

HITS

Rain/Makers

MAKING HISTORY NOW

MICHELE ANTHONY
IRVING AZOFF
MARTY BANDIER
JOHN BRANCA
TROY CARTER
JODY GERSON
SIR LUCIAN GRAINGE
ALLEN GRUBMAN
JIMMY IOVINE
JOEL KATZ
ROB LIGHT
MAX LOUSADA
MIKE McVAY
BOB PITTMAN
JON PLATT
MICHAEL RAPINO
SARA NEWKIRK SIMON
ROB STRINGER

HISTORY
OF THE
MUSIC
BIZ
THREE

7-Day Forecast

Monday



**100%
chance of rain**

Tuesday



**100%
chance of rain**

Wednesday



**100%
chance of rain**

Thursday



**100%
chance**

Nothing but

Thursday



0%
chance of rain

Friday



100%
chance of rain

Saturday



100%
chance of rain

Sunday



100%
chance of rain

rain in the forecast.

Congratulations to Sir Lucian Grainge, Michele Anthony, Jody Gerson
and all of the rainmakers at UMG.



UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP

World Radio History



流行音乐之王 *EL REY DEL POP*

KONUNGUR POPPSINS *KUNGEN AV POP*

بالا كالم *DER KÖNIG DES POPS*

O REI DO POP *პოპ მუსიკის მეფე*

MFALME WA POP *פופה קלם* *KO TE KINGI O POP*

КОРОЛЬ ПОП-МУЗЫКИ *POP GE RAJA* *LE ROI DE LA POP*

MICHAEL JACKSON THE KING OF POP

DEFINING POPULAR CULTURE &
INSPIRING A NEW GENERATION
OF FANS WORLDWIDE

*“When they say the sky’s the limit
to me that’s really true,”*

- MICHAEL JACKSON

**MICHAEL JACKSON 2018 YTD
TOTAL STREAMS WORLDWIDE**
2+ billion streams

FANS UNDER 25
Spotify + 25%
Apple + 39%

**MICHAEL JACKSON DIAMOND
BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION WEEK**

Michael's biggest streaming
week ever!

**DRAKE & MICHAEL JACKSON
"DON'T MATTER TO ME"**

A new single from Drake's
acclaimed Scorpion album
330 MILLION streams to date

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**MICHAEL
JACKSON:
ON THE WALL**

*"...an ambitious and
thought-provoking
new exhibition,"*

- NY TIMES

OPENING NOVEMBER 23 AT THE PARIS GRAND PALAIS

MICHAEL JACKSON'S THRILLER 3D

**ONE WEEK LIMITED ENGAGEMENT IN ALL IMAX THEATERS
IN THE US/CANADA IN SEPTEMBER**

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AND 3 NEW RIAA
ALBUM CERTIFICATIONS
THIS YEAR**

The Artist With The
Top Selling Album
Of All Time

**MICHAEL JACKSON
ONE**

The Critically
Acclaimed #1 Show
In Las Vegas
Seen By More Than
4.5 Million Fans

**MICHAEL JACKSON
THE IMMORTAL
WORLD TOUR**

A Worldwide Smash
& One of the Top 10
Touring Shows
of All Time

COMING SOON....

A Broadway musical

Book by Lynn Nottage, Pulitzer Prize winning playwright

Choreographed & directed by Tony winner Christopher Wheeldon



FOR THE ARTISTS FANS EMPLOYEES

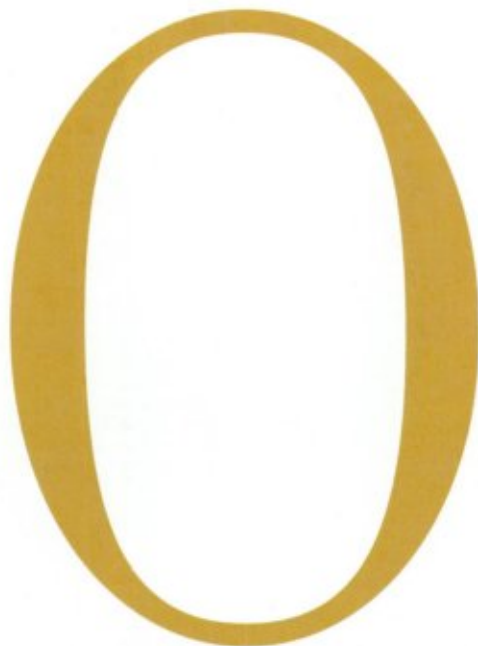
Congratulations, Michael.

We're proud to have such an inspiring leader.

Your Live Nation Family

LIVE NATION

THE INFLUENTIAL PLAYERS CHRONICLED IN THIS ISSUE COME FROM WILDLY DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS.



ne began as a high-school dropout from west Philly with dreams of rap stardom. One grew up watching Frank Sinatra perform at her family's nightclub in Cherry Hill, N.J. One was a longshoreman's son who got a job sweeping floors at the Record Plant and found his way into John Lennon's orbit. One rose to regional prominence as the hottest club DJ in Denver. One is the son of a North London shopkeeper. One started out as General Counsel to a New York real-estate company. One was an Indiana hog farmer's kid who escaped to Boston and started booking bands.

They come from Thunder Bay, Ontario, and Tooting Bec, London, and Brookhaven, Miss., and Greenburg, Penn., and Crown Heights, Brooklyn, and Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire.

Their paths to prominence, too, are incredibly divergent and winding. What unites them, however, is a combination of intelligence, determination, imagination and focus that is the very essence of leadership.

In profiling these Rainmakers, we've tried to focus not only on their notable achievements but also on the characteristics that make them who they are—through the lens of our three decades-plus on the scene. We've known some of these people since before we hung up a shingle, and others we met only recently. But they've all got the right stuff, and that's why we jumped at the chance to tell their stories.

*Michele Anthony, Irving Azoff,
Lucian Grainge, Rob Light,
Michael Rapino and Rob Stringer*



With love and respect always.

*You've all been a part
of our lives forever.*

Keep making it fucking rain!



Sharon & Ozzy Osbourne

*Thank you for writing about Rob,
so we can pay for this ad.*

Love from your friends at



HITS

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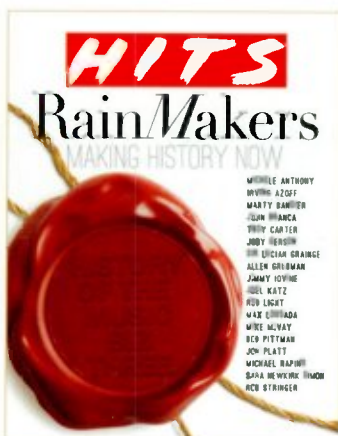
HISTORY OF THE MUSIC BIZ | THREE

RAINMAKERS

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ABOUT



You hold in your hands the third volume of our *History of the Music Biz* series. This edition parts ways from the others in that it profiles the industry leaders who are making history now—among them label-group and publishing chieftains, tech and broadcast titans, super-agents, mega-attorneys and more. Some we've known since we first began publishing this magazine, and others we've met only recently; but they all share that irreducible drive and vision that shape the most influential folks in the biz. Here's hoping these Rainmakers don't mind being associated with a puddle like us.

HITS: somehow we have to make more money this month...

brain:

Don't say it

Don't say it

Don't say it

Don't say it

Don't say it

Don't say it

Don't say it

Don't say it

Don't say it

Don't say it

Don't say it

Don't say it

Don't say it

Don't say it

HITS: let's just throw together another list!

HITS: can you do an ad for our
“Rainmakers” issue?

 : *puts in minimal effort*

HITS:



R A I N M A K E R S



Michelle

ANTHONY

THE TRIPL E THREAT

“ONE OF THE BIGGEST CHANGES I HAVE SEEN—AND WOULD LIKE TO THINK I’VE HELPED IN MY OWN WAY—IS THE INCLUSION AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN, BEING VALUED AT WHATEVER LEVEL.”

Back in 1990, when Michele Anthony was a highly regarded young attorney at **Manatt Phelps Rothenberg & Phillips** in L.A., she got the offer from **Tommy Mottola** to

come work for him at **Sony Music** in New York. This was a big decision, obviously, and several highly placed individuals whose opinions Michele had sought told her she should stay put. But her gut

told her to go for it, and that turned out to be a pivotal decision indeed. Because Anthony's initial move to the label side of the business served as the springboard to an extraordinary career that has earned her the deep respect and genuine affection of her fellow executives and artists alike.

As the Executive Vice President of **Universal Music Group**, a job she's held since 2013, Anthony now sits next to the most powerful individual in the music business, **Sir Lucian Grainge**. She's a key part of the chieftain's trusted inner circle, which also includes CFO/EVP of Operations **Boyd Muir**, General Counsel and EVP of Business & Legal Affairs **Jeff Harleston**, EVP and Head of Global Communications **Will Tanous** and EVP

of Digital Strategy **Michael Nash**. Her responsibilities are vast, and her decision-making is virtually flawless, powered by a fierce intelligence, a refined moral compass and a deep commitment to artists and artistry.

"Michele is a longtime friend of mine, and I've represented her for probably 25 years," super-attorney **Allen Grubman** tells us. "I consider Michele to be, if not the top, one of the top female executives in the music business. She has an enormous knowledge of both the business and the creative side; artists love her, and she does a very effective job on the business side. She's a unique person."

Anthony is accustomed to being invaluable to ranking executives run-



“There are too many people in this industry who laugh too loud at artists’ jokes and really want to say something to the artists but don’t have the balls to say it. But Michele isn’t a kiss-ass—she’ll tell you exactly what she’s thinking.”

—Sharon Osbourne



DREAM ON: With Steven Tyler

ning major companies; during her more than 16 years at Sony Music, she worked alongside Mottola as well as his successor in the top post at the company, **Donnie Ienner**. Compared to these two quintessential alpha males and the boys' clubs they assembled around them—within which she more than held her own, bringing sophistication and civility to her frequently coarse surroundings—Anthony's current situation, surrounded by numerous female executives in high-level positions, must be extremely gratifying for this longtime crusader for gender equality, who has inspired countless women seeking to follow in her footsteps.

"One of the biggest changes I have seen—and would like to think I've helped in my own way—is the inclusion and the empowerment of women, being valued at whatever level," Anthony has said. "There has been a lot of improvement, but I hope we're never satisfied."

UMPG CEO **Jody Gerson**, Anthony's friend, colleague and contemporary, lauded her during the 2017 UJA luncheon honoring her as Music Visionary of the Year. "In a business that is notoriously difficult for women, you've helped mentor, console and nurture so many," Gerson noted.

Also speaking was **Eddie Vedder**, whose business and personal relationship with Anthony extends back to the genesis of **Pearl Jam**, the band's subsequent signing to **Epic** in 1990 and its eventual breakthrough more than a year later. "There's a cool thing that happens, it's almost like a parlor trick, when someone meets Michele," he offered. "After she leaves, they say, 'Who was that? She was amazing.' I say, 'Well, she's actually one of, if not the most powerful, women in the music business.' And they're always surprised—she has such great energy, and she's such a real person. And then I think, 'Why do I have to say that? It's not about her being a woman... But until there's equality, I think it does have to be said. I can't wait for the day when we don't have to say it.'"

Irving Azoff offered an overview of Anthony's wide-ranging career at the event. "No matter whether she was a lawyer, a record company executive, a voice for a cause or a confidante for a creator, she gives all of herself," he stated.



LEGAL EAGLES: With Peter Paterno



UNI-FIED: With UMG boss Sir Lucian Grainge and UMPG Chairman Jody Gerson



TOWER OF SONG: With UMG's Boyd Muir, Grainge, L.A. Mayor Eric Garcetti, Capitol ruler Steve Barnett and COO Michelle Jubelirer, and Gerson

The early lives of Anthony and Sharon Osbourne—who emceed the UJA event—have remarkably similar backstories: Each is the daughter of a prominent rock manager, and each has carved her own path to a wildly successful career. For her part, Osbourne snatched her father Don Arden’s biggest band, Black Sabbath, out from under him in a characteristically ballsy move, married bandleader Ozzy Osbourne and later became a TV star.

When she and Michele first met in the early '80s, Sharon recalls, “I felt this instant connection, because our lives are parallel. I’ve always respected Michele so much, because it would have been so easy for her just to live off her dad’s name, but she went through law school, and she’s a brilliant lawyer. She also very creative, has great vision and has a natural rapport with artists. which so few record-company people have. There are too many people in this industry who laugh too loud at artists’ jokes and really want to say something to the artists but don’t have the balls to say it. But Michele isn’t a kiss-ass—she’ll tell you exactly what she’s thinking.

“How many people do you know,” Sharon continues, “who leave running a record company after 16-plus years, then go into marketing and management of groups and become hugely successful at that as well? She was just like, ‘OK, I’ll work with my friends who I love, in regard to Pearl Jam and Ozzy.’ And then she said, ‘I’m going to go back to another record company.’ She can pick and choose whatever she wants to do in this industry. She’s got an amazing history.”

Anthony’s dad, Bronx native Dee Anthony (born Anthony D’Addario), started out his management career representing Tony Bennett and went on to handle British acts including Humble Pie, Traffic, Jethro Tull, Joe Cocker, King Crimson, Emerson, Lake & Palmer, Gary Wright and Peter Frampton.

“I literally grew up with bands coming over from England and sleeping on our living-room floor,” Anthony recalled in an interview with *Billboard*, which has

naturally made her a fixture of its annual **Women in Music and Power 100** lists. “When I was 13, I’d go to the early show and the late show at the **Fillmore East**, and my dad would argue about the night’s take and then put it in my green-fringed suede bag. Because who would ever look for it there?”

During summer vacations, Michele hung around her father’s management office, and Dee sometimes took her on the road with him; these experiences gave her a firsthand view of the way the business actually worked, as well as planting the seeds for her desire to nurture and protect artists. As Michele pointed out in **Gillian Gaar’s** book, *She’s a Rebel: The History of Women in Rock & Roll*, “It was a unique childhood that really gave me an education in the music industry.”

She was also inspired by her mother, proto-feminist **Harriet Anthony** (née **Cohen**), who started as a jewelry designer for **Zales**, eventually becoming an executive at the company, while battling sexism every step of the way. She has since established her own jewelry-design

business, with a celebrity clientele. Her mom’s example made a lasting impression on the youngster.

“My parents were divorced,” Michele noted, “so I would go on the road with my dad but then also watch the indignities that my mom went through in the workforce: getting sent home from work for wearing pants, or having her boss giving her his hotel-room key when they went on a business trip. So my mother and I would read **Gloria [Steinem]’s** articles in *New York* magazine, and those became guiding principles for me.”

After receiving her bachelor’s degree from **George Washington**, Anthony decided to go to law school, surprising her father, who’d expected her to follow in his footsteps. She got her law degree at **USC** and began her professional life in **Los Angeles**, joining **Mitchell Silberberg & Knupp** before moving to **Manatt, Phelps**, where she became a partner in the firm’s music practice. During her years at **Manatt Phelps**, she represented numerous high-profile acts including **Ozzy Osbourne**, the **Eagles**, the **Go-Go’s**, **Kiss**,

Guns N’ Roses, **Mother Love Bone**, **Alice in Chains**, **Soundgarden**, **The Pixies** and **The Sugarcubes**, as well as producer **Rick Rubin**.

The era during which Anthony gained her experience and went on to make her mark on the music business began in 1990, two years after **Sony Corp.** acquired **CBS Records**, following the departure of longtime company head **Walter Yetnikoff** (who had lost it by then, in the view of most of his contemporaries) and the subsequent rise to power of **Tommy Mottola** and his inner circle: **Columbia** head **Don Ienner**, Epic topper **Dave Glew**, Vice Chairman/International Chairman **Mel Ilberman**, International President **Bob Bowlin**, EVP/CFO **Kevin Kelleher** and Anthony, who was initially given the title **SVP of Domestic Operations**. She managed the U.S. labels with **Mottola**, created **Sony’s A&R** scouting program and ran the catalog, branding and licensing divisions.

It wasn’t long before Anthony made her presence felt on the creative side as

“She’s a triple threat, because she’s got legal chops, she knows how to run a successful business and she’s adored by the artist community. I love her passion, her obsession. She’s dynamite.” —**Monte Lipman**



FUHGEDDABOUDIT



SONY SIDE UP: *Wolf-pack days with Donnie Ienner, Lauryn Hill, Bruce Springsteen, Damian Marley, Patti Scialfa, Rhea Perlman, Danny DeVito and Tommy Mottola*

well. She'd gotten *Mother Love Bone* out of their deal with PolyGram following the death of frontman Andrew Wood, which led to the formation of Pearl Jam, with Vedder tapped as lead singer. After arriving at Sony, Anthony recruited PolyGram A&R exec Michael Goldstone, who'd signed Mother Love Bone, and they partnered on the inking of Pearl Jam to Epic, Goldstone's new label home.

Together, the 55th Street Gang, as they were known, ran Sony during its most productive years leading up to the BMG merger in 2004. "Sony was a real oligarchy," a veteran executive told *New York* magazine's Phoebe Eaton in 2003, while another asserted that Mottola ran his team like a little Mafia family. "The Tommy clique really loved power," said a former employee. Along with their industry-leading salaries and bonus package, the members of the inner circle

enjoyed perks ranging from leased high-end Mercedes sedans with drivers to the use of a private elevator. Mottola, according to one Sony executive, "wanted to show he was separate from the pack. He had a disdain for his peers in the music business. There were only a few who mattered—RCA's Clive Davis and Universal's Doug Morris."

During her years at Sony, Anthony was extremely well liked, in stark contrast to some of the other major execs she worked with, whose gruff personalities and intimidating leadership styles engendered widespread negative feelings. She stood out among her peers because she possessed the rare ability to combine a rarefied business acumen gained from her deal-making experience with an affinity



for winning the trust of artists.

In the end, Mottola was undone by the combination of his inability to manage upward and the negative fallout from the Mariah Carey divorce, forcing Sony Corp. overlord Sir Howard Stringer—whom Mottola had treated disdainfully—to fire him in 2003. Taking Mottola's place was longtime TV exec Andy Lack, who tapped Ienner and Anthony to oversee the Sony labels (Glew had retired shortly before

Mottola was axed). Jenner then moved Steve Barnett from Epic to Columbia.

After Jenner was elevated to CEO of the Sony Music Label Group U.S. in 2004, his first official move was to anoint Anthony as his COO, while she retained her title as EVP of the recently finalized Sony BMG joint venture. In the latter role, she served as the combined company's liaison in legislative and legal issues, reporting directly to Lack. The following year, she was named President of the group.

Lack helped engineer the BMG merger but couldn't figure out how to get the combined companies to work together during his three years at the helm. In 2006, he was replaced by BMG veteran Rolf Schmidt-Holtz, who, in a naïve attempt to reorganize both units, abruptly forced out both Jenner and Anthony, sending shockwaves across the industry. Looking over a draft of the announcement, which stated that she'd resigned, Anthony vehemently objected to the wording. "No, please say you fired me," she insisted. "I would never leave a ship that I helped build...and the artists and employees there."

It didn't take long for her to regain her footing, as she refocused on her primary passion—artists.

Just months after leaving Sony, Anthony launched her own consulting and management company, 7H Entertainment, with clients including Pearl Jam, Prince, Black Sabbath and Ozzy, Björk, Soundgarden and Macy Gray. The work was fulfilling, so much so that she swore to herself that she'd never again work at a label.

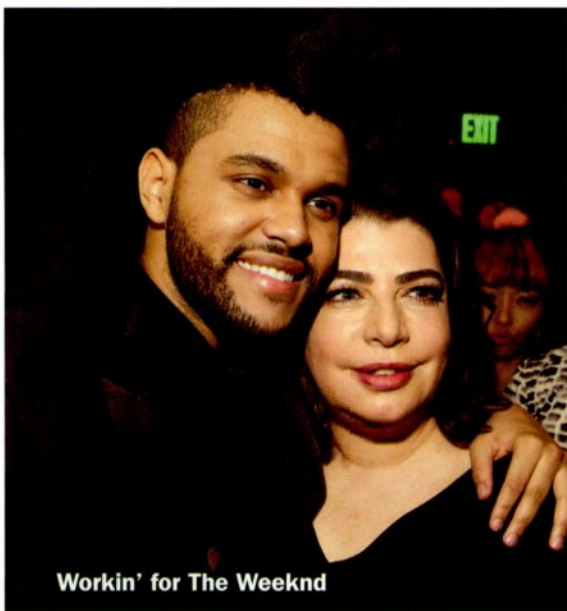
Anthony's stance began to soften when, in 2013, Grainge approached her with an enticing offer—to become an extension of the Chairman/CEO, and as such, to have her hand in virtually every aspect of UMG's operations. A meeting with Grainge and Muir about Pearl Jam's Monkeywrench label turned into a brainstorming session about the inner workings of UMG. Two days later, Anthony accepted Grainge's offer. "It was very exciting to



With the late, great Polly Anthony



POWER PACK: With Mottola, Tom Freston and Mickey Schulhof



“I consider Michelle to be, if not the top, one of the top female executives in the music business. She has an enormous knowledge of both the business and the creative side; artists love her, and she does a very effective job on the business side. She’s a unique person.” —Allen Grubman

see the entrepreneurial culture that he was building,” she later acknowledged.

Anthony and Grainge had first crossed paths more than three decades ago. “When I was a young artist lawyer,” she recalled, “he was my first choice for sub-publishing deals in the U.K. I actually made *The Sugarcubes*’ sub-publishing deal with him in 1987.” Those early encounters foreshadowed a formidable partnership.

“There are scarce executives in music with the depth of Michele’s experience on both the label and artist sides of the industry,” is how Grainge succinctly put it, in effect explaining his thinking not only for bringing Anthony into his company but also for giving her such wide-ranging responsibilities.

Grainge put Anthony in charge of UMG’s U.S. Commercial Services Division, encompassing sales, live events, label merchandising, college marketing and fan and consumer engagement. He also gave her oversight of the company’s film, TV and theatrical projects, working alongside Gerson; streaming marketing with Kronfeld; the Bruce Resnikoff-led catalog division UMe; and UMG Canada. Additionally, Anthony was given a seat on Universal’s Executive Management Board.

One top exec who was delighted by Anthony’s arrival was Republic chief **Monte Lipman**, who’d had a firsthand view of Anthony in action when he worked alongside her during the first half of the ’90s. “I love Michele,” he said at the UJA luncheon. “She also comes from the Sony system, and as a chief lieutenant,

and for I guess what was nearly two decades, that place was humming. She’s a triple threat, because she’s got legal chops, she knows how to run a successful business and she’s *adored* by the artist community. I love her passion, her obsession. She’s dynamite.”

Undaunted by the breadth and depth of her responsibilities, Anthony dove right into the deep end. She organized UMG’s first-ever branding division in 2014, installing savvy ad exec **Mike Tunnicliffe** as VP Branding & Sponsorships, while overseeing (in the language of her corporate bio) UMG’s global brand partnerships and live events, working with the company’s labels to maximize commercial and strategic opportunities to establish new revenue streams, form alliances with third parties and create a variety of special projects.

As UMG’s label liaison, Anthony played a central role in the disentangling of UMG’s labels, finalized as of April 1, 2014. In the unbundling of **Island Def Jam**, realigning Def Jam as a standalone label—and thereby returning it to its **Russell Simmons** roots as a prime destination for hip-hop—moving Island under the Republic umbrella and shifting **Motown** to **CMG**, the music group’s landscape was significantly and logically altered. Those moves reversed what Anthony described as “this shrinking of what the brands originally stood for.” Two years later, she oversaw the formation of the **Verve Label Group** and the appointment of **Danny Bennett** to lead the new entity as President/CEO.

There was some much-needed updating to be done with Universal’s corporate infrastructure as well. In 2015, Anthony and Muir jointly reshaped the company’s commercial functions in the U.S., dissolving distribution wing **UMGD**, and shifting **Candace Berry**, the division’s top exec, to the newly created post EVP of Sales, while the teams supervising the various functions were incorporated into the UMG structure—most of them reporting to Anthony. All in all, a mind-blowing array of responsibilities.

Somehow, the tireless Anthony—who sees “no demarcation between work and philanthropy or activism”—finds the time to work with the **Global Poverty Project** and advises the GPP’s annual **Central Park Global Citizen Festival**; chairs the **Global Citizen Tickets Initiative**; supports various initiatives with her mentor and friend **Gloria Steinem**, including fundraisers for **Hedgebrook**, a nonprofit retreat for female writers, as well as other pro-choice organizations. Anthony is also deeply involved in USC’s **Annenberg Inclusion Initiative**, which promotes diversity in media as well as the entertainment business; and oversees the label group’s college-network program, a source for young female hires.

Earlier this year, she was named to the **Recording Academy Task Force**, a no-brainer move virtually guaranteeing that the group will accomplish its mission, which is identical to her own. Because, to borrow Steinem’s accolade, Michele Anthony is simply fan-fucking-tastic, in her work and in her humanity. •

CreativeArtistsAgency
honors

our clients, whose artistry,
passion and talent endlessly
inspires us

CAA

IRVING

AZOFF

TAKING IT TO THE LIMIT, EVERY TIME

When his buddies think of Irving Azoff, they picture him holding court at Craig's, or even more vividly, in mid-round at his beloved Riviera Country

Club, talking on the phone, tossing it onto the grass to hit a shot and then picking it up again to resume the conversation. That's Irving in a nutshell, at the top of his game.

We first crossed paths with Irving in the early '70s, not long after he came to L.A., fresh out of college and hoping to make his mark—and his fortune—in the music biz, like countless others of his generation. To say that he succeeded on both counts would be a gross understatement. He's been a major success with a Midas touch since the mid-'70s, when his **Front Line Management** flagship clients the **Eagles** scored a massive breakthrough, followed by runs as a label head at **MCA** and his own **Giant**, his run at **Ticketmaster**,

which led to the formation of **Live Nation Entertainment**, and his multiple entrepreneurial undertakings in recent years. No other still-active music-biz figure can match this high-wire act.

During his near-half-century career, the perspicacious Azoff has been an agent, personal manager, major-label CEO, label owner, concert promoter and movie producer (with production credits including *Fast Times at Ridgmont High* and *Urban Cowboy*), typically wearing several hats simultaneously. These days, Irving has his fingers in so many pies it's hard to keep count, but among them are multifaceted sports and entertainment operation **Oak View Group**, the progressive **PRO Global Music Rights**, the “premium experience” company **LaneOne** and **Full Stop Management** in partnership with his son **Jeffrey**, who's become a major player in a relatively short time.

In October 2018, all of the abovementioned entities became part of **The Azoff Company**, as Irving acquired **Madison Square Garden's** 50% interest in **Azoff MSG Entertainment** for \$125 million.

“I am extremely proud that my part-



YOU CAN'T ARGUE WITH A SICK MIND: Irving (sporting early Eagles merch) and Joe Walsh



THE DEALIN' DALTON GANG: *Looking cool with the Eagles and Bill Graham*

ner, **Jim Dolan**, and I built an innovative company which always put the artists' and songwriters' interests first," Azoff said in announcing the acquisition. "The Azoff Company will build on this foundation of positive disruption and artist advocacy: we will continue to challenge antiquated parts of the entertainment business on behalf of artists and fans. The Azoff Co. is proud to renew our commitment to the Forum and MSG's transformative vision for the best possible, live entertainment experience."

The Azoff empire also includes Irving's daughter, **Allison Statter**, the co-head of **Blended Strategy Group**, who has done branding for the old man and has made him a grandfather three times over.

Larry Solters, another member of the extended family, has been at Irving's side for more than four decades, serving as his media guru and confidant—or, as Solters put it long ago, he's the "vice-

president-in-charge-of-whatever-Irving-tells-me-to-do."

Close friend and trusted associate **Howard Kaufman**, who helped launch **Front Line** in 1974, was a huge part of Irving's life until his death in 2017. Very bright and a great numbers guy, Kaufman had the reputation of being able to put more money in an artist's pocket from touring than any other manager. Irving relied on Howard's expertise, and the two maintained the closest of bonds until Kaufman's death in 2017.

But back in 1970, Irving was just a bright, ambitious, highly opinionated wiseass from the hinterlands who even then displayed a rarefied gift of gab. He paired that talent with a related one that turned out to be equally important—he listened. And unlike so many of his peers, he never failed to return a phone call—or these days an email—a discipline that has become an

integral part of the Azoff legend.

It was his innate social skillset that enabled Irving to quickly lodge himself smack-dab in the middle of the action, where he has remained ever since, calling the shots and directing the scene—and doing so in the most entertaining way imaginable. What's more, if there's anyone legitimately worthy of authoring a book titled *The Art of the Deal*, it's Irving. In terms of dealmaking, it's fair to say no one can touch him.

Irving has compared his behavior to that of a real-life **Dennis the Menace**, while taking on the nicknames "Swirv" and "poison dwarf" for his oft-notorious hijinks, infamously including sending a birthday present containing a live snake to a rival. And that's not all, folks. During the '70s, Irving and longtime client **Joe Walsh** teamed up on a running practical joke. They'd enter an executive's office for a meeting, whereupon Walsh would pull a

chainsaw out of his guitar case and they'd zip the legs off the office chairs, while Irving would sprinkle lighter fluid on the desk and set it on fire.

In his definitive chronicle of the period, *Mansion on the Hill*, author Fred Goodman described Irving as "a screaming record industry Napoleon right out of central casting." The Eagles' Don Henley made a similar point far more affectionately when, during his induction speech at the 1998 Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, he famously said of his longtime manager, "He may be Satan, but he's *our* Satan."

Irving gives as good as he gets. During the 2015 City of Hope event honoring Lucian Grainge, the little rascal zapped his fellow attendees with surgical precision, warning the crowd that Eddy Cue "will try to sell you his record collection," revealing that Scott Borchetta was "outside washing Taylor Swift's car," quipping that Neil Portnow will "always be Clive Calder's bagman to me" and alleging that Joel Katz "still wants to be Allen Grubman."

As for his tendency to stretch the truth at times, Irving confessed to Cameron Crowe in a 1978 *Rolling Stone* profile, "Sure I lie. But it's more like...tinting. I've inherited a lot of [deals made by] dummies. When that happens, you gotta make it right. It's all just negotiating theatrics."

Azoff grew up in Danville, a small town in downstate Illinois near the Indiana border, and attended the University of Illinois in nearby Champaign. He started early, booking acts into both Danville High School and U of I. Azoff's first management client was Champaign-based REO Speedwagon; his second was Peoria native and fellow U of I student Dan Fogelberg. In 1972, Azoff headed to L.A. with Fogelberg by his side; the two shared an apartment. Soon thereafter, he was joined by REO's tour manager, John Baruck, who remains part of Azoff's inner circle to this day. "It was fun times," Irving said of their initiation into West Coast culture. "There's something



SNAPSHOTS: *With Shelli*

to be said for not growing up in L.A. or New York and experiencing the business in the heartland," he pointed out in 2017. "You learn in different ways what does and doesn't work."

The early '70s were a golden age for Los Angeles, which was then—and is once again—a mecca for talented artists as well as for those who aspired to work behind the scenes, where—following a stint as a booker at Jerry Heller's Heller-Fischel Agency, David Geffen offered Azoff a gig at Geffen-Roberts Management, with responsibilities including booking the Roxy. It was there that he began his longstanding relationship with the Eagles.

"When I first came to Los Angeles, the center of the business was on Santa Monica Boulevard," Irving recalled during a November 2014 lunch at the iconic Riviera Country Club, the home away from home for this determined duffer. "It centered on the Troubadour bar and Dan Tana's next door. It was 1973. I met Albert Grossman on the sidewalk in front of the Troubadour. I was like a young kid



“THERE'S SOMETHING TO BE SAID FOR NOT GROWING UP IN L.A. OR NEW YORK AND EXPERIENCING THE BUSINESS IN THE HEARTLAND... YOU LEARN IN DIFFERENT WAYS WHAT DOES AND DOESN'T WORK.”

hangin' around the fringes, but I'd be in the Troubadour bar, and there would be David Geffen and Albert Grossman—all these guys yelling at each other and fighting, which was just the normal thing.

“The scene in Hollywood in those days was the Forum, the Troubadour, the Greek, the Whisky to some extent, and then very soon thereafter, the Roxy. And it was really fucking healthy. If you watch the Eagles documentary, people were moving here on both the business and the musician side from all over the country to taste the American Dream. It became the melting pot for American music. It

was exciting, and the music was varied, everything from Elton John coming from London to Joni Mitchell to Cheech & Chong to the Eagles to Linda Rondstadt. It wasn't any particular sound.”

With the Eagles as his flagship act, Irving split from Geffen-Roberts in 1974 and started his own management company, naming it Front Line. “Geffen told the Eagles they could leave, but I don't think they anticipated I would take 'em,” Azoff recalled. “They were pissed.” Not long afterward, the Eagles became absolutely ginormous, averaging a million albums a month for a two-year stretch

behind the chart-toppers *One of These Nights* (released June 1975) through *Hotel California* (December 1976). His loaded client roster also included Fogelberg, REO, Joe Walsh, Steely Dan, Jimmy Buffett and Boz Scaggs.

He shrewdly orchestrated the insertion of Walsh into the Eagles lineup before the recording of the mega-smash *Hotel California* in a win-win for all involved. And in a bold move, Irving sued Geffen and Warners in an attempt to get control of the Eagles' extremely lucrative publishing rights; in 1979, after two years of battling, Warners caved, as

BUNNY BUDDIES: With Steven Baker, Henley, Russ Thyret, Lee Phillips and David Altschul



Goodman put it, settling out of court, making Henley, Glenn Frey and Irving even more filthy-rich. Management was very, very good to young Mr. Azoff.

“It was such a fucking seat-of-your-pants, invent-the-rules-as-you-go business,” he told Goodman. “And David invented a lot of the rules. For anyone with any sort of gift of gab and business sense, it was easy to beat. Then the manager thing became real entrepreneurial; it was the next step for idiots who wanted to own and operate our own businesses. Being a manager was the way to go.” After a comedic pause, Irving delivered his payoff. “Management is a terrible business,” he said. “Who wants an artist to take 85% of his money?”

Eagles collaborator J.D. Souther put his own amusing spin on Irving’s quip when he observed to Goodman, “Irving’s 15% of everybody turned out to be more than everyone’s 85% of themselves.”

He wed Shelli Azoff in 1978; while they were dating, she’d become the assistant to agent Howard Rose at his Howard Rose Agency. Just before the nuptials, Frey wondered, “What wedding present do you get for the guy who’s already *taken* everything he wanted?” Irving and Shelli have been one of Hollywood’s most colorful high-profile power couples ever since.

Irving has also remained joined at the hip to Henley, who has served as his unofficial but essential A&R ears for decades, as well as his chief confidant. “I’m always awed,” Henley noted to Cameron Crowe, “because he’s screaming at some guy twice his size and never gets his face crushed for it. I think it helps that people are shocked at this short, deceptively *cute*-looking guy who goes to the top floor of a building and just *explodes* on some guy for his incompetence.”

Front Line was the biggest, most successful management company in the business, as Irving retained his longstanding clients while adding Chicago and Styx to



BIG SHOTS: [Top-bottom] With Mo Ostin, his phones and Lucian Grainge



CHEESEBURGERS IN PARADISE: *With Myron Roth, Jimmy Buffett, Howard Kaufman and Richard Palmese*

the core roster of the Eagles, Steely, Walsh, REO, Fogelberg, Buffett and Scaggs. Indeed, it was so successful that Irving kept on keepin' on even after the Eagles "went on hiatus" in 1980. But the loss of his beloved band was likely a factor in his decision to take the corporate plunge and attempt to bring the so-called Music Cemetery of America back to life, which he proceeded to do. At the outset, Azoff sold a piece of Frontline to MCA and entrusted his acts to Howard Kaufman, who would play a huge role in Irving's management business throughout its existence, including running Front Line in his absence.

Under Azoff's watch, working with an executive team that included Richard Palmese and Zach Horowitz, MCA notched hits with acts including Tom Petty, Glenn Frey, New Edition, Tiffany, Ready for the World, The Fixx, Jody Watley, Fine Young Cannibals, Eric B. & Rakim and Heavy D & the Boyz. This was the colorful era of "cutouts," Sal "the Baker" Pisello and William Knoedelseder's investigative reporting of shady dealings and dirty laundry for the *L.A. Times*, later documented in Knoedelseder's book *Stiffed* and Fred

Dannen's tome *Hit Men*. After six years of running a major label, Irving had had enough of corporate politics, so he bought back MCA's Front Line stake at a radically reduced rate, a slick move that he would repeat time and again during the ensuing decades.

Following his resignation from MCA, Azoff launched Giant Records in 1990—selling a piece of Front Line to parent company Warner Music Group—and installing legendary music-biz character Charlie Minor as the startup label's president. The back story, according to Thomas R. King's book *The Operator* (2001), goes like this: Geffen wanted Azoff out at MCA to clear the way for MCA to buy Geffen Records. Geffen convinced WMG's Mo Ostin to offer Azoff a "dream" label deal, which Irving agreed to. There were apparently no hard feelings on Irving's part toward his friendly rival mogul. Giant pattered along for much of the 1990s while he also attended to his longtime clients, until he decided to return to management fulltime at the dawn of the millennium, buying back WMG's piece of Front Line for pennies on the dollar, while also finding the time to launch the advo-

cacy group Recording Artists Coalition (RAC for short) with Henley in 2000.

The revived Front Line became bigger than ever, as Irving expanded his client roster while rolling up smaller management firms. These acquisitions provided him with the jet fuel to power him into his next deal, when, in 2008, Azoff sold his management company yet again, this time to Ticketmaster, after which he took the top post at TM. Two years later, he and Michael Rapino pulled off an even bigger merger, when, following months of scrutiny, the DOJ approved the pairing of TM with Rapino's Live Nation, forming Live Nation Entertainment and taking the role of Executive Chairman. In 2012, he topped *Billboard's* Power 100. But he abruptly resigned his post on New Year's Eve of 2012, explaining that he'd been itching to get out of the public sector. He announced the formation of Azoff MSG the following September.

In one of his biggest moves with Azoff MSG, Azoff gave L.A. an important new arena in the lavishly refurbished, music-specific Forum, which has since approached the exalted status of the company's New York citadel, Madison Square

“SURE I LIE. BUT IT'S MORE LIKE... TINTING. I'VE INHERITED A LOT OF [DEALS MADE BY] DUMMIES. WHEN THAT HAPPENS, YOU GOTTA MAKE IT RIGHT. IT'S ALL JUST NEGOTIATING THEATRICALS.”



FORUM CLUB: With Jim Dolan, Joe Walsh, Glenn Frey and Timothy B. Schmit

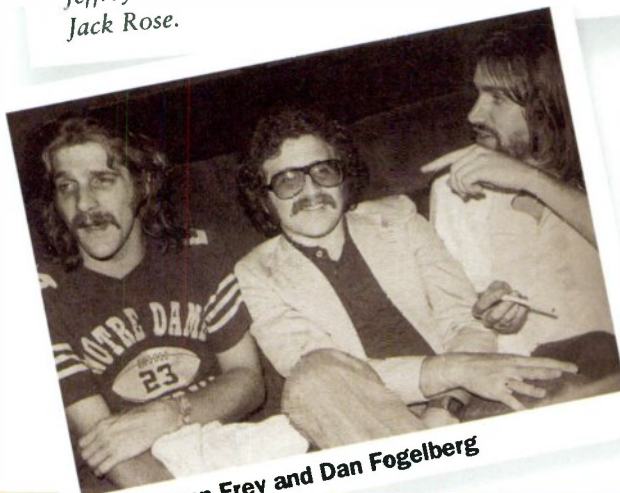
Garden, thanks in part to Shelli Azoff, who was in charge of remodeling the arena and making it artist-friendly. The Eagles, Steely Dan and Journey—all of which he took with him when he left Live Nation—remain high-grossing live acts. Azoff is also in the comedy business after doing a deal with Levity, the biggest and most innovative operation in the sector, while taking on Chelsea Handler for management.

Azoff launched Global Music Rights in 2014 with the aim of dramatically improving songwriting and performance-royalty terms for the acts he represented. More recently, the Oak View Group created the Arena Alliance, which is now nearing 30 venues, and purchased live-industry trade *Pollstar*.

Azoff was devastated by the death of Frey in January 2016. “Glenn Frey was a huge business, music, and golf influence on me,” he told us. “It’s like losing a brother. It will never be the same. He was beloved by so many—and I don’t mean just industry people. He did so much, and he was a regular guy.” When asked about the key to the partnership of Glenn and Don, who seemed like such opposites yet comple-



SHOWBIZ KIDS: On a golf holiday in Scotland with duffer contemporaries Mitch Rose, Rob Light and Colin Hodgson; offspring Jeffrey Azoff, Cameron Azoff and Logan Light; and course guide Jack Rose.



With Glenn Frey and Dan Fogelberg



TURNING ON THE CHARM: *With Michael Rapino, Clarence Avant and Marty Bandier, Christina Aguilera*

mented each other so beautifully, Irving responded, “Mutual respect and knowing that they each brought something different to the table”

Soon thereafter, Irving became the first manager to be chosen to receive the President’s Merit Award at Clive Davis’ pre-Grammy gala. Many assumed he’d turn it down, but he showed up, explaining, “It’s important that artists and managers be recognized by the Recording

Academy. I am just a representative of those communities.” When we asked him how he planned to get through what promised to be a long evening, Irving replied, “Arrive late. Leave early. Be Irving, as usual.”

Irving being Irving long ago elevated him to the highest rung of music-biz royalty, from which height (sorry) he continues to perform at the top of his game, eliciting hosannas from heavy-

weight peers including Lucian Grainge, who’s described him as “more, more and more, a winner,” and Grubman, who hails him as “one of the giants of the modern music business.”

Fellow mega-attorney Joel Katz, meanwhile, has “constantly marveled at his ‘chameleon-like’ ability to change himself to fit the precise needs of any situation—be it artistic, executive, or political—to find the perfect solution and to move the enterprise, whatever it is, constantly forward.”

In a 2014 interview with *HITS*, Katz went into greater detail, describing his friend of four decades as “dynamic, strategic and extremely smart... He’s very special, and when you really get to know him, he’s a very good-hearted person. Irving Azoff is a total winner, and he will always be a total winner. And he will build his business like he has always done. He has taken the management business to a new level. His definition of what a management company could be has now been successfully emulated by several others, but Irving created that definition.”

The combined roster of Full Stop, which Azoff the Elder joined in March 2017, includes the Eagles, Steely Dan, Jimmy Buffett, Journey, Henley, Joe Walsh, Van Halen, Lindsey Buckingham, Bon Jovi, Harry Styles, Christina Aguilera, Gwen Stefani, Chelsea Handler, HAIM, Sara Bareilles, John Mayer/Dead & Company, Mark Ronson and Meghan Trainor, with Maroon 5 and Travis Scott the most recent additions to the client roster.

“Young blood is important in our business, and I wanted to work with taller people,” Irving explained.

Not many people manage to get the last word when going head to head with Irving, but thanks to their shared DNA, son Jeffrey can hold his own against his old man. “I’m just trying to rebuild all the bridges he burned,” Azoff the Younger explains. •



Love, Elliot



Congratulations Dad,

MARTY

BANDIER

THE

GRAND

COHIBA

**“We are the greatest content holder
in the music-publishing era.”**



Marty Bandier has been a rainmaker for so long that two of our other rainmakers, UMPG's Jody Gerson and Warner/Chappell's Big Jon Platt, were once his protégés—and Platt, as we recently learned, will be the music-biz legend's successor when Bandier retires from the top post at Sony/ATV at the end of March 2019, perfectly closing the circle of a remarkable career. But until Marty calls it a day, the three close friends will remain competitors—and all's fair in love and publishing. "I love them; they're like my kids—and they wanna kill me!" is how Bandier explained it in a 2017 Q&A at his alma mater, Syracuse University.

Bandier, who is in his 12th year as Chairman and CEO of Sony/ATV—which he's transformed into the biggest player in music publishing—is universally admired in the music business.

"I've known Marty for many, many years, and Marty is without a doubt the most iconic music publisher of his generation," Allen Grubman, Bandier's longtime attorney, tells us. "Every step he's taken throughout his career has been phenomenally successful. There's nobody out there with his level of knowledge and sophistication, and it shows: Every company he's run has grown every year. When you talk about the great record guys, like Mo Ostin, Ahmet Ertegun and Clive Davis, Marty is their equivalent in music publishing, and I'm very proud to have represented him all these years."

Offered fellow attorney Joel Katz, "Why has Sony/ATV done well? It's because they have a great team and a great leader in Marty Bandier; it's the same in all successful businesses."

Platt hailed him as "an icon," noting, "He was very supportive of me as an A&R. I'm very competitive and Marty's very competitive, so we had a connection there." He added, "Marty played a big role in who I am today."

"I didn't think guys like him existed in the industry anymore," Wyclef Jean



ALL IN THE FAMILY: Future competitors Jon Platt and Jody Gerson, with Marty, Gerald Levert and Bob Flax in the EMI days.

told *The Guardian*. “The reality is, it used to be about the songs, and the time we’re living in now, it’s more about a quick hit. For Marty, it’s more about the music. He’ll come to your show, see the vibe that you’re on. He actually studies every artist to see the range of what they can do.”

Pharrell Williams put it more bluntly when his hip-hop band N.E.R.D played at EMI’s post-Grammys party in 2003. “Respect to Marty Bandier, the best motherfucking music publisher in the world.”

That is not an exaggeration. Without question, Bandier has been the single most dominant music publisher of the last 30 years. Apart from his two accomplished former lieutenants, no one comes close to matching his gigantic footprint.

Sony/ATV owns the rights to 3 million songs, including such Grammy

Song of the Year winners as “Moon River,” “Michelle,” “You’ve Got a Friend,” “The Way We Were,” “Every Breath You Take,” “Stay with Me” and “Thinking Out Loud.”

“We are the greatest content holder in the music-publishing era,” Bandier boasted a few years ago.

Bandier was born into a musical family in New York. His mother was a classically trained pianist. He and his older brother both followed in her footsteps. He graduated from Syracuse in 1962 and from Brooklyn Law School in 1965, whereupon he joined the New York firm of Battle Fowler Jaffin & Kheel. In 1969, he became General Counsel to the LeFrak Organization, a real-estate-development company headed by Samuel

LeFrak, his father-in-law at the time. Bandier rose to Senior Vice President.

In 1975, Bandier made his first big play in the music business, forming **The Entertainment Company** with LeFrak and industry veteran **Charles Koppelman**. (Bandier was 34 at the time, relatively old for someone just entering the music business—though he has since made up for lost time.) The production and publishing company was responsible for such Top 10 hits as **Barbra Streisand’s** “My Heart Belongs to Me,” **Dolly Parton’s** “Here You Come Again” and **Diana Ross’** “Why Do Fools Fall in Love.”

In 1984, he and Koppelman dissolved their partnership with LeFrak and formed the **Entertainment Music Company** and the **Entertainment Television Company**. The partners set out to buy song catalogs. They bid on **ATV Music**, which held the rights to



SMOKE 'EM IF YOU GOT 'EM: With Aerosmith's Steven Tyler and Joe Perry

The Beatles' music—but lost out to Michael Jackson, who bought the company for \$47.5 million in 1985. Bandier and Koppelman had put in a higher bid, according to a 1985 story in the *Los Angeles Times* by Robert Hilburn, but Jackson was prepared to close the deal more quickly, which proved to be the deciding factor.

In 1986, the partners purchased the Combine Music catalog (best known for Kris Kristofferson classics) from Monument Records. That same year, Bandier and Koppelman teamed with financier Stephen C. Swid to form the investor group SBK Entertainment World. (The name is an acronym incorporating the first letter of each of the founders' surnames.) They purchased the CBS Songs catalog for the record-setting price of \$125 million.

"That was a dazzling acquisition, because it changed the way everyone

**"WHY HAS SONY/ATV
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IN ALL
SUCCESSFUL
BUSINESSES."**

—JOEL KATZ

in the financial community viewed the value of owning musical copyrights," entertainment attorney Freddie Gershon told *The New York Times*.

The SBK principals more than doubled their money when they sold SBK's song catalog to Thorn EMI in 1989 for \$295 million. As part of the deal, Koppelman and Bandier formed a partnership with EMI Music Worldwide to create their own record label, SBK Records. Bandier was named President and Chief Operating Officer of the record company and Vice Chairman of the combined publishing company, EMI Music Publishing. Koppelman was Chairman/CEO of the label and Chairman of EMI Music Publishing, making him Bandier's boss.

SBK Records became one of the hottest start-up labels in music history. Vanilla Ice's *To the Extreme* shipped 7 million copies in the U.S., per the RIAA. Wilson Phillips' self-

titled debut album shipped 5 million. The latter project received five Grammy noms, including Album of the Year.

In 1990, Bandier and Koppelman received the *Abc Olman Publisher Award* from the *Songwriters Hall of Fame*. The following year, they sold their share of SBK Records to EMI Music, making EMI the sole owner of the label. Bandier moved up to Chairman and CEO of EMI Music Publishing, while Koppelman segued to *EMI Records Group North America*. He was CEO of that company until 1997, when he left the music industry.

In 1997, EMI purchased a 50% stake of *Jobete Music Co.* for \$132 million. At the time, Bandier called it the highlight of his career. “It’s the greatest American body of music produced during the 20th century,” he said.

In the Q&A at Syracuse, which was moderated by *Variety* Senior Music Editor *Jem Aswad*, Bandier called the Jobete acquisition one of the most challenging deals he has ever done.

“[That] was a trial by fire,” Bandier said. “[*Berry Gordy Jr.*] was very concerned about his babies—not just the songs he wrote, but *Smokey Robinson* and *Stevie Wonder* and *Holland-Dozier-Holland*. He said ‘You’ve gotta sell those people on why you would make a difference.’ I was able to do that, but it was not an easy task... Finally, I said, ‘Why don’t you just sell half the company to me and I’ll make the other half worth twice the amount?’ He’s a pretty smart guy and he said, ‘I’ll take that deal.’” EMI Music later acquired another 30% of Jobete, giving it an 80% share in the company.

Bandier was also responsible for the purchases of *Filmtrax* in 1991 and *Windswept Pacific* in 1999, establishing a pattern of buying smaller pubcos and merging them to make them more efficient and increasingly profitable.

When, in late 2005, Bandier asked EMI to sell him its publishing unit, the company turned him down; he resigned less than a year later.

“Six weeks after he stepped down, Marty called me, and he made it clear that he wasn’t ready to retire,” Grubman recalls. “He had the choice of either going to *Warner/Chappell* or *Sony/ATV*, which was a much smaller company. And Marty made the fateful decision that he wanted to work with a small company rather than take over a big company—because EMI was a big company, and so was *Warner/Chappell*.”

So Bandier took the top post at *Sony/ATV* in April 2007 after striking a deal that gave him a piece of the profits. “I thought I was ready for a change and wanted to do something that had an entrepreneurial bent to it that offered an opportunity to share in the growth of a company,” he told AP at the time.

He immediately went into his aggressively acquisitive mode, negotiating the acquisition of two prized catalogs—the *Famous Music* catalog from *Viacom* for a reported \$370 million and the *Leiber & Stoller* catalog for a reported \$40 million.

HE’S THEIR GUY: *With Leonard Cohen and Taylor Swift*





PUFF PIECES: With Gerardo and Koppelman, Rod Stewart, Wilson Phillips, Janet Jackson and Neil Diamond



In November 2011, Sony Corp. of America and an investor group purchased EMI Music Publishing, with Sony/ATV administering the catalog. The move reunited Bandier and the songs he had overseen for 17 years at EMI Music. The deal cost a then-whopping \$2.2 billion. “It was not an easy task to put together that type of financing,” Bandier said at Syracuse. “It was an incredible array of songs and worth every penny, but it was a difficult transaction and a lot of juggling.”

Four years later, Sony bought out the Jackson Estate for a reported \$750 million to gain full ownership of Sony/ATV. And by 2018, under Bandier’s savvy leadership, EMI had more than doubled in value to \$4.7 billion, at which point Sony bought out the other investors and formalized the union of the two companies—in what was undoubtedly an extremely gratifying moment for the man who had transformed both into powerhouses. The combined value of Sony/ATV and EMP is now believed to be in the \$6-7 billion range.

Sony/ATV had its most successful year in terms of both revenue and profit in 2017, according to Bandier, thanks to such superstars as Ed Sheeran and

Taylor Swift. At the BMI Pop Awards in May 2018, Sony/ATV was named Publisher of the Year for the fourth time in the past five years. Sheeran, Camila Cabello and Alessia Cara each received three awards.

Sony/ATV has also been involved in several long-running stage shows. *Mamma Mia!*, featuring the ABBA catalog, ran on Broadway for nearly 14 years. *Jersey Boys*, featuring hits by The Four Seasons, ran for more than 11 years. *Motown: The Musical* ran for nearly two years. *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* has been running for more than four years.

Bandier has called out such digital services as Pandora and Spotify for failing to properly compensate songwriters. In a letter to his staff that went public, Bandier complained that the songwriters of the megahits “Happy” (Pharrell Williams) and “All of Me” (John Legend and Toby Gad) earned surprisingly meager royalties from streaming and on-



EMPIRE STATE OF MIND: *With Alicia Keys and Jay-Z*

“We’re not afraid to fight for our songwriters. I’m the least contentious person you’d ever want to meet, and I find myself in arguments with the Department of Justice and the heads of Spotify and YouTube.”

demand airplay. In the first three months of 2014, 55 million plays of “Happy” generated just \$3,400, and 42 million plays of “All of Me” resulted in just \$2,700. “This is a totally unacceptable situation, and one that cannot be allowed to continue,” Bandier wrote in the letter. (He wisely didn’t add that he probably spends more than that on cigars.)

“We’re not afraid to fight for our songwriters,” Bandier explained at Syracuse. “I’m the least contentious person you’d ever want to meet, and I find myself in arguments with the Department of Justice and the heads of Spotify and YouTube.”

Bandier is also a tireless advocate for songwriters to get more recognition. One of his pet peeves is that songwriter credits are hard to find on streaming services. “It

is as if the songwriters do not exist, and the only people who matter are the recording artists,” he said in a 2017 speech, accepting a Lifetime Service Award from the National Music Publishers Assn.

“However, without the songwriter coming up with the words and music in the first place, there would be nothing for the artist to record and no music to stream. The irony is that the role of the non-performing songwriter in creating hit songs is probably greater today than it has been in any time since the heyday of Tin Pan Alley, when the NMPA was actually founded.”

In 2006, Bandier founded the Bandier Program for Music and Entertainment Industries at Syracuse. In a recent interview with the *Los Angeles Times*, Bandier admitted that, in the music industry’s

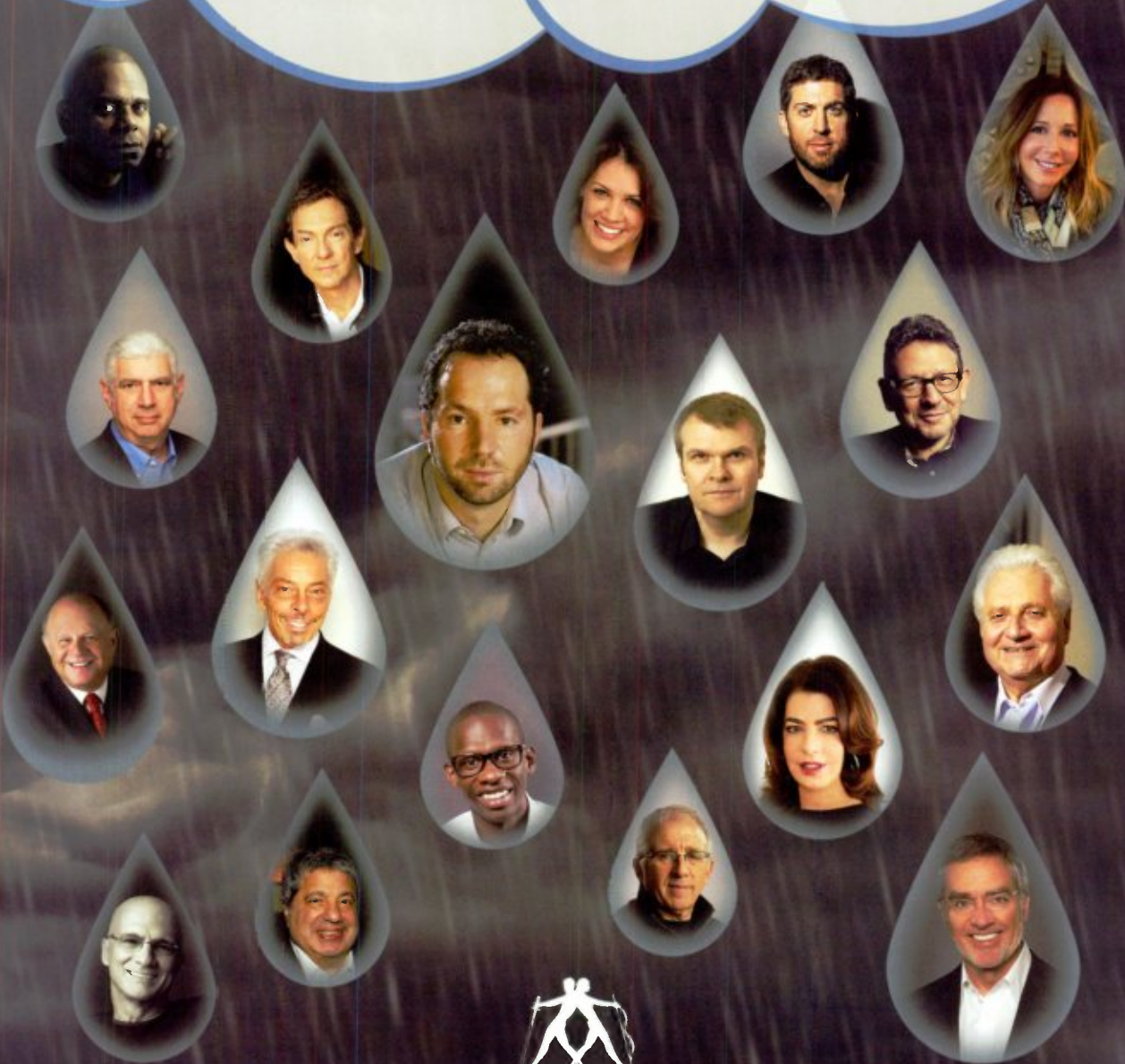
darkest days several years ago, he was feeling guilty about the students going into the program. “I was saying to myself, ‘God, all these kids who love music and want to be in the business—their passion was so great—am I putting them in a position of doom and gloom?’ Now, we get 400 applications for 30 spots [each year].”

Bandier has received countless honors. In 1994, he received the Arents Award, the highest alumni honor, from Syracuse. In June 2003, he was inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame for a second time, as a Patron of the Arts. In February 2015, he became the first music publisher to be honored at the annual Grammy Salute to Industry Icons. Bandier is a board member of ASCAP, the Songwriters Hall of Fame, the NMPA and

MAVERICK CONGRATULATES

ALL OF THE AMAZING

RAINMAKERS





PLAYERS (clockwise from top left): With Doug Morris, Kaz and Riko Hirai, Allen and Deborah Grubman; on the links with Darius Rucker and Tiger Woods; with Dottie Harris-Bandier and Clive Davis

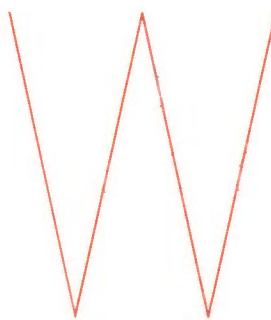
“There’s nobody out there with his level of knowledge and sophistication, and it shows: Every company he’s run has grown every year. When you talk about the great record guys, like Mo Ostin, Ahmet Ertegun and Clive Davis, Marty is their equivalent in music publishing.” —Allen Grubman

the City of Hope. He is also a trustee of the T.J. Martell Foundation and a director of MusiCares.

He and his wife Dorothy live in Manhattan with their son, Max. He also has two grown daughters, Allison and Jenifer.

Bandier is a high roller par excellence, boasting a lifestyle as outsized as his beloved Double Robusto Cohibas. He’s a veritable Air Bandier, zipping around the globe in his private jet. You can spot him courtside at Madison Square Garden for Knicks games, or behind the backstop at Yankee Stadium for the World Series, or at the net for the finals of the U.S. Open. He always gets the most coveted table at the best restaurants in NYC, London, L.A. and Paris,

or the poshest suite at Hotel Du Cap in Cap D’Antibes. The staffers at the premier golf courses know him as a famously big tipper who always snags those most desirable tee times. He and Dorothy have been on the New York social-scene A-list for years and are avid art collectors. In short, Marty is the emperor of all he surveys.



hile the conclusion of his tenure atop the world’s biggest pubco has undoubtedly been bittersweet, few in the biz believe it

will mark the final chapter of his illustrious career. Indeed, speculation about his next move—and the potential investors who were likely clamoring for a meeting to discuss that move—began as soon as news spread that he’d be stepping down from Sony/ATV.

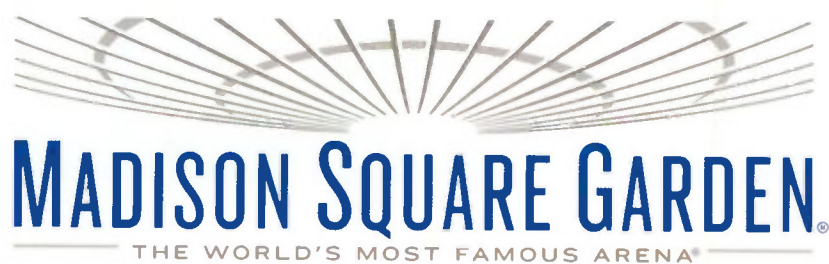
“The music business is like the alcohol business,” is how he explained his passion to *The Guardian*. “We drink when we’re happy, we drink when we’re sad. We just continue drinking because we enjoy it.”

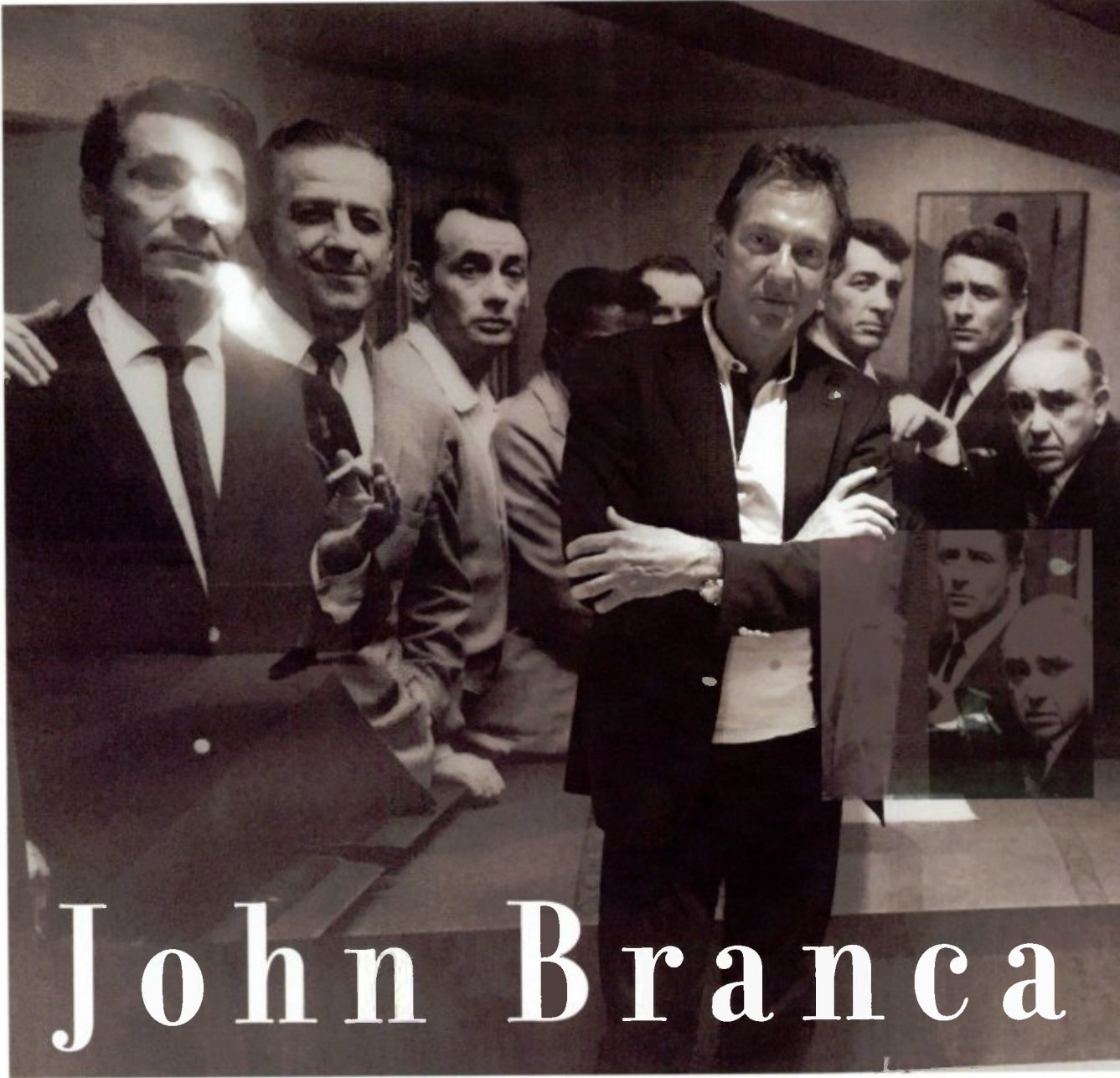
In all likelihood he’ll be uncorking something new soon enough—accompanied by a Double Robusto Cohiba, of course. •

IRVING AZOFF

THE RAINMAKER

CONGRATS FROM YOUR
MSG AND FORUM FAMILY





John Branca

THE

Here's the saga, *in five parts*, of a man who's been called—



I FOUND OUT ATV WAS FOR SALE, AND I TOLD MICHAEL. HE ASKED WHAT THAT WAS. I SAID, 'YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BELIEVE IT: 250 BEATLES SONGS, THE LITTLE RICHARD CATALOG.' HE STARTED SCREAMING ON THE PHONE. I ACTUALLY HAVE A GREAT NOTE HE WROTE ME. IT SAID, 'BRANCA, THE CATALOG IS MINE. DON'T LOSE IT BY OVER-NEGOTIATING.' I FRAMED THAT NOTE.”

—Branca to the AP in 2009

CLOSER

not hyperbolically—the most expensive lawyer in the world.

IT'S A WELL-WORN ADAGE THAT PAUL McCartney gave Michael Jackson the best investment advice he ever heard: Buy the publishing.

McCartney had purchased songs written by his childhood idols, artists such as **Buddy Holly**, which prompted Jackson to respond, "I'm gonna buy your songs." John Branca, partner and head of the music department at **Ziffren Brittenham LLP**, made sure it happened.

McCartney had passed along this tidbit while he and Jackson were recording "Say, Say, Say" in 1982 and three

years later, the Australian who owned 247 Lennon-McCartney titles, **Robert Holmes a Court**, was putting ATV up for sale.

Holmes a Court and Branca had a handshake deal, but Holmes a Court then agreed to sell it to **Marty Bandier** and **The Entertainment Co.** Branca went to Bandier's lead financier, a person he had done business with, and asked that he cancel the financing, which he did. Holmes a Court was left with only one option, and Branca chose to play hard to get, eventually agreeing to fly to London for a

24-hour period to strike a deal.

"My ass was on the line," Branca told **Stan Sinberg** for his *So We Can Rock Forever* blog in 2011. "I told him, 'if this deal didn't happen while I was there, to never, ever call me again.'"

Branca secured the ATV catalog of 4,000 songs for \$47.5 million after promising a charity performance by MJ and letting Holmes a Court's daughter have the rights to "Penny Lane."

Bandier responded by saying, "next time we do this, we're hiring John"—which came true when he went after **CBS Songs**.



2

“JOHN HAS A GREAT SENSE OF THE VALUE OF A SONG—WHICH SONGS WILL LAST FOR A LONG TIME. HOW CERTAIN SONGS CAN BE LICENSED.” —Marty Bandier

KILLER B'S: Branca, Berry, Bandier

WHEN BRANCA ORCHESTRATED THE merging of Jackson's ATV with Sony's nascent publishing business in 1995, he became music publishing's most accomplished attorney.

Sony paid Jackson \$95 million to merge ATV Music with its catalog to form a new 50/50 JV, which immediately became the world's second largest publisher. As the company continued to acquire other catalogs, it grew to the point that within 15 years it was earning \$1 billion annually from licensing and royalties.

In 2012, Branca was a consultant to Sony/ATV in connection with its \$2.2 billion acquisition of EMI Music Publishing; he was then hired by EMI to sell off music assets for \$90 million. His culminating move involving the EMI property took place six years later, when, on behalf of the Michael Jackson Estate, Branca sold the remaining 10% of the valuable pubco not already owned by Sony Corp. for \$287.5 million—adding to the estate's swelling coffers while making his friend Marty a very happy man.

Branca handled the sale of half of Berry Gordy's Jobete Music to EMI in 1997 for \$132 million, the 2007 sale of Jerry Leiber & Mike Stoller's catalog to Sony/ATV, and the 2009 sale of the Rodgers & Hammerstein catalog, which sold for over \$200 million in a "down" economy.

Richard Rodgers' estate executor, Joshua S. Rubenstein, told *The Daily Journal* in 2011, "It was a family estate, we wanted someone who would take good care of the legacy, and John blew us away with his passion and interest. For us, it wasn't just about the money," though he did get a sale price that was 95% of the estate's highest valuation.

Rodgers & Hammerstein was about more than money, Branca told *HITS* in 2014. "Something like that is especially exciting to me, because I grew up loving musicals like *The Sound of Music*, so we're brought in not just to do the paperwork but actually to help put together the offering materials and the marketing of the company to the finan-

"MY MOM TOLD ME, 'YOU'RE EITHER GOING TO GO TO COLLEGE OR YOU CAN GET A JOB.' I DIDN'T WANT TO CUT MY HAIR, SO I TOOK THE GED AND WENT TO L.A. CITY COLLEGE." —Branca in the *Occidental College Magazine*, 2017

cial marketplace, just as we assisted Apollo, Core Media and the Rainie Group in selling Elvis Presley Enterprises."

His other music-publishing deals include Kurt Cobain and Nirvana, Julian Lennon's share of The Beatles' royalties, and Steven Tyler's Aerosmith catalog. He has helped Don Henley and John Fogerty secure unpaid royalties, as well as getting Henley back his Eagles song copyrights, and negotiated royalty increases for The Beach Boys and The Doors for their catalogs.

Branca knows the business so well that when names are being bandied about for a new worldwide head of a top music publishing company, his name is always on the list.

David Dunn, who has worked with Branca on a number of projects and is managing partner of Shot Tower Capital in Baltimore, told *Occidental College Magazine* in 2017, "He knows the business better than anybody. You've got artists who have particular viewpoints which aren't necessarily aligned with monetization, you've got labels and publishers who are more focused on monetization, and you've got John, who over the course of his career has been able to bridge the gap and translate in both directions."



BRANCA GRADUATED FROM THE UCLA School of Law in 1975. He didn't take a particularly straight path to get there.

His mother was a dancer, and his father, the Honorable John R. Branca, ran a baseball school, served two terms in the New York State Assembly and became chairman of the New York State



ROCK STARS: With Steven Tyler, Sharon Osbourne and Gene Simmons

the table once. If you're against, bang twice." Wilson banged three times.

As a bona fide fan, Branca has a unique ability to represent artists, believing in their art first and commercial interests second. His passion translates into activism on artists' behalf.

"John Branca is, as I am, a groupie," Daniel Lamarre, Cirque du Soleil's chief executive, told the *Los Angeles Business Journal*. "He loves artists as I love artists. When we meet, even today, I don't remember many conversations about money; it was all about the artistic content."

He takes on the young and established. More than 30 members of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame have been his clients, among them Aerosmith, The Beach Boys, Dylan, The Doors, Dr. Dre, ELO, Fleetwood Mac, John Fogerty,

Henley, Elton John (negotiating his deal for *The Lion King*), Nirvana, the estate of Otis Redding, Smokey Robinson, the estate of Elvis Presley, The Rolling Stones, Earth, Wind & Fire and Carlos Santana, who calls Branca "the Shaman"; he's also working with Justin Timberlake, Beyoncé and Alicia Keys, as well as industry figures including Simon Cowell and Rick Rubin. Beyond the Jackson Estate, he handles the Elvis Presley Estate and has done work for The Doors as well.

Branca is a partner at Ziffren Brittenham, one the most powerful firms in the film and TV industries. Skip Brittenham and Ken Ziffren, who founded Ziffren Brittenham in 1978, represent or have repped a host

of A-list actors, directors, producers, writers and athletes including Ben Affleck, Roseanne Barr, Chadwick Bozeman, Richard Branson, Sandra Bullock, Matt Damon, Harrison Ford, Jamie Foxx, Eddie Murphy, Keanu Reeves, Sofia Vergara, Peter Chernin Entertainment, Dick Clark Productions, DreamWorks, Al Gore, Guggenheim Partners, Legendary Pictures, Les Moonves, Tyler Perry, Ridley Scott, Joe Roth, Haim Saban, Mike Tyson, Casey Wasserman, Oprah Winfrey, Dick Wolf, Maria Sharapova and Serena Williams, as well as the Sultan of Brunei, the Vatican, Interscope Records, Rhino Records and industry investors such as JVC, Matsushita, Vivendi and Ron Perelman (MacAndrews & Forbes). Additionally, ZB helped form and then sell Pixar for Steve Jobs.

Collectively, this roster accounts for

more than 20 TV series and 20-30 feature films a year. In terms of annual billings, Ziffren Brittenham is said to be the largest entertainment practice in the world.

The music department includes David Lande, who handled deals for Beyoncé, Timberlake and Shakira, Linkin Park, Jennifer Hudson, Selena Gomez and Alicia Keys, and David Byrnes, who has been behind Blake Shelton's rise to mainstream fame and also reps Kelly Clarkson and Pentatonix.

"I haven't been a traditional lawyer, in the sense that we're only there to review contracts," Branca told *HITS* in 2016. "We always encourage our clients to have managers, but we are usually part of a strategic team that oversees touring, branding and various issues that may come up."

He was lawyer/strategist behind the deal that reunited Carlos Santana with Clive Davis and resulted in *Supernatural*, the movement of The Rolling Stones to Virgin from Sony, plus their groundbreaking *Steel Wheels* tour, and The Bee Gees' recent catalog deal with Universal Music. He oversaw The Beach Boys' 50th anniversary operation in 2012.

Aerosmith wrote Branca a thank you letter after he negotiated a then-unprecedented \$50 million deal for them:

"Dear John,
Thanks a million
An unprecedented amount
An undisclosed sum reported to be
greater than that which any rock n
roll band has ever...
A LOT!!"

Most recently, he repped Lil Pump in negotiating out of one contract and into a new \$8 million deal with Warner Bros. Records.

"He knows how to close deals," Bandier raved in 2016. And "he's a real guy's guy. He loves sports. He loves music."

"My motivation is that I love music," Branca confirmed in that *Los Angeles Business Journal* story. "Growing up, if





“THE SHAMAN”: With Carlos Santana



BOTTOMS UP: With David Lee Roth

you had told me I could represent Brian Wilson, or Michael Jackson, I would have said, how much do I have to pay to do that? To even meet one of those people would have been enough.”

5

“IF I DO NOTHING ELSE IN MY CAREER EXCEPT HAVING DONE THIS FOR THE JACKSON ESTATE, I CAN SAY I DID A GREAT FUCKING JOB.”

JACKSON AND BRANCA MET IN 1980

as Jackson was enjoying unprecedented success with his first album for Epic, *Off the Wall*, as he became the first solo artist to have four singles from one album reach the Top 10.

By inventing a story about Bela Lugosi's religious convictions, Branca convinced Jackson to put aside his second thoughts about releasing the music video for “Thriller”; the objections came from his faith at the time, Jehovah's Witnesses. It led to the disclaimer at the beginning of the clip: “Due to my strong personal convictions, I wish to stress that this film in no



THRILLED: With MJ



Branca, Doug Morris, Rob Stringer, Sony's Richard Story and the Jackson Estate's Karen Langford prepare to moonwalk.



John and Ron



TWO CHAMPS: With Muhammad Ali

way endorses a belief in the occult.”

The “Thriller” video, directed by John Landis and clocking in at 14 minutes, was the first world premiere on MTV and is easily the most influential pop-music video in history. It is the only music video the Library of Congress has ever selected for its National Film Registry.

But even getting it on film required Branca’s genius. To fund the video, which cost more than \$1 million at a time when most video budgets were 50 grand, Branca negotiated the sale of a “Behind the Scenes” special to MTV and Showtime.

“It seemed odd that no one had ever thought of this before,” Jackson wrote in his autobiography, *Moonwalk*.

Branca also helped Jackson obtain the rights to his masters and brokered the purchase of Neverland Ranch at a significant discount. He secured Pepsi as a sponsor for The Jacksons’ 1984 Victory Tour, and unlike most brand deals, the contract stipulated that Michael would never be seen holding a Pepsi can and the limit to any screen time for the soda company would be three seconds.

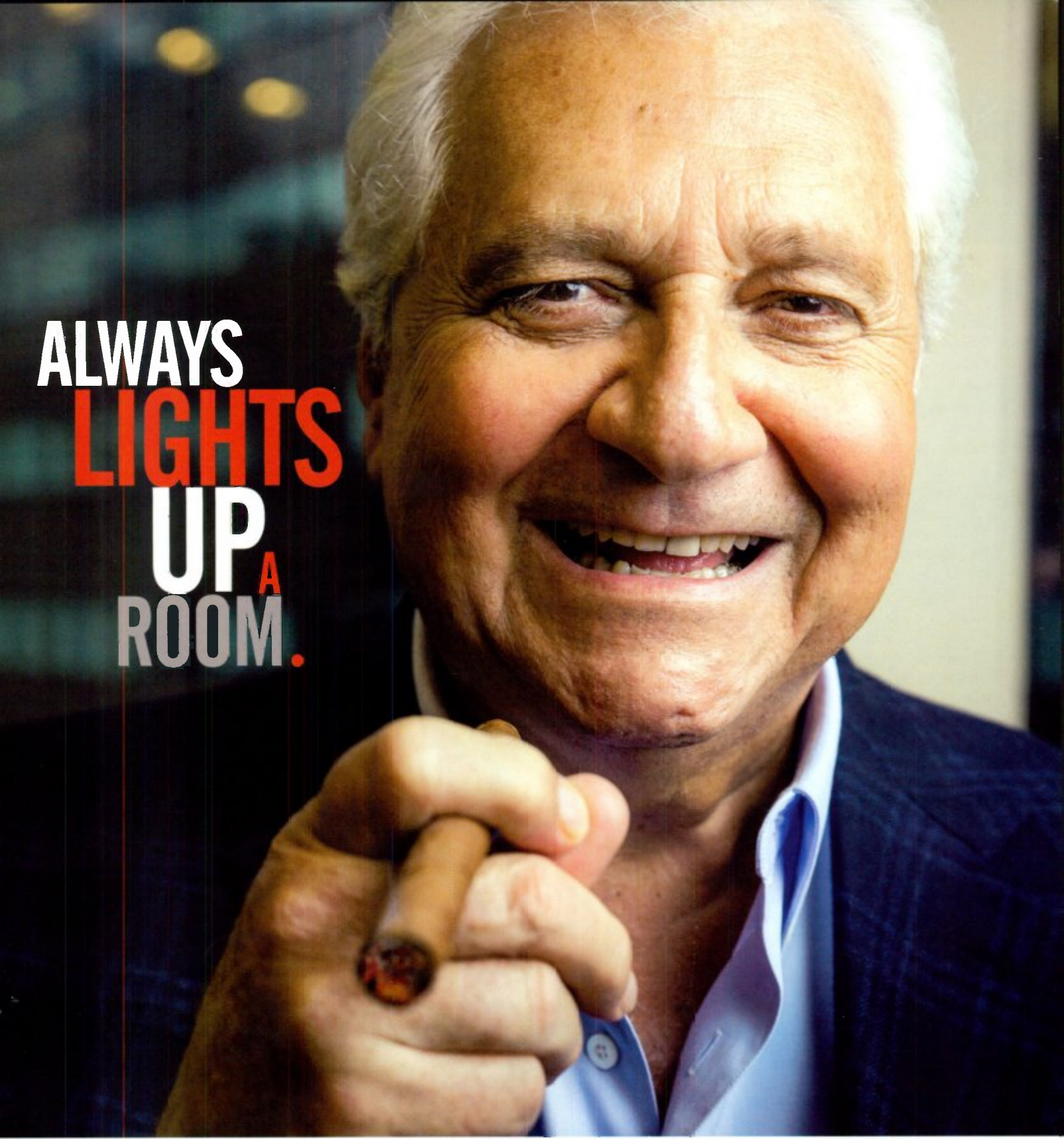
They were friends as well: They traveled together and socialized; Jackson was the best man at Branca’s first wedding, which Little Richard presided over.

The two parted in 1990, only to be reunited in 1993, when Jackson was being sued in a child-molestation case. Jackson surrounded himself with other advisers, and in 2006, Branca said, “No more.”

“He was surrounded, and I had to resign,” Branca told the AP. “He did not ask me to stay. I resigned amicably. Later on in his career, he really had a line between his business and personal life.”

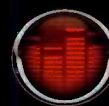


little more than a month before Jackson died, Jackson’s former manager, Frank DiLeo, called to discuss potential deals surrounding his comeback slated to start in London.



**ALWAYS
LIGHTS
UP A
ROOM.**

MARTIN BANDIER
RAINMAKER



Sony/ATV
MUSIC PUBLISHING

A concert movie, books, merchandising deals—“exactly what [co-executor] John McClain and I are doing now for the estate,” Branca said in that AP interview.

Jackson rehired Branca just eight days prior to his death in 2009. The estate, at the time, was around \$500 million in debt.

Attorney Howard Weitzman, whom Branca tapped as the chief litigator for the estate, told the *Occidental Magazine*, “It was an uphill battle to sell assets and see if there was anything left, so we were very concerned about the children. John—along with McClain—managed to turn this around. As a lawyer, he’s about as good as it can get.”

After Jackson’s death, Branca and McClain secured financing for the record-breaking concert film *This Is It* and a soundtrack album, produced two Jackson shows with Cirque du Soleil, one for Las Vegas and one for the road, and released an album of unreleased material, *Xscape*. As Chairman of the Michael Jackson Company, Branca also served as a producer of the animated *Michael Jackson’s Halloween*, a 2017 CBS prime-time special; *Michael Jackson’s Thriller 3D*, which debuted in 2017 at the Venice Film Festival; and the Spike Lee movies *Michael Jackson’s Journey From Motown to Off the Wall* and *Bad 25*. In 2013, *60 Minutes* did a segment on the estate and called it “the most remarkable financial and image resurrection in pop-culture history.”

“

It’s not traditional legal work,” he said in a *HITS* interview. “What we do for the estate is not unlike what we do for an artist or a brand—we are involved with records, deal with touring and

branding, as well as overseeing various aspects of their career.

“What we did with *This Is It* was to try to show the real Michael Jackson, the entertainer and not the tabloid sensation. It was really a rebranding effort.”•



WANNA BE STARTIN' SOMETHING: With Rob Stringer



RECORDING
ACADEMY

Looks like heavy weather.

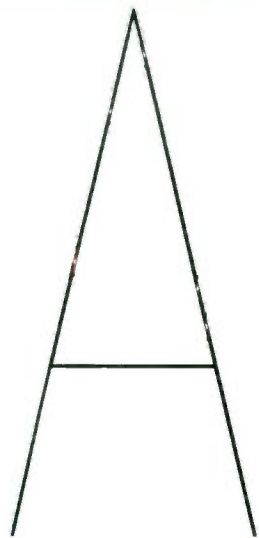
A shout-out to all the
Rainmakers.



“TROY IS ONE OF THE MOST FORWARD-THINKING AND CREATIVE EXECUTIVES IN OUR BUSINESS. HE ALWAYS ADVOCATES FOR WHAT IS RIGHT AND FAIR FOR ARTISTS, BUT DOES SO IN A WAY THAT BUILDS CONSENSUS WITHIN THE INDUSTRY.”-STEVE BARNETT

TROY CARTER

NEW-MODEL ENTREPRENEUR



As a manager, entrepreneur and innovator, Troy Carter epitomizes the modern-day visionary. Based on his impressive track record, which has seen him nimbly navigating the risk/reward tightrope, the 45-year-old Carter can write his own ticket whenever he's ready to begin his next chapter.

All industry eyes are on him as he formulates his plan; at presstime, that move remained a mystery beyond the expectation that he'll return to his entrepreneurial roots. Rumor has it he's forming a new media

company with a vertical model for monetizing music assets via distribution, management, publishing, recording and branding that will be built for the next evolution of the marketplace. It's highly likely that he'll be able to secure the millions in funding he'll need to launch this startup, because Carter has long evidenced a knack for staying well ahead of the curve.

"Troy gets the true 360 of it all for artists, tech and music companies," says Warner Bros. Records Co-Chairman/COO Tom Corson. "His depth of experience in both business and life is matched only by his undying curiosity and imagination, rare qualities to exist in a single person."

Carter was certainly a huge difference-maker during the 27 months he spent at Spotify, starting in June 2016, as Global Head of Creator Services. Almost single-handedly, Carter radically changed the perception of Spotify both inside and outside the business from that of



an indifferent partner of artists and labels to an extremely friendly and helpful collaborator. The marketing team Carter put together was a key element, acting aggressively and efficiently in identifying shared goals and making good on them.

The changes he initiated and oversaw occurred soon after the launch of **Apple Music**, a pivotal moment for Spotify in that mighty Apple was the Swedish company's first bona fide competitor. At the time, nearly everyone, it seemed, believed Apple Music would blow Spotify out of the water. Instead, Carter transformed Spotify into a well-oiled marketing machine, and the company held its own even as Apple was offering artists big money for exclusives. This transformation served to add value to the company, greatly enhancing its attractiveness leading up to and following its direct listing on the NYSE earlier this year.

When Carter made his departure from the streamery in September 2018, he could take immense satisfaction in what he'd been able to accomplish during the most crucial years in the company's history. Spotify CEO Daniel Ek showered praise on the departing exec. "By all measures, Troy has made a tremendous impact at Spotify," he said. "When he joined our team, there was skepticism from the artist community on streaming overall. Troy has been instrumental in changing that perception, and his efforts to establish true partnerships across the industry will be felt for years to come. He's built a very capable, global team that embodies an artist-first approach, and this philosophy has been adopted across Spotify. We are in an excellent position to build on the momentum we've established well into the future."

"Troy is one of the most forward-thinking and creative executives in our business," says **Capitol Music Group** chief Steve Barnett, who knows Carter well. "He always advocates for what is right and fair for artists, but does so in a way that builds consensus within the industry. He made a huge difference at Spotify; he brought in all the right people and really helped bridge the gap between the goals of that company and what was needed by independent and major-label artists alike. I think the world of Troy and always look forward to what he has in store for us."

In his statement, Carter gave a brief overview of his tenure. "I came to this company to help bridge the gap between Spotify and



TASTEMAKERS: With Steve Barnett; iHeart's John Sykes and Tom Poleman

the creative community,” he noted. “Over time, that goal evolved from fixing a challenge to building a global team focused on changing the game for artists around the world, partnering with them to help bring their creative visions to life in new and innovative ways. I’m very proud of what we’ve achieved, but with so much accomplished, it was the right time to move out of the day-to-day into an advisory role. The knowledge, relationships and personal experiences will remain with me, and I know that this talented team is committed to continuing this important work.”

Given Carter’s track record, he’s approaching that advisory role with the same commitment he’s evidenced in every stage of his career.

“Troy is a very interesting individual,” notes attorney Joel Katz, “because he is a unique mix of an entrepreneur and an operator. He has the ability to manage a business, but also the ability to begin a business and promote it to a level where it needs strong management, which he also does well. Troy is equally capable as an entrepreneur and as a manager, and there are very few individuals in our business who can do both.”

But before putting a smiley face on Spotify, before instituting order to the Prince estate, before guiding Lady Gaga on a unique path to unprecedented commercial success, Troy Carter was a rapper.

A high school dropout from West Philadelphia, young Troy held a fervent belief that if his music made it into the hands of local breakouts Will Smith and DJ Jazzy Jeff Townes, he’d be on the road to riches.

Carter and two friends—Armique Shartz Wyche, aka Jazz, and Anthony Fontenot (Ant Live)—called themselves 2 Too Many. After recording a demo tape, they spent nearly six months hanging outside Townes’ studio in the hopes of a chance encounter. Townes saw them and continually ignored them.

Carter got lucky one day when friends of his were in the studio. They let the three aspiring rappers in, and Smith took their tape and listened. “Will saw some potential in us,” Carter told NPR in 2017. “He drove us home that night and basically told our parents that, you know, he had us covered. We were going to be OK.”

That demo led to Jive signing the act and releasing their lone album, *Chillin’ Like a Smut Villain*, in 1992. Then it was over.

“TROY GETS THE TRUE 360 OF IT ALL FOR ARTISTS, TECH AND MUSIC COMPANIES. HIS DEPTH OF EXPERIENCE IN BOTH BUSINESS AND LIFE IS MATCHED ONLY BY HIS UNDYING CURIOSITY AND IMAGINATION, RARE QUALITIES TO EXIST IN A SINGLE PERSON.” —TOM CORSON



TWO LEGENDS, NO WAITING: With Jon Platt

Carter joked at a UJA event in 2018 that “It was probably the fastest signing and dropping in history.”

The chance meeting with Smith, however, led to a next step—a 1989 meeting with Smith’s business partner, James Lassiter. “In my soul, I wanted to be less Fresh Prince and more James,” Carter said in that NPR interview. “So I just kind of put myself under James. And James became my teacher.”

He became Jazzy Jeff’s assistant in 1993 and played the same role for Lassiter starting in 1997. When Smith, Lassiter and their company Overbrook moved to L.A., Carter made the move too. But when Lassiter fired Carter over a car-service bill in 1998, he returned to Philly, hooking up with J. Erving, son of *Sixers* legend Julius “Dr. J” Erving, to launch Erving Wonder. Their first client was Eve.

Despite having no experience, Carter became her manager, helping her on a Cash Money-Ruff Ryders tour, developing a clothing line and seeing her career beyond music include the film *Barbershop* and her UPN series, *Eve*.

“I was on cloud nine because, you know, this is everything that I’ve ever dreamed,” Carter said. “And because I was a failed artist, the fact that I was actually able to help somebody accomplish their dream was, you know, definitely fulfilling. And then the

trappings that came along with it as a young guy; I was loving it.”

He and Erving sold Erving Wonder for \$2.275 million in 2004 to the Sanctuary Group, which had just bought Matthew Knowles’ company, Music World Entertainment. He stayed with them, returning to L.A. in 2003 to help set up Sanctuary’s new West Coast offices.

He lasted about 18 months before choosing to start another business. A year into that operation, and eight years after their partnership began, Eve dropped him as her manager.

It was early 2006, and Carter was broke. Rent on the office was overdue, the house was nearing foreclosure, cars were being repossessed and he visited his children’s private school to ask for an extension on paying tuition. His wife and mother-in-law pawned their wedding rings to make a mortgage payment.

ere’s where the story takes a dramatic turn. The expression, “You learn more from your failures than your successes,” may be overused, but not enough can be said about how Carter approached the next chapter in his life. He saw diversification, technology and partnerships as

keys to success; he just needed cash. And an artist.

Enter Vincent Herbert, a friend from Newark, who dropped by Carter’s office in 2007 to introduce him to a woman Herbert had found out about through producer Rob Fusari; her name was Stefani Germanotta. She had a different sound—more European than American, artier than the party jams on the radio in the mid-2000s—and Def Jam had just dropped her.

“She walked in with these huge sunglasses on, fishnet stockings, and basically told me how she was going to change the game,” Carter told *Fast Company* in 2014 about his first meeting with Lady Gaga. “I believed her.”

Carter and Gaga split up their duties 95/5: He handled 95% of the business and 5% of the music; Gaga did the opposite. Vince helped shape her sound, and they signed with Interscope—coincidentally, the same label Eve was on.

They spent nearly 10 months working on songs, which they intended for her debut, but some suggested that she instead hand them to Britney Spears or Pussycat Dolls. Nonetheless, the partners stuck to their guns, and Carter tried to take the songs to radio on his own, with no success whatsoever.

With radio airplay elusive, Carter



PAYING IT FORWARD: Troy stands with Michelle Obama and her Reach Higher education initiative.

took a different approach, getting her in front of gay, fashion and visual-artist crowds via live performances, sometimes booking her for four shows in a night. These were all underground music communities, and while many a night the crowd was fewer than 100 people, word of mouth was taking off.

They turned to nascent forms of social media to generate interest: Facebook had only been open to the general public for a few months when Carter started managing Gaga, and Twitter, which started to take off after a SXSW demonstration, had only 60,000 users. They also put music videos on YouTube under the Gagavision moniker—three-minute clips of Gaga and her dancers with the music embedded. In 2012, they built a social network—*littlemonsters.com*—for fans.

“It was more about building a platform on top of music, because music, we realized, sells everything but music,” Carter explained to *Fast Company*. Interscope provided “a shoestring budget,” he told NPR. “We basically bootstrapped this thing. And every dime that she did make, she reinvested it back into her career... I didn’t have a plan B, she didn’t have a plan B, Vincent didn’t have a plan B—we had to make this work.”

Caution doesn’t appear to be part of Carter’s DNA. He understood the risk in being a one-artist manager, but rather than look to bulk up a roster, he chose to challenge and reinvent music-industry paradigms. Artist management, in the age of declining sales, was no longer just about getting record deals. Technology was the key.

In 2010, months after *Cherrytree*/Interscope released Gaga’s *The Fame*, which would go on to sell 15 million copies worldwide, Carter went on a whirlwind tour of Silicon Valley. He met investors and platform creators, and a year later made his first tech investment, via a Guy Oseary tip: *TinyChat*, a video service that still exists.

For a 2016 *Fortune* article, Carter recalled telling his wife, Rebecca, as they were leaving a barbecue at the Silicon Valley home of investor Joe Lonsdale in



ALL ABOUT THE MANAGEMENT: *With Meghan Trainor*

2010, “The world was going into a very different place. And the power was shifting.”

Carter invested in startups to the point where entrepreneurs were coming to him with nascent deals, and dealmakers were becoming his friends. He put money into Spotify, Uber, Lyft, Warby Parker, Dropbox and close to 100 other start-ups. In 2011, he funneled his experience building Gaga’s career via social media into the *Backplane*, which helps artists, musicians and athletes integrate their social networks; Gaga had an undisclosed stake in the newco.

A year later, he created *A \ IDEA*, a product-development and branding agency, as well as *AF Square*, an angel fund and technology consultancy.

“Like his artists, Gaga included, who is a multiple threat of singing, writing, dancing and playing instruments, Troy can manage, innovate, is an entrepreneur, and can partner with people who have complementary skills,” MTV Networks’ then-President Van Toffler told *Fast Company*. “He’s a force to be reckoned with.”

The Internet served as a promotional

playground. To promote her second album, *Born This Way*, Carter and Gaga worked with Facebook game-maker Zynga to create *Gagaville with Farmville* to provide pre-release access to the new songs. They went after the fashion crowd, striking a deal with the flash-sale site *Gilt.com* to promote the album, while Gaga’s fashion director, Nicola Formichetti, created Gaga-inspired clothing for sale.

Carter’s work with Gaga was getting noticed. *Wired* magazine tagged him as “Mogul 2.0,” the man who “reinvented the celebrity game with social media.” The *Harvard Business Review* commissioned two studies on Carter’s role in Gaga’s success.

Gaga’s rise, a professor who co-authored the Harvard studies, Anita Elberse, told the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, “has been phenomenally fast, and to manage such a quick climb to the top is incredibly difficult. It requires making a wide range of decisions, on touring, on the release of her albums, on forming partnerships with the right people and companies, each of which comes with significant risk.”

“AS ANYONE WHO HAS CROSSED PATHS WITH HIM KNOWS, TROY EMBODIES WHAT IT MEANS TO BE DRIVEN. BOTH PROFESSIONALLY AND PERSONALLY, HE IS ON A LIFELONG JOURNEY OF SELF-IMPROVEMENT AND IS NEVER COMPLACENT WITH THE STATUS QUO.” -JODY GERSON

n 2011, the year Gaga's third album, *Artpop*, was released, she was the most-followed person on Twitter, *Rolling Stone* named her Queen of Pop based on empirical data, the University of South Carolina offered a course on her fame, the Global Language Monitor named "Lady Gaga" the top fashion buzzword and she was a year into a six-year run on *Forbes'* Celebrity Top 100.

When Scooter Braun began the ambitious undertaking of rolling up management companies in conjunction with deep-pocketed investor

Waddell & Reed in 2013, Carter was the first to become part of the newco, Ithaca Management Holdings, which would also bring together The Creed Co. (Brandon Creed), Sandbox (Jason Owen) Morris Higham (Clint Higham) and OVO (Future the Prince). No one anticipated what would happen soon thereafter with the crown jewel of Carter's management roster.

That November, Gaga walked into Carter's Atom Factory offices in Culver City and said they were finished, citing creative differences. In his NPR interview, Carter drew a comparison to his split with Eve. "The first time, I went into panic mode. This time, I think I was able to sit in the middle of that storm and watch

the storm pass. That's the thing about management: I can't do it without pouring my soul into it. I didn't go into the relationship with Gaga with my guards up, you know, because of the thing that happened with Eve. There's just no gray for me. I'm either all in or all out."

As much as Carter was known for handling a single client, his Atom Factory was concurrently establishing itself in artist management and tech culture, and within a couple of years would have a roster that included Meghan Trainor, Miguel, Charlie Puth and Kamasi Washington.

Beyond business, Carter had been stepping up his philanthropic activities as well. Four months before his split with Gaga, he traveled to Tigray, Ethiopia, where a group of millionaire tech moguls were being shown the country's lack of paved roads, electricity and access to clean drinking water. It was on that trip that he met Daniel Ek.

"We bonded over our love for helping people," Carter said at the UJA event. "We were visiting people and places that were in desperate need of water, and we spent almost a week in the back of SUVs and at night by campfires, and that's when I heard his incredible vision for transforming the music business."

Less than three years later, Carter joined Ek at Spotify and began his extreme makeover of the company. In April 2017, he doubled down, taking on another huge task as entertainment adviser for the Prince estate. In that role, he worked out a deal with Sony's Legacy division to handle the re-release of 35 albums over the next three years. He has also overseen two albums of unreleased material for Warner Bros.

"As anyone who has crossed paths with him knows, Troy embodies what it means to be driven," UMPG chief Jody Gerson tells us. "Both professionally and personally, he is on a lifelong journey of self-improvement and is never complacent with the status quo. But more importantly, I appreciate our deep friendship."

Today, he splits his time between Atom Factory, his VC firm, Cross Culture Ventures, where one of his five children has a hands-on role, and his advisory role at Spotify. On the downside, Carter has been dealing with a lawsuit filed against him, his wife and Atom Factory by Braun's Ithaca Management Holdings alleging that Carter failed to pay back a \$10 million promissory note secured in June 2016, when he went to Spotify. The suit further sought foreclosure on the Atom Factory Culver City property which Carter had put up as collateral in September 2016. The issues are complex, and the damage to the once-strong Carter-Braun relationship may be irreparable, but most expect them to arrive at a settlement, and for Carter to emerge with his stellar reputation intact.

"Troy Carter is the leader of our generation as far as executives go," says J. Erving. "He showed us there is no limit to the things we can accomplish. More importantly, he's my friend, uncle to my kids, and example of the man I hope to be to my family."

Regardless of where or when Carter makes his next bold move, he wants to make clear that, as he told NPR, "I'm a simple guy. What I appreciate in life and the things that make me happy tend not to have to do with the money itself. More importantly, it's having the ability to live a life that I can wake up every morning doing what I love to do. Nothing's more important to me than that."•



HIGH IQ: With the great Quincy Jones and Spotify's Tiffany Kumar

**Congratulations to
all the Rainmakers.**



**tone
music Forecast:**

Sunny, NOT Rainy.

R A I N M A K E R S

JODY



GERSON

SHE WENT
FOR THE
BIG JOB
(AND
MADE
HISTORY)

In 2014, Jody Gerson made what was perhaps the boldest move of her career—despite some initial trepidation—and saw her years of hard work, superb instincts and creative passion rewarded with one of the most powerful posts in the business.

Her contract was up for renewal at Sony/ATV Music Publishing and she wanted a promotion. She had been Co-President (with Danny Strick) for six years and wanted a top

post of her own. “I had a great situation until I realized I wanted more,” she recalled in a 2017 *HITS* interview, “and I wasn’t going to get more.” She made her case to her boss, Martin Bandier, who wouldn’t go along with it. So, she reports, she picked up the phone and called a competitor, Lucian Grainge, who offered her an even bigger job—Global Chairman and CEO of Universal Music Publishing Group.

And with that, history was made. On Jan. 1, 2015, Gerson officially became the first woman CEO of a major music-publishing company.

She’s emerged as one of the most important music execs in the world in what seems like a short time—but she’s had years of training to get where she is today.

Part of what makes Gerson so successful is balance: She’s a tough negotiator but scrupulously fair-minded; fiercely outspoken but a good listener; and she can relate to creators and businesspeople with equal focus and understanding. She’s a peer-group leader with superb optics and appears on the shortlist for all manner of community endeavors.

Irving Azoff asserts, “Jody believes what is best for her writers is best for Universal. She’s an artists’ rights pioneer. We need more like her.”

“Jody’s an incredible executive,” says Republic boss Monte Lipman. “Her passion, her drive, her determination and her competitive edge make her one of the most impressive executives in our business, without question. She has such tremendous instincts, and she’s in the streets. She doesn’t operate from some lofty space as Chairman; she’s in it. Usually when I run into her it’s backstage—it’s sweaty and the floor is sticky and people are running back and forth. She gets out there.”

Gerson first spoke publicly about her dramatic ascent to the Chairmanship in June 2017 in a speech at the United

Jewish Appeal’s luncheon in which she introduced the honoree, Universal Music Group EVP Michele Anthony. She revealed more a few months later in a *HITS* interview.

“I think I just hit a wall,” Gerson told *HITS*, by way of explaining why she chose to leave Sony/ATV, and Bandier, for whom she had worked for most of her career. (They first worked together at EMI Music Publishing.)

“My career was really with one person for over 20 years. It was amazing, but I think it was time for me to really go for it...I knew I could run a com-

pany; I just didn’t know it was OK for me to *want* to run a company. I’ve been thinking a lot about that. Why didn’t I do it before?

“...As ambitious as I was, I was so caught up in the loyalty. And there was nothing wrong (at Sony/ATV). I had a great situation until I realized I wanted more, and I wasn’t going to get more.”

And having taken the leap, how did having the top job feel? “It feels amazing,” Gerson said in the September 2017 interview. “Better than I ever thought it would. Looking back on my first two and a half years; signing an abundance of

SET A SPELL: Gerson with Big Sean



incredible artists, having hits, changing the culture, increasing the revenue, working for Lucian, loving my staff and the company. I couldn't imagine being happier and more accomplished.

"Empowerment...is really a two-way street. First, we need to empower women. And then, at that point, we as women need to say, 'Wait, why not me?' I had to come to that myself. And I want other women to be prepared and confident to do the same thing when we give them the opportunities they deserve. That's the bottom line."

A

At *Glamour's* Women of the Year Live Summit at the Brooklyn Museum in New York last November, Gerson said that she bore the responsibility for not "owning her power" sooner.

"I spent my career being the loyal good girl, on every level. And I just hit a wall and I decided, you know what? I'm going to take my power and I called a competitor, Lucian Grainge, and he said 'Are you ready to be the global Chairman of Universal Music Publishing? And I said yes.

"...Until I finally decided to take this job, I didn't go for the big jobs. I really did think it was my job to make men look good...

"It was me not going for the big jobs and me thinking that by being the good girl I was going to get the reward—without having to take it. And one day somebody said to me, 'Uh-uh—it's time for you to step into your own power and think about you; don't worry about him.' I thought I couldn't leave my boss of all those years because I thought I would hurt his feelings and he would be upset. Honestly. It's like, I had to change. So I think that was me getting in my own way.

"It's not enough that there's only one [female] global Chairman of a music company. There should be more than one. But we're not going to get there unless we support each other, and we put each other in that position."



TOWERING: With Capitol chief Steve Barnett, COO Michelle Jubelirer and UMG topper Sir Lucian Grainge



POST TIME: With Post Malone

“FIRST, WE NEED TO EMPOWER WOMEN. AND THEN, AT THAT POINT, WE AS WOMEN NEED TO SAY, ‘WAIT, WHY NOT ME?’ I HAD TO COME TO THAT MYSELF.”



YOUR SONG(S): With Grainge, Sir Elton John and Bernie Taupin



PRODUCING RESULTS: With Jeff Bhasker

“Jody’s a pioneer, visionary and always willing to take a risk for what she believes in,” adds TDE boss Top Dawg. “The thing I love most about her is that she empowers women. It’s been a great experience working alongside her.”

Gerson grew up in Philadelphia, surrounded by performers. Her father and grandfather owned a nightclub in nearby Cherry Hill, N.J., which booked such stars as Frank Sinatra, The Supremes, the Temptations and Richard Pryor. “My mom took my brother and me every Sunday for the matinee,” Gerson recalled in an online interview. “I think what I got from that was a real understanding of artists and how to connect with them.”

Gerson was still in high school when she started working in the entertainment field. “I worked at *The Mike Douglas Show* for two summers, when I was 16 and 17,” she said. “I worked at a radio station. I was so ambitious, in a nice way, but I knew I wanted this.”

When Gerson graduated from Northwestern in 1983, she wanted a job at MTV. Unfortunately, so did everyone else at that time. There were no openings. So Gerson took a job at Chappell Music.

“I went in and got the job Xeroxing lead sheets. I had no idea what Chappell Music was. I had no idea what music publishing was.”

Gerson worked as an archivist for Chappell starting in 1983, working for then-President Irwin Robinson. It gave her a solid foundation in publishing. “I got to listen to songs all day—I had to splice them into reel-to-reels,” she told Bloomberg. “It gave me knowledge of the catalog.” She then moved into A&R. When Chappell was purchased by Warner, she was overseen by the legendary Chuck Kaye and Les Bider.

Gerson has superb networking and people skills, which helped her in her advancement. “Every time I met someone, the next morning they would get a note from me,” she remembered. “‘Dear Mr. Davis, It was so nice to meet you at the T.J. Martell dinner. We had a conversation about so-and-so.’ Every single person got a note from me.”

In 1988, she moved on to EMI Music Publishing, under Bandier and Charles Koppelman. She ran the company’s East

Coast office, and later, the West Coast office. She stayed with EMI for 17 years, signing such talents as **Norah Jones, Enrique Iglesias, Jermaine Dupri, Dallas Austin, Arrested Development** and a 14-year old prodigy named **Alicia Keys**.

Gerson signed Keys in 1996. “For years, she was making records that never came out,” Gerson said. “I remember the chairman of the company saying, ‘You know, she may be talented, but it doesn’t mean she’ll ever have success.’”

Gerson’s belief paid off in 2001, when Keys’ debut album *Songs in A Minor* and its lead single, “Fallin’,” both reached #1. In February 2002, Keys won five **Grammy Awards**, including Song of the Year.

In 2008, Gerson followed **Bandier** to Sony/ATV Music Publishing, where she served as Co-President. Her first signing was **Lady Gaga**, long before anyone had heard of Lady Gaga.

“Everybody else at Sony had passed on her,” Gerson said. “She told me she was going to be the biggest artist in the world, and that it wouldn’t be about money, it would be about fame and art. I believed her, I supported her—and I paid her a lot of money.”

During Gerson’s tenure, the EMI catalog was brought under Sony/ATV’s roof. “This is a transformative moment for Sony/ATV,” Gerson said at the time. “We went from being a small yet mighty global company to the world’s largest music publisher.”

Gerson also played an integral role in the careers of **Iglesias, Mac Miller, Pharrell Williams, Pitbull, RedOne** and many others.

A week into her new job at the Universal Music Publishing Group, Gerson gathered her staff for a town hall meeting. She began her speech by listing all the things she’s *not*:

“I’m not an attorney or an accountant; I’m not a copyright expert or a royalty expert; I’m not a songwriter or a musician. What I am is somebody who is passionate about music.”

At UMPG, Gerson has led the signings and contract extensions of such stars as **Adele, Coldplay, Justin Bieber, Harry Styles, The Bee Gees, Bruce Springsteen, R.E.M., Jack White, Pearl Jam, Linkin Park, Miley Cyrus, Mumford & Sons, Romeo Santos and Zedd**, as well as such newer talents as **Post Malone, SZA, Travis Scott, Quavo, Metro Boomin, Lil Yachty, Sam Hunt and Kane Brown**.

“Jody is the present and the future of music publishing,” says mega-attorney **John Branca**. “She covers all the bases—relationships with artists and writers, business acumen, people skills and charisma.”

In the *HITS* interview, Gerson spoke warmly about several of her writers. “There’s a thing some people have that other people don’t, and he had that thing,” she noted of **Harry Styles**, whose post-**One Direction** solo bow for **Columbia** earned major critical kudos and featured the hit “Sign of the Times.” Crediting manager **Jeffrey Azoff** for canily handling her introduction to the Brit star, she added that pairing Styles with producer **Jeff Bhasker** “was really exciting. It came together the way that you used to put together a band.”

Of **SZA**, whose TDE/RCA debut, *Ctrl*, was a smash and who subsequently earned a brace of Grammy nods, she noted, “I signed her as she was finishing her record... I had a great meeting with her and that was it. What I love, personally, is to sign artists we think can make a difference. That’s why I think **SZA** can be an important voice.”

Gerson described streaming giant **Post Malone** as



THEY ARE... THEY SAID: With Neil Diamond



UNDISCLOSED LOCATION: With Michelle Jubelirer



UNIVERSAL ACCLAIM: With Grainge, Michele Anthony and Boyd Muir

“another [developing artist] I’m super-proud of. Nobody knows the talent that he is as a songwriter yet, and he will continue to surprise people.”

Of *Migos* star Quavo, she declared, “I think he’s going to do way more than anyone expects him to. I think he’s brilliant and he could do anything”).

Gerson also said that she takes pride in the diversity of her staff. “In our industry, there is not enough diversity. There aren’t enough women leaders; there aren’t enough minorities. I look at my company and we’re increasingly diverse. I have many women CFOs across the globe.”

And she said she wants her people to be ambitious. “Again, it’s about empowering people. I want everyone who works for me to want my job, and I want them to have my job one day when I’m ready to give it up.”

“I learned how to hire people, how to support them and how to put together

a team,” she noted to *The New York Times*. “My management style is different from a lot of others because I don’t pit people against each other. I don’t think the point of management is to make people insecure.”

That team includes such accomplished execs as COO Marc Cimino, President North America Evan Lamberg, A&R heads David Gray and Jessica Rivera, VP Creative Walter Jones, Director of Creative Sterling Simms, Worldwide CFO JW Beekman, Chief Counsel, Biz Affairs/Digital Rights Management head David Kokakis, U.K. chief Mike McCormack, Latin America head Alexandra Lioutikoff and Production Music Prez Michael Sammis.

“Jody was the first person I introduced to Lady Gaga when I signed her [for management],” recalls Troy Carter. “It was the week Jody started her role at Sony/ATV. She’s tough as nails, but as genuine as they come. It’s been incredible

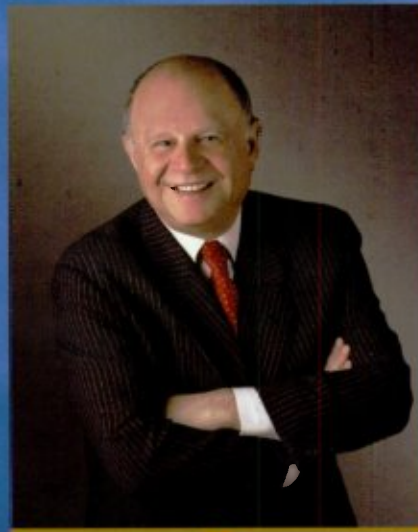
to watch her grow the once-sleepy UMPG into a real player in publishing.”

Gerson was a producer of the 2002 film *Drumline* and the 2006 film *ATL* (with Dallas Austin also serving as a producer) and exec producer for VH1’s *Drumline: A New Beat*, and she sits on the Board of Directors of ASCAP, MusiCares and the National Music Publishers Association.

Gerson’s advocacy on behalf of women goes well beyond the immediate platform of her Chairman post. She serves on the advisory board for USC’s **Annenberg Inclusion Initiative**, as well as on the Board of Trustees for **The Archer School for Girls**, a college preparatory school located in West Los Angeles,

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World Radio History

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and industry-focused nonprofit *She Is the Music*. In 2018, she helped shine more light on the latter organization by presenting SZA with the first-ever *She Is the Music* Award at City of Hope's Songs of Hope gala.

She was featured prominently in *Variety's* Power of Women L.A. and was Executive of the Year in *Billboard's* 2015 Women in Music issue; in 2018 she became the highest-ranking woman in the history of *Billboard's* Power 100 (she got the #8 spot).

Gerson has three children, Julian (now in A&R at Republic Records), Luke and Daisy. That experience has informed her management style. "My leadership style comes from being a mother," she told Adam Bryant of *The New York Times* last September. "I want the best out of people. When it doesn't work, I find the kindest way to have the conversation: What's right for them? What's right for me? What's right for the company? I want people to grow. The big thing for me about leadership is being in a position to empower people who deserve to be empowered, and to set the right example for how they can empower others."

Gerson told Bryant she quickly grew "comfortable" in this, her first job as CEO.

"I was worried at first that I had to know everything. I was worried that I had to be able to read a balance sheet. I was worried that I would have to know what the royalties were in Russia. I was worried that I had to understand the litigations in Germany. But I quickly grew comfortable because I recognized that I have experts in every area of the company. I don't have to solve every problem. They have to come to me and tell me what the issues are, and I have to surround myself with people I trust and who know what they're doing in those areas.

"I like being a CEO," Gerson concluded. "I'm good at it, because I'm very secure about making decisions. And I like making the final decision."•



RHYMES AND REASON: With YG, Hit-Boy, Tink and Sage the Gemini



KEYS TO THE KINGDOM: With Mary J. Blige

“I LIKE BEING A CEO. I’M GOOD AT IT, BECAUSE I’M VERY SECURE ABOUT MAKING DECISIONS. AND I LIKE MAKING THE FINAL DECISION.”

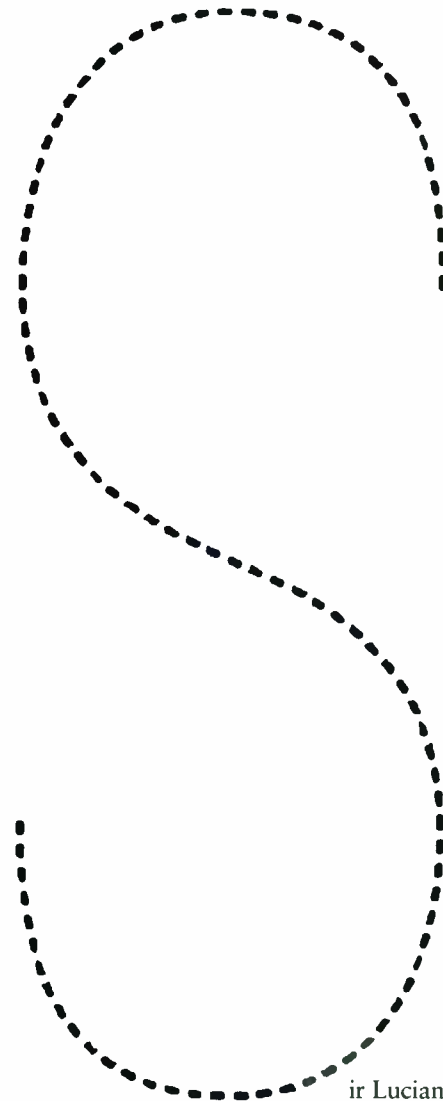


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Sir *Lucian* Grainge

The Architect of Change



Sir Lucian Grainge is the first Englishman operating a global music company based in the U.S. to ever get it right. And when, in 2011, he came to ultimate power, taking control of the biggest music group in the world, the business was in decline. His willingness to take risks and draw on his decades of music-business experience and combined with his great instincts encour-



With Sam Smith and Katy Perry

aged him to bet on the future and lead rights holders into the new streaming revolution. He moved forward swiftly to make deals with Spotify, Apple, YouTube, Amazon and Facebook. As a result of Grainge's wager, his Universal Music Group has become more dominant than ever: At presstime, UMG had 38.1% in overall U.S. marketshare and 39.2% in streaming share, while snagging well over half of the Top 50 albums and Top 50 streaming tracks, more than double the share of its closest competitor

in each metric.

The second half of 2018 promises to be huge for UMG, following parent company Vivendi's decision to sell up to 50% of the company to a strategic partner to be determined, with the process beginning this fall. Grainge will be making the key decisions in this all-important matter, including the ultimate one—the choosing of said strategic partner. Who will line up to bid on a chunk of the dominant music group, and which of the suitors will Sir Lucian choose? Those are shaping up as

the most intriguing questions of the year.

"He's the great hope for the music business," Irving Azoff accurately predicted in a 2014 *L.A. Times* profile of Lucian Grainge. "He started as a songplugger and a publishing guy. He understands the entire worldwide record business. And he gets technology. He understands that's the future of the business." With the deep-seated affection of a fellow record man, Doug Morris said of his onetime colleague and subsequent rival, "He is so deceptive, with that little

kind face and those little glasses. Behind them, he is actually a killer shark.” Bob Geldof put his assessment even more bluntly when he stated, “He’s a ruthless fucker—but he’s got good ears.”

Grainge’s achievements are many, but he’ll go down in the books for pulling off the Steal of the Century, acquiring EMI’s recorded-music assets in 2012 for the bargain-basement price of \$1.9 billion. That investment has paid off many times over as a central component in the rise of UMG’s market value to north of \$40 billion.

Even more crucially, Sir Lucian, as he’s now formally addressed, having been knighted by Prince William in November 2016 for his accomplishments in the business, has been a key matchmaker in the courtship and marriage of music and tech. “A dozen entrepreneurs in the tech space—they’d be like Irish coffee,” he analogized early on for the benefit of the uninitiated. “The cream would hit the whiskey and the coffee really nicely. Technology and talent: That’s what I’m trying to do: merge talent and technology.”

And that he has accomplished, leading an industrywide crusade for premium streaming across every viable platform, helping to reverse a decade and a half of contraction, revitalizing and restoring optimism to a moribund industry. “In 2017, our efforts really began to pay off,” Grainge said with undisguised pride. “The dramatic worldwide increase in streaming has been the single most important catalyst in returning UMG—and the music industry at large—to growth. In part, that’s why we posted our best financial performance in 15 years by many metrics. How did we do it? We started, of course, with great music. That’s where it all begins.”

And that’s precisely what his mission statement has been from the beginning. By prioritizing A&R—optimizing existing talent while developing new career artists—Grainge has kept the focus on any music company’s most important asset.

What’s more, this forward-thinking traditionalist has been ahead of the curve in championing gender equality, greenlighting deserving women for



With Ariana Grande



With the late, great Amy Winehouse



With Cash Money's Slim and Vernon Brown



*With Grammy champ Beck
[below] With the legendary Berry Gordy*

key roles at Universal, helping bring together an industry-leading group of top executives that includes corporate EVP Michele Anthony, UMPG CEO Jody Gerson, CMG EVP/COO Michelle Jubelirer, Motown President Ethiopia Habtemariam, Caroline President Jacqueline Saturn, Republic EVP/Head of Urban A&R Wendy Goldstein, IGA President of Promotion Brenda Romano, UMG Nashville President Cindy Mabe, UMG EVP of Sales Candace Berry and recent arrival Celine Joshua, UMG's GM, Commercial, Content and Artist Strategy. These moves were practical as well as philosophical. "Lucian chooses his executives without regard to anything but talent," Azoff noted with admiration.

"All of us know that people who choose to spend their lives in the music business are special, they're unique and they might be a little bit crazy," Grainge recently acknowledged. "Because for us, this isn't simply a job, it's a mission—a mission motivated by our love of music." Grainge has been walking like he talks it throughout his four-decade career, pursuing his life's mission with zeal and a card shark's willingness to take risks. "He has an instinctive ability to go for the jugular and to pounce when the opportunity is just right," a longtime colleague marveled.

Grainge was raised in north London, the son of a TV-and-radio-store owner that also conveniently sold records, and the younger brother of Nigel Grainge, who'd formed Ensign Records in 1976, when Lucian was 16. Music was in the youngster's blood,



so much so that he began looking for opportunities in the business while still attending Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School for Boys. After snagging an entry-level job as a runner for talent agency MPC, the teenager—whose taste was being shaped by his love of The Clash and The Sex Pistols—began looking for an opening in the big leagues.

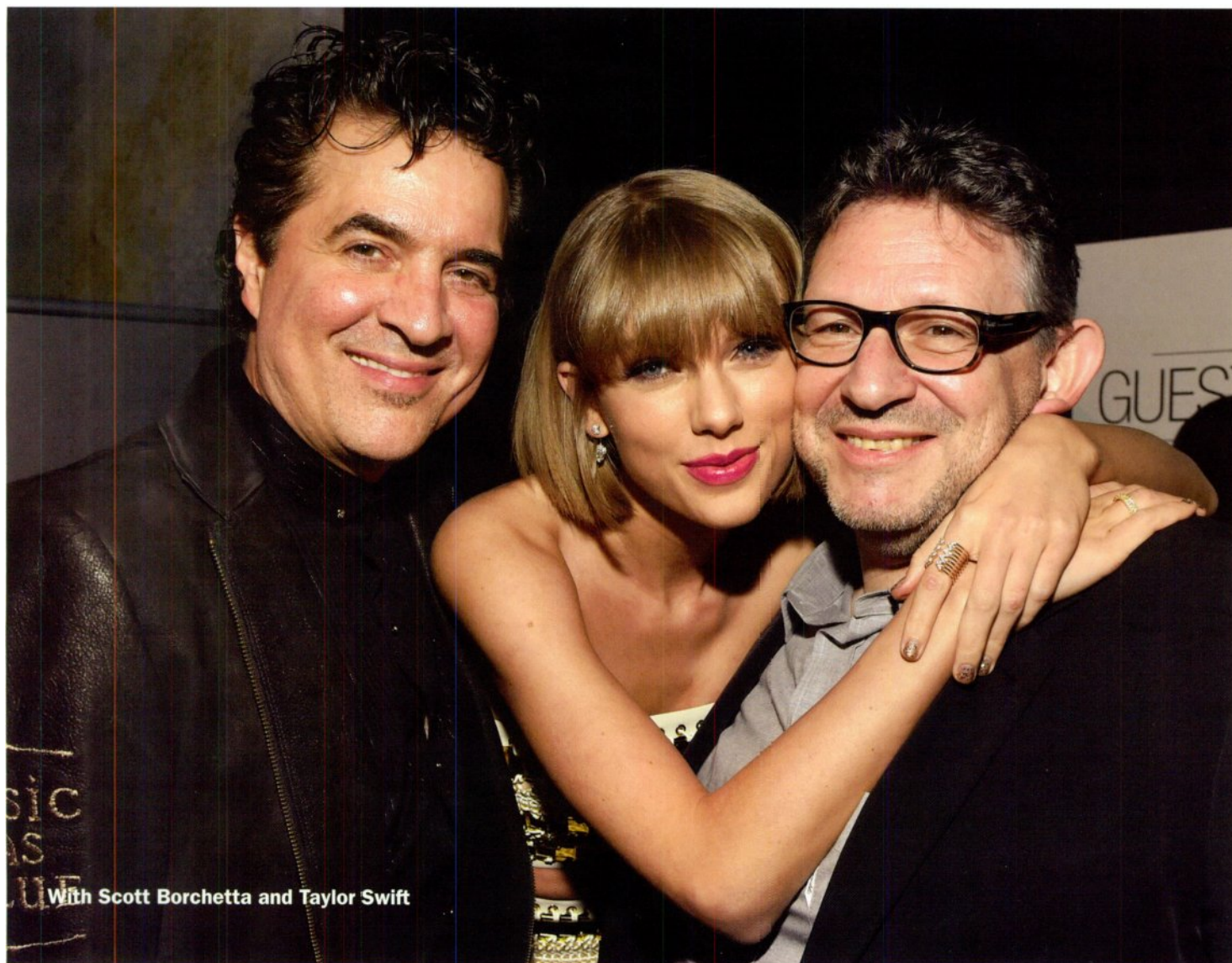
Grainge's longstanding reputation as a tough customer may well be rooted in the profound influence of his first mentor, Maurice Oberstein, who was known throughout the U.K. music business as Obie. Lucian had begun cold-calling label heads, whose names and numbers he'd pulled from the *Music Week* directory, and Oberstein, then the Chairman of CBS Records U.K., had been the first to take his call.

Obie surprised the youngster by giving him a job in the A&R department of April Music, and Lucian soon showed his acumen by walking out of his college-entrance exam in order to sign The Psychedelic Furs to a publishing deal, reportedly pocketing 400 quid for his trouble. In 1984, two years after moving over to RCA Music Publishing, Obie—who had by then become the MD of PolyGram—re-entered his life, giving him a job as A&R Director and subsequently tasking the rapidly rising Grainge with setting up PolyGram Music Publishing.

"I felt comfortable and normal around musicians and artists and managers," Grainge recalled in 2005. "I liked the social scene and loved the music. I was absolutely obsessed with it." "When you're in this business, and particularly

when you've been in this business since you were 18 like I have, there's no difference between the personal and business."

But it wasn't just the opportunities Obie had provided Grainge with that shaped the latter's business approach but also his mentor's colorful personal style. Obie, who often brought his dog to business meetings, amused some and alarmed others by pretending to seek Fido's counsel. Better yet was his approach to solving disputes: He'd place his ever-present hat on the desk, abruptly leave the office and on his way out, dismissively state, "Talk to the hat." Years later, the story goes, Grainge pulled a similar stunt when, walking into a conference room for an internal staff meeting,



With Scott Borchetta and Taylor Swift



With U2

“MUSIC HAS BEEN AROUND A THOUSAND YEARS, AND IT'S GOING TO BE AROUND FOR ANOTHER THOUSAND YEARS. HUMAN BEINGS LIKE RHYTHM. THAT'S WHY THERE IS A FUTURE. IT'S NEVER GOING AWAY.”

he switched off the lights and explained to the startled attendees, “This is what it looks like when you don’t have any hit records.” Somewhere, Obie was smiling in satisfaction.

After getting PolyGram’s pubco up and running, Grainge continued his rapid climb up the corporate ladder, adding business affairs to his A&R-centric oversight as Polydor’s GM in 1993 and rising to the label’s Managing Director of Polydor four years later. He was a natural, never losing sight of his primary focus as he raced up the corporate ladder. “I understand songs,” he explained. “It’s very, very difficult to define. I can definitely smell it. I can feel it in my fingertips.”

Morris subsequently recognized Grainge as a fellow big-stakes winner while the latter was running Universal’s international operations, playing a key role on Morris’ executive team. Vivendi CEO Jean-Bernard Lévy was likewise impressed with Grainge’s acumen, managerial abilities and aggressive decision-making, so much so that Lévy handpicked him to succeed Morris as Chairman/CEO of UMG. To say that Grainge hit the ground running when he became the sole ruler at the beginning of 2011 would be a gross understatement. He brought his global view of the music business, formulated during his six years at UMG International, to his new job

and has applied it with surgical precision.

During the ensuing seven and a half years, Grainge has been diligently remaking the company according to a clearly defined set of priorities, starting with the building of a strong and aggressive A&R force dedicated to attracting and developing top talent. When EMI went on the block just nine months into his reign, Grainge saw an opportunity to exponentially increase UMG’s cache of frontline talent while also substantially enriching its catalog holdings (The Beatles! Sinatra! The Beach Boys!), and though he wound up having to give up more than he would have liked—notably Coldplay—the respected English veteran

scored a historic, landscape-shifting victory when the EU formally approved the deal that September.

Just days after the deal closed, Grainge explained the reasoning behind another bold decision: moving UMG headquarters to L.A. “You have to remember that Universal over the last 15 years was a coming together of the old PolyGram and MCA structures,” he began, taking a quick jog down memory lane. “The music publishing business was always globally L.A. All of our administration, sales, key accounts, business affairs, legal, distribution, all were West Coast-based. And I [also] saw as the business was evolving how important the future of technology is... so I wanted to be 45 minutes away from all of this. And in terms of our cost savings and our synergies, our requirements are to globalize UMG. We historically had three structures: London, New York and L.A., and now we have one. So we’re leaner, we’re flatter, we’re more efficient, we’re better disciplined and we have a real global outlook. I’m very proud of that.”

The jewels in the crown of the EMI acquisition were **Virgin**, **EMI Records** and **Parlophone**, and Grainge turned to **Steve Barnett** to lead and retool the U.S. team of the combined labels, rebranded under the nameplate **Capitol Music Group**. A fellow Brit, Barnett had accrued most of his label experience in the U.S. As Grainge had expected, Barnett has cannily and fittingly combined the strongest aspects of British and American operational principles, transforming what had been a battered and mismanaged operation into a highly competitive, state-of-the-art modern music company.

Post-acquisition, the members of the UMG hierarchy—label heads **Monte Lipman** of **Republic**, **John Janick** of **Interscope** and Barnett, along with EVP/CFO **Boyd Muir**, Gerson, Anthony, EVP and Head of Global Communications **Will Tanous**, General Counsel/EVP of Business & Legal Affairs **Jeff Harleston** and EVP Digital Strategy **Michael Nash**—have expertly executed Grainge’s aggressive, A&R-driven business philosophy.



With Kacey Musgraves and Mike Dungan



With Rihanna



With Justin Lubliner, Steve Berman, Billie Eilish and John Janick

ipman really blossomed as a major-label head during the Grainge era, as his game came to be fully realized. The proof is in the points Republic has consistently been putting on the scoreboard.

Janick, who took the reins of IGA at 34 after having great success with his indie label **Fueled by Ramen**, was mentored by Grainge and **Jimmy Iovine**, who handed over the keys to his talented protégé in 2014. During his six years at IGA, Janick has emphasized the values of “artistry and entrepreneurship,” as he puts it, while maintaining the label’s momentum.

During our 2012 conversation, with the industry still peering up from a deep hole and pining for the good old days, which then seemed lost forever, Grainge stated, “I’m working tirelessly to create more music and to run a better music

company so that we stop the declines, because declines aren’t acceptable.” Simple as that—he would simply not accept the prospect of a permanently shrunken music business. Six years later, the fruits of Grainge’s fiercely determined efforts are abundantly apparent.

Grainge is super-smart, very competitive, aggressive and in it 24/7. One of the keys to his success has been his embrace of black music and culture, a fortuitous decision in that black music is dominating today’s ecosystem. His U.S. labels have all embraced the streaming culture in a big way. They all saw the writing on the wall and have pivoted in that direction big time. The recent naming of the savvy, entrepreneurial **Paul Rosenberg**, **Eminem**’s longtime manager, to head **Def Jam**, and the tapping of A&R-centric **Island U.K.** chief **Darcus Beese** to run the U.S. label are indicative of this strategy.

As the commander of a massive work-

force—around 7,000 in all, spread over 60 territories—Grainge has made it clear what their priorities should be. “We have literally thousands of people around the world whose responsibility, task, joy, is to get as much music to as many fans in as many ways as possible,” Grainge told the *L.A. Times* in 2014. “Music has been around a thousand years, and it’s going to be around for another thousand years. Human beings like rhythm. That’s why there is a future. It’s never going away.”

Three years later, in his Christmas letter to UMG staff, Grainge posited a broader agenda for UMG, one that values sociocultural progressiveness and philanthropic efforts right alongside profitability. “Impressive commercial results and remarkable chart positions are not the only things that drive us,” he said. “Being the global market leader comes with responsibility. We take that role seriously.”

He then enumerated examples of this

Congratulations
to all the
Rainmakers

Onwards and upwards

Allen Grubman

values system in action: the more than \$2 million raised for the victims of the May 2017 attack on Manchester concertgoers; the philanthropic initiative **All Together Now**, which targets “key areas of need across education, health and well-being, with a special tie to music and the arts”; the **Accelerator Engagement Network**, “a first-of-its-kind program that will support the next generation of entrepreneurs and promote the development of their innovative music startups”; and an industry-first partnership with **USC Annenberg** on its **Annenberg Inclusion Initiative**, whose purpose is to increase the representation of women and minorities in the entertainment industry.

“The reality is this: When the business was experiencing double-digit declines, we didn’t dig a hole and hide; we *invested*—in new artists, in emerging markets, in new business models, new technologies and in local music from around the world. We didn’t lose faith. We just kept doing what we came here to do—work tirelessly on behalf of our artists.”

That commitment must be in Grainge’s DNA, because it’s also evident in the burgeoning career of his 25-year-old son, **Elliot**, who founded and heads the **TenThousand** label and management company **Strainge Entertainment**, signing and developing hip-hop artists **Trippie Redd** and **6ix9ine**. Dad stays current by tapping the sensibilities of Elliot and daughter **Alice**, 18, during the family’s observation of the traditional *Shabbat* dinner on Friday nights.

In June 2017, Sir Lucian was honored as **Media Person of the Year** at **Cannes Lions**; he dedicated the award to his brother **Nigel**, who’d passed away just days earlier, as well as Universal’s artists, songwriters and his “incredible” team.

Like an English bulldog, Grainge has tenaciously guarded artists and the music they make. It all comes down to that, and in his mind it always will. The other fundamental aspect of Grainge’s character is that, for this lifelong fan of **Arsenal FC**, winning is the best feeling in the world, and losing is—here’s that word again—unacceptable. •



With Eminem



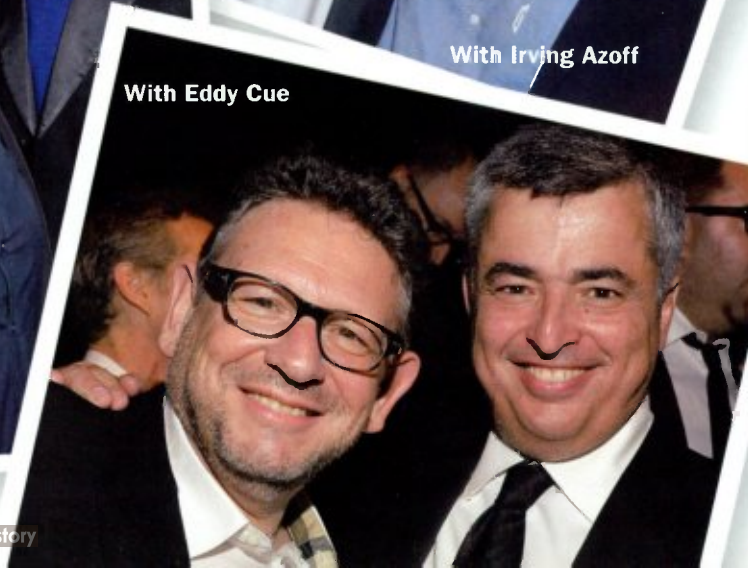
With Steve Barnett and Katy Perry



With Mick Jagger



With Irving Azoff



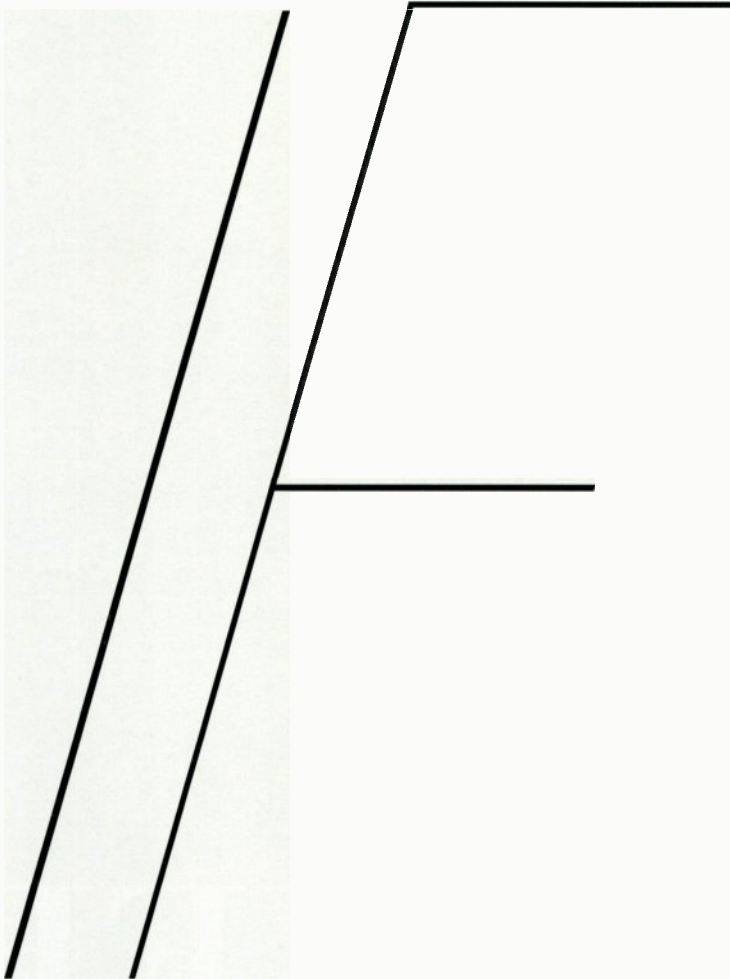
With Eddy Cue



RAINMAKER

Allen Grubman

THE KINGMAKER



it only takes one hit to get a career launched, then one of the largest entertainment law practices in the world has to celebrate every time “Macho Man” gets played.

Over the last 44 years, Allen Grubman has built Grubman Shire Meiselas & Sacks from a small firm into an international legal powerhouse covering all areas of entertainment. Its core has always been music, the area where Grubman has established himself as a confidante of the industry’s biggest stars and moguls, a fierce negotiator and a dealmaker of the highest order—not to mention the most colorful attorney in the biz. His connections to labels, executives and artists are legendary—every CEO of a major music group has retained Grubman as a consultant over the last 40 years. What’s more, he represents or has represented eight of the other 17 industry figures profiled in this volume.



“People disagree with me, but I’m a big believer that success in business is 75% luck, 25% brains,” Grubman told *Vanity Fair* three years ago. “Maybe it’s 50–50. But there are a thousand people with the same talent, but they didn’t get the break. You need luck and you need *sechel*.”

Sechel, he translates for the non-Yiddish speakers, is “a combination of instinct, balls and common sense.” And it’s a big part of what’s taken the gruffly formidable Grubman from the street to his regular perch at the **Hotel du Cap**.

No other music-business attorney has cast as large a shadow or left a bigger footprint over the last 40 years than Grubman. He’s street-smart, funny and gregarious; powerful captains of industry enjoy his company. And he enjoys a big lifestyle.

Grubman entered the music business at a time of transition. His first job found him stepping into the old-school way of doing business—visiting people like **Morris Levy** to get a bill paid and walking out with a five-figure settlement—in green, inside a brown paper bag. He saw the adversarial side of the relationship between labels, managers and artists.

“You had to adapt as the times changed,” Grubman has said. “The artists have a difficult time understanding that the [executives] they have to meet are very different people

than the ones they would have met 10 or 15 years ago. One of the functions a lawyer performs is, he becomes the bridge between the artist and the executives. If you're able to do that, you're able to succeed. I think I've done that."

By the time he hung up his own shingle, in 1974 at the dawn of the disco era, he saw the advantage of firm negotiating, avoiding litigation and—in a move away from legal tradition—embracing practices that in other areas of the law could represent conflicts of interest. The music industry had grown up; legal battles were with corporations, not seat-of-the-pants operations. He saw value in deal-making and partnerships rather than going *mano a mano* over royalty rates.

He also pioneered the concept of not charging an hourly rate and instead handing a bill to a client after a financial settlement had been made. It quickly made him a millionaire—*Forbes* had him in the top five of corporate lawyers in the late '70s based on

individual earnings. *Businessweek* later called him "the most powerful lawyer in the music business."

His career has rolled out like a superstar's—one hit leading to another. Success with The Village People and Hall & Oates early on led to Billy Joel for *52nd Street*, then Bruce Springsteen prior to his breakthrough *Born in the U.S.A.*, and then John Mellencamp; each artist was impressed with the results of Grubman's efforts to get larger advances and better royalty rates. U2, Madonna, Lady Gaga, Sting, Elton John, Lionel Richie, Sean Combs and others fill his high-end client roster, along with iHeartMedia, Spotify, Live Nation, Irving Azoff, Doug Morris, David Geffen and Jimmy Iovine. Interestingly, Grubman is no fan of rock & roll—he prefers the music of Frank Sinatra—

and therefore has never said, "I listened to your record and I think it could be a hit." But he has great instincts and can smell success from across the room.

Springsteen manager Jon Landau told the *Los Angeles Times*, "There's a very simple reason why Allen has accumulated such a massive list of the industry's smartest and most sophisticated clients over the years. He gets results."

Grubman, whose first high-profile client was Tommy Mottola, then running his artist management company Champion Entertainment, built his empire by representing artists and the companies they work for, though his attorneys will never be seated on both sides of the table at a negotiation or on opposing sides in court.

"All this hullabaloo we keep hearing about Allen and conflict of interest is absurd," Azoff told the *Los Angeles Times*. "Every artist who goes to Allen hires him precisely because he *has* relationships with all the label executives."

One of Grubman's clients told *Newsweek* ages ago that the lawyer has a favorite witticism: "If there's no conflict, there's no interest."

We were first introduced to Allen in the late 1970s by Bang Records head Eileen Burns; we needed help collecting money from Don Arden, who had hired us to market and promote ELO's releases on his CBS Records-distributed Jet label. We flew to New York, and Allen walked us into the office of Walter Yetnikoff. The CBS Records Chief said he would pay us on the condition that if he ever needed help with an artist, he could call us and ask for a favor. We were OK with that—despite the fact that the line sounded chillingly like it came straight out of *Godfather II*. Not long afterward, Arden's daughter Sharon stole Black Sabbath from her dad and went on to marry frontman Ozzy Osbourne—and the rest, as they say, is history.

A brash Brooklynite from Crown Heights, Grubman got his first taste of show biz as a 10-year-old when he was a singer on NBC's Sunday



VILLAGE PEOPLE

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LIVE WIRES: With Irving Azoff, Live Nation boss Michael Rapino, Netflix's Ted Sarandos and Maverick's Guy Oseary.

morning variety show *Horn and Hardart Children's Hour*.

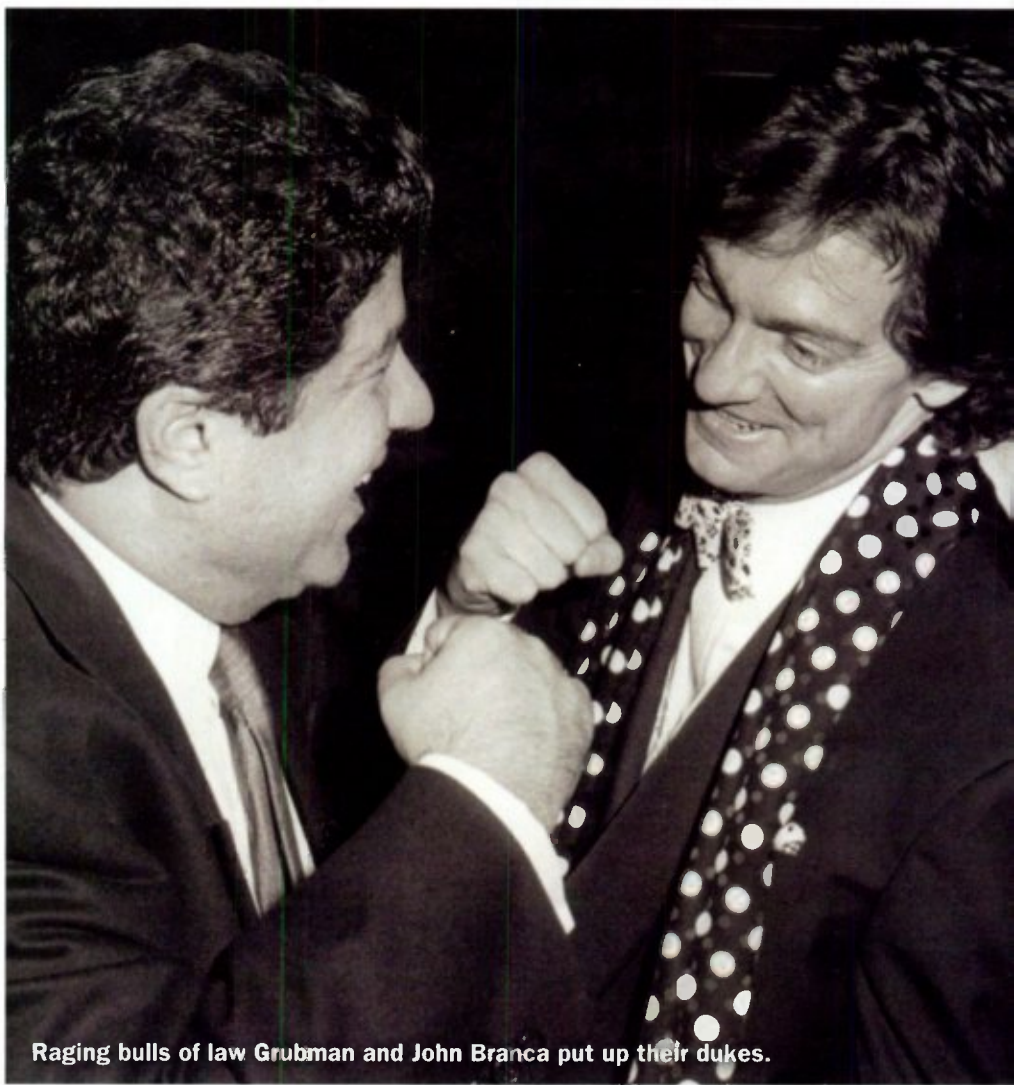
"They picked me up in a limousine every weekend," Grubman said in that *Vanity Fair* profile. "The only other time you were ever in a limo was behind a hearse on the way to a funeral. And they took us to good restaurants. Then my voice broke! But I never forgot the restaurants and the limousine. It was totally unheard of. In my neighborhood, I was a *macher*. I was on a TV show."

He attended *City College* before heading to *Brooklyn Law School*, where he squeaked by near the bottom of his class in 1967. During law school, he worked in the mailroom at *William Morris Agency* and interned at *CBS* as a page.

His first job was with *Walter Hofer*, the New York attorney most famous for representing *The Beatles* and *Brian Epstein*. "I didn't know what to say, so I tried to get him to like me," Grubman told *Vanity Fair*. "I said, 'I really want to work for you, but I don't come from a very wealthy family, so I can't afford to pay you very much to hire me.'"

He left in 1974, opening his own firm with only five grand in the bank. His initial clients were compilation kingpins *K-Tel*, *Henry Stone's* soon-to-be disco specialists *T.K. Records* and *Henri Belolo* (*The Village People*) and *Hall & Oates*.

Around the same time, Mottola started



Raging bulls of law Grubman and John Branca put up their dukes.

feeding clients to Grubman and, in turn, introduced Grubman to Yetnikoff. With shared appetites for food, nightlife and adventure, they formed a bond that would greatly help Grubman's firm.

A pipeline of clients started flowing to Grubman: the Champion-repped **Carly Simon**, Mellencamp and so many **Columbia Records** artists that, by 1987, it was estimated Grubman represented more than a third of the label's acts.

Two years after Yetnikoff guided Sony's acquisition of CBS Records and was busy howling at the moon, Mottola staged a coup, with Landau, Grubman, **David Geffen** and even **Michael Jackson** as lieutenants.

When Mottola took over for Yetnikoff, Grubman was a familiar sight at the bargaining table for more than a decade, as he represented a host of top executives who were brought in, among them **Donnie Ienner**, **Dave Glew**, **Polly Anthony** and **Steve Barnett**.

During that coup, Grubman had a nasty public spat with **Billy Joel**, who found Grubman's

loyalties divided between the artist and the label. It was settled in 1989, and Joel became the only client Grubman lost in the entire decade.

"Anybody who knows me knows that when I represent a client in a transaction, I kill for that client—sometimes to the frustration and anger of the person on the other side of the table—whether or not that person also happens to be a client," Grubman told the *L.A. Times* in 1997. "When the guy on the other side of the table sees me trying to get the absolute best deal for my client in that transaction, he realizes that I am going to kill the same way for them when I am hired to work on some future transaction on their behalf."

In the mid-1990s, Grubman found himself in two of his more famous battles. In 1995, **Time Warner's Michael Fuchs** refused to compromise with Interscope founders **Ted Field** and **Jimmy Iovine** on the release of several rap albums.

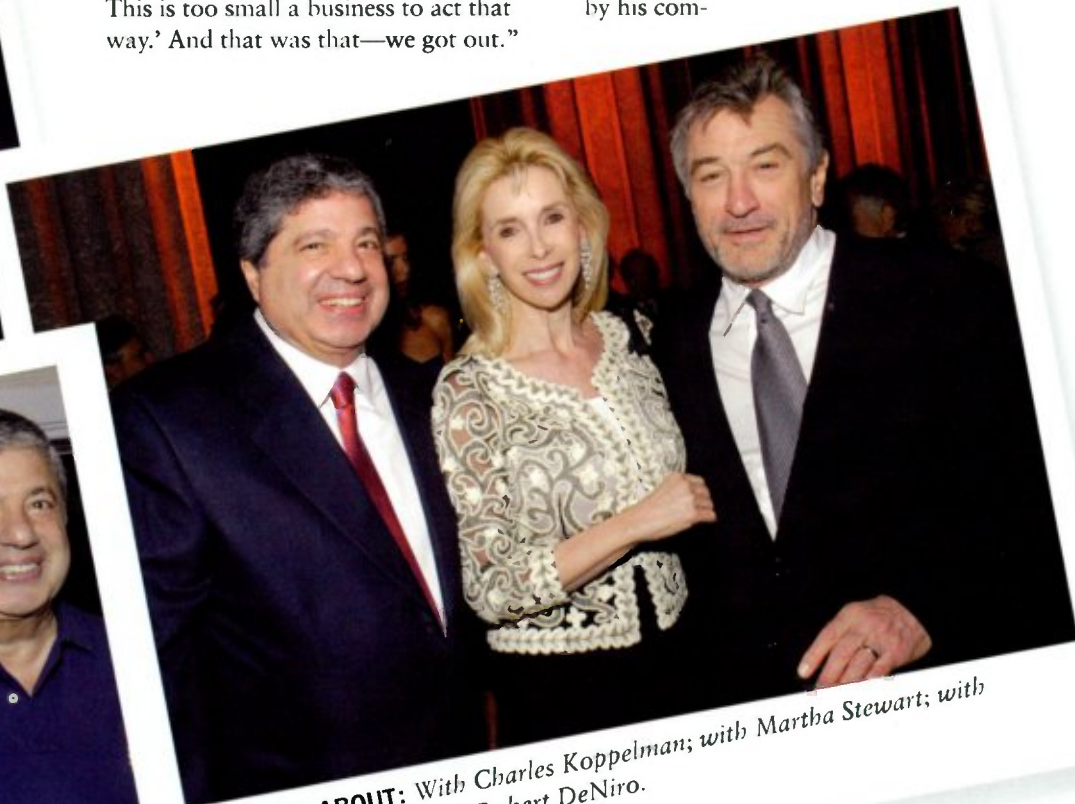
According to Field, interviewed in the *L.A. Times*, Grubman told Fuchs, "I represent 48 of the top 50 people in the record business. You don't renege on a deal. You don't do business that way. This is too small a business to act that way." And that was that—we got out."

A year later, **Edgar Bronfman Jr.** was shaking up the **Universal Music Group** by bringing in **Doug Morris** to replace **Al Teller** at the top. Both executives were Grubman clients. Morris told the *L.A. Times*, "I called Allen and asked if he'd do my deal. And he said, 'I can't. I represent Al Teller; I can't do both.' He didn't conflict the two things."

And don't forget: **Napster** hired him in 2000 as part of its last-ditch effort to cut deals with Sony, Universal, EMI and Warner Music.

In 2004, partner **Paul Schindler** stepped down and the firm went by the name **Grubman Indursky**. A year later, the firm's film and TV maven, **Lawrence Shire**, became a name partner after expanding the company's reach into visual media, publishing and fashion. As the recorded-music industry slumped in the early part of the 21st century, Grubman and team developed a digital-media team to work with the likes of **Facebook**, grew a gaming division after games became a new revenue stream for music and entered the Broadway arena with producer **Scott Rudin**.

He's not always well-liked by his com-



OUT AND ABOUT: With **Charles Koppelman**; with **Martha Stewart**; with **Deborah Grubman** and **Robert DeNiro**.

ARISTA IS BACK.

Unfortunately,
so are the calls from HITS.

ARISTA



MACHERS: With Mel Ilberman, Tom Freston and Tommy Mottola; (inset) with Grammy



petitors, as most of them have lost clients to him and accused him of poaching. Sometimes he comes off like a know-it-all—a loud, brash New Yorker. But no one debates that he’s a strong advocate for his clients and has the innate ability to represent either side of an issue with undeniable passion and fierce determination to close a deal.

Recently, Grubman has been consulting for Spotify, which he helped negotiate licensing deals with record companies, Live Nation, Azoff MSG Entertainment and Sony, while his music team, led by Kenny Meiselas, lists clients such as Springsteen, U2, Lady Gaga, The Weeknd, Maroon 5, Elton John, Lionel Richie, Bette Midler, John Mellencamp, Tony Bennett, Mary J. Blige, Sean Combs and AC/DC, as well as the estates of David Bowie and Whitney Houston. (In 2001, he negotiated a \$100 million long-term deal with Arista Records for Houston.) The firm’s non-music clients encompass TV stars (including David Letterman, Diane Sawyer and Martha Stewart), film figures (Robert DeNiro, Spike Lee and Meg Ryan), star athletes (LeBron James, Cam Newton, Colin Kaepernick), media moguls (Bob Iger, Les Moonves, Jim Dolan), publishing luminaries

(Carl Bernstein, John Meacham, *Rolling Stone*), fashion and apparel companies (Tommy Hilfiger, Calvin Klein, Vera Wang), media operations (HBO, iHeart-Media, Vice) and a variety of other businesses, from Samsung to SoulCycle.

He was never tempted to get into management, because he would be competing with his clients. “I sleep better at night knowing a thousand people can confide in me versus one or two.”

In that *L.A. Times* article, he said, “Life is 80% *mazel* and 20% brains. You can be the smartest guy in the world, but if you don’t have any luck, you’re screwed.”

Grubman and his wife, Debbie, an accomplished New York realtor, have led a high-profile life on the social scene;

their Fourth of July parties at their East Hampton estate are one of the most exclusive summer soirees in the Hamptons. They live on Park Ave. near the *Met* on the Upper East Side and also have a home in Beverly Hills, the former residence of the late agent Sue Mengers. Since the Beverly Hills purchase, he has become a fixture at Nate’n Al’s, where he breakfasts at 8:30 most mornings whenever he’s in town, holding court with the rich and famous.

Early in 2018, Grubman received two significant honors, as Brooklyn Law School named him Alumnus of the Year and the Grammy Foundation’s Entertainment Law Initiative presented him with the President’s Merit Award.

“We do something very important,” Grubman said at the ELI ceremony. “We bring joy to the world.” •



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DURING HIS 24-YEAR REIGN AS THE WILDLY SUCCESSFUL CHIEF OF INTERSCOPE RECORDS, HE WAS VIEWED BY HIS PEERS AS THE MOST SUCCESSFUL LABEL HEAD IN THE BIZ.

JIMMY IOVINE

MOVING THE NEEDLE ON THE CULTURE

N

ot many current music-biz figures get feature films made about them, but then, Jimmy Iovine is hardly your garden-variety mogul. Part Zelig, part visionary, the colorful, raspy-voiced producer-turned-label head-turned-streaming crusader has consistently found himself in the middle of some of the biggest industry stories of the last four decades-plus—and sometimes it appears that this hyper-driven force of nature has willed his narrative into existence. He's also parlayed his knowledge and savvy into ventures that have made him the third billionaire in the history of the music biz.

"Jimmy happens to you like a virus," according to no less an authority than Bono. The U2 frontman has also described his onetime producer and label head as "a heat-seeking missile," while Iovine's longtime partner Dr. Dre has noted, "Jimmy has this term: 'I smell blood.' When he says that, I



SAY "CHEESE": With friend and mentor Doug Morris; Jon Bon Jovi and Vanessa Williams

know he's on to something." Part of what makes Jimmy run is metabolic, it seems. "I am blessed with the energy of a chimpanzee," he offers. Maybe it's all that tea he drinks.

As an upstart engineer/producer, Iovine was deeply involved in the creation of landmark albums from **John Lennon**, **Bruce Springsteen**, **Patti Smith**, **Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers**, **Stevie Nicks** and **U2**, for starters.

During his 24-year reign as the wildly successful chief of **Interscope Records**, he was viewed by his peers as the most successful label head in the biz. Most recently, Iovine was a game-changer at **Apple**, helping to usher in a new age of prosperity—including **Dre's** and his own via the \$3 billion sale of **Beats** to the tech giant. All in all, not a bad track record for a perennially boyish inveterate hustler from Brooklyn.

Four years later, with **Apple Music** now challenging long-dominant streamery **Spotify**, Iovine is plotting his next move—his fifth chapter, if you're counting—and it seems like practically everybody in the music and tech sectors is trying to read the tea leaves to determine where he'll land.

"My nickname was Moochie," Iovine revealed in a 2014 interview with **GQ**. "My father was incredible, a longshoreman; my mother was a secretary. Very 'go to work' people. That's how I saw things. I loved music, and I wanted to do something different." He snagged an entry-level gig in the business at 19, sweeping floors in New York's **Record Plant** and keeping his eyes peeled for an opportunity.

It came, magically enough, in 1973, when Jimmy wormed his way into a John Lennon session and made himself useful, whereupon the Smart Beatle ordered, "Stay in the chair." Two years later, he'd become sufficiently adept and wily to be entrusted with chief engineering duties on the *Born to Run* project by Springsteen and producer/manager **Jon Landau**. Through the 1970s and '80s, Iovine's profile and bank account grew as his stack of hit albums accumulated: Smith's *Easter*, Petty's *Damn the Torpedoes*, **Dire Straits'** *Making Movies*, Nicks' *Bella Donna*, **Simple Minds'** *Once Upon a Time*, **U2's** *Rattle and Hum*.

Iovine has said more than once that he cared just as much about the music his artist clients were making as they did themselves. "When I was in there with them," he recalled

IOVINE'S LONGTIME PARTNER DR. DRE HAS NOTED, "JIMMY HAS THIS TERM: 'I SMELL BLOOD.' WHEN HE SAYS THAT, I KNOW HE'S ON TO SOMETHING."

in the *GQ* piece, "there was nothing else I gave a shit about in life. Nothing. Not even myself." As time went on, his perfectionism caused him to become increasingly demanding. "Jimmy set a standard in commitment I still look for," Petty told *Rolling Stone's* David Fricke in 2012. "He would throw himself on a grenade to get the track. He also had this saying, when we finished a take and asked how it was, he'd go, 'You're a million miles away.' Jimmy wouldn't give you anything until you really gave him something."

When not in the studio, Jimmy—with his ever-present baseball cap and fidgety demeanor—made the rounds of the major labels, trade-talking with Arista's Clive Davis at the latter's Beverly Hills Hotel bungalow, swapping anecdotes with Doug Morris at Atlantic HQ in NYC and shooting the shit with Irving Azoff in MCA's Universal City high-rise.

Those experiences with his artists and executive mentors—whom the ever-inquisitive Iovine pressed for insights, which they readily supplied—progressively fueled his ambition. "I'm a sponge," he said in *GQ*. "I can't learn in school, but I can learn from somebody who I think is cool and great. I have a gift: I'm very lucky to be able to spot when a person is special. I'm good at casting my life, you know?"

At 38, Iovine knew it was time to make his next move. "Producing is too small a hole," Iovine explained to Fricke. "What I felt in my 20s, I stopped hearing in my 30s. I didn't feel a thing. I felt it again when I started working with Dre and Trent Reznor. But they wouldn't have asked me to produce their albums. They didn't need to sound like Tom Petty."

As the '90s approached, Jimmy surveyed the landscape. Initially, he strongly considered joining Azoff at his start-up label Giant, but he wound up getting a better deal from entrepreneur Ted Field, and they co-founded Interscope in 1990. At first, the partners



BILLIONAIRES' CLUB

jointly ran the nascent label, but it wasn't long before it became apparent that Iovine was the engine driving the company, and Field receded into the background.

In the early days of Interscope, Jimmy's OCD-like relentlessness became apparent to us as he called every morning at 7am for weeks on end as part of a determined

effort to snag Daniel Glass as his head of promotion. Getting nowhere, Jimmy came up with a backup plan he could live with, hiring former Columbia promo domo Marc Benesch, who went on to head the department for nearly a decade. Benesch had come to Interscope from Boston, where he'd been working for

Dick Scott, manager of New Kids on the Block, and he brought Marky Mark, the brother of New Kid Donnie Wahlberg, to the label with him, while Benesch's attorney, Peter Lopez, brought Gerardo, giving the startup label its first two hits.

Those two acts won't go down in music-biz history, but their left-field hit singles put the fledgling label on the map. Gerardo's "Rico Suave" hit #7 in April 1991, and Marky Mark and the Funky Bunch's "Good Vibrations" topped the charts later that year. But Marky—aka Mark Wahlberg—would enjoy a significantly more long-lasting career in film.

Meanwhile, Jimmy applied his knack at spotting talent on the hoof to his hirings, as he took untested youngsters Steve Berman and Brenda Romano under his wing and grew them into highly capable execs. Indeed, they functioned throughout Iovine's tenure as his left- and right-hand lieutenants.

Things picked up considerably when Iovine signed and befriended Dre, whose first solo album, *The Chronic*, changed the face of the burgeoning hip-hop genre. It also changed Iovine's musical priorities. "I knew hip-hop was going around, but I had no idea what it was," he admitted. Following this awakening, the floodgates opened with the signings and breakthroughs of Snoop, Tupac and Eminem—the first two, as well as Dre, through a deal with Suge Knight's gangsta rap label Death Row—transforming Iovine's image within the business from that of rock producer to rap mogul. "He can see around corners," Morris marveled. "It was Jimmy who really believed that rap was going to go mainstream, and it did exactly what he thought."

As a label head, he was the antithesis of a corporate suit, viewing the Interscope staff and roster as his extended family. On Sundays in the early '90s, he hosted a touch football game in the backyard of his Malibu estate, which exemplified the close-knit, distinctly non-corporate vibe of the extended Interscope



SCOPING IT OUT: Doug digs what Jimmy's cooking up with Sheryl Crow, Bono and Gwen Stefani; Ted Field, Gerardo and Sylvia Rhone

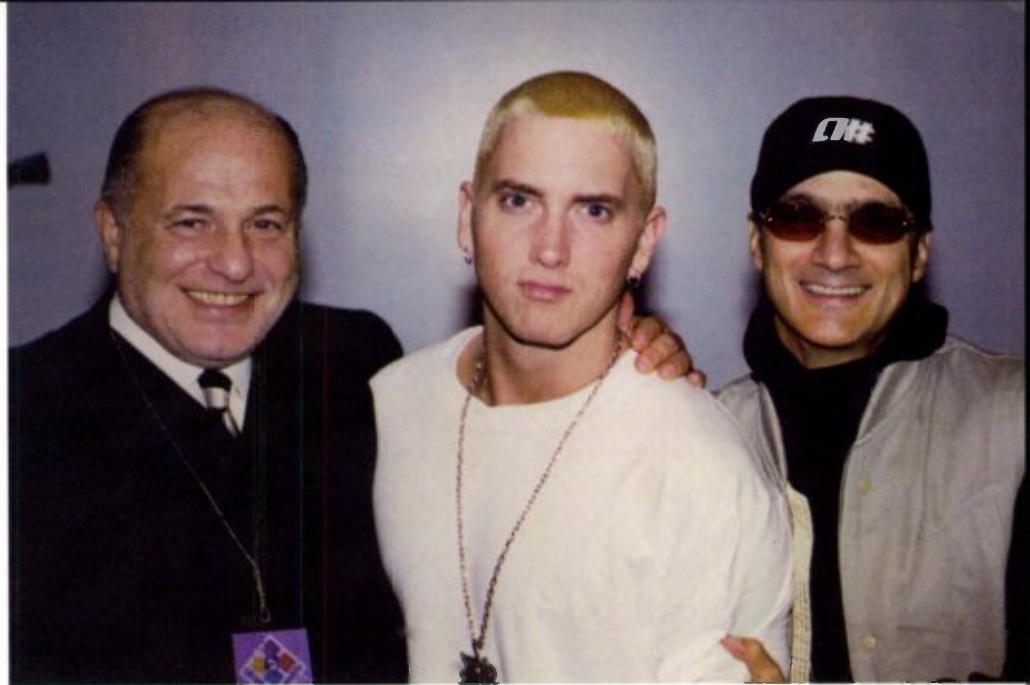
family. On any given Sunday, the pickup teams might include Dre, Suge and Snoop, staffers John McClain, Beau Hill, David Cohen, Step Johnson, and Michael Papale, along with friends and associates like Lopez, Jordan Schur and Jeff Kwatinetz, while Jimmy's mom, a frequent visitor, cooked her Italian specialties for dinner.

It wasn't all idyllic, however. The Death Row connection brought with it a horde of thugs, and it seemed like everyone was packing heat, so much so that Iovine had no choice but to hire bodyguards, just in case. The pervasive sense of danger during those times comes across in alarming detail in the second half of *The Defiant Ones*, the four-part HBO documentary chronicling Iovine and Dre's stories, which picked up five 2018 Emmy nominations.

For its first five years of existence, Interscope was part of Warner Music Group, but that arrangement came under fire when activist C. Delores Tucker and former federal drug czar William Bennett began a series of headline-grabbing attacks on gangsta rap lyric content. As a result, Michael Fuchs, WMG's clueless overseer, desperate to wash his hands of the whole business, happily handed over the company to Iovine's friend and mentor, Doug Morris, who'd been handed the reins of Universal Music by Edgar Bronfman Jr. after being fired by the very same Fuchs. The delicious irony is that Fuchs had virtually given away what would become the dominant label of the next 20 years, as Interscope continued to win big not just with its hip-hop superstars but also true originals like Nine Inch Nails, No Doubt, Bush, Primus, Helmet, Black Eyed Peas, Weezer and Lady Gaga.

In his role as label head, Iovine was just as demanding of his artists as he'd been during his producer days. "There's this thing: 'Jimmy Jail,' we call it," Gwen Stefani revealed in *Rolling Stone*. "You're writing a record, and it's always 'You're not done. One more song.' It's intimidating. But you want to be part of his history. He brings that out of you."

In 2006, when Dre told Jimmy he was thinking of starting a sneaker line, Iovine spontaneously uttered the now-famous



MADE IN THE SHADY: Doug and Jimmy with budding superstar Eminem

"I HAVE A GIFT: I'M VERY LUCKY TO BE ABLE TO SPOT WHEN A PERSON IS SPECIAL. I'M GOOD AT CASTING MY LIFE, YOU KNOW?"



BEAUTIFUL DAY: Jimmy, Bono and The Edge join Steve Jobs to hawk U2-branded iPod

"YOU'VE GOTTA BE OF SERVICE TO PEOPLE-YOU CAN'T JUST BE A SERVICE."



FARM CLUBBING



ADDING THE AMPERSAND: With John McClain, Doug, Herb Alpert and Lani Hall

retort, “Screw sneakers. Let’s do speakers.” That notion led to the founding of Beats by Dr. Dre, which revolutionized the headphone business. But it wouldn’t have happened if Doug Morris hadn’t crusaded on Iovine’s behalf to allow him to pursue outside business opportunities, leading to a clause to that effect in his employment contract.

The industry consensus was that when Iovine was focused, he could sign just about any act he wanted, that none of his rivals had much of a chance. Iovine’s star turn as chief mentor on *American Idol* from 2011-13, which made him a pop-culture icon, served to further increase his appeal to the acts he had his eye on.

When an artist came to his office or his house for a meeting, the impression Iovine made was nothing less than overwhelming, albeit in a totally unpretentious way. The first thing his guests would invariably notice was all the photos lining the walls showing Iovine with Lennon, Springsteen, Bono and other legends. When the phone would ring, it might be Bruce calling to discuss the logistics of joining Obama for lunch at the estate of Larry Ellison or David Geffen—or jumping on Paul Allen’s private jet to watch the Seahawks in the playoffs from Allen’s owner’s suite. For the coup de gras, Gwen, Gaga, Dre or Eminem might walk through the door to seal the deal. In short, Jimmy had all the marbles, and he knew how to spin them.

There’s good reason Iovine was the highest-paid music exec for the last 10 years of the Interscope run. He never made a big deal about it because he didn’t want to give off that sort of vibe, but those numbers were whoppers. In retrospect, of course, they look like pocket change compared to his Beats score.

But a distracted Iovine is not the A-game Iovine, as he demonstrated during his final years at Interscope. At the time, he was becoming increasingly distracted by his Beats project and, for a time, his *American Idol* mentoring duties. So, at Lucian Grainge’s urging, Iovine plucked young indie entrepreneur turned major-label all-star John Janick from Atlantic, anointed him as his heir apparent and empowered him

ZIFFREN BRITTENHAM LLP

CONGRATULATES

JOHN BRANCA

A HITS MAGAZINE RAINMAKER



BEATS GOES ON: Eddy Cue welcomes Jimmy and Dre to Cupertino.

to handle IGA's day-to-day responsibilities. As a result, IGA had one of its most profitable years in 2013, regaining much of the marketshare it had lost during the previous few years, and the company has been a consistently strong performer during the ensuing half decade.

What's more, Iovine's frustrations at running a label were beginning to take the joy out of the job. "My only regret about Interscope is I can't fix the image of a record company," he said ruefully in the *Rolling Stone* Q&A. "No matter what I do, if somebody's record stiffs, they are trained to blame the building. Even your greatest friends, when they want more money, their lawyer wants more money—they point at the building. And you're the building. I'm not saying I did everything right or wrong. But I could never fix that. It's too ingrained—the idea that the industry steals from people."

By then, Iovine was being pulled toward his next radical career shift. "When I met Steve Jobs and Eddy Cue at Apple, I didn't know how to make a headphone," he acknowledged to

Esquire in 2017. "I learned how to navigate that business by hanging out with Eddy. I was trying to help Apple as much as possible, and I was getting all this knowledge in return."

After Jimmy and Dre expanded their electronics business to include the user-friendly, human-curated Beats streaming service, Apple swooped in and bought the entire company in its biggest acquisition to date. The partners then played key roles in the development of the Beats-derived Apple streaming service, working closely with Cue and his team. Right after launch, Iovine told us, "My whole thing was, 'Get us into Apple and we can build something extraordinary.'... You've gotta be of service to people—you can't just be a service... We've got a big platform... and people are gonna use it—they're not gonna know exactly *why* they like it more, but I think they're gonna like it more."

Three years after Apple Music's launch,

the premium-only service boasts more than 50 million subscribers worldwide, and it aims to surpass Spotify's paid tier in the U.S. by the end of 2018. So it looks like Eddy Cue's \$3 billion bet has paid off big time. Indeed, Beats Electronics by itself has thrown off enough revenue since the acquisition to more than cover the cost of the deal. Jimmy has said that he'll continue to do whatever he can on Apple and Cue's behalf following his departure in August, but it looks like chapter four in his storybook career deserves to end with "Mission accomplished."

As for his next move, Iovine will likely bring the same perspective to the decision that brought him to Apple in 2014. As he said at the time, "Life is a balance of fear and overcoming it. You can use fear as a tailwind or a headwind. I'm most proud that I thought of Beats at [age] 55. Dre and I wanted to move the needle on the culture. That's *everything* to me. 'We caused it.' I'd say it's more important than money, but you wouldn't believe me."•

CONGRATULATIONS
TO

IRVING AZOFF
AND ALL THE RAINMAKERS

THANK YOU FOR YOUR
CONTINUED SUPPORT AND
GUIDANCE OVER THE YEARS

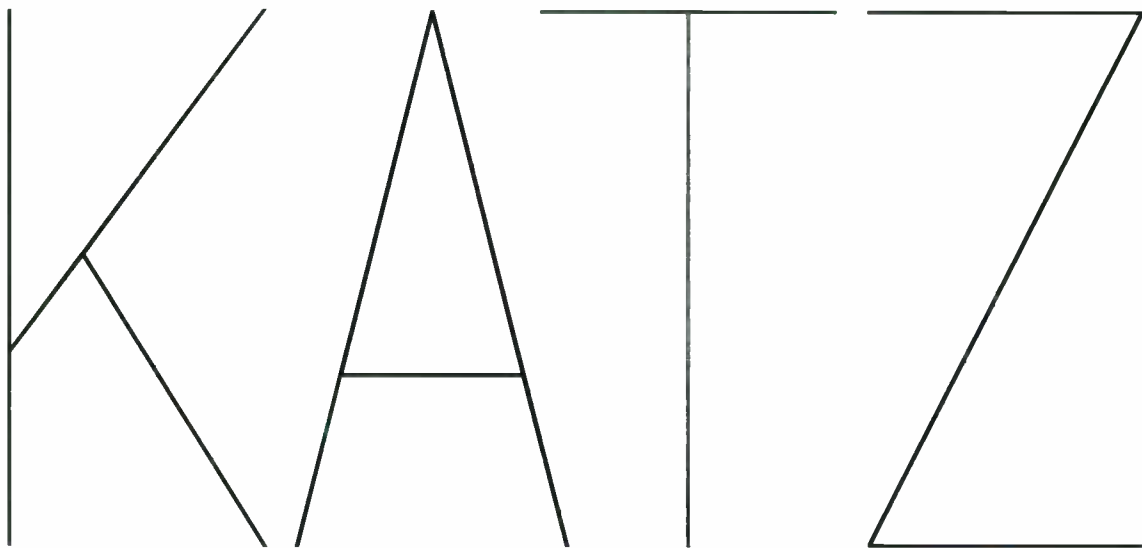


**CAREER ARTIST
MANAGEMENT**



JOEL

As a lawyer, Joel Katz has an uncommon distinction, one that upends the longstanding stereotypes of his profession: Affable, reflective and an acutely attuned listener, Katz is a sheer pleasure to be around, according to virtually everyone who comes in contact with him. That includes **Doug Morris**, who has observed the distinguished legal eagle in action at the negotiating table on numerous occasions. “He’s smart and hardworking, but he’s also very warm,” Morris marveled. “It’s different than the normal atmosphere you have with a lawyer; it’s the real thing.” On another occasion, the great record man described Katz as “one of the most charitable and finest people I have met in this industry.”



The South's Gentle Giant

“

A

nyone who
has ever
worked with
or known
Joel can't

help but be awestruck by his ability to understand the intricate details of putting a deal together,” says **Sandbox Entertainment** topper **Jason Owen**. “Like a great architect, he misses nothing and can see the things most of us cannot. More than that, though, Joel Katz is a man of immense integrity and kindness, and that is why we are so close both personally and professionally. He is family. He’s one of a kind, a gem in our business and in life generally.”

For much of his career, which spans nearly a half century, Katz—the **Founding Chairman of Global Entertainment and Media Practice** and the **Founding Shareholder of the Atlanta Office of global firm Greenberg Traurig**—

lived and worked in the shadow of his higher-profile counterparts in New York and L.A. such as **Allen Grubman**, **John Branca** and **Don Passman**. But it was just a matter of time before the breadth and scale of Katz’s achievements would thrust him to the very apex of the A-list of entertainment lawyers. “Joel is somebody you can always count on,” Grubman has said.

One of Katz’s clients went so far as to hail him as “the **Michael Jackson** of entertainment law,” and that’s actually not such a stretch. Katz’s work for the **Recording Academy** and the **Country Music Association** has been groundbreaking, and his client list is mind-blowingly diverse, encompassing numerous top execs (including several of those quoted in this piece) and a galaxy of high-profile artists ranging from **Ludacris** to **Julio Iglesias**, as well as a number of prestigious organizations. He and **Jess Rosen**, who’s co-chair of the **Atlanta Entertainment & Media Practice** (as well as a respected jazz guitarist), make a formidable duo, further strengthening upstart Atlanta’s foothold in the legal world.

“I’m very proud that we’ve been able to build a business that started in Atlanta, not in the mainstream of the entertainment business,” Katz told us. “Which really goes to point out that if you work hard at something and just keep at it, no matter where you’re from; you can be a participant in an industry.”

Perhaps most significantly, Katz is trusted and beloved in equal measure across the close-knit Nashville music community.

“To call Joel a lawyer is a massive understatement,” **UMG Nashville Chairman/CEO Mike Dungan** tells us. “Yes, he practices law, but he is also a spin doctor, a psychotherapist, a philanthropist and a walking encyclopedia. The best part is, when you ask him how much you owe him, the answer is always the same: ‘I don’t know, somewhere between X and Y.’ That’s part of his charm—and it’s part of the reason why he can get anyone on the phone. An entrepreneur at heart, he simply gets shit done.”

“When it comes to dealmaking, Joel

is the center of the universe,” **BMLG** topper **Scott Borchetta** asserts. “He either knows about the next big deal or he’s making it—and when he’s making it, it’s likely to be the most creative deal possible...and it’s going to cost somebody a lot of money! Joel—don’t bill me for this.”

But Katz doesn’t spend all his time below the Mason-Dixon line; in order to effectively represent his extraordinarily wide-ranging client roster, he makes 35 to 40 trips to New York and L.A. during a typical year. “It’s a tough existence as you get older,” he acknowledged. “But I’ve got it down to a pretty scientific place. I have an airplane, and that makes it a little bit easier. On the plus side, living in Atlanta was a great place to bring up my two daughters. I now have four grandchildren.”

One key element in Katz’s exalted status in entertainment law is his fine-tuned awareness of the needs of artists. “I think that people in the arts are extremely intelligent, but they’re different than people who are in business,” he pointed out in an interview with Atlanta magazine *Du Jour*. “They view problems differently—maybe more subjectively than objectively—and sometimes they need help with the situations they find themselves in. I would say most of my business is counseling; 75% counseling, 25% legal advice.” Indeed, as he sees it, practicing law isn’t just a business; it’s also an art form.

But the root of Katz’s success couldn’t be more fundamental, as far as he’s concerned. “You work hard,” he explained during his keynote interview at **Midem** in 2015. “It’s really simple—you work. There’s no magic to being a lawyer, there’s no magic to being successful, there’s no magic to making money—you have to work; you have to get things done. People don’t pay you to be cute, they pay you to get it done.”

After graduating from New York City’s **Hunter College** with an economics degree in 1966, Queens native Katz arrived in Knoxville and began working toward a law degree at the **University of Tennessee**. In order to help with his college expenses, he got a part-time job in the college library and a fulltime job as a night clerk at a nearby **Holiday Inn**, working from 6pm till 6am, six days a week. That meant he was only getting a couple hours sleep, and



“I STARTED JOEL KATZ OFF.
I WAS HIS FIRST CLIENT.”

James Brown

“There’s no magic to being a lawyer, there’s no magic to being successful, there’s no magic to making money—you have to work; you have to get things done. People don’t pay you to be cute, they pay you to get it done.”

he frequently arrived late for his first class, the study of contracts.

His professor, Joel told an interviewer from UT’s *Tennessee Law* magazine in 2016, “was a very prim and proper military guy, and he had a rule that if you were late three times, you got an automatic F.” After his third tardiness, the prof asked him about the cause of his lateness, and Joel told him about the all-night hotel job. “He said to me, ‘You’re not going to get an F in my class, son. You want to be a lawyer more than anybody else in this damn law school. You’re going to be a great lawyer, so I’m not going to flunk you out.’”

Three years later, sporting a law degree and a full head of hair, Katz headed to Atlanta, simultaneously taking jobs at HUD, then-brand-new Georgia State University and a small law firm before hanging out his own shingle, renting a one-room office and sharing a secretary with three other lawyers. “I opened my office with no clients,” he recalled. “The first week, there were no calls. The second week, no calls except from my wife. The third week, no calls.” On the fourth week, he got a call from the banker of a prominent Georgian, putting his career in motion.

“Strangely enough,” Katz noted, “my first client in my whole career as a lawyer was James Brown, who I represented off-and-on for about 40 years until he died. Securing him as a client was a story of insanity and silliness, but he and I became very close friends. He always used to tell people, ‘I started Joel Katz off. I was his first client.’”

Katz’s first job for Brown was negotiating a record deal with PolyGram in 1971. “He said he wanted a \$5 million advance against royalties, he wanted a jet plane and he wanted to own the master recordings and the publishing rights,”



TOAST OF THE TOWN: With Doug Morris



HANGIN' OUT IN THE 615: With Matt Donahoe, Nashville super-managers Clint Higham and Jason Owen

Katz explained. "I went through the list with the [PolyGram lawyer], and he looks at me and says, 'Are you completely out of your mind? This is the stupidest, craziest, most egregious list of things I've ever heard in my career.' I knew at that moment why Mr. Brown—I always called him that, never James—had hired me: because no lawyer who knew anything about this business would ever go in and ask for the things he wanted."

They negotiated nonetheless and agreed on the terms of a deal. "We got use of a plane and less than \$5 million, but it was in the millions," Katz told the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*. "That was a lot of money back then. James was amazed."

"At the end of the press conference announcing that the record company had just signed James, he said, 'I want to thank my lawyer from Atlanta, Joel Katz, who is the best lawyer in the entertainment business and just did one of the best contracts that has ever been done in the business.' Afterward, he gave me an envelope with \$50,000. It was three times more than I had ever made in a year. I'm thinking this is what I want to do for the rest of my life."

"Three days after the press conference, I got a call from Austin, Texas, from a guy wanting to know if I was the 'Godfather

of Soul's lawyer.' It was Willie Nelson, and he wanted me to represent him. I'm thinking, wow! I went to meet with him and he introduced me in one night to George Jones, Tammy Wynette, Waylon Jennings and Kris Kristofferson. Willie said to them, 'This guy is going to be your lawyer.'"

Katz then met George Strait through his manager. "So my roots are pretty deep in Nashville," he told us. "They're very deep in pop music too, because we've worked with Jimmy Buffett for more than 40 years, and had a very interesting run with him."

Katz put all of his clients on \$2,000-a-month retainers, and his practice grew, as did his bank account. In 1981, 10 years after Brown put him on the map, he started his own firm, Katz, Smith & Cohen.

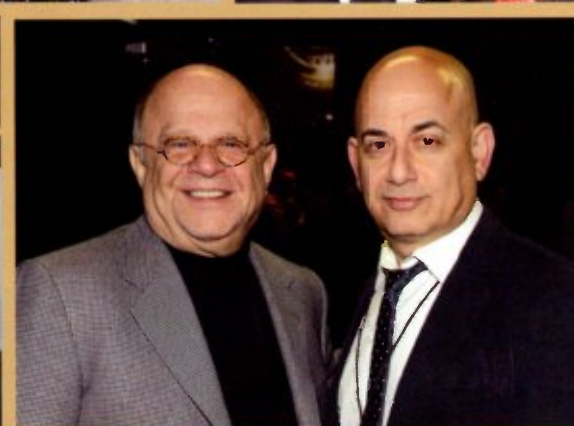
In 1995, Katz became special counsel for the Country Music Association, further entrenching him in Nashville. Says CMA CEO Sarah Trahern, "Joel is well known as a tireless advocate for his clients—many of them the icons of the format, including Willie Nelson, George Strait and Tim [McGraw] and Faith [Hill]. But what I admire most is his foresight and imagination. Decades ago, he envisioned securing the future of country music on television by negotiating network contracts that have

not only secured the future of CMA, but took the format to new heights—launching careers and establishing country music as a vital part of the mainstream."

In 1998, Katz merged his firm with Greenberg Traurig, which was then a Miami-based law firm of about 220 lawyers. As Greenberg Traurig grew, so did its entertainment practice; the firm now has entertainment attorneys scattered around the globe in nine offices. "But this is not a boutique firm; we do everything," Katz pointed out. "The Atlanta office alone now has almost 100 lawyers."

From there, his connections increased exponentially, along with his reputation. Since 2003, Katz has served as general counsel for the Recording Academy, with which he's been closely involved for more than three decades. And in 2011, he negotiated a monumental 10-year deal that would keep the Grammys with CBS while providing the Academy with \$20 million-plus in annual licensing fees, to the extreme delight of Academy chief Neil Portnow.

"I've known Joel for nearly four decades and have worked with him in various ways over the years," Portnow notes. "Like a fine wine, he only gets better with age. The Recording Academy could not have a better friend, mentor, advisor and



Katz with Scooter Braun; Brad Paisley and Nashville Mayor Megan Barry; Todd Boehly; Brooks and Dunn; colleague Jess Rosen; Recording Academy boss Neil Portnow and Sen. Barbara Boxer; President Jimmy Carter; CBS exec/Grammy VIP Jack Sussman; Republic chief Monte Lipman; another sign of his greatness; CMA topper Sarah Trahern; and L.A. Reid.

advocate, and we are forever grateful for his commitment and passion surrounding our work and missions. I'm always fond of expressing what has become an iconic saying: 'All roads lead to Joel Katz!'"

"I'm very proud of the Grammy television deal with CBS, and the CMA deal with ABC, which is also a 10-year contract," Katz pointed out. "Those deals give both of them enormous stability and the ability to really grow their businesses without having to worry about renegotiating every three or four years. It's difficult to run a nonprofit organization, which is very much dependent on profit-making record and publishing companies, so it's important for the management of those institutions to have the time to develop their visions and make them a reality."

He's also been counsel to the **Michael Jackson Estate** since it began, including the 2016 sale of MJE's 50% stake in **Sony/ATV** to **Sony Corp.** In the Estate's business dealings, he's worked side by side with **John Branca** and **Howard Weitzman** from the **Kinsella Weitzman** firm. "The three of us are like the Three Amigos," Katz quipped. "We're good friends, and we try to do the best we can for the Estate. We take it very seriously, and we really trust each other. And **John McClain**, the co-executor, is a brilliant guy."

Among Katz's accomplishments in 2017 was representing **Tim McGraw** and **Faith Hill** in their signing to **Sony Music**, which comprises two solo albums for each artist plus two recordings with both. The deal brought a truckload of prestige to **Sony Music Nashville** chief **Randy Goodman**, who notes that "Joel has been a great advisor, mentor and friend to me for more than 20 years."

That same year, Katz was tapped to head the **T.J. Martell Foundation** as Chairman of the Board. Said **Debbie Martell** of the appointment, "Joel was very close to my father for many years as his entertainment attorney and as his friend. He will be an excellent leader and will help continue the important mission of the foundation." Since taking on this role, he's reconstructed the foundation's Board of Trustees and created a new system for managing the entire organization.

The consummate dealmaker's recent slam dunks include the **Latin Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences'** new 10-year TV contract with **Univision**, valued at more than \$250 million; the negotiation of **Tom Corson's** employment agreement with **Warner Bros. Records**; assisting in the creation and establishing the funding of **Hitco Entertainment**, **L.A. Reid** and **Charles Goldstick's** new label.

Just as significantly, as the **Recording Academy's** General Counsel, Katz was involved in establishing the task force assembled in order to improve female advancement, while also assisting in commencing the search for a new CEO and President to succeed **Portnow**.

Katz is renowned for his philanthropic efforts. The law school library at the **University of Tennessee Law School** is named after him. He also endowed the **Joel Katz School** at the **University of Georgia** on the **Kennesaw State** campus, which is devoted to commercial music. He created an annual wine dinner for **T.J. Martell** in Atlanta, which always sells out and generates significant dollars for the foundation. He's helping to build a music university in **Gabon** in partnership with the **Berklee College of Music**. (He represents **Gabon**, among other nations.)

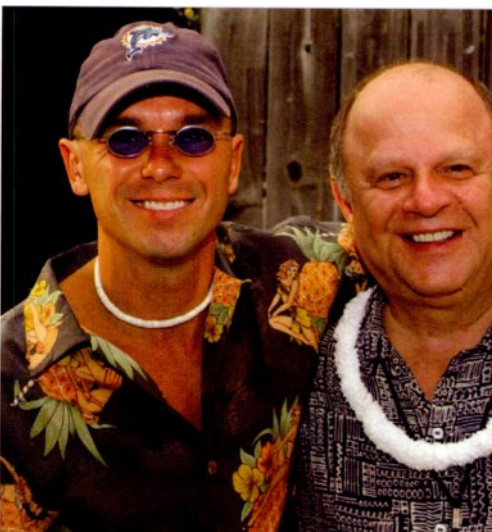
When **Sir Lucian Grainge** presented Katz with the **City of Hope's** 2016 Spirit of Life Award, he praised the honoree as "a man who excels at advocating and protecting his hall-of-fame roster of clients."

"Joel is not only my lawyer; he is my friend," said **Julio Iglesias**. "We immediately had a great connection. Joel is a very honest lawyer. The Spirit of Life means everything, and you deserve to have that."

"You've been my expensive lawyer for over 2,000 years, we've had some good times and we've made some very interesting deals, my friend," **Jimmy Buffett** quipped.

When it was his turn to speak, **Willie Nelson** turned to his friend of nearly a half century and said, "I'm glad the world is finally finding out how great of a guy you are."

But in accepting the award, Katz displayed characteristic humility, deflecting



COUNTRY GENTLEMEN: With Willie Nelson, George Strait and Kenny Chesney

"Music truly is medicine, and music truly is hope. For it is music that refreshes the soul."



HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL: Katz at Spirit of Life gala with UMG Nashville boss Mike Dungan, Little Big Town, Neil Portnow, UMG supremo Sir Lucian Grainge, Irving Azoff and Michael W. Smith.

“To call Joel a lawyer is a massive understatement. Yes, he practices law, but he is also a spin doctor, a psychotherapist, a philanthropist and a walking encyclopedia.” —Mike Dungan

attention from himself, instead referencing his dual passions for art and helping others in language more befitting a poet than a barrister. “Music truly is medicine, and music truly is hope,” he said from the dais. “For it is music that refreshes the soul.”

“Joel is the master,” says legendary concert promoter **Louis Messina**. “He may go into a meeting representing one person and leave representing everyone else. He’s so great, so smart and lovable, no one can say no to him.”

Katz has repped Messina for four decades. “I met Joel through **Mark Rothbaum**, Willie Nelson’s manager, in the late ’70s,” Messina recalls. “Back then, I did a lot of Willie shows. Even though **Allen Becker** started Pace Concerts on a handshake, when we started making some real noise, we felt I should formalize our deal. So we did; it’s also when Joel began representing Pace.”

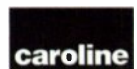
Messina, then, has first-hand knowledge of Joel’s uncanny ability to go into a negotia-

tion representing one party and coming out of it representing both.

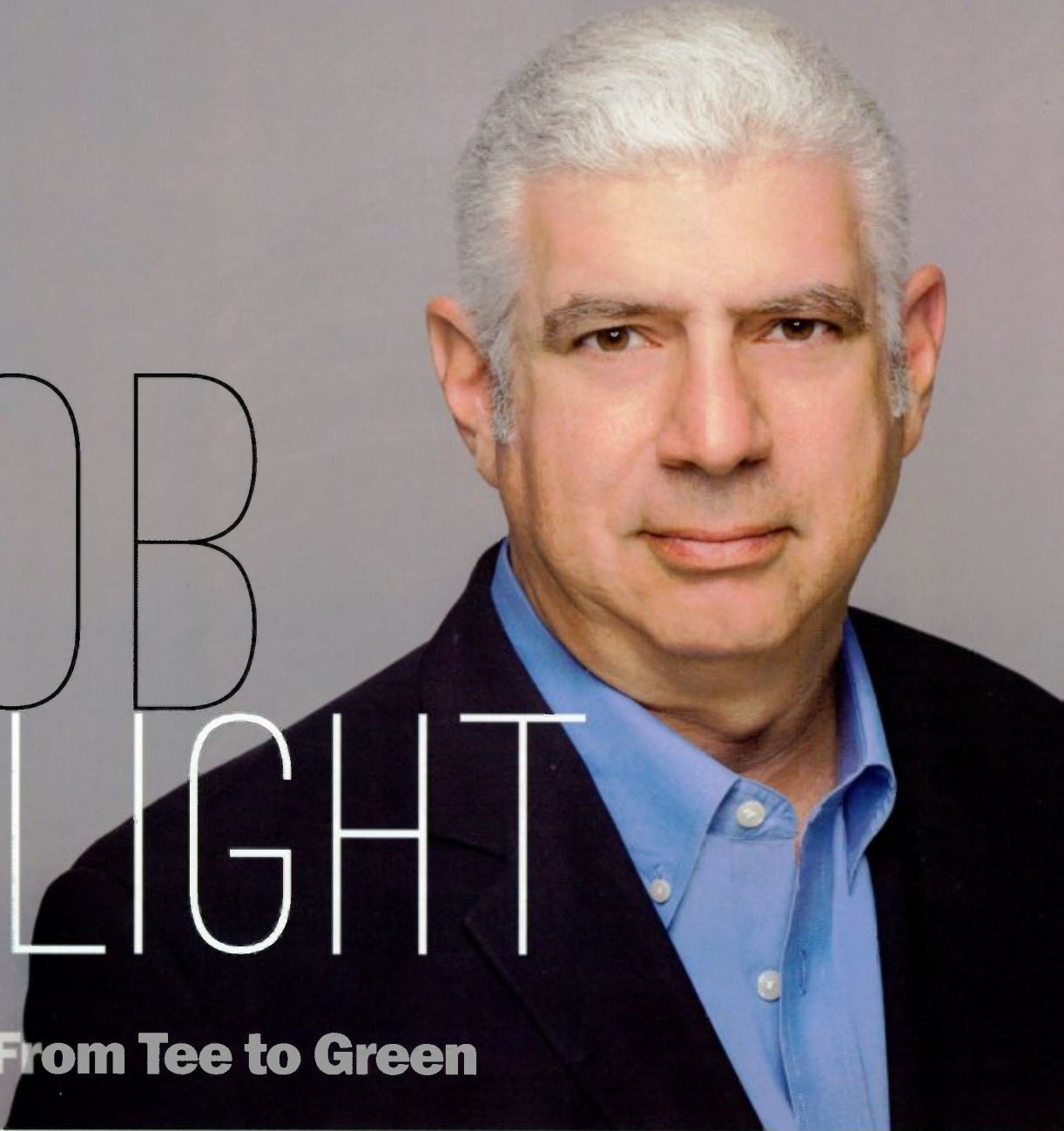
“He has done so much for me,” Messina continues. “He negotiated my Pace deal [Messina and Becker sold their company to Live Nation forerunner SFX in 1998 for \$130 million]; also my AEG deal. If it’s legal, for me, it’s Joel. But probably the best thing about being in business with him has been our friendship. As I said above, he’s the only one who represents everyone in the room—and that’s because of his integrity, concern for his clients and even the people he’s making the deals with. Talk about a mensch. He defines it.”

For this one-of-a-kind attorney, everything ultimately comes down to humanity and civility. “It’s about dealing with people and problem-solving,” Katz has stated. “From the beginning, I believed that relationships are the key to any business, and I still do.” •





HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA



ROB LIGHT

Killing It From Tee to Green

Everybody in this business remembers their first concert. Not everybody goes on to head the agency that represents the artist who played that concert.

That's the case with Rob Light, who was a teenager when he saw his most impactful show—Bruce Springsteen

at the Bottom Line in New York on Aug. 15, 1975. He waited nine hours to get a ticket. To this day, Light has the ticket framed in his office at CAA. "It reminds me of why I got into this business, and the power of live," he says.

"Like me, Rob wound up taking a fan's enthusiasm and making a place for himself inside the music

world," Springsteen's longtime manager and producer, Jon Landau, tells us. "In our relationship, his most important role is as a friend and advisor. He knows what we're looking for and is always coming up with creative thoughts and ideas. He's always interested in long-term goals. I had the pleasure of introducing Rob to the board of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, where he quickly became a terrific go-to

“ I'M ALWAYS PAINTED AS THIS INCREDIBLY DECENT, HONEST FAMILY GUY, AND I LOVE THAT. BUT I ALSO NEVER WANT TO LOSE SIGHT OF THE FACT OF THAT I'M THE MOST RUTHLESS AGENT WHEN IT COMES TO MY CLIENTS—NOBODY FIGHTS HARDER THAN ME. SO IT'S A BALANCING ACT.”

guy. Again, his fan enthusiasm adds to his skill as the consummate professional.”

“I think what makes Rob so special,” mega-manager **Scoter Braun** notes, “is that even though he’s been an agent for so long and has so many iconic clients, he still walks around that building like he’s a first-year agent with something to prove. He fights for his people and does it with integrity, and I think he’s an all-around

great guy. Not only is he a great agent, but one of the things I truly admire about him is what a great husband he is, and what a great father he is to his five kids. He makes time not only for his clients but for his family. He leads by example.”

Jeffrey Azoff, who worked with Light at CAA before launching **Full Stop Management**, says of his former boss,

admirably but with the requisite Azoffian twist, “Rob has earned every gray hair on his head.”

“I’m always painted as this incredibly decent, honest family guy, and I love that,” Rob tells us. “But I also never want to lose sight of the fact of that I’m the most ruthless agent when it comes to my clients—nobody fights harder than me. So it’s a balancing act. When I talk family, I

feel that the CAA group is also my family; I care about every one of them. I feel responsible for them as much as I do my own children.”

The truth is, Rob Light is the single most important music agent of the 21st century. The term “well-liked” doesn’t begin to describe the regard in which he’s held by virtually everyone who’s come in contact with him

over the years. Light’s decision-making and his strategic ability to analyze the variables have been the cornerstones of his brilliant career.

Under his watch, CAA has led the sector in innovatively responding to the ever-changing music business; for example, it was the first agency to have a dedicated private-events division, the first to open an office in London and the first to launch a tour-marketing department. On the last score, “We did

it because we saw the labels cutting back, and we saw the complexity of on-sales,” he explains. “So, rather than asking the agents to try to go over every marketing plan, we said, ‘Let’s hire someone from the outside who does this who can review it,’ and we brought in Allison McGregor. And when we hired Brian Loucks, nobody had an agent who did nothing but crossover, who could talk film and TV as a music agent. These different areas that we’ve built are things I’m really proud of that never get talked about.”

He’s obsessive about details, whether he’s lining up an eight-foot downhill putt or determining the best venue for the first show on a major-market arena tour. It’s these rarefied skills that have made him so valuable to his clients’ careers. He’s a class act—and a major headliner in his own right—who has helped make CAA the top music agency of the last 20 years.

Light joined CAA in January 1984 when the nine-year-old agency belatedly opened a music department, headed by Tom Ross. Light moved over from ICM, Ross’ former outfit, where he had spent six years learning the business.

CAA swiftly became a major player, thanks to such stars as Prince, Fleetwood Mac, Rick Springfield, Daryl Hall & John Oates, John Cougar Mellencamp, The Kinks, Eric Clapton, Neil Diamond, Madonna, Mariah Carey and Abba. CAA opened a Nashville office in 1991 and signed such stars as Dolly Parton, Randy Travis, Clint Black, Tim McGraw and Faith Hill.

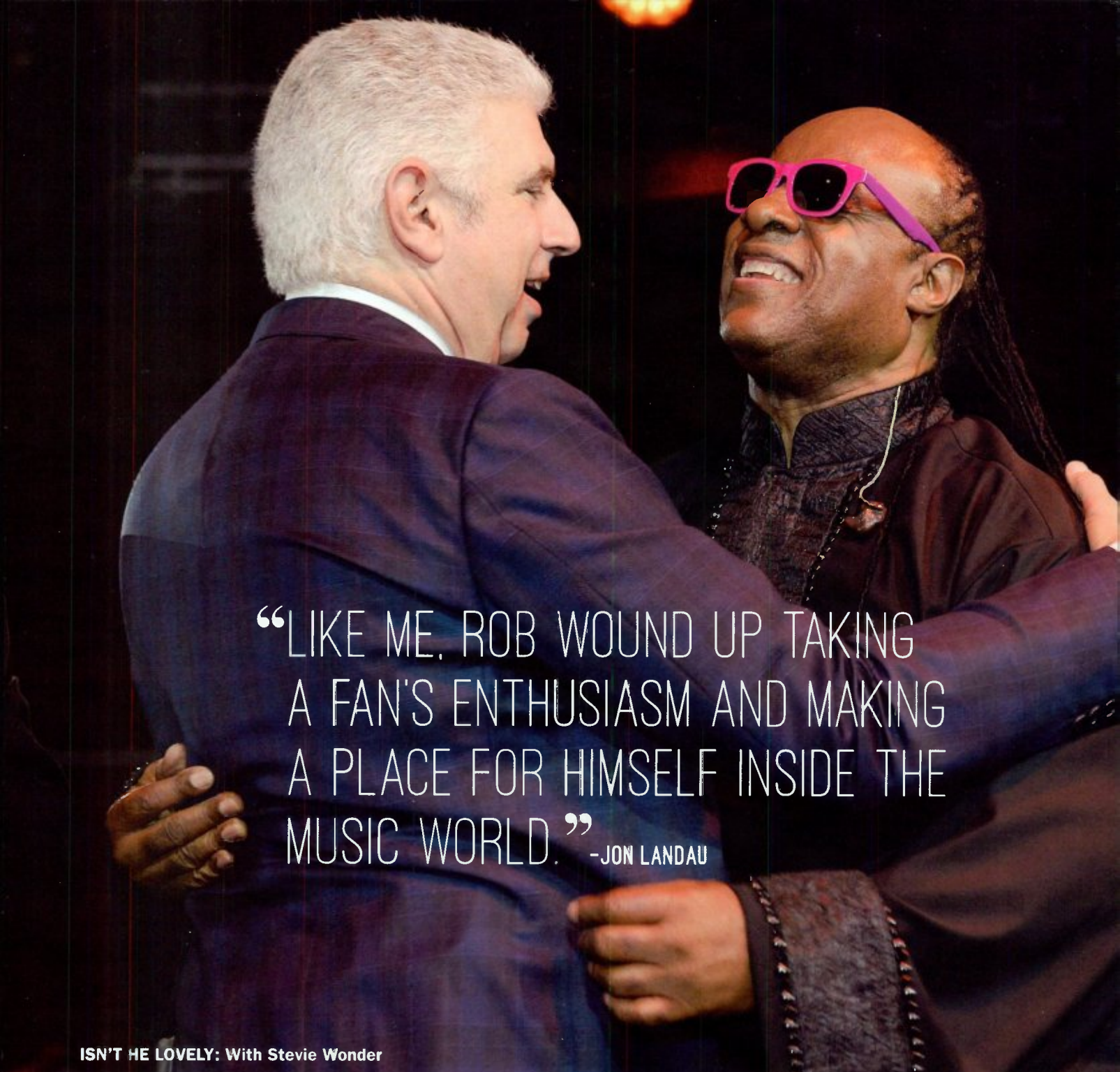
In 1995, Mike Ovitz and Ron Meyer left the agency they had co-founded. A group of five junior partners, dubbed the “Young Turks,” assumed increasing power in the agency. In November 1998, they clashed with Ross over his outspoken opposition to working with SFX Entertainment—the forerunner of Live Nation—and pushed him out. Light, who had been Ross’ No. 2, was immediately promoted to the top job.

Light had big shoes to fill—as Gary Bongiovanni, *Pollstar*’s president and editor-in-chief, noted in February 2004 in introducing Light at the Concert Industry Consortium, where Light gave the keynote address.

“When Tom Ross left CAA, he was at



“Not only is he a great agent, but one of the things I truly admire about him is what a great husband he is, and what a great father he is to his five kids. He makes time not only for his clients but for his family. He leads by example.” —Scooter Braun



“LIKE ME, ROB WOUND UP TAKING A FAN'S ENTHUSIASM AND MAKING A PLACE FOR HIMSELF INSIDE THE MUSIC WORLD.”
- JON LANDAU

ISN'T HE LOVELY: With Stevie Wonder

the top of his game,” Bongiovanni noted. “I think few people would argue with the fact that he was the most powerful agent in the business. And there were a lot of people that talked about how CAA was going to fall apart at that point and that all of these big acts that had been accumulated were going to go somewhere else. Well, as history bore out, CAA’s roster is bigger than it’s ever been; as impressive as it’s ever been.”

Light was appointed to CAA’s manage-

ment board in 2001. He guides more than 125 agents and executives while overseeing a music department that generates nearly \$5 billion annually in worldwide revenues.

CAA represents several of the top-grossing artists in live music of the past two years, including Justin Bieber, Beyoncé, Tim McGraw and Faith Hill, Ariana Grande and, yes, Springsteen, who received a special Tony Award on June 10 for his one-man show on Broadway.

Other top CAA clients include Katy Perry, Bette Midler, Twenty One Pilots, AC/DC, James Taylor, Lana Del Rey, The Eagles, Lorde, Lionel Richie, Shania Twain, Radiohead, Arcade Fire, Zac Brown Band, Bon Jovi, Daft Punk, Britney Spears, Journey, Eminem, Kanye West, Jennifer Lopez, Mary J. Blige, Pitbull, Sam Hunt, Meghan Trainor, Leon Bridges and Tori Kelly.

CAA’s music department was awarded Agency of the Year by Pollstar for 12

“I’VE ALWAYS RESPECTED HIM FOR THE WORK HE’S DONE—EVERY SHOW I GO TO, IT SEEMS LIKE ROB IS BACKSTAGE—AND YET AT THE SAME TIME, HE HAS WHAT APPEARS TO BE A DEEP AND MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIP WITH ALL OF HIS CHILDREN.”—RON LAFFITTE



BANGERZ: With Miley Cyrus

straight years. Light was named Agent of the Year six times between 1986 and 2003.

CAA played a key role in last year's **One Love Manchester** concert, which came just two weeks after a terrorist attack at a Grande concert there. "It was truly one of the most moving, emotional shows I've ever been to," Light told *HITS* at the time. "It really highlights the immense power of music. You felt it on TV, but if you were there, the electricity, the energy and the emotion between the artists and this city was palpable... I really believe that music, when there's a crisis, when there's a catastrophe, when there's a message to be sent, comes together like no other art form."

Light has led the firm's expansion into such top music markets as London, Nashville and Miami. He has also broadened its coverage into such genres as EDM and hip-hop.

During Light's 40 years in the agency business, live music has become more important in the scheme of things. As a result, agents have become more powerful and respected in the business. "Live is the most important part of the business right now," Light has said. "It's the one direct connection between an artist and a fan."

Among the specific changes Light has seen is a rise in the importance of pop music. "The fans stay loyal much longer," he says. "Thanks to social media, you're invested. If you were a 16-year-old **One Direction** fan, you'll be a 21-year-old who loves **Harry Styles** or **Niall Horan**... Pop is not disposable as it used to be perceived."

When CAA promoted Light to its board of directors, agency president **Richard Lovett** said, "This appointment to the board is as much a reflection of the music department's incredibly important role within CAA as it is an indication of Rob's long-term commitment to managing and growing the entire agency with heart, ingenuity and integrity."

Light has worked with most of the top artists of the past four decades, but **Prince** was special. Light booked Prince and the **Revolution's Purple Rain** tour



[Top] **HAPPILY EVER AFTER:** *Tying the knot with Shelly*

[Bottom] **Light Rocks Heavy:** *With Heart's Ann and Nancy Wilson and erstwhile Journeyman Steve Perry*



RIC OCASEK, JIMMY IOVINE, ROB LIGHT AT BEVERLY HILLS EVENT HONORING NILE RODGERS

in 1984-85 and every one of Prince's live concert dates for the next 11 years. In that time, Prince changed managers and lawyers multiple times, but he remained with Light and CAA.

In 2004, Light played a major role in routing a tour for a group of artists including Springsteen, Dave Matthews Band, Dixie Chicks and Pearl Jam with the express aim of denying President George W. Bush a second term. That goal was not realized, but Light's efforts did not go unnoticed. "Rob Light sort of became our coordinating agent, and all the other agents collaborated with him," Jon Landau said. "We put together a grid with the routings, synced our schedules and came up with Oct. 1-8. A number of people had to seriously modify well-developed plans to do this."

Light sits on a number of charity boards, including MusiCares, Tiger

Woods Foundation, City of Hope Cancer Research Hospital and Nile Rodgers' We Are Family Foundation.

He was awarded the City of Hope's Spirit of Life Award in 2013. He and his team raised more than \$6 million for the industry's premier charity. "The music industry is a collection of passionate, tenacious, smart and creative individuals, and I have long been proud and honored to be a part of such a group. To see how my music family has come together throughout this campaign to support City of Hope and the extraordinary work they do has been deeply gratifying."

He is a frequent guest lecturer at UCLA. He has also lectured at the Clive Davis Institute of Recorded Music at NYU/Tisch School of the Arts.

Light was born in Brooklyn. His father was the long-time art director for *Life* magazine. He majored in film

and television at the Newhouse School at Syracuse University. (He left school a few units shy of graduating.) He sits on the university's Board of Trustees.

Light was married briefly in 1985-86 to pop star Sheena Easton. He found a more lasting union with his wife Shelly, whom he married in May 1988. They have five adult children. The family home is in Encino, Calif.

Rob is extremely proud of his kids, and for good reason. Landon, 34, is a partner in a digital-advertising agency; Logan, 29, a NYU Law School grad, has been a practicing attorney for three years; Taylor, 27, spent four years with the Global Poverty Project and is going back to get his master's in international philanthropy at Columbia University; daughter Jesse, 24, a marketing executive with 305 Fitness

Interscope Records is an American recording company that is a division of Interscope Geffen A&M Records, whose parent company is the Universal Music Group, a subsidiary of Vivendi S.A.. [Interscope] differed from most recording companies by giving decision-making authority to its A&R staff, and allowing artists and producers complete creative control. It had its first hit records less than a year after it was founded Interscope is headquartered in Santa Monica, California.



and is also producing reality TV shows; and 21-year-old **Spencer**, 21, who's attending NYU, is an aspiring musician and designer. Says Light, "All the credit goes to my wife, Shelly, who raised those five kids and is an incredible woman."

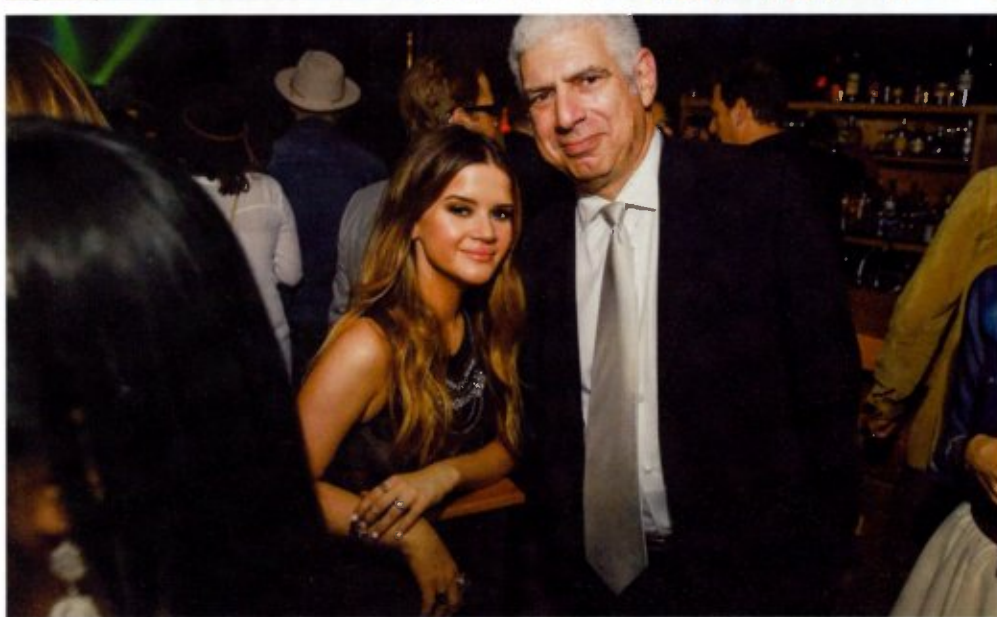
"I've known Rob since I started in the business when I was a teenager," says **Patriot Management's Ron Laffitte**. "Rob's always been righteous to me, but what impacted me the most about him was the loving things his daughter said about him when he was honored by the City of Hope. The next time I saw Rob and his daughter together, I said, 'If any of my children ever say the things that Rob's daughter said about him that night about me, I will consider my life a success.' I've always respected him for the work he's done—every show I go to, it seems like Rob is backstage—and yet at the same time, he has what appears to be a deep and meaningful relationship with all of his children."

"Actually, all five kids spoke at City of Hope cocktail party," Rob clarifies, "and they were all incredibly eloquent. Jesse, who went last, basically said, 'I don't know how my dad did it, but he never missed a soccer game, dance recital, never missed a doctor appointment or parent-teacher conference—he was always there.' The way she spoke was pretty amazing. Of course, every father in the room came up to me after and asked, 'How the hell did you do that?'"

Light has been around long enough to see patterns and connections in his life and career. In November 2013, he tweeted, "33 years ago I booked the first show to ever play the Ritz, NYC. Tonight, my son plays his first gig in that room Wow, life comes full circle."

Light is an avid golfer. He has a collection of more than 1,400 golf instruction books, dating back to the 1700s. Here's an actual Light tweet, from March 2010: "hate being at work...such a beautiful day...I should be play(ing) golf."

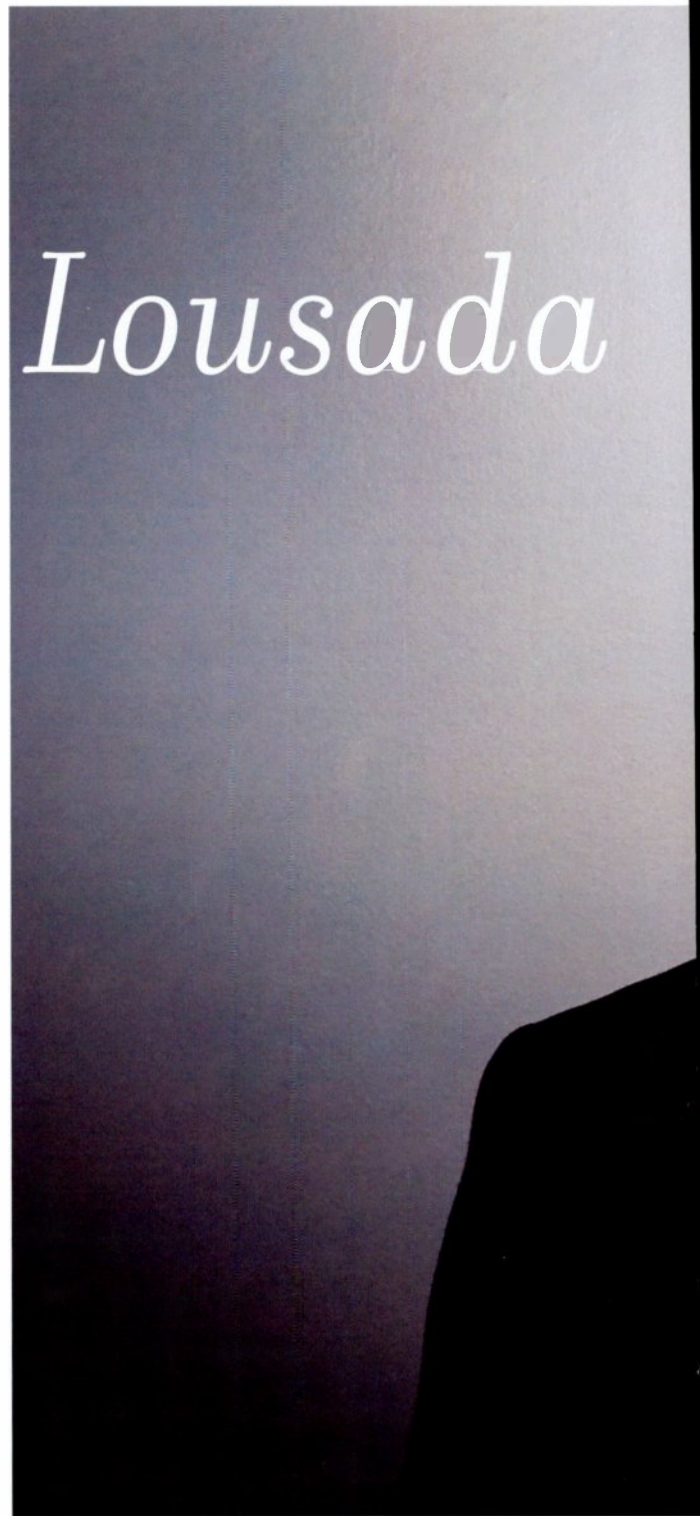
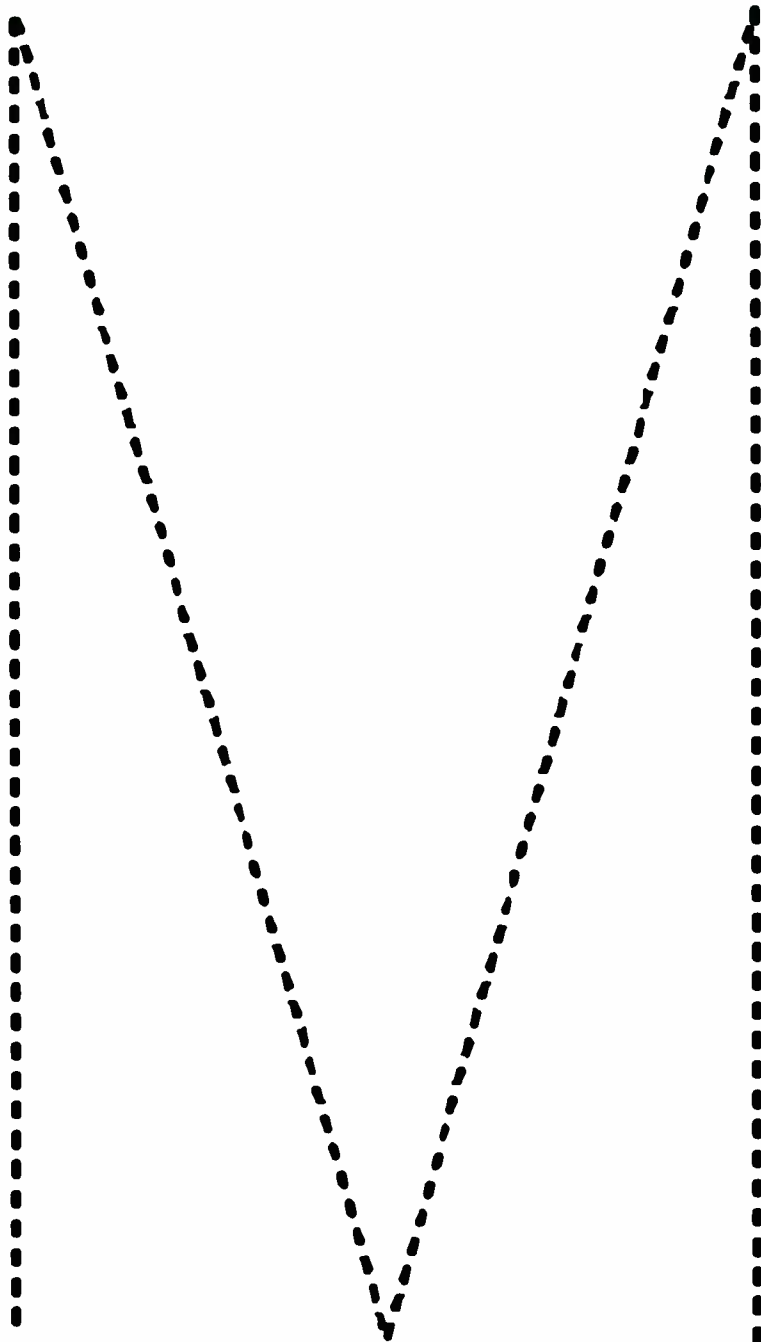
"Rob remarkably finds time to cover more shows than any young agent I know—and still finds time for his family and to work on his goal of playing the top 100 golf courses in the U.S.," attorney **Eric Greenspan** marvels. "I just don't know when he finds time to sleep. Work harder/play harder: He is an inspiration."•



[Top] Idolizing With Randy Jackson; [Center] Hero worship with Maren Morris; [Bottom] All the way live with Lionel Richie, manager Bruce Eskowitz and CAA's Chris Dalston.

PATRIOT MANAGEMENT

Max *Lousada*



Max Lousada's ascendancy to the CEO of Recorded Music post at **Warner Music Group** completed the "Britification" of the three U.S. majors' leadership. But it was also another indicator that a new generation of leaders had emerged. And Lousada, though young, emphatically embraces the characteristics of a classic "record man."

Those who met with him at the Chateau Marmont around the time of the 2017 Grammys, before his title was



“WE HAVE KEPT THE LIGHTS ON DURING THE LONG DARK DECADE OF DECLINE, AND IT TOOK CONVICTION, AND AN UNSHAKEABLE BELIEF THAT WHAT WE DO REALLY MATTERS.”

The **Believer**



TO THE MAX: Lousada with Rita Ora, Ed Sheeran and Stormzy

announced, report that the tall, bearded redhead cut an imposing figure, and his engaging persona, easy smile and robust sense of humor made an immediate impression. He asked probing, thoughtful questions about people who worked at WMG, these insiders report, as well as those who didn't. Here was another British music executive who embraced the proven strategy of selecting a creative exec to head up his company's content centers, ably assisted by savvy marketing execs. It was clear Lousada was contemplating

sweeping changes to the Warner world.

At the time he appeared to be considering an offer for a top Sony post in NYC, but in retrospect he was in the process of negotiating a much bigger job at WMG. Many British expats working for the competition had been saying for months that they were certain he'd be staying at Warner.

"Max is decisive, has 360 vision, has ambition for the company and great people skills," says Warner Bros. Co-Chairman/COO Tom Corson, who

hadn't met Lousada before talks began to bring him over to WMG. "I think there's a reason people want to work for him; it feels fresh, like a major move toward the future. He's a modern leader. He's not about just getting hits and letting the biz-dev guys figure out the structure of the business. He's very aware of and interested in new, developing channels and where they fit into our growth equation. He's impressive, and is building a team of ambitious, forward-thinking and diverse executives."

“I met Max a long time ago, because of his relationship with Ed Sheeran and my friendship with Ed and his manager, **Stuart Camp**,” recalls **Scooter Braun**. “We met at a show and completely hit it off; what he’s been able to do in his time at Warner is remarkable. Not only that, but he’s one of the guys who’s at the front of a new generation of leadership in the music industry. He thinks outside the box and he loves music. I’m happy to see a good guy in a big position.”

“Max is focused, a genius, erratic,” observed Sheeran. “You’re either very, very good at numbers or very good at making art, and he’s good at both. Just keep winning.”

“I haven’t met an artist yet that doesn’t like Max or want to work with him,” Camp told *Bloomberg*. “Max is the peacemaker and the deciding vote. He has an understanding and wisdom that everyone appreciates.”

“In my humble opinion,” asserts **Ron Laffitte**, “the most powerful thing we have in the music business is a great song, and what I’ve always enjoyed the most about my relationship with Max is that every conversation has been about the records. He’s a record man who truly loves records.”

“Max is the perfect package: a man of honor and principle with a brilliant mind and a deep love of music,” reads a statement from Warner stalwarts **Coldplay**.

“Max is brilliant at creating an environment where artists and executives feel backed by a real belief in their abilities,” notes Warner Bros. U.K. President **Phil Christie**. “That faith helps people achieve things they might otherwise have thought weren’t possible. He has a clear vision for how Warner and its culture should evolve, and it’s a great feeling to be part of the team that’s helping accomplish that on a global scale.”

The native of London’s Tooting Bec neighborhood grew up with an activist dad, and the sounds of left-leaning British rockers like **The Clash** and **Billy Bragg** helped form the soundtrack of his childhood. The multicultural local community, meanwhile, helped shape his eclectic sensibility. He attended the University



IN COUNTRY: At the CMA Awards with Warner Nashville artist **Brett Eldredge**, WMN boss **John Esposito**, and artists **Bebe Rexha** and **James Blunt**



Teatime with Robert Plant



[above] **SIREN SONGS:** with Charli XCX and Dua Lipa
 [right] **ACROSS THE ATLANTIC:** With Ben Cook



of Brighton for a time, but his greatest education there came outside the classroom—from new friends in the DJ world. Having fallen in love with indie soul, hip-hop, acid jazz and electronic music, he left the university after six months and quickly became a fixture—and then a player—on the local club scene.

His career began in the late '90s, when he launched the multifaceted collective *In a Silent Way* (named after a groundbreaking Miles Davis album). The venture combined import-export, management, apparel and music, hawking everything from European rap imports to Adidas shelltoes, using vans as mobile retail emporiums.

After a few brief stints at indie companies, Lousada started his own instrumental electronic label, *Ultimate Dilemma*. Two years later, he was in New York, having been brought aboard *Rawkus Records* by Nick Phillips; as Managing Director for ex-U.S. he helped expand the label's influential roster, which included such forward-looking hip-hop acts as *Mos Def* (for whom he secured airplay on BBC Radio 1), *Talib Kweli* and *Pharoahe Monch*. He carried on with *Ultimate Dilemma* at the same time.

"If I had to describe him," *Sony/ATV's* Guy Moot, who met Lousada during this period, told *Music Week*, "I would say he has this youthful exuberance and excitement about music and artists, but a very mature brain in terms of seeing the bigger picture and embracing new technology and media."

He transitioned to

Mushroom Records as Head of A&R in 2002; his first signing was electronic-pop hybrid **Zero 7**, which featured an intriguing vocalist named **Sia**. He also worked on projects by **Muse**, **Garbage**, **Ash** and DJ **Paul Oakenfold**.

During this period, a meeting with **Korda Marshall**, founder of affiliated label **Infectious**, would prove something of a milestone for Lousada. “We talked about music, we talked about culture, we talked about artist development,” the latter recalled to **Music Business Worldwide** in 2017. “And in that very first meeting, he showed me some of the truths that have stayed with me throughout my career... enjoying the artist’s journey and [that] it’s not a sprint, it’s a build. There’s going to be lots of ups and downs... it’s about celebrating the artist’s difference—their uniqueness, rather than trying to get them to conform. He showed me you

can dream big without selling out.”

Warner acquired **Mushroom** in 2004, after which Lousada was tapped as Head of A&R and Marshall became MD of **East/West U.K.** They decided to rechristen the company **Atlantic U.K.** as a tribute to the label that had delivered classic recordings by **Ray Charles**, **Aretha Franklin**, **John Coltrane** and **Led Zeppelin**, among other greats. Lousada began spending more time in New York and got to know **Ahmet Ertegun**, who had shepherded the original label to greatness.

In 2009, at the tender age of 29, he was anointed **Atlantic U.K.** Chairman. It’s particularly noteworthy that on his watch the label developed a fleet of home-grown successes rather than merely importing them. His tenure saw the minting of such British stars as **Ed Sheeran**, **James Blunt**, **Rudimental**, **Jess Glynne**, **Paolo Nutini** and more, while he also oversaw the U.K. success of acts like **Bruno Mars**, twenty

one pilots and **Jason Mraz**.

“My earliest memories of Max were those heady days at **Atlantic** in 2004,” publicist **Barbara Charone** recalled to **Music Week**. “I remember going to Max’s office, more like a flat than an office, with lots of mood boards for bands he was trying to sign. Those mood boards said a lot about Max. He always cared about the finer creative details. He enjoyed the process of breaking an artist. And he understood it. He’s a music man, he understands artists and has such a lovely manner about him.”

“Max’s achievements at **Atlantic U.K.** have been remarkable,” reads a quote from **WGMG** Chairman **Steve Cooper** that accompanied the announcement that Lousada would assume the top British post. “Artists that have emerged under his stewardship are among the most successful

“THIS LIFE IN MUSIC HAS GIVEN ME SOME INCREDIBLE EXPERIENCES, SOME INTENSE HIGHS AND SOME DEVASTATINGLY CRUSHING LOWS.”



ROYALTY: With **Charli XCX**, **will.i.am** and **Royal Blood**



STERLING: At the Brit Awards, Lousada suggests Ed Sheeran and Len Blavatnik lend the British government a few quid until payday.

British acts in recent years, not only in the local market but on the world stage... he will have extremely strong support when he takes the role. His appointment ensures stability and continuity during the handover period and leaves us well positioned for growth in this important and influential market.”

WMG owner Len Blavatnik told Music Business Worldwide that Lousada “has developed Warner Music U.K. into the premier home for British artists and a center of music innovation.”

“Max Lousada was the first person I met at a major record label,” Glynn recalled to Music Week. “We sat down for a lengthy amount of time and talked about life, music, opportunity, what it was that I wanted. I was blown away by the whole experience. I left that meeting feeling so welcomed, warmed,

excited, inspired and, in that moment, I knew that was where I wanted to be. I really didn’t want to meet anyone else. He’s been nothing but supportive and inspiring, and he’s made so many things happen that I didn’t think could even be possible, even in my dreams.”

In 2013, Lousada succeeded Christian Tattersfield as CEO of Warner Music U.K. Sheeran’s *x* dropped the following year and became one of the biggest records in the world. Lousada integrated Warner Bros. U.K. and Parlophone, upping Phil Christie to President of the former and Miles Leonard to the latter. “We’ve always been most successful when we’ve had a collective of strong, independently minded, artist-centric labels with their own creative identities,” Lousada told *HITS* in 2016.

Big successes from established super-

stars like Coldplay, Muse and Enya accompanied such breakout acts as Biffy Clyro, Foals and Royal Blood. New signings included Dua Lipa and Rationale. In addition to overseeing an array of other recorded successes, he launched The Firepit, a content development division and technology lab.

“It feels like we’re entering a really important era for British music,” he noted in his 2016 *HITS* interview. “It’s always been one of our greatest exports, and now that streaming has broken down geographic borders, the opportunity for us and for our artists is unprecedented. The idea of ‘local versus global’ is increasingly anachronistic. Today, every campaign is a global campaign from day one.”

In 2015 he also stepped into the role of BRITs Committee Chairman, taking responsibility for revitalizing a

**CONGRATULATIONS
TO OUR
UMG RAINMAKERS**

**YOUR
HITS STORY
IS OUR
HISTORY**

UM^e

British music institution that had been losing audience.

He became CEO Recorded Music for WMG worldwide in 2017. Lousada moved quickly once installed in the top post, recruiting Aaron Bay-Schuck and Tom Corson as co-heads of Warner Bros. The latter's proven track record in deal-making, marketing and logistics had already proved an effective complement to strong A&R, which was the former's specialty. In the U.K., he upped execs Peter Breeden and Mel Fox. In mid-2018 he also broke out Elektra Music Group as a freestanding label entity.

"Max is a very interesting character," Sheeran told Music Week, noting that achieving Lousada's facility with both business and A&R "is very difficult to do. He has weird strategic things that he'll just come out with off the cuff, and they'll be the most genius thing in the world. Max is definitely someone that I go to for advice very often, and his advice is always spot-on."

In 2018, Warner Music U.K. earned a whopping 17 BRIT Award nominations, five of which went to Dua Lipa and four to Sheeran. The company also took four Music Week Awards, with Lousada earning the prestigious Strat Award. His speech testified to the values and priorities that have sustained him throughout his career.

"This life in music has given me some incredible experiences, some intense highs and some devastatingly crushing lows," he said. "It's the promise of jeopardy in every artist signing, the thrill of seeing the act get the wins they deserve and the heart-break when they don't."

"This is no place for passengers. You have to love it, you have to be committed to the act, you have to believe in the song. You have to have real faith, and this generation of music people have seen their faith tested more than most. We have kept the lights on during the long dark decade of decline, and it took conviction and an unshakeable belief that what we do really matters."•



SONG AND STORY: With pubco chief Jon Platt

NMMPA

APPLAUDS

the *rainmakers* behind the *HITS*



The National Music Publishers' Association is the leading voice for promoting and advancing the interests of music publishers and their songwriting partners.





Thanks to some serious entrepreneurial hustle, Mike McVay turned his formidable programming knowledge and experience into a consulting empire—and then, after nearly three hugely successful decades as his own boss, re-entered the corporate world as a top exec.

“Mike is the ultimate professional,” Maverick Music prexy Greg Thompson tells us. “I’ve known him since his early days in Cleveland and watched him continue to inspire and drive radio and support and develop artists, all at the same time.”

McVay, currently Executive Vice President of Content & Programming for Cumulus Media and

MIKE

MCVAY

HELLO, CLEVELAND

Westwood One, joined Cumulus in August 2011 after nearly 28 years running his own company, McVay Media.

“It’s difficult to be your own boss and a successful consultant for many years and then make the transition to help run a prestigious radio chain,” says Glassnote Records founder/head Daniel Glass, who spent much of his career as a promotion exec. “Mike has done that. I think of him as a patient man who thrives on mentoring great radio executives. Mike knows how to identify and nurture talent.”

McVay was just 12 when he realized what he wanted to do with his life. He and his older brother would often walk past a radio station in Greensburg, Pa., on their way to the train station to catch a train



With Taylor Swift

for the short trip to Pittsburgh. WHJB had its studio at street level, behind a glass window. The brothers would stop and watch the DJ, Cowboy Phil, spin records. McVay was transfixed. "I remember thinking I want to do that job," he said.

By the time he was 15 years old, McVay was on the air at that same station. By 19, he was the station's program director. He became a PD in L.A. by 25.

He's been in radio ever since.

"Mike is passionate not only about radio but also the music he plays," says promotion legend Richard Palmese. "He's respected for supporting the careers of many artists over the years. He loves music and has earned the reputation of being a hitmaker."

McVay has experience in consulting, management, ownership, sales, programming and on-air. He programmed radio stations in markets ranging from Los Angeles to Wheeling, W. Va. He was a general manager in Mobile, Ala. and Cleveland. McVay and his wife, Doris, owned and operated radio stations in Naples and Key West, Fla., Honolulu and Flint, Mich. His countrywide experience and knowledge of virtually every facet of the biz would form the foundation of an empire.

In 1979, he first hatched the Cleveland-based McVay Media, devoting himself to it full-time starting in 1984, when he left a staff position at Robinson Broadcasting as VP/Station Manager for WMJI and WBBG. "Two of the radio stations I had been at earlier in my career were sold and things changed," he recalls. "I enjoyed living in Cleveland and near my wife's family. When Larry Robinson sold to Terry Jacobs of Jacor fame, I didn't want to move again. I felt that consulting would allow me to control my own destiny. To my surprise, Terry asked to become one of my first full-

"MIKE IS THE ULTIMATE PROFESSIONAL. I'VE KNOWN HIM SINCE HIS EARLY DAYS IN CLEVELAND AND WATCHED HIM CONTINUE TO INSPIRE AND DRIVE RADIO AND SUPPORT AND DEVELOP ARTISTS, ALL AT THE SAME TIME." -GREG THOMPSON



With Runaway June

time clients. I was blessed. Unlike many who became consultants, I hadn't been fired. I never missed a paycheck."

McVay Media became a heavy-weight champion among radio consultancies, serving as many as 200 stations simultaneously—including outlets in the U.S., Canada, Mexico,

Australia, New Zealand, the U.K. and elsewhere—not to mention ESPN, The WB, *The Wall Street Journal*, CBS Radio News and other media entities. McVay worked on the creation and launch of several highly rated, nationally syndicated shows, working with such familiar figures as Rick Dees, Reba McEntire, Charlie Tuna, John Tesh, Lou Dobbs, Al Sharpton and Donny

Osmond; authored multiple guides and numerous trade articles (including "The Seven Habits of Highly Successful Radio Stations"); and ran a Programming School for radio pros every year from 1988-2005. His empire also included three other, related companies—McVay Syndication (a radio network syndicating several radio programs), Listener Driven Radio (a new-media platform)

“MIKE HAS A GENUINE APPRECIATION FOR ARTISTS, NO MATTER HOW BIG OR SMALL, WHICH IS RARE TO FIND AT HIS LEVEL OF SUCCESS.” —JOEL KLAIMAN

and McVay New Media (a digital consulting firm).

His reign as a consultant earned him an array of industry laurels, such as Consultant of the Year noms from *Billboard* and *Radio & Records*, an Ohio Media Leader of the Year Award, Broadcaster of the Year from the Cleveland Association of Broadcasters, a Radio Music Award for Broadcast Consultant of the Year and R&R Broadcast Executive of the Year kudos three years running.

McVay was starting to think of winding down his company when the Cumulus offer was made. He and Doris had had their first grandchild. He decided he

wanted to travel less and stay home in Cleveland more.

John Dickey, Cumulus' former COO, was speaking at a conference in Los Angeles. When Dickey stepped off the stage, McVay went up to congratulate him. That simple courtesy led to a life-changing job offer.

“He said, ‘Let’s grab a coffee,’” McVay remembered. “John pitched me. I told him I was thinking of going in the other direction and slowing down. He told me people like me die when they slow down.”

Over the course of a five-hour flight from L.A. back home to Cleveland, McVay considered the possibility. A

family friend said, “Do you know how lucky you are at this point in your life to be offered the biggest job of your career?”

That clinched it. “The opportunity to work with what is going to be the largest pure-play radio company in the world was too great to pass up,” McVay said in the statement announcing that he had taken the job.

In a February 2016 interview with *Inside Radio*, McVay was asked about that transition from being his own boss to working at a giant conglomerate. “It’s exceptionally gratifying—and at times not as gratifying,” McVay replied. “I’m doing the job I took four years ago,



With Rascal Flatts

With Carly Pearce, Michael Ray, Jimmie Allen and Rebel Engine's Chris Borchetta



however, things move slower than I'd like them to. It takes time to grow audiences. You can't do it overnight. So I'm learning patience, which is difficult for me."

McVay joined Cumulus as SVP, Content & Programming. He was promoted to EVP in April 2017.

Cumulus has nearly 500 owned-and-operated radio stations covering virtually all formats. McVay has 12 corporate programmers working under him.

But those programmers no longer dictate what Cumulus stations will play. Cumulus has decentralized programming in the years that McVay has been at the company. "We brought control back to the local markets, he says. "Program directors are responsible for their radio stations. We still provide information, a lot of research, but the program director gets to decide. We have changed and are allowing PDs to do their jobs."

McVay works out of the company's Atlanta headquarters on Mondays, and usually spends the rest of the week traveling to two to three cities, visiting Cumulus stations. "I learn as much from them as they do from me," he says.

McVay's boss at Cumulus, President

and CEO Mary Berner, had no prior radio experience when she arrived in 2015. Her forte was turning around media companies.

"What she does not know about radio, she asks—and then asks some more," McVay told *Inside Radio*. "With her leadership, we have become all the more goal-focused... I came to Cumulus with a certain gravitas, because I've had so many years in the business and the gray hair that I have earned—and Mary enters our business with no prior knowledge of that. She is all about the 'now.'"

One of Cumulus' signature formats is *Nash Icon*, which consists of 50% current and recurrent hits and 50% oldies from the '80s and '90s. The success of the format led Cumulus to partner with the *Big Machine Label Group* to form *Nash Icon Records*, which specializes in veteran country talent. The first four signings were *Reba McEntire*, *Hank Williams Jr.*, *Ronnie Dunn* and *Martina McBride*. McEntire's second album for the label, *Sing It Now: Songs of Faith and Hope*, won a Grammy for Best Roots Gospel Album and a GMA Dove Award for Bluegrass/Country/Roots Album of the Year.

McVay's younger daughter, Jessica, has followed him into radio.

McVay has long been an advocate for more women in radio. He has been a judge for the Alliance for

Women in Media's Gracie Awards. "I have two daughters, which is probably why I'm so much into mentoring young women."

He's also passionate about football. Cumulus VP of Contemporary Music *Cat Thomas* points out that McVay is an "avid Pittsburgh Steelers and Ohio State fan. I'd say he's the most-liked guy in our industry—despite being a huge Steelers fan! He's also the snappiest dresser in the music business."

McVay's sartorial splendor has also made an impression on veteran exec *Joel Klaiman*, who was recently named President of *Hitco Records*. "Mike's all class and is always decadently dressed," Joel says admiringly. "He also has a genuine appreciation for artists, no matter how big or small, which is rare to find at his level of success."

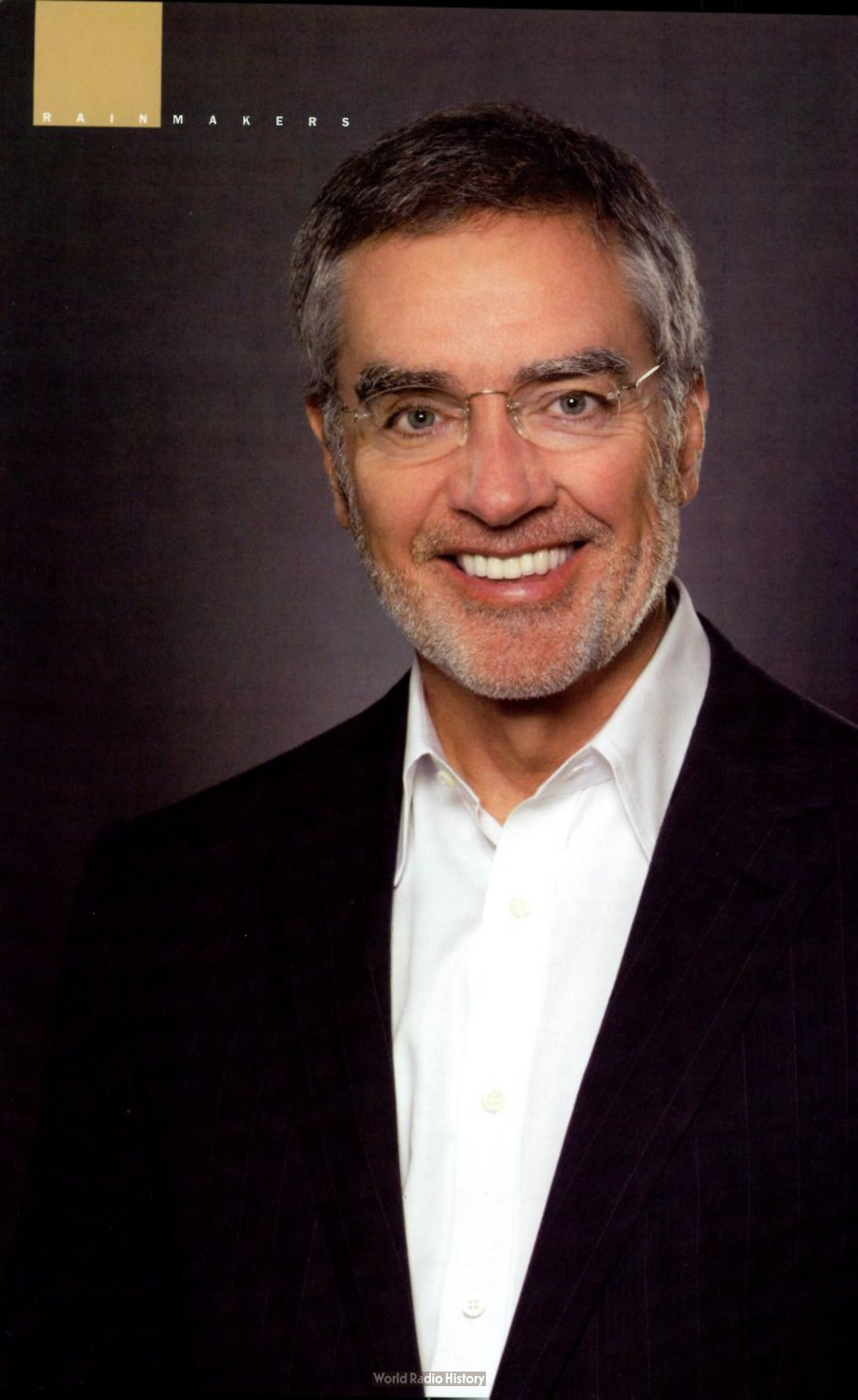
Inside Radio asked McVay what he considered to be the most profound evolution he has witnessed in radio over the course of his long career.

"The deregulation that started in the 1980s changed everything for radio," he replied. "There was a time when you had two oldies or two classic-rock stations in a market, and so on. With consolidation, companies bought their competition and changed the formats. Radio became a real business—the mom-and-pop companies grew into very large corporations. I was a program director in Los Angeles at the age of 25. It would be very difficult for that to happen today because of the amount of money that radio stations are valued at and the amount of money they generate."

McVay knows he's lucky to have found his niche at such an early age. "This is what I love doing," he told *Inside Radio*. "It's my golf game... I work long hours—but I never feel like I'm working, frankly.

"I never have a dull day."•

R A I N M A K E R S



BOB

PITTMAN

WORKING THE MATH AND THE MAGIC

“

rom his days of programming the nation's #1 radio station in his early 20s to reinventing the nation's #1 broadcasting company into today's premier media company, Bob Pittman has had a spectacular career," says **Republic** chieftain **Monte Lipman**. "Bob's motivation and fearlessness to always sail into uncharted waters is unprecedented."

Monte makes a valid point—and that includes piloting his jet to the **Burning Man** festival every year. From his *wunderkind* days holding court at the NBC commissary to his current reign atop **iHeartMedia**, the Mississippi native has always been zooming forward.

Name a game-changing media moment during the last 35 years, and chances are Bob Pittman's fingerprints were all over it. After getting his start in radio, he moved to television as a founder of **MTV**, which became the first profitable cable network as well as reenergizing the record business. Pittman was on hand when **Warner Bros.** merged with **Time Inc.**, and after serving as CEO of **Six Flags** and **Century 21**, he became COO of **AOL** and held the same post following the 2000 mega-merger that created **AOL Tim Warner**. Since 2010, Pittman has become

ever more deeply involved with iHeartMedia, which bore the Clear Channel nameplate when he arrived. His duties as Chairman/CEO have notably included overseeing the development of the iHeartRadio online platform, the iHeartRadio Music Festival and the iHeartRadio Music Awards.

“I think of Bob as someone who loves the medium of radio,” Glassnote Records head and longtime label exec Daniel Glass tells us. “He’s a student and a fan, and he’s made the radio and record businesses friendlier than ever, where both win. Over the years, Bob has been gracious enough to invite me and my family to MTV functions, Six Flags park openings, AOL events, iHeartMedia concerts and conferences—he even piloted a plane to give us a ride. I remember calling Bob in his NYC office, and his assistant said to hold the phone. She connected him a few minutes later, as he walked out of a TED Talk in the Northwest to take my call. The next thing I knew, he’d mobilized his team to help us break one of the biggest records of the year.”

“I’ve been in a lot of different industries. I spent many years in the Internet business, I was there at the birth of the

national cable networks, I’ve been an advertiser,” Pittman told CNN in 2013. “[Late Time Warner boss] Steve Ross taught me to take chances—don’t ever think you’ve arrived. [Cendant Corp. founder] Henry Silverman gave me great lessons about controlling costs and making sure you’re really getting a return on your money.”

As Pittman said on the Looking Glass podcast this year, “We all sort of absorb everything in the world, and it informs every other action we take... Whether it was an MTV or what we should do with AOL and the beginning of the Internet, some of it is research and I do spend time, a lot of time, with research informing who these consumers are. But as someone told me early on, it’s a mix of the math and the magic.”

“Bob is a true visionary who not only invented MTV but transformed a radio platform into a media powerhouse,” says veteran promotion exec Richard Palmese. “He is without a doubt one of the key architects of modern-day pop culture.”

In his seven-plus years at Clear Channel/iHeart, Pittman has spearheaded the company’s digital developments and live-event presence starting with

the iHeartRadio Fest in 2011. *Radio Ink* magazine named him the Most Powerful Man in Radio in 2011; he has yet to relinquish the title.

There’s a lot of truth in a quote from his former MTV cohort, Tom Freston: “Bob has been reincarnated so many times he’s like Buddha.”

Before he could get a driver’s license, the 15-year-old Methodist minister’s son wanted to learn how to fly. He needed a job to pay for the lessons. The tailor in his hometown of Brookhaven, Miss., told him he was too young to work at his hip clothing store. The Piggly Wiggly had no openings, so he headed over to the 250-watt AM radio station.

After reading copy for the boss, he was hired. That humble start eventually led to programming jobs at Pittsburgh’s WPEZ and Chicago’s WMAQ-FM, and when he was 23, Pittman was hired to program NBC’s flagship radio station, WNBC in New York. “I got completely hooked on radio,” he told *The New York Times* in 2013.

In 1976, *People* praised Pittman as



GLORY DAYS: They want his MTV.

a “22-year-old boy wonder” for shifting the format at WMAQ to Country and engineering what his boss, Charles Warner, called “the biggest turnaround in radio history.”

That early triumph attracted the attention of WNBC the following year, and upon his arrival, Pittman switched to Hot AC from Adult Top 40 and canned the DJs, among them Don Imus and Cousin Brucie. Ratings dropped, but the wunderkind was busy realizing a dream of moving into TV.

Pittman was producer and host of a music show, *Album Tracks*, that aired on NBC-owned TV stations in 1978. While he was building his credits in TV, American Express made an unlikely deal in 1979, buying half of Warner Cable. They created two companies: one that operated cable systems and another that fashioned cable networks; Pittman became programmer of what would eventually become The Movie Channel.

Buoyed by the success of *Album Tracks*, a video-music show on Nickelodeon that ran in 1980 and a video music program on the Warner Amex Qube cable system in Columbus, Ohio, Pittman and his team pitched the idea of an all-music channel to then-Warner Communications Chairman Steve Ross and Amex executives.

“We all felt confident that Ross would support the idea,” Pittman wrote in a 1991 first-person piece for the *Los Angeles Times* commemorating MTV’s first decade. “After all, it was Ross who had developed and championed the vision of ‘narrowcasting’—in which a cable network takes on one subject matter and does only that, continuously, rather than trying to be all things to all people—and Warner had a big investment in music. Additionally, David Horowitz had emerged as our guardian angel—nurturing the idea along at the various divisions of Warner Communications.

“We realized that almost all TV was narrative in form,” Pittman pointed out. “The appeal of music, however, has nothing to do with that structure... With the creation of MTV, we changed the form of TV to fit the form of music, as opposed to trying to fit music into a narrative structure.”



With Sir Elton John



With Lady Gaga

“We realized that almost all TV was narrative in form. The appeal of music, however, has nothing to do with that structure... With the creation of MTV, we changed the form of TV to fit the form of music, as opposed to trying to fit music into a narrative structure.”

It wasn't an easy sell at first. The Warner Amex board initially said no to the idea of “radio with pictures,” stating it was too risky. Pittman and John Lack, the Warner Amex Satellite Entertainment Co. EVP who came up with the idea of a music channel, took their case to Ross, AMEX CEO Jim Robinson and EVP Lou Gerstner, bringing along two music industry heavyweights—Doug Morris, then with Atlantic, and Warner Bros.’ Stan Cornyn, according to Rob Tannenbaum and Craig Marks’ *I Want My MTV: The Uncensored Story of the Video Revolution*.

In Ross’ conference room, Pittman spelled out how to build a music channel in a 20-minute pitch. After explaining that labels would supply videos for free and that there would be minimal costs in programming, Robinson pledged \$10 million. Eventually, they got the full \$25 million and circled Aug. 1 as a start date, figuring trends start in the summer.

With a team that included Freston (who’d been hired by Lack), Fred Seibert and John Sykes, MTV went live on Aug. 1, 1981 and before long was making

hits out of acts that couldn’t get played on the radio, especially new British bands associated with new wave. It was an audacious move, and it worked.

“If you remember, the state of the record industry in 1980 was alarming,” Pittman wrote in that *Times* piece. “Radio had stopped playing new music, records were rarely identified when played, the new music out of England couldn’t get exposure in the United States, and the record business’s costs had spiraled out of control. A bad combination—high costs and no new breakthrough records.”

BON VIVANTS: *iHeart’s Pittman, Rich Bressler, Tom Poleman and John Sykes score photo op with Jon Bon Jovi*





SEA CHANGE: Poleman and Pittman contemplate going blue while chatting with Halsey.

To garner the support of industry, every video ID'd the artist, song, album *and* label. Freston and Sykes saw it was working when they visited Tulsa, Okla., soon after launch and record stores were selling out of the music MTV featured faster than music that was getting radio airplay.

In 1983, not only did Nielsen ratings show it was building an audience, the network turned a profit in the fourth quarter. A year later, MTV was the highest-rated basic-cable network.

"The best advice Bob ever shared with me was simply, 'Don't be afraid to make quick decisions,'" Monte Lipman tells us. Pittman's quarterbacking of MTV—definitely calling audibles as he led the team to paydirt—stands as the quintessential example of the quick thinking that has characterized his career.

There's no debate that MTV quickly had an effect on pop culture as music video styles started showing up in films and TV shows; witness *Miami Vice*. Keeping the brand hot, Pittman told *The New York Times* in 1985 as VH1 was being launched, that research was a key element.

The MTV atmosphere that surrounded the music videos owed to Pittman incorporating the opinions prospective viewers gave in surveys.

"I love research," he told the *New York Times*. "I don't say that too often because it is something people look down on. But I use research to find out what people like and what they are doing. It is better than listening to the guy next door, because that gives you a warped perspective."

The core MTV audience—12- to 24-year-olds, Pittman found—wanted "irreverence, zaniness, instability, chaos, a frenetic pace, lots of disjointed thoughts, and in-depth information about the music."

Much as MTV was creating new star acts and giving its vee-jays such as **Martha Quinn** and **Mark Goodman** a platform far bigger than anything they experienced in radio, Pittman always knew where the focus had to be. In the book *I Want My TV: The Uncensored Story of the Music Video Revolution*, Goodman remarks, "Bob's thing was always, MTV is the star, and if MTV is big, you're big."

Under Pittman's watch the channel launched the **Video Music Awards**, must-see coverage of spring break and initiated formatted programs such as *120 Minutes*, *Yo! MTV Raps* and *Headbangers Ball*. It also boldly broadcast 16 hours of *Live Aid* from Philadelphia and London. He also launched the adult-skewing VH1.

"When I was there," Pittman said at

the 2016 **Further Future Festival**, "we had some real conscious discussions as to whether we should grow old with this generation or whether we should be the voice of young America, and in the end we decided to go with the voice of young America. What that meant was that we had to deliberately stop doing things that we knew were successful. We had to make change a constant part of the daily process, which I believe is true of any business—you need to evolve or die."

It might as well be a credo for his own career. He left MTV in 1989 and took his talents to a host of ventures with no connection to music—**Quantum Media**, **Time Warner Enterprises**, **Six Flags Theme Parks**, **Century 21** real estate and **AOL Networks** where he made it the industry leader during his 1996-2002 tenure.

He founded the private investment firm **Pilot Group** in 2003, which put its money in everything from **Casa Dragones** tequila to the **Thrillist** website and **Nutrisystem**. He also invested in **Clear Channel** when they made him **Chairman of Media and Entertainment Platforms**. Under the new name **iHeart-Media**, Pittman drove its digital revolu-

“The best advice Bob ever shared with me was simply, ‘Don’t be afraid to make quick decisions.’” —Monte Lipman

tion and created its live event operations, which generated millions of dollars in just a few short years.

“The card tricks that he used at MTV—breaking new artists, promoting music and tours, bringing excitement back to the business—he’s using again,” Tom Freston told *Adweek* in 2013. “And he’s creating a national brand out of a collection of seemingly disparate pieces.”

Pittman now oversees a company with 855 radio stations with more 110 million listeners and live-events unit that puts on the *iHeartRadio Music Festival*, the *iHeartRadio Music Awards* and the *Jingle Ball* tour, along with annual coun-

try and Latin fests.

Seasoned exec Joel Klaiman, now the President of Hitco Entertainment, praises Pittman’s company as “a multimedia platform where, along with the great broadcasting they do, they bring together some of the best artists in the business to their world-class events.”

iHeart was the first digital radio company to strike performance-royalty deals with labels and musicians. Pittman has also guided the company through Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection.

“MTV was the first time that the brand was the TV network,” Pittman said in his keynote address at the

DASH Conference in Detroit in 2015.

“I think the challenge today is to have a brand that people know what to expect from it when they go there,” referring to his thinking behind *iHeartMedia*.

The honors for his work in film and TV are numerous. He has been inducted into the *Advertising Hall of Fame* and the *Broadcasting and Cable Hall of Fame*; he received *AdWeek*’s first *Media Visionary* award and was named one of *Advertising Age*’s “50 Pioneers and Visionaries of TV” and “10 Marketers Who Changed American Culture.” The *Broadcasters Foundation of America* gave him the

REGULAR GUYS: *Michael Rapino, Sykes, Discovery Communications CEO David Zaslav, venture capitalist Vivi Nevo, Pittman, Turner Entertainment’s Kevin Reilly and Bressler* silently wonder how much total individual wealth is represented in this photo.



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Golden Mike Award in 2016, and *Life* magazine put his name on two of its lists, “Five Original Thinkers of the ’80s” and “50 Most Influential Boomers.”

“Bob puts the show in show business,” Maverick Music President Greg Thompson offers. “From his youngest years, he has been a visionary who supercharges any organization he leads. He is a true music lover.”

In recent interviews, the questioning is generally along the lines of, “How did you do it? What made you a success?”

“I always thought I was a sociologist,” he told Charlie Rose on his PBS interview series in 2014. “And I always said, even when I was a young guy, that it’s all about the consumer...What I want to be is the expert on how the consumer is behaving.

“People confuse it with the music business. Because of radio, more people get interested in music. I think it’s been interesting, as they have been able to move their music to a handheld device or the computer, then they also find radio there helps too.”

Pittman went into greater detail about the place of radio in the grand scheme of things when we interviewed him for a 2014 cover story. “You hear some people talk about audio streams and audio; I promise you, the consumer never calls it audio—they either call it *my music* or *radio*, and they have favorite radio stations. But the two are very different,” he argued. “When you deal with Spotify, iTunes, Pandora, Amazon, what you’re really dealing with is the replacement for CDs and cassettes and LPs and, way back when, 45s. But it’s still the same thing. It’s that music collection that you curate just for yourself, at just the right moment, for just the right mood. And radio is really the mirror image of that. Radio is the community social experience when you want to engage the world. It’s like walking into your favorite bar, all your friends are there, and they go, ‘Hey, Bob, let me tell you what’s going on.’ That’s what we do on the radio.”•



HEY BUDDIES: With Ryan Seacrest and Pharrell Williams (top); with Bressler, Jeffrey Azoff, Harry Styles and Azoff the Elder (middle); with Poleman, Luke Bryan and Sykes

“Radio is the community social experience when you want to engage the world. It’s like walking into your favorite bar, all your friends are there, and they go, ‘Hey, Bob, let me tell you what’s going on.’ That’s what we do on the radio.”



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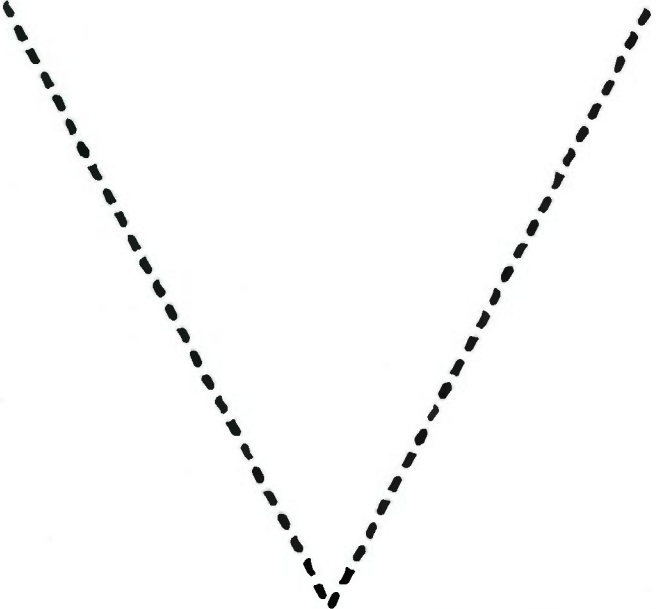
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Jon Platt

Towering Over *the* Competition

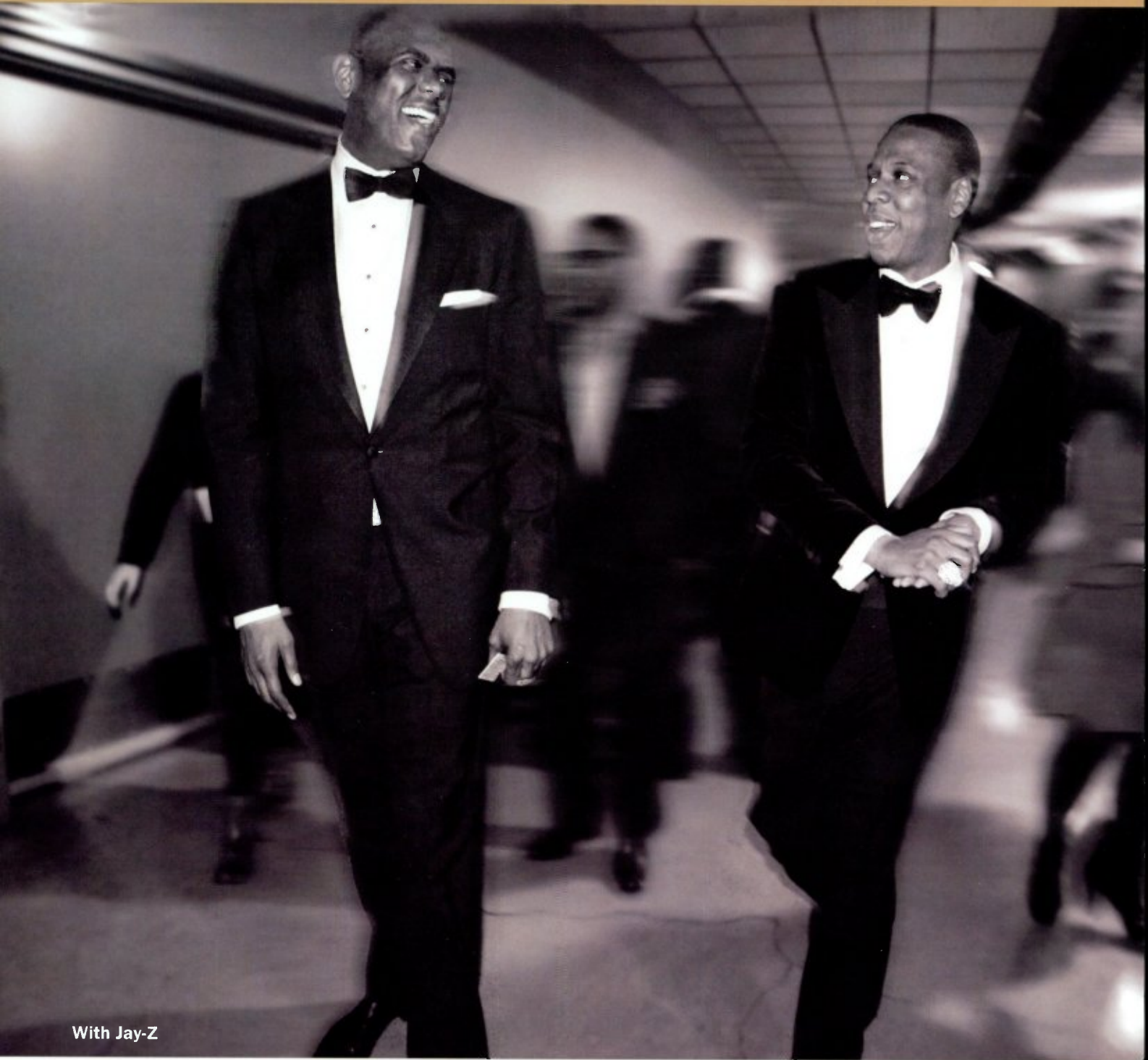


es, Warner/Chappell Music Chairman/CEO Jon Platt is exceptionally tall. But the stature he's achieved in the biz in a relatively short time is even more impressive. So much so, in fact, that the "Big" that used to precede his name is now superfluous (we note that in addition to being tall enough to play, he is an avid hoops fan). And that stature increased considerably in late 2018, when it was announced he would succeed Marty Bandier as the head of Sony/ATV.

The news came just before Platt was due to receive the Spirit of Life honor at the City of Hope's annual industry gala, a black-tie affair made all the more momentous by the big man's career developments. "I dreamed of running the largest publishing company in the world one day," Platt said during his City of Hope speech, alluding to the SATV gig. "Then, a few weeks ago, I opened my eyes—and I could see it."

Platt has overseen sustained global growth and





With Jay-Z

creative expansion at Warner/Chappell. Advocacy on behalf of songwriters has been a constant in his career, and he has been particularly outspoken about accord- ing greater recognition to black music and its creators—and championing diversity, social justice and community in the wider world. He spoke passionately about these themes during his City of Hope speech and also in an in-depth *HITS* interview con- ducted just ahead of the event.

“I don’t view this as City of Hope just recognizing me,” he said. “I would

like this to be a celebration of the culture which has supported and nurtured me.” And so it was, with his longtime friend and associate **Jay-Z** presenting the award, **Beyoncé** performing, **Pharrell Williams** hosting and other Platt-affiliated perform- ers and speakers chiming in.

“I want you to look around,” he enjoined the throng of industryites at the Spirit of Life dinner, “and see what hap- pens when you don’t exclude anybody.”

While Platt first made his name with some major signings in black music, his

achievements in all genres put him on the top tier. “You can’t look at me and put me in a box,” Platt told his home-town newspaper, *The Denver Post*, in 2010. “I love all music. I don’t love just hip-hop and R&B. That, for me, is one of the blessings of me growing up in Denver. There were so many things going on in Denver on the radio—pop and rock and country. I got a feel for those songs, and I didn’t realize what it meant at that time, but what it taught me was that music has no color. A hit is a hit. The only thing that

pushes it into one genre or another is the approach to the production of the song.”

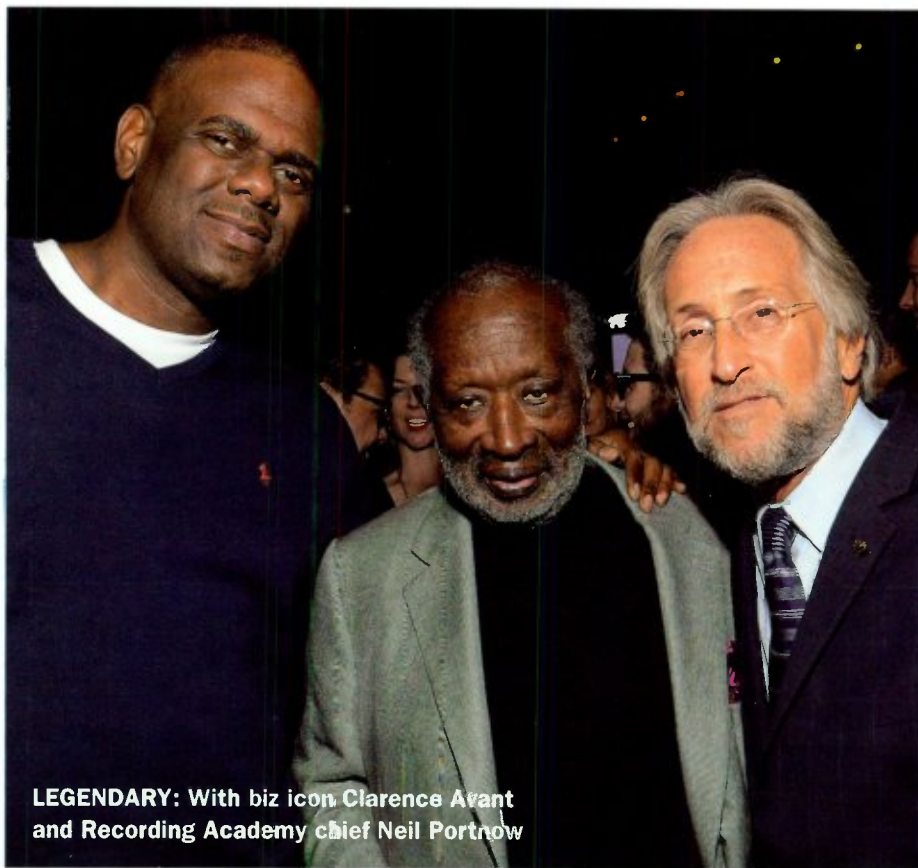
Platt, who was born in Philly and spent part of his childhood in Oakland before the family relocated to Denver, credits his Mom’s collection of Motown records for his early love of soul—and local FM radio for giving him an appreciation of classic rock. “That’s how my taste in music, and songs, became so diverse,” he remembered to *HITS*.

He was working in a Denver sporting-goods store as a teen when he happened to do a good turn for Thomas Edwards, a top local DJ, who tracked Platt down and offered to show him the ropes as an expression of his gratitude. “He would give me records and began showing me how to use his turntables,” Platt recalled. “Before long, my high school friends asked me to DJ at a party.” Then, he added, he met another DJ, Al Your Pal. “He really taught me how to blend and mix,” the big man says. “He showed me how not to be afraid to talk when I DJ’ed. That changed everything for me.”

An avid student, Platt became a popular DJ in Denver in the late ’80s. Retired basketball star Chauncey Billups (once an all-star guard for the Denver Nuggets and Detroit Pistons, now an ESPN commentator) remembered to *The Denver Post*, “When I was really young, Big Jon was the big-time popular DJ at all the nightclubs and private parties and weddings. If you had Big Jon there, that was the place to be.”

In 1990, a comment from Public Enemy front-man Chuck D got Platt to envision a bigger future for himself. “He says, ‘So, Big Jon, what are you going to do with your life?’ I said, ‘I’m good here in Denver. I’m the man here.’ Chuck says, ‘Yes, you’re the man here, but unless you dream bigger, that’s all you’re ever going to be.’” The conversation, he says, “really resonated with me, and that’s when I started looking for information”

Platt read books about the industry—including Don Passman’s seminal *All You Need to Know About the Music Business*—then moved to Los Angeles and began promoting and managing



LEGENDARY: With biz icon Clarence Avant and Recording Academy chief Neil Portnow



TO SIRE, WITH LOVE: With Seymour Stein



LEADERSHIP SUMMIT: Cooking up schemes with former colleague and current competitor Jody Gerson



"DREAM BIGGER": With Chuck D

R&B and hip-hop artists. He met Steve Prudholme, a Creative Manager at EMI Music Publishing, who later signed Platt's first client, Madukey, as well as producer Kiyamma Griffin. In 1995, Prudholme left EMI to join Warner Bros. and put in a good word for Platt to be his replacement.

Platt was a presence at the EMI offices even before he was hired. "He would go in the tape room and borrow DATs from the DAT machine," Jody Gerson remembers. "And I would say, 'Wait a minute, I don't understand. Who's the guy working from our conference room and taking all of our DATs to make music and having meetings?' And it was Jon. He literally showed up and set up office."

Gerson made it official by hiring Platt as Creative Manager. Within six months of his arrival he signed Marqueze Ethridge, who wrote TLC's 1995 smash

"Waterfalls," a Grammy nominee for Record of the Year, as well as AZ (who wrote "Life's a Bitch" for Nas); not long thereafter he inked Warrryn Campbell and gospel duo Mary Mary. He rose swiftly through the ranks—Creative Director, VP, Senior VP, Executive VP, President of West Coast, Creative. He spent 17 years at the company, rising to the position of President of North America, Creative.

"He was relentless," Gerson recalled during the City of Hope kickoff. "Very few executives I've hired compare to Jon and his integrity, work ethic and deep relationships."

Relentless though he was, Platt revealed that he was also, in the early days, often flying by the seat of his pants. Eager to sign Jay-Z, whose *Reasonable Doubt* album was blowing up, he says, "I was so innocent that I cold-called the label looking for him." After being transferred around, he found himself in a contentious phone exchange with Dame Dash. "He starts aggressively firing all these questions at me: 'You got some money? You got some paper? If you haven't got money, there's no conversation to be had.' I got so flustered I told him I'd call him right back." Later, though, Platt got a clearer shot at Jay-Z when his friend Jay Brown made a formal introduction, and the young hip-hop breakout soon joined EMI's stable.

One of Platt's signature moves has been to sign important writers early in their careers. The Jay-Z deal was closed in 1996, the year of *Reasonable Doubt's* release. He scored a pact with Usher a year later as his sophomore album, *My Way*, became his breakthrough, having been introduced to the young star by longtime friend Jermaine Dupri. He signed Kanye West in 2003 before he released his first single, "Through the Wire." He signed Drake in 2009 just as his first hit, "Best I Ever Had," exploded. He noted in 2018 that he didn't realize, during much of his EMI tenure, that his freedom to sign—"I had never been told that I couldn't do a deal"—was unique.

"These people have been with me their whole career," Platt told *The Denver Post*. "That's the thing about most of the people I sign. We got in business together at the beginning of their career."

Said Jay-Z at the City of Hope event, “My contract is tied to his; if he leaves, I leave, period.” He also hailed Platt as “the Obama of the music industry.”

“All of us recognize that he found us as seeds,” Pharrell Williams says. “Back then, we didn’t know how to blossom.”

Platt also signed Diddy, Beyoncé, Ludacris, Rick Ross and Young Jeezy, among others, to EMI.

The big man has been effusive about the importance of the mentors in his life. “Marty Bandier is an icon, make no mistake about it,” he proclaimed, adding that the longtime King of Music Publishing “has played a big role in who I am today.”

In noting the essential importance of trust in the A&R process, he said, “What I learned was, trust comes from the top—that was from Marty, Jody and Roger [Faxon]. Trust was handed to me, and it was up to

me who I wanted to pass that onto.”

In 2011, Platt and Gerson were honored with the Music Visionary Award from the UJA-Federation of New York. Platt was presented the award by Sean “Diddy” Combs, who called him “the most influential music publisher in the business.”

In June 2012, Platt announced that he was leaving EMI after 17 years. There was much speculation over the summer as to whether Platt would join Cameron Strang, chief executive of Warner/Chappell, or rejoin his former mentor, Bandier, at Sony/ATV. Rihanna jumped the gun on an official announcement of Platt’s move when she tweeted, “Congratulations to one of the best people in this industry, Jon Platt, on his new position as head of Warner/Chappell.”

Strang noted, “When I met Jon we were competitors and associates in this great publishing business. Now we’re partners at Warner/Chappell. When I got the job I knew that there was one person I needed to

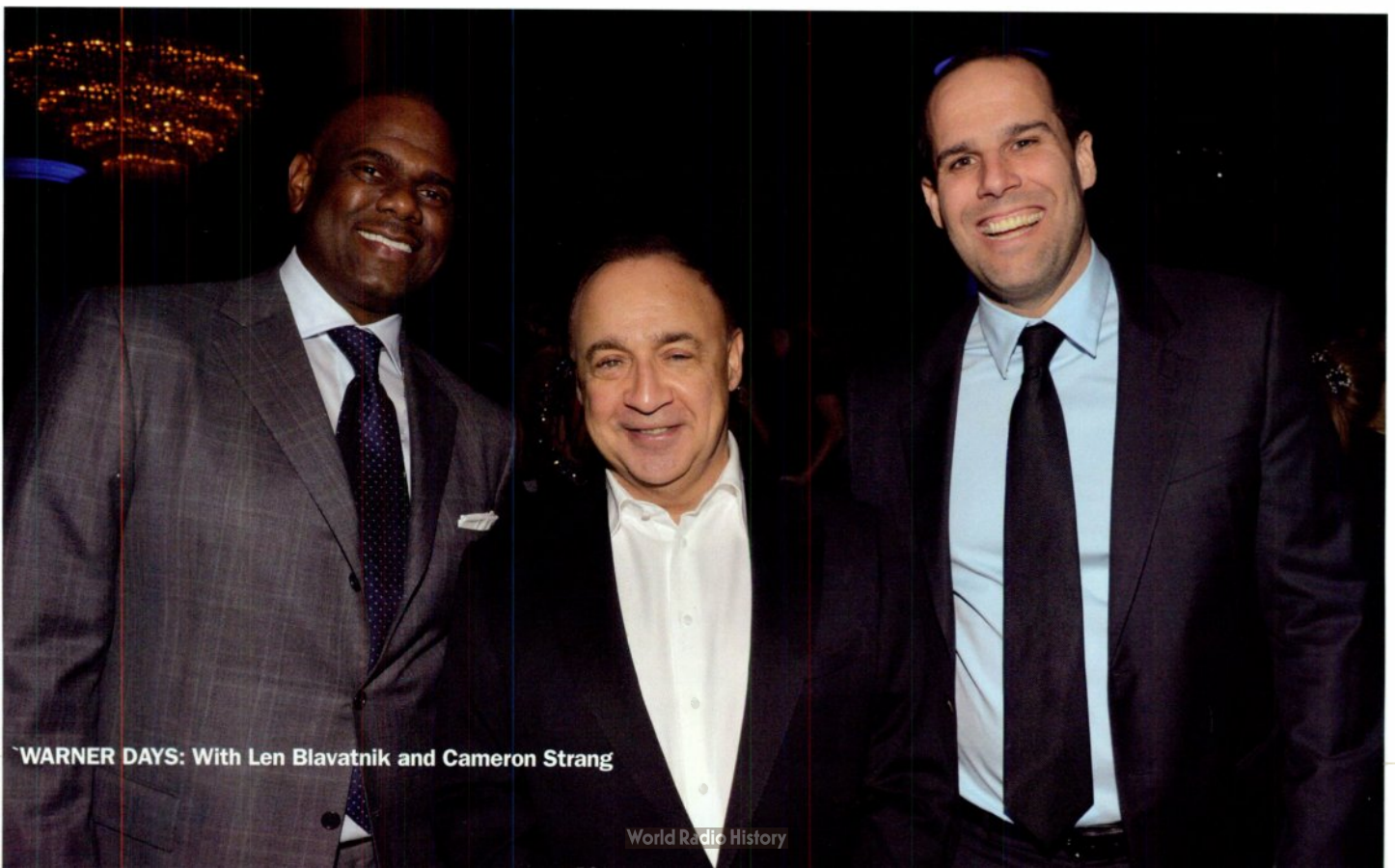
make Warner/Chappell as great as it could be [and that] was Jon Platt.”

Platt started at Warner/Chappell that September as President of Creative, North America. Just four months into his new gig, Platt (and VP A&R Ryan Press) signed the red-hot Mike Will Made-It. Other early signings included Jay-Z and Beyoncé, Roc Nation’s publishing roster, Aloe Blacc, Drake’s OVO Sounds label, Megadeth’s Dave Mustaine, Slash and Liz Rose.

The Warner/Chappell roster also includes Katy Perry, Kendrick Lamar, Nate Ruess, The Dream, Mike Dean, Julia Michaels, Justin Tranter, Twenty One Pilots, Chris Stapleton, Dr. Dre and Brantley Gilbert.

Platt was promoted to President, North America in December 2013; CEO in November 2015 and Chairman in May 2016.

“JON HAS RISEN TO HIS POSITION NOT JUST BECAUSE OF TALENT BUT ALSO BECAUSE OF HIS TREMENDOUS HEART.” -JAY BROWN



WARNER DAYS: With Len Blavatnik and Cameron Strang



HOPE AND CHANGE: *With City of Hope industry board members Gang, Tyre, Ramer & Brown's Don Passman, CAA's Rob Light, Phil Q, Loeb & Loeb's John Frankenheimer, UMe boss Bruce Resnikoff, Jody Gerson, W/C's Clark Miller, Kathy Nelson, Morey Management's Jason Morey, Spirit Music Group's David Renzer, UMPG's Evan Lamberg, The Davis Firm's Doug Davis and AEG Presents' Larry Vallon*

Platt has a knack for matching songs (even in their embryonic form) with the right artists. He brought Jay-Z what became the biggest hit of his career, “Empire State of Mind,” and Beyoncé what became one of her biggest recent hits, “Drunk in Love.”

“He has an amazing ear and sense of knowledge because publishing isn’t just a business, it’s an art,” Sean Combs said of Platt. “Finding the right writer and knowing who to team them up with and how to maximize their brand—he has a gift, a natural talent for it. He knows how to build relationships. He’s built relationships with me and a lot of the guys who are the future of music.”

Warner/Chappell had the three most nominated songwriter/artists at the Grammy Awards in January—Jay-Z, Kendrick Lamar and Bruno Mars. Another

of its writers, Julia Michaels, was up for Best New Artist.

One of Platt’s boldest and most influential moves was changing the way samples are paid. The traditional model in hip-hop publishing called for a song’s producer and songwriter to share the licensing expense of any samples used in a song. Platt created a system in which producers foot the entire bill for samples they use in their clients’ work.

“It was a thing people said would never fly, it would never happen, but really it revolutionized the business... He was pushing the envelope and changing the game,” Jay-Z said.

Since becoming Warner/Chappell’s global CEO in 2016, Platt has built an executive team that includes A&R co-heads Katie Vinten and Ryan Press; Warner/Chappell Nashville president Ben Vaughn, U.K. man-

aging director Mike Smith and global digital exec Eric Mackay. In another canny move, he added former SONGS partner Carianne Marshall as COO in 2018.

“Jon Platt is one of the best publishers in America and has done a wonderful job for that company and will continue to do a great job,” renowned attorney Joel Katz asserted. “We represent Jon Platt, and we’re very proud of the work that he’s done.”

In Q3 2017, W/C surged to #1 in publisher marketshare, scoring a 23% slice and becoming the #1 country publisher. Vaughn cited the “amazing encouragement” of his boss when the pubco took ASCAP’s Country Publisher of the Year award for the fifth year in a row (W/C took ASCAP’s Latin and BMI’s Pop honors earlier in the year). His aggressive approach to the company’s global

structure paid marketshare dividends as well—in the U.K. in particular but also in Germany, where he launched a new Berlin office.

At one point in the year the company had #1 spots on 10 radio charts. “This latest accomplishment reinforces what we already know: that our focus on putting songwriters first is putting Warner/Chappell first—and that our songwriters are creating the biggest hits around the world,” Platt proclaimed in a congratulatory missive to his staff. That fall, *Ebony* put Platt on its Power 100 list. In early 2018, Platt joined U.K. boss Smith and team in London to bear witness to a string of wins at the BRIT Awards.

The pubbery chief also took considerable satisfaction in the valedictory honors accorded longtime friend and signing Jay-Z, notably multiple Grammy nods, a special award at Clive Davis’ pre-Grammy gala and induction into the Songwriters Hall of Fame. Jay is the first rapper to join the SHOF ranks.

He’s been particularly outspoken not only about diversity but also about protecting the integrity of authentic music culture. “What I’ve learned through the years is that the greatest songwriters are the ones with distinctive voices who stay true to their roots,” he reflected in a letter published by *Music Business Worldwide* in 2017, specifically referencing the U.K.’s uncompromising grime subgenre. “I’m all for crossing over—as long as the mainstream crosses over to you.”

“It’s not just my turn,” he said of the responsibility associated with the City of Hope honor during the kickoff breakfast in L.A. “It’s my *culture’s* turn to do our part.”

By the time the actual gala came around on 10/11, of course, news of Platt’s forthcoming exit from Warner/Chappell and pending assumption of the top post at Sony/ATV had made the industry rounds, making the occasion that much more auspicious.

In addition to his primary professional work, he has served as Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors for the MusiCares Foundation and sits on the boards of the Songwriters Hall of Fame, the Motown Museum,

and the Living Legends Foundation.

In 2005, he launched the Big Jon Platt Scholarship Program, which awards scholarships at Platt’s alma mater, Montbello High School in Denver. The scholarships go to three students each year—one who has achieved academic excellence, one who has overcome adversity and stayed in school and one who wants a career in the music industry.

Platt also supports the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. (His wife, Angie, serves on the Los Angeles Chapter Board of Directors and the International Board of Directors.) The Platts have three sons, Jonathan, Clarence and Shawn.

“First and foremost, Jon is a brother,” says Roc Nation Co-Founder/CEO Jay Brown. “He is not just someone I know because of this industry. Jon has risen to his position not just because of talent but also because of his tremendous heart. The love he has for his beautiful wife and children extends to everyone who has the honor to cross paths with him. Jon has no problem calling you in the middle of the night with an amazing idea or song he just heard, because he knows music moves the world. When you think of all Jon has done over the years, you think in the scope of what he has done for The Culture, not just the music business. Jon not only has a vision for an artist’s career, he has a passion that cannot be measured.”

Platt was emotional on the night of his black-tie Spirit of Life ceremony. “This is the worst thing, for a big black dude to be sniffing and shit,” he joked. He praised his fellow successful executives of color and hailed City of Hope as an organization that doesn’t “know the meaning of the word ‘impossible.’” The event raised in excess of \$6 million for cancer research and treatment. Platt’s lifelong friends then gathered for a boisterous afterparty, with his old pal Dupri serving as DJ.

Platt himself has regularly proved seemingly impossible tasks eminently possible, and his next chapter promised still greater heights.

“This is my life,” Platt told *The Denver Post*. “It’s a dream. It doesn’t get much better than this.”•

“I DREAMED OF RUNNING THE LARGEST PUBLISHING COMPANY IN THE WORLD ONE DAY,” PLATT SAID DURING HIS CITY OF HOPE SPEECH, ALLUDING TO THE FORTHCOMING SONY/ATV GIG. “THEN, A FEW WEEKS AGO, I OPENED MY EYES—AND I COULD SEE IT.”

Michael Rapino

NATION BUILDER

How on earth did a soft-spoken music geek from Canada become the dominant power player in the live-music sector? A keen intelligence combined with a killer instinct certainly aided Michael Rapino in a journey that began in remote Thunder Bay, Ontario, and has taken him to the top post at **Live Nation Entertainment**, which he's built into a global colossus encompassing the concert and ticketing businesses, where it rules the roost, and artist management, where it has few peers. Rapino loves spending his downtime at home in L.A. with his wife,

Jolene, and their three kids, but being on the road with a band in, say, North Dakota is right in his comfort zone as well.

Live Nation has had only one boss in its 13-year history—Rapino. He's the dealmaker who made the company a major player early on in the 360-deal marketplace, dropping big bucks on **U2**, **Madonna** and **Jay-Z**. He's the one who realized ticketing offered far better margins than concert promotion, leading to

a merger with **Ticketmaster** that included **Irving Azoff's Front Line Management**. He saw benefits in owning venues, booking entire tours and bank-rolling artist management companies in North America and abroad. He turned sponsorships into a key profit driver.

Over time, his M&A activity has been laser-focused on live music entertainment, and today Live Nation has a hand in all its pipelines, having shed units that don't involve concerts, artists or fans. Since it spun off from **Clear Channel** in 2005, Rapino has stripped it of anything not having to do with the concert business, putting blinders on the company and finishing first in every category in the concert business—revenue, number of shows, countries of operation, artist rosters... The list goes on.

Rapino's *modus operandi* has been steady throughout its build-out: Live Nation acquires or takes a stake in a promoter, management company or festival and lets the locals run their businesses. It deepens the pockets of each individual company, allowing for their expansion without the need to add Live Nation staff and maintains the entrepreneurial spirit of the concert business within a corporate structure.

In 2017, Live Nation and its affiliates promoted 30,000 shows in 40 countries, sold 500 million tickets to fans in 29 countries, ran 220 venues, staged 90 festivals and employed more than 140 managers who represented more than 500 artists. The company generated more than \$10 billion in revenue; a decade ago, on the heels of merging with Ticketmaster, the company pulled in just over \$4 billion.



"I've known Michael for 15 years," says super-attorney **Allen Grubman**, "and I have seen him grow and develop, in my opinion, into the most successful executive of his generation in the music business. He has a rare quality of understanding the creative and a brilliant understanding of the business side. I believe his career is just starting to blossom, and what the future holds for him is boundless."

Since he was a 20-year-old college student who had just booked his first client, blind Canadian guitar virtuoso **Jeff Healey**, Rapino has had his sights on a singular goal.

"I wanted to be the guy that was involved in this thing called touring," he said in his keynote at **Canadian Music Week 2017** in Toronto. "I had a passion for the live business, and then my discipline kicked in after that to say, 'How am I going to end up running this?'"

Twenty years after writing on a napkin that he wanted to head up a concert

company, his dream was realized in 2005, when he was named President and CEO of the Clear Channel spinoff **Live Nation**.

"I got lucky," he said after receiving an honorary degree from his alma mater **Lakehead University** in his hometown. "I found my passion early. That was kind of my north star. I didn't stop pursuing my dream of doing it bigger and on a grander scale and it took me from Thunder Bay to Toronto to New York to Los Angeles."

Thunder Bay, located on the banks of Lake Superior near the Minnesota/Canada border, is a 14-hour drive from Toronto, where he got his start booking bands professionally. He got his

first corporate job at **Labatt's Breweries**, working his way up to senior marketing director over the course of a decade and managing the brewery's entertainment and sports properties until they were sold.

He left the company in 1998 to become partner and SVP of **Core Audience**, a six-month-old concert company that was going up against the more established **MCA Concerts Canada**. Its earliest shows were with **Our Lady Peace**, **Lilith Fair**, **Janet Jackson's Toronto stop** and the national production of **Lord of the Dance**.

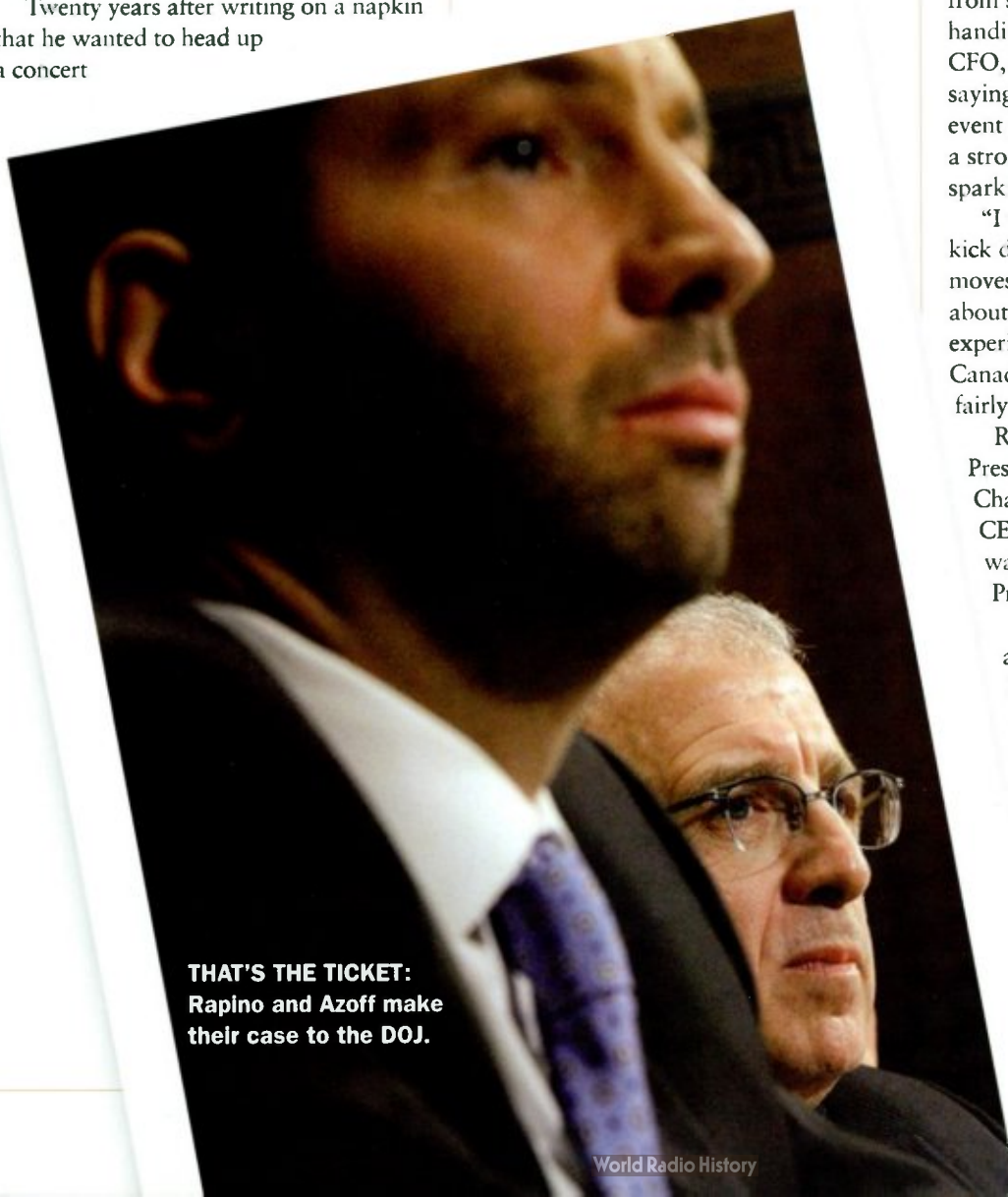
In 2000, Clear Channel acquired **Core**, renaming it **Clear Channel Entertainment Canada**, and naming founder **Steve Herman** as president. Within a year, Rapino was overseeing **Clear Channel Entertainment International's** music strategy, expanding the company's presence into 16 countries from six over a three-year period. In handing him the new job, CCE's then-CFO, **Randall Mays**, praised Rapino, saying, "His bold moves to increase event profitability have been matched by a strong fan-centric approach aimed at sparking market growth."

"I was a big believer that you had to kick doors open: new experiences, lateral moves, backward moves, don't worry about money, just keep getting better experiences," Rapino said during the **Canadian Music Week** address. "I was fairly determined."

Rapino was promptly elevated to President of **Global Music** for **Clear Channel Music Group**, adding the CEO title in 2004. When **Live Nation** was created in 2005, he held onto the President & CEO title.

His first major acquisition came a year later when LN bought half of **Michael Cohl's CPI**, the company best known for promoting **Rolling Stones** tours and its groundbreaking operations involving VIP ticketing, fan clubs and merchandising. Cohl, who joined the **Live Nation** board, is known as the godfather of global touring.

This acquisition brought together Cohl and **Live Nation's** head of **Global Touring**, **Arthur Fogel**, another world-



THAT'S THE TICKET:
Rapino and Azoff make
their case to the DOJ.



BICOASTAL: Thunder Bay's Rapino with NYC's Jay-Z and L.A. Mayor Eric Garcetti.

"I was a big believer that you had to kick doors open: new experiences, lateral moves, backward moves, don't worry about money, just keep getting better experiences."

wide touring specialist, most famous for his work with Madonna. "By reuniting these two global touring businesses under the same roof," Rapino said at the time, "this deal allows Live Nation to enhance its leadership position in world touring, fueling our distribution network to maximize revenues for the artist and Live Nation."

The move set the stage for Live Nation's rapid expansion. In early 2006, the company struck its first-ever 360 deal with Korn and EMI, covering recording, publishing, touring, merch, sponsorship and other activities. At the time, Korn's manager, The Firm's CEO Jeff Kwatinetz, called it "shifting power back to artists by finding strategic partners who are the best in their respective businesses and incentivizing them to work in unison to attain common goals consistent with the band's goals." He praised Rapino as "forward-thinking."

Live Nation promptly made a name for itself, producing more than a dozen summer tours in 2006, among them Madonna's record-breaking *Confessions Tour*. By the end of 2007, Madonna and Live Nation were bedfellows in a massive "unprecedented global partnership" that launched the company's *Artist Nation*. "Bringing all the varied elements of Madonna's stunning music career into the Artist Nation and Live Nation family moves her future and the future of our company into a unique and extraordinary place," Rapino said at the time.

Over the next two years, Rapino continued to sign deals involving touring and merchandising and, on occasion, recordings, with U2, Jay-Z, Shakira, The Jonas Brothers and even Nickelback, proving you can take the man out of Canada, but...

As much as Live Nation was participating in an increasing number of revenue streams, Wall Street was not convinced that Live Nation had a proper business plan, especially considering the rapid decline in recorded-music sales at the time. *The Wall Street Journal* quoted a 2008 note to investors from Morgan Joseph analyst David B. Kestenbaum, who said he was "wary of management's willingness to spend such substantial amounts of money on developing its Artist Nation segment." Live Nation's stock price had hovered around \$20 a share after the Madonna deal was signed in late 2006, but it went on a steady drop until it hit \$3.83 in December 2008.

Part of that decline, though, could be attributed to another company coming up with a game plan for the

concert business that investors liked better: Ticketmaster, which had merged with Azoff's Front Line Management and installed Azoff as CEO. The largest talent management company was now aligned with the world's largest ticketing operation.

At conferences and in chats with the media, Rapino would bring the conversation around to ticketing and its role in making Live Nation a complete 360 operation. Between fees and contracts with venues, ticketing is a much steadier business than concert promotion, which at the time had a single-digit margin.

Live Nation had purchased a company that handled fan club ticketing, Musictoday, in

2006, and it was the bedrock for the ticketing operation LN intended to launch in 2008 when many venues' Ticketmaster contracts expired. Nathan Hubbard, a former Ticketmaster CEO, was running the unit. Then a better idea was proposed: Merge with Ticketmaster.

As Rapino said at *Fortune's* Brainstorm Tech conference in 2013, Ticketmaster had "some branding issues, but a huge consumer base. When you have 400 million people buying in your store, you can use your data to do better things."

In a sit-down with the *Los Angeles Times* in 2009, when the planned merger was in front of the Department of Justice, Rapino positioned the new company as vital for the music industry. "If we don't do something, where will the innovation come from? I'm not saying I have four silver bullets that will make everybody happy. But the model has got to change."

The Live Nation-Ticketmaster merger, which included Front Line Management and its roster of 200-plus artists, was approved in January 2010, with Rapino taking the title of CEO and President of Live Nation Entertainment and Azoff being named Executive Chairman of Live Nation Entertainment and CEO of Front Line. Wall Street suddenly had a different outlook on the company, sending LN shares up nearly 15% to \$10.51 the day the deal was sealed. (The stock hit a record high of \$48.59 in February 2018.)

Azoff would leave the company on New Year's Eve 2012 to return to more entrepreneurial enterprises and artist management, but the two would remain tight. When asked for some words about Rapino, Azoff initially demurred, saying, "Tell Dennis to just make shit up like he always does." *HITS'* Publisher complied, offering, "Raymond Shaw Is the Kindest, Bravest, Warmest, Most Wonderful Human Being I've Ever Known in My Life." But Irving then reconsidered, describing Rapino glowingly as "the terror of Thunder Bay. Best junior-hockey coach in the history of Canada!" He also asked Rapino to describe himself. "Boring Canadian" was his emailed response.

Irving's quip is rooted in truth: Rapino has coached junior hockey, and he's referred to himself as "just a kid from Thunder Bay." He's an avid hockey fan, and this fitness freak—



“I got lucky—I found my passion early. That was kind of my north star. I didn’t stop pursuing my dream of doing it bigger and on a grander scale and it took me from Thunder Bay to Toronto to New York to Los Angeles.”

he runs every day—would likely kick ass on the ice even now.

Rapino attributed his company’s record year in 2013 in part to adapting to social media and improving mobile efforts on the Ticketmaster side. One of the company’s declared battles early on was against scalpers and the bots they use, and in 2017, Ticketmaster introduced its Verified Fan program to get more tickets into the hands of fans, which Ed Sheeran, Bruce Springsteen and others promptly embraced.

Live Nation’s management business grew significantly after the late-2013 acquisition and merger of Guy Oseary’s Maverick and Paul McGuinness’ Principle into what would become a consortium of management companies under the Maverick banner, with Oseary heading the entire operation. While Live Nation had assembled a coalition of management companies under its Artist Nation umbrella, it wasn’t until Rapino announced the Maverick operation that it was apparent how broad a scope the division covered.

Maverick opened with an impressive management arsenal: Ron Laffitte, I Am Other’s Caron Veazey, Blueprint Group’s Gee Roberson and Cortez Bryant, Reign Deer’s Larry Rudolph and Adam Leber, Quest Management’s Scott Rodger and Spalding Entertainment’s Clarence Spalding. Former Capitol Music Group EVP Greg Thompson stepped in as President of Maverick in April 2016, seven months before Laffitte left Maverick to form Patriot Management, a JV with Live

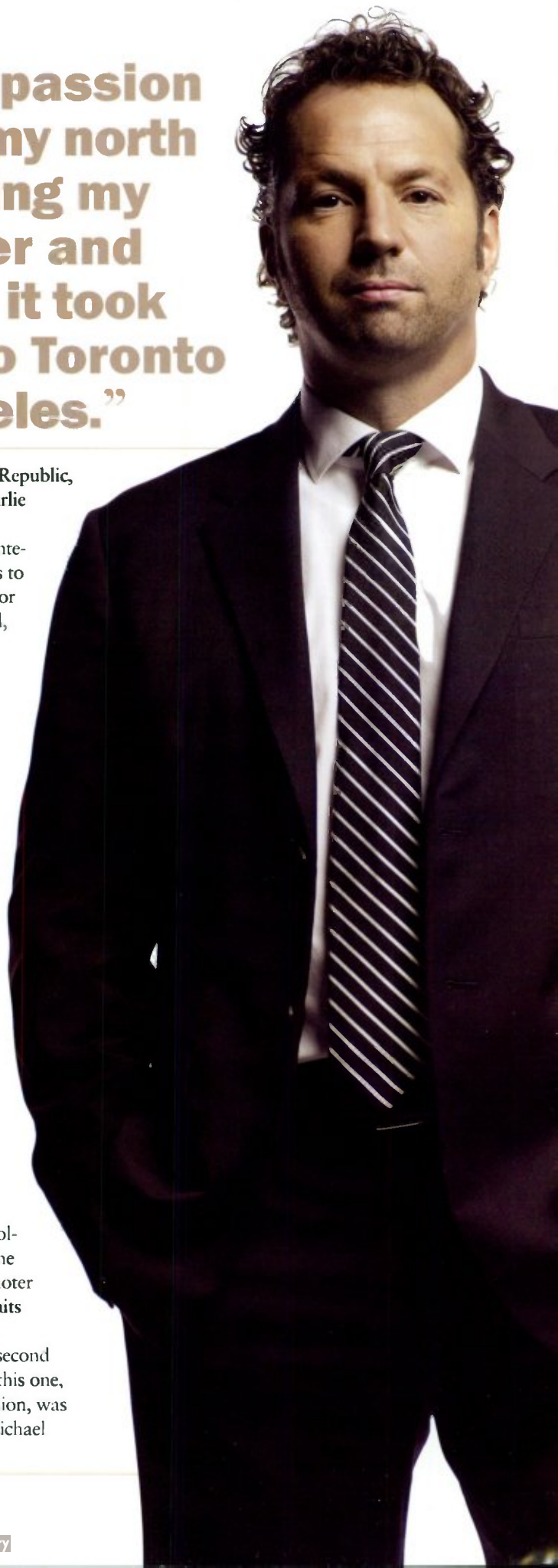
Nation, where he reps OneRepublic, Pharrell (with Veazey), Charlie Puth and others.

The stated goal was to integrate the management units to create more opportunities for artists. When it was formed, Maverick clients included Paul McCartney, Arcade Fire, OneRepublic, Nicki Minaj, Britney Spears and Miley Cyrus.

Not surprisingly, in 2014, Live Nation produced more than 700 shows by LN-managed artists, more than double the number in 2012. “We spend \$3 billion on talent,” Rapino said in 2013. “We’re the largest financier of [music] talent in the world.”

An acquisition spree followed, as Live Nation bought festivals such as BottleRock, Isle of Wight and the Union Events portfolio in Canada; they also took a stake in Bonnaroo presenter AC Entertainment and a controlling stake in C3 Presents, the Austin-based concert promoter behind the Austin City Limits Festival and Lollapalooza.

In 2017 Jay-Z signed a second 10-year deal with Rapino, this one, worth a reported \$200 million, was focused on his touring. “Michael



Rapino is an industry visionary, and this renewed partnership is a testament to our longstanding relationship and the talented individuals at Live Nation,” Jay-Z said when the deal was signed. “For the next 10 years, we will continue redefining the live-event landscape.”

His **Roc Nation**, a full-service JV since 2008, has delivered a steady stream of hip-hop stars into the Live Nation fold, among them **Rihanna**, **J. Cole**, **Big Sean** and **DJ Khaled**. With **Jay Brown** as CEO, Roc Nation is one of the most diversified units within Live Nation: the company inked a publishing deal with **Warner/Chappell**, a label deal at **UMG** and, since 2013, has represented star athletes. *Forbes* reported in 2017 that Roc Nation had \$906 million worth of contracts under management with 33 clients; that same year they created **Arrive**, a company to focus on startups.

Rapino has surrounded himself with a steady team at the top. **Bob Roux**, who has been with Live Nation and its predecessors for nearly 30 years, is President, U.S. Concerts; former **Warner Music Europe** chief **John Reid** has overseen Concerts in Europe since 2012; and **Alan Ridgeway** has been President, International and Emerging Markets, since 2011. **Jared Smith** runs Ticketmaster in North America.

Fogel remains chairman of Global Music and President of Global Touring and former **TicketsNow** CEO **Ron Bension** is President of **House of Blues Entertainment**. Live Nation President **Joe Berchtold** came over from **Technicolor** in 2011; EVP **John Hopmans** has overseen mergers and acquisitions for 10 years; CFO **Kathy Willard** has been with LN and Clear Channel before it since 2000; and Chief Strategy Officer **Jordan Zachary** is the new kid on the block, arriving in 2015.

Internally, Live Nation created its **Taking Care of Our Own** program to assist employees who were struggling to cover unexpected expenses such as burial costs or losses from a fire. In a 2017 call with employees, Rapino compassionately said, “We spend a lot of money, we do a lot of things with benefits; the one thing we have to do is make sure we take care of our own, and if there’s any employee in this company that’s got a real dire problem, we’re going to take care of



MAVERICKS: Comparing stylish stubble with Guy O

“I had a passion for the live business, and then my discipline kicked in after that to say, ‘How am I going to end up running this?’”

them. Email me. Call me.” He received 400 emails.

“You shockingly started to realize, ‘Jesus, we’re out here writing checks to galas thinking we’re doing a good job, and I’ve got 20,000 of them. I’ve got a charity; it’s called Live Nation.’”

He founded the **Rapino Foundation** in 2016, a family nonprofit dedicated to improving the lives of women and children worldwide, in 2017, initiated a program to help employees pay down

student debt, and in 2018 announced **The Woman Nation Fund** focused on funding female-led businesses in the concert promotions, events and festival spaces.

“There is still a lot of runway left at what we do,” Rapino said at the **Pollstar Live!** conference in February 2018. “We are the luckiest people in the business world. We’ve come from cavemen dancing to music, and people will gather to dance around music long after we’re dead. There’s huge geography left.”•



Sara *Newkirk* Simon:



always felt other,” says Sara Newkirk Simon as she recalls the path that led her to a music career and her present perch as a partner and Co-Head of Music at William Morris Endeavor. “I never felt like I belonged. I didn’t feel a sense of community; I didn’t feel understood. I definitely felt like an alien. The times when I didn’t, 90% of the time, the thing that made me feel connected to something greater than me—deeper than me—was music.”

She has turned the otherness she felt into a pursuit of supporting artists’ career visions well beyond the traditionally understood scope of “the agent.” She’s worked with Pharrell Williams on music, film and politics; figured prominently in Kanye West’s partnership with Nike; assisted Selena Gomez’s successful foray into cutting-edge TV production; and plenty more

besides. “The way to success is being true to who the person is,” she explains. “What are the adjectives that best describe you as a human being? How does every venture that we touch fulfill at least two of these adjectives, so we stay on brand?”

“Sara has the mind of a stone cutter,” declares Pharrell. “She looks at every possible angle of a situation to find the optimum desired spot, enabling the talent to shine the best. She is an integral part of my team, and I’m so grateful to have her.”

Endeavor Executive Chairman Patrick Whitesell declares she “has an innate ability to understand an artist’s goals and is relentless in her pursuit of helping them achieve their vision while preserving their artistic integrity. Sara brings enthusiasm and creativity to everything that she touches.”

“Sara is a force; she is selfless, passionate, brilliant, opinionated, and innovative,” declares Warner Bros. Records CEO Aaron Bay-Schuck. “However, what I believe sets her apart from her peers is simply how much she cares. She goes above and beyond to develop real and meaningful relationships with her clients and co-workers, challenges everyone around her to be the best and most daring version of themselves, and is always available to talk and give advice at any hour of the day or night.”

“For us, Sara has been the one who’s activated the idea of a full-service agency, because she’s brought the strength of every department at WME,” says Patriot Management’s Ron Laffitte, who numbers Pharrell among his clients. “Not only has she put incredible opportunities in front of us and helped us navigate which are the ones to accept and which are the ones to steer away from, but she’s also

helped us to determine which are the best deals, what the market opportunities are. Because if you can utilize the scale of a big agency and have all the information, you can make better decisions.”

“I’ve had the good fortune to work with a lot of great agents, but I’ve never worked with an agent like Sara, who brings the entire agency to life and creates opportunities for our client both inside and outside the agency,” Laffitte adds. “Certainly, in the case of Pharrell Williams, my partner and co-manager Caron Veazey and I have worked very hard to assemble a brain trust around Pharrell—a group of people who frame his brilliant ideas in the best possible way. And Sara, as much as anybody, has been a visionary and a catalyst for those great ideas.”

“Sara is intelligent, has great taste, and—on top of it all—is a strong woman, which is so important in our industry,” observes Lighthouse Management & Media CEO Aleen Keshishian.

Born a hog-farmer’s daughter in Clarks Hill, Indiana, Sara Newkirk first found refuge from the torpor of her surroundings on the radio dial. “It was a lot of Fleetwood Mac, Bruce Springsteen, REO Speedwagon,” she notes, recalling the times “when you’re riding in a car, and you get that sense of Divine Intervention when you’re feeling a certain way, and you change the station and the song you’ve been waiting for was on.”

She was about six when she first heard Prince. “He was the first one, the first love,” she says, chronicling what became an “obsession”—but also a blueprint for her assessment of an act. It was Prince’s utter control not only of the playing,

Finding the Adjectives



Running down the adjectives with Selena Gomez and Miguel

recording and mixing of his music but every touchpoint, from his look and choreography to the font on his album sleeve, that helped her understand what the cultivation and maintenance of an artist brand really meant. “Consciously or subconsciously, when I’m experiencing an artist for the first time,” she says, “I’m thinking about whether they are hitting those notes, really controlling everything. Prince was so ahead of his time. He knew how to market, but it’s not a marketing plan—he wasn’t making his art to sell it.

He was marketing his heartfelt art.”

The provincial world she lived in, meanwhile, was suffocating. “I got sent to the bathroom at school and had to turn my *Purple Rain* T-shirt—one of two I made my mom buy me at Blockbuster—inside out, because it was an R-rated movie,” she recalls. “It was the only way I could stay in school that day.”

She found her way to Walnut Hill School, an arts-centered boarding school in Massachusetts, where she studied musical theater for a little while. By age

16, though, she knew “the whole idea of auditioning and rejection is so not me.” (She has nonetheless been a booster as an alumna; “I really try to be supportive of their endowment and the kids who are entering and leaving the school,” she told *Variety* in 2010).

But the school did, in a roundabout way, offer her the entrée she truly sought: Thos Niles, who played drums in Boston hardcore band La Gritona and whose sister worked in the admissions office. “The idea that this musician would even

talk to some bratty girl at an art school his sister worked at—I'll never forget that," she says, adding that her friendship with members of the band continues to this day. Through that contact she made her way to the Middle East club in Beantown, which proved the grungy gateway to her true calling.

"It was magical," she remembers of the nightspot, a Lebanese restaurant with a downstairs stage that hosted the coolest bands in the burgeoning alternative movement. "It was dirty, it was crazy. These two guys who owned it, Joseph and Nabil [Sater Habib], seemingly didn't understand any of the music being booked there, but they empowered the bookers, and you had people like [Pixies founder/frontman] Frank Black eating hummus downstairs every day, and the Mighty Mighty Bosstones residency every Christmas, and J. Geils, Morphine, Buffalo Tom, Letters to Cleo. I just fell in love with all of the music."

The staff, she said, "took pity on me" and offered her an internship; she drew up the calendar and fetched hummus—and then got her next break, working with the Bosstones on their *Hometown Throwdown*. She moved to New York after just a year in Boston, and was summoned by the band's manager, Ami Bennett, to take on day-to-day management duties. With space at the offices of Nasty Little Man, she not only looked after the Bosstones but looked in on NLM's work with the Beastie Boys, including the Tibetan Freedom Concerts. She describes remotely handling her management duties as "a nightmare," as the Bosstones played 300 shows per year and she struggled to make ends meet in Manhattan.

"I was waiting tables a good three to four years because it was the only way I could afford to live," she remembers, noting that in addition to her daily music work she'd work restaurant shifts on Wednesday nights and a double on Saturday. All this to afford "a sixth-floor, rat-infested one-bedroom apartment on 28th between 7th and 8th—you couldn't shut the bathroom door. I was living the dream."

The Bosstones sought new management—and Newkirk Simon hooked them up (with Arthur Spivak and Stu Sobol) before starting meetings for herself. "I

was introduced to Peter Malkin, who was renting space from Cornerstone; he brought me in there." She was becoming increasingly enamored of hip-hop, she says, and her first client was Zack de la Rocha of *Rage Against the Machine*. Then came Maxwell, M.I.A., TV on the Radio and Nas.

WME came calling in 2006, and what they offered was unconventional. "I got a call from Dave Wirtschafter," she says, "and I remember saying to him, 'I don't want to be an agent!' He said, 'Don't be an agent. Do what you do. Work on the marketing and building these clients out in a multifaceted way.' At Cornerstone, I was

“The way to success is being true to who the person is. What are the adjectives that best describe you as a human being? How does every venture that we touch fulfill at least two of these adjectives, so we stay on brand?”



The “stone cutter” with Snoop Dogg and Pharrell Williams

“I was waiting tables a good three to four years because it was the only way I could afford to live... [I lived in] a sixth-floor, rat-infested one-bedroom apartment on 28th between 7th and 8th—you couldn’t shut the bathroom door. I was living the dream.”



In a clinch with hubby Jesse Simon and Selena Gomez

able to do so many different jobs. I had this management vertical, but then I was also working with them on *The Fader* and the brand work they were doing. I was already doing a version of [what WME suggested] there.”

The time had come, she felt, to make a move. “The truth is that I was getting to my expiration date of the more consuming work,” she admits. “I think being a manager is the hardest job in the business. As far as building out your staff, you’re responsible for hiring the lawyer and the business manager, the agent, picking the record label and publisher—all those things. But you also have to be the people who are on top of what’s happening with the car services, buying the house and all the other personal stuff. I felt I was looking down the barrel of a life of singledom and always being on that treadmill. I wanted to work in a greater volume with more people on a different level with different focus.”

Newkirk Simon describes the structure at the top of her department as a “triangle,” with partner/head of music Marc Geiger at the top and “me and [partner/co-head of music] Kirk Sommer in each corner.” That triangle, though, “can spin,” she adds. “Sometimes you’re on top; sometimes you’re on the side.” She has focused on maintaining a profile that isn’t bound by music, as the film, TV, branding and other opportunities she’s helped foster for clients amply demonstrate. At WME, she told *Variety*, “people are encouraged to think in a way that’s unlimited.”

And she has clearly achieved the work-life balance she was seeking, raising two kids with sculptor Jesse Simon in L.A.

“She’s a connector of people and truly loves the process of helping artists and executives excel in their careers,”

Bay-Schuck notes. “And through it all, despite her around-the-clock work ethic, she still finds a way to achieve the perfect work and life balance, always putting her family and well-being first. I admire and respect her very much.”

Longtime client Usher declares, “Sara plays an integral part of helping turn an artist’s vision into reality. Through her creative ideas, expert advice and her keen ability to tap into her varied resources, she has proven herself to be a undeniable force in helping artist’s achieve their goals.”

“Sara is a friend, a trusted confidant and an angel in our corner as we navigate our way through the entertainment world,” shares artist Camila Cabello. “We are so thankful she’s been such a strong presence on our journey.”

“She brings a real strength based on our passion and creative thinking, and she brings a very special and close relationship with the artists with whom she works—when you combine those things,

that’s a magical formula for success,” says attorney Kenny Mciselas. “She oversees artists’ needs from the perspective of a totality, and with her team she’s able to service all aspects of their careers.”

“Sara is a magician, if I had to sum it up,” says artist/actor and **OutKast** co-founder **Andre Benjamin**. “She is an idea-nurturer, a voice of truth and reason, and a therapist at times. She has great taste and actually gets it done. Whatever ‘it’ is. She will find the swiftest and best way to do it.”

“To me and many others, Sara is like a guardian angel,” offers **100 Management’s Luke Mitzman**. “She chooses her people carefully, because she cares for her clients in a deeply personal way and will commit to them on a level that is unparalleled. Sara is always three or four moves ahead of everyone else in the room and there’s no better feeling than having her in your corner. She’s simply the best.”

“Sara always brings great energy to any room or meeting,” observes manager **Tony Sal (The Weeknd)**. “I admire her passion and strategy. My clients and I consider her family.”

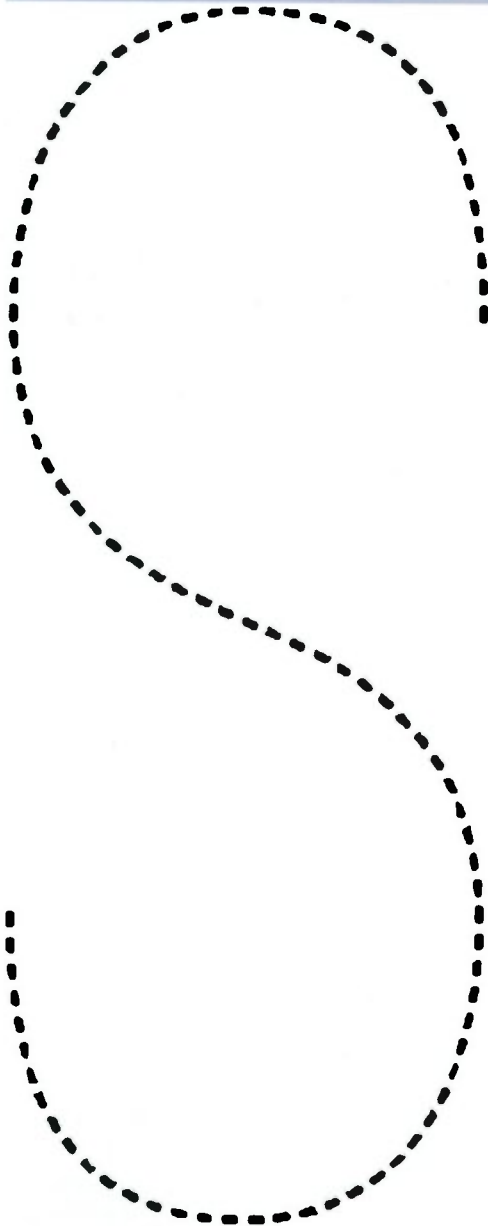
“I know that I’m biased,” says **Capitol Music Group COO Michelle Jubelirer**, “but Sara brings incredible and undeniable passion to her job, which is obvious whenever you hear her extolling the virtues of one of her clients. It’s always natural—never forced—and brutally honest (yes, we have that in common). That’s why she’s equally loved and respected by the talent she works with and the partners she has forged relationships with over decades in the business. She’s also strategic in her thinking and understands her business inside and out. It’s a powerful combination of attributes, and the result is Sara’s stellar career and her incredible value to the entire music business.”•

JUST US GALS: with Camila Cabello and lifelong pals Sarah Goldstein, Natasha Ferris and Nicola Tallarico



Rob Stringer

The Heat-Seeking Missile



Some execs enjoy the trappings of power, the pomp and circumstance of office. Rob Stringer is not one of these execs.

The Sony Music boss is never happier than when he's in the back of some tiny club, checking out a fledgling artist. Indeed, his obsession with A&R has guided his career and been a key focus of his tenure thus far as a label group head.

"It's all I've ever wanted to do since I was seven," he told U.K. paper *The Independent*. "I can look bands in the eye, still to this day, and not have my purity questioned on that level."

Stringer's advantage over the competition is that he has the innate ability to identify and sign top talent. As Columbia Records' Chairman/CEO, he was the dominant label head when it came to closing the top acts, especially the rock artists of the era; his pedigree was impeccable.

Subsequently, during his first year as Sony Music chieftain, Stringer's anointment of Ron Perry and the returning David Massey, along with his abiding confidence in Peter Edge, are indicative of his firm belief that a label's top dog should be a creative exec.

"I've known Rob for a long time and respected what he's done at Columbia Records," Edge told us recently. "He's been in the day-to-day business of running a label for years, so he understands everything that's going on, and it's super-valuable to have his insights. He's a music guy, which I really love, because you can have great musical conversations with him and he just gets it. He's also an aggressive player; his support is enabling us to make these deals and go for it."

There's something about Rob that's reminiscent of the golden age of the rock raconteur—those passionate free spirits who ran the business in the U.S.





ROLLING IN THE DEEP, AND ALSO THE DOUGH: *With Adele and Doug Morris*



With Steve Barnett, Beyoncé and Jay-Z

and the U.K. during the mid- to late 20th century. Like his forerunners, he can look an artist in the eye and feel comfortable about the commitment he's making, because he *believes* in the artist and the commitment he's making. Now, of course, Stringer's mandate is far broader, and his global plate is overflowing with responsibilities. Even so, he remains focused on instilling that same feeling in all those who work for him. And if he has the first meeting with a prospective signing, the

artist in question may well pass on taking a subsequent meeting with any of the others who are in pursuit, according to a top U.S. manager.

"Rob is a great partner whom I've enjoyed working with over the past 11 years," Jonathan Dickins, Adele's longtime manager, tells us. "The term 'artist-friendly' gets bandied around way too easily, but it is something that absolutely can be used to describe Rob and the way he supports and empathizes with artists."

Stringer's obsession began quite early. In 1976, the 14-year-old—dazzled by David Bowie and stirred by punk—started sneaking into shows at Friars Aylesbury, the coolest nightspot in his Buckinghamshire town. It was there he bore witness to the righteous racket of The Clash and was forever changed. Shows by Tom Petty, U2, The Ramones, Talking Heads, Blondie, XTC, The Stranglers and other breakouts of the era electrified him.

Stringer has been in the Sony system for a staggering 33 years—a hair longer than this wretched publication has existed. After graduating from Goldsmith's College, he entered as an A&R and marketing trainee at the London outpost of CBS Records, while his older brother Howard, who would one day become the first Westerner to helm Sony Corp., was an exec at CBS News. His marketing mentor was Nick Rowe, but it was Tim Bowen—who came to the Blighty office from New York—who moved him into A&R. His grounding in these two skills, Stringer later told *Music Week*, was vital for the “mixture of creativity and common sense” it bestowed. “A&R is schizophrenic,” he mused, “and for me to have a bit of schizophrenia in my makeup at that time was good. In marketing you can maybe end up a bit too rigid, especially once you’ve been doing it a while. A&R is not that—it’s lonely, it’s subjective and it’s far from rigid.”

His tenure at CBS saw Stringer exercising both his creativity and good sense in inking George Michael, Paul Young, Manic Street Preachers, Alison Moyet, Deacon Blue and Bros. He was tapped as Managing Director of Epic U.K. in 1992, two years into Tommy Mottola’s reign at the mothership; by 2001 was Chairman of Sony U.K. That move opened his eyes to the costs of being the boss.

“Running a label was in my comfort zone,” he recalled to *Music Week*’s Dave Roberts, “so I, perhaps foolishly, thought running a company would be an extension of that. But it was very, very different and very, very difficult,” in large part because he was removed from what he loved best: the day-to-day work of signing and developing artists.

“I didn’t handle that as well as I’d have liked,” he continued, “because I didn’t expect it and I just didn’t think about it enough. I ended up spreading myself too thin and it was much harder than I thought it would be, that’s the honest truth. But that’s a good thing in a career: Why should it always be easy? It won’t, that’s for certain. And I learned as



SYCO, KILLER: With Simon Cowell



“CHURCH” GOERS: With Hozier, Doug Morris and Greg Linn

“Rob’s a music guy, which I really love, because you can have great musical conversations with him and he just gets it. He’s also an aggressive player; his support is enabling us to make these deals and go for it.”—Peter Edge



GRAMMY GANG: With Sylvia Rhone, Calvin Harris, Camila Cabello, Diplo and Ron Perry



BLIGHTY BEAT: With Jason Iley

much in that period as I did in any other.”

The next several years would be tumultuous ones. “A lot of people didn’t want me to win,” he told Roberts, “because of what I represented.” Still, he agreed to cross the pond and step into the role of Chairman of Sony Music U.S. While the new gig gave him “the chance to reinvent myself,” he noted years later, “I walked into a firestorm.”

Still, he acknowledges, he didn’t get the gig because things were going well there, but “because it was screwed up.” Removing an entire stratum of management, he made a big bet on a crew of young execs who, he felt, reflected better values than their predecessors. When Sony bought Bertelsmann’s 50% of the merged company in 2008, the new entity was dubbed Sony Music Entertainment. Stringer, now holding the title Columbia/Epic Label Group Chairman under Rolf Schmidt-Holtz, oversaw several deals during this period that would become fundamental to the company’s success going forward—notably the signing of Adele to Columbia and a deal with brilliant A&R man Simon Cowell’s SYCO that would bring in, among others, the mighty One Direction.

Despite the merger, the integration of Sony and BMG cultures was contentious, with the faction loyal to Stringer sparring (and, by some accounts, openly warring) with the crew reporting to RCA/Jive boss Barry Weiss and his consigliere, Ivan Gavin.

In 2011, former UMG chief Doug Morris replaced Schmidt-Holtz as new head of SME. Morris moved quickly to reshape the group’s leadership with a decided A&R focus. This meant putting L.A. Reid in charge of Epic, Peter Edge atop RCA and moving Stringer into a Co-Chairman role with Steve Barnett at Columbia, Stringer as CEO and Barnett as COO.

Columbia was surging at the time, notably on the strength of Adele’s *21*, which bowed at #1 and went on to sell a staggering 11m+ and bring her six Grammy trophies (including the top three categories). Along with 1D, she was the wind beneath Columbia’s wings as it took the marketshare lead. In late 2012, Barnett was tapped by Lucian Grainge in the wake of UMG’s EMI acquisition, settling in as head of Capitol and leaving his longtime friend and partner as sole Columbia chief. The following year, thanks in large part to collaborators Pharrell and Nile Rodgers, the Stringer-signed Daft Punk became a monster. Then came Pharrell’s own

universally beloved smash “Happy.”

“I can hustle with the best of them,” Stringer told us in 2013. “I can roll my sleeves up and argue against any other label to try and get an artist.”

In 2011, nearly five years before he launched Patriot Management, Ron Laffitte witnessed the Stringer magic firsthand as he was shopping a deal for Pharrell, his then-new client. “We were out playing really good tracks for people from what would become the *G I R L* album,” Laffitte recalls. “Rob heard a couple of things and called me up, saying ‘I need to meet with you and Pharrell immediately. I’m flying to L.A., we’re going to have lunch and I want to make a solo album deal with Pharrell Williams; this is his time,’ Rob said. ‘He’s a genius, and he’s making records that we need to put out and the world needs to hear. This is a guy whose cultural impact

should be on the level of Jay-Z and Justin Timberlake. I want to help get him there, and I have an idea about how to do it.’

“Before we sat down to have lunch with Rob, I said to Pharrell, ‘I’m going to ask you to just listen. Rob’s got a vision to share and you’re a visionary, so oftentimes you dominate the conversation because you have clarity of purpose. But I’d like you to give Rob the opportunity to tell you where he’d like to go because *he* has clarity of purpose.’ So when we sat down for lunch, Rob was like, ‘So what’s going on?’ and Pharrell says, ‘Nothing.’ Rob questioned, ‘Nothing?’ and Pharrell said, ‘Ron told me I’m just supposed to listen to you [laughs].’ Rob said, ‘OK, here goes.’

“It was incredible to be part of the process, because he was so clear,” Laffitte marvels. “This deal was all Rob Stringer—100%. He was the only one who had anything to do with it.”

In addition to his newest stars, mean-

while, Stringer notched successes with label annuities like Barbra Streisand, Tony Bennett, Bruce Springsteen and Neil Diamond, nurtured unorthodox stars like Susan Boyle and Il Divo, hooked up a pact with Jack White’s Third Man Records and quietly developed a stunning new project with Bowie. “I see myself as the curator of a modern art museum,” he reflected in his *Music Week* profile. “You don’t own it. You have all these masterpieces, but you want to put some brand-new art in there—you want to make it multidimensional.”

“Do I think we are a destination for sophisticated, tasteful, cool stuff? Absolutely,” Stringer opined in a *HITS* interview. “Of all the majors, we have a very good reputation in that area. I would never rest on my laurels, thinking that we’re the only people like that. But at the end of the day, artists

“The term ‘artist-friendly’ gets bandied around way too easily, but it is something that absolutely can be used to describe Rob and the way he supports and empathizes with artists.”

—Jonathan Dickins



CHILDISH THINGS: With Peter Edge, Donald Glover (aka Childish Gambino), John Fleckenstein and manager Chad Taylor



DIAMONDS ARE A LABEL'S BEST FRIEND: Celebrating a milestone with Adele, manager Jonathan Dickins and Team Columbia

come out of the experience feeling very good about being here. I'm very proud of that fact."

"Rob always puts the music first—he starts with a song, an artist's vision, a creative idea—and everything follows from there," says Ian Montone, Jack White's manager. "His belief in the creative process is his strength, and artists love him for it. He's excellent at making people believe in what he believes, because when he believes, he's unstoppable."

2013 saw Stringer honored as Music Visionary of the Year by the UJA-Federation of New York, occasioning the customary array of bagel jokes from us.

In 2014 he received *Music Week's* prestigious Strat Award, which was presented to him by Bowie. "When I first knocked on the door of his office at Sony New York, you can imagine my surprise

when a member of Daft Punk opened it," the mercurial rock icon recalled in his introduction, adding that after this robot ushered him to a seat, its helmet came off—revealing Stringer.

"This," he said, "is how far I will go for my artists," Bowie continued. "I found out that during the course of that day, Rob had not only guested as an executive third Daft Punk member at a lunchtime gig at a club in Manhattan, but had also led a Dylanology symposium at Barneys clothing store, sung falsetto on a new London Grammar track and choreographed a touching interpretive dance number to One Direction's 'They Don't Know About Us' for the cast of *Glee*... If you become the object of his enthusiasm, an artist will find a genuine long-term support that is sadly missing in the recording industry."

Stringer's Columbia continued its ascent with another gigantic, Grammy-dominating set from Adele (a Diamond winner by the fall of 2016), Beyoncé's monster, *Lemonade*, and Bowie's devastating swan song, *Blackstar*. All of this success—making Columbia the market-share monster of the year in a walk—served as prologue to the fall announcement that he would be upped to Sony Music CEO.

"Rob is a passionate and competitive executive who understands the importance and value of hits, and like a heat-seeking missile, he locks onto great artists," Morris declared upon Stringer's anointing. "Most importantly, he is one of the finest people I know. And moving forward, Sony Music Entertainment will be in the great hands of Rob Stringer."

The new boss also was also selected to