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Sleaford Mods

Music Connection chats with English post-punk duo Sleaford Mods, the outspoken street outfit, as they put out their 13th studio album *The Demise of Planet X*.

By Brett Callwood

Photos: Nick Waplington

A&R Roundtable 2026

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By Andy Kaufmann



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Compiled by Robin Rose

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MUSIC
CONNECTION

E. Eric Bettelli PUBLISHER

E. Eric Bettelli **Brett Callwood**

GENERAL MANAGER /
 ADVERTISING DIRECTOR
 ericb@musicconnection.com

brettc@musicconnection.com

Derrick Rainey

ART DIRECTOR
 derrickr@musicconnection.com

Robin Rose

OPERATIONS MANAGER /
 DIRECTORIES EDITOR
 robinr@musicconnection.com

Jon K

ADVERTISING / MARKETING
 jonk@musicconnection.com

Ray Holt

DIGITAL MARKETING DIRECTOR
 rayh@musicconnection.com

Michael Stern

NEW TOYS
 newtoys@musicconnection.com

Andrea Beenham

SONG BIZ
 drea@dreajo.com

Jessica Pace

FILM / TV / THEATER / GAMES
 j.marie.pace@gmail.com

FEATURE WRITERS

Andy Kaufmann andy.kaufmann@verizon.net • Rob Putnam toe2toe6@hotmail.com
 Jonathan Widran few22@aol.com

EDITORIAL INTERNS

Shalen Farahi, Anna Jordan, Cade Pinkerson intern@musicconnection.com

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

David Arnon, Miguel Costa, Shana Nys Dambrot,
 Gary Graff, Eric Harabedian, Dan Kimpel, Glenn Litwak,
 Lina Lecaro, Joseph Maltese, Emily Mills, Lily Moayeri, Libby Molyneaux,
 Megan Perry Moore, Jacqueline Naranjo, Lyndsey Parker,
 Adam Seyum, Daniel Siwek, Eric Sommer, Ellen Woloshin

PHOTOGRAPHERS

David Arnon, Miguel Costa, Kevin Estrada,
 Apple Kaufmann, Alex Kluft, Charlie Meister, Megan Perry Moore,
 Jacqueline Naranjo, Garrett Poulos, Alexander G. Seyum,
 Daniel Seyum, Mark Shiwalich, Daniel Siwek,
 Brian Stewart, Ellen Woloshin

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Founded by: J. Michael Dolan / jmichaeldolan.com

CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS

3441 Ocean View Blvd., Glendale, CA 91208 Office: 818-995-0101

Fax: 818-638-8015 Email: contactmc@musicconnection.com

Web: musicconnection.com

Legal Counsel: Christopher J. Olsen / chris@chrisolsenlaw.com

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Brokenboard Productions

instagram.com/brokenboardprod

San Antonio Sk8er Boi Turned Underground Concert Promoter:

Growing up in San Antonio, TX, JohnSteven Garcia had two passions: skateboarding and music. As friends of his in the skater community found success booking local house and DIY shows, he set his sights on getting involved professionally in music. Since he didn't play an instrument, he had to find another way into the scene: "If I can't be the talent, I can get the talent." Garcia's opportunity came when a close friend who had been booking gigs said he was moving to Oakland and asked if he could help him out and take over. As he learned the ropes and made connections, he assembled a team and chose the perfect name for his company based on his extensive collection of skateboards and wall of broken skate decks—Brokenboard Productions. In the early days, focused more on doing everything out of love, caring about the local community, and making sure bands were taken care of, he resisted the word "promoter." Yet as the business grew over the next 20+ years, he embraced the reality that he was quickly becoming the leading independent concert promoter in Central Texas. As Brokenboard's Instagram page—which features promotional posters of hundreds of gigs—says, their aesthetic is "Beer. Whiskey. Shows. Friends. DIY. Good times."

The Best in Indie Grindcore and Death Metal: One of Garcia's early successes grew out of his time at the bar Rock Bottom, where he started as "floor guy" and bartender before beginning to book popular gigs—in conjunction with a major booking company—for touring grindcore and death metal bands like Phobia, Maruta, and Kylesa. While those genres became Brokenboard's specialty, Garcia also booked post punk, garage punk, and dark wave experimental bands as



well. One of the great joys of building his brand and being the "go-to" guy for these kinds of shows was having the opportunity to work with popular bands he grew up loving—including death metal groups like Deicide and Possessed and punk outfits TSOL and The Addicts.

Changes and Other Endeavors: With so many changes going on in the industry, it was inevitable that Brokenboard Productions would shift gears and slow down their once-relentless pace from three or four major shows per month to the current single show over two months. Garcia's collection of just under 5,000 vinyl records led to regular work DJing everything from casual events to local '80s dance nights. "A good promoter is always in tune with the people he or she works with and the fans who fill the venues," he says. "Everything comes down to who they want to see and fulfilling those wishes. I love that view I get from the side of the stage, seeing the crowd getting into the music, being happy and loving every minute of the experience."

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ASSIGNMENTS

Nuno Rocha

Head of Business Development
ONErpm

ONErpm has appointed **Nuno Rocha** as **Head of Business Development for Portugal, the Lusophone and Francophone African territories, and the MENA region**. Formerly the General Manager of Portugal, Rocha will now lead the company's expansion across these high-potential emerging markets. "Managing and leading the Lusophone, Francophone, and MENA regions means embracing multicultural dynamics, building strong and strategic partnerships, and fostering sustainable development," said Rocha. "Every encounter is an opportunity to pave the way for the future." For more, contact heidi@cswpublicity.com.



Curtis Heath

Board President and Chair
The Guitar Center Music Foundation

The Guitar Center Music Foundation (GCMF) announced that **Curtis Heath**, President of Guitar Center Business Solutions, has been appointed **Board President and Chair**. Heath's appointment marks a new chapter for the Foundation as it works to expand access to music education and deepen its impact in communities across the country. "Music has the power to change lives, and our mission is to make sure that opportunity exists for every child," said Heath. For more, contact pr@clynemedia.com.



Niels Walboomers

President
Warner Music Central Europe

Warner Music Central Europe has announced the appointment of **Niels Walboomers** as **President** as they expand to combine its recorded music businesses in Benelux (Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg), including Spinnin' Records, with those in Germany, Switzerland and Austria (GSA). "I'm hugely inspired by the talent and dedication of the GSA team, and I look forward to building on their outstanding work together. At the same time, I'm deeply grateful to the Benelux team, whose record-breaking achievements have helped make this next step possible," said Walboomers. For more, contact communications@wmg.com.



Marc Zelanko

Chief of Staff
ASCAP

The American Society of Composers Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) has named **Marc Zelanko** as **Chief of Staff**, reporting to ASCAP CEO Elizabeth Matthews. Zelanko is a seasoned business operations executive with extensive experience managing operations, partnerships, transformation and chief-of-staff functions to spur growth and drive efficiency in IP-led media and entertainment companies. "I look forward to bringing my expertise to ASCAP's mission in support of improving the future for its songwriters, composers and music publishers," said Zelanko. For more, contact cnevins@ascap.com.



Wendy Buckner

Senior Creative Director
North Chapel Music

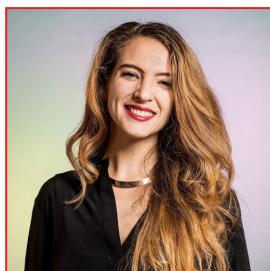
North Chapel Music announced it has appointed **Wendy Buckner** to the role of **Senior Creative Director**. Buckner, who has more than 20 years of experience in publishing, music and TV production, and artist management, previously served as North Chapel's Creative Director. In her newly appointed role as Senior Creative Director, she will continue to report to Executive Vice President Paul Compton. "Wendy has been a key member of our team since the launch of North Chapel and we look forward to the new projects she'll tackle in her expanded role," said founder Benny Brown. For more, contact natalie@qhmusicgroup.com.



Lisa Hresko

Chief Operating Officer
A2IM

The American Association of Independent Music (A2IM) announced that General Manager **Lisa Hresko** has been promoted to **Chief Operating Officer**. In addition, Hresko has been announced as the first President of the Foundation of Independent Music by its board. "I am thrilled to be continuing the important work we are doing here at A2IM, representing some of the most vibrant, passionate and creative artists and labels in the music industry, and building out the work of the Foundation of Independent Music," said Hresko. For more, contact jeff@thesyn.com.



Mary Claire "MC" Miskell

Senior Account Executive
Shore Fire Media

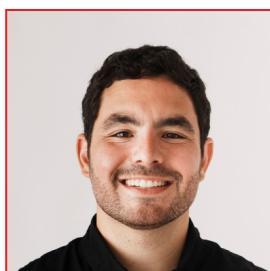
Shore Fire Media has announced the promotion of **Mary Claire "MC" Miskell** to **Senior Account Executive**. Miskell joined Shore Fire in 2022, after gaining experience in beauty and lifestyle communications at Aimee Majoros Public Relations and music publicity at Biz3. "MC's work embodies the kind of thoughtful and imaginative storytelling that defines Shore Fire at its best. Her talent for championing legacy artists, elevating cultural institutions and leading on-site events makes her an indispensable asset to both our team and our clients," said Co-President Rebecca Shapiro. For more, contact info@shorefire.com.

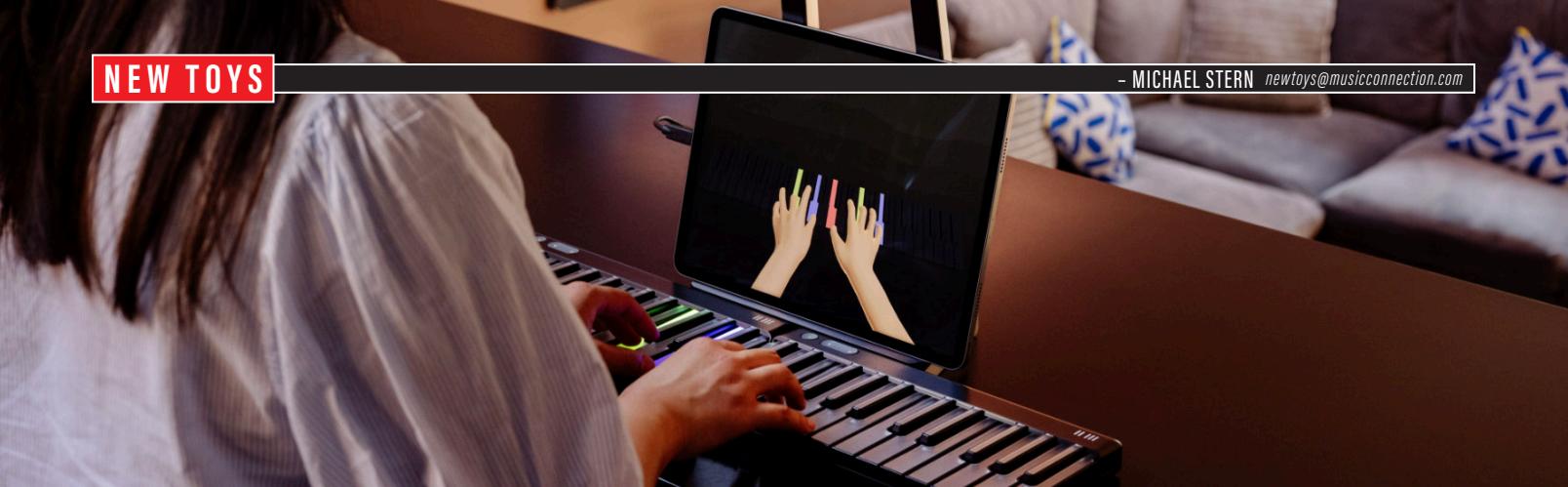


Jackson Weingart

Vice President, Marketing and Digital Strategy
Mercury Records

Mercury Records has appointed **Jackson Weingart** to **Vice President, Marketing and Digital Strategy**. In this role, Weingart will leverage his dynamic experience to devise, enact, and execute 360-degree campaigns tailored to each respective artist. "I'm truly honored to be joining such an incredible group of artists and executives at Mercury. I've admired the work this team has been doing for quite some time, so to be invited in to work alongside them means a lot to me," said Weingart. For more, contact marisa.bianco@umusic.com.





▲ ROLI PIANO - AIRWAVE AND PIANO A.I. ASSISTANT

ROLI, a U.K.-based music technology company, was founded in London in 2009 and is focused entirely on innovative keyboard products. New for 2025, the ROLI Piano and Airwave system is an A.I.-powered music platform designed for both learning to play piano and advanced musical creation. It combines a light-up keyboard with a hand-tracking camera peripheral, Airwave, and a unique software system.

The ROLI Piano is 49-key keyboard controller with full-size, semi-weighted keys that feature per-key pitch bend and polyphonic aftertouch. The keys are RGB illuminated and light up to guide users through songs, scales, and lessons. You can bend notes with a glide to one side, and vibrato works with a wiggle of the finger.

ROLI Airwave uses two infrared cameras to track hand movements and translates those movements into MIDI CC messages. The cameras track 27 points in each hand at 90 frames per second, offering real-time feedback. These gestures can be used to control parameters in software or external synths. Airwave comes with the Airwave Player plug-in, which provides over 100 custom sounds designed to react to the gestures.

ROLI Piano and Airwave do not generate sound on their own; they are both MIDI controllers that must be connected to a computer or sound source. The hardware combination captures your input, key presses and hand gestures, and the accompanying software generates the sound.

ROLI has two tiers of software, Learn Edition and Create Edition. Paired with the ROLI Learn app, the light-up keys and Piano A.I. Assistant guides users through songs, exercises, and games, making the learning process interactive. It acts as an "intelligent practice assistant" providing real-time visual feedback on posture, finger positioning, and technique. Piano A.I. can teach music history and theory and gives prompts on new things to learn. Learners can speak to the piano, asking it questions about music history, chords, scales, melodies, and popular and classic tracks. It's a music encyclopedia at your fingertips.

For accomplished players, ROLI Create can be used as a MPE (MIDI Polyphonic Expression) controller in your DAW. ROLI Create is a suite of plugins and management applications. Here are a few: ROLI Studio Player plugin plays ROLI's synths Equator2, Cypher2, and Strobe2. ROLI Studio Drums, the world's first MPE-enabled drum plugin, allows you to shape and bend drum sounds and grooves using gestures on your ROLI controller. ROLI Dashboard allows you to customize sensitivity, pitch bend range, and different performance modes (Piano, Pro, Stage, User). Airwave Player plugin provides custom sounds and the interface to map your hand gestures to control sound parameters.

ROLI Create brings advanced Airwave functions into play. ROLI Vision A.I. tracks hand movements in 3D space, in categories Air Raise, Tilt, Glide, Slide, and Flex. Airwave tracks and maps them as MIDI CC offering real time sound modification. This is the performance core of Airwave. If you've ever seen an EWI, (Electronic Wind Instrument), the non-linearity of that controller enabling all the incredibly expressive "in between" notes is somewhat analogous to what the ROLI system enables.

When you combine ROLI Piano, the Piano A.I. Assistant, and Airwave, you get what ROLI calls, "the most intelligent and intuitive system for musical learning and creation ever made: The ROLI Piano System." The ROLI System adapts with the user's ability, catering to beginners and pros. Connects via USB-C and Bluetooth. Piano + Airwave Bundle \$758

roli.com

▼ SHURE KSM11 CONDENSER LIVE PERFORMANCE MICROPHONE (WIRED)

If you are a performer that uses and maybe even loves microphones, there is no question that you have at one time or more held a Shure microphone in your hand. Established in 1925 and celebrating their 100th anniversary, Shure has been a technology leader and innovator whose products have set the industry standard and become synonymous with superior quality, reliability, and affordability for generations of people. With the time-tested technology of the venerable industry standard Shure SM58 dating all the way back to 1966, it makes sense that the lessons learned since this time would evolve to a much higher performance microphone.



Shure's new premier live performance microphone is the KSM11. A cardioid condenser of the highest quality, this vocal microphone sets the standard from the designed in America manufacturer that is the de facto standard for nearly every application. Comparing this to dynamic live performance microphones, it's immediately apparent that the KSM11 has a power, presence, and clarity that is beyond the ordinary.

Developed with and working in conjunction with artists and mixers from varied live performance genres, Shure set out to make their finest live mic. Designed to have a natural sound and a fullness that requires little to no EQ, the KSM11 features a proprietary condenser cartridge utilizing a 3/4" gold diaphragm and premium electronics for 130dB dynamic range with maximum SPL level of 149dB. These impressive specs are capped with a tight cardioid polar pattern intended to reduce off-axis sound pickup. The goal is to keep as little extraneous sound from entering your vocal mic as possible. Additional thought was put into feedback resistance when "cupping" the mic, holding it by the capsule as many performers often do. Shure engineers designed the KSM11's performance to be even no matter where the hands holding the mic are.

Live microphones, no matter how expensive, can end up taking a lot of abuse. With that in mind, the KSM11 features a dent-resistant hardened steel grille with 3-stage plosive reduction pop filtering and an "advanced suspended isolation system for virtually zero handling noise."

Interestingly and unique, the Shure KSM11 began as a wireless version. Introduced in April 2022 to be the first Shure wireless capsule built specifically for digital wireless systems, a wired XLR version was subsequently released at NAMM in January 2025, extending the same premium technology to both wireless and wired applications.

If you are looking for the absolute best American-designed live vocal microphone, the Shure KSM11 is it. It's a significant upgrade over many standard handheld mics, with a smooth, clear high-end, and a fuller low-end, making it ideal for both live and broadcast applications where vocal clarity and consistency are crucial. Known for its ability to reproduce a performance "in true form" and its high-performance characteristics, it is a top choice for performers who want the best live vocal reproduction. Requires +48-volt Phantom Power. Available in black and nickel. \$879 wired version.

shure.com

AMBIENTE: REDEFINING ROOM SIMULATION FOR AUDIO PROFESSIONALS

A deep look into Audio Modeling's physically modeled room simulator for engineers, producers, and sound designers.

From Reverb to Realism

For decades, engineers have used reverbs to create space—algorithmic ones for creative shaping, and convolution ones for realism. Yet even the most advanced reverbs don't truly reproduce how sound behaves in a real environment.

Ambiente, from Audio Modeling (<https://audiomodeling.com>), redefines spatial processing by simulating the geometry and materials of a real room. It's not about layering reverb tails—it's about placing sounds in a modeled space that calculates reflections and propagation in real time.

Audio Modeling, a world leader in physically modeled instruments and acoustic technology, brings its expertise to Ambiente, a Room Simulator that gives every sound a true sense of location and interaction—something no conventional reverb can achieve.

A Unified Acoustic Space for Modern Production

Ambiente lets producers and engineers place multiple tracks inside a shared virtual room. Each track communicates with the same modeled space, so their reflections blend naturally.

This capability makes Ambiente ideal for hybrid sessions that combine SWAM-modeled instruments with live recordings. Strings, brass, or vocals can all exist within the same coherent environment—breathing the same "air" without ever leaving the DAW.

The result is a realistic and cohesive mix that feels recorded in a single acoustic space, even if the elements come from different studios or sample libraries.

For Recording and Mixing Engineers

Dry recordings can sound sterile, especially when captured in small or untreated rooms. Ambiente restores realism by giving engineers control over distance and perspective rather than just "wet" and "dry" balance.

Inserted directly on a track, Ambiente places that source in a modeled 3D environment. Reflections and reverberation depend on room geometry, surface materials, and source position—not on arbitrary reverb levels.

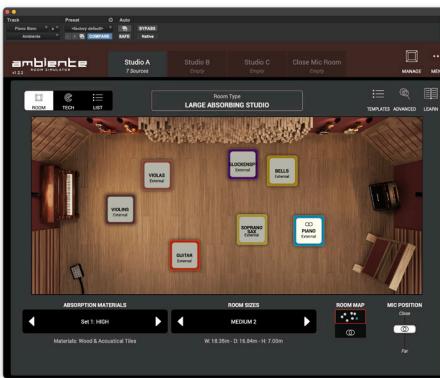
Using the microphone distance control, engineers can easily shift a sound from intimate and focused to spacious and open. The workflow is intuitive: insert the plug-in, choose or design a room, position the source, and adjust the mic perspective.

Ambiente transforms the process of mixing from one of layering effects to one of sculpting space.

For Producers and Home Studios

For home producers without access to expensive studios, Ambiente acts as a virtual acoustic room. With just a few clicks, a vocal or guitar recorded in a bedroom can sound as if captured in a professional live room or concert hall.

Each room's size and absorption characteristics are physically modeled, so reflections behave naturally and interact dynamically with the source's placement. The result is a realistic sense of air and dimension that typical reverb presets can't reproduce.



For Foley and Post-Production

Post-production engineers can use Ambiente to match voices, sound effects, and ambient noises within a consistent virtual room. Wall and floor materials are adjustable, allowing quick transitions from a controlled studio sound to a reflective environment.

By placing sounds accurately within the modeled space, Foley artists can maintain acoustic coherence across scenes—achieving the sense that every element truly belongs to the same location.

For Game Audio and Immersive Sound Design

In game audio or cinematic sound design, consistency of acoustics is essential. Ambiente allows sound designers to position dialogue, environmental cues, or effects inside a physically modeled virtual space.

Every sound reflects and decays according to the virtual room's dimensions and materials, ensuring realistic continuity throughout an entire project.

Working Inside the Room

Ambiente's interface offers three main views: Room, Tech, and List. Room View provides a visual map for dragging sources; Tech View gives precise, scaled control of dimensions and placement; and List View allows fast numeric adjustments.

Users can mix and match six room sizes with three absorption material sets, shaping everything from tight studio spaces to expansive halls. Advanced controls include Reverb Modulation for lush movement and Source Delay Mode to simulate real-world propagation timing.

Three customizable rooms plus a fixed Close Mic Room offer multi-space flexibility—ideal for separating instruments or sections while keeping a unified acoustic identity.

Practical Mixing Scenarios

Hybrid Orchestration: Combine SWAM strings with recorded acoustic instruments. Position them in the same Ambiente room to achieve orchestral depth and cohesion.

Pop, Soul, and Blues: Use smaller, more absorbent spaces to emphasize transients and clarity while maintaining natural ambience.

Multi-Room Projects: Assign different ensembles or sections to separate rooms—like vocals in a dry studio, drums in a medium space, and strings in a reflective hall.

Ambiente's intuitive workflow encourages creativity. Instead of juggling multiple reverbs,

engineers can shape a full acoustic scene with a single unified system.

For the Engineer's Workflow

Ambiente integrates seamlessly with all major DAWs including Logic Pro, Pro Tools, Cubase, Studio One, Reaper, and Ableton Live.

It supports both Mono→Stereo and Stereo→Stereo configurations, offering realistic reflection modeling for mono or stereo tracks.

Performance is efficient—modern quad-core systems handle multiple instances smoothly, and projects can easily be bounced or frozen when needed.

Ambiente is available for macOS, Windows, iPadOS, and iOS, in VST, VST3, AU, AUv3, AAX, NKS, and Standalone formats, giving users complete flexibility across platforms and workflows.

Why Ambiente Belongs in Every Engineer's Toolbox

Ambiente introduces a new way to think about space. For recording engineers, it restores realism to isolated tracks. For mixing engineers, it delivers depth without stacking effects. For sound designers, it provides coherence between acoustic elements.

From home studios to professional scoring stages, Ambiente turns any mix into a believable sonic environment—realistic, natural, and emotionally engaging.

Future Perspectives

Audio Modeling's roadmap for Ambiente includes:

- Multi-channel support for immersive audio,
- Selectable microphone types and layouts, and
- Animated sources for dynamic positioning within the virtual room.

These enhancements will expand Ambiente into surround and immersive formats such as Dolby Atmos—an evolution toward a complete spatial acoustics engine for modern production.

Conclusion

Ambiente bridges digital precision with the warmth of physical acoustics. It allows engineers to think like conductors, shaping mixes not just by level, but by location.

For home producers, it delivers the realism of world-class studios. For engineers and sound designers, it restores the natural glue that makes every mix breathe.

In a market saturated with reverbs, Ambiente stands apart—not as an effect, but as a space where sound truly lives.

Ambiente is priced at \$149 USD.

Apply the code **MC202601** at checkout on <https://audiomodeling.com> to get 33% off!

Ambiente is distributed in the United States by ILIO (<https://ilio.com>).

ILIO and Audio Modeling will exhibit at the NAMM Show 2026, January 22-24, at booth #9107.

► SSL 18 26-IN/28-OUT HIGH-PERFORMANCE USB AUDIO INTERFACE

Solid State Logic (SSL), is a British recording console manufacturer associated with the most famed temples of sound. Formerly accessible solely in multi-million-dollar A-list recording studios, the legendary SSL sound is now available in modular USB interfaces. The SSL 18 is a 26-input/28-output rackmount USB-C audio recording interface designed for professional and home recording studios that need a high-performance expandable audio interface for tracking, mixing, and music production.

SSL 18 features eight mic preamps, with switchable Mic/Line configuration. Boasting ultra-low noise, state-of-the-art dynamic range, and ultra-low distortion, the preamps can run in a neutral coloration mode to maintain transparency or in Legacy 4K Mode to add real analog saturation and the famous SSL 4000 series sound that was heard on countless hits dating back to the 1980s. Inputs 1 and 2 also offer instrument/Hi-Z inputs to capture any instrument that can connect via 1/4" guitar type cables.

Specifications are all top notch. The SSL 18 features 32-bit/192 kHz converters with dynamic range performance of 120 dB across all inputs. The monitor and line outputs offer 125 dB dynamic range. Two independent headphone outputs are configurable for 'Standard,' 'High Sensitivity,' and 'High Impedance' settings and measure 120 dB dynamic range. SSL 18's headphone outputs can also be repurposed as line-level outputs.

SSL 18 comes equipped with 10 balanced line-level outputs located on the rear of the unit. Line outputs 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 can be configured between +9 and +24 dBu, providing compatibility with studio monitors operating at lower levels. Outputs 3 to 10 operate at +24 dBu, for connection with line level outboard equipment or a mixer.

Designed to be the front end of your studio, SSL 18 features a full monitor controller section with built-in talkback input. Line outputs 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 offer stereo speaker switching via monitor controls on the front panel. For surround and ATMOS setups, all 10 outputs can be assigned to the front panel monitor control using their SSL 360° software. The talkback channel can operate in MIC or LINE mode. The LINE mode enables re-processing audio through the famous console Listen Mic Compressor that engineers used to crush drums, parallel compress vocals, getting more of that classic SSL sound.

The brains behinds the SSL 18 is SSL's software control system, SSL 360°. In SSL 360°, the SSL 18 low-latency mixer offers control of all inputs and outputs, and you can create the control room monitor mix, as well as configure up to four independent mixes for performers. A Mirror Routing system allows you to route any input or aux master directly to an output—useful for feeding personal monitoring systems, external metering, outboard FX or using additional SSL 18s as mic preamp expanders. All your templates for tracking and mixing can be saved in the SSL 18 mixer.

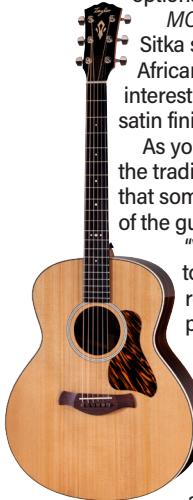
SSL is one of the most respected names in the audio recording industry. With the SSL 18, you can bring their renowned sound into your professional or home studio without breaking the bank. Includes the SSL Production Pack, loaded with dozens of plugins like Melodyne, Autotune, Spitfire V.I.'s and many more. \$1,199.99

solidstatelogic.com



▼ TAYLOR GOLD LABEL 714E ACOUSTIC-ELECTRIC GUITAR

Expanding on the success and warm reception of the new Gold Label Collection, Taylor Guitars adds three models. Debuted in 2025, the Heritage-Inspired Line adds new 514e mahogany and 714e and 817e rosewood models. The Gold Label collection now offers 18 total models, offering players more options within Taylor's premium acoustic range.



MC received a Taylor Gold Label 714e Super Auditorium for testing. Beautifully constructed of Indian and Honduran rosewood and torrefied Sitka spruce, the gorgeous rosewood two-piece back is beautifully bookmatched. The neo-tropical mahogany neck is topped with a West African Crelicam Ebony Fretboard that feels clean, precise, and has a nice sustain. The torrefied spruce top has a very tight grain with an interesting waviness to it and is a bit unusual and pleasing in appearance. The body has an attractive gloss finish, and the neck has a smooth satin finish. This model features modest appointments yet still has a high-end look.

As you would expect from a premium Taylor, intonation is excellent, and playability and workmanship are first rate. While it feels smaller than the traditional dreadnought, the 714e is still a full-sized guitar with a full-sized sound. The bass is tight and controlled with none of the boominess that sometimes comes with rosewood construction. The treble is round and full and does not sound thin or aggressive. The overall tonal balance of the guitar has a great consistency across its range and an even relationship between highs and lows.

"With the Gold Label Collection, we set out to capture the soul of older, traditional acoustic guitars with that warm, woody, broken-in tone that usually takes decades to develop," said Andy Powers, Chief Guitar Designer and CEO at Taylor Guitars. "While not a direct replacement, these new mahogany and rosewood Gold Label models are just about the closest thing you might otherwise spend a pretty penny hunting for."

The Gold Label Collection sports three design features that deviate from traditional Taylor offerings. Fanned V-Class® Bracing features a fan-like arrangement of braces in the soundboard's lower bout, promising a "warmer, more resonant, more powerful sound." The patented Action Control Neck® features a long-tenon neck joint that extends deeper into the body to boost low-end resonance while maintaining a slim, fast-playing profile. It also enables quick, precise string height adjustments with a turn of a bolt through the soundhole without the need to remove the neck or strings. The collection's Heritage-Inspired aesthetics draw from old banjos and mandolins, early Taylor designs, and Powers' pre-Taylor archtop work, featuring his modified headstock shape with an angled back cut and a script-style Taylor logo inlay and unique pickguard shape that comes in a nice tortoise shell.

All models feature LR Baggs Element VTC electronics and a lifetime warranty upon owner registration. Equipped with D'Addario XS Coated Phosphor Bronze Light strings, some players may prefer non-coated strings, but these ones sound and play great. \$2,799

taylorguitars.com

Michael Stern, C.A.S., is a Music Engineer based in Los Angeles. He has recorded and mixed 260 film scores including *Iron Man 2*, *Sex And The City 1 and 2*, *The Notebook*, and *Borat Subsequent Moviefilm*. He has also worked with the artists Strawberry Alarm Clock, Richard Marx, Kenny Loggins, Jackson Browne, Micky Dolenz, The Cowsills, Bon Jovi, Tom Jones, Chick Corea, Lisa Loeb, and Rob Morrow. He can be reached at newtoys@musicconnection.com.

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Plenty for All: The Art of Rick Fröberg

By Rick Fröberg

(hardcover) \$40



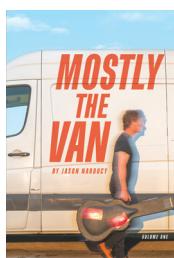
Rick Fröberg tragically passed away in 2023 at the all-too-young age of 55. He achieved immortality of a sort though, because his art and his music will be remembered through the ages. Fröberg was in the bands Pitchfork, Drive Like Jehu, Hot Snakes, and

Obits—all worthy of your attention. Here, we get to enjoy a beautifully packaged collection of his visual art, and it's a proper treat. His work was often printed on album covers, shirts, flyers and ads, including for his own bands. He was also exhibited throughout his career, because he was brilliant. See for yourself.

Mostly the Van: Volume One

By Jason Narducy

(paperback) \$25



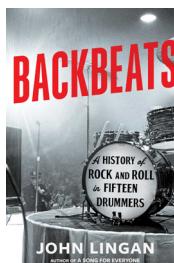
Jason Narducy, as well as being a solo artist, is known for his work with Bob Mould, Sunny Day Real Estate, Superchunk, Verboten and actor Michael Shannon, and *Mostly the Van* is his first book. The personal, revealing volume finds Narducy (according to a statement), "Detailing

some of the odd, uncomfortable, and even moving things that have happened to him as a musician, including getting lost in a Nazi bunker with Bob Mould in Hamburg." Ultimately, *Mostly the Van* is hilarious, touching, and well-written, plus the packaging is visually appealing. If this is indeed volume one, the second can't come soon enough.

Backbeats: A History of Rock and Roll in Fifteen Drummers

By John Lingan

(hardcover) \$30



Author John Lingan, with a body of work that includes the book *A Song for Everyone: The Story of Creedence Clearwater Revival*, has taken it upon himself to detail the long history of rock 'n' roll via biographical info and anecdotes about 15 very different drummers. The big guns are here—The Beatles'

Ringo Starr and the Stones' Charlie Watts. Moe Tucker of the Velvet Underground is like chalk and cheese next to Led Zep's John Bonham. Slayer's Dave Lombardo and Nirvana/Foo Fighters man Dave Grohl pop up too. Put it all together, and it makes for an enticing read.

The Return of the Blues Brothers: The Escape of Joliet Jake

By Luke Pisano, Stella Aykroyd, James Werner, Felipe Sobreiro

(hardcover) \$34.99

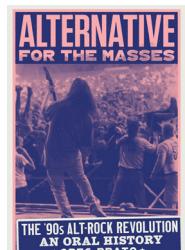


This feels very personal. Dan Aykroyd's daughter Stella, and Luke Pisano (son of John Belushi's widow Judy) have joined forces with writer James Werner and illustrator Felipe Sobreiro to continue the adventures of musical musketeers The Blues Brothers in comic book form. It's better than *The Blues Brothers 2000* film, in part because of the genuine love and affection for the characters that was poured into the pages, plus some genuinely thrilling storytelling. It's a joy to have Jake and Elwood back, regardless of the medium.

Alternative for the Masses

By Greg Prato

(hardcover) \$29.99



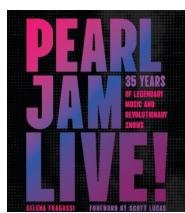
As he mentions in his introduction, author Prato is determined to prove to his readers that Nirvana didn't "come out of nowhere" in '91. The building blocks for an alt-rock explosion were well in place as the youth rebelled against "big rock," just as they had through punk in the '70s and '80s.

Prato takes the Please Kill Me approach of telling the story through quotes; he's gone straight to the mouths of multiple big-name horses, and the book benefits as a result. The definition of the term "alternative" (in a musical sense) has always been a bit messy, and so it is here. But the fun outweighs any genre semantics.

Pearl Jam Live: 35 Years of Legendary Music and Revolutionary Shows

By Selena Fragassi

(hardcover) \$30



While books have been written about Seattle giants Pearl Jam before, it's the "live" angle that music journalist Fragassi has leaned into here, actually structuring the book like a concert. According to a statement, "there's the opening act—which traces the band's formation in Seattle; the headliner—covering the band's meteoric rise in the 1990s; and the encore, which starts in 2001 and details the band's evolution and resonance to the present day." The author clearly knows her subject, and we're left dazzled by invaluable info and fascinating anecdotes.

