

# billboard

JUNE 4, 2022 • BILLBOARD.COM

Pride 2022

## BRANDI CARLILE

MEANS BUSINESS  
— And She's  
Making It A  
Better ONE



Six QUEER Artists  
CHANGING  
THE GAME

The Trouble  
With TikTok  
Teasers

Should MERCH  
Sellers keep  
The Tips?

INDIE  
POWER  
PLAYERS





# COLTURE



COLTURE (left to right:)  
Jayne Andrew, Ty Baisden,  
Kalisway, Malcolm Mays, Nascent

Photographer: Mark Peaced  
Design by: Nick Innella

IN  
AR  
RANGE  
ACH  
S  
AL  
ITY







LOST  
KIDS

LOST KIDS (left to right):  
Brent Faiyaz, Amber Olivier, Tre' Amani  
Lil Rece, Jordan Waré, Joony

Photographer: Bobby Banks  
Design by: Nick Innella



st

W





Cadillac  
Jacks

# contents

JUNE 4, 2022

VOLUME 134

NO. 7

## Features

# 56

### GOOD FOR BUSINESS

**Brandi Carlile** built a thriving career by melding activism with her art — and she's determined to leave the industry, and the world she lives in, better than she found it.

# 64

### MUSIC'S NEXT QUEER GAME CHANGERS

Meet the fearless creators forging exciting new paths for LGBTQ musicians now — and busting through genre lines as they do.

#### ON THE COVER

Brandi Carlile photographed by Lia Clay Miller on May 5 at Pink Motel in Los Angeles.

#### TO OUR READERS

Billboard will publish its next issue on June 25. For 24/7 music coverage, go to [billboard.com](http://billboard.com).





**VOICES  
OF CHILDREN**  
CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

# NO CHILD SHOULD BE LEFT ALONE WITH THE TRAUMA OF THE WAR



MAKE A DONATION HERE

Since 2015, Voices of Children has provided psychological and psychosocial assistance to children affected by war.



Areas of our Foundation's activities:



- Emergency assistance to women and children — refugees from all over Ukraine — essentials, settlement and relocation
- Psychological assistance to children and parents affected by the war
- Arranging centers for group classes with children who were evacuated from the shelling areas
- Individual assistance to families with children affected by the war



**LEARN MORE AT [VOICES.ORG.UA](https://www.voices.org.ua)**

## Voices of Change

We're donating our ad space in *Billboard* to amplify voices of activists, organizations, and charities that reflect our core values and are creating real change.

Our Indie Power Player honorees — Cat Kreidich, Sam Juneman, Samantha Moore, Adriana Sein, Marcus Siskind, and Andrea Slobodein — have chosen to spotlight Voices of Children for their support of children and families impacted by the war in Ukraine.





# contents

JUNE 4, 2022 / VOLUME 134 / NO. 7



## **BILLBOARD CHARTS**

### 13

**Harry Styles** leads the Billboard 200 and Hot 100, and **Bad Bunny** and **BTS** dominate the midyear Boxscore charts.

## **THE MARKET**

### 37

With labels increasingly trying out unreleased songs on TikTok, producers, songwriters and even artists are saying it's bad for business.

### 42

Merch tables are booming with added revenue — and tension.

## **THE SOUND**

### 51

In an age of ephemeral pop success, **Isaac Dunbar** wanted to avoid the rush — and made a major label wait for him.

### 54

How writer-director **Ally Pankiw** landed gigs directing a Netflix original series and music videos for **MUNA**.

## **THE PLAYERS**

### 71

### **2022 INDIE POWER PLAYERS**

Across every genre, these are the executives at labels and distributors driving the success of the independent music industry, commanding nearly one-quarter of the U.S. recorded-music market.

### 92

After two years of virtual shows, A2IM's Libera Awards return in person, with **Japanese Breakfast** leading the field of nominees.

## **CHARTBREAKER**

### 96

How singer-songwriter **Em Beihold**'s temporary low led to the high of her breakout hit, "Numb Little Bug."

Isaac Dunbar photographed by Nolwen Cifuentes on May 20 in Los Angeles.



# CONGRATULATIONS BILLY STRINGS ON THREE SOLD-OUT SHOWS!

SPECIAL THANKS TO  
BILL ORNER WITH  
HANK & ED MANAGEMENT  
AND PATRICK MAY WITH  
CROSSOVER TOURING



RYMAN 130  
YEARS-

RYMAN SPONSORS





FEWOCiOUS hosted a secret painting party in Brooklyn during NFT.NYC in 2021.



## A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

**A** **S A YOUNG TRANSGENDER** artist growing up in Las Vegas, FEWOCiOUS — one of the digital art world’s fastest-rising stars — says music offered him an introduction to “what art is — and how to tell a story with your feelings.” Today, the 19-year-old’s digital creations have generated over \$50 million — his Pride collection, auctioned by Christie’s last June, brought in more than \$2 million — and music remains core to his art. For his FewoWorld “paint drop” on Nifty Gateway, a 24-hour public non-fungible token sale that generated \$20 million, each collectible featured a unique audio composition. And he continues to draw inspiration from musicians ranging from Bob Dylan and David Bowie to Missy Elliott and Kanye West, whose works he sees as expressions of “authentic identity.”

For Pride Month this year, we invited FEWO to reimagine the *Billboard* logo to help us celebrate the diversity of music’s creators and consumers when it comes to gender and sexual orientation. In fact, a new report that we produced in partnership with Luminare and Queer Capita found that people who identify as queer spend \$72 more per year on music on average than other consumers, are 20% more likely to buy merchandise and are 15% more interested in finding and listening to new and emerging

artists. That report, “The Power of LGBTQ+ Music,” also found that LGBTQ+ Gen Z fans spent an average of \$136 per month more on music than other listeners, as compared with \$110 more per month for Gen Z, and were 78% more likely than their peers to listen to music on vinyl.

“The queer community is not some monolith that you can pander to occasionally,” our staff writer Stephen Daw said during a panel discussion about the report in May at the MusicBiz 2022 conference in Nashville. “We are out here spending more money than other groups.”

This issue also spotlights some of the queer artists shaping culture — and inspiring the next generation of creators, executives and fans to express their authentic selves. It’s a daunting challenge, given the discrimination still faced by so many, but one that, as FEWO has shown, can pay enormous dividends. We hope that telling the stories of these exciting successes will help illuminate some ways forward for many others to come. And we hope you enjoy seeing the *Billboard* logo the way FEWO says he does: “When you look at the ‘B’ and the ‘D,’ it almost looks like two different people looking at each other. As you get to the center of the logo, it looks like they’re almost getting closer to each other, until eventually they’re holding hands. It’s a love story!”



Hannah Karp  
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR



ZEXZY EXPLORES THE DUALITY OF DESIRE  
AS THE GOD OF

# OBSESSION

The catalyst of a multitude of exceptional art—obsession drives ambition and desire, and ZeXzy's new song has desire written all over it.

**"Obsession"** leans on sensual Afrobeats and soulful r&b foundation laced with entrancing vocals of **ZeXzy** himself and his featured - artist **Natasha Gartner**. Weaving romantic guitar and semi-oriental rhythms into smooth synths, the two artists execute a perfect duo—a timeless hit where there isn't a single dull moment. "Obsession" is already topping charts on iTunes, Shazam, and multiple other streaming platforms in multiple countries and is expected to make some giant waves! "Obsession" is an enticing single that positions **ZeXzy as the God of Obsession**, an object of adoration and desire. Natasha Gartner, on the other hand, represents all those ladies who seek ZeXzy's attention and love. But the God of Obsession is unwavering and his affection is unattainable. This constant push and pull—the **"hot and cold"** duality of desire is what the song flirtingly explores, making the listeners want to continuously replay the track.

A self-made and unstoppable man, ZeXzy does not shudder at the thought of uncharted territory in terms of music. Instead, he shifts between eras and genres like a timelord, delivering hot tracks that are very distinct. His previous releases include an impressive body of singles and an EP called **Na Who that's become ZeXzy's signature**.

"Obsession" also has a music video in the making that promises to be a rare treat. With influences like Michael Jackson, Tupac Shakur, The Notorious BIG, Bryan Adams, and 2Baba, ZeXzy's ultimate goal is to inspire people, while at the same time leaving a permanent footprint in the history of music. As determined and creative as the artist is, there is no doubt he'll quickly grow to do just that!



MAPLEGROVE  
ENTERTAINMENT



## Hannah Karp EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

### Editorial

**ROBERT LEVINE** DEPUTY EDITORIAL DIRECTOR  
**FRANK DIGIACOMO** EXECUTIVE EDITOR, ENTERPRISE REPORTING  
**REBECCA MILZOFF** EXECUTIVE EDITOR, FEATURES  
**CHRISTINE WERTHMAN** MANAGING EDITOR  
**ALEXIS COOK** CREATIVE DIRECTOR  
**JENNY SARGENT** PHOTOGRAPHY DIRECTOR  
**JASON LIPSHUTZ** EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MUSIC  
**MELINDA NEWMAN** EXECUTIVE EDITOR, WEST COAST/NASHVILLE  
**LEILA COBO** VICE PRESIDENT/LATIN INDUSTRY LEAD  
**GAIL MITCHELL** EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, R&B/HIP-HOP  
**THOM DUFFY** EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SPECIAL FEATURES/POWER LISTS  
**JOE LYNCH** EXECUTIVE DIGITAL DIRECTOR, EAST COAST  
**KATIE ATKINSON** EXECUTIVE DIGITAL DIRECTOR, WEST COAST  
**COLIN STUTZ** NEWS DIRECTOR

DEPUTY EDITOR **Andrew Unterberger**  
SENIOR EDITORS **Anna Chan, Lyndsey Havens**  
INTERNATIONAL EDITOR **Alexei Barrionuevo**  
AWARDS EDITOR **Paul Grein** DANCE DIRECTOR **Katie Bain**  
SENIOR DIRECTOR **Dave Brooks** (Touring/Live Entertainment)  
LEAD ANALYST **Glenn Peoples**  
SENIOR EDITOR/ANALYST **Ed Christman** (Publishing/Retail)  
SENIOR WRITERS **Griselda Flores** (Latin), **Dan Rys**  
HIP-HOP EDITOR **Carl Lamarre** DIGITAL NEWS EDITOR **Marc Schneider**  
SENIOR LEGAL CORRESPONDENT **Bill Donahue**  
SENIOR MUSIC REPORTER **Elias Leight**  
EDITORS AT LARGE **Steve Knopper, Joe Levy**  
WEEKEND EDITORS **Ashley Iasimone, Mitchell Peters**  
COPY CHIEF **Chris Woods**  
SENIOR COPY EDITOR **Christa Titus** COPY EDITOR **Jaymi Gooden**  
REPORTERS **Jessica Nicholson** (Nashville), **Kristin Robinson**  
STAFF WRITERS **Darlene Aderoju, Rania Aniftos, Starr Bowenbank, Stephen Daw, Heran Mamo, Neena Rouhani**  
EDITOR, SPECIAL FEATURES/POWER LISTS **Taylor Mims**  
STAFF WRITER, E-COMMERCE **Latifah Muhammad**  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR **Chris Eggertsen**  
ASSISTANT EDITORS **Josh Glicksman, Jessica Roiz**  
ASSISTANT TO THE EDITORIAL DIRECTOR **Cydney Lee**  
EDITORIAL INTERNS **Fred Sahai, Jude Zhu**

### Artist Relations

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, TALENT AND PROGRAMMING **Christina Medina**

### Design

ART DIRECTOR **Christopher Elsemore**  
SENIOR DESIGNER **Lyanne Natividad**  
ART PRODUCTION MANAGER **Dan Skelton**

### Photo

PHOTO EDITOR **Samantha Xu**  
SENIOR PHOTO EDITOR **Jenny Regan** (Digital)  
PHOTO RESEARCHER **Michael Calcagno**  
ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR **Naomy Pedroza**

### Video

ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT, VIDEO PRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT **Lee Schneller**  
SHOWRUNNER, NEWS **Mary Pelloni**  
PRODUCTION AND CONTENT MANAGER **Ciara McVey**  
SOCIAL PRODUCER/CONTENT MANAGER **Stefanie Tanaka**  
SUPERVISING PRODUCER, NEWS **Brian Zambuto**  
SENIOR PRODUCER **Lesley Corral** PRODUCER/EDITOR **Chris George**  
HOST/PRODUCER **Tedrick Kelly** PRODUCERS **Neha Joy, Tiffany Taylor**  
POST SUPERVISOR **Jonathan Suhadolnik**  
EDITORS **Jason Bass, Colin Burgess**  
VIDEO EDITOR/SHOOTER **Matt Damiano**

### Digital

DIRECTOR OF GROWTH **Danielle Dauenhauer**  
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, DATA AND TECHNOLOGY **Glenn Walker**  
VICE PRESIDENT, DATA **Julian Pan** DIRECTOR, DATA ANALYTICS **Tynelle Boothe**  
SENIOR MANAGER, SOCIAL MEDIA **Becky Kaminsky**  
SOCIAL MEDIA COORDINATOR **Lucy Blonstein**  
SOCIAL MEDIA EDITOR **Danielle Pascual**  
SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER/STAFF WRITER, LATIN **Ingrid Fajardo**  
SOCIAL MEDIA INTERN **Dana Cuccurullo**  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, ADVERTISING OPERATIONS **Cheryl Kampanis**

## Mike Van PRESIDENT

### Business Leadership

**DANA DROPPA** CHIEF BRAND OFFICER  
**BRIAN SZEJKA** CO-HEAD OF GLOBAL BRAND PARTNERSHIPS  
**SILVIO PIETROLUONGO** SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, CHARTS AND DATA DEVELOPMENT  
**JOE MAIMONE** VICE PRESIDENT, SALES  
**ANJALI RAJA** SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, BUSINESS OPERATIONS  
**KELLY SCHWANTNER** SENIOR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, EVENTS  
**SHAMEKA FRANK** VICE PRESIDENT, REVENUE OPERATIONS  
**JESSICA GRILL** DIRECTOR, BUSINESS OPERATIONS  
**SHIRA BROWN** ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT, VIDEO STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT

### Sales/Brand Partnerships

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS **Brendan Hoey, Lauren Kiggins, Edward Stepankovsky, Christina Tom, Lauren Wray**  
SENIOR DIRECTORS **Justine Matthews, Nicholas Urkonis**  
DIRECTORS **Sam Forrest, Sabrina Phillips, Cynthia Mellow, Lee Ann Photoglo, Marcia Olival, Ryan O'Donnell**  
MANAGER, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT **Catrise Johnson**

### Charts

SENIOR DIRECTORS OF CHARTS **Keith Caulfield** (Billboard 200, Heatseekers Albums; Los Angeles), **Gary Trust** (Billboard Hot 100, Pop, Adult)  
DIRECTOR, CHART PRODUCTION **Michael Cusson**  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, CHART PRODUCTION/RESEARCH MANAGER **Alex Vitoulis** (Blues, Classical, Jazz, World)  
SENIOR CHART MANAGERS **Jim Asker** (Country, Christian, Gospel), **Pamela Bustios** (Latin)  
CHART MANAGERS **Trevor Anderson** (R&B/Hip-Hop; Editorial Liaison), **Eric Frankenberg** (Boxscore/Touring), **Gordon Murray** (Dance/Electronic), **Kevin Rutherford** (Social, Streaming, Rock), **Xander Zellner** (Artist 100, Emerging Artists, Songwriters, Producers; Editorial Liaison)

### Events

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR **Mary Rooney**  
MANAGERS **Taylor Bartenope, Mary Carter, Kacie Collins**

### Account Management

SENIOR MANAGERS **Galina Druzhinina, Shannon McMahon**  
MANAGER **Andrea Guevara-Gresch**  
ASSOCIATE MANAGER **Kristen Wisneski**

### Brand Experiences

SENIOR DIRECTOR, BRANDED CONTENT **Elizabeth Lancaster**  
SENIOR BRANDED WRITER/PRODUCER **James Dinh**  
BRANDED WRITER/PRODUCER **Walaa Elsiddig**  
ASSOCIATE MANAGER, BRANDED SOCIAL **Meghan Mahar**  
SENIOR DIRECTOR, PROJECT MANAGEMENT **Sara Katzki**  
SENIOR PROJECT MANAGERS **Sidnei Afari, Sarah Lombard**

### Integrated Marketing

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR **Chris Santorella**  
DIRECTOR **Jasmine Kim**  
SENIOR MANAGER **Jeanne Dienstag**  
MANAGER **Brandon Kosikov**

### Design

DIRECTORS **Stacey Saunders, Adrian Castillo**

**SUBSCRIPTIONS** Call 800-684-1873 (U.S. toll-free) or 845-267-3072 (international) or email [subscriptions@billboard.com](mailto:subscriptions@billboard.com)

**REPRINTS AND PERMISSIONS** Enveritas Group (call 864-241-0779 or email [licensing@enveritasgroup.com](mailto:licensing@enveritasgroup.com))

## Jay Penske CHAIRMAN/CEO

**Gerry Byrne**  
VICE CHAIRMAN

**George Grobar**  
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

**Sarlina See**  
CHIEF ACCOUNTING OFFICER

**Craig Perreault**  
CHIEF DIGITAL OFFICER

**Todd Greene**  
EVP, BUSINESS AFFAIRS AND CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER

**Mark Howard**  
CHIEF ADVERTISING AND PARTNERSHIPS OFFICER

**Paul Rainey**  
EVP, OPERATIONS & FINANCE

**Tom Finn**  
EVP, OPERATIONS & FINANCE

**Jenny Connelly**  
EVP, PRODUCT & ENGINEERING

**Debashish Ghosh**  
MANAGING DIRECTOR, INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

**Judith R. Margolin**  
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, DEPUTY GENERAL COUNSEL

**Ken Delalcazar**  
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, FINANCE

**Lauren Utecht**  
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, HUMAN RESOURCES

**Marissa O'Hare**  
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

**Nelson Anderson**  
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, CREATIVE

**Rachel Terrace**  
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, LICENSING & BRAND DEVELOPMENT

**Adrian White**  
VICE PRESIDENT AND ASSOCIATE GENERAL COUNSEL

**Anne Doyle**  
VICE PRESIDENT, HUMAN RESOURCES

**Brian Levine**  
VICE PRESIDENT, REVENUE OPERATIONS

**Brooke Jaffe**  
VICE PRESIDENT, PUBLIC AFFAIRS & STRATEGY

**Constance Ejuma**  
VICE PRESIDENT, SEO

**Dan Feinberg**  
VICE PRESIDENT AND ASSOCIATE GENERAL COUNSEL

**Ellen Deally**  
VICE PRESIDENT, AUDIENCE MARKETING AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

**Frank McCallick**  
VICE PRESIDENT, GLOBAL TAX

**Gabriel Koen**  
VICE PRESIDENT, TECHNOLOGY

**Jamie Miles**  
VICE PRESIDENT, E-COMMERCE

**Jerry Ruiz**  
VICE PRESIDENT, ACQUISITIONS AND OPERATIONS

**Joni Antonacci**  
VICE PRESIDENT, PRODUCTION OPERATIONS

**Karen Reed**  
VICE PRESIDENT, FINANCE

**Mike Monroe**  
CMO, HEAD OF PMC STUDIOS

**Mike Ye**  
VICE PRESIDENT, STRATEGIC PLANNING & ACQUISITIONS

**Nici Catton**  
VICE PRESIDENT, PRODUCT DELIVERY

**Noemi Lazo**  
VICE PRESIDENT, CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND MARKETING OPERATIONS

**Stephanie Parker**  
VICE PRESIDENT, MARKETING, PORTFOLIO SALES

**Victor Hendrickson**  
VICE PRESIDENT, ASSOCIATE GENERAL COUNSEL



# HARD ROCK LIVE TOP 3 IN THE WORLD

5,000-10,000 CAPACITY CATEGORY

**THANK YOU TO ALL THE ARTISTS, MANAGERS, AGENTS AND PROMOTERS  
FOR YOUR ONGOING SUPPORT.**

98° | ALEJANDRA GUZMAN & PAULINA RUBIO | ALT-J AND PORTUGAL. THE MAN | AUDACY LEADING LADIES: CARLY PEARCE, GABBY BARRETT, LAINEY WILSON, LAUREN ALAINA, TENILLE ARTS,  
MORGAN WADE & PRISCILLA BLOCK | BARE KNUCKLE FIGHTING CHAMPIONSHIP: KNUCKLE MANIA II | BILLY JOEL | CAMILA & SIN BANDERA | CHRIS ROCK | DAN + SHAY  
DANCING WITH THE STARS: LIVE! | DEEP PURPLE | ELTON JOHN | GEORGE LOPEZ | GLADYS KNIGHT | HASAN MINHAJ | JASON BONHAM'S LED ZEPPELIN EVENING | JIM GAFFIGAN  
JOE BONAMASSA | JOHN MULANEY | KEVIN JAMES | MALUMA | MANNHEIM STEAMROLLER | OLD DOMINION | PBC FIGHT NIGHT: ORTIZ VS MARTIN | POST MALONE  
ROD STEWART | RON WHITE | SPORTS ILLUSTRATED AWARDS 2021 | THE ROLLING STONES | THE WHO | TIM ALLEN | VAN MORRISON



THE GUITAR HOTEL®

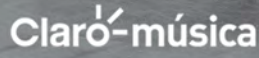
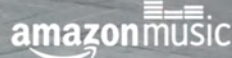
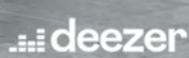
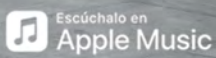
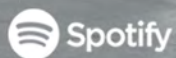




NEW ALBUM  
**SINERGIA**  
MYRIAM HERNÁNDEZ



Discover Sinergia here!



@MYRIAMHERNANDEZ\_OFICIAL



@MYRIAMHERNANDEZOFICIAL



@MYRIAM HERNANDEZ



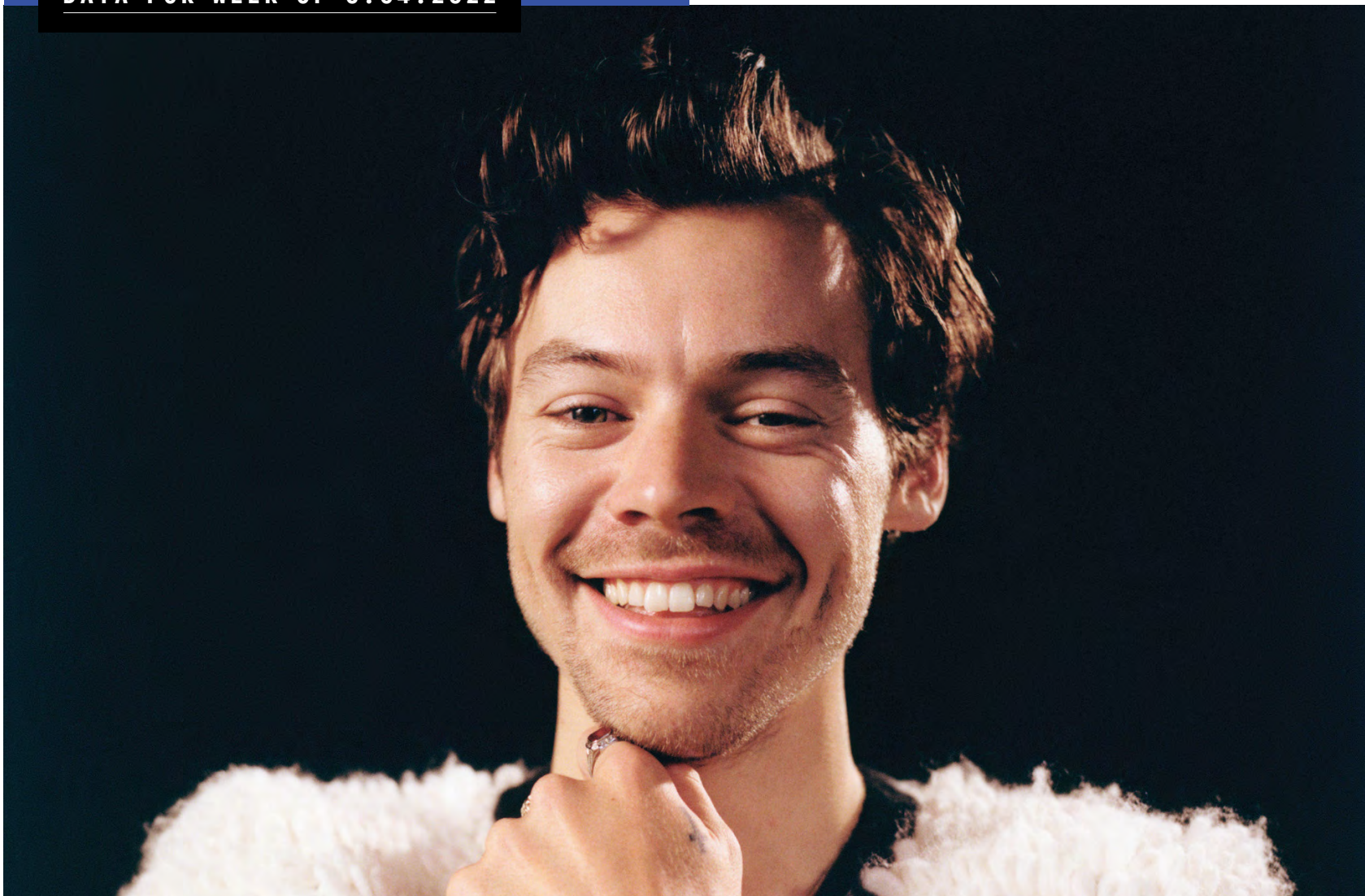
YOUTUBE.COM/MYRIAMHERNANDEZMUSICA



# charts

DATA FOR WEEK OF 6.04.2022

LILLEBOER



## Harry's Pent-'House': Styles Soars In At No. 1 On Billboard 200

**BILLBOARD 200**

**1**

**Harry's House**  
Harry Styles

LAST WEEK	PEAK POSITION	WEEKS ON CHART
-	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

**H**ARRY STYLES' *Harry's House* debuts atop the Billboard 200 (dated June 4) with 521,500 equivalent album units earned in the United States during the week ending

May 26, according to Luminate — the largest week of 2022 for an album and the biggest total since Adele's *30* arrived with 839,000 units (Dec. 4, 2021).

Styles scores his third Billboard 200 No. 1 and best weekly units sum among his three solo releases. *Fine Line* debuted with 478,000 units (Dec. 28, 2019), and his self-titled album opened with 230,000 (June 3, 2017).

*Harry's House* also breaks the record, since Luminate began tracking sales in 1991, for the most single-week vinyl album sales in the United States: 182,000. The project surpasses Taylor

Swift's *Red (Taylor's Version)*, which previously led with 114,000 sold on vinyl (Nov. 27, 2021).

On the Billboard Hot 100, *Harry's House* lead single "As It Was" returns for a fourth week at No. 1 and all 13 of the album's songs land in the top 30 ("Late Night Talking" scores the highest of its 12 debuts at No. 4). Notably, Styles ups his count to seven solo Hot 100 top 10s — one more than One Direction, the boy band that launched his career, achieved in 2012-15.

Styles ushered in *Harry's House*, released May 20, with interviews and/or performances on Apple Music with Zane Lowe (May 16), SiriusXM's *The Howard Stern Show* (May 18), NBC's *Today* (May 19) and NPR's *Morning Edition* (May 20). Apple Music also livestreamed Styles' One Night Only in New York concert from UBS Arena on May 20.

—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
2	2	1	<b>#1 for 4 WEEKS</b> <b>SAL</b> <b>As It Was</b> <small>KID HARPOON, T. JOHNSON (H. STYLES, T.E.P. HULL, T. JOHNSON)</small>	<b>Harry Styles</b> <small>ERSKINE/COLUMBIA</small>	1	8
1	1	2	<b>AIR</b> <b>First Class</b> <small>CHARLIE HANDSOME, J.T. HARLOW, J.L. HARRIS, R. CHAHAYED (C.B. BRIDGES, D. FORD, E. WILLIAMS, J.T. HARLOW, J.J. JONES, J.L. HARRIS, J. VELAZQUEZ, M. RAHEEM, N.J. PABON, R. CHAHAYED, CHARLIE HANDSOME, S. DUHAMEL, W. ADAMS)</small>	<b>Jack Harlow</b> <small>GENERATION NOW/ATLANTIC</small>	1	7
3	4	3	<b>Wait For U</b> <b>Future Featuring Drake &amp; Tems</b> <small>ATL, JACOB, FNZ (N.D. WILBURN, A. GRAHAM, T. OPENIYI, T. AKPOGHENE, J.D. CANADY, M.J. MULE, I.J. DEBONI)</small>	<b>Future Featuring Drake &amp; Tems</b> <small>FREEBANDZ/EPIC</small>	1	4
<b>HOT SHOT DEBUT</b>		4	<b>Late Night Talking</b> <small>KID HARPOON, T. JOHNSON (H. STYLES, T.E.P. HULL)</small>	<b>Harry Styles</b> <small>ERSKINE/COLUMBIA</small>	4	1
9	9	5	<b>About Damn Time</b> <small>B. SLATKIN, RICKY REED (B. SLATKIN, E.B. FREDERIC, L. PRICE, M. MCLAREN, M. JEFFERSON, R. LARKINS, S. HAGUE, T.M. THOMAS)</small>	<b>Lizzo</b> <small>NICE LIFE/ATLANTIC</small>	5	6
7	12	6	<b>Heat Waves</b> <small>D. BAYLEY (D. BAYLEY)</small>	<b>Glass Animals</b> <small>WOLF TONE/POLYDOR/REPUBLIC</small>	1	71
8	10	7	<b>Big Energy</b> <small>DR. LUKE, V. OLIVER (A.M. STEPHENS, L.S. GOTTFWALD, V. OLIVER, A.T.R. SMITH, T.M. THOMAS, KAINE, J. LOWE, A. BELEW, C. FRANZ, S. STANLEY, T. WEYMOUTH)</small>	<b>Latto</b> <small>STREAMCUT/RCA</small>	3	31
<b>NEW</b>		8	<b>Music For A Sushi Restaurant</b> <small>KID HARPOON, T. JOHNSON (H. STYLES, T.E.P. HULL, T. JOHNSON, M. ROWLAND)</small>	<b>Harry Styles</b> <small>ERSKINE/COLUMBIA</small>	8	1
<b>NEW</b>		9	<b>Matilda</b> <small>KID HARPOON, T. JOHNSON (H. STYLES, T.E.P. HULL, T. JOHNSON, A.R. ALLEN)</small>	<b>Harry Styles</b> <small>ERSKINE/COLUMBIA</small>	9	1
10	14	10	<b>Me Porto Bonito</b> <b>Bad Bunny &amp; Chencho Corleone</b> <small>LENEX, SUBELO, NEO, MAG (B.A. MARTINEZ OCASIO, O.J. DEL VALLE VEGA, J.A. MOLINA PRATO, F. MONTALVO ALICEA, J.C. CRUZ, J. HERNANDEZ RODRIGUEZ, M.D. BORRERO, R. ROSARDO)</small>	<b>Bad Bunny &amp; Chencho Corleone</b> <small>RIMAS</small>	10	3
11	17	11	<b>Enemy</b> <b>Imagine Dragons X JID</b> <small>MATTMAN &amp; ROBIN (D. REYNOLDS, W. SERMON, B. MCKEE, D. PLATZMAN, R.L. FREDRIKSSON, M.P. LARSSON, J.D. TRANTER, D. ROUTE)</small>	<b>Imagine Dragons</b> <small>KIDINAKORNER/INTERSCOPE</small>	5	27
13	21	12	<b>Stay</b> <b>The Kid LAROI &amp; Justin Bieber</b> <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.J. DEBONI, S. RAHMAN)</small>	<b>The Kid LAROI &amp; Justin Bieber</b> <small>RAYMOND BRAUN/COLUMBIA/DEF JAM</small>	1	46
<b>NEW</b>		13	<b>Daylight</b> <small>KID HARPOON, T. JOHNSON (H. STYLES, T.E.P. HULL, T. JOHNSON)</small>	<b>Harry Styles</b> <small>ERSKINE/COLUMBIA</small>	13	1
<b>NEW</b>		14	<b>Little Freak</b> <small>KID HARPOON, T. JOHNSON (H. STYLES, T.E.P. HULL)</small>	<b>Harry Styles</b> <small>ERSKINE/COLUMBIA</small>	14	1
<b>NEW</b>		15	<b>Grapejuice</b> <small>KID HARPOON, T. JOHNSON (H. STYLES, T.E.P. HULL, T. JOHNSON)</small>	<b>Harry Styles</b> <small>ERSKINE/COLUMBIA</small>	15	1
5	18	16	<b>Titi Me Pregunto</b> <b>Bad Bunny</b> <small>MAG (B.A. MARTINEZ OCASIO, M.D. BORRERO, R. ROSARDO)</small>	<b>Bad Bunny</b> <small>RIMAS</small>	5	3
4	15	17	<b>Moscow Mule</b> <b>Bad Bunny</b> <small>MAG, MICK, SCOTT (B.A. MARTINEZ OCASIO, M.D. BORRERO, M. COOGAN, S.H. DITTRICH, R. ROSARDO)</small>	<b>Bad Bunny</b> <small>RIMAS</small>	4	3
17	25	18	<b>Ghost</b> <b>Justin Bieber</b> <small>THE MONSTERS &amp; STRANGERZ, J. BELLION (J.D. BIEBER, J.D. BELLION, J.K. JOHNSON, S. JOHNSON, M.R. POLLACK)</small>	<b>Justin Bieber</b> <small>RAYMOND BRAUN/DEF JAM</small>	5	35
20	24	19	<b>Woman</b> <b>Doja Cat</b> <small>YETI BEATS, L. JAY, CRATE CLASSICS, A. JONES (A.Z. DLAMINI, D. SPRECHER, A. HORN, A. JONES, L. JAY, J.T. MOBISSON)</small>	<b>Doja Cat</b> <small>KEMOSABE/RCA</small>	7	43
-	3	20	<b>N95</b> <b>Kendrick Lamar</b> <small>SOUNWAVE, J.A. SWEET, BOI-HDA (K.L. DUCKWORTH, M.A. SPEARS, J.A. SWEET, M.J. SAMUELS, H.J. CARTER JR., S.J. DEW)</small>	<b>Kendrick Lamar</b> <small>PGLANG/TOP DAWG/AFTERMATH/INTERSCOPE</small>	3	2

Go to the Chart Beat section of [billboard.com](https://www.billboard.com) for complete charts coverage.



Blake Slatkin, 24, co-wrote and co-produced Lizzo's "About Damn Time," which also hits No. 1 on Digital Song Sales.

HOT 100

5

"About Damn Time"

Lizzo

How did "About Damn Time" come together?

**BLAKE SLATKIN** We finished 2021 with music that we all loved — Lizzo made an unbelievable album. The first week of January, we got a call saying, "Just try one more." We were on the

fence, [but] me and Ricky Reed went into the studio. I was playing around and Ricky was like, "Wait, that's something!" I thought he was joking because I play the same three chords on a piano every time. He got that baseline, [and] Lizzo came up with that hook, the melodies, and from there, it was a four-month process. It went through so many different iterations.

What do you think makes Lizzo a standout talent?

