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HOW TO GREEN THE MUSIC SCENE



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2024

02/15/24 CUIDAD DE MEXICO
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 11/07/24 CHICAGO, IL
 11/08/24 CHICAGO, IL
 11/09/24 CHICAGO, IL
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Billboard will publish its next issue on April 27. For 24/7 music coverage, go to billboard.com.

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KENNY CHESNEY

NEW ALBUM

BORN

FEATURING 'TAKE HER HOME'

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charts

DATA FOR WEEK OF 3.30.2024



Teddy Swims Wins With 'Lose Control'

IT'S ONLY ONE O'CLOCK, but it's five somewhere, ain't it?" Teddy Swims jokes to *Billboard*. Upon learning that "Lose Control" had become his first No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100, the singer-songwriter (born Jaten Dimsdale) says he called his mother to celebrate the accomplishment, then rejoiced with tequila during his March 25 interview.

The song crowns the Hot 100 (dated March 30) with 59.1 million airplay audience impressions, 23.2 million official streams and 8,000 sold in the United States in the week ending March 21, according to Luminate.

Notably, "Lose Control" completes the longest climb to No. 1, by weeks on the chart, for a title by a solo man in the Hot 100's history: 32. Overall, it's the fifth-most scenic route to the list's summit.

The track is from the Conyers, Ga., native's debut Warner Records studio set, *I've Tried Everything but Therapy (Part I)*, which has earned 380,000 equivalent album units. He signed with the label on Christmas Eve 2019 after breaking through with a viral cover of Michael Jackson's "Rock With You" earlier that year.

Teddy Swims co-wrote "Lose Control" with Julian Bunetta, Josh Coleman, Infamous and Mikky Ekko.

"You know what? I was going to be so depressed if we peaked at No. 2 – I wanted the whole thing," Teddy Swims says. "I was so scared I was never going to get out of covers, so to this point ... my own song being No. 1 ... I couldn't be more grateful. I feel so protected. I feel like God's favorite kid right now. It feels so good."
—GARY TRUST

**BILLBOARD
HOT 100**

1

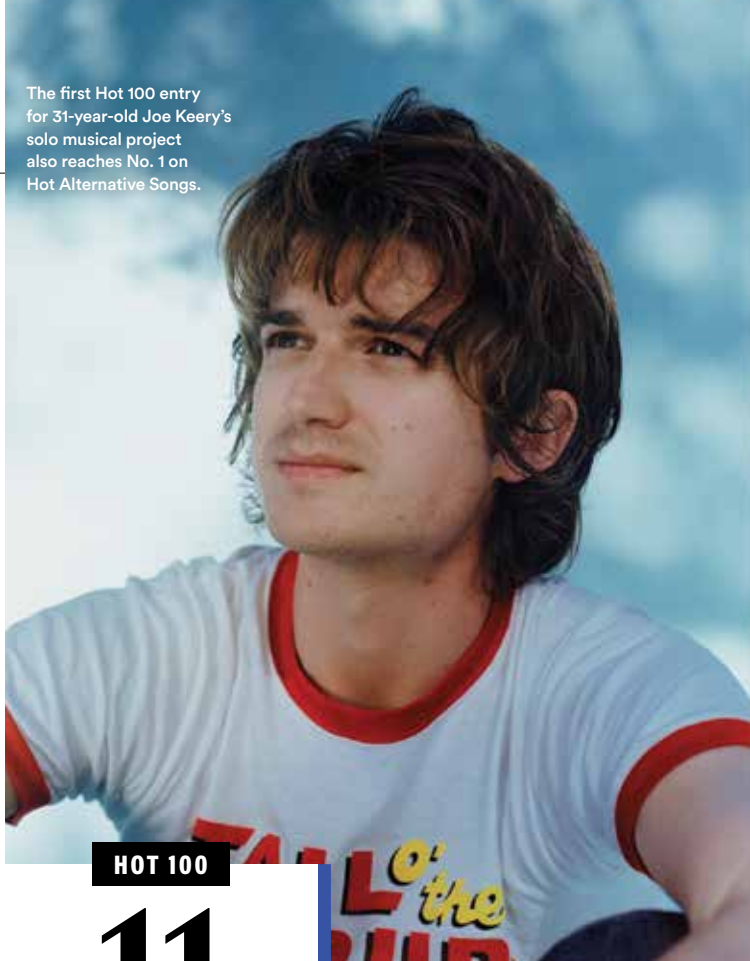
"Lose Control"
Teddy Swims

LAST WEEK	PEAK POSITION	WEEKS ON CHART
2	1	32

Hot 100

WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title <small>PRODUCER (SONGWRITER)</small>	Artist <small>IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL</small>	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
2	2	1	#1 for 1 WEEK Lose Control INFAMOUS, AMMO, J. BUNETTA (J.E. COLEMAN, J.C. BUNETTA, M. RODRIGUEZ, DIAZ, MIKKY EKKO, J.C. DIMSDALE) SWIMS INT./WARNER	Teddy Swims	1	32
4	3	2	Beautiful Things E. BLAIR (B. BOONE, E. BLAIR, J.L. LARSEN)	Benson Boone	2	9
-	1	3	AIR We Can't Be Friends (Wait For Your Love) A. GRANDE, MAX MARTIN, ILYA (A. GRANDE, MAX MARTIN, I. SALMANZADEH)	Ariana Grande	1	2
3	5	4	Lovin On Me OZ, NIK, D.S. MOMBEMGER (J. THARLOW, D. YILDRIM, N. FRASCONA, S. MOMBEMGER, N.J. PABON, D.M. GREER, R. NELTON)	Jack Harlow	1	19
1	4	5	Carnival YE, TY DOLLA SIGN, THE LABCOOK, THE LEGENDARY TRAXSTER, DJ VOLTA (YE, T.W. GRIFFIN, JR., D.L. ROGERS, M. WILLIAMS, G. DICKINSON, J.T. CARTER, S.C. LINDLEY)	Ye & Ty Dolla Sign Featuring Rich The Kid & Playboi Carti	1	6
5	6	6	Texas Hold 'Em B.KNOWLES CARTER, KILLAH B.N.FERRARO, RAPHAEL SAADIQ (B.G.KNOWLES CARTER, E.L.BOLAND, M.BULOW, B.V.BATES, N.FERRARO, RAPHAEL SAADIQ)	Beyonce	1	6
7	9	7	I Remember Everything Z.L.BRYAN (Z.L.BRYAN, K.MUSGRAVES)	Zach Bryan Featuring Kacey Musgraves	1	30
6	8	8	Greedy R.B.TEDDER, J.L.HARRIS, G.BOUTIN (T.MCRAE, R.B.TEDDER, J.L.HARRIS, A.R.ALLEN)	Tate McRae	3	27
HOT SHOT DEBUT	9	9	Enough (Miami) O.G.PARKER, TEE ROMANO (CARDI B, J.J.PARKER, T.WILLIAMS, J.D.STEED)	Cardi B	9	1
10	13	10	Cruel Summer J.M.ANTONOFF, T.SWIFT (T.SWIFT, J.M.ANTONOFF, A.E.CLARK)	Taylor Swift	1	46
23	21	11	End Of Beginning D.J.O.A.THEIN (J.KEERY)	Djo	11	5
11	15	12	Stick Season G.SIMON, N.KAHAN (N.KAHAN)	Noah Kahan	10	25
9	12	13	Agora Hills EARL ON THE BEAT, GENTI, JOHN BAPTISTE, BANGS (A.R.Z.DLAMINI, L.E.BYNUM, G.MEMISHI, J.B.KOLAME, B.PEPPLE, B.HOLLAND, M.SMITH)	Doja Cat	7	26
8	11	14	Snooze BABYFACE, K.VAN RIDDICK-TYNES, L.THOMAS, BLK (S.I. ROWE, BABYFACE, K.VAN RIDDICK-TYNES, L.G.THOMAS III, B.FERGUSON)	SZA	2	66
27	34	15	SAL/STM Never Lose Me GERREAU (T.M.CARTER, G.KATANA, D.FORD, M.R. REGISTER, D.M.HAYES, H.KIRIGAYA, G.HENRY)	Flo Milli	15	14
15	18	16	Last Night J.MOI (J.BYRON, A.G.GORLEY, J.K.HINDLIN, CHARLIE HANDSOME)	Morgan Wallen	1	60
13	14	17	Saturn C.LANG, R.BISEL, SOLOMONOPHONIC, MONSUNE (S.I. ROWE, C.LANG, R.BISEL, J.SOLOMON, S.ZHANG)	SZA	6	4
14	20	18	Fast Car CHIP MATTHEWS, J.D.SINGLETON, L.COMBS (T.L.CHAPMAN)	Luke Combs	2	52
61	7	19	Act II: Date @ 8 S.IREOLUWA (N.BENNETT)	4Batz Featuring Drake	7	11
17	19	20	Water SAMMY SOSO, RAYO (T.L. SEETHA, A. IROSO, G. LEWIS, C. KEAY, S. AWUKU, R.E.H. GOUFER, D. ZUCCA, J.P. LOMASTRO, C.A. STEWART, S. SOSO)	Tyla	7	25

Go to the Chart Beat section of billboard.com for complete charts coverage.



HOT 100 11 "End of Beginning" Djo

How was "End of Beginning" made?
At the time [in fall 2021], I was living in Los Angeles. I had punched the chords out really quick and had an idea for a melody and then banged out the instrumental in the studio pretty much in a day. The album [2022's *Decide*] is full of extra production, so I was feeling like, "Let's make the simplest thing we could possibly make." Verse-chorus-verse-chorus-bridge-chorus and be done. That was the goal: Try to work fast and not overcomplicate things. The lyrics came a bit later. I really like to take the songs outside and walk around; that's when I'm best at thinking up lyrics.

How does the song's success affect your marketing strategy for this side of your career?
In the same way that we haven't really been able to tour — a lot of that has been my schedule for shooting [Netflix's *Stranger Things*] being all over the place — the same kind of thing with marketing stuff. You spend all this time making the music, and you do want to market it properly. Now that the word is out more on the project and it's less of a secret between the people who know, [it] seems like a change in the way that the project is marketed could be cool. I'm still figuring it out, really. I am always really interested when people use marketing to their advantage.

Is there a difference in how you feel receiving praise for something you've acted in versus something you've created as a musician?
Definitely. [Being] a performer as to a writer is really the distinction to be made that I've found rewarding. To share something that people take in as their own and repurpose for their own life is really cool. Obviously, I've had amazing experiences on [Stranger Things] — the fan base is incredible. To see people wearing your character as a Halloween costume is unbelievable. But it does scratch a different itch. I just feel super lucky.

—JOSH GLICKSMAN

HOT 100 FIRST-TIMERS

Artists who have recently made their initial appearances on the chart

ARTIST	SONG	DEBUT POSITION	DEBUT DATE
Nonna	"Ordinary Things" with Ariana Grande	55	March 23
Dasha	"Austin"	74	March 23
Bryan Martin	"We Ride"	96	March 30
FloyyMenor	"Gata Only" with Cris Mj	98	March 30

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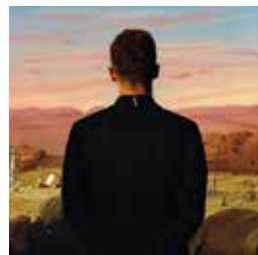
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BILLBOARD 200

4



Justin Timberlake
Everything I Thought It Was

His first album in six years marks his sixth top five chart entry in a row, spanning the entirety of Timberlake's studio releases as a solo artist. It debuts with 66,000 equivalent album units earned in the United States in the week ending March 21, according to Luminate.

123



AC/DC
Back in Black

A new vinyl pressing (commemorating the band's 50th anniversary) lifts the set to its highest chart rank of 2024 and prompts its reentry on the Vinyl Albums chart at No. 16 (2,500 sold).

196



The Cranberries
Stars: The Best of 1992-2020

The hits set returns to the chart for the first time since 2018, largely due to streaming boosts led by "Linger" (a recent TikTok favorite), "Zombie" and "Dreams."

2

Kacey Musgraves
Deeper Well



The only bigger vinyl sales weeks for country albums were registered by Taylor Swift's rerecordings. —KEITH CAULFIELD

Kacey Musgraves' *Deeper Well* makes a splash as it debuts at No. 2 on the Billboard 200 (and No. 1 on Top Country Albums) with 97,000 equivalent album units earned in the United States in the tracking week ending March 21, according to Luminate. It is Musgraves' biggest week by units since the chart began using that measurement in December 2014. Of the album's first-week units, traditional album sales totaled 66,000 — her biggest sales week ever. *Deeper Well's* sales were bolstered by its availability across nine vinyl variants, four CD variants and three digital downloads. Vinyl accounted for 37,000 sold, good for a career-best week on the format, the largest vinyl week of 2024 and the fourth-largest week for a country album on vinyl since Luminate started tracking sales in 1991.

Billboard 200

WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Artist	Title	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
-	①	1	Ariana Grande REPUBLIC	Eternal Sunshine	1	2
HOT SHOT DEBUT	②	2	Kacey Musgraves MCA NASHVILLE/INTERSCOPE/IGA	Deeper Well	2	1
1	③	3	GG Morgan Wallen BIG LOUD/MERCURY/REPUBLIC	One Thing At A Time	1	55
NEW	④	4	Justin Timberlake RCA	Everything I Thought It Was	4	1
2	3	5	Noah Kahan MERCURY/REPUBLIC	Stick Season	2	69
4	5	6	SZA TOP DAWG/RCA	SOS	1	67
7	9	7	Taylor Swift REPUBLIC	Lover	1	239
⑧	⑥	8	Zach Bryan BELTING BRONCO/WARNER	Zach Bryan	1	30
6	8	9	Taylor Swift REPUBLIC	1989 (Taylor's Version)	1	21
3	4	10	Y&: Ye & Ty Dolla \$ign YZY	Vultures 1	1	6
⑨	⑩	11	Morgan Wallen BIG LOUD/REPUBLIC	Dangerous: The Double Album	1	167
5	7	12	Drake OVO SOUND/REPUBLIC	For All The Dogs	1	24
12	12	13	Taylor Swift REPUBLIC	Midnights	1	74
⑩	11	14	Travis Scott CACTUS JACK/EPIC	Utopia	1	34
17	16	15	Zach Bryan BELTING BRONCO/WARNER	American Heartbreak	5	96
11	13	16	21 Savage SLAUGHTER GANG/EPIC	American Dream	1	10
16	17	17	Taylor Swift REPUBLIC	Folklore	1	191
14	14	18	Olivia Rodrigo Geffen/IGA	Guts	1	28
15	15	19	Post Malone MERCURY/REPUBLIC	The Diamond Collection	15	18
NEW	⑳	20	BossMan Dlow ALAMO	Mr. Beat The Road	20	1

BILLBOARD 200: THE WEEK'S MOST POPULAR ALBUMS, BASED ON THE TRACK EQUIVALENT ALBUMS, AS COMPILED BY LUMINATE. SEE CHARTS.ENTERTAINMENT.WEBSITE FOR COMPLETE DETAILS AND EXPLANATIONS. © 2024 BILLBOARD MEDIA LLC AND LUMINATE, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

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ARTIST 100

3

ARIANA GRANDE

WEEKS ON CHART
433

On the Billboard 200, Grande's *Eternal Sunshine* scores a second week at No. 1. It's her third

consecutive, and total, full-length studio set to open with a personal-best two weeks at No. 1, following *Positions* (in 2020) and *Thank U, Next* (2019).

—KEITH CAULFIELD



NO. 10

'Miami' Brings The Heat

Cardi B returns to the top 10 of the Artist 100 for the first time since February 2021 as "Enough (Miami)" debuts at No. 9 on the Billboard Hot 100. In its first week (ending March 21), the song earned 14.5 million official U.S. streams and 8.8 million in airplay audience, while seven digital options helped make it the week's best-selling track, with 37,000 sold, according to Luminate. "The next announcement is not going to be a single — it's going to be an album," she said during an exclusive "Enough" listening session on Zoom. The set will follow her debut Billboard 200 No. 1, 2018's *Invasion of Privacy*.

—TREVOR ANDERSON



NO. 63

'Truck Bed' Rolls To No. 1

HARDY earns his third leader on the Country Airplay chart as a recording artist and his first unaccompanied by any other acts with "Truck Bed." The song, his 12th No. 1 as a writer, drew 31 million audience impressions the week of March 15-21. His "Beers on Me" (with Dierks Bentley and BRELAND) led for one week in April 2022 after "One Beer" (featuring Lauren Alaina and Devin Dawson) ruled for a week in December 2020. "I'm so thankful," HARDY says. "I know my music is a little left of center, so thank you, country radio, for taking a chance on me."

—JIM ASKER

Artist 100

WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Artist	IMPRINT/LABEL	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
1	2	1	#1 for 103 WEEKS Taylor Swift	REPUBLIC	1	504
(76)	72	(2)	Kacey Musgraves	INTERSCOPE/MCA NASHVILLE/IIGA/UMGN	2	32
50	(1)	3	Ariana Grande	REPUBLIC	1	433
58	54	(4)	Justin Timberlake	RCA	1	206
2	3	5	Morgan Wallen	BIG LOUD/MERCURY/REPUBLIC	1	263
6	5	6	Zach Bryan	BELTING BRONCO/WARNER	1	97
3	4	7	SZA	TOP DAWG/RCA	1	238
4	6	8	Drake	OVO SOUND/REPUBLIC	1	508
5	7	9	Luke Combs	RIVER HOUSE/COLUMBIA NASHVILLE/SMN	1	368
RE-ENTRY	(10)	10	Cardi B	ATLANTIC/AG	1	206
8	9	11	Olivia Rodrigo	GEFFEN/IIGA	1	149
9	11	12	Noah Kahan	MERCURY/REPUBLIC	6	41
14	12	13	Dua Lipa	WARNER	1	307
12	14	14	21 Savage	SLAUGHTER GANG/EPIC	3	186
15	15	15	Jelly Roll	BAILEE & BUDDY/BROKEN BOW/BMG/BBMG	4	88
(7)	10	16	Teddy Swims	SWIMS INT./WARNER	7	28
19	17	17	Benson Boone	NIGHT STREET/WARNER	13	9
10	13	18	Beyonce	PARKWOOD/COLUMBIA	1	280
13	16	19	Travis Scott	CACTUS JACK/GRAND HUSTLE/EPIC	1	403
16	18	20	Chris Stapleton	SOUND/MERCURY NASHVILLE/UMGN	1	439

GRANDE: KATIA TERON; CARDI B: BRANZIF; HARDY: RYAN SMITH.
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RESHAPING THE RECORD BOOKS

U2's Sphere shows in Las Vegas are breaking Boxscore ground for single-venue residencies



U2 at Las Vegas' Sphere in March.

ON FEBRUARY'S TOP TOURS LIST, U2 is in the winner's circle with monthly earnings of \$56.5 million from 166,000 tickets sold. Since launching in 2019, the monthly Billboard Boxscore recap has detailed touring breakthroughs, particularly in country and Latin music — highlighted by Morgan Wallen and Bad Bunny, respectively — as well as reporting quirks along the way, including Trans-Siberian Orchestra's dual coastal ensembles during the holiday season. The latest development: U2's recent domination makes the band the first act to lead Top Tours without actually traveling from venue to venue. The group's haul north of \$50 million comes from 10 shows, all at Las Vegas' Sphere. The Irish quartet christened the Sin City arena with the first show from its *U2:UV Achtung Baby Live* residency in September and, to date, is still the only act to play at the venue. Concert series by Dead & Company and Phish are scheduled for later on Sphere's 2024 calendar. U2's recent run began Jan. 26 and stretched through March 2, earning \$84.7 million during that span. Dating back to opening night (Sept. 29, 2023, and through its March 2 close), the residency brought in \$244.5 million and sold 663,000 tickets over 40 shows.

—ERIC FRANKENBERG

Top Boxscores

	Artist(s) VENUE DATE	Gross TICKET PRICES	Total Attendance NO. OF SHOWS	Promoter(s)
1	U2 SPHERE, LAS VEGAS FEB. 2-3, 7, 9-10, 15, 17-18, 23-24	\$56.5M \$340.08	166K 10	Live Nation
2	Karol G ESTADIO AZTECA, MEXICO CITY FEB. 8-10	\$18.4M \$462.82/\$26.40	141K 3	OCESA, Westwood Entertainment
3	Coldplay RAJAMANGALA NATIONAL STADIUM, BANGKOK FEB. 3-4	\$16.9M \$220.19/\$19.76	106K 2	Live Nation
4	Laneway Festival SPOTLESS STADIUM, SYDNEY FEB. 4-12	\$15.9M \$130.16/\$97.60	120K 9	Laneway Presents
5	Billy Joel RAYMOND JAMES STADIUM, TAMPA, FLA. FEB. 24	\$13.2M \$357/\$57	54.5K 1	Live Nation
6	P!nk MARVEL STADIUM, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA FEB. 23-24	\$13.2M \$196.77/\$65.54	124K 2	Live Nation
7	TWICE FORO SOL, MEXICO CITY FEB. 2-3	\$11.1M \$279.44/\$29.11	114K 2	Live Nation
8	P!nk SUNCORP STADIUM, BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA FEB. 16-17	\$11M \$195.04/\$64.97	94.6K 2	Live Nation
9	Luis Miguel ESTADIO NACIONAL, LIMA, PERU FEB. 24-25	\$10.6M \$209/\$46	82.8K 2	Cárdenas Marketing Network, Fenix
10	P!nk ALLIANZ STADIUM, SYDNEY FEB. 9-10	\$9.8M \$195.05/\$64.97	78.5K 2	Live Nation

ROOP FURY

KAROL G: PHOTOFEST/GETTY IMAGES; P!NK: ALEXANDER TANZI/GETTY IMAGES; SHEERAN: SPINKE/JOHNSE/GETTY IMAGES

Top Venues

15,001 OR MORE CAPACITY

	Venue LOCATION	Total Gross	Total Attendance	No. Of Shows
1	Sphere LAS VEGAS	\$56.5M	166K	10
2	O2 Arena LONDON	\$16.5M	230K	18
3	Qudos Bank Arena SYDNEY	\$11M	110K	8
4	Honda Center ANAHEIM, CALIF.	\$10.3M	41.9K	4
5	T-Mobile Arena LAS VEGAS	\$9.9M	46.3K	3
6	Rod Laver Arena MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA	\$9.1M	84.5K	6
7	AO Arena MANCHESTER, ENGLAND	\$8.8M	138K	13
8	Amalie Arena TAMPA, FLA.	\$8.7M	39.3K	3
9	UBS Arena ELMONT, N.Y.	\$7.5M	93.6K	10
10	Climate Pledge Arena SEATTLE	\$6.9M	37.2K	3



10,001-15,000 CAPACITY

	Venue LOCATION	Total Gross	Total Attendance	No. Of Shows
1	Moody Center AUSTIN	\$10.8M	66K	8
2	CFG Bank Arena BALTIMORE	\$8M	133K	21
3	Footprint Center PHOENIX	\$7.3M	27.9K	2
4	Barclays Arena HAMBURG, GERMANY	\$7.2M	99.2K	16
5	Mercedes-Benz Arena BERLIN	\$6.8M	40.4K	3
6	OVO Hydro GLASGOW	\$6.5M	110K	14
7	Brisbane Entertainment Centre BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA	\$5.9M	59.6K	5
8	RAC Arena PERTH, AUSTRALIA	\$4.5M	44.1K	3
9	Atlas Arena ŁÓDŹ, POLAND	\$4.2M	27.8K	2
10	Dickies Arena FORT WORTH, TEXAS	\$4M	67.3K	13

5,001-10,000 CAPACITY

	Venue LOCATION	Total Gross	Total Attendance	No. Of Shows
1	Dolby Live LAS VEGAS	\$9.3M	25.7K	5
2	Radio City Music Hall NEW YORK	\$7M	78.7K	14
3	Mohegan Sun Arena UNCASVILLE, CONN.	\$5.8M	71.6K	12
4	Place Bell LAVAL, QUEBEC	\$2.4M	48.3K	7
5	MGM Music Hall at Fenway BOSTON	\$1.9M	35.1K	9
6	Bill Graham Civic Auditorium SAN FRANCISCO	\$1.4M	17.5K	2
7	The Anthem WASHINGTON, D.C.	\$1.4M	21.2K	7
8	Hard Rock Live at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino HOLLYWOOD, FLA.	\$1.1M	10.9K	2
9	Peacock Theater LOS ANGELES	\$837K	11.3K	3
10	Texas Trust CU Theatre DALLAS	\$811K	10.5K	5

5,000 OR LESS CAPACITY

	Venue LOCATION	Total Gross	Total Attendance	No. Of Shows
1	Fox Theatre ATLANTA	\$11.6M	119K	30
2	Beacon Theatre NEW YORK	\$8M	60.3K	22
3	David A. Straz Jr. Center for the Performing Arts, Morsani Hall TAMPA, FLA.	\$3.7M	34.4K	16
4	Ruth Eckerd Hall CLEARWATER, FLA.	\$2.7M	20.1K	14
5	Encore Theater at Wynn Resort LAS VEGAS	\$2.2M	14.7K	11
6	Fox Theater OAKLAND, CALIF.	\$1.6M	18.1K	9
7	SEC Armadillo GLASGOW	\$1.5M	23.4K	11
8	Fallsview Casino Resort NIAGARA FALLS, ONTARIO	\$1.4M	26.4K	6
9	Coca-Cola Music Hall SAN JUAN	\$1.4M	19.3K	7
10	Chicago Theatre CHICAGO	\$1.2M	14.2K	4

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MUSIC AND MONEY



PG. 22 DO TV TALK-SHOW GIGS STILL MATTER?
PG. 22 EVENT CANCELLATION INSURANCE PRICES SPIKE
PG. 24 AMY MORRISON ON GREENING THE MUSIC BIZ

Up, Up And Away With Superfans

Megan Thee Stallion and Olivia Rodrigo are among the big stars using Stationhead to build their sales, streams and stan bases

BY DAN RYS // ILLUSTRATION BY GLENN HARVEY

WHEN MEGAN Thee Stallion released her single "Hiss" on Jan. 26, she let the music do the talking, with two exceptions: On Jan. 30, she appeared on *Good Morning America*, the top-rated network morning show. Then, on Feb. 1, she logged on to social-audio platform Stationhead to speak directly to her most dedicated supporters.

"Let me tell y'all something — if 'Hiss' hits No. 1, I'm having an OG ratchet-ass Hottie party," she said on the HottieRanch fan channel, laughing along as two of her longtime fans hosted an off-the-cuff conversation with her. "[My first single] 'Cobra' and

'Hiss' are the first two music videos that I've done since I've been off of my labels, and I did this shit because I finally had full creative range. I could do whatever I wanted to do," she declared, adding, "The Hotties are gagging!"

During the 14 minutes that Megan spent on HottieRanch, 7,000 fans logged on to the channel, racking up 3,000 song downloads through the site and flooding the comments with her signature snake emojis and messages of support. Fireworks effects and alerts about sales milestones and other benchmarks flew across the app's interface, and "Hiss" later debuted at No. 1 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 —

Warner Music Group issued a formal notice disclosing its interest in acquiring the French digital music company **Believe**.

AEG Presents and Latin entertainment company **Cárdenas Marketing Network** partnered to combine both companies under one roof.

Megan's first-ever solo chart-topper. According to Stationhead, its users contributed 13,200 download sales and millions of global streams to the track's debut, and the benefits did not end there. The song's withering lyrics — which target Nicki Minaj, Tory Lanez and other artists — led Minaj to hop on her own Barbz channel on Stationhead to clap back during an extended dialogue with her fans. Her own dis track, "Big Foot," followed, leading to a back-and-forth that boosted streams for Minaj's and Megan's songs — and to Stationhead trending on X as the two MCs and their fans traded darts.

It's one of the latest examples of Stationhead's growing popularity with artists who want to foster strong connections to their fans and boost streams and chart positions in the process. In recent months, Olivia Rodrigo, Cardi B, BTS, Blackpink, Ed Sheeran, Jennifer Lopez, Coldplay, GAYLE and other acts have engaged with fans on the platform — which focuses exclusively on music — playing songs, telling stories and answering questions while thousands listen along.

"Stationhead is incorporated in every single and album release that we do," says Kirsten Stubbs, co-head of pop/rock digital at Interscope Geffen A&M (IGA), who has run campaigns with Rodrigo and Selena Gomez on the platform and says she first

discovered it after hearing about it from fans themselves. "It's an app that the industry was looking for for a long time."

"Your fans on Stationhead are like your season ticket holders at a sporting event: You can build a plan around them, count on them to show up to things," says TMWRK founder and CEO Andrew McInness, whose company manages Diplo and Dillon Francis, among others, and who serves on Stationhead's board. "Those types of fans are the reason why Taylor Swift is Taylor Swift, why Nicki Minaj has her power base or the various HYBE or K-pop artists have this big support system."

The platform, which debuted in 2017, functions much like a digital pirate radio station, where anyone with a streaming music account can host their own station and play music, with other users able to log on and listen, chat and even call in and speak to the DJ. And since the app functions as a skin over Spotify or Apple Music, each listener in a room counts as an individual stream.

Over the years, Stationhead has evolved into a destination for fan groups to discuss (whether through the chat or a podcast-like audio function) their favorite artists with the channel's host. These virtual connections sometimes lead to in-real-life relationships with, for instance, channel members meeting at music venues to see concerts together. The addition of channels — rooms created specifically for fans of certain artists, such as Minaj, Jimin or Stray Kids — in January 2023 solidified the app's new direction and led to Cardi and Rodrigo discovering the app through their fans and occasionally

"Your fans on Stationhead are like your season ticket holders at a sporting event: You can build a plan around them, count on them to show up to things."

—ANDREW McINNESS, TMWRK

joining them. According to the company, there are now more than 1,000 channels.

"Music's future is leaning into fandom, and fandoms live here," Stationhead co-founder Ryan Star says.

The platform's role in fostering the artist-fan connection — and helping to deliver hits — comes at a time when "superfan" is arguably the industry's biggest buzzword. In his New Year's memo to staff, Universal Music Group (UMG) chairman/CEO Lucian Grainge wrote that in 2024, the label group will focus on "grow[ing] the pie for all artists by strengthening the artist-fan relationship through superfan experiences and products."

Warner Music Group CEO Robert Kyncl also cited superfans in his holiday letter to staff, calling them "relatively untapped and undermonetized." Two months later, during a panel discussion at the Web Summit conference in Doha, Qatar, Kyncl mentioned that WMG had hired a team of engineers to help the company build its own superfan operation, with an emphasis on "a cross-platform solution," which he said at a later appearance that he felt labels were better positioned than anyone to do.

Stationhead and WMG aren't alone in the superfan space; HYBE's WeVerse and companies like Medallion and Fave are attempting to address different aspects of superfan monetization, with various levels of success. UMG invested in NTRK's \$109 million acquisition of Complex in February, and Live Nation, Spotify and others have also expressed an interest in or begun to explore ways to enter the superfan space. Last year, a Goldman Sachs report estimated that there will be a \$4.2 billion addressable market for superfan monetization by 2030, and Luminate reported that superfans spend 80% more on their favorite artists than the regular music listener.

Mike Pelczynski, a strategist who helped build SoundCloud's direct-to-fan capabilities and pioneered its fan-powered business, says Stationhead understands that rights holders "need to make money based on scale and volume of plays, [so] they're creating hyper-communities that stream music in groups and give [artists] the capability to tap into those people and give them something else, like merch or other purchase [options]."

Before he began developing Stationhead in 2014, Star released albums and performed in the band Stage and as a solo artist. He says that whenever he opened for such acts as the Goo Goo Dolls or O.A.R., he made a point of meeting fans at the merchandise booth afterward — even when the headliners would roll their eyes.

"I relied on those kinds of fans for my life," he says. "I was like, 'These are the people who are going to be there for me no matter what.'"

ON A WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON in early March, 3,700 people were logged on to Stationhead's BTS ARMY Jungkook channel; 3,500 were tuned in to the BTS ARMY channel dedicated to V; 1,200 people were on the ONCE channel for fans of TWICE; 1,300 were on the STAYS channel for fans of Stray Kids; and 800 people were on the BardiGang channel dedicated to Cardi B fans. The Beyhive channel, which Beyoncé has never visited, had 150 listeners, with the host dutifully streaming "Texas Hold 'Em" every three songs. Stationhead says it drove 15% of first-week downloads for the song when it debuted at No. 1 on the Hot 100.

During the pandemic, social-audio apps like Clubhouse, Spotify's Greenroom/Live and Amazon's AMP live radio app began to pop up, but the artist appearances on these platforms,



SB19 fans who met on Stationhead at the Filipino boy band's concert at Araneta Coliseum in Manila, Philippines, in 2022.

which attracted attention from both listeners and investors, were often procured with big checks — an unsustainable business model. (Last year, Amazon and Spotify shut down their platforms and Clubhouse laid off half its workforce.) Stationhead says it has never paid for marketing or for an artist to appear. Instead, virtually all of the artists and labels that have embraced it heard about it through fans, and the company says 95% of the billions of streams it facilitated in 2023 occurred when artists weren't present on the platform.

Atlantic Records GM Paul Sinclair, who has worked Stationhead into rollouts for Sheeran — he crashed a listening party that his fans held last September for his *Autumn Variations* album — Melanie Martinez, Charlie Puth and the *Barbie* soundtrack, among others, says the payoff often extends beyond a boost in streams and sales. "When artists join a channel with their fans, 'people record that kind of stuff, and it travels beyond the platform onto Instagram or TikTok.'"

Stationhead says that over the past year, its user base has quadrupled to more than 15 million fans, and the average user spends over two hours per day on the platform. The company claims it drove billions of streams and hundreds of thousands of downloads in the past year, creating tens of millions of dollars in additional revenue for labels and artists — an admittedly vague figure that it nonetheless expects to grow fivefold in the next year. (The company declined to reveal specifics.)

Stationhead's revenue comes largely from a cut of the downloads sold through the platform — a format that IGA's Stubbs says is "more important to the success of a song and album because downloads are weighted more" for chart algorithms.

Though its current business model is better suited to making money for streaming services and rights holders, Stationhead co-founder and COO Murray Levison says, "We plan to continue to innovate in the space and roll out a number of monetization features over the course of the next year."

Until then, Stationhead continues to do what it does best: serve as the destination for over 1,000 fandoms. "Stationhead is always on, and the community is always there even if nobody is talking," Star says. "We found our audience, and this market is just beginning. And it's going to be massive." **E**

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Bonnaroo 2023

Cancellation Culture

► **IN EARLY SEPTEMBER 2022**, organizers of the Harvest Moon festival in Miramar, Fla., were forced to cancel their three-day country music event for an unusual reason: They could not find affordable cancellation insurance for the festival, which was scheduled to take place Oct. 27-29 — little more than a month away.

Executives with destination-festival producer Topeka thought they had a policy in place when they announced Harvest Moon — which was to feature headliners Eric Church and the Turnpike Troubadours — and had no problem getting coverage in the past. The festival fell outside the official hurricane season, but approximately six weeks before the event, weather forecasts indicated that Miramar could be in the path of two developing superstorms. As a result, sources close to the festival tell *Billboard* that Harvest Moon promoters were suddenly being quoted prohibitively high prices that led to the decision to scrap the event and refund buyers, despite being 70% sold.

While these circumstances are rare, the incident underscores how the liabilities posed by inclement weather and climate change have significantly increased financial risk for independent promoters.

"The event business used to be much more competitive, which meant much lower prices for the policyholders," says Peter Tempkins, who recently retired from risk management and event insurance firm Hub International. But a substantial increase in the number of festivals taking place yearly in North America, coupled with an increase in adverse weather, has caused event cancellation insurance premiums to triple and deductibles to balloon in recent years.

For much of the last decade, event cancellation insurance enabled promoters to insure their expenses and forecast profits for about 80 cents per \$100. So, for example, a promoter that booked an artist for \$500,000 could purchase a \$4,000 policy covering that expense in the event of an adverse weather cancellation.

But policy prices have risen exponentially now that "insurance companies are increasingly relying on historic data about regional weather patterns and spending more time trying to identify the statistical risk based on location and time of year," says Paul Bassman, a broker with Dallas event coverage firm Higginbotham.

Tim Epstein, an attorney for independent festivals in North America, says rising premium costs are first felt by indie promoters and organizers, but even Live Nation and AEG have begun requiring some touring acts to carry their own cancellation policies and are reducing their obligations to cover artist payments if adverse weather forces the cancellation of an event.

Tempkins predicts that eventually, insurance companies "either won't cover events in certain regions, or they'll simply stipulate that the policy won't cover cancellations due to rain or adverse weather conditions."

"I'm already seeing artists and agencies ask far more detailed questions about my clients' coverage than in the past," Epstein says. "People are becoming more cognizant of the risks they face from weather." —DAVE BROOKS

Big Loud Records signed a multiyear distribution deal with **Mercury Records/Republic**.

The **National Music Publishers' Association** warned members that its license with **TikTok** ends April 30 and that it does not anticipate a renewal.

TALK-SHOW STRAIGHT TALK

With the right strategy, musical performances can still move the needle

LAST FALL, R&B singer October London performed "Back to Your Place" on *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* with a Snoop Dogg introduction and a seven-piece band including harp and violin players. In other words, the performance wasn't cheap — and probably far more expensive than the few thousand dollars late-night talk-show guests typically receive under union rules.

According to London's manager, Adrian L. Miller, the appearance, which has scored 281,000 YouTube views so far, was worth it. London's more stripped-down *GMA3* performance in February had even more concrete benefits, boosting ticket sales for the singer's show at Brooklyn Steel later that night by 100. "It's not nothing," he says. "It's good to have the logos and the exposure through TV."

Still, Miller concedes that the promotional benefits of late-night TV performances aren't as great as they were in the 2000s. Back then, Jay Leno and David Letterman frequently drew 4 million to 6 million nightly viewers, compared with the roughly 1.5 million to 3 million viewers top talk shows draw today. Plus, he says, "A lot of an artist's audience is not on television. They're not watching these shows."

For many acts, especially developing artists seeking viral moments, the return on investment for late-night and daytime talk-show performances has become too minuscule to be effective. "They have, like, 2 million viewers of these shows, and that's what we get on daily posts on TikTok," says Ethan Curtis, manager of singer-songwriter JVKKE, who played *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon* in 2022. "It's an energy drain. We travel and train for the performance and do it in one take. It doesn't feel worth it for every song."

And while audiences are down, the cost of mounting a memorable televised performance is way up. Another of Miller's clients, singer-rapper Anderson .Paak, spent "out of pocket, almost six figures," he says, for a 2017 *Ellen* appearance. "Everybody wants a creative director now, and the stylist and the hair and the makeup," a major-label source says. According to label and management sources, expenses for talk-show performances

range from \$150,000 to \$225,000 — or as high as \$700,000 for a potentially career-making *Saturday Night Live* opportunity.

"Most bands come in with the same amount of crew and backline as if they were putting on a show. They ask the record label to pay for it and [labels] don't want to," says Chris Gentry, who managed Phoenix in 2009 when the band's *SNL* appearance helped turn its album *Wolfgang Amadeus Phoenix* into a smash.

In an analysis of 458 artist appearances on top talk shows such as *Kimmel*, *Fallon*, *Ellen*, *SNL* and *The Late Late Show With James Corden*, music data analyst Chartmetric found the artists' monthly Spotify listeners averaged 1.78% more the week after the show. Some artists' distinctive performances make a bigger impact: BTS on *SNL* in 2019 and Barteaux Strange on *Kimmel* in 2022 both boosted their monthly Spotify listeners by nearly 85%.

Other talk-show performances barely register. Chartmetric reports that 192 artists experienced decreases in monthly Spotify listeners after their talk-show gigs; London's *Kimmel* performance in October had minimal impact on his Spotify metrics. "We've had these conversations for a long time: Late night doesn't move the needle," says the major-label source, who nonetheless remains a proponent of such appearances because "*Jimmy Fallon* or NBC helps spread a piece of digital content in an era when we're constantly trying to break through the noise."

Targeted talk-show performances sometimes redeem the expense, and Diana Miller, supervising producer for *The Talk*, which recently booked Bush and Rachel Platten, says some shows will negotiate to pay a portion of an act's costs. And some have taken it upon themselves to economize. The Lemon Twigs, a band from Long Island, played *Fallon* in late January with a "very stripped-back backline" and "hardly any money at all," according to Gentry, who manages the group. "We did it really for the cost of the flight for the drummer from L.A.," he says. "What's interesting right now with *Fallon* is how social media plays into it — 14 million on Instagram, 15 million on TikTok. It's almost like you get more now." —STEVE KNOPPER



London performed on *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* in October.

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MUSIC SUSTAINABILITY
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BY KATIE BAIN

PHOTOGRAPHED BY MAGGIE SHANNON

ON FEB. 5, 300 WORKERS from North America's music industry gathered at the inaugural Music Sustainability Summit to discuss the impact of climate change on their business. "People were always asking where to start, what to do and how to do it," says Amy Morrison, co-founder and president of the Music Sustainability Alliance, which organized the symposium. "We saw a need to bring people together in order to not duplicate work, to share best practices and to spotlight the good work everyone is doing."