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Founded in 2000, by Willard Ahdritz, Kobalt Publishing created an administrative model that allows artists to retain copyright ownership while the company collected and distributed royalties through an online portal. Its star-studded roster includes the likes of Paul McCartney, Stevie Nicks, Childish Gambino, Max Martin, Foo Fighters, and Nick Cave. In February 2025, Kobalt—which represents, on average, over 35 percent of the 100 songs and albums in the U.S. and U.K.—launched KOSIGN to provide mid-tier independent artists, songwriters and producers with tools to collect publishing royalties globally. Built on Kobalt's global infrastructure to offer a streamlined experience that makes publishing simple, efficient and transparent, the new platform addresses the over \$1 billion in publishing royalties that Kobalt says go uncollected every year. One of the key drivers of KOSIGN

is Kobalt's global collection society AMRA, which collects performance royalties directly from digital service providers (DSPs) like Spotify and Apple Music across more than 200 territories. This bypasses local PROs, avoiding their fees and delays. In its first nine months, KOSIGN has registered 33,000 works.

Quote from Senior VP and Head of KOSIGN Jason Feinberg: "Many artists assume that if they've signed up to a digital distributor, that service will collect all their streaming money for them. They don't always realize that they're only collecting from the recording itself. They still need to align with a publisher and performing rights organization to collect their songwriting royalties. KOSIGN is simply an opening for them to get access to the tools Kobalt has in place for the artists it has traditional publishing deals with."

How It Works: KOSIGN's branding line is "You've Earned It, We Make It Count." The home page offers an invitation: "Join our platform to see every cent of your songwriting income, in real time. It's simple—apply for membership, submit your songs, and collect your money, faster."

Feinberg elaborates: "Artists, producers and songwriters, provide their basic info and we run some quick modeling. If they meet certain revenue criteria, we accept the application and ask them to return to the portal to prove they are who they say they are. It's mission critical to prove that. Once they do that, they register their song information on the portal and it's handed off to our Kobalt administrative team—the same folks who register all Kobalt clients. Everything is driven by a combination of tech and a highly skilled team to ensure quality control and accuracy and to make sure everything is comprehensively registered."

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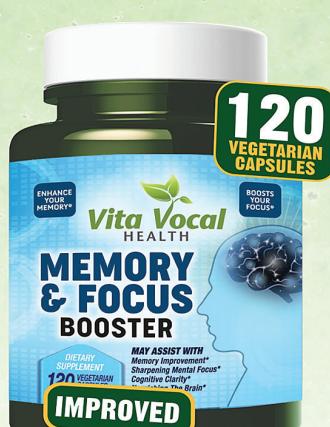
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▲ ALOE BLACC REUNITES WITH EX-CALL OF DUTY CHIEF ERIC HIRSHBERG ON "FOR REAL"

Singer-songwriter Eric Hirshberg and GRAMMY-nominated soul artist Aloe Blacc have reunited for "For Real," a powerful new single about coming together and finding common ground in our increasingly divided world. Out now on all digital platforms, the track arrives as the first glimpse of Hirshberg's forthcoming third album, *More Is Not The Answer*—an expansive new body of work due later this year.



▲ DIJON NOMINATED FOR TWO GRAMMY® AWARDS

Dijon has been nominated for two GRAMMY Awards, including honors for Producer of the Year, Non Classical, and Album of the Year for his contributions to Justin Bieber's *SWAG*. In support of his acclaimed sophomore album, *Baby*, Dijon recently kicked off his North American headlining tour.



▲ LEIF VOLLEBEKK RELEASES LATEST "SOUTHERN STAR" VERSION, EMBARKS ON LARGEST HEADLINING TOUR YET

Acclaimed Canadian singer-songwriter Leif Vollebekk has released a new version of his song "Southern Star," featuring award-winning Norwegian artist AURORA. The track originates from Vollebekk's forthcoming short film of the same name, starring both Leif and AURORA together as characters in the story. The artist has also set off on his largest headlining tour yet following supporting performances with Mumford & Sons, Gregory Alan Isakov, and Jacob Collier.



▲ CARDBOARD SESSIONS FEATURING THE DIRTY DIAMOND OUT NOW

Cardboard Sessions and Ernest Packaging return for Episode 30, featuring The Dirty Diamond in a special two-part performance of unreleased material. The first session, showcasing "Sea of Stars," and follow-up performance of "Thing That's True," is out now. Filmed at the legendary Paramount Studios, the Los Angeles four-piece radiates pure energy as they perform these songs on the signature cardboard instruments.

PRODUCER PLAYBACK

"Understand the needs of the music in terms of the studio required. That's usually driven by budget and size of the ensemble." — MICHAEL STERN





▲ IMA ROBOT RETURNS WITH EXPLOSIVE NEW SINGLE "SEARCH AND DESTROY"

Nearly two decades after it was lost to time, Los Angeles dance-punk phenomenon Ima Robot has unearthed their long-hidden LP, *Search and Destroy*, released on November 14 via Community Music. The record resurfaces as a crystalline snapshot of the iconoclastic quirk that defined their brilliance and kept them one of L.A.'s great secrets. Ahead of the full album, Ima Robot released title track and lead single, "Search and Destroy."



▲ MUSICIAN/COMEDIAN REGGIE WATTS AT THE LES PAUL RECORDING STUDIO HOLLYWOOD

Reggie Watts, the band leader from *The Late Late Show with James Corden* and musician/comedian/actor, poses with (L) producer Mark Bell and (R) electronic artist and techno producer Chris Coe at the Les Paul Recording Studio in Hollywood, CA. The Les Paul Recording Studio honors music pioneer Les Paul and features meticulously restored original equipment used by the legendary inventor and musician including his ground-breaking audio console where multi-track recording was invented



▲ SLASH DROPS ELECTRIFYING NEW SINGLE "CROSSROADS (LIVE)" OFF OF LIVE AT THE S.E.R.P.E.N.T. FESTIVAL ALBUM

"Crossroads (Live)" finds SLASH and his Blues Ball band paying homage to Robert Johnson's classic while injecting it with raw edge, fueled by SLASH's iconic guitar tone and the band's soulful groove. The track appears on *Live at the S.E.R.P.E.N.T. Festival*, the recently released album and concert film, recorded at Denver's Mission Ballroom on July 17, 2024, during the inaugural S.E.R.P.E.N.T. Festival—an event (and acronym) celebrating Solidarity, Engagement, Restore, Peace, Equality N' Tolerance.



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DOMINIQUE SANDERS

Musician, songwriter, and producer Dominique Sanders got his start in Kansas City as a child interested in the cello. He soon graduated to upright bass, later studied music for two years at the University of Missouri-Kansas City's conservatory and toured with various jazz groups. When he connected with fellow Kansas Citian Leonard Dstroy, the hip-hopper suggested that he create beats. He then sold his first to Ces Cru, a hip-hop duo signed to Strange Music, for its song "Letterman." Other artists with which he's written and/or produced include Tech N9ne (also from KC), Snoop Dogg, and even Willie Nelson. Recently he earned a Best Progressive R&B Album GRAMMY nomination for Terrace Martin and Kenyon Dixon's *Come As You Are*, which he co-produced.

For Sanders, one of music's most subtle superpowers is its ability—metaphorically—to transport listeners back through time. "A song is strong when 10 or 15 years later you can hear it and it always takes you back to a specific point," he asserts. "That's what songs are to me. They're memory markers. It has nothing to do with good chords or anything like that. It's what the song does to a person. The reason that the [Netflix] show *Stranger Things* is so powerful is because they chose the right music. Kids haven't heard Kate Bush but for us, it makes us feel like we're a kid in the '80s and now we can relate to our kids in the same way."

When you log a lot of studio time, you're bound to collect some memorable experiences. One of Sanders' favorites comes from back in 2018 when he worked with rapper Jidenna. "We'd started *85 to Africa* in L.A. and continued it in Johannesburg, South Africa," he recollects. "But my friend Rick Carson has a studio in Omaha called Make Believe. They've just started to make plugins, in fact. It's one of my top five studios in the country. I wanted to get Jidenna out of L.A. and into an environment where he could focus on music. We spent two weeks working there, would stay up for 36 hours straight and never left the studio property. It was a cool thing to see."

The production that stands out as one of his proudest contributions is Blessing Offor's song "Where My Feet Are," which is a relatively simple yet effective and uplifting piece. "The music came out amazing but from a song standpoint—the writing and everything—it's a really solid, great one," Sanders observes.

Aside from a Fender Precision bass, Sanders' most valued studio tool is the Waves Diamond bundle of plugins, particularly the CLAs created by/for mix maestro Chris Lord-Alge. He relocated to Los Angeles around 2016 and now works primarily from his North Hollywood space Steakhouse Studios, formerly owned by Toto founding member Steve Lukather. He also spends time at Dr. Luke's sound shack at Prescription Songs, the publishing company to which he's signed. His recent and upcoming projects include Wiz Khalifa's new album *Kush + Orange Juice 2*, work with rapper The Game and further recording with Terrace Martin. Lastly, he's collaborating with multi-GRAMMY-winning producer Brian Kennedy (featured recently in *MC*) on a variety of jazz projects.

THE 3 MOST IMPORTANT

lessons he's learned as a producer and musician are:

- It's always about the song.
- Get the best vocal performance possible. If you can do that, that's it.
- Let things happen. Sometimes you don't have to force them.



Contact linearmanagement.com



Rachel Stilwell

Entertainment & Intellectual Property Attorney
Owner, Stilwell Law

Stilwell — LAW —

Meet Rachel Stilwell, Owner of Stilwell Law, a music and intellectual property firm based in Los Angeles. Rachel's law practice focuses on entertainment, copyright, trademark, licensing, and commercial transactions. Rachel is proud to have been named to Billboard's Top Music Lawyers List for the last seven consecutive years. She is an advocate for artists' rights, having worked closely with the Recording Academy, musicFIRST Coalition, Future of Music Coalition, and Songwriters of North America.

Find out more about Stilwell Law at: rmslawoffices.com

Meet Rachel Stilwell at The NAMM Show at her panel for music creators and pro audio professionals:

"Protecting Creative Identity: Trademarks, Rights of Publicity, and Brand Integrity in the Age of AI & Artificial Creativity." Friday, January 23rd, 2026; 1:00 - 2:00 PM Pacific Time, Hilton Anaheim, 4th Floor, Palos Verdes Room. Rachel will be joined by 3x GRAMMY and 1x LATIN GRAMMY winning mastering engineer Gavin Lurssen, owner of Lurssen Mastering®.



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David Dann

Founder

Green Tea Distribution

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BACKGROUND

Green Tea Distribution is about much more than just getting music into the hands of listeners—it's a new service that helps guide the careers of young artists for a low monthly fee. The company is a partnership with David Dann's Mind of a Genius Records, which specializes in hip-hop, R&B, and electronica.

Spilling the Tea

Green Tea was started by Barry [Rosenblum] and Joni [Myllari], who had been running a studio here in Santa Monica for the last eight or nine years. Eventually, they took it from a studio rental to more of a community-based thing that lived online. And Green Tea Studios was the brand they built that around.

Then they started doing events. They had me come to one called Night On The Aux, where their members play music in front of each other and the panelists give them critical A&R feedback. I was immediately shocked at the amount of talent inside that room. It was this beautiful moment of being with artists that I had never experienced. And I was already trying to find something to add to the record label portfolio I had been building since 2014, because I was growing tired of that side of the business. So when I met Barry and Joni, I told them, "Let's get together in the morning. I have this idea." Green Tea Distribution was the idea to build alongside what they had already built.

Opening the Funnel

Originally, GTD was going to be a funnel into Mind of a Genius—we were just going to do a joint venture, and they were going to have all their artists put out their music through us. As we kept building the product, it changed and changed until it became a subscription service. There had been [online artist development] subscriptions available before, but we tried to add things we felt artists needed.

Physical Versus Digital Distribution

We don't do physical unless there's a need for it. We've had some artists ask about it, and we've linked them with people that I've used for small runs. Digital distribution is kind of the meat of the business. It's the least exciting part. It's more about all the other services.

For Serious Artists

We're looking for people on the same wavelength as we are. [We want] hard-working artists that want to better their craft. If you're a hobbyist, that's fine, but [we're for] people that want to take that next step in their careers. We're trying to attract people who have that same level of thought and need.



"Know who you are, know your vision, and make sure everything you do is in line with the story you're trying to deliver."

Helpful Feedback

We have a private chat that you get a link to when you sign up. And in that chat, you can upload a song a week. You can ask for any sort of feedback on your music. It can be like, "I just did this demo. How do you guys think I should move forward with it?" Or, "What do you think about the writing?" "What do you think about the mix?" Any sort of feedback that one would want from a professional, you can ask. One of the A&Rs from Mind of a Genius will respond within a day or two. And then you can go back and forth with that A&R person until the song is finished. You can do a new song every week; it doesn't have to be the same song. You can also ask any marketing and branding questions in the chat. It's like a day-to-day care manager for your career.

Pitching for Sync and Playlists

There's a form to fill out that asks a bunch of questions, all the things that labels typically need before they pitch their artists. The sync thing is a little longer, because it asks for things like publishing information and other things that sync agents need. And then those songs go into a library. Any time there's a brief sent from a sync agent, our agents have your music available.

Social Media

We're always trying to give people ideas on how to make their socials better and more performative. We're giving them all that information through our educational workshops. We also have a content-creator pitching tool. If you have a song that you think is strong and want to get it in front of content creators, you upload your music, the link to your bio, any marketing materials, and then a budget. And

then we have a content creator guy who reaches out to his network and says, "I have this song from Green Tea, and they have a budget of \$1,000. What can you guys do for this budget?" And we'll take that information and give it back to the artist.

Funding Creators

Say your song is making from \$500 to \$1,000 a month and you're like this thing is starting to move. Can you guys jump in and help me shoot a music video? Or put some money into promotion? We'll give you funding against your income. It's something to get your fire going so you can put as much gas as possible on it while it's hot.

Artist Vibes

We have a bunch of different events. We have Night On The Aux. We have an event called The Tea Room, where our artists perform as part of a festival. We also have an event for artists in L.A. It's small performances, drinks, and an opportunity for artists to meet and talk about what they're doing. The whole thing is to encourage collaboration.

Subscription Plans

We have an entry level [plan] that's pretty basic. It gives people access to certain features but none of the real meat and potatoes. It's kind of a way to get your feet wet with us. The artist plan includes all the services—the free events, the A&R feedback, all the pitching services. And the third one, which is the white glove, that's a lot more hands-on, like private workshops with the Mind of a Genius team every week, to really uncover what you're doing with your strategy, plans and marketing.

Success Stories

We have an artist named Jalen Chords. He was probably at 4,000 or 5,000 monthlies, and then he put out a song through us that got a bunch of editorial. We also kind of coached him through his TikTok. I think the song "Good Denim" now has over three million plays and over half a million shares on TikTok. We have another group, Audrum, based out of Europe. They've had similar success with the album they put out through us. With our help in the A&R side and pitching side, we were able to get them to the next stage.

Artist Advice

Do as many collaborations as possible to cross-pollinate audiences. I'm really big on that, especially with how the algorithms work. And then, focus on making strong, replay-able singles. You've got to have that in your catalog to get people cooking on your stuff. Focus less on the storytelling of an album and more on the fishhooks.

When Starting Out, Focus on Songs, Not Albums

Albums only matter once you have a true, built-in audience that is there for it. Otherwise, it doesn't make any sense. It's hard to get people to listen to a full 40-minute project. I don't recommend that people put out albums until their audience is really hungry.

David Schwartz Remixes the Mixtape

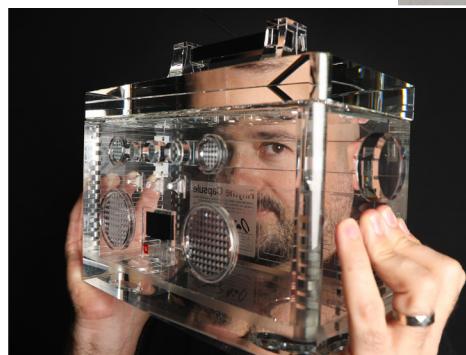
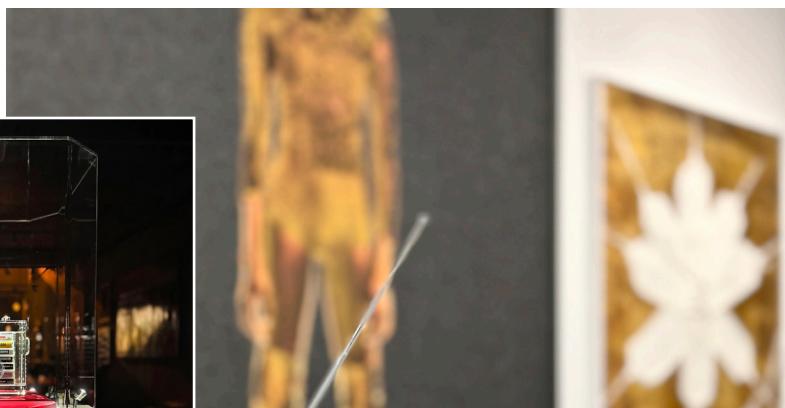
David Schwartz approaches sculpture as a form of listening. His translucent boomboxes operate like temporal, Proustian portals where sound and memory dance in the light. In Minneapolis he was a young musician studying art; but he left school when he ended up in Prince's world, recording at Paisley Park and performing with him. While professionally he went on to spend two decades designing visuals for outfits from Marvel to Netflix and Rock the Bells, those heady years at Paisley Park still ring in everything he does—including and especially his latest project, *Music as Medication*, debuting at LVMH The Studio Miami during Art Basel Week 2025.

As each individual *Rhyme Capsule* sculpture arranges vintage cassette spines into a slow-building sequence—a horizontal score encased in resin or crystal, catching and scattering light with a beckoning prismatic clarity—Schwartz says that, "the part that excites me most is when I've been trying to figure out a certain piece for years and then suddenly I know it's ready." The large-scale boomboxes have the presence of cozy monuments; the minis constellation into something more like jewels or amulets.

The pill pieces shift the idea into another register, each one an empathetic microdose of a specific year, a particular album, and a burnished emotion.

One work that is most personal to Schwartz is *Dark Side of the Moon*. "Summer of '88," he says. "I'd just moved to Minnesota to live with my dad. He had a Jeep Wrangler, and we'd ride around St. Paul all summer with the top off. Every time I see that cassette, it brings me right back." And he relishes hearing from friends and collectors who have their own deep memory jolts with the work. "A father bought one of the big Hip-Hop capsules so his kids could have visual access to all the artists he grew up on," Schwartz fondly recalls. The work carries that warmth forward—reminders of the artist's and his whole generation's quirky design obsessions, formative listening, and the shift from grief to growth. Furthermore, returning to physical making after years in design has thrown that door open wide again. "I can go anywhere I want with this, and it fills the same creative void I miss from my music days."

instagram.com/davidmadeit
instagram.com/rhymecapsule



KELLIE ROSE

For Kellie Rose, her love for songwriting grew out of her passion for words. "I love writing them and rewriting them and thinking out loud," Rose says. "Songwriting is how I articulate my thoughts and feelings, singing was my most natural ability and simplest source of joy, and performing has always been the avenue to serve it to others in the form of, wait for it, *fun*. Fun for me, fun for them."

Rose says that her sound stems from her warm, soulful voice with an occasional rasp. "I'm a singer songwriter, yes, and like most of us, I pull from any and every genre and inspiration that comes to me," she says. "My songs are introspective; typically built around an acoustic guitar which coincides with my on-stage performance. If you listen to my music or come to my show, the intention is you have an opportunity to laugh, dance and cry all in one go."

Her latest release is the "same team" single, which has a doozy of a story attached to it (her words). "I was sitting with my partner in an argument and pulled out a piece of paper," Rose says. "I made us write down our arguments, thoughts, feelings, needs so we had to articulate and physically see them. Eventually it came out that a need from my partner was for me to be a team player...oof, wasn't wrong. I have been solo in my pursuits so much of my life so the idea of consciously being a team player has been a newer lesson. The next day I wrote 'same team.' It's not from my perspective but my attempt at understanding. Building a relationship with someone so obsessed with their dreams is hard. It's important to be on the same team."

Rose says that she's been learning how to produce her own music over the past few years. "DIY for me looks like continuing to build out my business as a songwriter and music artist, expanding to recruiting an awesome team of people whose goals and missions align with mine, and then creating opportunities to make dope art," she says. "I write lyrics, melodies, I play guitar, I produce, I write vocal arrangements, I book enough live music performances and songwriting workshops to sustain a business for myself... I mean, yeah, if I could advise a fellow artist of anything, babe, do it ALL yourself. Learn and ask and take ownership."

With new releases and shows planned for 2026, there's a lot more to come from Kellie Rose.

Visit kellierose.com



THE LEGAL BEAT

BY GLENN LITWAK



ON NOVEMBER 24, 2025, Taylor Swift fans (known as "Swifties") got good news when a federal district court judge in Los Angeles ruled that the Swifties' antitrust lawsuit against defendants Live Nation and Ticketmaster (its subsidiary) could proceed.

The defendants filed motions to dismiss the lawsuit. Judge George Wu granted the motions in part by dismissing some of plaintiff's claims, including fraud and negligence. However, the judge's ruling allows the important antitrust and California consumer protection claims to proceed.

Swift's Eras Tour was a huge success, grossing over two billion dollars. It sold out more than 149

JUDGE ALLOWS SWIFTIE ANTITRUST LAWSUIT TO CONTINUE

stadiums around the world with over 10 million fans attending.

The lawsuit was filed in 2023, alleging "unfair" ticketing for the Eras Tour. There are approximately 355 plaintiffs contending that the defendants misled fans and favored bots and scalpers, thus breaking antitrust laws. The plaintiffs claimed that Ticketmaster's ticket buying system was poorly prepared for the huge demand for tickets and that bots were permitted to buy huge numbers of tickets. The judge stated that the original Complaint contained insufficient detail and has now allowed the plaintiffs to amend their Complaint.

The lawsuit arose as a result of the 2022 Eras Tour presale. This case was actually the second time the court has denied the defendants' attempts to dismiss the entire lawsuit.

The plaintiffs' claim in their lawsuit that Live Nation and its subsidiary, Ticketmaster, violated antitrust law by creating a monopoly over aspects of the live entertainment business. Defendants' ticket purchasing

system fell apart after incredible public demand and bot activity when the tour tickets went on sale. Millions of fans who attempted to buy tickets were unsuccessful in finalizing their purchases. The plaintiffs claimed that this happened because Ticketmaster allowed bots and scalpers to come in and purchase tickets.

The judge rejected the defendants' position that the plaintiffs' arguments improperly relied on the US Department of Justice's separate antitrust lawsuit. That action was about Live Nation's domination of arenas and amphitheaters, as opposed to the huge stadiums Swift performed at.

The judge stated:

"None of these allegations clearly indicate that the government action excludes conduct related to stadiums" and the court saw "no meaningful distinction between arenas, amphitheaters and stadiums" that would undercut the fans dependence on the Department of Justice's antitrust lawsuit."

The plaintiffs alleged that defendants' control over ticketing, promotion, and major stadiums

created an anticompetitive environment whereby fans had no alternative to buy tickets. The defendants' ticketing system was not prepared for the overwhelming demand for tickets. Ticketmaster's platform crashed during pre-sales and millions of fans could not purchase tickets at face value, which led to resale prices skyrocketing.

GLENN LITWAK is a veteran music and entertainment attorney based in Santa Monica, CA. He has represented platinum selling recording artists, music producers and hit songwriters, as well as 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 SXSW and the Billboard Music in Film and TV Conference. Glenn has been selected as a "Super Lawyer" by Super Lawyer Magazine for 2022-2026. Email Glenn at gtl法律59@gmail.com or check out his website at glennlitwak.com

The above is a brief overview of the subject and does not constitute legal advice.

Stephanie Aramburo



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LUKE PRESTON

Date Signed: September 2025

Label: Big Loud Publishing

Type of Music: Country

Publicity: Corey Brewer and Rachel Heatherly / Big Loud, corey@bigloud.com, rachel@bigloud.com

Web: bigloud.com

When Luke Preston moved from Clearwater, FL to Nashville, TN in 2011, his mission was to earn a living in the music industry however possible. While working at a grocery store, a friend who was on a major label invited Preston to play bass for him. He said yes, even though he hadn't touched the instrument since middle school.

Preston then secured his first songwriting deal in September 2019 and began writing alongside a number of artists affiliated with Big Loud

"They're always pushing into new territory instead of chasing after what's already successful."

Records, the country music juggernaut founded by GRAMMY-winning songwriter Craig Wiseman. "I started working with Kashus Culpepper, who I'm a big fan of," reports the tunesmith, whose other musical affiliations include The Lone Bellow, Corey Kent, and Kip Moore, plus Owen Riegling, another Big Loud musician. "The label has a bus they send out when their artists go on tour, so they can write while they're on the road," he goes on. "And I got asked to write with Kashus a few times."

Adam Romaine, Big Loud Publishing's Sr. Creative Director, loosely manages the bus, and Preston hit things off with the man colloquially known as Romie. Over the course of their time together, Romaine learned that Preston's publishing deal was coming to an end. Notes Preston, "It was fortuitous timing."

The rising songwriter had been meeting with other people around town, yet Preston felt a connection with the staff of Big Loud. On top of his friendships with Romaine and Culpepper, there was Sarah Knabe, who played a significant role in boosting the career of another musical buddy, Elvie Shane. Preston stresses how much he values her creative input.

Preston also puts stock in the quality and nature of the artists on Big Loud. "They're always pushing into new territory instead of chasing after what's already successful," he tells. "It feels like a good fit for me to get in the room and work with some of those people." - *Andy Kaufmann*



MARLON FUNAKI

Date Signed: November 2025

Label: Warner Records

Type of Music: Alternative Rock

Management: Nick Hostetter, nick@mickmgmt.com

Booking: Ethan Goldish, ethan.goldish@caa.com; Ben Schildkraut, ben.schildkraut@caa.com

Legal: Jeff Colvin, jeff@mcentlaw.com

Publicity: Rick Gershon - Warner Records, rick.gershon@warnerrecords.com

A&R: Daniel Werman

Web: marlonfunaki.com

"I love making music," blurts Marlon Funaki. "There's nothing else I see myself doing." The unique 24-year-old guitarist, songwriter and vocalist hailing from Redlands, CA, had been focusing on just that, playing shows and recording, when A&R reps from various labels began noticing his talent.

Yet making music wasn't all he'd been doing. He'd also been getting his feet wet with various career-oriented nuts and bolts, such as setting up a proper release schedule and soliciting attention through social media. Even though he was new to these tasks, Funaki's efforts drew in industry brass, not to mention more than one million monthly streaming listeners.

Numerous labels reached out, including Sony, Capitol, and Interscope. Another was Warner Records. Representatives first connected with Nick Hostetter, Funaki's manager, before speaking directly with Funaki. Then, the artist visited them in their offices, where he played the brass some

"I've always felt that, if things are supposed to happen, they will."

demos. "I think they liked what they heard," the jazz-influenced performer reflects.

Funaki was impressed by Warner's persistence. They went the extra mile, putting him in contact with producers and engineers without a formal commitment. "Warner kept in touch and did a lot of things for me," the cowboy-hatted, musical force of nature divulges. "That was one of the reasons I felt they were the right choice." Warner also signaled a clear hunger and passion for his music.

Warner Records must have found Funaki's originality and honest personality appealing, he surmises. "I'm a pretty authentic, raw person," the newcomer claims, "and I'm truthful with the way I feel and want things done." He certainly made himself clear during contract negotiations, insisting on maintaining artistic control and signing a limited-time licensing deal where he'd eventually get his music back.

Like with his sound, Funaki embodies a laidback approach to putting together a team. "I've always felt that, if things are supposed to happen," he offers, "they will." - *Andy Kaufmann*



Date Signed: November 2025

Label: Righteous Babe Records

Type of Music: Indie-Folk

Booking: Melissa Ferrick, Paladin Artists

Publicity: Karen Wiessen, Righteous Babe Records

A&R: Invasion Group

Web: sweetpetuniaband.com

Boston indie-folk duo Sweet Petunia recently signed with Ani DiFranco's Righteous Babe Records. The pair of musicians—Madison Simpson and Mairead Guy—describe their artistry as, "driven by a deep love of music, a need to express their loud and unapologetic queerness, and an unwavering commitment to strong political and moral values." Therefore, a deal with Righteous Brain was a no brainer.

It's been a long road to get here though. "I've been singing and playing instruments for most of my life, starting in elementary school with violin lessons and school choirs," says Simpson. "It wasn't until late high school that I even discovered contemporary folk music was being made, or that there were people continuing to play in traditional styles. Around that time I started writing my own songs as well, and taught myself to play the ukulele and the guitar. In college one of my dorm-mates was a banjo player, and after a few lessons with him I was hooked. I performed a tiny bit before college but mostly started playing out once Mairead and I started Sweet Petunia."

"My mom likes to brag that five days before she gave birth to me she was up on stage singing with the Irish American Pub band Uisce Beatha that she and my dad were in," adds Guy. "As far as I know, I've always been singing. I started playing the guitar when I was 12... When I got to college, I was determined to find someone who loved harmony singing like I did and had the passion for songwriting that I did, and I still think that fate put Maddy and I in a class where we sang together."

The pair describe their sound as, "contemporary, original music influenced by both the old time tradition and the DIY community we

"Righteous Babe is a dream come true because it's a label by artists for artists."

participate in here in Boston, more specifically Allston/Brighton. There's a lot of queer punk music happening here, as well as a lot of indie rock, shoegaze, and other newer genres people our age are excited about right now."

The deal with Righteous Babe came out thanks to friend and mentor Melissa Ferrick, who eventually became Sweet Petunia's agent.

"Pretty soon into working together, they suggested that Sweet Petunia and Righteous Babe might have quite a bit in common," they say. "She put us in front of Ani and the RBR team, and really helped us facilitate this collaboration. As a band that came up in the DIY scene, when looking at a label something artist focused, community oriented, and independently run was a top priority."

Their first release for Righteous Babe is the "Good Part" single, and then they have plenty planned for 2026, including a lot of tour dates. Check their website for details. - **Brett Callwood**

Date Signed: 2019

Label: Drag City

Type of Music: Experimental

Management: Zoë Blilie, zoe@tmwrk.net

Booking: Zoë Blilie, zoe@tmwrk.net

Publicity: Drag City

Web: geologist.bandcamp.com

Geologist is the "nom-de-théâtre" of Brian Weitz, probably best known for his work with Animal Collective. "I started performing with some of the guys in Animal Collective when we were 15 years old," he says. "That was in 1994. We eventually started doing the project that people think of as Animal Collective in 2000. I actually made a solo Geologist EP in 1999 but never released it. I didn't get much fulfillment out of solo music and was never inspired to do much of any music outside of Animal Collective until my mid-30s."

At that point, Animal Collective was working less frequently, and Geologist found himself some gear that would inspire his Geologist project. "I came into new pieces of gear, mainly my modular synthesizer and then later, a hurdy gurdy, that inspired ideas that wouldn't necessarily fit into Animal Collective," he says. "My bandmate in AC, Dave [Portner, Avey Tare], keeps asking me to go on tour with him where we both play solo sets and that is how a lot of my solo material comes to be. I have to write something in order to have something to play on the road. Then that leads to an album."

The Geologist sound has evolved over the years. "My music used to be more looped and collage-based," he says. "A lot of samples, though

"Since I started playing the hurdy gurdy, the idea of composing on and playing a live instrument has become a much bigger focus."

not necessarily samples of other people's music. It also allowed for more chance-based results on the modular synth. Since I started playing the hurdy gurdy, the idea of composing on and playing a live instrument has become a much bigger focus. That may seem like a strange thing for a musician to say, but not this one."

Drag City is a comfortable home for Geologist; he has long wanted to be on the label's roster, and he finally is. His debut album for Drag City, *Can I Get a Pack of Camel Lights?*, is out January 30 and it's preceded by the "Tonic" single.

"I've been wanting to make a solo hurdy gurdy record for a while now," Geologist says. "It started as a live set first and foremost because Dave from Animal Collective and I were doing an Avey Tare/Geologist tour, each doing solo sets. I wanted to write all new material on hurdy gurdy, and assumed it would be an ambient drone set, but I was extremely upset with my results. It sounded unoriginal and too indebted to my drone influences. I decided I was in the mood to play distorted guitar one day, but I can't really solo on the guitar, so I made some synth drum patches on my modular, plugged the hurdy gurdy into a distortion pedal and solo'd over top the synth loop. It was a really fun day so I kept doing it and that lead to writing the material that became *Can I Get a Pack of Camel Lights?* in just a couple weeks."

Geologist will be touring the West Coast with Bitchin Bajas in the early part of the year and then heading east. Stay alert for more plans.

- **Brett Callwood**



▲ SMP RENEWS DAECOLM

Daecolm renews (2016) global publishing with Sony Music Publishing, for existing and futures. With 420+ million streams for 2024's "I Adore You," 2025's "Think of Me," "99," "Barry Wonder" collabs include Wizkid, Arya Starr, Chris Brown, J Balvin, Ty Dolla \$ign, David Guetta, Kehlani, etc.



◀ TROMBONE SHORTY'S AWARD

Raising \$201,000 for education at 2025's "Brass and Bayou" Gala, GRAMMY Museum Mississippi awards Trombone Shorty the 7th Annual Crossroads of American Music Award. The Trombone Shorty Foundation take 100 students for five days of music workshops and concerts yearly.



▲ JIMMY EAT LOUD

Arizona's JIMMY EAT WORLD releases *Something(s) Loud* on Exotic Location Recordings, including formerly digital-only singles "Something Loud," "Place Your Debts," "Call to Love" (feat. Bethany Consentino), previously unreleased "Failure," and some remixes. More to come in 2026!

Landmark A.I. Ruling

A German Court has found that OpenAI's ChatGPT bot violated copyright laws through the unauthorized use of song lyrics and ruled that OpenAI should have acquired licenses for German song lyrics in GEMA's repertoire before using them to train and operate ChatGPT.

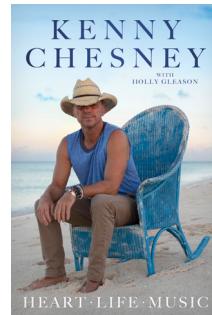
This verdict marks the first time a European court has legally examined and ruled in favor of creative works used by generative A.I. systems, with German collection society GEMA winning the landmark copyright case.

NSAI Membership Perks

For almost 50 years, now with over 80 chapters globally, the National Songwriters Association International (NSAI) provides an incredible opportunity to pitch your music, receive feedback, have one-on-one mentoring and evaluation, and access ongoing educational opportunities, writers' rooms, songwriting experiences, and song contests for a chance at professional promotion and cash prizes. The organization includes creatives from all genres, professional and amateur, committed to protecting the rights and future of songwriting, to advocate for, educate, elevate, and celebrate the songwriter. Learn more at nashvillesongwriters.com.

