$69.50	30,467 2	AEG Presents
8	Bad Bunny TOYOTA CENTER, HOUSTON FEB. 16-17	\$5,220,928 \$502/\$51	30,661 2	Cárdenas Marketing Network
9	Elton John LITTLE CAESARS ARENA, DETROIT FEB. 8-9	\$5,175,499 \$249.50/\$69.50	28,278 2	AEG Presents
10	John Mayer MADISON SQUARE GARDEN, NEW YORK FEB. 20-21	\$5,000,390 \$269.50/\$69.50	28,509 2	Live Nation

DANIEL KNIGHTON/GETTY IMAGES



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The Anti-Recidivism Coalition (ARC) works to end mass incarceration. To ensure our communities are safe, healthy, and whole, ARC empowers formerly and currently incarcerated people to thrive by providing a support network, comprehensive reentry services, and opportunities to advocate for policy change. Through our grassroots policy advocacy, we are dedicated to transforming the criminal justice system so that it is more just and equitable for all people.

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Our Top Music Lawyer honorees — Steve Butler, Brad Cohen, Jon Glass, Chris Head, Tim Meade, Maryrose Maness, Paul Robinson, and Trent Tappe — have chosen to spotlight the Anti-Recidivism Coalition (ARC) for their commitment to providing advocacy and support for formerly incarcerated individuals.

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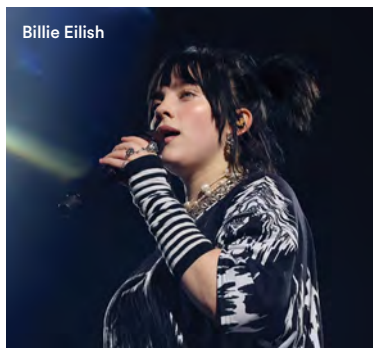
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Top Venues

15,001 OR MORE CAPACITY

	Venue LOCATION	Total Gross	Total Attendees	No. Of Shows
1	Madison Square Garden NEW YORK	\$27,232,524	169,176	12
2	The Forum INGLEWOOD, CALIF.	\$16,654,516	85,198	6
3	T-Mobile Arena LAS VEGAS	\$12,351,721	78,483	5
4	UBS Arena ELMONT, N.Y.	\$11,795,611	122,164	12
5	Crypto.com Arena LOS ANGELES	\$11,728,427	81,415	7
6	American Airlines Center DALLAS	\$11,490,824	64,114	4
7	TD Garden BOSTON	\$9,405,367	147,986	19
8	State Farm Arena ATLANTA	\$9,277,586	75,296	7
9	Prudential Center NEWARK, N.J.	\$9,170,115	72,382	8
10	Capital One Arena WASHINGTON, D.C.	\$7,882,117	64,937	13



Billie Eilish



Elton John

10,001-15,000 CAPACITY

	Venue LOCATION	Total Gross	Total Attendees	No. Of Shows
1	OVO Hydro GLASGOW	\$4,728,952	63,820	10
2	Pechanga Arena San Diego SAN DIEGO	\$4,549,467	27,335	3
3	MGM Grand Garden LAS VEGAS	\$3,506,957	21,403	2
4	Don Haskins Center EL PASO, TEXAS	\$2,592,134	16,498	2
5	CHI Health Center OMAHA, NEB.	\$2,504,828	25,675	2
6	Bon Secours Wellness Arena GREENVILLE, S.C.	\$2,015,330	13,154	2
7	First Direct Arena LEEDS, ENGLAND	\$1,793,676	28,479	5
8	Michelob ULTRA Arena LAS VEGAS	\$1,771,760	14,345	2
9	Van Andel Arena GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.	\$1,429,721	44,376	9
10	Atlantic City Boardwalk Hall ATLANTIC CITY, N.J.	\$1,311,650	16,589	2



Eric Church

5,001-10,000 CAPACITY

	Venue LOCATION	Total Gross	Total Attendees	No. Of Shows
1	Hard Rock Live at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino HOLLYWOOD, FLA.	\$6,578,341	39,139	7
2	Radio City Music Hall NEW YORK	\$3,450,352	46,017	8
3	Auditorio Telmex GUADALAJARA, MEXICO	\$2,614,953	47,369	7
4	Mohegan Sun Arena UNCASVILLE, CONN.	\$2,519,722	44,665	9
5	Auditorio Nacional MEXICO CITY	\$2,339,001	37,370	6
6	Payne Arena HIDALGO, TEXAS	\$1,944,665	8,107	2
7	The Anthem WASHINGTON, D.C.	\$1,581,626	31,259	9
8	Enmarket Arena SAVANNAH, GA.	\$1,412,370	11,346	2
9	Microsoft Theater LOS ANGELES	\$1,319,190	18,070	4
10	Shrine Auditorium LOS ANGELES	\$1,174,552	12,071	2

5,000 OR LESS CAPACITY

	Venue LOCATION	Total Gross	Total Attendees	No. Of Shows
1	Resorts World Theatre LAS VEGAS	\$6,146,344	34,112	9
2	DeVos Performance Hall GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.	\$5,250,105	44,612	21
3	Chicago Theatre CHICAGO	\$2,754,164	44,788	14
4	Beacon Theatre NEW YORK	\$2,399,567	28,178	11
5	Durham Performing Arts Center DURHAM, N.C.	\$2,292,698	34,016	15
6	Orpheum Theatre MINNEAPOLIS	\$2,050,573	28,328	13
7	Rosemont Theatre ROSEMONT, ILL.	\$1,416,402	14,133	4
8	James L. Knight Center MIAMI	\$1,405,361	17,055	6
9	The Mission Ballroom DENVER	\$1,250,767	31,967	10
10	Abraham Chavez Theatre EL PASO, TEXAS	\$1,006,857	14,218	7

CHURCH: CHRISTOPHER POLK FOR VARIETY; EILISH: MIKE COPPOLA/GETTY IMAGES; JOHN: GREG ALLEN/INVISION/AP

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TOP COUNTRY ALBUMS



NO. 1

Dangerous Ties No. 1 Mark

Morgan Wallen's *Dangerous: The Double Album* leads *Billboard's* Top Country Albums chart for a record-matching 50th week. The project — which won album of the year at the Academy of Country Music Awards on March 7 — scored 46,000 equivalent units (up 1%) in the week ending March 17, according to Luminate, formerly MRC Data.

Dating to the launch of Top Country Albums in January 1964, *Dangerous* equals the lengthy No. 1 runs of Luke Combs' *This One's for You* and Shania Twain's *Come on Over*, starting in June 2017 and November 1997, respectively. Randy Travis' *Always & Forever* (43 weeks, beginning in June 1987) and Garth Brooks' *No Fences* (41 weeks, starting in October 1990) round out the top five longest commands.

With 30 songs, *Dangerous* debuted at No. 1 on the Top Country Albums chart dated Jan. 23, 2021. This issue, the album's current single, "Wasted on You," jumps 19-13 on Hot Country Songs.

—JIM ASKER

Top Country Albums				
LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Artist	Title	WKS. ON CHART
		IMPRINT/DISTRIBUTING LABEL		
1	1	#1 for 50 WEEKS Morgan Wallen BIG LOUD/REPUBLIC	Dangerous: The Double Album	62
2	2	Taylor Swift REPUBLIC	Red (Taylor's Version)	18
3	3	Luke Combs RIVER HOUSE/COLUMBIA NASHVILLE/SMN	What You See Is What You Get	123
5	4	Luke Combs RIVER HOUSE/COLUMBIA NASHVILLE/SMN	This One's For You	250
6	5	Morgan Wallen BIG LOUD	If I Know Me	198
7	6	Walker Hayes MONUMENT	Country Stuff: The Album	8
9	7	Chris Stapleton MERCURY NASHVILLE/UMGN	Traveller	359
8	8	Chris Stapleton MERCURY NASHVILLE/UMGN	Starting Over	70
10	9	Cody Johnson COJO/WARNER MUSIC NASHVILLE/WMN	Human: The Double Album	23
11	10	Gabby Barrett WARNER MUSIC NASHVILLE/WMN	Goldmine	91

RHYTHMIC AIRPLAY



NO. 1

With 'Woman,' Doja Cat Sets Female Record

Doja Cat's dominance on Rhythmic Airplay continues as "Woman" rises to No. 1 from the runner-up spot. The single reaches the chart's summit after a 13% surge in plays in the week ending March 20, according to Luminate, formerly MRC Data.

"Woman" is the fourth No. 1 from the singer's *Planet Her* album after "Kiss Me More" featuring SZA, "You Right" with The Weeknd and "Need To Know." The collection makes Doja Cat's album the first by a woman to earn four No. 1s on Rhythmic Airplay, passing three each from Mariah Carey's *Daydream* (1995-96), Beyoncé's *Dangerously in Love* (2003-04) and Cardi B's *Invasion of Privacy* (2017-18).

The new chart-topper leads RCA Records to a top-four shutout for a second straight week, with SZA, Latto and Chris Brown at Nos. 2-4, respectively. "As promotion people, we're competitive by nature," says RCA senior vp of promotion for rhythmic Kevin Valentini, "but it's even better when you're competing against yourself."

—TREVOR ANDERSON

Rhythmic Airplay				
LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title	Artist	WKS. ON CHART
		IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL		
2	1	#1 for 1 WEEK Woman KEMOSABE/RCA	Doja Cat	13
1	2	I Hate U TOP DAWG/RCA	SZA	13
3	3	Big Energy STREAMCUT/RCA	Latto	24
4	4	Iffy CBE/RCA	Chris Brown	9
7	5	Pushin P GUNNA/YOUNG STONER LIFE/300	Gunna & Future Featuring Young Thug	9
6	6	Super Gremlin SNIPER GANG/ATLANTIC	Kodak Black	14
10	7	Peru YBNL NATION/EMPIRE	Fireboy DML & Ed Sheeran	11
5	8	Beautiful Lies VANDROSS/EMPIRE	Yung Bleu & Kehlani	20
14	9	Hrs And Hrs SUPERGIANT	Muni Long	8
8	10	Need To Know KEMOSABE/RCA	Doja Cat	29



Congratulations to Greg Lapidus
on being recognized post-retirement among
Billboard's 2022 Top Music Lawyers

Congratulations Greg on your many years of great service to so many and on this much-deserved recognition.

All your friends and colleagues at **Disney** Music Group will miss your guidance, wit and wisdom.

Thank you for helping make the magic and for making our world a better place.

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ON BEING NAMED TO

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MUSIC AND MONEY

PG. 24 TIKTOK'S DISTRIBUTION PLAY

PG. 26 GAMIFYING NFTs

PG. 28 THE UKRAINE WAR'S EFFECT ON TOURING



The New Old Guard

A close examination of the 10,000 most streamed songs reveals that contemporary artists like Drake, Taylor Swift and The Weeknd and TikTok are driving the catalog boom more than legacy acts

BY GLENN PEOPLES AND STEVE KNOPPER // ILLUSTRATION BY MARK HARRIS

AT THE BEGINNING of the year, Luminate, formerly MRC Data, issued its 2021 annual report, which revealed that catalog music — traditionally considered a track that's over 18 months old, although the term has different meanings in different situations — increased its share of U.S. music consumption from 65.1% in 2020 to 69.8% last year. The initial interpretation of that data was that, a year and counting into the pandemic, listeners were self-soothing with nostalgic songs — Fleetwood Mac, not Doja Cat.

But a closer examination by *Billboard* reveals a much different picture. Listeners are increasingly gravitating to catalog tracks, but in the first six weeks of 2022, the average age of the 100 most streamed songs was just 20 months old (compared with eight months in 2020), according to Luminate.

And for that same time period, the top 10,000 most streamed songs includes dozens of catalog tracks by contemporary artists such as Drake (82), Taylor Swift (81), The Weeknd (40) and Post Malone (31) (see chart, page 22).

With legacy artists such as Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, Stevie Nicks, Paul Simon and others selling their publishing catalogs of mostly 40- to 50-year-old tracks for hundreds of millions of dollars, Kevin Gore, president of both global catalog and Arts Music for Warner Music Group, says, "It's a headline-grabber, but it's not accurate" to look at the data and conclude old songs rule the music business. "It's better seen when you dig into it," he adds.

"The second you say 'catalog,' the assumption is it's all icons and heritage artists," Gore says. "But there's some really amazing and valuable content

Clockwise from left: Freddie Mercury of Queen, Drake, Taylor Swift, The Weeknd, George Strait and Stevie Nicks.

that's becoming catalog just because of its age. You're seeing Dua Lipa and Ed Sheeran and Bruno Mars — high-performing tracks and albums."

These shallow catalog tracks constitute a middle ground between current hits by artists (songs less than 18 months old) and museum-quality classics by The Beatles and Jimi Hendrix. Of the 132 titles Swift has in the top 10,000 most streamed songs, just 51 are current, compared with the 81 considered to be catalog. Eight of Ariana Grande's 33 tracks are current; the rest qualify as catalog.

Of the top 10,000 tracks, those less than 18 months old accounted for 28% of that total, according to *Billboard's* analysis of Luminate data. The remaining 72% were almost evenly split between tracks younger and older than 10 years old. In other words, 63% of the top 10,000 tracks were released in the last decade.

"There used to be a very easy way to define what is catalog and what isn't catalog. That's just not what it is right now," RCA Records COO John Fleckenstein says. "Whatever the context is right now, people are going to consume, regardless of when it came out. We may not be talking about The Beatles today, but if something happens with The Beatles tomorrow, it might become a big

Sony Music's acquisition of AWAL was fully cleared by the United Kingdom's competition watchdog.

Spotify signed a long-term sponsorship deal with European soccer club FC Barcelona.

QUEEN: FINGUSTELLO/REDFERNS; DRAKE: ROBER KISBY FOR WWD; SWIFT: JEFF KRANTZ/FILMMAGIC; WEEKND: KEVIN MAZON/GETTY IMAGES; NICKS: SHIRAZ PAULI; STRAIT: NATHANIEL PHARES

Investment group **Tempo Music** is exploring a potential sale of its catalog.

Warner Music acquired leading MENA music distributor Qanawat Music.

thing. It really just changes every single time.”

Labels’ catalog divisions traditionally spent most of their time focusing on the real oldies, releasing greatest-hits compilations, box sets and anniversary reissues of classic-rock albums. But the growing strength of recent catalog by contemporary artists presents new marketing opportunities. All three majors have separate divisions devoted to catalog: Universal Music Enterprises (UME), Sony Legacy and Warner’s Rhino Entertainment. Their staffs spend much of their time arranging projects like anniversary reissues, but they’re frequently pressed into service to handle Fleetwood Mac’s “Dreams” or Billy Joel’s “Zanzibar” when they take off through TikTok — which has played an outsized role in this evolution — or TV and film synchs.

At some point, a major label will move a release from front-line status to its catalog division (and by industry consensus, once that happens, that track or album cannot be reclassified as current). So, when singer-songwriter Elley Duhé’s January 2020 song “Middle of the Night” went viral after inexplicably blowing up on TikTok in Turkey and Russia, RCA, which handles Duhé’s catalog (she is no longer a Sony artist), had to determine whether its catalog or front-line team would oversee marketing the single. The latter got the nod “because the front-line team still has a good relationship with [Duhé], and we picked back up and leaned in,” Fleckenstein says. Decisions like that, he says, are “really specific to the artist.”

When, for example, Kygo remixed catalog megastar Whitney Houston’s cover of Steve Winwood’s “Higher Love” in 2019, which ultimately drew 670 million streams on Spotify alone, the DJ-producer’s front-line team worked the track with close involvement from Sony Legacy catalog staff, says Lyn Koppe, Sony executive vp of global catalog for Legacy Recordings. “Sometimes we don’t use the word ‘catalog’; we just say ‘hits.’”

Koppe compares the two different teams to hospital doctors — those in the emergency room react to urgent situations that need to be dealt with immediately, while those in other departments handle surgeries and other procedures that can be scheduled far in advance. “That works really well,” she says. “But it can sometimes be distracting. If you have a long-term plan, if you have a reactive moment, it can be a little bit schizophrenic.”

UME reps did not respond to requests for comment on this story, while at WMG, Gore says “great partnerships” between the front-line and catalog labels means “we don’t get into a lot of debates about when we jump in and when we don’t.” **B**

MARKET WATCH

24B

↑0.1%

TOTAL ON-DEMAND STREAMS WEEK OVER WEEK

Number of audio and video on-demand streams for the week ending March 17.

17.5M

↑0.2%

ALBUM CONSUMPTION UNITS WEEK OVER WEEK

Album sales plus track-equivalent albums plus streaming-equivalent albums for the week ending March 17.

254B

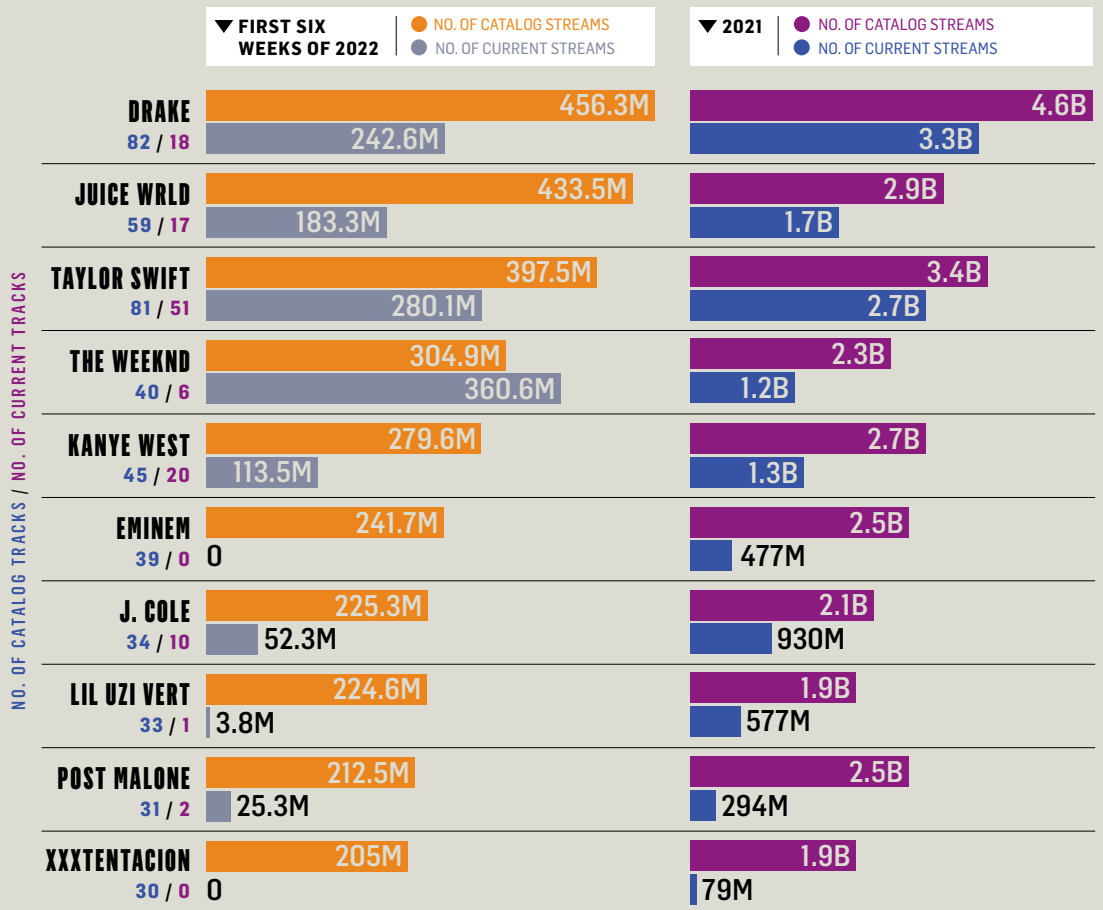
↑12%

TOTAL ON-DEMAND STREAMS YEAR OVER YEAR TO DATE

Number of audio and video streams for 2022 so far over the same period in 2021.

TOP 10 CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS

RANKED BY CATALOG STREAMS

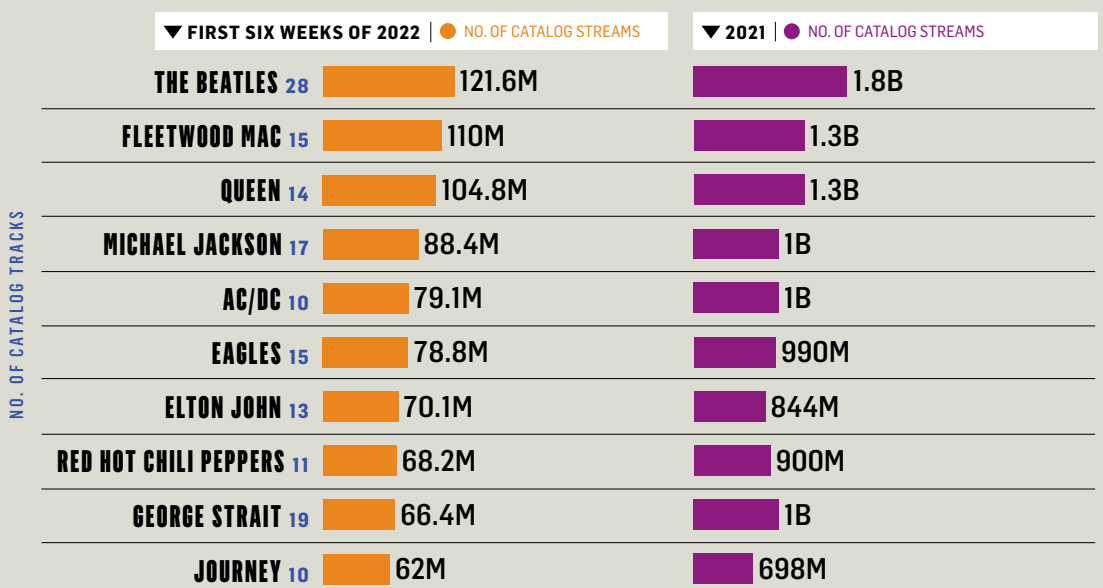


The top 10 contemporary artists are the artists with the most catalog streams in the first six weeks of 2022 based on analysis of the top 10,000 audio on-demand streams from Luminate. The chart provides the numbers of catalog tracks and current tracks each artist has in the top 10,000. The chart also provides the total number of catalog and current streams for each artist’s entire repertoire in 2021.

Source Luminate, formerly MRC Data

TOP 10 LEGACY ARTISTS

RANKED BY CATALOG STREAMS



The top 10 catalog artists are the legacy artists with the most catalog streams in the first six weeks of 2022 based on analysis of only their catalog tracks in the top 10,000 audio on-demand streams from Luminate. *Billboard* defines a legacy artist as having a recording history of over 25 years and no current tracks in the top 100. The chart also provides the total number of catalog streams for each artist’s entire repertoire in 2021.

Source Luminate, formerly MRC Data



Joel Katz



Jason Karlov

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Live Nation partnered with Verizon to outfit venues with 5G access.

K-pop label **JYP Entertainment** announced a "full scale" expansion in the United States.

TikTok's New Sound

The platform moves further into the music world with its marketing and distribution service **BY DAN RYS**

C **HLOE ADAMS HAD RACKED UP** 1 million followers on TikTok through her bedroom-pop covers of Lil Nas X, Shania Twain and Justin Bieber, as well as her own music, when someone from the platform contacted her late last year with a question: Would she want to be among the first artists to use its new in-app marketing and distribution tool, SoundOn, to release her next original song, "Dirty Thoughts"?

Adams was already using one of the few dozen digital distributors that, for a small fee, will ensure that an artist's music is uploaded and available across all streaming services and digital sellers — joining the deluge of the 60,000 songs uploaded to Spotify daily. But TikTok's proposition was appealing: SoundOn, still in beta at the time, could not only offer that same distribution, but it would also give her a dedicated relationship within TikTok to help promote her songs on the app, as well as share best practices of what works and what doesn't within its algorithm. And she would get paid streaming royalties directly through the platform, rather than waiting for an outside distributor to collect them or relying on the ancillary brand sponsorship that would come in as a result of her exploits on TikTok, as most creators do.

"TikTok is literally one of the only places nowadays to get your music heard as an independent artist, so it seemed like a no-brainer to me," Adams says. And the partnership paid off. After "Dirty Thoughts" began to pick up on its own, the TikTok team chipped in with marketing, like placing a banner on its homepage and putting the track in front of other creators to use in their videos. The song has racked up 10 million Spotify streams since its November release; Adams' TikTok following has jumped to 1.4 million, and she signed with TaP Management, which also reps Lana Del Rey and Ellie Goulding, though she has thus far declined label offers.

"In this day and age, breaking an artist is harder and takes longer than it ever has before, but one of the quickest ways to help break an artist is via TikTok," says Tony Beard, Adams' manager at TaP. "Your relationship with SoundOn gives you that extra edge over any other artist. It's a money-can't-buy relationship. Your competitors who are signed to a major label might have all the creator marketing funds to throw it into the world, but I just find that extra relationship with TikTok is key in launching a new artist."

On March 9, TikTok brought SoundOn out of beta. The platform has captured the pop culture zeitgeist — and,



in doing so, has become an essential tool for both rising creators and the music business, with labels and managers using it to discover talent, promote and market songs, and stay on top of trends.

