

PRODUCERS NOW

STUDIO MARVEL

INSIDE METRO BOOMIN'S
OWN CINEMATIC
UNIVERSE

PLUS

- × Mike Dean
- × Jack Antonoff
- × Andrew Watt
- × Ovy on the Drums
- × SZA's secret weapons

GRAMMY PREVIEW 2024

FEATURING

PinkPantheress

Gracie Abrams &
Aaron Dessner

PLUS

Ghostwriter
speaks out

billboard

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OCTOBER 7, 2023 • BILLBOARD.COM



BILLBOARD'S R&B/HIP-HOP
ROOKIE
OF THE
YEAR

BEST
NEW
ARTIST
MTV VIDEO MUSIC
AWARDS

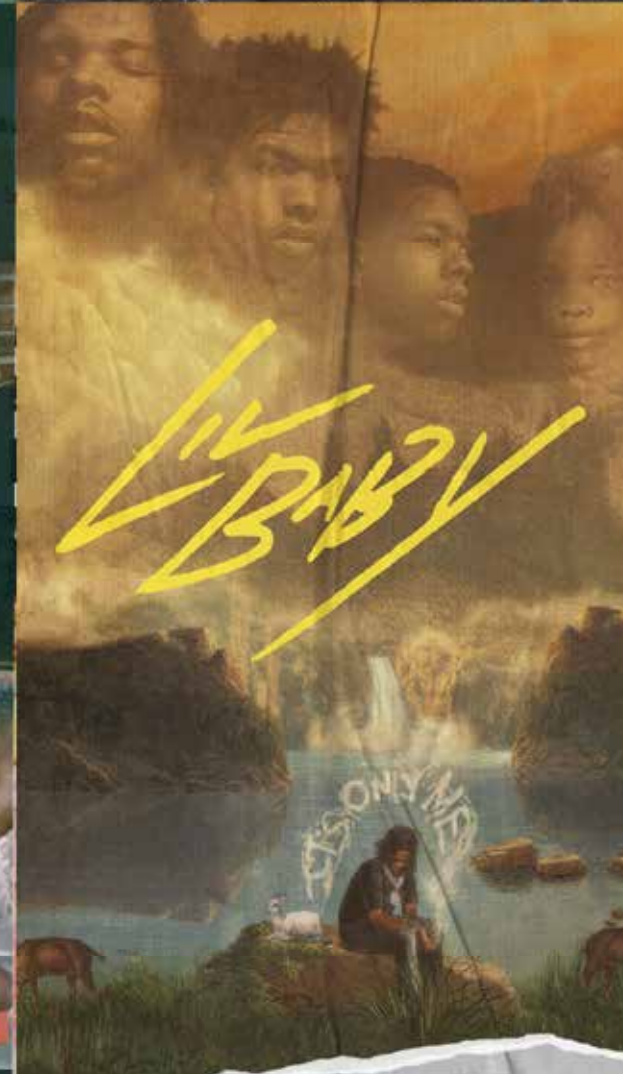
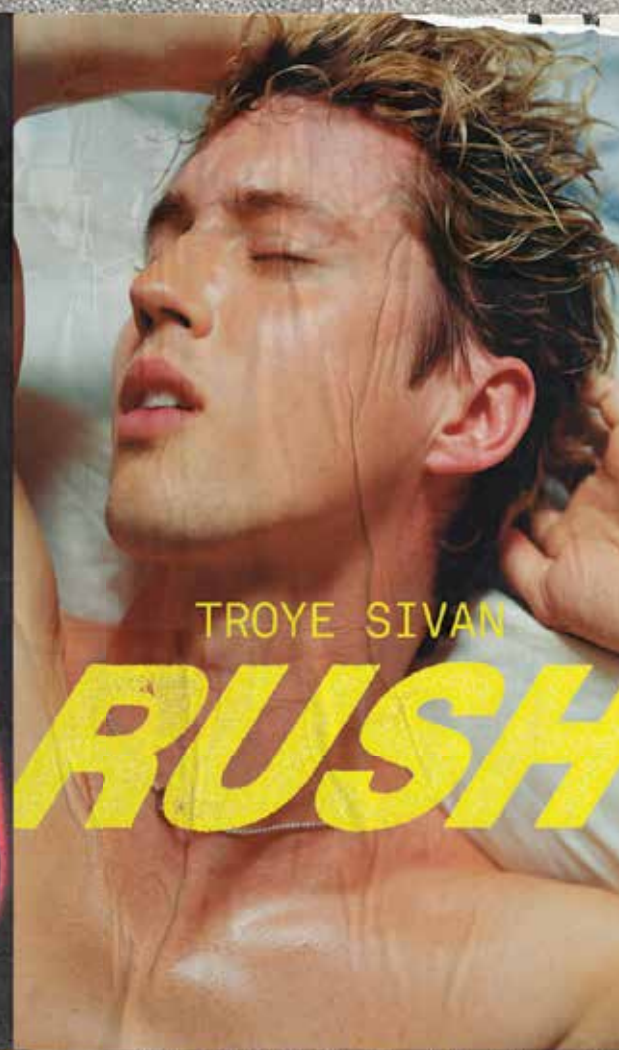
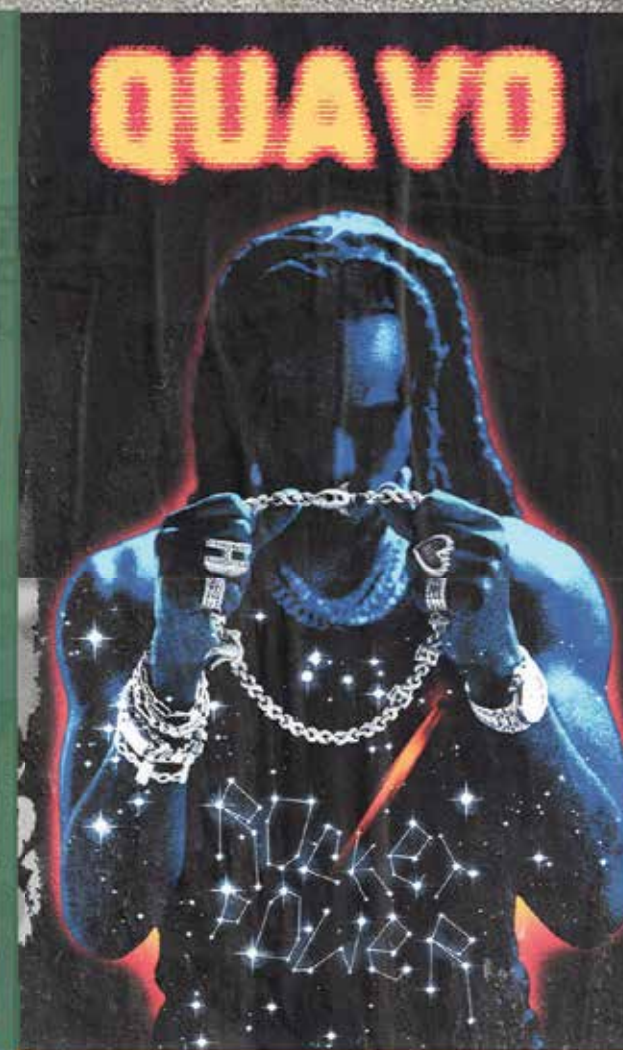
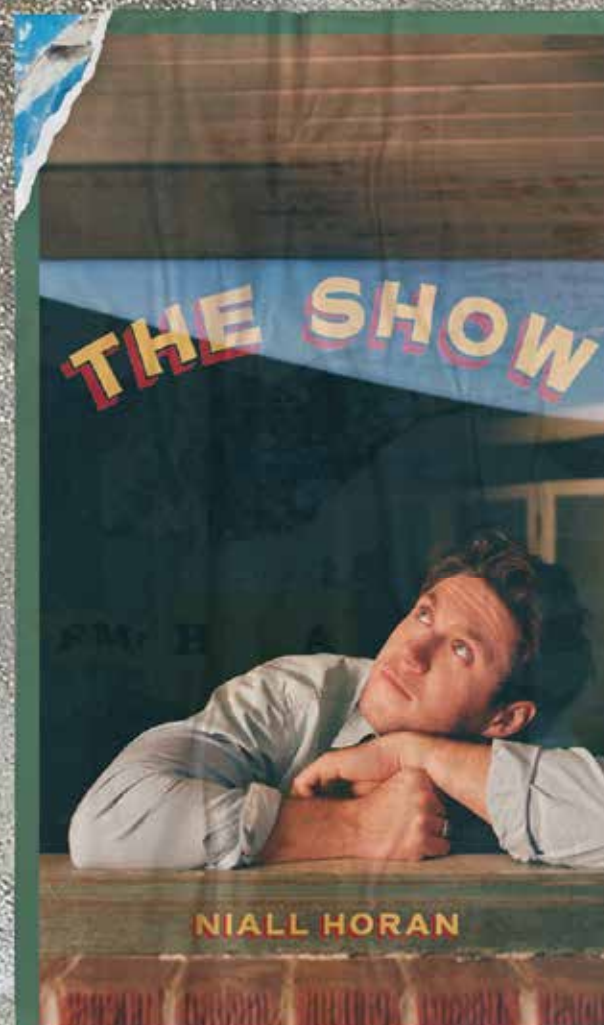
VEVO'S 2023 DSCVR
ARTIST
TO
WATCH

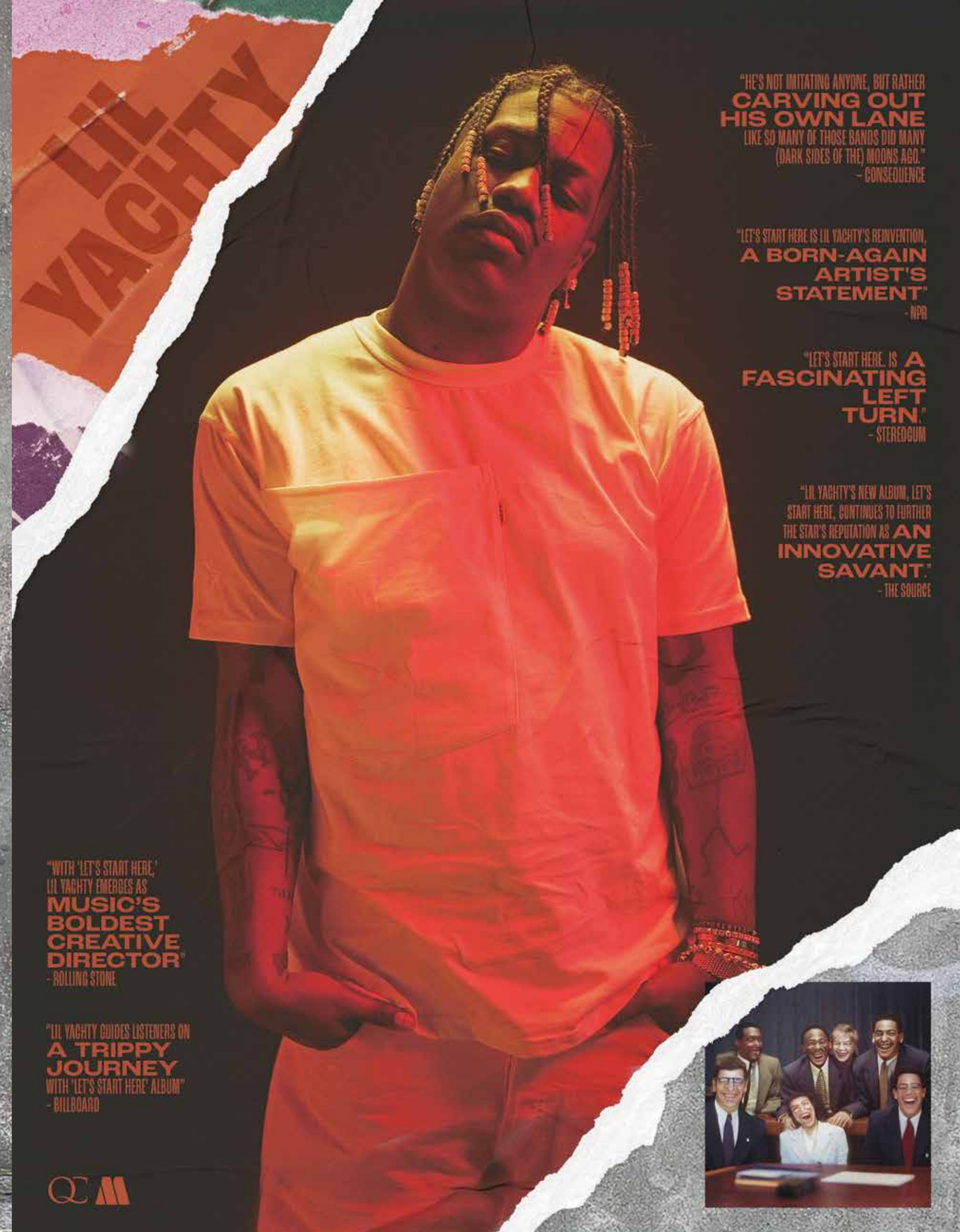
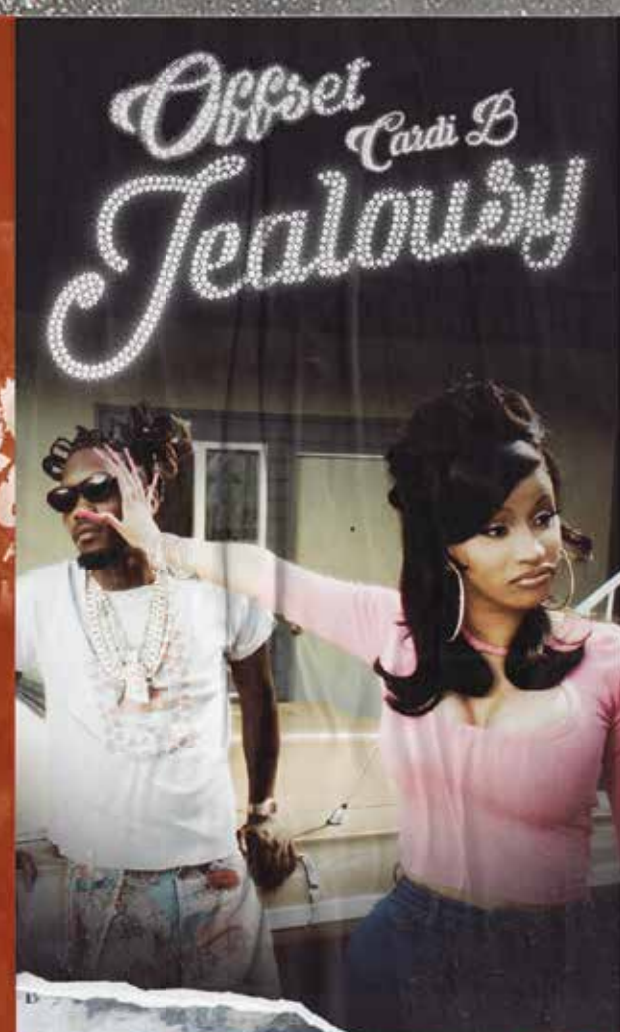
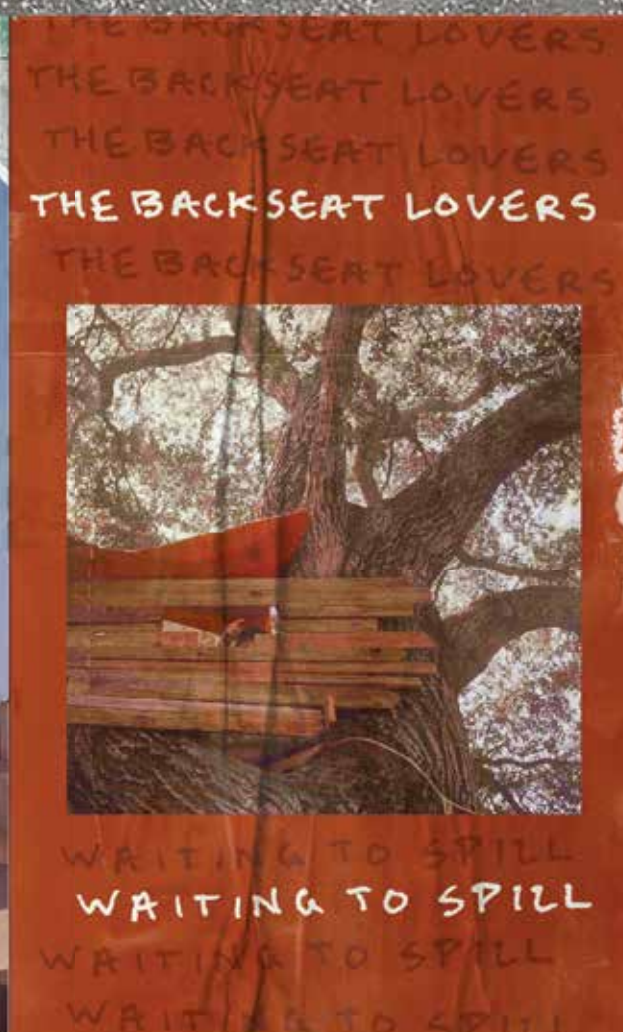
BMI HIPHOP/R&B
IMPACT
AWARD
WINNER

SHAZAM'S
TOP
2023
ARTIST
PREDICTION

BET'S AMPLIFIED
ARTIST
OF THE
MONTH

TIKTOK'S #1 EMERGING
ARTIST
OF THE
YEAR





"HE'S NOT IMITATING ANYONE, BUT RATHER CARVING OUT HIS OWN LANE LIKE SO MANY OF THOSE BANDS DID MANY (DARK SIDES OF THE) MOONS AGO."
- CONSEQUENCE

"LET'S START HERE IS LIL YACHTY'S REINVENTION, A BORN-AGAIN ARTIST'S STATEMENT"
- NPR

"LET'S START HERE. IS A FASCINATING LEFT TURN."
- STEREOGUM

"LIL YACHTY'S NEW ALBUM, LET'S START HERE, CONTINUES TO FURTHER THE STAR'S REPUTATION AS AN INNOVATIVE SAVANT."
- THE SOURCE

"WITH 'LET'S START HERE,' LIL YACHTY EMERGES AS MUSIC'S BOLDEST CREATIVE DIRECTOR"
- ROLLING STONE

"LIL YACHTY GUIDES LISTENERS ON A TRIPPY JOURNEY WITH 'LET'S START HERE' ALBUM"
- BILLBOARD



DRAKE

"Her Loss is our gain"



For Your GRAMMY® Consideration

Taylor Swift Midnights

"★★★★★"

The Guardian

"★★★★★"

INDEPENDENT

"★★★★★"

Rolling Stone

"Midnights heralds the return of a pop-music mastermind"

Los Angeles Times

For Your GRAMMY® Consideration



MORGAN WALLEN

ONE THING AT A TIME

"Morgan Wallen enters Adele territory"

The New York Times

"Country music consumption is way up in 2023 — and Morgan Wallen is leading the charge"

billboard



BIG LOUD



republic
records

For Your GRAMMY® Consideration

METRO BOOMIN HEROES & VILLAINS

"Metro Boomin has helped mold the sound of some of the biggest mainstream stars of the past decade as a producer and songwriter"

billboard

"The ultimate rap blockbuster"

COMPLEX



For Your GRAMMY® Consideration



republic
records

JONAS BROTHERS THE ALBUM

"Jonas Brothers' ambition is only getting bigger as its legacy expands"

RollingStone

"**THE ALBUM** was an instantly nostalgic thrill ride filled with plenty of harmonies, guitar and the most mature, intimate songwriting from the brothers to date"

billboard



republic
records

For Your GRAMMY® Consideration

POST MALONE AUSTIN

"*Austin* could be the musician's most epic album yet"

NME

"His voice... has never sounded better or more purposeful than it does here"

RollingStone



Mercury
records

republic
records

For Your GRAMMY® Consideration

Stray Kids

"Stray Kids have hit new heights with their comeback album *5-Star*"

Forbes

"Stray Kids' star is continuing to rise, and they're bringing us all up with them"

COS
CONSCIENCE OF SOUND



JYP IMPERIAL republic
records

For Your GRAMMY® Consideration

Tw TWICE

"The members of K-pop's most beloved girl group continue on their quest to dominate the scene and eventually the world"

MTV

"Still, in a crowded industry that's seemingly launching new acts every other week, *Ready to Be* proves that TWICE are not only ready to compete — they're ready to stake their claim to the top"

RollingStone



For Your GRAMMY® Consideration

JYP IMPERIAL republic
records



TOMORROW X TOGETHER

"From chart-hitting releases to record-setting firsts,
TOMORROW X TOGETHER continues to make its name known
in the industry and across the world"

● USA TODAY

"TXT has become a voice for their generation"

W



HYBE

BIGHIT
MUSIC

IMPERIAL

republic
records

For Your GRAMMY® Consideration

NOAH KAHAN

STICK SEASON

(We'll All Be Here Forever)

"Newly crowned...Kahan's phenomenon feels like a revival"

NEW YORK

"Kahan has become one of the most recognizable forces thanks to his alpine voice
and sucker-punch-to-the-heart lyrical style... now may be the time for his commercial breakthrough"

billboard



For Your GRAMMY® Consideration

Mercury
records

republic
records

METRO BOOMIN PRESENTS

SPIDER-MAN

ACROSS THE SPIDER-VERSE

SOUNDTRACK FROM AND INSPIRED BY THE MOTION PICTURE



"...not since Prince released the Batman soundtrack have superheroics sounded so cool"

RollingStone

"Metro Boomin has donned his soundtrack-composer outfit for the new Spider-Man movie, and the superstar producer netted a barrage of A-listers to help him out"

Pitchfork



republic
records

For Your GRAMMY® Consideration

STARCATCHER

GRETA VAN FLEET

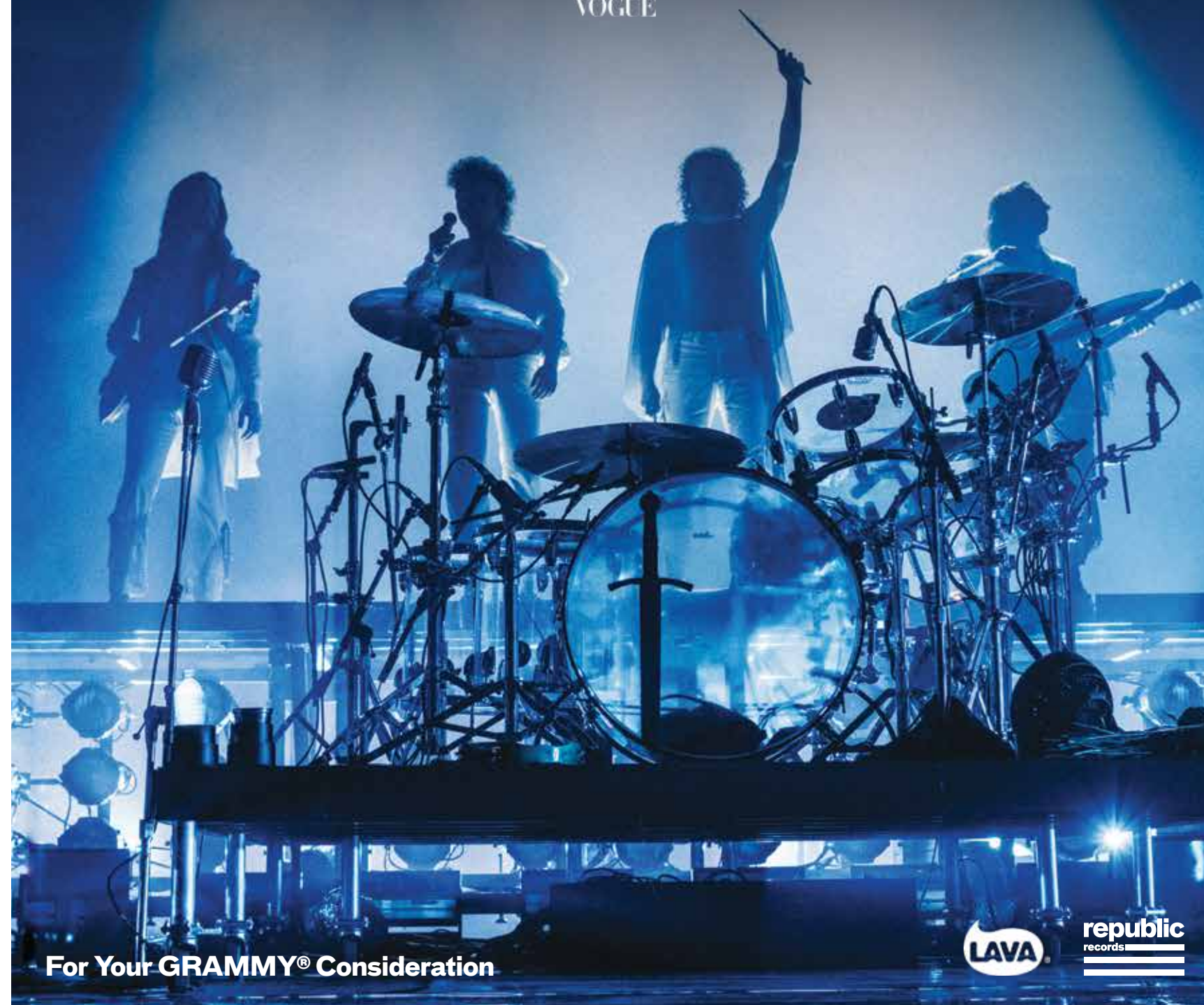
PRODUCED BY DAVE COBB

"It's one thing to hear a musician's work, their offering. It's quite another to experience a band's collective vision — in Greta Van Fleet's case, that means building a sonic universe rooted in mythology. The band continues to invite us to absorb the evolution of that vision"

AP Associated Press

"Between the group's elaborate onstage ensembles and a sound that puts a fresh spin on classic rock, Greta Van Fleet provides nothing short of a feast for the senses"

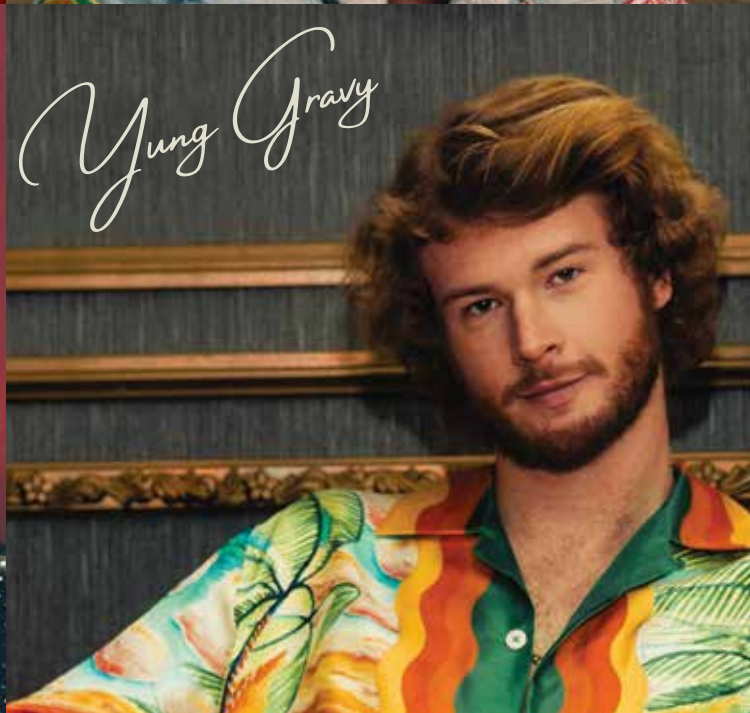
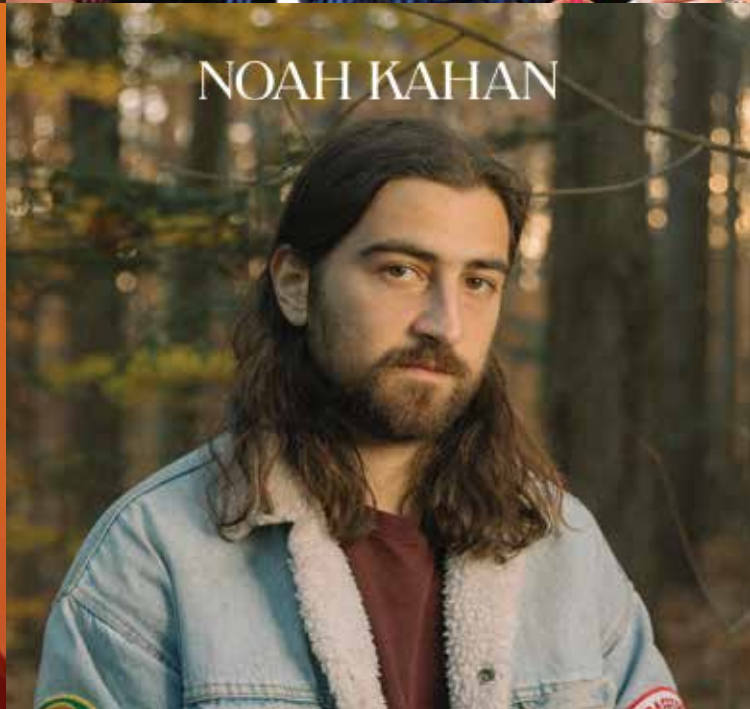
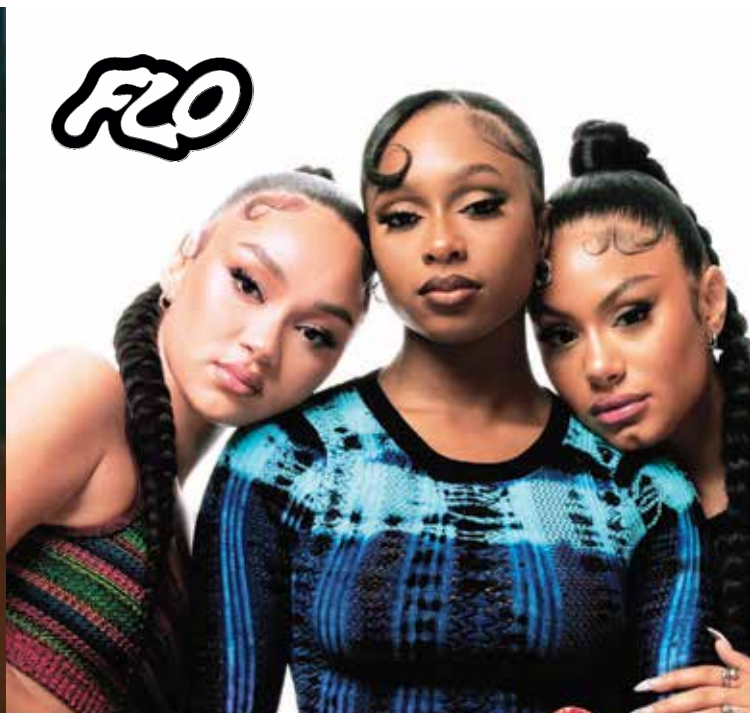
VOGUE



For Your GRAMMY® Consideration



republic
records



BEST NEW ARTIST

contents

OCT. 7, 2023

VOLUME 135

NO. 13

Features

84

SUPERPRODUCER

Metro Boomin spun a web of collaborators to become one of hip-hop's greatest heroes. With his biggest album yet and a *Spider-Verse* soundtrack to his name, can he use his creative powers to swing into pop's stratosphere?

98

PRODUCERS NOW

The producers powering chart hits now — including **Mike Dean**, **Jack Antonoff**, **Ovy on the Drums** and **Andrew Watt** — reveal the studio secrets, creative chemistry and work ethics behind their sustained success.

134

GRAMMY PREVIEW 2024

PinkPantheress' leap beyond TikTok, **Gracie Abrams** and **Aaron Dessner**'s symbiotic (and, perhaps, award-yielding) partnership, African music gets a category all its own and how **SZA** could bring R&B back to the Big Four.

ON THE COVER

Metro Boomin photographed by Sami Drasin on Aug. 31 at Woodbury Story House in Altadena, Calif.

TO OUR READERS

Billboard will publish its next issue on Oct. 21. For 24/7 music coverage, go to billboard.com.

For Your GRAMMY® Consideration





MASTHEAD

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Doja Cat's *Scarlet* debuts on the Billboard 200 as lead single "Paint the Town Red" returns to No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100.

THE MARKET

59

Morgan Wallen and Taylor Swift vault Republic Records almost four percentage points ahead of the nearest

competition for current market share through the third quarter.

64

AEG Presents president of North America Rick Mueller discusses the company's investment in small venues and the acts that play them.

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73

A long-awaited reunion, a superproducer's latest Hollywood stint and one of music's most dissected love stories told from the other side — the coming months will see a surplus of movies that put music at the forefront.

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173

TOP MUSIC BUSINESS SCHOOLS

Where to find the next generation of executives as it prepares to lead an increasingly complex industry.

CHARTBREAKER

250

Why soulful singer-songwriter Teddy Swims had to "Lose Control" to take off.

Aaron Dessner and Gracie Abrams photographed by Wesley Mann on Sept. 1 at Long Pond Studio near Hudson, N.Y.

We stand up for music.
We show up for music.
We fight for music.
We live for music.

Join us.



Hannah Karp
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FOR YOUR GRAMMY® CONSIDERATION

Ed Bazel - The London Sessions

"I could easily see Ed Bazel in the elite division of solo pianists. His compositions are on par with the best of the best."

★★★★★ Newage Music Guide

"To romanticize in the music framework is commonplace; it is another thing to make it into something extraordinary, and Ed Bazel accomplishes that."

★★★★★ New Age Music Reviews



Pristinely recorded and mastered at Abbey Road Studios, the heartfelt story behind Ed’s musical journey and philanthropy has entertained and inspired music fans worldwide.

The creative subtlety of this work has received numerous awards and accolades from international music competitions, new-age radio hosts, music collectors, music therapists, and more.

In response to his own family's cancer struggles, Ed began recording his original music, then founded The River of Calm™ radio, and established the River of Calm Headphones for Chemotherapy program to soothe patients with gentle music during their treatments.

FYC Page: <https://www.edbazel.com/fyc-2023> **Listen Now:** <https://edbazel.hearnow.com/>

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION IN THE CATEGORY
OF BEST NEW AGE, AMBIENT, OR CHANT ALBUM.



PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE OF MUSIC



ED SHEERAN



COLTON DIXON



BRISTON MARONEY



A BOOGIE WIT DA HOODIE



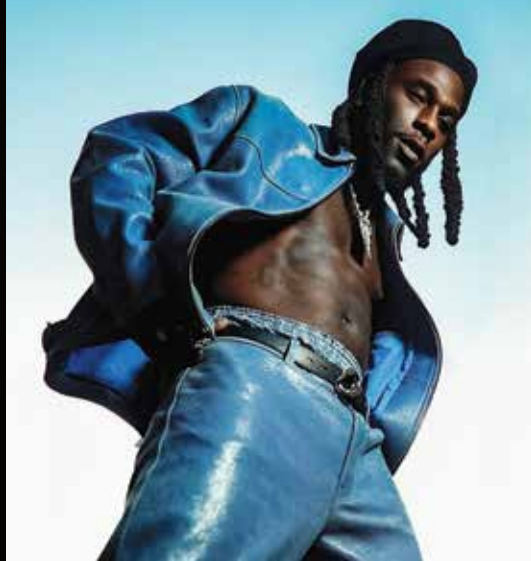
FINESSE2TYMES



CORDAE



BURNA BOY



AVA MAX



FLYANA BOSS



COROOK



CARDI B



& JULIET



FRED AGAIN..



DAISY JONES & THE SIX



CHARLOTTE CARDIN



BARBIE THE ALBUM



GUCCI MANE



DON TOLIVER



CHARLIE PUTH



BIG SCARR



SHINEDOWN



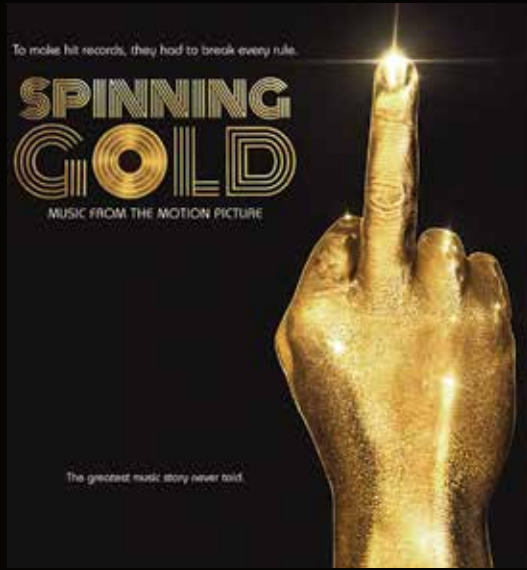
SIR CHLOE



SKRILLEX



SPINNING GOLD



TIËSTO



TY DOLLA \$IGN



MELANIE MARTINEZ



OHGEE\$Y



OLIVER TREE



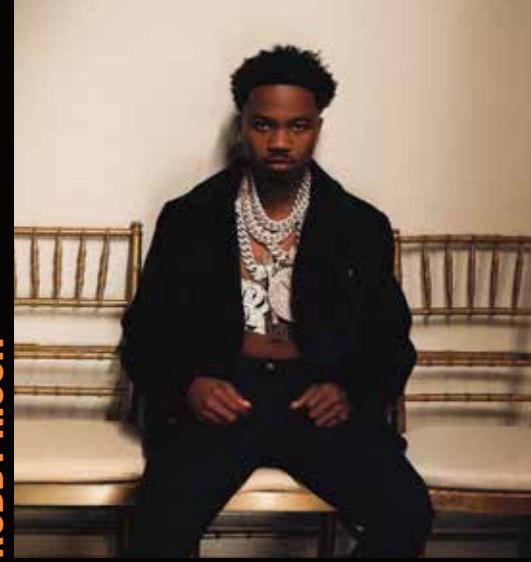
PARAMORE



PORTUGAL. THE MAN



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LIZZO



LUH TYLER



MAHALIA



MATCHBOX TWENTY



HALESTORM



IGGY POP



JACK HARLOW



JANELLE MONÁE



KALIII



KELLY CLARKSON



JANELLE MONÁE

THE AGE OF PLEASURE

"JANELLE MONÁE DOESN'T MAKE ALBUMS. SHE BUILDS WORLDS. THE AGE OF PLEASURE IS A CLAIMING AND CATALOGUING OF TERRESTRIAL SPACE. IT'S A BUFFET OF BIG-BAND GROOVES AND CAREFREE PARTY SCENES AND AN ITINERARY OF SEVERAL HOT SPOTS IN THE INTERCONNECTED, INTERCONTINENTAL CREATIVE DIALOGUE OF THE BLACK DIASPORA." – VULTURE

III
DOORWARD



MELANIE MARTINEZ

PORTALS

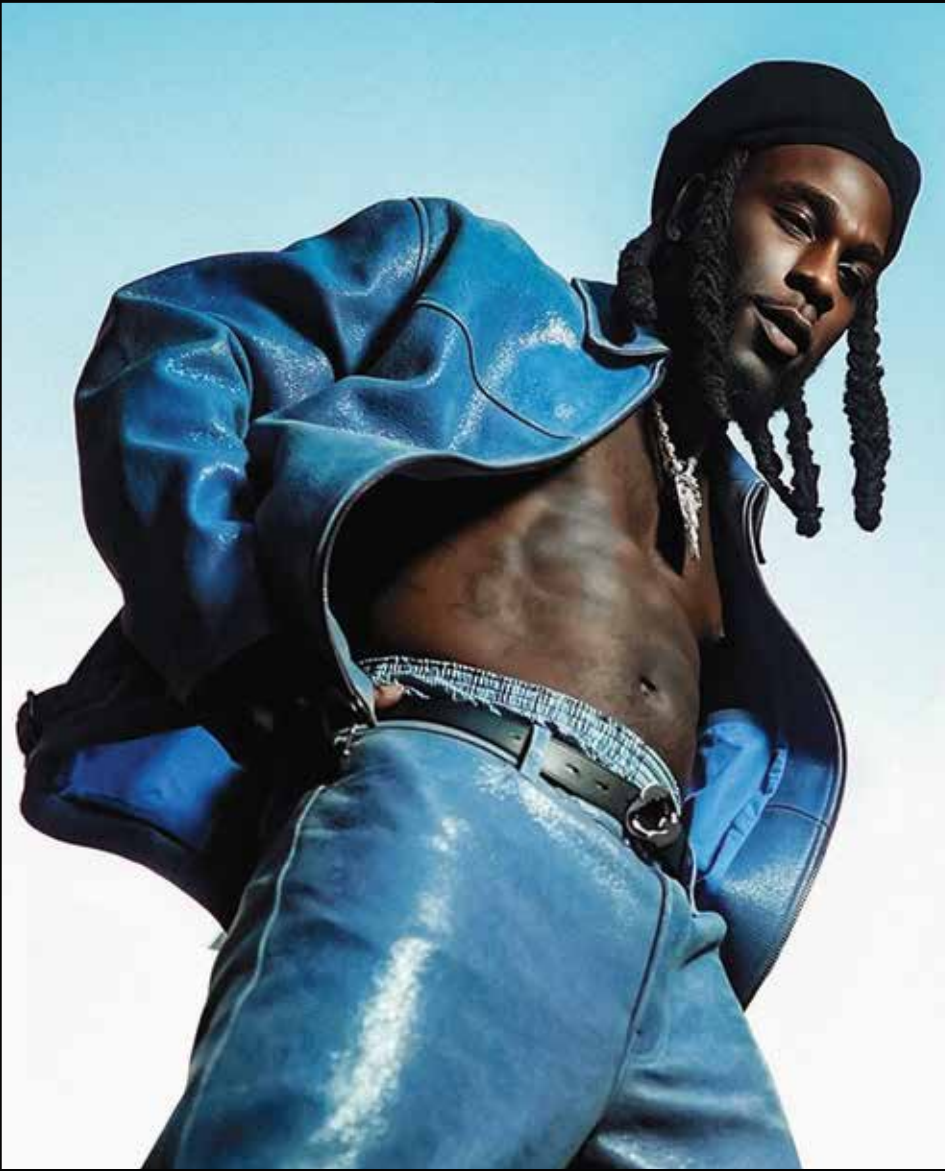
"WHEN IT COMES TO MAKING AMBITIOUS CONCEPT RECORDS, THERE AREN'T MANY ARTISTS IN HER CLASS... WITH PORTALS, MARTINEZ DELIVERS AN EFFORTLESSLY INVENTIVE, MATURE RECORD THAT REINTRODUCES HER AS AN ARTIST UNAFRAID TO START FROM SCRATCH AND TACKLE COMPLEX, DIFFICULT IDEAS. SHE ISN'T HIDING BEHIND HER BABY-PINK PROSTHETICS. SHE'S LETTING US INSIDE HER WORLD, AND THE STORY SHE TELLS IS CRISTAL CLEAR." – ROLLING STONE

ED SHEERAN

– (SUBTRACT)

"WITH SHEERAN'S NEW ALBUM, – (PRONOUNCED SUBTRACT)... HE'S IN SUDDEN DANGER OF ACHIEVING A NEW BRAND OF MUSICAL COOLNESS, THANKS TO SOME OF HIS MOST UNADORNED AND EMOTIVE SONGWRITING, PAIRED WITH THE CHIAROSCURO INVENTIVENESS OF PRODUCTION BY THE NATIONAL'S AARON DESHER." – ROLLING STONE

"...[SHEERAN] HAS PROVED HIMSELF TO BE A CONSUMMATE, DRIVEN 21ST-CENTURY MUSICIAN: GIFTED... WRITING SONGS THAT REVEAL IN DIRECT LANGUAGE AND BIG FEELINGS." – THE NEW YORK TIMES



BURNA BOY

I TOLD THEM...

"I TOLD THEM... IS A DELECTABLY CRAFTED AFROPOP ALBUM. THE SONGS ON I TOLD THEM... ARE SHARPLY WRITTEN BUT AT TIMES ALSO TENDER, BALANCING SERIOUSNESS WITH MOMENTS OF LEVITY." – ROLLING STONE

"HIS SEVENTH ALBUM HAS A TITLE THAT PROMISES THE VICTORY LAP FOR WHICH HE'S LONG-OVERDUE: IT'S CALLED I TOLD THEM... THE RECORD CONTINUES TO EXPAND BURNA BOY'S AFRO-FUSION PALETTE, AS HE DRAWS INSPIRATION FROM '90S HIP-HOP AND R&B – AND SOUNDS MORE ASSURED THAN EVER IN THE PROCESS." – NPR

SPACEDOUT
burna boy



DAISY JONES & THE SIX AURORA

“...CLASSIC ROCK SENSIBILITIES WITH AN EFFORTLESSLY MODERN FEEL...” – VARIETY

“AURORA IS AN UNPRECEDENTED PROJECT FOR A BOOK-TO-SCREEN ADAPTATION AND MUSICAL STORYTELLING ON TELEVISION.” – ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

prime video
hello
sunshine



KELLY CLARKSON chemistry

“... ‘CHEMISTRY’ REPRESENTS CLARKSON AT HER MOST VENTURESOME AND LIBERATED.” – VULTURE

“...IMMACULATE, SOARING VOCALS.” – THE NEW YORK TIMES

BARBIE THE ALBUM

“‘BARBIE THE ALBUM’ IS LIKE A PERFECT NIGHT ON THE DREAMHOUSE DANCEFLOOR. YOU WON’T WANT IT TO END.” – ROLLING STONE

“‘THE ‘BARBIE’ SOUNDTRACK IS FILLED WITH BOPS... A FUN POP SOUNDTRACK LIKE THE ONE ‘BARBIE’ BOASTS IS WORTH ITS WEIGHT IN ROSE GOLD.” – THE NEW YORK TIMES



LAUREN DAIGLE SELF-TITLED ALBUM

“...FILLED WITH SONGS THAT HIGHLIGHT HER BRAND OF PERSONAL POP AND SOULFUL ROOTS.” – BILLBOARD

“...ONE OF THE BEST SINGERS IN CONTEMPORARY POP.” – VARIETY



FRED AGAIN..

ACTUAL LIFE 3

"THE MOST RAPID ASCENT IN DANCE MUSIC OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS BELONGS TO THE BRITISH PRODUCER AND SONGWRITER FRED AGAIN.." – THE NEW YORK TIMES

"FRED AGAIN..’S LATEST ALBUM MAKES GOOD ON THE CONSIDERABLE HYPE, PROVIDING 13 SONICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY NUANCED TRACKS COBBLED TOGETHER FROM DIGITAL EPHEMERA, PULLING OFF THE RARE ACHIEVEMENT OF BEING AS RICH IN MEANING AS THEY ARE EFFECTIVE ON THE DANCEFLOOR." – BILLBOARD



SKRILLEX

QUEST FOR FIRE • DON'T GET TOO CLOSE

"...TWO STARKLY DIFFERENT ALBUMS THAT FLEX HIS EXPANSIVE SONIC PALETTE AND GIFT FOR COLLABORATION..." – RESIDENT ADVISOR

"THERE ISN'T A BETTER WAY THAT SKRILLEX COULD'VE MADE HIS RETURN, AND QUEST FOR FIRE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE REMEMBERED AS ONE OF HIS BEST." – THE LINE OF BEST FIT



LIL UZI VERT

PINK TAPE

"LONG-AWAITED PINK TAPE FINDS AN ARTIST STILL RELENTLESSLY BARRELING FORWARD, LEAVING EVERYONE IN THE DUST..." – ROLLING STONE

"PINK TAPE IS A MASTERPIECE." – STEREOGUM



PARAMORE

THIS IS WHY

"...THIS IS WHY, SHOWS A BAND THAT UNDERSTANDS WHAT EVOLVING AND ELEVATING THEIR CRAFT MEANS. THE ALBUM IS REPLETE WITH ECHOES OF THEIR PAST ALBUMS, AND THE RESULTING SOUND IS ECLECTIC." – TIME

"THE TIDES OF INFLUENCE IN MUSIC HISTORY MOVE IN UNEXPECTED WAYS. THERE ARE VERY FEW TOWERING ROCK LEGENDS... FOR INSTANCE, WHO'VE ENJOYED THE SPRAWLING AND INTENSIFYING AUTHORITY OF THE POP-PUNK BAND PARAMORE." – THE NEW YORKER





DON TOLIVER

LOVE SICK

“WHAT STICKS OUT IS THE TIMBRE OF THE R&B-TRAP SINGER’S VOICE, WHICH CAN BE A REMARKABLE INSTRUMENT, CAPABLE OF CONVEYING IMMENSE PATHOS...” – ROLLING STONE

“IN THE MIDDLE OF THE AFFAIR IS TOLIVER, GAINING CONFIDENCE AS A CROSS-GENRE LOTHARIO AND HOOK TACTICIAN, AND PRESENTING SOME OF HIS MOST MEMORABLE SONGS YET...” – BILLBOARD

Don Toliver

TIËSTO

DRIVE

“THE HUGE POPULAR DUTCH DJ’S NEW STUDIO ALBUM BRINGS HIS TRADEMARK EDM-POP BLAST...” – THE FADER

“TIËSTO HAS BEEN RIDING A LITANY OF MAJOR HITS, WHICH ARE NOW ASSEMBLED TOGETHER ON HIS NEW ALBUM, DRIVE.” – BILLBOARD



100 GECS

10,000 GECS

“AS CASUALTY GENIUS AS EVER...100 GECS PACK MORE IDEAS INTO 23 MINUTES THAN MOST ARTISTS WHO RELEASE 70--MINUTE-LONG ALBUMS.” – VARIETY

“...THE DUO’S UNPREDICTABLE SENSE OF HUMOR COURSE THROUGHOUT THE EXHILARATING ALBUM...” – THE NEW YORK TIMES



JACK HARLOW

JACKMAN

“...HARLOW IS BACK WITH JACKMAN, A SEMI-SURPRISE RELEASE AND A SURPRISINGLY URGENT SHOWCASE OF HIS TECHNICAL SKILLS AS AN MC... HE’S GONE BACK TO BASICS TO ILLUSTRATE HIS SKILLS BEFORE THE SPOTLIGHTS ARRIVED.” – BILLBOARD

“...THIRD ALBUM JACKMAN, A LEAN, 24-MINUTE BURST OF MIXTAPE-STYLE ENERGY THAT PROBABLY MAKES THE BEST CASE TO DATE FOR HARLOW AS ‘RAPPER’ RATHER THAN ‘SENSATION.’” – ROLLING STONE

Jack Harlow





Megan Thee Stallion

3X GRAMMY® WINNER

"Her"

Record Of The Year
Song Of The Year
Best Rap Performance
Best Rap Song

"Anxiety"

Best Melodic Rap Performance



"Being a good artist requires growth and relatability, two hallmarks of many of the songs in Megan's discography".

- TIME

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

FALL OUT BOY

2X GRAMMY® NOMINEE

So Much (For) Stardust

Album Of The Year
Best Rock Album

"Love From The Other Side"

Record Of The Year
Song Of The Year
Best Rock Song
Best Rock Performance

"We Didn't Start The Fire"

Best Pop Duo/Group Performance

"One Of The Best Albums Of 2023".
- Esquire



FUELED BY RAMEN CRUSH DCD2

ALL TIME LOW - ARIZONA
BAILEY ZIMMERMAN - BRANDI CARLILE
CHLOE MORIONDO - EMPIRE STATE BASTARD
FALL OUT BOY - FETTY WAP
FITZ AND THE TANTRUMS
GOJIRA - GRANDSON - GUNNA HUNXHO
ILSEY - KENYA VAUN - LAH PAT
LIL KEED - MAISIE PETERS - MARIA BECERRA
MEET ME @ THE ALTAR - MEGAN THEE STALLION
MOTIONLESS IN WHITE - MYRON ELKINS
NOTHING, NOWHERE. - ONE OK ROCK
PHONY PPL - PINK PANTHERESS - RIVAL SONS
RYAN BEATTY - SAM RYDER - SLIPKNOT
STATIC DRESS - TEE CRIZZLEY
THE BAND CAMINO - THE FRONT BOTTOMS
THEORY OF A DEADMAN - THXSOMCH
TONES AND I - TURNSTILE - TWENTY ONE PILOTS
VICTORIA CANAL - WANMOR - WATERPARKS
WHITE REAPER - YOUNG THUG

SAY
LESS



DO
MORE

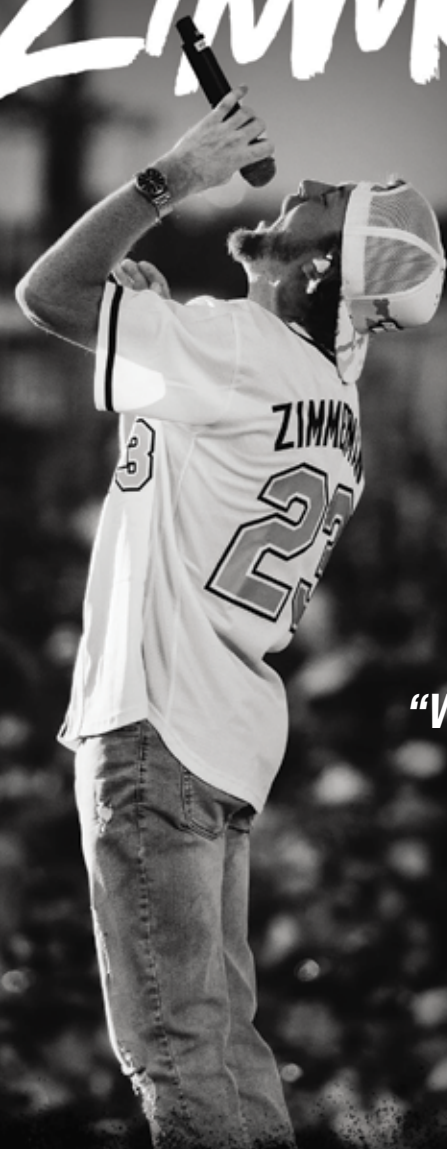


FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION
BILLBOARD'S 2023 COUNTRY ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

BAILEY ZIMMERMAN

"The brightest new star in
mainstream country music"

The New York Times



"Well on his way to becoming the
biggest new country artist"

Rolling Stone

RELIGIOUSLY THE ALBUM

BIGGEST FIRST WEEK ALL GENRE DEBUT SINCE 2021

Featuring the record-breaking singles "Rock And A Hard Place" and "Religiously"

Special guest on the Morgan Wallen One Night At A Time World Tour 2023 and 2024

SOLD OUT 2024 US + EUROPEAN HEADLINING TOUR

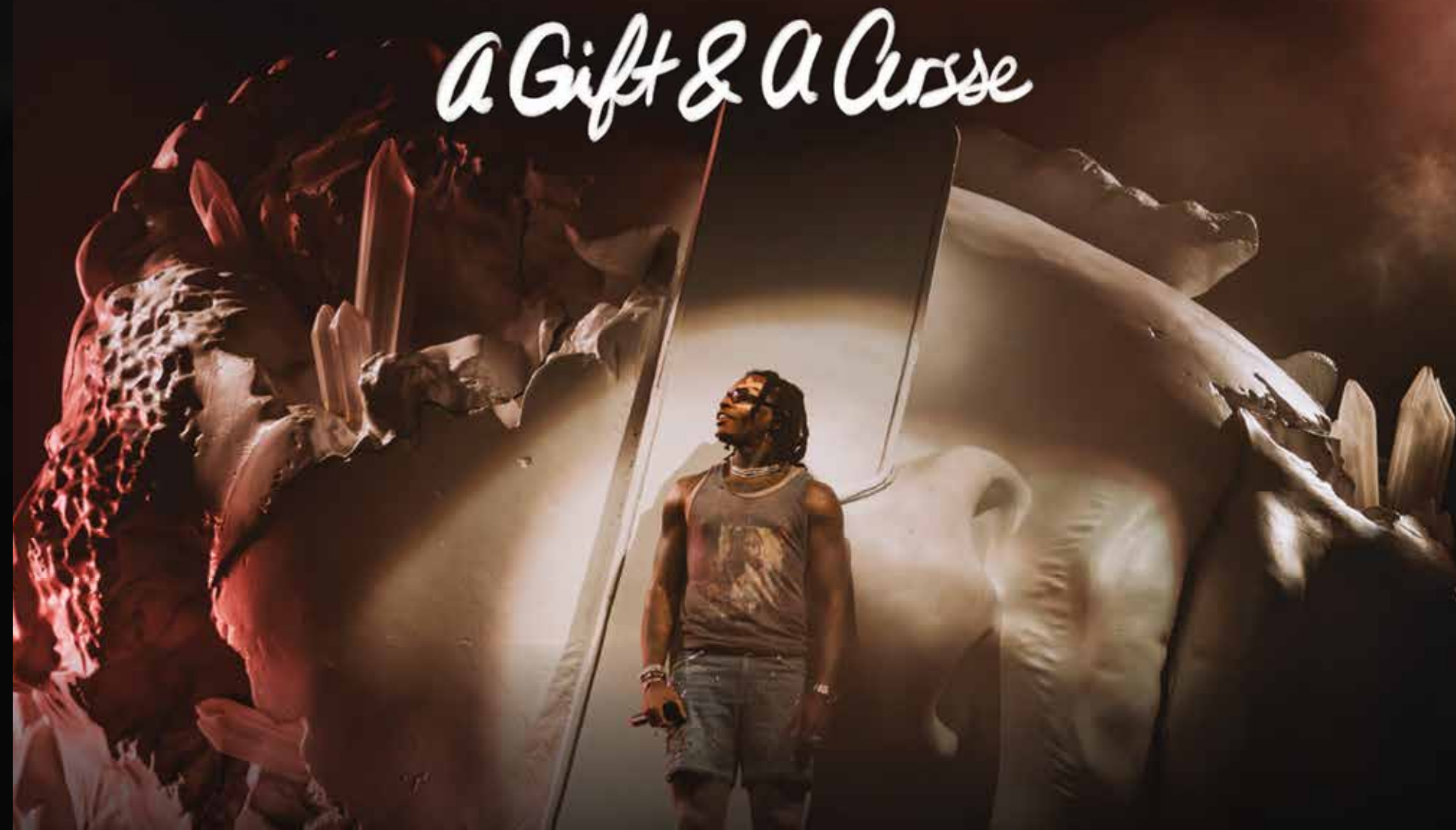


FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

4X GRAMMY® NOMINEE

GUNNA

a Gift & a Curse



FEATURING BREAKTHROUGH RECORDS
"fukumean" AND "bread & butter"

"IN RECKONING WITH HIS SITUATION, GUNNA EMERGES WITH HIS BEST AND MOST SELF-POSSESSED MUSIC,
FINDING HIS VOICE AMID THE CACOPHONY OF GOSSIP. EVEN A CRISIS CAN CREATE A MIRACLE."

n p r

"THE MELODIES ARE THERE (AS THEY ALWAYS ARE) BUT THIS TIME HE PAIRED THEM WITH THE BEST
SONGWRITING OF HIS CAREER. IT'S HIS MOST COMPLETE, BALANCED ALBUM YET."

COMPLEX

"WITH ONE OF THE YEAR'S BEST RAP PROJECTS AND NOW ONE OF THE BEST LIVE SHOWS UNDER HIS BELT,
1 GUNNA'S MOMENTUM HAS ARGUABLY NEVER BEEN STRONGER."

YOUNG STONER LIFE
RECORDS

GQ

300

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION



2X BET AWARDS NOMINEE
MTV VMAS NOMINEE FOR BEST NEW ARTIST



BOY'S A LIAR PT. 2
GLOBAL PHENOMENON

"PINKPANTHERESS IS THE FUTURE."

RollingStone

"...CROSSING INTO A NEW DIMENSION WITH THE COMPLEX, FUTURISTIC SOUND SHE'S EMBRACED."

n p r

"PINKPANTHERESS' DEBUT LEAVES YOU BREATHLESS AND EAGER FOR MORE."

COSMOPOLITAN

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

YOUNG THUG

GRAMMY® AWARD WINNING & 6X GRAMMY® NOMINEE

ARTIST, CEO & BUSINESSMAN

BUSINESS IS BUSINESS



"OH U WENT"
FEAT. DRAKE
AVAILABLE NOW

"BUSINESS IS BUSINESS' IS YOUNG THUG'S
STRONGEST PROJECT SINCE 'SO MUCH FUN.'"

VARIETY

"THE TITLE BUSINESS IS BUSINESS FEELS APPROPRIATE. THUG'S
PERFORMANCE IS JUST THAT. STRICTLY BUSINESS."

RollingStone

"THE ICONOCLAST'S THIRD STUDIO ALBUM COMES AT AN INFLECTION POINT
FOR HIM PROFESSIONALLY AND, MORE CRUCIALLY, PERSONALLY."

GQ

YOUNG STONER LIFE
RECORDS

300

DO WE HAVE ROYALTIES FOR YOU?



More than \$650 Million Distributed To Musicians and Vocalists

Royalties Distributed to Both Union & Non-Union Session Musicians & Vocalists For Their Performance on Songs Played on Satellite Radio, Non-Interactive Streaming Services, Webcasts, Other Digital Formats and International Neighboring Rights

Find Out If We Have Royalties For You
www.afmsagaftorafund.org

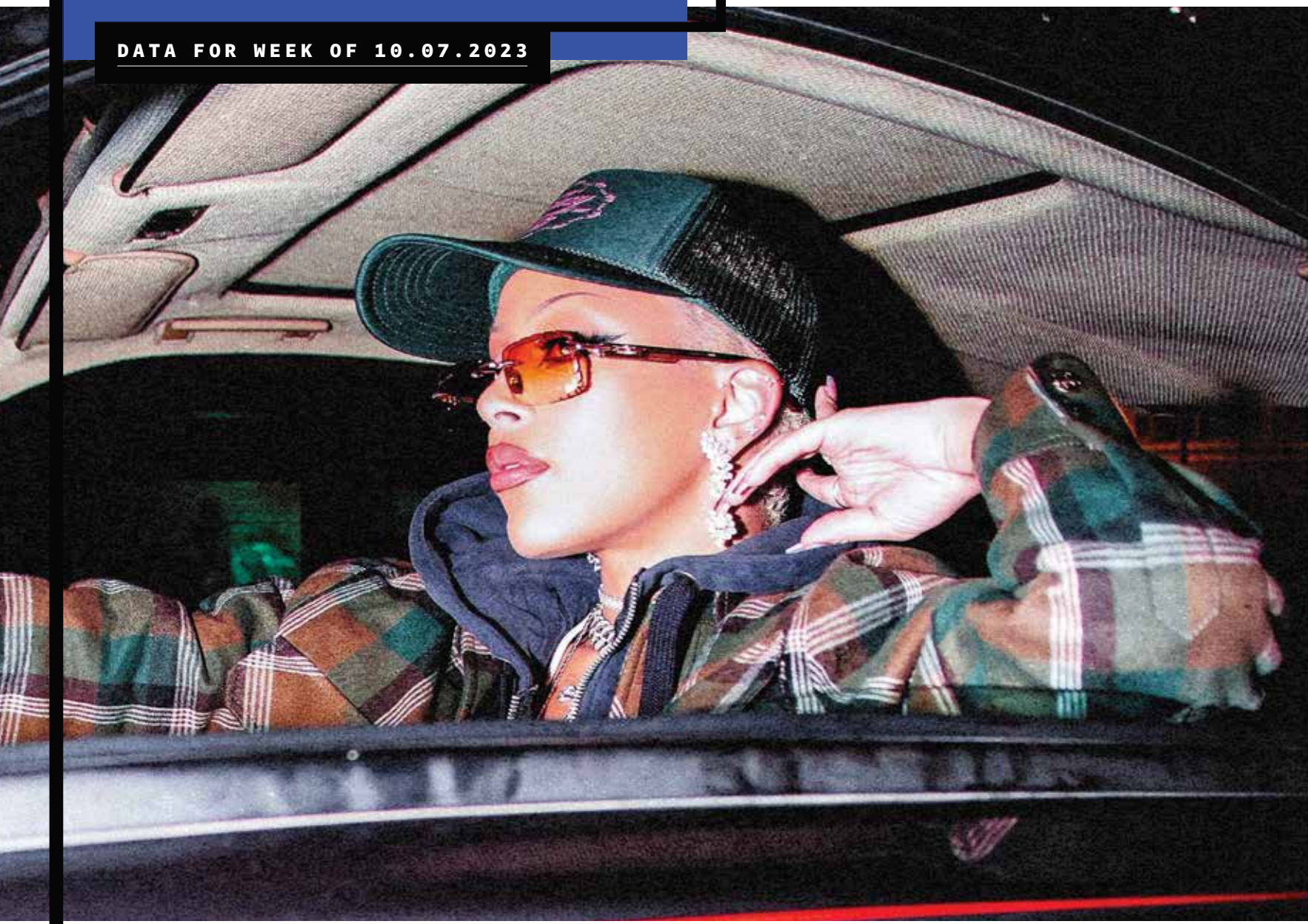


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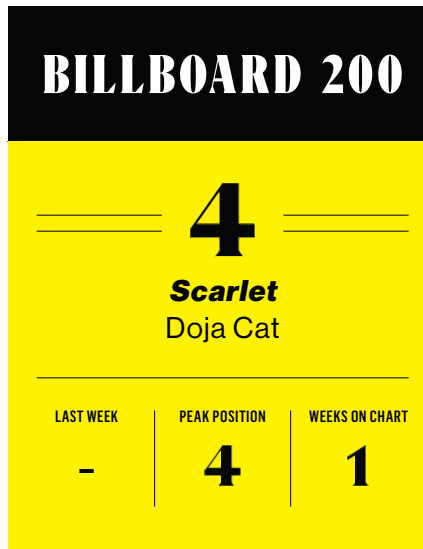


charts

DATA FOR WEEK OF 10.07.2023



Doja Cat Colors Charts 'Red' With *Scarlet*



DOJA CAT CAPTURES her third top 10 album on the Billboard 200 and returns to the summit of the Billboard Hot 100. The rapper-singer's new studio set, *Scarlet*, starts at No. 4 on the Billboard 200 with 72,000 equivalent album units earned Sept. 22-28, according to Luminate. Streaming-equivalent albums account for 65,000 units (translating to 88.4 million on-demand official audio and video streams of *Scarlet*'s 17 songs), album sales amount to 6,000 (with the collection available for purchase as a download, CD and deluxe box set with a T-shirt and CD), and track-equivalent album units equal 1,000. Meanwhile, the set's "Paint the Town Red" rebounds for its second week at No. 1 on the Hot 100. Doja Cat's second career chart-topper, which initially led three weeks earlier, is

her first to reign for multiple weeks, after "Say So" (featuring Nicki Minaj) spent a week at No. 1 in May 2020. "Paint the Town Red" drew 27.5 million streams (up 3%) in the tracking week and likewise tops the Streaming Songs chart, becoming Doja Cat's first leader on the list (see story, page 196). As the song samples Dionne Warwick's 1964 standard "Walk On By," the late songwriters Burt Bacharach and Hal David are credited as writers on both titles. Doja Cat's hit is Bacharach's first multiweek chart-topper since "That's What Friends Are For" by Warwick, Elton John, Gladys Knight and Stevie Wonder (four weeks in 1986) and David's first since The Carpenters' "(They Long To Be) Close to You" (four, 1970). Bacharach has eight No. 1s as a writer; David has five.

