

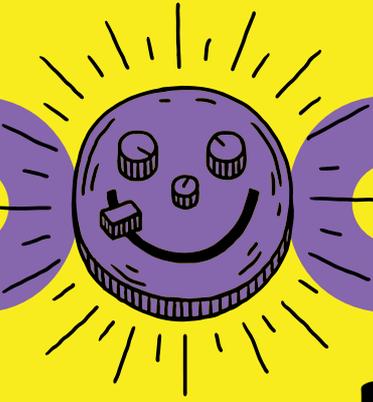
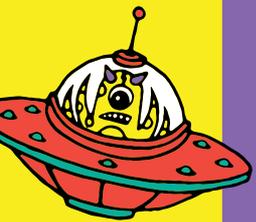
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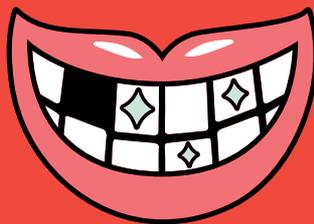


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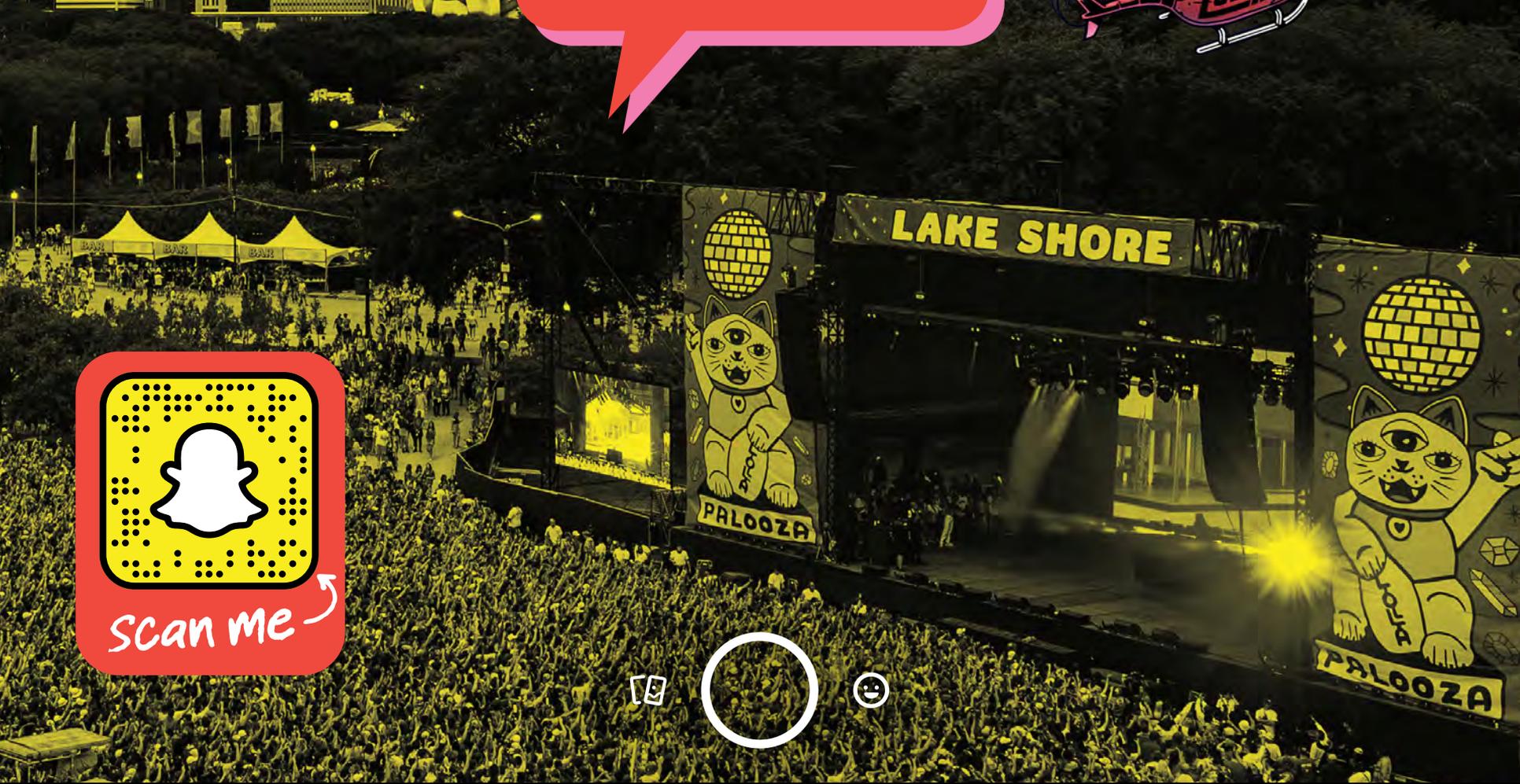
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SNAP HAS ENTERED THE CHAT



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FOR YOUR GRAMMY® CONSIDERATION
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THE ALBUM



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PUFFIN ON ZOOTIEZ **LOVE YOU BETTER**

“FUTURE IS
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-GQ

“THE HIGHS OF THE
ALBUM DEMONSTRATE WHY
PEOPLE WOULD PROPOSE FUTURE
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- COMPLEX

“HE [FUTURE]
HAS EMERGED AS ONE OF RAP’S
BIGGEST SUPERSTARS”

- PITCHFORK

“‘I NEVER LIKED YOU’ BECAME
THE EIGHTH CHART-TOPPING ALBUM
BY THE ATLANTA RAPPER WHO HAS
BEEN A MAINSTAY ON THE CHARTS
FOR A DECADE”

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“THE HALL OF FAME
TANDEM OF FUTURE AND DRAKE
CATCH ANOTHER WIN ON THE
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“Delightfully villainous...” **VULTURE** ‘Best Albums Of 2022’

“Immaculate...” **UPROXX** ‘Best Albums of 2022’

“Stellar... quintessential Pusha T.” **npr**

“Push’s lyrics pop with poetic detail and riotous cleverness.” *The New York Times*

“The verdict is clear: Pusha T has outdone himself once more.”  **HIGHNOBIETY**

“A tour de force of elite hip-hop at its finest”  ‘Best of 2022’

Def
Jam
recordings

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Photo Illustration by Mark Harris

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GloRilla photographed by Michelle Genevieve Gonzales on June 27 at DFLA Studio in Los Angeles.

TO OUR READERS

Billboard will publish its next issue on Aug. 6. For 24/7 music coverage, go to billboard.com.

ABBA VOYAGE



MAGGIE ROGERS SURRENDER



MARCUS MUMFORD (self-titled)



FOR YOUR GRAMMY® CONSIDERATION

Broken Hearts & Dirty Windows

Songs of John Prine, Vol. 2

Celebrating the Life of One the World's Greatest Songwriters

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Amanda Shires

Margo Price

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Jason Isbell

Iris Dement



Nathaniel Rateliff

Tyler Childers

Bonnie Raitt

John Paul White

Emmylou Harris

Sturgill Simpson

An homage to the late John Prine;
bringing Americana, Country, and Folk together for an array of
incredible interpretations of his best known material.



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"SWEET LITTLE GIRL"

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- Shooter Jennings

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"STEALING DARK FROM THE NIGHT SKY"

"A heart-on-your-sleeve slice of down-on-your-luck Americana...In the mold of fellow alt-country troubadours Jason Isbell, Tyler Childers, and Sturgill Simpson."



Hannah Karp

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Roque "Rocky" Venegas (Co-Owner) | Jimmy Humilde (CEO) | José JB Becerra (Co-Owner)

Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown, they say. Especially if said kingdom is something you've built desde abajo (from the bottom). But if you're Jimmy Humilde you're able to share in your kingdom's successes with fellow reyes (kings), José "JB" Becerra and Roque "Rocky" Venegas. You just tilt your collective crown, recruit your ablest knights (Nataael Cano, Junior H, Fuerza Regida, etc.) and storm the castle—in this case shake the music industry to its core with their revolutionary label, Rancho Humilde.

Created by Humilde and JB, with Rocky joining later, Rancho Humilde Entertainment began as a promotions company of underground parties for rising talent and turned into a full-on label in 2008. Today, the label boasts the biggest stars in Regional Mexican, or as Humilde refers to it as Mexican Music. As a whole, Rancho boasts an impressive over 33 billion streams across all platforms. A lot of its victories starts from the top—the brotherhood of Humilde, JB and Rocky.

"We work with our hearts more than anything," says Humilde, via Zoom sitting in the back of one of his countless collectible cars. "We don't know how successful we are because that's the last thing we worry about. All three of us wake up and go to work because we enjoy it. We're living a dream. We've never had a major argument to leave the company or threaten to do so. If we have a disagreement, we fix it at the moment."

JB further explains the synergy between the three business partners. "Although we all do everything. Jimmy pays attention to the music," says JB of a recent epiphany he wrote down at 3AM while he was struggling to sleep. "Rocky pays attention to the numbers. I pay attention to the artists."

That approach has positioned Rancho Humilde as one of the top indie record labels in the business. Yet, it's something deeper than just organization and cohesion. It's culture. Culture isn't a word, Humilde uses lightly. The Mexican American entrepreneur has used his culture as fuel

for his business and everything he touches. It's the melding of two important cultures—hip-hop and Mexican—that has disrupted the antiquated way música Mexicana was being produced before Rancho.

Simply think about the label's original slate of releases—Lo Mejor de Las Calles, Jimmy Humilde Presents Lo Mejor de Las Calles (Vol. 1 to Vol. 6). Google translate those titles and you'd be quick to mistake it for a classic G-Unit or Gangsta Grillz mixtape. And that's all Jimmy's doing.

As a child growing up in the multicultural enclave of Venice, California, Humilde was exposed to everyone and everything. While 'Chente's commanding voice permeated his home, the streets sounded like a war zone with Eazy-E and N.W.A. providing the soundtrack.

"I started reading [about] Russell Simmons, Master P, and Puff Daddy," says Humilde, who was an avid consumer of hip-hop journalism tomes *The Source*, *VIBE* and *XXL*. "[Hip-hop] entrepreneurs were about growing each other, bringing people from their neighborhoods out, sharing in it, making sure they looked good, and they were iced out, had a nice car, made sure their music videos looked good. Stuff like that made me look up to the hip-hop world."

Drawing inspiration from hip-hop's stay hungry, do it yourself ethos, in particular Diddy and his Bad Boy empire, Humilde applied a lot of the same principles to Rancho. He'd take the business acumen learned from one of Harlem's Finest and spread the wealth across his artist roster.



Team Rancho Humilde

Lalo Gonzalez



Dayana Fuentes



José Toribio



"We want to make sure that our artists knew about the business," Humilde says passionately. "We teach them the business. We teach them what publishing is; we teach them what a royalty is; what every royalty comes from. How to generate royalties. How to do the marketing side. We want to give other people the opportunity that us Mexican Americans and Latinos don't really get."

And Rancho Humilde artists are one of the leaders for millennial and Gen Z listenership. Case in point, 22-year-old Cano, Rancho's flagship artist, has charted on Billboard's multiple weeks, won three Premios Juvented, and made a fan (and collaborator ("Soy El Diablo (Remix)") of one of the world's behemoths in Bad Bunny. He's gone from a virtual unknown in 2019, "to an extremely wealthy person," says Humilde of Cano and his brand of corridos tumbados. "He is young, and he's made some right choices and some wrong ones, and he's paid the price for them. We've always taught him to learn from them. You're gonna lose, you're gonna fail but you're gonna learn."

As for Junior H, another of Rancho's marquee names, Humilde has never tried to change his sad boy flow. Rather he's embraced it.

"Junior has always been Junior," he says. "He's a helluva of artist and what you hear in the music is who he really is. Junior had the idea of singing slow songs because he's like a teddy bear. He's lovable. He uses his heart for everything. Whatever he says comes from the heart. Junior is very special."

And that's part of secret sauce for a Rancho Humilde artist—corazón. Its roster is as varied as its partners—Cano is a Mexican trap lord, Junior your hopeless romantic, Fuerza Regida are the party starters, Los Gemelos de Sinaloa are always up in smoke, OVI's the Cubano with the ill flow, and so on and so on.

"We only look for artists who do it from the heart," says Humilde. "That's the only thing we look at. We don't look at how they look like; a lot of the voices you hear on our label are not voices other labels will sign. I listen to the feeling behind their music."

It's the kind of tough, big brother love all three men offer their artists. Yet, it's also the way they manage their staff at Rancho—not as employees but as familia.

"Every single employee in our company started from being our assistant," he says. "We've never hired an employee to come start at a high position. Everybody has earned their way. For example, Dayana Fuentes started here as a part-time employee, and she's moved up to be our director of booking and touring in the company. Laura Muñoz is now the office manager. Tania Nuñez has been with us the longest. She knows how we are and how we started. Jose Toribio is our director of marketing and distribution. He's the guy that programs all our music. Miguel Sanchez, who's a longtime friend of mine, is Rancho Humilde's consultant. Cesar Ortiz is our director of audio engineering and Lalo Gonzalez is our creative director."

"We're very family orientated. If one eats at the table, we all eat. I've taught them that," Humilde adds. "If you go get lunch for yourself, please ask everybody if they want some. I don't want you eat next to someone who's hungry. We're not in competition with anyone within our team. We're here to work and take what's ours."

And certainly, with Humilde's drive, what's theirs is limitless. Beyond music, Rancho Humilde has upcoming deals for film, TV and potentially expanding into an in-house studio. All the present and future success wouldn't be possible without the strong bond these three men have for each other and the unbreakable influence their families instilled in them, respectively.

"We had our dads that always taught us the good, bad and ugly and told us if you go this route this is what you're gonna see, but if you go this way, this is what is gonna happen," says Humilde. "My dad was my mentor. He was my teacher. My everything. He's one of the main reasons I am who I am today. I know a lot of Latino kids growing up in the streets don't have their dad so that's why I try to do a lot of that in social media. I tell them don't give up, don't do this. All of us take care of our parents to the fullest. I think that was one of the first things we did; we all made sure our parents were good when we first started seeing success. We gotta make sure our families and parents are good."

Yes, great mentorship can push you in the right direction, but you also have to possess the ganas (will) to persevere and play your position. All three entrepreneurs have skills that don't overshadow each

other yet compliment their strengths.

"As a business partner he's more of a motivator," Rocky says of Humilde. "He's checking up on us making sure we're happy at what we're doing."

"I'm the guy that goes, 'Lets do this and do that.' Rocky is the one that will say. 'Don't do that, if you do, this will happen.' He's my Stop sign," says Humilde laughing.

It's takes strong, decisive leadership to build a kingdom. But you also need to know when to ask for help from your fellow royals.

"We've always believed that 10 brains are better than three," says Humilde. "Hey, I don't like the vocals on this guy; lets fix them. I don't like the way this kid dresses; lets see if we can find options; I don't like the way this kid is behaving; let's talk to him. JB is the dog whisperer; they relate to him a lot. Me they see me for the business; going out there and getting it; being in the studio with them. Rocky is more the operational guy. That's what keeps this company going."

"We always felt like Jimmy you're the face the company and he was the one that could get our point across," says JB of Humilde. "It's crazy because we might be somewhere and I'm not feeling the vibe. Jimmy is really good at changing the vibe. He'll turn it into his vibe. I always seen that in him. I would just go home but Jimmy, he'd turn it into a good place."

And that's exactly what Rancho Humilde as a label has done: changed the vibe of Regional Mexican and turned it into Mexican Music International, according to Humilde. Before Rancho, artists within the genre were stuck in traditional sounds with less experimentation. Today, your typical Regional Mexican artist topping the charts has more in common with Lil Uzi Vert or Lil Durk than Los Tigres del Norte and you can thank Rancho Humilde for the new wave. It's about change and propelling the next generation.

"A lot of people say the people behind us, it's not the people behind us, it's the people after us. That's who we're opening the way for," Humilde says. "I don't want to be the last successful Mexican American in the next 10-15 years. I want in the next 15 years for us to build way many more successful Mexican Americans and Latinos to make 100 times more money than me. That's what Rancho Humilde stands for; it's stands for opening the way. When you talk about Rancho Humilde, we want you to say, "they're opening the fucking door."

"He lives and breathes this culture and what he stands for," adds JB. "He's firm in what he believes in. I've seen it since day one. It was never about money or fame. It was about our culture being recognized."

Humilde is changing the narrative for young Mexican Americans. Similar to J Balvin changing the image of a narco-ridden Colombia to the current-day one of a colorful, masterful land of music and culture, Humilde has made it abundantly clear that mexicanos are much more than caricatures. They can become successful business owners just like him.

"One of the main things I tell people is to believe in yourself. If you can dream it, you can achieve it. It's the oldest news in the book. That's one of the things I tell a 15-year-old or a 50-year-old. It's never too late to do something. I didn't become successful until 18 years into my career. Believe in yourself."



Laura



Tania



Miguel Sánchez





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GEORGIA
ENTERTAINMENT
CAUCUS

charts

DATA FOR WEEK OF 7.30.2022



'Time' To Celebrate: Lizzo Lands Second Hot 100 No. 1

**BILLBOARD
HOT 100**

1

"About Damn Time"

Lizzo

LAST WEEK

2

PEAK POSITION

1

WEEKS ON CHART

14

LIZZO'S "ABOUT DAMN TIME" clocks in at No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100 dated July 30. The buoyant disco anthem becomes the Detroit native's second leader on the chart, after "Truth Hurts" dominated for seven weeks beginning in September 2019.

"Time" is from Lizzo's new album, *Special*, which concurrently debuts at Nos. 1 and 2 on the Top Album Sales chart and the Billboard 200, respectively.

The single tops the Hot 100 with 88.2 million radio airplay audience impressions (up 3%), 14.3 million streams (up 18%) and 14,000 downloads sold (up 29%, aided by discount-pricing in the iTunes Store) in the July 15-21 tracking week, according to Luminate.

The track adds a third week at No. 1 on the

Radio Songs chart and a second atop Digital Song Sales, while rebounding to its No. 8 best on Streaming Songs. It also holds the top slot on Hot R&B Songs for a 10th week.

Notably, "Time" interpolates "Hey! DJ," which World's Famous Supreme Team took to No. 15 on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart in 1984 and has now been reimaged in two Hot 100 No. 1s: Prior to "Time," Mariah Carey's "Honey" scored three weeks in the lead in September 1997.

Special, released July 15, opens with 69,000 equivalent album units, including 39,000 in album sales. With her fourth studio release, Lizzo lands new career bests in weekly consumption and sales for an album, as well as her first No. 1 on Top Album Sales and her highest rank on the Billboard 200.

—GARY TRUST AND KEITH CAULFIELD



SABAN Music Group

MERGUI

SUCKS TO KNOW YOU (FU)



BILLBOARD 200

17

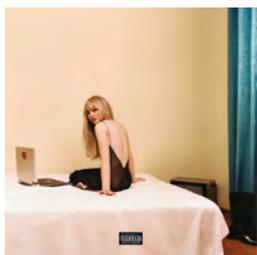


J-Hope

Jack in the Box

Of its first-week 26,000 equivalent album units earned (week ending July 21 in the United States, according to Luminate), album sales comprised 10,000 of that total – all from digital albums. Though high-profile K-pop releases are often powered by CD sales, *Jack* was surprisingly unavailable on CD.

23



Sabrina Carpenter

Emails I Can't Send

Carpenter's Island/Republic debut marks the singer-actress' highest-charting album yet, following four charting releases with Hollywood Records in 2015-19. It enters the chart with 18,000 units earned.

183



Jeff Beck & Johnny Depp

18

It's Beck's 20th entry on the Billboard 200 and Depp's first under his name – though he's also a member of the rock supergroup Hollywood Vampires, which has charted twice. *18* also debuts at No. 10 on Top Album Sales.

8

ITZY

Checkmate



ITZY's *Checkmate* marks the seventh K-pop album to debut in the top 10 on the Billboard 200 this year. At the same point in 2021, just two K-pop titles had accomplished the feat. More K-pop albums have debuted in the top 10 in 2022 than releases in country (six), hard rock (three) and Latin (three). All seven of the top 10-debuting K-pop albums this year have largely been powered by CD sales. *Checkmate*, for example, starts with 33,000 equivalent album units earned in the United States in the week ending July 21, according to Luminate, and 92% of that total is thanks to CD album sales. Like many K-pop releases, the CD version of *Checkmate* was issued in collectible deluxe packages (17 total, including exclusive editions for Target and Barnes & Noble), each with a standard set of items and randomized elements, such as photocards and posters.

—KEITH CAULFIELD

Billboard 200

2 WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Artist IMPRINT/DISTRIBUTING LABEL	Title	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
	1	1	#1 for 6 WEEKS Bad Bunny RIMAS	Un Verano Sin Ti	1	11
HOT SHOT DEBUT		2	Lizzo NICE LIFE/ATLANTIC/AG	Special	2	1
	2	4	Harry Styles ERSKINE/COLUMBIA	Harry's House	1	9
	4	5	Morgan Wallen BIG LOUD/REPUBLIC	Dangerous: The Double Album	1	80
	3	6	Drake OVO SOUND/REPUBLIC	Honestly, Nevermind	1	5
	7	7	Future FREEBANDZ/EPIC	I Never Liked You	1	12
NEW		7	Steve Lacy L-M/RCA	Gemini Rights	7	1
NEW		8	ITZY JYP/REPUBLIC	Checkmate	8	1
		9	Brent Faiyaz LOST KIDS	Wasteland	2	2
	6	8	Lil Durk ALAMO	7220	1	19
NEW		11	Various Artists CMG/INTERSCOPE/IGA	Gangsta Art	11	1
9	9	12	The Weeknd XO/REPUBLIC	The Highlights	2	75
14	12	13	Olivia Rodrigo Geffen/IGA	Sour	1	61
10	11	14	Post Malone MERCURY/REPUBLIC	Twelve Carat Toothache	2	7
15	13	15	Zach Bryan BELTING BRONCO/WARNER	American Heartbreak	5	9
8	10	16	Chris Brown CBE/RCA	Breezy	4	4
NEW		17	j-hope BIG HIT MUSIC/GEFFEN/IGA	Jack In The Box	17	1
11	15	18	Luke Combs RIVER HOUSE/COLUMBIA NASHVILLE/SMN	Growin' Up	2	4
13	16	19	Kendrick Lamar PGLANG/TOP DAWG/AFTERMATH/INTERSCOPE/IGA	Mr. Morale & The Big Steppers	1	10
18	17	20	Drake OVO SOUND/REPUBLIC	Certified Lover Boy	1	46

BILLBOARD 200: THE WEEK'S MOST POPULAR ALBUMS, BASED ON MULTIMETRIC CONSUMPTION, BLENDING TRADITIONAL ALBUM SALES, STREAMING AND TRACK SALES. SEE WWW.BILLBOARD.COM FOR COMPLETE RULES AND EXPLANATIONS. © 2022 BILLBOARD MEDIA LLC AND LUMINATE INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

LUMINATE

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OLIVIA RODRIGO:

driving home 2 u

a SOUR film

“TRIUMPHANT AND HONEST”

RollingStone

“EXHILARATING AND INTIMATE”

The New York Times





GLOBAL 200

1

"Bzrp Music Sessions, Vol. 52"
Bizarrap & Quevedo

"BZRP MUSIC SESSIONS, Vol. 52," by Argentine producer/recording artist Bizarrap (left) and Spanish artist Quevedo, jumps from No. 5 to No. 1 on the Billboard Global 200, with 88.3 million streams (up 38%) and 700 downloads sold (up 53%) worldwide in the July 15-21 tracking week, according to Luminate.

With the latest edition of his collaborative series, Bizarrap reaches the Global 200 summit for the first time, far surpassing his prior No. 20 high in March, when "Bzrp Music Sessions, Vol. 49," with Residente, debuted on the chart. Quevedo also makes his first visit to the top of the chart: His previous best was at No. 145, also in March, thanks to "Cayó La Noche," with El Ima, Cruz Cafuné, Bejo, La Pantera, Juseph and Abhir Hathi.

"Vol. 52" concurrently reaches No. 1 on the Billboard Global Excl. U.S. chart, up from No. 3, with 84.7 million streams (up 36%) and 600 downloads sold (up 46%) in territories outside the United States. (Of the song's global totals in the tracking week, 96% of its streams and 82% of its sales were from beyond the United States.)

Bizarrap, who boasts nearly 5 million followers on TikTok, and Quevedo are the first acts from Argentina and Spain, respectively, to lead both charts in their nearly two-year history.

"The first 'session' back in 2018 wasn't even planned," Bizarrap (real name: Gonzalo Conde) told *Billboard* last year. "All I wanted to do was record a local rapper, who goes by Kodigo, and upload that to YouTube, because I was a big fan of his and I wanted others to listen to him, too. I thought, 'Why not give these freestylers the production they deserve?' So, that's what I did."

—GARY TRUST

Global 200

2 WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title	Artist	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
-	5	1	#1 for 1 WEEK GG Bzrp Music Sessions, Vol. 52	Bizarrap & Quevedo	1	2
2	2	2	As It Was	Harry Styles	1	16
1	1	3	Running Up That Hill (A Deal With God)	Kate Bush	1	8
3	3	4	Me Porto Bonito	Bad Bunny & Chencho Corleone	2	11
4	4	5	Titi Me Pregunto	Bad Bunny	4	11
5	6	6	Glimpse Of Us	Joji	2	6
12	10	7	About Damn Time	Lizzo	6	14
9	8	8	Efecto	Bad Bunny	8	11
10	9	9	Heat Waves	Glass Animals	1	81
7	7	10	Ojitos Lindos	Bad Bunny & Bomba Estereo	4	11
11	11	11	Moscow Mule	Bad Bunny	2	11
17	15	12	I Ain't Worried	OneRepublic	12	7
8	12	13	Jimmy Cooks	Drake Featuring 21 Savage	3	5
13	14	14	Provenza	Karol G	6	13
6	13	15	Left And Right	Charlie Puth Featuring Jung Kook	5	4
-	62	16	Bad Habit	Steve Lacy	16	2
18	16	17	Cold Heart (PNAU Remix)	Elton John & Dua Lipa	3	49
21	22	18	Stay	The Kid LAROI & Justin Bieber	1	54
30	26	19	Late Night Talking	Harry Styles	2	9
24	24	20	Save Your Tears	The Weeknd & Ariana Grande	1	81

Laura Dale Play

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 CHARTS LEGEND ON BILLBOARD.COM FOR COMPLETE RULES AND EXPLANATIONS. © 2022 BILLBOARD MEDIA LLC AND LUMINATE INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

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STREAMING AND SALES DATA COMPILED BY

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"ROCK NEEDED A
'DEFIBRILLATOR'.
MACHINE GUN KELLY
CAME TO THE RESCUE"

- **billboard**

"MAINSTREAM SELLOUT IS DRIVEN
BY A RELATABLE SENSE OF ANGST
AND ITS OUTSIDER ANTHEMS
WILL CONTINUE TO SPEAK
TO MILLIONS"

"BONAFIDE ROCKSTAR"

- **NME**



MACHINE GUN KELLY

MAINSTREAM **SELLOUT**

BEST SELLING 2022 ROCK ALBUM





IT ALL ADDS UP

ED SHEERAN RETURNS TO NO. 1, LEADING A SLEW OF EUROPEAN STADIUM RUNS THAT DOMINATE JUNE'S BOXSCORE RECAP

IT HAS BEEN THREE LONG YEARS, but Ed Sheeran is back atop *Billboard's* monthly Top Tours chart with a \$60 million haul across 12 shows in June. According to figures reported to *Billboard* Boxscore, his Mathematics Tour grossed \$63.8 million and sold 750,000 tickets throughout the month.

