

billboard

JUNE 25, 2022 • BILLBOARD.COM

PLUS

PONY UP
SONGWRITERS
SEEK NEW FEES
TO SURVIVE

2022

COUNTRY POWER PLAYERS

PUBLISHING. MANAGEMENT. ACTING.
SEPTIC TANK REPAIR?
INSIDE THE ECLECTIC EMPIRE OF

Jimmie Allen

+ EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR **MARION KRAFT**

One-On-One With Star Client Miranda Lambert

BAR
FOR BAR

Torae and Swaggy Sie

come from inside the game to bring you exclusive sets, interviews and performances, spinning hip-hop hits from the biggest names like **Kendrick Lamar, Drake, Migos, Gucci Mane, 2 Chainz** and more.



LISTEN NOW ON
THE SXM APP



((SiriusXM))



TORAE

HOST
THE TOR GUIDE

**SWAGGY
SIE**

HOST
THE CULTURE TRAP

contents

JUNE 25, 2022

VOLUME 134

NO. 8

ON THE COVER

Jimmie Allen photographed by Eric Ryan Anderson on May 5 in Nashville.

TO OUR READERS

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



Features

44

EYES ON THE PRIZE

For **Jimmie Allen**, stardom didn't come fast or easy. But with the laser focus he brings to all his passions (even bowling), he has become a one-man industry — and he's not slowing down.

54

COUNTRY POWER PLAYERS 2022

Billboard's eighth annual list celebrating the executives setting the bar in every sector of the genre, led this year by ShopKeeper Management's **Marion Kraft** — who reflects with longtime superstar client **Miranda Lambert** about their journey together in the industry.



JOEL WHITBURN

1939-2022

Billboard could not have asked for a better representative to document the history of our charts.

Thank you, Joel

contents

JUNE 25, 2022 / VOLUME 134 / NO. 8



BILLBOARD CHARTS

9

BTS debuts at No. 1 on the Billboard 200 with *Proof*, which scores the biggest week for an album by a group this year.

THE MARKET

23

As the hits-driven streaming economy whittles away at songwriters' royalties, their managers are getting creative to get them paid.

26

Live Nation and **AEG** are battling for dominance in Los Angeles and Las Vegas over niche lineups that do big ticket sales.

34

How Ukraine's **Kalush Orchestra** turned its Eurovision-winning track into an anti-war anthem.

THE SOUND

39

ODESZA hopes its most ambitious live show to date will deliver its hard-to-describe dance tunes to the masses.

42

Inside dance trio **Cheat Codes'** biggest inspirations during the creation of its country album, which allows the group to "not be stuck in one lane."

THE PLAYERS

85

On the 20th anniversary of her self-titled debut, **Ashanti** is busy rerecording it — and taking ownership of her future: "I love what Taylor Swift did."

FOR THE RECORD

88

As **Elvis Presley** returns to the big screen in Baz Luhrmann's musical biopic, *Billboard* looks back at its decades of coverage fit for the King.

Marion Kraft (left) and Miranda Lambert photographed by Diana King on May 24 at ShopKeeper Management in Nashville.

DO WE HAVE ROYALTIES FOR YOU?



More than \$550 Million Distributed To Musicians and Vocalists

Royalties Distributed to Both Union & Non-Union Session Musicians & Vocalists For Their Performance on Songs Played on Satellite Radio, Non-Interactive Streaming Services, Webcasts, Other Digital Formats and Certain Music Performed on Film & Television

Find Out If We Have Royalties For You

www.afmsagaaftrafund.org

  **SAG-AFTRA**
Intellectual Property Rights Distribution Fund

The AFM & SAG-AFTRA IPRD Fund is a 501(c)(6) non-profit organization - est. 1998
4705 Laurel Canyon Blvd., Suite 400, Valley Village, CA 91607
p. 818.255.7980 | f. 818.255.7985 | www.afmsagaaftrafund.org



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)
DEPUTY DIRECTOR, R&B/HIP-HOP **Carl Lamarre**
LEAD ANALYST **Glenn Peoples**
SENIOR EDITOR/ANALYST **Ed Christman** (Publishing/Retail)
SENIOR WRITERS **Griselda Flores** (Latin), **Dan Rys**
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), **Heran Mamo** (R&B/Hip-Hop),
Kristin Robinson
STAFF WRITERS **Darlene Aderoju, Rania Aniftos, Starr Bowenbank,**
Stephen Daw, 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**

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**
CONTENT MANAGER **Emily Fuentes**
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**
VIDEO EDITOR **Frankie Pepper**
EDITORS **Jason Bass, Colin Burgess**
VIDEO EDITOR/SHOOTER **Matt Damiano**

Digital

DIRECTOR OF GROWTH **Danielle Dauenhauer**
VICE PRESIDENT, DATA **Julian Pan**
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 **Rachel Seiden**
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, ADVERTISING OPERATIONS **Cheryl Kampanis**

Mike Van

PRESIDENT

Dana Droppo

CHIEF BRAND OFFICER

Business Leadership

SILVIO PIETROLUONGO SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT,
CHARTS AND DATA DEVELOPMENT
ANJALI RAJA SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, BUSINESS OPERATIONS
CHRISTINA MEDINA SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, TALENT AND PROGRAMMING
JOE MAIMONE VICE PRESIDENT, INDUSTRY SALES
SHAMEKA FRANK VICE PRESIDENT, REVENUE OPERATIONS
MARY ROONEY VICE PRESIDENT/HEAD OF EVENTS
SHIRA BROWN ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT,
VIDEO STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT

Sales/Brand Partnerships

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS **Edward Stepankovsky, Lauren Wray**
SENIOR DIRECTOR **Justine Silagi**
DIRECTOR, BRAND PARTNERSHIPS **Corey Armend**
DIRECTORS **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

MANAGERS **Taylor Bartenope, Mary Carter**

Account Management

SENIOR MANAGERS **Galina Druzhinina,**
Shannon McMahan
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 Elsidig**
ASSOCIATE MANAGER, BRANDED SOCIAL **Meghan Mahar**
SENIOR DIRECTOR, PROJECT MANAGEMENT **Sara Katzki**
SENIOR PROJECT MANAGERS **Sidnei Afari, Sarah Lombard**

Integrated Marketing

DIRECTORS **Jeanne Dienstag, Jasmine Kim**
SENIOR MANAGER **Anisha Nallakrishnan**
MANAGER **Tunde Adeyinka**

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

REPRINTS AND PERMISSIONS Enveritas Group
Call 864-241-0779 or email 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

Paul Rainey
EVP, OPERATIONS AND FINANCE

Tom Finn
EVP, OPERATIONS AND FINANCE

Jenny Connelly
EVP, PRODUCT AND 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 AND 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 AND 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

Marquetta Moore
HEAD OF TALENT

Mike Ye
VICE PRESIDENT, STRATEGIC PLANNING AND 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

THE MARVEL NAMED *MAR*

HAS LATIN AMERICA FOUND ITS *NEW DIVA?*

Young talent in the age of the internet is definitely a buyers market. The hardest part of scouting was to hop from club, to bar, to the bario to hear what the streets had to offer. But every so often, between the beat jackers and sample pickers, a fresh breeze comes in. 2022 is the year of the MAR, one of the most charismatic, open minded, and learned pop stars to hop in the game **at just 21 years of age**. Her mother, a native cuban, and her father, a renowned mexican musician, she has perfectly crafted her sound to fit the lush cultural background she was immersed in throughout her youth.

Her debut track QUÉDATE released on june 10th 2022, is an instant hit, and dancefloor bushfire. From the very beginning, QUÉDATE is a sensual calling to one's passions; being free to do what you please and being honest with one's desires. Meaning "Stay" in English, the singer addresses the everyday attractions we feel in the presence of a passing stranger that "tickles our fancy". But more than just butterflies in our belly, the song explores our attraction to the unknown and how one needs to be honest with their vulnerability when taking the plunge. These very profound themes are definitely not what one would expect from a bubbly pop song, but as the artist has explained in an interview, exploring one's inner-child, vulnerability and innocence, is an absolute need in today's larger society and a central theme to the work she is releasing over the next year.

"This song reflects something that we live many times, where the people and experiences that move us the most happen at unexpected moments, where a connection drives us to do or say things to capture that moment, **like the sun and the moon that in a moment are and later no longer.**" — *MAR*

The young latina has embarked on her solo career and is touring the world to spread her message. Taking the stage across Europe, starting July 1st to the 10th 2022, she has understood that no success comes without hard work and discipline. Training her mind through active meditation, her body through exercise & her instrumentality with marathon studio sessions MAR is more than just ready to rumble, she was born for it. Pop music has been the bastion of commercial ideas and branded flare, but **MAR wants to bring a fresh new scope to her industry and musical culture as a whole.**

"I am more than ready to work hard, to discover this unlimited potential with which we all come into this world. Music is my whole life, and I know that, with it, I will be able to develop and show many facets of my being. I am very excited about what is to come. I feel very grateful and blessed to have the opportunity and ability to express myself through music, from the depths of my being." — *MAR*





#TURNUPRUPP

**ACM
"ARENA OF
THE YEAR"
NOMINEE
2021**

**#1 BEST TOUR
TICKET COUNT
REBA MCGENTIRE
2021**

**40,000 TICKETS
SOLD & \$4MM
GROSS
MORGAN WALLLEN
2021**

**HIGHEST-
GROSSING SHOW
OF ALL TIME
ELTON JOHN
2022**

**HOW
COULD
YOU TURN
THAT
DOWN?**



There are 7.5 million people within 125 miles of Lexington, Kentucky's new and improved Rupp Arena. Pop, rock, country or comedy—you bring the entertainment. They'll turn up.

LEARN MORE AT RUPPARENA.COM

THOMPSON-BOLING ARENA HOME OF SEVEN-FIGURE GROSSES!



**2nd Highest
Grossing Arena
Show Ever**

Paul McCartney, 2022

**Top Grossing
Venue
on 2022 Tours**

Alan Jackson
Brooks & Dunn
Reba McEntire

**Venue Records
Since October 2021**

Paul McCartney (Gross Sales)
Elton John (Gross Sales)
Eric Church (Gross Sales)

LEARN MORE AT TBARENA.COM

OVG360 provides expert management and event programming services for these venues and over 200 more around the globe.



charts

DATA FOR WEEK OF 6.25.2022



Proof Of Concept: BTS Debuts Atop Billboard 200

BILLBOARD 200

1

Proof
BTS

LAST WEEK

-

PEAK POSITION

1

WEEKS ON CHART

1

BTS' NEW ALBUM, *Proof*, debuts at No. 1 on the Billboard 200, garnering the pop group its sixth chart-topper. The project — which consists mostly of previously released material — arrives with 314,000 equivalent album units earned in the United States in the week ending June 16, according to Luminate.

The majority of that starting total was driven by CD album sales (259,000) as *Proof* scores the biggest week for an album on CD since Adele's *30* launched with 378,000 (week ending Nov. 25, 2021; chart dated Dec. 4, 2021). The *Proof* CD includes 13 bonus tracks unavailable on the album's streaming and digital retail editions and was issued in elaborate collectible CD packages, including two variants: a \$24 edition and a more

lavish \$70 version. Both versions have the same tracklist, though they have different packaging and internal paper goods (such as booklets and posters). Each also contains randomized elements (photo cards and postcards).

The album arrived June 10, four days before the group announced an indefinite hiatus to focus on solo ventures. The seven-member South Korean act formed in 2010 and made its U.S. *Billboard* chart debut in 2013. BTS has tallied 15 entries on the Billboard 200.

One of the new songs on *Proof*, lead single "Yet To Come," gives BTS its 13th top 40-charting hit on the Billboard Hot 100 as the track debuts at No. 13. It also arrives at No. 1 on Digital Song Sales (42,000 sold) and No. 27 on Streaming Songs (10.3 million streams).

—KEITH CAULFIELD

Hot 100

2 WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title	Artist	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
			PRODUCER (SONGWRITER)	IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL		
		1	#1 for 7 WEEKS As It Was	Harry Styles	1	11
			KID HARPOON, T. JOHNSON (H. STYLES, T.E. PHULL, T. JOHNSON)	ERSKINE/COLUMBIA		
(2)	(2)	2	First Class	Jack Harlow	1	10
			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)	GENERATION NOW/ATLANTIC		
(3)	(3)	3	Wait For U	Future Featuring Drake & Tems	1	7
			ATL. JACOB, FNZ (N.D. WILBURN, A. GRAHAM, T. OPENI, T. AKPOGHENE, J.D. CANADY, M.J. MULE, I.J. DEBONI)	FREEBANDZ/EPIC		
(4)	(5)	4	ABOUT DAMN TIME	Lizzo	4	9
			RICKY REED, B. SLATKIN (B. SLATKIN, E. B. FREDERIC, L. PRICE, M. MCLAREN, M. JEFFERSON, R. LARKINS, S. HAGUE, T.M. THOMAS)	NICE LIFE/ATLANTIC		
(8)	(4)	5	Running Up That Hill (A Deal With God)	Kate Bush	4	23
			K. BUSH (K. BUSH)	FISH PEOPLE/NOBLE AND BRITE/RHINO/WARNER		
5	6	6	Heat Waves	Glass Animals	1	74
			D. BAYLEY (D. BAYLEY)	WOLF TONE/POLYDOR/REPUBLIC		
6	7	7	Big Energy	Latto	3	34
			DR. LUKE, V. OLIVER (A.M. STEPHENS, L.S. GOTTFELD, V. OLIVER, A.T.R. SMITH, T.M. THOMAS, K.AINE, J.L. LOWE, A. BELEW, C. FRANTZ, S. STANLEY, T. WEYMOUTH)	STREAMCUT/RCA		
(7)	(8)	8	Me Porto Bonito	Bad Bunny & Chencho Corleone	7	6
			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)	RIMAS		
(11)	(10)	9	Titi Me Pregunto	Bad Bunny	5	6
			MAG (B.A. MARTINEZ OCASIO, M.D. BORRERO, R. ROSARDO)	RIMAS		
HOT SHOT DEBUT		10	Glimpse Of Us	Joji	10	1
			C. MCDONOUGH (A. KESSELMAN, C. MCDONOUGH, G. MILLER, J.E. CASTILLO, R. MCDONOUGH)	88RISING/WARNER		
(13)	(13)	11	Wasted On You	Morgan Wallen	9	31
			J. MOI, J. DURRETT (M. WALLEN, E.K. SMITH, J. THOMPSON, CHARLIE HANDSOME)	REPUBLIC/BIG LOUD		
10	11	12	Stay	The Kid LAROI & Justin Bieber	1	49
			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)	RAYMOND BRAUN/COLUMBIA/DEF JAM		
NEW		13	Yet To Come	BTS	13	1
			PDOGG (PDOGG, RM, M.G. SCHNEIDER, SUGA, J. HOPE)	BIGHIT MUSIC/GEFFEN/INTERSCOPE		
-	(9)	14	I Like You (A Happier Song)	Post Malone Featuring Doja Cat	9	2
			L. BELL, J.L. HARRIS (A.R. POST, A.Z. DLAMINI, L. B. BELL, J.L. HARRIS, B. WALSH)	MERCURY/REPUBLIC		
9	15	15	Late Night Talking	Harry Styles	4	4
			KID HARPOON, T. JOHNSON (H. STYLES, T.E. PHULL)	ERSKINE/COLUMBIA		
(16)	(17)	16	Boyfriend	Dove Cameron	16	18
			E. BLAIR (D. CAMERON, DELACEY, S. STONESTREET, E. BLAIR)	DISRUPTOR/COLUMBIA		
15	16	17	Ghost	Justin Bieber	5	38
			THE MONSTERS & STRANGERZ, J. BELLION (J.D. BIEBER, J.D. BELLION, J.K. JOHNSON, S. JOHNSON, M.R. POLLACK)	RAYMOND BRAUN/DEF JAM		
12	14	18	Enemy	Imagine Dragons X JID	5	30
			MATTMAN & ROBIN (D. REYNOLDS, W. SERMON, B. MCKEE, D. PLATZMAN, R.L. FREDRIKSSON, M. PLARSSON, J.D. TRANTER, D. ROUTE)	KIDINAKORNER/INTERSCOPE		
(19)	(21)	19	Numb Little Bug	Em Beihold	19	20
			D. CATON, FALCONRY, E. HILL (E. BEI HOLD, N.M. LOPEZ, A. DECARO)	MOON PROJECTS/REPUBLIC		
18	19	20	Bad Habits	Ed Sheeran	2	51
			FRED, J. MCDAID, E. SHEERAN, J. FISH, O.S. SYKES (E.C. SHEERAN, F.J.P. GIBSON, J. MCDAID)	ATLANTIC		

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



HOT 100
53

“Sleazy Flow”
SleazyWorld Go
featuring Lil Baby

The 24-year-old Grand Rapids, Mich., native’s first Hot 100 entry also reaches new No. 9 highs on both Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs and Hot Rap Songs.

How was “Sleazy Flow” created?

I was at a point like, “What’s the next move?” I never try to stick to the same shit; I’m always trying to make a new sound. Before I went to the studio, I had the beat, and I [visualized] the video before I wrote the lyrics. That shit was in my head. I was like, “I have to get this song done.” I laid down me talking, and then I started rapping and it came out like that. I posted a 26-second snippet the same day we shot the video. It went viral — at least 30,000 shares on Facebook. Everyone was asking when it’s dropping.

before I wrote the lyrics. That shit was in my head. I was like, “I have to get this song done.” I laid down me talking, and then I started rapping and it came out like that. I posted a 26-second snippet the same day we shot the video. It went viral — at least 30,000 shares on Facebook. Everyone was asking when it’s dropping.

Was there a moment you felt the song broke through in the mainstream?

I was meeting with labels before I dropped [“Sleazy Flow”]. That’s another reason why I needed to step my game up. I was meeting with Island Records in New York, and I woke up and it was viral. Everyone was tagging me, and there were artists doing TikToks to it. That was a game-changer. You don’t need to have a big platform to be visible there. I was an underground artist that everyone knew, but [in the] mainstream, nobody knew me. It opened them doors.

How do you feel about “Sleazy Flow” being your breakthrough hit?

I’m happy with “Sleazy Flow.” That’s the sound I’ve been searching for the whole time I’ve been doing music. When you’re an artist, you got to find yourself. It just took me figuring out who I was and the story I wanted to paint. I feel like a lot of my fans love my music so much because they can relate. I’m not trying too hard. I’m just rapping about what I know and what I been through. The name [of the song] alone is an opening statement to who I am.

—MICHAEL SAPONARA

Biggest Airplay Gain	4	“About Damn Time” Lizzo	
Biggest Streaming Gain	52	“Sunroof” Nicky Youre & dazy	
Biggest Sales Gain	63	“She Likes It” Russell Dickinson & Jake Scott	

BILLBOARD.COM: THE WEEK'S MOST POPULAR CURRENT RECORDS, ARTISTS, ALBUMS, SONGS, AND MUSIC VIDEO; CHARTS BY GENRE, COUNTRY, AND VIDEO; SOURCES: TRACKING DATA FROM BILLBOARD'S MONITORING AND ANALYTICS DEPARTMENT; CHARTS BY GENRE, COUNTRY, AND VIDEO; SOURCES: TRACKING DATA FROM BILLBOARD'S MONITORING AND ANALYTICS DEPARTMENT; CHARTS BY GENRE, COUNTRY, AND VIDEO; SOURCES: TRACKING DATA FROM BILLBOARD'S MONITORING AND ANALYTICS DEPARTMENT. © 2022 BILLBOARD MEDIA, LLC AND LUMINATE, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

COMING SOON



www.artefinomusic.com

BILLBOARD 200

9



SZA *Ctrl*

Following a June 10 fifth-anniversary deluxe reissue that added seven previously unreleased tracks, *Ctrl* rises 35-9 with 32,000 equivalent album units earned in the United States in the week ending June 16, according to Luminate (up 109%).

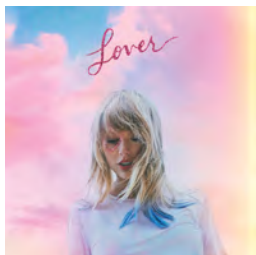
12



Motionless in White *Scoring the End of the World*

The band scores its second top 15-charting release and its third No. 1 on Top Hard Rock Albums with 29,000 units. Of that sum, 23,000 are in album sales – good for the act's second-largest sales week ever.

39



Taylor Swift *Lover*

The 2019 chart-topping album jumps back into the top 40 (14,000 units; up 29%) for the first time since December thanks to a replenishment of vinyl stock in the marketplace, with 4,000 sold on wax (up 323%).

10 Carrie Underwood *Denim & Rhinestones*



Carrie Underwood's new studio album, *Denim & Rhinestones*, debuts at No. 10 on the Billboard 200 with 31,000 equivalent album units earned in the United States in the week ending June 16, according to Luminate.

Denim marks Underwood's 10th consecutive top 10 album — and total entry — on the chart. Additionally, all 10 have debuted in the same region, stretching back to her first, *Some Hearts*, which arrived in 2005 and entered and peaked at No. 2. She has scored four No. 1s among the 10 entries.

Notably, with *Denim*'s debut, Underwood ties Reba McEntire's mark for the most top 10 country albums on the Billboard 200 for a female artist.

Denim was led by the single "Ghost Story," which reaches new highs on Hot Country Songs (15-12) and Country Airplay (19-16) this issue.

—KEITH CAULFIELD

Billboard 200

2 WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Artist	Title	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
			IMPRINT/DISTRIBUTING LABEL			
		1	#1 for 1 WEEK BTS	Proof	1	1
		2	Bad Bunny	Un Verano Sin Ti	1	6
		3	Harry Styles	Harry's House	1	4
	(2)	4	Post Malone	Twelve Carat Toothache	2	2
		5	Future	I Never Liked You	1	7
(5)	6	6	Morgan Wallen	Dangerous: The Double Album	1	75
		7	Kendrick Lamar	Mr. Morale & The Big Steppers	1	5
(8)	8	8	Olivia Rodrigo	Sour	1	56
83	(35)	9	GG SZA	Ctrl	3	262
	NEW	10	Carrie Underwood	Denim & Rhinestones	10	1
(7)	9	11	Zach Bryan	American Heartbreak	5	4
	NEW	12	Motionless in White	Scoring The End Of The World	12	1
		13	Jack Harlow	Come Home The Kids Miss You	3	6
(6)	11	14	Doja Cat	Planet Her	2	51
		15	Drake	Certified Lover Boy	1	41
(14)	(14)	16	The Weeknd	The Highlights	2	70
		17	Lil Durk	7220	1	14
		18	Soundtrack	Encanto	1	29
(28)	(12)	19	Kate Bush	Hounds Of Love	12	30
		20	Lil Baby	My Turn	1	120

BILLBOARD 200: THE WEEK'S MOST POPULAR ALBUMS, BASED ON MULTIMETRIC CONSUMPTION, BLENDING TRADITIONAL ALBUM SALES, ALBUM EQUIVALENT SALES, AND STREAMING SALES. *COMPILER'S CHOICE: ALBUMS THAT DEBUTED IN THE CHARTS FOR THE FIRST TIME. © 2022 BILLBOARD MEDIA, LLC AND LUMINATE INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

THE RYMAN HAS ALWAYS BEEN WHERE DREAMERS, REBELS, AND TRAILBLAZERS FIND THEIR SPOTLIGHT.

The world-famous Grand Ole Opry has called us home.
MLK and Susan B. Anthony have stood on our stage.
Coldplay called the Ryman the greatest theatre in the
world. Since 1892, this has been where history is made.
Where icons perform. Where pop culture lives.
And where music lovers belong.

The artists and fans who grace our stage and sit in our
pews have helped transform Ryman Auditorium from a
Nashville tabernacle to music's most iconic stage.
We couldn't have done it without you.

Thank you for 130 years.
We're looking forward to 130 more.



RYMAN

RYMAN.COM



LEADERS IN LIVE

OVER 20K EVENTS HOSTED EACH YEAR

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

LEARN MORE AT ASMGLOBAL.COM



THE LARGEST VENUE NETWORK

With over 350+ premier venues worldwide, our global reach and integrated network of venues across 5 continents provides unlimited opportunities.

116
ARENAS

27
STADIUMS

84
THEATERS





GLOBAL 200

6

"Glimpse of Us"
Joji

"GLIMPSE OF US" by Joji (above) debuts at No. 6 on the Billboard Global 200, starting with 52.2 million streams and 3,000 downloads sold worldwide in the week ending June 16, according to Luminate. The ballad marks the first appearance in the top 10 (and the chart's top half) for the Japanese-born singer-songwriter, who

originally broke through as a comedian-personality on YouTube, notably helping build buzz for Baauer's 2013 viral hit, "Harlem Shake."

The single is Joji's first release since his album *Nectar* arrived and peaked at No. 3 on the U.S.-based Billboard 200 in October 2020. He previously reached the chart's top 10 after *Ballads 1* also debuted at its No. 3 high in November 2018. "Glimpse" concurrently opens as Joji's first entry on the Billboard Global Excl. U.S. chart at No. 9, with 33.9 million streams and 1,000 sold outside the United States.

Meanwhile, BTS' "Yet To Come" arrives at No. 1 on the Global Excl. U.S. chart (96.5 million streams, 42,000 sold). The song, from BTS' new Billboard 200-topping album, *Proof* (see story, page 9), is the group's record-extending sixth leader on Global Excl. U.S. since the chart launched in September 2020. It follows "My Universe," with Coldplay (one week at No. 1, Oct. 9, 2021); "Permission To Dance" (one, July 24, 2021); "Butter" (five weeks, beginning June 5, 2021); "Life Goes On" (one, Dec. 5, 2020); and "Dynamite" (eight, starting Sept. 26, 2020).

Harry Styles' "As It Was" returns for a 10th week atop the Global 200. It's just the second song to hold the No. 1 slot for at least 10 weeks after The Kid LAROI and Justin Bieber's "Stay" led for 11 beginning in August 2021. —GARY TRUST

Global 200						
2 WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title	Artist	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
1	2	1	#1 for 10 WEEKS As It Was	Harry Styles	1	11
		HOT SHOT DEBUT	2 Yet To Come	BTS	2	1
3	1	3	Running Up That Hill (A Deal With God)	Kate Bush	1	3
2	3	4	Me Porto Bonito	Bad Bunny & Chencho Corleone	2	6
4	4	5	Titi Me Pregunto	Bad Bunny	4	6
	NEW	6	Glimpse Of Us	Joji	6	1
5	5	7	Ojitos Lindos	Bad Bunny & Bomba Estereo	4	6
7	6	8	About Damn Time	Lizzo	6	9
14	12	9	Efecto	Bad Bunny	9	6
9	8	10	Moscow Mule	Bad Bunny	2	6
55	16	11	Te Felicito	Shakira & Rauw Alejandro	11	8
	NEW	12	Run BTS	BTS	12	1
12	9	13	Provenza	Karol G	6	8
13	13	14	Heat Waves	Glass Animals	1	76
8	10	15	First Class	Jack Harlow	2	10
10	11	16	Wait For U	Future Featuring Drake & Tems	2	7
11	15	17	Party	Bad Bunny & Rauw Alejandro	8	6
6	14	18	Late Night Talking	Harry Styles	2	4
-	7	19	I Like You (A Happier Song)	Post Malone Featuring Doja Cat	7	2
15	18	20	Bam Bam	Camila Cabello Featuring Ed Sheeran	5	15

DAMIEN MALONEY

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 OR BOTH SUBSCRIPTION AND AD-SUPPORTED STREAMS, PLUS DOWNLOAD SALES. FROM TOP MUSIC RETAILERS ACROSS THE GLOBE. SEE CHART'S LEGEND ON BILLBOARD.COM FOR COMPLETE RULES AND EXPLANATIONS. © 2022 BILLBOARD MEDIA, LLC AND LUMINATE INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

LUMINATE

STREAMING AND SALES DATA COMPILED BY

BMI CHRISTIAN

AWARDS 2022

ALIVE & BREATHING

Elle Limebear (PRS)
Matt Maher
Be Essential Songs
I am a Pilgrim Songs
Limebear Projects

AMEN

Jake Henry
Jeff Pardo
Micah Tyler
Be Essential Songs
Fair Trade Global Songs
Foundational Songs

AMEN

busbee
Luke Smallbone
Tedd Tjornhom
7189 Music Publishing
Curb Dayspring Music
Kilns Music
Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp.