—KEITH CAULFIELD AND GARY TRUST

Hot 100									
2 WKS AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title	Artist	PRODUCER (SONGWRITER)	IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART	
			#1 for 2 WEEKS AIR						
2	2	1	Paint The Town Red	Doja Cat	EARL ON THE BEAT,K.R.BRUTUS,JOHN BAPTISTE,DJ REPLAY (A.R.Z,DLAMINI,E.BYNUM, K.R.BRUTUS,J.B.KOUAME,R.BUENDIA,B.F.BACHARACH,H.DAVID)	KEMOSABE/RCA	1	8	
8	3	2	Snooze	SZA	BABYFACE,K.VAN RIDDICK-TYNES,L.THOMAS,BLK (S.I.ROWE,BABYFACE,K.VAN RIDDICK-TYNES, L.G.THOMAS (II),B.FERGUSON)	TOP DAWG/RCA	2	42	
4	4	3	Fast Car	Luke Combs	CHIP MATTHEWS,J.D.SINGLETON,L.COMBS (T.L.CHAPMAN)	RIVER HOUSE/COLUMBIA NASHVILLE/ COLUMBIA	2	27	
5	6	4	Cruel Summer	Taylor Swift	J.M.ANTONOFF,T.SWIFT (T.SWIFT,J.M.ANTONOFF,A.E.CLARK)	REPUBLIC	3	21	
3	5	5	I Remember Everything	Zach Bryan	Z.L.BRYAN (Z.L.BRYAN,K.MUSGRAVES)	INTERSCOPE/BELTING BRONCO/WARNER/MCA NASHVILLE/WAR	1	5	
6	8	6	Last Night	Morgan Wallen	J.MOI (J.BYRON,A.G.GORLEY,J.K.HINDLIN,CHARLIE HANDSOME)	BIG LOUD/MERCURY/REPUBLIC	1	35	
1	7	7	Vampire	Olivia Rodrigo	D.NIGRO (D.RODRIGO,D.L.NIGRO)	GEFFEN/INTERSCOPE	1	13	
9	9	8	Fukumean	Gunna	DUNK ROCK,FLO (S.G.KITCHENS,L.DIFABIO,F.ONGONGA,C.R.LEE)	GUNNA/YOUNG STONER LIFE/300/3EE	4	15	
12	11	9	Calm Down	Rema & Selena Gomez	LONDON,ANDRE VIBEZ (M.HUNTER,ANDRE VIBEZ,A.RIBANEZ,S.GOMEZ)	JONZING WORLD/MAVIN/ SMG MUSIC/VIRGIN/INTERSCOPE	3	56	
10	10	10	Dance The Night	Dua Lipa	M.RONSON,ANDREW WYATT,THE PICARD BROTHERS (M.D.RONSON,ANDREW WYATT,D.LIPA,C.AILIN)	MATTEL/WATERTOWER/WARNER/ATLANTIC	6	18	
15	12	11	Barbie World	Nicki Minaj & Ice Spice With Aqua	RIOTUSA (D.T.MARAJ,PETTY,N.GASTON,E.LOPEZ,JR.,S.RASTED,J.M.PEDERSEN,C.NORREEN,K.DAHLGAARD, R.DIF,L.C.NYSTROM)	WATERTOWER/DOLO/10K PROJECTS/ATLANTIC/CAPITOL	7	14	
-	1	12	Slime You Out	Drake Featuring SZA	DRAKE,NOEL (A.GRAHAM,S.I.ROWE,NOEL,N.J.SHEBIB,B.SAINT FORT,D.TENNANT,G.LAPOINTE,C.POWELL)	OVO SOUND/REPUBLIC	1	2	
21	14	13	Religiously	Bailey Zimmerman	A.R.SHAWN,J.BRUYERE (A.PALMER,A.R.SHAWN,B.ZIMMERMAN,F.ROMANO,MARTY JAMES)	ELEKTRA/WARNER MUSIC NASHVILLE/WEA	13	21	
HOT SHOT DEBUT	14	14	Sarah's Place	Zach Bryan Featuring Noah Kahan	Z.L.BRYAN (Z.L.BRYAN)	BELTING BRONCO/WARNER	14	1	
17	15	15	Flowers	Miley Cyrus	KID HARPOON,T.JOHNSON (M.CYRUS,M.R.POLLACK,G.HEIN)	SMILEY MILEY/COLUMBIA	1	37	
7	13	16	Bad Idea Right?	Olivia Rodrigo	D.NIGRO (D.L.NIGRO,D.RODRIGO)	GEFFEN/INTERSCOPE	7	7	
27	17	17	Thinkin' Bout Me	Morgan Wallen	J.MOI,CHARLIE HANDSOME (J.BYRON,A.G.GORLEY,T.PHILLIPS,CHARLIE HANDSOME)	BIG LOUD/MERCURY/REPUBLIC	9	30	
NEW	18	18	Agora Hills	Doja Cat	EARL ON THE BEAT,GENT,JOHN BAPTISTE,BANGS (A.R.Z,DLAMINI,E.BYNUM,G.MEMISHI,J.B.KOUAME, B.PEPPLE,B.HOLLAND,M.SMITH)	KEMOSABE/RCA	18	1	
18	16	19	All My Life	Lil Durk Featuring J. Cole	DR. LUKE (D.D.BANKS,J.COLE,L.S.GOTTWALD,R.J.OGREN,G.LEWIS,T.M.THOMAS,R.VALDES)	ALAMO	2	20	
28	22	20	Need A Favor	Jelly Roll	A.NIVAREL (J.B.DEFORD,A.A.NIVAREL,J.RAGOSTA,R.RAGOSTA)	BAILEE & BUDDY/BMG/ STONEY CREEK/BROKEN BOW	14	26	

Go to the Chart Beat section of [billboard.com](#) for complete charts coverage.

The 25-year-old Chandler's Ford, England, native's first Hot 100 entry also reaches a new No. 3 high on the Billboard Global Excl. U.S. chart.



HOT 100

63

"Strangers"

Kenya Grace

How did "Strangers" come together? I wrote it about two months ago in my room. I didn't think too much into the full song, but I made a video of just the chorus. Nothing else existed at that point. I posted it on Instagram and TikTok and people seemed to really like it. I always find that I can write the chorus quickly, and then, like a week after, I get back into the head space and write the rest of the song. I finished writing, and then we worked on the production for a bit and got it mixed and mastered. We released it soon after that. It has been really fast.

The track has been successful on TikTok. What's your relationship with social media? My favorite thing to do is make beat videos. I love writing a mini song and then making all the drum loops and everything, so TikTok and Instagram are like my perfect places. It has been a crazy year because last year, I seriously considered giving up music. Then I posted a video on TikTok, and it changed my whole life. My socials are really different now — I think that's the biggest thing, just the amount of people, the amount of love. It has blown my mind.

How do you feel about bringing drum'n'bass further into the mainstream? It wasn't a goal, [but] I really love dance music in general. Drum'n'bass is the first thing I went out to; it's what all my friends go out to. It's really a huge part of young people's lives in the U.K. Liquid drum'n'bass I especially love — it's basically a more emotional version of drum'n'bass. Like dance music, but a very soft version. I love that so much. I feel like it goes well with my voice.

—KATIE BAIN

HOT 100 FIRST-TIMERS			
Artists who have recently made their initial appearances on the chart			
ARTIST	SONG	DEBUT POSITION	DEBUT DATE
Wet	"Nostalgia" with Rod Wave	40	Sept. 30
Sadie Jean	"2018" with Rod Wave	61	Sept. 30
Kenya Grace	"Strangers"	88	Sept. 30
Paul Russell	"Lil Boo Thang"	99	Sept. 30
Mitski	"My Love Mine All Mine"	76	Oct. 7

ILLUSTRATION: LUMINATE. BILLBOARD NOT. THE WEEK'S MOST POPULAR CURRENT SONGS ACROSS ALL GENRES, RANKED BY STREAMING ACTIVITY DATA BY ONLINE MUSIC SOURCES TRACKED BY LUMINATE. BILLBOARD'S AUDIENCE IMPRESSIONS ARE MEASURED BY LUMINATE AND SALES DATA IS COMPILED BY LUMINATE. SEE CHARTS. LEGEND OF BILLBOARD.COM FOR COMPLETE RULES AND EXPLANATIONS. © 2023 BILLBOARD MEDIA LLC AND LUMINATE INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

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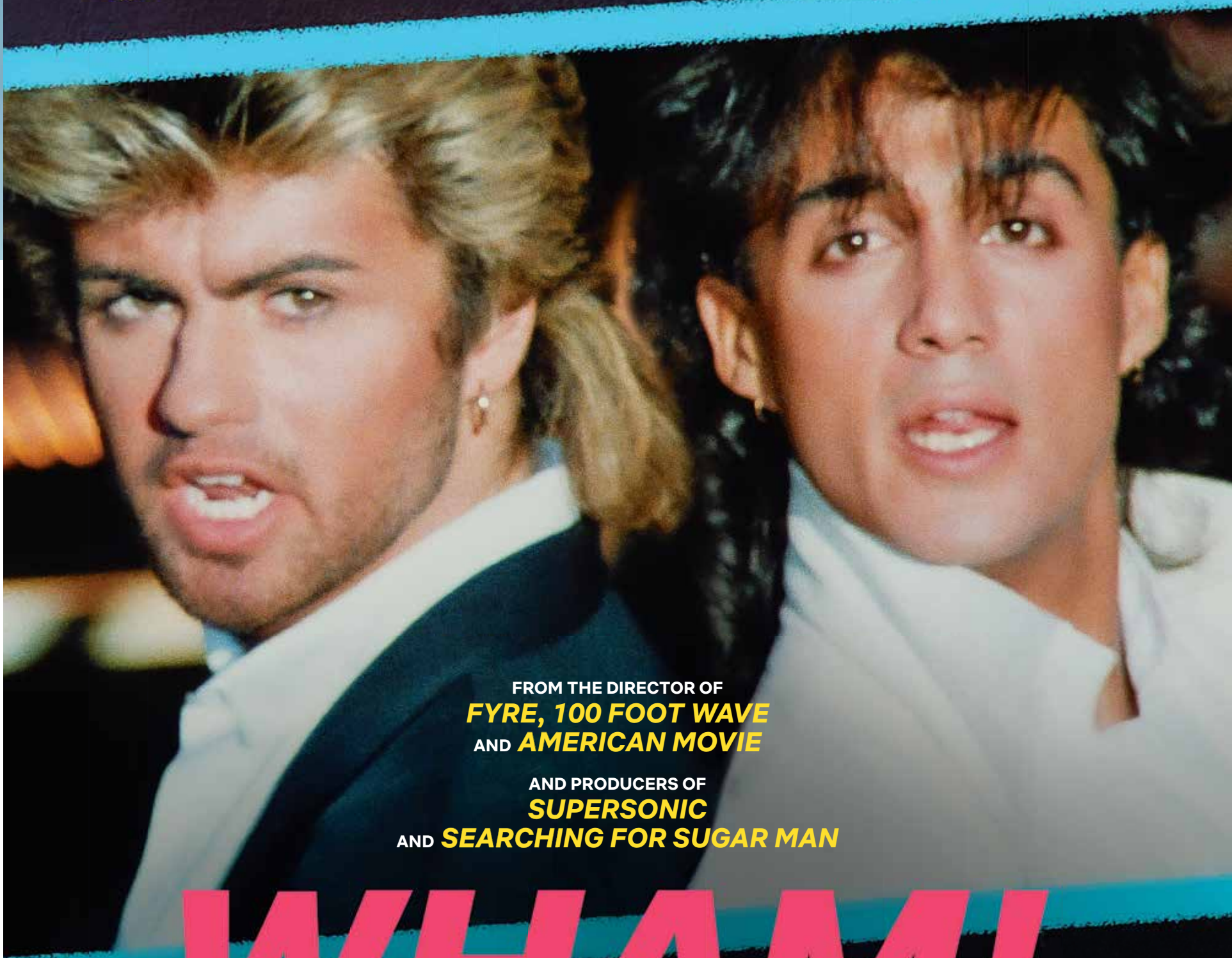
BEST MUSIC FILM

“AS INCENDIARY AS ANY OF WHAM!’S HITS. GRADE A.”

THE PLAYLIST

“YOU’LL FIND EVERYTHING YOU WANT IN THE DOCUMENTARY. IT IS A TOTAL BLAST.”

Roger Ebert.com



FROM THE DIRECTOR OF
FYRE, 100 FOOT WAVE
AND **AMERICAN MOVIE**

AND PRODUCERS OF
SUPERSONIC
AND **SEARCHING FOR SUGAR MAN**

WHAM!

N

BILLBOARD 200

10



Taylor Swift
Midnights

Swift has sold more vinyl albums in 2023 in the United States than any other act, with her 1.6 million sold accounting for 5% of the total vinyl album sales market this year, according to Luminate.

142



Cannibal Corpse
Chaos Horrific

The rock band's eighth entry on the chart also debuts at No. 4 on Tastemaker Albums (which ranks the top sellers at indie and small-chain stores) and at No. 9 on Hard Rock Albums.

145



Usher

Confessions

The set has its biggest week by units earned (9,000 in the United States in the week ending Sept. 28, according to Luminate) in over a year, following news that he will headline the 2024 Super Bowl halftime show.

1
ROD WAVE
Nostalgia



Hip-Hop Songs — equivalent
between 2020 and 2022.

Rod Wave's *Nostal'gia* spends a second week atop the Billboard 200 after its debut on the chart dated Sept. 30. The set earned 88,000 equivalent album units in the United States in the week ending Sept. 28 (down 36%, according to Luminate). It is the first of his three No. 1 entries to have led for multiple weeks.

Meanwhile, the album's "Great Gatsby" bumps 12-9 on Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs, marking his 12th top 10 hit on the list. Its chart success is largely driven by streaming activity, with 11.7 million official streams earned in the tracking week. In total, *Nostalgia* has spun off six top 10-charting tracks on Hot R&B/

—KEITH CAULFIELD

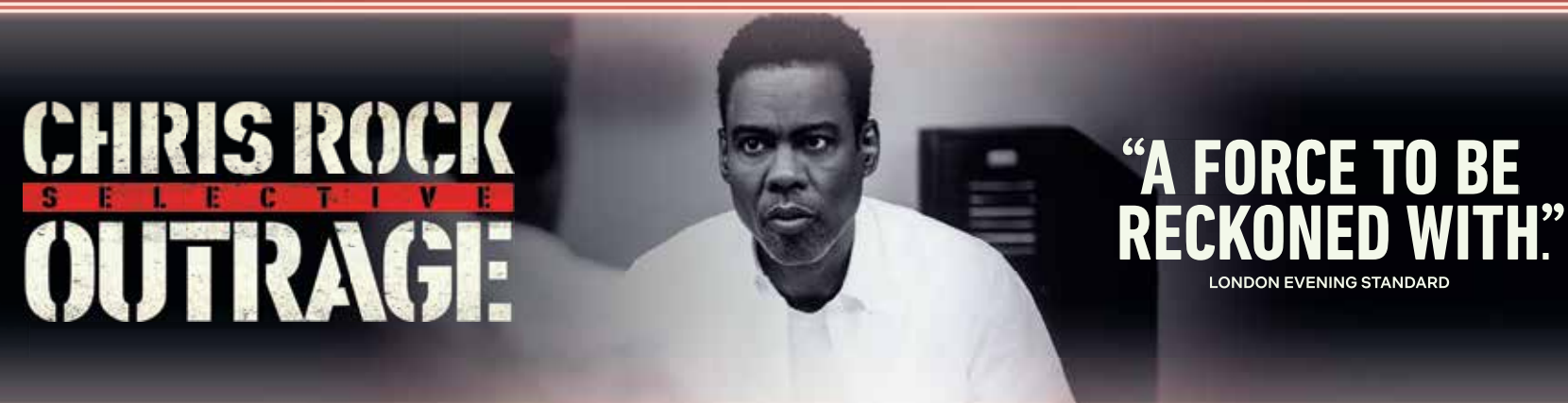
Billboard 200

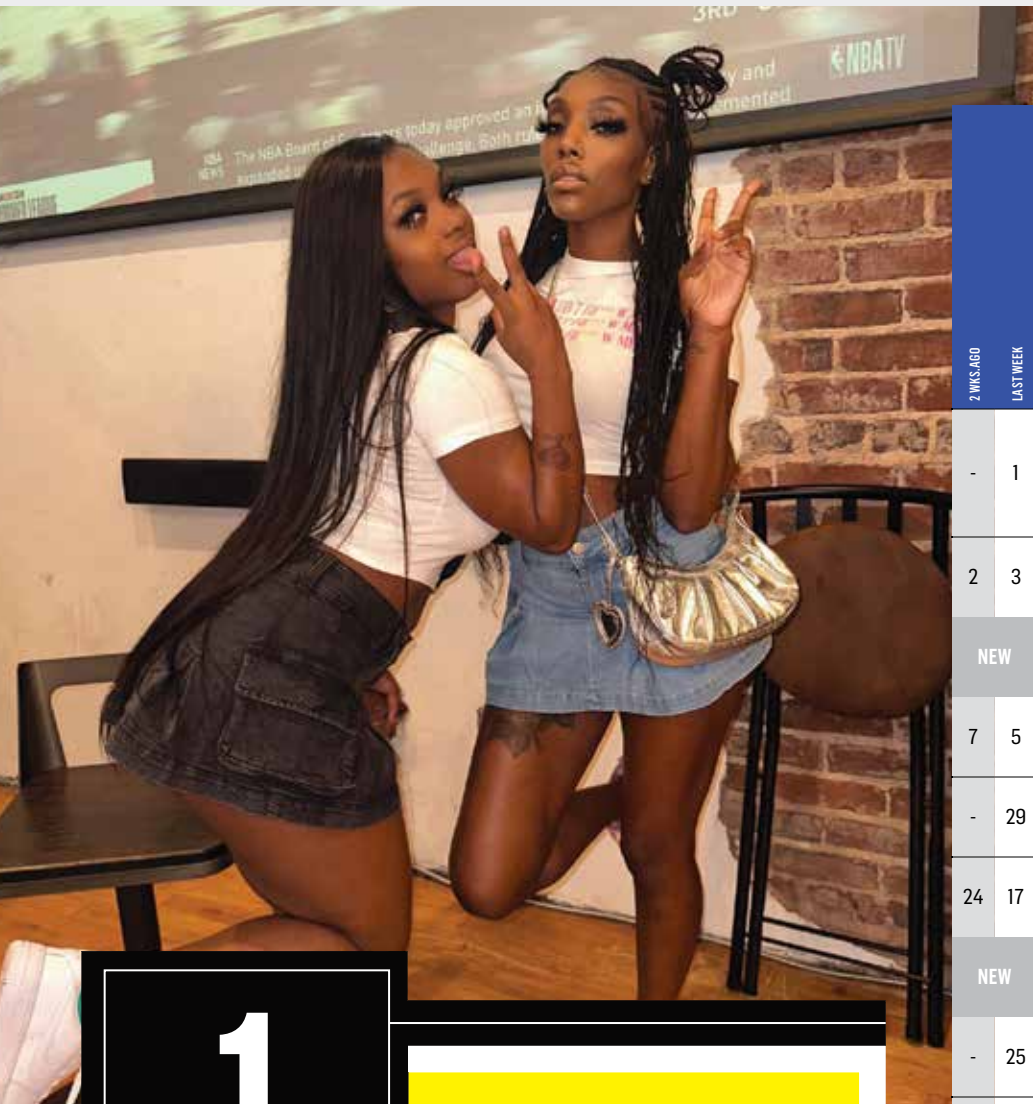
2 WKS. AGO		LAST WEEK		THIS WEEK		Artist		Title		PEAK POS.		WKS. ON CHART	
						IMPRINT/DISTRIBUTING LABEL							
-	①	1		1	<div>#1 for 2 WEEKS</div> <div>Rod Wave</div> <div>ALAMO</div>	Nostalgia				1	2		
①	2	2		2	<div>Olivia Rodrigo</div> <div>GEFFEN/IGA</div>	Guts				1	3		
4	4	3		3	<div>Morgan Wallen</div> <div>BIG LOUD/MERCURY/REPUBLIC</div>	One Thing At A Time				1	30		
HOT SHOT DEBUT				④	<div>Doja Cat</div> <div>KEMOSABE/RCA</div>	Scarlet				4	1		
3	3	5		5	<div>Zach Bryan</div> <div>BELTING BRONCO/WARNER</div>	Zach Bryan				1	5		
6	⑤	6		6	<div>SZA</div> <div>TOP DAWG/RCA</div>	SOS				1	42		
5	6	7		7	<div>Travis Scott</div> <div>CACTUS JACK/EPIC</div>	Utopia				1	9		
NEW				⑧	<div>Zach Bryan</div> <div>BELTING BRONCO/WARNER</div>	Boys Of Faith (EP)				8	1		
⑦	⑦	9		9	<div>Peso Pluma</div> <div>DOUBLE P</div>	Genesis				3	14		
8	8	⑩		⑩	<div>Taylor Swift</div> <div>REPUBLIC</div>	Midnights				1	49		
NEW				⑪	<div>Lil Tecca</div> <div>GALACTIC/REPUBLIC</div>	TEC				11	1		
12	11	⑫		⑫	<div>GG</div> <div>Taylor Swift</div> <div>REPUBLIC</div>	Lover				1	214		
9	9	13		13	<div>Morgan Wallen</div> <div>BIG LOUD/REPUBLIC</div>	Dangerous: The Double Album				1	142		
11	10	14		14	<div>Soundtrack</div> <div>MATTEL/WATERTOWER/ATLANTIC/AG</div>	Barbie: The Album				2	10		
14	14	15		15	<div>Zach Bryan</div> <div>BELTING BRONCO/WARNER</div>	American Heartbreak				5	71		
15	15	⑬		⑬	<div>Taylor Swift</div> <div>REPUBLIC</div>	Folklore				1	166		
19	⑬	⑮		⑮	<div>Noah Kahan</div> <div>MERCURY/REPUBLIC</div>	Stick Season				3	44		
13	13	18		18	<div>Taylor Swift</div> <div>REPUBLIC</div>	Speak Now (Taylor's Version)				1	12		
18	⑮	⑰		⑰	<div>Taylor Swift</div> <div>BIG MACHINE/BMLG</div>	1989				1	459		
20	23	⑳		⑳	<div>Taylor Swift</div> <div>BIG MACHINE/BMLG</div>	reputation				1	262		

LUMINATE BILLBOARD 200: THE WEEK'S MOST POPULAR ALBUMS, BASED ON MULTIMETRIC CONSUMPTION, BLENDING TRADITIONAL ALBUM SALES, STREAMING-EQUIVALENT ALBUMS AND TRACK-EQUIVALENT ALBUMS, AS COMPILED BY LUMINATE. SEE CHARTS LEGEND ON BILLBOARD.COM FOR COMPLETE RULES AND EXPLANATIONS. © 2023 BILLBOARD MEDIA LLC AND LUMINATE INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

FOR YOUR GRAMMY® CONSIDERATION

Best Comedy Album





1

“Wassup Gwayy”
FamousSally & YB

FAMOUSSALLY & YB are the first act to lead the TikTok Billboard Top 50 chart for more than one week as “Wassup Gwayy” remains at No. 1 on the Sept. 30 list.

The TikTok Billboard Top 50, which launched Sept. 16, is a weekly ranking of the most popular songs on TikTok in the United States based on creations, video views and user engagement. The latest chart reflects activity for the week of Sept. 18-24. (Activity on TikTok is not included in *Billboard*’s charts except for the TikTok Billboard Top 50.)

“Wassup Gwayy” debuted at No. 1 on the Sept. 23 chart. During the tracking week of Sept. 15-21 (for *Billboard*’s multimetric song charts), it earned 495,000 official U.S. streams, according to Luminate.

Earth, Wind & Fire’s “September” makes the highest entrance on the TikTok Billboard Top 50 at No. 3. The 1979 No. 1 Hot Soul Singles (now Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs) and No. 8 *Billboard* Hot 100 hit surges annually around Sept. 21, thanks to its opening verse name-checking the date. TikTok is no exception to that trend, with many users incorporating the track into their routines and videos. “September” jumped by 31% to 5.5 million streams in the week of Sept. 15-21.

Elsewhere on the chart, Odetari and 9lives’ “I Love You Hoe” continues its rise, pushing 5-4, while BashfortheWorld’s rap track “Darkest Before Dawn” vaults 29-5. The former has scored further *Billboard* chart success, including a No. 3 high on Hot Dance/Electronic Songs. The latter originally arrived in 2020 but has exploded in recent weeks, scoring 704,000 streams in the week of Sept. 15-21, up 75%.

—KEVIN RUTHERFORD

		TikTok		billboard		Top 50			
2 WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title	Artist	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART			
-	1	1	#1 for 2 WEEKS Wassup Gwayy	FamousSally & YB	1	2			
2	3	2	Paint The Town Red	Doja Cat	2	3			
NEW		3	September	Earth, Wind & Fire	3	1			
7	5	4	I Love You Hoe	Odetari & 9lives	4	3			
-	29	5	Darkest Before Dawn	BashfortheWorld	5	2			
24	17	6	What Was I Made For?	Billie Eilish	6	3			
NEW		7	Segun Quien	Maluma & Carin Leon	7	1			
-	25	8	Flex Up	Lil Yachty, Future & Playboi Carti	8	2			
1	2	9	SkeeYee	Sexyy Red	1	3			
NEW		10	Greedy	Tate McRae	10	1			
-	16	11	Fine Line	Harry Styles	11	2			
42	9	12	I'll Be Around	Cee-Lo Featuring Timbaland	9	3			
-	44	13	My Collection	Future	13	2			
NEW		14	Bando (Sped Up + Reverb)	bbygirl	14	1			
-	10	15	Hey Daddy (Daddy's Home)	Usher Featuring Plies	10	2			
9	12	16	I'm Blessed	Charlie Wilson Featuring T.I.	9	3			
6	7	17	Deli	Ice Spice	6	3			
11	24	18	Cruel Summer	Taylor Swift	11	3			
NEW		19	Mama's Boy	Dominic Fike	19	1			
NEW		20	Water	Tyla	20	1			

COURTESY OF EPIC RECORDS

TIKTOK BILLBOARD TOP 50: THE WEEK'S MOST POPULAR SONGS ON TIKTOK IN THE UNITED STATES. FOR COMPLETE RULES AND EXPLANATIONS, VISIT [WWW.BILLBOARD.COM/TIKTOK-TOPT50](https://www.billboard.com/tiktok-top-50). © 2023 BILLBOARD MEDIA. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

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STAR WARS JEDI: FALLEN ORDER BUT ALSO TO EVERY STAR WARS SCORE TO DATE.” - SPIN



ARTIST 100

4

MORGAN WALLEN

WEEKS ON CHART

238

Wallen adds his 11th and 12th top 10s on the Country Airplay chart: “Thinkin’ Bout Me” (11-7) and “Everything I Love” (12-10). They follow his crossover smash “Last Night,” which began an eight-week command in May. All three songs are from his album *One Thing at a Time*, which has now generated six total top 10s. —JIM ASKER



NO. 25

Lil Tecca Returns

Lil Tecca reenters the Artist 100 after a break of more than two years, concurrent with the debut of his third studio album, *Tec*. The set arrives at No. 4 on Top Rap Albums and No. 5 on Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums with 41,000 equivalent album units, according to Luminate. It’s his fourth top 10 on both charts. Three tracks from the collection place on Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs: “500lbs” and “HVN on Earth” (with Kodak Black) return at new highs of Nos. 20 and 30, respectively, and “Dead or Alive” debuts at No. 38.

—KEITH CAULFIELD



NO. 34

The Rose Blooms

The Rose debuts at No. 34 on the Artist 100 and reenters Emerging Artists at the top spot, sparked by the group’s second album, *Dual*. The set, released Sept. 22, starts at No. 9 on Top Alternative Albums, No. 13 on Top Rock & Alternative Albums and No. 83 on the Billboard 200 with 12,000 units in its first week. It becomes the act’s first entry on all three charts. The Rose is a South Korean pop-rock quartet comprising Dojoon, Hajoon, Jaehyeong and Woosung.

—XANDER ZELLNER

DATA FOR WEEK OF 10.07.2023

Artist 100						
2 WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Artist	IMPRINT/LABEL	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
2	2	1	#1 for 80 WEEKS Taylor Swift	REPUBLIC	1	479
1	1	2	Olivia Rodrigo	GEFFEN/IGA	1	124
4	5	3	Zach Bryan	BELTING BRONCO/WARNER	1	72
5	4	4	Morgan Wallen	BIG LOUD/REPUBLIC	1	238
13	10	5	Doja Cat	KEMOSABE/RCA	1	188
52	3	6	Rod Wave	ALAMO	1	116
8	6	7	SZA	TOP DAWG/RCA	1	213
6	8	8	Luke Combs	RIVER HOUSE/COLUMBIA NASHVILLE/SMN	1	343
7	7	9	Drake	OVO SOUND/REPUBLIC	1	483
10	11	10	Miley Cyrus	SMILEY MILEY/COLUMBIA	3	153
RE-ENTRY		11	Kylie Minogue	DARENOTE/BMG	11	3
12	12	12	Peso Pluma	PRAJIN PARLAY/PRAJIN	5	29
11	15	13	Travis Scott	CACTUS JACK/GRAND HUSTLE/EPIC	1	378
17	14	14	Jelly Roll	BAILEE & BUDDY/BROKEN BOW/BMG/BBMG	4	63
19	17	15	The Weeknd	XO/REPUBLIC	1	429
16	16	16	Dua Lipa	WARNER	1	282
20	18	17	Ed Sheeran	ATLANTIC/AG	1	476
18	19	18	Chris Stapleton	MERCURY NASHVILLE/UMGN	1	414
21	20	19	Bailey Zimmerman	ELEKTRA/WARNER MUSIC NASHVILLE/3EE/WMN	9	70
15	23	20	Fleetwood Mac	WARNER/RHINO	3	234

ARTIST 100: LIL TECCA: JEFFREY M. HARRIS/REPUBLIC; MORGAN WALLEN: JEFFREY M. HARRIS/REPUBLIC; THE ROSE BLOOMS: JEFFREY M. HARRIS/REPUBLIC; WILLEN: JEFFREY M. HARRIS/REPUBLIC; TAYLOR SWIFT: JEFFREY M. HARRIS/REPUBLIC; DOJA CAT: JEFFREY M. HARRIS/REPUBLIC; ROD WAVE: JEFFREY M. HARRIS/REPUBLIC; SZA: JEFFREY M. HARRIS/REPUBLIC; LUKE COMBS: JEFFREY M. HARRIS/REPUBLIC; DRAKE: JEFFREY M. HARRIS/REPUBLIC; MILEY CYRUS: JEFFREY M. HARRIS/REPUBLIC; KYLIE MINOGUE: JEFFREY M. HARRIS/REPUBLIC; PESO PLUMA: JEFFREY M. HARRIS/REPUBLIC; TRAVIS SCOTT: JEFFREY M. HARRIS/REPUBLIC; JELLY ROLL: JEFFREY M. HARRIS/REPUBLIC; THE WEEKND: JEFFREY M. HARRIS/REPUBLIC; DUA LIPA: JEFFREY M. HARRIS/REPUBLIC; ED SHEERAN: JEFFREY M. HARRIS/REPUBLIC; CHRIS STAPLETON: JEFFREY M. HARRIS/REPUBLIC; BAILEY ZIMMERMAN: JEFFREY M. HARRIS/REPUBLIC; FLEETWOOD MAC: JEFFREY M. HARRIS/REPUBLIC. CHART LEGEND ON BILLBOARD.COM FOR COMPLETE RULES AND EXPLANATIONS. © 2023 BILLBOARD MEDIA LLC AND LUMINA INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

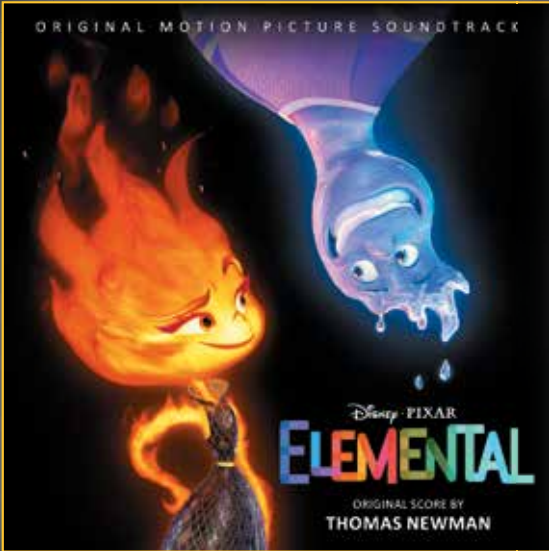
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Music by
John Williams



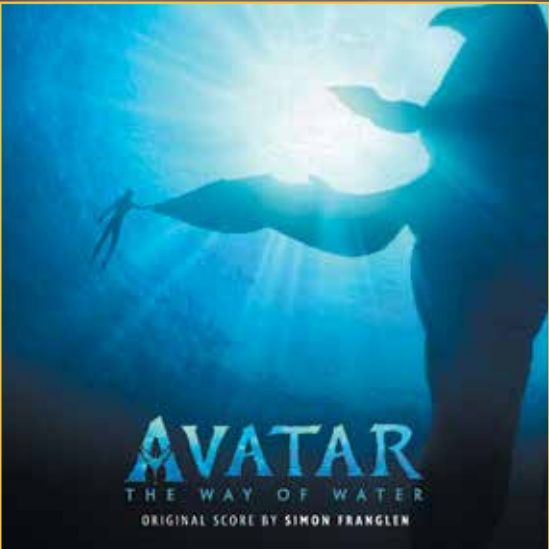
Music by
Ludwig Göransson



Original Score by
Thomas Newman



Music by
John Murphy



Original Score by
Simon Franglen



Score by
Kris Bowers

RECORD,
REPEATED

The *Renaissance* world tour accomplishes the biggest one-month gross in Boxscore history again

IN JULY, BEYONCÉ SET THE RECORD for the highest one-month gross in the history of Billboard Boxscore (dating to 1985) with \$127.6 million. The following month, she again rewrites herstory: Queen Bey earned \$179.3 million across 14 shows on the *Renaissance* world tour in August, according to figures reported to Boxscore, surpassing her impressive sum in July by a sizable 40%. With the back-to-back totals, she now lays claim to two of just four \$100 million months since the charts launched in February 2019.

When Beyoncé first reached the leading slot of *Billboard*’s Top Tours chart in May, she became the first woman to do so since P!nk accomplished the feat in July 2019. Now, with Beyoncé still at No. 1, P!nk is back up to No. 2, marking the first time that two women have held the top two positions on the chart.

While it’s Beyoncé’s third month with the highest-grossing tour, it’s the first time she has also owned the best-selling tour. In August, she moved 697,000 tickets.

With 10 shows left to report in September and October, the *Renaissance* world tour is trending toward \$550 million to \$575 million, aiming to finish among the 10 highest-grossing tours in Boxscore history.

—ERIC FRANKENBERG

Top Tours			
	Artist	Gross	Total Attendance No. Of Shows
1	Beyoncé	\$179.3M	697K14
2	P!nk	\$68.6M	396K10
3	Metallica	\$68.6M	637K8
4	Morgan Wallen	\$68.4M	338K7
5	The Weeknd	\$37.5M	376K6
6	Drake	\$35.9M	130K8
7	Jonas Brothers	\$31.4M	275K11
8	Ed Sheeran	\$28.3M	299K4
9	Luis Miguel	\$23.9M	204K17
10	Zach Bryan	\$20.7M	223K14

Top Boxscores				
	Artist(s) Venue Date	Gross Ticket Prices	Total Attendance No. Of Shows	Promoter(s)
1	Outside Lands Music and Arts Festival Golden Gate Park, San Francisco Aug. 11-13	\$40.1M \$499/\$199	225K3	Another Planet Entertainment
2	Beyoncé Mercedes-Benz Stadium, Atlanta Aug. 11-12, 14	\$39.8M \$585/\$226/\$141/ \$91/\$50.50	156K3	Live Nation
3	Beyoncé FedExField, Landover, Md. Aug. 5-6	\$29.4M \$585/\$226/\$150/ \$105.50/\$50.50	97.9K2	Live Nation
4	Morgan Wallen Ohio Stadium, Columbus, Ohio Aug. 11-12, 14	\$26.8M \$369.75/\$239.75/ \$149.75/\$99.75/\$69.75	139K3	Live Nation
5	Beyoncé Allegiant Stadium, Las Vegas Aug. 26-27	\$25.8M \$689/\$220/\$156/ \$91/\$51	86.5K2	Live Nation
6	Morgan Wallen Fenway Park, Boston Aug. 16-18	\$25.4M \$369.75/\$239.75/ \$149.75/\$99.75/\$69.75	117K3	Live Nation
7	Metallica MetLife Stadium, East Rutherford, N.J. Aug. 4, 6	\$19.3M \$114.18	169K2	Live Nation
8	Metallica AT&T Stadium, Arlington, Texas Aug. 18, 20	\$18.5M \$132.67	140K2	Live Nation
9	Metallica Sofi Stadium, Inglewood, Calif. Aug. 25, 27	\$17.5M \$122.66	143K2	Live Nation
10	Morgan Wallen PNC Park, Pittsburgh Aug. 30-31	\$16.2M \$369.75/\$239.75/ \$149.75/\$99.75/\$69.75	81.3K2	Live Nation

KEVIN MAZUR/WIREIMAGE

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Awkwafina,
Halle Bailey,
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and more!



Soundtrack features songs from
Radiohead,
Spacehog,
The Flaming Lips,
Bruce Springsteen
and more!



Featuring
“Lift Me Up”
performed by **Rihanna**

Plus, performances by
Burna Boy, Tems,
OG Dayv ft. Future,
Fireboy DML,
Bloody Civilian
ft. Rema and more!

Top Venues

15,001 OR MORE CAPACITY				
	Venue LOCATION	Total Gross	Total Attendance	No. Of Shows
1	Madison Square Garden NEW YORK	\$27.8M	225K	16
2	Crypto.com Arena LOS ANGELES	\$24M	168K	15
3	Kia Forum INGLEWOOD, CALIF.	\$22.1M	86.3K	6
4	Movistar Arena SANTIAGO, CHILE	\$10M	85.4K	7
5	Qudos Bank Arena SYDNEY	\$9.3M	114K	15
6	American Airlines Center DALLAS	\$8.2M	85.6K	10
7	Barclays Center BROOKLYN	\$7.2M	50.1K	4
8	Wells Fargo Center PHILADELPHIA	\$6.4M	38.5K	3
9	Oakland Arena OAKLAND, CALIF.	\$5.9M	64.4K	11
10	Bell Centre MONTREAL	\$5.8M	67.8K	5



10,001-15,000 CAPACITY				
	Venue LOCATION	Total Gross	Total Attendance	No. Of Shows
1	Movistar Arena BUENOS AIRES	\$13.9M	105K	10
2	Moody Center AUSTIN	\$7.1M	70.9K	12
3	Dickies Arena FORT WORTH, TEXAS	\$4.5M	58.1K	6
4	Forest Hills Stadium NEW YORK	\$4.1M	38.7K	4
5	Northwell Health at Jones Beach Theater WANTAGH, N.Y.	\$3.4M	49.2K	4
6	Brisbane Entertainment Centre BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA	\$2.3M	26K	2
7	Desert Diamond Casino SAHUARITA, ARIZ.	\$2.2M	23.2K	2
8	CFG Bank Arena BALTIMORE	\$2.2M	25.4K	3
9	Van Andel Arena GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.	\$2.2M	26K	3
10	Maine Savings Amphitheater BANGOR, MAINE	\$2.1M	28.3K	2



5,001-10,000 CAPACITY				
	Venue LOCATION	Total Gross	Total Attendance	No. Of Shows
1	Red Rocks Amphitheatre MORRISON, COLO.	\$20.7M	262K	30
2	Bakkt Theater LAS VEGAS	\$8.5M	44.1K	8
3	Dolby Live LAS VEGAS	\$8.4M	35.1K	8
4	Auditorio Telmex GUADALAJARA, MEXICO	\$5.4M	17K	3
5	Greek Theatre LOS ANGELES	\$5M	68.2K	13
6	Auditorio Nacional MEXICO CITY	\$4.9M	89.9K	10
7	Lake Tahoe Outdoor Arena at Harveys STATELINE, NEV.	\$4.3M	40.8K	6
8	Mohegan Sun Arena UNCASVILLE, CONN.	\$4M	45.3K	7
9	Hearst Greek Theatre BERKELEY, CALIF.	\$3.8M	53.2K	8
10	Radio City Music Hall NEW YORK	\$3.3M	37.4K	7

5,000 OR LESS CAPACITY				
	Venue LOCATION	Total Gross	Total Attendance	No. Of Shows
1	Fallsview Casino Resort NIAGARA FALLS, ONTARIO	\$4.2M	60.6K	13
2	Beacon Theatre NEW YORK	\$3.9M	39.7K	15
3	Resorts World Theatre LAS VEGAS	\$3.3M	26K	6
4	The Mountain Winery SARATOGA, CALIF.	\$2.8M	22.3K	11
5	Teatro Telcel MEXICO CITY	\$2.2M	26.1K	30
6	The Mission Ballroom DENVER	\$2M	37.9K	11
7	Encore Theater at Wynn Resort LAS VEGAS	\$1.9M	15.2K	11
8	Rosemont Theatre ROSEMONT, ILL.	\$1.5M	13.2K	4
9	Santa Barbara Bowl SANTA BARBARA, CALIF.	\$1.5M	23.1K	5
10	The Theater at MGM National Harbor OXON HILL, MD.	\$1.3M	14.7K	6

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“MEGHAN TRAINOR
MADE YOU LOOK”
- THE NEW YORK TIMES

“INSIDE AND OUT,
MEGHAN TRAINOR IS IN HER
ZONE...UNFORGETTABLE LYRICS
AND CATCHY PRODUCTION.”
- ROLLING STONE

“...CONSTANTLY EVOLVING
AS AN ARTIST”
- PEOPLE MAGAZINE



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BAKAR
"HELL N BACK (LIVE)"



J HUS
"BEAUTIFUL AND BRUTAL YARD"



MADISON BEER
"SILENCE BETWEEN SONGS"



TYLA
"WATER"



BIA
"I'M THAT BITCH" WITH TIMBALAND



LAMB OF GOD
"OMENS"



SPINALL
"LOU" FT. WIZKID



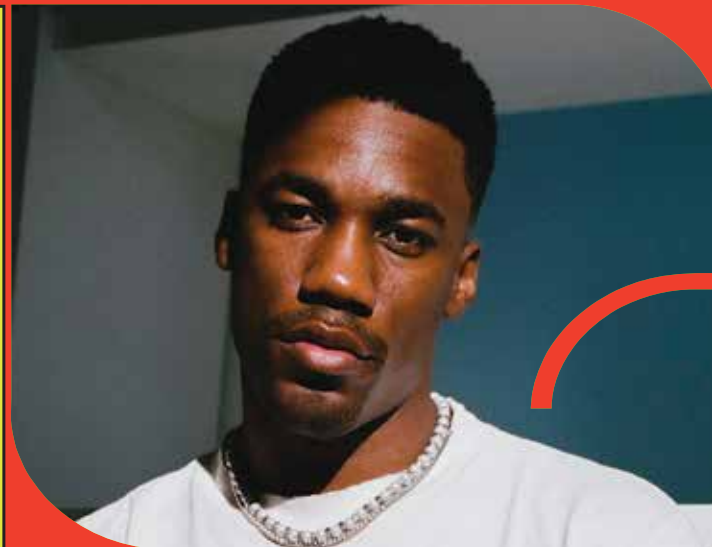
ZARA LARSSON
"ON MY LOVE" WITH DAVID GUETTA

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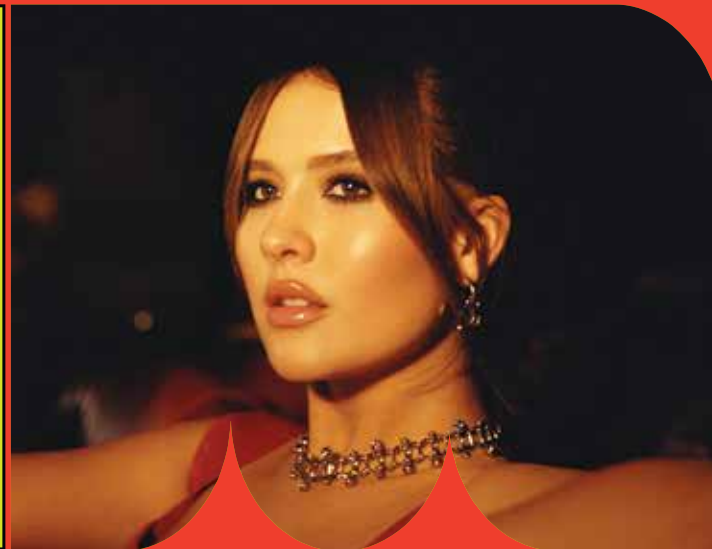
REAL BOSTON RICHEY
"WELCOME TO BUBBA LAND"



GIVÉON
"THE FIRST NOEL (AMAZON ORIGINAL)"



MIMI WEBB
"AMELA"



TORI KELLY
"TORI"



BUSTA RHYMES
"LUXURY LIFE" FT. COOLERAY



MARIO
"MAIN ONE" WITH LIL WAYNE FT. TYGA



OXLADE
"KU LO SA"



Will.i.am
"MIND YOUR BUSINESS" WITH BRITNEY SPEARS

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MILEY CYRUS



“It’s the song, the album, the moment she’s spent her whole career building up to.” – **RollingStone**

“Time to give Miley her flowers.” – **VULTURE**

“Always a musical shape-shifter, the pop star has now released her most wide-ranging record yet.”

– **THE WALL STREET JOURNAL**



DEPECHE MODE



“Their 15th album is a reminder that Dave Gahan and Martin Gore are capable of everything.” – **VULTURE**

“Hypnotic” – **RollingStone**

“Fantastic” – **STEREOGUM**

“This is absolutely Depeche Mode at their best since Ultra.” – **Pitchfork**

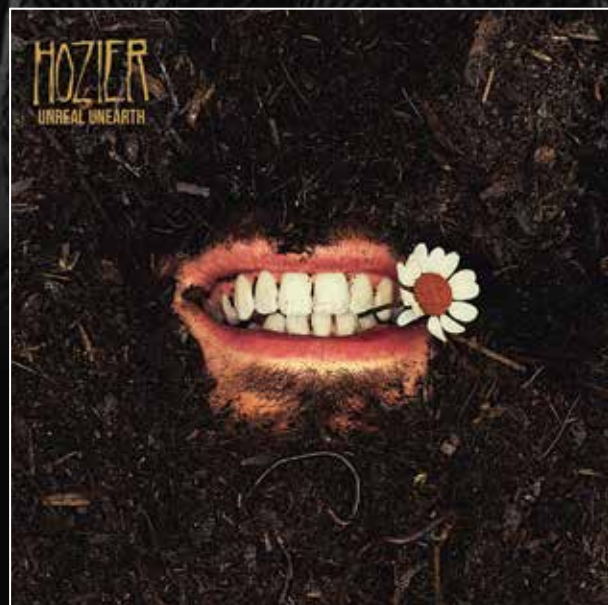


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 **COLUMBIA**

HOZIER



“Hozier isn’t just growing as an artist, he’s being reborn...
The result is his best album yet.” — **RollingStone**

“Hozier walks through hell but finds the light on
Unreal Unearth.” — **Entertainment**

“*Unreal Unearth* finds Hozier stepping fully into where he
was made to be... this is undoubtedly his best work.”
— **Paste**



BRUCE
SPRINGSTEEN



CALVIN HARRIS



CHLÖE

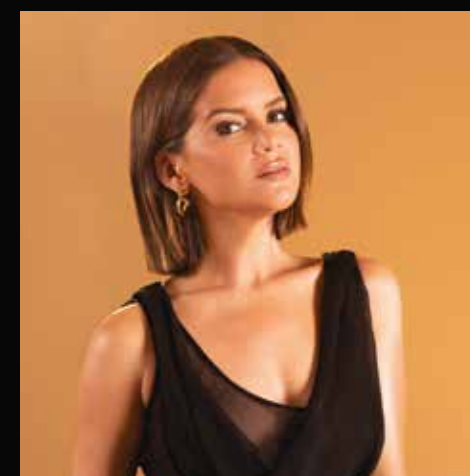
DIPLO



DOMINIC
FIKE



LABRINTH



MAREN
MORRIS



MEGAN
MORONEY

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ASAKE

WORK OF ART

The New York Times
OUR FAVORITE ALBUMS OF THE YEAR
ASAKE - WORK OF ART

Pitchfork
"ASAKE'S ON TOP OF THE WORLD
RIGHT NOW AND ISN'T COMING DOWN"

Rolling Stone
future
of
music

The
Guardian

"EVERY TRACK COULD BE A SINGLE"

npr

"WORK OF ART IS SUN-KISSED AND
SELF AFFIRMING [...] SHINY AND ELEVATED"

FADER

"POISED FOR GLOBAL DOMINATION"



LARRY JUNE AND THE ALCHEMIST



billboard
(BEST ALBUMS OF '23)
"LARRY JUNE GLIDES THROUGH
SONGS WITH SEAMLESS PRECISION"

CLASH
"BRIDGES GENERATIONS
OF HIP-HOP TOGETHER"

COMPLEX
(BEST ALBUMS OF '23)
"LARRY AND ALCHEMIST TELEPORT LISTENERS
TO THE SUNNY BAY AREA ON THE GREAT
ESCAPE, ONE SMOOTH BEAT AND
OBSCURE FOOD REFERENCE AT A TIME."

Pitchfork
"VIVACIOUS AND FREQUENTLY GORGEOUS"

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THE GREAT ESCAPE



FOR YOUR GRAMMY® CONSIDERATION



DEMI LOVATO



SABRINA CARPENTER



THE KILLERS



JESSIE REYEZ



LAUREN SPENCER SMITH



OLIVIA DEAN



CHVRCHES



LOREEN



NIA ARCHIVES



NOTD



THE LAST DINNER PARTY



STACEY RYAN



SPARKS



market

MUSIC AND MONEY

PG. 62 GRATEFUL DEAD MERCH KEEPS TRUCKIN'
PG. 64 AEG PRESENTS' RICK MUELLER KEEPS BUILDING



From left: Zach Bryan, Swift, Wallen, SZA and Travis Scott.

Republic Continues To Dominate The Year

Morgan Wallen and Taylor Swift drive the label to a lead of almost four percentage points over No. 2 Interscope Geffen A&M

BY DAN RYS // ILLUSTRATION BY NATE KITCH

THIS YEAR has been defined by consistency at the top of the charts, and one record label has led in current market share in each of the first three quarters: Republic Records, which has 12.28% of the market through Sept. 28, according to Luminate. That's a negligible drop from last quarter's 12.46% and more than four percentage points higher than the 8.77% share the label had for the same period last year.

Republic's market share — much like the year overall — has been headlined by the massive Morgan Wallen album *One Thing at a Time*, which has racked up more than

4.5 million equivalent album units since its March debut, and Taylor Swift's prolific release schedule, which not only includes her latest collection of new tracks, *Midnights*, but also the release of *Speak Now (Taylor's Version)*. Both are among the top 10 albums of the year so far. (Republic's share also includes Island, Big Loud, Mercury, Cash Money and indie distributor Imperial.)

Wallen's dominance is such that his label, Big Loud, would rank eighth among all labels on its own, with a 2.69% current market share if it were broken out from Republic, with both *One Thing at a Time* and his last release,

Dangerous: The Double Album, both counting toward current share. (Current is defined as albums released within the past 18 months or that have remained in the top half of the Billboard 200.)

Coming in at a comfortable second place, with big third-quarter releases from Olivia Rodrigo and NewJeans, was Interscope Geffen A&M, which hit a high mark for the year so far with an 8.55% current share, a half-point increase over its midyear mark. That's down from the 9.23% current share IGA posted at the third-quarter mark of 2022, but is a strong showing in a year in which Republic has vacuumed up so much market share. (IGA's share also includes Verve Label Group.)

In third place, Atlantic — which encompasses 300 Elektra Entertainment — has also moved to a high mark for the year, with a 7.39% share, up from 7.34% at midyear. The music group's performance was boosted by releases by Gunna, Lil Uzi Vert and, most significantly, the *Barbie* soundtrack, which is among the top five albums of the third quarter with over 650,000 equivalent album units.

However, factoring in back catalog to look at overall market share shakes up the top

Epic Games sold **Bandcamp** to **Songtradr** and announced plans to lay off 16% of its workforce.

Live Nation launched a program to support developing artists by paying them \$1,500 stipends and dropping merchandise fees.

BRAN: MICHAEL BUCHNER FOR VARIETY; SWIFT: FERNANDO LEO; THE KILLERS: JAMES SOK; CHRISTOPHER PALK FOR VARIETY; SCOTT: GILBERT FLORES FOR VARIETY

two. Interscope takes the top spot with 9.57%, besting Republic's 9.49% by a shade over 500,000 units through the first three quarters, with Atlantic in third at 8.31%. That's due to the deeper catalog of IGA and Atlantic: They are Nos. 1 and 2 in catalog-only share, with 9.91% and 8.62%, respectively. Republic finished third at 8.54%. Coming into the final quarter of the year, that's a race to watch.

Capitol, which includes Motown/Quality Control, Blue Note, Astralwerks, Capitol Christian and indie distributor Virgin Music, remained steady in fourth place at 6.01% (from 6.0% at midyear) through three quarters. (Although HYBE acquired Quality Control earlier this year, Universal Music Group [UMG] continued to distribute the label.)

In fifth, Warner Records has made large gains throughout the year, largely due to the successes within Warner Nashville. (Its market share also includes catalog label Rhino, as well as Warner Music Latina.) Zach Bryan's self-titled album has been a standout success in the quarter, while Bailey Zimmerman's *Religiously. The Album* continues to perform well. Notably, both Capitol and Warner made big leaps in current market share year over year: Capitol jumped from sixth place to fourth, growing from 4.50% in 2022 to 6.01% in 2023; Warner grew from 4.77% in 2022 to 5.89% in 2023.

Slipping down the rankings year over year was Columbia, which dropped in current share from fourth through three quarters in 2022 (6.93%) to sixth in 2023 (4.93%). Columbia scored big this year with Miley Cyrus' *Endless Summer Vacation*, though 2022's slate with releases from Harry Styles, Beyoncé and Adele represents a tough act to follow. RCA, in seventh, remains on a hot streak led by the huge success of SZA's *SOS* — still the No. 2 album of the year — with the label coming in at a 4.64% share, up from 4.47% this time last year.

Epic has roared back after a relatively quiet 2023 on the strength of Travis Scott's mammoth *Utopia*, which boosted the label from 1.82% in current share at midyear to 2.39% at the three-quarters mark — its highest quarterly showing for the year. Sony Nashville (eighth, 2.50%) and Sony Latin (10th, 1.96%) round out the top 10, with each growing more than half a percentage point year over year.

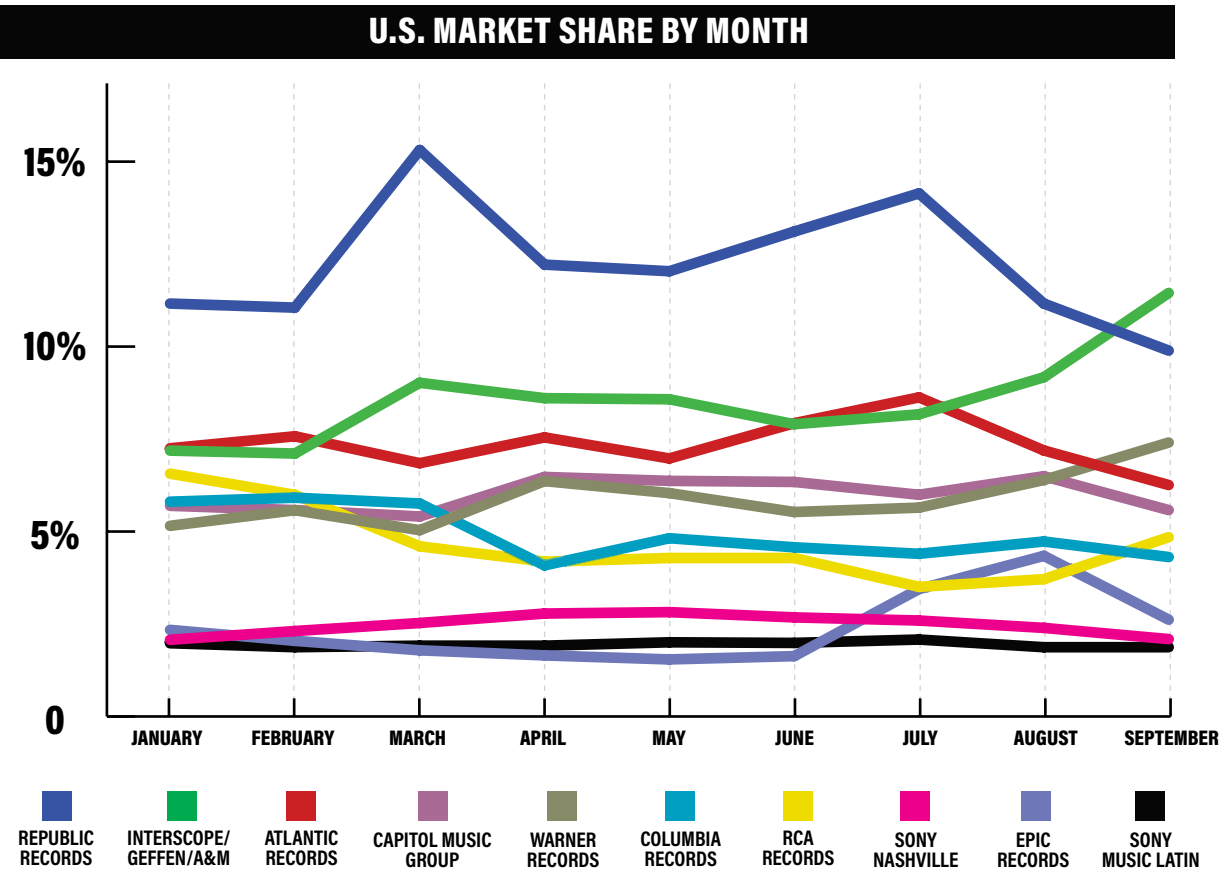
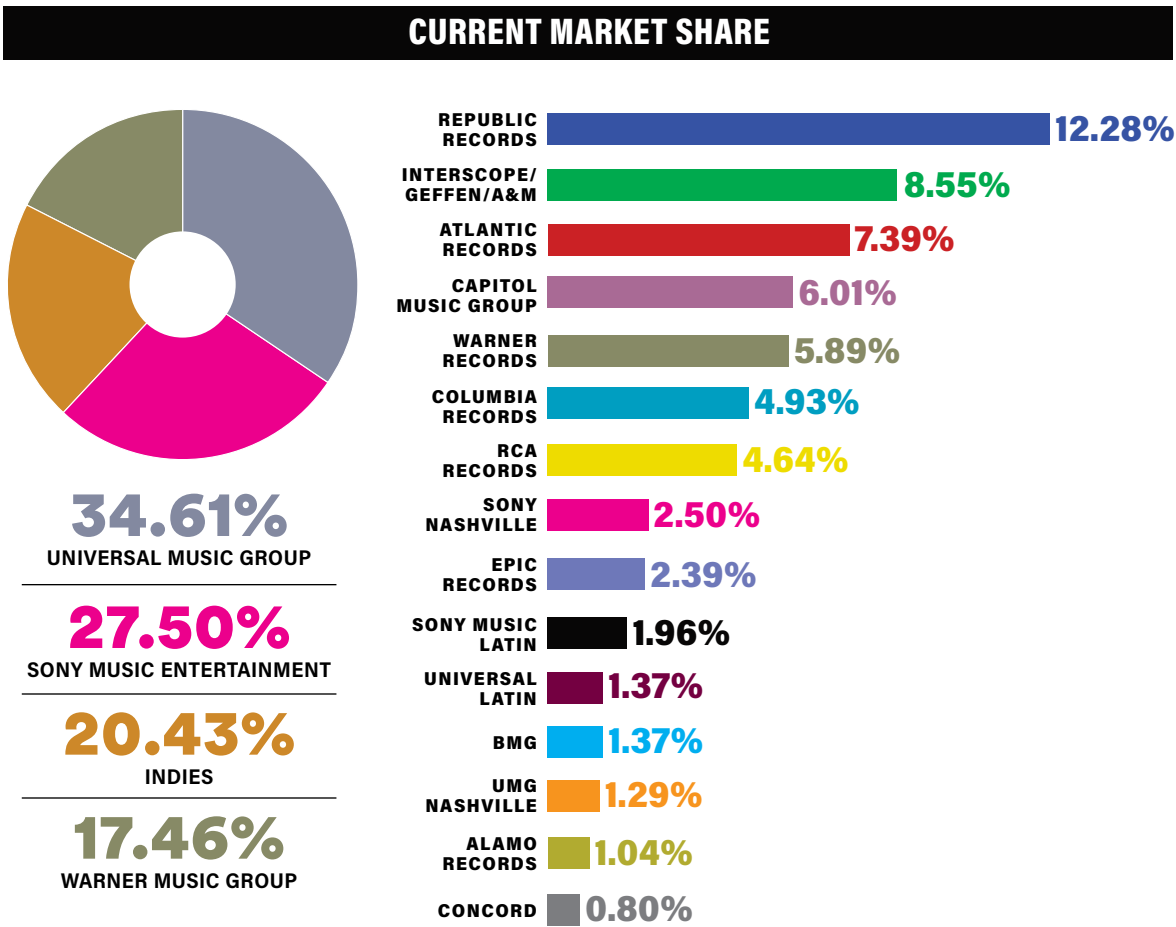
Among the label groups, both UMG (up from 32.54% to 34.61%) and Sony Music Entertainment (up from 27.09% to 27.50%) made big year-over-year strides, while Warner Music Group (down from 18.64% to 17.46%) and, collectively, independent labels (down from 21.73% to 20.43%) lost share compared with the same period in 2022. **B**

BMG will handle its own digital distribution after exiting its deal with Warner Music's **ADA**.

Katy Perry sold her master recording royalties and music publishing rights to **Litmus Music** for \$225 million.

Big Gains, Little Pain

Republic, Atlantic, Warner and Epic are among the labels that grew their shares in Q3



SOURCE Data from Dec. 30, 2022, through Sept. 28, 2023, as calculated by Luminate. Market-share percentages in the bottom graph are for the four-week period indicated and not year to date.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION FOO FIGHTERS BUT HERE WE ARE



BUT HERE WE ARE
ALBUM OF THE YEAR
BEST ROCK ALBUM

“RESCUED”
RECORD OF THE YEAR
SONG OF THE YEAR
BEST ROCK SONG
BEST ROCK PERFORMANCE

ALBUM PRODUCED BY GREG KURSTIN AND FOO FIGHTERS

“TRAGEDY ISN’T NECESSARY TO PRODUCE TRANSCENDENT MUSIC. BUT HERE, IT DID.”
THE ATLANTIC

“★★★★★ ... A STANDOUT ... STUNNING, PIECE OF WORK ... QUITE POSSIBLY THEIR BEST AND MOST MEANINGFUL ALBUM.”
GOLDMINE

“EXPLOSIVE, EMOTIONAL AND INSPIRED ... AS SOARING AND ANTHEMIC AS THEY’VE SOUNDED IN YEARS”
THE NEW YORK TIMES

“A FANTASTIC RECORD FULL OF RIFFS AND REFLECTION ... SO CATCHY AND VIBRANT, SO BRIMMING WITH WILD-EYED WONDER ... GROHL CLEARLY UNDERSTANDS THAT WE HONOR DEPARTED LOVED ONES BY BUILDING NEW JOYS WE WISH THEY WERE AROUND TO SHARE.”
NPR

“THE BAND’S MOST PROPULSIVE AND PURPOSEFUL MUSIC OF THE LAST TWO DECADES ... OFFERING EARNEST HOPE, FOND REMINISCENCE, AND SKYSCRAPING CHORUSES”
PITCHFORK

“ONE OF THE STRONGEST ALBUMS OF THE BAND’S CAREER ... RECKONING WITH THE CONUNDRUMS OF HUMAN EXISTENCE THROUGH THE SHEER POWER OF MUSIC”
SPIN

“MEMORABLE AND MEANINGFUL”
USA TODAY

“ACHING DIRECTNESS AND WOUNDED SWEETNESS MAKE A POTENT COMBINATION HERE”
VULTURE



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Rick Astley settled his vocal impersonation lawsuit with **Yung Gravy**.

The members of **BTS** renewed their contracts with **BigHit Music** for releases from 2025 onward.



Shakedown Streak

The Grateful Dead has been selling merch since the late 1960s and setting licensing and marketing standards for the now \$4.4 billion business **BY STEVE KNOPPER**

S **HORTLY AFTER** Michael Cherman founded his apparel company, Market, in 2016, he designed and sold a tie-dyed T-shirt with the Grateful Dead's dancing bears spiraling toward a center point. Spotting the trademarked image online, the Dead's official merchandise company, Rhino Entertainment, contacted him and asked: "Would you like to do this more legit instead of bootlegging it?"

"Yes," he responded, and today, the company's streetwear products include a \$200 Grateful Dead screen-printing kit and a \$45 trucker hat with the lightning-skull Stealie Rose logo. "This has unlocked the world for me," says Cherman, whose company sells clothing licensed from the estates of Bob Marley, Jimi Hendrix and others. "People just came to us and said, 'Hey, how can you do that for us?'"