She knows exactly what she wants — she's a creative force. She has stood up for a lot of things that she believes in, and she lets people into her life. I think the world feels like they're friends with her. She gives you the feeling that you can talk to her, and if you were with her in the room, you'd be dancing to her songs together. I've always admired artists who give you that feeling.

What do you think is the secret to making a long-lasting Hot 100 hit?

Every hit that I've been grateful enough to be a part of gave me this feeling in my chest when I hear it that I can't deny. If I knew, I would make it every time. The artist is where it all starts and ends. Songwise, it's these songs that you just can't explain — it ends and you want to put it on again. Those are the ones that I'm going to spend my time on and I'm going to go to the ends of the earth to get perfect.

—TAYLOR MIMS

Biggest Sales Gain

1

"As It Was"

Harry Styles



Biggest Airplay Gain

2

"First Class"

Jack Harlow



Biggest Streaming Gain

42

"Something in the Orange"

Zach Bryan







MONTANER

# TANGO

DISPONIBLE YA





## BILLBOARD 200

# 45



### Pusha T *It's Almost Dry*

Following its CD release on May 20, the rapper's latest full-length rebounds (121-45) with 13,500 equivalent album units earned in the week ending May 26 (up 49%) in the United States, according to Luminate.

# 68



### Jazmine Sullivan *Heaux Tales*

The Grammy Award-winning album reenters with 11,000 units (up 139%) thanks to its vinyl release on May 20 — which accounted for effectively all of its album sales for the week (6,500). It also debuts at No. 2 on the Vinyl Albums chart.

# 183



### The Clash *Combat Rock*

The band's only top 10 album, which peaked at No. 7 in January 1983, returns to the chart for the first time since that August. It was reissued in a special edition with bonus tracks, coinciding with the 40th anniversary of its May 1982 release.

# 5

### Zach Bryan *American Heartbreak*



Singer-songwriter Zach Bryan makes his Billboard 200 debut with his first major-label album, *American Heartbreak*, arriving at No. 5. The 34-track project enters with 71,500 equivalent album units earned in the United States during the week ending May 26, according to Luminate — and marks the biggest week for a country or Americana/folk album in 2022. Of *Heartbreak's* starting sum, streaming-equivalent album units make up 64,500 (equaling 84.09 million on-demand official streams of the album's 34 songs) while album sales and track-equivalent album units make up the remaining 7,000. It also debuts at No. 1 on Top Country Albums, Top Rock Albums and Americana/Folk Albums — his first leader on all three charts.

Bryan's breakout song, "Something in the Orange" (from *American Heartbreak*), surges 75-42 on the all-genre Billboard Hot 100 and hits the top 10 for the first time on the Hot Country Songs chart (12-3).

—KEITH CAULFIELD

# Billboard 200

2 WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Artist	Title	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
			IMPRINT/DISTRIBUTING LABEL			
		<b>1</b>	<b>#1 for 1 WEEK</b> <b>Harry Styles</b>	<b>Harry's House</b>	1	1
			ERSKINE/COLUMBIA			
		<b>2</b>	<b>Bad Bunny</b>	<b>Un Verano Sin Ti</b>	1	3
			RIMAS			
		<b>3</b>	<b>Kendrick Lamar</b>	<b>Mr. Morale &amp; The Big Steppers</b>	1	2
			PGLANG/TOP DAWG/AFTERMATH/INTERSCOPE/JGA			
		<b>4</b>	<b>Future</b>	<b>I Never Liked You</b>	1	4
			FREEBANDZ/EPIC			
		<b>5</b>	<b>Zach Bryan</b>	<b>American Heartbreak</b>	5	1
			BELTING BRONCO/WARNER			
		<b>6</b>	<b>Morgan Wallen</b>	<b>Dangerous: The Double Album</b>	1	72
			BIG LOUD/REPUBLIC			
		<b>7</b>	<b>Jack Harlow</b>	<b>Come Home The Kids Miss You</b>	3	3
			GENERATION NOW/ATLANTIC/AG			
		<b>8</b>	<b>Olivia Rodrigo</b>	<b>Sour</b>	1	53
			GEFFEN/JGA			
		<b>9</b>	<b>TOMORROW X TOGETHER</b>	<b>Minisode 2: Thursday's Child (EP)</b>	4	2
			BIGHT MUSIC/IMPERIAL/REPUBLIC			
		<b>10</b>	<b>Lil Durk</b>	<b>7220</b>	1	11
			ALAMO			
		<b>11</b>	<b>Drake</b>	<b>Certified Lover Boy</b>	1	38
			OVO SOUND/REPUBLIC			
		<b>12</b>	<b>Doja Cat</b>	<b>Planet Her</b>	2	48
			KEMOSABE/RCA			
		<b>13</b>	<b>Soundtrack</b>	<b>Encanto</b>	1	26
			WALT DISNEY			
		<b>14</b>	<b>GG Harry Styles</b>	<b>Fine Line</b>	1	128
			ERSKINE/COLUMBIA			
		<b>15</b>	<b>Lil Baby</b>	<b>My Turn</b>	1	117
			QUALITY CONTROL/MOTOWN/CAPITOL			
		<b>16</b>	<b>Ed Sheeran</b>	<b>=</b>	1	30
			ATLANTIC/AG			
		<b>17</b>	<b>Kendrick Lamar</b>	<b>good kid, m.A.A.d city</b>	2	500
			TOP DAWG/AFTERMATH/INTERSCOPE/JGA			
		<b>18</b>	<b>Gunna</b>	<b>DS4EVER</b>	1	20
			GUNNA/YOUNG STONER LIFE/300/AG			
		<b>19</b>	<b>Post Malone</b>	<b>Hollywood's Bleeding</b>	1	142
			REPUBLIC			
		<b>20</b>	<b>Luke Combs</b>	<b>What You See Is What You Get</b>	1	133
			RIVER HOUSE/COLUMBIA NASHVILLE/SMN			





MARIAH CAREY



EURYTHMICS



THE ISLEY BROTHERS



STEVE MILLER



THE NEPTUNES



RICK NOWELS



WILLIAM "MICKEY" STEVENSON

Nile Rodgers **Chairman**  
Linda Moran **President & CEO**

and the Songwriters Hall of Fame Board of Directors  
invite you to the

# 2022 SONGWRITERS HALL OF FAME GALA

## 51st ANNUAL INDUCTION CEREMONY

## & AWARDS PRESENTATION

# SOLD OUT

Thursday, June 16th, 2022

New York Marriott Marquis  
Broadway at 45th Street • New York City

Buckley Hall Events  
914-579-1000  
shof@buckleyhallevnts.com

Producer Nancy Munoz • Music Director Rob Mathes  
Show Committee Co-Chair Evan Lamberg  
Show Committee Tisha Fein, Charlie Feldman,  
Fletcher Foster, Rick Krim, John Titta

www.songhall.org



*SONGWRITERS  
HALL OF FAME's ongoing mission is to  
celebrate and honor the contributions of our great  
popular music songwriters who have written  
the soundtrack for our nation's history, while  
developing new writing talent through workshops,  
showcases, scholarships, and digital initiatives.*

## INDUCTEES

**Mariah Carey**

**Annie Lennox  
& Dave Stewart**

p/k/a **EURYTHMICS**

**Ernie Isley,  
Marvin Isley\*,  
O'Kelly Isley\*,  
Ronald Isley,  
Rudolph Isley  
& Chris Jasper**

p/k/a **THE ISLEY BROTHERS**

**Steve Miller**

**Pharrell Williams  
& Chad Hugo**

p/k/a **THE NEPTUNES**

**Rick Nowels**

**William "Mickey" Stevenson**

\*posthumous

## SPECIAL AWARDS

**Paul Williams**  
Johnny Mercer Award

**Lil Nas X**  
Hal David Starlight Award

**Jody Gerson**  
Abe Olman Publisher Award



PAUL WILLIAMS



LIL NAS X



JODY GERSON





GLOBAL 200

1

"As It Was"  
Harry Styles

**HARRY STYLES' "AS IT WAS"** doubles up atop the Billboard Global 200 and Billboard Global Excl. U.S. charts for an eighth straight week — tying Olivia Rodrigo's "drivers license" in 2021 for the longest consecutive run at No. 1 on both charts. But his dominance goes far beyond his chart-topper, as all 13 songs from parent album *Harry's*

*House* (see page 13) appear in the Global 200's top 25, including five entries in the top 10. On Global Excl. U.S., four rank in the top 10 and all 13 place in the top 30.

*Harry's House* accumulated 693.4 million official global streams in the week ending May 26, according to Luminate. The album more than doubles Adele's *30* for a new weekly high among British acts since the global charts launched in September 2020. *30* debuted with 340.3 million streams (Dec. 4, 2021).

The opening-week stream total for *Harry's House* trails only the debut sum from Bad Bunny's *Un Verano Sin Ti* — 1.1 billion (May 21) — for the most in a single week in 2022. Bad Bunny is also the only act to score more concurrent songs than Styles in the Global Excl. U.S. top 30 so far, with 16 tracks from *Un Verano Sin Ti* landing there in its first week on the chart.

Styles and Bad Bunny combine for nine spots in the Global 200 top 10. *Un Verano Sin Ti*'s 23-song tracklist excels on both global charts for a third week, averaging over 30 million worldwide streams per song. Bad Bunny's haul is led by "Ojitos Lindos" (with Bomba Estéreo) at No. 2 on Global Excl. U.S. and "Me Porto Bonito" (with Chencho Corleone) at No. 3 on the Global 200.

—ERIC FRANKENBERG

Global 200						
2 WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title	Artist	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
1	1	①	<b>#1 for 8 WEEKS</b> GG <b>As It Was</b>	Harry Styles	1	8
		<b>HOT SHOT DEBUT</b>	② <b>Late Night Talking</b>	Harry Styles	2	1
④	4	③	<b>Me Porto Bonito</b>	Bad Bunny & Chencho Corleone	3	3
⑥	6	④	<b>Ojitos Lindos</b>	Bad Bunny & Bomba Estereo	4	3
	NEW	⑤	<b>Music For A Sushi Restaurant</b>	Harry Styles	5	1
	NEW	⑥	<b>Matilda</b>	Harry Styles	6	1
⑤	8	⑦	<b>Titi Me Pregunto</b>	Bad Bunny	5	3
②	3	⑧	<b>Moscow Mule</b>	Bad Bunny	2	3
③	5	⑨	<b>First Class</b>	Jack Harlow	2	7
	NEW	⑩	<b>Little Freak</b>	Harry Styles	10	1
⑫	⑩	⑪	<b>About Damn Time</b>	Lizzo	10	6
	NEW	⑫	<b>Daylight</b>	Harry Styles	12	1
	NEW	⑬	<b>Grapejuice</b>	Harry Styles	13	1
10	11	⑭	<b>Wait For U</b>	Future Featuring Drake & Tems	2	4
⑧	12	⑮	<b>Party</b>	Bad Bunny & Rauw Alejandro	8	3
13	14	⑯	<b>Provenza</b>	Karol G	6	5
	NEW	⑰	<b>Cinema</b>	Harry Styles	17	1
	NEW	⑱	<b>Satellite</b>	Harry Styles	18	1
15	17	⑲	<b>Heat Waves</b>	Glass Animals	1	73
	NEW	⑳	<b>Love Of My Life</b>	Harry Styles	20	1

LLOYD WANEFIELD

BILLBOARD GLOBAL 200: THE WEEK'S MOST POPULAR SONGS BASED ON STREAMING AND SALES ACTIVITY FROM OVER 200 TERRITORIES AROUND THE WORLD — INCLUDING THE UNITED STATES — AS TRACKED BY LUMINATE. THE RANKING IS BASED ON A WEIGHTED FORMULA INCORPORATING OFFICIAL ONLY STREAMS ON BOTH SUBSCRIPTION AND AD-SUPPORTED SERVICES, PLUS DOWNLOAD SALES. FRONT-TOP MUSIC RETAILERS ACROSS THE GLOBE. SEE CHARTS.ILLUMINATE.COM FOR COMPLETE RULES AND EXPLANATIONS. © 2022 BILLBOARD MEDIA, LLC AND LUMINATE INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

LUMINATE

STREAMING AND SALES DATA COMPILED BY



WE PROUDLY CONGRATULATE  
MARIAH CAREY, EURYTHMICS,  
THE ISLEY BROTHERS AND PHARRELL WILLIAMS,  
ON THEIR INDUCTION INTO THE SONGWRITERS HALL OF FAME.



WE CELEBRATE AND HONOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS THAT  
NOT ONLY PUSHED MUSICAL BOUNDARIES, BUT ALSO INFLUENCED AND  
SHAPED GENERATIONS OF FUTURE SONGWRITERS.



AND CONGRATULATIONS TO  
LIL NAS X AS THIS YEAR'S  
RECIPIENT OF THE EMINENT  
HAL DAVID STARLIGHT AWARD





CONGRATULATIONS

# LIN-MANUEL MIRANDA

2022 NMPA  
SONGWRITER  
ICON

SPECIAL  
THANK YOU TO  
OUR ANNUAL  
MEETING  
KEYNOTE

SIR  
LUCIAN  
GRAINGE



TAYLOR JEWELL/INVISION/AP





# CONGRATULATIONS

2022 SONGWRITERS HALL OF FAME  
INDUCTEES & HONOREES

ANNIE LENNOX | DAVE STEWART | PHARRELL  
WILLIAMS | CHAD HUGO | ERNIE ISLEY | MARVIN ISLEY  
O'KELLY ISLEY | RONALD ISLEY | RUDOLPH ISLEY  
CHRIS JASPER | PAUL WILLIAMS | LIL NAS X

SPECIAL CONGRATULATIONS  
TO NMPA BOARD MEMBER &  
RECIPIENT OF THE ABE  
OLMAN PUBLISHER AWARD

JODY  
GERSON







ARTIST 100

9

THE WEEKND

WEEKS IN TOP 10

200

The Weeknd earns a 200th week in the top 10 of the Billboard Artist 100. Dating to the chart's

2014 launch, he joins only Drake (239) and Ed Sheeran (211) with at least 200 weeks in the tier — and he has spent 28 of them atop the chart, between August 2015 and this March.



NO. 62

Elton, Diana Ascend At AC

Pop icons shine on the Adult Contemporary chart, led by the return of Elton John (above) to No. 1 with his Dua Lipa collaboration, "Cold Heart (PNAU Remix)." The mashup of four songs by John (No. 62 on the Artist 100) became his record-extending 18th leader on the May 21-dated list. Fellow legend Diana Ross enters AC at No. 24 with "Turn Up the Sunshine" (featuring Tame Impala) from the *Minions: The Rise of Gru* soundtrack. The song marks Ross' highest debut on the chart, as well as her best placement as a lead artist since 1989.

—GARY TRUST



NO. 96

Zimmerman's 'Fall' Rises

Bailey Zimmerman debuts at No. 96 on the Artist 100 and reaches a new No. 6 high on the Emerging Artists chart thanks to his breakthrough single, "Fall in Love." The track rises 16-10 on Hot Country Songs, becoming his first top 10, up 33% to 9.7 million official U.S. streams in the week ending May 26, according to Luminate. It concurrently marks his first top 10 on Country Streaming Songs (12-4). The 22-year-old from Louisville, Ill., gained traction by posting videos on TikTok, where he has nearly 1 million followers. He signed to Warner Music Nashville in April.

—XANDER ZELLNER

# Artist 100

2 WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Artist	IMPRINT/LABEL	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
11	10	1	<b>#1 for 3 WEEKS</b> <b>Harry Styles</b>	ERSKINE/COLUMBIA	1	152
1	2	2	<b>Bad Bunny</b>	RIMAS	1	217
9	1	3	<b>Kendrick Lamar</b>	TOP DAWG/AFTERMATH/INTERSCOPE/IGA	1	334
4	4	4	<b>Morgan Wallen</b>	BIG LOUD/REPUBLIC	1	168
3	6	5	<b>Future</b>	FREEBANDZ/EPIC	1	236
6	8	6	<b>Doja Cat</b>	KEMOSABE/RCA	1	123
2	7	7	<b>Jack Harlow</b>	GENERATION NOW/ATLANTIC/AG	1	94
7	9	8	<b>Ed Sheeran</b>	ATLANTIC/AG	1	406
8	12	9	<b>The Weeknd</b>	XO/REPUBLIC	1	359
12	13	10	<b>Luke Combs</b>	RIVER HOUSE/COLUMBIA NASHVILLE/SMN	1	273
14	15	11	<b>Lil Baby</b>	QUALITY CONTROL/MOTOWN/CAPITOL	1	211
13	14	12	<b>Drake</b>	OVO SOUND/REPUBLIC	1	413
-	3	13	<b>TOMORROW X TOGETHER</b>	BIGHIT MUSIC/IMPERIAL	3	21
16	17	14	<b>Dua Lipa</b>	WARNER	1	212
17	18	15	<b>Olivia Rodrigo</b>	GEFFEN/IGA	1	72
18	21	16	<b>Lizzo</b>	NICE LIFE/ATLANTIC/AG	2	95
15	16	17	<b>Justin Bieber</b>	RAYMOND BRAUN/DEF JAM	1	379
31	20	18	<b>Post Malone</b>	REPUBLIC	1	309
27	24	19	<b>Imagine Dragons</b>	KIDINAKORNER/INTERSCOPE/IGA	1	376
20	22	20	<b>Bruno Mars</b>	ATLANTIC/AG	1	391

WEEKEND: BRIAN ZIFF; JOHN: DAVID J. BENNETT/GETTY IMAGES; ZIMMERMAN: TARA DIBOLD. BILLBOARD ARTIST 100, THE WEEKS MOST POPULAR ARTISTS ACROSS ALL GENRES, RANKED BY ALBUM AND TRACK SALES AS MEASURED BY LUMINATE RADIO, AIR AND TRACK SALES AS MEASURED BY LUMINATE STREAMING. ACTIVITY DATA FROM ONLINE MUSIC SOURCES TRACKED BY LUMINATE. SEE CHARTS.LEGEND ON BILLBOARD.COM FOR COMPLETE RULES AND REGULATIONS. © 2022 BILLBOARD MEDIA LLC AND LUMINATE, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.



# LEGENDS OF SONG

CONGRATULATIONS TO THIS YEAR'S  
SONGWriters HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES & HONOREES!  
THANK YOU FOR CREATING THE SOUNDTRACK OF OUR LIVES.



MARIAH CAREY

THE ISLEY BROTHERS

PAUL WILLIAMS  
ASCAP PRESIDENT & CHAIRMAN  
Johnny Mercer Award

EURHYTHMICS  
(ANNIE LENNOX AND DAVE STEWART)

JODY GERSON  
UMPG CHAIRMAN & CEO  
Abe Olman Publisher Award

LIL NAS X • THE NEPTUNES • RICK NOWELS •  
STEVE MILLER • WILLIAM "MICKEY" STEVENSON





## TOP DANCE/ELECTRONIC ALBUMS



NO. 1

### Palaces Crowns Top Dance/Electronic Albums Chart

*Palaces* by Flume (above) debuts at No. 1 on Top Dance/Electronic Albums with 7,600 equivalent album units in the week ending May 26, according to Luminate. The Australian DJ-producer adds his second leader, following *Skin* (June 2016), as well as his fourth top 10, including *Hi This Is Flume: Mixtape* (No. 2, April 2019) and *Skin Companion EP I* (No. 3, December 2016).

On Hot Dance/Electronic Songs, the new album's "Highest Building" (featuring Oklou) enters at No. 12 with 1.6 million U.S. streams. It's one of nine debuts from the project, which also spurs three reentries, led by "Say Nothing" (featuring MAY-A) at No. 18 (1.1 million streams, up 239%). Flume pads his count to 31 career appearances on the chart, a total that includes two top 10s: "The Difference" (featuring Toro y Moi; No. 10, March 2020) and "Never Be Like You" (featuring Kai; No. 3, July 2016).

—GORDON MURRAY

Top Dance/Electronic Albums				
LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Artist	Title	WKS. ON CHART
		IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL		
NEW	1	<b>#1 for 1 WEEK</b> <b>Flume</b>	<b>Palaces</b>	1
	2	<b>Lady Gaga</b>	<b>The Fame</b>	428
1	3	<b>The Chainsmokers</b>	<b>So Far So Good</b>	2
3	4	<b>Gorillaz</b>	<b>Demon Days</b>	381
4	5	<b>The Chainsmokers</b>	<b>Collage (EP)</b>	290
25	6	<b>Marshmello</b>	<b>Marshmello: Fortnite Extended Set</b>	172
5	7	<b>Daft Punk</b>	<b>Random Access Memories</b>	342
6	8	<b>The Chainsmokers</b>	<b>Memories...Do Not Open</b>	268
7	9	<b>Calvin Harris</b>	<b>Funk Wav Bounces Vol. 1</b>	256
10	10	<b>Calvin Harris</b>	<b>Motion</b>	246

## CHRISTIAN AIRPLAY



NO. 1

### Nichole Ties For Decade's Best

Mesa, Ariz., native Katy Nichole (above) rings up her sixth week atop Christian Airplay with "In Jesus Name (God of Possible)." The song matches the chart's longest No. 1 stint of the 2020s, joining Anne Wilson's fellow rookie hit, "My Jesus" (which began its run in August 2021), and Chris Tomlin's "Who You Are to Me" (featuring Lady A; October 2020).

"Jesus" — which Nichole, 21, co-wrote with Ethan Hulse, David Spencer and Jeff Pardo (Pardo also produced it) — earned 9.5 million audience impressions in the week ending May 29, according to Luminate. The single first led the chart dated April 30. "I am amazed by the impact that this song is having on so many and incredibly grateful that radio has been supporting it," said Nichole after initially reaching No. 1. "I am so in awe of everything that God has done and everything he's doing."

—JIM ASKER

Christian Airplay				
LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title	Artist	WKS. ON CHART
		IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL		
1	1	<b>#1 for 6 WEEKS</b> <b>In Jesus Name (God of Possible)</b>	<b>Katy Nichole</b>	17
2	2	<b>Brighter Days</b>	<b>Blessing Offor</b>	22
3	3	<b>For God Is With Us</b>	<b>for KING &amp; COUNTRY</b>	15
6	4	<b>God, Turn It Around</b>	<b>Jon Reddick</b>	31
7	5	<b>Jesus Is Coming Back</b>	<b>Jordan Feliz, Jonathan Traylor &amp; Mandisa</b>	27
10	6	<b>Sunday Sermons</b>	<b>Anne Wilson</b>	18
8	7	<b>See Me Through It</b>	<b>Brandon Heath</b>	21
5	8	<b>For The Good</b>	<b>Riley Clemmons</b>	31
9	9	<b>Jireh</b>	<b>Maverick City Music Featuring Chandler Moore &amp; Naomi Raine</b>	13
11	10	<b>Me On Your Mind</b>	<b>Matthew West</b>	11



**UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP CONGRATULATES OUR**

**SONGWRITERS  
HALL OF FAME**

**INDUCTEES**

**JODY GERSON**

**Abe Olman Publisher Award**

**ANNIE LENNOX**

Eurythmics

**CHAD HUGO**

The Neptunes

**MARIAH CAREY**

**MICKEY STEVENSON**

**PAUL WILLIAMS**

**Johnny Mercer Award**

**RICK NOWELS**

**STEVE MILLER**

**THE ISLEY BROTHERS**



**UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP**



## MAINSTREAM ROCK AIRPLAY



NO. 1

### Halestorm's 'Steeple' Stands Highest

Halestorm (above) strings together its second straight Mainstream Rock Airplay No. 1 with "The Steeple." It's the Lzzy Hale-fronted band's fifth chart-topper, beginning with "Freak Like Me" in April 2013. The group last ruled the chart for one week with "Back From the Dead" in November 2021.

Halestorm has the second-most No. 1s by a female-fronted act in the Mainstream Rock Airplay chart's 41-year history, after The Pretty Reckless (seven).

Concurrently, "The Steeple" rises 11-8 on the all-rock-format, audience-based Rock & Alternative Airplay chart with 2.7 million audience impressions, up 4%, according to Luminate. Halestorm scores its second top 10 and best rank yet on the chart, exceeding "Dead," which hit No. 9.

"The Steeple" is the second single from *Back From the Dead*, Halestorm's fifth studio album, which debuted at No. 2 on Top Hard Rock Albums in May.

—KEVIN RUTHERFORD

## Mainstream Rock Airplay

LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title <small>IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL</small>	Artist	WKS. ON CHART
3	1	<b>#1 for 1 WEEK</b> <b>The Steeple</b> ATLANTIC	Halestorm	16
1	2	<b>Afterlife</b> BETTER NOISE	Five Finger Death Punch	7
1	3	<b>Call Me Little Sunshine</b> LOMA VISTA/CONCORD	Ghost	19
5	4	<b>If Tomorrow Never Comes</b> BETTER NOISE	Bad Wolves	15
4	5	<b>Dead Man Walking</b> BAILEE & BUDDY/BMG/BROKEN BOW	Jelly Roll	25
7	6	<b>Wild Child</b> EASY EYE SOUND/NONESUCH/WARNER	The Black Keys	12
6	7	<b>Rest In Peace</b> ROC NATION/REPUBLIC	DOROTHY	17
8	8	<b>Lifetime</b> RCA	Three Days Grace	7
11	9	<b>Temple Of Ekur</b> VERTIGO/REPUBLIC/Q PRIME	Volbeat	12
14	10	<b>Eye Of The Storm</b> MELODY CATALOG/MNRK HEAVY/MNRK	Pop Evil	5

HALESTORM: JIMMY FONTAINE; THOMPSON: EASTON SCHIRRA.

## COUNTRY DIGITAL SONG SALES



NO. 1

### Idol Invigorates Country Charts

Noah Thompson (above), who won the latest season of ABC's *American Idol*, scores his first No. 1 on the Country Digital Song Sales chart with "One Day Tonight." The track by the 20-year-old from Louisville, Ky., sold 11,000 downloads in the week ending May 26, according to Luminate, after the show's season finale aired May 22. Plus, Tennessee native HunterGirl, who was the runner-up, jumps to No. 2 with "Red Bird" (9,900).

Meanwhile, 2011 *Idol* champ Scotty McCreery earns his seventh Country Airplay top 10 as "Damn Strait" climbs 11-9 (15.6 million audience impressions, up 10%). The song follows "You Time," which became his fourth No. 1 on the chart last October. Two other former *Idol* contestants also move up the list: 2005 winner Carrie Underwood rises 23-22 with "Ghost Story" (5.9 million, up 2%), and 2018 third-place finalist Gabby Barrett gains 31-29 with "Pick Me Up" (3.3 million, up 10%).

—JIM ASKER

## Country Digital Song Sales

LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title <small>IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL</small>	Artist	WKS. ON CHART
2	1	<b>#1 for 1 WEEK</b> <b>One Day Tonight</b> 19/BMG	Noah Thompson	2
6	2	<b>Red Bird</b> 19/BMG	HunterGirl	2
1	3	<b>You Proof</b> BIG LOUD/MERCURY/REPUBLIC	Morgan Wallen	2
4	4	<b>AA</b> MONUMENT	Walker Hayes	27
5	5	<b>Wasted On You</b> BIG LOUD/REPUBLIC	Morgan Wallen	22
3	6	<b>Thought You Should Know</b> BIG LOUD/MERCURY/REPUBLIC	Morgan Wallen	3
7	7	<b>'Til You Can't</b> COJO/WARNER MUSIC NASHVILLE/WMN	Cody Johnson	34
12	8	<b>Like I Love Country Music</b> RCA NASHVILLE/SMN	Kane Brown	3
9	9	<b>Fancy Like</b> MONUMENT	Walker Hayes	50
RE-ENTRY	10	<b>Where We Started</b> VALORY/BMLG	Thomas Rhett + Katy Perry	2

MAINSTREAM ROCK AIRPLAY: THE WEEK'S MOST POPULAR SONGS RANKED BY MAINSTREAM ROCK RADIO AIRPLAY DETECTED BY LUMINATE. STATIONS ARE RATED BY LUMINATE. SEE CHARTS. LEGEND ON BILLBOARD.COM FOR COMPLETE RULES AND EXPLANATIONS. © 2022 BILLBOARD MEDIA LLC AND LUMINATE INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. SALES DATA COMPILED BY LUMINATE



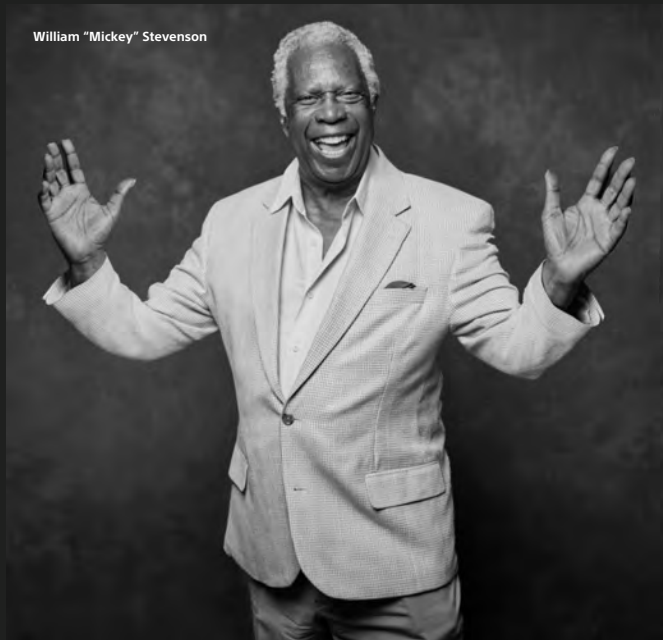
# 2022 CONGRATULATIONS Songwriters Hall of Fame HOMONOREES



*The Neptunes*  
Pharrell Williams  
/ Chad Hugo



*The Isley Brothers*  
Ernie Isley / Marvin Isley / O'Kelly Isley  
/ Ronald Isley / Rudolph Isley  
/ Chris Jasper



William "Mickey" Stevenson



Lil Nas X



SONY MUSIC PUBLISHING



Bad Bunny



# Bad Bunny's Breakout Year

The first half of 2022 shows how the concert business is becoming younger and more diverse

BY DAVE BROOKS

**T**HE FIRST SIX MONTHS of 2022 have lived up to the hype predicted for the concert business, fueled in large part by a more diverse, younger demographic eager to attend live shows and willing to spend more of their money on music and culture.

The leading 10 acts on the 2022 Top Tours chart grossed \$722 million at the midyear point, 20% more than the top 10 for 2019's Top Tours (the last complete year of touring prior to the pandemic), according to the 2022 Billboard Boxscore midyear charts that measure the top line of the live-entertainment industry. This year's chart shows very healthy consumer demand and attendance, despite the ongoing global presence of COVID-19 and growing concerns about waning immunity among vaccinated people.

While big-ticket goodbye tours from long-standing acts dominated the 2019 midyear chart, a new generation of younger, international names rules the 2022 report: Bad Bunny is the first Spanish-language artist to earn the No. 1 spot on the Top Tours chart. His *El Último Tour del Mundo* tour and two stand-alone shows in Puerto Rico grossed \$123.2 million and sold 645,000 tickets to 37 concerts, according to figures reported to Boxscore — roughly \$3.3 million and 17,400 tickets per night.

Top Tours				
	Artist	Gross	Total Attendees	No. Of Shows
1	Bad Bunny	\$123,237,294	644,868	37
2	Elton John	\$103,279,726	560,991	40
3	Genesis	\$81,935,379	450,148	35
4	BTS	\$75,489,240	458,144	11
5	The Rolling Stones	\$58,594,260	236,913	6
6	Eagles	\$57,721,507	253,728	22
7	Billie Eilish	\$57,461,541	434,895	33
8	Morgan Wallen	\$57,229,481	430,688	33
9	Trans-Siberian Orchestra	\$54,649,313	767,442	98
10	Justin Bieber	\$52,474,351	334,983	27

PAUL F. GUNTA/GETTY IMAGES



The Latin superstar isn't done, either. His 41-date *Bad Bunny: World's Hottest Tour* is set to begin Aug. 5 in Orlando, Fla. It will span the United States before heading to the Dominican Republic for two shows at Santo Domingo's Olympic Stadium. From there, he'll visit Santiago, Chile, and travel north through South America and Central America before closing with two nights at Estadio Azteca in Mexico City Dec. 9-10.

The stadium tour has the potential to gross between \$250 million and \$300 million. Combined with the \$123.2 million already posted, Bad Bunny has a very strong shot at securing the top spot on *Billboard's* year-end Top Tours ranking.

"The demand for Bad Bunny is incredible, especially when you consider how many shows are playing stadiums in 2022," says Christy Castillo Butcher, senior vp of programming at the newly opened SoFi Stadium and Hollywood Park in Inglewood, Calif. (Bad Bunny will perform there in late September.)

SoFi Stadium also hosted BTS for four shows that generated \$33.3 million — while another four at Las Vegas' Allegiant Stadium generated \$35.9 million. In total, BTS has grossed \$75.4 million by midyear, earning the group the No. 4 spot on Top Tours. Concurrently, BTS joins Bad Bunny to create history: 2022 marks the first time that two acts that perform in a language other than English made the top five of a midyear or year-end Top Tours chart.

Another exciting milestone in 2022: This is the first time that half of the acts on Top Tours are not yet 30 years old (Bad Bunny, BTS, Billie Eilish, Morgan Wallen and Justin Bieber) and that four of the other five acts are led by frontmen over 60. Elton John, Mick Jagger of The Rolling Stones and Don Henley from the Eagles are all over 70. Trans-Siberian Orchestra founding singer John Oliva is 62 and co-founder Al Pitrelli turns 60 in September.

**"THE DEMAND FOR BAD BUNNY IS INCREDIBLE, ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU CONSIDER HOW MANY SHOWS ARE PLAYING STADIUMS IN 2022."**

— CHRISTY CASTILLO BUTCHER,  
SOFI STADIUM

CHRISTOPHER POLK FOR VARIETY



## Top Promoters

	Promoter	Gross	Total Attendees	No. Of Shows
1	Live Nation	\$760,825,364	7,669,097	1,409
2	AEG Presents	\$754,830,386	8,887,214	4,337
3	Cárdenas Marketing Network	\$160,465,142	986,124	92
4	OCESA	\$136,128,348	2,441,912	424
5	HYBE	\$75,489,240	458,144	11
6	MSG Entertainment	\$66,861,418	654,389	155
7	Outback Concerts	\$61,331,847	784,974	230
8	G-Squared Events	\$60,672,966	560,594	63
9	Semmel Concerts	\$59,591,935	800,852	255
10	Black Promoters Collective	\$58,500,495	525,611	57

## Top Boxscores

	Artist(s) VENUE DATE	Gross TICKET PRICES	Total Attendees NO. OF SHOWS	Promoter(s)
1	BTS ALLEGiant STADIUM, LAS VEGAS APRIL 8-9, 15-16	\$35,944,850 \$275/\$185/\$105/\$75/\$60	199,697 4	HYBE
2	BTS SOFI STADIUM, INGLEWOOD, CALIF. NOV. 27-28, DEC. 1-2	\$33,316,345 \$155.87	213,751 4	HYBE
3	Lollapalooza Brazil AUTÓDROMO DE INTERLAGOS, SÃO PAULO MARCH 25-27	\$23,225,344 \$414.37/\$44.13	267,446 3	T4F-Time for Fun
4	Coldplay FORO SOL, MEXICO CITY APRIL 3-4, 6-7	\$19,544,924 \$164.96/\$24.14	259,591 4	Live Nation, OCESA
5	George Strait HOUSTON LIVESTOCK SHOW & RODEO, HOUSTON MARCH 20	\$15,405,112 \$193.88	79,456 1	Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo, Messina Touring Group/AEG Presents
6	The Rolling Stones ALLEGiant STADIUM, LAS VEGAS NOV. 6	\$14,804,562 \$750/\$250/\$99.50/\$29.50	42,600 1	Concerts West/ AEG Presents
7	Ed Sheeran CROKE PARK, DUBLIN APRIL 23-24	\$12,417,797 \$91.89/\$81.08	140,487 2	Aiken Promotions
8	Bad Bunny FTX ARENA, MIAMI APRIL 1-3	\$12,396,368 \$502/\$610	54,998 3	Cárdenas Marketing Network
9	Byron Bay Bluesfest BYRON EVENTS FARM, TYAGARAH, AUSTRALIA APRIL 14-18	\$11,519,946 \$557.90/\$111.58	101,024 5	Bluesfest
10	Bad Bunny ALLSTATE ARENA, ROSEMONT, ILL. MARCH 10-12	\$11,245,170 \$500/\$59	51,430 3	Cárdenas Marketing Network





John (left) and Eilish

### ROCKY ROAD STILL AHEAD

**WHILE CONSUMER SPENDING** on live events has yielded optimism, the problems that many foresaw in advance have materialized.