ANOTHER IN THE FIRE

Chris Davenport
Joel Houston (APRA)
Capitol CMG Publishing
Hillsong MP Songs

BATTLE BELONGS

Phil Wickham
Be Essential Songs
Phil Wickham Music
Simply Global Songs

FAMOUS FOR (I BELIEVE)

Chuck Butler
Krisly Nordhoff
Jordan Sapp
Tauren Wells
Be Essential Songs
Capitol CMG Publishing
Crucialworks Entertainment
Integrity's Praise! Music
Jord A Lil Music
Nordained Music

FOLLOW ME TO THE CROSS

Melissa Brady
Brady House Publishing
Capitol CMG Publishing

GOD SO LOVED

Ed Cash
Martin Cash
Scott Cash
Franni Cash Cain
Capitol CMG Publishing
We The Kingdom Music

GOOD GOD ALMIGHTY

Jeff Sojka
Capitol CMG Publishing
Sojka Songs

GRAVES INTO GARDENS

Chris Brown
Steven Furtick
Tiffany Hudson
Be Essential Songs
Music By Elevation Worship Publishing

HELP IS ON THE WAY (MAYBE MIDNIGHT)

tobyMac
Achtobor Songs
River Oaks Music Company

HOLD ON TO ME

Lauren Daigle
Capitol CMG Publishing
Centricity Songs
Pubalicious

ICON AWARD

STEVEN CURTIS CHAPMAN

SONG OF THE YEAR

THERE WAS JESUS

Casey Beathard / Jonathan Smith / Zach Williams
Anthems of Hope / Be Essential Songs / Cashagamble Jet Music
Little Louder Songs / Seven Ring Circus Songs / Songs of Kobalt Music Publishing
Wisteria Drive Music

SONGWRITERS OF THE YEAR

JASON COX

I See Revival
If God Pulled Back the Curtain
The Healer Hasn't Lost His Touch

ETHAN HULSE

Jericho
Out of My Hands
Rise Up (Lazarus)

PUBLISHER OF THE YEAR

BE ESSENTIAL SONGS

Alive & Breathing / Amen / Battle Belongs
Famous For (I Believe) / Graves into Gardens / Jericho
Less Like Me / Out of My Hands / Peace Be Still
Rise Up (Lazarus) / There Was Jesus

I SEE REVIVAL

Jason Cox
Adam Wheeler
Christian Taylor Music
ClearBox Benefit
Oven Music, Inc.

IF GOD PULLED BACK THE CURTAIN

Jason Cox
Kenna West
Christian Taylor Music
ClearBox Benefit
Mike Curb Music
Say Amen Music

CELEBRATE WITH US

bmi.com/christian2022

MUSIC MOVES OUR WORLD

JERICO

Ethan Hulse
Andrew Ripp
Be Essential Songs
Songs By Fishbone

KEEP ME IN THE MOMENT

Jeremy Camp
Jordan Sapp
Capitol CMG Publishing

LESS LIKE ME

Mia Fieldes (APRA)
Zach Williams
Anthems of Hope
Be Essential Songs
Upside Down Under
Wisteria Drive Music

OUT OF MY HANDS

Jeremy Camp
Ethan Hulse
Jeff Sojka
Be Essential Songs

PEACE BE STILL

Hope Darst
Mia Fieldes (APRA)
Andrew Holt
Andrew Holt Music Publishing
Be Essential Songs
Capitol CMG Publishing
Tbco Publishing
Upside Down Under

RISE UP (LAZARUS)

Ethan Hulse
Nick Schwarz
Be Essential Songs
Keep the Pulse on the Hulse
Schwarz I N C Publishing

THE HEALER HASN'T LOST HIS TOUCH

Jason Cox
Joseph Habadank
Tony Wood
Christian Taylor Music
ClearBox Benefit

THERE WAS JESUS

Casey Beathard
Jonathan Smith
Zach Williams
Anthems of Hope
Be Essential Songs
Cashagamble Jet Music
Little Louder Songs
Seven Ring Circus Songs
Songs of Kobalt Music Publishing
Wisteria Drive Music

WHEN GOD SAYS WAIT

Matthew Browder
John Darin Rowsey
Christian Taylor Music
ClearBox Benefit

WHO AM I

Jeremy Lutito
Thomas Rhett
Bear Rinehart
Bear in the Bunker Music
Bike Music
Chigostick Music
Cricket On The Line
EMI-Blackwood Music, Inc.
Razor & Tie Music Publishing
Songs of Kobalt Music Publishing
Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp.

WHO YOU ARE TO ME

Charles Kelley
Chris Tomlin
Capitol CMG Publishing
RADIOBULLETPUBLISHING
S.D.G. Publishing
Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp.

MACCA'S BILLIONS

WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM THE BIGGEST TOUR OF MAY, PAUL McCARTNEY SURPASSES \$1 BILLION IN TOTAL REPORTED CAREER GROSSES

AFTER A NOTABLY YOUNG AND DIVERSE group of tours — highlighted by Bad Bunny and BTS — led the way on the 2022 midyear Billboard Boxscore charts, classic rock elder statesman Paul McCartney finishes at No. 1 on *Billboard's* Top Tours chart for May. According to figures reported to Boxscore, McCartney earned \$52.4 million and sold 206,000 tickets across nine shows throughout the month.

The May dates of the Got Back Tour alternated between arenas (Seattle's Climate Pledge Arena, Dallas' Dickies Arena) and stadiums (Inglewood, Calif.'s SoFi Stadium, Orlando, Fla.'s Camping World Stadium), reaching a single-night \$12 million high in Inglewood. The lofty total is good for the No. 2 spot on the Top Boxscores ranking.

After his May 31 show at the Thompson-Boling Arena in Knoxville, Tenn., McCartney's total reported career gross rose to exceed \$1 billion, making him one of just 11 artists to surpass the 10-digit mark in Boxscore's 30-year-plus history.

—ERIC FRANKENBERG

Top Tours			
Artist	Gross	Total Attendance	No. Of Shows
1 Paul McCartney	\$52,352,859	206,061	9
2 Justin Bieber	\$32,261,200	274,888	13
3 Coldplay	\$31,852,318	306,340	6
4 Ed Sheeran	\$26,434,815	320,789	7
5 Kenny Chesney	\$25,516,118	231,041	8
6 Silk Sonic (Bruno Mars & Anderson .Paak)	\$18,311,526	60,518	12
7 My Chemical Romance	\$15,537,058	172,295	11
8 Dua Lipa	\$14,579,359	265,583	17
9 Maroon 5	\$14,565,078	120,202	4
10 Ricardo Arjona	\$12,042,223	100,283	12

Top Boxscores

	Artist(s) VENUE DATE	Gross TICKET PRICES	Total Attendance NO. OF SHOWS	Promoter(s)
1	Ed Sheeran PRINCIPALITY STADIUM, CARDIFF, WALES MAY 26-28	\$14,955,621 \$94.03/\$56.42	185,490 3	FKP Scorpio Konzertproduk- tionen, Kilimanjaro Live
2	Paul McCartney SOFI STADIUM, INGLEWOOD, CALIF. MAY 13	\$12,046,695 \$465/\$40	43,658 1	Live Nation, Marshall Arts, MPL
3	Maroon 5 HAYARKON PARK, TEL AVIV, ISRAEL MAY 9-10	\$11,740,800 \$261.23/\$105.67	98,055 2	Live Nation
4	Coldplay SOLDIER FIELD, CHICAGO MAY 28-29	\$10,969,930 \$174.50/\$34.50	107,072 2	Live Nation
5	My Chemical Romance STADIUM MK, MILTON KEYNES, ENGLAND MAY 19, 21-22	\$8,889,201 \$217.16/\$55.84	90,687 3	SJM Concerts
6	Paul McCartney CAMPING WORLD STADIUM, ORLANDO, FLA. MAY 28	\$8,848,666 \$428.50/\$39.50	42,662 1	AEG Presents, Marshall Arts, MPL
7	Justin Bieber FORO SOL, MEXICO CITY MAY 25-26	\$8,081,348 \$210.25/\$19.11	112,747 2	AEG Presents, OCESA
8	Paul McCartney CLIMATE PLEDGE ARENA, SEATTLE MAY 2-3	\$7,983,327 \$496.50/\$49	29,790 2	Live Nation, Marshall Arts, MPL
9	Paul McCartney OAKLAND ARENA, OAKLAND, CALIF. MAY 6, 8	\$7,580,903 \$399.50/\$29.50	28,599 2	Another Planet Entertainment
10	Paul McCartney TRUIST FIELD, WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. MAY 21	\$7,256,102 \$418.50/\$39.50	33,222 1	AEG Presents, Marshall Arts, MPL

BARRY CHUN/THE BOSTON GLOBE/GETTY IMAGES

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR HONOREES

MIKE DUNGAN

CINDY MABE

MIKE HARRIS

ROYCE RISSER

BRIAN WRIGHT

TROY TOMLINSON



UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP

Top Venues

15,001 OR MORE CAPACITY

	Venue LOCATION	Total Gross	Total Attendance	No. Of Shows
1	O2 Arena LONDON	\$14,417,470	212,219	19
2	AO Arena MANCHESTER, ENGLAND	\$14,312,533	187,778	19
3	T-Mobile Arena LAS VEGAS	\$14,252,702	44,430	3
4	Oakland Arena OAKLAND, CALIF.	\$12,422,532	81,010	6
5	Kia Forum INGLEWOOD, CALIF.	\$8,605,325	80,839	8
6	American Family Insurance Amphitheater MILWAUKEE	\$8,097,757	79,560	2
7	Climate Pledge Arena SEATTLE	\$7,983,327	29,790	2
8	Madison Square Garden NEW YORK	\$7,752,360	66,763	5
9	Prudential Center NEWARK, N.J.	\$6,665,790	60,243	6
10	Barclays Center BROOKLYN	\$6,220,928	37,550	3



Kenny Chesney



Silk Sonic's Anderson .Paak (left) and Bruno Mars

10,001-15,000 CAPACITY

	Venue LOCATION	Total Gross	Total Attendance	No. Of Shows
1	OVO Hydro GLASGOW	\$7,776,095	121,725	17
2	OVO Arena Wembley LONDON	\$7,197,525	94,758	14
3	Van Andel Arena GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.	\$5,047,301	51,747	8
4	MGM Grand Garden LAS VEGAS	\$4,680,885	15,707	2
5	First Direct Arena LEEDS, ENGLAND	\$4,057,822	70,778	14
6	Dickies Arena DALLAS	\$3,985,850	12,093	1
7	3Arena DUBLIN	\$3,555,618	34,078	4
8	Utilita Arena NEWCASTLE, ENGLAND	\$2,678,097	44,353	8
9	Mercedes-Benz Arena BERLIN	\$2,577,582	39,117	4
10	Barclays Arena HAMBURG, GERMANY	\$2,316,298	34,554	4



Dua Lipa

5,001-10,000 CAPACITY

	Venue LOCATION	Total Gross	Total Attendance	No. Of Shows
1	Dolby Live LAS VEGAS	\$18,311,526	60,518	12
2	Red Rocks Amphitheatre MORRISON, COLO.	\$11,289,655	172,182	20
3	Hard Rock Live at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino HOLLYWOOD, FLA.	\$4,021,153	24,845	5
4	Radio City Music Hall NEW YORK	\$3,408,858	27,639	5
5	Mohegan Sun Arena UNCASVILLE, CONN.	\$2,802,235	43,701	7
6	Auditorio Telmex GUADALAJARA, MEXICO	\$2,585,634	56,330	8
7	Greek Theatre LOS ANGELES	\$2,580,754	36,226	7
8	Texas Trust CU Theatre DALLAS	\$2,182,484	26,337	7
9	Auditorio Nacional MEXICO CITY	\$1,818,887	47,305	5
10	The Anthem WASHINGTON, D.C.	\$1,796,328	33,128	7

5,000 OR LESS CAPACITY

	Venue LOCATION	Total Gross	Total Attendance	No. Of Shows
1	Durham Performing Arts Center DURHAM, N.C.	\$9,222,214	87,178	33
2	Resorts World Theatre LAS VEGAS	\$3,439,274	21,288	6
3	The Colosseum at Caesars Palace LAS VEGAS	\$2,783,891	18,308	5
4	Chicago Theatre CHICAGO	\$2,575,618	24,037	8
5	DeVos Performance Hall GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.	\$2,092,047	28,083	17
6	KEMBA Live! COLUMBUS, OHIO	\$1,681,619	33,444	12
7	Orpheum Theatre MINNEAPOLIS	\$1,506,932	18,488	10
8	Terminal 5 NEW YORK	\$1,482,355	38,267	13
9	Mission Ballroom DENVER	\$1,394,236	31,200	12
10	Encore Theater at Wynn Hotel LAS VEGAS	\$1,326,779	11,880	9

LIPA: DIMITRI HANKE/GETTY IMAGES; CHESNEY: JEFF ROSENBERG/GETTY IMAGES; SONG: JOHN STANAKA/GETTY IMAGES

A MAGICAL NIGHT OF STORIES AND SONG
EVENING OF STORIES

A BENEFIT FOR PORTER'S CALL

TUESDAY, AUGUST 30, 2022 - 7:30PM
THE FISHER CENTER AT BELMONT

FEATURING STORYTELLERS



TRACY EDWARDS

Tracy Edwards, MBE is a British sailor who won international fame as the skipper of the first all-female crew in the Whitbread Round the World Yacht Race. She has written two books about her experiences and travels internationally to share her story, which became a Netflix documentary named *Maiden* in 2019.



CARLOS WHITTAKER

Carlos Whittaker is a self-proclaimed "Hope Dealer" who spends the majority of his time telling stories on stages and phone screens across the world that lead people towards action. He's a People's Choice Award winner, the author of three books, and the host of the popular podcast "Human Hope with Carlos Whittaker."

SPONSORSHIPS ARE NOW AVAILABLE

A limited number of individual tickets will be available at a later date.
Contact Ashley at ashley@porterscall.com for more information.

 PORTER'S CALL
www.porterscall.com

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 Country Power Player honorees — John Esposito, Ben Kline, Cris Lacy, James Marsh, Ben Vaughn, and Kristen Williams — have chosen to spotlight Porter's Call for their dedication to providing artists with specialized counsel, support, refuge, and encouragement in both their careers and personal lives.



Let's give four

CHEERS

Congratulations to Beville Dunkerley, J.R. Schumann,
Storme Warren and Alina Thompson for making
Billboard's Country Power Players List.
We're so glad you're part of our radio family.



Beville Dunkerley
Head of Country Music Talent and
Industry Relations, SiriusXM & Pandora

J.R. Schumann
Senior Director, Country Music Programming,
SiriusXM

Storme Warren
Host of *The Storme Warren Show* on SiriusXM's
The Highway and original SXM podcast *Exit 209*

Alina Thompson
Senior Manager, Artist Marketing &
Industry Relations, SiriusXM & Pandora

market

MUSIC AND MONEY

PG. 24 **BTS' HIATUS: WHAT'S AT STAKE**

PG. 26 **MAXIMIZING MINIFESTS**

PG. 28 **COMEDY DYNAMICS' CEO ON THE PANDORA SUIT**



Songwriting Cannot Remain The Same

As the hits-driven streaming economy whittles away at tunesmiths' royalties, their managers are getting creative to get them paid

BY ELIAS LEIGHT // ILLUSTRATION BY MADISON KETCHAM

S TREAMING HAS rejuvenated the music business, but it's no secret that the new economic model has upset many in the industry. And no group has been more frustrated than songwriters. In a physical sales-driven world, writers could make a decent living by landing a placement on a superstar's album whether it resulted in a hit or not — every song on a million-selling album earns the same amount of mechanical royalties, most recently 9.1 cents per copy sold. In the streaming-driven world, however, album placements no longer guarantee much income. There are only hits and non-hits, and the streaming money a writer earns from penning a couple of the latter, even if a superstar records them, "might not even equal the cost of filling up my gas tank

to come to the session," says Dan Petel, whose management company This Is Noise looks after Ian Kirkpatrick (a writer on Dua Lipa's "Don't Start Now" and "New Rules," as well as hits from Selena Gomez and Jason Derulo), Simon Wilcox (Demi Lovato, Camila Cabello) and others.

"The truth is that the large majority of songwriters are writing for free five days a week with a very low batting average [in terms of getting songs placed]," says Zach Gurka. His Ground Up MGMT roster includes Emily Warren (Lipa, Charli XCX) and Scott Harris (Cabello, Shawn Mendes), and Gurka's job — "to get your average writer to a living wage at the end of the year" — "involves a scavenger hunt to find money in different places."

In an effort to counteract this harsh economy

At its annual meeting, the **National Music Publishers' Association** launched a new songwriter advocacy group called NOTES and a new initiative to support female creators.

The **NMPA** filed a lawsuit against music-video making app Vinkle as part of a new legal campaign against similar unlicensed apps.

where artists and labels pull in the majority of money paid out by digital streaming platforms, Petel, Gurka and their peers are upending music-industry norms as they devise new ways to get their clients paid. Instead of praying for back-end royalties, songwriter managers are increasingly asking for payments throughout the writing and recording process: fees that can include upfront money to enter the studio with an artist; holding fees to reserve tracks for a set period; a kill fee if, for example, a label doesn't push a single to radio; and, in some cases, a percentage of royalties generated by the recording, which songwriters traditionally have not been granted. Collectively, these fees can add up to anywhere from a few hundred dollars to the high five figures for in-demand writers.

Every ask can be a risk — push someone too aggressively, and potential clients might opt for a less demanding songwriter. "It's so easy to sour relationships by asking for too much," says Kelle Musgrave Glanzbergh, whose Linear Management roster encompasses over a dozen writers, producers and mixers.

Songwriters have historically drawn on several streams of income: mechanical royalties from downloads, physical sales and, to a lesser degree, streams; performance royalties, which flow from radio play and streaming; and synch fees from

placements in ads, TV shows or films. Today, writers can no longer rely on mechanical royalties from physical sales and downloads to provide much revenue. Labels aren't typically open to input from songwriters when it comes to promotion or synch placements. And the number of writers and producers on many pop songs dilutes the income of each even further.

For Gurka, requesting a hold fee "is the earliest point to ask for something." Artist managers or A&R executives often hear demos and want to reserve them for a future project, at which point, he explains, "There's an opportunity to say, 'We will not pitch this to others for three to six months while you figure out what you want to do. But in exchange, can we have some sort of fee for that time?'" He says hold fee requests often range from \$5,000 to \$20,000.

More songwriter managers are also asking for royalties from songs that are destined for release. While writers enjoy publishing income when their lyrics or melodies are used, they are not typically entitled to a share of the income stream from the released recording unless pieces of their demo — bits of guitar, for example — are used in that recording. Petel says he will often push for 1% of recording royalties for his clients in situations where an artist wants a song but was not involved in writing it.

The same goes for situations in which a writer plays a large role in an album project, setting aside multiple days to help create songs and placing several tracks on the record. "There's not much money in album cuts unless you can get a fee and some sort of recording royalty," Petel says.

While getting a point on the recording is an accomplishment, it does not guarantee money for writers. Often they will not receive any royalties until the costs of recording and promoting a song are recouped. That's why asking for upfront fees matters, according to Musgrave Glanzbergh. She finds that "when the majors are blocking out a chunk of time for writers to work with an artist, it's easier to get maybe a \$500 day rate [for my clients]."

In some situations, Gurka has asked for kill fees if artists and labels appear hesitant to push a single up the charts. "If a song goes to pop radio, we make money [through performance royalties] — can we put that in writing?" he asks. "Can we put a kill fee in there in case the song doesn't have an impact date or doesn't reach a certain number on the [radio] chart?" A kill fee ask tends to be higher — potentially \$50,000 or more — under the assumption that the money won't be

paid if the label fulfills its obligations.

The shifts in writer compensation are currently centered in the top 40 pop space, but the Nashville songwriting community is taking note as well. "Los Angeles is often five years ahead of us," says Robert Carlton, senior vp of development at SMACKSongs, which has a roster of 20 country writers that includes hitmakers Shane McAnally and Josh Osborne. But "young writers are definitely unsettled. [They're asking,] 'Did I miss the last window where I could actually make a significant living doing this?' There's more of an onus on the artists and the labels — you have to help out here."

In 2019, country singer Kip Moore spoke about paying bonuses to songwriters who appear on his albums to ensure they are fairly compensated. But even in Nashville, where songwriters are highly valued, paying them more means that someone else is making less. "Whenever you try to make that status quo shift, there is going to be a pushback," says Gurka. His requests for compensation are often met with "an eye roll." Gandhar Savur, an entertainment attorney who represents writers and artists, says writers' asks have elicited "anger, shock [and] surprise," partially because "these points that writers are now asking for are coming out of the artists' royalties — the labels are not sharing in this burden."

Artists are already expected to pass some of those royalties to their producers and mixers. An act with an 18-point royalty, for example, may actually wind up with 13 points once collaborators' shares are allotted. That drops further if songwriters are added. Several artist managers say it's not fair for their clients to shoulder the burden of paying songwriters, believing it should fall to labels and even digital service providers.

If writers increasingly secure recording royalties for their work, Gurka hopes that labels — which typically earn far more points than their artists — will change their contracts accordingly. But artist managers note that labels are reluctant to set such a precedent. "Most companies will say, 'We can't give you a point, but we can give you a few grand,'" says Hannan Malik, founder of NowhereNear and manager of Plested (Lewis Capaldi, Little Mix) and others. He adds, however, that a label could gain a competitive advantage by being more generous with songwriters. "If a company said, 'We're going to give a point to everyone,' they're going to get the best songs," he says. "The more we ask, the more likely it becomes the norm." **B**

MARKET WATCH

24.18B

↓0.5%

TOTAL ON-DEMAND STREAMS WEEK OVER WEEK

Number of audio and video on-demand streams for the week ending June 16.

17.70M

↑0.9%

ALBUM CONSUMPTION UNITS WEEK OVER WEEK

Album sales plus track-equivalent albums plus streaming-equivalent albums for the week ending June 16.

571.9B

↑11.5%

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.

Pre-eminent chart historian **Joel Whitburn** died at the age of 82.

The **Radio Music License Committee** filed a petition to hold consolidated rate proceedings for both ASCAP and BMI before a single designated judge.



SINGULARITY: 5 YEARS OF BTS MILESTONES

Whether they take a hiatus or not, the boys of BTS have amassed some of the most impressive statistics by any act from any genre

\$299.1M

BTS total global Billboard Boxscore concert gross 2017-22

\$35.9M

The boy band's four-show June run at Allegiant Stadium in Las Vegas is the second-biggest Boxscore concert gross in North America (Bruce Springsteen holds the record) and landed the septet the top spot on the chart's 2022 midyear ranking. BTS also took the No. 2 spot thanks to the group's \$33.3 million four-show gross at SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, Calif., in November and December 2021.

2.26M

BTS total global Boxscore attendance 2017-22

29.4%

Percentage of K-pop sales and on-demand streams that BTS accounts for in the United States since the beginning of 2021.

24.9%

Percentage decrease of HYBE's stock on June 15, the day after the hiatus was announced. As of June 20, the stock was at 149,500 KRW on the Korea Exchange, down 22.1%.

28.8%

Percentage of the world-music album sales market in the United States that BTS accounted for through June 16. That market share has grown 11.3% since the June 10 release of the group's *Proof* compilation.

1.03M

Number of BTS albums sold in the CD format in the United States in 2021 — more than any other artist. That total accounted for 2.5% of all CDs sold stateside across all music genres.

Methodology Unless otherwise noted, Luminate is the source for all sales, streaming and chart data and Billboard Boxscore for all live-performance statistics.

Congratulations, 2022 BILLBOARD COUNTRY POWER PLAYERS

Including our very own Diane Pearson and Lori Badgett for the third year in a row.



Diane Pearson
SVP and Team Leader
Entertainment Division,
Nashville



Lori Badgett
SVP and Team Leader
Entertainment Division,
Nashville



Proudly serving the entertainment industry for more than 65 years.

LOS ANGELES | NEW YORK | NASHVILLE | ATLANTA | MIAMI*

*City National Bank does business in the state of Florida as CN Bank.

City National Bank Member FDIC. City National Bank is a subsidiary of Royal Bank of Canada.
©2022 City National Bank. All Rights Reserved. cnb.com

The FBI arrested DEL Records CEO **Angel del Villar** and CFO **Luca Scalisi** for working with a Mexican promoter tied to cartels.

Avant Gardner acquired New York's Made Event and Electric Zoo festival for \$15 million.

Are Big Minifests Better?

Live Nation and AEG are battling for dominance in Los Angeles and Las Vegas over niche lineups that do big ticket sales

BY DAVE BROOKS

A **S THE SOUTHERN** California-Las Vegas corridor develops into the largest year-round U.S. festival market, rival live-industry giants Live Nation and AEG are battling for control through competing minifestivals — genre-specific, commuter-friendly events that require little or no travel commitment, have lower ticket prices and could work nationally, spurring growth in a crowded market.

AEG-owned Goldenvoice once dominated that niche sector, but industry sources say the former talent buyer who delivered them there, Jeff Shuman, may have helped Live Nation build a superior model: a minifestival with the potential to generate Coachella-size attendance numbers.

On Oct. 22, 23 and 29, Live Nation will debut *When We Were Young*, a pop-punk/emo minifest — headlined by My Chemical Romance and Paramore — at the Las Vegas Festival Grounds. While such genre-specific events are typically scaled for venues with capacities of 10,000 to 15,000, the Festival Grounds can accommodate 80,000, and *When We Were Young* hopes to triple that attendance with a single lineup that will repeat all three days. Over 210,000 tickets have already been sold — while not a direct comparison, Coachella attracts approximately 250,000 festivalgoers during its two weekends — and industry sources say it's expected to generate \$50 million in sales. (Shuman and AEG/Goldenvoice declined to comment for this story.)

It's an innovative model, but one that has raised concerns in light of mishaps that have beset other Live Nation festivals overseen by Shuman. In March, the *Smokin Grooves* festival at Los Angeles' State Historic Park, which Shuman and Live Nation licensed this year, was plagued by sound problems and a strict noise ordinance that led to headliner Erykah Badu's closing set being cut to less than 30 minutes. Of far more concern, last December, Drakeo the Ruler was murdered backstage during the *Once Upon a Time in LA* festival, and in May, unconfirmed reports of gunfire caused a stampede at the *Lovers & Friends* festival at Vegas' Festival Grounds that led to the hospitalization of several attendees, and a 22-year-old woman died after suffering what local police deemed "a medical issue."



A Live Nation representative says the company pinpointed and resolved the issues that marred the first day of *Lovers & Friends*, and will be closely monitoring *When We Were Young* to ensure that the festival takes place without incident; it is "prepared to intervene," if necessary.

Shuman, 38, started out a decade ago creating the Growlers-headlined *Beach Goth* festival while working for the *Observatory* in Santa Ana, Calif. In 2015, he joined Goldenvoice, where he found an opportunity for nimbler, more narrowcast minifests that required hours, not days, of commitment from ticket buyers, such as the regional Mexican/Mexican rock-leaning *Tropicalia* fest, where attendance was capped at 15,000 per day.

"From the consumer side, it allows for fans to see as many of their favorite bands as possible without having to book a hotel," says Josh Kurfirst, head of festivals at WME, of minifests. "From the promoter side — especially if the festival sells out multiple days — the production can be amortized out increasing net profits," he adds. "And from the artist side, the bands can multiply their income if the festivals roll into multiple days, again increasing net profits."

By 2019, Shuman was curating six one-day festivals at Goldenvoice that generated \$10 million to \$15 million in annual sales. When he departed in 2020 after a disagreement over money, to the shock of many, he took with him full ownership of five of the seven festival brands he had created prior to his partnership with the promoter, including *Lovers & Friends*, *Once Upon a Time in LA* and *Tropicalia*

Clockwise from top left: Rhian Teasdale of Wet Leg, Hayley Williams of Paramore, Earl Sweatshirt, James Murphy of LCD Soundsystem and Gerard Way of My Chemical Romance.

(which has since been renamed *Bésame Mucho*).

He subsequently formed a joint venture with Live Nation and this year is on track to generate \$150 million to \$200 million in gross ticket sales with production help from C3 Presents, one of Live Nation's largest festival promoters, responsible for *Lollapalooza* and now *Bonnaroo*.