Since the Dead sold one of its earliest T-shirts in the late '60s, featuring key-boardist Ron "Pigpen" McKernan and designed by Hell's Angel Allan "Gut" Terk, its merchandise business has evolved into an international brand licensed to dozens of companies and sold in stores from Walmart to Saks Fifth Avenue. What Cherman calls the "holy trinity" of Dead logos — dancing bears, lightning bolts and skeletons — is on thousands of products. Online, fans can buy a pair of tie-dyed Crocs containing pink-and-yellow dancing-bear charms for \$160; a \$70 Teton hoodie designed for snowboarding; Grateful Dead leggings marked with "GD" and

pink roses, \$38; Grateful Dead fluorescent green Nike skateboarding shoes, \$110; a psychedelic Air Garcia skateboard, \$65; and a pair of Grateful Dead skis topped with the "Steal Your Face" skull logo, \$750.

The band's merch machine has also served as an exemplar of how an act can expand its brand into a multimillion-dollar business, raking in revenue years, and even decades, after the deaths of such core members as McKernan, Jerry Garcia and lyricist Robert Hunter.

Dead products are a sliver of the nearly \$4.4 billion music merch licensing industry, as valued by trade organization Licensing International in 2022, an increase from \$3.7 billion in 2019. Universal Music Group, which owns merch giant Bravado, earned \$618 million from product in 2022, according to financial reports — a 70.2% increase from \$363 million the previous year. Much of that revenue comes from traditional sales (T-shirts, hoodies and caps sold at concerts), and contemporary stars like Taylor Swift and BTS dominate the business. But classic-rock merch is booming, too.

"That universe has expanded," says Rhino president Mark Pinkus, who oversees the Dead account. "The shirts are being worn by people of all ages." Jeff Jampol, CEO of Jam Inc., which manages licenses for The Doors and the estates of Janis Joplin and others, adds that classic-rock merch has evolved from basic black T-shirts to a diverse fashion industry "largely driven by 10- to 20-year-

old females and their moms."

The rich and famous also boosted demand. In the late '90s, Brad Beckerman, who worked with his father at the sports-licensing company Starter, noticed that most music merch came in the form of mass-marketed T-shirts and saw an opening. Beckerman's company, Trunk, secured 76 licenses, including Madonna and The Beatles, and expanded the market to high-end customers and department stores. Trunk sold T-shirts, but also jackets and rhinestone belts, Japanese denim and Italian leather for prices that could approach \$1,000. "It was unbelievable, the exposure we got," he recalls. "We had hundreds of celebrities buying these things."

Until the early 2000s, the Dead — whose members weren't getting along at the time, according to their former longtime publicist, Dennis McNally — ran Dead Merchandising. Later, the band licensed its name and various logos to just a few companies, like Ripple Junction and Liquid Blue, and mostly focused on T-shirts. "It was easier to go their own ways and let somebody else deal with the business," McNally says.

According to a source who works in the business, merch licenses are normally structured as a percentage of the licensee's gross sales income. Smaller licensees typically pay 12% of gross revenue; national licensees, 4% to 5%; and for internet sales, where there is less overhead, it's a few points higher.

In 2006, after the Warner Music Group-

owned Rhino took over the Dead's merch, Heather Lewis, vp of merchandising for Warner's artist-branding division WMX, saw how well the band's CDs and box sets, such as the dozens of *Dick's Picks* live albums, were selling, and steered Rhino's Dead team toward a similar strategy for merch. "Over the past decade, it has been about growing not just the merch but the creative aspect of the merch and working with Deadhead artists," she says.

One of Rhino's challenges is when to turn a blind eye to bootleggers — such as the Shakedown Street vendors who sell unlicensed products at spinoff concerts such as Dead & Company — and when to shut them down or, as with Cherman and Market, license their creations.

The Dead's first line of merch gate-keeping is archivist David Lemieux and Pinkus, a Deadhead who recently flew to Boulder, Colo., to attend three Dead & Company shows. Their shared philosophy for licensing the band's nine trademarks: "The Grateful Dead should be everywhere, for everybody, at all price points and in all styles," Pinkus says. Accordingly, he and Lemieux are "easy to find and open to doing licensing deals." They recently approved Dead-branded coolers, hammocks, camping equipment and polo shirts with embroidered lightning bolts where you might typically find a horse or alligator. They run every potential licensee proposal by the band members and the estates of those who've died, but they usually approve the decisions. (A representative for the band members said they declined to comment.)

"My impression is that Rhino tries to honor the Grateful Dead example, which was choosy, low-key, and generally it wasn't to make money," McNally says. "It's like everything else about the world of the Grateful Dead. It just grew." **B**

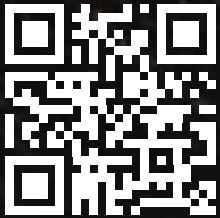


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From The Desk Of...
Rick Mueller

**PRESIDENT OF NORTH AMERICA
AEG PRESENTS**

BY FRANK DIGIACOMO
PHOTOGRAPHED BY YASARA GUNAWARDENA

Mueller photographed at AEG's Los Angeles offices.

WHETHER HE'S building live-music clubs and theaters or renovating them, Rick Mueller abides by a simple rule for his complex job: "The best venues bring out the best in the fans and the best in the band."

As AEG Presents president of North America, Mueller, 50, oversees all of the rooms in the territory for which the company is the primary talent buyer.

His purview includes more than 100 U.S. properties — mostly theaters and clubs managed by one of 13 regional offices that report to him. Among them are those owned and operated by The Bowery Presents, a collection of destination plays such as Brooklyn Steel and Forest Hills Stadium in New York and a series of newly opened clubs in Boston, Denver, Atlanta and Cincinnati. He's also heavily involved in business development, overseeing construction of new projects that AEG Presents will exclusively book, like Nashville Yards, as well as bringing existing venues like the Santa Barbara (Calif.) Bowl under AEG Presents management.

"We're building AEG as [a collection] of more regionally run businesses," he explains. "That allows us to be more responsive to those markets — what's happening musically there and what the customer wants."

Mueller, who is originally from the San Francisco Bay area and now lives in Los Angeles, contends that strategy gives AEG Presents a "distinct advantage" over its main competition, Live Nation, where he briefly worked. "Live Nation is a very centralized company," he says. "They buy their talent centrally. They make their concession deals centrally. They probably have their alcohol sponsored, and it's driving whatever they serve in their venues. I don't know that they give a lot of specialized thought in any given city to what is a great experience."

You have opened a lot of smaller clubs. How do you identify markets that need another venue?
Since the pandemic, we've opened The Eastern in Atlanta,

Roadrunner in Boston and the MegaCorp Pavilion in Cincinnati. They're all doing really well, and we want to continue to add a lot more venues to that list. We've got Nashville Yards, which will open up at the end of 2024 or early 2025. We've got a venue in Raleigh [N.C.] that will open up in the first half of 2025. These are brand-new builds. As for what markets we look at — any place there's opportunity. Sometimes that's a function of a certain capacity room that doesn't exist in a marketplace.

What size venues are your sweet spot?
We're focusing on locations with capacities of 1,500 to 5,000. There's more and more bands that are coming out of this frictionless distribution of music. They are able to sell tickets, so there's a huge demand for these size venues. The bands can't find enough dates, and we want to make sure that we service that opportunity.

You've opened a club called Racket in Manhattan, a market where you already have a number of small clubs. Why open another?
New York is a market where we've invested in very small spaces because it's a very important developmental market for our relationships and conversations with bands. We feel that finding any venue in Manhattan — in this case, we renovated the old Highline Ballroom — is an opportunity we're going to look at every single time.

What niche will Racket fill?
Look, in New York there's a variety of bands that could sell more tickets than probably any other market in the United States. It's also a first statement-type play. These smaller rooms are where we do a lot of, call it R&D. We build relationships with young bands, and then we want them on a path to play our whole venue portfolio. We hope that carries all the way through to our bigger venues like Forest Hills. It's a true vertical pipeline where we can service an artist's needs at any level.

Are small music clubs the new A&R for artists?
I think the internet is A&R for artists. In this day of social media and frictionless distribution, artists can be their own advocates. As far as building a live base, New York is a very important market to start relationships with artists early. Could you have that same level of development in Indianapolis? No, and that's not on my high-priority list. But in key markets that can handle a lot of shows, we're going to continue to invest in that.

A lot of live-industry innovators start at the club level. What are your priorities?
What you're seeing across the board in the industry is the desire for more premium offerings. There's a huge group of people out there who are willing to pay a little bit more whether it's for a better seat, a better experience, a better drink, better dining. We're looking at that, but we're also tailoring our offerings so that there's an experience for everybody. We want to make sure that we offer a range of experiences — from cheaper to high-end.

Billboard recently reported that Gen Z concertgoers aren't big consumers of alcohol. How do you adapt?
We're keeping a very close eye on that. It's a big part of the business, and it certainly hasn't dropped off a cliff. People are still drinking, and we're doing more offerings, whether it's non-alcoholic or specialty cocktails. Almost on a daily basis, we look at where our numbers are and try to understand why, but it's something that's really hard to see in the moment. You have to collect data, and by the time you see where the trends are going, you hope you're in a position to adjust to it.

How does your division run differently than, say, Live Nation's House of Blues chain and its smaller venues?
Live Nation takes more of, I'll say, a cookie-cutter approach to music. House of Blues is a chain, and it's the same somewhat uninspired experience anytime you go to one of them. We're

opening brands that we hope speak to their markets and stand with their own identity.

Have you noticed any changes in the way fans buy tickets since the pandemic?
When we first came back, the number of no-shows was much higher than we're accustomed to. That pretty much leveled off and came back into what you'd call traditional ranges. There are trends where a fan might wait a little longer to buy tickets. That's more market-specific, and that dynamic has always existed. When I first started in this business at Bill Graham Presents, Detroit was this crazy, huge, late-selling market and would do thousands of tickets week of show at some of the amphitheater properties. It doesn't sell the same way now. San Francisco has had a lot of changeover in terms of its population. Sales are up, but we see [ticket purchases] shifting a little bit later in the overall cycle. We are seeing more of a strong close to a lot of shows there, and why that is I'm not sure. But as an industry, we're still selling a lot of tickets early in the game, especially in big arenas and the stadium star category. Business has been incredibly good. You haven't really heard about a lot of large-scale underperforming tours.

What are the hot genres for ticket sales?
Generally stated, country continues to explode, as well as the land that Zach Bryan and Tyler Childers and even Jason Isbell inhabit — they aren't traditional-style country. Kelsea Ballerini's most recent tour is exploding. We've also seen incredible results with dance music. If you look at what has gone on at Brooklyn Mirage, which is in our company, they've had what appears to be a record season.

What headwinds do you see?
If there's a negative trend in the business, it's that more multi-genre festivals have struggled to maintain success. The big experiences like Coachella, Lollapalooza, Outside Lands are stronger than ever. They're brands that people trust, and

the festival experience is great. Below that, some festivals have struggled, while you're seeing more single-genre festivals — dance, for instance — succeed. Look at Electric Forest. It speaks to a very specific audience, and it's stronger than ever.

A year ago, indie and smaller acts were canceling tours because they were losing money. Is that still happening?
It has leveled off. A lot of people had sold tickets at a different kind of ticket price before the pandemic and made their budgets on one set of dynamics. Then when it was time to go out and tour post-pandemic, it cost a lot more to be out on the road. If your sales weren't that good or you weren't expecting to earn any back-end, you could end up losing money, which is why I think some people pulled down their tour plans. Costs have gotten under control, but it's still expensive to tour. The challenge for midlevel tours is finding a balance between prices that are welcome among the fan base and the costs of being out on the road. Sometimes you have to find a mix of festivals and soft-ticket money out there to help pay for the markets that don't cover the nightly bill that you need to earn.

How does the currently high level of inflation affect AEG's business?
It costs a lot more for security and the labor to run our shows. And again, in some of these big markets where there's a lot of events going on on a given weekend, it can be hard just to find staff. So managing our labor costs has been a real challenge. We have to look carefully when we do an event and what that costs and if we can make enough money for it to be worthwhile. Sometimes you go into these unique situations where the artist doesn't seem to make any money because it costs more to do the show, and we're struggling to make money, but it's an important look for the artist. So we are all going in with the right goals and intentions to grow that artist's career so that they make money on their live shows when they come back to that market. **B**

Disney veteran **Bryan Castellani** was named CFO at **Warner Music Group**.
AEG Presents president of global touring **Gary Gersh** is departing the company and will be succeeded by **Rich Schaefer**.

THE 4TH ALBUM BY TRAVIS SCOTT

"MY EYES"

"K-POP" FT BAD BUNNY & THE WEEKND

"TELEKINESIS" FT SZA & FUTURE

"MELTDOWN" FT DRAKE

"MODERN JAM"

"I KNOW?"

"DELRESTIO(ECHOES)" FT BEYONCE

CIRCUS MAXIMUS THE FILM

"TRAVIS SCOTT'S UTOPIA ALBUM
HAS BECOME THE MOST
COMMERCIALY SUCCESSFUL HIP-HOP
ALBUM OF THE YEAR"

VIBE

"...THE MOST IMPRESSIVE
OF HIS CAREER"

billboard



FOR YOUR GRAMMY®
CONSIDERATION.

"UTOPIA SHOWS A MUSICAL
VERSATILITY AND ADVENTUROUSNESS
THAT'S RARE FOR AN ARTIST
ON HIS LEVEL"

VARIETY

"A BLOCKBUSTER RELEASE"

GQ

Epic

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UTOPIA



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DJ KHALED

“SUPPOSED TO BE LOVED”

FEATURING LIL BABY, FUTURE, & LIL UZI VERT

**THE NEW ANTHEM
FROM RAP’S PROVEN HITMAKER**

“An explosive anthem, bringing together some of the industry’s heaviest hitters and icons.” – **SOURCE**

“A summer smash...all three artists give great vocal performances...the production is uplifting and has that Khaled sound...” – **hnhh**

“...pulsating, upbeat...” – **RollingStone**

“Reimagine ‘P.Y.T.’ for the summer jam...feels 90-esque with boom-bap production, but the three stars pivot to melodic rapping...” – **VIBE**



FOR YOUR GRAMMY® CONSIDERATION

COCO JONES

THE R&B BREAKTHROUGH



**“ICU”
THE GLOBAL R&B SMASH
FROM THE ACCLAIMED DEBUT EP
‘WHAT I DIDN’T TELL YOU’**

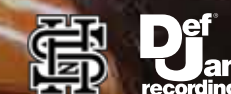
“One of the most compelling voices in modern R&B...a vocal powerhouse.” – **teenVOGUE**

“Soulful...Transfixing...” – **VANTITYFAIR**

“She is a natural triple threat—singing, acting, and dancing her way into the audience’s hearts...” – **V MAGAZINE**

“A beautiful fusion of modern neo-soul and blues...” – **COMPLEX**

“Everyone’s favorite up-and-coming R&B ‘IT’ girl” – **ESSENCE**



FOR YOUR GRAMMY® CONSIDERATION

FRIDAYY

THE R&B VIRTUOSO
& GRAMMY-NOMINATED VOICE OF “GOD DID”

“WHEN IT COMES TO YOU”
THE BREAKTHROUGH R&B HIT
FROM THE ACCLAIMED SELF-TITLED DEBUT ALBUM

“Guaranteed to raise goosebumps...” - **VXX**

“Traversing between singing, songwriting, and producing, Fridayy has blown the industry out of the water with his distinct vocals...” - **Wonderland**.

“Fridayy laid it all out there for the world to see.” - American Songwriter

“The artist, producer, and songwriter makes visceral sonic stories not bound by traditional structures but by emotions we all share.” - **REVOLT**

“Fridayy’s debut isn’t just a personal narrative—it’s a universal story of dreams, challenges, and the human experience.” - **SOURCE**



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ADEKUNLE GOLD

THE AFRO-POP ICON
FROM LAGOS, NIGERIA

“PARTY NO DEY STOP”
THE AFROBEATS ANTHEM

“AG flexes on the vivacious beat, co-produced by Kel-P and Monroe, which ensures the vibes are not just immaculate but also eternal.” - **billboard**

“Infectious...innovative...a testament to his ability to merge Afropop, Afrobeats, R&B, and amapiano to deliver his signature sound, but leave room for his growth as an artist.” - **okayafrika**

“An icon...Melding together aspects of rap and amapiano with his afrobeats mixture, Adekunle Gold supplies all-out bumpers.” - **CLASH**

“Nigerian superstar Adekunle Gold is experiencing a renaissance...” - **VARIETY**



FOR YOUR GRAMMY® CONSIDERATION

MUNI LONG

THE GRAMMY-WINNING
R&B SUPERSTAR

“MADE FOR ME” THE STUNNING RETURN SINGLE

“Made for R&B purists...If this is what [her] next chapter looks like, then we’re at attention.” – **VIBE**

“With its delicate piano notes and mellow backing beat, the track allows Long to explore her dynamic vocal range...” – **HITS**

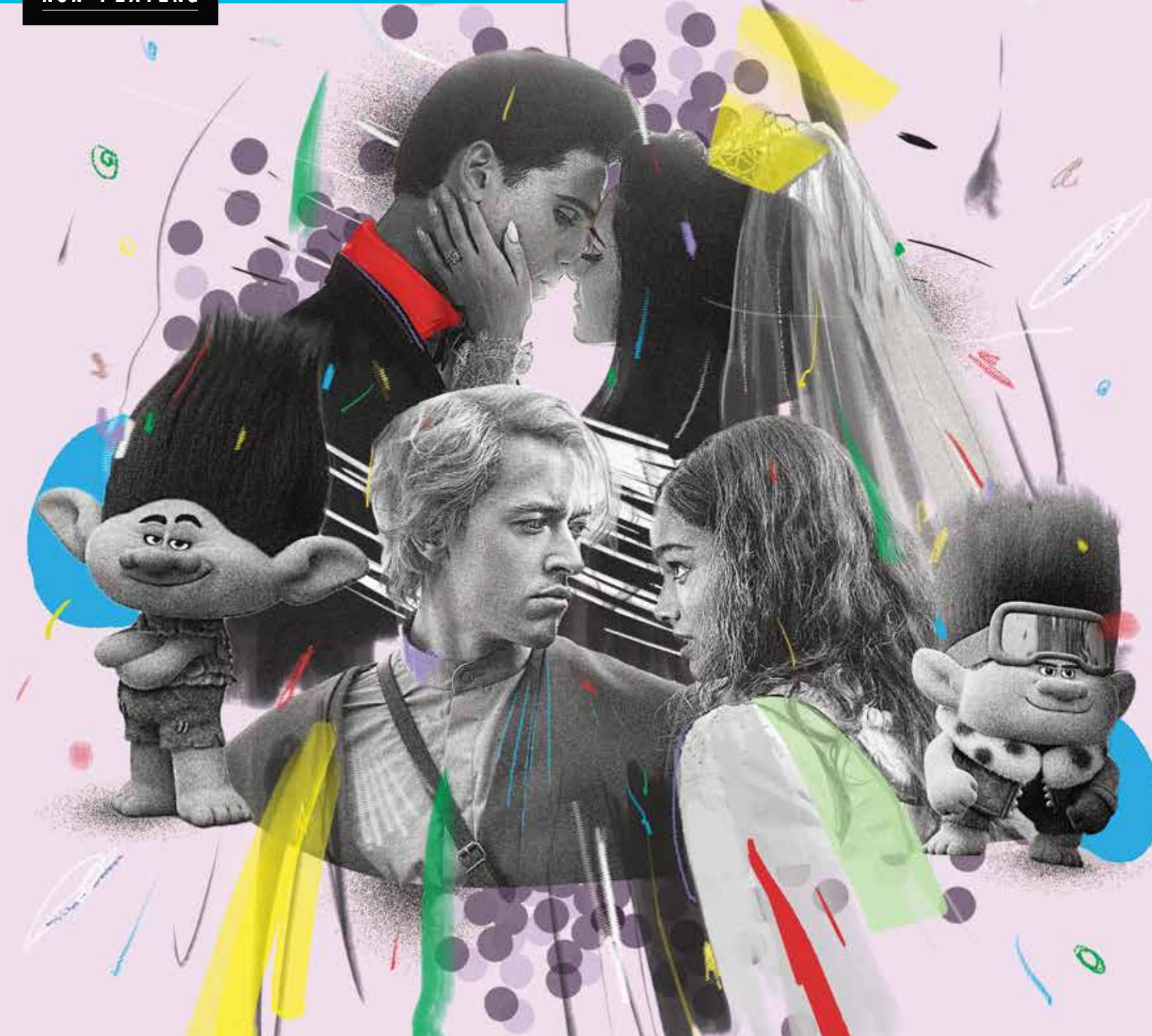
“Muni Long is back.” – **RATED R&B**

“A soulful piano leads the way on the sultry track as Long describes the surreal moments of love in its purest state.” – **UPROXX**

Def
Jam
recordings

sound

NOW PLAYING



Top: Jacob Elordi and Cailee Spaeny in *Priscilla*; bottom, left and right: the trolls voiced by Justin Timberlake and Eric Andrew, respectively, in *Trolls Band Together*; bottom, middle: Tom Blyth and Rachel Zegler in *The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds & Snakes*.

NOW PRESENTING...

A long-awaited reunion, a superproducer’s latest Hollywood stint and one of music’s most dissected love stories told from the other side — the coming months will see a surplus of movies that put music at the forefront [ILLUSTRATION BY SELMAN HOŞGÖR](#)



Zegler in *The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds & Snakes*.

AN APPETITE FOR AUTHENTICITY

Dave Cobb on what sold him to produce the *Hunger Games* prequel soundtrack — and how he made it as real as possible

BY JOE LYNCH

THE HUNGER GAMES films are no stranger to haunting musical moments that produce real-life hits, with six singles from four movies hitting the Billboard Hot 100 — including top 20 hits for Taylor Swift and even Jennifer Lawrence. When the prequel *The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds & Snakes* hits theaters on Nov. 17, a batch of new songs will take center stage thanks to Rachel Zegler, who delivers a nuanced portrayal of a nomadic balladeer thrown into a dystopian fight to the death.

Almost two years after winning a Golden Globe



Cobb

for Steven Spielberg's *West Side Story* remake, Zegler is preparing to show audiences she can deliver gritty country-folk just as deftly as Broadway classics. To ensure the music of the film convincingly conjured her character's Appalachia-esque milieu, Lionsgate tapped Nashville mainstay Dave Cobb to put melodies to lyrics penned by franchise author Suzanne Collins. Cobb, a nine-time Grammy Award winner, is primarily known for working with country artists including Brandi Carlile and Chris Stapleton. But he has produced music

for major films along the way such as *A Star Is Born* and *Elvis* — and his latest Hollywood project presented a new challenge.

What about this opportunity made you say yes?

One of the things that was so attractive about working on this film [is that] I don't think I've ever talked to a more intelligent person in my life than Suzanne Collins. She's an absolute genius. Suzanne telling me the impetus of the story had me captivated. I'm a history buff — I would teach history if I wasn't in music — and everything in this film, everything she has written for *Hunger Games*, is derived from real history. She sent me the lyrics, and I had to make them feel like turn-of-the-century,

timeless classics. That's a very hard thing to do.

The songs have a lived-in rawness to them. How did you achieve that?

The big thing for me was to get the ability to be completely unorthodox. We had this crazy idea to come down to my hometown of Savannah, Ga., and rent an old mansion and record in that. So we went to this 200-plus-year-old house, and the sound is very Alan Lomax. Lomax, whom I'm very influenced by, used to go around and capture people on their front porch. It was the real, genuine, authentic article of whatever he was [recording], so we went for that. With all the creaks in the walls, you can hear the history in the recording — it wasn't like a clinical studio. The old microphones we used looked like they'd been under a bed for 75 years.

And what about the band?

I brought in ringers who I thought were great musicians. Molly Tuttle played a big part — she played the guitar of [Zegler's character] Lucy Gray. I found this '30s Gibson that I brought down, and she played on that. I showed it to [director] Francis [Lawrence], and he used it in the film: It's the one [Zegler is] actually playing in the film. It wasn't just a regular acoustic guitar — it has character. That was a big part of making this come to life. There's bleed between the bass going into the fiddle going into the banjo. It's just absolute chaos in a way that makes things dangerous.

Did you work closely with Zegler, coaching her on how to approach the material?

I made the music before the film was made, and Rachel is such an incredible talent that she ended up singing everything live, which we were hoping she would do. She's so naturally gifted — it was effortless for her. She can sing anything.

Do you have a favorite musical moment in the film?

There's a song on [the soundtrack] I love called "Pure As the Driven Snow." Rachel has this beautiful, almost '30s American voice. The way she sings the last line of that song is so stunning.

ZEGLER: MURRAY CLOSE; COBB: BECKY FULKE

“THE SOUNDTRACK IS AN INSTANT CLASSIC.”

— THE GUARDIAN



STARFIELD

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Spaeny stars as the titular character in *Priscilla*.

INSIDE LOOK

Burning Love

How *Priscilla* director Sofia Coppola used surprising songs — and silence — to tell Priscilla Presley's side of her love story with Elvis

BY REBECCA MILZOFF

WHEN IT COMES TO the music of Sofia Coppola's films, "There's always a bit of impressionism," says Thomas Mars, the lead singer of Phoenix — who also happens to be married to the director. Think of My Bloody Valentine's "Sometimes" scoring Scarlett Johansson's taxi ride through late-night Tokyo in *Lost in Translation*, Kirsten Dunst cavorting through a decadent young queen's wardrobe as Bow Wow Wow's "I Want Candy" blasts in *Marie Antoinette* or the haunting chords of Air lending a foreboding tone to 1970s U.S. suburbia in *The Virgin Suicides*.

And in Coppola's latest film, *Priscilla* (out Nov. 3 from A24) — about when a teenage Priscilla Beaulieu (Caillee Spaeny) and Elvis Presley (Jacob Elordi) met — one moment in particular seems destined to join the canon of the director's great needle drops: after Priscilla and Elvis' first kiss, the resounding, viscerally recognizable trio of guitar chords of Tommy James and The Shondells' "Crimson & Clover."

"Sofia is really attuned to the grand majesty of popular music," says veteran music supervisor Randall Poster, who shares music supervision credit on the film with Phoenix. "In a sense, 'Crimson &

Clover' is as epic as Mozart or Beethoven — it encapsulates every adolescent emotion possible."

In adapting *Priscilla* from Priscilla's 1985 memoir, *Elvis & Me*, Coppola did use some of the historical music cues mentioned in it, such as a cover of Frankie Avalon's "Venus" (which Phoenix plays variations of as the score throughout) and Brenda Lee's "Sweet Nothin's." But for the rest of the soundtrack, "I didn't want it to sound corny, like some music of that era can to me," Coppola says. A fan of producer Phil Spector, his sound "became a way to tie things together. I wanted to embrace the melodrama of strings and big production."

Sometimes that meant nodding to Spector in unexpected ways: As the film opens, the orchestral psychedelics of Alice Coltrane's "Going Home" fade into Spector's trademark kick drums and lush strings — and the joltily nasal voice of Joey Ramone covering The Ronettes' "Baby I Love You" (a track from the Ramones' Spector-produced *End of the Century*).

But many times during the film, silence is used to striking effect. As Mars points out, key synchs like "Crimson & Clover" needed some quiet preceding them. "We felt this will be a big moment, so we can't have too much music before.

To make sure these moments are highlighted, there's a bit of negative space." And silence was, in fact, a big part of the discussion among Coppola, her longtime editor Sarah Flack, Mars and Poster about how music would inform the telling of Priscilla's story. Coppola has always been drawn to illuminating the interior lives of young women, and Priscilla, for much of the film, is alone — left at Graceland, away from her family, while her husband is off in the military or on film sets.

"She's trying to fit in; she's not sure where she is," Mars says. "It takes time for her to get her life back, to make her own choices." Emphasizing the stillness of her life without Elvis, and the noise and parties when he returns, was important. "I think those silences push you deeper into the movie, ultimately," Poster says.

Although Elordi magnetically portrays Elvis, the film is centered in Priscilla's experience, and his music is almost entirely absent from it. Authentic Brands Group, the majority owner of Elvis Presley Enterprises, which controls approval of Elvis song usage, did not grant it to Coppola. But that meant "we had to make a weakness a strength," Mars says. "In the end, it's better that it's more focused on Priscilla's perspective."

And it seems the film's subject was pleased. At the movie's Venice Film Festival showing, Priscilla embraced Coppola and wiped away tears during a standing ovation. "We haven't talked specifically about the music, but she said, 'You did your homework,'" Coppola says. "She felt it was authentic, which was so important to me."

BEHIND THE HIT

*NSYNC's "Better Place"

"ARE YOU GUYS DOING SOMETHING?" Taylor Swift asked the members of *NSYNC on Sept. 12 while onstage at the MTV Video Music Awards, where the reunited boy band had just arrived to shrieks and presented Swift the best pop trophy. "I need to know what it is!" *NSYNC was back, and even pop's biggest superstar was amped.

Justin Timberlake, JC Chasez, Lance Bass, Chris Kirkpatrick and Joey Fatone demurred at the time, but soon after the VMAs, *NSYNC announced "Better Place," its first new song together in over two decades. The shimmering, falsetto-heavy disco-pop track was created for *Trolls Band Together*, the third installment in the hit animated film series in which Timberlake voices a main character, Branch, and has contributed hits to each of the first two *Trolls* movies.

"My excitement started way back in the early part of the year," says Gina Shay, the producer/music supervisor for the films. That was when Timberlake sent her a demo of "Better Place," designed to follow his Billboard Hot 100-topping smash "Can't Stop the Feeling!" from the original *Trolls* film in 2016 and his SZA collaboration, "The Other Side," from 2020's *Trolls World Tour*.

Shortly after sending the demo, Timberlake texted Shay that he felt inspired to reunite *NSYNC to record "Better Place." "It was like dynamite was going off inside my brain," Shay says. After all, *NSYNC — whose four studio albums have sold 27.9 million copies, according to Luminate, and scored turn-of-the-century smashes like "Bye Bye Bye" and "It's Gonna Be Me" — hadn't released music together since 2002.

And while *Trolls Band Together* focuses on a boy band reunion, Shay says that the plot had been locked in long before any talk of an *NSYNC comeback. "The movie's story has been solid for about four years," she says, "so it was just that perfect confluence of a song to reunite *NSYNC and to carry the narrative."

Although Shay says that coordinating all five members' schedules with their individual teams "took a little time to sort through," "Better Place" came together rather seamlessly once the quintet was fully on board. After *NSYNC announced its reunion at the VMAs and unveiled "Better Place" on Sept. 29, Shay hopes that the song will become ubiquitous prior to the Nov. 17 release of *Trolls Band Together* — but however high it climbs, she's glad that the film franchise could play a role in the reformation of a pop behemoth like *NSYNC.

"I'm so glad we were able to do this for the fans," she says. "It has been a mix of love, pandemonium and wish fulfillment."

—JASON LIPSHUTZ



*NSYNC

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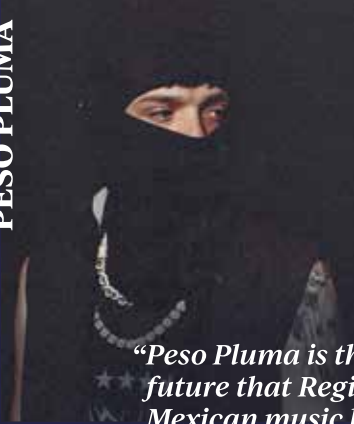
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- MUSIC ROW

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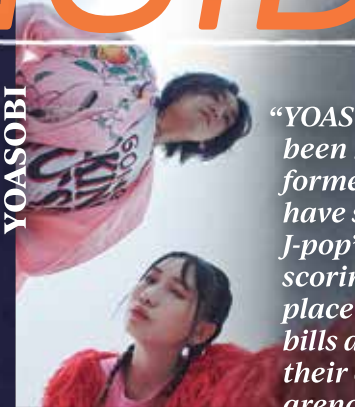
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- NPR

ERIC NAM



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NPR, Vanessa Romo

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*"IT'S FAIRLY SHOCKING — IN A GOOD WAY —
TO HEAR HER BARING HER POST-MARITAL
SOUL ON RECORD."* **VARIETY**

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SANDBOX

Metro Boomin photographed
Aug. 31 at Woodbury Story
House in Altadena, Calif.

Styling by Fatima B
Martine Rose suit.

NOW
PRODUCERS

SUPERPRODUCER

Metro Boomin spun a web of collaborators to become one of hip-hop's greatest heroes. With his biggest album yet and a *Spider-Verse* soundtrack to his name, can he use his creative powers to swing into pop's stratosphere?

BY HERAN MAMO

PHOTOGRAPHED BY SAMI DRASIN

WE ALL MUST make a choice — to be a hero or a villain.” The familiarity of Morgan Freeman’s commanding voice couldn’t calm down the fans — 80,000 of them, reportedly — standing around Coachella’s Sahara Tent. The perilous tone of his monologue, paired with producer Mike Dean’s sinister synths, stressed the festival’s need for a hero. And comic book animations projected on either side of the stage illustrated there was only one man for the job.

Wearing a custom black Chrome Hearts suit, a masked Metro Boomin emerged from beneath the stage, his purple cross-embroidered cape fluttering in the desert wind. But regardless of the Academy Award-winning actor’s resounding introduction, it was the usually soft-spoken producer’s booming voice that caught festivalgoers — and one of his many guest performers — by surprise when he greeted the crowd.

“When we was done, Future kept telling me, ‘Bro, I ain’t know who the fuck was talking!’ ” Metro recalls. “ ‘I ain’t know you could do that! You be in a room and just be so quiet.’ ”

Future’s description of our hero’s usual alter-ego is true today as Metro sits at his own Boominati Studios in North Hollywood. He isn’t cloaked in his luxe costume; instead, he’s wearing a black Barriers hoodie with the image of Michael Jackson’s moonwalking silhouette highlighted by a baby blue spotlight. One of the studio’s ceiling lights floods him in the same blue as the bandanna wrapped around his tri-colored dreads.

He has gotten more comfortable in the spotlight lately. Over the last decade, Metro, 30, has transformed from a behind-the-scenes trap beat-maker to one of rap’s most in-demand producers. He has managed to take over pop music, too, and without compromising his signature sound, which is characterized by eerie synth loops, 808s, soulful samples and orchestral finishes and branded by his notorious producer tags. (“Metro Boomin want some more, n—al”) So far, he has produced 115 Billboard Hot 100 songs, including 10 top 10 hits, among them Post Malone’s Quavo-featuring “Congratulations” and Future’s “Mask Off,” and two No. 1s, Migos’ “Bad and Boujee” (featuring Lil Uzi Vert) and The Weeknd’s “Heartless.”

But Metro’s latest solo album, *Heroes & Villains* — which he released Dec. 2, 2022, on Republic Records and his own label, Boominati Worldwide — continued his ascent into rarefied air: the producer-turned-successful artist. The sequel to his 2018 debut album, *Not All Heroes Wear Capes*, which topped the Billboard 200, and the second installment of an ongoing trilogy, *Heroes & Villains* built on Metro’s own cinematic universe, adding depth to his sound with more live instrumentation, like the horns on “Superhero (Heroes & Villains)” or the choral vocals on “Umbrella,” and assembling hip-hop Avengers like 21 Savage, Young Thug, Travis Scott and Don Toliver to perform their melodic and slick-tongued superpowers.



Amiri sweater, jacket, pants and shoes.

Heroes & Villains became Metro’s third No. 1 album, earning his biggest opening week yet, with 185,000 equivalent album units (according to Luminate), and its lead single, “Creepin’,” with The Weeknd and 21 Savage — a remake of Mario Winans’ 2004 R&B smash “I Don’t Wanna Know” (featuring Diddy and Enya) — spent the first half of 2023 in the Hot 100’s top 10, peaking at No. 3. Between *Heroes & Villains*’ No. 1 debut and Lil Uzi Vert’s *Pink Tape*, which topped the Billboard 200 in July, no other rap album reached No. 1 on the list, making it the longest wait in a calendar year for a rap album to lead the chart since 1993 (the year Metro was born).

The album’s success was unsurprising to those paying attention to Metro’s creative promotion strategy for *Heroes & Villains*. He tapped Freeman, who narrated Metro and 21’s chart-topping album, *Savage Mode II*, to star alongside him in an action-packed short film directed by Gibson Hazard that also featured

actor LaKeith Stanfield, Young Thug and Gunna. The clip kicked off his extensive rollout, which also involved an on-the-nose way to reveal the album’s featured artists.

A\$AP Rocky had texted him one day about “this artist on Instagram that was doing all these comic book covers for hip-hop artists. And I was like, ‘Damn, this shit looks crazy,’ ” he recalls. “I DM’d [the artist, Alejandro Torrecilla], and I was like, ‘Yo, I’m finna start rolling my album out in three, four weeks. What if you did a cover for every artist on here and I just roll out the features that way?’ ”

The promotional efforts didn’t stop once the album was out: Metro embarked on a four-city in-store CD signing tour, debuted a live beat-making hologram of himself in Los Angeles and Miami, and projected his Heroes signal (from the cover of *Not All Heroes Wear Capes*) around the world (literally). “He was more in people’s face,” says Republic vp of marketing strategy Xiarra-Diamond Nimrod, who has

worked with Metro since 2017. “[With *Not All Heroes Wear Capes*], we didn’t have as many in-store components. But this time around, we wanted him to have that interaction with [fans] and bring them into his world.”

The heightened visibility around Metro allowed the superproducer to transform into a superstar, separate from the ones with whom he regularly records. And more public-facing opportunities outside of music helped turn him into a household name: Earlier this year, he starred in and produced the music for Budweiser’s Super Bowl LVII ad and teamed up with the MLB Network for its Opening Day video, which was soundtracked by “On Time”

and “Trance” from *Heroes & Villains*.

“That’s one of the things we discussed when we first met: Do you want to be that low-key producer who you know some of their songs but you can walk right past them today and not know who they were? Or do you want to be out and known, like Swizz Beatz, Timbaland or Pharrell [Williams]? ” says his manager, Ryan Ramsey. “The numbers he’s doing on his own albums show he’s at that level where people are going to see him and say, ‘Hey, that’s Metro Boomin.’ ” Ramsey, who also manages Brandy, has represented Metro for the last two years under SALXCO, alongside the management company’s founder and CEO, Wassim “Sal”



Slaiby; SALXCO vp of A&R Rahsaan “Shake” Phelps; and Amir “Cash” Esmailian through his own YCFU management company.

And while his No. 1 rap album set a high bar, getting a prime-time slot at Coachella served as the perfect climax for his rollout. “We had every intention of stealing the weekend,” Metro confidently says in retrospect.

In order to pull it off, he recruited a superstar-trained team: creative director La Mar C. Taylor, who works closely with The Weeknd; show director Ian Valentine, whose creative studio Human Person (which counts Billie Eilish and Post Malone as clients) was also responsible for animation, staging, lighting and content; choreographer Charm La’Donna, who works alongside major acts from Kendrick Lamar to Dua Lipa; and his longtime recording and mixing engineer Ethan Stevens, who helped him curate the setlist. He even passed on using Coachella’s designated livestreaming crew and hired his own to ensure the quality of the video and flow of the performance for folks at home.

“There was so many people advising me, ‘Don’t spend your money on that show.’ But I was like, ‘Nah, n—s have to get this,’ ” says Metro, who remains mum about how much Coachella paid him to perform but reveals he spent “over four times” that amount to ensure it happened just as he envisioned. “People were already hearing me different with this album. But they needed to see me different now.”

While his albums have established Metro as a masterful curator, “Trochella” confirmed he was an equally skillful showman. And much like his albums, he brought out his all-star collaborators, including The Weeknd, 21 Savage and Diddy for the first live performance of “Creepin’,” to perform the hits they share. While he mostly flexed his superproducer muscles from behind the DJ booth, he made sure to bask in his glory from the stage, too.

As Metro’s biggest risks — like dropping an album during the holiday season or investing a small fortune in an impressive Coachella set — have continued to pay off, he credits his unwavering dedication to the art. “Over time, [I’ve] established trust between me and my listeners, [so they know] that whatever I have to offer as far as music or anything, I’m definitely putting 1,000% into it,” he says. “It’s not about, ‘Oh, look at me like a star!’ Look at me like I care.”



GROWING UP IN St. Louis, the producer born Leland Tyler Wayne looked up to hometown hero Nelly. *Country Grammar* was the first explicit CD he bought, and it inspired then-literally young Metro to become a rapper. But rapping requires beats, and since he couldn’t afford any, he decided to make his own. Producing turned into a bigger passion and came with added benefits, like not having to compete with so many other aspiring rappers — and

sounding like a more legitimate profession to his mother, Leslie Wayne.

Leslie played an instrumental role in getting his career off the ground: When Metro was 13, she bought him his first laptop, where he downloaded the popular music production software FL Studio. And when he was in high school, she made 17-hour round-trip drives from St. Louis to Atlanta nearly every weekend so he could work with artists he connected with over social media, like OJ Da Juiceman and Gucci Mane — while still returning home before school on Monday morning. (Leslie died in June 2022, and Metro pays tribute to her often on social media and during live performances.)

He moved to Atlanta in 2012 to attend Morehouse College but dropped out after one semester to pursue music: In 2013, he got his big break when he produced Future’s acclaimed “Karate Chop” (featuring Lil Wayne). And Metro seemed to take over hip-hop in 2015: He joined the Rodeo Tour with Travis Scott and Young Thug as a supporting act and the latter’s touring DJ; produced most of Future’s *DS2* album; worked on Scott’s debut album, *Rodeo*; and executive-produced Drake and Future’s joint mixtape, *What a Time To Be Alive*.

But he experienced a career-defining moment in February 2016 when Kanye West dropped *The Life of Pablo*. Right before premiering it during his Yeezy 3 fashion show at New York’s Madison Square Garden, West called Metro about one of the songs he had produced, “Father Stretch My Hands, Pt. 1.” “I didn’t put that tag on that beat. It’s Kanye’s shit,” Metro explains. “He asked for it like, ‘I’m finna play the album, but I need the tag on the song.’ And he just threw it in there real quick.” In a now viral clip, West is seen screaming and embracing a raccoon fur trapper hat-wearing Kid Cudi before “If Young Metro don’t trust you, I’m gon’ shoot you” blasts throughout the arena’s speakers. Metro’s tag catapulted him into the pop culture zeitgeist, from the numerous memes that flooded the internet immediately after to the hype it still creates whenever a DJ plays the song at a party. “That just took it to a whole ‘nother stratosphere,” he reflects.

From there, Metro continued building relationships with other rappers and elevating their music while reinforcing his reputation as the genre’s go-to producer. “A lot of times an artist will say, ‘I want to work with you, but send me beats.’ With Metro, it’s the opposite. He wants to create with you at a very intentional level,” says Vladimir “V Live” Samedi, who began working as Metro’s tour bus driver in 2016 before he was promoted to Boominati’s head of A&R. Metro dropped collaborative projects with Big Sean, Nav and 21 Savage, the lattermost of whom Metro has worked with on three full-lengths: *Savage Mode*, *Without Warning* (with Offset) and *Savage Mode II*. “Metro is the greatest producer of all time. I wouldn’t be where I am today without the help of my brother,” 21 Savage tells *Billboard*.

With prestige, a star-studded network and a stacked production discography, Metro

“Over time, [I’ve] established trust between me and my listeners ... It’s not about, ‘Oh, look at me like a star!’ Look at me like I care.”

—METRO BOOMIN

had all the tools he needed to fly high on his own. He launched his Boominati Worldwide label in partnership with Republic in 2017 and, the following year, released his first solo album, *Not All Heroes Wear Capes*, a cohesive, superstar-filled set that plays out like a movie soundtrack. His hero motif stems from a family tradition: He, his mother and his four younger siblings used to “always go see every single Marvel movie together. We done followed the whole timeline on some nerd shit,” he reflects. “It has always been an interest to me.”

Sony Pictures Animation, which produced 2018’s *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* in association with Marvel, took notice. The studio worked with Republic on the first *Spider-Verse* soundtrack (which yielded Post Malone and Swae Lee’s mega-smash, “Sunflower”). When the time came to work on its follow-up, Sony Pictures Motion Picture Group president of music Spring Aspers says it “was just pure luck in terms of timing” that the label had just finished working on Metro’s *Heroes & Villains* campaign and decided he was its “ideal partner.”

“It started off with him doing a couple songs, and then it just got to the point where I went to him and was like, ‘Yo, do you want to executive-produce this whole thing? Because it looks like I’m going to have that conversation,’” Ramsey recalls. “He said, ‘Man, that would be dope!’ ”

Metro started working on the *Spider-Verse* soundtrack at the end of December — the same month he released *Heroes & Villains*. “We’re already on a roll; might as well keep it going,” says Stevens, who also served as executive producer. Compared with the two-and-a-half years they spent working on Metro’s solo album, the duo knocked out the *Spider-Verse* soundtrack in six months. *Metro Boomin Presents Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse* taps



Junya Watanabe jacket, Fendi pants, Louis Vuitton shoes.

a diverse web of artists — Don Toliver, Nas, Lil Wayne, James Blake, Myke Towers, Mora and more — to deliver an ingenious mix of hip-hop, pop, Latin and Afrobeats that nods to the film’s protagonist Miles Morales’ African American and Puerto Rican heritage.

“He once texted us a line that a string quartet had played,” says Phil Lord, one of the film’s co-writers and co-producers, of what became the opening sequence of “Am I Dreaming” with A\$AP Rocky and Roisee, an up-and-coming St. Louis artist whom Metro discovered on YouTube years ago. “Then he had [Mike Dean] come over and do this really wild synth stuff. That became the song that’s on the end credits of the movie. And now that’s going to be the official Oscar submission for the film.”

When the time came to promote the soundtrack, Lord and Chris Miller, another one of the film’s co-writers and co-producers, took a page out of Metro’s playbook. “In the first movie, there was this phenomenon where people were making their own ‘Spider-sonas,’” Miller says. When they saw what he did with *Heroes & Villains*, they tapped the film’s character designer, Kris Anka, to create

Spidersonas for each of the featured artists on his soundtrack.

But they had a special plan for Metro’s own caricature. The day before Metro attended one of the *Spider-Verse* film screenings, Lord and Miller asked him to swing by the studio an hour early to test out some lines they had written for him. “The Republic team, our team, the music executives from Sony and the editors were crammed into another booth,” Lord recalls. When everyone cracked up after he recited, “My bad, everybody! There was somewhere to run,” Miller says they knew “that was the winner.”

Now his Spidersona — and his voice — actually appear in the film as Metro Spider-Man, but Nimrod wanted to ensure that fans would see him off the silver screen, too. “We made these cool cutouts of his character and were hanging them from light poles, and there were decals on the sidewalks and walls,” she says. “People were fully stealing these cutouts and tagging me on social like, ‘I got my Metro Spider-Man hanging in my room!’ That’s when I was like, ‘OK, now this is fire.’ ”

Metro Boomin Presents Spider-Man: Across

the Spider-Verse reached No. 1 on both the Soundtracks and Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums charts — matching, and outperforming, respectively, the performance of the first *Spider-Verse* soundtrack, which also received a Grammy nomination for best compilation soundtrack for visual media. Ramsey hopes Metro’s *Spider-Verse* contribution can score the same distinction, and given the success of *Heroes & Villains* and “Creepin’,” next year could well be Metro’s long-awaited Grammy breakthrough. Incredibly, he has been nominated only once, and not for a project one would have expected him to have worked on: He co-produced Coldplay’s “Let Somebody Go” with Selena Gomez, from the band’s *Music of the Spheres*, an album of the year nominee. “[Frontman Chris Martin is] a good friend of mine. Sometimes we work on ideas; sometimes we just go walk outside,” Metro explains casually.

But with so much music to make, industry accolades are far from his mind. He’s currently wrapping up his long-awaited joint album with Future and still working on his project with J.I.D that the two teased earlier this year. Metro is also working on A\$AP Rocky’s highly

anticipated album, *Don’t Be Dumb*, and is one of a few trusted producers working on The Weeknd’s final album.

Nonetheless, there are a few other artists he dreams of collaborating with in the future. “I still really want to do something with Justin Timberlake,” he says. “I need to work with Miguel. I still haven’t worked with Jay-Z.”

But while Metro will always make time for the music, he plans to spend the next decade focused more on his businesses. Since he launched Boominati, “a lot of the business was focused on Metro and our producers that we work with: Chris XZ, Doughboy and David x Eli,” Samedi says. Now Metro is transferring his artist discovery and development skills to the executive side so he can start signing artists. And, he teases, he has already started his own production company that will allow him “to do stuff for screen.”

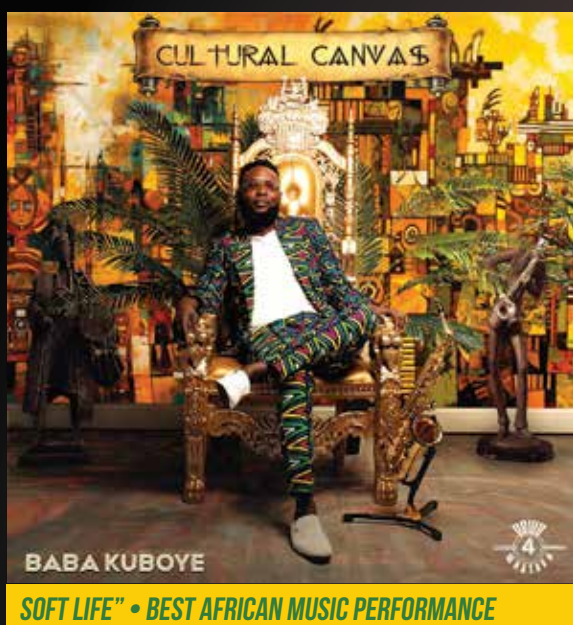
“The amount of grind and effort I put in my 20s into the music, I’mma put into the business aspect through these 30s,” he says. “I watched my music seeds grow from 20 to 30. I can watch the rest of these grow from 30 to 40.” 🗣



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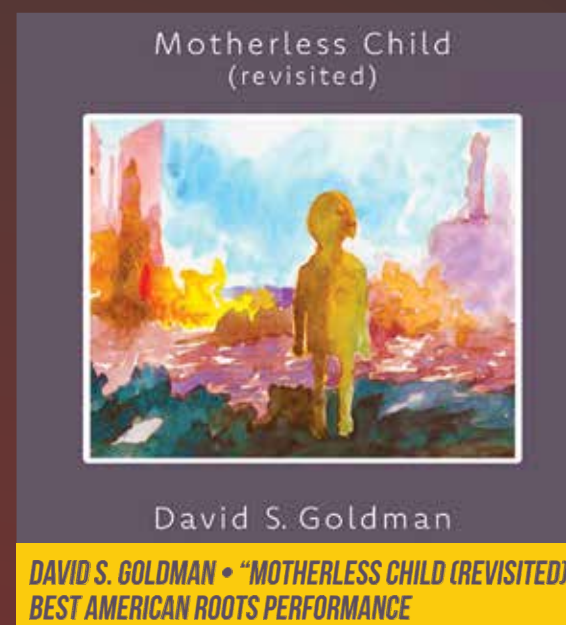
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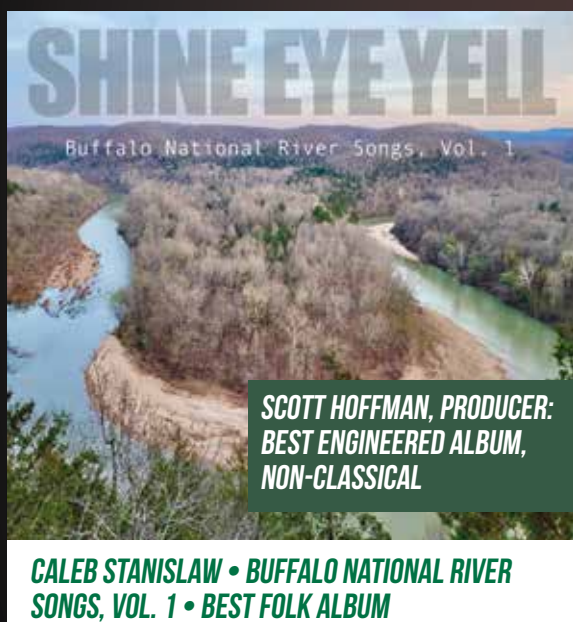
Billboard Top 10 Americana artist Grant Maloy Smith and marimba master Kevin Lucas joined forces to create a whole new version of the 18th century love song, "Scarborough Fair." Grant updated the lyrics of this bittersweet song, and added a chorus to bring it up to date. The duo went into the studio and created a lush version that builds from a beautiful acoustic beginning to a powerful rock/orchestral finish.

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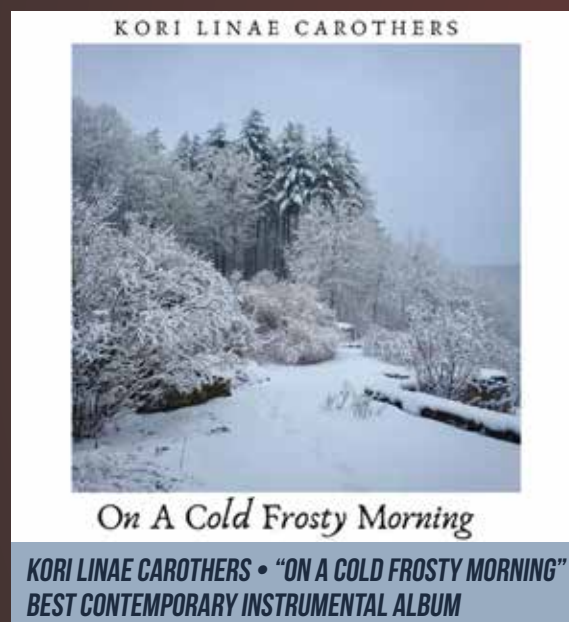


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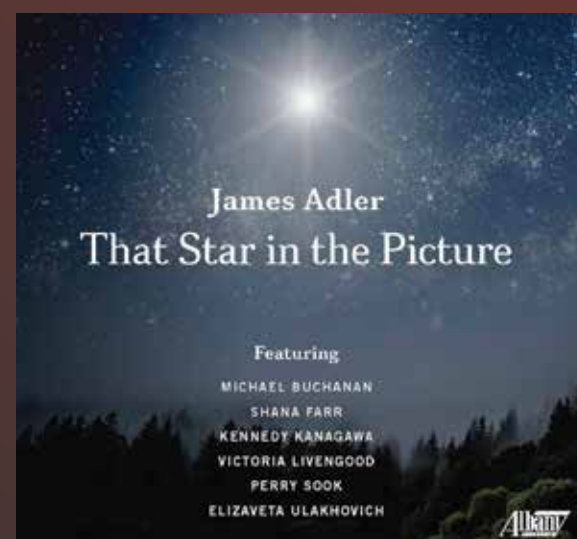


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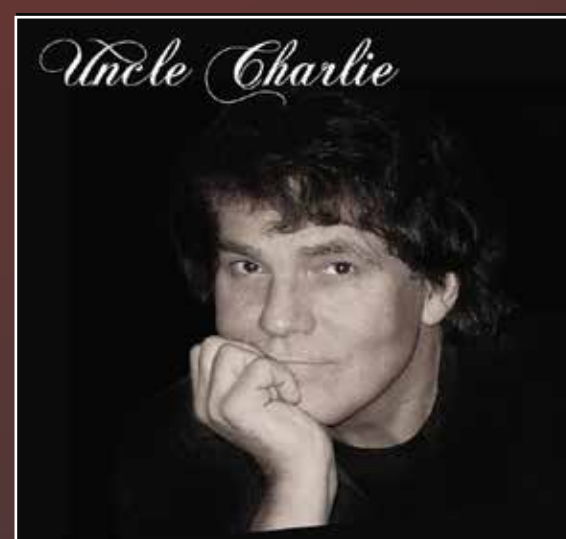


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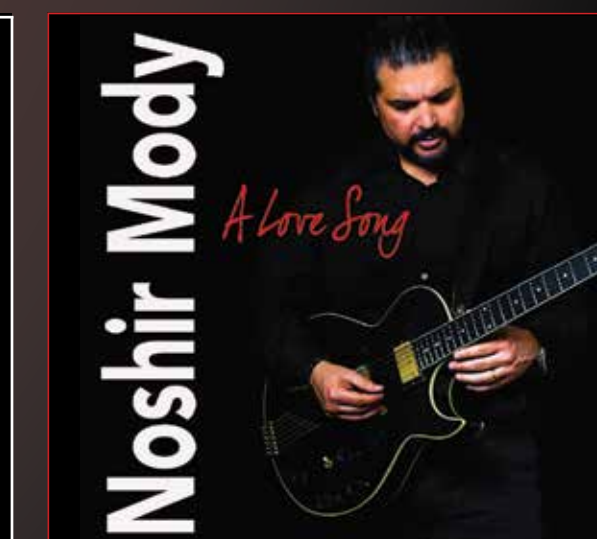


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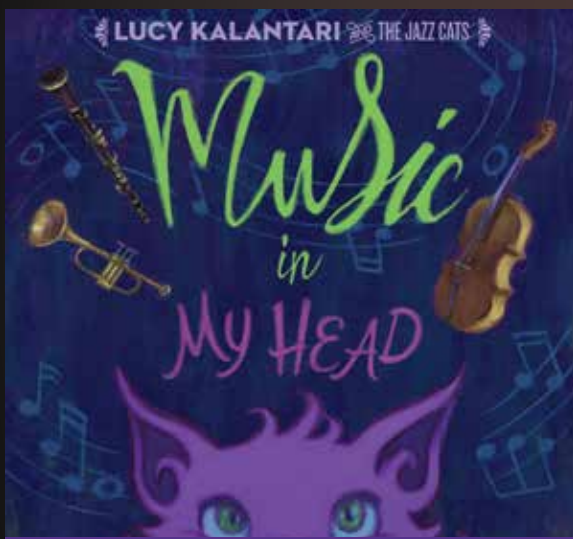
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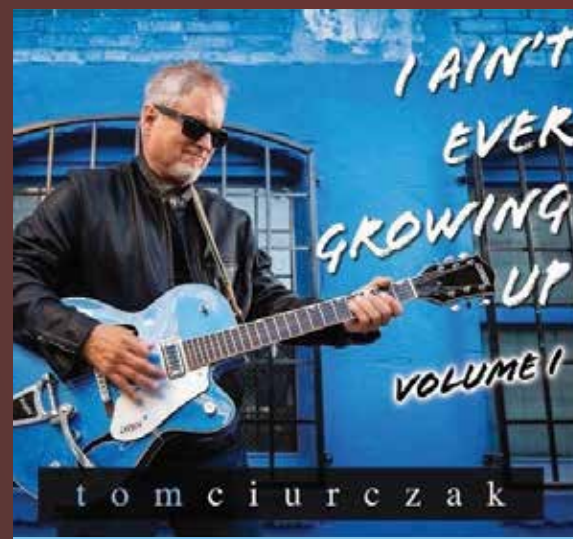
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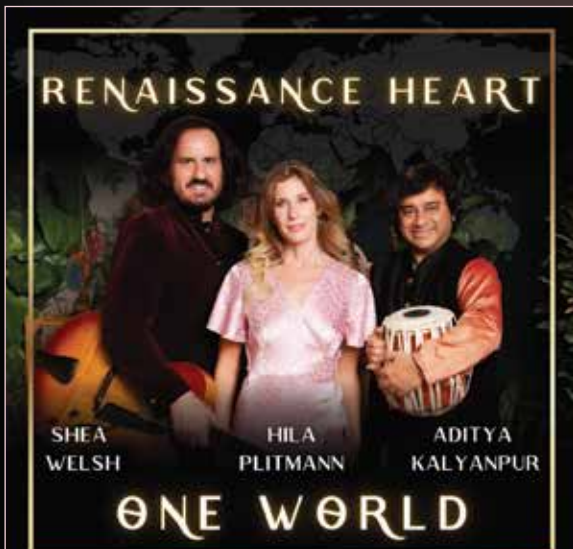
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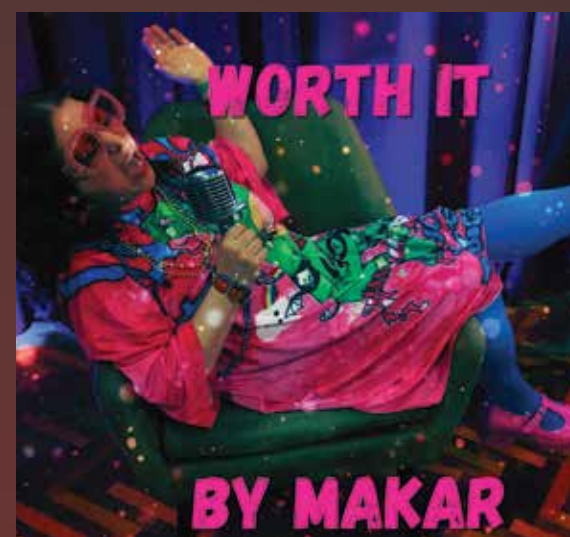
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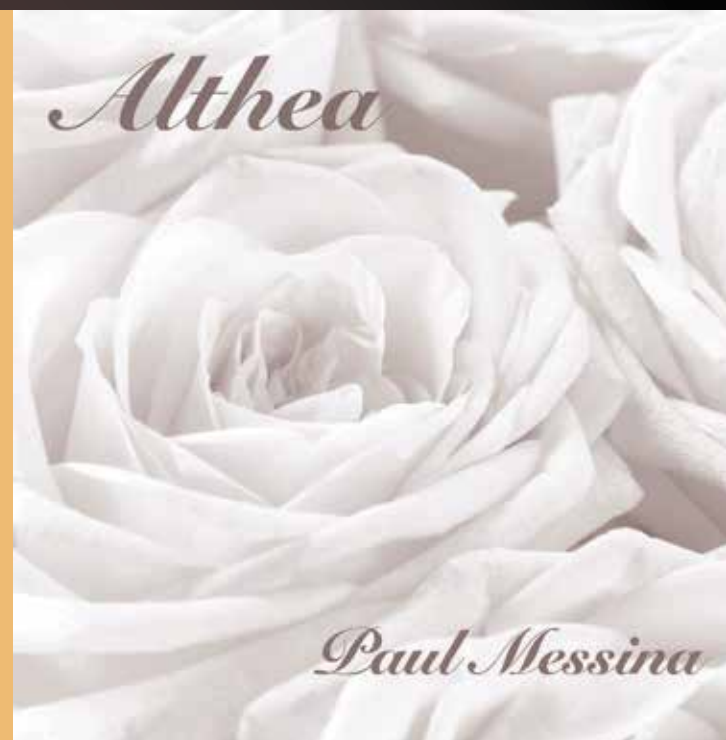
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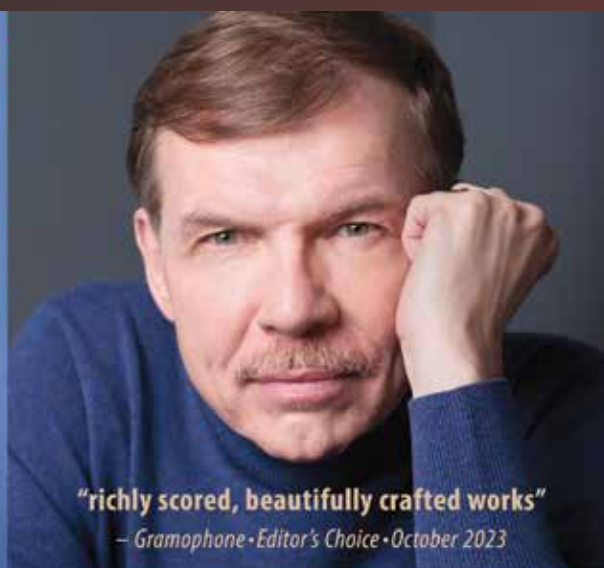
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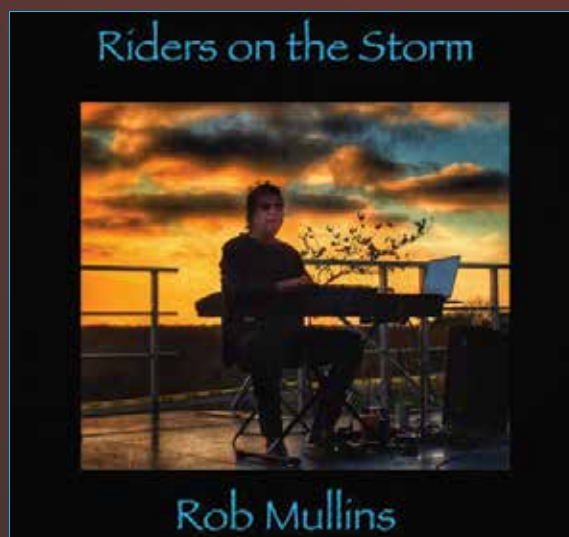
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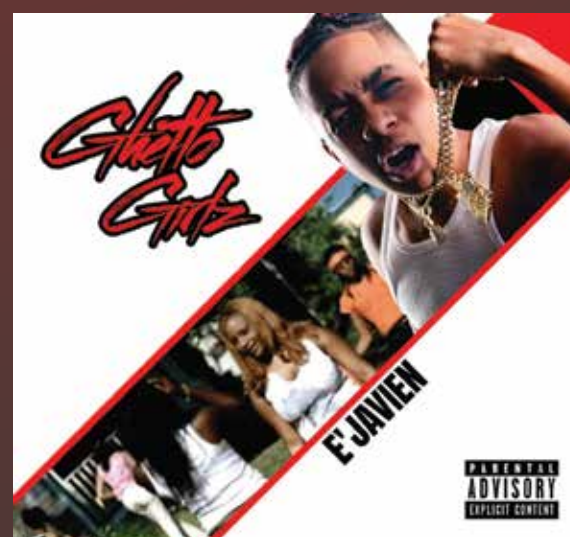
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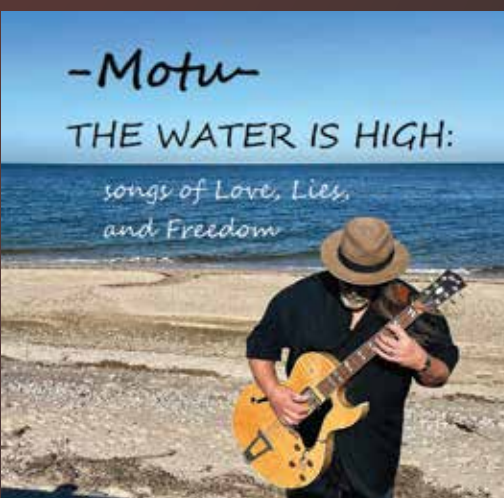
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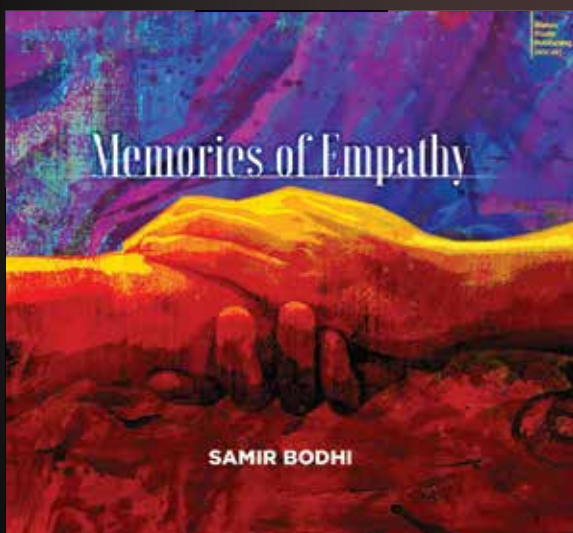


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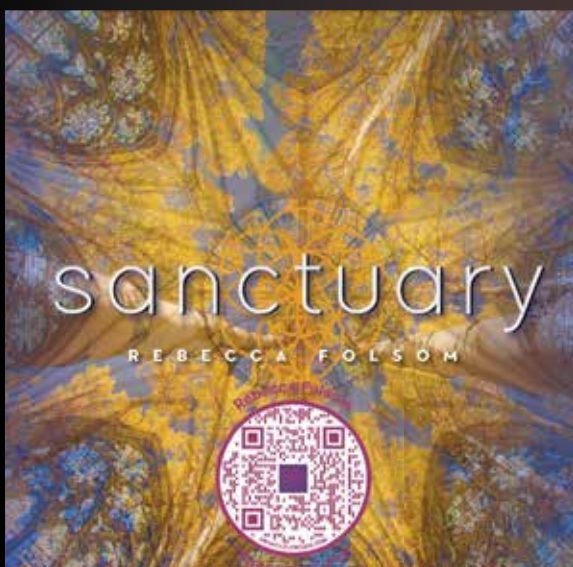
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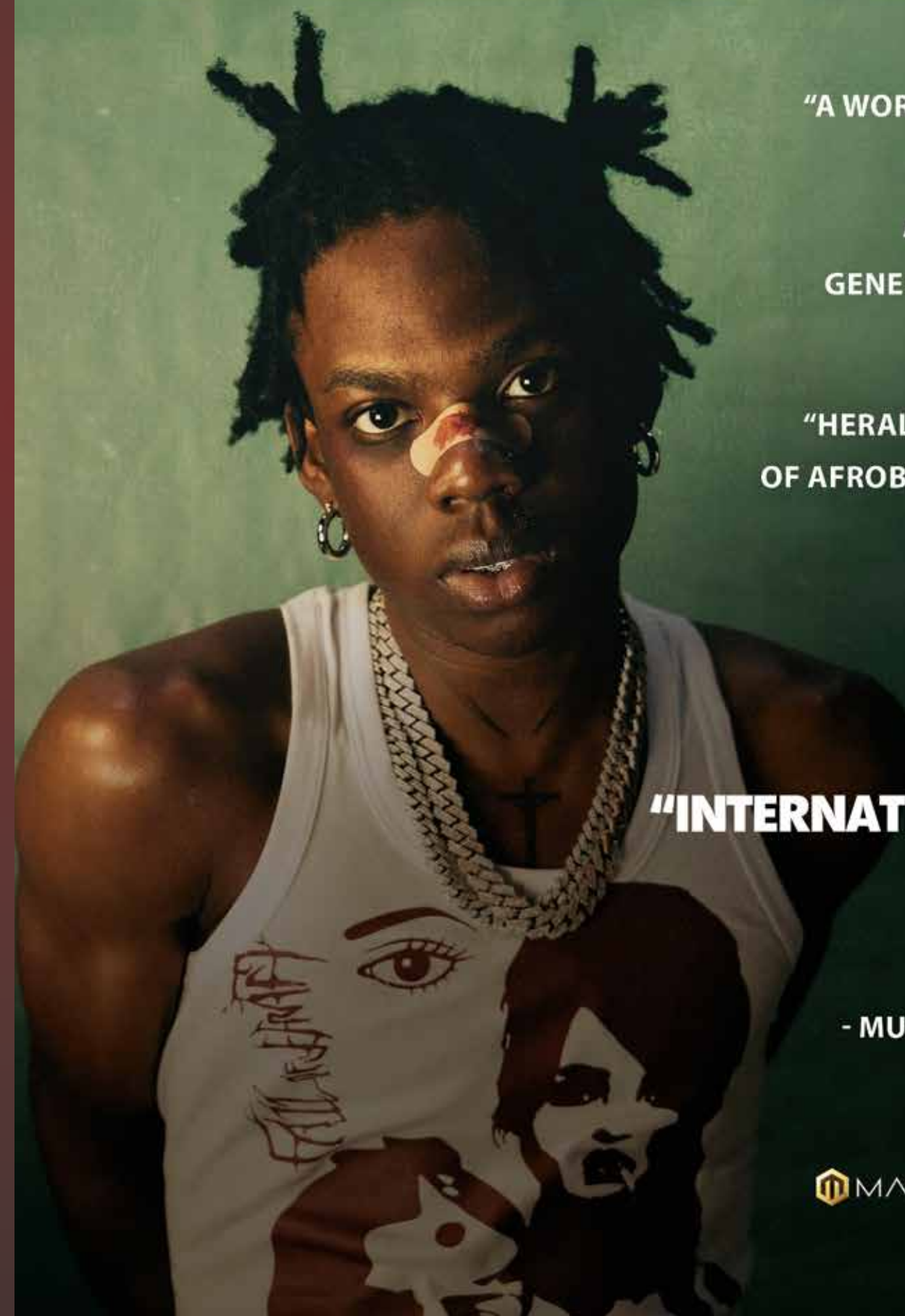


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4 (MORE) LESSONS FROM (ANOTHER) HUGE YEAR FOR JACK ANTONOFF

The hyperprolific superproducer goes behind the scenes on success with Taylor Swift, Lana Del Rey, The 1975 and more

BY JASON LIPSHUTZ

EVERY YEAR ENDS, and I think to myself, "That was a little crazy!" " Jack Antonoff says with a laugh. "It shouldn't feel familiar, but it does." That's because the 39-year-old studio polymath has rarely experienced a quiet 12-month period over the past decade, juggling multiple production and songwriting projects while fronting his own band, Bleachers.