After playing to a number of smaller-capacity crowds in late March and early April, Sheeran switched to stadiums across Ireland and the United Kingdom in late April and is up to an average of \$4.8 million and 57,000 tickets each night. That's up 8% and 10%, respectively, from the figures of his 2019 European leg of his record-breaking *Divide* tour.

Sheeran's run is one of seven European arena/stadium treks to rank in the top 10 tours in June. He's followed by Elton John, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Harry Styles, Def Leppard & Mötley Crüe, Queen + Adam Lambert and Billie Eilish. After an almost exclusively North American-led fall and spring, international venues have returned to the Boxscore charts, leading Top Boxscores and three of the month's five Top Venues charts.

—ERIC FRANKENBERG

Top Tours			
Artist	Gross	Total Attendance	No. Of Shows
1 Ed Sheeran	\$63,765,988	749,529	12
2 Elton John	\$47,168,303	340,619	12
3 Paul McCartney	\$45,938,596	199,584	5
4 Red Hot Chili Peppers	\$39,943,997	440,790	8
5 Harry Styles	\$39,556,533	419,328	8
6 Def Leppard & Mötley Crüe	\$39,279,531	300,174	8
7 Coldplay	\$36,170,781	331,827	6
8 Kenny Chesney	\$30,395,043	328,383	12
9 Queen + Adam Lambert	\$28,427,825	214,701	13
10 Billie Eilish	\$25,182,297	289,864	19

Top Boxscores

Artist(s) VENUE DATE	Gross TICKET PRICES	Total Attendance NO. OF SHOWS	Promoter(s)
1 Ed Sheeran WEMBLEY STADIUM, LONDON JUNE 24-25, 29-30	\$37,232,300 \$97.93/\$61.20	420,269 5	FKP Scorpio Konzertproduktionen, Kilimanjaro Live
2 Queen + Adam Lambert O2 ARENA, LONDON JUNE 4-5, 8-9, 14-15, 17-18, 20-21	\$22,744,678 \$1,102.44/\$56.18	174,485 10	Phil McIntyre Entertainments
3 Ed Sheeran ETIHAD STADIUM, MANCHESTER, ENGLAND JUNE 9-12	\$18,003,363 \$94.13/\$56.48	218,639 4	FKP Scorpio Konzertproduktionen, Kilimanjaro Live
4 Paul McCartney FENWAY PARK, BOSTON JUNE 7-8	\$15,305,355 \$391/\$46	71,380 2	Live Nation, Marshall Arts, MPL
5 Red Hot Chili Peppers LONDON STADIUM, LONDON JUNE 25-26	\$14,747,456 \$104.08	141,698 2	Live Nation
6 Harry Styles WEMBLEY STADIUM, LONDON JUNE 18-19	\$14,479,293 \$121.37/\$55.17	147,269 2	Live Nation, SJM Concerts
7 Coldplay METLIFE STADIUM, EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. JUNE 4-5	\$13,153,892 \$173.50/\$33.50	117,240 2	Live Nation
8 Paul McCartney METLIFE STADIUM, EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. JUNE 16	\$13,012,035 \$501/\$39.50	51,872 1	AEG Presents, Marshall Arts, MPL
9 Billie Eilish O2 ARENA, LONDON JUNE 10-12, 16, 25-26	\$9,992,581 \$118.24/\$42.27	106,803 6	Live Nation, SJM Concerts
10 Elton John LA DEFENSE ARENA, PARIS JUNE 11-12	\$9,846,099 \$264.27/\$63.42	62,220 2	AEG Presents, Gerard Drouot Productions

DAVE J. HOGAN/GETTY IMAGES

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COMPLEMENT THE STORY PERFECTLY.” - SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE / ALLEN JOHNSON

“...ALL THE SONGS ARE INFECTIOUSLY CATCHY.” - POLYGON / PETRANA RADULOVIC

Top Venues

15,001 OR MORE CAPACITY

	Venue LOCATION	Total Gross	Total Attendance	No. Of Shows
1	O2 Arena LONDON	\$41,682,854	371,519	23
2	Madison Square Garden NEW YORK	\$9,293,426	81,548	6
3	Kia Forum INGLEWOOD, CALIF.	\$6,028,642	57,618	6
4	Prudential Center NEWARK, N.J.	\$5,468,195	52,106	5
5	Ruoff Home Mortgage Music Center NOBLESVILLE, IND.	\$4,401,723	55,009	3
6	Jiffy Lube Live BRISTOW, VA.	\$4,307,144	41,288	2
7	FTX Arena MIAMI	\$4,256,509	30,620	3
8	Shoreline Amphitheatre MOUNTAIN VIEW, CALIF.	\$4,178,088	46,268	3
9	WiZink Center MADRID	\$3,800,784	79,705	6
10	PNC Music Pavilion CHARLOTTE, N.C.	\$3,767,537	36,848	2



Flea (left) and Anthony Kiedis of the Red Hot Chili Peppers



Kenny Chesney

10,001-15,000 CAPACITY

	Venue LOCATION	Total Gross	Total Attendance	No. Of Shows
1	Hallenstadion ZURICH	\$9,370,245	89,104	9
2	OVO Hydro GLASGOW	\$8,774,756	87,285	9
3	Forest Hills Stadium NEW YORK	\$7,521,373	91,147	8
4	Barclays Arena HAMBURG	\$6,164,058	96,419	13
5	OVO Arena Wembley LONDON	\$4,079,807	44,277	6
6	3Arena DUBLIN	\$3,605,597	41,003	4
7	First Direct Arena LEEDS, ENGLAND	\$3,519,343	38,467	6
8	Royal Hospital Kilmainham DUBLIN	\$3,400,675	30,000	2
9	Dickies Arena DALLAS	\$2,177,942	30,879	3
10	Van Andel Arena GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.	\$2,027,903	32,835	5



Chris Martin of Coldplay

5,001-10,000 CAPACITY

	Venue LOCATION	Total Gross	Total Attendance	No. Of Shows
1	Red Rocks Amphitheatre MORRISON, COLO.	\$11,411,272	197,743	24
2	Bank of New Hampshire Pavilion GILFORD, N.H.	\$3,946,236	38,776	5
3	Auditorio Nacional MEXICO CITY	\$3,909,087	83,566	9
4	Mohegan Sun Arena UNCASVILLE, CONN.	\$3,010,973	34,108	5
5	Dolby Live LAS VEGAS	\$2,996,786	24,649	5
6	The Anthem WASHINGTON, D.C.	\$2,765,519	51,393	14
7	Hearst Greek Theatre BERKELEY, CALIF.	\$2,577,603	35,011	5
8	Radio City Music Hall NEW YORK	\$2,232,395	22,152	4
9	Koka Booth Amphitheatre CARY, N.C.	\$1,546,788	17,956	4
10	Walmart Arkansas Music Pavilion ROGERS, ARK.	\$1,531,771	19,664	2

COLDPLAY: KEVIN MAZUR/GETTY IMAGES; RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS: ANDREW HARRIS/WIREIMAGE.COM; KENNY CHESNEY: TERRY O'NEILL/GETTY IMAGES

5,000 OR LESS CAPACITY

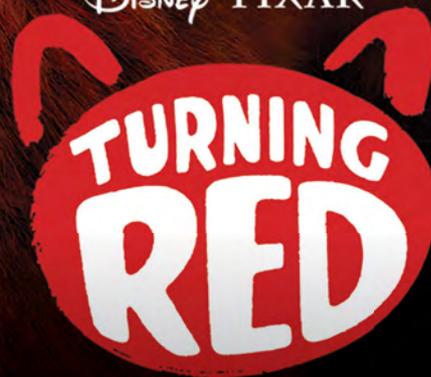
	Venue LOCATION	Total Gross	Total Attendance	No. Of Shows
1	Resorts World Theatre LAS VEGAS	\$5,307,631	35,977	11
2	Live At The Marquee CORK, IRELAND	\$2,907,549	56,233	13
3	Beacon Theatre NEW YORK	\$2,719,123	29,096	11
4	Santa Barbara Bowl SANTA BARBARA, CALIF.	\$2,481,255	23,683	6
5	Fox Theater OAKLAND, CALIF.	\$1,766,257	24,152	10
6	The Mountain Winery SARATOGA, CALIF.	\$1,701,061	18,965	11
7	Stage AE PITTSBURGH	\$1,428,746	32,980	13
8	Encore Theater at Wynn Hotel LAS VEGAS	\$1,381,154	8,228	6
9	Roadrunner BOSTON	\$1,331,068	29,929	11
10	Jacobs Pavilion CLEVELAND	\$1,191,860	21,739	9

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WASTELAND



Lost
YAS

Brent Faiyaz

market

MUSIC AND MONEY

PG. 32 DISTRIBUTION: STREAMERS ENTER THE MARKET

PG. 34 LIVE SLOWDOWN: TICKET SALES SOFTEN

PG. 36 BRAZILIAN CONCERT BOOKINGS UNDER INVESTIGATION



Miami Is The New Music Industry Mecca

Long the power city of Latin music, Miami has drawn executives fleeing L.A. and New York in search of a better quality of life (and lower taxes)

BY KATIE BAIN // ILLUSTRATION BY GLENN HARVEY

IT WAS THE SPRING OF 2021, and Cory Andersen wasn't sure what he was still doing in Los Angeles. The pandemic had brought the city's social scene to a standstill, and paying rent for his West Hollywood apartment didn't make sense when his talent management company, Prysm, went fully remote.

So in March 2021, Andersen packed his things and moved 2,300 miles across the country to Miami. He wasn't the only one.

When the pandemic untethered many music industry workers from their offices — and from the industry's hubs of New York and L.A. — Miami and South Florida's tri-county area (Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach) became a major destination. Since the spring of 2020, music executives from across genres have relocated to Miami and the tri-county area, finding, they unilaterally attest, a better

quality of life as fostered by Miami's cheaper housing market, increased access to nature, nearly 12 months of summer, greater opportunities for artists given that much of Florida didn't close during the pandemic, as well as an added arm's length from the industry grind.

"In South Florida, I did find that the script flipped a bit," says Andersen, who grew up in Connecticut and lived in L.A. for nine years. "It isn't as cutthroat; more people want to see you succeed, grow with you and hold their hand out to help you up, rather than cut you down on their way to the top."

Miami is, of course, a longtime Latin music stronghold. Sony Music, the first major label to have a Latin division, has roots in Miami dating to 1980, first as CBS Discos and then in 1991 — began to boom — as Sony Discos. Universal, BMG and Warner followed. Hip-hop and dance music also have long-standing presences in the city.

Warner Music Group CEO **Stephen Cooper** announced plans to step down in 2023, with WMG's board now looking for his successor.

UTA received a strategic investment from a fund operated by private equity firm EQT Partners for "investments in talent, innovation and international expansion."

As Latin music has gone global, the city has become an even more crucial epicenter of the genre — a hub that provides easy access to L.A., Latin America and Europe — while simultaneously exploding as a destination for complementary sectors like tech and finance. But in these lingering days of the pandemic, Miami has also become a boomtown for the music industry at large. The phenomenon is similar to what Nashville experienced in the early '90s after the massive success of Garth Brooks. And as in Nashville, for those who've relocated to Miami from big cities, this population influx has also brought familiar challenges — which show no signs of abating as new residents continue arriving en masse with sun hats in tow.

"We've got an expected growth rate of 12% over the next 10 years," says Ken H. Johnson, a Palm Beach County-based real estate economist and professor at Florida Atlantic University. "That's roughly an extra 700,000 people who will be living in the tri-county area 10 years from now. Never have we had this many people coming this fast."

For native New Yorker Justin Kleinfeld, founder of electronic music PR agency Rephlektor, moving his family to Parkland, Fla., from Jericho on New York's Long Island became an obvious choice during the pandemic, as Manhattanites fled to Long Island and Westchester County and surrounding property values rose. Working remotely even before the pandemic, Kleinfeld was rarely going into Manhattan,

was over the stress of the city and says Florida offered “the combination of the weather, the lack of state income tax and having my kids be able to be outside all the time, when in New York with COVID-19 it was miserable, because we were usually stuck inside with shit weather.”

Visiting Parkland in September 2020, Kleinfeld and his wife made a down payment on a new build, then spent the next year living in a nearby townhouse while it was finished, with supply chain issues stalling the process.

“We’re not building homes fast enough,” Johnson says. He notes that while the average home price in the Miami area is roughly \$100,000 more than it was a year ago (currently sitting at \$446,000), that’s still significantly cheaper than the price of an average home in L.A., which is \$948,000.

“New York is great as far as grinding. L.A. is great with health and wellness. In Miami, you get both.” —NELLY ORTIZ
WE THE BEST MUSIC GROUP

Nelly Ortiz, GM of DJ Khaled’s We the Best Music Group, relocated to Miami in the summer of 2020 after five years in New York and two in L.A. The move put her closer to family and the label’s Miami headquarters and provided the opportunity to upgrade to a bigger house.

“Personal space is very important to me, and owning your space is very important,” says Ortiz. “I’ve also had almost every partner, client and friend come to Florida, because it’s literally a destination state. Being here has given me the same flow, but also the blessing of more balance and more space.”

And this space isn’t simply for living, but expanding business. In October 2021, Austin Rosen, founder/CEO of Electric Feel Entertainment & Ventures (Post Malone, 24kGoldn, iann dior), purchased an 8,405-square-foot property in Miami’s Edgewater neighborhood to house the new Electric Feel headquarters, which will include studios and offices. Since moving to Miami during the pandemic, he says many peers have called to weigh relocation for themselves or their clients.

Miami’s financial benefits extend beyond cheap real estate. Florida does not have a state income tax for individuals, meaning those who move there automatically save cash. “I’ve been able to start a record label, purchase songs, work with producers and create events using capital that otherwise would have been tied up in taxes,” talent manager Andersen says of this perk.

Of course, another way Florida differs may be less comfortable for members of the historically progressive music industry. Florida Governor Ron DeSantis has stoked controversy by pushing for legislation that would allow Florida residents to openly carry firearms and signed the so-called “Don’t Say Gay” bill, which went into effect in early July and makes it illegal for public school teachers to instruct on sexual orientation or gender identity to children in kindergarten through third grade, and 51.2% of Florida voters went for Donald Trump in the 2020 presidential election, according to CNN.

But while large swaths of Florida are deep red, the

tri-county area is a longtime Democratic stronghold, with Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach all going for Joe Biden in 2020. Andersen notes that “whether it’s gun legislation or LGBTQ rights and protecting our trans population, [in Miami] I’ve been able to find a political community that has also wanted to initiate outreach to other communities and build a coalition.” Additionally, with so many people arriving to the Miami area from major cities, new residents are easily finding like-minded communities. “Ninety percent of the people we’ve met down here are either from New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania or Connecticut,” says Kleinfeld. “I’m watching the Rangers game, and everyone I’ve known down here for six months are Rangers fans.”

But like so many cities that were hit with a sudden population influx during the pandemic, everyday challenges are growing. Traffic in Miami now rivals that of L.A. and New York, and the cheaper cost of living that drew so many to the city is being mitigated by historic demand. (Johnson says rents in Miami are 31% higher than they were a year ago.)

“Nearly everything has increased in price, but I don’t think it’s something exclusive to Miami. It’s something that has happened worldwide,” says Rafa Madroñal, senior director of business development for Sony Music Latin, who moved to Miami from Spain in February 2020, just before the pandemic.

“Back in the day, a Cuban coffee colada used to be \$1; now it’s \$3,” adds WME’s Richard Lom, a Miami native who moved back to the city with his wife and children in the spring of 2020 after over a decade in New York.

As Miami’s economy evolves from tourism, hospitality and retirement to entertainment, tech and finance, wages among the labor force also aren’t high enough to support the number of workers needed for this infrastructure expansion. “You can’t get anything delivered to your home,” says economist Johnson, “because Amazon doesn’t have enough workers.”

Perhaps most crucially, many who made the move see Miami as a place to be when one is already established in the music business, and that it’s a harder city in which to cut one’s teeth. “A lot of the people who are down here moved to places like L.A. first,” says Kleinfeld, “and that’s where they actually made their footprint in the scene.”

“It’s incredibly difficult to bring a developing artist into South Florida,” Andersen adds, “especially with the rising cost of gas and transportation.” This is less true for Miami’s Latin music community, which has had a historically strong presence and today includes top executives, producers and artists from throughout Latin America. With the growth of Latin music over the last few years, the city has become an even more vital place to do business for anyone in this sector. “You have to be in Miami, because you have to be closer to the labels, closer to managers, closer to the right people in the industry,” says Colombian-born Juan Ballesteros, who manages Latin artists Greicy and Juan Bahia and now spends four months of the year in Miami and the rest in Europe and Latin America. “Miami is definitely the place to be for that.”

But as the old guard collides with the new and the city rides out its current state of flux, the executives who’ve recently made the move all remain satisfied with the sunny lifestyles they’ve found.

“New York is great as far as grinding. L.A. is great in the health, life, mental wellness balance,” says Ortiz. “In Miami and South Florida, you kind of get both.”

Adds Kleinfeld: “I haven’t been back to New York since we moved.” **B**

SoundCloud signed a deal with Warner Music Group to pay WMG’s artists under its Fan-Powered Royalties initiative.

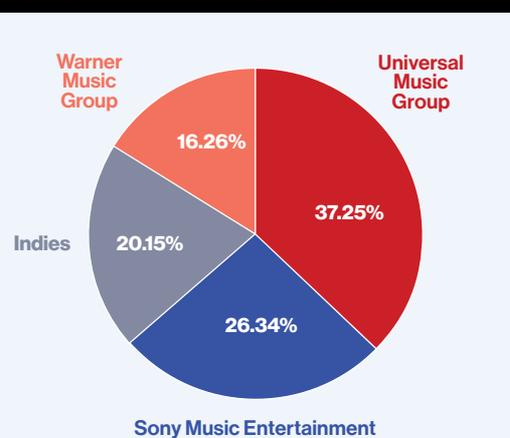
Twitter sued Tesla CEO Elon Musk, trying to force him to complete his \$44 billion takeover of the social media company.

BAD BUNNY HELPS SONY HOP UP

At the midyear point, Sony claims the second quarter’s three biggest albums

HALFWAY THROUGH THE YEAR, it’s still an *Encanto* world, but it wouldn’t be a summer without Bad Bunny, whose *Un Verano Sin Ti* is the biggest album released in 2022 to date and No. 2 overall. Bad Bunny helped lead the charge as Sony Music Entertainment grew its market share at the midpoint of 2022 with the three biggest albums of the second quarter: *Un Verano Sin Ti* (on the independent Rimas and distributed by Sony-owned The Orchard), Harry Styles’ *Harry’s House* (Columbia) and Future’s *I Never Liked You* (Epic). Sony’s market share is up 0.66% year over year to 26.34% at the midway point of 2022. Warner Music Group (up 0.08% to 16.26%) and the collective indies sector (up 0.56% to 20.15%) also grew thanks to significant gains in current market share, while Universal Music Group is down 1.29% at midyear 2022 compared with midyear 2021, almost entirely due to a 5.81% decline in current market share. But UMG remains the dominant force in the market, with its 37.25% share still a full 10 percentage points above Sony’s. And UMG was the only label group to increase its share of the catalog music market (albums older than 18 months), gaining 0.3% to 38.66% over midyear 2021. —DAN RYS

Overall Market Share



Rank	Label	Percentage
1	Atlantic Records	9.92%
2	Interscope Geffen A&M	9.36%
3	Republic Records	8.92%
4	Columbia Records	6.65%
5	Warner Records	4.63%
6	Capitol Music Group	4.31%
7	RCA Records	4.31%
8	Epic Records	2.24%
9	Disney Music Group	1.87%
10	Sony Music Nashville	1.72%

NOTE: Data from Dec. 31, 2021, through June 30, 2022, as calculated by Luminate.

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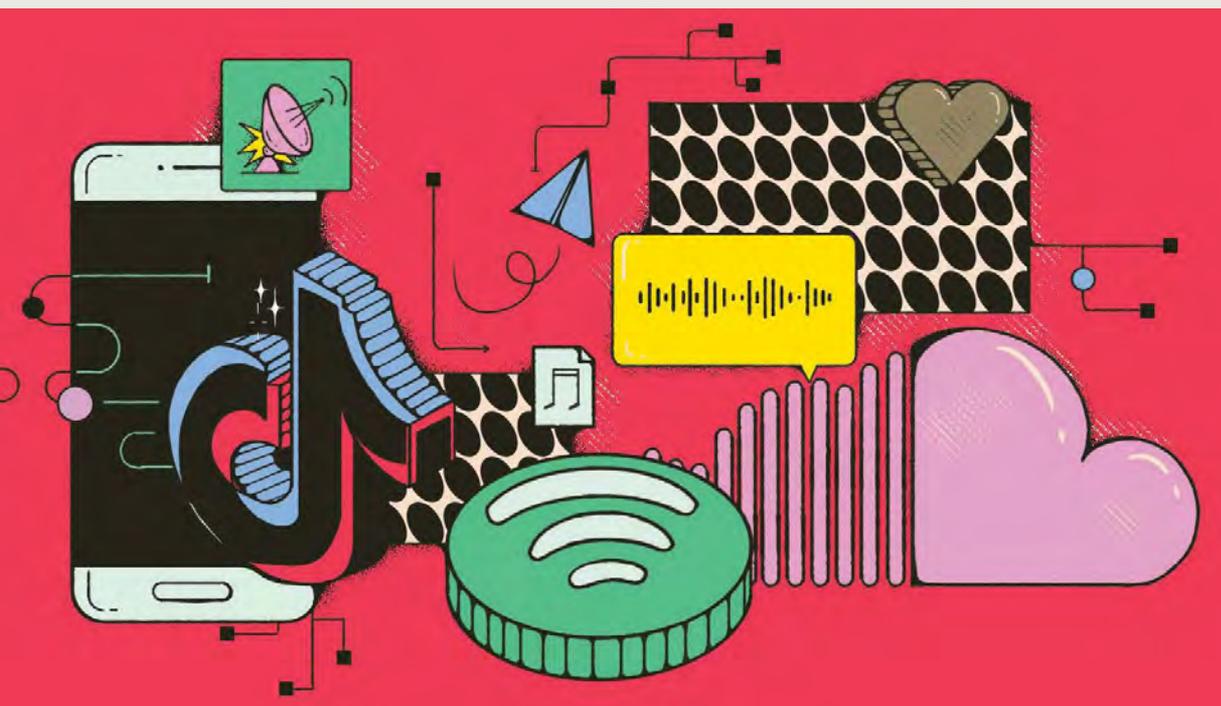
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BMI acquired Jean-Michel Jarre's entire music publishing catalog in the music company's biggest single deal ever in France.

Meek Mill split with Roc Nation Management, which had repped the rapper since 2012.



Can Streamers Make Distribution Work?

TikTok and SoundCloud have ventured into a crowded market. Here's why they — and a number of managers — think they can succeed

BY ELIAS LEIGHT

IN MARCH, TikTok launched SoundOn, a distribution and marketing service. TikTok's global head of music, Ole Obermann, said the aim was to ensure that "every aspiring musician in the world" wants to start their music career on TikTok.

Music distribution is one of the industry's recent gold rushes, and streaming platforms are among the companies that have taken an interest in the space. Spotify for Artists launched in September 2018 (though it was discontinued the following July). SoundCloud started offering premium users distribution in 2019. This year, Tencent expanded its Tencent Musician Platform into an initiative dubbed One-Click for All, which allows artists to distribute their music to more than 150 platforms.

Executives at longtime distributors, speaking on the condition of anonymity, view these new entrants with a shrug. "It's like, 'OK, sounds good,'" says one veteran. But managers — who recognize competition can bring more service for less commission — are more receptive. And they're especially curious about SoundOn's potential to provide their acts a competitive advantage on TikTok, since that platform has become a crucial proving ground for contemporary hits.

Veteran distributors' professed indifference to digital streaming platforms nosing into their business is understandable given Spotify's brief entry and speedy exit. As Jeff Price, one of the founders of TuneCore who left the company in 2012, points out, "There's already a market

solution — there's TuneCore, CD Baby, DistroKid; everyone and their mother has a distribution service. Why do these streaming companies need to do it?"

SoundCloud presents its move into distribution as a natural step for a platform that has long served as a springboard for young artists, particularly hip-hop acts. "If we're the beginning of that journey, of building a fan base, the next step on the journey is to do that off-platform, distribute to all the stores around the world and extrapolate the SoundCloud fan base outward," says SoundCloud president Elish Seton, who served as president of independent music and creator services for Warner Music Group before taking his current position. (Seton is not the only former Warner executive leading a recent push into distribution; TikTok's Obermann served as Warner's chief digital officer before leaving in 2019.) SoundCloud has cut deals with several acts, like Lil Pump and Tekno, who used to work with major labels.

When a streaming service with the reach and influence of SoundCloud or TikTok adds distribution and artist services, on paper, it has the potential to be "the best record label in the world," Price says. "Not only can it provide distribution, it can provide the marketing and promotion to drive consumers to listen to that artist in a way that a record label can't."

SoundCloud acquired Repost Network in 2019 to help bolster its distribution efforts, and TikTok's SoundOn is powered by TuneCore, although some

sources believe TikTok is seeking a new partner. These companies' reliance on already existing distribution platforms is a big reason "other distributors are very dismissive of them and think there's no way they have their shit together yet," says a manager familiar with SoundOn's offering.

To incentivize managers and artists, SoundOn's introductory distribution offers are generous: Artists keep 100% of revenue in year one; TikTok's cut rises to 10% in year two. (In contrast, artists say deals with Repost required them to give up 30% before the SoundCloud acquisition; now the company takes 20% from artists on its basic tier.) And some bigger independent acts like Russ and lovelytheband have negotiated the ability to distribute music to TikTok through SoundOn but use other distributors to push their music to other streaming services.

This flexibility is attractive — why not connect with SoundOn if you barely have to give anything up? But it also makes SoundOn's early impact on the larger ecosystem tough to gauge. Before TikTok moved into distribution, it was already helping break singles, with established labels or distributors swooping in to sign artists with viral hits. This dynamic is still playing out. Muni Long, for example, worked with SoundOn to help "Hrs & Hrs" take off on TikTok. But in March — a month after the track peaked at No. 16 on the Billboard Hot 100 — she signed with Def Jam, which took over her distribution.

SoundOn's skeptics don't believe TikTok will skew its algorithm in favor of a track, and sources say SoundOn's marketing strategy — which promises access to a team to help with best practices on the platform and sometimes provide banner ads and playlisting — is vague. Those who are more enthusiastic about SoundOn note that it is still in its early stages and may generate even more upside as it builds out its A&R and playlist-pitching capabilities. (Tim Reynolds, who previously held A&R positions with RCA, works closely with SoundOn, according to sources.)