One issue is that far too many shows are fighting for dollars in major markets with not enough people to staff the concerts. At the same time, surging gas prices are hitting both tour transportation costs and consumer spending.

There are also challenges facing the industry that no one predicted, including no-shows at events from fans who have already purchased tickets and the way the Russia-Ukraine conflict has halted the concert business' push east through Europe.

While the Boxscore charts don't measure or address these systemic problems, they provide a fairly reliable view of momentum in the touring industry. It's a rear-facing, unaudited view that skews heavily in favor of major cities and well-established artists, but comparing midyear results with those from 2020 shows some reasons for optimism.

### LIVE NATION: BIGGER, RICHER AND AT A CROSSROADS

**THE BIGGEST WINNER** of the midyear Boxscore is Live Nation: The company spent much of 2021 preparing tours for the busy 2022 season, delivering the big concert grosses that it had been promising investors while working under a reorganized management structure that has brought more focus to the company's Beverly Hills, Calif., office.

Live Nation's share price is hovering around \$90, down from a high of about \$125 per share when chief executive Michael Rapino and other executives cashed out some of their expiring stock options, but still 20% higher than the pre-pandemic period. Its show count and attendance are up, according to its quarterly financial report (though its Boxscore numbers are down because it has curbed how much information it shares with *Billboard*), and its market share is as strong, if not stronger, than it was in 2019.

Still, Rapino isn't taking a victory lap. Instead, he has reduced his visibility and worked mostly behind the scenes amid the fallout from the Astroworld Festival, where 10 fans died due to crowd surges. The tragedy presents both a major reputational and financial threat to the company, though Live Nation officials believe they have enough insurance to cover most of the costs.

### Top Venues

#### 15,001 OR MORE CAPACITY

	Venue LOCATION	Total Gross	Total Attendees	No. Of Shows
1	<b>Madison Square Garden</b> NEW YORK	\$89,657,031	777,474	58
2	<b>O2 Arena</b> LONDON	\$64,745,957	858,569	81
3	<b>Allegiant Stadium</b> LAS VEGAS	\$64,411,440	322,353	7
4	<b>T-Mobile Arena</b> LAS VEGAS	\$58,355,699	450,389	36
5	<b>Kia Forum</b> INGLEWOOD, CALIF.	\$52,383,527	388,789	31
6	<b>Foro Sol</b> MEXICO CITY	\$51,186,480	955,493	16
7	<b>Bridgestone Arena</b> NASHVILLE	\$42,221,345	379,104	38
8	<b>Crypto.com Arena</b> LOS ANGELES	\$41,078,547	368,194	37
9	<b>American Airlines Center</b> DALLAS	\$40,480,858	373,734	36
10	<b>FTX Arena</b> MIAMI	\$37,549,406	260,358	22

#### 10,001-15,000 CAPACITY

	Venue LOCATION	Total Gross	Total Attendees	No. Of Shows
1	<b>MGM Grand Garden</b> LAS VEGAS	\$30,865,993	108,429	12
2	<b>OVO Hydro</b> GLASGOW	\$20,660,481	314,745	43
3	<b>First Direct Arena</b> LEEDS, ENGLAND	\$17,601,333	293,965	48
4	<b>Pechanga Arena San Diego</b> SAN DIEGO	\$16,288,428	199,902	30
5	<b>Van Andel Arena</b> GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.	\$15,894,334	216,948	34
6	<b>Utilita Arena</b> NEWCASTLE, ENGLAND	\$13,490,324	231,986	44
7	<b>Footprint Center</b> PHOENIX	\$12,711,572	118,913	11
8	<b>Moody Center</b> AUSTIN	\$11,889,831	62,271	5
9	<b>Dickies Arena</b> DALLAS	\$11,587,505	208,832	30
10	<b>Mercedes-Benz Arena</b> BERLIN	\$9,892,299	113,207	21



# MUSIC IS UNIVERSAL

**UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP CONGRATULATES OUR 2022 PRIDE GAMECHANGER HONOREES AND IS PROUD TO SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS PROTECTING AND ADVANCING THE RIGHTS OF THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY**



**UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP**





The company has had a tricky time getting its messaging right in the aftermath of the tragedy, however: Nearly all of the data shows that increased prices are driving live music's comeback to the top level and that ticket prices will likely keep climbing due to the rising costs of labor and production. More importantly, prices are going up because there is a greater demand for the tickets from fans.

That's a difficult sell to consumers when the country appears to be entering a recession, but there are early signs in the market that there is plenty of demand in the lower price range, especially at amphitheaters. Tickets for superstar artists like Keith Urban are as cheap as \$30 per person at the MidFlorida Credit Union Amphitheatre in Tampa, Fla.

But even as the company works to reduce prices, it still charges customers a premium on the back end — fees for its lowest-priced tickets in Tampa include an \$11.40 ticket fee and \$5 order fee, which is good for a fee increase of 50% over face value. As fans continue attending concerts and become more sophisticated consumers, the bait-and-switch at the checkout stand is only going to push away more buyers.

### LAS VEGAS STAYS STRONG

AS EXPECTED, THE MAJOR live markets on the Boxscore charts all performed, but Las Vegas was the only city to be featured in all four venue lists based on size category.

"Coming out of the pandemic, people were wanting to get away, and Las Vegas was an easy choice because we are only a one- to three-hour flight max for half the country, and we started preparing for the return of live music earlier than many other cities," says Bobby Reynolds, senior vp of AEG Presents Las Vegas.

Sin City venues within the top 10 of their respective charts grossed a total of \$258 million. New York buildings grossed \$168 million, and Los Angeles concert halls grossed \$109 million.

Las Vegas' Allegiant Stadium, which opened in 2021, ranked third on the Top Venues: 15,001 or More Capacity chart, immediately followed by T-Mobile Arena.

The MGM Grand Garden Arena topped the 10,001- to 15,000-capacity chart, while Las Vegas' Dolby Live (previously known as Park MGM Theater) earned second place on the 5,001- to 10,000-capacity chart and Zappos Theater at Planet Hollywood grabbed the No. 7 spot.

The brand-new Resorts World Theatre earned the top slot on the 5,000 or less capacity chart, followed by The Colosseum at Caesars Palace in second. **B**

## Top Venues

### 5,001-10,000 CAPACITY

	Venue LOCATION	Total Gross	Total Attendees	No. Of Shows
1	<b>Radio City Music Hall</b> NEW YORK	\$57,717,862	602,259	132
2	<b>Dolby Live</b> LAS VEGAS	\$41,795,491	169,810	34
3	<b>Hard Rock Live at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel &amp; Casino</b> HOLLYWOOD, FLA.	\$25,354,390	162,977	38
4	<b>Auditorio Nacional</b> MEXICO CITY	\$19,705,171	401,702	54
5	<b>Microsoft Theater</b> LOS ANGELES	\$16,030,159	190,396	67
6	<b>Mohegan Sun Arena</b> UNCASVILLE, CONN.	\$14,689,245	280,433	58
7	<b>Zappos Theater at Planet Hollywood</b> LAS VEGAS	\$13,416,943	106,387	27
8	<b>Red Rocks Amphitheatre</b> MORRISON, COLO.	\$13,151,637	229,553	27
9	<b>Texas Trust CU Theatre</b> DALLAS	\$11,792,930	162,740	36
10	<b>Hulu Theater at Madison Square Garden</b> NEW YORK	\$10,140,727	126,313	42

### 5,000 OR LESS CAPACITY

	Venue LOCATION	Total Gross	Total Attendees	No. Of Shows
1	<b>Resorts World Theatre</b> LAS VEGAS	\$29,709,153	156,243	40
2	<b>The Colosseum at Caesars Palace</b> LAS VEGAS	\$19,618,415	95,905	26
3	<b>Chicago Theatre</b> CHICAGO	\$17,521,532	259,620	84
4	<b>Fox Theatre</b> ATLANTA	\$16,717,087	257,119	84
5	<b>Durham Performing Arts Center</b> DURHAM, N.C.	\$15,456,888	209,659	99
6	<b>Beacon Theatre</b> NEW YORK	\$10,192,708	140,797	62
7	<b>Orpheum Theatre</b> MINNEAPOLIS	\$10,023,257	142,844	75
8	<b>DeVos Performance Hall</b> GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.	\$9,823,227	126,169	79
9	<b>Teatro Telcel</b> MEXICO CITY	\$9,151,257	131,950	138
10	<b>Encore Theater at Wynn Hotel</b> LAS VEGAS	\$8,425,213	54,089	44





# OUTRIGHT

ACTION INTERNATIONAL

OutRight Action International works to research, document, defend and advance human rights and equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) people everywhere.

As part of its work, OutRight runs crisis relief funds, because in times of disaster, LGBTIQ people are left behind by mainstream response systems. OutRight's COVID-19 Fund is the largest global relief fund for LGBTIQ people in the world and has distributed over USD \$3.6 million to more than 340 groups in over 100 countries. Its Ukraine Fund has distributed over USD \$1 million, mostly to groups inside Ukraine, however also in neighboring countries to where LGBTIQ refugees are seeking safe passage.

 @OutRightIntl  
#PrideWithAPurpose



## Voices of Change

We're donating our ad space in *Billboard* to amplify voices of activists, organizations, and charities that reflect our core values and are creating real change.

In honor of Pride, we've chosen to spotlight our partners at OutRight Action International for their advocacy for human rights for LGBTIQ+ people around the world.





# KIDD KENN

**SUMMER EP  
LEAD SINGLE**

**BODY  
OUT NOW**



**4TH  
B'WAY**

**Def  
Jam  
recordings**



24hrs

KAASH PAIGE

LIL TJAY

**KAASH PAIGE**

**NEW SINGLE "24 HRS" FEAT. LIL TJAY**

**STREAMING NOW**

kaashpaigemusic.com  
defjam.com/##





# Joy Oladokun

"With roots in folk storytelling, Oladokun's lyrics and soothing delivery often offer much-needed reminders"

**billboard**

"Pouring poetry, pain, passion, and power into her songs, Joy Oladokun's words arrive at a time when we need them the most."

**OUT FRONT**

"Indie-folk singer Joy Oladokun puts her heart on her sleeve in 'Purple Haze,' strumming her guitar as her powerful yet silky smooth voice makes the song soar."

**V MAGAZINE**

"Her name is both prescient and redundant. She oozes energy that shifts a room's center of gravity and makes you happy for it. It is charisma and she has it in spades. It's the way she approaches her craft too."

**VANITY FAIR**

"Since her debut, the queer Nashville-based singer-songwriter has received critical acclaim from the likes of Vogue, NPR, and American Songwriter, and has performed on The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon, The Late Show with Stephen Colbert, and CBS Saturday Morning"

**OUT FRONT**





# market

MUSIC AND MONEY

PG. 40 VINYL MANUFACTURING UPDATE  
PG. 42 MERCH TABLE TIPPING TUSSLE  
PG. 46 INDIFY CEO ON AIDING ARTISTS

From left: Puth, GAYLE, Halsey, SZA and Harlow.



## The Trouble With TikTok Teasers

With labels increasingly trying out unreleased songs on the platform, producers, songwriters and even artists say it's bad for business

BY KRISTIN ROBINSON // ILLUSTRATION BY SELMAN HOŞGÖR

**A**RTISTS HAVE PREVIEWED unreleased songs on radio and in concert for decades, but thanks to the rise of TikTok and a handful of successful DIY social media campaigns — Lil Nas X's efforts for "Old Town Road" on Twitter and Triller are early examples — the practice has become de rigeur. But not

everyone thinks it's good business.

What started as a low-cost method for unsigned acts to casually test audience reaction and build up streaming service pre-saves has become the norm for even household names hoping to break their next hit before committing to a release date on streaming platforms like Spotify and Apple Music. The Billboard

Hot 100 contains ample proof that this works: SZA earned her first solo top 10 debut with her 2021 single "I Hate U," and Charlie Puth peaked at No. 27 with "Light Switch" earlier this year, as did Jack Harlow's first No. 1 debut with "First Class." Each of those superstar artists teased the songs on TikTok first, as did newcomer GAYLE, whose unlikely Hot 100 No. 1 hit, "abcdefu," started as an acoustic performance video that took off online before the single's official release.

Song teases come in many forms. Some are as simple as a selfie video, asking fans for feedback on a newly made track. Others are more involved. With "Light Switch," for example, Puth walked his fans through making the song, from laying down his vocal harmonies to sampling the snap of an actual light switch.

And though the teases began as a form of guerrilla marketing, labels have become increasingly reliant on their use to choose singles

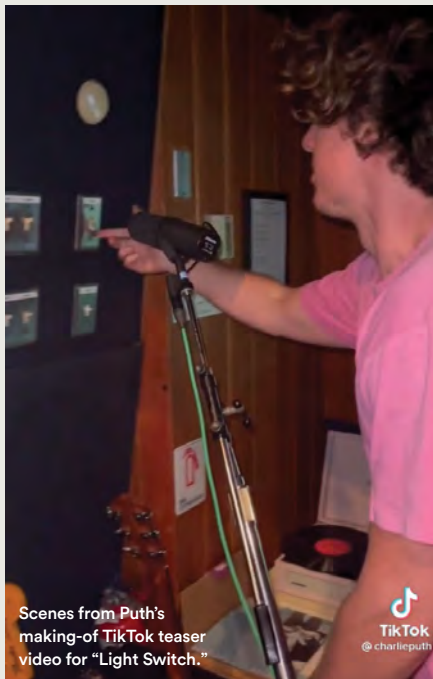
**Pepsi** announced it will no longer be the NFL's Super Bowl Halftime Show title sponsor.

As **Spotify** stock struggles, the platform announced June 8 plans for its first investor day since going public in 2018.



**Justin Timberlake** sold his song catalog to Hipgnosis.

**J Balvin** signed with UTA for global representation, leaving longtime agency WME.



Scenes from Puth's making-of TikTok teaser video for "Light Switch."



and break records. Lucas Keller — a critic of the practice and founder of management firm Milk & Honey — paraphrased a major-label president who recently told him that teasers are now a “major part of their marketing strategy.” The executive also advised Keller, who manages a number of top producers, to “fall in line with it.” Keller’s claim is bolstered by complaints on social media from such artists as FKA Twigs, Charli XCX, Florence Welch and most recently Halsey, who took to Twitter on May 23 to claim that her label, Capitol Records, “won’t give [her] a release date at all” if she does not reach “some imaginary goalpost of views or virality” on their latest song on TikTok, prior to its official release. Asked for comment, a Capitol Music Group representative told *Billboard*, “Our belief in Halsey as a singular and important artist is total and unwavering. We can’t wait for the world to hear their brilliant new music.” (Halsey’s management declined to comment.)

Teasers and previews have also become a point of contention with the songwriters and producers Keller works with because, he says, they put his clients’ earning potential at considerable risk.

Many artist teams neglect to lock in songwriter splits and producer fees before teasing a song, leaving collaborators in a situation where their compensation is tied to the performance of the preview. If the song blows up, these creators may be able to bargain for higher fees and splits. But if the track fails to catch fire, the song won’t be released.

This is where the real disparity between artists and songwriter-producers comes into play, says Benjamin Gross, founder of Brill Building Publishing. While “the artist still has gained followers, created additional exposure and

may have even gotten a record deal” from test-streaming the song, the songwriters and producers are left uncompensated and uncredited.

Though dropping a teaser on TikTok is not considered to be an official release of a song to audio streaming platforms, legally speaking, it is similar. The social app has licensing agreements in place with all the major music companies and the National Music Publishers’ Association to pay out for the use of music on TikTok. Uploading a song for the first time to the app requires a first-use mechanical license just like any other streaming service — a strong argument, Keller says, that songwriting agreements

and production fees should be settled in advance, and that producers should be paid as soon as a TikTok teaser of their song goes live.

In many cases, however, splits and fees are not determined ahead of time, leaving songwriters and producers vulnerable to the “try before you buy” process, as it has been dubbed in the industry. “Sometimes

**“Sometimes you see songs die on a hard drive because of the results of a TikTok that was up for 48 hours [and wasn’t viral enough].”**

**—CHRISTIAN JOHNSON, HIPGNOSIS**

## MARKET WATCH

**24.54B**

↓0.5%

**TOTAL ON-DEMAND STREAMS WEEK OVER WEEK**

Number of audio and video on-demand streams for the week ending May 26.

**18.01M**

↑0.7%

**ALBUM CONSUMPTION UNITS WEEK OVER WEEK**

Album sales plus track-equivalent albums plus streaming-equivalent albums for the week ending May 26.

**499.2B**

↑11.6%

**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.

you see songs die on a hard drive because of the results of a TikTok that was up for 48 hours and [wasn’t viral enough],” says Christian Johnson, Hipgnosis senior director of A&R and manager for production team The Monsters & Strangerz.

These “dead copyrights,” as Groff calls them, are especially damaging to songwriters and publishers when they circulate “pitch” records (songs that are often pitched to multiple artists in hopes of finding a match) and to producers sending out folders of hip-hop beats. Occasionally, artists will share a recording of a pitch record online before the song has been fully claimed. In a worst case scenario, if the song doesn’t stick and the artist dumps it, the song may be seen as damaged goods by other acts.

“Nobody wants another artist’s sloppy seconds,” says attorney Todd Rubenstein. In an age where fans are often led to believe that their favorite artists write their own music, all other interest in recording the song evaporates. “It’s hard to get the genie back in the bottle,” says Groff, especially when viewers start to use the song in their own user-generated content.

There is a flip side, however. Teasing a track without agreements in place can also work against an artist. If an unreleased, uncleared song goes viral, now the songwriters and producers can negotiate with the artist for a bigger payday because they have the ability to withhold the song from a full release. But as This Is Noise Management founder Dan Petel explains, exerting excessive leverage risks putting songwriters and producers in an adversarial position with collaborators that can negatively affect future business. “Some people might say that’s great,” he says. “But that’s not the kind of relationship I want to have with record labels and artists.”

Now that teaser campaigns have become a standard part of labels’ marketing and promotion tool kit, the question remains: What can be done to protect producers and songwriters from the pitfalls of song teasing? There aren’t many answers at the moment, but Keller, Petel and others say they are contemplating solutions. One source suggests that songwriters and producers be paid a “kill fee” when a previewed song does not get a full release. Others interviewed for this story say they are hesitant to ask for any change at all for fear of retribution from artists and labels.

“TikTok has done such a great job of taking music and injecting it into people’s lives. I think we all embrace that,” says Petel, echoing sentiments also expressed by Johnson, Groff and Keller. “But now, we need to find a system for this that takes care of everyone. Our industry needs to adjust.” **B**



Congratulations

Anthony  
Roth  
Costanzo

Your Team  
at Decca Gold

2022

Billboard Pride  
Game Changer





**The Kid LAROI** split with manager Adam Leber after less than eight months of working together.

**Live Nation's** concert division moved to a paid internship model to help diversify its workforce.

# Will Price Hikes Scratch Vinyl?

Supply chain problems and rising costs continue to plague pressing plants, labels and retailers — but CDs may be a stopgap

BY CHRIS EGGERTSEN

**O** N MAY 20, Universal Music Group raised its wholesale prices on roughly 2,400 vinyl titles, adding new pressure to a format struggling to keep up with increased demand, supply chain issues and skyrocketing materials costs. Whether the vinyl boom will suffer from sticker shock remains to be seen, but retail prices are climbing. “Out of the 2,400 [UMG] titles that are lifting, 1,200 of them will now have a [wholesale] cost of \$19 or higher,” says Carl Mello, director of brand engagement at Newbury Comics. “So those are all essentially becoming like \$30 price tag items.” Some vinyl albums are already selling for even more: Harry Styles’ new *Harry’s House*,

released by Sony/Columbia, has a wholesale cost of \$24, according to Mello, while retail prices range from \$32 to \$40.

UMG’s pricing increase follows a similar move by Warner Music Group, which raised wholesale costs on roughly 600 titles last October. “We’re waiting for the shoe to drop from Sony, too,” says Laura Provenzano, senior vp of purchasing and marketing for vinyl wholesaler and distributor Alliance Entertainment. “They’re all feeling the same cost pressure.”

Vinyl sales spiked 51.4% in 2021, with 41.72 million vinyl albums sold, making it the biggest year for the format since Luminate began tracking it in 1991. It’s too early to say how much

the price increases will affect sales, but rising materials costs and shortages are stretching the vinyl industry to the breaking point. Pressing plant executives tell *Billboard* that over the past year there have been three price increases on vinyl pellets that have nearly doubled the cost. “Pre-pandemic, the price of black compound [PVC] was \$1.16 and \$1.17 a pound. Now it’s over \$2 when you factor in all the fees,” says Mark Rainey, co-founder/CEO of Cascade Record Pressing in Milwaukie, Ore.

Another emerging concern for the industry is a potential shortage of nickel, a crucial element for producing the metal stampers used to press records. In early March, the London Metal Exchange temporarily suspended the trading of nickel after prices more than doubled on fears that the supply chain would be disrupted due to sanctions against Russia, which supplies roughly 10% of global nickel output. Ed Gross, who runs Nipro Optics, an Irvine, Calif.-based company that supplies stampers to pressing plants across the United States, says the price of nickel doubled in early March to more than \$30 a pound before settling into the \$20 range by late April. As a result, the plant was forced to tack on an additional \$16 surcharge per stamper that went into effect on May 1. Matt Earley, co-founder/vp sales and marketing for Gotta Groove Records in Cleveland, says that his plant — which he estimates goes through 5,000 to 6,000 stampers per year — is absorbing the stamper price increase for now, banking that the situation will resolve itself quickly.

Electricity, labor and fuel costs have also all spiked, and those costs are being passed down to labels. Andy Hsueh — global director of label operations at Partisan Records, home to IDLES, Fontaines D.C. and Laura Marling, among other acts — says costs per unit have increased anywhere from a few cents to \$2, depending on packaging needs and quantity.

A greater concern is turnaround

times, which have stretched to nearly a year in some cases, according to Zena White, managing director/senior vp at Partisan. “Vinyl production’s a volume game,” says White. “It inadvertently hurts independents more than majors because majors are able to guarantee a higher volume.”

Catalog has also been hard-hit. “It’s astonishing when you look at the gold catalog titles that are not available for months at a time,” says Mello, who cites as one example Taylor Swift’s 1989, which Newbury hasn’t received on vinyl since last August.

To try to meet demand, more pressing plants are coming online and others have increased their production. Cascade has moved to a seven-days-a-week schedule, looking to increase production by 50%. The Denver-based record club Vinyl Me, Please plans to open a 14,000-square-foot pressing facility by the end of the year, and Memphis Record Pressing is working on a nearly \$30 million expansion, including 36 pressing machines slated to be operational by September.

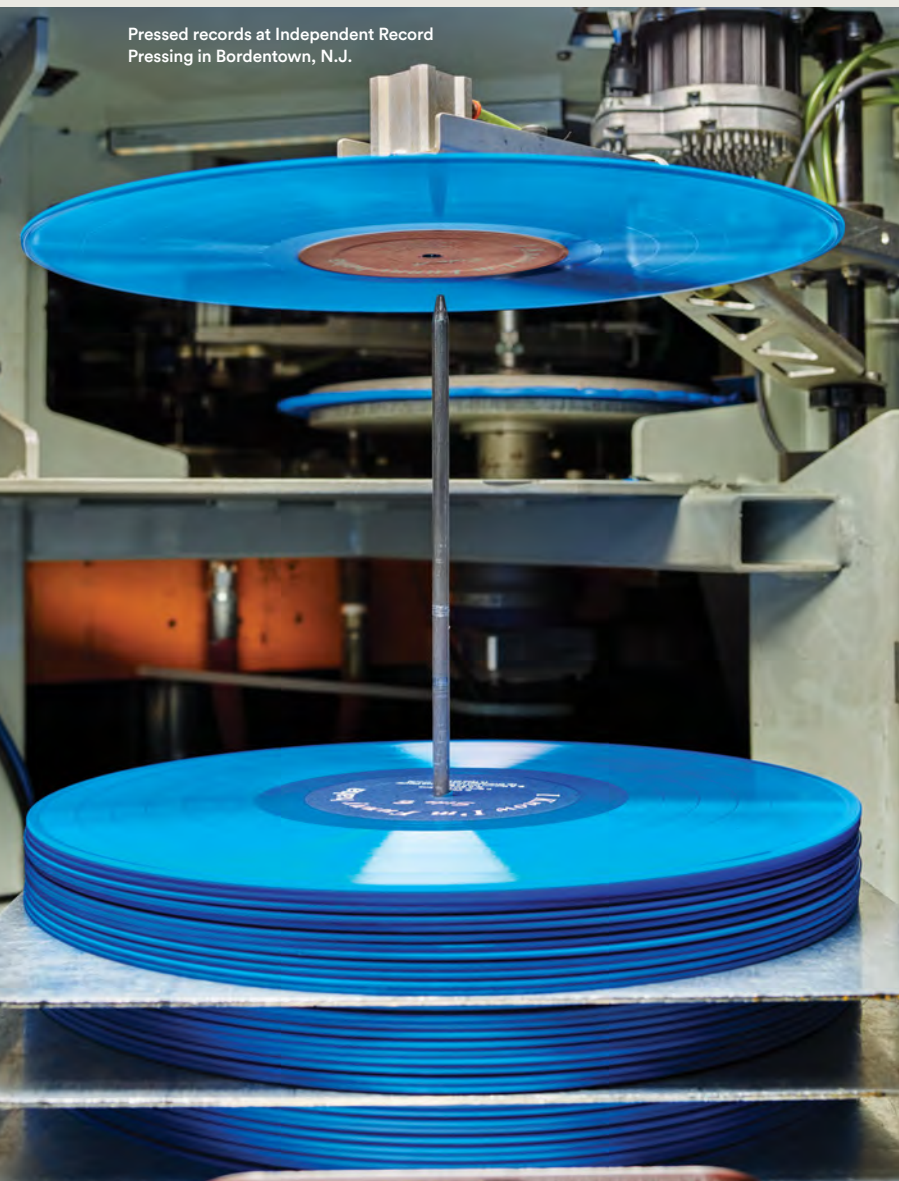
With vinyl demand surging as production struggles, some are looking to CDs to fill the void. The CD manufacturing process is less complex, the turnaround time quicker and sticker price more consumer-friendly. Demand for the format is also robust. According to the RIAA, CD shipments rose from 31.6 million in 2020 to 46.6 million in 2021, a 47% increase, while revenue rose from \$483.2 million to \$584.2 million. That’s the first sales increase for CDs since 2004, and proof that the clamor for physical product is expanding to other formats.

“More vinyl-only stores need to start considering adding at least some [CD] offerings to the mix, particularly when it’s a key artist where they don’t have a vinyl counterpart to sell,” says Steve Harkins, vp of sales and marketing at distributor and wholesaler Ingram Entertainment.

CD manufacturing also suffers from supply chain issues, but “it’s nowhere near the same ballpark as vinyl,” says Harkins, who adds that manufacturing times have increased from three to four weeks to roughly six to eight weeks today.

Some sources voiced concern that rising prices and the unavailability of product might slow sales. But most remained hopeful about the future, with some suggesting that production problems might even have an upside. “You could also argue,” says Provenzano, “that the scarcity of product kind of drives the demand, too.” **B**

Pressed records at Independent Record Pressing in Bordentown, N.J.





# ALWAYS PROUD

**Thank you to our LGBTQIA+ members and employees who inspire us to embrace our identities and live out loud.**

**ASCAP is proud to support you, during Pride Month and every other month, too.**





Independent label **mom + pop music** formed a financial alliance with Exceleation Music.

**Spotify** announced a bundle sales program for businesses, offering premium subscriptions as an employee perk.

# T-Shirt Tipping Point

Merch tables are booming with added revenue — and tension **BY ELIAS LEIGHT**

**L**ATELY, BEN BRANNEN has been getting a lot of calls. The co-founder/president of atVenu, which designs software to aid merchandise sellers at concerts, says people are curious, confused and even angry about the tips that merch vendors are racking up at some live shows. Unexpectedly, tips in some cases have been so large — an “extraordinary amount of money,” according to one manager — that they’ve become divisive.

“This is the hot-button issue right now in the tour merch world,” Brannen says. “We’re talking about five figures’ worth of tips in a night sometimes, a lot of money moving around. Everybody wants a piece of that. It’s the music industry — everyone has to have a piece of every dollar that’s out there.”

The growing popularity of digital payment systems has a lot to do with the increase in tips at the merch table. Much like at cafes and restaurants, these systems often request a 15% or 20% tip after a purchase. While the economy was already moving away from relying on grubby dollar bills, the pandemic accelerated that process. And whereas tipping a buck or two may have been standard before, transferring tipping rates that are common in other service industries to concert merch is resulting in head-turning tip totals.

Data from atVenu indicates that 84% of all transactions that used the company’s software last year — it was employed at more than 125,000 shows — were completed by credit cards as opposed to 65% in 2019. Even in venues that still accept cash, an experienced member of the merch community says, “We’ll have nights with our artists where we’ll do thousands and thousands of dollars in sales, and it’ll be less than 5% of that in cash.”

The prevalence of digital payment systems makes the tip earnings of merch salespeople more transparent. A merch table tip jar full of dollar bills isn’t necessarily something an artist manager will tally up; sales conducted on an iPad, though, are calculated automatically each night. “I was looking at the sales reports after a show,” one artist manager says. “And the tips were insane.”

On top of that, merch sales are rising, as is per-fan spending, according to atVenu data. Last year, 19% of fans bought merch at shows, up from 11% in 2019, with the average fan spending 22% more (\$8.47 a head). So far in 2022, atVenu data shows that average spending is up from last year for every venue size; fans at shows in 500-capacity rooms, for example, are spending an aver-



age of \$13.92, double what they were spending in 2019.

Take all these trends together, and the tipping issue “has reached a boiling point,” says Brannen. He was one of the few people willing to speak about this topic on the record and stresses that he’s an impartial middleman relaying what he has heard from software users, a group that includes merch companies, artist managers, artist-merch road managers, venues and festivals.

Artists playing small to midsize venues often hire additional local sellers to supplement their own merch operations. (Some artists have a merch company that issues shirts to a venue and the venue does the selling.) Tips supplement the sellers’ salary, but artist managers worry that tipping could become a negative experience for fans if they’re being asked to add something like 20% on top of the price of merchandise when they already paid for a ticket — and probably bought some drinks or food, too.

“I don’t think fans should be pressured into needing to tip \$5 to \$8 for buying a T-shirt,” says one manager who spoke on the condition of anonymity for fear of upsetting merch sellers. And with road crews in high demand, fans aren’t the only concern. “The last thing your front-of-house guy or lighting director wants to see is that your merch person is making a few hundred dollars more than they are. That is going to be a massive issue.”

But members of the merch-vendor community — supported by a few managers as well — believe that both the grueling nature of their job and their financial contributions to a tour are underappreciated. Not only are they responsible for moving heavy boxes in and out of venues over the course of a workday that often spans 12 hours or more, they also have to keep track of an extensive inventory and are responsible for large amounts of money. And no one is forcing the fans to tip them.

What’s more, the merchandise sellers serve as the band’s public representatives — unlike a guitar tech, they

are in the trenches interacting with fans in close quarters. “You’ll hear, ‘This guy made an extra \$400 in tips tonight selling merch. I want to make that money,’” one merch vendor says. “Do you want to stand for five hours with 1,000 different people breathing in your face?”

In addition, merch sellers “are the only people outside of the band on tour that literally bring in more revenue,” as one manager points out. Especially for bands that are touring on thin margins, a successful merch operation may be the difference between a profitable tour and one that loses money or breaks even. One manager who is pro-tipping estimates a recent tour might have sold 30% less merch if he didn’t have top vendors interacting with fans and ensuring everything ran smoothly.

Managers who are concerned about tipping blowing back on fans have taken a variety of approaches. Some have turned the tipping function off on their iPads, preferring to stick to the old-fashioned tip jar — maybe they raise the salaries for their merch sellers to make up for that. Others have simply reset the tipping levels on their equipment, so fans see a 5% or 10% option rather than something higher.

Then there are bands that are asking merch sellers to distribute some of their tips, either to members of the band or the rest of the crew (a practice similar to the restaurant industry’s pooling of tips between wait and kitchen staff). That “does not go over well with the merch reps that I’ve talked to,” Brannen says. “They’re like, ‘Fuck that. I’m not working with this band.’” In fact, there is a list circulating of acts that have instituted such policies regarding merch tips, according to a source in the merch community who requested anonymity.

For now, there’s no industry standard around tipping, and artists, managers and their merch sellers are figuring out what to do on a tour-by-tour basis. “It’s a really touchy topic,” says a member of the merch community. “And I don’t see it going away.” **b**



WE STAND  
WITH THE LGBTQ+  
COMMUNITY

HAPPY PRIDE MONTH!