SESAC Celebrates Songwriters

With over 500 music professionals in attendance, SESAC extends heartfelt congratulations to the songwriters and publishers of the most-performed country and Americana at 2025's CMA



▲ HEART LIFE MUSIC

Kenny Chesney releases book *HEART LIFE MUSIC*, navigating memories of his life and musical adventures, his struggles and triumphs. 20+ years touring, 35+ million album sales, 8x Entertainer of the Year, Most Billboard Country No. 1s, charity work, he speaks on working, playing, loving hard.

Awards week in Nashville. Alysa Vanderheym received an award for baggage from Kelsea Ballerini, Megan Moroney was presented with SESAC's Song of the Year Award for "Am I Okay?" from frequent co-writer Jessie Jo Dillon. Michael Tyler was named SESAC's Songwriter of the Year for hits including "Cowboy Songs" (George Birge), "Holy Smokes" (Bailey Zimmerman), and "This Heart" (Corey Kent), receiving a custom guitar and one-of-a-kind ring from Jostens. Details at musicrow.com.

Primary Lizzy Bruebeck

The Estate of Thin Lizzy's co-founder/songwriter Phil Lynott has partnered with Primary Wave Music for publishing and recording rights, in an agreement covering all of his music and recording interests from Thin Lizzy and other artist collaborations. The Estate will have full access to Primary Wave's marketing, licensing/sync, content, and branding services. Songs include "The Boys Are Back In Town," "Dancing in the Moonlight," and 1972's cover of "Whiskey In The Jar."

Less than a week later, Primary Wave announced its partnership with the Estate of jazz icon and Dave Brubeck for recording, publishing, and name and likeness rights, which will cover the entirety of Brubeck's career. Songs include "In Your Own Sweet Way," "Take Five," "It's a Raggy Waltz," and "Unsquare Dance." Brubeck's music has already appeared in *Wedding Crashers*, *Better Call Saul*, *Baby Driver*, and *The Residence*. Primary Wave already has plans for new TV and film projects around Brubeck's life and contributions.

The latest acquisitions follow partnership interests in those of Patti LaBelle, the Estate of Peter Green, the Cars, and the Estate of Biggie Smalls. Primary Wave's roster of catalogs includes Bob Marley, Whitney Houston, Stevie Nicks, and Luther Vandross.

ASCAP Foundation Celebration

Celebrating Johnny Mandel's centenary, The ASCAP Foundation names rising composer Michael R. Dudley Jr. as the first recipient of The ASCAP Foundation Johnny Mandel Prize for Early-Career (made possible through the generosity of Martha and Johnny Mandel's daughter, Marissa Mandel). With compositions/orchestrations performed by multiple symphonies, Dudley Jr. has toured the world with multiple orchestras, recorded as a lead trumpet player (John Daversa Big Band, Brian Lynch Big Band),

and has plans for a 2027 debut ensemble album.

Eli Feingold received recognition with revered ASCAP Foundation Johnny Mandel Prize. As a composer, arranger, orchestrator, music editor, songwriter, producer, trombonist and pianist, Feingold recently won The ASCAP Foundation Herb Alpert Young Jazz Composer Award for "1210" on *Good Size Park*.

Best known for his work on Oscar and GRAMMY-winning "The Shadow of Your Smile" from *The Sandpiper*, television's *M*A*S*H* soundtrack, Johnny Mandel was a prolific jazz composer and received a National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Masters Award. He played trombone in bands led by Boyd Raeburn, Buddy Rich, Jimmy Dorsey, Elliot Lawrence, and Count Basie, with compositions recorded by Stan Getz, Woody Herman, Chet Baker, and Count Basie. As a triple-GRAMMY winning arranger, he worked on albums for Frank Sinatra, Barbara Streisand, Peggy Lee, Natalie Cole, Quincy Jones, Shirley Horn, Andy Williams, Michael Jackson, Diana Krall, and Tony Bennett. More at ascap.com.

Virgin Renews GR6

Virgin Music Group has extended their partnership with Brazilian label GR6 (first joining forces in 2020). Listed by the International Federation of The Phonographic Industry (IFPI) as one of the top 10 Brazilian independent labels, and being home to one of 2024's top songs in Brazil—"Let's Go 4"—GR6's roster includes Perea DJ, Nilo, MC PH and Djay W. Founder and CEO, Rodrigo Oliveira has discovered and supported career artists who have grown to have a massive impact on the music culture within Brazil and on the world scale. GR6 is currently working, in association with label head and music video producer KondZilla, on a 60-track compilation of iconic hits, reimagined by artists including MC Livinho, MC Davi, MC Don Juan, MC Kevinho, MC Neguinho do Kaxeta, etc.

Performing Songwriter Workshops

Registration is now open for 2026's Performing Songwriter Workshops. With expert guidance from Jonatha Brooke, Verlon Thompson, Suzy Bogguss, Gretchen Peters, Beth Nielsen Chapman, Mary Gauthier, Emily Saliers, and Matt Rollings, sessions are restricted to a small group and fill up fast. Launched in 2014, Performing Songwriter Creative Workshops were created

to inspire creativity and provide a supportive space for people to be mentored by influential songwriter-teachers.

All skill levels, ages, occupations from around the world are welcome for three-day workshops that build their writing voice and message. Week-long retreats in Scotland and Italy are also offered. Details and registration at performingsongwriter.com/ creative-workshops.

Sacred Bones' Flowers

Sacred Bones Records has joined All Flowers Group under the Secretly Group umbrella, alongside Ghostly International and drink sum wtr. Marking the first addition to All Flowers since its formation in 2022, All Flowers serves as parent company to Secretly Group (Dead Oceans, Jagjaguwar, Saddest Factory Records, Secretly Canadian), Numero Group, Secretly Distribution and Secretly Publishing, and is redefining the label concept. Internal company collaborations now include streaming, vinyl, publishing, and more.

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



▲ BIG LOUD PRESTON

Having played guitar since age seven, worked as a sideman for Jackson Dean, Jordyn Shellhart and Dave Hause, and penning songs for Kip Moore, the Lone Bellow, Corey Kent, Kashus Kulpepper, Iam Tongi, etc., singer-songwriter Luke Preston signs to publishing with Big Loud Music.



▲ WHITE STRIPES' INDUCTION

After almost 30 years in music, The White Stripes enter the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. Officiated by Iggy Pop, tributes included Olivia Rodrigo, Feist, Twenty One Pilots. Known for live shows, they defined garage rock revival. "Seven Nation Army" remains iconic staple, beloved sports anthem.



▲ SLIPKNOT'S HARBOURVIEW

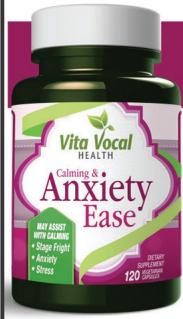
With seven billion+ YouTube views and having sold 30 million albums, iconic metal band Slipknot sells majority stake of their catalog to HarbourView Equity Partners, including "Wait and Bleed," "Duality," "Psychosocial," and "Before I Forget," in a deal rumored to be worth over \$100 million.



▲ SEVENTEEN'S TINY DESK

As first K-Pop act to play *Tiny Desk* at NPR, Seventeen shared stripped versions of nine of their best songs with a live band. Global best-seller *FML* (2023) sold over 6.4m copies. First K-pop group to play Glastonbury, Lollapalooza Berlin, and named UNESCO's first Goodwill Ambassador for Youth.

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SONGWRITER PROFILE

- ANDREA BEENHAM

Jessie Jo Dillon: Truth Teller

Born to songwriter Dean Dillon and Kenni Wehrman (A&R at Warner), Jessie Jo Dillon was not sure she wanted to get into the music business and spent time in Los Angeles contemplating journalism before returning to her Nashville roots. Now a well-respected and sought-after songwriter, Dillon is stacking awards and writing for artists including George Strait, Post Malone, HARDY, Miranda Lambert, Luke Bryan, Tim McGraw, Nate Smith, Brothers Osborne, Darius Rucker, Morgan Wallen, Jelly Roll, and many more.

Every collaboration is different. "Working with Jelly Roll doing a camp, he wants to hear a lot, then lives with it [before making] song choices," shares Dillon. "Megan [Moroney] is opposite. She'll have an idea, we'll sit down [and] work." For Dillon, it's all about the lyrics. "I wanna know the theme. If I don't like the lyrics, I don't like the song. Nine times out of 10, that's a jumping off point for me."

Music is her safe place. "I always loved music. My childhood was pretty chaotic and music was a retreat. I was always writing stories." Navigating Los Angeles for a year after high school to find herself, Dillon tried to talk herself out of it, but ultimately began songwriting, befriending Kathleen Carey at Sony (a friend and mentor to this day). On Carey's encouragement, Dillon returned to Nashville at 19 and met Clay Bradley, who landed her a publishing deal. Finally confessing it all to her father, the two began writing together. "One of my first big songs, the first I cut, was with my dad," says Dillon [George Strait's "The Breath You Take," won 2011's Best Country Song GRAMMY].

"I look back [realizing I] wasted a lot of time not getting help," admits Dillon. "I'll watch other people and think it's great their parent [helps], but I was so against it." She even contemplated hiding her surname. Co-writer Shane McAnally admitted halfway through an early session that he didn't want to like her because of her lineage, but thought she was awesome and asked her to work with him and Brandy Clark. Dillon says the two now feel like her siblings.

As Founder/President of Gatsby Records (under MCA), Dillon looks for artists with work ethic. "In L.A., Nashville, New York, Miami, throw a rock and you're hitting someone talented," says Dillon. "But the hard-working part, I don't know if you can teach that—it's either in them, or not." Raised to work hard, she says, "every time I sit down, I'm striving for greatness and connection. I've not lost that. I hope I never do."

Tell the truth and stay weird. Mentor Frank Liddell accepted an award saying, "tell the truth, it's more interesting," and co-writer Shane McAnally encouraged Dillon to, "step into your weird because that's what makes you, you." Co-writes also require surrender. "I want to tell *their* story," emphasizes Dillon. "To help somebody find their own voice and brand feels really special. I love artists, I love records. Everyone wants to talk about an algorithm [or] numbers. I get it, but don't give a shit. The same three people don't need to have written every song on the radio."

Dillon says lyrics usually give A.I. away. "We will have no A.I. on Gatsby. I get pissed at writers—everybody wants to use Suno. You're making it smarter. It's lazy. The day I start wanting to be lazy about my art is the day I need to do something else. We all need to look to the future, but there's a beauty in the past you can bring with you. You don't have to be chained to it, but I can't lose my morals about art."

Penning over 900 songs over 15 years, Dillon's accolades include ACM, AIMP Nashville, Billboard's Rising and MusicRow's Female Songwriter of the Year, placement on *Variety's* List of Power Women, CMA's Triple Play Award, and a GRAMMY Songwriter of the Year nomination next month. Upcoming projects include Tucker Wetmore, Jelly Roll, and co-writing Megan Moroney's *Cloud 9*. Carter Faith debut, *Cherry Valley* (on Gatsby) is out now.

Contact shelby@evolvancepr.com
Visit instagram.com/jessiejodillon
Photo Credit: Meri Grey



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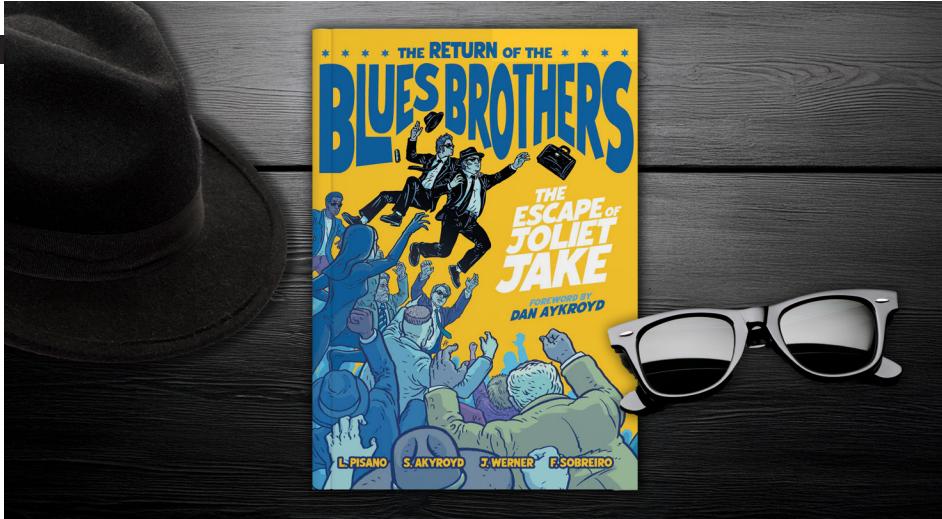
DROPS

Thanks to the Aykroyd family and Judy Belushi's estate, there are plans to expand the *Blues Brothers* universe over the next few years with new ventures across television, film, live events, and music, beginning with the release of the original graphic novel *The Blues Brothers: The Escape of Joliet Jake*, which dropped in November. Written by Stella Aykroyd, Luke Pisano, and James Werner with art by Felipe Sobriero and editorial oversight from one of the Blues Brothers himself, actor Dan Aykroyd, the project honors the spirit of the classic characters and was first conceived by the late Judy Belushi Pisano, who passed away during the book's production. In addition to the graphic novel, a deluxe edition pairs the book with a blue vinyl of previously unreleased live recordings featuring the full Blues Brothers band. For more information, contact Allie Gruensfelder at allie@thesyn.com.

Pasadena Playhouse will present a production of Peter Shaffer's 1979 stage play *Amadeus*, directed by Tony Award-winner Darko Tresnjak (*A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*). Sam Clemmett will star as Mozart, with Tony Award nominee Lauren Worsham as Constanze and Jefferson Mays as Salieri.



They will be joined by a full ensemble of stage and screen performers, with a crew including Alexander Dodge, Linda Cho, Will Vicari, Pablo Santiago, Jane Shaw, and Aaron Rhyne. Show dates run February 11 through March 8. Find tickets at pasadenaplayhouse.org. For more information, contact Peter Goldman at p.goldman@dcpublicity.com.



Soprano Tiffany Townsend will present *Crash Out Queens*, a multidisciplinary recital continuing Long Beach Opera's 2025–26 season on January 31 and February 1 at the Altar Society in Long Beach. Created in close partnership with Long Beach Opera, the program will reinterpret iconic operatic moments, from Puccini's *Suor Angelica* to Menotti's *The Consul*, through a modern lens that highlights women at moments of psychological reckoning. With scenic, dance, and instrumental collaborators, the recital will further shape Townsend's artistic voice and invite audiences into her creative world. Find tickets at longbeachopera.org/2025-2026-overview.

Depeche Mode: M and the companion concert film and live album *Memento Mori: Mexico City* was released worldwide on December 5. The former is a 2025 concert documentary film directed by Mexican filmmaker Fernando Frías de la Parra, featuring English electronic band Depeche Mode's 2023 Mexico City performances with segments examining music, mortality and Mexican death traditions. The physical edition includes two DVDs/Blu-rays and two CDs capturing the band's three sold-out 2023 Foro Sol Stadium shows, blending performances with archival and interpretive segments, in addition to a full concert film. The release is also accompanied by a two-CD live album featuring over two hours of music and four previously unreleased session tracks. Learn more at depechemodem.com/home.

Filmtrax has released the *Keeper—Original Motion Picture Soundtrack*, featuring a score by Edo Vanbreemen (*The Monkey, The Track, BRATS*), which is available digitally and on vinyl. Vanbreemen—who often composes from a remote cabin studio near Vancouver—

created a sparse, organic soundscape of 26 tracks using live acoustic recordings and custom textures like tapping and knocking to capture the film's own eerie cabin setting. *Keeper*, directed by Osgood Perkins, follows a couple whose anniversary getaway turns unsettling as a dark presence emerges. For more information, contact Christian Endicio at christian@whitebearpr.com.

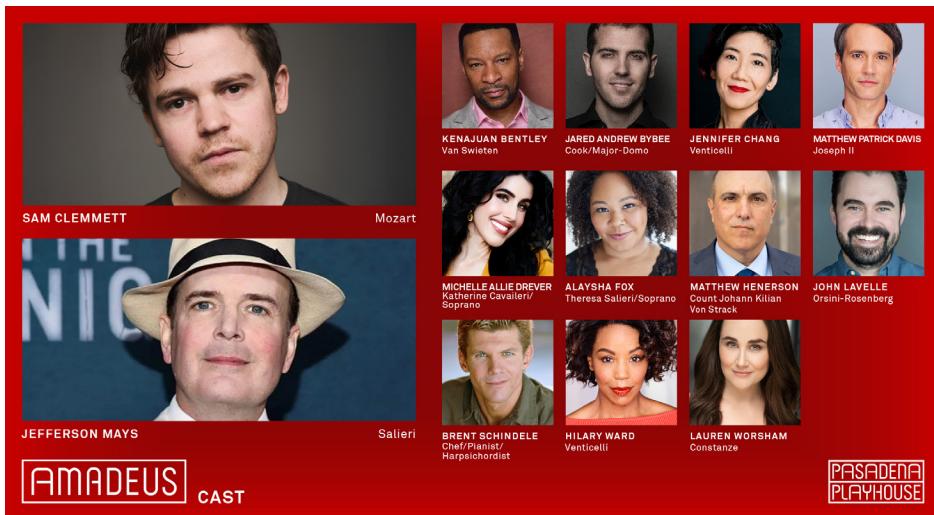
The *Father Mother Sister Brother* soundtrack, featuring original music by renowned independent filmmaker Jim Jarmusch (*Only Lovers Left Alive, Dead Man*) and singer-songwriter Anika, has dropped via Sacred Bones Records with CD, vinyl, and digital versions available. Jarmusch's anthology film stars Tom Waits, Adam Driver, Charlotte Rampling, Mayim Bialik, Cate Blanchett, and others, following two estranged siblings forced to confront long-buried family tensions. The dramedy premiered at the Venice Film Festival and was released in the U.S. in December. Order and learn more at sacredbonesrecords.com.

OPPS

The sixth annual International Conference on Audio for Virtual and Augmented Reality and Immersive Games—an event by the Audio Engineering Society focused on audio for extended reality and interactive gaming—has issued a call for proposals open until March 24. They are seeking professionals involved in audio for virtual and augmented reality, immersive audio, and gaming to participate in workshops, tutorials, and masterclasses. The event will be June 30–July 3. More information can be found at aes2.org.

The New Century Dance Project has issued a call for choreographic fellows with a submission deadline of January 12. The fellowship, which is part of the 2026 festival slated for July 24–August 2 in Santa Fe, is open to upper-level collegiate (Junior and above) through established career professionals. Learn more and submit your work at newcenturydanceproject.org/call-for-choreographic-fellows.

February 6 is the deadline for submissions (you must also register by January 31) for the Indie Film Music Contest. The competition, which offers cash prizes, focuses on musical storytelling without regard for sound quality



to give beginners a fair chance to compete. More information and submission guidelines can be found at indiefilmmusiccontest.com.

PROPS

The 16th Annual Hollywood Music in Media Awards once again celebrated music in film, television, and video games and the artists and creators behind them. Winners included "Dream As One" from *Avatar*:



Fire and Ash, written by Miley Cyrus, Mark Ronson, Andrew Wyatt, and Simon Franglen, in addition to "Highest 2 Lowest" from **Highest 2 Lowest**, written by Aiyana-Lee Anderson and Nicole Daciana Anderson, and "Dear Me" from **Diane Warren: Relentless**, written by Diane Warren. The event featured special performances by nominees including Miles Caton (*Sinners*), Aiyana-Lee (*Highest 2 Lowest*), Aryana Sayeed and Jeff Beal (*Rulebreakers*), and Diane Warren (*Diane Warren: Relentless*). View the complete list of winners and nominees at hmmawards.com/2025-hmma-nominations, and contact Rebekah Alperin at ralperin@costacomm.com for more information.

There's a lot in store for **Sierra Madre Playhouse**'s 2026 season, **Small Stage, Big World**, during which the intimate venue will showcase more than 90 diverse programs across theater, dance, music, jazz, and film, plus new and anticipated additions including opera, comedy, and an author series. Highlights include artist residencies with violinist **Martin Chalifour** and **Brightwork Newmusic**, groundbreaking premieres such as **George Sarah's** live chamber music score for Sergei Eisenstein's silent film **Battleship Potemkin**, and partnerships with East West Players and Bob Baker Marionette Theater. Featuring international voices, innovative collaborations and family events, the Playhouse is celebrating art that connects communities across borders and generations. Learn about all the varied offerings and new additions at sierramadreplayhouse.org/calendar, and contact Libby Huebner at libby@adlibpr.com for more information.

Graceland—the Memphis, TN home and estate of the late **Elvis Presley**—will host the first advanced U.S. screenings of **Baz Luhrmann's EPIC: Elvis Presley in Concert** on January 8, 2026—Elvis's birthday—offering two free showings at 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. in the TCB Showroom. The 2025 documentary film blends long-lost footage from Elvis' 1970s Las Vegas residency with rare 16mm and 8mm archival material and newly unearthed recordings of Elvis sharing his own story. It follows Luhrmann's 2022 biographical film *Elvis* about the King of Rock and Roll. The screenings are part of the 2026 Elvis Birthday Celebration. Learn more at graceland.com/elvis-news/posts/baz-luhrmanns-epic-elvis-presley-in-concert-graceland-premiere-screenings.

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



Mark Watters
Festival co-director, conductor, music director

Web: esm.rochester.edu/directory/watters-mark

EMMY AWARD-WINNING COMPOSER and conductor Mark Watters has written music for film, television, and video games, led notable orchestras including the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the London Symphony as a guest conductor, served as music director for two Olympics, and worked as a conductor for artists such as Beyoncé and Sting. Today, he serves as director of the Beal Institute for Film Music and Contemporary Media at Rochester's Eastman School of Music and oversees the school's Master of Music degree in Contemporary Media/Film Composition, where he teaches his students that it takes more than musical talent to break into composition for visual media.

"You have to convey your ability to deliver what people want," Watters says. "That's no different from having your own independent business in any field—you have to not just produce the product, but exude a professionalism that tells people they want to work with you and you can deliver."

Watters says music that helps tell a story is what drew him into composing for visual media. "I've always been fascinated with what music can do in a film and how it can affect us psychologically. And it amazes me that if I assign 10 students to compose for the same scene—each piece can be different, but they can all work."

Most recently, Watters contributed to an effort to celebrate Rochester's deep ties to film music and the arts (thanks to George Eastman, founder of Kodak and the Eastman School of Music) by co-directing the inaugural Soundtrax Film Music Festival in October, which featured Spike Lee's go-to composer Terence Blanchard. "The inaugural event had great turnout and noteworthy talent, and we think its success, dependent on funding, was enough to make this a yearly event," he says.

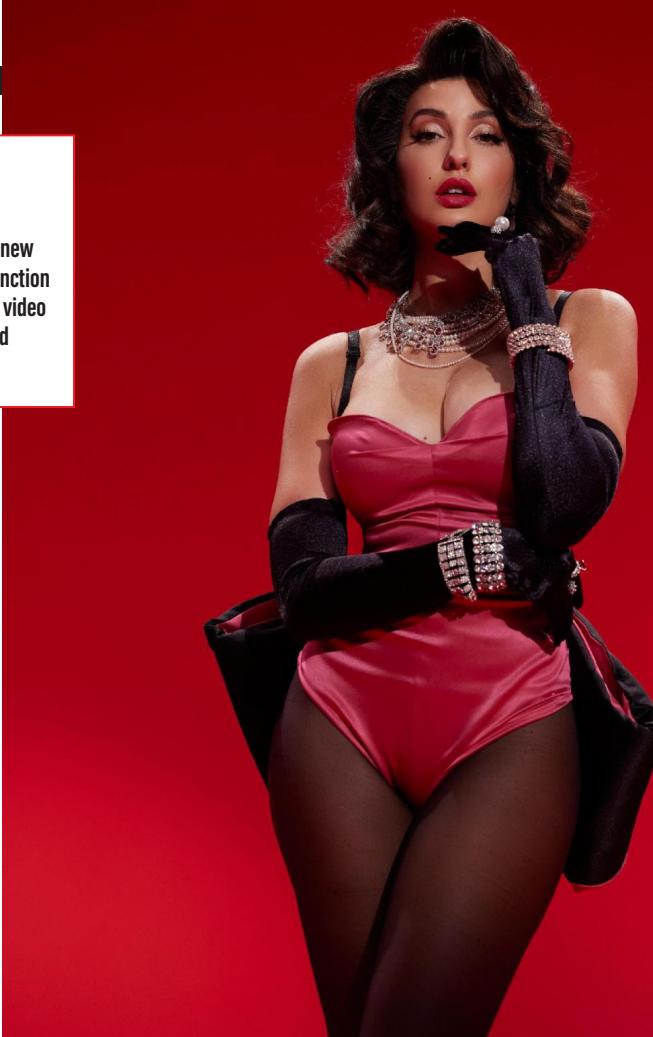
► NORA FATEHI UNVEILS NEW SINGLE AND VIDEO "WHAT DO I KNOW (JUST A GIRL)" FEATURING SHENSEEA

Globally renowned multi-hyphenate Nora Fatehi delivers a dancefloor-ready anthem with new single "What Do I Know (Just A Girl)" featuring Jamaican singer Shenseea, out now via 5 Junction Records/Warner Records. Along with the song, the duo joined forces for an accompanying video directed by Arrad (Cardi B, Anitta, Missy Elliott) that dances between jetset playfulness and bombshell glamour à la Marilyn Monroe.



▲ SUSANNAH JOFFE AND BABY NOVA RELEASE COVER OF PHOEBE BRIDGERS' "FUNERAL"

The forthcoming charity compilation *All Things Go: 10 Years*, with all proceeds benefitting The Ally Coalition (TAC), revealed its seventh track: Susannah Joffe and Baby Nova's "Funeral" (Phoebe Bridgers cover). The song was released right after the inaugural All Things Go Festival in Toronto through their partnership with TAC to further support LGBTQ+ youth through on-site programming and artist-driven engagement across its festival platforms.



◀ INDIE POP/FOLK ARTIST QUEEN QUAIL RELEASES EMOTIVE DEBUT EP NARCISSUS

Berlin via Milwaukee indie pop/folk singer-songwriter Queen Quail's debut EP, *Narcissus*, explores the nuances of longing, identity, philosophy, and the search for home over sweeping production and emotive vocals. Produced by David Thornton, mixed by Michael Kümper, and mastered by Huntley Miller (Bon Iver, Sylvan Esso), the concise project weaves dreamy, shimmering production with matter-of-fact storytelling, sometimes touching on heavier topics, but consistently maintains her truth and raw humanity.

◀ LA FEMME'S MARLON MAGNÉE ANNOUNCES SOLO DEBUT VIA DISQUE POINTU

After 15 years recording and touring the world with French neo-psych ensemble La Femme, Marlon Magnée, announced his debut solo project with a brand new single titled "Nuage Gris," via label Disque Pointu. Of the track, Marlon says it's "a song about life's ups and downs, encouraging listeners to chase away the grey clouds looming overhead."

**Tidbits From Our
Tattered Past**



▲ NAÏKA DROPS DEFIANT NEW FRENCH-ENGLISH ANTHEM "MATADOR"

French-Haitian singer and global pop artist Naïka makes a striking return with "MATADOR," a bold bilingual anthem that confronts patriarchal expectations and reclaims feminine power. The single is accompanied by a haunting lyric video, which compiles the eerie surveillance-style videos that were initially used to tease the track on social media. The visualizer amplifies the song's tension and urgency, reflecting a world where we are constantly being watched.

► CHLOÉ FRENCH RETURNS WITH DÉLICIEUX NEW SINGLE "CHOCOLAT"

Rising New York City chanteuse, Chloé French, has unveiled "Chocolat," a flirty, French single that blends dreamy, house-tinted production with reflections on desire and the sweetness of intimate moments. French made her striking entrance last year with her breakout debut single, "Angels," and will, this year, unveil her debut project *NY Tapes*, a French disco-fueled EP, packed with infectious grooves, sleek production, and undeniable hooks.



► MICAH MCLAURIN RELEASES NEW SINGLE "DANCING WITH MY BROKEN HEART"

Prolific pop artist and pianist Micah McLaurin has released his glossy new pop bop "Dancing With My Broken Heart" via Casa Doce Music. Produced by Mark Taylor (Cher, Lady Gaga, Kylie Minogue), "Dancing With My Broken Heart" turns heartache into neon-drenched pop joy as a reminder that sometimes healing shows up on the dance floor.



1984 - Huey Lewis - #15

On the cover for 1984, "rock's regular guy" Huey Lewis (and the News) talked success. "Today, bands spend too much time marketing themselves... trying to sound un-original—trying to sound exactly like what's happening... avoid that. Try to sound different, and write, write, write, and don't give up, because it could be right around the corner." As for the "regular guy" allegations, Lewis put it simply: "I know that's not very fashionable, but nobody's OD'd, and we're all getting along fine."



2001 - Jill Scott - #5

After releasing the pivotal *Who Is Jill Scott (Words & Sounds Vol. I)*, the radiant Jill Scott graced our 2001 cover. "I didn't want it to be a big campaign," she said of the LP, "I wanted the album to be more of an offering and less of something to sell." On developing her love of singing, Scott recalled, "I always sang, but I didn't let anybody hear it... I never intended to sing in front of people. But getting in front of people, being onstage... opened a lock and so much of me just came out."

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[at musicconnection.com](http://musicconnection.com)*

BRITISH DUO SLEAFORD MODS are an outlier on the contemporary music landscape. They occupy a space where music meets beat poetry, where art meets spoken word, where biting, satirical comedy meets pub banter. There are other groups out there who stick by their working-class British roots to the benefit of the music, Yard Act being a solid example. But it hits different with this East Midlands outfit, thanks to Jason Williamson's abrasive vocal delivery and the fact that he retains his regional accent, plus Andrew Fearn's minimalist yet undeniably infectious musicianship.

MC chatted with both Williamson and Fearn, voices carried across the Atlantic via Zoom in November, early in the morning for us and late afternoon for them. The guys were in great form; we knew in advance that they were razor sharp and super-witty. Williamson's on-stage delivery is

Austerity Dogs is quite eclectic. There are hip-hop tracks, there's bangers—even from that point when we got together, it reflected the fact that we like different kinds of music. So, I think that's something that I've tried to hang on to, with my input to the band—to try and keep that variety in there. We don't have a guitarist; guitarists lead the sound and create a huge part of the sound and the tone of a band, which is great. But we've always been a bit more progressive than that."

Austerity Dogs was Fearn's second album with the group, his first being 2012's *Wank* after he joined in 2011. Simon Parfment, an original member alongside Williamson, left in 2012 leaving Williamson and Fearn to carry on moving forward. In all, Fearn has now been in the ranks for nine albums. They say that *The Demise of Planet X* feels different though.

"It's been different with every album, really," says Fearn. "I think it's



aggressive, and in person he's passionate when talking about things that he cares about. But that takes nothing away from his warmth and general likability. Fearn, too, is an easy chap to talk to.

Over the course of their 13 studio albums—up to and including *The Demise of Planet X*, released in mid-January—the subject matter has covered anything and everything that is grinding Williamson's gears, tackled with the Mods' trademark caustic wit. There was a gap in the market for hyper-intelligent social commentary set to an ear-wormy melody and beat, and the Sleaford Mods filled it.

"We're not a rock band, you know," says Williamson. "Even [2013's]

evolved quite a lot. It's got more musical from what it was in the beginning. It depends what you're into and where you're coming from with your perspective. Everyone talks about it being minimal, but then good music's always minimal anyway. I think for Jason it's a different experience, because he was there during the process a lot more than me, just making everything at home and turning up with a load of music."

"I think with every album, we've gone back over things we've done before and dragged some of those ideas forward and then been progressive with the album at the same time," adds Williamson. "Because we don't want to forget where we've come from, and we created our own



sound, so we don't want to forget about that either. I think that's always been quite important."

The songwriting process on *The Demise of Planet X* is much the same as it's been since the duo started working together on *Wank*—Williamson writes the lyrics, Fearn the music, and then they come together and it all fits.

"We've gone into a few studios this time," says Fearn. "We got the opportunity to use Abbey Road, so we used it. They set up a guitar and a bit of a drum kit so you can get some ideas down, but it's the same in the sense that, you know, I'm not a virtuoso musician. I'll play a bit of something, and then we'll make samples, basically. So it's still the same process in that way, but we're just using all their equipment to make a loop. Jason was getting to loop up other people's music, you know. So I

to enjoy the music of Public Enemy, and the Sleaford Mods' themes can be similarly relatable. At the same time, you might learn a thing or two.

"It's cryptic sometimes, but so was the Wu-Tang Clan," says Williamson. "I think it'd be interesting to see where it goes. In regards to getting any bigger in places like America, I'm not so sure. The more you get into this game, the more you realize that to be able to appeal to the mass, mass market, you've got to have that transatlantic type thing. And I don't think we've got that in abundance."

"America's like from zero to stadium," adds Fearn. "You've got to go platinum and all that sort of thing. And even if it's quite good, it's kind of manufactured, to a point. It's supply and demand. We're in a weird time for music. Being English, what was making me think was over the years, the British legacy for songwriters, for lyric writers, you know? And it kind

SLEAFORD MODS

BY BRETT CALLWOOD

think that hip-hop aspect is part of what we do. We've just embellished that quite a lot. Abbey Road's, obviously very good. Its reputation precedes it. But it's just getting away from your normal working space. Just waking up somewhere different can really help."

While the Sleaford Mods are unashamedly English and they write about what they know, the themes can feel very localized. Throw in Williamson's broad East Midlands accent, and it all seems very England-specific. But scratch the surface a little, and the Sleaford Mods are singing about themes that many people from all over the globe can relate to: austerity, shitty politicians, working class life, etc. You don't have to come from New York

of mixes together. The Beatles sang with American accents. When we play Italy or Spain, they get the working class angle totally. British music's been a big export for a long time. So we can just tag on to that, and be part of that."

When it comes to the themes on the new album, Williamson says that there are tons, as the guys seek to air their grievances to their willing public.

"Obviously MAGA, the Middle East, God, nationalism," he lists. "This sudden acceptance of traditional male masculinity that all the kingpins of modern communication have embraced because of Donald Trump. Just

stuff like that, really, and then the ongoing issues with other bands. Just opinions, etc. So, yeah, the kind of usual stuff. And I do say the usual stuff, because we try to take snapshots of whatever's going on at the time, because it does affect us. Me and Andrew can constantly sit there and discuss what these things mean to us, you know, and that is basically what goes into it."

For Williamson, the key is to write a song to help you get something off your chest, while also injecting a healthy amount of humor.