Goldenvoice also recently assembled a minifest team, which has created new events like *This Ain't No Picnic* that will be headlined by LCD Soundsystem and The Strokes in August and the Kacey Musgraves-fronted *Palomino*, both slated for the *Rose Bowl* grounds in Pasadena, Calif. But though official numbers aren't available, industry consensus is that Shuman's events are outselling Goldenvoice's. *Bésame Mucho* — which is set for December at Dodger Stadium — sold out in 12 minutes, while AEG's competing *Viva! L.A.* minifest — with Daddy Yankee and J Balvin headlining — was canceled earlier in June due to poor ticket sales, according to sources.

Live Nation faced a different crisis when thousands of ticket holders to *Lovers & Friends* demanded refunds following the chaos that ensued. Festival sources say problems there as well as at *Smokin Grooves* and other Shuman minifests have chipped away at the profitability of Live Nation's joint venture with him, raising expectations, and pressure, around the execution of *When We Were Young*. **B**

CONGRATULATIONS
TO OUR

billboard 2022 COUNTRY POWER PLAYERS



MIKE RITTEBERG
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT,
LABEL OPERATIONS



SCOTT BORCHETTA
PRESIDENT/CEO/FOUNDER



ANDREW KAUTZ
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER



ALLISON JONES
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT,
A&R



DAVE KELLY
VICE PRESIDENT,
DIGITAL CONSUMPTION



MIKE MOLINAR
GENERAL MANAGER,
BIG MACHINE MUSIC

BIG MACHINE
LABEL GROUP



Ashley Calhoun was promoted to president of PULSE Music Group in addition to her role as head of creative.

Juan Paz joined Apple Music in the new position of global head of Latin music business.



From The Desk Of... **Brian Volk-Weiss**

FOUNDER/CEO, COMEDY DYNAMICS

BY FRANK DIGIACOMO

PHOTOGRAPHED BY YASARA GUNAWARDENA

WHEN IT COMES to the business of stand-up comedy, the process usually goes something like this: A comedian spends a year to 18 months building an hourlong set, sharpening jokes that work and tossing the ones that don't. Once the set is perfected, a special is filmed and sold to Netflix or another streaming service.

For Comedy Dynamics founder/CEO Brian Volk-Weiss, that's just half the equation. The company's record label — which he says releases over 150 comedy albums every year in digital streaming and physical formats — accounts for approximately 50% of annual revenue. That means vinyl is every bit as important to his bottom line as it is to any music company.

The 46-year-old Queens native

— who could pass for a lankier, more animated version of Moby — has built a multimedia empire by following his instincts and immersing himself in the histories of his “hobbies,” as he calls them. And his instincts told him that the delays with the already crammed vinyl pipeline would only get worse with the pandemic, so he pushed his chips into the center of the table. “The deals we did were a little bit risky because we had to guarantee volume to get priority,” he explains. But that volume has meant the turnaround time for Comedy Dynamics vinyl releases is about six to eight months. “The best-case scenario for the industry right now is 14 months, but I think it's closer to 18.”

Comedy Dynamics bills itself as the largest independent comedy production and distribution company. In 2019, it made Grammy Award history when its releases swept all five of the nominations for comedy album

of the year. (All told, 21 have been nominated and four have won.) Five years ago, Volk-Weiss founded the Nacelle Company — now the parent company of Comedy Dynamics — to expand into publishing, podcasts, and scripted and unscripted productions, such as the Netflix series *The Toys That Made Us*. (Speaking of hobbies, his toy collection numbers approximately 3,300.) That led to Nacelle entering the business of collectible toy making, and the walls of Volk-Weiss' Burbank, Calif., office are lined with drawings, schematics and photos of recent and future releases. He even has a Legends of Laughter line of stand-up comic action figures.

But the audio side of the comedy business was the focus when Volk-Weiss sat down with *Billboard*: what the music industry might learn from it and his take on the push by collection societies Word Collections

Volk-Weiss photographed April 12 at Comedy Dynamics in Burbank, Calif. The drawings are of toys from the company's Robo Force line; the Grammy certificates are for albums by Dave Chappelle and Louis C.K.

and Spoken Giants to get comics paid royalties for the jokes they write and not just for their performance of them.

Stand-up comedy arguably works best when a comedian can be seen, whether live or on a streaming special. Given the volume of specials you release annually, why do you need a record label?

A couple of reasons: First, based on the listening, renting and buying numbers we see in North America, England, South Africa and other countries, the people want it. We typically have between 200% and 400% growth year over year. Second, it makes a lot of money, and that money finances all the other stuff we're

CURB[®]
R E C O R D S

CONGRATULATES ALL 2022
COUNTRY POWER PLAYERS

Melissa Ormond was named COO at Goldenvoice. She will retain her current title as COO of festivals for AEG Presents.

Jennifer Caserta was hired as SoundCloud's new head of people.

Prototypes of Maxx Steele (left) and Wrecker from the Nacelle Company's Robo Force line of collectible toys.



A Star Wars Death Star cookie jar and a "wood thing" that Volk-Weiss says was "the first fan-made anything" created for Comedy Dynamics.



A collection of Comedy Dynamics albums and box sets. "I think physical will be 10% to 12% of our revenue this year," Volk-Weiss predicts.

doing. We've moved into books, toys, podcasts, a scripted feature film. Don't get me wrong — the video finances a tremendous amount of that as well. But the cash flow from the record label is tremendous, too.

How tremendous?

Very high seven, low eight figures — and growing. As you know, physical — vinyl and even CDs — is growing. Five years ago, physical would have been 5% of our revenue. I think it will be 10% to 12% this year. We did one all-vinyl record deal this year with a major lifestyle chain store. That one deal was more physical product than we sold in all of 2018.

What size was the order?

A 60,000-piece order. They have hundreds of stores. And overall, we sell hundreds of thousands of vinyl albums a year. This chain ordered two titles from us in 2020. We told them one was a smart pick and one was a stupid pick — the data we have is insane. Blue state, red state, Black people, white people, old, young — it's that granular. This company saw the data and they ignored us, but we were so specific and so correct that they placed this massive order with us this year and said, "We want 10 titles. You pick them."

Are you generating this data in-house or outsourcing?

We get data from the places that

monetize our content and plug it into software that we hired a computer coder to build.

What percentage of Comedy Dynamics' revenue does the label bring in?

For Comedy Dynamics, about 50%. For Nacelle, it will be about 8% this year and next. You need enough hits that are expected, and you need enough unexpected hits. We put out a great album last year.

Who's the comedian?

Because I'm talking money, I don't want to reveal her name. She had just 12,000 followers on Instagram and wasn't on Twitter. Our business model is almost all based on referrals from comedians, agents, managers. This comedian was recommended by another comedian I trust. We did the deal. We paid her \$5,000 upfront. It cost a couple of grand to do all the stuff we do to put it out: artwork, yada, yada, yada. Our all-in was slightly less than \$10,000. I would have jumped over the moon if it had broken even in the first 12 months. But she had a joke in the middle of the special — a 40-second

piece — that took off. Something like 80,000 YouTube streams within a week. The album made about \$43,000 in the first eight months. People hear 40 seconds of genius, and then they want to listen to the album.

Besides an advance, what else does the comedian get from a deal made with Comedy Dynamics?

Cradle-to-grave love for the album and back end. Once it breaks even, they'll make money for the rest of their lives. The money is coming in from everywhere — we just did a deal with one of the biggest airlines in the world. So we get a billionth of a penny from everywhere, every day. It all gets put in a pot that gets divided with the artist.

What's their cut?

Every deal is different, but we never go below 33%.

In February, five comedians, including the estates of George Carlin and Robin Williams — all clients of the collection agency Word Collections — sued SiriusXM-owned Pandora for not paying the

equivalent of music publishing royalties to use their works. Spotify has also come under fire. Where do you stand on this issue?

Our contracts say that we own the publishing. To the best of my knowledge, no other contract in stand-up has that language, so we are protected.

Now, I'm a big history buff, and everything we're talking about today — the lifeblood of this company, the cash flow that comes in — goes back at least 100 years to the sale of sheet music in London. ASCAP, BMI and SoundExchange, they are all the great-great-great grandchildren of the sheet music business in London. What I also know is that every 10 to 15 years, somebody says, "I found the way to squeeze out another nickel."

I look at this in two different ways. No. 1, because of how much time I spent as a manager, I want the artists to make as much money as possible. When I first heard about this, I was like, "All right, it has been 10 years — time to shake the couch again and look for the pennies." And it is pennies.

I've seen estimates that \$1.5 billion in royalties haven't been collected.

We'll get to that. As I said, I'm happy if artists are making more money because, for one thing, it's their genius that people are listening to. On the other hand, here's what nobody talks about: How much does it cost to design a satellite that needs to remain in orbit for eight to 10 years? How much does it cost to get it up into orbit? How many people know that for Sirius and Pandora and all these companies to do what they do requires a minimum of 12 fully functioning satellites and three spares? And that's just for 80% of global penetration. If you want to cover the world — which Sirius does — you need 24 satellites and, I think, six spares. Satellites are about \$20 million a pop; to get one into orbit is about \$100 million.

So do you support these comedians' lawsuits?

I support anything that will make artists more money. If they can

find a way to make it work for everybody, where the artists can make more money and the providers can continue to launch those satellites into orbit, great. If Sirius goes out of business because they can't afford to pop satellites up anymore, what could be worse for comedians?

You were saying that the \$1.5 billion in uncollected royalties is really about pennies.

If there is anything that annoys me about what [Word Collections and Spoken Giants] are doing, it's that they're talking about how they've discovered this new thing. We've been collecting this type of money for at least four years. So let's talk about that \$1.5 billion: My main problem with this whole topic is you have all these comedians out there who are like, "Woo! We got another SoundExchange coming." They don't. And let's say, hypothetically, it is \$1.5 billion a year. That money is getting divided up by a bare minimum of 10,000 comedians, but it's skewed to performance. I guarantee you the top 10% of comedians — the Kevin Harts, the Ali Wong's, the Jim Gaffigans — will get \$1.3 billion of that total.

Over the past few months, Chris Rock was slapped onstage at the Academy Awards, and Dave Chappelle was attacked during a live performance. How much does that worry you?

It worries me. To be a comedian — I don't care if you're Chris Rock and you've been doing this for 40 years — you are so vulnerable up there. Because at the end of the day, if you've done 999 shows and the joke always works, you know damn well this could be the show where it doesn't. Nine out of 10 comics get some degree of butterflies before they go onstage. And now they have to worry about knives? Or getting punched in the face when the whole world is watching? This is *Mad Max* stuff — that's how horrible it is.

Are comedians you know taking precautions?

Yeah, they are. I'm going to leave it at that. **E**

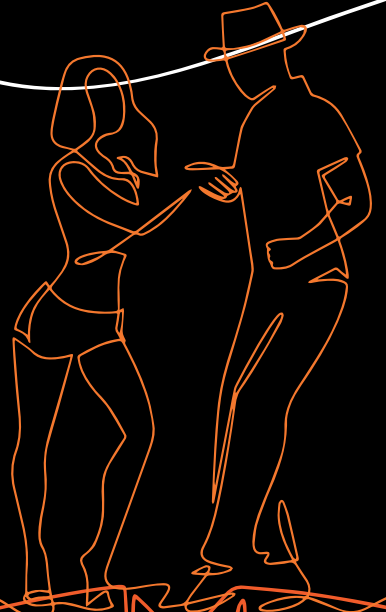
Scan this QR to enter
www.farolatino.com



contact@farolatino.com



JESSI
URIBE



AMPLIFYING OUR
ARTISTS

faroLatino
Media Network

Members of



**The collective voice of
independent music**

Join a community of over 700 indie labels, distributors, DSPs and more

LEARN
MORE AT
A2IM.ORG



Stills photographed
June 13 in Los Angeles.

Stephen Stills Loves The One He's With

The rock pioneer and founding member of Buffalo Springfield and Crosby, Stills & Nash, among other groups, has partnered with Irving Azoff's Iconic Artists Group to open his music vault to both longtime fans and the streaming generation

BY MELINDA NEWMAN // PHOTOGRAPHED BY BRIAN GUIDO

THOSE WHO CAME OF AGE in the 1960s and 1970s know that rock pioneer Stephen Stills helped define the sound of the Woodstock generation. What they may not know is the depth and breadth of his 58-year musical career. A new, multi-faceted partnership with Irving Azoff's Iconic Artists Group assets management firm aims to burnish that legacy with the 77-year-old singer-songwriter's current fans and attract new ones by getting his songs and albums on the playlists of the streaming set.

The deal includes IAG's purchase of a controlling interest in Stills' intellectual property, including his music publishing catalog of 1,000-plus songs from his stints in Buffalo Springfield; Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young (CSNY); Crosby, Stills & Nash (CSN); Manassas; The Rides and The Stills-Young Band, as well as his solo career. Among the classics the deal covers are "Suite: Judy Blue Eyes," "Southern Cross" and "Love the One You're With." Additionally, IAG has acquired Stills' recorded-music assets from his solo work, his interests in the aforementioned groups and an interest in Stills' band trademarks, as well as his name, image and likeness.

Stills joins an elite roster of acts at IAG, which Azoff co-founded in January 2020: The Beach Boys, Linda Ronstadt, Nat "King" Cole and Stills' former bandmate David Crosby.

Sitting with Stills in the spacious, tree-lined backyard of the artist's Hollywood Hills home, Azoff says that not only have Stills' musical contributions left an indelible imprint on American culture, they've had "a huge personal impact on me" — as have all of IAG's roster: California artists Azoff "grew up loving, and people that I worked with and became friends with." Even Cole — a pioneer of Los Angeles' Central Avenue jazz scene before he became a Capitol Records signature artist — qualifies as such, though Azoff says, "I didn't know him."

Azoff and Stills' friendship spans over 50 years. They met when Azoff, now 74, was a young upstart at Geffen-Roberts, the Sunset Boulevard management company run by David Geffen and Elliot Roberts, who handled, among other acts, CSN.

"I was the young kid in the office, and

Stephen was the big rock star roaming the halls," Azoff recalls. Their relationship deepened when he was put in charge of Stills' first arena tour as a solo artist in 1975.

Stills says that the trusting, collaborative relationship they built over the decades was a determining factor when he decided to sell. Other buyers were interested, but "I waited for an Irving, someone that I knew and knew would cherish it," he says. "I got another contract from another company, and it was jail."

Azoff adds, "He actually got offered more money [elsewhere]. This is about a partnership and growing it forward."

"I waited for an Irving [Azoff], someone that I knew and knew would cherish [my catalog]. I got another contract from another company, and it was jail." —STILLS

Stills, who has seven children, says the time was also right to plan for the future: "I got to these advanced years, and I decided I would circumvent the estate fight."

Stills owned his compositions aside from a handful of Buffalo Springfield songs (like the protest classic — and the band's only hit — "For What It's Worth") that will revert to him at the end of this year. With the IAG move, he has shifted administration of his catalog from Wixen Music Publishing to Universal Music Publishing Group and his music rights management from BMI to Azoff's Global Music Rights. And while Warner Music Group owns the masters to CSN and CSNY releases, the bands' members own their unreleased music, and Stills owns the master recordings of a significant amount of his unreleased solo material.

Asked what he wants out of his partnership with IAG, Stills replies: "A profit." He's half-kidding, but Azoff is dead serious when he talks about promoting and marketing Stills' work better. "Nobody has focused on him for years and years," he says. "Buffalo Springfield; Crosby, Stills, Nash; Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young; Manassas; and Stephen Stills — I mean, he has had more than five careers."

Stills and IAG are already teeing up projects that will appeal to longtime fans and expose new generations to his music. First is a previously unreleased live album captured from two shows at California's Berkeley Community Theater in 1971 to support Stills' sophomore solo album, *Stephen Stills 2*.

"We were deep-diving in my vault and we discovered this thing," says Stills. "We thought, 'This is sloppy but great.' I couldn't hit those notes with a cattle prod these days." The release is expected later this year on a label yet to be named. Also planned: an expanded 50th-anniversary version of Manassas' self-titled 1972 album, a lineup that featured former Byrds member Chris Hillman, former Flying Burrito Brothers member Al Perkins and Dallas Taylor, studio drummer for Young and CSN.

Azoff adds that people are also "circling" potential CSN and CSNY film projects. While Graham Nash and Neil Young have both fallen out with Crosby, Stills says he remains on good terms with all three. When Azoff asks him how long it has been since he has spoken to Crosby, Stills replies, "Not that long. Same with Graham. And Neil, I can get on the phone any time. Neil's my son's godfather."

There is also potential for a documentary on Stills, who was one of rock's most compelling and tempestuous artists of the '60s, '70s and '80s. At the 1969 Big Sur Festival in California, Stills was famously captured on film trading punches with a heckler in the crowd. He is the only member of the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame to be inducted twice in one night, he unsuccessfully auditioned for The Monkees, and Jimi Hendrix and Eric Clapton played on his debut solo album. That so much of his backstory remains widely unknown was "all part of a carefully devised plan," Stills says with a smirk.

"We're going to change that," says Azoff. ■

market



PLAYING FO



From left: Oleksandr Kondratiuk, Tymofiy Muzychuk, Oleksandr Slobodianyuk, Psiuk, Carpet Man and Vitalii Duzhyk of Kalush Orchestra photographed May 25 in Lviv, Ukraine.

How Ukraine's **Kalush Orchestra** turned its Eurovision-winning track into an anti-war anthem

BY RICHARD SMIRKE

PHOTOGRAPHED BY SASHA MASLOV

THE SIX MEMBERS of Ukrainian rap-folk band Kalush Orchestra took their win at this year's Eurovision Song Contest as a morale-boosting show of international support for their war-ravaged country, which Russia invaded Feb. 24. "They want to destroy our culture," band founder/lead singer Oleh Psiuk, 28, tells *Billboard* on Zoom through a translator. "We came to Eurovision to show everybody that our culture exists. That our music is alive."

Kalush Orchestra's victory on May 14 in Turin, Italy — where a Eurovision record 438 points from the public for its song "Stefania" helped beat 24 other finalists — also aided the war effort in more practical ways. The group auctioned off the crystal microphone trophy it collected in Italy and the pink bucket hat that Psiuk wore onstage, raising \$900,000, which will be used to buy aerial drones for the Ukrainian military. "We are doing whatever is possible to help," says Psiuk, speaking from Berlin two days after performing at a charity concert at Brandenburg Gate.

Before that Berlin show, Kalush Orchestra had returned to Lviv, where the sound of explosions has become a regular occurrence — and where Kharkiv-born photographer Sasha Maslov shot these images for *Billboard*.

"There is a constant feeling of stress and anxiety because there are constant air alarms, and you do not know which house will be hit by a bomb or a missile," says Psiuk, who lives in Kalush, a city in the foothills of the Carpathian Mountains, from which the group took its name.

R P E A C E



*Oleksandr
Kondratiuk*



*Oleksandr
Slobodanyk*

A SONG FOR MOTHER UKRAINE

KALUSH ORCHESTRA WROTE its Eurovision-winning entry last year as a tribute to Psiuk's mother, Stefania. Following the Russian invasion, the song, which mixes traditional Ukrainian folk melodies with modern hip-hop beats and rhymes, took on symbolic relevance as a unifying message of strength and resilience for many Ukrainians, inspiring numerous videos on TikTok and Instagram. "Very quickly, the song expanded its meaning to all mothers who care for their children and protect them from the scourge of war," says Psiuk. "The song is now in the hearts and ears of Ukrainians." The stage design for the group's Eurovision performance — featuring images of a mother's tear-filled eyes — reinforced the theme of unconditional love at the heart of "Stefania," and the group regularly performs wearing traditional Ukrainian costumes. "We take older folklore and make it cool and fashionable," says the singer, who cites Eminem as his favorite artist. "Our goal is to make Ukrainian music popular, not only in Ukraine but all over the world."

HELPING OTHERS IN NEED

THREE DAYS AFTER RUSSIA invaded, Psiuk set up a volunteer organization called Ty de? ("Where are you?") that helps displaced citizens find shelter, housing, transport and medicine. The organization has around 35 members operating in multiple cities across Ukraine. "We have a Telegram chat, and



Carpet Man



Tymofiy
Muzychuk



Oleh
Psiuk



Vitalii Duzhyk

any person from Ukraine can join it, write what help he or she needs, and we will do whatever is possible,” says Psiuk. Another of Kalush Orchestra’s original members — Slavik Hnatenko, known as MC KlymMen — passed on the opportunity to perform in Turin because he was fighting for Ukraine in the volunteer forces. His bandmates stay in regular touch with him. “He is fully equipped. He’s OK,” says Psiuk, who, along with his bandmates, had to get permission from the Ukrainian government to travel to Italy for Eurovision. (Men ages 18-60 are not allowed to leave the country.) “We didn’t have an opportunity to have proper rehearsals [before the competition], so we had to rehearse in the urgent mode.”

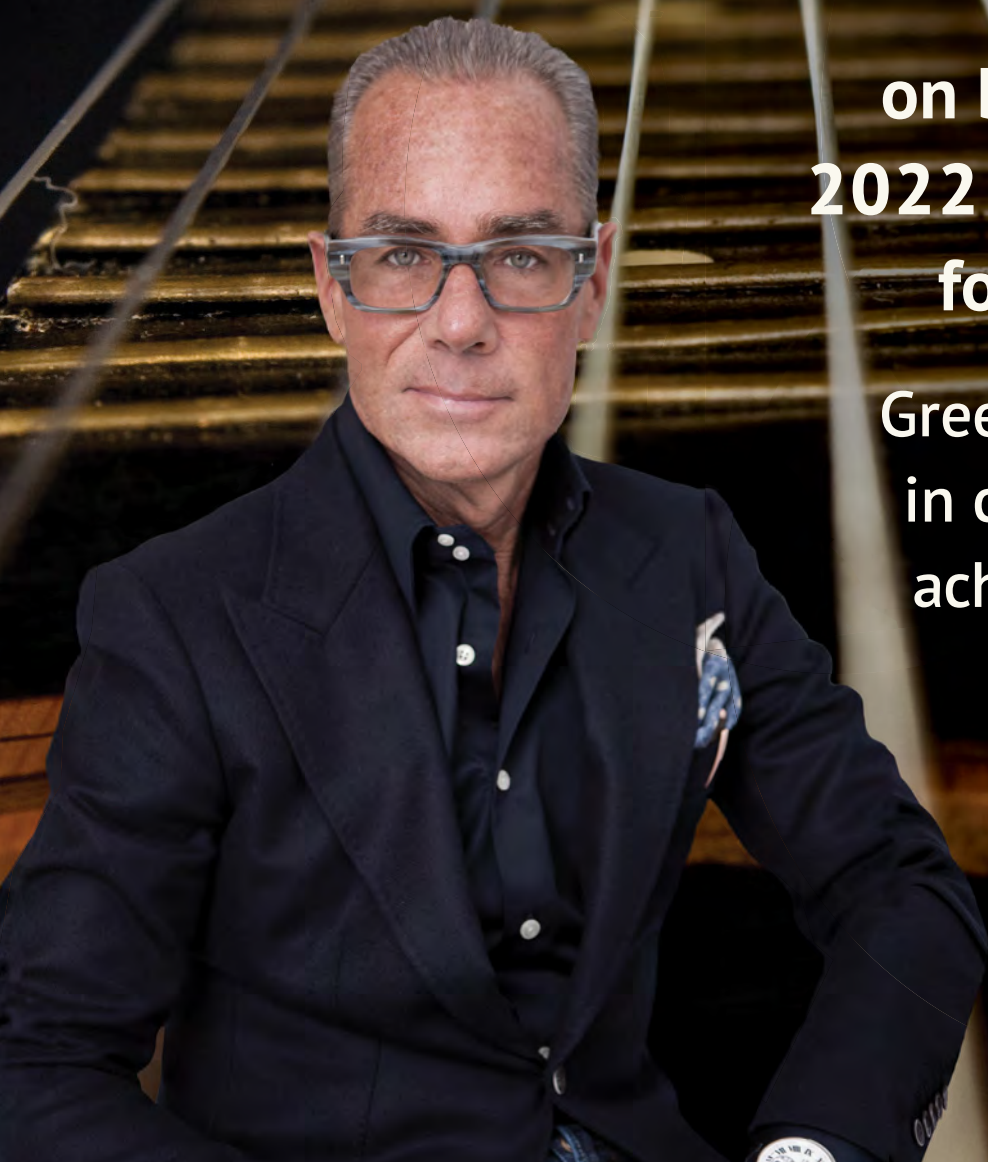
HOPES FOR PEACE

AFTER RETURNING FROM TURIN, Kalush Orchestra was greeted at the Polish-Ukrainian border by a crowd of fans, leading to an impromptu outdoor performance of “Stefania.” Since Eurovision, the group has been leveraging its heightened profile to draw attention to the war’s humanitarian crisis and raise funds for its country. Plans are now being made for “lots of concerts and shows” later this year, says Psiuk, although the group’s priority is to do all it can to help end the current conflict. Despite everything Ukraine has endured the past four months, Psiuk says he is optimistic that there are brighter days ahead. “If a person is deprived of hope, then how to live on?” he asks. “Faith and hope for our speedy victory is what moves us closer to this. Ukrainians are now united as never before, and each of us is making every effort to defeat the enemy. We believe that this will happen very soon, and we will all quickly rebuild our country together.” **B**

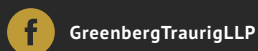
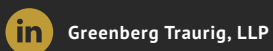
CONGRATULATIONS TO **JESS ROSEN**

on being named to **Billboard's
2022 Country Power Players list**
for the 7th consecutive year.

Greenberg Traurig is proud to join
in celebrating this well-deserved
achievement, and your dedication
to the country music industry.



GREENBERG TRAUIG, LLP | ATTORNEYS AT LAW | 2400 ATTORNEYS | 43 LOCATIONS WORLDWIDE*



ENTERTAINMENT & MEDIA LOCATIONS

**Amsterdam | Atlanta | Austin | Denver
Germany* | Las Vegas | London* | Los Angeles
Miami | New York | San Francisco
Silicon Valley | Washington, D.C.**

The hiring of a lawyer is an important decision and should not be based solely upon advertisements. Before you decide, ask us to send you free written information about our qualifications and our experience. Prior results do not guarantee a similar outcome. Greenberg Traurig is a service mark and trade name of Greenberg Traurig, LLP and Greenberg Traurig, P.A. ©2022 Greenberg Traurig, LLP. Attorneys at Law. All rights reserved. Attorney Advertising. Contact: Jess Rosen in Atlanta at 678.553.2100. Operates as: -Greenberg Traurig Germany, LLP; *A separate UK registered legal entity. *These numbers are subject to fluctuation. 36824

sound

NOW PLAYING

Larger Than Life

ODESZA hopes its most ambitious live show to date will deliver its hard-to-describe dance tunes to the masses

BY KATIE BAIN

PHOTOGRAPHED BY MERON MENGHISTAB

Harrison Mills (left) and Clayton Knight of ODESZA photographed June 9 at Supernova in Seattle.

sound

I T WAS SHORTLY after ODESZA finished its new album that the duo began remaking it entirely.

Having spent more than a year working in their Seattle studio, Harrison Mills and Clayton Knight were eager to hit the road with their new project, *The Last Goodbye*, out July 22 on Ninja Tune and their own Foreign Family Collective label. But first, the pair had to complete a task unique to electronic artists: reassembling the full-length for the stage.

“You basically write another album,” Knight says of preparing for ODESZA’s upcoming tour, “because you’re adapting all the music to the live setting, blending old songs with new, remixing little aspects. It’s a full-on project.”

Mills and Knight have avoided straightforward DJ sets since launching ODESZA 10 years ago. Their performances have become increasingly complex and now feature live instrumentalists, cinematic visuals, a lot of fireworks and reimagined versions of their emotional yet highly danceable soundscapes.

Their last tour alone, in support of Grammy-nominated third album *A Moment Apart*, involved six semitrucks, four tour buses, a string section and a six-person drumline. It grossed \$9.1 million and sold 198,000 tickets across 35 shows in 2018 and 2019, according to figures reported to Billboard Boxscore.

Now, with its fourth album complete, ODESZA is poised to present its most lofty live show to date during a 27-date North American run, launching July 29 with three sold-out hometown shows at

the 17,459-seat Climate Pledge Arena. The duo has been running and jumping rope to get in shape for the shows, all of which will feature longer bills (support acts include Sylvan Esso and San Holo) and installations to create a minifestival vibe. The remainder of the tour will hit mostly amphitheaters, venues that — outside of Colorado’s Red Rocks, a standard stop for A-list dance producers — have never been the domain of electronic acts.