"There are already lots of artists getting discovered on TikTok and then finding success on Spotify and Apple, getting signed to record-label deals," says TikTok global head of music Ole Obermann, a Warner Music Group veteran who joined the service at the end of 2019. "So we're just trying to figure out how we make this better for the musical creator so that we, ideally, have every aspiring musician in the world thinking, 'I want to start my musical career on TikTok.'"

That creates some tension with the music industry, with SoundOn raising a familiar question in the digital age: Can artists make it outside the label system?

TikTok is not the first platform to experiment in the music business. In 2018, Spotify announced a direct upload option for artists who wanted to skirt the label system, while partnering with DistroKid to allow distribution to other digital service providers — an initiative that sputtered out after nine months. More recently, SoundCloud repositioned itself as both a streaming service and an artist-services company. But TikTok is different. More social media platform than streaming service, it grew from music-inspired roots — emerging from the predecessor app Musical.ly in 2017 — but has been late to embrace the music business, finalizing its current deals with the labels by February 2021 and not stoking the same kinds of fears that Spotify did, when many thought the streaming platform was directly threatening the labels' business model.

"There was always this conversation about, at any moment, the major labels would be in trouble if Apple or Spotify created record labels," says Milk & Honey founder/president Lucas Keller. "But being Capitol Records is a pain in the ass. You have to do customer service, talk to artists, make records, deal with egos — it's a lot of work.

For a tech company, there's no [artificial intelligence] to deal with a difficult artist. The tech companies don't want that headache."

In that respect, TikTok's forays into the music space align more with YouTube's, a relationship that stalled into a type of cold war between the Google-owned video platform and music labels over the perceived "value gap" between the revenue YouTube was generating from music and the payments that the labels received. One industry source decried TikTok's payments as lower than most other partners in the business, adding that TikTok has used its ever-growing importance to the music industry to push for lower rates and noting that the terms of service for SoundOn amount to an artist signing his or her life away. (Keller agrees that the terms — which include granting rights that are "irrevocable" with a worldwide license to "copy, modify, correct [and] edit" — constitute a "vague list of bad words"; Obermann stresses that they include "a pretty flexible exit clause" should artists want to sign a label deal after using SoundOn.)

Another industry source, however, points out that while it took years for YouTube to repair its label relationships, ultimately the platform rolled out a paid subscription service in 2018 and beefed up its label- and artist-services divisions. Some see the relationship with TikTok evolving in a similar way, with labels eventually being able to utilize some of the tools held in reserve for SoundOn acts while also finding ways to extract additional value from TikTok.

Ultimately, TikTok's position on the cutting edge of music discovery is enticing for rising artists.

"To have the expertise of the people who work there to help support you and make sure you understand the platform — shit, it's game-changing," says Rashad Tyler, co-founder of Supergiant Records and co-manager of Muni Long, who used SoundOn to help promote her breakout hit, "Hrs and Hrs." "Because you need any advantage you can get. It's the most competitive environment in the world." **B**



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GOOD WORKS

UMG UNVEILS RX FOR CREATIVES

► **JOHN DUFILHO** hadn't had a routine physical in 10 years when the email from Universal Music Publishing Group arrived last fall. The film/TV composer and frontman of indie rock band The Deathray Davies worked as an independent contractor and could not afford health insurance.

That changed when Dufilho, 52, learned that UMPG, which handles his publishing, and parent company Universal Music Group (UMG) had partnered with Music Health Alliance (MHA), a Nashville-based nonprofit that since 2013 has saved 18,000 musicians and industry workers an estimated \$85 million in health care costs by helping them find insurance and navigate other health-care issues, including counseling for survivors of the 2017 Route 91 Harvest festival mass shooting. Its services are free.

Dufilho finally got that physical, and as the doctor listened to his heart, she "got this look on her face that you don't want to see," he says. Over

Christmas, he underwent quintuple bypass surgery. "Opening that email saved me," he says.

Dufilho is far from the only beneficiary of the program launched by UMG and MHA last April. In its first year, the initiative, which the music company has kept under wraps until



Allsep

now, helped 333 UMG and UMPG independent contractors — including many legacy artists — saving them more than \$5.3 million in health care costs, estimates MHA founder/CEO Tatum Hauck Allsep. The emails went to anyone who had ever been signed to or released an album through a UMG label or was a qualifying UMPG songwriter.

UMG senior vp of royalties and copyright James Harrington realized many creatives were losing their insurance during the pandemic, and he and Susan Mazo, UMG executive vp of global corporate social responsibility, events and special projects, led the team that devised the program, which included funding two UMG-dedicated positions at MHA. "This was not a hard sell," Harrington says.

Allsep hopes the UMG affiliation will broaden MHA's reach, especially within "communities of color," she says. "We had a number of artists from Detroit, Chicago — areas where we didn't have a lot of outreach — call." She also hopes other music companies will follow UMG's lead, adding that Sony Music recently contacted her.

Mazo says UMG plans to market the program to its creatives to increase awareness and would like to eventually include mental health care. She adds: "This is going to be a long partnership with Tatum and her team." —MELINDA NEWMAN



Next Level NFTs

Gamification unlocks ongoing conversations with fans, but comes with demands **BY KATIE BAIN**

FROM DETROIT TO BERLIN to the metaverse, electronic dance music has always had a symbiotic relationship with technology's cutting edge. Now history is repeating itself as a mega-festival lineup's worth of electronic artists — including stars like deadmau5, Steve Aoki and Claude VonStroke — have emerged as early adopters and innovators of non-fungible tokens. And some are pushing it a step further, unlocking the potential of NFTs to engage their audience through gamification.

Vivie-Ann Bakos — the DJ, producer and label owner who performs as Blond:ish — initially got into NFTs as a way of offering value to hardcore fans who were spending upwards of 12 hours a day on her Twitch channel, Abracadabra TV, during the pandemic. Bakos emphasizes that the value of many NFTs is not just the piece of music or visual art itself. Rather, NFTs — as programmable assets that can contain access to airdrops, events, merchandise and more — can offer continued value and create ongoing conversations with fans that aren't reliant on the opaque algorithms of centralized platforms like Instagram or Facebook.

"It feels like music now has more purpose for the intended medium and message," Bakos says. But the work on these sorts of NFTs is ongoing and demanding. "You can't just put something out and [expect] it's going to be successful," says Bakos. "There's this whole layer of gamifying, or leaving breadcrumbs along the way. You always have to keep the community engaged. Otherwise they'll just sell the NFT and say

'bye-bye,' so it actually adds a lot of stress."

Such gamification adds an interactive element that turns any given NFT into a sort of video game, with varying degrees of technical, conceptual and visual complexity. One example is a January NFT drop by German dance-world veteran Boys Noize, whose "Rave Pigs" collection featured 6,666 generative tokens featuring characters made in homage to Berlin's underground electronic scene. Each of these 6,666 characters was assembled by its purchaser using combinations of 129 traits, spread out over 10 visual categories and five audio layers, making for over 50 trillion potential combinations. Thus, each token was ultimately one-of-a-kind, as designed by its owner — who is also that NFT's rights holder.

"You think it's just a picture, but then in the code, that's where all the magic is," says Bakos of the collection.

Gamifying requires partnering with a Web3 developer who, working in tandem with designers and 3D visual artists, can take the artist's vision for an NFT — or help the artist create one — then turn it into something mintable, functional and, hopefully, cool and resonant. "There's this whole new level of collaboration that happens," says Bakos. "Artists can't just do it themselves." The amount of tech required to gamify NFTs is one of the reasons Web3 agencies, which represent development teams, designers, artists and others, are a gold rush area of the electronic music industry.

But while gamification is a fun way to make an NFT stand out, MODA DAO co-founder Sean Gardner says the success of a gamified NFT is ultimately less about its entertainment aspect and more about how it creates the opportunity to be "an active participant in a creator's ecosystem — with tangible outcomes" like the rights to music and artwork.

"By comparison," Gardner adds, "the outcome of my contributions toward playlisting and referrals just adds value to Spotify." **b**

For more in-depth reporting on music-related blockchain, NFTs and crypto, see "A Musician's Guide To Web3" at [billboard.com/pro/deep-dive](https://www.billboard.com/pro/deep-dive).

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Sony Music Latin-Iberia acquired a stake in Walter Kolm's WK Records.

Australia's **Mushroom Group** struck a multitiered partnership with Virgin Music.



'WE CAN'T LET RUSSIA CHANGE OUR LIVES'

As the Ukraine war rages, Polish promoters hope Warsaw will remain a must-play market

BY RICHARD SMIRKE

WARSAW, POLAND — Before the global pandemic, Poland's live-music industry had experienced two consecutive record years, in 2018 and 2019, for both local and international acts. "It was absolutely booming," says Mikołaj Ziółkowski, president of SOIAR, the Polish promoters association. Now the Russian invasion of neighboring Ukraine — including a March 13 Russian missile strike on a military training base 15 miles from the Polish border — has created new tensions in a country that has long embraced Western touring artists.

In 1984, Iron Maiden became the first Western rock band to perform in Poland, launching its World Slavery tour with five dates there before going on to play other former Soviet Bloc countries. Ever since, Warsaw has been a must-play city for touring rock acts, as well as a crucial stop on the way to Moscow for artists like Metallica, Bon Jovi and Ed Sheeran. But Russian aggression against Ukraine means that Warsaw will be the easternmost stop on the line this summer.

The escalation in hostilities so close to Poland — a NATO member since 1999 — has stoked fears among many live-music executives about the war's potential impact on touring in Eastern and Central Europe. "During the last few weeks, almost every tour manager is asking us if it is still safe to come here," says Joanna Muszyńska, marketing manager at promoter FKP Scorpio Poland, which has a sold-out five-date national tour by British rock band Skunk Anansie beginning May 2 and two stadium shows by Sheeran in August. "My message is always the same," she says. "Nothing has changed, and there is nothing to be afraid of."

But for the European live-music industry, the war in Ukraine has both heightened concerns around security risks for touring acts and raised infrastructure and supply chain issues, which now threaten to disrupt the live business at the very moment it seems poised to return after two years of pandemic-forced closures.

"It's a dramatic situation," says Dieter Semmelmann, CEO of German promoter

Semmel Concerts. "We almost survived the pandemic, and now we suddenly have a war situation in Europe — something that hasn't been there for decades and that you couldn't imagine."

Poland, which borders Ukraine and Belarus and has a population of 38 million, is the biggest live-music market near Russia. It's hard to obtain accurate figures about the value of the concert business in Poland, but executives there report a thriving sector where average ticket prices range from 130 to 750 zloty (\$30 to \$175). Billboard Boxscore showed an average ticket price of \$84.26 for eight concerts.

Since mid-2017, Warsaw's PGE Narodowy Stadium has hosted eight shows that collectively grossed \$35.7 million and sold 423,806 tickets, averaging \$4.5 million and 53,000 per show. The Rolling Stones had a top ticket price of \$515 in 2018, but none of the other shows asked for more than \$150 per ticket, with Beyoncé & Jay-Z and P!nk offering tickets between \$20 and \$30, according to Billboard Boxscore.

Executives in Poland are confident that Russian forces won't target the country and throw its burgeoning live-music industry into turmoil. "We can't let Russia change our lives," says Ziółkowski, who is also CEO of independent promoter Alter Art, which runs Poland's biggest summer music festival, Open'er Festival, which will take place June 29-July 2 in Gdynia with a lineup that includes Doja Cat, Dua Lipa, Imagine Dragons and twenty one pilots. "The strategy is to keep everything going on," says Ziółkowski, "and do some fundraising to help."

Temporary refugee centers have been set up at PGE Narodowy Stadium and the capital city's 6,000-capacity COS Torwar Arena to help the 2 million-plus Ukrainian refugees who have entered Poland since Feb. 24. (A March 16 Lumineers show at COS Torwar was canceled as a result and will be rescheduled at a future date.)

Muszyńska says her four colleagues in FKP Scorpio Poland's Warsaw office have all taken in refugees and are dividing time between work and helping those in need — and across Poland, people have responded to the growing refugee crisis in a similar way. "I am waiting ages for replies from catering companies, from transport companies, from graphic designers," says Muszyńska, "because we are all involved in this war, and we are all trying to help as much as possible."

Beyond the human suffering, the conflict is driving up inflation across Europe, in particular food and energy prices, leaving consumers with less discretionary income. Live executives are reporting slower ticket sales since the start of the war.

Increasing production costs and supply chain issues are also hitting promoters' bottom lines, with costs rising by up to 300% for basic production supplies like staging, lighting and rigger equipment that had already been in short supply, say executives. As a result, promoters have been forced to lower artist-fee offers by around 20% compared with before the war.

With Ukraine and Russia — where artist fees rank among the highest in Central and Eastern Europe — closed for the foreseeable future, promoters in Poland say they are fielding calls about replacing dates in those countries with additional shows in Poland and other European countries.

Lessons learned during the pandemic, when rearranging shows and supply chain issues became regular occurrences, are helping promoters navigate the current uncertainty. "We've been in crisis management for two years already," says Ziółkowski. "So we are used to it." **b**

Additional reporting by Dave Brooks.

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From The Desk Of...

Alejandro Duque

PRESIDENT, WARNER MUSIC
LATIN AMERICA

BY LEILA COBO

PHOTOGRAPHED BY MARY BETH KOETH

WHEN ALEJANDRO DUQUE was growing up in Bogotá, Colombia, he would spend time after school at the studios of Sonolux, the storied independent label where his father was president. "I wasn't doing much more than getting in the way — acting as a gopher and working the mail room," he says. "But I loved it."

Whether by nurture or nature, that Duque would end up in the music business seemed a foregone conclusion. His studio forays continued after his family moved to Miami when he was in his late teens, followed by a degree from the Berklee College of Music, where he studied music business. Now, at 39, Duque has become the youngest head of a Latin multinational, having been named



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Rebecca Allen and **Jo Charrington** were named co-presidents of EMI and Capitol Records UK.

Former Nike executive **Hilary Krane** was hired as Creative Artists Agency's chief legal officer.

president of Warner Music Latin America last August, with a purview over the United States and Latin America.

His appointment follows 17 years at Universal, where he started as new media manager at Universal Colombia in 2005 and left as managing director of Universal Music Latin last year. In between came stints in Argentina, Brazil and the United States in business development and digital — all of which made him a desirable candidate to helm a diverse and quickly transforming region.

Duque, who lives in Miami with his wife and 6-year-old son, appears far younger than his 39 years, but don't let the baby face deceive you. He is affable but steel-willed, and he has been busy since taking over Warner last fall, preparing for the release of a new album from Brazilian pop star Anitta (whose reggaetón-flavored "Envolver" debuted at No. 31 on *Billboard's* Hot Latin Songs chart on March 14, four months after its release), signing Mexican-American emo-corrido sensation DannyLux (who built his following on TikTok) and restructuring Warner Music Latin America for the 21st century.

You held jobs in digital and business development in the late 2000s, when the Latin market transitioned definitively to digital. What lessons did you take away?

Everyone has the same data. You have to know how to interpret it. Having experience in data tendencies and how consumers behave lets you apply that to marketing and release strategies.

Give me an example.

Anitta's "Envolver" came out last November, and it did OK. Then we released a remix with Justin Quiles and began to notice that the remix and the original displayed different consumption tendencies. Anitta's dance [from the video] began to go viral, and we started to see consumption spikes in markets that weren't her natural markets, like Mexico and the West Coast. When that happens, you seek out those markets and start to invest in them and look for new creations around the content. Both versions of the song started to grow because of the targeted marketing and the choreography, which we amplified on TikTok. Anitta posted a tutorial of how to dance "Envolver" without getting hurt and it has spurred dozens of other videos. Each platform's algorithm is different — TikTok rewards many creations with the same sound. When you understand that, you can design a marketing plan focused on each platform.

What are the limitations of data?

Many times you see the overall data, but you don't necessarily know who the end user is. I can't say what X person is doing right now. We try to address that by segmenting the audience as much as possible and targeting specific audiences. But sometimes you do everything right and the music doesn't connect. I always say we're very good at throwing gasoline onto the fire. But the spark is the song.

It's coming up on six months since you took over at Warner Music Latin America. What did you want to accomplish, and what have you accomplished?

For me, the Mexican music movement is extremely important. It's growing by leaps and bounds, and we didn't have such a relevant presence. So we created a new Mexican music division and brought in Delia Orjuela [former vp of Latin at BMI] to head it. Our first signing was

DannyLux. We released an album with him [*Perdido en Tí*] and it went to No. 1 on Apple Music. [Warner Music Group CEO of recorded music] Max Lousada heard it, loved it and said, "Let me show it to Chris Martin." Long story short, DannyLux is opening Coldplay's Mexico dates.

How involved is Lousada in what you do, and how interconnected is Warner Music Latin America with the other Warner labels?

Overall, there is a lot of contact [between departments]. Anitta is a good example. The strategy is to release her in English with Warner Records, Spanish on Warner Music Latina and Portuguese on Warner Brazil at the same time with different songs. Of course, you need an artist that allows you to do that — one who works in both worlds.

"Latin labels have to undergo a major, rapid modernization where servicing the artist is the priority. It sounds simple, but it often isn't the modus operandi."

Are you specifically signing artists who fall under that category?

Definitely. It's not the only parameter, but it's important. Some of our recent signings are Tiago PZK, an example of the Argentine urban movement that's finally breaking in a big way; Paulo Londra, who is finally making his comeback; and Maria Becerra, who signed to [Warner's] 300 Entertainment in 2020. But overall, I look for artists who have a lot of career before them; artists who you can truly work and take from point A to point B.

You restructured Warner Music Brazil, promoting Leila Oliveira to GM, and in the United States, you brought in Roberto Andrade as managing director. He comes from management, not from the label side. Why that choice?

I wanted someone who came from outside a label, who had an indie mindset, a good ear, who was a good A&R but also understood marketing — who could move fast and make things happen. I met Roberto through Sebastián Yatra [who Andrade managed when Duque was at Universal] and we had been talking for a while. I also promoted Ruben Abraham, who now supervises marketing and digital strategy. And we consolidated our A&R under a single vice president, Hector Rivera, who we named senior vp/head of A&R for Latin music.

Warner is much smaller than Sony or Universal. Does that make you lose sleep?

Definitely, because we want to grow. But it's easier to

grow when you're this size than when you're a monster label. Our catalog isn't as deep nor plentiful, but that doesn't mean we can't be super competitive with front-line product.

What is your vision and your mission?

Latin labels have to undergo significant changes in their way of working and thinking. There has to be a major, rapid modernization where servicing the artist is really the priority. Artist first. It sounds simple, but it often isn't the modus operandi. My aim is to restructure so the region works as a single block, and to do that you have to change the structure and the flow of information.

You oversee a region that includes a U.S. Latin label but also several regional labels. What's the difference between them?

There was a time when all the countries were very similar [in terms of music consumed]. And today, they've become localized again. They're very different from each other, which forces you to think as a unified block, so you can really potentialize these artists at a regional level, but never losing touch with what's happening at the local level. That impact is more and more noticeable on the charts.

Latin America is, as ever, in the middle of a political, social and economic crisis,

and struggling with huge currency devaluation. How challenging is this for you?

Unfortunately, our region tends toward instability, and these swings go from country to country. It's not unique. On the other hand, many interesting cultural movements come from moments like this. Argentina's current trap movement results, at least in part, from their economic and social crisis. And the reggaetón movement in Medellín [Colombia] is a post-narco movement. Now, we're seeing a new crop of Venezuelan artists, like Micro TDH.


What does the mainstream market still not understand about the Latin market?

That Latin isn't a genre. They don't understand that Latin is many subcultures, many ways of speaking and a bunch of genres from many countries that are different from each other. You can't have a one size fits all.

With your experience in business development, what untapped opportunities do you see for Latin music?

The metaverse and blockchain have enormous potential — the Latin market and Latin America have traditionally been early adopters of new technologies. Look at how fast Spotify and TikTok have grown in Latin America. With the metaverse, we have a universe at our disposal.

Warner has many labels. If you could describe your Latin operation in one word, what would it be?

Innovation. 

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sound

NOW PLAYING

Rhian Teasdale (left) and
Hester Chambers of Wet Leg
photographed March 13 at Soho
House Nashville in Nashville.

'It Sounded Unlike Anything Else'

How a pair of friends from the
Isle of Wight formed Wet Leg
and became indie rock's
latest, and quirkiest, saviors

BY CHRISTINE WERTHMAN

PHOTOGRAPHED BY DIANA KING



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IN THE SAME DAY THAT emerging indie-rock band Wet Leg announced its

signing to Domino Recording Co. last June, the group released “Chaise Longue,” a minimalist post-punk rocker that immediately gained notoriety for its deadpan vocal delivery and *Mean Girls* references. But according to lead vocalist Rhian Teasdale, the duo’s debut single was never meant to come out.

“Chaise Longue” was “supposed to just stay in this folder that said ‘High Jams,’” she says. “They’re just really silly songs. They’re not for anyone else. But now it is.”

“Had we known that other people would listen to it, maybe we never would have made it,” adds lead guitarist Hester Chambers.

Teasdale affirms: “No, we definitely wouldn’t have. I say ‘chaise longue’ like 47 times.”

Since then, the pair from England’s Isle of Wight has sold out venues across the United Kingdom and the United States, with more shows scheduled worldwide from now through November. Its catalog has earned over 13 million U.S. streams, according to Luminate, formerly MRC Data, and singles “Chaise Longue” and the dreamy, reflective “Too Late Now” have charted on *Billboard*’s Alternative Airplay and Adult Alternative Airplay, respectively. The band is in good company with acts both past — like the speak-singing Art Brut a decade ago — and present — including contemporaries Fontaines D.C., with whom it shares producer Dan Carey. And now, with its self-titled debut album arriving April 8, Wet Leg is already being touted as a shining example of how the world is hungry for the return of guitar-fueled indie rock.

Teasdale, 29, and Chambers, 28, met as music students at The Isle of Wight College. They first played together in 2018,

when Chambers joined Teasdale for some gigs as part of RHAIN, Teasdale’s piano-based solo project, and in 2019 officially formed a band built around straightforward lyrics and “playing guitar really loudly,” says Teasdale. “I think before when I was writing, I would try and overcomplicate stuff, and the singing. I would try and show off the full range of my voice, but that is just unnecessary. It’s like guys on guitar who shred; it’s just musical masturbation.”

Though they previously attributed the band’s name to random hits on an emoji keyboard, they now say it came from an unfortunate sweat stain experienced by their drummer, Henry Holmes, who is joined by guitarist-keyboardist Josh Mobaraki and bassist Ellis Durand. The first Wet Leg show occurred on a local stage during the Isle of Wight Festival in front of a small crowd in 2019, but with Teasdale working in London as a wardrobe assistant and Chambers helping with her family’s jewelry business on the isle, the

band could only play sporadically.

When pandemic lockdowns began in 2020, Teasdale and Chambers both ended up in their hometown, and although they collaborated remotely at first, they soon reunited in person, making the video for “Chaise Longue” that April. Former Wet Leg studio bassist Michael Champion, A&R executive for management company Hall or Nothing, sent the video to his boss, Martin Hall, who became an immediate fan and signed on as the act’s manager. “The fact that you can’t see Hester’s face in the whole video, the humor involved, it’s hard to do humor in music videos, but it’s so dry, the way Rhian sings to camera,” Hall says. He adds he had never heard the song prior to watching the clip, saying, “It sounded unlike anything else.”

Hall sent the video and some other early Wet Leg songs to labels including Island Records and Domino, which both dispatched representatives to the Isle of Wight to meet the band. “It seemed to

me that they were making guitar music for themselves,” says Jordan Whitmore, Domino’s U.K. A&R manager. “They were not trying to be like anyone else or taking themselves too seriously.” Over a pint and some chips at the Spyglass pub, Teasdale and Chambers bonded with the Domino team and signed with the label in November 2020.

Following the signing announcement, Wet Leg resumed playing live last July, and by December, the band had played its first string of U.S. shows across New York and California — and sold out every date. “In our experience, we find it is good to get artists out to key international cities and turn people on to something new nice and early in the campaign, way ahead of the album release,” says Domino founder/owner Laurence Bell. “You get all those early adopters and tastemakers coming down to the small shows, and the excitement on the ground just swells from there.” Adds Hall: “It has gone incredibly quickly, more than any band I’ve ever managed in terms of putting the music out to where we are now.”

When the band returned this March for another round of touring, more sellouts followed, including one at Brooklyn Steel. (The show was originally scheduled for Brooklyn’s Music Hall of Williamsburg, but demand forced an upgrade from the 650-capacity club to the 1,800-person venue.) Attendees near the front wore lobster claws, as Wet Leg does in the “Wet Dream” video. Audience members screamed “I love you!” and someone in the crowd threw a bra. The band had enough material for about an hourlong set, playing through most of the upcoming album plus a Ronan Keating cover. Toward the end, Teasdale took a beat to stare out into the whooping audience. “This is very funny,” she mused aloud, smiling in disbelief before plunging into the next song. **Q**



BEHIND THE HIT

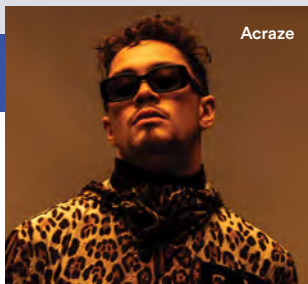
“Do It To It”

CHARLIE DUNCKER’S PATH to dance world fame began while watching Instagram stories in bed one morning. After he saw a clip in which a friend showed off her new car with girl group Cherish’s 2006 R&B hit, “Do It To It,” playing as a backing track, his phone went glitchy, then the song started skipping — and inspiration struck.

