

SPECIAL YEAR END ISSUE!

MUSIC CONNECTION

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Tips of 2022*

HOT 100

*LIVE Unsigned
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TOP 25

*New Music
Critiques*

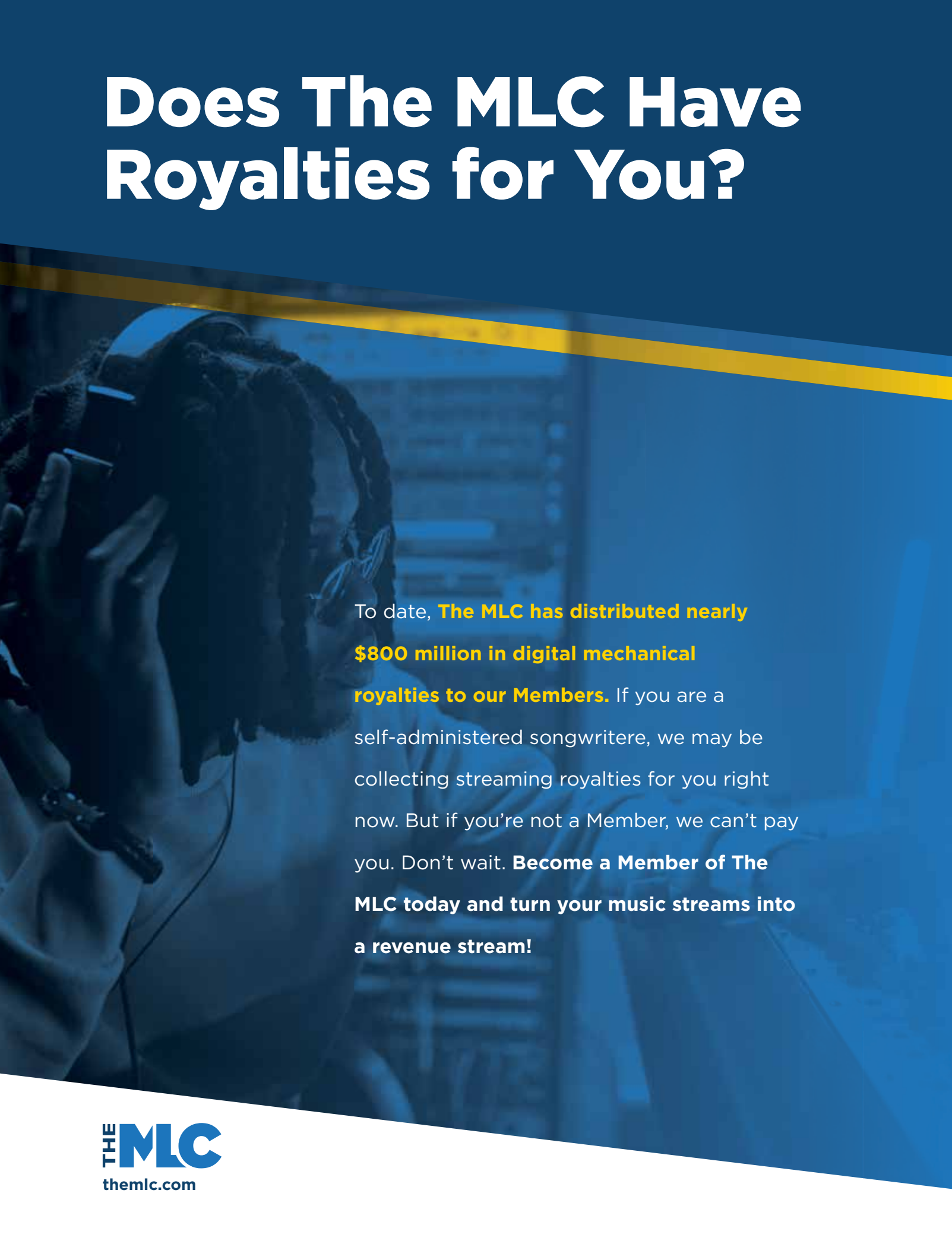
Miranda
Lambert

+ **GloRilla** - Robyn Hitchcock - Chris Standring

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42 **Miranda Lambert**

MC speaks candidly with Lambert, the most awarded artist in the Academy of Country Music's history, about her songwriting processes and her recent Las Vegas spectacular, a residency which encompasses the entire scope of her remarkable career.

By Dan Kimpel

Photos by: Robert Ascroft for fourleven.agency



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Compiled By Mark Nardone

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A woman with long braids and glasses is smiling while playing a drum set. She is wearing a white tank top with a black and red pattern and matching pants. In the background, there is a laptop on a stand with a Focusrite audio interface connected to it. The setting appears to be a home studio or rehearsal space.

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*Special pricing valid November 1, 2022, through December 31, 2022, only

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Creative Works Legal Services

creativeworkslegal.com

Combining Passions for Music and Law: A few years into his legal career, Joe Joseph circled back to his enduring passion for music and, inspired by his family's longstanding entrepreneurial spirit, launched his own firm, and its music law division, Creative Works Legal Services. Going strong after nearly 12 years, Joseph and his staff, serving local and national clients from offices in Detroit and Nashville, are committed to offering first class legal solutions for all types of music professionals. As stated in their MC ad, one of the most important elements of the practice is to "protect and secure your creative works."

Ironically, when Joseph was first considering law school, many people in his life, including numerous lawyers, tried to dissuade him. It wasn't until years later, when he began reaching out to top music lawyers in preparation for his entry into music and entertainment law, that he received genuine encouragement and the reassurance that working in music law was one of the greatest jobs in the world. "Long before a crisis arises that demands legal assistance," he says, "it's important for artists, songwriters, musicians and producers to find an experienced attorney, in the industry, who knows the ins and outs of the music business. It is much more beneficial, and far less expensive, to have an attorney review your affairs prospectively, as opposed to trying to undue that which has caused you harm and damage," says Joseph. "I've developed my reputation by building long-lasting relationships based on trust and by continuously educating myself and staying on top of evolving trends and industry practices."

Philosophy on the Importance of Music: Joseph may be the only music industry lawyer whose home page has a photo of him sitting informally on the floor, holding his electric guitar. The image speaks volumes about his foundational love of music, which drives his dedication and devotion to helping his clients do what they do best, which is create. "Creative minds should be able to focus on their craft without being bogged down by the countless nuances on the business side of things," says Joseph.



Accompanying the photo is a mission statement reflecting Joseph and his team's belief in the cultural importance of music: "We believe that music is an indispensable component in the fabric of life, having the ability to transcend both time and space. Music acts as a bridge between the past and present, while providing an inspirational window into the future. It has shaped cultures, ideologies, and the world as we know it. In essence, music plays an instrumental role in defining the very nature of our society."

Array of Legal Services: The first words visitors to the website will see is a concise summary of what Creative Works does for its clients: "Know Your Rights, Own Your Rights." Joseph believes that although the industry has seen many improvements over the years, the playing field is still largely uneven. "The idea that something must be a certain way, simply because it is 'industry standard,' is not a concept we subscribe to or accept. This is what drives me and my team." Putting a premium on educating clients, Joseph's services include contracts (band agreements, record deals, publishing contracts, licensing agreements, administration deals, co-writing/collaboration agreements, work for hire agreements), copyright (from registration and management and administration to dispute resolution), trademark (registration, licensing), sync licensing (film & TV, advertising, gaming) and business formation (operating and partnership agreements).

Contact Creative Works Legal Services: Detroit 248-455-4344;
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Charles Blessing

CEO
NUGEN Audio

NUGEN Audio has named **Charles Blessing** as CEO to continue to push forth the company's forward-thinking efforts and provide the leadership needed to take **NUGEN** into the future. Blessing, who previously served as the brand's Chief Technology Officer (CTO) first joined the company as a Software Engineer in 2013. Prior to that, Blessing, who has a degree in Computer Science and Math from the University of York, held several programmer and engineer positions with Team17 Software. For more information in regards to Blessing's promotion, contact vanessab@dpagan.com.



Dani Deahl

Head of Comm & Creator Insights
BandLab Technologies

Dani Deahl has been at the forefront of music innovation for the past seven years, and is now stepping into a new role with **BandLab Technologies** as **Head of Communications & Creator Insights**. As a journalist and editor, music producer, and advocate for musicians and creators, Deahl combines her extensive communications background with insight into data and industry trends. Deahl will serve as a prominent cultural liaison, highlighting the division's impact on the future of the music industry and surveying industry changes to drive conversations and build connections. For more, contact meg@rockpaperscissors.biz.



Jessica Bonner

VP of Publicity
Milestone Publicity

Milestone Publicity has promoted **Jessica Bonner** to **Vice President of Publicity**. This advancement recognizes her passion for clients and ability to execute on their campaigns at a high level with an eye for detail, in addition to an unparalleled work ethic and dedication to the company's growth. Prior to being named Vice President of Publicity at Milestone, Bonner was an Account Executive where she invested time sharpening her public relations skill set and deepening her knowledge of the field. For more information on this promotion, contact jbonner@milestonepublicity.com.



Ron Stewart

SVP of Urban Promotion
Warner Records

Warner Records announced **Ron Stewart** has been promoted to **SVP of Urban Promotion** for the label. Stewart came to Warner Records in 2019 and has scored chart-topping singles from Saweetie, NLE Choppa, Freddie Gibbs, ShaEK, and more. He joined the label from Atlantic Records, where he was the Northeast/Midwest Regional Promotion Manager. At Atlantic, he worked closely with Cardi B, Meek Mill, Wale, Kodak Black, Wiz Khalifa, and Nipsey Hussle. Stewart began his career in 2003 as an intern, then Promotion Assistant at Jive Records, where he helped launch the careers of Ciara, Chris Brown, and T-Pain. For more, contact laura.swanson@warnerrecords.com.



Shawnae Corbett-Rice

Senior Vice President of Marketing
Warner Records

Shawnae Corbett-Rice has been promoted to **Senior Vice President of Marketing** for **Warner Records**. Since joining the label in 2018, she has worked closely with breakthrough artists such as Saweetie, Chika, Wale, NLE Choppa, Baby Tate, Andra Day and more. In her new post, Corbett-Rice will continue to oversee innovative marketing campaigns focusing on artist development. Based at Warner's Downtown Los Angeles headquarters, she reports to recently appointed EVP of Marketing & Artist Development Dionnee Harper. For more info, contact laura.swanson@warnerrecords.com.



Elizabeth Cline

Executive Director
Wild Up

Wild Up has announced the hiring of **Elizabeth Cline** as their new **Executive Director**. Cline's previous leadership roles include Executive Director for The Industry, the Los Angeles-based experimental opera company; Assistant Director at Machine Project, an arts non-profit in Los Angeles and a Curatorial Associate at the Hammer Museum, where she organized artists' projects in the Public Engagement program. For more information on this recent appointment, contact jrainis@shorefire.com.



Elyssa Macri

Director of Communications
and Industry Relations
Canadian Musical Reproduction
Rights Agency

The **Canadian Musical Reproduction Rights Agency Ltd.** (CMRRA) has announced that **Elyssa Macri** will take on the role of **Director of Communications and Industry Relations**. Macri will oversee the Communications and Industry Relations team. Macri will lead strategic communications, marketing, events and sponsorship opportunities. She will work closely with other members of CMRRA and SX Works to develop strategies that support CMRRA's client base and amplify the work of both organizations. For more information, contact jv@spinlab.net.



Brooke Mansfield

Sr. Director of Digital Strategy
Riser House Entertainment

Riser House Entertainment has announced the hiring of **Brooke Mansfield** as **Sr. Director of Digital Strategy**. Mansfield joins the team after most recently serving as Sr. Digital Strategist at The Artist Management Group, working with a roster of artists including Kat & Alex, Payton Smith, Chris Colston, Jordan James, Liv Charette, and Essex County. Prior to her time at The Artist Management Group, she worked on the digital marketing team at Capitol CMG, bolstering projects including Chris Tomlin's country collaboration album *Chris Tomlin & Friends* and Kari Jobe's "The Blessing." For more information, contact jcarter@shorefire.com.





◀ GIK ACOUSTICS RAZOR ACOUSTIC PANELS

GIK Acoustics' Razor panels are 1-inch thick absorption panels that are lightweight so they can be used just about anywhere, including up on ceilings. I have a pair of them mounted on the ceiling just above where my singer stands in my vocal room here at my Tones 4 \$ Studios. My pair measure 24 X 48-inches but they are available in: 24 X 24, 12 X 48, and 24 X 36-inches.

I'm relying on them to reduce any high-frequency flutter echoes and slaps bouncing off the ceiling and affecting the quality of the vocal sound being recorded directly below them. Even though I use a RealTraps Portable Vocal Booth, it only controls the sound left and right of the mic, it does not stop reflections from overhead that causes slaps and comb filtering.

The Razor panels' core are made from Class-A fire-rated, rigid fiberglass ECOSE® technology absorption material and are 100% environmentally friendly recycled materials and use no formaldehyde or urea formaldehyde. The biggest 24 X 48-inch panels weigh eight pounds and are available in 15 colors. The panels mount to walls using impaler clips—sharp pointed metal fasteners that attach to the wall. I'm hanging them from the ceiling so I'm using eyehooks screwed into the corners of the Razor panels and then using cable tie-wraps to attach them to matching hooks in the ceiling.

The NRC (Noise Reduction Coefficient) is 1.05; compared to foam at 0.4 and will not deteriorate over time as foam always does. Razor panels, with all the shapes available, are an excellent, stylish option for environments such as offices, restaurants and schools for controlling ambient noise.

Prices range from \$42 to \$67.95 MSRP each.

gikacoustics.com/product/the-razor-1-acoustic-panel-new

▶ SOLID STATE LOGIC ULTRAVIOLET STEREO EQ

SSL now has the Ultraviolet Stereo Equalizer, a four-band, minimum phase EQ whose two-band, Hi/Lo shelving equalizer section is from the Violet EQ section of the analog Solid State Logic Fusion 2U rack-mounted stereo processor. The UV EQ comes as a two slot 500-series module.

The low shelf frequency section has 30Hz, 50Hz, 70Hz and 90Hz frequency choices while the high frequency shelving EQ has four frequency choices: 8kHz, 12kHz, 16kHz, and 20kHz. Both have their own Gain controls for up to +/- 9dB of boost/cut.

The UV EQ has the frequencies and tonal footprint of past SSL Channel strips and adds two parametric mid-band sections (LMF and HMF) with overlapping ranges, variable Q, and the Focus feature. There is also a single, master In/Out bypass button for quick A/B comparisons.

I used the UV EQ on a hardware insert on my Pro Tools stereo mix bus. Just like the Fusion, the UV's Hi/Lo shelving section on entire mixes works great to brighten the top and build out the low end. I boosted 30Hz just slightly while also adding a boost at 20kHz for more "air" on the track.

I then tried the UV EQ on individual vocal and instrument tracks. For a vocal, it was easy to clarify the diction of the singer and, at the same time take care of some peaky moments by zeroing in on them using the Focus feature that's available in both HMF and LMF sections. Focus greatly narrows the Q for boosting or cutting very exact frequency areas. The Gain range is also doubled to +/- 18dB while in Focus mode.

Whether you're working in live sound, recording, or mixing music, the SSL Ultraviolet Stereo EQ is a great choice for an all-around and useful tool for your studio or live sound rack! It sells for \$1,299 MSRP.

solidstatellogic.com/ssl-500-series-modules



▼ AUSTRIAN AUDIO OD303 DYNAMIC VOCAL MIC

The new Austrian Audio OD303 dynamic is all you need for a good live vocal mic and nothing you don't. It is rugged with a die-cast all metal body that has a good 'heft' and feel in your hand. The OD303 shares the same body design with the other new handheld mics from Austrian Audio: the OD505 active dynamic and the OC707 True Condenser models. The OD303 and OD505 mics have stylish black with colorful red highlights while the OC707 is gunmetal gray with red highlights. All three come with a sturdy clip to attach it to mic stand.

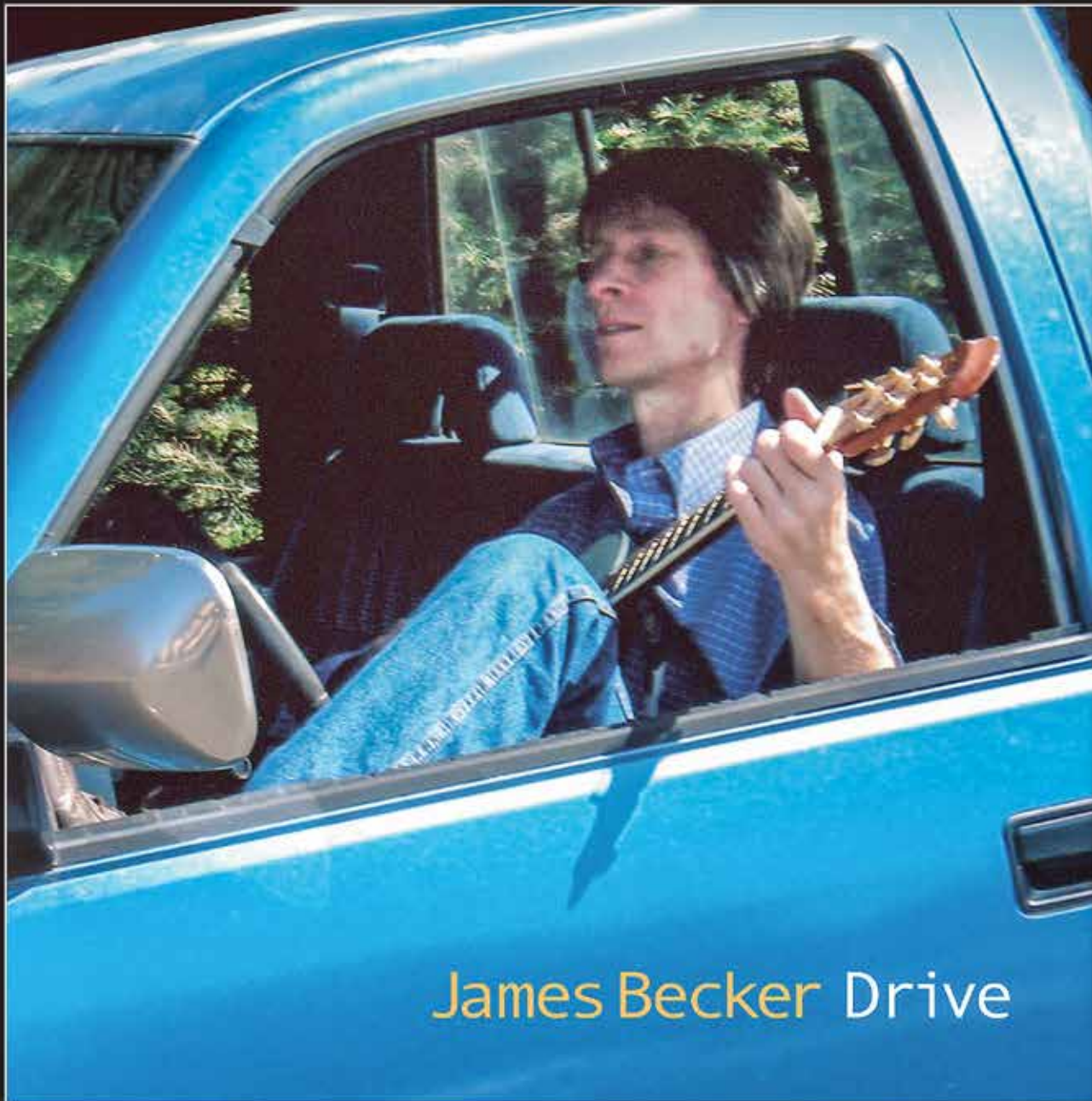
The Austrian Audio OD303 uses a ODC50 dual-capsule design and their Open Acoustic technology to deliver a super cardioid polar pattern you'll want for excellent feedback rejection at all times no matter how and where your artist holds the mic. I also liked the 3D Pop Noise Diffuser that will reduce "T" and "P" plosives commonly heard from singers who like to "eat" microphones.

I tried the OD303 for a lead vocal/rap performer and I just loved the sound of this mic! This mic has a tremendous rejection of all sound not aimed straight into its front grill. Off-axis rejection was amazing; when my artist moved off to one side, he was gone! Close in on the mic produces some proximity effect or bass buildup but it can be used to thicken up a thin voice—especially in live sound!

The Austrian Audio OD303 Dynamic Vocal Mic sells for \$119 MSRP and comes with a storage pouch.

austrian.audio/microphones/od303





James Becker Drive

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**Contact Robert Case for details 719 632-0227
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▼ BABY AUDIO IHNY-2 PARALLEL COMPRESSOR

IHNY-2 is the updated version of Baby's very first plugin called I Heart NY (I love New York). Both are New York-Style Parallel Compression tricks. The all-new IHNY-2 is more visual with an X/Y pad for easily moving a "node" between four poles at the corners of the GUI.

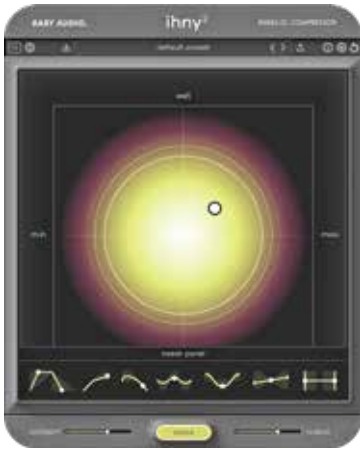
IHNY-2 splits the incoming audio into two streams with a joystick to mix between the wet output and the dry input. The horizontal axis has the extremes of minimum and maximum compression amounts. So rather than trying to decode the gain reduction and output meters, you'll dial in a great compressor sound quickly.

IHNY-2 has both an algorithmic auto-gain feature to keep the level under control and a separate Output fader. This new version has seven internal parameters available in a retractable, show/hide panel labeled Tweak. These parameters are graphically represented and saved with all presets.

The Tweak parameters are: Attack Release, Compression Ratio, Punch emphasizes attack transients that are lost with deep compression, Harmonics is the level of additional saturation, Shape is a kind of "smiley EQ," Tilt has a center pivot point for carefully dialing in the ratio of brightness to bottom end, finally Lo + Hi Preserve keeps the low and high frequencies from being too compressed.