“To our knowledge, no electronic artist has really done it,” ODESZA’s longtime manager, Adam Foley, of Red Light says of the amphitheater shows. “We felt like we could crack that door open, because we’re not your typical electronic act.”

ODESZA has found traction in places beyond the clubs and the electronic charts. *A Moment Apart* debuted at No. 3 on the Billboard 200 in 2017, spending 10 weeks on the chart, while the album tour included a main-stage Coachella performance and mostly 5,000-plus-capacity spaces. And ODESZA did it all without a radio hit. While

album single “Across the Room” featuring Leon Bridges hit No. 6 on Adult Alternative Airplay, the duo hasn’t clocked a Hot 100 crossover smash like some peers.

“There has been no radio,” says Foley. Indeed, much of the act’s output is too experimental for top 40, with the music often eschewing structural standards for songs that are rooted in electronic production — but are also fairly indie or even pop. Adds Mills: “Probably the weirdest thing about all this is that we don’t really know where we fit either. We often have to explain who we are.”

In that sense, the duo hopes the new tour is clarifying. Working with ODESZA’s agent, Jay Moss of Wasserman, Foley began routing the run shortly after the last tour ended in 2019, giving consideration to the handful of amphitheaters the act had played during the trek. Before Mills and Knight even began working on the new album, Foley and Moss put holds on amphitheaters — most with capacities between 15,000 and 20,000 — across the

United States and Canada. They held on to these dates through the pandemic, while the duo was in the studio enjoying a more spacious production schedule than it has typically experienced, ultimately delivering a cathartic album featuring samples culled from crate digging and the members’ own childhood home videos.

When the tour went up for presale in April, Foley was nervous, particularly when considering midweek shows in smaller markets. From his office in Jackson Hole, Wyo., he sat on Zoom to track progress with ODESZA’s agent and management, along with various promoters and ticketing teams.

“We started with the East Coast,” Foley recalls, “and it was like, ‘Is this an anomaly that Atlanta [sold] really fast?’ Then it was like, ‘Chicago did, too.’ It wasn’t one or two markets, it was across the country.”

By the end of the day, the tour was 80% sold — a remarkable feat given the act has been quiet, releasing a collaborative album with Australian producer Golden Features under the name Bronson in 2020 but going dormant as ODESZA nearly three years ago.

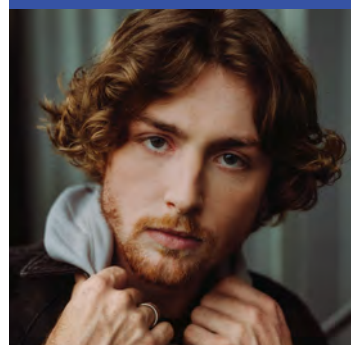
Mills and Knight are tight-lipped about what they’re assembling for the tour, assuring only that the set will include visuals by longtime live director Luke Tanaka and creative director Sean Kusanagi. They estimate the outing will require 11 semitrucks and a crew of 100, and let it slip that the drumline is returning.

“The fact that people seemed as excited as we were was extremely overwhelming,” says Mills. “I didn’t even know if we were relevant anymore.” **B**



BEHIND THE HIT

Bailey Zimmerman’s “Fall in Love”



DESPITE ITS TITLE, BAILEY Zimmerman’s churning hit “Fall in Love” is *not* a romantic ballad, with the Illinois native lamenting on the track: “Love’s a smoke ring wrapped around your finger/One second it’s a blessing, and the next it’s already gone.” Yet the single’s impact is anything but ephemeral, as it reached No. 9 on *Billboard*’s Hot Country Songs chart and has earned 78.7 million on-demand U.S. official streams, according to Luminate.

The rising country star says of the song’s inspiration, “After you lose that special person you never thought you’d lose, it’s hard to want to give love a second chance. We felt like we could relate to a lot of people by shining a light on that feeling.” Zimmerman co-wrote the song with Austin Shawn, who also produced the track, and Gavin Lucas, who had the initial idea for its first verse and chorus in 2020. Last year, Lucas and Zimmerman fleshed out the second verse with Shawn

during a co-writing session at Shawn’s home studio, and the finished version arrived this February. “One of my favorite parts of that session was writing the line ‘Seen your mama walking out the county market,’” says Zimmerman, “because it ties the whole story together and gives it that small-town feeling.”

Zimmerman, who is signed to Warner Music Nashville/Elektra Music Group and The Core Entertainment and 10th Street Entertainment for

management, hit No. 2 on the Emerging Artists chart. Come July 11, “Fall in Love” will be promoted to country radio.

“From the beginning of us writing ‘Fall in Love’ on my couch with an acoustic guitar, I was thinking big-picture,” Shawn recalls. “I was thinking about Bailey’s roots, his rasp, the message the song carried. I wanted to define what he is all about through the emotion and sound it carried — that gritty, modern-Americana country vibe.” —JESSICA NICHOLSON

A BIG LOUD CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR COUNTRY POWER PLAYERS



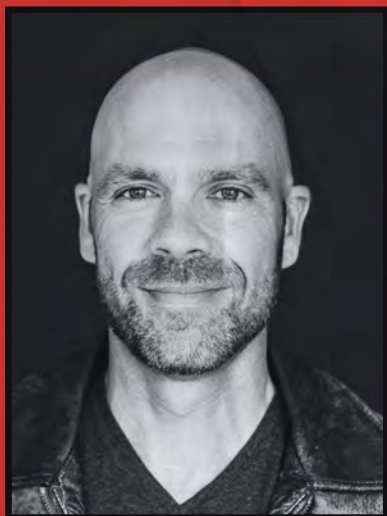
SETH ENGLAND
CEO / PARTNER



JOEY MOI
PRODUCER / PARTNER
PRESIDENT OF A&R



CRAIG WISEMAN
SONGWRITER / PARTNER



AUSTEN ADAMS
COO



CANDICE WATKINS
SVP OF MARKETING

20
22





ONE TO WATCH

OGI

FROM Madison, Wis.

AGE 25

LABEL ARTium Recordings/Atlantic Records

FOUNDATION Growing up, R&B singer Ogi was often woken up at sunrise by her grandmother singing Nigerian hymns. “Those are the first songs I can remember memorizing, because we heard them every day,” she recalls. Raised in Wisconsin, Ogi says there weren’t many people of color around, so her mother made it a point to bring the family to Nigerian prayer meetings, where everyone would sing. It was there that Ogi developed a fascination with harmony and recognized the power of layered voices. And in her high school’s jazz choir, she discovered her gift of perfect pitch.

DISCOVERY Despite her passion for music, Ogi majored in political science and minored in legal studies at Northwestern University. “Being Nigerian, there are really three paths that you can go on in terms of careers: doctor, lawyer and engineer,” she says. Still, she made time to perform in an a cappella group, and during her senior year started an Instagram account dedicated to cover songs, including tracks like PJ Morton’s “Alright.” “I would post these videos just harmonizing with myself with covers of songs that I liked,” she says. Morton was so taken with her rendition that he reposted the song; that caught the attention of producer No. I.D., who quickly signed her to his Def Jam imprint ARTium in 2021.

FUTURE Ogi, who relocated to Los Angeles after graduating, describes her debut EP, *Monologues*, which arrived in May, as her tryout for the music industry. “When you go into an audition, you have monologues to show the breadth of what you could do,” she says. The six-track project arrived alongside the bouncy single “Bitter,” which stemmed from a demo she made in college after a bad date. In June, Ogi performed at her first festival (Pharrell Williams’ Something in the Water) after spending her spring on tour with Snoh Aalegra. As for whether she thinks her “audition” was a success, Ogi says, “Even if the answer was ‘no’ to the audition, I’m here.”

—FRED SAHAI



GEEKING OUT WITH...

Cheat Codes

In just over one year, dance trio Cheat Codes completed its three-part debut album, *Hellraisers*, with the final piece arriving in May. But long before then, the independent act was already working on its follow-up — and considering how to keep its fan base on its toes. The answer: a country album. Having released the 2021 country collaborations “Never Love You Again” with Little Big Town and Bryn Christopher and “How Do You Love” with Lee Brice and Lindsay Ell, Cheat Codes felt inspired to keep building. “We had so much fun making [those songs], we just started working on a bunch of other ideas, and one turned into 13,” says Trevor Dahl. “It’s why we got into electronic music, because we’re able to explore other genres and other artists and not be stuck in one lane.” Ahead of the as-yet-untitled album’s summer release, Dahl and bandmates KEVI and Matthew Russell revisit what excited them while exploring country music.

—LYNDSEY HAVENS

Dolly Parton

Thanks to his sister, Dahl was exposed to country music in elementary school and later became a fan of everyone from Rascal Flatts to Taylor Swift. “I’ve always loved that country-pop stuff, and being able to dive into it with our music is really cool and something that I didn’t necessarily think we would be able to do when we started,” he says. As for other inspirations, the trio is unanimously all-in on Parton (Russell grew up going to the Dixie Stampede in Branson, Mo.), and the act even has a song concept for her that she may make a surprise appearance on. While favorite songs of hers include “I Will Always Love You” and “Jolene,” the trio says if it had to choose, its idea for the country icon is most aligned with “9 to 5.”

Stagecoach Festival

All three members mention the importance of attending California’s Stagecoach Festival in late April, with Russell saying, “I guess it’s similar to EDM in a way, where country music is the music but it’s also the lifestyle. That’s what sells you on it.” During the event, Cheat Codes hung out with Lee Brice and his band, and the trio also tossed back tequila shots with Guy Fieri. “It’s fun for us; we were having a good time,” recalls Dahl. KEVI, who has attended both Coachella and Stagecoach, believes the latter to be more family-oriented, observing that it’s much less about clout than “everyone having a good time together. It’s a different vibe, different energy.”

Nashville

Naturally, Cheat Codes spent some time in the city while making the upcoming album, including a trip for a *Good Morning America* performance with Brice. KEVI was there for a week: “I bought a truck because of it, honestly,” he says. “I filled up my closet with so many cowboy and western jackets, so much cool shit.” Russell adds that any amount of firsthand experience in a genre’s base is essential when sonically tapping in. “Everyone’s friendly, and everyone’s priorities are in a different place sometimes than if you’re in New York or in Los Angeles, where you’re worried about likes and being big on TikTok,” he says. “So I think when you experience [being there], you connect with the lyrics a little bit more and understand the storytelling.”



Alumnus Chris Young at the grand opening of the Chris Young Café, featuring the iconic Famous Friends mural

WE ARE MUSIC

World-class facilities

GRAMMY®-winning faculty and alumni

Lowest tuition among *Billboard's* Top 10 music business programs

One of the first and best collegiate recording programs in the country

**MIDDLE
TENNESSEE**
STATE UNIVERSITY.

Be mentored. Be inspired. Be ready.
mtsu.edu/recording-industry

Eyes *On The* Prize

For **Jimmie Allen**, stardom didn't come fast or easy. But with the laser focus he brings to all his passions (even bowling), he has become a one-man industry — and he's not slowing down

BY MELINDA NEWMAN

PHOTOGRAPHED BY
ERIC RYAN ANDERSON





Allen photographed May 5 in Nashville.

Styling by Ashley Torrance
Any Old Iron suit, Stetson hat, King Baby jewelry.



Gyasi coat, Brunner's Metalwear and King Baby jewelry.

I**N 2012 — FIVE** years after moving to Nashville to chase his dream of being a country artist — Jimmie Allen had little to show for his efforts. He was working multiple jobs to pay the rent, playing writers' rounds when he could and taking gigs for tip money. He had already been tossed off *American Idol*.

Then one day, while searching through his attic for family photos, he found a "trashy" spiral notebook and began filling the empty pages with a list of very specific career goals: Land a publishing deal. Sign a record contract. Get a booking agency to expand his reach into movies and TV. Have No. 1 singles. Play sold-out stadiums. Sing with the world's greatest musical icons, like Elton John.

A decade later, Allen still has that notebook. And while he hasn't quite finished checking off all of the items on that list, sure enough, they all seem to be coming true — from signing with BMG's Stoney Creek/BBR imprint in 2017 to collaborating with John in 2021 — just like he predicted.

"Everything I accomplish, it doesn't surprise me. I'm thankful for the opportunity, but I'm not surprised at all," says Allen, leaning forward in his chair on the spacious fifth-floor patio of his

"Everything I accomplish, it doesn't surprise me. I'm thankful for the opportunity, but I'm not surprised at all."

— ALLEN

record label as a soft rain falls over Nashville's historic Music Row in late May. "It's all part of this plan that has been written down."

Allen, 37, is fresh from a red-eye, his 13th flight of the week, following a gig in Seattle the night before, and he has stopped at his home south of Nashville just long enough to shower and change before jumping in his black Ford F-150. But he is engaged, focused and alert. Though he's known for flamboyant, often bedazzled stage get-ups, he's dressed down today in a *Dancing With the Stars* sweatshirt — he competed on the show last fall — a DEL Made ball cap and black sneakers, one of more than 1,000 pairs he owns. His trademark diamond studs are missing from his ears ("That's the 'show Jimmie,'" he explains), but he does

sport impressive bling on his left wrist: an engraved Breguet watch that new friend Garth Brooks gave him as a gift to thank him for performing as part of his Kennedy Center Honors induction last year. (Allen's rendition of "Friends in Low Places" brought the Washington, D.C., crowd — and the star he calls Mr. Brooks — to their feet, though Allen admits to having world-class jitters performing for one of his heroes.) Every few minutes, he spits Grizzly Wintergreen snuff — "If you know them, I'll take a sponsorship," he volunteers — into an empty smartwater bottle.

Allen may look relaxed, but he is in full-on work mode. In less than 18 hours, he'll leave town again. Before then, he'll head to the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum to kick off an event, then handle some business calls, then participate in a CMT Twitter Spaces panel about artists and mental health. (He was diagnosed with bipolar disorder when he was 13.) Somehow, he'll also find time between engagements for his pandemic passion, bowling in nearby Franklin, Tenn., before returning home to his wife, Lexi, and two infant daughters, Naomi Bettie and Zara James. (He also has an 8-year-old son, Aaydn, from a previous relationship.) Then he'll hop on a tour bus for an overnight ride to Arkansas and the next gig.

"I only sleep about three-and-a-half hours a night," Allen says. "If I get two, I feel like I've slept."

Over the past few years, Allen's seemingly inexhaustible supply of energy has proved especially useful — not only as his career has gained velocity since his first single, "Best Shot," vaulted to No. 1 on *Billboard's* Country Airplay chart in November 2018, but also as he has become his own cottage industry. He runs management, production and publishing companies in Nashville, as well as a trio of businesses that include a septic-pump repair company in his hometown of Milton, Del. On top of that, he has launched a TV career, discussing big- and small-screen projects with UTA (he also co-hosted the 2022 Academy of Country Music

[ACM] Awards with Dolly Parton and Gabby Barrett); published a children's book, *My Voice Is a Trumpet*; and served as executive music producer on *Titletown High*, a Netflix reality show about a Georgia high school football team.

"There are times when you're pushing an artist forward and pushing and pushing," says BMG Nashville president Jon Loba. "With Jimmie, we're always running to catch up with him."

Allen's intense drive would mean nothing if he didn't possess the talent to back it up. With his honeyed baritone that effortlessly wraps around the everyman

anthems he writes — seamlessly blending country, pop and R&B — Allen has become the reigning Country Music Association (CMA) new artist of the year, the ACM's 2021 new male artist of the year and, at this year's Grammy Awards, the only country act nominated for best new artist.

On June 24, he'll release his 17-track third album, *Tulip Drive*, named for the street where his late grandmother and confidante, Bettie, lived. It's the final piece of a trilogy that began with his 2018 debut, *Mercury Lane* (the street he grew up on) and 2020's *Bettie James* (which subsequently received an expanded version), a collection of duets with artists beloved by Allen, his grandmother and his father, James, who died in 2019.

Tulip Drive bolsters Allen's growing cross-genre appeal, with collaborations featuring Cee Lo Green, T-Pain and Jennifer Lopez, but it's also his most personal work yet. The first single, "Down Home," takes the form of a stirring yet never maudlin conversation with his deceased father, updating him on Allen's accomplishments: "I promise I'm working/With this guitar about as hard as I can/I met a girl, bought a house/Put a nice little payment/Down home is still where my heart is."

Loba felt the song was so strong he wanted to put it out last year, before Allen's most recent Country Airplay No. 1, the Brad Paisley duet "Freedom Was a Highway." But Allen asked him to wait: "Jimmie said, 'I can't right now, Jon. It's so personal. The wound is still open, and I need some time to heal,'" Loba recalls. "I said, 'Enough said. We'll go with it whenever you're ready.' And as we approached the top 10 with 'Freedom Was a Highway,' he said, 'I'm ready.'"

Allen was also prepared to expose a darker chapter of his family history on *Tulip Drive*. "Habits & Hearts" (written by Steven McMorran, Derrick Southerland and Jess Cates) reminded him of his father's struggles with substance abuse and the toll Allen saw it take on his mother. "Just hearing the song and remembering him wanting to get better and then falling short a few times — I felt like I was in a time and place to sing it now and be honest with it," Allen says. "Because even though my dad had his issues, he always reminded me that I shouldn't do it. He said, 'I'm telling you, this can cripple you.'"

Allen says he inherited his dad's addictive personality but that he channels it into his competitive drive — the fuel that got him from broke unknown to bright rising star with three No. 1 Country Airplay singles, his own headlining tour earlier this year, a growing shelf of awards and names like Keith Urban, Tim McGraw, Darius Rucker, Pitbull and Shaquille O'Neal in his phone contacts.

And sometimes, it lets him play as hard as he works. Even when it comes to fun, Allen has goals: say, at least an hour of *NBA2K* or *Madden* on his PlayStation each night, or (amid the pandemic) becoming not just a bowling hobbyist, but an expert. After former pro football player Cortland Finnegan and Los Angeles Dodgers baseball player Mookie Betts introduced him to the sport, he would spend "five days a week, seven, eight hours at a time at the bowling alley," Allen recalls. He now belongs to five bowling leagues, keeps three different sets of balls (for home, the tour bus and flights — Brunswick Hammers and DV8s all — so he'll always be prepared for a few pre-meet-and-greet games) and, in January, plans to try out for the Professional Bowlers Association.

This May, in fact, Allen left his own SESAC party celebrating his second and third No. 1 records early to go bowling. His league average is 215, but he still grimaces remembering the perfect 300 game that eluded him: He got a spare and ended at 288. "It was all strikes until the 10th frame," he says. "I was sick for a week."

S**OMEWHERE BETWEEN** the ages of 8 and 11 — he can't remember for sure — Allen was riding in the car with his father and told him he dreamed of becoming a country music performer. "But I can't," he added.



"They're all white dudes." His dad popped in a CD and played "Does My Ring Hurt Your Finger" by Charley Pride, the first Black country superstar. "That's when it all made sense," Allen recalls with a smile.

Allen's parents divorced when he was 12, but his father remained a constant in his life. "Something broke, he came and fixed it. [My mom has] never had a boyfriend or anything since," he says. After discovering Pride, music became a constant, too. Allen played drums in the church choir and picked up piano as well. "That's one of the perks about playing, especially in a Black church: You learn to play off of a feeling," he

says. "You hear and you feel it. I can't tell you what notes I'm playing, but I can tell you if it's wrong or right."

In high school and college, Allen started performing in musicals, landing lead roles like Ren in *Footloose* and the King of Siam in *The King & I*. He regularly traveled to New York to perform in talent shows — enough to realize early on that the Big Apple wasn't the place for him. Instead, after dropping out of Delaware State University, he packed his late-'90s Chevy Malibu and moved to Nashville to pursue music as an artist in his own right. He rented a trailer from a couple, then moved into his car when they wanted him to buy it for \$300. He showered and did laundry at the gym where he worked. At 22, he saved up to buy his first guitar and taught himself out of sheer necessity: "I couldn't afford somebody to play for me [at gigs], like \$50 every time," he says.

Several years of dead ends later, in 2010 Allen tried out for *American*

Idol after losing a bet with a friend. He made it to Hollywood, but got cut short of the top 24. He did, however, become pals with his season's winner, Scotty McCreery, who years later would tap Allen to open on his own tour. "I saw him around Nashville often through those [subsequent] years," McCreery remembers now, "and he was always grinding. He's such a hard worker."

Post-*Idol*, Allen still couldn't get paid gigs, so he continued playing for tips at Lower Broadway bars, often calling to book dates under the name of a fake manager, "Landon Jackson." He worked a series of odd jobs — even appearing in a 2013 Taylor Swift Diet Coke commercial as a singing extra — but decided to never keep one for more than six months: "You get comfortable and are like, 'You know what? I'm going to stay here,'" he says. "I had this insurance company offer me a job that would have started me off at 70 grand a year. Yeah, I can't do that."

So the college dropout once again became a student. He read *Music Row* magazine and, when he couldn't afford his own subscription, borrowed a friend's copy of *Billboard*. He went to South by Southwest not to perform but to hear from industry insiders. And with the dedication of a baseball stats fanatic, he memorized the names of key managers, executives, songwriters, producers, mixing engineers — and their histories, which he remembers to this day. When asked why he eventually signed with BMG, he dives into a detailed recitation of then-president Zach Katz's résumé, as well as Loba's.

During those fallow years, Allen recalls sneaking into a WME party with a buddy who also wanted to be an artist but had no idea he was talking to one of the agency's Nashville heads. "Come on!" he says, seemingly still horrified by his friend's ignorance. "A lot of people want to get to know the artist. Nah, I want to know the machine that makes the artist because that's who is doing the work. You have to know so you can make an educated decision on who you work with."

Eventually, the encyclopedic knowledge he had accumulated paid off. In 2017, after BMG executives saw him at a showcase and brought him in for meetings, "I learned things about our staff that I didn't even know from him," Loba says. "One day, we had a couple of employees who had gotten locked in the garage somehow after hours and were trying to figure out how to get out. They were on social media. Jimmie was dialed in enough to have already added them before the deal was signed. He [saw the posts] and said, 'Hey, I'm right down the street. I'll come down and help you out.' He knew about it before any of us at the label did."

But Allen's first big break had as much to do with luck as all of his homework. Back in 2015, he had scored a spot in a writers' round at Puckett's Grocery in Franklin because another writer had canceled. For the same reason, Ash Bowers — an artist-turned-writer who ran Wide Open Publishing — also found himself on the bill.

"He had an amazing voice, great songs that

Travis Austin
jacket and hat,
pskaufman... Boots,
Black Shag Vintage
jewelry and scarf.





Black Shag Vintage shirt and jewelry, Travis Austin hat, King Baby chain wallet.

he had written and seemed very driven to have a career in music," Bowers recalls of that night. "It was obvious to me that Jimmie is a world-class singer and a natural star." He offered him a publishing deal on the spot and, shortly thereafter, launched a management division with Allen as his first client.

Now a frequent writing and producing collaborator, Bowers was instrumental in helping rejigger Allen's first single, "Best Shot," turning it into the stripped-down, midtempo ballad that reached No. 1 on Country Airplay — and made Allen the first Black artist to do so with his debut single. (Second single "Make Me Want To" would reach the same height.)

Allen is well aware that, as a Black artist played frequently on country radio — no less one notching No. 1s — he's still in all-too-small company. But "I don't let my mind go there," he says when asked if he experiences prejudice in his corner of the industry. "Here's my thing: Are there people in every genre of music that might not like someone because of their skin color? Yes! [But] everybody's not like that. If I get that mentality, then I start viewing people with a prejudice the same way, so you start to become what you hate and we're not helping the issue, we're perpetuating it."

And anyway, he credits his meticulous research with both his success thus far and, as he sees it, his ability to meet country music where it is. "So many people haven't properly done homework or quit too soon. I said country music is what I want to do, country radio is where I want my songs. So I have to be respectful to something that has been there that I'm getting into." He quotes his own recent tweet that summed up his outlook: "I'm not here to change country music. I'm just here to add to it."

LAST YEAR, WHEN he won the CMA's new artist award, it was "show Jimmie" that came to the stage, sporting a fluorescent pink and silver lamé three-piece suit, diamond studs flashing. But as he began to speak, he became choked up, recalling his 10 years plugging away without much progress — and how, in 2016, he had spent his last \$100 to buy a ticket to the awards' 50th anniversary just so he could see Pride perform. Four years later, Allen continued, he performed with Pride on the same stage — the legend's last TV appearance before his death.

Playing with Pride was another notebook goal realized. Allen first met him in 2018 at a trade show in Nashville and the two hit it off; they had a standing phone call every other Sunday. "I'd keep calling till he answered the phone," Allen says. "He told me he was proud of me and Kane [Brown] and Darius [Rucker] and what we were doing. And he said he was glad to finally see people younger than him that look like him in

the business. He said that was one of his fears — he thought he'd be the only one to kind of reach [that] level."

Pride, who collaborated with Allen and Rucker on the *Bettie James* track "Why Things Happen," also encouraged Allen to trust his power. "His big advice was you never shy away from who you are. You're not here to wake up every day and say, 'How can I make myself smaller to make someone else bigger?' No. Inspire people from greatness."

Last year, Allen put that message into practice. "We all are where we are because someone created an opportunity for us," he says. "It's our job, just as humans, to have a platform and find ways to share it and create other opportunities for other artists." In September, he formed Bettie James Music Publishing, a partnership with Sony Music Publishing Nashville, with songwriter (and his own bassist) Tate Howell his first signee. Then in December, Allen joined forces with former Spotify executive John Marks and producer Aaron Benward to launch JAB Entertainment, a management and production company; its first client, country duo Neon Union, has since signed with Red Street Country, the imprint founded by Rascal Flatts' Jay DeMarcus.

And Allen, who will open for Carrie Underwood on tour this fall, has his eye on the live sector, too. On Aug. 13, his second Bettie James Fest will take place in his hometown, with himself, Lainey Wilson and We the Kings on the bill, among others. The tug to return to Delaware is ever present. "I'd move back now if my wife was ready to go, but she just moved from Delaware two years ago," he says. "She's not ready to go back. I am."

Be that as it may, his myriad interests keep him on the road. He loves

"A lot of people want to get to know the artist. Nah, I want to know the machine that makes the artist because that's who is doing the work."

— ALLEN

dancing, so he competed on *Dancing With the Stars*; he also loves game shows, so he made stops on *Celebrity Family Feud* and *Let's Make a Deal*. But for Allen and his team, these aren't just whimsical side projects — they're ways to build his audience.

"*Dancing With the Stars* was very impactful," Bowers says. Over the eight weeks that Allen competed, "we saw a huge uptick in social following and streaming audience. It's about expanding his fan base in areas where he also has interest. It's proven to be successful in creating new fans that haven't discovered him on country radio." Now, Allen has his eye on more hosting gigs as well as acting roles, citing Jamie Foxx and Wayne Brady as inspirations. "We have been approached with several opportunities that lead me to believe we are on the right path with that," says Bowers, who surveys them with Allen's agent at UTA, Josh Garrett. Allen is even considering returning to his stage roots: "I want to play Aaron Burr in *Hamilton*," he told *Billboard* last December.

Most of the time, Allen's laser focus allows him to keep his music career front and center. "When I'm writing, I'm writing. When I'm performing, I'm performing," he says. "I compartmentalize my whole life. Sometimes it's a good thing, sometimes it's bad. But I feel like my personal issues should

never interfere with work. And work should never interfere with my personal life. Wherever I'm at and what I'm doing, that's who I am."

Still, maintaining such clear-cut divides isn't always straightforward. Allen has talked candidly about his bipolar diagnosis and addresses it in "Untitled," an as-yet-unrecorded song that he has posted twice on his Instagram. "Truth is that I'm always on the edge/Trying to find the point of living/I'm barely hanging on/And no one can see that I'm constantly fighting with me ... It's like two different people live inside my mind/Which voice do I follow, the dark or the light," he sings, sounding weary. When he posted it in April, he wrote, "Mental illness is something I have struggled with my entire life. Every day is a constant battle with myself."

Today, Allen says he has learned "to take time when I need time" for a mental break. "Whether it's a show or interview or something, if I'm not in the right space to do it, I'll cancel it," he continues. "And it's always a few days ahead of time or a week in advance because I know me, I can kind of feel it: 'Yeah, I'm not going to be good on this day. Let's move it.'"