“I was like, ‘Wait, this could

be sick!’” says the 26-year-old Orlando, Fla.-based producer, who performs as Acraze. Within minutes, he was at his computer to perfect the idea, pitching down vocals and adding drums.

An hour later, he had a rough house edit of the 2006 original (which featured Sean Paul of YoungBloodZ and peaked at No. 12 on the *Billboard* Hot 100) that would soon become a global smash. Since its release last August, the “Do It To It” remix has piled up 74 million on-demand official streams in



Acraze

the United States, according to Luminate, formerly MRC Data. It has also reached a No. 3 high on *Hot Dance/Electronic Songs* and become his first *Hot 100* hit (peaking at No. 65 in January).

Acraze — who previously was “maybe playing one show a month” — first played “Do It To It” at a 2021 New Year’s Eve show and had roughly 500 DMs

about it the next morning. Scene leaders like Chris Lake and Carnage asked to drop it during their sets, with it also getting played by stars like Martin Garrix and DJ Snake.

With the help of his manager and high school friend Alex Akleh, he ultimately signed “Do It To It” to Thrive Music/Virgin as part of a three-track deal. (Thrive helped the DJ clear the sample.) On March 27, Acraze will make his *Ultra Music Festival* debut with a main-stage set.

Among Acraze’s new fans are

the four members of Cherish, who have told him he “revived the record,” he says. They’ve even been in the studio together recently, as Acraze prepares pop/house hybrid follow-ups that he hopes will showcase his skill set beyond the 2000s remix trend he helped inspire.

“I don’t want to throw anyone under the bus,” he says, “but my inbox is full of people, like very big DJs, saying, ‘Yo, let’s collab on this’ and it’s like, a Ciara song. Everybody’s doing it now.”

—KATIE BAIN

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From left: Tokischa, Chimbala and El Alfa.

INSIDE LOOK

DEMBOW'S LONG-AWAITED RISE

How the once-banned genre is finally getting global recognition

BY NEENA ROUHANI

A **REGGAETÓN HIT** the mainstream market almost two decades ago, becoming a defining sound of commercial Latin music, its neighboring genre dembow — identified by its playful, rapid drum pattern and carefree energy — endured a slower climb to prominence.

In the decade following its inception in the early 1990s, dembow music — born out of a sample of Jamaican artist Shabba Ranks' anti-imperialist single "Dem Bow" — faced relentless criticism and resistance, with an unofficial TV and radio ban on the genre due to what one Dominican Republic government official referred to as "sexual and obscene content" (not too dissimilar to what reggaetón acts faced early on in Puerto Rico). But in the last year alone, Latin stars across the board, including J Balvin, Rosalía, Camilo, Natti Natasha and Justin Quiles, have tapped into the genre, collaborating with dembow mainstays Chimbala and El Alfa, as well as the genre's iconoclastic up-and-comer, Tokischa. "Artists love dembow, and for me, it's a privilege," says El Alfa. "It makes it easy to collaborate with them."

Dembow has since achieved mainstream success — a catalyst for a greater awards show presence (Tokischa and Rosalía live-debuted "Linda" at the 2021 Billboard Latin Music Awards), as well as *Billboard* chart highs (El Alfa's "La Mama de la Mama" reached No. 9 on Hot Latin Songs last May, while his collaboration with Chimbala and Natti Natasha is currently climbing the chart). As Spotify head of artists and label partnerships for Latin America Maykol Sanchez says: "There's more consumption happening in more places — not only in Latin America, but in the U.S. and

Europe. It has been an incredible expansion."

Tokischa — who will embark on her first U.S. tour in March — recalls the early days of the genre's rise in Santo Domingo when she was in her early teens. "I had to do my chores every day, and when my aunt would leave, I would play dembow," she recalls. "Before she got back, I would put her CD back in to hide the evidence." Today, she stresses the importance of the genre's roots, saying, "Dembow carries the Dominican culture throughout the world, but it represents the *barrio* [hood]. The *barrio* is part of the story [of dembow]. The *barrio* makes society function because we are the workers. We are the ones struggling."

El Alfa — who like Tokischa, grew up in a *barrio* outside of Santo Domingo — recalls Dominican media's dismissal amid his growing popularity in the early 2000s. At 18, he had his first local hit, 2009's "Coche Bomba," a 107 beats-per-minute DIY dembow track that permeated his native island. "When I'd go to the television and radio stations, they'd say, 'No, we can't play that.' But you step in the streets, and all you could hear was dembow."

Chimbala, who produced a few of El Alfa's early singles, recalls a turning point for dembow soon after: "[It] was in style to sing a verse and then repeat the same line over 20 times. It made [people] want to move their bodies. So the clubs began playing it." Around the same time, the genre was continually spreading by way of the Dominican diaspora, gaining traction in New York and other Latin American countries.

In the last year, Chimbala's Spotify monthly listener count has more than doubled, jumping to 6.7 million. And recently, the Guericano native — who a decade ago was performing at local prisons on the outskirts of Santo Domingo — headlined New York's United Palace. The 3,000-plus-capacity show featured dembow acts including El Alfa, Bulova, La Insuperable and Mozart la Para. "Fame doesn't last forever," he says, "but at least we can enjoy our moment."

Even local airwaves have since shifted in the genre's favor. "If you turn on the radio today in the Dominican Republic, the stations are all killing themselves to get the latest dembow tracks first," says El Alfa with a triumphant grin. "If things keep going how they're going, dembow will become one of the most listened to genres in the world." **Q**



ONE TO WATCH

Omar Apollo

FROM Hobart, Ind.

AGE 24

LABEL Warner Records

FOUNDATION Prior to picking up a guitar for the first time as a 12-year-old, Apollo grew up in the Midwest listening to "old, romantic songs from the '50s" by Mexican artists like Pedro Infante and Juan Gabriel while cleaning with his family on Sunday mornings. By 2017, without much training or guidance, he put his first song on Spotify, thanks to a \$30 loan from a friend for the upload fee. Apollo's parents thought pursuing music as a career was "a terrible idea," and he admits that he had no idea what was to come. As for his friend, multimedia artist Matthew Brown, Apollo never got around to paying him back, though he says they now work together often.

DISCOVERY Apollo started playing shows in his hometown and Chicago for free: "Any time anybody was having an event, I'd pack up the car with my friends, a drum set and a 10-watt amp that was not loud, and we'd just play." As demand grew, he tweeted about needing a manager, to which Dylan Shanks — then a student at New York University — eagerly replied. He suggested flying Apollo out to perform at a university event, after which Shanks made his formal pitch. By 2019, Apollo had signed a global deal with AWAL, and by early 2020, he was "talking to a bunch of labels" before signing with Warner Records that April and releasing his label debut mixtape, *Apolonio*, in October. "They were hitting us back super quick," he says of the Warner team. "They were always available — and still are. That's the thing: I wanted to be around people who were just as hungry as I was."

FUTURE As Apollo finished recording what he thought would be his debut full-length, he decided to scrap it. "[Warner Records] wasn't too happy about that," he says with a laugh, "but they understood ... and were so happy afterward." By early last November, Apollo handed in a new project, *IVORY*, now due April 8. "It's all I think about every single day," he says of the nearing release date. Compared with past projects, Apollo believes that this rollout is "way more rationalized," adding how he has enjoyed being more involved and intentional with the creative direction and timing — which is why he's already eager to make his next album. "I always find myself going back to old albums, and I'm just like, 'This really stood the test of time,' and I want to do that. I can't control that, but as long as it feels like that for me, I'm cool." **—LYNDSEY HAVENS**

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BAD BOY FOR LIFE

With a magnetic mix of glam, grime and guitar, **Machine Gun Kelly** went from also-ran rapper to prince of the pop-punk revival. His new album may be called *Mainstream Sellout*, but he's ready to prove — once and for all — that he's no poseur

BY MEAGHAN GARVEY

PHOTOGRAPHED BY
VIJAT MOHINDRA





Machine Gun Kelly
photographed March 1 at
Pink 1968 in Northridge, Calif.

Styling by Adam Ballheim
Bossi coat, Atelier Cilliam suit,
Christian Louboutin shoes, Parts
of Four, The Great Frog and House
of Emmanuele rings.



Dolce & Gabbana suit and necklace, Christian Louboutin shoes, Parts of Four, The Great Frog and House of Emmanuele rings.



"BUT I LOVE YOU SO MUCH.

Don't you love me? Do you want to see my car?" Colson Baker whispers to the kitten clutching his chest for dear life. Whiskey — named after his dad's drink of choice — is a 15-week-old Bengal that looks like a leopard, if a leopard could sleep in a shoebox. They're in the driveway of Baker's Los Angeles home, appraising the cat-friendliness of his first ride, a mint green '53 Pontiac Chieftain with Ohio plates. "What do you think?" Baker asks his tiny feline. "We'll go cruising in this. You can have the whole back seat. You're so beautiful."

Like a born rock star, Whiskey appears horrified by his proximity to early-afternoon sunlight, mewing from between Baker's fingers, which glitter with pink polish that matches his hair. "I'm sorry, boy," Baker murmurs into the kitten's neck. "The real world's scary. I know. I know."

You probably wouldn't peg Baker — better known as Machine Gun Kelly — as a guy typically awake before sunset himself. There's no one on the charts serving balls-to-the-wall rock'n'roll decadence like the 31-year-old musician, who has become the poster boy for the streaming age's renewed interest in guitar riffs. His last album, 2020's *Tickets to My Downfall*, channeled his long-simmering inner-adolescent angst into addictive *TRL*-era pop-punk and debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard 200; at the time, it was the first rock album to do so in over a year, making MGK the rare rock artist not circling AARP membership to top that chart in recent memory. Haters would say Sid Vicious is rolling in his grave; to them, Baker would like to say: Get over yourselves. "It opened the lane back up for people to make money. It opened up these festivals," he says of the pop-punk revival he's helping fuel. "[Rock] needed a defibrillator. Who cares who gives it, just as long as that motherfucker doesn't die?"

Is it strange that the face of pop-punk 2.0 was best known, not too long ago, as a moderately successful white rapper? Not for an artist who likened himself to *Jackass*' Steve-O on his 2011 breakout hit, "Wild Boy"; who insisted on leading a live band and playing guitar onstage back when his only chart hits were pop-rap team-ups with junior-varsity divas; who was covering Blink-182 songs in concert long before he tapped the group's drummer, Travis Barker, to become his main producer. Nor is it strange to anyone who has observed the collision course that rap and rock have been on for a few years already, as late artists like Lil Peep and Juice WRLD married hard-hitting beats with the visceral edge and open-vein lyricism of alternative rock and emo music. "I think people try to put in a box what rock or alternative music can be," says Baker's label boss, Interscope Geffen A&M chairman/CEO John Janick. "[MGK] is the definition, right now, of a rock star."

Achieving that involves a lot more than just music, though, and Baker is a careful student of the pyrotechnic theater of it all. "The task as an entertainer is to entertain, and that means giving a part of yourself, including your comfort, away," he explains from his candlelit living room, overlooking a backyard infinity pool in need of some cleaning. It's something he believes all great artists have in common, from Prince's freaky fashions ("You think Prince *liked* playing in high heels?") to Daft Punk's iconic masks ("They didn't get five years in and go, 'You know what? Fuck it. This shit's uncomfortable. I can't breathe!' ") to Migos' opulent swagger ("They're giving you more than talent — they're giving you entertainment. They've got the jewels, the clothes, the hair").

It has become a mission of Baker's to give the people what they want — a show, and not just onstage. So he'll do things like smash the windshield of his friend's car in full view of the paparazzi during a wild night out on the Sunset Strip, or jump on

the boardroom table during a playback session at his record label, or walk the red carpet decked out in leather and fangs, chained by the fingernails to his fiancée, actress Megan Fox. A couple of tequila shots into our afternoon together, Baker casually announces his plan to get his nose pierced; sure enough, a woman named Doll Face arrives to add a third hoop to his right nostril. (It's apt — considering that precise blend of glamour and sleaze — that Pete Davidson portrays him on *Saturday Night Live*.)

Baker is particularly attuned to the mythologies of rock stardom: As an actor, he played a pitch-perfect Tommy Lee in the 2019 Mötley Crüe biopic *The Dirt*, and he executive-produced and stars in this year's *Taurus* as a rap-rocker approaching rock bottom. The coffee shop he recently opened in Cleveland, The 27 Club, is named for the age at which some of the most legendary rock musicians have died. (Regarding his coffee fanaticism, he deadpans, "It's better than cocaine!")

In person, it's clear why Fox tends to refer to her husband-to-be in the language of a Gothic romance paperback: "my achingly beautiful boy," "magical and haunted." Through the holes in his sweater, there is no visible real estate left on his tattoo-saturated torso. Baker stands a spindly 6'4" without his platforms; in certain lights, his blue eyes appear almost black. His offstage antics, combined with the fact that his corporeal form would not have been out of a place on a '90s runway, have not always made him the easiest person to root for. "My own friend was like, 'I couldn't even listen to your music at first because I just didn't like your face,'" says Baker with a half-laugh, swiveling a pair of Zen meditation balls in his palm. "He's not wrong!"

Yet the reigning poster boy of not giving a fuck admits he's still sorting out just how many fucks he wants to, or should, give. He has just returned from Cleveland, where he grew up, having MC'd the opening of the NBA All-Star Game in a bedazzled grandma sweater. When he's back home, he feels like the same scrappy teenager from 15 years ago, hustling mixtapes outside the mall. Cleveland's also the only place where he'll let people get away with roasting him: for his love of the color pink, or his penchant for dressing like Edward Scissorhands, or for

"KIDS COME UP TO ME LIKE, 'DUDE, THE FIRST TIME I EVER SAW SOMEONE PLAY GUITAR IN CONCERT WAS AT YOUR CONCERT — AND NOW I TAKE GUITAR LESSONS.'"

being, in Baker's words, "on some Brad Pitt shit." But it bothers him a little when the rest of the world — the ones who only know MGK, not Colson — makes those jokes. "I felt from the beginning, even in my household, like the kid who was just outcasted from birth. I was always too tall for the kids at my school, or I didn't have enough money to buy the outfits the other kids had — it was just always something," Baker remembers. "But the world isn't looking at me like that. They're like, 'Fuck you, dude, you're a rich rock star. How hard could it be?'"

So he has gotten into the habit of telling the joke before anyone else can. Hence, a title like *Tickets to My Downfall*. "It's either really ironic or I called it, you know?" explains Baker as he hunches on his white leather sofa. "It's like the ultimate checkmate." He had intended to call the follow-up *Born With Horns*, a summation of that outsider feeling he has always held on to, and even got matching tattoos of the name with Barker. Then he had another idea: If the world still wanted to pick him apart, he would lead the conversation. The new title had to be *Mainstream Sellout* (which shares the name of his world arena tour kicking off in June). "It was time to just accept all the deprecation," Baker says, the ice in his glass of Japanese whiskey rattling in his shaking hands; the kitten lunges around the room, hunting imaginary prey. "I can handle it."

The skeptics could chalk one No. 1 album up to dumb luck. Two, though? That would shut them up. The prerelease singles from *Mainstream Sellout*, out March 25, have yet to reach the Billboard Hot 100 highs of any singles off his last album, but Baker and Interscope have employed a similar merchandise-heavy strategy to the one that helped take *Tickets* to No. 1; at press time, his webstore offered over a dozen different box sets for sale. "One thing about Machine Gun Kelly: He doesn't lose to the *Encanto* soundtrack," Baker scoffs, sounding about 10% like he's joking.

Chart milestones aside, there's something more intangible that Baker is after that he's well on the way to achieving: a level of success, or at least omnipresence, at which he can't be ignored. His 2019 album, *Hotel Diablo*, received mostly tepid reviews, but what bothered him more was how little it was reviewed in the first place — "like it wasn't even worth it." Tongue-in-cheek title aside, *Mainstream Sellout* is, he thinks, his best shot at being genuinely heard, and maybe even understood. "I've waited for this," he says in the hushed rasp he slips into when he gets serious. "The

"DO I INVITE THE TORTURE OR CREATE IT FOR MYSELF? PROBABLY. DO I FEAR A STABLE LIFE? DO I FEAR THAT IT'S GOING TO STOP MY WRITING? FOR SURE."

confidence to hit 'play' and know that what's about to come out of the speakers is what I've wanted to say all along."

IN THE HOME Baker shares with Fox and their respective children (he has a daughter from a previous relationship; she has three sons with her ex-husband, actor Brian Austin Green), books are scattered across every surface: compendiums of ritual magick and tarot, *Abloh-isms* by Virgil Abloh, a Salvador Dalí cookbook from the '70s. The centerpiece of the all-white living room is a rare Egyptian chessboard, a nod to Baker's itinerant childhood, when he lived in Egypt, Kenya and Kuwait with his missionary parents before settling back in the States. Underneath the spiral staircase in the foyer, an engraved wooden sign — "Two halves of the same soul meet again. I love you in all lifetimes. Now let's get married!" — is tucked between a vase of white lilies, an MTV Video Music Awards Moonman trophy and a journal emblazoned with the words "WHO ARE YOU?"

It's a question Baker has confronted his entire career. Rap and rock are genres defined by their proximity to youth, with their own codes about authenticity, and Baker has had an uphill battle for credibility in both. He hated being treated like a novelty when he was the odd, skinny white kid rapping alongside the likes of Waka Flocka Flame and entering ridiculous feuds with Eminem. (Prior to *Tickets*, one of Baker's biggest hits was the 2018 diss track "Rap Devil.") And he hates it all the same when detractors suggest he is a pop-punk poseur, a mere tourist who'll pack up and leave whenever a genre stops suiting him.

"I know it *kills* certain bands in that community that I got the success that I got. But I earned that shit," he says as he schools me in a chess game. "Dude, I was fucking loading

up the van with our drums and amps in 2010, driving to Indiana and Chicago, playing Warped Tour. I can tell you the fucking Wi-Fi codes to venues in Blackfoot, Idaho. Can you say that shit as a band?" Videos from his 12 p.m. set on the fold-out stage at Warped Tour 2012 show a mohawked Baker, full band in tow, covering Limp Bizkit's "Break Stuff" and ending up in the pit.

The members of his team and touring band, most of whom have worked with him for over a decade, witnessed the grind. Andre Cisco, one

of his three managers, first met Baker in Cleveland in the mid-'00s outside the airbrush shop where Baker worked. The teenage MC caught Cisco's attention, battle-rapping outside the mall for anyone who would listen, and soon, Cisco had quit his job to be Baker's full-time tour manager. By the early 2010s, the crew was opening for acts like Rick Ross and Meek Mill, and touring for crowds of Juggalos with the rapper Tech N9ne, with whom Baker reportedly set a Guinness World Record by performing 99 shows in 104 days. "So we've been through the wringer," Cisco says — janky tour buses, filthy communal bathrooms. "Any mistake that you can make in the music industry, we probably all made [them] together."

They've got tour stories for days, most of them unprintable; Baker animatedly tells the tale of the night they dropped acid that they got from a random hitchhiker and changed the sign outside a Missouri buffet to "ALL YOU CAN EAT BUTT." The band grew even closer during the beginning of the pandemic, bunkering down in Baker's previous house with a month's supply of food and a bunch of machetes — just in case all hell broke loose and they needed to protect themselves. (Unsurprisingly, their house wasn't the most popular on the block: After cops were called to Baker's 30th birthday party, he apologized to his neighbor by delivering a Dom Pérignon bottle by skateboard.)

Yet the downtime proved fruitful in more ways than one. Early in the pandemic, Baker had begun a practice he called the Lock-down Sessions, hopping on Instagram Live to perform casual acoustic covers of Nirvana, Oasis and Paramore. To his surprise, the broadcasts were a hit, amassing views in the millions — and the type of critical acclaim his albums never seemed to drum up. By then, the gears for a full-fledged pop-punk record were already in motion. Inspired by his time working with Barker on a song for 2019's *Hotel Diablo*, Baker spent two months



Dolce & Gabbana suit and shirt,
Giuseppe Zanotti boots, Lillian
Shalom necklace, Parts of Four
and The Great Frog rings.

Dolce & Gabbana suit,
Lillian Shalom necklace,
Parts of Four and House of
Emmanuele rings, and The
Great Frog bracelet.





in the studio with him and a revolving door of guest musicians, jamming until sunrise almost every night. Quick and catchy, with classic three-chord melodies, the songs that materialized dealt with addiction, depression and disillusion — themes Baker had covered before, only now delivered in a more potent package.

That combo of feel-good sounds and heavy lyrics is the secret ingredient of the pop-punk resurgence, according to Baker collaborator and writer-producer Omer Fedi, who has been a driving force in bringing guitars back to the Hot 100 with his work on songs like 24kGoldn and iann dior's chart-topper "Mood." "English is not my first language, so when we write a song, the first five times I listen to it, I only care about the melody," Fedi explains. "Then after five times, I'm like, 'Damn, this song's also really deep.' If we produced it on the piano, it'd make us all cry, but we're doing it with drums and fast guitar."

Baker's label didn't flinch over the transformation. After all, Janick had cut his teeth in alternative rock, having founded the indie label Fueled by Ramen — the launchpad for bands like Fall Out Boy and Paramore — in the mid-'90s before finding his way in 2012 to Interscope, where Baker was already signed in a joint venture with Bad Boy Records. "Obviously, he was a rapper, but he also was an alternative kid — and that's what everything is now," Janick says. "Knowing where he came from, the conversations we'd had over the years, it's easy for me to see the progression."

At first, Baker wanted to follow *Tickets* with a return to rap, something for his friends at home to vibe to. "But I love playing guitar," he rasps from the desk of his upstairs office as he meticulously hand-rolls a cigarette. (He makes his from scratch using tobacco grown by Native American shamans, a practice inspired by Fox; he pauses to say "thank you" each time he runs the leaves through the grinder.) "The 2010s was great for singers and rappers, and I was part of that. But I think we needed something else: We needed an instrument," Baker continues. "Kids come up to me like, 'Dude, the first time I ever saw someone play guitar in concert was at your concert — and now I take guitar lessons.'"

But don't even get him started on the videos with titles like "Machine Gun Kelly Live Guitar FAIL!" that pop up on YouTube every few months. "Never once was I like, 'I need to be touted as the greatest guitar player,' but you know what, though? I'm *playing* my fucking guitar, and you guys stopped," counters Baker. At awards shows, he says he is often the rare act not performing alongside a prerecorded track. "Fuck that! At least mine sounds like how I was feeling that day, and

maybe I was feeling angry, or I was drunk and I didn't give a fuck. But if I have to be a scapegoat for people's own insecurities, whatever. I'm more punk rock than you are because at least I'm willing to put my ass on the line — like, hear me as I am, today."

From the desk of his home office, where a bobblehead of himself sits alongside a Bruce Lee figurine and a fancy bong, Baker cues up *Mainstream Sellout* over the speakers. The songs he previews sound like every chapter of his career rolled into one; this time, Baker's thunderous drum rolls are

school — finally complimented one of his tracks. It was his dad who had helped him write his first song on guitar, and he was happy to see Baker embrace the instrument after all those years. Baker's hands tremble when he talks about it. "In that moment, when he acknowledged my music and we bonded over a song, it gave me the richest memory I'll ever have," he whispers after a long spell of silence. "To me, that was the ultimate success. And everything else that preceded that in our relationship didn't matter because we had finally made it." His

"IF I HAVE TO BE A SCAPEGOAT FOR PEOPLE'S OWN INSECURITIES, WHATEVER. I'M MORE PUNK ROCK THAN YOU ARE BECAUSE AT LEAST I'M WILLING TO PUT MY ASS ON THE LINE."

cast into relief by 808s, while verses from Young Thug and Gunna sit alongside appearances by Willow and Bring Me the Horizon's Oli Sykes. But there's one guest who Baker can still barely believe is involved at all, let alone on two separate tracks: Lil Wayne, who made his own attempt at fusing rap and rock over a decade ago with 2010's *Rebirth*. (Though the album was widely panned at the time, Wayne perhaps got the last laugh when one of its tracks had a viral moment on TikTok last year.)

Baker beams as he tells the story of Wayne arriving at the studio at midnight in a cloud of neon and smoke to record his verse on the song "Drug Dealer." Wayne's second appearance, on the downcast single "ay!," arrived in Baker's inbox the morning the album was due to his label, recorded fresh off a 7 a.m. skate sesh. "That motherfucker is *everything* I loved about the rock stars from back then," Baker raves. "Someone where you're like, 'I don't have the screw loose enough to pierce my face a million times or go out like 'Fuck you!' to the world — but I need a vessel to live through.'"