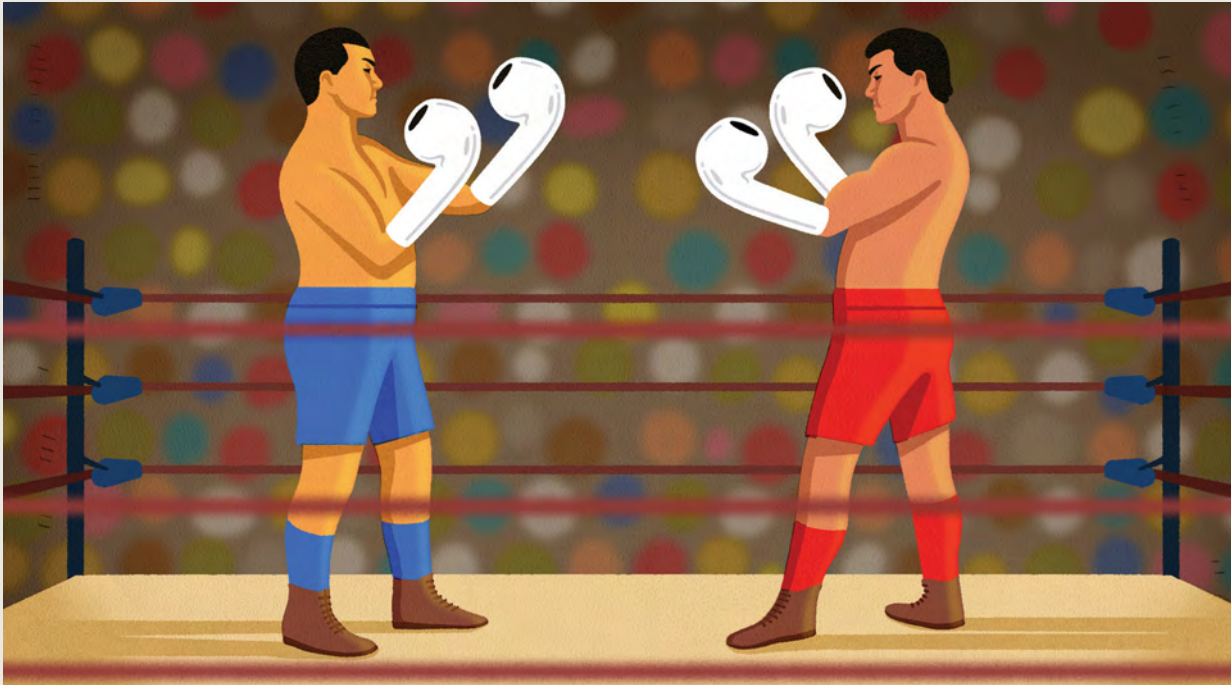


**CURB**  
RECORDS<sup>®</sup>  
curb.com



**Sony Music Entertainment** launched RCA Records Greater China, based in Shanghai.

Liechtenstein-based performing rights society **SUISA Digital Licensing** sued Snap for copyright infringement.



# COPYRIGHT WARS HEAT UP IN CHINA

Streaming service NetEase Cloud Music sues rival Tencent Music Entertainment for unfair competition. TME fires back with allegations of its own

BY HSIUWEN LIU AND ALEXEI BARRIONUEVO

**HONG KONG** — Since Chinese regulators forced music streaming platforms to end exclusive licensing deals with global labels last year, Tencent Music Entertainment has portrayed itself as China's public face of copyright adherence. In its most recent annual report, the company says it is "committed to protecting music copyright, and our leading role in China's music copyright protection efforts has made us a partner of choice for major domestic and international music labels and other content partners."

TME's biggest rival in China, NetEase Cloud Music, doesn't see it that way. The Hangzhou-based streaming company claims that, domestically, TME is engaging in brazen acts of copyright infringement that constitute "unfair competition" that has "been intensifying [in] the last two years." In a lengthy statement in April describing a lawsuit against TME, NetEase highlighted the other company's alleged use of "song washing" to create near-duplicate

versions of songs with modified notes, lyrics or arrangements that fool listeners and drive online traffic.

In the same suit, NetEase also accuses TME of other acts that violate copyrights or constitute unfair competition, including copying aspects of its app design and allowing users to bypass copyright protection in order to play songs only licensed by NetEase.

"We urge TME to immediately rectify its products and businesses and cease all acts of unfair competition," NetEase posted in a statement on social media platform Weibo, including "taking down infringing works" and "stopping the practice of impersonating and washing songs."

TME fired back on Chinese social media platform WeChat: "TME believes in truth and integrity, and has already taken appropriate legal actions," said Chen Mo, a company representative. He noted NetEase's own history of copyright infringement, including a 2019 verdict in which a Shenzhen court

ordered NetEase to pay TME 850,000 yuan (\$126,000) for producing a fake digital album with as many as 178 of Taiwanese singer Jay Chou's songs; the collection was offered on NetEase Cloud Music after its sublicense had expired, infringing the copyright of the sound recordings. And, Mo added, "multiple copycat versions" of popular songs by TME artists like Wen Yixin remain available on NetEase Cloud Music.

The tit for tat illustrates the Wild West nature that still pervades China's intellectual property landscape, even as the industry has made strides over the past decade to reform a market that IFPI says that before 2011 was essentially 99% piracy. TME and NetEase have been making accusations against each other for years, but they are now more willing to air their feuds in Chinese courts and in public, analysts say, since they both have become public companies.

The legal action comes as competition heats up in the Chinese music streaming sector amid a regulatory crackdown. In 2021, TME reached 76.2 million paying users, up 36.1% from 2021, while NetEase grew its monthly subscribers to 28.9 million, up 80.6% from 2020. Now new competitors are emerging: ByteDance, which owns TikTok, launched its music streaming service, Qishui Yinyue ("Soda Music"), in March.

The NetEase lawsuit is the first case brought since China implemented an anti-monopoly law last July aiming to restore market competition. One month later, TME said it had relinquished the exclusivity of most of its licenses, including deals with Universal Music Group, Sony Music Entertainment and

Warner Music Group. The labels had previously let TME license recorded music for its own platforms, plus sublicense tracks to its local rivals, including NetEase Cloud Music.

China's State Administration for Market Supervision fined TME for antitrust violations related to its 2016 acquisition of China Music Corporation, saying that TME — which owns the apps QQ Music, Kuwo Music, Kugou Music and karaoke platform WeSing — controlled over 80% of exclusive music rights after the merger.

A NetEase representative declined to show *Billboard* a copy of the actual lawsuit, which is not currently available, saying that its statement "covered most issues mentioned in the litigation." The company says its claims against TME are based on anti-competition law, copyright law in China "and other relevant laws and regulations."

With limitations on exclusive access to international labels' recorded-music repertoire, Chinese streaming platforms are generating more music in-house and becoming bigger distributors of user-generated content. NetEase says TME is pirating or plagiarizing many of those compositions by producing fake or "song-washed" tracks (in essence, soundalikes) that are intended to mislead users into playing them. Since 2020, NetEase contends, TME has released nearly 1,000 songs with the same name as its popular songs and choruses that are the same as or similar to the original songs.

Proving the claims is not so easy: "In China, there is legal ambiguity as to what is tolerable and what is not," says Charlie Chai, vice head of research at 86Research. "Some cases are blatant infringements, but other cases can be subtle and controversial," he says. Chinese copyright law protects compositions and lyrics as well as the distribution rights of a song's producer, copyright lawyers tell *Billboard*, but it doesn't clearly define the rights in the song's arrangement. "Therefore, if the 'song-washing' process is relatively sophisticated and only refers to part of the original arrangement, then it is difficult to constitute plagiarism in a legal sense," says Ding Tao, a lawyer at Guangdong Zhuojian Law Firm.

While amateurs — individual users uploading their own songs — are sometimes behind the song-washing, more often professional organizations are trying to monetize it, says Chai. NetEase says that over 5,000 "counterfeit and plagiarized" versions of its songs "Misplaced Time," "Under the Sea," "Masquerade" and "Delete It" have appeared on TME's platforms and made it onto their official charts. **b**



# THE FIGHT CONTINUES

**AEG**  
PRESENTS





Garg photographed May 20 in Brooklyn.

# From The Desk Of... Shav 'prettyboyshav' Garg

CEO, INDIFY

BY KRISTIN ROBINSON

PHOTOGRAPHED BY REBECCA SMEYNE

**S**hav Garg and Connor Lawrence, the CEO and COO of indify, respectively, met in fourth grade when both played on the championship Little League baseball team in Scarsdale, N.Y. A decade later, in 2015, the pair, along with Lawrence's pre-K classmate and future indify chief technology officer Matt Pavia, founded the company in the basement of Garg's family home and, over the next seven years,

grew it into one of the most disruptive and unlikely successes in the music business.

Indify is an angel investing platform that pairs strategic investors with songs by emerging talent that, using proprietary data, the company has identified as poised for a breakthrough but in need of financial and marketing resources. Investors in the company include Kerry Trainor, the former CEO of SoundCloud and Vimeo; Anthony Saleh, the man-

ager of Nas and Kendrick Lamar; and Courtney Stewart, who manages Khalid through Right Hand Music Group. Josh Feshbach, a partner in artist management and funding company Thrice Cooked Media, and Golden Kids Group Management CEO Nick Mueller are among those who have invested in talent.

Unlike labels, indify does not require acts to sign long-term contracts or give away ownership of their songs. Instead, artists grant their investors a percentage of streaming royalties for the songs on which they team — often just one track — and indify takes a 15% cut of the investor's share of profits after recoupment.

Although indify has a relatively low profile, some of the biggest names in finance and music are boosters, including Reddit founder and indify's first investor, Alexis Ohanian, who frequently posts raves on the platform backing shock-pop singer Leah Kate. Her song "10 Things I Hate About You" has earned over 43 million Spotify streams since its April 22 release.

Garg's partnership with Ohanian also began at a sporting

event: an elevator pitch at the U.S. Open. "I remember seeing Alexis tweet something like, 'I wish I could invest in Lizzo Enterprises' on Twitter," he says. "So I tweeted back at him, and I was like, 'Invest in the next one on indify!'" A mutual friend of Garg and Ohanian pointed out the tweet to Ohanian, and Garg was invited to make a five-minute pitch at the tennis match. "I told Alexis that investing in music can be safe, and he told me I was a crazy person," Garg says with a laugh.

Indify was initially capitalized by the \$25,000 prize Garg won at a Colgate University incubator program, but the idea was a by-product of the then-21-year-old trio of friends and their penchant for discovering music. While they pored over 2DopeBoyz, Good Music All Day, Ill Roots and other music blogs, they felt the need for a more democratized way for A&R executives to find new artists without those artists having to know "the right people." During an internship with Warner Music Group, Garg says he saw his supervisors running spreadsheets and manually monitoring social media and streaming

activity for a handful of new acts, but was shocked that there wasn't a better way to track and prioritize the data.

The first iteration of indify was a business-to-business product that was marketed to label A&R departments and promised to discover sure musical bets bubbling under the charts. Indify has since been repositioned as a platform designed to aid independent acts instead of labels. Garg is one, after all — a singer-songwriter who goes by the handle of prettyboyshav.

"Artists are expected to do so much more for themselves, so in a way, they are becoming their own CEOs," he says. "Artists on indify are earning six, sometimes seven figures per year off their music, and they have built that business themselves with strategic help. We think indify is a deal that fits the modern-day artist way better."

**Many companies claim to serve independent artists. What sets indify apart?**

One thing that sets us apart is I'm still an artist releasing music. My own music has always guided



**Dominique Casimir** was promoted to BMG's chief content officer, adding the United Kingdom and Mexico to her repertoire.

**JJ Italiano** rejoined Spotify as head of global hits.



"Artists still are not being respected as business owners in the economics you see at traditional record labels," Garg says in reference to this T-shirt emblazoned with his mantra. "Those deals put the ownership in favor of the label, when in reality, this market is expecting the artists to do the work."

our vision. When I saw that artists weren't being discovered based on the merit of their work but on who they knew, that felt so wrong. I also see Connor and Matt as artists in their own ways — Matt's technological skills and Connor's writing abilities are art, too. So we built the company as young artists on a mission to help young artists.

#### Who was the first artist that indify discovered?

In October 2015, a few months after Matt built the first version of indify, which was tracking 40,000 new artists, Connor was like, "Shav, you need to check out this artist at No. 55." His name was Kai!, and we were like, "Who is this kid?" We had his music on repeat in the basement. He was at 60,000 SoundCloud plays and had less than 1,000 followers, but our tool caught that he was growing across the platform organically. We found his contact info and called him. He's like, "I'm 17. I live in El Paso, Texas. I'm recording music on my cellphone. I uploaded my first track to SoundCloud, like, 25 days ago." We helped him get into a Pigeons and Planes [blog] story we did called something like "20 artists that are going to blow up." He was super excited. Then he went out to Atlanta; met his manager, Courtney Stewart; and changed his artist name back to his real name: Khalid.

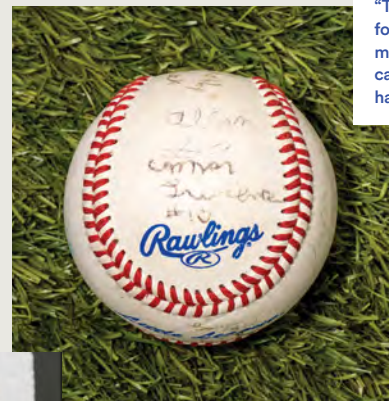
#### What were some other early indify finds?

We featured Billie Eilish at 13 years old. We featured Post

Malone in 2015. We were some of the first people to feature SoundCloud rap. We were some of the first people to feature bedroom pop as a genre. Eventually, most of the major labels ended up subscribing to the tool, and it got to a point that we were basically helping create bidding wars for certain artists. I remember a hip-hop artist whose deal offers sextupled the next day after being featured on indify. That was the peak of the first product, but it still didn't feel like enough. That led us to where we are today.

#### Why did you evolve from a business-to-business data tool to an angel investing platform?

We started to see that the artists that were in the top 100 on indify often had the same marketers behind them, the same access to funding, the same management teams, the same lawyers, etcetera. We had helped democratize discovery, but it wasn't enough. We hadn't helped equalize resources, and that has always been our goal. We started looking at artists who were in even earlier stages of their careers and what resources they needed. The best artists still weren't winning against the artists that had funding and marketing help. In reality, a lot of what we're doing today we talked about in the basement seven years ago. AngelList was a beacon for us. We dreamed of doing a platform where strategic investors, similar to venture funds in tech, could directly back artists.



"This is the championship ball from my fourth grade Little League team, where I met my co-founder Connor Lawrence. You can see our names on it. You can also see I had much better handwriting then."



"Ganesh statues are a sign of good luck at the start of a journey. My mom gave it to me when we started indify, and I've had it on my desk since."

#### Who was the first artist you worked with to help secure funding and resources?

Pink Sweat\$. He's in the top 500 in the world on Spotify right now, but when we met him, he hadn't released music yet. We knew he had a sharp manager who was incredible at marketing and finding talent, but we helped them find a funding partner. That was our first deal, but it was technically off platform. We didn't know what this was going to become at the time, but we learned from helping their team how important funding for digital marketing and [digital service provider] pitching was for an early-stage artist.

#### A lot of your investors come from music business backgrounds, but what makes an investor like Alexis Ohanian strategic for an artist?

The two types of strategic investors that have worked for indify thus far are music professionals and people with influence. We don't actually view Alexis as just a big capital person. He obviously has that, but we look at him and Leah Kate as proof of



This limited-edition magazine is tied to the 2016 release of Frank Ocean's *Blonde*, an "iconic independent" release that Garg says "represents the future we're trying to build for all artists."

concept that people with influence can help bring audiences to emerging artists on a strategic level. Alexis is more than an investor — he has exposed Leah to an incredible number of business professionals and to his online audience. Their pairing has created such respect for Leah Kate as an independent businesswoman, which she is.

#### What does a typical indify deal look like?

We have three principles that are core to the platform: One, artists always keep ownership of their music. Two, artists always keep 50% or more of their music royalties after the initial investment is returned. And three, artists always keep creative control.

#### Do you intend to replace major labels and traditional label deals? Or do you see yourself as simply an alternative?

We believe every artist should have every option available to them. We've proven that indify is

the best option for artists at the earliest stage of traction to mid-level stages — say, zero to 50 [on a scale of career establishment] — and that indify's partners are the best people to build with because they offer more strategic value than distributors for prices that are less than distribution deals. What we are interested in delving into next is the 50-to-100 tier to see if we can build independent superstars via this alternative route.

#### What do you need to be able to offer to get an artist from 50 to 100?

For us, it's a longer-term vision, but it's going to take bigger capital partners, bigger plays than what we are already working on. We'll get there when we get there. One thing we get excited about is, what happens if a young artist is posed with the choice to sign their rights away to a major label or to keep their rights and have the option to do a strategic investment partnership with a cultural leader like LeBron James, Serena Williams or Kanye West?

#### Often when an artist signs a traditional label deal, the label wants to absorb the popular songs that artist has already released. How do you work out that transfer for indify artists?

We want artists to have every possible option on the table, and so upstreaming to labels is something that we have successfully done multiple times at this point. It's not any different than how artists have upstreamed from distributors previously. Generally, there could either be a buyout or an override depending on the case. We will never tell an artist what to do. We are still building pathways for artists to upstream to major labels. Artists deserve to have that option if they want to go to a label, and we make sure that our technology is capable to transfer them there, but our belief is that artists should stay independent. **E**



# Well done to our 2022 Billboard Indie Power Players

**Brad Navin, CEO**

**Colleen Theis, COO**

**Tricia Arnold**  
*SVP Global Label Management & Sales*

**Alan Becker**  
*SVP Artist & Label Partnerships*

**Mary Ashley Johnson**  
*SVP North American Label Management & Sales*

**Lonny Olinick**  
*CEO, AWAL*

**Ron Cerrito**  
*President, North America, AWAL*

**Paul Hitchman**  
*President, AWAL*

**Taylor Wilson**  
*Director, Product Management, Human Resources*

*we are inspired by your leadership*



# Congratulations to all of our named partners & clients *we are proud to work with you*

**Bob Frank**  
*Bob Frank Entertainment*

**Brian Slagel**  
*Metal Blade Records*

**Camille Soto Malave**  
*Glad Empire*

**Chris Scully**  
*Glassnote Records*

**Dana Biondi**  
*G59 Records*

**Daniel Glass**  
*Glassnote Records*

**David Macias**  
*Thirty Tigers*

**Fiona Whelan Prine**  
*Oh Boy Records*

**Gordon Kerr**  
*Black River Entertainment*

**Greg Hammer**  
*Red Bull Records*

**Jody Whelan**  
*Oh Boy Records*

**John Smith**  
*Smithsonian Folkways  
Recordings*

**Matthew Johnson**  
*Fat Possum Records*

**Melinda Caffin**  
*Fat Possum Records*

**Missi Callazzo**  
*MRI Entertainment*

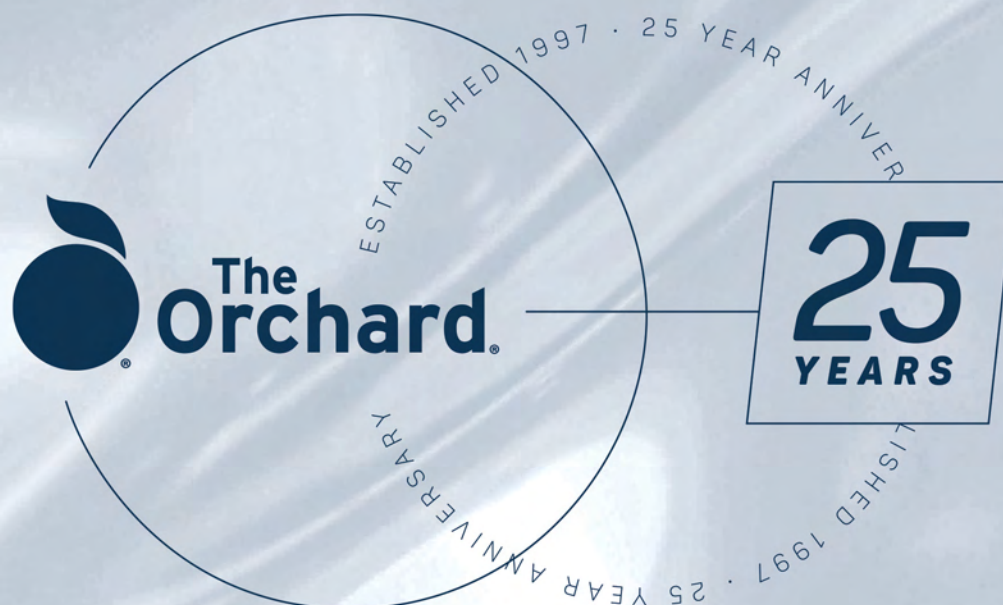
**Noah Assad**  
*Rimas Entertainment*

**Norbert Nix**  
*Triple Tigers Records*

**Peter Bittenbender**  
*Mass Appeal Records*

**Tomas Cookman**  
*Industria Works/  
Nacional Records*

**Tracy Vera**  
*Metal Blade Records*



**EMPOWERING CREATORS SINCE 1997**

For more information visit [theorchard.com](http://theorchard.com)





# CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL A2IM MEMBER INDEPENDENT POWER PLAYERS

Kevin Breuner, CD Baby  
Brett Gurewitz, Epitaph/Anti-  
Jason Peterson, GoDigital Media Group  
Louis Posen, Hopeless Records  
Jonathan Poneman, Sub Pop  
Tony Kiewel, Sub Pop  
Simon Halliday, 4AD  
Martin Mills, Beggars Group  
Nabil Ayers, Beggars Group  
Claire Taylor, Beggars Group  
Brandon Becker, Beggars Group  
Risa Matsuki, Beggars Group  
Miwa Okumura, Beggars Group  
Allen Kovac, Better Noise Music  
Andreea Gleeson, TuneCore  
Brad Navin, The Orchard/SME  
Colleen Theis, The Orchard/SME  
Tricia Arnold, The Orchard/SME  
Alan Becker, The Orchard/SME  
Mary Ashley Johnson, The Orchard/SME  
Taylor Wilson, The Orchard  
Elijah Seton, SoundCloud  
Jeff Ponchick, SoundCloud  
Darius Van Arman, Secretly Distribution  
Chris Welz, Secretly Distribution  
Chris Cannon, Secretly Distribution  
Charley Kiefer, Secretly Distribution  
Jacqui Resur, Secretly Distribution  
Ben Swanson, Secretly Group  
Chris Swanson, Secretly Group  
Phil Waldorf, Secretly Group  
Nick Blandford, Secretly Group  
Hannah Carlen, Secretly Group  
Jon Coombs, Secretly Group  
Robby Morris, Secretly Group  
Phoebe Bridgers, Saddest Factory Records  
Lonny Olinick, AWAL

Paul Hitchman, AWAL  
Ron Cerrito, AWAL  
Dean Tabaac, AMPED  
Pip Smith, AMPED  
Mike Marquis, Photo Finish Records  
Matt Galle, Photo Finish Records  
Chris Taylor, MNRK Music Group  
Steve Stoute, UnitedMasters  
Greg Hammer, Red Bull Records  
Marie Clausen, Ninja Tune  
Cat Kreidich, ADA Worldwide  
Sam Moore, ADA Worldwide  
Sam Juneman, ADA Worldwide  
Adriana Sein, ADA Worldwide  
Marcus Siskind, ADA Worldwide  
Andrea Slobodein, ADA Worldwide  
Ghazi, EMPIRE  
Nima Etminan, EMPIRE  
Tina Davis, EMPIRE  
Mobolaji Kareem, EMPIRE  
Moody Jones, EMPIRE  
Bob Roback, Ingrooves Music Group  
Jeff Cuatto, Ingrooves Music Group  
Lloyd Hummel, Ingrooves Music Group  
Philip Kaplan, Distrokid  
Jon Salter, ATO  
John Smith, Smithsonian Folkways Recordings  
Michael Goldstone, mom + pop music  
Thaddeus Rudd, mom + pop music  
Jacqueline Saturn, Virgin Music Label & Artist Services  
Marni Halpern, Virgin Music Label & Artist Services  
Matt Sawin, Virgin Music Label & Artist Services  
Adam Starr, Virgin Music Label & Artist Services  
Laura Campbell Pittard, Redeye  
Jason Taylor, Redeye  
Michael Howard, Redeye  
Hank Stockard, Redeye

Ryan Whalley, Concord  
Michele Smith, Concord  
Rebecca Berman, Concord  
Michael Nance, Concord  
Andy Serrao, Concord  
Bob Frank, Bob Frank Entertainment  
Kris Gillespie, Domino Recording Co.  
Matthew Johnson, Fat Possum Records  
Melinda Caffin, Fat Possum Records  
Patrick Amory, Matador Records/Beggars  
Gerard Cosloy, Matador Records/Beggars  
Chris Lombardi, Matador Records/Beggars  
Jermel "DaddyO" Moore, Paper Route Empire/Young Dolph  
Mike Curb, Curb Records, Curb I Word Entertainment  
Scott Robinson, Dualtone  
Fiona Whelan Prine, Oh Boy Records  
Jody Whelan, Oh Boy Records  
David Macias, Thirty Tigers  
Norbert Nix, Triple Tigers Records  
Barry Daffurn, Cinq Music Group  
Tomas Cookman, Industria Works/Nacional Records  
Paris Cabezas, InnerCat Music Group  
Ana Gonzalez, InnerCat Music Group  
Garrett Schaefer, InnerCat Music Group  
Emmanuel Zunz, ONErpm  
Jorge Brea, Symphonic Distribution  
Janette Berrios, Symphonic Distribution  
Nick Gordon, Symphonic Distribution  
Randall Foster, Symphonic Distribution  
Pieter van Rijn, FUGA  
Helen Smith, IMPALA  
Jeremy Sirota, Merlin  
Wayne Hampton, Create Music Group  
Jonathan Strauss, Create Music Group  
Alexandre Williams, Create Music Group  
Kristin Graziani, Stem  
Ed Seaman, MVD Entertainment Group



# sound

NOW PLAYING

Dunbar photographed  
May 20 in Los Angeles.

## In Good Time

In an age of ephemeral pop success, Isaac Dunbar wanted to avoid the rush — and made a major label wait for him

BY STEPHEN DAW

PHOTOGRAPHED BY NOLWEN CIFUENTES



**I SAAC DUNBAR HAS** always had a vision for himself, which has been both a blessing and a curse. “If you don’t know what you want, you don’t make anything,” the 19-year-old says with a shrug over Zoom from his Los Angeles bedroom. “But sometimes, I shoot myself in the leg because I can get very territorial over my work.”

That vision led the alt-pop singer-songwriter to pen a coming-out anthem, “Makeup Drawer,” at the age of 14. Dunbar opted to wait on releasing the song — as well as a major-label record deal — until he felt ready, and he reached that point two years later in 2019. Now, on his third major-label EP, *Banish the Banshee*, he is returning to his EDM-inspired synth-pop roots, with pulsing songs like “Sunburn” and “Gummy” employing the ground-shaking production techniques and soul-splicing songwriting he studied before he even turned 10.

After taking an early interest in Lady Gaga’s career (“I think *Artpop* is my favorite album,” he says with a shy smile), Dunbar taught himself how to produce at 9 years old. At first mimicking some of his favorite Gaga songs, he slowly began to create his own EDM-influenced tracks by following YouTube tutorials and started releasing both covers and original songs — all self-written, -produced and performed — on SoundCloud.

His first upload, a demo titled “Woman on the Hills,” caught the attention of Nathan James, an artist manager at Little Worry who found Dunbar’s SoundCloud account in 2017. “His bio just read, ‘14-year-old producer/artist from Cape Cod,’ and the only post had a couple hundred listens at most,” recalls James with a laugh. “But as soon as I heard the



song, I knew he was special — to have those kinds of production chops and songwriting skills at such a young age is incredibly rare.”

James tracked down Dunbar and his parents within a few weeks and signed on as manager. But despite the industry traction, Dunbar doubled down on what he had always wanted: to take his time. When RCA Records reached out shortly after he

posted his song “Pharmacy” in October 2017, Dunbar didn’t meet with the label until the following year. “It was my first time ever talking to anybody at a label,” he says. “I wanted to figure out what I wanted to do with my career.”

Dunbar instead signed a distribution deal with Platoon in 2018, through which he released his first EP, *Balloons Don’t Float Here*, the following year. Soon after,

Dunbar and James reached back out to RCA — not just because of its continued interest, says James, but also because of its track record with developing talent and creating “a really healthy A&R ecosystem for young artists like Isaac.” Dunbar signed to the label that October.

Even with major-label resources at his disposal, Dunbar says he prefers to keep a “close-knit” team around him. “I don’t have hella people around me,” he says with a giggle. “I have maybe one or two people that I share every one of my plans with, but that’s kind of it.” Adds James: “He does so much of the production and songwriting on his own that he just has to feel 100% comfortable that a person understands his full vision.”

Part of that vision is intrinsically tied to Isaac’s identity as a queer person: When he finally released “Makeup Drawer,” which became his breakthrough single, in 2019, Dunbar officially came out to his fans as gay. Written as a kiss-off to would-be bullies, the song sheds insight on the star’s creative process and became the obvious choice to open his 2020 RCA debut EP, *Isaac’s Insects*.

The pandemic halted plans for touring the project. Instead, Dunbar wrote, produced and released a follow-up EP, *Evil Twin*, in 2021; *Banish the Banshee* arrived in May. “Now I’m just really looking forward to seeing everyone [on the road],” he says, referring to his headlining U.S. theater tour that begins in June at The Roxy Theatre in Los Angeles.

And while James reveals that Dunbar has “really elaborate PDF presentations” of his future plans, when asked about the path ahead (including an anticipated full-length), Dunbar simply smirks into his webcam. “I can’t say,” he says wryly. “I’ll wait till the right time.” **B**

## BEHIND THE HIT

“Why Am I Like This?”



**SINGER-SONGWRITER** Orla Gartland is the first to admit that her reflective 2019 single “Why Am I Like This?” started out as a joke. “The title sounded really snarky to me and was something that my friend and I said a lot in a very self-deprecating way,” Gartland says from her childhood home in Dublin.

But the song recently found a serious second life soundtracking a pivotal scene in *Heartstopper*, the Netflix adaptation of the popular queer coming-of-age webcomic that author Alice

Oseman began publishing in 2016. In the closing moment of the series’ second episode, Nick (Kit Connor) starts to question his feelings for newfound BFF Charlie (Joe Locke) and heads to Google to type out the question achingly familiar to anyone who has come out: “Am I gay?” Just as Nick presses the “return” key on the search, the screen cuts to black, leaving viewers’ hearts racing as the final chorus — which urgently repeats the song’s titular phrase — kicks in and the credits roll.

A longtime fan of Gartland, Oseman had reached out on Twitter saying she already had the song in mind before the scene was even filmed. Viewers latched on to the soul-searching moment, and suddenly Gartland’s 3-year-old song had a new audience, reaching No. 4 on *Billboard*’s Top TV Songs chart in April with 1.4 million U.S. on-demand streams, according to Luminate — a 2,142% increase from the previous month (March) before the show aired.

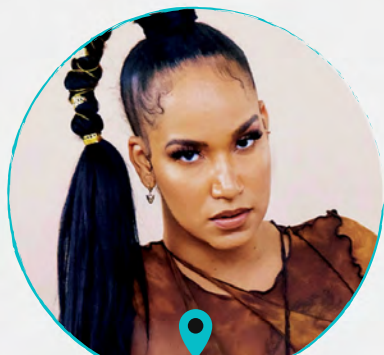
The moment has been made even sweeter for

Gartland, who came out as bisexual less than a year ago on Twitter and is, as she puts it, “a bit more settled” in herself than when she wrote the song in 2018.

“I do think that if I had this show when I was, like, 16, I would’ve been so much quicker to do that, to be happy to shout about that,” says Gartland, now 27. “Hopefully, we’ll see loads of series and films that follow where it’s a beautiful, human love story and it’s queer. It’s just a really simple thing.”

—GLENN ROWLEY





**BERLIN, GERMANY**

**AISHA VIBES**

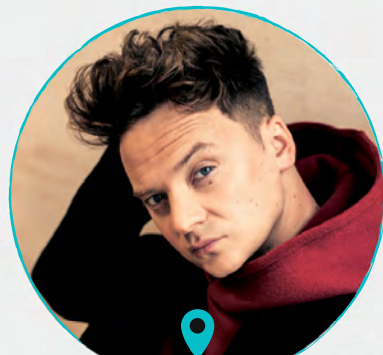
TikTok Judge for "Meme des Monats," Touring with Megaloh 2022, 123k+ Instagram followers



**NASHVILLE, USA**

**ALEXANDRA KAY**

"That's What Love Is" debuted #1 on iTunes Country & #3 All Genre #3 Digital Sales Chart, Billboard



**LONDON, UK**

**CONOR MAYNARD**

300 million streams in one year across Spotify & Apple Music, 2.6 million+ followers on Instagram



**CHICAGO, USA**

**CUPCAKKE**

"Discounts" hit #10 Digital Song Sales on Billboard, 3.1 million+ monthly listeners on Spotify



"From all corners of the globe, TuneCore Artists are reinventing what it means to be independent. I would like to recognize & honor each Indie Power Player for their phenomenal achievements, and proudly celebrate all of our international artists worldwide. The future of independent music is unlimited and you're in control."

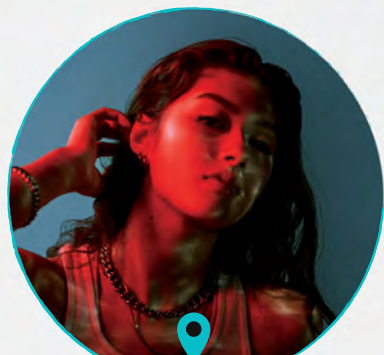
**Andreea Gleeson**  
CEO, TUNECORE



**LAGOS, NIGERIA**

**ERRIGA**

17 million YouTube views to date, 17k+ monthly listeners on Spotify, 1 million+ Instagram followers



**VANCOUVER, CANADA**

**JADE LEMAC**

1.1 million+ monthly listeners on Spotify, 91k+ Instagram followers



**LUBBOCK, USA**

**JOSH ABBOTT BAND**

RIAA Gold-certified singles "She's Like Texas" & "Oh, Tonight," "Small Town Dreams" debuted #15 on Billboard 200



**MEXICO CITY, MEXICO**

**MARGARITA LA DIOSA DE LA CUMBIA**

Music career spanning over 40 years, Known as the 'Goddess of Cumbia,' 1 million+ monthly listeners on Spotify



**NASHVILLE, USA**

**MICHIGANDER**

"Let Down" peaked at #8 - AAA Airplay, Live at Austin City Limits Festival, October 2022



**MUMBAI, INDIA**

**NIKHITA GANDHI**

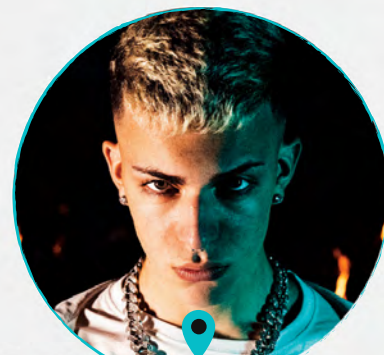
8 chart-topping releases in 2021 & 2022, 2 billboard features at Times Square in 2022, 6.3 million+ monthly listeners on Spotify



**HOUSTON, USA**

**QUEENDOM COME**

"Then Leave" Top 10 Billboard Bubbling Under Hot 100, Top 100 Rolling Stone Hot Songs, Top 50 Spotify US Viral Songs



**CATANIA, ITALY**

**SKINNY**

Amazon Music, Italy selection for exclusive album release "Breakthrough Italia," 435k+ monthly listeners on Spotify



## IN DEMAND

# ALLY PANKIW

WRITER-DIRECTOR

Ally Pankiw believes “a series of little moments” helped her realize her calling as a visual artist. After working as a choreographer and pursuing journalism at university, she gravitated toward broadcast and documentary studies. “I remember there was this moment where I was like, ‘Oh, I love shooting and editing stuff,’” says Pankiw, 35. “I wanted to create things that didn’t exist before.” Since then, the Toronto native has built quite the résumé, directing episodes of Hulu’s *Shrill* and *The Great* and working as a story editor on *Schitt’s Creek*. (She’s now



developing a series and co-writing a feature with show creator Dan Levy.) After getting her start with a directing collective managed by French company Partizan, with whom she directed and produced music videos for Ariana Grande and Janelle Monáe, Pankiw was drawn to more narrative storytelling, eager to explore comedic and

queer storylines. By 2019, she was directing season one of the Netflix comedy series *Feel Good*, which she says “opened the door to pitch weirder and more queer stuff” — including a pair of videos for indie-pop trio MUNA. As Pankiw puts it: “When you settle into your voice as a director, that’s your biggest year.” —LYNDSEY HAVENS

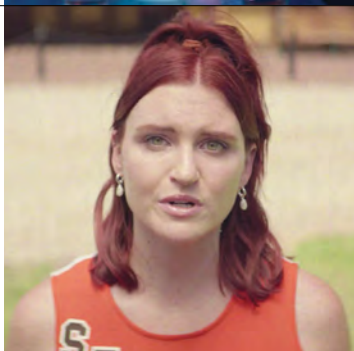
## THE PROJECTS

### FEEL GOOD Netflix



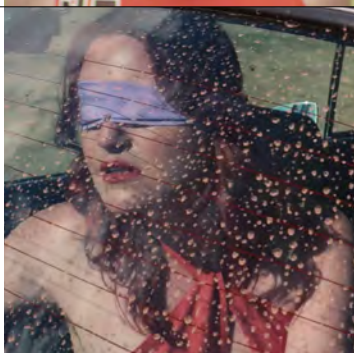
Pankiw believes directing *Feel Good* — a semi-autobiographical comedy about addiction, gender and sexual fluidity — was “a testament to how the queer community gives each other opportunities.” Having known show creator and star Mae Martin as “young queer kids in Toronto,” Pankiw had been following their comedy career ever since. Turns out, Martin had been following Pankiw’s career as well: “Because we really liked each other’s tastes and knew we had the same sense of humor, they really went to bat for me.”