But while Bowers says he and Allen see eye to eye on that front, nothing seems likely to stop Allen's relentless drive forward and upward. "I think the ultimate goal is to headline stadiums as an artist and become an A-list actor," Bowers says. "I think we will be very close to accomplishing that in five years from now."

It sounds like a milestone straight out of that old notebook. But Allen quit writing in it after he signed his record deal; at that point, he had finalized his list of career goals and it was time to focus on accomplishing them. There's one final entry, he says: his plan for how to, eventually, walk away. He won't reveal when, but makes it clear he's not interested in a slow fade. When

he leaves, it'll be with the same kind of intention that drove him in the first place.

"I look at my music career like sports. If I'm not able to perform or create at a level that I've always done it, I won't do it anymore," he says. "Imagine [Michael] Jordan in the NBA right now. You would easily forget about his greatness. You'd easily forget about everything he accomplished ... because people are all about the right now."

And Allen has never been only about the present. He speaks slowly and deliberately as he envisions what that final chapter might look like. "I want to do it at a level for a while. After I step away and retire, I might do a pop-up thing twice a year," he muses. "But the time of grinding and building will be over. It's more enjoyment, to where if I want to put out a song, I might. But I probably won't." ■

The Highway

On The Highway, our hosts don't just play the latest hits.

They bring you in-depth interviews with the hottest artists who are taking country music to the next level. And they discover and break new artists before anyone else.

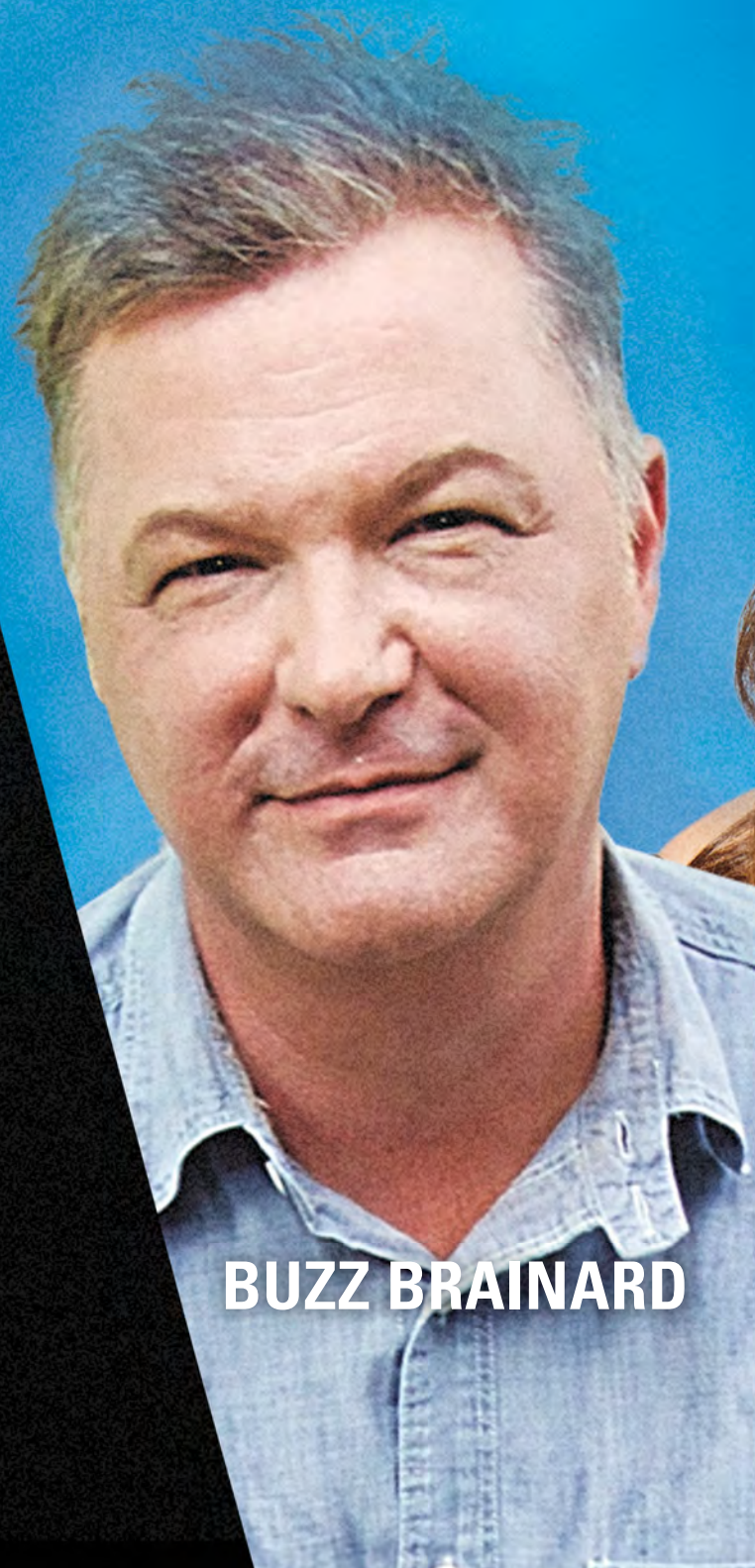
Our hosts connect with today's country stars, the music industry and the fans like no one else in the business.

Hear them all now on SiriusXM's The Highway, Ch. 56.

SiriusXM



LISTEN NOW ON
THE SXM APP



BUZZ BRAINARD

ay

**DISCOVER
COUNTRY'S
NEXT GENERATION**



ANIA HAMMAR

STORME WARREN

KELLIE PICKLER



EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR

Marion Kraft

With longtime superstar client **Miranda Lambert**, she has built ShopKeeper Management from the ground up — and supported a new generation of women executives in Nashville along the way

BY JESSICA NICHOLSON // PHOTOGRAPHED BY DIANA KING



Lambert (left) and Kraft
photographed May 24 at
ShopKeeper Management
in Nashville.

M

ARION KRAFT VIVIDLY recalls one meeting at Sony Nashville in 2007 — early in her days as a manager for then-rising star Miranda Lambert. Joe Galante, who

ran the label at the time, wanted to update his artists and their managers on the state of the music business. “[He] was the master of making sure everyone felt part of it and we were all true partners with our record label,” Kraft recalls. But looking around at the group of managers and executives around her, Kraft was struck. “There was one woman and me,” she says. “That was it.”

Today, “those meetings have changed dramatically,” says Kraft, 57, while sitting in the Nashville office of her company, ShopKeeper Management. Since opening ShopKeeper 13 years ago, she has built a singular career anchored by her close to 20-year partnership with reigning Academy of Country Music (ACM) entertainer of the year Lambert. The company’s all-female staff now guides a roster that includes Ashley Monroe, Pistol Anniés (the trio of Lambert, Monroe and Angaleena Presley), Tenille Townes and Aaron Raitiere. All the while, she has become a mentor to and supporter of the next generation of female executives in country music, like Kerri Edwards (Luke Bryan, Cole Swindell), Janet Weir (Maren Morris) and Mary Hilliard Harrington (Dierks Bentley, Elle King).

“‘What would Marion do?’ is a question I ask myself pretty often,” says Red Light Management’s Harrington. “Marion has incredible natural instincts, and she also is a great listener and problem solver. She always sees the big picture and thinks strategically. Plus, she throws a hell of a dance party.”

Kraft’s path was a winding one. She was born in Germany, raised in the small southeastern village of Söhnstetten “where everyone knows everyone,” Kraft says. Her father worked for the German army and her mother raised Kraft and her two brothers, later working in hospital administration (she still lives in Söhnstetten).

At 21, Kraft moved to the United States to learn English and study international business at the University of California, Los Angeles. Her first music industry job was at events logistics company Rock-It Cargo (now Rock-It Global), making T-shirts, jackets and other merchandise as end-of-tour gifts for clients like Michael Jackson and U2. She went on to handle wardrobe for Paul Simon’s early-’90s Born at the Right Time Tour — then took a hiatus from the music business, working on offices and private planes as an independent interior designer. “It took me a long time to figure out I wanted to be in management,” Kraft says. “I have a business degree and I like doing deals, but I’m also highly creative.”

By 2001, however, Kraft found her way back to the industry, joining artist management company The Firm as day-to-day manager for the then-Dixie Chicks and Mary J. Blige, later adding Anastacia, Tears for Fears and Clay Aiken. Then, in 2004, Kraft was asked to meet with a new addition to the Firm roster: a fearless 19-year-old singer-songwriter from Lindale, Texas.

“One of the things that I asked Miranda at our first meeting was, ‘What kind of career do you want?’” Kraft recalls. “She said, ‘I want to make music forever and I want a career that’s long term. I want to be here in 50 years.’ We are nearly 20 years in, and so far it’s going good.”

In 2005, Lambert released her major-label debut, *Kerosene* (on Epic Nashville), which debuted at No. 1 on *Billboard*’s Top Country Albums chart, and its title track became a top 15 Country Airplay hit. That same year, Kraft departed The Firm to join Simon Renshaw at Strategic Artist Management, and she brought Lambert with her. Over the next four years, Lambert’s career skyrocketed, and in 2009 Kraft opened ShopKeeper with Lambert as her sole client.

The rest is history. Seven of Lambert’s albums have debuted at No. 1 on Top Country Albums (her latest, *Palomino*, arrived at No. 2), and she has written most of the music on them all. In March, after winning entertainer of the year, Lambert became one of only eight artists to achieve the ACM’s triple crown, following her wins for top new female vocalist in 2007 and top female vocalist a record nine times.

Today, sitting together at ShopKeeper, Lambert and Kraft have a familial ease. Lambert’s good-natured bluntness — “I had my times where I was being a shitshow and she had to go, ‘Hey, you’re wearing yourself out,’” she says of a time when she’d play up to 250 shows a year — is balanced by

Kraft’s reflective style. “She was never really a little shit,” Kraft maintains. “She was growing up, trying to figure out how to be an artist in a constantly changing environment.”

As Lambert’s ambitions have expanded, their partnership has supported her at every step, whether on creative risks — like her Grammy Award-nominated back-to-basics collaborative album with Jack Ingram and Jon Randall, *The Marfa Tapes* — or entrepreneurial ones, like her first restaurant, Casa Rosa, a “Tex-Mex cantina” on Nashville’s Lower Broadway in partnership with TC Restaurant Group (known for its ventures with artists like Jason Aldean and Bryan).

And as they gear up for their next big adventure — Lambert’s first Las Vegas residency in September at Planet Hollywood’s Zappos Theater — they’re still focused on the crux of the operation: the music. “That’s always No. 1,” Lambert says. “The style will evolve, the outfits will evolve, the brands will evolve, but it all starts with, ‘What’s this new evolution of music?’ And we go off that for everything else.”

Marion, what lessons from your work with artists like Mary J. Blige and The Chicks did you bring to managing Miranda’s career?

MARION KRAFT Working with women, you learn what to look out for and what is important to them. I’m 20 years Miranda’s senior and I have a lot more experience under my belt, so it’s very important that I share that experience. But she is a businesswoman.

She makes all her decisions. Do I make some decisions for her that I know this is how she would decide? Yes, absolutely. But that’s also the ease of where we’re at, at this point. Anything music-related, she decides.

Miranda, can you recall a time early on when you realized how Marion was looking out for you?

MIRANDA LAMBERT Yeah, in a ton of ways. Sometimes I would say, “Something doesn’t feel right.” And maybe we already committed to it, but I slept on it and would call her like, “Something’s off about this.” And she has no question. She just says, “OK, then we’re done.” She doesn’t ask for an explanation or try to talk me into it. We go with our gut — whether it’s an opportunity for a brand or a record or a producer. If one of us feels off, we talk about it and we move on.

Marion, you’re also mentoring the next generation of female managers, like Crystal Dishmon, who joined ShopKeeper as Miranda’s day-to-day and now manages Tenille Townes.

KRAFT I wanted to be sure that I could build something people wanted to be part of. And then I called Crystal and said, “I think you should come work with me because I think we would work great together. I think you and Miranda would get along fabulously.”

LAMBERT She came at a time when I was just starting to get my business sense a little bit. Before that, I



was young and I would push back on Marion because we have, a lot of times, a mother-daughter sort of relationship. Crystal was there to calm the waters.

KRAFT It's strong to come out the gate with people who are good at their jobs, willing to learn, putting their best foot forward. We just kept hiring great team members who ended up being women. I remember being in Los Angeles, calling different management offices in Nashville. One day I thought, "This woman could be really good, but she's treated like furniture in this company, like just somebody who can file and answer the phone." I wanted everybody to have a voice, and in this company, everybody has a voice.

What female managers did you look up to early on?

KRAFT I learned from a lot of great people, men and women, though there were very few [female] managers in those days. I looked up to Sheryl Louis, who manages Stevie Nicks; Kathy Schenker, who managed Sting. There were other managers, but they were either very private or their style wasn't really what I wanted to be. There was one in particular who had more of a manly style, lots of yelling. I was like, "That's not what I want to do."

As a team, how has your communication style evolved?

LAMBERT We talk almost every day, at least on text or something. We're really good at communicating, and we weren't always; I would be just going off on another tangent, not filling her in on my life. So we used to have meetings and sit down and talk about, "What's the trajectory? Where are we headed?" Now, I don't feel like we need time for those big planned meetings anymore because we just are flowing through it.

KRAFT We have a thing where if I don't get an answer on something pressing from you within 48 hours, then I'll make the decision without you, good or bad. You're going to have to live with it. The good news is, most of the time I do hear back.

LAMBERT It's so much more of a business now than when it was just about putting out records and touring. We have to communicate every day. There's too much going on not to.

Miranda has her own clothing line, Idyllwind; she has teamed with Tractor Supply for a line of pet products; and last year she opened Casa Rosa. How do you

choose business opportunities?

KRAFT They're really only opportunities if they're good for all parties involved. We've come to this place where we say, "If it's a maybe, it's a no."

LAMBERT [Casa Rosa] had been brought up a few times on and off through the years, but it never felt like the time. We try to stay as open as we can, and when the opportunity came back around, [Marion] went and met with these people and was like, "What's your intention with my daughter?"

KRAFT [We had been] on the music trajectory and we couldn't take our eye off that ball. We knew we needed a certain amount of time because she wanted to be creatively involved. Now, when you walk into Casa Rosa, it feels like Miranda Lambert.

LAMBERT Anything that has my name on it, we don't do that quickly or chain it or anything else — I want my thumbprint on it. I want to know that one of us is looking at every detail. Because we've built this brand, which is built on the music. It's sacred to me.

How is preparation going for your Velvet Rodeo Vegas residency?

LAMBERT I'm a little scared, which I like, because being nervous means I have such a passion for what I do. This weekend when I'm off, I'm writing out the set list and getting a feel for where I think it should go. I haven't even started with wardrobe and all that stuff yet, but the idea of more fringe and rhinestones sounds pretty cool to me.

Are there any Vegas shows you looked to for inspiration?

LAMBERT In December a bunch of my road team went with me to see Brooks & Dunn, Shania Twain and George Strait. What I learned from those shows alone was that you're in Vegas because you built a catalog, so play the songs that people know and love from you. That's really what I'm sticking with. Sometimes on the road or with new record cycles, we get all wrapped up in our new songs, but there's a certain amount of trust the fans put in this catalog. But there are also so many more shows I want to see, Silk Sonic being one of them.



I'm coming for you, Bruno. I also want to see Céline [Dion] whenever she comes back.

With so much going on, how have you learned to strike a balance?

LAMBERT There were times when I was younger and running a hundred miles an hour, getting exhausted. I would spread myself too thin and not be my best at what I'm supposed to be doing. She would rope me in on that, which I think is important. She'd be like, "You're doing this to yourself. Stop saying yes to stuff. You need to rest." When I go on a camping trip or she goes to Mexico for a few days, both of us come back with epiphanies about more things because we took a minute away.

KRAFT A manager is not just representing the artist; there are moments when you have to represent the career. You may have to make a decision when it's good for the career, maybe not so good for the person. Ninety-nine percent of the time, I will look out for her as a human being first. But there are moments when, good or bad, the career has to take precedence, and you just have to be willing to gamble it all and say, "I know this is so important. I wouldn't make you do it if it wasn't."

Miranda, you recently released the song "Y'all Means All" for Netflix's *Queer Eye*. You've openly supported the LGBTQ+ community and your brother Luke, who is gay. Did you and Marion have conversations about your approach to that?

LAMBERT There's always conversation about something that could potentially... everything has a backfire of some sort these days, [so it's about] just making sure we're on the same page and how we message that. There wasn't a question in the world about doing it, it was just, "How's the best way for us to do this? Well, guess what — a song, because that's what I do." [My 2011 song] "All Kinds of Kinds" started that ball rolling for me. I didn't think I *wasn't* saying something, but now looking back, one song wasn't saying a lot. I didn't realize I could've helped more or done a better job at saying more, even if it's through my music. I love *Queer Eye*, and when [Marion] called and asked about it, I thought it was perfect.

You've worked together for almost two decades. What's your secret to a long-term working relationship?

LAMBERT I think just sticking it out with people and believing in each other. I never signed a contract. I've been with my team, like Marion and my agent, [WME's] Joey Lee, since I was 19 years old, and I don't have a contract with any of them. Maybe since then I have certain things with companies, but not with the person, because we choose each other every day. And then we all decide that if we don't choose each other anymore, then we shouldn't be together. It's a marriage in a way, and it's important to have that commitment and not to bail when times are tough and nothing's happening, and to have the days when you can not only celebrate something great happening but sit on my porch and she cries her butt off because entertainer of the year finally happened. That's years of history that just came to fruition.

KRAFT I couldn't put it any better.

LAMBERT Nailed it.

KRAFT Go Team Lambert. **b**

LABELS

Scott Borchetta

Founder/president/CEO • Big Machine Label Group; chairman of labels
• HYBE America

Andrew Kautz

COO • Big Machine Label Group; president of labels • HYBE America

Allison Jones

Executive vp of A&R
• Big Machine Label Group

Mike Rittberg

Executive vp of label operations
• Big Machine Label Group

Dave Kelly

Vp of digital consumption
• Big Machine Label Group

Big Machine Label Group has been on a signing spree, making deals with hot country upstarts Jackson Dean, Conner Smith, Kidd G (jointly signed with Rebel/Geffen), Tiera Kennedy, Mackenzie Carpenter, Abbey Cone and Shane Profitt over the past year. As label acts like Carly Pearce and Thomas Rhett continue to log significant successes, Borchetta says, "I'm most proud of our more than ever aggressive stance with A&R and new signings."

Mike Curb

Chairman • Curb Records;
Word Entertainment

Curb has continued having success in both the contemporary Christian and country genres. In the country space, Lee Brice added to his list of *Billboard* No. 1 hits this past year with the Country Airplay chart-topper "Memory I Don't Mess With." Meanwhile, his song "One of Them Girls" was honored as song of the year during the country music celebrations held by performing rights organizations ASCAP, BMI and SESAC. Dylan Scott's "New Truck" has reached No. 10 on Hot Country Songs, and Scott teamed with Stoney Creek/BBR artist Jimmie Allen for the unifying "In Our Blood."

Mike Dungan

Chairman/CEO • Universal Music Group Nashville

Cindy Mabe

President • Universal Music Group Nashville

Mike Harris



Sony Music Nashville celebrated the achievement of Luke Combs as he scored his 14th No. 1 on Country Airplay with "Doin' This."

COO/executive vp • Universal Music Group Nashville

Royce Risser

Executive vp of promotion

• Universal Music Group Nashville

Brian Wright

Executive vp of A&R

• Universal Music Group Nashville

Universal Music Group Nashville has no shortage of artists topping the charts, from veterans to newcomers. But for Dungan, the continued commercial and critical success of Chris Stapleton, who swept his three Grammy Award categories and won several other industry honors this year is "further recognition of a great artist who came from outside of the box to build his way to the very top of our industry, radically changing and enriching culture along the way."

Seth England

Partner/CEO • Big Loud

Joey Moi

Partner/producer • Big Loud

Craig Wiseman

Partner/songwriter • Big Loud

Austen Adams

COO • Big Loud

Candice Watkins

Senior vp of marketing • Big Loud

Artists like superstar Morgan Wallen, as well as HARDY, Ernest, Lily Rose and Jake Owen, helped bolster Big Loud to the status of *Billboard*'s No. 1 Hot Country Songs Label for 2021. Additionally, Wallen's *Dangerous: The Double Album* was *Billboard*'s No. 1 album on the year-end all-genre *Billboard* 200. "Our roster experienced exponential growth over the last 12 to 18 months," says Adams, "between new chart milestones, new signings and new music that has exceeded every expectation."

John Esposito

Chairman/CEO • Warner Music Nashville

Ben Kline

Cris Lacy

Co-presidents • Warner Music Nashville

Kristen Williams

Senior vp of radio

• Warner Music Nashville

James Marsh

Director of radio accounts • Warner Music Nashville

Esposito, who will transition to chairman emeritus in 2023, spent much of 2022 preparing WMN for the future, including upping Kline and Lacy to co-presidents and redesigning its radio department under Williams. "Our long-standing geographic approach is now supplemented with a focus on radio accounts, allowing us to collaborate on a high level with the chains," he says. "We are now able to be more targeted, creative and nimble in meeting the needs of our artists and partners."

Randy Goodman

Chairman/CEO • Sony Music Nashville

Ken Robold

COO/executive vp • Sony Music Nashville

Steve Hodges

Executive vp of promotion and artist development • Sony Music Nashville

Jennifer Way

Executive vp of marketing

• Sony Music Nashville

Taylor Lindsey

Executive vp of A&R

• Sony Music Nashville

Sony Music Nashville had numerous victories this year, including Luke Combs scoring his record-extending 14th consecutive No. 1 on the Country

Airplay chart with “Doin’ This” and Miranda Lambert winning the entertainer of the year trophy at the Academy of Country Music Awards in March. But for Robold, the biggest victory was gathering the entire staff together for the first time in two years. “That coincided with the reopening of our office,” he says, “which has brought the day-to-day collaborative spirit back into what we all do and added an energy that has been needed.”

Gordon Kerr

President/CEO

• Black River Entertainment

Rick Froio

Executive vp • Black River Entertainment

Kelsea Ballerini was Black River’s standard-bearer over the past year, when her hit single “half of my hometown” (featuring Kenny Chesney) won Country Music Association Awards for both musical event and video of the year. “Continuing to work with Kelsea Ballerini as she excels in every aspect of her career is an honor,” Froio says. But Black River runs deeper, with a roster that includes burgeoning talents such as Ray Fulcher, MaRynn Taylor and Josiah Siska. “Black River’s roster of writers and artists has been able to keep their passion alive for creating music that can help give some encouragement and even a little fun during a time that has been so challenging for our music community and the world in general,” adds Kerr.

Jon Loba

President • BMG Nashville

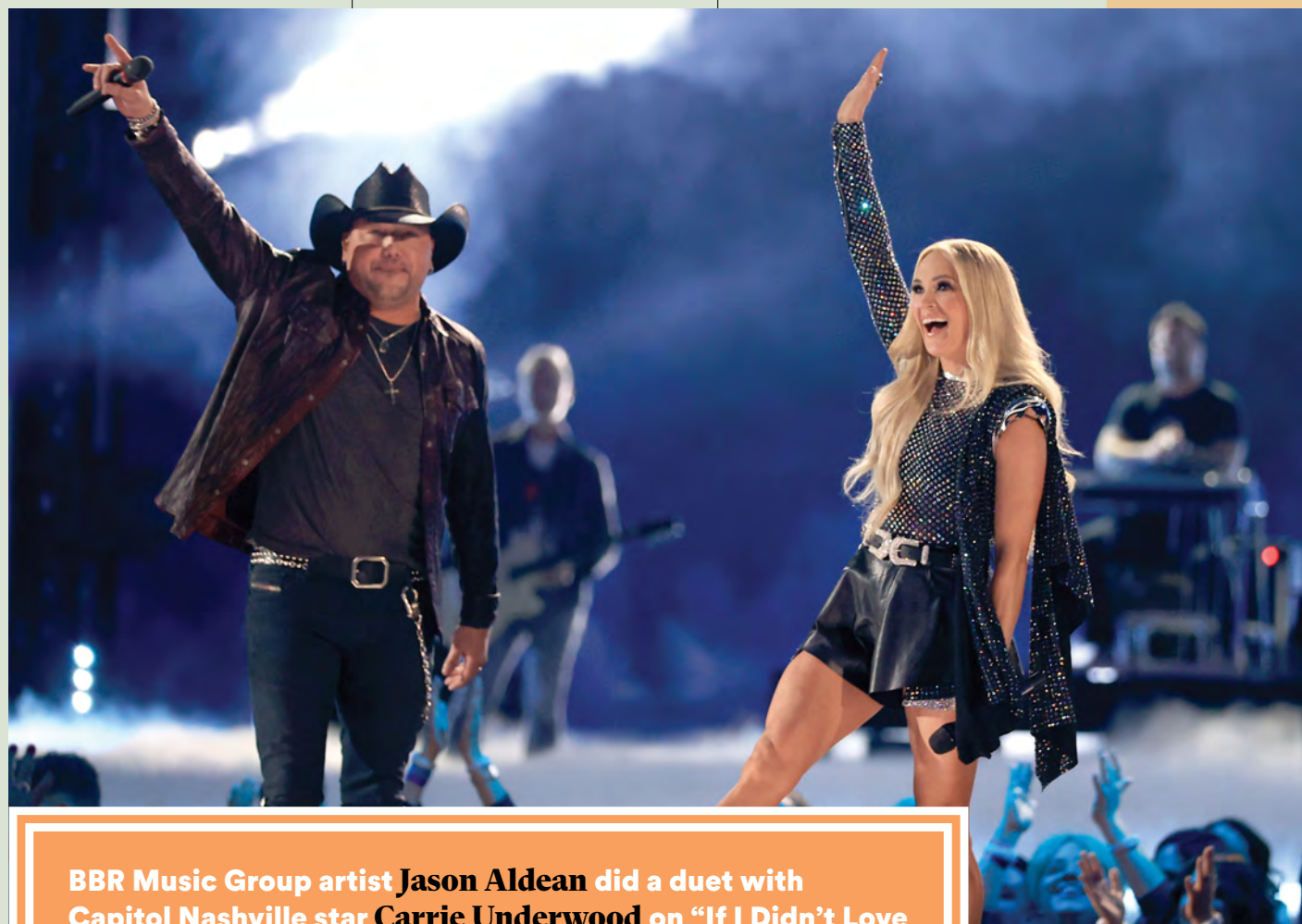
JoJamie Hahr

Senior vp • BBR Music Group

Five years after BMG acquired BBR Music Group, the union continues to yield great success. The roster scored five Country Airplay No. 1s in 2021 — two from Jason Aldean with “Blame It on You” and the ACM Awards single of the year, “If I Didn’t Love You” (with Carrie Underwood). Other triumphs included Elvie Shane’s “My Boy,” Lainey Wilson’s “Things a Man Oughta Know” and Dustin Lynch’s “Thinkin’ Bout You,” as well as Parmalee and Blanco Brown’s platinum “Just the Way” collaboration and Jimmie Allen’s best new artist win at the 2021 CMA Awards. Newcomers Jelly Roll, John Morgan and Frank Ray are also scoring gains. The BBR team “continues to paint outside the lines and invest in and develop new artists,” says Hahr. “This

“Our roster at Big Loud experienced exponential growth over the last 12 to 18 months.”

—AUSTEN ADAMS



BBR Music Group artist Jason Aldean did a duet with Capitol Nashville star Carrie Underwood on “If I Didn’t Love You,” which won single of the year at the ACM Awards.

is a label that embraces artists with unique voices ... who are all crossing genres and breaking boundaries, winning awards, and topping sales and streaming charts.”

David Macias

President • Thirty Tigers

Nashville-based Thirty Tigers, launched in 2001, has grown under

Macias to include offices in Los Angeles, New York, North Carolina and London. The company was instrumental in the success of country artist Morgan Wade, spearheading the indie release of her debut album, *Reckless*, in March 2021. (Arista Nashville released a deluxe edition in 2022.) The album included Wade’s breakthrough single, “Wilder Days,” which was included in *Billboard*’s year-end staff-

voted list of the best country songs of 2021. Last year, Thirty Tigers also inked a deal with Jacob Bryant and will be involved in upcoming releases for LeAnn Rimes, American Aquarium and others.

