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DIRECTORY OF
MANAGERS
+ BOOKING
AGENTS

DREAM DOLL

HIP-HOP ROUNDTABLE 2026

PETER AND JULIAN FRAMPTON

SENNHEISER

Vol. 50 - July 2026 - \$3.95/\$4.95 Canada



Brontë Fall



“Main Character Energy”

Brontë Fall's new single "Main Character Energy" will be released on June 15th.

This is the follow up to her debut song, "Invited To The Party"
which reached #12 on Mediabase AC and #22 on Billboard AC.

Written by: Brontë Fall and Elizabeth Eckert

Produced by: Brian Kennedy

Promotion by: Howard Rosen Promotion

TOB Music Group distributed by: Symphonic

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DreamDoll

Music Connection chats with rising rapper DreamDoll about her recent output, and the big period for her career that lies ahead.

Photos: Andrew Fennell

By Lina Lecaro



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Producer Crosstalk: Les Camacho

By Rob Putnam

Hip-Hop Roundtable 2026

MC has a roundtable talk with some of the most highly rated new rappers in the game, including: TK The Legend, H3adband, YoDogg, Zeddy Will, and StarBandz.

By Brett Callwood



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Stephanie Spruill

stephaniespruill.net

Generations of Vocal Artistry: Few artists in the entertainment industry embody versatility, longevity, and purpose-driven artistry quite like Stephanie Spruill. Over a remarkable five-decade career, the Los Angeles native has built a global reputation, not only as one of the most recorded and in demand background vocalists in modern music history, but also as a singer-songwriter, percussionist, vocal arranger, motivational speaker, and founder of Spruill House Music, Inc. School of Voice & Artist Development. Having toured and/or recorded with everyone from Michael Jackson, Julio Iglesias, Donna Summer, Mariah Carey, and Whitney Houston to Aretha Franklin, Elton John, Olivia Newton-John, Glen Campbell, Quincy Jones, Barbra Streisand, Chaka Khan, and Ricky Martin (to name a few), Spruill continues to evolve while carrying her immense experience forward into new generations of artistry.

A Full-Circle Moment: One of the most meaningful chapters of Spruill's extraordinary journey came recently through her work on the hit Michael Jackson biopic *Michael*, where she spent four and a half years coaching her longtime student Juliano Valdi (Young MJ) and doing vocal coaching with Jaafar Jackson at the Hayvenhurst Studio to authentically capture the legend's signature tone, phrasing, pitch, and emotional essence. She also coached the actors who portrayed The Jackson 5. The project created a profound full circle moment for Spruill, who originally worked closely with the Jacksons decades ago, adding her vocals to classics like "Can You Feel It" and "Heartbreak Hotel," and playing the tambourine on "Dancing Machine." "When Michael called me to organize and direct the adult and children's choir for 'Can You Feel It,' which featured my soprano background vocals, none of us could have imagined I would later help bring his voice and spirit to life for a whole new generation," she says.



Artist Development with Purpose: Long before "artist development" became an endangered concept in the music business, Spruill recognized the importance of preparing performers not only technically, but emotionally, spiritually, and professionally. Through her internationally respected school and her book *17 Points to Longevity in Show Business*—which is part of her curriculum—she has mentored singers, actors, speakers, and creatives from around the world, helping them develop confidence, focus, diction, stage presence, and authentic artistic identity. Her students have included international recording artists, actors, and public figures from throughout the world—from Romania, Russia, Spain, Mexico, and Japan to Hollywood. "Every business is show business," she says. "You have to know how to present yourself, communicate, and connect."

Strength Through Reinvention: Even profound personal loss has only deepened Spruill's sense of mission. After losing her Altadena home, studio, memorabilia, and all of her instruments and treasured artifacts in the recent L.A. fires, she chose to focus not on devastation but renewal. "God is good because I'm here and I'm alive," she says. "All those things came from me, and I can generate more." That resilient philosophy continues to guide her life and work as she balances family, performing, teaching, coaching, and creating new music. "It is my mission to reach the world over and touch everyone with all the artistry in me," Spruill says. "I have discovered that God and art are the links that bring me closer to my divine purpose."

Contact Stephanie Spruill, 626-797-2429



“I’m **MOMARZ**, an electronic music artist blending atmospheric sound design, emotional storytelling, and modern production. I am currently seeking record label opportunities and music placement in TV/film to expand my creative reach. My music is available on Elasticstage.com, Spotify, Amazon Music, and YouTube. For inquiries, collaborations, or industry opportunities, contact me at momarz1842@gmail.com or send a direct message on Instagram [@momarz99](https://www.instagram.com/momarz99).

My sincere gratitude goes out to my family, friends, listeners, music-publication editors, and the incredible teams at Lost Boy Entertainment, Planetary Group, and Tinderbox Music for their continued support.”

Carlos Alcalá

Director of A&R
Ultra Records

Ultra Records has announced that **Carlos Alcalá** has joined the company as **Director of A&R**. Alcalá—who boasts over a decade leading A&R in dance music—will represent the New York-based label from Los Angeles and be focused on identifying the next wave of global dance music and breaking records that cut through the noise. “Ultra is one of the most iconic dance music labels in the world, and I’m honored to help carry its legacy forward while continuing to push boundaries,” said Alcalá. For more, contact agreenberg@falconpublicity.com.



Eric Reese

Vice President
AUDIX

AUDIX has announced the appointment of **Eric Reese** to the position of **Vice President**. In his new role within the Videndum Creative Solutions family of brands, Reese will oversee all functions at AUDIX, including Sales, Marketing, Product Development, and Operations. “I look forward to utilizing my varied skillset and industry knowledge to collaborate with the team at AUDIX to continue the brand’s legacy and usher in a new era of quality audio,” said Reese. For more, contact press@mktg-dept.com.



Chris Rogerson

Artistic Director
The Bravo! Vail Music Festival

The **Bravo! Vail Music Festival (Bravo! Vail)** has announced composer **Chris Rogerson** as its next **Artistic Director**. Rogerson assumes the Artistic Director Designate role immediately and the Artistic Director title on September 1, 2026, for an initial three-year term. “Bravo! Vail represents the highest level of music-making in an incomparable natural setting. From its founding in 1987, it has served as a beacon of artistic integrity and a place of limitless artistic possibility,” said Rogerson. For more, contact powens@bravovail.org. For more, contact pdonahie@championmgt.com.



Dan Hawie

Managing Director
MNRK Music Group

MNRK Music Group has promoted **Dan Hawie** to **Managing Director of Last Gang Records**, effective immediately. In his new role, Hawie will oversee Last Gang’s full P&L and assume expanded leadership across A&R and brand strategy. Based in Toronto, he will report to Randy Derebegian, VP of Artist Development, and Chris Moncada, COO of MNRK Music Group. “I’m incredibly honoured to carry the legacy of Last Gang forward,” said Hawie. For more, contact gmelchiorre@mnrk.com.



John Holloway

Chief Executive Officer
Seattle Chamber Music Society

Seattle Chamber Music Society (SCMS) announced that its Board of Directors has appointed **John Holloway**, previously the Dr. Oliver E. Cobb Executive Director of SCMS, as **Dr. Oliver E. Cobb Chief Executive Officer**. Holloway has served as Executive Director since 2021, a period marked by SCMS’s expanded community reach, patron growth, and new approaches to audience engagement. “SCMS is built for this work and committed to it, and I’m honored to continue leading it forward,” said Holloway. For more, contact matt@8vamusiconconsultancy.com.



Jesse Dean

Managing Director of the Americas
beyerdynamic

Beyerdynamic has announced the appointment of **Jesse Dean** as **Managing Director of the Americas**. In this role, Dean will oversee beyerdynamic’s business operations, sales strategy, and brand development across North and South America. “I look forward to bringing beyerdynamic closer to the musicians, creators, gamers, and professionals who make this market so exciting,” said Dean. For more, contact beyerdynamic@maxborgesagency.com.



David Kalt

Board of Directors Member
Guitar Center

Guitar Center has named **David Kalt** as an independent member of its **Board of Directors**. Kalt is the founder of Reverb, the platform that transformed how musicians buy and sell new, used, and vintage gear online. He also previously acquired and helped grow Chicago Music Exchange, one of the country’s most recognized destinations for vintage and collectible instruments. His appointment comes as Guitar Center enters its next phase of growth. “I’m excited to join the Board and support the company as it continues to innovate across stores, digital, services, and community,” said Kalt. For more, contact media@guitarcenter.com.



Katherine Palmer

Executive Director
NAMM

NAMM (The National Association of Music Merchants) announced the appointment of **Katherine Palmer** as the new **Executive Director of the Museum of Making Music (MoMM)**, effective summer 2026. In her new role, Palmer will lead the museum’s mission to celebrate and advance the history, impact and future of the music products industry and active music making through exhibitions, educational initiatives and public programming. “I’m honored to join the NAMM family and help shape the museum’s future while expanding its impact and accessibility for audiences everywhere,” said Palmer. For more, contact johnd@namm.org.





DPA DPK2015 PIANO MICROPHONE KIT

DPA Microphones is a Danish manufacturer of professional condenser microphones. The company was founded in 1992 as Danish Pro Audio by two former employees from Brüel & Kjær. Brüel & Kjær had decided to close its pro audio division, and these employees made a contract with

B&K to take over sales, service, and development. DPA Microphones now focuses on manufacturing high-end, precision condenser microphones focused on a clear, natural, and transparent sound. Their primary goal is to capture audio exactly as it truly sounds, while engineering durable, problem-solving solutions for demanding professional audio applications. They are particularly favored for classical music and acoustic recordings that demand pristine, linear frequency responses.

Many of DPA's products focus on specific audio applications to make the audio engineer's job easier. From Broadway musicals to touring orchestras, DPA specializes in close-miking instruments using adaptable mounting systems that are particularly suited for live stage and theater to a degree that few other microphone manufacturers concentrate on. DPA makes three different microphone sets aimed exclusively at the task of reproducing piano. *MC* tested the midline of the three sets, the DPA DPK2015 Piano Microphone Kit, on two different well-maintained and well-known Grand Pianos in two Los Angeles recording studios.

Dennis Moody's 1937 Chickering 9' Grand Piano was the first tested. This is a wonderful piano with a very balanced and even response and very articulate low end. Played by L.A. pianist Derek Philips, *MC* tested the mics magnetically attached to the piano frame. The result was a very neutral, uncolored, and transparent sound which would sit perfectly in a dense track. Next the mics were tested with a classical micing approach, outside the piano a few feet above the strings in a spaced pair at the maximum width allowed by the supplied stereo bar.

John Pratt's legendary 1979 Yamaha C-3 6' Grand Piano was next, played by Michael Alemania. This is a very bright rock 'n' roll piano featured on hundreds of recordings at RCA NY and EMI Hollywood Studios, and when Pratt heard the mics his first comment was how nicely they handled the treble without being harsh. Both micing techniques were used and the piano sounded smooth and full with the mics inside or outside the piano. *MC* agreed that micing the piano inside would be best for a rock 'n' roll track and micing the piano outside would be more suitable for a solo track.

The DPK2015 Piano Kit comes in an attractive aluminum Halliburton-style case that houses the two DPA 2015 mics with a bevy of functional accessories made to work with piano. The microphones are small form factor pencil mics that have a wide cardioid pickup pattern.

Mic specifications are excellent. Frequency response is 20 Hz - 20 kHz with an effective frequency range stated at ± 2 dB, at 30 cm (11.8 in) 40 Hz to 18 kHz. Distortion is rated at THD < 1 percent 147 dB SPL, 150 dB SPL peak with dynamic range typ. 132 dB and Max. SPL, THD 10 percent with a healthy 153 dB SPL peak and requires P48 Phantom Power.

The DPK2015 Piano Kit is designed for versatile mounting inside or outside the piano, lid open or closed. Accessories include two GM1500 Gooseneck Mounts which feature strong magnetic bases for piano frame mounting and integrated Rycote Lyre shock-isolation suspensions. At 5" tall these mounts can easily be used with the piano lid closed or open and feel very secure. A lightweight 16-inch carbon fiber stereo bar allows dual microphone mounting standard XY or ORTF configurations with alignment markings at every 45°. Additionally, two foam windscreens minimize unwanted air movement.

Due to the wide pickup pattern of the 2015s, DPA further states that the mics are useful for overheads on drums, horn groups, vibraphones, xylophones, large marimbas, and other large instruments. The DPK2015 Piano Kit comes only with piano mounting accessories, but DPA makes a variety of mic clips and shock mounts that are available separately.

\$2,800 MSRP
dpamicphones.com

OESOUND SOOTHE3: AUTOMATIC FULL-SPECTRUM RESONANCE SUPPRESSION PLUGIN

Soothe3, the most refined version of Oeksound's flagship automated resonance suppression plugin, was released in May 2026. Soothe3 is a "cut-only" dynamic processor that analyzes incoming audio in real-time, applying a virtually unlimited amount of dynamic notch filters to suppress and eliminate spikes and resonances that can make your sound harsh and hard. Soothe3 employs a spectral DSP engine that calculates hundreds of microscopic dynamic notches simultaneously across the entire frequency spectrum. These notches constantly shift, grow, and disappear in real-time based on the incoming audio signal.

A groundbreaking technology that was introduced in 2016, Soothe1 was the first plugin that effectively automated the process of minimizing spikes and resonances without tedious manual searching using notch filters. In 2020, Soothe2 was released and was even more powerful. Soothe2 became the benchmark plugin for removing vocal harshness, taming piercing cymbals, and acoustic build-ups, earning multiple industry awards. Users of the prior versions will instantly recognize and use Soothe3.

Oeksound states the goal of Soothe3 was to create the most transparent resonance suppression available and Soothe3 is widely considered the best in the industry. The release of Soothe3 solidified this achievement by rebuilding its DSP algorithm from scratch, improving

transparency, and introducing a zero-latency tracking mode. When pushed hard on complex material, Soothe3 handles frequency reduction with minimal artifacts and is markedly improved from Soothe2. Soothe3 doesn't just cut fixed frequencies; it smoothly tracks moving pitch changes, fundamentals, and



overtones across the entire spectrum in real time.

Soothe3 offers nearly 100 factory presets covering 11 categories. These include: Misc, Bass, Drums, Guitar, Keys, Mastering, Mix Bus, Orchestral, Sidechain, Sound Design, and Vocals. These presets offer great starting points that will cover most uses. Variable controls include Depth, Detail, Attack, and Release, which interact with a toggle choosing Soft Mode or Hard Mode. Soft mode has an adaptive threshold which reacts to the relative levels of resonances and achieves the most transparent resonance suppression. Soft mode is ideal for most sound sources and works especially well with dynamic instruments. Hard mode has a fixed threshold and reacts to the absolute level of resonances.

Soothe2 forced you to work with six fixed, un-deletable bands. In Soothe3, you can freely add and delete nodes on the fly up to the 8-band limit. The eight bands do not perform direct notch filtering themselves. Instead, they form a "Depth Curve." By boosting a node, you instruct the plugin to hunt more aggressively for resonances in that area; by cutting it, you create a "protection zone" to leave that frequency range untouched.

Owners of Soothe1 and Soothe2 might wonder whether to keep the older versions on their computers. Soothe3 is a comprehensive upgrade that covers all its predecessor's capabilities. Soothe3 is more precise, sounds cleaner, and offers vastly superior control. However, you might keep the older plugins active on your system for your archived project compatibility. New to Soothe3 are live tracking and immersive audio capabilities. In low latency mode Soothe3 adds no latency at base sample rates and ~1 msec at HD sample rates, enabling tracking and live applications.

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PRESONUS AIR XD 12 LOUDSPEAKER

The focus of the PreSonus Air XD loudspeaker line is to deliver professional-grade, high-definition sound in a portable, user-friendly, affordable, and lightweight package. They are designed specifically for live bands, club venues, corporate events, gigging musicians, and mobile DJs. An update from the original Air series, the newer Air XD series steps up with powerful Class-D bi-amplification, up to 1,500 Watts, to provide plenty of sound and clarity up to 134dB SPL.

Control of the Air XD 12 is achieved through the LED back panel and scroll knob. Five operational modes are available with distinctly different voicings. FOH (Front of House) is the standard, neutral default mode. It provides a balanced frequency response ideal for general live sound reinforcement. DJ mode optimizes the speaker for prerecorded tracks, boosting the low-end punch and high-frequency crispness. Enhance mode scoops out mid-range frequencies while warming up the lower frequencies for a more hyped sound that engineers call the "smile EQ curve." Monitor mode tailors the response specifically for floor wedge use, rolling off low-end that would acoustically couple with the floor and taming feedback-prone midrange frequencies. Speech mode strongly rolls off the low frequencies and boosts the presence range of 2 kHz to 4 kHz to maximize vocal clarity for public speaking. All these modes sound very different than one another and are great starting points for the applications specified.

Additional acoustical voicings are available with Locate Modes. These modes adjust the speaker's acoustic profile depending on how and where the physical cabinet is physically mounted. In Stand mode, EQ is calibrated for a standard tripod stand or a subwoofer pole mount. A standard size mounting hole is available at the bottom of the unit. A secondary Monitor mode filters out boomy bass frequencies caused by floor coupling and attenuates specific mid-range frequencies predetermined as feedback prone and enhances the upper mid-range and high frequencies. Bracket mode attenuates for the low-end acoustic coupling effect that occurs when a speaker is mounted flat against a wall.

The Air XD 12 paired with an iPhone instantly. At first listen in FOH mode listening to various recorded material, the 12" speaker sounded a bit boomy, but this was easily tamed with a quick roll off of bass. The onboard EQ provides ± 10 dB of bass or treble gain. The Air XD can get extremely loud, most likely louder than you will ever need. It is a very clean and punchy sounding speaker with a lot of kick and versatility. Speaker control via a phone is limited to volume only. Be warned that the speaker on first powerup defaults to full power on, but on next power up the Air XD 12 will remember whatever the last volume setting was.

The Air XD 12 features an integrated mixing and wireless setup. Inputs to the onboard 3-channel mixer are combo 1/4"-XLR mic/line connectors and a miniplug auxiliary input.



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SENNHEISER HD 480 PRO HEADPHONES



Sennheiser has long been at the forefront of professional audio products of the highest quality. In April, Sennheiser launched its top-of-the-range closed-back headphones for studio and live environments. Sennheiser cites that the top design goals were to deliver tight, accurate bass reproduction and ensuring ultimate comfort for audio professionals tasked with recording, tracking, or monitoring in the studio, and in live audio environments. With closed-back headphones, accurate reproduction of the low-end is more challenging than open back headphones. "This is where the HD 480 PRO excel. Compared to other closed-back headphones, they are a lot tighter on the bass, their low-end is super-accurate and realistic," notes Jimmy R. Landry, Category Market Manager, Music Industry at Sennheiser. "Comfort is of paramount importance when headphones are a work tool," adds Gunnar Dirks, Senior Product Manager for professional headphones. "Engineers often spend hours on end in their sessions. They need a lightweight, ergonomically designed pair of headphones to keep focus and concentration up. The HD 480 PRO eliminate any pressure points and fit every head precisely and comfortably—even if you're wearing glasses."

Subtitled by Sennheiser as, "nothing but the truth," these headphones sounded astoundingly good from the moment *MC* tried them. Often with headphones there is a few moments of transition where you sit and think, "what are these headphones doing, and what areas are hyped or lacking?"

Not so with the HD 480 PRO. Lightweight at 9.6 ounces (w/o cable) and feeling very durable—we all know this is of prime importance as no matter how hard you try, headphones always end up crashing to the floor at some point. Most importantly, the sound on these headphones is clean, clear crisp and non-fatiguing. *MC* had the opportunity to spend dozens of hours listening to the HD 480 PRO and they immediately became a favorite. Additionally, when compared to many other high-end headphones, some costing double the amount, the HD 480 PRO were less hyped and more accurate and simply pleasing to work with. And if a tone was unexciting, it always meant that you needed to work harder on the tone of that sound.

Sennheiser elaborates further: "The HD 480 PRO are an ideal choice for monitoring, producing, and recording, but also for mixing, which makes them Sennheiser's most versatile professional headphones to date. Their absolute accuracy, uncolored frequency response and honest low-end ensure that the audio translates reliably to any listening situation from home speakers to automobile use and PA systems."

The HD 480 PRO feature multiple stages of passive sound shielding, while comfortable ear pads with soft grooves at the temples for glasses ensure the precise seal that is required for good audio reproduction.

The HD 480 PRO are stylish and sleek, with a very modern and subdued look. The brushed metal clamp fits securely on your head without excess pressure. The coiled 3-meter cable is detachable via a 4-pin mini-XLR plug and has two unique features. The cable can plug in to either side of the headphone set, which can be very helpful to musicians that have a preference to which ear the cable feeds.

\$399 for PRO-soft case
\$439 for PRO PLUS-hard case

sennheiser.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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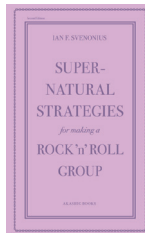
By Brian Cullman
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The exploits of music writers always make for a fun, often chaotic memoir. We speak from experience here. Music journalists are introduced to a life of intrigue and magic; it can feel like we're Charlie Bucket in the presence of Wonka's infinite delights. And Cullman's new book is a blast. "Blending memoir, criticism, and travelogue, *How to Prepare for the Past* offers the witty curiosity of Geoff Dyer's *But Beautiful*, the intimacy of Patti Smith's *Just Kids*, and the humor and soul of Nick Hornby's *High Fidelity*," reads a statement. That's true, and his friendships with Lester Bangs, Nick Drake, and more offer a fresh glimpse at rarely seen worlds.

Supernatural Strategies for Making a Rock 'n' Roll Group: Second Edition

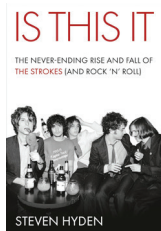
By Ian F. Svenonius
(paperback) \$17.95



"This book is an indispensable guide for anyone attempting to create a rock 'n' roll group," author Svenonius writes at the very start of the introduction. The Los Angeles-based writer, described in his bio as a "rock 'n' roll antihero," then provides what is described as, "an instructional guide, which doubles as a warning device, a philosophical text, an exercise in terror, an aerobics manual, and a coloring book." Svenonius has played in the bands the Make-Up and Nation of Ulysses, and his underground sensibilities, dry wit, and oodles of experience make for a compelling read.

Is This It: The Never-Ending Rise and Fall of the Strokes (and Rock 'n' Roll)

By Steven Hyden
(hardcover) \$30



There was a point in time when New Yorkers The Strokes were one of the most highly rated new rock bands on the planet. It was the beginning of the new millennium, garage rock had seen a resurgence, and the debut *Is This It?* album was an absolute smash. Author Steven Hyden captures the buzz beautifully, before taking the reader on the roller-coaster ride what was their subsequent career. The Strokes never got bad (although they never fulfilled the Velvet Underground comparisons

that came their way early doors), but the spotlight was shining elsewhere for a while.

Lessons & Lace

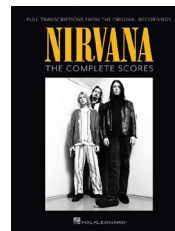
By Rachel Brodsky
(hardcover) \$26



Celebrated L.A.-based journalist Rachel Brodsky has tagged her biography of Stevie Nicks (also her debut book), "Everything I know about dreams, heartbreak and magic I learned from Stevie Nicks." That's a long but refreshing personal sentence to put right on the front of a book. The biography is, as stated in the press release, "structured according to different themes—rather than chronologically." So, the chapters have titles such as "Tell the Truth, Always," "Float Like a Goddess," and "Don't Be Sorry for Anything." Nicks' incredible story is told, but the unique approach makes the telling all the more special.

Nirvana—The Complete Scores

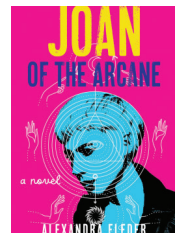
Transcriptions by Gabe Andrews, Jordan Baker, Joe Collinson, Chris Romero, and Jim Schustedt
(hardcover) \$89.99



All of the songs from the three Nirvana studio albums—*Bleach*, *Nevermind*, and *In Utero*—plus the MTV *Unplugged in New York* live album (though not the *Incesticide* odds 'n' sods collection) are transcribed and compiled here, making this a gorgeous hardcover tome for guitar-playing fans of the pioneering '90s alt-rock icons. "*The Complete Scores* provides a unique opportunity to study Nirvana's music in detail, whether for performance, education, or deeper appreciation," reads the press release. Meanwhile, the packaging is stunning.

Joan of the Arcane

By Alexandra Fleder
(paperback) \$17.99



We cover a lot of biographies and music theory guides in this column, so it's great when we're presented with a novel with a musical lean. That's the case with *Joan of the Arcane*, the story of the former singer with a Los Angeles-based punk band who managed to evade success when it came knocking and now spends her time as "a suburban empty nester—days in Lululemon-clad Pilates classes, nights consumed by conspiracy theories about ancient technologies and government cover ups." Fleder handles it all with a deft touch; it's funny, tragic, relatable, and often dark.



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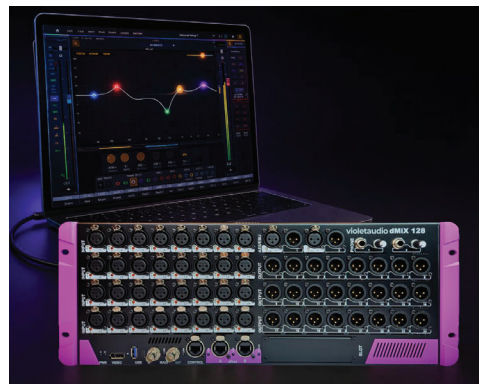
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Violet Audio USvioleaudio.com

A Legacy Reimagined: While Violet Audio may be a relatively new name to many North American audio professionals, the company's engineering pedigree runs deep. The Australian-based brand has been active for more than two



decades and is now re-emerging with a new generation of products built by a team whose innovations have helped shape professional audio. Leading the charge in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico is Violet Audio US President/CEO Phil Wagner, a longtime industry veteran whose career includes executive roles with Soundcraft, Neve, Focusrite, and most notably Solid State Logic. Wagner first encountered Violet Audio's new dMix 128 platform at NAMM, and immediately recognized its potential. "When you've spent decades around mixing console technology, you know when a company has done the hard work to bring real value to the market," he says. Wagner subsequently founded Violet Audio US to handle customer/dealer relationships, along with support and training throughout North America, helping establish a strong presence for a platform he believes delivers capabilities typically found in systems costing significantly more.

Power and Flexibility in a Compact Platform: At the center of Violet Audio's current vision is the dMix 128, a high-performance digital mixing and audio-routing platform designed primarily for live sound applications. Built around advanced FPGA processor technology, the system offers 128 mixing channels, 88 DSP-equipped busses, 96kHz operation, MADI and AES67 connectivity, and a 64-channel DAW interface capable of recording and playing back live performances. Wagner describes it as "two to four times more powerful than anything comparable in its price range," with a dealer price of approximately \$5,995. Particularly appealing for live sound and installed audio applications is the ability to split the system into dual 64-channel consoles with gain compensation, allowing front-of-house and monitor engineers to operate independently from a single platform. Early users, including Violet Audio founder and veteran live engineer Daniel Olesh, have already deployed the system extensively in live environments, generating enthusiastic feedback about its speed, workflow, and processing power.

Built for the Next Decade: Behind the dMix 128 is a compact but highly specialized development team whose members previously contributed technologies used by major brands within the HARMAN group of companies. Their focus has been creating forward-thinking, sophisticated tools that remain intuitive in demanding real-world situations. Wagner believes that philosophy reflects a larger trend in professional audio, where engineers increasingly require powerful solutions that maximize both quality and efficiency. "Great equipment won't make a bad song better, but it will absolutely make a great performance shine," he says. Looking ahead, Violet Audio's immediate focus remains on expanding awareness of the dMix platform through dealer training programs and online education. For Wagner, the mission is clear: help engineers and production professionals achieve higher-quality results with fewer technological limitations. "Mixers always want to capture the energy of a live performance," he says. "Technology changes, but that goal never does."

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▲ OWEN BARRY DEBUTS CARDBOARD ARCHTOP GUITAR IN LATEST CARDBOARD SESSIONS

Cardboard Sessions features Owen Barry as the first artist to perform on a fully playable, archtop hollow-body acoustic guitar made from cardboard. Developed in collaboration with Ernest Packaging and luthier Gabriel Currie, the instrument expands an ongoing series of unconventional builds, exploring the intersection of material experimentation, craftsmanship, and live performance.



▲ PISO 21 NAMED UFORIA'S ARTIST OF THE MONTH

Colombian group Piso 21 has been selected as Uforia's Artist of the Month, earning placement across the platform's national programming and digital content. The feature includes interviews and coverage of their latest album *TrEcender*, a project that reflects the group's ongoing evolution as they continue to grow their presence within the U.S. Latin music market.



▲ KIESZA RELEASES DANCING & CRYING VOL. 3

Electro-pop artist Kiesza has released *Dancing & Crying Vol. 3*, the latest installment in her ongoing series. The project follows recent singles "When I'm Dancing" and "Good Morning America," and continues her exploration of dance-driven pop with varied emotional and thematic elements. The release arrived ahead of a run of international tour dates across North America and Europe.