Morrison formed the 501(c)(3) nonprofit MSA with co-founder Mike Martin during the pandemic and near the end of her 23-year run as senior vp of marketing at Concerts West/AEG. While semi-retired, she still consults for the company and continues running tour marketing for The Rolling Stones, including their North American *Hackney Diamonds* trek this summer. The touring shutdown enabled her to complete a certificate program in sustainability at Presidio Graduate School, and she now dedicates most of her working hours to the MSA. (The alliance is currently collaborating with a nonprofit fundraising consultant to raise money to pay staff.)

The MSA's mandate is the creation of "climate-focused professional resources and community," Morrison explains. "It's a relatively simple concept, but nobody ever saw the need for it. The downtime we had to reflect during COVID was helpful, and the timing now couldn't be better to accelerate and lift everyone up together to do this."

The Music Sustainability Summit will be an annual gathering that takes place in Los Angeles — where the MSA, like Morrison, is based — on the day after the Grammy Awards, and MSA will organize a number of year-round initiatives and



track environmental regulations that will affect the industry, with the two most pertinent being truck emissions and phasing out single-use plastics. It also offers a music-industry resource guide.

By mid-April, the MSA plans to have three to five working groups dedicated to promoting sustain-

ability practices in the industry. Each will share solutions and actionable recommendations. In collaboration with the Eller College of Management, MSA is also conducting an analysis of the economic impacts of extreme weather on the live industry and how environmental regulations

will affect touring practices. Morrison is also a member of the advisory group for the Sustainable Production in Entertainment Certification, which is being developed by the U.S. Green Building Council-Los Angeles in partnership with experts to develop SPEC's green certification

Morrison photographed March 14 in Los Angeles.



A friend gifted Morrison this Al Hirschfeld drawing of Grateful Dead frontman Jerry Garcia. "As a longtime Deadhead and Hirschfeld fan, it makes me smile to see Jerry doing what he loves."



"Running the marketing for a festival of this magnitude with these artists was an incredible experience. I got to draw on my touring experience while learning new things."



"This clock commemorates The Concert of a Lifetime, Simon & Garfunkel's 1993 residency at [what is now] The Theater at Madison Square Garden. I grew up listening to them, and being a part of this historic reunion was a career highlight."



"It still blows my mind that I get to work with the Stones," Morrison says. "Living in L.A., this poster beautifully marries the SoCal vibe and the greatest rock'n'roll band in the world."

program for workers across the entertainment industry.

Beginning in May, MSA will hold a series of webinars that will focus on merchandise, food choice impact, easy ways to green events, regulations and incentives, among other topics. Plans are also underway to launch quarterly member happy hours in L.A. and New York.

"I oversimplify things a lot, which I think is a gift and a curse," Morrison says, "but it makes me not scared and it motivates me to try things because it's like, 'We can do this!'"

It's often said that despite the music industry having a

very small impact on climate change, it has an outsized influence on the culture that can be leveraged. What are your thoughts on that?

I agree as a general statement. I feel it's really important, though, that we have our house in order and that the industry can walk the walk, speak with confidence and be legit and authentic in getting that message out. I think that supports artists who want to speak out as well because they have the confidence that the industry is behind them.

The MSA wants to create that confidence. The mission is to have a net-zero music industry by 2050 [with] lots of milestones along the way.

What initiatives is the MSA working on?

We've been working on a Get Out the Vote working group. There's a lot of interest, and it involves everything from message targeting, deciding on markets and the intention of activating younger people to vote [with consideration for] the climate. We're also talking about how to use the channels we have: What can a venue do to get the word out? What can a promoter do? Then the campaign needs to be created for them to actually have something to share. It could even be picking a city that needs the impact and finding a local artist there [to get involved] who could be just as meaningful

as getting a superstar to do it. We're working with folks that create campaigns, along with political experts.

You work in the touring industry. What initiatives do you have in that sector?

In the next couple of months, we're launching a campaign for [tours] to have one less truck. It's about flipping the narrative that [the goal] is no longer having the biggest tours with the most trucks — it's about still putting on a beautiful show, but with fewer trucks. That's something we can measure over time. It's a ways down the road from launching. We're also working on courses for worker education on how to be green, like a certification you get in how to do your job in a green way. We need operational change, and it only comes from education.

What would a curriculum like that teach?

It could be how to set up composting backstage, or how to go down your supply chain and source items, or how to measure energy use. Really basic stuff, starting on the production side.

Because production has the biggest impact?

Yeah, and it's easier to adopt. It's important for systemic change that the people who are doing the work, who are really making operations hum, understand the work. And if their bosses or management see the value in funding this type of program, then it's also coming from the top.

How do you see the music industry generally becoming greener?

I see it in the expansion of departments, with more people being hired and more resources getting put behind it. [Live Nation's touring program] Green Nation is starting to really empower its production teams to lead in the green space, and they're putting green coordinators out on the road. It's not like, "The runner or the [production assistant] can do it." There has been a shift in the acknowledgment that this is actually a job.

Universal Music Group's East Coast label operation, restructured as Republic Corps, will be led by Monte Lipman. UMG's West Coast label operation restructured as Interscope Capitol Labels Group and will be led by John Janick.

The MSA is working with big companies that compete with each other. What has that been like?

We've found that in the production vendor world, it's a no-brainer. They're all game to be on the same calls and do things together. At the summit, the panel with the [sustainability leads from AEG, Live Nation, ASM Global and Oak View Group] was a good start. A secret mission of mine is to find a project for the four of them to work on. Maybe to find a city where they all have a property — I'm sure there's more than one — and work on [climate-minded] infrastructure together. It can be a small thing to do as proof of concept. I think the working groups will bring some of that because a lot of our role is to facilitate, convene and set the table for people.

I think part of the road map for us is to come up with some science-based, peer-reviewed recommendation to take to the C suite and say, "Here are a couple of projects that maybe if all the venues work together on, this is the impact it could have, and all it will cost you is X, Y or Z."

I can see how having such options would be useful for busy people who don't know where to start.

Maybe I'm dreaming, but they really should all work together on this, and I think they will, with the right projects and the right impact.

Climate change can feel so overwhelming. How do you avoid existential dread and stay in a place of progress and optimism?

I'm a half-full gal. I am optimistic, and I'm fed by support, good work and successes. The summit was amazing. I couldn't have dreamed of it to be any better. And everyone still showed up during a crazy rainstorm. There were a lot of years of banging the head against the wall around all this, but change is happening. So I'm not driven by fear — I'm driven by making a difference. ☑



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‘These Communities Exist’

Land acknowledgments are becoming more commonplace in live music — but is awareness alone enough? BY LYNDSEY HAVENS // ILLUSTRATION BY RICARDO SANTOS

WHILE ACCEPTING THE AMPLIFY AWARD at the 2024 Billboard Power 100 event in Los Angeles in February, the members of boygenius began their speech the same way they had started most shows on their 2023 tour. Lucy Dacus, standing alongside Julien Baker and Phoebe Bridgers, dedicated the moment to the elders and descendants of native peoples and also asked for action from the crowd — which happened to include the music industry’s most powerful executives.

“We believe in land back,” Dacus said. “Which is also water back

and air back. I encourage you to look into this if it’s a new concept for you. It’s not only a cause that centers Indigenous sovereignty, but the general well-being of the earth and all of its inhabitants.”

Welcome to Territory, also known as a land acknowledgment, is a formalized statement recognizing and respecting the relationship of Indigenous peoples and their traditional territories. Dacus noted that the band worked closely with the Pass the Mic (PTM) Foundation — which was founded by Portugal. The Man — on its tour to help organize such acknowledgments at each show. And while

land acknowledgments have become standard practice for Portugal. The Man, with bands including NOFX also opting in, the foundation's ultimate goal is to prevent invisibility and erasure of Indigenous peoples. Live music has offered an ideal setting to do so, and this past year, more artists — and fans — were eager to participate.

"Concerts or festivals can be challenging to engage, but people attend them because they want to feel good," says Múkaró Borrero, *kasike* (chief) of the Guainía Taíno tribe and president of the United Confederation of Taíno People. Borrero met Portugal. The Man in 2018 after participating in a group land acknowledgment at the band's show, leading him to become a partner of the foundation. "Music can be a great equalizer, so attendees can be open to hearing some of these messages and learn more than they perhaps knew when they came to the venue."

The PTM Foundation soft-launched in 2019 with help from executive director Logan Lynn, an artist and advocate who met Portugal. The Man through the Portland, Ore., music scene. After Lynn interviewed the band for his mental health-focused concert series, the group invited him on its 2018 summer tour, which served as a crash course in Portugal. The Man's many philanthropic and community-focused efforts. "The only thing I can think of is a food court, where there were all these booths and it felt like a rock show," Lynn recalls, "but it also felt like a place where all different kinds of community members were finding their people and finding a way to get involved."

Land acknowledgments in particular are an easy, and affordable, foot in for artists and bands wanting to support community. And while Portugal. The Man was one of the first acts to make this its norm — where the group literally passes the microphone to local community members for a few minutes at the start of every set — Lynn noticed an increase in interest following the boygenius tour in particular. "It was so exciting because what [fans] were reposting was the video of the land acknowledgment and tagging the tribes and it felt like a wildfire," he says. "Every day I was like, 'Oh, my God, this is exactly the thing we were trying to do.'"

"One of the things we heard far and wide when we were starting all this was this idea that Indigenous peoples are historic. Like it's an ancient thing. That Indigenous peoples aren't your friends and neighbors still," Lynn says. "It's this weird thing. Part of what we wanted to do was just make sure people knew that these communities exist where you live."

But, as he and the band stress, awareness alone isn't enough. Every partner that engages in the PTM process receives an unrestricted \$500 grant from the PTM Fund. Lynn says Portugal. The Man frontman John Gourley has always been committed to moving with meaning — and



"To go from [the] mainstream not seeing us at all to now normalizing acknowledgment of the original caretakers is, to me, significant."

—MÚKARÓ BORRERO, CHIEF OF THE GUAINÍA TAÍNO TRIBE



Top: Borrero (center) with boygenius backstage at Outlaw Field in Boise, Idaho, in 2023. Bottom: NOFX onstage.

following a moment with action. "Land acknowledgments have been a mechanism to get people's attention," says Laura John, tribal consultant for the Blackfeet and Seneca Nations and PTM partner. "Providing space for [this] should be understood as a gesture of commitment to doing more," such as providing resources to tribal communities.

As Borrero says, "The next step for someone who experiences a land acknowledgment is to be sure there is a next step ... it is the fans that need to help sustain and expand the momentum [the PTM Foundation] has initiated."

It comes down on venues and promoters, too. Last year, PTM partnered with AEG on its Re:SET traveling concert series, for which boygenius was a headliner. "I was prepared for it to be clunky and hard and like, 'Who do I talk to?'"

And it wasn't," Lynn says. "Everybody from the band to management is like, 'This is important.'"

Borrero agrees, saying that despite some Indigenous peoples who "are not so impressed by land acknowledgments because they view them as performative," he sees them as a positive beginning. "To go from [the] mainstream not seeing us at all to now normalizing acknowledgment of the original caretakers is, to me, significant," he says. He also notes that the Taíno community in particular has been cited as extinct by some sources. "Being a partner helps us not only change that narrative but take our power back to tell our own story."

"The goal has always been to make it commonplace, and it feels like we are moving in the right direction," Gourley adds. "People show up and it's expected at our shows now — we want it to become expected everywhere." **B**

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AEG PRESENTS

Maná in Mexico's Ahuisculco mountain range in 2021. Inset: Olvera (center) bagged saplings with the Selva Negra team.



Q & A

TURTLES, TREES AND TEACHING

For decades, Maná has proved the power of investing in local community through Selva Negra

IN 1992, Maná scored a hit with “Vivir Sin Aire,” a love song that also served as a metaphor for the environment — and set the Mexican rock band down a path it still walks today. Not only has the group included one song inspired by environmental or social change on every album since, but in 1996, the band — comprising Fernando “Fher” Olvera, Alejandro González, Sergio Vallín and Juan Calleros — cemented its environmental commitment by launching the Selva Negra (Black Jungle) Ecological Foundation, which protects species, restores ecosystems and promotes environmental education.

Nearly 30 years since its creation, Selva Negra has more than delivered on its mission. It has directly hatched and released 8 million sea turtles, planted over 800,000 trees, produced over 500,000 plants in its communal greenhouse and worked with the Interamerican Development Bank to help preserve Mexican forests and promote projects to raise consciousness on climate change, among many other actions. All the while, the foundation has promoted myriad social justice causes, including providing support and dignified living to immigrant communities in

the United States, Mexico and Latin countries.

Speaking from his home base of Puerto Vallarta, Mexico — and wearing a silver charm of a sea turtle, his favorite animal, around his neck — Maná frontman and Selva Negra president Olvera speaks on why the work is never over.

Several years ago, you spoke about a plan to develop an environmental curriculum for schools. How is that coming along?

We do a lot of environmental education on the ground. But what’s most important, and what we tried to achieve with the previous governments, was making ecology a part of the core school curriculum like geography or math. It’s coming along, but our government doesn’t understand the environment. We’re trying to change that.

On the band’s last U.S. tour, you donated to many organizations that help migrants. What is your position on that issue?

More than a political position, it’s a humanitarian position. When we spent time with [President Barack] Obama in the White House, we weren’t supporting Democrats or Republicans — we were supporting the people who work, who put bread on the tables of American families. We are for human rights. The Latin community in the United States is so strong now that it can change an election, and presidents can no longer offend Latinos so easily. Well, some can.

Tell us about Platanitos, the place where you have your turtle preserve.

It’s very close, in an area called Nayarit [Mexico]. Platanitos is an enormous beach where the government has an untouchable reserve, and we partnered with them to take care of the turtles. In Platanitos, we have a conser-

vation station that houses the biologists and the team that takes care of the turtles. They collect the eggs, put them in a protected area. There they grow for a little over a month until they hatch, and they push the baby turtles to sea at night so no predators eat them. Last year, we liberated to sea almost 1 million baby turtles, our record. There are many turtle camps worldwide. It shows that man can do good with the same hand that does harm. We took a single species, but there are many more.

Do you feel artists have an obligation to promote social justice now more than ever?

If it comes from the heart, yes. If it’s not within them, and it’s against my principles to say this, they’re under no obligation. An artist’s obligation is to make good art — to give the best of themselves in their songs, their lyrics, the arrangements, everything that makes up the music. Now, if on top of that they want to talk about women’s rights, or education rights, or health, the environment, whatever, then that’s the cherry on the cake. I believe many people have been inspired by Maná to protect the environment — to think globally and act locally.

—LEILA COBO

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A D’Addario Playback program string recycling bin

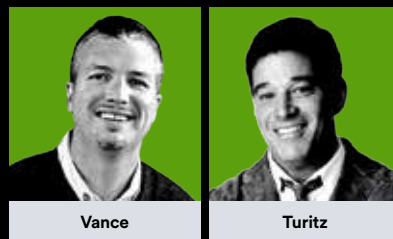


PULLING THE RIGHT STRINGS

SINCE THE 1970s, D’Addario has manufactured strings for guitars, orchestral instruments and more with an eye on the future — but back then, no one at the Farmingdale, N.Y.-based company could have expected that future to involve smelting metal strings. After decades of prioritizing music educa-

tion for children through its D’Addario Foundation, particularly in underserved communities, the company launched Playback in 2015, which prioritizes sustainability. The program repurposes used guitar and orchestral strings in partnership with recycling company TerraCycle. Metal strings are smelted into new alloys, while nylon strings are recycled for industrial plastic applications — keeping both out of landfills, where over 1.5 million pounds of strings accumulate every year, according to Playback. To participate, individuals can place strings into bins at one of the nearly 1,200 collection locations across the country, including hundreds of Guitar Centers and independent retailers, or mail them on their own, so long as shipments exceed 5 pounds, to minimize waste. (D’Addario provides prepaid UPS shipping labels for such donators.)

To date, almost 13 million strings have been recycled through Playback. Acts such as U2, My Morning Jacket and Young the Giant have drawn attention to the initiative, with the lattermost



Vance

Turitz

donating a percentage of every ticket sold from its 2023 summer tour to the D’Addario Foundation. Additionally, the company has partnered with competitors, and its site provides links to international string recycling organizations in France and Slovakia, too. “We want to do what’s good for the whole industry,” says Brian Vance, D’Addario vp of fretted strings and accessories.

In 2022, D’Addario instituted World String Change Day to heighten interest in the program. The idea encourages consumers to try new strings and other accessories, often through deals. It will return for its third year on June 6. “At that moment you’re taking your strings off, it goes right into the Playback bin,”

chief marketing officer Jonathan Turitz says. The D’Addario Foundation has also led drives for those looking to donate used instruments, many of which end up in the hands of in-need students. The practice of repairing used instruments for kids was highlighted in the recent Academy Award-winning documentary *The Last Repair Shop*. “That film is exactly the story of what we’re doing,” Turitz says, “whether it’s the people in the shop or the kids.”

Playback aims to expand globally in the coming years, though logistical issues and costs stand in the way. “The recycling laws, methodologies and practices in Europe are much different than they are in the U.S.,” Vance says, although later this year, D’Addario hopes to conduct testing on scaling the program abroad. And despite the rising costs that come with the program’s success, D’Addario’s ultimate mission remains at the forefront. “We’re facing an existential crisis,” Turitz says. “It’s vital that we put the planet above profit.”

—JOSH GLICKSMAN

MANÁ: THE COURTESY OF SELVA NEGRA; D’ADDARIO, VANCE, TURITZ: COURTESY OF D’ADDARIO



Women In Music 2024

PHOTOGRAPHED BY SAMI DRASIN

ALL THE POP LADIES!" exclaimed Katy Perry while backstage at *Billboard's* annual Women in Music event — which returned to YouTube Theater on March 6 — having run into Demi Lovato, Ice Spice, Charli XCX and Bebe Rexha in succession. Perry, who attended to help honor *Billboard's* Executive of the Year, former Capitol Music Group chair/CEO Michelle Jubelirer, spoke highly of her "iced latte hiking buddy" while introducing the award. "She heard me, she saw me, she created space for me, even supported me through my journey of motherhood," Perry said. The night was full of women supporting one another, with Lovato joining Luisa Sonza, one of seven Global Force honorees, for a surprise performance of "Penhasco2" and Powerhouse recipient Charli XCX honoring late producer SOPHIE with the live debut of her new song "So I." A handful of honorees also celebrated the women who got them here: their mothers. Hitmaker recipient Ice Spice shouted out both Jubelirer and her mom for "being the best woman ever," Tems dedicated her Breakthrough Award to her mother, and Victoria Monét performed "On My Mama" only to then accept her Rising Star Award from the song's inspiration (yes, her mom). Rexha honored Kylie Minogue with the Icon Award, Coco Jones introduced Producer of the Year PinkPantheress, and Andra Day presented the Visionary Award to Maren Morris, who said in her speech, "This year has been a lot, and the women in my life have truly banded around me and held me upright." The love extended offstage, too. *Billboard's* Woman of the Year, Karol G, shared a quick hug with Young Miko, who received the Impact Award; presenters Saweetie and GloRilla cheerfully embraced and took a quick selfie; and Perry told Charli, "You sounded amazing," before exchanging numbers with Rexha. The members of Group of the Year NewJeans perhaps summarized the evening best, saying as they exited the stage after accepting their award from Lainey Wilson: "So much fun!" —LYNDESEY HAVENS



Morris



Minogue



Tems

“Follow your gut instinct on everything that you think is cool,” Charli XCX said backstage. “Also, don’t take anything that seriously ... I feel like I’m a very sarcastic person, and I was always afraid to show it. Now I’m just like, ‘Be yourself.’ ”



Charli XCX



“As a woman in the Italian music industry, we have still a lot of work to do, but we are on the right road,” Global Force honoree Annalisa said prior to the event. “Today is a very inspiring day for all of us.”



“It’s a facade,” Perry revealed to Ice Spice and Charli XCX of her taller-than-usual height, pointing down to her platform boots before the trio posed for photos, including a selfie Perry captured on her phone.



Ice Spice

From left: Hyein, Hanni, Minji, Danielle and Haerin of NewJeans.



Sonza



Wilson



“Something I always try to think about daily is just being myself. I don’t think there’s anything more powerful and more beautiful,” Young Miko said on the Women in Music carpet.



Young Miko

Rexha



billboard Women in Music



FRONT ROW, FROM LEFT Laura Gonzalez, Mary Ashley Johnson, Angela Lopes, Charmaine Smith, Mary Allen, Darcy Rae Johnson, Natalie Koe, Tricia Arnold, Alejandra Olea, Farhana Pargac, Summer Marshall, Clara Pablo, Carole Kinzel, Andreea Gleeson, Marsha Viasic, Sally Velazquez, Jenna Adler, Angela Leus, Vanessa Sylvia, Nitsa Kalispera, Karen Lieberman, Margaret Galton
MIDDLE ROW, FROM LEFT Morgan Dentch, Karina Puente, Maria Fernandez, Amanda Molter, Nicole Giacco, Yendi Rodriguez, Ann Jackson, Casey Sparks, Ashley Winton, Allison Jones, Melanie Dorf, Caroline Yim, Dre Hanna, Kelley Purcell, Elise Stawarz
BACK ROW, FROM LEFT Emily Simonitsch, Jen Sandstrom, Colleen Theis, Alessandra Alarcón, Angela "Angie" Martinez, Heidy Vaquerano, Donna Caseine



Jubelirer (left) and Perry

Women In Music Class Portrait

Several executives who made this year's Women in Music list gathered together onstage after the event to pose for *Billboard's* annual class photo



From left: Jackie Kajzer, Diane Warren and Lori Rischer.



Bozoma Saint John (left) and Lael Saint John



From left: Andrea De Castro Ayala, Elina Adut and Clara Pablo.

CLASS PHOTO: SAINT JOHN, WARREN: RICH POLK, JUBELIRER: MICHAEL BUCKNER, PABLO: CHRISTOPHER POLK



POPIANO

With a monster hit single in "Water," a Grammy and a global push from her label,

STAR

South Africa's **TYLA** is bringing her alluring take on *amapiano* music to the masses

BY HERAN MAMO

PHOTOGRAPHED BY RAMONA ROSALES

Tyla photographed March 11 in Los Angeles.

Styling by Katie Qian
Retrofête dress, Jessica Rich shoes, Armature earrings, Alexis Bittar bracelet, Jacquie Aiche necklace, La Manso ring and Letra necklace and ring.

W

WHEN SOUTH AFRICAN SINGER-SONGWRITER

Tyla turned 22 years old in late January, she was on top of the world — literally.

Her label, Epic Records, invited a few hundred music executives, artists and fans to Harriet's Rooftop in West Hollywood, Calif., for her birthday bash. The party was a dual celebration: Tyla had also recently scored her first Grammy Award nomination, for best African music performance — one of three new categories the Recording Academy introduced this year — with her 2023 breakthrough hit, "Water."

Walters surprised Tyla — who had transformed a corner of the rooftop bar into her own private VIP section, complete with glam shots of herself decorating the walls — with a glittery sheet cake. Epic chairwoman/CEO Sylvia Rhone and president Ezekiel Lewis presented her with three plaques commemorating the success of "Water": gold and platinum certifications in over 18 countries (including the United States and South Africa); surpassing 1 billion views on TikTok; and reaching No. 1 on *Billboard's* U.S. Afrobeats Songs, Rhythmic Airplay and

maintains a level of poise that suggests nothing's wrong. She gamely plays the part of the glamorous burgeoning pop star, in a fur-print puffer jacket, bra top and mismatched gold hoops that complement the edginess of her eyebrow slit.

This is, after all, a role Tyla has prepared for her whole life. Her co-manager, Colin Gayle, clearly remembers his first meeting with her: "I was like, 'What do you want to do?' She said, 'I want to be Africa's first pop star.'" Gayle, who is also co-founder and CEO of Africa Creative Agency, had recently moved to South Africa when Brandon Hixon — the New York-based co-founder of FAX Records who started managing Tyla in 2018 after discovering her on Instagram — reached out to see if he would meet with Tyla and consider becoming her on-the-ground support. By 2020, Gayle had joined her management team.

As a new generation of young African women has broken into mainstream pop music over the past few years (including Beninese Nigerian singer Ayra Starr, whom Tyla collaborated with on "Girl Next Door," and fellow South African DJ Uncle Waffles, whom she performed with in September in New York), Tyla has emerged with a unique blend of sounds dubbed "popiano" — a hybrid of pop, R&B and Afrobeats with the shakers, rattling log drums and soulful piano melodies of amapiano. It really

with me. I still have the video, and I'm wearing this bodysuit that's half open. It's a hectic video, but it showcases the excitement in that moment."

This year's best African music performance nominees were predominantly Nigerian artists — Burna Boy ("City Boys"), Davido ("Unavailable"), Asake and Olamide ("Amapiano") and Starr ("Rush"). Tyla and Musa Keys (who's featured on Davido's "Unavailable") were the only South African acts. Considering the significant inroads Afrobeats has made in the American music market over the last decade, Tyla's win with an amapiano song wasn't necessarily likely.

"That category is something that was introduced in my lifetime, and I was the first person to win it. And I'm able to bring it home back to South Africa," Tyla marvels now, adding that her father has already claimed the trophy to be displayed in his study, along with the rest of her award hardware. "The South African genre of amapiano just started bubbling, and I'm so proud that South Africa has a genre that people are enjoying and paying attention to. I'm super proud of my country and where our sound has gone."

That sound is just one element of how Tyla represents her home country in her craft, sometimes in ways that the average non-South African consumer might miss. For a late-2023 performance on *The Voice*, she transformed the stage into a *shebeen*, an "unlicensed, underground space for drinking and music" where Black South Africans could gather and "speak freely in protest" during apartheid, according to Lior Phillips, author of *South African Popular Music (Genre: A 33 1/3 Series)*. And at the very end of the repeated prechorus of "Water," Tyla softly exhales "*haibo*," a Zulu expression of shock or disbelief. "It's similar to 'Yo!' where you can use it multiple ways," she explains. "In that [song], I kind of use it in a sassy way."

But when she performed "Water" during her debut U.S. TV performance on *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon* in late October, Tyla replaced it with another South African expression: "*Asambe!*"

"*Asambe*" in South Africa means "Let's go!" And she screamed it on the mic. That was pivotal," recalls her choreographer, Lee-ché Janecke. "It felt awkward at first when we were rehearsing it because we were like, 'Are we really going to do this on national television in America? Um, yeah, we are!' As much as it's one word, it meant the most to South Africa."

GROWING UP IN THE

"very lively" city of Johannesburg, Tyla Laura Seethal was always the center of attention. "Even before I could remember, my mother would tell me stories about how when I was small, I would always want to sing for people," Tyla recalls. "I would pose for people just so they [could] take pictures of me. And I danced for everyone."

Her parents exposed her to American R&B icons like Stevie Wonder, Brian McKnight, Aaliyah and Whitney Houston; South African pop and house acts like Freshlyground, Mi Casa and Liquideep; and Nigerian Afrobeats superstars like Wizkid, Burna Boy and Davido. When Tyla was 11, she started uploading videos of herself singing covers to YouTube and Instagram, from Billie Eilish's "Ocean Eyes" to Boyz II Men's version of "Let It Snow," and DM'ing them to superstars like Drake and DJ Khaled.

"The South African genre of amapiano just started bubbling... I'm super proud of my country and where our sound has gone."

—TYLA

Mainstream R&B/Hip-Hop Airplay charts.

Then, five nights later, Tyla got the best belated birthday present of all: her first Grammy, the inaugural win in its category, which Jimmy Jam presented to her during the awards show's premiere ceremony. "I was in such shock," Tyla recalls on an early March afternoon. "It's something that a lot of people strive toward and want to win at least once in their lifetime. And I'm so blessed to have received one so early in my career."

But for an artist reflecting on such a joyous moment, Tyla sounds a bit blue speaking to me about her Grammy win today — and understandably so. Just six hours before our chat, she had posted a letter on Instagram announcing the kind of news no young artist wants to reveal: Due to "an injury that's tragically worsened," she would be delaying her first headlining North American and European tour and dropping out of a handful of festivals, including Coachella. "It's difficult because I want to go. It's the moment that I've been waiting for," she tells me. "It's not an easy decision, but it's the right decision."

Four days later at her *Billboard* cover shoot, Tyla

popped when she released "Water," a summer anthem with a sweltering pop/R&B hook (and a subtle sensuality recalling Aaliyah's "Rock the Boat") that floats over bubbling log drums.

"Water" opened the floodgates to the global recognition of Tyla's dreams. The song debuted at No. 67 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 in October and by January had reached a No. 7 peak. Its viral TikTok dance helped catapult the track onto radio, and Travis Scott and Marshmello eagerly hopped on its remixes. "Water" hit No. 1 on U.S. Afrobeats Songs in October, ending the record 58-week reign of Rema and Selena Gomez's "Calm Down," and it has now spent 24 weeks (and counting) atop the chart. Tyla's catalog has earned 283.7 million official on-demand U.S. streams, according to Luminate — and "Water" is responsible for 236.7 million of them.

On the morning of Nov. 10, 2023, Tyla's Epic team told her to tune in to the Grammy nominations livestream from her hotel room in New York. "I didn't even know the label submitted some songs," she recalls. "When I saw my name, I was like, 'There's no way.' My best friend was jumping in the room

AREA jacket and boots, Rui top, Cori! Burns skirt, Hugo Kreit earrings and Jacquie Aiche necklaces.



HAIR BY CHRISTINA TINI; MAKEUP BY PATRICK OSHAN; ON-SITE PRODUCTION BY JENNIER LARUE

Diesel dress, Dsquared2 shoes,
Jenny Lauren Jewelry bracelet, Letra ring
and UNOde50 bracelet and ring.



“It’s difficult because I want to go [on tour]. It’s the moment that I’ve been waiting for. It’s not an easy decision, but it’s the right decision.”

—TYLA

in Cape Town,” as SoSo wrote on Instagram.

“I was actually driving in Portland [Ore.] with my family and I started listening to [“Water”] on my phone. I literally stopped the car and pulled over,” Hixon recalls of his initial reaction. “My wife and my kids were like, ‘What’s going on?’ And I was like, ‘Yo, this shit is crazy!’ ”

Tyla and her team instantly knew “Water” was going to be big, and she wanted to find a way to make it even bigger. One night at around 10:30 p.m., a few days before the song dropped, Tyla called Janecke and Nzimande to brainstorm choreography ideas. She had always loved the Pretoria-based *Bacardi* style of dancing — which synchronizes booty shaking and intricate footwork with a song’s fast-paced rhythm — and had incorporated it into a different song from her live sets that always generated a crazy crowd reaction. Tyla asked Janecke if he could create a Bacardi-inspired dance for “Water,” and within an hour, he drafted a TikTok video of his original routine and sent it to her. “She goes, ‘Post! Post this right now!’ ” he recalls excitedly. “She was going crazy over this pocket of hands up, hands down, throw it to the side, boom. Booty on log drum! Throw it to the other side. Booty on log drum!”

When she performed the dance for the first time at the self-proclaimed world’s biggest Afrobeats festival, Afro Nation Portugal, in July, Janecke had Tyla’s backup dancers pour water bottles on her. A month later, while rehearsing for her Giants of Africa festival set in Rwanda, she suggested simply pouring the water bottle on herself — a choreography tweak that proved to be social media gold. One festival attendee posted a video of the revised “Water” routine on her Instagram Story and Tyla asked for the footage, reposting to her own account shortly before jetting back to South Africa. When she landed almost four hours later, the video had amassed more than 5 million views. (It now has over 21 million.)

Tyla’s natural dance ability — and her instincts for the kind of performance that would most resonate on the internet — continued to draw in fans as she began performing on TV, appearances that, co-manager Gayle says, “cemented her as an artist.” But keeping her audience engaged and growing required more than one hit single. The *Tyla* EP arrived in early December, with “Water,” its Scott remix and three new songs — intended, Lewis explains, to give fans “a taste of other layers of the artist so that it becomes bigger than a track proposition and turns into an artist proposition.”

The mini project also introduced a playful new focus track, “Truth or Dare,” which came with its

own viral TikTok choreography. “Truth or Dare” and another EP track, the 1990s R&B-inspired “On and On,” became two more top 10 hits on the U.S. Afrobeats Songs chart for Tyla, peaking at Nos. 3 and 10, respectively, and “Truth or Dare” has been steadily climbing at radio, reaching No. 22 on Mainstream R&B/Hip-Hop Airplay and No. 24 on Rhythmic Airplay.

The momentum of her other songs perfectly set the stage for the March 22 release of Tyla’s self-titled debut. It’s bittersweet that she can’t promote it live — yet — in the way she has proved to be so skilled, and for the moment, neither Tyla nor her label will reveal anything more about her injury. So for now, the music will have to speak for itself.

Over 14 tracks, Tyla polishes her popiano sound, finding the sweet spot between African and American music with R&B melodies, amapiano production and exquisite pop writing. “We traveled the world to make this record, and that’s why the world is reflected in this record,” Lewis says. Mexican American star Becky G joins her for the smooth, Afrobeats-meets-Latin dancefloor number “On My Body”; rapper Gunna and Jamaican dancehall artist Skillibeng help coax out her more braggadocious side on “Jump”; and Tyla brings other stars from her home continent along for the ride, blending beautifully with Nigerian singer-songwriter-producer Tems on “No. 1” and cooing over South African DJ-producer Kelvin Momo’s slow-burning amapiano production on “Intro.” “I had this voice note on my phone of the song playing and people talking in the back. I remember loving the slang that we were using and just the sound of a South African studio session,” Tyla says. “I knew I wanted that for my intro.”

And while her fans will have to wait to see her live (in her Instagram note, Tyla said she hoped to be “ready to return safely onstage this summer”), they can still see the kind of performer Tyla is in her Gap Spring 2024 Linen Moves campaign, which reimagines Jungle’s viral “Back on 74” music video. She wants to keep branching out into fashion, too, or perhaps dabble in makeup and acting. “People are going to see me *everywhere*,” she promises. “If you don’t like me, I’m sorry.”

Tyla dreamed for years of becoming Africa’s first pop star — and she isn’t about to let one setback stop her. “I’m really confident in what I’ve created. Now’s a time where I can showcase a performance style where I’m not really dancing as much. Maybe I strip back a little bit more and I’m just serving vocals,” she muses. “But there’s no way to stop me. I’m always going to find a way.” **B**

While her countless reachouts went unanswered, her Instagram covers caught the attention of Garth von Glehn, a Zimbabwean director and photographer based between Cape Town and New York. When he first emailed her, Tyla worried it was a scam — but after a few weeks, she agreed to meet von Glehn with her parents.

Ultimately, Tyla spent every weekend of her final year of high school at his studio loft, writing and recording music, shooting music videos and conducting photo shoots with her best friend Thato Nzimande. Von Glehn’s loft was “a creative artist hub,” says Janecke, who worked on music video sets with von Glehn and was tapped by him to help train some of the in-house artists during their early development period. One of those artists was Tyla.

“She just had this thing in her eyes that she wants this!” Janecke exclaims. “And wanting it makes me feel like, ‘OK, I’m going to push more with this person.’ If you’re hungry, and that hunger never stops, that’s my girl. And she has been that girl since that point.”

Tyla’s parents, however, remained skeptical that the path of an artist was the right one for her — so, to appease them, she applied to university to study mining engineering, a field she picked only because “it was the job that was going to give me the most money.” But after “a lot of convincing and a lot of crying,” her parents allowed her a trial gap year after

she graduated from high school in 2019 so she could prove that a full-time music career would pan out.

Working with Kooldrink, a producer living in von Glehn’s house, Tyla started “to experiment and find out the sound that I wanted to have.” At the time, amapiano was taking over South African dancefloors and radio stations alike. Meaning “the pianos” in Zulu, amapiano originated in the South African townships in the mid-2010s as a hybrid of deep house, jazz and *kwai*to music and was popularized by Kabza De Small and DJ Maphorisa, among others.

After first hearing amapiano in high school, when a classmate played her Kwiish SA’s “Iskhathi (Gong Gong),” Tyla wanted to put her own spin on the genre. “Amapiano songs were like eight minutes, 10 minutes at that time,” Tyla told *Billboard* in October, when she was honored as R&B/Hip-Hop Rookie of the Month. “And I was like, ‘Oh, that’s a bit too long! Let me make an amapiano song that has the normal format of a pop song or an R&B song.” She experimented with that formula on her scintillating debut single, “Getting Late,” featuring Kooldrink. But after shooting one scene for the video at the beginning of 2020, the coronavirus pandemic broke out and production shut down. With just one year to prove herself to her parents, Tyla feared she had run out of time.

“Even if it only gets 270 views on YouTube and my

career fails, I’ll just watch this video on repeat for the rest of my life and I’m pretty sure I’ll be happy,” Tyla posted on Instagram days before the “Getting Late” video eventually premiered in January 2021. The outcome quashed all of her previous concerns: The clip, which has since garnered more than 9 million YouTube views, earned a music video of the year nomination at the 2022 South African Music Awards, and FAX Records’ Hixon sent it to Epic’s Rhone and Lewis.

“This could be the vehicle to take Africa to the world in a way that it has never been exported before,” Lewis recalls thinking. The “Getting Late” video started a label bidding war, but thanks to Hixon’s established business relationship with Lewis and Rhone — and with a little help from multiple “Love, Sylvia Rhone from Epic” billboards with Tyla’s face on them placed around Johannesburg — Tyla chose Epic.

“It was a very competitive signing. We wanted something authentic, sincere and personal — especially since we’re 10,000-plus miles away,” Rhone says of her tactic. “That’s what sealed the deal.”

TYLA CAN STILL PICTURE the first time she left South Africa, in 2021. “I remember looking outside

of the plane and crying,” she says, “and being like, ‘What the heck is this?’ ”

She was en route to Dubai, United Arab Emirates, where Epic had assembled various American, European and African songwriters and producers, including three-time Grammy winner (and former Epic president of A&R) Tricky Stewart, and put them in a writing camp just for her. “At the time, we couldn’t get the resources and the people [to South Africa] to make it happen,” Lewis explains. “So I figured out randomly by looking at the map that Dubai would be a place that would host us all. That’s a very expensive proposition, a very ambitious sort of undertaking, but she was worth it.”

For the next two-and-a-half years, Epic’s development of Tyla became a truly global endeavor, taking her and a rotating group of hit-makers to Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania, South Africa, Jamaica, the United Kingdom, the United States and beyond to write and record her self-titled debut album. The sessions helped Tyla gain more formal studio recording experience, while also establishing her “Fantastic Four” team of creative collaborators: Ari PenSmith, Mocha Bands, Believeve and Sammy SoSo, who all contributed to “Water,” the “summer banger” that Tyla felt had been missing from her album. In keeping with the project’s international genesis, the song was “produced in London, then finished in LA, written and vocal demo done in ATL then recorded

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THE GREEN SCENE

There are plenty of reasons to despair about the destruction of our environment, and about the music industry's role in contributing to it. But from global superstar artists to the companies running the giant venues and festivals where they perform, some of the most imaginative, motivated (and, yes, often well-funded) powers in the business are making significant strides toward creating a more sustainable future for music lovers — and for the planet.

ILLUSTRATION BY MARTIN NAUMANN

MARCH 30, 2024

BILLBOARD.COM



THE SUSTAINABLE SUPERSTAR

Billie Eilish and her mother, Maggie Baird, were stunned by the music industry's lack of environmental action — so they've integrated their own into every element of the artist's business

BY LYNDSEY HAVENS

LONG BEFORE BILLIE EILISH became a global superstar, she says she was "notorious" among her friends for something else entirely. "When I would get a present, I would carefully undo the tape and carefully unwrap it and not let it rip and I would fold it up so that it could be reused — I didn't want to destroy it," she says with a sincere chuckle.

In the eco-conscious house where Eilish grew up, everything — wrapping paper included — was treated as reusable. In 2012, with the help of a government rebate program, the family transitioned its Los Angeles home to run on solar power. And, in 2014, Eilish's parents, Patrick O'Connell and Maggie Baird, removed the grass from their front yard to save water. "Those were big moments for us," Baird recalls. "We were excited."

When Eilish, then in her early teens, started taking label meetings in 2016, her mother came along for the ride — for myriad business reasons, including keeping sustainability at the forefront of her daughter's career. Baird recalls "begging" labels to provide more information about their environmental initiatives and policies, and often wondered why she and her teenage daughter were the ones who had to raise the issue in the first place. (Eilish signed with The Darkroom in 2016, an imprint of Universal Music Group subsidiary Interscope Records.)

Today, Eilish and Baird are still talking about the environment — to much larger audiences than they were nearly a decade ago — while also leading the

charge for the future of sustainability in music. In 2020, Baird founded Support + Feed, which aims to mitigate climate change and increase food security by encouraging the acceptance and accessibility of plant-based food, including at large-scale events like concerts. Eilish partnered with the organization on her 2022 *Happier Than Ever* tour, which, according to REVERB, a nonprofit dedicated to addressing environmental concerns in the music business, saved 8.8 million gallons of water by serving plant-based meals for the artists and crew.