Katie McCartney

GM • Monument Records

See page 61.

Norbert Nix

Partner/president • Triple Tigers Records

Kevin Herring

Senior vp of promotion

• Triple Tigers Records

Triple Tigers Records, a Sony Music Entertainment imprint created out of a partnership among Thirty Tigers, Triple 8 Management and veteran music executive Nix, scored its eighth No. 1 in its six years with the September release “You Time” from Scotty McCreery. The label also logged its first triple-platinum single: Russell Dickerson’s “Yours.” Both artists now have the fastest-rising songs of their careers. Adds Nix: “Look for new-comer Jordan Fletcher this summer.”

MANAGEMENT

Narvel Blackstock

CEO • Starstruck Entertainment

Blake Shelton is key to the Starstruck client portfolio, and Blackstock’s crew treats his career like a wisely diversified 401k. Shelton released his 12th

“We love developing new artists and breaking careers more than anything at Wide Open Music.”

— ASH BOWERS

album, *Body Language*, in May 2021, with a deluxe version following in December as the 21st season of NBC’s *The Voice* wrapped with Shelton in a judge’s chair. Shelton is also using the Nashville branch of his Ole Red venues to film the inaugural season of TV contest *Barmageddon*. Starstruck clients Maggie Rose and pop artist Caroline Kole also issued albums, and Starstruck Studios — Cody Johnson’s favorite recording locale — added a Dolby mixing room.

Ash Bowers

Owner/manager • Wide Open Music

Bowers, whose clients include Jimmie Allen, Matt Stell and George Birge, kept busy with Allen’s “massive award season” this past year. Allen, who will open for Carrie Underwood on tour this fall, co-hosted the 2022 ACM Awards with Dolly Parton and Gabby Barrett (after winning new male artist in 2021), took home the CMA Award for new artist of the year and was the only country act to earn a Grammy nomination for best new artist this year. Stell, who scored a Country Airplay No. 1 with “Everything but On” in 2020, will release his debut album later this year. “We love developing new artists and breaking careers more than anything at Wide Open,” Bowers says, “and are constantly proud of what we are building with each one of them.”

Virginia Bunetta

Managing partner/artist manager

• G-Major Management

Longtime G-Major client Thomas Rhett put out two albums “in under 12 months,” says Bunetta, with *Country Again: Side A* debuting on the chart dated May 15, 2021, and *Where We Started* arriving on April 16, 2022; both peaked at No. 2 on Top Country Albums. Rhett partnered with Amazon Music for Thomas Rhett: The Live Experience, a live album launch for *Where We Started*. Bunetta adds that G-Major is expanding, signing newcomer Mackenzie Carpenter.

Coran Capshaw

Founder • Red Light Management

Brad Belanger

Owner • Homestead

Mary Hilliard Harrington

Manager • Red Light Management;

chairman of the board

• Country Music Association

Tom Lord

Manager/head of marketing

• Red Light Management

According to Red Light, the company’s clients enjoyed 22 weeks at No. 1 on the Country Airplay chart in the last 18 months, including rising star Lainey Wilson, who achieved her first radio hit with “Things a Man Oughta Know” and repeated the feat a few months later alongside Cole Swindell on “Never Say Never.” Parker McCollum also landed his own pair of chart-toppers. Capshaw emphasizes that even as Red Light racks up wins in “traditional” formats with clients like Chris Stapleton, Sam Hunt (through Belanger’s Homestead company) and Dierks Bentley, it is also focusing on achieving success through “nontraditional methods.” To that end, it launched a TV production company, selling *New Year’s Eve Live: Nashville’s Big Bash* to CBS, and focused on expanding brand relationships. Working with automotive or alcohol companies, for example, is “another big area of growth and exposure,” says Capshaw.

Thomas Rhett, a longtime client of Virginia Bunetta at G-Major Management, debuted at No. 2 on Top Country Albums with two of his most recent albums that were released a year apart.



Katie McCartney

GM • Monument Records



McCartney, who runs Monument Records with co-presidents Jason Owen and Shane McAnally, oversaw Walker Hayes' rise to stardom with his cross-format smash, "Fancy Like," an ode to a sweetheart who's happy with "Applebee's on a date night/Got that Bourbon Street steak with an Oreo shake." The song topped the Hot Country Songs and Country Airplay charts and reached No. 3 on the all-genre Billboard Hot 100. The track also won top country song at the Billboard Music Awards in May. "It not only changed everything for him as an artist," says McCartney, "but it changed everything for us at Monument, too."

What was your biggest achievement of the year?

Walker hitting the top of every country chart — blasting through every TV screen and prompting millions of TikToks — was a surreal experience for our whole team. And now with his song "AA" on the same trajectory, we couldn't be more excited for what's next for him and for Monument.

How did you celebrate Hayes' No. 1 for "Fancy Like?" Oreo shakes for everyone?

Yes, actually. Walker came to the office for a toast with the entire staff and it was a super emotional moment for everyone. We had a chance to really reflect on the work



From left: recording engineer Gena Johnson, Smith and McCartney.

that has gone on over the last several years, and we were able to really recognize every staff member for their huge impact on the process. And then, we did, in fact, all go to Applebee's for a celebratory dinner.

Caitlyn Smith also is a rising star on the roster. What are the plans for her?

She's just a hit away. The foundation she has built as a songwriter, powerhouse vocalist, producer and touring artist is

unlike any other new artist in our format. We released the first portion of her self-produced new album, *High*, earlier this year and shipped her single "Downtown Baby" to country radio, which kicked off her headlining tour. She performs the theme song for the new Fox TV show *Monarch* premiering in September. She is also a guest star on the show. We are focused on breaking her wide open this year.

What steps is Monument taking to make country more diverse and inclusive?

I'm proud to say that we have a 50/50 male-to-female artist ratio on the Monument roster. Yet

there is still major room for improvement when it comes to amplifying more diverse voices in our format. All deserve to be heard. The audience is there and the talent is there. Jason Owen and Shane McAnally have been and are hugely outspoken advocates for the LGBTQ community. I've personally learned a lot serving on the [diversity, equity and inclusion] task forces for both the Country Music Association and Academy of Country Music and am bringing those tools to our team, our artists and the company as a whole. We all still have a long way to go. It is a huge priority as we move forward.

—MELINDA NEWMAN

Bob Doyle

President • **Bob Doyle & Associates**

After Garth Brooks' stadium tour was forced to shut down twice — first in 2020 at the start of the pandemic and again amid more COVID-19 uncertainty during the summer of 2021 — Brooks' longtime manager Doyle got the trek back up and running in March 2022. Averaging, according to Doyle, 90,000-plus tickets sold per market so far, Doyle helped Brooks face down the unprecedented challenges to remain one of the world's best-selling, highest-grossing artists of all time.

Martha Earls

Owner • **Neon Coast**

"The highest achievement for our company over the past year was getting our artists back on the road and in front of fans despite the lingering challenges of COVID-19," says Earls. "Kane Brown's NBA arena tour was a massive success, and to have sold out shows from coast to coast during a time of market uncertainty was a tremendous achievement and a testament to Kane's superstardom." Up-and-coming acts also returned to the road. "Launching Restless Road's headlining tour and getting Nightly

back in front of its rabid fan base through touring," says Earls, "have been such satisfying achievements that have allowed us to take both acts to the next level."

Ann Edelblute

Owner • **The HQ**

A Las Vegas residency that grossed \$12.4 million and the Grammy Award-winning gospel album *Savior* are among Carrie Underwood's recent accomplishments. "We were proud to be a part of the grand opening of the Resorts World Theatre in Las Vegas in December with Carrie Underwood's ongoing *Reflection: The Las Vegas Residency*, as she was the first artist to perform there," Edelblute says of the eight-time Grammy winner whose new album, *Denim & Rhinestones*, arrived June 10. Underwood has played three sold-out runs (December through May), and will return to Vegas in 2023 after her just-announced 43-city *Denim & Rhinestones* arena tour concludes.

Kerri Edwards

President • **KP Entertainment**

Before his fifth season as a judge on ABC's *American Idol*, Edwards' client Luke Bryan staged his 2021 Proud

To Be Right Here Tour (earning recognition as a finalist for top country tour at the Billboard Music Awards) and then launched his Las Vegas headlining dates for Resorts World in February. Among other members of the KP Entertainment roster: Cole Swindell scored his seventh Country Airplay No. 1 with "Never Say Never" with Lainey Wilson, and Dylan Scott celebrated his first trophy at the 2021 CMT Awards, winning breakthrough video of the year for "Nobody." The latest addition to Edwards' management roster, *American Idol* season 19 winner Chayce Beckham, released his debut EP, *Doin' It Right*, in April.

Clint Higham

Co-owner/president

• **Morris Higham Management**

Dale Morris

Co-owner • **Morris Higham Management**

Morris Higham Management client Kenny Chesney wrapped 2021 by taking home the CMA Award for musical event of the year for his

collaboration with Kelsea Ballerini on "half of my hometown." Come 2022, the country icon delivered another head-turning musical event: his long-awaited return to stadiums. The demand was so high leading into Chesney's *Here and Now* 2022 tour that two months before it kicked off in April, he tacked on 20 more amphitheater shows. Higham, whose other clients include Old Dominion, Michael Ray and Brantley Gilbert, says, "We're constantly in awe of [Chesney's] work ethic, performance acuity and production capabilities both on- and offstage."

Chris Kappy

Founder • **Make Wake Artists**

For Kappy, the biggest highlight of the past year was "coming out of the pandemic firing on all cylinders." Management client Luke Combs, who was named CMA entertainer of the year in November, maintained a record-setting streak of 14 straight No. 1 Country Airplay singles with

Bob Doyle helped longtime management client Garth Brooks navigate the pandemic-driven shutdown of his stadium tours in 2020 and 2021, as well as the relaunch of the shows in March 2022.



"Doin' This." On May 21, Combs played to 50,000 in Denver at his first stadium headlining date. Among Make Wake's other clients, Drew Parker co-wrote two of Combs' No. 1 titles, while Hailey Whitters earned a song of the year Grammy nod for "Beautiful Noise" and Niko Moon and Flatland Cavalry continued their career ascents.

Marion Kraft

CEO • **ShopKeeper Management**

See page 54.

Danny Nozell

President/CEO • **CTK Management**

"We have been blessed with many achievements from the past 18 months," says Nozell, including the fact that CTK Management didn't have to furlough employees during



CTK Management president/CEO Danny Nozell worked with client Dolly Parton, who hosted the ACM Awards in March and was named to the 2022 class of the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame.

the pandemic. The Dolly Parton juggernaut continues: Her collaboration with suspense novelist James Patterson, *Run, Rose, Run*, spent five weeks at No. 1 on the *New York Times* Best Sellers list, and Reese Witherspoon is producing the upcoming film based on the book, which will also star Parton. Parton also hosted the 2022 ACM Awards, starred in two Super Bowl commercials and was named to the 2022 class of the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. Meanwhile, Nozell signed Dennis Quaid to his management roster, and he has shepherded Kenny G into a Super Bowl commercial, an HBO documentary and collaborations with The Weeknd and Kanye West.

Lynn Oliver-Cline
 Founder/CEO • River House Artists
Zebb Luster
 VP/GM • River House Artists

River House Artists, an independent label, publishing and management company, counts Luke Combs (reigning CMA Awards entertainer of the year) and Jameson Rodgers among the artists on its label (through Sony Music Nashville), with more acts to come thanks to a new venture with Warner Nashville and Elektra Records. "They are a very passionate and collaborative team," Oliver-Cline says of

the new label home. The publishing division also logged successes with songwriter-artists Ray Fulcher, Drew Parker and Billy Strings.

Jason Owen
 President/CEO • Sandbox Entertainment;
 co-president • Monument Records

Owen's management clients include Kacey Musgraves, Kelsea Ballerini and Dan + Shay. In April, Sandbox launched Sandbox Live, a new division in partnership with Live Nation. Days after announcing the new company's first venture, The Judds: The Final Tour, matriarch Naomi Judd died. Sandbox Live co-produced Judd's live memorial service with CMT, and the fall tour will now honor her memory, as superstars such as Brandi Carlile and Trisha Yearwood will replace Judd as they join daughter Wynonna Judd on tour. Says Owen: "Watching the industry, friends, family and fans come together to show so much love and support for Wynonna and the Judd family has been really inspiring."

John Peets
 Founder/president, Q Prime South
 Under Peets' leadership, Q Prime South found major success in the

past year with Ashley McBryde (who topped the Country Airplay chart with her Carly Pearce duet, "Never Wanted To Be That Girl") and Brothers Osborne (winner of the best country duo/group performance Grammy for their powerful "Younger Me"). Peets' main triumph was in the live sector,

where Eric Church's Gather Again Tour became the highest-grossing outing of his career. Church also announced plans to open Chief's, a six-story Nashville bar, restaurant and music venue, in 2023.

Clarence Spalding
Chris Parr
 Partners • Maverick
Amanda Cates
 Head of marketing and digital strategy
 • Maverick

Maverick clients have notched a slate of successes in the last year. Jason Aldean sold most of his catalog to

Spirit Music Group in a nine-figure deal and released a two-part album, *Macon, Georgia*, with both halves debuting within the top three of the Top Country Albums chart. Brooks & Dunn rode a "Neon Moon" TikTok explosion that led to 2.5 billion digital views. Reba McEntire issued a box set, executive-produced two Lifetime movies and returned in a recurring role on CBS' *Young Sheldon*; she also joined the cast of ABC drama *Big Sky*. Darius Rucker created his own festival in Charleston, S.C., and a Design Network series, *Rucker's Reno*. In the midst of the triumphant year, Cates became a Nashville Music Equity board member, working to improve diversity in the genre.

Janet Weir
 Artist manager • House of 42/
 Red Light Management

Weir's client Maren Morris took her latest studio album, *Humble Quest* — which peaked at No. 2 on the Top Country Albums chart — on quite an ambitious quest this year, from the Stagecoach Festival in Indio, Calif., to her NPR *Tiny Desk (Home)* concert held at Nashville's SoHo House to a 45-date U.S. tour through the end of 2022. Of her team, Weir says, "I'm proud that we've intentionally maintained a healthy balance of constant learning/adapting while not overreacting to the complexities of the ever-changing environment of releasing music and touring."

"I'm proud that we've intentionally maintained a healthy balance of constant learning/adapting while not overreacting to the complexities of the ever-changing environment of releasing music and touring."

— JANET WEIR

Damon Whiteside

CEO • Academy of Country Music

Lyndsay Cruz

Executive director • ACM Lifting Lives



“‘Pivot and innovate’ has definitely been our theme for the past year,” says Whiteside. In March, the ACM Awards became the first major awards show to exclusively livestream, shown globally on Amazon’s Prime Video. Last August, the academy held its ACM Party for a Cause concert in Nashville for the first time to benefit its philanthropic division, ACM Lifting Lives, guided by Cruz. This fall, the academy will open its new headquarters in Nashville after nearly 60 years in Los Angeles. Whiteside is most proud of the fact that the ACM Lifting Lives COVID-19 Response Fund distributed nearly \$4 million to those in need since the pandemic’s start. He took the time to expand on some other big changes at the academy.

Why are you moving to Nashville?

It was a difficult decision, being that the foundation of the academy has always been West Coast. However, the core reasons that the ACM was founded there do not really exist anymore. Our board, artists and members are mostly Nashville-based, and it is more effective and efficient that we be located here in the heart of country music.

How do you measure the success of the 2022 ACM Awards since traditional broadcast viewership metrics don’t apply?

We measure success the same way every

other show does in a changing media landscape, which is to evaluate how it impacts the performers and nominees in a positive way, be it streaming, social, merch, etcetera. We also look to the fans directly, across digital and social platforms. Also quantitative stats: Our social engagement numbers were up dramatically year on year. We also look to streaming performance across [digital service providers] in response to live performances.

This year marked the ACM Awards’ return



Whiteside and Parton

to Las Vegas after two years in Nashville. Does the show work better for you there?

After two years of more heartfelt, emotional and poignant shows, we were thrilled to be back in Vegas and somewhat return to our “Country’s party of the year” positioning, which is a huge part of the

show’s history and heritage. While it was a fun, upbeat and colorful show, there were still heavy COVID-19 protocols we had to adhere to, so we couldn’t freely party like we had originally hoped. As we

plan for 2023, we will look to bring as much of the party back as we can, but also embrace our new tag line of “This is how we country!”

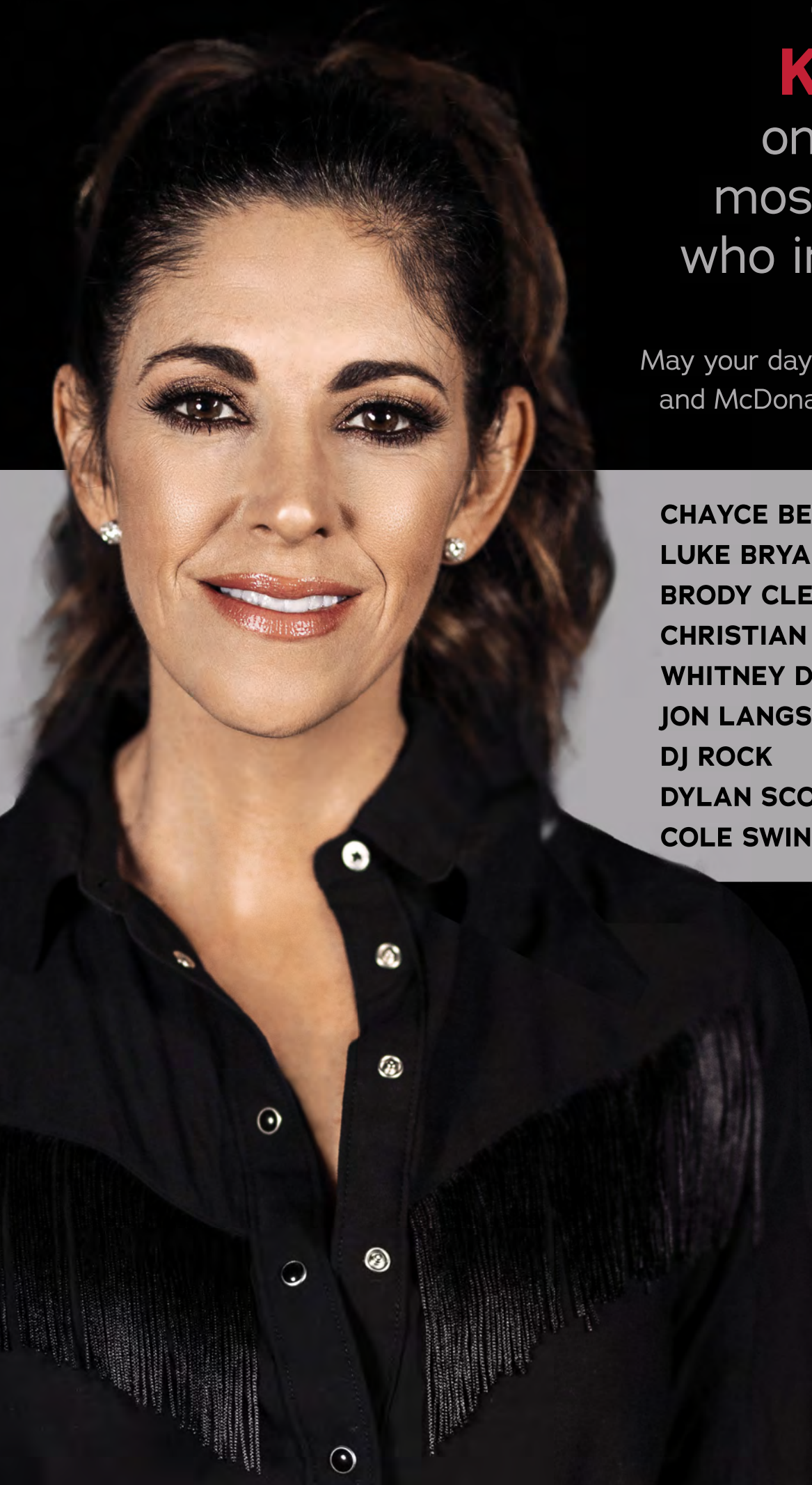
What are the plans for the ACM Honors in August?

This year’s ACM Honors are special because it’s the 15th anniversary. We

had to take a year off due to the pandemic, and we are thrilled to be back again, especially on the historic Ryman [Auditorium] stage. We are working now on a distribution plan so that this special show can be seen more widely. Miranda Lambert, unfortunately, was unable to physically join us [at the ACM Awards] in March for her triumphant entertainer of the year win, and so we’re particularly excited to celebrate her as our triple-crown honoree [reflecting her awards for top new female vocalist, female vocalist and entertainer of the year]. We want to give her that special moment. —PAUL GREIN

ILLUSTRATION BY HSIAO RON CHENG

KPentertainment



Congratulations to
Kerri Edwards,
one of our industry's
most powerful women,
who inspires us all daily.
#ALLIN

May your day be filled with all the Satco Queso
and McDonald's Diet Cokes you can dream of!

CHAYCE BECKHAM

LUKE BRYAN

BRODY CLEMENTI

CHRISTIAN CLEMENTI

WHITNEY DUNCAN

JON LANGSTON

DJ ROCK

DYLAN SCOTT

COLE SWINDELL

DUSTIN EICHEN

TRACY GOLDENBERG

DANIKA GURLEY

ETHAN HELMS

JACOB KNIGHT

CAIT MURPHY

JACOBY PLYLER

AUBREY SCHWARTZ

LEIGHANNA SMITH

Special Congratulations
to **Marion Kraft**
-Executive of the Year-

and to all other
2022 Billboard Country
power players!

www.kpentertainment.co

 [@thekpentertainment](https://www.instagram.com/thekpentertainment)



AEG Presents promoted The Worldwide Beautiful Tour for Kane Brown in 2020 and 2021, which included sellouts in Canada, Europe and Australia.

LIVE

Scott Bailey
President • Opry Entertainment

Dan Rogers
VP/executive producer • Grand Ole Opry
Over the past four years, Opry Entertainment Group has evolved into what Bailey calls “a fully integrated country lifestyle platform.” The company’s ventures have included acquisition of a city block in Austin that features the ACL Moody Theater and the launch of Circle TV in partnership with Gray Television. Opry Entertainment Group also recently landed a landmark deal with partners Atairos and NBCUniversal. Bailey calls the deal “the recognition of all the work the team has done, and will be the catalyst to put the company on a global growth path.”

Julie Matway
COO of Country Nation • Live Nation

Brian O’Connell
President of country touring
• Live Nation

Patrick McDill
VP of country touring • Live Nation

Aaron Spalding
Talent buyer • Live Nation
Over the past year, the Live Nation country music team under O’Connell has reconnected fans with artists onstage in multiple settings while putting tens of thousands of touring support staff back to work. Matway

and O’Connell ran three major country festivals, drawing more than 285,000 total fans: the Faster Horses Festival in July at Michigan International Speedway in Brooklyn, Mich.; the Watershed Festival in August at the Gorge Amphitheatre in George, Wash.; and the Tortuga Festival in November 2021 in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., which then returned to its traditional April dates only five months later. As pandemic restrictions lifted, O’Connell, McDill and Spalding produced tours for artists including Luke Bryan, Chris Stapleton, Thomas Rhett, Lady A, Dierks Bentley, Reba McEntire, Morgan Wallen, Brooks & Dunn, Jason Aldean, Miranda Lambert, Maren Morris, Tim McGraw and Darius Rucker.

Louis Messina
President/CEO • Messina Touring Group

See page 76.

Rich Schaefer
Adam Weiser
Senior vps of global touring

• AEG Presents
As concerts ramped back up in the latter half of 2021, AEG’s global touring team opened the gate with several sold-out, rescheduled tours for acts including Dan + Shay, Kane Brown and Luke Combs, who played his first-ever NFL stadium show in May. Other highlights included Dan + Shay’s sold-out album-release concert at Nashville’s Centennial Park and international sellouts for Brown in Canada, Australia and Europe. The company

also worked with Kacey Musgraves on her first arena tour in January, which Schaefer says played “to rave reviews and packed arenas.”

Stacy Vee
VP of talent • Goldenvoice

Vee, a driving force behind the annual Stagecoach Festival, was overjoyed when the country music extravaganza finally returned to Indio, Calif., during the final weekend of April (with headliners Thomas Rhett, Carrie Underwood and Luke Combs) following a three-year hiatus due to the pandemic. “Watching it in person is something I’ll always remember,” says Vee. “It has been a wild year on so many levels, but for a moment in time, not a single bit of that mattered and everyone celebrated in harmonious unison.”

AGENCIES

Marc Dennis
Jeff Kronos
Darin Murphy
Co-heads of CAA Music’s Nashville office

• Creative Artists Agency
Katie Anderson
Global music leadership team and strategy and operations executive
• Creative Artists Agency
Amid the pandemic touring shutdown, the CAA team focused on innovation, coordinating book deals

for clients including Darius Rucker and Kelsea Ballerini, and negotiating Tim McGraw’s and Faith Hill’s headlining roles in the Paramount+ series *1883*, which was recently renewed for a second season. “Now that the world is opening up, we’re seeing all of our hard work pay off — both on the road and in the office,” says Kronos. “The result has been incredible momentum forward for our team and artists.”

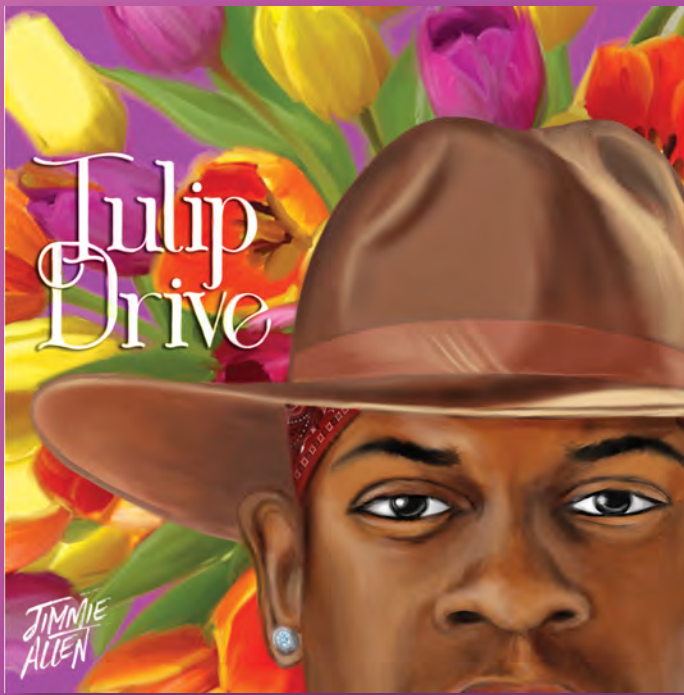
Becky Gardenhire
Jay Williams
Joey Lee
Partners/co-heads, Nashville • WME

Aaron Tannenbaum
Partner • WME
WME — which counts Eric Church, Luke Combs, Miranda Lambert and Chris Stapleton among its clients — rebounded from the pandemic with touring, packaging and festival bookings. Meanwhile, Lambert and Stapleton also picked up 2022 ACM Awards for entertainer and male artist of the year, respectively. “This reflects the extraordinary talent we represent,” Tannenbaum says, “and the thoughtful participation from all departments across the agency.”

Jeffrey Hasson
Co-head of the Nashville office • UTA
Emily Wright
Agent, music brand partnerships • UTA

Lance Roberts
Agent, music • UTA
In June 2021, UTA officially opened its new Nashville headquarters, a state-of-the-art space located inside the former downtown Carnegie Library. The agency’s Music City division grew both internally and externally this year, with new hires, roster acquisitions and activity by existing clients including Dolly Parton, Toby Keith, Midland, Jimmie Allen, Brittney Spencer, Elvie Shane, Ian Munsick and Frank Ray. It was, Hasson says, “an exciting year working to secure innovative opportunities for our clients with brand partnerships, film, television and more.”