▲ GAVIN TEMPANY JOINS KYLIE MINOGUE'S TENSION TOUR ON SSL LIVE L550 PLUS

Monitor engineer Gavin Tempany supported Kylie Minogue's 2025 Tension Tour using a Solid State Logic Live L550 Plus console, managing complex in-ear mixes, and an extensive communications setup across nearly 70 global shows. The production combined detailed vocal control, integrated comms routing, and full system redundancy to accommodate the scale and technical demands of the tour.

PRODUCER PLAYBACK

"If you're doing it the right way, you're a sponge; you listen to the people around you who know more." — BRANDY ZDAN





▲ **TOMMY LEE ANNOUNCES TOMMYLAND RIDES AGAIN REISSUE**

Tommy Lee released *Tommyland Rides Again*, a reworked version of his 2005 solo album *Tommyland: The Ride*, in May via BMG. The updated edition features new mixes, including a Dolby Atmos version, and adds a bonus track with Chad Tepper. The album is available on streaming platforms for the first time, with physical formats arriving in August.



▲ **JULIUS BLACK RELEASES DEBUT ALBUM OH, DESIRE**

New Zealand-born, Shanghai-based artist Julius Black released his debut album *Oh, Desire* in May via Cantora under Rostrum Records. The project arrived alongside singles "Time" and "YHYH," highlighting his genre-blending approach shaped by a cross-cultural background. The album marks a significant step in his evolution as he continues building a global audience.



▲ **LESS ART CABARET DEBUTS WITH ECLECTIC MOUNTAIN-TOP SHOWCASE**

CONDUIT 742 has launched its inaugural Less Art Cabaret at Mount Wilson Observatory, featuring Doug Harvey's long-running Moldy Slide Show, with a live improvised score by Rick Potts. The immersive, multi-artist program blends experimental film, music, and performance, offering a rare, offbeat afternoon of art set against a scenic mountain backdrop.

A photograph of Gina Miles, a woman with long dark hair, wearing large black headphones. She is looking down and appears to be in a recording or editing studio. The background is slightly blurred, showing studio equipment.

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LES CAMACHO

Producer and engineer Les Camacho got his start when he was barely a teenager in Miami, FL. Like many 14-year-olds, he faced challenges. His mother recognized the signs early and connected him with a friend who ran what was then Pantera Studios. He learned engineering on the job and at 17 was tapped to record vocals for 2 Live Crew's *As Nasty as They Wanna Be* at the legendary Criteria Recording Studios. Now based in Los Angeles, he's since worked with artists including Fleetwood Mac, Massive Attack, and the Killers. He also spent three years doing front-of-house for Pink Floyd beginning with the 1994 Division Bell tour.

There are many things that contribute to making a song strong. For Camacho, one of the most important elements is finding an artist who's self-assured and unapologetic.

"People like Joan Jett and Iggy Pop came in and said 'I'm gonna do this whether you like it or not,'" he says. "If you don't [like it], don't buy my record! So, it's great melodies, great songwriting, but also an artist who isn't going to worry about being popular. They're just going to kick ass and let the chips fall where they may."

Working in production and engineering since his early teens, one of the biggest challenges Camacho has faced is when artists don't get along. "As a producer, you're kind of caught in the middle and you have to be the United Nations," he says. "So the hardest thing is managing the personalities in the room while also keeping the project moving forward. These days it doesn't happen as often as it used to. People seem to be more interested in being good to one another, even if it's begrudgingly. Another challenge is when artists get creative and want to do take after take."

Camacho enjoys working with rising, emerging, or undiscovered artists. To find them, he scouts local clubs, confers with friends, and offers his services at a price cash-challenged artists can afford. "I check places like Hotel Café, Gold-Diggers, and Venice West," he says. "I also look at what my friends like on Instagram."

Around 2021, Camacho was invited to beta-test Sony's immersive 360 Reality Audio and VME (virtual mixing environment). It's currently in development but has grown to become a tool that he loves. "It's amazing," the producer asserts. "Their 360 RA is immersive audio, but you can play it back on headphones and it's fantastic. The other side of that is their VME. They measure your hearing and can then mimic a profile of all kinds of studios."

Camacho's recent and upcoming projects include work with alternative/Americana Nashville band Grizfolk, independent artist Cordelia Watson, and a number of label projects that he can't yet discuss. His three go-to studios are Gold-Diggers, Sunset Sound, and EastWest Studios. Favorite gear includes ATC's SCM45A and Kali Audio SM-8 monitors as well as AudioScape's E-Series Deluxe Buss Compressor.

Contact les@rockwaymusic.co

THE 3 MOST IMPORTANT

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

- Stay out of the way of the music. Don't take over a record. My job is to give artists ideas.
- Not every tool is right for every project. I once put up Neumann U 87 and U 67 mics for Stevie Nicks. She told me that she usually sings on a Telefunken ELA M 251. I rented one, put it up and saw that she was absolutely right.
- Keep your imagination open. Don't chase trends. Listen to the artist and what they want to achieve.



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Sacha Matthey

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Clients: Waylon Wyatt, John Summit, Julian Fijma, Saam Sultan, Riordan



BACKGROUND

Darkroom Records has helped develop the careers of breakout stars such as Vincent Mason and hey, nothing. Toiling behind the scenes at this indie with major label reach sits Sacha Matthey. There, he advances the label's strategic growth, ensures financial transparency, and secures brand partnerships.

Following His Heart

I grew up in London and created companies as a kid, mostly in the fashion space, and then went to business school at Wharton. I was studying financing and accounting to work at companies like Goldman Sachs or private equity funds like KKR. A year in, I thought, 'What do I really want to do?' I wanted to create value in a field I love. I started managing artists and got my feet wet at Warner. I did a bit of stuff at Spotify and then went to work at Create Music Group. But I wanted to create something of my own. And in order to do so, I had to understand all different facets of the music industry.

Going Dark

A few months into [working at Create Music Group], there was this opportunity to work for [Darkroom CEO] Justin Lubliner, who I was obsessed with. Six interviews later, I got to work at Darkroom. I do various things there on the business side of the music industry. Throughout the years, I've been able to learn a lot from creative people but really stick to the business stuff.

Joint Ventures

I'm always speaking to entrepreneurs that have created a record label and want to take it to the next level. Darkroom's a perfect place for that. I speak to at least one label every day to see if we can form a partnership. We're trying to be strategic. We don't just want to be a bank. We want to mentor and teach people whilst learning from them as well.

Best Laid Plans

I help with strategy. There's the most amazing executive team that drives that, but I'm there to give my perspective. When everyone's going right, I tend to go left and give a different point of view, not to be contrarian but because my mind works in weird and wonderful ways. I'm a huge believer in the quote from Marcus Aurelius that strategy's not about building the road all of a sudden but moving a rock every single day and creating the path of least resistance to success.

"I try to be up front and blunt as possible. If somebody's spending in a wrong manner, I will definitely mention that to them."

So, once I get told what success looks like, I'm the person that starts moving those rocks.

Whatever It Takes

I'm not responsible for looking for artists, although I do get my feet wet from time to time. I'll do anything that brings value to the company. There are people here that have amazingly trained ears and know how to build relationships with artists. I'm better at building relationships with managers. Having said that, I have a huge affinity towards electronic music and signed an artist called Julian Fijma. If I need to be tapped in anywhere, I'll tap myself in and try to add value.

A Selective Roster

We are not trying to sign everything. We're trying to focus on artist development and have a strong employee network that is passionate about the people they work on. You see a lot of labels signing as many things as possible. We're very against that. We're meticulous about who we sign. By building perfect symbiotic relationships, we're able to stand out. I'm really passionate about the core values the company holds, focusing on a select few artists, building them out over a long period, and not taking every opportunity to work on something.

Committing to Artists

We're going to work on and think about you every day. We're going to really try to make your dreams come true. We're good at artist development. And we strongly believe that, if we're paired with the right artist or partner, we can see some value come out of that, not just for them or us but the music industry as a whole.

It's the Music That Counts

We're looking for any sort of artist. We work [with everything from] underground rap to pop to electronic to country. As long as you have great music with strong marketing and a good story to tell, you can promote any genre.

The Value of a Dollar

The more you spend, the more in debt you go, so you want to find a balance. If something's working, we know how to spend it. And we've spent years building stuff in house, so a dollar will probably go a lot further with us than

someone else. The more transparent one can be with artists and the better understanding they have, the better it will be for them. I try to be up front and blunt as possible. If somebody's spending in a wrong manner, I will definitely mention that to them. But at the end of the day, it's typically their choice. I'm just the messenger. Each artist has a different story, and each artist requires a different amount.

Bright Future

The music industry's growing. Most people consume music. Growing up, I faced difficulties, and the stuff that made me get through it all was music. It's given me a lot. And it's given a lot of people a lot. When I go to a concert and see how an artist we work with has changed a fan's life, you can see there's something within this industry. I love music and always have. Put on The Rolling Stones' "Wild Horses" and you'll have me crying.

Simplifying

There are a lot of inefficiencies in the music business. I'll look at royalty statements, and there are so many lines of communication. If this got streamlined, you'd find money on the table. The adoption of A.I. is very late within music; military weapons manufacturers have been using A.I. for ages. How can we use A.I. to cut down on redundant tasks to open up time for people to be creative? The people at the forefront of that will definitely have a leg up in the next few years.

Music First, Money Second

Be careful with any deal you sign. Really understand it to the fullest degree. Don't sign a deal too early. Wait until the data's working and you have some leverage. When you're starting out, the only thing you should be focused on is your music. Don't worry about the finances. Get the product right. Don't go out there spending loads of money. Try to spend zero, because you have zero coming in. It all starts and stops with the music. It starts with the music, and then you build a story. Once you build a story, create your world. And then you have an artist proposition. Go out, do your thing, and then start looking at your finances.

Data Vs. Instinct

We're very tapped in on analytics. We're also a company that is music-first. We allow our employees to use their gut instinct and intuition while using data [to back them up]. If someone is passionate about a certain artist, we'll always lean towards that.

Carving a Path Behind the Scenes

Anyone can get into this side of the business. They've just got to have a bit of passion. When I was at university, I used to go on LinkedIn every day and network, with a specific goal of working in the investment side of music catalogs. Speak to royalty people. Speak to strategists. Speak to business development people. Speak to investors. Speak to startups in this space. The more you speak to them, the more you'll have an opinion on certain things. Then you can bring those opinions to meetings and start adding value to the people you're speaking with.

A Museum Show with its own Punk Playlist

The Skirball's new exhibition, *Outsiders, Outcasts, Rebels + Weirdos: Punk Culture 1976-86*, comes with its own playlist (which we highly recommend tuning into as you peruse the show), and there are free grainy xerox takeaways, so that's already more fun than the usual artifacts-in-a-glass-box history show. But in its quirky exhibition design and the evocative staging of its premise—that visual art didn't just document or promote the music; it carved out the cultural territory where the music could proliferate and disseminate—the museum lets its inner rocker out to play. For a movement born out of a total refusal of preciousness, the show proves punk's lasting footprint is inseparable from its radical, yet disciplined, visual language.

While overwhelmingly presenting fliers and album art, band logos and posters as the original source material, the exhibition features independent print media prominently as well, pairing original copies of John Holmstrom's *Punk Magazine* with stark visuals like the unmistakable frontman poster for the Screamers. And there is a striking moment where the sound materializes as wearable art—with custom-altered Vivienne Westwood and buttons galore alongside handwritten lyric sheets reminding us that the unique energy of human-handed artistry was a huge part of the point, a pushback against corporate culture and oligarchal greed with echoes of the present.

Importantly, the show celebrates the Skirball's specific context by pulling on a foundational, often overlooked thread—the massive wave of Jewish musicians, writers, and artists who helped build the movement. From the affecting, electronic dread of Alan Vega and Suicide to the hyper-kinetic New York roar of the Ramones, and the biting, poetic satire of influential icons like Lou Reed, the exhibition demonstrates how a deep-seated heritage of identity and exile was channeled directly into a radical counterculture.

And for anyone who lived in Los Angeles at the time, *SPRAWL CITY: LA Punk Venues 1977-84* maps that bygone landscape like a Thomas Guide of the damned, charting a decentralized network of basement

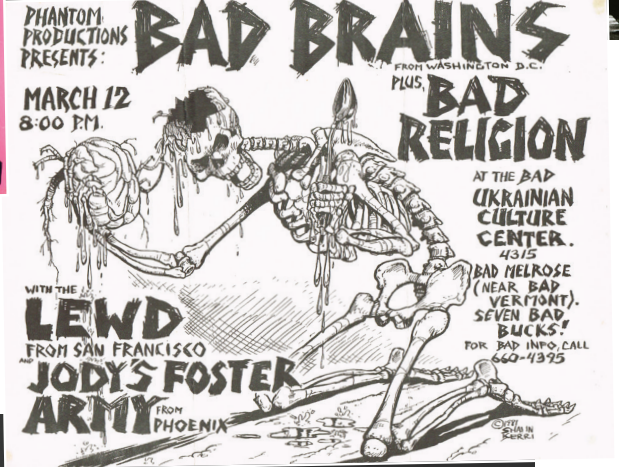
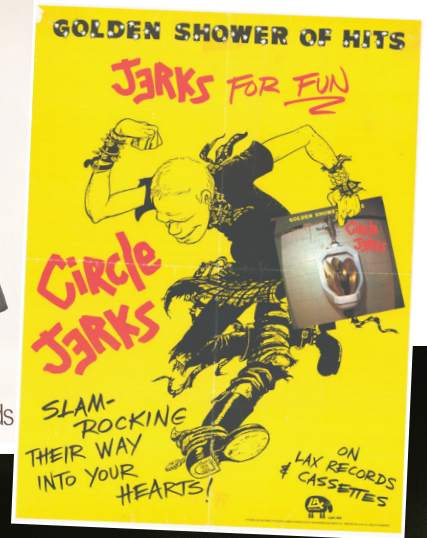
clubs, dive bars, abandoned buildings, parking lots, and makeshift halls winding across the region. Hand-lettered, xeroxed bills—like the flyers for the Weirdos and DEVO at Myrons Ballroom or the classic X and Germs bill at Hope Street Hall—were throwaway tools designed to pull a subculture out of the woodwork in real time. And it worked. While these ephemeral treasures of contemporary art may have been destined for windshields and telephone poles rather than museum archives, now they are part of art history.

At the Skirball through September 6; skirball.org



Patti Smith

on Arista Records



TIFFANY JOHNSON

Nashville-based country/pop/alternative singer and songwriter Tiffany Johnson says that she started creating music as soon as she could talk.

"I loved to sing around the house growing up and make up little songs about ladybugs or playing outside," Johnson says. "I was always so inspired by female songwriters like Dolly Parton, Taylor Swift, and Kelsea Ballerini. I loved to write stories, and songwriting was just another way I could do that. I started to play open mics when I was seven years old and fell in love with performing as well. My love for music came at a young age and I started to get serious about it pretty young as well. When I was 13, I traveled to Nashville and went to songwriting camps to learn the craft of songwriting from the pros. I moved to Nashville at 18 and was able to pursue a music career full-time, release music, and write with others here in Nashville."

While Johnson describes her sound as "pop adjacent," listen to her recently released debut album *Temptress*, and you'll hear plenty of country and Americana influences. "It's pop with some rock, folk, singer-songwriter, and alt all mixed in," she says. "I love blending genres and getting creative with sounds. My style has been described as a Taylor Swift, Stevie Nicks, Olivia Rodrigo lovechild, but I often consider it to be a mix of glam, grunge, and vintage all mixed together."

Going back to *Temptress*, the album hits some big notes, both musically and societally. "At its core, the album explores power, desire, blame, and self-awareness, especially in the way women are often cast as the catalyst in stories they didn't ignite," Johnson says. "The album poses the question: who gets blamed, who gets burned, and who walks away untouched? *Temptress* is my declaration of emotional autonomy, artistic freedom, and a voice unwilling to be simplified."

For Johnson, the term DIY mean digging your heels in and making it work. "It's getting creative and persevering despite not having big budgets or a large team behind you," she says. "To me being DIY is being your own boss and making things happen for yourself and not waiting on anyone else to make it happen for you. I love being DIY and getting to be a part of every aspect of my career. I hope to always keep some DIY in my life and career!"

Looking ahead, Johnson has plenty planned for 2026. "2026 is the year of *Temptress*," she says. "I am so excited to continue promoting this album and sharing it with the world."

Visit tiffanyjohnsonsings.com

Photo by Lucienne Nghiem



THE LEGAL BEAT

BY GLENN T. LITWAK



Colombian superstar singer Shakira was recently acquitted in a tax fraud case in Madrid, Spain. The court ruled that she is entitled to a refund of approximately \$70 million in wrongfully imposed fines.

Shakira has been fighting the Spanish government in court since 2011. The Court ruled that the Spanish taxing authorities had failed to prove that she lived in Spain long enough in 2011 to be subject to the 183-day residency requirement to be considered a Spanish tax resident. The court ruled she only spent 163 days in Spain in

2011.

Shakira stated: "There was never any fraud, and the Tax Agency itself was never able to prove otherwise, simply because it wasn't true."

Shakira traveled extensively that year performing at 120 concerts in 37 countries. The Spanish taxing authorities alleged her economic center of activities was in Spain. The court ruled otherwise. The court rejected the argument that her relationship with her boyfriend, retired Barcelona Soccer star Gerard Pique, made Spain her home. Shakira lived with Pique for over 10 years. At the time, she and Pique had begun dating but were not married. The national high court also held that her children were not living in Spain in 2011 and that her personal relationship with Pique could not legally be considered akin to marriage.

Shakira's lawyer, Josse Luis Prada, stated: "This resolution comes after an eight-year ordeal that has taken an unacceptable toll, reflecting a lack of rigorous administrative practices."

SHAKIRA WINS TAX CASE IN SPAIN

After the ruling, Shakira stated that she should not have been forced to prove her innocence. The Spanish taxing authorities could still appeal to the Supreme Court.

Shakira had another dispute in Spain in which the Spanish prosecutors contended she did not pay \$15.8 million in taxes between 2012-2014. Prosecutors had tried to send her to jail and fine her. She denied any wrongdoing and agreed to pay unpaid taxes and penalties to avoid a trial and possibly prison if she lost. She stated that she decided to settle the case "with the best interest of my kids at heart."

And in 2024 a court in Spain was reported to have dropped an investigation into her tax payments for 2018 due to "a lack of evidence."

Shakira also stated the court had "finally set the record straight after eight years enduring brutal public targeting, orchestrated campaigns to destroy my reputation, and sleepless nights that ultimately impacted my health and my family's well-being."

Shakira is well known for such hit songs as "Hips Don't Lie" and "Wherever, Wherever." She is currently on her Las Mujeres Ya No Lloran world tour. She is also slated to perform this summer with Madonna and BTS at the half-time show for the FIFA Men's World Cup Final. Recently, she performed in front of a huge crowd at a free concert at Copacabana Beach in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

GLENN T. 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 gtllaw59@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.



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Date Signed: March 2026

Label: Brutal Panda

Type of Music: Noise-Rock, Punk

Management: bob@brutalpandarecords.com

Booking: bob@brutalpandarecords.com

Publicity: dave@earsplitcompound.com

A&R: bob@brutalpandarecords.com

Web: instagram.com/foreignbody_nyc

The members of Brooklyn-based grimy noise-rockers Foreign Body have been knocking around in different bands for the best part of a decade, often crossing paths during their college years. That's where they met—at school in New York—and the idea of forming a band together took shape during COVID. Foreign Body was born.

"We wanted to try playing a style of music we felt not many other bands were approaching in a meaningful way," they say.

They certainly achieved that. The music of Foreign Body is devastatingly ferocious and, dig beyond the uncompromising brutality, it's also razor sharp and intelligent.

"We are a noise rock band that prioritizes aggression and immediacy," they say. "Our influences lean towards the heavier, noisier, side of the genre. We have no use for Sonic Youth. When we first started playing there was a more overt post punk sound but that has been thoroughly rooted out over time. Now our sound is closer to orthodox blue collar noise rock bands like Flipper or even some power electronics than something like Unwound. In trimming a lot of the whiny moodiness, our sound has become more unified and intense in the process."

Earlier this year, Foreign Body signed to Brutal Panda, known for its

"In trimming a lot of the whiny moodiness, our sound has become more unified and intense in the process."

consistently excellent roster, and released the "Strung Out" single.

"It came about through word-of-mouth from our friends in Couch Slut who passed along the album to the team there," they say. "Given the label's roster, especially with bands like Cherubs, who we've always held as one of the best of our contemporaries, we thought it was a natural fit. Everyone at the label has been supportive of our music, art, and ideas for the release."

The guys say that the "Strung Out" single is both the opening track of and the best distillation of their forthcoming full-length album.

"Despite being the first track, it was ultimately one of the last songs we wrote for the album, as we thought it needed something that felt more like a kick in the teeth to start," they say. "We began working on the album almost immediately after our first album *Fixed* and in a lot of ways addressed the shortcomings of that record. The sound is simultaneously more dynamic and noisier while throwing in a couple of curveballs which we won't spoil. Thematically it progresses naturally from themes present in the first—fantasy, vices, and a race to the bottom—while also diving further into subjectivity and a more profound sense of disgust." - **Brett Callwood**



Date Signed: February 2026

Label: Jealous Butcher Records

Type of Music: Ambient, Indie-Folk, Instrumental

Publicity: Charm School Media

A&R: Rob Jones

Web: melanieradford.com

Bassist and vocalist Melanie Radford built a reputation with bands like Built to Spill and Blood Lemon, but she recently released her debut album *For the Sake of Stillness*, while signing with Jealous Butcher Records. The "Hangin' On" single offered a taste; haunting vocals and equally moody bass. This is Radford's time to shine.

"I had always been in bands as a collaborator, but I tried some solo performances when I was 21 and I really enjoyed it," she says. "It didn't last very long though—life complications happened and I had to give that dream up for a while. I just wasn't confident enough in myself. Then, about two to three years ago, I began writing the material for this album and it felt like I was finally finding myself."

Radford describes her solo sound as calm, steady and warm. "I love a good, well-rounded bass tone and the heaviness that can be found in an ambient song, so I try to make my sound feel like it's wrapping you in a weighted blanket," she says.

The artist joins a Jealous Butcher roster that includes the likes of Johanna Samuels, Adam Schatz, and The Geraldine Fibbers.

"Rob Jones manages Team Dresch who Built to Spill toured with many years ago," Radford says. "We hit it off and kept in touch over the years and when I was looking for someone to help me release this record, it was like the universe pushed us together—my friend Adam Schatz recommended

"I love a good, well-rounded bass tone and the heaviness that can be found in an ambient song."

working with him and we later got to meet up and chat at a crazy Modest Mouse cruise/festival thing where Califone (another JBR band) was also playing... we felt like the album would be a perfect fit for his roster."

Radford says that *For the Sake of Stillness* is a "spiritual, conceptual art project."

"It was created with the intent of inspiring contemplative moments and filling the listener with warmth (because I needed that for myself) so there is a home-made feeling to it," she says. "I recorded it in multiple home studios in different locations around the world while I was touring and traveling with friends and my partner, Lê Almeida."

Looking ahead, Radford has plenty planned for the second half of 2026. "A lot of touring with Built to Spill (again!) but I'm planning to squeeze in as many solo shows as I can," she says. "I'm really excited about the album release show in Seattle because I'll be performing it in a chapel with a full band and surprise visuals that will be tailored completely to the space. I haven't been able to create a full performance experience in a long time, so to finally have this opportunity if very exciting." - **Brett Callwood**



Date Signed: April 2026
Label: Kscope
Type of Music: Folk, Indie Rock
Management: maiahwynnemanager@gmail.com
Booking: greg@manicmerch.com
Legal: greg@manicmerch.com
Publicity: Austin Griswold - Secret Service Publicity, austin@secretsservicepr.com
A&R: Greg Ross
Web: maiahwynne.com

Maiah Wynne didn't know where to start. Without any industry connections yet still wanting to make inroads as an entertainer, she searched Google for songwriting competitions. "Not the big ones that everybody's heard of, but smaller ones," tells the singer and songwriter, whose influences include Norah Jones and Radiohead. "And I won. I've done that a few times." She also began self-releasing a small avalanche of unofficial recordings.

Those moves eventually led to becoming the lead singer for Envy of None, a side project formed by Alex Lifeson, guitarist for seminal progressive rock band Rush. The group signed with Kscope shortly before the release of their self-titled debut in 2022.

Wynne naturally began forming friendships with the label's staff, including Kscope's co-founder, Johnny Wilks. "We've met in person a couple times, and he's such a delightful person," declares the multi-instrumentalist, extending that quality to everyone there. "We've developed a relationship that feels like a nice foundation for this record deal."

Crucially, she began working with her manager, Greg Ross, who took the initiative to pitch her as a solo artist. Wynne admits she doesn't know

"I wasn't drawn to the idea of signing to a label for a long time, because I like being independent. But there's a ceiling I felt I'd reached."

if she'd have had the energy or drive to do so on her own. Focusing on her music had become too draining, making Kscope's help all the more welcome. "I wasn't drawn to the idea of signing to a label for a long time," she admits, "because I like being independent. But there's a ceiling I felt I'd reached."

Although another company showed interest, that option failed to strike the right chord. Kscope, on the other hand, made her feel confident, even though they've never worked with an artist in her genre. "Their core is really the message of the music," Wynne insists. "If they connect with it, they want to help." And even though they're based in the United Kingdom, distance won't be a problem while she studies at the Abbey Road Institute.

Wynne's forthcoming LP, *Into the Waves*, splashes onto shores this summer. - **Andy Kaufmann**

Date Signed: April 2026
Label: Take Care Records
Type of Music: Indie Rock
Management: whisperdollmusic@gmail.com
Booking: whisperdollmusic@gmail.com
Legal: whisperdollmusic@gmail.com
Publicity: Kenzie Davis, kenzie@bighassle.com
A&R: Rob Glander - Take Care Records
Web: whisperdoll.neocities.org

At a certain point in New York City, you learn that some shows don't feel like shows so much as shared hallucinations. Lights dim, conversations dissolve, and suddenly you're inside someone else's emotional weather system. That's where Whisper Doll tends to live.

The project of Fiona Tagami has always had the feeling of something half-remembered: dream-pop brushed with static, melodies that feel like they're being pulled through fabric. But for Tagami, it all started somewhere much less ethereal. "I started singing and performing in my school's choir in middle school and was in various bands throughout high school in Atlanta," she says.

Whisper Doll's sound today floats somewhere between nostalgia and fogged glass—critics hear The Sundays and The Cranberries, but Tagami resists turning it into a museum of influences. "I'm interested in creating expansive songs that have a strong melodic core." The reference points sprawl outward: Lush, Cocteau Twins, Broadcast, Julee Cruise, Lana Del Rey—artists who all seem to build worlds more than songs.

But the real-world leaks in anyway, usually through small fractures. "Seeing little beautiful and unexpected things really inspires me," she

"We have a lot to be grateful for as a band. Finding Rob and having him believe in us so fiercely has changed everything."

says. "Plants growing through cement, swirls on gates, water droplets on a window." She walks at night often, drawn to the strange neutrality of darkness. "The quiet and neutrality of the dark" becomes its own kind of studio. So does the city's music ecosystem: "Going to see shows in New York really inspires me too. I have many talented friends."

That intimacy—the sense of a scene built from proximity rather than scale—threads through everything Whisper Doll does. At a recent Nightclub 101 show, Tagami noticed something she couldn't shake. "I had four of my closest friends in the front row, singing along to our songs," she says. "It brought back a memory of our first couple of shows, when they were the only ones in the audience." The fact they're still there, she adds, "means everything to me."

The path to Take Care Records wasn't engineered so much as accumulated. "I applied for the band to play at the New Colossus Festival in 2024 after the deadline," she says, almost amused by it in hindsight. They still got in. She performed sick that day, with her mother in the crowd. "I decided to push through," she says. That set led to Rob Glander from Take Care watching them for the first time—and then again, and again. "He kept coming back to our shows," she says. "Rob slowly gained my trust."

What started with skepticism toward labels turned into something closer to kinship. "We share the exact same visions, tastes, and aspirations," she says. "He's one of my best friends."

More music is coming in 2026—singles, videos, eventually a record, and a tour. - **Ruby Risch**



▲ CHILI PEPPER SALE

WMG acquires catalog masters of the Red Hot Chili Peppers for rumored over \$300 million (a joint venture with Bain Capital). Catalog includes 13 studio albums, generating approximately \$26 million/year. The sale follows 2021's publishing sale to Hipgnosis (now Recognition Music) for roughly \$150 million.



◀ KIRK FRANKLIN HONORED

With over 30 years of hits, multi-GRAMMY winning artist-songwriter-producer Kirk Franklin receives SoundExchange's Hall of Fame Award as one of the most-streamed artists of the past 20 years. Part of inaugural Rise and Rhythm Cruise, he headlines August's Gospel Garden event in London.



▲ PLATTEN'S DIAMOND AWARD

Marking over 10 million units sold in the United States, singer-songwriter Rachel Platten receives RIAA's Diamond Award for "Fight Song" by Sony Music Publishing, joining Beyoncé, Rihanna, Taylor Swift, Lady Gaga, and others as one of only 25 solo female artists to receive the honor. [Pictured l-r: Jon Platt (Chairman/CEO, Sony Music Publishing), Rachel Platten, Dave Bassett at Sony Music Publishing's celebration of Rachel Platten.]