During the past year, Antonoff has helped steer Taylor Swift's mega-selling *Midnights*, Lana Del Rey's sweeping *Did You Know That There's a Tunnel Under Ocean Blvd* and The 1975's ultra-catchy *Being Funny in a Foreign Language*, while also prepping Bleachers' fourth full-length. He has signed a new label deal with Dirty Hit Records, brought in label founder Jamie Osborne as manager and inked a new deal with Universal Music Publishing Group. ("It doesn't feel like anything's shaken up, just that the team's got a couple new members," Antonoff says of the moves.) All the while, he's eyeing a potential fifth consecutive producer of the

year, non-classical Grammy nomination and third straight win, which would be the first three-peat in the category this century should it occur.

Two years ago, Antonoff shared with *Billboard* his seven habits of highly effective producers. As he hunkers down in the studio for the next few months — finishing Bleachers' follow-up to 2021's *Take the Sadness Out of Saturday Night* and generally "chipping away at stuff" — he revealed his latest takeaways from his past year's work.

DON'T LET COMMERCIAL GAINS DISTRACT IN A CREATIVE SPACE

CASE STUDY TAYLOR SWIFT, "ANTI-HERO"

Midnights scored the biggest Billboard 200 debut of Swift's career and her Eras Tour became the summer's hottest

stadium ticket, but Antonoff says that he marvels at how his frequent collaborator keeps her level of superstardom very much outside the studio. "There's not a lot of panning back in the room — 'Whoa, look at this [achievement], look at that!' — because that would feel like popping the balloon," he explains. "When I work with Taylor, there's still just this person who has these life experiences and this remarkable gift of writing about them."

See: "Anti-Hero," the lead single from *Midnights* that sardonically prods at Swift's insecurities. "When we made 'Anti-Hero,' I just thought, 'Wow, that's so honest and funny, and also so sweet and so sad,'" Antonoff recalls, adding that the song, which became Swift's longest-leading Hot 100 chart-topper earlier this year, wouldn't have worked if they had been preoccupied by her radio appeal during its creation. "It has this weird beat going through a tremolo — no part of me was like, 'Fucking A, that's the song to take over the world!'"

SOMETIMES THE SPARK TAKES TIME

CASE STUDY THE 1975, "PART OF THE BAND"

"Who would you want to work with?" It's a question Antonoff often hears, and one he finds impossible to answer. "I can only want to work with someone based on knowing them and seeing where they're going," he says. When Antonoff met The 1975, he envisioned a creative partnership where he could add to the band's sound on its fifth album — but still experienced "that weird kind of early-relationship stuff" on *Being Funny in a Foreign Language*, his first project with the British rock group.

"Part of the Band," the restrained, stream-of-consciousness lead single, helped alleviate some of that awkwardness. "It wasn't the first thing we did," Antonoff recalls, "but there's a big difference between the first thing you do and the moment that you're like, 'Oh, shit. We have that ability.' Anyone can get in a room and carve out a song and make it sound halfway cool, but the idea of collaborating with people is doing something bigger than the sum of the parts." Ultimately, "Part

of the Band" unlocked the rest of *Being Funny in a Foreign Language*, which spun off five top 40 hits on the Hot Rock & Alternative Songs chart.

AMBITION COMES IN MANY FORMS

CASE STUDY LANA DEL REY, "A&W"

Antonoff says that his most frequent collaborators share the characteristic of "becoming obsessed with understanding what their ambition is and how to access it constantly" rather than resting on their laurels. That creative curiosity manifests itself in different ways: For Swift, after the indie-folk storytelling on *folklore* and *evermore* in 2020, "There was this sense of blazing out of the cabin" with the personal pop of *Midnights*. Meanwhile, The 1975 came to Antonoff after several winding, esoteric full-lengths, and he helped push *Being Funny in a Foreign Language* into uncharted territory for the band: a tight, interlude-free pop-rock record.

For Del Rey's *Did You Know That There's a Tunnel Under Ocean Blvd*, the seven-minute centerpiece, "A&W" — which begins as a folk lament before flipping into a trap refrain midway through — resulted from experimenting with other album tracks like "Peppers" and "Taco Truck x VB," mashing up sounds until arriving at the most innovative structure possible, according to Antonoff. "This sprawling thing was the most ambitious thing to do. A song like 'A&W' is just an example of what happens when you just know people so well that you can really support each other into strange places."

MAKE AN ENTRANCE

CASE STUDY BLEACHERS, "MODERN GIRL"

Bleachers' upcoming fourth album, which Antonoff and his six-piece group made with co-producer Patrik Berger and a few special guests, translates the jubilation of the band's live show into a studio setting. Not every song is as boisterous as "Modern Girl," released in September as the project's lead single, but for Antonoff, its 1980s-indebted mix of jittery vocal energy and uncorked saxophone blasts captured "enough left-field shit that speaks to where the album is going" and was the obvious introduction.

"Putting out albums is like pulling at both the past and the future, and 'Modern Girl' just felt like this perfect shock and comfort moment, both honoring where Bleachers has been and where it's going," he says of the new album, due next year. "I've always believed in this 'house' mentality of just understanding what an album is, and 'Modern Girl' just feels like the biggest front door."

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TEAM PLAYERS

How producers **Carter Lang**, **ThankGod4Cody** and **Rob Bisel** worked together to help SZA craft her seismic second album, *SOS*

BY HERAN MAMO

WHEN PRODUCERS Carter Lang and ThankGod4Cody worked on SZA's culture-shifting 2017 debut album, *Ctrl*, the vibes were cozy and casual. "We'd all bunker up and pretty much camp out in the stu' and just be making stuff for weeks, if not months, at a time. Those adventures bonded us for life," says Lang, 32. Adds Cody, 31: "I don't even remember what the ultimate goal was except for making a fire album."

But that "fire album" — one that's still sizzling on the Billboard 200, 329 weeks after it debuted at No. 3 — created lots of unpredictable "pandemonium," Lang says, from fans and the industry, and substantially raised the stakes for SZA, who waited five years before she released its follow-up, *SOS*.

"There was a little pressure to help her complete the tasks that she had at hand and for her to be happy with the final product and not have a sophomore slump," Cody says. Yet re-creating *Ctrl*'s mellow, free-flowing and dependable environment was crucial to ensuring the artist felt comfortable enough to produce another masterpiece. Upon its release, *SOS* spent 10 nonconsecutive weeks at No. 1 on the Billboard 200, bolstering SZA's superstar status. She earned her first Billboard Hot 100 No. 1 with "Kill Bill," which she made with Lang and Rob Bisel, 31, both of whom also worked on other *SOS* top 10 hits "Good Days," "Nobody Gets Me" and "I Hate U" (the lattermost of which Cody also co-wrote and co-produced).

"The three of us are the people she probably would trust the most to finish the music and bring it home," says Cody, who with Lang and Bisel has credits on 19 of *SOS*' 23 songs. "I feel like we all were involved in everything, except the artwork. It was like a group project in college."

Cody met SZA in 2014, when he was working closely with her Top Dawg Entertainment labelmate Isaiah Rashad, after she heard Cody making a beat in the room next door,

came in and spontaneously recorded the song "Sobriety." A year later, Lang — who had been working with R&B and hip-hop artists from his Chicago hometown like Chance the Rapper and Ravyn Lenae — ran into SZA at a studio and soon after joined her band while she toured her third EP, *Z*. He eventually met Cody at TDE's Carson, Calif., headquarters while working on *Ctrl*.

Around *Ctrl*'s release, Bisel briefly met SZA while she was recording at Rick Rubin's Malibu, Calif., studio, Shangri-La, where he had worked his way up from intern to house engineer. The two eventually re-connected at the beginning of 2020, when he flew out to Rubin's house in Hawaii to help her record *SOS*.



The album was not only made all over the place — from Lang's Glendale, Calif.-based studio to SZA's Malibu home to Westlake Recording Studios — but also with a variety of other producers, like Jay Versace, Michael Uzowuru and even Babyface.

"Back in the day, it would be Timbaland or Pharrell [Williams] and one person, or just them. Now it's you and six other people, and you might figure out that there are two other people you had no idea about afterward," Cody explains. "You have to be comfortable with collaboration. It's a must at this point."

Set the scene when you're working with SZA. What's her creative approach like?
CARTER LANG She takes her time to get in her zone, so it's about being patient

we're going to put on the track.
ROB BISEL It was a lot of jamming. [With] "Seek & Destroy," that was all of us hanging out one afternoon like, "All right, we got to make something more upbeat." It just felt like everyone was doing one thing at once, and suddenly, a track fell into place.
LANG That one was like butter. I stepped out of the room for a second and came back and saw all three of you guys [Cody, Bisel and Tyran "Scum" Donaldson] ripping on your parts. I was like, "OK, this is obviously a crazy moment."

Are you surprised by *SOS*' tremendous success?
BISEL I knew people would love it, but I didn't know commercially how that would be reflected. I thought it would do well, but 10 weeks [at No. 1] is insane. I'm still processing that one.



with each other. I can just sit there and jam on something or play beats and not feel like we're giving any invisible pressure to each other to create. The music can really inspire [her], and she'll just want to riff on something. It feels more like vibing out around a campfire.

How do you all work with each other and the other collaborators SZA brings into the fold?
LANG We might be in different places, but the day after, we'll be in communication about what has happened. We'll send a track around, or she'll incubate it. Having our own studios and then being able to converge without having to be in the same place is special, and that was created by our friendships and how fond we are of each other. We trust each other's voices and what

There was some stat about Aretha Franklin that we beat [becoming the longest-reigning No. 1 on Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums by a solo woman, beating out Franklin's 1968 set, *Aretha Now*] and that one was like, "Whoa."

Why do you think "Kill Bill" resonated so much?
LANG It had this personality to it already. You can just see a cartoon playing out in your brain. The fact that people loved it and lifted it up like that echoes the sentiment of being able to put your thoughts out there in the most authentic and even aggressive way, but over such a sweet-sounding, psychedelic-sounding beat.
BISEL A pretty common piece of wisdom you'll hear from producers and songwriters [is], "Make the music that you would want to listen to yourself." And that was 1,000% the

case with that song. The first night we made it, I was like, "Wow, I think we really did something special." I vividly remember [Cody being] one of the early believers in that song.
THANKGOD4CODY I remember we were talking about how to make [the title] appropriate. (Laughs.)
BISEL I remember thinking, "I wonder if we need to give this a more on-the-nose title, like 'Kill My Ex' or something." But the more we lived with the "Kill Bill" title, I was like, "Ah, this feels cool. I think it'll stick with people."

It's fascinating how cohesive the album is, given how stylistically different the tracks are. How were you able to balance them out?
CODY Even though it is different, it's still all of us. We all listen to *everything*, including her. We'll come back and be playing new music that each other has found, and it's the most random music you'll probably ever hear.
BISEL But at the end of the day, she's writing all of these songs and they come from such a genuine place. That is the glue that binds it all together.

How have you seen SZA grow while making *SOS*?
LANG She's always exceeding her own potential. When I finally saw the tour and how insane she was going with her choreography, range and stamina, and then recalling all the moments we rocked out onstage, it really hit me. The transformation was super apparent. She feels refreshed and revitalized and excited to perform her music. She sounds so amazing, always has, but she has grown into her voice so well.
BISEL She was already a pretty phenomenal writer when I met her, but her pen got sharper and more personal. I also think she got a lot faster, and the process of writing became even more natural to her the more time she spent working on this album. She'd have songs like "I Hate U" or "Kill Bill" where she would write them in under an hour. The ideas flowed more effortlessly from her.

How have you seen yourselves grow?
LANG I learned a different level of collaboration where I really get a kick out of watching my friends play instruments. [Before], I used to want to be a part of everything and play, play, play. Being a backboard in the most neutral way and just letting the music happen was a different part of the process.
BISEL [Working on *SOS*] forced me to step up. [When it comes to] my own creative output, [I] made so much stuff. For every song that I worked on that made the album, I probably made 100. It forced me to be more resilient and knowing you got to keep stepping up to the plate no matter how many times you strike out.
CODY I learned what producing really consists of and how it's deeper than music. It's [about] you setting the vibe of the whole room, setting the vibe for the day and making sure that the artist is good and comfortable and in the best space to get out whatever ideas they have.

DEAN OF PRODUCTION

He insists he doesn't "work much." But **Mike Dean**'s detail-oriented stoicism and multitasking talents have made him one of hip-hop's busiest producers — and, as one artist puts it, the music industry's equivalent of Tony Montana

BY KRISTIN ROBINSON
PHOTOGRAPHED BY MICHAEL TYRONE DELANEY



Dean photographed Sept. 8 in Los Angeles.

I JUST NEED TO make one edit. Could we start talking while I do it?” Mike Dean asks, lowering himself into a leather office chair in his Los Angeles home studio.

He swivels his seat to face a wide-screen monitor and scrolls through scores of waveforms in his Pro Tools session, searching for the right spot to doctor. It’s a song from Diddy’s just-released *The Love Album: Off the Grid* called “Another One of Me” (featuring The Weeknd, French Montana and 21 Savage), and mere days before its Sept. 15 release, Dean has been tasked with crafting a slightly cleaner version of 21’s verse.

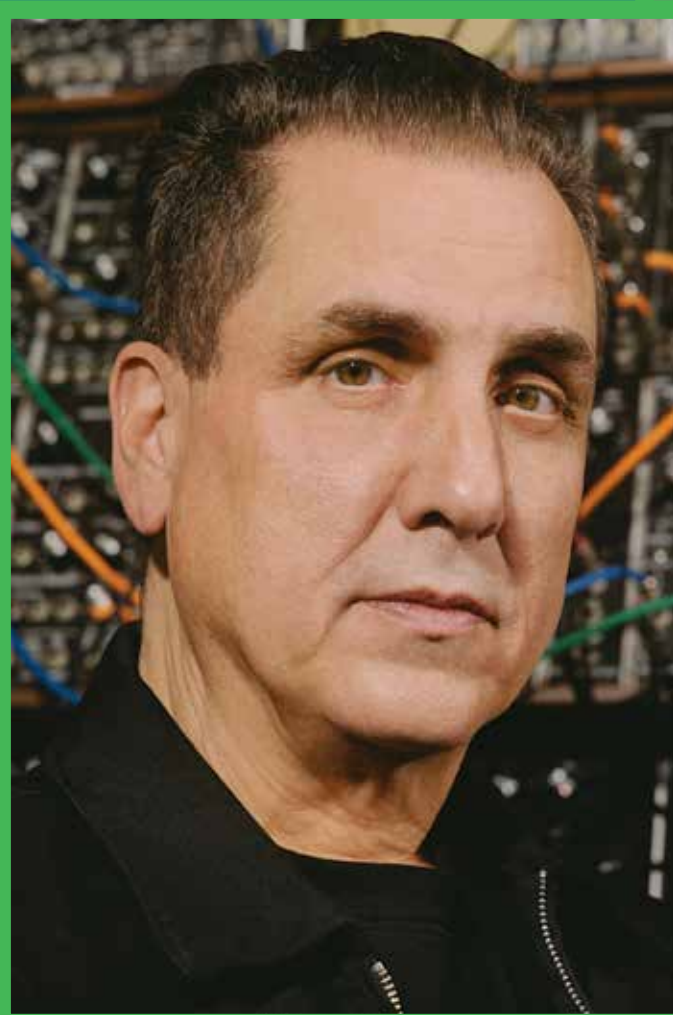
Despite the clear urgency of the work, Dean appears unfazed, steady. “It’s OK. I like to do eight things at a time,” he explains while he rotates among vocal editing, answering questions, FaceTiming a manager and ripping from his bong. This is not the first time the writer, producer and engineer has performed last-minute miracles for an A-listers’ song — and it certainly won’t be the last.

Dean’s stoicism and keen editing ear are among the many reasons he has been hip-hop’s most in-demand collaborator for decades, often skillfully guiding the genre’s most temperamental and perfectionistic talents — from Kanye West to Travis Scott to Jay-Z — to complete their best work.

He recalls the February 2016 evening when West played his seventh studio album, *The Life of Pablo*, for fans at Madison Square Garden in New York. With a packed house of nearly 20,000 at the arena and 20 million tuned in at home through a livestream, West shared a sampling of its tracks, including now essential hits like “Famous” and “Ultralight Beam.” As on the six West albums that had preceded it, Dean was a trusted collaborator in creating *Pablo*. Fans waited well past the event’s scheduled start time, but few could have guessed the reason for the delay: Almost none of the songs were done.

“It was crazy,” recalls Dean as he clicks over to his camera roll on the monitor, searching back to the photos he took that night. “We had 16 songs unfinished. I think we finished something like four songs, gave them to Kanye, and he went down there and played that shit in front of 20,000 people.

“Then I finished some more and rushed from the studio. We had to jump out of the cab about 10 blocks before the arena because the traffic was so bad,” he continues, still searching for that specific night on his camera roll, casually whisking his cursor past other culture-defining moments in the process: The Weeknd’s headlining Coachella set, West’s *Yeezus*-era *Saturday Night Live* performance and many raucous Scott shows. “I ran to MSG, fought to get to the basement and then to the floor and gave him the memory stick.”



Finally, Dean locates one of the pictures of that night. In it, West stands in the center of the frame in a red long-sleeve shirt and black baseball cap, arms lifted above his head. Under the halo of a white spotlight, he appears to be leading a religious rite rather than a listening party. Dean stands to West’s right sporting a flat bill hat from MWA, his label, and a slick black windbreaker. Despite the preceding chaos, Dean’s countenance betrays no signs of alarm. “I’m calm, really,” he says with a shrug, zooming in on himself in the background. “I’ll put a memory stick in a computer in front of thousands of people.”

His most prolific relationship of all is with West, whom the Texas born-and-bred producer-engineer met when he was still living in Houston circa 2002. In the preceding years, Dean had become a local legend, defining the sound of the Dirty South by producing, writing and mixing records for Geto Boys and Scarface and touring with acts like Selena.

“Kanye first came to my house when he was working on his mixtape, songs like ‘Through the Wire.’ I remember he had on a backpack and tight pants,” he says with a laugh. “You know, people in Texas don’t wear tight pants.”

Though West has now cycled through dozens — if not hundreds — of other creative collaborators throughout his career, Dean has been his singular through line. He has been with the artist from mixing parts of *The College Dropout* (2004) to producing much of *Donda 2* (2022). He says the key to fostering such long-term relationships with artists, including West, is to not “try to follow them too much” and “stand up for what [I think] is right” for a song. “You let them do their thing but steer them in



the right direction,” he says, though he admits “that gets harder, though, as they get bigger and bigger.” (Dean declined to comment about the current status of his creative relationship with West.)

Don Toliver, who worked on his 2020 hit “After Party” with Dean, says he loves collaborating with the producer because he is “the ultimate badass at mixing and mastering. If Tony Montana from *Scarface* worked in the music industry, he would be Mike Dean, deep into his craft and bringing that essence and vibe to the music as well.”

But Dean’s best-known strength is his penchant for synthesizers. From where he sits in his studio, these analog instruments cocoon him, stacked in columns up and down all four walls of the room. He points out a few of his favorites: a Memory Moog from 1978, the latest Prophet from Dave Smith Instruments. Then Dean gestures across the room to a clunky keyboard with colorful knobs and buttons and wood grain siding. “That’s the one Michael [Jackson] played ‘Billie Jean’ on. That’s the most important synth in the room,” he says, beaming. Of course, he has other favorites in storage — in his two garages, his other studio or his Texas house.

In recent years, some Dean acolytes have dubbed him “The Synth God.” “Every year, I

turn the synths up a couple dBs [decibels],” he jokes. “On [West’s 2005] *Late Registration*, the synths were really tucked in, but since then it has just gotten louder and louder.”

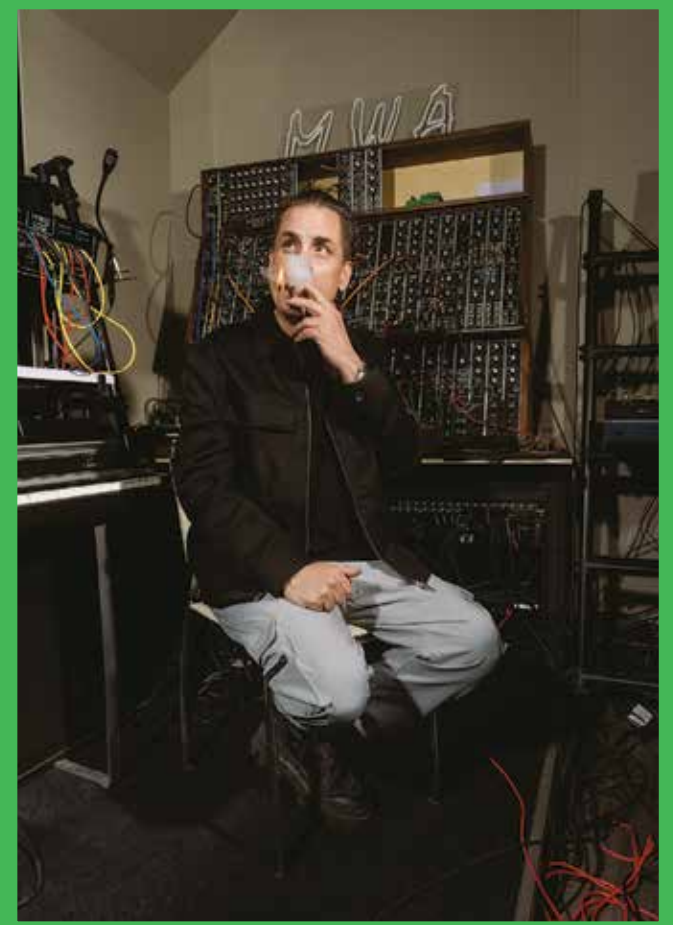
While many of his contemporaries add so-called “producer tags” — audio identifiers on tracks where they stake their claim — Dean mostly shies away from that. “My sound is usually my tag,” he says matter-of-factly. It’s a claim that’s evident on records that feature what has become known as a Mike Dean Outro — a 30-second- to minute-long ending devoted to Dean’s transcendent synth work; one of the best-known examples is on Scott’s 2019 single “Highest in the Room.” Of the 59 total producer credits and 106 songwriter credits Dean has amassed on the Billboard Hot 100, “Highest in the Room” is one of his few No. 1s (along with Scott’s Drake-featuring “Sicko Mode” and Kid Cudi collaboration “The Scotts”). “That’s when the outro really went viral,” he says, though that was far from its first iteration. He has been doing these characteristic endings since West’s “Stronger” in 2007. “I just always jam on songs as much as possible... But [the outros are] becoming almost cliché to me now,” he says.

Savvy rap fans have known about Dean since the 2000s — or earlier, if they followed Houston hip-hop — but the producer, 58, has

intentionally increased his visibility in recent years. During the COVID-19 lockdowns, Dean started to see himself as more of an artist in his own right. He began a series of solo albums, released annually every April since 2020, each titled *4:20*, *4:21*, *4:22* and, most recently, *4:23*.

He also started livestreaming as he played around on his synths, building avant garde instrumentals from scratch as teenagers frantically sent goat and fire emojis in the chat. The videos let Dean be more transparent with his process, and they amassed a following quickly, even among his famous friends like The Weeknd — who texted Dean, “You should open for me on tour.” Soon he was performing with the singer in stadiums around the world. To keep up with his other musical commitments, Dean worked out of a 10-foot-by-10-foot makeshift studio, designed for the back of his tour bus.

“It wasn’t too hard to work out of there, really,” he explains. “I did Travis’ second album in the back of a bus once. Plenty of my songs have been made like that.” It was during that time on the road, he says, that he created much of the songs and score for *The Idol*, the dark HBO drama co-created by The Weeknd and *Euphoria* producer Sam Levinson. The show was widely panned and ultimately canceled; one of its highlights, however, was Dean’s scoring work and soundtrack. Apart from co-writ-



ing the score for *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare II*, *The Idol* was Dean’s first major gig as composer, and his synth mastery laid the perfect morose undertone for the action onscreen.

Dean himself was also written into the show, playing “Mike Dean,” and furthering his mystique. In his first scene, he arrived in a matte black

Tesla, emerging from the car’s butterfly doors in a fog of smoke, bong in tow — a meme-worthy entrance caricaturing his real-life demeanor and pot habit. It was Levinson’s idea: “I was first approached about *Euphoria* season two,” Dean says, which ultimately did not happen. “Then they asked me if I wanted to do music for *The Idol*, and when I met Sam, he asked me, ‘Well, do you want to be in the show, too?’ I guess he thought I was funny.”

But moving forward, Dean says TV and film work isn’t a priority: “I’d work on some select projects but not too much. I’m looking more at being an artist and putting out my own music and touring than anything else right now.” And as usual, he’s dutifully at work behind the scenes on the year’s biggest records. In 2023, he has already lent his expertise to Scott’s *Utopia*, the *Idol* soundtrack and Metro Boomin’s *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse* soundtrack. And because Dean is never entirely predictable, he also worked on *Paranoia*, *Angels*, *True Love* by Christine and the Queens.

“I don’t work much,” he insists. “I just smoke weed and fucking hang out and make music — it’s not work.” He swiftly turns his head to look back at the monitor, refocusing. “Sorry,” he says. “I actually need to get to editing this.”



A GUIDE TO PAYING THE MODERN PRODUCER

BY KRISTIN ROBINSON

Q

QUINCY JONES SAID it best, “explains Nile Rodgers: “A producer of a record is like the director of a film.” From his first production credits on tracks by Luther Vandross, Sister Sledge and Diana Ross to his more recent work with Beyoncé, Daft Punk and Coldplay, Rodgers is one of the rare producers who bridges the gap between the classic understanding of a record producer and today’s digital music-maker.

In the 20th century, Rodgers and his contemporaries recorded songs to lumbering rolls of tape, bringing the visions of artists and songwriters to life with their ornamentation, arrangement and technical skill. While that is still true for some producers, the trade has changed dramatically. Around the turn of the millennium, increasingly powerful DIY recording tools and the piracy-inflicted bust of the music business drove recording from fancy studios and into musicians’ homes — shifts that democratized who could be viewed as a producer and blurred the lines between the processes of songwriting and recording. How producers are compensated has also evolved, with greater distinctions for payment by genre, widely varying upfront fees and greater possibilities to earn publishing income than ever.

Producer Fees

The most reliable form of income for producers: a sum owed for their work before the song comes out. Fees tend to start around \$15,000 to do a track for a major-label-affiliated pop or R&B/hip-hop artist; a superstar-level producer might charge up to \$75,000 (or higher), but \$30,000 to \$40,000 is

considered a good range for one who is well-established and working with a major-label act.

When producers work across an entire album of songs, it’s common to reduce per-track rates. “It might be \$30,000 for the first three songs, \$20,000 for the second two and \$10,000 for the last song,” says Lucas Keller, founder of producer management firm Milk & Honey.

These fees are paid half upfront and half upon the delivery of a record that the label deems “commercially satisfactory.” While that first half is a producer’s to keep, the second is an advance against master royalties earned from the song. In today’s streaming economy, however, many tracks don’t recoup their fees.

Independent artists and/or those with little-to-no recording budget sometimes get more creative in paying producers what they are owed. Instead of a fee, “a lot of producers are getting 50% of the master monies, either in perpetuity or until the artist makes the producer’s fee back,” says Audrey Benoualid, partner at Myman Greenspan. Producers can also receive a fee under the aforementioned \$15,000 for their work.

Points

The percentage of master royalties producers receive for their work. Earning from two to five percentage points of a record is common today, starting at two points for a newcomer and four to five for a well-established, in-demand producer. This amount is subtracted from the act’s percentage share of the recording; labels aren’t expected to cede any of their share to compensate a producer.

In rare cases, a superstar talent may command

six to eight points: Rodgers and his manager, Hipgnosis founder and CEO Merck Mercuriadis, confirm that, on average, Rodgers earns six points, but every song is a unique negotiation. As Keller explains, things can get more complicated when two producers are involved: “Let’s say two sizable producers want four points each. We likely won’t get to take eight all together, so what about we try to split six points down the middle?”

Publishing

Because modern musicians often write and record as they go, the line between songwriter and producer is blurrier than ever. Many creatives that are now primarily classified as producers are also part of the songwriting process — and these multihyphenates earn publishing in addition to fees and points.

“Back in the day, when people talked about what a songwriter did, it was the guy who wrote melody, lyrics and chords. Today, if you come up with the beat, like many producers do, you can also be credited as a songwriter,” Mercuriadis says.

This is especially true in hip-hop. Michael Sukin, a top music attorney who has worked in the business since the 1970s, credits the genre’s emer-

gence as a big part of redefining what a producer does. Timmy Haehl, senior director of publishing at Big Machine’s Los Angeles office, says, “In hip-hop, publishing is sometimes split down the middle: 50% for the top line, 50% for the track.” (In pop and other genres, there isn’t a standard amount of publishing a producer-songwriter can expect; that share of the composition is negotiated on a case-by-case basis.)

Extra Earnings

Some producers can pocket extra income through neighboring rights — performance royalties earned on the master side of income in many countries outside the United States. This, however, “has to be for a qualified record or qualified person,” Benoualid says. “You can’t be a U.S. citizen, unless you record in London and the studio is credited on the album — then you qualify for neighboring rights there.”

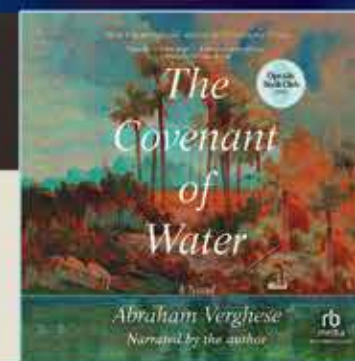
Producers in the United States qualify to earn a similar (but more limited) royalty from their masters playing on digital radio stations like SiriusXM, Pandora and other noninteractive digital transmissions. This is paid by SoundExchange, but producers aren’t entitled to this income unless the artists they worked with tell SoundExchange to pay the producers part of their royalty directly.

Nowadays, veteran hit-makers like Dr. Luke and Max Martin may also sign protégés to production deals or joint ventures with publishers to earn additional income, allowing them to, as Keller puts it, “amass a huge catalog with real enterprise value.” The younger producers, in exchange for part of their monies, in turn get introductions to, Haehl says, “people in [the veteran hit-makers’] network [and] special opportunities with artists.”

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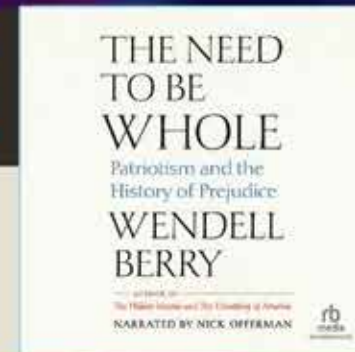
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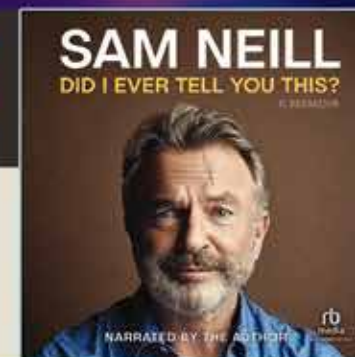
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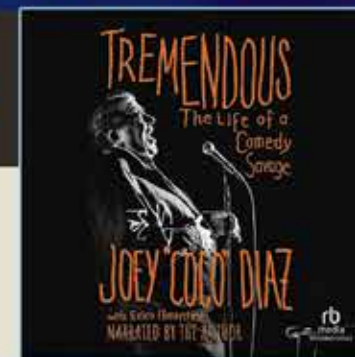
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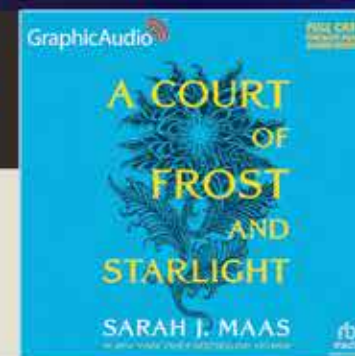
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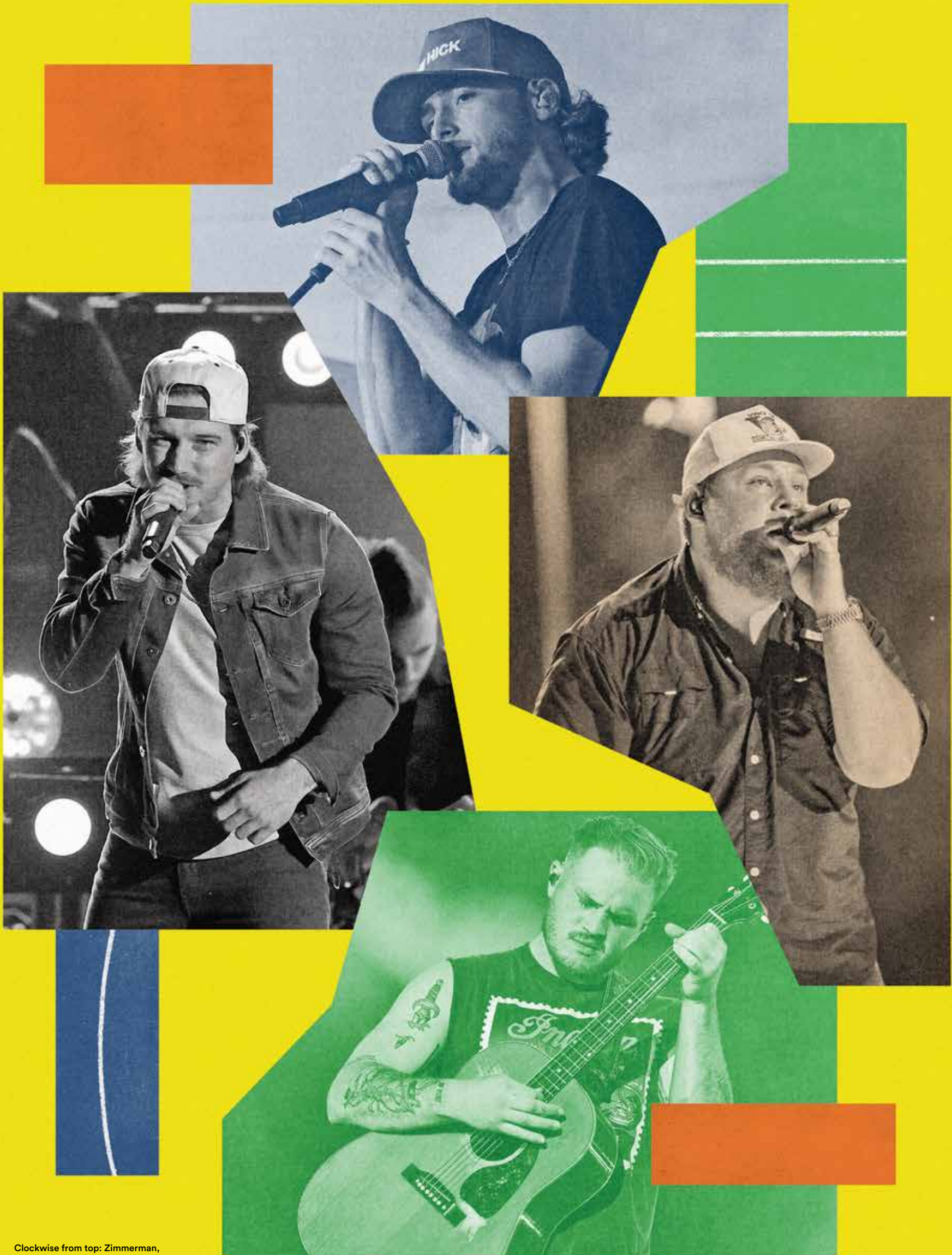
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Clockwise from top: Zimmerman, Combs, Bryan and Wallen.

PRODUCERS

A LITTLE BIT COUNTRY...

The artists topping the genre's charts — and climbing the Hot 100 — this past year did so with the help of producers encouraging influences from way outside Nashville

BY JESSICA NICHOLSON

ZACH BRYAN'S "Something in the Orange" spent six weeks atop *Billboard's* Hot Country Songs chart. But the track wasn't recorded anywhere near Nashville — it was crafted alongside producer Ryan Hadlock, over 2,000 miles away at Bear Creek, the rustic barn-turned-studio that Hadlock's parents had built in 1977 just outside of Seattle, not far from the birthplace of grunge. The genre-fluid song didn't just top the country chart — it peaked at No. 10 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 and topped the Hot Rock & Alternative Songs chart, too.

"Even the term 'country music' is almost becoming passé in some ways because in working with Zach, in a lot of ways, he doesn't really consider himself a straight-up country musician," says Hadlock, who also produced Bryan's "From Austin." "He's a singer-songwriter who happens to be from Oklahoma, has an accent and sings about the world he's in... I think he will be doing amazing things for a really long time."

Within Nashville, too, a similar genre-mashing ethos has bubbled up on hits such as Morgan

country production, and it still sounds like a Morgan Wallen song."

As more and more country tracks have risen to the upper reaches of the Hot 100 this past year, many of the standouts — not only "Something in the Orange" and "Last Night," in addition to other tracks by Bryan and Wallen, but also Luke Combs' rendition of Tracy Chapman's "Fast Car" (which reached No. 2), Bailey Zimmerman's "Rock and a Hard Place" (which hit the top 10) and Jelly Roll's rock and country-blending "Need a Favor" (which broke into the top 20) — demonstrate an instinct for crafting sounds that appeal beyond the genre.

A mix of newcomers and veterans, they include Hadlock; Wallen's "Last Night" producers, Moi and Charlie Handsome; Zimmerman producer Austin Shawn; Combs' "Fast Car" co-producers, Jonathan Singleton and Chip Matthews; and Jelly Roll producer Austin Nivarel.

Notably, many of these studio creatives have résumés that extend beyond country. Before working with Big Loud artists like Wallen and Florida Georgia Line, Moi produced Canadian rock band Nickelback. Hadlock has worked with names ranging from

"[Bryan is] a singer-songwriter who happens to be from Oklahoma, has an accent and sings about the world he's in... I think he will be doing amazing things for a really long time."

—RYAN HADLOCK

Wallen's muted, acoustic-based chart juggernaut "Last Night," which spent 16 nonconsecutive weeks atop the Hot 100 in 2023. "He has one of those magical voices that allows him to span multiple formats, really," says producer Joey Moi, who has worked with Wallen since his debut album. "He can sing a traditional country song, or over a hip-hop, contemporary production or a contemporary

Foo Fighters to Brandi Carlile, while Handsome's credits include Post Malone, Kanye West, Juice WRLD and Lil Wayne.

For Wallen and Bryan, scaled-back production proved essential to the genre-traversing success of their respective hits. "We purposefully kept it simple," Moi says of "Last Night." "There are a handful of parts going on, but it's more about the negative

space and making it about the story, the vocal and the instrumental that runs throughout. It lends itself to being accessible by more lanes as far as radio formats; it was tougher to define as just a country song, or just a pop song or [adult top 40] song. It kind of fit everywhere."

Moi says the song's sparse production partially resulted from Wallen's own creative inclinations. "My natural instinct is to build these larger-than-life productions, and Morgan is great about coming behind me and being like, 'Take this out and that part out,' making sure I'm not doing too much on certain things," Moi says. "I'd say he has had his best opportunity on the last two records to really imprint upon every aspect of it, from the song-writing to demos to our approach to tracking in the studio and postproduction. You can hear his contemporary, youthful thoughts over all of it."

Similarly, Hadlock notes the minimal production on "Something in the Orange," which utilized vintage mics and gear. "Sometimes old equipment is better at capturing emotion, and part of it is having a good room; I think people don't always realize how much an instrument the room is that people are playing in," says Hadlock, whose goal was a recording that sounded like Bryan was "playing right in front of you," that would make "people listen to it and say, 'Wow, that's an amazing live recording.'"

For Shawn, the freedom to experiment was key in landing the right feel for Zimmerman's "Rock and a Hard Place." He and Zimmerman produced the song a half-dozen different ways before landing on the approach they used for the final recording. "We produced an almost John Mayer-esque, real smooth-sounding [version], then the acoustic version and one that was a dark piano ballad, with strings and fiddle that sounded almost like you were listening to a country Goo Goo Dolls song," Shawn says.

As he did with "Fall in Love," Shawn incorporated a "three-minute-long sample of just wind" into "Rock and a Hard Place." "It feels like you are in a desert, and I wanted to feel that open style — we added fiddle and pedal steel, just subtly to bring out the emotive aspect. We wanted this song to feel like you could play it on acoustic guitar, but at the same time, it can still fit into a country radio modern format."

Shawn, who co-wrote Zimmerman's "Fall in Love," recalls the no-barriers approach he and Zimmerman took early on in developing his sound. "We thought about the kinds of songs he would want to hear and made the music as fans, just encompassing everything we love... There's no gimmicks with this kid. His gift is making the music that defines him and his lifestyle."

Ultimately, producers who encourage such experimentation — whether Combs' cover of a 1980s folk-pop classic, Bryan's poetic blend of country, folk and rock or Wallen's country-to-hip-hop range — have shaped songs that are resonating with a multitude of listeners.

"He has always wanted to stay in the country lane, but we all knew he had a sort of contemporary side," Moi says of Wallen. "If we planted our roots and built our foundation in a good spot, [we knew] we'd have the opportunity to explore other genres, and I think we're in a sweet spot for that right now."

ILLUSTRATION BY ANDREI COJOCARU

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PRODUCERS



HEART BEATS

With his close collaborator Karol G, **Ovy on the Drums** worked his way up from the local Colombian music scene to the top of the *Billboard* charts. Now he dreams of a mainstream, multihyphenate legacy

BY JESSICA ROIZ

PHOTOGRAPHED BY DEVIN CHRISTOPHER

AS HE WATCHED from a suite while Karol G performed at New Jersey’s MetLife Stadium on Sept. 8, Ovy on the Drums was nostalgic and teary-eyed. Over 70,000 fans were chanting the Colombian reggaetón star’s biggest hits at the top of their lungs — the majority produced by him.

“I cried that day because there were no words,” he recalls, slouched on a couch in his Miami-area home a few days later. “One day, we are working with the hopes of making it big, that our music will go around the world, and life itself makes sure things happen. God himself has given us these blessings, and it’s because we have worked with love, with dedication, without stopping. We are dreamers and unstoppable.”

After accompanying Karol G on most of her shows during her *Mañana Será Bonito* summer stadium tour, Ovy (real name: Daniel Echavarría Oviedo) is finally back at his three-story corner house in Doral, Fla., where he resides with his personal manager, Alejandro Muñoz, and his aunt Gloria. He’s relaxed, wearing a neon-green Nigeria soccer jersey and black Nike shorts, and his signature spiky, blond dreadlocks are tamed. It’s a typically hot summer Florida day, but inside, the 32-year-old’s aunt is cooking lunch while he catches up on laundry and sips homemade hibiscus tea. “This is amazing for your health. I drink it every day to stay hydrated,” he says, offering a glass.

As Karol’s longtime producer, Ovy is behind her biggest hits, including “Tusa,” with Nicki Minaj; “Provenza”; “TQG,” with Shakira; “Mi Ex Tenía Razón”; and the Peso Pluma-assisted “QLONA” — which all hit No. 1 on *Billboard*’s Hot Latin Songs chart. But his road to success has not been, as he puts it, “*llegué y pegué*” (“I came, and I conquered”). In fact, Ovy says he never knew music would be his calling.

Fifteen years ago, Ovy, then 17, was working at a plaza in Medellín carrying bags of chicken and selling disposable party supplies when he realized he had to find a passion if he wanted to succeed in life. His first taste of music production came a few years later, in 2012, when a cousin’s friend offered to install the digital audio workstation FL Studio on his laptop and give Ovy a beat-making crash course.

“From that moment, my life changed. Look, I even have the [company’s] fruity logo tattooed,” he says, flaunting the mango-strawberry ink on his right forearm. “I didn’t know what a melody was, I didn’t know anything [about making music], but when he showed me that program, that was where I, Daniel Echavarría Oviedo, discovered a new planet.”

As he practiced each day and sold his first beats for only \$5 each, Ovy made headway in the Colombian music scene, working with artists such as Landa Freak, Lorduy and DVX. He also connected with producers Ronald El Killa and La Compañía (the production group of Mr. Pimps, DJ Maff, Migueman and Gotex), whom he credits as the first people to give him an opportunity in the music industry. The latter, which produced Karol G’s 2013 Nicky Jam collaboration, “Amor de Dos,” ultimately connected Ovy with Karol.

“The first day we met, I overheard her talking to her father about needing a DJ for a presentation,

and I respectfully offered myself,” he remembers. “At first, she didn’t take me seriously. But about a month later, my friends at La Compañía called me to share the news that Karol wanted me as her DJ.”

After a successful debut performance together at a local university, the duo embarked on a “school tour” across the country while also promoting themselves on local TV and radio. Along the way, Ovy decided to play Karol some of his beats, and they immediately began creating music. The first song they worked on together was “Ricos Besos,” a flirtatious reggaetón track released in summer 2014.

“She was happy because I was the only person who understood what she wanted to express with her sound,” he says. “I remember that we were on a balcony one day when I proposed that we become a team — just like The Rudeboyz with Maluma, Sky Rompiendo with J Balvin — and she told me, ‘Let’s do it!’ ”

Since then, Ovy — whose style is characterized by minimalist urban-fusion beats backed by edgy keyboards, dramatic violins and hard-hitting drums — has produced a handful of Karol’s bangers, such as “Tusa,” which earned him his first No. 1 as a producer on the Hot Latin Songs chart, and the EDM-fueled “Cairo,” which marked his first Billboard Hot 100 entry.

His work on Karol’s studio albums *Unstoppable* (2017), *Ocean* (2019), *KG0516* (2021) and the historic

“He is a master of his craft. He can create an entire song by himself ... and 99% of the time, they are hits! Beyond that, when you meet him, you want to be his best friend and confidant.”

—LESLIE AHRENS, KOBALT MUSIC

Mañana Será Bonito (2023) — the first all-Spanish-language album by a female artist to top the Billboard 200 — ultimately has kept him at No. 1 on the Latin Producers chart for 25 nonconsecutive weeks since February 2020, the third-longest reign atop that chart, following Tainy and MAG. He was less involved on Karol’s latest, *Mañana Será Bonito (Bichota Season)*, released in August, but still produced three of its 10 songs: “S91,” “QLONA” and “Dispo.”

“I’m taking time for myself,” he says as Gloria serves warm *picadillo* (ground beef), rice, salad and noodle soup. “It hurts me because I want to be making new music with Karol like the old days.

But it’s not a bad thing — it’s just that now I want to focus on my project.”

Inspired by the multihyphenate Dr. Dre, Ovy wears many hats: he produces; he composes; he develops artists under his record label, Big Ligas; and at one point, he even had a singing career — though after releasing music with Mike Bahía, TINÍ and Danny Ocean, he decided to quit because “Ovy on the Drums has respect as a producer, not as a singer.”

At the dining table, where Muñoz and Gloria join him, Ovy says that moving to Miami in 2020 was the best decision of his life, mainly because it allowed him to grow as a producer. “I got to a point where I asked myself, ‘What am I doing in Medellín?’ I felt like there was nothing more to do. Other than enjoying my country, my family and relaxing, I wasn’t being productive,” he explains. “Once I moved to Miami, I started creating and creating more, and establishing more relationships.”

And while he’s best known for his work with Karol G, he has now worked with numerous other artists, including Enrique Iglesias, Zion y Lennox, Camilo, Ozuna, Prince Royce and Peso Pluma. When he hits the studio with those other acts, he prepares thoroughly, studying them, observing their musical styles and making sure to arrive with the best energy.

“He is a master of his craft,” says Leslie Ahrens, senior vp of creative, Latin America at Kobalt Music, where Ovy signed in December 2018. “He can create an entire song by himself — production, lyrics and melody — and 99% of the time, they are hits! Beyond that, when you meet him, you want to be his best friend and confidant. He also has a great sense of humor, and all that is a part of his magic.”

Now, as he shifts his focus to his personal musical projects, Ovy is also planning his next move: expanding to work with mainstream artists.

“I’ve had opportunities. Producers like London on Da Track who has worked with Drake have written to me, but nothing has happened yet because I feel that I need to learn to speak English first,” he says. “If I speak the language very well, I will get along with the mainstream producers and artists and even create a solid friendship like the one I have with artists in the Latin music world. I’m on it right now.”

In the meantime, he’s preparing his debut album as artist-producer, titled *Dr. Drums*, which will include features from Karol G, Quevedo, Sech, Ryan Castro and Blessed.

As we finish lunch, he reminds me that his trajectory hasn’t been “*llegué y pegué*” but rather working hard for his dreams with the hope of one day inspiring others.

“Tomorrow, when I’m not in this industry or in this world anymore, people will simply remember me because I created different music from everything that has ever existed, and hopefully, they will be inspired by the music I made. That’s my goal,” he says with a smile. “Every day I wake up with that hope —with the purpose of leaving a legacy.”



THE GOAT WHISPERER

Grammy-winning producer **Andrew Watt** has helped define today's pop airwaves. Now he has become a trusted collaborator for rock stars twice his age — including The Rolling Stones

BY JASON LIPSHUTZ

THE BEST PART of producing Mick Jagger's vocals, according to Andrew Watt, is when he begins taking off his clothes. "He starts in like, a sweater, a button-down and a T-shirt," the producer-songwriter recalls of a studio session with the Rolling Stones legend, "and then, two takes in, the sweater comes off. Two takes later, the button-down comes off. All of a sudden, he's down to a T-shirt, and he's ripped, and he's 80, and he's fucking giving you full-blown Mick Jagger, shaking and sweating as he sings every note."

Such fantastical rock-star run-ins have become relatively commonplace for Watt — but the 32-year-old and 2021 producer of the year Grammy winner, who wore a different Rolling Stones T-shirt every day to the studio while producing the band's forthcoming album, *Hackney Diamonds*, still recounts the experience with giddy breathlessness. "You can't not be jumping up and down with excitement," he says of watching Jagger work his magic, "because that's what we've all been trained to do for the last 60 years."

Over the past half-decade, Watt has transitioned from scoring hits for pop stars like Justin Bieber, Camila Cabello and 5 Seconds of Summer to guiding late-career projects from rock's legacy elites, including Ozzy Osbourne, Elton John and Iggy Pop. While the New York native still collaborates with modern A-listers — Watt worked on the majority of *Austin*, the recent full-length from frequent collaborator Post Malone — his career has become an inverse of the "How do you do, fellow kids?" meme, with the 1990s baby blending in with legends in their 70s and 80s. "It's like going to college," he says, "and learning from the literal masters."

Helming *Hackney Diamonds*, due Oct. 20 on Geffen Records, represented a true bucket-list item for Watt, who was introduced to Jagger by veteran producer Don Was in the middle of the pandemic and struck up a friendship over FaceTime. In the summer of 2022, Watt was in London working with Dua Lipa, and Jagger invited him over for some tea; after years of false starts and scrapped demos for the Stones' first album of original material since 2005's *A Bigger Bang*, Jagger asked Watt if he would be interested in helping them cross the finish line. Watt's jaw dropped: "You have this moment where you're like, 'Am I even capable of that?'" he says. "It's



the greatest honor as a kid with a guitar who grew up idolizing every single thing Keith Richards ever did."

That level of lifelong fandom, combined with an urgency to secure results, is what Watt believes makes him so effective at sharing the studio with icons more than twice his age. He understands that "these legends don't owe anyone anything," as he puts it, "so the only reason they're making a new album is for themselves." With that in mind, Watt encourages artists to pursue ideas indiscriminately — less conversation, more raw creation — and then it's his job to approach projects from the viewpoint of what fans most want to hear.

When it came to the Stones, "Any fan wants to hear the greatest live rock'n'roll band of all time," Watt explains, "so to do anything else with them in the studio is just letting everyone down." When preproduction for *Hackney Diamonds* began in September 2022, Watt pushed the band to work efficiently and made sure to prioritize its live energy, particularly within the interplay between Richards and Ronnie Wood.

Session locations ranged from Los Angeles to Paris; Steve Jordan took over the drum kit from Charlie Watts,

who died in 2021 but is posthumously featured on two tracks carried over from earlier sessions; and Lady Gaga, Paul McCartney and Stevie Wonder were among the guest stars to swing by. The result is a lean, 11-song Stones album that Watt says was mostly finished in under six months, and that "you could put on against other contemporary music, but is still loose and really gets grooving at certain points."

Although Watt likens the experience of producing a Stones album to climbing a personal Mount Everest, he also says that he has plenty left to accomplish in his career. Aside from contributing to Lipa's highly anticipated third album, Watt recently co-produced "Seven," Jung Kook's Billboard Hot 100 chart-topper featuring Latto. "That was the first time I worked with an artist who didn't speak the same language as me, so we communicated through music," he says of the BTS star. "It was the complete opposite of my work with The Rolling Stones, but that's what keeps it interesting."

Watt says that his work with various music legends has already started to inform his new stars. "Watching Paul McCartney arrange background vocals and harmonize with himself?" he says. "I'm taking that shit with me to every production I do for the rest of my life."

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PRODUCING 101

The studio is your classroom at some of the country's best audio engineering programs — and their professors your best introduction to the music business **BY STEVE KNOPPER**



WHETHER YOU'RE A math-and-science whiz or an intuitive creative, there's a prestigious audio engineering program that can prepare you for a career as a producer — or for whatever studio path you might follow — while emphasizing a well-rounded education in the process. Here's a selection of some of the best academic programs, along with sage professional advice from those who lead them.

Belmont University
AUDIO ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY
The program Heavy on math and science, the curriculum teaches students to design systems, components and processes and prepare for careers as recording-studio and live-sound engineers and audio-software designers. "If it makes a noise or records a sound, somebody has to think about it, create it, program it, build it, use it, apply it," program chair Michael Janas says.
The skills producers need most now "Motivation. If they're trying to force themselves as a square peg into a round hole, they're going to struggle."

Berklee College Of Music
MUSIC PRODUCTION AND ENGINEERING
The program Working with artists, writers and other engineers, students learn technical skills (microphone placement, signal flow) and personal skills (critical listening, communication). "Reading the room, leveraging the strengths of artists, how you speak to people, deliver bad news — these are incredibly sensitive, difficult things," program chair Rob Jaczko says. (Alums include Charlie Puth and Abe Laboriel Jr., Paul McCartney's longtime drummer.)
The skills producers need most now "Understanding the business landscape. We all need to have a better understanding of how we monetize our work."

Drexel University
RECORDING ARTS AND MUSIC PRODUCTION

The program Students learn the basics of recording, production, arranging, composition, postproduction, mixing and mastering. In one sound-recording course, experienced artists (recently, members of John Legend's band) work with students directly. After their sophomore year, students spend the summer working in live-sound engineering or another music-business sector. "They can go out and explore an area," says Ryan Moys, who oversees the RAMP curriculum. "Sometimes you figure out what you don't like."
The skills producers need most now "Knowing different software platforms: We teach Pro Tools, Ableton and Logic. And great communication skills. It all comes back to you've got to be a cool person to hang out with."

Frost School Of Music, University Of Miami
MUSIC ENGINEERING
The program Developed in 1977, Frost centers on a recording studio with three full-size consoles. "Half our students end up at a company, like Dolby or Bose or Amazon Lab126 or Shure," department chair Christopher Bennett says. "They work on the innards of devices that end up in the studios."
The skills producers need most now "The more you can learn under the hood, the better engineer or producer you'll be. If they understand things like room acoustics and theory, it empowers them to make more creative choices."

Jacobs School Of Music, Indiana University Bloomington
AUDIO ENGINEERING AND SOUND PRODUCTION
The program Among IU's 1,600 music students, prospective engineers and producers get hands-on experience in pursuit of their 80-recording-hours-per-semester standard as part of this 41-year-old program. "That level of responsibility makes a big difference," department chair Michael Stucker says.
The skills producers need most now "Signal flow is a concept that's really important to us. Physics and acoustics as well."

Middle Tennessee State University
AUDIO PRODUCTION
The program With five recording studios, plus a postproduction studio and separate labs for mixing, mastering and electronic music, students learn mixing and sound reinforcement and put on end-of-semester shows for live audiences. "We don't really think of ourselves as training people for a job as a music producer," says Bill Crabtree, director of the master of fine arts program in recording arts and technologies. "That's not the kind of entry-level job you're going to get right after college. It takes a while." (Alums include Luke Laird, who has written No. 1 hits for Carrie Underwood and Eric Church, among others.)
The top issue facing producers now "Artificial intelligence has the potential to disrupt a lot of things. However, it will be a tool. Having those skills — we think that's important."

Peabody Institute, Johns Hopkins
MUSIC ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY
The program Bachelor's degree programs range from highly technical, five-year studies emphasizing electrical engineering, math, science and computer science to a two-year graduate program working with classical ensembles and rock bands. "Some find, 'I'm interested in how loudspeakers are designed or getting into programming with signal processing,'" program chair Scott Metcalfe says. "Others embrace their composition side."
The skills producers need most now "Musicianship. Understanding the goal of the artist and what the market is."

Purchase College, State University Of New York
STUDIO PRODUCTION
The program With nine studios at their disposal, students get hands-on experience, from arranging their own pieces to engineering sound in the Dolby Atmos format, in genres from classical to hip-hop. "We want them to be able to do everything. We don't want people to be button-pushers," says Peter Denenberg, coordinator of the music and technology program. (Alums include Grammy Award-winning jazz singer Samara Joy.)
The top issue facing producers now "Being forced to deliver projects in spatial audio is an incredibly difficult ask. It just adds a level of complexity and difficulty."

Steinhardt School Of Culture, Education And Human Development, New York University
MUSIC TECHNOLOGY
The program Director Paul Geluso says graduates of the program are "skilled professionals" who know hardware and software product design, audio engineering, and performance and composition: "The students do a little bit of everything their first two years and [then] they gravitate to one area."
The skills producers need most now "Our students take theory and history. We're definitely music-first in our approach to our engineering side."

Thornton School Of Music, University Of Southern California
MUSIC TECHNOLOGY
The program Offering a bachelor's degree in music production and minors in production and recording, Thornton emphasizes songwriting. "We build this program around our students being strong musicians with a technical inclination," program chair Rick Schmunk says. "They can write the song, arrange it, produce it, record, edit, mix, master."
The skills producers need most now "Arranging and songwriting. We don't have much trouble finding students with enough technical skills to be effective."