And last year, Eilish helped launch and fund REVERB's Music Decarbonization Project, which aims to ultimately eliminate carbon emissions created by the music industry. As part of the initiative, she partially powered her headlining set at Chicago's Lollapalooza last summer with zero-emissions battery systems that were charged on a temporary "solar farm" set up on site. (In 2024, Willie Nelson's Luck Reunion festival partnered with REVERB for a second consecutive year to power its main stage with 100% solar energy all day.)

Eilish's sustainability efforts go far beyond her touring. In 2022, she worked with Nike to redesign the brand's iconic Air Force 1 shoes to be vegan using vegan nubuck leather made with 80% recycled materials and 100% recycled polyester. More recently, in October she starred in a Gucci campaign that featured its classic 1955 Horsebit bag in Demetra, a vegan alternative to leather made from 75% plant-derived raw materials — a first for the brand.



"Yeah, we're all going to die soon," Eilish says matter-of-factly. "But we can try our best."

Growing up, why was sustainability such a priority for the family?

BILLIE EILISH It wasn't even something I really thought about; it was such a normal thing. My mom started making these bags in these different types of beautiful fabrics and ribbons, and that's how all of our presents were wrapped for Christmas and my birthday. When I would have parties, friends would

come over and bring me presents in wrapping paper and I would be like, "Ew, this is so ugly." We always used dish towels instead of paper napkins — everything was reusable, truly. And I didn't even know it was weird. When I started dating, the people I was dating would be like, "Do you have any paper towels?"

MAGGIE BAIRD You're four-and-a-half years [younger than your brother], Finneas... [he] remembers [the] transition more. We always joke that my kids grew up in the house where you got the

stink eye if you came in with a plastic bag or if you wasted anything.

EILISH I even think to a fault sometimes, I'm so unable to just throw things away in the trash. If I get food out with a friend I literally have to separate everything. Like, it's genuinely annoying. I wish I just didn't care and could throw it all in the garbage and that could be the end of it.

When Billie was starting out, were there any blueprints for making a music career

From left: Eilish, Finneas and Baird at a Support + Feed event in Los Angeles this year.

sustainable or were you making your own?

EILISH There's always somebody that paved the way for you, but I got to be real: It was bleak out here. We would be in meetings for things and my mom would [ask], "What are you guys doing to be more resourceful and conscious?" And they'd be like, "Oh, uh, well, you know..." They'd be tripping and stumbling over their words because they're not doing anything. And it was kind of alarming to find that no one's really doing anything to better the world. And the problem is, us people living in the

world with no power — “us” in terms of anybody — we’re all like, “Oh, don’t use plastic straws. We’re going to use horrible, soggy paper straws to save all the turtles. And we’re going to get electric cars. And we’re going to not use blow dryers,” or whatever it is to save the planet. And then these giant companies are not even doing anything when they have so much more power. We’ve had a lot of conversations and people are trying, but even when they’re trying, they’re like, “Oh, yeah. We’re going to have that in 2026.” And you’re like, “Well, that’s not fast enough.”

BAIRD It did feel bleak and very lonely in the beginning. When you’re a smaller artist and you don’t have any power and you don’t have any money, you just find yourself going, “Wait, why do we have all this plastic backstage?” Or, “Why are we driving this way?” Or, “Why are we doing this?” And the answer was, “Well, that’s just the way it’s done.” What really helped me was somebody said, “You need to talk to [Coldplay’s] Chris Martin.” They connected me on a call with Chris, which was amazing. Then Chris connected me to REVERB, and REVERB was a real game-changer for us. They had the ability to help us know what to change and how to communicate.

Do you recommend REVERB to new artists looking for sustainability solutions?

BAIRD They do have resources for newer artists because in the beginning, you can’t really afford things and you may not be playing in venues that have a lot of flexibility. There’s a lot of organizations working in this space: Music Sustainability Alliance, Music Declares Emergency. If artists are interested, it does really start with them telling their teams that they care and that it’s foremost in their thoughts. From the beginning, it was about constantly asking questions until people [got] you the answers.

We, as a plant-based family, had all these catering conversations and it was not until Lesley [Olenik,

“[EXECUTIVES WOULD] BE TRIPPING AND STUMBLING OVER THEIR WORDS BECAUSE THEY’RE NOT DOING ANYTHING. AND IT WAS KIND OF ALARMING TO FIND THAT NO ONE’S REALLY DOING ANYTHING TO BETTER THE WORLD.”

—BILLIE EILISH

vp of touring at] Live Nation was like, “Well, it sounds like you’d like all plant-based food.” We were like, “Can we do that?” And she was like, “Erykah Badu did.” It’s kind of just knowing what other people are doing. We do have green riders [for] dressing rooms, video shoots and photoshoots. I think those are really, really helpful and highly shareable.

Which of your strides in sustainability are you most proud of?

EILISH The one that was seen by the most people was getting Oscar de la Renta to stop using fur when they made me a dress for the Met [Gala]. That was really important to me. It’s tough as a person who loves fashion. I’ve tried to be a big advocate of no animal products in clothing and it’s hard. People really like classic things. I get it, I’m one of them. But what’s more important: things being original or our kids being able to live on the planet and them having kids?

BAIRD Also, the solar set at Lollapalooza was a huge moment. And Billie also made it possible for us to create two climate summits in London for her fans, *Overheated*, [which was held in 2022 and 2023]. Getting [London’s] O2 Arena to go fully plant-based for six shows [in 2022] was a monumental feat, and getting plant-based food in every arena on her [*Happier Than Ever*] tour was amazing. There’s so many amazing wins that Billie herself probably

doesn’t even know. I think that the artist’s role is to champion [something] and say that’s what they want, what they believe in and [that they] want to make it happen. It’s the power that they have to say, “This is important to me, and it has to be a priority.”

Have you seen labels make sustainability a priority?

BAIRD I will say happily that Universal has really come a long way. We had three Universal Music Group Sustainability Summits last year, one in London, one in L.A., one in New York with just UMG employees talking about all the various issues. I used to be like, “Why are we the ones doing this?” Like, why is a 15-year-old girl and her mom talking about this? Why aren’t you telling us, why don’t you have all the advice on this? But gradually they have started to, which I think is really encouraging.

When it comes to pushing for impact over profit, have you experienced any friction?

BAIRD Merch becomes a real issue. We look at sustainability in every single aspect: vinyl, packaging, transportation, food. But with merch, Billie is very particular about what her merch looks like.

EILISH It’s about how it feels and how it looks and how it’s made. And so the problem is to make sure that my clothing is being made well and ethically and with good materials and it’s very sustainable

Eilish (left) and Baird onstage with panelists at their *Overheated* climate activism event in London in 2023.



EILISH BAIRD, JESSE PROSSER

and that it feels good and is durable. It’s going to be more expensive and that’s the thing: People can be upset by that. But I’m trying to pick one of two evils.

BAIRD And Billie reduced the number of drops she does. Like, she just literally doesn’t sell as much merch.

EILISH Sometimes people have the idea of when things are more ethical, they’re more expensive, and so it’s harder to be plant-based or environmentally conscious if you don’t have as much money. That’s the whole system we live in, of like, if you have less money then you have less resources [for] healthier food... And so what we’re trying to do is make it more universally accessible.

You’re working to make vinyl more sustainable. *Happier Than Ever* came in eight vinyl variants, but you use 100% recycled black vinyl — plus recycled scraps for colored variants — and shrink-wrap made from sugar cane.

EILISH We live in this day and age where, for some reason, it’s very important to some artists to make all sorts of different vinyl and packaging ... which ups the sales and ups the numbers and gets them more money and gets them more...

BAIRD Well, it counts toward No. 1 albums.

EILISH I can’t even express to you how wasteful it is. It is right in front of our faces and people are just getting away with it left and right, and I find it really frustrating as somebody who really goes out of my way to be sustainable and do the best that I can and try to involve everybody in my team in being sustainable — and then it’s some of the biggest

artists in the world making fucking 40 different vinyl packages that have a different unique thing just to get you to keep buying more. It’s so wasteful, and it’s irritating to me that we’re still at a point where you care that much about your numbers and you care that much about making money — and it’s all your favorite artists doing that shit.

BAIRD But to be fair, the problem is systemic, right? Because if *Billboard*, to be honest, is going to not have limits... I would love to see limits, like no more than four colors. Or some kind of rules, because you can’t fault an artist for playing the No. 1 game.

EILISH I was watching *The Hunger Games* and it made me think about it, because it’s like, we’re all going to do it because [it’s] the only way to play the game. It’s just accentuating this already kind of messed up way of this industry working.

How have the industry and fan responses to your efforts shifted over the years?

BAIRD You have this amazing power when you’ve got 10,000 to 20,000 people in a venue to see you, who get to hear from you, what you believe in and how you’re trying to change. That fan interaction is incredibly important. If you can educate them to know you can bring your reusable water bottle in and there will be water-filling stations, and there will be plant-based food and it will not be more expensive, and [to think about] how you get to the show and back — which, as we know, the biggest carbon cost is fan transportation. Then we’ve got to get the arena to understand people want these things.

We know from research that fans are more likely

Eilish (left) and Baird at *Overheated* in 2023.

to take action if they believe the artist is authentic. Which I think unfortunately scares off a lot of artists because they’re like, “Well, I don’t want to say I’m trying to do X because I’m not perfect on Y.” That’s a barrier that is really challenging to break, especially with social media and the culture of cancel and hate. The truth is, you just have to do it anyway. Artists can cast a giant shadow of influence. If you’re not perfect, but you are influencing many, many, many people to do better, it’s multiplied hundreds of times.

Is there any other part of your career, Billie, that isn’t yet where you would like it to be in terms of sustainability?

BAIRD You experienced major touring weather events in 2022 and 2023. We were in an extreme weather event in Mexico City that canceled the show and was quite dangerous. We’ve been in horrific heat. We’ve been in horrific smoke from fires. It’s just a reality of the business, and people have to start to take seriously that this is the biggest threat to touring.

EILISH It’s a never-ending fucking fight. As we all know, it’s pretty impossible to force someone to care. All you can do is express and explain your beliefs, but a lot of people don’t really understand the severity of the climate [crisis]. And if they do, they’re like, “Well, what’s the point? We’re all going to die anyway.” Believe me, I feel that way too. But “what’s the point” goes both ways: “What’s the point? I can do whatever I want. We’re all going to die anyway.” Or, “What’s the point? I might as well do the right thing while I’m here.” That’s my view.



THE FORWARD-THINKING FEST

With Cali Vibes, promoter Goldenvoice is offering the festival space a case study in “a way to go at it where everybody does better”

BY KATIE BAIN

ON ITS SURFACE, CALI VIBES seems like a normal music festival. In February, the three-day Long Beach, Calif., event held its third annual edition, welcoming 20,000 fans per day with a bill topped by Gwen Stefani, Stick Figure, Slightly Stoopid and Rebelution. But a closer look reveals quiet innovation.

Attendees drink from reusable plastic cups instead of single-use ones. Solar panels power the artists lounge. Staff members posted at each garbage station advise guests on whether waste should be thrown away, recycled or composted. Excess food is donated to local shelters.

The festival is a fun time — and a testing ground for sustainability initiatives that may eventually be used throughout the live sector. In 2023, Goldenvoice parent company AEG Presents designated Cali Vibes as an incubator to pilot green measures with the hope of expanding them across AEG’s festival portfolio. Cali Vibes designed its program in partnership with Three Squares, a Los Angeles-based environmental consulting firm.

“Environment is part of the DNA of the festival,” says Goldenvoice vp of festivals Nic Adler, who in his position oversees California festivals including Cali Vibes, Cruel World, Just Like Heaven, Portola, Camp Flog Gnaw and Goldenvoice’s other “non-desert” (i.e., not Coachella or Stagecoach) events, which all typically draw between 20,000 and 30,000 fans per day.

“Cali Vibes is definitely the greenest one,” says Adler, who also helps book the shows, which focus on reggae, roots rock and hip-hop. “It’s harder to do something on the scale of 125,000 people a day [like Coachella or Stagecoach] versus 30,000, so the festivals we oversee are testing grounds for our larger events.

“We’re all aware that bringing 50 truckloads of stuff and 50,000 people to a site is not sustainable,” he continues. “But there’s a way to go

at it where everybody does better.”

Goldenvoice doesn’t promote Cali Vibes as a green festival — but it certainly could. That starts with how fans reach the festival grounds at Long Beach’s Marina Green Park. Cali Vibes promotes public transit use by offering attendees free or discounted rides through a partnership with L.A. Metro and electric scooter company Bird. (Scientists cite the emissions from fan travel as the single biggest challenge in greening concerts.) This year, most Cali Vibes transport vehicles were electric. While the festival can’t control how artists arrive at the site or how the event’s equipment is delivered, its “no idling” rule reduces emissions by requiring cars and gas-powered golf carts to be turned off when not in motion. Adler says the rule will likely be implemented at Coachella 2024.

Elsewhere, festival signage is made from wood so it can be reused, while thousands of square feet of plastic banners at stages are taken by up-cycling company Rewilder after the event wraps and sewn into tote bags and backpacks sold at the following year’s merchandise stand. Unsold merch is refashioned into staff uniforms. This year, the festival’s reusable cup program, r.Cup, had an 81% return rate, which translated to the elimination of 300,000 single-use plastic cups. Water is served in aluminum cans, and refill stations are located throughout the event. Each ticket includes a \$5 sustainability charge — Adler says it helps fans “feel like they’re participating” — which is split between greening festival operations and nonprofits including Surfrider Foundation and Plastic Pollution Coalition; Cali Vibes has donated \$130,000 since the program’s inception.

Such forward-facing initiatives are crucial, Adler explains, because “festivals are inherently discovery-based in terms of new music, new people, new food” and can instill new habits that might stick with attendees. “We are an example,” he says, that could inspire fans to get their own reusable cup, learn to compost or go vegetarian.

From left: The scene at the 2024 Cali Vibes Festival; reusable cups from r.Cup were the rule; staffers served as garbage station guides.

Roughly 20% to 30% of food vendors at Goldenvoice festivals are vegan, with all vendors required to offer at least one vegetarian option. When Morrissey and Siouxsie Sioux headlined Cruel World in 2022 and 2023, respectively, both artists required that meat not be sold, resulting in roughly 80% vegan options — and demonstrating the power artists have to demand sustainability initiatives. Meanwhile, festival staff collect and compost food waste from vendors and divert excess food to local nonprofits and homeless shelters.

Beyond the solar-powered artists lounge — which Adler says has become a point of pride even if it isn’t “that great-looking” — the fest has shifted to clean energy in several areas, including solar-powered light towers in parking lots, merch stations and bathroom zones, and battery-powered LED lights in some locations. In 2023, the use of renewable diesel in generators and heavy equipment eliminated 43 tons of carbon emissions.

And since festival greening often means entering unknown territory, Adler says his team “spends a lot of the year going to random parking lots to meet someone to test a solar battery. We’ve seen more things we don’t like than things that will work, but that’s the process to find the right products.”

When it comes to green initiatives, Adler thinks the live sector is “crossing the threshold.” As sustainable technologies become more widely available and adopted, “the more prices are going to come down, so more festivals will want to use solar batteries or electric vans. The minute [the costs] start affecting the bottom line in a positive way, there’s going to be a full push for all of this.”

That hasn’t happened just yet, but even so, Adler can’t “recall a time in this business where it has been easier to use these alternatives.” He predicts that in five to 10 years, green energy tech will be established and affordable enough for producers to feel confident using it for large-scale stages and other major energy use points.

But for Adler, the goal is not necessarily to create a zero-emissions festival — “If you restrict it too much, people might not come back” — but instead an enjoyable, inspiring environment that implements and showcases ever-improving sustainability components and which vendors, artists and fans are happy to return to.

“You must create the opportunity for people to do the right thing,” he says. “That’s what our team is focused on the most: Have we created enough opportunities for people to participate in doing better?”

COURTESY: GOLDENVOICE; PHOTOS: JACOB BERENSON, GIP HICULTA/BRANLEY

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From left: The "living wall" at Seattle's Climate Pledge Arena; a rendering of U.K. venue Co-op Live, where a pedestrian path encourages foot travel to the arena.

THE VENUE VISIONARIES

With its innovative arenas — like the new Co-op Live — Oak View Group is setting an ambitious industry standard for sustainable buildings

BY TAYLOR HIMS

WHEN CO-OP LIVE, the latest arena from developer Oak View Group (OVG), opens in Manchester, England, in April, it will look a bit different from most similarly sized British venues.

Inside, it will serve up an eminently modern offering: the United Kingdom's largest arena concert capacity, an acoustically efficient infrastructure and a star-studded concert lineup including Stevie Nicks, Olivia Rodrigo and Nicki Minaj. But outside, the venue's innovations will be most visible. Situated on the Manchester Ship Canal, Co-op Live is surrounded by a "biodiversity ring" — over 29,000 square feet of lush greenery offering a natural habitat for local wildlife and a surrounding green wall to attract bees. A mile-long pedestrian path partially along the water will encourage more environmentally friendly travel to and from the 23,500-capacity venue.

Since OVG broke ground on Co-op Live in 2021, chairman/CEO Tim Leiweke has frequently walked that route to the arena, which was built by local suppliers to reduce the transportation of materials, is entirely powered by electricity to eliminate the use of gas on site and even collects rain to water its plants and flush its toilets. "Co-op Live is going to be the most sustainable arena in the U.K. and one of the most in the world," he tells *Billboard*. "It is our intent, our ambition and our commitment to be carbon neutral, but it takes a year to be certified" with an "excellent" rating from the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method, run by U.K. accreditation service BRE Global.

A veteran of the live sector — and of innovation in arena construction, specifically — who once served as president of AEG, Leiweke is known for his enthusiasm for ambitious new projects like Co-op Live and Green Operations & Advanced Leadership (GOAL), a sustainability program developed by founding members OVG; State Farm Arena and its NBA sports tenant the Atlanta Hawks; Fenway Sports Group; and green building expert Jason F. McLennan for arenas, stadiums, convention centers and other venues. "I love GOAL. It's the most

important thing we've done toward sustainability," Leiweke says. "It's hugely important that we get other people in the industry committed to GOAL. That's one of [OVG's] highest priorities."

Building Co-op Live is only the latest milestone in OVG's commitment to creating more sustainable concert spaces that began with its billion-dollar, four-year renovation of Seattle's Climate Pledge Arena (formerly Key Arena), which reopened in late 2021. Now OVG is working to bring sustainability to each of the more than 400 buildings it owns, operates or partners with.

"As an industry, we are a lightning rod of attention," Leiweke says. "Can we use that platform that has such a big profile to be an example of tackling this issue and doing the right thing?"

During Climate Pledge Arena's renovation, OVG floated its iconic roof in the air for conservation — Seattle designated Key Arena's exterior a municipal landmark in 2017 — and overhauled the 60-year-old building to consume zero fossil fuel, use solar panels for 100% renewable energy power and employ a "Rain to Rink" system harvesting water off the roof to help create the ice for NHL tenant the Seattle Kraken. Naming-rights partner Amazon chose the new arena's moniker, basing it on its Climate Pledge with environmental advocacy group Global Optimism. Today, it's a zero-waste venue without single-use plastics — and was the first arena to achieve International Living Future Institute Zero Carbon Certification, meaning it's energy-efficient, combustion-free and powered entirely by renewable sources.

After working with OVG on Climate Pledge, Amazon provided its web services software to track venue performance for sustainability measures such as energy and water use, greenhouse gas emissions and waste management. In October 2021, OVG and fellow founding members launched GOAL to provide resources to venues exploring how to operate more sustainably.

"You don't have to be Climate Pledge Arena and chances are you won't be, at least not at first," says Kristen Fulmer, OVG head of sustainability and director of GOAL. "It's important that we meet operators where they are and make incremental improvements over time."

Take OVG's newly built Acrisure Arena in Palm Desert, Calif., as an example. It's surrounded by drought-resistant plants, uses electric Zambonis to maintain the ice used by AHL team the Coachella Valley Firebirds, runs on solar panels covering its parking lot and is sunk 25 feet below grade to limit exposure of its exterior facade and thus reduce its HVAC dependence. Parking lot lights are on dusk-to-dawn sensors, the venue composts, and prepaid parking reduces the time cars spend idling.

"When you open a venue that has all these elements already designed into it, [sustainability] becomes part of your daily procedure," Acrisure senior vp John Page says. And GOAL provides a "tracking system that allows us to evaluate on an ongoing basis how we can lower our carbon footprint" and reach a target of carbon neutrality by 2025.

As with Acrisure, GOAL's approach to sustainability often utilizes creative solutions to regional issues, a practice made easier by the data it collects from its now 50 members. (Leiweke intends to double that number by the end of 2024.) "No one does a better job than State Farm Arena on recycling," Leiweke says. "We brought them in and said, 'Great, write the playbook.' And then we bring in all of the other people in our industry that we see as best in class on green and sustainability and say, 'Great, write that playbook.'"

Even with its collected best practices, Leiweke says, "Amazingly, many people turn down [GOAL] because they say it will cost too much money, which is ridiculous. How much do you think it's going to cost to replace the Earth?" It's true that upfront costs are higher at OVG's tricked-out-for-sustainability venues — but, Leiweke insists, GOAL's energy tracking and operational data will prove they're saving money in the long term. "It's usually about how long you're looking at the budget," Fulmer says, "and usually it will pay for itself."

In the meantime, there are ways to defray costs. Corporate partners, Fulmer explains, are often eager to contribute funding for environmental causes, promote their own sustainability agendas or both. GOAL helps those that want to back specific measures — say, funding a venue's switch from plastic to compostable cups — to team up with venues in exchange for on-site branding or activations.

As artists calculate their carbon footprint for upcoming tours, GOAL venues and partners can provide numbers, as well as initiatives and proposals, to lessen a tour's impact.

"Do I think it makes a difference that Billie Eilish is going to play my venue when she has a choice because she knows how committed we are to sustainability? 100%," Leiweke says. "But that's not the only reason we did it. We did it because we should all be doing this."

CLIMATE PLEDGE ARENA: CO-OP LIVE; COURTESY OF OAK VIEW GROUP

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THE PROACTIVE PARTNER

For 20 years, REVERB has helped artists, promoters and venues make concerts more sustainable — while engaging fans on critical environmental and social issues

BY ERIC RENNER BROWN

IN THE EARLY '00s, ADAM GARDNER'S home and work lives didn't align. "We would live an environmentally friendly lifestyle at home, and then he would go off on the tour bus powered by diesel, using Styrofoam and plastic utensils, and just feeling miserable about it all," recounts the Guster frontman's then-girlfriend, now-wife, Lauren Sullivan. "He realized other artists were feeling the same way."

Gardner cared about sustainability. Many music business stakeholders that he met, in touring especially, didn't. So he and Sullivan — a veteran of environmental organizations including Rainforest Action Network — set out to redefine how the industry approaches its footprint.

In 2004, they co-founded REVERB (they're now co-executive directors), partnering in short order with prominent eco-friendly acts like Dave Matthews Band and Jack Johnson. Twenty years on, its guiding mission remains: working with artists (its partners now include Billie Eilish, ODESZA and The 1975) and the music business to implement sustainable touring measures and to leverage the fan-artist relationship to increase engagement with environmental and social issues.

Inspired by Bonnie Raitt — "the godmother of all of it," as Sullivan puts it, who launched her Green Highway initiative on her 2002 tour to promote alternative energy sources while greening her own touring — Sullivan reached out to the musician's management to gauge how the model might be applied to other tours, and it offered mentorship and initial financial support. Gardner propositioned Barenaked Ladies to test the model; the band agreed, and REVERB debuted on the group's 2004 co-headlining tour with Alanis Morissette.

REVERB spent its early years navigating a music business that was often ambivalent about environmental issues. But as the climate crisis worsened and stakeholders saw REVERB in action, its conversations about sustainability became easier and its actions more comprehensive. Where REVERB used to be "a thorn in the side" of promoters, venues and artist teams, Sullivan explains, "it has been a sea change, 2004 to today."

The nonprofit's work falls into two broad categories:

improving a tour, venue or event's sustainability and using concerts to connect with fans about important issues. While tour sustainability has improved since REVERB launched — thanks in part to the organization itself — the former remains central to its work because most music industry stakeholders still lack the expertise to conceive and carry out green initiatives. Lara Seaver, who as REVERB's director of touring and projects implements its strategies, describes REVERB's suite of tour greening measures as "a menu" that teams can choose from based on a tour's established culture. There's "low-hanging fruit," like eliminating single-use plastic bottles backstage, and more involved actions, like collecting a touring party's unused hotel toiletries (which hotels often discard because they're not tamper-resistant) and donating them to local shelters.

"What REVERB does really well is they make it turnkey to implement everything," says AG Artists COO/GM Jordan Wolosky, who has handled client Shawn Mendes' REVERB work. "There's so many different moving pieces, so when you have an organization that can help you tackle a few of those pieces from the start, it's extremely helpful."

There's also "not a lot of weight or responsibility put on the artist unless they really want to dive in," says Activist Artists Management partner and head of sustainability Kris "Red" Tanner, who oversees REVERB affiliations for clients like The Lumineers and Dead & Company. "They help execute and check everything. We as the artists can say, 'We support this, we want it to happen,' but funnel it through [REVERB] and make sure we're actually living up to what we're promising."

Critically, REVERB's programs are tailored. "I can't imagine saying to an artist, 'It's cookie-cutter, and it's our way or the highway,'" Sullivan says. Some artists want to go green but aren't sure how; others have specific environment-related priorities (one year, Dave Matthews asked REVERB to dedicate its on-site messaging to protecting rhinos), while others still tap into the climate crisis' intersectionality by asking REVERB to coordinate advocacy for social issues (like homelessness and addiction for The Lumineers and Indigenous land rights for boygenius). "It's a really great, low-impact way for us to allow

the artists to make an impact without a lot of heavy lifting on their side," Tanner says. "Just using their pulpit is a great way to help spread the word."

REVERB researches and assembles local and national nonprofit partners, which are often numerous enough to create "action villages" at events for fans to interact with; for instance, during its 2023 tour, boygenius hosted 50 nonprofits. Since forming, REVERB has facilitated 7.7 million total fan actions, which range from voter registration to utilizing the #RockNRefill program, a decadelong partnership with Nalgene that rewards donors with collectible, tour-specific reusable water bottles — and offers all fans free, filtered refilling stations. "If you have 100 people on a tour, doing everything perfectly — you have the lightest footprint tour that ever was — and you compare that with the power of 20,000 fans at one show, it's pretty clear where the most potential for impact is," Seaver explains.

Notably, since REVERB's inception, sustainability has moved from afterthought to priority in the industry. "Folks are realizing if these sorts of impacts are considered from the very beginning, the efficiency of these solutions goes through the roof," says Tanner Watt, a 12-year REVERB veteran who liaises with artists, nonprofits and brands as director of partnerships. "We can usually save time and money and also increase the potential positive outcome and positive impact of these programs when we're involved in the entire conversation around a tour or event."

These conversations extend to venues and promoters. Mike Luba, president of Forest Hills Stadium in Queens, began a partnership between the venue and REVERB in 2017. "We followed their blueprint," he says, and the facility became climate-positive, meaning it offsets its carbon by more than it generates. "REVERB has changed the narrative, where people now go to concerts expecting that these things are in place," Luba continues. Some artists do, too: Neil Young, who will play two dates at Forest Hills in May, isn't an official REVERB partner, but he has a host of green requirements for any venue he plays. When booking his shows, "if we hadn't already checked a whole bunch of boxes, it was a nonstarter," Luba says.

Plenty of touring frontiers remain to be conquered. Last year, REVERB launched a major initiative, the Music Decarbonization Project, to eventually eliminate the carbon emissions created by the music industry, and Sullivan cites fan travel and inefficient tour routings as areas with room for improvement. But more broadly, REVERB has already accomplished some of the most challenging work.

"We're continuing to show venues, promoters and other stakeholders that this is feasible — fans want it, artists clearly want it," Sullivan says. "And if the will is there, it can happen."

From left: Fans engaged with REVERB volunteers at a concert; Gardner, Johnson and Sullivan; a fan refilled at a water station.

WELLES: COURTESY KARA BOTE; JOHNSON: WATT COOPER; WATER: COURTESY OF REVERB



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THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD

For artists who want to make eco-conscious actions both meaningful *and* measurable, working with scientific experts is increasingly a must

BY JASON LIPSHUTZ

THese days, Coldplay approaches touring “as a traveling R&D lab,” says longtime manager Phil Harvey — and the band’s ongoing *Music of the Spheres* tour does feel a bit like a stadium run as science experiment. There are compostable wristbands, biodegradable confetti and stationary bicycles that fans on the floor can ride mid-set to generate power to the production’s smaller C stage.

Five years ago, frontman Chris Martin declared that Coldplay would not tour until he could ensure the act’s stadium dates would “have a positive impact” on the environment. Now, thanks to the numerous green innovations put in place since *Music of the Spheres* began in 2022 — including not only the aforementioned measures but also renewable-resource batteries and routing that reduced air travel — the band achieved a 47% reduction in carbon emissions for the first year of touring, with a 50% reduction goal by the time it wraps in November.

Like an increasing number of artists, Coldplay relied on a team of scientific experts to devise a plan for a greener tour that would be both mammoth (7.7 million global tickets sold to date, according to Billboard Boxscore) and meaningful. “For the number of artists that we’ve been speaking to, the interest and appetite for understanding is pretty good and has exploded over the past three years,” says professor John E. Fernández, director of the Environmental Solutions Initiative (ESI) at MIT, who helped certify Coldplay’s carbon emission results and has also worked extensively with major dance act Above & Beyond.

The band also connected with Luke Howell — a former solar engineer who founded British sustainability consulting firm Hope Solutions and previously worked with the Glastonbury Festival. Howell and his Hope team studied the band’s previous tours “to identify key areas where we could reduce emissions,” he says, then created a range of targets, while recommending emerging green tech for the trek. “We don’t always get it right,” Harvey says of Coldplay’s ongoing efforts, “but we pass on everything we learn so that other people can do it better next time.”

Ahead of the inaugural Music Sustainability Summit, held in Los Angeles in February, the ESI announced a comprehensive study on touring’s carbon footprint, expected to be completed this summer. Recommendations will be made — although Fernández says there’s still a long way to go. “I would characterize the music industry as risk-averse,” he says. “It’s a business, and artists are

trying to make a living, so we’ve seen an enormous amount of concern over the risk entailed with making a commitment to reduce emissions.”

It’s one thing for a stadium act like Coldplay to make sustainability a prerequisite for playing live, but the majority of artists don’t have that financial luxury — or even a standardized emissions benchmark to shoot for. Michael P. Totten, who has served as a climate science adviser for Pearl Jam for over two decades, says, “The biggest problem we face is that [no artist] has control over everything” — in short, even one big act can’t cut through all the live-industry bureaucracy. “You’d love to work with green arenas,” he says, “but they’re owned by somebody else, they do a ton of events, and might say, ‘You should talk to the ticket sellers.’”

Thus, so far, the artists who effectively make their touring practices greener tend to be those who have the means and drive to do so — and whose tours also often leave the biggest footprints. Totten points out that Pearl Jam guitarist Stone Gossard helped drive the band’s pledge of donating \$200 per ton of carbon on its tours — but did so based on scientific recommendations, not any law or industrywide objective.



Coldplay fans generated power on the kinetic dancefloor during the *Music of the Spheres* tour.

FERNÁNDEZ: MIT/ENVIRONMENTAL SOLUTIONS INITIATIVE

Marcus Eriksen, a marine scientist who has worked with Jack Johnson to spread awareness of plastic pollution in the oceans, believes that change needs to start with more major artists demonstrating their awareness of various environmental issues. “You want to find influencers — people that can reach a much wider audience,” says Eriksen, who has led several ocean expeditions intended to help educate celebrities like Johnson about how much plastic exists in large bodies of water. Such in-person experiences can, he says, help attendees recognize an urgent issue and encourage them to spread the message back on land. “Getting folks out into the field for a direct experience — that can be transformative,” Eriksen says.

While standard green guidelines may not exist yet for the live industry, Howell says he would love to see more solar and renewable energy incorporated into touring, as well as “electric vehicles and fossil oil-free fuels for all trucking and freight.” Fernández also says the music industry must remain in close contact with the scientific community about the latest climate change projections to make any real progress. “Everyone in the music industry must accept the fact that we’re not going to stay [at] 1.5 degree C average surface warming,” he says, referencing the temperature threshold that was the original goal of the 2015 Paris Agreement. “So if you’re developing a climate plan to maintain that, you’re just going to have to rewrite that plan.”

With that in mind, Fernández stresses that artists must remain open to evolving information on climate change, even at the risk of reworking pre-existing sustainability pledges. “This is not unique to the music industry — what we’re seeing is that some companies have made climate commitments, they don’t feel good about the inability to fulfill them, and then they go silent,” he says. “Artists can’t go in that direction. They have to be part of inspiring people to take action.”

JOSE J. TORRES RODRIGUEZ
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billboard TOP MUSIC LAWYERS

“JOSÉ JUAN, QUEREMOS EXPRESARTE NUESTRO MÁS SINCERO ORGULLO POR TODOS TUS LOGROS. TU DEDICACIÓN Y COMPROMISO CON TUS CLIENTES SON REALMENTE ADMIRABLES.

SIEMPRE ESTÁS DISPUESTO A DARLO TODO POR TUS CLIENTES. TU INTEGRIDAD Y DISCIPLINA SON VERDADERAMENTE EJEMPLARES. GRACIAS POR SER UN PROFESIONAL EXCEPCIONAL Y POR INSPIRARNOS A TODOS.

¡SIGUES SIENDO UN GIGANTE EN LO QUE HACES!”



THE FESTIVAL OF THE FUTURE

For decades, festivals have created weekendlong oases for music fans — and left a mind-boggling amount of waste in their wakes. But as artists and fans increasingly learn about their impact on the environment, eco-minded — and creative — organizers have started pushing to make festivals greener. Whether headliner- (solar power) or supporting act-size (“Pee into tea,” anyone?), their ideas are making the live space more sustainable. Just imagine if they could all happen in one place...

BY DAVE BROOKS ILLUSTRATION BY SINELAB

IT TAKES A VILLAGE

Tennessee’s Bonnaroo offers fans interested in sustainability a dedicated place at the festival to organize and learn about new green efforts proposed by its nonprofit division, Bonnaroo Works. That includes the Roo Works cafe, where green entrepreneurs can pitch their ideas in a group setting; a nonprofit village where patrons can interact with green groups; a “learning garden” highlighting sustainable farming practices; and a volunteer program called Rooduce, Roouse and Roocycle.



KEEPER CUPS

Single-use beverage cups are a major source of festival landfill waste. Companies like r.Cup have begun working with major promoters like Goldenvoice to switch to washable, reusable cups, which are collected each night and washed at a local cleaning center. In 2023, r.Cup’s program diverted 1.1 tons (roughly 30,000 cups per day) of waste from local landfills.

WATER WORKS

Last year, Amsterdam’s DGTL festival launched an initiative to protect the site’s limited groundwater supply — it’s located within an industrial port in the city — by partnering with local sanitation companies to, well, “make tea out of pee.” By harnessing the same water purification technology that’s used to convert wastewater in space, DGTL created water reuse applications that will likely be expanded in the future.

WIPE DEFORESTATION OUT

Festivals like Lollapalooza and Outside Lands have switched to bamboo-based toilet paper this year, not because of the material’s post-flush qualities but to help curb deforestation. Bamboo grows much faster than trees cultivated for paper products, and activists see it as a possible long-term solution to the developing world’s need for lumber, which is increasing in price as deforestation continues.



START A MOVEMENT

For its *Music of the Spheres* tour, Coldplay deployed a kinetic dancefloor, harnessing the crowd’s movement to activate LED lights and other visuals — and to generate electricity that was then routed to power elements of the production. On the tour, custom-made Energy Centers were also assembled in a circle for fans to generate energy by riding stationary bikes.

MAKING (VEGAN) CONCESSIONS

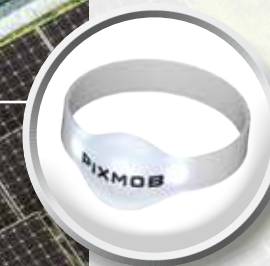
In 2022, Goldenvoice’s Cruel World Festival in Pasadena, Calif., launched the largest vegan and vegetarian dining pavilion for any festival west of the Mississippi, with 10 vegan and 20 vegetarian vendors offering items like maneatingplant’s vegan bao buns, dairy-free milkshakes from Monty’s Good Burger and plant-based sushi burritos from Oona Sushi.

PLANT SEEDS OF CHANGE

To offset the carbon dioxide emissions of large events, promoters are increasingly planting trees and creating forest reserves. Groups like the European Festival Forest focus their offset efforts in certain regions of the globe, like Iceland, while other organizers plant and restore forests at festival sites for future concertgoers’ benefit.

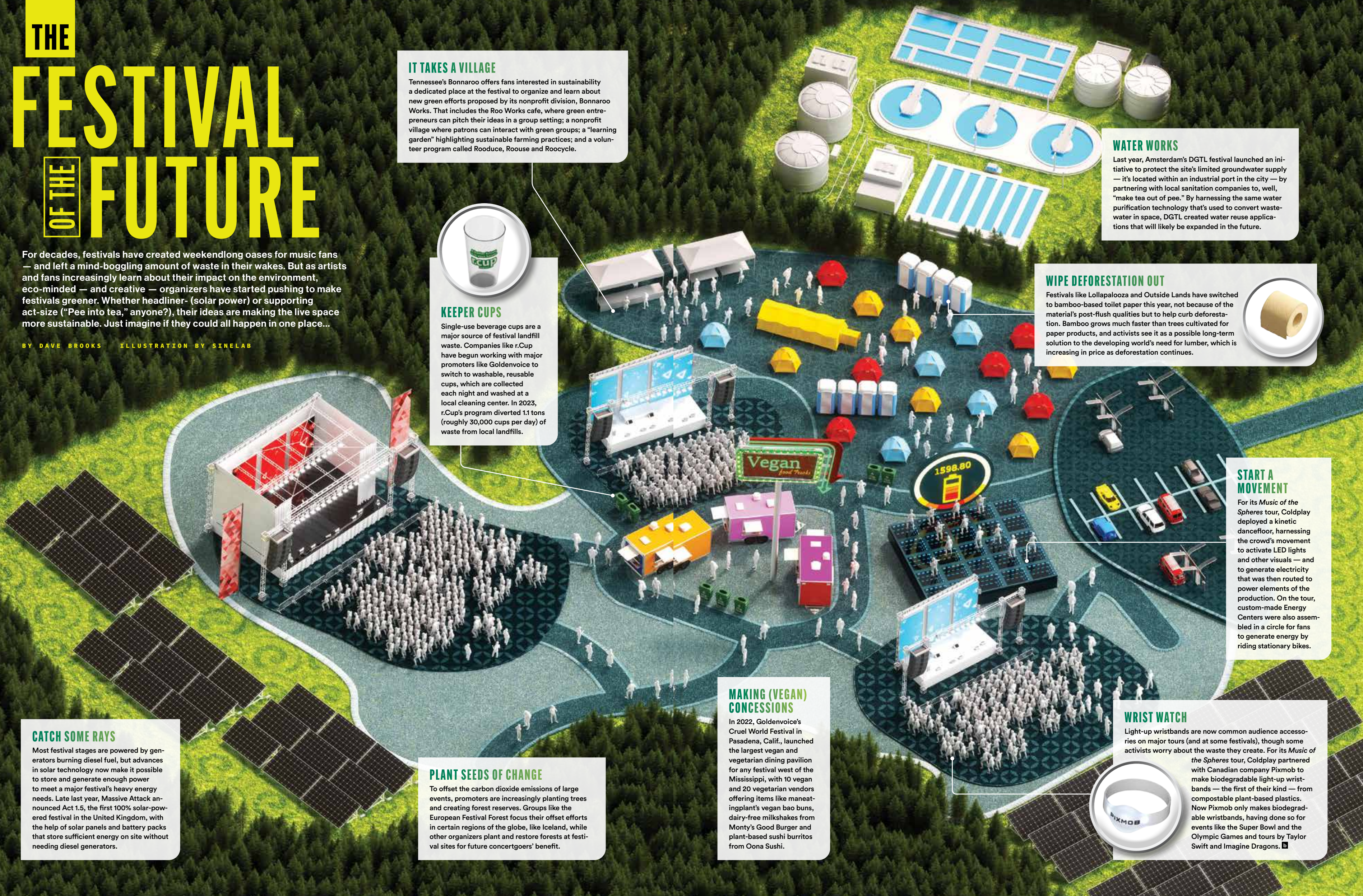
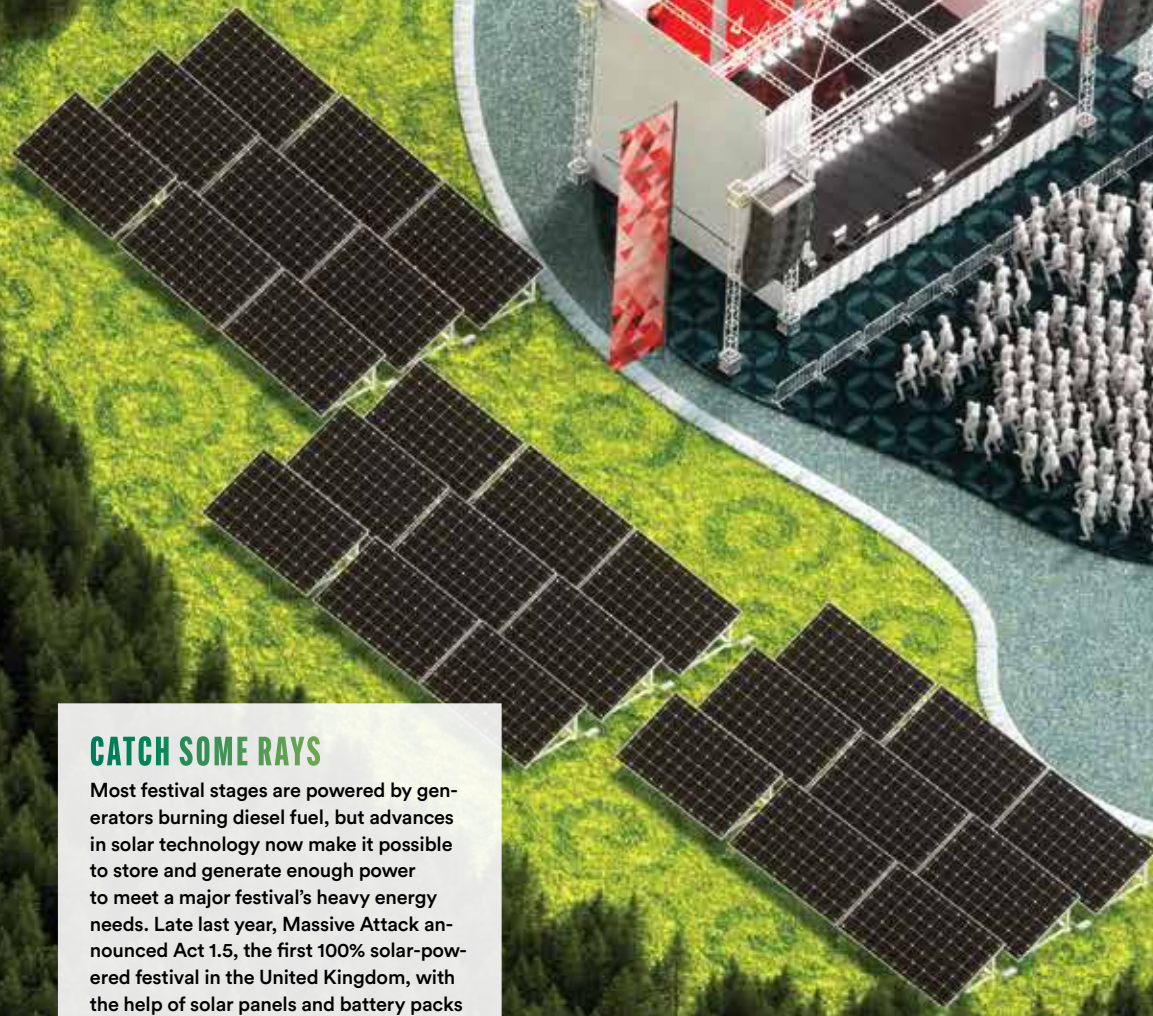
WRIST WATCH

Light-up wristbands are now common audience accessories on major tours (and at some festivals), though some activists worry about the waste they create. For its *Music of the Spheres* tour, Coldplay partnered with Canadian company Pixmob to make biodegradable light-up wristbands — the first of their kind — from compostable plant-based plastics. Now Pixmob only makes biodegradable wristbands, having done so for events like the Super Bowl and the Olympic Games and tours by Taylor Swift and Imagine Dragons.