SourceAudio Music Monitoring

Sync Platform SourceAudio has expanded their SourceAudio Detect music monitoring service to include neural fingerprinting and watermark technology to identify licensed music in television, film, radio, and other commercial uses. SourceAudio members can add the monitoring service to their membership as an add-on fee, pro-rated to their catalog size. The new technology can detect legacy and new recordings and provide comprehensive reports for the associated performing rights organization (PRO) to help ensure the collection of all appropriate royalties, adding to SourceAudio's mission to increase music rightsholder revenue. Details at sourceaudio.com/music-monitoring.

NSAI Rise Program

The 2026 Nashville Songwriters Association International (NSAI) Summer Rise Program kicks off this month. For artists ready to pursue an in-depth study of songwriting, the remote interactive program runs for five weeks, July 20 - August 18, with NSAI delivering an incredible group of industry guests ready to answer questions and offer their best insight and advice to help writers improve in their craft. Topics covered include co-writing, the music business, publisher pitching, and professional songwriter



▲ SENSELESS OPTIMISM'S HEAT

Prescription Songs signs alt-pop project Senseless Optimism (singer-songwriter-instrumentalist Brittany Tsewole), releasing "HEAT" on imprint Amigo Records. Playing guitar, bass, drums, etc., videos navigate introspective lyricism, layered guitar-driven pop, warm melodies, with millions of TikTok/Instagram views.

feedback. Limited to 25 participants, all genres and levels of songwriters are welcome, with details and registration at nashvillesongwriters.com/RISE, email maxwell@nashvillesongwriters.com.

SESAC Celebrates Artists

Celebrating the SESAC Film & Television Composer Awards, this year's honorees included Laura Karpman (*Captain America: Brave New World*), Daniel Lopatin (*Marty Supreme*) and The Newton Brothers. SESAC's annual Latina Music Awards honored Kapo, Edén Muñoz, and Sony Music Publishing for global chart successes. Details at sesac.com. With growing international efforts, the organization recently established the "John Sweeney Stage" at England's Sound City Festival and the John Sweeney Impact Prize for promising new artists, in honor of SESAC's late Vice President of International, a passionate advocate for U.K. music.

MLC Statutory Designation

Launching in 2021, The MLC now has almost 90,000 members and a database of over 54 million songs. With almost \$4 billion in royalties distributed to songwriters and publishers to date, the US Copyrights Register continues in its designation of The MLC as the statutory Mechanical Licensing Collective for the United States. The move follows a periodic review of designation required by the Music Modernization Act (MMA), with The MLC being determined to have met each of the redesignation criteria. More at bit.ly/4e8p2Z0. Some improvements were recommended, including database tools, match-rate data disclosure, and investment transparency. In addition to licensing and distribution, The MLC has also been actively enforcing royalty obligations of digital music services (including a lawsuit with Spotify against subscription bundling, and a dispute with Pandora over ad-supported radio). The next MLC review is slated for January 2029.

Growing Grass Roots

Latin music is changing, with massive momentum in Mexico's corridos genre, with an explosion in listener activity, as reported by Duetti and Chartmetric's study of almost 20,000 corridos artists), who noted demographics, platform shares, and engagement patterns across Mexican streaming. The narrative song form sits combines storytelling folk and regional music built around characters, locations, specific events, and a

clear, unfolding story, rather than just atmospheric sound. With the first No. 1 on the Spotify Global Top 50 chart from Mexican artist Xavi ("La Diabla"), and hits from Chino Pacas and Gabito Ballesteros, corridos is the third fastest growing genre globally, almost all driven by catalogs from independent artists. Corridos has better-than-average repeated listen and save data and has entered other genre segments. Global penetration, rapid growth, indie-led development, and differentiated monetization present a great opportunity for independent corridos artists. More at hmc.chartmetric.com/corridos-tumbados-independent-artist-success.

NO FAKES Act

The Human Artistry Campaign and RIAA renew their support for new congressional action being taken on the NO FAKES Act. Following 2024's initial rollout, an updated version of the Act looks to expand federal guardrails against unauthorized A.I. content that monopolizes on the identity of individuals through unauthorized replicas and deepfakes, with creative communities, labor unions, A.I. developers, child advocacy groups, and a growing group of politicians voicing their concerns. The goal of the NO FAKES ACT ("Nurture Originals, Foster Art, and Keep Entertainment Safe Act of 2026") is to give every American a right that protects their voice and likeness from invasive A.I. deepfakes and voice clones. The revised version adding protection for First Amendment use for news reporting, satire, and education and research for libraries and other institutions, as well as a counter-notice procedure to challenge platform removal of materials More at humanartistrycampaign.quorum.us/campaign/162429.

ASCAP Celebrates Thomas

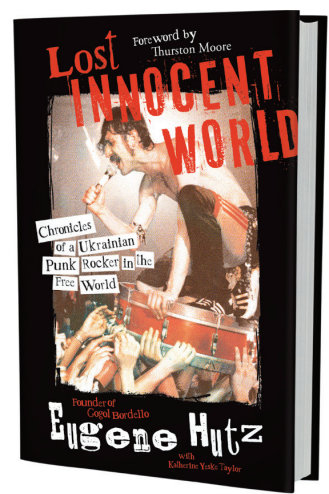
Brooklyn-born, triple GRAMMY-winning, R&B singer-songwriter-producer Leon Thomas has received the 2026 ASCAP Vanguard Award from ASCAP for work shaping modern R&B music. From his start on Broadway in musicals *The Lion King*, *Caroline, or Change*, and *The Color Purple*, to work on Nickelodeon's *Victorious* and production work with Chris Riddick-Tynes, he has co-written-co-produced for Ariana Grande, Babyface, Drake, Rick Ross, SZA, Toni Braxton, released three mixtapes and an EP (Rostrum Records). Signing with Ty Dolla Sign's EZMNY Records/Motown,

he won Best R&B Song for co-writing "Snooze" (SZA) and climbed *Billboard* charts with 2024's *Mutt*, with six GRAMMY nominations at the 68th annual Awards (including for "Vibes Don't Lie").

Canadian SongProof Registry

Toronto's new blockchain-powered music ownership platform, SongProof, has launched, already including over registered 500 songs from creators in over 40 countries. Designed as a compliment to the copyright process, SongProof provides creators with instant, timestamped proof of authorship and collaboration before being shared publicly, the platform generates a fingerprint of every uploaded song, anchored to blockchain (polygon and Bitcoin) to create a tamper-proof certificate within seconds to provide a record of creation, as well as a built-in split sheet system, to help document ownership percentages.

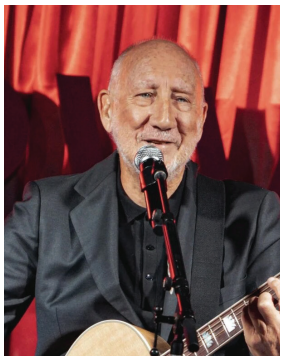
ANDREA BEENHAM (aka Drea Jo) is a freelance writer and marketing consultant based in Southern California. The South-African born, Canadian-raised California transplant has a passion for music, people and fun. She can be reached at drea@dreaajo.com



▲ **HÜTZ LOST INNOCENT'S** Ukrainian-American punk frontman Eugene Hütz (Gogol Bordello) releases *Lost Innocent World*, navigating the journey from refugee to global punk icon. Launched in 1999, with global members, Gogol is known for theatrics/tenacious touring. Forward by Thurston Moore (Sonic Youth). See bit.ly/4dTgiqj.



▲ **SCMS' BALOURDET QUARTET** Having mentored musicians and sharing chamber music in homes, schools, and health spaces, The Balourdet Quartet (Angela Bae, Justin DeFilippis, Benjamin Zannoni, Russell Houston) returns for a second residency with Seattle's Chamber Music Society, through May 2027.

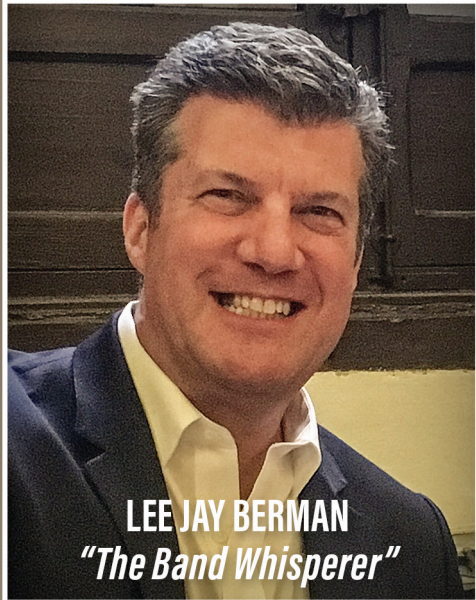


◀ **PRIMARY WAVE'S TOWNSEND** Founder/principal songwriter of The Who, Pete Townshend partners with Primary Wave for rights to a selection of music (majority still owned/distributed by UMG) and use of name, image and likeness for future works. Rumored to have cost over \$100 million. Townshend's solo rights are owned separately.



▲ **ELTON JOHN'S IMPACT** New podcast series/awards program launched by iHeartMedia and P&G, *The Elton John Impact Awards* celebrates LGBTQ+ icons/trailblazers/prominent allies helping shape culture and advance equality. Hosts Billy Porter/Elvis Duran chat with Elton John, David Furnish, and the year's honorees. See bit.ly/4aj6PqI.

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Leland

Humble Creative



Photo by Michael Ian

Biloxi, MS is hardly the destination that springs to mind when thinking of cutting-edge queer pop, but that is exactly where it all started for producer-songwriter-deejay Leland (Brett Leland McLaughlin). MTV (*Total Request Live*) reached him during his precious 90-minute after-school window, and he got the bug. He has since worked with artists including Selina Gomez, Andy Grammer, Kelsea Ballerini, Allie X, Charlie XCX, Demi Lovato, and many more, with his success built on patience and humility.

"There was a sacred window of time by myself when I would come home from high school," shares Leland. "Those were very formative years of falling in love with all types of pop. [It was] the first time I saw on TV what felt like people like me, a community passionate about music whose lives do not revolve around religion. I didn't feel alone; there was possibility and community."

Buying stacks of CDs and studying credits, he developed songwriting ideas at the piano. Gigs up and down the Gulf followed, before studying commercial voice at Belmont University, which Leland says was "the best next step for finding people like me [and] starting my process of writing hundreds of terrible songs to finally get to good ones." Students showcased country, rock, and pop, and Leland loved helping. "It was training ground for what I do now. Whether writing country, or on *Drag Race*, that training diversified the music I was writing."

A student at Belmont when he secured his first publishing deal (which came by way of a casino cocktail waitress he sang with in church in Mississippi), he spent a year writing what he calls terrible songs. "Maybe one out of every 30 or 40 songs was okay," he says. "They all got gradually better." Circling back with the label, he signed to publishing with John Platt at EMI. His first cut did not come for another seven years.

Troye Sivan inspired Leland using same sex pronouns in their first studio session. "Being *this* version of myself, I can't imagine *not* doing that," says Leland. "I started feeling comfortable and didn't have to filter." Initially feeling need to overcompensate for being gay (something he says exists for many queer songwriters), friends JHart, Sarah Hudson, Jessie Saint John, and Ross Golan helped. "If we weren't these versions of ourselves, we would never have written 'DJ Play A Christmas Song' for Cher. Troye's music wouldn't exist with the same honesty and lyricism people have connected to if we hadn't had journeys with our sexuality."

RuPaul's Drag Race started because a friend needed a change after almost 10 years. Thirty-plus seasons later, Leland says, "I love that I get to say my full-time job is *RuPaul's Drag Race*, and also write songs with friends and artists. Drag is innately a protest of the norm, how society thinks you need to present yourself. I feel really lucky. It doesn't feel divisive, it feels beautiful, full of joy." Adds Leland, "When it's lighter, it can sneak into places it normally wouldn't if it was too serious. That's the beauty of *Drag Race*."

As for studio writing, Leland says, "It doesn't need to be this serious energy. Let the room breathe, let everyone feel they're being heard. If you are a good listener, a good communicator, you're going to be liked and the energy is gonna be great. Opportunities will not all come at once [and] success is about being able to pay your bills doing music. There is no shame in getting a job. Songwriters are the last to get paid, [so] set yourself up to not be financially stressed." Ultimately, he says, "The secret is sticking it out until you find people that see you and recognize you for your value."

Signed to Vertigo Berlin/Universal Music Germany as a singer in December 2017, Leland began as resident songwriter/producer for *RuPaul's Drag Race* the same year. With an exclusive set at WeHo Pride's OUTLAND Music Festival, he deejays at World Pride Music Festival in Amsterdam August 1. Feature film *Stop That Train* is out now (youtube.com/watch?v=yx2YuoAnwIQ).

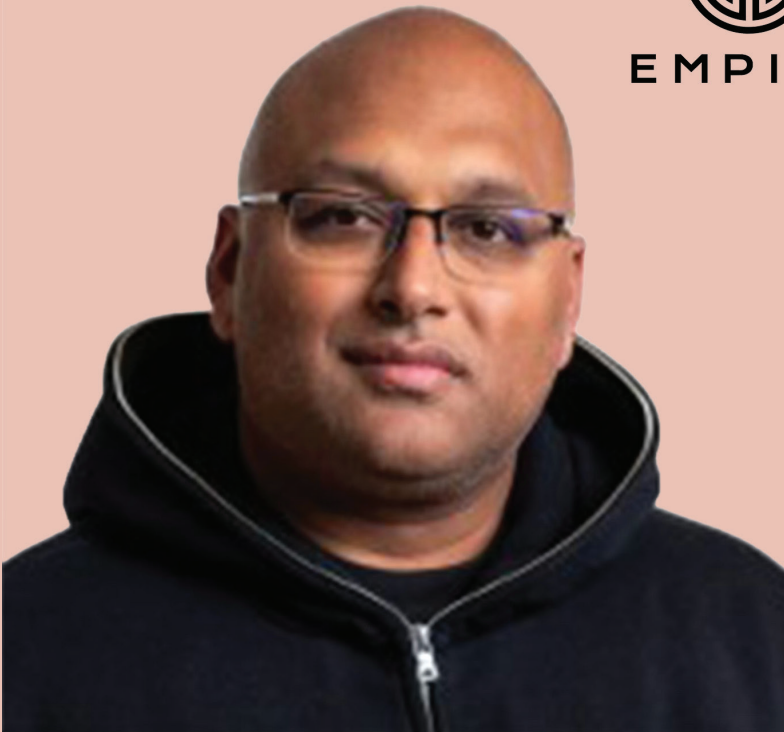
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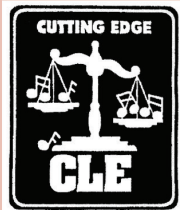
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President
EMPIRE Publishing

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DROPS

Lakeshore Records released the *Hacks Seasons 2-5 Original Series Soundtrack* digitally, featuring an original score by Emmy and GRAMMY-winning composer Carlos Rafael Rivera and composer David Stal. Their orchestral work spanned the full emotional and comedic range of the HBO Max series, which follows the unlikely partnership between a Las Vegas comedian played by Jean Smart and a television writer played by Hannah Einbinder. The composers drew on intimate piano, funk, soul, and full live orchestration to support the show's comedy across four seasons. Contact Sarah Roche at sarah@whitebearpr.com for details.

The music from *Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag* has released on vinyl in two formats, a 5LP collector's box set and a double LP set, via Ubisoft and Laced Records. Timed to the announcement of *Assassin's Creed Black Flag Resynced*, both releases featured new cover artwork by illustrator Jeff Langevin alongside archival environment pieces from Ubisoft. Exclusive variants include a blue-disc 5LP and a blue-and-orange double LP, available only through Laced Records. The 5LP includes 79 tracks from Brian Tyler's original score, multiplayer music by The Flight and Christian Henson, popular sea shanties, and Olivier Deriviere's *Freedom Cry DLC* score. The 2LP features 36 highlights from Tyler's score and a selection of shanties. For more information, contact Greg O'Connor-Read at greg@topdollarpr.com.

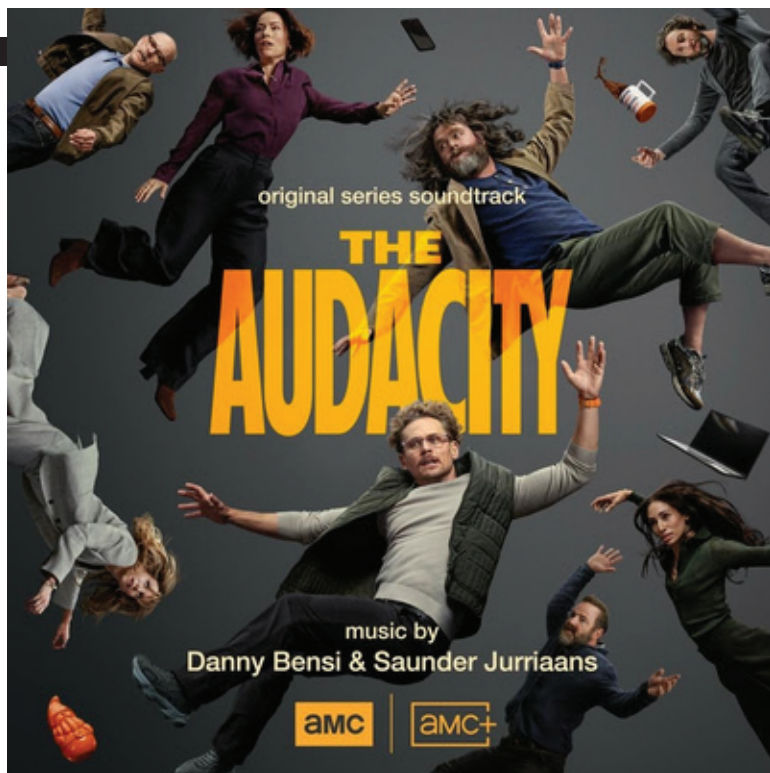
Streaming Arrow Records opened pre-orders for two first-time vinyl releases tied to *The Legend of Heroes: Trails from Zero*, in partnership with developer and publisher Nihon Falcom. *The Legend of Heroes: Trails from Zero Original*

Soundtrack, composed by Falcom Sound Team jdk and remastered for vinyl, was pressed on 5xLP, collecting the full score to the 2010 Crossbell RPG. *The Legend of Heroes: Trails from Zero Super Arrange Version*, the 2011 live band arrangement album, was pressed on 2xLP and released alongside the soundtrack featuring violin, guitar, and bass performances across 12 reimagined tracks. Both releases were timed to coincide with the game's newly announced Nintendo Switch 2 reissue of the game, with shipping slated for the first quarter of 2027. For details, contact Jayson Napolitano at jayson@scarletmoonproductions.com.

Lakeshore Records has released *The Audacity (Original Series Soundtrack)* digitally, featuring music by composers Danny Bensi and Saunder Jurriaans. The duo, celebrated for their work on *Ozark* and *Black Rabbit*, brought Jonathan Glatzer's AMC dark comedy to life through layered string arrangements, percussion, and vocalizations. The series stars Billy Magnussen, Sarah Goldberg, and Zach Galifianakis and

explores the egos, ethical failures, and ambitions beneath Silicon Valley's shiny surface. Stream it on AMC+ and find the soundtrack on digital platforms. For more information, contact Sarah Roche at sarah@whitebearpr.com.

Denver cosmic death metal band Blood Incantation released *All Gates Open (Original Motion Picture Soundtrack)*, their first-ever soundtrack, which accompanies a documentary about the creation of their acclaimed 2024 album *Absolute Elsewhere*. Previously exclusive to a deluxe artbook, the release is a standalone for the first time on Blu-ray, vinyl, and digital



formats. The four-tracks were composed in 2021 and reveal an introspective, ambient side to the band through synth improvisations and acoustic instrumentation. The accompanying documentary, directed by Niklas Tschaikowsky and Tammo Dehn, takes viewers inside Berlin's Hansa Tonstudios, where the album was written and recorded. Contact Bailey Sattler at bailey@another-side.net for details.

Independent game developer Blue Lily launched a Kickstarter campaign for *Moonlight Pale*, a 2D hand-drawn survival horror game set in a late 1800s female seminary. Players follow Juliette, a student who pursues the ghost of her dead cat into an abandoned building deep within the school gardens, navigating hidden monsters and spirits while attempting to rescue fellow students. Inspired by *Silent Hill*, *Signalis*, and *Rule of Rose*, the game features two modes including one that focuses on puzzle-solving, and another that allows for combat. The campaign aims for a late 2026 or early 2027 Steam release, with voice work from cast members including Kira Buckland, Lizzie Freeman, Diana Garnet, Chiisa, and Michelle Marie. For more information, contact Jayson Napolitano at jayson@scarletmoonproductions.com.

OPPS

Are you ready to join hundreds of composers from over 30 countries scoring a real award-winning short film? Visit indiefilmmusiccontest.com to register and submit your work for consideration in the Indie Film Music. It doesn't matter if you're brand new to film scoring or an old pro—all are welcome, and work will be reviewed by real composers. The submission deadline is July 30.

August 1 is the deadline to submit work to The Small Plates Choreography Festival, which is open to both emerging and seasoned



choreographers. The November 13 and 14 event in New York entails a series of two curated dance performances with facilitated dialogue between the artists and audience. Learn more about this unique festival and how to apply by visiting smallplatesdance.com/performances/nyc.

August 31 is the early bird deadline for the California Music Video & Film Awards, which celebrates music videos, music, musicians, artists, films, and directors. Submissions do not need to be from California creators. Learn more about the event, categories and submission guidelines at filmfreeway.com/californiamusicvideoawards.

PROPS

Acclaimed vocal coach, singer, and producer **Stephanie Spruill** has stepped into the spotlight for her pivotal role as vocal coach on the Lionsgate/Universal Pictures biopic *Michael*, which has approached \$1 billion at the worldwide box office. Spruill worked with stars Jaafar Jackson (who portrays his uncle,



the late pop star Michael Jackson), Juliano Valdi (who portrays young Michael), as well as the Jackson 5 cast, coaching them to authentically capture Jackson's vocal tone and phrasing. She was uniquely qualified, having worked closely with Jackson himself. The achievement marked another milestone in a five-decade career that included collaborations with Aretha Franklin, Elton John, and Barbra Streisand, among many others. For more information, contact Edna Sims at esppr@icloud.com.

Game Music Festival, a leading organizer of videogame music concerts and events



that celebrate game soundtracks, hosted a symphonic concert in June, *The Colors of Harmony*, to celebrate the 40-year career of video game composer Hitoshi Sakimoto. Held at Fairfield Halls in London, the event featured the London Mozart Players under conductor Timothy Henty, with Sakimoto himself in attendance. The program drew from four decades of his work, including **13 Sentinels: Aegis Rim**, **Odin Sphere Leifthrasir**, **Final Fantasy Tactics**, and **Final Fantasy XII**. VIP ticket holders also gained access to a full-day celebration featuring a pub quiz and a masterclass with Sakimoto. Contact Jayson Napolitano at jayson@scarletmoonproductions.com for more information.

Scarlet Moon Records has released **Prescription for Sleep: Ocarina of Time**, a jazz lullaby tribute to Koji Kondo's score for *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time*. The album marks a dual celebration: 40 years of *The Legend of Zelda* franchise and 15 years since the re-release of *Ocarina of Time*. Performed by GENTLE LOVE, a duo consisting of saxophonist Norihiko Hibino and pianist AYAKI, the record features 11 popular arrangements and an original composition inspired by the land of Hyrule. This is the 16th album in the *Billboard*-charting jazz series, and the first album dedicated entirely to the *Zelda* franchise. For more information, contact Jayson Napolitano at jayson@scarletmoonproductions.com.

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

OUT TAKE



Cheryl Wang

Music Supervisor

Web: imdb.com/name/nm11125087

Most recent: *I Love Boosters*

One of Cheryl Wang's most significant moments as a music supervisor, she says, was when she cleared Eagles' "Hotel California" for a project. "To me, as a nonnative English speaker, that song was kind of like one of the three English songs you could find everywhere in China, so to get approvals for that felt like a big moment for me."

Born and raised in a small town in China where a career in music or entertainment didn't strike her as realistic, Wang's path to music supervision wasn't planned. But when she went to college in Shanghai, and then graduate school at Columbia in New York, that world was opened up to her as she started working in post-production jobs. Now, she has credits on *Splitsville*, *X*, *Armageddon Time*, and, most recently, she secured the rights to Prince's "Adore" for rapper Boots Riley's new adventure comedy *I Love Boosters*.

Landing the Prince track for the film was fate. "I'm a long-time fan of Riley; I used to follow him on Twitter back in the day and remember him saying he was trying to use that same song on [his television series] *I'm a Virgo*, and I remembered that," Wang says. "When I go the call to join the *Boosters* project, I was secretly hoping we'd get to have a Prince track in it. Fortunately, when we reached out to the Prince estate, they were so collaborative, so we were lucky."

Securing the rights to music isn't always as straightforward, and it's the hurdles and obstacles of the job that exercise creativity, Wang says. "It's not just finding the right tracks. Especially in the indie film world, you have to work within all kinds of limitations, including budget. And you have to be super organized, know all the nuances of clearance, and be ready to handle a large volume of emails and calls. I think a good music supervisor is being adaptable when you can't secure a song, and communicative, because ideas change every minute, and your job is to fulfill a filmmaker's vision."

Other upcoming films Wang collaborated on include independent romantic drama *Ephemer*, shot in Shanghai and created by Wang's film school friend, director Shan Jiang; *The Get Out* starring Russell Crowe; and *Runner* with Owen Wilson.

▶ **DISCO SHRINE KICKS OFF #SPRAYTANSUMMER WITH NEW SINGLE "SPRAY TAN"**

Disco Shrine launches #SprayTanSummer with her new single "Spray Tan," a glitter-soaked, bass-heavy club anthem out now. Built on playful excess and tongue-in-cheek commentary on beauty culture, the track turns L.A.'s Coachella spray tan frenzy into dancefloor chaos. It marks the start of a new era from the L.A. DJ and pop disruptor.



▲ **CASPER SAGE RELEASES NEW EP PATINA**

Alt-R&B artist Casper Sage shares his new EP *PATINA*, out now via Warner Records. The seven-track project captures a reflective, emotionally intimate body of work shaped by personal loss and change, as Sage reframes nostalgia and aging through his signature blend of soulful production and introspective songwriting.



◀ **M.I.A. RELEASES SEVENTH STUDIO ALBUM M.I.7**

M.I.A. releases *M.I.7*, her seventh studio album, out via OHMNIMUSIC. Structured around seven songs written across seven countries in seven-day creative bursts, the project features Sunday Service and expands her ongoing fusion of music, spirituality, and global experimentation. The release follows her surprise Coachella appearance with Diplo and Major Lazer.

◀ **SATYA RELEASES "FRUITS OF MY LABOR" AHEAD OF DEBUT ALBUM YELLOW HOUSE**

Oakland-born, Los Angeles-based artist Satya shares "Fruits of My Labor," a soulful reimagining of the Lucinda Williams classic. The single appears on her debut album *Yellow House*, a reflective collection exploring childhood trauma, healing, and recovery, produced by Colin Linden and recorded in Nashville.

Tidbits From Our Tattered Past

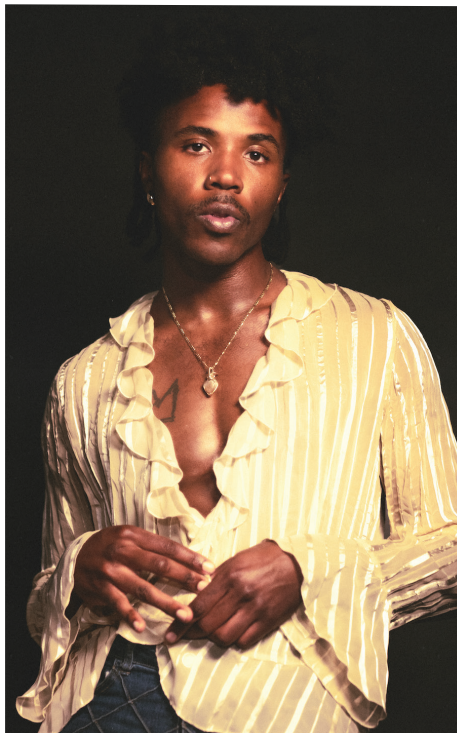


▲ INJI LAUNCHES SUPERLAME TOUR ACROSS EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

INJI has begun the SUPERLAME Tour, which began in April in Europe, before it headed to North America in May. The tour follows her debut mixtape *SUPERLAME*, a dance-pop project shaped by themes of reinvention and emotional release. The run supports breakout tracks including "GASLIGHT" and "BELLYDANCING," which helped establish her global streaming presence.