JIMMIE ALLEN



Tulip Drive

AVAILABLE NOW

FEATURED ARTISTS INCLUDE:
JENNIFER LOPEZ, CELO GREEN,
T-PAIN AND KATIE OHH

CURRENT SINGLE "DOWN HOME"

2022 ACM

MALE ARTIST OF THE YEAR NOMINEE

2022 ACM AWARDS

CO-HOST

2022 GRAMMY®

BEST NEW ARTIST NOMINEE

2022 NAACP

OUTSTANDING NEW ARTIST NOMINEE

2021 CMA

NEW ARTIST OF THE YEAR

2021 ACM

NEW MALE ARTIST OF THE YEAR

OVER 1 BILLION
TOTAL ON-DEMAND STREAMS

3 #1 SINGLES AT COUNTRY RADIO

"JIMMIE ALLEN IS A HIT-MAKING
COUNTRY ARTIST"

- npr

"ONE OF THE MOST EXCITING
RISING ARTISTS IN THE GENRE"

- billboard

"JIMMIE ALLEN: A RISING
NASHVILLE STAR FOR EVERYONE"

- POLLSTAR

OVER 70 NATIONAL TV APPEARANCES

BBR
music group

STONE
CREEK

BMG

Jonathan Levine

Executive vp/managing executive

• Wasserman Music

Mike Betterton

Senior vps

• Wasserman Music

Chappel McCollister

VP of branding

• Wasserman Music

While Wasserman clients clocked myriad successes, the accomplishment McCollister is proudest of is the company partnering with the Black Music Action Coalition, Nashville Music Equality, the RIAA and YouTube Music to launch a three-week Music Accelerator program at Tennessee State University focusing on different sectors in the music business. (McCollister taught the Marketing 101 course.) Through the program, the team worked to secure music industry internships for all 16 students. Next year, it will expand to other historically Black colleges and universities, providing, McCollister says, “opportunity for more diverse representation across country music and the entire industry.”

MEDIA

Jackie Augustus

Music partnerships, North America

• Meta

As Meta’s Instagram platform seeks to improve the ways in which it helps creators, Augustus has been on the front lines with artists. In the week leading up to the CMA Awards, she helped develop a Reels

pop-up to pair rising artists with professional directors to let them maximize the service. She’s also guiding talents like Maren Morris and Dylan Scott through promotional tools such as push notifications to followers and in-app banners, which can boost views and streams.

Randy Chase

Executive vp of programming

• SummitMedia

Chase landed at Birmingham, Ala.-based SummitMedia in June 2020 as executive vp of programming following a stint overseeing broadcaster EMF’s K-LOVE Christian brand. In today’s world of group programmers, fewer gatekeepers and a shortage of honest opinions, Chase is musically aggressive. “Our brands are growing and reaching new benchmarks at a time when radio listening has dipped and the music cycle is not the best we’ve ever had,” he says. Among the songs Chase added early were future Country Airplay No. 1s “My Boy” by Elvie Shane and “half of my hometown” by Kelsea Ballerini featuring Kenny Chesney.

Charlie Cook

VP of country formats

• Cumulus

Media; operations manager

• Cumulus

Nashville; program director

• WSM-FM Nashville

Mike Preston

Program director

• KSCS-FM/KPLX-FM

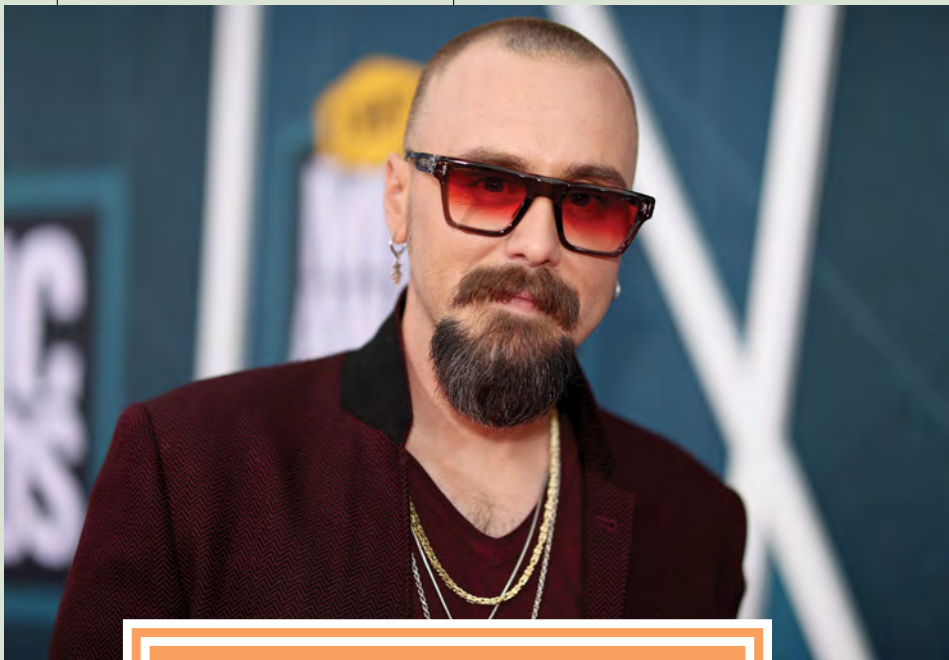
Dallas, Cumulus

Mike Moore

Program director

• WKHX-FM

Atlanta, Cumulus



Randy Chase of SummitMedia was an early supporter at radio of “My Boy” by Elvie Shane (above).

Cumulus Media’s latest country format recruit is industry veteran Moore, who joined WKHX Atlanta in October 2019 after a 16-year run as vp of programming for Audacy’s Portland, Ore., cluster. He quickly repositioned WKHX (formerly Kicks 101.5) to New Country 101-FIVE in November 2019, but the pandemic put many of his plans on hold. With life slowly returning to normal, “We have begun to build the *Kincaid & Dallas* morning show into the stars we’ve known they are,” says Moore. “We are again enjoying meeting people at giveaways, concerts and live events.”

RJ Curtis

Executive director

• Country Radio

Broadcasters/CRS

After staging the annual Country Radio Seminar as a virtual event in 2021, Curtis and his team worked to bring CRS back full throttle this year for three days of in-person education, live music and networking. In October 2021, the Country Radio Hall of Fame dinner and induction ceremony also returned as an in-person event. Curtis, who was one of the 2021 inductees, says, “I’m very proud of how we’ve navigated the unique challenges a worldwide pandemic posed for our organization, which thrives on live industry gatherings.”

Leslie Fram

Senior vp of music and talent

• CMT
Fram led the charge in introducing the next step in the CMT Equal Play initiative as CMT teamed with mtheory Nashville president Cameo Carlson to launch the Equal Access Development Program to train, educate and financially support artists and management professionals from historically underrepresented groups. “We as an industry have a responsibility to try and level the playing field for all marginalized voices,” says Fram. “CMT is committed to [working] tirelessly toward that change.”

Rod Phillips

Executive vp of country programming

strategy

• iHeartMedia

Bobby Bones

VP/creative director

• iHeartCountry;

host, *The Bobby Bones Show*, *Country*

Top30 With Bobby Bones, *Bobbycast*

• iHeartMedia; executive producer of

Women of iHeartCountry

• iHeartMedia

Carletta Blake

Program director/morning show co-host,

• WGAR Cleveland

• iHeartMedia

Gator Harrison

Senior vp of programming

• WSIX

Nashville; program director/brand

coordinator

• iHeartMedia/iHeartCountry

Phillips, who is at the helm of iHeart-

Media’s 125 contemporary country

“We are again enjoying meeting people at giveaways, concerts and live events.”

— MIKE MOORE



**CONGRATULATIONS
2022 COUNTRY
POWER PLAYERS**

LOUIS MESSINA

RICH SCHAEFER

STACY VEE

ADAM WEISER



AEG
PRESENTS





Rod Phillips of iHeartMedia credits the media chain's On the Verge program with promoting rising artists like Callista Clark.

stations, credits iHeart's On the Verge program for helping break new acts, as the project "can truly put a song in the spotlight quickly." The initiative has promoted artists including Ingrid Andress, Lainey Wilson and Callista Clark "in line with our strategy to focus on the talents of women in our format," Phillips adds. On the Verge features multimedia support such as airplay in significant rotations and social support across iHeartMedia's entire platform.

Tim Roberts

Country format vp/brand manager

• Audacy

Mark Anderson

Regional vp of programming • Audacy

Chris Michaels

Regional brand manager • Audacy

Roberts oversees Audacy's Detroit

cluster of stations, including day-to-day programming at country powerhouse WYCD. In the most recent Nielsen ratings for April, WYCD posted a 4.3 share of the audience compared with crosstown competitor WDRQ, which logged a 2.3 (with listeners ages 6 and older). "This is a great sign for future country format growth in 2022 and a credit to our great brand managers within Audacy," says Roberts. WYCD also brought a number of country stars to the station's Musictown Performance Facility: "It's a unique chance for fans to see performances up close and personal in downtown Detroit," he says. Post-pandemic shows kicked off with Jordan Davis, Kassi Ashton, Ryan Hurd and Morgan Evans and have continued weekly, helping the station "develop new artists and reward loyal WYCD fans."

Alix Rosenberg

Senior manager of artist partnerships

• TikTok

As TikTok continues to lean into partnerships with the music industry, Rosenberg helped launch the service's first marketing and programming efforts geared specifically toward country music, helping the #CountryMusic hashtag become the second-most-used genre tag for music content videos, with over 8 billion views since last May, according to the company. Rosenberg also spearheaded a CMT livestream with performances from Priscilla Block and Jon Pardi, among others, while booking Walker Hayes — whose "Fancy Like" is the No. 1 country song for creators on the platform in 2022 so far — on the NHL Stadium Series tailgate.

JR Schulmann

Senior director of country music programming • SiriusXM

Storme Warren

Host, *The Storme Warren Show*, *The Highway* channel • SiriusXM

The end of COVID-19 restrictions brought a welcome return to SiriusXM's live-event broadcasts for the satellite radio operator's 32 million subscribers. "Our backstage and red-carpet live coverage of the ACM Awards in Las Vegas [in March] reminded us all how much we've missed seeing our friends in person," says Warren. Then from April 29 to May 1, SiriusXM broadcast the Stagecoach Festival from Indio, Calif. Warren adds, "We pride ourselves on being on the front lines of country music."

STREAMING

Emily Cohen Belote

Principal music curator for country, Christian, Americana and folk

• Amazon Music

Michelle Tigard Kammerer

Head of country music • Amazon Music

Perhaps the most significant move of the past year has been Amazon Music's collaboration with Prime Video to stream the ACM Awards, the first time a major awards show of its kind was livestreamed. Since its late-2016 launch, Amazon Music's Country Heat suite of playlists — curated by Cohen Belote — now exceeds 13 billion streams in the United States. Stepped-up marketing for Maren Morris helped her streams increase by 80% year over year, according to the service. Amazon Music also released the feature-length original documentary *For Love & Country*, which examines country music's complicated relationship with race.

A night cityscape with a full moon and floating musical notes. The background is a dark blue night sky filled with stars. A large, bright yellow full moon is in the upper right corner. In the foreground, a city skyline is visible with several lit-up buildings. Overlaid on the scene are numerous musical notes and staff lines in shades of purple and blue, some appearing to float and others to be part of a larger, abstract musical structure.

SHOOT FOR THE
MOON

RUN WITH THE
STARS

O'NEIL HAGAMAN LLC

ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY CONSULTING AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

LEGINA CHAUDOIN / AL HAGAMAN / CHERYL HARRIS / KERRY O'NEIL
CRAIG OWENS / SAM POWERS / LILLIAN WILLIAMS

Beville Dunkerley

Head of country music talent and industry relations • SiriusXM/Pandora

Alina Thompson

Senior manager of artist marketing and industry relations • SiriusXM/Pandora

In August 2021, SiriusXM and Pandora kicked off *Small Stages*, a series of live broadcasts of arena and stadium acts for lucky subscribers and listeners in a cozy setting at venues such as the 250-seat Stephen Talkhouse on New York's Long Island and the 500-capacity Roxy Theatre in Los Angeles. "There are no bad seats in the house, and the millions of listeners at home can feel the intimacy," says Dunkerley. So far, fans have bumped elbows with country stars Kane Brown and Kenny Chesney, as well as rock groups Coldplay and Dave Matthews Band.

Margaret Hart

Head of Nashville label and industry relations • YouTube

Copeland Isaacson

Head of Nashville artist relations • YouTube

"In the past 12 months, our team has partnered with a stand-out group of diverse Nashville talent across YouTube's top marketing programs," says Hart. Queer, folk-leaning singer-songwriter Joy Oladokun was part of #YouTubeBlack Voices Fund, developing country singer Tenille Arts participated in the Foundry program, and country artist BRELAND is a graduate of YouTube's flagship Artist on the Rise program, "which resulted in a significant increase in views across his channel [22 million-plus], press coverage and more in the Nashville market and beyond," Hart says.

Jay Liepis

Director of music business partnerships, Nashville • Apple Music

Michael Bryan

Director/head of Apple Music Country Radio • Apple Music

Kelleigh Bannen

Host of *Today's Country/The Kelleigh Bannen Show* • Apple Music Country Radio, Apple Music

Aside from what she describes as "the absolute game-changing launch of Spatial Audio that Apple Music introduced in June 2021, Bannen says, "We're excited that our Apple Music Nashville studios are live and open. The new space enables Apple

to connect with our music community in more powerful ways, from the live-radio studios to the gorgeous content space where we can capture full performances."

Brittany Schaffer

Head of artist and label partnerships • Spotify

Rachel Whitney

Head of editorial for Nashville • Spotify

In May, Zach Bryan — signed to Warner Records through his Belting Bronco Records imprint — became the first country artist featured in Spotify's RADAR US artist development program, giving him guaranteed marketing support and placements on playlists such as New Music Friday (3.9 million followers), Hot Hits USA (673,000) and RADAR US (350,000). The extra attention paid off. "He has absolutely blown us away with the success of his new album, *American Heartbreak*," says Whitney, "which broke our single-day streaming record for a country album so far this year."

PUBLISHING

Stephanie Cox

GM/senior vp of creative Nashville • Kobalt

Cox's team won publisher of the year from the Association of Independent Music Publishers in April — and helped bring back Applebee's Oreo cookie shake. After Walker Hayes, signed to Kobalt partner SMACK-Songs, name-dropped the drink in 2021 in his song "Fancy Like," the track went viral on TikTok, then hit No. 3 on the Hot 100 — prompting the restaurant chain to bring the shake out of retirement. The company also celebrated Cody Johnson's "Til You Can't" spending two weeks at No. 1 on the Country Airplay chart with writer Ben Stennis and publishing partner Young Guns Music.

Rusty Gaston

CEO • Sony Music Publishing Nashville

Fresh from winning both ASCAP's and BMI's country publisher of the year awards, Gaston is most proud of "how our staff has come together to create a real team and family" over the last year. With a remodeling



Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro is an alma mater of several of the 2022 Country Power Players.

LEADING SCHOOLS OF THE COUNTRY POWER PLAYERS

The most frequently cited alma maters of the 2022 class of honorees

Auburn University

Auburn, Ala.
ENROLLMENT 24,505

Belmont University

Nashville
ENROLLMENT 6,626

Florida State University

Tallahassee, Fla.
ENROLLMENT 32,543

Indiana University

Bloomington, Ind.
ENROLLMENT 32,986

Lipscomb University

Nashville
ENROLLMENT 2,997

Middle Tennessee State University

Murfreesboro, Tenn.
ENROLLMENT 19,188

University of Alabama

Tuscaloosa, Ala.
ENROLLMENT 31,670

University of Kentucky

Lexington, Ky.
ENROLLMENT 22,227

University of Tennessee

Knoxville, Tenn.
ENROLLMENT 24,254

Vanderbilt University

Nashville
ENROLLMENT 7,057

Note: Enrollment figures as of 2020 and sourced from *U.S. News & World Report*

**TRNGO
TRNGO
TRNGO
TRNGO**

DALE & CLINT,

**Congratulations on being named
2022 Country Power Players.
No two people are more deserving.**

**Thanks for being the strength behind
making our wildest dreams come true!**

**You both have made the journey
so sweet.**

Cheers,

Old Dominion



Spirit Music Nashville represents certain copyrights of Chris Stapleton, including his tune “You Should Probably Leave,” which topped Hot Country Songs in February.

of the company’s Music Row building, Gaston has succeeded in creating a more “welcoming, vibrant atmosphere” for the publishing giant’s Nashville branch, where the company’s staff and its songwriters, including new signees like Ashley Gorley, can work together after over a year of social distancing.

Shane McAnally

Founder/owner • SMACKSongs; co-president • Monument Records
Walker Hayes’ “Fancy Like” proved to be a multipronged winner for McAnally. “To see fans connect with [Hayes] and his music is something

[that], as the head of both his publishing and his label, I take great pride,” says McAnally, who is co-president of Monument Records and also heads SMACK’s management division, whose clients include Hayes. Plus, SMACKSongs writer Josh Jenkins scored his first and second No. 1s on Hot Country Songs and Country Airplay this year as co-writer of “Fancy Like” and Jordan Davis and Luke Bryan’s “Buy Dirt.”

Mike Molinar

GM • Big Machine Music
Big Machine Music’s recent wins include the addition of hit songwriter-

producer Matt Dragstrem to its publishing roster and the breakout success of Ryan Hurd. Hurd released his album *Pelago* in 2021, and Dragstrem’s recent credits include tracks on Thomas Rhett’s 2022 album, *Where We Started*, and Morgan Wallen’s lengthy chart-topper, *Dangerous: The Double Album*.

Chris Oglesby

VP of creative • BMG Nashville
BMG Nashville’s writer roster has been rich with recent successes — none more so than the Jason Aldean-Carrie Underwood collaboration “If I Didn’t Love You,” a triple

ACM Award winner, co-written by Kurt Allison and Tully Kennedy. The latter duo also penned “Trouble With a Heartbreak,” another Aldean chart-topper. Artist-writer Carly Pearce co-wrote “Never Wanted To Be That Girl,” a No. 1 Country Airplay duet with Ashley McBryde, while Kat Higgins was part of the team behind Kenny Chesney’s “Knowing You,” and Emily Landis and Jim McCormick co-wrote Gabby Barrett’s “The Good Ones.” The highlight, says Oglesby, is “watching the growth in our writers and team from singles to ACM and CMA awards [to] building careers.”

Frank Rogers

CEO • Spirit Music Nashville; founder/president • Fluid Music Revolution
Rogers oversees a Nashville publishing roster that, he says, landed nine No. 1 songs last year. Spirit writers include Frank Ray, whose 2021 single “Country’d Look Good on You” reached No. 23 on Country Airplay, and the company had publishing credit on Carly Pearce and Lee Brice’s “I Hope You’re Happy Now,” winner of single of the year at the 2021 ACM Awards, and Eric Church’s “Hell of a View,” which topped Country Airplay. The publisher also bought most of Jason Aldean’s catalog in February, in a deal reportedly worth over \$100 million. Spirit Music Nashville represents certain copyrights of Chris Stapleton, including his Hot Country Songs chart-topper “You Should Probably Leave.”

Troy Tomlinson

Chairman/CEO • Universal Music Publishing Group Nashville
Reporting an impressive 15 country chart-toppers from UMPG songwriters over the last year, Tomlinson explains that the company’s success is the result of a “focused strategy of signing the absolute best talent.” The formula is simple, he says: great talent paired with “outstanding teams who work to develop their careers.” This is certainly true for UMPG Nashville songwriter Chase McGill, who recently ruled the Country Songwriters chart for his work on Morgan Wallen’s “Don’t Think Jesus” and Cole Swindell and Lainey Wilson’s “Never Say Never,” and for the company’s newly signed artist-songwriter Carter Faith, who was selected as *Billboard*’s Rookie of the Month in March.

For the *Small Stages* series from SiriusXM and Pandora, “there are no bad seats in the house and millions of listeners at home can feel the intimacy.”

— BEVILLE DUNKERLEY

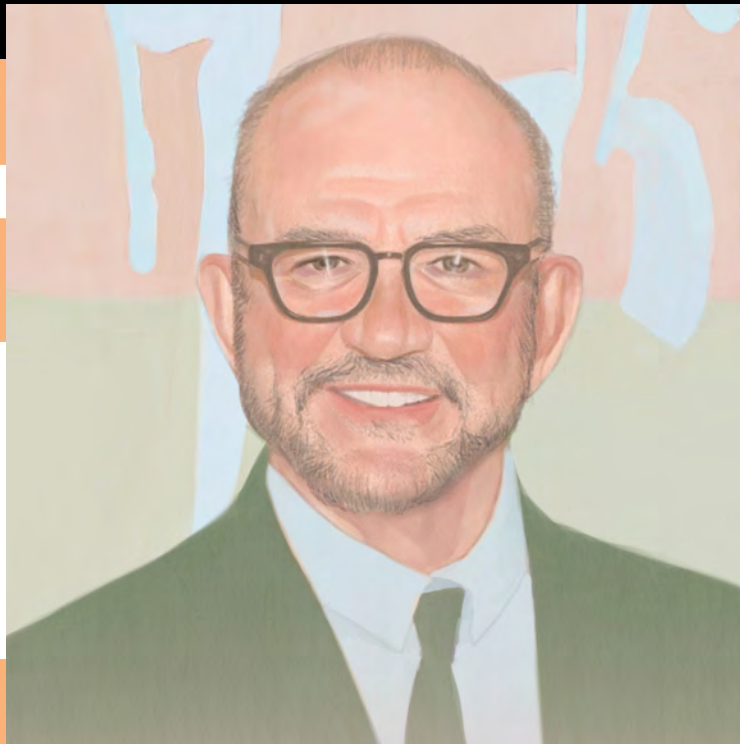


CONGRATULATIONS,
**MARTHA
EARLS**
COUNTRY POWER PLAYERS 2022

Billboard's
COUNTRY
POWER PLAYERS

Congratulations
BRET GUEST





Louis Messina

President/CEO • Messina Touring Group

Messina Touring Group's formidable roster has come roaring back to life on the road after the pandemic imposed a moratorium on touring: George Strait, Kenny Chesney, Eric Church, Blake Shelton and Little Big Town grossed over \$170 million combined across roughly 90 shows between August 2021 and May 2022. Messina says he has been actively hiring young people to boost his company's digital marketing efforts, but his mission is the same as it always was: "I'm not in the rent-a-van business," he says. "I'm in the career business." Even for his slate of stadium-ready acts, Messina is adamant that there's still room for growth. After congratulating Church on a recent show at Madison Square Garden in New York, Messina texted: "Next tour, stadiums. Then we'll figure out what's bigger."

Is there a particular achievement from the last year-plus that you're especially proud of?

The fact that I still have a company. My team stayed with me. We all survived. All the artists that I work for stayed with me. They all survived. I'm lucky. We put the future on hold for a bit. Now it's time to start saying, "What's next for MTG?"

And what is next? What's your vision?

It's not my vision, it's my artists' vision. Instead of trying to sign 12 other acts, my idea is, "How am I involved in getting the artist to a

level where they always thought they were dreaming about?," but this is actually beyond their dreams. That's how I grow my business. I'm still one act at a time. I want to work with an act that I'm passionate about and an act that enjoys working with me, which is sometimes difficult. No, it's not difficult at all — I'm a lot of fun.

Has the live business changed permanently in the past two years?

The live-music business changes in a different way every day. Nothing is permanent. Every day is an evolution of artists, of music, of presenta-



Messina (left) and Chesney

tion. You look where it once was and where it is today. Used to be only one or two acts could play stadiums. Now a lot of people are playing stadiums. I feel like our company was one of the first ones to create that mentality, especially in country music.

You've obviously seen a lot of changes in country music over the years. What's the biggest issue facing the genre now?

I think it's as healthy as can be. The only issue you have in country music is it's too crowded. Everyone wants to

work at the same time. Acts tour every year — c'mon, man, stay home every once in a while. Learn from George Strait: Less is more.

You used to work with AC/DC. What's the difference between an AC/DC show and a George Strait show?

I don't see George in schoolboy pants. That's a big difference there. Maybe there's a different attitude, but it's the same thing: They're bringing their art to the people.

When is Taylor Swift going back on tour?

When she tells me.

—ELIAS LEIGHT

Congratulations to our partners Derek Crowover, Tiffany Dunn and Denise Stevens, as well as all of our friends on *Billboard's* 2022 Country Power Players list.

We applaud your outstanding professional accomplishments and steadfast commitment to the firm and your clients throughout the music industry.



LOS ANGELES
NEW YORK
CHICAGO
NASHVILLE

WASHINGTON, DC
SAN FRANCISCO
BEIJING
HONG KONG

loeb.com

MAVERICK

&RQJUDWX0DWLRQV \$ PDQGD &DWHV
&KULV 3DUU DOG &0DUHQFH 6SD0GLOJ

billboard &RXQW\ 3RZHU 30D\HUV



Anthem Entertainment is the publishing company for Jordan Davis, co-writer of “Buy Dirt,” which hit No. 1 on Hot Country Songs.

“Nashville has become a major hub for a cross-section of great music.”

— MIKE WHELAN

Ben Vaughn

President/CEO • Warner Chappell Music Nashville

Warner Chappell Music Nashville — country music’s top publisher for the 21st consecutive quarter — celebrated big wins for Chris Stapleton, Brothers Osborne and Old Dominion at the Grammys, CMA Awards and ACM Awards, but Vaughn is not resting on his laurels. He’s bringing in more developing talent to the roster, including Flatland Cavalry’s Cleto Cordero, Warren Zeiders and Bailey

Zimmerman. Additionally, the WCM Nashville offices received an upgrade — an “entire gut renovation of its offices,” says Vaughn — making its headquarters a far more “songwriter-focused space,” even putting writers’ favorite books on the shelves.

Mike Whelan

Senior vp/GM • Round Hill Nashville

Round Hill’s roster includes Jimmy Robbins, co-author of Brett Young’s “You Didn’t,” which reached No. 35 on Country Airplay, plus, “[We] own

catalogs of country hit writers such as Ashley Gorley, Craig Wiseman and Dallas Davidson,” says Whelan. The publisher’s Music City office also dips into rock — Nashville-based songwriters Marti Frederiksen and Scott Stevens penned hits by Daughtry and others, and Blues Traveler recorded its Grammy-nominated *Traveler’s Blues* at the Nashville studio. “Nashville has become a major hub for a cross-section of great music,” says Whelan. “I’m so proud to be a part of the Round Hill team and the success we are having.”

Tim Wipperman

President • Anthem Music Publishing, Nashville, Anthem Entertainment

“I am most proud of the amazing success of our creative team,” says Wipperman. His company counts among its hit-making songwriters Jordan Davis, whose “Buy Dirt” (with Luke Bryan) topped Country Airplay and Hot Country Songs simultaneously, and Cody Johnson, who reached No. 1 with “Til You Can’t.” Headquartered in Canada, Anthem also completed the acquisition of Combustion Music,

launched a joint venture with Anthem songwriter Chris Janson and signed Kelly Archer to an exclusive publishing deal with partner Jeremy Stover’s RED Creative, according to Wipperman.

PERFORMING RIGHTS

Clay Bradley

VP of creative, Nashville • BMI

Bradley began his role in March 2020, “just as we were all sent home,” he says. In the time since, his team has focused on creating opportunities for BMI’s songwriters and publishers, including at the Key West Songwriters Festival — a five-day event with over 175 songwriters — in May and through a recently introduced monthly showcase called BMI Presents at the Bluebird Cafe in Nashville. The series has already featured the Fisk Jubilee Singers, John Oates and Dean Dillon. Says Bradley: “We work every day to lend support to the greatest asset we have in Music City: the songwriters.”

Shannan Hatch

VP of creative services

• SESAC Performing Rights

Hatch leads SESAC’s Nashville creative team and has had plenty to celebrate in the past year thanks to the roster of songwriters she has helped shape during her two decades with the company. In addition to the success of country stars including Lee Brice, Jimmie Allen and Zac Brown, Josh Jenkins co-wrote Walker Hayes’ “Fancy Like,” which reached No. 3 on the Hot 100, and Alex Kline and Allison Veltz Cruz co-wrote Tenille Arts’ “Somebody Like That,” which became the first song by a female artist to reach the Country Airplay chart’s top 10 that was entirely produced and written by women.