LIL WAYNE co-sign was one thing. But the approval he had been seeking his whole career actually arrived in 2020, when Baker's father — who had kicked his delinquent son out of the house after high

father died a few months later. Sometimes when Baker performs certain songs, he feels something take over him, lighting him up with purpose.

Lately, Baker has been wondering about whether he romanticizes the turmoil that fuels his music. "The torture is real. However, do I invite the torture or create it for myself? Probably," he admits. "Do I fear a stable life? Do I fear that it's going to stop my writing? For sure. Sometimes I wake up and it's like, 'It's sunny today. I live in this house today. What am I? I *am* a mainstream sellout, dude.'" Early in his career, he would counter feelings of awkwardness and discomfort by putting on what he calls an "exoskeleton of arrogance and cockiness." He cringes at certain old interviews now, at the guy he was trying to be. "I'm overcompensating so much for how I actually was inside," he says. "I was scared to be myself."

Baker's not trying to hide anymore. If being honest in his lyrics helped misfit kids everywhere connect to him, he might as well embrace it in real life. And while he's holding the world's attention, he would like to remind you that he's just a person doing his best, too. "My name is Colson Baker, and I have real feelings," he says, the smoke from his cigarette wafting past his face and out the open window. "I have real loss. I have real vulnerability. I have real regrets. I just want to be given the same respect that you would give yourself to fuck up and bounce back." Giving a fuck, he has decided, is actually pretty punk rock. **B**



Dolce & Gabbana suit and shirt,
Giuseppe Zanotti boots, Lillian
Shalom necklace, The Great Frog
and Parts of Four rings.



A CONCERT FOR UKRAINE
 LINCOLN CENTER
 NEW YORK
 MARCH 14

Ticket sales and other proceeds from the Metropolitan Opera Chorus' benefit performance at Lincoln Center supported Ukrainian citizens and relief efforts. The outside of the venue was lit up blue and yellow to resemble the Ukrainian flag, with Ukrainian Ambassador to the United Nations Sergiy Kyslytsya in attendance at the event.

SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE GOES LIVE

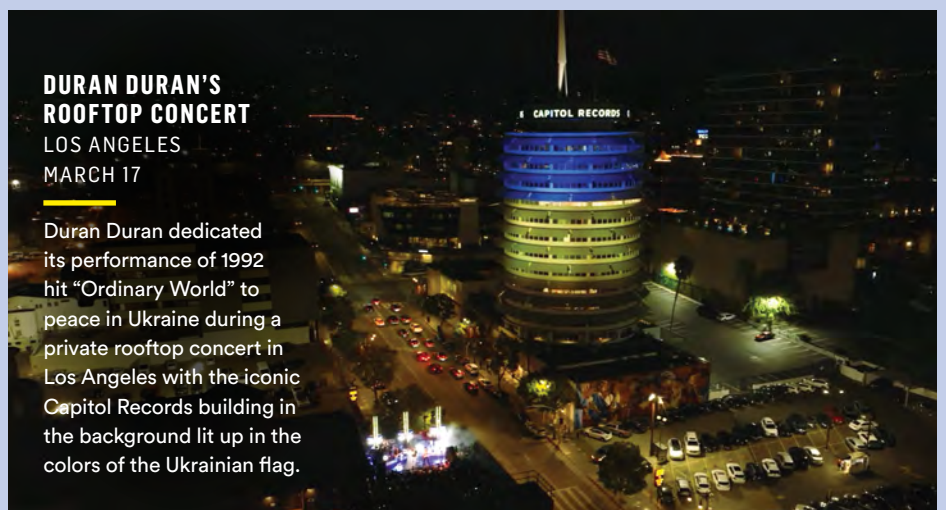
SINCE RUSSIAN PRESIDENT Vladimir Putin invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24, the live-music industry has rallied around the latter country with demonstrations of support and myriad benefit concerts across the globe, including, in New York, Metropolitan Opera's A Concert for Ukraine at Lincoln Center and City Winery's A Benefit for Ukraine Featuring Gogol Bordello & Friends, where Patti Smith announced a \$50,000 donation to Doctors Without Borders on behalf of Yoko Ono and Sean Ono Lennon.

Meanwhile, acts from Ed Sheeran to Camila Cabello have signed on to play an all-star benefit show on March 29 at Resorts World Arena in Birmingham, England. The live, two-hour special broadcast by ITV is expected to raise \$4 million for Disasters Emergency Committee's Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal. —TAYLOR MIMS



DURAN DURAN'S ROOFTOP CONCERT
 LOS ANGELES
 MARCH 17

Duran Duran dedicated its performance of 1992 hit "Ordinary World" to peace in Ukraine during a private rooftop concert in Los Angeles with the iconic Capitol Records building in the background lit up in the colors of the Ukrainian flag.





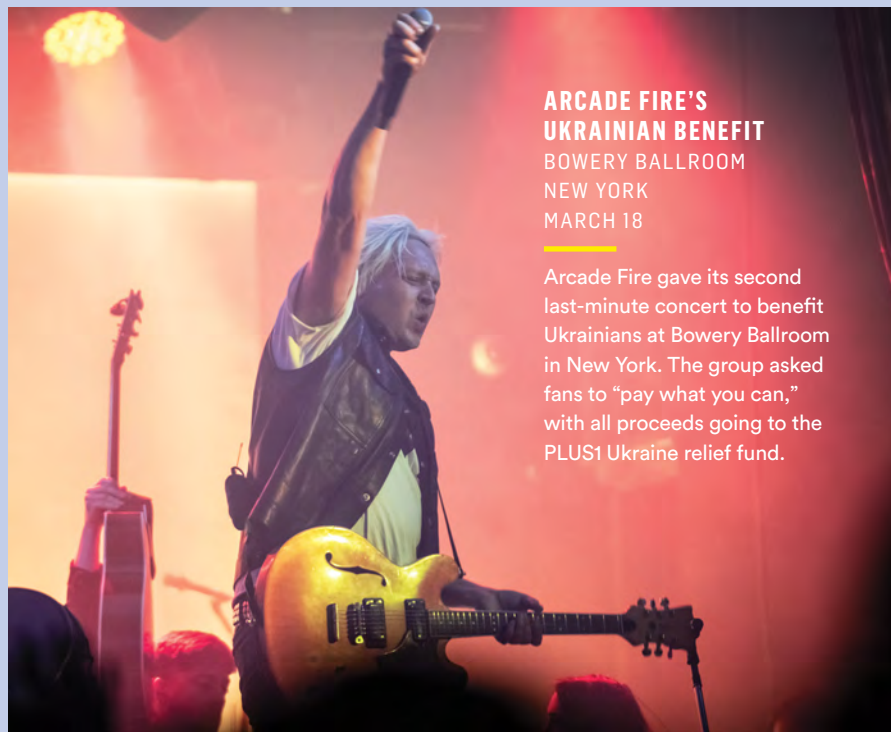
RUSSIANS AGAINST WAR
KADIKÖY SAHNE, ISTANBUL
MARCH 15

Russian rapper Oxxxymiron took the stage in Turkey during the first in his series of Russians Against War charity concerts for Ukraine following the announcement that he canceled six sold-out performances in Moscow and St. Petersburg in protest of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.



**A BENEFIT FOR UKRAINE FEATURING
GOGOL BORDELLO & FRIENDS**
CITY WINERY, NEW YORK
MARCH 10

Gogol Bordello frontman Eugene Hütz — who was born in Ukraine — performed during the event at City Winery. Patti Smith, The Hold Steady's Craig Finn, Suzanne Vega, Jesse Malin, O.A.R.'s Marc Roberge and others also appeared at the benefit.



**ARCADE FIRE'S
UKRAINIAN BENEFIT**
BOWERY BALLROOM
NEW YORK
MARCH 18

Arcade Fire gave its second last-minute concert to benefit Ukrainians at Bowery Ballroom in New York. The group asked fans to "pay what you can," with all proceeds going to the PLUS1 Ukraine relief fund.



**BENEFIT CONCERT
FOR PEACE
AND CROSS-BORDER
UNDERSTANDING**
PAULSKIRCHE
FRANKFURT, GERMANY
MARCH 13

Ukrainian pianist Alexej Gorlatch played in Frankfurt's Paulskirche — formerly a Protestant church that is now a national assembly hall — during a concert for peace in Ukraine alongside Russian colleague Sergey Belyavsky.



NIGHT FOR UKRAINE
THE ROUNDHOUSE
LONDON
MARCH 9

Franz Ferdinand's Alex Kapranos took the stage during the charity fundraiser in London. Earlier in March, the Scottish band announced that it had canceled its upcoming shows in Russia.

billboard

2022 Top Music Lawyers



Congratulations

To Pierre Hachar, Jr., Esq. and Cody Pellicer, Esq. for
being named 2022 Top Music Lawyers by Billboard

the hachar
law group

hachargroup.com

players

CELEBRATING MUSIC'S MOVERS



Clockwise from left:
Spears, Cardi B, Diamond,
Dr. Dre and the Euronext
Amsterdam stock exchange.

2022 TOP MUSIC LAWYERS

The savviest legal counselors in the business are called upon to advise on familiar contracts and a surging tide of catalog sales but also IPOs, NFTs, Web3 and new ventures in the metaverse

WHEN MUSIC MEETS money, industry attorneys usually serve as matchmakers. *Billboard's* 2022 class of Top Music Lawyers — nominated by their firms and peers and chosen by our editors — are cast in more complex and challenging roles than ever.

In the past year, their behind-the-scenes work grabbed headlines with major publishing and catalog deals, live-performance agreements, a defamation case, a conservatorship battle and one very, very large initial public offering.

Among many other matters, attorneys on this list were involved with Neil Diamond's sale of his publishing and master recording catalog; Dr. Dre's performance with a who's who of hip-hop during the Pepsi Super Bowl LVI halftime show; Cardi B's successful verdict in a defamation claim; Britney Spears' release from a conservatorship that

controlled her life for 13 years; and Universal Music Group's massive September stock offering on the Euronext Amsterdam exchange.

For this year's Top Music Lawyers report, *Billboard* asked attorneys not only about their clients and achievements but also their top concerns for the music business. For those steeped in the law, the issue of racial equity and justice in the music industry, which exploded into awareness with the killing of George Floyd in May 2020, remains no less urgent.

Several attorneys have been involved in efforts to ban the use of rap lyrics in criminal prosecutions, and L. Londell McMillan, whose clients include Prince's heirs and the Westmore collective of Snoop Dogg, E-40, Too \$hort and Ice Cube, says: "There should be more senior Black executives in C-suites and more Black-owned companies doing business with global enterprises."

Meanwhile, the rapid expansion of digital op-

portunities have become so important to the role of these music lawyers that some may wish they had supplemented their law degrees with studies in computer science.

But as Ken Doroshow, chief legal officer for the RIAA, says, "In a time of constant innovation and a steady stream of 'next big things,' it's more important than ever that all platforms and services that use and profit from music obtain the necessary licenses and pay rights holders and creators for their work." Doroshow's counterparts at the National Music Publishers' Association are on the front lines of efforts to get digital platforms to properly license their use of music.

Richard Baskin of Simons Muirhead Burton in London adds that amid "significant opportunity within the creative industries... comes the concern around regulating and managing this growth on behalf of all."

And not just for superstars.

"It's extremely rewarding that the real value of music industry [intellectual property], the artist and the artist's brand, is finally being realized," says John Frankenheimer, chair of music industry at Loeb & Loeb, one of the most respected senior attorneys in the music business. "But there's a responsibility to make sure that the midlevel, young and emerging artists are sharing in that as well." —THOM DUFFY

music groups

Jeff Harleston

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

Saheli Datta

EXECUTIVE VP/CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER/EMPLOYMENT COUNSEL, UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP

Steve Gawley

EXECUTIVE VP OF BUSINESS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS, UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP

Nicola Levy

EXECUTIVE VP OF DIGITAL BUSINESS AFFAIRS, UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP

Alasdair McMullan

EXECUTIVE VP OF BUSINESS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS/HEAD OF LITIGATION, UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP

Michael Seltzer

EXECUTIVE VP/HEAD OF COMMERCIAL TRANSACTIONS FOR BUSINESS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS, UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP

Magda Vives

EXECUTIVE VP OF BUSINESS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS, LATIN AMERICA AND IBERIAN PENINSULA, UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP

In addition to day-to-day business, like handling the contracts of the world's biggest music stars, Universal Music Group's legal team helped usher the company into a public listing on the Euronext Amsterdam stock exchange, which in its first 10 minutes added billions of dollars of value to UMG — and boosted the prospects of the entire music business. Harleston, a 25-year-plus UMG veteran, calls the run-up to the September listing “a transformational period,” and adds, “I couldn't be prouder of the key role my team played.” Next up: emerging, cautiously, from the pandemic. “I'm hopeful that we learn from the past few years,” Harleston says, “and create an atmosphere where fans are excited to reengage in live events.”

Paul Robinson

EXECUTIVE VP/GENERAL COUNSEL, WARNER MUSIC GROUP

Brad Cohen

SENIOR VP/HEAD OF LITIGATION, WARNER MUSIC GROUP

Jon Glass

SENIOR VP/HEAD OF DIGITAL LEGAL AFFAIRS, WARNER MUSIC GROUP

Maryrose Maness

SENIOR VP/DEPUTY GENERAL COUNSEL, WARNER MUSIC GROUP

Trent Tappe

SENIOR VP/DEPUTY GENERAL COUNSEL/CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER, WARNER MUSIC GROUP

In February, Warner Music Group unveiled a first-of-its-kind ESG Report, heralding its environmental, social and governance projects, such as donations to 20 international

philanthropic groups to fight COVID-19, a new \$100 million Social Justice Fund and what Robinson calls “the launch of our legacy unrecouped-advances program that will benefit thousands of artists and songwriters.” Now, WMG's attorneys turn their attention to the metaverse. “The concern is being able to transact in crypto and tokens at scale with our music and other intellectual property,” says Robinson.

Julie Swidler

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

Stu Bondell

EXECUTIVE VP OF BUSINESS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS, INTERNATIONAL, SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT

Wade Leak

EXECUTIVE VP/DEPUTY GENERAL COUNSEL/CHIEF COMPLIANCE, ETHICS AND PRIVACY OFFICER, SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT

Susan Meisel

SENIOR VP OF CORPORATE/DEPUTY GENERAL COUNSEL, SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT

Jeff Walker

EXECUTIVE VP/HEAD OF BUSINESS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS, GLOBAL DIGITAL BUSINESS, SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT

Among its other achievements, Sony's legal team celebrated two major deals in 2021: a partnership with the dominant Brazilian independent music company Som Livre, which works with Marilia Mendonça, Jorge & Mateus and others in repertoire, publishing, festival production and distribution; and the \$430 million purchase of Kobalt's recorded-music division, AWAL (FINNEAS, Little Simz), which was approved in March by U.K. regulators. In an evolving digital landscape, Swidler notes the importance of laws keeping pace with innovation. “We have a responsibility, on

The legal team at **WARNER CHAPPELL MUSIC PUBLISHING** worked on the acquisition of **DAVID BOWIE**'s song catalog from the singer-songwriter's estate.



behalf of our artists and songwriters, to protect their creativity while embracing new digital experiences.”

streaming

Gabe Fleet

EXECUTIVE VP OF BUSINESS AFFAIRS/CHIEF MUSIC LICENSING COUNSEL, IHEARTMEDIA

IHeartMedia's return to in-person live events last year kept Fleet and his team busy as the company navigated the complex COVID-19 regulations around the country to put on shows safely. The broader issue that matters to Fleet? “It's the same concern as in society as a whole,” he says, “which is an inability to empathize and recognize the legitimacy of someone's problems other than your own. We are all trying to build a vibrant, economically powerful 21st century music business ecosystem, and we can only do that if we truly listen to each other and make the economic models sustainable for everyone.”

Eve Konstan

GENERAL COUNSEL, SPOTIFY

Kevan Choset

ASSOCIATE GENERAL COUNSEL/HEAD OF LEGAL STRATEGY, SPOTIFY

Sofia Sheppard

ASSOCIATE GENERAL COUNSEL, SPOTIFY

In 2021, Spotify underwent a massive global expansion, as the streaming service launched in over 80 additional countries, bringing its operations to a total of 184 territories. “This would have been a feat in any year, but doing this in a year with limited travel made this that much more of a challenge,” Choset says. Despite the departure of longtime chief legal officer Horacio Gutierrez to Disney last year, the company is pushing forward, with its legal team calling the return to live music the industry's most pressing concern in 2022.

Antonious Porch

GENERAL COUNSEL/CHIEF DIVERSITY OFFICER, SOUNDCLOUD

Ama Walton

SENIOR VP OF BUSINESS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS, MUSIC, SOUNDCLOUD

Anne-Marie Chirema

DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS, SOUNDCLOUD

SoundCloud's executive leadership team helped steer its evolution from an independent streaming service into a full-service distributor. But that wouldn't have happened without the company first launching fan-powered royalties, a user-centric model for royalty payment to its independent artists that is based on the total number of streams rather than market share. The change underlines SoundCloud's belief

THANK YOU BILLBOARD FOR
THE RECOGNITION
WE HAVE BEEN SERVING THE MUSIC
INDUSTRY FOR
OVER 40 YEARS
WE ARE PROUD OF THE CONTRIBUTION WE
HAVE MADE, AND CONTINUE TO MAKE TO
THE MUSIC INDUSTRY



that the industry should focus on “deepening the connection between artists and fans and ensuring that artists at all stages of their careers, especially emerging and independent artists, are rewarded fairly with more equitable payouts, transparency and control over their own careers,” says Porch.

Robert Windom

CHIEF COUNSEL, CONTENT AND SERVICES, APPLE

Adam Blankenheimer

SENIOR COUNSEL, CONTENT AND INTERNET SERVICES, APPLE

Elizabeth Miles

DIRECTOR, ITUNES AND APPLE MUSIC LEGAL, APPLE

Brahim Ait Ben Larbi

PRINCIPAL LEGAL COUNSEL, MUSIC PUBLISHING, APPLE

Apple’s legal team in the past year has supported the launch of spatial audio on Apple Music. “We had to make the case to the labels to get their artists on board and then remix and redeliver entire catalogs, because this is the next step for music,” says Miles. “It’s a big project for the industry, and it was some work to make it a win-win for everyone. But artists and their fans love the magic of hearing their music in spatial audio, so that’s a really strong foundation on which to build your deal terms.”

Stephen Worth

HEAD OF LEGAL/ASSOCIATE GENERAL COUNSEL, AMAZON MUSIC

Cyrus Afshar

Nicolas Gauss

SENIOR CORPORATE COUNSELORS, AMAZON MUSIC

Amazon Music improved its service for all of its Unlimited subscribers last year, with the company making high-definition music and spatial audio available at no additional cost. Gauss described his work on the feature as a highlight of the past year, but notes that the industry as a whole “needs to remain ahead of the curve in adapting new technologies, addressing evolving customer preferences and reacting to ever-changing other entertainment offers.”

live

Michael Rowles

EXECUTIVE VP/GENERAL COUNSEL/SECRETARY, LIVE NATION ENTERTAINMENT

Rowles, who joined Live Nation in 2006 and serves as both the company’s general counsel and a corporate officer, helped guide the reorganization of the company as it prepared to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic. That has meant continuing to rely on an organizational structure that includes a small corporate mergers and acquisitions group, which oversaw major transactions out of the Beverly Hills office

(including closing the purchase of Mexican promoter OCESA). Company lawyers also continue to report to the heads of their individual business units. While the tragedy at Astroworld that left 10 fans dead and scores more injured has emerged as one of Live Nation’s most significant legal challenges, the company is working with outside counsel in that matter as it continues to cooperate with investigators.

Shawn Trell

COO/GENERAL COUNSEL, AEG LIVE

AEG’s longtime top lawyer navigated the company through the changing tide of pandemic protocols in 2021, as the promoter executed some of the most aggressive vaccination rules in the United States. “Certain states’ regulations may override our mandate, or a few artists may not want to immediately get on board with the plan, but we know that using our platform to take a strong position on vaccinations can make an impact,” Trell says. AEG initially announced it would require proof of vaccination for every fan attending Coachella, Firefly and other festivals. In January, AEG dropped the requirement for festivals after California’s Department of Health changed state rules, but the company still requires proof of vaccination at its indoor concerts.

publishing

Peter Brodsky

EXECUTIVE VP OF BUSINESS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS, SONY PUBLISHING

Michael Abitbol

SENIOR VP/HEAD OF U.S. DIGITAL, SONY MUSIC PUBLISHING

Nicole Giacco

SENIOR VPs OF BUSINESS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS, SONY MUSIC PUBLISHING

Sony Music Publishing’s legal team has guided the world’s largest publishing company through another banner year. Apart from catalog acquisitions — especially the recent \$500 million deal with Bruce Springsteen — and exciting new signings, the team is most proud of its songwriter-friendly initiatives like the Legacy Unrecouped Balance program and the Songwriter Assistance program, as well as a provision providing signees with 24/7 counseling support, which Abitbol calls “just the beginning.” Over the next year, the team is focused on fighting for fair royalty rates at the Phonorecords IV trial of the Copyright Royalty Board, which will establish rates paid by interactive streaming services for the next five years. “This is our one opportunity to fight for fair mechanical royalty rates that reflect the incredible contributions of songwriters,” Abitbol says.

Steve Butler

SENIOR VP OF LEGAL AND BUSINESS AFFAIRS, WARNER CHAPPELL MUSIC

Chris Head

Tim Meade

VPS OF LEGAL AND BUSINESS AFFAIRS, WARNER CHAPPELL MUSIC

The Warner Chappell team kept busy over the last year, acquiring a number of massive catalogs, including its new crown jewel: the global music publishing rights to David Bowie’s song catalog. As Butler puts it, “it was an absolute honor” and an “amazing collaborative experience” for the Warner Chappell legal team to be a part of the transaction, which involved “more than 400 songs from almost 30 studio albums spanning a period of more than 50 years.” On the horizon, the attorneys are looking at the implications of NFTs for Warner Chappell songwriters. “While they are offering exciting new ways to share music,” says Butler, “it is critical that we ensure that our songwriters are protected and fairly compensated in this rapidly growing uncharted area.”

Kerrigan Hennings

VP OF BUSINESS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS, UNIVERSAL MUSIC PUBLISHING GROUP

Angelica Merida

VP OF BUSINESS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS, INTERNATIONAL AND DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT, UNIVERSAL MUSIC PUBLISHING GROUP

Don Glista

SENIOR DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS AND CREATIVE AFFAIRS NASHVILLE, UNIVERSAL MUSIC PUBLISHING GROUP

Ira Hoffman

SENIOR DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS, UNIVERSAL MUSIC PUBLISHING GROUP

Over the last year, the UMPG team has sealed new deals with heavyweights like Sting, Louis Bell, Lionel Richie, Julia Michaels and, most recently, Neil Diamond. The company’s acquisition of Diamond’s song and master recording catalogs is the culmination of a decadeslong relationship between the artist and UMG. As the fight for fair compensation at the Copyright Royalty Board hearings continues, the lawyers have been particularly focused on “ensuring that artists and writers are paid fairly for the use of their music on stream-

ing platforms,” says Glista. He sees the role of the publisher as a protector and partner for writers so that they can “continue doing what they love doing and continuing creating music for all of us to enjoy.”

rights organizations

Christos Badavas

EXECUTIVE VP/GENERAL COUNSEL, SESAC MUSIC GROUP

Last summer, Badavas helped secure SESAC’s purchase of the digital rights collection agency Audiam from Canadian rights management group SOCAN. The acquisition helped SESAC expand beyond its core business and, according to Badavas, enhanced its “ability to claim, track and report YouTube royalties, streaming mechanicals and Canadian digital mechanical royalties for its songwriters, composers and music publishers.” Audiam, which launched in 2013, has collected \$140 million for songwriters and publishers as of 2021, and its integration into the performance rights organization supports the growth of its “multirights, multiterritory global rights management business,” he adds.

Tim Dadson

GENERAL COUNSEL, SOUNDEXCHANGE

“One of the most pressing concerns is the need to update our laws to reflect the rapid change in the ways music is now consumed,” Dadson says. Last June, he and the SoundExchange legal team, assisted by outside counsel, won a royalty rate increase from the Copyright Royalty Board for sound recording artists and rights owners of 17% for ad-supported digital music services and 8% for subscription services. After nine years at the rights management nonprofit, Dadson was promoted to general counsel in September 2021, and he intends to advocate for even higher rates in his new role, “making sure both emerging and existing platforms are paying creators fairly not only in the U.S. but around the world.”

> **“We have a responsibility — on behalf of our artists and songwriters — to protect their creativity while embracing new digital experiences.” —JULIE SWIDLER**

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ROSEMARY, MICHAEL, ELLIOT, ROB, GILLIAN & RENEE

Would like to take this opportunity to thank all our clients
for entrusting & allowing us to be a part of your journey

And once again - we would like to thank our
partners, associates & everyone at the firm

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Ira Friedman, Esq. (Partner)
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Dave Keady, Esq.
Jenna Akemi Kon, Esq.
Celine Hollenbeck, Esq.
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Laura Walker
David Garcia
Melanie Rousselet
Ayan Hotchkiss
Chris Reynolds
Jason Holt
Sofia Perez
Robert Workman
Alberto Reynoso
Kajol Seecharan
Kay Goldberg



↙ The **ASCAP** team, including attorney **CLARA KIM**, celebrated the Grammy nominations of the performing rights organization's members, including **JON BATISTE**, who leads the field with 11 nods.