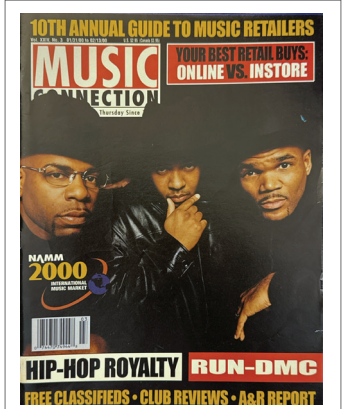
▶ DE'WAYNE AND LENNY KRAVITZ TEAM UP ON "HIGHWAY ROBBERY" REMIX

Emerging rock artist DE'WAYNE teams up with Lenny Kravitz for a new remix of "highway robbery," a glam-rock reimagining of the standout track from his 2025 album *june*. The collaboration arrives alongside a new music video and follows news of DE'WAYNE joining Machine Gun Kelly and Lenny Kravitz on extensive summer tour dates.



◀ OAKS FEATURED IN JASON ROSS AND WILLIAM BLACK'S "MIRAGE"

Jason Ross and William Black have released "Mirage," a melodic house collaboration featuring vocals from Oaks. Issued via Lost In Dreams, the track blends progressive production with emotive songwriting, anchored by Oaks' ethereal vocal performance. The single continues Jason Ross' evolving album rollout while highlighting the trio's shared focus on cinematic, emotionally driven electronic music.



2000 - Run-DMC - #3

Hip-hop royalty Run-DMC graced *MC*'s cover in 2000 as they prepared their star-studded album, *Crown Royal*. Discussing their industry alliances, Run shared his immense excitement about working with Arista Records chief Clive Davis: "It's the greatest thing ever. I talk to Clive Davis on the phone every day—and Clive, plotting and scheming and figuring it out, and loving it to death." However, not every collaboration was seamless. Run candidly expressed his heartbreak over an unexpected snub: "We chose the Beastie Boys [to be on the new album], but they acted funny. They were the only people who didn't show up and didn't want to do anything... I'm hurt."



1993 - Redd Kross - #24

MC's 1993 issue celebrated the pop-punk brilliance of Redd Kross. Jeff McDonald famously declared, "I consider rock & roll high art. I honestly do," adding, "it's so primitive. Therefore, it is absurd, so you gotta have a smile about it." Embracing modern American culture, they boldly injected unfiltered honesty into their music. Reflecting on their tumultuous history with various record companies, McDonald candidly shared, "I credit indie labels for giving us our start... But there were other ones that were very shady and worse than anyone we've ever met at a major label."

Limited back issues available to order at musicconnection.com



DREAM WEAVER

From Bad Girl to Hot Mom, **DreamDoll's** Clocking It
All with Her Next Career Phase

By **Lina Lecaro**

When it comes to milestones, nothing changes a woman like motherhood. Tabatha Robinson, AKA DreamDoll, is no exception, and as we prepare to discuss her new music, the outspoken rapper is clearly in the midst of creating a balance that works for her. Our Zoom chat happens during naptime for her one-year-old daughter Jream, a scheduling decision that any mom can relate to. Time becomes precious in a new way after giving birth and “going back to work” is a transitional process that requires a different kind of attention and management.

My offspring is an adult now, but the challenges of maintaining my identity as a journalist—and as a woman—are still fresh in my mind, as they are for anyone who opts to pursue a career and have a family. It’s something that we all have to contemplate and navigate when life changes in ways we never imagined, especially as a woman breastfeeding, sleep training, and bonding with your child while also doing a job that requires leaving the house and being “on” for the public in any way.

As a music artist, the demands are huge, and even with childcare help, it’s a lot. DreamDoll identifies as a single mother, which everyone knows is especially hard. But if there’s anyone who can do it with ease—and maintain her fortitude and lyrical tease—it’s the lady who came out of the gate demanding respect, establishing herself as a woman who won’t take shit from anyone, especially in terms of how she wants to be spoken to and treated. It’s what made her debut track for DJ Self’s Gwinin Entertainment called “Everything Nice” such a huge hit.

*It’s DreamDoll, baby
Talk nice (maddies or nah?)*

*I’m a dog, I’m a freak
Ask your nigga about me
Catching rep’ in these streets
Screaming, “Motherfuck the fee!”
What’s my tab? Fuck that tab
I’ma make that shit right back
Fix ya’ face lil’ thot
Why you mad? Why you mad?*

*Talk to me nice (talk to me nice)
Talk to me nice (talk to me nice)
Talk to me nice (talk to me nice)
Talk to me nice, yeah (talk to me nice)*

*If you a bum ass bitch then fuck yo’ life (fuck yo’ life)
Everything nice (talk to me nice)
Talk to me nice (talk to me nice)*

*I rock Christian Loub’s, two bands on my shoes (ooh)
I will fuck your nigga and might give him back to you (ooh)
Everything nice, pull up foreigners, cocaine white (skrt)
Talk to me nice, no he didn’t fuck, but he tryna wife (woah)
What type is you on? I get to that bag ‘cause that’s all I know (I know)
Only rock with baddies that get money, lil’ hoe (right)
I need bands just to pull up for the walkthrough
You a broke bitch, kill ya’ self, let it haunt you*

— Excerpt from “Everything Nice”

“Everything Nice” saw massive success in urban music markets and was particularly hot in the clubs, where it became an audacious anthem for gals who want the finer things in life and ain’t afraid to work for it (or take it), running tabs and knowing it will all be covered one way or another as long as she grabs “the bag” and “the bands” (large sums of money) with focus and ferocity.

The track not only served as DD’s breakthrough, it solidified her brand, garnering millions of views for its music video on YouTube and over 10 million streams on Spotify. It also paved the way for the *Billboard*-charting collaborations that came later, namely the mega-hot “Ah Ah Ah” with Fivio Foreign which peaked at No. 9 on the Rap Digital Song Sales chart, No. 24 on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Digital Songs Sales chart, and No. 30 on the overall Digital Song Sales chart; and “Thot Box (Remix)” with Hitmaka, Young M.A, Dreezy, Latto & Chinese Kitty, which became a streaming favorite on Apple Music and Spotify.

She’s a Bad Mama Jama

“It’s challenging,” DreamDoll admits as we start talking about her new life and her mindset since becoming a mom. “Well, it’s *kind of* challenging, but then it also just gives you a different type of purpose.”

Her purpose these days? Reestablishing her name as a top rapper after taking a year-long mommy break. The Bronx native was honing her sexy and powerful persona even before she became a rapper, from her days as a bartender at the New York strip club called Starlets to her rise as an Instagram sensation known for pics highlighting her alluring face card, her voluptuous body, and her fierce fashion. Her transparent approach to everything—from what plastic surgery she’s had (a boob job and a BBL, the latter of which she had removed) to the power dynamics of her sex life—was not only refreshing, it was aspirational.

“Dream has an incredible delivery and a special gift that has stood out to me since our first collaboration on ‘Thot Box,’ which was a game changer and earned us a Gold record,” shares GRAMMY-award winning producer Hitmaka. “So, executive producing her next project was a no-brainer. I’m excited for the world to hear what she’s created and finally give her the flowers she truly deserves.”

Hitmaka—whose real name is Christian Ward—knows what he’s talking about. He’s been involved in production for huge hits including “Bounce Back” by Big Sean, “John” by Lil Wayne, “Dangerous” by Meek Mill, and “Plan B” by Megan Thee Stallion to name a few, living up to his name in the studio and beyond. Collaborating with DreamDoll on her brand-new hot tracks “Too Established” and “Maybeline,” which were released together as a two-song combo/double single (think Queen’s “We Will Rock You/We Are the Champions”) it’s clear they both mean business.

Dream’s delivery sounds more mature and assured than it did in her early career even as it maintains its provocative assertions of agency over her lifestyle and style in general.

Filled with fashion-focused shout-outs and a cavalcade of clever pop culture references that can only be fully appreciated by checking out the lyric sheets, this Doll may be growing and evolving but she is still calling out her haters and anyone who doubted she'd be back badder than ever after having her babe.

*Uh, I mama, blow a bag in Prada (Yeah)
Top shottas, pink socks, Balenciaga (Uh)
Still taxing, my passion high fashion
These hoes scared to walk in the booth, I'm really rapping*

*Hoes looking for a out or what they do for clout
Put a nigga in his place, ask him, he'll vouch
(He know)
Told the captain park the yacht right next to habibi
Half you bitches in my comments drive a Mitsubishi (Uh-uh)
Ass fat, put it in his face, Miss Rikishi
Bitches tell me they could see me, then turn into Stevie
This rich pussy, it get leaky, I'm feeling like NeNe
President Rollie, told my new jeweler, "Impeach me"*

*I'm a freak, yup, guaranteed I ain't going Cassie (Uh-uh)
New wig, it's two colors like cotton candy
I ain't doing no talking unless I talk to Angie
I'ma stand on you bitches until y'all understand me
Tuh, for richer or for poorer
Or for poorer
Mmm, do I want the daddy or Shedeur? (Pick one)
My biggest problem is Givenchy or Dior (Mm-mmm)
Tell me, nigga, is you stingy or you poor?*

*Uh, I mama, blow a bag in Prada (Dream)
Top shottas, pink socks, Balenciaga (Woo)
Still taxing, my passion high fashion (Uh)
These hoes scared to walk in the booth, I'm really rapping*

*I mama, blow a bag in Prada (Dream)
Top shottas, pink socks, Balenciaga
Still taxing, my passion high fashion (Yeah)
Ain't going back and forth with you bitches, I'm too established*

*These hoes talking pregnancy
I'm the baby daddy, ho, let it be
Whole time they was talkin' shit
Tryna break down a bitch legacy
Shut the fuck up
Whole time you was tweaked out
Hoes must sniffin' amphetamines
Bitches tryna make shit up, fake as fuck
Ho, this ain't Maybelline*

*Y'all be worried about who the fuck the father of my child is
But don't know who y'all mother is
'Cause I'm really y'all bitches' mother
'Cause y'all bitches be watchin', preeing, copying
Copy and paste, I can't keep up
Ask your mother who your daddy, ho*

-Excerpts from "Too Established/Maybelline"



Clearly, Dream is very comfortable talking about the pregnancy that made her take a break from the rap game. She also addresses online chatter about who the daddy is (she hasn't said publicly). When we ask about how comfortable she's been incorporating motherhood into her music, she says it's a driving force in her current output and the new record she's working on, expected later this year.

"With this album I'm literally touching on everything," she explains. "I just feel like you're gonna get Dream the artist, the actress, the influencer, the rapper, all of that, all in one. So that's the best part about it, and you know, it's gonna definitely speak for itself."

Like other rappers who've had kids in the past couple years such as Cardi B, Sexyy Red, and Flo Milli to name a few, Dream is redefining what it means to be a mom, showing that women do not need to deny their sexual selves in order to be good parents. Her lyrics, like the aforementioned artists, can be extremely explicit. Basically every cut off her *Life in Plastic* series, which consists of three EPs, has an "E" next to it on streaming sites and her best collabs are shamelessly raunchy and impressively descriptive, from the no pussyfooting prose of "Splish Splash" with Chicago's CupcakKe to "Ass For Days" with KashDoll, a booty banger that makes "Baby Got Back" sound like a nursery rhyme.

Still, Dream tells us she does have a line, and her reference to "Cassie" (Diddy's highly publicized ex partner) in "Too Established"

suggests the jailed rapper's baby oil antics are it.

"It means that I'm freaky, but I ain't too freaky, like, there's levels to the freakiness," she says coyly. "I'm very unapologetic with my lyrics. It's just like, straightforward... you don't know what might come out of my mouth. And there's nothing wrong with controversy."

"Regardless of being a mom or not, I'm still me, and my daughter's my everything, but that doesn't change everything," Dream adds. "I try not to mix DreamDoll with motherhood but I balance both. I'm still gonna pop it, I'm still gonna talk about what the girls want to hear, and I'm gonna still speak about the culture."

This Doll Don't Play

DreamDoll isn't just reflecting hip-hop culture with her music, she's helping to shape it. She has been for well over a decade. Her popularity online led to a seamless transition into reality TV that's manifested into acting roles in recent years too. Her latest, an action film starring Jason Mitchell called *Black Heat*, came out last year.

You might remember her from *Bad Girls Club* (season 16), which focused on baddies with big online followings. From there her rising profile as a rapper saw her cast on season 8 of *Love & Hip Hop*, the soapy chronicle of up-and-coming performers in the music industry set in her hometown of New York.

The BET and VH1 reality productions relationship continued with *College Hill*:

Celebrity Edition (which saw popular Black figures like Ray J and Amber Rose go back to school) and *The Impact: New York*, which followed successful entrepreneurs and entertainers as they expanded their platforms.

Unlike many who get their start online, DreamDoll understands the value of influencing others, whether it be coining slang terms, promoting clothing brands, or elevating herself in the public eye. She's an old school influencer in this way and she uses the descriptor proudly when we speak, even though many social media figures tend to use the term "content creators" instead these days.

"I know they copy so I make sure I say what I say," Doll explains. "Before rapping I already had a following on social media from, like, my photo shoots online, as an influencer. But *Bad Girls Club* was a pivotal point when it came to reality TV."

The oldest of five siblings, Robinson's origin story starts in the Edenwald Projects within the Eastchester neighborhood of the Bronx. She attended Bronx Academy High School later, Westchester College and

as a rapper were knocked down a long time ago.

"I don't feel like I have that problem anymore," she insists. "I feel like I'm very respected. My raps are very respectable."

"I think our goals are to establish her as a very serious artist," says JY Williams, heard of Urban A&R at DreamDoll's current label, MNRK Music Group. "I don't want people to look at her as just a social media girl. I don't want people to look at her as a reality TV girl. I want them to look at her as a serious artist. It will take some time, and a consistency of releasing music, but I do believe this new project will be the first step in that regard."

Williams mentions Dream's other new track, "Clocking It Freestyle," as the kind of potent jam that will grab attention as she re-establishes herself. The cut reinvents the beats of the sultry club classic by Kaya, "My Neck, My Back," with a fresh pop of attitude and big diva energy.

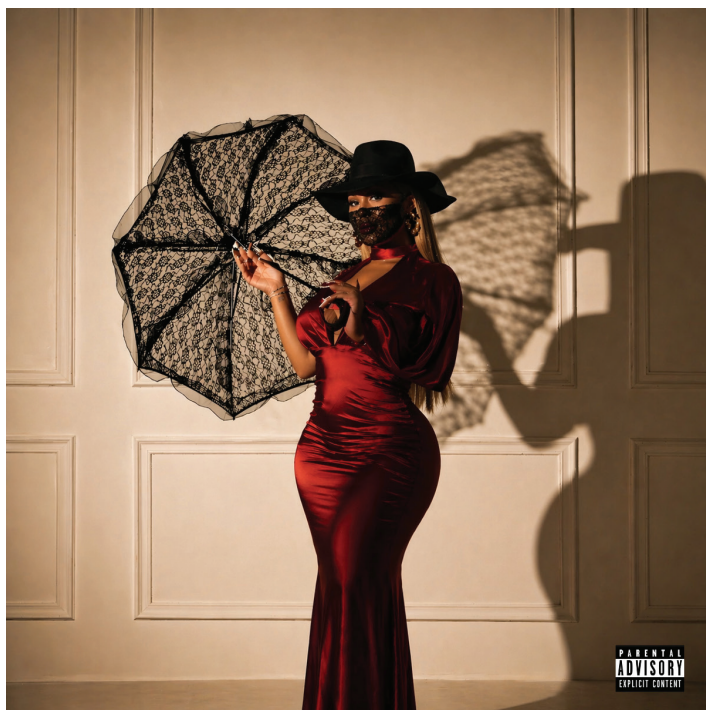
"I knew that once I heard certain lines, it was very much a song that females were going to grasp," Williams shares. "A lot of

studio... she'll record like seven songs in a day," he shares. "If she's going to record, she's not there to bullshit, she's not going to order the hookah or order the food. It's not a party to her. She's taking this like really, really seriously, and it's been a pleasure to see."

"My iPhone notes is my best friend, especially when it comes to catchy things that I might say," Dream explains, adding that "Ah Ah Ah" came out of a chat jotted down on her cell. "It was a filler in between, like, having a conversation, and Amber [Ravenel, her long-time manager and confidante] was like, you should put that in the song. I was like, 'okay, cool', and then I just went in the studio, and thought about how many things I could say... and that's how that song came about."

The rapper says that the biggest influence to her music is her mood, and "what I'm going through at that time. That's why I keep recording. I stay in the studio—I have a home studio—and I just keep recording, because you never know how you might feel. Emotions change all the time."

She promises a wide range of material



Herkimer Community College while working as a bartender. But her rhymes, which she describes in the early days as "roast" driven, quickly got her attention too.

She was inspired by the unfiltered female energy of rappers like Lil' Kim in the early days and says that she doesn't pay attention to beefs amongst her fellow female artists these days. Today's music makers have to work on building a presence online and social media, but Dream already had one built in. So much so that some of her followers only learn about her music after they've been connected online for a while.

"That's the beauty of it, because there are some people who know me on TikTok, and there're some people that know me off of YouTube," she says. "That's what's great about having such a broad fan base—people come from literally all over the world," she explains, adding that any struggles to be taken seriously

the things that she says are relevant to what females are going through... like comparing a Transformer to Prime steakhouse... she's able to convey things that men would think are clever and that women have familiarity with. You know, the makeup references and all that type of stuff, and then she actually turns those concepts into punchlines. She does a great job of that."

The video for "Clocking It," like all her clips, is filled with eye candy featuring the rapper in gorgeous outfits—both high end and trendy (she often promotes the brand Fashion Nova online)—and arty set-ups including an array of unique hair looks and a duct tape visual that might suggest BDSM, but DD says was really just a Pinterest image she thought was cute.

From her prolific writing approach to all-in work ethic, Williams also says that she's an actual "dream" to work with. "It may be the baby, but you know she's ferocious in the

on the forthcoming album, from the usual club grinders to love songs. We ask if she's currently in love and she answers, "not too much," subverting our attempts for a lil dating and relationship tea.

Whether or not she's got lust for anybody at the moment, DreamDoll is driven by something far more powerful as she continues to create and express herself.

"I am talking about motherhood all over this new album... that's my life, like literally every day. My life is wrapped around being a mom 24/7," she explains. "It changed me, but not in a way where it altered me; it kind of just made me better, you know, more purposeful, more intentional, more everything. It also gave me patience which is great. It just shows me there's nothing that I can't do now. But I'm still that girl... I just got a baby girl now too. I used to be living life, like YOLO, now I be like, yeah, no."



HIP-HOP ROUNDTABLE 2026

By Brett Callwood

With DreamDoll gracing the cover this month, *MC* has taken the opportunity to speak to five up-and-coming rappers about the state of the genre in 2026, and much more besides. Hip-hop is still one of the biggest genres on the current music industry landscape, and these artists have provided some eye-opening insights. Read on...



Star Bandz

When did you start rapping and producing music? When did it get serious?

I started rapping when I was 12 years old. I started getting serious for me around 14 because that's when people really started recognizing me for my music and paying attention to what I was doing.

Describe your sound/style...

My sound and style are catchy, versatile, and unique. I like making music people can feel, but I also make records that stick in your head and bring energy.

Tell us about your most recent release...

My most recent release really shows where I'm at creatively right now. I've been focused on leveling up my sound, being more personal in my music, and giving my supporters something they can really connect with.

What are some key pieces of gear and/or tech that you use?

Honestly, I don't really focus too much on the technical side. As long as it sounds good in the headphones and the vibe is right in the studio, that's all that matters to me. I just go with the flow and create.

What are the main challenges facing new rappers in 2026?

One of the biggest challenges is making sure you have a presence outside of just music. Social media plays a big role now, and you have to keep people engaged and entertained while still staying true to yourself. You really have to keep putting yourself out there until your name sticks.

What else do you have coming up?

More music on the way, and a lot of new things coming for the supporters. I'm just staying consistent and continuing to grow.

officialstarbandz.com

H3adband

When did you start rapping and producing music? When did it get serious?

I started rapping to myself around 2023. But I was still hooping in college at the time so it was more of a side hobby. I started taking it seriously right before the summer of 2025.

Describe your sound/style...

Versatile and Baton Rouge. I'm able to dip into different genres and things but it will always be that Louisiana feeling because of my accent.

Tell us about your most recent release...

I recently dropped a song called "That's It" and a song featuring DaBaby called "She Can Get It." I just got off tour with him. I'm planning to put together an album in the near future.

What are some key pieces of gear and/or tech that you use?

My durag is my signature. My favorite app

would be [untitled] cause I listen to my unreleased music on there.

What are the main challenges facing new rappers in 2026?

Overcoming others' differences. It's easy to just collab with people because you're a fan of their music but on the flip side, their enemies see you as their enemy now. I think this is the main problem in hip-hop.



What else do you have coming up?

BandBoy the album coming soon. "Dat Sound" remix coming soon, the feature is a surprise. I have a couple visuals coming soon also. BET awards are coming up so I'm excited about that as well.

[instagram.com/h3adbandshawty](https://www.instagram.com/h3adbandshawty)

TK The Legend

When did you first start making and producing music? At what point did it become something you wanted to pursue seriously?

I got into music extremely early around five years old. My mom sang in the choir at church and watching her perform was my first real connection to music as something emotional and powerful. At that age, I didn't understand it as a career yet, I just knew I wanted to sing and create that feeling for people. My childhood gave me a wide musical foundation: growing up in the U.K. exposed me to 2000s pop, R&B, Disney soundtracks, and talented global artists, while moving to PG County, Maryland opened me up to hip-hop, alt-rock, and a deeper R&B culture. At the same time, being Nigerian meant I was constantly around African music, gospel, and traditional music, so before I was even 10, I had absorbed a lot of different musical worlds.

I started actually making and producing music in high school. I had always been performing through choir, various music programs, and bands, but high school was when I began understanding how records were made. Some rappers from church brought me into the studio, and that made me realize I didn't just want to sing, I wanted to make records.

I think the moment I realized I had to take music seriously was in high school, when I started seeing other kids making songs and actually putting them out on social media. Up until then, music was something I loved and knew I wanted to do, but seeing people my age take the step of recording, releasing, and promoting themselves made it click for me. Nobody was going to magically discover me just because I could sing or because I had



talent. I had to take my career into my own hands.

Around junior year, I started a small snow-shoveling business and used the money to buy my first MIDI keyboard, computer, and USB microphone. I was recording on the floor at home, downloading beats, producing in FL studio, and teaching myself the skills I still use today.

Describe your sound/style...

I've always been eclectic. I pull from everything I've absorbed: pop, R&B, gospel, African music, rock, hip-hop, reggae, classical, jazz, cinematic music, electronic music. Even early on, I write have a rap song, then a rock song, then a pop song, then something more R&B, and people would understand that I was good at all of them, but they wouldn't always know where to place me. I think that used to confuse people, especially executives, because the industry was more genre-focused at the time. But now, most artists are hybrids in some way. I just came up that way naturally.

The common thread however, is my melodic approach. Whether I'm making something dark, euphoric, heavy, soft, experimental, or direct, you can usually tell it's me because of the way I approach melody, vocals, and production. I tend to bring a very distinct melodic instinct to everything I do. The artists and icons that I draw inspiration from reinvent themselves over the years. So I learned to compartmentalize my sound into different eras.

For *DARKSIDE*, the sound is cinematic, heavy, synth-driven, 808-driven, and emotionally intense. There's a lot of trap and hip-hop influence, a lot of rock influence, and a darker 80s-retrowave atmosphere. The sound of *DARKSIDE* is all about contrast between a heavy track and melodic vocals.

Tell us about your most recent release...

My mowwwwst recent release is "PERFECT," which is also the first official collaboration on *DARKSIDE*. I worked on it with Bloody White, who's one of my favorite producers, singers, and songwriters.

Emotionally, "PERFECT" sits right in the heart of *DARKSIDE*. The song itself is about the illusion of perfection, especially in relationships and in the way people present themselves. It's about being drawn to someone who looks flawless on the surface but is hiding dishonesty, manipulation, and unresolved darkness underneath. There's a lot of sarcasm in the hook, like calling someone "perfect" while clearly seeing how destructive they are. The song plays with the tension between obsession and resentment, like laughing at the pain while you're still bleeding from it. The lyrics speak to how fake everything can feel,

especially in a world where people curate themselves online while avoiding their real demons.

What are some key pieces of gear and/or tech that you use?

I'm well versed in various DAWs and tools depending on what I'm making, but Pro Tools and Ableton are my current primary DAWs for music recording, mixing, and production. My secret weapon is my Ableton Push. It makes my production process extremely efficient.

My go-to microphone is the Sony C800, but my at home mic is the Aston Spirit. I'm



very hands-on with both the music and the technical side, so my setup has to move fast between recording, producing, streaming, and editing. For this, I've recently added an Elgato Stream Deck XL and this has helped expedite my creative processes with a ton of scripts and shortcuts.

I'm big on building chains that let me capture ideas quickly without killing the emotion. The less friction between the idea and execution, the better.

As an artist who moves across genres, what challenges do you think emerging artists face when trying to build their own lane in 2026?

I think one of the biggest challenges for emerging artists in 2026 is that music is more open than ever, but also more crowded than ever. You can make any kind of music, blend

genres, build visuals, reach fans directly, and create an entire world from your laptop, but because everyone has access to the same tools, it's harder to make people understand why they should care.

Artists are also expected to be much more self-sufficient now: songwriter, performer, content creator, marketer, strategist, community builder, entrepreneur, the CEOs of their own companies. That can be empowering, but it can also be exhausting.

You need strong identity, strong visuals, strong songs, and a reason for people to care beyond one viral moment. Talent alone isn't enough. You have to build a language around your art so people know how to follow you.

For artists who move across genres, that challenge is even bigger because the industry "wants originality" but still rewards clear boxes. So, the real challenge is creating clarity without sacrificing complexity. You don't have to make the same song forever, but you do have to build an identity strong enough for people to trust you across different sounds.

The bright side is that audiences are more open-minded than the industry gives them credit for. That's why worldbuilding matters to me. If the genre changes but the world, narratives, emotions, and atmosphere stay consistent, people can still recognize you.

What else do you have coming up?

The next major thing is the full expansion of *DARKSIDE*, starting with the *DARKSIDE Deluxe*. The deluxe is a chance to make the project feel bigger, bring more people into the world, and create the kind of moment that *DARKSIDE* deserves. There are major features and collaborations coming, not just musically, but across the entire universe of the project. I'm also working on merch collaborations with some top brands, which is exciting because *DARKSIDE*

has always had a strong visual and fashion identity.

Beyond the music, I'm continuing to build out the cinematic side of the project. *DARKSIDE* has a narrative, a world, and a visual language, so I'm developing that through a short film, more visuals, live performances, and immersive experiences that make people feel like they're stepping into the world instead of just listening to a release.

I'm also continuing to build *Eternal Garden*, which is the larger universe a lot of my ideas connect back to.

[instagram.com/tkthelegend](https://www.instagram.com/tkthelegend)

YoDogg

When did you start rapping, and/or producing music?

I started writing raps super young, probably around seven years old. I started recording myself around 11 or 12, then around 13 or 14 I started going to a real studio. That's when I'd say it became serious for me—dropping mixtapes on LiveMixtapes and Spinrilla, shooting real videos, and really trying to build something.

From about 14 to 25, I was just grinding nonstop until I eventually ended up getting my deal with Epic.

Describe your sound/style...

My sound is smooth, cool, and grungy at the same time, but still high-class. It's intellectual money-getting, woman-getting street music, in my opinion lol.

My music is really just a representation of me. It's very life-experience driven—from the way I dress to my tattoos. It's all connected through the same aesthetic I want to push. I like showing people that you can be more than one thing at once. You can be street, fashionable, and artistically inclined all at the same time.

You don't have to box yourself in. You can be Kanye and Nipsey at the same time.

Tell us about your most recent or upcoming release...

I have a new single coming out called "Cameras" produced by DunDeal & Cardo Got Wings. It's an up-tempo club/party record, something the ladies can enjoy for sure. It also got that grunge element to it where the guys can vibe with it too. In the era we're in, your phone, your camera is everything—so mixing that with something the women can dance to feels like it's going to be a home run. I can't wait to drop it.

What are some key pieces of gear and/or tech that you use?

My favorite microphone personally is the Neumann U48, I feel like I sound the best on it. You can plug it into any interface. If I'm in studio, the Sony C800, that's the best for sure.

As far as tech I'll share a plug I use, it's called Echo-Boy. I love how it delays your vocals and how you can manipulate the pitch

and other things. I love doing pitch drops so I use that a lot.

What are the main challenges facing new rappers in 2026?

I would say the internet is probably the biggest challenge facing new rappers right now. There was a time when it felt like the internet had room for every type of artist. Now it feels more like a competition over who can get the most followers, subscribers, and viral moments.

You can be amazing at your craft, but if you don't naturally know how to clickbait, trend

chase, or constantly go viral, it becomes way harder to break through. Meanwhile, someone way less talented can get opportunities simply because they understand the algorithm better than the music itself.

What makes it even tougher is that independent artists aren't just competing against other rappers anymore—they're competing against influencers, streamers, comedians, and every other form of online entertainment fighting for attention. Back then, it felt like if you were truly talented, eventually the right person would hear your music and give you a shot. Artists like J. Cole and

I'm really treating this project as if I'm a new artist and this is everyone's first time hearing me. I'm going to have a lot of different things coming for the rest of the year, they better get use to seeing me!

[instagram.com/yodogg](https://www.instagram.com/yodogg)

Zeddy Will

When did you start rapping, and producing music? When did it get serious?