In a Pro Tools mix, I used stereo bus compression/limiting for achieving an aggressive powerful mix. There are loads of clever presets in the factory folder to get you started and I picked one called "hip-hop punchy" for a modern dance track. It comes up extreme but it was easy to dial it back to fit this song. Or try "bussin-skyler" to produce a more natural sound. There are lots of presets for individual instruments and vocals and all worthwhile to check out. Intro price is \$39 and IHNY-2 is Mac M1 compatible and in all the popular plugin formats!

babyaud.io/ihny-2



► D'ADDARIO/EARLAB DBUD EARPLUGS

D'Addario partnered with EarLab's dBud Earplugs, premium hearing protection for musicians or music fans that want to attend concerts or shows that are just a little loud for them. dBud provide hearing protection without compromising sonic quality as typical earplugs will do.

Live music is back and you can enjoy hi-fidelity sound without worrying about any damage to your hearing. dBuds uses an acoustic filtering/baffle system with a patented, two level volume slider that allows users to reduce the volume by either 12dB or 24dB.

Each dBud set comes with two dBud ear filters and five pairs of reusable silicone tips (small, medium, large, etc.) to fit your ear canals. Each earplug also has a magnet so that the pair will stick together when not in use and stay on an included lanyard—users can wear them around their neck to keep them handy.

D'Addario/EarLab dBud Earplugs sell for \$54.99 MSRP.

ddar.io/dBud.PR



▼ ARTESIA PRO AND ESI XJAM AND XKEY CONTROLLERS

Artesia Pro Xjam is a mobile MIDI and Pad controller perfect for live performers and studio work. The second model in the X-Series, notable features include its super small size at about 8-inches wide, 5 1/2 inches deep, and its very thin profile made from anodized aluminum. It's designed to run standalone or fit right next to the Artesia Xkey Keyboard controller. I received the Xkey 25-key model but know there is also a 37-key model as well. Both the Xjam and Xkey are class-compliant, USB controllers that work with either Macs or PCs.

I immediately set them both up—the Xjam to the left of the Xkey so the included USB cables were clear. I used the Xjam to quickly change patches, fire off samples in a live setting as well as program drum loops using the 16-backlit drum pads. For its compact size, the pads on the Xjam are just big enough and also have a good feel. There are six assignable continuous controller knobs—I used one to control the filter cutoff on a recorded keyboard track in my mix session. I like controller knobs especially for recording automation—this is the best!

Xkey is super fun with positive feeling keys and polyphonic after touch; I like the touch sensitive push button pitch bend buttons, octave up/down, and sustain switches—there are no foot pedals required. If you like to write songs and work while traveling lite, the Xjam and Xkey plus a laptop running Cubase is the way to go!

Both the Xjam and Xkey come with lite versions of WaveLab LE, Cubase LE, and Bitwig Studio 8-track. The Xjam sells for \$139 MSRP while the Artesia Xkey 25-keyboard controller is \$139. There are also a Bluetooth wireless version and a 37-key version of Xkey either at \$199 MSRP.

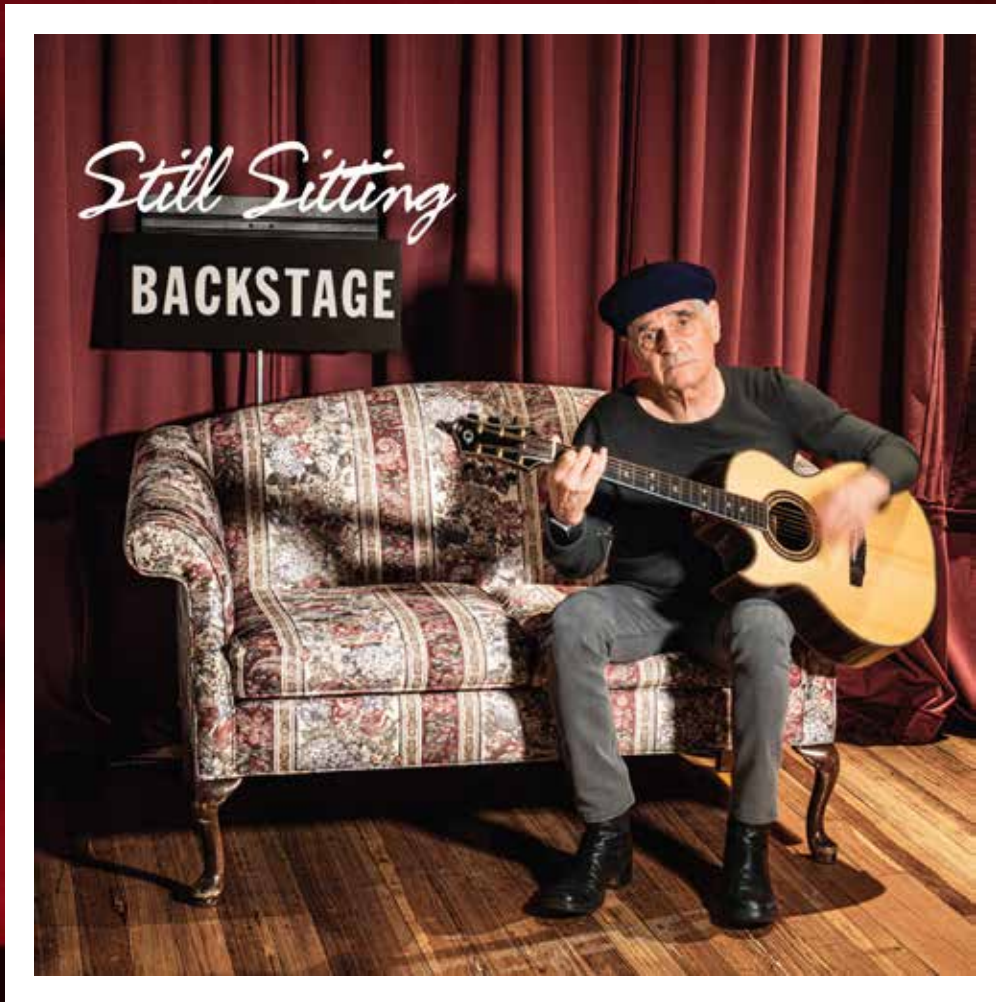
artesia-pro.com



BARRY RUDOLPH is a recording engineer/mixer who has worked on over 30 gold and platinum records. He has recorded and/or mixed Lynyrd Skynyrd, Hall & Oates, Pat Benatar, Rod Stewart, the Corrs and more. Barry has his own futuristic music mixing facility in North Hollywood called Tones 4 \$ Studios. He is a lifetime Grammy-voting member of NARAS and a contributing editor for *Mix Magazine*. barryrudolph.com

BOB DAVOLI

Still Sitting Backstage



From the author of *Wistfully Yours*, all new original album available everywhere November 18 by Gutbrain Records

www.BOBDAVOLI.COM



ROCKING THE STOCKINGS STOCKING STUFFERS

BY ROB PUTNAM

Finding holiday stocking stuffers for musicians should be easy. Generally speaking, they are. However, there's an arena-sized difference between a tired set of guitar strings—the musician's equivalent of a tie for dad on Father's Day—and something sleek, nuanced and cool... like a pair of sunglasses with built-in Bluetooth speakers (yes, they exist). After a marathon Zoom session with the North Pole, *Music Connection* once again delivers the goods. Last year we asserted that our list was worth its weight in gold records. This year we've raised the stakes and declare that it's now worth its weight in platinum records... because, you know, intellectual capital supply chain issues. After reading this list, all you'll need will be a stocking.

from the U.K. It's believed by some (presumably) that slow shipping times were a contributing factor to America's call for independence back in the day. etsy.com/listing/1138029115/minature-amp-guitar-pick-storage-box etsy.com/listing/1138029115/minature-amp-guitar-pick-storage-box

YOSH'S DRUM WAREHOUSE VOLUME 2 \$79.99 (INTRO PRICE)

Created by GRAMMY-winning engineer and producer John "Yosh" Jaszcz alongside drummer Kevin Kelley, Yosh's Drum Warehouse Volume 2 is a drum bundle with more than 2,000 new multi-sampled, multi-velocity drum hits recorded with three different kits, a trio of toms and kicks and more than a dozen snares. It offers 24-bit,

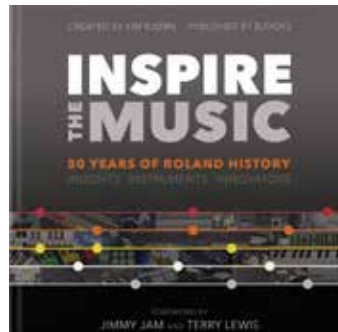
BOSE SUNGLASSES WITH OPEN-EAR BLUETOOTH HEADPHONES \$129

(Relax. There's also a cheaper \$60 option.) Sunglasses with built-in speakers? Hepcats have likely ached for them since the day sunglasses hit store shelves. Consider what these would look like if produced in 1975. The entire assembly would likely weigh north of 50 pounds, cost thousands and only carry enough juice to play a 45 at 33 RPMs. You'd be the coolest uncool kid in your 'hood. Something else that's rad about these: while you can hear your selected audio with shades deployed, bystanders, essentially, cannot. tinyurl.com/2hm5et46, tinyurl.com/2hm5et46 Razer Anzu offers its version for a comparatively cheap \$70. tinyurl.com/2264z64m

for that brief time that it's at large, help indulge the passion with a tiny steel drum. The good news is that it's so small that when the neighbors do complain--this is how you'll discover which are cool and which aren't--it's easily hidden and the prosecutor will have to drop all charges. Or at least the drum-related ones. If the neighbors are cool, let them in on the secret. If they're not, then perhaps they deserve to have their sleep disturbed. tinyurl.com/2p9bpvbd

INSPIRE THE MUSIC: 50 YEARS OF ROLAND HISTORY \$75

A 400-page hardback tome on gear-maker Roland's 50-year history, *Inspire The Music* is far more than a bland retelling. The book contains 70 interviews with



BESPOKE 3D-PRINTED AMP BADGE \$25

An Etsy entrepreneur offers customized amp badges that can include a band or player's name. Buyers can get creative and/or mischievous with badges such as "Amplifier," "Too loud!" or "Goes2Eleven." Have some fun and make people second-guess themselves with an intentional misspelling such as "Martial," "Marshall" or "Partial." Amp badges are available in various sizes, styles and colors. Buyers aren't restricted to the Marshall-style font... but then when has the Marshall font ever been a restriction? etsy.com/listing/907297388/custom-3d-printed-guitar-amp-badges

In a similar vein, there are also mini amp-style pick boxes at \$26. Order early, though, since they ship

48 kHz WAV files that get along famously with any DAW or sampler. It's like having a dual battalion of drummers at your back ready to wage percussive war. Except these soldiers run on cheap and virtually weightless electricity rather than equally shocking MREs. tinyurl.com/5hd5s5ap

FULLY-CUSTOMIZED BAND OR ARTIST POSTER \$18

Get inventive with a unique personalized poster for the musician in your life. Make one for a real upcoming gig, a past one or even a fantasy bill... such as headlining Woodstock with support acts Jimi Hendrix and The Who. You can upload your own image. The only limits are your imagination and graph-hack skills. posterburner.com

PERSONALIZED GUITAR PICK HOLDER \$15

If guitarists can sometimes forget their name, they can also forget what instrument they play. This personalized guitar pick holder solves both problems: it reminds them both of their name and the instrument they play, since it's in the shape of a guitar. If they forget where they've left their pick holder... well, the magic of our stocking stuffer ideas has its limits. etsy.com/listing/1202875190/personalized-guitar-pick-holder-guitar

IRONKOI STEEL TONGUE DRUM EIGHT NOTES, SIX INCHES \$19.99

Musician or not, there's a little drummer in each of us that screams to be let out... until the neighbors scream for it to be let back in. But

artists and designers: the people who witnessed the birth and evolution of Roland's audio armory firsthand. tinyurl.com/2p94av4f

CUSTOM PLASTIC AMPLIFIER AIRPODS CASE/KEYCHAIN \$25.95

This AirPods case is patterned after a Marshall amp head, but it will likely hold picks, spare change or even a tiny key. But then why would you have a case for a key... that's five times the size of the key? These are issues that you should explore with your locksmith or therapist—whichever charges the least. There's a 12-character maximum on the name, but that's long enough for the essentials such as "Martial," "Marshall" or "Goes2Eleven," which observant readers will recall from earlier. Less observant readers will recall them... from somewhere. tinyurl.com/yvm7hu6n

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GIFTS UNDER A

▶ JACKSON X SERIES CONCERT CBXNT DX IV

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◀ OWC ENVOY PRO FX

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▼ JBL EON ONE COMPACT

The JBL EON ONE Compact packs a professional-grade speaker, a full-featured 4-channel mixer and Bluetooth control into JBL's most compact battery-powered PA, weighing in at just 17.6 pounds. Sound your best in seconds with premium effects and presets that you can customize right on your phone or tablet using the JBL EON ONE Compact Control app—no engineer needed. Presenters, fitness instructors and emcees will appreciate EON ONE Compact's ducking feature, which lowers background music volume when speech input is detected. Peer-to-peer Bluetooth lets you broadcast music playback. **\$629.00**



▲ UA VOLT 276 STUDIO PACK

The UA Volt 276 studio pack includes UA's latest 2-in / 2-out USB-C audio interface with two premium grade preamps. A large diaphragm condenser microphone, studio-grade headphones and an added-value software bundle is included. **\$429**



GRAND



▶ DPA MICROPHONES 2028 SUPER CARDIOID VOCAL MIC

On a live stage, the 2028 super-cardioid vocal microphone from DPA Microphones delivers open and transparent sound. The 2028 has a supercardioid capsule with DPA's famously flat off-axis response. Besides a high gain-before-feedback, this characteristic makes it easier for sound engineers to handle bleed from other instruments at close proximity. **\$700**

▶ AVID M-BOX STUDIO

AVID's new M-Box Studio is an eight-channel console-style audio interface designed to deliver exceptional sound for just about any recording situation. The AVID M-Box features loopback mixing, real-time on-board DSP effects and Bluetooth I/O capability. The Avid M-Box Studio features four XLR combo-style inputs, the front two preamps variable impedance inputs for maximum flexibility when recording guitar and vocals. **\$899**



▼ EPIPHONE HUMMINGBIRD

The new Epiphone Inspired by Gibson Hummingbird blends solid woods, vintage appointments, and a Fishman Sonicore under-saddle pickup and a Sonitone preamp. This acoustic-electric is outfitted with gold Epiphone Deluxe tuners, a Kalamazoo style headstock, and is available in Natural and Aged Cherry Sunburst finishes. **\$849**



▲ THE PHANTOMFOCUS ECHAIR™

The PhantomFocus eChair™ is the ultimate chair for the audio professional and the only chair to be nominated for a prestigious TEC Award. The PhantomFocus eChair is used by many of the world's top recording engineers and is now available in six different models. **\$602.00 - \$832.00**

20^{MC}
22

GIFTS UNDER A

▼ KORG LIANO

The new KORG Liano digital Piano has 88 keys and features KORG's proprietary light touch (LS) keyboard action. Access to KORG's award-winning software is included at no extra charge. **\$329.99**



▶ KALI AUDIO IN-8 V2

Kali's new Audio IN-8 V2 is part of Kali's latest generation of nearfield monitors. The IN-8 V2 features a newly design amplifier platform that allows for 12 dB less shelf noise while increasing the maximum SPL 3 dB. The IN-8 V2 features an 8 inch woofer, a 4-inch midrange and a 1-inch coaxial tweeter. **\$798 (Pair)**



▼ FOCUSRITE VOCASTER DM14V AND BROADCAST KIT

Podcasters, streamers, vloggers and voiceover artists will love the Vocaster Broadcast Kit, a podcasting accessory bundle that pairs the Vocaster DM14v dynamic microphone and Vocaster HP60v headphones to bring studio quality to any podcast setup. **\$249.99**



▲ CAD AUDIO E100SP

The CAD Audio E100SP studio pack contains everything you need to start recording your next vocal track, podcast, voiceover project, or acoustic instrument track. This value-packed bundle from CAD includes an E100Sx large diaphragm super-cardioid condenser studio mic, a CX2 2-channel USB audio interface (24-bit/96kHz), an AS10 mini vocal shield, a VP1 microphone pop filter, and a CLC25 mic cable. **\$429.99**



GRAND

▶ SQUIER CONTEMPORARY ACTIVE STARCASTER

The Squier Contemporary Active Starcaster electric guitar is an evolution of the original Fender Starcaster model, which featured an iconic semi-hollow guitar design when it was introduced in the '70s. Now redesigned with an SQR Rail humbucker pickup in the bridge position and an Atomic humbucker in the neck, the Contemporary Tele RH is ready for any playing situation. **\$479.00**



▶ YYZ SHAPE SHIFTER

It's been great seeing Rush's Geddy Lee out and about playing again—and using his Tech 21 gear. At the *South Park* 25th Anniversary show, all he brought was his YYZ pedal. The YYZ packs the essence of Geddy Lee's tone—and his gargantuan rack rig—into a compact preamplifier/DI pedal. **\$249**



◀ SIMMONS TITAN 50 E-KIT

The new Simmons Titan 50 e-kit delivers powerful drum sounds, great playing feel, Bluetooth and MIDI connectivity, and a free mobile app that provides training tools and more. This new electronic drum-kit is quick and easy to set up, complete with a large 10" dual-zone mesh snare with rimshot detection, three 8" mesh toms, and sensitive hi-hat, crash, and ride cymbals. The Titan 50 represents the pinnacle of performance for beginners and working professionals alike. **\$379**

▶ THE FIX COLLABORATOR

The FIX COLLABORATOR is a four-channel analog high-definition headphone amp with four individual level controls, one for each set of headphones. Each of the headphone outputs has its own power amp to minimize crosstalk between outputs. The Collaborator has a built-in talk-back Mic, that can be mixed into each of the headphones, allowing "collaboration" between and can be used as a room mic with a drummer or singers. **\$499**



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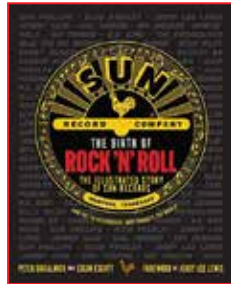
www.TRENDPR.com

BOOK STORE

The Birth of Rock & Roll: The Illustrated Story of Sun Records and 70 Recordings that Changed the World

By Peter Guralnick, Colin Escott, et. al.
(hardcover) \$60.00

From primal blues artists like Howlin' Wolf and B.B. King to long nights in the studio with Elvis and Jerry Lee Lewis, the book explains how Sun was shaped and how it redefined American

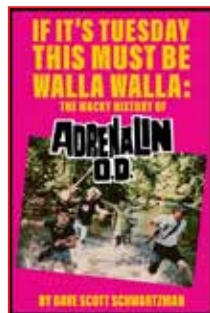


music. Featuring hundreds of rare images, the book also contains an exclusive QR code to an official Sun Records created playlist. Available on all major streaming services, it and can be viewed here: sunrecords.lnk.to/million-dollarquartet

If It's Tuesday This Must Be Walla Walla: The Wacky History of Adrenalin O.D.

By Dave Scott Schwartzman
(paperback) \$29.99

Drummer Schwartzman delivers a comprehensive, 300-plus page history of his '80s punk unit, one of New Jersey's most beloved bands, presenting an array of tour stories, photos, fliers, and, of course, plenty of laughs. Features never-published photos, a complete A.O.D. discography, and shows why their on-stage chemistry turned into what's been called a cross between Minor Threat and Don Rickles.



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Rock Camp

By David Fishof with Travis Atria
(hardcover) \$49.95

Fishof created the Rock and Roll Fantasy Camp, where over the past 25 years 6,000 campers and counselors have lived, played, and become family with rockstars. Campers get to meet and jam with their musical idols—including Joe Perry, Vince Neil, Jack Bruce, and Jeff Beck—in legendary venues like Abbey Road in London, Whisky A GoGo in West Hollywood. *Rock Camp* shares the history of the camp through interviews with the people who got to live out their dreams.



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Anatomy of 55 More Songs: The Oral History of Top Hits That Changed Rock, R&B and Soul

By Marc Myers
(paperback) \$27.00

This hefty book—a sequel to Myers' previous compendium of 45 songs—is a real kick to read. Hard to put it down, really, as Myers gets first-

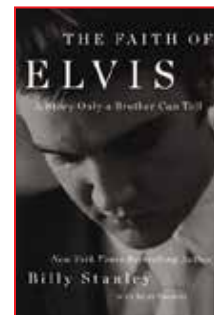


hand accounts of the artists and writers who wrote and recorded some of the biggest radio hits of their day.: The Hollies, Todd Rundgren, Chic, Yes, Sinners, Black Sabbath, Carly Simon, Roxy Music, Hall & Oates, Redbone, Pet Shop Boys, Donna Summer, and many more.

The Faith of Elvis

By Billy Stanley and Ken Sanders
(paperback) \$19.69

Stepbrother of Elvis Presley, Stanley shares the untold story of the iconic singer's Christian faith—its deep influence on his music, films, relationships, commitment to his family and fans, and his love for the Gospel. Stanley gives his first-hand accounts of Elvis' life and abiding

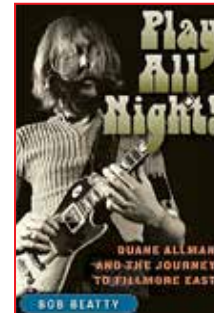


belief in Jesus and heaven, which the book posits has been downplayed. Though Presley struggled with addiction and with his notorious playboy image, Stanley makes the case that the true Elvis was deeply committed to ensuring his family and his fans felt his commitment to Jesus Christ.

Play All Night!: Duane Allman and the Journey to Fillmore East

By Bob Beatty
(paperback) \$28.00

The 1971 Allman Brothers Band album *At Fillmore East* was a musical manifesto years



in the making. In *Play All Night!*, author Beatty dives deep into the motivations and musical background of band founder Duane Allman to tell the story of what made this album not just a smash hit, but one of the most important live rock albums in history.

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– Top Shelf Music**

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– Hanging On Sunset**

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– Remezcla**



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From Recording Studio to Reinventing Music Credits: As a veteran mixer, engineer and producer who's worked with Papa Roach, Hoobastank, Bush, and countless others, Jay Baumgardner knows a little something about the importance of attribution. He'll be the first to admit that because he had a manager and solid representation, most of his credits have always been correct. But, as owner of North Hollywood-based NRG Recording Studios (home to sessions with famous rock bands like Linkin Park and superstars like **Beyonce** and Future), he realized how many engineers and mixers didn't have professional support and lacked the knowledge and access needed to ensure the accuracy of their credits.