Kristen Johns

CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER,
THE MECHANICAL LICENSING COLLECTIVE
Johns is helping The Mechanical Licensing Collective transform and simplify how streaming and download services obtain all the necessary rights for musical works and accurately pay creators and rights holders. Created by the Music Modernization Act of 2018 to administer blanket mechanical licenses for digital service providers, The MLC distributed \$280 million in mechanical royalties, and its membership doubled to 16,000 in its first year of operations. Perhaps as importantly, says Johns, it “provided unprecedented levels of transparency into data related to The MLC’s work.”

Clara Kim

EXECUTIVE VP/CHIEF LEGAL
AND BUSINESS AFFAIRS OFFICER, ASCAP
Though Kim notes that “the music business is still recovering from the pandemic,” ASCAP has deftly adapted: The PRO reported in March that its revenue collections in 2021 reached a historic high of \$1.335 billion while it distributed \$1.254 billion to songwriters and publishers — a 3.4% increase from 2020. Its members have thrived, too, highlighted by Jon Batiste earning an artist-leading 11 nominations at the upcoming Grammy Awards, along with eight for Justin Bieber and seven each for Billie Eilish and Olivia Rodrigo. Still, the company continues to push forward, says Kim, adding that it “finalized a significant number of deals last year that will help to provide long-term income security for ASCAP members,” specifically focusing on agreements with major streaming, broadcast and audiovisual licensees.

Stuart Rosen

SENIOR VP/GENERAL COUNSEL, BMI
BMI’s legal team helped the performing rights organization and its affiliates navigate through “changing waters,” says Rosen, including the catalog sales boom, an explosion of new technology platforms and calls for greater data transparency. As businesses continue to recover from the impact of COVID-19, the music community at large has an obligation to “recognize its songwriters and composers have been hit just as hard, if not harder,” he adds, “and it’s our job to preserve the means for them to continue creating the music that fuels an entire industry.”

associations

Danielle Aguirre

EXECUTIVE VP/GENERAL COUNSEL,
NATIONAL MUSIC PUBLISHERS’ ASSOCIATION
Any upstart technology company that uses music to help build a user base can expect a call from the NMPA if it’s not paying royalties along the way. Over the last 18 months, the NMPA negotiated settlements regarding past unlicensed royalties with the major players of a new generation of online entertainment services: social media apps TikTok and Triller; livestream service Twitch; and publicly traded gaming platform Roblox. “These deals have brought not only value to the music publishing industry,” says Aguirre, “but also helped develop new relationships and partnerships between publishers and some of these fast-growing digital platforms.”

Ken Doroshow

CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER, RIAA
For the RIAA, Doroshow executed a pair of high-profile copyright infringement cases on behalf of the labels that were initially filed while he was a partner at Jenner & Block. Each of the cases affirmed protections for copyright holders against digital infringement: The first, against the Russian stream-ripping site Kurbanov, awarded labels \$83 million in damages; the second, against mixtape site Spinrilla, granted a summary judgment on the site’s liability. “In a time of constant innovation and a steady stream of ‘next big things,’ he says, “it’s more important than ever that all platforms and services that use and profit from music obtain the necessary licenses and pay rights holders and creators for their work.”

Ryan McWhinnie

SENIOR DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS
AND LEGAL AFFAIRS, MERLIN
McWhinnie has been at the forefront of helping digital music licensing service Merlin expand its membership, including to new continents with deals in Africa with Boomplay; in India with JioSaavn, Spotify and Resso; and in Southeast Asia with JOOX and TREBEL. The London-based lawyer says that while the industry must continue to support the growth and diversity of streaming services, “it is also important that we continue to encourage innovation by making it easier for emerging verticals and business models to access music.” That includes generating incremental revenue through deals with social music platforms like Facebook, TikTok and Triller and with business-to-business platforms such as Soundtrack Your Brand.

talent and litigation

Kenneth Abdo

EQUITY PARTNER, FOX ROTHSCHILD
Paul Bowles
Cynthia Katz
Tim Mandelbaum
Michael Reinert
Leron Rogers
Alex Threadgold
Heidy Vaquerano
PARTNERS, FOX ROTHSCHILD
John Rose
ASSOCIATE, FOX ROTHSCHILD
Fox Rothschild significantly expanded its music department after 2020. Equity partner Abdo is part of a hiring team at the firm that recruited attorneys from diverse backgrounds; Rogers, Rose and Vaquerano are among those who arrived in the past two years. Rogers renegotiated Kanye West’s recording agreement with Def Jam ahead

of the release of *Donda*. Bowles counseled client A\$AP TyY of the rap collective A\$AP Mob on his distribution deal with AWAL. Katz and Mandelbaum represented Mötley Crüe in the sale of the band’s master recording catalog to BMG. She and Reinert advised the estate of Muddy Waters in managing his music catalog and a new administration deal for his publishing. Katz joined Threadgold in helping the digital music/video distributor Symphonic in closing a large round of financing, and she collaborated with Vaquerano in advising former Blink-182 member Tom DeLonge on the sale of his master catalogs. She and Rogers advised Rick Ross on branding and equity deals with the wine and spirits company Sovereign Brands. Rose won dismissal of a defamation suit against Ross resulting from his autobiography, *Hurricanes: A Memoir*.

Gary P. Adelman

MANAGING PARTNER, ADELMAN MATZ
Sarah M. Matz

PARTNER, ADELMAN MATZ

Lisa F. Moore

PRINCIPAL, MOORE PEQUIGNOT

Andrew Pequignot

MEMBER, MOORE PEQUIGNOT

When Cardi B sued a YouTube for waging a “malicious campaign” to hurt her reputation, the rapper turned to a team of four veteran entertainment litigators from two different firms to represent her. Defamation lawsuits are hard for celebrities to win, but Moore, Pequignot, Matz and Adelman pulled it off, securing nearly \$4 million in damages for Cardi B. The win shouldn’t surprise anyone: Moore Pequignot is a well-known Atlanta entertainment boutique that has repped Offset and The Blind Boys of Alabama, while the New York-based Adelman Matz has repped Migos, Khalid and A\$AP Rocky.

Jenny Afia

HEAD OF LEGAL, SCHILLINGS INTERNATIONAL
London-based Afia, whose clients include Adele, Elton John and Johnny Depp, says the vast majority of her work has been “below the radar” — stopping the media from publishing intrusive and false stories about her clients. She led the team that won a landmark privacy case for Meghan Markle against Associated Newspapers and successfully defended her victory on appeal. She also advised on battling defamatory allegations published about a Grammy Award-winning client in the media, resulting in an apology and removal of the contested content. The most pressing concern she sees in 2022: “a potential World War III.”

Lisa Alter Katie Baron

PARTNERS, ALTER KENDRICK & BARON
Alter Kendrick & Baron advised Primary



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Covington's global music practice offers integrated transactional, intellectual property, litigation, regulatory, and public policy expertise. Our team includes trial lawyers who have been involved in some of the most significant music industry disputes of the digital era, deal lawyers with decades of technology and content transactions experience, and lawyers with in-house experience at record labels across business affairs and A&R.

We congratulate our colleagues Adrian Perry, Neema Sahni, and Jonathan Sperling for again being recognized by *Billboard* as Top Music Lawyers.



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> “These deals [by the NMPA] have helped develop new relationships between publishers and some of these fast-growing digital platforms.”

— DANIELLE AGUIRRE

Wave on how to pour some sugar on its long-standing partnership with Def Leppard with a deal in January that gave the music publisher additional stakes in the band’s publishing and master royalty income. Alter has guided deals in the past 12 months collectively worth more than \$2.5 billion, including the representation of Primary Wave on its acquisition of assets from the estate of James Brown and publishing/master recording catalogs of iconic artists and writers that include Stevie Nicks, Luther Vandross, America, Gerry Goffin, Chris Isaak, Patrick Leonard, Olivia Newton-John, The Four Seasons and Culture Club. She was music counsel to Hybe on its merger with Scooter Braun’s Ithaca Holdings and advised both Reservoir Media Management in its acquisition of Tommy Boy Music and BMG Rights Management in purchasing the ZZ Top music catalog. With rising interest by private equity in music assets, Alter counsels several equity investors and financial stakeholders in the industry.

Peter Anderson

PARTNER, DAVIS WRIGHT TREMAINE
Davis Wright Tremaine’s past and present clients include The Weeknd, Max Martin, Gwen Stefani and Lil Nas X, as well as the three major-label groups. In October, Anderson scored a major victory for The Weeknd and Martin when a federal appeals court ruled that their song “A Lonely Night” did not infringe the copyright of another tune written by two British songwriters in a case initially filed in 2019. Looking ahead, Anderson says, “a major concern and something being litigated now is whether Copyright Act statutory termination rights apply to recording contracts, allowing recording artists to claim ownership of a vast number of master sound recordings.”

Christian Barker

EQUITY PARTNER, SHACKELFORD BOWEN MCKINLEY & NORTON

Lauren Kilgore

PARTNER, SHACKELFORD BOWEN MCKINLEY & NORTON

By 2021, just one year after joining the firm, former artist manager Barker had signed songwriter and producer clients to nearly every Nashville publisher, brokering deals totaling more than eight figures. His biggest wins include landing TikTok breakout Warren Zeiders a recording contract with Warner Records — in what Barker says was a record-setting level in country music history for a new artist. With veteran clients like Bryon Gallimore and Paul Overstreet, Barker is closely watching the evolution of rights management. “We are going to see a future that’s ripe with tokenization of intellectual property,” he says, “where every songwriter has the ability and know-how to be in tune with real-time ownership and valuation of their assets.”

Andy Bart

PARTNER/CO-CHAIR, CONTENT, MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT PRACTICE, JENNER & BLOCK

Previn Warren

PARTNER, JENNER & BLOCK

On behalf of the major music groups and other members of the RIAA, Bart led the team that won a summary judgment in November 2020 on liability in a copyright infringement case against hip-hop mixtape site Spinrilla. On behalf of SoundExchange and other music industry clients, Warren helped lead a Jenner & Block team that last June obtained a significant rate increase from the Copyright Royalty Board for royalties paid by ad-supported and subscription digital music services.

Richard Baskind

PARTNER, SIMONS MUIRHEAD BURTON

London-based Baskind worked on the acquisition, led by his partner Alasdair George, of a substantial interest in the recorded music and publishing assets of Ace Copyrights by Cosmos Music, the oldest independent music company in Scandinavia. The ACE catalog includes some 9,000 recordings and 3,000 songs, including titles by Etta James and B.B. King. The firm’s client list includes Nick Cave, Alan Walker and Tion Wayne, and Baskind says he sees a “significant opportunity within the creative industries” in the rapid development of Web3, but notes that “comes with the concern around regulating and managing this growth on behalf of all.”

David Beame Brian Mencher

FOUNDING PARTNERS, BEAME & MENCHER

Beame and Mencher represent artists and producers Andrew Maury (Shawn Mendes, Mika, Olivia O’Brien) and Mod Sun, who co-steered Avril Lavigne’s seventh studio album, *Love Sux*, and co-wrote/directed the upcoming film *Good Mourning With a U* with longtime collaborator Machine Gun

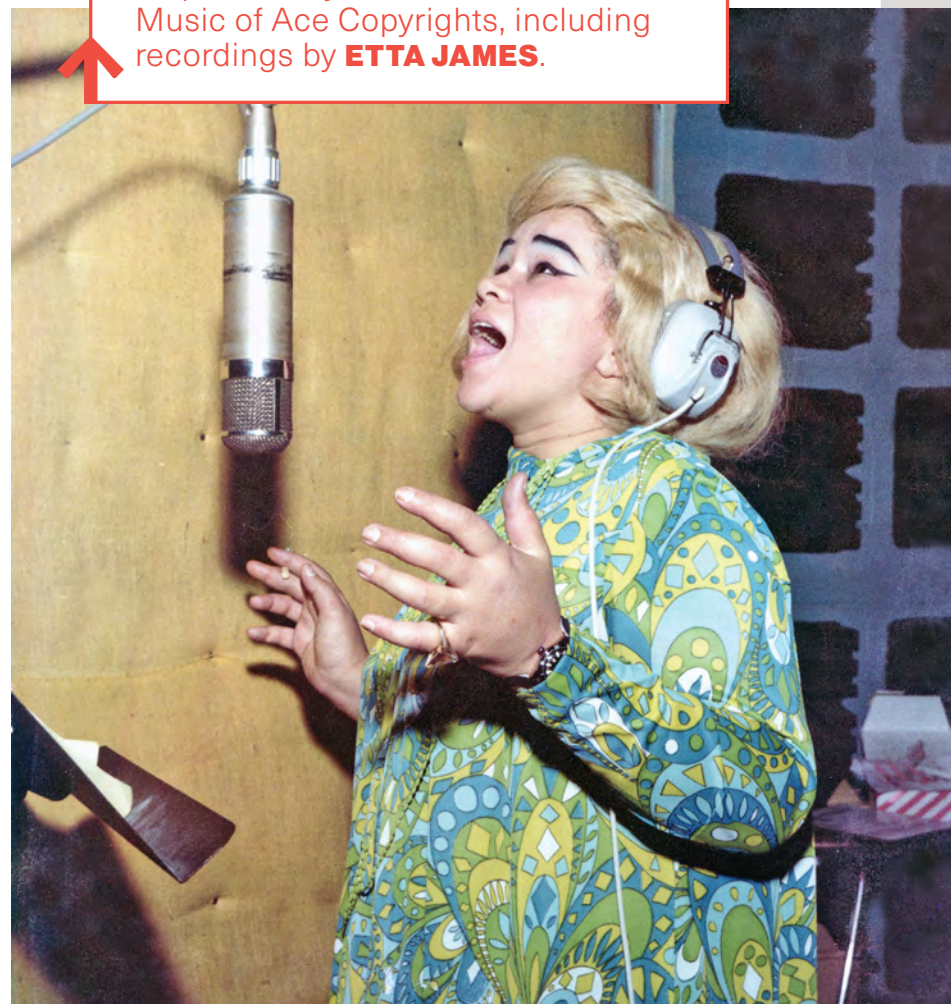
Kelly. The firm also works with Global Citizen, the international advocacy organization dedicated to ending extreme poverty. A safe and sustainable return to live events is a paramount issue for the industry, says Mencher, who served as the chief legal architect — managing COVID-19 protocols, artist/talent contracts and insurance issues — for Global Citizen’s Vax Live concert in May 2021.

Jill H. Berliner Ray Garcia

PARTNERS, RIMON

While the law firm declines to cite specific clients, Garcia says Rimon represents a number of Grammy-winning artists, Rock & Roll Hall of Fame inductees and entertainment entrepreneurs, as well as an independent record company, providing clients “with a virtual business affairs department.” Garcia also says the firm has recently advised clients on cases including Soundgarden’s lawsuits with the estate of Chris Cornell and Nirvana’s dispute with fashion designer Marc Jacobs and Spencer Elden, the man who appeared as a baby on the cover of the band’s *Nevermind* album.

RICHARD BASKIND and law partner **ALASDAIR GEORGE** worked on the acquisition by Scandinavia’s Cosmos Music of Ace Copyrights, including recordings by **ETTA JAMES**.



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2022

Top Music Lawyer List



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THE ZIA FIRM PLLC

**Adam Zia
Nate Kuo**

Joshua Binder
Jeremy Mohr
Paul Rothenberg

PARTNERS/CO-FOUNDERS,
ROTHENBERG MOHR & BINDER

A new publishing deal for songwriter Jon Bellion and a hot Super Bowl ad with Frito-Lay for longtime client Charlie Puth were just two of the agreements Rothenberg guided during the last year. The firm runs point for top executives, songwriters and artists — among them Andra Day, Chloe x Halle, Jazmine Sullivan, A\$AP Ferg and Marshmello. “When I started in the industry, it was often more lucrative to have written the hit than performed it,” Rothenberg says. “But now, anything connected to the master [recording] is paying higher. We must address equitable compensation for songwriters.” He also predicts that boons in catalog sales and streaming will continue: “If it’s a stream of music, somebody is selling it.”

Jason Boyarski

PARTNER, BOYARSKI FRITZ

Boyarski Fritz celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2021, but the boutique entertainment firm has remained focused on the future. Its label work involves steering NFT initiatives for Timbaland’s Beatclub, negotiating catalog sales for songwriter-producers Tainy and Louis Bell, and deals for the estates of Prince and Earth, Wind & Fire’s Maurice White. “Music catalog valuations have reached their highest levels in modern-day history, garnering a massive appetite from private equity and public markets globally,” Boyarski says, but inflation and rising interest rates could result in more supply than demand. The litigator encourages creators to choose their partners and strategies wisely to ensure that their music remains top of mind. “Music is art,” he says, “not a commodity.”

John Branca
David Lande
David Byrnes

PARTNERS, ZIFFREN BRITTENHAM

Branca has long served as the co-executor of the Michael Jackson estate and has helped secure a number of lucrative deals for the late pop singer. The firm steered the deal for a music biopic with Lionsgate and *Bohemian Rhapsody* producer Graham King; the launch of *MJ: The Musical*, which debuted on Broadway in February; and the

post-pandemic return of Michael Jackson One — the long-running Las Vegas Cirque du Soleil production set to Jackson’s music. The firm’s focus in 2022 and beyond remains to support “social justice and accountability and truth on social media,” says Branca.

William J. Briggs II

PARTNER, VENABLE

Venable’s clients include Stevie Wonder, Snoop Dogg, Migos and Gucci Mane. Briggs notes that many artists today “have been sued or have had claims made against them for copyright infringement arising from social media posts. Many have found pictures of themselves [online] and have simply reposted those photographs on their social media accounts. Those posts have been the subject of copyright infringement claims by paparazzi, who often claim entitlement to damages greater than a license fee they could obtain for the photograph. We have resolved a number of these claims.”

Jo Brittain
Simon Esplen
Chris Gossage
Gavin Maude
John Reid
Steven Tregear

PARTNERS, RUSSELLS

“How to reconcile the competing claims of record companies and artists to a share of

the digital income pot” is the most pressing issue facing the music business, says Tregear. The firm’s notable clients include Coldplay, Roger Waters and the estates of George Michael and Prince. The Russells music team also helped close one of the year’s biggest deals, advising Kobalt on the sale of its Kobalt Music Royalty Fund II — comprising over 62,000 copyrights — for \$1.1 billion to investment companies KKR and Dundee Partners in October.

Vernon Brown

PRESIDENT/CEO, V. BROWN AND COMPANY

Brown, the longtime attorney for Cash Money and its co-CEOs Bryan “Birdman” Williams and Ronald “Slim” Williams, believes artists need to find more ways to generate money. “From my view, the vast majority of artists make no money,” he says, “and the most pressing issue for them is figuring out how to create alternative streams of income.” Founded in 1992, V. Brown and Company continues to help both veteran artists and younger acts including Erykah Badu, Dodgr and ATL Jacob.

Ed Buggé

PARTNER, HERTZ LICHTENSTEIN YOUNG & POLK

Jamie Young

NAMED PARTNER, HERTZ LICHTENSTEIN YOUNG & POLK

Young played a key role in the mediation and settlement of legal actions involving

the estate of Tom Petty, “which included creating a business operation and establishing a management and business management team, while continuing to respect Tom Petty and his legacy,” he says. Young also represented Stevie Nicks in the sale of a portion of her music publishing catalog to Primary Wave. Buggé is an adviser to Apple on key music issues and acts as head of business affairs for the creative services company Platoon, including key artist deals in the United States, the United Kingdom and Africa. He has advised artist clients like Jaden Smith, Brent Faiyaz and Joshua Bell “on equity holdings in some of the industry’s most successful disruptive businesses and tech startups,” he says.

Richard Busch

PARTNER IN THE LITIGATION SECTION/HEAD OF THE ENTERTAINMENT AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY SECTIONS, KING & BALLOU

Busch — whose clients include Marvin Gaye’s family (for whom he won the “Blurred Lines” copyright infringement case in 2015) — continues to work to ensure “that owners of intellectual property, and most notably writers of musical and literary compositions, are not only licensed but paid properly.” In addition to pursuing a claim against Spotify on behalf of Eight Mile Style — co-owner, publisher and administrator of some 250 songs by Eminem — he filed suits



RICHARD BUSCH is representing Eight Mile Style, co-owner, publisher and administrator of some 250 songs by **EMINEM**.



Congratulations
Ken Doroshow

TOP MUSIC
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PHOTO BY OTHELLO BANACI

on behalf of comedians Robin Williams, George Carlin, Bill Engvall, Ron White, Nick Di Paolo and Andrew “Dice” Clay against Pandora “for alleged copyright infringement of their spoken word compositions, due to the failure to allegedly obtain either public performance or reproduction licenses or pay any royalties for the use of these works.”

Joe Carlone
Leslie Frank
Marjorie Garcia
Joseph Halbardier
Scott McDowell
Peter Paterno
Michael Rexford
Jacqueline Sabec
Laurie Soriano

PARTNERS, KING HOLMES PATERNO & SORIANO
 Among the many achievements of his firm and partners, Paterno’s recent negotiations on behalf of Dr. Dre stand out as the most high profile — if little recognized by fans. Paterno directed a team that was involved in all business aspects of Dre’s Super Bowl performance alongside Snoop Dogg, Eminem, Mary J. Blige, Kendrick Lamar and 50 Cent. The work involved dozens of contracts required with the NFL, Pepsi and all artists, designers, manufacturers, suppliers, production managers, choreographers and dancers — along with the clearance of music, trademarks and other intellectual property involved in the event.

Rosemary Carroll
Michael Guido
Elliot Groffman
Gillian Bar
Rob Cohen
Ira Friedman
Paul Gutman
Renee Karalian

PARTNERS, CARROLL GUIDO GROFFMAN
 COHEN BAR & KARALIAN

Groffman’s client Brandi Carlile wrote one of the most heartfelt music memoirs of the past year with *Broken Horses*, while her latest album, *In These Silent Days*, has earned her three Grammy Award nominations, including nods for record and song of the year. He also guided the transition of Paradigm Music to Wasserman. Carroll negotiated Patti Smith’s first endorsement deal with Rimowa luggage and guided the sale of Steve Earle’s publishing catalog. Guido has advised Megan Thee Stallion on her music and branding relationships, while Friedman negotiated her acting agreement for A24’s upcoming *Fucking Identical Twins*. Gutman works with Groffman to offer day-to-day counsel to clients including Carlile, Pearl Jam, Dave Matthews, Eric Church, Hipgnosis Songs Group and ATO Records. Among several catalog deals guided by Karalian is the sale by Julia Michaels of publishing and



The attorneys of **CARTER + WOODARD** negotiated a deal for the publishing catalog of the late R&B star **AALIYAH**.

recording assets to Influence Media Partners. Cohen struck film/TV deals for the Jonas Brothers, Demi Lovato and actress Olivia Culp. As live music returns, says Bar, “Goth Babe and The Backseat Lovers are two examples of clients whose touring has exploded.”

Uwonada Carter Scott
John Shay
Donald Woodard

FOUNDING PARTNERS, CARTER + WOODARD
 Carter + Woodard’s leading trio of entertainment litigators represents acts including Summer Walker, Kelly Rowland, Lil Yachty, Big Boi and Metro Boomin. Milestones include representing the purchasers in an eight-figure deal for a publishing catalog that includes copyrights of the late R&B star Aaliyah and a “multifaceted” deal between Metro Boomin and Republic Records that included a

label deal, an artist deal, a staff producer agreement and a consultant agreement. Additionally, the firm helped score branding/endorsement deals for their clients with companies including Target, Gap, Intel, Chef Boyardee, Reese’s Puffs Cereal, Amazon and FabFitFun.

Robert A. Celestin

FOUNDING PARTNER, THE LAW OFFICES
 OF ROBERT A. CELESTIN

Alicia Ferriabough Taylor

SENIOR ASSOCIATE, THE LAW OFFICES
 OF ROBERT A. CELESTIN

Representing the estates of hip-hop stars XXXTentacion and Pop Smoke, Celestin’s firm negotiated recent major deals including a distribution agreement for a Hulu documentary, an NFT deal and a new distribution pact with Columbia Records for XXXTentacion. The lattermost contract will include his earlier SoundCloud records and

another posthumous album to be released later this year. The firm played a major role in the release of Pop Smoke’s second posthumous album, *Faith*, negotiating, drafting and clearing its producer and side artist agreements. All recording acts, producers and songwriters need to “register their work with the Copyright Office,” says Celestin. “When I speak at various music panels, I urge the creatives to ‘CYS,’ or ‘Copyright yo’ shit!’ ”

Ross Charap
Matt Finkelstein

PARTNERS, ARENTFOX SCHIFF

After five years at another firm, Charap and Finkelstein returned to Arent Fox in 2021, bringing with them top industry names including Mick Jagger and Keith Richards of The Rolling Stones, together with their music publishing company, Promopub; BMG Rights Management; and Wise Music Group. Focused primarily on buying and selling copyrighted works and royalty streams, the firm helped BMG with its acquisition of Mick Fleetwood’s recording stake in the Fleetwood Mac catalog. The firm continues to focus on new technologies for its clients. “In a world where digital music consumption by consumers and the use of music by new business platforms continues to grow exponentially,” says Finkelstein, “it is vital that songwriters are paid fairly for the use of their songs.”