I started rapping in 2022. I would say that I started taking it seriously around 2024 after dropping "Cha Cha." That was when things went to a whole new level.

Describe your sound/style...

I would say my sound is fun, high-energy, and in my own lane. In a time when most music is about doing drugs, sex, and money. I make fun party music that gets you moving and dancing.

Tell us about your most recent release...

"Party At The Beach." The song samples Janelle Monae's song "Yoga." Someone on TikTok already produced the beat. I reached out to the producer and asked to be on the beat. Janelle is on the song. I only added a few words and ad-libs to it, and it got 10 million views on TikTok on the first day.

What are some key pieces of gear and/or tech that you use?

I have two things. The first: the Shute SM7. It was the first mic I got in 2022. The second: BandLab. That software changed my life. At times when I couldn't go to the studio, I was making music that's out right now on that software.

What are the main challenges facing new rappers in 2026?

This is a struggle for lots of artists today, and it's finding another song after having a massively successful one and not living too much on the moment of that one record. The music industry is a business. Once that song is gone, you have to have another one, or you're done. TikTok makes you seem like a superstar; it can get you booked, seen everywhere, or picked up for a movie or video game soundtrack. But people don't understand that you need a follow-up song ready to go.

What else do you have coming up?

I just got off DaBaby's Be More Grateful tour. I'll be doing a lot of shows this summer and hopefully do more festivals. The biggest thing coming up is having my own set at Summer Jam. I was brought out last year by Jim Jones on his set at Summer Jam, so I'm really looking forward to having my own set.

[instagram.com/thezeddywill](https://www.instagram.com/thezeddywill)



Kendrick Lamar didn't become stars because they were viral every week. They became who they are because the music was undeniable and the right people believed in them early.

That path feels almost obsolete now. Today, unless you go viral or already have connections to someone famous, there's a real chance people may never even discover your talent. Even artists taking a more authentic independent route, like Larry June, are fighting uphill because attention has become the real currency.

What else do you have coming up?

I plan to drop another single or two, then I'm releasing a project. I'm in the lab everyday just sharpening my sword, making sure this is my best full body of work thus far. I want that to be abundantly clear from the rollouts, to videos, to marketing, production, and lyrics.

Peter and Julian Frampton: It's a Family Affair

What's that phrase about the apple not falling too far from the tree? That certainly applies in the case of Peter Frampton and his son Julian. It has been 16 years since the elder Frampton had recorded a full-length album of all original material and, after much toil and deliberation, *Carry the Light* (Universal Music) is the result of that endeavor. It's all about meeting the moment, and the timing was just right for the release of this album and the magical collaboration that emerged between the two.

"I started writing material for this album six or seven years ago, and there was a gap of eight years before that," explains Peter. "There was also a lot going on in my life with my health and everything." The GRAMMY Award-winning singer-songwriter/guitarist was diagnosed with a rare degenerative autoimmune muscle disease in 2015 called Inclusion Body Myositis (IBM) and, after announcing it publicly in 2019, was preparing a farewell tour.

However, undaunted, Frampton decided to continue using his fingers, muscularity, and guitar playing acumen as much as possible, which bore two cover albums *All Blues* and *Frampton Forgets the Words*. Perhaps the biggest revelation and saving grace to his life and career came in the form of a writing and production partnership with his son Julian on this latest project *Carry the Light*.

"On *Carry the Light* there are some overall themes of wisdom, empathy, and knowledge that come to mind," says Julian. "It's also about not forgetting the past and repeating the same mistakes over and over again. We have to find ourselves out of that cycle and just learn from our mistakes as a country, as a species and as a world together."

Over the years the Framptons have worked together on stage and in various musical capacities. But, in this case, what began years prior as a Peter Frampton solo record evolved into so much more.

"Julian's in L.A. and I'm in Nashville," says Peter. "I was working on these songs and was getting close to finishing them. I asked Julian if he could come out to my place for a week and help me with some of the lyrics. He came out and it was so easy and just a lot of fun straight away. Julian came up with all these great ideas. If it was another producer I don't know if I would've gone along with it because I'm a control freak. But because he's my son and I have so much respect for him as a musician and a producer we tried every one of his and my ideas. And sometimes it was his idea that worked. And that's something I wouldn't have done before. I couldn't have done it without him. Our motto was to never settle. If I needed to re-do a guitar part or vocal we did it."



Carry the Light features what fans come to expect from Peter Frampton—exceptional guitar playing, superb songs, and stellar vocals. However, Julian's steady co-production hand, along with producer-engineer Chuck Ainley, brought in fresh background vocal techniques, clever lyrical ideas, atypical song arrangements, and an overall progressive vibe. In addition, there is an all-star list of celebrity friends and artists that organically heeded the call when given the opportunity to come on board for a cameo. Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers' keyboardist Benmont Tench, singer-songwriter Sheryl Crow, guitarist Tom Morello, guitarist H.E.R., singer-songwriter Graham Nash, and jazz saxophonist Bill Evans each offer rich and singular contributions to the album.

"I tried one guitar and then another to try and find what was in the wheelhouse and would work best for a particular song," recalls Peter regarding the album's instrumental approach. "But, ultimately, I always have gone back to my Phenix guitar. It's so easy to play, along with the Suhr PF 100 series amp. You know, it's amazing how many people think you've gotta use a wall of sound, with 200 watt amps and blow the room out. But that's probably the absolute wrong thing to

do. For me, it's loud, but it's not that loud. It's controllable and doesn't take over the room."

With this new album and a documentary, simply titled *Frampton*, just entering the film festival circuit, there is a mainstream resurgence and relevance for the legacy artist. And, just as many of his celebrity friends paid homage to him with their talents on *Carry the Light*, Peter Frampton continues to be in demand as a "go-to" side and session man.

"When people want me to play on their stuff they come to me because they want my style," Peter humbly explains. "I can't do a Jeff Beck or Clapton type of thing. But I will tailor my style to fit the track they want me to play on."

And, so, the making of *Carry the Light* is not only an album filled with songs of depth, hope, love, and positivity for the world but, in many ways, it is a new step in the careers of both Peter and Julian Frampton, as well as a revitalization of their relationship as father and son.

"I now realize, as well as being a great musician, singer and writer, one of his fortes is producing," says the proud father. "And if you give him a chance I think Julian is gonna be one of the best up-and-coming producers."

frampton.com

INTERNAL EXILE

DIY Deathrockers The Exile Keep it In-House



The Exile are among America's mere handful of deathrock buzz bands. After four years of climbing the live ladder and releasing their debut album last summer, the Santa Ana outfit is now opening for genre legends and finalizing their first tour.

Fronted by the iconic Lex, The Exile are gaining traction not by reimagining deathrock but rather by paying loving homage to the genre's sepia-tinted mélange of punk rock, horror-movie shock, and glammy goth—albeit with some welcome stylistic surprises. Alongside European influences like Killing Joke and Musta Paraati, they're steeped in the darker side of throwback SoCal punk, namechecking the likes of 45 Grave, Legal Weapon, and Rikk Agnew's bands and solo work.

"We all started out as punks. I think you can hear that on our first demo," mullied Lex over libations at Sunset Strip's storied Rainbow Bar. "We're getting a little spookier as it goes down the line; drifting further away from punk and just getting really into deathrock."

Completed by guitarist Lemon, drummer Rory Price, and (at time of writing) a touring bassist, The Exile came together in 2022. The following year they self-released their *Exile 1* EP and were regularly gigging around Orange County, Long Beach, and L.A.

Lex marries intuitive, super-emotive stagecraft to classic dark punk style and strut: the shoulder shrugs of Discharge's Cal Morris; side-to-side Siouxsie Sioux hair tossing; and hanging arms-length off the mic between phrases like *Bollocks*-era Johnny Rotten. Singing in both Spanish and English, she spans deadpan first-wave punk to subtle vibrato, feral yelps to full-bodied sustained vowels. Incredibly, The Exile is her first band.

While such a compelling, fashionista figurehead inevitably commands the lion's share of attention (including in this very article), The Exile is by no means The Lexile. Most of their songwriting begins with riffs from the easy-going Lemon, while Rory is their level-headed, thoughtful pillar with a broad musical background. And off-stage, all three are hands-on with almost every aspect of the band.

A Lament

Released last August, *A Lament* is The Exile's definitive statement to date, its eight haunted yet haranguing tracks including convincing forays into echo-drenched dark dub. "We all come heavily from UK82 and traditional U.K. punk and deathrock, and there's always been a reggae element to those," Rory explained beneath the gaze of The Rainbow's famed Lemmy statue. "I love The Ruts; we all love The Specials."

Recorded largely live at Paradise Recorders in Anaheim with producer Mike Kriebel, *A Lament* is streaked with subtle acts of single-mindedness amidst its trad deathrock motifs of effected minor-chord guitar; mobile, melodic basslines; and bustling hi-hat/tom-heavy beats. The disco-licious off-beat hats of "Cradle to Grave," the New Wave-y guitar line snaking through "La Condención," and the hypnotic PiL x Bauhaus atmospheric of "Hanging Man" and "Dub 2" confirm that, while The Exile have no desire to reinvent the wheel, their vividly palpable sense of self inevitably seeps through.

The unpretentious rooftop performance video for single "Incantation" stays true to The Exile's staunchly DIY ethic. They released *A Lament* only digitally and on cassette, with artwork by Lex, dubbed and assembled at home. Wherever

possible, they keep everything within their circle, to the point of turning away third-party offers to release *A Lament*.

Instruments of Death(rock)

The Exile's choice of gear is shaped by years of playing on other people's bills, often with only a cursory line-check (though they'll show up early for a soundcheck whenever one's offered). The aim is to maintain maximum control over their live sound rather than depending on house engineers who're likely unfamiliar with their music, firmly prioritizing the musicality of their mix over sheer volume.

"I use the TC Helicon Voicelive Play [vocal effects pedal]—it makes *such* a difference," Lex enthused. "I don't have to rely on the sound guy to get my reverb right—he almost doesn't need to do anything to my vocals."

Channeling punk's protest spirit, Lemon is shunning Fender guitars in response to that company's recent legal actions against small builders and just adopted Epiphone as an alternative. His amp is a rare vintage red Vox AC30 combo, an OfferUp find. Like most semi-pro drummers, Rory frequently finds himself playing other people's kits on stage, so he focuses on bringing robust, high-quality breakables.

"I always tell drummers that are starting off, get some good cymbals," he said. "You don't even have to get a good snare: just get a big steel snare and tune it up well. And good drum skins can go a long way!" When he does get to use his own gear, Rory plays a 1970s Pearl fiberglass kit with a 14-inch rack tom and an 18-inch on the floor. His snare is a similarly large 7x14-inch Mapex Black Panther, and he's stayed true to Sabian cymbals since high school orchestra. Unusually, for a punker, he plays to a click.

Next For The Exile

Sharing a table with The Exile for their first-ever interview as a band oozed that singular sense of anticipation that surrounds artists on the cusp of wider recognition. Having recently played their first out-of-state show in Texas, their bookings are getting larger and further afield, with a debut short tour scheduled for September. They just played with OG L.A. deathrockers Kommunity FK, and open for Xmal Deutschland's Anja Huwe in Santa Ana on August 28.

"It's not necessarily about leaving some kind of legacy behind," Rory concluded with characteristic modesty. "It's more just like this band did it, I can do it too. If they can do it, anyone else can fucking do it." Or, as Lex put it, "Get off your phone and pick up an instrument!"

theexile.bandcamp.com

Songs in the Key of Diane

"The idea of merging Diane's world with island reggae and the artists that we work with at Island Empire is a dream come true for both sides, and so I'm happy that we were able to accomplish that. I love it, and hopefully everybody likes it."

-Steven Rosen

With 450 artist recordings—including Whitney Houston, Celine Dion, Aretha Franklin, Cher, Lady Gaga, Britney Spears, Beyoncé, Elton John, Eric Clapton, Dolly Parton, Diana Ross, Dionne Warwick, Taylor Swift, Gwen Stefani, Angélique Kidjo, Common (and many others)—Diane Warren ties Lionel Richie for the most No. 1s penned by a single writer. The sole owner of one of music's most successful publishing companies (Realsongs) with placements in over 150 films and a catalog worth an estimated half a billion dollars, Diane Warren (17-time nominee) is also the first songwriter in history to win an Honorary Oscar Award.

2021's *The Cave Sessions Vo. 1* first personal artist release, and last year's *Relentless* documentary share a new level of vulnerability, and Warren's new 13-song project, *Songs in the Key of Diane* takes things a step further. With existing credits for Aswad ("Don't Turn Around," "Give A Little Love") and Ziggy Marley ("The Good Good" under Snoop Lion moniker), this is the first full reggae collection, built around reimagined pieces, unreleased works, and new songs.

Partnering with Regime Music Group, Steven Rosen (Regime President and prominent industry executive) provided curation and executive production. Rosen began at Motown Records, began signing bands and negotiation deals, quitting to start artist management after realizing publishing held no power (at the time). Working with Guy Roche, who had produced some Diane Warren songs, Rosen says, "35 years later, Diane and I are still working together. She's one of the most tenacious artists I manage." Adds Rosen, "the impetus was to get our artists exposed to Diane and her world because they're great singers. It's a great spin on songs nobody would think of."

Artists presented song demos, and Warren would select their song. "I hope all these songs get a chance," she says, "get promoted the way they should. I love to work in every genre. It's not just a bunch of fucking old songs. 'Hey Haters' is this fun, happy, fuck you song. It worked even better with reggae than just a straight pop record," she says (of Pia Mia's previously unreleased single). "I love 'Haters'—the bullying makes you stronger or knocks you down—it's your choice."

Save Ferris brings ska flavor to "Kiss Me



"A great song can work in any genre. If it's a shitty song, it's gonna be shitty in any genre, including the original one." - Diane Warren

Tonight" (2012's Sugababes' renamed "Too Lost In You," unreleased for a decade), while reggae-dub Boostive and quartet Through The Roots (featuring Divina) shift "She's Fire" from G-Eazy/Carlos Santana's slinky-pop original. Sammy Johnson renews "I Heart U" with thicker, fuller male vocals and Gramps Morgan (son of Denroy Morgan of the Morgan Heritage Band) lends timely and poignant, rich sound to "I Wish That" (originally by 12-year-old Bianca Ryan of *America's Got Talent*).

Common Kings' remake of Warren's 1985 career-defining DeBarge hit "Rhythm of the Night" adds thicker guitar and an updated pop-reggae feel, while Eli-Mac brings a modernized version of "I'll Never Get Over You Getting Over Me" (originally by Exposé). Late legend George "Fiji" Velkoso adds "You Kind of Beautiful" (Jimmie Allen song from *The Cave Sessions*). Says Warren, "it was written as a ballad. Fiji loved it and did this great record. I hope that gets to see the light of day as a single."

Further reinventions include "Can't Fight

The Moonlight" (2000's *Coyote Ugly* LeAnn Rimes version) by Anuhea, with higher BPM and mellower guitar, (son of North shore surfer Eddie Rothman) Makua's upbeat cover of Bad English's "When I See You Smile" (1989), and Aerosmith's *Billboard* No. 1, "I Don't Wanna Miss A Thing" (from 1998's *Armageddon*) as a fast reggae-pop by Analea Brown. Epitomizing '80s synth-pop, "Blame It On The Rain" (No. 1 on 1989's *Billboard* 100 before a lip-sync scandal) re-emerges 37 years after famously *not* being recorded by Milli Vanilli, with NomaD (alter-ego of GRAMMY-winning music producer-songwriter-composer Damon Elliott). Says Warren, "Shoutout to Damon. He produced a lot of this."

Juggling schedules and finding the right song fits took three years. "Putting out a compilation is not the easiest thing in the world," admits Rosen, "but because it's island music, is fun, and Diane was such a great partner, it was a lot easier. Everybody was really enthusiastic."

"Island reggae is different than typical Jamaican [music]," says Rosen. "It's much lighter: let's party, have fun in the sun, be at the beach." With modern reggae dominating streaming, classics capturing billions of global plays, rising crossover popularity, and international fan hubs popping up (including in Kenya and Brazil), the new record presents Warren's songwriting genius to a new group of music lovers. Frequently referred to as the 'frequency of love,' reggae uses 432Hz tuning, often with deep

drum and bass rhythms mirroring the human heartbeat, promoting deep relaxation and a compassionate state of mind. Says Warren, "I hope people embrace it; it's a great record. Put it on after you watch the news (which will depress anybody), if you're having a shitty day, or the world's too much for you—it feels good. These are all songs from my heart, so enjoy it."

2025's *Diane Warren: Relentless* (with "Dear Me," performed by Kesha) brought GRAMMY and Academy nominations and the Johnny Mercer, GRAMMY, Emmy, Golden Globe, ASCAP and *Billboard* Award-winning Songwriter Hall of Fame inductee has no plans to slow down. Finalizing songs for a *Coyote Ugly* musical (for London's West End), Warren says, "I'm dipping my toes into different worlds, not just different genres." A Dionne Warwick project (with Cynthia Erivo and John Legend), work with Ty Dolla \$ign, David Guetta, and Nicole Scherzinger are also in the works. *Songs In the Key of Diane* is out July 31.

realsongs.com

Tarja

Frisson Noir
earMUSIC

Producers: Neal Avron, Tarja Turunen

With no disrespect meant towards those that followed her, symphonic metal band Nightwish just hasn't been the same since vocalist Tarja Turunen left the ranks in 2005.

The trained classical singer with a three-octave vocal range brought something to the world of metal that we'd never really seen before: actual operatic vocals rather than opera-esque singing. But hey, the past is the past. Nightwish moved on and so has Turunen.

Recording under her first name, *Frisson Noir* is (amazingly) Tarja's 10th studio album, dropping three years after the *Dark Christmas* "holiday-ish" record. The title track sees the album get off to a moody start, before "The Eternal Return" kicks in—an absolute monster of an opera-rock song. There's a break where Tarja allows her voice to soar, and it's simply spine-tingling. "Leap of Faith" sees Tarja working with fellow former Nightwish member Marko Hietala again, and it's an epic, dynamic tune. There are other guests too—cello rockers Apocalyptica pop up on "Tango," Chili Pepper Chad Smith appears on "Against the Odds" and, best of all, Dani Filth of British black metal vets Cradle of Filth lends his screech to "I Don't Care."

There's a lot going on, and it's all good. Tarja's voice is her greatest gift, but the songwriting is excellent too, and she's surrounded herself with excellent musicians. - **Brett Callwood**



8

Romeo Void

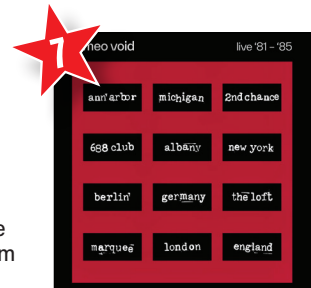
Live '81-'85

Liberation Hall

Producers: Louie Beeson, Patrick Haight

This special edition live album, released for Record Store Day, begins with the line "The band you've all been waiting for, from San Francisco, California, Romeo Void."

We're then presented with 17 songs from the underrated new wave/post-punk outfit, recorded over a four-year period in four cities (Ann Arbor, MI; Albany, NY; Berlin, Germany; and London, England). The band—Debora Iyall (vocals), Frank Zincavage (bass), Peter Woods (guitar), Benjamin Bossi (saxophone), Larry Carter (drums), and Aaron Smith (drums)—is on fine form throughout, with genre-classic "Never Say Never" a clear standout. There's no filler here though, and this album offers a chance to rediscover Romeo Void. - **Brett Callwood**



7

Soft Machine

Thirteen

Dyad Records

Producer: Theo Travis

Soft Machine is a legacy band that has been on the international music scene since the '60s. However, they are not ones to rest on their laurels. Theirs is a morphogenetic approach that adapts its sonic shape to fit each composition. And all of the 13 tracks break down barriers where the rules evolve on their own terms, and the sum is greater than the individual. Call it post modern jazz, jazz-rock, world beat, or experimental—it's all apropos. Soft Machine is a living, breathing entity that exists as long as the spirit of those involved endures.

- **Eric Harabadian**



8

Golems of the Red Planet

Surf Masada—The Compositions Of

John Zorn

heyday AGAIN Records

Producers: Golems of the Red Planet, John Koval

Over the years, avant-garde musician/producer John Zorn has composed hundreds of instrumentals with his Masada project, combining mystic Judaism and jazz. Seasoned musicians Golems Of The Red Planet ("golem" being a clay Frankenstein in Jewish folklore) have taken 10 selections and ROCKED THEM OUT using a surf-based approach. This is a perfect storm of entertainment, a scintillating mix of klezmer, spy theme/spaghetti western, avant jazz, and eastern scales, all wrapped in a delightful surf beat pulse. Secret weapon—a cello runs through this! Run, don't walk to get this one, this is something truly special - **David Arnsen**



8

Taj Mahal

Time

Resonatin' Records / Thirty Tigers

Producers: Tony Braunagel, Larry Fulcher

18 years after *Maestro*, Taj Mahal and The Phantom Blues Band (PBB) return for *Time*.

The GRAMMY-winning, genre-defying phenom's 10-track compilation of decades-old, previously unreleased covers and originals navigates blues, soul, R&B, and island sound, with Mahal's trademark cheeky, joyful spirit front and center. The album includes songs from Bill Withers, the Wailers' Carleton Barrett, Isaac Hayes, and Otis Redding. Guests include Ziggy Marley, Maxayn Lewis, Kudisan Kai, and Sir Harry Bowens. - **Andrea Beenham**



8

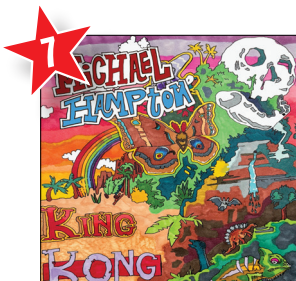
Michael Hampton

King Kong

Sound Mind Records

Producer: Joe "The Butcher" Nicolò

The guitarist better known as Kidd Funkadelic is still turning out stunners, despite being nearly 70. This time 'round, he mines inspiration from cinema's most notorious ape, fitting in as much tribal percussion, jungle ambience, and banana humor as possible. Beyond the hokum, there's true genius on display. The arrangements are soulfully freaky, and Hampton's insane axe runs prove stickier than Gorilla Glue. It doesn't get much better than this. - **Andy Kaufmann**



7

The Blasters

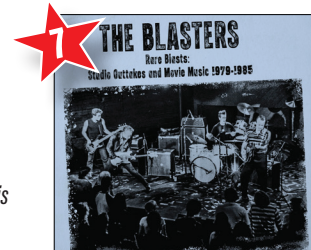
Rare Blasts: Studio Outtakes and

Movie Music 1979-1985

Liberation Hall

Producers: The Blasters, Antone DeSantis, Chris Morris

Roots-rockers/rockabilly exponents The Blasters managed to get themselves caught up in the diverse L.A. punk scene alongside old pals X, mainly thanks to an uncompromising attitude and a sound that remains as raw as chicken sushi. This compilation collates outtakes from the *American Music*, *Non Fiction* and *Hard Line* albums, plus two songs from the *Streets of Fire* movie soundtrack. *Rare Blasts* manages to prove that the tracks The Blasters were throwing to one side were better than most bands' best takes. - **Brett Callwood**



7

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



Hillbilly Vegas

Contact: ed@npmprandmarketing.com
Web: facebook.com/hillbillyvegasmusic
Seeking: Film/TV
Style: Southern Rock, Modern Classic Rock

Hillbilly Vegas includes former Bad Company bassist Todd Ronning in their ranks, and the great Paul Rodgers (Bad Co., Free) guests on the song "Mr. Midnight." So the resume looks good. That song in particular, "Mr. Midnight," is a bluesy, boogie-rocker of a beast. Great riffs, great vocal. But then, of course it is. Paul Rodgers is on it. Take him away, and the results are a little more patchy. "Miss America" (what's with the Mr. and Miss thing?) is so overly earnest, it borders on ludicrous. "I Hope You Know," however, is a driving little rocker.

- Production 7
- Lyrics 6
- Music 7
- Vocals 7
- Musicianship 8

SCORE 7.0



Mid-Night The Golden Soldier

Contact: midnightthegoldensoldier@gmail.com
Web: thegoldensoldier.com
Seeking: Booking, Film/TV, Label
Style: Hip-Hop

Mid-Night The Golden Soldier positions his work as reflective listening, and he largely delivers, bringing a heavy, atmospheric Griselda-style gravity to traditional boom-bap frameworks. "Matched Energy" cuts through with purpose, its critique of modern society delivered in steady, unflinching bars. There's a clear command of tone here, but also a tendency to linger too long in it—the sonic palette can begin to feel predictable across multiple tracks. That said, "From the Concrete" breaks the pattern beautifully, with soulful female vocals adding dimension and urgency. It's a glimpse of a more dynamic future he'd be wise to chase.

- Production 7
- Lyrics 8
- Music 7
- Vocals 7
- Musicianship 8

SCORE 7.4



Deer Tick

Contact: grace@grandstandhq.com
Web: grandstandhq.com
Seeking: Review
Style: Alternative Rock

There's a certain barroom mythology Deer Tick taps into—the kind that smells like spilled beer and sounds like a voice cracking at just the right moment. The grit in the vocals carries a Springsteen-adjacent earnestness, but it's the storytelling that really sticks, especially on tracks like "Mary Singletary" and "ACI." The slightly rough-around-the-edges production works in their favor, mimicking the thrill of a live set that could tip over at any second. "Everything Born" is a high-water mark, pairing muscular lyricism with a ripping guitar solo. This writer suspects that the only thing Deer Tick is in need of is more exposure, more stages, and a real shot.

- Production 7
- Lyrics 9
- Music 8
- Vocals 8
- Musicianship 9

SCORE 8.2



Jahmi Roc

Contact: bookjahmiroc@gmail.com
Web: jahmiroc.com
Seeking: Booking, Sync
Style: Reggae, R&B

Jahmi Roc successfully threads academic insight and cultural history into a sound designed to empower, weaving cultural awareness and personal healing into her songs to give them a quiet authority. Far from dry, her music feels deeply alive. "Safe and Sound" radiates an easy, sunlit optimism, while collaborations keep the project from settling into one lane for too long. When she pivots to a darker R&B landscape on "Last Time," Roc transmutes personal trauma into a moving message of resilience. Roc's voice is the anchor throughout: rich, expressive, and persuasive—this is music that simply makes you feel good.

- Production 8
- Lyrics 8
- Music 8
- Vocals 8
- Musicianship 8

SCORE 8.0



Me the Machine

Contact: taylor@trendpr.com
Web: methemachine.net
Seeking: Booking
Style: Alt-Pop

There's a very 2000's feel to Me the Machine, although not necessarily hyper-contemporary. The first name that springs to mind when listening to first submitted track "Remember Me" is Linkin Park. That said, there's some mariachi-esque instrumentation in there that adds a fresh twist. "War in Silence" features the talents of rapper and musician Ando San and, again, that brings something new to the party. The songs are from the *Flesh of the Innocent* album, which is certainly worth a spin. "The Innocent" is a moody tune that shows a different side to this machine. Not massively original, but interesting.

- Production 8
- Lyrics 7
- Music 7
- Vocals 7
- Musicianship 7

SCORE 7.2



Dharma Guns

Contact: petri.leppanen@gmail.com
Web: linktr.ee/dharmaguns
Seeking: Booking, Collaboration
Style: Action Rock

Helsinki, Finland has an admirable history of producing quality rock and metal bands. From Hanoi Rocks to The 69 Eyes to Beast in Black, the region is synonymous with big riffs and bigger tunes. Dharma Guns fit comfortably into that rich tradition. Like Hanoi in particular, these guys have a punky, trashy, sleazy, edge to their gutter rock 'n' roll, which we haven't heard out of a relatively new band (their debut album dropped in '24) in a while. The songs are catchy yet uncompromising, ferocious and infectious. "The Voice of the Underdogs" stands out as an anthem for these times. Count us in.

- Production 8
- Lyrics 8
- Music 9
- Vocals 8
- Musicianship 9

SCORE 8.4

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.



MOMARZ

Contact: momarz1842@gmail.com
Web: instagram.com/momarz99
Seeking: Review, Label, Film/TV
Style: Electronic

The term "electronic music" can mean almost anything nowadays. Most producers, certainly in pop and hip-hop but elsewhere too, incorporate electronic elements. According to his online bio, MOMARZ "centers his music on piano-rooted melodies, hypnotic percussion sequences, and instrumentals." That makes for a sound which comfortably blends a warm, nostalgic electronic sound, with something still quite futuristic. "Signals" could score a moody scene in an indie movie effectively, while "Party Moves" is reminiscent of club anthems from the late '80s and early '90s. All of which is a good thing.

- Production 8
- Lyrics X
- Music 8
- Vocals X
- Musicianship 8

SCORE 8.0



Troubles

Contact: troublespunk@gmail.com
Web: troublespunk.bandcamp.com
Seeking: Gigs, Distribution
Style: Garage-Punk

Troubles is the second punk 'n' roll band from Helsinki that submitted music to us this month and, like Dharma Guns, this female-fronted outfit stands out. Their *Red Alert* LP dropped in April, and the whole thing is a fuzzy, gnarly gem. It's like The Cramps jamming with Bikini Kill in a graffiti-covered garage in an ill-advised part of town. "Ghoul" is particularly Crampsy—elements of horror-punk and psychobilly in a gritty stew. "Gimme Danger" (not the Stooges song) is a shout-along garage anthem, while "Full Moon" closes the album with some healthy melancholy. We want more.