Sources familiar with SoundOn's pitch say its deals are beginning to shift toward a more traditional model — funding artists and recouping expenses. Those sources also say the company is offering upwards of \$50,000 in combined advance and marketing budgets for new artists to work on small projects. (A representative for SoundOn declined to comment on questions about its deals.) The magnitude of these offers is roughly similar to the distribution deals being offered by SoundCloud, according to sources familiar with the company's offers.

Despite longtime distributors' skepticism of SoundOn, several managers still see it as an option worth exploring. After all, these managers say, if they sign a young artist to a major label or distributor, many of their strategy sessions will focus on achieving momentum on TikTok. In a world like that, "an opportunity to work directly with TikTok was a no-brainer," says Alex Barragan, who manages the SoundOn artist Ashley Mehta.

"We're talking with them about a real deal, one that favors the artist," Barragan adds. "If and when a label deal does make sense for us, we'll be able to have the leverage to get exactly what we want." **b**

For more on how distribution has evolved and a guide to the players — established and emerging — check out the *Distribution Revolution* at billboard.com/pro/deep-dive.

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Alexander "Bones" Sanchez * D'wayne "Jah Wayne" Bracchas

With Guest Artists:

Capleton * Beenie Man * Spice * Julian Marley * Gyptian
Charly Black * Jon Secada * Ky-Mani Marley * Junior Reid
Morgan Heritage * Jah Cure * Sizzla * Elephant Man Bay C
Jah Thunder * Turbulence Dynasty The King * Renee 6:30
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From left: Kid Cudi, Kraftwerk, Travis Scott and Machine Gun Kelly.



Summer Slowdown?

Soft sales lead to hard questions about the concert business

BY DAVE BROOKS

THE CONCERT INDUSTRY is officially in recovery mode, but not everyone is experiencing a sustained rebound.

While data from Live Nation shows that the record year predicted by CEO Michael Rapino has materialized, many independent promoters in the concert business are sharing anecdotal evidence that sales are beginning to soften and costs are continuing to rise.

Despite these persistent fears about oversaturation, high ticket prices and inflation pressure on consumers, pent-up demand from the pandemic has continued to propel consumer spending. As of March 31, more than 70 million tickets were sold for shows in 2022, which is up 36% compared with the same point in 2019, according to Live Nation.

Moreover, the number of shows on the books as of late April, when the last Live Nation earnings report was released, was up 44% compared with 2019. That means the number of fans going to shows is growing, just not as fast as the number of new shows being added to the calendar each month. While an 8% delta between supply and demand is unlikely to cause serious oversaturation issues during a period of rapid growth, that difference likely widens when factoring in concerts happening outside of

the Live Nation ecosystem.

James “Disco Donnie” Estopinal Jr., who promotes raves and EDM shows mostly in Florida and Texas, says he believes the number of new events, especially in the dance category, has far outstripped demand, leading to softer sales for everyone in that market. While 2021 brought record sales, “that didn’t carry over into 2022,” he says. “Fans ran out of money in March and just stopped buying tickets for the year.” Now, he adds, “nothing is doing well.”

Oversaturation has also created problems in California and Las Vegas, where an explosion of new festivals has diluted attendance for some organizers — or worse. Goldenvoice’s Day N Vegas, which had previously attracted a crowd of 80,000, was canceled due to weak ticket sales just weeks after being announced. (The festival was to mark the first live appearance for Travis Scott following the November 2021 Astroworld tragedy in Houston, which left 10 dead.) Other festival promoters have pushed through the weak demand but say the bump they enjoyed after the pandemic has been replaced by a broader slowdown in ticket sales due to oversaturation, high ticket prices and budget-conscious consumers. Factor in the effect of inflation on the

price of fuel and goods, an equipment shortage and hiring difficulties, and many independents report that profitability is unlikely in 2022.

Other festivals, such as Lollapalooza, Austin City Limits and Baja Beach, are selling tickets but not selling out. Rolling Loud’s mainstay Miami festival, which typically sells out in one day and is the only festival to feature Ye (aka Kanye West), still had tickets available days before its start.

In May, LiveOne announced it was postponing its Spring Awakening festival in Chicago after its sister event there, Autumn Equinox, lost \$3 million in 2021. On July 22, Insomniac announced it was canceling plans to expand its Project Glow series into Philadelphia.

The unease extends beyond festivals. While Machine Gun Kelly’s arena tour with Willow and Avril Lavigne has done fairly well, other acts attempting to make that leap from smaller venues, such as Kid Cudi, Leon Bridges and Lil Durk, have struggled to sell tickets.

If sellouts become less common in a saturated post-pandemic world, independents are much more likely to feel the economic pain than Live Nation or AEG. In fact, Live Nation’s latest earnings release doesn’t include any language about how many shows

Swedish production music label **Epidemic Sound** filed a \$142 million lawsuit claiming Facebook enabled “exponential” infringement of its music.

Spotify announced plans to acquire the popular music recognition trivia game **Heardle**.

and festivals have sold all of their tickets. Growth for Live Nation has come from increased consumer spending through increases in ticket prices — while a small percentage of Platinum tickets on Bruce Springsteen’s 2023 tour made headlines, the real boost came from a 33% average increase in ticket prices that pushed average show grosses to \$3.7 million — and on-site spending, as well as sponsorship dollars and the fees it generates from ticket sales.

Unlike many festival promoters whose main source of income is ticket sales, Live Nation is diversified enough to generate significant income from its events whether or not they sell out, creating more incentive to stage a higher volume of events to better pinpoint demand.

The same goes for Day N Vegas’ parent company, AEG. A source there confirms that parts of the company’s various touring and concert divisions — where profit-and-loss statements rely mostly on ticket sales outpacing costs — could be down this year. But overall, AEG, which operates a complex ticketing business, facility management team and sponsorship division (that closed out 2021 with a \$700 million naming rights deal to rechristen Los Angeles’ Staples Center as Crypto.com Arena), is on track to be profitable in 2022.

That could leave independent promoters in a precarious position, but don’t rule the sellout dead yet. Earlier in July, the fourth annual Zedd in the Park mini-festival at L.A.’s State Historic Park hit its expanded capacity of 19,000, resulting in people who had expected to buy tickets at the box office — some of them decked out in LED-enhanced outfits — being turned away.

“This was the first time we attempted 19,000,” says Zedd’s agent, Lee Anderson, of Wasserman Music. It worked because Zedd was willing to stage a smaller version of his show, essentially at cost, and build fan momentum and enthusiasm organically until it hit critical mass. “We only stage this concept here in L.A., because it’s right for this market,” he adds. In Las Vegas, for example, Zedd goes big, performing at two nightclubs inside the brand-new Resorts World casino.

The success of this year’s Zedd in the Park date was “a slow build,” Anderson says. “It’s not just throwing something on sale and maxing it out.”

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British recorded-music exports grew 13.7% to a record high of 590.8 million pounds (\$708 million) in 2021, according to U.K. labels trade organization **BPI**.

Canada extended copyright protection for musical works by 20 years to life plus 70 years — as set out in the terms of a 2018 North American trade agreement.



An aerial view of the 2022 BBQ Mix Festival.

BRAZIL'S BIGGEST GENRE MIRED IN CONTROVERSY

As an election approaches, a national scandal erupts about overpaying artists who dominate Brazil's music charts

BY BEATRIZ MIRANDA AND ALEXEI BARRIONUEVO

GOIÂNIA, BRAZIL — For his first show in Brazil since early 2020, promoter-manager Marcos “Marquinhos” Araújo went big. Fifty-six thousand people attended the second BBQ Mix festival on July 3 to hear 10 acts, most performing *sertanejo* — the 10-string-guitar-driven country music of Brazil that remains the nation’s most popular genre — and to eat beef. There was plenty of the latter, 52,000 servings, which more than doubled the Guinness World Record for the most barbecued beef served in eight hours that was set at the first BBQ Mix two years ago.

Araújo is one of Brazil’s most influential music entrepreneurs, as well as one of its most inventive. He founded the Villa Mix festival over a decade ago, expanding it from a single event to 27 cities at its peak. He created BBQ Mix as a way to refresh the genre he helped popularize. “I realized the *sertanejo* market was becoming too much of the same thing,” Araújo says. “The idea of gathering meat, beer and music sounded like something new.”

But both Araújo and *sertanejo* itself have experienced trouble lately. Araújo’s

top artists have defected during the last two-and-a-half years — including *sertanejo* acts Gustavo Lima and Jorge & Mateus, as well as international dance-music sensation ALOK — in part due to management contracts where Araújo typically takes half of his artists’ income. (Such contracts, particularly for new or developing artists, are not unheard of in Brazil; some sources criticize Araújo, accusing him of greed and strong-arm tactics.) And *sertanejo* has been caught up in a national controversy over whether local governments were paying over-inflated prices — using public funds — to stage country music shows. Local politicians can use such shows to boost their popularity, and the sky-high artist fees may generate kickbacks.

Scrutiny over publicly funded concerts has come in a highly charged political atmosphere ahead of elections in October. Since May, state prosecutors across Brazil have investigated, temporarily suspended or canceled at least 81 publicly funded *sertanejo* shows for potential contract irregularities involving high artist fees despite city officials failing to provide basic

services like sewer and public health. The probes have mentioned some of the genre’s biggest stars, including Lima, a Sony Music artist, and Wesley Safadão, who have been paid up to 1.2 million reais (\$218,000) by local governments, according to public documents.

Bruno — of the Latin Grammy Award-winning *sertanejo* duo Bruno & Marrone — says he feels the investigations unfairly target the genre. “Artists from other genres also do publicly funded shows,” he says. “This is very hypocritical.” Neto e Jr, another duo that played BBQ Mix, fear “dishonest people” may affect *sertanejo*’s image. “The artist can’t ask where the money comes from every time,” says Jr. “If he does that with every contractor, he will end up playing nowhere.”

Sertanejo’s wealthy stars have become targets of a populist backlash because the genre dominates pop music in Brazil, the 11th-biggest music market, with total revenue in 2021 of 2.1 billion reais (\$382 million), according to label trade organization Pró-Música Brasil. Over one-third of the songs on Pró-Música’s top 50 streaming chart in June were *sertanejo* tracks,

including three of the top 10. In 2021, Sony Music paid \$255 million for Brazil’s biggest indie label, Som Livre, which controls the recorded-music catalogs of several of *sertanejo*’s biggest stars.

Originally seen as a kind of cowboy music of Brazil’s agricultural heartland, *sertanejo* rose to popularity in the 1990s, spreading from the country’s interior to cosmopolitan coastal cities like Rio de Janeiro. *Sertanejo* is an “amalgamation of many genres” that incorporates everything from rock to funk to *forró*, says Gustavo Alonso, who wrote a book about the genre.

It’s hard to imagine a town where *sertanejo* is more adored than Goiânia, which is often called “Brazil’s Nashville.” In March, the city council designated it the “capital of *sertanejo*” — a nod to its growing importance as a cultural and production hub for artists — and an estimated 100,000 people attended a wake there in November for Marília Mendonça, the genre’s biggest female artist, after she died in a plane accident.

Araújo grew up around Goiânia, working as a local radio and house music DJ before discovering talent like Lima and Jorge & Mateus. He forged a strong partnership with WME agent Rob Markus, who believes *sertanejo* has crossover potential. “When we showed some of the *sertanejo* music to people in Nashville, there was definitely some interest,” Markus told *Billboard* in 2021. “It is going to take some clever strategizing because, at the end of the day, these are big pop stars [in Brazil].” Part of the challenge is convincing Brazilian artists to learn English or Spanish — as Anitta did — and to focus on regions outside the lucrative Brazilian market, where they can do 250 shows a year.

Araújo believes he can create a crossover act with management client Kevin Brauer, a Brazilian American DJ-producer who performs as Sevenn. Brauer — who grew up in Rio de Janeiro speaking English — also took the stage at BBQ Mix, and Araújo has encouraged him to form a *sertanejo* band. “If he understands the American audience and starts singing *sertanejo* music in English, then that will be the breakthrough,” Araújo says.

For now, the national debate over publicly funded *sertanejo* shows has become a discussion topic in Brazil’s congress and on the campaign trail. On July 13, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, the left-wing former president who is running to unseat President Jair Bolsonaro, weighed in on the controversy. “Mayors spend a fortune on artists who charge 1 million reais [\$182,000] and aren’t able to spend 30 reais [\$5.50] on a local theater group with local music,” Lula said at an event, “because this is a society formed by an incomprehensible ruling elite.” **b**

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Aaron "Dash" Sherrod was hired as Geffen Records' president of urban A&R, joining from RCA Records.

Alaysia Sierra joined Spotify as head of R&B after five years at Apple Music.

Bernstein photographed July 9 in Oak Park, Calif.



From The Desk Of... Keith Bernstein

FOUNDER, CRUNCH DIGITAL

BY KRISTIN ROBINSON

PHOTOGRAPHED BY DAMON CASAREZ

THOUGH HE HAD been on the front lines of creating a fairer system for digital music licensing since the CD era, in 2000 Keith Bernstein took a job at Napster. "I was not a fan of what they were doing," he says. "I thought they should

get sued until they were out of business." But the file-trading service wanted to rework itself as a properly licensed music provider and heard of a program Bernstein had developed to track digital sales. It was software he had created because he understood early on, while working for

A&M and then Universal Music Group, the potential of digital to cannibalize the music business. So Bernstein spent two years flying from Los Angeles to Silicon Valley every day, determined to build a new Napster infrastructure that would ensure everyone got paid fairly.

Two decades later, he's still at it. He has run the Royalty Review Council — which he founded in 1999 and which provides auditing — since 2002, and in 2008, he spun off Crunch Digital, a consulting group that helps an ever-growing list of companies from new apps to gaming, fitness and travel businesses configure the licenses they need to use music legally. The explosion of the at-home fitness industry during the COVID-19 pandemic — as well as recent lawsuits filed

by the National Music Publishers' Association (NMPA) against Roblox, Peloton and the video app Vinkle for improperly using music on their platforms — show how Crunch Digital's services are needed more than ever in today's fast-evolving music industry.

Now Bernstein — whose clients include major airlines, app games like SongPop by Fresh Planet and at-home fitness startups like Liteboxer and Hydrow — wants to take Crunch Digital a step further with a search engine called Tempo that will allow companies to input a playlist of songs they want to use and discover instantly the labels and publishers that need to approve the licenses. The idea is to make the process quick and easy, including the ability to cross-reference the rights a company

currently holds against what's missing, as well as functionality that will be particularly helpful to the fitness industry: the ability to search by genre or BPM.

Bernstein says he's driven to keep fighting for solutions by his conviction that "music has value, and music is undervalued," he says. "I know that music is core to the success of these digital platforms, and if anyone argues that they're not, then I challenge them to just take out the music and see how well [the company] does."

You had a peek inside one of the most disruptive technology companies in music history. What was company culture like at Napster?

I was 34 years old and felt like I was a grandpa.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION:

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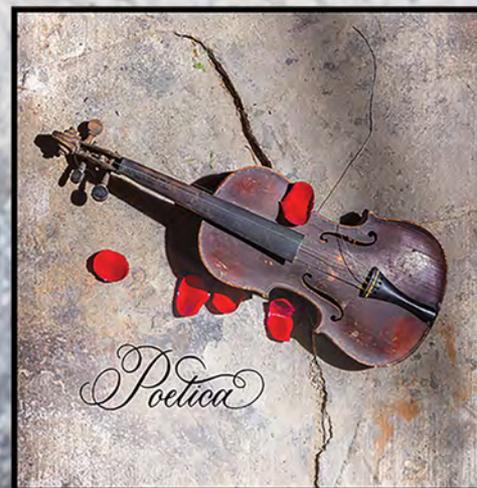
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Molly Neuman was named chief marketing officer of Downtown Music Holdings.

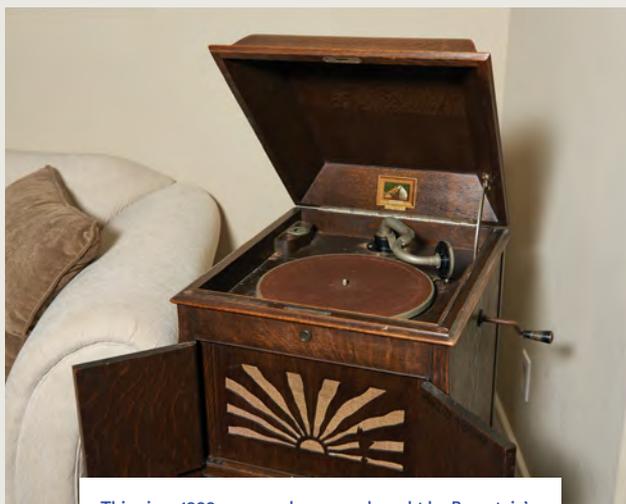
Dionnee Harper was appointed executive vp of marketing and artist development at Warner Records.



Bernstein bought this Gibson Les Paul for his 50th birthday. "I've never played and decided I wanted to learn," he remembers. "I am a work in progress."



A 2019 update on a '70s Honda minibike Bernstein used to have when he was a kid. "I had to have one," he says. "I ride on Sundays, and it's a nice break from emails and calls."



This circa 1920s gramophone was bought by Bernstein's father at auction years ago. "No matter the technology for playing music, it comes down to adapting to new technology," he says. "Plus, it's a cool thing."

What was the tipping point when you realized you needed to leave Napster?

While building the operating system, I was hunting for publisher information for databases of information that we could utilize and acquire for identification purposes and understanding who uses what and who to pay. But I couldn't find it. There were companies logging CD booklet information, but nobody had publishing information. When I began to see what was going to happen, I was like, "Forget Napster. When this thing implodes and streaming comes in — which was already being talked about — I don't know how anybody is going to be able to know who owns what." There was nothing out there able to help pay publishers at that time.

I wanted to start quietly aggregating publisher data and my own database. I wanted to create the future audit procedures for digital download companies and streaming services, because a CPA generalist wasn't going to cut it anymore. I relaunched the company in 2002, and by 2005 we were doing audits for all the major labels, all the major publishers, SoundExchange — nearly everybody. We conducted

audits of every digital service where there were audit rights, and because we were finding tons of money that wasn't being paid, our clients just wanted to audit more.

Why did you create Crunch Digital when you were already thriving with the Royalty Review Council?

It became apparent there were multichannel networks, gaming companies, apps, fitness companies, even the travel industry — all of whom needed the same type of reporting, licensing and clearance help as the traditional labels and publishers did. Probably even more so because they didn't have a lot of music people. They just had a good idea that was well-funded and used music.

When we first started to talk to these companies about assisting them, I was talking to a lot of people with hoodies on — we found the name "Royalty Review Council" wasn't very hip or cool. So we spun out Crunch Digital.

Was the difficulty of licensing music shocking to these new companies?

I especially have seen that in the last couple of years. In the early days, more companies seemed to be more like, "Help me. I want to make sure everything is totally available before I use it." But it shifted when people started racing toward the market and felt the need to be faster than their competitors and to host the most content. You saw people cutting corners and

relying on things like the [Digital Millennium Copyright Act] or a compulsory license or saying, "I don't even need the licensing."

How does the influx of catalog acquisitions and ownership changes play into the difficulties of licensing music?

If the song a company used a lot is now owned by somebody else that they don't have a license with, that could be trouble. It's silly for these companies to think that they're going to take the data in from the major labels and major publishers and build their own internal database to track this. Our work honestly doesn't end, because our clients are constantly wanting to know whether they can or cannot use something as rights holders change.

Are there companies that actively try to get around having to pay for music?

There are definitely some lawyers out there that spend a lot of time trying to find the workaround so that their client doesn't have to go to the labels or publishers or get a license outside of a performance license. Lawyers will tell them it is too costly and takes too long.

The NMPA has made it a mission to go after these infringing digital companies and apps — like Roblox and Twitch — in big lawsuits and settlements. Do you work with the NMPA on these initiatives at all?

We have always had a nice relationship with the NMPA. What they do is critical to the marketplace. We do talk every now and then when we believe there might be something rogue going on and they might look into it, but there are just so many companies out there that are doing the wrong thing. A lot of brands feel like they can fly under the radar. But when you have a new \$100 million investment that you're advertising around, the labels and publishers are going to take notice.

Are we living in the Wild West for music licensing?

Technology moves so fast that there's always something being developed, or a new use, or

another form of distribution that you can't get your head around fast enough. You have to look at labels and publishers and cut them some slack. They're getting inundated with license requests, and there's just so many things they could look at. The tools have not been in place for companies licensing music to be able to assess and monitor what they can and cannot do under their licenses. That's why we focused on building the part that's missing in the marketplace. We want to get to a place where there's no excuse: "Oh, I didn't know that I couldn't use that. I didn't know who to talk to."

Is that what Tempo is trying to solve?

Yes. We were already doing research requests for clients that would send us lists of 10,000, 50,000, even a million tracks and say, "Can you help me to identify who I need to get licenses from?" Maybe they already had deals in place with a few companies and wanted to make sure that's all they needed. We would go through these lists and give the clients what we call "the road map." But when COVID-19 hit it got to be an even bigger issue, especially with the fitness brands. How is it possible for a large company to control all of their fitness instructors? You can't. You can't tell a fitness instructor to only use Universal Music Group or Sony Music. That doesn't mean anything to them, and how are they going to look it up? We thought we needed to build an online platform that would empower these businesses to learn about this more.

How did you aggregate all that data for Tempo?

Painfully. We already had been aggregating it for the purposes of our services for years.

What are some opportunities music-rights owners should be taking advantage of to grow revenue?

They should audit more. I don't think enough audits take place. And I'm not saying that because I want to do their audits! I'm just saying that the more you keep people on their toes, the more likely they are to get it right. **b**

FOR YOUR LATIN GRAMMY
CONSIDERATION

BEST NEW
ARTIST
2020



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PARA SU CONSIDERACIÓN
LATIN RECORDING ACADEMY

A portrait of Marcos Witt, a man with glasses and a dark turtleneck, standing with his hands clasped. The background is a solid, warm brown color.

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From left: Jack Antonoff, Taylor Swift, Dan Nigro and Lin-Manuel Miranda.

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eligibility



GRAMMYS FIRSTLOOK

THE WAITING GAME

The songwriter of the year honor has been a long time coming for the Grammy Awards. But whom will it actually end up honoring?

BY ANDREW UNTERBERGER

ILLUSTRATION BY MICHELLE ROHN

V **ETERAN POP** singer-songwriter Autumn Rowe recalls how she “smiled the entire day” when the Recording Academy announced the addition of a songwriter of the year, non-classical award in June. While producers have been honored with their own producer of the year category dating back to 1975, recognition for songwriters for their full year’s body of work had yet to be seen in the Grammys’ 65-year history — and it’s happening at a crucial time in the music industry.

“Songwriters are at a critical point where we are working harder than ever and being valued the least when it comes to monetization,” says Rowe, an album of the year honoree at the 2022 Grammys thanks to her contributions to Jon Batiste’s winning *We Are*. “Although this award would’ve been appreciated sooner, it’s also somewhat perfect timing — we need everyone to rally behind and beside us advocating for the value we bring.”

The urgency of the category’s introduction is one understood by both Evan Bogart — chair of the academy’s new Songwriters & Composers Wing who helped lead the charge in drafting the proposal for the new award and ensuring it passed — and by academy CEO Harvey Mason Jr., who also was a successful songwriter earlier in his career. “It’s something that has been talked about for as long as I can remember at the academy — ‘acknowledging the craft of songwriting’ — [which is] obviously part of the bedrock of our whole music ecosystem,” says Mason.

The academy has long acknowledged songwriters through the trophies for song-

awarded categories, with best rock song, best rap song and, of course, the all-genre song of the year going to the composers. In 2018, songwriters for albums nominated for album of the year were also added as honorees if they contributed to at least 33% of the project’s playing time, with that being expanded at the 2022 ceremony to include every credited songwriter of new material on an album.

So far, Mason and Bogart (who is also a Grammy-winning songwriter and CEO of independent publisher Seeker Music) say the songwriting community has greeted the award with overwhelming excitement and positivity. But it’s possible some songwriters whose roles are not focused entirely (or even primarily) on their writing might have mixed emotions when they read the award’s fine print.

To qualify, writers “must have written a minimum of five songs in which they are credited ‘solely’ as a songwriter or co-writer” — further explaining that “songs in which the songwriter was also credited as a primary or featured artist, producer or any other supporting role do not qualify to achieve a minimum song threshold for consideration.” (If writers do have enough compositions to meet the threshold, they can submit an additional four songs for consideration in which they were credited as a producer or performer.)

In other words, songwriters who perform the majority of their compositions — like Taylor Swift, Beyoncé and Drake — would not be eligible for the award, unless they also had a minimum of five outside contributions for other performers. Similarly, writers who often produce

“Songwriters are at a critical point where we are working harder than ever and being valued the least.”

— AUTUMN ROWE

on most of their compositions — like Jack Antonoff, Dan Nigro or Lin-Manuel Miranda — may also be ineligible, unless they had five songs they wrote for but did not produce on.

Bogart explains that the award was designed in this way to ensure that the honor remained focused on songwriting and prevented big hybrid names from otherwise dominating the category. “We were able to strike the right balance and tone between people who are professional songwriters, who wake up every day and think about crafting songs for artists, and not just make this another award for a producer or an artist to win,” he says. “We wanted to really honor the people that the songwriting community would largely look at as songwriters first.”

However, some writers aren’t convinced this is a realistic view of their role in the current industry. “That feels like a very old-fashioned way of thinking,” says country songwriter-producer Shane McAnally, one of Nashville’s preeminent hitmakers for the past decade-plus. “That in order to be recognized as a true songwriter, you should be sitting with a pen and paper and a single instrument somewhere ‘writing’ a

song without technology or without influence with the artist. But the thing is, songs don’t get recorded that way anymore.”

The award might also present a challenge for Grammy viewers, who might not be immediately familiar with the award’s qualifications and end up incredulous over their favorite artist — or that artist’s most regular collaborators — being excluded. “The nominees will come out and some glaring omission will be there and people will go, ‘Why isn’t Brandi Carlile nominated?’ ” says McAnally. Mason says the academy is aware of these concerns: “That’s something we’ll be working on with our comms team and awards team,” he says of ensuring the award has the right “messaging” for the average viewer.

Moving forward, the academy will be flexible about the qualifications. “We want to service people the way they feel is right, not just the way we feel is right — and we’re a membership organization,” Mason says. “If people feel like, ‘This needs to be tweaked,’ we’ll keep looking at it.”

Adds Rowe: “I have no idea who will be nominated for this first year of the award, but I can say I will be watching and rooting because this is a win for us all.” **B**

No More Playing Around

OVER THE PAST decade, only one video-game soundtrack, for the 2012 title *Journey*, has received a Grammy nod, for best score soundtrack for visual media. That number could increase fivefold this year thanks to the addition of a new category: best score soundtrack for video games and other interactive media.

While video-game scores may not be as mainstream as those of TV and film, renowned composers like Hans Zimmer and Michael Giacchino have validated the relevance and

importance of video-game music, contributing scores for popular franchises like *Call of Duty* and *Medal of Honor*. “People have come to realize that game music is serious music,” says Brian Schmidt, president of the Game Audio Network Guild. “Modern video games have scores that, in addition to serving as the emotional foundation of many games, reflect the incredible artistry of the composers, producers, performers and other artists involved in its creation. It’s thrilling to see the Recording Academy recognize video-game music as the unique art form that it has become.”