For more audio engineering programs, go to billboard.com.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

BEST MUSICAL THEATER ALBUM

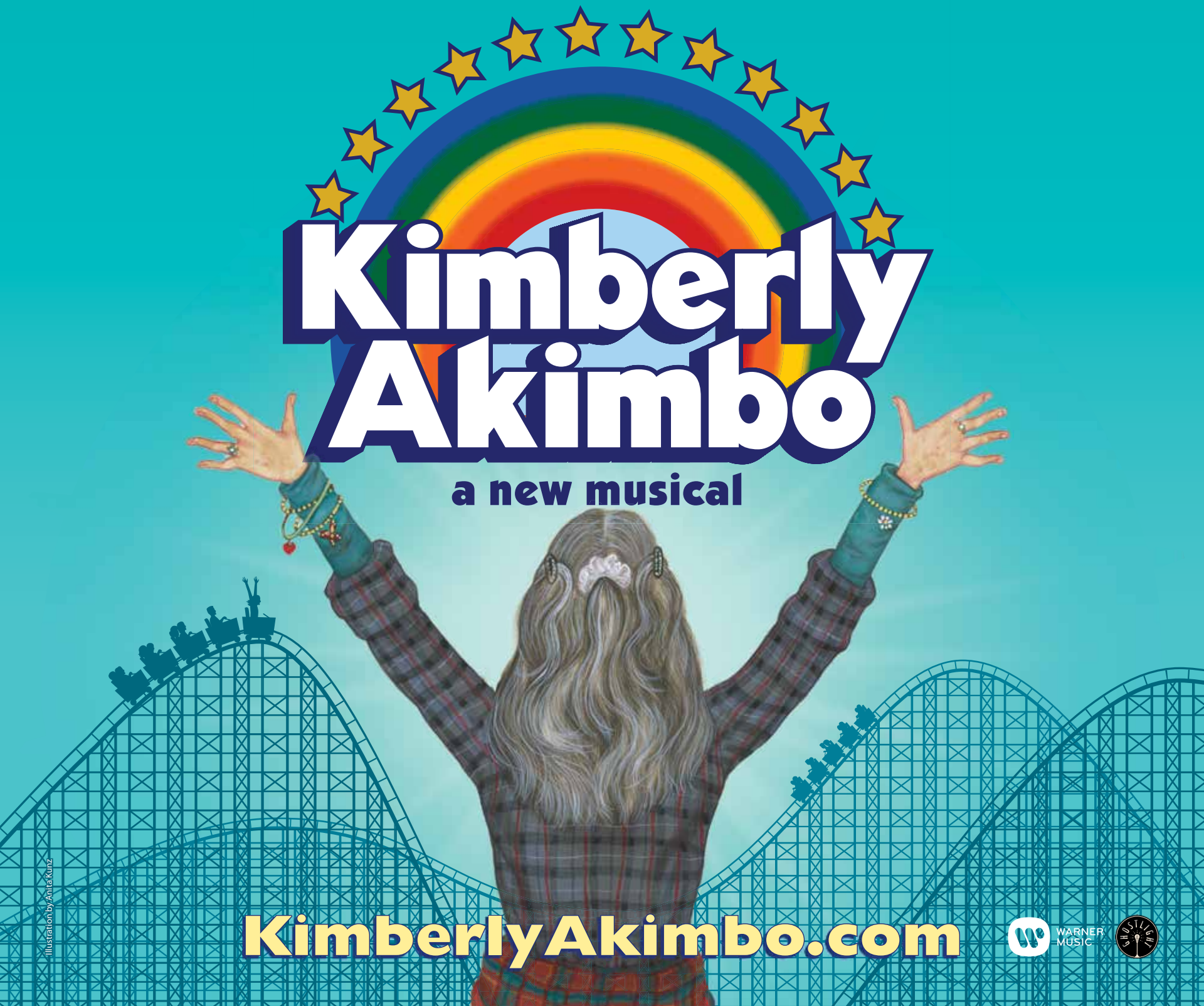
WINNER ★ 5 TONY AWARDS

INCLUDING

BEST MUSICAL

BEST ORIGINAL SCORE

BOOK & LYRICS BY **DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE** MUSIC BY **JEANINE TESORI**





**INTERSCOPE
Geffen
A&M**



FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

"strutting, barnstorming return"



The Guardian

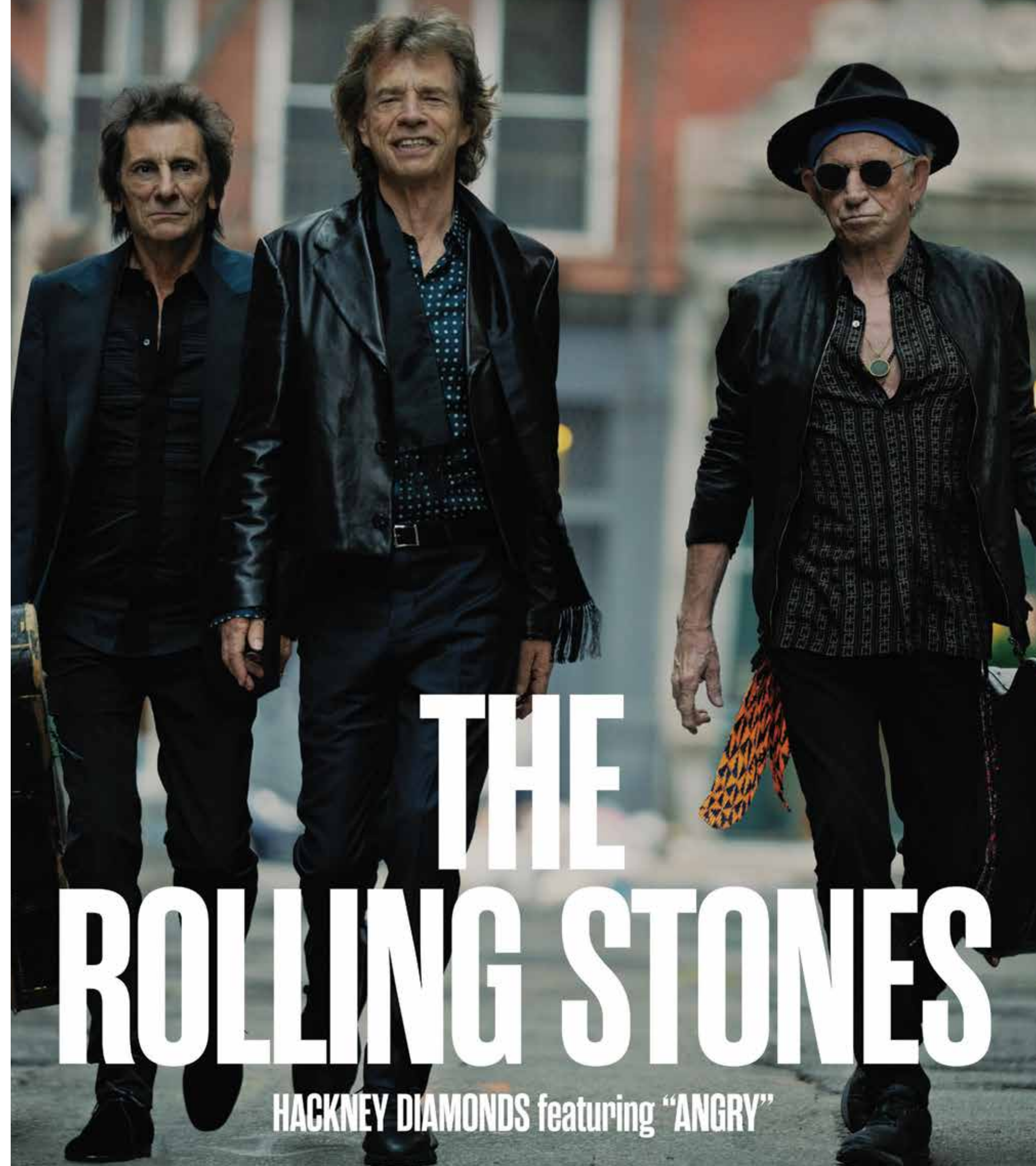
"They're back — with a riff of 'Start Me Up'-like hugeness, a fantastic vocal... and proof that, six decades on, The Stones can still locate their mojo"

THE TIMES

"'Angry' is The Rolling Stones' best single in 40 years"



The Telegraph



**THE
ROLLING STONES**

HACKNEY DIAMONDS featuring "ANGRY"

OLIVIA RODRIGO

ONE OF THE MOST CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED ALBUMS OF THE YEAR

GUTS featuring "vampire"

"... a songwriter of rather
astonishing purity"

The New York Times

"Masterpiece"

Los Angeles Times

"Instant Classic"
"... a voice that's here to stay
and a songwriter built to last"

RollingStone

"...the most complete pop
album of the year"

billboard

vampire
"brilliant, biting"

The
Guardian

"... proves her place in pop
music's upper echelon"

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

vampire
"Best New Track"

Pitchfork

★★★★★

NME

BEST ALBUMS OF 2023

billboard

Pitchfork

RollingStone

VARIETY

The Washington Post

SPIN



STEREOGUM

VULTURE

BEST SONGS OF THE YEAR "A&W"

RollingStone

VULTURE

billboard

Los Angeles Times

PASTE

LANA DEL REY

DID YOU KNOW THAT THERE'S A TUNNEL UNDER OCEAN BLVD
featuring "A&W" AND "CANDY NECKLACE (feat. JON BATISTE)"

"Del Rey, at her best, has a finger
not just on the pulse, but
somewhere beneath the flesh."

The New York Times

"The ninth studio album proves
that Lana Del Rey is still one of our
more interesting storytellers."



"Lana Del Rey's most personal
album yet may just be her best."

Los Angeles Times

"Lana Del Rey's new album is
sprawling, mysterious and presents
her at the height of her powers."

The Washington Post



BILLIE EILISH

"WHAT WAS I MADE FOR?"

"... mirrors the existential, tear-jerking moment Robbie's character goes through in the film."

RollingStone

"Barbie's heart song"

GRETA GERWIG

RADIO 2

"Eilish knows how to tease out the pathos and a subtle sense of macabre from a particular kind of feminine malaise."

The New York Times

"The single is emotional, well-written and the kind of hauntingly beautiful production that only Eilish can pull off."

Forbes

KALI UCHIS

RED MOON IN VENUS featuring "MOONLIGHT"



BEST ALBUMS OF 2023

Los Angeles Times *RollingStone* *VARIETY* Entertainment *AV CLUB* *COMPLEX* *UPROXX*

"Soft, ethereal and fully femme...Uchis blends R&B seamlessly with soul and funk."

Ap Associated Press

"Red Moon in Venus is Uchis' most immersive project yet."

Pitchfork

"Red Moon drips with pleasure, pain and everything in between, showing just what a force of nature Uchis is."

billboard

"Make no mistake, Kali Uchis has arrived"

VARIETY

"gravity-defying R&B"

The New York Times

GRACIE ABRAMS

GOOD RIDDANCE featuring "I KNOW IT WON'T WORK"

BEST ALBUMS OF 2023

NYLON *RollingStone* **UPROXX**

"Poetic master...visceral, brutally honest, unflinchingly self-examining storytelling of the highest caliber."

billboard

"Abrams has a knack for the sort of vulnerable songwriting that grabs you in quiet moments, the kind that finds fans because it is empathetic and personal"

AP Associated Press

In her stunning debut, one of pop music's most promising stars sticks the landing in more ways than one.

RollingStone

"With Good Riddance, Gracie Abrams has achieved a feat only few have achieved — a debut album that feels at once of the moment and timeless."

NYLON

"Destroy Lonely is in a league of his own"

HUNGER

"Destroy Lonely is a star"

COMPLEX

"[Destroy Lonely] commands the mic"

V MAGAZINE

"rising rap sensation"

songwriter

DESTROY LONELY

IF LOOKS COULD KILL

NAMED ARTIST TO WATCH IN 2023

People **PIGEONS & PLANES** **BET★** **AP**

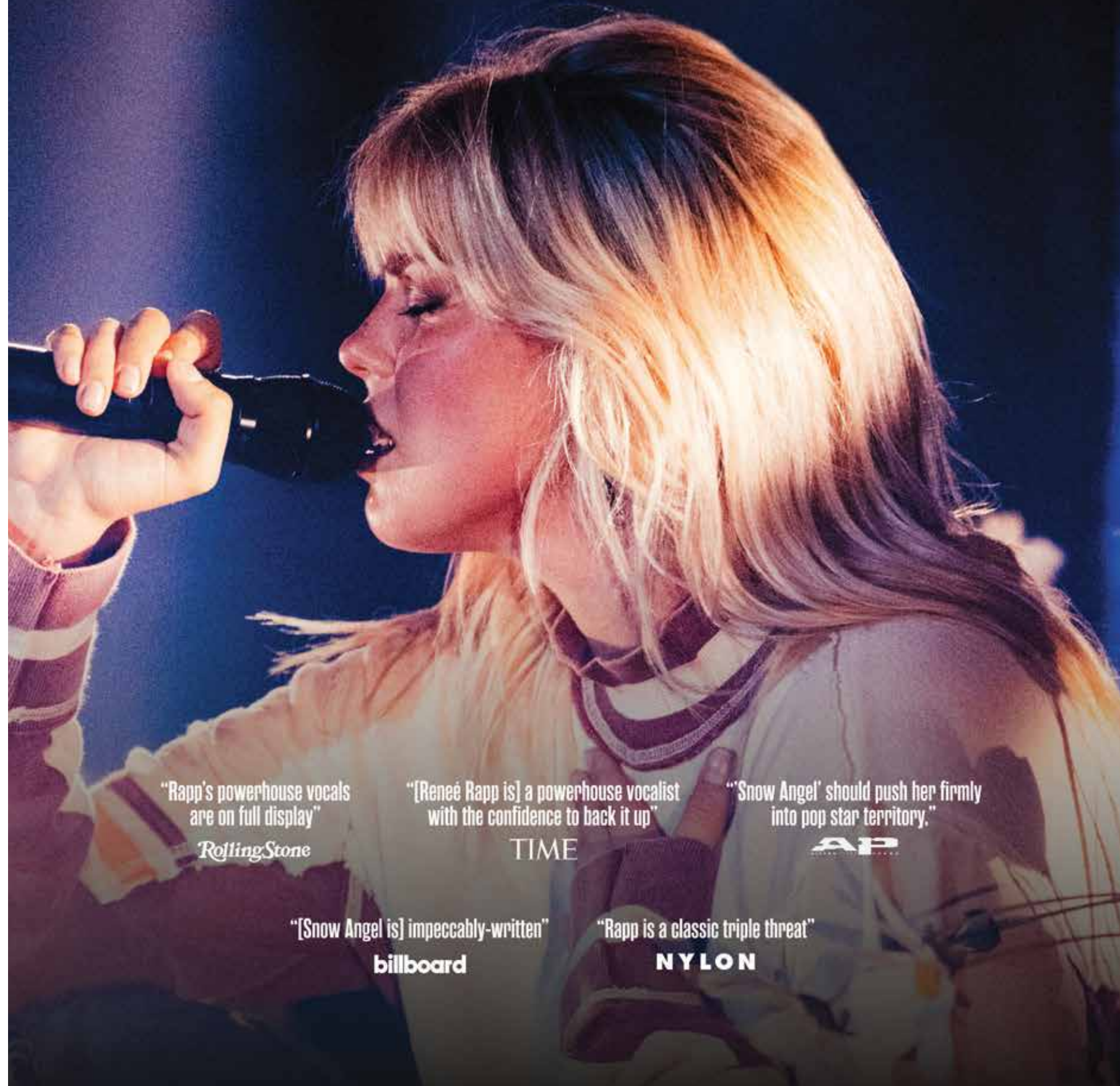
billboard *RollingStone* **COMPLEX**

RENEÉ RAPP

SNOW ANGEL

THE BIGGEST DEBUT ALBUM OF 2023 FROM A SOLO FEMALE ARTIST

MTV VMA 2023 BEST NEW ARTIST NOMINEE



"Rapp's powerhouse vocals are on full display"

RollingStone

"[Reneé Rapp is] a powerhouse vocalist with the confidence to back it up"

TIME

"Snow Angel' should push her firmly into pop star territory."

AP

"[Snow Angel is] impeccably-written"

billboard

"Rapp is a classic triple threat"

NYLON



BEST ALBUMS OF 2023

Pitchfork



RollingStone

VARIETY

STEREOGUM

VULTURE

"NOT STRONG ENOUGH" BEST SONGS OF 2023

RollingStone



billboard

BOYGENIUS

THE RECORD featuring "NOT STRONG ENOUGH"

"at its heart, 'the record' is a celebration"

npr

"boygenius's full-length debut is exceptional, easily ranking with the year's best indie-rock offerings."

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

"Instant Classic"

RollingStone

"one of the best albums of 2023 arrived right on time"

VARIETY

A close-up portrait of Selena Gomez. She is wearing a bright orange leather jacket over a matching orange top. She has large gold hoop earrings and a delicate necklace. Her hair is pulled back, and she is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile.

SELENA GOMEZ

MY MIND & ME

"Lovely, fragile, brave, honest, touching"
Los Angeles Times

"...the track doesn't only share a title with the documentary. It shares its thesis. 'And all of the crashing and burning and breaking, I know now / If somebody sees me like this, then they won't feel alone now.'"

VULTURE

"SINGLE SOON"

"A triumphal march"
The New York Times

THE BIGGEST FEMALE SPANISH LANGUAGE ALBUM DEBUT IN ALMOST 20 YEARS

RECORD-BREAKING MAÑANA SERÁ BONITO TOUR MAKES HISTORY
WITH SOLD-OUT PERFORMANCES AT ICONIC U.S. STADIUMS



BEST ALBUMS OF 2023

billboard VARIETY RollingStone COMPLEX

KAROL G

MAÑANA SERÁ BONITO
featuring "TQG (with Shakira)"

"...pop star delivers her best music yet with her lush, sprawling fourth album"

RollingStone

"Karol G's Songs Conquered the World."

The New York Times



YO GOTTI

I SHOWED U SO
featuring "THE ONE"

"Gotti brings anthem after anthem that showcases how his hard-hitting flows continue to stick into the fabric of rap music."

hrrh

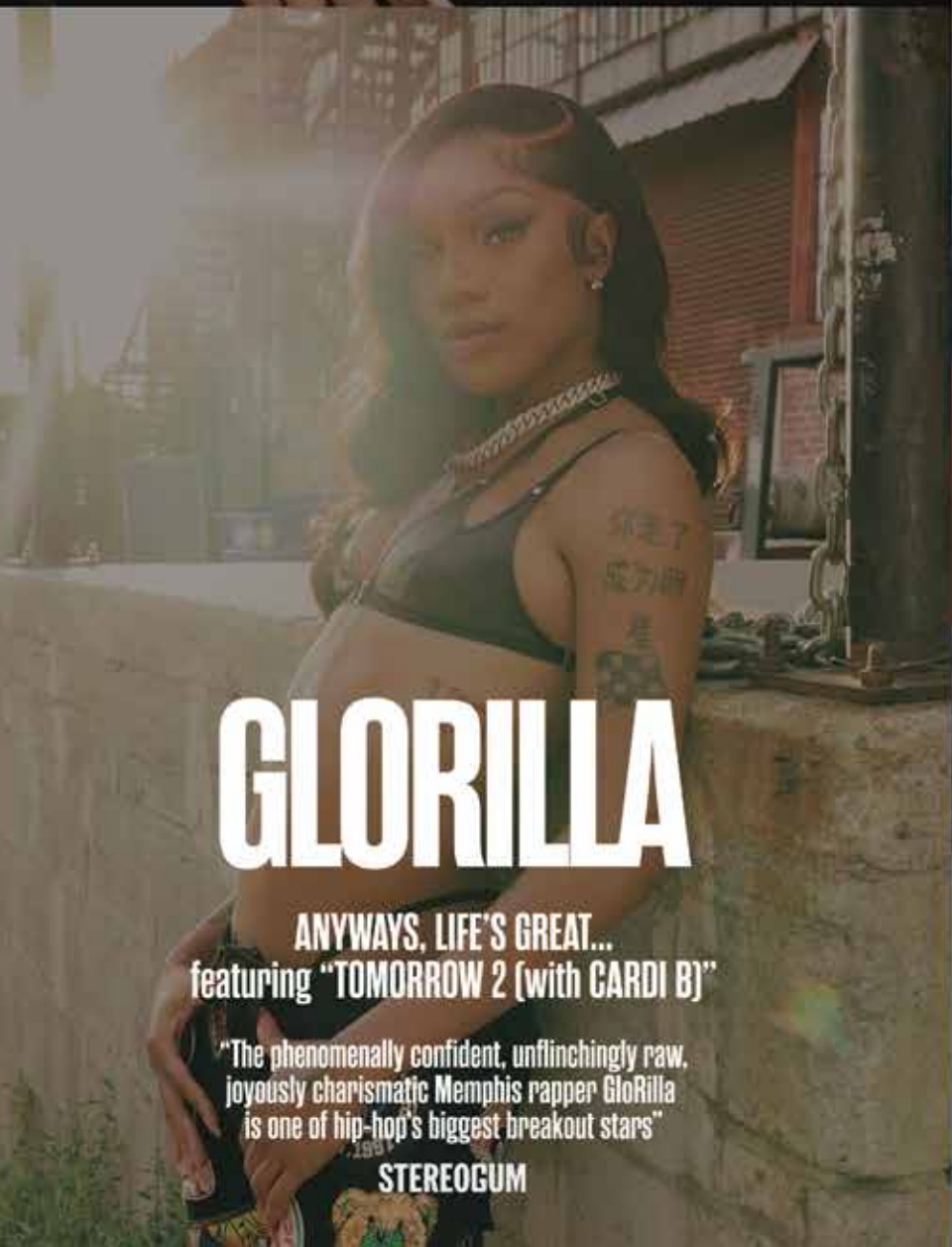


MONEYBAGG YO

HARD TO LOVE
featuring "OCEAN SPRAY"

"always does a great job of balancing pain and pleasure thanks to his well-polished skill for delivering fun, earworm-producing hits"

RollingStone

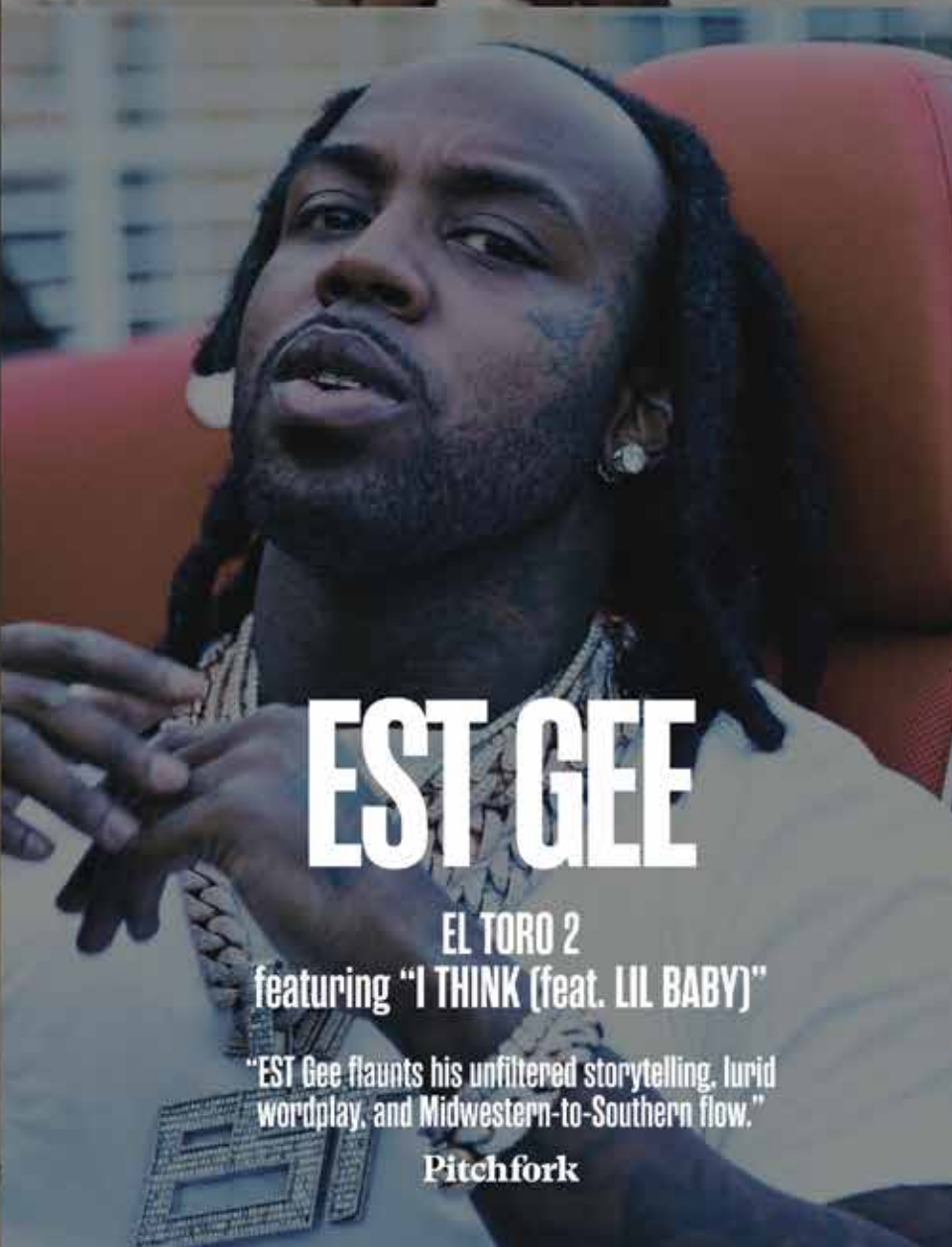


GLORILLA

ANYWAYS, LIFE'S GREAT...
featuring "TOMORROW 2 (with CARDI B)"

"The phenomenally confident, unflinchingly raw, joyously charismatic Memphis rapper Glorilla is one of hip-hop's biggest breakout stars"

STEREOGUM

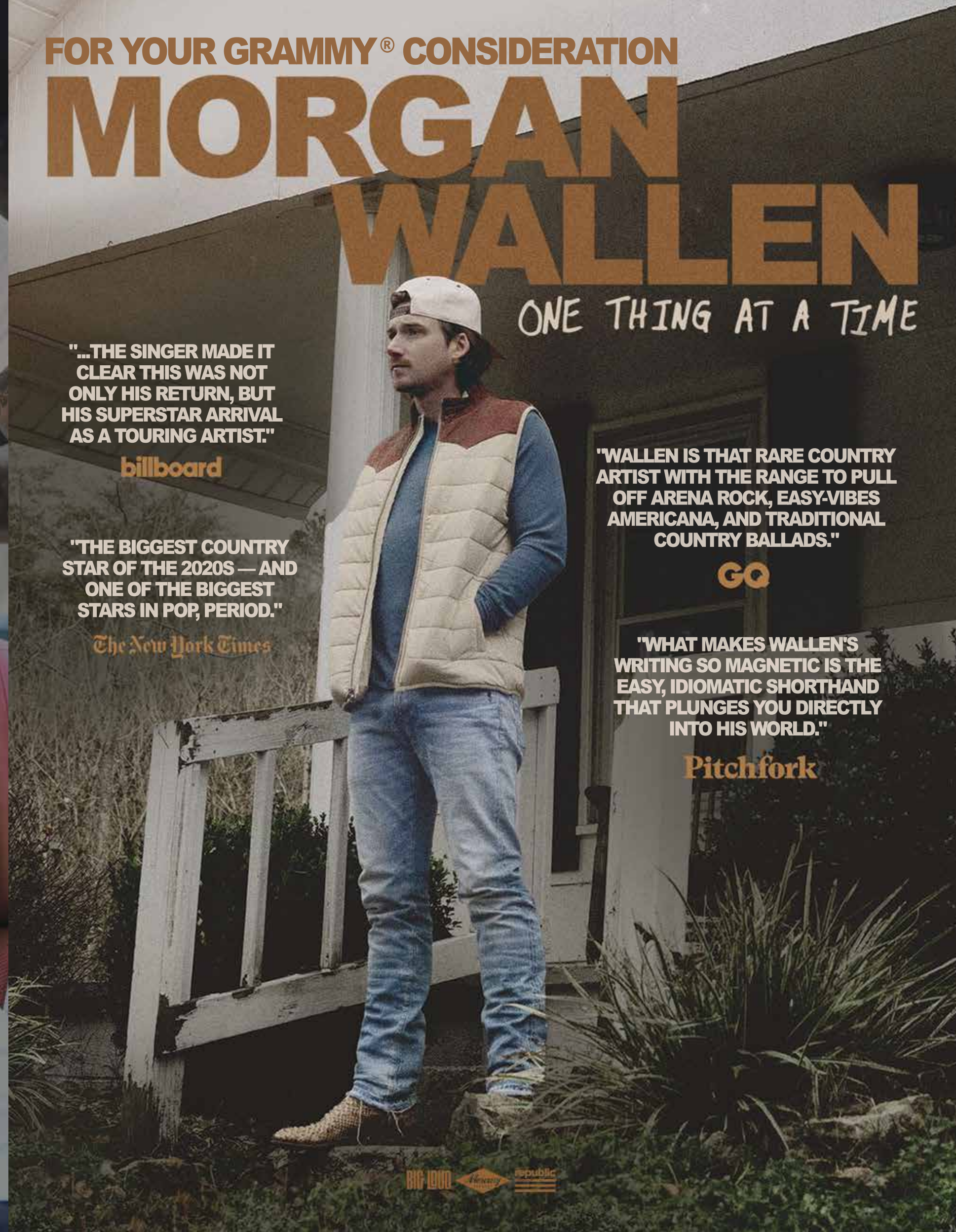


EST GEE

EL TORO 2
featuring "I THINK (feat. LIL BABY)"

"EST Gee flaunts his unfiltered storytelling, lurid wordplay, and Midwestern-to-Southern flow."

Pitchfork



FOR YOUR GRAMMY® CONSIDERATION

MORGAN WALLEN

ONE THING AT A TIME

"...THE SINGER MADE IT CLEAR THIS WAS NOT ONLY HIS RETURN, BUT HIS SUPERSTAR ARRIVAL AS A TOURING ARTIST."

billboard

"THE BIGGEST COUNTRY STAR OF THE 2020S — AND ONE OF THE BIGGEST STARS IN POP, PERIOD."

The New York Times

"WALLEN IS THAT RARE COUNTRY ARTIST WITH THE RANGE TO PULL OFF ARENA ROCK, EASY-VIBES AMERICANA, AND TRADITIONAL COUNTRY BALLADS."

GO

"WHAT MAKES WALLEN'S WRITING SO MAGNETIC IS THE EASY, IDIOMATIC SHORTHAND THAT PLUNGES YOU DIRECTLY INTO HIS WORLD."

Pitchfork

big loud *Mercury* *republic*

FOR YOUR GRAMMY® CONSIDERATION

HARDY



the mockingbird &
THE CROW

"NORM-BUSTING, UNBRIDLED 17-TRACK SET THAT FINDS HARDY IN FULL, CENTERED POSSESSION OF HIS MUSICAL RANGE."

billboard

"AND THAT'S HARDY'S GIFT: SYNTHESIZING BIOGRAPHY WITH IMAGINATION TO CREATE REAL STORYTELLING."

RollingStone

"THERE AREN'T MANY NAMES AS SIZZLING IN COUNTRY MUSIC THESE DAYS AS THE ONE-WORD MONIKER: HARDY."

songwriter

"HARDY'S ARTISTIC CAREER HAS PRODUCED SOME OF THE MOST INTRIGUING MUSIC TO EMERGE FROM NASHVILLE IN YEARS."

SPIN

BIG LOUD BIG LOUD ROCK

FOR YOUR GRAMMY® CONSIDERATION

HAILEY WHITTERS

"Whitters has proven herself a stellar songwriter and artist in equal measure..."

billboard

"Hailey Whitters' blood, sweat and tears have paid off - she has more than earned this moment."

songwriter

"As both a writer and a singer, Whitters has rapidly proven to be one of the most interesting voices of country music."

npr

"...one of the most appealing country singers and songwriters working today."

THE NEW YORKER



BIG LOUD S&D

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Jelly Roll

BEST
NEW ARTIST
JELLY ROLL

BEST COUNTRY
ALBUM
WHITSITT CHAPEL

BEST COUNTRY
SOLO PERFORMANCE
"NEED A FAVOR"

BEST
COUNTRY SONG
"NEED A FAVOR"

BEST COUNTRY
DUO/GROUP PERFORMANCE
"SAVE ME"
(WITH LAINEY WILSON)

BEST
MUSIC VIDEO
"SHE"

2X CHART-TOPPING
RADIO
SINGLES

3X 2023 CMT
AWARD-WINNING
ARTIST

4X 2023 PEOPLE'S CHOICE
AWARD WINNER

5X 2023 CMA
AWARD
NOMINEE



FOR YOUR GRAMMY® CONSIDERATION

"COUNTRY MUSIC'S BRIGHTEST NEW STAR"

Los Angeles Times

Lainey Wilson

BEST NEW ARTIST

BELL BOTTOM COUNTRY

Produced by GRAMMY® Winner Jay Joyce

Album Of The Year

Best Country Album

"WATERMELON MOONSHINE"

Record Of The Year · Song Of The Year
Best Country Solo Performance · Best Country Song

"SMELL LIKE SMOKE (LIVE)"

Best Song Written For Visual Media

WHAT A BREAKTHROUGH YEAR!

9X 2023 CMA AWARD NOMINEE

Most Nominated Artist

4X 2023 ACM WINNER

BELL BOTTOM COUNTRY BEST OF

songwriter billboard Los Angeles Times

RollingStone SLATE STEREOGUM TASTE OF COUNTRY NIGHTS



FOR YOUR GRAMMY® CONSIDERATION

CHRIS STAPLETON WHITE HORSE

RECORD OF THE YEAR
SONG OF THE YEAR
BEST COUNTRY SOLO PERFORMANCE
BEST COUNTRY SONG



“a hell-raising anthem, meant to be blared with windows down and enjoyed with ears ringing.
‘White Horse’ finds Stapleton pairing an outlaw swagger with some heaven-scraping vocals” – Billboard

“an explosive love song that finds the reigning Entertainer of the Year in rare form” – Taste Of Country

“one of the most jaw-dropping singles yet...” – Brooklyn Vegan

“‘White Horse’ certainly suggests that Stapleton is leaning into his strengths as a cross-genre act.”
- Consequence of Sound

NEW ALBUM ‘HIGHER’ OUT NOV. 10



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THE WAR AND TREATY

WINNER 2023 AMERICANA HONORS & AWARDS
BEST DUO/GROUP OF THE YEAR

LOVER’S GAME

BEST NEW ARTIST
BEST AMERICANA ALBUM

“AIN’T NO HARMIN’ ME”

BEST AMERICANA PERFORMANCE

“BLANK PAGE”

BEST AMERICAN ROOTS SONG



“... one of Nashville’s hottest acts”- *RollingStone*

"In context and talent, they are unlike any other act in music."- THE TENNESSEAN

"rootsy vocals and chameleonic arrangements"- **billboard**

FOR YOUR GRAMMY® CONSIDERATION



"...Pearce delivers..."

billboard

"...taking her storytelling abilities to a whole new level."

circle | ALL ACCESS

"...a transcendent storyteller."

discovermusic.

"...climbed to her place among today's celebrated three-chord truth-tellers..."

Tennessean.

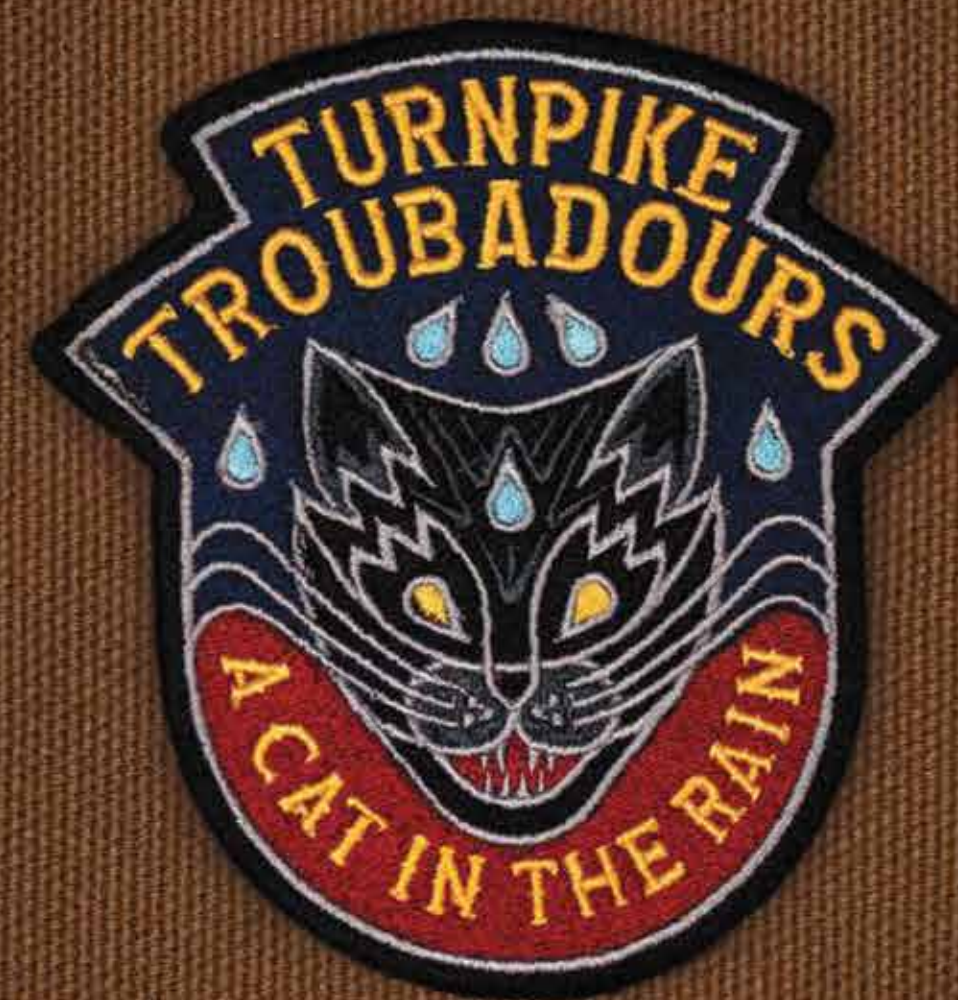


carly pearce

TURNPIKE TROUBADOURS



A CAT IN THE RAIN



FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

“

They've returned with the kind of ferocity that feels destined to put them right back on that long-term upward trajectory

”

Associated Press

“

One of the most beloved groups in country and roots music

”

SPIN

“

Turnpike Troubadours are thriving in their star-to-icon era renaissance because they're peerless rock stars

”

THE TENNESSEAN

FOR YOUR GRAMMY® CONSIDERATION

Ghost Hounds

🎻 **FIRST LAST TIME** 🎻

"Ghost Hounds are every bit as timeless as they are fresh and modern. They seamlessly manage to blur the lines between the new and the old, and it's all done with such masterful artistry and storytelling that it's hard to believe that First Last Time is only their fourth full-length album as a band."

SPIN

BEST NEW ARTIST

**BEST COUNTRY DUO/GROUP PERFORMANCE & BEST COUNTRY SONG +
RECORD OF THE YEAR & SONG OF THE YEAR** – "Last Train To Nowhere"

BEST MUSIC VIDEO – "Last Train To Nowhere"



FOR YOUR GRAMMY® CONSIDERATION

Ghost Hounds

🎻 **FIRST LAST TIME** 🎻

"The six-piece is the definition of modern rock with a blues-steeped edge."

American
songwriter
the craft of music

BEST AMERICANA PERFORMANCE – "Make It Shake"

BEST AMERICAN ROOTS SONG – "Dirty Angel"

BEST ARRANGEMENT, INSTRUMENTS AND VOCALS – "Here No More"

**BEST AMERICANA ALBUM + ALBUM OF THE YEAR + BEST ENGINEERED ALBUM,
NON-CLASSICAL** – *First Last Time*





PINKPANTHERESS, IRL



She blew up on
TikTok — but
with a surprise
Hot 100 hit,
Grammy buzz and
a sound all her
own, the British
singer-songwriter
is transcending
internet stardom

BY DAHIEN SCOTT

PHOTOGRAPHED BY
LIA CLAY MILLER

DON'T GO ON TikTok," says PinkPanther-
ess when asked whom she pegs as future
TikTok stars. It's surprising, to say the
least. Few musicians have utilized the
platform as expertly as she has over the
past three years. What started out as
a bet with a friend to prove she could crack
its algorithm — "I told her I could make a
viral video if I wanted to. And then I did," she
remembers — wound up launching what has
turned out to be a fruitful career IRL.

"Once I figured out the algorithm, I was
like, 'Well, surely this would be able to blow
up the music, too,'" she says. The 22-year-
old English musician (who goes by various
pseudonyms in lieu of her real name) is sitting
in a midsize meeting room at the 1 Hotel in
Brooklyn's DUMBO neighborhood, where the
décor — black leather, bare metal and treated
wood everywhere — is working hard to make
nature feel modern, but she looks effortlessly
cool in baggy denim and a comfortable tank
top. She's polite and cordial, even though it's
clear she would rather be doing anything but
an interview. "I was like, 'Well, I might as well
just try and see what happens. And even if I
don't get anyone listening to it, at least it's out
there and not just stuck on my laptop.' "

The songs that were hiding out on her lap-
top quickly found an audience. Her brand of
drum'n'bass-meets-'90s pop/R&B tapped right
into the heart of the zeitgeist, resonating with
a generation of kids who don't know life before
the internet, smartphones and social networks
but are downright tickled by the idea of a more
analog lifestyle.

"When I posted my first song, people were
commenting saying it was really good. And I
saw people using the sound — like 200 uses
in a day or something," PinkPantheress says.
"At that point I was like, 'Wow, this is crazy.'
Imagine you have a song that you didn't think
anyone was going to listen to, to suddenly way
more people than you expected listening to it."

Uploaded three years ago on Christmas Day,
the song was the Michael Jackson-sampling
"Just a Waste," and it showcased what has be-
come her trademark style: throwing a disco ball
drenched in despair into a blender to create
something deceptively fun. But while PinkPan-
theress loves sampling, she's weary of relying
on its easy pleasures. "I always like to think that
I'm adding something to [the sample], which is,
like, relevant enough that suddenly it's a new
song. I just think too many songs these days are
just an interpolation," she says.

With hordes of new fans clamoring for
more, PinkPantheress uploaded "Pain" in
January 2021, a song that would have fit in
perfectly with the Euro alt-pop invasion of the
late 1990s. At only a minute and 39 seconds
long, it's really more of a ditty than a song
— but manages to perfectly convey forlorn
teenage love.

"Just a Waste" and "Pain" showcased a
young, gifted songwriter, one who could suc-
cinctly capture and clearly telegraph universal
feelings to make listeners feel as if she might



“I feel like I don’t have that many
peers that exist in a similar space
to me. I’m not talking about levels.
I’m talking about internet space.”

—PINKPANTHERESS

be reading their DMs. Early on, unrequited
love dominated her music. The feeling of “hav-
ing someone that you’ve always wanted to see
romantically but you’ve never managed to be
able to and stuff like that,” she says. Now that
she’s getting more famous, though, her music
may soon have a more optimistic glint. “I guess
the more I create music, the less I want to be
stuck in that world.”

Born in Bath, England, to a Black Kenyan
mother and a white British father, PinkPan-
theress was raised in Kent with her older
brother. She took to music at an early age,
learning to play piano and forming a rock
band with a few friends while in grammar

school. She spent most of her free time watching music videos
and interviews on YouTube. By the time she got to college,
she started making electronic music and experimenting with
musical software to create her own productions.

To try out her songs, she wrote and produced for her friend
MaZz. “I think, objectively, the songs were good songs,” Pink-
Pantheress says. “She was kind of the [voice] and face for my
writing.” But, like many talented songwriters, PinkPantheress
soon “wanted more control over how I sounded.” She registered
for SoundCloud under the name of her favorite Steve Martin
movie and began uploading songs.

Nothing caught on — but when she took to TikTok in De-
cember 2020, seemingly overnight, she became an indie pop
darling. “Pain” broke onto the U.K. Singles chart in August 2021
and peaked at No. 35. Later that year, she signed a deal with

Parlophone and Elektra Records and released her first mixtape,
To Hell With It. As booking offers came in for PinkPantheress —
who had yet to perform live — her management at Upclose took
things slowly, opting for smaller shows that allowed her to build
an audience rather than going for festival stages.

“I remember my first few shows after my mixtape was out
at the end of 2021 and [my management] were making me do
rooms of like 100 people and 150 people,” she recalls. “The big-
gest room I did was probably 800. I remember thinking, ‘Why
are these rooms so small?’ ”

“It has been superintentional,” says Jesse Gassongo-
Alexander, PinkPantheress’ co-manager, when asked about
helping her build a fan base after finding so much success
online. “It was always a case of putting in the hard work and
taking the slower route to build a foundation that is solid that’s

going to allow her to stay here for a while.”

Her story resembles that of another young
female artist who managed to parlay mas-
sive online success into real-world results:
rapper Ice Spice. On paper, PinkPantheress
and Ice Spice may seem like photo negatives
of each other — one’s a brash rapper from the
Bronx who has no problem putting herself
in the spotlight; the other’s an introverted
singer who prefers the solitary pursuit of
songwriting to industry glad-handing — but
to PinkPantheress, they’re more alike than
different. So much so that she offered Ice a
spot on the remix to her hit song, “Boy’s a liar
Pt. 2,” earlier this year.

“I feel like I don’t have that many peers
that exist in a similar space to me,” she says.
“I’m not talking about levels. I’m talking
about internet space. I think a lot of people
see me as being this, like, internet cutesy
teen-pop girl. I feel like she was one of the
newcomers whom I got drawn to because,
even though she does drill and rap, it still
feels like she’s in the same cutesy world to
me. And she’s Black too, and that was a big
important part of it to me. I prefer to collabo-
rate with other Black artists.”

The song became an instant hit, her biggest
so far, debuting at No. 14 on the Billboard
Hot 100 after going viral on TikTok. For many
in the United States, “Boy’s a liar Pt. 2” was the
first time they had heard PinkPantheress. It
got her her first BET Award nominations (best
collaboration, BET Her Award), landed her
an MTV Video Music Awards nod (best new
artist) and ultimately peaked at No. 3.

Many believe she’s a lock for her first Gram-
my nomination thanks to the song — if she had
to guess, probably for best pop duo/group per-
formance. She’s taken aback and amused when
told about the drama that has surrounded
the Grammy Awards’ classification of certain
albums by Black artists — even more so when
she learns how disappointed Justin Bieber was
when his album *Changes* got the nod for best
pop vocal album instead of best R&B album.

But even without a Grammy nomination,
she can count this year as an unequivocal suc-
cess. In addition to her biggest single yet, she
appeared on *Barbie: The Album* — as good an
“I’ve arrived” moment as any. But still, even as
her career explodes, it’s surprising to hear that
TikTok has taken a back seat.

“I didn’t leave it behind. I still post on it,”
she says reassuringly. “I love using it to post
my own videos, but I do not watch videos on
there. Because like a year ago, I would scroll
and I’d see too many TikToks about me. I was
like, ‘I can’t do this anymore.’ ”

Makes sense. Her management team trusts
her to make the best decisions for herself. “I
think she has shown how globally intelligent
she is by being one of the earlier trendset-
ters,” Gassongo-Alexander says. “Coming
from TikTok and appealing to a wider audi-
ence and then knowing how to retain that
wider audience.”

How does PinkPantheress plan to keep
growing that audience? By keeping on keeping
on, it seems. She’s uninterested in sacrificing
her core audience at the altar of pop stardom.
Thankfully, her music is naturally easy on pop
fan ears. “What I’ve realized is that my natural
way of writing is more pop-friendly than
anything,” she says. “So even though the beats
can be kind of alternative, I still write in a very
standard structure. And I make sure all the
lyrics are tangible. And because of that, I think
that it has made the [music] that I’m doing
very accessible to mainstream audiences. But
my biggest fear is having people hear me do a
[song] and recognize that I’m doing it for the
wrong reasons.”

MAKEUP BY LAMIA COSTA. HAIR: TWISTE. GROOMING: TIZ FOR EXCLUSIVE ARTISTS

‘More Global Than We’ve Ever Been’

A new award category for African music performance reflects its exploding cultural and commercial appeal in the United States and beyond

BY DAN RYS AND HERAN NANO

LAST DECEMBER, THE Recording Academy convened a listening session of artists, label executives and stakeholders both in the United States and across Africa to discuss the rising influence of music coming from the continent. The meeting, which lasted several hours, was a key part of the process that led to the addition of a category that will be presented for the first time at the 66th Grammy Awards on Feb. 4: best African music performance.

“There’s a threshold that you like to see for a genre of music before it actually could make for a healthy category,” says academy CEO Harvey Mason Jr., who led the meeting alongside global music genre manager Shawn Thwaites. “When you talk about music coming from Africa, you’re seeing Afrobeats grow, you’re seeing *amapiano* and other genres coming out of the continent over the last three to five years. That started the discussions around, ‘Is it the right time?’ ”

The new category reflects the exploding commercial and cultural appeal of music by African artists in the United States. Its growth over the past few years has been almost linear: Davido’s 2017 single “Fall” was the first Nigerian song to be certified gold in the United States by the RIAA in 2020; Wizkid and Tems’ “Essence” became the first Afropop song to reach the top 10 of the Billboard Hot 100 in 2021; Burna Boy’s *Love, Damini* debuted at No. 14 on the Billboard 200 in 2022, becoming the highest-charting Afro-fusion album in chart history; and in May, Rema and Selena Gomez’s “Calm Down” became the first song to ever top both the U.S. Afrobeats Songs and Pop Airplay charts and peaked at No. 3 on the Hot 100. (“Calm

Down” was released too early to be eligible.)

“I don’t think currently there’s better or more advanced music being made anywhere outside the continent,” says Seni Saraki, CEO and editor in chief of The NATIVE Networks, the Lagos, Nigeria-based media and content company that launched a joint venture with Def Jam in September 2022. “From what we call Afrobeats — which is, really, just popular music from Nigeria — through amapiano, the rap music, Afropop, I genuinely think this is some of the most exciting music in the world right now. And the academy is becoming cognizant of that.”

The new category is also an attempt to address some of the controversy that has arisen around the global music album award, renamed from best world music album in 2020 due to “connotations of colonialism,” but still seen as little more than a catchall for non-Western music. As the music industry has itself become more global, the academy recognized that the time had come to offer a home for music from the African continent. But it also goes beyond the popularity of Afrobeats, which itself is more of an umbrella term: The academy listed some 30 different genres that could qualify for the category, including *alté*, *fufu* and high life.

“People know about Afrobeats and they’re learning about amapiano, but they don’t realize there are so many other genres on the continent that are underserved, and they can’t just be put in a bulk category called ‘world music;’ ” says Tina Davis, president of EMPIRE, which has invested heavily in African music and artists. “And much respect to the Recording Academy because they actually took the time to want to find out. [Mason] went

to the continent to just learn more about it.”

The industry has also taken notice. In the past few years, an explosion of new signings, joint ventures and licensing deals for African artists and labels from U.S.-based companies and distributors has brought a new generation of stars like Rema, Asake and Ayra Starr to join the continent’s established hit-makers. “There was a time a few years ago when I was at RCA and it seemed like we were the only ones on it,” says Def Jam chairman/CEO Tunji Balogun, who signed Tems and worked closely with Wizkid and Davido while an A&R executive at RCA and has since signed Adekunle Gold and Stonebwoy to Def Jam. “Now every week, there’s another label signing someone. The budgets are open.”

“I think you see more labels paying attention to it, you see the marketplace paying more attention to it; there’s a spotlight on it,” RCA co-president John Fleckenstein says. “The Grammys are the big leagues of awards, one of those artistic validations that many artists dream about. It’s a bit of an awakening that we are more global than we’ve ever been.”

There is, however, a little reticence around the new category; in the past, artists from genres like hip-hop, R&B and some of the Latin sectors have looked at the genre categories as boxes that merely nod to their music while gatekeeping them from the more prestigious general-field categories like song, record or album of the year. Further, a category called best African music performance, while welcome, is itself incredibly broad, covering a continent with 54 countries and 1.4 billion people.

“It’s a really important moment for the Grammys,” says Temi Adeniji, managing director of Warner Music Africa and senior vp of strategy for Sub-Saharan Africa. “But then the next step is, how do you actually roll this thing out? Even regionally — East Africa, Southern Africa, West Africa — it would be great to see a diversity of nominees, and that would reflect a real understanding from the Grammys of how large the continent is and how diverse the sounds are that are coming out.”

Talks of additional categories around African music, as well as a possible African Grammys, could be part of a future that Mason says this category is just the start of. “We want to serve music people, regardless of where they are,” he says. “I don’t know what that means yet, but we will continue to try and make sure that we are reaching as many music people regardless of their geography.”

THE POTENTIAL NOMINEES?



WIZKID FEAT. AYRA STARR, “2 SUGAR”
STARBOY/RCA

Following the crossover success of his “Essence” (featuring Tems) was this breakout hit from the Nigerian superstar’s *More Love, Less Ego* album, featuring a powerful vocal from Starr, who is herself blossoming into a major force in African music.



LIBIANCA, “PEOPLE”
5K/RCA

With an arresting, emotional vocal performance, the 22-year-old Cameroonian American singer — who previously appeared on season 21 of *The Voice* — has captivated fans and the industry alike. “People” spawned remixes by artists such as Ayra Starr, Omah Lay and Becky G on the way to a long-running No. 2 peak on the U.S. Afrobeats Songs chart.



DAVIDO FEAT. MUSA KEYS, “UNAVAILABLE”
DAVIDO MUSIC WORLDWIDE/RCA

The lead single from one of the year’s best albums in any genre, “Unavailable” showcases Davido at his irresistible best, combining Magicsticks’ amapiano production with a slick verse from South Africa’s Musa Keys to craft one of 2023’s more enduring anthems.



ADEKUNLE GOLD FEAT. ZINOLEESKY, “PARTY NO DEY STOP”
DEF JAM

Insistent, urgent and eminently catchy, Gold’s debut Def Jam single blends the street melodies of fellow Nigerian Zinoleesky with his own knack for songwriting for a club banger with substance. It’s aspirational yet relatable, much like the album on which it appears.



ASAKE FEAT. OLAMIDE, “AMAPIANO”
YBNL/EMPIRE

Asake’s meteoric rise over the past few years led to a headlining slot at Brooklyn’s Barclays Center in September. This track, alongside label boss and Nigerian music legend Olamide, is among his best, celebrating his trademark amapiano vibe and orchestral backing vocals, yet elevating both artists.

WIZKID: SPARK HUSSEIN/WIREIMAGE; LIBIANCA: BENNET FAGUN/GETTY IMAGES; DAVIDO: ASAKE: PARAS GRIFFIN/GETTY IMAGES; ADEKUNLE: JOSEPH OBIYAN/WIREIMAGE

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DYLAN SCOTT

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BEST COUNTRY SOLO PERFORMANCE
BEST COUNTRY SONG

WRITTEN BY: THOMAS RHETT, TYLER HUBBARD, BRIAN KELLY, COREY CROWDER
PRODUCED BY: WILL WEATHERLY, MATT ALDERMAN

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BEST CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN MUSIC
PERFORMANCE/SONG

WRITTEN BY: JOEL SMALLBONE, LUKE SMALLBONE, JOSH KERR, AND MICHAEL POLLACK
PRODUCED BY: FOR KING + COUNTRY, JEFF SOJKA, AND JOSH KERR

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When Gracie Met Aaron

For magnetic young singer-songwriter **Abrams** and in-demand producer **Dessner**, a creative partnership was immediate. Now the album they made together could put both in serious awards contention

BY LYNDSEY HAVENS

PHOTOGRAPHED BY WESLEY MANN

THE FIRST TIME Gracie Abrams met Aaron Dessner, at his famed Long Pond studio near Hudson, N.Y., the pair wrote over 10 songs. “We hit it off,” recalls Dessner, 47, of their first session in spring 2021. That’s a bit of an understatement, considering what followed: Dessner went on to produce and co-write Abrams’ acclaimed debut album, *Good Riddance*, released in February and brimming with honest reflections sung in her delicate voice that float over intriguing chord progressions and indie-rock riffs. In June, following the album’s vinyl release, Abrams topped *Billboard*’s Emerging Artists chart. In early September, following appearances by both on Taylor Swift’s Eras Tour (Abrams as an opener, Dessner as a guest), the duo played three sold-out, intimate acoustic shows in New York, Nashville and Los Angeles, where they performed songs of Abrams’ both old and new. The gigs bookended a recording pit stop at Long Pond. “We made a lot of music, and it feels really different than what we’ve done before... like the best stuff we’ve made,” Dessner reveals.

Abrams, 24, is one of the newest artists to become a Long Pond regular, joining an eye-popping group of talent that includes Swift, Ed Sheeran and, of course, Dessner’s band, The National — all of whom have been incredibly active in recent years, continuing Dessner’s streak as one of the most in-demand, and busiest, collaborators in music today. As such, and with Abrams a likely best new artist contender, could Dessner finally score a long-awaited nod for producer of the year, non-classical? “I don’t know another person that could do what Aaron does,” Abrams says. “There’s a kind of sensitivity that doesn’t necessarily exist in most artist-to-producer relationships that I am aware of.”

What was it about Long Pond that felt immediately inspiring or comfortable?
GRACIE ABRAMS Everything. I felt really open as a result of the space feeling open, and it’s entirely a testament to Aaron’s entire personality. The place feels very inviting [for] sharing all your secrets and deepest, most private feelings without any hesitation.

When Gracie’s debut arrived, Aaron wrote on Instagram that it almost feels like you two are siblings. What’s the best example of that?
ABRAMS I mean, maybe brutal truth all the time. I tell Aaron everything as soon as it happens to me, so I burden him with my life story in a way that I feel like only people who you’re related to by blood should have to take on.
AARON DESSNER And I get to live vicariously through Gracie, which is really nice. (*Laughs.*) When you write songs and make music with someone — and when you make so much music as we have — it’s an intimate, vulnerable experience, so you get to know each other really well. And it’s also the thing that makes music most meaningful, I think, the friendships that you collect along the way. Because



“There are a lot of producers who franchise themselves and collect as many artists as they can, and you can see that... You also have to live and experience things. I like the way community slowly grows... I feel like people find each other for a reason.”

—AARON DESSNER

when I look back — I’m quite a bit older than Gracie, although we don’t feel so far apart — there are these friendships that I still have from different points along the way, and those are the mile markers. Because [as a musician] you don’t have a very normal life and you’re traveling all the time and kind of running on fumes and it’s so amazing but it’s also hazardous, being unstructured and not having your support system or your family close by a lot of the time. The only way I know how to do this is to grow close to people and learn from them. I always feel like I’m learning as much as anyone might learn from me.

What is the biggest lesson you have learned from each other?
ABRAMS My identity now has been massively shaped by what I’ve learned in this relationship with Aaron the past couple years, not just musically — which it has entirely helped guide me in terms of self-trust — but just how to be a very decent person. Especially in the context of the music industry. I grew up in L.A. and started recording here first and it felt very different than when I went to Long Pond for the first time, and it really broadened my imagination for the kind of life that I could have if I’m lucky enough to do the thing that I love, versus what I assumed to be the blueprint that always secretly made me feel a little depressed.
DESSNER To be honest, I’ve never written songs in the room with anyone [before]. I would always make music alone or with my brother [Bryce]. Most of the time, I write the music first and then someone writes to it. That has been how The National worked and how I worked with [Swift] and other people. And Gracie came and we wrote together in the room, and it’s a scary thing because you don’t have the chance to be figuring out your brilliant idea. And I found I was even more comfortable doing it like that, where I would basically sketch [an idea] and Gracie could guide me or bounce off it in real time and write words and melodies. And then over time we got really good at it, and that’s what I ended up doing a lot with Ed Sheeran. I don’t know that I would have been able to do it had I not had that confidence from this.

Aaron, why do you think Gracie could be in the running for best new artist?
DESSNER Gracie is making incredibly compelling, emotionally direct songs that really resonate with her fan base. [She has] become an artist that’s clearly impacting a lot of people. And I think the record is one of the best of the year, and she’s one of the artists that should be in that discussion. I also think with all of this stuff, it’s subjective. It’s a total honor to be in any conversation about the Grammys and to win a Grammy, and of course it sounds like I have to say that, but a lot of my favorite artists have never been in that conversation. So I kind of take it with a grain of salt. I have a lot of respect for it, but at the same time if you don’t get nominated... it doesn’t diminish what you’re doing.

And Gracie, why should Aaron get a producer of the year nod?
ABRAMS I don’t know another person that could do what Aaron does could make album of the year after album of the year. I can identify instantly whether or not Aaron has touched a song because you can feel it, and I can’t compare that to anything. It’s not something that I’ve found anywhere else. And I think also it’s so evident, like the songs that people fall in love with on all the albums that Aaron has made are the ones that really work. The ones that the die-hard fans want to hear and scream at the top of their lungs.

How do these sets you’ve been performing together compare to the stadium shows you both played as part of Swift’s Eras Tour?
DESSNER As much as I am close friends with and know Taylor well, you can’t believe that she pulls it off. It’s like, the best thing that has ever happened to live music in a way. And seeing Gracie play those shows [as an opening act] and seeing people in the stadium singing the songs, it’s a crazy moment in her career. It reminded me of, in a way, in 2007-8, R.E.M., on their final tour, invited The National to open for them, and that was this real moment for us



because one of our favorite bands, a giant American rock band, was saying, “Come, we love you.” This is on a much bigger scale than that was, but it feels related, it feels like that really fueled us, and I can feel that in Gracie now, like there’s this confidence, and it’s exciting.


ABRAMS There’s something about the scale of what Taylor has done that is unlike anything I’ve ever felt or known in my entire life, and I agree that it is the best thing that has ever happened to live music. Just to be in a place where that many people are equally moved and emotional and down to express it as loudly as possible, it’s really unbelievable. That feeling, though — being in a stadium, at least a Taylor Swift stadium, and these intimate rooms — is very connected, which sounds wild maybe. One of the many millions of things I learned this summer is, she does actually make it feel like you’re on another planet and like it’s just you and her in the room. And I’ve been lucky enough to see the show so many times and I’ve watched it from every possible place in the stadium, and that’s true every time.

Aaron, have you and Taylor’s longtime collaborator Jack Antonoff ever joked that you two could be competing for producer of the year for the foreseeable future?

DESSNER He has produced so many records and been in that really intensely for a long time, whereas I’ve been really doing all my esoteric art music with my brother [Bryce] and making music with The National and touring a lot. But I feel like there’s a lot of camaraderie between Jack and I, having worked on a lot of the same records now, and I think anyone that gets nominated is lucky. Some people have more notoriety for whatever reason, and I think part of the thing is like, how much do people know what you do? So, the answer is, I think we’ll think it’s funny.

For an artist or producer who wants to build what you two have, what advice would you give?

ABRAMS I hope I’ve gotten less annoying about it, but [Aaron] very much encouraged following your gut, which is maybe cliché advice or feels empty, but I think I was so lucky to have had the person saying that to my face be someone whose work I have admired forever and someone who I trust. But having not heard that or believed it, a lot of the music wouldn’t exist, or I would be in a very different place in general right now.

DESSNER There are a lot of producers who franchise themselves and collect as many artists as they can, and you can see that, and I feel like the work becomes diminished or something. You also have to live and experience things. I like the way community slowly grows... I feel like people find each other for a reason. 





SZA: JAZZ WEBSTER; PRINCE: WILLIAMS/RETNA; ANDREW GUNNETT/IMAGES

R&B’S SOS

With SZA’s universally lauded, commercially dominant album, will voters finally give the oft-ignored genre long-overdue recognition?

BY GAIL MITCHELL AND ANDREW UNTERBERGER

AS R&B SUPERSTAR SZA has continued to ascend to the highest levels of popular music’s stratosphere over the past year — No. 1 hits, festival headlining slots, A-list collaborations, raves from critics and peers — her résumé still lacks a key item: major Grammy success. While SZA has been nominated for 15 Grammys — an impressive number, considering that as of the most recent ceremony, she still only had one full-length album to her name — she has just one win: in the best pop/duo group performance category, for her guest turn on Doja Cat’s crossover smash, “Kiss Me More.”

That seems likely to change at the 2024 Grammys, following the December 2022 release of her *SOS*, one of the most universally lauded albums of the past year. Not only did it draw near-unanimous praise, it also brought SZA to a new level of commercial dominance: *SOS* topped the Billboard 200 for 10 nonconsecutive weeks, with all 23 of its tracks hitting

a Grammy artist since she signed with Top Dawg Entertainment (TDE) a decade ago — and that it’s time for the Recording Academy to properly recognize her. “The Grammys are supposed to reward artists who show development and growth; artists who were once opening up and then get to arena level,” one music industry veteran says. “The Grammys really should want to be behind the trajectory of an artist like that.”

A source on SZA’s team confirms that the label will run a traditional campaign for her and points to increased visibility from the second leg of her North America tour (which includes two late-October stops in Los Angeles), as well as a deluxe reissue of *SOS* — recently confirmed by SZA herself as being titled *Lana*, featuring “seven to 10 [new] songs” and coming sometime this fall. The team has also sent out *SOS* boxes to “partners at press, radio” and digital service providers that include the album on vinyl and CD, as well as a compass, ring, metal straw and cleaning brush.

more of a classic, retro-vibing R&B mold: Bruno Mars and Silk Sonic, H.E.R., Jon Batiste. Artists like SZA — whose R&B is largely rooted in hip-hop sonics (and who came up as the lone R&B artist on the rap-focused TDE) — have, like rap itself, struggled to gain that kind of Grammy recognition.

Anokute doesn’t necessarily see that lack of recent precedent as an issue for SZA’s chances, instead calling back two decades to a pair of artists whose blend of classic and modern soul sounds made them pop insiders and Grammy darlings. “To me, you could compare this SZA moment to Lauryn Hill’s and Alicia Keys’ big Grammy moments [in 1999 and 2002, respectively],” he says. “She has crossed boundaries, she has crossed race with this album. At the end of the day, popular is popular, right? ... You can’t call pop music [only] music that is on top 40 radio. Pop music is the most popular genre. And at the end of the day, Black music is the most popular music in the world.”

No matter how popular her music is currently, SZA will still have her work cut out for her contending at next year’s Grammys, likely against some of the other biggest artists in the world right now — including Olivia Rodrigo, Morgan Wallen and of, course, three-time album of the year winner Taylor Swift. However, Anokute points out that no one, not even the galactically popular Swift, can boast the cross-demographic appeal that SZA now has: “In terms of the most popular record between all genres of people, SZA beats Taylor Swift. I don’t know anybody listening to Taylor Swift outside of mostly, you know, white people... But I know a lot of white people, a lot of Black people, a lot of Spanish people that are listening to SZA and are huge fans. I’m not saying that Taylor only appeals to white people or Caucasian people, but the majority of her fan base is not Black or brown. SZA’s is, but she also crossed over.”

And whether the Grammys ultimately reward SZA’s latest, one music industry veteran says that it is in the Recording Academy’s best interest to look forward with R&B as much as backward. “We appreciate [the recognition for] the Bruno Marses and the H.E.R.s — they’re a safe balance,” the veteran says. “I think the academy knows that to be a part of the future, they have to embrace the future... Can we prove the *Rolling Stone* guy [Jann Wenner] wrong? That’s what we should focus on.”

“She has crossed boundaries, she has crossed race with this album. At the end of the day, popular is popular, right?”

—CHRIS ANOKUTE

the Billboard Hot 100 — including breakout single “Kill Bill,” which became her first No. 1 on the chart. “There’s nobody close,” says artist development specialist and academy member Chris Anokute when gauging SZA’s 2024 Grammy credentials. “The girl has paid her dues. She has been releasing music for seven years. And she has made a multigenre, multiformatted album — the best multigenre, multiformatted record I’ve heard in years. And it deserves to be the album of the year.”

Indeed, the feeling among insiders that *Billboard* spoke with for this article is that SZA’s career has hit all the right beats for

“Such packages have become very effective through the years because that’s what helps make projects stand out,” says a veteran marketing strategist of the box set promotional strategy. “It’s about what’s going to remind people that this record is a contender.”