- Production 8
- Lyrics 8
- Music 9
- Vocals 8
- Musicianship 8

SCORE 8.2



Richard Zeier

Contact: pearlmusic@sbcglobal.net
Web: richardzeier.com
Seeking: Sync, Exposure, Label
Style: Electro-Symphonic-Rock

Fans of guitar virtuosos like Joe Satriani, Steve Vai, and Yngwie Malmsteen will lap up this gloriously symphonic, wonderfully overblown instrumental rock. Well, we say "rock," but "Hold on Tight" features elements of funky tango. The songs which were submitted to us feature on Zeier's new album *Running with Horses* which, according to his website, is heavily influenced by scripture. That said, you don't have to be a lover of religious music to get a kick out of these jams. The joy that runs throughout is overt, including funk-jazz number "Kingdon Swing."

- Production 8
- Lyrics X
- Music 7
- Vocals X
- Musicianship 8

SCORE 7.1



Innuendo

Contact: brichey4@cox.net
Web: bretttricheymusic.com/press-kit
Seeking: Exposure
Style: Pop, Rock

Operating under the moniker Innuendo, journeyman Brett Richey boasts a staggering resume of thousands of gigs. That deep, road-worn experience bleeds directly into his nostalgic '70s and '80s rock revivalism. "Smile for the Camera" juxtaposes gritty, throwback guitar work with modern lyrical references, effectively anchoring the nostalgia in the present day. Meanwhile, "Never Thought I'd Live To See The Day" provides an intriguing roller coaster of experimental arrangements. Richey's vocals carry a compelling, weathered charm, even if they occasionally sound like they've hit a ceiling in terms of technical range. Still, the veteran grit keeps it engaging.

- Production 7
- Lyrics 7
- Music 7
- Vocals 7
- Musicianship 8

SCORE 7.2



How Now Brown Cow

Contact: dave@hownowbrowncowband.com
Web: hownowbrowncowband.com/listen
Seeking: Film/TV, Distribution, Label
Style: Jazz, Funk, Heavy Instrumental, Jam band

Seattle instrumental four-piece How Now Brown Cow proudly dub themselves "true siblings of swing and herders of funk," and their latest offerings absolutely deliver on that promise. On "Not My Monkeys Not My Circus," the band cooks up an intoxicating blend of jazz and funk, yet they are equally adept in quieter moments; the tender textures of "South of No North" highlight the inherent beauty of their musicianship. They operate like a band in constant conversation with itself—loose, intuitive, and deeply locked in. There's a warmth to their improvisation, a sense that you're hearing something unfold in real time; it's immersive, unforced, and refreshingly ego-free.

- Production 8
- Lyrics X
- Music 8
- Vocals X
- Musicianship 9

SCORE 8.3



The Only Humans

Contact: theonlyhumans@gmail.com
Web: on.soundcloud.com/8ju03wB6dmIzAhas0N
Seeking: Audience
Style: Indie Rock

The Only Humans aim for emotional contrast—"sad lyrics, happy music"—but the execution suffers from a jarring tonal disconnect. There's no shortage of narrative strength as the lyrics show a clear instinct for storytelling and perspective, though the vocals lack dynamism, often settling into a flatness that undercuts the intended impact. On a track like "Narcissus," the polite indie-pop arrangement lacks the bite required to match the text; the song practically begs for an explosion of genuine rage. You can hear the passion, but it feels restrained, boxed in by choices that don't quite align. One can only wonder how compelling they might be if they stopped holding back.

- Production 6
- Lyrics 7
- Music 6
- Vocals 6
- Musicianship 7

SCORE 6.4

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.

The Fonda Theatre Los Angeles, CA

Web: sleafordmods.com

Contact: taliamiller@roughtraderrecords.com

Players: Jason Williamson, vocals; Andrew Fearn, programming

THE STARS OF MC'S FIRST cover story of 2026, British duo the Sleaford Mods fast appeared on our radar due to the almost-audible buzz, the undeniable freshness of their sound, and the fact that they're just a lot of freaking fun. Jason Williamson (vocals) and Andrew Fearn (programming) might not look like rock stars. To be fair, aesthetically they're the farthest thing from it. But there's something altogether new about them, and that carries them a fair distance.

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

The progressiveness, the genre-blending, the street poetry lyrics—all of that, we were aware of from listening to their recorded output on repeat for a couple of months. In that cover story, we

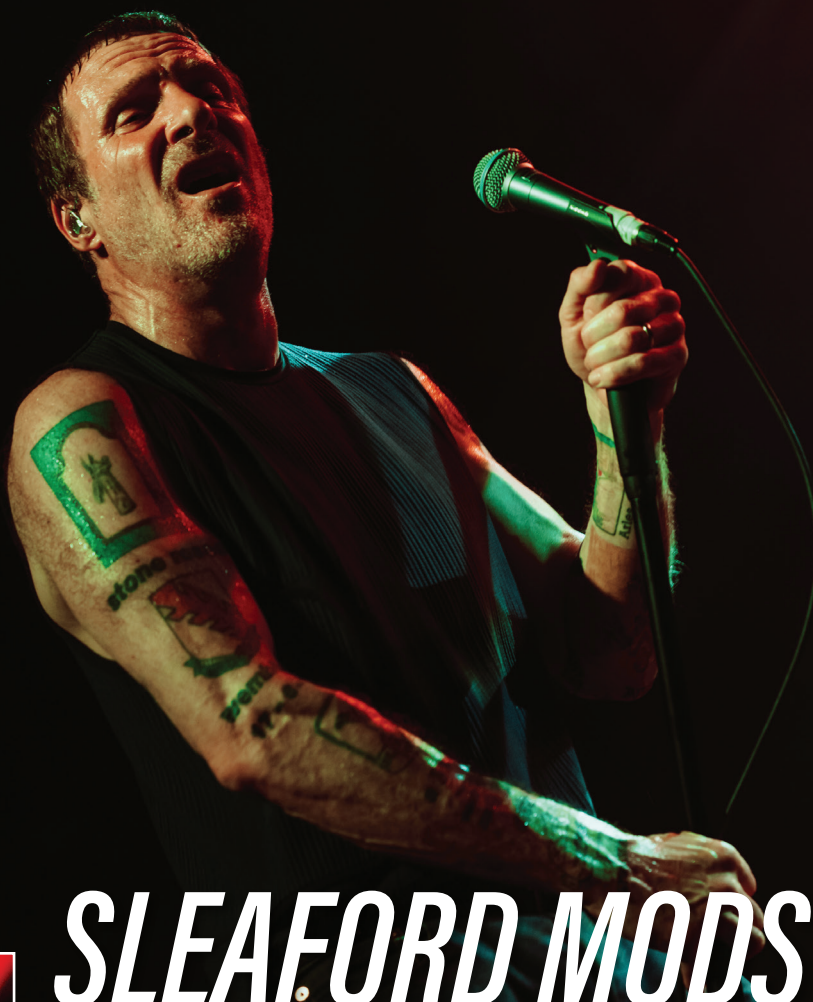


wrote of Williamson's "abrasive vocal delivery," plus Andrew Fearn's "minimalist yet undeniably infectious musicianship." And all of that's true. What we *didn't* quite know prior to seeing them perform live was how damn funny they are.

Abrasive maybe, but Williamson's delivery is all "working class fella in the bar, yelling at

Planet X album.

For Fearn, to be fair, the programming is done beforehand. In person, he's there to get the ball rolling and then to dance like a mad bastard. Which he duly does. He's not Bez of the Happy Mondays; Fearn's musical imprint is all over the Mods sound. But live, his main role seems to be



anyone who will listen." It's like a British Bill Burr in a post-punk band, albeit a Burr who is down on his luck, living in a doorway, and arguing with a plastic bag.

None of this is meant as an insult. Indeed, it's all by design. The seemingly unhinged display, coupled with a majestic level of cussing, could be at odds with the actually incisive and thoughtfulness woven into the lyrics.

Williamson genuinely is a poet, even though one suspects he'd consider that idea a bit wanky.

At the Fonda in Hollywood on a Thursday night in May, the pair wandered onto the stage looking like they were lost. Fearn appeared first, plugged in his laptop, gave a cheering crowd two thumbs up, then left. Ten minutes later, they both ambled on. Fearn pushed a button, and the Mods kicked into "The Unwrap" from this year's *The Demise of*

to keep the energy up.

All the songs from the new album hit hard. Talking to us about the themes, Williamson said "Obviously MAGA, the Middle East, God, nationalism. 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."

"The Good Life" and "Shoving the Images" are both great examples, the latter with the opening line "Endless war whether you like it or not." And through it all, Williamson dances like an odd uncle at a wedding. Or like a drunk guy in the pub who's dancing alone to his favorite song on the jukebox, oblivious to the stares. We should all be so cocky.

Every now and then, he'll pause between songs to kinda quietly ask, "How you doin'? You alright?" That was surprising to us—we were expecting him to be as verbally aggressive with the crowd as he is with his lyrics, but not so. In conversation, he was a gent and he turns out to be the same on stage when he's not singing/rapping/yelling.

The cover of the Pet Shop Boys "West End Girls" is inspired. Retaining the club anthem appeal, in the Mods' hands it could be taken of an indictment, a commentary on class.

Perhaps predictably, "Tied Up In Nottz" and "Tweet Tweet Tweet" from 2014's *Divide and Exit* get the biggest crowd reaction. It's amazing those tunes are 12 years old, but it does feel like the duo is having the sort of breakthrough moment that they deserve. — **Brett Callwood**

Griffith Park Los Angeles, CA

Web: diocancerfund.org

Contact: info@diocancerfund.org

Players: Saints and Sinners; Legs Diamond; Whole Lotta Rosies; Led Zepagain; Dio Disciples; Lita Ford

ROCK FOR RONNIE IS AN ANNUAL fundraising concert for the Ronnie James Dio Stand Up and Shout Cancer Fund in honor of the late Dio/Black Sabbath/Rainbow vocalist. The 2026 edition delivered an afternoon of quality hard rock under a cloudless Griffith Park sky, augmented with vendors, food trucks, and fundraising auctions and raffles. Rock radio personality Eddie Trunk hosted, often alongside Dio's widow, Wendy.

Sets by L.A.'s Saints of Sinners and Legs Diamond; long-running local tribute bands Whole Lotta Rosies (AC/DC) and Led Zepagain (duh!); and former industrial-turned-Americana troubadour Jason Charles Miller were all warmly received by a good-natured if rather sparse crowd.

The stars started to come out with Dio Disciples, an "official" Dio tribute with a lineup that rotates around former RJD collaborators. Rock For Ronnie was the debut for a DD incarnation that will tour later this year. Ably subbing for usual drummer Simon Wright was Brian Tichy (Billy Idol, Whitesnake), alongside longtime members Bjorn Englen (Yngwie Malmsteen, Quiet Riot) on bass and Scott Warren (Dio) on keys, Rowan Roberston (Dio) on guitar backing tag-teaming vocalists Robin MacAuley (MacAuley Schenker Group) and Oni



Logan (Lynch Mob).

The sheer quality of this lineup was face-slappingly evident, even after just two rehearsals. Logan and debutante MacAuley came as close as anyone will to Dio's inimitable pipes on the likes of "Last in Line," "Rainbow in the Dark," and "Holy Diver." But what really impressed was Dio Disciples' palpable joy in performing their old mate's music in such a worthy setting.

The day's big draw was "Queen of Rock Guitar" Lita Ford, who never disappoints. The chemistry of her unusually stable band (guitarist/vocalist Patrick Kennison and drummer Bobby Rock have been aboard for over a decade) sets Ford apart among solo acts. In a striking silver jumpsuit that few could pull off at any age, the 67-year-old reminded us of her second-nature

stagecraft and storied shredding on faves like "Only Women Bleed," "Kiss Me Deadly," and 1988 hit, "Close My Eyes Forever," on which Kennison deftly covered the late Ozzy Osbourne's parts.

Lita and her band always bring a welcome throwback attitude of money's-worth entertainment—including epic solos, inter-band banter, and between-song humor—embroidered on this occasion with apt humility, appreciation, and awe for Ronnie James Dio.

The day closed out with an all-star jam kicked off by former Thin Lizzy frontman Ricky Warwick and his band revisiting Lizzy's "Cowboy Song" and "Jailbreak," with current and former members of Anthrax, Machine Head, W.A.S.P., and Dio/Sabbath drummer Vinny Appice also dropping in. — **Paul Rogers**

YouTube Theater Los Angeles, CA

Web: helloween.org

Contact: curtis@csquared.info

Players: Michael Kiske, vocals; Andi Deris, vocals; Kai Hansen, guitars, vocals; Michael Weikath, guitars; Sascha Gerstner, guitars; Markus Grosskopf, bass; Dani Löble, drums

THE STORY OF GERMAN POWER-METAL titans Helloween is an undeniably thrilling one. Having formed in '84, the 1985 debut album *Walls of Jericho* saw them fronted by guitarist Kai Hansen. By the second album, 1987's *Keeper of the Seven Keys: Part I*, Michael Kiske had been hired as lead vocalist, with Hansen sticking to guitar and backing vocals. It remained that way until 1994's *Master of the Rings*, for which Kiske was out and former Pink Cream 69 man Andi Deris was the new singer. Somewhere in-between, Hansen had left to form Gama Ray.

Here's what's great about Helloween in 2026, as they tour a 40th anniversary show: Hansen and Kiske are back in the ranks, and Deris wasn't let go. So effectively, Helloween has three singers who rotate in and out of lead duties. A lot of the time, Kiske and Deris sing together, something that shouldn't work but really does. Every other band on the planet should take note—by putting their individual egos to the side, the band and its fans benefit massively. This power-metal band got a ton more powerful.

That Teutonic power boost can be heard immediately when Helloween opened with



"March of Time" from their masterpiece *Keeper of the Seven Keys: Part II* album. Right from the off, Kiske and Deris were facing off like pre-fight wrestlers. But rather than throwing insults at each other, the two men were encouraging the very best from the singer stood opposite. It was frankly inspiring.

2021's self-titled 16th album was the first to feature all three of Kiske, Deris and Hansen, followed by last year's *Giants & Monsters*. In Inglewood, we got four from the latter, including a huge "A Little Is a Little Too Much." Naturally, there were a bunch of songs from the two *Keeper of the Seven Keys* albums, including an excellent "Future Word" and a spooky

"Halloween" from *Part I*.

The two songs from the debut—"Ride the Sky" and "Heavy Metal (Is the Law)"—were fun, and it was great to hear Hansen take the lead even if his voice doesn't have the power of the other two guys. More importantly, Hansen's an incredible guitarist and Helloween has been missing his licks.

The encores were immense. "Dr. Stein," "Eagle Fly Free," and a snippet of "Keeper of the Seven Keys" from *Part II*, plus the Deris-fronted underrated anthem "Power" from *The Time of the Oath*. By the end, the amped-up metal crowd poured out into Inglewood feeling like Bonafide warriors. — **Brett Callwood**

The Sun Rose Los Angeles, CA

Web: jarrodlawson.com

Contact: fiona@thebloomeffect.com

Players: Jarrod Lawson, vocals, piano; Mark Novelich, trumpet; Raul Anguiniga, tenor saxophone; Adrian Carrillo, trombone; Samir Moulay, guitar; Phil Chuah, bass; Gorden Campbell, drums

THRILLING A PACKED HOUSE IN West Hollywood, with a six-piece band in tow, R&B/soul phenom Jarrod Lawson played his first headliner show in Los Angeles and, with fans including Gilles Peterson, Trevor Nelson, Louie Vega, and Michelle Obama, the long-awaited California premiere did not disappoint.

With a phenomenal sound, passionate room, and great overall vibe, the evening kicked off with a delicious scat intro on "Music & Its Magical Way," with instant band gel and a fabulous laidback groove. Showcasing Lawson's undeniable falsetto talent, it included a great tenor sax solo from Raul Anguiniga. Continuing with "I'll Be Your Radio" (written with Moonchild), the taffy guitar licks, delicious bass intro, and blanket of a horn soli were divine. A gorgeous cover of The Isley Brothers "Footsteps In The Dark," including kickdrum and keyboard intro and dynamite guitar solo, was perfection.

Switching gears to acoustic piano, Lawson shared "Do Whatchu Gotta" (from new album *Just Let It*), with tight cutoffs and hanging vocal notes, bringing just enough tension to leave

GRAMMY Museum Los Angeles, CA

Web: jasonmraz.com

Contact: ashley@ashleywhitepr.com

SITTING DOWN WITH RISING ARTIST Philip Labes for a Q&A session with Dan Povenmire (*Phineas and Ferb*) following the screening of music documentary *The Opener*, it is clear that two-time GRAMMY winner and Songwriters Hall of Fame Honoree Jason Mraz is a fan of Labes' art.

Sharing the inspiring journey of a street performer-turned-opening act, *The Opener* navigates how the life of a viral TikTok artist changed the day Jason Mraz joined his livestream. "I took a risk [interacting with Mraz] and he stuck around," shared Labes. "I was already familiar with the music," says Mraz. "I clicked on it and he says, 'Hi Jason Mraz.' I thought maybe A.I. was communicating with me, but it was so sincere. I watched his entire performance that evening."

A few days later, Mraz invited Labes to be his opening act.

Labes' friends, Jeff Toye and Sunya Mara joined the tour to document the adventure, planning to capture social media footage, but the adventure grew into a full-length documentary. Says Mraz, "I still cry when I see it, probably because I can relive my journey through the way Philip conducted himself on this tour. He went above and beyond and absolutely nailed it." Labes says he feels like it is a "love letter to creatives and the impulse to be creative." He hopes it inspires more creativity.

Performing "(This Movie Is) Rated Ours" and



JARROD LAWSON

you constantly wanting more. Shifting gears to Prince's "I Would Die 4 U," the fantastic horn and bass lines, funky breakdown bridge, and incredible drum fills—alongside Lawson's mesmerizing vocals—brought the song everything it deserved.

Guest vocalist Raquel Rodriguez joined the group on "Next Move" (a cowrite that charted at No. 1 in the U.K. in 2025). Stunning vocals joined absolute badass bass-ery on this tune (shoutout to Phil Chuah). Shifting into head-boppin', booty-shakin', falsetto-storied bliss, including an extraordinary guitar solo and driving high-hat/kickdrum/bass outro, gospel-reggae-soul blending "I Got Your Back" was absolutely mesmerizing.

Beautiful heartfelt musical proposition, "Evalee," was written for Lawson's wife when he first met her, and Michelle Obama's pick—"Be The Change" (from 2020's album of the same

name)—delivered tasty bossa, building to calypso. Elegant soul, delicious bass lines, and breathtaking unison vocals grew to a crowd sing-along on "Love Isn't Always Enough."

Stefan Mahendra joined Lawson for "Can't Hide Love," with perfectly blended vocals and stellar drumkit sound (Gorden Campbell) before encore "Smoke Me Out." Thick fat bass sound, syrupy guitar stylings, and a mind-blowing drum solo outro unleashed on the song Lawson originally penned for Nigel Hall. Rounding out the evening with clap-along crowd interaction, Lawson delivered a solo rendition of gospel-tinged "Everything I Need."

With humble giant vibes, Lawson brings just enough sass to his sound, while always leaving room for more. The room was wrapped around his little finger. A fresh take on everything good about old school sound. Just Let It out now.

— **Andrea Beenham**



JASON MRAZ

fan favorite "I Won't Give Up," Mraz interacted with trademark humility, delivering stunning pure vocals and breathtaking guitar stylings, leaving the room in quiet awe before Philip Labes hopped on stage. Sharing new track, "Big Scary Thing," sing-a-long "CANNONBALL!" and breakout favorite, "A TV Show Called Earth," Labes' combination of softness and sharp wit make him an absolute delight. The full-circle evening (Labes busked outside GRAMMY museum doors 13 years ago) was a magical breakout, with Mraz returning to wrap the evening with a gorgeous rendition of biggest hit, "I'm Yours."

On creating art, Mraz shared to, "take a deep breath, exhale, [and] make a noise. Maybe the first song is all tears, sorrow and chaos, but maybe the next song has a little bit more clarity, and then after that, you have the laughter again."

Grandma's Gospel Favorites—originally recorded almost 20 years ago for Mraz—is out this month, including songs recalled from his earliest church memories, a few standards with mandolin and upright bass, a Johnny Cash cover, and a couple of originals. Features include longtime collaborator Noel 'Toca' Rivera, Andy Powers (CEO/Chief guitar designer at Taylor Guitars), and Ray Suen. — **Andrea Beenham**

Chelsea Table & Stage *New York, NY*

Web: turbogoth.com

Contact: fiona@thebloomeffect.com

Players: Sarah Gaugler, vocals; Paolo Peralta, guitar

IN APRIL, N.Y.C.-BASED DUO TURBO GOTH invited listeners to their "Multiverse Party" at Chelsea Table & Stage. Below a hotel, the low stage was circled by tables and chairs, as if the audience and musicians were on equal footing. The set list featured less than 10 tracks and felt like a private show for loved ones. Despite living in N.Y.C. now, Turbo Goth was founded by Peralta and Gaugler in the Philippines in 2008. When they started, they were the only electronic rock duo in the country.

After a spoken word opening act, the two greeted the crowd and took to the stage. Immediately, each member of the duo fell into an assigned role. While Peralta's hard rock guitar riffs kept the crowd tethered, Gaugler's light and high vocal register floated up into space. Mixed with heavy vocal reverb and backing beats, Turbo Goth's sound is somehow grounded and surreal. It dips its toes into experimentalism but never loses the plot. They were an interesting dichotomy—Peralta was a consummate rock star while Gaugler was more pop diva. Together, their stage presence was electric and intriguing.

Occasionally, Gaugler's reverb was so pronounced, the lyrics layered, slowly sliding



TURBO GOTH

over each other. It was as if the vocal melody was being poured slowly, as a syrup, over the crowd. Other times, Gaugler would transition to quicker phrasing or lofi "oohs," showing off her range. Peralta's guitar lines brought heavy energy, shredding below the vocals. Bringing a more traditional rock sound, Peralta was an unwavering and commanding force on stage. Encouraged by fog and flashing lights, Peralta would alternate between jumping around and rolling on the floor, overtaken with the music.

Between tracks, Gaugler would take time to address the audience to give speeches and thanks. Before one track, Gaugler detailed a utopian future, built on love and trust, and hoped

that we would all go forth to work together. They frequently thanked the crowd for coming, and during their final track, left the stage to thank close friends and family personally. It was a sweet way to close the show, confirming how deeply Turbo Goth appreciated support from their fans.

Turbo Goth is finishing their tour, but frequently post about upcoming shows on their socials. They also document their travels and adventures on their blog, highlighting different locations they visit for shows. All information about upcoming dates and personal stories can be found on their website. — *Emily Mills*

503 Social Club *Hoboken, NJ*

Web: facebook.com/p/george-usher

Contact: gjusher@aol.com

Players: George Usher, acoustic guitar, keyboards, vocals; Mark Sidgwick, electric guitar; Laurie Webber, artwork

VISUAL ARTS AND MUSIC COME together in this 30-year journey finally getting its due.

Stevensonville, based on a cast of fictional characters in a small town, this song cycle consists of 12 original folk-rock compositions each relating to a separate character and illustration displayed throughout the venue.

Set in a town bearing the same name as the project's title, the characters could easily serve as prototypes for any small-town USA. What links them together is their rootedness in this insular environment, dealing with issues that are sometimes dark but sometimes optimistic. Their destiny depends on whether they remain there or break free, leaving behind the familiarity they've come to rely on. Drawing from real life people he knew growing up as well as figures in literature, Usher presents a mélange of colorful but conflicted individuals.

One of the characters, Marjorie Hayes, the nasty church lady, has a fixation with another character named James Strothard. The song associated with her is entitled "James Strothard," and depicts her penchant for preying on children which Strothard remembers from his youth. Like any small town, everyone is connected to everyone for good or for bad. The cycle culminates with two songs, "Town Elders" and "Benny Weed." The first warns of the dangers of



GEORGE USHER

staying in Stevensonville while the latter sings the praises of those who opt out and look for a different future.

The show's focus is more about effective storytelling than any individual musical element. Usher's job is to make each character and narrative come to life through song and humor. "My plan was to eventually guide my audience into accepting a full-blown song cycle that would bridge rock 'n' roll, theater, and poetry as a large conceptual project. I wanted to zero in on a small town, where I could address a lot of my lyrical ideas and this small town became Stevensonville."

No stranger to the New York City music scene, Usher fronted and/or played in numerous N.Y.C./Hoboken, NJ bands since the '70s and co-wrote the title tracks to Bongos' frontman Richard Barone's *Cloud Over Eden*. The *Village Voice* once described him as "One of New York's best pop craftsmen."

A limited series of two hundred vinyl albums will be released complete with a booklet containing visuals that correspond to each song. Usher closed the set with "Not the Tremblin' Kind," which he wrote for Laura Cantrell and was the title track from her debut album.

— *Ellen Woloshin*

Photo by Mark Shiwovich

Updated for 2026, MC's exclusive, national list of professionals will help connect you to those who can handle your career interests and arrange live bookings. (For MC's lists of Music Attorneys, Recording Studios and much more, please visit musicconnection.com/industry-contacts.)

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Brooklyn, NY 11232
310-450-2555
Email: info@5bam.com
Web: 5bam.com
Styles: Metal, Rock, Alt.
*No unsolicited material

Additional location:

12021 W. Jefferson Blvd.
Culver City, CA 90066
310-450-7132

AAM

270 Lafayette St., Ste 605
New York, NY 10012
212-924-2929
Email: info@aaminc.com
Web: aaminc.com

Contact: Matthew Clayton
Styles: Alt., Rock, Pop, Indie
Clients: Call for roster

*No unsolicited material, represents producers only

Additional locations:

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310-271-9350

1600 17th Ave., S.
Nashville, TN 37212
615-742-1234

AM CONSULTING GROUP

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Contact: Ashwin Mathur, CEO
Kevin Liles, President/Partner
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Web: arslanianassociates.com/who.html
Contact: Oscar Arslanian
Clients: Fabian, Chris Montez, Little Peggy March, Kathy Young, Johnny Tillotson, Dennis Tufano, Brian Hyland
Styles: Classic Rock
Services: personal management
*No unsolicited material

ELLEN AZORIN, MANAGER, PEDRO GIRAUDO

TANGO QUARTET
157 W. 79th St., Ste. 4A
New York, NY 10024
212-724-2400
Email: ellenazorin@gmail.com
Web: pedrogiraudo.com, cantaloupeproductions.com
Styles: Performance Argentine Tango
Client: Pedro Giraudo Tango Quartet

THE BABBLE BOUTIQUE

Email: azalee@azalee.maslow.com
Web: azaleemaslow.com
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Services: Social and digital media consulting and management agency.
We specialize in converting your followers into paying fans.
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Web: backerentertainment.com
Contact: David Backer

BACKSTAGE ENTERTAINMENT

Nashville, TN 37220
615-323-2200
Email: staff@backstageentertainment.net
Web: backstageentertainment.net
Contact: Paul Loggins, John Stevens, Laurent Stoeckli
Styles: All
Services: full-service radio promotion, publicity and PR, radio programming/consulting, personal management, entertainment consulting/marketing
*Accepts unsolicited material

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Austin, TX 78738
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Web: bbabooking.com, facebook.com/bbabooking

Contact: Laura Mordecai
Styles: rock, jazz
Clients: Stephanie Urbina Jones & the Honky Tonk Mariachi, Beto and the Fairlanes, Robin Mordecai, John Mills Times Ten, Matt Wilson Band, Javier Chaparro & Salud, Butch Miles Jazz Empress
Services: specializes in placing musicians for recording sessions and back up for touring acts, must read sheet music
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Woodinville, WA 98072
425-481-4100 Fax 425-486-2718
Email: bearcreekstudio@gmail.com
Web: bearcreekstudio.com
Contact: Manny Hadlock

Styles: intelligent rock, indie rock, rock nervous, folk, renaissance, rock, jazz
Clients: Gordon Raphael, Ryan Hadlock, Holy Ghost Instrument, Sony Records, Sub Pop, Vertigo, Warner, Transgressive
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BEDLAM MUSIC MANAGEMENT

864 Eastern Ave.
Toronto, ON M4L 1A3
416-585-7885
Email: info@bedlammusicmgt.com
Web: bedlammusicmgt.com
Clients: The Sheepsdogs, Moors, JuD, City and Colour, Monster Truck

BIG HASSLE MANAGEMENT

157 Chambers St.
New York, NY 10007
212-619-1360
Web: bighassle.com/publicity
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Clients: A Girl Called Eddy, Adult Books, AFI, Alexandra Savior, Alice Phoebe Lou, Alt-3, Chole Tang, Chrissie Hynde, Charlie Burg, etc. (see website for entire list)
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Additional Location:

3685 Motor Ave., Ste 240
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424-603-4655

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11 S. Angell St., Ste. 336
Providence, RI 02906
401-274-4770
Email: al.bignoise@gmail.com
Web: bignoiseno.com
Contact: Al Gomes
Styles: pop, rock, R&B, metal, jazz, acoustic, blues, punk, techno
Clients: Christina Aguilera, Red Hot Chili Peppers, The Beach Boys, Chicago, Katharine McPhee, Dionne Warwick, Gregory Porter, and Viola Davis
*Currently accepting demo submissions.
*Please call or email first: Al Gomes, A&R

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Cedartown, GA 30125
678-901-0162
Email: ty@bitchinentertainment.com

Web: bitchinentertainment.com

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Contact: Raymond A. Shields, Pat Shields
Clients: producers, engineers, marketing, production
Styles: R&B, jazz, urban adult contemporary
Services: personal management, marketing
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BRICK WALL MANAGEMENT

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New York, NY 10001
212-501-0748

Email: bwmgmt@brickwallmgt.com

Web: brickwallmgt.com
Contact: Michael Solomon, Rishon Blumberg
Styles: pop, rock, country, singer-songwriter
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Styles: roots, rock, jam, Americana, blues
Clients: Webb Wilder, Geoff Achison, Yonrico Scott, Randall Bramblett, Peter Karp, Glenn Phillips/Cindy Wilson of B-52's
Services: A boutique agency that gives personal attention to musicians
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Styles: folk, pop, rock, country
Clients: Dar Williams, The Nields, Susan Werner, Cry, Cry, Cry
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T: 212-277-9000 f: 212-277-9099

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Burbank, CA
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How to Submit: no unsolicited material

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Styles: All Styles
Clients: Irene Cara, Michael Carvin, David Chesky, Suzanne Ciani, Elisha Abas, Equie Castrillo, Larry Coryell, Mamma Freedom, George Garzone, Eumir Deodato, Keith Emerson, Kenia, Craig Handy, Paulette McWilliams, Captain Beyond
 *Accepts unsolicited material. See website for instructions.