### “SILK CHIFFON” MUNA featuring Phoebe Bridgers



Pankiw immediately knew “Silk Chiffon” was a special song for how the band explored the idea that it’s “radical to express joy as a queer person,” saying she wanted to do that justice. As she and the band discussed playing up ’90s films and tropes, member Naomi McPherson suggested one in particular: the 1999 cult-classic queer satire *But I’m a Cheerleader*. “Everyone was just having such a fun time,” says Pankiw, noting that all of the cast and a large portion of the crew was queer.

### “ANYTHING BUT ME” MUNA



Working on “Silk Chiffon” led Pankiw to direct another recent clip from MUNA, “Anything but Me,” for which the members find themselves in a variety of hostage-like scenarios. “The whole point is to show that most of the time when we feel trapped in a pattern, we have the ability to remove ourselves, and a lot of the time, we’re the ones trapping [ourselves],” says Pankiw, who came to the band with the concept. “That’s why MUNA is so great ... they’re always saying something compelling about the human experience and about the queer experience.”



## ONE TO WATCH

# Saucy Santana

FROM Perry, Fla.

AGE 28

LABEL RCA

**FOUNDATION** “I’ve always been lit, even as a kid,” says Saucy Santana, who grew up in Perry, a Florida town just shy of 7,000 residents. “I knew I had star power.” It’s why at 24, he relocated to Tallahassee to become a celebrity makeup artist, soon working for City Girls. Around the same time, he started a Facebook podcast with friends, for which he rapped its theme song and set his career down an unexpected path. His first official upload, a freestyle to Blueface’s “Thotiana” that he posted to YouTube in early 2019, led to club appearances and showcases. “They would be like, ‘Who’s this boy with the cheetah shirt and red lipstick?’” he recalls. “And the whole club is going crazy.”

**DISCOVERY** After turning his bathroom into a makeshift studio, Santana recorded breakout track “Walk Em Like a Dog,” which prompted Alamo Records and StreamCut to reach out. (The latter distributed the single for its official 2019 release.) Less than one year later, Santana released his vivacious anthem “Material Girl” — and it took off on social media in 2021, soundtracking over 1.2 million TikTok clips. This April, he signed a record deal with RCA. “I felt like they were family,” he says, “but I still had to work to get that record deal, child.”

**FUTURE** “Everyone thought it was a gimmick,” says Santana of how labels were intent on getting behind a one-off release rather than him as an artist. Now he’s preparing to open for Latto on her summer headlining tour and teasing an upcoming collaboration with Lil Nas X titled “Down Souf Hoes” that pays homage to the queer sensations’ beginnings. “I want to leave behind a legacy where if another gay boy comes after me, they get the same acceptance and warm welcome that I had to work hard to get.”

—NEENA ROUHANI



# PROUDLY INDEPENDENT SINCE 2007

*celebrating 15 years*



Albert Hammond Jr.



Arkano



Beartooth



BLXST



flawes



Gavin Haley



JUGGER



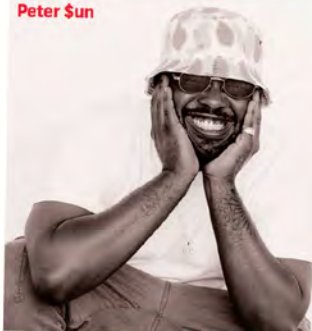
Kofi



Kyle Banks



Peter \$un



pineappleCITI



The Aces



Wonderchild Imprint  
(WondaGuri)





**P  
R  
E  
D  
E**

**2022**





# Good FOR Business

**Brandi Carlile** built a thriving career by melding activism with her art — and she's determined to leave the industry, and the world she lives in, better than she found it

BY TAYLOR MIMS

PHOTOGRAPHED BY LIA CLAY MILLER

Carlile photographed May 5 at  
Pink Motel in Los Angeles.

Styling by Maryam Malakpour  
Any Old Iron suit, Stella McCartney top,  
Efva Attling Stockholm necklaces.



# B

**BRANDI CARLILE IS HAPPY TO** expound upon bad wine. Bad wine gives her a hangover. The pretension of wine culture leaves a bad taste in her mouth. “Without sounding like I’m judging wine as a concept, it’s annoyingly bougie and culturally hetero,” she says with a laugh. “It’s like golf.”

So when it came to developing her own boutique wine label, XOBC, she knew what she *did* want. It would be a wine for folks who are “a little left of center.” Something a bit rugged — maybe for a camping trip, to be sipped out of a Solo cup — “but it’s not going to give you a fucking headache.” And like everything Carlile does, it wouldn’t just be good — it would do good, too.

Because Carlile and her wife, Catherine Shepherd, started XOBC with their married friends Amy and Jeri Andrews, the company is entirely women- and LGBTQ-owned. Its grapes come from vintners in her home state of Washington, where she still lives with Shepherd and their two young daughters, Elijah and Evangeline. It’s even inclusive of those who don’t drink alcohol: Because Carlile saw her father’s struggles with alcoholism throughout her childhood (he eventually got sober), she insisted on adding Misfit Mist, a hop-infused carbonated water, to XOBC’s offerings. In March, to celebrate the LGBTQ community, Carlile planned to release Proud Sparkling Rosé. Then, just three days before, the Florida state legislature passed the Parental Rights in Education bill — aka the “Don’t Say Gay” bill — aimed at criminalizing classroom instruction about sexual orientation and gender identity for younger students.

As she recalls it today, Carlile’s mood turns sober. Recently, 7-year-old Evangeline was named student of the month and brought home a poster board to fill out about her family. She could write about how one of her moms is a nonprofit savant who previously ran Paul McCartney’s charitable foundation and about how the other has six Grammy Awards. But “I suddenly realized,” Carlile says, “that whole thing was against the rules in Florida. I don’t want that to be the reality for my child — but I don’t think there’s a difference between my child and anybody else’s.” She knew what to do: The Proud release was delayed, and its profits are now 100% funneled toward LGBTQ organizations fighting discriminatory bills. “We’re blinded by this insatiable need to do the right thing,” says Shepherd. After all, she points out, Carlile’s fans “expect a certain level of thought that goes into everything Brandi lends her name to.”

From the moment her career began in the late 1990s, Carlile’s name has been inextricable from activism. The simple act of being an openly queer country artist was, at the time, radical, even in her hometown outside of progressive Seattle. But even then, Carlile never only championed herself: Following her breakout 2007 single, “The Story,” she harnessed her newfound fame to launch the Looking Out Foundation (LOF) with her

lifelong bandmates, twins Tim and Phil Hanseroth, to raise funds for causes and organizations in need of a supporting voice as strong as her own. “[Her impact is] multigenerational, and it cuts across LGBTQ+, men and women, and all kinds of genres,” says Bonnie Raitt, one of Carlile’s heroes and a mentor when it comes to organically blending activism and art. “Her talent and her fire are unmistakable.”

As her profile rose and her albums made a slow-burn climb up the *Billboard* charts — reaching an apex with 2019’s *By the Way, I Forgive You*, which peaked at No. 5 on the *Billboard* 200; yielded her stunning ode to the underrepresented, “The Joke”; and garnered six Grammy nods and three wins — Carlile also became an expert connector between generations in the artist community, supporting its elders (with Shooter Jennings, she produced Tanya Tucker’s Grammy-winning *While I’m Livin’* in 2019 — and powered a Tucker appreciation campaign in the process) and keeping its departed legends’ legacies alive. (She’s a constant presence at major tribute concerts, for everyone from John Prine and The Everly Brothers to Chris Cornell and Aretha Franklin.)

“What impresses me about her is she still always finds time and a way to be there for things she cares about,” says Gregg Nadel, co-president of Elektra Music Group, where Carlile is signed. “Our whole label has this feeling of wanting to do right by her because it’s a two-way street — it’s a communal relationship.”

And at this point, Carlile’s business is so tightly woven to her beliefs that the

more she thrives, the more her activist work does, too. Her consistently solid touring business has allowed her to donate \$2 from every ticket to organizations like The Trevor Project and the anti-police-violence platform Campaign Zero. The proceeds from her 2017 album, *Cover Stories* (on which the likes of Dolly Parton, Pearl Jam, Adele and Miranda Lambert covered Carlile’s songs), were entirely donated to War Child UK. A purchase of her recent single “Party of One,” featuring Sam Smith, still delivers a portion of proceeds to Children in Conflict. Even the XOBC wine label was created in part to benefit LOF — which it did just as the pandemic halted touring and, overnight, stripped the foundation of its main revenue generator.

Even then, Carlile didn’t turn her focus inward. At The Compound — the roughly 80 acres of land where she lives among family and friends in Maple Valley, Wash. — her team rallied to build a makeshift studio in Carlile’s barn and broadcast intimate solo acoustic livestreams to raise money for

her crew and LOF. The Bramily, as Carlile’s fans are affectionately known, “were incredibly generous in times of need,” Shepherd says, “where you would think people would be panicking and keeping their resources to themselves.”

Carlile is able to do all this because her compassion has been a core part of her personality since day one. “Brandi is fearless with a strong, golden moral compass,” says Duffy McSwiggin of Wasserman Music, her agent of 20 years. “When you’re moving in the right direction, it contributes to that fearlessness.” But even that compass has, on occasion, faltered. In her 2021 memoir, *Broken Horses*, Carlile describes a protest over the 2017 “Muslim ban” where she had been asked to perform Bob Dylan’s “The Times They Are A-Changin’” — and immediately felt questioning stares as the only white woman standing onstage among Muslim immigrant activists. “If you’re not cringing at this point in the story,” Carlile writes, “just picture me squeezed onto a mostly melanated, largely marginalized community’s stage ... in my cowboy hat holding an acoustic guitar.”

So she kept to the side of the stage and, when the speakers began experiencing technical difficulties, got on her hands and knees, untangling wires until others’ voices were properly amplified. Being an ally, she realized, “is more than

**“There’s not  
 really anyone  
 else I can think  
 of that is the  
 den mother for  
 musicians and  
 causes the way  
 Brandi is.”**

—BONNIE RAITT





Affair Haute Couture dress,  
Christian Louboutin boots.



stepping out of the way. It's more than saying nothing," Carlile says today. "It's being willing to be embarrassed and willing to ask questions. It's putting yourself in that crowd, taking that risk."

**J** OY OLADOKUN REMEMBERS the moment she first met Carlile. At the 2021 Newport Folk Festival, the rising queer singer-songwriter was rehearsing for Allison Russell's *Once and Future Sounds* set, in which she would be playing alongside Chaka Khan, when Carlile made a surprise appearance — and pulled Oladokun aside to praise her work.

"She didn't have to take me aside and encourage my work and production, but she did," Oladokun recalls. "She's a champion of people through and through. That's her power." She and Carlile instantly bonded over their experiences of growing up queer in very religious places. "It's like a tattoo on a young mind that you spend your whole life trying to impact," Carlile says, adding that her activism was in large part inspired by feeling utterly rejected in the church community because of her sexuality. "You can't do it alone."

So Carlile found ways to build community elsewhere. Her trip to Newport was brief — she flew out expressly to support Russell and had to hop on a plane right after to visit longtime friend Elton John in Paris — yet she still insisted on gathering Russell's cohort (including, briefly, Khan herself) for a post-set boat ride and oysters. For a Black, queer Nashville artist like Oladokun, that felt huge, and perfectly aligned with the many ways Carlile makes less well-known artists feel seen.

"When we're not in the room together, I feel so confident that Brandi is advocating for me," Oladokun says, noting how Carlile will regularly drop her name — as well as those of other up-and-coming artists she admires — on talk shows where she's ostensibly promoting her own work. "[Oladokun] represents our community of activists in such a way that it's undeniable that we're making progress," Carlile gushes. "I'm thinking about [that progress] all the time. That's how I remember to name-check."

She knows firsthand just how powerful that kind of platform can be: As an opener herself for many years, "My objective always was to show up at that gig and grab ahold of those fans and take them with me," Carlile recalls. "I've done that in such a way that it's going to last a lifetime." Now that she's a headliner, she's determined to provide that kind of spotlight to others who need it, whether they're talented younger artists (her tour support has included rising stars Amythyst Kiah and Katie Pruitt, as well as collaborators like Lucius and Lucie Silvas) or veterans deserving of their flowers while they're still active (Mavis Staples has also opened for her).

One of the biggest platforms Carlile uses, no surprise, is one she created herself: her destination festival, *Girls Just Wanna Weekend*. Since its 2019 debut, thousands of fans have flocked to Riviera Maya, Mexico, as much to see Carlile as the vibrant, diverse group of women artists she introduces and often joins onstage — from Nashville innovators like Yola and Ruby Amanfu to outspoken stars like Margo Price and Maren Morris





Versace suit and blouse.  
Free Lance x Lou Doillon boots,  
Anna-Karin Karlsson sunglasses.







Bella Freud pants and vest, Anna-Karin Karlsson sunglasses, Efva Attling Stockholm necklaces, Vintage Celine boots.

and trailblazing veterans like Tucker, Sheryl Crow and Indigo Girls. The 2023 festival has already sold out without a single artist announced.

McSwiggin, Carlile's agent, brings valuable expertise from working on similar events with touring powerhouses like Dave Matthews Band and Phish; still, he says, putting together Girls Just Wanna Weekend each year takes a lot of "elbow grease" and depends upon the deeply loyal fan base that knows any Carlile show will be "a safe space to be yourself." At the close of each weekend, Carlile can dependably be found right in the midst of the Bramily, tequila bottle often in hand. (She loves it almost as much as wine.) In shimmering leggings, headbands, high ponytails and other questionable '80s get-ups, she, her team and her fellow performers let loose to the Ladies of the '80s DJ set — or, as Carlile puts it: "I get totally shit-housed onstage and then usually end up dancing in a hot tub fully clothed without my shoes. That's just tradition."

Moments like that are Carlile to a tee, says Shepherd. "Brandi doesn't like experiencing any joy without sharing it with people," she says. And those people don't just include her fans and the other artists she can help, but the artists who've helped her, too. Ever since Carlile caught a guitar pick that said "No nukes" at a Raitt show as a teen, she has sought out meaningful relationships with the artists she considers her teachers.

"Bonnie's activism is action-based, but it's also

philosophical," says Carlile, who wrote Raitt a letter early on in her career as a fan and has stayed close with her since. "She lives her activism." Likewise, John — whose own foundation focuses on the global AIDS epidemic — is a hero turned friend. Before she ever heard his music, Carlile says, "I knew about his heart and his activism and how intertwined it was with his music. My young mind was wrapped around that concept before I was an artist or an activist."

"There's not really anyone else I can think of that is the den mother for musicians and causes the way Brandi is," says Raitt. "One of the great joys of the last few years has been growing our friendship through her incredible help with Joni Mitchell — organizing salons at Joni's house to help Joni come back from her brain aneurysm [in 2015]."

Since meeting Mitchell at the retired singer's 75th-birthday party, Carlile has helped organize and invite musicians to these "Joni Jams." Despite not publicly performing anymore, Mitchell was eager to put her home full of instruments to good use and has since hosted stars like Raitt, John, Parton, Herbie Hancock, Harry Styles and Jacob Collier. Each night, Carlile says, includes some "headache" wine, a home-cooked meal by Mitchell's friend Chef Steph and time to ask Mitchell questions; then everyone heads to the living room to pass around Mitchell's instruments, play and occasionally hear Mitchell sing both her own songs and covers. "She has even gotten to know some of the lyrics to my songs," Carlile marvels, "so she pipes in on mine, which is surreal."

"I love her!" Mitchell says of Carlile. "She's my ambassador."

Sometimes, Carlile will visit on her own to run new music by Mitchell, who'll sit and play solitaire. "She is back to mentoring, and she has found a way to make the things that have happened to her a blessing for other people," says Carlile. After two decades in the music industry, Carlile has done plenty of mentoring, too. Yet she still sees herself as the kid at the knee of legends, intent to make sure everyone in her tribe remembers where they came from.

"Culturally, I think we discard our elders. I don't want to call them 'elders' because some of them could beat me in a footrace — but ageism is real," says Carlile. "I want to make sure everyone remembers the foundations of the things we enjoy so we don't become untethered to our way-pavers."

**M** ID-MAY IS SHRIMPING SEASON in Washington — and when it comes to shrimp, Carlile is dead serious. Each day, she'll write a note to her girls' teachers excusing them from class so they can assist in the endeavor. "I need their limit," Carlile protests with a laugh, explaining there's a limit of 80 shrimp per person, and "the kids are people!" So she'll prop Evangeline and Elijah on the bow of the boat, drop pots down and take home upwards of 200 shrimp per day for Compound-wide barbecues.

Carlile, who just turned 41, admits that her wife is "constantly rolling her eyes at how much time I want to be with [the kids]. When I was younger, it used to be work, work, work. I'd get to the end of these tours, and I'd be all strung out on sleeping medication and steroids and having panic attacks and not knowing why I was so unhealthy," she continues. "I had no footing." Now she's determined to savor the little moments of family life: building fires in their old wood-burning stove, making dinner at night, trick-or-treating (most recently as a *Legend of Zelda*-themed quartet).

That's easier said than done. Between recording, touring and running a wine label and a foundation, the business of being Brandi Carlile is 24/7. She built a career by saying yes to everything, and she works as hard as she asks anyone to



work for her. “I have an addict mentality that I probably got from my dad,” Carlile figures; if she’s not on the road or with her family, she’s out fishing in her hip waders or wielding a power drill for someone’s remodel on the Compound. It’s the same work ethic that took her from busking under the clock at Seattle’s Pike Place Market to hitting *that* high note in “The Joke” at the Grammy Awards. And so, “despite every therapist’s wish for me,” Carlile says, “I’m doubling down on it because it feels like my lane.”

Red Light Management’s Will Botwin was president of Columbia Records in 2004 when the label signed Carlile based off a handful of songs she played at a showcase. (She moved to Elektra in 2017; five years ago, Botwin rejoined Carlile’s team as a manager.) He didn’t anticipate it would take nearly two decades for her breakout success with *By the Way, I Forgive You*, but he did see the commitment it would take.

“She is a throwback artist in terms of the way she has developed,” says Botwin, who still recalls the days when Carlile would play “every night in any club that would have her.” Growing her fan base, songwriting talent and public persona organically for years meant that “when her moment started arriving, she was ready.”

In 2019, Carlile took home the best Americana album Grammy for *By the Way,*

two additional trophies for “The Joke” — and a much wider audience after her on-air performance of the song. “I don’t know an artist who has ever been more present and more joyful doing a song like that on a big show, and it resonated with people,” says Botwin.

After that, the doors swung wide open for Carlile and, as the saying goes, the rising tide lifted all boats. According to Billboard Boxscore, between 2018 and 2019 — pre- and post-Grammy night — Carlile more than doubled her average concert attendance from 2,385 to 5,557 per show. Even with a limited number of shows in 2021, that average spiked again to more than 9,000. And triple the number of tickets sold meant triple the donations to LOF.

“You notice the donations increasing anytime she’s in the spotlight, whether she is delivering a message of activism or not,” Shepherd says. Shepherd has led LOF since 2012, when she left her position as McCartney’s charity coordinator to move to the United States with Carlile. During her decade with McCartney, she saw how grown men consistently lost their cool, dropping their briefcases to stand next to him — and how he never let the “Beatle effect” go to his head. “He was really good at reminding people he was just a normal person who likes bagels for lunch,” says Shepherd, “and Brandi is really good at putting people to ease in that respect.”

Carlile’s gratitude for the Grammys and how they furthered her activism was boundless until last year, when the Recording Academy announced that her 2021 single “Right On Time” would be slotted into the best solo pop performance category, not Americana. “The Grammys changed my life. They gave me the most life-changing opportunity, not just for me but for a lot of people,” says Carlile. But being moved out of the Americana genre “pissed me off,” she says.

“I can’t even begin to express how important it is to me to stay with [the Americana community],” Carlile continues, “even if it means levels of success that I’ll never reach.” She had decided long ago that achieving pop stardom wasn’t nearly as important as making change in her small corner of the industry — and suddenly, she found herself far from it. “When the Grammys made that decision for me,” she says, “it felt like I had been taken out of my space that I wanted to be in.”

Olivia Rodrigo took home the award, and Carlile’s frustration has since subsided. She’s quick to acknowledge that the categorization was also “a great compliment. I had to look at the juxtaposition of those two issues and come to a peaceful place with it,” she says. There was something cool, she admits, about being “in pop with all them kids.”

And even with that category relocation, she still managed a very Brandi Carlile 2022 Grammys. She garnered four other nominations: two more for “Right On Time,” one for best American roots performance for her feature on Brandy Clark’s “Same Devil” and a song of the year nod for her Alicia Keys collaboration, “A Beautiful Noise.” In true Carlile fashion, “A Beautiful Noise” was recorded to encourage voting in the 2020 election and created by an all-female songwriting team. And thanks to that, two of the writers got their first-ever Grammy nomination, including Ghana-born artist Amanfu — a Girls Just Wanna Weekend alum. Carlile hopes artists will one day be able to define the categories in which they’re placed. In the meantime, she’ll keep helping them do so far from awards show stages.

“Communities are so important,” she says. “You should be able to choose which one you’re a part of.” ■





**P  
R  
I  
D  
E**

**2022**



**Music's Next Queer Ga**



From left: Doechii,  
Anthony Roth  
Costanzo and Tokischa  
photographed May 17 at  
Seret Studios in Brooklyn.

# me Changers

Meet the fearless creators forging exciting new paths for LGBTQ+ musicians now — and busting through genre lines as they do

PHOTOGRAPHED BY HAO ZENG



**Anthony  
Roth  
Costanzo  
Is Pushing  
Opera Outside  
The Box**



**W**hen opera star Anthony Roth Costanzo began plotting the follow-up to his Grammy Award-nominated 2018 album, *ARC*, the Durham, N.C.-born countertenor was sure of one thing: “I really didn’t want it to be one of these boring classical music albums,” he says with a laugh.

So, like any self-respecting member of the LGBTQ+ community, Costanzo looked to trailblazing women for inspiration. During a chat with New York cabaret iconoclast Justin Vivian Bond about their opposites-

attract friendship, Costanzo was reminded of a 1976 TV special that paired two stage legends — soprano Beverly Sills and comedienne Carol Burnett — to “hilarious and bizarre” effect.

Drawing on “that high-low dichotomy, but also high and low culture,” Costanzo and Bond began developing a live show that morphed into January’s *Only an Octave Apart*, a duets album melding pop hits with classical arias in ways that are both pucky and poignant — think Kate Bush and Peter Gabriel’s “Don’t Give Up” juxtaposed with “Deh placatevi” from Gluck’s *Orfeo ed*

*Euridice*, about pounding on the gates of hell to bring a lover back to life. “When we sat in the studio and listened to it, both of us started to tear up, thinking about what it could mean to a community of people who are sometimes othered and struggling with their own identity,” Costanzo says.

Costanzo has built a singular career with his distinctive vocal range (countertenors possess the highest adult male singing voice) on gorgeous display in what has become a signature role: the titular young pharaoh in Philip Glass’ *Akhnaten*, currently playing at the Metropolitan Opera; its recording

won Costanzo a 2022 Grammy. But he is also a formidable presence outside opera’s hallowed halls, where he has sought out like-minded artists — from painter George Condo to filmmaker James Ivory — for diverse interdisciplinary projects.

*Only an Octave Apart*, he says, is one that pushed him to weave an even bolder queerness into his art. The opera world “can seem like a foreboding environment,” says Costanzo. (As we speak, he’s about to get all his body hair waxed as prep for *Akhnaten*.) “You don’t always get to express that queerness and identity in

the work you’re doing in classical music. All of a sudden [with *Octave*], even though I was singing classical music, I felt like I was expressing the essence of who I was. That felt powerful to me.”

While Costanzo says that opera — with its history steeped in queens, divas and camp — is in some ways “even more queer than Broadway,” that connection isn’t necessarily apparent to everyone. When Bond and Costanzo set their sights on a collaborative concert with the New York Philharmonic, “there were a lot of roadblocks to get through — it was totally different from what they normally do,” Costanzo explains. He credits the organization’s president/CEO, Deborah Borda, with championing his vision; when the concert series wrapped in January, he received “some really moving emails from the orchestra, about how they never could have imagined doing this, but it felt absolutely necessary.”

The mere existence of the *Octave* album, Costanzo adds, feels like a small miracle. “It’s not cheap to make those things,” he bluntly says. “It was a crazy concept, and I’m thrilled Universal [Music, specifically Decca Records] let me do it.” He’s hopeful that it — along with his own ever-evolving career path — will inspire other artists.

“I am definitely in search of all kinds of friends and people. I want to understand other worlds and generations,” says the singer, who just turned 40. “What’s key is collaboration. Think intentionally about how to creatively produce and grow your project and reach more people. It adds up.”

—JOE LYNCH



**Dove  
Cameron  
Is Making A Pop  
— And Personal —  
Breakthrough**

**D**ove Cameron realizes you might not believe her when she says “Boyfriend” — her seductive, overtly queer and currently inescapable pop anthem — was a “total fucking accident.” But, she promises, it really was.

“It took on a life of its own,” she says. “We’ve basically been on a three-and-a-half-month train that just has not stopped. It’s the song that kind of took over my whole universe.”

Happy accident or not, “Boyfriend” has redefined Cameron’s career. It’s her highest-charting single yet on the Billboard Hot 100 (peaking at No. 31 in May), a commercial breakthrough driven by TikTok — where, on the advice of her label, Disruptor Records, Cameron posted various demo clips and watched “Boyfriend” blow up, accumulating over 700,000 videos to date using its sound.

It’s also a breakthrough for Cameron personally. The 26-year-old





**Doechii**  
**Is Bringing**  
**Femme-Forward**  
**Rhymes To TDE**

**W**hen the COVID-19 pandemic hit, most artists went into survival mode. Doechii, on the other hand, saw opportunity.

“I was in this place where I was so focused on money, and I was like, ‘You know what? I’m getting unemployment. Now I don’t have to worry about money,’” recalls the 23-year-old rapper. “So I started focusing on me.” She left her mother’s Atlanta home and, from her father’s couch in Tampa, Fla., began a spiritual quest of sorts — unpacking trauma and getting to know herself better, reading books on quantum physics, the human spirit and the universe. “I had gone through a transformative point in my life,” Doechii continues, “so I was very trusting of God. Then everything happened exactly how I planned it.”

In the past year, she has set that master plan into motion: With her radically femme-focused rhymes and theatrical style, she’s determined to shatter limiting tropes surrounding Black women in rap while doing what she loves most. “If there was nobody on this whole Earth — no cars, no planes, no animals — if it was just me, I would be making music,” she says. “That’s what the fuck makes me happy.”

A landmark deal as Top Dawg Entertainment’s first female rapper, and her subsequent signing with Capitol Records, set her well on her way toward achieving that goal. “When I would talk to other labels, I could tell they admired my talent, but they were already [set] on a formula that they felt works and didn’t want to budge on,” Doechii explains. When her breakthrough single, “Yucky Bucky Fruitcake,” dropped in 2020, major labels like Warner and Universal came knocking; still, she stayed independent. Then TDE arrived: “I was sold. They flew me out in January, I got signed by February.”

“She’s like a hybrid of all of the

women who’ve come before her,” says TDE president Moosa Tiffith. “She knows what she wants and is going to push the bar even further.”

In one of her first TDE recording sessions, Doechii wrote what would become her jaw-dropping first major-label single, “Crazy,” an appropriately chaotic track reclaiming the power of a word often weaponized against women. “As soon as I heard [“Crazy”], I knew she wasn’t going home,” says Tiffith. “We went and got her an apartment, made an offer to her and here we are today.”

“I knew my formula was different and risky, but TDE was willing to support it,” Doechii recalls. When the “Crazy” music video debuted in April, starring a gun-toting Doechii and an entirely nude crew of women, it sparked a mix of shock and awe across social media — exactly what she had hoped for.

“I feel a really big responsibility to make an influence on pop culture,” she says, referring to a time when artists like Aretha Franklin released raw, soul-baring music before “things got a bit more superficial. I want to switch that narrative. We don’t have to be afraid of real.”

For Doechii, that also means allowing queer artists like herself to define themselves in myriad ways. “I would like to get in a space where being queer could be so normalized that I don’t have to highlight it,” she says. “I’m proud of it, but I don’t like feeling othered all the time.” She thinks back to her childhood, when she couldn’t choose just one creative pursuit among glass-making, sculpting, drawing, volleyball, gymnastics, ballet, tap, dancettes, swimming, track and basketball. “I couldn’t pick just one way to be or to show up” — and that, she realized, was her greatest strength. Today, whether it comes to her sexuality or her music, it still is. “My entire identity goes back to this fluidness. I’ve always just been everything.” —**NEENA ROUHANI**

rose to fame acting in Disney franchises like *Liv and Maddie* and *Descendants*. And though she rejects the “Disney girl-gone-bad” narrative, Cameron says she’s experiencing a transformation all the same, coming into her own as a queer pop star.

“Going from being this performatively feminine, blond girl next door who started out on a children’s network, [I’m often asked], ‘What happened to the blond girl who used to wear pink?’” she says. “And I’m like, ‘That was never it. That was never who I actually was.’”

Even so, watching a song “so intrinsically linked to my sexuality” become a hit (the

lyric “I could be a better boyfriend than him” is directed at a female love interest) has felt “a little confusing,” Cameron admits. Though she has openly identified as queer for the last few years, she says she still struggles with the “dysphoria” of owning her status as a publicly queer person.

“There’s suddenly this big, capital Q on my chest,” she explains. “It’s massively encouraging and wonderfully moving and I’m so privileged that I am in a space where I can be who I am publicly, but there’s also suddenly a lot of expectations publicly. It is weird to navigate all of these intricacies before you even really know where your own

lines between personal and public are.”

Figuring that out has meant shedding elements of her past. Shortly after releasing “Boyfriend,” Cameron deleted her previous, non-Disney work from all digital service providers, including singles like “Waste,” “Bloodshot” and “LazyBaby.” Its removal disappointed many fans, but Cameron is clear about her intentions. “It’s important to me that everybody understands that this was *not* a business decision,” she says with a sigh. “My old stuff was so not representative of the person that I am inside. It was kind of disruptive to what I’m trying to do now.”

That means looking forward: prepping her debut studio album — a set of jazz-infused, dance-ready pop songs much like “Boyfriend” — while defining queer stardom on her own terms. “I do not have to make myself ‘queerer’ or use some kind of preapproved LGBTQ ‘lens.’ My lens is queer. Period,” she says — a stance she hopes more queer artists will take up, too. “Nobody knows better than you, even if they’ve been in the industry 10 times as long. Listen to other people when they offer you advice on branding and distribution. But educate yourself so that you can make those choices yourself.” —**STEPHEN DAW**





## Tokischa

Is Taking Filter-Free

Dembow Far And Wide

**E**ver since I was a little girl, if I felt the need to say something, I had a pressure in my chest,” says Tokischa. “My heart would start beating fast, my blood pressure would rise. I felt obligated to say something, [and] I would get in trouble for it a lot of times.” The 26-year-old Dominican rapper giggles, then adds: “They’re not punishing me for it anymore.”

With her racy rhymes dripping with local lingo, dembow drums and rhythmic moans, Tokischa has amassed enough fans (plus plenty of can’t-look-away haters) to sell out shows from Queens to Rome. Those crowds may come in part to witness her onstage antics (licking milk out of a cat’s bowl; locking lips with Rosalía at the Billboard Latin Music Awards), but they’re also responding to the DGAF energy Tokischa radiates — creating a radically liberal space that feels like a Dominican *teteo* (street party) where her heavily female audiences can drink, smoke, throw the occasional punch and always move their hips.

Not so long ago, Tokischa was in a very different place: head in her hands, daydreaming about acting classes while miserably answering phones for a FedEx call center. “I would be so high, place the customers on hold and totally forget why they called,” she says with a chuckle. “I had a moment

of depression. The call center sucked the dreams out of me.” When she eventually quit, she was swept into the turbulent world of sex work, taking on a few “gringo” sugar daddies, all the while creating content for her locally popular Instagram. “That’s how I met my manager, Raymi [Paulus],” she says.

Tokischa was always creative, but had never planned to become a dembow sensation, and Paulus helped bring her focus as she began playing shows and kicking substance addictions. As her horizons broadened beyond the Dominican Republic, so did her ideas about sexuality. “Am I queer?” she asks half-jokingly, strolling around Brooklyn’s Domino Park, where she occasionally interrupts our conversation to coo at puppies.

In the Santo Domingo barrio where Tokischa grew up, sexual expression was fluid by default but queer subcommunities were less visible. “I’m a sexual person. I grew up seeing that in my hood,” she says. “The queer [labels] are new for me.” But since she started spending more time in the United States, her sense of identity has blossomed. She has found a second home in drag culture and the ballroom scene. “It’s so inspiring seeing the drag queens, all the effort they put into their looks — they’re so empowered. It makes me want to cry sometimes,”

she says. “Now that I’m here in [the United States], I want to hang out within the queer community and learn more. It’s something new for me.”

She’s more familiar with other labels. As a fiercely unapologetic woman of color causing mayhem in a predominantly male genre, she’s often lauded on social media as a sex-positive activist paving the way for oppressed communities — a characterization she never intended and one that’s sometimes far from the truth. (She has defended a rapper charged with sexual assault and came under fire as part of the music video for J Balvin’s “Perra,” which many called out as racially insensitive and misogynistic.) “I’m only being myself. I say what I feel, and I have fun with it,” she says. “I’m being honest, but whoever is honest becomes a rebel.”