CATCH SOME RAYS

Most festival stages are powered by generators burning diesel fuel, but advances in solar technology now make it possible to store and generate enough power to meet a major festival’s heavy energy needs. Late last year, Massive Attack announced Act 1.5, the first 100% solar-powered festival in the United Kingdom, with the help of solar panels and battery packs that store sufficient energy on site without needing diesel generators.



Congratulations

Greenberg Traurig is proud to celebrate our colleagues, **Jeff Biederman, Jay Cooper, Steve Plinio, Jess Rosen, Bobby Rosenbloum, Mathew Rosengart, Paul Schindler, and Charmaine Smith** for their well-deserved recognition on the *Billboard 2024 Top Music Lawyers* list.

Your outstanding contributions to the entertainment industry and dedication to your clients are truly commendable.

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CELEBRATING MUSIC'S MOVERS

2024 TOP MUSIC LAWYERS

These attorneys are on the front lines of the music industry's legal battles and deals — led by Lawyer of the Year Christine Lepera, the go-to litigator for Katy Perry, Drake, Jay-Z and others



LAWYER OF THE YEAR
Christine Lepera
Mitchell Silberberg & Knupp

BY BILL DONAHUE

PHOTOGRAPHED BY NINA WESTERVELT

CHIRSTINE LEPERA MIGHT BE ONE of the country's top music litigators, but decades ago, she wasn't even sure she still wanted to be a lawyer at all.

In 1986, just a few years after she graduated law school, she was working at a New York firm where she was "dissatisfied" and, like many young attorneys, faced existential questions about her chosen career path.

"I never intended to be a music lawyer, and after four years at a corporate firm on Wall Street, I was basically ready to quit the law entirely," she recalls with a laugh.

Today, that's hard to imagine. Lepera — who is chair of the music litigation group at Mitchell Silberberg & Knupp (MSK) — for years has been one of the music industry's go-to trial lawyers.

Lepera photographed March 13 at Mitchell Silberberg & Knupp in New York.



From left: Attorneys Christopher Buccafusco, Lepera and Carla Miller discussed how copyright law affects creators at a 2019 panel at Cardozo Law School in New York.

She handles many different types of cases, from representing Daryl Hall in last year's headline-grabbing battle with long-time partner John Oates that's still pending to Dr. Luke in his just-settled defamation case against Kesha. But her primary specialty is defending superstar artists against allegations that they've stolen their songs from someone else.

Over the past year, Lepera has handled such copyright cases for Dua Lipa, Jay-Z, Post Malone and others; previously, she has done similar work for Katy Perry, Ye (formerly known as Kanye West), Drake, Ludacris and many more. For Lepera, who herself plays piano, working those lawsuits is not just about the people involved, but about their music — and their right to create without facing needless lawsuits.

"What I get the most enjoyment from is servicing the music," Lepera says. "In many of these cases, what you're dealing with is people who have not stolen anything and have just used basic musical building blocks. And the other side is literally trying to monopolize music that they shouldn't."

In recognition of her achievements, Lepera has been named *Billboard's* 2024 Lawyer of the Year. Fellow partners Eric German, Bradley Mullins and David Steinberg join her on the Top Music Lawyers list.

Facing an impasse in her young career, Lepera turned to Martin Silfen — her former law professor at New York Law School and a music attorney who represented clients like Blondie, LL COOL J and Aerosmith — for advice. Silfen connected her with Leonard Marks, a legendary New York music attorney who counted Billy Joel, The Beatles and Elton John as clients over his long career.

The timing was just right. At that point, Marks was getting plenty of litigation business sent his way from John Eastman, another powerful industry attorney who is best known for representing Paul McCartney in his wranglings with the other members of The Beatles (prompted by their association with manager Allen Klein). The

late Marks, whom Lepera fondly recalls as an eccentric attorney with you-can't-believe-he's-a-lawyer vibes, brought her into his small firm and gave her a shot.

"Len hired me, I started doing lots of entertainment cases and everything changed," Lepera says.

One of the first major cases she handled was a copyright lawsuit filed in 1990 against Broadway composer Andrew Lloyd Webber that accused him of stealing the title song from his smash hit *The Phantom of the Opera* from a Baltimore liturgical composer. The case dragged on for years, featuring countersuits, multiple appeals and an attempted appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court before ending in the late 1990s with a victory for Lloyd Webber in a high-profile jury trial.

The long-running lawsuit provided plenty of material for the young music litigator to cut her teeth. "It was a 10-year extravaganza," Lepera says, laughing. "And we won everything at the end of the day."

In the years that followed, big music cases kept coming. In 2006, Lepera won a jury verdict clearing Ye and Ludacris of allegations that they had based their 2003 *Billboard* Hot 100 No. 1 hit, "Stand Up," on an earlier song. In 2015, she helped defeat a lawsuit claiming that Jay-Z and Timbaland had stolen material from an Egyptian composer for their 2000 smash "Big Pimpin'." In 2017, Lepera won a ruling that Drake had made fair use of a spoken-word jazz track when he sampled it on his 2013 song "Pound Cake."

The attorney's trajectory culminated in 2022, when she won a federal appeals court decision that Perry's 2013 single "Dark Horse," another Hot 100 No. 1, had not infringed the copyright of an earlier song. It was not only a big win for the singer, overturning millions in damages, but also set an important legal precedent that individual songwriters cannot lock up simple musical "building blocks."

For years, such lawsuits have been a source of anxiety for creators and companies alike, particularly in the wake of

the controversial 2015 verdict that Robin Thicke and Pharrell Williams' "Blurred Lines" had infringed Marvin Gaye's "Got To Give It Up." In the years that followed, artists became more cautious about vetting their songs with musicologists, often preemptively offering writing credits to would-be accusers rather than risking a lawsuit.

But from Lepera's perspective, song-theft lawsuits didn't increase after the "Blurred Lines" verdict; rather, they've always just been an unfortunate byproduct of success. "You write a hit, you get a writ," she jokes. In fact, she suggests the verdict had a positive impact: More artists are willing to fight back against questionable allegations and more courts are willing to scrutinize bad lawsuits.

"They're going to fight and not give into this fear," Lepera says of her clients and other modern artists. "Even though it's a very draining, expensive, uncomfortable and uncertain process, I think we're seeing very strong advocates turning around and deterring these kinds of cases."

In the past year, Lepera fought battles inside and outside the copyright sector. She represented Lipa in two high-profile lawsuits that claimed the star had copied earlier songs when she wrote her megahit "Levitating." In June, a federal judge dismissed one of them, agreeing with Lipa's argument that she had never heard the song in question; the other case, where Lepera has made the same argument, is awaiting a decision. Lepera also won a ruling in September dismissing a lawsuit against Jay-Z, Timbaland and Ginuwine that claimed they had lifted material from an old soul tune for the songs "Paper Chase" and "Toe 2 Toe."

Perhaps more notably, Lepera resolved the decadelong litigation by Dr. Luke against Kesha, in which her client claimed the pop star had defamed him when she accused him of rape in 2014. After years of litigation and appeals, a trial was set for July 2023; instead, a confidential settlement was reached in June. As part of the

agreement, the two issued a joint statement in which Kesha said she "cannot recount everything that happened" while Dr. Luke maintained that he was "absolutely certain that nothing happened."

The Dr. Luke v. Kesha case, which started years before the #MeToo movement and was heavily litigated throughout that period, sparked strong emotions on both sides and sometimes thrust Lepera herself into the spotlight. In deposition videos made public in 2019, Lady Gaga told her, "You should be ashamed of yourself."

When facing such situations as an attorney, Lepera says she sticks to the "facts and the law" of a given legal argument and is not intimidated by the celebrities involved or the PR dimensions that can accompany it.

"I can't advocate a position unless I believe in it," she says. "I have to truly believe in whatever it is I'm arguing. I'm not really emotional. I don't have that trepidation of 'Oh, look who I'm representing.'"

Another major 2023 case for Lepera was the public breakup of beloved duo Hall & Oates, in which she served as Hall's lead counsel. In the dispute, which attracted heavy media attention thanks to sealed filings later becoming public, Hall accused Oates of violating their partnership agreement by unilaterally attempting to sell part of their joint entity to Primary Wave, a prominent music company that has acquired many catalogs in recent years.

As the case unfolded, it became clear the matter was deeply personal for Hall, who in legal filings called the alleged sale by Oates the "ultimate partnership betrayal" and said it specifically had been designed to hurt him after years of worsening relations between the duo. Oates later responded by calling the accusations "inflammatory, outlandish and inaccurate" and saying that they had left him "deeply hurt."

In late November, after a climactic court hearing in Nashville, a judge sided with Hall and Lepera, putting the Primary Wave deal on hold and allowing an arbitrator time to decide Hall's arguments against it. The dispute remains pending.

Due to the massive media attention, Lepera says the case has been "very painful, obviously, for both of them." Bands, she says, are "almost like family," and when things "fall apart at the seams" after a long career, there are bound to be intense feelings for all involved. After decades of handling such cases, she says the job of a good litigator is to understand and absorb that human dynamic, but also to channel it into a winning legal argument.

"My challenge is to be there to absorb and listen to that," Lepera says, "but also to just cut through and get to the result that's needed."

Congratulations to Jeff Gould, Alex Kaplan, Matt Oppenheim, and Scott Zebrak for being named to *Billboard's* Top Music Lawyers list

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MUSIC GROUPS

Jeff Harleston

GENERAL COUNSEL/EXECUTIVE VP OF BUSINESS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS, UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP
Saheli Datta
EXECUTIVE VP/CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER AND EMPLOYMENT, UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP

Rob Femia

EXECUTIVE VP OF BUSINESS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS, UNIVERSAL MUSIC NASHVILLE

Steve Gawley

EXECUTIVE VP OF BUSINESS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS AND EAST COAST LABEL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP

Nicola Levy

EXECUTIVE VP OF DIGITAL BUSINESS AFFAIRS, UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP

Alasdair McMullan

EXECUTIVE VP OF BUSINESS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS/ HEAD OF LITIGATION, UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP

Michael Seltzer

EXECUTIVE VP/HEAD OF COMMERCIAL TRANSACTIONS FOR BUSINESS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS, UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP

Magda Vives

EXECUTIVE VP OF BUSINESS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS FOR LATIN AMERICA AND IBERIAN PENINSULA, UNIVERSAL MUSIC LATIN AMERICA

In the current music industry climate, UMG's legal team stays focused on efforts "to defend and protect the rights of our artists, songwriters and music publishing company" from generative artificial intelligence (AI) companies like Anthropic, which it sued in November over "unlawful ingestion, appropriation and infringement of legally protected works as well as the appropriation of the culture and unique identity of our songwriters," Harleston says. "[AI] is remarkable technology and can potentially enhance the creative process. However, it should only be deployed with the consent and in the service of the artist."
Most pressing issue "Eliminating fraudulent tracks and nonmusic sounds from the music streaming platforms," Harleston says, "allowing for a more 'artist-centric' experience for creators and fans."

Paul Robinson

EXECUTIVE VP/GENERAL COUNSEL, WARNER MUSIC GROUP

Brad Cohen

SENIOR VP/HEAD OF LITIGATION/ASSOCIATE GENERAL COUNSEL, WARNER MUSIC GROUP

Jon Glass

SENIOR VP/HEAD OF DIGITAL LEGAL AFFAIRS, WARNER MUSIC GROUP

Michael Kushner

SENIOR VP/DEPUTY GENERAL COUNSEL, BUSINESS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS, WARNER MUSIC GROUP

Maryrose Maness

SENIOR VP/DEPUTY GENERAL COUNSEL, WARNER MUSIC GROUP

Trent Tappe

SENIOR VP/DEPUTY GENERAL COUNSEL/CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER, WARNER MUSIC GROUP

Dana Sheahan

VP/HEAD OF MERGERS AND ACQUISITIONS OF CORPORATE LEGAL, WARNER MUSIC GROUP

WMG, along with attorneys from Pryor Cashman, prevailed on behalf of Ed Sheeran in the copyright lawsuit over whether Sheeran's "Thinking Out Loud," a No. 2 hit on the Billboard Hot 100 in 2015, copied Marvin Gaye's 1973 classic "Let's Get It On." Robinson says the case is an example of the importance of the company's dedication to "defend[ing] the rights of our artists and songwriters." But the music group is also focused on boosting the value of those rights and music in general: "In a world where more than 100,000 new tracks are being uploaded to streaming services every day," he says, "the most pressing issue is enhancing the value of the music of artists and songwriters such as ours that drives engagement on these services."

Julie Swidler

EXECUTIVE VP OF BUSINESS AFFAIRS/GENERAL COUNSEL, SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT

Stu Bondell

EXECUTIVE VP OF BUSINESS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS FOR INTERNATIONAL, SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT

Wade Leak

EXECUTIVE VP/DEPUTY GENERAL COUNSEL/CHIEF COMPLIANCE, ETHICS AND PRIVACY OFFICER, SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT

Susan Meisel

EXECUTIVE VP/CORPORATE DEPUTY GENERAL COUNSEL, SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT

Jeff Walker

EXECUTIVE VP/HEAD OF BUSINESS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS FOR GLOBAL DIGITAL BUSINESS, SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT

Jennifer Womack

SENIOR VP OF BUSINESS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS FOR FILM, TELEVISION AND PODCASTS, SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT

As streaming growth in the world's biggest markets begins to slow, SME's legal team is working to keep expanding the company's opportunities around the world and in new sectors, particularly gaming and social media. "Our team works globally across Sony Music to offer legal support systems that help our labels and divisions reach their creative and commercial goals," Swidler says. "We are focused on working to ensure that there are proper rights environments and deal frameworks that can support commercial activity and greater partnership expansion opportunities across platforms where music content is core to their customer experience."

Advice on AI "When AI companies want to use our artists' voices and music," Swidler says, "they must seek permis-



In May 2023, **Ed Sheeran** won a copyright case confirming that his 2015 hit "Thinking Out Loud" did not infringe Marvin Gaye's classic "Let's Get It On," a victory for the legal teams at **Warner Music Group** and law firm Pryor Cashman.

sion and make sure that there is a proper business plan to pay all those in the music ecosystem that contributed to this music."

STREAMING

Eve Konstan

GENERAL COUNSEL, SPOTIFY

Kevan Choset

VP/ASSOCIATE GENERAL COUNSEL/HEAD OF LEGAL STRATEGY, SPOTIFY

Darren Schmidt

ASSOCIATE GENERAL COUNSEL/GLOBAL HEAD OF RECORD LABEL LICENSING, SPOTIFY

Sofia Sheppard

ASSOCIATE GENERAL COUNSEL/GLOBAL HEAD OF LICENSING AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, SPOTIFY

Spotify has 602 million active monthly users but has posted inconsistent profits. That could change after Konstan and her team helped build an audio-books business, fought Apple for better in-app payment terms and secured rights to podcasts such as Trevor Noah's *What Now?* Spotify's health is crucial, considering it's the single largest source of music royalties — \$9 billion in 2023 alone. That responsibility isn't lost on Konstan. "The most pressing issue facing the music industry today," she says, "is growing the total pie of listeners and revenue to ensure more artists are able to live off their work."

Advice on AI "Whatever we think about the state of AI and its legal treatment," Konstan says, "it's important to stay nimble and try to think several steps out because things may change fast."

Jon Kurland

EXECUTIVE VP OF BUSINESS AFFAIRS AND CHIEF ENTERTAINMENT COUNSEL, IHEARTMEDIA

Over the past year, music fans have tuned in to some of their favorite artists' live performances in part because of Kurland's work to expand iHeartMedia's platform partnerships. In addition to the iHeartRadio Music Festival shifting its distribution partner to Hulu, enabling a livestream after years of cable broadcasts, Kurland helped iHeart partner with Meta for its expanded Horizon Worlds virtual reality concert experiences, as well as showcasing an immersive Ed Sheeran performance in Fortnite. "Fans are spending increasing amounts of time in virtual and interactive spaces, a factor which was only accelerated by the pandemic," Kurland says. "At iHeart, we are committed to reaching listeners wherever they are."

Most pressing issue "As the music industry achieves unprecedented growth, it will continue to be important for stakeholders to work in concert to achieve meaningful service profitability while also adequately compensating artists and other rights holders."

Antonious Porch

GENERAL COUNSEL/CHIEF DIVERSITY OFFICER, SOUNDCLLOUD

Ama Walton

SENIOR VP OF MUSIC LICENSING/DEPUTY GENERAL COUNSEL, SOUNDCLLOUD

SoundCloud finalized a global licensing deal with Merlin in 2023 that lets Merlin members and their artists participate in SoundCloud's Fan-Powered Royalties model, "a trailblazing alternative to the

traditional pro rata model to pay artists equitably," Walton says. "The Merlin deal seamlessly integrates with the SoundCloud initiative First Fans, leveraging SoundCloud's robust recommendation algorithms to amplify exposure for new uploads, ensuring both artists and listeners alike discover and engage with fresh content." Importantly, Walton adds, the integration also brings fans and creators together at scale and helps artists find their audience, which is something she says is "close to my heart."

Most pressing issue "The economic model behind streaming needs fixing. Most artists don't make an adequate living income despite the consistent demand for streaming," Walton says. "Fair remuneration and transparency are crucial to ... the future of music."

Robert Windom

CHIEF COUNSEL, CONTENT AND SERVICES, APPLE

Elizabeth Miles

SENIOR LEGAL DIRECTOR, APPLE MUSIC

The legal team at Apple Music helped support the company's big expansion into classical music, which last year included the launch of the Classical app in March and then the acquisition of Swedish classical label BIS in September. "In addition to the product counsel-

ing, deals and [mergers and acquisitions] support our team performed for the acquisition and new product launch, we had a chance to learn about the customs and practices of the classical music business, which can be quite different than in other genres and may date back to long before Apple existed," Windom says. "It's really thrilling to bring the full power of streaming to this important category of our music culture."

If I quit law, I would "Be a musician, of course," Windom says.

Stephen Worth

HEAD OF LEGAL/ASSOCIATE GENERAL COUNSEL, AMAZON MUSIC

Cyrus Afshar

Nicolas Gauss

ASSOCIATE GENERAL COUNSELS/DIRECTORS, AMAZON MUSIC

Jon Cohen

SENIOR CORPORATE COUNSEL, AMAZON MUSIC

During the past year, Worth has seen Amazon Music collaborate with artists, labels and managers to cultivate a "next-generation" approach to tour merchandise. Through partnerships with artists such as Beyoncé, Mariah Carey, Doja Cat and Rauw Alejandro, Amazon Music has expanded the concept of purchasing tour merch to encompass

fans buying merch in venues to be shipped to their homes. The returns were immediate, with the exclusive, online *Renaissance*-themed Beyoncé merch capsule breaking the Amazon Music record for first-day sales from an artist collaboration. Successes like these have only made Worth even more "excited about what [Amazon Music] has planned for 2024."

If I quit law, I would "Volunteer as a mountain guide," Worth says, "giving skiers tours of a ski area in the winter and helping backpackers explore the backcountry during the summer."

LIVE

Michael Rowles

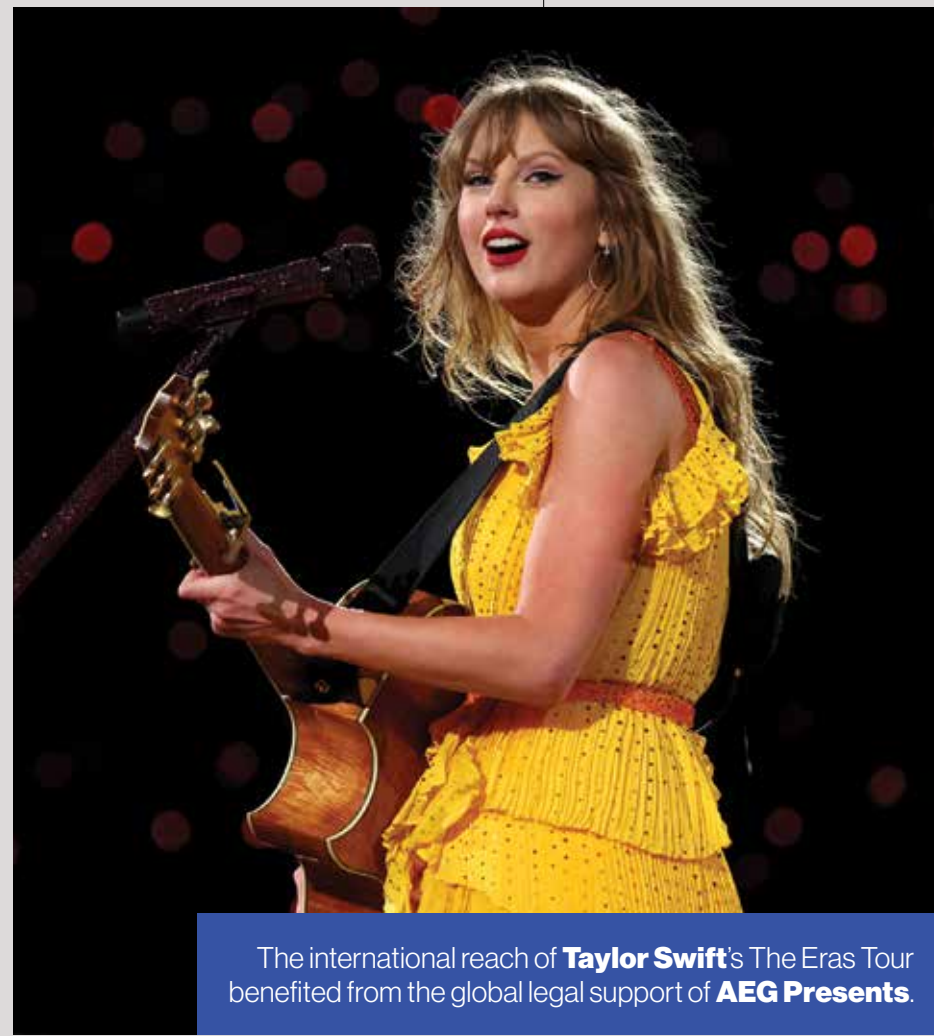
GENERAL COUNSEL, LIVE NATION

Rowles spent much of the past year working on ticketing legislation following the major disruptions that affected Ticketmaster during Taylor Swift's problem-plagued ticket sale in 2022. "Live Nation led the industry by moving to all-in pricing at our owned and operated venues and festivals so that fans see the total cost of the ticket upfront," Rowles says. "All-in pricing is one of many ticketing reforms we and a broad industry coalition are calling for as part of our FAIR Ticketing platform." The company, according to Rowles, is also seeking reforms to protect fans and empower artists, including a ban on speculative ticketing, stronger enforcement of the Better Online Ticketing Sales Act and giving artists control over resales. "You'll see us and a broad industry coalition advocating for ticketing reforms that protect the artist-fan connection," Rowles says.

Shawn Trell

EXECUTIVE VP/COO/GENERAL COUNSEL, AEG PRESENTS

The last year has yielded more major milestones for AEG's top attorney as the company's global touring division keeps expanding its footprint. "It has been among the most significant experiences of my career to have been involved in the single most successful tour in music history — Taylor Swift's Eras Tour," Trell says. The trek, which will reach Europe this spring, is poised to become the highest-grossing global tour of all time by the time it wraps in December. "So many people across AEG Presents all around the globe have contributed to the execution and success of that tour," Trell says. "That effort has truly highlighted the strength of this company and the collaborative work environment that exists here among our touring teams in the U.S., Europe, Asia and Australia."



The international reach of **Taylor Swift's The Eras Tour** benefited from the global legal support of **AEG Presents**.

including Jack Antonoff, Lana Del Rey, Wallows and Maggie Rogers. “Everyone we sign brings a unique value to our roster,” Hennings says, “and strengthens our reputation as the premier songwriters-first publishing company.”

Peter Rosenthal

EXECUTIVE VP/GLOBAL HEAD OF LEGAL AND BUSINESS AFFAIRS, WARNER CHAPPELL MUSIC

Steve Butler

HEAD OF LEGAL AND BUSINESS AFFAIRS FOR NORTH AMERICA, WARNER CHAPPELL MUSIC

Chris Head

SENIOR VP OF LEGAL AND BUSINESS AFFAIRS, WARNER CHAPPELL MUSIC

The attorneys at Warner Chappell Music have had a lot to celebrate this year. “We’ve continued our tireless advocacy for songwriters across multiple fronts,” Rosenthal says, “from our involvement with the Copyright Royalty Board Phonorecords IV settlement — which secured the world’s highest streaming rates to date — to proposed rulemaking in the U.S. Copyright Office on the Mechanical Licensing Collective’s distribution of royalties.” Rosenthal and his team are also proud to have drawn up the contracts for its roster’s new signees, from legends like Mick Jones, Jacques Brel, Serge Gainsbourg and Burton Cummings to current stars like Morgan Wallen, 21 Savage, Zach Bryan, Coco Jones, Maria Becerra, Laufey and Yng Lvcas.

Most pressing issue “Continuing to enhance the engagement and value of music,” Rosenthal says, “amid the ever-increasing competition for people’s time, attention and entertainment budgets.”

RIGHTS

Christos Badavas

EXECUTIVE VP/GENERAL COUNSEL, SESAC MUSIC GROUP

In March 2023, the acquisition of the analytics, content management and distribution platform AudioSalad solidified SESAC as “a comprehensive music services platform that can administer



Billie Eilish and FINNEAS, who won two Grammys and an Academy Award for “What Was I Made For?” from *Barbie*, are clients of **Mark Music & Media Law** and among the stars who have signed for representation with **Global Music Rights**.

rights and distribute music on behalf of independent publishers and labels worldwide,” Badavas says. Regarding the rise of AI, he says the technology “will not replace human expression and artistry that speaks to people. Focus on how your music connects uniquely with people as AI is adopted and leverage [its power] to drive efficiencies in licensing and rights management for your works.”

Most pressing issue “The barriers to entry for the creation and distribution of music have lowered dramatically. While this has democratized who can write, record and release music, it has also led to oversaturation. As a result, breaking through the noise is a huge challenge.”

Tim Dadson

GENERAL COUNSEL, SOUNDEXCHANGE
Dadson cites SoundExchange’s \$150 mil-

lion suit against SiriusXM over unpaid royalties as “one of the best examples” of how the organization — the designated administrator of the compulsory license outlined in Section 114 of the U.S. Copyright Act — “enforces the terms that govern licensees’ use of creators’ work.” SoundExchange accused the satellite giant of using “contrived” methods to underpay royalties owed to artists. (SiriusXM has denied the allegations, stating they were based on a “flawed and biased examination.”) “While we’d prefer to find business solutions,” Dadson says, “we will use all means at our disposal to ensure that creators are paid every cent they are owed.”

Advice on AI “Engage with your representatives locally and nationally to ensure that creators’ rights are at the center of any proposed rulemaking or legislation around artificial intelligence.”

Kristen Johns

CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER, MECHANICAL LICENSING COLLECTIVE

The final mechanical royalty rate determination for interactive streaming for the period of Jan. 1, 2018, through Dec. 31, 2022, published by the Copyright Royalty Board in August 2023, was “a significant development for not only the MLC as the sole entity tasked with administering blanket mechanical licenses for eligible streaming and download services in the United States, but also for the music industry as a whole,” Johns says. Songwriters and publishers are due nearly \$400 million in additional payouts following the determination, according to information released by the MLC. “The deadline to provide adjusted data and corresponding royalty payments was Feb. 9,” Johns says.

Most pressing issue “The necessity for accurate data reporting. Accurate and transparent data practices ensure that copyright owners and creators are paid for their work.”

Clara Kim

EXECUTIVE VP/CHIEF LEGAL AND BUSINESS AFFAIRS OFFICER, ASCAP

Addressing the issues raised by AI has been a priority for more than a year, Kim says. “In November, we submitted an extensive set of comments to the U.S. Copyright Office in response to their notice of inquiry on AI to help policymakers understand the stakes for music creators.” In June, Kim adds, the ASCAP board of directors adopted six guiding principles regarding AI: human creators first, transparency, consent, compensation, credit and global consistency. The transparency principle is another priority while moving forward: “ASCAP’s distribution rules, governing documents and awards show rules are all publicly posted ... and ASCAP members have 24/7 access to their performance royalty information,” she says, adding that ASCAP and BMI’s Songview provides performing rights data for their combined repertoires. “We believe the entire industry has to provide more transparency to songwriters for the system to work fairly and efficiently.”

Stuart Rosen

SENIOR VP/CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER, BMI
BMI, which closed its sale to Big Mountain Capital in February, had two high-profile legal victories in 2023. “BMI prevailed against AEG, Live Nation and the North American Concert Promoters Association,” Rosen says. “As a result, BMI affiliates will receive a rate 138% higher than the historical rate and an expanded revenue base.” The decision is on appeal. BMI also fended off what Rosen called the Radio Music Licensing Committee’s “unprecedented and



Mick Mars of Mötley Crüe sold his publishing catalog to BMG in a deal negotiated by **Ken Abdo** of **Fox Rothschild**.

improper” joint rate proceeding against BMI and ASCAP.

Most pressing issue “Ensuring that businesses that use music understand and recognize the full value of what music creators bring to their industries. While it’s a never-ending challenge, BMI is always ready to advocate for our songwriters, composers and music publishers so they’re fairly compensated and valued for their essential contributions to the many industries that benefit from their creations.”

Emio Zizza

GENERAL COUNSEL, GLOBAL MUSIC RIGHTS
The powerhouse sibling duo of Billie Eilish and FINNEAS won the Academy Award for best original song on March 10 for “What Was I Made For?” from the film *Barbie*, a month after the composition earned them two Grammys — and they previously sought performing rights

royalties to match their creative stature by signing with Global Music Rights. “For over a decade, it has been GMR’s express mission to ensure that superstar creatives are paid superstar rates,” Zizza says. “However, the industry at large needs to go much further in order to properly recognize the outside value brought by the most popular artists to every sector of music.” GMR, a division of The Azoff Company, has also recently signed YoungBoy Never Broke Again, the estate of George Michael, The Black Keys and *Bel-Air* composer Jacob Yoffee.

ASSOCIATIONS

Danielle Aguirre

EXECUTIVE VP/GENERAL COUNSEL, NATIONAL MUSIC PUBLISHERS’ ASSOCIATION
Social media companies have shed

their reputation as licensing backwaters and engaged with music rights holders — with one notable exception: the platform formally known as Twitter, now known as X. That impasse could change after the \$250 million copyright infringement lawsuit that 17 music publishers brought against the company in a Tennessee federal court in June 2023. “Twitter was one of the last, largest digital companies that refused to license music despite benefiting from a substantial amount of music on its platform,” Aguirre says. “It was time to hold Twitter to account, and NMPA spent over a year developing evidence to demonstrate Twitter’s massive copyright infringement.”

Advice on AI “Educate yourself about how generative AI works. Understand how your copyrights are being used by generative AI companies, and don’t be afraid to protect your copyrights where necessary.”

Ken Doroshow

CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER, RIAA

In April 2023, “Heart on My Sleeve,” a song written and produced by TikTok user ghostwriter977 and performed by AI-generated replicas of the voices of Drake and The Weeknd, set off alarms in the music industry. By the following month, Doroshow was speaking at one of the first formal proceedings — a U.S. Copyright Office “listening session” — dedicated to the issue of protecting artists from nefarious uses of generative AI. “My team has done dozens of filings, meetings and briefings across the executive and legislative branches as well as in state capitols,” Doroshow says. “[We’re] laying down an intellectual architecture for the ethical development of AI in ways that promote human creativity and maximize the benefits of responsible AI for all.”

If I quit law, I would “Play my guitar all day and night.”

Ryan McWhinnie

VP OF BUSINESS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS, MERLIN
A key to McWhinnie’s work at digital licensing firm Merlin is finding new approaches to the pro rata royalty model with his streaming partners that will drive more value to music creators while ensuring appropriate protections. Whether it’s Deezer’s “artist-centric” royalty distribution system, Spotify’s new “track monetization” approach or SoundCloud’s Fan-Powered Royalties model, McWhinnie says his role is to “ensure that these initiatives accrue to the benefit of our members, their artists and the incredible music they create while ensuring that these moves do not disintermediate independents.”

Most pressing issue “Tackling artificial streaming and fraudulent content is an incredibly important issue facing our industry. At Merlin, we are laser-focused and deploying significant resources on doing all we can to combat these corrosive issues, which penalize legitimate actors and pull monies away from artists and the rights holders who invest in their careers.”

TALENT & LITIGATION

Kenneth J. Abdo Paul N. Bowles III Cynthia L. Katz Tim Mandelbaum Michael L. Reinert Leron E. Rogers Alex Threadgold Heidy Vaquerano

PARTNERS, FOX ROTHSCHILD

Among the firm’s deep roster of clients are 10K Projects, Berry Gordy, Cash Money Records, Coco Jones, the estates of Bill Withers and Muddy Waters, HarbourView Equity Partners, Mötley Crüe, Primary Wave, Roberta Flack, Stevie Wonder, Trace Adkins and Kool & The Gang. Abdo negotiated the 2021 release of *Perfect Union*, the last Kool & The Gang album to involve, at that time, the surviving four of the original five members. Abdo also represented Mick Mars of Mötley Crüe on the sale of his publishing catalog to BMG and closed the deal for his first solo album, *The Other Side of Mars* (Megaforce Records). He led the closing team for BMG Rights on 12 catalog acquisitions.

Gary Adelman Sarah M. Matz

PARTNERS, ADELMAN MATZ

Adelman Matz specializes in the fashion and beauty brands for some of pop’s biggest names, including Justin Bieber’s Drew House line and Ariana Grande’s R.E.M. Beauty. In the past year, the company helped facilitate Drew House’s collaboration with the NHL on the jerseys for the 2024 All-Star Game held in Toronto and represented R.E.M. Beauty in its global intellectual property (IP) ownership and protection strategy. In 2022, alongside the law firm of Moore Pequinot, Adelman and Matz represented Cardi B in her successful defamation action against a gossip blogger. As a firm, Matz advises clients to “lean in” when it comes to AI, counseling that “the people and companies who do their best to embrace the technology in a manner that helps them ... will be in the best position in the long run.”

Lisa Alter Katie Baron

PARTNERS, ALTER KENDRICK & BARON

Alter and Baron — whose clients include Primary Wave Music Publishing, BMG Rights Management, Iconic Artists Group and Reservoir Media Management — worked on multiple major transactions in recent months. The firm represented Primary Wave in acquiring a stake in recording, publishing and other rights for The Doors, BMG in the acquisition of The Hollies' sound-recording rights and Influence Media Partners in its acquisition of the catalog of Enrique Iglesias in a reported nine-figure deal. Regarding AI, Alter says the firm is "pushing clients to explore the ways in which you can enhance the exploitation of your music assets in partnership with ethical AI ventures — including the creation of new or rerecorded material and the development of branding opportunities including holograms and other audiovisual productions or otherwise." They're also watching the declining share of English-language music worldwide, highlighting the need

for international strategies for music publishers and rights holders.

Jonathan Altschul

MANAGING ATTORNEY, THE ALTSCHUL FIRM

In an increasingly global industry, Altschul has negotiated a partnership between Korea's SM Entertainment and RCA Records tied to K-pop group RIIZE, announced in September, after doing the same for SM Entertainment with Warner Records for aespa in 2022. The latter was Warner Music Group's first collaboration with a K-pop act, with the girl group earning three No. 1s on *Billboard's* World Albums chart. He also worked on deals for the creators of asone, the first boy band comprising Israeli and Palestinian musicians. **Advice on AI** "Fighting against the implementation of new technology that consumers want has always been a losing battle for the entertainment industry. The better approach is figuring out the best ways to monetize the new technology and provide fans with connections and experiences that AI cannot easily replace."

Ken Anderson Jill Berliner Ray Garcia Celeste Moy

PARTNERS, RIMON

"With a practice that represents some of the music industry's most iconic recording artists and songwriters" — including Foo Fighters, Dave Grohl, Beck, The Chicks and Soundgarden — "as well as certain leading independent record companies and publishers, we have been able to empower established artists with the reversion of their sound recording and publishing copyrights and propelled new, talented artists on their career paths," Garcia says. Last year, the firm represented Nirvana when an appeals court affirmed the dismissal of a copyright lawsuit regarding the band's use of the 1949 illustration *Upper Hell*. The court deemed the lawsuit, brought by the heir of illustrator C.W. Scott-Giles, must be resolved in the United Kingdom. **If I quit law, I would** "Return to my former life as a rock journalist," Garcia says.

Peter Anderson

PARTNER, DAVIS WRIGHT TREMAINE

Anderson, whose clients include Mariah Carey, The Weeknd, Taylor Swift, Normani and Sam Smith, scored a major victory for Smith and Normani and their co-writers in September when they prevailed in a copyright lawsuit against their 2019 hit, "Dancing With a Stranger"; the California judge dismissed the case. Three songwriters had alleged that the tune, which reached No. 7 on the Hot 100, copied their 2015 song of the same name. Anderson, who has over four decades of experience in copyright and entertainment litigation, also represents major labels Universal Music Group, Sony Music Entertainment and Warner Music Group. **Most pressing issue** "The continued filing of copyright infringement cases based on the mere presence of commonplace musical building blocks, such as a few pitches, chords and commonplace lyrics."