At one point in his career, when an iTunes exec visited to meet Linkin Park, Baumgardner had asked him why the platform didn't list credits for all the people that contribute to the music. The exec shrugged and said the labels don't give them that information. The exec challenged, "Why don't you do something about it?" Teaming with entrepreneur and former Blue Shield CTO, Aaron Kaufman, and producer, engineer, and former NRG cohort, Kyran de Keijzer, Baumgardner launched Muso.AI to do just that. In an effort to solve the credit issue for his colleagues, friends and customers and create a tool to serve millions of music industry professionals, the company has now grown to employ 50 people with de Keijzer as CPO running day to day operations and overseeing a remote team based in Amsterdam, Ukraine, and the U.S.



How It Works: By building a base catalog using A.I., an engine collects and merges data from various sources using machine learning models. These models enrich the data, taking it from raw, unindexed and unsearchable to indexed and cataloged data points. By doing this, Muso.AI is creating a starting point for music professionals to search for, edit and manage their legacy metadata. Their database is a representation of the content available to stream; if it's not on a streaming service, it's not in the catalog.

Currently, there are over 5.5 million professional profiles in their database. Credit data can be amended by users only after identity verification which involves scanning and submitting an ID card; any claim for an artist profile requires proof of ownership of the artist's social media account. Any credit changes submitted are ultimately validated by artists and master rights holders. There are several other validation steps in place before data is shared. Verified profiles and artists can make changes to the base catalog, which in turn will be sent to industry partners.

Muso.AI Pro: This premium service allows users to turn their credits into daily stats and historical trends, track streams, playlists, charts and more. They can view daily credit stats from 11 platforms including Apple Music, Spotify, SoundCloud, Tidal, Shazam and TikTok. Pro provides daily notifications with the latest updates. Another element of the Pro package is a managed discography playlist, in which users can sync their credits with playlists to allow an efficient way for their work to be heard. The playlist gets updated automatically as new credits are added and old inaccurate ones are fixed. Pro also enables users to dive deeper into their career trends with historical graphs for tracks, albums and collaborators. The staff of Muso.AI believes that it's time that credits are celebrated and modernized. They encourage users to share career achievements discovered on Muso.AI with their social media followers.

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GORILLAPOCALYPSE

features singer-songwriter I.Z.M.B. joining forces with beat producer Grizz La Flore and lyricist Gary "GB" Bernard to create a vibey cocktail of sound that's perfect for both the dance floor and lounging by the pool. The result is an LP equal parts passion, irony and fun.

@__izmb__
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▲ FRIDAY PILOTS SUPERSTAR CLUB

"This photo was taken outside of Drew's studio while we were in L.A. putting the finishing touches on the *I Love You, Robot Superstar!* EP," says frontman Caleb Hiltunen. "Most of our songs start pretty bare bones on a guitar, so whenever we hit a roadblock in the writing process, it always helps to bring it back to where it began."



▲ LORDE: SOLAR POWER TOUR

Pop superstar Lorde has entrusted FOH mixing engineer Philip J. Harvey for her live audio needs. Currently, Harvey is wrapping up his work for the singer's Solar Power Tour. DPA has been entrusted by Harvey for Lorde's live performances since 2017. "I love how natural and real her voice sounds with the d:facto 4018VL."



▲ WEYES BLOOD FOR SYNTH HISTORY

Natalie Mering of Weyes Blood shows off some of her studio essentials for Synth History's Recommends Series, including a Sequential Circuits Prophet Rev 2, a racy Disney black light poster and creepy Jim Morrison drawing.



▲ WORMHOLEDEATH AT ZERO BY ONE SOUND

Jason Ruch and Randy Ball of Zero By One Sound (Ox1 Sound) have been named to lead audio and video productions for WormholeDeath USA and EpicTronic. Ruch (pictured) works out of his own commercial recording studio, Zero By One Sound, in Cherry Hill, NJ.

Producer Playback

"My style is similar to [Japanese martial art] aikido. It's all based on natural momentum. You can't plan that. When you release a record, you never know. It could go to the stratosphere but it might not."

– DAMION "DAMIZZA" YOUNG, (Mariah Carey, Garbage, Lil Wayne)





▲ THE BEATLES 'REVOLVER' IN DOLBY ATMOS

Revolver, The Beatles' 1966 album that brought fans into a new era of psychedelia, has been newly mixed by producer Giles Martin and engineer Sam Okell in stereo and Dolby Atmos, sourced from its 1966 mono master tape. *Revolver's* new Special Edition follows the universally acclaimed remixed and expanded Special Editions of *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (2017), *The Beatles* ('White Album') (2018), *Abbey Road* (2019), and *Let It Be* (2021).



▲ PHANTOMFOCUS AT THE WORKSHOP

Pictured (l-r): Lead PhantomFocus installation engineer Adam David Smith with composer, audio engineer, and The Workshop studio owner Pablo Vega, pictured with the studio's new PFM UHD-1000 Master Reference Monitor System, Carl Tatz Edition™ Dual 15K Keyboard Workstation by Argosy and PhantomFocus eChair™.

▲ LOG CABIN STUDIO

Middle Ridge Studio, a log cabin recording studio, is a hidden gem in the hills of the Diablo Mountain Range Parkfield, CA, roughly three and a half hours north of L.A. and south of San Francisco. The studio is a 20' x 30' one-room setup, fully equipped with both modern and vintage recording equipment, and instruments.

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KATELYN CLAMPETT

Writer and producer Katelyn Clampett embarked on her jangle journey during high school. By the time she was 15, she'd begun to experiment with Cubase. A scholarship to Berklee College of Music soon followed, then she moved to Los Angeles in 2010 and on to Nashville in 2013. Clampett has written with a number of country and Christian artists, for an array of TV shows and commercials and has performed with Selena Gomez and The Scene as a background singer. "Daddy's Little Girl"—a song she co-wrote with Ernie Halter—was used by Nick Edwards in his 2022—audition and has since earned millions of YouTube views.

Clampett's roots are in pop. "Working in pop initially gave me some chops that transferred into the genres that felt more natural," she observes. "That's allowed me to be the girl that's doing the demo in the room as well as writing. I don't do as much Christian anymore and that was a conscious choice. Country is my forte, but I still do a little pop."

Over the course of her career, Clampett has worked at a number of studios, notably Nashville's Station West. But more recently she's turned to her own creative home space where she records virtually all of her work. Being a woman in a field that is still largely dominated by men, Clampett finds that she has to be at the apex of her game in order to be recognized. "My chops have to be good enough so that I'm listened to," she asserts. "Our voices aren't heard or validated, or we have to feed them through a man. I have to hone in on my craft, advocate for myself and trust my instincts. I didn't start out feeling that way. It's something I had to grow and build."

Clampett is fond of using unconventional sonic sources, such as toasters and high heels in her work. "I got bored with the same old sounds," she says of that choice.

"The productions I was drawn to had something tasty that drew me in and encouraged me to do the same. There's construction going on at a neighbor's place now and I've sampled some of that. They're such great sounds: the saws, hammers and even some of their shouts. Those types of things are fun."

Musicians and engineers are often obsessed with gear, and Clampett counts herself among the gear geeks. "I'm a huge vocal production nerd," she admits. "Townsend came out with the [Sphere] L22 Precision Microphone Modeling System. I bought it during the pandemic and fell in love with the setup because it enabled me to model some of my favorite vintage mics or [had] great options for some really nice [modern] ones. The sound is comparable to all of them."

These days she's working on a number of singles, but aims to release an EP or perhaps even a full-length record sometime in 2023. She's been in "artist mode," as she calls it, for the past several months as she develops her live show.

Visit katelynclampett.com, [instagram.com/katelynclampett](https://www.instagram.com/katelynclampett)

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— Mindi Abair



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THE 3 MOST IMPORTANT

... lessons she's learned as a writer and producer are:

- Don't over-produce. Sometimes I have the inclination to want to prove my chops. I have to remember to simply be confident in doing the production that's needed and not one that's rooted in ego.
- The song shines first. When you have a great one, you don't have to decorate it much.
- Use what you have. Don't reach for the newest or most expensive piece of gear. There's a lot that can be done with just a little.

“Figure It Out”

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Featuring Singles:

“Isn't It Strange”

and

“What Else”

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Carleen Donovan

Founder

The Oriel Company

Years with Company: January 2021

Address: 37 West 20th St., Ste. 1004
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Phone: 212-677-0014

Web: theoriel.co

Email: carleen@theoriel.co

Clients: Questlove, Zoe Kravitz, Robyn, Andre 3000, Phoebe Bridgers, Lenny Kravitz, Adam Levine

BACKGROUND

Having already established herself as a publicity and management expert, Carleen Donovan was seeking new opportunities. Instead of joining an existing organization, she formed Donovan Public Relations. She shuttered that outfit in 2020 in favor of starting The Oriel Company, a similar venture with even greater reach. Most recently, the firm launched a presence in Nashville.

Homecoming

I founded DPR in 2015. We had offices in New York City and L.A., and I was looking to expand. I'd been approached a few times to be purchased or absorbed into other agencies.

Jen Appel and Chloe Walsh, the other cofounders of the company, approached me. They were looking to make a move from the agency they were at. We worked together many years ago with another agency, so it was kind of like coming home. We have a 20-year history and are like a family.

What Publicists Need

We need clients to come prepared with their 12-month plans. We talk through every level of those plans. What content can we create? What is the narrative going to be? What's the social strategy, and what's the online presence going to look like? Once we have all those elements, we look at ways we can amplify and grow it.

Essential Questions

Every artist campaign is different, but at the foundation of everyone's campaign is: what does the calendar look like? What are their pegs going to be for the media? What's going to be the single? When is the artist going to release an album? When are they going to tour? When are they available to speak with the press?

Being Charitable

We work with a multitude of nonprofit organizations. We say to our team, "Please provide us with ideas for charitable contributions." We want to convey a shared understanding of purpose in all we do.

Paying It Forward

Mentorship and mental health are two big priorities. They were part of our ethos long before they were in vogue. Thinking about the health and mental wellbeing of our staff is paramount. This is a 24/7 job, and we're always looking for ways to incorporate balance into our work life



"When I started, the labels would dictate how you worked a campaign by the Mississippi River. If you're on one side, you work that half of the country. And if you're on the other side, you do the other half. That would never work today."

and educate our team on ways of achieving it. When I was coming up, many young publicists did not have this sort of support. Quite frankly, there was a lack of mentorship, so nurturing the next generation is important to us.

Finding and Picking Clients

We get a lot of referrals from talent, and their teams. A lot comes to us through our social channels. We also pursue the talent we work with. We work with every level, from unsigned talent to iconic, award-winning superstars. We pick clients we're passionate about and clients we [believe] we can help achieve their goals.

Representing Estates

Working for an estate can be very exciting. You're looking to honor the legacy and find new ways to expose it to new generations. For example, we represent Phife Dawg's estate, [the rapper] from A Tribe Called Quest. We worked on [promoting] a posthumous album to his existing fan base and to new generations of listeners.

The Artist's Role

What are the goals? What are you asking the publicist to do for you? You should be managing your social and online presences and have a sense of that. Come prepared to help the publicist do their job. Public relations strategies cover a full year, so come with a 12-month plan.

Staying Current With Media

Stories can break at a moment's notice. How and when you approach a journalist can have a significant impact.

You have your traditional print outlets and television shows that continue to resonate, but there's a new crop of online outlets that can change week-to-week. You need to be on top of

which outlets are having an impact and help your client rise above the noise.

Seeking Coverage, Being Innovative

I had a client go to the Met Gala this year. We pitched a getting-ready-with-style piece. We said, "What's another way we can tell the story of this exciting night in fashion?" So we created a time-lapse video of the dress being created, brought over to the U.S., being presented at the fitting, and then arriving on the red carpet.

It was another way of telling the story and keeping things fresh.

Switching Modes

Something a lot of people in the public relations world struggle with is changing gears. Your to-do list sometimes has to go out the window, and you have to be okay with that. You never know what the day is going to bring.

One day, I came into the office on Good Friday to do some filing and clean my desk. And then I got news of an album from a client unexpectedly breaking a month early. You have to jump into action.

Opportunities Everywhere

A lot of students believe they need to be in a major city, like New York or L.A. I suggest that students look around their own

communities, as well. It's surprising how many internship opportunities are available from local media outlets, college radio stations, and local performance venues. All these places are looking for help. And when you're looking for a job and have that on your resume, it's going to be very advantageous.

The Female Factor

[Staffing The Oriel Company with women] wasn't by design, but women are recognized as great communicators. And I've always found the entertainment public relations field to be a dynamic and creative environment for women. It's a job sector that consistently allows plenty of room for advancement. Women have the ingenuity to play the long game. We're also recognized as being nurturing, and that's something that lends itself to creating a successful P.R. campaign.

A Single Territory

For a lot of our campaigns, we not only manage and execute the domestic strategy but we also dictate the international strategy. It's one world with the internet. If you do an interview in Japan, it's going to have an impact here, so we really like to get involved with the international strategy.

When I started, the labels would dictate how you worked a campaign by the Mississippi River. If you're on one side, you work that half of the country. And if you're on the other side, you do the other half. That would never work today.

Holistic Service

A lot of independent P.R. firms keep things very siloed. Here, you get the strength of the entire firm. Our resources and network are shared with all our clients. Everyone gets the strength of the company. And every project here is a priority.

OPPS

Moonbug Entertainment wants a Manager, Music Creative Development.

The successful candidate will have overseen songwriting and lyric writing projects from inception through production for children's musical content. Reporting to the Senior Creative Executive, you will be helping expand the **CoComelon** music catalog across various media streams. You will be responsible for developing and creating original songs and nursery rhymes as well as expanding the CoComelon soundscape. Based in Los Angeles. Apply at LinkedIn.

BMI seeks Music Researcher.

Occasional part-time hourly work with hours ranging from 0-25 hours per week. Assignments include onsite research in businesses during late evenings, including weekends. Assignments also require completion of detailed reports following on-site visits. Conduct in-person research in businesses as assigned. Complete detailed reports of music used in a business during in-person research. Recording of music performance(s). Based in San Francisco. Apply at ShowBizJobs.

Sam Ash Music Corp. needs Music Store Sales people.

As a sales associate, you'll be a vital contributor to their goal of providing the knowledge, guidance and very best service possible to ensure that their customers are treated to a great experience on every visit or phone call. If you love

making music and helping others, they'd love to speak to you. Based in Margate, FL. Apply ZipRecruiter.

Warner Music Group wants an Assistant, A&R.

Job responsibilities include (but are not limited to) handling all administrative aspects of work for multiple A&R executives, as well as more detailed project management and independent projects on various levels. Provide administrative and office support activities for A&R executives including but not limited to: Answer and screen telephone calls and receive and direct visitors. Coordinate calendars, scheduling, and meeting logistics. Prepare written correspondence and communicate internally and to third parties (producers, artist managers, lawyers, etc.). Coordinate travel for executives and artists. Log and respond to demo submissions. Based in Los Angeles. Apply at LinkedIn.

For More Career Opportunities, check out musicconnection.com daily. And sign up for MC's Weekly Bulletin newsletter.

LABELS-RELEASES SIGNINGS

Progressive doom metal band The Abbey has signed to Season of Mist. The Abbey's debut release for the label will be the "A Thousand Dead Witches" single and video.

"We feel honored and privileged



▲ LOLO ZOUAÏ IS A PLAYGIRL

Pop-R&B star Lolo Zouaï has released a new album called *Playgirl*, via Keep it on the Lolo/RCA Records. "This whole album is about not boxing myself into any one genre or sound," Zouaï said in a statement. "Once I had that revelation—that my album could be like my life itself—it unlocked an entirely new outlook on making music for me." Contact dana@biz3.net for more info.

to get to write a new chapter in the history of **Season of Mist**—a distinguished label that has the courage and vision to do something extraordinary," said the band in a statement. "We do believe that the collaboration between Season of Mist and The Abbey is going to lead us to great things." Contact katy@season-of-mist.com for more info.

Pop-rapper Zzz. has signed to Warner Records in partnership with Grade A Productions. It was **Lil Bibby** who founded **Grade A Productions** and of this signing he said, "It's a privilege to be able to show the world an extraordinary creative talent like **Zzz**. We're thrilled to be working with Aaron, Tom, and the exceptional team at Warner Records for such an incredible artist and making his

DIY Spotlight

OCEAN ALLEY

Psych-rock sextet Ocean Alley are on their way to becoming one of Australia's hottest properties. They've had to use plenty of smarts to get to this point, from where they started.

The group describes their sound as a mix of different genres.

"It's a melting pot of all of our influences and musical idols," they say. "We are constantly changing and evolving our sound, so it rarely stays in the same place for too long. If I had to label it, I would call it rock with a surf-psychedelic main ingredient."

Ocean Alley has had a great year, performing at the John Cain Arena in Melbourne to 10,500 people, but they certainly

haven't had it easy going the DIY route. "To me, [DIY] means doing it tough for a few years before finding your footing in the industry—sacrificing time, energy and money to do what needs to be done to make it to the next level," they say. "We have done everything ourselves. From doing professional shows, our wonderful management team have been indispensable and are just as important as the band itself."

The guys feel that the music industry is just getting started again post-COVID.

"We've all had a long hibernation in terms of live shows and new material in general," they say. "The great beast that is the



music industry has got a lot of lost ground to cover, and in this post-COVID world, I think we're about to see a massive shift in terms of what artists can accomplish. We had our 'holiday,' now it's time to get back into the action!"

The new album is *Low Altitude Living*, and they say it reflects who they are as a band and individuals.

"Everybody in life has their own story, and we have tried to tell a piece of that through this album.

We live by the ocean, we love our friends, we eat, drink, have a good time and try to find the many beautiful things that are out there to find," they say. "The album talks about change, reflection, love and loss and camaraderie. We didn't set out to explore those things intentionally, but it was how we were feeling at the time of writing and how we still feel."

For more information, visit oceanalley.com.au.

vision come to life." Contact yashar.zadeh@warnerrecords.com for more info.

PROPS

Brandon Davis and Jeff Levin have been promoted to Executive VPs and Co-Heads of Pop A&R at Atlantic Records. Based in Los Angeles, both report to Atlantic President of A&R **Pete Ganbarg**. Davis and Levin were most recently Sr. VPs of A&R.

Said Ganbarg in a statement: "Both Brandon and Jeff have worked at Atlantic their entire professional lives, rising from entry level intern and assistant positions to become an integral part of the leadership of our A&R team. The new artists they've signed and championed, including **Lizzo, Melanie Martinez, Oliver Tree, Charlie Puth, Ava Max, and Jaymes Young**, are now cornerstones of the roster. I couldn't be happier for them and am thrilled to recognize their contributions with these well-deserved promotions." Contact sheila.richman@atlanticrecords.com for more info.

Indie band Glass Animals' song "Heat Waves" has become the longest charting song by any artist in Billboard Hot 100 history.

The song has now been in the charts for 91 weeks. Speaking to Billboard, singer **Dave Bayley** said, "Wow, all I can say is wow. Many of you know when I wrote this song it was about missing someone I loved very dearly. Never in my wildest dreams did I think that it would lead to so much love and connection across the globe. You all have done that. Thank you to everyone who has helped this song reach so many people. You know who you are. Thank you." Contact nicole.hajjar@umusic.com.

BRETT CALLWOOD has written about music for two decades, originally for Kerrang!, Classic Rock, Metal Hammer and more in the U.K. He's the author of two books, about Detroit proto-punks, the MC5 and the Stooges. He's now the music editor at LA Weekly, and has regular bylines in the SF Weekly, Tucson Weekly and idobi Radio, as well as here in Music Connection. He can be reached at brettcallwood@gmail.com



▲ COURTNEY MARIE ANDREWS PREMIERES LOOSE FUTURE

Grammy-nominated singer-songwriter Courtney Marie Andrews appeared on the *Kelly Clarkson* show early in November to premiere the title track from her new album *Loose Future*. The rest of November through mid-December will see Andrews touring North America, before making her way to Europe for all of March. Contact stella@tcbpr.com for more info.

The LEGAL Beat

BY GLENN LITWAK



Using Rappers' Lyrics in Criminal Court

They contend that rappers lyrics are being held to a higher standard. Some people may argue this may be true but, in general, rappers' lyrics (as opposed to other types of music) more often discuss violence or criminal behavior. In any event, some in the music industry argue that such use of a rapper's lyrics in court unduly prejudices the jury against the defendant. In California we have Evidence Code Section 352 which states:

"The court in its discretion

specifically address rap lyrics.

Other prominent music industry companies and artists have joined Warner in support of the open letter, such as Spotify, Tidal, Capitol Records, and Universal Music Group as well as artists Drake, Megan Thee Stallion, John Legend and Post Malone.

In September of 2022, California passed a new law, "The Decriminalizing Artistic Expression Act." It is intended to restrict such use of rappers' lyrics

"This is a way to stop overzealous prosecutors from using creative expression, which should never be prohibited."

However, the new law allows the judge some discretion so a rapper's lyrics could still be used in evidence when it is relevant.

The "Restoring Artists Protection Act" (the RAP Act) is a proposal to restrict the use of rap lyrics as evidence in federal court cases.

We will have to see what new state and/or federal laws may be passed to address this issue.

"It appears the Warner coalition of music industry insiders want laws that specifically address rap lyrics."

may exclude evidence if its probative value is substantially outweighed by the probability that its admission will (a) necessitate undue consumption of time or (b) create substantial danger of undue prejudice of confusing the issues, or of misleading the jury."

The above already limits prejudicial evidence, but it appears the Warner coalition of music industry insiders want laws that

as evidence in criminal cases. I think this makes sense, since, for example, even if a rapper raps about a murder, it obviously does not mean he or she committed the murder and it would be highly prejudicial. Some see this use of rap lyrics as an attack on free speech, especially on Black artists.

The new law was introduced by California state representative Reggie Jones-Sawyer, who stated:

GLENN LITWAK is a veteran entertainment attorney based in Santa Monica, CA. He has represented platinum selling recording artists, Grammy winning music producers, hit songwriters, management and production companies, music publishers and independent record labels. Glenn is also a frequent speaker at music industry conferences around the country, such as South by Southwest and the Billboard Music in Film and TV Conference. Email Litwak at gtlaw59@gmail.com or visit glennlitwak.com.