"You don't want to be just moaning and depressing people," he says. "I mean, you want to have some joy with it all. That's how it started off, really, just having a, having a go at the right people. So that's still got to be the order of the day. I think a lot of people are taking it far too seriously in some respects, and it's becoming quite oppressive. There's no humor in a lot of people's music or their message. That just rings alarm bells for me. It's got to have some of that shit in it. It is a really dark time. People on the left might argue, 'You've got to be vigilant against the rise of fascism.' You know, kind of true. But you can use humor as a weapon in that way. If it cheers people up, then they're not so desperate. Why would I want to try and achieve a stay at Utopia if I'm gonna have to still look at a mardy fucking face like yours?"

The Sleaford Mods have been releasing music on Britain's iconic Rough Trade Records since 2017's *English Tapas* album. Rough Trade has, over the years, been home to the likes of Arcade Fire, Super Furry Animals, Islands, The Libertines, and Pulp, among many others. Williamson says that it's a comfortable relationship because Rough Trade pretty much lets them do what they want.

"They're nice people," adds Fearn. "They like what we do, so it's all quite good. We're not very good at being told what to do, and sometimes we're probably not very good at taking suggestions, but they're really good at handling us a little bit. I think both of us have learned a lot about ourselves as well. Sometimes, a little bit of compromise is needed in the sense of just listening to other people's opinions, though not so much anything else. I think that's why it works."

An early single from the new album was "Megaton," which came complete with a video directed by celebrated artist and photographer Nick Waplington, filmed at Speaker's Corner in Hyde Park, London.

"He was great," says Williamson. "He just turned up in his shorts and orchestrated it. It was as if he had this invisible brush, and he's just painting each bit. It was very laid back. It was really quite pleasant. There were quite a few people filming it on phones, just quite surprised. So it was quite relaxing compared to something in the studio. He has a lot of faith in knowing that he's going to be getting what he wants."

All profits from the tracks went to the War Child organization, a group which states quite plainly, "We believe no child should be part of war. Ever. And we won't stop until this belief becomes a reality."

"They work with displaced kids from war zones," says Williamson. "So what they do is they set up learning centers, or places to try and pull these traumatized children out of themselves, because a lot of them won't speak for up to six months a year, sometimes more than that. That just fucking knocks your head off, doesn't it? All of everything about war is absolutely terrible. What are you going to choose, to try and help? And we thought that would be a good place to go with it. We've been supporting them on and off for a few years, doing little bits and bobs. But it's only over the last two years that we fully came into it. I think the past few years, it's been the most relevant charity to support."

on it, which just makes it sound different. But I think the process involves taking a lot of chances, and it always seems to work out for us. That's something that we've always done—do the wrong thing, and it comes out right. I think we live in a time where there aren't any wrong things to do. Anyone thinking there is, is missing the point."

Other guests on the new album include *Game of Thrones* actress Gwendoline Christie on "The Good Life" alongside Big Special, Life Without Buildings singer Sue Tompkins on "No Touch," soul singer Liam Bailey on "Flood the Zone," and Snowy, an MC, on "Kill List." The collabs, Williamson says, happen organically.

"I'll run it through my head and I'll discuss it with Andrew," he says. "It will be the last minute that we say, 'right, invite him down,' until we're really sure it's going to work. They come in and they do it. You know, most people that do music are quite professional. They come in and get it done. It's like, you're at a level now where, if you're going to bring someone in to collaborate, they've usually got a vast amount of experience, so it's kind of executed very quickly. So if they agree to do it, it's going to work."

"We haven't had that experience where we've picked someone, and it's just been terrible," adds Fearn. "That's because we're both from a generation, mainly the '80s and '90s, which is a hugely varied funneling-out time for music. Everything from Throbbing Gristle to fucking ABBA is our generation's music. I think it's important to remember that in some ways, to take that forward and try and keep some of something like that in there."

When you see the two men on stage, you'll see Williamson holding a mic and Fearn in front of a laptop. When it comes to gear, they keep things simple.

"It's just an SM 57 mic," says Williamson. "And I usually just use a mic with a fixed bottom, but I'm thinking about branching out and taking it off the stand. I'm like, 'Oh, this song really could do with me taking it off.' And then I'm like, 'No,' and this is how delicate the operation is. But yeah, that's all I use."

"For me, it's just Foobar," adds Fearn. "Because it doesn't do anything stupid, and it just does what you want it to do, you know? And I've just got a T61 [laptop] that I've got XP on. They stopped updating it, like, I don't know, 10 years ago now. So it just works as a glorified WAF player. It's kind of foolproof."

2026 will see the Mods on tour, first in the U.K. and then Australia. Plans to come Stateside are afoot, their issues with the current administration aside.

"The shutdown's finished, hasn't it? Because a handful of Democrats have folded," says Williamson. "So the government's reopening. But who knows what's going to happen next week."

Hopefully, we'll see them here soon. But for now, we get to enjoy *The Decline of Planet X* while appreciating the fact that there are still musicians out there who can be successful by creating their art on their own terms.



One of the things that differentiates *The Demise of Planet X* from the rest of the Mods' catalog is the sheer volume of guest appearances. They've worked with other artists before, notably Perry Farrell and Dave Navarro of Jane's Addiction on the "So Trendy" track from the *UK Grim* album. But this time, there are more collabs.

"That's been quite a new thing," Fearn says. "Not to get away from the punk thing, but when we have choruses like with Big Special on 'The Good Life,' he's got a beautiful, folky singing voice and that's quite different to have on a track. In the Aldous Harding track ['Elitist G.O.A.T.'], she's quite seductive, and a lot of it is quite gentle. So that's quite a different thing to have to have there. I think where there's been a chorus bit, Jason's usually sang it, and then we've kind of embellished it with a synth melody or a keyboard melody to accent that softness. But this time we've just got somebody in to sing

A&R ROUNDTABLE 2026

BY ANDY KAUFMANN

Musicians create the sounds we love, shaping their artistic visions in the studio and bringing songs to life on stage in living color. While the art they make remains the essential ingredient, every profit-minded artist needs a team behind them to help guide their career. One key player is the A&R representative. These individuals match songs with artists, oversee the recording process, and assist in developing a creative entity's artistic flavor. They're the ones discovering diamonds in the rough, then nurturing their talents until the rest of the world recognizes their brilliance.

To kick off 2026, *MC* spoke with four leaders in this competitive field. Each provided priceless insights into their profession, exploring topics such as how they find clients, what makes them want to work with someone, and the ways in which their job is evolving.

NICK GUILMETTE

Sr. Director, A&R, Prescription Songs
prescriptionsongs.com

What is the most important quality you look for in an artist or songwriter?

What they're writing or producing has to be something that's already good or has the potential to be great. But there are also two important factors outside of quality. One is passion. Being a musician is such a grind, especially in the beginning. If you don't want it with all your body, it's very difficult to be successful. The other thing is you have to be good with people. Much of the job of a producer or songwriter is becoming an artist's best friend and being a safe place for them to talk about the songs they want to write. The best ideas get created when everybody is comfortable with each other. There's that characteristic certain people have where everybody wants to be their friend. When I meet an artist or songwriter that has that, it's typically a good sign.

How do you find musical acts?

It happens a lot of different ways, most often through recommendations, whether it's a manager working with a developing client or a lawyer who just signed somebody. But often it's coming from my other clients. I discovered EJAE through another Prescription Songs songwriter, JT Roach. He knew EJAE through a friend. He sent a demo they did together to my old colleague who's no longer at Prescription, Shari [Fitch]. That demo was the first time we heard EJAE, and we realized we had to meet her.

How do you match songs to artists? How do you learn that skill?

It's a bit of research, talking to the artists' A&Rs or managers, and hearing what they're looking for. Also, what the artist might be going through



in their personal life. And it's a bit of luck. Sometimes an artist or label team has to hear the song on the right day and be in the right headspace to receive the song. A lot of variables have to align, but it makes it so rewarding when you are able to land a song with the artist. Ultimately, everybody's looking for something special, that's different from what they've been making. It makes it easier when your songwriters or producers are creating something unique.

How do you think artificial intelligence is going to impact your role as an A&R?

I'm not sure. There are ways it could really help. I've been messing around with using A.I. to change the gender of the singer on demos. It opens up a world of ideas. There have been a couple different placements come from that. I don't know if A.I. could ever fully replace the role of A&R or songwriter or producer. It's just about how we use it to make us more effective.

What is your advice to people who would like to get into A&R?

Find songwriters and producers you are really

passionate about, and see what you can do to help them. Seeing how you can champion them and connecting the dots with other talented songwriters and producers is the first step. And the other thing is building with other aspiring A&Rs, managers, label reps, publishers, etc., that are at your level. Many of my friends and colleagues, we've been working together one way or another for 10 years. This is such a relationship business, and building genuine relationships with people at and around your experience level, those are relationships you should aim to have for your whole career.

How do you think the role of A&R will change?

The music industry will always change. And the role of A&R has always shifted. I don't know what the future will look like, but what will stay consistent is being an artist's advocate and championing your artist, songwriter, or producer to the best of your ability. And trusting your gut on what you think is right for them. No matter what the music landscape looks like, being that advocate for creatives you believe in, that's never going away.

HANNAH MONTGOMERY BAY-SCHUCK

Founder, 7Hills Music
instagram.com/7hills.music

What is the most important quality you look for in an artist?

I'm always looking for someone who is going to complement what I do well. With 7Hills, I'm borrowing from the ethos of what Prescription created. I worked there for eight years; I'm now a consultant at Prescription and have my imprint through Prescription. We have this idea of quality over quantity. We are not the right home for everybody, but we're competitive. We want to



make sure we keep it small and that we're 100 percent able to service whomever we sign. I'm not just looking for something that's doing good numbers and trending. I'm looking for something with good engagement. [An artist] might have a lot of talent, but can I be a part of that? Am I going to be able to lift this up? I'm also looking for writers, artists, and producers who work hard and know how to tap into what they do well.

How do you find musical acts?

It's a million different ways. Obviously, there's reaching out to attorneys and managers. I also hear about people from sessions that my writers do. Scoot Teasley is one of the artists on 7Hills. I found him on TikTok. And I was like, "This kid is so cool. He's from Georgia. I understand him. I get the music he cares about and what he's trying to share." My sisters will reach out. "This kid from Columbus, Georgia, is doing music. Can I share it with you?" My school choir teacher sent me Will Terry's stuff. It didn't make sense for me to sign him at the time, because he was 17. And then he popped up on TikTok about a year and a half, two years later. The growth was insane. That's what I'm looking for.

How do you match songs to artists? How do you learn that skill?

Having that ear is as important as knowing the community. It's about knowing the A&Rs and managers working on these projects, understanding what the artist not only is willing to say but wants to say. For some, alcohol's off their list. Or talking about relationships is off-limits. Or that's all they want to talk about. So listening to songs is super important, and taking the time to talk to writers and producers about where these artists are in their lives, so you have an understanding of what would make sense. Also, I love a team project. I love being around people. I don't want to be on an island by myself. At Prescription, I might know what Luke Bryan's cutting, but somebody else might know what Dua Lipa's cutting. Who is Olivia Rodrigo working with? What changes have they made on Blackpink? So it's utilizing other people's knowledge and relationships. And sharing that with your writers and producers, and saying, "If you're writing for Teddy Swims, he already has these songs." So we're not wasting their time.

How do you think artificial intelligence will change the role of A&R?

I don't know. It would be a disservice to just say, "I'm not using it." It's here, and it's going to be here. The devil you know is better than the devil you don't. You need to get familiar with it. Why I love working in music is it changes culture. I don't know if I see A.I. making music that is going to have an impact on humans' lives. But how will it affect A&R? It'll be another way of assisting. I don't think we're going to see a huge rise in A.I. artists. Also, legislation's going to come in, and we're going to have to move with that. What's the legality around A.I. artists and what they're able to do? But I don't think it's going to take over. There's going to be a happy medium.

What is your advice to people who would like to get into A&R?

Find ways to engage. I was talking to a young intern. She created this fan page that amassed over 200,000 followers and the label reached out to her. When I was coming up, I felt like there was one path. I went to Florida State and then transferred to Belmont, which was a great school. But I felt like that was the only option. I look back and don't know if that was necessarily true. There are a lot of different avenues to getting that A&R position. If you're the assistant, be the best assistant and, when appropriate, be like, "I've been looking at some artists I want to share with you."

How do you think the role of A&R will change?

In the last 10 years, the lines have become blurred. I've now signed two country artists to 7Hills. We also represent them on the label side with our incubator label, Amigo Records. We have every intention of upstreaming them to a major when the time is right. But this is a way for us to put some money behind them and develop them. Especially in the beginning, it doesn't have to be so structured. I think that's where it's changing the most. We're seeing blurred genres and a bit more flexibility with these roles.

MARA KUGE

*President and Founder, Superior Music Publishing
superiormusicpub.com*

What's the most important quality you look for in an artist or songwriter?

I'm looking for somebody who has their career actively going and their act and general presentation together enough that they're either booking shows or sessions or getting work on their own. If somebody doesn't have their act together enough to have some basics in place, they're less likely to have their act together enough to work well with a publisher. There are a lot of people getting their music out, in comparison to when I started doing A&R over 20 years ago, so it's really important to make yourself stand out from the crowd.

How do you find musical acts?

A lot of it is via people that I've worked with – managers or attorneys, people like that. I still

go to a lot of shows, and sometimes I make note of a band or opening act I want to reach out to. I will check my sources and see if they have a publishing deal already. I also sign a lot of back catalogues. Back catalogue is an area that is generating more revenue now than when it was new. I work with a lot of '80s new wave bands that are getting more syncs now than ever. Nothing goes out of print anymore, so it's perfectly viable to sign a band that broke up 40 years ago and build a career for them out of syncs, reissues, and cover versions of their songs.

Is that because of the media landscape, that now everything's available all the time?

I very much think it is. Even 10 years ago, there would be songs that a music supervisor couldn't hear unless somebody sent it to them. But between Spotify and all the reissues, there are very few songs that have been released that aren't on some streaming media service. Really small, niche records are on streaming media now. Since nothing goes out of print, that means songs can have lives for much longer. And there's a lot of television shows that use songs from the past. When we had COVID and the writers' and actors' strikes, we started



producing a lot more documentaries. And a lot of documentaries use music from the past to establish time period. In general, it used to be about the newest, hottest songs as syncs in your show. Now, it's a combination of that and the coolest, most unheard song.

Can you talk about the art of sync and connecting songs with media? How do you learn the skill of matching songs with movies, TV, video games, etc.?

Lots of practice. It takes a while being in the sync world and getting to know the different players. It used to be there was a small amount of supervisors, and now there are thousands. So it's about getting to know supervisors, getting a feel for what they need, making sure what you send over is something they're going to find useful. There are some artists that sell well but don't really lend themselves to sync.

Is there any way songwriters can shape their songs to be sync-able?

Yeah. I don't like to speak too much on content,

like actual music and lyrics for sync, because songs turn out better when they're sincere and aren't written with the purpose of sync in mind. But don't use samples, because that will make it harder for the music supervisor to clear the song. And try to stay away from profanity. Even things you might not consider profane, networks owned by Disney might. If you want to have profanity in your songs, that's fine, but it'll rule you out for a lot of networks.

How do you think artificial intelligence will change the role of A&R?

My hope is that some of the tools of A.I. can make the processes of A&R and sync easier by helping in a search engine, behind-the-scenes manner. As far as A.I. taking over for actual singers and musicians, I don't think that's going to happen. I don't know what enhancements will happen, but people are still going to want to see performers. Taylor Swift just had the biggest live tour in history, so there's clearly a demand to see people live and have actual personalities that they connect with. Hopefully, A.I. will be a useful tool rather than a hindrance. I don't think people are going to prefer listening to A.I.-generated music [rather than] human-generated music. There's always going to be a demand for human-generated music that people can form parasocial relationships with.

I discovered an artist on YouTube that turned out to be A.I. and immediately lost interest.

I think that's the reaction of a lot of people. People connect to music because of the shared humanity. People are not going to be drawn to robots. I have more concern for my friends who work in production music, because a lot of that is more likely to be replaced by A.I. Those libraries have their dedicated fan bases in the industry, but they don't cater directly to consumers.

What is your advice to people who would like to get into A&R?

Getting to know A&R people is probably the key. In my case, I just started doing it and started a company. That's always a way to go. To do A&R, you don't have to have a huge roster of artists. You can have your own company where you have two or three artists. And then if you want to increase your role in the A&R community, you'll have some experience behind you. There are more opportunities than ever for anyone who wants to do some kind of independent A&R work. That wasn't really a thing in the '90s, but it's something you can do now.

JAKE ROUND

President and Founder, Pure Noise Records
purenoise.net

What's the most important quality you look for in an artist?

That's difficult to answer. I've always done A&R kind of by feel. And I've been so immersed in the space for the last 25 years that, for the most part, I'm pretty aware of who the up-and-coming artists are. But more than anything, it starts with the music. I generally have a pretty good

idea if something's interesting in the first 90 to 120 seconds of listening. And then I dive into intangibles like vibe and visuals, social media presence, touring history, and so on. But it starts with whether I like the music.

How do you find musical acts?

In the early days, many of them slept on my floor. I toured and did a bunch of Warped Tours. So at that time, if there was a young punk band I didn't know, it probably wasn't far enough along. These days, I'm not going to D.I.Y. shows, so we have a little A&R team. I get turned on to things from agent friends and managers. If one of my pals thinks something's interesting, we'll share that with each other and get a feel for whether I'm going to be able to build a team around this. Is there additional interest, or am I the lone wolf here? Our biggest successes are Knocked



Loose and The Story So Far. These were bands that were selling less than 50 tickets when we discovered them. We'll often come in first. It's not unusual for me to come in without a team. Sometimes, a manager brings it to you, they've got booking representation, and it's ready to rock. You're the last piece of the puzzle. But that's not always the case.

Do you bring songs to artists?

Not at all. All our artists have some hand in writing their own songs. I would say 90 percent of the material is self-written. With some of the poppier stuff, there'll be co-writes. One or two or more members [of a band] will be in the room for the session. I do lots of records where it's just the band and producer, where the producer may get a bit of writing credit. That's the most common for us. When we're making records, we have a meeting and talk about ideas for producers. More often than not, I'm like, "Right on. Let me set it up." And I'll book the time and negotiate the rate for the band. Sometimes, the artist will have their dream situation and their second choice. I'll work through those and find the most appropriate match.

How do you view your role in terms of artist development?

That's the service we offer that makes us relevant, especially with as much as the music business has changed and how artists are

able to grow their audiences through social media. What differentiates us from some of the bigger record companies is long-term artist development and culture building. What we do is very niche, but in a broad spectrum. We've been working with Knocked Loose for over 10 years. We've been working with The Story So Far for close to 15 years. And those bands have built themselves into lifestyle artists. They are pillars and soundtracks to a community. When we sign a band, we're looking to replicate that kind of growth. Maybe one out of 20 artists can achieve this, or even less, but that's our goal. Can we build this band into a long-term, lifestyle brand that people will want to rally behind for decades? That's kind of what a hit is in my space. We have very little radio. We've had few viral hits. Probably no true viral hits. It's all been long-term audience building. Our top artists could build festivals around themselves in the same way Slipknot does.

How do you think artificial intelligence will change the role of A&R?

I wish I knew. I'm certainly aware of it. I read a lot about it. I'm not scared of it. But it's going to be a disruptor. In the short term, I don't think we'll see A.I.-driven artists getting super successful. So much of the punk and alternative space is about going to shows and being part of a community. And you need real people to build that. So in the short term I don't think it's going to be a major issue, but in the actual album making I think it's going to be massive. There's A.I. being used in almost every writing session. We use ChatGPT in our office to do everything from proofing artwork to running comparables on purchase orders. In the short term, I don't think there's going to be a ton of humans replaced by A.I. in the independent music business. But I do think it's going to be important that the humans working in the independent music business be able to use A.I. Someone who's A.I.-proficient is going to have a leg up on an employee that's not.

What is your advice to people who would like to get into A&R?

Everybody wants to be a bartender when they're 22, but you can't get a bartending gig without bartending experience. A&R's kind of the same—you can't get an A&R gig without A&R experience. Find an internship, get in wherever you fit, and just hang around. Be available. Networking is a long game. And if you love music and you're at shows all the time and getting yourself in every internship opportunity you can, share artists that you think are cool with the A&R people above you.

Do you have any tips for artists on getting a label's attention?

If you're doing the right things, it's going to happen eventually. For my label, you can send your demo straight to our website. It's rare for us to sign something through that, but it's not unheard of. Make the best demo you can, put some songs on the internet, and go play shows. If you're doing something unique, it's going to get discovered.

Vomit Face Records

Sid Wilson is many things to many people. As the DJ and keyboardist with metal giants Slipknot, Wilson was designated the number 0, and he remains a core member. He tours and records as DJ Starscream, or simply as SID. He's a father and, at the time of writing, fiancé. And now we can add "label head" to that list.

A statement by Wilson on the Vomit Face Records website reads, "Vomit Face Records is about tearing down the walls. This is for the artists who don't fit in, and never wanted to. It's rebels in motion that unapologetically stand out. It's to celebrate imperfection, people making real art out of the mess, in a world that rewards fake. It's where the sound, hard work, and spirit collide, and no one can tell you how to look or feel. Real art isn't pretty, it should stir something slightly uncomfortable, and break down those walls to create something new inside of you. It's a place for the misfits to have a voice, and a place to make their own."

That tracks. Whether it's with Slipknot, his solo projects, or anything else he's been involved with, Wilson has made it his business to amplify the objectively abnormal. To find the joy in despair. To create something artistically beautiful out of chaos. That's a gift, and it's one he's intent on passing on.

"I was working on different albums with different people and, as they were accumulating, people were asking questions like 'What do you want to do with this?' Obviously, what you want to do is try and shop it to a label, or have the artist release it independently somehow, or what have you. It just got to the point where we were like, 'You know, why try and shop it to a major label and end up with a 360 deal or something that's similar to that, just not as beneficial to the artist in the long run?'"

For the record, a 360 deal is when the label gets a cut of all revenue streams, not only recorded music sales. And for Wilson, that's just not cool. "You always hear about people wanting to keep their masters and all this stuff, and it seems like a daydream for a lot of artists," Wilson says. "So we just decided, why not start a label for artists by artists, and be able to own your music. Work hand in hand with each other, so that we're splitting it evenly, rather than a label taking a lump sum. We want to see the artist get the lion's share."

That's what it's all about—offering the Vomit Face artists an alternative to the big machine. Wilson and his colleagues help the artists to help themselves. They offer services, sure. But

they also teach self-sufficiency and DIY.

"We help with PR and getting the information out there, through different media," Wilson says. "People know about it. A label would hire out a music studio and then pay the producer a labor fee on top of getting points on the album, and then charge you back for the studio fees, and charge you back for hotel or wherever you're staying while you're at the studio. If you're not local

Wilson says that there's a feeling among artists that a lot of what goes on in the studio is a form of wizardry. Vomit Face pulls back the velvet curtain by providing solid education.

"In a sense, you're getting college time, or an internship, but you know, being a professional working musician," he says. "You don't have to feel like a student, you get to feel like a working professional who's also, at the same time, getting taught these skills. There's so much more you can do now at home on a computer, there's so much more you can do yourself."

The roster, at least at present, is predominantly hip-hop. "There is a couple of hip-hop groups, such as the Mudd Brothers, which consists of two people. And then you have DEAD X HEDZ, which is a hip-hop group and one of the lead members was Seth [Brooks Binzer], or Shifty Shellshock, as most people know, from Crazy Town. He passed away, but this was the last project that he did. It's the last recordings that he did before he passed away, and it's with Mike Rebel, Ray Garrison, myself and Tommy Roulette. That's a group. Mostly, we have solo artists, because I can actually give the individual the time and focus that they deserve in order to get the best product out of them."

Those solo artists on the roster include Ricardo Grimm, Rome Fortune, Kid Bookie, Mars Black, J57 (who is also VP at Vomit Face), and Lil Bushwick. The latter is the son of Geto Boys rapper Bushwick Bill, who passed away in 2019. Lil Bushwick's self-titled debut album is out now, and he recently collaborated with Wilson on a *Rick and Morty*-inspired video for the track "We Gone." That's the now, but there's a lot more to come.

"I'm getting a crazy amount of messages and emails from people, you know, 'Hey, man, I want to be on your label,'" says Wilson. "So that's really cool for me, and for everyone involved, that a lot of people are interested and psyched about it and like what we're doing. We're just going to try and keep it as true and genuine as possible. I always like to say punk rock, even if it's not necessarily punk rock music. It's the spirit of it. It's kind of like, 'Fuck everybody, fuck all the big corporations and people that don't want to pay attention.' We're actually doing a lot of really good work. And we're here to do what we enjoy, not seeking out anybody's approval, and just have fun with it."

Who could possibly argue with that?
vfrecs.com



to the studio, it's just like a whole bunch of fees that get incurred. When we work with our studio, we don't charge you for the studio time. We don't charge you for producer labor time. Instead, we're sharing the album. The producer would get some points on the album, but then you don't have to pay them this crazy, outrageous fee. It's more of a partnership."

Juliana Hatfield: From Spinning Bottles to Scratching Lottery Tickets

Kickin' it indie-style since the mid-'80s, singer-songwriter and all-around artist Juliana Hatfield formed her first band Blake Babies while attending the Berklee College of Music. The trio released four albums before it disbanded in 1992. She then lent her bass talents to the Lemonheads and played on the band's '92 hit *It's a Shame About Ray*. She went solo later that year, released several records and stockpiled a stash of charted singles including "My Sister," "Spin the Bottle," and "Universal Heart-Beat." Her latest record *Lightning Might Strike* dropped on December 12 while the third single "Fall Apart" hit shelves—if such things still exist—on November 18.

From the beginning, Hatfield's creativity has been fueled by myriad challenges including loss, change, and even her own in-built shyness. *Lightning Might Strike* came heavy on the heels of several: a family illness, the death of her dog, and a city swap. But of all the songs on the record, "Scratchers" was the one that surprised her the most. "I like it because I thought of it as

HER TOP THREE TIPS TO ARTISTS ARE:

- Don't listen to what other people say you should do. You have to do what you think is right, even if it feels scary.
- If you can recognize that there's reverb on something, turn it down. You want it to be subtle and felt rather than heard.
- Even authorities don't know best what's right for you. I've learned to trust my own ideas. But you have to balance that with being open to other people's ideas and you have to make the decisions.

a throwaway," she recollects. "I remember thinking that it wasn't very good but I decided to give it a try and see what happened. But it really sprang to life and became a weird little song about scratch tickets, hopes and failures. Often the songs that I think are going to be the most successful turn out to be disappointing and the ones I think are deep-cut nothings turn out to be the best. It's a reminder that there's a lot of magic and mysticism in the process; you're letting in these magical outside forces and it's a good lesson in humility. You can't control it all."



The title *Lightning Might Strike* was inspired by several things: her mother's brother being killed by a lightning strike when he was only 16, the idea of fate and perhaps even human fallibility. "That's a line from 'Scratchers,'" Hatfield explains. "It's about buying lottery tickets despite the odds of winning being so unlikely. We need to have hopes, dreams, and fantasies. My mom felt that her brother's death was his fate so she was able to accept it. I've always thought that fate is a powerful force in my life. We can't control our fates and that's where the title originates. In the bigger picture, it's about being grateful for what we have and about finding balance. It's a reminder to myself not to give up on my dreams but also not to be an idiot and think that I deserve wonderful things. Somewhere in the middle is probably the more realistic thing."

"Most of the best music is inspired by challenging emotions and trying to work through difficulties," the artist continues. "Making songs is a way of coping. I don't deal with things well. On an interpersonal level, I'm not a great sharer, I'm not verbal or a communicator so I write about it. That helps

me come to terms with things instead of going to a therapist. I also had problems with confidence or shyness when I was younger. I didn't know how to bond or be myself. Making music was a path to self-expression and to release difficult things. That's probably true for many artists. It takes a long time to figure out who we are."

A significant portion of *Lightning Might Strike*—drums and bass—was recorded remotely, a process that's a metaphorical roommate that moved in during the COVID lockdown and has never left. "I taught myself to record using my laptop during the pandemic with my ELO covers album [*Juliana Hatfield Sings ELO*]," Hatfield recalls. "A lot of that was done remotely. Both approaches have their pros and cons. The financial difference is great, given how expensive [pro] studios are. If I record at home, it doesn't really cost anything. Lately that's where I've done most of my work. I do miss the camaraderie of being in a studio with other people but I also don't mind being isolated in my house. It's nice not to have to hear from the peanut gallery when I'm working; I don't have to have other people's opinions in my ear. It's probably good to be in a collaborative situation but I did sit with the drummer [Chris Anzalone] when he did his parts."

One of her go-to pieces in the studio is the microKORG keyboard with a built-in Mellotron emulator. "I'm addicted to the flute sound and I put it on every album," Hatfield observes. "There's a lot of it on *Lightning Might Strike*. It's so little, easy to plug in and is transportable. Real Mellotrons are delicate, heavy and big. There's no way I could get one in my small space but I got to use one at [Cambridge's] Fort Apache, a studio where I used to work."

Even authorities don't know best what's right for you. I've learned to trust my own ideas. But you have to balance that with being open to other people's ideas and you have to make the decisions.

Her favorite studio memory is of bumping into Lou Reed at N.Y.C.'s The Magic Shop when she recorded 1995's *Only Everything*. "It wasn't like he was LOU REED, the icon," she reminiscens. "He was just this quiet guy who was really nice. It was a cool little interaction."

Hatfield's taste for touring has soured in recent years, her tolerance waning with each successive outing. When *Music Connection* spoke with her the week before Thanksgiving, she had a lone record release show planned at Somerville, MA's Irish-leaning pub The Burren on December 14, two days after the debut of *Lightning Might Strike*.

Visit julianahatfield.com

Streams Get You Heard, Sync Gets You Paid

Ever since streaming has become the primary way people consume music, the entire business model has been fundamentally transformed, replacing revenue from CD and record sales. While streaming can be a path to engaging new fans or promoting a live show, the truth is, that it takes a million or more streams to make a few thousand dollars. Since most artists and songwriters don't come close to achieving that level of listeners, most make extraordinarily little money. If a record sells for \$12 and you sell 50, you will earn \$600, while 50 streams might make you a few cents.

Enter music licensing. This is a way for songwriters to grant use of their music for a fee while retaining ownership of that music. It can be in the form of retail outlets, TV shows, films, ads, or video games. If a song is used with a corresponding visual, it is referred to as sync licensing. This has become the predominant way for songwriters, especially independent artists, to earn a decent living. The person who chooses music for these placements is the music supervisor.

Having your music featured in a major TV show or film will not only earn you income but can get your music exposure with a wider audience. In some cases, the song can pave the way for fans to discover you, potentially resulting in thousands or even millions of streams. Even if listeners discover you through streaming alone, it's like putting the cart before the horse since the chances of hitting those big numbers is low.

According to veteran music supervisor Chris Mollere, "sync is one of the rare true win-wins in this industry, where productions get the perfect musical moment for their storytelling, artists receive payment for the sync as well as long-term discovery, and audiences experience something that resonates on an even deeper level." Mollere, who has music supervised and placed music in over 900 TV episodes and over 50 films (*The Vampire Diaries*, *We Were Liars*, *Get Out* and many more, and was just voted to a seat on the board of the Guild of Music Supervisors), has witnessed this time and time again.

With the explosion of sync over the past several years due to a plethora of shows being produced, there is a huge demand for more music; however, along with that comes more competition. That is even more reason to become as educated as you can about the business. The important thing to understand is that sync licensing is a business and there are "rules of the road," so becoming familiar with them will highly benefit you before jumping in. While being a good songwriter is at the heart of it, doesn't necessarily mean your song is right for a placement. You are no longer writing simply for the sake of your art, but as a vehicle to enhance a particular scene while moving the storyline forward. That means having the right song for the right moment. Mollere refers to this as "strategic songwriting." The feeling viewers should experience is a perfect marriage between the song and that moment.



Songs that work best don't usually get too specific with details, names or dates but deal with more universal themes that can fit various scenarios.

Another crucial aspect of the business is metadata which is pertinent information about the song. This includes your contribution; whether you wrote it in its entirety or collaborated with others. Is there an outside publisher or is it self-published, and is the song released or unreleased. This information will always be required when pitching your music. Being on top of this demonstrates that you are a serious professional who has done their homework.

When trying to figure out where your music fits best, become familiar with as many shows as you can to get an idea of what supervisors are looking for. You can also go to the website imdb.com to see who is working on which shows and what their upcoming projects might be.

So, what can you do to increase your chances of getting your music placed? Fostering relationships with those in the industry is one of the most effective ways to achieve this. There are conferences and panels you can attend as well as courses that will not only provide necessary information but a chance to build on those relationships. There are also sync agents who place music for artists, but they do take a cut of your fee and it's important to make sure they are working on

your behalf.

As the business has grown, so have the number of "how to" courses, some more reputable than others. Often, they have considerable price tags and/or investment of time, making it a barrier to entry. Mollere, acutely aware of these obstacles, has recently launched The Sync School, a comprehensive course which takes into consideration not only an artist's pocketbook, but also their time constraints. It covers everything from the fundamentals of sync to more advanced industry strategies and is not only geared to music creators, but also to those who might be considering a career in music supervision or as a sync agent. Taught by an experienced music supervisor, it offers a front seat to the business and the opportunity to work at your own pace by choosing the best package that suits your needs and goals.

Whatever path you choose, your best bet is to learn all you can about the business and what your strengths as a music creator are vis-à-vis the sync world. Music supervisors, many who are musicians first, not only know the value of placing the right song, but doing their job well depends on it. This interdependence is the key ingredient for success in sync. "Here's my promise," says Mollere; "No song is truly unsyncable. You just have to wait to find the right scene for it to find its home."