Marvin Arrington Jr. Vincent Phillips

FOUNDING PARTNERS, ARRINGTON & PHILLIPS

Aurielle Brooks

JUNIOR PARTNER, ARRINGTON & PHILLIPS

Whether it's newcomers such as Sexy Red and Rob49 (one of *Billboard's* R&B/Hip-Hop Artists To Watch in 2024) or seasoned artists like Keri Hilson and Bow Wow, Arrington & Phillips has advised them. Securing a major global touring deal for YoungBoy Never Broke Again with Live Nation for eight figures was no small feat. "This is monumental because this will be his first tour," Phillips says. Other notable clients include Stevie J, Kevin Gates,

That Chick Angel and Wolf Pack Global Music, home to Lil Baby.

Advice on AI "Protect your IP," Phillips says. "Make sure all of your label agreements, side-artist agreements, appearance waivers, etc., have language in them to protect yourself. Also, be diligent by further expanding your protections for your brand, name, image and likeness."

Craig Averill Jeff Worob

PARTNERS, SERLING ROOKS HUNTER

McKAY WOROB & AVERILL

The firm, which represents Maroon 5, LCD Soundsystem, Interpol, Leon Bridges and Maggie Rogers, among others, recently navigated a corporate restructuring for Rostrum Records that included the acquisition of Fat Beats Distribution. Its work also resulted in the separation of Rostrum's catalog business from its front-line business, as well as the creation of a new division working with other stand-alone legacy catalogs. Maroon 5's Las Vegas residency continues at the Dolby Live, and Bridges further expanded his acting career as the lead in *The Young Wife*, an independent film that premiered at South by Southwest. **Advice on AI** "It will be hard to develop and retain a loyal fan base without the 'humanity' of a real-life recording artist," Averill says. "Think Taylor Swift fans standing outside of a sold-out stadium to listen to her music from a parking lot. I don't see that happening around an AI artist."

Ed Baden Powell Nick Eziefule Paddy Gardiner Ben Gisbey Tom Iverson Euan Lawson Ead Weidman

PARTNERS, SIMKINS

London-based Simkins represents clients ranging from Universal Music Group and rights organization PRS for Music to acts such as Iron Maiden, Becky Hill, Eliza Rose and the estate of David Bowie. The firm is also representing Experience Hendrix and Sony Music against posthumous royalty claims by the estates of Noel Redding and Mitch Mitchell. Lawson says the firm, which has been operating since 1962, also tries to help clients navigate shifting marketplace dynamics to develop "a sustainable and long-term career." "The industry needs to continue to find ways to grow, but in a sustainable manner," Lawson says, "ensuring that new talent is not overlooked in favor of catalog artists."

If I quit law, I would "Become a musician, of course," Lawson says. "Although my talents — or lack of them — mean that giving up the day job is unlikely."

Hector Baldonado

FOUNDER, THE BALDONADO GROUP

Baldonado reports closing the sales of catalogs for eight-figure prices, renegotiating recording contracts for established artists and signing several new acts to major recording deals over the past year. His clients include the estate of Juice WRLD, which has had two posthumously released albums, *Legends Never Die* in 2020 and *Fighting Demons* in 2021, reach No. 1 and No. 2, respectively, on the *Billboard* 200. He also represents Lil Durk, Rod Wave, Coi Leray, Trippie Redd and Moneybagg Yo, among others. One year ago, before AI became a hot topic, Baldonado flagged his "serious concern because of deepfakes and the possibility of copyright infringements."

Most pressing issue "Greater diversity at the high executive level. I would also like more financial literacy for recording artists."

Andrew "Andy" Bart

CO-CHAIR OF CONTENT MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT

PRACTICE, JENNER & BLOCK

In late 2022, Bart led a team that secured a \$46.7 million verdict on behalf of Universal Music Group, Sony Music Entertainment and Warner Music Group. At issue was the failure of defendant Grande Communications Network, a Texas-based internet service provider, to address the massive pirating of copyrighted recordings by its users. The jury found in favor of the plaintiffs and ruled that Grande willfully contributed to the copyright violations by failing to act against subscribers who were repeat infringers. Bart calls the trial result "a resounding win for the music industry." **Advice on AI** "I don't believe that anyone knows where AI is going to take the industry five years from now. Having said that, the battle over whether content owners should be compensated for the use of their assets to train AI models is an existential one."

Richard Baskind Alasdair George

PARTNERS, SIMONS MUIRHEAD BURTON

Working on a wide array of issues that concern artists, labels, publishers and more, London-based Simons Muirhead Burton provides its clients with a global perspective. Among the greatest challenges now, according to Baskind, is "the proliferation of channels and the sheer volume of new releases daily: How do you get your music to rise above the noise and be noticed? To answer this question, direct fan engagement is critical. Social media and the use of available and emerging technology are key to achieving and sustaining that base of support." Among the firm's major transactions during the past year have been the acquisition of Lil Peep's recordings catalog for the late rapper's estate and the sale of Arctic Rights Management — one of the largest independent publishers in Scandinavia — to peermusic.

David Beame Brian Mencher

FOUNDING PARTNERS, BEAME & MENCHER

Beame & Mencher are legal advisers to the music-driven international advocacy nonprofit Global Citizen, where Mencher is general counsel and Beame holds the position of vp of global events and experiences. In November, in partnership with Kendrick Lamar's creative imprint, pgLang, Global Citizen announced Move Afrika, an international music touring circuit in Africa. The first music event, Move Afrika: Rwanda, was headlined by the Pulitzer Prize-winning artist in December. Mencher oversaw the legal and business affairs of launching Move Afrika, whose aim is to create jobs and other business opportunities on the continent. As part of his efforts, Mencher says he is also "building the broader blueprint for establishing a continentwide tour throughout Africa while helping upskill the local communities to host



Kendrick Lamar's creative imprint, pgLang, and Global Citizen, advised by Beame & Mencher, teamed up to announce an international touring circuit in Africa.

first-rate international touring artists for years to come."

Jeffrey Becker

CHAIR OF ENTERTAINMENT AND MEDIA LAW PRACTICE

GROUP, SWANSONS MARTIN & BELL

"We are honored to work with a diverse array of talent," says Becker, whose firm's clients include Toosii, Natalie Jane, Shaquille O'Neal for his music projects as DJ Diesel, late rapper King Von and the estate of Frankie Knuckles. The firm also represents producers such as Dru DeCaro, whose production credits include "Money on the Dash" by Whethan and Elley Duhé, as well as Nick Henriques, who produced Crash Adams' hit "Give Me a Kiss" and "If Only I" by Bebe Rexha, Loud Luxury and Two Friends. High points of the past year for the firm, Becker says, included signing deals for WesGhost with Columbia Records, Natalie Jane with Warner Chappell Music and C3 Presents, CIL with Warner Records and Ax and the Hatchmen with Arista Records.

Audrey Benoualid Eric Greenspan Josh Karp Jeffrey Light Craig Marshall Tamara Milagros-Butler Robert Minzner Francois Mobasser Aaron Rosenberg

PARTNERS, MYMAN GREENSPAN FOX ROSENBERG

MOBASSER YOUNGER & LIGHT

The firm boasts an all-star roster of clients including Red Hot Chili Peppers, Disturbed, Common, Yeti Beats, RuPaul, Tate McRae, Deftones, Erykah Badu, Reach Records, Silversun Pickups, Brett McLaughlin, Jennifer Lopez — and

Ariana Grande, whose first album since 2020, *Eternal Sunshine*, debuted at No. 1 on the *Billboard* 200. "In addition to some interesting catalog sales over the last 18 months," Milagros-Butler says, "we've also had the pleasure of handling the agreement for Dead & Company to appear at the Sphere in Las Vegas, as well as [Jennifer Lopez's] new recording and publishing deals with BMG. Handling the heavy legal lifting to get ready for the much-anticipated 2024 Khruangbin tour has also been a ball."

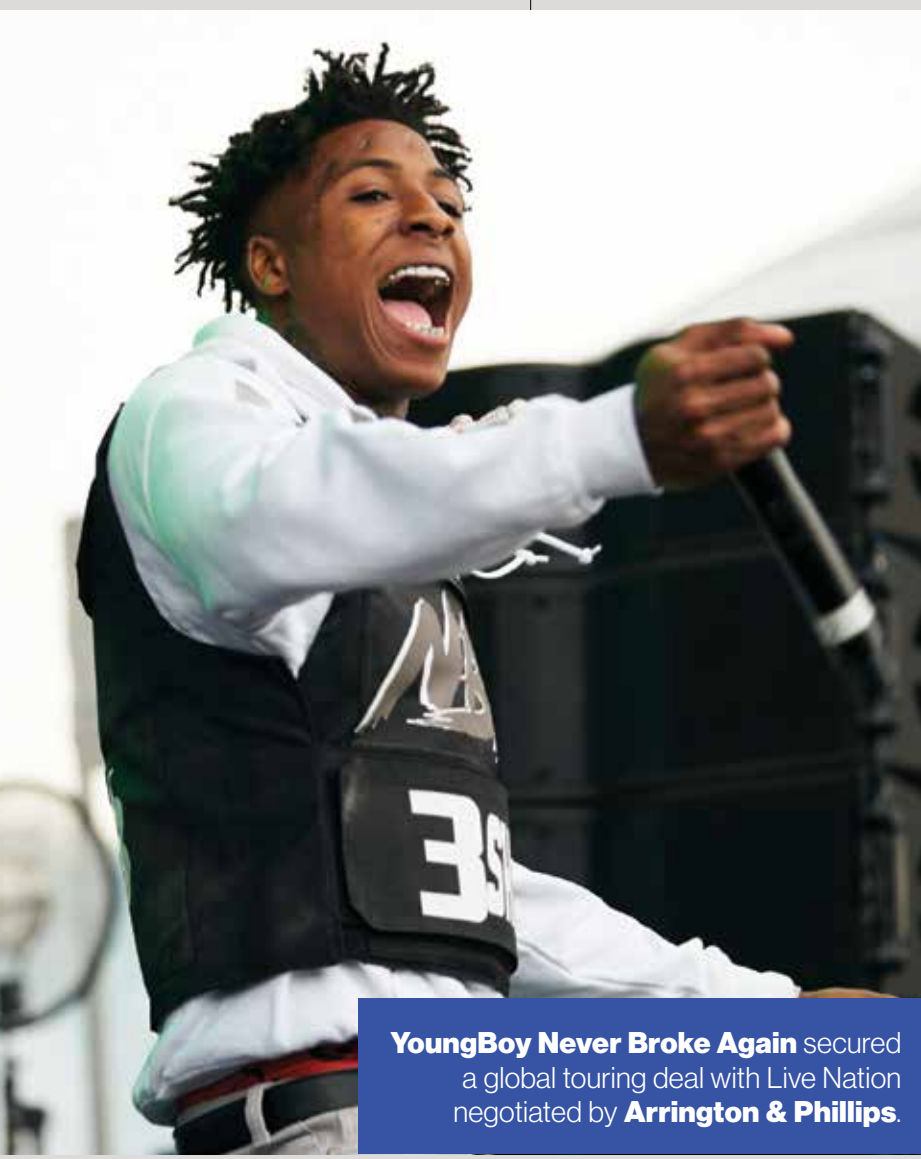
Advice on AI "Keep calm and create on," Milagros-Butler says. "Don't be afraid to explore AI as a tool, but maintain human connection. And stay vigilant about protecting your IP and original work."

David Bercuson

FOUNDER/PRESIDENT, DAVID BERCUSON

Bercuson worked on the inclusion of music for the recently released biopic *Bob Marley: One Love* and defended composers and producers who had worked with the artist Canserbero from litigation and "specious claims," he says. The underground Venezuelan rapper has been in the spotlight after his death was reinvestigated last year and found to be a homicide instead of suicide. In addition, Bercuson, who also works with Farruko and InnerCat Music Group, among other notable clients, defended longtime client Harry Wayne Casey of KC & The Sunshine Band from protracted copyright claims.

Most pressing issue "With respect to new and independent artists, the need to understand, exploit and utilize the digital ecosystem to promote, market and distribute their music and videos."



YoungBoy Never Broke Again secured a global touring deal with Live Nation negotiated by Arrington & Phillips.

Josh Binder Jeremy Mohr Paul Rothenberg

FOUNDING PARTNERS, ROTHENBERG MOHR & BINDER

The Beverly Hills, Calif., firm that represents such stars as Charlie Puth, Gunna, Logic and Chloe x Halle has also worked with client Top Dawg Entertainment's TDE label to release SZA's RCA blockbuster *SOS* and launch her accompanying tour. Binder says "free-flowing, unchecked misinformation" and the coming AI onslaught are concerning: "Artists are bombarded with misinformation" all the time, he says, "and are often left wondering what's actually true, making it nearly impossible to determine the best direction. And watch out: AI is going to make things much more complicated."

Most pressing issue "The biggest dilemma facing recording artists is deciding which record partner to work with when faced with so many options," Binder says. "Between self-releasing, pure distribution, label services and indie and major record labels, the value proposition of each partner is hard to determine."

Jason Boyarski David Fritz

PARTNERS, BOYARSKI FRITZ

Boyarski's clients include the estates of Donny Hathaway and Earth, Wind & Fire's Maurice White, established superstars such as Marc Anthony and rising talents like JVKE and Maddie Zahm. For White's estate, Boyarski negotiated a new administration deal with Sony Music Publishing and an agreement for a documentary about Earth, Wind & Fire and White's life. He also guided Tainy's signing to Republic Records and counseled JVKE on deals with AWAL and Kobalt, as well as brand partnerships with Bose, Walmart and Microsoft. For the producer duo Stargate, he cut a new joint-venture partnership with Pulse Music. And for NEON16, the company run by Tommy Mottola and Lex Borrero, he negotiated new publishing and distribution deals with Sony and a financing agreement with Firebird.

Most pressing issue "Assuring that music creators are fairly compensated for music and that the tech platforms do not undervalue the power of the song," Boyarski says.

Benjamin Brafman

PRESIDENT, BRAFMAN & ASSOCIATES

Brafman has been the go-to defense attorney for the rich and famous for about three decades, and while many of his peers have hung their jerseys in the rafters, the New York native shows no signs of slowing down, boasting a client roster that features hip-hop icons — Jay-Z, 50 Cent and Sean "Diddy"

Combs — and nightlife royalty (Peter Dinklage). The 75-year-old legal legend is making sure to stay on top of all the new threats that could possibly ensnare some of his clients — with the use of rap lyrics as evidence in criminal cases heading his list. (Legislation to prohibit the practice, the Restoring Artistic Protection Act, was reintroduced to Congress in April 2023.)

If I quit law, I would "Be a writer or an entertainer — an actor or a comedian."

John Branca David Lande David Byrnes

PARTNERS, ZIFFREN BRITTENHAM

Ziffren Brittenham handles all business transactions for a formidable array of superstars, from Beyoncé — for whom

the firm negotiates business transactions including her Super Bowl ad for Verizon in which she teased the release of her upcoming album, *Cowboy Carter* — to Justin Timberlake, who just released a new album and announced a tour. In addition, the firm works with the Michael Jackson estate, which is developing a biopic of the legendary singer, and the Bee Gees, who also have a biopic in the works — Ridley Scott is reportedly in talks to direct. Other superstars for whom the firm handles all business arrangements include SZA, Olivia Rodrigo and Rosalía. Branca says, "Ziffren Brittenham has been at the forefront of the most important entertainment deals that have shaped pop culture today."



Ziffren Brittenham represents **Beyoncé** in all business transactions, including the Super Bowl ad for Verizon in which she teased the release of her upcoming *Cowboy Carter* album.

William Briggs Joshua M. Rosenberg

PARTNERS, VENABLE

With a roster of clients that includes Ariana Grande, The-Dream and Love Renaissance, Rosenberg points to Venable's work defending pop singer Jason Derulo in a copyright dispute over his 2020 Jawsh 685 collaboration, "Savage Love (Laxed - Siren Beat)," as an example of the firm's commitment to clients. As for the future of music law, Rosenberg says, "New social media platforms that tacitly permit hackers to unlawfully obtain an artist's music prior to release" present a new challenge. Digital Millennium Copyright Act take-downs "are necessary," he says, "but you need to investigate the source of the leak to finally stop it."

Advice on AI "You can be proactive and take the fight to them," Rosenberg says. "Or you can protect your rights as best as you can while the law develops and sheds light on your available remedies."

Jordan Bromley

PARTNER/LEADER OF MANATT ENTERTAINMENT,

MANATT PHELPS & PHILLIPS

Robert Jacobs

PARTNER/LEADER OF ENTERTAINMENT LITIGATION,

MANATT PHELPS & PHILLIPS

Gary Gilbert

L. Lee Phillips

SENIOR PARTNERS, MANATT PHELPS & PHILLIPS

W. Joseph Anderson

Eric Custer

Beau Stapleton

Monika Tashman

PARTNERS, MANATT PHELPS & PHILLIPS

"Manatt Entertainment is dedicated to helping creators make the most of their brand value, so we launched our own unique U.S. Streaming Royalty Calculator in October of 2023," says Bromley, whose firm represents the Eagles, ODESZA, Alicia Keys, Tracy Chapman, Neil Young, BMG Rights Management and Downtown Music Holdings. "Our aim for this calculator was to pull back the curtain so artists can have a reliable way to understand how much they get paid from streams on Spotify and Apple Music." In addition, Bromley says the firm closed over \$1 billion in asset purchases and sales, "including some of the most iconic catalogs sold in 2023. One such deal was representing The Zombies in acquiring their rights to their 1960s recording catalog, which is a rare achievement for creators in the music industry."

Vernon Brown

FOUNDER/CEO, V. BROWN & COMPANY

A lot has changed since Brown launched his eponymous business and financial management company in 1992.

Rap was a relatively new phenomenon, social media didn't exist, and the only handheld computer Apple made was something called the Newton. Now, after having worked with a wide range of stars from Erykah Badu to Public Enemy, Brown is focused on ensuring that all artists, not just the ones he represents, receive their fair share in the digital economy. One big focus is getting platforms like TikTok and Instagram to properly pay rights holders for the use of their music. "My job is to guide and navigate people through a lot of decisions," Brown has said. And this past year, he has done just that, helping negotiate deals for up-and-coming R&B sensation October London and rising multiplatinum producer Hendrix Smoke.

Scott Burroughs

PARTNER, DONIGER/BURROUGHS

"I am most proud of the work we are doing on behalf of trailblazing Jamaican musicians Cleveland Browne and Wycliffe Johnson, through his estate," Burroughs says. His firm brought the 2021 lawsuit on behalf of the musicians, who performed as Steely & Cleve, that claimed all musicians using the *dembow* rhythm at the roots of reggaeton are violating their copyright on the 1989 song "Fish Market." The firm is also working to recapture 2 Live Crew's copyrights from a label that acquired them. "As we have seen, labels will fight tooth and nail to deny an artist this right, so litigation will build in this area," Burroughs adds, noting the firm's work on the "copyright reversion right" allowing artists to "recover ownership of their work for their own projects or enter into new, more equitable deals."

Richard S. Busch

PARTNER IN THE LITIGATION SECTION/HEAD OF THE ENTERTAINMENT AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY SECTIONS, KING & BALLOU

With the rise of AI on everyone's mind, Busch says there are "many avenues where the law is unclear and developing. There may be viable claims where name and likeness are used separate and apart from claims for copyright infringement." Busch specializes in copyright claims, having represented Marvin Gaye's family in the "Blurred Lines" case and, in 2019, challenging the constitutionality of the Music Modernization Act by representing one of Eminem's publishers in a lawsuit against Spotify. Busch says these are the "Wild West" days, and the rules "are really yet to be written."

If I quit law, I would "Be involved in a business involving new technology, providing whatever assistance I could. Between things like bitcoin and AI, we are indeed living in interesting times."



Trio **boygenius** struck the deal for its Grammy Award-winning debut album, *the record*, with guidance from attorneys at **Carroll Guido Groffman Cohen Bar & Karalian** and lawyer **Christiane Kinney**.

Matthew Buser

FOUNDING PARTNER, BUSER LEGAL

One of Buser's clients, country singer Dylan Gossett, was hotly pursued by major labels in 2023 before signing a joint deal with Mercury Records and Big Loud. In addition to working with artists, Buser has a number of producers on his roster. He is determined that the music industry develops "more efficient clearance processes" for producers so they can get paid for their work in a more timely fashion.

Advice on AI "Be cautious how much you use AI in creating your work because of the Copyright Office's position on protectability. Also, don't sleep on AI, because it's not going anywhere."

Joe Carlone Peter Paterno Michael Rexford Jacqueline Sabec Laurie Soriano

PARTNERS, KING HOLMES PATERNO & SORIANO

King Holmes Paterno & Soriano worked with clients Ava Max, Kim Petras and Dominic Fike, who released new albums in 2023, landed movie music and brand deals and resumed regular touring. "It's a relief that artists are able to promote their music again now, as in pre-pandemic days," says Soriano, whose firm also represents Dr. Dre, Metallica, Calvin Harris, Frank Ocean, Skrillex, Sia, Victoria Monét, Snow Tha Product, Xavi and Poo Bear, among others. While the return to touring normalcy is welcomed, Soriano is concerned about the "loss of boundaries to artists' privacy and personhood" primarily caused by social media. "It was alarming to see artists, including my client Ava Max, assaulted onstage by members of the public," she

says, referencing a June incident where a man attending Ava Max's Los Angeles show appeared to slap her while she performed onstage.

Rosemary Carroll Michael Guido Elliot Groffman Rob Cohen Gillian Bar Renee Karalian Ira Friedman

PARTNERS, CARROLL GUIDO GROFFMAN COHEN BAR & KARALIAN

Carroll, Groffman and Friedman (assisted by firm associate Jared Leon) are the attorneys for Grammy-winning trio boygenius, with Carroll serving as counsel for Phoebe Bridgers (who also won a 2024 Grammy as a solo act) and Groffman the adviser for Lucy Dacus since her original 2016 deal with Matador. Along with Christiane Kinney, the attorney for Julien Baker, the firm helped negotiate the group's deal with Interscope Records, its tour with AEG and various merchandising and media deals in support of *the record*, which won the Grammy for best alternative music album. Guido's clients include Mark Ronson, the executive soundtrack producer for *Barbie*. Cohen negotiated the Jonas Brothers' residence on Broadway. Bar represented PinkPantheress for her 2023 debut album, *Heaven Knows*. Karalian guided deals including Baby Keem's extension of his recording contract with Columbia Records.

Uwonda S. Carter Donald Woodard

FOUNDING PARTNERS, CARTER + WOODARD

Several clients of Carter's soared in the last 12 months — none higher than bur-

geoning rap superstar Metro Boomin. She represented him for his work as the creator/executive producer of the critically acclaimed *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse* soundtrack, for which he co-produced 11 of the 13 tracks. Woodard advised Summer Walker on her contract renegotiation with Warner Chappell Music and negotiated her U.S. and international tour deal with Live Nation. Other notable clients for the firm include Muni Long, Lil Yatchy, Big Boi and Dion "No ID" Wilson.

Advice on AI Do not "automatically agree to any term that would give the label unfettered control over 'future media,'" Carter says, "and be very careful about licensing [your] images without having controls and approval."

Chris Castle

FOUNDER, CHRISTIAN L. CASTLE ATTORNEYS

Castle is known as an industry renegade who questions practices that are embraced by mainstream music industry legacy players. While the U.S. labels and publishers were willing to accept a five-year extension of the 9.1 cents-per-song statutory rate for sale formats (as opposed to streaming), Castle represented Helienne Lindvall, David Lowery and Blake Morgan in public comments before the Copyright Royalty Board proceeding for the Phonorecords IV term that covered 2023-27. "We stood with many other independents in opposing the proposed 'frozen mechanical' settlement," he says. "The joint opposition opened the door to a new industrywide settlement with the labels that substantially increased the applicable rate [beginning at 12 cents per song]. And I'm proud that we made that new settlement without litigation."

Robert “Bob” A. Celestin

FOUNDING PARTNER, THE LAW OFFICES

OF ROBERT A. CELESTIN

Alicia Ferriabough Taylor

JUNIOR PARTNER, THE LAW OFFICES

OF ROBERT A. CELESTIN

Along with representing the high-profile estates for hip-hop stars like XXXTentacion and Pop Smoke — and clients like 6ix9ine, Designer and others — Celestin spent much of 2023 securing a film score and soundtrack deal for composer Desmond Murray with Netflix, leading to the release of the official score of Juel Taylor’s sci-fi comedy film, *They Cloned Tyrone*. For his work, Murray received a 2023 Black Reel Awards nomination for outstanding score. Regarding the rise of AI in music, Celestin says he tells his clients to embrace the new tech instead of fighting it: “It’s not all bad news,” he says. “There is software now to help a producer record and mix music or even create new and unique sounds. It might even help a lyricist with writer’s block.”

**Ross Charap
Matt Finkelstein**

PARTNERS, ARENTFOX SCHIFF

Finkelstein and Charap led a team in defending Mick Jagger and Keith Richards together with The Rolling Stones’ company Promopub in a copyright infringement suit over “Living in a Ghost Town.” The case was filed in Louisiana federal court by songwriter Sergio Garcia Fernandez, who claimed the two artists copied “recognizable and key protected elements” from two of his songs. A judge ruled in October that the state’s court lacked jurisdiction in the matter and dismissed the case; Fernandez has the option to refile in a different venue. The attorneys also represented The Pointer Sisters in the sale of their catalog rights to some of their biggest releases, including “I’m So Excited,” to BMG.

Most pressing issue “Delivering a bigger piece of music earnings from all types of music users to songwriters and music publishers,” Charap says, “because it all begins with a song.”

Jacqueline Charlesworth

PRINCIPAL, CHARLESWORTH LAW

Charlesworth lists Disney, A+E, peer-music, Satisfaction Fulfilled (Malcolm McLaren) and William Champlin among her clients; for the latter two, the firm litigated two federal cases involving rights. Public case records show that peer-music and Satisfaction Fulfilled sued Sony Music Publishing over the usage of The World’s Famous Supreme Team’s 1984 R&B hit “Hey DJ,” co-written by McLaren, in Lizzo’s “About Damn Time,” while in an unrelated case, songwriter-performer Champlin sued Music Sales Corp. and Wise Music Group over infringement for

a song he co-authored for Earth, Wind & Fire in 1978, “After the Love Has Gone.” The cases reached settlement agreements, providing “happy endings for our clients,” Charlesworth says.

If I quit law, I would “Finish my novel.”

Jay Cohen

LITIGATION PARTNER, PAUL WEISS RIFKIND

WHARTON & GARRISON

Cohen has represented ASCAP for more than 25 years and is currently engaged in rate court litigation with the terrestrial radio industry to, he says, “try to obtain fair market compensation for creators whose music drives the economics of the radio industry.” In addition to other matters, he is advising ASCAP and other clients including the National Music Publishers’ Association, Sony Music Entertainment, Grupo Salinas Charter Communications and Altice on AI-related matters, helping to ensure these organizations “are paid fairly when their work is used in any way by AI,” he says, “including specifically when their work is used to train AI models.”

Most pressing issue “The continuing effort to obtain fair market compensation for music creators who, in a variety of contexts, are required to license their work on a compulsory or functionally compulsory basis rather than in a free market.”

Jay Cooper

SHAREHOLDER/FOUNDER, LOS ANGELES

ENTERTAINMENT, GREENBERG TRAUIG

**Jeff Biederman
Steve Plinio**

SHAREHOLDERS, ENTERTAINMENT AND

MEDIA PRACTICE, GREENBERG TRAUIG

Jess Rosen

SHAREHOLDER/CO-CHAIR OF ATLANTA

ENTERTAINMENT AND MEDIA PRACTICE,

GREENBERG TRAUIG

Bobby Rosenbloum

CHAIRMAN, GLOBAL ENTERTAINMENT AND

MEDIA PRACTICE, GREENBERG TRAUIG

Mathew Rosengart

SHAREHOLDER, MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT

LITIGATION PRACTICE, GREENBERG TRAUIG

Paul Schindler

SHAREHOLDER/SENIOR CHAIR, NEW YORK

ENTERTAINMENT AND MEDIA PRACTICE,

GREENBERG TRAUIG

Charmaine Smith

SHAREHOLDER, ENTERTAINMENT AND MEDIA

PRACTICE, GREENBERG TRAUIG

For Greenberg Traurig — which advises performers including Britney Spears, Katy Perry and Kenny Chesney, composer John Williams and organizations like Epic Games, Meta and the Recording Academy — a major focus has been working with emerging companies in AI. According to Rosenbloum, the firm has been “navigating all of the unknowns in this new and exciting area” by providing companies strategic guidance for

establishing platforms and services that legally use generative AI technologies, including thinking through business and legal issues, developing business models and licensing frameworks. “When it comes to developing products, platforms and services that use AI technology to generate new musical sound recordings,” Rosenbloum says, “the safer course of action while the law is being developed in this area is to refrain from using copyright-protected works to train the AI technology.”

Roger Cramer

OF COUNSEL, WINSLETT STUDNICKY

McCORMICK & BOMSER

Cramer, who for 16 years managed acts such as Living Colour, Wayne Shorter and Lisa Loeb before turning to law full time in 2000, has a varied client list at the New York firm. He handles legal transactions for Yeat, Robert Glasper, Eem Triplin, \$NOT, Lancey Foux, Guin Records, Summrs, Autumn, OWSLA, Tolou, Whyceg and Joeyy. “Over the last year, I had the pleasure of assisting Yeat with his worldwide tour, negotiating a label deal for Cegular Records with Santa Anna, signing Lancey Foux to Pulse and continuing to help guide the multifaceted and endlessly exciting career of five-time Grammy winner Robert Glasper,” Cramer says. The challenge facing the industry, he says, is “helping artists navigate the rapidly changing landscape of distribution, independent and major labels.”

If I quit law, I would “Teach history to high school students.”



Mick Jagger and Keith Richards, represented by attorneys from **ArentFox Schiff**, won a dismissal in October of a copyright infringement suit involving their pandemic song “Living in a Ghost Town.”

Sandra Crawshaw-Sparks

CHAIR OF ENTERTAINMENT, COPYRIGHT AND

MEDIA PRACTICE GROUP, PROSKAUER ROSE

Anthony Oncidi

CO-CHAIR OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT LAW

DEPARTMENT, PROSKAUER ROSE

Highlights in the past year for Oncidi have included “advising and defending the Grammys in several employment litigation matters [and] assisting clients throughout the industry in dealing with their [diversity, equity and inclusion] initiatives in the wake of the recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling regarding college admissions.” For Crawshaw-Sparks, “one of our highlights this past year includes defending Live Nation and Madonna in a class action lawsuit alleging breach of contract, false advertising and related claims in connection with alleged late starts for the first three shows of the North America leg for Madonna’s Celebration Tour.” Proskauer Rose clients also include Viacom, NBCUniversal, CAA, Sony Music, RCA, Columbia Records — and U2. “How [do you] fill a concert venue ever again after fans have experienced U2 at Sphere in Las Vegas?” Oncidi says. **Advice on AI** “Somewhere in the multi-verse, humans win!” Oncidi says.

**Sy Damle
Gabe Fleet
Andrew Gass
Alli Stillman
Jonathan West
Joe Wetzell**

PARTNERS, LATHAM & WATKINS

Latham & Watkins’ clients span an array

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of music companies including Live Nation, iHeartMedia, Pandora Media and HYBE America, which the firm has worked with on its acquisition of hip-hop label Quality Control. Recently, the firm has “positioned itself as the preeminent thought leaders and go-to counsel for technology companies operating in the generative AI space,” Fleet says. He adds that dozens of companies have turned to Latham & Watkins for legal risk analysis surrounding new product launches, understanding the evolving public policy landscape, entering complex transactions related to generative AI offerings or defending copyright infringement lawsuits. Damle, Gass, Stillman and Wetzel are representing OpenAI in pending infringement suits related to the alleged use of textual works to train ChatGPT, as well as the infringement lawsuit by several major music publishers against Anthropic related to the company’s “Claude” AI assistant.

**Robert Darwell
Alexis Robinson
Daniel Schnapp**

PARTNERS, SHEPPARD MULLIN RICHTER AND HAMPTON
The firm recently served as counsel for Domain Capital Group, an investment company that manages in excess of \$8.4 billion in total assets, in acquiring the catalogs of rapper Iggy Azalea and Ashley Gorley, ASCAP’s 10-time country music songwriter of the year honoree. The firm — which represents some of the biggest names in entertainment including Amazon Studios, Spotify, ASCAP, Bytedance/TikTok, Vevo and Triller — also represented ASCAP “in negotiating numerous licenses with major global television network programmers, terrestrial, digital radio platforms and service providers, including a multiyear agreement with YouTube and SiriusXM,” Robinson says.
Most pressing issue “Adapting to consumer expectations by creating immersive and engaging experiences, such as interactive content and virtual reality,” Robinson says. “Finding ways to deliver compelling experiences while



Harry Styles was represented by the London-based music team of **Lee & Thompson** on all aspects of his 2021-23 worldwide Love on Tour trek, which ranks as the fifth-highest-grossing tour of all time.

navigating legal complexities is a key challenge for stakeholders.”

Doug Davis

FOUNDER, THE DAVIS FIRM
With a client list ranging from Columbia Records chairman/CEO Ron Perry to Dionne Warwick to Swizz Beatz, The Davis Firm boasted a wide range of success stories over the past year. Davis helped negotiate the partnership of Sony Music Entertainment and Barry Weiss’ RECORDS and the sale of Polo Grounds Music’s recorded-music assets to Sony, as well as six catalog sales totaling over \$200 million. “On an executive side,” he adds, “I am very proud of having negotiated Ezekiel Lewis’ presidency of Epic Records.”
Most pressing issue “Technology companies’ goal of increasing profits by way of reducing royalty payments to creators. Spotify, for example, has been investing in podcasts and audiobooks, which are taking up a larger portion of the listening hours on this platform, which in turn reduces the pie of revenue that gets shared with artists, producers and songwriters.”

Scott A. Edelman

CHAIRMAN, MILBANK

Atara Miller

PARTNER, MILBANK
This year, Milbank represented BMI in litigation against the North American Concert Promoters Association, including members Live Nation and AEG, that reset the rates paid for the public performance of music at live shows. After a five-week trial, BMI secured an increase in the rate and an expansion of the revenue base to include revenue from box suites, VIP packages and service fees, in addition to the face value of tickets. (The case is on appeal.) Clients also include Edward Kosinski, one of three defendants initially charged in a criminal case connected with alleged efforts to sell Don Henley’s notes linked to the Eagles’ 1976 album, *Hotel California*. A New York judge dismissed the charges on March 6 after prosecutors alerted him that newly uncovered evidence cast doubt on whether Henley’s notes had actually been stolen.

Scott Edelman

PARTNER/CO-CHAIR OF GIBSON DUNN’S MEDIA, ENTERTAINMENT AND TECHNOLOGY PRACTICE GROUP, GIBSON DUNN & CRUTCHER

Orin Snyder

PARTNER/CO-CHAIR OF GIBSON DUNN’S GLOBAL TRIALS PRACTICE GROUP, GIBSON DUNN & CRUTCHER
Edelman, Snyder and their firm have represented

some of the biggest artists and labels in the business — including Led Zeppelin, Lady Gaga and Elton John, as well as Universal Music Group and Warner Music Group. In 2023, Snyder helped defend Bob Dylan against sexual abuse allegations in a case that was ultimately dismissed with prejudice, while Edelman secured a dismissal of tort claims levied against WMG in a case alleging sexual abuse against a band formerly signed to the label.
Most pressing issue “As the gap between the most streamed music and everything else continues to grow and streaming manipulation proliferates, there will continue to be a push and pull between music labels and their artists and streamers over payment models,” Snyder says. “And with the European Union Parliament getting involved in reforming streaming rates, it could be a dynamic year for the streaming economy.”

David Eisman

PARTNER/HEAD OF SKADDEN’S MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT GROUP/LEADER OF THE LOS ANGELES M&A/CORPORATE GROUP, SKADDEN ARPS SLATE MEAGHER & FLOM

Eisman and his firm are proud of their representation of OVO Sound — the independent label co-founded by Drake — in its recently announced investment and partnership with the Todd Moscovitz-led Santa Anna Label Group. Additional notable clients include Alamo Records, Larry Jackson’s gamma, DJ Khaled’s We the Best Music, Litmus Music, Artist Partner Group and Latin-focused Ntertain.

Most pressing issue “Increasing fairness and transparency in the industry to ensure that creators are fairly compensated for their work, including through the use of technologies such as blockchain to manage and track music rights and royalty payments. AI will drive up the number of creators and works in the market, which will further increase the need for more efficient, equitable and scalable payment and tracking mechanisms for labels and artists.”

Lawrence Engel

HEAD OF MUSIC, LEE & THOMPSON

Will Everitt

Tim Fowler

Liv Lyons

Lizzie Payne-James

PARTNERS, LEE & THOMPSON

Engel led Lee & Thompson’s five-person music team in advising Harry Styles on all aspects of his 2021-23 Love on Tour worldwide trek, which earned over \$617 million across 169 shows and five continents, becoming the fifth-highest-grossing tour of all time. Other notable clients include Styles’ former One Direction bandmate

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Louis Tomlinson, Lana Del Rey, Depeche Mode, Wet Leg and British rapper Dave, whose song with Central Cee, "Sprinter," spent 10 weeks at No. 1 on the Official U.K. Singles Chart last summer. The London-based firm also guided David Dollimore's December launch of electronic label Disorder Records, in partnership with Geffen Records.

Most pressing issue "Same as it has always been: to discover and break new artists," Engel says, "so we can carry on competing with movies, games and sports."

Timothy Liam Epstein

PARTNER, DUGGAN BERTSCH

Epstein advises independent U.S. promoters with clients that own and/or operate venues like Le Poisson Rouge in New York; College Street Music Hall in New Haven, Conn.; and Seattle's El Corazon, as well as entities including Psyko Steve Presents, Sofar Sounds, Kilby Block Party, Baja Beach Fest, Riot Fest and Pitchfork Festival. "Despite various market headwinds on the live side, it has been a joy and a privilege to be able to work with clients at the operational counsel level," Epstein says. "From watching Andy Levine [with Topoka Live] expand the team and meet the fans' desire for VIP experiences, to Chris Den Uijl and Aaron Ampudia having grown well beyond successes with Baja Beach Fest and Sueños to additional shows and partnerships, to the ever-expanding tour stops for Zach Ruben and Adam Lynn with the Breakaway brand."

Paul Fakler

PARTNER, MAYER BROWN

Fakler — whose clients include SiriusXM, Pandora Media, Google and YouTube — is particularly proud of one case that is no laughing matter: Yellow Rose Productions et al. v. Pandora. Fakler and his firm represented Pandora Media in copyright infringement cases from nine comedians or their estates, alleging Pandora failed to obtain sufficient rights to the underlying jokes embodied in duly licensed sound recordings streamed on Pandora. The cases, he says, sought "to impose the music industry's byzantine licensing practices on the comedy industry. The case will make new law on various topics related to sound-recording licensing and the comedy industry."

Most pressing issue "Finding a way to allow music streaming services to generate a profit on a sustained basis. After 25 years, that has still not happened, and it is in nobody's long-term interest — least of all artists, songwriters or consumers — to keep making it impossible."

Sid Fohrman Alex Weingarten

PARTNERS/CHAIRS, WILLKIE FARR & GALLAGHER

Shane Nix

PARTNER, WILLKIE FARR & GALLAGHER

In the past year, Willkie Farr & Gallagher represented Primary Wave in acquiring a 50% stake in the Village People catalog, which includes hits like "Macho Man" and "In the Navy." The firm also worked on a joint venture with Can't Stop Productions and Galilee Publishing (the Village People's original label and publisher, respectively). With clients including Selena Gomez, Manny Marroquin, Create Music Group, the Joe Cocker estate and Snoop Dogg, Fohrman says, "We, as an industry, need to focus on economic solutions that promote both a vibrant and sustainable creative community without stifling innovation."

Advice on AI "Our common goal," Fohrman says, "should be to establish a business model that protects and fairly compensates artists, writers and rights holders; respects and preserves human artistry; but also recognizes the commitment and genius of those driving this incredible innovation."

Karl Fowlkes

MANAGING PARTNER, THE FOWLKES FIRM

In addition to his longtime client and successful independent rapper Blxst, Fowlkes represents and provides strategic guidance and legal strategy to Hologram, a music production label and incubator founded by Grammy-nominated producer Synthetic. Hologram "has grown to 17 producers behind some of the biggest hits of the past 18 months from Ice Spice, Yeat, Lil Uzi Vert, 41, Nav, Trippie Redd and countless others," Fowlkes says. Going forward, he believes streaming needs more transparency. "When fans stream a song, the money generated from those streams should go directly to that artist's pocket," he says. "We need to figure out a universal artist-centric payout system."

Advice on AI "Don't fight it. Learn how AI can efficiently and effectively help your workflow and creative process, and be open. We know the negatives to AI, but not enough artists know the positives."

John Frankenheimer

CHAIR OF MUSIC INDUSTRY, LOEB & LOEB

Derek Crowlover Debbie White

VICE CHAIRS OF MUSIC INDUSTRY, LOEB & LOEB

Denise Stevens

PARTNER, LOEB & LOEB

Tiffany Dunn

CO-OFFICE ADMINISTRATIVE PARTNER OF NASHVILLE, LOEB & LOEB

Loeb & Loeb oversaw more than \$500 million in sales and acquisitions during 2023 with a client list that spans from artists like Carrie Underwood,



Freundlich Law represents **Bad Bunny** and **Rimas Entertainment** in a suit claiming that scores of artists using the dembow rhythm at the core of reggaeton are violating copyright.