DENNY SANFORD
PREMIER CENTER

THANK YOU
TO OUR **RECORD BREAKING** ARTISTS

ERIC
CHURCH

MTG WAVE

REBA
MCENTIRE

LIVE NATION WAVE

MORGAN
WALLEN

LIVE NATION THE NEAL AGENCY



CONGRATULATIONS
TO OUR COUNTRY POWER PLAYER

CEO OF
SPIRIT MUSIC
NASHVILLE

**FRANK
ROGERS**

43
#1 HITS AS A
MULTI-PLATINUM
PRODUCER

SpiritMusic GROUP SpiritMusic NASHVILLE

Mike Sistad

VP of Nashville membership • ASCAP

"We're excited to keep moving forward and providing our members with the support and career services they need," says Sistad of ASCAP's Nashville team. Overall, the performing rights organization reported \$1.254 billion in payouts to its members in 2021, a 4% increase over the previous year. ASCAP, as a whole, also surpassed the \$1 billion mark in domestic revenue last year for the first time. Its members have likewise thrived: At the Grammys in April, Chris Stapleton dominated in the country categories thanks to the success of his album *Starting Over*.

**BUSINESS,
BRANDS AND
ASSOCIATIONS**

Tatum Allsep

Founder/CEO • Music Health Alliance

Shelia Shipley Biddy

CFO/certified senior adviser

• Music Health Alliance

Due to their work and innovation at the forefront of COVID-19 relief, Nashville-based Music Health Alliance received the 2021 CMA Foundation Humanitarian Award along with Dolly Parton. The alliance provided over 900,000 meals and 1,700 counseling sessions and became a source of pandemic information for those within the country music world and beyond. "The awareness created for MHA's services during that pandemic has continued to grow our nonprofit, as those served then tell others who are now reaching out for our services," Biddy says of the impact of MHA's work. It also partnered with Universal Music Group to help their artists and songwriters across all genres save over \$5.3 million in health care costs through a new pilot program.

**Lori Badgett
Diane Pearson**

Senior vps/team leaders of the entertainment division in Nashville

• City National Bank

After spending the last 24 months assisting many Nashville artists and



The marketing agency FlyteVu guided Kacey Musgraves' Simple Times Machine promotional campaign with Spotify.

companies with COVID-19-related setbacks, Badgett says that "with restrictions easing, we have seen a significant increase in demand for live shows and expect the trend to continue through the rest of the year." Badgett and Pearson helped companies leverage assistance from the Paycheck Protection Program, ACM Lifting Lives' philanthropy and Music Health Alliance.

Julie Boos

Chairman • FBMM

Duane Clark

President • FBMM

Jamie Cheek

Carmen Romano

Vice presidents • FBMM

Chris Hughes

Business manager • FBMM

One of Nashville's leading business management firms, FBMM has spent much of the last year delving into intellectual property opportunities with private equity firms. Despite the firm's deep country roots, opportunities have

expanded into rock, EDM, R&B/hip-hop and pop. "We have also, despite the crazy circumstances, managed to continue our training and coaching programs and have seen employees achieve higher levels of expertise," says Boos.

**Kella Farris
Stephanie Self
Catherine Moore**

Partners • Farris Self & Moore

The Nashville business management and financial planning firm keeps its client list confidential but has expanded steadily in the past year, adding six new positions to its now 22-person staff — "a testament," says Moore, "to our commitment to remain boutique, full service and all-in." The company also expanded its tax and royalty departments and other segments of the operation. "We are excited to continue to provide a family-like culture and the highest level of business management and financial planning services to our clients," she says.

Bret Guest

Business manager • Tri Star Sports and Entertainment Group

Amid the uncertainty of touring income during the pandemic, the Tri Star team guided its clients "through the constraints of 2021 into the hybrid touring environment" — a mixture of virtual and in-person events — to keep those artists going, says Guest. The company does not identify its clients but has previously reported representing Florida Georgia Line and Reba McEntire. "Throughout this dynamic period," says Guest, "we focused on alternate revenue streams such as digital appearances and catalog investment opportunities to maintain positive cash flow."

**Jeremy Holley
Laura Hutfless**

Co-founders • FlyteVu

Entertainment marketing agency FlyteVu worked with some of country music's biggest artists over the past year on several promotional cam-

ROCKIN' WIT U

FOR 20 YEARS

CONGRATULATIONS TO

ASHANTI

ON TWO DECADES
OF TIMELESS HITS!

THANKS FOR CALLING
ASCAP HOME.



paigns, including Kacey Musgraves' Simple Times Machine with Spotify, in which she introduced fans to her *star-crossed* album and film by taking them back, as the title would suggest, to a simpler time. They also spearheaded two major collaborations with Cracker Barrel, with Christian artist Tauren Wells performing on the country store's Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade float, and Mickey Guyton teaming with Pentatonix for Cracker Barrel's festive holiday special, *Sounds of the Season*.

Andy Moats

Executive vp of music, sports and entertainment

• Pinnacle Financial Partners

Like other financial institutions, Pinnacle has helped its clients keep their doors open through the pandemic while also significantly expanding its label and publishing business beyond Nashville into New York, Los Angeles and London this year, which has placed the music, sports and entertainment team on a record pace in terms of loan production. "We've become one of the largest music banking teams in Music City and beyond," Moats says, "with plans to add more great music bankers to an already impressive group."

Kerry O'Neil

Partner • O'Neil Hagaman; co-founder/co-owner • Big Yellow Dog Music

With the pandemic putting tours on hold for most of 2021, O'Neil's business management consultancy worked with clients to reassess and reset their intellectual property investment goals through major acquisitions, increased A&R investment and strategic sales and new ventures. Looking ahead, COVID-19 and inflation can still make for a stressful path for touring acts, but "our close coordination with the artist touring teams have allowed us to adapt, often on the fly, to these quickly changing environments so our artists can entertain their fans and run a business," says O'Neil, who is also co-founder and co-owner (with Carla Wallace) of indie music publishing firm Big Yellow Dog Music.

Sarah Trahern

CEO • Country Music Association

Tiffany Kerns

VP of industry relations and philanthropy

• Country Music Association; executive director • CMA Foundation

The CMA has been working to remove "barriers of entry" for prospective members to improve diversity in the industry. The new, more inclusive membership strategy includes "pipeline opportunities to ensure an equitable future for our business; education and professional development for our members, staff and the greater industry; and intentional and thoughtful community partnerships," Trahern says.

Damon Whiteside

CEO • Academy of Country Music

Lyndsay Cruz

Executive director • ACM Lifting Lives

See page 64.

LEGAL

David Crow

Michael Milom

Partners • Milom Horsnell Crow Kelley

Beckett Shehan

Milom and Crow represented a number of artists, including Luke Bryan and Keith Urban, in the post-pandemic relaunch of major headlining tours for 2022 and helped turn clients' "COVID-19-born revenue diversification activities" into permanent parts of their long-term business plans, including cementing strategic partnerships like Kelsea Ballerini's deal with CoverGirl. They say the best way lawyers can help clients often is less about one big deal and more about "a series of smaller but critical deals that propel careers in unique ways."

Derek Crownover

Denise Stevens

Partners • Loeb & Loeb

Tiffany Dunn

Co-office administrative partner

• Nashville, Loeb & Loeb

Crownover has expanded Loeb & Loeb's representation of artists, songwriters and publishers in Nashville, working with a team to coordinate publishing catalog sales, artist signings and more. His longtime business strategy and planning work with Sam Hunt, Craig Wiseman, Big Loud, Ashley Gorley, Dallas Davidson, Gabby Barrett, Jordan Davis, Creative Nation and the estate of Otis Redding Jr. continues. Dunn's numerous clients

have included Luke Combs, whom she represented in connection with the release of his deluxe edition album *What You See Ain't Always What You Get* and his Bootleggers Radio project with Apple Music, as well as deals with Columbia Sportswear, Ford Motor and NASCAR. Among her multiple clients, Stevens represented Carrie Underwood for recording projects, TV appearances, her Las Vegas residency and her recent tour, as well as Underwood's CALIA clothing line and a show on Apple Radio.

Russell A. Jones Jr.

Attorney • Law Offices of

Russell A. Jones Jr. and Associates

Jones, whose talent roster includes Toby Keith, Tim McGraw and Trisha Yearwood, says the "public is hungry for live music" in the wake of the pandemic and that clients such as Garth Brooks, who is on year three of a three-year stadium tour, are happily obliging. "After months of trying to outguess the length and effects — including numerous governmental responses — with respect to the pandemic, my clients are now touring again."

Joel Katz

Senior counsel • Barnes & Thornburg

Katz, a veteran negotiator for senior executives, represented John Esposito in his transition from chairman/CEO at Warner Music Nashville to chairman emeritus, as well as Ben Kline's ascension at Warner Music Nashville to co-president. The attorney, who also serves as special counsel for the CMA, counts label heads Scott Borchetta (Big Machine Label Group), Mike Dungan (Universal Music Group Nashville) and Randy Goodman (Sony Music Nashville) among his clients.

Chip Petree

Managing partner • Ritholz Levy Fields

Petree, whose clients include Chris Stapleton, Brothers Osborne, Tyler Childers, Ashley McBryde and Billy Strings, handles catalog sales not only for top country talent but also buyers like Spirit Music, Primary Wave and Influence Media. Over one-third of the \$100 million-plus in catalog business he has recently handled has been related to country copyrights. Like many in the industry,

Petree says he's excited that "the past year has seen successful returns to touring."

Jess Rosen

Shareholder/co-chair

• Atlanta entertainment and media practice, Greenberg Traurig

A go-to attorney for top country talent, Rosen has represented Miranda Lambert since before she signed a recording contract, so he understandably took great pride when she won the ACM Award for entertainer of the year in March. "Being part of that is the greatest example of long-term artist development," Rosen says. He also represented Kenny Chesney in January in a deal that "created a dynamic relationship" with Hipgnosis by selling 80% of the artist's catalog. Also on the catalog front, Rosen handled artist-asset sales for Alabama, Martina McBride and Nicolle Galyon.

contributors

Rania Aniftos, Jim Asker, Katie Bain, Ed Christman, Mariel Concepcion, Stephen Daw, Bill Donahue, Thom Duffy, Chris Eggertsen, Deborah Evans Price, Josh Glicksman, Gary Graff, Paul Grein, Lyndsey Havens, Steve Knopper, Elias Leight, Heran Mamo, Melinda Newman, Jessica Nicholson, Glenn Peoples, Kristin Robinson, Tom Roland, Dan Rys, Andrew Unterberger, Xander Zellner

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* 2022 Country Power Players were chosen by editors based on factors including, but not limited to, nominations by peers, colleagues and superiors. 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 *Billboard*, Luminate and social media impressions using data available as of May 11.

To Our “Shany” Congratulations on 20 years!

*You made it through both triumphs and tears.
Pushing through any and all fears,
You’ve earned longevity in your stellar career!*

*You were our star first!
We love you!*

From Your Family and Friends

*Aunt MiMi and the Allen Family
Jonathan and Darcel Cumbo and Family, Jay Goodine and Family, Lonney and David
Aunt Cathleen Mealing and Family, Aunt Virginia Mealing
Aunt Diane Morgan and Miss Ruby “Ribs” Walton, Cathy and Raymond Mickens
Penny Mealing, The Goodine Family, Daphne Wilson and Family
Regina and Tracey Thompson, Pam and Butch Mickens, Your FB Church Family*

SUBSCRIBE TO

billboard **COUNTRY**
UPDATE

**The country music industry’s must-have source for news,
charts, analysis and features**

- EXCLUSIVE CHARTS including Hot Country Songs, Country Airplay, Top Country Albums, Country Streaming Songs and more!
- Weekly content including Makin’ Tracks, On The Charts, a roundup of executive moves and timely analysis of the latest country news and trends
- Expert insight and commentary by Tom Roland and Jim Asker

SIGN UP FOR FREE
DELIVERY EVERY MONDAY
[BILLBOARD.COM/NEWSLETTERS](https://www.billboard.com/newsletters)





*20th
Anniversary*

Congratulations! Ashanti



momanger.com

Your 1st Album "Ashanti" has EXCEEDED any expectations we could EVER dream of!

GOD has guided you to this milestone and we have been there right along with you!

Family - The foundation of genuine love, support and trust. Though all of the blood, sweat and tears to create such a classic Album and celebrate it 20 years later is a Blessing! Just know we will ALWAYS be there for you!

*Love,
Mom, Dad, and Shia*

players

CELEBRATING MUSIC'S MOVERS

ASHANTI BEGINS A NEW CHAPTER

On the 20th anniversary of her self-titled debut, Ashanti is busy rerecording it — and taking ownership of her future: “I love what Taylor Swift did”

BY DARLENE ADEROJU

ASHANTI DOUGLAS WAS set to become an Olympic athlete, but her life ended up going in a different direction. A standout runner on her Glen Cove, N.Y., high school team, she was scouted by the Olympics and later earned track scholarships to both Hampton and Princeton universities. But Ashanti ultimately took home the gold — and multiplatinum awards — when her dream to pursue music prevailed.

Growing up on Long Island, Ashanti attended dance classes and participated in talent shows at a dance school owned by “momager” Tina Douglas. But Douglas first noticed her daughter’s exceptional voice at home, where Ashanti would belt out Mary J. Blige while doing chores. Douglas began sending tapes to labels, and in 1994, Ashanti signed her first deal with Jive Records when she was 14 years old; she moved to Noontime/Epic four years later.

After graduating from high school, “I moved to Atlanta and ended up majoring in my first album,” says the now 41-year-old Grammy Award-winning artist. In 2002, Ashanti — who is celebrating the 20th anniversary of that self-titled debut — found mainstream success with Murder Inc. Records, where she composed hooks for some of the label’s rappers and sang on fan-favorite singles like Ja Rule’s No. 1 Billboard Hot 100 hit “Always On Time” (2001) and Fat Joe’s No. 2 Hot 100 smash “What’s Luv?” (2002).

Ashanti debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard 200 with 503,000 copies sold, a then-record for the biggest U.S. opening week of sales for a female artist’s debut album, according to Luminate. Lead single “Foolish” topped the Hot 100 for 10 weeks, and thanks to that hit, “Always On Time” and “What’s Luv?,” Ashanti became the first female artist to simultaneously chart three songs in the Hot 100’s top 10. Follow-up singles “Happy”

(No. 8) and “Baby” (No. 15) also proved victorious. *Ashanti* went on to win the Grammy for best contemporary R&B album in 2003; it has sold 3.7 million copies in the United States, and its songs have amassed 788 million U.S. on-demand streams.

Two decades later, the singer-songwriter spoke to *Billboard* about rerecording *Ashanti* and retaining ownership of her masters, publishing the children’s book *My Name Is a Story* (July 12; HarperCollins Publishing), producing and starring in the upcoming film *The Plus One* and being honored with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in April. “It’s still hitting me,” she says of the accolade. “It’s a reward after the good times, bad times, tears and moments of rejection.”

You announced on the *Tamron Hall Show* in September that you would rerecord *Ashanti* and regain ownership of your masters. Where are you in that process?

After 20 years, I got the rights to rerecord my Universal [Music Group] albums and material [plus my album *Braveheart*] and own those new masters. I’m rerecording my first album now. The timing is perfect with Apple Music and other [streaming services] because everything is getting remastered anyway.

There were definitely obstacles [to gaining my right to rerecord]. Certain people don’t want to see you move forward and progress in life, so they try

to create roadblocks. You need a strong legal team to support you and make sure you’re doing everything correctly. It’s really important as an artist to continue to spread the ownership narrative. I love what Taylor Swift did. Anything worth something will be a bit of a battle.





Shock Waves Linger After Presley's Death

MEMPHIS—The shock waves linger after Elvis Presley, who had the last side in upstate a few days of American music, died of an apparent heart attack at Graceland, his Memphis home Tuesday (8). He was 42.

It took more than two cardiology days to determine the cause of death.

People who normally sleep up all night when he is in Memphis, and sleep at day, had been with Presley throughout the night at Graceland and had been playing reggae ball on a record in his honor.

He had gone to his home at 11 a.m. and went to his bedroom and changed to pajamas. According to the housekeeper, he was in his bed at 2:30 p.m. and remained there until about 4 p.m. when he was found at 42 of a heart attack in 1968.

Presley was found at 2:30 p.m. on the second floor of his 18-room mansion in the highway between his bedroom and the kitchen by Joe Esposito, a high school student and his band manager for a number of years.

Esposito could not determine if Presley had eaten anything or if he had been drinking. He helped emergency resuscitation efforts. He helped out in the phone room. Presley's personal physician, Dr. George Nichipolous, then summoned a Memphis for department ambulance.

Four department medical technicians, Union Junior, Jr. and Charles Crosby, rushed to Graceland and began resuscitation with their equipment. Dr. Nichipolous then arrived. At 4:30 p.m. he pronounced Presley dead. At 4:30 p.m. he pronounced the final death. His mother, starstruck, sobbed at 42 of a heart attack in 1968.

ELVIS' GOLD STANDARD RECORDS

447-0601 I Feel So Bad/Wild in the Country	447-0646 Viva Las Vegas/What'd I Say?	447-0691 I Feel So Bad/Wild in the Country	447-0696 Viva Las Vegas/What'd I Say?
447-0602 Love Me Tender/Marie's the Name of My Last Name	447-0647 Blue Christmas/Be Careful How You Go	447-0694 Little Susie/Marie's the Name of My Last Name	447-0698 Blue Christmas/Be Careful How You Go
447-0603 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World	447-0648 Do the Clam/You'll Be Gone	447-0695 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World	447-0699 Do the Clam/You'll Be Gone
447-0604 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World	447-0649 Ain't That Loving You Baby/Ask Me	447-0696 Good Luck Charms/Anything That's Part of You	447-0700 Ain't That Loving You Baby/Ask Me
447-0605 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World	447-0650 Wooden Heart/Puppet on a String	447-0697 Anything That's Part of You	447-0701 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0606 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World	447-0651 Joshua Fit the Battle/Known Only to Him	447-0698 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0702 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0607 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World	447-0652 My Way/Blue River	447-0699 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0703 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0608 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World	447-0653 I Believe in the Man in the Sky	447-0700 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0704 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0609 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World	447-0654 Kissin' Cousins/It Hurts Me	447-0701 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0705 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0610 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World	447-0655 Tell Me Why/Blue River	447-0702 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0706 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0611 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World	447-0656 Frankie and Johnny/Please Don't Stop Loving Me	447-0703 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0707 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0612 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World	447-0657 Love Letters/Come What May	447-0704 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0708 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0613 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World	447-0658 Spinout/All That I Am	447-0705 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0709 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0614 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0706 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0710 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0615 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0707 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0711 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0616 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0708 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0712 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0617 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0709 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0713 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0618 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0710 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0714 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0619 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0711 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0715 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0620 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0712 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0716 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0621 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0713 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0717 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0622 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0714 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0718 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0623 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0715 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0719 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0624 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0716 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0720 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0625 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0717 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0721 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0626 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0718 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0722 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0627 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0719 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0723 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0628 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0720 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0724 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0629 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0721 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0725 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0630 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0722 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0726 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0631 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0723 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0727 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0632 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0724 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0728 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0633 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0725 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0729 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0634 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0726 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0730 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0635 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0727 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0731 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0636 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0728 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0732 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0637 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0729 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0733 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0638 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0730 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0734 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0639 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0731 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0735 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0640 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0732 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0736 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0641 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0733 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0737 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0642 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0734 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0738 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0643 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0735 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0739 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0644 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0736 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0740 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0645 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0737 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0741 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0646 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0738 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0742 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0647 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0739 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0743 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0648 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0740 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0744 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0649 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0741 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0745 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0650 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0742 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0746 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0651 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0743 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0747 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0652 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0744 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0748 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0653 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0745 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0749 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0654 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0746 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0750 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0655 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0747 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0751 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0656 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0748 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0752 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0657 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0749 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0753 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0658 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0750 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0754 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0659 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0751 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0755 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0660 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0752 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0756 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0661 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0753 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0757 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0662 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0754 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0758 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0663 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0755 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0759 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0664 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0756 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0760 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0665 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0757 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0761 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0666 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0758 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0762 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0667 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0759 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0763 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0668 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0760 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0764 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0669 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0761 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0765 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0670 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0762 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0766 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0671 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0763 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0767 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0672 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0764 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0768 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0673 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0765 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0769 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0674 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0766 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0770 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0675 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0767 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0771 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0676 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0768 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0772 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0677 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0769 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0773 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0678 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0770 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0774 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0679 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0771 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0775 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0680 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0772 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0776 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0681 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0773 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0777 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0682 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0774 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0778 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0683 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0775 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0779 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0684 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0776 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0780 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0685 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0777 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0781 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0686 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0778 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0782 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0687 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0779 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0783 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0688 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0780 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0784 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0689 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0781 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0785 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0690 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0782 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0786 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0691 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0783 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0787 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0692 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0784 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0788 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0693 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0785 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0789 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0694 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0786 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0790 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0695 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0787 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0791 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0696 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0788 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0792 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0697 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0789 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0793 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0698 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0790 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0794 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0699 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0791 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0795 Tropicana and Jimmy's
447-0700 Can't Help Falling in Love/It's a Wonderful World		447-0792 Return to Sender/Where Do You Come From?	447-0796 Tropicana and Jimmy's

Presley Period Saw Majors Get Into Rock

BY PAUL KATZBERG

NEW YORK—There are some who believe that the development of rock music is a direct result of the development of the Presley period.

Presley's music was a blend of rock and roll, gospel, and country. It was a sound that was new and exciting. It was a sound that was different from anything that had come before.

Presley's music was a sound that was different from anything that had come before. It was a sound that was different from anything that had come before.

The answer is a sensitive mass medium is obvious. But the questions of "How?" and "How Much?" have taken time to answer.

Most stations have ranged themselves on the cautious side. Station WJAG, Norfolk, Neb., for example, rations the "moonstruck" adolescents only one Elvis Presley disk a day. Station KHEM, Big Springs, Tex., plays rock and roll disks only during one 30-minute period daily, and even then, each rock and roll disk must be insulated between two pop records.

2D JACKPOT FOR PRESLEY

NEW YORK—Elvis Presley, the phenomenon from Mississippi, is still setting precedents. This week, for the second time, the RCA Victor artist hit the No. 1 spot on six charts with his version of "Heartbreak Hotel."

This makes P.P. the first "double-triple crown" winner in the history of The Billboard's record charts. He topped the retail, jukebox and juke box lists in both the pop and country, and western categories.

In addition, Presley's LP held its position as the No. 1 album on The Billboard's Best Selling Pop Album chart.

Mourning Fans Boom Elvis' Sales

U.K.: Album Demand Reflects His Popularity U.S.: Run On Catalog Heats Up RCA Presses

NEW YORK—The RCA Victor artist hit the No. 1 spot on six charts with his version of "Heartbreak Hotel."

This makes P.P. the first "double-triple crown" winner in the history of The Billboard's record charts. He topped the retail, jukebox and juke box lists in both the pop and country, and western categories.

In addition, Presley's LP held its position as the No. 1 album on The Billboard's Best Selling Pop Album chart.

Paramount Inks Elvis Presley

HOLLYWOOD—Elvis Presley, in the music business about a year, was signed to a motion picture contract with Paramount Pictures here last week (6). Col. Tom Parker, Presley's personal manager, and representatives of the William Morris Agency handled the negotiations with Paramount.

Presley played to a total of 11,500 admissions in a two-day stand at the San Diego Arena April 4-5, grossing \$17,250 for the dates. He left here Friday (6) to conclude 12 additional one-nighters in the Mid-West for promoter A. V. Bamford.

RCA Rattle & Roll on

By MIKE GROSS

NEW YORK—There's letting up on Elvis Presley, singer, who has amassed an unprecedented sale of well over 200 million records for RCA domestically, is now being primed by the company for its biggest promotional effort yet in with his first TV special.

RCA's campaign will be tied in with special drives formulated by Colonel Tom Parker, Presley's mentor, and the Singer Company, sponsors of the TV special scheduled for airing on Tuesday (3) on NBC-TV. The multifaceted promotion is centered on a new LP, "Elvis," which features 20 songs, dialog

ELVIS

KING-SIZE MOVIE

Elvis Presley didn't do his best work in Hollywood. But his story is coming to the big screen in the form of Baz Luhrmann's *Elvis*, a musical biopic that explores his complicated relationship with manager Colonel Tom Parker, played by Tom Hanks. (Austin Butler plays Presley.) When it comes to music, though, Elvis never left the building: He remains one of the best-selling artists of all time, with 25 top 10 songs on the Billboard Hot 100, plus numerous hits that precede it. *Billboard* followed him from his rise at Sun Records, through his days in Las Vegas, until his 1977 death in Memphis.

HOUND DOG, CASH COW

Hailing a 21-year-old from Tupelo, Miss., as a "country cat" who was "powerfully inspired by authentic R&B," an article in

the April 14, 1956, *Billboard* noted that Presley's "Heartbreak Hotel" was moving "between 25,000 and 30,000 disks per day." The King's men didn't waste time cashing in: The Aug. 25 issue reported on a deal for "Presley-endorsed... rock and roll jewelry" under the headline "Thar's Gold in Them Side Burns."

ALL SHOOK UP

The King left some shaken and rattled. In the Nov. 10, 1956, *Billboard*, one radio station owner declared, "We do not consider rock and roll music." But "stations have had to concede that this is no 'fad' that will vanish with the wave of a wand. Therefore, it has been necessary to come to terms with it." Capitulating to the "Presley avalanche," one Nebraska station said it "rations the 'moonstruck' adolescents only one Elvis Presley disk a day."

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

When Presley's fortunes waned, his 1968 TV special came to the rescue. "The singer, who has amassed an unprecedented sale of well over 200 million records for RCA domestically, is now being primed by the company for its biggest promotional effort," the Nov. 30, 1968, *Billboard* reported. The blitz worked. "There has been a landslide on Presley product," an executive from RCA told *Billboard*. "The stores are ordering his new single and album like early Monkees singles."

VIVA LAS VEGAS

Presley's resurgence was tested by a four-week, 57-show Las Vegas residency. The Aug. 9, 1969, *Billboard* called his opening July 31 set "Elvis' toughest musical challenge since he rocked out of the South with long sideburns, rotating pelvis and a banged-up guitar." Reporting that

Presley's "eagle-eyed manager" pulled the deal together while "working over the roulette tables," *Billboard* described the performance as "polished, confident and talented," adding that "it was not the Elvis with the rough edges of the middle 1950s."

THE KING IS GONE BUT HE'S NOT FORGOTTEN

"The shock waves linger after Elvis Presley, who had the lead role in spawning a new form of American music, died of an apparent heart attack at Graceland," reported the Aug. 27, 1977, *Billboard*. An article in the same issue titled "Mourning Fans Boom Elvis' Sales" quoted an RCA spokesman saying "it would be inappropriate" to discuss marketing plans, but also noted that "RCA Records pressing plants here and abroad were reported working full-time to fulfill an extraordinary demand." —JOE LYNN

ILLUSTRATION BY BARBARA GIBSON 88 BILLBOARD.COM JUNE 25, 2022



20th
Anniversary

Congratulations Ashanti

Celebrating 20 years of your amazing career as an
artist, actor, and role model.

With love from Team Ashanti.

Tina Douglas
Momanger, LLC
Personal Manager

Stephan Dweck, Esq
Attorney

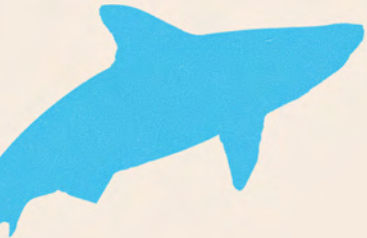
Jerome Leventhal
Business Manager

William Archer, Esq
Entertainment Attorney

Richard Murphy
Booking Agent



IMAGINE
DRAGONS
PRESENTS



DIRECTED BY DREW KIRSCH

INTERSCOPE RECORDS AND KIDINA KORNER PRESENTS "SHARKS" DAN REYNOLDS WAYNE SERMON BEN MCKEE DANIEL PLATZMAN
MUSIC BY IMAGINE DRAGONS COSTUME DESIGNER MERCEDES NATALIA EDITED BY SEBASTIAN ZOTOFF PRODUCTION DESIGNER JOSHUA BROKAW
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY MICHAEL GIOLAKIS COLORIST SEAN COLEMAN EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS TARA RAZAVI SANTINA GIULIANO MAC REYNOLDS
PRODUCED BY STEPHAN BIELECKI JARED SHELTON DIRECTED BY DREW KIRSCH

NEW ALBUM MERCURY - ACTS 1 & 2
JULY 1, 2022