Visit thesyncschool.com

Azam Ali

Synesthesia

COP International
Producer: Azam Ali

Los Angeles-based Azam Ali was born in Iran and raised in India, and from the start of the opening title track, all that beautiful multiculture bursts out of the speakers. It's not shoehorned either; it's not like the listener will sit there going, "That's the Indian bit, that's the Middle Eastern bit." Rather, there's an ethereal spirituality about the whole thing that feels authentic and cinematic. The likes of Kate Bush, Tori Amos, Björk, and even Enya are reasonable references, but Ali really does have a sound of her own. Songs such as "Hazy Gaze" and "Autumn of Goodbye" carry the listener away on a cloud of sweet notes and genuine emotions. - *Brett Callwood*



Couch

Big Talk

Couch Productions, LLC
Producer: Couch

Big Talk is Boston-based retro-pop septet Couch's debut, though it hardly sounds like one—it sparkles with joy-splashed confidence and each track bops with belonging. Leaning into the current wave of Sabrina Carpenter-style love pop, the band puts their own soulful, horn-soaked spin on the sound, catering to moments of surrender—in longing, self-discovery, heartbreak—but above all, of love. "What Were You Thinking" and "Static and Noise" are absolute joyrides, displaying everything that defines their genre and signature strengths. It's bold, playful, and, as the album title suggests, anything but small. - *Ruby Risch*



Irving Flores

Armando Mi Conga
Amor De Flores Productions
Producer: Irving Flores

Legendary Mexican born, San Diego based pianist and bandleader Irving Flores calls his bold, multi-faceted, richly immersive and rhythmically explosive new Latin/Afro-Cuban jazz ensemble album *Armando Mi Conga* a "love letter to Latin America... my journey and a tribute to the rhythms who shaped me." A culmination of wisdom, musical and traveling experience and the finely chiseled arts of personal and professional sacrifice, dedication and discipline, it's a full blown, wildly exuberant and fun-filled yet often soulful and poignant expression of love, loss, rebirth, and, to draw from the name of a famed rock/R&B band, many decades of blood, sweat, and tears. - *Jonathan Widran*



Evan Horner

Everything I Wanted
Stem
Producers: Garrett Hall, Shane Travis, Evan Horner

Known for his sold-out Americana shows, and having amassed over 500+million online streams, Evan Horner brings clean distinctive vocals and a tight country-rock instrumental sound in his indie-alternative pop debut. The record includes comforting pop-rock melodies and relatable lyrics that bounce between catchy refrains, and gentle, melancholy poetry. - *Andrea Beenham*



Leon Majcen

Making A Livin' (Not a Killin')

Stem
Producer: Pat Lyons

Leon Majcen's fourth full-length release is out now. Gaining early attention with hit song "Love and Misery," Majcen brings his trademark mellow Americana-folk sensibilities and gritty songwriting alongside fuller instrumental arrangements and a more layered production [from Pat Lyons (Colter Wall, Josh Mely, Sam Barber, etc.)] on *Making A Livin' (Not a Killin')*. Praised for his authentic, salt-of-the-earth writing and gentle, gravel-tinted country vocals, Majcen's warm, soothing tone shines through. Includes a feature with Riley Downing and shares gorgeous southern instrumentals wrapped in an easy, relaxed feel. - *Andrea Beenham*



Syndee Winters

Syndee Winters Sings Lena Horne

Wake Your Worlds/Bassline Live/Sony Orchard
Producers: Eulis Cathey, Carl Griffin

A modern, neo soul-tinged twist on classic vocal jazz pieces presented by theatrical artist and singer-songwriter Syndee Winters. Known for her role as Nala in *The Lion King* (2012, 2019), and as a cast member of *Hamilton*, Winters' record shares soft, intoxicating vocals with sweet jewel tones that float above an incredible band. Upbeat salsa, "I Want To Be Happy," sprinkles in some fun, while gentle vibrato sooths on "The Rules Of The Road." Beautifully balanced and mixed, the album creates a perfect soundtrack to an evening wind-down. - *Andrea Beenham*



Miles Kane

Sunlight in the Shadows

Easy Eye Sound
Producer: Dan Auerbach

On *Sunlight in the Shadows* Miles Kane appears nostalgic, slightly bruised, but very much alive. With producer Dan Auerbach steering production, the album leans into glam-rock swagger and Northern-soul warmth, all the while hinting at some underlying weary tenderness. Songs like "Slow Death" and "Sing A Song To Love" offer a loose, sweaty urgency, but cracks show too—on quieter cuts like "Always in Over My Head," you hear vulnerability peeking out from beneath the strut. It's not a reinvention so much as a confident continuation. - *Ruby Risch*



Gogol Bordello

We Mean It, Man!

Casa Gogol Records
Producers: Nick Launay, Adam "Atom" Greenspan

Often classified as punk, Gogol Bordello amounts to so much more. Past works take cues from folk, Latin, and dub music. Their latest flirts with techno and hardcore, creating an unforgettable flavor. Bookending *We Mean It, Man!* are the crackerjack title track and an updated version of pro-Ukraine tune "Solidarity." Both pack a wallop, but the rest of the album bubbles and jolts in equal fashion. - *Andy Kaufmann*





James "JB" Barnes

Contact: dougdeutschpr1956@gmail.com

Web: jbkeepingthebluesalive.com

Seeking: Label, Booking

Style: Blues, Soul, Rock

Cleveland-born, Jersey-raised blues man James "JB" Barnes is keen to stress that he's the real deal; a soulful, authentic blues man with real stories to tell. That certainly comes across on songs such as "My Mississippi Roots" (inspired by his father's lineage) and "Southern Girl." The musicianship is faultless, and Barnes' voice is as smooth as silk. The polish on the production is a little heavy-handed—a little bit of grit and spit would have gone a long way. But Barnes pours himself into his music, and that's ultimately an appealing trait.

Production	7
Lyrics	8
Music	7
Vocals	8
Musicianship	8

SCORE 7.6

Keyofgigi

Contact: gigi@keyofgigi.com

Web: keyofgigi.com

Seeking: Sync Placement

Style: adult contemporary/alt-country

Keyofgigi's bio is singular: "I make music not content," and yes, it is evident that her goal isn't entertainment but art. Her vocals arrive unassumingly with a unique twang, emotional grit, and authenticity—sounding impossibly seasoned for a newer artist. The instrumentals remain minimal, though that isn't the focus of her tracks; the star is the intention behind the vocals and lyrics. "Accidentally" stands as a quiet gut-punch of a highlight. This isn't music for algorithms—it's music for still rooms and heavy thoughts. Simply put, Keyofgigi is like Joni Mitchell's alt-country cousin; you're in for a treat.

Production	7
Lyrics	9
Music	7
Vocals	9
Musicianship	9

SCORE 8.2

Elly Kace

Contact: ellykacemusic@gmail.com

Web: ellykace.com

Seeking: Coverage

Style: Dream-Pop

Brooklyn-based dream-pop artist Elly Kace describes herself as a "queer sound healing mystic and indie artist," which is fair enough. She's also a gifted songwriter, with songs such as the recently released "Backwards in Blue" dripping with sweet sincerity, delicious melody, and mood by the shovel-full. "Her baroque-pop portals incorporate earthy vocals, sparkling sound worlds and sound medicine to conjure a new paradigm of radical self love," her website reads, and that tracks. "What Would Be Enough," as with much of her music, has elements of Jane Siberry's ethereal, emotion-stirring alt-pop, and there's some Portishead in there too. But Kace's sound is her own.

Production	8
Lyrics	8
Music	8
Vocals	8
Musicianship	8

SCORE 8.0



Tiki Cowboys

Contact: bluebaronmusic@comcast.net

Web: tikicowboys.bandcamp.com/album/oyster

Seeking: Distribution

Style: Americana, Island Country Blues Rock

Forget about troubling images of white supremacists marching with tiki torches. The Tiki Cowboys blend island culture with rootsy Americana and blues rock to great effect. "Tiki Cowboys latest album *OYSTER* features ten new tracks of instrumentals and re-mixes of previously released recordings from the Tiki Cowboys music catalog," a statement reads. For those of us new to the band, that's largely academic, though it does make us curious about the original versions. What we do on tunes such as "Hippo Hop" and "Swizzle Sticks (Oyster Mix)" is mood-inducing, hip-swaying music, played by clearly talented musicians.

Production	7
Lyrics	X
Music	8
Vocals	X
Musicianship	8

SCORE 7.1



Whitney Fenimore

Contact: jessica@milestonecollective.com

Web: whitneyfenimore.com

Seeking: Label, Booking,

Style: Indie Singer-Songwriter

Raised on Christian music in the Bible Belt and sharpened under the spotlight of season 13 of *The Voice*, Whitney Fenimore's sound balances spiritual warmth with indie-pop accessibility. The production stays clean and radio-ready without sacrificing sincerity. Her songwriting shines most when she leans into storytelling, as heard in the quietly powerful "Come Around." Her sound isn't complex and that's okay, it makes you feel *good*. There's something undeniably uplifting about her voice—not just in message, but in tone itself. It's the kind of music that feels grounding rather than flashy, rooted in faith, heart, and well-earned musical intuition.

Production	8
Lyrics	8
Music	8
Vocals	8
Musicianship	9

SCORE 8.2



The Dark Bob

Contact: darkbob@darkbob.com

Web: songsforartistsalbum.com/product/elkphrasis-synesthesia-songs-for-artists-deluxe-double-vinyl

Seeking: Love

Style: Eclectic pop/rock

Absurdity has rarely sounded this self-aware. There's a throwback Weird Al spirit to The Dark Bob's spectacle here, amplified by flamboyant, Vegas-grade theatricality and a deep obsession with pop culture's shiniest flaws. The standout, "I Don't Want To Love You But Do (For Pablo Picasso)," skewers modern perfection culture with lines like, "I hate you but I wish I was you," turning envy into sing-along satire. It's clever, unhinged, and strangely sticky in your brain. You may listen ironically at first—then realize you're hooked.

Production	7
Lyrics	7
Music	7
Vocals	6
Musicianship	8

SCORE 7.0

Music Connection critics rate recorded music on a scale of 1 to 10. Number 1 represents the lowest possible score, 10 represents the highest possible score.
MC can only guarantee that a review will be fair and honest. For more information, see Submission Guidelines on the next page.



The MIDI World of Freedom

Contact: angelcross826@aol.com

Web: themidiworldoffreedom.bandcamp.com/album/luna-sparks

Seeking: Label, Booking, Film/TV

Style: Electronic MIDI Plunderphonics

There's a lot of fun to be had here. The MIDI World of Freedom is, according to the small amount of information we could dig up online, an experimental MIDI project created by a musician called Angel Cross in 2021. They're best known for the *Luna Sparks* album, which features reinterpretations of Oasis and Nickelback tunes (perhaps among others). Ultimately though, this earns points with us due to the originality of thought, combined with some healthy, warm nostalgia for that old MIDI sound. "Two Universes" and "I Miss You" are a ton of fun, and sometimes that's enough.

SCORE 8.0



Bei Bei

Contact: info@beibeizheng.com

Web: beibeizheng.com

Seeking: Label, Booking, Sync, Management

Style: World Fusion, Chinese instrument, Organic Lo-Fi Electronic

Bei Bei is, according to her online bio, "an internationally acclaimed and award-winning guzheng performer, composer, recording artist and guqin artist. As one of the world's premier guzheng musicians, she has played a key role in bringing this ancient Chinese instrument to a global audience." Her gift is for taking something traditional, something steeped in culture, and placing it very firmly in the now. By creating something contemporary and fresh, she's really gifted the world with music that allows us to learn about the past while enjoying the present.

SCORE 8.0



SmartBlackKid

Contact: 4pjmusicgroup@protonmail.com

Web: smartblackkid.com

Seeking: Film/TV

Style: Modern Rock, Classic Rock, Punk Rock

According to his Bandcamp bio, SmartBlackKid released an astonishing 10 albums in a year between April 2012 and January 2013. That's the sort of prolificacy that puts even The Beatles to shame. And hey, one could be forgiven for thinking that at some point he was just throwing out any old crap. But no, the evidence doesn't suggest that at all. Everything we've listened to by SmartBlackKid is eminently listenable and massively enjoyable. Straddling the rock 'n' roll sub-genres, there are elements of rockabilly and garage rock in his punk sound. Songs like "Free Thought" and "Rock Bottom" have us hooked.

Production 8
Lyrics 8
Music 8
Vocals 9
Musicianship 8

SCORE 8.2



August Gladstone

Contact: asgladstone@gmail.com

Web: augustgladstone.com

Seeking: Label, Booking, Representation

Style: Folk

Influenced heavily by the '60s and '70s folk revival, August Gladstone's melodies feel intentionally simple, allowing his lyricism to do all of the heavy lifting. "Nevermore, Nevermind" reveals his playful wit, while "Mira" hints at a more sentimental and thoughtful route. There's clear passion throughout, even when the sound stays restrained—his vocals, while they feel effortless, are perfectly unexceptional (though, like Dylan, that isn't the point of his music). It's true that the genre can feel a bit stagnant at times, but Gladstone undoubtedly shows promise—especially if he eventually pushes beyond tradition.

Production 8
Lyrics 7
Music 6
Vocals 7
Musicianship 8

SCORE 7.2



Leilani Kilgore

Contact: dave@longviewpcc.com

Web: leilanikilgore.com

Seeking: Review, Coverage

Style: Rock, Blues

Some artists feel powerful on record, others feel *dangerous* in the best way. Kilgore is by far apart of the latter group. Across her latest self-release *TELL YOUR GHOST*, Kilgore's energy crackles with defiance and emotional volatility, especially on "HIGH/LOW" and the venom-laced "WISH YOU WERE DEAD." "I tried to let you in my heart but you just crawled in my head. I used to wish you were all mine now I just wish you were dead"—oof, that stings. Her lyrics have proper bite, her vocals are commanding, and her instrumentation and lyrical intentions shift around enough to keep every track feeling quite fresh. Kilgore is one to watch.

Production 8
Lyrics 9
Music 8
Vocals 8
Musicianship 9

SCORE 8.4



Syante

Contact: skg-1234@hotmail.com

Web: linktr.ee/syante

Seeking: Management, Label, Film/TV

Style: Alt Pop/Rock

There is no issue of polish in Syante's tracks; perhaps the only thing that's lacking is a little risk. The songs are clean, digestible, and undeniably listenable, but they hover too comfortably within predictable pop territory. "A Little Sunshine" and "Cold Blooded" follow familiar formulas, while "Downhill," albeit an older single, finally hints at the artist hiding beneath the sheen. There's clear vocal potential waiting to be granted proper access and this writer can't help but want more—more chaos, more grit, more emotional danger. A scream, even. Syante shouldn't abandon pop; she just needs to break it open and make it hers.

SCORE 6.6

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES: There is absolutely no charge for a New Music Critique.

To be considered please go to musicconnection.com/reviews/get-reviewed. All submissions are randomly selected and reviewed by MC staff.

Fonda Theatre Los Angeles, CA

Contact: zoeh@grandstandhq.com

Web: riconastymusic.com

Players: Rico Nasty, vocals; Miles Walker, DJ; Chancey, guitar

EIGHTY PERCENT OF THE BEST new rappers of the last decade have been female. After years and years of misogyny in the music industry that, lets be clear, does still exist, it does at least seem to have gotten through to some of the people at the top of the industry tree that, hey, if there's more than one female rapper in the charts at the same time, the world won't implode.

So, beefs aside, we have Cardi and Nicki, Megan and Doja. Bubbling under, we have a lot more strong, talented women ready to make the break into arena-level shows. Saweetie, Ice Spice, DoeChii, Coi Leray, Kash Doll... the list goes on and on. And let's get this right: If Rico Nasty isn't headlining the Kia Forum in two years MAXIMUM, then something's wrong with the world.

She's got it all. Rico Nasty's rhymes are incisive, intelligent and, in the very best possible way, cutting. Her delivery is rapid-fire and, most importantly, very much her own. There's a little snarl in there, that bit of nasty, which is partially why she's so attractive to the contemporary punk crowd. That, and she performs on stage with a live guitarist as well as her DJ.

She's a consummate show-woman. She holds the crowd at the Fonda, Hollywood in the palm



Photo: Mark Shiwach

of her hand which, given the length of her nails, is a precarious but elevated position to be in.

And then there are her songs which are either gloriously memorable or rabble-rousingly anthemic. Oftentimes, they're both.

Weighing it at about 40 songs, her setlist at the Fonda was lengthy but didn't outstay its welcome by one microsecond.

"WHO WANT IT" and "EAT ME!" gets the crowd yelling along early, and there are some awesome choices of covers (DoeChii's "Swamp

B*tches" and Doja Cat's "Tia Tamera"). The set flies by, one killer tune after the other. Teezo Touchdown and Molly Santana join Ms. Nasty at various points, and Paramore's Hayley Williams gets up to help her with "Smack a B*tch," increasing the scream volume.

Towards the end, we get set highlight "TEETHSUCKER" and "Son of a Gun," but in truth the set was packed with highlights. Rico Nasty is the real deal—make her huge! - **Brett Callwood**



LEITH ROSS

Cat's Cradle Carrboro, NC

Contact: windjack@birthdaycakemedia.com

Web: leithross.com

Players: Leith Ross, guitars, vocals; Keiran Placatka, keys; Soona Lee-Tolley, guitar; Zoe Sparks, bass; Vania Lee, drums

IT'S A STRANGELY HEROIC THING to stand on the wide stage at The Cat's Cradle, stare into a sold-out room of 700+ true believers, and keep a straight face while assuming—rightly—that everyone in the audience is quietly in on the same joke. But for Leith Ross, the childlike, preternaturally calm 27-year-old singer-songwriter who's androgynous, age-neutral aura radiates both bedroom vulnerability and cosmic ambiguity, the moment seemed effortless.

Their presence alone sparked a blend of love, adoration, affection, and a soft-focus reverence reminiscent of a boutique-era Beatlemania, now refracted through modern queer-pop tenderness.

Ross opened the evening backed by an ensemble as visually and energetically neutral as Ross themselves, drifting directly into a four-song haze "POV," "Treasure," "Stay," and "Terrified." Each transition was softened by Ross' hesitant, shy stage banter, as though they were still surprised to find themselves in command of a room that had already devoted itself completely to them. The band, understated yet tightly rehearsed, followed through as Ross moved into the next run of songs, weaving the dreamy "What My Love Is For" into the delightfully off-kilter "Love Watching You Eat Dinner," then easing the

spotlight into a mid-set solo acoustic section.

This shift, which could have exposed Ross' modest guitar technique, instead became one of the night's most luminous moments. In a landscape packed with self-focused confessionalists, Ross delivered theirs with a sincerity that felt unforced and quietly devastating. The songs flowed one into the next "I'd Have to Think About It," the beautifully rendered "I Will," and then "What Are U Thinking About," "Alone," and "Grieving"—each one unfolding like a new page in the same diary, each sung with a soft, unguarded honesty that pulled the entire room closer.

By the time Ross reached "I Can See the Future," the audience was fully suspended in their world. Hands lifted in a gentle wave, voices rose to meet Ross' own, and the entire room seemed to float on the same wavelength. When the lights finally came up, there was no rush for the exits. Instead, the crowd drifted outward slowly, almost ceremonially.

Musically, the night demonstrated how far a carefully arranged ensemble of modestly skilled players can go when unified around a central voice. Ross' guitarist, initially almost indifferent in approach, evolved over the course of the set, unveiling a series of elegant, lightly improvised solos that became unexpected highlights.

In the end, Leith Ross didn't simply perform—she conducted a soft-pop séance, drawing hundreds of people into a shared emotional current for the better part of an hour. It was thoughtful, unexpectedly polished, and quietly transcendent—a demonstration of how small, deeply personal songs can expand to fill an entire room with light. - **Eric Sommer**

The Ryman Auditorium Nashville, TN

Contact: joe@missingpiecegroup.com

Web: stephenwilsonjr.com

Players: Stephen Wilson, Jr., vocals, guitar; Julian Dorio, drums; Scotty Murray, steel guitar; C. Miles Burger, bass guitar, harmonica

NASHVILLE'S RYMAN AUDITORIUM WAS packed to the rafters for Stephen Wilson Jr.'s two-night takeover on the *søn* of dad tour. Hailing from southern Indiana, Wilson Jr. self-describes as "Death Cab for Country"—a nod to the huge indie rock and grunge influence in his country sound. This past year has held exponential success for his music, culminating most recently with performance alongside Shaboozey at the 2025 CMA Awards.

The scene was set with a boxing ring in center stage, adorned with plants and symbols unique to Wilson Jr.'s story. A former Golden Glove boxer and scientist, the artist has no shortage of life experience to pull from for his storytelling. His debut album, *søn* of dad, was named the No. 1 album of 2023 by Holler and wrestles with topics such as grief, love, fatherhood, and rebellion. He stepped into the ring and opened the night with a knockout: a cover of Hum's "Stars," rolling seamlessly into "Calico Creek"—a song with a tune that happily haunts your mind with its catchy reflection on small-town roots. "This hillbilly has been dreaming about this day for 20 years," he explained.

The set featured hits from his album, such as "Year to Be Young 1994" and "Cuckoo" and highlighted his latest single, "Gary." Wilson Jr.'s voice grinded out melodies with a sweet twang and a gritty vulnerability. It was as if he was plucking the songs straight from the sinew of his heart and presenting it on the stage for



everyone to examine. In fact, his songs sound like how his guitar looks: the body with taped family photos, swaths of wood worn down from dedicated use, odd drawings around the strings, and the Virgin Mary at the center. It's a mess of nostalgia, authenticity, and passion that culminates in a beautiful tapestry of storytelling through song.

The standout of the night was a performance

of "Father's *Søn*" with special guest HARDY. The song cuts right to the core of Wilson Jr.'s identity as a man shaped by the legacy and lessons of his father. A cover of "Stand By Me" was the final piece of the evening, leaving fans roaring with applause. They won't be left wanting for long, as Wilson Jr. has big plans for 2026 with the Gary the Torch tour.

- *Erica Beatey*

Your lonely heart has found a home today/And in the space of a minute you're swept up in it. The set continues with songs by Antonio Carlos Jobim, Michel Legrand, and Roger Kellaway, among others.

Much of the show's success is due to the interplay between Corsaro and her backing trio. With consummate arrangements by pianist and musical director Gregory Torolian, they seamlessly highlight Corsaro's thoughtful phrasing. They are so intertwined that it's hard to imagine one without the other. Sporadically adding sax or flute to the mix brings in another musical flavor rounding out the band's sound.

Three quarters of the way through the set the mood suddenly changes. We hear a haunting a capella vocalese leading up to "Portrait in Black and White (Zingaro)." Written by Antonio Carlos Jobim and Roger Schore, the song recounts the dissolution of a marriage in all its gut-wrenching reality, balancing out the set's lighter moments.

With her folksy delivery when introducing a song, Corsaro's straightforward performance style makes her accessible to the audience, never seeming lofty or pretentious when sharing her knowledge of the repertoire. Her love and execution of the material is impressive and it's refreshing to hear these songs that you don't often hear live these days.

- *Ellen Woloshin*



Chelsea Table & Stage New York, NY

Contact: katineiheisel@gmail.com

Web: mariacorsaro.com

Players: Gregory Torolian, piano; Skip Ward, bass; Dave Silliman; drums; Mark Fineberg, sax, flute.

CELEBRATING THE RELEASE OF HER new CD, "Love Makes the Changes," Maria Corsaro

mutual love will prevail: *I loved you so since that first day/The angels let you leave and come my way/Don't you see what a lost lady I'm libel to be/If you never fall in love with me.* Followed by "In April," a Bill Evans tune, also written as an instrumental with lyrics added by Roger Schore (who was in the audience), shares the promise of spring and all that comes with it: *Love blossoms all around in April/Not a single care/*

The Blue Note Los Angeles, CA

Contact: sydney.whittenburg@umusic.com
Web: tankandthebangas.com
Players: Tarriona "Tank" Ball, vocals; Norman Spence, keys, guitar; Robert Kellner, keys; Kenaniah Turner, bass; Deven Trusclair, drums; Etienne Stoufflet, saxophone, flute; Raion Ramsey, background vocals

A WISE MAN ONCE SAID, "life is what happens when you're busy making other plans." We at MC know that Tank of Tank & the Bangas is a powerful and gifted singer, a charismatic frontwoman and a n energetic performer. No doubt, she fully planned to offer a trademark killer performance at the newly-opened Blue Note LA in November, the last in a long run of shows. She was primed and ready, and she was going to slay because that's what she does.

Unfortunately, her vocal cords weren't prepared to play ball. Very early in the set, it became apparent that her voice just wasn't there, probably because she's thrown herself into every performance prior. She tried, bless her heart; Tank emerged from the Blue Note wings with all of the vigor and vitality that one has come to expect from her. Things started ok, and then the croaks began. Through no fault of her own, Tank wasn't able to play her normal show.



TANK & THE BANGAS

So what to do? Well, a lesser artist might give up completely. Some might offer a slight apology and exit the stage. Tank chose not to do that; rather, she invited one friend after another up onto the stage to read from her new, second book of poetry *The Thing About Falling*. Tank interjected when able—she remained on stage and, in doing so, remained a powerful presence.

The band stayed up there too, offering a musical backdrop to the magical words pouring out of different mouths but one mind. In doing so, an air of stability was maintained. Like, ok, this isn't a normal Tank & the Bangas show but the music is present and correct, the words are equally incisive and personal, it's only the

messenger that, for the most part is different.

This was a lesson in strength, flexibility and ingenuity. Because, against the odds, it turned out to be a joyous and quite glorious Tank & the Bangas show. In addition, the Blue Note LA is a quite gorgeous room. It's a little fancy for this ragged, punk rock personality, but every now and again it's nice to get swanky. The staff ate warm and welcoming, the lighting creates a very cool vibe, and everything is immaculate. More importantly, the sound is crystal clear.

We hope that the next time Tank sings around here, she's all better. But the silver lining is that we got to see and hear a very different, rather brilliant set. - **Brett Callwood**



NOELINE HOFMANN

Cat's Cradle Carrboro, NC

Contact: sydney.collett@tmwrk.net
Web: noelinehofmann.com
Players: Noeline Hofmann, vocals, guitar; Alex Lyon, bass; Tyler Guenther, guitar; Cam Buie, keys; Nik Winnitowy, drums; Ciara Hager, fiddle

AS NASHVILLE COUNTRY CONTINUES its slow slide into flash-trash spectacle—more rhinestone smoke bombs than chord changes—along comes Noeline Hofmann, scootin' down the snowline from Alberta with the cleanest, meanest, most legit country twang to hit the Triangle in recent memory. In a scene oversaturated with bejeweled swagger and algorithm-approved choruses, Hofmann arrives like a cowboy-booted meteor: real, radiant, and just dangerous enough to wake the genre up.

Her gloriously smooth, unapologetically real outfit torched the bro-pop hay bales and shoved aside the format-chewin' Nashville mush. What they delivered instead was a tight, precision-tuned, grin-inducing set of originals so fun and full of pulse that folks in the back started leaning

forward and forgetting about their beer. This wasn't nostalgia, either—this was the sound of Country remembering its spine.

They opened with "Lightning," an electric can-opener of a tune where Hofmann's vocals slid in warm as molasses on the low lines and snapped with a flinty edge on the chorus. "Rodeo" stomped in with a whip-crack snare, while "Lovers" floated across the room with a groove that shimmered like heat over a two-lane highway. The crowd was small at first, but the room had that unmistakable buzz: the sense that everyone who walked in late was gonna brag later that they were "totally there from the beginning."

Hofmann—barely a couple dozen birthdays in—carried herself like a road-seasoned veteran. Confident without being slick, present without pandering. She had the kind of stage command that makes the audience relax because she clearly wasn't worried about anything. With just a raised eyebrow or a half-turn, she moved the band like chess pieces.

By the time they hit the mid-set stretch of "August," "Bullfighter," "Sleepless Nights," and

"Big River," the ensemble was firing in cinematic widescreen. "Bullfighter" came at the room sideways, with flamenco-flavored stabs from the guitar and a rolling tom pattern that gave the tune a sense of danger around the edges. "Sleepless Nights" leaned into a lush 6/8 sway—pure porchlight melancholy—while "Big River" burst out like a barn door kicked open at the right moment: double-stops on the fiddle, bass rattling the floorboards, piano rolling through clusters like someone cleaning a dusty saloon.

Hofmann's vocal presence was the lynchpin-world-class without ever sounding showy. She's a wordwright with instinct: shaping phrases like she's wrestling something honest out of them. Her tone carried an earthy warmth, bolstered by a fearless reach into the high notes when the songs demanded it. There are singers who imitate country. Hofmann exports it.

Musically, the band straddled that elusive "Loretta meets radio-ready" line without ever tipping into cliché. It was honky-tonk by way of a philosophy seminar. Imagine Dwight Yoakam piloting a tour bus driven by Bob Wills, Eldon Shamblin loading gear with quiet exasperation, and Tommy Duncan calling out the stops in perfect pitch. The guitarist had taste for days—never using five notes when two told the story better. The bassist was basically Dusty Hill's ghost in a clean shirt: solid thunder below, soft feathers above. The drummer had that rare light-heavy touch—hi-hat whispering sweet nothings, kick drum hitting like a polite bar fight. And the fiddle? It swayed, swooned, and occasionally went full wildfire.

Once again, our friends from the Great White North slid down from Alberta with a fresh, original, country-soaked package of songs that swayed, stunned, and absolutely captivated.

- **Eric Sommer**

Here's our latest list of record labels, giving you names, phone numbers, web info and roster details of majors and indies who actively seek new artists for their companies. All 2026 updates have been supplied by the listees.

1-2-3-4 GO!
400 4th St., Ste. #5
Oakland, CA 94609
510-995-0225
Email: store@1234gorecords.com
Web: 1234gorecords.com
Styles/Specialties: rock, punk
*Do not accept unsolicited material

4AD RECORDS
134 Grand St.
New York, NY 10013
212-995-5882
Email: demos@4ad.com
Web: 4ad.com
Roster: the National, Deerhunter, Efterklang, Aldous Harding, Beirut, Holly Herndon, U.S. Girls
Styles/Specialties: rock/indie

Additional location:

17-19 Alma Rd., SW18 1AA, UK
44-208-870-9724
Email: 4ad@4ad.com, edhorrox@4ad.com
Contact: Ed Horrox, A&R

ACTIVATE ENTERTAINMENT
5062 Lankershim Blvd.-174
N. Hollywood CA 91601
818-569-3020
Email: submissions@2actvate.com
Contact: James Arthur
How to Submit: Urban, Soul/R&B, HipHop, Pop, Hard Rock, Country; Send Soundcloud &/or YouTube links, socials, list your email & text number

ALLIGATOR RECORDS
Attn: New Material
P.O. Box 60234
Chicago, IL 60660
Email: info@allig.com
Web: alligator.com
Styles/Specialties: blues, roots, contemporary blues
*Please include a letter-sized stamped envelope so we can reply to your submission.
*Due to the large number of submissions we receive, response time is approximately four months or more. All submissions will be acknowledged by email; if no legible address is on the demo material, there will be no response. Please keep submissions to a maximum of four songs (If we like what we hear, we'll ask for more).
*Alligator will NOT accept inquiries or phone calls regarding the receipt or status of submissions. We do not visit artist websites or listen to email submissions

AM CONSULTING GROUP
157 Church Street
New Haven, CT 06510
203-812-0291 (W)
Email: info@amconsultgroup.com
Web: amconsultgroup.org
Contact: Ashwin Mathur, CEO
Styles/Specialties: C.R., Rap, R&B
All Music Accepted
Email for Rates

AMATHUS MUSIC
PO. Box 611
Rockville Centre, NY 11571
Email: info@amathusmusic.com,
Web: amathusmusic.com
Styles/Specialties: dance, electronic, pop
*Do not accept unsolicited material

AMERICAN LAUNDROMAT RECORDS
PO. Box 85
Mystic, CT 06355
860-565-8900
Email: americanlaundromat@hotmail.com
Web: airmusic.com
Styles/Specialties: indie rock, tribute compilations
*We do not accept unsolicited materials
Joseph H. Spadaro, Founder, President

AMERICAN RECORDINGS
(Republic Records/Universal)
2200 Colorado Ave.
Santa Monica, CA 90404
Email: mgoldberg@americanrecordings.com
Web: universalmusic.com/labels
Styles/Specialties: all genres
*No unsolicited material
Rick Rubin, President
Michael Goldberg, A&R

APPLESEED RECORDINGS
PO. Box 2593
West Chester, PA 19380
610-701-5755
Web: appleseedmusic.com
Styles/Specialties: AC
*accepts demo submissions, see website

ASTRALWERKS
1750 Vine Street
Hollywood, CA
Email: astralwerks.astralwerks@gmail.com
Web: astralwerks.com
Styles/Specialties: electronic, dance, alternative, techno
*No Unsolicited material accepted.

ATLANTIC RECORDS
(Warner Music Group)
812 N. Fairfax Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90046
818-238-6800, 818-239-9222
Web: atlanticrecords.com
*No unsolicited material
Jeff Vaughn, VP of A&R

ATLANTIC RECORDS GROUP
Paramount Plaza
1633 Broadway, 10th & 11th Floor
New York, NY 10019
212-707-2000
Email: pete.ganbarg@atlanticrecords.com
Web: atlantic-records.com
*No unsolicited material
Jeffrey Sledge VP A&R, Riggs Morales, SVP A&R

ATO RECORDS
10 East 40th Street, 22nd Floor
New York, NY 10016
212-422-4282
Email: info@atorecords.com
Web: atorecords.com
Styles/Specialties: pop, rock, acoustic rock, indie
*Demo Submissions will only be accepted by mail
Will Botwin, President/CEO

AVERAGE JOES ENTERTAINMENT
3739 Keystone Ave.
Nashville, TN 37211
615-733-9983
Email: info@averagejoesent.com
Web: averagejoesent.com
Roster: Carter Winter, Cypress Spring, Camo Brian, Austin Toliver, Bubba Sparxxx, Charlie Farley, Colt Ford, DJ Cannon, Banyon, Hatcher, Jeremy McComb, Josh Mirenda, Lenny Poor, Montgomery Gentry, Rich O'Toole, Sam Graw, Sarah Ross, Shelsky, Tommy Chayne
Styles/Specialties: country rap

BAR/NONE RECORDS
P.O. Box 1704
 Hoboken, NJ 07030
201-7090
Email: glenn@bar-none.com
Web: bar-none.com
Styles/Specialties: indie rock
*Unsolicited material accepted
Glen Morrow, Owner

BARSUK RECORDS
P.O. Box 22546
Seattle, WA 98122
Email: questions@barsuk.com
Web: barsuk.com
Distribution: ADA/WEA
Styles/Specialties: Indie Rock
*Accepts Demo submission, see website
Josh Rosenthal, President

BEGGARS GROUP/ROUGH TRADE
(XL Recordings, Beggars Music, 4AD, Matador, Rough Trade)
134 Grand St.
New York, NY 10013-1012
212-995-5882
Contact: Sadie Matthew
Email: banquet@beggars.com
Web: beggars.com
Styles/Specialties: indie rock, pop, electronic and more
Roster: Adele, Alabama Shakes, Girl Band, Tobias Jesso, Yo La Tengo
*Does not accept Demo Submissions

Additional locations:
2035 Hyperion Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90027
323-663-0607

17-19 Alma Rd.
London, SW18 1AA England
44-208-870-9912
Email: info@beggarsmusic.com

BIELER BROS. RECORDS
1000 N. Pinesline Rd., #5
Pompano Beach, FL 33073
954-979-4781
Email: info@bielerbros.com
Web: bielerbros.com
Styles/Specialties: hard rock, metal
*Accepts unsolicited material, EPK only
Jason Bieler, Owner
Aaron Bieler, Owner

BIG LOUD RECORDS
Nashville, TN
Email: info@bigloud.com
Web: bigloudrecords.com
AJ Kassen, SVP Head of A&R, Big Loud Rocks

BIG MACHINE LABEL GROUP
1221 16th Ave. S.
Nashville, TN 37212
615-324-7777
Email: allison.jones@bmg.net,
mail@bigmachine.us
Web: bigmachinelabelgroup.com
Roster: Aaron Lewis, Abigail Coley, Avenue Beat, Ayron Jones, Badflower, Brantley Gilbert, Brett Young, Brock Gonyea, Callista Clark, Carly Pearce, Connor Smith, Danielle Bradbery, Florida Georgia Line, Jamie Fine, Jay Demarcus, Jennifer Nettles, John 5, Laci Kaye Booth, Rascal Flatts, Ray Wylie Hubbard, Sugarland, Tim McGraw
Allison Jones, SVP, A&R

BIG NOISE
11 S. Angel St., Ste. 336
Providence, RI 02906
401-274-4770
Email: albignoise@gmail.com
Web: bignoisenow.com
Client List: Christina Aguilera, Red Hot Chili Peppers, The Beach Boys, Chicago, Katherine McPhee, Dionne Warwick, Gregory Porter, and Viola Davis
*Currently accepting demo submissions.