Morgan Wallen, Diana Ross and Christina Aguilera to the estates of Johnny Cash and Otis Redding. Clients also include Sony Music Publishing and Warner Music Group. "Although the initial steps undertaken in 2023 to ensure that value is recognized for those who are actually creating interest and demand were much appreciated," Frankenheimer says, "this is going to be an ongoing struggle that requires real commitment from all parties in the value chain."

Advice on AI "AI is here now," Frankenheimer says. "There is strength in numbers, and the creative community aligned with their business partners — labels, publishers, agencies, managers — can form a powerful and unified message for those that shape the laws that will define what is and is not permissible in our world."

Ken Freundlich

FOUNDER/PRESIDENT, FREUNDLICH LAW

Freundlich defended Bad Bunny and Rimas Entertainment in two "high stakes" copyright infringement lawsuits. "In one of those matters," he says, he "drafted and argued a complex, high-profile motion to dismiss concerning the copyrightability of the allegedly appropriated dembow rhythm." He also submitted briefs to the Supreme Court on behalf of LyricFind, which led to a lower court upholding the dismissal of a \$50 million complaint against his client from Genius Holdings. The complaint was dismissed on copyright preemption grounds.

With clients ranging from Sly Stone and members of the Family Stone to heirs of the founders of War, Freundlich says the biggest challenge facing the music industry "always has been and continues to be about protecting creativity."

If I quit law, I would "Spend more time expanding the repertoire and reach of The Singers in Law, the jazz vocal quartet that I co-founded a decade ago that currently performs in the Los Angeles area."

Sasha Frid Skip Miller

PARTNERS, MILLER BARONDESS

Last August, a federal jury ruled in favor of client William "Smokey" Robinson and against his ex-manager Eric Podwall, who claimed the Motown legend owed him for touring and concert commissions worth over \$2 million. Given legal issues now stemming from the rise of AI, Frid recommends clients "be proactive to protect [their] copyrights but also use AI's ability to analyze data in order to release music that's more likely to resonate with the artist's target audience." Among the firm's other clients: hard-rock bands Mötley Crüe and Five Finger Death Punch and companies Live Nation and Warner Music Group.

Most pressing issue "Due to the rise of streaming and search algorithms, as well as the vast availability of older catalogs," Frid says, "it is difficult for new and independent artists to differentiate themselves and find an audience."

Jeffrey B. Gandel

FOUNDER, THE LAW OFFICE OF JEFFREY B. GANDEL

Gandel's firm negotiated deals for Medium Rare Live, which puts together such events as Shaq's Fun House, Kelce Jam and Daymond John's Black Entrepreneurs Day at venues including Harlem's Apollo Theater, Las Vegas' Wynn Hotel and Brooklyn's Maimonides Park. The firm's clients also include Timbaland, OjjiVolta and GORDO. Regarding AI, Gandel says, "The most important thing is

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CONGRATULATIONS
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HONOREE





Attorneys at the law firm **Eisner** have guided **Jon Batiste's** moves along multiple career paths, including his Grammy-nominated album *World Music Radio* and his role in *The Color Purple*.

for each of my clients to understand what it is and how it interacts with their work. Without that knowledge, clients will not be able to have intelligent conversations with their peers, and they will not be able to determine if this new technology is something that could assist them with their work or something that takes away from their creative endeavors."

Most pressing issue "The balance of income allocation between the digital service providers [DSPs], labels, artists, producers, writers, etc."

**Eric German
Christine Lepera
Bradley Mullins
David Steinberg**

PARTNERS, MITCHELL SILBERBERG & KNUPP
See story, page 63.

**Damien Granderson
Guy Blake
Lynn Gonzalez
Elizabeth Moody
Colin Morrissey**

PARTNERS, GRANDERSON DES ROCHERS
Granderson Des Rochers helped usher client Quality Control Music into a reported \$300 million sale to K-pop giant HYBE America in February 2023, placing rappers Offset and Quavo, Lil Yachty, City Girls and Lil Baby under the same umbrella with BTS. The company advocates for a "more equitable share of streaming revenue" for its clients, which include J. Cole, J Balvin, A\$AP Rocky and Wizkid, and major labels and publishers, Granderson says. "It's more challenging than ever to have a sustainable career in the music industry unless the artist executes on a sound strategic plan," he adds.

Advice on AI "Always be aware of where your music is and be apprised of unauthorized versions of your songs, voice and likeness," Granderson says. "Have the right lawyers and resources available to you to remain informed so you can protect your likeness and rights."

Navarro W. Gray

FOUNDING PARTNER, THE GRAY LAW FIRM
Gray's accomplishments go beyond working with clients such as Lil' Kim, Ronald Isley and Internet Money. His recent achievements include closing a major publishing deal for DD Osama with Sony Music Publishing and negotiating recording agreements for not only MAF Teeski and APG, but also Baby Jamo and Listen 2 the Kids/Santa Anna and Lil Nuu and Island Records. Gray also negotiated all aspects of Isley's last album, *Make Me Say It Again, Girl*, which featured appearances by Beyoncé, Snoop Dogg, Earth, Wind & Fire, Trey Songz, 2 Chainz, and Quavo and Takeoff. And, offering a full array of services, Gray negotiated a liquor distribution deal for Isley's brandy, Ron Isley Liquid Gold.

If I quit law, I would "Create an '80s soft-rock band in which I would be the lead singer."

**Matthew Greenberg
Stephanie Chopurian-Valencia**

MANAGING PARTNER, GREENBERG CHOPURIAN-VALENCIA & ASSOCIATES
PARTNER, GREENBERG CHOPURIAN-VALENCIA & ASSOCIATES
The firm represents numerous Latin artists including Ovy on the Drums, Arcángel, Chencho Corleone, Sech, Yandel, Gerardo Ortiz, Prince Royce and De la Ghetto, as well as former Black Eyed Peas singer Fergie and the estate of Canserbero. Greenberg notes the company has been involved in defending clients in a 2021 action filed by lawyers for the Jamaican duo Steely & Cleve — Cleveland "Clevie" Browne and the estate of the late Wycliffe "Steely" Johnson — who claim that more than 150 different artists who use the dembow rhythm (the beat at the core of reg-gaetón) violates their copyright on their 1989 song "Fish Market." The suit has an "impact on urban Latin artists, labels and publishers," Greenberg says.

Most pressing issue "Declining per-stream revenue to creators," Greenberg says.

Gary R. Greenstein

MEMBER, WILSON SONSINI GOODRICH & ROSATI
Greenstein — who works with digital media and entertainment clients and counts AI, technology transactions and financial technology as his focus areas — is representing Google and Stingray before the U.S. Copyright Royalty Board in the Web VI rate-setting proceedings, which will determine streaming royalties for 2026-30. He previously represented Google in the Phonorecords IV proceedings, which resulted in a rates settlement that interactive streaming services pay for using music as of January 2023. "We also represent numerous broadcasters and streaming services in royalty audits by record companies, the [performing rights organizations] and SoundExchange," he says.

Most pressing issue "Where is innovation going to come from next, and will the currently constituted music business permit new businesses and ideas to germinate and flourish? You have three major labels and a relatively small number of services responsible for most music consumption."

**Jordan Gutglass
Evan Krauss
Daniel Shulman
Owen Sloane**

PARTNERS, EISNER
Eisner's ability to "service all aspects of" Jon Batiste's multifaceted career highlights the firm's capabilities, Shulman says. Over the past year, Eisner has guided Batiste's involvement in a critically acclaimed documentary (*American Symphony*), a Grammy-nominated album (*World Music Radio*), a role in last year's *The Color Purple*, major brand partnerships (Coca-Cola, Tommy Hilfiger) and a festival with Batiste's role as co-founder of the Miami edition of the Montreux Jazz Festival. The firm's clients also

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Yeshiva University** (New York)
Enrollment: 906

Brooklyn Law School (Brooklyn)
Enrollment: 1,070

**Columbia Law School, Columbia
University** (New York)
Enrollment: 1,293

Fordham University School of Law
(New York)
Enrollment: 1,145

**Harvard Law School, Harvard
University** (Cambridge, Mass.)
Enrollment: 1,747

New York University School of Law
(New York)
Enrollment: 1,413

Southwestern Law School
(Los Angeles)
Enrollment: 742

**University of California, Berkeley,
School of Law** (Berkeley, Calif.)
Enrollment: 1,093

**University of California, Los Angeles,
School of Law** (Los Angeles)
Enrollment: 1,038

University of Miami School of Law
(Miami)
Enrollment: 1,150

**University of Southern California
Gould School of Law** (Los Angeles)
Enrollment: 631

* Enrollments source: U.S. News & World Report. Schools are presented alphabetically and are not ranked. An alumni-count tie results in 11 schools listed this year.

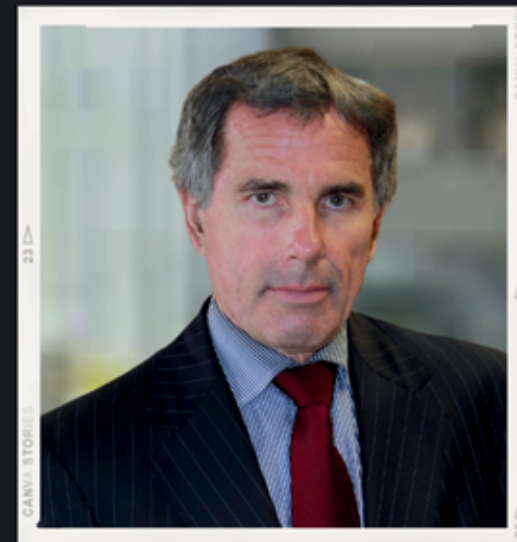


Cardozo School of Law

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TOP MUSIC LAWYERS 2024



SASHA FRID



SKIP MILLER

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players

include PartyNextDoor, G-Eazy, Boi-1da, Hype Williams, Sofi Tukker, Ceremony of Roses and Matchbox Twenty.

Most pressing issue "Understanding what a long-term sustainable career looks like in an age of virality," Shulman says. "This includes funding and financial resources for artists who want to remain independent and their ability to sustain a living, safety for artists and fans in-person and online, and a focus on mental health and the well-being of artists."

Pierre Hachar Jr.

MANAGING PARTNER, THE HACHAR LAW GROUP

Cody Pellicer

GENERAL PARTNER, THE HACHAR LAW GROUP

The Hachar Law Group advises stars like Lele Pons, Chayanne, Alex Sensation and Justin Quiles. Highlights of the past year include restructuring the legal affairs for regional Mexican singer Carín León, who has established himself as a "market-leading independent artist topping the charts as a Latin Grammy winner, forming global partnerships with Universal Music Publishing and AEG for his first sold-out U.S. arena tour," Hachar says. The industry's challenges, he adds, include "the oversaturation of new music readily available makes it increasingly difficult for new or independent artists to stand out."

Advice on AI "Learn how to use it as a tool to your advantage, legally. It is not going away, and if you don't learn, you will be left behind," Hachar says.

Joe Halbardier

FOUNDER, HALBARDIER

Halbardier's firm represents artists including regional Mexican music stars Grupo Frontera, which has amassed multiple No. 1 songs on the *Billboard* charts, including "Que Vuelvas" with Carín León (Regional Mexican), "El Amor de Su Vida" with Grupo Firme (Regional Mexican) and "un x100to" with Bad Bunny (Latin Airplay, Global 200). "It has been incredibly rewarding to be able to help my clients navigate the challenges of rapid growth during the explosion of Mexican music," Halbardier

says. "Growing up in Texas, this music has always been a part of the culture, and to see its popularity grow not just in the United States but throughout Latin America and beyond has been especially exciting."

Most pressing issue "Artists have more leverage than ever before. At the same time, labels, distributors, publishers and promoters have better data and are best suited to market music in an increasingly complex and multifaceted environment; however, they are pulling back on risk."

Matt Hallinan Michael G. Rhodes

PARTNERS, COOLEY

"As personal counsel to Justin Bieber, I led and worked with the larger team of Matt Hallinan at Cooley, Scooter Braun and Dave Bolno at HYBE, and Hipgnosis on the sale of his music catalog for \$203 million," Rhodes says. Hipgnosis Songs Capital closed its deal in January 2023 to buy 100% of Bieber's publishing, as well as his artist royalties from his master recordings and neighboring rights, Hipgnosis confirmed at the time. The deal was the largest rights sale for any artist of Bieber's generation and also Hipgnosis' biggest acquisition to date, covering all 290 titles in his catalog released prior to Dec. 31, 2021, including his most recent album, 2021's *Justice*.

If I quit law, I would "Go surf, ride my motorcycles, improve my golf index and hang with the grandkids," Rhodes says.

Jonas Herbsman

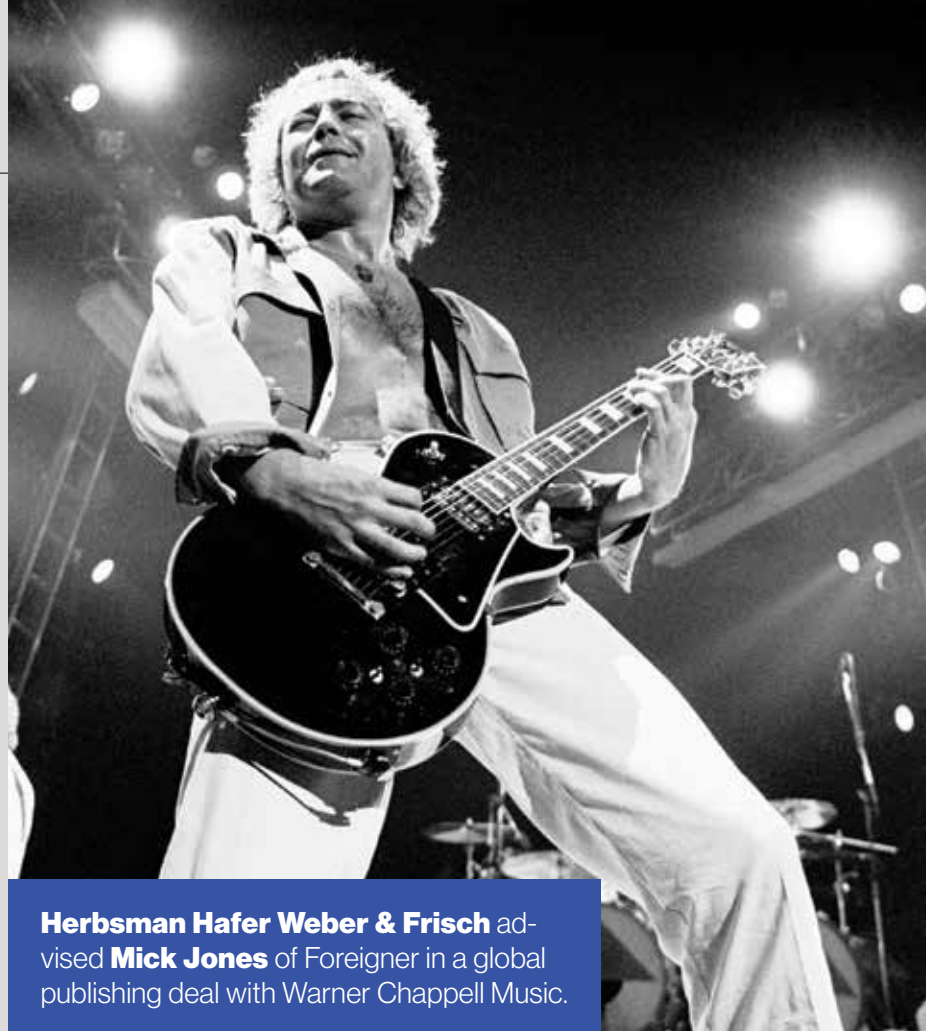
MANAGING PARTNER, HERBSMAN HAFER

WEBER & FRISCH

Michael Frisch Dorothy Weber

PARTNERS, HERBSMAN HAFER WEBER & FRISCH

The firm — whose clients include Lenny Kravitz, Desmond Child, Patti LaBelle and Judy Collins, as well as the estates of John Lennon, Jimi Hendrix and Roy Orbison — represented Foreigner's Mick Jones, another music icon on its roster, in a global publishing deal with Warner Chappell Music. Herbsman and partners negotiated the



Herbsman Hafer Weber & Frisch advised Mick Jones of Foreigner in a global publishing deal with Warner Chappell Music.

worldwide administration agreement for the founding member of the British American rock band who is known for his impressive catalog of hits such as "I Want To Know What Love Is," "Urgent," "Cold As Ice," "Jukebox Hero" and "Waiting for a Girl Like You."

Advice on AI "Artists and creators must make sure that the agreements they are entering clearly address AI," Herbsman says. "AI issues are lurking in areas you might not realize, and you don't want to unknowingly grant those rights."

Ken Hertz Jamie Young Ed Buggé

PARTNERS, HERTZ LICHTENSTEIN YOUNG & POLK

"Terminating copyrights to leverage various types of new deals for artists and songwriters" has been the law firm's chief focus of late, Hertz says. Also on the team's radar: catalog sales and advising on the establishment, expansion and acquisition of industry disruptors and leading independent management com-

panies. Representing a diverse roster of artists and businesses that includes Apple Music, Céline Dion, H.E.R., Gwen Stefani, Keith Richards and Stevie Nicks, Hertz adds that two of the most pressing issues facing the industry are "TikTok and the increasing challenge for emerging talent of rising above the din."

If I quit law, I would "Volunteer, play pickleball, bake, play golf, build furniture, keep advising young entrepreneurs and spend more time in Portugal," Hertz says.

Larry Iser

MANAGING PARTNER, KINSELLA HOLLEY

ISER KUMP STEINSAPIR

Jonathan Steinsapir

PARTNER, KINSELLA HOLLEY ISER KUMP STEINSAPIR

The firm is among the representatives of the estate of Michael Jackson, which sold half of the King of Pop's publishing and recorded-masters catalog to Sony Music Group for a reported \$600 million in February. The Kinsella Holley Iser team also represented majority heirs of Motown songwriter Ron Miller (co-writer of Stevie Wonder's "For Once in My Life"), who had filed copyright termination notices to regain control of Miller's works. Minority heirs "tried to invalidate several dozen termination notices," Iser says of the firm's response, led by Steinsapir. "We were able to have the case dismissed ... holding that the termination notices were all valid."

Most pressing issue "Moving artists away from sales and touring revenue," Iser says, and "toward diversifying income streams and connecting with audiences in innovative ways and tapping into new markets."

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"Our common goal [for AI] should be to establish a business model that protects and fairly compensates artists, writers and rights holders; respects and preserves human artistry; but also recognizes the commitment and genius of those driving this incredible innovation."

—Sid Fohrman, Willkie Farr & Gallagher

Erin M. Jacobson

CEO/ATTORNEY, ERIN M. JACOBSON

Jacobson's recent achievements include a catalogwide termination project that recaptured the copyrights of several hundred songs, including many Hot 100 top 10 hits; favorably concluding a complex case regarding foreign termination rights; and counseling of estate and legacy catalogs. Her clients have included the estates of Elvis Presley, Frank Sinatra, Prince and Sam Cooke, along with Salt-N-Pepa, Radiohead, classic TV theme songs and well-known holiday music. Through her work, Jacobson has determined that the biggest issue facing the business is "a fundamental lack of respect for the use of music" regarding infringements by social media platforms, DSPs and even "other industries focused on intellectual property, like film and print."

If I quit law, I would "Be a watercolor artist and jewelry designer — which I already do outside of my law career as my creative practice."

Neville L. Johnson

FOUNDING PARTNER, JOHNSON & JOHNSON

Douglas L. Johnson

MANAGING PARTNER, JOHNSON & JOHNSON

After resolving what Douglas Johnson calls a "contentious contract dispute in arbitration" for Janet Jackson, the firm is representing Paula Abdul in her sexual abuse lawsuit against Nigel Lythgoe (he has denied the allegations), as well as APM Music in a variety of copyright enforcement matters. "We have been spearheading numerous class actions against the major record labels for improperly lowering streaming royalties paid to legacy artists," he says. "The cases have enormous implications for older recording artists who haven't individually renegotiated their contracts, since the labels are arguing that they consider any streaming royalties paid to those artists to be charity."

Most pressing issue "Streaming platforms continue to underpay record labels, who in turn underpay artists," Douglas says, "and the status quo is simply untenable."

Rusty Jones

ATTORNEY, LAW OFFICE OF RUSSELL A. JONES JR. AND ASSOCIATES

In May 2023, Jones' client Garth Brooks launched his Las Vegas residency, *Garth Brooks/Plus ONE*, at The Colosseum at Caesars Palace; due to demand, he extended dates into 2024. In March, Brooks and his wife, Trisha Yearwood, celebrated the Nashville opening of their Friends in Low Places Bar and Honky Tonk, which takes its name from Brooks' signature 1990 hit. Jones also represents



Attorney Wale Kalejaiye of **Sheridans** in London helped negotiate **Burna Boy's** *Love, Damini* tour, including his European stadium shows.

major country music names including Yearwood, Tim McGraw and the estate of Toby Keith, who died in February. For Jones, some of the most important issues the music industry faces include "internet theft" and "corporate downsizing during a period of high profits."

Advice on AI "Heed the warning from 2001: *A Space Odyssey*: Don't trust HAL."

Wale Kalejaiye

PARTNER, SHERIDANS

Kalejaiye helped negotiate Burna Boy's *Love, Damini* tour that included European stadium shows and secured an Apple Music Live deal for his London stop last June. He also negotiated a publishing agreement between Sony Music Publishing France and Michael "London" Hunter, the British Nigerian

producer behind Rema and Selena Gomez's Hot 100 No. 3 hit, "Calm Down," and "successfully finalized a distribution agreement" between Virgin Music and Dapper Music, the latter of which Kalejaiye describes as "the biggest street hip-hop label in Nigeria" that features Shallipopi, Seyi Vibe and others on its roster.

If I quit law, I would Return to "my former life playing semiprofessional [soccer] for a local team, so I would love the opportunity to guide my local team, Charlton FC, back to the Premier League."

Joshua A. Kamen

FOUNDER/OWNER, THE LAW OFFICES OF JOSHUA A. KAMEN

In 2023, Kamen represented music

executive Dante Ross as he relaunched the label Stimulated in partnership with Roc Nation's Equity Distribution and published the memoir *Son of the City*. "I interned for Dante at Stimulated 25 years ago," says Kamen, who represents multiple high-profile clients including Doja Cat, Teddy Swims, Giveon, City Girls and 6LACK. His clients also extend beyond artists to include producers such as Oz, who worked on Drake's "First Person Shooter" (featuring J. Cole) and Jack Harlow's "Lovin on Me."

Advice on AI "Songwriters and producers can use AI as a tool to create better demos, and artists can use AI as a fan engagement tool or to perform virtual concerts. New technologies often create a challenge in the music business, but it's the early adopters who typically have the edge."

Jason Karlov

PARTNER/CHAIR OF THE ENTERTAINMENT, MEDIA AND SPORTS PRACTICE GROUP, BARNES & THORNBURG

Brian Schall

PARTNER, BARNES & THORNBURG

Barnes & Thornburg represent an array of clients in sectors including music and sports, such as Bob Dylan, Imagine Dragons, John Fogerty and The Killers, as well as the NFL and all of its 32 teams, 18 NBA teams and nine NHL teams. Last year, the company represented Fogerty for the repurchase of the Creedence Clearwater Revival catalog. Karlov says that one of the most pressing issues facing the music industry is "capturing the income from social media licensing."

Advice on AI "Wait and see how it all shakes out, and, in the meantime, protect yourself as much as possible," Karlov says. "These are valuable future rights that are currently being addressed, and we will see them play out over time."

Lauren Kilgore Lauren Spahn

PARTNERS, SHACKELFORD BOWEN

McKINLEY & NORTON

With a focus on the live-performance industry, the attorneys' roster — which spans music festivals, talent agencies, talent buyers and promoters — totals over 300 events and brings in more than nine figures for the firm. Key artist clients include Tanya Tucker and Heart's Ann Wilson. Post-pandemic, Spahn renegotiated major deals with agencies for talent-buyer clients including Romeo Entertainment and Variety Attractions, restructured performance agreements for agency clients like Reliant Talent and offered guidance for Heart's 2023 tour.

Most pressing issue "Ticketing prices, fees and practices like resales and the

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ongoing Federal Trade Commission investigation with regard to the antitrust claims against Ticketmaster and Live Nation,” Spahn says. “More importantly, fans deserve to know what, and how much, they are paying for, as a lot of those fees don’t even end up in the artists’ pockets.”

Russell L. King

DIRECTOR, KING LAW FIRM
King continues to guide his clients — such as Maluma, Juan Luis Guerra, Carlos Vives, Quevedo, Melendi and Laura Pausini — with “their tax structuring and IRS agreements for touring, endorsement deals and music distribution contracts.” In just the past few months, multiple branding agreements that King negotiated for Maluma, in particular, have come to fruition: In late 2023, the Colombian hit-maker began to promote a smart glasses collaboration between Meta and Ray-Ban across platforms. More recently, in February, he headlined a Las Vegas concert presented by SiriusXM and Pandora in the week leading up to Super Bowl LVIII.

Advice on AI “Unfortunately, other than right of publicity laws that vary in effectiveness on a state-by-state basis, there is little current protection for an artist regarding the threats posed by artificial intelligence, and, therefore, governmental action is urgently needed.”

Christiane Kinney

PRESIDENT, KINNEY LAW
Throughout the past year, Kinney has focused her expertise on catalog sales, touring agreements, endorsement deals and termination of transfer rights for legacy artists and their respective estates. She has assisted clients in navigating new media and technology deals and addressing their concerns with AI. Kinney also advised Grammy-winning acts during negotiations over publishing and label deals (including Julien Baker of boygenius for the group’s debut album). “Finding a balance where artists can be fairly compensated for their contributions while supporting the rise of new technology will continue to be one of the most pressing issues facing the music business,” she says.

If I quit law, I would “Beg to play keys on tour with my clients.”

**Mark Kraiss
Simon Goodbody**

PARTNERS, BRAY & KRAISS
Kraiss and Goodbody handled “the necessary paperwork” for The Rolling Stones’ first album of original material in almost 20 years. Released in October, *Hackney Diamonds* entered the Billboard 200 at No. 3 and topped the charts in 20 countries, such as the United Kingdom, Germany and France. The London-based firm’s other clients include Ed Sheeran, Elton John, Mumford & Sons and Sony Music Publishing. Of the challenges facing the industry, Kraiss and Goodbody say that Universal Music Group’s recent decision to pull its catalog from TikTok following a licensing dispute “calls into question the long-term commercial viability of promoting music consumption via short-form video clips.”
Advice on AI “For artist clients, the most urgent practical thing that they can do would be to understand what rights they are granting to third parties, like their label or publisher.”

Dina LaPolt

FOUNDER/OWNER, LAPOLT LAW
**Mariah Comer
Kristin Womer**
PARTNERS, LAPOLT LAW
Four years after his detention by U.S. Customs and Immigration, rapper 21 Savage obtained his green card thanks to the work of LaPolt Law, which spearheaded the hard-fought campaign. The firm — whose clients include Cardi B, Mary J. Blige, Steven Tyler, Joan Jett and deadmau5 — also continued its efforts to pass the Restoring Artistic Protection Act in Congress to prevent the use of lyrics as evidence in court cases. On the AI front, LaPolt Law submitted comment papers to the U.S. Copyright Office on behalf of the Songwriters of North America, Music Artists Coalition and Black Music Action Coalition, advocating for the rights of creators as the technology presents new challenges across the music industry. The firm has also recently focused on lobbying for a federal right of publicity to protect against the unauthorized use of an individual’s voice, likeness and other personality traits.



LaPolt (left) with Blige

**BILLBOARD’S FIRST
TOP MUSIC LAWYERS’
CHOICE AWARD GOES
TO DINA LAPOLT**

THE FOUNDER OF LAPOLT LAW WINS THE PEER-VOTED HONOR

After nearly 1,000 votes cast over three rounds of voting, Billboard Pro members selected Dina LaPolt, founder and owner of LaPolt Law, for the 2024 Top Music Lawyers Power Players’ Choice Award, which honors the attorney they believe had the most impact across the industry in the past year. With multiple industry roles — on the executive boards of Songwriters of North America; the Black Music Action Coalition; City of Hope’s Music, Film & Entertainment Industry Group; the Grammy Awards’ Entertainment Law Initiative Executive Committee; and others — LaPolt’s impact extends far beyond representing her A-list clients like Cardi B, Mary J. Blige and 21 Savage. A

staunch advocate for creators’ rights, as well as gender and racial parity, LaPolt has built influence rallying her extensive network behind common causes. Her current focuses include AI, a federal right of publicity and banning the use of rap lyrics in criminal trials. “Receiving *Billboard’s* Top Music Lawyers Power Players’ Choice Award is the most prestigious honor I’ve ever received because I have been selected by my peers,” LaPolt says. “When I got sober almost 26 years ago, I would have never dreamed that this would have even been possible. I am so grateful that I am able to be of service and help so many people in our industry. I am really touched. This means so much to me.”

“I am so grateful that I am able to be of service and help so many people in our industry.” — LAPOLT

COURTESY OF LAPOLT LAW



Photo Credit: Chekiel Barthley

Willkie congratulates partners **Sid Fohrman, Shane Nix** and **Alex Weingarten** for being named among *Billboard’s* 2024 Top Music Lawyers



Sid Fohrman



Shane Nix



Alex Weingarten

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Todd Larson

PARTNER, INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND MEDIA PRACTICE, WEIL GOTSHAL & MANGES

Benjamin Marks

HEAD OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND MEDIA PRACTICE, WEIL GOTSHAL & MANGES

"We are representing SiriusXM and Pandora in Web VI," Marks says. "the Copyright Royalty Board proceeding that will set the rates and terms for the statutory licenses for the reproduction and public performance of sound recordings by noninteractive music streaming services for the next five-year period, 2026-2030." The firm is also representing the North American Concert Promoters Association — and its largest members, Live Nation and AEG — in a dispute with BMI over the royalty rate paid for live performances. The 138% rate increase awarded in March 2023 "is considerably closer to NACPA's rate proposal than BMI's," according to Marks. But the firm is appealing the decision on behalf of its clients.

Advice on AI "Proceed with extreme caution, don't skimp on due diligence and investigations, and keep us on speed dial," Marks says. "Minefields abound."

Bernie Lawrence Watkins

FOUNDER/CEO, B. LAWRENCE WATKINS & ASSOCIATES

With a loaded roster in hip-hop including Latto, Young Nudy, Tay Keith, Doe Boy and others, B. Lawrence Watkins & Associates has landed various deals for its artists, most notably in endorsements. The firm worked alongside Latto on her endorsement deals with HALLS, Sprite (for its Hip-Hop 50 celebration), Just E.A.T. and others. It also helped structure Young Nudy's renegotiation with RCA Records while handling the clearances for Apple's use of Doe Boy's name, image and likeness rights in an Apple iPhone 15 commercial.

Advice on AI "The use of AI is growing at a rapid speed. Read the terms-of-use

policy prior to agreeing to incorporate AI in your creative works, and always have an attorney review your paperwork."

Shay Lawson

MANAGING ATTORNEY, LAW FIRM OF LAWSON MCKINLEY

Lawson's firm has a noteworthy roster of clients in hip-hop and beyond including producers Sheldon Ferguson and Groove and the estate of rapper Pimp C. During the past year, Lawson took on major transactions and legal cases, including UGK's collaboration with streetwear giant Supreme. An advocate for racial justice in the music industry, Lawson was also appointed policy chair for the Black Music Action Coalition and its advocacy efforts in the launch of the Congressional Hip Hop Task Force. The firm also worked on successful Louisiana legislation prohibiting the use of rap lyrics in criminal prosecutions and ongoing federal efforts on the Restoring Artistic Protection Act.

Most pressing issue "The harm to artists, fans and venues by ticketing bots and the resale Wild West creating unfair ticket marketplaces."

Bill Leibowitz

FOUNDER, WILLIAM R. LEIBOWITZ LAW GROUP

Leibowitz, whose top clients include Hipgnosis Songs Capital, Hipgnosis Songs Fund and veteran rock bands INXS and Iron Maiden, specializes in IP acquisitions and believes "songwriters are still grossly underpaid relative to the other participants in the music food chain." For Hipgnosis Songs Capital, Leibowitz has closed major catalog purchases regarding Justin Bieber; Tobias Jesso Jr., who in 2023 became the inaugural Grammy winner for songwriter of the year, non-classical; Erika Ender, co-writer of the 2017 global smash "Despacito"; English songwriting-production team TMS (Tom "Froe" Barnes, Benjamin Kohn and Pete "Merf" Kelleher), whose



The William R. Leibowitz Law Group advised Hipgnosis Songs Capital on the acquisition of publishing catalogs from writers including Erika Ender, co-writer of the 2017 global smash "Despacito."

credits include Lewis Capaldi's biggest hits; and David Foster's writer's performance income.

Advice on AI "If AI isn't heavily regulated and controlled, the only beneficiaries will be the companies that own the AI software and their shareholders."

**Robert Lieberman
Michael Perlstein**

PARTNERS, FISCHBACH PERLSTEIN LIEBERMAN & ALMOND

In addition to working with music companies like rights management firm GoDigital Media Group and its subsidiary Cinq Music, Lieberman's firm also represents Bob Dylan, Paul Simon, The Cars and Lukas Nelson, as well as the estates of Peggy Lee and Dr. John. For his clients, Lieberman says that the past year has been defined by "numerous purchases and sales of music publishing and master catalogs involving complex copyright issues in excess of \$200 million." Viewing the overall industry landscape, Lieberman says a key concern remains "increasing artist and songwriter streaming royalty rates."

Advice on AI "Be patient," Lieberman says. "Protect your rights contractu-

ally with the third parties that you are dealing with and wait to see how the marketplace will deal with it."

Doug Mark

FOUNDING PARTNER, MARK MUSIC & MEDIA LAW

**David Ferreria
Leon Morabia
Harry Roberts
Jared Tankel**

PARTNERS, MARK MUSIC & MEDIA LAW

With clients including Billie Eilish and FINNEAS, Ice Spice, The Chainsmokers, Benny Blanco, Andrew Watt, Emily Warren, Laufey and writer Amy Allen, Mark Music & Media Law also advises best-selling authors, publishing catalogs, composers and labels. "Despite higher interest rates, catalog transactions continue to grow in scale and frequency," Tankel says. "Our firm remains at the forefront of the business in [negotiating] purchases and sales."

Most pressing issue "The business is still and will always be driven by the creativity and talent of its artists," Tankel says, "but there are more records, platforms and channels to promote and consume, etc., than ever, so it's increasingly important that artist representatives understand the broad scope of the industry."

NICOLE GAUSTRETT/FANES

FLOR BERTOTTI

TOUR 2024

sold out CDMX	sold out SANTIAGO
sold out QUADALAJARA	26/05 SANTIAGO <small>last tickets</small>
sold out MONTERREY	30/06 MADRID <small>last tickets</small>
42/02 MONTERREY	28/08 PANAMA <small>last tickets</small>
sold out PUEBLA	30/08 CARACAS <small>last tickets</small>
17/03 BOGOTA	07/09 MIAMI <small>last tickets</small>
20/03 QUERETARO	sold out BUENOS AIRES
sold out MERIDA	sold out BUENOS AIRES
sold out CDMX	sold out BUENOS AIRES
27/03 TIJUANA	sold out BUENOS AIRES
12/04 PACHUCA <small>last tickets</small>	sold out BUENOS AIRES
14/04 VERACRUZ <small>last tickets</small>	sold out BUENOS AIRES
17/04 TOLUCA <small>last tickets</small>	sold out BUENOS AIRES
19/04 CDMX <small>last tickets</small>	sold out BUENOS AIRES
21/04 TORREON <small>last tickets</small>	sold out BUENOS AIRES
sold out NAPOLI	03/11 SALTA <small>last tickets</small>
sold out NAPOLI	sold out BUENOS AIRES
06/05 BOLOGNA <small>last tickets</small>	sold out BUENOS AIRES
09/05 MILANO <small>last tickets</small>	sold out BUENOS AIRES
12/05 TORINO <small>last tickets</small>	1/12 CORRIENTES <small>last tickets</small>
14/05 ROMA <small>last tickets</small>	7/12 LA PLATA <small>last tickets</small>

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Angela “Angie” N. Martinez

FOUNDER, ANGELA N. MARTINEZ
Martinez counts notable artists in Latin pop and urban music among her clients — Feid, Ozuna, Sebastián Yatra, Luis Fonsi, Ricardo Montaner and María Becerra. Over the past year, she negotiated multimillion-dollar catalog sales on behalf of songwriters Nacho and Gian Marco. “Within the realm of my profession,” Martinez says, “success should not be solely measured by the accomplishments achieved but also by the complexities skillfully navigated and resolved.”

Most pressing issue “As we just saw with the TikTok-Universal face-off, technology services have transformed the landscape of music consumption. Numerous artists contest they are paid just a fraction of a cent per stream, raising concerns about their professional livelihood.”

Gavin Maude
PARTNER/HEAD OF MUSIC, RUSSELLS
Jo Brittain
Simon Esplen
Chris Gossage
Steven Tregear
PARTNERS, RUSSELLS

Advising Coldplay on its *Music of the Spheres* tour, including the band’s ground-breaking sustainability initiatives, ensured another busy 12 months for Russells. The group’s global trek, which started in March 2022 and resumed in summer 2023 with a run of European shows, was the No. 2 tour of the past year and ranks as the second-highest-grossing tour of all time, earning \$807.8 million to date. The London-based firm, which this year celebrates its 50th anniversary, operates at “the cutting edge” of catalog/IP acquisition and sales, Maude says, handling recent deals for clients Primary Wave, Reservoir and Iconic Artists Group, as well as the sale of Guy Chambers’ and David Gray’s rights to Bella Figura Music.

If I quit music, I would “Tie my own [fishing] flies,” Maude says.

James E. McMillan
MANAGING PARTNER, JAMES E. McMILLAN
Last year, Houston artist Odetari ushered in a new subgenre of electronic music he dubbed Odecore, and *Billboard* recognized him as one of the biggest dance artists of 2023. He was No. 1 on *Billboard*’s year-end Top New Dance/Electronic Artists chart and featured by the magazine alongside 6arelyhuman as one of the artists shaping the future of dance music. “After a hot bidding war, my team closed a smart and handsome deal for Odetari with Mike Caren,” founder of Artist Partner Group, says McMillan, who also still runs his independent label, ART@WAR, which boasts artists Cordae, Honey Baby and YBN Nahmir.

Most pressing issue “As consumer attention span becomes shorter due to technology, the need to quantify fair compensation for rights holders becomes more necessary.”

L. Londell McMillan
CHAIRMAN/CEO, THE McMILLAN FIRM
McMillan’s list of clients over the years has included Michael Jackson, Roberta Flack, Isaac Hayes and Chaka Khan, but he’s best known for repping Prince Rogers Nelson. McMillan and Charles Spicer serve as managers for Prince Legacy, one of the two holding companies created to oversee the superstar’s \$156 million estate. In a suit that became public in January, the two allege that four of Prince’s relatives have been improperly trying to force them out of the company. (Primary Wave, which owns the other half of the Prince estate, is not involved in the dispute.) Despite the legal fight, McMillan has been able to keep Prince’s art alive by producing events like the “Celebration” festival (the annual gathering of Prince fans) and the upcoming stage adaptation of the seminal 1984 film musical *Purple Rain*.

Ed McPherson

PARTNER, McPHERSON
Representing top acts across genres — Travis Scott, Justin Timberlake, Kelly Clarkson, Linkin Park, Frank Ocean, Tool, Evanescence, Mick Mars and Chance Peña — McPherson takes pride in guiding his clients through legal complications in their careers. Most recently, he cites the “brutal attacks” that former Mötley Crüe guitarist Mars has experienced. “After founding the band, naming the band and performing with the band for 41 years, [he] has now been unmercifully ejected from the band and all of its corporate entities,” McPherson says.

Most pressing issue “Without a doubt, frivolous lawsuits. Frivolous copyright lawsuits that stifle the creativity of songwriters and frivolous concert-related lawsuits that will ultimately cause ticket prices to increase so significantly that only a select few fans will be able to afford them.”

Kenny Meiselas
PARTNER/HEAD OF MUSIC DEPARTMENT, GRUBMAN SHIRE MEISELAS & SACKS

Larry Shire
PARTNER/HEAD OF FILM, TELEVISION, THEATRE DEPARTMENT, GRUBMAN SHIRE MEISELAS & SACKS

David Jacobs
Joe Brenner

PARTNERS, GRUBMAN SHIRE MEISELAS & SACKS
Meiselas represented Usher for his Super Bowl halftime performance in February, as well as his BMW and Uber Eats commercials for the big game and his subsequent tour and release of his latest album, *Coming Home*. In addition, the firm represents U2, Bruce Springsteen, Mariah Carey, the David Bowie estate, Lady Gaga, J Balvin, Zach Bryan, The Weeknd and many others. For Meiselas, who also produces films and TV shows, the most pressing music business issue is “navigating the new landscape created by the consolidation of the major labels, together with the emergence of new independent labels and distribution companies.”