This year could see a handful of newer names making a mark in video-game music. Some of 2022’s most likely candidates to



A still from *Horizon Forbidden West*.

receive nominations in the new category will be the soundtracks to *Horizon Forbidden West*, *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare II* and *God of War Ragnarök*.

Schmidt has been advocating for this inclusion for decades,

first approaching the academy in 1999 to discuss a Grammy category — and credits the field’s growing popularity as the reason for why this is the year the academy has finally recognized video-game music.

“Today,” he says, “artists record covers of game music, symphony orchestras play concerts of game music, and fans flock to conventions dedicated to game music.”

— BRIAN HAUNTLY

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F/SIMAS

BEST BETS FOR THE BIG FOUR

When the nominations for the 65th annual Grammy Awards are announced Nov. 15, Adele, Beyoncé, Silk Sonic and Harry Styles could each wind up competing for album, record and song of the year. Adele, Beyoncé and Silk Sonic's Bruno Mars have each swept those three nominations twice before, but this would be Styles' first nod in any of those marquee categories. For now, there is only one thing that's for sure: There will be 10 nominees in each of the Big Four categories for the second year in a row. Below are *Billboard's* best bets for who will be in the running. —PAUL GREIN

ALBUM OF THE YEAR

Three British pop superstars — Adele, Ed Sheeran and Styles — are apt to be nominated. They will likely face off against Beyoncé and Kendrick Lamar, who are still looking for their first wins in this category. The big question mark is Taylor Swift, whose *Red (Taylor's Version)* could become the first rerecording of an artist's album to be nominated for album of the year.

Adele

30

This would be Adele's third consecutive album to be nominated in this category. She won with her last two studio albums, *21* and *25*. *30* has spawned two top five hits on the Billboard Hot 100 — "Easy on Me" and "Oh My God." Billboard 200 peak: No. 1 (its first six weeks)

Bad Bunny

Un Verano Sin Ti

This project is vying to become the first Spanish-language album to receive an album of the year nod. Bad Bunny won Grammys in each of the last two years with *YHLQMDLG* (best Latin pop or urban album) and *El Último Tour del Mundo* (best música urbana album). Four songs from *Un Verano Sin Ti* made the top 10 on the Hot 100. Billboard 200 peak: No. 1 (five weeks so far)

Beyoncé

Renaissance

Released July 29, *Renaissance* would be Beyoncé's fourth album to be nominated in this category, following *I Am... Sasha Fierce* (2009), *Beyoncé* (2014) and *Lemonade* (2016). She would become the first woman of color to receive four album of the year nods as a lead artist.

Brandi Carlile

In These Silent Days

This would be Carlile's second album in a row to be nominated in this category. Its lead single, "Right On Time," was nominated last year for record and song of the year. Billboard 200 peak: No. 11

Kendrick Lamar

Mr. Morale & The Big Steppers

This would be Lamar's fourth studio album to be nominated in this category,

which would tie Ye (aka Kanye West) for the most by a rapper. Four songs from *Mr. Morale & the Big Steppers* made the top 10 on the Hot 100. Billboard 200 peak: No. 1 (one week)

Ed Sheeran

=

This would be Sheeran's second nod in this category. Two songs from =, "Bad Habits" and "Shivers," made the top five on the Hot 100. "Bad Habits" was nominated last year for song of the year. Billboard 200 peak: No. 1 (one week)

Silk Sonic

An Evening With Silk Sonic

"Leave the Door Open," the debut hit by the retro-soul duo of Mars and Anderson .Paak, won four awards at the 64th annual Grammys in April. *An Evening With Silk Sonic* won album of the year at the BET Awards in June. The project spawned two top five hits on the Hot 100, "Leave the Door Open" and "Smokin' Out the Window." Billboard 200 peak: No. 2

Harry Styles

Harry's House

Two years ago, Styles' smash "Watermelon Sugar" won best pop solo vocal performance, but he is overdue for a nod in a Big Four category. Four songs from *Harry's House* made the top 10 on the Hot 100. Billboard 200 peak: No. 1 (two weeks)

Taylor Swift

Red (Taylor's Version)

This would be Swift's sixth nomination in this category, which would tie Barbra Streisand for the most nods by a female artist. Moreover, it would be the third year in a row Swift has been nominated — the most consecutive years with a nod in this



Clockwise from left: Lamar, Adele, Beyoncé, Styles, Bad Bunny and Carlile.

category since Lady Gaga three-peated from 2009 to 2011. Swift's original *Red* was nominated nine years ago. Billboard 200 peak: No. 1 (one week)

Various Artists

Encanto film soundtrack

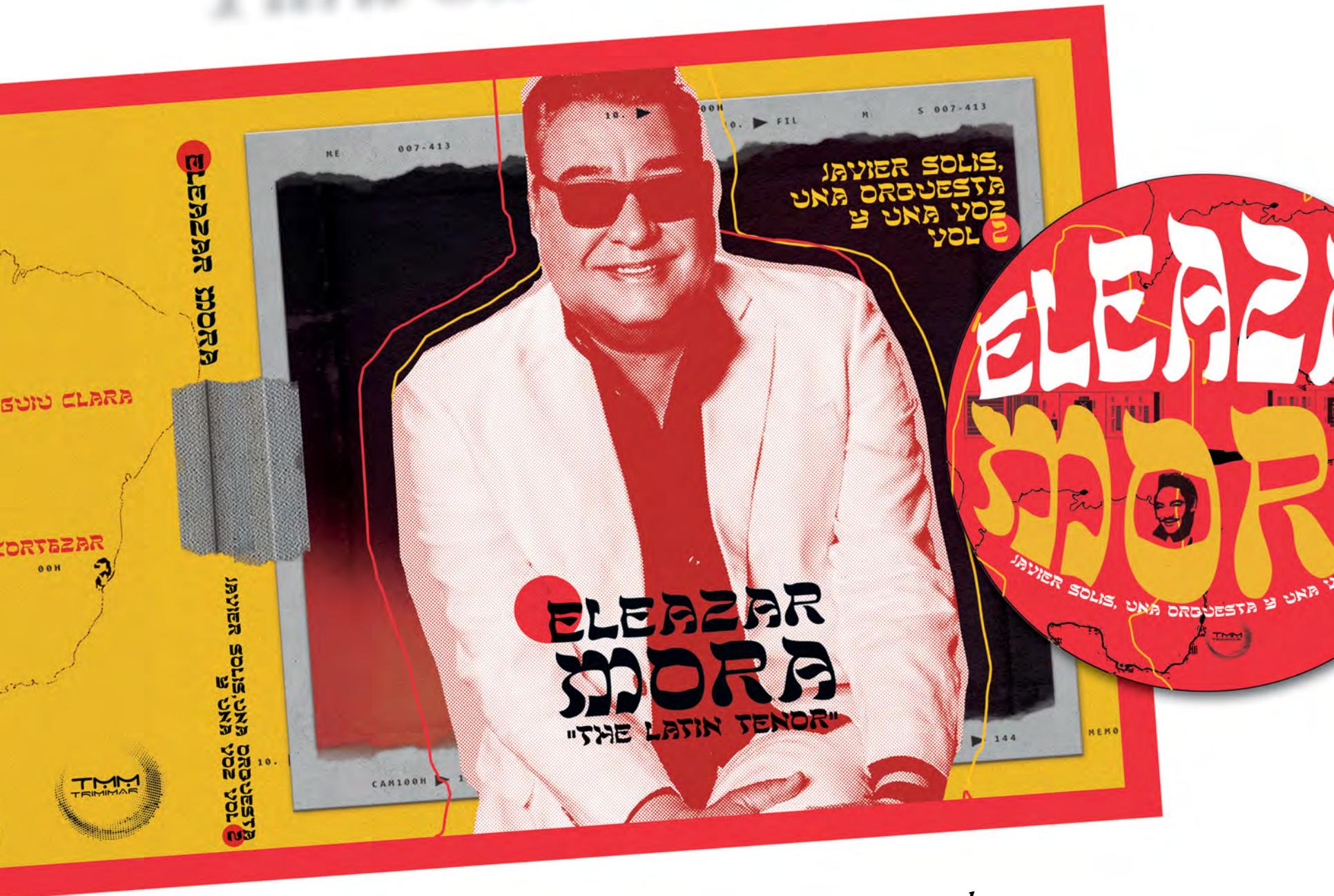
This is vying to become the first soundtrack to an animated movie to be nominated in this category since *Beauty and the Beast* 30 years ago. The album produced two top five hits on the Hot 100 — "We Don't

Talk About Bruno" and "Surface Pressure." Billboard 200 peak: No. 1 (nine weeks)

WITHIN REACH

Drake, *Honestly, Nevermind*; Future, *I Never Liked You*; Elton John, *The Lockdown Sessions*; Miranda Lambert, *Palomino*; Lizzo, *Special*; Post Malone, *Twelve Carat Toothache*; Bonnie Raitt, *Just Like That...*; Rosalía, *Motomami*; Summer Walker, *Still Over It*; The Weeknd, *Dawn FM*

Para Su Consideración



*Me permito someter a su consideración mi segundo álbum en homenaje al gran cantante mexicano **Javier Solís**, con nuevo formato manteniendo los instrumentos originales usados por el famoso cantante, acompañados por una orquesta sinfónica.*



Clockwise from left: Cameron, Mirabel from *Encanto*, J. Cole, and Anderson .Paak and Bruno Mars of Silk Sonic.

SONG OF THE YEAR

Taylor Swift's "All Too Well (10 Minute Version) (Taylor's Version)," an expanded take of a song from her 2012 album, *Red*, isn't eligible. The rules state: "A song ... must have been released on a recording for the first time, or achieved prominence for the first time, during the current eligibility year." Last year, seven of the 10 works that were nominated for record of the year were also nominated for song of the year. This year, it looks like six could be up for both awards.

"About Damn Time"

Songwriters: Blake Slatkin, Eric Frederic, Larry Price, Malcolm McLaren, Melissa Jefferson, Ronald Larkins, Stephen Hague, Theron Makiel Thomas

This would be the second nod in this category for Jefferson (aka Lizzo) and Frederic, who were both also co-writers of "Truth Hurts."

"As It Was"

Songwriters: Harry Styles, Thomas Hull, Tyler Johnson

This would be Styles' first nomination in a songwriting category. His three nominations

two years ago were for best pop solo performance (which he won), best pop vocal album and best music video.

"Boyfriend"

Songwriters: Delacey, Dove Cameron, Evan Blair, Skyley Stonestreet

This sultry single with a provocative lyric has helped Cameron leave her Disney Channel image behind. This would be the second year in a row that a song with an LGBTQ+ overtone was nominated in this category. Lil Nas X's "Montero (Call Me by Your Name)" was nominated last year.

"Break My Soul"

Songwriters: Beyoncé Knowles, Shawn Carter, Freddie Ross, Terius Nash, Christopher Stewart, Allen George, Fred McFarlane, Adam Pigott

Beyoncé, Nash and Stewart were among the writers of "Single Ladies (Put a Ring on It)," which won this category 13 years ago. This would be Beyoncé's fifth nod in this category.

"Easy On Me"

Songwriters: Adele Adkins, Greg Kurstin

Adele and Kurstin won in this category six years ago for co-writing "Hello." Adele previously won for co-writing "Rolling in the Deep," and Kurstin was previously nominated for co-writing Kelly Clarkson's smash "Stronger (What Doesn't Kill You)."

"First Class"

Songwriters: Jackman Harlow, Jasper Harris, Douglas Ford, Rogé Chahayed, José Velazquez, Micaiah Raheem, Nickie Jon Pabón, Ryan Vojtesak, Stacy Ferguson, Jamal Jones, Will Adams, Elvis Williams, Christopher Bridges

This would be Chahayed's second nomination in this category. He received his first nod last year for writing Doja Cat and SZA's "Kiss Me More."

"Glimpse Of Us"

Songwriters: George Miller, Joel Castillo, Alexis Kesselman, Connor McDonough, Riley McDonough

The recording by Miller (aka J. Cole) entered the Billboard Hot 100 at No. 10 on the strength of heavy TikTok activity. If enough voters hear it, this striking ballad could have a shot at a nod.

"Numb Little Bug"

Songwriters: Em Beihold, Nick Lopez, Dru DeCaro

This song's whimsical nature belies the serious points it makes about mental health. Grammy voters often respond to songs with such lyrics, with nominations in this category in recent years for Logic's "1-800-273-8255" (featuring Alessia Cara and Khalid) and Shawn Mendes' "In My Blood."

"Smokin' Out The Window"

Songwriters: Bruno Mars, Brandon Anderson, Dernst Emile II

If this is nominated, Mars will tie Paul McCartney and Lionel Richie for the most nods in this category (six). Mars, Anderson (aka Anderson .Paak) and Emile (aka D'Mile) are the reigning champs in this category for "Leave the Door Open." In addition, D'Mile won the previous year for co-writing H.E.R.'s Black Lives Matter anthem, "I Can't Breathe."

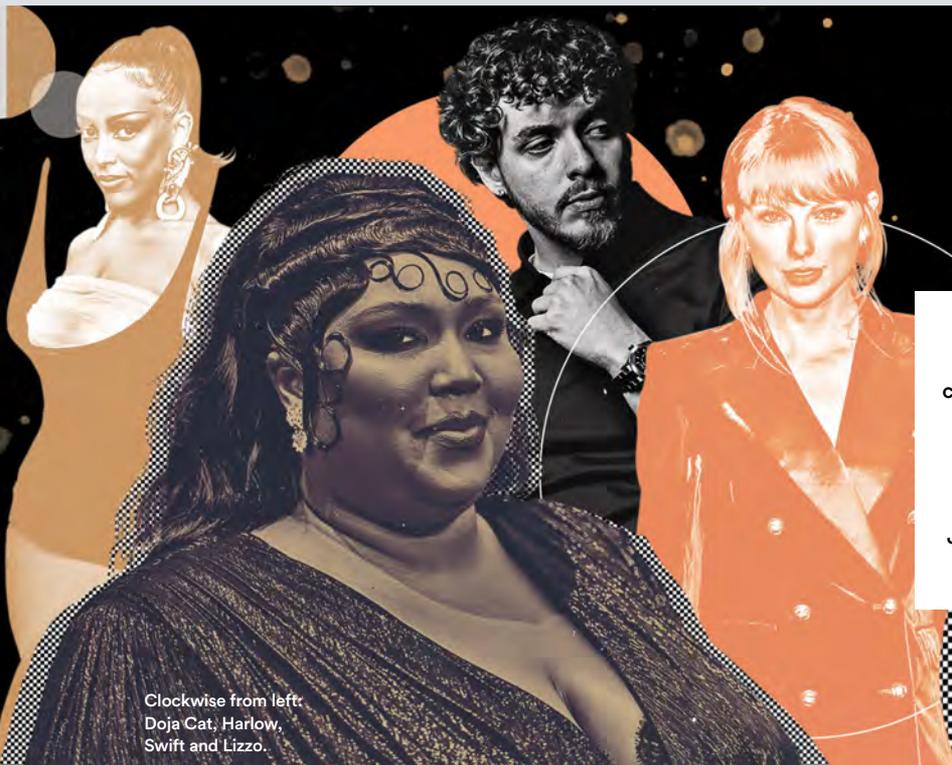
"We Don't Talk About Bruno"

Songwriter: Lin-Manuel Miranda

This would be Miranda's first nomination in this category, as well as the first song penned by only one songwriter to be nominated since Taylor Swift's "Lover" three years ago.

WITHIN REACH

"Enemy," Imagine Dragons and JID; "Fingers Crossed," Lauren Spencer-Smith; "Hrs&Hrs," Muni Long; "I Hate U," SZA; "Love Me More," Sam Smith; "MAMIII," Becky G featuring Karol G; "N95," Kendrick Lamar; "Sweetest Pie," Megan Thee Stallion and Dua Lipa; "Wait 4 U," Future featuring Drake & Tems; "Woman," Doja Cat



Clockwise from left: Doja Cat, Harlow, Swift and Lizzo.

RECORD OF THE YEAR

Six hits that would have been strong contenders in this category were released prior to Oct. 1, 2021, the start of the eligibility year. That's a tough break for Latto's "Big Energy," Lil Nas X's "That's What I Want," Ed Sheeran's "Shivers," Justin Bieber's "Ghost," Doja Cat's "Need To Know" and GAYLE's "abcdefu."

Adele

"Easy On Me"

This tender piano ballad will almost certainly lead to Adele's fourth nomination in this category, following nods for "Chasing Pavements," "Rolling in the Deep" and "Hello." "Easy on Me" topped the Hot 100 for 10 weeks, one of only two singles to stay on top that long in this eligibility period.

Becky G Featuring Karol G

"MAMIII"

This would be the first all-Latin collaboration to be nominated. It would also be the third all-female pairing to get the nod in as many years, following Megan Thee Stallion's "Savage" (featuring Beyoncé) and Doja Cat's "Kiss Me More" (featuring SZA). Hot 100 peak: No. 15

Beyoncé

"Break My Soul"

BEST NEW ARTIST

This contest seems more wide open than in the last three years, when Billie Eilish, Megan Thee Stallion and Olivia Rodrigo, respectively, were clear favorites. As past Grammy nominees, Tems, Walker Hayes, Big Thief and Chlöe are ineligible. Though the hits by GAYLE and Latto were released prior to this eligibility year, the academy has shown a bit more flexibility in this category in an effort to be inclusive.

Em Beihold

Beihold, 23, cracked the top 20 on the Hot 100 with “Numb Little Bug.” She received attention on TikTok for her songs “City of Angels” and “Groundhog Day,” which led to her signing with Republic Records in January.

Zach Bryan

Bryan’s third studio album, *American Heartbreak*, reached No. 1 on Top Country Albums and No. 5 on the Billboard 200. The album’s fifth single, “Something in the Orange,” climbed to No. 3 on Hot Country Songs. Bryan would be the third male country artist to be nominated in this category in the past five years, following Luke Combs and Jimmie Allen.

Dove Cameron

The Grammy screening committee may have a lively debate regarding whether Cameron should be considered a new artist, due to her extensive previous work on Disney Channel projects. It may

This dance smash would be Beyoncé’s eighth single to be nominated in this category, which would set a new record. She’s tied for the lead with Frank Sinatra with seven nods each. Hot 100 peak: No. 7

Doja Cat

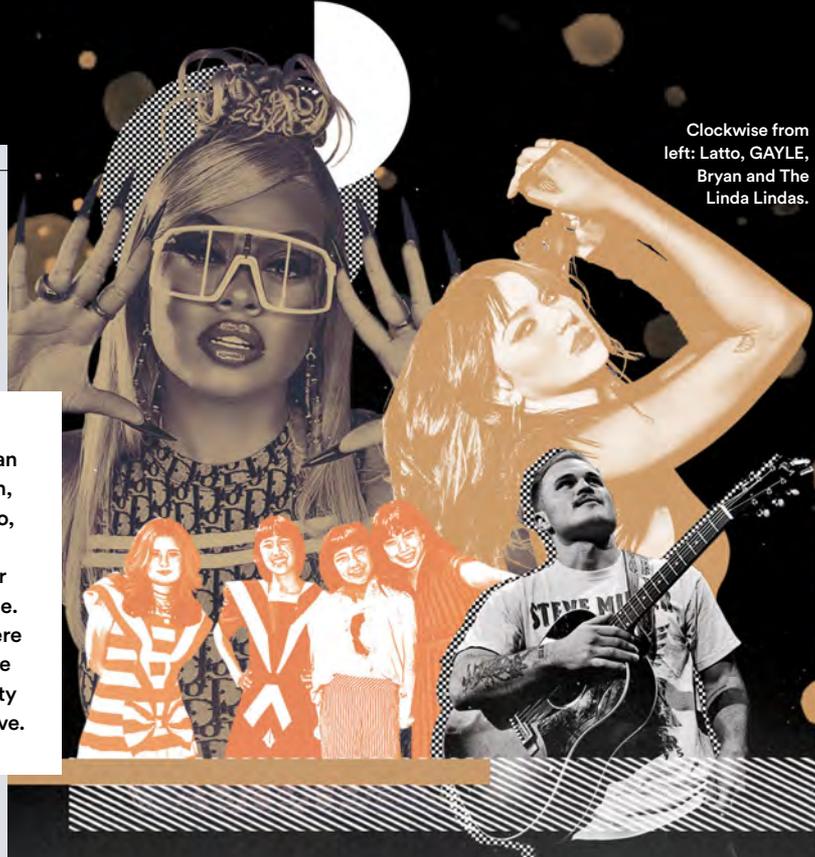
“Woman”

This song could put Doja in record of the year contention for a third consecutive year following nods for “Say So” and “Kiss Me More.” Doja would be only the third woman in Grammy history to land three straight nominations in this category, following Roberta Flack (1972-74) and Billie Eilish (2019-21). Hot 100 peak: No. 7

Jack Harlow

“First Class”

This smash, which interpolates Fergie’s “Glamorous,” could lead to Harlow’s first record of the year nod. His previous



Clockwise from left: Latto, GAYLE, Bryan and The Linda Lindas.

adhere to the usual Grammy philosophy in this category — to err on the side of inclusiveness. Such recent nominees as Alessia Cara, Megan Thee Stallion and Jimmie Allen weren’t entirely new when they were recognized.

GAYLE

GAYLE reached No. 3 on the Hot 100 with the witty “abcdefu,” a takedown of everything she wouldn’t miss about her no-good former boyfriend. (She spared his dog.) GAYLE is just 18, the same age as three major artists who were nominated in the past few years: Billie Eilish, The Kid LAROI and Olivia Rodrigo.

Latto

Latto won best new artist at the BET Awards in June. She’s vying to become the fifth artist to win in this category at both shows, following Alicia Keys, John Legend,

Sam Smith and Chance the Rapper.

Latto’s “Big Energy” reached No. 3 on the Hot 100. Her second album, *777*, hit No. 15 on the Billboard 200.

The Linda Lindas

This all-female punk-rock band won best punk record at the Libera Awards in June for “Racist, Sexist Boy.” Its members are all between 11 and 17, which is similar to Hanson, whose members were between 12 and 17 when they were nominated in this category 25 years ago.

Muni Long

Long’s breakthrough this year with the sensuous ballad “Hrs & Hrs” (which reached No. 16 on the Hot 100) was a long time coming: She has been releasing records since 2009. Until this year, she was best-known as a writer for other artists. Her co-writes include Pitbull’s “Timber”

(featuring Kesha), Fifth Harmony’s “Worth It” and Miranda Lambert & Carrie Underwood’s “Somethin’ Bad.”

Lauren Spencer-Smith

This British-born Canadian artist had a top 20 hit on the Hot 100 with “Fingers Crossed.” Spencer-Smith is just 18, the same age as GAYLE. If both receive nods, this will be the first time two female solo teens were nominated in the same year since Avril Lavigne and Michelle Branch 20 years ago.

Wet Leg

The British indie-rock band was founded in 2019 by Rhian Teasdale and Hester Chambers. Their eponymous debut album, featuring the viral hit “Chaise Longue,” reached No. 14 on the Billboard 200. Wet Leg won two trophies at the Libera Awards — breakthrough artist/release and video of the year, both for “Chaise Longue.” Wet Leg and The Linda Lindas may be the only groups to receive nominations. That’s par for the course. The last time there were more than two bands in the running was 2012.

Lainey Wilson

Wilson’s single “Things a Man Oughta Know” reached No. 1 on Country Airplay, No. 3 on Hot Country Songs and No. 32 on the Hot 100. She won two awards at the Academy of Country Music Awards in March: new female artist of the year and song of the year for “Things a Man Oughta Know.”

WITHIN REACH

Omar Apollo, Eslabon Armado, Blxst, CKay, Jnr Choi, Mitski, PinkPantheress, Morgan Wade, Mimi Webb, Bailey Zimmerman

hits “Whats Poppin” and “Industry Baby” (a collaboration with Lil Nas X) were nominated in rap performance categories. Hot 100 peak: No. 1 (three weeks)

Imagine Dragons & JID

“Enemy”

This rock-rap fusion, from the animated streaming series *Arcane*, would be the first song from a TV show to be nominated. This also would be Imagine Dragons’ second nod in this category; the act was in contention nine years ago for “Radioactive.” Hot 100 peak: No. 5

Lizzo

“About Damn Time”

This smash, which could have slid right into a 1979 disco playlist, has the flirty, playful sound and positive energy that have become Lizzo’s trademarks. It could bring her a second nod in this category, after she was nominated three years ago

for her breakthrough hit, “Truth Hurts.” Hot 100 peak: No. 2

Silk Sonic

“Smokin’ Out The Window”

Silk Sonic was victorious for both record and song of the year with “Leave the Door Open.” The act could return to the finals in both categories with this hit. This would be Bruno Mars’ seventh record of the year nomination and Anderson .Paak’s second.

Harry Styles

“As It Was”

On this sleek global smash, Styles projects the confidence and ease of an artist hitting his commercial and creative peak. Styles is vying to join such other boy band alumni as Michael Jackson, Ricky Martin and Justin Timberlake with a solo nod in this category. Hot 100 peak: No. 1 (10 weeks so far)

Taylor Swift

“All Too Well (10 Minute Version) (Taylor’s Version)”

This would be Swift’s fifth nod in this category and first since “Blank Space” seven years ago. “All Too Well” broke the record held by Don McLean’s “American Pie” for nearly five decades as the longest song to top the Hot 100, where it ruled for one week.

WITHIN REACH

Em Beihold, “Numb Little Bug”; Dove Cameron, “Boyfriend”; Future featuring Drake & Tems, “Wait 4 U”; Joji, “Glimpse of Us”; Kendrick Lamar, “N95”; Muni Long, “Hrs & Hrs”; Megan Thee Stallion and Dua Lipa, “Sweetest Pie”; Lauren Spencer-Smith, “Fingers Crossed”; SZA, “I Hate U”; Carolina Gaitán, Mauro Castillo, Adassa, Rhenzy Feliz, Diane Guerrero, Stephanie Beatriz and cast of *Encanto*, “We Don’t Talk About Bruno”

THE (POTENTIAL) 6 BIG LATIN GRAMMY RECORD BREAKERS

Over the course of the Latin Grammys' 22-year history, the awards ceremony has become one of the hardest to predict. Case in point: Last year, two veteran acts with outlier projects — Rubén Blades with Roberto Delgado & Orquesta and Caetano Veloso — won album and record of the year, respectively, over global chart-toppers. With its bilingual scope (recordings must be at least 51% in Spanish or Portuguese) and vast, pan-regional reach that includes music released throughout Latin America, Spain, Portugal and the United States, nominees tend to be diverse, multigenerational and multigenre. With Bad Bunny's continued dominance, he and these five other artists could break records in the Big Four categories this year. —LEILA COBO



Bad Bunny

Bad Bunny has earned an album of the year nod two years in a row: in 2021 for *El Último Tour del Mundo* and in 2020 for both *YHLQMDLG* and *Oasis* (his joint release with J Balvin). It's a feat matched only by Spanish star Alejandro Sanz, who won in 2001 and 2002 with *El Alma Al Aire* and *MTV Unplugged*,

respectively. Unlike Sanz, Bad Bunny is yet to win in a Big Four category, but if he does score a nomination for *Un Verano Sin Ti*, he'll become the first artist to get three album of the year nods in a row. The artist has also taken home four Latin Grammys across other categories.