While the album (and its accompanying singles, “Kill Bill” and the more recent top 10 hit “Snooze”) likely will be in the running, it’s working against the tide of recent history. R&B has had some success in the past decade with in the all-genre Big Four categories, but the genre’s most successful artists in the general field have tended to be those who embraced

GHOST

In his first-ever sit-down interview, the songwriter behind viral AI track “Heart on My Sleeve” — and potential Grammy nominee — explains why deepfaking artists’ voices could be “the future of music”

BY KRISTIN ROBINSON

LAST SPRING, A YOUNG music-maker who called himself Ghostwriter threw on a white bedsheets and black shades and logged into TikTok to share his first song, “Heart on My Sleeve.” Over an ascending piano riff and 808 drums, a familiar voice began to sing. It sounded just like Drake, but — somehow — it wasn’t. To achieve this mimicry, Ghost and his manager tell *Billboard*, Ghost recorded his own voice singing the tune and employed a fledgling form of artificial intelligence known as “voice generation” to deepfake Drake’s trademark timbre onto it. At the time of its release, many listeners misunderstood his use of “AI” to mean that the beat, lyrics or melodies were also generated by a computer. But Ghost clarifies now that “it is definitely my songwriting, my production and my voice.” The song went viral in minutes, becoming one of the most widely discussed, and controversial, music stories of the year.

Now, months later, the masked musician has returned with a second single, “Whiplash” (using the voices of 21 Savage and Travis Scott) — and Grammy ambitions. In a Sept. 5 *New York Times* story, Recording Academy CEO Harvey Mason Jr. said “Heart on My Sleeve” was “absolutely [Grammy] eligible because it was written by a human.” Three days later, however, he appeared to walk back his comments in a video posted to his personal social media, saying, “This version of ‘Heart on My Sleeve’ using the AI voice modeling that sounds like Drake and The Weeknd, it’s not eligible for Grammy consideration.”

Ghost’s team now maintains (and an academy representative confirms) that “Heart on My Sleeve” will, in fact, be on the ballot — because they quietly uploaded a new, non-AI version to streaming services on Sept. 8, just days before the Grammy eligibility cutoff and the same day as Mason’s statement.

IN

THE

MACHINE

Billboard traveled to an undisclosed location to sit down with Ghostwriter — who arrived in disguise, wearing head-to-toe black including a ski mask, goggles and knit gloves — and his manager for their first-ever interview. (Both spoke on condition of anonymity.) They explained why they firmly believe AI voice filter technology is the “future of music” — but one for which the industry must create an “ethical framework.”

When did Ghost first approach you with this idea, and what were your initial thoughts?
MANAGER We first discussed this not long before the first song dropped. He had just started getting into AI. We wanted to do something that could spark much needed conversation and prep us so that we can start moving toward building an environment where this can exist in an ethical and equitable way. What better way to move culture forward around AI than to create some examples of how it can be used and show how the demand and interest is there?

As the person in charge of Ghost’s business affairs, what hurdles did you see to executing his idea?
MANAGER When anything new happens, people don’t know how to react. I see a lot of parallels between this moment and the advent of sampling. There was an outcry [alleging] thievery in 1989 when De La Soul was sued for an uncleared sample. Fast-forward to now, and artist estates are jumping at the opportunity to be sampled and interpolated in the next big hit. All it took was for the industry to define an equitable arrangement for all stakeholders in order for people to see the value in that new form of creativity. I think we agreed that we had an opportunity to show people the value in AI and music here.

These songs, however, were not done with the consent of Drake, The Weeknd, Travis Scott or 21 Savage. How do you justify using artists’ voices without having their consent?
MANAGER I like to say that everything starts somewhere, like Spotify wouldn’t exist without Napster. Nothing is perfect in the beginning. That’s just the reality of things. Hopefully people will see all the value that lies here.

How did you get in touch with the Recording Academy?
MANAGER [Mason] reached out to Ghostwriter over DM. He was just curious and interested. It’s his job to keep the industry moving forward and to understand what new things are happening. I think he’s still wrapping his head around it, but I thought it was really cool that he put together an industry roundtable with some of the brightest minds — including people in the Copyright Office, legal departments at labels, Spotify, Ghostwriter. We had an open conversation.

I don’t know if Harvey has the answers — and I don’t put words in his mouth — but I think he sees that this is a cool tool to help people create great music. We just have to figure out the business model ultimately so that all stakeholders feel like they have control and are being taken care of.

I think in the near future, we’re going to have infrastructure that allows artists to not only license their voice but do so with permissions. Like, say I’m artist X, I want to license my voice out, but I want to take

50% of the revenue that’s generated. Plus users can’t use my voice for hate speech or politics. It is possible to create tech that can have permissions like that. I think that’s where we are headed.

“Heart on My Sleeve” is Grammy-eligible after all, but only the version without AI voice filters. Why was it so important to keep trying for Grammy eligibility?
MANAGER Our thought process was, it’s a dope record, and it resonated with people. It was a human creator who created this piece of art that made the entire music industry stop and pay attention. We aren’t worried about whether we win or not — this is about planting the seed, the idea that this a creative tool for songwriters.

Tell me a little about yourself, Ghost. What’s your background?
GHOSTWRITER I’ve always been a songwriter and producer. Over time I started to realize — as I started to get into different rooms and connect with different artists — that the business of songwriting was off. Songwriters get paid close to nothing. It caused me to think: What can I do as a songwriter who just loves creating to maybe create another revenue stream? How do I get my voice heard as a songwriter? That was the seed that later grew into becoming Ghostwriter. I’ve been thinking about it for two years, honestly. The idea at that time was to create music that feels like other artists and release it as Ghostwriter. Then when the AI tech came out, things just clicked.

You’ve said songwriters aren’t treated fairly in today’s music industry. Was there a moment when you had this revelation?
GHOST It was just more of a progression...
MANAGER We’re in no way trying to diminish the hard work and deserving nature of the artists and the labels that support them. We’re just trying to shine a light on the value that songwriters bring and that their compensation currently doesn’t match that contribution. We owe it to songwriters to find solutions for the new reality. Maybe this is the solution.
GHOST How many incredible songs are sitting on songwriters’ and producers’ desktops that will never be heard by the world? It almost hurts me to think about that. The Ghostwriter project — if people will hopefully support it — is about not throwing art in the trash. I think there’s a way for artists to help provide that beauty to the world without having to put in work themselves. They just have to license their voices.

Ideally, where should these AI songs live? Do they belong on traditional streaming services?
MANAGER One way that this can play out is that [digital service providers] eventually create sort of an AI section where the artist who licenses their voice can determine how much of the AI songs they want monetarily and how they want their voices to be used.
GHOST These songs are going to live somewhere because the fans want them. We’ve experienced that with Ghostwriter. The song is not available anymore by us, but I was just out in my area and heard someone playing “Heart on My Sleeve” in their car as they drove by. One way or another, we as the mu-

sic industry need to come to terms with the fact that good music is always going to win. The consumer and the listener are always in the seat of power.

There are 100,000 songs added to Spotify every day, and the scale of music creation is unprecedented. Does your vision of the future contribute to a scale problem?
MANAGER We don’t really see it as a problem. Because no matter how many people are releasing music, there’s only going to be so many people in the world that can write hit songs. The cream always rises to the top.
GHOST My concern is that a lot of that cream-of-the-crop music is just sitting on someone’s desktop because an artist moved in a different direction or something beyond their control. My hope is we’ll see incredible new music become available and then we can watch as democracy pushes it to the top.

Can you explain how you think AI voice filters serve as a possible new revenue stream for artists?
MANAGER Imagine singing a karaoke song in the artist’s voice; a personalized birthday message from your favorite artist; a hit record that is clearly labeled and categorized as AI. It’s also a marketing driver. I compare this to fan fiction — a fan-generated genre of music. Some might feel this creates competition or steals attention away from an artist’s own music, but I would disagree. We shouldn’t forget that in the early days of YouTube, artists and labels fought to remove every piece of fan-generated content using copyrighted material that they could. Now a decade or so later, almost every music marketing effort centers around encouraging [user-generated content (UGC)] — TikTok trends, lyric videos, dance choreography, covers, etc. There’s inherent value in empowering fans to create content that uses your image and likeness. I think AI voice filters are another iteration of UGC.

When Ghost introduced “Whiplash,” he noted that he’s down to collaborate and send royalties to Travis Scott and 21 Savage. Have you gotten in touch with them, or Drake or The Weeknd, yet?
MANAGER No, we have not been in contact with anyone.
“Heart on My Sleeve” was taken down almost immediately from streaming services. Are you going about the release of “Whiplash” differently?
MANAGER We will not release a song on streaming platforms again without getting the artists on board. That last time was an experiment to prove the market was there, but we are not here to agitate or cause problems.

Ghost, you’ve opted to not reveal your identity in this interview, but does any part of you wish you could shout from the rooftops that you’re the one behind this project?
GHOST Maybe it sounds cheesy, but this is a lot bigger than me and Ghostwriter. It’s the future of music. I want to push the needle forward, and if I get to play a significant part in that, then there’s nothing cooler than that to me. I think that’s enough for me.



Bryan (left) and Anthony

OUTSIDER CHANCES

In a year when country broke through to the mainstream in a big way, two very different artists followed nontraditional paths that could lead to attention on nomination day **BY MELINDA NEWMAN**

COUNTRY MUSIC IS HAVING a major mainstream moment. Morgan Wallen's "Last Night" spent 16 nonconsecutive weeks from March to August at No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100, claiming the undisputed song of the summer crown — and is one of four country songs to top both the Hot 100 and Hot Country Songs charts in 2023, the most in a year since 1975.

And Wallen's success story is far from the genre's only recent standout. Thanks to artists like Luke Combs, whose cover of Tracy Chapman's "Fast Car" spent eight weeks at No. 2 on the Hot 100, and Zach Bryan, whose breakthrough single, "Something in the Orange," reached the top 10 of the Hot 100 while his album *American Heartbreak* reached No. 5 on the Billboard 200, country music consumption surged in the United States for the first half of 2023. According to Luminate, it was up 20.3% compared with 2.5% growth during the same period in 2022 — and that was before Jason Aldean's polarizing track, "Try That in a Small Town," hit No. 1 on the Hot 100; before Appalachian breakout Oliver Anthony Music dominated headlines with his viral populist anthem, "Rich Men North of Richmond"; and before Bryan topped both the Hot 100 and Billboard 200.

Whether that commercial surge will translate to Grammy nominations on Nov. 10 — and in particular to a long overdue showing for country artists in the

general-field categories — could prove one of the more compelling narratives this awards season, particularly with country outliers Anthony and Bryan potentially leading the way.

"Country music [is at] peak awareness right now, and the industry people that vote have an opportunity to recognize that or not," says Joey Moi, Big Loud partner/president of A&R, as well as Wallen's producer. "You're looking at two or three artists [from the country format] that are hanging up there with the big kids."

Country has often been neglected when it comes to Grammy nominations in the general-field categories — album, record and song of the year and best new artist, for which all 13,000 Recording Academy members can vote. (Starting with the 2024 Grammys, the so-called Big Four becomes the Big Six, with the addition of songwriter of the year, non-classical and producer of the year, non-classical moving into the general field.)

Five Grammy Award cycles have occurred since nominations in the Big Four categories were increased from five to eight and then to 10 contenders, and there have been 196 total Big Four nominations in that time — yet only six have gone to mainstream country artists or projects, with just one victory: Kacey Musgraves' album of the year trophy for *Golden Hour* in 2019. (The nominees will revert to eight per category for the 2024 awards.)

But recognition of many of these songs beyond only country audiences could shift the dynamic this year. Anthony went from obscurity to instant household name with "Rich Men North of Richmond," which debuted at No. 1 on the Hot 100 in August. "Rich Men" was submitted for record and song of the year, though not in any country categories, nor was Anthony entered into consideration for best new artist. (His manager did not respond to a request for comment on the submissions.)

Should "Rich Men" receive a song or record of the year nod — or even a win — it would not be the first time voters have marked their ballots for a song with a message. At the 2019 ceremony, Childish Gambino's commentary on institutional racism, "This Is America," won song and record of the year. Two years later, "I Can't Breathe," H.E.R.'s poignant take on George Floyd's murder, won song of the year.

But though "Rich Men" has enjoyed a kind of flashpoint notoriety — the song was even referenced at the Republican presidential debate in August — that may not translate to Grammy votes.

"Artists who have huge moments still have to consider who's voting," one Grammy consultant says, noting that voters aren't the fans who propelled "Rich Men" to No. 1 but creatives who make music. And while the timing of Anthony's breakthrough means he is fresh in voters' minds as they mark their ballots, that could also work against him. "I don't know if the industry is going to wait and hold off to see if [he] has legs or it's a flash in the pan," one Grammy voter says. "If this happened in March or April and maintained through the year, we'd have a much clearer story. [He's] kind of starting the race about five minutes later than everybody else."

Bryan — who, unlike Anthony, is entered in several country categories as well as album, song and record of the year — may have a different experience. Unlike the self-released Anthony, he is signed to Warner Records, which has the infrastructure to run a campaign for him. His success has built steadily over the past 18 months and extends beyond one song and one format, or as the Grammy voter puts it: "He has had a career that has grown and gathered some roots." Bryan and past Grammy favorite Musgraves debuted at No. 1 on the Hot 100 with their duet, "I Remember Everything," from his self-titled album that entered the Billboard 200 and Top Country Albums at No. 1. And when it comes to the general-field categories, he could draw from a particularly broad base of voters: His self-titled set, which arrived Aug. 25, also launched atop the Top Rock Albums, Top Rock & Alternative Albums and Americana/Folk Albums charts.

By creating their own nontraditional paths, Anthony and Bryan could, ironically, achieve recognition that some of country's most respected artists have not: None of Miranda Lambert's 27 career Grammy nods have been in the general-field categories, while only one of Chris Stapleton's 17 nominations has been. Whether they also end up distracting from the work of their more conventional country peers in the general categories remains to be seen. Adds the Grammy voter: "I don't know if people are aware of a lot of the other great country records that may have been out there over the year — they've taken up so much air in the room."

Additional reporting by Jessica Nicholson.

For Your Consideration

COUNTRY JUBILEE

BEST HISTORICAL ALBUM
COMPILATION PRODUCER: DANA McELWAIN
MASTERING ENGINEER: SCOTT SEDILLO,
BERNIE GRUNDMAN MASTERING, HOLLYWOOD, CA

BEST RECORDING PACKAGE
ART DIRECTOR: PETER F. MULLER

BEST ALBUM NOTES
ALBUM NOTES WRITER:
CHARLES E. (PAT) BOONE, FRANK MYERS

YOU AND I

BEST COUNTRY DUO/GROUP PERFORMANCE
PAT BOONE, CRYSTAL GAYLE

RECORD OF THE YEAR
ARTIST: PAT BOONE
PRODUCER: JIMMY NICHOLS, FRANK MYERS
ENGINEER/MIXER: JOHN GUESS
MASTERING ENGINEER: SCOTT SEDILLO,
BERNIE GRUNDMAN MASTERING, HOLLYWOOD, CA

GRITS

PAT BOONE AND GUEST ARTISTS
RAY STEVENS, THE GATLIN BROTHERS,
LORRIE MORGAN, DEBORAH ALLEN,
DEAN MILLER

BEST COUNTRY SONG
SONGWRITER: CHARLES E. (PAT) BOONE

SONG OF THE YEAR
SONGWRITER: CHARLES E. (PAT) BOONE

RECORD OF THE YEAR
ARTIST: PAT BOONE
PRODUCER: JIMMY NICHOLS, FRANK MYERS
ENGINEER/MIXER: STEVE MARCANTONIO
MASTERING ENGINEER: SCOTT SEDILLO,
BERNIE GRUNDMAN MASTERING, HOLLYWOOD, CA

BEST ARRANGEMENT, INSTRUMENTS AND VOCALS
ARRANGER: JIMMY NICHOLS, FRANK MYERS

patboone.com/country-jubilee-fyc

patboone.com/country-jubilee-fyc

Hello, friend;

I'm a country boy, always have been. I grew up on a 10-acre farm just outside Nashville. Some of my fondest memories take me back to the swing on our front porch where I sat on warm Tennessee nights enjoying lightnin' bugs and crickets singing.

With those memories on my mind and in my heart, I thought for a very long time about the songs to include in this "Country Jubilee" album. Over the 70 years that I've been making records, I've recorded many great songs that were or became classic hits by Country legends...more than could fit on even a 2-LP set.

Country music pioneer and Grand Ole Opry legend "Red" Foley was my father-in-law. I married his daughter, Shirley, at 19. He recorded songs that people loved. At one point I began recording songs in a variety of genres just because I really liked them, without always demanding that each trip to the studio produce a million-seller, or fit into a box defined by a chart.

After many years of missing "Daddy Red," it was an easy decision to include in this album of some of my own favorite Country records, six of my favorite Red Foley songs that he'd either written or made popular.

I hope you enjoy "Country Jubilee." Thank you for listening!

Pat Boone



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The 188 page special edition, coffee table book is richly illustrated and includes:

- photos from the archives of the José Iturbi Foundation and Sony Classical Music
- complete discography, filmography, and career gallery
- essay penned by the Ambassador of the "Great American Songbook" and GRAMMY® nominee - Michael Feinstein

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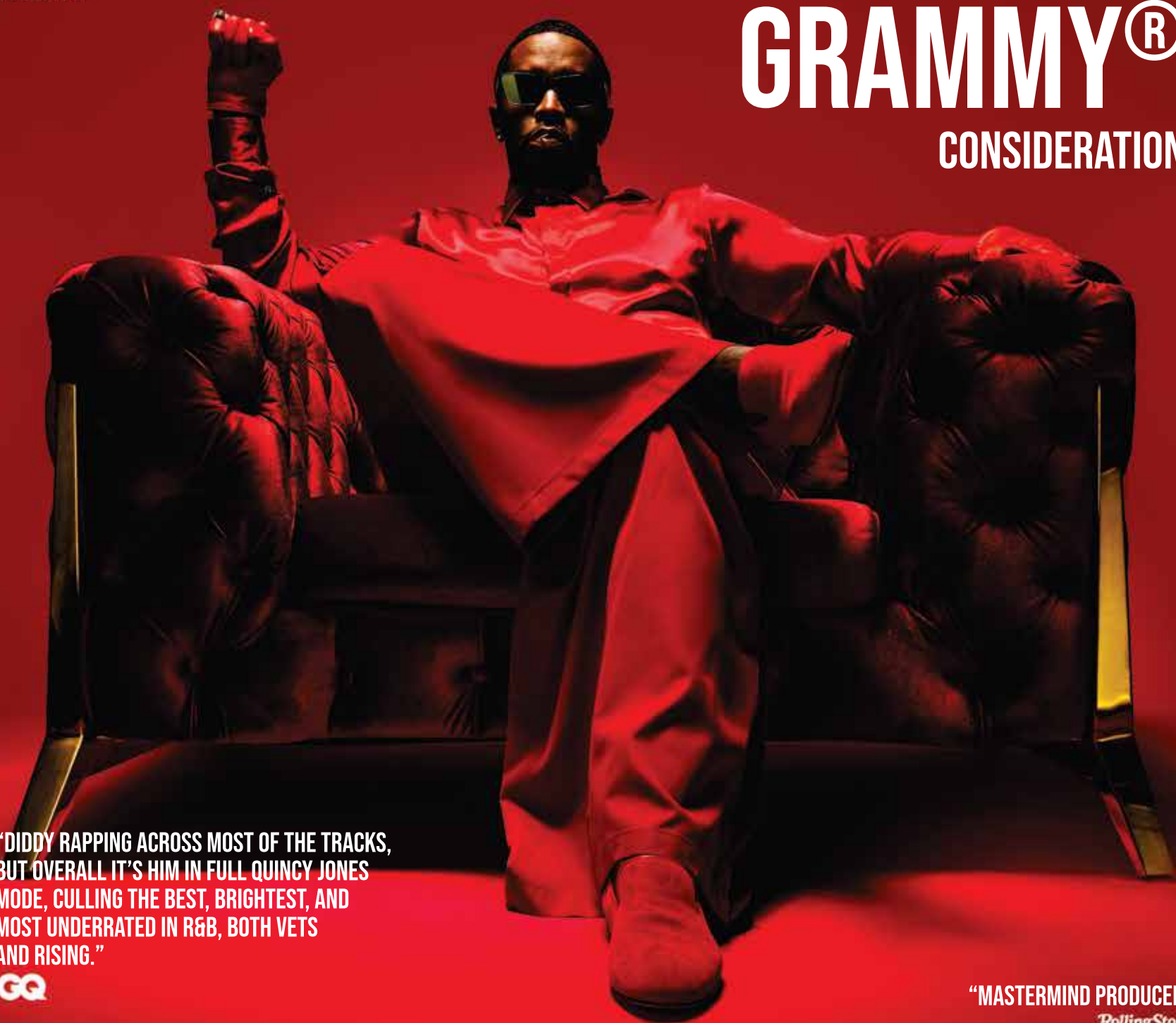
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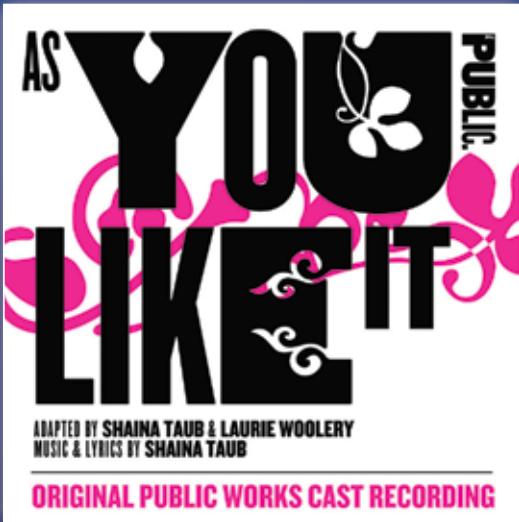
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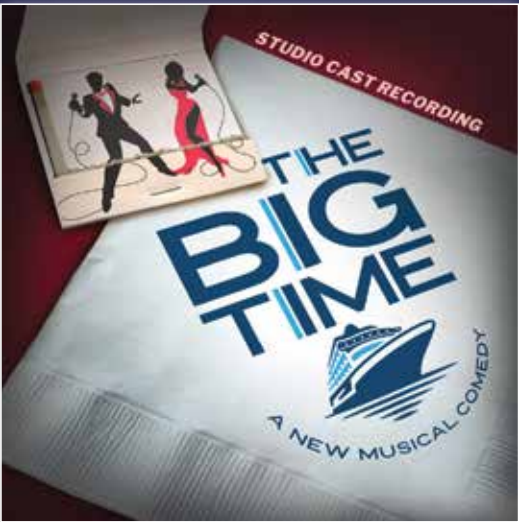
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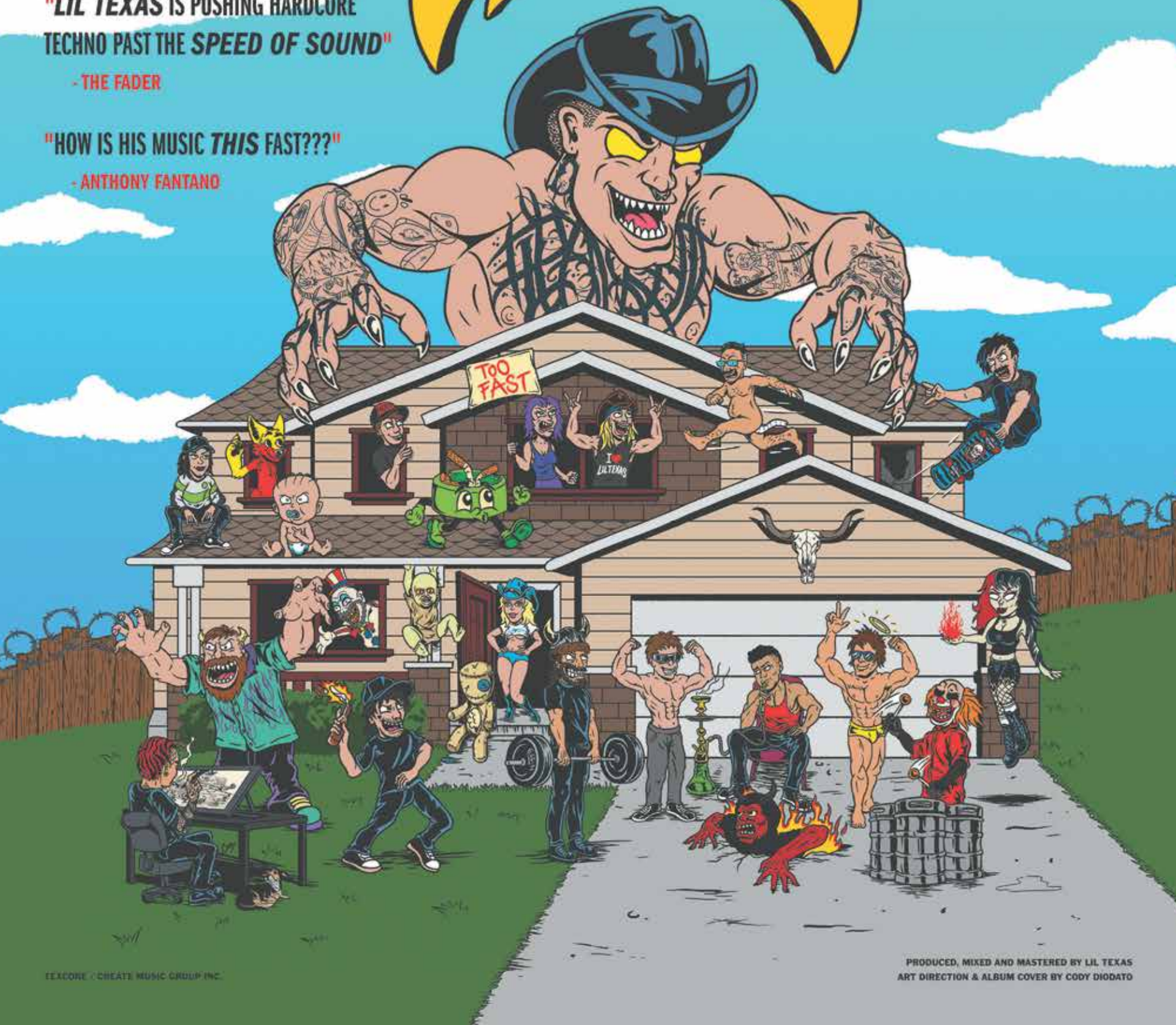
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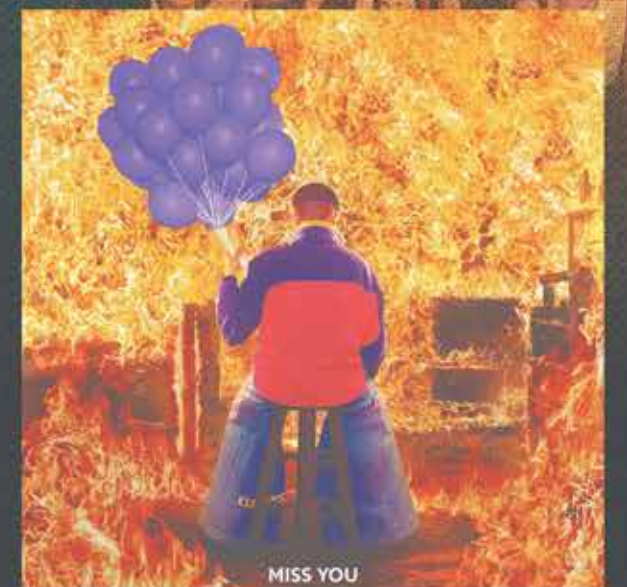
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The Liverpool Institute for the Performing Arts, co-founded by Paul McCartney in 1996.

2023 TOP MUSIC BUSINESS SCHOOLS

Here's where to find the next generation of executives as it prepares to lead an increasingly complex industry

BY CATHY APPLEFELD OLSON AND THOM DUFFY

THE STUDENTS WHO BEGAN their undergraduate education this fall at any of *Billboard's* top music business schools are the first since the class of 2019 who can actually expect to spend four years on campus and in classrooms.

As the COVID-19 pandemic spread in March 2020 and learning moved online, every student studying the music business, or any other field, took on a double major — in resilience.

"The resilience and positivity that our graduating students have shown over the last three years has been an inspiration," said Sean McNamara, president/CEO of the Liverpool (England) Institute for the Performing Arts — the school that Paul McCartney co-founded in 1996 — as he presided over LIPA's graduation in 2022, the school's first in-person commencement since 2019. "I believe these qualities will see them successfully embark upon the next stage of their careers."

Those attending any of *Billboard's* top music business schools will be solidly positioned to pursue careers in an increasingly complex music industry. The schools listed are selected through executive recommendations, alumni information provided by honorees from our multiple power lists, information requested from each school and a decade of reporting on these programs.

We continue to prioritize more affordable public colleges and universities while also aiming for broad geographic diversity. Beyond the music capitals of New York, Los Angeles, Nashville and Miami, students can find worthwhile curricula in Philadelphia, Memphis and New Orleans, as well as Syracuse, N.Y.; Kennesaw, Ga.; Stillwater, Okla.; and Cleveland, Miss. This list includes the Valencia, Spain, campus of Boston's renowned Berklee College of Music, the United Kingdom's famed BRIT School outside London, LIPA and the BIMM Institute, the largest provider of contemporary music education in Europe.

Two noteworthy historically Black universities and colleges, public Tennessee State University in Nashville and private Howard University in Washington, D.C., also merit inclusion this year.

Billboard presents this list of schools alphabetically and declines to rank institutions in what would often be an apples-to-oranges comparison. (The past year has seen widespread criticism of college ranking practices.) For students seeking quantitative measurements — from admission percentages to tuition and fees to graduation rates — those data points are available through impartial sources such as College Navigator, a resource of the Institute of Education Sciences, a division of the U.S. Department of Education.

By any measure, however, the colleges and universities here offer impressive opportunities for students seeking an edge in music-industry careers — running campus record labels, devising business plans, volunteering at top festivals, traveling to major music industry events and meeting with leading artists and executives.

The faculty and administrators at any of these schools would echo the remarks of McNamara as their students complete their studies and move to reshape the music business: "We are immensely proud of them and extremely excited to watch them progress toward the next chapter in their lives."

Abbey Road Institute
LONDON

Established as a music production school in 2015 by Abbey Road Studios and the owner of the famed location, Universal Music, the flagship program is now located inside London's Angel Studios, the site of recording sessions for acts including Adele, The Cure and Sam Smith. The institute also has sister programs across Europe and in the United States, Australia and South Africa. It offers a one-year intensive program, designed in collaboration with the music industry, that dives deep into music production, sound engineering and the music business.

COURSE The core program offered by all of the institute's campuses worldwide is the advanced diploma in music production and sound engineering.

American University
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Created in 2013 under the guidance of SoundExchange co-founder John Simson, the business and entertainment program at American University is housed in the Kogod School of Business and is already making a name for itself in the industry. The university is the alma mater of, among others, Rich Kepler, day-to-day manager of The Killers, and CAA

agent Zack Borson. Given the school's location, it's an easy stop for industry professionals visiting the nation's capital as well as local executives. Recent guests include Michael Huppe, president/CEO of SoundExchange, and Audrey Fix Schaeffer, head of communications for concert promotion and production company I.M.P.

COURSE Representing Talent: Agents, Managers & Lawyers, taught alternately by Simson and former Sony vp of marketing Stacy Merida, informs students about all participants on an artist's team. The class also assists in managing regional recording artists.

Baldwin Wallace University
BEREA, OHIO

This past year, Baldwin Wallace welcomed the largest-ever class of incoming students to its music industry program housed on its campus just 15 minutes from downtown Cleveland. The university, which in 2021 was invited to become an educational affiliate of the Grammy Museum, offers individualized instruction combined with hands-on experiences supported by Cleveland's musical ecosystem, including the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. Internship partners range from Live Nation properties to small indie venues. In spring 2023, students had the opportunity to enroll in

tour management, a special topics course taught by Lamba Productions president Hadden Hipsley, who has helped produce festivals including Bonnaroo, Outside Lands and Governors Ball, while some students served as volunteers at Bonnaroo in June.

EVENT Stephanie Yeager — tour accountant for Foo Fighters, Phish, Bon Iver, Neil Young and Blake Shelton — recently visited the tour management class to provide insight into the financial components of a successful tour.

Belmont University
Curb College of Entertainment
and Music Business
NASHVILLE

Located less than a half-mile from Nashville's Music Row, Belmont's Curb College offers unique access to net-working opportunities with industry professionals as well as affiliated programs in areas including audio engineering and songwriting. Courses such as Inside a Booking Agency (taught in association with CAA) and The Artist's Team (which features industry guests representing each of the main roles on a recording artist's team) are complemented by hands-on opportunities such as summer term Bonnaroo U. A partnership with the Songwriters Hall of Fame yielded a new

SHOF scholarship, and Belmont song-writing majors Lauryn Marie Hedges and Zander Jett were named the inaugural recipients in May. Hit-maker Desmond Child presented a master class on song-writing and navigating the industry, the first of many in a series.

EVENT In April, Belmont hosted Grammy-nominated singer-songwriter Gavin DeGraw for an intimate Q&A about touring, marketing and getting his start in the business.

Berklee College of Music
BOSTON

Berklee offers two degrees for students pursuing careers in the industry: a bachelor of music in music business/management and a bachelor of arts in music industry leadership and innovation, which debuted in 2022. The school continues to attract top-level industry guests. Donald Glover, aka Childish Gambino, spoke in March on a keynote panel as part of its annual Career Jam that also featured former Beats by Dre president Luke Wood and Main Street Advisors founder and CEO Paul Wachter. Berklee also has an expansive alumni network, which includes Live Nation senior vp of touring Jared Braverman and Netflix music data and insights manager Anahita Bahri.

COURSE BPMI Live is a one-year program focused on the festival business. Students hone their skills in talent scouting, artist development, and concert promotion and production; the capstone includes opportunities to participate at Lollapalooza and Governors Ball, where they work as production and tour managers for artists.

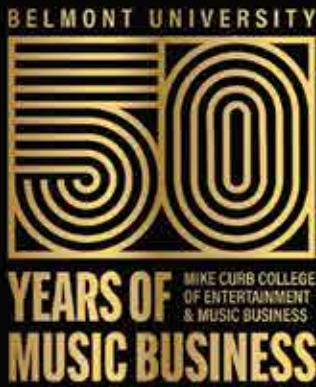
Berklee College of Music
VALENCIA, SPAIN

The sister campus to Boston's Berklee College of Music offers a one-year master's degree in global entertainment and music business attended by students from more than 20 countries who can concentrate in live entertainment, entrepreneurship and the record industry. The program optimizes its location, bringing all students to the Future of Music Forum in Barcelona and to the Great Escape in Brighton, England, a conference and festival showcasing 500 emerging artists from around the globe. In addition, it annually welcomes high-level industry professionals. This year's honorary doctorate recipient, Yvette Noel-Schure, known for her work with Beyoncé, Prince, John Legend and Chloe x Halle, was recognized at the 2023 commencement ceremony in July, and recent guests include Ithaca Holdings/SB Projects founder Scooter Braun and manager Sophia Chang, who has worked with acts ranging from Paul Simon to Wu-Tang Clan.

Berklee College of Music in Spain presented an honorary degree to veteran music publicist Noel-Schure, known for her work with Beyoncé and others.

Today

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- 10 am Grammy U Meeting
- 11 am Popular Music Experience class
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- 6 pm Working CMA Awards red carpet event



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COURSE Emerging Technologies and New Creative Frontiers prepares students to both understand and capitalize on technological change, from artificial intelligence to virtual reality.

BIMM University

BIMM Music Institute
LONDON

Given full university status by Britain’s Department for Education in July 2022, the newly named BIMM University now includes the BIMM Music Institute as well as schools for the performing arts, film and TV. The BIMM Music Institute, with seven locations in London and other cities across the United Kingdom, Ireland and Germany, draws on a 40-year history of educating its students with high-end facilities, industry experience, knowledgeable lecturers and music business connections. Courses include music business; music marketing, media and communications; and event management to train those aiming for industry careers.

ALUMS Ella Mai, Fontaines D.C. and James Bay are among the graduates of the school.

The BRIT School

CROYDON, ENGLAND

The BRIT School, a tuition-free institution that educates students ages 14 to 19 for careers in performance and creative arts and related industries, was co-founded in 1991 by the British government and the British Record Industry Trust (the charitable division of U.K. labels trade group BPI, which presents the BRIT Awards). The school has specialists teaching courses in live sound, production, recording, music tech and the music business — while also offering a comprehensive nonvocational curriculum. Not surprising given its history, the school has exceptional connections within the British music industry for career opportunities post-graduation. Students have participated in sessions with industry figures from Disney composer Alan Menken to YouTube global head of music Lyor Cohen.

ALUMS Artists including Adele, Jessie J, Loyle Carner, RAYE, Amy Winehouse, Leona Lewis and Katie Melua have attended The BRIT School.

California Institute of the Arts

The Herb Alpert School of Music
SANTA CLARITA, CALIF.

CalArts students at the Herb Alpert School of Music immerse themselves in the business of music, but the school also ensures that every student — even those who plan to pursue nonperforming roles — lean into some type of music creation. Among



Artists including Adele (pictured), Jessie J, Loyle Carner, RAYE, Amy Winehouse, Leona Lewis and Katie Melua have attended The BRIT School in England.

its alums: Composer Raven Chacon and composer/sound artist Ellen Reid are both Pulitzer Prize winners; Greg Kurstin, a producer, songwriter and multi-instrumentalist, has won nine Grammys and worked with artists including Adele, P!nk, Paul McCartney and Kendrick Lamar. On the business side, courses such as AI Sonic Explorations, The Art of the Mix and The Art of Recording keep students ahead of the curve regarding evolving technology and work-flow models.

FACULTY Laurel Halo, a composer, producer, live musician and DJ, joined the faculty in fall 2022.

California State University, Northridge

LOS ANGELES

While copyright law, publishing and licensing concepts, and the intricacies of recording and publishing contracts are key areas of focus in the classroom at CSUN, the school’s music industry studies program also delves into entrepreneurship and experiential learning. Aside from regularly hosting industry panels, the program — which counts singer-songwriter Andy Grammer as an alumnus — is home to Vove, a student-run record label where participants select, record, promote and manage an “artist of the year.” Thanks to its L.A. location, the school also boasts a robust internship program where all students must earn four credits working in a sector of the music business, from publishing to labels to live events. In addition to its undergraduate program, CSUN offers a master’s in music industry administration, with class sched-

ules designed for fully employed students and midcareer professionals.

EVENT The university recently presented a panel and networking discussion of songwriting with Jud Friedman, an Academy Award- and Grammy-nominated songwriter (Whitney Houston’s “Run to You” from *The Bodyguard*); Bonnie McKee, who co-wrote hits for Katy Perry, Christina Aguilera and Kelly Clarkson; and Joe Poindexter, vp of digital at Pulse Music.

Delta State University

Entertainment Industry Studies
CLEVELAND, MISS.

Located in the heart of the Mississippi Delta, Delta State’s entertainment industry studies program offers small class sizes and hands-on opportunities including its entertainment industry entrepreneurship and record-label practicum: Fighting Okra Records, where attendees work at the student-run imprint. The school annually draws industry speakers, including recent guests Boo Mitchell, Grammy-winning producer and owner of Royal Studios in Memphis, and Jim Sonefeld, drummer, author and songwriter (Hootie & The Blowfish).

ALUMS Erin Moorman, marketing coordinator at Syntax Creative, and Libby Switzer, executive assistant at Creative Strategic Management, both in Nashville.

Drexel University

Westphal College of Design
Media Arts and Design
PHILADELPHIA

Students at Drexel’s Westphal College of Media Arts and Design begin taking music business-specific classes when they start the program freshman year. That allows them to engage in the school’s unique course offerings, including Women in Music Industry and Fan Engagement: One Direction, which uses the former boy band as a focal point to examine the past, present and future of fan engagement. As part of the curriculum, students spend six months working in the industry; this year’s class interned at companies such as Netflix, Goldenvoice, Universal Music Group, Republic Records, WME, Live Nation and AEG.

ALUMS Universal Music Group senior director of artist and label services Deb Keller and The Orchard vp of international label management Marissa Putney.

Full Sail University

WINTER PARK, FLA.

Full Sail offers several nonperforming degree programs in areas including music business, audio production, recording arts and the live industry-centric program show production. The school also regularly hosts events where students can learn from first-hand experience of those in the industry. Its recent speaker roster includes Mike McGrath, tour manager for Jason Aldean, and Randall Foster, vp of business development at Symphonic Distribution, and it hosts executives — and potential employers — from companies including Microsoft Game Studios, Fever, Samsung, Disney and Carnival Cruise Line.

ALUMNUS Music business program graduate Michael Cariglio is a vp of marketing at Republic Records.

Hofstra University

HEMPSTEAD, N.Y.

The number of students enrolled in the music business program at Hofstra has nearly tripled since the curriculum launched in 2017. The school has created a new bachelor of science in music business and also offers a music business major (for nonperformers) that leads to a bachelor of arts. Hofstra welcomes over 50 guest speakers on campus every year and offers internship opportunities year-round in New York (30 miles west of campus). A state-of-the-art MIDI computer lab was completed in January, and a recording studio including a control room, live room, isolation booth and recording console is due to open at the end of the year.

FACULTY Kenyatta Beasley, a professor of music business who began teaching earlier this year, is a trumpeter, composer and music producer who has worked with Tru-Sound New York, Interscope/G-Unit Records, Helen Han Creative and Art vs. Transit Production.

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GARETH OATTEWILLE/GETTY IMAGES



Mellencamp (left) answered questions from music writer Anthony DeCurtis during a symposium about his life and career at Indiana University in March.

Howard University
WASHINGTON, D.C.

The Warner Music/Blavatnik Center for Music Business at Howard University, funded by a \$4.9 million gift in 2021, offers a one-year fellowship program that provides fellows with coaching, specialized curriculum, mentorship and experience working with partner organizations. The Howard University School of Business takes the approach that the key to addressing the underrepresentation of Black executives and professionals in music and entertainment is intense coaching and immersion programs, and the Warner Music/Blavatnik Center frequently hosts industry executives for fireside chats, master classes and other programming. Recently, Combs Global president Tarik Brooks presented a “master mogul” panel discussion, and DJ Drama, a co-owner of Generation Now (home to Lil Uzi Vert, Killuminati and Jack Harlow), had a session with students.

COURSE Among the university’s noteworthy offerings is the class The History of the American Music Industry: What Isn’t Black Music?

Indiana University
Jacobs School of Music
BLOOMINGTON, IND.

At IU’s Jacobs School, emerging professionals have the opportunity to establish a career path that pairs their interest in the music industry with a large set of career options. Among multiple paths of study, undergraduate students can earn a music-oriented entrepreneurship certificate that includes foundational courses at the university’s Kelley School of Business. The music school also hosts a strong roster of guest speakers. Austin Wintory, an award-winning composer for film and video games, recently visited the campus to talk with students in an event hosted by

the Music in Games student organization and the office of entrepreneurship and career development.

EVENT Indiana native John Mellencamp spoke about his life and career in March at the university’s Franklin Hall during a symposium discussing the social and cultural impact of his music. University president Pamela Whitten subsequently announced that Mellencamp would be donating archived collections of his work to IU.

Kennesaw State University
Joel A. Katz Music and Entertainment Business Program
KENNESAW, GA.

Integrated within the university’s Coles College of Business, the Joel A. Katz Music and Entertainment Business Program teaches the business side of the industry while providing practical experiences, on-the-job training and exploration of career opportunities. The program offers an annual study abroad trip to London, including an all-day visit with international executives at Sony Music Entertainment and Universal Music Group. It recently formed a partnership with the book and online platform Music Business Toolbox and its creator, Bryan Calhoun, that provides tools, templates, forms and guidance to help students manage their music careers. The program recently established a partnership with the Dolby Institute, an educational division of the audiovisual technology company.

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE David Ryan Harris, John Mayer’s guitarist and a singer, songwriter, producer and multi-instrumentalist, is Kennesaw’s latest artist in residence as of fall 2023.

Liverpool Institute for the Performing Arts
LIVERPOOL, ENGLAND

Within LIPA’s curriculum on management for the creative industries and performing

arts, students take the music industry management pathway train alongside performers, technicians, designers and filmmakers in the school’s facilities. In their final year, students participate in a three-month internship that reflects their career goals with companies such as Warner Music, Live Nation and Sentric Music Publishing. LIPA was co-founded in 1996 by Paul McCartney and Mark Featherstone-Witty, who retired as LIPA principal/CEO in 2021, succeeded by Sean McNamara.

SPEAKER Robert Plant participated in a Q&A with students in November 2022.

Los Angeles College of Music
PASADENA, CALIF.

LACM’s music business program — which offers a 12-quarter bachelor of music degree and a six-quarter associate of arts degree — is committed to offering students hands-on experience and networking opportunities. On average, a student will meet and interact with more than 100 guest speakers and master class guests per year from all facets of the music industry, and the program also features field trips to companies such as Spotify, Hipgnosis, Universal and Disney. Recent industry guest speakers include *Billboard*’s Keith Caulfield, managing director of charts and data operations, and publishing reporter Kristin Robinson.

FACULTY Music business department head Erin Workman’s experience in artist development includes working with Zac Efron, Miley Cyrus and Ashley Tisdale.

Los Angeles Film School
The Los Angeles Recording School
LOS ANGELES

Located in the heart of Hollywood, the Los Angeles Recording School (a division of the Los Angeles Film School) is equipped with professional recording studios that let

students train in a real-world work environment. The school offers an array of degrees across its music and entertainment business programs, which let students gain analytical and practical skills both in the classroom and in the field. New for 2023 is an 18-month online competition program that allows those with an associate degree to earn their bachelor of science in entertainment business. The school also boasts an active speaker roster. Recently, SunPop managing partner Will Tenney spoke with students from the entertainment business program during an on-campus event.

ALUMNUS As president of Record Plant Studios, Jeff Barnes oversees business operations and booking and has worked with Justin Bieber, Beyoncé and Ariana Grande, among other artists.

Loyola University
School of Music and Theatre Professions
NEW ORLEANS

New Orleans is among the world’s most vibrant music cities, and Loyola University’s music industry studies program, within the School of Music and Theatre Professions, helps students build careers around their passions. Students learn from professors who are active in the industry and can create their own professional projects alongside creative peers. Loyola’s two Hilton-endowed professorships fund student travel and participation in various music industry conferences such as NAMM, Americana and Mondo — with future plans for South by Southwest and Music Biz. The program this year launched songwriter and music business camps where students worked directly alongside Grammy-winning rapper-producer D’Mile and Pulse Music Group’s Ricki Rich. The school also partners with the city so students can help produce the annual Freret Street Festival, which has drawn over 20,000 attendees a day.

COURSE Record Label Operations brings a working music-label entity to campus. With a professorship-funded budget of \$5,000, students in the course form a team to function as a label, recruiting and developing a young artist for commercial release.

Middle Tennessee State University
MURFREESBORO, TENN.

Located less than an hour from the site of the Bonnaroo festival, where students regularly gain hands-on experience, MTSU offers an expanded focus beyond music recording into areas including live-event production, broadcast and streaming, and immersive audio for music, film and gaming. As such, courses in venue management, mixing techniques in immersive audio, and concert promotion and touring



Recording Industry faculty Odie Blackmon coaches students in MTSU’s new Songwriting Center in the Miller Education Center.

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are popular with students. The school also hosts a revolving mix of industry speakers. Mixing engineer Andrew Scheps and re-cording engineer George Massenburg are among recent visitors to campus. **EVENT** This summer, MTSU students produced over 30 segments for Hulu's Bonnaroo Music Festival channel, which streamed the event.

Monmouth University
WEST LONG BRANCH, N.J.
Monmouth's music industry program combines coursework from the university's business school with its music and music business curriculum, a hybrid model that prepares students for a range of opportunities in the arts industry. Home of the Bruce Springsteen Archives and Center for American Music, the school incorporates hands-on activities like its student-run record label, Blue Hawk Records, and leverages partnerships with major music organizations, tech companies, agencies and a state-of-the-art recording complex in Asbury Park. Last year, the new Monmouth Artists for Diversity & Inclusion released an album on Blue Hawk, and the organization's founding members were awarded a joint senatorial and gubernatorial proclamation from the State of New Jersey for contributions to society. **ALUMNUS** Joe Bognanno is director of music publishing licensing and partnerships at TikTok/ByteDance.

Musicians Institute
HOLLYWOOD
Anderson .Paak was once a drum student and a drum teacher's assistant at Musicians Institute, whose Hollywood location puts it at the nexus of the entertainment world. The school's music business program offers detailed specialization in every area of the industry through a frequently updated curriculum taught by professionals. Courses cover the gamut from law and contracts to music publishing and licensing to artist and tour management, A&R and record labels, distribution, promotion and marketing. Musicians Institute is also continually honing industry partnerships that serve as a direct line into the workforce through internships. **EVENT** During a recent online social media workshop, BRXND vp of artist management and digital strategy Dan Tsurif discussed the importance of social media marketing and explained how platforms can aid developing artists and brands.

New York University
Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development
NEW YORK
The ongoing addition of courses like

advanced topics in recorded music and music publishing, co-taught in person by RIAA chairman/CEO Mitch Glazier and National Music Publishers' Association president/CEO David Israelite, is just one way NYU Steinhardt ensures students are learning from the leaders at the cutting edge of the music business. For the course Village Records, students work with independent artists on career development areas including live performance, sound recording, product management, publicity, management and fan engagement. The Steinhardt program also allows students to take classes at NYU's Stern School of Business and offers options for them to complete studies on its campus in Nashville (through a program designed in partnership with Universal Music Group) or at any of 12 global campus sites including Los Angeles, London, Paris and Shanghai. **SPEAKER** David Gray, executive vp of U.S. A&R and head of global creative for Universal Music Publishing Group, is an executive in residence and engages with students at least three times each semester.

New York University
Tisch School of the Arts
Clive Davis Institute of Recorded Music
NEW YORK
A holistic understanding of business, performance, production, writing, history and emerging media is the goal of the Clive Davis Institute, which counts Maggie Rogers among its notable graduates. Students work with resident artists, such

as singer-songwriter Dawn Richard and singer Jamila Woods, and executives in residence. Columbia Records A&R executive Katie Vinten served in the latter role this past year and also led a summer accelerator program. Other recent speakers included Atlantic Records president of A&R Pete Ganbargs, Hipgnosis Songs Fund founder and CEO Merck Mercuriadis and Patreon co-founder and CEO Jack Conte. In partnership with *Billboard*, the institute offers an online music industry essentials course. In 2022, Barry Manilow and school officials joined Davis at the opening of the Clive Davis Gallery at NYU. The institute is also expanding geographically, recently launching a study abroad program in Berlin. **EVENT** Pop Conference 2023, held in April at the institute, hosted guests including Timbaland, NPR music critic Ann Powers and Jimmy Jam & Terry Lewis.

Northeastern University
College of Arts, Media and Design
BOSTON
Northeastern's bachelor of science in music with a concentration in music industry encourages students to become entrepreneurial thought leaders and change agents across the music business. Aside from classes focused on topics including actionable analytics in the music industry and artist management, the school is home to Good Dog Licensing, a student-run music synch company through which students receive hands-on experience and offers four- or six-month co-op experiential learning opportunities.

New this year is a university chapter of the nearly four-decade-old nonprofit Women in Music, dedicated to fostering equality in the music industry through the support and advancement of women. **EVENT** In honor of World Mental Health Day in October 2022, the Women in Music Boston chapter presented Mental Health Awareness for Artists and Their Allies, a panel to guide musicians with resources and information about emotional well-being.

Occidental College
LOS ANGELES
Occidental's music business courses are embedded within its liberal arts curriculum, and many of the students in music department classes major or double-major in other disciplines such as economics, math, politics, chemistry, philosophy and physics. The school's location gives students access to a capital of the music industry, providing immersive education through internships and other opportunities. In 2022, Occidental formalized its relationship with Warner Music Group (whose former CEO Steve Cooper is an alumnus) and has since hosted events with WMG executives for students from all majors who are interested in a career in music business. **EVENT** Warner Chappell Production Music vp/head of legal and business affairs Steve Touchton met with students in March to share his 25 years of experience, field questions and offer advice on entering the business side of the music industry.



Sony Music Entertainment chief creative officer Davis, who endowed New York University's Clive Davis Institute for Recorded Music, attended the 2022 opening of a permanent gallery focusing on his career at the school's campus in his native Brooklyn.

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The UNT College of Music announces plans to offer
a new BA in Commercial Music, effective Fall 2024

Oklahoma State University

The Greenwood School of Music
STILLWATER, OKLA.

OSU's bachelor of science in music industry, established in 2017, remains the fastest-growing music program at the school. Recent developments include the Greenwood School of Music's new facilities, which opened in 2021, and a collaboration this year with Kicker, a Stillwater-headquartered audio manufacturer with which students partnered on the research and design of a potential new product. The student-run music company Poke U comprises a record label, music publisher, concert promotion and musical products divisions, and the school has a robust speaker and alumni network. Once again, the New York Philharmonic residency returned to the university's McKnight Center for the Performing Arts, adjacent to the campus, with the opportunity for students to work with the business staff of the orchestra.

EVENT Alumnus Garth Brooks in April delivered two concerts at OSU: a scholarship benefit show and a free performance exclusively for OSU students.

Rhodes College

Mike Curb Institute for Music
MEMPHIS

Rhodes College and the Curb Institute benefit from their location in the artistically vibrant city of Memphis, as Curb students tap experiential opportunities in the city. In 2022, the institute launched the Curb Community Fellows program, which provides funding for students to work directly with local professionals and organizations such as Goner Records, the Overton Park Shell, the Memphis Music Initiative and the STAX Museum of American Soul Music. On campus, they can engage with *Dredge*, a student-produced zine and social media platform focused on the Memphis arts scene, and *Beyond Beale*, a student-produced podcast that explores underresearched aspects of the city's music history. The first two seasons received honorable mention recognition by the NPR Student Podcast Challenge.

COURSES In fall 2024, Rhodes will offer two new certificates in music industry studies — content production and arts entrepreneurship — that complement the college's core liberal arts mission.

**State University of
New York, Oneonta**
ONEONTA, N.Y.

The music industry program at SUNY Oneonta is designed to appeal to aspiring executives, as well as students interested in technical fields like audio

Questlove received the Lew Klein Excellence in the Media Award from Temple University's Klein College of Media and Communication in 2022.



production or who are entrepreneurial musicians. In addition to the core courses, music industry students are required to complete a sequence of courses in the SUNY Oneonta School of Business, an array of general education courses and at least one course from a slate of electives such as concert production, through which students conceive, plan and manage a series of live concert events on campus and in the Oneonta community. Off-campus learning and networking experiences include a faculty-led trip to the annual NAMM trade show in Los Angeles.

EVENTS John Mayer recently engaged with music industry program students through a video conference; another event connected students with members of the Dave Matthews Band. (Mayer and Matthews are both clients of business manager and Cal Financial Group founder Rit Venerus, an Oneonta alumnus.)

Syracuse University

*Bandier Program for Recording and
Entertainment Industries*
SYRACUSE, N.Y.

This year marked the return of the Bandier Program's international immersion trip, with a dozen students traveling in May to meet with more than 40 executives at music companies in Singapore; Jakarta, Indonesia; Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam; and Bangkok. On campus, students choose from an ever-evolving variety of courses and also tackle entertainment industry exploration, the program's capstone, for which seniors must build a functioning and profitable real-world business. The previous academic year also saw rapid growth in the readership of *Full Rate No Cap*, a free weekly email of industry analysis that program director (and former *Billboard* editorial director) Bill Werde crafts for students to read; the

email underpins a weekly, programwide student-led discussion about industry trends and headlines. Subscribers number in the thousands and include top executives at virtually every major music company around the globe.

EVENT The weekly Wednesday-night speaker series this past academic year scheduled over 25 guest lectures from industry pros including Warner Music Group chief digital officer/executive vp of business development Oana Ruxandra and Apple Music creative director/radio host Zane Lowe.

Temple University

Klein College of Media
and Communication
PHILADELPHIA

Temple University's Klein College offers an interdisciplinary bachelor of arts in audio and live entertainment that also includes courses in the music and business schools. The college's mission is to empower and prepare the media creators of tomorrow to be ethical, analytical and creative leaders. The faculty has a wealth of industry experience, and courses are often complemented by presentations by industry creatives and executives including Grammy and Academy Award winner Questlove and American Association of Independent Music CEO Richard Burgess. (Philly native Questlove received the college's 2022 Lew Klein Excellence in the Media Award.) A student-run record label interfaces with student radio, TV and other ventures in a collegewide media ecosystem, and a study abroad program offers opportunities in top global music markets such as Tokyo and London.

ALUMNUS Multiple Grammy-winning producer Noah Goldstein, founder of Ark Publishing, has worked with artists including Kanye West, Frank Ocean, Travis Scott, Rihanna and Paul McCartney.

Tennessee State University

NASHVILLE

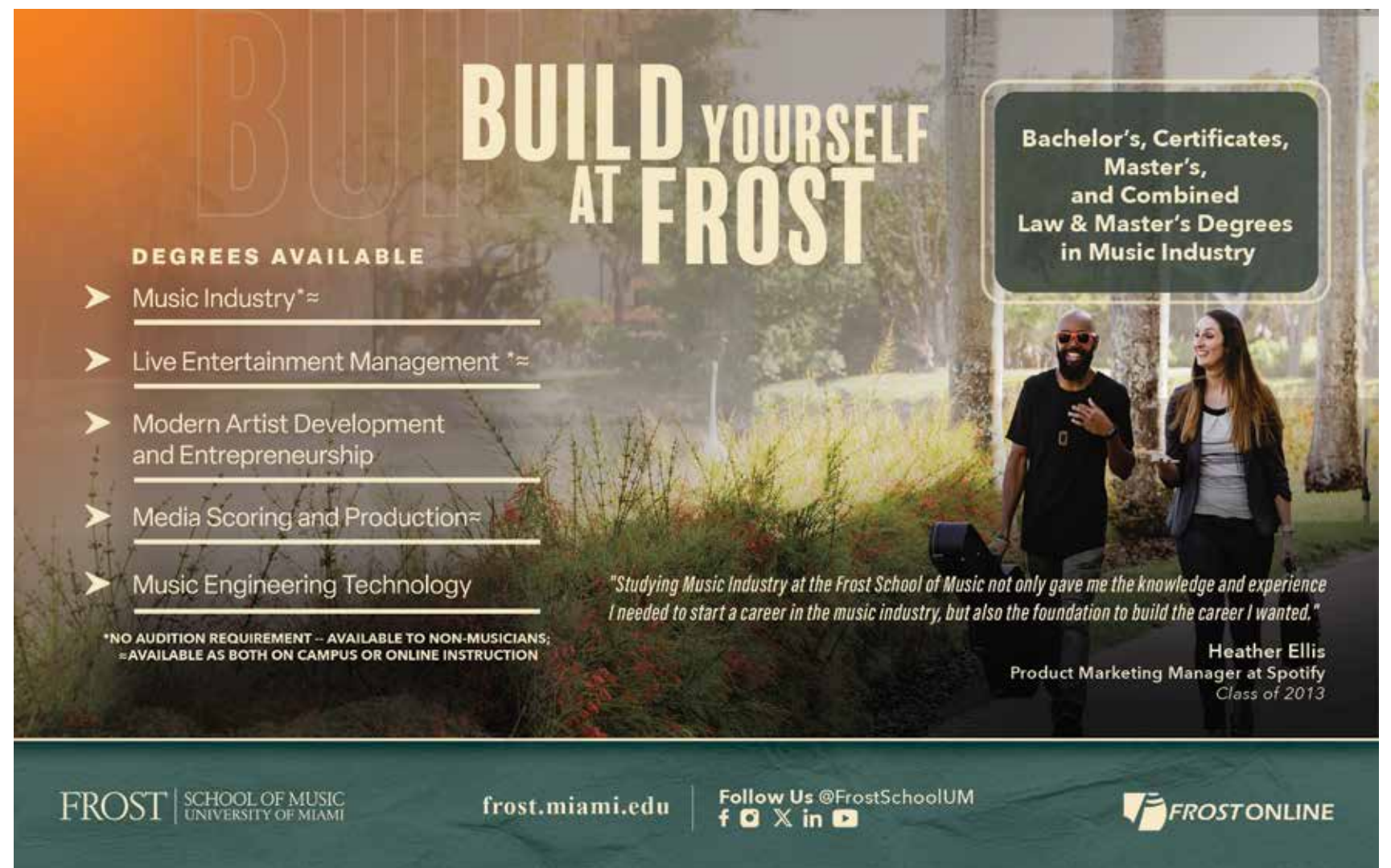
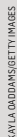
One of the nation's historically Black colleges and universities, TSU is located in the heart of Nashville and offers a commercial music program as a concentration within the school's music department. Perks include small class sizes, targeted courses such as music business and law, access to a variety of internships and mentor programs, and ample guest speakers who have recently included producer Rodney "Darkchild" Jerkins and BMI executive director, creative Shannon Sanders, a TSU alumna. Harry Fox Agency client solutions coordinator Dashawn Howard and Grammy-nominated producer Dwane "Keywane" Wier are among other alums.

EVENT In May, the music business accelerator program, which offers Black college students in Tennessee career resources to help them break into the industry, held an event at TSU in partnership with Amazon Music, Nashville Music Equality, the RIAA and Wasserman Music.

**University of California,
Los Angeles**

Herb Alpert School of Music
LOS ANGELES

Spurred by the success of the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music's music history and industry degree program and its music industry minor, the school this fall introduced a major in music industry. The new program, which complements the performance, composition, musicology and music education programs already offered, provides students with a high level of liberal arts integration to ensure they master the skills needed for a successful creative industry career. Classes immerse students in a range of subjects from data science for the music industry to music and activism, and internship and em-



ployment opportunities abound as those enrolled in the program benefit from the school's relationships with an array of music companies. A major gift from former Warner Bros. Records chairman Mo Ostin, who died in 2022, funded construction of the Evelyn and Mo Ostin Music Center.

SPEAKER Amy Davidman, founder of and agent at TBA Agency, recently spoke with students on campus.

University of Colorado
Denver
DENVER

The university offers two course tracks for students interested in pursuing a career in the music industry: one for performing students and another to provide the chops to work as managers, publishers, music supervisors and/or marketers. Students in the lattermost progression take courses examining music supervision and synch licensing, music publishing, music marketing, law and the music industry, artist management and more. Additionally this year, the Mechanical Licensing Collective appointed faculty member Dan Hodges as one of its educator ambassadors to advise students on the importance of registering music with the MLC to collect interactive streaming royalties.

PARTNERSHIP The Nashville Songwriter Association International this past year launched a chapter at the university.

University of Miami
Frost School of Music
MIAMI

Under director Serona Elton, whom the Music Business Association recently named the first music business educator of the year, Frost's music industry program is expanding. It recently launched a bachelor of arts in music industry major for nonperformers, an addition to its well-established bachelor of music in music industry and master of arts in music industry. Along with its diversity of courses and proximity to the Latin offices of many major music companies, the program also offers a variety of student-run enterprises including 'Cane Records, Cat 5 Music and Frost Sounds, as well as a campus radio station, concert production organization, numerous concert halls and music industry student association.

COURSE Students in recorded-music operations learn about A&R, production, distribution, marketing/promotion, licensing and royalties and use Chartmetric to analyze the consumption of their favorite artists' tracks.

University of North Texas
College of Music
DENTON, TEXAS

Options abound at UNT's College of Music, located on the northern edge of the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex and the country's largest public-university music program. It offers degrees from bachelor to doctoral levels and is home to the world's first jazz studies degree program, now in its 75th year. The school is continually adding faculty and courses to the curriculum, offered fully online or in a hybrid format, with options ranging from music leadership to performing arts management to touring. The curriculum leading to a master's in music business, launched just three years ago, supports student goals within music technology and entrepreneurship. In 2021, the Yamaha Institution of Excellence program included the UNT College of Music in its inaugural list of 10 distinguished colleges and universities recognizing extraordinary commitment to innovation in the study of music.

EVENT Julian Peterson, associate director at Gearbox Software and a composer, audio programmer, sound designer and researcher, recently met with students.

University of Rochester
Eastman School of Music
ROCHESTER, N.Y.

It's all about flexibility at the University of Rochester's Eastman School. Students can earn a double degree, a minor concentration or just take courses related to their interests. Among the options, Eastman offers a master of arts in music leadership and a commercial music industry experience through the Beal Institute for Film Music and Contemporary Media, where students have opportunities to work with the Rochester Institute of Technology's film, animation and video game development schools. The Electroacoustic Music Studios at Eastman introduces students to electronic music technologies. And student-run ensembles provide commercial and music leadership skills, including the Empire Film and Media Ensemble, a live-to-film ensemble, and OSSIA, the school's student-run new music ensemble.

ALUMNUS Eastman's Beal Institute was named after its founder, alumnus Jeff Beal, a five-time Emmy-winning composer of film and TV scores. Beal is a frequent guest speaker and students have traveled to Los Angeles to work with him for an immersive experience.

University of
Southern California
Irvine and Young Academy
LOS ANGELES

USC's Irvine and Young Academy innovators forum hosts leaders in diverse disciplines, industries and the arts to present and discuss problems

facing society and to critique real-world projects. Recent guests have included TOMS Shoes founder Blake Mycoskie. That's just one way the interdisciplinary-focused academy provides a framework for students interested in the music industry to study topics from reimagining virtual concert events to building a new artificial intelligence-driven music platform. Endowed by industry entrepreneurs Jimmy Iovine and Andre "Dr. Dre" Young, the academy offers a bachelor of science in arts, technology and the business of innovation and a master of science in integrated design, business and technology.

EVENT For the *Masters of Scale* podcast in June, Iovine spoke with Angela Ahrendts, former CEO of Burberry and former senior vp of Apple, about success, motivation and education.

University of
Southern California
Thornton School of Music
LOS ANGELES

Close ties with the L.A. music community are core to the DNA at USC Thornton, which offers both an undergraduate and 18-month master's program in the music industry. Students benefit from an abundance of networking, internship and job opportunities across areas such as touring, marketing, branding, business and law, and the school provides a classroom guest list that recently included Ali Harnell, global president/chief strategy officer of Live Nation Women. Collaboration and

camaraderie are also emphasized among students who will one day join an alums network that includes DreamWorks Animation senior vp of TV music Alex Nickson and Warner Records senior vp of creative sync licensing Julia Betley.