Advice on AI “The biggest concern for the client,” Meiselas says, “is to make sure that they have creative approvals and get compensated for AI exploitations of their name, likeness and music, similar to the legal protections that have been adopted for samples and music interpolations.”

Mike Milom
David Crow

PARTNERS, MILOM CROW KELLEY BECKETT SHEHAN
The firm, which represents clients including Keith Urban, Carly Pearce, Luke Bryan, Ricky Skaggs and Kelsea Ballerini, was instrumental in Ballerini’s recent extension of her partnership with her longtime label home, Black River. The



Kenny Meiselas of **Grubman Shire Meiselas & Sacks** represented **Usher** for his Super Bowl halftime performance in February, as well as his game-day commercials, upcoming tour and latest album, *Coming Home*.

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Covington’s global music practice offers integrated transactional, intellectual property, litigation, regulatory, and public policy expertise. We congratulate our colleagues Adrian Perry, Neema Sahni, Jonathan Sperling, and Phillip Hill for being recognized by *Billboard* as Top Music Lawyers.



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Phillip Hill
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Learn more at www.cov.com/music

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firm also remains active in catalog sales, representing both buyers and sellers, as well as joint ventures, sponsorships and endorsements. Crow notes that ongoing shifts in the industry include labels no longer performing many of the traditional artist development activities, which fall to other sectors, such as publishers. "This in turn," Crow says, "has impacted deal structures, and newer deals often won't support labels sticking with a new artist for multiple releases, given the economics of the deals."

If I quit law, I would "Play fiddle in a bluegrass band," Crow says.

**Carron Joan Mitchell
Farrah A. Usmani**

PARTNERS, NIXON PEABODY
Mitchell and Usmani have tackled a host of issues for their extensive list of clients, which includes Brent Faiyaz, Childish Gambino, Vince Staples, Cuco, Ari Lennox, Jordan Ward, Earthgang, Dame D.O.L.L.A (aka Damian Lillard), Masego, Earl Sweatshirt, Freddie Gibbs, Fana Hues, Felix Ames, thuy, Rainbow Kitten Surprise, Pussy Riot, Eddie Spear and promoter Outback Presents. Recently, Mitchell negotiated deals for Faiyaz's sold-out worldwide tour, the release of his *Larger Than Life* project and his Apple Music Live deal. Usmani negotiated on behalf of Outback Presents for North American tours by comedians Bert Kreischer, Taylor Tomlinson and Nate Bargatze — three of *Billboard's* top 10 highest-grossing comedy tours of 2023.

Most pressing issue "How all of the label restructurings will impact artists' careers and whether it will be beneficial to developing artists," Mitchell says.

Zia Modabber

**MANAGING PARTNER OF THE LOS ANGELES OFFICES/
CHAIR OF THE ENTERTAINMENT AND MEDIA
LITIGATION PRACTICE, KATTEN**
Modabber's clients include Live Nation, Insomniac, the estate of Michael Jackson, André 3000 and Trent Reznor (who he has worked with for more than two decades). "We handle all of Trent Reznor's Nine Inch Nails, film scoring and entrepreneurial projects, including a number of upcoming ventures," Modabber says. (Two-time Academy Award winners Reznor and Atticus Ross scored the upcoming film *Challengers* starring Zendaya.) "Trent's a creative freak of nature," Modabber adds. "I'm excited for what's coming and proud to be even a small part of it alongside his entire team." For clients concerned about AI, Modabber says, "Have fun with it, just not too much fun — there's lots to figure out to make sure rights aren't trampled."

If I quit law, I would "Figure out how to change my genetics into someone

with legitimate artistic abilities. I am in awe of artists."

**Lisa Moore
Andrew Pequignot**

MANAGING PARTNERS, MOORE PEQUIGNOT
Moore and Pequignot count Cardi B, Offset, Mary J. Blige, YG, Cordae and BlocBoy JB among their clients. Besides guiding that impressive roster, their most notable recent achievements include successfully defending Cardi B in a suit that claimed the rapper violated a California man's rights by photoshopping one of his tattoos onto the cover of her 2016 debut mixtape, *Gangsta Bitch Music, Vol 1*. A jury rejected the claim after just one hour of deliberation. "This was a significant case regarding an artist's First Amendment rights to free expression," Moore says, "and an important lesson about when someone falsely tries to claim credit for a talent's hard work and success."

If I quit law, I would "Spend more time reading, running and traveling," Moore says.

Jeffrey Movit

HEAD OF LITIGATION, CHAUDHRYLAW
Movit joined ChaudhryLaw in September, following recognition in the last two Top Music Lawyers lists at Mitchell Silberberg & Knupp. He is counsel for all of

the defendants, including client Playboi Carti, in a suit that alleges violation of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act. In August, Movit obtained an order requiring the plaintiff and his counsel to pay attorneys' fees to Movit's clients. (Movit notes that his clients have since moved for dismissal of the action "as a matter of summary judgment.") In addition to Carti, other clients include Polo G, G Herbo, Dr. Luke and Ronald Isley.
Advice on AI "I urge everyone to actually use AI platforms — and not merely read about them — so that we can truly understand the problems and opportunities we face as an industry."

Aliya Nelson

PARTNER, GREENSPOON MARDER
**Sandra Brown
Alan Clarke
Jerry Juste
Kendall Minter**

OF COUNSEL, GREENSPOON MARDER
(POSTHUMOUS HONOR)
Greenspoon Marder negotiated with TriStar Pictures for a project focused on Sugarhill Gang's seminal 1979 single, "Rapper's Delight," and is also negotiating a theatrical rights deal to bring the story behind the song to Broadway. The firm represented Lecrae in connection with his Grammy-winning Christian album

Church Clothes 4 and counseled a company that creates Web3 content and applications for T.I. and The Trap Museum, Cee Lo Green and more. Last year, the firm suffered a great loss when Minter, 71, died Dec. 6 in Atlanta. Among his last major transactions was negotiating the June sale by George Brown, the founding band member and drummer of Kool & The Gang, of his stake in the group's catalog ("Celebration," "Jungle Boogie," "Get Down on It") to Primary Wave, working in association with the band's longtime attorney, Ken Abdo.

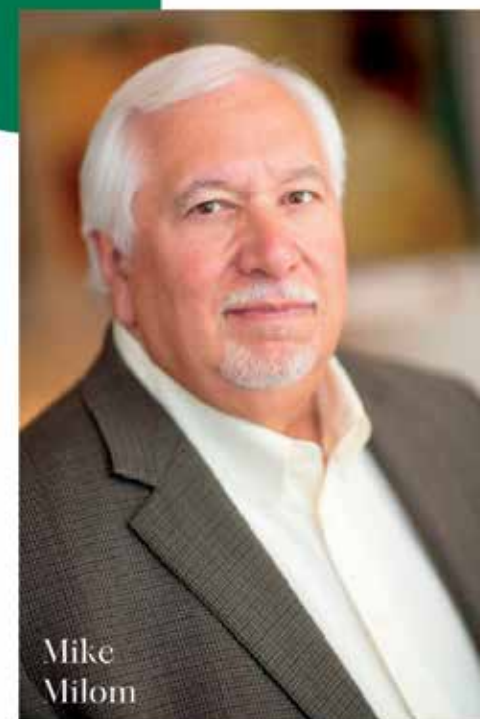
Matt Oppenheim

MANAGING PARTNER, OPPENHEIM + ZEBRAK
Scott Zebrak
CO-FOUNDING PARTNER, OPPENHEIM + ZEBRAK
**Jeff Gould
Alex Kaplan**

PARTNERS, OPPENHEIM + ZEBRAK
On behalf of Universal Music Group, Concord Music Group and ABKCO Music, Oppenheim + Zebrak filed a complaint in federal court in October against AI platform Anthropic, claiming it was unlawfully copying and disseminating copyrighted works to train AI models, including its assistant, Claude, to generate new lyrics. "Anthropic must not be allowed to flout copyright law," the complaint states. Zebrak says the case, which has become a key legal battle



Trent Reznor has been a client for over two decades of attorney **Zia Modabber** of the the law firm **Katten**, which handles his Nine Inch Nails, film scoring and entrepreneurial projects.



Mike Milom



David Crow

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over the future of AI music, has been “moved for a preliminary injunction.” The firm is also continuing to litigate against internet service providers over subscribers’ unlawful uploading and downloading of music after the U.S. Court of Appeals overturned a \$1 billion verdict in February.

Most pressing issue “Protecting the rights of music copyright owners, and the value of music, in a digital environment,” Zebrak says.

**Don Passman
Ethan Schiffres**

PARTNERS, GANG TYRE RAMER BROWN & PASSMAN

Gene Salomon

MANAGING PARTNER, GANG TYRE RAMER BROWN & PASSMAN

The Beverly Hills, Calif., firm had a busy year, overseeing the sale of superstar Cher’s catalog to Iconic Artists Group, as well as handling P!nk’s ongoing world tour and Green Day’s *Saviors* stadium run, which will launch in the United States in July. The firm also handled legal matters for such clients as Taylor Swift, whose The Eras Tour continues through 2024; as well as Adele, Neil Diamond and award-winning composer Ludwig Göransson. Among the issues facing the music business that concern Salomon are “those trying to game the streaming ecosystem,” as well as “tech platforms trying to devalue music rights.”

Advice on AI “AI can be a great tool in the hands of creators, but it can also be abused to undermine art and artists,” Salomon says. “Artists need to lead the charge to ensure their futures and the future of music.”

Adrian Perry

PARTNER/CO-CHAIR OF ENTERTAINMENT AND MEDIA INDUSTRY GROUP/CO-CHAIR MUSIC INDUSTRY GROUP, COVINGTON & BURLING

Neema Sahni

PARTNER/CO-CHAIR OF ENTERTAINMENT AND MEDIA INDUSTRY GROUP/CO-CHAIR MUSIC INDUSTRY GROUP/CO-CHAIR OF COMMERCIAL LITIGATION PRACTICE/VICE CHAIR OF SPORTS INDUSTRY GROUP, COVINGTON & BURLING

Jonathan Sperling

PARTNER/CHAIR OF MUSIC INDUSTRY GROUP, COVINGTON & BURLING

Phillip Hill

SPECIAL COUNSEL, COVINGTON & BURLING



Last August, Iconic Artists Group acquired **Cher’s** full interest in her past sound recordings and compositions in a deal negotiated by **Gang Tyre Ramer Brown & Passman**.

Covington & Burling counts among its clients Sony Music Entertainment, Downtown Music, Global Music Rights, SESAC, TIDAL/Block, the National Music Publishers’ Association, LiveCo and Futureverse. The lattermost, a leader in AI and metaverse technology applications, has called on the firm for assistance in navigating some of the murkier legal matters related to fully licensed music-generation models. “You’ll get ‘taxed’ on what you don’t know,” Hill says. “For each use case, you need to understand what’s going on under the hood for the AI model or deployment at issue — or find someone who does.”

Most pressing issue “Data — from ownership to usage to royalties and reporting, data is a long-standing, global issue,” Hill says. “Ongoing progress in standardization, sharing and transparency will likely bring old issues to a

head, new issues to light and innovative solutions to market.”

Daniel Petrocelli

TRIAL PRACTICE CHAIR/FIRM VICE CHAIR, O’MELVENY & MYERS

David Marroso

GENERAL LITIGATION PRACTICE HEAD, O’MELVENY & MYERS

**Terrence Dugan
Leah Godesky**

PARTNERS, O’MELVENY & MYERS

Since 2016, the firm has represented Kesha in a defamation lawsuit brought by producer Lukasz “Dr. Luke” Gottwald, whom she had accused of sexual misconduct. Last June, the New York Court of Appeals ruled that Dr. Luke was a “public figure” and he would need to prove that Kesha had acted with “actual malice” when she made her accusations. The two reached a confidential settlement on June 22, “just

days after we secured a series of key pre-trial appellate wins for Kesha that seismically shifted the trial’s legal landscape,” Godesky says. The two issued a joint statement in which Kesha said she “cannot recount everything that happened” while Dr. Luke maintained that he was “absolutely certain that nothing happened.” The firm is also the legal adviser for clients including Travis Scott, Global Music Rights and Liberty SiriusXM Group.

Tabetha Plummer

FOUNDER, PLUMMER LAW GROUP

Plummer made a name for herself representing Grammy-winning R&B singers Ledisi and Anthony Hamilton and producer Rex Rideout, as well as making brand-expanding moves for NFL great Deion Sanders and *Power* star Omari Hardwick. Her biggest recent win was for longtime client Adam Blackstone. Not only did Plummer negotiate a deal for his first holiday album, *A Legacy Christmas*, released in November, but she also “secured his pivotal music director role in Super Bowl LVIII, featuring Andra Day, Reba McEntire and the Usher halftime show,” she says. Plummer also assisted Blackstone with his upcoming Broadway production of *The Wiz* and guided Alicia Keys in moving forward with her new musical, *Hell’s Kitchen*.

If I quit law, I would “Travel the world taking photos.”

Michael Poster

PARTNER-IN-CHARGE/MUSIC ACQUISITIONS AND FINANCING CHAIR, MICHELMAN & ROBINSON

Last May, Poster helped facilitate a deal between Sony Music Group and longtime client and music executive Barry Weiss for a 50/50 partnership in RECORDS, the label Weiss co-founded in 2015. Weiss’ former partners, Matt Pincus and Ron Perry, were bought out for a reported \$100 million valuation, and Weiss will now run the label (which sources have said generated about \$20 million in revenue in 2022) with chart-toppers like 24kGoldn and Noah Cyrus. Poster also represented Weiss in negotiations for Bossy Songs, his new publishing venture with Sony Music Publishing. Poster says the two deals are “a prime example of how we bring together our extensive experience in the music industry with our sophisticated transactional practice.”

Most pressing issue “Streaming fraud, including the theft of streaming income, the manipulation of streaming data and the scamming of young artists into spending their limited budgets on shady streaming promoters.”

PIERRE SQUERITY IMAGES



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Attorney Elliot Resnik of **Raines Feldman Littrell** shared in the Grammy night celebration with his client **Killer Mike** — and aided the rapper after he was briefly detained that evening following an alleged altercation with a security guard.

tion of Voices of Mississippi, which he describes as “an immersive multimedia experience and concert event that celebrates the people and art of the Southern blues, gospel and storytelling traditions.” To take it on the road, “I helped organize the project by handling contracts and licensing,” Ramsey says. The show held two tours in the United States in 2023, with a European run scheduled for later in 2024.

Rollin Ransom

PARTNER/CO-LEADER OF GLOBAL ENTERTAINMENT, SPORTS AND MEDIA PRACTICE; GLOBAL COMMERCIAL LITIGATION AND DISPUTES PRACTICE/MANAGING PARTNER OF THE LOS ANGELES OFFICE, SIDLEY AUSTIN

Matthew Thompson

PARTNER/CO-LEADER OF GLOBAL ENTERTAINMENT, SPORTS AND MEDIA PRACTICE, SIDLEY AUSTIN

Sidley Austin represented client Warner Music Group in a joint venture with Elliot Grainge’s 10K Projects, home to artists such as Trippie Redd and Ice Spice (before Spice moved under the umbrella of Capitol Music Group). As part of the deal, 10K is now a stand-alone label “within the WMG ecosystem,” Thompson says. Launched by Grainge in 2016, 10K makes the switch from Universal Music Group to join Atlantic Records and Warner Records among WMG’s

Elliot Resnik

PARTNER OF MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT, RAINES FELDMAN LITRELL

While Resnik cites “joining up with [law partner] Andy Tavel and the team at Raines Feldman Littrell” as a highlight of his year, he’s most proud of his client Killer Mike, whose album *Michael* netted three Grammy Awards in February, including best rap album. “I handled the record deal with Loma Vista and the publishing deal with Reservoir, as well as handling all rights and clearances, producer and artist deals,” says Resnik — who came to Killer Mike’s aid when the rapper was detained by police after his Grammy wins. “I couldn’t be happier for Mike and the team,” says Resnik, whose clients also include the National Independent Venue Association and the All Things Go music festival.

If I quit law, I would “Have smoking barbecue backstage at music festivals and [in] Montauk [on New York’s Long Island] in between surf or fishing sessions.”

Adam Ritholz
Jeff Levy
Chip Petree

PARTNERS, RITHOLZ LEVY FIELDS

At Ritholz Levy Fields — whose clients include acts from Brothers Osborne to *NSYNC and Robert Plant — a highlight of the past year has been the firm’s continued relationship with “Whiskey and You” singer Chris Stapleton. “I’m very proud of the work we have done to thoughtfully extend Chris Stapleton’s brand presence, especially with his recent collaboration with Buffalo Trace Distillery for [his own] Traveller Whiskey,” Petree says. And beyond the country sensation, Petree raises a shot of Tennessee whiskey to partner Ritholz: “[He] and I have continued to expand the firm’s presence in the catalog market by handling a number of high-profile catalog and music-rights sales, [including] several acquisitions for Primary Wave.”

If I quit law, I would “Go back to work year-round for my childhood summer camp on the North Carolina coast,” Petree says.

Carlos Rodriguez-Feliz

FOUNDER/MANAGING PARTNER, RODRIGUEZ FELIZ

Rodriguez-Feliz — who counts RaiNao, Rapeton Approved, Villano Antillano, Young Miko and Súbelo NEO as clients — says that leading the renegotiation of reggaeton duo Zion & Lennox’s publishing deal with Sony Music Publishing in December was a highlight for the firm. In September, Zion & Lennox — who recorded reggaeton hits including “Yo Voy,” “Bandida” and more from the genre’s first explosion in the mid-2000s — struck

Berkeley Reinhold

PRESIDENT, REINHOLD GLOBAL

Reinhold has a long history with Lollapalooza, the music festival created by Jane’s Addiction frontman Perry Farrell. She first signed on as the festival’s general counsel in 2003, and in 2011 she helped the brand expand into international markets like Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Germany and France. Lollapalooza’s annual Chicago event remains successful, according to promoter C3 Presents. She took on a new role in 2024 as a producer of the documentary *Lolla: The Story of Lollapalooza*, which premiered at the 2024 Sundance Film Festival and will be released on Paramount+ later this year. Notably for an attorney focused on the festival business, Reinhold describes the most pressing issue facing the music business in two words: “climate change.”

If I quit law, I would “Improve my French.”

Bon Jovi, which is about to release its 16th studio album, *Forever*, in June, is a Reed Smith client. The firm also represents The Smashing Pumpkins, Korn, Megadeth, Kesha, Lil Uzi Vert, Linda Perry, Glen Ballard and the companies Kobalt, Lyric, Shamrock, Seeker and YG Entertainment (Blackpink). Reed Smith represented Concord in the purchase of the Round Hill Music Royalty Fund in a deal valued at \$469 million.

Most pressing issue “Fair compensation and revenue distribution for artists, particularly in the digital streaming era,” Sessa says. “With the shift from physical sales to streaming platforms, artists often struggle to earn a fair income from their music due to complex royalty structures and the dominance of streaming services. This issue has sparked debates and discussions about how to reform the system to ensure that artists receive fair compensation for their work in the digital age.”

William Ramsey

MEMBER, NEAL & HARWELL

Among the clients that Nashville-based Ramsey “handled matters for” recently are Garth Brooks, Taylor Swift, Tim McGraw, Chris Young, Kane Brown and Tanya Tucker. “I also represent several music business managers, financial managers, talent agents, publishers and labels in a variety of litigation matters,” he says. However, he is most proud of his ongoing work with the produc-

Edwin J. Prado Galarza

OWNER/CEO/ATTORNEY AT LAW, PRADO LAW OFFICES

Prado’s client list boasts stars of reggaeton including Daddy Yankee, Anuel AA, Darell and Nio Garcia, as well as Ricardo Arjona and Romeo Santos. He recently negotiated publishing agreements with Kobalt for emerging composer-producer Angel Sandoval (Peso Pluma, Grupo Firme) and producer-composer BASSY (Eladio Carrion’s “3MEN2 KBRN”). Prado was the lead attorney in executive Raphy Pina’s appeal of a firearms conviction and is representing both Real Hasta la Muerte (Anuel AA’s label) in a complaint against basketball team Los Capitanes de Arecibo and producer Boy Wonder in a breach-of-contract civil dispute with artist Jon Z.

Advice on AI “It is important to note that we can coexist in an industry that respects and nourishes the creativity and individuality of each musician, producer and artist while using AI to push the boundaries of music.”

Gregor Pryor

MANAGING PARTNER, EUROPE AND MIDDLE EAST, REED SMITH

Steve Sessa

PARTNER/CO-CHAIR OF THE ENTERTAINMENT AND MEDIA INDUSTRY GROUP, REED SMITH

Josh Love

Eric Marder

Ed Shapiro

PARTNERS, REED SMITH

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- ★ Michael Reinert
- ★ Leron Rogers
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a deal for co-management by Walter Kolm's WK Entertainment and producer Andres Castro's Hits Don't Lie.

Most pressing issue "The compensation for rights owners from the streaming platforms as well as from social media, which have millions of users that [incorporate] music into their content. Although it is not music business-related, another issue artists face is mental health. Not many are aware and willing to seek help when needed."

Angela M. Rogers

FOUNDER/OWNER, ROGERS LAW GROUP

Rogers' client Mass Appeal played a key role in last year's 50th-anniversary celebration of hip-hop. The multimedia firm owns the HipHop 50 trademark and, under Rogers' guidance, partnered with MLB for a livestream concert at Yankee Stadium starring legends such as Kurtis Blow, Slick Rick, Lil' Kim, Snoop Dogg and Run-DM.C. Mass Appeal also produced the immersive exhibit "Hip Hop 11

Infinity." Rogers — whose roster includes Tink, Nardo Wick and Jay Electronica — says copyright infringement remains a major challenge. Noting the tug of war between Universal Music Group and TikTok, she says, "A balance between the two needs to happen soon so that creators aren't the ones who suffer the most here."

Advice on AI "Be proactive in this new space. AI's not going anywhere, so find a way to rethink your role as a creator and as an artist."

Nick Rosenberg

PARTNER, NOLAN HELMANN

At Nolan Helmann, Rosenberg — who represents rapper IDK and beatmaker Mario Luciano — has been handling deals for immersive experiences for companies like Audio Anthem. He's in the process of clearing rights for one band that has its masters, film, trademarks and publishing with different companies. "With immersive, there's

going to be a lot more music being exploited in that arena," he says. "Every immersive experience does have that musical component to it. It's a hard business. There are so many different stakeholders involved and real estate issues, but it's exciting."

Most pressing issue "The divide between the haves and have-nots in the music business. The way the system is set up, it's much harder for there to be working artists who are making a good living and have some success and can sustain it for their whole lives."

**Oswaldo Rossi
John R. Baldivia**

PARTNERS, ROSSI

Rossi and Baldivia have positioned themselves at the forefront of Latin music, representing artists such as Karol G, Rauw Alejandro, Peso Pluma, Noah Assad and Juan Luis Guerra. Baldivia's involvement in high-profile deals, like Karol G's *Mañana Será Bonito* tour with Live Nation and MAG's producer agreements with Bad Bunny's *Nadie Sabe lo Que Va a Pasar Mañana* are highlights of his recent work. The firm has served as outside counsel for Rancho Humilde, Double P, Rich Music and Seitrack.

Advice on AI "For now, the best thing to do is to pay close attention to the technological developments and how AI can be used as a tool for your music creation," Baldivia says, "because the business side of AI is still a moving target."

Daniel Schacht

PARTNER, DONAHUE FITZGERALD

Schacht's clients include Carlos Santana, Missy Elliott, Barry Mann, Mary Bono and the estate of Malik Taylor (aka Phife Dawg of A Tribe Called Quest). Most recently, his firm handled Santana's legal work for the documentary *Carlos*, released through Sony Classics, which premiered on streaming platforms in September. The firm is also representing former congresswoman Bono, widow of the late Sonny Bono, in the *Cher v. Bono* litigation regarding copyright terminations. Meanwhile, Schacht is watching the live space. "The success of *ABBA Voyage* shows how live music can be transformed through technology while building on a very traditional artist-audience connection," he says. "Lawyers will be there to make sure artists retain and enforce their rights and avoid exploitation in a new medium."

If I quit law, I would "Run a small restaurant and music venue."

John Seay

OWNER, THE SEAY FIRM

Seay, who was previously recognized on Top Music Lawyers in 2022 as a member of Carter + Woodard, has since

set up his own shop that represents artists in genres spanning from hip-hop to country to rock. Clients including the estate of Russell Tyrone Jones (Wu-Tang Clan's Ol' Dirty Bastard), Rylo Rodriguez, Faye Webster and Lakeyah look to Seay for legal expertise. A recent notable success was "working to support the team around [rapper] That Mexican OT as his career began to take off in the last year, including clearance of *Lonestar Luchador*, which contains the RIAA-certified gold single 'Johnny Dang,'" Seay says.

Most pressing issue "The challenge for talent representatives is to help their clients develop and diversify their revenue streams to supplement income from streaming, which is minimal for the vast majority of artists."

Michael Selverne

MANAGING PARTNER, SELVERNE BRADFORD

Selverne's list of clients includes the Spin Doctors, Cheap Trick's Bun E. Carlos (while also serving as co-counsel to Cheap Trick) and, on the corporate level, Alibi Music. Additionally, Selverne is active in the music asset marketplace, often representing institutions in financing, due diligence and business affairs for contemplated acquisitions. Last year, he was involved in one of the biggest music asset deals, providing legal representation to client Round Hill Music Group in the sale of its publicly traded Round Hill Music Royalty Fund to Concord for \$469 million. He also led Round Hill's acquisition of producer Steve Lillywhite's royalties and buying the copyrights and songwriter royalties of Craig Wiseman, as well as its deal to buy Canadian record company and music publisher Linus Entertainment.

Robert Sherman

CO-CHAIR OF ENTERTAINMENT FINANCE, DLA PIPER

Sherman's firm counts among its clients Concord, HarbourView Equity Partners, MultiMedia Music, Secretly Group, Bella Figura Music and Gold State Music, and he praises his team as a "leader in the burgeoning arena of music securitizations." In December 2022, the firm closed a \$1.8 billion music rights securitization for Concord. This was followed by an additional \$500 million issuance in 2023 to finance Concord's acquisition of Round Hill Music Royalty Fund — including songs by Alice in Chains, Bruno Mars and Louis Armstrong — in a deal valued at \$469 million. Amid the rise of AI, he cautions clients to "prepare yourself to find ways to create value through AI while maintaining control of your copyrights."

If I quit law, I would "Be a lounge singer."

KEVIN MAZUR/GETTY IMAGES

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We are proud to congratulate **Christine Lepera** for being named 2024 Lawyer of the Year on *Billboard's* 2024 "Top Music Lawyers" list!

We also extend our congratulations to our colleagues **Eric German, Bradley Mullins, and David Steinberg,** and their fellow honorees, for their recognition on the 2024 list.

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2024 Lawyer of the Year
Christine Lepera
Partner, New York

Eric German
Partner, Los Angeles

Bradley Mullins
Partner, Los Angeles

David Steinberg
Partner, Los Angeles

Music fuels my passions. It's what drives me. I use that passion to assist Music Creators as best as I can.

WSE
WIGGINS SPORTS & ENTERTAINMENT

MSE

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Jodie Shihadeh

FOUNDER/OWNER, SHIHADAH LAW

Shihadeh Law's negotiations sent its clients' music far and wide in 2023 as the firm established a global distribution infrastructure for Steve Aoki's Dim Mak Records and handled agreements for Two Friends' 2023 headlining tour, which included stops at Coachella and Fortnite's FNCS Global Championship halftime show in Copenhagen. Shihadeh negotiated the use of Jamaican dancehall artist Shenseea's music on the soundtracks to *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse*, *The Color Purple* and *Bob Marley: One Love*. Endorsement deals also topped the firm's accomplishments, with Shihadeh securing them for Two Friends with Smirnoff, Wendy's, Celsius fitness drinks, DraftKings and Olipop; she did the same for Shenseea with H&M and Captain Morgan.

If I quit law, I would "Run my family's three-generation business importing Oriental rugs from across the Middle East and India and expand it."

Shardé Simpson Ciara Reed

CO-FOUNDERS, SIMPSON & REED

Simpson says the firm "specializes in getting startup companies, specifically record labels and distributors, off the ground and running smoothly." Representing a wide range of clients that includes artists Meek Mill, Jimmie Allen and Vic Mensa and labels Desi Trill Music and Dream Chaser Records (established by Mill), the firm is dedicated to helping artists and labels build their empires. "Simpson & Reed assisted with the formation of Desi Trill Music," Simpson says, "a newly formed record label, as well as music genre, co-founded by Shabz Naqvi and Tyran 'TyTy' Smith, co-founder of Roc Nation. Desi Trill is a fusion of South Asian and hip-hop music from both the United States and London." Universal Music Group distributes the label.

Simran A. Singh

FOUNDER/MANAGING PARTNER,

SINGH SINGH & TRAUBEN

Michael A. Trauben

FOUNDER/PARTNER, SINGH SINGH & TRAUBEN

Christopher Navarro

PARTNER, SINGH SINGH & TRAUBEN

Singh and his partners represent major stars in Latin urban music, including Ozuna, Natti Natasha, DJ Nelson and Jay Wheeler. Their A-list roster also includes reggaetón superstar Daddy Yankee, whom they advised throughout his top-grossing *La Última Vuelta* world tour, which raked in \$197.8 million and landed at No. 27 on Billboard Boxscore's 2023 year-end Top 40 Tours chart. Daddy Yankee's farewell trek — which he announced in March 2022 along with



The attorneys at Singh Singh & Trauben advised Daddy Yankee on his top-grossing *La Última Vuelta* world tour.

the news of his retirement — culminated with *La Meta*, a series of four back-to-back shows at the Coliseo de Puerto Rico José Miguel Agrelot, with his final concert scheduled for Dec. 3.

Most pressing issue "Many artists argue that the current streaming model disproportionately benefits record labels and streaming services over the creators themselves," Singh says. "Addressing this issue requires industrywide discussions and potential reforms to ensure that artists receive fair compensation for their work."

Alex Spiro

PARTNER, QUINN EMANUEL URQUHART & SULLIVAN

Spiro is a nationally prominent attorney who has represented Jay-Z, Megan Thee Stallion and Elon Musk, among others. In late 2023, he was identified as the representative for collectibles website Gotta Have Rock and Roll in its dispute with the Michael Jackson estate over unreleased studio recordings. Last July, it was reported that Jay-Z's Team ROC — Roc Nation's philanthropic and social justice division — had hired Spiro to get charges dropped against a Wisconsin man who was arrested after police mistakenly believed he was involved in a hit-and-run crash. Videos posted to social media appear to show a white officer punching the Black man, Jermelle English Jr. Spiro was previously chosen for the Top Music Lawyers list after he represented Megan Thee Stallion in connection with her being shot by Tory Lanez. He has also been among the attorneys calling for a ban on the use of rap lyrics as evidence in criminal prosecutions.

Brian Steel

FOUNDER, THE STEEL LAW FIRM

Steel, a veteran criminal defense attorney in Georgia, is representing Young Thug in the racketeering trial in Atlanta

over allegations that the rapper and others operated a violent gang called YSL for years. The music industry is closely watching the case because of prosecutors' controversial use of Young Thug's music as evidence against him. "The fight against the prosecution's wrongful use of rap lyrics and music videos is so critical to our case and others like it," Steel says. "The government targets innocent people without understanding the culture and dynamics of this multi-billion-dollar industry or the artists who perform therein."

Advice on AI "I focus on criminal defense and the false information on public domains [that] can be wrongly used in investigations and prosecutions, and all must be prepared to unmask these falsities with proper expert analysis."

Stanton "Larry" Stein

PARTNER/HEAD OF MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT

GROUP, RUSS AUGUST & KABAT

Irene Y. Lee

Ashley R. Yeargan

PARTNERS, RUSS AUGUST & KABAT

The firm's clients include Drake, Post Malone, DJ Khaled, 21 Savage, the estates of Juice WRLD and Donna Summer, and organizations including Songwriters of North America. Stein says the firm has been defending Drake and his companies in multiple proceedings, including the defense of over 1,000 suits resulting from his appearance at Travis Scott's ill-fated 2021 Astroworld concert. (A motion earlier in March argued that Drake should not be named in those suits, as he did not play a part in planning the event.) During the past 18 months, the firm has managed over 5,000 brands and related rights in its role as "protecting, enforcing and managing intellectual property portfolios for artists such as Mariah Carey, Mary J. Blige, Cardi B, deadmau5, The Kid LAROI, Mick Fleet-

wood, Tyga and iann dior," as well as label and company clients, Stein says.

Rachel Stilwell

OWNER, STILWELL LAW

Stilwell Law's clients include LeAnn Rimes, who in 1997 became the youngest Grammy Award winner for best new artist. With 15 studio albums under her belt, she still holds that distinction. Other clients are Grammy nominees AI B. Sure! (best known for his top 10 1988 hit, "Nite and Day") and Noel Schajris (an Argentine Mexican singer-songwriter-pianist), songwriters Darrell Brown (who has written nearly 50 songs recorded by Rimes) and Andre Merritt, MusicFIRST Coalition, Wolff Audio and Lyte Inc. With Dan Lifschitz at Johnson & Johnson, Stilwell Law negotiated a settlement in a breach-of-contract action for nonpayment of royalties to client Tek O'Ryan.

Most pressing issue "Congress must pass legislation in live-event ticketing that protects fans against deceptive practices from powerful primary/secondary ticket sellers and scalpers while recognizing that artists should be rewarded for having created the demand for tickets in the first place."

Michael Sukin

PRESIDENT, SUKIN LAW GROUP

Besides representing artists including The Rolling Stones, Beastie Boys and Sir Mix-a-Lot, Sukin has gathered a list of achievements including developing a unique approach to policing unauthorized use of the names and likenesses of major artists, resulting in substantial benefit to asset value and monetization. He also negotiated unprecedented agency representation agreements for major Broadway musicals on behalf of rights holders and initiated the development of an annual live event for a legacy artist with worldwide fans to help with continued visibility and income.

Advice on AI "AI is a developing area, both legally and functionally. It's important to learn everything one can about this area as it applies to one's business. Unfortunately, there are still no clear legal guidelines for guard rails. Proceed with caution, but don't hesitate to vigorously protect your intellectual property."

Ron Sweeney

FOUNDER, RON SWEENEY AND COMPANY

Sweeney, who prefers not to name his clients, is known to have worked with James Brown, Jimmy Jam & Terry Lewis, Swizz Beatz, Lil Wayne, Clarence Avant, Tabu Records, Young Money Records, Easy E and Ruthless Records, Sean Combs and Bad Boy Records, Irv Gotti, Murder Inc., Public Enemy, DMX, Ja Rule, Morris Day, The Time, Klymaxx and Kool & The Gang, among others. As

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Paul Fakler on being
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industry-leading work at the
intersection of music, technology
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the music industry navigates the rise of AI, Sweeney has more of a positive spin, urging creators and executives to “keep an open mind.” He says, “There will be ways to monetize AI to the benefit of the artist who owns and controls their name and likeness and the copyrights to their music.” The 45-year industry veteran believes the bigger challenge is “how to break new acts” when it comes to cultivating younger talent.

Most pressing issue “I’m not focused on the advance. I’m focused on the [deal] structure,” Sweeney said in a recent podcast interview. “My goal for my clients is to own equity so that when they decide to retire, they’ve got an asset that they can sell.”

José Juan Torres

MANAGING MEMBER, TORRES

With offices in Puerto Rico and New York, Torres represents superstars such as Bad Bunny and Rauw Alejandro, as well as Residente and Eduardo Cabra, and music companies like The Wave Music Group. While Torres wouldn’t name the players, he cites as a recent highlight of his work an “intricate, triangular” transaction concerning the acquisition of specific rights from an independent label that “included influential figures in the current music scene and is poised to influence the direction of the music industry for the next seven to 10 years.”

Seth Traxler

PARTNER, KIRKLAND & ELLIS

Specializing in global technology and IP transactions, Traxler says the firm’s focus has been “helping various clients navigate the shifting catalog-sale market, including acquisition work, and the creation and funding of new vehicles to pursue opportunities” with an emphasis on “new technologies to expand their musical reach.” Clients include Hipgnosis, Blackstone, Metallica and Kobalt. For Universal Music Group, Kirkland & Ellis provided counsel in February for the acquisition of a 25.8% interest in Chord Music Partners for \$240 million. UMG will now handle distribution and publishing administration for Chord’s catalog, which features more than 60,000 copyrights, such as stakes in songs like “Dreams” and “Landslide” by Fleetwood Mac, “Girls Like You” and “Sugar” by Maroon 5 and “Halo” by Beyoncé.

Most pressing issue “Expand the pie aggressively and divide it fairly.”

David Vodicka

FOUNDING PARTNER, MEDIA ARTS LAWYERS

Rob Glass
Julian Hewitt
Stephen King
Marcus Walkom

PARTNERS, MEDIA ARTS LAWYERS

Based in Melbourne, Australia, Media Arts Lawyers worked on over \$50 million in mergers and acquisitions in the past 18 months, including BMG’s catalog acquisition of chart-topping Australian band Jet. The firm boasts clients including Tame Impala, Dom Dolla, Rūfūs Du Sol, Timmy Trumpet, Kylie Minogue, Ruel, Gotye, OneFour and Tones and I, as well as festival promoters, record labels and entertainment companies such as Onelove, Future Classic, Untitled Group, Select Music and BenchMob. Today, artists have a plethora of options for their music, so “an artist’s team must identify their specific goals,” Vodicka says, “and needs to ensure the resources on offer from prospective suitors will support and strengthen the artist’s trajectory in both the short term and long term.”

James L. Walker Jr.

PRESIDENT, WALKER & ASSOCIATES

In a 30-year career, Walker has represented an array of iconic artists across pop, R&B, hip-hop, gospel and jazz including Aretha Franklin, Vicki Winans, DMX (and now his estate), Miki Howard, Freddie Jackson, the late Rick James and Shirley Caesar. (Walker’s firm also has advised leaders of the civil rights movement including Andrew Young, the Rev. Jesse Jackson and the families of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X and Dick Gregory.) Walker fielded notable cases this past year involving copyright infringement, settling the high-profile case of Take 6 v. H.E.R. over the latter’s song “Could’ve Been” (featuring Bryson Tiller), and winning a case of trademark infringement levied against Marvin “Slim” Scandrick of R&B group 112.

Previn Warren

TECH AND MEDIA LITIGATOR, MOTLEY RICE

As Motley Rice’s tech and media litigator, Warren is part of a team working for performing rights organization SESAC “in representing its interests, and the interests of its affiliated publishers and songwriters, in an arbitration seeking to increase the license fees owed by commercial radio stations represented by the Radio Music License Committee,” he says. Touching on a perennial point of concern, Warren says, “It is long past time to eliminate terrestrial radio’s unfair and unneeded exemption from paying sound-recording royalties.”

Most pressing issue “Social media companies and websites that host deepfake content are immune from accountability because of an outdated liability shield, Section 230. Creators and their representatives should make clear to Congress that the time for Section 230 reform is now.”



Australian firm **Media Arts Lawyers** represents *Billboard*’s 2024 Women in Music Icon Award winner **Kylie Minogue**.

Douglas Wigdor

FOUNDING PARTNER, WIGDOR

Michael J. Willemin

PARTNER, WIGDOR

Much of the Wigdor firm’s activity in 2023 stemmed from the passage of the Adult Survivor’s Act. The company represented singer Cassie Ventura in her sex trafficking and assault lawsuit against Sean “Diddy” Combs, alleging years of physical abuse. “We are proud to have represented Ms. Ventura in her lawsuit,” Willemin says. “In speaking out, Ms. Ventura gave other victims the strength to also come forward with their stories.” The parties settled the suit the day after it was filed. The firm’s other clients are Model Alliance founder Sara Ziff, actress Julia Ormond, sports journalist Jim Trotter and former New York Knick Charles Oakley.

Most pressing issue “Continuing the push for diversity and inclusion for all under-represented persons and musicians,” Willemin says.

Marcus Wiggins

FOUNDER/OWNER, WIGGINS SPORTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Wiggins’ clients range from dancehall legend Cutty Ranks and Chopmaster J, the surviving founding member of Digital Underground, to concert promoter WorldOne Presents and record label Bully Park. “I want to do as much as I possibly can for artists and musicians,” says the Sacramento, Calif.-based Wiggins. He fulfills this goal by finding and claiming rightful retroactive royalties for musicians,

enforcing and protecting copyrights and trademarks, and reviewing music clearance requests. Wiggins says he’s in the process of retrieving past royalties for several musicians through SoundExchange and negotiating a major-label contract for Kstylis, the Missouri-based rapper known as the “King of Twerk.”

Most pressing issue “The streaming companies are raking in billions, but the artists, the people responsible for actually making the music, are woefully underpaid and unappreciated. This is why I have participated in the Recording Academy’s advocacy efforts since 2016.”