INVASION GROUP
 333 E. 75th Street #4A
 New York, NY 10021
 212-414-0505 Fax 212-414-0525
Contact: Steven Saporta
Email: info@invasiongroup.com, steven@invasiongroup.com
Web: invasiongroup.com
Styles: rock, world, folk, singer-songwriter
Clients: Ani DeFranco, David Bieber Archives, Donny McCaslin, Elizabeth Moen, Everett Bradley, Future Generations, Gall Ann Dorsey, Grace and The Victory Riders, Gracie and Rachel, Jai Uttal, Ken Butler, Raye Zaragoza, Ronnie Spector, Seth Gier, Sylvie Simmons
 *Accepts unsolicited material

Additional locations:
 P.O. Box 27687
 Los Angeles, CA 90027
Email: info@invasiongroup.com

83 Morse St.
 Floor 2
 Norwood, MA 02062
Email: info@invasiongroup.com

JAMPOL ARTIST MANAGEMENT
 8033 W. Sunset Blvd., Suite 3250
 West Hollywood, CA 90046
 310-654-1900
Email: assistant@jamina.com
Web: wemanageleads.com
Contact: Jeff Jampol
Clients: The Estates of the following: the Doors, Janis Joplin, Peter Tosh, Jim Morrison, Ramones, Michael Jackson, Rick James, Johnny Ramone, Henry Mancini
 *Does not accept unsolicited material

JAY ANTHONY'S NEXT LEVEL BOOKING & ENTERTAINMENT AGENCY, LLC
 USA
 702-861-5075
Email: jayanthony@nextlevelbookingandentertainment.com
Web: facebook.com/jayanthonynextlevel
Contact: Jay Anthony
Style: ALL

KAHN POWER PICTURES
 433 N. Camden Dr, Ste. 600
 Beverly Hills, CA 90210
 310-550-0770
Email: artists4film@gmail.com
Web: artists4film.com
Styles: Film/TV scores, composer/performer/director representation
Clients: Eva Babic, Nancy Bishop, Stewart Copeland, Robert Domheim, J.P. Dutilleux, Claudio Faeh, Jiri Madi, Eric Neveux, J. Peter Robinson, Peter Golub
 *No unsolicited material

KARI ESTRIN MGMT/CONSULTING & RADIO PROMO
 P.O. Box 60232
 Nashville, TN 37206
 615-262-0883
Email: kari@kariestrin.com
Web: kariestrin.com
Contact: Kari Estrin
Styles: folk, Americana, AAA, roots
Clients: John McCutcheon, Reggie Harris, Tim Grimm, Deirdre McCalla
 Le Vent du Nord, The Accidentals, Peggy Seeger, Happy Traum, Pete & Maura Kennedy
 Janis Ian, Steeleye Span...
 *Accepts unsolicited material

KBH ENTERTAINMENT GROUP
 Los Angeles, CA
 818-786-5994
Web: facebook.com/kbhentertainment
Contact: Brent Harvey
Styles/Specialties: All styles, entertainment consulting, publicity, music placement/licensing and live event production
 *No unsolicited material

KBM
310-228-8172
Contact: Brent Harris
Clients: Tony! Toni! Tone!, Sounds of Blackness
*No unsolicited material

KELLEEMACK MANAGEMENT
2110 Artesia Blvd, #546
Redondo Beach, CA 90278
818-430-8926
Email: kelly@kelleemackmanagement.com
Web: kelleemackmanagement.com
Contact: Kelly MacGaumn

KRAFT ENGEL MANAGEMENT
3349 Cahuenga Blvd. West
Los Angeles, CA 90068
818-380-1918
Email: info@kraft-engel.com
Web: kraft-engel.com
Contact: Richard Kraft
Styles: Film Composers
*No unsolicited material

KUPER PERSONAL MANAGEMENT/RECOVERY RECORDINGS
515 Bomar St.
Houston, TX 77006
713-520-5791
Email: info@recoveryrecordings.com
Web: recoveryrecordings.com
Contact: Koop Kuper
Styles: folk, roots rock, Americana
Clients: the Very Girls, David Rodriguez
*Accepts unsolicited material

LAKE TRANSFER ARTIST & TOUR MANAGEMENT
Studio City, CA
818-508-7158
Web: laketransfer.com
Contact: Steven B. Cohen, Mgr.
Clients: Candyboy, Friends of Distinction, Evelyn Champagne King, Rose Royce, DJ Asi Vidal

LAKES COMMUNICATION SERVICES
Los Angeles, CA 90045
323-251-2358
Email: lakescommunications@gmail.com
Contact: Jeffery Lakes
Clients: Mark Drummond, Lakes The Voice
Styles: R&B, HipHop, Smooth Jazz, Urban Contemporary
Services: artist management, marketing, business development

LEN WEISMAN PERSONAL MANAGEMENT
357 S. Fairfax Ave., Ste. 430
Los Angeles, CA 90036
323-653-0693, 323-653-7670
Email: persmanmt@aol.com
Web: persmanmt.com/services.html
Contact: Len Weisman
Styles: R&B, soul, blues, gospel, rap, soul, pop
Clients: Jewel With Love, Chosen Gospel Recovery Singers, Winds Of Fate, Rapture 7, Chosen Gospel Singers, L'Nee, Sister Maxine West, TooMiraquelas (rapper), Winds of Fate
*Accepts unsolicited material

LEONARD BUSINESS MANAGEMENT
532 Colorado Ave.
Santa Monica, CA
310-458-8860
Email: info@lbmgmt.com
Web: facebook.com/profile.php?id=100066541158026
Contact: Jerry Leonard
Clients: Call for roster
Styles: All
Services: Business management only
*No unsolicited material

LIPPMAN ENTERTAINMENT
Beverly Hills, CA 90210
310-775-5228, 805-686-1163
Email: music@lippmanent.com, info@lippmanent.com
Web: lippmanent.com
Contact: Michael Lippman, Nick Lippman
Clients: producers, artists, songwriters
Styles: All
Services: Full-service
*No unsolicited material

LOGGINS PROMOTION
310-325-2800
Email: staff@logginspromotion.com
Web: logginspromotion.com, facebook.com/logginspromotion
Contact: Paul Loggins
Services: Represents both major and independent artists. All genres.

MAINE ROAD MANAGEMENT
P.O. Box 1412
Woodstock, NY 12498

212-979-9004
Email: mailbox@maineroadmanagement.com
Web: maineroadmanagement.com
Contact: David Whitehead
Styles: rock, singer-songwriter, pop
Clients: Lloyd Cole, Mimi Goese, HELMET, Joe Henry, Joe Jackson, Hugh Laurie, Keeley Forsyth.
*No unsolicited material

MAJOR BOB MUSIC
Nashville, TN 37212
615-329-4150
Web: majorbob.com, facebook.com/majorbobmusic
Contact: Bob Doyle
Styles: Country, Pop
Clients: Garth Brooks, JP Williams, John & Jacob, Alysa Vanderheyem, Josh London
*No unsolicited material

MANAGEMENT ARK
116 Village Blvd., Ste. 200
Princeton, NJ 08540
609-734-7403, Vernon H. Hammond III
301-859-4050, Edward C. Arrendell, II
Email: ed@managementark.com
Web: managementark.com
Contact: Vernon Hammond III, Edward C. Arrendell, II
Styles: jazz
Clients: Wynton Marsalis, Herlin Riley, Cecile McLorin Salvant
*No unsolicited material

MASCIOLI ENTERTAINMENT CORPORATION
319 Dillon Cir.
Orlando, FL 32822
407-701-9342
Email: masciolli319@gmail.com
Web: masciolientertainment.com
Contact: Paul A. Mascoli
Styles: country, jazz, R&B, orchestras, swing, tropical, rock
Clients: See website for roster
*Accepts unsolicited material

MCGHEE ENTERTAINMENT
21 Music Sq. W.
Nashville, TN 37203
615-327-3255
Email: info@mcgheela.com
Web: mcgheela.com
Clients: Kiss, Paul Stanley, Ted Nugent, Down, Caleb Johnson

THE MGMT COMPANY
6906 Hollywood Blvd., 2nd Fl.
Hollywood, CA 90028
323-946-7700
Email: inquiries@themgmtcompany.com
Web: linkedin.com/company/the-mgmt-company/people
Contact: Marc Pollack

MICHAEL HAUSMAN ARTIST MANAGEMENT
17A Stuyvesant Oval
New York, NY 10009
212-505-1943
Email: info@michaelhausman.com
Web: michaelhausman.com
Contact: Michael Hausman
Styles: rock, pop, singer-songwriter
Clients: Aimee Mann, Suzanne Vega, the Both
*No unsolicited material

MIKE GORMLEY
L.A. Personal Development (LAPD)
Email: glebe99@yahoo.com, mgsunkhollow@gmail.com
Web: lapersdev.com/history

MIKE'S ARTIST MANAGEMENT
Funzalo Records
PO Box 2518
Agoura Hills, CA 91376
Email: dan@mikesartistmanagement.com, mike@mikesmanagement.com, info@mikesmanagement.com
Web: facebook.com/mikesartistmanagement
Contact: Mike Lembo
Styles: rock, pop, Americana
Clients: Tony Furtado, Mostly Bears, Luca, Brian Lopez
*No unsolicited material

MILLION DOLLAR ARTISTS
12 Lake Forest Court West
St. Charles, MO 63301
636-925-1703, 888-521-8146
Web: facebook.com/milliondollarartists
Contact: Dr. Charles "Max" E. Million
Styles: All Styles
*Accepts unsolicited material. See website for instructions.

MOKSHA MUSIC MANAGEMENT
Hollywood

1247 North Crescent Heights Blvd. Suite D
West Hollywood, CA. USA. 90046
323-842-4434
Email: info@mokshaentertainment.com
Web: mokshaentertainment.com, bobbyleigh.com
Contact: Bobby Leigh
Clients: Stony Sugar skull, DieAna, Karuna, WaWa Baby, Lindsey Loon, Diana Meyer, Dr. Monike Demmler
Styles: Rock, Pop, Punk Rock, Psychedelic Punk
Services: Personal Management, Artist Development, Tour Management, Social Media Management
Bobby Leigh is an active member of the PGA (Producers Guild of America), FIND (Film Independent), CAA (Creative Actors Alliance), NALIP (National Association of Latino Independent Producers), IP (Independent Producers), IFF (International Film Finance), IDA (International Documentary Association and Filmmaker's Alliance).
*Accepts unsolicited material in U.S. office

MORRIS HIGHAM MANAGEMENT, LLC
2001 Blair Blvd.
Nashville, TN 37212
615-321-5025
Web: morrishigham.com
Styles: Country
Clients: Kenny Chesney, Brandon Lay, MamaDear, Old Dominion, Ryan Griffin
*No unsolicited material

MSH MANAGEMENT
Studio City, CA
503-332-3229
Email: mshgmt@yahoo.com
Web: bandmix.com/mshgmt1550969
Contact: Marney Hansen
Clients: Silver Lining, Nocturnal Drifters, Nancy Luca
Services: personal management
*No unsolicited material

MTS MANAGEMENT GROUP
227 Gill Road
Apollo, PA. 15613
412-445-5282
Email: michael@mtsmanagementgroup.com
Web: mtsmanagementgroup.com

MUSIC & ART MANAGEMENT
Asheville, NC 28801
828-225-5658
Web: facebook.com/p/music-and-art-management-100070007323989
Contact: Steve Cohen
Styles: Jazz, Electronic, Experimental, Multimedia
Clients: Theo Bleckmann, Carl Hancock Rux, David Wilcox, Vijay Iyer
*Does not accept unsolicited material

MYRIAD ARTISTS
P.O. Box 550
Carrboro, NC 27510
919-967-8655
Email: trish@tg2artists.com
Web: myriadartists.com
Contact: Trish Gallano
Styles: folk, bluegrass, jazz, Americana
Clients: A.J.Croce, Mike Marshall, Leahy, Sugar and the Mint, Seamus Egan,
*No unsolicited material

NETTWERK PRODUCER MANAGEMENT
3900 W. Alameda Ave., Ste. 850
Burbank, CA 91505
747-241-8619
Email: info@nettwerk.com
Web: nettwerk.com
*No unsolicited material

Additional locations:
Head Office:
1675 West 2nd Ave
2nd Floor
Vancouver, BC V6J 1H3
604-654-2929

263 S. 4th St.
P.O.Box 110649
Brooklyn, NY 11211
212-760-1540

15 Adeline Place, Ground Fl
London, WC1B 3AJ
011-44-207-456-9500

Neuer Kamp 32
20357 Hamburg, Germany
49-40-431-846-50

NEW HEIGHTS ENTERTAINMENT
Calabasas, CA 91372
323-802-1650
Email: info@newheightsent.com
Web: newheightsent.com

Contact: Alan Melina
Styles: All Styles
Clients: See Website
*No unsolicited material

ONCE 11 ENTERTAINMENT
310-906-9800
Email: javier@once11ent.com
Web: once11ent.com
Contact: Javier Willis
Styles: all types of Latin and world music
Clients: Espinoza Paz, Vazquez Sounds, Annette Moreno, Sergio Arau, Agina Alvarez, Jerry Demara Consulting and Personal Management
*Call before sending material.

PERFORMINGBIZ.COM
10 Chestnut Ct.
Palmyra, VA 22963
Email: jg@performingbiz.com, performingbiz@gmail.com
Web: facebook.com/performingbizsuccessstrategies, performingbiz.com
Contact: Jeri Goldstein
Styles: All Styles/Coaching and Consulting
*Accepts Unsolicited material

PERSISTENT MANAGEMENT
P.O. Box 88456
Los Angeles, CA 90009
Email: pm@persistentmanagement.com
Web: persistentmanagement.com
Contact: Eric Knight
Styles: All
Clients: Disciples of Babylon—Eric Knight, Blake Nix, Keith Shaw
Services: Personal Management
*We Do Not Accept Unsolicited material, email links only, see website for info

PETER KIMMEL'S MUSIC CATALOG
P.O. Box 55252
Sherman Oaks, CA 91413-0252
818-980-1039 Cell/Text 818-903-6518
Email: peter.kimmel@sbcglobal.net
Web: linkedin.com/in/peterkimmel, musicmis-sile.com
Contact: Peter Kimmel
Styles: All
Services: Music Sync Licensing Publishing.
*Call for approval before sending material

PINNACLE MANAGEMENT
MARKETING & PROMOTION
785 Quintana Road #174
Morro Bay, CA 93442
Email: pinnaclemanagement212@gmail.com
Contact: Debbie Rosen
Styles: Top 40/Hot AC, AC & Rock
Services: Promotion & Management

PLATINUM STAR MANAGEMENT
9663 Santa Monica Blvd. #320
Dept. MC
Beverly Hills, CA 90210
Email: jen@platinumstarmgmt.com
Web: platinumstarmgmt.com
Contact: Jennifer Yeko
Clients: Specializing in film/TV placement, radio promotion, music publicity and managing pop/rock/singer-songwriters
*Accepts unsolicited material

PRIMARY WAVE MUSIC
116 E. 16th St. #9
New York, NY 10003
212-661-6990
Contact: Steven Greener
Email: sgreener@primarywave.com
Web: primarywave.com
Clients: Cee Lo Green, Fantasia, Melissa Etheridge, Brandy, Cypress Hill, Eric Benet, Toots & The Maytals.

Additional location:
2690 N Beachwood Drive, Floor 2
Los Angeles, CA 90068 USA
424-239-1200

Q PRIME MANAGEMENT
New York, London, Nashville
212-302-9790
Email: newyork@qprime.com (NY), nashville@qprime.com (Nashville), london@qprime.com (London)
Web: qprime.com
Styles: rock, Pop
Clients: Bear Hands, Silversun Pickups, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Eric Church, Brothers Osborne
*No unsolicited material

RAINMAKER ARTISTS
PO Box 342229
Austin, TX 78734
512-229-7799, 214-744-0290
Email: paul@rainmakerartists.com
Web: rainmakerartists.com

Contact: Paul Nugent
Styles: rock, pop
Clients: Blue October, Bowling For Soup, IAMDY-NAMITE, Danny Malone
 *Accepts unsolicited material

RAM TALENT GROUP
 Fort Lee, NJ 07024
 201-363-1461 Ext. 201
Email: ruben@rubenrodriguezentertainment.net
Web: facebook.com/rubenrodriguezentertainment
Contact: Ruben Rodriguez
Styles: urban, gospel, urban AC, Latin music

RED LIGHT MANAGEMENT
 5800 Bristol Pkwy, Suite 400
 Culver City, CA 90230
 310-273-2266
Web: redlightmanagement.com
Styles: All styles
Clients: Phish, Luke Bryan, Alabama Shakes, Lady Antebellum and many more.
 *Accepts unsolicited material

Additional locations:
 Virginia
 New York
 Nashville
 London
 Atlanta
 Seattle
 Charlottesville

REGIME MANAGEMENT
 Agoura Hills, CA
Email: info@regimeinc.com
Web: regime72.com
Clients: The REGIME client base ranges from Athletes, Artists, Musicians & Producers - From Hip Hop to Latin Jazz to Funk & Reggae. From legendary Graffiti Artist Risk, Hip Hop pioneers Everlast, House Of Pain, DJ Muggs & Dilated Peoples to Poncho Sanchez, Lettuce, Lucky Chops, Common Kings, Amigo The Devil - & many, many more.

RIGHTTRACK MANAGEMENT
 (Chaser Music Group- Ascaph, Bmi, Universal music)
 (Artist Direction, Record Production, and Music Publishing)
Contact: Founder; A.Rosenthal aka Chase Williams.
 (805)200-9772
Email: ar.cw.917@gmail.com
Styles: All Genres, specifically Rock, Contemporary and Alternative.
Clients: (past & present) Jean luc Ponty, Jack Mack and the Heart Attack, Dave Mason, Spencer Davis, Freddie Hubbard, Malcolm Bruce, and others.
 Look for Righttracks new and revised sites on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and more.

RON RAINEY MANAGEMENT, INC.
 8500 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 525
 Beverly Hills, CA 90211
 310-277-4050
Email: ryan@ronrainey.com
Web: ronrainey.com
Contact: Ryan Jones
Clients: John Kay and Steppenwolf, ANGEL
Services: management
Styles: rock, classic rock, hard rock, stoner rock, metal
 *We can accept unsolicited material

RPM MUSIC PRODUCTIONS
 420 W. 14th St., Ste. 6NW
 New York, NY 10014
 212-246-8126
Email: info@rpmproductions.com
Contact: Danny Bennett
Styles: rock, pop, jazz
Clients: Tony Bennett
 *No unsolicited material

RPS RECORDING AND ENTERTAINMENT GROUP
 4212 E. Los Angeles Ave.
 Simi Valley, CA 93063
 805-551-2342
Email: rps.entertainment.group@gmail.com
Contact: Gary Bright
Styles: Various genres along with Gospel and Christian
 *No unsolicited material please

RUSSELL CARTER ARTIST MANAGEMENT
 567 Ralph McGill Blvd.
 Atlanta, GA 30312
 404-377-9900
Email: info@rcam.com
Contact: Russell Carter
Styles: singer-songwriter, alt, Americana, pop, rock
Clients: Indigo Girls, Matthew Sweet, Susanna

Hoff, Shawn Mullins, Chely Wright, the Shadow-boxers, Sarah Lee Guthrie, Abe Partridge

SAM
 Silva Artist Management
 722 Seward St.
 Los Angeles, CA 90038
 323-856-8222
Email: info@sammusicbiz.com
Web: sammusicbiz.com
Contact: John Silva
Clients: Foo Fighters, Band of Horses, Ryan Adams, Jimmy Eat World, Beastie Boys, Beck, Sonic Youth, Queens Of The Stone Age
Styles: alt., rock
 *No unsolicited material

SHERROD ARTIST MANAGEMENT
 Music Entertainment Manager/A&R
 (252) 269-2869
Contact: Sean Sherrod
Email: info@sherrodartistmanagement@mail.com
Web: instagram.com/sherrod_sean/?hl=en

SKH MUSIC
 540 President St.
 Brooklyn, NY 11215
Email: skaras@skhmusic.com,
 khagan@skhmusic.com
Web: skhmusic.com
Contact: Steve Karas, Keith Hagan
Clients: The Afghan Whigs, Arthur Buck, Joseph Arthur, Davina and the Vagabonds, Greg Dulli, Robert Finley, The Gutter Twins, Jonny Lang, Lily & Madeleine, The Magpie Salute, Squirrel Nut Zippers, TOTO, The Twilight Singers

SO WHAT MEDIA & MANAGEMENT
 890 W. End Ave., Ste. 1-A
 New York, NY 10025
 212-877-9631
Email: sowhatasst@me.com
Contact: Lisa Barbaris
Styles: rock, pop
Clients: Cyndi Lauper, Billy Porter, Amanda Shires, Liv Warfield
 *No unsolicited material accepted

SOUNDTRACK MUSIC ASSOCIATES
 1601 N. Sepulveda Blvd. #579
 Manhattan Beach, CA. 90266
 310-260-1023
Email: info@soundtrk.com
Web: soundtrk.com
Contact: John Tempereau, Isabel Pappani, Koyo Sonae
Styles: All Styles, Underscores
Clients: Composers: Cliff Martinez, Rod Abernethy, Evan Lurie, (see roster on site)
 *No unsolicited material

Additional Location:
 4133 Redwood Ave., Ste. 3030
 Los Angeles, CA 90066

SPARKS ENTERTAINMENT, LLC
 PO Box 531973
 Livonia, MI. 48153
 734-394-9945
Web: facebook.com/bsparksentertainment
Email: sparksentertainment78@gmail.com
Styles: ALL, Hip-Hop, R&B, Country, Rock, Acting & Modeling
Services: Talent Management, Career Development, Promoting

SPINNING PLATES MGMT
 49 Music Square West #503
 Nashville, TN 37203
 615-482-6995
Email: kirt@spinningplatesmgmt.com
Web: spinningplatesmgmt.com
Contact: Kirt Webster
Styles: country, rock, tributes, corporate branding
Services: specializes in legendary musicians, corporate branding, and lifestyle marketing
 *No unsolicited material

STARKRAVIN' MANAGEMENT
 McLane & Wong
 11135 Weddington St., Ste. 424
 North Hollywood, CA 91601
 818-587-6801 Fax 818-587-6802
Email: bcmclane@aol.com
Web: bcmclane.com
Contact: Ben McLane, Esq.
Styles: pop, rock, alt.
Services: Personal management, legal
 *Accepts unsolicited material

STEVE STEWART MANAGEMENT
 12400 Ventura Blvd., #900
 Studio City, CA 91604
Email: stevestewart@stevestewart.com
Web: stevestewart.com
Contact: Steve Stewart
Styles: alt., rock, pop producers, film & TV com-

posers
 *No unsolicited material

STEVEN SCHARF ENTERTAINMENT
 126 E. 38th St.
 New York, NY 10016
 212-779-7977
Web: stevenscharf.com
Contact: Steven Scharf
Styles: rock, alt., singer-songwriter, hip-hop, world, producers, film & TV composers
Clients: Mackenzie, The Kickback, Leah Siegel, Liquid, Mike-E
 *No unsolicited material

STIEFEL ENTERTAINMENT
 21731 Ventura Blvd, #300
 Woodland Hills, CA 91364
 310-275-3377
Contact: Arnold Stiefel
Clients: Rod Stewart
Styles: rock, pop
Services: personal management
 *No unsolicited material

SUNCOAST MUSIC MANAGEMENT
 212 Otter Ridge Dr
 Brandenburg, Ky 40108
 888-727-1698, 727-237-7971,
 (Ohio) 330-730-1615
Email: suncoastbooking@aol.com
Web: suncoastent.com
Contact: Al Spohn
Styles: rock, classic rock, metal, variety
Clients: Nightrain International (Guns n Roses Tribute), Hells/Bells (AC/DC Tribute), Battery (Metallica), Madman's Diary (Ozzy), Kiss Army (Kiss), LedSmith (Led Zeppelin & Aerosmith)
 *Accepts unsolicited material

SURFDOG/DAVE KAPLAN MANAGEMENT
 1126 S. Coast Hwy, 101
 Encinitas, CA 92024
 760-944-8800
Email: lauren@surfdog.com
Web: surfdog.com
Contact: Lauren Fricke
Style: Rock / Reggae / Soul / Americana
Clients: Brian Setzer, Stray Cats, Dave Stewart, Sublime

TAC MUSIC MANAGEMENT
 9971 E. Ida Pl.
 Greenwood Village, CO 80111
 720-431-2604
Email: info@tacmusicgmt.com
Web: tacmusicgmt.com
Contact: Tracey Chirhart
Styles: blues, southern rock, hard rock, country, bluegrass
Clients: see website
Services: personal & business management, promotion, marketing
 *Accepts unsolicited material

TAKEOUT MANAGEMENT, INC
 785 Quintana Road #174
 Morro Bay, CA 93442
 805-382-2200
Email: howie@howiewood.com
Web: howiewood.com
Contact: Howard Rosen
Styles: CHR/Top 40, AC, Hot AC, AAA, Alternative Specialty, Mainstream Rock, Modern AC, Country, College for artists of all label sizes including independent.
Services: Personal management, shop for distribution and record deals. Production and remix with major producers.

TED KURLAND ASSOCIATES
 173 Brighton Ave.
 Boston, MA 02134
 617-254-0007 Fax 617-782-3577
Email: agents@thekurlandagency.com
Web: thekurlandagency.com
Contact: Ted Kurland
Styles: jazz, blues, vocals
Clients: Pat Metheny, Wynton Marsalis, Bill Charlap, John Pizzarelli, Lisa Fischer, Bobby McFerrin, Bobby Rush, Chris Botti, Sonny Rollins, Taylor Rae and more
 *No unsolicited material

TENTH STREET ENTERTAINMENT
 1115 Broadway, 12th Floor
 New York, NY 10010
 212-334-3160
Email: info@10thst.com
Web: 10thst.com
Clients: Motley Crue, Nikki Sixx, Sixx:AM, Papa Roach, Blondie, Oh No After Midnight, Bad Wolves, Bailey Zimmerman, Bleeker, Dorothy, Fire From the Gods, Five Finger Death Punch, Hollywood Undead, Ice Nine Kills, In Flames, Saul, Solence
Styles: All

Services: personal management
 *No unsolicited material

Additional location:
 113 North San Vicente Blvd.
 2nd Floor, Suite 241
 Beverly Hills, CA 90211
 310-385-4700

THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT INTERNATIONAL, INC. (T.E.I.)
 3820 E. La Palma Ave.
 Anaheim, CA 92807
 714-693-9300
Email: jmcentee@teientertainment.com
Web: teientertainment.com
Contact: John McEntee
Styles: All
Services: Entertainment broker for corporate/concert events, personal management
 *No unsolicited material

THREEE
 Erik Eger Entertainment, Inc.
 918 N. Western Ave., Ste. A
 Los Angeles, CA 90029
 213-381-5100 Fax 213-381-5115
Email: info@threee.com
Web: threee.com
Contact: Erik Eger
Styles: All styles
Clients: Dan Carey, Stuart Matthewman, John Hill, Johnny McDaid, Jordan Palmer, Mark Rankin, Stint, Jordan Palmer, Daniel Ledinsky, Blanda
 *We do not accept unsolicited material

TKO ARTIST MANAGEMENT
 Nashville, TN
 615-383-5017
Web: facebook.com/tkoartistmgmt
Contact: T.K. Kimbrell
Styles: Country
Clients: The Bacon Brothers, Toby Keith, Ashley Campbell, Colt Ford, Krystal Keith,
 *No unsolicited material

TOM CALLAHAN & ASSOCIATES
 310-418-1384
Email: tc@tomcallahan.com
Web: linkedin.com/in/tom-callahan-23749542,
 tomcallahan.com
Contact: Tom Callahan
Services: full-service consulting company, including record promotion, legal services, Internet marketing, web design, retail promotion and publicity.
 *No unsolicited material

VARRASSO MANAGEMENT
 103 Main St.
 Copperopolis, CA 95228
 510-792-8910
Email: richard@varrasso.com
Web: instagram.com/creativecopperopolis, creativecopperopolis.com
Contact: Richard Varrasso
Styles: rock, covers, country
 *Accepts unsolicited material

VECTOR MANAGEMENT
 P.O. Box 120479
 Nashville, TN 37212
 615-269-6600
Web: vectormgmt.com
Contact: Ken Levitan
Styles: country, pop, singer-songwriter
 *No unsolicited material

Additional locations:
 430 W. 15th Street
 New York, NY 10011

VELVET HAMMER MANAGEMENT
 9014 Melrose Ave., W.
 Hollywood, CA 90069
 310-657-6161
Email: info@velvethammer.net
Web: velvethammer.net
Clients: System of a Down, Alice in Chains, the Deftones, Code of Orange, Night Riots
Specialties: All
 *Accepts unsolicited material

WANTED MANAGEMENT
Email: wantedgregg@gmail.com
Web: facebook.com/wantedmgmt
Styles: rock, blues, pop, punk, soul
Services: personal management
Clients: Jane Lee Hooker, Echo Del Tusker
 *No unsolicited material

WOLFSON ENTERTAINMENT, INC.
 805-494-9600
Email: info@wolfsonent.com
Contact: Jonathan Wolfson, Dillon Barbosa, Sammy Wolfson, Tom Burger
Web: wolfsonent.com
Styles: All

Clients: Daryl Hall and John Oates, Loverboy, Huey Lewis & The News, Live From Daryl's House, The Tubes, Down North
Services: Personal management. Also offers full-service social media and media relations for clients.