Jacqueline Charlesworth

PRINCIPAL, CHARLESWORTH LAW

Charlesworth brought her experience as a former general counsel with the U.S. Copyright Office and a private litigator to the 2021 launch of her own firm, where, she says, “about half of my practice right now involves termination issues. We recently sued in federal court to reclaim a songwriter’s rights in the famous song ‘After the Love Is Gone’ [by Earth, Wind & Fire] from the publisher, which has refused to honor the writer’s notice of termination under the Copyright Act.”

Stephanie Chopurian

SENIOR ASSOCIATE, RITHOLZ LEVY FIELDS

Matt Cottingham

SENIOR COUNSEL, RITHOLZ LEVY FIELDS

New York-based Chopurian recently renegotiated contracts for Latin music clients such as Sech, Ovy on the Drums and Myke Towers, while Nashville-based Cottingham did the same for country clients such as Brittney Spencer, Lily Rose, Andrew Janakos and Ashley Cooke. Both attorneys agree that there’s room for greater diversity in their areas of practice. “There is a wealth of female creative and executive talent out there which is being underutilized,” says Chopurian. “More Latinas need to be involved in the actual creative process and in senior executive roles.”

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Jay Cohen

PARTNER, PAUL WEISS RIFKIND WHARTON & GARRISON

"I have had the good fortune to represent ASCAP for more than 25 years in a variety of matters impacting music creators' efforts to obtain fair compensation for their work," says Cohen. That work has included ASCAP rate court proceedings and efforts by ASCAP to have the Department of Justice update the consent decrees that ASCAP and BMI have operated under for over 80 years. (The DOJ opted not to take action on the matter last year.) Other notable clients include the National Music Publishers' Association, Sony Music Entertainment and communications/media company Altice.

Jay Cooper Jess Rosen Bobby Rosenblum Mathew Rosengart Paul Schindler

SHAREHOLDERS, GREENBERG TRAURIG

A former federal prosecutor, Rosengart became a household name in 2021 through his representation of Britney Spears. He helped the pop star secure a win in November to end the 13-year conservatorship imposed by her father, Jamie Spears, and has vowed to continue fighting for an investigation into allegations of wrongdoing. Greenberg Traurig also counts as clients Katy Perry, Kacey Musgraves, the Recording Academy, iHeartMedia and OneOf (a leading music NFT platform). Rosenblum, who heads the firm's entertainment group, says that NFTs present "enormous opportunities," but only if the industry can sort out royalties first. "The industry risks missing out," he says, "on new revenue streams presented by these innovative technologies."

Roger Cramer

OF COUNSEL, WINSLETT STUDNICKY MCCORMICK & BOMSER

Cramer spent 15 years as an artist manager (Living Colour, Lisa Loeb, Wayne Shorter) before launching his two-decade-plus career as a music attorney, with clients including Disturbing Tha Peace, Ludacris, Nelly, Wu-Tang Clan, Stuart



DOUG DAVIS' clients include superstar artist-producer **SWIZZ BEATZ**, co-founder with Timbaland of the webcast series *Verzuz*.

with former president/CEO Deborah Dugan, which resulted in a confidential settlement in June 2021.

Sy Damle Andrew Gass Alli Stillman Jonathan West Joe Wetzel

PARTNERS, LATHAM & WATKINS

Latham & Watkins advises some of the largest firms and organizations in the music industry, including Live Nation, the National Association of Broadcasters, Meta, Snap, Roblox and Triller, as well as an increasing number of investors in music assets. The firm defended online gaming platform Roblox in a copyright infringement action brought by the National Music Publishers' Association — and achieved a settlement for the platform in June that opened the door to licensing talks with music publishers.

Doug Davis

FOUNDER/PRINCIPAL, THE DAVIS FIRM

Kim Youngberg

PARTNER, THE DAVIS FIRM

Davis — whose client list includes producers such as Swizz Beatz and Mike WILL Made-It, as well as artists like Wale and Barry Manilow — notes with pride that in 2021 he oversaw deals "that reflected the elevation of minorities into major leadership positions beyond just department heads." That included the promotion of Ryan Press to president of North America at Warner Chappell Music, Carolyn Williams to executive vp of marketing at RCA and Jeannette Perez to president/COO of Kobalt Music Publishing, as well as the return of Rani Hancock to Columbia Records as executive vp/head of A&R. Youngberg's clients include Swizz Beatz, LL Cool J and Lil Jon.

Silvino Edward Díaz

CHAIR, ENTERTAINMENT LAW GROUP, EPGD BUSINESS LAW; FOUNDER, STARVING ARTISTS

Díaz has focused on independent and rising producers and acts, including producers Caleb Calloway (Cazzu) and Mr. NaisGais (Rauw Alejandro), manager Angelo Torres (Álvaro Díaz) and artist Amarion. For Amarion, Díaz defended and settled a breach of contract action brought by his former management in Puerto Rico. Díaz also founded Starving Artists in Miami, a legal/business counsel service for artists

Matthewman and Robin Hannibal. He also represents composer-keyboardist-bandleader Robert Glasper and rising acts like \$NOT, Yeat, Autumn! and Lancey Foux, as well as producers, songwriters and mixers such as SephGotTheWaves, Tom Norris and James Francies. His experience also includes handling business and legal affairs for Songs Music Publishing, electronic dance music label OWSLA and Round Hill Music.

Sandra Crawshaw-Sparks

PARTNER/CHAIR OF ENTERTAINMENT, COPYRIGHT AND MEDIA PRACTICE GROUP, PROSKAUER ROSE

Anthony Oncidi

PARTNER/CO-CHAIR OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT LAW DEPARTMENT/HEAD OF WEST

COAST LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT PRACTICE, PROSKAUER ROSE

Proskauer Rose counts among its clients Sony Music Entertainment, BMG/Chrysalis, Live Nation, the Recording Academy, Madonna, U2 and Daft Punk. Crawshaw-Sparks recently defended Live Nation and Madonna in multiple class actions and arbitrations arising from delayed starts, phone-free policies and environmental conditions at dates on Madonna's *Madame X* tour and questions over the enforceability of mandatory arbitration clauses in online click-through contracts. Oncidi specializes in employment law in the entertainment/media and financial services industries. He was the lead counsel for the Recording Academy in its dispute

> **"The industry risks missing out on new revenue streams presented by these innovative technologies."**

— BOBBY ROSENBLUM

▶ DAMIEN GRANDERSON



▶ GUY BLAKE



▶ ELIZABETH MOODY



▶ COLIN MORRISSEY



GRANDERSON DES ROCHERS

BEVERLY HILLS  NEW YORK CITY

CONGRATULATIONS DAMIEN GRANDERSON, GUY BLAKE, ELIZABETH MOODY, & COLIN MORRISSEY

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list of "Top Music Lawyers."



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and entrepreneurs. Asked what the biggest ongoing challenge is for the industry, he says, “Properly compensating independent artists for their recording income.”

Scott Edelman Orin Snyder

PARTNERS, GIBSON DUNN & CRUTCHER
Snyder, who has handled legal matters for Lady Gaga, Bruce Springsteen, Elton John and others, won a ruling for Bob Dylan in August to dismiss a lawsuit that claimed the iconic songwriter owed a portion of his massive Universal Music Group catalog sale to the estate of a former collaborator. Edelman, meanwhile, helped UMG beat a \$100 million proposed class action filed by Tom Petty’s ex-wife that sought a portion of the money that the label had recovered through litigation over the 2008 warehouse fire that destroyed a trove of master recordings. He is now representing Sony in a different class action over copyright terminations.

Lawrence Engel

HEAD OF MUSIC, LEE & THOMPSON
“Extensive work” on Harry Styles’ 42-date Love on Tour U.S. trek — which sold 719,000 tickets and grossed \$94.7 million — kept Engel busy in 2021, his 10th year as head of music at London-based Lee & Thompson. The sale to Primary Wave of songwriter-producer Steve Kipner’s publishing catalog — which includes his share of hits by Olivia Newton-John, Christina Aguilera and Chicago — was one of a number of catalog acquisitions that Engel helped guide. Other notable clients include Craig David, Little Mix, MNEK and Styles’ former One Direction bandmates Liam Payne and Louis Tomlinson. The firm

also successfully represented Steve Jones and Paul Cook in their London High Court trial against John Lydon over the use of the Sex Pistols’ songs in a TV drama.

Timothy Liam Epstein

PARTNER, DUGGAN BERTSCH
Epstein represents over 100 venues, promoters and festivals including Riot Fest, Pitchfork, Baja Beach Fest, Sofar Sounds and Lightning in a Bottle. He helped *Rolling Stone* and PMC (the parent company of *Billboard*) close their acquisition of the Las Vegas festival Life Is Beautiful. The event ranked second on *Billboard*’s Top Boxscore year-end tally in 2021 after drawing over 160,000 in attendance and grossing \$18.3 million in three days. The deal took more than two years to close, following delays due to the pandemic and the untimely loss of festival and Zappos founder Tony Hsieh in 2020.

Ilene S. Farkas

PARTNER/CO-CHAIR, MUSIC LITIGATION PRACTICE, PRYOR CASHMAN

James G. Sammataro

PARTNER/CO-CHAIR, MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT GROUP, PRYOR CASHMAN

Frank P. Scibilia

PARTNERS, PRYOR CASHMAN

Pryor Cashman’s client list spans the industry’s top talent, including Ed Sheeran, Justin Bieber, Ariana Grande, Bruno Mars and Paulo Londra, alongside major labels and publishers Universal, Sony, Warner, peermusic, ABKCO and others. The firm represents the National Music Publishers’ Association and the Nashville Songwriters Association International in actions before the Copyright Royalty Board, proposing

rates and terms payable by interactive streaming and limited download services such as Amazon, Apple, Google and Spotify. Its top priority, says Sammataro, is “the struggle to ensure proper control and compensation for creators from digital uses, particularly as the music marketplace comes to be dominated by new business models.”

Javier Feito

PARTNER, ENTERTAINMENT, MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY GROUP, SMGQ LAW

Leslie José Zigel

PARTNER/CHAIR, ENTERTAINMENT, MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY GROUP, SMGQ LAW

With a client list of artists and music companies including Marco Antonio Solís, Wisin and Carlos Vives, SMGQ Law cites recent negotiations such as Pitbull’s “I Feel Good” Tour, which ranked at No. 20 on *Billboard*’s 2021 Top Tours chart and HBO’s music series *A Tiny Audience*, which nabbed an Emmy Award nomination. The firm negotiated Vives’ involvement, through his hit single “Colombia, Mi Encanto,” with Disney’s blockbuster *Encanto*, which has spent nine nonconsecutive weeks atop the Billboard 200.

Sid Fohrman

SHANE NIX
ALEX WEINGARTEN

PARTNERS, WILLKIE FARR & GALLAGHER

Since joining the firm in January as chair of music and digital media practices, Fohrman has overseen transactions for a diverse client base that includes TikTok, Match Group and metaverse companies AmazeVR and Roar Studios. Weingarten represented Jamie Spears in the litigation with his pop-star daughter Britney over

her conservatorship and post-termination proceeds. Fohrman adds that Jamie tapped Weingarten for “his expertise in handling high-profile, high-stakes litigation such as the claims being pursued in this instance.”

John Frankenheimer

CHAIR, MUSIC INDUSTRY, LOEB & LOEB

Debbie White

VICE CHAIR, MUSIC INDUSTRY, LOEB & LOEB

Derek Crownover

Tiffany Dunn

CO-OFFICE ADMINISTRATIVE PARTNERS, NASHVILLE, LOEB & LOEB

The firm that looks out for BTS, Carrie Underwood, Diana Ross, Luke Combs, The Who, Sony Music Publishing and the Academy of Country Music represented Warner Music Group in its acquisition of the David Bowie estate’s music publishing assets and BTS label HYBE’s joint venture and distribution deal with Universal Music, as well as the K-pop superstars’ McDonald’s campaign. “It’s extremely rewarding that the real value of music industry [intellectual property], the artist and the artist’s brand is finally being realized,” says Frankenheimer. “But there’s a responsibility to make sure that the midlevel, young and emerging artists are sharing in that as well.” Steering the live-music business back from its pandemic vacuum represented another critical issue. “COVID-19-related cancellations were not expressly covered in many agreements, so promoters and vendors suffered tremendously and are now pushing to have the artists assume this liability,” says White. “We need to establish the new economic models that balance the risk allocation for all parties.”

Sasha Frid

Louis “Skip” Miller

PARTNERS, MILLER BARONDESS

Frid and Miller represent groups such as Five Finger Death Punch, Bad Wolves and Backstreet Boys as well as Universal Music Group and Live Nation. Last April, the firm resolved a dispute among members of Journey in which client Neal Schon, as well as Jonathan Cain, settled a \$10 million trademark infringement lawsuit regarding the continued use of the band’s name. Frid adds that he also “litigated and resolved a dispute between Bad Wolves and its former lead singer, Tommy Vext, allowing Bad Wolves to move on with a new singer.”

The attorneys of **SMGQ LAW** negotiated **CARLOS VIVES’** involvement in the blockbuster soundtrack album *Encanto*, which includes his hit single “Colombia, Mi Encanto.”



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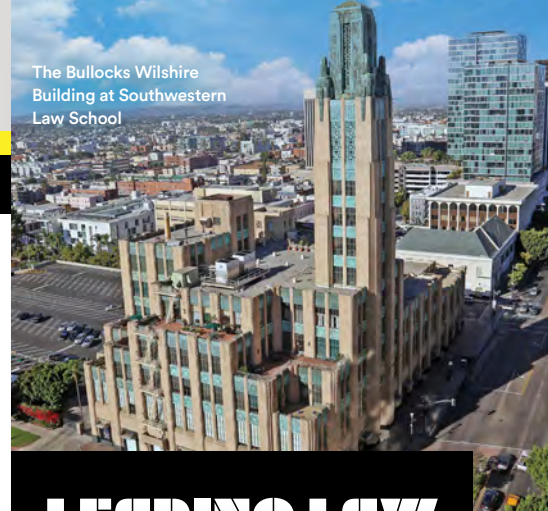
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Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, Yeshiva University

NEW YORK

Enrollment: 909

Brooklyn Law School

BROOKLYN

Enrollment: 1,037

Columbia Law School, Columbia University

NEW YORK

Enrollment: 1,263

Fordham University School of Law

NEW YORK

Enrollment: 1,100

Harvard Law School, Harvard University

CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

Enrollment: 1,715

New York University School of Law

NEW YORK

Enrollment: 1,370

Southwestern Law School

LOS ANGELES

Enrollment: 670

University of California, Berkeley, School of Law

BERKELEY, CALIF.

Enrollment: 1,045

University of California, Los Angeles, School of Law

LOS ANGELES

Enrollment: 1,022

University of Southern California Gould School of Law

LOS ANGELES

Enrollment: 599

ENROLLMENTS SOURCE:
U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT

Eric German

PARTNER, ENTERTAINMENT TRANSACTIONS GROUP, MITCHELL SILBERBERG & KNUPP

Christine Lepera

PARTNER/CO-CHAIR, ENTERTAINMENT AND IP LITIGATION PRACTICE GROUP, MITCHELL SILBERBERG & KNUPP

Jeffrey Movit Bradley Mullins

PARTNERS, ENTERTAINMENT AND IP LITIGATION PRACTICE GROUP, MITCHELL SILBERBERG & KNUPP

The firm's client Katy Perry prevailed in a yearslong copyright infringement case involving her 2013 hit "Dark Horse." Earlier in March, Lepera, as lead counsel for the defense, obtained a decision by the district judge to toss a \$2.8 million jury verdict of infringement, which was unaniously affirmed by the Ninth Circuit in a decision that set a precedent on music copyright issues. The firm's clients also have included Drake, Post Malone, Max Martin, Universal Music Group and Ultra International Music Publishing.

Leah Godesky David Marroso

PARTNERS, O'MELVENY & MYERS

Daniel Petrocelli

PARTNER/TRIAL PRACTICE CHAIR/FIRM VICE CHAIR, O'MELVENY & MYERS

The firm helped bring client SiriusXM "an August appellate win in a landmark music industry case regarding performance rights for recordings created before 1972," says Petrocelli. He and Godesky are also representing Keshia in the defamation suit brought by producer Lukasz "Dr. Luke" Gottwald, whom the singer has accused of sexual misconduct. They're gearing up for the long-awaited trial that is set for early 2023.

Damien Granderson Colin Morrissey

PARTNERS, GRANDERSON DES ROCHERS

Guy Blake

MANAGING PARTNER, GRANDERSON DES ROCHERS

Elizabeth Moody

PARTNER/CHAIR OF NEW MEDIA PRACTICE, GRANDERSON DES ROCHERS

While the firm represented J. Cole on behalf of his *The Off-Season* tour with Live Nation, Granderson Des Rochers also supervised the joint venture between Quality Control's Solid Foundation Management and SoundCloud. The joint venture's goal is to discover new talent and provide them with custom resources, tools and access. Given the rise of new music distribution channels such as direct-to-digital service providers and NFTs, Granderson — whose firm also represents H.E.R., J Balvin and songwriter Bernie Taupin — says it's crucial that "artists be empowered with all information possible to maintain ownership, control

and a fair share of proceeds derived from their works."

Navarro Gray

FOUNDER, THE GRAY LAW FIRM

Representing a mix of legacy acts and new artists, Gray has helped secure deals across the R&B and hip-hop sectors for Ron Isley, Taz Taylor, Nick Mira and Internet Money, among others. Recent highlights include negotiating a TV deal with 50 Cent and Starz on behalf of Black Mafia Family co-founder Southwest T, a publishing deal for Chris Brown and Benji Entertainment (the producer of Young Thug) and Capella Grey's record deal with Capitol Records, following the release of hit single "Gyalis," which Gray says "took the world by storm."

Eric Greenspan Jeffrey Light Craig S. Marshall Francois Mobasser Aaron Rosenberg

PARTNERS, MYMAN GREENSPAN FOX ROSENBERG MOBASSER YOUNGER & LIGHT

When Justin Bieber launched his *Justice* world tour on Feb. 18 in San Diego, the star used his platform to raise awareness about criminal justice reform, climate issues and voter registration. Representing Bieber behind the scenes is Rosenberg, who also advises Ariana Grande, John Legend, Jennifer Lopez and LVRN. Greenspan counts among his clients Paul Tollett, Dead & Co. and Red Hot Chili Peppers, whom he advised on the sale of their publishing catalog to Hipgnosis Songs Fund. Mobasser advises Common, Jack Johnson and Erykah Badu; Light represents Queens of the Stone Age, Disturbed and Pulse Music; and Marshall works with Kevin Abstract, Elle King and Yeti Beats.

Gary R. Greenstein

MEMBER, WILSON SONSINI GOODRICH & ROSATI

Specializing in the digital exploitation of intellectual property, the Washington, D.C.-based Greenstein's recent cases include representing Google before the Copyright Royalty Board in the Phonorecords IV rate-setting proceeding, Stingray Music USA and Rockbot before the CRB for the Business Establishment Services IV proceeding and Roblox in its now-settled dispute with the National Music Publishers' Association. He is a fierce opponent of the rampant "consolidation of rights" in today's music industry.

Allen Grubman

SENIOR PARTNER, GRUBMAN SHIRE MEISELAS & SACKS

David Jacobs

PARTNER, GRUBMAN SHIRE MEISELAS & SACKS

Kenny Meiselas

NAMED PARTNER/HEAD OF THE MUSIC DEPARTMENT, GRUBMAN SHIRE MEISELAS & SACKS

The firm boasts an all-star client list. Grubman represents Bruce Springsteen, the estate of David Bowie, Paul Simon, Sting, Spotify and senior executives such as Lucian Grainge, Michael Rapino and Jon Platt. Jacobs advises Lil Nas X, Kali Uchis and Take a Daytrip, while Meiselas advocates on behalf of The Weeknd, Lady Gaga, Usher, Lizzo, Sean Combs, GAYLE and the Robin Hood Charity. Among the firm's highlights of the past year are record-setting catalog sales for Springsteen, Bowie, Sting and Simon; The Weeknd's partnership with Amazon and his upcoming stadium tour; Gaga's role in *House of Gucci* and her latest duet album with Tony Bennett; and Lil Nas X's sponsorships and endorsement deals with Uber Eats, Logitech, Taco Bell and Postmates.

Pierre Hachar Jr.

MANAGING PARTNER, THE HACHAR LAW FIRM

Cody Pellicer

GENERAL PARTNER, THE HACHAR LAW FIRM

Hachar's Miami office represents clients including Gente de Zona, Anitta, Vibras Lab, Deorro and Justin Quiles. Hachar represented Quiles in a complex and multiparty restructuring of the artist's global recording and publishing deals with Warner Music Latin and Kobalt, respectively. The litigator is passionate about educating newer artists and executives, with his top concern being the shift into consumption of new technologies "that the industry is not ready to execute," he says, citing the metaverse and NFTs.

Jonas Herbsman

MANAGING PARTNER, HERBSMAN HAFFER WEBER & FRISCH

Michael Frisch Dorothy Weber

PARTNERS, HERBSMAN HAFFER WEBER & FRISCH

Herbsman Hafer oversaw a number of catalog sales in 2021, most recently Regent Music and Jewel Music to Primary Wave. The catalogs include the songs "Pipeline" (Brian Carman, Bob Spickard), "More Today Than Yesterday" (Pat Upton), "Lonely Teardrops" (Berry Gordy Jr., Gwen Gordy and Roquel "Billy" Davis) and Christmas classics like "I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus" (Tommy Connor) and "Do You Hear What I Hear?" (Noël Regney, Gloria Shayne). "Working on the sale was a journey through the history of 20th-century American music put together by a true independent music publisher," says Herbsman.

Lawrence Iser

MANAGING PARTNER, KINSELLA WEITZMAN ISER KUMP

Jonathan Steinsapir

PARTNER, KINSELLA WEITZMAN ISER KUMP

As the touring business returns, among the most pressing issues is "the dominance of

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Ticketmaster in the primary and secondary ticketing services market,” says Iser. The firm’s clients include the estate of Michael Jackson; such artists as Jackson Browne, David Byrne, Cardi B, Offset, Lil Wayne, Swae Lee, French Montana, Trey Songz and Lana Del Rey; and companies like Del Records, Roland, Saban Music Group and Third Side Music. Iser and his team also represented producers Justin Raisen, Jeremiah Raisen and Yves Rothman in the just-settled suit against Lizzo over the authorship of “Truth Hurts.”

Erin M. Jacobson

ATTORNEY/CEO, ERIN M. JACOBSON
Jacobson’s client list spans Grammy and Emmy winners, legacy artists and catalogs, music publishers, independent artists and companies, and heirs and estates. Her most recent cases involved catalog acquisitions, music estate issues, copyright terminations, music publishing agreements and international music licensing agreements. Jacobson has advised on the music rights issues involved in both licensing and selling music and its associated intellectual property in NFTs. She says the industry “is still fighting for proper pay for its artists, and especially its songwriters.”

Russell A. Jones Jr.

ATTORNEY, LAW OFFICES OF RUSSELL A. JONES JR. AND ASSOCIATES
Two years into the pandemic, the music industry’s artists are “now happily spending more time on tour and personal appearance agreements,” says Jones, who counts country artists Garth Brooks, Toby Keith, Tim McGraw and Trisha Yearwood among his clients. He notes that the biggest challenge for the music industry in 2022 is “reintroducing live music to the people.”

Olawale “Wale” Kalejaiye

ASSOCIATE, MUSIC GROUP, SHERIDANS
London-based Kalejaiye helped clinch fashion endorsement deals with Calvin Klein and Tommy Hilfger’s Tommy Jeans for Nigerian newcomers Burna Boy and Tems, respectively. Additionally, he helped negotiate major-label bidding wars for Tems at RCA/Since93 and for former model JNR Choi at Epic Records. His goal moving forward is to help solve “the black-box conundrum” of \$2.5 billion in unallocated royalties for rights owners, he says, noting that the “rise of smart contracts, cloud computing, data security and collective ownership can provide a solution.”

Joshua A. Kamen

FOUNDER/OWNER, THE LAW OFFICES OF JOSHUA A. KAMEN
Kamen’s firm represents City Girls, 6LACK and Givëon, who sold out his first headlining tour, landed six Grammy

nominations and collaborated with artists such as Justin Bieber and Drake in the past year. Kamen stresses the importance of artist development. “As attention spans get shorter, we need to figure out how to get kids to meaningfully connect with new artists again and not just listen to music as the soundtrack to viral videos,” he says. “There will never be a one-size-fits-all solution.”