*Please call or email first.
Al Gomes, A&R

BLACKHEART RECORDS
456 Johnson Ave #202
Brooklyn, NY 11237
212-553-9600 Fax 212-553-8300
Email: gabe@blackheart.com
Web: blackheart.com
Styles/Specialties: Rock, Punk
*Unsolicited material accepted, attn: A&R Dept.
Zander Wolff, A&R

BLUE ÉLAN RECORDS
(Universal Music Group)
1750 N. Vine St.
Hollywood, CA 90028
323-971-5425
Email: bluenote@umgstores.com
Web: bluenote.com
Roster: Black Lips, Two Gallants, Buffalo Killers, Brian Olive
Distribution: Lumberjack Mordam Music Grp.
*Unsolicited material accepted. Do not contact us, we will contact you if we dig what we hear.

BOMP/ALIVE NATURALSOUND RECORDS
919 Isabel, Unit G
Burbank, CA 91506
Email: label@alive-records.com
Web: alive-records.com
Roster: Black Lips, Two Gallants, Buffalo Killers, Brian Olive
Distribution: Lumberjack Mordam Music Grp.
*Unsolicited material accepted. Do not contact us, we will contact you if we dig what we hear.

CAPITOL MUSIC GROUP
(Universal Music Group)
1750 Vine Street
Los Angeles, CA
310-235-4700
Email: communications@umusic.com
Web: capitolrecords.com
*No unsolicited material
Solomon Sounds, SVP A&R

Additional location:
New York
(Universal Music Group)
1755 Broadway #6
New York, NY 10019
212-841-8000
Contact: Andrew D. Keller
Email: andrewkeller@umusic.com
Web: universalmusic.com/label/capitol-music-group
*No unsolicited material

CENTURY MEDIA RECORDS
The Century Family, Inc.
c/o Sony Music International
25 Madison Ave.
New York, NY 10010
Email: mail@centurymedia.com,
mike@centurymedia.com
Web: centurymedia.com
Styles/Specialties: heavy metal, rock
*Unsolicited material accepted, see web for details.
Mike Gitter, VP, A&R

CHERRYTREE RECORDS
(Universal Records)
2220 Colorado Blvd
Santa Monica, CA 90404
Email: info@cherrytreerecords.com
Web: cherrytreerecords.com
Styles/Specialties: All genre styles considered
Roster: Avril Lavigne, Lady Gaga, Far East Movement, Ellie Goulding, ROBYN, LMFAO, Keane, R&B, Matthew Koma, The Fratellis, Michael Ian Black, The Knux, Tokio Hotel, Sir Sly, Mohombi, Kelis, Milow
Scott Enright, A&R

CLEOPATRA RECORDS
9417 Brodie Ln.,
Austin, TX 78748
310-477-4000
Email: bperera@cleorecs.com
Web: cleopatracards.com
Styles/Specialties: alternative, gothic, rock, metal, Industrial, Electronic, classics, soundtracks
*We only accept demos/music in digital form. See website for instructions
Brian Perera, President, Tim Yasul, VP/GM

CLICKPOP RECORDS
PO. Box 5765
Bellingham, WA 98227
Email: dave@clickpoprecords.com
Web: clickpoprecords.com
Styles/Specialties: folk, metal, pop, punk, electronic, ambient noise and more
Dave Richards, A&R

CLUBSTREAM LABEL GROUP
Gothenburg, Sweden
+46 (0) 708 579 753
Email: demo@clubstream.se
Web: clubstream.se
Styles/Specialties: techno, all electronic dance music
*Accepts unsolicited material.
Do not send rock music, reggae or psy-trance.
See website for instructions
Hakan Ludvigson, A&R Manager

CMH RECORDS
2998 Rowena Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90039
800-373-8073

Web: cmhrecords.com
Styles/Specialties: country, bluegrass, electric, children's, Christmas

COLUMBIA RECORDS
LOS ANGELES
(Sony Music)
10202 Washington Blvd.
Culver City, CA 92032
310-272-2555
Web: columbiarecords.com
*No unsolicited material

COLUMBIA RECORDS
NEW YORK
25 Madison Ave
New York, NY 10010
615-321-4000
Email: john.deelp@sonymusic.com
Web: columbiarecords.com
*No unsolicited material
Rani Hancock, Head of A&R

COMPASS RECORDS
915 19th Ave. S.
Nashville, TN 37212
615-320-7672, 800-757-2277
Email: info@compassrecords.com
Web: compassrecords.com
Styles/Specialties: Celtic, roots
*Accept unsolicited material accepted see website for info
Alison Brown, A&R
Garry West, A&R

CONCORD MUSIC GROUP
5750 Wilshire Blvd. Suite 450
Los Angeles, CA 90036
310-385-4455
Web: concordmusicgroup.com
Styles/Specialties: jazz
Tom Coulson-Smith, A&R Director

CURB RECORDS
48 Music Sq. E.
Nashville, TN 37203
615-321-5080
Email: licensing@curb.com
Web: curb.com
Styles/Specialties: country, pop, gospel
*No unsolicited material
Bryan Stewart, SVP, A&R

DANGERBIRD RECORDS
3801 Sunset Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90026
323-665-1144
Email: info@dangerbird.com
Web: dangerbirdrecords.com
Roster: Butch Walker, Royal Teeth, T. Hardy Morris, Broadheads, JJ-MAT, Maritime
*Does not accept unsolicited demos
Jenni Sperandeo, President

DD2
New York, NY
Email: info@dd2records.com
Web: dd2records.com

DEEP ELM RECORDS
Maui, HI
808-214-4407
Email: info@deepelm.com
Web: deepelm.com, deepelm.com/submit
Styles/Specialties: indie rock, emo, punk, pop, atmospheric, slowcore, alt-country, instrumental
John Szuch, A&R

DEEP SOUTH ENTERTAINMENT
PO Box 12761
Raleigh, NC 27619
919-494-1515
Email: hello@deepsouthentertainment.com
Web: deepsouthentertainment.com
Styles/Specialties: rock
*See website for demo submission policy
Steve Williams, A&R

Additional location:
PO. Box 121975
Nashville, TN 37212
615-953-4800

DEF JAM (Universal)
2200 Colorado Ave., 5th Fl.
Santa Monica, CA 90404
310-465-4000
Web: defjam.com
*No unsolicited material
Chelsea Blythe, SVP, A&R
Noah Preston, VP, A&R

DEF JAM (NY)
1755 Broadway - 7th Floor
New York, NY 10019
212-333-8000
Email: steve.carless@umusic.com
Web: defjam.com, universalmusic.com/label/def-jam
Styles/Specialties: hip-hop, rap, urban, R&B
*No unsolicited material
Steve Carless, Sr. Dir VP

DEFEND MUSIC, INC.
1667 N. Main Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012
323-305-7315
Email: russell@defendmusic.com
Web: defendmusic.com
*We do not Accept unsolicited material
Russell Nygaard, A&R

DELMARK RECORDS

4121 N. Rockwell
Chicago, IL 60618
773-539-5001
Email: delmark@delmark.com
Web: delmark.com
Styles/Specialties: blues and jazz
Elba Barilar, VP & Artist Director

DIM MAK RECORDS

724 South Spring St.
Los Angeles, CA 90014
Email: admin@dimmak.com
Web: dimmak.com
Styles/Specialties: edm, pop

DINE ALONE RECORDS

864 Eastern Ave
Toronto, ON Canada
416-585-7885
Email: info@dinealonerecords.com
Web: dinealonerecords.com
Styles/Specialties: Various, including rock, indie, punk, R&B, hip-hop, post hardcore and emo
Roster: Moneen, Streets of Laredo, the Flatliners, Vanessa Carlton, New Swears, the Lumineers
Joel Carrasco, Founder, A&R

DISCHORD RECORDS

3919 Boucher St. NW
Washington, DC 20007
703-351-7507
Email: discord@discord.com
Web: discord.com
Styles/Specialties: punk rock

DOMO MUSIC GROUP

11022 Santa Monica Blvd., #300
Los Angeles, CA 90025
310-966-4414
Email: newtalent@domomusicgroup.com
Web: domomusicgroup.com
Styles/Specialties: new age, world music, rock, soundtrack, ambient, electronic
*We accept unsolicited material. See website for details

D'MAR ENTERTAINMENT, INC.

7723 Tylers Pl. Blvd, Ste. 275
West Chester, OH 45069
513-617-2392
Web: dmarmusic.com
Styles/Specialties: smooth jazz, R&B, gospel
*Accepts unsolicited material

DRAG CITY RECORDS

P.O. Box 47687
Chicago, IL 60647
312-455-1015 Fax 312-455-1057
Email: radio@dragcity.com
Web: dragcity.com
Styles/Specialties: rock, hard rock, experimental
*Does not accept Demos

DUALTONE RECORDS

3 McFerrin Ave.
Nashville, TN 37206
615-320-0620
Email: info@dualtone.com
Web: dualtone.com
Styles/Specialties: country, rock

ELEKTRA

1633 Broadway 10th & 11th Floor
New York, NY 10019
212-707-2300
Web: elektromusicgroup.com, elektra.com
Johnny Minardi, VP, A&R

Additional location:

3400 W. Olive Ave.
Burbank, CA 91505
818-238-2200

ELTON AUDIO RECORDS

155 Willowbrook Blvd. Ste #110 3430
Wayne, NJ 07470
Email: contact@eltonaudio.com
Web: eltonaudio.com
Contact: Louis Elton

EMI CHRISTIAN MUSIC GROUP (CMG) (Capitol Christian Music Group (CCMG))
1234 Martin St.
Nashville, TN 37203
615-371-4300
Email: radio@capitolcmg.com
Web: capitolchristianmusicgroup.com
*No unsolicited material

EMI MUSIC GROUP

(See Universal Music Group)
Web: universalmusic.com
*No unsolicited material

ENTERTAINMENT ONE MUSIC

2700 Pennsylvania Ave.
Suite 1000
Santa Monica CA 90404
Web: lionsgate.com

Additional locations:

4201 Wilshire Blvd.
Suite 400
Los Angeles, CA 90010

Renegade83
11-13 East 26th Street
New York, NY 10010

15301 Ventura Blvd, Bldg. D
Suite 350
Sherman Oaks, CA 91403

124 Peter St.
Suite 708
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

EPIC

10202 W. Washington Blvd.
Culver City, CA 90232
310-272-2220
Web: epicrecords.com
Contact: Ezekiel Lewis, EVP & Head of A&R, Jermaine Piegues, VP A&R, Patrick Afeku, Sr. Director A&R
*No unsolicited material

Styles/Specialties: Various, including pop, R&B, rock and hip-hop
Distribution: Sony Music Entertainment

Roster: DJ Khaled, Judas Priest, Meghan Trainor, Sade, Travis Thompson, Jez Dior, Jidenna, (see website)

EPITAPH / ANTI (WMG)
2798 Sunset Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90026
213-355-5000
Email: radio@epitaph.com
Web: epitaph.com
Styles/Specialties: alternative rock, post-hardcore, punk rock, hip-hop, metalcore
*Accepts unsolicited material. See website for instructions
Chris Foltel, SH VP

EQUAL VISION

P.O. Box 38202
Albany, NY 12203-8202
518-458-8250
Email: music@equalvision.com
Web: equalvision.com
Dan Sandshaw, GM/A&R
*accept unsolicited submission

FAT POSSUM RECORDS

P.O. Box 1923
Oxford, MS 38655
662-234-2828 Fax 662-234-2899
Email: info@fatpossum.com
Web: fatpossum.com
Styles/Specialties: indie
*Accepts unsolicited material
Matthew Johnson, President
Bruce Watson, Director, A&R

FAT WRECK CHORDS

2196 Palou Ave.
San Francisco, CA 94124
415-284-7791
Web: fatwreck.com
Styles/Specialties: punk

FAVORED NATIONS RECORDS

17322 Ventura Blvd., #165
Encino, CA 91316
Web: favorednations.com
Web: favorednations.com, facebook.com/favorednations-entertainment
Styles/Specialties: all styles welcome

FEARLESS RECORDS

5870 W. Jefferson Blvd., Studio E
Los Angeles, CA 90016
310-730-6655
Email: cody@fearlessrecords.com
Web: fearlessrecords.com
Styles/Specialties: pop-punk, punk rock, emo, alternative rock, post-hardcore
*Accepts unsolicited material. See website for instructions
Bob Becker, Owner/A&R

FERVER RECORDS

1810 W. Northern Ave., Ste. A-9
Box 186
Phoenix, AZ 85021
602-870-1788
Email: info@fervor-records.com
Web: fervor-records.com, facebook.com/fervorrecords/about
Styles/Specialties: vintage, new indie
*We do not accept unsolicited submissions
Jeff Freundlich, Exec. Producer

FIRE TOWER ENTERTAINMENT

Located in West Hollywood, CA
Email: artis@firetowerent.com
Web: firetowerent.com
Contact: Evan Griffith, Ruth Nichols
Styles: Pop, Indie
Clients: Wesley Stromberg, Michael Blum, Sophie Ann.
full roster on website
Services: Artist Management, A&R consulting, horn contracting
*Accepts unsolicited material

FONOVISA

(Universal Music Group)
Woodland Hills, CA
Web: universalmusica.com
*Accepts unsolicited material

FUNZALO RECORDS

P.O. Box 2375
Agoura Hills, CA 91376
520-628-8655
Email: dan@mikesmanagement.com
Web: funzalorecords.com, facebook.com/funzalorecords
Michael J. Lembo, President
Dan Agnew, General Manager

GEARHEAD RECORDS

P.O. Box 2375
Elk Grove, CA 95759
916-897-2451
Email: info@gearheadrecords.com
Web: gearheadhq.com
Styles/Specialties: rock n' roll, outlaw country, punk, garage,abilly and slate metal
*No unsolicited material
Michelle Haundorf, President

GEFFEN

See Interscope

GEZA X RECORDS

310-601-8707
Web: gazexrecords.com
Email: gazexrecords@gmail.com

Services: Mixing, Mastering, Recording/Engineering, Vinyl Pressing, Video Production, A&R, Vocal, Publishing,
Contact: Geza X, Larva X
Basic Rate: See Website

Indie Specialist!

Package Deals Available

GLASSNOTE RECORDS

770 Lexington Ave
New York, NY 10065
646-214-6000
Contact: michael@glassnotemusic.com
Web: glassnotemusic.com

GOGIRLSMUSIC.COM

Email: gogirlsmusic@gmail.com
Web: gogirlsmusic.com
Styles/Specialties: all genres

*The oldest and largest online community of indie women in music
Madalyn Sklar, A&R

HIPGNOSIS

P.O. Box 260800

Encino, CA 91436
818-922-0807

Email: info@bigdealmusic.com
Web: hipgnosissongs.com
Styles/Specialties: rock, pop, AC
Distribution: Sony/Rec
*No unsolicited material
Henry Marx, President/CEO

Additional location

115 29th Ave. S.
Nashville, TN 37212
615-942-8328

HOLLYWOOD RECORDS - LOS ANGELES

500 S. Buena Vista St., Old Team Bldg.
Burbank, CA 91521
818-560-5670
Email: hollywoodrecords@gmail.com
Web: hollywoodrecords.com
*No unsolicited material, No MP3s

Mike Daly, Exec. Director, A&R

HOPELESS RECORDS

15018 Armita St.
Van Nuys, CA 91406-1806
818-997-0444
Email: information@hopelessrecords.com
Web: hopelessrecords.com
Mike Tobin, EVP, Business Dev. & A&R

INTERSCOPE

2220 Colorado Ave., 5th Fl.
Santa Monica, CA 90404
310-865-1000
Email: sam.rickb@umusic.com
Web: interscope.com
*No unsolicited material
Natalie Wysko, EVP and Co-Head of A&R Aaron "Dash" Sherrod, President of Urban A&R

IPPECAC RECORDINGS

Email: info@ippecac.com
Web: ippecac.com, facebook.com/ipepac

Distribution center

Roster: Fantomas, Melvins Big Band, Northern State, Dalek, Skeleton Key, Peeping Tom, Dub Trio
Greg Werckman, A&R

ISLAND RECORDS

(UMG)
2220 Colorado Ave
Santa Monica, CA
888-582-7176
Contact: Darcus Beese, President
Web: universalmusic.com/label/island-records

JAGGÖ RECORDS, LLC

5100 Wilshire St.
18th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90071
323-850-1819
Email: jago@jago.com
Web: jago.com
Styles/Specialties: pop, rock, jazz, R&B, hip-hop, soul, World
*Unsolicited material accepted

K RECORDS

P.O. Box 7154
Olympia, WA 98507
360-786-1594
Email: promo@krecords.com
Web: krecords.com
Roster: Kimya Dawson, the Curious Mystery, the Blackouts, Calvin Johnson, Owner

KOBALT MUSIC

Los Angeles
926 N Sycamore Ave
Suite 700
Los Angeles, CA 90038
310-967-3087
Email: info@kobaltmusic.com
Web: kobaltmusic.com

Additional locations:

2 Gansevoort St. - 6th Fl
New York, NY 10014
212-247-6204
Bob Borthick, SVP, Creative

907 Gleaves St., Ste. 101
Nashville, TN 37203
615-321-8585

2100 Ponce De Leon Blvd
Suite 1230
Coral Cables, FL 33134
305-456-1624

The River Building
5th Floor, Goldings House,
Hays Galleria, 2 Hays Lane,
London, SE1 2HB

LITTLE FISH RECORDS

P.O. Box 19164
Cleveland, OH 44119
216-164-1634
Email: littlefishrecords@gmail.com
Web: littlefishrecords.com
Styles/Specialties: roots reggae, jam band, jazz, pop
*Accepts unsolicited material
Lawrence Koval, President, Artist Mgmt

LIZARD SUN ENTERTAINMENT

San Pedro, CA
310-505-3958
Email: Floyd@lizardsunentertainment.com
Web: facebook.com/lizardsunentertainment

Floyd Bocox, CEO

LOGGINS PROMOTION

Nashville, TN
310-325-2800
Email: staff@logginspromotion.com
Web: logginspromotion.com

Styles/Specialties: all styles

*Accepts unsolicited material
Paul Loggins, A&R

LOVECAT MUSIC

P.O. Box 548, Pomeroy Station
New York, NY 10023
Email: lovecatmusic@gmail.com
Web: lovecatmusic.com

Styles/Specialties: rock, country, folk
*No unsolicited material

MACK AVENUE

18530 Mack Ave, Unit #299
Grosse Pointe Farms, MI 48236
888-640-6225
Email: info@mackavenue.com
Web: mackavenue.com

MALACO RECORDS

3023 W. McLean Dr.
Jackson, MS 39213
601-922-4522, 800-272-7936
Email: demo@malaco.com
Web: malaco.com
Styles/Specialties: gospel, R&B, spoken word, jazz, blues, soul
*No unsolicited material
Tommy Couch, Jr., President/R&B, A&R
Wolf Stephenson, VP, A&R
Matt Kivett, Director, Gospel

MATADOR RECORDS

134 Grand Street
New York, NY 10013
212-995-5882 Fax 212-995-5883
Email: store@matadorrecords.com
Web: matadorrecords.com
Styles/Specialties: all styles
*No Unsolicited Material
Jake Whitener, Director of A&A

Additional location:

17-19 Alma Rd.
London, SW1B 1AA U.K.
+020-8875-6200

MERGE RECORDS

409 E. Chapel Hill St
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
919-967-9969
Email: info@mergerecords.com
Web: mergerecords.com
Styles/Specialties: alt-rock
Roster: See website for roster

MEROK SKY RECORDS

Van Nuys, CA
818-427-2712
Styles/Specialties: folk/rock/Americana/Country

Roster: Barry Goldberg, Alex Del Zoppo, Tony Kead, Todd Taylor, Alex Sherman, Andrew Wraith, Matt Michenzi

METAL BLADE RECORDS

5930 Van Nuys Blvd, #1301
Sherman Oaks, CA 91401
818-597-1964
Email: metalblade@metalblade.com
Web: metalblade.com

Styles/Specialties: heavy metal, progressive, rock

*See website for Demo Submission
Brian Slagel, President

Additional location:

Metal Blade Records GMBH
Friedrichstr. 38
73033 Goppingen, Germany

METROPOLIS RECORDS

P.O. Box 974
Media, PA 19063
Attn: Demos
610-595-9940
Email: demo@metropolis-records.com
Web: metropolis-records.com
Styles/Specialties: electronic, industrial, goth
*Accepts unsolicited material by CD or CD-R

MILAN ENTERTAINMENT

Sherman Oaks, CA
Email: milanrecords@sonymusic.com
Web: milanrecords.com
Styles/Specialties: soundtracks, electronic, world

MINT RECORDS

P.O. Box 36140
Markham, ON Canada V6B 3Y6
604-669-MINT
Email: info@mintrecs.com
Web: mintrecs.com
Roster: Duotang, Duplex, Fanshaw, Hot Panda, Immaculate Machine
Styles/Specialties: indie
*Send demos via mail

MOM + POP RECORDS

Web: momandpopmusic.com
Email: digital@momandpopmusic.com
Roster: Tom Morello, Sleater-Kinney, Sleigh Bells, Courtney Barnett, Hannah Gross, VP and Head of West Coast A&R

MORPHUS RECORDS

100 E. 23rd St.
Baltimore, MD 21218
410-662-0112
Email: david@morphus.com
Web: morphus.com
Styles/Specialties: rock, punk, hip-hop, experimental

MOTOWN (Capitol Records Bldg.)

1750 North Vine Street
Hollywood, CA 90028
Web: motownrecords.com
*No unsolicited material accepted

MRC RECORDINGS

Los Angeles, CA
310-629-9782
Email: info@mrcrecordings.com,
submission@mrcrecordings.com
Web: mrcrecordings.com
Styles/Specialties: rock, electronic, ambient, folk

NETTWERK RECORDS

1675 West 2nd Ave, 2nd Floor
#200
Vancouver, B.C. V6J 1H3
604-654-2929
Email: info@nettwerk.com
Web: nettwerk.com
*No unsolicited material
Meg Tarquino, VP Strategy & A&R (New York
Spencer Kelley, A&R, New York/London)
Marshall Altman, VP, A&R (Nashville)

Mark Abramowitz, Director, A&R
(Nashville)
Eric Robinson, Director, A&R
(Los Angeles)

Additional locations:
3900 West Alameda Ave, Suite 850
Burbank, CA 91508
747-241-8619
263 S 4th St.
PO Box 10649
Brooklyn, NY 11211
212-760-1540

NEW PANTS PUBLISHING INC. & OLD PANTS PUBLISHING INC.

119 N. Wahsatch Ave
Colorado Springs, CO 80903
719-632-0227 Fax 719-634-2274

Email: rac@crfl.net

Web: newpants.com, oldpants.com

Styles/Specialties: all genre styles considered

Roster: Stephanie Aramburo, Chad Steele, C. Lee Clarke, Tech T, James Becker, Kathy Watson, Lisa Bigwood, George Montalbano, Silence, Sherwin Greenwood, Joel Diehl, John Ellis and Rocky Shaw
*Unsolicited material through management or lawyer only. Please call or Email before submitting.

Robert A. Case, A&R

NOFACE RECORDS

Phone: 829-285-1849

Email: demos@nofacerecords.com

Web: facebook.com/nofacerecordsofficial

Styles/Specialties: edm, all styles of electronic music including house, dubstep, bigroom, techno, trance, trap, etc.

*Email demos of your unsung electronic music

NONESUCH RECORDS

1633 Broadway

New York, NY 10019

212-275-4910

Email: info@nonesuch.com

Web: nonesuch.com

Roster: Emmylu Harris, Joni Mitchell, Gipsy Kings, KD Lang, Randy Newman, Wilco, Brian Wilson, Stephen Sondheim, Kronos Quartet, Youssou N'Dour, Buena Vista Social Club, Laurie Anderson and more.

Styles/Specialties: jazz, classical, Americana, singer-songwriter, contemporary, world, pop
*No unsolicited material!

OGILIO ENTERTAINMENT

3540 W. Sahara Ave., #308

Las Vegas, NV 89102

702-800-5500

Web: ogilio.com

Contact: Carl Capriglio, Mark Copeland

Roster: The Leftovers, Foreign Gloster, Margo Guryan, Big-Bang, Beastie Boys, George Lopez, Jackie "Joke Man" Martling, comedy, reissues, novelty, soundtracks, Brian Wilson (Beach Boys), Robbie Krieger (the Doors), Ray Manzarek (the Doors), Wilsly, Phunk Junkeez, Bouquet of Veal and Odgen Edsl, Carl Capriglio, President

OH BOY RECORDS

PO. Box 150222

Nashville, TN 37215

615-742-1250

Email: info@ohboy.com

Web: ohboy.com

Styles/Specialties: country

*No unsolicited materials

OMINIVORE RECORDINGS

1110 N. Virgil Ave, Suite 500

Suite 209

Los Angeles, CA 90029

877-733-3931 Ext. 333

Email: car@omnivore.com

Web: omnivorerecordings.com

*Not accepting demos

ORCHARD

23 E. 4th St., 3rd Fl.

New York, NY 10003

212-201-9280

Email: communications@orchard.com

Web: orchard.com

Contact: Brad Navin, CEO

PAPER GARDEN RECORDS

170 Tillary St., Apt. 608

Brooklyn, NY 11201

Contact: Caleb Olson, Dir. of A&R

Email: info@papergardenrecords.com

Web: papergardenrecords.com

Roster: Laura & Greg, Denny Love, The Due Diligence, Hnry Flwr, Big Brutus

POSI-TONE

PO. Box 2848

Los Angeles, CA 90294

310-871-2652

Email: info@posi-tone.com

Web: posi-tone.com

Styles/Specialties: jazz

Roster: Michael Dease, Doug Webb, Behn Gillette, Brian Charette, Walt Weiskopf, Ed Cherry, David Gibson, Ken Fowler, Art Hirshara, Ralph Bowen, Marc Free, A&R

PPL-ZMI ENTERTAINMENT GROUP, INC

310-962-3873

Web: pplzmi.com

Email: pplzmi@aol.com

*No unsolicited material accepted

PRA RECORDS

1295 1/2 Ave., Ste. 7K

New York, NY 10029

212-860-3233

Email: pra@prarecords.com

Web: prarecords.com

Styles/Specialties: jazz

Distribution: E-1

Patrick Rains, A&R

PRAVDA RECORDS

4245 N Knox, Suite 7

Chicago, IL 60641

773-763-7509

Email: kenn@pravdamusic.com

Web: pravdamusic.com

Styles/Specialties: rockabilly, pop, blues

Distribution: ADA

PRIMARILY A CAPPELLA

PO. Box D

San Anselmo, CA 94979

415-419-5509

Email: harmony@singers.com

Web: singers.com

Styles/Specialties: a cappella

*Unsolicited material accepted

PUTUMAYO WORLD MUSIC

Attn: A&R

413 Carpenter Rd

Charlotte, VT 05445

802-626-1400 800-995-9588

Email: info@putumayo.com

Web: putumayo.com

*Accepts unsolicited materials.

RAMP RECORDS

Santa Barbara, CA

Email: info@ramprecords.com

Web: ramprecords.com

Styles/Specialties: eclectic

Roster: Michael McDonald, Jeff Bridges

*No unsolicited material

RCA RECORDS

6363 Glendale Blvd

Los Angeles, CA 90028

Web: rarecords.com

*No unsolicited material

Additional locations:

25 Madison Ave.

New York, NY 10010

Web: rarecords.com

*No unsolicited material

9 Derry St. 4th Floor

London, W8 5HY England

Web: synmusic.co.uk

RED BULL RECORDS

9041 Melrose

Hollywood, CA 90069

323-606-7680

Email: customerservice@redbullrecords.com

Web: redbullrecords.com

*Demo submission accepted

Additional location:

1740 Stewart Street

Santa Monica, CA 90404

310-393-4647

RED HOUSE RECORDS (COMPASS RECORDS)

9119 19th Avenue South

Nashville, TN 37214

800-757-2277, 615-320-7672

Web: redhouserecords.com

*Accepts unsolicited material

RELAPSE RECORDS

1720 South State Road

Upper Darby, PA 19082

610-734-1000

Email: brian@relapse.com

Web: relapse.com

Styles/Specialties: metal, rock

Rennie Jaffe, VP, A&R

REPUBLIC RECORDS

175 Broadaway, 8th Fl.

New York, NY 10019-3743

212-333-8000

Email: robert.stevenson@umusic.com

Web: republicrecords.com

Rob Stevenson, Exec. VP/ Head of A&R

Additional location:

Republic/UMG

2220 Colorado Ave., 3rd Fl.

Santa Monica, CA 90404-3506

310-865-8470

Email: ben.adelson@umusic.com

Web: republicrecords.com

Ben Adelson, SVP, A&R

REVELATION RECORDS

P.O. Box 5232

Highington Beach, CA 92615

714-242-7650

Email: webmaster@revhq.com

Web: revhq.com

Styles/Specialties: hardcore, punk, emo

*Unsolicited material accepted

RHYMESAYER ENTERTAINMENT

2409 Hennepin Ave., S

Minneapolis, MN 55405

612-977-9870

Email: info@rhymesayers.com

Web: rhymesayers.com

facebook.com/rhymesayers

Styles/Specialties: hip-hop/ rap

Brent Sayers, CEO

RISE RECORDS

15455 NW Greenbrier Pkwy, Ste. 115

Beaverton, OR 97006

310-379-6477 Fax 310-379-6477

Email: rockzionrecords@rockzion.com

Web: riserecords.com

*Accept unsolicited material

ROADRUNNER RECORDS

Warner Bros. Group

1633 Broadway

New York, NY 10019

Email: publicity@roadrunnerrecords.com

Web: elektrumusicgroup.com/roadrunnerrecords

Styles/Specialties: Christian and crossover rock

*Unsolicited material accepted, but look at our website so you know who we are.

ROIR (say ROIR)

(Reachout International Records)

Email: accounts@roir-usa.com

Web: roir-usa.com

Styles/Specialties: punk, reggae, rock

*Unsolicited material accepted, but look at our website so you know who we are.

ROCKERZ RECORDS

10 Valley Dr.

Hermosa Beach, CA 90254

310-379-6477 Fax 310-379-6477

Email: rockzionrecords@rockzion.com

Web: rockzion.com

Styles/Specialties: Christian and crossover rock

*Unsolicited material accepted, but look at our website so you know who we are.

ROUNDER RECORDS

Nashville, TN

629-401-3901

Email: info@rounder.com

Web: rounder.com

Styles/Specialties: rock

Web: rounder.com

*No unsolicited material

Styles/Specialties: roots music

ROUND HILL MUSIC

40 West 57th St

Suite 1440

New York, New York 10019

212-380-0080

Email: info@roundhillmusic.com

Web: roundhillmusic.com

Jonnie Davis, VP, A&R

Additional locations:

2026 Directory of Attorneys

Never sign anything until you have a qualified legal pro look over it first. Expert legal advice is essential to any successful career, and this exclusive MC list updated for 2024 will help you connect with an attorney who can advocate for you.

ALABAMA

ADAMS AND REESE, LLP

Regions Harbert Plaza
1901 6th Ave. N, Ste. 1100
Birmingham, AL 35203
205-250-5000
Web: adamsandree.com
Specialty: Entertainment Law, Music Law, Intellectual Property

Additional location:
BSA Battle House Tower
11 N Water St, Ste. 23200
Mobile, AL 36602
251-433-3234

M.S. McNAIR
2151 Government St.
Mobile, AL 36606
251-450-0111
Email: msm@mcnair.com
Web: mcnairlawfirm.com
Contact: Michael S. McNair
Specialty: contract

ALASKA

DAVIS WRIGHT TREMAYNE, LLP

188 N. Northern Lights Blvd., #100
Anchorage, AK 99503-3985
907-257-5300 Fax 907-257-5399
Email: jondawon@dwt.com
Web: dwt.com
Contact: Jon Dawson
Specialty: Litigation

DORSEY & WHITNEY LLP
103 W. 4th Ave., Ste. 600
Anchorage, AK 99501-5907
907-276-4557
Email: mills.mike@dorsey.com
Web: dorsey.com
Contact: Michael Mills, Partner
Specialty: Intellectual Property

PERKINS COIE
1029 W. 3rd Ave., Ste. 300
Anchorage, AK 99501-1981
907-279-8561 Fax 907-276-3108
Email: sgillstrm@perkinscoie.com
Web: perkinscoie.com
Contact: Sarah C. Gillstrom, Partner
Specialty: Litigation

ARIZONA

LEWIS ROCA ROTHRUBER CHRISTIE, LLP

201 East Washington St., Suite 1200
Phoenix, AZ 85004
602-262-5311, 602-262-5747
Email: mcurry@lewisroca.com
Web: lewisroca.com
Contact: Michael J. Curry, Partner
Specialty: Intellectual Property, Trademarks and Copyrights

PERKINS COIE
2901 N. Central Ave., Ste. 2000
Phoenix, AZ 85012-2788
602-351-8000 Fax 602-648-7000
Email: jessicagarcia@perkinscoie.com
Web: perkinscoie.com
Contact: Jessica L. Everett-Garcia, Partner
Specialty: Trademark Law, Intellectual Property

SANDERS & PARKS, PC
3030 N. 3rd St., Ste. 1300
Phoenix, AZ 85012
602-532-5600
Web: sandersons.com
Specialty: Intellectual Property

SNELL & WILMER
One East Washington Street
Suite 2700
Phoenix, AZ 85004
602-382-6000 Fax 602-382-6070
Email: info@swlaw.com
Web: swlaw.com
Specialty: Intellectual Property

Additional location:
One S. Church Ave., Ste. 1500
Tucson, AZ 85701-1630
520-882-1200 Fax 520-884-1294

WILLIAM D. BLACK, LAW OFFICES OF
Great American Tower
20 East Thomas Road
Ste. 2200
Phoenix, AZ 85012
480-680-8519, 844-224-0054
Web: billblacklawfirm.com

Additional location:
Kierland Corporate Center
7047 E. Greenway Pkwy., Ste. 250
Scottsdale, AZ 85254
480-699-6888

ARKANSAS

CARVER LAW
Pleasant Valley Corp. Center, Ste. 800
2024 Arkansas Valley Dr.