This article is a very brief overview of the subject matter and does not constitute legal advice.



I Quit My Day Job Because I Make More Money From My Music.

Matthew Vander Boegh, TAXI Member

That's every musician's dream, isn't it —quitting your day gig because you make more money with your music. Well, that's my life now, and here's how I did it...

I joined TAXI.

Looking back, I wish I'd joined years earlier. TAXI taught me how to create music that people in the industry actually *need*. Then they gave me 1,200 opportunities a year to *pitch* my music!



It Didn't Take That Long

I promised myself I'd quit my job as a college professor when my music income became larger than my teaching income. I reached that goal in less than five years because of TAXI.

My income keeps growing exponentially, and my music keeps getting better because it's my full time gig now! Here's the ironic part...

I live in Boise, Idaho, not Hollywood, yet my music is on TV nearly every day. My studio is in a glorified tool shed in my backyard, and my gear setup is so quaint other musicians ask, "Really? That's *it*!?" I've got a computer, monitors, a few mics, and a cheap little interface. No fancy outboard gear, no rack-mounted *anything*!

My Two Secret Weapons

Targets and deadlines are my secret weapons. Knowing who needs music and *when* they need it motivates me to get things done. It's changed my life! Actually, TAXI changed my life.



TAXI®

The World's Leading Independent A&R Company

1-800-458-2111 • TAXI.com

I'm getting *paid* for my music now instead of sitting on my couch *dreaming* about it. I'm my own boss, and some day my music will probably pay for my retirement, a vacation home on an exotic beach, and some umbrella drinks!



Don't wait until you've built a catalog...

Join TAXI now and let them help you build the *right* catalog! Be patient, be persistent, and you'll hit critical mass like I have. My income keeps growing every year!

I'm all the proof you need that a regular guy can make enough money with his music to quit his day job! Do what *thousands* of other musicians have done to become successful—join TAXI. You might never have to work another day gig in your life!

20
22 MC

HOT 100

LIVE UNSIGNED
ARTISTS & BANDS

9 FINGER

Rock
Los Angeles, CA
soundcloud.com/9finger

ACOUSTIC MADNESS

Progressive Americana
Utica, MI
acousticmadness.com

ADA MARQUES

Indie Folk
Los Angeles, CA
instagram.com/adatheband

AJ SMITH

Pop
Nashville, TN
ajsmithmusic.com

ALMOST JULY

Indie Pop
New York, NY
almostjuly.com
almostjuly@gmail.com

AMBER MARK

R&B
New York, CA
ambermarkmusic.com

ANDREW BROWNING AND THE 9 POUND HAMMERS

Outlaw Country
Santa Monica, CA
andrewbrowning.net

ANDY DARLING

Pop/EDM
Los Angeles, CA
tiktok.com/@iamandydarling

ANISSA LEA

Jazz
Livonia, MI
anissalea.com

ANNABEL LEE

Indie Alt-Rock
Los Angeles, CA
annabelleemusic.com

APOSTLE

**Melodically Charged
Blackened Punk**
Marietta, GA
linktr.ee/apostlesucks

ASTRALUX

Rock
Los Angeles, CA
instagram.com/astraluxmusic

BATFARM

Rock
Sherman Oaks, CA
batfarmband.com

BILL GRISOLIA & THE NEW BLUES FESTIVAL ALL-STARS

Blues/R&B/Soul
Long Beach, CA
billgrisolia.com

BOBBING FOR APPLES

Rock
Worcester, MA
bobbingforapplesmusic.com

BONAVEGA

Rock
Los Angeles, CA
bonavegamusic.com

BRAN MOVAY

Neo-Soul, Hip-Hop
Los Angeles, CA
branmovay.com

Alt-Pop
Los Angeles, CA
brioglu.com

COLE SUPPLE

**Alternative/Singer-
Songwriter**
Los Angeles, CA
colesupple.com

COURTNEY GOVAN

Pop
San Diego, CA
courtneygovan.com

CAROLYN STRIHO (AND SCOTT DAILEY)

Poetic Rock
Farmington Hills/Detroit, MI
carolynstriho.com

CHANNEL TRES

House/Hip-Hop
Los Angeles, CA
channelers.net

CHEEKFACE

**Indie Rock/Talk-Singing/
Folk-Punk**
Los Angeles, CA
cheekface.limitedrun.com

CIRCLE THE EARTH

Pop-Rock
Los Angeles, CA
trupitch.com/circle-the-earth

COWBOY DIPLOMACY

Country
Austin, TX
cowboydiplomacy.rodeo

CREATURE CANYON

Indie/Alternative Rock
San Diego, CA
creaturecanyonmusic.com

DAMN TALL BUILDINGS

Bluegrass/Americana
New York, NY
damntallbuildings.com

DAVE EDWARDS

Rock/R&B
Detroit, MI
facebook.com/daveedwardsband

DOE BOI 909

Westcoast Rap
Inland Empire, CA
instagram.com/doeboi909

DORIS ANAHI

Singer-Songwriter
Los Angeles, CA
linktr.ee/dorisanahi

ELIJAH THE BOY

R&B/HipHop
Brooklyn, NY
instagram.com/elijahtheboy

EMPIRE SPRINGS

Progressive Rock
Birmingham, AL
empirespringsband.com

FIVE HEADED COBRA

Rock
Los Angeles, CA
instagram.com/rnrisedead

FLEECE

Queer/Indie-Rock
Montreal, QC
fleeceemusic.com

GABY MONTIEL

Singer-songwriter
Ventura, CA
instagram.com/gabymontielmusic

GODS EYES

Metalcore
New York, NY
linktr.ee/godseyesli

HANA MCCARTNEY

**Alternative/Psychedelic/
Blues/Rock**
Lakeland, FL
instagram.com/hanamccartneyofficial

HIS EYES HAVE

FANGS
Indie Rock
Los Angeles, CA
hiseyeshavefangs.com

INSECT SURFERS

**Today's Psychedelic Surf
Instrumental Soundtracks**
Los Angeles, CA
insectsurfers.com

ITAMI

Metal
Albuquerque, NM
itami1.bandcamp.com

JADES GOUDREULT

Alternative Pop
Los Angeles, CA
instagram.com/itsmejades

JASON MANN'S

Americana/Folk
Bowling Green, VA
jasonmanns.com

JENN BOSTIC

Pop/Gospel/Country
Nashville, TN
jennbostic.com

J. IVY

**Spoken Word to Music
Poetry**
Chicago, IL
j-ivy.com

JESSE LYNN

MADERA
Americana/Alt Country
Nashville, TN
jesselynnmadera.com

KAPONO WONG

Instrumental/Hawaiian
Honolulu, HI
Instagram/kapononwmusic

KID \$WAMI

Hip-Hop
Saint Paul, MN
instagram.com/kidswamifof

KIDS RETURN

Indie-Rock/Electric Pop
Paris, France
instagram.com/kidsreturn

KIDS THAT FLY

Alternative Pop/Rock
New York, NY
kidsthatfly.com

KINGQUEEN

Pop Rock
Los Angeles, CA
kingqueenmusic.com

Yes, it's back once again! After skipping last year due to the pandemic, Music Connection's annual list of unsigned live performers has returned, placing the spotlight on individuals and bands who delivered unique excitement, expert musicianship and intriguing songcraft to stages all over the U.S. during the past year. In addition to MC staffers and freelance writers, the contributors to this list include producers, club bookers, music attorneys, managers, agents and other industry professionals. Currently, MC has reviewers in Los Angeles, New York, Detroit and Nashville. Livestreams have also become part of our offerings. So, to be considered for an always-free live review, go to musicconnection.com/reviews/get-reviewed.

LAUREN MASCITTI

Country
Nashville, TN
laurenmascittimusic.com

LEVI ALTAR

Trap
Los Angeles, CA
indieadvance.com/featured-artists/levi-altar

LITTLE FUSS

Indie Rock
Boston, MA
instagram.com/littlefussband

LOUDEN SWAIN

Indie/Alternative Rock
Los Angeles, CA
loudenswain.com

LOVE AND A .38

Rock
Los Angeles, CA
loveanda38music.com

LYN STAR

Throwback R&B/HipHop
Los Angeles, CA
instagram.com/stoasta

MAC SATURN

Rock
Detroit, MI
macsaturn.com

MADDOX LIM

Indie Pop
San Gabriel, CA
instagram.com/_maddox.lim

MILCK

Alt-indie/Pop
Los Angeles, CA
milckmusic.com

MISFIT SOTO

Westcoast Rap
Los Angeles, CA
sinisterkingdommusic.com

MOVIE CLUB

Indie Rock
Venice Beach, CA
movieclubtheband.com

NEW HERE

Pop-Punk / Alt-Rock / Folk-Punk
Portland, OR
newherexpdx.bandcamp.com

NINE MILE STATION

Rock
Los Angeles, CA
ninemilestationmusic.com

NONBINARY GIRLFRIEND

Indie-Pop/Experimental Pop
Portland, OR
nonbinarygirlfriend.bandcamp.com

ORCHESTRA GOLD

African Psychedelic Rock
Oakland, CA
orchestragold.com

PATRICK LUNA

Latin/Pop/R&B
Miami, FL
instagram.com/patricklunamusic

PISTOLS AT DAWN

Active Rock
Atlanta, GA
pistolSATDawnband.com

POSSIBLE OCEANS

Indie Rock
Los Angeles, CA
possibleoceans.com

PRINCESS GOES TO THE BUTTERFLY MUSEUM

Alternative Rock/ Electronica
New York, NY
princessgoestothethebutterflymuseum.com

REDLIGHT KING

Active/Hard Rock
Los Angeles, CA
facebook.com/redlightkingofficial

REMY REILLY

Indie-Pop
Dallas, TX
remyreilly.com

RICKSHAW BILLIE'S BURGER PATROL

Punk-Metal
Austin, TX
rickshawbilliesburgerpatrol.bandcamp.com

RIOTRON

Pop/EDM/Dance-Rock/Jazz
Winnipeg, Canada
riotronmusic.com

SANDY HALEY BAND

Blues/Rock
Los Angeles, CA
sandyhaleyusic.com

SATICOY

Alt-Pop
Los Angeles, CA
saticoy.co

SIERRA MILES

Alternative/Singer-Songwriter
Philadelphia, PA
soulofsierra.com

SOLAREYES

Stoner Rock
Los Angeles CA
solareyes.bandcamp.com

STORMSTRESS

Heavy Metal
Boston, MA
stormstressband.com

SWIFTY BLUE

Westcoast Rap
Paramount, CA
instagram.com/grimeysuge

SYD CARTER WEST

Blues Rock
Vancouver, BC
sydcarterwest.com

TARRA LAYNE

Southern Rock
Los Angeles, Pittsburgh
tarralayne.com

THE DRYES

Country
Nashville, TN
thedryes.com

THE MENDENHALL EXPERIMENT

Heavy Metal
Los Angeles, CA
themendhallexperiment.com

THE NOBLE PRIX

Modern Garage Rock
Burbank, CA
xrslrnce@earthlink.net

THE SANTANA PROJECT

Tribute Rock
Detroit, MI
facebook.com/thesantanaproject

THE SIXTH CHAMBER

Gothic Doom Rock
Los Angeles, CA
thesixthchamber.com

THE SWORDS OF FATIMA

Exotic Punk
Los Angeles, CA
theswordsofatima.com

TIFFANY THOMPSON

Indie Pop
New York, NY
tiffanythompsonmusic.com

STEVE TAYLOR THREE

Americana
Detroit/Orion Township, MI
thestevetaylorthree.com

SYD CARTER WEST

Blues Rock
Vancouver, BC, Canada
sydcarterwest.com

T.F.

Hip-Hop
Los Angeles, CA
instagram.com/im.tf

VAN GO GO

Rock
Detroit, MI
vangogoband.com

VEGA BLACK

Indie-Rock / R&B
Portland, OR
facebook.com/VBMusicXO

VELVET CHAINS

Rock
Las Vegas, NV
velvetchains.com

VISION VIDEO

Post-Punk/Goth
Athens, GA
visionvideoband.com

WHITSETT

Emo/Post-Hardcore /Pop-Punk
Nashville, TN
whitsettband.com

WHITNEY FENIMORE

Singer-Songwriter
Nashville, TN
whitneyfenimore.com

WILLIAM ANDREW REVELES

Americana
Los Angeles, CA
williamandrewreveles.com

WRECKLESS STRANGERS

Americana/Soul
San Francisco, CA
wrecklessstrangers.com

ZANA MESSIA

Swedish-inspired Jazzy Pop
Los Angeles, CA
zanamessia.com



▲ TYSON TO WISE

The publishing catalog for Canadian singer-songwriter Sylvia Tyson has been sold to Wise Music Group. Hits included 1964's "You Were On My Mind" (as Ian & Sylvia, with versions recorded in the U.K., Italy, France and China), "Four Strong Walls," "River Road," "Denim Blue Eyes," and more.

▶ BAYONNE TO NETTWERK

Experimental musician Bayonne (born Roger Sellers) has signed to Nettwerk Music Group and joined dance-pop group St. Lucia for select dates of their 2022 Fall U.S. tour. The recent signing follows independent releases *Primitives* (2016) and *Drastic Measures* (2019) via Mom + Pop.



▲ GEORGE JACKSON CONTEMPORARY SONGWRITER '22 AWARDS HELD IN MUSCLE SHOALS

The Awards were presented recently to hit songwriters Mark Narmore and Phillip White. "Alabama raised and Alabama strong," says Lillian Glanton, "these songwriters have continued to carry the torch for Muscle Shoals Music. And they have never forgotten the place they call home. They not only give back to their community, but they give back to the world every single day." Pictured (l-r) is the Muscle Shoals Songwriters Foundation Board: Lillian Glanton, Lindsay Siddall, Phillip White, Daphne Harding Smith.

SESAC Nashville Awards

SESAC has awarded Josh Jenkins ("Buy Dirt," "Fancy Like") Songwriter of the Year for 2022's Nashville Music Awards, with "Fancy Like" (Walter Hayes) as Song of the Year, and SMACK as Publisher of the Year.

Derek Wells was awarded the Spirit of SESAC Award for his musical contributions, having played on over 100 No. 1 songs, including his hit co-write with Matt McGinn, "Like I Love Country Music" (Kane Brown). A tribute medley included contributions from Brinley Addington, Joey Hyde, Mike Walker, Aaron Eshuis, Phil Lawson, and Allison Veltz Cruz.

This was SESAC's first live awards show in three years to celebrate the most-performed country and Americana songs for 2022. More than 400 songwriters, publishers, and music professionals attended the celebration, with winning songs including "Same Boat," "Freedom Was a Highway," "Wild Hearts," and more. Full details at: sesac.com

Performing Songwriter Workshops

The Performing Songwriter Workshop series has limited spots remaining for their 2023 series, including "Discovering New Paths Into Songs" with Jonatha Brooke—April 5-8, "Songwriting From the Inside Out" with Gretchen Peters—April 14-17, "Full Vocal Presence" with Beth Nielson Chapman—July 5-8, and "The Art, Craft & Presentation of Your Song" with Verlon Thompson—Aug. 30-Sept. 3, each taking place in Nashville, TN. More at: performingsongwriter.com

The MLC Distributes \$700m

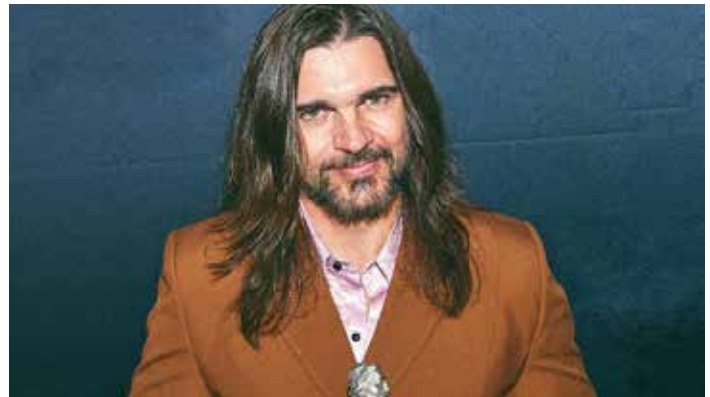
In the 18 months since its official launch, The Mechanical Licensing Collective (The MLC) has distributed nearly \$700 million in blanket royalties to the organization's members, and has met every congressional milestone as set out in 2018's Music Modernization Act.

At their second official membership meeting, the summarized metrics achieved included: collecting almost \$1 billion in mechanical royalties, over \$800 million in royalties going out to shareholders, membership of 22,000 with an additional 6,000 added in 2022, 98% processing rate of over 17 million works registrations that have been to date, with 19 monthly royalty distributions on time or early. More at: themlc.com

NSAI Songwriter Pitches

Did you know Nashville Songwriters Association International (NSAI) has locations throughout the U.S. and in Canada, the U.K. and Africa? Since 1967, the world's largest non-profit songwriter trade association has supported over 5,000 active and professional members through advocacy, education, mentorship, and celebration along their songwriting journey.

In addition to in-person and online events and mentorship, members can submit original songs each month for professional feedback during one of NSAI's monthly online pitch sessions. To submit, visit: nashvillesongwriters.com/online-pitch



▲ SONGWRITERS HALL FOR JUANES

At the 10th anniversary of La Musa Awards, JUANES was inducted into The Latin Songwriters Hall of Fame, bringing his total GRAMMY and LATIN GRAMMY wins to 27. He performed a medley of songs that included "Minas Piedras," "La Vida Es Un Ratico," "Es Por Ti" and "Volverte A Ver" for the show.

ASCAP Awards Rimes and Jackson

To celebrate 25 years since her debut album, *Blue* (at just 13 years of age), LeAnn Rimes was awarded the ASCAP Golden Note Award during an ASCAP Experience broadcast and was acknowledged for her music and humanitarian work over the years. Celebrity video tributes included Reba McEntire, Diane Warren, Rob Thomas, Mickey Guyton, etc.

Playwright-composer-lyricist Michael R. Jackson (creator of the musical, *A Strange Loop*) has also been honored, this time with The ASCAP Foundation Richard Rodgers New Horizons Award. Jackson's honor was presented by ASCAP Foundation President Paul Williams and composer-lyricists Stephen Schwartz and Adam Guettel.

Songsalive! Workshop

Next month's Songsalive! songwriter workshop takes place online on Sunday, Jan. 15, 2023. Join songwriters from around the world from the comfort of your home to workshop your original creations with hosts Gilli Moon, Rik Lawrence, and Rod O'Riley. Part one includes a song critique with guest speaker feedback and insights, while part two will share advice from a music industry guest speaker. Sessions are open to members worldwide, made up of songwriters, composers, lyricists, and more.

Membership and registration details here: songsalive.org/workshop.html

Position Signs Oakes

Alt-rock/hip-hop artist, Ryan Oakes has signed an exclusive recording and publishing deal with Position Music to cover his existing catalog (over 250 tracks), as well as any future works. With over a million monthly Spotify listeners and 300-plus million total streams, Oakes has been played on BBC Radio One and SiriusXM, as well as being featured on many playlists, and collaborations to date include State Champs, MOD SUN, Futuristic, Layto, and others.

Reservoir for Prima

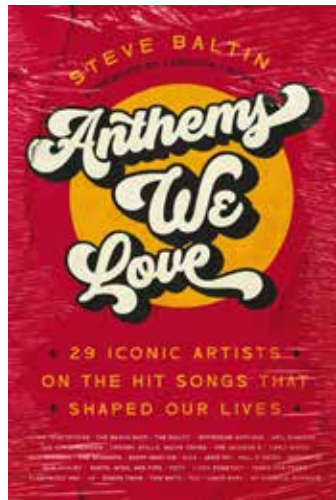
In a deal that covers publishing and recording rights, Reservoir Media has acquired the song catalog of Louis Prima from the Gia Maione Prima Foundation. Prima's hits include "Sing, Sing, Sing," "I'm Just A Gigolo," "Pennies From Heaven," "Let's Call The Whole Thing Off," "Buona Sera," and more.

Proceeds of the Reservoir sale will allow the Gia Maione Prima Foundation to further their charitable efforts in and around New Orleans.

NEWS FOR WARNER

Mary Rahmani's record label and creative agency, Moon Projects, has launched a joint music publishing venture with Warner Chappell Music to include music rights and catalog management. Moon Projects also currently has an imprint label with Republic Records, with whom they jointly launched artist Em Beihold.

Warner announced a new collaboration with the music publishing arm of Producer Entertainment Group (PEG), whose roster includes Trixie Mattel, Bob the Drag Queen, Alaska Thunderfuck, and country artist Brandon Stansell. PEG's move into music publishing comes in an effort to provide LGBTQ+ talent with the same opportunities as their mainstream colleagues.



▲ BOOK: ANTHEMS WE LOVE

Harper Horizon has released Steve Baltin's *Anthems We Love: 29 Iconic Artists on the Hit Songs That Shaped Our Lives*. Includes interviews around songs from Neil Diamond, Aerosmith, Shania Twain, Linkin Park, Earth, Wind & Fire, Linda Ronstadt, and others, with foreword from Cameron Crowe.

ANDREA BEENHAM (aka Drea Jo) is a freelance writer and marketing consultant based in Southern California. The South-African born, Canadian-raised California transplant has a passion for music, people and fun. She can be reached at drea@dreaajo.com



▲ UMPG EXPANDS ON BERLIN

Universal Music Publishing Group expands its exclusive worldwide representation of the Estate of Irving Berlin. Serving as administrator (not including the U.S.) since 2012, the expanded deal includes branding, marketing, and a sync website for clients to draw from Berlin's 1,500+ songs.



▲ PICNIC WITH SONA

The 2022 SONA Annual Picnic was a great success with staff and volunteers including, pictured (l-r): Ronda Call, Kellie Brown, Laurie Geltman, Rhonda Nicole, Lucy Levinsohn, Galit McCord, Morgan Roberts, Chase Dreams. For more about SONA and their advocacy, visit wearesona.com.



▲ SOCAN AWARDS FOR CCS

CCS Rights Management scooped three awards at the 33rd annual SOCAN Awards, including the International Television Series Music Award and Most Streamed Production Award for *Paw Patrol*, and the Domestic Television Music Awards for Animated Programming for *Rusty Rivets*.