Booking Agents

25 LIVE
 25 Music Sq. W.
 Nashville, TN 37203
 615-777-2227
Email: david@25ent.com
Web: 25ccm.com
Contact: David Breen
Styles: Christian
 *No unsolicited material

ACA MUSIC & ENTERTAINMENT
 705 Larry Ct.
 Waukesha, WI 53186
 800-279-7909, 262-790-0060
 Fax: 262-790-9149
Web: acaentertainment.com
Contact: Louie Higgins
Styles: variety, bluegrass, bands, lounge acts, nostalgia, DJ's, club, festival bands, ceremony, dinner hour, cocktail
Services: Represents nightclub and acts for private functions, not currently seeking new clients
 *Accepts unsolicited material

AGENCY FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS (APA)
 10585 Santa Monica Blvd
 Los Angeles, CA 90025
 310-888-4200
Web: apa-agency.com
Styles: All
 *Call before submitting material

Additional locations:
 3 Columbus Circle
 23rd Floor
 New York, NY 10019
 212-205-4320

424 Church Street
 STE 900
 Nashville, TN 37219
 615-297-0100

3060 Peachtree Rd. NW, Ste. 1480
 Atlanta, GA 30305
 404-254-5876

129 John Street
 Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5V2E2
 416-646-7373

53 Palace Gardens Terrace
 Suite 2
 London, W8 4SB UK
 +44-20-3871-0520

AM CONSULTING GROUP
 157 Church Street
 New Haven, CT 06510
 888-241-3293
Web: amconsultgroup.org
Contact: Ashwin Mathur, CEO
 Kevin Liles, President/Partner
Styles: Hip-Hop, Rap, R&B
 All Music Accepted
 Call for Rates

AMW GROUP
 8605 Santa Monica Blvd.
 West Hollywood, CA 90069
 310-295-4150
Web: amworldgroup.com
Styles: All Styles
Clients: info upon request
 *No unsolicited material

Additional locations:
 New York City
 228 Park Ave., S.
 New York, NY 10003
 212-461-4796

382 NE 191st Street
 Miami, FL 33179

ARROWHEAD BOOKINGS
 New York, NY
Email: contact@arrowheadbookings.com
Web: arrowheadbookings.com
Contact: Ryan Mastrelli

ARTIST REPRESENTATION & MANAGEMENT
 1257 Arcade St.
 St. Paul, MN 55106
 651-483-8754

Email: molly@armentertainment.com, booking@armentertainment.com
Web: armentertainment.com
Contact: John Domagall
Styles: specializes in '80s-early '90s rock, country, blues, metal
Clients: info upon request
 *No unsolicited material

BBA MANAGEMENT & BOOKING
 Austin, TX
 512-477-7777
Email: mike@bbabooking.com
Web: bbabooking.com
Styles: jazz, Latin, rock, classical singer-song-writer
 *No unsolicited material

BIG BEAT
 1515 University Dr., Ste. 102
 Coral Springs, FL 33071
 954-755-7759
Email: talent@bigbeatproductions.com
Web: bigbeatproductions.com
Contact: Richard Lloyd
Styles: all styles
Clients: info upon request
 *Accepts unsolicited material

BOOKING ENTERTAINMENT
 Two Park Avenue, 20th Floor
 New York, NY 10016
 1-800-4ENTERTAINMENT,
 800-436-8378
 212-645-0555
Email: agents@bookingentertainment.com,
 steve@bookingentertainment.com
Web: bookingentertainment.com
Contact: Steve Einzig
Styles: rock, pop, jazz, adult contemporary, pop, R&B
Clients: info on website.
 *No unsolicited material

CAA CREATIVE ARTISTS AGENCY
 2000 Ave. of the Stars
 Los Angeles, CA 90067
 424-288-2000 Fax 424-288-2900
Web: caa.com/entertainmenttalent/touring
Styles: All
 *No unsolicited material - No phone calls

Additional locations:
 10250 Constellation Blvd.
 Los Angeles, CA 90067

405 Lexington Ave., 19th Fl.
 New York, NY 10174
 212-277-9000

65 E. 55th Street
 New York, NY 10022

401 Commerce St., Penthouse
 Nashville, TN 37219
 615-383-8787

6075 Poplar Ave, Suite 410
 Memphis, TN. 38119

1500 K Street NW
 Washington DC, 20005
 771-444-5301

3560 Lenox Road, Suite 1525
 Atlanta, GA 30326
 404-816-2722

1688 Meridian Ave., Suite 340
 Miami Beach, FL. 33139

444 N. Michigan Ave, Suite 3540
 Chicago, IL. 60611
 312-242-2700

CAA ICON
 5075 S. Syracuse Street
 Suite 700
 Denver, CO. 80237
 303-557-3700
Web: caaicon.com

Additional Locations:
 3652 South Third St., Suite 200
 Jacksonville Beach, FL 32250
 904-339-0435

London
 12 Hammersmith Grove
 Hammersmith, London W6 7AP
 U.K.

Additional International offices in Geneva, Munich, Stockholm, Singapore, Shanghai, Beijing

CANTALOUPE MUSIC PRODUCTIONS
 157 W. 79th St., Ste. 4A
 New York, NY 10024
 212-724-2400
Email: ellenazorin@gmail.com
Web: cantaloupeproductions.com
Contact: Ellen Azorin, President
Clients: see website
Styles: Booking agent specializing in Brazilian, Argentine, Cuban and other Latin music, as well as other world music and top level jazz ensembles.
 *Does not accept unsolicited material

CELEBRITY TALENT AGENCY INC.
 2218 Broadway Suite 249,
 New York, NY 10024
 212-539-6039, 201-837-9000
Email: info@celebritytalentagency.com
Web: celebritytalentagency.com
Contact: Mark Green
Styles: jazz, R&B, hip-hop, comedians, gospel
Clients: info upon request
 *No unsolicited material

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Web: closedsessions.live
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 99 Lexington Ave., Suite 5032
 New York, NY 10006
 212-691-5630, 516-830-1951
Email: bruce@thefirm.com
Contact: Bruce E. Colfin
Styles: rock, blues, world, reggae
Clients: Dark Star Orchestra, Mick Taylor, Sly and Robbie, Marty Balin, Freddie McGregor, Niney the Observer, Bernard Purdie
 *Accepts unsolicited material
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COLLIN ARTISTS
 Pasadena, CA 91104
 323-556-1046
Email: collinartists@gmail.com
Web: facebook.com/collinartists
Contact: Barbara Collin, Robert Sax, Goh Kurawasa
Styles: jazz, blues, world, Latin, R&B, doo wop/ classics and beyond
Clients: Mary Stallings, Jeri Brown, Kevin Mahogany, Andy Bey, Alan Paul, Latin Jazz Masters, Bobbi Humphrey, Kathy Kosins
Services: management, promotion, consulting, booking, workshops
 *No unsolicited material

CONCERTED EFFORTS, INC.
 P.O. Box 440326
 Somerville, MA 02144
 617-969-0810 Fax 617-209-1300
Email: concerted@concertedefforts.com
Web: concertedefforts.com
Contact: Paul Kahn
Styles: blues, soul, jazz, gospel, zydeco, Cajun, folk, singer-songwriter, rock, world
Clients: info upon request
 *No unsolicited material

CUMBERLAND MUSIC COLLECTIVE
 529 Snyder Ave
 Nashville, TN 37209
 615-627-2243
Email: lee@cmcartist.com
Web: cmcartists.com/artists
Styles: bluegrass, roots, folk, singer-songwriter
Clients: info upon request
 *No unsolicited material

EAST COAST ENTERTAINMENT
 855-323-4386
Email: info@bookece.com
Web: bookece.com
Styles: rock, acoustic, classical, latin, jazz, pop, R&B, funk
 *No unsolicited material
 **See website for additional locations

ELECTRIC EVENTS CORPORATION
 P.O. Box 280848
 Lakewood, CO 80228
 303-989-0001
Email: info2@electricevents.com
Web: electricevents.com
Contact: Michael A. Tolerico
Styles: pop cover bands only
Clients: info upon request
 *No unsolicited material

ENTERTAINMENT SERVICES INTERNATIONAL
 1819 S. Harlan Cir.

Lakewood, CO 80232
 303-727-1111, 417-882-2222
Email: randy@esientertainment.com
Web: esientertainment.com
Contact: Randy Erwin
Styles: mostly classic rock
Clients: info upon request
 *No unsolicited material

ENTOURAGE TALENT ASSOCIATES
 150 W. 28th St., Ste. 1503
 New York, NY 10001
 212-633-2600
Email: info@entouragetalent.com
Web: entouragetalent.com
Contact: Wayne Forte
Styles: rock, pop, singer-songwriter, jazz
Clients: info upon request
 *No unsolicited material

FAT CITY ARTISTS
 1906 Chet Atkins Pl, Ste. 502
 Nashville, TN 37212
 615-320-7678 Fax 615-321-5382
Web: fatcityartists.com
Styles: nostalgia, country, big band, bluegrass, blues, R&B, Cajun, world, folk, funk, gospel, jazz
 *No rap or opera
Clients: info upon request
 *No unsolicited material

FLEMING ARTISTS, INC.
 PO Box 1568
 Ann Arbor, MI 48104
 734-995-9066
Email: jim@flemingartists.com
Web: flemingartists.com
Contact: Jim Fleming
Styles: rock, pop, singer-songwriter, contemporary roots rock, folk, bluegrass, improv comedy
Clients: Jeff Daniels, Judy Collins, the Kruger Brothers, Shane Koyczan, Ariel Horowitz, Holly Near

GIGSALAD
 2733 E. Battlefield Rd.
 Box 105
 Springfield, MO 65804
 866-788-GIGS
Web: gigsalad.com
Contact: Mark Steiner, Steve Tetrault
Services: A marketplace for booking bands, musicians, entertainers, speakers and services for parties, productions and events.

Additional locations:
 401 Chestnut Street
 Wilmington, NC

3050 East Battlefield Road
 Springfield, MO

GORFAINE-SCHWARTZ AGENCY
 4111 W. Alameda Ave., Ste. 509
 Burbank, CA 91505
 818-260-8500
Web: gsamusic.com
Clients: see our website for client list
 *No unsolicited material

GREAT AMERICAN TALENT
 P.O. Box 2476
 Hendersonville, TN 37077
 615-368-7433, 615-957-3444
Web: facebook.com/greatamericantalent
Email: info@eddyraven.com
Styles: country, Cajun
Clients: info upon request
 *No unsolicited material

HARMONY ARTISTS INC.
 20501 Ventura Blvd, Suite 289
 Woodland Hills, CA 91364
 323-655-5007
Email: acrane-ross@harmonyartists.com
Web: harmonyartists.com
Contact: Adrienne Crane-Ross
Styles: tribute, nostalgia, R&B, Latin, blues, bluegrass, jazz, swing
 *No unsolicited material

HELLO! BOOKING
 P.O. Box 18717
 Minneapolis, MN 55418
 651-647-4464
Email: info@hellobooking.com
Web: hellobooking.com
Contact: Eric Roberts
Styles: bluegrass, country, rock, folk, pop, jazz, indie, hip-hop, acoustic, rockabilly
Clients: info upon request
 *Accepts unsolicited material

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 442 Fifth Avenue, #1545
 New York, NY 10019
 212-235-7015

Email: info@intouchent.com
Web: decibelpresents.com/roster, instagram.com/intouchentertainment

Contact: Charles Carlini
Styles: All Styles
Clients: Irene Cara, Michael Carvin, David Chesky, Emur Deodato, Michael Sembello, Ron Sunshine, Tito Rodriguez, jr., George Mraz, Airtro Moreira, Kenia, Tony Middleton, Elisha Abas, Sarah Hayes, Guinga, Brian Auger, Mamma Freedom, Eddie Jobson
 *Accepts unsolicited material - via SonicBids only

INA DITKE & ASSOCIATES
 770 NE 69th Street, Ste.7C
 Miami, FL 33138
 305-762-4309
Email: ina@inaditke.com
Web: inaditke.com
Contact: Ina Dittke
Styles: jazz, Latin, world
Clients: info upon request

JAZZ HANDS FOR AUTISM
Web: jazzhandsforautism.org
A&R/Manager: George Earth
Booking Agent: Esbeth Heredia, Job Placement Coordinator
Email: info@jazzhandsforautism.org
Notes: JHFA works with neurodivergent artists who are developed and coached to prepare them going into the music industry.

JEFF ROBERTS & ASSOCIATES
 174 Saundersville Rd., Ste. 702
 Hendersonville, TN 37075
 615-859-7040
Web: jeffroberts.com
Contact: Jeff Roberts
Clients: info upon request
 *No unsolicited material

LIVE NATION
 Beverly Hills, CA
 800-653-8000
Web: livenation.com
Styles: All Styles
Services: producing, marketing and selling live concerts for artists

MARSJAZZ BOOKING AGENCY
 1006 Ashby Pl.
 Charlottesville, VA 22901
 434-979-6374
Email: reggie@marsjazz.com
Web: marsjazz.com
Contact: Reggie Marshall
Styles: jazz
Clients: info upon request
 *No unsolicited material

MAURICE MONTOYA MUSIC AGENCY
 Culver City, CA 90232
 305-763-8961, 212-229-9160
Email: maurice@mmsmusicagency.com, info@mmsmusicagency.com
Web: mmsmusicagency.com
Contact: Maurice Orlando Montoya
Styles: jazz, Afro-Cuban, Brazilian, contemporary/pop
Clients: info upon request
 *No unsolicited material

M.O.B. AGENCY
 6404 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 505
 Los Angeles, CA 90048
 323-653-0427
Email: mitch@mobagency.com
Web: mobagency.com
Contact: Mitch Okmin
Styles: rock, alt.
Clients: info upon request
 *No unsolicited material

MONQUI EVENTS
 P.O. Box 5908
 Portland, OR 97228
 503-223-5960
Email: web@monqui.com
Web: monqui.com
Styles: alt., rock, indie rock, pop, country
 *No unsolicited material

MUSIC CITY ARTISTS
 7104 Peach Ct.
 Brentwood, TN 37027
 615-915-2641
Email: cray@musiccityartists.com
Contact: Charles Ray, President/Agent
Styles: AC, country, oldies, musicals, tribute, comedy, music
Clients: info upon request
 *No unsolicited material

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 404-822-4138, 877-472-4399
Email: mya@musicgroupworldwide.com, music-groupceo@gmail.com
Web: facebook.com/musicgroupworldwide
Contact: Mya Richardson
Styles: neo soul, R&B, pop, rock, country, jazz, alt, dance, reggae, calypso, dance hall, comedy acts
 *No unsolicited material, not accepting hip-hop demos

MUSICIANS CONTACT
 29684 Masters Dr.
 Murrieta, CA 92563
 818-888-7879
Email: info@musicianscontact.com
Web: musicianscontact.com
Contact: Sterling Howard
Styles: All, originals or covers
Services: Established 40 years of referral services for musicians and employers

NIGHTSIDE ENTERTAINMENT
 10 Crabapple Ln.
 Greenville, RI 02828
 401-949-2004
Email: nightsideentertainment@gmail.com
Web: facebook.com/nightsideentertainment
Contact: Al Salzillo
Styles: All Styles
Clients: info upon request
 *No unsolicited material

PACIFIC TALENT
 P.O. Box 19145
 Portland, OR 97280
 503-228-3620
Email: andy@pacifictalent.com
Web: pacifictalent.com
Contact: Andy Gilbert
Styles: jazz, blues, R&B, rock, funk, disco, everything
Clients: info upon request
 *Accepts unsolicited material

PARADIGM TALENT AGENCY
 700 N. San Vicente Blvd
 Suite G820
 West Hollywood, CA 90069
 310-288-8000
Web: paradigmagency.com
Contact: Paul Morris
Styles: rock, hip-hop, electronica, industrial
Clients: info upon request
 *No unsolicited material

Additional location:
 810 Seventh Ave
 Suite 205
 New York, NY 10019
 212-897-6400

PARADISE ARTISTS
 108 E. Matilija St.
 Ojai, CA 93023
 805-646-8433
Email: info@paradiseartists.com
Web: paradiseartists.com
Contact: Howie Silverman
Styles: rock, pop, alt., legends
Clients: info upon request
 *No unsolicited material

Additional location:
 P.O. Box 20088
 New York, NY 10011
 Phone: (917) 703-0851

PROGRESSIVE GLOBAL AGENCY
 P.O. Box 50294
 Nashville, TN 37205
 615-354-9100
Email: info@pgmusic.com
Web: pgmusic.com
Contact: Jennifer Fowler
Styles: rock, pop, world
Clients: info upon request
 *No unsolicited material

PYRAMID ENTERTAINMENT GROUP
 377 Rector Pl, Ste. 21-A
 New York, NY 10280
 212-242-7274
Email: info@pyramid-ent.com
Web: pyramid-ent.com
Contact: Sal Michaels
Styles: urban, jazz, gospel, classic and contemporary R&B, funk, hip-hop
Clients: info upon request
 *No unsolicited material

RED ENTERTAINMENT AGENCY
 505 8th Avenue, Suite 1004
 New York, NY 10018
 212-563-7575
Email: info@redentertainment.com

Web: facebook.com/redentertainmentagency-group
Contact: Carlos Keyes
Styles: rock, funk, jazz, gospel, R&B, pop, Latin, hip-hop
Clients: Dionne Warwick, Village People, Elliott Yamin, Cameo, Jodeci, Steven Seagal, Gloria Gaynor, Ready For The World, Surface, Erasure's Andy Bell, Tito Jackson, Bell Biv DeVoe, Case, Baha Men, Hi-Five, DMX, the Brides of Funkenstein, Dwele, Keith Sweat, Mario Winans, Tyrese, Meek Mill, Johnny Gill, Chic Feat. Nile Rodgers, Kathy Sledge, Slum Village, Twista, Jon B, Kenny Lattimore, CeCe Winans, Carl Thomas
 *No unsolicited material

ROMEO TOURING, LLC
A Talent Agency
 565 Marriott Dr.
 Nashville, TN
 402-359-1010
Email: lisaromeo@comcast.net, info@romeoent.com
Contact: Lisa Romeo
Styles: country, rock, and industrial only
Clients: info upon request
 *No unsolicited material

SELAK ENTERTAINMENT
 466 Foothill Blvd., #184
 La Canada, CA 91011
 626-584-8110, 213-709-4909
Email: steve@selakentertainment.com
Web: selakentertainment.com
Contact: Steve Selak
Styles: tribute bands, blues, country, dance, disco, ethnic, hip-hop, party band, jazz, soul, solo, swing, pop, R&B, blues
 *No unsolicited material

SELF GROUP, LLC, THE
 P.O. Box 14721
 Portland, OR 97293
Email: info@selfgroup.org
Web: selfgroup.org
Contact: Krist Krueger
Styles: indie, rock, folk, acoustic, experimental, pop
Clients: info upon request
 *No unsolicited material

SPECTRUM TALENT AGENCY
 212-268-0404
Email: marc@spectrumtalentagency.com
Web: spectrumtalentagency.com
Contact: Marc Katz
Styles: pop, R&B, dance, hip-hop, theatrical
Clients: info upon request
 *No unsolicited material

THIRD COAST TALENT
 P.O. Box 170
 Chapmansboro, TN 37035
 615-685-3331
Email: carrie@thirdcoasttalent.com
Web: thirdcoasttalent.com
Styles: Country
Clients: see website for complete roster
 *No unsolicited material

UNCLE BOOKING
 5438 Winding Way Dr.
 Houston, TX 77091
 510-917-1610
Email: erik@unclebooking.com
Web: unclebooking.com
Clients: Kevin Barnes, Bottomless Pit, CEX, Citay, the Coke Dares, Danielson, Deerhoof, Southeast Engine, Trans Am,
 *No unsolicited material

UNITED TALENT AGENCY
 9336 Civic Center Dr.
 Beverly Hills, CA 90210
 310-273-6700
Web: unitedtalent.com
Clients: See site for a list
 *No unsolicited material

Additional locations:
 New York, NY
 888 7th Ave., Seventh Fl.
 New York, NY 10106
 212-659-2600

225 Polk Ave
 Suite 130
 Nashville, TN. 37203
 615-564-2580

Miami, FL
 1101 Brickell Ave.
 South Tower, Fl. 8
 Miami, FL 33131
 786-574-5210

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 1 Newman St.
 London W1T 1PB
 United Kingdom
 +44-207-278-3331

UNIVERSAL ATTRACTIONS AGENCY
 15 W. 36th St, 8th Fl.
 New York, NY 10018
Web: universalattractions.com
Email: info@universalattractions.com
 212-582-7575
Fax: 212-333-4508

Additional location:

21650 W. Oxnard St. Suite 1460
 Woodland Hills, CA 91367
 212-582-7575
Email: info@universalattractions.com
Web: universalattractions.com
Styles: All
Clients: info upon request

WALKER ENTERTAINMENT GROUP
 P.O. Box 7926
 Houston, TX 77270
 281-431-9393
Email: info@walkerentertainment.com
Web: walkerentertainmentgroup.com
Contact: Ernest Walker, President/CEO
 *No unsolicited material

WILLIAM MORRIS AGENCY
 9560 Wilshire Blvd.
 Beverly Hills, CA 90210
 310-285-9000
Web: inquiries@wmeagency.com
Web: wmeagency.com
Styles: All
 *No unsolicited material
 **No phone calls

Additional locations:
 131 S. Rodeo Dr., 2nd Fl.
 Beverly Hills, CA 90212

1201 Demonbreun
 Nashville, TN 37203
 615-963-3000

11 Madison Ave.
 New York, NY 10012
 212-586-5100

100 New Oxford St.
 London, WC1A 1HB
 +44 (0) 20 8929 8400
 Level 45, Level 25

Level 45, 25 Martin Place
 Sydney, NSW 2000
 + 61 (2) 8046 0300

YELLOW COUCH STUDIO / MANAGEMENT
 412-728-2916
 131 Academy Avenue
 Pittsburgh, PA 15228
Email: stevenfoxbury@gmail.com
Web: yellowcouchstudio.com
Contact: Steven Foxbury
Styles: folk, singer-songwriter,
Clients: Sean Rowe, Anna Tivel, Peter Mulvey, Jeffrey Martin, Laney Jones, Lowland Hum, Matthew Fowler, Terri Binion
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For hundreds more contacts from Music Connection's directories (A&R, music attorneys, producers, engineers, video production, video gear rental, vocal coaches, music schools, recording studios, everything indie, social media, promotion, publicity, rehearsal studios, audio gear rental, film/TV, mastering studios, music publishers, college radio and more), visit: musicconnection.com/industry-contacts.



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Musical Longevity From a Semi-Pro Musician

I've been a bassist since the mid-1980s, mostly at a semi-professional level (i.e., earning money but not making a living from music). I've toured across multiple continents, recorded in world-class studios, and realized many of my adolescent dreams. Since arriving in L.A. in 2000, I've also been a music journalist. On occasions, I've acted as manager, booking agent, and/or publicist for my bands, so I have experienced many facets of the industry.

At age 52, with an all-original band (I've never done the cover/tribute thing), I signed to a prominent indie label, and we released an album regarded as a genre classic. My most recent gig, at age 59, was a rapturous sold-out show in Mexico City last month, with all the trimmings. My playing is better than ever; I've never enjoyed it more; and most of my friends are former bandmates.

Accordingly, my strictly subjective tips below are aimed at those seeking longevity—and maximum joy—as a semi-pro musician playing original music rather than someone wanting to “make it big” or survive as a session or tribute player (though these ambitions can certainly overlap).

Know Your Craft

In a business which places heavy emphasis on “who you know,” networking can start taking priority over actual musicianship. Unless you have absolute rock star talent/looks/charisma, this is a mistake. Think of practice (*with a metronome!*) and lessons as investments in future fun, creative satisfaction, and maybe a career. Because, sooner or later, the recording light will come on and you'll need to deliver. I once read that after age 25, all a musician has to offer is their chops—an exaggeration but grounded in truth. This doesn't mean you have to be a virtuoso unless the gig explicitly requires it. I'm a competent bassist, nothing more, but often get gigs specifically because I keep things simple, solid, and play for the song.

Be A Good Hang

A few years ago, we hired a pro drummer for an Australian tour. He explained that, as he put it, “being a good hang” is crucial to working consistently in the music business. Because, with countless great players to choose from, especially here in L.A., artists are looking for those who'll also be fun (or at least amiable) when sandwiched together in a van, studio/rehearsal space, or shared hotel room. Most music making will involve one or more of these situations, so “playing well with others” applies on and off stage. (I once heard of a fantastic guitarist who was fired mid-tour because he kept masturbating on the bus and would hog all the fruit on backstage riders!)

Prepare

“Practice *for* rehearsal, not *at* rehearsal,” the old saying goes. No one wants to battle traffic for 45 minutes then stand around in silence at an expensive lockout while one member of



the band listens to the material and figures out their parts. *Do that stuff at home!* Of course, this is infinitely more important when auditioning. Humans are naturally lazy and so are inclined to hire the person who walks in knowing their parts without instruction. For example, I was once asked to learn three songs from an album before auditioning for a signed singer. I learned the entire record. We played it front to back at the audition and, while the last notes were still ringing out, the drummer declared, “Right—let's books some shows.” A year of fantastic international touring followed.

Get a Flexible Job

Making music the only thing you do doesn't make you a musician. Because for most of us, being unemployed will only make you a liability to a band: unable to maintain a reliable vehicle or gear and too broke to contribute to rehearsal/recording costs. Plus, it's hard to practice if you're living in your car in a CVS parking lot (I knew a drummer who did just that). So, a day job should be embraced as an intrinsic part of being a semi-pro musician rather than resented as a detriment to that pursuit. Flexibility is key: a job or business that will allow you time off to tour. This is precisely why, when I realized I had appropriate ability, I worked feverishly to build a freelance writing career. And if that job can be complementary to your musical dreams, all the better (I've learned so much from interviewing rock stars that applies to my own musical efforts).

Get Out There

In an ideal world, we'd all form our dream band with our best mates at high school and

spend adulthood touring the world together. In reality, most musicians are making creative compromises most of the time. But it's important to stay out there playing rather than just sitting at home scouring Craig's List and waiting for the perfect opportunity. Even if it's not entirely your style, joining a band will develop your chops and put you around other musicians with whom, or through whom, more apt situations can evolve. If you can really play and are the aforementioned “good hang,” word-of-mouth often does the rest. But you need to be “in the shop window,” demonstrating what you can do. This doesn't mean a hardcore punker joining a Barry Manilow tribute act—seek out situations that check at least some of your boxes but be ready to be flexible.

Be A Team Player

This should go without saying but is depressingly common. Don't be that band member who insists on being loudest in the mix or on rehearsals being scheduled/rescheduled around their whims. Musicians exhibit diverse motivations for playing in bands and, counterintuitively, these sometimes don't include simply contributing to making the best sound possible. I've met folks who'll join a band mostly so they can live rent-free in its lockout or who are lonely and simply seeking a captive audience. Be a team player and seek out team players, because music is almost always a collective endeavor. This will not only yield better creative outcomes but will also make the process way more enjoyable. Because making music, even in the darkest and angriest genres, is supposed to be *fun*.

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