Little Rock, AR 72212-4147
501-224-1500
Email: sdcc@arkpatent.com
Specialty: Intellectual Property

ROSE LAW FIRM
120 E. 4th St.
Little Rock, AR 72201-2893
501-375-9131 Fax 501-375-1309
Email: info@roselawfirm.com
Web: roselawfirm.com
Specialty: Intellectual Property

WRIGHT, LINDSEY & JENNINGS, LLP
200 W. Capitol Ave., Ste. 2300
Little Rock, AR 72201
Phone: (501) 371-0808
Email: jdougherty@wjlj.com
Web: wjlj.com
Contact: J. Charles Dougherty
Specialty: Intellectual Property

Additional location:
3333 Pinnacle Hill Pkwy., Ste. 510
Rogers, AR 72758
479-986-0888

CALIFORNIA

ABRAMS, GARFINKEL, MARGOLIS, BERGSON, LLP

3900 West Alameda Ave, Suite 2100
Burbank, CA 91505
310-320-2900
Email: info@agmblaw.com
Web: agmblaw.com

Additional locations:
1430 Broadway, 17th Fl.
New York, NY 10018
212-201-1170

225 Broadhollow Rd., Ste. 102
Melville, NY 11747
516-986-2745

AKIN, GUMP, STRAUSS, HAUER & FELD, LLP
1999 Avenue of the Stars, Ste. 600
Los Angeles, CA 90067
310-229-1000
Email: losangelesinfo@akingump.com
Web: akingump.com

Additional locations:
One Bryant Park
Bank of America Tower
New York, NY 10036
212-872-1000
Email: newyorkinfo@akingump.com

100 Pine Street
Suite 3200
San Francisco, CA 94111-5218
415-765-9500
Email: sanfranciscoinfo@akingump.com

Additional locations:

4 Park Plaza
Suite 1900
Irving, CA 92614-2585
949-885-4100
Contact: Paul Lin, Partner
Email: pcalin@akingump.com

ARNOLD & PORTER
1 Fiduciary St., South Fl.
Los Angeles, CA 90017
213-243-4000 Fax 213-243-4199
Web: arnoldporter.com
Specialty: all areas, intellectual property/tech.
*No unsolicited material

Additional locations:
Three Embarcadero Center, 10th Fl.
San Francisco, CA 94111
415-471-3100 Fax 415-471-3400

3000 El Camino Real
Five Palo Alto Square, Ste. 500
Palo Alto, CA 94306-3807
650-319-4500

LEE JAY BERMAN
The Mediation Offices of Lee Jay Berman
4640 Admiralty Way
Suite 500
Marina del Rey, CA 90292
310-593-9905

Email: info@leejayberman.com, leejay@mediationtools.com
Web: leejayberman.com

BEVERLY HILLS BAR ASSOCIATION
9420 Wilshire Blvd., 2nd Fl.
Beverly Hills, CA 90212
310-601-2422

Email: info@bhba.org
Web: bhba.org

BLAKE & WANG, P.A.
300 Century Park E., 24th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90067
310-295-1998
Web: filmvlaw.com

Specialty: Entertainment Law, Music Law, Film and TV Law

Additional location:
1 Sansome Street
35th Floor

San Francisco, CA 94104
415-869-9832

BLOOM, HERGOTT, DIEMER, ROSENTHAL, LAVIOLETTE & FELDMAN SCHENKMAN & GOODMAN, LLP
150 S. Rodeo Dr., 3rd Fl.
Beverly Hills, CA 90212
310-859-8100
*No unsolicited material

BRET D. LEWIS, LAW OFFICES OF
Santa Monica Wellesley Plaza
12304 Santa Monica Blvd., Ste. 107A
Los Angeles, CA 90025
310-207-0896 Fax 310-362-8424
Email: bdlawyer@gmail.com
Web: blewislaw.com

GERRY BRYANT, ESQ.
9903 Santa Monica Blvd., Ste. 1007
Beverly Hills, CA 90212
Email: mail@gerrybryant.com
Web: gerrybryant.com
*No unsolicited material or deal shopping.

CALIFORNIA LAWYERS FOR THE ARTS
12304 Santa Monica Blvd., Ste. 304
Los Angeles, CA 90025
888-775-8995, 310-207-0001
Email: losangeles@calawyersforthearts.org
Web: calawyersforthearts.org

Specialty: Lawyer Referral Service, Mediation/Arbitration

*Additional offices in Sacramento and San Francisco and San Diego

CHRISTOPHER J. OLSEN, LAW OFFICES OF
5760 Lindero Canyon Rd. Pmb 1055
Westlake Village, CA 91362-4088
805-557-0660 Fax 805-491-8324
Email: chris@chrisolsenlaw.com

Web: apc.ca.gov/attorney/Licensee/Detail/109124

Practice Areas: Entertainment Law, Music Law, Contract Negotiation, Business and Transactional Matters, Civil Litigation.

30 years experience

Specialty: Studio and Performance Bass Player. I share musicians' concerns because I am one.

D. BURGUNDY MORGAN, ESQ., ONE LLP
23 Corporate Plaza Drive
Suite 150
Newport Beach, CA 92660
949-502-2870, 310-258-5081
Email: bmorgan@onelip.com
Web: onelip.com

Contact: D. Burgundy Morgan, Esq.

Specialty: Entertainment Law

Additional location:

400 Corporate Point

Suite 300

Culver City, CA 90230

310-866-5157

DEAN SHELTON SERWIN

1107 Fair Oaks Ave., #848

South Pasadena, CA 91030-3311

323-465-1738

Email: dean@deanserwin.com

Web: facebook.com/lawofficeofdeanshelsonserwin/about/

Specialty: full-service for entertainment industry, including records, publishing, online, video game, film and television, management, licensing, trademark, music clearance. Selected

DJULIO LAW GROUP

330 N. Brand Blvd., Ste. 1280

Glendale, CA 91203

818-502-1700

Email: ddd@djuliolaw.com

Web: djuliolawgroup.com

Specialty: Record contracts, music publishing, licenses

Additional location:

6 Woodard Ave.

Absarokee, MT 59001

DONALD S. PASSMAN

Gang, Tyre, Ramer & Brown, Inc.

120 S. Rodeo Dr., Ste. 306

Beverly Hills, CA 90212-2414

310-777-4800

Email: don@donpassman.com

Web: donpassman.com/about-donald-s-passman

*No unsolicited material

DONALDSON CALLIF PYZER

5600 West Adams Boulevard, Suite 300

Los Angeles, CA 90016

310-277-8394 Fax 310-277-4870

Email: mdonaldson@dcplaw.com

Web: donaldsoncallif.com/attorneys

*No unsolicited material

DYKMA

444 S. Flower Street

Suite 2200

Los Angeles, CA 90071

213-475-1800

Email: huron@dykma.com

Web: dykma.com

Contact: Jeffrey Huron, Office Managing Member

Specialty: Intellectual Property

*Unsolicited material accepted

ERIC NORWITZ

333 W. 2nd St., Ste. 52-214

Los Angeles, CA 90004-6149

213-389-3477

Email: enorwitz@pacbell.net

Specialty: entertainment law and litigation

*Unsolicited material accepted

ERIN M. JACOBSON

The Music Industry Lawyer

9100 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 725 E

Beverly Hills, CA 90212

424-354-9364

Email: erinjacobsoneq@gmail.com

Web: themusicindustrylawyer.com

FAEGRE DRINKER BIDDLE

1800 Century Park E., Ste. 1500

Los Angeles, CA 90067

310-203-4000, 310-229-1285

Web: faegredrinker.com/en

Additional location:

Four Embarcadero Center, 27th Fl.

San Francisco, CA 94111

415-591-7500

FINDELL LAW & MANAGEMENT

2029 Century Park E., Ste. 900

Los Angeles, CA 90067

310-552-1717, 310-207-1990

Email: eric@findeLL.com

>Contact: Stann FindeLL, Esq.

Specialty: manager and recording agreements, production, actors, broadcasting and publishing

*Call before sending material

GIBSON, DUNN

One Embarcadero Center

Suite 2600

San Francisco, CA 94111-3715

415-393-8216

Email: rmurri@gibsondunn.com

Web: gibsondunn.com

*No unsolicited material

GLENN T. LITWAK

201 Santa Monica Blvd., Ste. 300

Santa Monica, CA 90401

323-518-2826, Fax 310-207-4180

Email: glenn@litwak.com

Web: glennlitwak.com

GREENBERG, GLUSKER

2049 Century Park East

Suite 2600

Los Angeles, CA 90067

310-553-3610, 310-201-7437

Email: info@greenbergglusker.com

Web: greenbergglusker.com

Contact: Matt Galsor, Partner

*No unsolicited material

HELMER, FRIEDMAN, LLP

9301 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 609

Beverly Hills, CA 90210

310-396-7714

Email: info@helmerfriedman.com

Web: helmerfriedman.com

Contact: Ken Helmer

Specialty: all areas

*No unsolicited material

IRELL & MANELLA, LLP

1800 Ave. of the Stars, Ste. 900

Los Angeles, CA 90067

310-975-1080
Email: njohnson@jllplaw.com
Web: jllplaw.com
Contact: Neville L. Johnson
Specialty: Litigation and contracts
 *No unsolicited material

JONATHAN STEIN, LAW OFFICES OF
 5050 Laguna Blvd.
 Suite 112-325
 Elk Grove, CA 95758
 916-247-6886
Web: jonathanstein.com/contact
 *No unsolicited material

KATTEN, MUCHIN, ROSENMAN, LLP
 2029 Century Park E, Ste. 2600
 Los Angeles, CA 90067
 310-788-4400, 310-788-4627
Email: zia.modabber@kattenlaw.com, michael.hobel@katten.com
Web: kattenlaw.com
Contact: Zia F. Modabber, Michael S. Hobel
Specialty: Intellectual Property, Entrepreneurial Ventures, Copyrights, Trademarks

Additional locations:
 515 South Flower Street, Suite 4150
 Los Angeles, CA 90071
 213-443-9000

100 Spectrum Center Drive
 Suite 1050
 Irvine, CA 92618
 714-966-6819

KEATS GATIEN LLP
 900 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 210W
 Beverly Hills, CA 90212
 424-302-0092
Email: tony@keatsgatien.com, ip@keatsgatien.com
Web: keatsgatien.com
Contact: Tony Keats, Conrad Gatien
Specialty: Intellectual Property, Rights of Publicity, Litigation

KENOFF & MACHTINGER, LLP
 312 S. Beverly Dr. #6344
 Beverly Hills, CA 90212
 310-552-0808 ext. 207
Email: jkenoff@entertainmentlawla.com
Web: entertainmentlawla.com
Specialty: contracts, litigation
 *No unsolicited material, no shopping

Additional location:
 1801 Century Park E
 Los Angeles, CA 90067

KING, HOLMES, PATERNO & BERLINER, LLP
 1900 Ave. of the Stars, 25th Fl.
 Los Angeles, CA 90067
 310-282-8989
Web: khpslaw.com
Specialty: Entertainment Music Law

KLEINBERG, LANGE, CUDDY, CARLO, LLP
 1801 Century Park East
 24th Floor
 Los Angeles, CA 90067
 310-286-9696
Web: kleinberglange.com
Contact: Barbara J. Schussman
Specialty: contracts and publishing
 *No unsolicited material

KLINEINST ATTORNEYS
 777 S. Figueroa St., Ste. 4000
 Los Angeles, CA 90017
 213-442-7000
Web: klineinstlaw.com
Contact: Daniel S. Agle

LAIRD & SOBEL, LLP
 9255 Sunset Blvd., Ste. 800
 Los Angeles, CA 90069
 310-274-6184
Email: sobel@elsenlaw.com
Web: elsenlaw.com
Specialty: All areas except demo shopping
 *No unsolicited material

LAPOLT LAW, PC
 9000 Sunset Blvd., Ste. 800
 West Hollywood, CA 90069
 310-858-0922
Email: inquiry@lapoltlaw.com
Web: lapoltlaw.com
Contact: Dina LaPolt
Specialties: All areas relating to music, film, television, merchandising and book publishing.

LEE RUDNICKI, LAW OFFICES OF
 1901 Santa Monica Blvd., #521
 Los Angeles, CA 90025
 247-245-5570
Email: drumlaw80@gmail.com
Web: drumlaw80.com
Specialty: music, film and television

LEWIS, BRISBOIS, BISGAARD & SMITH, LLP
 633 W. 5th St., Ste. 4000
 Los Angeles, CA 90071
 213-250-1800, 213-580-6312
Email: jonathan.pink@lewisbrisbois.com
Web: lewisbrisbois.com
Contact: Jonathan Pink
Specialties: Entertainment Law
 *No unsolicited materials

LICHTER, GROSSMAN, NICHOLS, ADLER & FELDMAN
 9200 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 1200
 Los Angeles, CA 90069
Email: info@lga.com
Web: lga.com
 310-205-6999
 *No unsolicited material

LOEB & LOEB, LLP
 10100 Santa Monica Blvd., Ste. 2200
 Los Angeles, CA 90067
 310-282-2135
Contact: T. John Frankenheimer
Email: jfrankenheimer@loeb.com
Web: loeb.com
Specialty: All areas of music & entertainment

MANATT, PHELPS & PHILLIPS
 2049 Century Park East, Suite 1700
 Los Angeles, CA 90067
 310-312-4000
Web: manatt.com/offices/los-angeles
Specialty: all areas
 *No unsolicited material

Additional locations:
 695 Town Center Dr., 14th Fl.
 Costa Mesa, CA 92626
 714-371-2500

One Embarcadero Center, 30th Fl.
 San Francisco, CA 94111
 415-291-7400

1215 K St., Ste. 1900
 Sacramento, CA 95814
 916-552-2300

203 Redwood Shores Parkway
 Suite 450
 Redwood City, CA 94065
 650-812-1300

MATTHEW JAY WARREN, ESQ.
 Law Offices of Clinton & Clinton
 100 Oceangate Blvd., Ste. 1400
 Long Beach, CA 90802
 562-216-5000
Web: the-music-lawyer.com
Email: mjw@clintonlaw.com
 *No unsolicited material

MCCLANE & WONG
 1135 Washington St., Ste. 424
 North Hollywood, CA 91601
 818-581-8301 Fax 818-587-6802
Email: bmcclane@mcclane.com
Web: mcclane.com
Specialty: contracts, negotiation
 *Unsolicited material accepted

McPHERSON & ASSOCIATES
 1900 Avenue of the Stars
 25th Floor
 Los Angeles, CA 90067
 310-553-8833
Email: firm@mcpherisonrane.com
Web: mcpherisonrane.com
 *No unsolicited material

MICHAEL MACHAT
 8730 W. Sunset Blvd., Suite 250
 West Hollywood, CA 90069
 310-860-1833
Email: michael@machatlaw.com
Web: machatlaw.com
Specialty: all areas

MICHAEL R. MORRIS
 Valensi Rose PLC
 1888 Century Park E, Ste. 1100
 Los Angeles, CA 90067
 310-277-8011
Email: mrm@vrmaw.com
Web: vrmaw.com
Specialty: Full-service music law, including recording, producer, production company and soundtrack agreements, master use and synchronization licenses; artist and label representation; entertainment tax law

MORGAN LEWIS & BOCKIUS, LLP
 300 South Grand Ave., 22nd Fl.
 Los Angeles, CA 90071
 213-612-7208
Contact: Barbara Fitzgerald
Email: barbara.fitzgerald@morganlewis.com
Web: morganlewis.com
Additional locations:
 2049 Century Park East, Ste. 700
 Los Angeles, CA 90067
 310-255-9111
Contact: Seth Gerber
Email: seth.gerber@morganlewis.com

MORGAN LEWIS & BOCKIUS, LLP
 600 Anton Blvd., Ste. 1800
 Costa Mesa, CA 92626
 949-399-7199
Contact: James Collie
Email: collie.james@morganlewis.com
Additional locations:
 1400 Page Mill
 Palo Alto, CA 94304
 650-843-7519
Contact: Dion Bregman
Email: dion.bregman@morganlewis.com

MORRIS MUSIC LAW
 475 Washington Blvd.
 Marina del Rey, CA 90292
 310-439-3737
Contact: Brian Rocca
Email: brian.rocca@morganlewis.com

MUSIC ATTORNEY, LEGAL & BUSINESS AFFAIRS REGISTRY
 818-570-3374
Email: info@musicregistry.com
Web: musicregistry.com
Contact: Ritch Ezra

MYMAN GREENSPAN FOX ROSENBERG MOBASSER YOUNG-ER & LIGHT LLP
 11601 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 2200
 Los Angeles, CA 90025
 310-231-0800
Email: myman@myspan.com
Web: myspan.com
Specialty: all areas
 *No unsolicited material

NEAL TABACHICK, ESQ.
 Wolf, Rifkin, Shapiro, Schulman & Rabkin, LLP
 *No unsolicited material

11400 W. Olympic Blvd., 9th Fl.
 Los Angeles, CA 90064-1557
 310-478-4100
Email: ntatabachick@wrslawyers.com
Web: wrslawyers.com/nealetabachick
 *Does not shop material

NED MENOY
 EEM Law, PC
 15915 Ventura Blvd.
 PH One
 Encino, CA 91343
 844-336-5292
Email: nedmenyo@eemlawpc.com
Web: eem-law.com

NOLAN HEIMANN
 16000 Ventura Blvd., Ste. 1200
 Encino, CA 91343
 818-574-5710
Email: info@nolanheimann.com
Web: nolanheimann.com
Specialty: Music and Entertainment Law

O'MELVENY & MYERS
 400 S. Hope St.
 Los Angeles, CA 90071-2899
 213-430-6000
Web: omm.com
 *No unsolicited material

Additional locations:
 610 Newport Center Drive
 17th Floor
 Newport Beach, CA 92660
 949-823-6900
 1909 Avenue of the Stars
 8th Fl.
 Los Angeles, CA 90067
 310-553-6700
 2 Embacadero Center
 28th Floor
 San Francisco, CA 94111
 415-984-8700

PERKINS COIE
 1888 Century Park E, Ste. 1700
 Los Angeles, CA 90067-1721
 310-788-3280
Contact: George Colindres
Email: gcolindres@perkinscoie.com
Web: perkinscoie.com
Specialty: Trademark Law, Intellectual Property
Additional locations:
 633 W. 5th Street, Suite 5850
 Los Angeles, CA 90071
 310-788-9300

505 Howard St., Ste. 1000
 San Francisco, CA 94105
 415-344-7168
Email: bschussman@perkinscoie.com
Contact: Barbara J. Schussman
 3150 Porter Dr.
 Palo Alto, CA 94304
 650-539-4317
Email: mness@perkinscoie.com
Contact: Lowell D. Ness

PIERCE LAW GROUP, LLP
 9100 Wilshire Blvd.
 Ste. #850E
 Beverly Hills, CA 90212
 310-274-9191, 800-875-0756, Fax 310-274-9151
Web: piercelawgroup.com
Contact: David Albert Pierce
Specialty: contracts
 *No unsolicited material accepted, no shopping.

PILLSBURY WINTHROP SHAW PITTMAN, LLP
 Four Embarcadero Center, 22nd Fl.
 San Francisco, CA 94111
 415-983-1000, 415-983-1976
Email: roxane.polidora@pillsburylaw.com
Web: pillsburylaw.com
Contact: Roxanne A. Polidora
Specialty: All areas, including intellectual property and technology
 *No unsolicited material

Additional locations:
 725 South Figueroa Street
 Suite 2800
 Los Angeles, CA 90017
 213-488-7100
 500 Capitol Mall
 Suite 1800
 Sacramento, CA 95814
 916-329-4700
 501 West Broadway
 Suite 1100
 San Diego, CA 92101
 619-234-5000

North San Diego County
 11682 El Camino Real
 Suite 200
 San Diego, CA 92130 USA
 858-509-4000
 Silicon Valley
 2550 Hanover St
 Palo Alto, CA 94304
 650-233-4500

PROSKAUER, ROSE, LLP
 2029 Century Park E, Suite 2400
 Los Angeles, CA 90067
 310-557-2900
Email: scrawshaw@proskauer.com
Web: proskauer.com
Contact: Sandra A. Crawshaw-Sparks
Specialty: practice limited to litigation of commercial and entertainment related disputes

***No unsolicited material**

PRYOR CASHMAN, LLP
 1901 Avenue of the Stars
 Suite 900
 Los Angeles, CA 90067
 310-683-6900 Fax 310-943-3397
Email: jscardaro@pryorcashman.com
Web: pryorcashman.com
Contact: James G. Sannatato
Specialty: Entertainment Law, Music Law, Intellectual Property, Litigation

RACHEL STILWELL
 Law Offices of Rachel Stilwell
 26565 West Agoura Rd., Ste. #200
 Calabasas, CA 91302
 818-330-6819
Email: rachel@rmlawoffices.com
Web: rmlawoffices.com

RANDAL NEAL COHEN
 12100 Wilshire Blvd., Ste.1250
 Los Angeles, CA 90070
 310-821-8035, 800-718-4658
Email: randal@music-attorney.com
Specialty: all areas except demo shopping.
 *Unsolicited material accepted

REBEL ROY STEINER, JR.
 Loeb & Loeb LLP
 10100 Santa Monica Blvd., Ste. 2200
 Los Angeles, CA 90067
 310-282-2051
Contact: 310-282-2298

Web: loeb.com/en
Specialty: Entertainment Law

REED SMITH, LLP
 1801 Ave. of the Stars, Ste. 700
 Los Angeles, CA 90067
 310-734-5200
Web: readsmith.com
Contact: Ashok Mukhey, Partner

Additional location:
 515 South Flower Street, Suite 4300
 Los Angeles, CA 90071
 213-457-8038
Contact: Benjamin Fliegel

RICHARD JOSEPH, LAW OFFICES OF
 8383 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 341
 Beverly Hills, CA 90211
 310-782-1721
Email: rjoseph@rjrlmt.net
Web: rjrlmt.net
Specialty: All areas of music law.
 *No unsolicited material

SALLY KOENIG
 Koenig Law Offices
 Los Angeles, CA
 310-984-1225
Email: koeniglaw@mac.com
Web: koeniglaw.com
Specialty: Artist and label representation in all areas. Draft and negotiate agreements.
 *Unsolicited material accepted, email for permission

SCOTT HARRINGTON, ESQ.
 Harrington Music Law Group, PC
 2001 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 400
 Santa Monica, CA 90403
 310-315-9222 Fax 310-315-9225
Email: sharrington@dhmusicalaw.com

SINDEE LEVIN, ESQ.
 556 S. Fair Oaks Ave., #332
 Pasadena, CA 91105
 310-440-8778
Email: info@entertainmentstelawyer.com
Web: entertainmentstelawyer.com
Specialty: Music and Entertainment Law
 *No Unsolicited materials accepted

SNELL & WILMER
 Two South Figueroa St., Ste. 2300
 330 S. Grand Ave., Ste. 3100
 Los Angeles, CA 90071
 213-929-2500 Fax 213-929-2525
Email: info@swlaw.com
Web: swlaw.com
Specialty: Intellectual Property
Additional location:
 Plaza Tower
 600 Anton Blvd., Ste. 1400
 Costa Mesa, CA 92626-7689
 714-427-7000 Fax 714-427-7799

STEPHEN E. SESSA, ESQ.
 Reed Smith, LLP
 1801 Ave. of the Stars, Ste. 700
 Los Angeles, CA 90067
 310-734-5426
Email: sessa@reedsmit.com
Web: reedsmit.com
Contact: Stephen E. Sessa

STEVEN R. LOWY ISAACMAN, KAUFMAN & PAINTER, LOWY & ZUCKER
 1100 Glendon Ave.
 Suite 1500
 310-881-6800
Email: stevenr@iklaw.com
Web: iklaw.com

TERRY B. BATES
 Reed Smith, LLP
 315 South Flower, Suite 4300,
 Los Angeles, CA 90036
 323-655-7180
Email: tbates@reedsmit.com
Web: reedsmit.com
Specialty: entertainment media

TYLER & WILSON, LLP
 5455 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 1925
 Los Angeles, CA 90036
 323-655-7180
Email: inquiries@tyler-law.com
Web: tyler-law.com
Contact: Christine J. Wilson
Specialty: Music and Business Law

VICTOROFF & ASSOCIATES
 1191 San Vicente Blvd., #390

Los Angeles, CA 90049
310-207-8999
Email: greg@rohloff-victoroff.com
Web: victoroff-law.com
Contact: Greg Victoroff
Specialty: all areas
*Unsolicited material accepted

WESTON, GARROU, MOONEY
12121 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 525
Los Angeles, CA 90025
310-442-0072
Web: wgdlaw.com
Contact: Jerome H. Mooney
Specialty: Music Law, Entertainment Law

MARCUS WIGGINS, ESQ
900 Fulton Avenue, Suite 132
Sacramento CA 95825
(916) 834-8000
Email: info@wigginsmse.com
Specialties: Music Law, Sports Law, Entertainment Law, Intellectual Property, Licensing, Copyrights, Clearances "I'm here" help"

YORN, LEVINE, BARNES, KRINTZMAN, RUBENSTEIN, KOHNER, ENDLICH & GELLMAN
1999 Avenue of the Stars, 4th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90067
Web: morrisonyorn.com
310-319-3900

YU LESEBERG
A Professional Law Group
1645 Vine Street
Penthouse 1002
Los Angeles, CA 90288
310-236-7668
Contact: Helen Yu, Esq
Web: yulesberg.com
Specialty: Music, Film, Television, Copyright, High Level Corporate Transactions

ZIFFREN, BRITTENHAM, LLP
1801 Century Park W.
Los Angeles, CA 90067
310-552-3388 Fax 310-553-7068
Email: info@ziffrenlaw.com
Web: ziffrenlaw.com
Specialty: all areas
*No unsolicited material

COLORADO

CLINE, WILLIAMS, WRIGHT, JOHNSON & OLDFATHER, LLP
221 E. Mountain Ave.
Suite 240
Fort Collins, CO 80524
970-221-2637
Web: clinewilliams.com
Specialty: Intellectual Property and Technology Law

HOLLAND & HART
555 17th St., Ste. 3200
Denver, CO 80202-3979
303-295-8000, 303-295-8187
Email: mabell@hollandhart.com
Web: hollandhart.com
Contact: Matthew Abell
Specialty: Intellectual Property

Additional locations:
600 East Main Street
Suite 104
Aspen, CO 81611
970-925-3476

1800 Broadway
Suite 300
Boulder, CO 80302
303-473-2700

LEYENDECKER & LEMIRE, LLC
9350 E. Arapahoe Rd.
Suite 300
Greenwood Village, CO 80112
720-773-7620
Email: info@coloradolaw.com
Web: coloradolaw.com
Specialty: Copyright Law, Trademark Law, Intellectual Property

PERKINS COIE
1900 16th St., Ste. 1400
Denver, CO 80202-5255
303-291-2314 Fax 303-291-2400
Email: sallison@perkinscoie.com
Web: perkinscoie.com
Contact: Garland (Sonny) W. Allison
Specialty: Trademark Law, Intellectual Property

SNEEL & WILMER
Block 100
675 15th Street
Suite 2500
Denver, CO 80202
303-634-2000 Fax 303-634-2020
Email: info@swlaw.com
Web: swlaw.com
Specialty: Intellectual Property

CONNECTICUT

CACACE TUSCH & SANTAGATA
1111 Summer St.
Stamford, CT 06905
203-337-2000
Web: lawctcs.com
Specialty: Intellectual Property

OHLANDT GREELEY RUGGIERO & PERLE, LLP
One Landmark Sq, 10th Fl.
Stamford, CT 06901-2682
203-327-4500
Email: info@ogrp.com
Web: ogrp.com
Specialty: Intellectual Property

ST. ONGE STEWARD JOHNSTON & REENS, LLC
857 Post Road, Ste 398
Fairfield, Connecticut 06424-6041
203-324-6165 Fax 203-327-1096
Email: info@ssjr.com

Web: ssjr.com
Specialty: Intellectual Property

D.C., WASHINGTON

ADAMS AND REESE, LLP
201 F St., NW, Ste. 500
Washington, DC 20001
202-737-3234
Web: adamsandree.com
Specialty: Entertainment Law, Music Law, Intellectual Property

BERLINER, CORCORAN & ROWE
1101 17th St., NW, Ste. 1100
Washington, DC 20036
202-293-5555
Email: bcr@bcrus.com
Web: bcrus.com
Specialty: Entertainment Law, Copyright Law and Internet Law

EDSEL M. BROWN, JR. ESQ
Law office of Edsel M. Brown, Jr. PLLC
1629 K Street, NW – Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20006
202-329-1520
Email: emb@edselmbrownjrlaw.com
Web: edselmbrownjrlaw.com

MANATT, PHELPS & PHILLIPS
1050 Connecticut Ave., NW, Ste. 600
Washington, DC 20036
202-585-6500
Web: manatt.com
Specialty: all areas

PROSKAUER, ROSE, LLP
1001 Pennsylvania Ave.,
NW, Ste. 600 S.
Washington, DC 20004-2533
202-416-6800, 202-416-5850
Email: tbellapianta@proskauer.com
Web: proskauer.com

Specialty: practice limited to litigation of commercial and entertainment related disputes
*No unsolicited material

STEPTOE & JOHNSON
1330 Connecticut Ave., NW.
Washington, DC 20036
202-429-6749, 202-429-3000
Email: mailan@stepoe.com
Web: stepoe.com
Contact: Michael J. Allan
Specialty: Contracts and Intellectual Property

VENABLE, LLP
600 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Washington, DC 200041
202-344-4000 Fax 202-344-8300
Web: venable.com
Specialty: Intellectual Property

DELAWARE

FISH & RICHARDSON, PC
200 Delaware Ave., 7th Fl.
PO. Box 114
Wilmington, DE 19899-1114
302-652-5070
Web: fr.com
Specialty: Intellectual Property

FLORIDA

ALLEN L. JACOBI
11077 Biscayne Blvd., Ste. 200
Miami, FL 33161
305-893-2007
Web: allenjacobilaw.com
Specialty: All entertainment-related services

GRIMES LLC
8890 Terrene Court Unit 102
Bonita Springs, FL 34145
239-390-9000
Web: gandb.com
Specialty: Entertainment, branding, trademarks, copyrights, licensing, and litigation

PROSKAUER, ROSE, LLP
225 Glades Rd, Ste. 421 Atrium
Boca Raton, FL 33431-7360
561-241-7400, 561-995-4777
Email: dratt@proskauer.com
Web: proskauer.com
Contact: David Pratt

Specialty: practice limited to litigation of commercial and entertainment related disputes
*No unsolicited material

PRYOR CASHMAN, LLP
255 Alhambra Circle
8th Floor
Miami, FL 33134
786-582-3003 Fax 786-582-3004
Email: jsammataro@pryorcashman.com
Web: pryorcashman.com
Contact: James G. Sammataro
Specialty: Entertainment Law, Music Law, Intellectual

TALENTED TENTH CONSULTING & LEGAL SERVICES, PLLC

1415 W. Cypress Creek Road
Suite 300
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309
754-800-5201 Fax 764-999-2140
Email: adumas@talentedtenthslaw.com
Web: talentedtenthslaw.com
Contact: Antoine Dumas, Esq.
Specialty: Contract drafting, dispute and negotiation, trademarks, copyright, publishing, licensing, business consulting, touring, recording, royalties calculations, Film and TV law, full-service litigation.