Richard Wolfe

FOUNDER, WOLFE LAW MIAMI

Based in Miami, Wolfe lists among his firm’s clients “29 defendant artists in the dembow case,” including Carlos Vives, Maluma and Wisin & Yandel. Scores of different artists who use the dembow rhythm — the beat at the core of reggaetón — are defendants in a suit brought by lawyers for Jamaican duo Steely & Cleve, who claim use of the rhythm violates the copyright on the pair’s 1989 song “Fish Market.” Wolfe also works with boy band Why Don’t We and hip-hop label Lil Joe Records. He highlights his company’s work on Lil Joe’s “groundbreaking Section 230 copyright termination case,” which is pending in federal court in Miami.

Most pressing issue “The inverse relationship between the need for legal documentation and the financial ability to hire competent lawyers.”


CONGRATULATIONS JOSH KAMEN

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Billboard’s 2024


TOP MUSIC LAWYERS

The Law Offices of
Joshua A. Kamen, P.C.


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GUY BLAKE



ELIZABETH MOODY




COLIN MORRISSEY



LYNN GONZALEZ

CONGRATULATIONS TO
**DAMIEN GRANDERSON, GUY BLAKE, ELIZABETH MOODY,
COLIN MORRISSEY & LYNN GONZALEZ**

for being named among Billboard’s “Top Music Lawyers 2024”.



Andrea Yankovsky

FOUNDER, YANKOVSKY LAW
Yankovsky has her sights set on battling copyright infringement on streaming platforms: "Fake accounts using artist or indie-label names" filled with a "deluge" of AI-generated content. Some of her clients have faced revenue losses of up to \$180,000 due to infringement, she says, but the firm has developed an effective strategy to stave off these attacks with trademark registrations. "It's like playing Whac-a-Mole, with dozens of [AI] accounts and tracks popping up daily," she says, adding that trademark registration allows the firm to force platforms to take down infringing accounts and tracks.

Most pressing issue "The dominance of the major labels and publishers continues to be an issue. We need to keep working to put power and profits in the hands of those who actually make the music — artists and small businesses."

Helen Yu

PARTNER, YU LESEBERG
Yu counts Ty Dolla \$ign, Black Eyed Peas member Apl.de.ap and the late Deon "Big D The Impossible" Evans as some of her clients. She is proud of a recent deal she struck for the Evans estate, negotiating a catalog acquisition agreement with Reservoir Media for some of the songwriter-producer's most beloved tracks with Tupac Shakur, including "Changes," "Brenda's Got a Baby" and "Papa'z Song." By finding the right creative home for these songs, Yu says Evans' contributions to Shakur's legacy have now "taken their rightful place in history."

Most pressing issue "It is incumbent upon the leaders in the music industry to en-

sure that our artists, producers and songwriters receive fair compensation for their creative contributions to keep music as a sustainable ecosystem and safeguard the vibrancy and integrity of the music business for generations to come."

Donald S. Zakarin

PARTNER/CO-CHAIR OF THE LITIGATION AND MUSIC GROUPS AND MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT LITIGATION PRACTICE, PRYOR CASHMAN

Ilene S. Farkas

PARTNER/CO-CHAIR OF THE MUSIC GROUP AND COPYRIGHT, MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT LITIGATION AND MUSIC LITIGATION PRACTICES, PRYOR CASHMAN

James G. Sammataro

PARTNER/CO-CHAIR OF THE MUSIC GROUP AND MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT LITIGATION PRACTICE, PRYOR CASHMAN

Frank P. Scibilia

PARTNER/CO-CHAIR OF THE MUSIC GROUP AND THE COPYRIGHT, MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT LITIGATION, MUSIC LITIGATION AND MUSIC TRANSACTIONS PRACTICES, PRYOR CASHMAN

Benjamin K. Semel

PARTNER/CO-CHAIR OF THE MUSIC GROUP AND MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT LITIGATION PRACTICE, PRYOR CASHMAN

Brad D. Rose

PARTNER/CHAIR OF THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY GROUP, PRYOR CASHMAN

The team of A-list music litigators from Pryor Cashman, which counts Megan Thee Stallion, Justin Bieber, Bruno Mars and all three major labels as clients, successfully represented Ed Sheeran at the blockbuster 2023 trial over allegations that he based his "Thinking Out Loud" on Marvin Gaye's famed "Let's Get It On." Litigator Zakarin was recognized on *Billboard's* 2024 Power 100 ranking for his achievements. And 2024 could be even bigger, as the firm is representing

Karol G, Daddy Yankee and dozens of others in a copyright case over reggaeton. Pryor Cashman also worked on the Phonorecords proceedings before the Copyright Royalty Board, where significant increases in the royalty rates for the 10-year period of 2018-27 were achieved, which the firm says will result in billions in additional royalties paid to songwriters and music publishers.

Adam Zia

FOUNDING PARTNER, THE ZIA FIRM

Nate Kuo

PARTNER, THE ZIA FIRM

Zia credits the firm's work in representing Bandsintown for securing a significant deal with Spotify in February. Now, with the two platforms combined and Bandsintown incorporated into Spotify's user interface, artists can experience "enhanced engagement [with] fans and stronger sales for live events worldwide," Zia says. Meanwhile, the firm also negotiated rising artist Dylan Cochrane's record deal with Columbia Records, while simultaneously representing a growing roster of A-list artists including Machine Gun Kelly, Travis Scott, Tokischa and Tierra Whack.

Most pressing issue "The battle between the already established DSPs and the other platforms that are developing commercial music models, which obviously includes TikTok," Zia says. "TikTok has become such a powerful tool for artists, both established and up-and-coming. But artists also need to be compensated fairly, whether they're on a major label or as an independent artist."

Leslie José Zigel

PARTNER/CHAIR OF ENTERTAINMENT, MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY GROUP, SMGQ LAW

Javier Feito

PARTNER OF ENTERTAINMENT, MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY GROUP, SMGQ LAW
SMGQ Law has served as the legal counsel for Bobby Weir of the Grateful Dead on all touring (Wolf Brothers, Dead & Company) and Grateful Dead legacy-related legal matters. The firm is also counsel for Marco Antonio Solís and Los Bukis' international tour and Las Vegas residency and represented Carlos Vives for his 2023 El Tour de Los 30 trek. Additionally, Zigel and Feito, who represent acts like Wisin, Joaquina and Maffio, represented Pitbull in the release of his 2023 album, *Trackhouse*, and its publishing. On the film/TV side, the law firm was also lead counsel for the 2023 Billboard Latin Music Awards.

Most pressing issue "The complexity of the financial models for streaming services," Zigel says, "and the resulting huge black box of unmatched revenue due to poor inputting of label-copy information." **b**

CONTRIBUTORS

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METHODOLOGY

Billboard's Top Music Lawyers recognizes only outside counsel at law firms with the exception of in-house attorneys at market-leading companies in the sectors shown. Nominations for all of *Billboard's* industry-sourced executive lists open no less than 150 days in advance of publication, and a submission link is sent by request before the nomination period. (Please email thom.duffy@billboard.com for inclusion on the email list for nomination links and for how to obtain an editorial calendar.) *Billboard's* 2024 Top Music Lawyers were nominated by their firms and chosen by editors based on factors including the stature of their clients, as measured by year-end *Billboard* charts; sales and streaming performance; market share; revenue or, where not available, *Billboard* revenue estimates, which may be aided by company guidance; social media impressions; and radio audiences reached, using data available as of Jan. 15. Career trajectory and momentum were also considered. Where required, U.S. record label market share was consulted using Luminate's current market share for albums, as well as track-equivalent and streaming-equivalent album consumption and *Billboard's* quarterly top 10 publisher rankings. Unless otherwise noted, *Billboard* Boxscore and Luminate are the sources for tour grosses and sales/streaming data, respectively. Luminate is also the source for radio audience metrics. The source for radio metrics is monitored station airplay from Mediabase provided by Luminate.

DAVID PALLEVITY IMAGES



LARRY ISER



JONATHAN STEINSAPIR

We congratulate
Larry Iser & Jonathan Steinsapir
on their selection to *Billboard's* 2024
"Top Music Lawyers" list.

KHIKS

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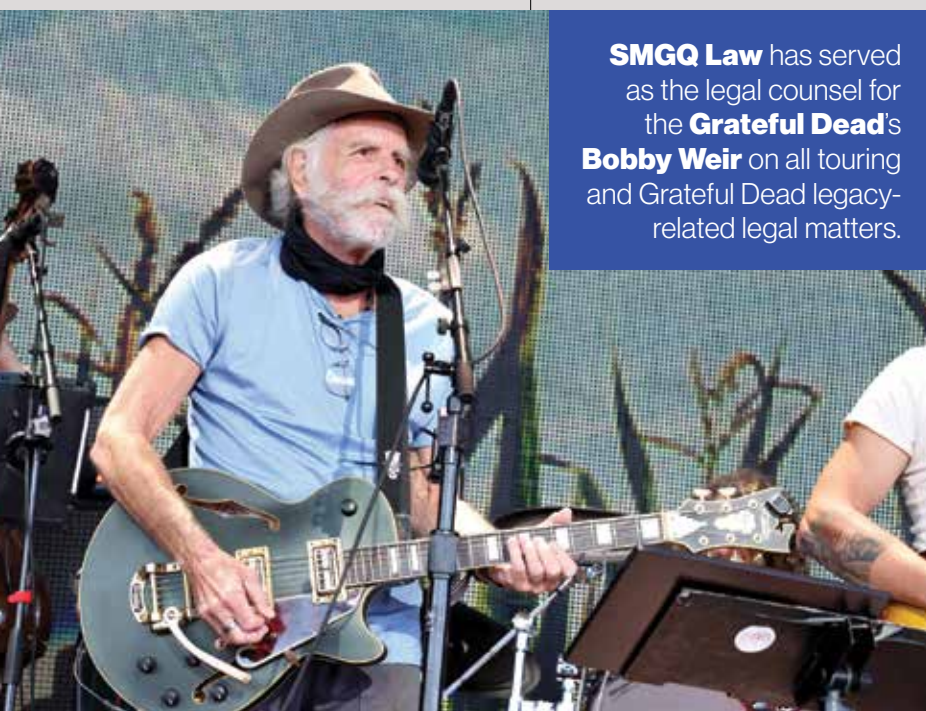
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on being named to *Billboard's* 2024
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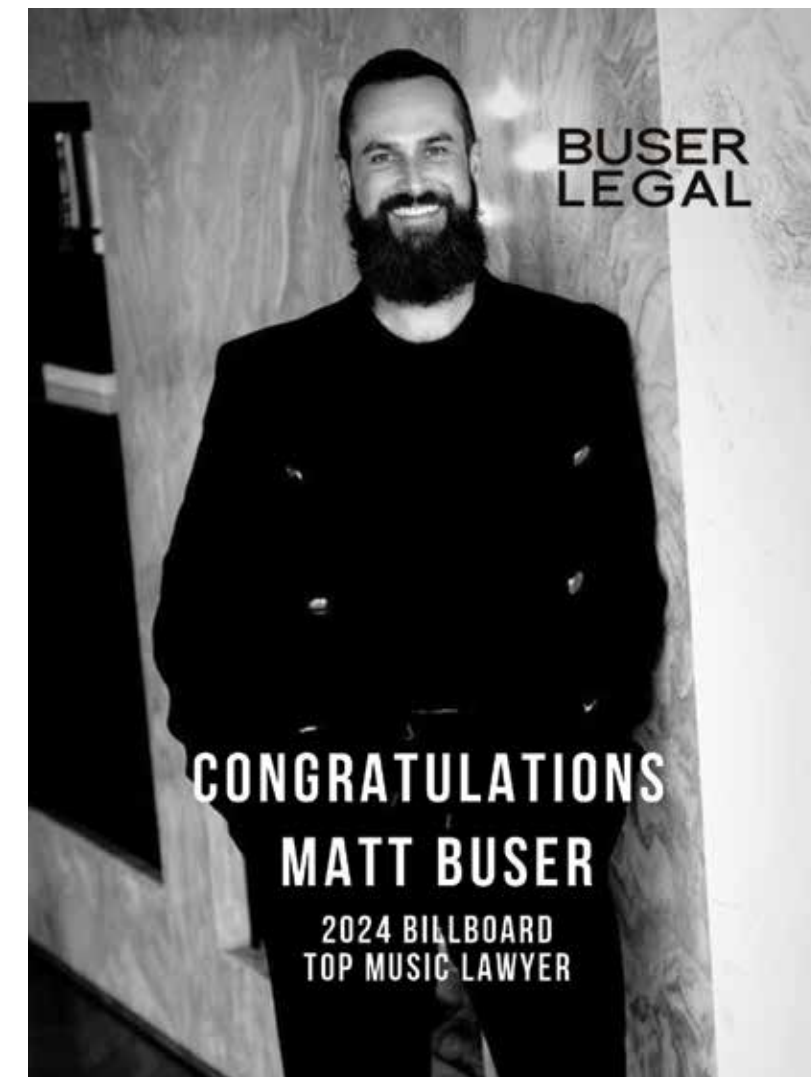
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Siblings Adolfo (left) and Gustavo Ángel have performed as Los Temerarios for more than 40 years.



THE FINALE OF LOS TEMERARIOS

After achieving more entries on the Top Latin Albums chart than any other act, the group led by brothers Adolfo and Gustavo Ángel is playing its last tour **BY LEILA COBO**

AS THE 18,000 FANS gathered at Mexico City's Arena Ciudad de México on Feb. 14 screamed at deafening levels, the duo Los Temerarios ran onstage — Adolfo Ángel from the left, Gustavo Ángel from the right — and embraced briefly but fiercely upon meeting in the middle of the vast platform.

Then, Adolfo, 60— dressed in black pants and shirt and light blue jacket — took his customary place behind an array of keyboards while frontman Gustavo, 55, dressed in a shining black and red embroidered jacket, picked up his microphone.

Without preamble, he sang the first notes of the first song of the brothers' last tour, *Hasta Siempre* (Until Forever).

After more than four decades together,

41 entries on *Billboard's* Hot Latin Songs chart and an astounding 46 entries on Top Latin Albums — more than any other Latin act in history — Los Temerarios is calling it quits.

"Tomorrow is the beginning of the end of an era for Temerarios," Adolfo says over a bottle of wine in Mexico City the night before the tour opens, his eyes welling up with tears, in his first and only interview since the group's announcement of this finale. "I'm a little sensitive," he adds with a soft, embarrassed laugh.

Adolfo, the "big" Temerario, is over 6 feet tall and brooding. It's not unusual to see him get emotional. After all, this is a group whose career has quite literally been built on love songs, all penned and produced by Adolfo since he was a teenager doing music with younger brother

Gustavo, the dashing, charismatic singer with the high, expressive tenor.

But during a U.S. tour in August, Los Temerarios made a surprise announcement on social media:

"With the love that has united us since we were kids, the same that we feel for the vocation that we've had the privilege of working in for more than 46 years, we want to share that we've made the difficult decision of separating, closing one of the most important and gratifying cycles of our lives," the brothers wrote. "Everything we express from this moment on will be in the form of music and in our next shows where we'll be giving you the best of us."

On the eve of their farewell tour, Adolfo stayed true to his statement, refusing to further explain the group's split except to say they were ending Los Temerarios at

Gustavo's request and that things were not just amicable, but brotherly.

"My brother and I were clear that [beyond the statement] we were keeping things between him and me, and I want to respect that, and I'm sure he does, too," Adolfo says. "We will finish this tour, each of us will go our own [professional] way, and I will always wish my brother the very best."

For now, they're making good on their promise to fans by bringing their best to the stage. On Feb. 14, backed by their longtime five-piece band, Adolfo and Gustavo performed for well over two hours as the crowd sang along. The brothers sold out five consecutive nights, a record for the venue.

"Having a single artist play five consecutive sold-out [shows] goes beyond



anything we'd done before," says Alejandro Arce, general director of tour promoter Zignia Live, which also owns Arena Ciudad de México. The promoter initially announced nine tour dates across Mexico for Los Temerarios, "and sales were extraordinary," Arce says. The group hadn't toured the country in over a decade, and the response has been phenomenal, spurring the addition of three more dates at the Mexico City arena (for a total of over 120,000 tickets sold), as well as three sold-out dates (30,000 tickets) at the Arena Monterrey. Not that any of this was a surprise. Last year, the group grossed \$12.3 million and sold 125,000 tickets to 14 shows, according to figures reported to Billboard Boxscore.

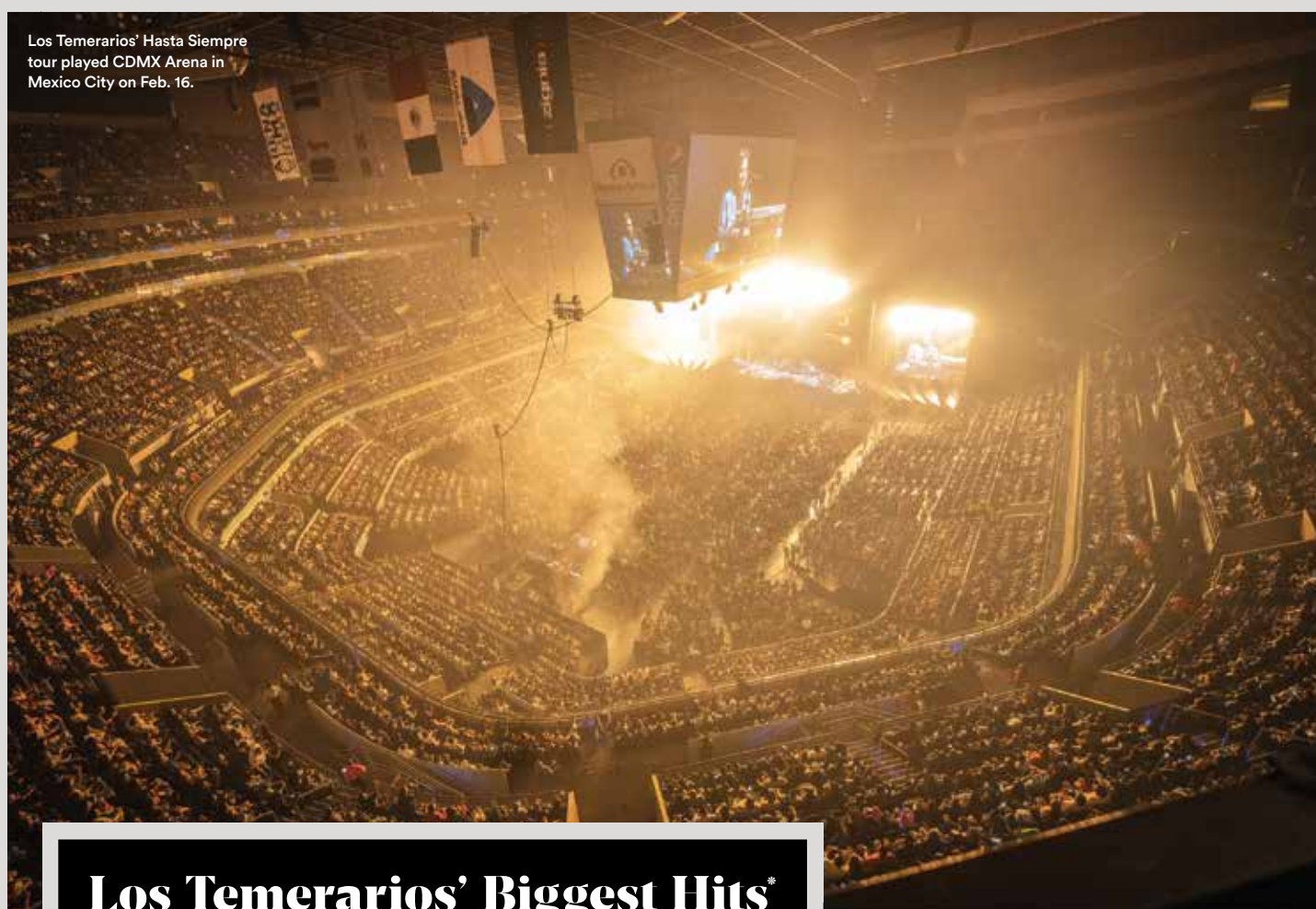
All told, in 2024, Los Temerarios will play over 50 arena and stadium dates across Mexico, Central America and the United States — including Madison Square Garden in New York and two nights apiece at Houston's Toyota Center and Chicago's AllState Arena, with more cities expected to be announced. The U.S. leg of the tour is promoted by Zamora Entertainment and, for West Coast dates, in partnership with Frias Entertainment.

"Los Temerarios is a group that has transcended generations," Arce says. "Very few groups in this genre can fill stadiums. It opens this kind of music, which is completely different and with a completely different message, to new generations."

The duo performs wistful and passionate love songs with arrangements that veer from very traditional Mexican — cumbia, *ranchera* and the keyboard-heavy sound associated with Mexican romantic groups — to sophisticated pop, a duality the band uniquely achieved in its sphere.

Originally launched along with a cousin in the late 1970s as Grupo la Brisa, the group was always spearheaded by Adolfo, the budding keyboardist-composer who penned songs for his brother. Their romantic *grupera musica* was beginning to surge in Mexico, with dozens of romantic groups, including Los Bukis and Bronco, gaining traction. Los Temerarios had an additional asset: the entrepreneurial Adolfo's keen business sense.

He eventually changed the duo's name to Los Temerarios and started releasing music on his own label, AFG Sigma Records, in 1989 while also promoting the band's shows. That DIY approach served the group well. Save for a brief moment at the very beginning of Los Temerarios' career, the brothers have always licensed albums as opposed to signing with a label, keeping the rights and control over their



Los Temerarios' *Hasta Siempre* tour played CDMX Arena in Mexico City on Feb. 16.

Los Temerarios' Biggest Hits*

TITLE	LABEL	CHART PEAK	PEAK DATE
"Ya Me Voy Para Siempre"	Fonovisa	1	4/26/1997
"Por Que Te Conoci"	Fonovisa	1	2/7/1998
"Te Hice Mal"	Fonovisa	2	4/22/2000
"Que De Raro Tiene"	Fonovisa	1	7/24/2004
"Como Te Recuerdo"	Fonovisa	5	12/5/1998
"Una Tarde Fue"	AFG Sigma	3	1/29/1994
"Acepta Mi Error"	Fonovisa	8	8/16/1997
"Si Tu Te Vas"	Fonovisa	1	7/19/2008
"Cuando Fuiste Mia"	Fonovisa	7	11/9/1996
"Que Poca Suerte"	AFG Sigma	7	2/11/1995

masters. As for Adolfo's publishing catalog of hundreds of songs, it has always been administered by their own publisher, Virtus, the successor to an earlier company, ADF, set up in 1989. This year, the group is signing its first publishing administration deal, with Kobalt.

Twelve years ago, the brothers went completely independent, launching their own label, also named Virtus, and taking

over their own promotion and marketing. Their cousin Mayra Alba, who has a master's in music management from the University of California, Berkeley, has managed them since 1996.

"Their music doesn't stop evolving," Alba says. "As artists, they've done what they want yet have continued to be authentic, connecting with a multigenerational audience and reaching

every possible milestone."

The results speak for themselves. In addition to its record number of entries on Top Latin Albums, the band has placed 41 tracks on Hot Latin Songs since 1990. Of those, 17 went top 10 and four hit No. 1.

On Latin Airplay, the group has 15 top 10s and four No. 1s, and on Regional Mexican Albums, its 47 entries best those of any group. Los Temerarios is one of only five acts to have achieved eight No. 1s on Top Latin Albums. Only two acts, Marco Antonio Solís and Luis Miguel, have achieved more (12 and nine, respectively).

The steadiness of the group, which has been performing since 1980, made the news of its split even more surprising. And yet, so far, Los Temerarios' farewell tour has been joyous — and has garnered an overwhelming response.

For these shows, Los Temerarios upgraded the production, adding sophisticated visuals, courtesy of longtime collaborator and video director Carlos Pérez. And aside from Gustavo's vocals, Adolfo, for the first time, is also singing a short set of songs. It may be a harbinger of what's to come.

"I've never been afraid of experimenting. Then all these energies come in and try to say no to you, but I never listen to that," Adolfo tells *Billboard*. "I listen to my heart. I've discovered that's the key: Listen to your heart."

"Su carrera ha revolucionado un marco cultural en la musica latina y establecido un legado que enriquece esta industria. Un privilegio estar al servicio de su vocación, ser testigo del amor que comunican y que continua uniendo generaciones."

- Mayra Alba



*THE CHART OF LOS TEMERARIOS' BIGGEST HITS IS BASED ON ACTUAL PERFORMANCE ON THE WEEKLY BILLBOARD CHARTS THROUGH MARCH 2024. SONGS ARE RANKED BASED ON THEIR PEAK POSITION ON THE CHART, WITH WEEKS AT THE GREAT TEST, VALUE AND WEEKS ON CHART. CHARTS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE AND NOT BE USED FOR PROMOTIONAL PURPOSES.

The duo won the top Latin albums artist of the year honor at the 2005 Billboard Latin Music Awards.



I would love to hear the story of how you got your first record deal as a teen.

Yes. It was a time of dreams. A time when you saw a lot of artists and groups that inspired and motivated you and you wanted to get to those same stages and take a positive message to the hearts of those who heard you. I went to every single label at the time, and they all said no. I would take our little demos, and they would all say, "This is all very good. Come back in February."

And then it was March. So, since no one wanted us, we decided to make our own albums, using our gig money. I'd take [our own records] to the radio stations and say I was the radio promoter. I was a teenager. I'd sit there for hours, and sometimes they would see me, sometimes they wouldn't. I'm not complaining. It's part of something that now I understand had to happen.

I also took the records to the record store, on consignment. If they sold them, they paid me; if not, I had to pick them up. And when we started to sell 5,000 copies and I had to say, "Hey, send me another thousand," the people from Sony — CBS then — came over and we signed a contract. Didn't even look at it. Just said "Órale" ["OK"] and signed. That was around 1983.

You began your career by hustling and doing everything on your own, and now, as a superstar, you're still independent.

Yes, and that has been important, positive for our career. It made us learn and took us down a road that has been a great gift. Because in the beginning, we knocked on doors and they'd say, "Come back next year." Until I realized that we had to do it ourselves. And I did it.

Did you have a mentor?

No. It was always the desire to make it [that motivated me]. And I would look for the way. I'd pick up the phone and find the label, find the radio station. Then I would get in the pickup truck and drive wherever I had to go. And finally, it would happen. Little by little we became known, at least in our area.

But my dad was a very important example in my life. He still supports me. Without my dad, it would have been much harder, because he loves music. For example, when we had to work the fields and I didn't want to go, I would pretend I was asleep. And when they were all gone, I'd go look for my music teacher in Fresnillo, Zacatecas, and the next day, my dad wouldn't say anything. He allowed me those peccadillos. He bought me my first keyboard, a red organ. And then, when I outgrew it, he bought me the new model.

Early in your career you launched your own publishing company,

"Their music doesn't stop evolving. As artists, they've done what they want yet have continued to be authentic, connecting with a multigenerational audience and reaching every possible milestone."

— MAYRA ALBA, MANAGER

and now you're signing your first administration deal, with Kobalt. Have you considered selling your catalog?

No. My songs have a very special value. It's not just the money. If I can take them by the hand the way I think is best — these songs that came from my heart — well, I'd rather do that than give them to someone in exchange for a check. That's not what I want to do. At least not now.

A decade ago, you were on top of the world with chart success. You last released an album in 2015, then the pandemic interrupted your cycle. What did you do?

We were always doing something. Even though we haven't released a full album of new songs since 2015, we have a few singles. I've always been patient in recording. We usually put out new albums every four, five years. I always thought the quicker you recorded, the quicker your

fans got tired. I still think that, even in the era of TikTok. That's why there's so much space between albums. And resisting that pressure has given us results, even when people start to say things like, "Hey, I don't hear your songs."

The industry has changed, and now the cycle of releases is very fast. Did that worry you?

Some artists release songs every week, every two weeks, but I don't think those songs transcend. They're very ephemeral successes. I believe that if you give [the process] respect, if you take the time and make a great production and you feel satisfied with it, very great things can happen. Maybe something works on TikTok with the chorus for a little bit, but I don't think that's the path. I like things the old-fashioned way, where you go to the studio, you have a great console, you record a great production with the best

engineers and the best musicians and not only with a computer. That's the music I like to make, that lifts my soul.

Your music is romantic by definition. Are you dismayed at how some artists today portray love in their lyrics?

Not dismayed, but I was surprised to hear how music is being used to denigrate women. That had a big impact on me because I do the opposite. I try to say beautiful things about the most beautiful being in the universe; or at least, in my universe. But I respect everyone, and every artist will do their own thing. Me, I'll continue writing my love songs, and I prefer to make a woman feel like a queen or a princess rather than something else. Maybe I'm being cheesy, but I like that. But I'm not criticizing anyone. Everyone does their own thing.

You wrote a lot during the pandemic, and most of the songs haven't been released. Now that you're splitting up, what do you plan to do with them?

I wrote them for us, thinking of my brother, of course. Even when I write on the piano or guitar, I do so in my brother's tone, which is a higher range than mine. Then, when my brother decided he no longer wanted to be in Temerarios, the songs were put on pause. I don't know what I'll do with them. But now, we're going to finish this tour, everyone will go their own way, and I will always wish my brother the best in life. I think my brother is a very talented man, he has a lot of charisma, people love him a lot, we have had a great career together, and we have the affection of the audience, both of us. He's going to do very well in whatever he decides to do, and I'll continue making my songs as long as I can.

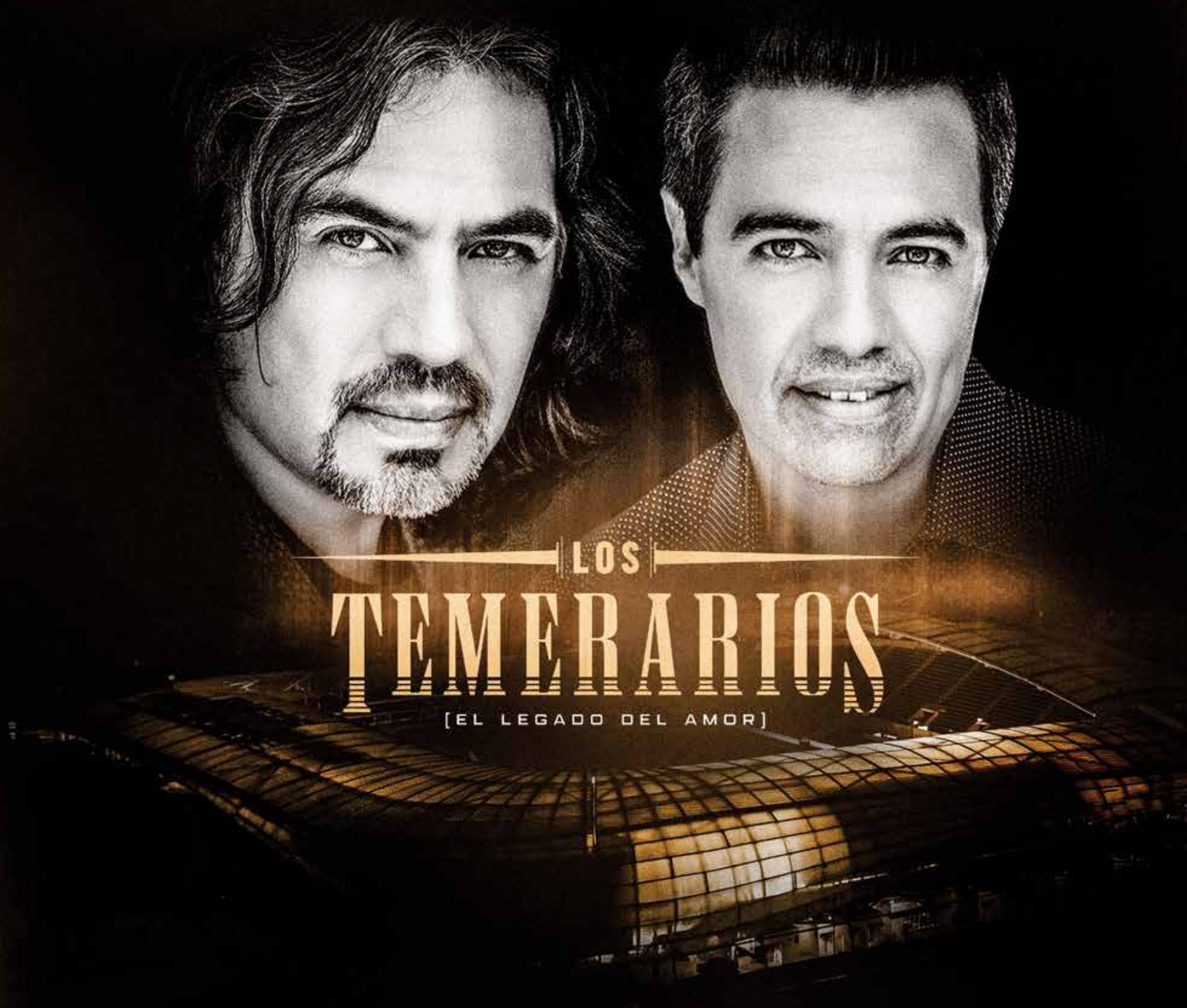
Are you working on a solo album?

I am not. I love to sing, but I never used to do so onstage. Because I always felt very comfortable behind my keyboards, with my brother in front. Behind the keyboards I can tell you a story, talk with you; it's like a protective cape where you feel very comfortable. That's the way it was, for decades. Then, on this tour, I said, "OK, I have to do it." And I sing a set of three songs. The only intent is to respond to the audience's love. And I liked it. A lot. Now I feel very comfortable. But, right now, I'm always writing. I feel most happy and comfortable writing for Temerarios. And if my brother isn't there anymore, I'll think about doing it for myself.

What would you like your legacy to be for Mexican music and Latin music overall?

I feel we're leaving behind a beautiful message for everyone who has ever listened to us, and that's enough for me. **b**

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ISSUE DATE 4/27 | AD CLOSE 4/16 | MATERIALS DUE 4/18

Cobain Death Spurs Rush At Retail
Biz Talk Turns To Band's Unreleased Work

Nirvana Achieves Chart

Cobain Story Tests MTV News

Cobain Mourned By Fans, Industryites In Memorials, Music Stores

THE BILLBOARD 200

WEEK	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50

THE DAY THE MUSIC DIED

When Kurt Cobain was found dead by suicide on April 8, 1994, it was a generation-shaking tragedy comparable to the 1980 murder of John Lennon or the 1959 plane crash that killed Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and The Big Bopper. An era-defining band that enjoyed — or perhaps endured — critical acclaim and commercial success, Nirvana remade rock in its own slouching image. The group's 1991 breakthrough, *Nevermind*, has sold 10.3 million copies in the United States, according to Luminate, contributing to overall album sales of 30.3 million, as well as Nirvana's legacy as the most important band of the '90s.

'NEVER'-LAND

The band's 1989 indie debut, *Bleach*, didn't chart on the Billboard 200 when it came out, but Nirvana made a significant impact when it jumped to major label DGC for *Nevermind*. "Nirvana pulls off an

astonishing palace coup by dethroning King of Pop Michael Jackson from the top spot on the Billboard 200," reported the Jan. 11, 1992, *Billboard*, which also pointed to the album's success as "the most convincing argument that new artists can succeed" on the chart, which had switched to point-of-sale tracking less than a year earlier.

PREGNANCY SCARE

With success came scrutiny. While Nirvana's third album, *In Utero*, was still gestating, *Newsweek* ran a piece alleging that DGC was unhappy with it. In a full-page ad in the May 22, 1993, *Billboard*, the band blasted the *Newsweek* piece as "gossip" with "invalid" reporting. "This whole thing sucks," bassist Krist Novoselic said in an article in the Sept. 25, 1993, *Billboard*. "The MTV Awards and all the schmoozing." A piece in the same issue reported that DGC was planning a "low-key approach" to marketing.

FEST STRESS

In 1994, Nirvana was booked to play Lollapalooza, but "due to the ill health of Kurt Cobain we cannot confirm them," said a festival organizer in an article in the April 16, 1994, *Billboard*. (The issue went to press before Cobain died.) The cancellation was "prompted by singer/guitarist Cobain's accidental drug-and-alcohol overdose in Rome in March," according to the article. "It's unfortunate that Nirvana is not on it," concert promotion giant Louis Messina told *Billboard* at the time, "but it's unfortunate The Beatles aren't together."

THE NEWS HITS

The April 23, 1994, *Billboard*, carried the news of Cobain's death with such headlines as "Cobain Mourned By Fans, Industryites In Memorials, Music Stores" and "Cobain Death Spurs Rush At Retail: Biz Talk Turns To

Band's Unreleased Work." In the next issue, *Billboard* blasted the "witless, mean-spirited comments" of 60 Minutes contributor Andy Rooney, who dismissed Cobain's death by asking on-air, "What would all these young people be doing if they had real problems?" *Billboard's* take: "Doesn't CBS have a mandatory retirement policy?"

'PLUG' LIFE

The Nov. 19, 1994, issue hailed Nirvana's *MTV Unplugged in New York* as "another window into a tragic genius" that "promises as much satisfaction for the curiosity seeker as for the most avid Nirvana fanatic." Two years later, the posthumous live set *From the Muddy Banks of the Wishkah* became Nirvana's fourth Billboard 200 chart-topper. "Few defunct bands," declared the Oct. 12, 1996, *Billboard*, "could get away with releasing two live albums of old material after only three full-length studio releases." —JOE LYNCH

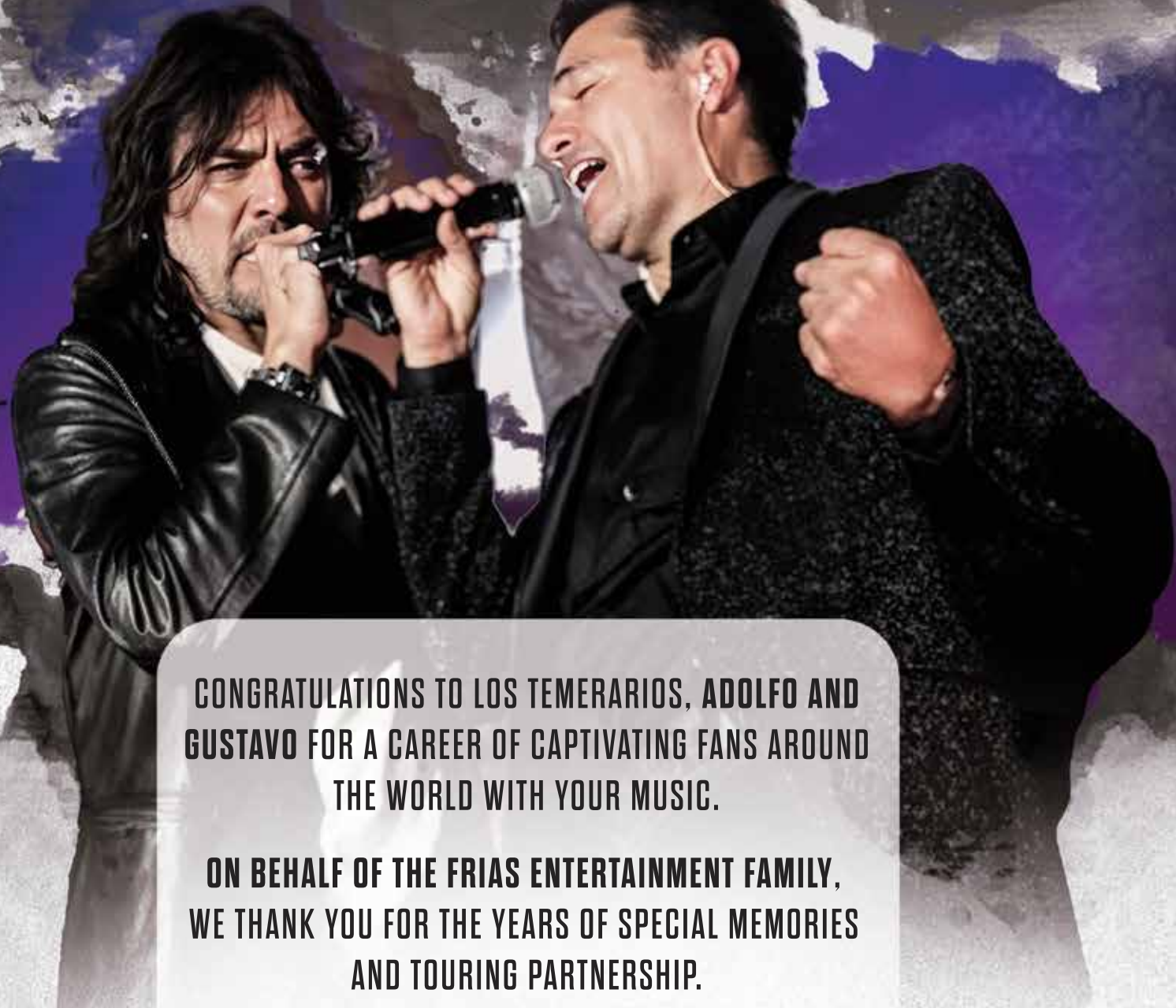
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