Gemi Taylor

Immersive Soul

As a member of Mandrill and Graham Central Station, performing hits like "Is It Love" and "POW" on *Soul Train*, and as a go-to session guitarist for recordings with Motown, Mercury, Atlantic, Sony, and others, Gemi Taylor knows all about the makings of a great song. Working on projects with everyone from Smokey Robinson, Thelma Houston, The Spinners, Esther Phillips, Junior Walker, playing on the score to 1974's *Foxy Brown*, and creating bass lines for Ja Rule's *Pain Is Love*, his writing catalog is outmatched only by his incredible career.

Born in New Orleans and moving to South Central Los Angeles at the age of four, he began playing publicly in church (with 1-4-5 chords) at age five. Raised around his father's musician friends—including Earl Palmer and Allen Toussaint (who he later performed with)—he was also inspired by his guitarist uncle Bobby Wright. "I wanted to be as good a guitar player as my uncle—and travel the world," he says. Watching *The Ed Sullivan Show*, Don Kirshner's *Rock Concert*, and *The Midnight Special*, Taylor knew what he wanted, and when he was directed to the band room in high school, he never looked back.

Pianist Nathaniel Morgan Jr. was like Taylor's big brother in school, playing with Charles Lloyd, Sonny Stitt, etc.—and Willie Hutch (who rose to fame writing "I'll Be There" for the Jackson 5). Looking for a guitarist to use as a go-to, in-house player to develop his own sound at Motown Records, Hutch asked if Morgan knew a guitar player, and Morgan suggested Taylor. A few years later, wanting a break from the comfort of Motown, Taylor got a call and soon joined Graham Central Station.

"When played right, the respect that you get from people that's listening—especially the attention you get from the women—it's amazing," says Taylor of the guitar. "It's an amazing instrument, and you never master it. When you think you got it, that's when you wind up on your ass again. I'm 67 now [and] I'm still learning."

Missing credit on his first few projects, Taylor is quick to point out that the Musicians' Union and Motown were all about changing the game and giving artists proper credit. "You played on it, your name should be on it," he emphasizes, "but I always got the check, man." Starting his songwriting soon after joining Hutch, Taylor set up his first home studio in 1977, but says that "You don't just pop out the room with a pen in your hand. You have to get hurt. Until you experience things, you can't write about it or make somebody else believe it."

Taylor also says that the arrangement always comes first. "[Writing] comes out various kinds of ways. I'm building a song from the bottom up—the beat, the drums, how the kickdrum correlates with the bass, the keyboard pads." Inspired by lyrics, melody, music—and even random conversations—Taylor says he never creates the same way twice, and he suggests that good writing requires flexibility and openness to finish a song. He credits being around the right people. "To be around Stevie Wonder and Smokey Robinson—all these people," he admits, "Man, that shit brought songs—it's just an energy."

His best advice for up-and-coming songwriters is to dream big—and exercise patience. "It's going to take time for you to figure out what you want to do and how to go about doing it," he says, "and it's going to take time for other people to understand that. As long as you put it in the universe and stay on your path, you'll get there."

As for his New Orleans roots, Taylor says, "There is no way to escape music if you live in New Orleans. (...) They're gonna party when your ass is buried—that's the custom. (...) There are a lot of great musicians that will never leave—for no kind of money—they love the culture."

Taylor continues to work on his original music, virtual sessions, and film scoring work from his home studio.

Contact gemi_taylor@sbcglobal.net, [instagram.com/taylorgemi](https://www.instagram.com/taylorgemi)



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THE INDIE ARTIST

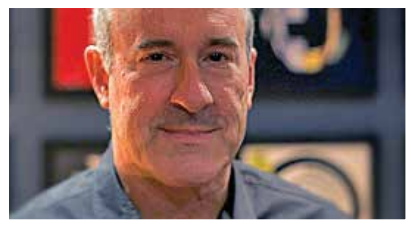
"*Music Connection* is a great resource for all rising artists looking to gain industry insight and development tips." - **LAW**



THE EDUCATOR

"*Music Connection* magazine is my barometer for staying on top of industry trends. My students receive invaluable feedback through the New Music Critiques and Reviews. Also, the national Directories are a great resource. The latest issue of *Music Connection* magazine has a permanent home in my teaching studio!"

- **Chris Sampson**, Vice Dean for Contemporary Music, USC Thornton School of Music



THE AUDIO PRO

"*Music Connection* is the most enjoyable magazine I read. It has the best advice, news, inside scoops, etc. As a designer and manufacturer, they keep me up to date as to where things are heading. The people there are awesome, and you can always find the 'magazine of choice' by looking in a studio's bathroom. There is ALWAYS a *Music Connection* magazine in there!"

- **Paul Wolff**, Designer, Inventor, Owner, FIX Audio Designs



THE STUDIO OWNER

"I find valuable information in every issue. I constantly refer engineers seeking employment to the annual Recording Studio issue, which has the most complete and comprehensive list of U.S. studios that you will find anywhere. And when I am asked for advice by a kid just starting out, I always tell them 'Well the first thing you should do is check out *Music Connection*.'"

- **Kathleen Wirt**, Owner, 4th Street Recording



THE INDIE ARTIST

"*Music Connection* consistently serves up some of the most helpful music articles online, and has helped me find several songwriting opportunities that I wouldn't have known about otherwise. Regardless the stage of your career, *Music Connection* is an amazing resource."

- **Aprilann**



THE GRAMMY WINNER

"*Music Connection* is consistently the best source for how to make records and sustain a career in music."

- **Greg Wells**, producer, songwriter-musician (Katy Perry, Panic!, Adele)

**MUSIC
CONNECTION**

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DROPS

Wendy O. Williams—WOW: Live and Fucking Loud in London! is out now on DVD, featuring rare live concert footage of metal priestess **Wendy O. Williams** as well as special guests **Lemmy** and **Wurzel** of **Motorhead**. Shot at London's Camden Palace in 1985 and originally broadcast on Sky TV, the set includes "Bump and Grind," "Fuck and Roll," "You'll Succeed," "Banana Rap" and more. Williams' career began in 1977 when she met counterculture artist **Rod Swenson** in New York, and he created the **Plasmatics**, a band with a rotating cast of musicians. They released the albums **New Hope for the Wretched**, **Beyond the Valley of 1984** and **Metal Priestess** before landmark punk-metal fusion album **Coup D'Etat**. For more information, contact Audrey Faine at audrey@mvd.cc.



The complete Original Broadway Cast Recording for the highly anticipated new original musical **& Juliet** is out now. In addition to the songs featured in the show, the album features a brand-new version of "Since U Been Gone" performed by **& Juliet** star **Lorna Courtney**, alongside superstar **Kelly Clarkson**, whose original version of the song debuted in 2004 and won her a Grammy Award for Best Female Pop Vocal Performance. **& Juliet** opened on Nov. 17 featuring songs by Grammy-winning songwriter and producer **Max Martin**, a book by the Emmy-winning writer from **Schitt's Creek**, **David West Read**, direction by **Luke Sheppard** in his Broadway debut, and choreography by Emmy winner **Jennifer Weber**. The production utilizes some of the most popular songs of the past three decades to tell Shakespeare's greatest love story. For more information, contact Taylor Apel at taylor.apel@atlanticrecords.com.

Born In Chicago, a new documentary focusing on the untold story of unprecedented mentor and apprentice relationships between first generation Chicago blues masters and a



younger group of white, aspiring musicians who were inspired by their musical idols, first screened in L.A. in November. It was followed by a panel discussion and audience questions with a number of the film's principals, including co-directors **John Anderson** and **Bob Sarlews**, author **Joel Selvin** who wrote the script as well as **Barry Goldberg**, **Harvey Mandel** and **Jimmy Vivino**, plus a video message from **Nick Gravenites**, who wrote the film's title song. Thereafter, **Chicago Blues Reunion**, including Goldberg, Mandel and Vivino, along with **Rob Stone**, **Rick Reed** and **Vince Fosssett, Jr.**, performed onstage at the Clive Davis Auditorium. Contact bobmerlis@bobmerlis.com for further details.

Forty years after the release of **Thriller**—the album that launched **Michael Jackson** into superstardom, won a record-setting eight Grammys, is the best-selling album of all time, and revolutionized music, video standards, and choreography—the late Jackson's estate launched a global campaign to celebrate with free events for fans around the world. These events included immersive experiences, screenings of the **Thriller 40** documentary and other parties in November. Learn more at michaeltjackson.com/news/thriller-40-events and contact maria.malta@sonymusic.com.

Artist **Joe Baughman + The Righteous Few** has released his new album, **Antichrist Complex**, alongside a music video for his single, "Vacant Spaces." It took three years for Baughman to make the stop motion video. Baughman is likely best known for his

visual work creating music videos for the likes of **Julien Baker**, **Wilco**, **The Roots** and other artists. Find his music and learn more about him at josephbaughman.com/music/jbrf and contact Chris Vinyard at vinyard@clarioncallmedia.com.

In a new short video, original members of the band **Chicago** recall how the late **Jimi Hendrix**, who would have celebrated his 80th birthday on Nov. 27, invited them to be an opening act (when they were still called **Chicago Transit Authority**) on his 1969 U.S. tour before their first album was even released. The video can be found on YouTube and at jimihendrix.lnk.to/LAFchicagoPR. The film features trombonist **James Pankow**, trumpeter **Lee Loughnane** and keyboardist-vocalist **Robert Lamm** as they recount how Hendrix's gracious invitation marked a huge turning point in Chicago's career. The new live album **Jimi Hendrix Experience Los Angeles**



Forum: April 26, 1969 is also out now on 2LP vinyl, CD and digital platforms. Contact maria.malta@sonymusic.com for more information.

OPPS

Enter your work by Dec. 4 for the 2023 **Society of Composers and Lyricists Awards**, celebrating composers and songwriters working in visual media. The awards will honor scores for film, television, interactive media and more. For eligibility guidelines, entry rules and more information, visit thescl.com/scl-awards.

Super MAGFest, or the Music And Gaming Festival, will be held in National Harbor,

MD on Jan. 5-8, 2023. The four-day event is "dedicated to the appreciation of video game music, gaming of all types, and the gaming community," offering arcades, live video game cover bands, guest speakers and more. To register and learn more, visit super.magfest.org.

The 2023 **New Century Dance Project Festival** is inviting students and emerging talent to submit their work to be considered for the upcoming festival July 31-Aug. 6. Visit newcenturydanceproject.org/about-the-calls to learn more about the calls for choreography and submission guidelines. The deadline is March 1.

PROPS

To honor **Loretta Lynn**, the Queen of Country who passed away this fall, the legendary **Grand Ole Opry House** hosted "**Coal Miner's Daughter: A Celebration of the Life & Music of Loretta Lynn**" in October. Hosted by NBC's **Today Show** co-host and close family friend **Jenna Bush Hager** and held in partnership with the late country star's family, the live event aired on CMT, and will be made available on Paramount+ in early 2023. It featured never-before-seen performances and collaborations, with special guest appearances from the likes of **Brandi Carlile, Crystal Gayle, Darius Rucker, Emmy Russell & Lukas Nelson, George Strait, The Highwomen with Brittney Spencer, Keith Urban, Little Big Town, Margo Price, Tanya Tucker and Wynonna, Barbara Mandrell, Faith Hill, Martina McBride, Sheryl Crow and Tim McGraw**. For more information, contact maria.malta@sonymusic.com.

The **Police's** renowned "**Every Breath You Take**" music video has surpassed 1 billion streams on YouTube, making it the 225th video to achieve this milestone. The video, which was uploaded to YouTube 12 years ago, but created in 1983, this is the seventh music video from the 1980s to have reached 1 billion views. The video was shot in black & white and features the musical trio and Rock & Roll Hall of Fame inductees—**Sting, Andy Summers and Stewart Copeland**—performing the song alongside a four-piece string section and grand piano. The hit song was named the Most Performed Song at the BMI Pop Awards in 2019 with 15 million radio plays, and last year, the song was added to Spotify's Billions Club of songs that have achieved more than 1 billion streams. Contact Todd Nakamine at todd@funhouse-ent.com for more information.



DIANE WARREN

The **Nashville Film Festival and Society of Composers and Lyricists** celebrated composers and songwriters this fall with special panels and awards at the **2022 Creators Conference**. This included a career retrospective for 13-time Oscar-nominated songwriter **Diane Warren**, who has written more than 100 songs for films. The conference panels included "Getting the Best Score for Your Film," a presentation on how to create a film score regardless of budget, using as a case study Sony Pictures' **Where the Crawdads Sing**, featuring the film's Oscar-winning composer **Mychael Danna** and orchestra contractor **Gina Zimmitti**. For further details, contact Ray Costa at rcosta@costacomm.com.

Coldplay's recent show at **Buenos Aires' River Plate stadium**—one of 10 sold-out nights at the venue—was broadcast live to cinema audiences in 81 countries around the world, breaking a record for number of countries for a live cinema event. Fans were able to catch the performance afterward, brought to the big screen in partnership with **Trafalgar Releasing**. A sizzle

reel of the concert, which featured career-spanning hits and an appearance from **Jin of BTS** for the debut live performance of his new solo single, "**The Astronaut**," can be found on YouTube. For more information, contact taylor.apel@atlanticrecords.com.

The **Roku Original** biopic film **WEIRD: The Al Yankovic Story**, produced by **Funny Or Die** and **Tango**, and streaming exclusively on **The Roku Channel**. In tandem with the movie's debut, **Legacy Recordings**, the catalog division of Sony Music Entertainment, is releasing the film's original motion picture soundtrack, featuring new versions of classic **Weird Al** parodies recorded exclusively for the movie, as well as "Now You Know," a hilariously meta new **Weird Al** original tune which plays over the duration of the film's closing credits. For more info, contact maria.malta@sonymusic.com.

JESSICA PACE is a music journalist-turned-news-reporter based in Durango, CO. She is from Nashville, where she started a writing career by freelancing for publications including **American Songwriter** and **Music Connection**. Contact her at j.marie.pace@gmail.com.

OUT TAKE



Panu Aaltio

Composer

Web: panuaaltio.com
Contact: kate.twilley@impact24pr.com
Most Recent: *Super Furball Saves the Future*

Having played cello since the age of 6, Panu Aaltio found his way to composing early on, and, knowing he wanted to create music with "big emotions," Finland-born Aaltio found his way to the University of South to start studying film music. "It was always the kind of music I was drawn into. *Star Wars, Indiana Jones*—they had big, dynamic musical ranges with a lot of emotion to them," Aaltio says. "European film music is meant to be quieter, more introspective. I like big, orchestral music that's melodramatic."

In addition to writing music for film and video games, Aaltio also wrote a ballet for the Finnish National Opera, which he said was a valuable learning experience in creating music that captures live audiences. "I had not done much stage music before. I knew every second of the music had to be very worthwhile," he says. "You have to be very thoughtful, to think about what makes music interesting, and what keeps the interest of the audience, as well as tells the story at the same time."

Aaltio is the only composer to have won the Best Documentary Score award from the International Film Music Critics Association (IFMCA) for each film in a trilogy, for his emotive scores for a series of Finnish nature documentaries. "I love a challenge, and [nature documentaries] wasn't a genre I was familiar with," he says of scoring the trilogy. "I think that was a good thing. The music has a lot of my personality in it. It was sort of classically influenced, but definitely has a unique thing. The film depicts all the birds and animals in the forest, so the music couldn't be very lush and overpowering; it had to be a bit softer."

Aaltio was also nominated by the IFMCA as Composer of the Year in 2022, alongside Hans Zimmer, James Newton Howard, Jonny Greenwood and Nicholas Britell. "You obviously have to be a good composer, but you have to also know a bit about everything in the industry side, and be good with people. In that sense, you almost have to be sort of a psychologist in some ways," Aaltio advises aspiring composers. "It's a profession where patience is important."

▶ BLACK MUSIC ACTION HONORS JIMMY JAM

Black Music Action honored Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis and announced The BMAC Music Makers Grant, which will award \$5,000 annually to an emerging BIPOC songwriter or producer. Star-studded guests at the celebration included: Earvin "Magic" Johnson, Giveon, Kenya Barris, Jesse Collins, Sugar Ray Leonard, Harvey Mason Jr, Yvette Nicole Brown, Shawn "Tubby" Holiday, John "Big Jon" Platt, Stephen Hill, Alex Avant, and more.



▲ GREAT JAPANESE BREAKFAST OFF

Japanese Breakfast recruited 2021 *Great British Bake Off* contestant Jürgen Krauss as a special guest on trombone at the Kentish Town Forum in London. Frontwoman Michelle Zauner adds via Twitter (@jbrekkie), "he also made us matcha white chocolate shortbread!!!!"



◀ LIL WEEZYANA FEST

Lil Wayne returned to hometown New Orleans for the 6th annual Lil WeezyAna Fest, headlining his star-studded, sold-out, one-day festival featuring special guests such as Rick Ross, Quavo, Takeoff, BabyFace Ray, Cam'ron and Young Money legend, Drake. A portion of each ticket sale benefitted NOLA students' educational opportunities within the culture.



▲ BIG SPLASH AT THE OUTLAW COUNTRY WEST CRUISE

A cavalcade of heavy hitter Outlaw Country Stars came together for this 5-night celebration of California's Country Rock & Cow Punk legacy. From Social Distortion, Lucinda Williams and Los Lobos to Rosie Flores, Slim Jim Phantom and many familiar faces like Dusty Wakeman on bass, Charlie Sexton on guitar and Brady Blade on drums backing up artists like Shannon McNally, pictured here. Keep an eye out for next year's cruise at outlawcountrywest.com.

Tidbits From Our Tattered Past



2000-RUN-DMC-#3

We spoke to hip-hop royalty Run-DMC who were finishing their big Arista Records release, *Crown Royal*, which boasted a whole bunch of big-name features. The trio was especially high on working with label chief Clive Davis, who'd just put out the phenomenal Santana album, *Supernatural*. "I talk to him on the phone every day," said Run, "me and Clive plotting and scheming and figuring it out, and loving it to death."



2013-Paramore-#4

In our feature Q&A with Haley Williams, the Paramore frontperson had this advice for artists suffering the setback of band members suddenly leaving. "Sometimes," she said, "you really need to go through the one thing you don't want to go through. Losing two band members is not unusual. You gotta accept it. It definitely hurts. But that's what makes great art."



▲ GUITAR CENTER FOUNDATION

Seen above are individuals involved in the ceremony at Marrero Middle School, in Jefferson Parish in New Orleans, on Friday, Sept. 30, 2022, presenting the school's music program with musical instruments to replace those destroyed, damaged or lost due to Hurricane Ida. Pictured (l-r): Pamela Blackmon (Preservation Hall Foundation Programming & Development Associate); Greg Lambousy (New Orleans Jazz Museum Director); Chiho Feindler (Save The Music Foundation Chief Program Officer); Bryan Kerlec (GC Store Manager); Ryan Salinas (GC District Manager); Ryan Merritt (donor); Myka Miller (GC Music Foundation Executive Director); Jeremy Williams (Marrero MS Band Director); and Josh Wingerter (New Orleans-based artist).



◀ STUDIO LUMINARIES AT AES

At this year's AES, *MC* caught up with studio luminaries, EastWest Studios Manager Candace Stewart (L) and Capitol Studios VP of A&R Paula Salvatore (R) enjoying a break from the action with Billboard VP of Sales/Publisher Joe Maimone.

▶ GIRL POWER AT 25

Curated by the Spice Girls themselves, *SPICEWORLD 25* brings together the original chart-topping album with some of their favorite bonus tracks and B-Sides, along with previously unreleased live recordings from the Virgin Records archive. Released in 1997, *Spiceworld* has since sold more than 14 million copies worldwide, 5x Platinum in the U.K. and 4x Platinum in the U.S.





MIRANDA LAMBERT

Las Vegas Spotlights and Tall Tales of Texas **By Dan Kimpel**

A TOUGH TALKING TRAILBLAZER, a tequila-tipping Texan, and a remarkable storyteller with a repertoire of indelible songs. As the most awarded artist in the Academy of Country Music's history—with 37 honors including this year's Entertainer of the Year title—Miranda Lambert commands a towering career pinnacle.

Lambert's latest release, *Palomino*, honors her history, weaving classic country influences into an artistry that is tough, tender, and granular, with ties to both small town rural roots and an allegiance to the enduring legacy of her home state's legendary singer-songwriters.

On this morning, Miranda Lambert is in Nashville after her inaugural Las Vegas residency. In this exclusive *Music Connection* interview, she's ready to talk about music.

PHOTOS BY ROBERT ASCROFT FOR FOURLEVIN AGENCY

Music Connection: You recently introduced “Miranda Lambert: Velvet Rodeo The Las Vegas Residency,” at Zappos Theater at Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino with tickets now on sale for Spring 2023. How do you translate the intimacy of your presentation to a cavernous Las Vegas showroom?

Miranda Lambert: I like the fact that every seat is a good seat, and it is intimate, because it’s a theater. The fact that it’s a stationary show, where we don’t have to move our stuff every night with the trucks and travel to the next city allows us to have so much more production that we’ve ever had before. The cross between a big production and everyone able to see is a successful juxtaposition. And my jacket catches on fire, which is pretty damn cool.

MC: In looking at the set list, it is an encompassing soundtrack to an almost 20-year career. How did you curate the repertoire?

Lambert: We spent a lot of time on the song selection. It’s what started the whole thing. We didn’t do any design or production until we honed in on the set list. My musical director, Danny Mitchell, went through my whole catalog. Our biggest question was how do we get from “Kerosene” to *Palomino*? I wanted to have some nostalgia, and have some video elements, as well. Those videos really were such a part of the songs, like “Kerosene” for instance.

MC: You go back to a song that you famously covered, the poignant “The House That Built Me,” written by Tom Douglas and Allen Shamblin.

Lambert: I got lucky enough that it landed around me, and I could catch it and hold it close, because it’s one of the most special songs that I have ever heard in my life. I don’t take it lightly. I wanted to make sure that I executed it perfectly, because that song deserves it. It’s all of our stories.

MC: Speaking of *Palomino*, the song “Carousel” is an emotional standout, with a narrative about a faded circus performer. How does it fit into the Velvet Rodeo presentation?

Lambert: It’s a huge moment in the show. It’s not stripped down, but it’s more dramatic because of lighting and production. Sometimes it’s hard to get through. Being a writer on it, I’m still so in it and so wrapped up in the story every time I sing it. And it’s heartbreaking. Singing it every night, I want to make sure that I’m getting the story across. I sing as close to the mic as I can, and we use the tricks of the trade with the lighting and everything. That’s something I appreciate about the Las Vegas setting. You can highlight lyrics more because you’re indoors and it’s controlled. For a song like that, it’s really cool to set it up and make the production a part of the story.