In fact, she would rather contemplate heavy topics like how she’ll live out her final days, which she has already decided: “I want to live on a mountain, disconnected, and make peace with God. I pray every day, like, ‘God, I’m here doing my thing, but I can’t wait to be out there with you!’” She has had an innate faith and love of prayer since childhood — and if that seems contradictory, well, that’s just Tokischa. “I held on to faith because I dreamed of a future,” she says. “And to have attained that is magic.” —N.R.



# Joy Oladokun

## Is Writing Her Own Story



**J**oy Oladokun has spent over five years in the music industry; still, she's not exactly sure which genre her music fits into.

Sometimes, she's lumped into folk, likened to her hero Tracy Chapman; maybe, she figures, because she'll dedicate a portion of every live set to just playing guitar, baring her soul in the dark. Sometimes, she's called an Americana or country artist, based on her close ties to Maren Morris (whom she'll join on tour in August) and Brandi Carlile, or because she's based in Nashville, where she's signed to Prescription Songs as a writer. As a queer Black woman, "it would be fun to start calling myself a country artist," Oladokun says with a laugh. "I've got to get a cowboy hat first. I'm really going to lean into this."

If audience is any indicator of genre, Oladokun's only muddles the answer further. On her first cross-country tour, she says she saw Black and queer folks at every show, but her demographic is "super wide. There's always one really sweet white lady in the back of the venue looking at me like I'm her daughter and I'm making

her proud," she says with a smile. There's also always a tall white guy "who looks like he could be a Trump supporter, but really likes Bruce Springsteen and can hear that in what I do."

So Oladokun (who is signed to Amigo Records/Verve Forecast/Republic Records in a joint partnership) prefers to simply call herself a singer-songwriter — because "I sing 'em, I write 'em," and she tries to be as inclusive as possible. She never shies away from mentioning her queerness or obscures her Blackness, but tends to broaden her choruses so anyone can relate. "I make music that humanizes me to people that may not know someone like me," she says.

Her talent as a lyricist has allowed Oladokun to easily collaborate with others, too. She happily writes for straight artists ("I pretended to be straight for a long time," she jokes) and sees putting herself in someone else's shoes as simply part of the job description. "In nature, we see how species take care of each other," she says. "The more we remind each other of our shared humanity, the better we'll be to each other."

Oladokun's kindness and hearty laugh belie an inner steeliness. She always remembers a story Jason Isbell told her: When he played guitar on an album by his wife, Amanda Shires, he noticed the way men in the studio deferred to him, not her. "He was like, 'Never forget your name is on the sign,'" Oladokun says. "If someone does something I feel mars the integrity of what I'm trying to accomplish, I'm pretty quick to stand up for it."

She encourages other queer and Black artists to do the same and to find teams that don't just tout diversity and inclusion but actually check their own prejudices. "I just know that all of us are hearing crazy microaggressions and having to advocate twice as hard to get half as much as our boring white counterparts," she says. And if there's any time for queer and underrepresented artists to finally, truly be heard, Oladokun is confident it is now. "There are people out there who will take your ideas and help you communicate them," she says. "Even if what you're doing is too out there, there is a space — there is a market."

—TAYLOR MIMS

# MUNA

## Is Embracing Indie Empowerment



From left, McPherson, Gavin and Maskin.

**I**t feels like a rejection," Katie Gavin says. "It feels like a failure." The lead vocalist of alt-pop trio MUNA is recalling the day in 2020 when she and bandmates Naomi McPherson and Josette Maskin learned that RCA Records had dropped them. "When you have that type of relationship, for me personally, you use that as a way of getting validation," continues Gavin, 29. "You think, 'Oh, I must be good. I'm signed to a major label!'"

But after some mental regrouping, she realized something crucial: "A label is not what makes you valuable at the end of the day," she says. "It's the skill set you have as a songwriter and the ability to create with people you respect. So it did, in fact, end up being really good for us."

Two years later — with a new self-titled album (out June 24), a new label (Saddest Factory) and a new outlook on the industry — MUNA is "doing better than ever," says McPherson, 29. They add that the album's lead single, the buoyant ode to queer intimacy "Silk Chiffon," is the perfect expression of a band that's "sick of being depressed" and

embracing optimism anew. "It's so nice that this is 'the song' for us because there are a lot of movements right now to put queer people down," says Maskin, 28. "We want queer joy to be represented in pop music, and it's just as valid as any other form of queer art."

"Silk Chiffon" also marks a milestone for MUNA: its first entry on *Billboard's* alternative airplay charts. That's thanks in part to a featured verse from Phoebe Bridgers, who signed the band to her label, Saddest Factory (an imprint of Dead Oceans, a subsidiary of Secretly Group), in May 2021. "Phoebe is a marketing genius," says Maskin. "She is so good at branding herself and what she does, so we were all very keen to have a chance to work with her and have a playful relationship with how we could present ourselves to the world in a more creative, kitschy kind of way. It's nice to have another person in the room who, frankly, we think is cool but who also really gets the business side of things." (Recently, Gavin says, the trio has started investing its album advances.)

As queer and nonbinary artists (Gavin and Maskin use she/

they pronouns, while McPherson uses they/them), the members of MUNA also have a rare champion in Bridgers: a label head who, like them, is a queer artist. "There is something so nice about not having to do the extra labor of explaining yourself," Gavin says. "It feels fucking good to know that the person running our label has values that they're going to stick up for."

Bridgers also understands MUNA's priorities on a fundamental level. Recently, that meant the band played the Saddest Factory "corporate retreat" (a label showcase at South by Southwest) alongside a Texas U.S. congressional candidate defending trans rights. It means that, while others around the act were skeptical about releasing the clever kiss-off "Anything but Me" as the album drop single, Bridgers told MUNA to follow its instincts and go for it (and that she was "jealous" of it, too). Above all, it means that MUNA is finally getting encouragement to "play the game of empowering [itself]," as Gavin puts it — and treating the band like a business it can run just fine on its own.

—S. D.



Universal Music Group  
congratulates all of our

Indie  
**POWER**  
Players



UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP



# players

CELEBRATING MUSIC'S MOVERS

Stars on independent labels include (clockwise from top) Raitt, Cole, Bad Bunny, Tomorrow X Together, Encanto's Mirabel Madrigal and Pearce.



2022

## INDIE POWER PLAYERS

Across every genre, these are the executives at labels and distributors driving the success of the independent music industry, commanding nearly one-quarter of the U.S. recorded-music market

**I**N EARLY MAY, one album by a veteran artist now signed to her own independent label topped three *Billboard* charts and landed within the top 10 on three other tallies in its debut week.

Bonnie Raitt, who began her career in the 1970s on Warner Bros. Records and reached superstardom in the 1990s on Capitol Records, has recorded for the past decade on her own Redwing Records.

Indie status has worked well for Raitt. Her latest album, *Just Like That...* arrived at No. 1 on Top Current Album Sales, Americana/Folk Albums and Blues Albums; No. 2 on Top Album Sales; No. 6 on Top Rock Albums; and No. 7 on Independent Albums. (Redwing has partnered with Sub Pop for U.S. physical distribution and ADA Worldwide for global digital and physical distribution outside the United States.)

Raitt's latest wave of acclaim — including raves from *The New York Times*, NPR's *Fresh Air* and *The Wall Street Journal*, as well as an attention-grabbing Spotify

billboard in Times Square — began when she received the Icon Award at *Billboard*'s 2022 Women in Music event in March.

When she was recognized, Raitt gave a shoutout to fellow female artists and musical mentors, plus praised the "mighty core" of women in her organization to whom she was "extremely indebted," including Redwing Records co-directors Kathy Kane and Annie Heller-Gutwillig.

Raitt, Kane and Heller-Gutwillig are among those honored in this report on *Billboard*'s 2022 Indie Power Players, including executives at more than 90 companies who have contributed to the success of the independent music sector. All of the honorees were chosen by our editors from among nominations by their companies, industry peers or the American Association of Independent Music (A2IM).

A2IM, which is *Billboard*'s partner in the Top Independent Albums chart, will present its annual Indie Week conference June 13-16 as a hybrid event, both online and in person, and conclude on its final day with

the first live Libera Awards since 2019 (see page 92).

Included among our Indie Power Players are executives from labels and distributors that account for 23.5% of the recorded-music market in the United States, according to 2021 year-end data from Luminate. For this report, record companies are defined as independent by their ownership through entities other than the three major music groups. Distributors, regardless of their corporate ownership, qualify as independent through the repertoire they market.

Aside from Raitt's mighty core at Redwing Records, our Indie Power Players are behind some of the year's biggest success stories: executives from Roc Nation and Dreamville for J. Cole, from Rimas Entertainment and The Orchard for Bad Bunny, from BIGHIT MUSIC for BTS and Tomorrow X Together, from Disney Music Group for *Encanto* (featuring the endearing character Mirabel Madrigal), from Big Machine Label Group for Carly Pearce and from many others.

And as Raitt's high media profile has shown, indie status is no obstacle to mainstream attention. Just ask Japanese Breakfast founder-frontwoman Michelle Zauner, who is signed to the Dead Oceans label (part of Secretly Group), fresh from her acclaimed May 22 performance on *Saturday Night Live*.

Lloyd Hummel, executive vp of global commercial strategy at Ingrooves Music Group, the independent distributor owned by Universal Music Group, puts it succinctly: "The independent music sector," he says, "is thriving in every genre imaginable."

—THOM DUFFY





**PHOEBE BRIDGERS** launched her own **SADDEST FACTORY RECORDS** label in 2020 and has worked since with signees **Claud**, **Sloppy Jane**, **Charlie Hickey** and **MUNA**.

## ASSOCIATIONS

### Richard James Burgess

PRESIDENT/CEO, AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT MUSIC

Leading the independent recording industry's trade association, Burgess guided A2IM's advocacy efforts with Congress for pandemic relief as part of the CARES Act and last year's American Rescue Plan Act. Advancing equity in the industry, A2IM in early 2021 launched a fellowship grant program called the Black Independent Music Accelerator and played an important role in the shutdown of scam sites such as HitPiece, which sold unauthorized non-fungible tokens. "Our overarching effort is directed towards a more collaborative music industry future," says Burgess, "that includes all creators, labels, publishers and tech companies."

### Jeremy Sirota

CEO, MERLIN

In April, the global digital rights organization Merlin signed a licensing partnership with FLO, one of South Korea's biggest music streaming apps, to further expand the global reach of its members' repertoire. The deal was the latest in a series of recent agreements overseen by Sirota, following partnerships with livestream service Twitch, music licensing platform Lickd and Tencent-owned streaming service JOOX. Merlin's

membership has significantly grown over the same period with 42 new independent labels and distributors, including companies from Germany, Lebanon, Pakistan, Turkey and the United States, according to the organization.

### Helen Smith

EXECUTIVE CHAIR, IMPALA

As head of Impala, the trade association representing independent music companies in Europe, Smith has been a passionate advocate for the sector, campaigning for creator rights and promoting a greener, more diverse record business. The recent ruling by the European Union's Court of Justice to uphold the Copyright Directive in full (following a legal challenge by Poland) will "help members maximize revenue for their artists," she says. In April, Impala launched what it says is the first carbon calculator for the indie-music community in order to help labels measure their environmental impact.

## LABELS

### Patrick Amory

CO-OWNER/PRESIDENT, MATADOR RECORDS

### Gerard Cosloy

CO-OWNERS, MATADOR RECORDS

Over the past year, Matador Records has taken advantage of both its existing

catalog and newer acquisitions to build success for its artists. The company recently marked the 20th anniversary of Interpol's debut album by promoting that title alongside the group's newest release, while doing the same for Spoon's recent album and the other nine albums in its catalog. Matador's efforts have included "using vinyl reissues, publicity around key anniversaries, unreleased music and video, our [*Matador Revisionist History*] podcast, social partnerships with digital service providers, physical retail and the artists themselves," Amory says.

### Noah Assad

CO-FOUNDER/CEO, RIMAS ENTERTAINMENT

The crown jewel in the artist roster of Rimas Entertainment is Bad Bunny, the global superstar whose new album, *Un Verano Sin Ti*, broke Spotify's record for most streams in a single day and debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard 200 — only the second all-Spanish album to reach the top slot. The first album to do so? Bad Bunny's *El Último Tour del Mundo*. Under Assad's leadership, Rimas has become a full-fledged label with some 100 employees, distribution through The Orchard and a roster that also includes Jowell y Randy, Tommy Torres and newcomer Eladio Carrión, whose new album debuted at No. 2 on Top Latin Albums in December. Veteran reggaetonero Miky Woodz signed with Rimas last fall. The company won six categories at the 2021 Billboard Latin Music Awards, including Top Latin Albums label of the year.

### Tunde Balogun

CO-FOUNDER/PRESIDENT, LVRN

### Junia Abaidoo

CO-FOUNDER/HEAD OF OPERATIONS, LVRN

### Justice Baiden

CO-FOUNDER/HEAD OF A&R, LVRN

### Sean "Famoso" McNichol

CO-FOUNDER/HEAD OF MARKETING, LVRN

### Carlton Ramong

CO-FOUNDER/CREATIVE DIRECTOR, LVRN

### Amber Grimes

EXECUTIVE VP/GM, LVRN

"As a company, we're most proud of the fact that we've been able to continue to innovate in the past year in the areas of mental health for our employees, our artists and their teams," says Balogun. LVRN artist Summer Walker, in partnership with Interscope, reached No. 1 on the Billboard 200 with her second album, *Still Over It*. "We were also humbled to be honored by the Recording Academy earlier this year as the only company recognized at its inaugural Black Music Collective celebration," he says. "It's an incredible honor to be receiving as we begin to celebrate our 10-year anniversary as a company."

### Dana Biondi

PARTNER/MANAGER, G 59 RECORDS

Biondi engineered the strategy that moved the duo \$uicideboy\$ from an underground favorite to a top 10 Billboard 200 act twice, in 2018 and 2021 — with 4.2 million units of total U.S. album consumption activity. The duo is set to tour again this year following the success of its multi-act Grey Day Tour lineup in 2021. Meanwhile, Biondi and partner Kyle Leunissen continue to expand their G 59 label roster and management company, signing Shakewell, Ramirez, Night Lovell and Chetta in 2021.

### Peter Bittenbender

CEO, MASS APPEAL

Bittenbender, along with partners Nas and Sacha Jenkins, launched Mass Appeal's #HipHop50 initiative to celebrate the impact of the genre over the past five decades. The venture includes strategic partnerships and global promotional campaigns, each with charitable components. Mass Appeal has also entered into a partnership with Live Nation Urban to produce live events. The company also has teamed up with top producers — including Swizz Beatz, Hit-Boy, Take a Daytrip and fellow Indie Power Player Dion "No I.D." Wilson — for *Hip-Hop 50 The Soundtrack*, and has launched a partnership with Paramount+ and Showtime to release hip-hop-focused documentaries.

### Scott Borchetta

FOUNDER/PRESIDENT/CEO, BIG MACHINE LABEL GROUP

Big Machine Label Group's imprints scored strong chart successes with top 10 Country Airplay hits from Thomas Rhett, Carly Pearce and Tim McGraw, but Borchetta is already looking ahead. "I'm most proud of our more than ever aggressive stance with A&R and new signings," he says, citing country newcomers that include Jackson Dean, Kidd G (with Geffen), Tiera Kennedy and Mackenzie Carpenter, as well as rock stalwarts The Struts and Starcrawler. "The bench can never be deep enough, and these acts constitute the next front line of Big Machine Label Group," he adds.

### Phoebe Bridgers

CEO, SADDEST FACTORY RECORDS

Bridgers unveiled her Saddest Factory Records label in October 2020 and, since then, the singer-songwriter has worked closely with signees Claud, Sloppy Jane, Charlie Hickey and MUNA to release new music, map tours and otherwise support indie-rock artists on the rise. "It has been a very collaborative and creative process — exactly as I envisioned for the label,"



what gets rewarded, gets repeated.

Rebecca Berman

SVP, International  
Concord Recorded Music

Michael Nance

SVP, International  
Concord Recorded Music

Andy Serrao

President  
Fearless Records

Michele Smith

VP, Estate & Legacy Brand Management  
Craft Recordings/Stax Records

Ryan Whalley

President  
Loma Vista Recordings



**CONCORD**  
RECORDED MUSIC





says Bridgers. The Secretly Group label launched the Bridgers-hosted *Saddest Factory Radio Show* on Sirius in March — the same month it held its first showcase at South by Southwest. “Watching everyone play from the audience of people singing along has been my favorite part so far,” she says.

### Shari Bryant Omar Grant

CO-PRESIDENTS, ROC NATION LABEL

Roc Nation’s label division landed another massive win with J. Cole’s *The Off-Season*, his sixth No. 1 album and a huge streaming success that has racked up 1.2 million equivalent album units since its release in May 2021. But the Roc’s two co-presidents, who emphasize that they’re in a marathon and not a sprint, have had their artist development efforts pay off this past year as well, particularly with Willow and Snoh Aalegra, the latter earning two Grammy Award nominations this year for her album *Temporary Highs in the Violet Skies*.

### Ken Bunt

PRESIDENT, DISNEY MUSIC GROUP

### David Abdo

SENIOR VP/GM, DISNEY MUSIC GROUP

### Robbie Snow

SENIOR VP OF GLOBAL MARKETING, DISNEY MUSIC GROUP

### Karen Lieberman

VP OF SALES AND DIGITAL, DISNEY MUSIC GROUP

Bunt cites the massive impact of *Encanto*’s soundtrack as Disney Music Group’s greatest success of the past year, noting his team “worked tirelessly” to release the soundtrack, music videos and social media creative in over 23 languages. That led to “billions of streams” globally, he says — including for the Hot 100 No. 1 “We Don’t Talk About Bruno” — while the soundtrack also found success at mainstream and adult top 40 and adult contemporary radio. The company is also set to launch a 32-city *Encanto* singalong concert tour in the United States this summer.

### Corey Calder

SENIOR VP OF MARKETING AND BRANDS, ARTIST PARTNER GROUP/ARTIST PUBLISHING GROUP

At Artist Partner Group — the home of Charlie Puth, Kehlani and Alec Benjamin, among others — Calder continues concentrating on rising acts like Cico P, who earned his first gold record with the viral 2019 TikTok hit “Tampa,” and Lexi Jayde, who’s gearing up for her second EP, *Close to Closure*, which will include production and writing assistance from FINNEAS. Calder says he attributes their achievements to a “fearless” team and continued guidance from APG CEO Mike Caren.

### Missi Callazzo

CO-OWNER, MRI ENTERTAINMENT

While the company’s acts spent 2021 eagerly anticipating the return of live music, a couple of significant anniversaries became marketing hooks for MRI’s Megaforce label. Last year was the 40th anniversary of pioneering thrash band Anthrax, while 2022 marks 25 years since Third Eye Blind’s breakthrough self-titled album started its journey to multiplatinum status. “One of the things that has been the most fun is watching artists come back to life after the lockdown,” says Callazzo. “The COVID-19 pandemic stopped touring completely, and it seemed like many artists lost a bit of their identity. Watching artists gear up to go back on the road and release music has been a real highlight for me in the past year.”

### Don Cannon

### Leighton “Lake” Morrison

### Tyree “DJ Drama” Simmons

CO-FOUNDERS, GENERATION NOW

After scoring with the 2020 hit “WHATS POPPIN,” Generation Now star Jack Harlow earned his first Hot 100 No. 1 in 2021 as a featured artist on Lil Nas X’s “Industry Baby.” Then, in April, Harlow reached the summit again after his song “First Class” debuted atop the chart. The hit follows Tyler, The Creator’s Grammy win for best rap album for *Call Me If You Get Lost* featuring DJ Drama, and the label — through its partnership with Atlantic Records — has its sights set on more. Says Morrison: “Watch what comes next.”

### Marie Clausen

HEAD OF NINJA TUNE NORTH AMERICA/HEAD OF GLOBAL STREAMING, NINJA TUNE

It has been a big year at Ninja Tune as Clausen watched many of the label’s artists, including Bonobo, Hiatus Kaiyote and PVA, earn Grammy nominations. She also played a role in the success of the top five releases on The U.K. Official Albums chart from acts like Bicep, Bonobo and Black Country. Ninja Tune last year also relaunched its Big Dada imprint, under the leadership of staff who identify as Black, ethnic minorities and people of color. It also affirmed its commitment to become a carbon-neutral company by the end of 2021 “and carbon-negative beyond that,” says Clausen. In February, electronic duo ODESZA released “The Last Goodbye,” the title track to the group’s forthcoming album, boosting its monthly Spotify listeners to over 6 million.

### J. Cole

CO-FOUNDER, DREAMVILLE

### Ibrahim “Ib” Hamad

CO-FOUNDER, DREAMVILLE; MANAGER (J. COLE)

### Candace Rodney

EXECUTIVE VP, DREAMVILLE; PRESIDENT, DREAMVILLE RECORDS/DREAMVILLE STUDIOS

### Adam Roy

PARTNER, DREAMVILLE; PRESIDENT, DREAMVILLE FESTIVAL/DREAMVILLE APPAREL

Over the past 12 months, the multifaceted Dreamville, co-founded by Cole and Hamad, achieved its most successful period yet both financially and in terms of cultural impact, according to the company. (It does not report specific revenue results.) Cole’s *The Off-Season*, released in partnership with Roc Nation, became his sixth No. 1 album on the Billboard 200, and Dreamville Records labelmates Bas, Ari Lennox, J.I.D., Earthgang, Cozz and Lute all achieved chart success, while the label also organized its first major post-pandemic tour last fall. Dreamville Studios, under Rodney, has sold projects to Apple and FX Studios. Its podcast, *The Messenger*, debuted in January 2021 on Spotify and expanded to Apple Music. The Dreamville Festival, under Roy, returned for two days in Raleigh, N.C., in April, after a two-year absence, with Cole joined by Lil Baby, Wiz Khalifa, DJ Drama and others.

### Tomas Cookman

FOUNDER/CEO, INDUSTRIA WORKS/NACIONAL RECORDS

After hosting the Latin Alternative Music Conference online for two years in a row due to the pandemic, Cookman plans a grand return for the annual event in New York in July, which was preceded by a three-day virtual conference in April. Industria Works, which includes a label and management division, had a 100% increase

in revenue and a 200% increase in stream volume year over year, according to the company. “We are excited and encouraged by the growth of not only our company,” says Cookman, “but of the overall Latin music industry as well.”

### Mike Curb

CHAIRMAN, CURB RECORDS, CURB | WORD ENTERTAINMENT

Curb Records continues to have hits on both the country and contemporary Christian charts. *What Are We Waiting For?* — the latest studio album from sibling duo for KING & COUNTRY — debuted in March at No. 1 on Top Christian Albums and No. 7 on the Billboard 200. The album also included the hit single “Relate,” which topped Hot Christian Songs for three weeks. Meanwhile, Curb country artist Dylan Scott collaborated with Stoney Creek act Jimmie Allen on an anthem of unity, “In Our Blood,” released in May.

### Ángel Del Villar

FOUNDER/CEO, DEL RECORDS

For the past 14 years, Del Villar has been a pioneer in the growth of regional Mexican music. He played an important role in the development of the *corridos progresivos* genre with Gerardo Ortiz and Regulo Caro, revived the *sierreño* style with Ariel Camacho, Ulises Chaidez and Los Plebes del Rancho, and propelled the *corridos verdes* sound with T3R Elemento. Most recently, Del Records act Eslabon Armado’s *Nostalgia* became the first regional Mexican album to reach the top 10 of the Billboard 200.



Executives of **GENERATION NOW**, in partnership with Atlantic Records, have helped **JACK HARLOW** top the Hot 100 with “First Class.”

BRIAN FRIEDMAN FOR VARIETY



# CONGRATULATIONS



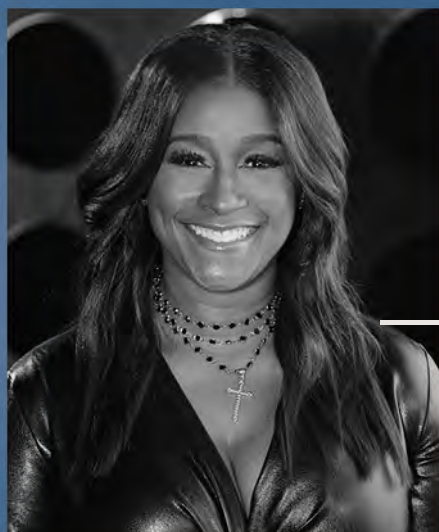
---

GAZI



---

NIMA  
ETMINAN



---

TINA  
DAVIS



---

MOBOLAJI  
KAREEM



---

MOODY  
JONES

# 2022 BILLBOARD INDIE POWER PLAYERS





**Brandon "Lil Bibby" Dickinson  
George "G Money" Dickinson  
Peter "Pete" Jideonwo**

**PARTNERS, GRADE A PRODUCTIONS**

*Fighting Demons*, the second posthumous album from Juice WRLD, was released in December by Grade A Productions in partnership with Interscope Records as a tie-in with the HBO Max documentary on the rapper and hit No. 2 on the Billboard 200. "We also produced the first annual Juice WRLD Day in Chicago at the United Center, which was really well received by his fans," says Jideonwo. "The Kid LAROI also continued to build his fan base all around the world, which has been amazing to see."

**Seth England**

**PARTNER/CEO, BIG LOUD**

Led by the success of Morgan Wallen's *Dangerous: The Double Album*, the No. 1 album on the year-end all-genre Billboard 200 chart for 2021, Big Loud is having "our biggest year yet," says England, who oversees the label, management and publishing divisions. England cites the success of other artists on the roster, which include Jake Owen, Lily Rose and Chris Lane, as well as the second volume of HARDY's multi-artist collaboration, *Hixtape*. "We pushed the envelope and will take the energy and momentum from the

"Watching artists gear up to go back on the road has been a real highlight for me in the past year." —MISSI CALLAZZO

past 18 months into the coming year as we continue to grow and achieve," he says.

**Matt Gale**

**PARTNER/CEO, PHOTO FINISH RECORDS; EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP/AGENT, CREATIVE ARTISTS AGENCY**

**Mike Marquis**

**PARTNER/COO, PHOTO FINISH RECORDS; AGENT, CREATIVE ARTISTS AGENCY**

The Maine, after a 15-year career on both major and indie labels, scored its first top 20 hit on Alternative Airplay with "Sticky" thanks to a big push from Photo Finish Records. The band had "never reached the recognition they deserved," Marquis says of the Arizona rockers. Photo Finish has also welcomed new acts McKenna Grace, Joan, Billy Lockett and AVIV to the label, plus welcomed back to its roster Misterwives, whose Photo Finish-released "Reflections" and "Our Own House" were recently certified platinum and gold, respectively. "With our small but

mighty team," says Marquis, "we are lucky to be able to treat every artist as a priority."

**Kris Gillespie**

**U.S. MANAGING DIRECTOR, DOMINO RECORDING COMPANY**

The pandemic became an opportunity for entrepreneurial creativity for Domino, which boosted its U.S. revenue by 21% in 2021, according to the company. The success was driven by robust vinyl sales across the catalog, steady streaming growth and over 30% growth in revenue from YouTube, with added resources dedicated specifically to that area, according to Gillespie. "Timely and imaginative campaigns" that triggered growth included those for hitmakers like My Bloody Valentine and U.K. breakthrough act Wet Leg, which has already gone global. "None of these achievements," he says, "would be attainable without the hard work and creativity of the artists."

**Daniel Glass**

**FOUNDER/CEO, GLASSNOTE RECORDS**

**Chris Scully**

**GM/COO, GLASSNOTE RECORDS**

During the past 18 months, Glassnote Records has notched successes from Chvrches, Hamilton Leithauser, Jade Bird, Flight Facilities and Norwegian songstress Aurora, whose January debut album, *The Gods We Can Touch*, followed TikTok sensation "Runaway." Glassnote also expanded its roster with its first Latin artist, Silvana Estrada, along with Ripe, Edie Bens and Cecilia Casatleman, the lattermost of whom is working on a debut album with Grammy-winning producer Don Was. Despite the pandemic, "our artists and our team worked diligently to come up with new and innovative ways to remain connected while in an at-home world," Glass says. "As touring returns, we are now getting to see the fruits of our two-plus-years labor."

**Michael Goldstone**

**FOUNDER/CO-OWNER, MOM + POP MUSIC**

**Thaddeus Rudd**

**CO-OWNER, MOM + POP MUSIC**

For Goldstone, mom + pop's development of electro-folk singer-songwriter Ashe and her 2021 debut album, *Ashlyn*, made him feel like a proud parent in the indie-music

industry. "The album had big moments, including a synch of 'Moral of the Story' for Netflix's *To All the Boys: P.S. I Still Love You* and 'Till Forever Falls Apart' with FINNEAS," he says. "A Niall Horan remix [of 'Moral of the Story'] and nearly a billion streams later, a career is cemented because of the collective work that had been done to develop her in the previous years." Most recently, mom + pop scored a coup by signing Tegan and Sara after the duo's Warner Music contract ended in 2021. The deal reunites the band with Goldstone, who originally signed the act to Sire Records in 2016.

**Elliot Grainge**

**FOUNDER/CEO, 10K PROJECTS**

**Zach Friedman**

**Tony Talamo**

**CO-PRESIDENTS, 10K PROJECTS**

Grainge says the past 12 months have been "hugely important to the evolution of 10K." The label re-signed Trippie Redd, "ensuring that his incredible music will be on 10K for years to come. And we've brought in some exciting new artists in Leah Kate and JELEEL! On the executive side, we acquired Homemade Projects, bringing in Zach Friedman and Tony Talamo as co-presidents of the label." And internal promotions, says Grainge, "position us for even more success."

**Brett Gurewitz**

**FOUNDER/CEO, EPITAPH RECORDS**

In true punk-rock fashion, Gurewitz and his team at Epitaph, ANTI- and their sibling labels have risen to the challenge of another rough year for the music industry. Major new releases have included Danny Elfman's *Big Mess* and the Neko Case retrospective *Wild Creatures* on ANTI- and Epitaph titles from Falling in Reverse, Bad Suns and Architects. The company has been busy on the signing front, too, with Epitaph bringing in The Linda Lindas, Magnolia Park and DRAIN while ANTI- added Fleet Foxes, M. Ward and Ezra Furman to its roster. Label chief and Bad Religion guitarist Gurewitz says, "Epitaph has treated its artists and employees with fairness, respect and compassion while at the same time growing the business 40% overall and close to 90% vinyl growth year over year."



**GRADE A PRODUCTIONS**, together with Interscope Records, released *Fighting Demons*, the second posthumous album from **JUICE WRLD**, which reached No. 2 on the Billboard 200.





# CONGRATULATIONS

MNRK PRES/CEO, CHRIS TAYLOR

ON BEING RECOGNIZED FOR  
**6** CONSECUTIVE YEARS

# billboard

## INDIE POWER PLAYER 2022



**billboard**  
R&B/HIP-HOP  
POWER PLAYER  
2021



ALAN GRUNBLATT  
PRESIDENT, URBAN



**billboard**  
WOMEN  
IN MUSIC  
2022



ASHLEY POITEVIN  
VICE PRESIDENT OF  
ARTIST MANAGEMENT



**billboard**  
INTERNATIONAL  
POWER PLAYER  
2022



TED MAY  
MANAGING DIRECTOR  
OF U.K. AND  
INTERNATIONAL



**billboard**  
WOMEN  
IN MUSIC  
2020



GINA MILLER  
SVP &  
GENERAL MANAGER  
INSPIRATIONAL



**billboard**  
INTERNATIONAL  
POWER PLAYER  
2021



GARY MANDEL  
VICE PRESIDENT  
CREATIVE



AND TO OUR OTHER LIST MAKERS... WHO SAID BUTTERFLIES WEREN'T POWERFUL?



**MNRK MUSIC GROUP**

THE MIGRATION CONTINUES...

[www.mnrk.com](http://www.mnrk.com)



### Simon Halliday

WORLDWIDE MANAGING DIRECTOR, 4AD

For Halliday, the achievements of 4AD's staff have been "just as rewarding" as the success of its artists. While Big Thief, Aldous Harding, Erika de Casier, Tkay Mardza and Helado Negro have all succeeded during the past year, he notes that many employees have also been promoted, with interns and junior-level staff now working as label managers and department heads. "Seeing people thrive and overcome challenges," he says, "is the best part of my job."

### Greg Hammer

MANAGING DIRECTOR, RED BULL RECORDS

This year is the 15th anniversary of Red Bull Records, and the company has had a lot to celebrate. Hammer says he's particularly proud of signee AWOLnation having its hit single "Sail" earn diamond certification in 2021 — only the third independently released song in history to reach that milestone, according to the label. Meanwhile, labelmates BLXST and Beartooth landed some of their highest chart positions over the last year.

### Jimmy Humilde

CO-FOUNDER, RANCHO HUMILDE

Humilde built his powerhouse regional Mexican label by breaking rules and eschewing airplay — "Programmers never wanted to play my acts," he says — and focusing instead on streaming and digital sales. Rancho Humilde was a three-time finalist at the Billboard Latin Music Awards in categories including top Latin albums label of the year, and in April, star artist Natanael Cano — a pioneer of trap *tumbao* — claimed his first top 10 on the Latin Rhythm Albums chart with *NataKong*. In May, Rancho Humilde acts including Fuerza Regida and Los Gemelos de Sinaloa had three tracks on Hot Latin Songs.

### Matthew Johnson

OWNER/PRESIDENT, FAT POSSUM

### Melinda Caffin

COO, FAT POSSUM

New and old music from U.K. act Spiritualized has been getting attention from Fat Possum. Led by Jason Pierce, the band's only constant member, Spiritualized released the critically acclaimed album *Everything Is Beautiful* in April, its third since joining Fat Possum's roster in 2012. Pierce also rereleased the entire Spiritualized catalog, dating back to the band's first album in 1992, featuring fresh artwork and mastering. "Fat Possum has been working with our longtime partner, Jason Pierce, for over a decade," says Caffin, "and [our ability] to reinvigorate his catalog alongside a

brilliant new release has been a testament to what our label does best."

### Gordon Kerr

PRESIDENT/CEO, BLACK RIVER ENTERTAINMENT

With a label roster that includes Kelsea Ballerini and Ray Fulcher, and a publishing roster with writers including Jason Earley, Kerr says he is most proud of his team, which has "been able to keep their passion alive" through the pandemic, creating music that provides "some encouragement and even a little fun during a time that has been so challenging for our music community and the world in general." This year, Ballerini earned her latest Country Airplay chart-topper with "half of my hometown" (featuring Kenny Chesney), while Fulcher will release his debut album on June 10.

### Allen Kovac

FOUNDER/CEO, BETTER NOISE MUSIC

Last year, Kovac's Better Noise ranked at No. 1 on *Billboard's* Mainstream Rock Airplay Imprints, Hot Hard Rock Songs Imprints and Hot Hard Rock Songs Labels year-end tallies. All Good Things scored a No. 1 Mainstream Rock Airplay track with "For the Glory," Five Finger Death Punch's *F8* album was certified gold, and Better Noise opened its fifth international office, in Paris. "We pride ourselves in branding the company as 'the artist development company,'" says Kovac. "The proof of concept with international, streaming, touring and radio success is fulfilling for our global team and our artists."