Bizarrap

Argentine producer Bizarrap was a quadruple threat in 2021, scoring nods for producer of the year and best new artist, as well as nominations for his BZRP Music Sessions with Nathy Peluso in best urban/fusion performance and with Snow Tha Product in best rap/hip-hop song. While he left empty-handed last year, Bizarrap now seems poised for song and record of the year nominations, thanks to an impressive array of sessions with guests that included Villano Antillano, Nicky Jam, Anuel AA and Tiago PZK. If Bizarrap scores a song of the year nod, he'll become the first producer nominated as an artist in the category.



Karol G

Karol G didn't release an album during the current Latin Grammy eligibility period, and her widely acclaimed *KG0516* was surprisingly shut out of the Big Four last year (though album single "Tusa," featuring Nicki Minaj, was up for song and record of the year in 2020). But in the 18 months since *KG0516*'s release, Karol G has emerged as *Billboard*'s top-charting Latin female artist in the world. Already recognized by the Latin Recording Academy as best new artist in 2018, she could become the first female act to have two different singles — "Provenza" and "Mamiii," the latter alongside Becky G and both produced by Ovy on the Drums — compete simultaneously for song and record of the year.

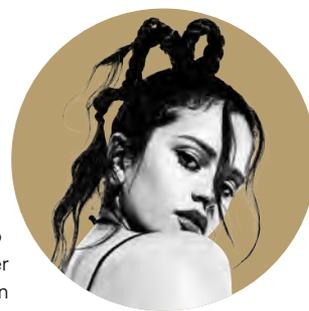


Residente

The Puerto Rican rapper and former Calle 13 member has the most Latin Grammy wins with 27, including his solo nods. He is followed by Eduardo Cabra (also formerly of Calle 13) and Juanes, tied with 24 each. Residente is the only artist to win song of the year as part of a group (with Calle 13 in 2011 for "Latinoamérica") and as a soloist (in 2020 for "René"). Now, with his urgent "This Is Not America," a rallying cry against U.S. imperialism, Residente may claim song and record of the year for the first time on his own.

Rosalía

The Spanish artist won album of the year in 2019 for her breakout project, *El Mal Querer*, becoming only the third woman to win the award (the other two artists are Shakira in 2006 with *Fijación Oral, Vol. 1* and Natalia Lafourcade in 2020 with *Un Canto por México, Vol. 1*). Rosalía's 2022 follow-up, *Motomami*, leans far more urban and Latin-centered in its rhythms than its predecessor, which was heavy on flamenco. If she were to win again, Rosalía would become the first woman to nab two album of the year trophies.



Alejandro Sanz

Of Sanz's 14 albums, eight have been released since the 2000 launch of the Latin Grammys — and all were nominated for album of the year. He's the most nominated artist in the category and ties Juanes and Juan Luis Guerra with three career wins. Given that neither Juanes nor Guerra have eligible albums this year, Sanz could become the all-time leader in the category with his latest album, *Sanz*. It wouldn't be his first record: The Spanish singer-songwriter is also the biggest winner for song of the year (four wins out of 10 nominations) and record of the year (seven wins out of 11 nominations). Sanz is also the only artist who has swept song, record and album of the year in a single year on three separate occasions.



**The Annual
Latin GRAMMY Awards®
process is currently underway**

7/28 – 8/08 – First Round of Voting

9/20 – Nominations Announcement

9/30 – 10/13 – Final Round of Voting

11/17 – 23rd Annual Latin GRAMMY Awards®



**LATIN
RECORDING
ACADEMY**

LATIN'S NEW CONTENDERS

The Latin Grammy Awards consider up-and-coming acts from over 20 countries for its best new artist category. A vast majority of honorees are singer-songwriters who perform their own material; the country with the most winners to date is Colombia, with six, including Juliana Velásquez last year. And though the regional Mexican genre has largely been out of the running in the past, that may change this year, with an incoming class of artists appearing on charts in multiple countries. —LEILA COBO



Eslabon Armado

Siblings Pedro and Brian Tovar began making their sad *sierrreño* tunes out of their garage in their early teens before their 2020 debut album entered the top 10 on *Billboard's* Top Latin Albums chart. Since then, Eslabon Armado has placed three albums at No. 1 on the Regional Mexican Albums chart and made history in May when its latest release, *Nostalgia*, became the first regional Mexican album to debut in the top 10 of the Billboard 200.



Carín León

After gaining traction with his live YouTube performances during the pandemic, León scored a No. 1 on *Billboard's* Regional Mexican Airplay chart last September with "El Tóxico" alongside Grupo Firme. Five top 10 hits later, including another No. 1, he has gained fans across multiple countries thanks to collaborations with Spain's C. Tangana and Colombia's Jessie Uribe.



Blessd

Mentored by fellow Medellín, Colombia, native Maluma — an early believer who jumped on a remix of the rapper's single "Impossible" in 2021 — Blessd notched his first Latin Airplay No. 1 with "Medallo" alongside Justin Quiles and Lenny Tavarez.



Luis Figueroa

Figueroa approaches salsa in the tradition of powerhouse vocalists like Victor Manuelle or mentor Marc Anthony, the latter of whom signed the rising artist to his Magnus label. Figueroa has scored three top 10 hits on *Billboard's* Tropical Airplay chart since last year, including "Todavía te Espero," produced by Motiff.



Pehuenche

The singer-songwriter from Veracruz, Mexico, performs pop that veers from traditional romance to experimental. Pehuenche's debut album, *Vida Ventura*, was released on Nacional Records in May, and he was recently named one of the 2022 Latin Alternative Music Conference's Discovery Award winners.



Derby Motoreta's Burrito Kachimba

The band from Sevilla, Spain, which *Billboard* previously dubbed "Spain's own brand of Southern rock," tours relentlessly while injecting new life into the genre. Fresh off a nomination for Spain's Goya Film Awards this year for best original song, the act has played festivals like South by Southwest in the United States and Lollapalooza Argentina.



Silvana Estrada

The daughter of luthiers, Estrada is the first Latin artist signed to Glassnote Records. Perhaps more notable for Recording Academy voters, at age 25 she has already performed with Latin Grammy multiwinners Jorge Drexler and Natalia Lafourcade.



Juliette

The attorney-turned-singer became a social media star when she won *Big Brother Brazil* in 2021. She released her debut EP last year, featuring all original material — a mix of pop and traditional *forró* that has helped Juliette appeal to multiple audiences.



Yahritza Y Su Esencia

The sibling trio from Washington state, fronted by 15-year-old Yahritza, grew beyond early TikTok fame thanks to soulful lyrics backed by a guitar ensemble reminiscent of Mexico's romantic trios. The group's debut EP, *Obsessed*, landed at No. 1 on *Billboard's* Regional Mexican Albums chart.



Tiago PZK

Argentina's rap and hip-hop scene is growing stronger thanks to artists like Tiago PZK, known for his intensely personal lyrics and dynamic onstage persona. Last year, the Argentine newcomer placed three songs on the Billboard Global 200.

ESTRADA: GUY TILLY/MANTEL; ESLABON ARMADO: FELIX TORRES; BLESSD: MARINER MUECA/LATINA; JULIETTE: JORDI HELD; PEHUENCHE: ROBERTO QUARTAL; YAHRITZA: RTA/EVERETT; LEÓN: TAMERINO DEKOR/SZ; DERBY MOTORETA'S: JUAN HERNANDEZ; TIAGO: THOM RAYMOND

ON SALE
SEPTEMBER
17

billboard

TOP LATIN POWER PLAYERS

*On September 17th, **Billboard** will profile the most influential people in Latin music, from record label executives, music publishers and management companies to radio and television stations and live entertainment*

*Join **Billboard** in congratulating this year's Latin Power Players.*

ON SALE 9/17 | ISSUE CLOSE 9/7 | MATERIALS DUE 9/8

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HOW TO FIGHT FOR



YOUR RIGHTS — NOW

When the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, many of music's most powerful voices led the outcry. But what comes next? *Billboard* reached out to major-label executives, indie innovators, rising artists and veteran road warriors to ask what real action might protect reproductive rights. Their answers offer a toolbox to anyone in the industry who's feeling angry, scared or just plain powerless — and prove that with our collective creativity, all of us can do *something*

USE YOUR PLATFORM

REFUSE TO 'SHUT UP AND SING'

I was raised by a single mom in a small, economically distressed town in Pennsylvania. After my father died when I was 3, I watched my mother struggle to build a new career in an America where a woman couldn't get a mortgage or even a credit card in her own name until 1974. I knew I wanted to wait to become a parent until I had gotten an education and built my career. For me, becoming a mom at 40 was the right choice. Many women I know chose different paths. The point is, for women of my generation and every generation that came of age since 1973, it has been our choice.

You can't plan an education, a career, a life without planning your family. In the United States — where employers are not required to provide paid family leave and the maternal mortality rate is higher than any other wealthy country, especially for Black women — forcing parenthood on people is an unspeakable cruelty.

Someone like me is always going to be able to access reproductive health care. But none of us is free unless all of us are free. Knowing that, I have worked hard to push back against those who seek to restrict reproductive rights. Inspired by my mom, who has always been politically active, I volunteered at a rape crisis center in college and, later, for sexual assault and violence intervention programs. I also recently completed a six-year term as a national board member for Planned Parenthood.

You would think these experiences would have prepared me for June 24, 2022, when the Supreme Court issued its crushing ruling in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health*. I was that person shouting at everyone that Roe could fall and we had to fight like hell to make sure it never happened. Yet the decision landed this sickening, fatal-seeming blow.

I am furious and full of rage. But sitting next to rage is determination. Part of why I love the music business and the reason I have made my home in it is that we are a group of ambitious, spirited, creative people who are driven by our desire to manifest what we know is possible. We are all unrelenting advocates for what we believe in. I am especially honored to work with so many incredible artists who are unafraid to speak out. We have audacious goals. We must work to make them real. We must shine a light on injustice and hold our leaders accountable. We need to get to work right fucking now.

I am channeling my anger and pain in two ways, one immediate and one longer term.

One: Repeating, every damn day — We are not in the "shut up and sing"

business. Many of us run social media accounts that have genuine impact. From the upcoming midterms to funding organizations providing sexual and reproductive health care, there is a lot of crucial, urgent work to be done triaging the confusion on the ground and helping to put sane leaders in key positions of resistance moving forward. If you have a platform, use it.

Two: We will play the long game. That's what they did. How do you overturn a decision that is half a century old and has overwhelming majority support among Americans? You work. Purposefully, without wavering. When we find artists we believe in, we support them for as long as it takes. We do this because we know that nurturing the thing you believe in, no matter what, is the only way to see it succeed. Our country needs that resolve now.

—**Michelle Jubelirer** chair/CEO, Capitol Music Group



Turn Social Media Into A Tool

The internet is a very powerful tool not only to create, but to connect. I have personally seen videos [on TikTok about] where to volunteer in my community, how to make my voice be heard and educational election content, and in real-time reporting footage. Please post and tell everyone you know about resources that you locate — you never know who may see it and pass along to someone who may need it.

—**Emily Bowman** music growth strategist, artist partnerships, TikTok

Artists may look to you [as a member of their team] for advice on the right way to support the fight for abortion rights. When posting about the outrage they have over *Roe v. Wade* being overturned, [tell them to] ask followers to support Planned Parenthood, the American Civil Liberties Union and other organizations. They can also create PSA videos encouraging people to support these organizations.

If they, as a celebrity, are politically connected, ask them to reach out to the politicians they know and express their willingness to help. Encourage your artists to use their social media voice to not only call attention to the unjust things that are happening but to let people know what they can do.

—**Thuy-An Julien** chief business officer, Grand Hustle Music Group



Speak From The Stage

Onstage banter is an underrated aspect of a live performance, and artists can sometimes forget that being up onstage is an opportunity to connect with fans on a deeper level. Using these moments to raise awareness for something you believe in is a way to find common ground with your audience and invoke a passionate response. And as a publicist, it's important for me to approach every interaction with empathy and understand that many of my colleagues might find more benefit in a supportive conversation rather than another request for them to support my artist. Knowing when to hold off on pitching can often be just as important as knowing when to pitch.

—**Noah Wallace** co-founder, Dac Biet

BE OF BENEFIT TO OTHERS

Rethink An Old Song

We must support organizations that provide access to safe, legal abortion and reproductive health services. This is what I am doing with my rerecorded version of “Sally’s Pigeons” [a song about a lethal back-alley abortion]. “Sally’s Pigeons” was a common story when I was growing up. It is a story we all thought we wouldn’t have to relive. Proceeds from the rerecorded version, as well as other efforts I am working on, will go to the Girls Just Want To Have Fundamental Rights Fund. When I saw the Dobbs draft, my team and I decided to create this fund

are a safe haven. When government fails, it is up to the people to find solutions.

—**Jordan Bromley** partner/entertainment group leader, Manatt Phelps & Phillips

Build In Charity

Buy-Ins

Indie artists can help make a difference by using the music distribution platform Bandcamp: Its pricing feature would enable them to enact pay-what-you-want charity sales benefiting organizations helping to support abortion access for all.

—**Masud “Mally” Hassan** founder, SwidLife

Volunteer Locally

You don’t have to start from scratch when wanting to create change. Find people aligned with your values and help them. For instance, I donate studio time at Echo Mountain to nonprofits for silent auctions. I volunteer at a local women’s shelter, and I also let those volunteers park at the studio so they don’t have to pay for parking. We don’t have anything in place now [for abortion funds], but that makes me think I should reach out to a couple of organizations and see if that’s something that could be of use to them.

—**Jessica Tomasin** manager, Echo Mountain Recording; founder, Connect Beyond Festival

Throw A Party

We just can’t let the artists sing or take action on their own. Organize a benefit to raise funds for the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice, Planned Parenthood, et cetera. Reach

in order to support organizations that protect safe, legal abortion access and reproductive health, like AbortionFunds.org, and get-out-the-vote efforts, like Vote411.org.

—**Cyndi Lauper**

Use Those Air Miles

— For Someone Else

A client of ours had an amazing idea: We should aggregate unused air miles our various touring parties have accumulated and work with the airlines to create an unused miles clearinghouse for women looking to travel out of various states that ban abortion to states like California that



Gastelum

out to them: In many cases, they can help get you organized and spread the word for a benefit that can really pinpoint your community/location. Let’s also remember that abortion rights aren’t the only issue these organizations tackle — it’s also free or low-cost screenings for breast cancer, birth control and counseling, among many other things. They need our financial support to continue to provide and to operate. Talk to a local music venue or community center to see if they can donate a night.

—**Gil Gastelum** founder, Cosmica Management & Records

Help Overhaul

Health Care

With remote work becoming more widespread and accepted, it’s important for employers with staff in anti-abortion states to guarantee they will be able to get treatment wherever it is allowed. DMG Clearances, which has always been remote, employs people in three states that have or are likely to ban abortion: Louisiana, Florida and North Carolina. We cover 100% of our employees’ health costs and are committed to maintaining their privacy against those who would do them harm. We encourage all other employers to do the same.

—**Deborah Mannis-Gardner** founder/president, DMG Clearances

Our most recent Women in the Mix study found that women in the music industry are already at a significant disadvantage

SEE THE BIG PICTURE

I’ve put out two benefit tracks in the last couple of weeks. I wrote “Disorders” with [Pearl Jam’s] Stone Gossard, and we made it a benefit for the National Network of Abortion Funds. The lyrics are very much about the psychological heaviness of watching my reproductive freedom being taken but also everything from the [appointment of Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh] to the hearings for [Supreme Court] Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson — listening to these legal proceedings where I end up feeling physically ill from the experience and various traumas are triggered.

And then there’s this other track I worked on with MILCK and Autumn Rowe and this producer BIANCO called “We Won’t Go Back.” The day after the decision was leaked, there was this spontaneous demonstration outside the Supreme Court, and MILCK happened to be in [Washington] D.C., so she went down there and recorded the crowd chanting, “We won’t go back,” and that became the basis of this song. It benefits Planned Parenthood and the Yellowhammer Fund, which supports women in the Deep South trying to get reproductive services.

Those are two direct-action efforts: making songs to bring attention to the issue, directly benefiting people who are most affected right now. I think it’s really important to just try to keep a perspective that’s bigger than yourself. I’m not in the best financial place I’ve ever been — it’s a long pandemic. I couldn’t bring home the bacon. Like many people, I’ve had to try to get really creative with how to support my family, so I’d love to focus on making some money come in, but not as much as I’d love to see women not be forced to have children. Not as much as I’d like to not have the world overpopulated by unwanted and unsupported babies. Doing these benefit tracks, working long hours on songs and releasing them for no money to myself to just try to get support to desperate women in desperate situations is a no-brainer. I don’t need income that badly.

I can appreciate that it’s a scary thing, especially for a young artist who wants to build bridges between themselves and the widest audience possible, to not offend or scare anybody away. And yeah, you might. Somebody might walk out of your show. But just keep it in perspective. So what if a couple of people walk out of your show? So what if some business that’s profit-oriented shies away from getting involved with you — fuck them! To a young artist on the fence about being political, I’d say: It’s fucking awesome! Don’t worry! If you’re being *you* as fully and authentically and bravely as you can and expressing yourself in your art, that’s the most effective artist you can be, and you’re going to do your best work and connect with the most people in the most meaningful way. Living your ideals, trying to live the way you hope for the world, I think it really does pay off in the end tenfold.

—**Ani DiFranco**



Lauper



because of gender disparities in our health care systems. Right now, we should all be working to expand women's access to health care, and that's where we will continue to focus. In this critical time, we have conducted an in-depth review of our internal policies related to reproductive rights — from access to abortion services and in vitro fertilization to mental health benefits. I'm pleased to say the Recording Academy's benefits are comprehensive and supportive of women, enabling them to get the care they choose to receive.

—**Harvey Mason Jr.**
CEO, Recording Academy

I absolutely love seeing the music companies that have rallied behind their employees. It's important that these offers to cover travel and time off for an abortion are frictionless and not contingent on approval or even disclosure to a supervisor. It's a good idea to seek the help of a third party for matters such as this (and really, if possible, all medical issues) so people don't have to expose themselves to receive care. This is a space where gender minorities in music organizations can be your partners and advisers.

I also think this opens up an opportunity to discuss health care in the music industry comprehensively. Being employed at a company that already offers comprehensive health care is a privilege that many people in



Osazuwa

music don't have. If you're in the position to offer abortion coverage for your employees, what ability do you have to extend this to the musicians and contractors who help your business persist? While this isn't always easy or straightforward, it can start with a call to your insurance companies to see if extending coverage to at least your 1099 employees is possible. That's also a great time to check what coverage is available for abortions, HIV treatment, mental health and prenatal care; to get more generous with your parental leave policies; to get more creative within deal structures to allow for more stability; and, of course, to donate to your local musicians' health funds so that if you can't cover them, someone can.

—**Christine Osazuwa**
founder, Measure of Music; U.K. director, shesaid.so

Schedule Donations

A great way to stay engaged is to set up monthly donations to an organization. Many organizations are set up for this, including the National Network of Abortion Funds, which splits donations among 90 local abortion funds. I think it would be amazing for companies to do this, as well as individuals. Getting in touch with your own capacity for generosity is important. Many people can afford to give more than they do, but it's common to feel a fear of scarcity, and for some, it's hard to prioritize benefiting strangers over themselves or loved ones. But your liberation relies on the liberation of all.

—**Lucy Dacus**

Offer Your Expertise

If you are a lawyer, you can help individuals and organizations, including your own, by providing advice on what state and local legal protections are available for people in need of reproductive health care.

—**Adrian J. Perry** partner/co-chair of music industry practice, Covington & Burling

MAN UP

As a terrified 18-year-old in 1965, I went through a botched abortion on top of a washing machine in Tijuana, Mexico. I ended up, still pregnant and hemorrhaging, in a San Diego hospital where the [dilation and curettage] actually took place. When I woke up, there were two police officers at my bedside taking information and charging me as a criminal.

When Roe v. Wade passed in 1973, I thought it meant that no other girl would have to live through that nightmare. Today, after 50 years of women and girls having the right to our own reproductive health and freedom, forces of misogyny, ignorance and domination are taking control, and we've got to work together to defeat them. The Supreme Court majority believes in jurisprudence from the Middle Ages, and they are poised to force their religious superstitions on us all.

Here's where I'm focusing my energy and resources right now:

One: Given the insanity at SCOTUS, we need to codify the right to abortion into federal law, which means electing pro-choice Democratic representatives at every level this November. WalktheWalkUSA.org is my go-to group for soulful, data-driven and effective action. It's an all-volunteer initiative partnering with community groups in key states, districts and races registering, empowering and relationally mobilizing voters of color who



form the base of the Democratic party. I love these people.

Two: Abortion Access Front (aafont.org) uses humor and outrage to fight enemies of reproductive freedom, traveling the country in direct support of clinics, creating powerful media to call out disinformation and provide great resources. On July 17, it offered a free, seven-hour training session, gathering the coolest abortion activists and experts from around the country for a super-charged, all-day livestreamed experience that felt like an activist house party!

And finally, given that every pregnancy starts with an erect penis, I would like to see the anti-choice, self-proclaimed "pro-life" old men in Congress pass a bill banning Viagra prescriptions to men. Viagra could be prescribed only to married women who could dole out a pill to their husbands if they ever want to. More flaccid penises would mean less unwanted pregnancies, right?

—**Denise Kaufman** co-founder, Ace of Cups

To be a woman in this industry is hard. And to be a woman right now in general is scary. It's a human right to control your own body. This is not just one person or group's fight; we should all be shouting how unjust this is and supporting the right for someone to decide what happens to their body. I want to see men supporting by protesting alongside women and voting for candidates that push forward our right of choice.

We will continue to fight the fight for what's right. Do your research on candidates, their policies and what they stand for. Every election, local or national, counts. Tune into the debates, show up and vote, set reminders for your local elections, and let your friends know. I'll do my part to use my platform to remind my fans in Atlanta when to turn out to vote. The time to act is now.

—**Latto**

Maybe I'm being naive, but I find it astounding that so few men have spoken out, as though somehow getting pregnant is a female issue. I was truly dismayed by how few male musicians



Latto

who claim to be woke did not say one word. Flip through their social media — not one peep. And yet they're the very first to align themselves with young female talent to further their own careers. So how about we start there? How about men start talking about it and being outraged? Until men join us and fight as strongly as women do for women's rights, we're going to keep running into this issue every generation.

—**Shirley Manson**

FIND POWER IN YOUR PEOPLE

Reconnect With Your Community...

At a time like this, it is important to remember that we are not alone and have so much more in common than we know. It has always been important to me to serve as an example for women, particularly women of color, in the music industry. This time has made me even more resolved to lean into and support my community, whether that be on an individual level by being a mentor, currently serving in the 2022 Universal Music Group Black Label Uplift mentorship program or on a larger scale by finding ways to volunteer with music and female-led organizations like She Is the Music.

—**Erica M. Paul** vp/head of digital marketing, Island Records

We are preparing a safe-space session now in response to the overturning of Roe v. Wade. I am so honored that I get to be a part of building a space and a powerful community that is designed to absorb the shock from the dismissal of reproductive rights for women and nonbinary people. So often in times of racial, gender or

socioeconomic injustice, the folk from underrepresented groups are almost immediately called on to organize, develop action plans, implement and execute those plans, and have all of the answers. But those people are also dealing with a great deal of trauma tied to being part of an in-group who are direct targets of those acts of discrimination, and they are rarely given space to unpack the trauma before being called to action. I get to create spaces that were never built for me throughout my career until now. A space to foster emotional connectedness and have respectful, candid conversations.

—**Debonair Oates-Primus** vp of DEI, Oak View Group

...And Rally For It

You have to be the person who constantly rallies your friends and colleagues to action. It's important to make sure that you and your network of friends and col-



Oates-Primus

leagues stay engaged politically, no matter what happens and no matter how big of a setback the Roe v. Wade repeal might feel right now. People tend to get disillusioned after a major loss, and that's why it's important to be that friend in your group always rallying people to vote, donate and even run for local office. The person who keeps caring and keeps fighting is the person who can make the biggest difference.

—**Peter Shapiro** owner, Brooklyn Bowl



Seek Out An Already Galvanized Group...

I am heartened by the energy that has been sparked by the connected communities who know the reversal of Roe is the beginning of more rights we have taken for granted being stripped. In my community, I am seeing efforts to support candidates who are not local, but who will help course-correct, initially connected by Los Angeles organization Hang Out Do Good. I've joined the Walk for Democracy 2022 Planning Committee, one small effort toward connecting to the larger mission to engage and inspire in the midterms. I'm also seeing the punk underground ignite to speak out and energize. Having Bikini Kill on tour again, bringing organizations like SisterSong to their audiences and letting the newer generations of rockers know that we still care and will fight is also keeping me going.

—**Molly Neuman** chief marketing officer, Downtown Music Holdings

LET A FRIEND RELEASE YOUR FEAR

I grew up in the Deep South, where there's absolutely no separation of church and state. My mom didn't raise me with a super-closed mind, even though I grew up in church. I just didn't feel like my viewpoint fit in a lot of places. Now, being in music and having friends from all over the place, it's a lot easier to learn. I've learned a lot from my friend Beth [Cosentino] in the band Best Coast, and I feel like she has taught me a lot about speaking up and being willing to take the shit that comes with that.

I wish that someone had told me earlier on that I could speak out against power, and yes, it comes with shit and it comes with people pushing back against you, but that's how progress is made. I have a lot of anxiety, and when one of the first big women's marches was in town, I was going through a divorce — it wasn't even my divorce yet, it was like a horrible breakup in that same relationship — and I was like, "I can't go," and I was talking to Beth about it and just being like, "I feel like if I speak up

about something, even if I know it's right, I feel like it's going to bear down on me and I'm not going to be able to breathe." I think the confidence to speak up about these things is a muscle.

It's also a continuous learning lesson. You have to be willing to be wrong and then get redirected. You have to be willing to ask a lot of questions and find resources and people to partner with. I'm learning right now that the best and the shortest route is to direct people to A, people smarter than me, but B, to people that actually do the work day in and day out — obviously, Planned Parenthood and the American Civil Liberties Union, but now, it's just becoming more and more apparent that we have to dig deeper than that. Being a woman from the South, I think it is important to speak up because there are a lot of people down here that are now stranded, essentially, and you have to be able to point them to actual help. I'm focusing on Abortion Care Tennessee, which is here in Nashville, and Mississippi Reproductive Freedom Fund.

I know that our shows feel like safe places for people. But now the responsibility is going to be really telling people what they can do. It's also not just about when I'm onstage. It's about, "What cities are we going to? What's going on in those cities? OK, we're stopping in Mississippi — what are we going to do with this show, whether it's monetarily or partnering and getting our hands dirty?" I just don't understand the point of traveling across the country if there's not more purpose than just sweating for an hour-and-a-half to two hours and getting applauded. [It's about] giving your fans the resources. It's telling your team, "We've got to do better." I texted one of our booking agents last week, and I was like, "We need to have a meeting about what UTA is going to do on a grander scale, about what Live Nation and these promoters can do." Because bands will do what they can. If they're in the fight, they're going to do what they can, but they also need support to keep it going.

—**Hayley Williams**



SHAPIRO, CRAIG BARRETT/GETTY IMAGES; OATES-PRIMUS, COURTESY OF OAK VIEW GROUP; WILLIAMS, AMY SUSSMAN/GETTY IMAGES

OPLE

...Or Cultivate

A New One

As Afro-Latinas who grew up in the Midwest, we've always understood that our current system was not made to serve or protect us. And so, we've always taken it upon ourselves to cultivate communities of care that extend far beyond our immediate sphere. Take empowerment into your own hands! We have members on our team looking into abortion doula courses so they themselves can be a resource for our community. Join the movement



Coco and Breezy

toward holding a constitutional convention. Our current Constitution is dusty AF and could for sure use some updates. And finally, we need some revolutionary optimism to enter the chat! We have the power and tools to connect, nurture and support each other now more than ever.

—Coco and Breezy

Partner With Your Roster

By partnering with their artists, labels looking to make a difference can amplify their reach. For instance, we're working with our artist Scene Queen on crafting a specific piece of merchandise that will raise funds for charities that support abortion access. Another thing we've implemented at Hopeless Records is our Sub City Cause of the Month: We highlight and support various nonprofits each month and donate all the proceeds from our merch store donation option to a specific nonprofit. The charities we

support vary from month to month, but this July, we felt it was appropriate to support the National Network of Abortion Funds.

—Erin Choi vp of marketing and product management, Hopeless Records



Choi

Talk To Your Wider Team

Lean on and surround yourself with a like-minded community of both women and men, and allow them to keep you mentally strong and positive whenever possible. As the head of Warner Music Nashville's women's employee resource group, I knew that I had an immediate responsibility to do all I could to make sure my female col-

leagues felt safe and protected by their company. I am lucky to have incredible leaders who all were immediately open to speaking with me on this matter and ensured me that I had their full support in wanting to make sure our women were protected and felt safe.

The women of both Warner Music Nashville and our Center of Excellence offices are all based in Tennessee and will therefore be affected by the state's heartbeat law that became effective immediately after Roe's reversal, as well as its trigger law. I therefore reached out to Warner Music's global head of diversity, equity and inclusion, Dr. Maurice Stinnett. His team immediately put together a Zoom of about 15 to 20 Warner Music personnel, where we discussed not only the expanded benefits options that

would now be offered to all employees, considering the recent SCOTUS ruling, but also how we can lean more into the mental health resources that Warner Music offers. It felt wonderful to know that not only was my company one step ahead of my concerns, it was also acknowledging the mental health toll that losing this fundamental right to choice was going to have on individuals. I was given an incredible road map from the leaders on this call, armed with comforting insight as to what steps are being taken from a corporate standpoint, and was therefore able to go back to the women at Warner Music Nashville and assure them: Regardless of where you live, your company will support both your physical and mental health in any way that it can.

—Bridget Herrmann regional manager, radio, Warner Music Nashville



COCO: CHELSA LAUREN WIND; CHOI: MEGAN THOMPSON

Show No Strings Solidarity

I'd implore every company in music (and beyond) to go out of their way to outline guidelines, policies and resources (i.e., paid leave, contribution to travel expenses) instead of putting employees in a position of having to ask.
—**Bronte Jane** vp of A&R, Third Side Music

As soon as the opinion was made official, we sent out a note affirming everyone's right to control their own reproductive health, and restating that our offices are a safe space for all of our people. We wanted to take immediate steps, which is why we're supporting the Center for Reproductive Rights and matching employee donations. We also expanded our health coverage so our employees and dependents can travel for medical procedures, and we made short-term disability immediately available. In addition, we'll cover any legal expenses arising from any action taken against those who access covered medical procedures. We want our people to know that they're supported and that their well-being is our priority.

—**Masha Osherova** executive vp/chief people officer, Warner Music Group

Make Time For Facetime

It's important to have meaningful conversations in your life. Meaningful conversations are not social media posts. Take the time to engage with people in your life who could get pregnant and make sure that their health needs are being met. If you are a person who is sleeping with someone who could get pregnant, make the time to communicate about every detail that goes into managing health and make sure that this is not a one-sided responsibility. If you're not willing to take the time and discomfort of having meaningful conversations with people about what is affecting them, you missed an opportunity.

—**Maria Elena** guitarist, Special Interest



Align With Like-Minded Artists

I think that we shouldn't support artists who don't support our rights. So for me, I'm not going to go to a concert or spend money on a person who doesn't believe that I should have bodily autonomy or family autonomy. Artists can speak up and just stay current and helpful in that.

—**Amanda Shires**

Tap Into Your Connections

As communications professionals, our clients rely on us to help them research organizations and guide them on public statements. When news of the Roe ruling broke, we immediately reached out to our contacts at the American Civil Liberties Union and Planned Parenthood Action Fund, as well as a network of grassroots organizers we know and trust, to collect information and digital tools for ourselves and our clients. We're diligent in researching these organizations to make sure that principles align. Many of our clients have young fans, and figuring out how to succinctly offer a reaction, share facts and perhaps inspire others to take action of their own is hugely important. Providing them with information and a plan of action helps us all feel less helpless. We regularly canvass our team to hear what organizations everyone in the company feels strongly about championing, and we make donations accordingly. For a company spread across three states, and with several young employees who may often feel helpless in the face of gargantuan political implications, this helps ground us all with a sense of shared purpose.

—**Chlöe Walsh** co-founder/chief executive, The Oriel Company

Double Down On Your Medium

Now more than ever, the stories and narratives we tell across all media platforms are paramount to enacting change and starting a dialogue about fundamental issues, such as Roe v. Wade.

As a creative, I use my expertise in visual storytelling to add weight to the significance of an artist's song. Every song has a story, and if that story is one that myself and the artist feel has larger cultural implications, it is my job to ensure the coinciding visuals really highlight that message. With videos such as Halsey's "Nightmare," for example, I knew I wanted to amplify the discourse around gender inequality. When we started the creative process for that video, we were fueled by the frustrations of feeling voiceless in our own country. We knew the writing was on the wall with Roe v. Wade and that ultimately culminated with the concept behind the video. These topics are evergreen, and if this latest ruling hasn't made it apparent enough, they're not going away unless we take action and use our creative influence to drum up conversation. When that video came out, we received an outpouring of support from viewers it resonated with. Its sentiment remains just as relevant now, if not more so than it was at its release.

—**Hannah Lux Davis** music video director



Lux Davis

Wear Your Cause On Your Sleeve

The Grateful Dead's music has always fought against the suppression of freedom, and today we continue that legacy. The passionate and informed Natascha Weir [guitarist Bob Weir's wife] created the design for the Dead & Co. "Save Our Rights" shirt, which will help fund multiple pro-choice organizations. We hope to not only help monetarily but also by shedding a light on this incredibly important issue. It might be time to take a beat, look around and realize, "The women are smarter."

—**Mickey Hart** Dead & Co.



Hart

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TOUR WITH INTENTION

Aid The Already Active

Live Nation reported that they are anticipating over 70 million fans attending shows this year. At concerts, the music industry has a unique opportunity to create on-ramps to activism: mass signing of petitions, educational opportunities for fans that are not frustrated enough about this attack on our democracy and creating strong bonds between fans and local advocacy organizations by inviting them on site.

—Adam Met, AJR

Bring Meaning To The Merch Table

Connect with Noise for Now, a nationwide initiative that connects artists to organizations that support reproductive justice. Simple actions include taking abortion information cards and stickers on tour and placing them on merchandise tables and in bathrooms to get crucial information into the hands of concertgoers in every city. Musicians can donate the proceeds from merch items to reproductive justice organizations, and they can partner with Plus1 to donate \$1 per every concert ticket sold to the local-level abortion clinics and abortion funds of their choice. Agents can also use our network of promoters to help add a benefit concert to any market along the tour's route to raise much needed funds for that community's abortion clinic and/or fund.

—Samantha Kirby Yoh partner/co-head of global music, UTA

Travel Thoughtfully

Bands should boycott states that enacted trigger laws. Or they can continue to play in those states *but* donate *all* the funds to abortion clinics — especially independent abortion clinics.

—Marissa Oliver corporate social responsibility specialist, TuneCore/Believe

Reroute Your Profits

In those states where access to abortion is removed, promoters should find a way to reroute [show] profits so they don't contribute

to the political factions that strip people's rights away and instead are redirected to initiatives they are aligned with. This is probably one of the most important areas of music to activate since entertainment plays such a big role in state economics. Boycotting these events is one solution, but perhaps there are other ways that don't punish the local music stakeholders behind them. One potential solution is offered by the Web3 space, where we've seen decentralized autonomous organizations leverage their community to raise funds — such as UnicornDAO and Endaoment's joint initiative LegalAbortion.eth or Adriana Arce's Haus of Power. The beauty of Web3 is its transparent infrastructure which ensures that money flows to the right places.

—Andreea Magdalina founder, shesaidthe

As music business-people, we all can make informed choices around what we support, how and where, with our tours and festival appearances, with our spending money as industry organizations, as visitors, panelists and networkers at conferences or business events. There are ways in which we can use our commercial leverage to boycott events where the actions of the state — and the money collected by the state — is directly contributing to this heinous subjugation of women's rights. We can look at choosing to tour in different places and different venues, and we can choose not to pay our business or consumer or individual monies to support states' regimes that we do not agree with and which erode the basic fundamental human rights of women. When artists, DJs, producers and bands do need to tour or perform in those states where abortion has been banned, think about what you can collaboratively do to contribute something back to the women whose lives are affected by those decisions at the state level — for example, a percentage donation of fees or an offset of taxes earned in that state from the event/festival. When we do this industrywide, we hit home where it matters — the bank balance — we create genuine power for change.

—Silvia Montello CEO, Association for Electronic Music



Montello



MAKE ACTIVISM APPROACHABLE

The overturning of Roe v. Wade has been a rallying cry across the country to get back to organizing as much effective opposition as we can. How exactly those of us in our music industry can have the biggest impact is up to each of us, to do the work to research, discuss and decide what feels like the right path to giving your support, using our platforms to educate and motivate others.

As a touring musician, I've spent a lot of my career integrating my activism into the fans' concert experience to raise both funds and awareness for causes I care about. Back in 1991 and 1992, reproductive rights were again being threatened, and together with Tom Campbell, a pioneer of music industry activism, and his Guacamole Fund, we held fundraising receptions after my concerts to support Voters for Choice and Planned Parenthood. This was at a time when Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey was working its way through the Supreme Court (threatening the federal right to abortion as guaranteed by Roe v. Wade). I bought blocks of good seats and donated them to be sold at a higher price to folks wanting to support the cause. It was a very effective way to bring both attention and support to the groups without haranguing the audience from the stage. I respect that the audience is there for the music, and I know not everyone would agree with me, anyway. That said, after-show receptions and special benefit seats are terrific ways to raise funds and support.

Recently, we've shifted to more streamlined means of raising funds on tour, to both help save my voice and energy for the shows, but also to accommodate our COVID-19 touring safety precautions. Since 2009, we've built \$1 for charity into

the price of every ticket sold and we also offer premium seating with an up-charge for charity added to the face value of the ticket, which we affectionately call "scalping for charity." We find these two avenues to be our most effective ways of raising money to give directly to our vetted charity and activist groups.

After playing the dates, we grant funds raised on tour to local, regional and national organizations we've carefully chosen for their effective work on issues that mean the most to me. Many don't have access to huge corporate funding to buy ads, so utilizing our voices to present alternative positions is an especially effective way to level the awareness playing field. We invite local grassroots groups to set up tables at my concerts so the audience (if interested) can learn about issues affecting their community and decide if they would like to get more involved. I find concerts can often be a "neutral space" where people can ask questions they might not feel comfortable discussing in other situations.

It's very important to vet the organizations to which we make grants, as we want to ensure that the money we donate mostly supports their stated mission and programs, not just their fundraising and operational expenses. This can be done by reviewing their financial information, usually required to be made publicly available (often on their websites; other good resources for vetting potential organizations are charitynavigator.org and guidestar.org).

Let's hope that, with the latest rulings out of the courts and the need to address so many crucial issues, we'll see a resurgence of activism in our music community that will once again show what a real difference harnessing the power of the artist-audience relationship can make.

—Bonnie Raitt

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Jim Farber - The Guardian

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Jacob Uitti - American Songwriter

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Steve Horowitz - PopMatters

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GET PERSONAL



Keys

Sing Your Truth

A simple but effective way to help is to talk, write, sing and create about abortion experiences. Humanize and destigmatize the word and the process. Share powerful stories, everyday stories, our own stories and experiences about abortion. So it can become something we can be open and talk about without fear or shame.

—Alicia Keys

Share Your Story

Being vulnerable and sharing your story is powerful. As a member of the LGBTQ+ community, coming out of the closet created a new connection to the community around me and helped show LGBTQ+ kids that life does get better when you are authentically you. We all know someone who has had an abortion, we just might not know who specifically has had one, the reasons they made the decision and how it affected their lives. If you're comfortable, be open about your abortion story, in private conversations, on social media, within your employee resource groups.

—Tracy Chan senior vp of Creator, SoundCloud



Chan

HAVE THE UNCOMFORTABLE CONVERSATIONS

As a woman born of an East Asian minority community in the United States (I'm Korean American), sexual and reproductive health was never talked about. All of us second-generation kids found out about sexual health through school, friends, the internet — you name it, but definitely not our parents.

However, underneath the outwardly conservative and understated culture is a real deeply rooted sense of practicality and family. Our parents came to America from poverty-stricken countries, sometimes with upwards of eight to 10 siblings. They wanted better for their families.

They worked harder and planned better. Behind closed doors are many aunts, nieces, cousins and friends that have had to make the tough decision to choose the path of abortion in order to dutifully care for their family and themselves.

There are several ways artists and industry members from culturally conservative minority communities can help address sexual health. One straightforward way is to create open public discussions that allow community members to learn and participate privately. If there are a

few bold voices to break the ice, it could help create comfort for those that feel unable to speak for themselves.

In my personal case, I don't think I want to have children, and these reproductive rights restrictions will not have a huge effect on me due to my privilege living in a blue state. However, what about my less fortunate friends, families and community members living in restricted states? With the amount of sacrifice that it took for us to end up in this country, we should have the right to live our lives conscientiously.

—TOKIMONSTA



Bypass The Gatekeepers

Many distributors, like DistroKid, Vydia, Symphonic, Stem and Amuse now make it easy to split up royalty payments. Why not take a percentage of the revenue from your upcoming release and donate it to an organization that is in the trenches fighting this fight day in and day out? Ask your distributor or label to send a percentage of your money directly to an organization fighting for women's rights and abortion access. As an artist, you now have the tools to reach an audience without the permission of the traditional gatekeepers. Pitch yourself directly to Spotify playlist editors through the Spotify for Artists pitching tool to get on one of the platform's protest, social justice and women-focused playlists like Rise Up, Vital Voices and the EQUAL Hub.

—Ari Herstand author, *How To Make It in the New Music Business*; CEO, Ari's Take

Wield Your Influence

In this country, people need to understand that there are two types of power: money and influence, with the latter being the one that most moves the needle. Any high-profile music artists or any of their representatives have a unique opportunity to use their platforms to move the needle by contacting their respective senators and/or members of Congress and letting them know how they feel on the issues that are important to them and hold them accountable. In addition, hosting and contributing to various campaigns to make sure Democrats get elected is super important. I am co-hosting a series of fundraisers in the next few months to keep prominent Democrats in office and to hopefully elect new ones. Anyone wanting to come and donate, please hit me up!

—Dina LaPolta founder, LaPolta Law

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AND OF COURSE, VOTE!

Claim Your Autonomy

No one should have authority over my body, period. This is a crime against women and birthing parents' rights and is unnecessarily creating so many health risks. The human stories that have been shared since this happened have been horrifying. This is why it's so important to vote during the mid-term elections so we can elect the right people to protect our reproductive rights.

—**Coi Leray**

Use Experience To Fuel Empowerment

After birthing my children — namely Polo G when I was 17 years young — and inevitably being forced to make strategic decisions to navigate my



son's career amid the already male-dominated industry, the Supreme Court's decision to overturn abortion rights is devastating. A male-dominated council is ultimately making decisions on how and when we procreate. I view this as a wake-up call that we, as Americans and leaders, have failed to appreciate the many civil liberties we worked so hard to attain. It is imperative that we vote and be empowered to take on roles within our justice system.

—**Stacia Mac** manager, ODA Management

Get Over Politics

No one really likes politics. But if you want to protect your rights, if we want to protect all our rights, it's very important that you vote. That's really the most important action you can take if you want to stand up for Roe v. Wade or any other potential ruling the Supreme Court can hand down. Two voter registration organizations — Black Voters Matter and HeadCount

— are confirmed to be present at this year's Made in America Festival.

—**Desiree Perez** CEO, Roc Nation



Inform Yourself On The Issues

Because these Supreme Court rulings give power to regionalism, we need to pay extra attention to our local government, researching the shit out of potential

congressional candidates running for office now and in November. [Republican] Mary Miller should have never won her primary [in Illinois' 15th congressional district], and one of the main reasons why extreme right-wing candidates are doing so well right now is because of these new rulings — the far right are coming out of the woodwork to join in, they're inspired. We need to have the kind of collective inspiration that we had when we were fighting for Biden to win the presidency. We will always need to stay informed on these issues, who these delegates are, what they support and

how they financially are endorsed as they run. The NAACP has a good guideline for what to do to read up on local officials who may not have as much press.

—**Angel Olsen**

Prep The Next Generation

It's our duty and responsibility to educate young people on the importance of voting. If we can get across to [kids] in a fun, creative way that once they're 18 they have a voice, or can hold office, or run a charity benefiting a certain cause (such as women's reproductive rights), I believe we'll be in a better position to make an impact.

—**Bob Celestin** founding partner, Law Offices of Bob A. Celestin

I've had many casual conversations with minority youth about the voting process and some of them didn't even know where to vote — or that they could vote for the local politicians that affect decisions in their very own neighborhoods. People from our urban communities are scared because they're going into unfamiliar territory to vote oftentimes, and there's big cages and they don't know what to do when you walk in. I can imagine how many more young adults share similar feelings throughout the country. We can teach our youth how to do this early on and maybe have our clients go into these high schools to advocate for voting. We can even have mock voting, just like how in law school there's mock trials.

—**Navarro Grey** founding partner, The Grey Law Firm

Learn Alongside Your Fans

It's important we encourage and help mobilize artists to use their voices, platforms and influence for what they believe in — there are millions of people just like them that need encouragement or a push to take action. About two years ago, I had an artist who was interested in learning more



ELECT FIGHTERS

In one fell swoop, the U.S. Supreme Court's reversal of Roe v. Wade denies more than 160 million women their constitutional right over their own bodies and jeopardizes their access to essential reproductive health care services. And, according to one of the court's written opinions, puts countless other rights at risk — from our right to contraception to same-sex intimacy and marriage.

As Americans we have the power to effect change, and it's based in our power to vote. If we want government to reflect our best interests, we need to elect people at every level — local, state and federal — who will fight for us and our rights. That includes ensuring every woman's access to reproductive health care services, as well as other essential issues like education and gun safety.

To put it mildly, this year's elections are critical. The outcome will affect the lives of millions of Americans and determine whether they will enjoy their full rights. In order to succeed, we simply must register more voters and get them to vote, especially younger people. It's pretty simple: If you want to reflect the will of the people, you have to hear what they have to say. After all, somewhere around one-third of America's eligible voters didn't even vote in the 2020 elections.

I encourage — no, I implore you to ask everyone you know to check their voter registration now. Even if they think they're registered, check to see that you haven't been improperly removed from the voting rolls before it's too late — text VOTER to 26797. As for my colleagues in music, please work with outstanding partners like I Am a Voter (iamavoter.com), a nonpartisan organization aimed at creating a cultural shift around voting and civic engagement, as well as voter mobilization groups like HeadCount, When We All Vote and Voto Latino.

The time is now to elect candidates who will fight for us. The stakes are too high to do anything else.

—**Jody Gerson** chairman/CEO, Universal Music Publishing Group



BONNIE RAITT

just like that...

"On Just Like That..., Raitt certainly sounds like the best version of herself. Her voice has only become richer and more nuanced over the years, her range spanning a low purr all the way up to a floating falsetto, her ability to effortlessly bend a lyric to her will as supple as ever." - **BILLBOARD**

"The blues-rock icon's first LP in six years is as warm and soulful as ever." - **ROLLING STONE**

"Just Like That... brings new depth to songs of love and loss... Understanding that life is finite, the stakes are higher for every relationship, every moment. On 'Just Like That,' Raitt calls for compassion, consolation and perseverance to get through with grace." - **NEW YORK TIMES**

"Her voice remains a subtle instrument, earthy with an ache around the edges, its smoothness textured by a fine grittiness. Its sly intimacy is, as always, a deep pleasure." - **NPR FRESH AIR**

"Just Like That..." continues her late-career renaissance... a potent reminder that she's still here, and still vital" - **WALL STREET JOURNAL**

"...Raitt is in top form, recruiting blues rock fans above and underground to pay attention to her soulful emanations." - **NO DEPRESSION**

"...Raitt's absolutely brilliant new album, Just Like That... should put the multiple Grammy winner right back in the mix for 2023. From track one, 'Made Up Mind,' through track 10, 'Down The Hall,' the album is Raitt at her best — heartfelt, moving, rocking, bluesy, vibrant, life affirming. It is an eclectic mix of songs that remind again why Raitt is a musical institution." - **FORBES**



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NICOLE HENRY

TIME TO LOVE AGAIN

"Every inflection conveyed mastery..."

The New York Times

"An exuberant, joyous, immaculately executed set."

DOWNBEAT

"TIME TO LOVE AGAIN is a triumph."

ROOTS MUSIC REPORT

"Vivid and enthralling, funky and sensual... a new masterpiece."

Smooth Jazz

"... one of the best new CDs I've heard. A rare talent...strong and beguiling."

SAN DIEGO TROUBADOUR

about how each branch and role within government affected decisions and policies. Understanding her audience could also benefit from the education, we created a weekly educational livestream where she'd bring experts on IG Live to learn more for eight weeks. The fact that the artist was learning about the topic with her fans humanized her and brought her and her fans even closer. We ended up flooded with testimonies describing the fans' voting experience and how our program helped them cast their vote.

—**Yaz Britt** director of A&R, SoundCloud

Focus Local First

Voting in general is important, but now more than ever, participating in the vote at the local election level all the way up to national elections has never been more important. Real change starts from the bottom up, and electing



officials who support your beliefs is our power to combat what comes next after the overturning of Roe v. Wade. Primary elections are happening now across the country, and I hope we all take the time to learn about each candidate for every position and vote for those who will support our core values.

—**Em Beihold**

Read Up On Registration

Artists and music industry professionals can register, check their voter registration and then shout it out on their social media, email lists, text clubs, websites and during interviews. They can ensure their fans are registered by working with organizations such as Michelle Obama's When We All Vote — a crucial nonpartisan resource that also supplies messaging on key registration deadlines and primary dates — as well as HeadCount, which can help to register fans at shows. Artists and their teams can also work regionally with organizations such as Stacey Abrams' New Georgia Project, which has registered over 300,000 voters in Georgia alone.

—**Emily White** partner, Collective Entertainment; founder, #iVoted Festival

Make A Plan For The Polls

Unfortunately, the power now lies with each state to decide the reproductive health of so many. The most powerful way to fight back is by heading to the polls for your state and local elections. If it's available in your state, I've found requesting an absentee ballot ahead of time to be super helpful: It eliminates the additional stress of fighting long lines at the polls or sitting in traffic and allows you to focus from the comfort of your own home.

—**Carianne Marshall** co-chair/COO, Warner Chappell Music

Think Before You Synch...

The recipients of synch license requests for the use of a song or master in an advertisement for a state organization, such as a state tourism board, should carefully consider the stance of the particular state on reproductive health and abortion rights. While the ad may not be overtly political, denying the use of music to support a state on the wrong side of the abortion aisle may make a powerful statement over time. Similarly, it is important to be aware of the position that commercial advertisers in general have taken on the right to choose, to support those who are proactively supporting the rights of their employees and turn down requests from advertisers known for their opposition to abortion.

—**Lisa Alter** partner, Alter Kendrick & Baron

...And Also Before You Speak

Now more than ever, we should continue to act in solidarity and advocate for each other's rights. That means march, donate, vote, make your voice heard — but it can also be as simple as making sure to use inclusive language when you refer to people's reproductive rights (this decision does not solely affect cis gender women).

—**Maurice Stinnett** global head of diversity, equity and inclusion, Warner Music Group



LOOK BEYOND THE INITIAL ISSUE

I hate to circle the narrative of race with a ruling that ultimately affects all women, femmes and gender-expansive human beings' access to abortion care services. However, I can't seem to shake the disparities that overwhelmingly place Black women at the top in maternal complications by death; according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, per 100,000 live births, Black women make up 41% of all pregnancy-related deaths, with deaths among American Native and Alaskan Native women closely alongside at 30% and white women at 13%.

The National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda reports that although Black women only make up 13% of the U.S. population, we make up 38% of all U.S. abortions. Its

2021 policy agenda also informs that Black women are more likely to lack economic resources, to be unemployed and/or underinsured and to be insured by programs that restrict coverage for abortion care. The agenda also reports on the myriad factors contributing to Black women and girls' overall health and reproductive outcomes.

I bring this to attention when discussing reproductive justice: what it means to mobilize, to encourage the music community to look further than Roe v. Wade or the right to bodily autonomy and take a deep dive into the historic and systemic injustices that continuously place the lives of Black women and men on the back burner of discussion, when statistically we are ahead at the coroner's office.

If you are motivated to act, I implore you to further discover and advocate for organizations focused on reproductive health and also uplift organizations that service communities in an effort to reduce poverty, overincarceration and sexual violence and increase access to healthy food, mental health, sex education and health care services. Review the Fall of Roe Resource Guide; some highlights include the Reproductive Health Access Project and In Our Voices: Black Woman's Reproductive Justice Agenda.

If this all feels overwhelming, it is because it is — but we got this.

—**Noelle Scaggs** co-lead singer, Fitz & The Tantrums; co-founder, Diversify the Stage

FELIPE PELÁEZ

PARA SU CONSIDERACIÓN



DIVERSO

Felipe Peláez se muestra a plenitud en diversos frentes de la música tropical, logrando interesantes fusiones de sonidos contemporáneos, diversos géneros, diversos tipos de arreglos, diversos productores e invitados.



EL DE SIEMPRE

La faceta original de Felipe Peláez como cantautor. Un recorrido netamente vallenato en letras de su autoría. Habla del amor, costumbres y cultura de su tierra.

A su consideración Latin Grammys

ASTOR TORRES

Todo Por Ti

Desde la bella ciudad de Guatemala llega a nosotros Astor Torres, quien radica desde hace 20 años en la ciudad de Miami.

Astor Torres lanza su tercera publicación titulada "Todo Por Ti" Canción en la cual se inspira en sus dos retoños Mateo y Milán.

Bajo la producción y arreglo del maestro Cesar Benítez, Astor Torres nos brinda una canción que mientras el mundo siga procreando, no pasara de moda jamás.

Astor Torres espera conseguir ganarse el corazón de todos los románticos del mundo con esta hermosa canción "Todo Por Ti"

Puedes escuchar este hermoso tema en todas las plataformas digitales y redes sociales bajo

@astortorres <https://youtu.be/pwC11WtNPSs>
 @dreamsofsound

SNAP



HAS ENTERED THE CHAT



With its new AR innovations, the tech company wants

to make concertgoing more fun and functional — and open

up a whole new world of artist partnerships, too

BY LYNDESEY HAVENS



IN A CLEAR DAY IN Manhattan, the rooftop of Snap Inc.'s Midtown offices offers an excellent view — especially of the giant purple robot and friendly-looking hot dog that are waving from behind skyscrapers.

And no — no one here is on drugs.

The characters, which can only be seen when looking at the skyline through Snapchat, seem hilariously out of place. But company executives hope they will look right at home at Lollapalooza Chicago, which runs July 28-31. Ideally, the festival's 100,000 attendees will make them so by incorporating these characters into their photos and videos that can only be created at the show in Grant Park.

Technology showing things on a screen that aren't there in real life is augmented reality, an area of innovation that Snapchat and its parent company, Snap Inc., have quietly dominated for years. Since 2013, when Snapchat debuted Lenses — which let users apply AR filters over photos and videos — the company has developed AR technology for both utility and entertainment. Live music could benefit from both.



Left: Jack Harlow at Lollapalooza in 2021. Under Snap's new partnership with Live Nation, the company's AR technology will play a starring role at the Chicago festival July 28-31 and on the rapper's tour, which kicks off in September.



Now, as startups and tech giants alike are increasingly using AR, Snap wants to position itself as the company best suited to bring it to concerts. Its new, multiyear partnership with concert giant Live Nation, the parent company of Lollapalooza promoter C3 Presents, will surely help.

Kevin Chernetz, Live Nation's executive vp of global content partnerships and innovation, recalls his "aha" moment with bringing AR to live music in 2019 during a concert with The Chainsmokers. The dance act had partnered with Verizon to offer AR experiences such as live filters and photo opportunities. "I was standing there like, 'Only the people here get this,' and I like that," says Chernetz. "It's the FOMO snap."

The only problem? Such experiential enhancements could only be accessed through a pre-installed app fans had to download — which served no purpose after that show. The same year, at Atlanta's Music Midtown festival, Live Nation offered a second AR experience, this time through the festival's own app, and a similar issue arose. "It was just so obvious to me I've got to go where the fans are and not necessarily rely on the fans to discover these things on their own," says Chernetz. So, last July, he reached out to Ben Schwerin, Snap's senior vp of content and partnerships.

"I was like, 'We need to do this with you. You have 250 million daily users,

I have basically zero,'" says Chernetz. (Seventy-five percent of Snapchat's 347 million daily active users across 20 countries are ages 13-34.) "There really was no other platform to turn to. If you look at AR interaction, there's no other platform that's even close."

This April, at the annual Snap Partner Summit, Live Nation and Snap announced they had signed a four-year deal to bring custom AR to festivals and concerts, with help from Snap's creative studio Arcadia, which launched last October. In May, the two companies unveiled the partnership at Las Vegas' Electric Daisy Carnival, promoted by Live Nation subsidiary Insomniac. As promised, the partnership showed how AR could make festivals more fun, but also more navigable for attendees. One Snapchat Lens showed neon-colored daisies sprouting from the ground, while more practical tools included the interactive map AR Compass and the Friend FindAR Lens, launched at EDC in beta, which helps fans pinpoint their relative location from friends using visual aids like rainbow-lit AR pathways.

It was a full-circle moment for Snapchat and Live Nation, which had first teamed up for a one-off partnership at EDC in 2014 — when, as Chernetz recalls with a laugh, "I got a call that there was this company trying to get into EDC for free to test this closed-circuit communications system that no one had ever heard of." (Snapchat did, in fact, get in — and

"There really was no other platform to turn to. If you look at AR interaction, there's no other platform that's even close."

—KEVIN CHERNETZ, LIVE NATION

subsequently tested the platform's first-ever Our Story, a user-populated reel of Snaps, at the festival.)

More than a dozen festivals are on deck for Live Nation and Snap, with Lollapalooza up next. Snapchat will offer four features at the Chicago staple: AR Compass, which works even without cellular connectivity and uses GPS wayfinding to show an interactive 3D map (for sustainability reasons, Lollapalooza ended its paper programs); Friend FindAR, now out of beta; Festival Planner, which lets fans note must-see sets and share custom schedules; and Lollaland, where the purple robot and hot dog live, contained within the Chicagoland area over the festival weekend by geofencing. (Patrick

Dentler, director of marketing for C3 Presents, says the festival wants to integrate AR features while ensuring fans aren't glued to their phones, which is why most of Lollapalooza's AR offerings are utility-based.)

Snap's Live Nation partnership comes at a pivotal time for the tech company, which in May announced it would likely miss its second-quarter targets for revenue and adjusted profit. Its stock took a beating, plummeting from an all-time high of \$83.11 last September to \$11.91 in mid-June. Following a small rebound, Snap's stock fell to \$9.96 after the company released its second-quarter financial report on July 21, which revealed a net loss of \$422 million, compared with \$152 million the year prior, even

as revenue increased slightly, by 13% year over year to \$1.1 billion.

Promisingly, though, the company's daily active user growth increased 18% to 347 million during this period. And at this crucial juncture, AR provides a path forward for Snap to differentiate itself from competitors. The company wants to find real-life applications for the technology, and the concert business offers one with potential. Snap knows fans are already on their phones at concerts, so it wants to meet them there.

Snap's interest in music goes well beyond concerts. The platform envisions itself as integral to an artist's plans at each career stage, from launch — bolstered by the 2020 introduction of its Sounds feature, in which millions of songs were licensed to the platform for the first time — to ascent. Ultimately, the company hopes to become a central part of lasting careers at a time when TikTok virality is beginning to feel a bit too familiar — and fleeting.

One way the platform will double down is by bringing AR to a handful of Live Nation's fall tours, starting with Jack Harlow's 22-date *Come Home the Kids Miss You* shows, which begin in September. The rapper's custom AR experience will include merchandise drops, experiences timed to key parts of the show and Portal Lenses, which allows fans to see special content when entering certain areas on the tour grounds.

"This tour is something my team and I have been working on and ideating for a while, especially during the making of this new album," says Harlow. "Now that everyone's back outside, the energy at live concerts has never been higher, so we wanted to create an even more immersive experience for my fans who are already capturing moments during my show. [We wanted to] take it a step further [with] augmented reality that extends the tour experience right in the palms of their hands."

Schwerin expands on that idea: "AR is going to be the next important creative canvas for artists when they're thinking about, 'What is my show going to look like?' As the technology evolves, we want to think about, 'What does the future of concerts look like?'"



Left: Snapchat's AR technology will enhance fans' concert experience with tools including Friend FindAR, a way to locate others among the masses.

RESH SIDHI, the global director of Snap's creative studio Arcadia, grew up loving sci-fi films, particularly *Back to the Future*, because of their sense of possibility. She says colleague Peter Sellis, vp of product at Snap, feels similarly, though his reference point is the "Mis-match!" closet technology from *Clueless*. "There were things we imagined and believed, and there is no reality in which those can't be possible," says Sidhi. "That's what we want to enable. We can forge that future that we imagined."

Sidhi has over a decade of experience working at the intersection of creativity and technology, with previous clients including Fenty Beauty, Nike and Samsung, and was eager to hit the ground running when she joined Arcadia and its roughly 40-person team in February. She believes "there is no better place than Snap in the world who is doing the best AR,"

and says she's particularly fond of its mission to democratize the technology with partnerships — like the one with Live Nation — that offer "a creative runway."

That has been part of Snap's strategy since it was founded in 2011 by Evan Spiegel, Bobby Murphy and Reggie Brown. Snap has remained independent, turning down substantial offers by Facebook and Google, but has a rich history of acquiring forward-thinking tech companies such as QR code scanning startup Scan.me; Lookery, which helped develop Snap's now-famed Lenses; Bitmoji founder Bitstrips; and AR startup Cimage Media.

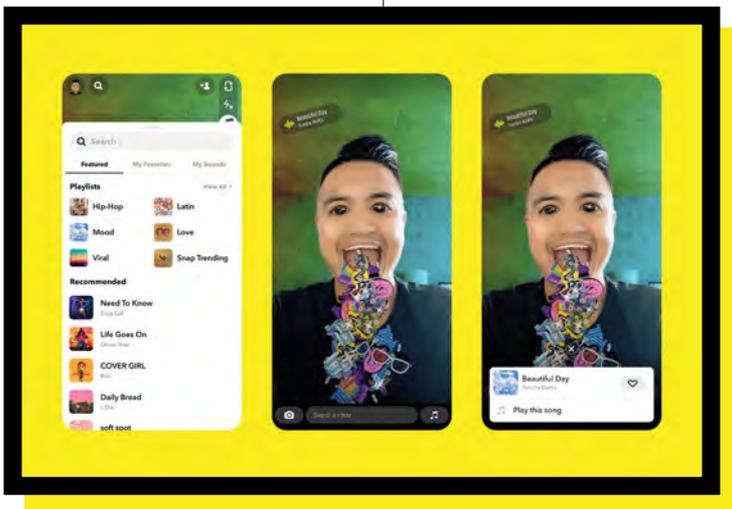
"When people started using Snapchat, it felt like a really fun, innovative way to communicate with the people you cared about most because it was visual, it was ephemeral," says Schwerin, who joined the company in 2015. "This felt very novel, and frankly, it still does. When you think about how all of these [other] apps have

evolved, a lot of them have adapted features that we pioneered. They said, 'How can we do our version of Stories?' or 'How do we do our version of Lenses?'" (Notably, Instagram has also leaned into AR, incorporating the tech into its own effects and filters.)

In 2016, Snapchat Inc. rebranded as Snap Inc. to become more inclusive of new product lines such as Spectacles and the mini drone Pixy, and in a 2017 Securities and Exchange Commission filing, it declared itself to be "a camera company" rather than a social media platform. In its continued pursuit of innovation and expansion, Snap has invested heavily in AR — and while the term might be unfamiliar to users, the technology probably isn't.

"People have been using augmented reality, hundreds of millions of people now, for years," Schwerin says. AR enhances, rather than removes, users from reality, Sidhi adds, noting that "augmenting the world in which you live is what we see as the future of how we are going to interact as a species, completely."

"AR technology is moving at such speed it's remarkable," continues Sidhi, citing the rapid development of "segmentation" technology. "What we're doing with sky segmentation we couldn't do a year ago. What we're doing with ground segmen-



Snapchat's Sounds feature allows users to add music to content generated using the app's Lenses.

tation we couldn't do six months ago." Developed by Snap's Camera Platform team and utilized by Arcadia, segmentation deals with obstacle detection and path planning of virtual autonomous objects, like a purple robot having the awareness to avoid "walking into" buildings or people. "As I look around the world, I see it in AR," says Sidhi. "Like, 'What else can we do? What haven't we done?'"

These technological advances have opened new revenue possibilities. As Chernetz says, a core part of Live Nation's business is selling media sponsors experiential areas that take up physical real estate. "What my promoters quickly realized is [AR] isn't going to take up any space. We're just trying to create a utility to help your fans have a better experience and some fun entertainment — and we're going to do it all here," he says, holding up his iPhone. "I've had to educate my sales team because it's like, now we have the sky. This is a whole new piece of real estate, literally. So it has forced us to think differently because [we can tell] our sponsors, 'You got this, but you didn't buy the sky.'" (At Governors Ball, the festival by Live Nation subsidiary Founders Entertainment in New York, Verizon purchased a bit of the sky, which allowed fans to hold their phones over the company's physical Verizon Cabana space and festival main stage to see animations of neon lights, stars and fireworks.)

Pitching artists' teams to use AR on

tours can require some education about the technology and its applications. "They're not building a tour thinking, 'What's our AR play here?'" says Chernetz. "Yet — but that's our goal. When Ben and I initially spoke, we were like, 'How do we change that?' And the only way to change that was to do it."

"With artists, what we're beginning to learn is [the importance of] really understanding what their creative expression is," Sidhi says, "and then how do we bring a layer of AR into that? How do we create a moment of connection so that we transform [a phone] from being an intrusion to being a canvas?"

AR engagement can be just as beneficial, especially for generating revenue, when an artist is offstage. Both Snap and Live Nation executives particularly light up when speaking about the opportunities for AR and e-commerce. Sidhi describes a situation where a fan can try on merch using AR, purchase that same merch in-app

and skip physical lines. In the future, AR might allow a piece of merch to come to life with graphics illustrating specific moments from an attendee's experience. ("That's the ultimate memento," says Sidhi.) Fans might use Compass to find their seats or a dedicated Lens to populate set lists in real time (Live Nation owns setlist.fm).

"We've got to educate, we've got to adopt, then we've got to innovate — but it will take a minute," Chernetz says. "We can't solve it all in one summer. I think we all know that."

S

NAP HAS

always played the long game. The key to remaining innovative, says

Schwerin, is the years the company has spent developing and maintaining deep relationships with key industry stakeholders, like Live Nation, "and that's managers and artists and everyone up and down the chain where we're asking, 'What's going to be meaningful?' That's how we start the conversation: 'How can we help?'"

The Snap team is optimistic such partnerships will bolster yet another new venture: Its music-centric Snapchat feature Sounds. Launched in October 2020, the platform has been used to create over 2.7 billion videos featuring music that Sounds licensed from each major-label group publisher; independents including Kobalt, BMG and DistroKid; and others. (No product launch is without hiccups, though: In May, Snap was sued for copyright infringement by SUIA Digital Licensing, which collects digital publishing royalties for some compositions outside the United States for

publishers and songwriters.)

The announcement was quickly framed as Snap's answer to TikTok. (In July, Snapchat launched a web-based version for Snapchat+ subscribers that facilitates the platform's chat and video features, drawing comparisons to another prominent company, Zoom.)

Yet, when Snap employees speak about its music strategy, the word "TikTok" seems verboten; the platform is only alluded to rarely, as an unnamed "other app." Snap cites friend-to-friend recommendations as a key differentiator of how its users engage with music compared with other apps, with 40% of videos created with music from Sounds being shared directly with friends through the platform's chat feature.

There's also the AR component that, according to Snap, offers a distribution opportunity for artists at all levels. Before Sounds, mostly major-label acts had partnered on AR Lenses to support single releases, from Whitney Houston and Kygo's "Higher Love" (which was used over 16 million times) to G-Eazy and Halsey's "Him and I" (used over 61 million times). Today, Sounds from any artist — not just those with big followings or budgets — can be embedded in Snapchat's AR Lenses.

Snap hopes this will lead to organic success. In August, it will unveil the Snapchat Sounds Creator Fund, a grant program for independent artists that will offer monthly sums of \$5,000 to emerging and indie acts distributing music on Snapchat through indie distributor DistroKid, with the intent to award up to \$100,000 in grants every month. (Artists must be U.S.-based and over the age of 16.)

"My dream would be there's an artist in this program who does great and they have a song that goes viral and they start to build a following and then they release a new album and it's a hit and then we see that they're on tour and now we have a big AR partnership with them," says Schwerin. "That, to me, is the journey that we want to be part of."

That value in continued exploration is key not only to Snap and Live Nation's evolution but also the development of AR as a whole — and is precisely what the pair's new partnership is aiming for. "If we can transform the music industry with AR," says Sidhi, "the opportunities are limitless." **B**

"AR is going to be the next important creative canvas for artists when they're thinking about, 'What is my show going to look like?'"

—BEN SCHWERIN, SNAP



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THE ANGRIEST MAN IN R



ATE COURT

For the last decade, songwriter **George Johnson** has been on a crusade in Washington to raise royalty rates. He finally scored a rare win. So why do some in the publishing world want him to stop?

BY STEVE KNOPPER

PHOTOGRAPHED BY MARY BETH KOETH



Johnson, who was photographed July 1 in North Palm Beach, Fla., says he's flipping the bird to the National Music Publishers' Association, the RIAA and the three major record labels "for keeping our 9.1 cent royalties frozen the past 15 years, then trying as hard as they possibly could to freeze them once again this time around."

T WAS A SWELTERING DAY in Washington, D.C., and George Johnson was running late for an appointment at the James Madison Memorial Building, the massive, bright-white marble box that is part of the Library of Congress. Inside, a high-priced lawyer for Pandora, impatient to move on with a 2016 hearing to set royalty rates for webcasting recorded music, suggested that the three-judge Copyright Royalty Board (CRB) simply call the next expert witness. But the judges decided to wait just a little longer.

Finally, an hour after his scheduled time, Johnson, now 55, burst into the room, drenched in sweat and wearing a “Still Pissed at Yoko” T-shirt. (He was out of suits, and his Metro had stalled.) “It looked like he’d just run a marathon,” remembers Chris Harrison, then vp of business affairs for Pandora and SiriusXM. “But he got his hour in front of the judges.”

As a songwriter, Johnson’s most popular track is the one advertised on his T-shirt, a whimsical rant against Ono for her alleged role in breaking up The Beatles. Its 2013 video — a psychedelic, jump-cutting homage to “Strawberry Fields Forever” starring birds, octopuses, fast-growing trees and Johnson dressed in various *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* costumes — has 9,250 plays on YouTube. But in the music business, he’s much better known — and occasionally feared — for his other job, which pays even less: filing legal motions in various CRB rate-setting proceedings. For the past 10 years, he has led a largely under-the-radar David vs. Goliath battle against the industry’s biggest labels, publishers and streaming services, facing off against top copyright lawyers who are paid to understand the arcane language of mechanical rights and late-fee waivers. He usually wears a suit in court.

Johnson might be best understood as the music business equivalent of those earnest long-shot candidates who run for president with a big idea but face long odds — not quite as sophisticated as Ralph Nader but far more serious than Deez Nutz. He has no legal background, and he spends long, solitary days in his bare Florida apartment writing motions and preparing testimony, which is always smart but often over the top. And while he has no more chance of winning the debate over music royalties than Nader did of moving into the White House, he has learned enough about CRB proceedings (sometimes with help from staffers) to score at least one big win.

On March 24, in its first decision in the rate-setting procedure known as Phonorecords IV — the less important section sets mechanical royalty rates for physical music sales and downloads, while the crucial section sets such royalties for streaming services — the CRB agreed with one of Johnson’s long-running arguments. The board ruled that mechanical royalties for sales and downloads should not be frozen at 9.1 cents per song, as they have been since 2008. This development shocked publishing companies, which had provided the CRB with a carefully constructed settlement with record labels. In the ruling, interim chief copyright royalty judge Suzanne M. Barnett quoted at length from Johnson’s 27 filings before concluding that “the proposed settlement does not provide a reasonable basis for setting statutory rates and terms.”

Although the other pending part of Phonorecords IV, which deals with streaming, is far more significant to the industry, Johnson says, “I definitely feel validated.” That feeling was short-lived, however. In early May, the record labels and publishers boosted their settlement offer from 9.1 cents to a modestly increased 12 cents per song for each sale, prompting Johnson to revert to his standard

outrage. (Why 12 cents? As several songwriter advocates argued to the CRB, it’s roughly the same as the recent growth of the Consumer Price Index.) His “central and No. 1 issue,” he says, is for that rate to rise to 50 cents per song, adjusted for “long-overdue inflation.” In a 40-page motion, he declared himself “continually tricked by these disingenuous lobbyists” for labels and publishers who “only offered the bare minimum 12 cents because they were forced to.”

Especially by regulatory-hearing standards, Johnson is outspoken, bombastic and profane. For him, though, this isn’t a fight over a few cents per song — it’s a moral struggle against the labels and publishers using the CRB process to agree on rates that are unfair to songwriters. In a motion filed with the CRB in 2021, Johnson attacked statements by the National Music Publishers’ Association and the RIAA as “EVIDENCE OF COUNSELS’ BLATANT LYING AND FRAUD.” In another motion last year — this one sprawling, passionate and full of boldface, italics and underlines — he frequently repeated his point that RIAA and NMPA lawyers said he wished to maintain royalty rates when, in fact, he demanded to raise them. He used the words “fraud” and “fraudulent” 18 times. In a phone interview, he calculates the mechanical per-stream rate from Spotify and other services, as set by the CRB, to be “.000-go-screw-yourselfes.”

JOHNSON HAS BEEN FIGHTING for underdog causes for years, long before he ever heard of the CRB. His father, Darwin Johnson, is a retired attorney who owns a shipping company, Vance River Terminal, in Morgantown, W.Va. In 1999, the younger Johnson started attacking former West Virginia Gov. Cecil Underwood for unfairly jacking up the price of some land parcels Underwood personally owned; the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers said it was the best dock site for an inland port in the area. Johnson’s family had dock sites in the same area, and Underwood received approval from the state’s port authority to sell his land parcels for \$216,000 — and possibly qualify for millions more in federal funds. Johnson told local reporters repeatedly the Underwood deal was a conflict of interest. He put out a protest song: “Cecil.”

Six years later, Johnson ran for U.S. Senate as a Republican, facing off against Robert Byrd; Johnson regularly pointed out that he had been a member of the Ku Klux Klan. (Byrd renounced his involvement in the Klan and went on to become the Senate’s longest-serving member, a Democrat who served as majority leader in the late 1970s.) Johnson resoundingly lost that election, then smaller races, then left politics for good. “It’s just a mind-boggling process,” says the self-described “center-right libertarian.” “But not as mind-boggling as the CRB.”

Since Johnson began his crusade as an unknown songwriter hanging around CRB meetings, his ideas have bubbled up — not quite to the mainstream, but close enough to have some influence.

In addition to the 50-cent per-song royalty and an old-school, iTunes-style Buy button that he believes should appear next to every Spotify or Apple Music track in order to encourage streaming subscribers to purchase downloads as well, Johnson’s broader ideas include a harsh critique of the entire structure of the recorded-music business. Labels, he argues, unfairly take advantage of a “willing buyer/willing seller” clause in the 2018 Music Modernization Act, in which Universal Music Group, Sony Music Entertainment and Warner Music Group and their publishing divisions are “simply negotiating with

themselves” to keep songwriters’ rates low. He calls this “Soviet-style central planning and price-fixing.”

“All the people who are supposed to care about us and running around telling us how much they love songwriters, they’re out there saying, ‘We want to help you guys,’ but they’re trying to hurt you,” he says.

Until March, his crusade had been almost overwhelmingly unsuccessful. In July 2021, for example, the judges denied three of Johnson’s motions in a succinct, single page, responding: “None of the documents are proper motions.” But once the CRB raised the mechanical royalty rate for physical sales from 9.1 cents to 12 cents on March 24, the big players in the music business finally started to take him seriously. “The entire songwriter community owes a huge debt of thanks to those who fought for this increase in the face of the opposition of major record companies and indifference of major publishers,” BMG Rights Management declared in a statement.

Publishers know that Johnson’s win in Phonorecords IV is a tiny skirmish in a far larger battle, however. That part of the proceeding covered only physical sales and downloads, which the NMPA predicts will account for about 1.5% of the songwriting royalties set by the CRB for the 2023-2027 period that is the subject of the current proceeding. (*Billboard* estimates that these mechanical royalties accounted for 9% of that revenue in 2021.) The far more important part of Phonorecords IV involves the songwriting-side royalties for streaming that Spotify and other streaming services pay publishers and collecting societies. Johnson understands the stakes. “I’m going to give them hell,” he says of labels, publishers and streaming services. “Because they’re giving us hell and [have been] stealing from us for years. I’m treating them exactly the same way, with the same disrespect.”

Behind the scenes, sources tell *Billboard*, the major publishers and their attorneys worry that Johnson will meddle with their carefully planned strategy to maximize streaming payouts. “This is not *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*,” says a music-publishing source. “The streaming market for this next five-year period is going to be worth billions and billions of dollars. There is so much at stake.”

The source, who also advocates for higher royalties, derides Johnson as a time-wasting provocateur: “His participation in the CRB hurts songwriters. Serious people trying to make serious gains for songwriters are hampered because they have to share time with him to make ridiculous arguments that the court immediately dismisses.”

Todd Larson, an attorney who has represented SiriusXM and Pandora at earlier CRB webcasting hearings, which made him a Johnson adversary, is slightly more diplomatic: “I like George a lot. He argues his position with conviction, and it’s admirable. But he’s sort of tilting at windmills.”

Johnson may be charging at imaginary enemies Don Quixote-style, but he is gradually gaining real allies. Over the last two or three years, instead of shunning Johnson as a fringe character, songwriters and attorneys have begun paying attention to his filings. First came David Lowery, frontman for Cracker and Camper Van Beethoven. A longtime critic of music streaming, he blogged in early 2020 about how right Johnson was and, in an interview with *Billboard*, praised him for “dragging the truth out into the light.”

Johnson’s ideas went mainstream, more or less, that year when Austin attorney Gwen Seale, who represents local songwriters, was researching the rate-setting system and came across his Phonorecords IV motions. Seale is well-connected: In 2020, she participated in a webinar

with U.S. Rep. Lloyd Doggett, D-Texas, about unemployment programs, where she mentioned that songwriters are stuck with low mechanical royalty rates. After this exchange, Doggett sent a pointed letter last July to the Librarian of Congress and the Register of Copyrights. The participants in the CRB's recent rate-setting hearings "are dominated by major publishers and record companies," Doggett wrote, "seeking to impose their private settlement on all other songwriters."

Those are George Johnson's exact views.

A few weeks after Doggett's letter, singer-songwriter Rosanne Cash wrote her own missive to the CRB, arguing that the royalty rate must be raised to account for inflation: "I don't want to see an entire population give up their passion and their chosen vocation because they can't pay the rent," Cash wrote.

Johnson couldn't have put it better himself. Except that he has, in hundreds of pages of motions that started as a sort of poetic rage but have gradually become a bit more succinct and polished as he received feedback from CRB clerks and learned the legal lingo.

"I realized George was arguing the pure songwriter position — truly protecting our interests," Lowery says. "Some people might see him [as] throwing a wrench into the works, but he's helping make the process more transparent and not letting those who represent publishers and big writers give away too much for songwriters."

Christian Castle, an Austin music attorney who often criticized publishers, adds that Johnson has been a sort of unofficial advocate for the silent majority. "No one's going to have the money to go up against every lawyer in the known universe. You have to go to Washington. You have to be there," he says. "If George weren't there, nobody would be there." And while Doggett and Cash influenced the CRB's ruling that led to the royalty increase, Johnson "definitely helped keep the issue alive," Castle says.

The system for determining mechanical royalties is complicated: It allows groups like the RIAA and NMPA to send lawyers to Capitol Hill, haggle with Spotify and other streaming services, and set rates that help determine artists and songwriters' livelihoods — like that soon-to-be-12-cents-per-song royalty paid on every record album or CD sale.

And it's not exactly accessible. Many songwriters, even the most successful, have no idea where to begin when it comes to representing themselves at the hearings so crucial to their livelihoods. Who has time to learn copyright law, figure out how to file motions and show up for hours of hearings every day in D.C.? Only George Johnson. That leaves groups like the NMPA to essentially stick up for songwriters, even though their interests don't exactly align with publishers. "They call themselves 'the copyright owners,'" Johnson says. "Are you kidding me? You don't own one copyright. You're lobbyists. They don't represent me."

Johnson's views on publishing and royalties can be, to put it generously, outside the mainstream. He favors completely eliminating the compulsory license that allows songwriters to receive those 12-cent royalties on physical sales whenever anyone covers their work. This is a major source of income for them, especially now, when stars like Bob Dylan and Stevie Nicks are selling their catalogs for hundreds of millions of dollars. But Johnson, a centrist Republican, is a free-market guy. Why shouldn't songwriters and publishers be able to charge 10.1 cents a song when someone covers it? Or \$100? "There's nothing more that the music industry needs," he says.

It's an idea rooted more in philosophy than reality. Without that compulsory license, any artist who wanted

to record a version of "Sugar Mountain" would have to ask permission from Neil Young's people — and Young could reject every request. In fact, many of these long-standing publishing rules that Johnson wants to burn down are rooted in practical policies intended to make life easier for songwriters. An example of his self-righteousness that doesn't translate well to everyday record-business policy is his belief that labels are basically cartels that negotiate lower rates with the publishing divisions they own so industry fat cats get rich. He makes a logical point about a conflict of interest that others have made over the years, but there's no evidence of this in the CRB proceedings, and publishers also have an incentive to raise royalties.

"In my heart of hearts, I don't believe the NMPA and the National Songwriters Association are these evil com-

"I'm going to give them hell," Johnson says of labels, publishers and streaming services. "Because they're giving us hell and [have been] stealing from us for years. I'm treating them exactly the same way, with the same disrespect."

panies who are in bed with the devil, who are the major labels, and they're trying to get all these rate reductions," says Chris Wares, assistant chair of the music business/management department at Berklee College of Music. "Yes, there is some conflict of interest, but I genuinely think they want what's best for songwriters."

With characteristic bombast, Johnson disagrees. In 2018, he recalls, NMPA president/CEO David Israelite pointed out that the initial mechanical royalty rate of 2 cents, adopted in 1909, would be about 50 cents today, "if adjusted for inflation." When the CRB decided on the 12-cent rate earlier this year, he called it an "extremely positive result." To Johnson, that makes Israelite a "lying hypocrite" — how else could he praise a rate that's so out of line with what he knows songwriters deserve? (Israelite declined to respond and would not comment for this story.) But Israelite's job is complicated: He needs to keep publishers united, negotiate compromises with labels and focus on the streaming portion of the Phonorecords IV proceeding that's far more important for the future of the business.

JOHNSON'S UNOFFICIAL, UNPAID CAREER as an amateur songwriter lobbyist began in roughly 2012, when he released two albums on his own "just for the fun of it." They didn't sell, and he started asking himself questions about the business: "If I'm going to waste another two years doing an album that costs \$30,000, why don't I figure out what's going on with the royalties?" The question began to consume him, and he realized how "messed up" the system is.

He became so immersed in the details that he took it upon himself to meet with one of West Virginia's senators, Jay Rockefeller, suggesting a songwriter bill to eliminate the compulsory license because he was so opposed to the government setting royalty rates for songwriters. The next year, he attended a Grammys on the Hill event in Washington and had an encounter that would change his

life. He says a well-known music executive in the city had heard about his meeting with Rockefeller and approached him, screaming and cursing: "What the fuck do you think you're doing, meeting with your representative, doing your own bill?" Johnson calls this the "inciting incident to spark what I'm doing."

But the executive in question insists it never happened. Asked if anyone could confirm this story, Johnson comes up with two witnesses, both of whom say in phone interviews that they don't remember. Told this, Johnson responds with profane, all-caps emails. "He doesn't have a memory problem," Johnson wrote of one of them. "He's a D.C. lobbyist."

His crusade continues. In an October statement to the CRB proposing a 65% increase in streaming rates, among other provisions, Johnson filed 28 pages of testimony,

quoting Apple senior vp of services Eddy Cue, uber-manager Irving Azoff and a former assistant attorney general. Songwriters, he concluded, "have the right to decide how much their content should cost." (This time, he used the word "fraudulent" only once.)

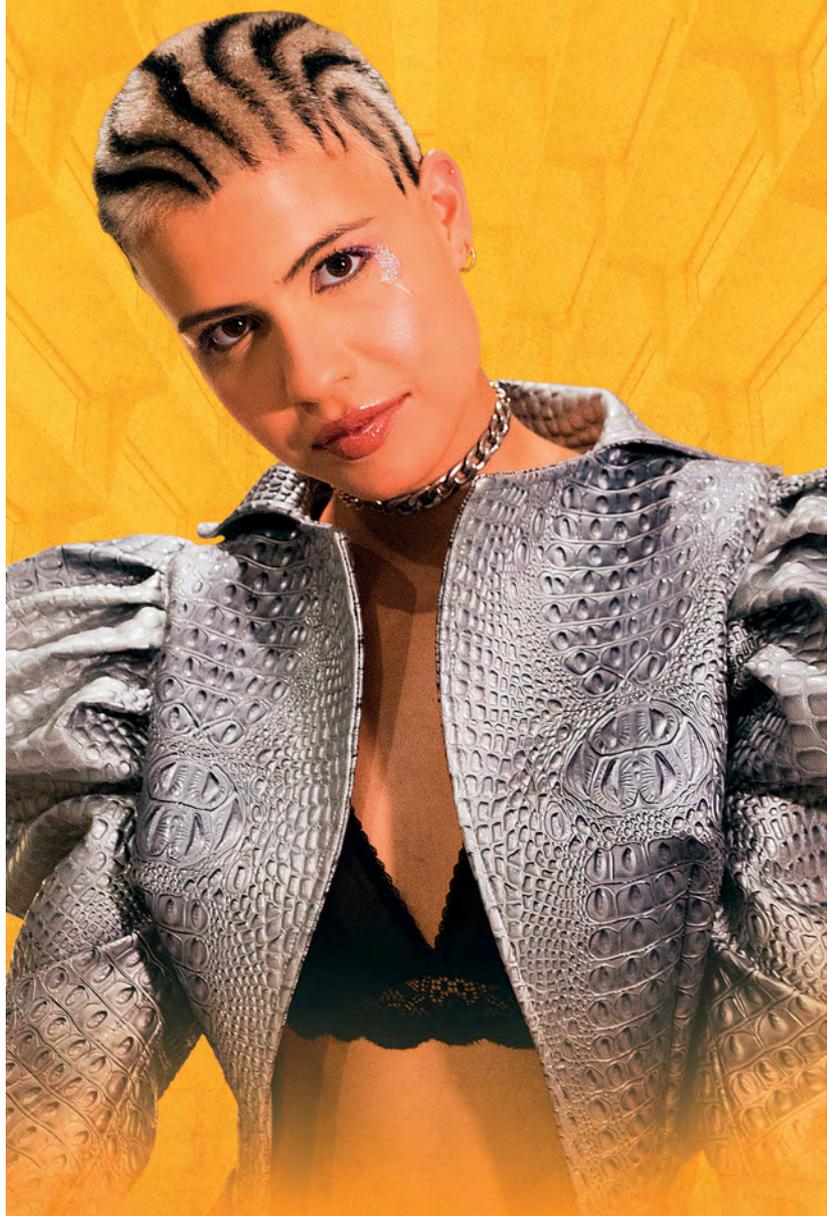
For all his fiery behavior — he once screamed at *Billboard* reporter Ed Christman for suggesting that his push for an old-fashioned iTunes-style Buy button on streaming services was "quixotic" — Johnson leads a modest life. Today, he temporarily lives in a still largely unfurnished apartment near Juno Beach, Fla., where he spends time with his elderly father. He implies he finances his more-or-less full-time job as a songwriter advocate through a bit of family money: "I'm from a family that has done some real estate and things like that." He drove an Uber until the pandemic and is now looking for work and doing job interviews over Zoom.

The pandemic has made it easy to live outside of Washington and still be part of CRB proceedings that have been mostly virtual for two years. He's single, with no kids, and used to play golf and other sports until songwriting royalties consumed his life; he's still writing and shopping songs, including a CRB-inspired one called "The Cost of Living's All I'm Living For." Eventually, he plans to return to Nashville, probably near Music Row and what was once Sammy B's restaurant, where Johnson met renowned songwriters such as Dewayne Blackwell and Harlan Howard. He has powerful friends in the city.

"George Johnson has been a breakfast buddy of mine at Nashville for 10 years, and he possesses a big heart for what is fair for songwriters and publishers. I respect him for sticking up for the underdog," country star Vince Gill writes in an email. "But he always orders poached eggs, which leaves me puzzled a bit."

Johnson responds — because of course George Johnson responds: "If it wasn't for poached eggs, or egg yolks in general," he wrote in an email, "not one motion or word would have been written." **b**

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Coachella's iconic Ferris wheel at the 2022 festival in April in Indio, Calif.



THE TOP FESTIVALS OF 2022

Billboard reveals the top 50 gatherings of the year, from cultural rites of passage to mystical experiences

BY DAVE BROOKS

FESTIVALS HAVE TRANSFORMED the live-music business and become a vital revenue stream for the industry, reshaping live entertainment into an economic engine, and even occasionally challenging humanity to live by its own best principles in a way that celebrates both the individual and the power of the masses.

Like other great art forms, festivals evolve by building upon the past — beginning with the idealism and counterculture movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s through events like Woodstock and Glastonbury, to the changing cultural landscape of the 1990s, when events like Lollapalooza, Warped Tour and the Free Tibet concert series served as a bridge to today's biggest names.

Ranking the festivals that have come to dominate today's landscape will undoubtedly generate debate. Ten people could attend the same festival and have 10 different experiences. Much of what makes a festival great is subjective, but most fans who enjoy and attend festivals have had some part of their life affected by the experience. With that in mind, *Billboard* has ranked its inaugural Top 50 Festivals chart based on influence both within the live-music ecosystem and on the larger music and cultural community.

1. Coachella Valley Music And Arts Festival

Best Festival Overall
EMPIRE POLO FIELDS, INDIO, CALIF.
APRIL 15-24

The granddaddy of them all, Coachella is the best attended, most relevant and highest-grossing music festival in the world. Livestreamed each year to millions of fans worldwide, no other event has as much influence on the music industry as this annual rite of passage in the desert. Spread out over a sun-soaked polo complex outside of Palm Springs, it is both a celebration of Southern California culture and a platform for artists of all backgrounds. While influencers and celebrities draw the most attention, most attendees are young music fans who are passionate about the live experience and will continue supporting concerts over the long haul. Goldenvoice provides a live-music

experience produced, staged and delivered at the highest level possible. Money can buy attendees greater creature comforts, but those who invest their time dancing, singing along and taking in the festival's artistry are the ones who gain the most from the Coachella experience.

2. Glastonbury Festival

Best Festival Culture
WORTHY FARM, SOMERSET, ENGLAND
JUNE 22-26

No other event has done more to nurture and develop the idealist peculiarities of modern festival culture than Glastonbury. Launched by dairy farmer Michael Eavis as the Pilton Pop, Blues & Folk Festival, Glastonbury would serve as ground zero for countercultural movements of the 1970s and 1980s and takes a "fallow" year every five years to give both the land and locals a break. Today, Glastonbury is more relevant than ever, from its iconic Pyramid stage to its efforts to raise

awareness about the dangers of global warming. The festival has been through many incarnations over the years, but it has always served as a force for good in the music world.

3. Electric Daisy Carnival Las Vegas

Best Community
LAS VEGAS SPEEDWAY, LAS VEGAS
MAY 20-22

Pasquale Rotella's annual dance festival has gone from quasi-legal Los Angeles rave to major Las Vegas economic engine. The dance music world takes over the Strip every May for North America's ultimate spectacle of sound and light featuring the biggest names in house, techno and other genres. Each night the festival provides a Ferris wheel, art exhibits and seven stages packed with superstars, but it's the community EDC has created — where fans are deemed "headliners" and productions grow bigger each year — that speaks to the event's power and longevity.

4. Outside Lands Music And Arts Festival

Best Festival Site
GOLDEN GATE PARK, SAN FRANCISCO
AUG. 5-7

The annual San Francisco festival is one of the youngest in the top 10, but its founders' credentials (Superfly Entertainment and Another Planet Entertainment) and its location inside picturesque Golden Gate Park give Outside Lands instant credibility. Known for its well-curated lineup, a long-standing commitment to high-end food and wine from Bay Area restaurants and chefs, and a willingness to take risks on everything from comedy to cannabis, Outside Lands is discovered each year by thousands of new fans looking for an authentic experience.

5. South By Southwest

Best Platform For Music Discovery
VARIOUS LOCATIONS, AUSTIN
MARCH 11-20

Even when it launched in 1987 with only 700 attendees, South by Southwest was already too crowded for the 15 host venues in its first year (only 150 were initially expected to attend). Today, SXSW is a global platform where buzzy young bands still get discovered in dive bars and major artists play secret shows in cramped honky-tonks. At a time when so much music discovery involves playlists and algorithms, SXSW is still the best feet-on-the-ground festival for discovering new bands and sounds. (*Billboard* parent company PMC purchased a minority stake in SXSW in 2021.)

6. Tomorrowland

Best Dance Festival
DE SCHORRE RECREATION AREA, FLANDERS, BELGIUM
JULY 15-31

This long-running event in Belgium is celebrated as the world's largest dance music party at the Tomorrowland Holy Grounds, which is steeped in mystical imagery with destinations like the Rave Cave and the famed Mouse Bar. Attendees say Tomorrowland is the most out-there defying experience one can have without leaving Earth. It hosts EDM, house, drum'n'bass and trance superstars across 10 intricately designed stages that push the boundaries of live production. Tomorrowland is its own universe waiting to be discovered and a bucket list experience for dance music fans.

7. Lollapalooza

Best City Festival
GRANT PARK, CHICAGO
JULY 28-31

Few cities do summer quite like Chicago, and one of its crown jewels is Grant Park, along the shore of Lake Michigan. Every year, it's home to the Lollapalooza festival featuring 170 top touring acts in rock, pop, dance and EDM spread over nine stages. At night, the city buzzes with afterparties and unofficial underground shows at Chicago's iconic venues. It's perfect for fans who want to immerse themselves in all forms of music in one of the country's best concert cities.

8. Bonnaroo Music And Arts Festival

Best Camping Festival
BONNAROO FARM, MANCHESTER, TENN.
JUNE 16-19

What began as a jam band festival on a 700-acre farm has become one of the largest camping-based music festivals in the world. While jam-bands still usually get top billing, Bonnaroo has become more mainstream since Live Nation

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bought out Superfly's ownership in 2020. The Roo is an annual tradition for attendees looking for a festival that places positivity and kindness as its highest values. Even during the most difficult moments on the Farm, attendees are expected to have a good attitude and be willing to help one another.

9. Stagecoach Festival

Best Country Music Festival

EMPIRE POLO FIELDS, INDIO, CALIF.
APRIL 20-MAY 1

This annual Palm Springs festival is considered the largest celebration of country music on the planet. With major Nashville acts headlining the main stage and alt country, Americana, bluegrass and roots music groups performing on the smaller stages, Stagecoach has something for all the genres, including bountiful barbecue pits, "hillbilly chic" fashion boutiques and a full-scale replica of North Hollywood's old Palomino bar.

10. BottleRock

Napa Valley

Best Culinary Experience

NAPA FAIRGROUNDS, NAPA, CALIF.
MAY 27-29

Dave Graham and Latitude 38 have completely changed how the world looks at the festival-going experience with this Napa, Calif., weekend built around food and wine, and featuring award-winning chefs. With a general-admission experience that rivals most festivals' VIP sections and a lineup of contemporary and classic artists, BottleRock is an easygoing event with no long lines and options for every price point.

For more details on Nos. 11-50, see [billboard.com](#).

11. New Orleans Jazz Festival

NEW ORLEANS FAIRGROUNDS, NEW ORLEANS
APRIL 29-MAY 8

12. Rolling Loud Miami

BAYFRONT PARK, MIAMI
JULY 22-24

13. Austin City Limits Music Festival

ZILKER PARK, AUSTIN
OCT. 7-16

14. Day N Vegas

LAS VEGAS FESTIVAL GROUNDS, LAS VEGAS
SEPT. 2-4

15. Electric Zoo

RANDALL'S ISLAND PARK, NEW YORK
SEPT. 2-4

16. Reading And Leeds Festivals

BRAMHAM PARK, LEEDS; LITTLE JOHN'S FARM, READING, ENGLAND
AUG. 26-28

17. Newport Folk Festival

FORT ADAMS STATE PARK, NEWPORT, R.I.
JULY 22-24

18. Splendour In The Grass

NORTH BYRON PARKLANDS, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA
JULY 22-24

19. Rock In Rio Brasil

CIDADE DO ROCK, RIO DE JANEIRO
JUNE 18-26

20. Roskilde Festival

ANIMAL SHOWGROUNDS, ROSKILDE, DENMARK
JUNE 25-JULY 2

21. Electric Forest

DOUBLE JJ RESORT, ROTHBURY, MICH.
JUNE 23-26

22. Osheaga

PARC JEAN-DRAPEAU, MONTREAL
JULY 29-31

23. Primavera Sound

PARC DEL FÒRUM, BARCELONA
JUNE 2-12

24. Pitchfork Music Festival

UNION PARK, CHICAGO
JULY 15-17

25. Baja Beach Festival

PAPAS AND BEER, ROSARITO, MEXICO
AUG. 12-21

26. Life Is Beautiful

DOWNTOWN LAS VEGAS
SEPT. 16-18

27. Fuji Rock

NAEBA SKI RESORT, NIIGATA PREFECTURE, JAPAN
JULY 29-31

28. Riot Fest

DOUGLAS PARK, CHICAGO
SEPT. 16-18

29. Boston Calling

HARVARD ATHLETIC CLUB, BOSTON
MAY 27-29

30. Ultra Music Festival

BAYFRONT PARK, MIAMI
MARCH 24-26

The 2021 Outside Lands festival at Golden Gate Park in San Francisco.



Harry Styles on the main stage at Coachella in April.

31. Desert Daze

LAKE PERRIS, CALIF.
SEPT. 29-OCT. 2

32. Estereo Picnic

C. GOLF BRISENO, BOGOTA, COLOMBIA
MARCH 25-27

33. Exit Festival

PETROVARADIN FORTRESS, NOVI SAD, SERBIA
JULY 7-10

34. Rocking The Daisies

CLOOF WINE ESTATE, DARLING AND SUPERSPORT PARK; CENTURION, SOUTH AFRICA
OCT. 7-9

35. Afropunk

SHERIDAN MEMORIAL PARK, MINNEAPOLIS
JUNE 18-19

36. HARD Summer

NOS EVENTS CENTER, SAN BERNARDINO, CALIF.
JULY 29-31

37. Ohana Fest

DOHENY STATE BEACH, DANA POINT, CALIF.
SEPT. 24-26

38. Roots Picnic

THE MANN AT FAIRMOUNT PARK, PHILADELPHIA
JUNE 4-5

39. Hangout Fest

THE BEACHES OF GULF SHORES, ALA.
MAY 20-22

40. Vive Latino

FORO SOL, MEXICO CITY
MARCH 19-20

41. Telluride Bluegrass

TOWN PARK, TELLURIDE, COLO.
JUNE 6-19

42. Corona Capital Guadalajara

ARENA VFG, GUADALAJARA, MEXICO
MAY 21-22

43. Welcome To Rockville

DAYTONA INTERNATIONAL SPEEDWAY, DAYTONA BEACH, FLA.
MAY 18-22

44. Rock Am Ring And Rock Im Park

NÜRBURGRING RACETRACK AND ZEPPELIN FIELD, NUREMBERG, GERMANY
JUNE 3-5

45. Bourbon And Beyond

KENTUCKY EXPOSITION CENTER, LEXINGTON, KY.
SEPT. 15-18

46. Something In The Water

NATIONAL MALL, WASHINGTON, D.C.
JUNE 17-19

47. Float Fest

PRIVATE RANCH, GONZALES, TEXAS
JULY 23-24

48. III Points

MANA WYNWOOD CONVENTION CENTER, MIAMI
OCT. 21-22

49. Moonrise

PIMICO RACETRACK, BALTIMORE
AUG. 6-7

50. Suwannee Hulaween

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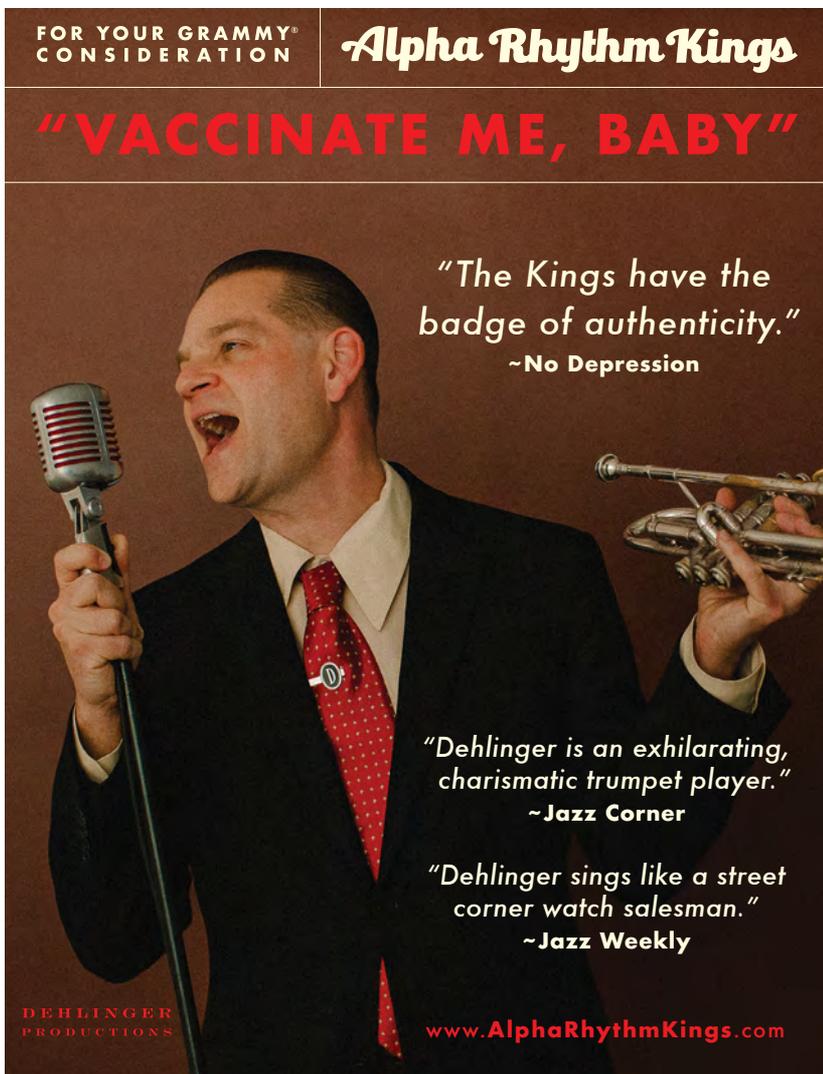
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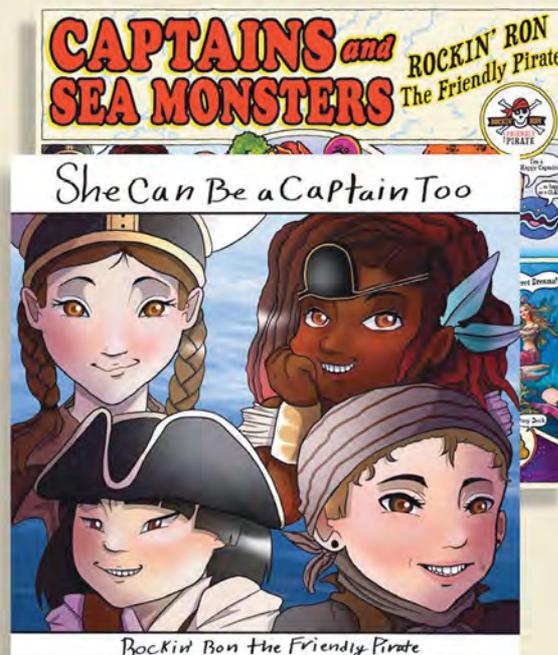
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GloRilla

How the rapper created a summer anthem — and breakout hit — in mere days

GloRilla photographed by Michelle Genevieve Gonzales on June 27 at DFLA Studio in Los Angeles.

No. 5

PEAK ON *BILLBOARD'S*
MAINSTREAM R&B/HIP-HOP
AIRPLAY CHART

▷ Last April, Memphis producer Hitkidd created a menacing, bass-bumping beat ripe for a hit and had a specific superstar in mind for it. “I drove around thinking, ‘I’m going to send this to Megan Thee Stallion,’” recalls Hitkidd, who had contributed to her 2021 compilation album, *Something for Thee Hotties*. “I ended up sending it, but was like, ‘Bruh, this beat too hard to be waiting on her.’” Instead, Hitkidd reached out to GloRilla — a fellow Memphis native he had met at a local showcase a few years prior. “I did tell her, ‘We need a summer anthem, something the girls can chant,’” he says. Glo promptly delivered: After stepping out of the studio to smoke some Backwoods, “I came up with, ‘I’m F-R-E-E, fuck n— a free,’” the 22-year-old rapper recalls. Within 30 minutes, they knocked out the framework for what became the growing hit “F.N.F. (Let’s Go).”

She and Hitkidd released the rambunctious summer track in April through online distribution company Ditto Music, with Hitkidd lending pointers on how to increase the song’s exposure — like telling Glo to change her explicit second verse to boost radio play and shooting the music video later that same day to maintain momentum. Days later, Blac Noize! Recordings and Big Machine Label Group approached Hitkidd to rerelease “F.N.F.” on streaming platforms through their new hip-hop label venture, and within 24 hours Big Machine republished the song to streaming services as the single’s official record label. Soon after, fellow Memphis artist Brezay kicked off the #FNChallenge on TikTok, which has garnered over 9 million views and highlights Memphis’ jookin street dance with intricate footwork. Once DJ Duffey, French Montana’s DJ, shared her own impromptu clip dancing along to the track, it went viral. “Before that, I was going up just locally,” Glo says with glee. “But ‘F.N.F.’ took over globally.”

In June, she and Hitkidd earned their first Hot 100-charting hit as lead artists, with “F.N.F.” since reaching a No. 66 high. The song — which has earned 56.6 million official on-demand U.S. streams through July 21, according to Luminate — has climbed to Nos. 5 and 6 on Mainstream R&B/Hip-Hop Airplay and Rap Airplay, respectively. By July, its rapid ascent caught the attention of Yo Gotti, who signed GloRilla to his CMG imprint. She’ll soon celebrate with a performance at Rolling Loud New York and an “F.N.F.” remix with Saweetie. “It’s one of the quickest rises that I’ve seen,” Yo Gotti told *Billboard* following the announcement. Her manager Marcus Ward agrees, adding, “She has put a spotlight on a lot of females [in Memphis]. It’s opening up opportunities that we’ve been lacking for years.”

—HERAN MAMO

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