MC: The songs on *Palomino* are character- and locale-driven. How were these tales conceived?

Lambert: I started writing the songs in 2020. We spent a lot of time developing these characters and these stories. It’s not a concept record, but it’s definitely got a thread. I spent a lot of my writing career writing about personal experiences, or those of people close to me,

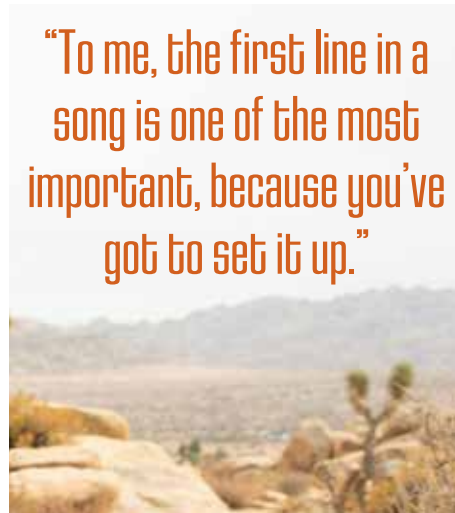
and this is one that was like “Let’s go out of ourselves and find some cool places and some cool people that we can make up.”

MC: Country is certainly the bedrock of *Palomino*, but we can hear soul, gospel, blues and Southern rock added to the mix.

Lambert: I pulled a little bit more from other influences, more than I have in the past. Linda Ronstadt and ZZ Top—trying to get those coming in.

MC: How does Linda Ronstadt influence you?

Lambert: Watching her documentary, she was so committed. “I had to sing this song or I would just die.” She meant it, with that fire inside her eyes. I want that commitment, that crazy passion for something, even just a tenth of what she had. The skillfulness and the longevity of her career are very inspiring to me.



MC: We hear a lot of new voices in country music, with African American artists, LGBTQ folks, and others who might not have been included a decade ago. Is this a trend determined by the times?

Lambert: I think it’s just how it falls. It’s probably always been that way, but we’re seeing more of it now. I see this new crop of what I call kids come up, and I’m excited, because there are a lot of different sounds. We survived the Bro Country era, which makes me happy that it’s over. It was a stagnant time for me.

MC: On a track from *Palomino*, the famous party band The B-52s join you on a song about a riverboat, “Music City Queen.” How did this come about?

Lambert: We went for it! We were at my farm writing with Natalie Hemby and Luke Dick. Natalie was singing the “rolling down the river,” and Luke said, “What if we had the B-52s on this song?” And I was like, “Oh my God! That would be epic.” I called my manager and said, “I don’t know if you know this band, or what they’re doing, or even if they are doing anything at the moment, but can we get ahold of them and see if they’d be interested?” They were all in different places, Atlanta, California, New York. So, they Zoomed with Jon Randall and Luke to get their parts down at studios across the country.

MC: You often reference music that was made before your time.

Lambert: I think I was born a little late, from the music that I’m drawn to, and that I enjoy. There didn’t used to be genres. There was Creedence Clearwater Revival and Lynyrd Skynyrd, all on the same radio stations. I love modern music, but I love old music—it’s what I gravitate to when I’m listening in my car: old country, old anything. But I’m in it. I hope that 30 years from now someone feels that way about my music. I want that nostalgia for people who listen to me. I think I pull from that stuff. It stuck out to me, because it mattered to me.

MC: What other historic music made an impact?

Lambert: I sing as a male character in “If I Were a Cowboy.” I got that from Emmylou Harris, who would never change the genders. And John Prine with “Angel From Montgomery,” when he assumed the character of an old woman. I love that it doesn’t have to change. Once I heard Emmy do it, I thought I could change the rules. Emmylou’s is a career that I have longed for. I said from day one, “I want to be a singer-songwriter, and I want to have a long career and to make a mark on country music.”

MC: Your home state of Texas is famous for introducing notable songwriters, Guy Clark, Townes Van Zandt, Steve Earle, and Rodney Crowell among them. What is it about the culture that gives us so many phenomenal storytellers?

Lambert: We do grow a different crop there. I’m happy to be one of them. There’s such a nurturing music scene. Starting out there, you can have a whole career there without ever leaving the state. It’s so vast and so huge. There is always an audience, and always somewhere to play. Growing up, as a budding want-to-be-songwriter back in the day, there were so many opportunities, and so many places that help grow artists. I think that culture is why so many of us come from there.

MC: And such great sounding names for titles and lyric: Amarillo, Luckenbach, El Paso, San Antonio, Abilene, Laredo.

Lambert: You could write 20 records and never run out of towns!

MC: Speaking of Texas, *Palomino* was preceded by *The Marfa Tapes*, an around the campfire project from 2021 that joined you with Jack Ingram and Jon Randall in a stripped down, low-fi collaboration.

Lambert: That’s one of my favorite projects I’ve ever worked on. It was so organic, the way it came together, Jack, Jon, and I spent seven years writing songs, and they are such great friends of mine. Two Septembers ago, it was like “So what are we going to do with these songs? They are just sitting there, and they will never see the light of day.” We just had the harebrained idea to record them and put them out recorded in one take on one microphone. Once we got into it, it was a lot more in depth than I thought emotionally. We had lived with these songs for so long, and I was just happy to put them down in a recording.

MC: It was also captured visually as a documentary.

Lambert: We had a videographer there to get some B-roll, I thought. Spencer Peeples made this beautiful film. So, a film and a double record: we didn't know what we were getting into. It's one of my favorite things. There is nowhere to hide. And it's not every day that the fans get to hear the actual way that the song starts, and how raw and how scary that can be. I will always say forever that this is one of my favorite things that I have ever been a part of.

MC: A couple of the songs from *The Marfa Tapes* are recast with bigger productions on *Palomino*. "Waxahachie" opens with a line that says "Nobody ever left New Orleans as mad as I was / I wrote a lipstick letter on the mirror with a bourbon buzz." What an introduction to the story.

Lambert: I feel like that, too—it sets the whole scene. You know so much about this girl before you hear another word. It also comes from three Texans sitting around a fire in West Texas. We pretty much write about where we're from because we're proud of it. That's number one. We have it all in common. But it's not just about Texas; it's about rural life. And that's what country music is. To me, the first line in a song is one of the most important, because you've got to set it up. I want to write some of those first lines that make you want to start over listening because you weren't paying enough attention and you don't want to miss part of the story.

MC: Do you have a songwriting superpower?

Lambert: I'm definitely not a bridge writer—I run from the bridge—I think we all do. Whoever gets the short end of the straw has to deal with it. Titles are a part of it. Bringing the country, down-to-earth way of putting things. You can get all fancy and have dollar words, but I'll throw in an "ain't" and it changes the sentence, and it feels like me.

MC: You wrote "Geraldene" with Jack Ingram and Jon Randall, and we first heard it on *The Marfa Tapes*. On *Palomino* it reappears with full production.

Lambert: I had that title on my phone for a long time. I watched the movie *The Last Waltz* 100 times, and I watched the documentary *Heartworn Highways* 100 times, and I tried to gather new things from those two every time I watch them. In *Heartworn Highways*, Townes Van Zandt is introducing a dog, and he says, "This is my dog Geraldene," and I thought it was such a cool name, and I wrote it in my phone. When Jack and Jon and I were together in Marfa we just pulled from the air, or whatever was going on, and whatever some of us had written down, whether it was weird or not. "Geraldene" popped up, and they were like "ooh, who is she?" And I was like "I don't know."

MC: Pistol Annies is a trio that enjoins you with Ashley Monroe, and Angaleena Presley. Your *Interstate Gospel* was nominated for a Grammy and *Hell of a Holiday* has both original songs and covers.

Lambert: Pistol Annies is another passion project—we've been together for 11 years, which is crazy to think about. Making music with my friends is where all of this starts. How lucky am I that some of my best friends are the greatest songwriters that I know? Why not do that together? With Jon and Jack or Natalie Hemby, Pistol Annies, they are all like family to me.

MC: How is the dynamic different when writing with women?

Lambert: It's two different perspectives. I couldn't have written the Pistol Annies records with Jon Randall and Luke Dick, and I probably couldn't have written *The Marfa Tapes* with those girls. It's the chemistry, the stories and the background, and how that chemistry makes you react to each other when you get into a room.

MC: Where do you write?

Lambert: My manager has a really cool basement that I use, or music rooms at Universal. But I do a lot of writing outside. With *The Marfa Tapes* it was pretty much all done outside. With *Palomino* a lot of that was done on a porch at my farm, Pistol Annies, all of *Interstate Gospel* was done on a porch at my farm, and a bunch of writing for that project was also in the Smokey Mountains. I prefer to be outside all of the time. It feels like a wide-open space, so there's a wide-open space on the page. So that's where I do my best writing.

Contact [Ebie McFarland](mailto:EbieMcFarland@ebmediapr.com), ebie@ebmediapr.com

"I'm definitely not a bridge writer—I run from the bridge—I think we all do. Whoever gets the short end of the straw has to deal with it."



Quick Facts

- Born in Longview, TX, and raised 43 miles distant in Lindale, Lambert made her performing debut in high school. She released her self-titled debut album in 2001.
- In 2003, Lambert finished third in the televised talent competition, *Nashville Star*. Sony Music executive Tracy Gershon, a judge on the show, convinced the label to sign her to Epic Records.
- "I'm Drunk (And I Don't Wanna Go Home)" a 2021 duet with Elle King and Miranda Lambert, became the first female duet to top the country charts in almost 30 years.
- A vocal LGBTQ advocate, in 2021, Lambert released "Y'all Means All" in support of the queer community. The song was featured in the trailer for the sixth season of *Queer Eye*.
- "I'm Just an Old Chunk of Coal (But I'm Gonna Be A Diamond Someday)" a signature Billy Joe Shaver-written song, is performed by Miranda Lambert on the new Shaver tribute album from New West Records titled *Live Forever: A Tribute To Billy Joe Shaver*.
- Lambert, Live Nation Las Vegas and Caesars Entertainment are donating \$1 of every ticket purchased for her residency to Lambert's MuttNation Foundation, a non-profit with a mission to promote the adoption of rescue pets, support animal shelters across the country, advance spay & neuter, and assist with the transport of animals during times of natural disaster. For more information, visit muttnation.com.

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20 **MC**
22

TOP 25 New Music Critiques

Music Connection offers a variety of ways for unsigned artists to receive recognition for creating exceptional music. Each month, for example, our New Music Critiques area spotlights the recordings of a dozen unsigned recording artists. The cream of the 2022 crop is here on the pages before you—25 remarkable recording artists, plus 20 Top Prospects who are too good to be overlooked. Unsigned recording artists of all genres are welcomed to sign up for a free critique at musicconnection.com/reviews/new-music-critiques.



SARAH HARRALSON 9.0

Web: sarahharralson.com
Style: Country



BUILDING UPON THE REVELATION 8.7

Web: linktr.ee/buildingupontherevelation.com
Style: Progressive Instrumental



CREATURE CANYON 9.0

Web: creaturecanyonmusic.com
Style: Indie Rock



LAW 8.6

Web: linktr.ee/lawandmusic
Style: R&B/Pop



JACK BARKSDALE 8.8

Web: jackbarksdale.com
Style: Americana



WANDERERS 8.6

Web: wanderersmusic.com.au
Style: West Coast Sound



THE WAYMORES 8.8

Web: thewaymores.com
Style: Honky Tonk Americana



NED AND WENDY THE BAND 8.6

Web: Instagram @nedandwendy_the_band
Style: Folk



KIDS THAT FLY 8.8

Web: kidsthatfly.com
Style: Alternative Pop-Rock



POSSIBLE OCEANS 8.6

Web: possibleoceans.com
Style: Indie Rock



SWEET MEGG 8.6

Web: Soundcloud
Style: Western Swing, Standards, Blues, Jazz



JERRY GERBER 8.4

Web: jerrygerber.com
Style: Classical-Electronic



WRECKLESS STRANGERS 8.4

Web: wrecklessstrangers.com
Style: Americana



PEACEARTHOPE 8.6

Web: samortolano.com/music
Style: World Fusion Instrumental



ZARENAE 8.4

Web: zarenae.com
Style: R&B/Pop



MOLLY MAHONEY 8.3

Web: mollymarymahoney.com
Style: Vocal Jazz, Crossover



ALANA RICH 8.5

Web: alanarich.com
Style: Dance-Pop



KATIE BARBATO 8.4

Web: katiebarbato.bandcamp.com
Style: Singer-Songwriter



DAVID BROOKINGS 8.2

Web: davidbrookings.net
Style: Pop, Rock



DAVID D'ALESSIO 8.4

Web: daviddlessio.com
Style: Pop, Singer-Songwriter



GHOSTE 8.4

Web: ghostenyc.com
Style: Electro-Pop



KELLZ 8.2

Web: linktr.ee/kellzkellzkellz
Style: Hip-Hop/Rap



JOHN ARMATO 8.4

Web: thedrummerlovesballads.com
Style: Jazz



SARA NIMIETZ 8.4

Web: saraniemietz.com
Style: Indie Pop/Rock



HVIRESS 8.2

Web: Spotify
Style: Dark Electronic



ETERNAL FREQUENCY 8.2

Web: eternalfrequencyband.com
Style: Hard Rock



CHAGELL GUEVARA 7.8

Web: chagellguevara.com
Style: Rock



SHARON GROOM 8.2

Web: sharongroom.com
Style: Blues, Rock, Americana



DOXY 7.6

Web: linktr.ee/doxyband
Style: Indie Rock



KIKA 8.0

Web: kika1.bandcamp.com
Style: Indie Rock/Pop



BROOKLYN SUMMERS 7.6

Web: SoundCloud
Style: R&B/Soul



ROBERT MINOTT 8.0

Web: robertminottmusic.com
Style: Reggae



MYKII J 7.6

Web: Spotify
Style: Hip-Hop/Rap



ANNIE OF THE CANYON 8.0

Web: linktr.ee/annieofthecanyon
Style: Folk



MC HOLY GHOST 7.6

Web: mcholyghost.com
Style: Hip-Hop, Rap



MOVE LIKE CREATURES 8.0

Web: movelikecreatures.com
Style: Indie Pop



THE MYSTICAL HOT CHOCOLATE ENDEAVORS 7.6

Web: themysticalhotchocolateneavors.com
Style: Alternative Prog



STORMY STRONG 8.0

Web: stormystrong.com
Style: Alternative



UNI* 7.6

Web: linktr.ee/unireign
Style: Rap, Hip-Hop



JOE MARCINEK BAND 8.0

Web: joemarcinekband.com
Style: Jazz-Rock



IZ.M.B 7.6

Web: bluecollarrecordsllc.net/artists/iz-m-b
Style: Singer-Songwriter



ANGELA PREDHOMME 7.8

Web: angelapredhomme.com
Style: Singer-Songwriter



SCARECROWZ 7.4

Web: scarecrowzottowa.wixsite.com
Style: Hard Rock



JASON SHAND 7.8

Web: jasonshand.com
Style: Pop Rock, Singer-Songwriter



SLUKA 7.4

Web: sluka.com
Style: Enigmatic Rock



50 BEST CAREER TIPS

FOR THE ARTIST

1 JAX

"I think there's power in just being yourself and being organic and putting yourself out there."

2 LAYTO

"Love the process, and hone your chops."

3 DUCKWRTH

"He started out, he says, 'just feeling like I had something different that I could bring,' and feels that artists should, 'be a whole lot of themselves. It's the key ingredient to [being] a good artist."

4 BILLY JOEL

"There's a line in 'Piano Man' that I sing—I know that it's me that they're coming to see to forget about life for a while—and the audience applauds after that line and I realize, they wanted something to take them somewhere else, and that's my job. My politics are my politics, but the music is something else."

5 ANSON SEABRA

PRODUCER

"If some other artist is having a bigger moment than you are, it's hard not to read into that or to feel like you're a failure. It's brutal here in L.A. People seem to only care about your streams and followers. You have to be your own champion, especially in the beginning when few people believe in you."



6 ANDY GRAMMER

"My favorite definition of joy is 'gladness not based on circumstance' and, if that's the case, then you should still be happy when you're alone in the silence."

7 MARY RAHMNI

MOON PROJECTS

"The best thing you can do is put your music on platforms. Get active. Build a community. Build that connection. The rest will happen organically, because people can see how important it is to you, they love what you're creating, and they're rooting for you."

8 DRUMMA BOY

"Famous or not famous, it's about making good music," he asserts. "It's about pulling out the artist's story; it's like a therapeutic process. The music has to match the artist's emotion."

9 KHIYON HURSEY

COMPOSER

"The best advice I ever received is you have the talent to do the work, so do the work. It's simple advice, but an encouragement and reminder that success is only achieved through work and really hard work at that."



10 ZHU

"I think people, when they come to my show, they want to be entranced. And then, when everyone's on the same wavelength, the performance really starts."

11 KATHLEEN RIGGS

VOCAL COACH

"The number one rule on singing is this: if your voice is tired, give your voice a rest. Vocal rest is when you don't use your voice at all. This is important as it gives your vocal folds and chords time to recover and regenerate."

12 3FORTINI

"The only person who can stop you from accomplishing what you want is you. There are people out there who aren't given anything, and they still make something out of their lives. Just keep pushing and the world is yours."

13 LACHI

"A lot of songwriters are so hard in the grind that they don't take time to meditate. You need a healthy brain to write healthy music."

14 JOEY DUFFY

CLIFFDIVER

Duffy advises against accepting the first opportunity that comes a young artist's way; always hold out for something better. Additionally, have faith and persist. "Keep going. Just don't give up," he intones. "I'm 34. There's no timeline. You can do it."

15 KRISTOPHER POOLEY

SONGWRITER

Be reliable, dependable, know your craft, and “be realistic about who you are as an artist,” he advises. Know the history and musical focus of each genre. [People want] to feel seen, heard and to know that this person respects what this music is.”

16 ROBERT TOTERAS

COMPOSER

“People expect to get music for free, but you can’t clothe and feed your children or pay for studio time if you don’t get paid. You have to tell people, ‘I don’t want to do this just for exposure.’ Don’t undersell yourself.”

17 KELLY BUCHANNAN

DIMESTONE DOLLS

“It’s been over 14 years since I did my last self-titled record. It’s a big deal to finally release original music again after all these years. And I’m happy to be indie right now.”

18 DRUMMA BOY

“People want lyrics, not beats. You could mute the music or the beat at a party and people would still sing the words. That’s how I came to understand how important a song’s lyrics are. As a producer, I can make beats and get placements. But when you start writing, you have the power of the pen.”



19 GUNNA

“Look at it like your first time is always an opportunity. You can always make a better situation once you build yourself up, build your name up and put in more work—you’ll get what you want after.”

20 LVCRFT

“Don’t be afraid to say no—it trains the universe to who you are and what you love. I’ve never done anything that isn’t 100% me. The feeling is what people connect to. If you get too smart about it, then you’ve fucked all the feeling out of it.”

21 FINNEAS

“You have to make the artist feel safe. Otherwise, no one is going to do their best work. We aren’t as vulnerable around our closest friends as we need to be around our creative collaborators. We need to be really vulnerable—I mean therapist vulnerable. And that can be a challenge.”

22 GLASS ANIMALS

“Giving yourself a few days, writing a few songs and just putting one out, [to] break through the pressure. It breaks the ice again. We’ve done that now after every record—released one or two songs as a stopgap that takes the pressure off. I hate the idea of not writing music at all between albums. It could really hinder the process.”

23 ANDY GRAMMER

“The blast is smaller than it’s ever been and it’s even cooler to go to all these little side roads to get exactly where your fans are.”



24 WET LEG

“In a way [social media] is cool, because you can do shout-outs on your stories and be, like, ‘Hello, I’m looking for a vegetarian restaurant’ nearby this random place that we’re playing a gig, and you’ll get loads of replies. I see some of my friends that are in bands and play music, they use it in such a wholesome way and they’re able to get their personality across.”

25 TEDESCHI TRUCKS

“If you go far enough down the road you realize they all lead back to the same place. You figure out where things are coming from and leading to. Those are great moments that can really influence your playing and your sound starts becoming your own a little bit.”

26 ZHU

“When you get down to it, what matters is capturing the essence of music at a certain point in time.”

27 KATHLEEN RIGGS

VOCAL COACH

“If you have a vocal issue, most times it is because there is vocal abuse, which means that

you are doing too much singing, speaking... In that case, you need to focus on strengthening the weakened areas with the right vocal exercises.”

FOR THE COLLABORATORS

28 TEDESCHI TRUCKS

“We try to keep the lines of communication with our band and our relationship just wide open. It’s tough at times. There are highs and lows that feel insurmountable. But a lot of times that leads you to places where you’re better off.”

29 JOOLS HOLLAND

“Collaborations can also be beneficial. If you get someone amazing to sing your songs, it illuminates it and turns it into something much better. The best thing that could happen to a songwriter is when you hear someone singing and they magnify it.”

30 JOSS STONE

“When you collaborate, you end up with the best of both worlds. make sure that you’re always listening.” She adds, “It’s not about everything you want to say—it’s about the song in the room that is already in existence. All you have to do is open your ears and hear it—and always press record.”

31 TARA MACRI

“I get to work with some talented people, from my photographer to my producer to my mixer. Sometimes you are pulled in many different directions, and it can be challenging, but that’s part of the creative process and in the end it always comes together.”

32 LVCRFT

“At a certain point, if you’re lucky, you just write with your crew. You want to be open to new opportunities, but predominantly your schedule is filled with the people you have the best chemistry with.”



33 FINNEAS

“You have to make the artist feel safe. Otherwise, no one is going to do their best work. We aren’t as vulnerable around our closest friends as we

need to be around our creative collaborators. We need to be really vulnerable—I mean therapist vulnerable. And that can be a challenge.”

FOR THE PRODUCERS

34 DUCKWRTH

“I like I had something different that I could bring. Artists should be a whole lot of themselves. It’s the key ingredient to [being] a good artist.”

35 FINNEAS

“Intimacy makes the scope and size of large things even larger. So, if you have an album that’s all at a 10, how can you have an 11? But if you have one that goes from one to five and then back again, when it goes to 10 it feels enormous.”

36 SHELBY KENNEDY

“Being a songwriter is like being a puzzle master. We are putting puzzles together. As a puzzle master, I can skillfully put together large jigsaw puzzles and if I finished a 5,000-piece puzzle of the Nashville skyline, I would want to show you my accomplishment. The art of writing commercial songs is hiding all the puzzle pieces.”

37 DUCKWRTH

“Create a bridge of sounds and genres to something new that people aren’t yet doing, and to challenge yourself.”



38 TEDESCHI TRUCKS

“Over the years of working with a large band we’ve come to realize when and how much ‘gas’ to use at any given time. A 12-piece band can be an eight-piece band. It can also be a 4 piece or a duo. And I think this incarnation of the band is such where everyone just wants to contribute when appropriate, and that’s a good place to be.”

39 SHELBY KENNEDY

“The language of a lyric can sometimes be the downfall that exposes a ‘too artistic’ puzzle piece as well. The language of the lyric should be everyday grammar, proper or improper, as long as it is how people actually speak.”

40 TEDESCHI TRUCKS

“There doesn’t have to be this big heroic guitar solo here or Sue has to do this big vocal thing there. If a song feels good, the concept’s good and the intention’s right, that’s enough!”

FOR THE MASSES

41 ANDY GRAMMER

“Make sure that everybody feels heard. Especially as a white guy, my viewpoint is not necessarily going to cover the whole spectrum, so I need to be really open to everybody else’s input. It’s from a place of ‘oh man, I have straight up blind spots,’ so I need all the information to make something great.”



42 LVGRFT

“It’s a very demanding, illogical business—it’s constant gambling. It suits my personality, but it’s not for everyone. Be prepared to hear ‘no’ 99% of the time and still wake up excited to connect emotionally with someone... The community is what will feed your soul.”

43 JOOLS HOLLAND

“You need to make music that will make people feel—make them dance, cry, or feel romantic—and that it needs to resonate with you. The title’s enough to take you to the place sometimes—you don’t need words. The great thing about all music is there’s no rules at all.”

44 JULIAN SCHERLE

COMPOSER

“Make your decisions for the right reasons. Be aware that it’s a long journey. Just keep going,

and develop a thick skin. You get rejected 95% of the time; don’t take it personal. Find projects you’re excited about.”

45 WET LEG

“I really don’t love social media. I really don’t. But it is a marketing tool and it is important to have it.”

46 MAX DI CARLO

COMPOSER, PRODUCER, ENGINEER

“The more music you get exposed to, either producing it or composing it or songwriting, the more skills you have for your next step.”



47 TARA MACRI

“Sometimes the idea you had in mind doesn’t always work out, so you have to be able to keep an open mind and pivot when you need to.”

48 AVA DELLA PIETRA

SONGWRITER, BROADWAY

“Getting into it so young was definitely one of the most educational experiences. When you’re really little, you take in a lot of information very quickly. I think that’s part of the reason I was able to pick up the business so rapidly.”

49 ALEX KANE

“Bitter, entitled people will never get the job. Don’t resent those who you deem less talented, and work on yourself rather than blaming the world. Many people far more talented and influential than you have not made it.”

50 LACHI

“The word vulnerable is interesting because me opening up my deepest parts actually made me stronger. God, if I had somebody like that [me] when I was coming up, you know?! Especially these kids—they don’t have to figure it out themselves.”



Compiled by MC Senior Editor Mark Nardone

OUR FAVORITE SIGNING STORIES

MATTSTAGRAHAM

Label: I Surrender Records
Type of Music: Indie/Alternative Rock
Publicity: Becky Kovach - becky@bigpicturemediaonline.com
Web: mattstagraham.bandcamp.com
A&R: Rob Hitt, Gaby Fainsilber

Matt Graham is a Tucson, AZ native born into a musical family. A 30-year-old Graham first pursued serious touring with several bands while in his early 20s. Following that, he self-released his debut solo album *I Get It* in 2019. "I was turning 27 and was feeling down, like it may be time to do something else," he explains. "I had written these songs and just wanted to get them down, record them, and get them out of my head. I never put out anything as a solo artist.

"Being dejected, I had started playing with a band called Sundressed on Rude Records,"

Publicity: Amanda Blide - Trend PR
Web: theattiremusic.com
A&R: Monti Olson

There's plenty of great career advice for *MC* readers in this Signing Story of Greg Shilling and Stephen Santa Teresa, who met in Washingtonville, NY, when they were in middle school and eventually formed a band when they were in eighth grade. The pair describe their sound as a modern spin on Hall & Oates and the Bee Gees. Pop-based, blue-eyed soul. They're creating it in Los Angeles now, which is a long way from their small hometown, 40 miles outside of Manhattan.

"There's no scene in Washingtonville," says Shilling. "We fell in love with L.A. But what we really appreciated about our town is that it's very supportive. Especially our teachers." When they got their driver's licenses, they spent many a night exploring N.Y. "That's how we met up-and-coming songwriters, and developed

LUKE SITAL-SINGH

Label: Nettwerk Records
Type of Music: Indie Folk
Management: Julian Deane - Raygun Music
Publicity: Penny Palmer - Nettwerk Records
Web: lukesitalsingh.com
A&R: Mark Jowett - Nettwerk Records

British indie pop/folk singer-songwriter Luke Sital-Singh's label and release history is a cautionary tale for any artist who still thinks signing with a major is the ticket to the perfect career. Signed by Parlophone (onetime home of The Beatles) for his 2014 debut album *The Fire Inside*, he says he got paid a lot but lost artistic control. It was not a great fit and he was quickly dropped from their roster.

After putting out his follow-up *Time is a Riddle* as a DIY, he continued to build momentum with two more full-lengths released under exclusive license with Raygun



MATTSTAGRAHAM



THE ATTIRE



LUKE SITAL-SINGH

continues Graham. "And 2020 was supposed to be our year until, surprise, COVID happened!"

During the pandemic's early days, Graham posted on Instagram and TikTok some videos for his solo songs. Hundreds of thousands of views occurred, including Rob Hitt at I Surrender Records. The label immediately fell in love with Graham's music and vision. "It just goes to show every single thing you do has some kind of impact," says Graham. "You can't discount yourself like I did."

THE ATTIRE

Date Signed: June 17, 2021
Label: BMG
Band Members: Greg Shilling and Stephen Santa Teresa
Type of Music: Pop
Management: Andrea Torchia and Brian Kierulf
Legal: Scoff Felcher - Felcher & Freifeld, LLP

our craft as songwriters, as well," says Santa Teresa. "Having sessions with songwriters."

"One handshake led to another, and we met all these amazing people who worked in the industry: songwriters, producers, A&R people, journalists, people we were thrilled to meet," adds Shilling. "It just goes to show how vastly connected the music industry is. We came from such a small town, but we met one person who led to another and now we're here."

Eventually, the Attire would get signed to BMG Records, and they feel honored to call such an historic label their home. "Every connection leads to a new connection, but it's about the opportunity that the connection brings and what you have to offer that connection," says Shilling. "Stephen and I were very grateful that throughout each connection, we learned something. As we learned, we developed, and as we developed we brought better music each time." It all culminated in their debut album *Songs About Girls Like You*.

Records. A few years ago, when the singer was looking for a support act for one of his tours, he hooked up—via their managers, who were friends—with Ben Cramer, whose persona as a recording artist is Old Sea Brigade. The two hit it off and Cramer told Sital-Singh about his solid relationship with Nettwerk Records, which planted a seed that would ultimately come to fruition after the two released the dual EP *All The Ways You See in the Dark* on the label. Sital-Singh says, "Ben just seemed to have the best of all things from Nettwerk. He usually had good budgets for his albums and great tour support."

Major labels give you funds, he says, "but then take ownership of your creative direction. When you sign with a small indie, you have all the artistic control, but no budget, so things are constrained. From Ben's experience, Nettwerk was like a halfway house between the two. He made music the way he wanted to, without the struggle for money."

SIGNING STORIES

Music Connection's Signing Stories allow artists to share their hard-won experiences—the good and the not so good—when getting signed by a label, publisher, or manager. We hope you find the following profiles especially instructive.

SHADY BLU

Label: NoName Recordings/Interscope
Type of Music: Rapping/Singing
Publicity: cheyenne.beam@umusic.com
A&R: Cyrus Taghipour

California-based artist Shady Blu was simply having fun when she started rapping in high school. Although the singer laid down her first recording in 2016, it wasn't until 2020 that she decided to get serious.

If she was going to give good game, she needed an engineer. So, she searched Instagram and found Derek Ali. Professionally known as MixedByAli, Blu had no reason to believe the multi-Grammy winner (Schoolboy Q, Nipsey Hussle, Kendrick Lamar) would be open to working with her. Still, following a link within Ali's bio led her to engineears.com, which included a submission form. So, she passed along her song, "Dream\$." Surprisingly,



SHADY BLU

Ali reached out. "He told me to come up to the studio," says the newcomer. The pro immediately began helping develop her sound. "We've been locked in ever since."

Four or five months later the engineer offered to sign her to his new label, NoName Recordings. Making this more fortuitous is that Ali was busy securing a partnership with Interscope. "I feel like it's the perfect fit," the singer enthuses.

"Don't jump into the first contract you get," she warns. "Always take your time. And make sure you have lawyers and people you trust. Let your music grow, so you can see what label fits. Once you get to that point, you should be fine."

MOKITA

Label: Nettwerk Music Group
Type of Music: Pop Singer-Songwriter
Management: David Conway and Andrew de Torres

Booking: Tony Sangiacomo - APA
Publicity: Penny Palmer - Nettwerk
Web: thisismokita.com
A&R: Marshall Altman, Eric Robinson, Rachel Cragg

With an already well-entrenched interest in pursuing music, Mokita did some co-writing but didn't really know how to parlay his musical interests into a career. A college friend suggested he move to Nashville to pursue songwriting and to learn the business, an ideal place to do both.

Out of necessity, with a limited budget, he purchased enough equipment to set up a home studio and spent the better part of a year learning to use it. He then started writing and producing tracks, taking him down the DJ/dance path. The artist's early songs attracted the attention of Armada, a dance label in the Netherlands, which then signed him to a deal.

Mokita was finding success as an independent artist, continually putting out music



MOKITA

on his own, gaining streams on numerous platforms (the most coming from Spotify). He then began to question whether this was the best fit for his talents. After much soul searching, he realized that pop-rock was where he really belonged. Meeting the Nettwerk team proved to be a more than favorable situation for him as they gave him the freedom to produce and record the music himself.

According to Mokita, "Getting the deal isn't always ideal if it's not the right match. Knowing what you want and who can deliver it can save you precious time and keep you from landing in the wrong place." Sometimes that might not reveal itself immediately, but the more you refine your goals, the more you will attract the right situation.

BED

Date Signed: July 25, 2022
Label: Wiretap Records

Band Members: Ebed "bed" Moreno, vocals, guitar; Nathan Gameros, guitar; Joel Lazcano, bass; Axel Alba, drums
Type of Music: Alternative/Shoegaze/Dreampunk
Publicity: Mike Cubillos - Earshot Media
Web: thatbandbed.com
A&R: Rob Castellon - Wiretap Records

When Ebed Moreno began performing solo with nothing but a guitar and laptop, his backyard appearances met with surprising popularity. Audience demand compelled him to piece together a proper group. The shoegaze rockers got their self-funded debut onto platforms like Spotify with an assist from DistroKid.

One day, Moreno started receiving direct messages from Rob Castellon, owner and operator of Wiretap Records. Castellon had heard their recording and wanted to discuss Moreno's vision for the future. "I want to take this as far as I can," repeats the vocalist. "This



BED

is a dream, and I've got to put everything into it." The head of the Whittier, CA-based indie label detected potential and subsequently put forth an offer.

Moreno consulted other bands about Wiretap. Their comments were nothing but positive. Meanwhile, Moreno and Castellon chatted over the phone. The band's other members equally approved jumping aboard. The opportunity to maintain control of their music proved an irresistible incentive. Though a lawyer never reviewed the official paperwork, the manager of another artist scrutinized the document on their behalf. Says Moreno, "I read [the contract] front-to-back, memorized it, and made sure I knew what I was getting into."

The singer advises artists seeking partners to remain patient. Concentrate on your craft rather than formulating business arrangements. "If your music is making waves, all that will come naturally," he insists. "Just keep focusing on those waves."



Audient EVO 16

Audient, headquartered in Herriard, Hampshire, U.K., is a manufacturer of innovative professional grade recording technology. In business for over 20 years, Audient built their reputation on building large format recording consoles and have successfully distilled that technology down into a range of affordable recording interfaces.

A good example of the kind of creative recording technology Audient comes up with is the new Audient EVO 16, a 24 in X 24 out recording interface. The EVO 16 bring some clever, time saving solutions to what otherwise would possibly be in the way of your creative workflow. These include Audient's new Smartgain feature, which can automatically set recording levels for multiple tracks in seconds and Motion UI (user interface) which automatically displays all the parameters of your session status on EVO 16's easy-to-read full color immersive display.

The Audient EVO 16's smartgain feature makes it easy to set correct gain levels and record multiple inputs simultaneously. If you're recording drums or live bands either in studio or on stage, the EVO 16's Smartgain feature is a game changer. To use the smartgain feature, all you do is enable your input or inputs and hit the green Smartgain button and the EVO 16's Smartgain technology does the rest. Even if you're an experienced recording engineer, having the ability to automatically set correct input gain levels for multiple inputs within seconds is a hassle-free way to keep your sessions moving forward.

EVO 16's Motion UI offers some useful and intelligent features that will help streamline your session workflow. For example, if you have an instrument plugged into channel one and two and try to activate Phantom power, an icon will advise you it's not possible to have both active at once. The Instrument DI circuit is switchable from instrument back to line level if you find yourself needing all eight inputs for your tracking session.

The EVO 16 has eight, high-quality console-grade preamps that can handle just about any input you might be using with them. The first two inputs located on the front of the EVO 16 are JFET high impedance DI inputs optimized for guitar and bass. Two headphone jacks are located on the front of EVO 16, each with its own headphone output.

The EVO 16 has six combination jacks on the back of the unit to facilitate Mic and Line

"The entire user interface on EVO 16 was designed to eliminate the hassle of fumbling through menus and button pushing when you're in the middle of a tracking session."

inputs, and also provides eight dedicated line outputs. The back of EVO 16 provides two sets of outputs for connecting both a main and alternate set of monitors. For channel expansion, EVO 16 has two optical I/O's, making it possible to add channels via ADAT or TOSLINK etc., all at 96 KHz. EVO 16 also has a BNC connector for syncing word clock or slaving EVO 16 to an external device. All inputs can be linked as stereo pairs.

The whole point of the Audient EVO 16 is to work smarter, not harder. The entire user interface on EVO 16 was designed to eliminate the hassle of fumbling through menus and button pushing when you're in the middle of a tracking session. I'm not saying EVO 16 fully automates the recording process, but it does eliminate several steps you might have

to go through on competing interfaces to get the same result. If you're working under pressure or on the clock, EVO 16's Smartgain and Motion UI technology can make a huge difference in making your recording sessions stress-free and successful.

EVO 16 comes with a downloadable software mixer that gives you complete control over your EVO 16. Recording functions such as stereo linking, mute, assigning phantom power, fader levels and master control room functions such as diming, switching in an alternate pair of monitors, assigning cue mixes and playing back your mixes in stereo or mono can all be done from EVO 16's Motion UI or via the software mixer. EVO 16 has a talkback feature that can be controlled from EVO 16 itself, as well as built-in loopback capability for streaming or recording audio off your computer.

The EVO 16 packs all this technology and advanced feature set into a relatively small footprint—it's about the size of a typical 15-inch laptop. EVO 16 does not require drivers for Mac computers; drivers for Windows PC's are downloadable off the Audient website. Once you register your EVO 16 on the Audient ARC website you're presented with a selection of free plugins, downloads and special offers. Rack ears are available free for the asking.

The Audient EVO 16 is designed to compete head-to-head with any one-rack unit eight-channel recording interface currently on the market. If you're recording drums, live bands, ensembles or any format requiring tracking multiple inputs at once on a regular basis, the Smartgain feature alone makes the EVO 16 very likely worth the price of acquiring it. The Audient EVO 16 is packed with some clever features and delivers a next generation user interface that sets it apart from the competition. For what you're getting, the EVO 16 is a bargain.

The Audient EVO 16 is available now for \$499 US. Find out more at audient.com.

Sennheiser XSW IEM

Sennheiser's XSW IEM in-ear monitoring system is designed to provide solo artists, singer-songwriters, gigging musicians and project studio owners an affordable point of entry into Sennheiser's professional in-ear monitoring technology. The XSW IEM is designed for ease of use while still delivering many of the professional-level features Sennheiser's IEM technology is known for in the professional stage, fixed install, and touring industries worldwide. The XSW IEM is the most cost effective in-ear monitoring system Sennheiser has ever offered and succeeds in delivering a professional level end-user experience that will, for many people, be a significant improvement over their existing wireless in-ear monitors.

The XSW IEM operates on eight pre-configured frequency banks operating in the professional UHF range. Designed for worldwide use, variants of the XSW IEM kit are available to operate in all UHF bands. There's no quality difference between the variants, and the only potential issue would be if there are other devices in the area operating in the same band that you are. Each band covers a wide enough range of frequencies that you should never have a problem finding an open frequency. The XSW IEM ships with a complete set of international wall adapters making it useable anywhere in the world.

The XSW IEM kit contains a transmitter, a receiver belt-pack, a starter pair of IE4 in-ear monitors and a power supply. Also in the box are rack ears for mounting one or two XSW IEM in a single rack space and a selection of silicon ear tips for the IE4. Both the XSW IEM's transmitter and receiver feature a high-quality display that's easy to read in all lighting conditions. The included IE4 ear buds are Sennheiser's least expensive in-ear monitors. Stepping up to a better pair of in-ear monitors such as Sennheiser's IE 100 Pro in-ear monitors will significantly improve the overall XSW IEM end-user experience.

Using the XSW IEM has been simplified as much as possible so that a minimum of technical knowledge is required to set up and operate it. Commonly used settings

such as dialing in and pairing an available frequency setting gain, configuring mono or stereo operation, turning off and on the brick wall limiter and dialing in EQ settings have been simplified down to a minimum of clicks. Additional features and controls are easily accessible via a simplified, scrollable menu system. Dialing in basic settings and pairing the transmitter and receiver on the XSW IEM is simple, just turn on the transmitter and receiver, align the frequencies and hit the set button and you're good to go.

The XSW IEM transmitter has two combo jacks to accommodate XLR or Line level inputs.

sync function. The transmitter has a headphone jack with its volume control, so you can monitor input levels. The display on the receiver shows if the receiver has any conflicting frequency interference. In most cases, finding an available frequency just takes a few seconds. Additional features include an onboard brick wall limiter, EQ settings, and a focus mode for panning the inputs left, right or center.

The XSW IEM's belt pack receiver is made of hard plastic (one of the few compromises Sennheiser made over their more expensive IEM systems receivers, which are slightly smaller and made of metal) and features a

rigid antenna. To avoid accidentally opening on stage, the receiver's controls are secured in place behind the battery door. The receiver's backlit control panel has an automatic dimming feature so it can be discretely used on stage. The display also shows your remaining battery level, antenna range and any existing RF interference. The receiver is powered by a set of three standard AA Batteries. Sennheiser advises that each set of batteries will last about six hours of normal use. The XSW IEM will also accommodate rechargeable batteries, which will help make it more cost effective to operate if you're regularly using it for gigs, etcetera.

Sennheiser's XSW IEM is a professional grade in-ear monitoring system

and comes in at about half the price of the next level up in the Sennheiser wireless IEM product lineup. Designed for one or two users or a whole band, the XSW IEM sounds on par with Sennheiser's more expensive evolution wireless G4 systems. Like all Sennheiser in-ear monitoring products, the XSW IEM is ruggedly built and is designed to withstand a reasonable amount of real-world abuse. To sum it up, Sennheiser's XSW IEM offers the solo or gigging musician a complete professional grade IEM solution. It delivers the audio clarity and rock-solid stability Sennheiser is famous for, all at an affordable price point. Definitely worth checking out!

The XSW IEM is available now for \$599.00. Find out more at en-us.sennheiser.com/xsw-iem-set.



"Sennheiser's XSW IEM offers the solo or gigging musician a complete professional grade IEM solution."

The XSW IEM's transmitter is made of metal and has a removeable rigid antenna. You can manually dial in a desired frequency on the transmitter or use the infrared sync function to pair the transmitter with multiple receivers on the fly. Two XSW IEM transmitters can be mounted in a single rack space; however, as the transmitters have different physical dimensions, you cannot fit an XSW IEM and a different model wireless Sennheiser transmitter such as transmitters from the evolution wireless series side by side in the same 1U rack space.

From the transmitter's front panel, you can easily switch between mono or stereo inputs and set user preset frequencies, and you can manually dial in a frequency using the up and down control buttons. Multiple receivers can be synced with one transmitter via the infrared

Bill Frisell

Four

Blue Note Records

Producer: Lee Townsend

Frisell, like many, turned inward once the pandemic hit. What came out of it for him was these compositions dedicated to loss, renewal and friendship. Frisell's guitar etches out delicate, simple melodies and motifs that provide brilliant seeds for Gregory Tardy's woodwinds, Gerald Clayton's piano and Jonathan Blake's percussion to blossom and flourish. Tracks like "Dear Old Friend," "Monroe," "Invisible" and "Wise Woman" are reflective, sweet, soothing and lyrically fresh.

- Eric Harabadian



GloRilla

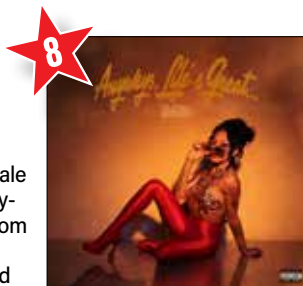
Anyways, Life's Great

Collective Music Group

Produced by: Various

The door is open in this golden age of female emcees. Collaboration rather than publicity-fueled beefs is resulting in quality music from fresh new voices. Cardi B's feature in "Tomorrow 2" off GloRilla's debut has achieved mainstream success, while the young Memphis rapper has already got a hold on viral trends. Her unique delivery, cleverness and hubris is authentic and a step above the rest. She deserves her claim on the charts with this EP, a Grammy nom, as well as her Best New Artist win at this year's BET Hip-Hop Awards.

- Joseph Maltese



Chris Standring

Silent Night

Ultimate Vibe Recordings

Producer: Chris Standring

In 2011, contemporary jazz guitarist Chris Standring got in the holiday spirit with *Send Me Some Snow*, a guitar/vocal duet album with Kathrin Shorr. Now, he keeps his silky, snappy cool while offering a complete 180 with the charming, seductively intimate *Silent Night*. Standring and his trio create an instrumental classic via a hypnotic swirl of sparkling melodic and easy grooving energy, cool soulful swing, sensual atmospheres and most of all a jazzy sense of reverence for these classics.

- Jonathan Widran



Fitz and The Tantrums

Let Yourself Free

Elektra Entertainment

Producers: Various

An upbeat, vibey record with great production and fun, lively energy. Opener "Good Intentions" delivers a lighter bop, while "Let Yourself Free" and "Moneymaker" provide full-on dance jams and "Good Nights" provides an anthemic sing-along. Positive feelings continue on "Big Love," with a funky swagger emerging on "Is It Love" before horns take center stage on "Steppin' On Me." Melancholy closer "Someday" highlights thick syrupy vocal harmonies in a fabulous rollercoaster of a party album.

- Andrea Beenham



Stephen McCarthy and Carla Olson

Night Comes Falling

Bob Frank Entertainment/The Orchard

Producers: Stephen McCarthy, Carla Olson and Mikal Reid

Sparks fly when you pair second generation Americana rock royalty like McCarthy and Olson together. He, of Long Ryders and Jayhawks fame, and she from the Textones, picked up the baton from bands like The Byrds and Buffalo Springfield. "We Gotta Split This Town" erupts with well-measured abandon, making way for the beautiful melodies and angelic harmonies of the title track and "Broken Lullaby." "Brink of the Blues" is a slice of pedal steel heaven.

- Eric Harabadian



Bob Davoli

Still Sitting Backstage

Gutbrain Records

Producer: Bob Davoli

This is the fifth release for the prodigious singer-songwriter and guitarist. And it is one of his most intimate to date. Davoli wears his heart boldly on his sleeve as he details personal accounts and observations. "Last Chance Road" is the recollection of a relationship, rife with a touch of melancholy. "Dust in the Wind" urges one to savor the moment and "Nothing Aches as Hard (As a Broken Country Heart)" mines classic Hank Williams territory. Davoli and violinist-harmony vocalist Kathleen Parks are a lovely combo.

- Eric Harabadian



Robyn Hitchcock

Shufflemania

Tiny Ghost Records

Producers: Robyn Hitchcock and Emma Swift

A fantastic collection of Robyn Hitchcock's songwriting at his best, featuring his usual touches of Syd Barrett, John Lennon, intriguing pop guitar chords, and a sinister wit. Not to mention various fauna, and on this one, "The Feathery Serpent God," and the fish in "The Raging Muse." An all-star cast includes Johnny Marr, Sean Ono Lennon, and a couple of members of his first band, The Soft Boys. The rocker tunes are fab, but the winners are the slower spookier tunes, especially "Noirer Than Noir" and "The Man Who Loves The Rain."

- David Arnsion



Villages

Dark Island

Sonic Records

Producer: Joshua Van Tassel

With guidance from renowned soundscape artist Joshua Van Tassel, the Celtic rock quartet achieves a masterpiece, delivering a combination of gently harmonized vocals and maritime-shanty melodies alongside lilting instrumentals such as easy-listening "Wearing Through the Pine," while "Dawnless Nights" brings a mellow guitar unison. "Love Will Live On" and "Flower of the Morning" present stunning falsetto and crystalline vocals with intermittent whooping calls. A soothing ethereal experience.

- Andrea Beenham



To be considered for review in the Album Reviews section, you must have a record deal with a major label or an independent label with an established distributor. If you do not, please see our New Music Critiques section.

The Hotel Café Hollywood, CA

Contact: Fiona Bloom, fiona@thebloomeffect.com

Web: ajsmithmusic.com

Players: AJ Smith, vocals, guitar, bass, keyboard, violin; Dru, drums

Material: Sharing music from 2018 through to his new 2022 tracks, as well as two unreleased singles, AJ Smith shared his incredible musicality and vocal artistry with a full house at The Hotel Café. From his opening vocal growls and smooth octave leaps in “Cooler,” and gorgeous melody lines of ode to narcissism, “Better,” Smith is the real deal, presenting a rare combination of extraordinary talent, wrapped in a sassy, confident, and intriguing presence—beneath a genuinely gracious exterior.

Musicianship: Near-perfect vocals add to a beautifully simple backdrop of sound from invested, sensitive drummer (and songwriting collaborator) Dru, along with Smith’s guitar, bass, keyboard, and violin stylings. Smith’s stunning vocal lines and falsetto add deliciously to his playful, thought-provoking lyricism. His phenomenal ease of playing is especially clear in the animated intensity of the elasticized ballad, “Billy Joel,” as well as the theatrical vocal lines and tight key and drum unison on “Confetti.” With a vocal quality sounding like a combination of Adam Lambert and Freddie Mercury—especially



on unreleased track, “Drama”—Smith is an absolute dynamo at garnering investment and participation from his audience.

Performance: Smith and Dru create absolute magic on “Misfits,” with its stripped-down rhythmic guitar and hi-hat opening, fabulous rimshot/vocal section, and retro drum vibe with falsetto. The tight, solid powerhouse duo delivered a super-catchy sound, with fantastic cutoffs and a clipped offbeat ending. “Rush”—with Smith playing violin (alternating between tremolo and pizzicato) while singing—was unbelievable. His second unreleased track, “Best Parts,” presented warm vocals over a building storyline of love lost, before bringing the crowd together on “Nobody” and “WAGD

(We’re All Gonna Die),” the new single co-written by DRU. The finale showcased brilliant vocal control, octave leaps, and even more glorious melodic tension, with the crowd clapping and singing along throughout.

Summary: Smith’s ease and comfort on stage make it easy to forget the fantastic talent he possesses, outshone only by his ability to create rapport with the audience and build palpably tense anticipation through his singing and playing. Between his great energy, catchy loops, and exquisite melody lines, his poignant writing and dramatic anthems make for seductively relatable songs. —**Andrea Beenham**



The Viper Room West Hollywood, CA

Contact: becky@bigpicturemediaonline.com

Web: hot4crime.com

Players: Mick Dorn, vocals; Chris Cash, guitar; Danny Thompson, drums; Miles Schon, guitar; Paul O’Malley, bass

Material: Hot for Crime is a Los Angeles born ‘n bred, hard rockin’ band cranking out tunes in the vein of The Ramones, The Sex Pistols, SoundGarden and Alice in Chains. The music is well written and is stiff, in-your-face rock

& roll with creative twists and turns spiraling wildly through each song. The songs are inventive, and although sounding somewhat like the above-mentioned artists, each tune has its own personality.

Musicianship: Excellent. The band gelled together nicely from the get-go and didn’t let up all night. Thompson, Cash and O’Malley make up a great rhythm section and that opened up each song for some blistering guitar work from Schon. Although his fretboard was lit a-fire from the opening note, Schon managed some

very refined, tasteful and juicy solos that were the highlight of many of Hot for Crime tunes. Icing on the cake was Dorn’s very masculine, youthful vocals that had the ladies screaming, singing and dancing to all the tunes.

Performance: Hot for Crime put on a good show (with a little help from The Viper Room crew). The music was loud, clear and thundering in the small venue and the lighting just put everything over the top. Dorn tried hard to keep everything light and airy as he talked to the audience between songs and kept it rough and rowdy while singing. Schon was all smiles as his fingers glided and danced over his fretboard while he strutted and posed for the picture-takers. Cash and O’Malley had the girls dancing and screaming all night long and Thompson was the steadiest of time keepers.

Summary: Hot for Crime’s show was a lot of fun. The music has everything. Great background vocals, searing guitars and great rhythms and melodies. “Kisser” has a high school vibe that takes you back to a time when things were simpler and more carefree. “Irish Style,” a rockin’, metal-guitar infused rockabilly tune, had the audience jumping in their seats. “My Girlfriend,” is a Ramones-meets-The-Beastie-Boys tune that was heartfelt and touching to the core.

The band’s music is imaginative and unique and the tunes are melodic and pleasing to the ear; and on top of all that, Schon’s guitar work is phenomenal. You can hear many a genre evaporate off his fingertips as he plays; rockabilly, metal, grunge, rock, hard rock, punk and pop, making Hot for Crime a memorable listening experience. —**Pierce Brochetti**

The Lighthouse Café Hermosa Beach, CA

Contact: dougdeutschpr1956@gmail.com
Web: jongieger.com
Players: Jon Geiger, guitar, vocals; Chad Watson, bass; Peter Buck, drums

Material: Jon Geiger is a somewhat contemporary blues artist borrowing riffs from the likes of Stevie Ray Vaughan, Keb' Mo' and Gary Clark Jr. Geiger's songs are well written, with catchy lyrics and good melodies, and they are on the softer end of the spectrum. This gave the audience a look-see into Geiger's mellower, jazzy side and set the stage for an afternoon of relaxing, bluesy sounds.

Musicianship: Solid rhythm section; Watson and Buck held it down pretty good and even improvised through "Desert of My Heart" and others. Geiger had some good, jazzy licks come through on "Born to the Street" and his raspy vocals meshed well with his music. "Feeling Good" is a slow, moody, down 'n dirty blues tune that engaged the music with his vocals and gave the audience something to sink their teeth into. Nothing fancy; just straightforward jazzy blues for your listening enjoyment.

Performance: A bit lackluster. Something wasn't clicking. Geiger stood around looking at his bandmates for the better part of 40 minutes as if asking, "What's wrong?" Something wasn't right, but even in all the



JON GEIGER

dishevelment, Geiger's opening tune was born out of Stevie Ray Vaughan's tips, tricks 'n licks and that was just enough impetus to pull the performance through. Topping things off with a well performed version of Bill Withers' "Ain't No Sunshine," it received warm, well-deserved applause that had some passers-by poke their head in to see who was playing.

Summary: Most of Jon Geiger's music is pretty good and most of the songs have enough

"fancy-ness" to make them likeable and appealing. Despite being tired from his recent trip to Australia, the gig didn't keep Geiger from being a trooper. Tunes like "Born to the Streets" and "Feeling Good" are both radio worthy and pleasing, while "Desert of My Heart" has an Australian Bushmen feel to it, with different tempos encompassing a complex tune. Jon Geiger is diverse enough to catch the ear of many a blues (as well as jazz) listener.

-Pierce Brochetti



HIS EYES HAVE FANGS

Alex's Bar Long Beach, CA

Contact: hiseyeshavefangsband@gmail.com
Web: hiseyeshavefangs.com
Players: Rachel Anne Rainwater, guitar, vocals; Ray Barbee, guitar; Tony Alva, bass; Matthew Rainwater, drums

Material: We caught the fascinatingly named His Eyes Have Fangs for the first time as they opened up for comedy-rock troupe the Sloppy Boys in Long Beach. It made for an interesting night, though there's nothing funny about these guys. There are some oddities, however. Guitarist Ray Barbee and bassist Tony Alva

are both well-known local skateboarders, as well as longtime musicians. Barbee is known for his pioneering freestyle skating, and he has his own Vans shoe. Alva was an original Z-Boy (Zephyr Competition Skateboarding Team), and he played with Venice punks Skoundrelz and Hollywood rockers Junkyard, before joining this band in 2013.

Barbee isn't listed on their Facebook page as a member, so he may be a recent addition. Regardless, the music that they're making together now, alongside drummer Matthew Rainwater, is a wonderful blend of psychedelic rock and dream-pop, with a punk edge. And in singer and guitarist Rachel Anne Rainwater,

they have an exemplary focal point—ethereal and captivating. They didn't have a long set and only manage to squeeze in six songs, but from the opening "Into the Sun" they made the most of every second.

Musicianship: The band is fascinating, actually. Barbee is a unique, eclectic guitarist, apparently as pioneering with his instrument as he is with his board. Not unlike Tom Morello, Barbee wrangles sounds out of his guitar that don't seem like they came out of a guitar. Alva and Matthew Rainwater are more than the average rhythm section, adding flourishes when they feel the urge. And Rachel Anne Rainwater has a voice that is simply gorgeous. It takes you on a journey, and it's not always pretty. She's as reminiscent of PJ Harvey as she is Beth Orton.

Performance: The band pretty much stays in place, yet there's something hypnotic about the way Barbee and Alva move with their instruments. Meanwhile, the singer looks like a Lynchian hallucination, swaying like a *Twin Peaks* nightclub performer on tunes such as "Datura's Moonflower" and "Anyone Who Knows What Love Is (Will Understand)."

Summary: His Eyes Have Fangs have been around for much longer than we would have guessed, and the L.A. band have found a sound that is very much their own. Collectively, they're a supremely talented bunch and it's easy to imagine their music scoring a TV show or movie—they just need a whole lot more people to discover them. **-Brett Callwood**



The Mint Los Angeles, CA

Contact: mjaffe365@gmail.com

Web: mattjaffemusic.com

Players: Matt Jaffe, vocals, acoustic guitar

Material: Performing music from 2018's *The Spirit Catches You* and 2021's *Kintsugi*, Matt Jaffe delivered an authentic, lighthearted acoustic set at The Mint for a supportive midweek crowd. From his opening guitar work on "Wicked World" to his closing cover

of Bob Dylan's "Forever Young," he brought gorgeous guitar play and strong vocal delivery, added to by a dry, witty sense of humor that revealed a fun, down-to-earth approach to engaging with his audience.

Musicianship: Opening with catchy refrains and solid storytelling, "Wicked World" began with Spanish-flavored guitar strumming and falsetto vocals, both of which he made look and feel easy. Jaffe's guitar picking skills opened "Weekend Lover," which also

showcased his impressive vocal range and beautiful guitar playing over the bridge. "Voodoo Doll" followed (along with a funny reference to performing circuits at juvenile halls), and "Save Your Sorrow" revealed his softer side, with its gentle lilting style.

Performance: Taking the lid off, Jaffe shared a song dedicated to Martha Stewart (another comedic story) with fabulous guitar licks on "Hellhounds of Alcatraz" and spoke of his experience with the California fires in "Fire On The Freeway," sharing catchy guitar loops and great syncopation. As a talented guitarist and a strong vocalist, combined with a transparent storytelling style and a vocal sound similar to that of Noel Gallagher, Jaffe brings a unique, gentle approach to his stage persona. His presence is refreshingly invitational and he shows an honest appreciation for—and investment in—his audience.

Summary: With his unassuming, mellow persona and confident, effortless style of playing and singing, Matt Jaffe creates a warm and comfortable environment to enjoy his musical offerings. Jaffe's genuine audience engagement, interesting lyrical storytelling, and amusing, quirky anecdotal interludes between songs make for a jovial, relaxing atmosphere. His music is sincere and uncomplicated and makes for a satisfying musical evening out. **-Andrea Beenham**

Alex's Bar Long Beach, CA

Contact: thesloppyboyspr@gmail.com

Web: thesloppyboys.com

Players: Mike Hanford, bass, vocals; Tim Kapalkis, guitar; Jeff Dutton drums

Material: Few words can strike as much fear in the music critic as "comedy" and "rock" when they're placed together. Because, make no mistake about it, most of the time the results aren't nearly as successful as the work of Spinal Tap, or even Dewey Cox. Usually, it ends up being far closer to forgotten rap-rockers the Bloodhound Gang. Which is to say, the music ends up being neither comedic nor rocking. With that in mind, the Sloppy Boys don't do too badly at all. The three men spawned out of comedy troupe the Birthday Boys—that name might be familiar to comedy fans who recall their TV sketch show which saw them get a leg up from *Better Call Saul* / *Mr. Show* man Bob Odenkirk. So, they have pedigree, and a few great tunes too. Many of them are about partying, rocking and drinking, and they sound like a blend of early Beastie Boys and Andrew WK. Which isn't a bad thing.

Musicianship: It probably shouldn't be surprising that the trio can play well, but it kinda is. The vibe of goofiness that the trio deliberately convey can be mistaken for childish apathy—like they don't really care about this stuff. But that's sort of the joke—the tunes are carefully crafted, lovingly constructed, and well performed.



Performance: "Loooooong Beeeeach—the Sloppy Boys are here," they call out with nasal tones when taking to the stage. Decked out in white and looking for all the world like yacht rockers, they blast through songs like "Here for the Beer," "The Mastah Bong Rippah" and "Pass the Doobie" with all of the joyful enthusiasm of frat boys at the frattiest of frat parties. That's not a dig—the trip are simultaneously goofing off and playing their music, and one isn't getting in the way of the other. It's a gift.

Summary: It might surprise many to learn that these Sloppy Boys have been around for a while now, and they have three albums on the shelves (or, to be more accurate these days, available to stream). Fans of the Birthday Boys should relish the chance to dive in and discover their musical project. But even those not familiar with the comedy gang will find plenty to enjoy here. Think of Andy Samberg's *SNL* "On a Boat" skit, and then expand it into a full gig. If that doesn't sound obnoxious to you, jump right in. **-Brett Callwood**

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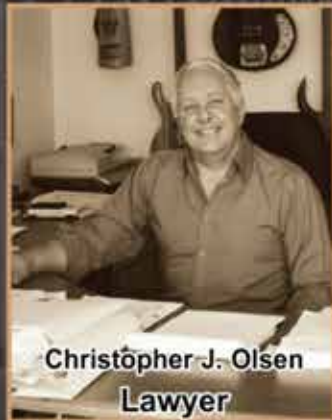
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Get Your Songs Published

Molly-Ann Leikin, who's written with and for everyone from Katy Perry, to Cher, Tina Turner, Anne Murray, Billy Preston, and Placido Domingo, has the following words of wisdom to share with you about the business side of being a songwriter. These tips and advice are taken from Leikin's recent book, *Insider Secrets To Hit Songwriting In The Digital Digital Age*.

A legitimate music publisher won't charge you to publish your work. Only scuzz buckets do.

What Publishing a Song Really Means

When my first song was published, I expected to see shiny sheet music with a nice picture on the cover. But I learned when a song is published, unlike a book, what a songwriter gets is a signed contract, and maybe a small check. Heavy on the maybe. Sheet music isn't printed until the song is a hit. Then a photo of the artist or band who made your tune a hit, will be on the cover. Your name will appear as well, but in small print.

No matter how small the font, you still get paid per copy sold. That amount varies from forty cents up. Everything is negotiable.

How Do I Sell My Songs?

Lots of new songwriters call me daily, saying they want to sell their songs. NO! Only sleazoids buy material, taking advantage of naïve writers who need instant gratification, recognition and maybe 10 bucks.

There are scurrilous companies claiming to "buy" your work outright, but when you see one of their ads, delete it.

Suppose you do sell a song for 10 dollars. What if that song goes on to earn \$10,000,000.00? Your name will never appear on the credits, or copyright, and you'll never earn more than that initial 10 dollars. Period.

So don't ever sell your songs.

Your Publisher and You

You and your publisher are partners. However, writers and publishers are often at odds. Publishers feel their writers demand instant placements and deals. Writers complain full-time when that doesn't happen, and feel their publishers are not paying enough attention to them. It's like being a middle child.

This debate will never end. However, once you, as a songwriter, make your first deal through the efforts of your publisher, everybody loves everybody again. You share limos to the Grammys, name your children after one another and then, when that positive wave subsides, go back to leaving dead possums on doorsteps.

How The Song Royalty Pie Is Shared

A song is a circle, like a CD. Draw a line

through the diameter. The top half is the songwriter's share. For each tunesmith involved, slice the pie equally. The bottom half is the publisher's share.

All new songwriters are desperate to find publishers for their work. But there are publishers and there are publishers. You want a viable one, with recent hits and lots of current connections. A guy who placed a song on the B-side of a Snot single in the '60s is not your best shot now.

It's tough out there, even with the hottest hustle and lifetime connections. So, respect your publisher for trying to help you.



It's Your Responsibility

As a writer, it's part of your job to know who publishes the hit songs/artists in your genre each week on the Billboard charts. There is no fairy godmother who will do that for you. The schlemiels who pretend to be this miracle, really aren't. So, it's on you until you've got enough momentum on your own, for a real manager, from a muscle company, who will bully their way into making a deal for you.

Until you sign with a pushy, persistent manager, it's your responsibility. And if you don't do it, nothing will get done.

Nobody But You Will Ever Be As Passionate About Your Success As You Are

While reading the chart in your genre, if you honestly feel you and your material are right for a

particular publishing company working with a hit artist, contact someone there.

If the artist writes their own songs, don't bother.

The best way in is to co-write, and be "invited into the room" while an artist creates new material. That usually won't happen until you have some cred.

Eventually you'll get through. As you listen to all the songs on the current Top 40, realize those people finally got past the gatekeepers. So will you. Honest.

As you navigate the choppy waters of Musi-land, make sure you're dealing with legitimate professionals, and skip the grief. Save hard copies of all paperwork. NEVER, ever trust anyone to do anything without a signed agreement. If somebody you're dealing with won't do that, run the other way. Even a family member needs to sign paperwork. You can't imagine the drama when writers have hits and their fourth cousins, who died five years ago, want in.

Avoid Cheap Music-For-Hire Companies

Legions of smarmy companies prey on naïve, frustrated lyricists by offering to write and produce inexpensive "melodies" for those lyrics.

On behalf of my clients, I've contacted most of these enterprises, and closed down dozens. What they offer sounds like a reasonable idea, but the reality is, the alleged original melodies are the same ones they sold thousands of times before, the singers are past their prime, sing flat and completely without

feeling. None of the thousands of disappointed clients, who have contacted me after the fact, ever earned a penny.

Songwriting is your life. Your songs are your children. Protect them. If you don't, you have no business claiming to be an artist interested in successful commerce. The cheapest answer is just that. It's never the best. And certainly not the only one.

Think like a pro and write well today. I'm in your corner all the way.



MOLLY-ANN LEIKIN is an Emmy nominee who's written with and for everyone from Katy Perry, to Cher, Tina Turner, Anne Murray, Billy Preston, and Placido Domingo. She penned themes and songs for over six dozen TV shows and movies, including *Violet*, which won an Oscar. Leikin has mentored two generations of Grammy winners and nominees. Leikin does private, personal, telephone consultations at songmd.com, and is the author of *Insider Secrets To Hit Songwriting In The Digital Digital Age*.

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