Jason Karlov

CHAIR, ENTERTAINMENT, MEDIA AND SPORTS PRACTICE GROUP, BARNES & THORNBURG

Joel Katz

SENIOR COUNSEL, BARNES & THORNBURG
In addition to his continued work with clients Bob Dylan and Michael Bolton, Karlov represented the NFL in production and guild matters and the procurement of music rights for Super Bowl LV. Katz, who represents the Country Music Association and senior executives like Steve Carless, Mike Dungan, John Esposito, Randy Goodman and Monte Lipman, led a team that helped promoter TEG execute a December benefit concert headlined by Kanye West and Drake at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. With expanding opportunities for music licensing, says Karlov, “a more efficient system for synch would unleash a lot of money and uses for all.”

Han Kim

ASSOCIATE, SHEPPARD MULLIN RICHTER & HAMPTON
Kim’s client list ranges from South Korean hip-hop trio Epik High and pop artist Jackson Wang to Spotify for numerous podcast productions, Tinder and Match.com in various music-related transactions and the immersive virtual reality concert producer AmazeVR. On behalf of the lattermost company, Kim says he spearheaded negotiations with Megan Thee Stallion’s team, as well as her label and publisher, for “a one-of-a-kind *Enter Thee Hottiverse* VR concert that will be exhibited in movie theaters across the United States in the coming months.”

Russell L. King

DIRECTOR, KING LAW FIRM
Since the beginning of the pandemic, King has negotiated numerous “endorsement deals, non-fungible token drops and other alternative revenue sources” for his clients, he says, structuring an upcoming e-commerce venture for Juan Luis Guerra and clothing and fragrance lines for Maluma with Macy’s, as well as deals for the latter with Anheuser-Busch, Versace, Quay, Oppo and Hennessy. Maluma was one of the first artists to announce a new tour at “a time of great uncertainty,” says King, but the outing ranked as the No. 14 tour of the year. King negotiated the Latin star’s tour agreements to “protect him through that calculated risk as well as the central

withholding agreement [on nonresident income] with the IRS,” he adds.

Christiane Kinney

ENTERTAINMENT ATTORNEY/PRESIDENT, KINNEY LAW

For its artist clients, Kinney’s firm manages traditional negotiations involving label and publishing deals, terminating transfer rights, catalog sales and partnerships such as future royalty streams. But the work that sets it apart in the music space, she says, is expertise in the burgeoning technology sector, from interactive and virtual reality media experiences and the metaverse to helping on intellectual property due diligence on assets that clients want to mint for NFTs, “which is far more complex in the music space than other areas of intellectual property. There has been so much exciting new ground broken in recent years, largely in response to the

pandemic, and we love to help our clients stay on the cutting edge and benefit from these opportunities.”

Mark Kraiss

PARTNER, BRAY & KRAISS SOLICITORS

Over 5.5 million viewers tuned in to Ed Sheeran’s TikTok livestream last June and its two replays, making it the biggest-ever live-music performance on the platform, according to TikTok. For Kraiss, whose London-based firm represents Sheeran, the show was one of several high points in another challenging 12 months for the live sector, boosted by the return of touring in the second half of the year. That included the rescheduled No Filter Tour by Bray & Kraiss client The Rolling Stones. Originally slated for 2020, the outing ranked as the No. 1 tour of the past year with a gross of \$72.3 million, according to Billboard Boxscore. Kraiss’

OLAWALE “WALE” KALEJAIYE negotiated an endorsement deal with Calvin Klein for Nigerian star **BURNA BOY**.



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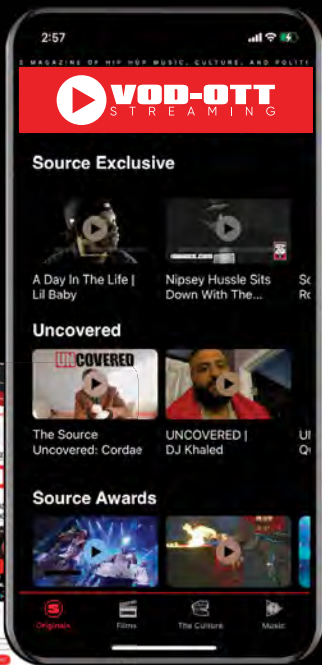


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other clients include Mumford & Sons, Elton John and British rappers Skepta and KSI.

Simon Rust Lamb

LAW OFFICES OF SIMON RUST LAMB; COO/
GENERAL COUNSEL, BULLDOG DIGITAL MEDIA

As the pandemic continued to affect live events, Lamb advised major independent festival promoters, including the Texas-based dance fest producer Disco Donnie Presents. He helped navigate challenges associated with cancellations and COVID-19-responsive festival operations amid rapidly shifting protocols and co-authored strategic communications in the face of litigation and crisis. "The work of independent promoters is critical to local culture [and] artist development and as an alternative to conglomerates," he says.

Greg Lapidus

MANAGING PARTNER (RETIRED),
LAPIDUS ROOT & SACHAROW

In the past year, Lapidus announced his retirement after nearly two decades of leading his Santa Monica, Calif.-based firm, representing superstar artists, producers, major record companies and film studios. He takes special pride in his longtime representation of Disney Music Group and Special Olympics, including his involvement with *A Very Special Christmas*, the compilation series benefit-

ing the annual competition for differently abled athletes.

Dina LaPolt

FOUNDER/OWNER, LAPOLT LAW

Sarah Scott

MANAGING PARTNER, LAPOLT LAW

Cardi B's role as *Playboy's* inaugural creative director-in-residence and founding member of a new creator-led online platform, Centerfold, is just one of the recent trailblazing deals sealed by the firm's LaPolt and Scott, who also mind the legal business of Offset, 21 Savage, The Kid LAROI, deadmau5 and Steven Tyler. The industry issues that top LaPolt's list? "Dwindling royalties paid to songwriters due to government regulations and Copyright Royalty Board proceedings, tours still getting canceled due to COVID-19 and issues concerning systemic racism," she says.

Todd Larson

PARTNER, INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND
MEDIA PRACTICE, WEIL GOTSHAL & MANGES

Benjamin Marks

HEAD OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND
MEDIA PRACTICE, WEIL GOTSHAL & MANGES

Marks and Larson are on the front lines of the battle over royalty rates. In July, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit vacated the rate determination of the Copyright Royalty Board for 2018-2022, which sets the mechanical

royalties that client Pandora, as well as other interactive streaming services, pay to music publishers. In December, the CRB adjusted the royalty rate for noninteractive webcasters, including the firm's clients Pandora and SiriusXM, under the Web V rate proceeding. They expect podcasting to be the next frontier in the battleground for the ears and dollars of music fans.

Shay M. Lawson

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND ENTERTAINMENT
ATTORNEY, LAWSON MCKINLEY

Lawson represents some of hip-hop's biggest names, from artists Offset and Pimp C to producers Sheldon Ferguson (Moneybagg Yo, Travis Scott), Groove (EarthGang) and Ramengvrl (Sofía Reyes, Jason Derulo). She has remained a committed advocate for the Black community, working to combat inequities across the industry as a member of Songwriters of North America, a private working group within the Recording Academy and the Black Music Action Coalition. She also has advocated for federal legislation to curtail the use of rap lyrics as proof of guilt in criminal proceedings.

William R. Leibowitz

FOUNDER, WILLIAM R. LEIBOWITZ LAW GROUP

In an industry where deal-making is already happening fast and furiously — and accelerating — Leibowitz is at the center of the

whirlwind, representing Merck Mercuriadis' Hipgnosis Songs Fund as it tries to close acquisitions for the music assets in its billion-dollar pipeline. In 2021, he negotiated and closed many Hipgnosis acquisitions including deals for rights and/or royalty streams by artists, songwriters and producers like Christine McVie, Andrew Watt, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Carole Bayer Sager, Stefan and Jordan Johnson, Rhett Akins and Andy Wallace.

Jason Lueddeke

ASSOCIATE, DLA PIPER

Lueddeke's most recent achievement comes by way of his work representing songwriter-entrepreneur Philip Lawrence (Bruno Mars) in multiple litigations related to his music publishing catalog and ownership of the iconic Record Plant recording studio in Hollywood and its related trademarks. "For a music fanatic like me, having the opportunity to work on matters involving such a legendary studio where some of the greatest albums ever made were recorded has been a dream come true," says Lueddeke. "I feel very fortunate to represent Philip, who, in addition to being a world-class musician and entertainer, is a great person."

Kent Marcus

OWNER/SENIOR PARTNER, MARCUS & COLVIN

Clients Jason Aldean, Kings of Leon and Joy Oladokun have long counted on Marcus for straightforward guidance, particularly now as digital video and streaming platforms evolve at a mind-bending pace. "Web3, blockchain/node technology, NFTs and gaming models will disrupt the music industry," says Marcus. "When executed with real value, NFTs and node networks will provide artists and fans with next-level relationships and profitability." Marcus weathered a personal crisis as well after partner Jeff Colvin sustained life-threatening injuries during a series of intense thunderstorms in Nashville in May 2020. "Jeff and his son have just about fully recovered," he says. "We came together as a law firm to support them as best we could — that was the easy part."

Doug Mark David Ferreria

PARTNERS, MARK MUSIC & MEDIA LAW

Working with acts such as Billie Eilish, FINNEAS and Guns N' Roses, Ferreria and Mark have used their combined 14



MARK KRAIS represents **THE ROLLING STONES**, whose No Filter Tour ranked No. 1 on *Billboard's* year-end Top Tours chart.

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ANGELA MARTINEZ represented LUIS FONSI in the sale of his publishing catalog to HarborView Equity Partners.

years at Mark Music & Media Law to create success, guiding breakout singer-songwriter Lauren Spencer-Smith's new label deal with Island/Republic and negotiating Eilish's headlining slot at Coachella. Their greatest concern? "For the past few years, it has been the same issue: the calculation and collection of royalties received from digital service providers," says Ferreria. "Our industry needs to ensure that an appropriate share of the revenue makes its way back to the creators in every instance."

Angela "Angie" N. Martinez

ATTORNEY AT LAW, ANGELA N. MARTINEZ
Martinez's roster of clients includes Latin chart-toppers Ozuna, Camilo, CNCO, Ricardo Montaner, Mau y Ricky and Luis Fonsi, whom she most recently represented in the sale of his publishing catalog to HarborView Equity Partners. "With acquisition agreements becoming more prominent in the Latin music industry," she says, "it is fundamental that artists and their teams have copies of all of their agreements, have access to all of the royalty platforms for the corresponding royalty statements and have realistic expectations of what their catalog is worth."

James E. McMillan

FOUNDER, JAMES E. MCMILLAN
Because he's also busy running his own record label, ART@WAR, McMillan is "selective" about the legal clients he takes on. One artist who fits the bill is Bobby Shmurda, whose team reached out to McMillan last year to help renegotiate the rapper's deal with Epic Records following his release from prison after six years. "I'm personally committed to working with people who are looking to transition from difficult circumstances into leadership roles," says McMillan, who helped Shmurda set up his business

infrastructure and "get his show back on the road."

L. Londell McMillan

CHAIRMAN/CEO, THE MCMILLAN FIRM
McMillan has an ownership stake in and manages half of the business and financial interests on behalf of Prince Legacy LLC once it closes probate this year. Prince Legacy includes the artist's remaining siblings who didn't sell to Primary Wave as well as McMillan and Charles Spicer. With a client list including the Mt. Westmore collective (Ice Cube, Snoop Dogg, Too \$hort, E-40), the veteran music attorney's other recent achievements include suc-

cessfully opposing Primary Wave's efforts to create a single joint holding company to manage the Prince estate's assets. In today's challenge-filled economy, cultural and economic equity remain important, says McMillan: "There should be more senior Black executives in C-suites and more Black-owned companies doing business with global enterprises."

Ed McPherson

ENTERTAINMENT TRIAL LAWYER, MCPHERSON
As artists return to live performances, McPherson has remained vigilant about ensuring crowd safety at his clients' concerts and festivals. He has represented Travis Scott for two years and continues as his attorney following the tragedy in November at the Astroworld festival, where 10 people died and hundreds were injured during a crowd surge at the 50,000-capacity show. (He has said producers would have

stopped the concert if requested by the police, as they did with the 2019 Astroworld when it went past curfew.) Looking ahead, his firm's top priority is "how to get back on track with touring and festivals after the pandemic — and how to do it safely."

Matthew Middleton

FOUNDER/PRINCIPAL, MIDDLETON LAW
Last August, the late singer Aaliyah's multiplatinum album *One in a Million* hit streaming platforms for the first time. It was soon followed by other classic but long-unavailable albums by Timbaland & Magoo, Tank, Toni Braxton, JoJo and others from the illustrious Blackground Records catalog. After negotiating a distribution deal between the legendary '90s label Blackground Records and distribution company EMPIRE, Middleton says he's especially proud of having helped revitalize a catalog that "hasn't been available to fans for over 10 years." The Harlem native's client list includes rappers Yung Bleu, Fabolous and Cam'ron.

Michael Milom David Crow

PARTNERS, MILOM HORSNELL CROW
KELLEY BECKETT SHEHAN

In 2021, the firm negotiated artist deals for major TV musical competition series and represented clients in agreements for Las Vegas residencies, while also representing buyers and/or sellers in a dozen catalog sales with an aggregate purchase price of over \$28 million. Luke Bryan, Mickey Guyton, Carly Pearce and Keith Urban are among its clients. According to Crow and Milom, one of the music industry's most pressing concerns this year is how to develop new artists in light of changes forced upon the industry by COVID-19 and the shifting sands at terrestrial radio and digital service providers. How can the industry collectively build and sustain arena-level hard-ticket acts, they ask, if the focus is on social media metrics?

Carron Joan Mitchell

PARTNER, NIXON PEABODY
Mitchell recently joined Nixon Peabody from Hertz Lichtenstein Young & Polk. She brings her experience in representing artists including Ari Lennox, Brent Faiyaz, Cuco, Freddie Gibbs, Earl Sweatshirt, Vince Staples and EarthGang and in negotiating branding deals for clients with Coca-Cola, Calvin Klein, Facebook and others. On the firm's website, she notes: "Clients are asking to be paid in cryptocurrency, and while in the past companies pushed back on this method of payment, there are companies now open to this new way of accounting. I'm also excited to see how Web3 and the metaverse impact the sports and entertainment industry as more and more clients are starting to explore ways to monetize in the virtual worlds."

> "Our industry needs to ensure that an appropriate share of the revenue makes its way back to the creators in every instance." — DAVID FERRERIA

Congratulations to our partners **Derek Crowover, Tiffany Dunn, John Frankenheimer, and Debbie White**, and all of our friends honored on *Billboard's* Top Music Lawyers list.



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HERTZ LICHTENSTEIN YOUNG & POLK, LLP

Zia F. Modabber

MANAGING PARTNER, CALIFORNIA/CHAIR, ENTERTAINMENT AND MEDIA LITIGATION, KATTEN MUCHIN ROSENMAN

Modabber is defending the Michael Jackson estate in a class action lawsuit regarding the artist's first posthumous album. (The plaintiffs claim that Jackson wasn't the vocalist on three tracks.) The California Supreme Court has granted a review of a ruling by the trial court, with Modabber to lead "oral arguments that will address previously undecided First Amendment issues on the boundary between protected artistic speech and expression, on the one hand, and pure commercial speech that may be easily regulated, on the other," he says. The firm's other top clients include Trent Reznor, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Stevie Wonder, Usher, Lil Nas X, Céline Dion and the Recording Academy.

Matt Oppenheim

MANAGING PARTNER, OPPENHEIM + ZEBRAK

Scott Zebrak

CO-FOUNDING PARTNER, OPPENHEIM + ZEBRAK

While representing the three major labels, the firm's partners "won an important case against two of the most popular stream-ripping services in the world, websites FLVTO.biz and 2conv.com," says Oppenheim. A U.S. magistrate recommended — and a district judge then ordered — the owner of the sites to pay the labels nearly \$83 million in damages for copyright infringement. Oppenheim and Zebrak (along with Covington & Burling) also continue to represent the major labels and their publishers in ongoing copyright infringement actions against internet service providers including Charter Communications and Bright House. "Both ISPs," says Oppenheim, "have repeatedly turned a blind eye to [their] subscribers' repeated infringement of music copyrights."

Don Passman Ethan Schiffres

PARTNERS, GANG TYRE
RAMER BROWN & PASSMAN

Gene Salomon

MANAGING PARTNER, GANG TYRE
RAMER BROWN & PASSMAN

With clients that include Adele, Taylor Swift, Neil Diamond and P!nk, the firm was busy with Swift's two 2021 releases, as well Green Day's Hella Mega Tour (with Fall Out Boy and Weezer), which was the first stadium tour to return to the road in 2021. Salomon was the lead lawyer for the sale of Diamond's masters and publishing to Universal Music Group and Universal Music Publishing Group that was announced in February. "The teams at UMG and UMPG are first rate," Salomon says, "and their experience working with Neil's catalog, and his comfort level with them, were critical to the process."

Michael Perlstein Robert Lieberman

PARTNERS, FISCHBACH PERLSTEIN
LIEBERMAN & ALMOND

In the past year, Lieberman and Perlstein have been involved in the trading of music assets on both the buy and sell sides. On the buy side, they helped client GoDigital Media Group navigate some complicated acquisitions, including a few music catalogs. The firm also handled GoDigital's acquisition of Sound Royalties, a company that provides financing solutions to music creators. From the sell side, the firm's representation included working with music creators in selling income streams derived from music used in animated film and TV programs to Cutting Edge Music Holdings. Among other capabilities, Cutting Edge provides a range of music services to films, TV shows and video games, and has put together a \$125 million fund with Blantyre Capital to buy TV and film music rights, according to press reports.

Lee Phillips

SENIOR PARTNER, MANATT PHELPS & PHILLIPS

Jordan Bromley

LEADER OF ENTERTAINMENT,
MANATT PHELPS & PHILLIPS

Monika Tashman

Eric Custer

Gary Gilbert

PARTNERS, MANATT PHELPS & PHILLIPS

Robert Jacobs

PARTNER, ENTERTAINMENT LITIGATION,
MANATT PHELPS & PHILLIPS

Manatt Phelps & Phillips boasts a diverse range of music clients that spans veterans the Eagles, Paul Anka and Neil Young to contemporary acts Migos, ODESZA and Sturgill Simpson. The firm's 2021 docket included representing sports and entertainment agency Wasserman's acquisition of Paradigm Talent Agency's North American live-music business, Dundee Partners' \$1.1 billion deal for Kobalt Capital's music rights portfolio and Marshmello and Bastille's win in a copyright suit over the hit "Happier." "Music consumption and integration is at an all-time high, generating billions in wealth," says Bromley. "Unfortunately, very little is going to the bottom line for those who create the music. It is more critical than ever for all participants in the value chain to work

together to drive value to those who create the music."

Vince Phillips

FOUNDING PARTNER, ARRINGTON & PHILLIPS

Aurielle Brooks

ASSOCIATE ATTORNEY, ARRINGTON & PHILLIPS;
GENERAL COUNSEL, COLLECTIVE GALLERY

Representing buzzworthy R&B/hip-hop clients like YoungBoy Never Broke Again, Wolfpack Global Music/Lil Baby, Bow Wow, SpotemGottem and Muni Long, Phillips says the biggest concern facing the music industry is how artists leverage their star power to monetize their brands. "They need to be smart in a way to not oversaturate themselves by making calculated moves," he says. Over the last year, the firm negotiated a global label deal for YoungBoy Never Broke Again with Motown for his imprint, Never Broke Again Entertainment, and also a separate deal with Atlantic to release his independent album *From the Bayou*, alongside Birdman, which has reached No. 4 on *Billboard's* Top Rap Albums chart.

Tabetha Plummer

ENTERTAINMENT LAWYER AND ATTORNEY,
PLUMMER LAW GROUP

Plummer, who represents artists including Anthony Hamilton, Jhené Aiko, BJ the Chicago Kid, India.Arie and How Sweet the Sound, both successfully negotiated a multimillion-dollar publishing deal for

Chopsquad DJ and acquired a music beat for a TikTok client after they had gained millions of views. Her goal now? "Staying ahead of how music is used in connection with technology and ensuring that all of the creatives involved in the creation of the music are fairly compensated, from streaming platforms to use of music in NFTs."

Michael Poster

PARTNER, MICHELMAN & ROBINSON

Last year, Poster was named head of Michelman & Robinson's corporate and securities department. He earned the promotion after advising longtime client Massarsky Consulting, a boutique investment firm with music assets valued at over \$6.5 billion, in its acquisition by Citrin Cooperman. Poster, who counts principals Barry Massarsky and Nari Matsuura as personal friends, says the acquisition will "enable both companies to grow and prosper for years to come."

Gregor Pryor Stephen Sessa

PARTNERS/CO-CHAIRS, GLOBAL ENTERTAINMENT
AND MEDIA INDUSTRY GROUP, REED SMITH

Joshua Love Edward Shapiro

PARTNERS, GLOBAL ENTERTAINMENT AND
MEDIA INDUSTRY GROUP, REED SMITH

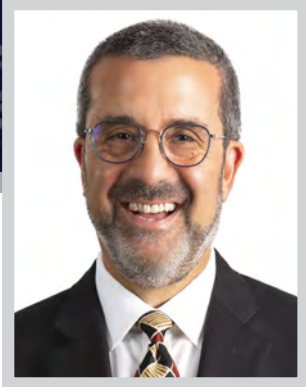
During the pandemic, the London-based Pryor led an initiative for his firm to author

The attorneys of
ARRINGTON & PHILLIPS
negotiated separate deals
with Motown Records
and Atlantic Records
for **YOUNGBOY NEVER
BROKE AGAIN.**

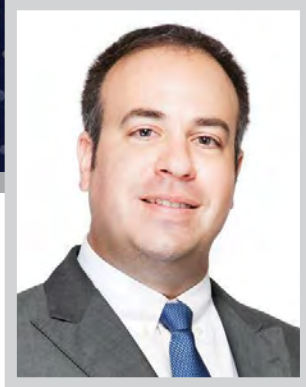


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Larry Iser & Jonathan Steinsapir
on their selection to *Billboard's* 2022
"Top Music Lawyers" list.



LARRY ISER



JONATHAN STEINSAPIR

KWIKH

KINSELLA WEITZMAN ISER KUMP HOLLEY
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Christine Lepera



Eric German



Jeffrey Movit



Bradley Mullins

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OSWALDO ROSSI advised **KAROL G** in the renewal of her Kobalt publishing deal and tour sponsorship with AT&T.

two white papers, a guide to livestreaming and a guide to the metaverse, that were offered for free on the Reed Smith website to support the industry during the COVID-19 shutdown. Sessa, who is co-chair with Pryor of the firm's entertainment and media industry group, serves as outside counsel to Concord Music and has advised on all of the company's numerous recent acquisitions. In addition to negotiating a wide range of deals for artists and companies, Love advises on the sale and acquisition of recorded music and music publishing assets, as well as rights issues related to digital distribution and new technologies. Among Shapiro's achievements, he handles all business and legal affairs for Avex USA. His clients include Rihanna, Kaskadee, Jon Bon Jovi (with Sessa), Bella Poarch, Saweetie, Anitta, Ali Tamposi, Lord Huron, Josie Maran, Grimes and Angelina Jordan.

Rollin A. Ransom

PARTNER/CO-LEADER OF GLOBAL COMMERCIAL LITIGATION AND DISPUTES PRACTICE, SIDLEY AUSTIN

Ransom is representing clients including Universal Music Group in a putative class action suit in which the plaintiffs are seeking to reclaim the rights to their recordings under the 1976 Copyright Revision Act. "This major litigation is ongoing and currently proceeding through discovery," says Ransom. The case potentially affects "legions of recording artists from the late 1970s and early 1980s who are looking to take advantage of this statutory provision to attempt to reclaim ownership rights," with later generations of artists to follow. "Commentators have described the matter as a 'ticking time bomb.'"

Berkeley Reinhold

FOUNDER/OWNER, REINHOLD GLOBAL
Reinhold Global's client list includes artists Marc Anthony, Thievery Corporation and

Spencer X (who has "55 million TikTok followers," she says); companies such as Live Nation, C3 Presents, Magnus Talent Agency and Sound Talent Group; and festivals including Austin City Limits, Bonnaroo, BeachLife, Lollapalooza and Global Citizen. For the 24-hour Global Citizen Live broadcast last September, Reinhold served as chief outside counsel with responsibility for artist contracts, as well as TV production and event production agreements. The concert, which featured performances by over 50 acts including Billie Eilish, Coldplay, Jennifer Lopez and BTS, raised over \$1.1 billion in commitments and pledges to fight poverty and climate change through the planting of 157 million trees worldwide. In Reinhold's view, "climate change" is the most pressing concern facing the music industry in 2022.

Elliot A. Resnik

PARTNER/CHAIR OF ENTERTAINMENT, MASUR GRIFFITTS AVIDOR

Resnik's clients include hip-hop duo Run the Jewels and music agencies All Things Go Music, Convicts Agency and Heard Entertainment. He also represents the National Independent Venue Association in its efforts to help revive the live-entertainment industry. He assisted the tourism agency NYC & Co. to secure the rights to music including Chic's "Good Times" to promote the post-pandemic reopening of New York. "I've never been happier to be able to see both the city and our live business back in full swing."

Jaimie Roberts

FOUNDING PARTNER, ROBERTS & HAFITZ

Harry Roberts

ATTORNEY, ROBERTS & HAFITZ

Roberts & Hafitz's clients include hitmakers such as The Chainsmokers and Robin Thicke, as well as Arthouse Records & Publishing, whose signee GAYLE topped the Billboard Global 200 in early 2022

with breakout hit "abcdefu." With major labels turning their attention to TikTok in an age of viral-made hits, the father-and-son team helped guide numerous rising talents through label bidding wars such as BoyWithUke, Ricky Montgomery, Chloe George and Lilyisthatyou. Harry, son of founding partner Jaimie, says he is concerned with issues including "the low compensation paid to songwriters, particularly by digital streaming services."

Carlos Rodriguez-Feliz

FOUNDER/MANAGING ATTORNEY, RODFEL LAW

For client Rapetón Networks, led by Angel "El Guru" Vera, Rodriguez-Feliz says his RodFel firm negotiated a joint artist development venture with Yandel's label, Y Entertainment Records. The deal created Rapetón Approved in 2020, a platform "for increasing exposure for Latin artists from the start of their careers," he says. Rodriguez-Feliz — whose notable clients also include Lenny Tavárez, Cerebro (a producer for Sech) and Álvaro Díaz — handles all legal matters for Rapetón Approved, and was co-counsel for its deal with Warner Music Latina to "support the venture in reaching our goals with the artists that participate in the project."

Angela Rogers

OWNER, ROGERS LAW GROUP

For Rogers, who represents rappers Nardo Wick, Coi Leray, G Herbo, EST Gee and Tink, the most pressing issue facing the industry is streaming services' royalty rates for songwriters. As the Copyright Royalty Board works to set fair rates for mechanical streaming royalties, Rogers notes that "having more artists and songwriters advocate and be aware of what's happening will only help get the rates up." Music, though, isn't Rogers' sole focus: For visual artist Shantell Martin, the attorney negotiated an exclusive collabora-

tion with Adidas/MakerLab and a deal with the Boston Ballet for Martin's first choreographic work, *ChoreographHER*.

Oswaldo Rossi

FOUNDER/MANAGING PARTNER, ROSSI

John Baldivia

SENIOR ASSOCIATE ATTORNEY, ROSSI

Rossi, the former vp of business affairs at EMI Latin/Capitol Latin, represents a trove of Latin artists, including Karol G (for the renewal of her publishing agreement with Kobalt and tour sponsorship with AT&T) and Nicky Jam (for his partnership with La Industria Bakery and his European tour). Rossi also advised Noah Assad on his publishing administration agreement with Universal Music Publishing Group and Rich Music on its renewal of Sech's deal. His clients also include Paloma Mami, Manuel Turizo, Danny Ocean and the estate of Jenni Rivera.

Neema Sahni

PARTNER/CO-CHAIR, MUSIC INDUSTRY GROUP/ VICE CHAIR, SPORTS INDUSTRY GROUP, COVINGTON & BURLING

Jonathan Sperling

PARTNER/CHAIR, MUSIC INDUSTRY GROUP, COVINGTON & BURLING

Adrian Perry

PARTNER/CO-CHAIR, MUSIC INDUSTRY GROUP, COVINGTON & BURLING

Covington & Burlington (along with co-counsel from Oppenheim + Zebra) represent both the record labels and the publishing companies of the three major music groups in copyright infringement actions against Charter Communications and Bright House based on their failure to take action against subscribers who they knew were pirating music. In another area of focus, Perry looks forward to the "exciting and novel opportunities for platforms, creators and rights holders" presented by NFTs and the metaverse, but is also wary of how they "present great challenges if not managed thoughtfully."

Diana A. Sanders

CO-CHAIR, MUSIC PRACTICE GROUP, RUSS AUGUST & KABAT

Stanton "Larry" Stein

CHAIR, MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT PRACTICE GROUP, RUSS AUGUST & KABAT

Ashley R. Yeargan

CO-CHAIR, FILM AND TV PRACTICE GROUP, RUSS AUGUST & KABAT

Stein and Yeargan are "currently representing Drake in a number of litigation matters, including prosecution of a right of publicity claim and defense of numerous cases filed in connection with the Astroworld festival," says Stein, adding that Sanders' work with offerings of security tokens and NFTs allows "for investments in companies that entitle investors to potential returns from music royalties." The firm's clients also include Post Malone and Roddy Ricch.

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Lisa Alter & Katie Baron

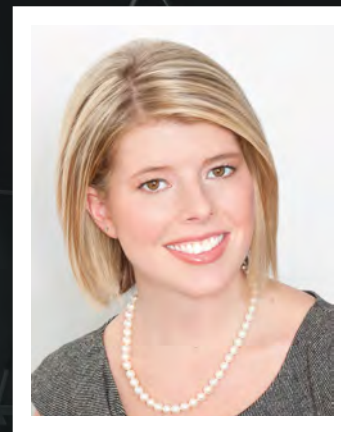
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> “Artists and musicians have to be a jack-of-all-trades and be much more entrepreneurial — but are making way less money in return.”

— NYANZA SHAW

Michael Selverne

MANAGING PARTNER,
SELVERNE KELLEY BRADFORD

Selverne has been involved in some high-profile music asset transactions over the last few years, including helping Round Hill Music prepare the company to go public prior to its launch as a song catalog royalty fund on the London Stock Exchange. While his firm has been involved in both sides of transactions, the majority of Selverne's work is representing institutions in acquisitions, financing, due diligence and business affairs, he says. The main event at the firm in the past year was adding two name partners, Palisa Kelley and Scott Bradford.

Nyanza Shaw

OWNER/MANAGING PARTNER, SHAW ESQUIRE
After watching client Blxst celebrate a hit with “Chosen” — which features Tyga and Ty Dolla \$ign, and got a boost last year thanks to TikTok — Shaw is now eager to see Tha Eastie Boyz enjoy a similar lift thanks to a “major” publishing deal that she negotiated with Warner Chappell. With a client roster that includes recent Atlantic Records signee Jayson Cash and R&B artist Sainvil, Shaw's negotiations remain more important than ever: “Artists and musicians have to be a jack-of-all-trades and be much more entrepreneurial — but are making way less money in return,” she says.

Jodie Shihadeh

FOUNDER/OWNER, SHIHADAH LAW

Marquis “Quest” Malloy

ASSOCIATE ATTORNEY, SHIHADAH LAW

With a client list packed with artists, songwriters and producers ranging from El Guincho to producer Roy Lenzo (Lil Nas X), Shihadeh and Malloy are well acquainted with both their clients' specific interests and larger industry trends. Shihadeh recently helped Grammy Award-winning producer J White Did It (Cardi B, Megan Thee Stallion, 21 Savage) form More Hits Publishing in partnership with

Milk & Honey and negotiated a publishing venture for it with Downtown Music Publishing. “Transparency in accountings for streaming revenue is an issue that doesn't get a lot of attention,” says Shihadeh, “but has an enormous impact on gauging the fairness and accuracy of a creator's royalty income.”

Daniel Shulman Owen Sloane Andrew Tavel

PARTNERS, EISNER

Over the past year, Eisner's music team has negotiated numerous deals to generate alternative sources of revenue for recording artists, including those in the NFT and branding spaces, while also striking residency agreements for clients in Las Vegas and at Carnegie Hall in New York. The firm represents acts such as Matchbox Twenty, Suzanne Vega, G-Eazy, Sophie B. Hawkins, Andreas Vollenweider and Jon Batiste; songwriters and producers including Jasper Lee Harris, Boi-1da and Barry Eastmond; and, perhaps most notably, the estate of late R&B star Aaliyah.

Simran A. Singh

MANAGING PARTNER, SINGH SINGH & TRAUBEN

Christopher R. Navarro

PARTNER, SINGH SINGH & TRAUBEN

The firm represented Daddy Yankee in his sponsorship and ambassadorship deals with Airbnb, Sprite and Samsung. For Natti Natasha, the firm helped close a partnership with Amazon for her reality show, *Everybody Loves Natti*, and deals with global brands like MAC, GrubHub and Sugar Bear. Singh and Navarro also assisted Duars Entertainment and Rauw Alejandro with the renewal and extension of their partnership with Sony Music Latin.

Alex Spiro

PARTNER, QUINN EMANUEL
URQUHART & SULLIVAN

Spiro defended Jay-Z from accusations that he violated an endorsement contract for a Gold Jay-Z cologne brand, eventu-

ally winning a trial verdict in November that cleared the rapper of wrongdoing and avoided paying \$67 million in requested damages. A former Manhattan prosecutor who later worked for legendary celebrity defense attorney Benjamin Brafman, Spiro declined to disclose his other industry clients, but he defended rapper Bobby Shmurda on drug and gun charges and has represented Megan Thee Stallion in connection with her shooting by Tory Lanez. He also penned a letter to New York lawmakers on behalf of Meek Mill and many other artists, calling on legislators to ban the use of rap lyrics in criminal prosecutions.

Rachel Stilwell

FOUNDER/CEO, STILWELL LAW

Stilwell Law represents country veteran LeAnn Rimes and Argentine singer-songwriter Noel Schajris, as well as the MusicFIRST Coalition, Future of Music Coalition and Lyte, the live-event ticketing platform. The attorney sees fair compensation for musicians as the most pressing concern facing the industry in 2022. “Professional musicians are still woefully undercompensated for the use of their work across all platforms,” she says, noting that “this is true with respect to both recording artists and songwriters. Continued challenges to touring make economics brutal for performers and those who support them.”

Michael Sukin

PRESIDENT, SUKIN LAW GROUP

Sukin Law Group's estate business has kept the firm busy, including initiating the planning for celebrations for what would have been Aretha Franklin's 80th birthday on March 25, as well as this year's 50th anniversary of her landmark *Amazing Grace* album. Working with George Gershwin's heirs, Sukin was able to recover ownership of Gershwin's masterpiece “Rhapsody in Blue.” Going forward, Sukin, who also represents the writers of the musical *Les Misérables* and

the Johnny Marks estate's St. Nicholas Music, says the most pressing issue facing the music industry is “the continuing efforts to restrict the income and rights of recording artists and songwriters.”

Ron Sweeney

FOUNDER, RON SWEENEY & CO.

A leading attorney in the business for over four decades who has represented artists ranging from James Brown to Lil Wayne, Sweeney perhaps made his biggest impact of this decade outside of his official work with his own firm. In 2020, he wrote an open letter called “Elephant in the Room” to instruct the industry on “how to address the inequities [in the business] as it relates to Black people.” The letter's impact was widely felt: “The majors responded, among other things, by eliminating the unrecouped artist royalty accounts for artists signed before 2000, as I suggested in the letter,” Sweeney says. “A lot of artists, Black and white, are now getting paid.”

Adam Van Straten

PRINCIPAL, VAN STRATEN SOLICITORS

Van Straten represented The O'Jays when Round Hill Music Royalty Fund acquired the masters to 532 of the group's original recordings, including classics such as “Love Train” and “Now That We Found Love.” His overarching mission? To secure “equitable remuneration in an increasingly tech-centric industry” for clients Craig David, KT Tunstall, Bad Boy Chiller Crew and Koffee, he says. “It is crucial that the music industry adopts technologies in a way that treats artists and songwriters fairly, allowing them to appropriately maximize any potential alternative income streams.”

James L. Walker Jr.

PRESIDENT, WALKER & ASSOCIATES

Over the past three decades, Walker's Atlanta-based firm has represented high-profile music clients including Aretha Franklin and Bobbi Humphrey, as well as distinguished civil rights leaders, such as the families of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X and Dick Gregory, among others. Walker is managing cases in 15 jurisdictions, with two recent copyright infringement cases involving client Andre Sims, whose lawsuit against producer Darhyl “DJ” Camper over the H.E.R. track “Focus” was settled in 2021.

Douglas Wigdor

FOUNDING PARTNER, WIGDOR

Michael Willemin

PARTNER, WIGDOR

Wigdor and Willemin represented Deborah Dugan, the former Recording Academy president/CEO, in her claims of gender discrimination, sexual harassment and retaliation that resulted in a confidential settlement in June 2021. Willemin

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of protecting music copyrights, content, and brands for artists,
labels, and publishers. We look forward to another decade
of fighting the good fight for our clients.

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calls that “a case study in leveraging the legal system to effectuate industrywide change,” noting that after Dugan came forward with her allegations, the academy implemented or announced numerous large-scale changes. The firm’s other clients include former Miami Dolphins head coach Brian Flores and former Fox News producer Jennifer Eckhart, in employment discrimination and sexual harassment disputes, respectively.

**Jeff Worob
Craig Averill
Joseph Serling**

PARTNERS, SERLING ROOKS HUNTER MCKOY WOROB & AVERILL
Serling Rooks Hunter McKoy Worob & Averill’s clients span Maroon 5, Hall & Oates, Leon Bridges and 50 Cent, whose surprise performance at the Pepsi Super Bowl LVI halftime show was negotiated by the firm. In addition, the firm has represented both buyers and sellers in multimillion-dollar asset purchases and sales agreements, including Kobalt Music and Iconoclast. Says Serling: “Always in the music business, one of the most pressing concerns is ascertaining and commercializing the next major area of music exploitation after streaming.”

Andrea Yankovsky

FOUNDER, YANKOVSKY LAW
Defining her mission as getting power and profits into the hands of individuals and small businesses “who actually make the music,” Yankovsky in 2020 created the OutHouse Counsel program to offer legal and business guidance to independent artists and their allies, “helping them to get their music out into the world, manage their rights — and make damn good money doing it,” she says. Her clients have included ArtistShare, home to Maria Schneider and others, which launched its partner label, Sam First Records, last year.

Helen Yu

PRINCIPAL ATTORNEY, YU LESEBERG
Yu represented Argentine trap star Paulo Londra in a two-year legal battle with Cristian Salazar and producer Daniel Oviedo (aka Ovy on the Drums), with whom he co-founded Bia Liass

in 2018. In August, Yu reached a settlement under which Londra has no further obligations to Big Ligas, clearing the way for Londra to sign a new deal with Warner Music Latina in March. Yu’s clients also include Ty Dolla \$ign, individual members of the Black Eyed Peas (as well as songwriters and producers for the group), Diane Warren, Jeff Gitelman, Gerardo Or-

tiz, and Jess Jackson, who co-produced four tracks on Pop Smoke’s posthumous album, *Shoot for the Stars Aim for the Moon (Deluxe)*.

Adam Zia

OWNER/PARTNER, THE ZIA FIRM

Nate Kuo

PARTNER, THE ZIA FIRM



The firm of **SERLING ROOKS HUNTER MCKOY WOROB & AVERILL** negotiated **50 CENT**'s performance at the Pepsi Super Bowl LVI halftime show.

The Zia Firm’s client list includes Machine Gun Kelly, Bia, Tierra Whack, Bandsintown and artist-songwriter Starrah (Rihanna, Maroon 5), who secured a new joint venture with Pulse Music Group in March. Founder Zia describes working with Starrah as a journey that “brought her from a young songwriter to a superstar songwriter to now a publishing executive and owner of her own company, 3:02 Publishing,” he says. The firm ventured into new territory as well, representing the virtual music group Kingship in its precedent-setting record deal with Universal Music Group’s Web3 label, 10:22PM. **B**

contributors

Darlene Aderaju, Rania Aniftos, Cathy Applefeld Olson, Katie Bain, Steve Baltin, Alexei Barrionuevo, Starr Bowenbank, Dave Brooks, Dean Budnick, Anna Chan, Ed Christman, Leila Cobo, Mariel Concepcion, Stephen Daw, Bill Donahue, Thom Duffy, Chris Eggertsen, Griselda Flores, Josh Glicksman, Paul Grein, Lyndsey Havens, Steve Knopper, Juliana Koranteng, Carl Lamarre, Cydney Lee, Joe Levy, Joe Lynch, Heran Mamo, Geoff Mayfield, Taylor Mims, Gail Mitchell, Melinda Newman, Jessica Nicholson, Glenn Peoples, Bryan Reesman, Kristin Robinson, Jessica Roiz, Neena Rouhani, Dan Rys, Micah Singleton, Richard Smirke, Eric Spitznagel, Jaelani Turner-Williams, Andrew Unterberger, Christine Werthman, Jewel Wicker, Deborah Wilker, Nick Williams, Todd “Stereo” Williams

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*’s Top Music Lawyers for 2022 were chosen by editors based on factors including, but not limited to, nominations by peers, colleagues and superiors. In-house counsels were limited to the companies shown. Otherwise, Top Music Lawyers focused on outside counsels. In addition to information requested with nominations, editors consider attorneys’ representation of clients with notable music industry impact. That impact is measured by metrics including, but not limited to, chart, sales and streaming performance as measured by Luminate (formerly MRC Data) and social media impressions using data available as of Feb. 13.

M A L U M A

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DIGITAL EQUIPMENT COST CD Mastering Put At \$2 Mil

By IS HOROWITZ

NEW YORK—Anyone interested in setting up mastering facilities for the compact digital audio disk will have to shell out close to \$2 million for equipment and training.

That is the estimate being quoted by N.V. Philips in Eindhoven, Holland, to those inquiring about cost and availability.

First delivery of mastering systems to outside parties will not take

Again

place before some time in 1983, the company says. Meanwhile, small amounts of CD masters may be produced for clients this year from prototype equipment in Eindhoven.

This, of course, assumes that an accommodation is reached with respect to a royalty for the use of the technology. Philips is demanding a three-cent levy per compact disk sold as compensation for heavy development costs. But so far no major label outside the PolyGram fold is known to have agreed to pay any royalty.

A CD mastering system will cost about \$1.4 million, Philips tells record companies seeking information. It cautions, however, that this is not a "fixed price," although it may be used for "budgetary reasons." Installation and training should cost another \$114,000, Philips says, and associated equipment (digital tape recorder, etc.) an additional \$342,000.

The system includes equipment to clean and coat glass masters, a CD beam recorder with necessary processing electronics, a CD developer which will perform post-forming, and a CD master player to evaluate "all electrical parameters of undecoded and decoded signals."

Next Generation—This is the latest Compact Disc player launched by Sony in Japan, joining the COP-101, which came to market last October. Known as the COP-701ES, the new machine will retail at the yen equivalent of \$1,000, compared to the \$700 price tag of the earlier model. Features include random memory music sensor which permits selection of eight titles at random, a large multi-function display, music scan, automatic sensor and full repeat function.

WFMT Breaks Ground With CD Broadcast

By JIM McCULLAUGH
And ALAN PENCHANSKY

CHICAGO—Classical music station WFMT here became what is believed to be the first station in the world to broadcast music using the Philips/Sony digital audio disk as source material.

The broadcast took place Tues. (8) evening between 8:30 and 10 p.m., one day before the close of the nearby Consumer Electronics Show where at least a dozen hi fi manufacturers had Compact Disc players on display and where PolyGram exhibited CD software.

The station utilized an early production model of a Sony Compact Disc player through the cooperation of A. Suzuki, the firm's CD head Marc Finer and Scott Lucky, both with Sony Corp. of America, helped with the setup.



Bright Future Predicted For CD PolyGram's Gout Cites Figures On European Launch

MIAMI BEACH—Preliminary data on the European Compact Disc launch in March appear to show results "even better than in Japan—which would be absolutely amazing," according to Hans G. Gout, senior director of the Compact Disc for the PolyGram Group.

NARM Report

The data provided by Gout, making an unscheduled appearance at the NARM convention's opening business session Monday (11), was part of PolyGram Records' formal introduction of CD to merchandisers, which included a CD demonstration suite. Last year, PolyGram offered NARM attendees a prototype demonstration, comparing a Bee Gees performance in CD and LP configurations.

Germany, Holland and England "only estimates and indications—1 dare not trust them 100% yet." Gout covered eight points gleaned from reply cards enclosed in European software catalogs and pocket unit players.

"In three weeks time, 50%-70% of the shipped Compact Discs were sold to the consumer."

"Consumer prices range from \$16 to about \$20. As expected, this price level is fully acceptable."

"Dealer, media and customer reactions have been overwhelmingly positive."

"Dealers who could and did demonstrate the Compact Disc sold much more than those who did not."

"The average number of Compact Discs bought per consumer in three weeks ranges from 'over five' in one country to 'about seven' in another."

"There is, obviously, a shortage of hardware and software; nobody could have expected such high sales."

"Sales of classical repertoire in Japan were—as expected—extremely high: 60%-80% of total. Fast indications in Europe are pop/classical 50/50—a reflection of more classical repertoire available to start with. If we look at the best-seller lists, however, we see that the strongest adult contemporary or MOR, pop titles easily outped the strongest classical repertoire."

Gout called it a "misunderstanding—rather widespread in the U.S.—that only digitally recorded repertoire could or should be used on Compact Disc. This simply is not true."

(Continued on page 60)



HARDWARE AT CES

Compact Disc Software Is No Nearer U.S. Market

CHICAGO—Vented label reports here in the Compact Disc software line seems unlikely to appear until well into 1983. This was shown at last week's Consumer Electronics Show here, where CD player manufacturers said that the bulk of the software makers' output

The system's launch here supported European and Japanese product is not entirely realistic, but gives today's overall picture of the market, participation from U.S. software makers is clearly a crucial issue.

Executives of Philips and PolyGram here issued a breakthrough in signing a major U.S. label was expected before year's end. CBS Records is known to be further along.

label software, while some top U.S. musicians have found preliminary interest here at the U.S. in 1983.

Almost a dozen hardware manufacturers showed demonstration discs, and some players were featured with all-compact disc boards. Philips CD players here used hidden track for software digital playback.

Philips executives today demanded more interest in a compact disc, a new recording, executives here seemed to declare.

The manufacturers who might have the best for recording music seem to be Sony and Philips. The latter also says that Compact Disc discs "PolyGram's Mike Gout,"

Commented on page 70.

Software Follows Hardware Rackers Testing CDs in Discount Stores

By JOHN WELLS

LOS ANGELES—Taking a lead from the record industry, a limited number of software titles are being tested in discount stores to encourage sales to CD consumers.

Shelton estimates that opening stock is more than 20% more than last year in these stores stocking the best audio titles.

Deery White of Arrow Electronics in Cleveland says that more "titles with the blades" after the June Consumer Electronics Show. Talks with his department store partners will indicate that they will be targeted.

that the giant retailer "is testing CDs in the aisles of its stores. I want to emphasize it's a limited trial, but importantly, it should every store where the hardware is available. That is what caused our account to encourage us to utilize CD consumers."

THE DECLINE AND FALL — AND AFTERLIFE — OF THE COMPACT DISC

Old formats never die — they just spin around again. Compact disc sales first outpaced vinyl in 1987, but the CD has been slipping for almost 20 years, eclipsed by downloads and then streaming. But hold on to those CD towers: In 2021, new releases from Adele, BTS and Taylor Swift drove disc sales up 1.1% in the first annual increase since 2004, according to Luminate, formerly MRC Data. Could a future "CD Store Day" spark an eventual comeback?

LASER-FOCUSED — ON MONEY

"According to insiders, Sony's launch of its Compact Disc digital audio disk system within the next year will be unparalleled in consumer electronics history in terms of ad and promo mega bucks," reported the Feb. 13, 1982, *Billboard*. Big bucks weren't just for the ad campaigns, though. Early CD players cost around

\$750, or about \$2,100 in today's dollars, adjusted for inflation — about the cost of 17 years of Spotify.

MY DIGITAL ROMANCE

More affordable models were introduced the following year, and the Oct. 1, 1983, issue reported that Sony would launch a \$470 player "aimed at the 'man-in-the-street' audio fans rather than the up-market hi fi buffs." The Oct. 22 *Billboard* detailed Sony's "A Date With Digital" push to target younger consumers. Among the enticements: "an index search feature designed to help the user locate a specific subcoded portion of a long classical movement." Swoon!

NEVER MIND THE BOLLOCKS, HERE'S GUSTAV HOLST

Early adopters don't always have the

hippest taste. The Oct. 29, 1983, *Billboard* cited a 137-store survey that found classical music accounted for 74% of CD sales, followed by pop at 21%. PolyGram revealed that its "hottest titles" were the soundtracks to *Chariots of Fire* and *Fame*, plus a recording of Gustav Holst's *The Planets*. "We know who will be buying the player," a PolyGram executive said in the June 19, 1982, issue, "and they're not people who will be buying punk."

THE LONGBOX GOODBYE

It took years to standardize CD packaging. In the March 7, 1992, issue, *Billboard* reported that the six major-label groups had finally settled on CD-size packaging, a move that "seals the coffin of the infamous 6-by-12-inch cardboard longbox." Not everyone took a shine to the jewel case, however. "It's outrageous. The

longbox is a good anti-theft package," said one record store owner. "Also, I am going to have to get new fixtures." Tower Records' Russ Solomon was equally angry. "We're dealing with people called 'suits,'" he said in the March 28, 1992, issue, "and suits don't speak the same language we do."

SALES FREEZE

For the last two decades, *Billboard* has tracked the format's decline. "CD sales are falling precipitously and digital sales continue to accelerate," according to the Dec. 22, 2007, issue. On Dec. 20, 2008, *Billboard* reported that most retailers had "plans to reduce CD floor space in the new year." One California record store owner fought cooling sales with ice-cold treats: "I can make a 50% margin on ice cream, while on CDs I can lose two bucks." —JOE LYNCH

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