EVENTS Thornton's producers forum has hosted speakers including Merck Mercuriadis, founder and CEO of Hipgnosis Songs Fund, and Lee Zeidman, president of Crypto.com Arena, Peacock Theater and L.A. Live.

William Paterson University
WAYNE, N.J.

William Paterson University's music and entertainment industries program focuses on today's industry from an independent artist and label perspective. Courses, including the popular Backstage: The Business of Touring, focus on three key pillars of music income: live, recording and publishing. The program has hosted visiting resident experts including Kate Hyman, former vp of A&R for BMG, and Mark Robinson, senior vp of music strategy, business and legal affairs at Paramount. And while internships are a core tenet, students also benefit from industry professionals who come to campus, including Vydia co-president Jenna Gaudio in a recent visit.

ALUMS Theresa Abou-Daoud, production assistant with Tyler, The Creator, and Nathaniel Meyerowitz, associate manager of experience at Wasserman, are among recent graduates of the program. **B**



In May, Elton (right), director of the music industry program at the University of Miami's Frost School of Music, received the Music Business Association's first music educator of the year award, presented by president Portia Sabin.

LAURA E. PAVITAN

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John Oates, KLN '70, one half of the famed musical duo Daryl Hall & John Oates

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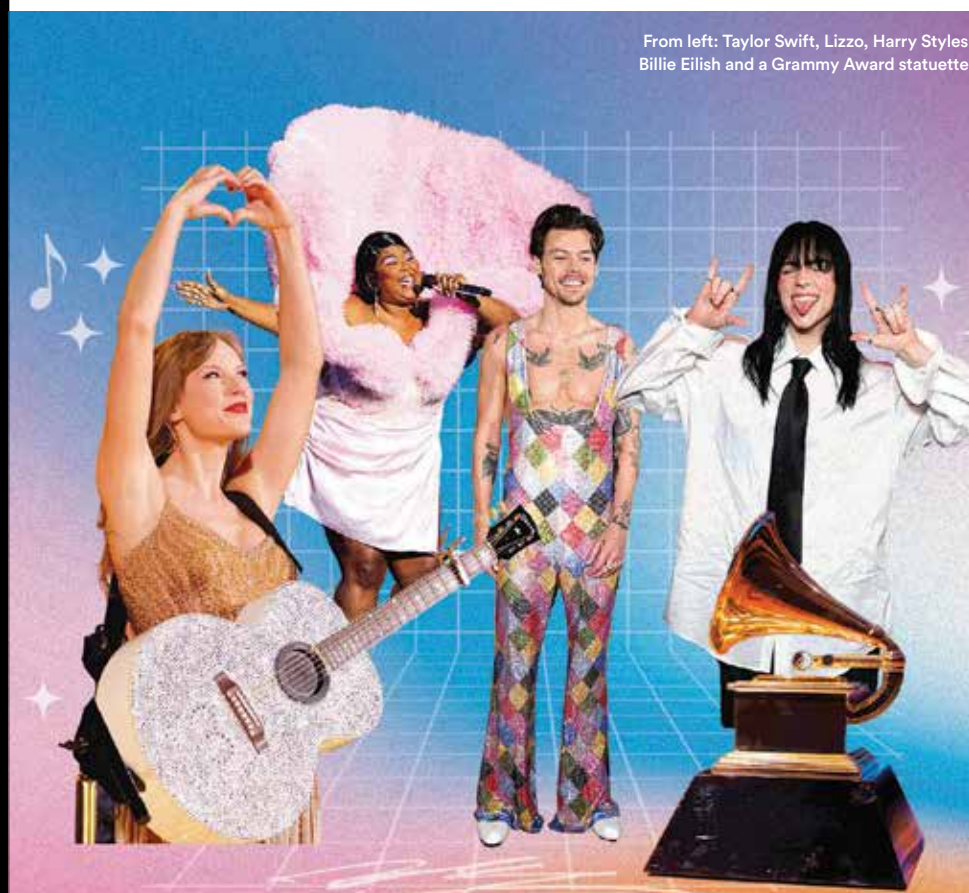
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I GOT A SECRET APRIL DIAMOND

charts



From left: Taylor Swift, Lizzo, Harry Styles, Billie Eilish and a Grammy Award statuette.

How Grammy Winners Have Performed On The Charts

How well do the winners at the Grammy Awards coincide with *Billboard* chart success? Perhaps expectedly, the answer is "very closely" when it comes to trophy recipients reaching the top 10 of both the *Billboard* 200 albums chart and the *Billboard* Hot 100 songs chart.

Billboard examines the intersection of critical and commercial achievements over the last 10 years, and beyond, for chart-based insights into what to possibly expect on Music's Biggest Night on Feb. 4, 2024.

—GARY TRUST

THE LAST 10 ALBUM OF THE YEAR WINNERS ON THE BILLBOARD 200

YEAR	Title	Artist	PEAK
2023	<i>Harry's House</i>	Harry Styles	No. 1, 2 weeks
2022	<i>We Are</i>	Jon Batiste	No. 25
2021	<i>folklore</i>	Taylor Swift	No. 1, 8 weeks
2020	<i>When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?</i>	Billie Eilish	No. 1, 3 weeks
2019	<i>Golden Hour</i>	Kacey Musgraves	No. 4
2018	<i>24K Magic</i>	Bruno Mars	No. 2
2017	<i>25</i>	Adele	No. 1, 10 weeks
2016	<i>1989</i>	Taylor Swift	No. 1, 11 weeks
2015	<i>Morning Phase</i>	Beck	No. 3
2014	<i>Random Access Memories</i>	Daft Punk	No. 1, 2 weeks

THE LAST 10 RECORD OF THE YEAR WINNERS ON THE BILLBOARD HOT 100

YEAR	Title	Artist	PEAK
2023	"About Damn Time"	Lizzo	No. 1, 2 weeks
2022	"Leave the Door Open"	Silk Sonic (Bruno Mars & Anderson .Paak)	No. 1, 2 weeks
2021	"Everything I Wanted"	Billie Eilish	No. 8
2020	"Bad Guy"	Billie Eilish	No. 1, 2 weeks
2019	"This Is America"	Childish Gambino	No. 1, 2 weeks
2018	"24K Magic"	Bruno Mars	No. 4
2017	"Hello"	Adele	No. 1, 10 weeks
2016	"Uptown Funk!"	Mark Ronson feat. Bruno Mars	No. 1, 14 weeks
2015	"Stay With Me"	Sam Smith	No. 2
2014	"Get Lucky"	Daft Punk feat. Pharrell Williams	No. 2

95%

Of the **65** album of the year winners, **62** — or **95%** — have hit the **Billboard 200's top 10** (two of which did so for the first time following their Grammy victories). **Twenty-six in a row** did so from **1996** to **2021**, the **longest streak of all time**.

Of the **65** record of the year winners, **54** — or **83%** — have reached the **Hot 100's top 10**. **Fourteen in a row** have done so since **2010**, the **second-longest streak**, after a **23-year run** from **1965** to **1987**.

83%

68%

Six of the last **10** album of the year winners ruled the **Billboard 200**. Historically, **68%** of all recipients (**44 of 65**) have reached No. 1.

Likewise, **six** of the last **10** record of the year winners topped the **Hot 100**. Historically, **54%** of all recipients (**35 of 65**) have led the list.

54%



4
Staind
Confessions of
the Fallen

the week ending Sept. 28, according to Luminate.

The album was preceded by a pair of hits on the Mainstream Rock Airplay chart, “Lowest in Me” and “Here and Now.” The former reached No. 1 in August, spending two weeks atop the list, and marked the band’s fifth No. 1 and first since 2011’s “Not Again” ruled for seven weeks.

Of the album’s first-week sales, physical sales account for 7,000 (5,000 on CD; 2,000 on vinyl) and digital downloads make up over 4,000.

Confessions of the Fallen marks the first studio release for Staind on BMG after its six albums from 1999 to 2011 were all released on Elektra or Atlantic.

Though the band’s last album was its self-titled set in September 2011, frontman Aaron Lewis has been busy notching hits on the *Billboard* charts since spring 2011. He has scored five solo entries on Top Album Sales, including the chart-topping *Sinner* in 2016. His most recent solo release, *Frayed at Both Ends*, debuted and peaked at No. 5 last year.

Elsewhere on Top Album Sales, The Breeders’ *Last Splash*, released in 1993, returns to the chart for the first time since 1994 as it reenters at No. 20 with nearly 5,000 sold. The set was reissued in a remastered deluxe 30th-anniversary edition on Sept. 22, with two previously unreleased bonus tracks.

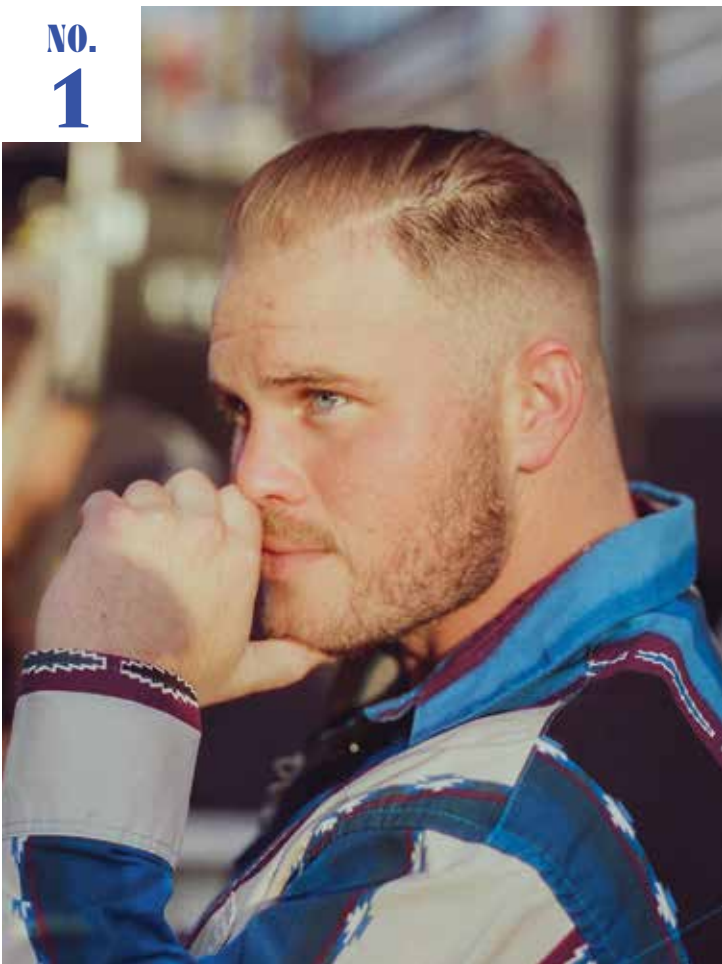
—KEITH CAULFIELD

Top Album Sales				
LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Artist	Title	WKS. ON CHART
		IMPRINT/DISTRIBUTING LABEL		
1	1	#1 for 3 WEEKS Olivia Rodrigo	Guts	3
		GEFFEN/IGA		
NEW	2	Kylie Minogue	Tension	1
		DARENOTE/BMG		
2	3	V	Layover (EP)	3
		BIGHIT MUSIC/GEFFEN/IGA		
NEW	4	Staind	Confessions Of The Fallen	1
		VECTOR/ALCHEMY/BMG		
NEW	5	The Rose	Dual	1
		WINDFALL/TRANSPARENT ARTS		
NEW	6	Tom MacDonald & Adam Calhoun	The Brave 2	1
		ADAM CALHOUN/TOM MACDONALD		
NEW	7	Cannibal Corpse	Chaos Horrific	1
		METAL BLADE		
9	8	Taylor Swift	Speak Now (Taylor's Version)	12
		REPUBLIC		
11	9	Taylor Swift	Midnights	49
		REPUBLIC		
10	10	NewJeans	2nd EP 'Get Up'	10
		ADOR/GEFFEN/IGA		
3	11	Mitski	The Land Is Inhospitable And So Are We	2
		DEAD OCEANS		
22	12	Taylor Swift	Lover	182
		REPUBLIC		
NEW	13	Doja Cat	Scarlet	1
		KEMOSABE/RCA		
20	14	Soundtrack	Barbie: The Album	10
		MATTEL/WATERTOWER/ATLANTIC/AG		
19	15	Taylor Swift	Folklore	166
		REPUBLIC		
NEW	16	Tom Waits	Rain Dogs	1
		ISLAND/UME		
NEW	17	Big Time Rush	Another Life	1
		BOUGHT THE RIGHTS/BMG		
18	18	Stray Kids	5-Star: The 3rd Album	17
		JYP/IMPERIAL/REPUBLIC		
NEW	19	The Replacements	Tim	1
		SIRE/RHINO		
RE-ENTRY	20	The Breeders	Last Splash	37
		4AD		

STEVE THORSHER

BRYAN: THELOR PAULIK; BARRERA: MARIO ALZATE

No.
1



Bryan
Doubles Up
At No. 1

Zach Bryan simultaneously leads *Billboard*’s Hot 100 Songwriters and Hot 100 Producers charts for a third week each thanks to the continued success of his recently released self-titled album and his new EP, *Boys of Faith*, the latter of which debuts on multiple Oct. 7-dated charts. Bryan charts 10 songs on the latest *Billboard* Hot 100; he’s billed as a songwriter on each track and as a producer on all but “Deep Satin” (No. 45; credited to Eddie Spear).

—XANDER ZELLNER

Hot 100 Songwriters		
	1	#1 for 3 WEEKS Zach Bryan
TIE	2	Dan Nigro
TIE	2	Olivia Rodrigo
	4	Tracy Chapman
	5	Rod Wave
TIE	6	Jack Antonoff
TIE	6	Taylor Swift
	8	Ashley Gorley
	9	Kacey Musgraves
	10	Oliver Anthony Music

No.
7



Barrera Gets
A Raise With
‘El Jefe’

Edgar Barrera rises 9-7 on Hot 100 Producers thanks to five productions on the *Billboard* Hot 100, including two debuts. Shakira and Fuerza Regida’s “El Jefe” arrives at No. 55 on the Oct. 7 chart and leads the five entries. The track also surges to No. 4 on Hot Latin Songs, becoming Shakira’s 22nd top five hit — extending her record among women — and Fuerza Regida’s fourth. Plus, Maluma and Carin León’s “Según Quién” enters at No. 83 on the Hot 100. Barrera reached No. 2 on Hot 100 Producers in May.

—X.Z.

Hot 100 Producers		
	1	#1 for 3 WEEKS Zach Bryan
	2	Dan Nigro
	3	Joey Moi
	4	RIOTUSA
TIE	5	Jack Antonoff
TIE	5	Taylor Swift
	7	Edgar Barrera
	8	Dr. Luke
	9	Austin Nivarel
	10	Draven Riffe



No. 1

Doja Cat's 'Red' Reign

Doja Cat scores her first No. 1 on the all-genre Streaming Songs chart with “Paint the Town Red.” The track earned 27.5 million official U.S. streams in its eighth week on the chart, up 3%, the week of Sept. 22-28, according to Luminate. The track’s first week on top follows the Sept. 22 release of parent album *Scarlet*, which concurrently debuts at No. 4 on the Billboard 200.

Previously, Doja Cat hit a No. 2 best on Streaming Songs with “Kiss Me More” (featuring SZA) in May 2021.

Also, “Paint the Town Red” returns to No. 1 on R&B/Hip-Hop Streaming Songs, spending a fifth week atop the chart. It’s Doja Cat’s third No. 1, following “You Right” (with The Weeknd) and “Ain’t Shit,” both in 2021. It also tops Rap Streaming Songs for a sixth week, having become her second No. 1 following “Ain’t Shit.”

—KEVIN RUTHERFORD



No. 1

Swift’s ‘Summer’ Still Going Strong

Taylor Swift’s “Cruel Summer” climbs 2-1 to crown the Radio Songs chart, up 2% to 76.1 million in audience the week of Sept. 22-28, according to Luminate. The song becomes Swift’s eighth No. 1, as she breaks out of a tie with Maroon 5, Katy Perry and Usher for the fourth-most since the chart launched in December 1990. Rihanna leads with 13 No. 1s, followed by Mariah Carey (11) and Bruno Mars (nine).

“Cruel Summer” appeared on Swift’s 2019 album, *Lover*. Republic Records began promoting it as a single in June, as Swift has performed it on her Eras Tour, her first in which she has been able to spotlight songs from *Lover*. (The album was released shortly before the onset of the coronavirus pandemic.)

“Cruel Summer” also becomes Swift’s longest-leading Mainstream Top 40 No. 1 as it rules for an eighth week, surpassing her seven-week reign with “I Knew You Were Trouble.” in 2013.

—GARY TRUST

Streaming Songs				
LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title <small>IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL</small>	Artist	WKS. ON CHART
3	1	#1 for 1 WEEK Paint The Town Red <small>KEMOSABE/RCA</small>	Doja Cat	8
2	2	I Remember Everything <small>BELTING BRONCO/WARNER</small>	Zach Bryan Featuring Kacey Musgraves	5
5	3	Last Night <small>BIG LOUD/MERCURY/REPUBLIC</small>	Morgan Wallen	35
1	4	Slime You Out <small>OVO SOUND/REPUBLIC</small>	Drake Featuring SZA	2
NEW	5	Sarah's Place <small>BELTING BRONCO/WARNER</small>	Zach Bryan Featuring Noah Kahan	1
4	6	Snooze <small>TOP DAWG/RCA</small>	SZA	40
7	7	Fukumean <small>GUNNA/YOUNG STONER LIFE/300/3EE</small>	Gunna	15
NEW	8	Agora Hills <small>KEMOSABE/RCA</small>	Doja Cat	1
6	9	Vampire <small>GEFFEN/INTERSCOPE</small>	Olivia Rodrigo	13
9	10	Fast Car <small>RIVER HOUSE/COLUMBIA NASHVILLE/COLUMBIA</small>	Luke Combs	27

DOJA: JACOB WEESTER; SWIFT: VALERIA BOCHAL



No. 1

Cyrus Gets Her ‘Flowers’

Miley Cyrus’ “Flowers” adds to its record-breaking run on the Adult Contemporary chart. The single notches a 26th week at No. 1, extending the longest rule both for a song by a woman and for a title released on Columbia Records, dating to the chart’s 1961 inception. Among all songs, “Flowers” holds the fourth-longest command; Maroon 5’s “Girls Like You” dominated for a record 36 weeks in 2018-19.

Meanwhile, Belinda Carlisle’s “If U Go” rises to No. 29 — her first AC entry since 1990. It’s from her EP *Kismet*, for which Diane Warren wrote all five tracks, reviving a partnership between the two: Carlisle sent the Warren-penned “I Get Weak” to No. 2 on the Billboard Hot 100 in 1988. “I can’t say no to her,” Carlisle said about Warren upon *Kismet*’s release in May. “That she gave me these amazing songs is like a gift.”

—GARY TRUST

ADULT CONTEMPORARY: THE WEEK'S MOST POPULAR SONGS RANKED BY ADULT CONTEMPORARY RADIO AIRPLAY DETECTIONS, AS MEASURED BY LUMINATE. S. TATIONS ARE ELECTRONICALLY MONITORED 24 HOURS A DAY. 7 DAYS A WEEK. ADULT TOP 40: THE WEEK'S MOST POPULAR SONGS RANKED BY ADULT TOP 40 RADIO AIRPLAY DETECTIONS, AS MEASURED BY LUMINATE. S. TATIONS ARE ELECTRONICALLY MONITORED 24 HOURS A DAY. 7 DAYS A WEEK. ADULT AIRPLAY: THE WEEK'S MOST POPULAR SONGS RANKED BY ADULT AIRPLAY AUDIENCE IMPRESSIONS, AS MEASURED BY LUMINATE. S. TATIONS ARE ELECTRONICALLY MONITORED 24 HOURS A DAY. 7 DAYS A WEEK. SEE CHARTS. LEGEND ON BILLBOARD.COM FOR COMPLETE RULES AND EXPLANATIONS. © 2023 BILLBOARD MEDIA LLC AND LUMINATE INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

Radio Songs				
LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title <small>IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL</small>	Artist	WKS. ON CHART
2	1	#1 for 1 WEEK Cruel Summer <small>REPUBLIC</small>	Taylor Swift	15
1	2	Fast Car <small>RIVER HOUSE/COLUMBIA NASHVILLE/COLUMBIA</small>	Luke Combs	20
3	3	Snooze <small>TOP DAWG/RCA</small>	SZA	21
4	4	Calm Down <small>JONZING WORLD/MAVIN/SMG MUSIC/VIRGIN/INTERSCOPE</small>	Rema & Selena Gomez	36
5	5	Dance The Night <small>MATTEL/WATERTOWER/ATLANTIC/WARNER</small>	Dua Lipa	18
6	6	Barbie World <small>WATERTOWER/DOLQ/10K PROJECTS/ATLANTIC/CAPITOL</small>	Nicki Minaj & Ice Spice With Aqua	10
9	7	Paint The Town Red <small>KEMOSABE/RCA</small>	Doja Cat	8
8	8	Flowers <small>SMILEY MILEY/COLUMBIA</small>	Miley Cyrus	37
7	9	Vampire <small>GEFFEN/INTERSCOPE</small>	Olivia Rodrigo	13
10	10	Need A Favor <small>BAILEE & BUDDY/BMG/STONEY CREEK/BROKEN BOW</small>	Jelly Roll	21

ADULT CONTEMPORARY: THE WEEK'S MOST POPULAR SONGS RANKED BY ADULT CONTEMPORARY RADIO AIRPLAY DETECTIONS, AS MEASURED BY LUMINATE. S. TATIONS ARE ELECTRONICALLY MONITORED 24 HOURS A DAY. 7 DAYS A WEEK. ADULT TOP 40: THE WEEK'S MOST POPULAR SONGS RANKED BY ADULT TOP 40 RADIO AIRPLAY DETECTIONS, AS MEASURED BY LUMINATE. S. TATIONS ARE ELECTRONICALLY MONITORED 24 HOURS A DAY. 7 DAYS A WEEK. ADULT AIRPLAY: THE WEEK'S MOST POPULAR SONGS RANKED BY ADULT AIRPLAY AUDIENCE IMPRESSIONS, AS MEASURED BY LUMINATE. S. TATIONS ARE ELECTRONICALLY MONITORED 24 HOURS A DAY. 7 DAYS A WEEK. SEE CHARTS. LEGEND ON BILLBOARD.COM FOR COMPLETE RULES AND EXPLANATIONS. © 2023 BILLBOARD MEDIA LLC AND LUMINATE INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.



No. 9

Jelly Roll Continues Crossover

Jelly Roll’s “Need a Favor” claims Greatest Gainer honors on Adult Top 40, up 12% in plays the week of Sept. 22-28, according to Luminate. The song previously commanded Country Airplay for four weeks beginning in August and Mainstream Rock Airplay for three weeks in July — the first single to top both charts in the more than 33 years that the lists have coexisted.

With its lyrics referencing God, prayer, church and the hymn “Amazing Grace,” the song is somewhat atypical for pop radio. “ ‘Need a Favor’ is a record that leaves you thinking from the first listen because it sounds so different from what you might expect,” says Steve Pereira, pop programming manager for Music Choice, whose Pop Hits channel has played the track over 500 times. “It’s a country song that transcends genres. The relatable lyrics connect to so many in our audience.”

—G. T.

Adult Contemporary				
LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title <small>IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL</small>	Artist	WKS. ON CHART
1	1	#1 for 26 WEEKS Flowers <small>SMILEY MILEY/COLUMBIA</small>	Miley Cyrus	37
3	2	Anti-Hero <small>REPUBLIC</small>	Taylor Swift	50
2	3	Unstoppable <small>MONKEY PUZZLE/RCA/LEGACY/CRUSH MUSIC</small>	Sia	69
4	4	As It Was <small>ERSKINE/COLUMBIA</small>	Harry Styles	78
5	5	Eyes Closed <small>ATLANTIC</small>	Ed Sheeran	27
6	6	Fast Car <small>RIVER HOUSE/COLUMBIA NASHVILLE/COLUMBIA</small>	Luke Combs	22
7	7	GG Cruel Summer <small>REPUBLIC</small>	Taylor Swift	11
8	8	I'm Good (Blue) <small>WHAT A DJ/WARNER</small>	David Guetta & Bebe Rexha	48
9	9	Dance The Night <small>MATTEL/WATERTOWER/ATLANTIC/WARNER</small>	Dua Lipa	16
10	10	Forget Me <small>VERTIGO/CAPITOL</small>	Lewis Capaldi	47

Adult Top 40				
LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title <small>IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL</small>	Artist	WKS. ON CHART
1	1	#1 for 5 WEEKS Cruel Summer <small>REPUBLIC</small>	Taylor Swift	15
2	2	Dance The Night <small>MATTEL/WATERTOWER/ATLANTIC/WARNER</small>	Dua Lipa	18
4	3	Vampire <small>GEFFEN/INTERSCOPE</small>	Olivia Rodrigo	13
5	4	Calm Down <small>JONZING WORLD/MAVIN/SMG MUSIC/VIRGIN/INTERSCOPE</small>	Rema & Selena Gomez	33
3	5	Fast Car <small>RIVER HOUSE/COLUMBIA NASHVILLE/COLUMBIA</small>	Luke Combs	22
6	6	Flowers <small>SMILEY MILEY/COLUMBIA</small>	Miley Cyrus	37
7	7	Used To Be Young <small>SMILEY MILEY/COLUMBIA</small>	Miley Cyrus	5
8	8	Wish You The Best <small>VERTIGO/CAPITOL</small>	Lewis Capaldi	23
9	9	GG Need A Favor <small>BAILEE & BUDDY/BMG/BROKEN BOW</small>	Jelly Roll	10
12	10	Single Soon <small>INTERSCOPE</small>	Selena Gomez	5



Combs Parks 'Car' Atop Chart

Luke Combs' cover of Tracy Chapman's 1988 Billboard Hot 100 top 10 rolls into its second week atop the Hot Country Songs chart after logging 19 weeks at No. 2. It tallied 75.2 million all-format airplay impressions, 16 million official streams and 4,000 downloads sold in the United States in the week of Sept. 22-28, according to Luminate. "It has been so cool to see everyone enjoying this song, whether it was people who were hearing the song for the first time or people [for whom] it brought back memories of Tracy's timeless recording," Combs says. "I'm just glad this song got another life because it deserves to be around forever."

The single marks Combs' sixth No. 1 on Hot Country Songs. It previously topped Country Airplay for five weeks and Adult Top 40 for two weeks and has reached the top 10 on the Mainstream Top 40 and Adult Contemporary charts.

-JIM ASKER

Hot Country Songs				
Last Week	This Week	Title ¹	Artist	Wks. on Chart
		Imprint/Promotion Label		
		#1 for 2 Weeks		
1	1	Fast Car River House/Columbia Nashville	Luke Combs	27
2	2	I Remember Everything Interscope/Belting Bronco/Warner/MCA Nashville/War	Zach Bryan Featuring Kacey Musgraves	5
3	3	Last Night Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	35
4	4	Religiously Elektra/Warner Music Nashville/WEA	Bailey Zimmerman	26
Hot Shot Debut	5	Sarah's Place Belting Bronco/Warner	Zach Bryan Featuring Noah Kahan	1
5	6	AIR Thinkin' Bout Me Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	30
7	7	Need A Favor Bailee & Buddy/Broken Bow/BMG/Stoney Creek	Jelly Roll	35
6	8	Rich Men North Of Richmond Oliver Anthony Music	Oliver Anthony Music	7
New	9	Boys Of Faith Belting Bronco/Warner	Zach Bryan Featuring Bon Iver	1
8	10	Watermelon Moonshine Broken Bow	Lainey Wilson	18

COMBS: JEREMY COWART, WILSON: NICK RAU.

BLINK-182: JACK BRIDGLAND. ROLLING STONES: MARK SELIGER.



Blink-182 Is Back

Blink-182's newest single, "One More Time," scales multiple charts, including leaping to No. 3 in its second week on the Alternative Airplay ranking. It ties the quickest jump to the top three in 2023, alongside Linkin Park's "Lost" in March.

"One More Time" is the trio's second single from its album of the same name, following "Edging," which reigned on Alternative Airplay for 13 weeks beginning in November 2022. The new track concurrently jumps 8-3 on the all-rock-format Rock & Alternative Airplay chart with 6.1 million impressions in its first full tracking week, according to Luminate. It also vaults 44-14 on Hot Rock & Alternative Songs and 37-25 on Mainstream Rock Airplay, and it debuts at No. 62 on the Billboard Hot 100, where "Edging" hit No. 61 in October 2022.

One More Time... is due Oct. 20 on Columbia. It's the band's first album with guitarist-singer Tom DeLonge since 2011's *Neighborhoods*. **—KEVIN RUTHERFORD**

Alternative Airplay				
Last Week	This Week	Title	Artist	Wks. on Chart
IMPRINT / PROMOTION LABEL				
		#1 for 2 WEEKS		
1	1	Under You	Foo Fighters	9
ROSWELL/RCA				
2	2	Dial Drunk	Noah Kahan With Post Malone	15
MERCURY/REPUBLIC				
29	3	GG One More Time	Blink-182	2
VIKING WIZARD EYES/COLUMBIA				
5	4	Lost	Linkin Park	33
MACHINE SHOP/WARNER				
3	5	Just Pretend	Bad Omens	36
SUMERIAN/VIRGIN				
6	6	We Didn't Start The Fire	Fall Out Boy	12
CRUSH MUSIC/DCD2/FUELED BY RAMEN/3EE				
4	7	Out Of My Mind	little image	27
HOLLYWOOD				
10	8	Honey (Are U Coming?)	Maneskin	4
EXIT MUSIC MANAGEMENT/ARISTA				
7	9	Rescue Me	Dirty Heads	31
BETTER NOISE				
8	10	Hold Me Like A Grudge	Fall Out Boy	14
CRUSH MUSIC/DCD2/FUELED BY RAMEN/3EE				



Wilson's Landmark Third No. 1

For the first time in over two years, a woman without any accompanying artists tops the Country Airplay chart as Lainey Wilson scores her third No. 1 with “Watermelon Moonshine.” It reigns with 27.2 million audience impressions, up 5%, during the week of Sept. 22-28, according to Luminate. She was also the last woman to accomplish the feat, when her “Things a Man Oughta Know” led for a week in September 2021. Between then and the chart’s new No. 1, two all-women duets led: Elle King and Miranda Lambert’s “Drunk (And I Don’t Wanna Go Home)” and Carly Pearce and Ashley McBryde’s “Never Wanted To Be That Girl,” both in spring 2022.

Wilson has also ruled Country Airplay with “Never Say Never” (with Cole Swindell) for two weeks starting in April 2022. Her new chart-topper is the second single from *Bell Bottom Country*, which became her first top 10 on Top Country Albums, reaching No. 9 in January.

-J.A.

Country Airplay				
LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title	Artist	WKS. ON CHART
IMPRINT/DISTRIBUTING LABEL				
		#1 for 1 WEEK		
(2)	(1)	Watermelon Moonshine BROKEN BOW	Lainey Wilson	19
(4)	(2)	Try That In A Small Town MACON/BROKEN BOW	Jason Aldean	19
(6)	(3)	Girl In Mine STONEY CREEK	Parmalee	57
(1)	(4)	Religiously ELEKTRA/WARNER MUSIC NASHVILLE/WEA	Bailey Zimmerman	27
3	5	Fast Car RIVER HOUSE/COLUMBIA NASHVILLE	Luke Combs	24
5	(6)	Need A Favor BAILEE & BUDDY/BROKEN BOW/BMG/STONEY CREEK	Jelly Roll	37
(11)	(7)	GG Thinkin' Bout Me MERCURY/REPUBLIC/BIG LOUD	Morgan Wallen	21
(8)	(8)	God Gave Me A Girl TRIPLE TIGERS	Russell Dickerson	37
(10)	(9)	Stars Like Confetti BROKEN BOW	Dustin Lynch	36
(12)	(10)	Everything I Love MERCURY/REPUBLIC/BIG LOUD	Morgan Wallen	15

HOT COUNTRY SONGS: THE WEEK'S MOST POPULAR CURRENT COUNTRY SONGS ACROSS ALL GENRES, RANKED BY STREAMING ACTIVITY DATA BY ONLINE MUSIC SOURCES TRACKED BY LUMINATE. RADIO AIRPLAY AUDIENCE IMPRESSIONS AS MEASURED BY MEDIANE BASE AND PROVIDED BY LUMINATE. COUNTRY AIRPLAY: THE WEEK'S MOST POPULAR COUNTRY AIRPLAY AUDIENCE IMPRESSIONS, AS MEASURED BY MEDIANE BASE AND PROVIDED BY LUMINATE. STATIONS ARE ELECTRONICALLY MONITORED 24 HOURS A DAY, SEVEN DAYS A WEEK. SEE CHART LEGEND ON BILLBOARD.COM FOR COMPLETE RULES AND EXPLANATIONS. © 2023 BILLBOARD MEDIA LLC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

LUMINATE
AIRPLAY, SALES
AND STREAMING
DATA COMPILED BY

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LUMIMATE



Stones Roll On Radio

The Rolling Stones are back in the top 10 of a *Billboard* airplay chart with "Angry," which lifts 16-10 in its third week on Triple A Airplay. The song is the Rock & Roll Hall of Famers' first top 10 on the chart since "Living in a Ghost Town," which climbed to No. 4 in 2020. (The group first reached the top 10 on a songs ranking when "Time Is on My Side" hit the top tier on the *Billboard* Hot 100 dated Nov. 21, 1964.)

The new song also premieres at No. 39 on Mainstream Rock Airplay, where it's the band's first entry since "Doom and Gloom," which peaked at No. 35 in December 2012. "Angry" also jumps 24-18 on Rock & Alternative Airplay with 1.7 million impressions, a 16% boost, according to Luminate.

The song is from *Hackney Diamonds*, the group's new album due Oct. 20. —K.R.

Triple A Airplay				
LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL	Artist	WKS. ON CHART
		#1 for 2 WEEKS		
1	1	More Than A Love Song ATO	Black Pumas	5
2	2	Dial Drunk MERCURY/REPUBLIC	Noah Kahan	14
3	3	Francesca RUBYWORKS/COLUMBIA	Hozier	15
4	4	Good Old Days CONCORD	The Revivalists	8
5	5	Nothing Matters ISLAND/REPUBLIC	The Last Dinner Party	15
6	6	Road To Joy REAL WORLD	Peter Gabriel	10
7	7	Say Yes To Heaven POLYDOR/INTERSCOPE	Lana Del Rey	16
11	8	Evicted DBPM	Wilco	7
9	9	When We Were Close SOUTHEASTERN/THIRTY TIGERS	Jason Isbell And The 400 Unit	14
16	10	GG Angry THE ROLLING STONES/POLYDOR/INTERSCOPE	The Rolling Stones	3



SZA's SOS Smashes R&B Record

SOS by SZA charts new territory on Top R&B Albums, having surpassed the record for the most weeks atop the list since the chart's launch in 2013. It broke the record when it claimed its 41st week at No. 1 and surpassed the previous record-holder, The Weeknd's *After Hours*. SOS pads its lead with its 42nd week at No. 1 (on the current chart).

SZA's album has yet to cede the throne since it debuted on the chart last December. The set's consistency traces to its steady run of singles, most notably "Kill Bill" and current hit "Snooze." The former, SZA's first Billboard Hot 100 No. 1, rolled to a record 21-week stay atop Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs; the latter earned a recent twin boost from its Aug. 25 music video premiere and an acoustic "Snooze" remix with Justin Bieber on Sept. 15. Between that song and the original's presence on pop and R&B/hip-hop radio, "Snooze" rises to No. 2 on the Hot 100 and Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs charts dated Oct. 7.

—TREVOR ANDERSON



Usher Makes 'Good' With 17th No. 1

Usher, Summer Walker and 21 Savage's "Good Good" rises to No. 1 on the Mainstream R&B/Hip-Hop Airplay chart. It's Usher's first chart-topper since October 2016, when "No Limit" (featuring Young Thug) spent two weeks on top.

"Good Good" marks Usher's 17th No. 1, a count that puts him at fourth all time on the chart; Drake holds the most with 45 dating to the list's 1993 inception.

As for Walker, it's her first chart-topper, surpassing the No. 2 peak of "Karma" in June. It's 21 Savage's sixth, following the two-week reign of his Drake collaboration, "Spin Bout U," in May.

"Good Good" concurrently jumps 3-2 on R&B/Hip-Hop Airplay, 6-3 on Rhythmic Airplay, 13-11 on Adult R&B Airplay and 35-29 on Mainstream Top 40.

The song is scheduled to appear on *Coming Home*, Usher's ninth studio album, due Feb. 11, 2024, alongside a performance at the Super Bowl halftime show.

—KEVIN RUTHERFORD

Top R&B Albums				
LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Artist	Title	WKS. ON CHART
		IMPRINT/DISTRIBUTING LABEL		
①	1	#1 for 42 WEEKS SZA TOP DAWG/RCA	SOS	42
3	2	The Weeknd XO/REPUBLIC	Starboy	305
④	3	SZA TOP DAWG/RCA	Ctrl	328
5	④	Beyonce PARKWOOD/COLUMBIA	Renaissance	61
②	5	Diddy LOVE RECORDS	The Love Album: Off The Grid	2
9	⑥	The Weeknd XO/REPUBLIC	The Highlights	135
⑥	7	Frank Ocean BOYS DON'T CRY	Blonde	360
7	8	The Weeknd XO/REPUBLIC	After Hours	113
8	9	Brent Faiyaz LOST KIDS	Wasteland	64
11	⑩	Bryson Tiller TRAPSOUL/RCA	TRAPSOUL	360

Mainstream R&B/Hip-Hop Airplay				
LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title	Artist	WKS. ON CHART
		IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL		
③	1	#1 for 1 WEEK Good Good MEGA/GAMMA	Usher, Summer Walker & 21 Savage	8
1	2	Fukumean GUNNA/YOUNG STONER LIFE/300/3EE	Gunna	12
②	③	Snooze TOP DAWG/RCA	SZA	23
4	4	All My Life ALAMO	Lil Durk Featuring J. Cole	20
⑥	⑤	GG Peaches & Eggplants YOUNG NUDDY/RCA	Young Nudy Featuring 21 Savage	19
⑤	⑥	Sittin' On Top Of The World BAD HABIT/ON A SPACESHIP/ATLANTIC	Burna Boy	17
⑧	7	Oh U Went YOUNG STONER LIFE/300/3EE	Young Thug Featuring Drake	11
9	⑧	Summer Too Hot CBE/RCA	Chris Brown	12
7	9	Put It On Da Floor Again STREAMCUT/RCA	Latto Featuring Cardi B	17
⑫	⑩	Bongos ATLANTIC	Cardi B & Megan Thee Stallion	3

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Our Categories are

Best Folk Album
The Road Not Taken
The High Kings

Best American Roots Song
Song For Kelly
The High Kings

Best American Roots Performance
The Streets Of Kinsale
The High Kings Feat. Steve Perry (Journey)



THE
highkings
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'Reflecting the strength and diversity of Irish folk music, bringing together its most influential artists for the first time ever.'



No. 1

Karol G Scores Sweet 16th No. 1

Karol G notches her 16th No. 1 on Latin Airplay as “Mi Ex Tenía Razón” rises 3-1 in its seventh chart week. The song earned 9.8 million audience impressions in the United States in the week ending Sept. 28, according to Luminate, a 16% gain from the previous week. With the new No. 1, Karol G becomes the first woman to achieve a chart-topper as a soloist unaccompanied by another act this year. The last woman to do so was Rosalía with “Despechá” in October 2022.

Among her 16 career chart-toppers, five of Karol G’s No. 1s have been without another artist. Prior to “Mi Ex Tenía Razón,” “Provenza” was her last solo No. 1, for one week, in July 2022. In between, “TQG” (with Shakira) spent two weeks at No. 1. “Mi Ex Tenía Razón” also rises on Regional Mexican Airplay, climbing 39-23 in its second week on the chart. The song earned Karol G her first entry on the list when it debuted.

—PAMELA BUSTIOS

Latin Airplay				
LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title <small>IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL</small>	Artist	WKS. ON CHART
3	1	#1 for 1 WEEK Mi Ex Tenia Razon <small>BICHOTA/INTERSCOPE</small>	Karol G	7
5	2	Coco Loco <small>SONY MUSIC LATIN</small>	Maluma	14
2	3	LaLa <small>ONE WORLD/WARNER/WARNER LATINA</small>	Myke Towers	10
9	4	El Amor de Su Vida <small>GRUPO FRONTERA</small>	Grupo Frontera & Grupo Firme	4
4	5	Copa Vacia <small>SONY MUSIC LATIN</small>	Shakira X Manuel Turizo	13
12	6	Dios Bendiga Nuestro Amor <small>EL RECODO/FONOVISA/UMLE</small>	Banda El Recodo de Cruz Lizarraga	7
15	7	El Amor de Mi Vida <small>SETTRACK/DISA/UMLE</small>	Los Angeles Azules y Maria Becerra	5
7	8	Tulum <small>DOUBLE P</small>	Peso Pluma & Grupo Frontera	6
1	9	Un Cigarrillo <small>CERCO/SONY MUSIC LATIN</small>	Chencho Corleone	19
22	10	De Lunes A Lunes <small>GRUPO FRONTERA/LA INDUSTRIA/SONY MUSIC LATIN</small>	Manuel Turizo X Grupo Frontera	4

KAROL G: PABLO ESCOBEDO; BUNNY: VITTORIO ZUNINO/GETTY IMAGES.



No. 8

Bad Bunny’s ‘Preview’ Pushes Record

Bad Bunny extends his top 10 record on Hot Latin Songs to 62 entries with “Un Preview,” his second top 10 of the year. After Bad Bunny released the track, produced by Tainy, MAG and La Paciencia, on his WhatsApp channel as a teaser of what’s to come in 2024, the song debuts at No. 8 powered almost entirely by streams. Following its release on Sept. 25, it registered 7.6 million official U.S. streams in its four days of activity during the Sept. 22-28 tracking week. The single also enters at No. 5 on Latin Streaming Songs.

Sales also assist the new song’s high debut on the multimetric list with 1,000 downloads, enough for a No. 2 start on Latin Digital Song Sales.

Bad Bunny strengthens his lead for the most Hot Latin Songs top 10s over Enrique Iglesias and Luis Miguel, who are tied for second with 39.

—P. B.

Hot Latin Songs				
LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title <small>IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL</small>	Artist	WKS. ON CHART
1	1	#1 for 2 WEEKS Lady Gaga <small>DOUBLE P</small>	Peso Pluma, Gabito Ballesteros & Junior H	14
2	2	Qlona <small>BICHOTA/INTERSCOPE</small>	Karol G & Peso Pluma	7
3	3	Ella Baila Sola <small>PRAJIN PARLAY/DEL</small>	Eslabon Armado X Peso Pluma	28
45	4	SAL AIR STM El Jefe <small>SONY MUSIC LATIN</small>	Shakira X Fuerza Regida	2
4	5	La Bebe <small>YNG LVCS/WARNER LATINA</small>	Yng Lvcas x Peso Pluma	33
5	6	Mi Ex Tenia Razon <small>BICHOTA/INTERSCOPE</small>	Karol G	7
6	7	LaLa <small>ONE WORLD/WARNER/WARNER LATINA</small>	Myke Towers	13
HOT SHOT DEBUT	8	Un Preview <small>RIMAS</small>	Bad Bunny	1
7	9	Un x100to <small>RIMAS</small>	Grupo Frontera X Bad Bunny	24
11	10	El Amor de Su Vida <small>GRUPO FRONTERA</small>	Grupo Frontera & Grupo Firme	8

LATIN AIRPLAY: THE WEEK'S MOST POPULAR SONGS RANKED BY LATIN RADIO AIRPLAY AUDIENCE IMPRESSIONS, AS MEASURED BY MEDIABASE AND PROVIDED BY LUMINATE. STATIONS ARE ELIGIBLE IF THEY REPORTED AT LEAST 15 HOURS OF BROADCASTING IN THE WEEK. HOT LATIN SONGS: THE WEEK'S MOST POPULAR CURRENT LATIN SONGS, AS RANKED BY STREAMING ACTIVITY AND TRACK SALES. SEE CHARTS.LEGEND ON BILLBOARD.COM FOR COMPLETE RULES AND EXPLANATIONS. © 2023 BILLBOARD MEDIA LLC AND LUMINATE INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

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AND IN SALES AND STREAMING DATA COMPILED BY

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BASS

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ALBUM OF THE YEAR

SONG OF THE YEAR

RECORD OF THE YEAR

WRITTEN & PRODUCED BY RILEY SCHMELZER

SCAN TO LISTEN

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NO.
1

Tomlin Wraps Record Run

Chris Tomlin's "Holy Forever" hits No. 1 on the streaming-, airplay- and sales-based Hot Christian Songs chart. With its 59-week trip to the top, it completes the longest climb to No. 1 in the chart's 20-year history, surpassing Elevation Worship's "Graves Into Gardens" (featuring Brandon Lake), which took 46 weeks in 2020-21.

Tomlin scores his seventh No. 1 on the chart and first since "Good Good Father," which dominated for seven weeks beginning in February 2016.

"Holy Forever" ruled Christian Airplay for six weeks beginning in August, awarding Tomlin his 11th No. 1.

"Ultimately, what this chart represents is impact," Tomlin says of his latest Hot Christian Songs No. 1, "and to be a part of a song like 'Holy Forever' and experiencing its impact is an honor. My hope is that this song continues to help people around the globe beyond anything I could imagine, see or ever know."

—JIM ASKER



NO.
1

David & Blessett Bring Back A Classic

Atlanta-based Anthony David and Algebra Blessett's "Heaven" rises from No. 5 to No. 1 on the Gospel Airplay chart, up 15% in plays in the week of Sept. 22-28, according to Luminate. The singers' first collaboration in over a decade marks their first entry on the chart. Billed as Anthony David featuring Algebra, they reached No. 2 on Adult R&B Airplay in 2011 with "4Evermore."

"Heaven" was originally recorded by gospel greats BeBe & CeCe Winans and released as the title track to their 1989 set that led Top Gospel Albums, becoming the duo's first of three chart-toppers. BeBe Winans co-wrote the song with Keith Thomas.

"We're definitely happy to be embraced by the gospel community," David and Blessett said in a statement. "Our whole mission in music is to be inspirational and add to the culture."

The pair is currently working on an album of duets.

—J. A.

Hot Christian Songs				
LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title	Artist	WKS. ON CHART
IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL				
2	1	#1 for 1 WEEK Holy Forever RIVERMUSIC/SPARROW/CAPITOL CMG	Chris Tomlin	59
1	2	Thank God I Do ATLANTIC/CENTRICITY	Lauren Daigle	26
3	3	Gratitude BETHEL/TRIBL	Brandon Lake	61
6	4	Praise You Anywhere BRANDON LAKE/PLG	Brandon Lake	16
4	5	I Believe It (The Life Of Jesus) GOTEE	Jon Reddick	37
5	6	To Not Worship You FAIR TRADE	MercyMe	19
8	7	Trust In God ELEVATION WORSHIP/PLG	Elevation Worship Featuring Chris Brown	22
7	8	Hold On CENTRICITY	Katy Nichole	31
10	9	Jesus Does SPARROW/CAPITOL CMG	We The Kingdom	39
9	10	This Is Our God FAIR TRADE	Phil Wickham	37

Gospel Airplay				
LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title	Artist	WKS. ON CHART
IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL				
5	1	#1 for 1 WEEK GG Heaven DOME	Anthony David & Algebra Blessett	28
1	2	Lord Do It For Me (Live In Memphis) BLACKSMOKE	Zacardi Cortez	21
4	3	I Believe God WAYNORTHY	Jekalyn Carr	28
3	4	I Wanna Say Thank You BLACKSMOKE	James Grear & Company Featuring Maurette Brown Clark	37
2	5	All Things FO YO SOUL/RCA/RCA INSPIRATION/PLG	Kirk Franklin	20
7	6	It's Working DULANEYLAND/MNRK	Todd Dulaney + Bishop Hezekiah Walker	22
9	7	Speak ANSPIRE	Angel Taylor	30
8	8	Speak Your Name KEY OF A/FAIR TRADE/TYSCOT	Anthony Brown & group therAPy	19
11	9	No Stressing LITTLE WORLD	Damon Little Featuring Angie Stone	17
6	10	Always Peace MOTOWN GOSPEL	Brian Courtney Wilson	41

HOT CHRISTIAN SONGS: THE WEEK'S MOST POPULAR CURRENT CHRISTIAN SONGS ACROSS ALL GENRES, RANKED BY STREAMING ACTIVITY DATA BY ONE OF MUSIC SOURCES TRACKED BY LUMINATE. ADULT AIRPLAY: AVERAGE OF AIRPLAY ON RADIO AND SALES DATA AS COMPILED BY LUMINATE. GOSPEL AIRPLAY: THE WEEK'S MOST POPULAR GOSPEL SONGS AS MEASURED BY RADIO AIRPLAY AND SALES DATA AS COMPILED BY LUMINATE. GOSPEL ALBUMS: THE WEEK'S MOST POPULAR GOSPEL ALBUMS AS MEASURED BY SALES DATA AS COMPILED BY LUMINATE. SEE CHARTS. LEGEND ON BILLBOARD.COM FOR COMPLETE RULES AND EXPLANATIONS. © 2023 BILLBOARD MEDIA LLC AND LUMINATE, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

AMP, IN, SALES, AND STREAMING DATA COMPILED BY LUMINATE

TOMLIN: ROBBY KLEIN; DAVID & ATTA: JONOR.





Minogue Dials Up 'Tension'

Kylie Minogue collects her second No. 1 on Top Dance/Electronic Albums as her new studio release, *Tension*, debuts atop the chart. The set, previewed by the No. 7-peaking "Padam Padam" on Hot Dance/Electronic Songs, earned 24,500 equivalent album units in the United States in the week ending Sept. 28, according to Luminate. That marks Minogue's best week, by units, since the industry began measuring with that metric in December 2014.

On the Billboard 200, *Tension* enters at No. 21, marking Minogue's highest-charting album in over a decade, since *Aphrodite* hit No. 19 in July 2010. *Tension* also starts at No. 2 on Top Album Sales with 19,500 copies sold — Minogue's biggest sales week in nearly 20 years. She last sold more albums in a single week when *Body Language* debuted with 43,500 in February 2004. *Tension's* sales were boosted by its availability in over 15 physical formats.

—KEITH CAULFIELD

Top Dance/Electronic Albums			
LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Artist	Title
		IMPRINT/DISTRIBUTING LABEL	WKS. ON CHART
NEW	1	#1 for 1 WEEK Kylie Minogue DARENOTE/BMG	Tension 1
1	2	Beyonce PARKWOOD/COLUMBIA	Renaissance 46
2	3	Lady Gaga STREAMLINE/KONLIVE/CHERRYTREE/INTERSCOPE/IGA	The Fame 498
3	4	Drake OVO SOUND/REPUBLIC	Honestly, Nevermind 67
4	5	Odetari ODETARI/ARTIST PARTNER GROUP	XIII Sorrows 2
5	6	Tiesto MUSICAL FREEDOM/ATLANTIC/AG	Drive 23
7	7	Jungle CAIOLA/AWAL	Volcano 7
6	8	Gorillaz PARLOPHONE/WARNER	Demon Days 451
8	9	Kim Petras AMIGO RECORDS/REPUBLIC	Feed The Beast 14
21	10	GG David Guetta GUM/ASTRALWERKS	One Love 167



Illenium Adds Fifth No. 1

Illenium's "Other Side" (featuring Vera Blue) hits No. 1 on *Billboard*'s Dance/Mix Show Airplay chart. It's the artist's fifth No. 1 on the list, as he ties David Guetta for the most among all acts since his first chart-topper in November 2019, when he led with "Takeaway" (with The Chainsmokers and featuring Lennon Stella). In between, the Illinois native reigned with "Nightlight" in November 2020, "Hearts on Fire" (with Dabin and Lights) in April 2021 and "Luv Me a Little" (featuring Nina Nesbitt) this April. Australian singer-songwriter Blue hits No. 1 in her first visit to the chart.

Elsewhere, The Weeknd, Playboi Carti and Madonna debut on Dance/Mix Show Airplay at No. 34 with "Popular." Madonna has now reached the ranking in the 2000s, 2010s and 2020s (dating to its August 2003 inception). She has scored seven No. 1s, leading longest with her first chart-topper, "Hung Up," for eight weeks beginning in November 2005.

—GARY TRUST

Dance/Mix Show Airplay				
LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title	Artist	WKS. ON CHART
IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL				
3	1	#1 for 1 WEEK Other Side	ILLENIUM Featuring Vera Blue	14
		WARNER		
2	2	Running Blind	Aluna, Tchami & Kareen Lomax	10
		MAD DECENT		
8	3	Phone	MEDUZA Featuring Sam Tompkins & Em Beihold	10
		SECONDO PIANO/CROSS/ISLAND/REPUBLIC		
1	4	(It Goes Like) Nanana	Peggy Gou	10
		XL/BEGGARS GROUP		
4	5	0800 Heaven	Nathan Dawe, Joel Corry & Ella Henderson	11
		HELIX		
11	6	Rush	Troye Sivan	6
		CAPITOL		
17	7	On My Love	Zara Larsson x David Guetta	2
		SOMMER HOUSE/EPIC		
18	8	Desire	Calvin Harris & Sam Smith	6
		COLUMBIA		
7	9	Dance The Night	Dua Lipa	17
		MATTEL/WATERTOWER/ATLANTIC/WARNER		
9	10	If Only I	Loud Luxury, Two Friends & Bebe Rexha	14
		ARMADA/HELIX/PAYDAY		

MINOQUE: EDWARD COOKE. ILLENUM: LINDSEY BYRNES.

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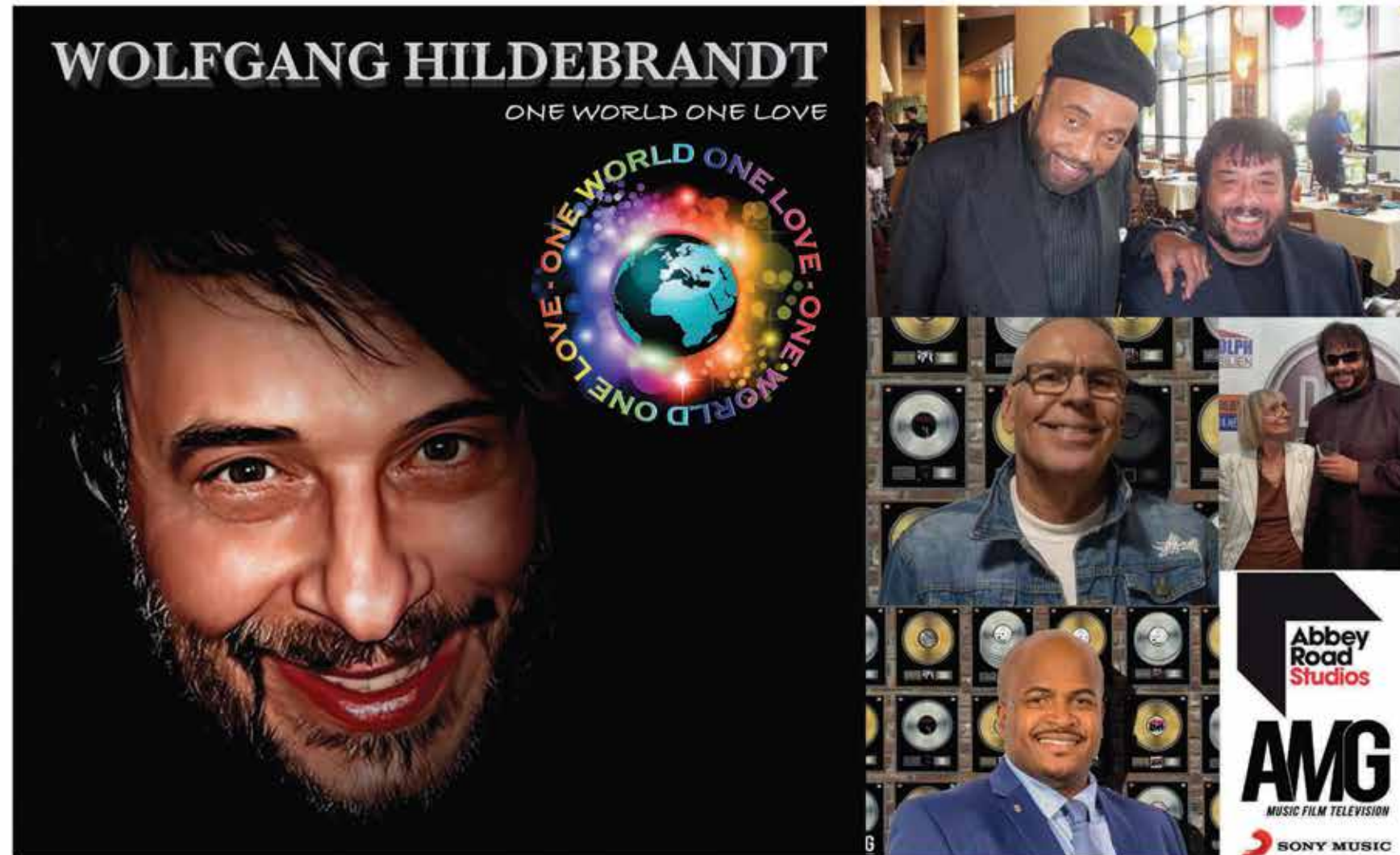
  

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ONE WORLD ONE LOVE 2023

WOLFGANG HILDEBRANDT

Lyrics: Wolfgang Hildebrandt, Music & Arrangement: Helmut Jost
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Mastered at the legendary Abbey Road Studios, London UK



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Let's try to create peace together, even with all the differences we have. The rainbow has different colors but it is there for all of us, it knows no borders, no skin color, no religion, no race. The rainbow is there for everyone all the differences somehow make us one. **“One World One Love”.**

Thanks to Pastor Andrae Crouch for always supporting and believing in me.

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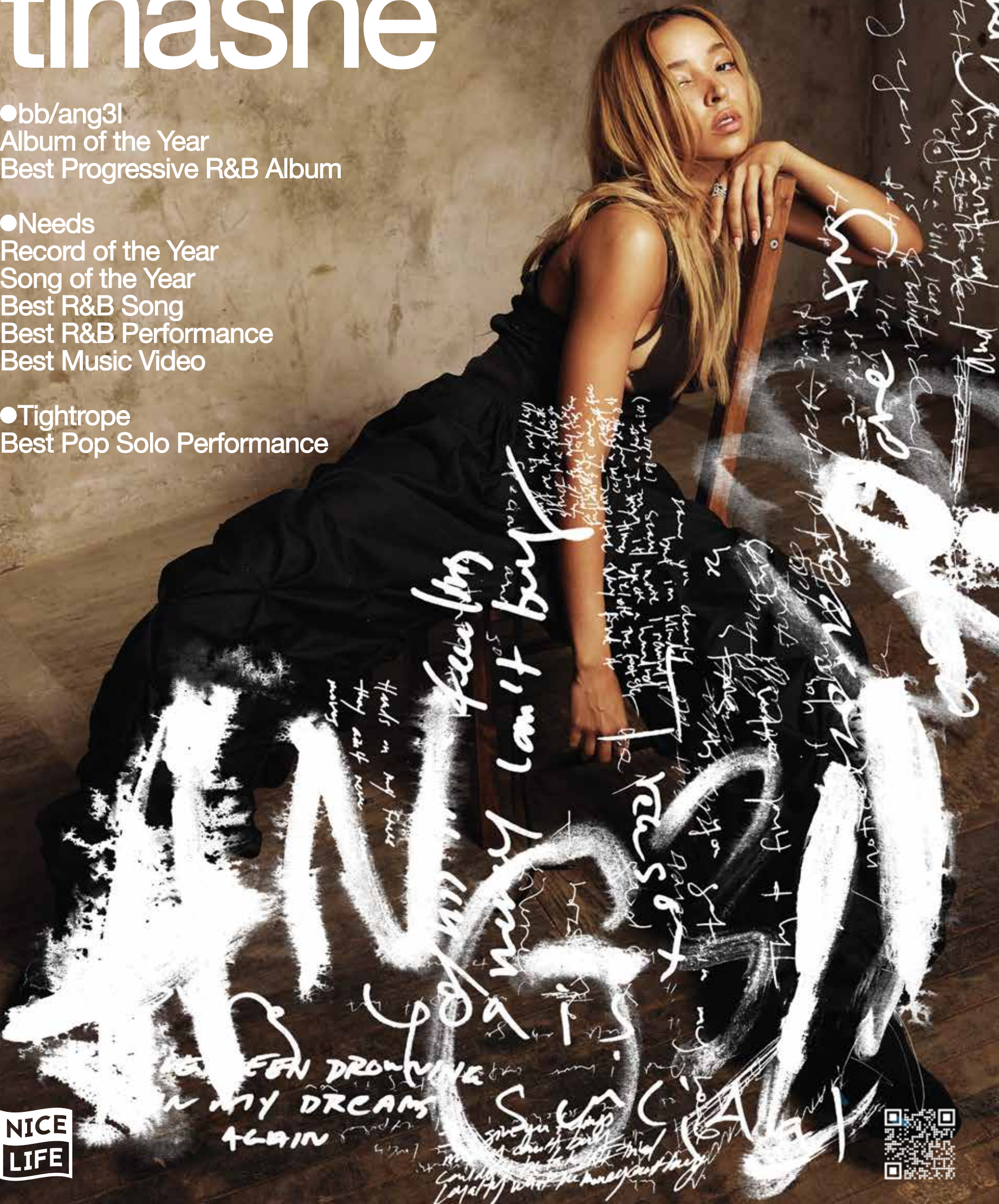
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2023

SONG OF THE YEAR
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BEST RAP SONG
"Rolling Stone"

BEST RAP ALBUM
2023

BEST RAP SONG
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BEST RAP SONG
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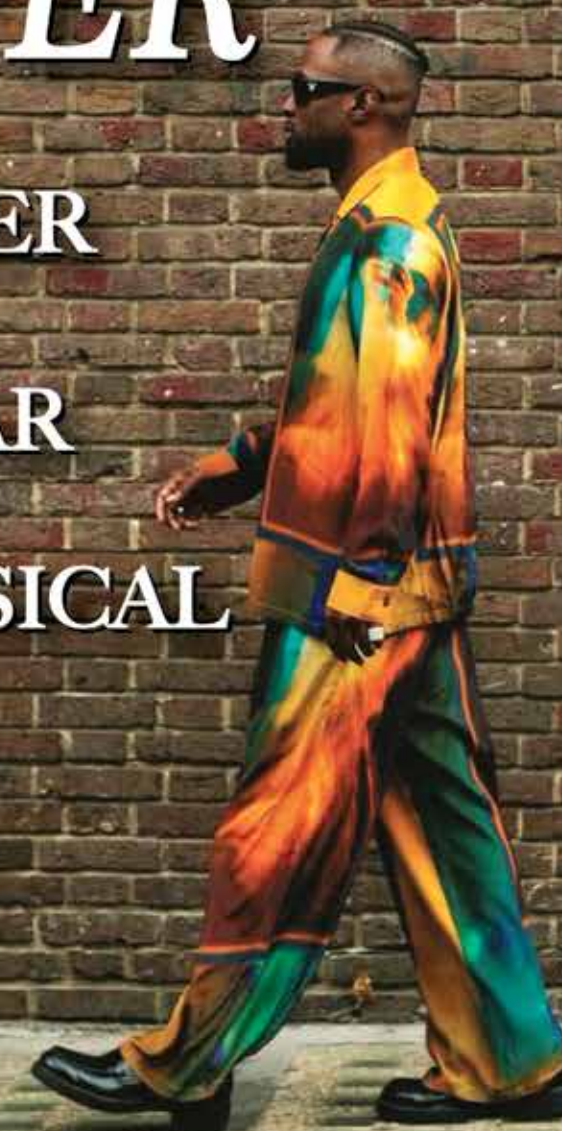
Rosemarie
"BEST 2 OUT OF 3"

Usher
"BOYFRIEND"

Maeta
"THROUGH THE NIGHT"
"CLARITY"
feat. Lucky Daye

Ta Thomas
"JUNE 15TH"

Jonathan McReynolds
"BASICS"



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Best Original Song
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& Music Annual Competition
(NYC)

**Best International
Singer of the Year**
Rome Movie Awards

*An Inspiring Song of Hope and Courage
By Singer-Songwriter Darla Z*

Honored Worldwide - Over 30 International Awards!



"Her records are individual jewels of musical originality, poetry, and stylistic elegance, in one word...Darla." -Michele Dioma, Editor in Chief, WILD FILMMAKER

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A unique global album
for families and children...

A Musical Hug
for the World...



by GRAMMY®-nominated Chandrika Tandon

Love Light Laughter



CHANDRIKATANDON.COM

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14X GRAMMY® NOMINATED

MUSIQ SOULCHILD

VICTIMS VILAINS

Executive Produced by HIT-BOY
ALBUM OF THE YEAR

"I Remember You My Ex"
BEST R&B PERFORMANCE
BEST R&B SONG


"Is It Love, Is It Lies"
BEST R&B PERFORMANCE
BEST R&B SONG

"The combination of Musiq Soulchild's smooth vocals and Hit-Boy's plush production makes their first collaborative album a sonic pleasure—even though Musiq's lyrics at times dig deep into love's darker corners. Musiq possesses one of Neo-soul's most assured voices, which lends his plainspoken chronicles of love and lust an intimacy that gives this brief album an electric charge."

- APPLE MUSIC

Engineer/Mixer: David Kim Yungin
Mastering Engineer: Colin Leonard
Producer: Chauncey Hollis Jr. "Hit-Boy"
Songwriters: Alexander Lloyd "A-Lex", Taalib Johnson "Musiq Soulchild"





FOR YOUR **GRAMMY®** CONSIDERATION

UNCLE JUMBO

ALBUM OF THE YEAR
TASTE THE SKY

BEST CHILDREN'S MUSIC ALBUM
TASTE THE SKY


SONG OF THE YEAR
ONE BIG FAMILY

RECORD OF THE YEAR
ONE BIG FAMILY


BEST MUSIC VIDEO
ONE BIG FAMILY

BEST NEW ARTIST

BEST MELODIC RAP PERFORMANCE
CURIOSITY



UNCLE-JUMBO.COM




FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

MAVERICK CITY MUSIC

THE MAVERICK WAY EP
BEST GOSPEL ALBUM

GOD PROBLEMS
BEST CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN MUSIC PERFORMANCE/SONG

MORE THAN ABLE
BEST GOSPEL PERFORMANCE/ SONG

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- 5 GRAMMY AWARDS, 4 GMA DOVE AWARDS, 1 BILLBOARD MUSIC AWARD, & 1 SOUL TRAIN MUSIC AWARD.
- MAINSTAGE PREFORMANCES INCLUDE:
THE BET AWARDS SHOW, NPR'S TINY DESK, THE VIEW, AND NBC'S TODAY SHOW



"Her genuine commitment to the culture is represented with such grace and dignity"

– Mick Fleetwood

"A phenomenal project ... Helm's voice is, without question, one of the most revered voices of Hawai'i."