### David LaPointe

FOUNDER/OWNER, LP

Under LaPointe, LP continues to focus on salsa and tropical music, which led to its status as a finalist as tropical airplay label of the year at the 2021 Billboard Latin Music Awards. LP is home to rising star Luis Figueroa, whose single "Hasta el Sol de Hoy" reached No. 1 on Tropical Airplay, and icon Victor Manuelle, whose "Victimas las Dos" with La India also led the chart. Says LaPointe, "A great song, a great live performance, will always prevail."

### Sung Su Lee

CEO, SM ENTERTAINMENT

### Young Jun Tak

COO, SM ENTERTAINMENT

In 2021, K-pop boy band NCT set new records, surpassing 10 million in worldwide album sales, says Lee. NCT's Johnny received an invitation to this year's Met Gala in New York, and girl group Aespa performed on the Coachella main stage as part of 88rising's Head in the Clouds Forever showcase. Says Lee: "We are proud to be seen as trailblazers in the global music industry during such an exciting time for K-pop."

### Jon Loba

PRESIDENT, BMG NASHVILLE

### Thomas Scherer

PRESIDENT OF REPERTOIRE AND MARKETING FOR LOS ANGELES AND NEW YORK, BMG

Loba and Scherer lead a label culture in which artists are encouraged to find

their unique voices and push boundaries. "We're continuing to see new deals with established artists seeking more control over their careers," says Scherer, who worked with his team to sign 5 Seconds of Summer, Maxwell and Logic. BMG also scored big wins recently with its acquisition of Mötley Crüe's recording catalog and the rights to administer George Harrison's Harrisongs publishing catalog. The latter deal builds on BMG's joint venture with the late Beatle's Dark Horse Records, which includes licensing agreements for works by Leon Russell and Joe Strummer, among others.

### Gustavo Lopez

CEO, SABAN MUSIC GROUP

### Corey Berkowitz

SENIOR VP/HEAD OF POP AND URBAN A&R, SABAN MUSIC GROUP

Saban Music Group, founded by Haim Saban in 2019, has strategically grown its roster to include Chesca, Static & Ben El, Mergui, Loyal Lobos and hitmaker Don Omar — who last year signed a groundbreaking multiyear partnership with the company. These signings have set up Saban to become a "unique vessel [for] worldwide exposure for developing and established artists alike," says Berkowitz. Most recently, the label released Don Omar's comeback track, "Se Menea" (featuring rapper Nio Garcia), which peaked at No. 15 on Hot Latin Songs.

### Justin Lubliner

OWNER, THE DARKROOM

"Watching Billie Eilish win an Oscar, three years after we started that process, was an incredible moment," says Lubliner, citing the best original song Academy Award that went to Eilish and brother Finneas O'Connell for "No Time To Die," the title track to the latest James Bond film. In partnership with Interscope, Lubliner's label released Eilish's 2019 smash debut album and 2021's *Happier Than Ever*, both chart-toppers on the Billboard 200.

### David Macias

PRESIDENT, THIRTY TIGERS

Since Macias co-founded Thirty Tigers over 20 years ago, the company has worked with such names as Alanis Morissette, Jason Isbell and the 400 Unit, and Patty Griffin. Last year, Thirty Tigers was instrumental in guiding Morgan Wade's breakthrough album, *Reckless*. The company grew in markets outside the United States and brought more international artists into the fold. Macias says he is "proudest of how well the Thirty Tigers team kept our customer service at the highest levels [during the pandemic] and our business thrived."



**BILLIE EILISH** has achieved the status of cultural phenomenon through her releases on label **THE DARKROOM**, owned by **JUSTIN LUBLINER**, who partnered with Interscope Records.



**CONGRATULATIONS TO**  
**JONNY SHIPES**

**BILLBOARD 2022**  
**INDIE POWER PLAYER**  
**HONOREE**



**CINEMATIC**

**FROM THE TEAM AT CINEMATIC MUSIC GROUP**





Despite the death of **PAPER ROUTE EMPIRE** founder and rapper **YOUNG DOLPH** in 2021, label partner **JEREMEL "DADDYO" MOORE** has continued to guide the success of the label's hip-hop roster.

### Josh Mendez

CO-FOUNDER/COO, RICHMUSIC

With the re-signing of Panamanian singer-songwriter Sech and producer Dimelo Flow — as well as new artists and producers including Latin Grammy winner paopao, Symon Dice, Thyago, Animal and Rike Music — RichMusic is “strengthening and growing,” says Mendez. “We’re developing promising new acts, including our first-ever female artist, paopao.” RichMusic has also “kick-started community impact initiatives,” he adds, “empowering youth in our hometown of Miami to realize their hopes and dreams.”

### Martin Mills

CHAIRMAN, BEGGARS GROUP

### Nabil Ayers

PRESIDENT, BEGGARS GROUP U.S.

### Claire Taylor

GM, BEGGARS GROUP U.S.

### Brandon Becker

GLOBAL HEAD OF STREAMING, BEGGARS GROUP

### Risa Matsuki

VP OF PROMOTIONS, BEGGARS GROUP

### Miwa Okumura

SENIOR VP OF WEST COAST OPERATIONS AND LICENSING, BEGGARS GROUP

The staff of Beggars Group — whose labels are home to bands including Big Thief, The National and Spoon —

experienced internal success in the past year with the promotion of “multiple long-time employees to roles including president, GM, global head of streaming [and] product manager, as well as label positions at 4AD and Matador Records,” says Ayers. The sales and content teams at Beggars are also growing, in addition to several new roles such as a director of streaming and another product manager that were added to keep up with the increasing needs of artists.

### Jeremel “Daddyo” Moore

CO-FOUNDER, PAPER ROUTE EMPIRE

Despite the death in November 2021 of Paper Route Empire founder Adolph Thornton Jr. (better known as the rapper Young Dolph), Moore has continued to guide a promising hip-hop roster at the label, which includes Big Moochie Grape, Snupe Bandz, Kenny Muney and Dolph protégé and cousin Key Glock. In January, the label’s artists united for the mixtape *LLD (Long Live Young Dolph)*, which debuted at No. 44 on the Billboard 200. Moore attributes the year’s success to “executing like a major label.”

### Norbert Nix

PARTNER/PRESIDENT, TRIPLE TIGERS RECORDS

Now in its sixth year, Triple Tigers counts

artists including Scotty McCreery, Russell Dickerson, Cam and Jordan Fletcher as part of its roster. The label has notched another Country Airplay No. 1 with McCreery’s “You Time,” as well as its first triple-platinum-certified single with Dickerson’s “Yours.” Meanwhile, McCreery’s latest, “Damn Strait,” is at No. 11 and climbing on Country Airplay, and Dickerson’s “She Likes It” has earned over 75 million U.S. streams.

### Lynn Oliver-Cline

FOUNDER/CEO, RIVER HOUSE ARTISTS

### Zebb Luster

VP/GM, RIVER HOUSE ARTISTS

Independent label, publisher and artist development company River House recently celebrated the rise to No. 1 of Luke Combs’ “Doin’ This,” the first single from his third full-length album, *Growin’ Up*, due June 24. The song was co-written by rising star Drew Parker, also a River House act. In March, the company announced a new venture with Warner Nashville and Elektra Records. “They are a passionate and collaborative team,” says Oliver-Cline, “and are allowing us to truly be the artist development company we want to be.”

### Jonathan Poneman

CO-FOUNDER/CO-PRESIDENT, SUB POP RECORDS

### Tony Kiewel

CO-PRESIDENT, SUB POP RECORDS

The pioneering Seattle label co-founded by Poneman, which started modestly in the late 1980s and helped launch the grunge explosion of the early 1990s, has survived the setbacks of the pandemic. Kiewel credits “an incredible team of co-workers and artists” that has persevered. “We’ve not only survived those tribulations, but we’ve grown our business, tackled massive systems upgrades and released some of our biggest albums to date from Beach House and Father John Misty,” says Kiewel. “All while continuing to honor our core mission of helping newer artists like Suki Waterhouse, Hannah Jadagu and CHAI develop their art and build their audiences.”

### Louis Posen

PRESIDENT, HOPELESS RECORDS; EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SUB CITY

After founding the alternative rock/pop punk label Hopeless Records in

the 1990s — and creating its nonprofit Sub City in 1999 — Posen says his team “has been leading the way on the new Gen Z artist sound.” The label’s artists — including DE’WAYNE, Scene Queen, LØLØ, Noahfinnce, Stand Atlantic and Point North — “are paving a way for a new genre and community that welcomes and embraces being different and weird,” Posen says. “It’s an attitude and a lifestyle that connects with artists on multiple levels, whether it be on TikTok, Twitch, in person or in the metaverse.”

### Bonnie Raitt

### Kathy Kane

### Annie Heller-Gutwillig

CO-DIRECTORS, REDWING RECORDS

See story, page 71.

### Paul Roper

PRESIDENT, DUALTONE RECORDS

Dualtone began its year by helping The Lumineers achieve their third straight No. 1 on Top Album Sales with *Brightside*, while the album’s title track reached No. 2 on Rock Airplay. “As The Lumineers peaked, Amos Lee simultaneously had his most successful single in over a decade with ‘Worry No More,’” says Roper of Lee’s track, which reached No. 6 on Triple A. “Our direct-to-consumer platforms, the Dualtone online store and our vinyl subscription service, Magnolia Record Club, have exploded in the past 12 months and are close to tripling our year-over-year growth,” he adds. “These e-commerce platforms are great differentiators for our label.” He credits their growth to “the strategic work of our incredible staff.”

### Jon Salter

PRESIDENT, ATO RECORDS

ATO welcomed Old Crow Medicine Show back to its roster in October 2021 after the band left for Columbia Records Nashville in 2017 and put out the group’s new album, *Paint This Town* — its first in four years — in April. The label also celebrated wins for newer acts including Black Pumas, whose 2019 self-titled debut album and its single “Colors” are both approaching gold certification, according to Salter. “To witness several of our younger artists,” such as Nilüfer Yanya and Amyl and The Sniffers, “have breakthrough, acclaimed albums reaching wider audiences with elevated campaigns is the ultimate achievement,” he says, “and the most fulfilling.” ATO has also seen “promising growth” in its TV/film licensing and direct-sales departments in the last year, with the latter benefiting from “the increased demand [for] vinyl” releases, including catalog vinyl reissues, says Salter.

“We’ve not only survived, but we’ve grown our business and released some of our biggest albums to date.” —TONY KIEWEL

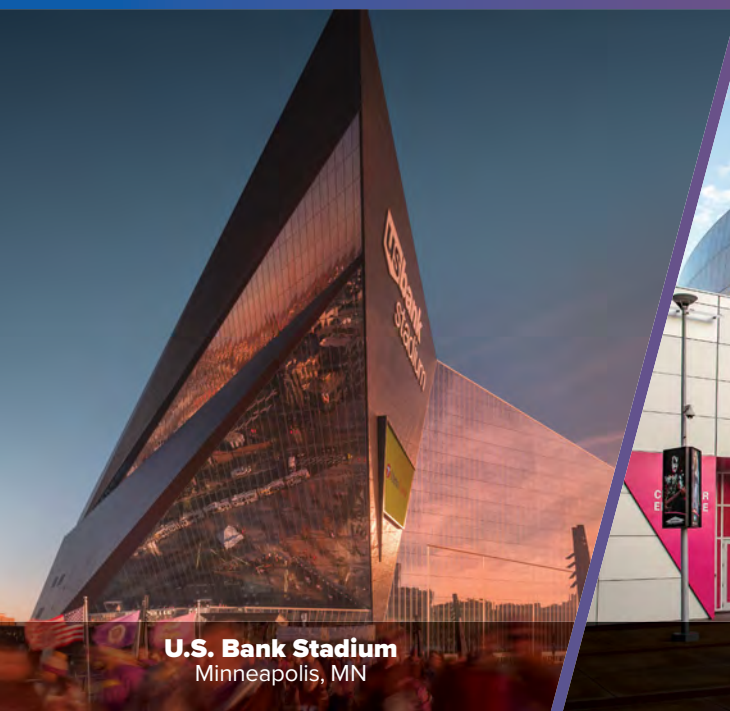




# LEADERS IN LIVE

**#1 partner** of the world's leading event promoters, annually hosting more concerts, professional and minor league sports, family shows, conventions, exhibitions and events.

**The Greek Theatre**  
Los Angeles, CA



**U.S. Bank Stadium**  
Minneapolis, MN



**T-Mobile Center**  
Kansas City, MO



**Capital One Hall**  
Tysons, VA

## THE LARGEST VENUE NETWORK

As the world's leading venue management company and producer of live event experiences, ASM Global is the preeminent management and content partner with over **350+ premier venues worldwide.**

**LEARN MORE AT [ASMGLOBAL.COM](http://ASMGLOBAL.COM)**



**27**  
STADIUMS

**116**  
ARENAS

**84**  
THEATERS



### Andy Serrao

PRESIDENT, FEARLESS RECORDS, CONCORD

### Ryan Whalley

PRESIDENT, LOMA VISTA RECORDINGS, CONCORD

### Rebecca Berman

MICHAEL NANCE

SENIOR VPs OF INTERNATIONAL, CONCORD RECORDED MUSIC

### Michele Smith

VP OF ESTATE AND LEGACY BRAND MANAGEMENT, CONCORD

Under Serrao, Concord's hard-rock-oriented Fearless Records scored success in the past year with iDKHOW, The Pretty Reckless and Ice Nine Kills, the lattermost of which co-headlined The Trinity of Terror Tour this spring. Whalley has guided Loma Vista Recordings, home to St. Vincent, Rise Against, Manchester Orchestra and Robert Glasper, winner of the Grammy Award for best progressive R&B album for *Dinner Party: Dessert*. With responsibility for global marketing for Concord Recorded Music repertoire, Berman and Nance have raised the international profile of acts including Rise Against, The Offspring, Korn, Chase Atlantic, Yola, Allison Russell, Ghost and Denzel Curry — while supporting Concord's relaunch of Tears for Fears. Smith oversees label partnerships and brand licensing for the iconic Stax Records and the estates of Billie Holiday and Tammy Wynette. She has worked with the Concord Stax Scholarship Fund on plans to raise \$1 million to benefit 100 students at the Memphis-based Stax Music Academy over the next five years.

### Moe Shalizi

FOUNDER/CEO, PICK SIX RECORDS/THE SHALIZI GROUP

Last year, Pick Six Records and the Shalizi Group team helped their artist Morray go from an unknown rapper from Fayetteville, N.C., to a rising hip-hop star. With assistance from partners at Interscope and Audible Treats, Pick Six guided Morray to two Grammy Award nominations for his work with J. Cole on the No. 2 Hot 100 hit "my.life," best new artist nominations at the BET Hip-Hop Awards and Soul Train Awards, and placement on the XXL Freshman list. Morray also landed a gold record with "Quicksand"; released his debut mixtape, *Street Sermons*; and hit No. 1 on the Emerging Artists chart.

### YJ Shin

PRESIDENT, BIGHIT MUSIC

Since HYPE spun off BIGHIT MUSIC as an independent label in 2021, Shin has led the South Korean and global promotions of the groups BTS and Tomorrow X Together — which both scored top five hits on the *Billboard* charts last year. (BTS had three No. 1s on the *Billboard* Global 200, while TXT's *The Chaos Chapter: FREEZE* peaked at No. 5 on the *Billboard* 200.) During the pandemic, Shin took "the rapidly

changing artist and fan perspective into consideration," proposing "borderless, all-encompassing" promotional and marketing strategies, which broke from traditional approaches of carrying out operations on a region-by-region basis. That allowed BTS and TXT to enhance their presence in key global markets, including the United States, Japan and the United Kingdom.

### Jonny Shipes

FOUNDER, CINEMATIC MUSIC GROUP

Shipes' partner at 4lifers Film & TV, internet comedian Druski, has grown into a creative force within hip-hop culture, from his scene-stealing guest appearance in the music video for Drake's Hot 100 No. 2 hit "Laugh Now Cry Later" to starring alongside Grammy-nominated rapper Jack Harlow in their comedy sketches. But Shipes says he's most proud of "all the talent found at Coulda Been Records," which is Druski's satirical record label, where he has aspiring rappers freestyle for him over Instagram Live on the label's account with 300,000-plus followers.

### Paul Sizelove

PRESIDENT, GAITHER MUSIC GROUP

Expansion has been pivotal to Gaither Music Group over the past year, according to Sizelove. The Gaither brand launched its first TV specials and video recordings with Carrie Underwood and Reba McEntire and strengthened its relationship with Capitol Nashville. Gaither Music Group also released new projects by The Oak Ridge Boys and Gaither Vocal Band, in addition to assimilating the Sun Records catalog and brand, which bolstered ties with Virgin Music Distribution and Capitol Christian Music Group. Sizelove credits the team that "ingested a steady flow of new catalogs, led initiatives across consumer platforms that have increased revenue streams and created a winning strategy that combines decades of masters with newly recorded content."

### Brian Slagel

CHAIRMAN/CEO, METAL BLADE RECORDS

### Tracy Vera

PRESIDENT, METAL BLADE RECORDS

Metal Blade marks its 40th anniversary in 2022. The label will forever be associated with Metallica — Metal Blade released the group's first song on a compilation — but it prides itself on forging lasting relationships with bands. "We love working long term with artists we respect like King Diamond, Whitechapel and Killswitch Engage, who we consider family," Vera says. And Metal Blade refuses to rest on its laurels: Vera says the company "is still going strong with signing young bands like 200 Stab Wounds."

### John Smith

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS RECORDINGS

At the nonprofit record label of the Smithsonian Institution, Smith oversees a release schedule like none other — from the nine-CD *Smithsonian Anthology of Hip-Hop and Rap* to *Industrial Strength Bluegrass*, a history of Ohio bluegrass music. Smith signed and developed current acts including Vietnamese American singer-songwriter No-No Boy, folk performer Charlie Parr and the trio Lula Wares, and Smithsonian Folkways has achieved 36% year-over-year streaming growth, thanks to initiatives like its People's Picks playlist series, which delves into its deep catalog.

### Ben Swanson

CO-FOUNDER/COO, SECRETLY GROUP

### Chris Swanson

CO-FOUNDER/PRESIDENT OF A&R, SECRETLY GROUP

### Nick Blandford

MANAGING DIRECTOR OF AMERICAS, SECRETLY GROUP

### Hannah Carle

NORTH AMERICAN MARKETING DIRECTOR, SECRETLY GROUP

### Jon Coombs

VP OF A&R, SECRETLY GROUP

### Robby Morris

CREATIVE DIRECTOR, SECRETLY GROUP

Secretly Group had success in the past year across its family of labels. Japanese Breakfast, on Dead Oceans, earned two Grammy Award nominations including a nod for best new artist. Labelmate Mitski debuted at No. 5 on the *Billboard* 200. Jagjaguwar's Big Red Machine, a collaboration between The National's Aaron Dessner and Bon Iver's Justin

Vernon, drew creative contributions from Taylor Swift, among others. Phoebe Bridgers launched her Saddest Factory Records with new signings including Claud and MUNA. Meanwhile, Ben Swanson, with marketing assistance from Blandford, took the lead on Secretly Canadian's 25th-anniversary campaign, *Every Light on This Side of the Town*. The charitable fundraising venture, on behalf of the nonprofit New Hope for Families, was aimed at helping homeless families in Secretly Canadian's hometown of Bloomington, Ind., and has involved artists including Bridgers, Jim James, Goose, Bright Eyes, Bartees Strange and Madison McFerrin, as well as partnerships with Vans, Topo Designs and others.

### Arnold Taylor

CEO, SOUTH COAST MUSIC GROUP

### Daud Carter

EXECUTIVE VP OF A&R, SOUTH COAST MUSIC GROUP

### Garrett Williams

VP OF MARKETING/HEAD OF OPERATION, SOUTH COAST MUSIC GROUP

For Taylor, the most important achievement of South Coast Music Group in the past year — and throughout the pandemic — "has been to stay relevant while continuing to break our artists DaBaby, Toosii, Blacc Zacc, TiaCorine and Big Mali" through its partnership with Interscope Records. "We were extremely excited to introduce Tino Szn and Dustystaytrue with their debut projects in 2021," adds Taylor. This year, "we have been making a lot of noise with our new artists Dee Youngin' and Lil Shordie Scott with his 'Rocking a Cardigan in Atlanta' record," which cracked the Hot 100 in March.



Under ATO RECORDS president JON SALTER, OLD CROW MEDICINE SHOW returned to the label and, in April, released *Paint This Town*, its first album in four years.



**CONGRATULATIONS  
TO OUR FEARLESS LEADER**

**INDIE POWER PLAYER**

**20**



**22**

**SETH  
CEO**

**/**

**ENGLAND  
PARTNER**

**BIG LOUD**



### Chris Taylor

PRESIDENT/CEO, MNRK MUSIC GROUP

MNRK Music Group, formerly eOne Music, controls the catalogs of Last Gang Records, Dualtone Music Group and the publishing catalog of Chuck Berry. For Taylor, MNRK's biggest recent accomplishment was finalizing the sale of the Death Row catalog and trade name to Snoop Dogg in February. "Involvement with this iconic music brand for 13 years will be one of my career highlights," says Taylor. "The sale was a true win-win-win for all parties and a testament to the MNRK team, who have been proud custodians of the brand for decades."

### Abel "The Weeknd" Tesfaye

FOUNDER, XO RECORDS

### Wassim "Sal" Slaiby

CO-FOUNDER/CEO, XO RECORDS

### Amir "Cash" Esmailian

CO-FOUNDER, XO RECORDS

### La Mar C. Taylor

CO-FOUNDER/CREATIVE DIRECTOR, XO RECORDS

### Melissa Mahood

GM, XO RECORDS

This year, XO, in partnership with Republic Records, launched The Weeknd's hotly anticipated *Dawn FM*, which hit No. 1 on Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums, Top R&B Albums and Top Album Sales and No. 2 on the Billboard 200. See *You Next Wednesday*, the third album from Belly, was released in conjunction with Roc Nation and hit No. 4 on Heatseekers Albums. Says Slaiby: "XO is a brand, lifestyle and a music global success story that started from nothing."

### Pierre "Pee" Thomas

CEO, QUALITY CONTROL MUSIC

### Kevin "Coach K" Lee

COO, QUALITY CONTROL MUSIC

### Simone Mitchell

PRESIDENT, QUALITY CONTROL MUSIC

Quality Control's reign over hip-hop continues through its partnership with Motown Records with the success of Lil Baby and City Girls. *My Turn* rapper Lil Baby won his first Grammy Award for best melodic rap performance as a featured artist on Kanye West's "Hurricane," while duo City Girls performed at Coachella alongside their label counterpart. Now Quality Control is expanding its reach, announcing new ventures in sports, film and podcasting. Says Thomas: "It feels exciting and like the expansion is endless."

### Fiona Whelan Prine

### Jody Whelan

MANAGING PARTNERS, OH BOY RECORDS

At Oh Boy Records, the pioneering indie label co-founded by his late father, John Prine, Jody Whelan attributes its continued



**MNRK** president/CEO **CHRIS TAYLOR** guided the sale of the Death Row catalog and trade name to **SNOOP DOGG**.

success to the ability of the label's artists to steadily find ways to connect with and grow their audience. "Whether it's in-person events like our Vinyl Brew tour, our support of charitable events and nonprofits or unique ways to connect with people online, we've really focused on forging deeper connections within our larger community," he says of a roster that includes Dan Reeder, Kelsey Waldon, Tré Burt, Arlo McKinley and Emily Scott Robinson. With several Oh Boy acts set to tour this summer, says Whelan Prine, "It'll be a fun time traveling together and bringing some great music to our fans."

### Bryan "Birdman" Williams

### Ronald "Slim" Williams

CO-FOUNDERS/CO-CEOs, CASH MONEY RECORDS

Cash Money — which launched the careers of Lil Wayne, Drake and Nicki Minaj and more recently sent Young Thug and Juvenile to stardom — remains at the forefront of hip-hop. Ronald "Slim" Williams says that between May 2021 and April 2022, the label earned over \$55 million in total revenue, and Luminate tracks a total consumption of 6.5 million album-equivalent units for Cash Money. "As we prepare to release a new slate of artists, it's gratifying to see our catalog hold its value," he says. "It's a testament to our commitment to making great music and signing extremely talented artists."

### Dion "No ID" Wilson

CO-FOUNDER/CEO, ARTIUM RECORDINGS

ARTium hitmaker Snoh Aalegra earned her first Grammy nominations for best R&B performance ("Lost You") and best R&B album (*Temporary Highs in the Violet Skies*). The latter reached No. 24 on the Billboard 200 (Aalegra's highest

placement on the chart), and she's now playing a sold-out North American tour. With Afrobeats continuing to score big globally, Wilson says ARTium has also helped a newer discovery — rising Nigerian R&B singer-songwriter Ogi — navigate a partnership deal with Atlantic Records. "ARTium takes immense pride in tirelessly working to ensure our artists are productive, fruitful and creatively fulfilled, all while breaking boundaries," he says.

## LABELS & DISTRIBUTORS

### Paris Cabezas

### Ana González

MANAGING PARTNERS, INNERCAT MUSIC GROUP

### Garrett Schaefer

GM, INNERCAT MUSIC GROUP

A digital distributor for indie acts, InnerCat also has deals with over 60 digital service providers worldwide and offers artist services such as digital marketing (for names including Gilberto Santa Rosa, whose album *Colegas* won a Latin Grammy Award for best recording package), YouTube channel search optimization and revenue collection. This year, says Cabezas, the company introduced Play & Follow, a proprietary smart link that provides data on fan engagement to labels, managers and artists. InnerCat recently added a live production space and an in-house video team; a recording studio is now in the

works. Says Schaefer: "We want to provide everything to our clients in one place."

### Bob Frank

FOUNDER/CEO, BFE

After building BFE into a record label with even bigger distribution and more label services, Frank recently diversified his company by forming catalog acquisition division Red Shark Ventures, which acquired 33% of master recordings owned by Charlie Daniels in its first deal. Distributing such labels as Righteous Babe, Charly and earMusic — and recordings by Ani DiFranco, Alice Cooper, Marie Osmond and Joe Satriani among the 300 releases it issued last year — BFE has notched \$10 million in global revenue. "We expect our business to double in size again over the next two years," says Frank. "It's an incredible period of growth for us and the niche we are strongest in — physical and deluxe physical, which represents over 60% of our business."

### Ghazi

FOUNDER/CEO, EMPIRE

### Nima Etminan

COO, EMPIRE

### Tina Davis

SENIOR VP OF A&R, EMPIRE

### Mobolaji Kareem

REGIONAL HEAD OF WEST AFRICA, EMPIRE

### Moody Jones

SENIOR VP OF DIGITAL AND CREATIVE, EMPIRE

EMPIRE's expansion into West Asia and North Africa in 2021 demonstrates the label's far-reaching growth, which founder/CEO Ghazi says reflects the company's "commitment to building a global footprint" since its inception in 2010. This year, EMPIRE partnered with Blackground Records to release its coveted catalogs across streaming platforms, including the long-awaited music of the late Aaliyah. EMPIRE also contributed to the rise of cryptocurrency among creatives by paying artist Money Man's seven-figure advance in bitcoin through Cash App.

### Jason Peterson

CHAIRMAN/CEO, GODIGITAL MEDIA GROUP

### Barry Daffurn

PRESIDENT, GODIGITAL MEDIA GROUP

GoDigital widened its scope in 2021 to add Sound Royalties — a provider of royalty-backed advances to creators — to a business that already includes tech (AdShare) and media networks (VidaPrimo, mitú). In April, the Los Angeles-based company funded subsidiary Cinq Music (a distributor, label and publisher) to the tune of \$100 million "to acquire rights in the independent sector," says Daffurn, who adds that Cinq will be acquiring recordings and compositions — and signing creators to recording, publishing and distribution



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE DREAMER

# JOSH MENDEZ

RICHMUSIC'S CO-FOUNDER AND COO  
NAMED 2022 BILLBOARD INDIE POWER PLAYER





deals, bolstering a catalog that includes the Beluga Heights label and music by Jason Derulo and T.I.

**Jacqueline Saturn**

PRESIDENT, VIRGIN MUSIC LABEL & ARTIST SERVICES

**Matt Sawin**

GM, VIRGIN MUSIC LABEL & ARTIST SERVICES

**Adam Starr**

SENIOR VP OF MARKETING, VIRGIN MUSIC LABEL & ARTIST SERVICES

Virgin Music has been “on a continual growth curve,” says Sawin, citing worldwide distribution agreements forged in the past year with Primary Wave and Australia’s Mushroom Group. Alongside partner Thrive Music, the company also mounted an eight-month global campaign for ACRAZE’s streaming smash “Do It To It” (featuring Cherish), which peaked at No. 3 on Hot Dance/Electronic Songs and No. 65 on the Hot 100. These achievements have “illustrated the expansive global vision” at Virgin, Sawin adds. “Our team is firing on all cylinders.”

**Camille Soto Malavé**

CEO, GLAD EMPIRE

Last year was bittersweet for Soto Malavé and her company. After the success of “Te

Boté Remix” and signing a multimillion-dollar distribution deal with indie label Flow La Movie, company founder José Angel Hernandez died along with eight others in a December plane crash in the Dominican Republic, “leaving great sorrow,” says Soto Malavé. The partnership with Flow La Movie led to Glad Empire distributing hit singles such as Nio García’s “Travesuras Remix” and the Bad Bunny- and J Balvin-assisted “AM Remix,” co-produced by Hernandez. Looking ahead, Soto Malavé says she will expand Glad Empire’s recently launched gaming center to “create and monetize” gaming content.

**DISTRIBUTORS**

**Stacey Bedford**

CEO, BANDZOOGLE

Under Bedford’s direction amid the drop in touring income during the pandemic, digital distributor Bandzoogle helped creators sell over \$11.5 million in music, merchandise and tickets directly to fans, commission-free, in 2021. The company also acquired U.K.-based SoundJam, a DJ website-building platform. Most recently, Bandzoogle announced a new smart link

**“We’ve really focused on forging deeper connections within our larger community.”**  
**—JODY WHELAN**

feature and custom landing pages to its suite of tools for musicians. Smart links allow artists to more easily sell music directly to fans and also link to their work on streaming platforms from a single, mobile-friendly page on artists’ websites.

**Jorge Brea**

CEO, SYMPHONIC DISTRIBUTION

**Randall Foster**

CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER, SYMPHONIC DISTRIBUTION

**Nick Gordon**

CHIEF PARTNERSHIP OFFICER, SYMPHONIC DISTRIBUTION

**Janette Berrios**

HEAD OF CORPORATE MARKETING, SYMPHONIC DISTRIBUTION

Over the last year, Symphonic has prioritized technology to become the first distributor to offer clients TikTok Analytics and received a patent for a first-of-its-kind transfer tool to assist incoming clients in seamlessly moving their catalogs from another distributor without losing revenue. After expanding its offices to Brazil and Africa, Tampa, Fla.-based Symphonic landed new clients including Activision and Imogen Heap. The company also distributes the music of DoeChii, who is now signed to Top Dawg Entertainment.

**Kevin Breuner**

SENIOR VP OF ARTIST ENGAGEMENT AND EDUCATION, CD BABY

Breuner, a 16-year veteran of CD Baby, notes that the online independent music distributor recently reached the milestone of \$1 billion in payments to artists since the platform’s 1998 launch. “We’re also now representing publishing rights for over 2 million songs,” says Breuner, “which continues to ensure artists are collecting everything they are owed for their music.”

**Andrea Gleeson**

CEO, TUNECORE

Since its inception in 2005, TuneCore, which distributes music mainly for indie DIY artists (and also for some established acts and labels), has reached \$2.5 billion in collections for artist earnings from about 500 billion streams and 700 million downloads. TuneCore reported revenue of 35.8 million euros (\$40.1 million) last

year as part of Paris-based parent Believe’s year-end results. But that amount takes into consideration only the company’s fees for distributing music. Overall, *Billboard* estimates that TuneCore collected \$450 million to \$500 million for artists in 2021. “We want music creators to know that TuneCore is where you go to make money,” says Gleeson, “and by announcing our artists have earned \$2.5 billion, we’re showing receipts. While TuneCore is truly proud of reaching this immense milestone, all credit goes to our incredible artists.”

**Kristin Graziani**

PRESIDENT, STEM DISTRIBUTION

Independent distribution is about carving a niche to differentiate companies from their peers, and Stem, which started in 2016, positions itself as a tool kit that helps indie artists run their businesses. In August, Stem launched its Recoup Rules feature to help clients track and recoup expenses before calculating and distributing royalty splits. “This kind of transparency is unheard of in the music industry, even for superstar artists signed to big major-label deals,” says Graziani. A \$20 million investment in April will help develop more accounting tools to assist artists regardless of their distribution partner.

**Drew Hill**

VP OF PHYSICAL DISTRIBUTION, UTOPIA MUSIC; MANAGING DIRECTOR, PROPER MUSIC GROUP

In April, the distribution division of the United Kingdom’s Proper Music Group received the Queen’s Award for enterprise in international trade. The company has achieved a run of No. 1 hit albums from metalcore favorites Architects and indie rockers The Wombats, among others, and has delivered \$450 million in indie-label royalties, despite the pandemic and the challenge of post-Brexit trade policies, according to the company. Switzerland-based fintech group Utopia Music acquired Proper in January with plans for international expansion. “With physical music still pushing artists to the top of the charts,” says Hill, “I look forward to our work continuing to excel.”



**VIRGIN MUSIC**, in partnership with **THRIVE MUSIC**, drove a global campaign for **ACRAZE** that led to his track “Do It To It” reaching No. 3 on Hot Dance/Electronic Songs.





**SABAN** Music Group

CONGRATULATES  
**GUSTAVO LOPEZ**

**CEO**

**COREY BERKOWITZ**

**SVP, URBAN AND POP A&R**

FOR MAKING THIS YEARS  
**billboard**  
INDY POWER PLAYERS LIST

[WWW.SABANMUSIC.COM](http://WWW.SABANMUSIC.COM)



### Michael Howard

OPERATIONS DIRECTOR, REDEYE

### Laura Campbell Pittard

MARKETING DIRECTOR, REDEYE

### Hank Stockard

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR, REDEYE

### Jason Taylor

DIRECTOR OF SALES AND LABEL RELATIONS, REDEYE

As Redeye marks its 26th year as a distributor, the company has kept its sights focused on supporting indie labels and artists despite widespread supply chain issues. “We prioritized advising our labels on the latest marketplace trends, the growing demand for vinyl and the latest digital and physical marketing opportunities,” says Pittard. In the past 12 months, she adds, “we have received glowing feedback from our retail partners as the gold standard in packaging records and shipping on time, with product arriving in great condition.”

### Philip Kaplan

FOUNDER/CEO, DISTROKID

DistroKid launched 21 services that are free for company clients “and we’re continually building new things that are fun and useful to artists at every level,” says Kaplan. Examples include Hyperfollow, which creates a website for every release, helping fans find an artist’s music across multiple platforms; Promo Cards, which offers artists customizable graphics that artists can post across social media; and Synched Lyrics, which makes it easy for listeners to sing along with songs on Instagram and other platforms. Kaplan says his company “now distributes 30% to 40% of all new music in the world, which blows my mind — we’re thankful for and grateful to every artist who relies on DistroKid.”