GEORGIA

ALAN S. CLARKE, LAW OFFICES OF
1100 Peachtree Street, North East, Suite 92

Atlanta, GA 30309
470-466-1701
Email: alan.clarke@gmlaw.com
Web: gmlaw.com/attorneys/alan-s-clarke
Contact: Alan Clarke
Specialty: Intellectual Property

BAKER HOSTETLER
1170 Peachtree St., NE, Ste. 2400
Atlanta, GA 30309-7676
404-459-0050
Email: jones@bakercavalaw.com
Web: bakercavalaw.com
Contact: Joann Gallagher Jones
Specialty: Intellectual Property

FREED HOWARD, LLC
101 Marietta St.
Ste. 3600
Atlanta, GA 30303
470-839-9300
Email: info@freedgrant.com
Web: freedgrant.com
Specialty: Entertainment Law, Music Law, Film/TV Law, Copyrights

HOLLAND & KNIGHT
1180 W. Peachtree St., Ste. 1800
Atlanta, GA 30309
404-871-8500, 404-817-8585
Email: allen.maines@hklaw.com
Web: hklaw.com
Contact: J. Allen "Allen" Maines
Specialty: Entertainment Law, Contract Law

YEMANE CLARKE, ATTORNEY
5863 Redan Rd.
Stone Mountain, GA 30088
770-450-8003
Web: clarkelegal.com
Contact: Yemane Clarke
Specialty: Intellectual Property

IDAHO

HAWLEY, TROXELL, ENNIS & HAWLEY, LLP
87 Main St., Ste. 200
Boise, ID 83702
208-344-6000
Email: info@hawleytroxell.com
Web: hawleytroxell.com
Specialty: Intellectual Property

Additional locations:
PO. Box 3804
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83816
208-667-1300

333 S. Main Street, Suite 200
Pocatello, ID 83204
208-233-2001

2010 Jennie Lee Dr.
Idaho Falls, ID 83404
208-529-3005

PEDERSEN AND COMPANY, PLLC
1410 N. 28th St.
Boise, ID 83702
208-344-6359
Email: jpedersen@idaho.com
Web: pedersoncompanyidaho.com
Contact: Ken J. Pedersen or Barbara S. Pedersen
Specialty: Intellectual Property

PERKINS COIE
1111 W. Jefferson St., Ste. 500
Boise, ID 83702-5391
208-343-3434 Fax 208-343-3232
Email: emalen@perkinscoie.com
Web: perkinscoie.com
Contact: Erik Eaton Malen
Specialty: Trademark Law, Intellectual Property

PARSONS, BEHLE & LATIMER
800 17th St., #1300
Boise, ID 83702
208-562-4900 Fax 208-562-4901
Email: rsemanko@parsonsbehle.com
Web: parsonsbehle.com
Contact: Norman M. Semanko
Specialty: Intellectual Property Litigation, Patents, Trademarks and Copyrights

ILLINOIS

BRIAN A. ROSENBLATT, ATTORNEY AT LAW

BRYCE DOWNEY & LENKOV LLC
30 N. Lasalle St., Ste. 3600
312-377-1501, 312-327-0056
Chicago, IL 60601

Email: briandowney@bdlfirm.com

Web: bdlfirm.com

Specialty: Entertainment Law, Intellectual Property, Litigation

HUSCH BLACKWELL
120 S. Riverside Plaza, Ste. 2200
Chicago, IL 60606
312-655-1500, 312-526-1643
Email: daan.erikson@huschblackwell.com
Web: huschblackwell.com
Contact: Daan G. Erikson
Specialty: Entertainment and Media, Intellectual Property

JAY B. ROSS & ASSOCIATES, PC
842 W. Grand Ave.
Chicago, IL 60642-6565
312-246-9200
Email: music_law@msn.com
Web: jaybross.com
Contact: Jay B. Ross
Specialty: Entertainment Law

KATTEN, MUCHIN & ROSENMAN
525 W. Monroe St.
Chicago, IL 60661
312-902-5200, 312-902-5296
Email: kristin.achterhof@kattenlaw.com
Web: kattenlaw.com
Contact: Kristin J. Achterhof
Specialty: Trademark, Copyright, Entertainment Litigation

LOEB & LOEB, LLP
321 N. Clark, Ste. 2300
Chicago, IL 60654
312-464-3144
Contact: Douglas N. Masters
Email: dmasters@loeb.com
Web: loeb.com
Specialty: all areas

MANDELL MENKES, LLC
One North Franklin St., Suite 900
Chicago, Illinois 60606
312-251-1000, 312-251-1016
Email: pstrand@mandellmenkes.com
Web: mandellmenkes.com
Contact: Peter Strand
Specialty: Media, Entertainment and First Amendment Intellectual Property

PERKINS COIE
110 North Wacker Drive
34th Floor
Chicago, IL 60606
312-834-8400
Email: cwilson@perkinscoie.com
Web: perkinscoie.com
Contact: Christopher (Chris) B. Wilson
Specialty: Trademark Law, Intellectual Property

SMITH AMUNDSEN, LLC
150 N. Michigan Ave., Ste. 3300
Chicago, IL 60601
312-894-3200
Email: lschechman@salawus.com
Web: salawus.com
Contact: Larry A. Schechman, Partner, Brian Rosenblatt
Specialty: Ent, Media, Prvacy, and Intellectual Property

INDIANA

BARNES & THORNBURG, LLP
11 S. Meridian St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204-3535
317-231-7313
Email: shawn.bauer@btlaw.com
Web: btlaw.com
Contact: Shawn D. Bauer
Specialty: Intellectual Property

LEWIS & KAPPES, PC
One American Sq., Ste. 2500
Indianapolis, IN 46282-0003
317-639-1210
Email: tricholson@lewis-kappes.com
Web: lewis-kappes.com
Contact: Todd Richardson
Specialty: Intellectual Property

ZARLEY LAW FIRM, PLC
Capitol Sq.
580 Market St., Suite 101
West Des Moines, IA 50266
515-558-0200
Email: info@zarleylaw.com
Web: zarleylaw.com
Specialty: Intellectual Property

KANSAS

FLEESON, GOOING ATTORNEYS AT LAW
1900 Epic Center
301 N. Merriam St.
Wichita, KS 67202
316-277-7300
Email: kmeyerhoff@fleeson.com
Web: fleeson.com
Contact: Kent A. Meyerhoff
Specialty: Intellectual Property

FOULSTON SIEFKIN, LLP
1551 N. Waterfront Pkwy., Ste. 100
Wichita, KS 67206-4466
316-267-6371
Email: bmatthews@foulston.com
Web: foulston.com
Contact: William (Bill) P. Matthews, Partner
Specialty: Intellectual Property

Additional locations:
822 S. Kansas Ave., Ste. 200
Topeka, KS 66612
785-233-3600 Fax 785-233-1610

7500 College Boulevard, Ste. 1400
Overland Park, KS 66210

913-498-2100 Fax 913-498-2101

KENTUCKY

LYNN, COX, GILMAN & GOODMAN
500 W. Jefferson St., Ste. 2100
Louisville, KY 40202
502-589-4215
Email: aty@lgcgm.com
Web: lynncoxlaw.com
Specialty: Intellectual Property

LOUISIANA

ADAMS AND REESE, LLP
One Shell Sq.
701 Poydras St., Ste. 4500
New Orleans, LA 70139
504.581.3234
Email: paige.sensenbrenner@arlaw.com
Web: adamsandree.com
Contact: E. Paige Sensenbrenner

Specialty: Entertainment Law, Music Law, Intellectual Property

Additional location:
450 Laurel St., Ste. 1900
Baton Rouge, LA 70801
225-378-3244
Email: william.shea@arlaw.com
Contact: William D. Shea

MAINE

RUDMAN & WINCHELL, LLC

84 Harlow St.
PO. Box 1401
Bangor, ME 04402-1401
207-947-4501, 207-992-2412
Email: apellegrini@rudmanwinchell.com
Web: rudmanwinchell.com
Contact: Anthony D. Pellegrini
Specialty: Intellectual Property & Copyright Law

MARYLAND

LARRY J. GUFFEY

500 Washington Ave., Ste. 605
Towson, MD 21204
410-659-9550
Email: larry@guffeylaw.com
Web: guffeylaw.com/index.htm
Specialty: Intellectual Property, Trademark and Patents

Additional location:
94 Narod Blvd.
Water Mill, NY 11976
631-237-4891

MARYLAND VOLUNTEER LAWYERS SERVICE

201 N. Charles St., Ste. 1400
Baltimore, MD 21201
410-539-6800, 800-510-0050
Email: info@mvlaw.org
Web: mvlaw.org

VENABLE, LLP
750 E. Pratt St., Ste. 900
Baltimore, MD 21202
410-244-7400 Fax 410-244-7742
Contact: Ashleigh J. F. Lynn
Email: ajlynn@venable.com
Web: venable.com
Specialty: Intellectual Property

Additional location:
210 West Pennsylvania Ave., Ste. 500
Towson, MD 21204
410-494-6200

MASSACHUSETTS

CESARI & MCKENNA, LLP
One Liberty Square, Suite 310
Boston, MA 02210
617-951-2500
Web: c-m.com
Specialty: Intellectual Property

PATTI JONES ATTORNEY AT LAW
20 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116
617-948-2139
Email: patti@pattijones.com
Web: pattijones.com
Contact: Patti Jones
Specialty: music, literary publishing, media and independent film

PROSKAUER, ROSE, LLP
One International Pl., 14th Fl.
Boston, MA 02110-2600
617-526-9600, 617-526-9851
Email: janderson@proskauer.com
Web: proskauer.com
Contact: James Anderson
Specialty: practice limited to litigation of commercial and entertainment related disputes
*No unsolicited material

WOLF, GREENFIELD & SACKS, PC
600 Atlantic Ave., 23rd Fl.
Boston, MA 02110-2600
617-646-8000 Fax 617-646-8646
Web: wolfgreenfield.com
Specialty: Trademark, Copyright

MICHIGAN

FOLEY & LARDER, LLP

One Detroit Center
500 Woodward Ave., Ste. 2700
Detroit, MI 48226-3489
313-234-7100 Fax 313-234-2800
Web: Foley.com
Specialty: Intellectual Property

HERTZ SCHRAM
1760 S. Telegraph Rd., Ste. 300
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48202
248-609-3146, 866-775-5987
Web: hertzschram.com
Contact: Howard Hertz
Specialty: Entertainment Law, Contracts, Litigation

Additional location:
Guardian Building
500 Griswold, Suite 2400
Detroit, MI 48226
Telephone: (313) 923-3994
Fax: (313) 438-5002

HONIGMAN MILLER SCHWARTZ & COHN, LLP
315 E. Eisenhower Pkwy., Ste. 100
Ann Arbor, MI 48108
734-418-4264
Email: falbord@honigman.com
Web: honigman.com
Contact: Fernando Alberdi, Partner
Specialty: Intellectual Property Litigation

Additional locations:
350 E. Michigan Ave., Ste. 300
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

269-337-7704 Fax 269-337-7705
Email: jobrien@honigman.com
Contact: Jonathan P. O'Brien, Ph.D., Partner

2290 First National Building
660 Woodward Ave.
Detroit, MI 48226
313-465-7000

39400 Woodward Ave., Suite 101
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304
248-566-8300

650 Trade Centre Way, Suite 200
Kalamazoo, MI 49002
269-337-7700

200 Ottawa Ave., NW, Suite 700
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
616-649-1900

222 N. Washington Sq., Suite 400
Lansing, MI 48933
517-484-8282

REISING, ETHINGTON, PC
755 W. Big Beaver Rd., Ste. 1850
Troy, MI 48084
248-689-3500 Fax 248-689-4071
Web: reising.com
Specialty: Intellectual Property Law

MINNESOTA

DORSEY & WHITNEY, LLP
50 S. 6th St., Ste. 1500
Minneapolis, MN 55402-1498
Email: rosenbaum.robert@dorsey.com
Web: dorsey.com
Contact: Robert A. Rosenbaum
Specialty: Intellectual Property

KENNETH ABDU, PARTNER
Entertainment Law and More
Fox Rothschild LLP
City Center
33 S. Sixth Street, Suite 3600
Minneapolis, MN 55402
612-607-7063 - Direct
Email: kabdu@foxrothschild.com
Web: foxrothschild.com
Specialty: Intellectual Property

LOMMEN ABDU
1000 International Centre
920 2nd Ave. S,1000
Minneapolis, MN 55402
800-752-4297, 612-339-8131
Fax: 612-339-8064
Web: lommens.com
Specialty: Music Law, Entertainment Law

PATTERSON THUENTE, IP
4800 IDS Center
80 S. 8th St.
Minneapolis, MN 55402-2100
612-361-0309, 612-349-3010
Email: biasco@ptslaw.com
Web: ptslaw.com
Contact: Tye Biasco
Specialty: Entertainment Law

THE SPENCE LAW FIRM
80 S. 8th Street, Suite 900
Minneapolis, MN 55402
612-337-9007
Email: spence@spence.law
Web: spence.law
Contact: Mick Spence
Specialty: Entertainment Law, Intellectual Property, Litigation, Mediation, Copyrights

MISSISSIPPI

BRUNINL, GRANTHAM, GROWER & HEWES, PLLC
The Pinnacle Building, Ste. 100
190 E. Capitol St.
Jackson, MS 39201
601-948-3101, 601-960-6890
Email: scarmodity@brunini.com
Web: brunini.com
Contact: Steven J. Carmody
Specialty: Intellectual Property, Litigation, Media and Advertising

MISSOURI

SPENCER, FANE, BRITT & BROWNE
1000 Walnut St., Ste. 1400
Kansas City, MO 64106
816-292-8150, 816-474-8100
Email: kelliott@spencerfane.com
Web: spencerfane.com
Contact: Kyle L. Elliott
Specialty: Entertainment Law, Intellectual Property

MONTANA

ANTONINETTE M. TEASE, PLLC
175 N. 27th St., Ste. 1902
Billings, MT 59101
406-294-9000, 406-591-3689
Email: toni@teaselaw.com
Web: teaselaw.com
Contact: Antoniette M. Tease
Specialty: Intellectual Property and Technology Law

CROWLEY, FLECK, LLP
120 N. State St., Ste. 500
Billings, MT 59101
406-222-3441
Email: rgflecken@crowleyfleck.com
Web: crowleyfleck.com
Contact: Bob Griffin

DORSEY & WHITNEY, LLP
125 Bank St., Ste. 600
Missoula, MT 59802-4407
406-721-6025
Email: bell.steve@dorsey.com
Specialty: Intellectual property, Entertainment Law

Web: dorsey.com
Contact: Steve D. Bell
Specialty: Intellectual Property

WORDEN THANE, PC
321 W. Broadway
Suite 300
Missoula, MT 59802
866-758-3444, 406-721-3400
Web: wordenthane.com
Specialty: Copyright, Trademarks

NEBRASKA
ABRAHAMS, KASLOW & CASSMAN, LLP
8712 W. Dodge Rd., Ste. 300
Omaha, NE 68114
402-392-1250 Fax 402-392-0816
Web: akclaw.com
Specialty: Intellectual Property

CLINE, WILMANS, WRIGHT, JOHNSON & OLDFATHER, LLP
12910 Pierce St., Ste. 1900
Omaha, NE 68144
402-474-6900, 402-397-1700
Email: eric@clinesw.com
Web: clinesw.com
Contact: John C. Miles
Specialty: Intellectual Property & Technology Law

Additional locations:
233 S. 13th St., Ste. 1900
Lincoln, NE 68508
402-474-6900

HOUGHTON BRADFORD
WHITTED PC, LLC
6457 Frontage Road, Suite 100
Omaha, NE 68106
402-344-4000, 402-930-1009
Web: houghtonbradford.com
Contact: David A. Houghton
Specialty: Intellectual Property

KUTAK ROCK, LLP
The Omaha Building
1650 Farnam St.
Omaha, NE 68102-2186
402-346-6000 Fax 402-346-1148
Web: kutakrock.com
Specialty: Intellectual Property

NEVADA

BROWNSTEIN, HYATT, FARBER, SCHRECK
100 N. City Pkwy., Ste. 1600
Las Vegas, NV 89106
702-382-2101
Web: bhfs.com
Specialty: Intellectual Property

Additional locations:
5520 Kietzke Lane,
Suite 110
Reno, NV 89511
775-324-4100

206 S. Carson Street
Carson City, NV 89701
775-398-3838

GREENBERG, TRAURIG
10845 Griffith Peak Drive #600
Las Vegas, NV 89135
702-792-3773
Web: gtlaw.com
Specialty: Entertainment and intellectual properties

MARIO F. GONZALEZ, ESQ.
2780 So. Jones Blvd., #200-3383,
Las Vegas NV 89146
818-707-3894, 818-383-9359
Email: mario@mgonzalezlaw.com
Web: mgonzalezlaw.com
Specialty: music attorney

PARSONS, BEHL & LATIMER
50 W. Liberty St., Ste. 750
Reno, NV 89501
775-323-1601
Web: parsonsbehl.com
Specialty: Intellectual Property Litigation, Patents, Trademarks and Copyrights

SNELL & WILMER
1700 South Pavilion Center Drive
Suite 700
Las Vegas, NV 89135
702-784-5200
Web: swlaw.com
Specialty: Intellectual Property

Additional location:
6530 Kietzke Lane
Suite 200
Reno, NV 89511
775-785-5440

WEIDE & MILLER, LTD
10655 Park Run Drive
Suite 100
Las Vegas, NV 89144
702-382-4804 Fax 702-382-4805
Email: mail@weidemiller.com
Specialty: Intellectual property and technology law

NEW HAMPSHIRE

GALLAGHER, CALLAHAN & GARTRELL, PC

214 N. Main St.
Concord, NH 03302-1415
603-229-1181, 800-528-1181
Email: cline@gcglaw.com
Web: gcglaw.com
Contact: Peter Cline
Specialty: Intellectual property, Entertainment Law

MAINE, CERNOTA & RARDIN
547 Amherst St., 3rd Fl.
Nashua, NH 03063-4000
603-886-6100
Email: info@mcr-ip.com
Web: mcr-ip.com
Specialty: Intellectual property

SHAHEEN & GORDON, PA
115 Elm St. Suite 300
Manchester, NH 03101
603-335-4099
Web: shaheengordon.com
Specialty: Trademark, Copyrights

Additional locations:
107 Storrs St.
Concord, NH 03302
603-819-4231

191 Main Street
Nashua, NH 03060
603-605-8144

353 Central Avenue
Suite 200

Dover, NH 03820
603-871-4144

NEW JERSEY
JEKIELKE & JANIS LLP
26 Park St., Suite 2045
Montclair, NJ 07042
212-686-7008
Email: jon@j-lawyers.com
Web: jj-lawyers.com
Contact: Jon Jekielek
Specialty: Entertainment Law

MCCARTER & ENGLISH, LLP
100 Mulberry St.
Newark, NJ 07102
973-624-4444 Fax 973-624-7070
Email: info@mccarter.com
Web: mccarter.com
Specialty: Litigation, Intellectual Property, Trademark, Copyrights

PAUL B. UNGAR
90 Washington Valley Road
Bedminster, NJ 07921
732-692-4286
Email: paul@paulungar.com
Web: paulungar.com
Contact: Paul Ungar
Specialty: Entertainment Law, Intellectual Property, Trademark, Copyright

NEW MEXICO

PEACOCK LAW
201 Third Street, NW
Suite 1340
Albuquerque, NM 87102
Web: peacocklaw.com
877-998-1506, 505-998-1500

NEW YORK

ASSOCIATION OF THE BAR OF THE CITY OF NY.
42 W. 44th St.
New York, NY 10036

212-626-7373, 800-342-3661

Web: nybar.org

BELDOCK, LEVINE & HOFFMAN
99 Park Ave., 26th Fl.
New York, NY 10016
212-490-0400
Email: pmatorin@blhny.com
Web: blhny.com
Contact: Peter Matorin
Specialty: Entertainment Law, Intellectual Property

CODISPOTI & MANCINELLI, LAW OFFICES OF
111 John St., Ste. 800
New York, NY 10038
212-793-0453
Email: brian@codispolilaw.com
Web: codispolilaw.com
Contact: Bruno Codispoti
Specialty: Entertainment Law

Additional location:
81 Court Street
5th Floor
Brooklyn, NY 11201
212-791-9453, 212-962-6525

COWAN, DEBAETS, ABRAHAMS & SHEPPARD, LLP
60 Broad Street, 30th Floor
New York, NY 10004
212-974-7474 Fax 212-974-8474
Email: info@cdsllp.com
Web: cdsllp.com
Specialty: Entertainment Law

Additional location:
9454 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 901
Beverly Hills, CA 90212
310-340-6334

DAVIS, SHAPIRO, LEWIT, GRABEL, LEVIN, GRANDERSON & BLAKE
414 W. 14th St., 5th Fl.
New York, NY 10014
212-230-5500
Email: info@davishapiro.com
Web: davishapiro.com
Specialty: Entertainment Law

DAVIS, WRIGHT TREMAINE, LLP
1261 West of the Americas, 21st Fl.
New York, NY 10020-1104
212-489-8230, 212-603-6433
Contact: Alexandra Nicholson, Partner
Email: alienicholson@dwt.com
Web: dwt.com
Specialty: Entertainment Law

DORSEY & WHITNEY, LLP
51 W. 52nd St.
New York, NY 10019-6119
212-415-9200, 212-415-9269
Email: edelman.sandra@ dorsey.com
Web: dorsey.com
Contact: Sandra Edelman
Specialty: Intellectual Property

FOSTER GARVEY PC
199 Water Street
Suite 901
New York, NY 10038
212-431-8700
Web: foster.com
Specialty: Entertainment Law

GEORGE T. GILBERT, ATTORNEY AT LAW
74 W. 68th St., Ste. 9B
New York, NY 10023
212-677-2001, 917-817-4891
Web: linkedin.com/in/georgegilbert
Specialty: Intellectual Property, Entertainment Law with focus on the music industry, literary, television and film. Trademark and Copyright

GEORGE STEIN, LAW OFFICES OF
270 Madison Ave., Ste. 1410
New York, NY 10016
212-683-5320 Fax 212-686-2182
Email: georgestein@earthlink.net
Web: georgesteinlaw.com
Contact: George Stein
Specialty: Entertainment Law, Music Law, Copyrights

GOTTLIBE, RACKMAN & REISMAN
270 Madison Ave.
Ste. 1403
New York, NY 10016
212-684-3900 Fax 212-684-3999
Email: arubenstein@grr.com
Web: grr.com
Contact: Allen L. Rubenstein
Specialty: Entertainment Law

GREENBERG TRAURIG
One Vanderbilt Avenue
New York, NY 10017
212-801-9200 212-801-6781
Email: kanusher@gtlaw.com
Web: gtlaw.com
Contact: Laurence A. Kanusher
Specialty: Music Law & Entertainment Law

HERBSMAN HAVER WEBER & FRISCH LLP
494 8th Ave., 6th Fl.
New York, NY 10001
212-245-4580 Fax 212-956-6471
Email: info@musiclaw.com
Web: musiclaw.com
Contact: Jonas Herbsman
Specialty: Entertainment Law, Copyrights, Contracts

HEYMAN LAW
355 8th Avenue, Suite 5H
New York, NY 10001
212-414-9522
Email: info@heylaw.com
Web: heylaw.com
Specialty: Entertainment Law, Copyright, Trademark, New Media

CHRISTOPHER HOYT, ESQ.
The Hoyt Law Group, LLC
30 Wall St., 8th Fl.
New York, NY 10005
212-268-3414
Email: info@cwhesq.com
Web: cwhesq.com
Specialty: Entertainment and Business Law
*No unsolicited material

THE JACOBSON FIRM, PC.
347 5th Ave., Suite #1402-440
New York, NY 10016
212-683-2001
Email: info@jacobsonfirm.com, jeffrey@jacobsonfirm.com
Web: jacobsonfirm.com

**JEFFREY GANDEL,
LAW OFFICES OF**
1623 3rd Ave., Ste. 22A
New York, NY 10128
212-289-0709 Fax 212-289-0686
Email: jeff@gandelaw.com
Web: gandelaw.com
Contact: Jeffrey Gandel
Specialty: Music Law, Film Law, Litigation

JOEL BROOKS & ASSOCIATES PC
25 S. Service Rd., Ste. 240
Jericho, NY 11753
516-338-0533
Contact: Joel Brooks
Specialty: Music Law

KATTEN, MUCHIN & ROSENMAN, LLP
50 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, NY 10020
212-940-8800, 212-940-8776
Email: karen.ash@katten.com
Web: katten.com
Contact: Karen Artz Ash
Specialty: Intellectual Property

KIA LAW FIRM
149 Madison Ave., Ste. #1105
New York, NY 10016
212-679-4200 Fax 212-679-4155
Email: info@kialawfirm.com
Web: kialawfirm.com
Specialty: Entertainment Law

LEVINSON ASSOCIATES, PC, 333
1 North Broadway, 12th floor
White Plains, NY 10601
212-262-1000
Email: assistant@entlawfirm.com
Web: entlawfirm.com
Specialty: IP, Copyright

LOEB & LOEB, LLP
345 Park Ave.
New York, NY 10154-1895
212-407-4000, 212-407-4990
Email: iruckel@loeb.com
Web: loeb.com
Contact: Laurie S. Ruckel
Specialty: all areas

MANATT, PHLEPS & PHILLIPS
7 Times Sq.
23rd Floor
New York, NY 10036
212-790-4500 Fax 212-790-4545
Web: manatt.com
Specialty: all areas

Additional location:
136 State St., Ste. 300
Albany, NY 12207
518-431-6700 Fax 518-431-6767

MARIA SCHEURING
15 Ocean Ave., Suite #220
Patchogue, NY 11772
631-730-6966
Email: marias@msclawyer.com
Web: msclawyer.com
Contact: Maria Scheuring, Owner
Specialty: Music Law, Negotiation, Contracts, Band Agreements, Music Publishing and Licensing, Litigation for Musicians, Music Merchants, Promoters and Venues

MARVIN KATZ, LAW OFFICES OF
1325 Avenue of the Americas
27th Floor
New York, NY 10020
212-486-5000 Fax 212-486-4608
Email: marvin@mkatzlaw.net
Web: mkatzlaw.net
Contact: Marvin Katz
Specialty: Contracts, Mergers, Acquisitions, Music Publishing

MATTHEW L. KLETTER
Law Office of Matthew L. Kletter, PLLC
Tarrytown, NY
914-681-5191, 914-844-5766
Email: mklletter@msn.com
Web: linkedin.com/in/mklletter
Contact: Matthew Kletter
Specialty: Entertainment Law

PELOSI, WOLF, SPATES, LLP
50 Broadway, Suite 1609
New York, NY 10279
212-334-4801 212-334-3599
Web: pwspates.com
Contact: John Pelosi
Specialty: Entertainment Law, Music Law, Intellectual Property

PERKINS COIE
1155 Avenue of the Americas
22nd Floor
New York, NY 10036-2711
212-262-6900
Web: perkinscoie.com
Specialty: Trademark Law, Intellectual Property

PROSKAUER, ROSE, LLP
Eleven Times Square
(8th Ave. & 41st St.)
New York, NY 10036
212-989-8299
212-989-3000
Web: proskauer.com
Specialty: practice limited to litigation of commercial and entertainment related disputes
*No unsolicited material

PRYOR CASHMAN, LLP
7 Times Square
40th Floor
New York, NY 10036
212-421-4100 Fax 212-326-0806
Email: fscibilia@pryorcashman.com
Web: pryorcashman.com
Contact: Frank P. Scibilia, Benjamin K. Semel
Specialty: Entertainment Law, Music Law, Intellectual Property, Litigation

RENZULLI LAW FIRM, LLP
One North Broadway, Suite 1005
White Plains, NY 10601
914-285-0700
Contact: John F. Renzulli
Email: jrenzulli@renzullilaw.com
Web: renzullilaw.com
Specialty: Intellectual Property

RITHOLZ LEVY SANDERS CHIDEKEL & FIELDS, LLP
235 Park Ave., 3rd Fl.
New York, NY 10003
212-448-1801
Email: hello@rlscf.com
Web: rlscf.com
Specialty: Entertainment Law

Additional locations:
1094 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 1600
Los Angeles, CA 90024
310-443-4176

131 South 11th Street
Nashville, TN 37206
615-250-3939

ROBERT A. CELESTIN, ESQ.
1650 Broadway, #505
New York, NY 10019
212-262-1103
Web: raclawfirm.com
Contact: Robert A. Celestin
Specialty: Entertainment Law

ROBERT S. MELONI, PC.
3 Columbus Cir., 15th Fl.
New York, NY 10019
212-520-6090
Email: rmelon@m2lawgroup.com
Web: m2lawgroup.com
Contact: Robert S. Meloni
Specialty: Entertainment and IP, Litigation

ROBINSON BROG LEINWAND GREENE GENOVESE AND GLUCK, PC
885 Second Avenue
3rd Floor
New York, NY 10017
212-603-6300
Email: info@robinsonbrog.com
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Email: msendroff@sendroff.com
Web: sendroffbaruch.com
Contact: Mark Sendroff
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Contact: Elena M. Paul
Specialty: Pro bono legal services for artists

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250 E. 39th St., Ste. 9K
New York, NY 10016
212-661-3656
Email: wallace@wallacecollins.com
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Contact: Wallace Collins
Specialty: Entertainment and Intellectual Property

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Winston-Salem, NC 27101
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Contact: Bryan D. Beel, Ph.D. Counsel
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STEPHEN E. VANYO, ESQ.
Associate, Law Offices of Lloyd Z. Remick
One Liberty Place
1650 Market Street, 56th Floor
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215-575-3820
Web: braverlaw.com/the-team/stephen-vanyo
Email: stephen.zanemgmt@gmail.com, vanyo@braverlaw.com

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Contact: Philip M. Kirkpatrick

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Contact: Robin J. Gordon
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Suite NT 700
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Web: kingballow.com
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Web: milonlaw.com
Contact: David S. Crow
Specialty: Entertainment Law

RICHARD D. ROSE
Mailing address:
PO. Box 40971
Nashville, TN 37204
615-330-7673

Email: hello@copyrightcafe.com
Web: copyrightcafe.com
Contact: Richard D. Rose
Specialty: Entertainment, Internet, Copyrights, Trademark, Clearance

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144 2nd Avenue North, Suite 157
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Web: shrumlaw.com
Contact: Barry Neil Shrum
Specialty: Entertainment Law, Intellectual Property, Trademarks, Copyrights

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713-528-6946
Email: al@music-lawyer.com
Web: music-lawyer.com
Contact: Al Staehely, Jr.
Specialty: Entertainment Law

AMY E. MITCHELL, ATTORNEY, MEDIATOR, COUNSELOR AT LAW

4408 Spicewood Springs Rd.
Austin, TX 78759
512-505-0845
Email: law@amyemitchell.com
Web: amyemitchell.com
Contact: Amy E. Mitchell
Specialty: Entertainment Law

CRAIG BARKER, P.C., LAW OFFICE OF

401 Congress Ave, Ste. 1540
Austin, TX 78701
512-494-0777
Email: craig@craigbarkerlaw.com
Web: craigbarkerlaw.com
Contact: Craig Barker
Specialty: Entertainment Law

DAVID W. SHOWALTER, LAW OFFICES OF

1117 FM 359 Rd., Ste. 200
Richmond, TX 77460
888-627-4042, 281-762-6872
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Austin, TX 78701

512-480-5600

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Web: gdhm.com

Specialty: Intellectual Property, Entertainment Law

MICHAEL NORMAN SALEMAN, LAW OFFICES OF

100 Congress Ave, 11th Fl.
Austin, TX

512-480-5629

Email: saleman@movelaw.net

Web: movelaw.net

Contact: Michael Saleman

Specialty: Entertainment Law, Trademark, Copyright

MIKE TOLLESON & ASSOCIATES
2106 E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Austin, TX 78702
512-480-8822 Fax 512-479-6212
Email: mike@mikel tolleson.com
Web: mikel tolleson.com
Contact: Mike Tolleson
Specialty: Entertainment Law

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204-965-7700, 204-965-7799
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Contact: J. B. Louis
Specialty: Trademark Law

TEXAS ACCOUNTANTS & LAWYERS FOR THE ARTS
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Austin, TX 78714
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Salt Lake City, UT 84111
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Web: dotsey.com
Contact: Bryan Benevento
Specialty: Intellectual Property

PARR BROWN GEE & LOVELESS
101 South 200 East, Suite 700
Salt Lake City, UT 84111
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Web: parrbrown.com
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Contact: Rexford A. Johnson
Specialty: Intellectual Property Litigation

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Dallas, TX 75231
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Contact: Jeremy S. Grant, Associate

Specialty: Intellectual Property and Technology

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1850 Towers Cres Plaza, #400

Tysons Corner, VA 22182

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Web: movelaw.net

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Columbia Center
701 5th Ave., Ste. 6100
Seattle, WA 98104-7043
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Web: dorsey.com

Contact: Nathan Alexander

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206-447-4400, 206-447-6282

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Contact: Benjamin Hedges

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The PSE Building
1085 N.E. 4th St., Ste. 700
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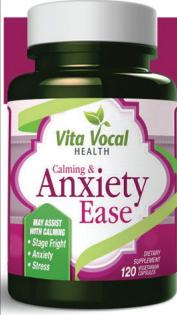
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The Cost of Culture: How Art and Entertainment Left the Common Man Behind



Photo by Martin de Arriba on Unsplash

A few weeks ago, I went to see Elvis Costello in concert—one of my longtime heroes, a songwriter once known for his sharp wit, his political bite, and his uncanny ability to channel frustration into art. The tickets were \$130 each, and the merchandise—a simple cotton t-shirt with a screen print—was \$45.

And I couldn't help thinking: What happened?

Here was a musician who once gave voice to working-class anger, railing against the hypocrisy of power and privilege. Yet now, even his live shows—that most democratic of art forms—are increasingly priced out of reach for the very people his songs once represented. It's a kind of ironic inversion: music for the people becoming music only the privileged can afford.

We've somehow created a system where artists who started as rebels and reformers are now forced, by economics or inertia, into producing bourgeois music for the bourgeois. Not because they've lost their ideals, necessarily—but because the machinery of touring, production, and profit margins has made it nearly impossible to do otherwise.

And it's not just music.

Take movie theaters, once the cathedral of shared imagination. The average movie ticket in the U.S. cost \$4 in 1990 and around \$7.50 by 2010—but today, according to the National Association of Theatre Owners, the

average ticket price exceeds \$12, with major cities charging upwards of \$18–20 for premium screenings. Popcorn and soda can easily double that figure.

I think back to one of my favorite old haunts, The Biograph Theatre in Georgetown, D.C.—a beloved art-house cinema that closed its doors years ago. It was later converted into an adult movie house, then shuttered entirely. The economics of running a space devoted to independent, low-budget, or foreign films simply couldn't compete with the profit margins of more commercial or sensational offerings.

But there's another story from that same neighborhood that offers a spark of optimism.

Just a few blocks away, the old Trolley Barn in Georgetown—once a relic of D.C.'s streetcar past—was transformed into a movie theater and event space that became home to the Georgetown Film Festival. For a time, it stood as proof that creative reuse and community vision could bring cultural life back into the heart of a city. What was once a decaying industrial shell became a hub for film, conversation, and shared experience—the very things we risk losing when art becomes unaffordable.

This pattern—the pricing-out of the public—runs through nearly every aspect of American entertainment and culture. Whether it's live music, theater, sports, or film, the cost of participation, both as a spectator and a

creator, has risen far faster than wages or inflation.

But there are glimmers of a different model.

In Texas, several defunct shopping malls—symbols of a bygone consumer era—have been repurposed into mixed-use community hubs: libraries, coworking spaces, coffeehouses, maker studios, and even housing for veterans. One example is the Highland Mall redevelopment project in Austin, where the shell of an old retail center was transformed into a vibrant public and educational space anchored by Austin Community College.

It's a reminder that our cultural infrastructure doesn't have to be discarded—it can be reinvented. The same could be done with large, defunct movie theaters, many of which now sit empty in strip malls and suburbs across the country. Imagine if those spaces were converted into community performance halls, youth music programs, or affordable housing for artists and veterans.

It's not just about nostalgia. It's about reclaiming access—to art, to music, to the shared experiences that remind us who we are.

When the price of a concert ticket rivals a week's groceries, we've lost something fundamental: the connection between the artist and the audience, the maker and the listener, the song and the soul it was meant to stir.

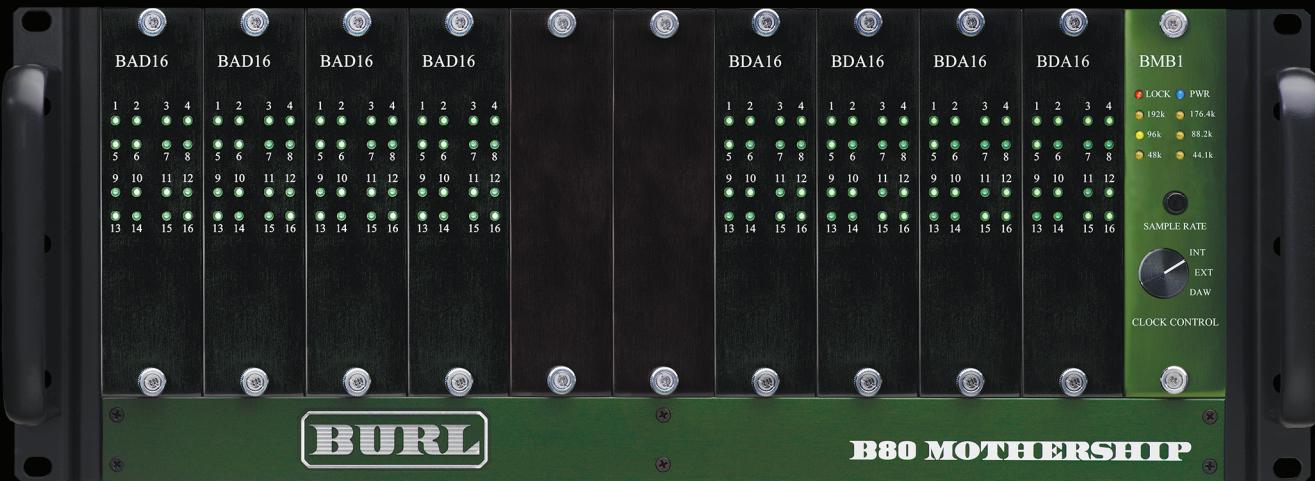
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