–Jake Shimabukuro
world-renowned 'ukulele virtuoso & composer

A LEGACY OF HAWAIIAN SONG & STRING

VOLUME ONE

BY RAIATEA

"Raiatea's leo (voice) is sent from the heavens. She is one of a kind...."

–Kalani Pe'a
3-time GRAMMY® Award Winner
Hawaiian Singer, Songwriter & Music Producer





www.raiateahelm.com

For your GRAMMY® consideration
Best Regional Roots Music Album


"A Legacy of Hawaiian Song & String... is Raiatea and her view of the future, which will always connect to the past... Mahalo Raiatea for giving us this look through the Window...."

–Jon de Mello
President CEO, The Mountain Apple Company • Hawai'i



FOR YOUR GRAMMY® CONSIDERATION

BEST AFRICAN MUSIC PERFORMANCE



WOUTER KELLERMAN & DIAMOND PLATNUMZ

Pounds💰Dollars



Wouter and **Diamond** set out to do this pan-african collaboration to shine some light on East and South African music, and to help bring social cohesion and a message of togetherness to the African subcontinent, which is so important at the moment in an increasing xenophobic world.



For Your GRAMMY® Consideration

Shaun Drew

- BEST CONTEMPORARY CLASSICAL COMPOSITION
- BEST ORCHESTRAL PERFORMANCE

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FEATURING

Vladimir Martinka, Conductor
Czech National Symphony Orchestra
Northern Film Orchestra String Quartet



"Astonishing"
"sublime"
"heavenly"
"transcendent"



composer/producer
Shaun Drew

The Singularity Buzz:
"devastating melody"
"deeply moving"
"Absolutely beautiful"



FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

ONE NATION UNDER LOVE

PERFORMED BY
TINA KAROL & DIANE WARREN

WRITTEN BY

"LOVE TRANSCENDS BARRIERS —
EVEN IN THE DARKEST TIMES"
VOGUE

"MUSIC HAS ALWAYS PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE
IN LIFTING THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF A RESISTANCE,
OR REMINDING PEOPLE OF WHY SOME THINGS
ARE WORTH FIGHTING FOR"
Forbes

"ONE NATION UNDER LOVE"
IS A MOVING ANTHEM."
Numéro

For Your GRAMMY® Award Consideration

**BEST ROCK
PERFORMANCE**



DEAD & COMPANY
"CASEY JONES" 6/25/22
WRIGLEY FIELD (CHICAGO, IL)

DEAD & COMPANY'S 2023 FINAL TOUR GROSSED NEARLY \$115 MILLION AND BROKE THE ALL-TIME RECORD FOR SHOWS
PLAYED AT WRIGLEY FIELD WITH THEIR TENTH PERFORMANCE AT THE FAMED BALLPARK.


"NEEDLESS TO SAY, THE LEVEL OF MUSICIANSHIP IS HIGH AMONGST THE UBER-TIGHT SIX PIECE ENSEMBLE." - FORBES
AFTER AN HISTORIC SHOW AT CORNELL IN MAY, DEAD & COMPANY **DONATED \$3.1 MILLION** TO THE RECORDING ACADEMY'S
MUSICARES ORGANIZATION AND THE CORNELL 2030 PROJECT.

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(composer)




Octavian Nemescu
(composer)




Ashlee T. Busch
(composer)




James Lentini
(composer)



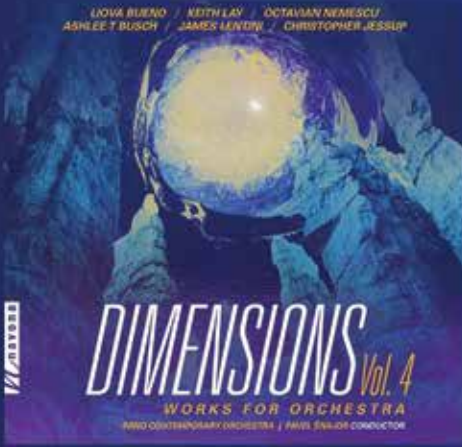
Christopher Jessup
(composer)



Brno Contemporary
Orchestra







Pavel Šnajdr
(conductor)



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WORKS FOR ORCHESTRA
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- BEST CHAMBER MUSIC/SMALL ENSEMBLE PERFORMANCE
- PRODUCER OF THE YEAR, CLASSICAL
- BEST ENGINEERED ALBUM, CLASSICAL

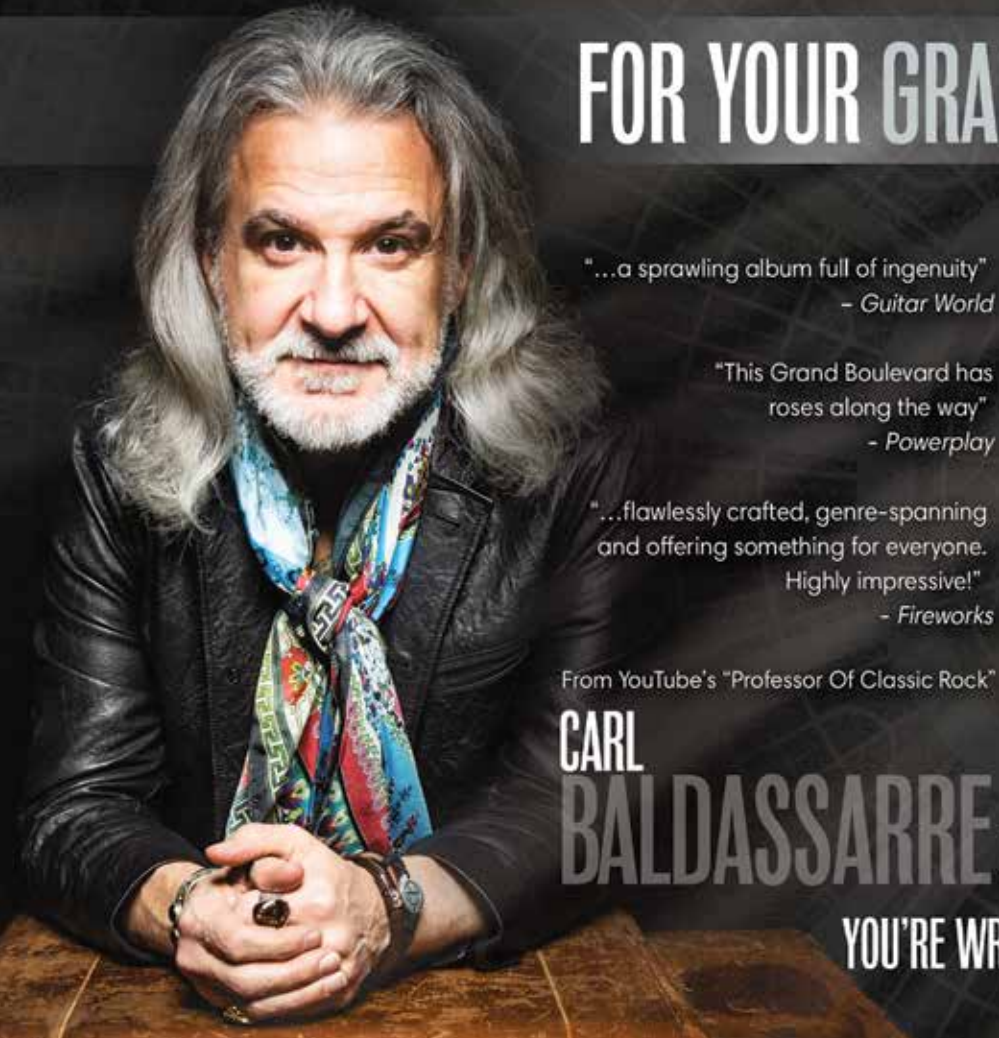
"It's a knockout... Kudos to Deutsche Grammophon for seizing the opportunity to widen the Sphinx Virtuosi's audience and the Sphinx Organisation's invaluable continuing achievements."
— *Gramophone Magazine*

"an engaging musical journey [and] an uplifting showpiece."
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SONGS FOR OUR TIMES



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"...a sprawling album full of ingenuity"
— *Guitar World*


"This Grand Boulevard has roses along the way"
— *Powerplay*

"...flawlessly crafted, genre-spanning and offering something for everyone. Highly impressive!"
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From YouTube's "Professor Of Classic Rock"

CARL BALDASSARRE **GRAND BOULEVARD** **ALBUM OF THE YEAR**

YOU'RE WRONG (DEAD WRONG) **BEST ROCK SONG**



GRAND BLVD
BALDASSARRE

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

Best Arrangement, Instrumental Or A Cappella:
BIRKS' WORKS by Dizzy Gillespie
Artist & Arranger: LISA HILTON
From The Album: Paradise Cove

Best Jazz Performance:
Igmar Thomas / Trumpet on
BIRKS' WORKS by Dizzy Gillespie
From The Album: Paradise Cove


LISTEN: BIRKS' WORKS & PARADISE COVE are on all streaming service
CONNECT: on socials with LisaHiltonMusic



LISA HILTON
PARADISE COVE

WATCH: YouTube.com/LisaHiltonMusic
FOR MORE INFORMATION: LisaHiltonMusic.com

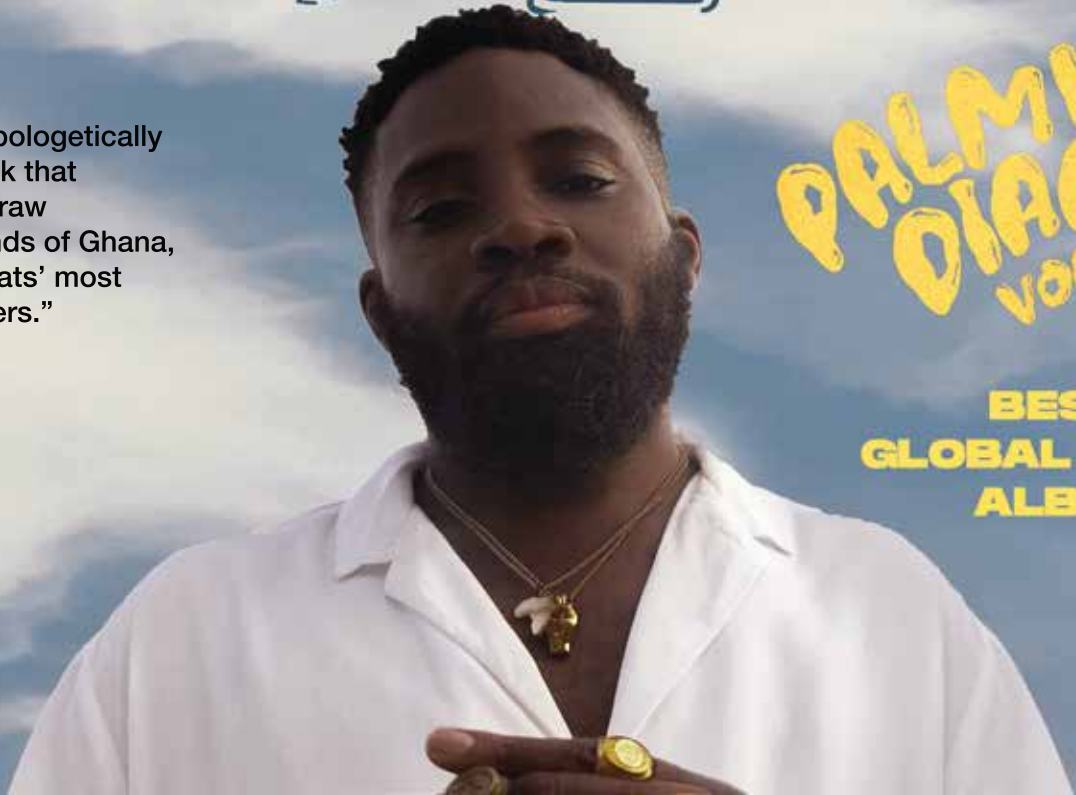
FOR YOUR GRAMMY® CONSIDERATION



"A soulful and unapologetically timeless soundtrack that overflows with the raw and authentic sounds of Ghana, from one of Afrobeats' most pioneering producers."

PALMWINE DIARIES VOL. I

BEST GLOBAL MUSIC ALBUM




For Your Consideration
Best Alternative Music Album



"Take My Hand was inspired by a desire to connect people to their inner selves, to each other, and to the world."

I believe we all have an innate capacity to rise, renew, and be present. For me, music is that force."

— Osmunda Music aka Rebecca Trujillo Vest



photo: Mark Maryanovich

ARCTIC MONKEYS
THE CAR

Album Of The Year / Best Alternative Music Album / Record Of The Year
Best Alternative Music Performance / Best Rock Performance / Best Rock Song
Best Engineered Album, Non-Classical



"They've crafted one of the most compelling catalogs in contemporary music, and Alex Turner has solidified his place as one of this generation's great songwriters and frontmen."

Rolling Stone 


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BEST FOLK ALBUM



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RAY ANGRY THREE

Best Jazz Instrumental Album
Best Jazz Performance
Round Midnight/No Space No Time



DAVID MURRAY • QUESTLOVE • RAY ANGRY

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For Your Consideration: ✨

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"He is a walking masterclass. A living legend. Ask any poet worth his salt."
— Malcolm-Jamal Warner



BEST SPOKEN WORD POETRY ALBUM

THUG HEALER VOL. I
LANGUAGE OF THE DISENFRANCHISED

TAALAM ACEY

CRITICAL ACCLAIM FOR

GREGORY ALAN ISAKOV'S

appaloosa bones



"Gregory Alan Isakov's celebrated brand of folk music has long carried with it a kind of tender turbulence – a marriage of dark and light qualities full of as much intimacy as they have intensity."
ATWOOD MAGAZINE

"His new songs are relentlessly majestic, a kind of musical morphine, invariably soothing."
AP Associated Press

"Gregory Alan Isakov remains standing as an essential voice in the folk scene."
sputnik music

"His velvet baritone glides over elegant and shimmering Wild West mirages."
MOJO

"Appaloosa Bones has become an Americana classic."
OOR

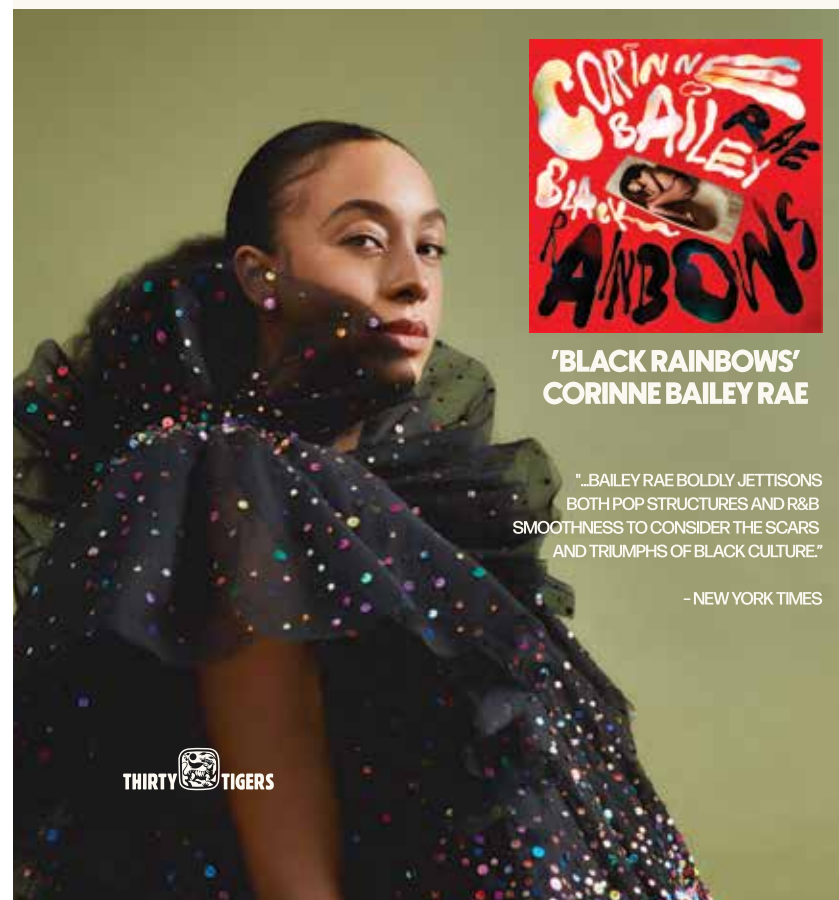
"This is Isakov's genius. He turns a short poem into a magnificent piece of music that can captivate for hours."
NO DEPRESSION

"Introspective lyrics and cumulus melodies... Isakov's most panoramic album."
UNCUT



DUALTONE

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'BLACK RAINBOWS'
CORINNE BAILEY RAE

"...BAILEY RAE BOLDLY JETTISONS BOTH POP STRUCTURES AND R&B SMOOTHNESS TO CONSIDER THE SCARS AND TRIUMPHS OF BLACK CULTURE."
- NEW YORK TIMES

THIRTY TIGERS



'SOMEONE YOU LOVE'
SARAH SILVERMAN

"...THE COMEDIAN CONTINUES TO EXPERTLY WALK THE LINE BETWEEN PROVOCATION AND SINCERITY."
- THE DAILY BEAST



FOR YOUR GRAMMY® CONSIDERATION

BEST NEW ARTIST

JVKE

"GOLDEN HOUR"

RECORD OF THE YEAR
BEST POP SOLO PERFORMANCE

"RISING POP TALENT"
Billboard

"HE PROVES HIMSELF TO BE A SONGWRITER CAPABLE OF NARRATIVE-BUILDING FAR BEYOND THE CONFINES OF A CATCHY VIRAL SNIPPET"
V Man

"CAPTIVATING A SPECTRUM OF EMOTIONS WITH HIS GENIUS MUSICAL MIND"
Earmilk

PERFORMANCES ON GOOD MORNING AMERICA, THE TONIGHT SHOW WITH JIMMY FALLON AND THE OFFICIAL TIMES SQUARE NEW YEAR'S EVE
SOLD OUT FIRST NATIONAL HEADLINE TOUR

AWAL

Rock & Roll Hall of Fame E Street Band Member • Neil Young Crazy Horse Band Member • Solo Artist

NILS LOFGREN



MOUNTAINS
Best Americana Album
featuring appearances by Ringo Starr, Neil Young, David Crosby, Ron Carter, Howard Gospel Choir, Cindy Mizelle

NOTHIN'S EASY (for Amy)
Best Americana Performance
featuring Neil Young

AIN'T THE TRUTH ENOUGH
Best American Roots Song
Best Music Video
featuring Ringo Starr

Produced by Nils and Amy Lofgren
www.nilslofgren.com

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CATTLE TRACK ROAD RECORDS

"...Lofgren's new album Mountains is nothing less than stunning, it doesn't happen that often, and not with the undeniable certainty of these ten songs"
Neil Young Archives/Bentley's Bandstand

"Nils Lofgren is one of the finest ever to grace recorded music, and with each album he delivers something we didn't know we needed but now somehow can't live without"
- Pop Matters

"This latest entry offers reminders of how well he occupies center stage. Passionate, powerfully delivered lyrics imbue the set...
- Americana Highways

"Lofgren serves up a reminder that he's every bit as formidable as the guys he hangs around."
- Relix

"Lofgren's vision of anger, love, hope and fear blossoms, making for a potent listening experience from start to finish"
- Jambands.com

"Outstanding"
- TIDAL Magazine

ORIGINAL MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK

REBELIÓN

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

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"REBELIÓN" ORIGINAL MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK

"THE BEST TROPICAL MUSIC SOUNDTRACK OF THE YEAR"
Charlie Sepúlveda

Music Produced by **Julio Bagué** featuring **ChocQuibTown** and **Ky-Mani Marley**

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26th FESTIVAL DE MALAGA

INTERVIEW WITH A CULTURE

RECORD ORIGINAL LATINOAMERICANA

REVENA DE PLATA A LA MEJOR MUSICA

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MUSIC BY ALACRAN RECORDS & VARIOUS ARTISTS

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"Interesting work exalting the work of maestro Joe Arroyo with a vision for today's Industry".
José Aguirre Producer and Musical Director of Grupo Niche

"Without a doubt one of the best productions of the year"
Rafael Poveda

"My friend Joe Arroyo must feel very proud of the way in which Bagué praised his musical legacy"
Enrique Córdoba

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Best New Age, Ambient, Or Chant Album



"This unique voyage into the deep blue sea feels significant, timeless, and heartfelt."

NEW AGE MUSIC GUIDE

"A brilliant music tribute... The music holds deep sentimentality and tenderness, in what is a very beautiful tribute to her late mother. Kirsten captures the mood so perfectly, you can almost hear the seagulls in the distance... The album is delightfully unrushed, with the aimless exploration of plucked notes and arpeggios that you might expect on a holiday or, for those of us stuck grudgingly at work, a montage to play memories of happier days."

CLASSICAL Crossover

"Kirsten skillfully weaves her deep connection with the ocean and the cherished memories of her mother into a tapestry of evocative melodies."

HAILTUNES

"Kirsten's Aquamarine is... a spirit caressing, free-flowing straight through immersion from the hypnotic, gently strummed ambient title track through the spacious and haunting, chamber-tinged Into the Mist, which conveys a profound sense of wonder and mystery - and by extension, gratitude."

JONATHAN WIDRAN - THE JW VIBE



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or go to:
kirstencopelymusic.com/fyc

"LAUFEY'S ASCENDENCY TO MAJOR-LEAGUE POP ARTIST IS ONE OF THE MOST HEARTENING MUSICAL PHENOMENA OF THE LAST COUPLE OF YEARS" - *Variety*

"SHE COMPOSES WITH AN EAR FOR TIMELESSNESS." *Washington Post*

"SHE IS A MUSICAL TOUR DE FORCE" *Los Angeles Times*

"LAUFEY IS THE VIRAL ICELANDIC PRODIGY BRINGING JAZZ TO GEN Z" - *VOGUE*

"CONFIDENT AND MUSICALLY AMBITIOUS" *NME* 5 STARS

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BEST NEW ARTIST

LAUFEY

BEWITCHED

**ALBUM OF THE YEAR
BEST TRADITIONAL
POP VOCAL ALBUM**

"FROM THE START"

**RECORD OF THE YEAR
SONG OF THE YEAR
BEST POP SOLO PERFORMANCE**

AWAL

For Your GRAMMY® Award Consideration
BEST CONTEMPORARY INSTRUMENTAL ALBUM

**THE
POWER
STATION
SESSIONS**

**The
Pat Petrillo
Big Rhythm
Band**

"Tons of stylistic variety and talent on one record!"

★★★★ *All About Jazz*

Featuring

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- Oz Noy
- John Popper
- Felicia Collins
- Lenny Pickett

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JOHN CLAYTON
HOUSTON PERSON
FAMILY TREE

jazz in its purest form

Best Jazz
Instrumental
Album

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IMAJ FOR YOUR GRAMMY[®] CONSIDERATION



SCAN ME FOR MUSIC



“LOVE ONLY LOVE”
Written & Arranged by IMAJ, Ron Grimes
Produced by Ron Grimes / Mastered by Randy Merrill

SONG OF THE YEAR
RECORD OF THE YEAR
BEST POP SOLO PERFORMANCE

“UN-TRAILER TRASH”
Written & Arranged by IMAJ, Kassandra Thomas
Produced, Mixed & Mastered by Buddy Hyatt

BEST COUNTRY SOLO PERFORMANCE
BEST COUNTRY SONG
BEST MUSIC VIDEO

LOVEIMAJ.COM



FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION



JOEL GOODMAN An Exquisite Moment

FEATURING: Randy Brecker, Brandee Younger, Donny McCaslin, Lisa Fischer, John Patitucci, Adam Rogers, Eric Harland, Philippe Saisse, Mino Cinélu, Scott Colley

Best Alternative Jazz Album
An Exquisite Moment

Best Jazz Performance
What Dreamers Dream

Best Instrumental Composition
The Mystery of Trees
(Joel Goodman)

Best Engineered Album, Non-Classical
An Exquisite Moment
(Elliot Scheiner, Joe Mardin, & Alex DeTurk)


Best Arrangement, Instrumental Or A Cappella
Astral Projection - mvmts 1-4
(arranged by Joel Goodman & Joe Mardin)

Best Arrangement, Instruments And Vocals
An Exquisite Moment
(arranged by Joe Mardin & Joel Goodman)

This album of many moods and colors had me digging deep to keep up with the harmonic and emotional nuances of Joel's compositions. This whole project provided me with many "Exquisite Moments"!
~ Randy Brecker

"An Exquisite Moment" goes well beyond the usual practice of tunes with improvised solos. It is a shining example of group improvisation which transcends the ordinary.
~ Raul Midon







October
project

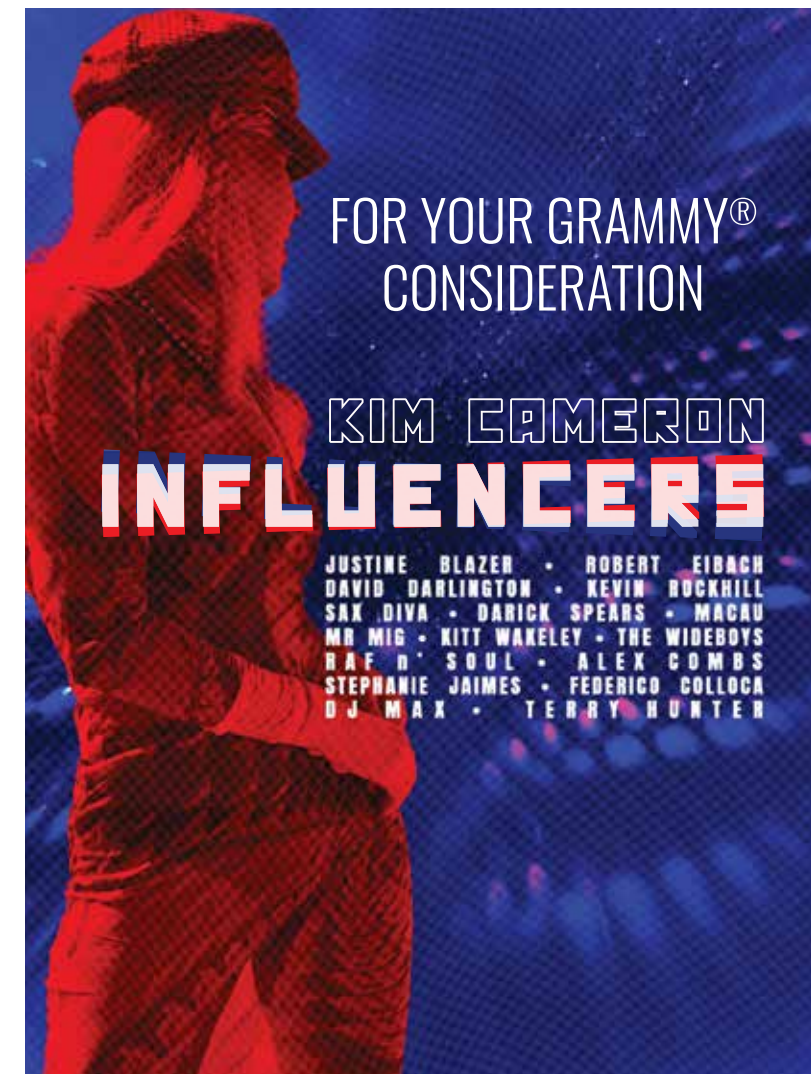
IN A CATEGORY OF THEIR OWN

For Your
GRAMMY®
Consideration

Best Music Video
Angels in the Garden
Sand Art, Kseniya Simonova

octoberprojectmusic.com | bit.ly/aboutangels



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CONSIDERATION

KIM CAMERON
INFLUENCERS

JUSTINE BLAZER • ROBERT EIDACH
DAVID DARLINGTON • KEVIN ROCKHILL
SAX DIVA • DARICK SPEARS • MACAU
MR MIG • KITT WAKELEY • THE WIDEBOYS
RAF N' SOUL • ALEX COMBS
STEPHANIE JAIMES • FEDERICO COLLOCA
DJ MAX • TERRY HUNTER

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION
**BEST GLOBAL
MUSIC ALBUM**

SAMBALISMO
Cara Pieratta



"One of the year's best Brazilian albums! From songwriting and arrangements to performance. It's simply world-class!"
-Scott Adams, Connect Brazil

"The expressiveness and technical mastery in Cara Pieratta's voice underscores Brazil's tradition of great female singers - from Sylvia Telles to Gal Costa. Breathtaking beauty... nothing short of remarkable!"
-Ernesto Lechner, LA Times

"Refreshing Brazilian music. Unique vintage voice. Cara is the whole deal, you can feel as soon as you hear her first note."
-Aaron Byrd, KCRW LA




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Pia Renee

333
AVAILABLE NOW!



INCLUDES THE HIT SINGLE
"TOUCH"

BEST R&B ALBUM

ACCLAIMED VOCALIST • BASSIST • SONG WRITER
PIARENEE.COM

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"FORGOTTEN VOICES" – Best Classical Compendium

Forgotten Voices is a song cycle commissioned by Music Kitchen – Food for the Soul, the pioneer organization to bring classical music to those experiencing homelessness, featuring comments by homeless shelter clients set to music by 15 Award-Winning Composers.



Featured Composers:
Courtney Bryan, Jon Grier, Kelly Hall-Tompkins, Gabriel Kahane, James Lee III, Beata Moon, Paul Moravec, Angelica Negron, Kevin Puts, Steve Sandberg, Kamala Sankaram, Jeff Scott, Carlos Simon, Errollyn Wallen and Ellen Taaffe Zwilich

Featured Artists:
Allison Charney, soprano; Adrienne Danrich, soprano; Jesse Blumberg, baritone; Mark Risinger, bass; Kelly Hall-Tompkins, violin; Ling Ling Huang, violin; Andrew Gonzalez, viola; Alexis Gerlach, cello; Peter Seidenberg, cello and John-Paul Norpoth, double bass.



Scan here to listen:



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Sold-Out Carnegie Hall World Premiere of the Song Cycle

www.MusicKitchennyc.org www.KellyHall-Tompkins.com

For Your GRAMMY® Consideration
Best Alternative Jazz Album

BRAXTON COOK
WHO ARE YOU WHEN NO ONE IS WATCHING?

"Meters"
Best Jazz Performance

"90s" featuring Masego
Best R&B Performance • Best R&B Song

"Indie"
Best Instrumental Composition

"Serene"
Best Arrangement, Instrumental Or A Capella

"The Answer"
Best Arrangement, Instruments And Vocals

Named One of The Most Anticipated Albums of 2023
BET • OkayPlayer

The 17-song odyssey is an exploration into what's possible within the future of jazz, R&B, soul and hip-hop. The title, *Who Are You When No One is Watching?* incites themes of perception and Braxton addresses viewpoints on race injustice, love in the media, marriage, fatherhood, and what it means to succeed in our world. His new epic holds up a mirror to ourselves and the society around us. It's at once confrontational, thoughtful, and sentimental.

"Making jazz-R&B for the next generation"
PAPER

"...a superb offering...delivers a modern jazz album that feels urgent."
okayplayer



FOR YOUR GRAMMY® CONSIDERATION
I Am Waiting
featuring
TODD RUNDGREN

KENTON EMERSON

Best Alternative Music Performance

"Lighting up a new twist on an old Stones classic"
Kester Smith (Taj Mahal Trio)



DOWN
SF1

"If you're looking for an excuse to shake your hips, you've found it."
303 Magazine

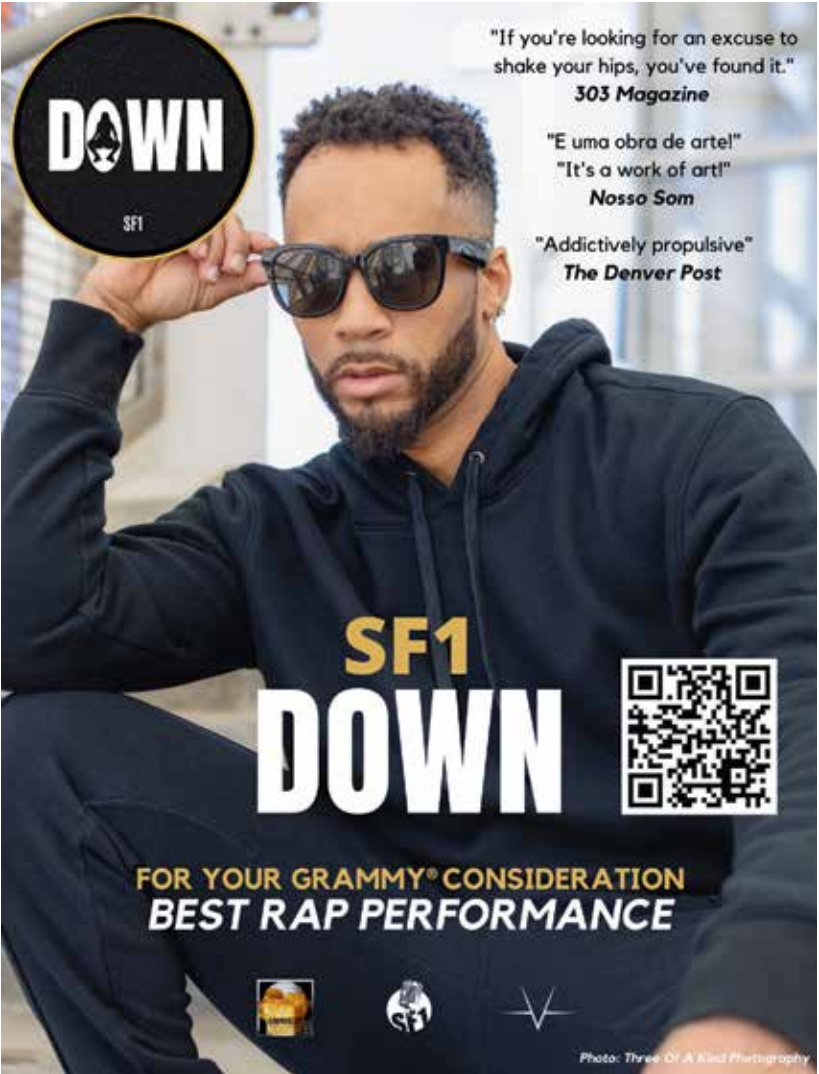
"E uma obra de arte!"
"It's a work of art!"
Nosso Som

"Addictively propulsive!"
The Denver Post

SF1
DOWN

FOR YOUR GRAMMY® CONSIDERATION
BEST RAP PERFORMANCE

FOR YOUR GRAMMY® CONSIDERATION
BEST RAP PERFORMANCE



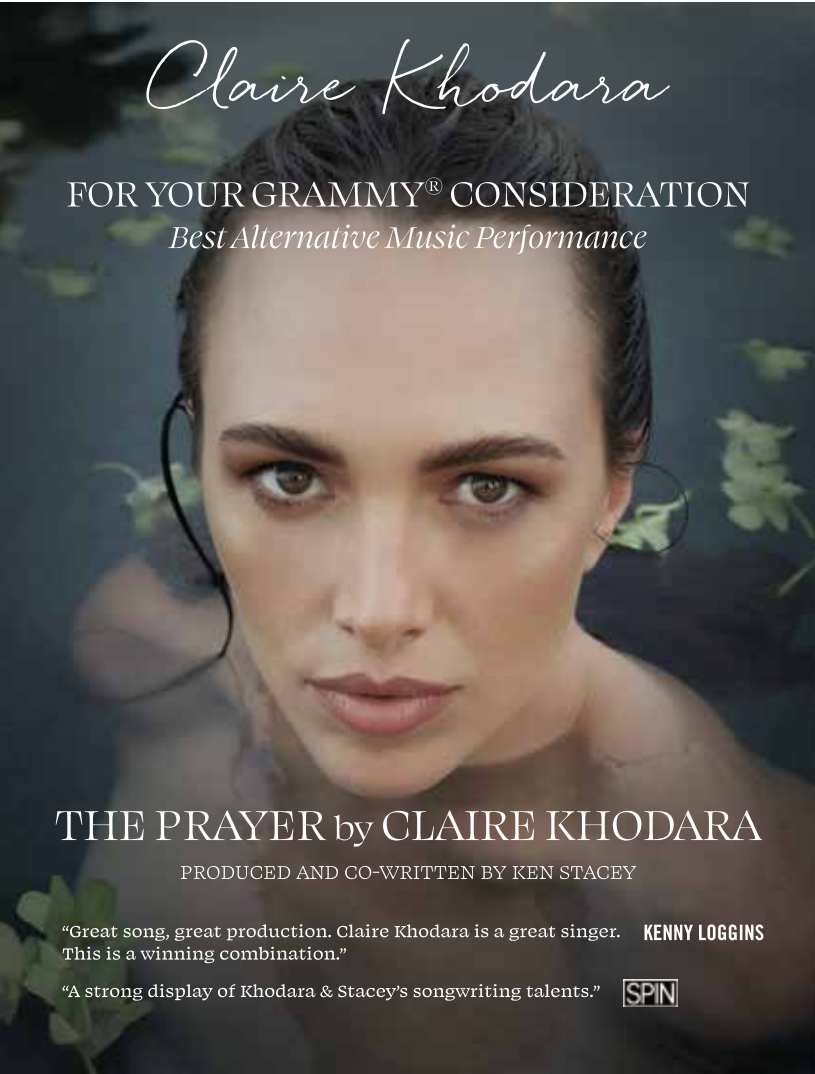
Claire Khodara

FOR YOUR GRAMMY® CONSIDERATION
Best Alternative Music Performance

THE PRAYER by **CLAIRE KHODARA**
PRODUCED AND CO-WRITTEN BY **KEN STACEY**

"Great song, great production. Claire Khodara is a great singer. This is a winning combination."
KENNY LOGGINS

"A strong display of Khodara & Stacey's songwriting talents."
SPIN



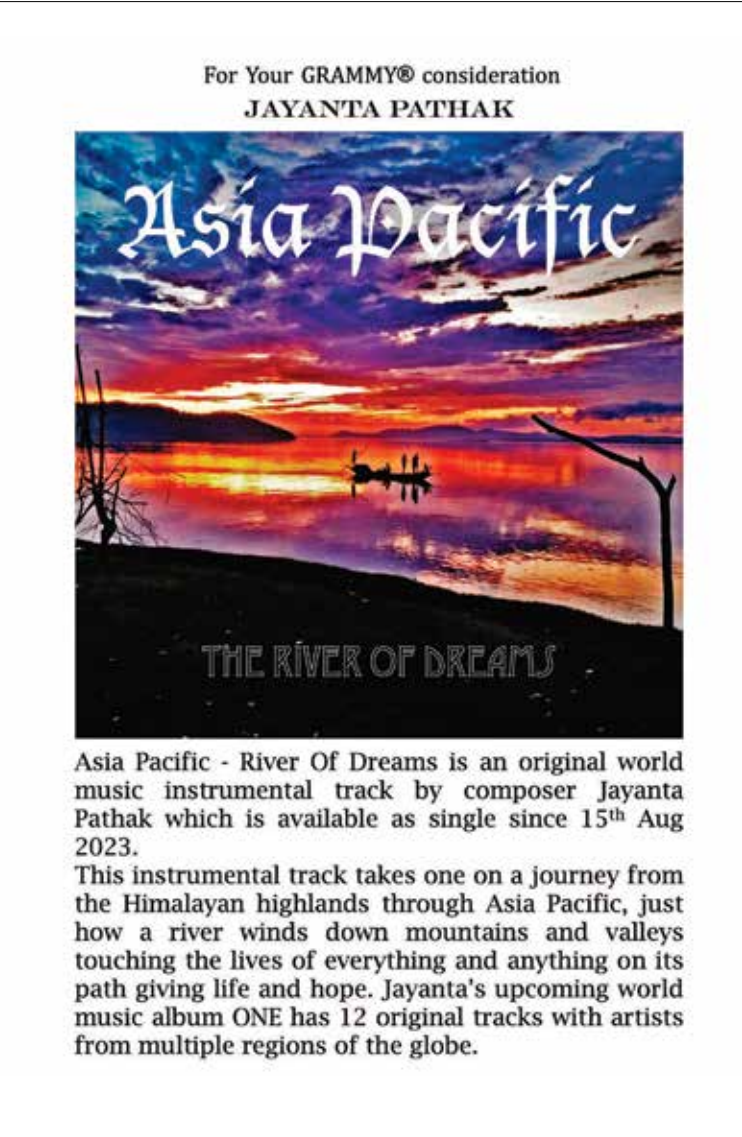
For Your GRAMMY® consideration
JAYANTA PATHAK

Asia Pacific

THE RIVER OF DREAMS

Asia Pacific - River Of Dreams is an original world music instrumental track by composer Jayanta Pathak which is available as single since 15th Aug 2023.

This instrumental track takes one on a journey from the Himalayan highlands through Asia Pacific, just how a river winds down mountains and valleys touching the lives of everything and anything on its path giving life and hope. Jayanta's upcoming world music album ONE has 12 original tracks with artists from multiple regions of the globe.



GRAMMY® Award-winner and Three-time GRAMMY® Award-nominee
DARLENE KOLDENHOVEN
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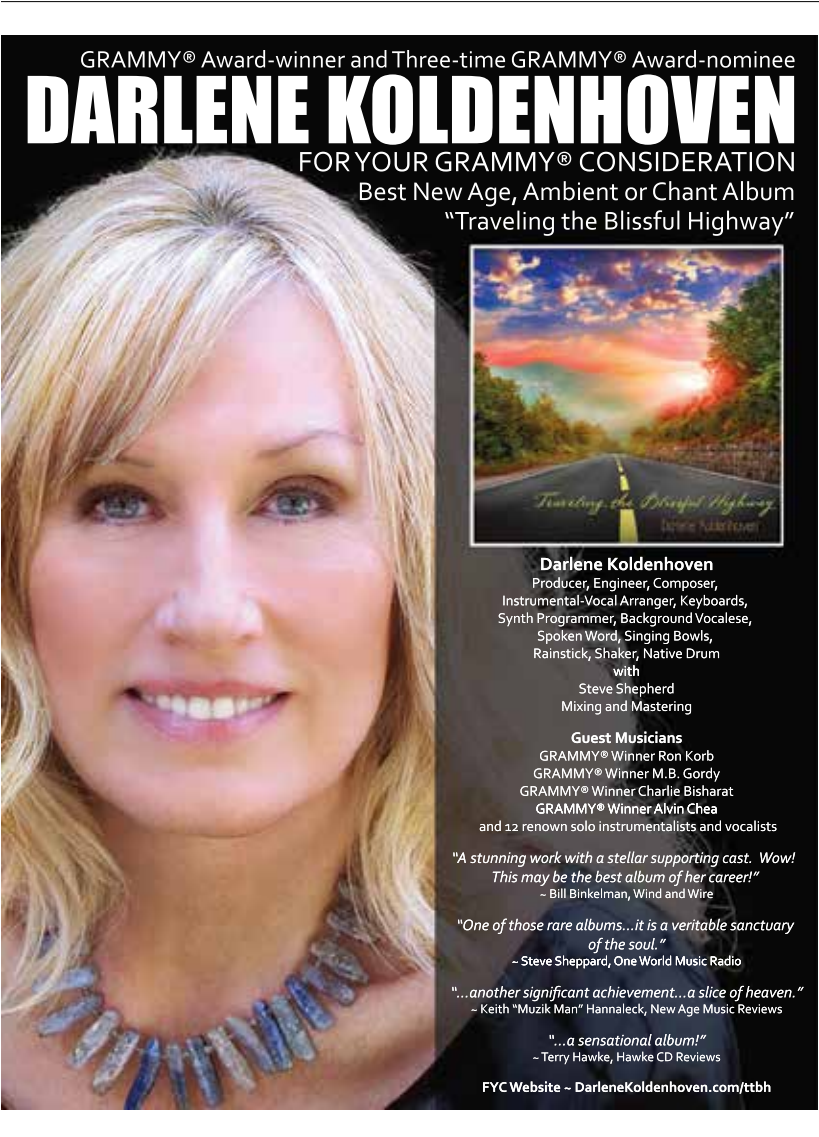
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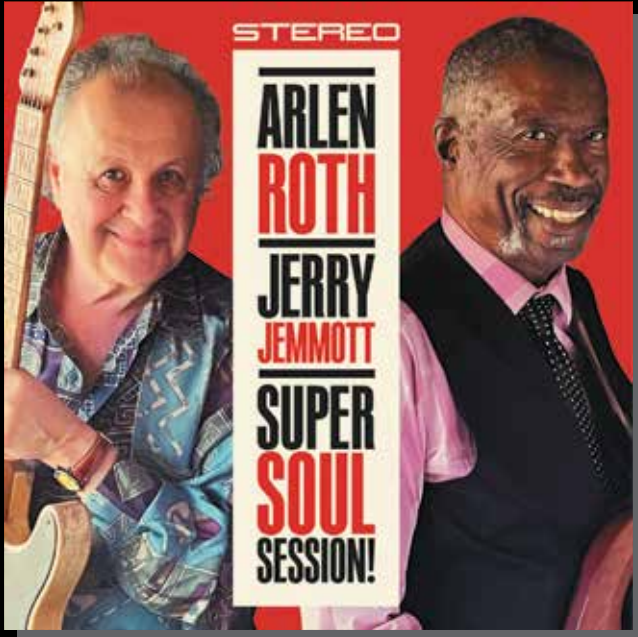
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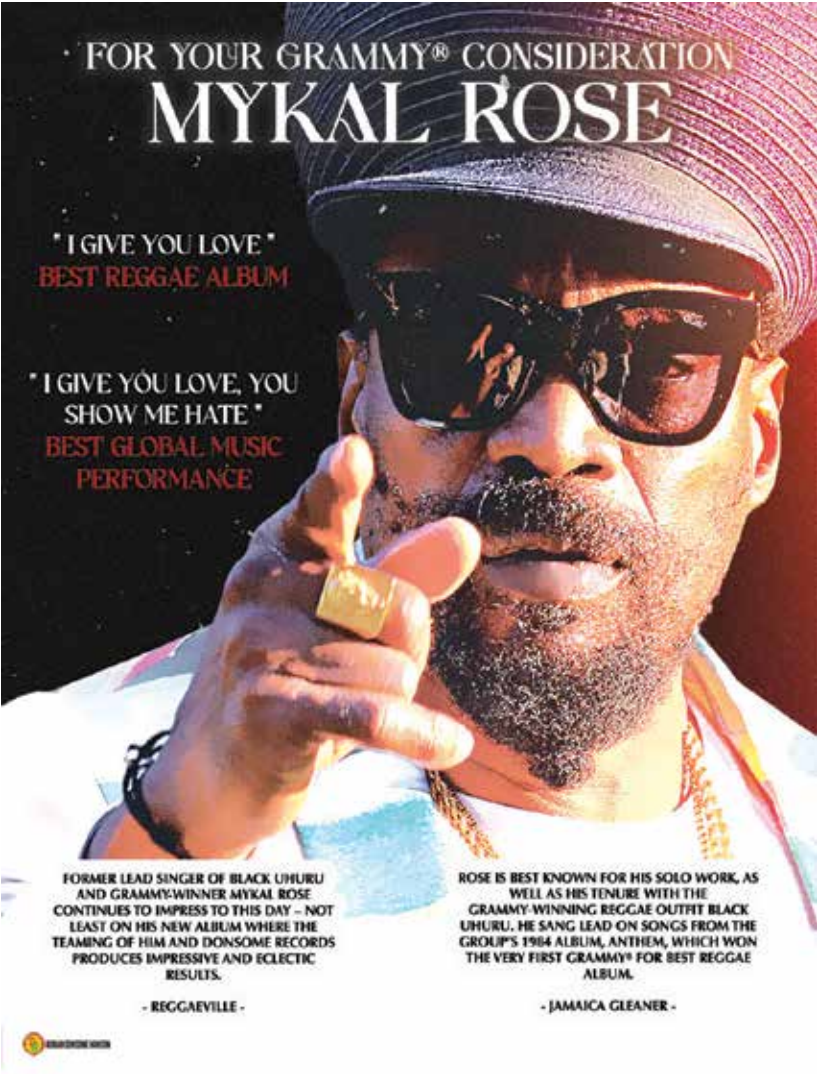


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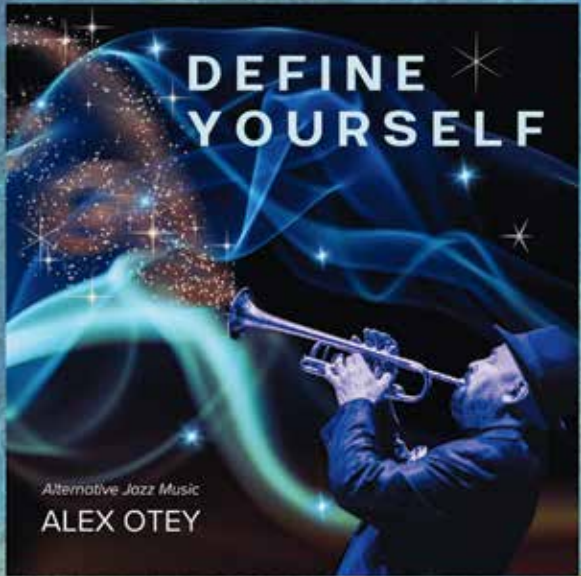
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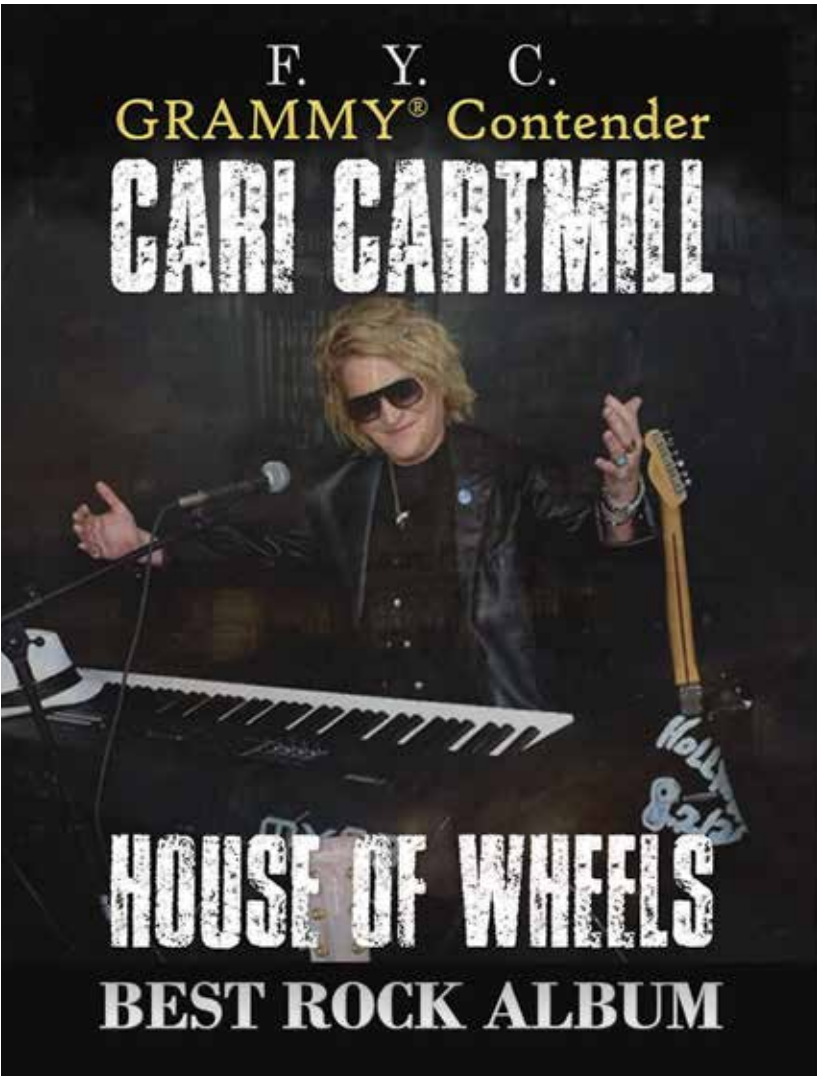
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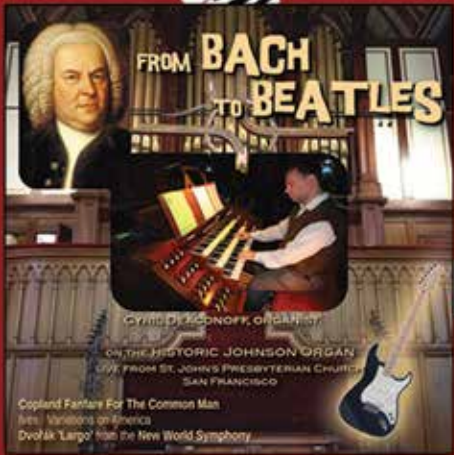
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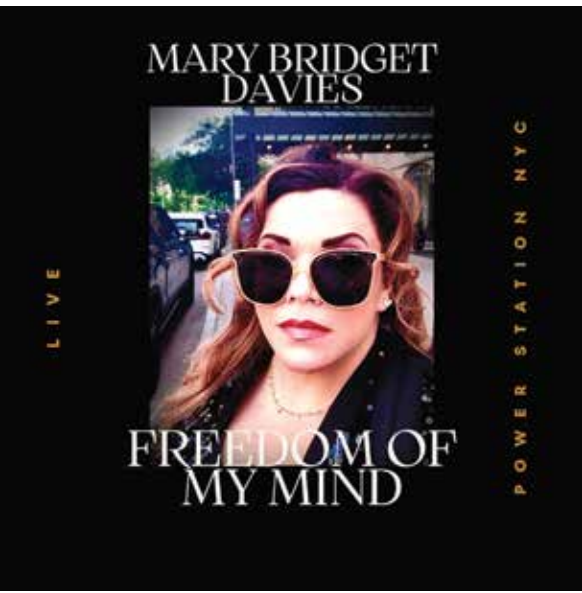
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Teddy Swims
photographed
Sept. 15 in New York.

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TEDDY SWIMS

Why the soulful singer-songwriter
had to “Lose Control” to take off

BY JOSH GLICKSMAN


PHOTOGRAPHED BY MEREDITH JENKS

► Over five days at a writing camp in Palm Springs, Calif., R&B-soul artist Teddy Swims had a professional breakthrough amid personal turmoil. “I was so unhinged,” recalls the singer-songwriter, who was experiencing a rough breakup. “I just needed to say a lot of stuff.” He left with half of the songs that would appear on his debut album, including what became his breakout hit, “Lose Control.” Rooted in prodding piano production and grounded by a characteristically staggering vocal, the R&B-pop ballad, which details a relationship tainted by substance abuse, arrived in late June. By August, it had become Teddy Swims’ first entry on the *Billboard* Hot 100. “I knew this [song] was going to change my life,” he says.

Born Jaten Dimsdale, the 31-year-old began performing at his suburban Atlanta high school, trading football for musical theater and releasing a hardcore EP with his band in his senior year. In the years that followed, he explored genres including country, alternative and metal in a number of different groups. “He was doing every single thing that you could possibly do,” says Luke Conway, his manager since early 2019. That June, Teddy Swims uploaded a YouTube cover of Michael Jackson’s “Rock With You” that went viral. More covers followed, with renditions of Shania Twain’s “You’re Still the One” and Mario’s “Let Me Love You” each passing 100 million YouTube views. Before long, a dozen labels had made offers, and in December, Teddy Swims signed to Warner Records.

While the covers grew Teddy Swims’ audience, his priority upon signing was to create an identity all his own. “Some people get stuck in that world and never make it out,” he says. “I wanted to be an artist with my music.” He worked with veteran songwriter-producers like Julian Bunetta and John Ryan to help hone his voice. Having written hundreds of songs, he now says, “They started this idea of the signature Teddy sound that I feel like I’m finally nailing now.”

That sound punctuates the 10 songs on his September debut album, *I’ve Tried Everything but Therapy (Part 1)*, and it’s best illustrated on “Lose Control.” After its initial release, he shared three new versions — live, strings and piano — as the song gained steam at streaming and radio. On the charts dated Oct. 7, “Lose Control” holds at its No. 67 high on the Hot 100 and reaches a new No. 26 peak on Adult Pop Airplay. As the hit swells, Conway says the strategy isn’t to hurry a follow-up. “We have to be protective,” he says. “This is the golden egg we’ve been fighting to dig out of the ground for years. We see the life span of this song.”

Teddy Swims is on a 43-date North American tour, and as his album title suggests, there are plans for another installment. He says it could arrive by the middle of next year, though the writing likely won’t begin until after the tour. “I’m hoping the next time is me falling back in love and moving on,” he says. With a laugh, he adds, “Or it’s more sad shit. Life is happening to us, what are you going to do?” 

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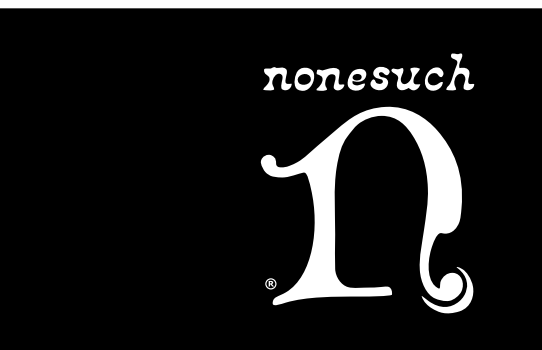
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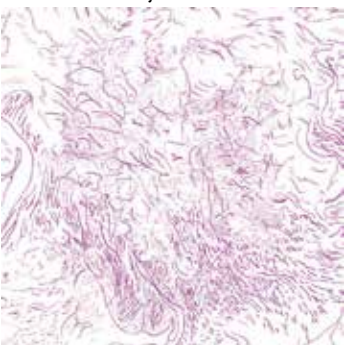
Julia Bullock



Rachael & Vilray



Carminho



Tom Skinner



Grimes/Snider/Negrón/Nova/Shaw: A Far Cry & Shara Nova



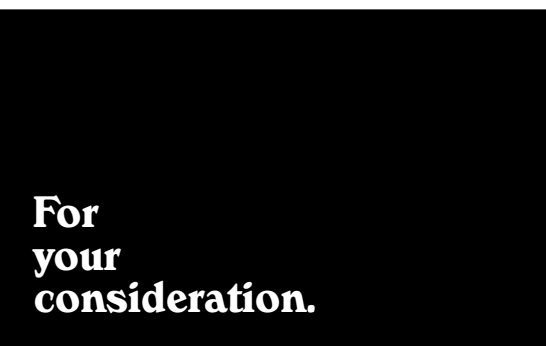
Sam Gendel



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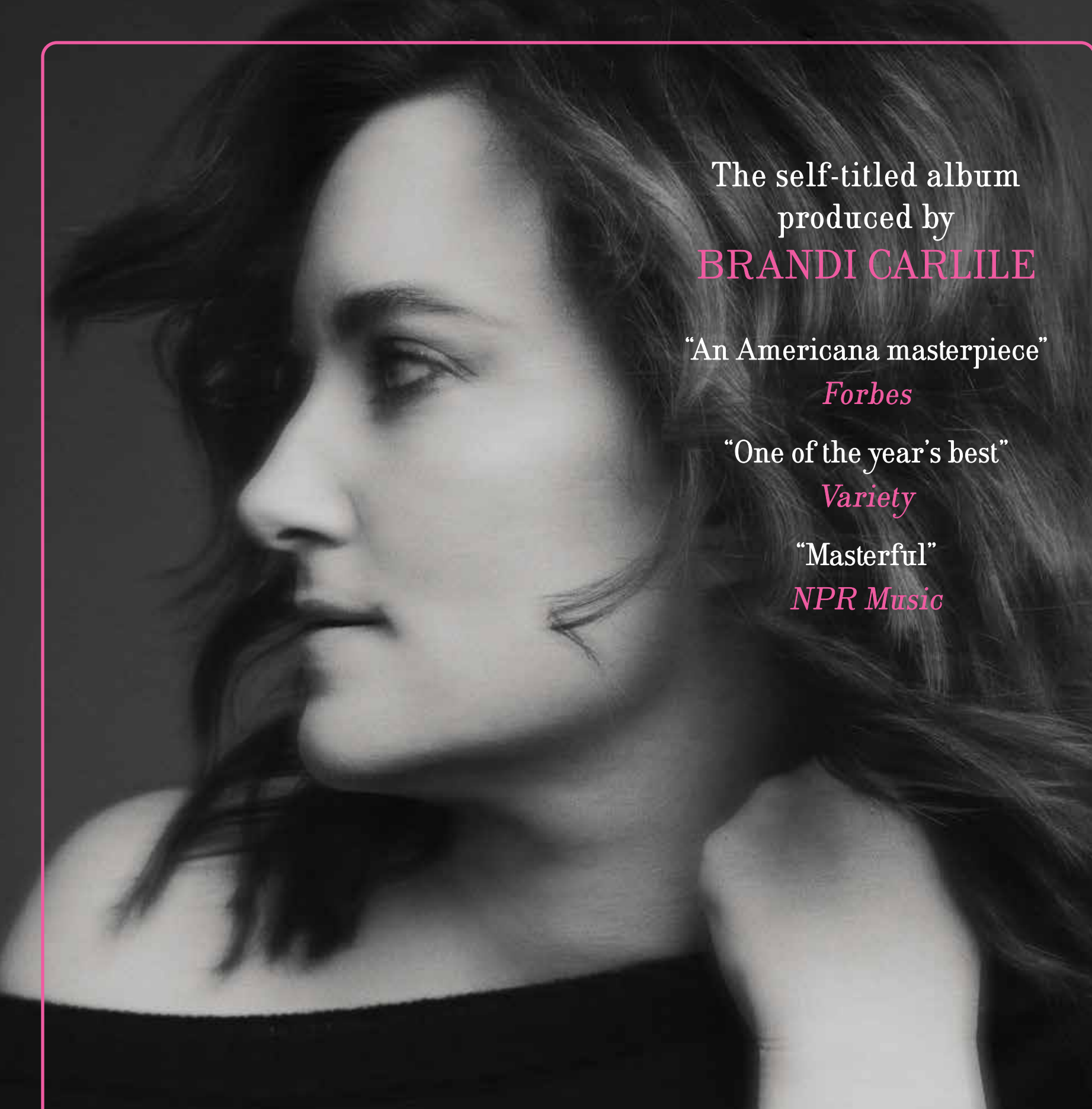
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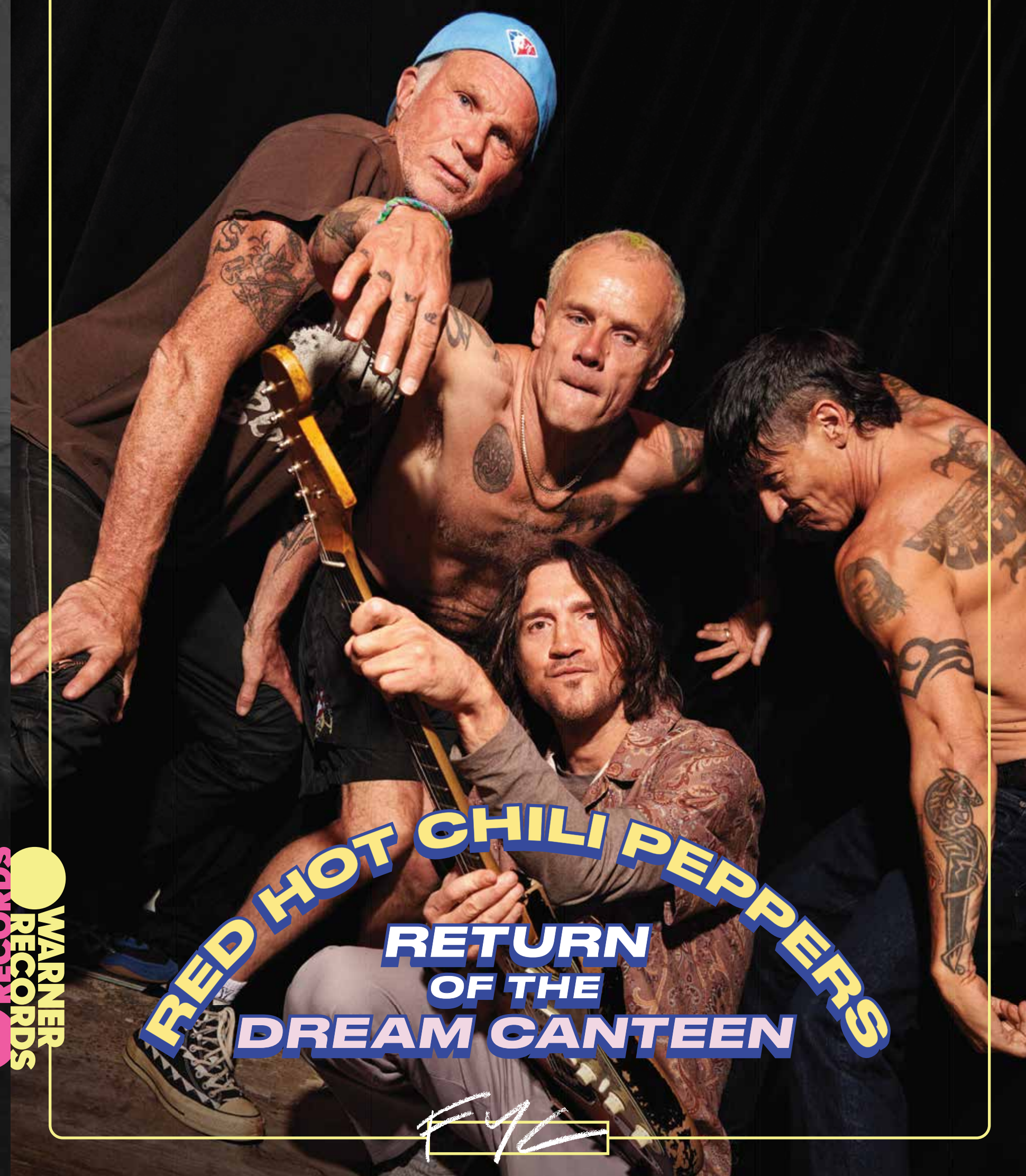
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