### Cat Kreidich

PRESIDENT, ADA WORLDWIDE

### Sam Juneman

HEAD OF MARKETING AND SERVICES, ADA WORLDWIDE

### Samantha Moore

CHIEF OF STAFF, ADA WORLDWIDE

### Adriana Sein

HEAD OF INTERNATIONAL, ADA WORLDWIDE

### Marcus Siskind

HEAD OF U.S., ADA WORLDWIDE

### Andrea Slobodein

HEAD OF PRODUCT AND INTEGRATION, ADA WORLDWIDE

In early 2022, ADA signed Grammy-nominated producer Murda Beatz, who has racked up over 7 million U.S. streams with “One Shot,” and the company also arranged to distribute longtime dance-music executive Patrick Moxey’s labels Payday and Helix. “We’ve invested in the best people, combining major-label muscle with indie scrappiness,” says Kreidich, who took over as president of the Warner Music-owned distribution and label



Under founder/CEO **TONY LARIOS**, digital distributor TuStreams has built a roster of 6,000-plus artists including reggaetón star **DON OMAR**.

services company in April 2021, following eight years with The Orchard. “Our pitching team has tripled in size and brings genre specialization experience.”

### Tony Larios

FOUNDER/CEO, TUSTREAMS

With over 6,000 clients on the TuStreams roster, including regional Mexican acts such as Grupo Firme and reggaetón artists like Don Omar, Larios has built a business model focused not only on digital distribution but also on publishing, ticketing, live events and agency services. In 2021, TuStreams partnered with Nederlander Concerts for Grupo Firme’s seven back-to-back shows at the Staples Center (now Crypto.com Arena). The group made history as the Latin act to perform the most shows in a single calendar year at the venue. TuStreams has now partnered with Live Nation, Nederlander and Eddie Orjuela Entertainment for Grupo Firme’s first-ever stadium tour kicking off May 28 at SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, Calif.

### Brad Navin

CEO, THE ORCHARD

### Colleen Theis

COO, THE ORCHARD

### Tricia Arnold

SENIOR VP OF GLOBAL LABEL MANAGEMENT AND SALES, THE ORCHARD

### Mary Ashley Johnson

SENIOR VP OF NORTH AMERICA LABEL MANAGEMENT AND SALES, THE ORCHARD

### Alan Becker

SENIOR VP OF ARTIST AND LABEL PARTNERSHIPS, THE ORCHARD

### Taylor Wilson

DIRECTOR OF PRODUCT MANAGEMENT AND HUMAN RESOURCES, THE ORCHARD

The Orchard, the Sony Music-owned independent distributor, claimed its

strongest global market share to date in 2021 (although it does not report specific figures) placing over 350 albums on the Billboard 200 including titles by Bad Bunny, BTS, Nas, YOASOBI, Jorja Smith, Noel Gallagher, \$uicideboy\$, Banda MS, Ozuna and Anuel AA. The expansion of its label roster also contributed to that growth. Theis notes that The Orchard “closed two major global distribution partnerships with Rimas Entertainment, which included the creation of new independent label SONAR and Mass Appeal Records, which brought rap legend Nas back to the Sony Music family.”

### Lonny Olinick

CEO, AWAL

### Paul Hitchman

PRESIDENT, AWAL

### Ron Cerrito

PRESIDENT, AWAL NORTH AMERICA

AWAL has continued to open up alternative opportunities for acts seeking to trade the traditional label/artist paradigm for AWAL’s business model of supporting artist-owned repertoire. “2021 was a record-breaking year,” says Olinick. The label services provider has produced breakthrough talents like Norwegian-born girl in red, whose debut album hit No. 8 on the Top Alternative Albums chart and single “Serotonin” reached No. 2 on Alternative Airplay, and AWAL client Little Simz won the BRIT Award for best new artist.

### Bob Roback

CEO, INGROOVES MUSIC GROUP

### Jeff Cuatto

CFO, INGROOVES MUSIC GROUP

### Lloyd Hummel

EXECUTIVE OF GLOBAL COMMERCIAL STRATEGY, INGROOVES MUSIC GROUP

Ingrooves, the independent distributor owned by Universal Music Group, continues its aggressive international expansion, led for the past seven years by Roback. “And we continue to see great success stories across genres at home and abroad,” says Hummel. Recent examples include Stray Kids’ mini album, *Oddinary*, released in partnership with Imperial Distribution, which sent the K-pop group to No. 1 on the Billboard Artist 100. Yahriza y Su Esencia’s hit “Soy El Unico” debuted at No. 1 on Hot Latin Songs and reached No. 20 on the Hot 100. “The independent music sector,” says Hummel, “is thriving in every genre imaginable.”

### Krystian Santini

PRESIDENT, EQUITY DISTRIBUTION

With the distribution industry becoming increasingly competitive, Santini points to exclusive deals and releases from artists like Alicia Keys, Tinashe, Tokischa, Mach-Hommy and Poo Bear, among others, as examples of how his company boosts artists who want to maintain ownership over their careers. “We’re quickly becoming the premier label for independent hip-hop and Latin artists,” he says.

### Ed Seaman

CEO, MVD ENTERTAINMENT

MVD has had another strong year as vinyl sales continue to soar. Best known for helping repertoire owners sell physical products (DVD, CD, vinyl and merchandising in brick-and-mortar stores), Seaman has spent the past 12 months strengthening the company by hiring new executives, including a new vp of label management, a vp of digital and a director of marketing. Seaman is also working to “ramp up [MVD’s] marketing services to provide even better experiences and results for its valued label partners.”

### Elijah Seton

PRESIDENT, SOUNDCLOUD

### Jeff Ponchick

HEAD OF CREATOR, SOUNDCLOUD

In the past year, SoundCloud focused on its new artist services by helping independent artists extract maximum value from the platform through its monetization, distribution and professionals; developing its first-ever artist roster with names like Lil Pump and Tekno attached; and by partnering with Quality Control’s Solid Foundation Management in a joint venture “to discover new talent and revolutionize artist partnerships by empowering





&21 \* 5\$78/\$7(6

billboard

,1' ,( 32: (5 3/\$<(56



),21\$ : +(/\$1 35,1(

-2' < : +(/\$1



creatives with bespoke resources, tools and access,” Seton says.

**Steve Stoute**

FOUNDER/CEO, UNITEDMASTERS

In May, during its SelectCon creator conference in Brooklyn, UnitedMasters launched the Beat Exchange — a curated marketplace to buy and sell beats, connecting producers with UnitedMasters’ 1.5 million independent artists. The platform gives artists access to emerging and A-list producers, including Hit-Boy, Turbo (Travis Scott, Gunna, Young Thug), Sham “Sak Pase” Joseph (Kodak Black, Rihanna, SAINT JHN), Kato on the Track and David Morse. “The potential of independent artists is endless,” says Stoute. “Independent music is the fastest-growing segment of the industry. With more independence, artists will earn a fair share of the value that they create and our culture will benefit from more voices being amplified and heard.”

**Jonathan Strauss**

CO-FOUNDER/CEO, CREATE MUSIC GROUP

**Wayne Hampton**

CO-FOUNDER/CHIEF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT OFFICER, CREATE MUSIC GROUP

**Alexandre Williams**

CO-FOUNDER/COO, CREATE MUSIC GROUP

Create — which, according to the company, is the only distributor to provide daily earnings data from the major digital service providers — last year introduced Create Carbon, a credit card for its clients. The tool allows artists to tap

“With more independence, artists will earn a fair share of the value that they create and our culture will benefit from more voices being amplified and heard.” —STEVE STOUTE

revenue on the day it is earned, rather than wait for monthly payments. The company’s Flighthouse brand on TikTok has nearly 28 million followers and has drawn marketing partnerships with almost every major label, according to Create. Snoop Dogg chose Create to release his first Death Row Records album, *B.O.D.R.*, prior to his performance in the Super Bowl half-time show.

**Dean Tabaac**

HEAD, AMPED DISTRIBUTION

**Pip Smith**

VP OF SALES/GM, AMPED DISTRIBUTION

AMPED enjoyed a double-digit increase in revenue for the eighth year in a row last year, says Tabaac. (The company does not publish specific figures.) AMPED labels had an aggregate increase of 20%

and 50% on CDs and vinyl, respectively, “with our commitment to physical goods combined with a direct account reach for brick-and-click retailers that is the largest in the industry,” he says. In addition, in April the independent distributor says it represented some 27% of 2022’s Record Store Day releases, which hit an event record of 1.32 million vinyl albums sold in a week.

**Darius Van Arman**

CO-CEO, SECRETLY DISTRIBUTION

**Chris Welz**

MANAGING DIRECTOR, SECRETLY DISTRIBUTION

**Chris Cannon**

HEAD OF INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY, SECRETLY DISTRIBUTION

**Charley Kiefer**

DIRECTOR OF DIGITAL ACCOUNT STRATEGY, SECRETLY DISTRIBUTION

**Jacqui Resur**

HEAD OF LABEL RELATIONS, SECRETLY DISTRIBUTION

With Dead Oceans act Japanese Breakfast performing on *Saturday Night Live*, labelmate Mitski debuting at No. 5 on the Billboard 200 with *Laurel Hell* and Phoebe Bridgers launching her Saddest Factory Records, the global physical and digital distribution division of Secretly Group has good reason to cheer on its roster. Van Arman in January was named chair of Merlin, the independent global digital rights organization. Welz reports the company grew over 50% in 2021. (Secretly does not publicly state its earnings.) Cannon created a new neighboring rights division at the company. Kiefer’s digital strategy is credited with helping drive Mitski’s Billboard 200 achievement. Resur oversees a new label rep division and brought onboard 30 new label and artist partners last year.

**Pieter van Rijn**

CEO, FUGA

FUGA launched in 2006 in Amsterdam and first worked primarily with local dance music labels, but the music distribution and services company has steadily

expanded its footprint. “Last year’s merger of Downtown and FUGA Neighboring Rights, now managed under FUGA, has led to the signing of artists such as Lindsey Buckingham and Young T & Bugsy,” says van Rijn. While FUGA helps deliver millions of tracks a month to digital service providers, van Rijn is proud of his company’s recent entry into physical distribution, where it has enjoyed “chart success on releases for Run the Jewels and Pete Doherty’s label Strap Originals.”

**Emmanuel Zunz**

FOUNDER/CEO, ONERPm

Digital distributor ONERPm has continued to expand at a rapid clip, opening offices in Australia, Ivory Coast, Rwanda, Tanzania, South Africa and Ghana in 2022 — with more offices coming in Southeast Asia — bringing its global workforce to 450 employees across 29 offices. The company, which has sought to improve interfaces for users and clients alike, recently introduced new features to track differing recoupment rates to improve marketing transparency and centralize analytics. In 2021, ONERPm signed artists including Jowell y Randy and Cosculluela as its revenue grew 70% year over year along the way, according to the company.

**CONTRIBUTORS**

Darlene Aderaju, Trevor Anderson, Rania Aniftos, Chuck Arnold, Katie Bain, Alexei Barrionuevo, Starr Bowenbank, Ed Christman, Leila Cobo, Stephen Daw, Thom Duffy, Chris Eggertsen, Deborah Evans Price, Griselda Flores, Gary Graff, J’na Jefferson, Gil Kaufman, Steve Knopper, Juliana Koranteng, Carl Lamarre, Cydney Lee, Elias Leight, Heran Mamo, Geoff Mayfield, Melinda Newman, Jessica Nicholson, Glenn Peoples, Bryan Reesman, Eric Renner Brown, Kristin Robinson, Jessica Roiz, Neena Rouhani, Dan Rys, Richard Smirke, Christine Werthman, Jewel Wicker

**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 Indie Power Players were chosen by editors from among independent labels and distributors based on factors including, but not limited to, nominations by peers, colleagues and superiors. Nominations from the American Association of Independent Music also were considered. Record companies are defined as independent by their ownership through entities other than the three major music groups. Distributors, regardless of their corporate ownership, qualify as independent through the repertoire they market. In addition to information requested with nominations, editors consider industry impact as measured by metrics including, but not limited to, chart, sales and streaming performance as measured by Luminate and social media impressions using data available as of April 25.*



**AWAL** has supported the breakthrough of artists like singer-songwriter **GIRL IN RED**, whose debut release reached No. 8 on Top Alternative Albums.



# billboard

INDIE POWER PLAYERS 2022



CONGRATULATIONS  
**TONY LARIOS**

)281' (5 &(2 78675(\$06

FROM YOUR FAMILY AT





# A2IM'S LIBERA AWARDS GO LIVE AGAIN

After two years of virtual shows, the multigenre honors for the independent music community return in person, with Japanese Breakfast leading the field of nominees

BY THOM DUFFY

**I**N A SEASON OF comebacks for live industry events, the annual Libera Awards presented by A2IM — the American Association of Independent Music — will take place June 16 at Webster Hall in New York. The awards also will be livestreamed on YouTube.

The event will conclude A2IM's Indie Week, four days of keynotes, workshops and panels June 13-16 that are being held as a hybrid event, both online and in person.

Japanese Breakfast, the four-member band headed by Korean American musician/director/author Michelle Zauner, leads the 2022 nominees with seven nods in categories including record of the year for *Jubilee* (Dead Oceans). The act also earned Grammy Award nominations this year for best new artist and best alternative music album.

"Throughout the pandemic, A2IM continued to make a profound impact by focusing on the core pillars of our mission: advocacy, education and community," says A2IM president/CEO Richard James Burgess (see Indie Power Players, page 71).

This year, the Libera Awards are partnering with RAMPD — Recording Artists and Music Professionals With Disabilities — which is offering consultation services on event accessibility, disability culture and inclusion. The coalition's work is described in detail at rampd.org.

Here's the full list of the 2022 Libera Award nominees:

## RECORD OF THE YEAR

**ARLO PARKS** *Collapsed in Sunbeams* (TRANSGRESSIVE/[PIAS])

**DRY CLEANING** *New Long Leg* (4AD)

**JAPANESE BREAKFAST** *Jubilee* (DEAD OCEANS)

**JASON ISBELL AND THE 400 UNIT** *Georgia Blue* (SOUTHEASTERN RECORDS/THIRTY TIGERS)

**LOW** *Hey What* (SUB POP)

**SNAIL MAIL** *Valentine* (MATADOR RECORDS)

## SELF-RELEASED RECORD OF THE YEAR

**CAUTIOUS CLAY** *Deadpan Love* (CAUTIOUS CLAY)

**EMMA-JEAN THACKRAY** *Yellow* (MOVEMENTT)

**JACKSON WOOTEN** *A New Child* (THE ASSEMBLY)

**REBECCA BLACK** *Rebecca Black Was Here* (REBECCA BLACK)

**SINÉAD HARNETT** *Ready Is Always Too Late* (THAIRISH)

**WIKI** *Half God* (WIKSET ENTERPRISE)

## BREAKTHROUGH ARTIST/RELEASE

PRESENTED BY INGROOVES

**BLACK COUNTRY, NEW ROAD** *For the first time* (NINJA TUNE)

**GIRL IN RED** *if i could make it go quiet* (WORLD IN RED/AWAL)

**JAPANESE BREAKFAST** *Jubilee* (DEAD OCEANS)

**MDOU MOCTAR** *Afrique Victime* (MATADOR RECORDS)

**WET LEG** *"Chaise Longue"* (DOMINO RECORDING CO.)

Japanese Breakfast, fronted by Zauner, leads the field of Libera Award nominees and will perform at this year's event, following the success of the band's 2021 album, *Jubilee*.

## VIDEO OF THE YEAR

PRESENTED BY YOUTUBE MUSIC

**DANNY ELFMAN** "True" (EPITAPH RECORDS)

**IDLES** "Car Crash" (PARTISAN RECORDS)

**JAPANESE BREAKFAST** "Savage Good Boy" (DEAD OCEANS)

**SHARON VAN ETTEN & ANGEL OLSEN** "Like I Used To" (JAGJAGUWAR)

**WET LEG** "Chaise Longue" (DOMINO RECORDING CO.)

**YVES TUMOR** "Jackie" (WARP RECORDS)

## BEST REISSUE

**BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB** *Buena Vista Social Club (25th-Anniversary Edition)* (WORLD CIRCUIT RECORDS/BMG)

**GANG OF FOUR** *77-81* (MATADOR RECORDS)

**RADIOHEAD** *Kid A Mnesia* (XL RECORDINGS)

**SPIRITUALIZED** *Ladies and Gentlemen We Are Floating in Space* (FAT POSSUM RECORDS)

**THUNDERCAT** *The Golden Age of Apocalypse (10-Year Anniversary Edition)* (BRAINFEEDER/NINJA TUNE)

**TOM TOM CLUB** *The Good, the Bad and the Funky* (NACIONAL RECORDS)

## BEST LIVE/LIVESTREAM ACT

**AMYL AND THE SNIFFERS** *Live on KEXP at Home*

**BLACK PUMAS** "Colors," Biden inauguration performance

**JAPANESE BREAKFAST** "Be Sweet," *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*

**JASON ISBELL AND THE 400 UNIT** "Driver 8," live from Athens, Ga.

**MDOU MOCTAR** "Live at the Niger River"

**ST. VINCENT** "At the Holiday Party," *Austin City Limits*

## BEST OUTLIER RECORD

PRESENTED BY THE ORCHARD

**BO BURNHAM** *Inside (The Songs)* (BO BURNHAM/IMPERIAL/INGROOVES)

**L'RAIN** *Fatigue* (MEXICAN SUMMER)

**MOOR MOTHER** *Black Encyclopedia of the Air* (ANTI-)

**SPIRIT OF THE BEEHIVE** *Entertainment, Death* (SADDLE CREEK)

**TIRZAH** *Colourgrade* (DOMINO RECORDING CO.)

## A2IM HUMANITARIAN AWARD

**COMMON** (for work with) *Rebirth of Sound*

**MARGO PRICE** (for work with) *Farm Aid*

**RECORDING ARTISTS AND MUSIC PROFESSIONALS WITH DISABILITIES (RAMPD)**

**REV. MOOSE** (for work with) *National Independent Venue Association*

**SECRETLY GROUP** *SC25: Every Light on This Side of the Town*

**HOPELESS RECORDS/SUB CITY RECORDS** *Songs That Saved My Life*

## BEST ALTERNATIVE ROCK RECORD

**CAUTIOUS CLAY** "Wildfire" (CAUTIOUS CLAY)

**COURTNEY BARNETT** *Things Take Time, Take Time* (MOM + POP MUSIC)

**DRY CLEANING** *New Long Leg* (4AD)

**GIRL IN RED** *if i could make it go quiet* (AWAL)

**JAPANESE BREAKFAST** *Jubilee* (DEAD OCEANS)

**LOW** *Hey What* (SUB POP RECORDS)

**SNAIL MAIL** *Valentine* (MATADOR RECORDS)

## BEST AMERICANA RECORD

**FRUIT BATS** *The Pet Parade* (MERGE RECORDS)

**HISS GOLDEN MESSENGER** *Quietly Blowing It* (MERGE RECORDS)

**JASON ISBELL AND THE 400 UNIT** *Georgia Blue* (SOUTHEASTERN RECORDS/THIRTY TIGERS)

**JOHN HIATT WITH THE JERRY DOUGLAS BAND** *Leftover Feelings* (NEW WEST RECORDS)

**LEO NOCENTELLI** *Another Side* (LIGHT IN THE ATTIC)

**MADI DIAZ** *History of a Feeling* (ANTI-)

**STEVE GUNN** *Other You* (MATADOR RECORDS)

## BEST BLUES RECORD

**CEDRIC BURNSIDE** *I Be Trying* (SINGLE LOCK RECORDS)

**CHRISTINE "KINGFISH" INGRAM** *662* (ALLIGATOR RECORDS)

**ERIC BIBB** *Dear America* (PROVOQUE RECORDS/MASCOT LABEL GROUP)

**NEAL FRANCIS** "Can't Stop the Rain" (ATO RECORDS)

**NICK WATERHOUSE** *Promenade Blue* (INNOVATIVE LEISURE)

**TERESA JAMES & THE RHYTHM TRAMPS** *Rose-Colored Glasses, Vol. 1* (BLUE HEART RECORDS)

## BEST CLASSICAL RECORD

**BRYCE DESSNER, AUSTRALIAN STRING QUARTET, SYDNEY DANCE COMPANY** *Impermanence/Disintegration* (37D03D)

**CANADIAN BRASS** *Canadiana* (LINUS ENTERTAINMENT)

**GRANDBROTHERS** *All the Unknown* (CITY SLANG)

**JEREMIAH FRAITES** *Piano Piano* (DUALTONE MUSIC GROUP)

**THEO ALEXANDER** *Sunbathing Through a Glass Screen* (ARTS & CRAFTS)

**VITAMIN STRING QUARTET** *Our Flashback Wedding* (CMH LABEL GROUP)









Margo Price is a finalist for the A2IM Humanitarian Award for her work with Farm Aid, the organization that Willie Nelson launched in 1985 to support family farmers.



## BEST COUNTRY RECORD

**CAITLIN ROSE** *Own Side Now* (Deluxe Anniversary Edition) (ATO RECORDS)

**EMILY SCOTT ROBINSON** *American Siren* (OH BOY RECORDS)

**MORGAN WADE** *Reckless* (LADYLIKE RECORDS/THIRTY TIGERS)

**STURGILL SIMPSON** *The Ballad of Dood & Juanita* (HIGH TOP MOUNTAIN RECORDS/THIRTY TIGERS)

**FANCY HAGOOD** *Southern Curiosity* (MICK MUSIC/DOWNTOWN MUSIC SERVICES)

**LAINIE WILSON** *Sayin' What I'm Thinkin'* (BROKEN BOW RECORDS/BMG)

## BEST DANCE RECORD

PRESENTED BY EDM.COM

**BRITTANY HOWARD** "Stay High again.." (Fred again.. & Joy Anonymous Remix) (ATO RECORDS)

**DAWN RICHARD** "Loose Your Mind" (MERGE RECORDS)

**DISCLOSURE** *DJ-Kicks: Disclosure* (!K7 RECORDS)

**JUNGLE** *Loving in Stereo* (AWAL)

**KEYS N KRATES** "Original Classic" (LAST GANG RECORDS)

**LOGIC1000** *You've Got the Whole Night To Go* (THERAPY DISTRIBUTED BY BECAUSE MUSIC)

## BEST ELECTRONIC RECORD

PRESENTED BY REDEYE

**ARCA** *KiCk iii* (XL RECORDINGS)

**CARIBOU** "You Can Do It" (MERGE RECORDS)

**DAWN RICHARD** *Second Line* (MERGE RECORDS)

**FLYING LOTUS** *Yasuke* (WARP RECORDS)

**박혜진 PARK HYE JIN** *Before I Die* (NINJA TUNE)

## BEST FOLK/BLUEGRASS RECORD

**AISHA BADRU** *The Way Back Home* (NETTWERK RECORDS)

**HAND HABITS** *Fun House* (SADDLE CREEK)

**JOSÉ GONZÁLEZ** *Local Valley* (MUTE RECORDS)

**SHANNON LAY** *Geist* (SUB POP RECORDS)

**THE WEATHER STATION** *Ignorance* (FAT POSSUM RECORDS)

**VARIOUS ARTISTS** *Broken Hearts & Dirty Windows: Songs of John Prine, Vol. 2* (OH BOY RECORDS)

## BEST HEAVY RECORD

**BABYMETAL** *10 Babymetal Budokan* (COOKING VINYL)

**DEAFHEAVEN** *Infinite Granite* (SARGENT HOUSE)

**EVERY TIME I DIE** *Radical* (EPITAPH)

**QUICKSAND** *Distant Population* (EPITAPH)

**SPIRITBOX** *Eternal Blue* (RISE RECORDS/BMG)

## BEST HIP-HOP/RAP RECORD

PRESENTED BY VIRGIN MUSIC

**INJURY RESERVE** *By the Time I Get to Phoenix* (SELF-RELEASED/STEM)

**JOYNER LUCAS & J. COLE** "Your Heart" (TWENTY NINE MUSIC GROUP)

**LITTLE SIMZ** *Sometimes I Might Be Introvert* (AWAL)

**MICK JENKINS** *Elephant in the Room* (CINEMATIC MUSIC GROUP/INGROOVES)

**MYKKI BLANCO** *Broken Hearts and Beauty Sleep* (TRANSGRESSIVE/[PIAS])

**YOUNG M.A** *Off the Yak* (M.A MUSIC/3D)

## BEST JAZZ RECORD

**ADRIAN YOUNGE** *The American Negro* (JAZZ IS DEAD)

**BADBADNOTGOOD** *Talk Memory* (XL RECORDINGS)

**JOHN CARROLL KIRBY** *Septet* (STONES THROW RECORDS)

**NALA SINEPHRO** *Space 1.8* (WARP RECORDS)

**JIHYE LEE ORCHESTRA** *Daring Mind* (MOTÉMA MUSIC)

**NICK HAKIM** "Qadir" (BadBadNotGood Remix) (ATO RECORDS)

## BEST LATIN RECORD

**ALEJANDRO ESCOVEDO** *La Cruzada* (YEP ROC RECORDS)

**ARCA** *KiCk ii* (XL RECORDINGS)

**CIMAFUNK** *El Alimento* (THERAPIA PRODUCTIONS/THIRTY TIGERS)

**HELADO NEGRO** *Far In* (4AD)

**LOS RETROS** *Looking Back* (STONES THROW RECORDS)

**XENIA RUBINOS** *Una Rosa* (ANTI-)

## BEST POP RECORD

**ARLO PARKS** *Collapsed in Sunbeams* (TRANSGRESSIVE/[PIAS])

**ASHE** *Ashlyn* (MOM + POP MUSIC)

**BIG RED MACHINE** *How Long*

*Do You Think It's Gonna Last?* (JAGJAGUAR)

**CHAI** *Wink* (SUB POP RECORDS)

**NOGA EREZ** *Kids* (CITY SLANG)

## BEST PUNK RECORD

**AMYLAND THE SNIFFERS** *Comfort to Me* (ATO RECORDS)

**CHUBBY AND THE GANG** *The Mutt's Nuts* (PARTISAN RECORDS)

**ILLUMINATI HOTTIES** *Let Me Do One More* (HOPELESS RECORDS)

**SLEAFORD MODS** *Spare Ribs* (ROUGH TRADE RECORDS)

**THE LINDA LINDAS** "Racist, Sexist Boy" (Live at LA Public Library) (EPITAPH)

## BEST R&B RECORD

**BRITTANY HOWARD** *Jaime (Reimagined)* (ATO RECORDS)

**CHARLOTTE DAY WILSON** *Alpha* (STONE WOMAN MUSIC)

**DURAND JONES & THE INDICATIONS** *Private Space* (DEAD OCEANS)

**HIATUS KAIYOTE** *Mood Valiant* (BRAINFEEDER RECORDS/NINJA TUNE)

**SERPENTWITHFEET** *Deacon* (SECRETLY CANADIAN)

**TKAY MAIDZA** *Last Year Was Weird, Vol. 3* (4AD)

## BEST ROCK RECORD

PRESENTED BY MSK (MITCHELL SILBERBERG & KNUPP)

**BLACK PUMAS** *Capitol Cuts (Live From Studio A)* (ATO RECORDS)

**IDLES** *Crawler* (PARTISAN RECORDS)

**PARQUET COURTS** *Sympathy for Life* (ROUGH TRADE RECORDS)

**SHAME** *Drunk Tank Pink* (DEAD OCEANS)

**THE THE** *The Comeback Special* (EARMUSIC)

## BEST SPIRITUAL RECORD

**BLIND BOYS OF ALABAMA FEATURING BÉLA FLECK** "I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel To Be Free" (SINGLE LOCK RECORDS)

**HISS GOLDEN MESSENGER** *O Come All Ye Faithful* (MERGE RECORDS)

**NATALIE BERGMAN** *Mercy* (THIRD MAN RECORDS)

**THE OAK RIDGE BOYS** *Front Porch Singin'* (LIGHTNING ROD RECORDS/THIRTY TIGERS)

**WANDE FEATURING PORSHA LOVE** "Don't Worry Bout It" (REACH RECORDS)

## BEST SYNC USAGE

**ADELE** "Hello," NFL/Tom Brady's return (XL RECORDINGS)

**BLACK PUMAS** "Colors," Concrete Cowboy trailer (ATO RECORDS)

**FELA KUTI** "Zombie," Gucci 100 promo campaign (KNITTING FACTORY RECORDS)

**JOHN PRINE** "Caravan of Fools," episode 3, *Yellowstone* (OH BOY RECORDS)

**PHOEBE BRIDGERS** "I Know the End," episode 106, *Mare of Easttown* (DEAD OCEANS)

**THE ROLLING STONES** "She's a Rainbow," episode 205, *Ted Lasso* (ABKCO)

**WET LEG** "Chaise Longue," episode 5, *Gossip Girl* (DOMINO RECORDING CO.)

## BEST WORLD RECORD

**ALTIN GÜN** *Yol* (ATO RECORDS)

**FEMI KUTI AND MADE KUTI** *Legacy +* (PARTISAN RECORDS)

**JOÃO DONATO** *João Donato JID007* (JAZZ IS DEAD)

**MDOU MOCTAR** *Afrique Victime* (MATADOR RECORDS)

**PACHYMAN** *The Return of Pachyman* (ATO RECORDS)

## CREATIVE PACKAGING

**BUZZCOCKS** *Complete UA Singles 1977-1980* (DOMINO RECORDING CO.)

**ERROLL GARNER** *Liberation in Swing: Centennial Collection* (MACK AVENUE MUSIC GROUP/OCTAVE MUSIC LICENSING)

**FELA KUTI** *Boxset 5* (co-curated by Chris Martin and Femi Kuti) (KNITTING FACTORY RECORDS)

**GANG OF FOUR** *77-81* (MATADOR RECORDS)

**GARY NUMAN** *45X15 The Singles Collection 1978-1983* (BEGGARS ARKIVE)

**JAPANESE BREAKFAST** *Jubilee* (DEAD OCEANS)

## INDEPENDENT CHAMPION

PRESENTED BY MERLIN

**BANDCAMP**

## FUGA

**LIGHT IN THE ATTIC DISTRIBUTION**

**REDEYE**

**SOUNDEXCHANGE**

## LABEL OF THE YEAR (BIG)

PRESENTED BY ADA

**ATO RECORDS**

**MATADOR RECORDS**

**MERGE RECORDS**

**MOM + POP MUSIC**

**NINJA TUNE**

**POLYVINYL RECORD CO.**

**THIRD MAN RECORDS**

## LABEL OF THE YEAR (MEDIUM)

**CITY SLANG**

**HOPELESS RECORDS**

**NEW WEST RECORDS**

**SACRED BONES RECORDS**

**SADDLE CREEK**

**YEP ROC RECORDS**

## LABEL OF THE YEAR (SMALL)

**DON GIOVANNI RECORDS**

**INNOVATIVE LEISURE**

**OH BOY RECORDS**

**SARGENT HOUSE**

**SUNDAZED**

## MARKETING GENIUS

**BICEP** *Isles* (NINJA TUNE)

**VARIOUS ARTISTS** *Death Row Records 30th Anniversary* (DEATH ROW RECORDS)

**EYEDRESS** *Mulholland Drive* (LEX RECORDS)

**HELADO NEGRO** *Helado Negro Ice Cream Tricycle* (4AD)

**JAPANESE BREAKFAST** *Jubilee* (DEAD OCEANS)

**KING GIZZARD & THE LIZARD WIZARD** *Official Bootlegger series* (KGLW/VIRGIN MUSIC)



# billboard

INDIE POWER PLAYERS 2022



CONGRATULATIONS  
**TONY LARIOS**

)281' (5 &(2 78675(\$06

FROM YOUR FAMILY AT



ORJUELA  
ENTERTAINMENT

Eddie Orjuela



# No. 9

PEAK ON BILLBOARD'S

POP AIRPLAY CHART

## EM BEIHOLD

How the singer-songwriter's temporary low led to the high of a breakout hit

▶ Last spring, while disgruntled by the monotony of the pandemic, Los Angeles native Em Beihold uploaded a snippet of an original song called "Groundhog Day" to TikTok — and it soon led to her first taste of viral success. Labels scrambled to sign the budding indie-pop artist, but Beihold didn't feel the excitement she expected. "I had started on antidepressants, and I didn't realize the medication could take the highs away as well," the 23-year-old recalls. "I was telling my mom that everything I ever wanted was happening, but for some reason, I [wasn't] happy. So, I tried finding the right words to explain it."

The exchange led her to write the chorus of what would become "Numb Little Bug," which, again, resonated with the masses on TikTok after a teaser post, garnering 7.1 million views. While the clip took off, Beihold and her manager Nick Bobetsky (State of

the Art Management, formerly Rebel One) negotiated a record deal with Republic Records in partnership with Moon Projects, a joint venture founded in 2021 by Mary Rahmani, who previously worked as global head of partnerships at Triller and director of music and artist partnerships at TikTok. Beihold became the company's first official signee.

She utilized her new resources to get "Numb Little Bug" finished, adding that they went through "around 14 versions to get it right" before the quirky yet vulnerable track was released in January. While the label opted to wait until the annual influx of holiday music subsided, Beihold says she "felt nervous about [the song] flopping" since it had been five months since her viral clip — so she doubled down on her social strategy. "The first couple of days was all about Em and her organic posting," says Bobetsky. "It also very quickly became a global pri-

ority for Republic, working with [digital service provider] partners in the U.K., Germany, Australia, New Zealand and throughout Southeast Asia. That gave the label the leverage to take the song to radio in these markets."

"Numb Little Bug" has since reached a No. 35 high on the Billboard Hot 100 in its 17 weeks on the chart, also recently entering the top 10 of the Pop Airplay chart. The song has collected 106.2 million on-demand official U.S. streams, according to Luminate. Now, with a Hot 100 hit, a follow-up single in "Too Precious" and plans to play the radio festival circuit in June, Beihold hopes to release an EP this summer — while continuing to relay the message that inspired the song that launched her career. "I always try to remind my fans that it's OK to not be OK," she says. "And that often, in moments in our lives when we're feeling down, they're temporary, they're not permanent. You can always get out of a situation." —STARR BOWENBANK



# billboard



2022

# COUNTRY POWER PLAYERS

*Billboard's ninth annual Country Power Players issue will profile the people who have driven another solid year for the country music industry in sales, streaming and publishing. This special feature will highlight the top executives, artists and change-makers who kept the music playing during challenging times, as well as coverage of the changing face of country music.*

Advertise in *Billboard's* Country Power Players issue to congratulate this year's honorees while reaching key decision-makers who are driving the music business.

#### CONTACTS

**Joe Maimone**  
joe.maimone@billboard.com

**Lee Ann Photoglo**  
laphotoglo@gmail.com

**Cynthia Mellow**  
cmellow615@gmail.com

**Marcia Olival**  
marciaolival29@gmail.com

**Ryan O'Donnell**  
rodonnell@pmc.com

ISSUE DATE 6/25 | AD CLOSE 6/15 | MATERIALS DUE 6/16



# JUNETEENTH

---

**Ever mindful of the past, determined in the present, and hopeful for the future, we wish our employees, artists, songwriters and fans a Happy Juneteenth.**



**UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP**