

MUSIC CONNECTION

ANNUAL GUIDE TO
EVERYTHING INDIE

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Young the Giant

SoCal alternative rock band Young the Giant talk about their two-decade career, new album *Victory Garden*, and their plans for 2026.

By Brett Callwood

Photos: George Gallardo



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By Rob Putnam

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LA Opera

Representatives of the LA Opera, and performers in forthcoming production *Akhnaten*, talk to MC about all of the work that goes into putting on something so ambitious.

By Brett Callwood



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Annual Guide to Everything Indie

Compiled by Robin Rose

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Musicians Union Local 47

afm47.org

Advocating for over 125 Years: Formed by and for Los Angeles-based musicians in 1897, the Burbank-based American Federation of Musicians Local 47's mission is to promote and protect the concerns of professional musicians—including high level studio musicians, artists signed to major and indie labels, those who work in film and TV, and members of premiere orchestras and symphonies, including the LA Philharmonic, LA Opera, and Hollywood Bowl Orchestra. Union VP (and former President) John Acosta says his elevator pitch on Local 47's function is: "The union is the backup for musicians in the freelance world that helps you get paid properly, gives you access to better gigs, tours and sessions, and protects your rights when your music is recorded and reused. They are also playing a critical role to put a framework around the use of A.I., so that the work of musicians is not being copied, mimicked or reproduced. They have a mandate to work with the creative community to protect music creators."

VP John Acosta: In the '90s, Local 47 VP John Acosta was the singer/guitarist for L.A. trip-hop, neo-psychedelia band Forest for the Trees, which signed to Dreamworks, and released their only album and the Billboard Hot 100 single "Dream" in 1997. Later, over his initial 18-year span at AFM Local 47, he served as business rep, VP, and ultimately President, advocating for fair pay, inclusion, and protections for working musicians. After stepping away for a few years to take a creative sabbatical that included touring in South America and the Middle East, Acosta decided to return this year. He joins a committed leadership team (led by President Mark Sazer), with a clear mission to stabilize the union after uncertain years (due to the pandemic, actors and writers strike, and L.A. fires) and build a strong foundation.



"One of the bright lights for us is that since my hiatus, I see more thirst than ever for live performances, even higher than pre-pandemic," he says. "Every country I go to, I see people wanting to be around others experiencing music, and there's been an explosion of concerts here and abroad. More live performances mean more work for our members. We're also encouraged by the labor organizing being

done across the country."

The Rise Orchestra: Another bright spot is the RISE Film Scoring Orchestra, an L.A.-based mentorship initiative by non-profit Musicians at Play that pairs young, diverse musicians with professional industry veterans to provide training in film and TV scoring. It serves as an apprenticeship program with Local 47 offering support by providing union-level professional mentors and opportunities. The RISE Diversity Project aims to increase diversity in the Hollywood studio orchestra scene by providing high-level, paid training to minority and underprivileged students. MAP foundation lists the John Williams Family Foundation as a supporting partner in their efforts to provide musical instruments and training to underserved schools.

Contact AFM Local 47 at 323-462-2161

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Jon Eggert

National Account Manager
C. F. Martin & Co.

C. F. Martin & Co. announced that **Jon Eggert** has joined the company as **National Account Manager**, bringing more than 15 years of music industry experience across key account leadership, retail merchandising strategy, and business development. "I'm honored to step into the role of Key Account Manager at Martin Guitar," said Eggert. "There are no other brands in the industry that carry the heritage, craftsmanship, and cultural impact that Martin has built over so many generations." For more, contact kate@richlynngroup.com.



Hannah Karp

EVP & Chief Communications Officer
Warner Music Group

Warner Music Group (WGM) has announced that editor and journalist **Hannah Karp** has been named **EVP & Chief Communications Officer**. Karp will be based in New York and report to WGM CEO Robert Kyncl. Karp will spearhead WGM's global communications and brand marketing strategies, ensuring a unified approach across its diverse portfolio of businesses. In addition to managing all internal and external messaging, Karp will oversee the company's philanthropic efforts and special events. For more, contact majeda.hussein@wmg.com.



Russell Wedelich

President
Eventide Audio

Eventide Audio announced that **Russell Wedelich** has been named **President**, in addition to his current role as CTO. Wedelich, who has been instrumental in developing some of Eventide's most celebrated products over the past 17+ years, will lead operations for the audio business. In his new role, Wedelich will oversee all aspects of Eventide Audio's business while continuing to guide the company's technical direction. "I'm honored to lead this team and excited about the products we're cooking up," said Wedelich. For more, contact nsanchez@eventide.com.



Angela Abbott

VP of Music Licensing and Strategy
TouchTunes

TouchTunes has appointed **Angela Abbott** as **Vice President of Music Licensing and Strategy**, reporting to General Counsel Amy Tenbrink. In this role, Abbott will lead music strategy, licensing, and operations across TouchTunes' expansive network of nearly 100,000 connected jukeboxes and entertainment devices. "I'm excited to join TouchTunes at a moment when music-driven experiences in physical spaces feel more important than ever," said Abbott. For more, contact patti.nunez@sourcecodecomms.com.



Todd Horvath

President and Chief Operating Officer
BMI

BMI has recently announced the appointment of **Todd Horvath** as **President and Chief Operating Officer**. In this new role, Horvath will report to BMI CEO Mike O'Neill and oversee the company's ongoing efforts to modernize its platforms, identify new sources of revenue, and improve the affiliate experience at BMI. "Todd's unique skill set is a perfect complement to our team, and I look forward to his contributions as we continue to drive growth and position BMI for the future," said O'Neill. For more, contact lfischer@bmi.com.



Pam Schoenfeld

SPV, Chief Legal Officer
BMI

BMI announced that **Pam Schoenfeld** has been named its **SVP, Chief Legal Officer**. Schoenfeld reports directly to CEO Mike O'Neill and is based in the company's New York office. "Pam's extensive legal expertise and industry insight make her an incredible asset to BMI and our music creators," said O'Neill. "Her leadership will help strengthen BMI's mission to protect and champion our songwriters, composers and publishers, and the advocacy work we do on their behalf." For more, contact jthomas@bmi.com.



Mike Gitter

Label Lead & Global Head of A&R
Frontiers Label Group/BLKIBLK Records

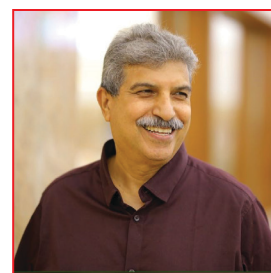
Frontiers Label Group has announced the launch of its metal, hard rock and extreme music label, **BLKIBLK Records**. Joining the team at the Naples, Italy-based company is long-running A&R man and record executive **Mike Gitter**, who will lead the label as well as assume responsibilities as **Global Head of A&R** for Frontiers Label Group. "I'm proud to announce my joining the Frontiers Label Group team and helming BLKIBLK... this is just the beginning," said Gitter, who arrives at the label having signed and worked with a venerable history of genre-defining artists. For more, contact freeman@freemanpromotions.com.

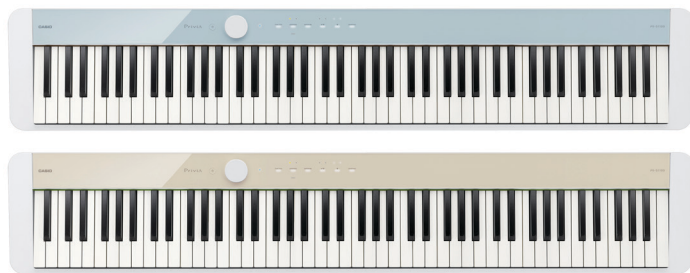


Ashok Parwani

Head of Music
Divo

Divo, one of South India's digital media and music companies, which is majority owned by **Warner Music India**, announced the appointment of **Ashok Parwani** as its **Head of Music**. Parwani brings over four decades of experience across India, Sri Lanka, and the UAE. "I'm thrilled to join Divo at such a dynamic moment. South India is a powerhouse of creativity, and aligned with Warner Music India's long-term vision, we have a unique opportunity to strengthen our regional presence and take this music to wider audiences across India and globally," said Parwani. For more, contact communications@wmg.com.





▲ CASIO LIMITED EDITION PRIVIA PX-S1100 DIGITAL PIANO IN LIFESTYLE COLORS

Since 1960 Casio has been a leading manufacturer of powerful, affordable, and lifestyle-oriented musical instruments. Casio has always been a value-oriented brand, yet they manage to provide professional features at an attractive price point. Since debuting in 2003, Casio Privia digital pianos have become known for their high-quality sound, excellent touch, and attractive design.

The Privia PX-S1100 blends modern aesthetics, natural piano feel, expressive sound, and advanced connectivity. Eighteen sounds including grand piano, electric piano, organ, vibraphone, strings, bass are included. Recently released are two new limited edition color options "Calm Blue" and "Mellow Beige."

With the PX-S1100, Casio set out to make an 88 key digital piano that was as small as possible. Sensing there would be a demand for an ergonomic full sized portable keyboard, Casio took a chance and was proved correct. At nine inches deep and 24 lbs., the PX-S1100 is slimmer and lighter than all its competitors, making it a great choice for working musicians tired of lugging massive keyboard controllers.

The PX-S1100 features a weighted keyboard with two built in speakers. Damper resonance, key-off simulation, and string resonance are part of the design, which Casio notes are features often missing in this price range. The PX-S1100 is the only digital piano in this price range that includes Bluetooth audio via its included WU-BT10 Bluetooth Audio and MIDI Adapter. Users can stream backing tracks through the instrument's speakers, providing an integrated way to play or enjoy background music. The PX-S1100's USB port offers MIDI connectivity without additional drivers. When connected with either USB or wireless Bluetooth MIDI, the Casio Music Space app for iOS and Android provides remote control, visual learning, and PDF score viewing with annotation.

MC plugged the PX-S1100 via USB-C into a Mac Studio M4 for a recording session, and the keyboard was up and running right out of the box. The session pianist was immediately comfortable and impressed with the feel of the PX-S1100 and ended up greatly preferring the touch of it compared to the studio's other well-known and much more expensive keyboard.

Additional features include Chorus, Brilliance and other DSP effects. Split function enables a bass tone for the lower zone and assignable tones for the upper zone. A Duet function splits the keyboard into two zones of the same register. A Built-in MIDI record/playback and metronome functions for practice sessions. Part on/off function allows you to mute the right or left-hand part of song data saved in the user area of the digital piano or USB flash drive which can be used for practicing each part separately. Two headphone jacks allow for two pairs of headphones to be connected for private listening.

The PX-S1100 comes with a 12-volt power supply and can run up to four hours on six AA batteries. The optional SP-34 three-pedal unit and CS-68 stand provide a polished, console-like setup if desired. The PX-S1100 is designed to be attractive to all levels of keyboard players. It can be used in a professional setting yet is compact and affordable enough for casual use. \$729

casiomusicgear.com

▼ AKG C-SERIES PROFESSIONAL CONDENSER MICROPHONES

New from AKG are the C-Series Professional Condenser Microphones. With microphone design excellence dating back to 1947, AKG microphones are recognized as being among the finest in the world and are featured in most professional recording studios. The C-Series is intended to be economical alternatives to their high-end microphones, while still offering a fully professional experience. Designed with musicians, podcasters, YouTubers, and streamers in mind, the new C104, C114, and C151 models promise AKG's "signature detail and clarity. Their broad frequency response ensures the full richness of every sonic element is faithfully preserved."

The new models include the C104 Large Diaphragm Condenser Microphone and the C114 Multi-Pattern Condenser Microphone, both the "little brother" of the iconic C414 which has been in continuous production since 1971. Additionally, the new C151 Small Diaphragm Condenser Microphone is the "little brother" of the seminal C451, which in 1968 became AKG's first FET microphone that did not require

a vacuum tube. Each mic in the series features a transformerless field effect transistor (FET), circuit that delivers an ultra-low noise floor, expansive dynamic range, and with a max SPL for 0.5 percent THD of 143dB SPL, 145dB SPL, and 147dB SPL respectively, these mics can take high levels before distortion.

The C104 is a bare bones cardioid only mic with no pads or filters on it and is intended for vocals, speech, and general recording. It has a pronounced proximity effect that gives a nice bass sound on human voice for that "radio sound." The C114 offers cardioid, omnidirectional and figure eight pickup patterns to enhance versatility and will make

a good studio workhorse. The proximity effect is more moderate, and the high end more detailed and extensive. The AKG C104 uses a 22mm electret condenser capsule, while the AKG C114 uses a larger 26mm gold-sputtered dual-diaphragm true condenser edge-terminated capsule inspired by classic AKG models like the C12 and C414. While their electronics specifications are nearly identical, the difference in capsule construction contributes significantly to their different sound profiles. The AKG C151 is a small diaphragm electret condenser optimized for instruments like acoustic guitar, drums, and percussion. It sounds very smooth with a moderate low-end taper that pencil mics are known for.

MC spoke with AKG Product Manager Phil Feinman who spent two years working on making these microphones unique. He stated that the goals were to make accessible microphones that retained the quality of the higher end industry standard mics, to have them be visually recognizable as AKG mics, look great on camera, and ensure that sustainability was part of the mic construction and packaging. All the mic bodies are crafted from 100 percent post-industrial recycled metal and every aspect, from packaging to accessories, has been engineered for minimal environmental impact.

Featuring cardioid and multi-pattern designs, the new AKG C-Series microphones are easily adaptable to any audio environment. The concept is to simply plug in and start capturing. This flexible functionality supports professional grade audio capture of vocals, speech, instruments and other sound sources. The C Series offer high quality at entry level price points. All mics require +48v phantom power.

C104 \$129

C114 \$229

C151 \$129

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► EVENTIDE AUDIO TEMPERANCE PRO

Eventide Audio, one of the earliest pioneers of digital audio has released the “world’s first musical reverbs,” Temperance Lite and Temperance Pro. Temperance Pro adds 29 modal spaces, advanced sequencing capabilities, MIDI control, and specialized modal and temper controls for creating ambiances that are distinctive.

Temperance Pro operates on the 12-note chromatic scale, and “speaks the language of music.” Eventide states that “users can now create spaces that feel musically intentional rather than incidental. Temperance Pro lets you control what notes bloom and what notes wither. This unique modal approach models reverb as collections of thousands of independent resonators.”

A central dial labeled “Temper,” surrounded by a dial to select the chromatic scale, controls the amount of resonance. You can select notes, triads, or more complex chords and either emphasize the selected notes or deselect them. Using a high amount of positive Temper creates effects that sound like a synth reinforcing the space, and the effect can be quite beautiful, even on drums or non-pitched sounds. You can create notes and chords solely with a beat. With zero Temper, the plugin behaves as a normal reverb. Selecting Negative Temper will deemphasize any resonant notes. The Note Width Control can scroll between richer sounds and purer tones. Temper can also work in conjunction with the Temper Range control. You can use this control to select a section of the audio spectrum to produce a frequency selective resonant reverb.

Target Select controls when tempering happens in time, choosing whether selected notes bloom with early reflections, with the late reflections during the reverb tail, or both. Note Width defines how many nearby modes are included in each note, with lower settings offering more musical precision and higher settings affecting more of the overall reverb for broader, more pronounced results.

Note selection methods add depth and creative control. Manual Mode offers note-roll style input with access to chords, scales, modes, or intervals through the Choose Scale dialog. Sequence Mode programs note changes to follow chord progressions. MIDI Mode provides real-time keyboard control with Octave Repeat, offering hands on modifications.

Three modal controls offer ways of shaping space. Position adjusts the balance between early and late reflections independently from tempering. Density controls how many modes are active, from full quality reverb to progressively fragmented, lo-fi tones. Offset shifts the center frequencies of all modes by up to $\pm 500\text{Hz}$ independent of temper settings, changing the timbre of the entire space.

Temperance Pro delivers 29 spaces spanning rooms, grand halls, lush mechanical reverbs, and experimental synthetic spaces. The collection includes faithful recreations of renowned acoustic spaces, and original spaces built to showcase modal reverb technology. The plugin features over 100 creative and production-focused presets including 11 tutorial presets.

Temperance Pro is a novel and innovative approach at reverb. It’s easy to use out of the box and users will benefit from experimentation to truly unleash the power of this unique effect. It’s deep. For contemporary pop and electronic music creators it can be used as a compositional tool much the way a synthesizer can. Or simply as a traditional reverb, it sounds excellent. \$179

eventideaudio.com



▼ WARM AUDIO TUBE SQUEALER GUITAR DISTORTION PEDAL—A GUITAR CENTER EXCLUSIVE



Based in Austin, TX, Warm Audio specializes in recreating legendary vintage recording gear, such as microphones, preamps, and compressors, at a fraction of the cost of the originals. Founded by Bryce Young in 2011, the company is known for using premium components like CineMag USA and Altran transformers while hand-testing every unit to ensure high-end analog performance for home and professional studios.

The Warm Audio Tube Squealer (WA-TS) is an all-analog, feature-rich overdrive effects pedal that faithfully recreates the circuitry and tone of three classic «Tube Screamer» variations: the TS808, TS9, and TS10. The WA-TS is the only pedal to combine all three of the most popular Ibanez Tube Screamer variations in one compact stomp box. The Ibanez Tube Screamer is one of the most iconic and widely used overdrive guitar pedals in history, known for its signature mid-boosted tone that emulates a cranked tube amplifier. Originally designed by Susumu Tamura at Maxon in the late 1970s, it has gone through several iterations, the most popular being the TS808 and TS9 models. Guitarists that are known to have used the Tube Screamer include Stevie Ray Vaughn, The Edge, John Mayer, Slash, Eric Johnson, and Joe Bonamassa. Note that neither the Tube Screamer nor the Tube Squealer actually contains tubes.

Unlike the Tube Screamer, The WA-TS features three selectable circuits. 808: The earliest iteration is known for warm breakup and a smooth, singing tone. TS9: The most produced version, offers more drive and a punchy, compressed mid-hump. TS10: A later, popular circuit known for its smooth character, fuller sound, and added “sparkle.”

Like the original Tube Screamer, the WA-TS has Drive, Level, and Tone controls. The WA-TS also adds four controls not present in the original Tube Screamer. Mix Control allows you to blend your clean, dry guitar signal with the overdriven tone for enhanced clarity and dynamic control. Pickup Voicing is a mini-toggle switch that optimizes the pedal’s midrange emphasis to better suit either single-coil or humbucker pickups. The pickup voicing switch shifts mids from 800Hz (original, single coil) to 2k (humbucker) helping to avoid muddiness with humbuckers. Voltage Boost is an external slider up to 18V for increased clean headroom and a more dynamic, less compressed feel. Last, you can select between true bypass or buffered bypass modes via a switch on the back, to preserve tone based on whether you have a short or long cable lengths in your pedalboard.

The WA-TS is an incredibly versatile soft clipping distortion pedal that accomplishes what it promises to do, emulate the most popular versions Ibanez Tube Screamer in one pedal. Furthermore, the WA-TS incorporates many of the custom modifications that boutique pedal builders added. \$119

guitarcenter.com

warmaudio.com

\$799 Stealth Black (Guitar Center Exclusive)

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 Movie film. 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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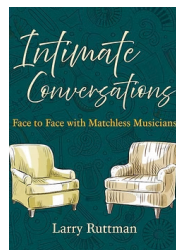
By Bobby Borg
(paperback) \$35.95



Borg has a number of excellent music industry reference guides under his belt; only last month, we reviewed the second edition of his book *Introduction to Music Publishing for Musicians*, written with Michael Eames. This one sees Borg, who is an assistant professor of practice at the University of Southern California, offer pointers to students looking to get an early start with a quality internship. The author gives advice about preparing like a pro, applying with confidence, navigating office dynamics, and transitioning from internships to professional life. All invaluable info for those looking for a good leg-up.

Intimate Conversations: Face to Face with Matchless Musicians

By Larry Ruttman
(hardcover) \$50



Attorney and author Ruttman has written a "deep dive into the minds of celebrated composers, conductors and performers, written not by a trained musician but by award-winning author and lifelong music lover Larry Ruttman." He really has created an impressive piece of work; intimate, revealing and ultimately informative conversations with world-renowned musicians from across the classical spectrum. Ruttman is a skilled interviewer and writer, so his chats feel comfortable while probing. We hear from composer John Harbison, pianist Robert Levin, conductor Gil Rose, diva Susan Graham, violist Kim Kashkashian, and many more. All have a fascinating story to tell.

Rhythm of My Heart: The Authorized Biography of Marc Jordan

By Don Breithaupt
(paperback) \$24.95

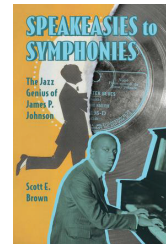


Canadian singer and songwriter Marc Jordan is one of those "if you know him, you really know him" sort of artists. As well as an impressive solo career, he's also written songs for the likes of Diana Ross, Chicago, Cher, Bonnie Raitt, Bette Midler, The Manhattan Transfer, and Rod Stewart. Author Breithaupt digs deep into the Brooklyn-born, Toronto-raised veteran musician. "Readers are given exclusive access to Jordan's cauldron of popular music over the last half-century, featuring a foreword by Marc Jordan himself and

an array of exclusive photos documenting his life from 1951 to the present," reads a statement. Ultimately, fans of Jordan new and old will get a kick out of this.

Speakeasies to Symphonies: The Jazz Genius of James P. Johnson

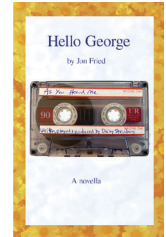
By Scott E. Brown
(paperback) \$35



According to this book's blurb, "James P. Johnson (1894–1955) is one of the most important figures in twentieth-century American music. However, few people other than scholars and serious fans know of his life and work." Clocking in at 380 pages (minus notes, index, etc.), independent jazz researcher Brown digs deep into this widely forgotten talent and pulls back the curtain to reveal a fascinating, brilliant artist. Johnson composed "The Charleston," which would become a dance craze and the unofficial anthem of the '20s, and for that alone he should be revered.

Hello George

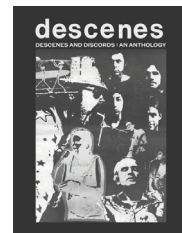
By Jon Fried
(kindle) \$3.99



Oh, this is fun. Jon Fried of power-pop project the Cucumbers has written this novella, and then his band's new album *As You Heard Me* is the soundtrack to said book. The story, as described in the press release, "is the tale of an aspiring young music publisher in search of a reclusive songwriter." It's only about 35 pages long, so it's a quick read. Yet paired with the sweet, Americana-ish tunes on the album, it's a fulfilling experience. Fried is a gifted scribe; the dialog feels particularly natural and he fits a lot into a short space.

Descenes and Discords: An Anthology

By Howard Wuelfing
(paperback) \$38



Any fans of Washington D.C. punk rock and hardcore need, genuinely need, to own this incredible anthology of work originally published in the two separate fanzines *Descenes* and *Discords* during the 1970s and '80s. Industry vet Howard Wuelfing is the cat responsible, and the joy here is that he's retained the DIY feel of the 'zines, so it feels like we're in some ragged, ink-stained time capsule. There have been similar anthologies of the likes of *Sniffin' Glue* and *Touch & Go*, and this is right up there with them. Ian MacKaye pops up right at the start, and there's a foreword by Mark Jenkins.

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Campbell's History and Approach: Over the years, he has done songwriting and productions with Imx, Ava Cherry, Sierra, Quantum HMBC, Big G and MC Eiht, China Girl, The Dixions, She's All That, Marcus Huston, Marc Gordon of Levert, Shock G of Digital Underground, Kurupt from the Dogg Pound, and work on the Lion's Gate film *Christmas in Compton*. His main genres are neo-soul, jazz fusion, and R&B. Originally an orchestral French horn player, his original goal was to get young people more interested in a diverse array of music, including classical. When artists come to him seeking full productions, he makes it personal, helping them feel comfortable with the natural sound of their voice, then adding elements like string arrangements, drum loops, and kicks to help them sound their best. He guides them to understand what they really want and helps them take their artistry to the next level and explore their deeper potential by "opening the box" beyond what they thought possible. He is currently working on several personal recordings for future release, including a vocal R&B album and a Latin hip-hop collection.

The Other Member of the Team: The A&R Rep for Bass King Productions, Charles Weatherly, has an extensive industry background who is a member of the Music Business Registry, Song Casting, and the Los Angeles Music Network. His responsibilities include seeking new materials from publishing and record companies that need hits, attending local establishments to scout for new talent, and assisting in mailings, meetings, appointments, and pick-up and delivery of demos and contracts. He also books artist to showcase their musical talent in their local area to help develop their act. He has worked with artists like Tres'jur, lil Mama, Act Da Fool, Mr. Tan (Baby Boy), New Child of 2 Pac Outlawz, and Kali Finest.

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▲ NEW YORK ARTIST CHRISTOPHER ARDRA RETURNS WITH NEW SINGLE "TELL ME"

Following his 2025 EP, *SaiRu*, and 2024 LP, *Sometimes Other Times*, New York artist Christopher Ardra returns with his new single "Tell Me," a song about trying to figure out who you want to be or what you actually want in life. Written and produced by Ardra in his Long Island studio, "Tell Me" is the first taste from a sophomore album due later in 2026.



▲ THIRD MAN RECORDS UNLEASHES FIRST-EVER LIVE ANTHOLOGY FROM NOISE ROCK LEGENDS, LAUGHING HYENAS

Third Man Records announced the first-ever live anthology from Ann Arbor, MI-based legends, Laughing Hyenas. *That Girl - Live Recordings 1986-1994* collects 18 ferocious tracks—painstakingly compiled by founding member John Brannon from his personal archive of cassette tapes and then transferred, mixed, and mastered by GRAMMY® Award-winning producer Bobby Emmett (Sturgill Simpson, Jack White, The Sights)—that showcase the band's full-on sonic groove assault in its purest, most unadulterated and gloriously abrasive form.



▲ JULIAN LAGE RELEASES FIFTH FULL-LENGTH BLUE NOTE RELEASE, SCENES FROM ABOVE

Seven-time GRAMMY® Award-nominated guitar virtuoso Julian Lage has shared his highly anticipated album *Scenes From Above*. This is Lage's second album made in collaboration with three-time GRAMMY® award-winning producer Joe Henry (Carolina Chocolate Drops, Ramblin' Jack Elliott, Solomon Burke) and first with a striking new quartet featuring keyboardist John Medeski, bassist Jorge Roeder, and drummer Kenny Wollesen.



▲ JACK WHITE SHARES NEVER-BEFORE-PUBLISHED POEMS AND WRITINGS IN JACK WHITE COLLECTED LYRICS AND SELECTED WRITING VOLUME 1

Jack White kicks off what promises to be another eventful new year with the official publication of *Jack White Collected Lyrics and Selected Writing Volume 1*. The landmark new anthology features never-before-published poems and writings by White, rare and exclusive photos, and new essays written especially for this book by Third Man Records co-founder Ben Blackwell, award-winning, Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award-nominated poet Adrian Matejka, and award-winning, Detroit-based filmmaker and writer dream hampton.

PRODUCER PLAYBACK

"There's a spontaneity involved that's key to the magic in the studio. You don't want to be over-prepared. You still want to leave leeway so that magic can occur. To be in a box where you've planned out every part is not a good thing." – BRUCE SUGAR





▲ HIT ME HARD AND SOFT: THE TOUR (LIVE IN 3D) TO HIT THEATRES MARCH 20

Captured during her sold-out world tour, *BILLIE EILISH - HIT ME HARD AND SOFT: THE TOUR (LIVE IN 3D)* brings an innovative new concert experience to the big screen from one of the most celebrated and successful artists of her generation. Presented in immersive 3D, the film is directed by Academy Award® winners James Cameron and Billie Eilish.



◀ POWFU ANNOUNCES LOFI LIBRARY CLUB TOUR AND LAUNCH OF NEW MUSIC LABEL

Lo-fi artist Powfu is set to hit the road in 2026 with the Lofi Library Club Tour, a nationwide and international run that marks the official launch of his new music label and community imprint, Lofi Library Club label, a creative community built to support and amplify lo-fi artists worldwide. The upcoming tour will not only showcase Powfu's signature sound but also feature performances from other talented artists within the Lofi Library family, creating an intimate and immersive experience for fans.



▲ THE FORMAT RELEASE BOYCOTT HEAVEN ALBUM

Indie pop band The Format, led by Nate Ruess and Sam Means, has released their latest album, *Boycott Heaven*, via The Vanity Label. Produced by Brendan O'Brien (Pearl Jam, Bruce Springsteen, The Killers), *Boycott Heaven* marks The Format's first album in nearly two decades and features O'Brien on bass alongside drummer Matt Chamberlain (David Bowie, Bob Dylan, Fiona Apple).

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The night that 16-year-old L.A. native Karrie Keyes attended a Black Flag show, she hadn't the faintest idea that it would change her life. She snatched a post-show seat on the stage and met audio adventurer Dave Rat who was running sound for the band. She struck up a conversation—a challenge for the self-described introvert—and he taught her to wrap mic cables. After she'd worked with him for two years, in 1987 Rat needed help with a daytime gig: scrappy L.A. upstarts Jane's Addiction. She quit her regular job to do the show and has never looked back. She's since worked as the monitor engineer for an enviable entourage of artists including Red Hot Chili Peppers, Neil Young, and Pearl Jam, a gig she's rocked for a staggering 35 years.

After decades in audio, Keyes has concluded that engineering the monitor mix is the most challenging gig on a tour. "That's because it doesn't necessarily have to do with sound," she asserts. "You've got five to 10 musicians on stage, although with Pearl Jam now I just mix Ed [Vedder]. There's too much going on and breaking that connection with the singer is no longer workable. So you're dealing with that, bad acoustics, weather, and the performers are vulnerable and you have to be their ground."

"When Pearl Jam goes on, I always tell the guys 'Don't ask me for anything until the third song,'" she says. "Because the audience noise will drop by then, front-of-house has dialed in its mix, and you guys are now settled on stage and can actually pay attention to what you're missing. Most of the time after three songs we're good and don't need any changes."

One of her favorite anecdotes from the road is the night that Pearl Jam wrapped the 2004 Vote for Change tour. "I admire, respect, and love my boss [Vedder]," she begins. "That being said, he is challenging to work for because he has a specific way he wants things. But he always comes back and apologizes [if he gets heated]. That night we had Scott, a replacement lighting director. Ed had yelled at him a few times to kill a light. At the end of the night, Scott came to me and said 'Ed is so cool. Look at this [apology] letter he wrote me.' I was like 'What the fuck? I never got an apology letter.' When Ed was getting ready to leave, I said to him 'Hey Ed: how come I never got an apology letter?' He replied 'Karrie, there isn't enough paper in this world.'"

In 2013 together with Michelle Sabolchick, Keyes launched SoundGirls, a free networking group for women in audio, although it's now wholly inclusive. It started with a mere handful of members and has since grown to more than 15,000. The seed for the idea germinated a year earlier when Keyes and four other women were asked to sit on a panel at AES. "Five of us were invited and we connected within 30 seconds," she recalls. "We all stayed in touch and wondered how different our careers would have been had we known each other earlier. It's a labor of love but it's worth it."

Pearl Jam's drummer Matt Cameron retired from the band in July, 2025. Keyes hopes that a replacement is found soon so that the band can hit the road again. Since 2018, her go-to piece of gear has been DiGiCo's SD5 console, although recently she upgraded to their Quantum 5.

Contact soundgirls.org; soundgirls@soundgirls.org

THE 3 MOST IMPORTANT

lessons she's gleaned as a monitor mixer are:

- Observe conditions and the people you work for. Know when they're having a bad day and work around it.
- Be prepared. Under the setlist I keep instructions of what we'll do if one of the consoles crashes. It will eventually. I just don't know when.
- Patience, communication, and don't take things personally. Sometimes I react by just walking away.

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BACKGROUND

Vertigo Live is making concert films for a new generation. The punky startup takes renowned artists and places them in exotic locales, then films them performing in front of no more than 250 fans. The results are distributed every which way, from online streaming to IMAX and beyond.

Becoming a Label Professional

I toured for a bit in various bands. After a while, I worked out I was never going to make any real money. A lot of people I was in bands with had part-time jobs at record companies. Someone said, "I can get you a temp job at a label." I said, "Yeah, I'll do that," because I needed the money. I was putting rent on my credit card and living out the back of a van. It wasn't sustainable. And I really enjoyed [working at a label].

Going His Way

I got a job at Virgin Records, pre-EMI merger. They had Smashing Pumpkins, Janet Jackson, Spice Girls, and The Chemical Brothers. They were doing really well and punching above their weight for their size at that time. There was a Lenny Kravitz record coming out. He came 'round and shook every employee's hand. I thought that was very smart. I can't remember which studio it was at, Abbey Road or Olympic Studios in Barnes. Record companies used to dress up for showcases and have 100 international stringers and journos there with a pop-up bar. It was my job to put all the goodie bags [together], get them drinks, and make sure they had a good time. I remember watching Kravitz play in this famous studio. I said to my boss, "What a way to see your favorite artist. You should sell tickets."

When Your Studio Becomes a Venue

I worked for Virgin and then EMI in the merger and then went on to Universal. My last job at a major record label was working all their visual [media]. I made hundreds of films, documentaries, and live concerts. Stupidly, I bought a big recording studio [Metropolis Studios]. It was hemorrhaging money. I thought, "We'll do gigs in the studio for 100 people and film them." I had an '80s series with Belinda Carlisle. We did The Zombies and Public Enemy. We did George Clinton. The last show I did was Noel Gallagher. We were selling tickets for about £1,500; we could've sold them for £10,000. When people came out, they were saying it was the most incredible experience of their lives.



"To really feel the music and have the hair stand up on the back of your neck, those are the moments we're trying to create."

Giving Fans Credit

Every audience member gets their name in the credit roll of the film. We filmed Duran Duran at The Aster in L.A. It was the first music film to premiere at the Dolby Theater in Hollywood. The film played, and the names [of the live audience members] were on the screen. That film will exist forever. If you're a Duran Duran fan, having your name in there is the ultimate souvenir.

Everywhere You Want To Be

We have a global brand partner in Visa. There are two tiers of tickets: Visa tickets and non-Visa tickets. With non-Visa tickets, we work with artist managers to see how they want to make those tickets available. It could be a sweepstakes or a Willy Wonka-style thing. It could be first come, first serve. And Visa reward their customers by giving them access to these tickets.

Show Time

There are three or four components to every show. The main live show is a minimum of 60 minutes. For the super-VIPs, there's another exclusive 30-minute performance for just 50 guests. Usually, it's in the vicinity of the main show. And then there's a Q&A with the director. Often, there's a Q&A with the artist. Sometimes, there's a meet-and-greet, depending on logistics. There's after-show parties, exclusive merchandise, and things that aren't going to be commercially available down the line. We collect memorabilia from the shows and work with charity partners. We're working with Nurse Heroes, so nurses get the opportunity to see these shows. We try to make it all-inclusive.

Do Something Different

On its face, it might just look like a concert performance, but we're making documentary concert feature films. To explain that to the artists and managers takes time. When I was at Universal, most managers' strategy with audio/visual was to do a TV show and DVD. And those things would promote the album and tour. We're trying to do something different. Lots of elements of what we're doing have been done a million times over, but we're trying to take the best bits of that and create a legacy product that stands the test of time.

What's Your Monterey?

I'm a huge Jimi Hendrix fan. Everything I've ever read about Jimi points to Monterey being one of the seminal shows featuring electric guitar. If I had a time machine, I'd go watch that show. I tell this to artists and say, "What's your Monterey? Do something people will write about in the history books. Play with an orchestra. Play with your heroes. What do you want to do?" We contracted with OneRepublic. [Lead singer] Ryan Tedder is a huge James Bond fan. He said, "I'd love to play James Bond Island in Thailand." I said, "Great. Let's do that." Which isn't necessarily the most commercially savvy thing to say, because I haven't worked out how much it's going to cost. But we're going to make it work. If it's something that's important to [the artists,] it becomes way more authentic.

Real Connections

I make it a point to go around to the fans after each show and say, "Tell me what you think." We've gotten some lovely feedback. It's so up close and personal that it really does feel different. They feel this electric connection. It's hard to get that when you're in Wembley Stadium. There was this push 15 years ago—the bigger, the better. It was a million fans in Rio and a million fans at the Champs-Élysées in Paris. You get so disconnected from the artists that it felt diluted.

At Universal, I was fortunate enough to see one of my favorite artists, Stevie Wonder, in Abbey Road with 200 people. I was maybe six feet from him for two hours. He broke down playing a song he wrote for his ex-wife, who died of cancer. Everyone started sobbing. To be that close to a hero, to really feel the music and have the hair stand up on the back of your neck, those are the moments we're trying to create.

Breaking Acts

I grew up with *MTV Unplugged*. It's one of the benchmarks of what an audio-visual music platform can achieve. That's what we aspire to be—the contemporary version of that. But MTV wasn't with established artists in the beginning. It was breaking artists through taking risks. We're a small company, so we need to monetize these things. However, as the series matures and evolves, we want to help break artists.

The Way of the Walk

We're doing Cypress Hill in April. We've filmed the documentary already and coming up is the live show. One of their mothers was a Cuban revolutionary in the '60s and imprisoned by Fidel Castro. She escaped prison and had a makeshift raft on the beach with her two seven-year-old sons waiting to go to Miami. The current made them travel up near New York. They nearly died and got picked up by a fishing boat with a Greek captain who was a resident. She married him to get into the States, eventually migrated to L.A., and Cypress Hill was born. We took them back to Cuba for the first time since then. It was very emotional for them. That documentary is going to set the world on fire.

Echoes of Gen X: The Art of the Fillmore at Gabba Gallery

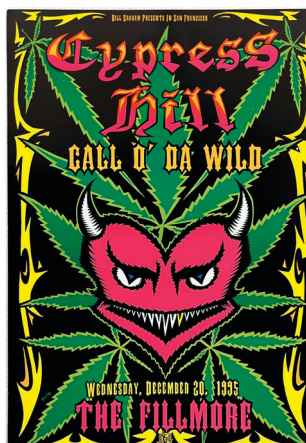
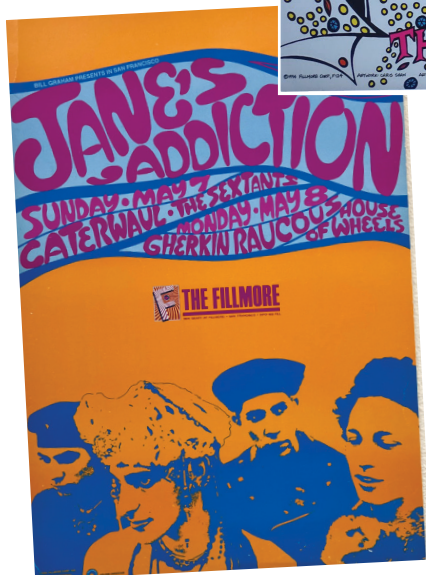
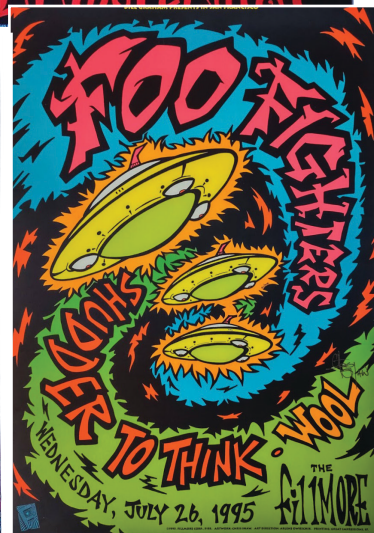
Concert posters at The Fillmore were never just advertising. They functioned as part of the entire cultural atmosphere, establishing an amped-up visual experience before a single note was played. *Echoes of Gen X: The Art of the Fillmore (1980s-2000s)* at Gabba Gallery gathers a large field of original prints and ephemera produced for the venue during its heyday, framing concert-poster art as a parallel culture unto itself.

More than 1,000 concerts are represented, including Hole, Jane's Addiction, Counting Crows, Cypress Hill, Green Day, Rage Against the Machine, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Alice in Chains, Smashing Pumpkins, Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers, and Dogstar, y'all! The range tracks how the Fillmore extended the Bill Graham model of artist-centered programming into a generation shaped by MTV, zines, and independent print culture. A smaller inclusion of earlier Fillmore ephemera from the 1960s and 1970s establishes continuity without shifting the focus away from Gen X production.

The most striking posters operate through excess and caricature. Band names swell into dripping, donut-shaped forms or wedge themselves into skulls and flying saucers, the lettering staying just this side of illegible. Figures with skeletal skin and cosmic hair, ornamental frames and Art Nouveau lushness, animals as recurring motifs—snarling dogs, leering apes, horned creatures, biomorphic cannabinoids—drawn in thick outlines and hot palettes, their expressions pitched between a threat and joke; this is Gen X after all. Across the selection, eyes glow, flames lick, moons hover, and bodies stretch into poses borrowed from tattoo flash, skateboard graphics, and underground comics.

Presented with Relix as partner, the exhibition treats concert posters as an archive built from color, contour, and repetition rather than sound. Gallery co-owner Jason Ostro describes the project as personal and generational: "This show is a major passion project for [Elana Jacobson and myself]. Having Relix involved—the historic zine of the SF scene—as our presenting partner is incredible." For Ostro and Jacobson, what Bill Graham and The Fillmore did for this generation of counterculture seekers can never be appreciated enough. "Incredible music and beautiful art," says Ostro, "Inspiration for all. And now we get to show it."

On view at Gabba Gallery in DTLA through April 11; gabbagallery.com/genx



CHARLIE ANGEL

Norfolk, VA rapper Charlie Angel recently scored an impressive 8.0 in a New Music Critique, prompting MC to feel excited about digging deeper. After all, her music displays a rare vulnerability, with strength and sensitivity coming through as she explores her own feelings as well as the world around her. There's a lot to enjoy.

Angel began writing when she was seven years old, quickly penning a song with lyrics that her parents didn't approve of. "As the years went on, I focused on poetry leading up to college, and my first official song that I wrote seriously was when I was a sophomore that semester," she says. "It became serious for me when my love interest passed away, when I was 19, and I wrote a song about how much I missed him. My first studio track wasn't recorded until 2022, as the lead single to my album *Hard 2 Luv*."

The artist describes her sound as versatile and genre-blending. "However, I am most known for my hip-hop music, and I have gotten comparisons to Da Brat, Queen Latifah, or MC Lyte," she says. "I would say that I am not as legendary, but I do carry the '90s type of cadence in my rhymes."

Angel's latest release is the single "GLD" (featuring TyisMe). "It's a fun track where we just go back and forth with bars," she says. "It is a clear juxtaposition of thoughts between us two, and that's what makes it so dope. While Ty is talking about his vices, I rap about my spiritual growth. Somehow, it all flows together."

For this hip-hop artist, the term DIY symbolizes maintaining creative control. "I do so by creating my own cover art, music video directing, and planning my own shows," she says. "It's a large responsibility, but it proves to me that I am capable of creating my own universe with my artistic abilities."

Looking ahead, Angel has plenty planned for 2026. "My plans are to drop merchandise, more artistic collaborations, more BTS of who I am, a documentary, and my sophomore album *Protege* releases in March," she says. Look out for that.

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



THE LEGAL BEAT

BY GLENN LITWAK



On January 23, 2026, Wixen Music Publishing sued social media company, Meta in the United States District Court for the Central District of California. Wixen alleges that Meta committed copyright infringement by using over 330 of its copyrighted songs on Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp without permission.

The songs included are by artists such as The Black Keys, Missy Elliot, The Doors, and Weezer. Wixen seeks damages for copyright infringement and additional damages for defamation and interference with its contractual relations.

Wixen is claiming that Meta is trying to "drastically cut payments to human songwriters" and replace them with royalty free A.I.-generated music. As a result of Wixen making these allegations,

WIXEN SUES META FOR COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT AND DEFAMATION

Wixen claims Meta defamed them.

Wixen has licensed its musical catalog to Meta since 2018. When the license was about to expire in 2025, the negotiations faltered when Meta allegedly "sought to drastically cut the license rates, to a small fraction for what Wixen and, therefore, Wixen's clients, had received over the past seven years."

Wixen further contends that Meta continued to exploit Wixen's catalog in its music library after their license expired "resulting in thousands of audiovisual works incorporating [songs] without authorization or compensation."

Meta is a powerhouse company who, as alleged in the Complaint, made over \$161 billion in advertising revenue in 2024. According to the Complaint, in 2024, Meta's platform had three billion monthly active users on Instagram; Facebook had already reached that amount by 2023. The Complaint further states that "in October 2025, Meta announced that Reels is on track to generate \$50 billion in advertising revenue in the next 12 months." Meta's "Reels" is a short-form video format across Facebook and Instagram.

In addition to its copyright

infringement claims, Wixen alleges that Meta engaged in a "pressure campaign" during its license renewal negotiations. In particular, Wixen alleges that Meta removed some of Wixen's clients' music from its platforms, while its license was still in force, and then falsely claimed that Wixen was responsible for its removal. The Complaint states: "Further, Meta falsely told these clients and their representatives that Wixen was muting and blocking the clients' music on Meta's platform."

Wixen contends that "Meta made these false statements with the malicious intent to strong-arm Wixen into accepting drastically reduced rates."

Wixen mentions that Meta's hard-nosed negotiating tactics may be related to its ambitious plans for using artificial intelligence: "Meta's reason for slashing payment to songwriters is to replace human generated, royalty-bearing music with royalty-free generated music."

The Complaint mentions that Meta's investment in A.I. and its development of the "AudioCraft" technology "generates music from text prompts and directly threatens the future and livelihood of musical

artists."

Wixen seeks statutory damages for copyright infringement of at least \$49.65 million for the 331 musical works itemized in the Complaint. In addition, Wixen seeks injunctive relief to prevent future infringement.

Wixen also seeks a minimum of \$20 million in damages for its defamation and interference with business relations claims. I think it is very likely the parties will settle this lawsuit at some point.

GLENN LITWAK is a veteran music and entertainment attorney based in Santa Monica, CA. He has represented platinum selling recording artists, music producers and hit songwriters, as well as management and production companies, music publishers and independent record labels. Glenn is also a frequent speaker at music industry conferences around the country, such as SXSW and the Billboard Music in Film and TV Conference. Glenn has been selected as a "Super Lawyer" by *Super Lawyer Magazine* for 2022-2026. Email Glenn at gtllaw59@gmail.com or check out his website at [glennlitwak.com](https://www.glennlitwak.com)

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

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Date Signed: August 2025

Label: Island Records/Adventure Recordings

Band Members: Reuben Haycocks, guitar, vocals; James Bradbury, guitar, vocals; Aoife Anson-O'Connell, bass, cello, vocals; Paddy Murphy, drums

Type of Music: Americana

Management: Alex Edwards

Booking: Carly Goldberg, Andrew Morgna, Wasserman

Legal: Ally Horn

Publicity: Jaycee Rockhold - Pitch Perfect PR, jaycee@pitchperfectpr.com

A&R: James Talbut

Web: westsidecowboy.com

Honing one's sound and being unique can vastly increase the odds of industry attention. It's a truism taken to heart by Manchester's Westside Cowboy. The fast-rising band melds alt-country, punk, Americana, folk, and indie rock into a style they've dubbed Britainicana. "Don't look for [a deal]," recommends drummer Paddy Murphy. "Just write the best music you can."

"Which is aggravating to hear," chimes in guitarist Reuben Haycocks. "We had people say that to us, and I would be like, 'Fuck off. You're already signed.'"

Nevertheless, the tactic worked. They first inked deals with a pair of

"It wasn't engineered. It was a right place, right time type of thing."

local boutiques, Heist or Hit and Nice One Records. Alex Edwards, who runs Nice One with Pete Heywoode, began managing the blossoming act. Touring then ramped up, and during this period they played London's Sebright Arms. Edwards had invited a modest throng of record people to the show, but the band believes their performance that evening was subpar. "We thought we'd shagged it," gulps Murphy.

Yet it didn't matter. Word was starting to get around. Edwards, who works with English Teacher and formerly supported Sports Team, both successful Island Records acts, similarly invited label people to a subsequent gig at The Social. A trickle of interest turned into an avalanche. "This sort of weird hype started," tells Murphy. "It wasn't engineered. It was a right place, right time type of thing."

The group that once wanted to be on an indie soon found itself in Island Records' offices. Before leaving, the president said they were sending over a contract. Chuckles Murphy, "We kind of laughed, because we'd never been in a situation like that. Two hours later, it was in our email." The agreement with newly minted imprint Adventure Records is especially generous with the timeframe around which it will relinquish their masters.

Being on a sublabel of a major comes with advantages. "It means that smaller bands like us are less likely to get lost in the shuffle," the percussionist points out. "Hopefully, it means we get the appropriate attention and care." - **Andy Kaufmann**



Date Signed: November 2025

Label: XOXO Entertainment Corp.

Band Members: Chauncey "Black" Hannibal, Levi Little, Mark Middleton, Eric Williams

Type of Music: R&B

Management: XOXO Entertainment Corp, info@xoxoent.com

Booking: Paquin Entertainment

Legal: Sander Shalinsky

Publicity: Allie Gruensfelder - The Syndicate, allie@thesyn.com

A&R: Adam H. Hurstfield, Jackie Sonegra

Web: blackstreetofficial.com

It's been three decades since their song "No Diggity" spent four weeks atop the *Billboard* Hot 100, but the GRAMMY-winning R&B group has never stopped grinding. Besides independently recording a fresh album during the pandemic, the quartet tours to this day. They were performing an abbreviated, half-hour version of their set in Canada last September when one of their security guards said someone wanted to talk.

That person, multi-platinum producer Adam H. Hurstfield, is the CEO of XOXO Entertainment. The executive expressed how much he adored the show. "That's nothing," replied original member Chauncey "Black" Hannibal. "That's just 30 percent of our capabilities." They exchanged numbers, and Hannibal soon received a long text explaining what XOXO could do for them.

Being that the group has been around the block, they were unwilling to compromise. Instead of signing a traditional deal, the group became partners with the next-gen global entertainment company. The

"He gave us everything we wanted and more. This type of deal doesn't get done in 2026."

arrangement includes full-on management, plus complete creative control and ownership of their masters. "He gave us everything we wanted and more," raves Hannibal. "This type of deal doesn't get done in 2026." The contract was signed right before Christmas.

The gentlemen knew they'd made the right choice when Hurstfield provided an analysis of their streaming data. He calculates Blackstreet has racked up 4.6 billion plays across all platforms, worth millions of dollars they've yet to see. Hurstfield promises to get them the money they deserve.

"They make us feel like we're part of a family," says Levi Little, who's also been with the showmen since the early days. "We like that atmosphere." The brevity of their contract reflects a mutual respect. The day they signed, they had a Zoom meeting to put the wheels in motion.

For Mark Middleton, who first joined in '96, the key to success is a matter of patience. "Hone your skills. Master yourself. Be disciplined. You can't just jump at anything," he imparts. "But keep God first. Have a strong relationship with God, because this is a faith walk."

Expect new material from Blackstreet, including new versions of their greatest hits, to arrive this year. - **Andy Kaufmann**



MARIA TAYLOR

Date Signed: August 2025
Label: Million Stars Records
Type of Music: Singer-Songwriter
Management: Jason Hradil
Booking: Eric Dimenstein, Ground Control Touring
Publicity: Joe Sivick, Missing Piece Group - joe@missingpiecegroup.com
Legal: John Seay, The Seay Firm
A&R: Conor Oberst
Web: mariataylormusic.com

Before she could even properly form sentences, Maria Taylor was hunkered down in a make-believe cardboard studio her father built for her, armed with a tape recorder and a microphone.

"I started writing songs before I could fully speak," she says, reflecting on a career that spans from those childhood tapes to a professional stage debut at 16. "I still have lots of these tapes, and they are hilarious. Lots of times my dad would come in and join me on guitar." Despite her obvious drive and passion for music, she divulges that, "I was always painfully shy," admitting a lifelong tug-of-war with her relationship to performing—the hours before a show being "the worst," the moments after being "the absolute best feeling." Still, her endurance remains a quiet testament to the idea that courage isn't the absence of nerves, just the refusal to surrender to them.

Her sound, she explains, hasn't so much changed as matured. "Even when I want to write something that sounds different, it just sounds like me...I feel like my sound hasn't changed since I was a little girl," she says. "Sometimes it's frustrating," she continues, "but I feel like how my sound has evolved is just how I've grown as a songwriter." And that growth is evident in her latest record—the album itself is the product of patience: many of the songs began in 2020 and were shaped across five years, with bass and drums recorded in Omaha alongside Mike Mogis, strings arranged by Nate Walcott in Los Angeles, and final production and mixing handed to Ben Brodin—a cross-country patchwork stitched into a cohesive whole.

"I'm just trusting the universe and hoping some good shows and opportunities present themselves."

The deal with Million Stars Records came not through industry speed-dating but through friendship. Conor Oberst, a longtime collaborator and former partner (and founder of Million Stars Records), co-wrote a few tracks and later listened to the finished album with Taylor outside his house. He looked up and casually offered, "maybe Million Stars should put this out..." Taylor recalls that she "was so excited, but I wanted to make sure he meant it." So she suggested that he take the night and sleep on it, "Of course, I didn't sleep at all, and I tried to make it till about noon the next day and then texted him, 'so did you really mean it?'"

He did. Now, as she prepares for select record release shows, Taylor is balancing the "absolute best feeling" of performing with her "number one job" as a mother. For Taylor, the future isn't about the hustle; it's about the fit. "I'm just trusting the universe and hoping some good shows and opportunities present themselves," she says. After all, when you've been singing your heart out since the cardboard-playhouse days, you know exactly when the music feels like home. - **Ruby Risch**



THE 69 EYES

Date Signed: January 2026
Label: BLKIIIBLK
Band Members: Jyrki 69, vocals; Bazie, guitar; Timo-Timo, guitar; Archzie, bass; Jussi 69, drums
Type of Music: Glam, Goth
Management: Pasi Moilanen, management@69eyes.com
Booking: TKO Booking Agency, dandevita@tkoco.com
Publicity: Freeman Promotions
A&R: Mike Gitter
Web: 69eyes.com

Not only have Finnish dark glam rockers The 69 Eyes been at it since the late '80s, they've also managed to keep the same lineup in place since 1992 which, let's face it, it practically unheard of. They have an armful of awesome albums to their name, but it was time for a change so they recently signed with BLKIIIBLK, the metal imprint of the hard rock-associated Frontiers Label Group.

It's just the latest chapter in what has been a fascinating story up to this point. It's refreshing, in a genre associated with chaos and unpredictability, that The 69 Eyes have retained a level of consistency, with the lineup, the quality and the sound.

"It's '80s glam rock with '90s goth keyboards and '50s swagger," says vocalist Jyrki 69.

BLKIIIBLK is a recent initiative from Frontiers, and they quickly made the wise choice of appointing industry veteran Mike Gitter as global head

"It's '80s glam rock with '90s goth keyboards and '50s swagger."

of A&R. That they've signed The 69 Eyes, alongside Forbidden, Cro-Mags, Unto Others, and the gloriously named Nunslaughter, points to a big future for the imprint.

"This part is dreamy," says Jyrki 69. "I realized I was on the phone talking about G.G. Allin with A&R metal legend Mike Gitter, as he was telling me about their new label BLKIIIBLK, and I was thinking that it would be very cool to be on that. Later on, I found out that, actually, that was the reason I had a chance to talk with him. We were to be on the label! Now Mike labels The 69 Eyes like 'Elvis-meets-GG.' Something like that. Nevertheless, legendary."

The band has kicked off its new life with BLKIIIBLK with the single "I Survive," which sees guitarist Steve Stevens (Billy Idol) guesting.

"I had been recording with Steve Stevens on my solo album *American Vampire*, on Cleopatra Records, some years ago," says Jyrki 69. "I asked if he had any suitable tracks for The 69 Eyes, and he sent me the demo of 'I Survive.' I immediately wrote the lyrics for it, and now a couple of years later we finally have it released. Steve's such a legend in our books that the whole process was pretty surreal. When it comes to guitarists, I love Link Wray, Johnny Thunders, Cheetah Chrome, Ron Asheton, James Williamson, and Steve Stevens. The 69 Eyes has recorded a Dead Boys cover, 'Sonic Reducer,' with Cheetah quite recently, so recording with Steve Stevens is on the line of my rock 'n' roll fantasy. L.A.-based Barry Pointer mixed the track to be THE Sound of Glam in 2026! It's an anthem for us all!"

The 69 Eyes will spend 2026 doing as much touring as possible, so look out for dates as well as news of a new EP soon. - **Brett Callwood**



▲ N'KENGE'S MISSION FOR CHANGE

Creator, producer, and star of *That's Love! The Dorothy Dandridge Musical*, Julliard-trained, five-octave N'Kenge is on a mission to redefine leadership and performance opportunities. The hardcore polyglot (11) has collabs with Wynton Marsalis, Ornette Coleman, blends opera, Broadway, jazz, pop, and soul.



◀ KOBALT'S SLEEP TOKEN

Leading independent publisher Kobalt signs metal-ambient-progressive band Sleep Token's drummer, II, known for powerful drumming and songwriting. The deal follows "Caramel" (one of *NYT's* best songs of 2025). *Even in Arcadia* hit No. 1 in U.K., Canada, Australia, Germany, New Zealand, Austria, Netherlands, and Belgium.



▲ AYO ADDS DIAMOND

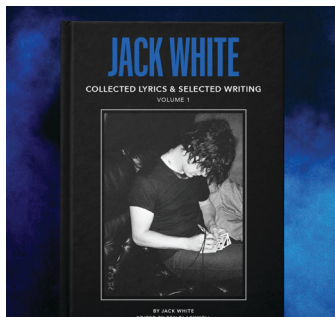
Launching in 2024, copyright administrator AYO Music Group develops a new Gapfinder tool, has new releases set for 2026, and adds to their roster—including artists Pete Rock, Silk the Shocker, Drumma Boy, and SOCAN Breakthrough and JUNO Award-nominated ("See You When I See You") Kayla Diamond.

Landmark Rights' Ruling

In a U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals decision that could forever shift the landscape of music, songwriters can now lean into U.S. copyright law to reclaim their songs worldwide. Upholding a lower court's decision, songwriter Cyril Vetter takes back full global control of 1963's *Double Shot (Of My Baby's Love)* from publisher Resnik Music Group. A three-judge panel affirmed an earlier ruling that Vetter/Vetter Communications Corporation are the sole owners worldwide. The decision centers around copyright law "termination rights," which permit songwriters to reclaim songs sold years earlier. The Copyright Act of 1976 allows original songwriters to reclaim their copyrights from publishers (or rightsholders) after a certain period of time (35 years for anything written 1978 or later). Further details at copyrightlately.com.

Tin Pan Returns

Tickets go on sale March 3, for the 34th annual Tin Pan South Songwriters Festival, taking place in Nashville, TN March 24-28, 2026. As the world's largest songwriting festival with 100 showcases highlighting the best songs, an energetic intersection of fans and songwriters, and a community of supportive creatives in a city built to support music, this event is not to be missed. With all genres of music and industry professionals from across the country, Tin Pan presents a fabulous place for powerful networking. Details and registration at tinpansouth.com.



▲ JACK WHITE COLLECTED

New *Jack White Collected Lyrics and Selected Writing Volume 1* anthology includes unreleased solo poems and writing with The Raconteurs, The Dead Weather, and rare photos. *Live At Ford Field* and *Live No Name* out now, following 2025's *White Stripes' Rock & Roll Hall of Fame* induction. More at jackwhiteiii.com/tour-dates.

Altadena Musicians Fundraising

Launching in Los Angeles to help musicians replace instruments and albums lost to the Eaton Canyon and Palisades fires, Altadena Musicians has already replaced over 2,600 instruments for 1,200 artists. See video of 13-year old getting a new bass from Duff McKagan through the organization, and another on YouTube featuring fire-impacted musicians recording compilation fundraiser album *Gimme Shelter*, with all proceeds going to fund Altadena Musicians. Find out more and lend support at altadenamusicians.org.

SESAC Congratulates Nominees

Extending heartfelt congratulations on their GRAMMY nominations, SESAC wishes to acknowledge all member nominees, including Ariana Grande, Guy Lawrence, Howard Lawrence, Emily Armstrong, Lalah Hathaway, Darius Dixon, Kenyon Dixon, Swiff D, Robert Glasper, Margo Price, Jenee Fleenor, Randy Newman, Shirley Caesar, PJ Morton, Burna Boy, Zain Effendi, Lili Haydn, Jeremy Ivey, and Alysa Vanderheym. Full details at sesac.com.

SongWriterCamps Sync MasterCamp

Experienced independent artists are invited to apply to write and produce music for current sync briefs through the SongWriterCamps' Sync MasterCamp. Supported and mentored by top U.S. music supervisors actively looking for new music to place, the goal is for songs to be pitched and placed as a "one stop" for television, movies, trailers, and advertising. Previous participants have expanded catalogs, networks, and landed placements for *Batwoman*, *The Sex Lives of College Girls*, *Riverdale*, *Kung Fu*, *Maggie*, etc. Details at songwritercamps.com/sync-mastercamp or email info@songwritercamps.com.

Sankofa Inaugural Fundraiser

Entertainment and activism join together for Sankofa.org's star-studded inaugural fundraiser on Sunday, March 1, with performances by Aloe Blacc, DJ Ali Shaheed Muhammad of A Tribe Called Quest, and others. Committed to dismantling systemic violence, working towards restorative justice initiatives, and championing meaningful immigration reform and livable minimum wages, the event celebrates what would have been Harry Belafonte's 99th birthday. Launched in 2013 by Belafonte with daughter Gina and Raoul Roach, the evening also honors Danny

Glover, Dolores Huerta, Shepard Fairey, and Chuck D with awards for their tireless social justice work. Proceeds raised benefit sankofa.org.

Stealing Isn't Innovation

In an ongoing battle against unauthorized copyright usage, The Human Artistry Campaign has launched a new advocacy campaign to protest against Big Tech's illegal (and unpaid) harvesting of copyrighted creative content in their pursuit of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) platforms and a call for licensing and enforcement to help curb the unauthorized activity. Threatened jobs, declining creative sector growth, and content theft and unauthorized duplication continue to erode the industry and de-incentivize new content. More at stealingisntinnovation.com.

GCMF Lyrics Contest

Calling all young songwriters! Guitar Center Music Foundation (GCMF) renews its commitment to young artists, launching its first ever songwriting competition. Creatives ages 7-17 can enter for a chance to write, record, and bring their music to life in Nashville, by submitting a fully written song or strong lyrical or musical idea, with creativity valued over polish. Submissions accepted through March 31, 2026, with winners announced mid-April; two winners will be chosen by a judging panel including GCMF Board and hitmaking songwriters Stephan Kirk, Jenna Andrews, Josh Phillips, and Brock Berryhill, with entries evaluated on creativity, originality, storytelling, and musical potential. Winners will write, record, and be featured in a mini documentary. Details at guitarcenterfoundation.org/finish-the-lyrics.

ASCAP Honors Nominees

Celebrating GRAMMY nominees and top songwriter and producer members, ASCAP's annual Brunch in the garden included appearances from Jon Batiste, Shaboozey, Bernie Taupin, Diane Warren, Amy Allen, Sierra Hull, Kamasi Washington, Angélique Kidjo, Tyler Spry, Freaky Rob, Ashley Gorley, T.I., and more. Beautiful appetizers, delicious cocktails, and incredible vibes from DJ Beverly Bond were enjoyed by all. More at ascap.com

Cutting Edge's Paesano

Film and television music investor Cutting Edge Group has purchased catalog royalty streams from composer John Paesano. Including over 80 film, television, and gaming scores, the agreement includes

scores for *The Maze Runner* trilogy, work on *Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes*, music from the *Daredevil* series, and Amazon's *Invincible*. Work in gaming includes *Marvel's Spider-Man* for PlayStation, *Mass Effect: Adromeda*, *Gran Turismo Sport*, *Detroit: Become Human*, and more. The catalog includes music from *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, DreamWorks' *Dragons*, and *Night at the Museum: Kahmunrah Rises Again*. Paesano's works have received a BAFTA Games Award (*Spider-Man: Miles Morales*), Emmy and GRAMMY nominations (*The Defenders*, *Spider-Man 2*).

MusicRow's Rising Women

Now in its 13th year, MusicRow celebrates the Rising Women on the Row Class of 2026, with this year's honorees including six executives making a significant impact on Nashville's Country music industry, in a celebration that now includes 60 women, congratulations go out to Courtney Allen, Jackie Augustus, Sara Knabe, Victoria Mason, Sophia Sansone, and Elisa Vazzana. More at musicrow.com.

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



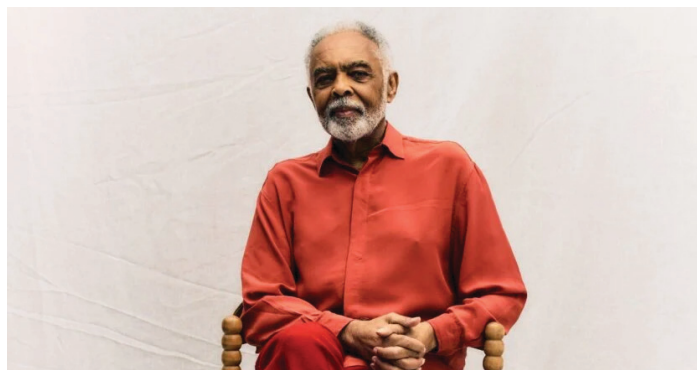
BIG LOUD'S RANKIN

Texas singer-songwriter Julianna Rankin has signed to Big Loud Texas, with label debut "Bad Habits and Good Horses" (with co-writers Garrett Bradford, Jon Decious) to be featured in the Paramount+ season finale of *Landman*. Rankin started off at an AryIn Studio party, connecting with mentor Miranda Lambert.



BATISTE SUPPORTS CLASSICAL

GRAMMY and Oscar-winner Jon Batiste co-hosts podcast *Classical Californians*, sharing his journey, stories, musical influences, inspirations, and spotlighting classical champions across the State. Classical California is America's largest listener-supported, independent classical network (KUSC 91.5fm LA/KDFC 90.3fm SF). [Jon Batiste with Classical California Host Dianne Nicolini]



GIL GETS PRIMARY

Primary Wave Music/Nas Nuvens Music Group acquire Brazilian composer-singer-guitarist Gilberto Gil's catalog. Gil's 60+ year career and 60+ albums brought two GRAMMYS, nine Latin GRAMMYS, 2005's Polar Music Prize. Work included tours with Jimmy Cliff and recording with The Wallers. Tour continues through 2026.



SMP SIGNS BUSCEMA

Partnering with Daniel Nigro's Amusement, Sony Music Publishing signs BMI's Jon Buscema (Conan Gray, Grace VanderWaal, Sofia & The Antoinettes, etc.) to global publishing. Co-write/production credits include "Wherever I go," "The Pines" (Noah Rinker *In Order* (Devon Again), "Caramel" (Conan Gray/*Wishbone*). [L-R: Mike Ferris (Founder, Good Problem), Daniel Nigro, Jon Buscema, Nick Bral (SMP)]



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Frank Handy

Empowering Through Education



First serving as Senior Copyright Administrator at Bug Music (now BMG) in 2005, Frank Handy transitioned to Bicycle Music (now Concord), before moving on to his role at SONGS (working closely with The Weeknd, Lorde, Diplo, and others). Serving as Vice President and Head of Operations and Administration at Position Music added licensing, income tracking, YouTube and digital distribution operations, and catalog valuations. He was also the Head of Creator and Publisher Relations at AllTrack Performing Rights and worked as a consultant for Swell Sound, Geffen Records, and El Camino Media. Currently the VP of Catalog Royalties Administration at Peermusic, Handy's support for independent publishers has deepened through his royalty distribution oversight and revenue stream optimization, in addition to work in his role as President (Los Angeles Chapter) and national chair of AIMP (Association of Independent Music Publishers).

With over 20 years of experience in music business operations, administration, and royalty management, Handy has also spent extensive time performing in bands as an alt-rock guitarist and songwriter. An award-winning graduate of the guitar tech program at Musician's Institute (once auditioning for Nine Inch Nails), his passion for the music remains, although his primary focus has shifted to educating and supporting independent music publishers and creators, sharing his knowledge in panels and events focused on copyright, publishing trends, and rights advocacy.

Speaking to his own songwriting process, Handy says it always started with the guitar. "I wanted to make it playing guitar, so I played in bands for many, many years. The writing process for me always started around cool chord progressions or guitar sounds, and then I would usually let someone else write the words because I don't really sing or write [lyrics]. I think that's the case for a lot of alternative rock."

Ultimately, everything comes down to great music. "Coming up in my day, it was a pretty set road," says Handy. "You got out, you played shows, and there were gatekeepers you had to get past to have any success. There was the indie DIY thing as well, but there were gatekeepers in that scene too. You had to be cool enough. There was a real rock ethos. With the internet in the past 20 years, the barriers have really come down. Anybody can put a song up anywhere and what is encouraging is [that] great music still finds people. They'll try and point to virality, but ultimately it comes down to [making] great music. If the song's great, it'll resonate with people, and they'll want to use it. There are algorithms and things, but if the music ain't great, you can't manufacture it. That's been true since the dawn of commercial music."

There are blessings with the development of artificial intelligence. "Last year, [at] this time, the fires were raging, destroying California. A.I. really came on the scene," reflects Handy. "A lot of big rights holders are willing to work together. There's always going to be bad players, but ultimately this is a new revenue stream for the music industry. There's lots of good guardrails in licensing, and people using the music understand that music has value and should be paid for."

Having served on the AIMP board for 10 years, Handy says that the toughest part of his role as President has been saying no to so many. "You can't be all things to all people. We are an educational organization that serves the independent music publishing community—that's what we have to focus on," he emphasizes. "If the organization gets too far out of its lane one way or the other, that's not good for anybody."

As for his career success, Handy says it all comes down to work ethic. "I outworked everybody and that has served me well being a performing musician, as well as an executive."

For more insights from Handy, listen in on SiriusXM's *Break the Business* radio show.

Turning 50 years old in 2027, AIMP now has chapters in Los Angeles, New York, Nashville, and Atlanta, launching the Young Professionals Committee (YPC) in 2021.

Contact Jon Bleicher - Prospect PR, jon@prospectpr.com

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

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

MUSIC CONNECTION

Wolfgang Van Halen

Mammoth Delivering on A Legacy



Wolfgang Van Halen launched his career around the age of 16 when he was tapped (no pun intended but acknowledged) by his father Edward to become the bassist in the family business: legendary rock band Van Halen. Following the 2012 release *A Different Kind of Truth*, he began to record with various bands. Later, he worked under the name Mammoth WVH, which ultimately became simply Mammoth, one of Van Halen's early band names. Wolf has since released three records as Mammoth, most recently 2025's *The End*. *Music Connection* spoke with him between legs of his tour, the latest of which will take the band to Europe and, for the first time, South America.

For any artist, there's often a creative pursuit that exacts its price. For Van Halen, his most challenging song sprang to life after a protracted creative crisis. "The final track on the record 'All in Good Time' was the last song we did," he recalls. "It's not a ballad but it's close and was really important for the record because it needed that vibe. We'd just been through all of the fires and it was the first day of torrential rains so there was a lot of relief. I was kind of losing myself and I stood outside in the rain for an hour as I tried to will it into existence. I had writer's block and you do anything you can to shake up your brain in a different way. This was the first record where I felt unsure when I recorded the vocals because I'd stepped outside of my comfort zone, lyrically and vocally. Luckily, I was wrong. When I went back inside, I unlocked what I was searching for and finished it, which was a huge relief because then I knew we had

the record."

Eleven years ago, Van Halen began to work with producer Michael "Elvis" Baskette, who's helmed all three of Mammoth's records. His partnership with Baskette has proved pivotal. "Elvis and I have worked together since before Mammoth existed," he says. "We have a great friendship and partnership and don't feel weird about challenging each other's opinions so it's a healthy work environment. Not having a band in the studio [could be] weird if I didn't have anybody else there challenging and pulling stuff out of me. That's what the process needs. He provides creative friction and is a key part of what makes Mammoth Mammoth. He sees the bigger picture and knows the right moves."

Van Halen played all of the instruments and performed vocals on each of his three records. That's a bold move especially in addition to writing everything. How he arrived at that choice is quintessentially rock and roll. "I've always been a big fan of the Foo Fighters," he observes, "and I wanted to see if I could do what Dave [Grohl] did with [1995's] *Foo Fighters* where he recorded the whole thing on his own. I wondered if I was capable of writing and recording a record that way and not have it sound like it was one person; that

it could sound like a full band. That was the driving force behind the first record [2021's *Mammoth WVH*] and it grew from there."

Edward Van Halen began work on his home studio 5150 in 1983. It's where Van Halen (the band) recorded all of its records from 1984 onward. It's also where Wolfgang does all of his work. Like any crossroads of creativity, it constantly evolves, grows and changes. "It's been important for me to make sure that its overall vibe remains the same," he explains. "I even sourced the exact parquet flooring to make sure that when we move stuff around I can have it be the same. Other than little things like a flat-screen TV, it's still very much the same studio."

Artists often have a favorite piece of studio gear or a go-to instrument. For Van Halen, he relies heavily upon guitars that he designed and developed alongside Fender's EVH brand. "With my second record, I did ninety-five percent of the guitar tracking on one of the prototypes," he recalls, "and with *The End* I did about the same with the SA-126, one of my newer ones. But I also like to use one of my dad's old guitars to have some of his energy mingled with mine. I bring out the Frankenstein [Edward's iconic, cobbled-together guitar] once per record. For this one I used it for the tapping intro to the song 'The End.'"

Van Halen is a decided detractor of using A.I. to make music. "I read recently that some people use it when they write," he shares. "That's not only insulting to the process but it's incredibly lazy. It shows how much music means to you if that's where you stoop to create. Whenever I've been stuck and am losing my mind, I step away. Then I come back to it the next morning refreshed and either find it or I realize that what I'd done was good enough. I understand the benefit of convenience but at a certain point it's trying to bring efficiency to something that isn't necessary and we'll start to lose the human experience."

Mammoth returns to the road on March 5, will remain there through the summer and resume in the fall. Van Halen is excited to open for stalwart metal outfit Iron Maiden for the first time. Although Mammoth's latest release is titled *The End*, it seems likely that Van Halen won't reach that point for quite some time.

Contact mammoth.band; Instagram @[mammothwvh](https://www.instagram.com/mammothwvh); @[wolfvanhalen](https://www.instagram.com/wolfvanhalen)

THE 3 MOST IMPORTANT

lessons he's gleaned as a artist are:

- Confidence. Trust yourself and the process. I've stopped worrying about what other people think or the comparisons they'll make.
- Surround yourself with people you trust. It helps you go to places you're not comfortable to pull out a piece of art that's worth it.
- Patience. It's tough to find balance especially when you have a deadline.

DROPS

Gibson Films premiered *Volume One*, the first installment of a limited music docuseries series called *Iommi: The Godfather of Heavy Metal*, streaming exclusively on Gibson TV throughout 2026. Best known as the lead guitarist and co-founder of heavy metal icons Black Sabbath, Tony Iommi's life and career—from his humble roots in the U.K.'s Birmingham to building a lasting, influential legacy across international stages—is captured in this series. Viewers are offered in-depth interviews with the likes of Brian May, Slash, Zakk Wylde, and Rob Halford, as well as Iommi himself. For more information, contact Libby Coffey at lcoffey@primeprgroup.com.

East West Players will present the world premiere of David Henry Hwang's newly updated 2026 book for Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Flower Drum Song*, opening in April at the Japanese American Cultural & Community Center's Aratani Theatre in Los Angeles. Directed by EWP Artistic Director Lily Tung Crystal, the production will serve as the finale of the company's 60th Anniversary Diamond Legacy season and the final show before the venue's major renovation. The reimaged musical will feature a cast led

second chapter of the Nia DaCosta-directed horror saga, which is a dark exploration of survival, with a foreboding blend of strings, primal percussion, and unsettling instrumental effects. The film stars Ralph Fiennes, Jack O'Connell, and Alfie Williams. Gudnadóttir made history with her soundtrack for Todd Phillips' dark psychological thriller *Joker* when she became the first solo woman winner of the Golden Globe Award for Best Original Score (Motion Picture) since the category's introduction in 1947. For further details, contact Sarah Roche at sarah@whitebearpr.com.

In response to early demand, Pasadena Playhouse extended its production of Peter Shaffer's *Amadeus* to now run through March 15. Directed by Tony Award-winner

Darko Tresnjak, the production stars Tony winners Jefferson Mays as Salieri, Sam Clemmett as Mozart, and Tony nominee Lauren Worsham as Constanze, alongside a talented ensemble including Kenajuan Bentley, Matthew Patrick Davis, Jennifer Chang, and more. Theatergoers will see rivals Antonio Salieri, the court's celebrated musician, and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, the vulgar prodigy, go head to head in this beloved, award-winning and witty drama. Visit pasadenaplayhouse.org for tickets and more information or contact Peter Goldman at p.goldman@dcpublicity.com.

The digital soundtrack for *Return to Silent Hill* is out

now, coinciding with the 20th anniversary since the first *Silent Hill* film hit theaters. Directed by Christophe Gans and starring Jeremy Irvine as James Sunderland, the film was based on Konami's classic horror video game *Silent Hill 2*. The score was composed by longtime series collaborator and executive producer Akira Yamaoka, who revisited familiar melodies in tracks like "Chasing Laura" and "Moth Mary." Yamaoka's soundscape was intentionally composed not to tell listeners or viewers what to feel, but to leave them with an unsettling feeling of ambiguity. Contact Greg O'Connor-Read at greg@topdollarpr.com for more information.

ORIGINAL MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK



OPPS

The 2026 Palm Desert Choreography Festival will accept choreography submissions until April 1. The performance/competition will be held November 14-15, with grand prizes for both seasoned choreographers working with professional dancers as well as those collaborating with aspiring and emerging individuals and organizations. The festival is offered through McCallum Theatre. More information and submission guidelines can be found at mccallumtheatre.org/festival-details.

Cleveland's 2026 Horror Hotel Film Festival is hosting a film scoring competition, and there's still time to submit—the late registration deadline is April 17. Composers are tasked with scoring a trailer provided by the festival, now in its 15th year, and slated for June 18-21. Learn more about the event and how to submit your work at instagram.com/horrorhotelfilmfest.

The International Conference on Audio for Virtual and Augmented Reality and Immersive Games has a call for proposals out that remains open until March 24. The Audio Engineering Society's sixth annual event, slated for June 30-July 3, focuses on audio for extended reality and interactive gaming. Conference attendees can participate in workshops, tutorials, and masterclasses on audio for virtual and augmented reality, immersive audio, and gaming. Visit aes2.org for more information on the event and submitting proposals.

PROPS

Bright Eyes frontman Conor Oberst marked his February 15 birthday with the debut of a new concert film, *An Evening with Bright Eyes & Cursive*, which premiered on Veeps with proceeds benefitting Poison Oak Project, Bright Eyes' initiative supporting LGBTQ+ equity with a focus on the trans community. The performance captured the bands'



by Grace Yoo, Emily Kuroda, Marc Oka, and more, with music by Richard Rodgers and lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II. Set in 1960s San Francisco Chinatown, the revival explores themes of identity, assimilation, and cultural legacy through a contemporary Asian American lens. Visit eastwestplayers.org for tickets and details.

28 Years Later: The Bone Temple (Original Motion Picture Soundtrack), featuring an original score by Academy Award-, Emmy-, Golden Globe-, and GRAMMY-winning composer Hildur Gudnadóttir, is out now via Milan Records. The album accompanied the

OUT TAKE



Burlington, VT performance at Higher Ground during their Five Dice, All Threes tour in 2024. Fans got to see career-spanning sets with behind-the-scenes interviews, offering an intimate look at both groups. Bright Eyes has a few spring dates lined up in May and June to celebrate the 21st anniversaries of *I'm Wide Awake, It's Morning* and *Digital Ash in a Digital Urn*. Visit thisisbrighteyes.com/tour for the schedule.

Tibet House US has announced the 39th Annual Benefit Concert at Carnegie Hall on March 3. This year's event will be in celebration of the Year of the Fire Horse, "a time of heightened spiritual energy, transformation, and opportunity for merit-making," according to the event website. Kate Pierson of The B-52s fame and Debbie



Harry, AKA Blondie, are among those slated to perform, along with the Philip Glass Ensemble, Tenzen Choegyal, Moses Sumney, and more. Composer and pianist Philip Glass and musician and filmmaker Laurie Anderson will serve as artistic directors for Carnegie Hall's event, held annually around the Tibetan new year to celebrate Tibetan heritage and support the preservation of Tibetan culture. Learn more, see the complete list of performers and contributors, and find tickets at benefitconcert.thus.org.

The 16th Annual Guild of Music Supervisors Awards, hosted by the nonprofit Guild of Music Supervisors each year to spotlight exceptional achievements across film, television, documentaries, advertising, trailers, and video games, took place on February 28 at the Wilton Theatre in Los Angeles. Music and music supervision in Ryan Coogler's acclaimed horror/action film *Sinners* earned the most nominations, including for Niki Sherrod's music supervision and the original songs "I Lied to You," performed by Miles Caton, and "Last Time (I Seen the Sun)," performed by Caton, Ludwig Göransson, and Alice Smith. See the complete list of winners and nominees at gmsawards.com.

The Society of Composers & Lyricists celebrated their 7th Annual SCL Awards on February 6 at the Skirball Cultural Center in Los Angeles, once again celebrating the best in music for visual media. Ludwig Göransson won two honors for his *Sinners* score and the original song "I Lied to You," co-written with Raphael Saadiq, while *KPop Demon Hunters'* songwriters EJAE and Mark Sonnenblick won Outstanding Original Song for a Comedy or Musical for "Golden." The ceremony paid tribute to the 50th anniversary of *Rocky* with a special performance conducted by the film's legendary composer Bill Conti, along with a featured appearance by Melissa Manchester. Hosted by actor and musician Kevin Bacon and composer (and brother) Michael Bacon, the evening highlighted a standout year for film music, with many Oscar- and BAFTA-recognized composers and songwriters among the nominees. The Spirit of Collaboration Award went to Göransson and director Ryan Coogler in honor of their creative partnership on *Sinners*. See the complete list of winners and nominees, as well as highlights from past years, at thescl.com/scl-awards.

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.



Simon Franglen

Composer

Web: simonfranglen.com

Most recent: *Avatar: Fire and Ash*

Award-winning composer Simon Franglen, who most recently was recognized for the Golden Globe-winning music in James Cameron's *Avatar: Fire and Ash*, has always been captivated by the emotion film music can bring to the screen. It's no surprise, since he won a GRAMMY for producing one of the most renowned and emotionally resonant onscreen songs in American cinema—*Titanic*'s renowned "My Heart Will Go On." Franglen has collected dozens of credits since the '90s, saying it's the overarching themes that often draw him into composing for a project, including his most recent work for *Avatar: Fire and Ash*. "From an early age, I always loved punk and the punk aesthetic, and I saw a lot of those vibes and themes in *Avatar: Fire and Ash*. Themes like society turning its back on people, the idea of no future, grief—and the question became how do I translate those themes into music?" Franglen says.

Writing close to 2,000 pages of music for the project and tasked with the challenge of creating continuity but also producing something fresh for the third installment in the *Avatar* series, Franglen considers *Fire and Ash* to be the most challenging project he's ever taken on. His advice to aspiring composers who are just starting out is to treat low-budget projects not as a limitation, but as a chance to be innovative. "If you're working with a small budget but are trying to create the sound of an enormous symphony orchestra, your end result isn't going to be as good. Don't sweat the things that are small—treat it as an opportunity. And don't sound like somebody who already exists—there's no reason to hire you if you don't sound like you."

He also says composers need to use technology so it helps, rather than hinders, their art. "A lot of composers today are great at playing their particular instruments, but mastering the technology to present your demos is the essential part. You're pitching to people who might be phenomenal directors, but don't understand music and won't understand your ideas if you don't know how to use technology to translate them into director-speak."

► **GIRL TONES JOIN AMAZON MUSIC'S LIST OF ARTISTS TO WATCH, FORGE AHEAD INTO 2026**

After releasing their first single of the year titled "Volcano," Girl Tones, the high-energy rock duo brought to life by sisters Kenzie and Laila, are currently on the road with supporting Peter McPoland on tour before stepping up as a Showcasting Artist at SXSW. The duo was also has also joined Amazon Music's list of Artists to Watch in 2026, joining peers like Fckers, Florence Road, Folk Bitch Trio, and NewDad.



▲ **GEN Z ALT POWERHOUSE LIA PAPPAS-KEMPS SET TO RELEASE DEBUT ALBUM WINGED**

Following the release of her single "Towers," alt singer-songwriter Lia Pappas-Kemps is set to release her debut album *Winged* on March 13. Acting as a continuation of the Toronto-based musician's intimate, emotionally textured sound, it's the kind of close-to-the-bone storytelling that makes her a new voice to watch in 2026.



◀ **HOLLY HUMBERSTONE SET TO RELEASE SECOND STUDIO ALBUM CRUEL WORLD ON APRIL 10 VIA INTERSCOPE RECORDS**

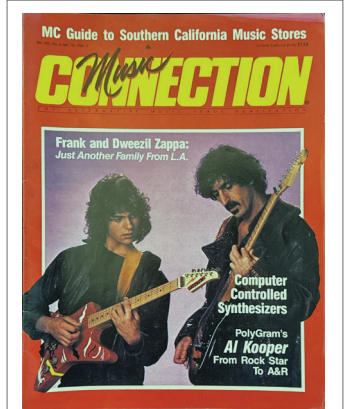
Holly Humberstone's forthcoming release of her highly anticipated sophomore album, *Cruel World*, is due on April 10 via Interscope Records. *Cruel World* was written with a new discipline through daily studio sessions with collaborator Rob Milton and draws deeply on love (romantic, platonic, and feminine). Looking ahead, Humberstone will perform in Europe for a run of intimate headline dates, tour in the U.K. this spring, and is set to make major festival appearances at Coachella, Governors Ball, and Bonnaroo.



◀ **POP STAR NAÏKA RELEASES HIGHLY ANTICIPATED DEBUT ALBUM ECLESIA**

French-Haitian singer and global pop artist Naïka returns with her highly anticipated debut album *ECLESIA*, a project deeply rooted in community, self-reflection, identity, and spiritual clarity. In support of the album, Naïka is bringing *ECLESIA* to the stage on an almost sold-out international tour across Europe and North America, marking her largest global run to date.

Tidbits From Our Tattered Past



1984 - Frank and Dweezil Zappa - #2

MC's 1984 cover featured Frank Zappa, approaching a more mellow time in his illustrious career, and his then 14-year-old son, Dweezil, navigating his own music path outside of his father's shadow. Frank discussed the business aspects of his career: "I made myself wealthy not by satirizing the American way of life, but by spending 16 hours a day doing physical work to keep other people amused." Of his son's guitar prowess, Frank asserted, "People who've played for twenty years can't touch him." "It's nothing special, having a dad who's a performer," said Dweezil before simply saying, "I aspire to be just a good guitar player."



1995 - TLC - #4

Following the release of their sophomore album, *CrazySexyCool*, R&B/Hip-Hop heroines TLC graced the cover of MC. Despite rampant rumors that the group would break up because of the troubles surrounding Lisa "Left Eye" Lopes, Tionne "T-Boz" Watkins insisted that her and co-members Left Eye and Rozonda "Chilli" Thomas were, "just one big happy family. Sure, we've had some rough times, but in everyday life, you'll find no job is perfect... The thing to do is to make the best out of the worst situation—and I think that's what we've done."

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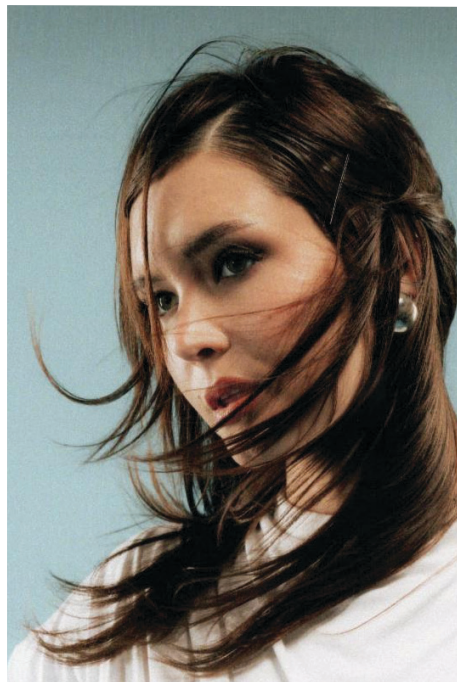


▲ HOTEL FICTION RELEASE DELUXE VERSION OF 2024 ALBUM STARING AT THE SUN

Hotel Fiction, the indie project of Athens, GA-based duo Jade Ireland Long and Jess Thompson, released their sophomore album *Staring at the Sun* in 2024, and now, the band has shared the album's deluxe version, featuring four never before heard tracks. On the deluxe version, Hotel Fiction pulls back the curtain on the early years of their singular creative partnership, crystalizing the first phase of their music as they prepare to move into the next.

► KATIE TUPPER RELEASES DEBUT ALBUM, GREYHOUND, ANNOUNCES HEADLINE TOUR DATES IN NORTH AMERICA AND EUROPE

Katie Tupper has released her debut album *Greyhound* via Arts & Crafts. The record is about the instinct to chase—fleeting desires, guaranteed mistakes, the feeling of home, love in all its shapes and forms. Born in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, *Greyhound* will bring the prairie roots of Tupper's past to meet the blended and expanded worldview of her present. Kicking off in May, Tupper will embark on a headline world tour. Making stops across the U.S., Canada, and Europe, *Greyhound* will take on a new form for audiences across the globe.



◀ ADRIATIQUE JOINS FORCES WITH YUBIK AND VINCENT VOSSEN ON MELODIC HOUSE/TECHNO TRACK "NEVER ALONE"

Adriatique explores fresh artistic territory for their latest club record "Never Alone," a three-way production with rising melodic maestro Yubik, and emotional genre-blender Vincent Vossen. "Never Alone" is the first of many new tracks to come from the pair moving into 2026.





YOUNG THE GIANT

BY BRETT CALLWOOD

The new year was still fresh when we landed on a Zoom call with Young the Giant's enigmatic frontman Sameer Gadhia and charming multi-instrumentalist Eric Cannata. The air was crisp (even in Southern California), the extra holiday weight still stubbornly lingering, and the political climate was not allowing for any traditional vibes of new hope.

And yet, the conversation was a free-flowing, warm experience. The two musicians love to talk about their work, and they're justifiably proud of what they've been up to of late. *Victory Garden*, which drops in April, is YtG's sixth studio album and, true to form, it displays a marked progression on their celebrated career path. Further evidence that, while this band has a sound that is very much their own, they also refuse to stand still.

The band formed in 2004, originally as The Jakes, and the lineup has stayed consistent since

2008. The quality has also remained remarkably consistent, and MC asked Gadhia and Cannata what keeps them creatively buzzing.

"Some of it, I think, is inexplicable," says Gadhia. "I think it's that we don't feel like we've explored and said all that we want to say as a group together. I think the second that happens, that's the eventuality. But right now, we're just enjoying each other. I think we're closer than we've ever been as a band. We feel more confident as players and songwriters, and there's more that we want to say. Every time we work on a record, there's this infinite zero. It's like you're trying to get to this place of perfection every time. And you're obviously wanting to better it and get better at your craft. That's, for me, what keeps it going."

"The more we do this, the more we realize there's so much to learn from each other, from the different collaborators we work with, different producers, engineers," adds Cannata. "I think

that, for this particular record, it was a coming back to form. All five of us writing and recording almost like brothers. Being together and seeing where we were all at as a collective and what we wanted to focus on for this record was really kind of viewing the world from the lens of a child or of the beginner's mind. Going back to the beginning, when we were making our first record. So I think there's more vitality than ever within this band and just being present with each other and enjoying the time, because at the end of the day, we do really love collaborating with one another and really love the friendship and camaraderie that comes with this project."

That camaraderie has been there from the beginning, when the band formed in Irvine (Orange County), CA.

"Irvine is a unique place in Orange County, in that the rest of Orange County is pretty homogenous," says Gadhia. "It's pretty conservative. Whereas the Irvine that we grew up

in was very diverse. It was filled with immigrants from all over the world, some of whom were fleeing very conflicted lives, difficult worlds, to find their form of paradise. It's a huge cultural hot pot for ideas, for music, for culture. That being said, Irvine is a very manicured place. As you get older, you appreciate things like great public schools. There's access to education; there's access to music. And the music that we all had access to at a young age was very important. By the time we were all teenagers, there was a vibrant local music scene. Bands like Rage Against the Machine came out of Irvine, decrying the situation of the world that we live in. For us as teenagers, we were going to shows all the time. And there were shows that were put up all over the place. It became a testing ground and a place to try new ideas. So it was really exciting at that particular moment. Other bands of that era were Cold War Kids and Local Natives—we were all playing shows together."

Young the Giant's 2010 self-titled debut album was released on Roadrunner Records (primarily known for metal), the next two dropped on Fueled by Ramen (known for punk), 2018's *Mirror Master* came out on Elektra, then 2022's *American Bollywood* was released by the super-hip AWAL. *Victory Garden* is coming out on the punk-focused Fearless Records. So why the label-hopping?

"Roadrunner was our first home," says Gadhia. "I think at the time, looking back, it was the best home for us, because it was a place where they were trying to prove themselves as a label that could break something else besides heavy metal. I think that's such a great tip—to be a part of a label where you stand out. I think that really helped us. AWAL was just a quick licensing deal. We wanted to see how that worked, and there were some good things and bad things. We wanted to find a partner that was really passionate and believed in us as a band, and where we were going in the future. We found that in Fearless, which in some ways reminded us so much of our early days at Roadrunner—we do stick out from the roster, and that's exactly what we want."

Andy Serrao, an old friend of the band, is President at Fearless, and he played a key role in getting YtG on the roster.

"He was the owner of Chain Reaction, which is a storied venue in Orange County that we used to perform at all the time," says Gadhia. "He was the reason why we got signed and discovered in the first place, 15 years ago. So, it's pretty amazing that he's now the GM of Fearless, and we've been able to kind of get back with him in so many ways. It feels like a comfortable home now, to be on Fearless."

Previous effort *American Bollywood* was an ambitious piece of work that is worthy of the listeners effort and attention, but it may have caught a few fans off-guard. We're convinced that it's a slow burner, that people will discover it down the line. For the band, and Gadhia in particular, it was a worthy endeavor either way.

"It was a very personal record for me to make, and it was something that I had to make," says Gadhia. "I really appreciate that the band dove

in full. Eric was such a huge, instrumental part of the songwriting power of that record, and our ability to come together. Everyone really poured in and understood what we wanted to do. I think we're very, very proud of that album. Obviously, it didn't go the way that we thought it might go, but I think that was a learning process for us. And at the end of the day, we still went on a tour that was our biggest tour."

The band tackled some tough subject matter on that album, warnings that we're seeing come to fruition during the second Trump administration.

"It still means so much to us, and it's the record that we own outright," says Gadhia. "The great thing about the internet is when things get discovered—at some point, maybe people will pick it up again."



"I feel like we were so incredibly inspired with that record," adds Cannata. "A lot of the writing was throughout the pandemic, so it was very difficult. It was a painful process. Just getting in the room together was a difficult thing, but I think it was musically a culmination of where we were at, at the time. I really think it closed a chapter, a really important chapter, musically for us. And I think that it was a bold record. I do think performing those songs live, even now, after we're getting geared up to put out our sixth record, we could tell that a lot of our fans, there's some of their favorite songs and some of our best work musically."

Perhaps, but *Victory Garden* rivals it. True to form, the songs are epic, soaring, and majestic while displaying an openness, vulnerability, and real-ness that creates an air of rare accessibility.

"All of us have become solid producers in our own right," says Gadhia. "We wanted to work with a producer who recognized that, and it was a collaborative process where so much of the skeleton the songs were from the demos and the production that we'd already done. I think with every record, there's a new process. And

with this record, the inspiration was really just getting back to being in a room together, being live, performing together, writing the songs in the room together. And several years ago, around the time of *American Bollywood*, we bought a band house together, in the hope that we could reconnect in that space."

That's a return to "Monkees"-esque band living for guys who, at this point in their individual lives, are in a much different place personally than they were in the early days of Young the Giant.

"We used to live in band houses for the first record, the second record, and then obviously we started becoming adults and having our own lives and getting our own places," says Gadhia. "There was no headquarters, so we got this house and built it into a studio with the hopes of working there. And we did do a lot of great work there, even a little bit of tweaking for this record. But what we were realizing was that, being in L.A., so much of the rest of our lives and responsibility were calling to us from the other side of the door. We find ourselves just a little bit distracted there, and we would spend months working on stuff that we knew that we could work at a more inspired and faster pace. The concept was that we were going to go and surgically inundate ourselves in the process. And so we would go out to Idlewild and Joshua Tree. We did four trips in total, two at each, and we spent a week there."

So it was that Young the Giant holed themselves up in an Airbnb, dropped some psychedelics, and reconnected as human beings, in the process finding inspiration for new work.

"We really wanted, at the very top, to not be precious, not to overthink things," says Gadhia. "I think, even with *American Bollywood*, we loved so much of that, but we spent so much time painstakingly obsessing over the tiniest details. And while that is important, I think there's an element of what we've always wanted to chase, which is our live performance, and we hadn't really found a record that was able to capture that energy. We wanted to be rough around the edges. We wanted to record it fast. We wanted to write it fast. So we decided to then work with Brendan O'Brien, who is such an amazing band producer and has done so many iconic albums. He's the last of a very few people who know how to make that sound feel like live."

The relationship with O'Brien, who has worked with the likes of Stone Temple Pilots, Black Crowes, Aerosmith, Springsteen, AC/DC, and many more, was a productive one. *Victory Garden* was recorded in three weeks, while prior to that it was written in about four weeks total (spread out over a year and a half while touring).

"We want this record to have radical empathy and humanity, and so we did everything in our power to keep it real," says Gadhia. "There's no programming going on, everyone's in the same room, and the bulk of the album has been performed and recorded live."

"I think that with the advancement of technology and the ability to record records in your home, in your bedroom, I think that it's a choice, right," adds Cannata. "It's a choice for us to say, 'Let's all be together. Let's write the record



together. Let's record together and capture not only great performances of the songs that we had written, but the sheer fact that a bulk of the material was recorded with all the instruments at the same time.' I think that there's a special thing captured. And I think a lot of people are craving that, capturing people performing at the same time again, because we live in such an isolated world, sitting on our computers, on our phones."

While *Victory Garden* is by no means a concept album, Gadhia says that "radical empathy" is the top line, the connective tissue that makes the whole record tick.

"In this time that we're in, we vacillate between meaningless stuff, where 'is life a simulation' to the 'nuclear death clock' of things just nearing an end and hopelessness," he says. "And this is an ode to everything that is human, everything that's beautiful. I think having that unconditional love, and having radical empathy, is its own form of resistance. Seeing life through a child's eyes and seeing that hope again. Hoping that this record is a beacon of hope for not only ourselves, which it definitely has been. It's been this ray of light in our lives, and it can be that for other people."

One of MC's favorite songs on the album is "Already There"—a future anthem that will surely have future crowds simultaneously swaying and singing. We asked the guys to use that song as an example and take us through their process.

"It was really about what the song needed," Gadhia says. "The song took priority. And with that one, it was a spark of a concept of synthesizer that I believe Eric played me. Oftentimes in the studio, you can kind of sit and be like, 'oh, how do we want this to sound? What

do we want to be like?' And I think this was this process. We were just trying to be natural and unthinking, and whatever came its way is what the song needed. It was about being intuitive with the arrangement. I remember that was in Joshua Tree. I think it was relatively quick; the melodies

kind of swam in a little bit later. But the instrumentation, everything else, just felt really natural and came together."

"I was listening back to a few voice memos of 'Already There,' where it's just the base synth that you hear at the very top of the song, and Samir and I bouncing off each other," adds Cannata. "And it's really cool to hear that process of the melody writing, coming from this spark, these chords, or this bass synth, and us just kind of bouncing melody ideas off of each other. A lot of it will be trying to get into that flow state of almost unconsciously riffing on melody ideas."

Naturally, we asked Cannata and Gadhia about gear, and Cannata in particular was enthusiastic in his response.

"For this record, we were trying to keep a lot of the instrumentation of the strengths of each member," he says. "So when it comes down to it, there's two guitars, vocals, drums, bass, and then we've always dabbled into drum machines and synthesizers to help embellish and create a sonic world that feels inspired to us. Some of the instruments that were really important on this particular record was the Moog Sub 37 synthesizer. You hear it in the pulsating synth-based sounds of 'Evergreen,' of 'Already There.' On top of that, we used a Juno 60 synthesizer. We have a cool, funny synth called the Baldwin Discoverer, which is just a digital synth that

sounds like a mix of an electric piano with a little bit more of that synth iciness to it. Then there was a good amount of piano as well. We have an upright that was lent to us from our friend and producer who helped produce the lot the previous couple records, John Hill. And then tons of toys in terms of little gibs and gobs and guitar pedals, and we went back to using amps on this record. One of those amps was a silver face Princeton, there's a port city amp, which is like a boutique amp builder that Brendan had, that I used quite a bit, and then a deluxe Tweed."

While Gadhia is less gear-headed, he does point out that he used a U67 mic on the entire record, happy to be consistent with a mic that he felt was working for him.

"Sameer is a wizard with the TC Helicon voice live stuff, where he's been using it live and in the studio," says Cannata. "It's such a cool inspiration machine in the studio, where he's just mastered it at this point. Over the years, the string players have collected more and more guitar pedals. And Sameer is like, 'Wait a minute, I want something for my voice.' So he really dove into that in a really cool way."

With the album dropping in the Spring, 2026 will be a year of promotion. That will come in the form of videos and singles, and likely some touring down the line.

"Our goal is to take this out everywhere," says Gadhia.

"There will be one or two singles out by the time this story comes out," adds Cannata. "We're planning on four singles previous to the album, and the album will be out April 24."

Look out for it!



Opera for All

By Brett Callwood

Music Connection has been in publication since 1977, and in that time, we've made a concerted effort to cover all musical genres and make everyone feel welcome. MC is for everyone! That said, we must admit that we've rather neglected the classical arts. Orchestral music, classical, and even big band have scarcely been in these pages, and we're going to be putting that right moving forward. That starts right now, with the exceptional people and productions of the LA Opera.

Since its formation in 1986, the LA Opera has become renowned worldwide for its innovative productions while simultaneously, in their own words, "honoring the great historical legacy of opera."

In 2026, the LA Opera will host Verdi's *Falstaff* in April and May, and Mozart's *The Magic Flute* in May and June, as well as recitals from some of opera's leading vocalists and musicians. The program for the 2026/27 season was just announced as we were going to press, with *Carmen*, *Turandot*, and *The Marriage of Figaro* standout shows. There's something incredibly special happening on February 28 to March 22, however—a production of renowned minimalist composer Philip Glass' contemporary opera set in ancient Egypt, *Akhnaten*.

MC spoke to LA Opera president and CEO Christopher Koelsch, and three members of the *Akhnaten* team—director Phelim McDermott, conductor Dalia Stasevska, and countertenor John Holiday (in the role of Akhnaten himself)—about what goes into an enormous, magnificent endeavor such as this...

Christopher Koelsch
LA Opera, president and CEO

Could we get a little background on what you've done before coming to the LA Opera?

I've been at the LA Opera for most of my adult life. I started in 1997 and before that, I was company manager for Opera Pacific, which is a now-defunct opera company in Orange County, CA. Before that, I was in graduate school, and during that period, I was running the rehearsal

department for an international arts festival called Spoleto Festival USA in Charleston, SC. But I joined the artistic staff of LA Opera in 1997 and have been running it since 2012.

Can you remember your introduction to opera? What drew you in?

Yes, it came relatively late. I was studying abroad in London in the early '90s, and I was assigned a production of Handel's *Xerxes* at the English National Opera—that was my first experience. I grew up in Boston at a time in which we didn't have an opera company, and frankly, even if we did,



I'm not sure that I feel confident that I would have gone because that was not the milieu in which I grew up. But I was a trained musician and a theater kid, and the scale of the endeavor was the thing that really seduced me. I was really amazed at the emotional and aesthetic spectacle of it and was almost immediately drawn to it because of that.

What style of music did you grow up on?

I was a public school kid, so I was given a violin when I was six years old and told to learn it. But I grew up on '80s pop music.

Some people have pre-existing ideas of what the opera is and who it's for, that it's for the upper classes only... What are your thoughts on that? And is it part of your remit, to open it up to a wider audience?

Well, precisely. My *raison d'être* really is the democratization of both access to and perception of access to opera. There are many barriers, and most of them, frankly, are perceptual or psychological—an idea of what it is and who it's for, and what you need to know in advance of you going. We've really tried to radically diversify the program and diversify the number of entry points, and then to try to upend people's expectations about what the opera is and what stories it tells. I often say that opera, in the end, is music and storytelling, and there isn't a human being in the world that doesn't respond to those two things. We try to surprise people with what we're bringing to them.

What does the CEO of an opera company do day-to-day?

Every day is a little bit different. I'm in charge of all of it, meaning that I must figure out what we should be doing, artistically, creatively, and then figuring out a way to create a business model that supports that. So a lot of work with creatives, a lot of work with philanthropists, a lot of governance with the board. Work on public relations, marketing and education, and government officials and our landlords. All of it is relationship management, basically. Trying to figure out how to connect the work of an artist that inspires us with an audience member and a structure that can support that.

to cut the wheat from the chaff, and to figure out which of those collaborations could work in a different context.

How do you feel about this season's program?

I'm very proud of this year. I'm excited. This is the final season of our music director James Conlon, who's stepping down after 20 years. And so the season was mostly curated around the productions and the pieces that he loves the most. As always, we're looking for the greatest variety we can manage, both in terms of the aesthetic, but also in terms of the nature of the storytelling. With *Akhnaten*, you'll see something radically different from what you experienced in *La Bohème*.



Have you been to many other upper companies worldwide, and how do you think L.A. compares?

I'm in Brussels right now. Every opera company has its own weather and ecosystem. They're radically different in the way that they operate. Most European companies get most of their funding from the government, and so that changes what relationships they're building, and changes the nature of the product. But also, it's a 400-year-old art form, and it's a 40-year-old company in Los Angeles. So the remit is quite different. I would say an American audience doesn't always have, for good and for bad, the cultural context for how to receive it. Whereas for an opera company that's been going on for 150 years, every production is in dialog with the last version of that piece. So it's sort of chalk and cheese, but at the same time, fundamentally, I think everyone's after the same thing, which is how to create great musical and theatrical endeavors. The extremes of the human experience are fundamental and universal, and so theoretically, it doesn't always work this way, but a production that works in Brussels should work in Los Angeles. Part of my job is

**Dalia Stasevska
Akhnaten, conductor**

Could you tell me your career highlights to this point, and what you'd done before this production?

I think this is professionally my 10th year in my career. I mostly work in the symphonic repertoire, but I try to do an opera once a season. It's been a big passion for me throughout my life. I discovered that I want to become a musician through opera when, in my early teens, I heard *Madame Butterfly*. That was a big game changer for me. It was a mind-blowing experience, because I'd never seen or heard anything like that. I became quite the passionate opera nerd in my early teens, when everybody was listening to pop music like Backstreet Boys and Spice Girls. I was really into opera, but also not classical opera. I used to listen to contemporary stuff. I recall listening to Philip Glass' music fairly early. So it's been a big part of my life.

I heard *Akhnaten*, and especially this production, way before COVID. I saw this production in a movie theater in Helsinki, where I'm based in Finland, and I remember that I was so blown away. It's been my dream ever since.

When LA Opera approached me more than a year ago, I had to conduct Missy Mazzoli's new opera, but unfortunately it fell apart. I couldn't believe my luck when they suggested that I do *Akhnaten*. It was a dream come true.

How did you become a conductor?

Of course, I chose an instrument first. I'm a trained violinist and violist, and I also used to play professionally in a symphony orchestra. It was my biggest dream, to be an orchestra musician. But then I saw a female conductor when I was 20 years old, and that was pre #metoo time—there were not many of them around. I used to go

and sneak to look at the conductive scores and try to understand the music really deeply. So when I saw a role model, I approached her, and I was like, 'Wait a minute. Can I do this too? How can you get into conducting?'

And then she was really helpful. Maybe half a year later, I found myself in a conducting master class with a legendary Finnish conducting teacher,

Jorma Panula, who is still alive. He's 97 years old, and a teacher of all famous Finnish conductors like Esa-Pekka Salonen. He took me under his wing, and it was, for me, a second game changer. When I held the baton in my hands, I knew that I can't let this go. It was a feeling that I've never experienced while playing an instrument. It was so challenging and so motivating, and I knew then that I will do anything and everything to be able to at least try to become a conductor, and I've been on that path ever since.

How much work goes into a production like this? For the conductor, I assume you must know everybody's parts, not just your own...

I think that's one of the most fun parts, and also why I became a conductor—I've been always fascinated about everything, and I want to know about the history behind it. There's a fair amount of work behind the scenes before you come to the first rehearsal. So you not only have to learn the music, you must understand the aesthetics of the music. And then you prepare yourself, of course, with the story, with the history. You must understand the production you're going into. It's self-preparation. We are working for five weeks before we go on stage, so it's a lot of work, and we work from Monday till Saturday every week. It's a very intense period.



music. And even though every voice is important, every voice is also part of the music. So nobody has a leading role. Everybody is as equal as possible. Through these endless loops, Philip is trying to take us into another time. He's trying to make us forget that we are here. He tries not to stick to single melodies or a single psychology, but step out of it. To see an architectural construction. I don't know any other composer of an opera that is capable of doing what Philip does. And this makes it such an exceptional opera, and it makes Philip, in my opinion, not only a genius but a groundbreaking visionary.

What are your plans after Akhnaten?

I'm actually doing quite a lot of opera now. Right after this project finishes, I move to Berlin for the next one and a half months, and I will be working there on a fabulous opera by Benjamin Britten, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin. Otherwise, I'm around 200 days on the road. So this is my life.

Phelim McDermott
Akhnaten, director

Can you tell us of your career up to this point?

I formed a theater company in 1985 when I left college. I went to Middlesex Poly and did a performing arts degree there. We took a show to the Student Drama Festival, then we took it to Edinburgh, and then we got a gig at the



What's going to surprise people about Akhnaten?

What I would say is the reason Philip [Glass] is such an exceptional composer and opera composer is his music, and actually the music is center of it all, more than in any other opera that I know. The music features endless time loops and cycles. It gives us something deeply connected to the human soul. The whole opera becomes like a mantra through

Almeida Theater in London. And at that time, our major theater was run by Pierre Audi, who went on to run Netherlands Opera, and then he ran the Armory. Pierre Audi was an extraordinary guy, and he ran that venue in Islington as both a theater venue and he basically brought over all the new music people at that time. So he brought John Cage over. He brought over Robert Wilson, he brought over Glass, and they had an extraordinary music festival there. So when I was performing there at the Almeida in the '80s, Philip Glass and his band played there. That, weirdly, is the very beginnings of me making theater, but also loving Philip's music.

I went to see *Akhnaten* at the Coliseum, and I spotted Philip in the street. I was like, 'it's Philip Glass. Oh my god.' I followed him around, and he went into a sushi restaurant. Nobody had sushi then. I wanted to say hello or ask for his autograph, and I wasn't brave enough. All his music's always been a big, important part of my life. I guess for some people, it's challenging but also incredibly commercial. Most people know Philip's music, they just don't know that it's Philip's music, or that it's had such an influence on the mainstream.

What I like about opera is it's live, but it's not amplified. It's still vulnerable. And a lot of the time you see Broadway shows or whatever, and they amplify them to oblivion. It's slightly because they're worried that the audience isn't going to be interested. With opera, you get these moments where you get this extraordinary sound, but it's still got vulnerability to it. With *Akhnaten*, LA originally commissioned it. They've got these elements where you go, 'Geez, these sounds are really being made by human beings.' Or at certain points, there's a single voice making this extraordinary, beautiful sound.

What does your role as director entail?

It's about 12 years, probably more, since the premiere. I'd already done two of [Glass'] operas. I did one about Gandhi—*Satyagraha*—and then I did another one called *The Perfect American* about Walt Disney, which they were too scared

to do in America because of the mouse, and because some of it was about the not so nice side of Walt Disney. So I'd already done two of his operas, and then I got asked to do *Akhnaten*, and I was like, 'I can't do another Philip Glass opera.' But the music's so brilliant. It's an extraordinary sound. It's very different from other operas. It's more like a big ritual.

There is a theory that Akhnaten was the first monotheist. In ancient Egypt, there's all these different gods, and he said, 'No, no, enough of that. Enough of the multi-God stuff. There's just going to be one God, and it's the sun.' So he replaced all the other gods with this idea that the sun is the God and that he was the embodiment of this. God on earth. He had this reign of, I think it was only 14 years where he built this whole city, and then they got rid of him, and then Tutankhamun came in. So the opera is about ideas. They're about musical meditations on the idea.

What else do you have planned this year?

What's weird about opera is you make a show, and very often, with a modern opera, you get like, five or six goes to see it, and then very often, they don't happen again. But Philip has got this extraordinary audience where people come and see them. It's site-specific work, where you go, we've only got a week. The orchestra comes in, and then the set. It's not like Broadway, where you get weeks and weeks of previews. Everything has to come together really fast, which is also what's exciting about it. So to get the chance to do those more than once, and to get the chance to do them with different performers and so on, is a real, real gift. It's exciting to come back to L.A., and I've always had a great time at the opera house there. They're very supportive of my shows and the way that I work, because it tends to be very kind of ensemble and collaborative. So it's great when a house kind of gets that, and they definitely do at the LA Opera.

John Holiday *Akhnaten*, countertenor

Could you give us a little background of your career highlights prior to *Akhnaten*?

My debut at LA Opera was in 2014. This is my third production here, and my first title role here. As far as my career, I've done many things up to this point. I've sung Julius Caesar, I've sung Xerxes, the title role of Xerxes at Glimmerglass. I've done Cato and Utica at Glimmerglass as the role of Cesare as well. I just finished doing my first ever Cherubino in the notary Figaro at the Washington National Opera, which is one of my favorite operas. I did the role of Oberon in *Midsummer Night's Dream*. But I will also say, I don't just sing opera, I do a lot of jazz and gospel. I grew up playing the piano at my home church in Houston, Texas, so there is a big part of me that is very much a church boy, and happily so.

How were you introduced to opera?

Well, I was in a boys' choir growing up. It was called the Fort Bend voice choir of Texas, under the direction of William R Adams, who was the founder and the artistic director. I remember my teacher, Dorothy Arnold. I'll never forget her. She took a strong interest in me, and she said to me, 'I think you should audition for this boys' choir.' So I auditioned for this choir, and it was through this choir that I really became acclimated to and introduced to choral music and classical music.



And then in 1997 I was in the tour choir, and we were doing a production of *Faust*, and Denyce Graves was singing Berlioz. I was 12 years old, and out walks this beautiful black woman. I hadn't even heard her sing yet, and she was just stunning. Then she opens her mouth, and she starts to sing, and I'm just like blown away by what is coming out of this human being's mouth.

How familiar were you before starting work on *Akhnaten* with Philip Glass's work?

I was very familiar with Philip Glass. If you're paying attention to all the things that are going on around you, Philip Glass's music is very noticeable. And that's one of the things I love about his music. I'll be watching a commercial, and I'll be 'Oh, it's Philip Glass.' Or watching films like *The Hours*. My very first operatic professional engagement was at Portland Opera singing in *Galileo Galilei*, by Philip Glass. There are two roles that are written for the countertenor, and that's what I did.

There aren't many people like Philip that have such an influence on opera, and mainstream and pop...

Yeah, he has an insane, cult-like following. I mean, at every show. Every show in Berlin was sold out and people had flown in. They show up just to hear his name, music, and I understand it. And then there are people too who don't like his music, but I think it's very beautiful.

Maybe they just need time...

Maybe, but do you know what? Everything isn't for everybody and that's okay. Doesn't mean that it's not beautiful. Doesn't mean that it's not important.

Do you prefer to sing contemporary or traditional opera?

I like both. I've been really lucky that I've been oftentimes the first to sing a role when it's written. And I take great pride in that most composers will ask me to do it. So yeah, I do like singing all of it. They're different muscles that you flex in in both genres, as it were. What I think I enjoy more about the contemporary, if I were to say that I enjoy it more, is that no one's stamp is on it. I find

that contemporary opera lends itself more to a little improvisation, and I love that. But then I also enjoy Baroque music very much, because in a strange and cool way it lends itself to my gospel upbringing, where you do lots of riffs and runs, which is also in jazz.

What does preparation for the role of *Akhnaten* involve?

Well I've done the role, so I didn't have to do a lot of preparation for it this time around, but when I did it the first time, I took at least two months to really delve deeper into it. Some study of the character and who Akhnaten really was, and what was his contribution to the world. But I will say my physical work for this one is very different because there are different demands in this production that were not in the other, so I would say I started working out for this role on December 15 of 2024—I still remember the date.

A lot of people who haven't been to the opera before are surprised to learn that it's not miked up. It's not amplified.

That's something that we all, as opera singers, are working on, and I am also a professor of voice. It's something that you're always working through with your students, to understand how to cut through an orchestration, because we don't have microphones, and we don't have the privilege of being miked up and over some of the amplification. Because, actually, it's written in this orchestration that some of the instruments are amplified, and normally you would have a microphone for such a thing, but because it's not *all* the music, then you don't have to worry about it.

What will surprise people about Akhenaten if they've only previously experienced traditional opera?

I would think that one of the most beautiful things that they would experience, but they may not be looking for, is that this is a type of music that is very transcendental. It transcends the current time. It transcends what they've been used to, because there are so many patterns in it. One can be kind of low in it. It becomes very meditative. And what I, as a singer, have to remind myself is that you can't phone it in. You have to pay attention. And because there are so many patterns, people can, it also lends itself to ear worms. But I think that people are going to find that there is a meditative aspect of it, and I, as a singer, really love that.

What are your plans after *Akhnaten*?

I have some recitals that I am doing. I'm being honored by my alma mater, my graduate school, the University of Cincinnati. I am the most outstanding alumni of this year, which I can barely talk about. I'm honored by that, to know that my work has meant something. Then I release my debut album on July the 17th, through Pen to Tone record label, called *Over My Head*. My prayer to God is always that he uses me, or she uses me, to be an instrument of joy, peace, and love. And I hope that people get that when they come to this opera, when they hear my album. There's this beautiful quote by Maya Angelou, which I will paraphrase because I'm not going to say it word for word, but she says, in essence, 'One of the most beautiful things that we can do as artists, is to, in the face of adversity, keep making your art.' Because it is that thing that will make the world better.

Vocana Ushers in a New Generation of Streaming and Fan Interaction for Independent Artists

For better or worse, the music industry leans heavily in favor of supporting major artists. If big time musical acts want their songs available for streaming, the usual suspects have their backs. And when it comes to social media, all the mainstream platforms push their music. Independent artists are like second-class citizens; until they break through, it can feel as though they're invisible. Not everyone in the industry treats young artists this way. There's the American Association of Independent Music (A2IM), a non-profit organization that has supported indie record labels since 2005. Creative types have BeatBread, which funds artists' careers with flexible royalty advances. Groover helps musicians promote their music, get on playlists, find a manager, and more.

Yet until now, there hasn't been an app for independent artists to truly get discovered by fans. On the flipside, listeners have for too long lacked a natural way of finding those artists online. Hoping to fix this problem is Vocana, a fresh style of streaming and interactivity service built for indie artists and the music-lovers who adore them.

The president of this newly minted platform is Neil Sheehan. He entered the music industry straight out of college by creating a concert promotion firm he ran from his attic. "I was throwing what I consider bullshit hardcore punk VFW shows," he colorfully notes. Within a year, he had a dozen people under his command. Booking around 300 concerts annually, he gained a rapid foothold in the independent space. That success naturally led to management and then a recording studio. "For about nine years, we became like an incubator for independent, DIY bands," he recalls. In due time, RED Distribution, then owned by Sony, wooed him to start a label. Standby Records released over 200 albums in its dozen years. Then after COVID hit, Sheehan dipped his toe into livestreaming.

Having worked on many sides of the independent space, Sheehan was on the radar of Jim Knight and Dale Chorba, Vocana's cofounders. Being lovers of music yet never having been a part of the music business, they needed someone with Sheehan's expertise. They reached out, explaining how the inspiration for Vocana came from going to shows and seeing tip jars on stage. Why wasn't streaming paying enough for bands to survive? It was time someone created a service that paid more fairly, they thought. Sheehan proposed a system featuring user-centric payouts rather than the pro rata system preferred by Spotify and Apple, where the profits are put into one pot that gets distributed to everyone. With Vocana, "You pay \$10, listen to 10 bands, and it gets split between those 10 bands," he explains. Plans are in place for a new type of system that will identify whether an act is A.I., further protecting the

purses of deserving players.

There were other problems Sheehan wanted to address, one being access to user data. DSPs such as Deezer provide a heat map showing how many listeners are accessing an artist's music, yet there isn't much that can be done with that info. Vocana provides actual email addresses of fans, so bands can reach out and foster individual relationships. Worry not: contact information is only shared when listeners agree.

A third matter Sheehan wanted to tackle is the discovery experience. Sheehan hopes to revive the person-to-person music-sharing ethos of MySpace, and Vocana's Hubs are designed to do just that. Incidentally, artists can follow fans, just as fans can follow artists.

The fourth and final problem he wanted to tackle is the algorithm, which has prevented many an indie artist from getting on playlists and into new ears. Vocana remains algorithm-free, making for an even playing field.

If you're an independent musician with a distribution deal in place, your music may already be on Vocana. The ambitious startup has inked deals with distributors such as DistroKid, Downtown, United Masters, MNRK, and CD Baby. Anyone who has music on the service can simply log on and claim their page. Vocana currently boasts over 50 million tracks.

Besides being home to heaps of on-demand listening, Vocana offers livestreaming. Audience members can give real-time reactions and make comments during shows. Tip jars are always present, should anyone feel the urge to give. All tip money goes directly to the intended recipients without Vocana taking a cut.

A partnership with Printful makes it a snap for

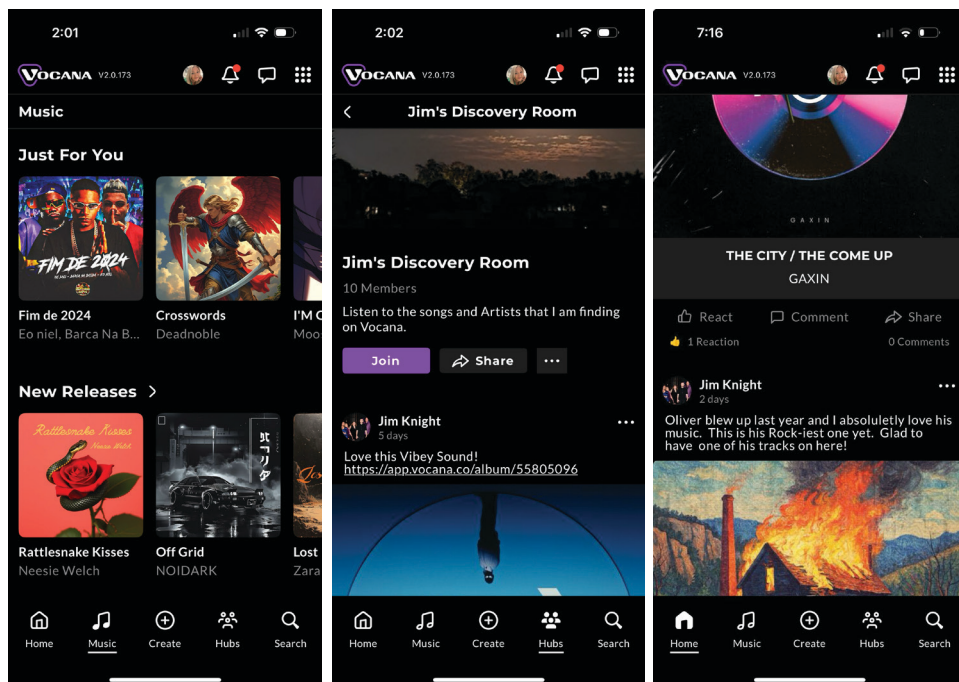
artists to sell merch. Because it's an on-demand service, bands don't have to create a bunch of t-shirts and stickers in advance and then worry about storing them until buyers come knocking. Anyone who doesn't want to use Printful can make goods from elsewhere available via a link.

The company is getting into the IRL music game, too, producing a series of concerts set to begin in New York City, with plans to extend elsewhere. Vocana even hopes to compete with TikTok by offering short form videos they call Moments.

Interested readers can download the app through the Apple Store or Google Play. Vocana was still in public beta at the time Sheehan spoke with *Music Connection*. Once the service officially goes live, there will be two tiers: Vocana Free and Vocana Plus. Those who subscribe for \$8.99 will be able to download as much music as they want. Otherwise, there will be a 30-second limit on checking out tracks. Sheehan wanted to make sure the entire experience was ad-free for both versions. "That always bugged me," he grouses. "If I'm in the zone listening to a hardcore album and all of a sudden, I hear a Pampers commercial, that sucks."

Sheehan hopes Vocana complements other streaming options rather than replaces them. "We're not looking to compete with Spotify or Deezer or Tidal," he explains, noting he's as much a buff of major label output as anybody. "But if you're wanting music discovery, community, and independent bands, nobody's really claimed that spot."

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NAMM®

NAMM celebrated its 125th year with a kaleidoscope of musical instruments, pro audio, and the latest innovative technologies along with star studded panels and award shows honoring some of industries top performers, music industry professionals, and latest in pro audio gear. *MC* shines a light on some of the key players in front and behind the scenes that make the music world go round. **By Brian Stewart**



GRAMMY-winning producer and mixer Chris Lord-Alge, Harman Pro Global Manager, Product Relationships Becki Barabas, Bon Jovi guitarist and prolific session musician Phil X.



On the "Studios Sisters" panel: Studio managers Zoe Thrall, Tina Morris, Vicki Giordano, Candace Stewart, Paula Salvatore.



Saxophonist Katja Rieckermann's band blew the roof off NAMMs main outdoor stage with other notable musicians including (l-r) Ron De Jesus, guitar; Roch Bordenave, trombone; Dan Potruch, drums; Ben White, bass.



AFM & SAG-AFTRA Fund Director of Artist Relations, Colin Gilbert hanging out with renowned session/live guitarist and fund participant Pat Thrall.



Live front of house engineer and mixing engineer Flash Feruccio, and Cedar Audio Head of sales Paul Alexander.



GRAMMY-winning producer/engineers Vance Powell, Mike Clink, and Clark Germain who is also an Emmy-winning scoring mixer.



At the Burl Audio booth with GRAMMY-winning producer and mixing engineer Brendan Dekora, and Burl audio engineer/circuit designer Kevin Colomby.



At the Exotic booth with Govt Mule Bassist, session musician and producer Jorgen Carlsson, Xotic bass/guitar tech and customer support Mitch Takahashi.

ADULT.

Kissing Luck Goodbye

Dais Records
Producers: Nolan Gray

Detroit electropunk husband and wife duo ADULT. have been knocking around since 1998, and *Kissing Luck Goodbye* is their tenth full length studio effort. There's no treading water here though. "Be alert. Be aware. Be prepared. Stand up for yourself and look out for your community," says singer Nicola Kuperus, when discussing the inspiration behind first single and anti-fascist anthem "No One is Coming." The "punk" is as prevalent as the "electro" here; fans of Public Image Ltd and Siouxsie will adore this is much as old Wax Trax!-heads. It's pulsating, insistent, and wonderful. - **Brett Callwood**



Galecstasy & Mike Watt Trio

Wattzotica

Mystery Circles
Producer: Primary Mystical Experience

Minutemen/Firehose/Stooges/dos man Mike Watt has never stood still during what has been a gloriously diverse, curveball career. He's blurred the lines between punk and art/improvisational rock with a deft touch, and this latest outing with Galecstasy sees him dive further into the jazz well. "If you really want to keep from doing reruns, same ol' same ol'," Watt says, "You put yourself in situations where everybody's got something to teach ya." - **Brett Callwood**



ATEEZ

GOLDEN HOUR: Part.4

KQ Entertainment, RCA Records and Legacy Recordings
Producer: Various

ATEEZ keeps the momentum going with their 13th mini-album, *GOLDEN HOUR: Part.4*. The eight-member K-pop group continues to impress with their artistic vision, diving into deeper emotional themes. The five-track release is filled with earworm hooks and memorable outros that make their songs feel exciting and dynamic. "On The Road" is the perfect example with its feel-good and hopeful harmonies. "Ghost" and "NASA" are darker and rhythmic R&B/rap tracks, while "Adrenaline" is an explosive EDM anthem. The album ends on a high note with "Choose," a heartfelt seventh-anniversary fan song. - **Jacqueline Naranjo**



My Ruin

Declaration of Resistance

Magick Room Recordings
Producers: My Ruin

While people are dying in the streets, *Declaration of Resistance* is the sort of album that we need; a no-punches-pulled, lyrically sharp slab of aural resistance (as the album title suggests). Anyone familiar with the band's catalog, and indeed Tairrie B. Murphy's previous work with Manhole and Tura Satana, won't be surprised by any of this. But still, it's refreshing during these shocking times to hear demands for women's rights and the rights of minorities spelled out so succinctly. "I resist the fascists when push comes to shove, because there's no hate like Christian love." Incredible! - **Brett Callwood**



The Lone Bellow

What A Time To Be Alive

Independent
Producers: Self-produced

Recorded in legendary Muscle Shoals and entirely self-produced and released, The Lone Bellow's latest album, *What A Time To Be Alive*, carries a lived-in, communal spirit. Flecks of Arctic Monkeys-style vocal distortion roughen the edges of their warm folk-rock glow, adding bite without dulling the shine. When the pace eases, the band drifts into tender, soft-focus ballads that linger rather than rush. Their sound, both grounded and newly energized, is comforting without being complacent, alive with harmony, heart, and the quiet power of shared experience. - **Ruby Risch**



Pavlov's Dog

Wonderlust

Ruf Records
Producers: David Surkamp, Abbie Steiling, Jacob Detering, Thomas Ruf

With a history that dates back to the early '70s, Pavlov's Dog scored a modest hit with a heartfelt ballad called "Julia." Fast forward to the present and the unmistakable voice of David Surkamp is still at the helm. Theirs is a sonically full and expressive sound that is part prog, part classical as well as rock and folk. It's a mixed bag, of sorts, blending baroque styled shadings, with a vibrant spark and charm. Violinist Abbie Steiling shines throughout, highlighted by "Mona" and "Another Blood Moon." - **Eric Harabadian**



Courtney Barnett

Creature of Habit

Mom+Pop Music
Producers: John Congleton, Stella Mozgawa, Marta Salogni

There's a natural irresistibility to Courtney Barnett. Her awkward-cool persona lands at the exact midpoint between larger-than-life rock star and self-doubting musical neophyte, making her uniquely relatable. Her songwriting remains preternaturally on point, bursting with lyrics every ounce as pure as they are memorable. Each track on *Creature of Habit* is exceptional, but the collection's standouts (including "Same," "Another Beautiful Day," and "Great Advice") make this a must listen. - **Andy Kaufmann**

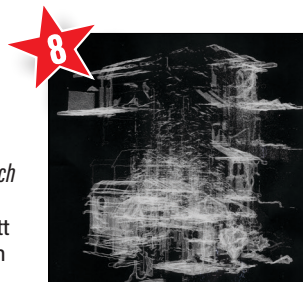


Ritt Momney

BASE

Disruptor Records
Producers: Jack Rutter, Eric Conley, Christopher Peranich

Spooneristically named and Utah-born Ritt Momney welcomed his third studio album with *BASE*, a record that recontextualizes Momney's singer-songwriter voice in the electric now. Nothing's unfounded in this album: for any moment of amped up, distorted bass, there's an inciting kick beat; if there's an autotune, his vocals are clear enough to survive the melding process. While the album features moments of electropop ilk, it's a record born in the acoustic world. It can be a little too noncommittal at times; when it's slow, it really drags. But when it chooses a side between gentle or roaring, it hits its stride. - **Anna Jordan**



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.



Summer Colds

Contact: info@summercoldsmusic.com

Web: summercoldsmusic.com

Seeking: Review

Style: Indie/Alternative Rock

There may be nothing worse than a summer cold, but Nic McNamara (whose moniker is Summer Colds) is the rare case you actually want to catch. There's a whiff of Green Day DNA here and an obvious yet welcoming sense of nostalgia. The only palpable limitation is a vocal delivery that can stay too even-tempered—tending to settle into a routine. Still, the glorious yet minimal electric fingerpicks in the background of "Shakeout" suggests that fully-realized evolution is on the horizon. On "Dear Life," McNamara sings, "Kick off your shoes I got something for you," and he sure does; stumble upon this in a dive bar and you're happily staying for the set.

Production	7
Lyrics	8
Music	7
Vocals	8
Musicianship	9

SCORE 7.8



Dawn Derow

Contact: beatrice@empktmedia.com

Web: dawnnderow.com

Seeking: Booking, Film/TV

Style: R&B, Adult Contemporary

Eagle-eyed readers may have noticed that Derow was reviewed in our Live section recently, and so impressed was our writer with her genre-defying sound that we felt the time was right to explore further. If there's a downside to enjoying Derow's music outside of the live environment, it's that this artist is very much a show-woman, in the classic sense. Clearly a student of musical theater, opera, and cabaret, the visual aspect is a key element to the Derow experience. To her immense credit, however, her voice conveys enough joy on "Everything's Gonna Be All Right" and "On the Street Where You Live," to see us right.

Production	7
Lyrics	8
Music	8
Vocals	8
Musicianship	7

SCORE 7.6



Sophie Gault

Contact: alex@torrezmusicgroup.com

Web: sophiegault.com

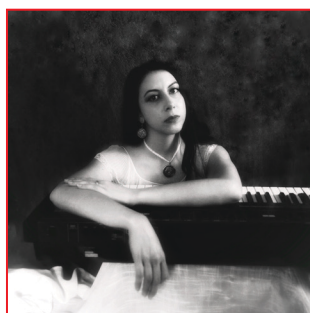
Seeking: Booking, Film/TV

Style: Americana, Rock

Nashville-based Americana artist Sophie Gault is a bit of a throwback, in the best possible way. While the production is pristine, and there is a contemporary sheen to the sound, there's a glorious, dusty authenticity to the Unhinged album that shines through on songs like "Love's Gonna Live Here" and "Stowaway." There's a boogie-rock vibe on there that will delight fans of the likes of ZZ Top and Status Quo, while the title track is a slow-burner—a nighttime, backwoods joyride of a song. Ultimately, Gault is the sort of country artist that we've been missing for a while.

Production	9
Lyrics	8
Music	8
Vocals	8
Musicianship	8

SCORE 8.2



Arily Michele

Contact: arily.michele@gmail.com

Web: arilymichele.com

Seeking: Review

Style: Dream-Pop

Nashville-based artist Arily Michele describes herself as dream-pop, and that certainly makes sense given the other-worldly, mildly trippy, and defiantly chilled-out atmosphere that she creates on a song as accomplished as "Komorebi." But there's a lot more going on here too. There's a Kate Bush-esque, new-wave singer-songwriter quality, an art-rock edge, that is entirely welcome on a song like "Silver Dollar." Michele's vocals are gorgeous; softly expressive in the main, they soar when necessary, hitting rare heights on occasion. After listening to everything that she submitted, we're keen to hear what Michele has in store next.

Production	8
Lyrics	8
Music	8
Vocals	9
Musicianship	8

SCORE 8.2



C. Steven Blue

Contact: cstevenblue@gmail.com

Web: wordsongs.com

Seeking: Label, Booking, Film/TV

Style: Rock, Pop, Blues, Folk, Country, EDM

A poet, it seems, according to his bio, C. Steven Blue is also in possession of some serious musical skills. "I'd Still Yearn For You" stretches nearly eight minutes, showcasing his Country/Rock roots with deliberate, expressive guitar work while "Little Toy Gun" feels like a modern, more intimate "Mamas Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up To Be Cowboys" moment. Still, at times, his lyrics tend to tiptoe around cliché. "Love's Prose," exudes an entirely alternate, albeit welcomed, vibe, one that strays into an absorbing pop sound—a shift that pays off and marks the track as a clear standout.

Production	7
Lyrics	7
Music	7
Vocals	7
Musicianship	7

SCORE 7.0



Cindy Kalmenson

Contact: cindykalmenson@me.com

Web: cindystylemusic.com

Seeking: Review, Booking, Film/TV, Distribution

Style: Americana

Cindy Kalmenson takes on theatrical Americana with a slow but charming sensibility. The vocals, reminiscent of early Sheryl Crow or Linda Ronstadt, prove well matched for quiet ballads like "From Here To Tennessee," a thoughtful, moody little tune about 2 a.m. drunk calls that lands with a relatable, weary sting. While the instrumental restraint borders on safe, it ultimately serves a vocal style, one that values subtlety, patience, and emotional clarity over bold reinvention. There is certainly a uniqueness here worth tuning into.

Production	8
Lyrics	7
Music	6
Vocals	7
Musicianship	8

SCORE 7.2

Music Connection critics rate recorded music on a scale of 1 to 10. Number 1 represents the lowest possible score, 10 represents the highest possible score.

MC can only guarantee that a review will be fair and honest. For more information, see Submission Guidelines on the next page.



The Antennas

Contact: antennasrecords@gmail.com

Web: theantennas.net

Seeking: Label, Distribution, Management

Style: Folk/Roots Rock

There's an intriguing quality to The Antennas, driven by guitar work that feels fresh and purposeful, especially on "High Noon." "I'm Alright" flirts with a low-grade angst, but the vocals verge on disinterested, flattening what could be a more compelling turn. There's a clear ambition here—echoes of a modern-day Tom Petty sensibility—and when the vibes align, this could really click; for now, it feels like a promising signal still searching for its frequency. The charisma is there, but maybe it just needs a little prodding.

Production	7
Lyrics	6
Music	7
Vocals	6
Musicianship	7

SCORE 6.6



Claudia Hoyser

Contact: maggie@milestonecollective.com

Web: claudiahoyser.com

Seeking: Label, Booking

Style: Indie-Country

According to her bio, Claudia Hoyser "began in her parents' basement, singing into a karaoke machine she 'sang into until it died.'" Now that's commitment—and, clearly, she hasn't lost that drive. She's already shared the stage with Country legends like Keith Urban, Blake Shelton, and Miranda Lambert and it's clear she belongs in that company. Her "fingerprint voice" and her natural knack for sultry Country storytelling is evident on tracks like "Tides Gonna Turn," a song that could easily already be on your playlist or soundtracking the likes of *Yellowstone*. For fans of Country: remember the name.

Production	9
Lyrics	9
Music	8
Vocals	8
Musicianship	9

SCORE 8.6



Carlyle Myrie

Contact: ctmgroup5@gmail.com

Web: carlylemyrie.bandcamp.com

Seeking: Film/TV

Style: Reggae, Positive, Inspirational

Let's be honest here—it's really hard to offer a balanced criticism of an artist who describes his music as positive and inspirational, and has a song called "Autism Speaks." Frankly, the world needs more people in it who are prepared to put themselves out there and speak out for those who need a voice. That said, our job here is to review the music as well as the message. There are eight different mixes of "Autism Speaks" available, and the reggae and dub versions are the best. The same is true of the song "Football." Myrie is an artist who is at his best when the constraints are lifted.

Production	7
Lyrics	7
Music	7
Vocals	8
Musicianship	7

SCORE 7.2



Fresh Caps

Contact: jamesjoda8@gmail.com

Web: linktr.ee/freshcaps

Seeking: Film/TV, Booking

Style: Trap, Hip-Hop, R&B, Soul, Pop, Afro

Fresh Caps, based in Yola, Nigeria, has a sound that is simultaneously old school and super-contemporary. There's a classic soul vibe that recalls the likes of Usher and Keith Sweat. But at the same time, the production is very now. A song like "My Anchor" has a voice-manipulated, hyper-pop thing going on, and that's no bad thing. Meanwhile, the artist goes in a hip-hop direction on "Gratitude." It could be that he's still looking for his sound, and that's fine because he's got plenty of time. But at the same time, his music benefits from the multitude of genres that he's throwing in the soup.

Production	8
Lyrics	8
Music	7
Vocals	8
Musicianship	7

SCORE 7.6



Equatorial

Contact: equatorial9999@gmail.com

Web: youtube.com/@dilemmamusic

Seeking: Review, Exposure, Distribution

Style: Electronica, IDM, Beats-Ambient

Right from the opening moments of the song "Among the Shadows of the Dervishes," electronica artist Equatorial pumps up the drama and the tension like a skillful aural technician. The brooding beats, deftly muted but always there, certainly insistent, create a moody soundscape. It's like Equatorial is painting with sounds, and the results are spellbinding. The three songs that the artist submitted are between 13 and 20 minutes long, so this isn't a musician who likes to be rushed. But the listening experience is a magical one; we're taken to new worlds, minds wide open, and we're left to gape in wonder.

Production	8
Lyrics	X
Music	8
Vocals	X
Musicianship	8

SCORE 8.0



Quinston Pugh

Contact: quinstonpugh@gmail.com

Web: c5fold.com/quinstonpugh

Seeking: Booking, Film/TV

Style: R&B, Pop, Hip-Hop

Quinston Pugh's latest offerings prove that Virginia Beach remains a fertile ground for inherently vibey artists. While the production is polished and designed to make you groove, it occasionally feels like he's playing it too safe—still, he knows his lane and drives it well. Where Pugh really shines is in his pen; his lyrics flow with an effortless grace that suggests he's writing from the marrow. The vocals are solid and assured, yet you sense a ceiling waiting to be cracked. A little more emotional risk, dynamic range, and instrumental experimentation could unlock that next gear, adding surprise and texture to an already solid foundation.

Production	7
Lyrics	8
Music	7
Vocals	7
Musicianship	7

SCORE 7.2

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.

Vibrato Grill Beverly Hills, CA

Contact: bullionent@gmail.com

Players: Syndee Winters, vocals; Max Haymer, piano; Jay Flat, saxophone, flute; Brad Allen Williams, guitar; Luca Alemanno, bass; John Davis, drums

A PACKED HOUSE WELCOMED New York transplant and musical theater phenom Syndee Winters to Herb Alpert's Vibrato Grill with enthusiastic engagement for her one-woman variety show navigating the life of Lena Horne. Her pure and smooth vocal lines and powerful projection were gorgeous, with a sassy and engaging onstage presence that couldn't keep the smiles away. Winters' moody and theatrical delivery was beguiling and fun, while also sharing poignant messages and colorful anecdotes between songs and highlighting the parallels of her own life with that of Ms. Horne—on the stage, on the screen, and in the streets.'

Sharing songs from recent release *Syndee Winters Sings Lena Horne* (and a handful of others), Winters' live show began as a dare from Broadway friend Chester Gregory (who does a live show about Jackie Wilson) and Heavy-hitters lined the room, including Freda Payne (the Supremes), Clare Bathé (*Lena Horne: The Lady & Her Music*), Eric Floyd (costumer), Wanda Dee (first female Hip-hop deejay), Oz Scott (*Mr. Boogedy*), and Sherri G. Sneed (Horne's manager). Remaining captive and present, the room hang on every word and inflection,



Photo: Lewis Beenhaim

cheering and clapping along.

Opening with "Love Me Or Leave Me," the funky rhythm guitar and tenor saxophone breakdown with vocal scat set the town for a memorable evening, with "From This Moment On" showcasing the fantastic backing band, and unveiling the more animated and feisty side of Winters. Gentle glissandos and a syrupy delivery unfolded on "Alive," while "Let Me Love You" added lovely vibrato alongside deliciously tense pauses. Exploring her lower range on "Where Or When" added a beautiful upright bass solo from Luca Alemanno, and seamless transitions in and out of swing stylings—before shifting into a medley of "Ain't It The Truth"/"Stormy Weather"/"Lady Is A Tramp"/"That Man of Mine." All were divinely delivered.

"Rules of the Road" highlighted tremendous walking bass lines and John Davis' exceptional brushwork—before Winters shifted into a rebellious reggae surprise, nodding to her

Jamaican roots with Bob Marley's "War" (with a fabulous gravelly tenor sax solo from Jay Flat).

Danceable, energetic vibes unfolded in "I Want To Be Happy," "Some People" shared great stylistic transitions, and "Yesterday When I Was Young" added a delicate ballad juxtaposed with powerful belting against a captivating guitar solo from Brad Allen Williams. Rounding things out with "Just One of Those Things," the band was absolutely stunning, with impeccable musicianship and perfect communication. Landing her closing with "If You Believe," Winters wrapped the evening with an exceptional, warm tone.

As a fun, honest, engaging spitfire of a talent, Syndee Winters' credits include *The Lion King*, *Hamilton*, and *Law and Order SVU*, in addition to her live and recorded musical stylings. — **Andrea Beenhaim**



Photo: Mark Shiwolich

Mercury Lounge New York, NY

Contact: jillr@mpressrecords.com

Web: jamesmastro.net

Players: James Mastro, vocals, guitar; Tony Shanahan, bass, vocals; Megan Reilly, vocals acoustic guitar; Dennis Diken, drums, vocals; Chris Robertson, guitar, vocals.

AMERICANA ROCKER JAMES MASTRO wowed his loyal fans at the Lower East Sides' Mercury Lounge with a setlist largely consisting of

songs from his most recent release, *Dawn of A New Error*.

While many of his songs are drawn from Mastro's personal experiences, social consciousness and redemption also play a part. We hear that in "River Runs Forever," four separate and distinct verses joined by the notion that regret for past mistakes can be corrected. The river, a metaphor serves as a chance at that redemption: "Hitch your saddle up and ride with a badge and a gun/ Keep changing all the rules/That's how the

West was won/ By Indian takers not Indian givers/River runs forever." On a more intimate subject, "Never Die," written for his parents who have passed, informs us that those we love live on inside us: "Change/Life will change/always change/always/Round/what goes around/comes around/always...there's a light that doesn't dim/...You always thought you would never die/never die."

At the ripe age of 16 Mastro was already playing live at CBGB before becoming one fourth of "The Bongos," the Hoboken band that that helped launch the music scene centering around Maxwell's, the iconic Hoboken venue. He went on to form The Happiness Project in the early '90s. Since then, Mastro has appeared with acts like Patti Smith, Robert Plant, Garland Jeffreys, and many more.

Mastro has mastered his own unique brand of songwriting which he blends seamlessly with his guitar-driven accompaniment. His backing band is a true fit with the overall vibe and musical arrangements. Synergy with guitarist Chris Robinson makes for some great interplay and Robinson's riffs and solos bring added dimension to every song.

In a much-appreciated encore, Mastro covered Bob Dylans' "Baby, Let Me Follow You Down," a very apt choice for his vocal style.

Striking an emotional balance, Mastro is adept at sharing deeper feelings without pitching into sentimentality. There is directness in his songwriting filled with clever lyrical content and a straightforwardness that rings authentic. — **Ellen Woloshin**

Kia Forum Inglewood, CA

Contact: greg.cortez@42west.com

Web: twice.jype.com

Players: Dahyun, Chaeyoung, Jeongyeon, Jihyo, Mina, Momo, Nayeon, Sana, Tzuyu

WITH 10 YEARS UNDER THEIR BELTS, it's no surprise that TWICE is one of the best-performing girl groups in K-pop. The group (who graced the cover of *Music Connection* in 2024) is currently touring across North America for their 2026 THIS IS FOR World Tour and stopped by the Kia Forum in Inglewood for four sold-out shows. The tour is different from any other tour they've done before. It's more ambitious thanks to the 360-degree setup with the stage extending throughout the entire floor.

Marking the start of the show on January 22nd, the venue lights dimmed as the words "TWICE THIS IS FOR" dramatically appeared on the screens. The screens then lowered down as the opening visuals showcased Dahyun, Chaeyoung, Jeongyeon, Jihyo, Mina, Momo, Nayeon, Sana, and Tzuyu. It was fun seeing fans cheer with their glowing candybong light stick for their favorite member when they appeared onscreen. As the video montage ended, the screens raised to reveal the group on stage. TWICE aptly began their performance with "This is For," from their fourth Korean studio album of the same name. This was the perfect song to start the night as the opening verse from Momo is meant to energize fans, "This is for all my ladies who don't get hyped enough / If you've been done wrong, then this your song, so turn it up."

With a discography of over 200 songs, it's no surprise that the setlist leaned heavily on their biggest hits. The first act started off strong



with fan-favorite songs, including "SET ME FREE" and "I CAN'T STOP ME." The stage setup allowed the group to freely move around with their dance routines, switching sides throughout the songs. Unfortunately, Dahyun sustained an ankle injury and remained seated for the entire show. That didn't stop her as she participated by doing the dance routines with her hands. Most K-pop acts sing with a backing track, but that wasn't the case for TWICE, as they had a live band performing alongside them. Each girl has a distinctive vocal tone that complements the others very well. The R&B track "Gone"

specifically stands out for highlighting the group's strengths. Jihyo, Jeongyeon, and Nayeon have powerful vocals with dynamic vocal ranges. Momo, Chaeyoung, and Daeyon have great rhythm and rapping delivery, while Mina, Sana, and Tzuyu have softer and breathier vocals.

The group saved the best for last as the fourth act of the show included all their biggest hits, including "FANCY," "What is Love?," "YES or YES," "Dance the Night Away," and "ONE SPARK." After a short break, the girls returned on stage dressed in their own merchandise for a very casual encore. — **Jacqueline Naranjo**



Fred Kavli Theatre Thousand Oaks, CA

Contact: kjr@blackrockla.com

Web: bigphatband.com

Players: Vangie Gunn, vocals; Trumpet: Wayne Bergeron, Dan Fornero, Aaron Janik, Mike Rocha, Ryan Deweese; Trombone: Andy Martin, Charlie Morillas, Ryan Dragon, Craig Gosnell; Sax: Eric Marienthal, Brian Scanlon, Dan Kaneyuki, Anibal Seminario, Alex Han, Sal Lozano, Jay Mason, Adam Schroeder; Rhythm: Ray Brinker, Kevin Axt, Andy Waddell, Joey DeLeon, Quinn Johnson; Backing vocals: Aria Gunn, Fletcher Sheridan, David Loucks, Alvin Chea

Goodwin and I really want to thank you for coming tonight. Hold onto your hats 'cause tonight's gonna be a smokin' performance by one of the best big bands on the planet earth—that's Gordon Goodwin's Big Phat Band!" Then the fiery 21-piece ensemble got down to business on his vibrant, high-octane arrangement of a song whose title says it all about its vibe and intention, "T.O.P. Adjacent," complete with one of sax great Eric Marienthal's trademark alto solos.

Though held on what would have been Goodwin's 71st birthday and only three weeks after his passing from pancreatic cancer, the

affair was joyous, lighthearted, and sorrow free. The freewheeling show was an explosive, eclectic, life-affirming show featuring a star studded guest list of jazz luminaries, including Patti Austin, Eddie Daniels, Lee Ritenour, Take 6 and a heartfelt, deeply passionate closing set by Goodwin's beloved wife Vangie Gunn. Proceeds from the evening went to the CancerBlows/Ryan Anthony Foundation and cancer research—and many in the crowd wore the purple support ribbons that were handed out in the lobby.

Punctuated by spoken word photo and video montages tracing his origin story as a young musical genius, his flourishing, influential career and his beautiful relationship with Vangie, the night showcased the intricacies and dynamism of Goodwin's trademark Phat Band aesthetic on key tracks from throughout the group's storied 25-year history.

After a beautiful montage showing the enduring love between Goodwin and Gunn and his effervescent personality, she took the show home with power, pride, and emotional intensity, evoking strong audience reaction for the heart-tugging "The Very Thought of You," Goodwin's soaring wordless vocal gem "Change Is Good" (featuring a video of Goodwin playing the piano solo) and the rousing anthem "Shine" which put an emphatic "go forth in love and musical power" coda on the spectacular evening.

— **Jonathan Widran**

Music-makers tap into this list to connect with indie labels, marketing experts and indie publicists. Plus there's loads of contact info to aid in promoting your career: swag & t-shirt manufacturers, CD/vinyl duplicators, blog sites, social media tools and more.

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New York, NY & Los Angeles, CA
Contact: Sean Miyashiro
Email: shop@88rising.com
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Saugerties, NY 12477
845-246-9955
Email: viewvid@aol.com
Web: viewb2bonline.com

ASTHMATIC KITTY RECORDS

121 E. Kirkwood Ave., Suite 300
Bloomington, IN 47408
Email: info@asthmatickitty.com
Web: asthmatickitty.com
Notable Artists: Mozart's Sister, OMBRE, Roberts & Lord

ASTRALWERKS RECORDS

1750 Vine Street
Hollywood, CA
Email: astralwerks.astralwerks@gmail.com
Web: astralwerks.com, facebook.com/astralwerks
Styles/Specialties: electronic/rock
*No unsolicited material accepted

ATTABOI MUSIC MAGAZINE

Email: info@wildoatsrecords.net
Web: facebook.com/wildoatsrecords
Styles/Specialties: popular music/underground
Distribution: online

BAR/NONE RECORDS

P.O. Box 1704
Hoboken, NJ 07030
201-770-9090
Email: glenn@bar-none.com
Web: bar-none.com

Contact: Glen Morrow, Owner

Distribution: ADA

*Unsolicited material accepted

BARSUK RECORDS

P.O. Box 22546
Seattle, WA 98122
Email: questions@barsuk.com
Web: barsuk.com
Roster: Death Cab For Cutie, the Long Winters, Mates of State, Menomena, Nada Surf, Ra Ra Riot, Phantomgram, Ramona Falls, the Wooden Birds, David Bazan, Maps & Atlases, Say Hi, Big Scary, Laura Gibson, Pacific Air, Chris Walla
Distribution: Redeye
*Please DO NOT send us MP3s or other audio files, but please DO send us links to your music or press kit. See website for submission.

BEC RECORDINGS

P.O. Box 12698
Seattle, WA 98111
206-691-9782
Email: licensing@toothandnail.com
Web: becrecordings.com, facebook.com/becrecordingsmusic

BEGGARS GROUP

(Also XL Recordings, Rough Trade Records, Matador Records, 4AD)
134 Grand St.
New York, NY 10013
212-995-5882
Email: banquet@beggars.com
Web: beggarsgroupusa.com
Contact: Matt Harmon, President
Styles/Specialties: indie-rock, pop, electronic
Roster: Vampire Weekend, Sonic Youth, Queens of the Stone Age, the National, Warpaint, the xx, Yo La Tengo and the New Pornographers
Distribution: ADA

BIG DEAL RECORDS

PO Box 260800
15503 Ventura Blvd., Ste. 300
Encino, CA 91436
818-922-0807
Email: info@bigdealmusic.com
Web: bigdealmusic.com
Styles/Specialties: pop, rock, R&B
*No unsolicited material

Additional locations:

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

BIG NOISE

11 S. Angell St., Ste. 336
Providence, RI 02906
401-274-4770
Email: al.bignoise@gmail.com
Web: bignoiseno.com
Roster: Artists have included 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

BLACK DAHLIA MUSIC

P.O. Box 631928
Highlands Ranch, CO 80163
505-672-0333
Email: blackd@blackdahlia.com
Web: blackdahlia.com

BLACKHEART RECORDS

636 Broadway
New York, NY 10012
212-353-9600
Email: blackheart@blackheart.com
Web: blackheart.com
Styles/Specialties: all styles
*Unsolicited material accepted, ATTN: A&R Dept.

BLOODSHOT RECORDS

(see *Excelsation Music*)

BLUE CANOE RECORDS

Atlanta, GA & Tokyo Japan
Email: contactbcr@bluecanoerecords.com
Web: bluecanoerecords.com

BOMP/ALIVE NATURALSOUND RECORDS

919 Isabel, Unit G
Burbank, CA 91506
Email: label@alive-records.com
Web: alive-records.com/category/bomp
Contact: Patrick Boissel
Roster: The Black Keys, Two Gallants, Buffalo Killers, Brian Jonestown Massacre, Soledad Brothers, The Warlocks, the Black Lips, SSM, Brimstone Howl, Trainwreck Riders, Black Diamond Heavies, Bloody Hollies
Distribution: Lumberjack Mordam Music Group

*Unsolicited material accepted. We are a small team, but we listen to it all. Do not contact us, we will contact you if we dig what we hear.

BOOSWEET RECORDS

P.O. Box 45256
Los Angeles, CA 90045
310-613-3535
Web: boosweet.com
Styles/Specialties: jazz, jazz fusion, smooth jazz, R&B, pop, reggae, hip-hop, rap, rock, metal, guitar instrumental, alternative
Roster: Kiko Loureiro, Vernon Neilly

BRIDGE NINE RECORDS

282 Rantoul Street
Beverly, MA 01915
978-532-0666
Email: info@bridge9.com
Web: bridge9.com

BURNSIDE RECORDS

6635 N. Baltimore Ave, Ste 226
Portland, OR 97203
503-231-0876 ext. 202
Email: skip@bdcdistribution.com
Web: burnsideistribution.com

CANYON RECORDS

P.O. Box 61564
Phoenix, AZ 85052
800-268-1141
Email: canyon@canyonrecords.com
Web: canyonrecords.com

CELESTIAL HARMONIES

Division of Mayflower Music Corp
P.O. Box 30122
Tucson, AZ 85751
520-326-4400 Fax 520-326-3333
Email: celestial@harmonies.com
Web: harmonies.com

CENTURY MEDIA

The Century Family
c/o Sony Music International
25 Madison Ave.
New York, NY 10010
Email: centurymedia@musictoday.com
Web: centurymedia.com, facebook.com/centurymedia
*Unsolicited material accepted, see web for details

CEXTON RECORDS

P.O. Box 80187
Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688
Offices in CA and NYC
949-766-1384
Email: johnceyton@aol.com
Web: cexton.com
Contact: John Anello, Jr.
Roster: Johnny Mandolin, Larry Luger, Chiz Harris w/ Conte Candoli, Doc Anello Trio, Tom Kubis Big Band, Jack Wood, Beach Front Property, Doc Anello & the Swing Machine Big Band, James L. Dean Big Band, Reissues of Sinatra, Martin, Andante Duo Italian Music, Marie Anello Opera CD, Otaku in Crime Japanese Anime music
Styles/Specialties: jazz, big band, swing and Italian-American artists
Distribution: Indie, point of purchase, Internet, specialty stores

CLEOPATRA RECORDS

11041 Santa Monica Blvd., PMB 703
Los Angeles, CA 90025
310-477-4000 Fax 310-312-5653
Web: cleopatrarecords.com/home
Contact: Brian Perera, Tim Yasui
Styles/Specialties: gothic, rock, metal, rap, R&B, dance, classics, soundtracks
*Music Submissions accepted

CLICKPOP RECORDS

P.O. Box 5765
Bellingham, WA 98227
Email: dave@clickpoprecords.com
Web: clickpoprecords.com

CLOSED SESSIONS

Chicago, IL
Email: alex@closedsessions.com
Web: closedsessions.com
Notable Artists: Jamila Woods, Kweku Collins, Webster X

CMH RECORDS

2998 Rowena Ave., #201
Los Angeles, CA 90039
800-373-8073
Email: info@cmhrecords.com
Web: cmhrecords.com
Styles/Specialties: country, bluegrass, electric, children's, Christmas

COMMUNION RECORDS

London & Brooklyn

Email: info@communionmusic.com
Web: communionmusic.co.uk
Notable Artists: Michael Kiwanuka, Gotye, Tennis

COMPASS RECORDS
 916 19th Ave. S.
 Nashville, TN 37212
 800-757-2277, 615-320-7672
Fax: 615-227-7378
Email: info@compassrecords.com
Web: compassrecords.com

CONCORD RECORDS
 5750 Wilshire Blvd. #450
 Los Angeles, CA 90036
 310-385-4455
Email: submissions@concordmusicgroup.com
Web: concordmusicgroup.com
Roster: Action Bronson, Andrew Bird, Arianna Neikrug, August Burns Red, Barenaked Ladies

CROSSROADS ENTERTAINMENT
 50 Fisk Drive
 Arden, NC 28704
 828-684-3066
Email: care@crossroadsmusic.com
Web: crossroadsmusic.com, facebook.com/crossroad-labelgroup

CURB RECORDS
 48 Music Sq. E.
 Nashville, TN 37203
 615-321-5080
Email: licensing@curb.com
Web: curb.com, curb.com/licensing
 *No unsolicited material accepted

DAEMON RECORDS
 P.O. Box 1207
 Decatur, GA 30031
Email: hello@daemonrecords.com
Web: daemonrecords.com

DANGERBIRD RECORDS
 3801 Sunset Blvd.
 Los Angeles, CA 90026
 323-665-1144
Email: info@dangerbird.com
Web: dangerbirdrecords.com
Roster: Juicebox, *Repeat Repeat, A. Sinclair, Holly Miranda

DCD2 MUSIC
Email: info@dcd2records.com
Web: dcd2records.com

DEEP SOUTH RECORDS
 P.O. Box 17737
 Raleigh, NC 27619
 919-844-1515
Email: hello@deepsouthernentertainment.com
Web: deepsouthernentertainment.com

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

DELMARK RECORDS
 4121 N. Rockwell
 Chicago, IL 60618
 773-539-5001
Email: delmark@delmark.com
Web: delmark.com

DELOS PRODUCTIONS
 P.O. Box 343
 Sonoma, CA 95476
 800-364-0645, 707-996-3844
Email: orders@delosmusic.com
Web: delosmusic.com, outhere-music.com
Styles/Specialties: classical

DISCHORD RECORDS
 3819 Beecher St. N.W.
 Washington, DC 20007
 703-351-7507
Email: dischord@dischord.com
Web: dischord.com

D'MAR ENTERTAINMENT, INC.
 San Jose, CA
Email: dmarmusic@yahoo.com
Web: dmarmusic.com
Styles/Specialties: smooth jazz, R&B, gospel
 *Accepts unsolicited material

DOMINO RECORDS
 P.O. Box 47029
 London, UK SW18 1EG
Web: dominorecordco.com
Notable Artists: Blood Orange, Arctic Monkeys, Animal Collective

DOMO RECORDS
 11022 Santa Monica Blvd., #380
 Los Angeles, CA 90025
 310-966-4414
Email: info@domocart.com
Web: domomusicgroup.com
Contact: Dino Malito
Styles/Specialties: new age, world music, rock, soundtrack, ambient, electronic
 *If you are interested in submitting your music to us, please see our website

DRAG CITY RECORDS
 P.O. Box 476867
 Chicago, IL 60647
 312-455-1015

Fax: 312-455-1057
Email: press@dragcity.com
Web: dragcity.com
 *No Longer accepts demos

DSPB
 237 Cagua N.E.
 Albuquerque, NM 87108
 505-266-8274
Email: dsbp@dsbp.cx
Web: dsbp.cx

DUALTONE RECORDS
 3 McFerrin Ave.
 Nashville, TN 37206
 615-320-0620
Email: info@dualtone.com
Web: dualtone.com

EARWIG MUSIC COMPANY, INC.
 2054 W. Farwell Ave., Ste G
 Chicago, IL 60645-4963
 773-262-0278
Email: info@earwigmusic.com
Web: earwigmusic.com

EAST 2 WEST COLLECTIVE
 Los Angeles, CA 90025
 323-963-8050
Email: idevita@e2wcollective.com
Web: e2wcollective.com
Contact: Laura Ackermann, Senior Publicist

ELTON AUDIO RECORDS
 155 Willowbrook Blvd. Ste. #110 3430
 Wayne, NJ
Email: contact@eltonaudio.com
Web: eltonaudio.com
Contact: Louis Elton, Owner
 Distribution: Symphonic, Too Lost
 *Accepts unsolicited material

EMPEROR JONES RECORDS
 P.O. Box 4730
 Austin, TX 78765
Email: brutus@emperorjones.com
Web: emperorjones.com

ENTERTAINMENT ONE MUSIC US (MNRK)
 11-13 East 26th Street
 New York, NY 10010
Web: mnrk.com

Additional locations:
 2700 Pennsylvania Ave.
 Suite 1000
 Santa Monica, CA 90404

4201 Wilshire Blvd,
 Suite 400
 Los Angeles, CA 90010

Offices in Canada
 Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver

Offices in London & Asia

EPITAPH RECORDS
 2798 Sunset Blvd.
 Los Angeles, CA 90026
 213-413-7353
Email: edie@epitaph.com
Web: epitaph.com
Styles/Specialties: alt-rock, punk
Distribution: Indies
 *No unsolicited material

EQUAL VISION RECORDS
 P.O. Box 38202
 Albany, NY 12203-8202
 518-458-8250 Fax 518-458-1312
Email: info@equalvision.com
Web: equalvision.com
Styles/Specialties: punk, hardcore, indie, emo, rock, pop, metal
 *No physical demos. Email links to stream your music (no downloads), with a biography

ERASED TAPES RECORDS, LTD
 174 Victoria Park Road
 London E9 7HD Great Britain
Email: licensing@erasedtapes.com
Web: erasedtapes.com
Notable Artists: Anne Muller, Bell Orchestre, Codes in the Clouds, Daniel Brandt, Greg Gives Peter Space, etc.

ESTRUS LLC
 P.O. Box 2125
 Bellingham, WA 98227
Email: website@estrus.com
Web: estrus.com
 *No unsolicited material

EXCELERATION MUSIC
 Is a partnership of global music industry leaders who invest in the future of independent music.
Web: excelerationmusic.com
Contact: info@excmusic.com

FAT POSSUM RECORDS
 P.O. Box 1923
 Oxford, MS 38655
 662-234-2828 Fax 662-234-2899
Email: matthew@fatpossum.com
Web: fatpossum.com, facebook.com/fatpossumrecords

FAVORED NATIONS ENTERTAINMENT
 17328 Ventura Blvd., #165
 Encino, CA 91316

818-385-1989
Email: info@favorednations.com
Web: facebook.com/favorednations.org, favorednations.org
Styles/Specialties: all styles welcome
 (Label is co-owned by Steve Vai)

FEARLESS RECORDS
 5870 W. Jefferson Blvd., Ste. E
 Los Angeles, CA 90016
Web: fearlessrecords.com
Styles: See website for details

FERVOR RECORDS
 1810 W. Northern Ave A-9
 Box 186
 Phoenix, AZ 85021
Email: info@fervor-records.com
Web: fervor-records.com
 *We do not accept unsolicited material

FEVER RECORDS
 AT TN: Sal Abbatiello
 P.O. Box 219
 Yonkers, NY 10710
 914-725-0011
Email: feversmusic@aol.com
Web: feverrecords.com

FIRST ACCESS ENTERTAINMENT
 6725 Sunset Blvd. Ste. #420
 Los Angeles, CA 90028
Email: contact@faegrp.com
Web: faegrp.com
Published: facebook.com/firstaccessent
How to Submit: no unsolicited material

FORMUSIC
 Rua Bernardino de Campos, 277
 Indaiatuba - São Paulo 0 Brazil
Contact: Nando Machado
Web: formusic.com.br
Email: info@formusic.com.br
Styles/Specialties: Indie/Rock/Hard Rock/Pop/Folk/Electronic
Notable artists: Arctic Monkeys, Queens of the Stone Age, Radiohead, Tame Impala, Gavin James, Passenger

FREDDIE RECORDS
 5979 S. Staples St.
 Corpus Christi, TX 78413
 361-992-8411 Fax 361-992-8428
Email: sales@freddierecords.com
Web: freddiestore.com

G2 RECORDS
 14110 N. Dallas Pkwy. Ste. 365
 Dallas, TX 75254
 972-726-9203
Email: info@g2records.com
Web: g2recordsandpublishing.com

GET HIP, INC.
 1800 Columbus Ave.
 Pittsburgh, PA 15233
 412-231-4766
Email: gregg@gethip.com
Web: gethip.com

GEZA X RECORDS
 310-601-8707
Web: gezaxrecords.com
Email: gezaxrecords@gmail.com
Services: Mixing, Mastering, Vinyl Pressing, Video Production
Contact: Geza X, Larva X
Basic Rate: See Website
 Indie Specialist!
 Package Deals Available

GHOSTLY INTERNATIONAL
 P.O. Box 220395
 Brooklyn, NY 11222
Email: booking@ghostly.com
Web: ghostly.com
Notable Artists: Mary Lattimore, Tadd Mullinix, Matthew Dear, Kilo, Tycho

GLASSNOTE RECORDS
Demo Submissions
 770 Lexington Ave., 16th Fl.
 New York, NY 10065
 646-214-6000 Fax 646-237-2711
Email: demos@glassnotemusic.com
Web: glassnotemusic.com
Roster: Phoenix, the Temper Trap, Mumford and Sons, Two Door Cinema Club, Givers, Oberhofer, Childish Gambino, Daughter, Little Green Cars, Robert DeLong, Flight Facilities, Half Moon Run, CHVRCHES, Foy Vance, Jeremy Messersmith, Panama Wedding

Additional locations:
Los Angeles
 2200 Colorado Avenue
 Suite 200
 Santa Monica, CA 90404
 310-865-8620

London
 10-11 Lower John St, Soho
 London W1F 9EB
 020-7183-6887

Toronto
 2450 Victoria Park, Ste.1
 Toronto, Ontario
 M2J 4A1
 416-718-4424

HEADS UP INTERNATIONAL
 Concord Music Group
 5750 Wilshire Blvd, Suite 450
 Los Angeles, CA 90036
 310-385-4465
Email: submissions@concordmusicgroup.com
Web: concordmusicgroup.com/labels/heads-up

HOPELESS RECORDS
 PO Box 495
 Van Nuys, CA
 818-997-0444
Email: ar@hopelessrecords.com
Web: hopelessrecords.com
 *See web FAQ for submission guidelines

HOT TOMATO RECORDS
DEEP SOUTH ENTERTAINMENT
 P.O. Box 17737
 Raleigh, NC 27619
 919-844-1515
Email: info@deepsouthernentertainment.com
Web: deepsouthernentertainment.com

Additional Location:

Nashville
 PO Box 121975
 Nashville, TN 37212
 615-953-4800

IDOL RECORDS
 P.O. Box 140344
 Dallas, TX 75214
Email: info@idolrecords.com
Web: idolrecords.com

INNOVATIVE LEISURE
 2658 Griffith Park Blvd, #324
 Los Angeles, CA 90039
Contact: Nat Nelson, Jamie Strong & Hanni El Khatib
Email: info@innovativeleisure.net
Web: innovativeleisure.net
Notable Artists: BADBADNOTGOOD, Nosaj Thing, Rhye

INTEGRITY LABEL GROUP
 4050 Lee Vance Drive
 Colorado Springs, CO 80918
 1-888-888-4726
Email: customercare@integritymusic.com
Web: integritymusic.com
Contact: David C. Cook
 *No unsolicited material

Additional location:

1646 Westgate Circle, Suite 106
 Brentwood, TN 37027
 888-888-4726

IPECAC RECORDINGS
Email: info@ipecac.com
Web: ipecac.com
Contact: Greg Werckman
Distribution: Fontana
Roster: Fantomas, Melvins, Northern State, Dalek, Skeleton Key, Peeping Tom, Dub Trio

JAGGO RECORDS
 323-850-1819
Email: jaggo@jaggo.com
Web: jaggo.com
Styles/Specialties: pop, rock, jazz, R&B, hip-hop, soul, World music
 *Unsolicited material accepted

JAGJAGUWAR
 213 S. Rogers St.
 Bloomington, IN 47404
Contact: Darius Van Arman, Chris Swanson
Email: info@jagjaguwar.com
Web: jagjaguwar.com, facebook.com/jagjaguwar
Notable Artists: Bon Iver, Angel Olsen, Unknown Mortal Orchestra

JAZZ LINK ENTERPRISES
 3721 Columbia Dr.
 Longmont, CO 80503
 303-776-1764
Email: hiberljude@gmail.com

JONKEY ENTERPRISES
Sonic Safari Music
 663 W. California Ave.
 Glendale, CA 91203
 818-242-4034
Email: chuck@sonicsafarimusic.com
Web: sonicsafarimusic.com
Contact: Chuck Jonkey
Styles/Specialties: environmental, world, traditional, ethnic
Distribution: Indies
Roster: Chuck Jonkey, Carl Malone
 *No unsolicited material

K RECORDS
 P.O. Box 7154
 Olympia, WA 98507
 360-786-1594
Email: promo@krecs.com
Web: krecs.com
Roster: Karl Blau, Aries, Jason Anderson
 Currently not accepting demos

KEMADO RECORDS
 87 Guernsey St.
 Brooklyn, NY 11222

Email: info@kemado.com
Web: kemado.com
Roster: The Sword

KILL ROCK STARS
819 SE 14th Loop
Suite 106
Battle Ground, WA 98604
Email: feedback@killrockstars.com
Web: killrockstars.com
*Accepting demos from active, touring bands

KOCH RECORDS
See Et Music Group

KRANKY
Chicago, IL
Email: krankyinfo@gmail.com
Web: kranky.net
Notable Artists: Stars of the Lid, Grouper, Tim Hecker
Currently accepting demos

LAMON RECORDS CORPORATION
Hollywood: 818-850-0625
Nashville: 615-379-2121
Email: dave@lamonrecords.com
Web: lamonrecords.com

LAZY BONES RECORDINGS
10002 Aurora Ave. N.
Ste. 36 PMB 37
Seattle, WA 98133
310-281-6232
Email: scott@lazybones.com
Web: lazybones.com
*At this time we are not accepting demos

Additional Location:
Melbourne, Australia
(03) 9028 2200

LAZY S.O.B. RECORDINGS
P.O. Box 4084
Austin, TX 78765
512-480-0765
Email: lazysobl@aol.com
Web: lazysob.com

LEG (Loggins Entertainment Group)
615-323-2200
Email: staff@backstageentertainment.net
Web: backstageentertainment.net

LEVIATHAN RECORDS
P.O. Box 745
Tyrone, GA 30290
770-257-8697
Email: promotions@leviathanrecords.com
Web: leviathanrecords.com

LITTLE FISH RECORDS
Cleveland, OH 44119
216-481-1634, 216-849-6478
Email: lkoval@msn.com
Web: littlefishrecords.com
Contact: Greg David

LIZARD SUN ENTERTAINMENT
1621 W. 25th St., Ste. 115
San Pedro, CA 90732
310-505-3958
Email: floyd@lizardsunentertainment.com
Web: cliffmorrison.com, facebook.com/floydbocox
Contact: Floyd Bocox, CEO & President
Styles: country, pop, rock

LOCAL ACTION
London
Email: info@localactionrecords.co.uk
Web: localactionrecords.co.uk
Notable Artists: Deadboy, Jammz, DAWN

LOVECAT MUSIC
P.O. Box 548, Ansonia Sta.
New York, NY 10023
646-304-7391
Email: lovecatmusic@gmail.com
Web: lovecatmusic.com

LUAKA BOP
195 Chrystie, 602B
New York, NY 10002
212-624-1469
Email: iwasthinking@luakabop.com
Web: luakabop.com
Styles/Specialties: pop, world
*No unsolicited materials

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

MAGGIE'S MUSIC
P.O. Box 490
Shady Side, MD 20764
410-867-0642
Email: mail@maggiesmusic.com
Web: maggiesmusic.com

MALACO MUSIC GROUP, THE
P.O. Box 9287
Jackson, MS 39286
601-982-4522
Email: malaco@malaco.com
Web: malaco.com

MANIFESTO RECORDS
104 West Anapamu Street
Suite K
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
805-837-0100
Email: esc@manifesto.com
Web: manifesto.com
Contact: Evan Cohen, Business Affairs
Styles: rock, indie, Brit-pop, punk
Roster: Alice Cooper, Dead Kennedys, Tom Waits
Distribution: MVD
*No unsolicited material

MARSALIS MUSIC
323 Broadway
Cambridge, MA 02139
617-354-2736
Web: marsalismusic.com
*Not accepting any artist submissions

MASCOT LABEL GROUP
P.O. Box 231
2650 AE Berkel & Rodenrijs
The Netherlands
Web: mascotlabelgroup.com
Contact: Ron Burman & President MLG North America/A&R
Email: burman@mascotlabelgroup.com
Contact: Ed van Zijl & owner/A&R
Styles: Rock, metal, guitar, prog, blues rock, jam

MATADOR RECORDS
134 Grand St.
New York, NY 10013
703-915-1211, 212-995-5882
Email: miwaokumura@beggars.com
Web: matadorrecords.com
Styles/Specialties: all styles
*Unsolicited material accepted

MELLO MUSIC GROUP
Tucson, AZ
Email: info@mellonmusicgroup.com
Web: mellonmusicgroup.com
Notable Artists: Oddisee, Open Mike Eagle, Apollo Brown

MERGE RECORDS
Chapel Hill, NC
Email: merge@mergerecords.com
Web: mergerecords.com
Roster: Arcade Fire, Barren Girls, Caribou, Divine Fits, Ex Hex, She & Him, Teenage Fanclub, M. Ward and more.

METAL BLADE RECORDS
5632 Van Nuys Blvd., #1301
Sherman Oaks, CA 91401
Email: metalblade@metalblade.com
Web: metalblade.com, facebook.com/metalbladerecords
Styles/Specialties: heavy metal, progressive, rock *No unsolicited material

Additional location:
Metal Blade Records GMBH
Marstallstrasse 14
73033 Goppingen, Germany

METROPOLIS RECORDS
P.O. Box 974
Media, PA 19063
610-595-9940
Email: demo@metropolis-records.com, facebook.com/metropolisrecords
Web: metropolis-records.com
*Not accepting demos at this time.

MEXICAN SUMMER
87 Guernsey St.
Brooklyn, NY 11222
Email: info@mexicansummer.com
Web: mexicansummer.com
Notable Artists: Ariel Pink, Weyes Blood, Dungen

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

MILK RECORDS
P.O. Box 35
Moreland LPO
Coburg 3058
Victoria, Australia
Email: milk@milkrerecords.com.au
Web: facebook.com/milkrerecordsmelbourne
Notable Artists: Courtney Barnett

MIND OF A GENIUS (MOAG)
P.O. Box 3613, M.P.O.
Vancouver, BC, Canada, V6B 3Y6
604-669-MINT
Email: info@gmintrecs.com
Web: mintrecs.com, facebook.com/mintrecs, mindofagenius.co.uk
Notable Artists: THEY, Gallant, ZHURECORDS
Roster: Hot Panda, Immaculate Machine, Fanshaw, Kellarissa, John Gulick
*We are no longer accepting physical demo submission. Use contact form on website

MIXPAK RECORDS
Brooklyn, NY
Email: info@mixpakrecords.com
Web: mixpakrecords.com
Notable Artists: Popcaan, Palmistry, Murio

MORPHIUS RECORDS
100 E. 23rd St.
Baltimore, MD 21218
410-662-0172
Email: info@morphius.com
Web: morphius.com

MOTION CITY RECORDS
P.O. Box 50624
Minneapolis, MN 55405
310-434-1272
Email: us@motorcitysoundtrack.com
Web: motioncity.com
Styles/Specialties: alternative rock
Roster: Velvet, Voodoo, Brent Fraser, 10 Pound Troy, UFO Bro, Drag, Wendy Bucklew

MOUNTAIN APPLE COMPANY, THE
P.O. Box 22569
Honolulu, HI 96814
808-597-1888
Web: mountainapplecompany.com
Styles/Specialties: traditional and contemporary Hawaiian

MOUNTAIN HOME RECORDS
50 Fisk Drive
Arden, NC 28704
828-684-3066
Email: info@mountainhomemusiccompany.com
Web: mountainhomemusiccompany.com, facebook.com/mtnhomemusic
Styles/Specialties: bluegrass
*No unsolicited material

MRG RECORDINGS
Email: submissions@mrgregrecordings.com
Web: mrgregrecordings.com, facebook.com/mrgregrecordings
Contact: A&R
Styles/Specialties: rock, electronic, ambient, folk

MTS RECORDS
227 Gill Road
Apollo, PA 15613
412-445-5282
Email: michael@mtsmanagementgroup.com
Web: mtsmanagementgroup.com
Styles/Specialties: All Genres

MY-ZEAL PRODUCTIONS, CO
23207 Lahser Rd.
Southfield, MI 48033
313-444-8583
Email: myzealproductions@gmail.com
Web: myzealproductions.com
Styles/Specialties: gospel, pop, rnb, singer-song-writers
Distribution: IndieBlu, MNRK

NEW PANTS PUBLISHING INC. & OLD PANTS PUBLISHING INC.
119 N Wahsatch Avenue
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80903
719-632-0227 Fax 719-634-2274
Email: rac@crfr.net
Web: newpants.com, oldpants.com
Contact: Robert A. Case
Styles/Specialties: pop, rock, rap, R&B, country
Roster: Stephanie Aramburo, Chad Steele, C. Lee Clarke, Tech T, James Becker, Kathy Watson, Lisa Bigwood, George Montalbano, Silence, Sherwin Greenwood, Joel Diehl, John Ellis and Phyllis Shaw.
*Unsolicited material through management or lawyer only. Please contact before submitting

NEW WEST RECORDS
2923 Berry Hill Dr.
Nashville, TN 37204
615-385-4777
Web: newwestrecords.com
Roster: see web
*No unsolicited materials accepted

NINJA TUNE
P.O. Box 4296
London, SE11 4WW
Email: demos@ninjatune.net
Web: ninjatune.net/home
Roster: Bonobo, Actress, FaltyDL, The Bug
*Only accepting demos in digital form

NITRO RECORDS
7071 Warner Ave., Ste. F736
Huntington Beach, CA 92647
Email: info@nitrorecords.com
Web: facebook.com/nitrorecords
Styles/Specialties: punk/pop
Roster: see web

NOISEY BY VICE
Brooklyn, New York 11249
Email: press@vice.com
Web: vice.com/en/section/music

NONESUCH RECORDS
1633 Broadway
New York, NY 10019
212-707-2000
Email: info@nonesuch.com
Web: nonesuch.com, facebook.com/nonesuchrecords
Roster: Emmylou Harris, Joni Mitchell, Gipsy Kings, kd lang, Randy Newman, Wilco, Brian Wilson, Stephen Sondheim, Kronos Quartet, Youssou N'Dour, Buena Vista Social Club, Laurie Anderson

OGLIO RECORDS
3540 W. Sahara Ave., #308

Las Vegas, NV 89102
702-800-5500
Web: oglio.com
Contact: Carl Caprioglio, Mark Copeland
Roster: George Lopez, the Sparks, Jackie the Jokeman Martling, reissues, novelty, soundtracks, Beatallica

OH BOY RECORDS
P.O. Box 150222
Nashville, TN 37215
615-742-1250
Email: info@ohboy.com
Web: ohboy.com
*no unsolicited material accepted

PAPER GARDEN RECORDS
170 Tillary St., Apt. 608
Brooklyn, NY 11201
Email: info@papergardenrecords.com
Contact: Bryan Vaughn
Web: papergardenrecords.com
Roster: Alcoholic Faith Mission, Darla Framer, Mighty Tiger, Pree
Accepting Demos

PARMA RECORDINGS
44 Lafayette Rd.
PO Box 1567
North Hampton, NH 03862
603-758-1718
Email: info@parmarecordings.com
Web: parmarecordings.com

PAUL WINTER
P.O. Box 72
Litchfield, CT 06759
860-567-8796, 800-437-2281
Email: elizabethgwaldmaniapr.com
Web: paulwinter.com, facebook.com/paulwintermusic

POSI-TONE
P.O. Box 2848
Los Angeles, CA 90294
310-871-2652
Email: info@posi-tone.com
Web: posi-tone.com
Styles/Specialties: jazz
Roster: Orrin Evans, Jim Rotondi, Ralph Bowen, Brian Charette, Jared Gold, David Gibson, Ehud Asherie, Doug Webb

PPL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP, INC
PO Box 261488
Encino, CA 91426
310-962-3873, 424-394-1496
Email: pplzmi@aol.com
Web: pplzmi.com
*No unsolicited material accepted
Contact: Maxx Diamond
*No unsolicited material accepted. Must first write with SASE for permission.

PRA RECORDS
212-860-3233
Email: pra@prarecords.com
Web: prarecords.com
Contact: Patrick Rains
Styles/Specialties: jazz
Roster: Jonathan Brooke, Randy Crawford, David Sanborn, Curtis Stigers
Distribution: Ryko

PRAVDA RECORDS
4245 N Knox Ste 7
Chicago, IL 60641
773-763-7509
Email: kenn@pravdamusic.com
Web: pravdamusic.com

PRIMARILY A CAPPELLA
P.O. Box D
San Anselmo, CA 94979
415-419-5509
Email: harmony@singers.com
Web: singers.com
Styles/Specialties: a cappella
*Unsolicited material accepted

QUARTO VALLEY RECORDS
Woodland Hills, CA
Email: info@quartovalleyrecords.com
Web: quartovalleyrecords.com
Roster/Notable Projects: Paul Rodgers, Savoy Brown, Edgar Winter, The Immediate Family, Narada Michael Walden, Richard T. Bear, Bonham-Bullick Band, Denny Seiwell, Sean Chambers, Dominic Quarto

R&S RECORDS
Email: bandcamp@rsrecords.com
Web: randsrecords.com
Roster: James Blake, Nicolas Jaar, Paul White

RAMP RECORDS
Santa Barbara, CA
Email: Info@ramprecords.com
Web: ramprecords.com
Styles/Specialties: Eclectic
Roster: Michael McDonald, Jeff Bridges
*No unsolicited material

RAZOR AND TIE RECORDS (CONCORD)
Web: concord.com/labels/razor-and-tie-records
Email: info@concord.com
Roster: (See Website)

RED EYE MUSIC GROUP
505 Eno St.
Hillsborough, NC 27278
877-733-3931

Email: info@redeworldwide.com
Web: redeweusa.com
Note: no unsolicited material

RED HOUSE RECORDS
 916 19th Avenue South
 Nashville, TN 37212
 800-757-2277, 615-320-7672
Email: info@compassrecords.com
Web: redhouserecords.com
 *Unsolicited material accepted

RELAPSE RECORDS
 P.O. Box 2060
 Upper Darby, PA 19082
 610-734-1000
Email: mailorder@relapse.com,
Web: relapse.com, facebook.com/
 relapserecords
Roster: High on Fire, Jucifer, Origin, Brutal Truth

REVELATION RECORDS
 P.O. Box 5232
 Huntington Beach, CA 92615
 714-842-7584
Email: webmaster@revhq.com
Web: revelationrecords.com
Styles/Specialties: hardcore, punk, emo, metal
Roster: See website
 *Unsolicited material accepted

RHYMESAYERS ENTERTAINMENT
 2409 Hennepin Ave.
 Minneapolis, MN 55405
 612-977-9870
Email: info@rhymesayers.com
Web: rhymesayers.com

ROADRUNNER RECORDS
 Warner Music Group
 1633 Broadway
 New York, NY 10019
 212-275-2000
Web: elektramusicgroup.com/roadrunnerrecords
Styles/Specialties: rock
 *Unsolicited materials accepted, see web for details.

ROUGH TRADE RECORDS
 30 Rockefeller Plaza
 New York, NY 10112
 212-664-1110
Web: roughtrade.com
Notable Artists: Princess Nokia, jennylee, Parquet
 Courts

SACRED BONES
 Brooklyn, New York
Email: info@sacredbonesrecords.com
Web: sacredbonesrecords.com
Notable Artists: Amen Dunes, Zola Jesus, Jenny Hval

SECRETLY CANADIAN
 213 S. Rogers
 Bloomfield, IN 47404
 812-335-1572
Email: info@secretlydistribution.com
Web: secretlycanadian.com
Notable Artists: Whitney, ANOHNI,
 serpentwithfeet, War On Drugs

SHANGRI-LA PROJECTS
 P.O. Box 40106
 Memphis, TN 38174
 901-359-3102
Email: sherman@shangrilaprojects.com
Web: shangrilaprojects.com

SIX DEGREES RECORDS
 P.O. Box 411347
 San Francisco, CA 94141
Email: licensing@sixdegreesrecords.com
Web: sixdegreesrecords.com
Distribution: Fontana
 *we do not accept unsolicited demos

SONIC IMAGES ENTERTAINMENT GROUP
 12400 Ventura Blvd., #268
 Studio City, CA 91604
 323-650-4000
Email: sonicimages@sonicimages.com
Web: sonicimages.com

SOULECTION
 Los Angeles
Contact: Joe Kay, Head of A&R
Web: soulection.com
Notable Artists: Goldlink, Sango, Ta-ku

SOUND KITCHEN STUDIOS, LLC
 112 Seaboard Ln.
 Franklin, TN 37067
 615-370-5773
Email: iblonder@soundkitchen.com
Contact: Ira Blonder
Specialties: All Genres
 *Unsolicited material accepted

SOUNDSCAPES MEDIA GROUP
 1534 N. Moorpark Road, #183
 Los Angeles, CA 91360
 805-405-8078
Email: info@soundscapesmedia.com
Web: soundscapesmedia.com
Styles/Specialties: Jazz, Acoustic, Vocal, Latin, Pop,
 Blues, Classic Rock, Classical - HD Recordings and
 Distribution, Immersive formats
 * Unsolicited Material Accepted

SPARROW RECORDS
 (Capitol CMG Label Group)

101 Winners Cir.
 Brentwood, TN 37027
 615-371-4300
Email: info@capitolcmg.com
Web: capitolcmglabgroup.com
Styles/Specialties: Christian
 *No unsolicited materials

SST RECORDS
 PO Box 1
 Taylor, TX 76574
 512-387-5331
Email: orders@sstsuperstore.com
Web: sstsuperstore.com
Styles/Specialties: rock, jazz, punk, progressive rock
 *Unsolicited material accepted

STONES THROW RECORDS, LLC
 2658 Griffith Park Blvd, #504
 Los Angeles, CA 90039
Email: losangeles@stonesthrow.com
Web: stonesthrow.com
Notable Artists: J Dilla, Dam-Funk, Madvillian

SUB POP
 2013 4th Ave., 3rd Fl.
 Seattle, WA 98121
 206-441-8441 Fax 206-441-8245
Email: info@subpop.com
Web: subpop.com
Styles/Specialties: rock, alt. rock
 *No unsolicited material

SUMMIT RECORDS
 P.O. Box 13692
 Tempe, AZ 85284-3692
 1-480-491-6430
Email: sales@summitrecords.com
Web: summitrecords.com
Styles/Specialties: jazz-big band,
 contemporary
Distribution: hard goods: Allegro Media Group (North
 America); digital: IODA

SURFD0G RECORDS
 1126 S. Coast Hwy, 101
 Encinitas, CA 92024
 760-944-8000 Fax 760-944-7808
Email: demo@surfdog.com
Web: surfdog.com
Contact: Anita Strine
Roster: Brian Setzer, Stray Cats, Richard Cheese, Gary
 Hoey, Rusty Anderson, Slightly Stoopid, Dan Hicks,
 Butthole Surfers, Gibby Haynes, Dylan Donkin, the
 Wylde Bunch
 *Unsolicited material accepted, see website

SYMBIOTIC RECORDS
 P.O. Box 88456
 Los Angeles, CA 90009
 424-245-0416
Web: symbioticnation.com
Styles/Specialties: All
Roster: Ignacio Val, Eric Knight
Services: Record Label
 *Accepts unsolicited material email links only, no
 phone calls

THIN MAN ENTERTAINMENT
 P.O. Box 322
 Torrance, CA 90507
 310-320-8822
Email: submissions@thinmanentertainment.com
Web: facebook.com/p/Thin-Man-Entertainment
Contact: Jeremy Meza
Styles/Specialties: alternative rock, darkwave, death-
 rock, gothic, industrial, jazz, junk, punk and psychobilly

THREE ONE G
 P.O. Box 178262
 San Diego, CA
Web: facebook.com/threonegrecords
Email: heylisten@threoneg.com

THUMP RECORDS
 P.O. Box 9605
 Brea, CA 92822
Email: customersupport@thumprecords.com
Web: thumprecords.com
Contact: Bill Walker, CEO
Styles/Specialties: Latin rap, old skool, rap, R&B, Latin,
 oldies, disco
 *New Artist submission guidelines: see website.

TRUE PANTHER SOUNDS
 New York, New York
Email: sounds@truepanther.com
Web: truepanther.com
Notable Artists: Tobias Jesso Jr. London O'Connor

UNIVERSALCMG WORLD ENT. 1954
 A Straiter Enterprise Company
 Wells Fargo Center
 355 South Grand Avenue
 LA, California 90071
 323-334-0446
Email: info@unicmg.com
Web: unicmg.com
Styles/Specialties: All Genres
 *No unsolicited material accepted

URBAND & LAZAR
 Los Angeles, CA
 London
 323-230-6592
Email: help@urbandlazar.com
Web: urbandlazar.com
Styles/Specialties: indie, alt-rock, s-s
 *We do not accept unsolicited material

VAGRANT RECORDS
 5566 W. Washington Blvd.
 Los Angeles, CA 90016
 323-302-0100
Email: info@vagrant.com
Web: vagrant.com
 *We do not accept unsolicited demos

WARP RECORDS
 Sheffield London
Web: warp.net
Email: usa@warprecords.com
 Notable Artists: Hudson Mohawke, Danny Brown,
 Aphex Twin, Kelela
 *not seeking unsolicited demos

WICKED COOL RECORDS
 434 6th Ave., Ste. 6R
 New York, NY
 347-229-2960
Email: scott@wickedcoolrecords.com
Web: facebook.com/wickedcoolrecords

WINGSPAN RECORDS
 A Straiter Enterprise Company
 Wells Fargo Center
 355 South Grand Avenue
 LA, California 90071
 323-334-0446
Email: info@unicmg.com
Web: wingspanrecords.com
Styles/Specialties: Artist development, solo artists,
 singer/songwriters, All Genres
 *No unsolicited material accepted

XL RECORDINGS
 (Beggars Group)
 1 Codrington Mews
 London, England W11 2EH
 +44 (0) 20 8870 7511
Email: xlrecordings.com
Web: xl@xl-recordings.com

YEAR0001
 Krukmarkargatan 22, 118 51
 Stockholm Sweden
Email: info@year001.com
Web: year0001.com, facebook.com/year0001
Notable Artists: Yung Lean, Bladee, Thaiboy Digital

YEP ROC RECORDS
 449-A Trollingwood Rd.
 Haw River, NC 27258
 877-733-3931
Email: fred@yeprocmusicgroup.com
Web: yeproc.com

MARKETERS/PROMOTERS

1 SEO EXPERTS
 Los Angeles, CA
 888-736-2413
Web: 1seoexperts.com
Contact: Michael Guy
Services: Providing cutting edge media and marketing

360 MEDIA
 1040 Boulevard SE, Suite C
 Atlanta, GA 30312
 404-577-8886
Email: hello@360media.net
Web: 360media.net

919 MARKETING COMPANY
 104 Avent Ferry Rd.
 Holly Springs, NC 27540
 919-557-7890
Email: letsworktogether@919marketing.com
Web: 919marketing.com

ABC PROMOTIONAL MARKETING
 20531 Rhoda St.
 Woodland Hills, CA 91367
 818-999-2226
Email: andrew@shopabcpromo.com
Web: shopabcpromo.com

AFFORDABLE IMAGE
 515 E. Grant Street, #216
 Phoenix, AZ 85004
 800-639-1622
Email: sales@affordableimage.com
Web: affordableimage.com

AIM MARKETING SOLUTIONS
 830 3rd Street South, Suite 203
 Jacksonville Beach, FL 32250
 904-881-0932
Email: info@aimmktgagency.com
Web: aimmktgagency.com
Styles/Specialties: sports and entertainment mar-
 keting

AIRPLAY ACCESS
 5018 Franklin Pike
 Nashville, TN 37220
 310-325-9997
Email: staff@airplayaccess.com
Web: airplayaccess.com
Contact: Paul Loggins
Styles/Specialties: all styles

ANDERSON MARKETING
 85 NE Loop 410, Suite 501
 San Antonio, TX 78216
 210-223-6233
Email: info@andersonmarketing.com
Web: andadv.com

ARIES OF NOHO PROMOTIONS
 P.O. Box 16741
 North Hollywood, CA 91615
 747-256-8911, 818-220-3423
Email: shelby@ariesofnoho.com
Contact: MJ Shelby
Styles: Funk, Jazz, Old School, R&B, Soul, Urban,
 World Beat
Services: Consulting, Radio Airplay, Marketing, On-Line
 Promotion, Band Management, Social Networking,
 Video Promotion and Internet Publicity

ARISTOMEDIA
 Nashville, TN 37202
 615-269-7071
Email: info@aristomedia.com
Web: aristomedia.com

BEHIND THE CURTAINS MEDIA
 234 6th St, Ste #5
 Brooklyn, NY 11215
 347-699-4429
Contact: Michael Abiuso
Email: mike@behindthecurtainsmedia.com
Web: behindthecurtainsmedia.com

BLACK DOG PROMOTIONS
 9920 South Rural Road, Ste. 108
 Phoenix, AZ 85284
 480-206-3435
Email: scott@blackdogpromotions.com
Web: facebook.com/blackdoggaming

CARDSCASHREWARDS.COM
 Los Angeles, CA
 1-888-452-5959 Toll-Free in USA
Email: info@cardscashrewards.com
Web: cardscashrewards.com
Styles/Specialties: We develop gift cards into market-
 ing solutions that enable music artists to establish and
 sustain their careers independently.
 Our award-winning approach to gift cards integrates
 online PR; social networking; cutting-edge ecommerce
 and more into any
 commercially-viable artists' marketing mix to acceler-
 ate sales and cash-flow; grow and monetize social
 networks; establish
 new distribution channels; and new strategic partner-
 ships and sponsorships. Our approach to gift cards also
 conveys S.M.A.R.Ter ways
 for indie music artists to crowdfund; digitally distribute
 music globally; sell directly to consumers.

CARPARK RECORDS
 P.O. Box 42374
 Washington, D.C. 20015
Email: info@carparkrecords.com
Web: carparkrecords.com
Notable Artists: Toro y Moi, Skylar Spence, Cloud
 Nothings

CORNERSTONE
 71 W. 23rd St., 13th Fl.
 New York, NY 10010
 212-741-7100
Email: info@cornerstonepromotion.com,
 pr@cornerstonepromotion.com
Contact: Rob Stone and Jon Cohen

CREATIVE BRAND CONSULTING
 2219 S. 48th St., Ste. 1
 Tempe, AZ 85282
 888-567-0522
Email: ron@creativebrandconsulting.com
Web: creativebrandconsulting.com

CYBER PR
 389 12th St.
 Brooklyn, NY 11215
 212-239-8384
Email: contact@arielpublicity.com
Web: cyberprmusic.com

DEATH TO SLOW MUSIC
 Chicago, IL
 (646) 470-8009
Email: teamdeath@eathtoslowmusic.com
Web: deathtoslowmusic.com
Contact: Henry Bainbridge
Styles: Indie, Punk, Rock, Folk, DIY, Underground
Services: Music PR for punks, geeks, weirdos and the
 rest of us.
 Campaigns with soul. Killer bios. Punchy press releases.
 Straight dope advice.

DEBORAH BROSSEAU COMMUNICATIONS
 Los Angeles, CA
 323-314-4203
Email: db@deborahbrosseau.com
Web: deborahbrosseau.com
Contact: Deborah Brosseau

DISTINCTIVE PROMO
 646-727-9645
Email: promo@distinctivepromo.com
Web: distinctivepromo.com

DOMINANT CREATIVE
 453 S. Spring St., Ste. 937
 Los Angeles, CA 90013-2089
 213-232-1193
Email: info@dominantcreative.com
Web: dominantcreative.com
Services: Logo creation, press kit design, album cover
 art, promo materials (stickers, flyers, etc.) audio post
 production, composition for TV/films/games, song-
 writing arrangement, record production, engineering,
 mixing, mastering, prepping, albums for duplication/
 replication, vocal coaching, vocal production, career
 consultation

FILTER/SKETCH DECK

300 Lenora Street, Suite# 1279
Seattle, WA 98101
800-336-0809
Email: info@filterdigital.com
Web: sketchdeck.com

FLANAGAN'S RADIO PROMOTIONS

323-876-7027
Email: submit@flanaganpromotions.com
Contact: Jon Flanagan, Taylor W. Tom S.
Styles/Specialties: AAA, rock, AC, consult before pressing CD, building a band's buzz!

GAIL ROBERTS P.R. & INTERNET MARKETING

10061 Riverside Dr., Ste. 1400
Burbank, CA 91602
310-734-8193
Email: gailrobertspr@gmail.com
Web: linkedin.com/in/gailrobertspr
Contact: Gail Roberts
Styles/Specialties: longstanding music PR firm with marketing and online promotion, internet publicity, social networking. The firm also handles marketing and media for painters, authors, corporations and ecological projects.

GIANT STEP

281 N. 7th St., #2
Brooklyn, NY 11211
212-219-3567
Email: inquiries@giantstep.net
Web: giantstep.net

GIRLIE ACTION MEDIA & MARKETING, INC.

243 W. 30th St., 12th Fl.
New York, NY 10001
212-989-2222
Email: info@girlieaction.com
Web: girlieaction.com, facebook.com/girlieaction
Howard

GONZALEZ MARKETING

2804 W. Northern Lights
Anchorage, AK 99517
907-562-8640
Email: gm@gonzalezmarketing.com
Web: facebook.com/steve.gonzalez.73113
Contact: Steve Gonzalez

GRIFFIN 360

260 5th Avenue
Midtown NY 10001
Web: griffin360.com
Phone: (212) 481-3456
Email: julia@griffin360.com
Services Provided: Public Relations, Advertising - Print, Digital and Social Media Planning, Social Media Management, Event Management, Corporate Identity and Branding, Website Design, Video Production
Contact: Julia Sciacca Account Coordinator

HANDS ON PR & MARKETING

Email: handsonpr@aol.com
Contact: Craig Melone
Styles/Specialties: all styles/indie labels

HOWARD ROSEN PROMOTION, INC.

785 Quintana Rd. #174
Morro Bay, CA 93442
805-382-2200
Email: howie@howiewood.com
Web: howiewood.com
Contact: Howard Rosen
Formats/Specialties: We quarterback projects in all genres,CHR/Top 40, AC, Hot AC, AAA, Alternative Specialty, Mainstream Rock, Modern AC, Country & College for artists of all label sizes including Independent. Social Media, Video Production

IFANZ.COM

(McCartney Multimedia, Inc.)
322 Culver Blvd., Ste. 124
Playa Del Rey, CA 90293
Email: info@ifanz.com
Web: ifanz.com

IMAGINE PR

262 West 38th Street
Suite 703
New York City
212-922-1961
Email: info@imagine-team.com
Web: imagine-team.com

INDIEPOWER PROMOTION & MARKETING

5062 Lankershim Blvd., #174
N. Hollywood, CA 91601
818-505-1836
Email: info@indiepower.com
Web: facebook.com/indiepoweronline, indiepower.com
Contact: Jay Warsinske CEO (40+ year veteran)
Styles/Specialties: All styles, worldwide, maximum PR, promotion, marketing and major distribution services by top pros

J&H PROMOTIONS

P.O. Box 295
Indian Rocks, FL 33785
760-812-1214
Email: jhpro@att.net
Web: facebook.com/groups/202874821030116
Contact: Mary Christopher, President
Styles/Specialties: Award-winning promotions, brand management, ad agency, radio promotions, press/PR, representing all genres, from indie to major label.
Clients: ABC Radio Networks, Dreamworks Records, Harrah's Casino, MCA Records, Jones and Thomas Advertising Agency, Naxos Music, Stringtown Records,

Town of Los Altos Hills, Tennessee Trial Lawyers Association, Polk County Utilities, 3rd Battalion 3rd Marines, Main Street Bank and Trust and Vinyl Records.

JJ ENTERTAINMENT

530-412-3354
Email: joddith@aol.com
Web: jjentertainment.com
Contact: Jodi Jackson
Styles: All

KAREN MORSTAD & ASSOCIATES

79 E. Putnam Ave.
Greenwich, CT 06830
646-209-8055
Email: kmorstad@karenmorstad.com
Web: karenmorstad.com

KBH ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

Van Nuys, CA 91405
818-786-5994
Email: support@kbhentertainment.com
Web: facebook.com/kbhentertainment
Contact: Brent Harvey
Styles/Specialties: consulting, artist management, event production, music licensing and placement, publicity, talent buying & booking

LABEL LOGIC

Artist and Label Services
566 Mindenvale Court
Simi Valley, CA 93065
(310) 405-4155 (text), 818-431-0728
Contact: Jay Gilbert and Jeff Moskow
Email: jay@label-logic.net, jeff@label-logic.net
Styles/Specialties: All genres

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

LANE TERRALEVER

645 E Missouri Ave., Ste 400
Phoenix, AZ 85012
602-258-5263
Email: info@laneterralever.com
Web: laneterralever.com

LARRY WEIR

National Record Promotion
137 N. Larchmont Blvd., S-#500
Los Angeles, CA 90004
323-658-7449
Email: lweir@larryweir.com
Web: larryweir.com
Specialties: Need radio airplay? Multi-format radio promotion

LOGGINS PROMOTION

2530 Atlantic Ave., Ste. C
Long Beach, CA 90806
310-325-2800
Email: staff@logginspromotion.com
Web: logginspromotion.com
Contact: Paul Loggins
Styles/Specialties: all styles

LOTOS NILE MARKETING

P.O. Box 90245
Nashville, TN 37209
615-298-1144
Email: info@lotosnile.com
Web: lotosnile.com

LUCK MEDIA & MARKETING, INC.

8581 Santa Monica Blvd., #426
West Hollywood, CA 90069
818-232-4175
Email: info@luckmedia.com
Web: luckmedia.com
Contact: Steve Levesque

LUCKIE & COMPANY

1143 1st Ave S, Suite 110
Birmingham, AL 35223
833-4-LUCKIE
Email: press@luckie.com
Web: luckie.com

Additional location:

3160 Main St. Ste 200
Duluth, GA 30096

MAKE GOOD MARKETING & MANAGEMENT, INC.

Paul Orescan
13636 Ventura Blvd., #185
Sherman Oaks CA 91423
(818) 749-7014
Email: paulorescan@me.com
Web: makegoodmarketing.com

MIA MIND MUSIC

254 6th St., Ste. #2
Hoboken, NJ 07030
800-843-8575
Email: info@miamindmusic.com
Web: miamindmusic.com

MIKE MATISA

Independent Agent
Radio Promotions, Artist Development

Email: mikematisa@gmail.com

Website: mikematisa.com

Contact: Mike Matisa

Services: Independent agent and scout for a diversified portfolio of radio promotion and artist development professionals. Specializing in: Pop, Top 40, Adult Contemporary, Urban, Hot AC, Country, Triple A, Alternative, Active & Modern Rock, and Smooth Jazz radio formats.

MILES HIGH PRODUCTIONS

P.O. Box 93157
Hollywood, CA 90093
323-806-0400
Email: info@mileshighproductions.com
Web: mileshighproductions.com
Styles/Specialties: Social Marketing and digital press company catering to both indie and established artists. We specialize in rock, pop, dance, jazz, blues, country/roots, soul/urban and new age. Established in 2002.

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Cranston, RI
401-942-8025
Email: ginny@mixedmediapromo.com
Web: mixedmediapromo.com, facebook.com/mixed-mediapromotion

MOTION CITY RECORDS

1424 4th St., #604
Santa Monica, CA 90401
310-434-1272
Web: motioncity.com
Styles/Specialties: alternative rock
Roster: Velvet, Voodoo, Brent Fraser, 10 Pound Troy, UFO Bro, Drag, Wendy Bucklew

MTS MANAGEMENT GROUP

227 Gill Road
Apollo, PA 15613
412-445-5282
Email: michael@mtsmanagementgroup.com
Web: mtsmanagementgroup.com
Contact: Michael Stover
Styles: all genres
Services: Consulting, Radio Airplay, Marketing, On-Line Promotion, Band Management, Social Networking, Video Promotion, iTunes and Spotify promotion, and Internet Publicity

NEW MUSIC WEEKLY

137 N. Larchmont Ave., Ste. 500
Los Angeles, CA 90004
310-325-9997
Email: staff@newmusicweekly.com
Web: newmusicweekly.com
Contact: Paul Loggins, Larry Weir, Chuck Dauphin, John Loggins, Jon Hudson, Masika Swain, Debi Fee
Styles/Specialties: all styles
"National music magazine specializing in radio airplay charts, artist spotlights/interviews and entertainment based editorials

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951-444-8683
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Web: nvarecords.com
Contact: Gary Devon Dotsdon, CEO

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New York, NY 10003
Email: info@theorieco
Web: theorieco

PACIFIC MARKETING LLC

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Salem, OR 97301
503-880-5516
Email: luc@pacmarllc.com
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Suite 302
San Diego, CA 92101
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Ojai, CA 93023
805-201-6300
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Formats/Specialties: CHR/Top 40, AC, Hot AC, AAA, Alternative Specialty, Mainstream Rock, Modern AC, Country, College for artists of all label sizes including Independent.

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62 Grand St., 3rd Fl.
New York, NY 10013
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Email: nycinfo@peoplesrevolution.com
Web: peoplesrevolution.com
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Entertainment Media & Marketing
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New York, NY 10001
212-334-6116
Email: info@pfamedia.net
Web: pfamedia.net

Additional location:

Nashville
615-840-8127
Email: info@pfamedia.net

PINNACLE MANAGEMENT

785 Quintana Rd. #174
Morro Bay, CA 93442
805-382-2200
Email: howie@howiewood.com
Web: howiewood.com
Contact: Howard Rosen
Formats/Specialties: We quarterback projects in all genres,CHR/Top 40, AC, Hot AC, AAA, Alternative Specialty, Mainstream Rock, Modern AC, Country & College for artists of all label sizes including Independent. Social Media, Video Production

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1303 16th Ave. S.
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615-327-0100
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Portland, OR
206-890-9906
Email: nathan@riotactmedia.com
Web: riotactmedia.com

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Hollywood, FL 33020
954-767-8385
Email: service@rockstarpromos.com
Web: facebook.com/rockstarpromos
Contact: Aaron Schimmel
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425 E 53rd St.
New York, NY 10022
212-593-6400
Email: taylorjohnson@ruderfinn.com
Web: ruderfinn.com
Contact: Taylor Johnson

SHINE ON PROMO

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Web: shineonpromo.com
Specialties: Radio Promotion for College/ Specialty / NONCOMM formats.
#1 Albums in 2020: OSEES, Bully, Washed Out, Wolf Parade & of Montreal.

SO MUCH MOORE MEDIA

615-202-1313
Email: martha@somuchmoore.com
Web: somuchmoore.com, facebook.com/somuch-mooremedia
Contact: Martha Moore
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Email: support@sonicbids.com
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Web: spawnnak.com

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Los Angeles, CA
818-363-1315
Web: speakeasypr.com
Email: monica@speakeasypr.com
Contact: Monica Seide

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12198 Ventura Blvd., Ste. 210
Studio City, CA 91604

818-763-9800
Email: info@spinlab.net
Web: spinlab.net
Styles/Specialties: branding campaigns, corporate communications, crisis communications, event planning and execution, public relations, publicity

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 A Backstage Entertainment Co.
 5018 Franklin Pike
 Nashville, TN 38220
 310-325-9997
Email: staff@spintrackingsystem.com
Web: spintrackingsystem.com
Styles/Specialties: Country, AC, hot AC, top 40, hip-hop, rap, AAA, Christian, college, loud rock, jazz, smooth

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 Artists' Gateway to Production Services
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Email: claris@studioexpres.com
Styles: jazz, R&B, record pools, world, Americana

SUNSHINE SACHS & ASSOCIATES
 136 Madison Ave, 17th Fl.
 New York, NY 10016
 212-691-2800
Email: info@sunshinesachs.com
Web: sunshinesachs.com
Contact: Jeff Okeefe

Additional locations:
 720 Cole Ave
 Los Angeles, CA 90038
 323-822-9300

201 W. 5th Street
 11th Floor
 Austin, TX 78701
 512-646-0149

1875 Connecticut Ave. NW, 10th Fl.
 Washington, D.D. 20009
 202-280-2398
 101 Marietta Street, NW
 Suite 3000
 Atlanta, GA 30303
 404-334-3545

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 785 Quintana Rd. #174
 Morro Bay, CA 93442
 805-382-2200
Email: howie@howiewood.com
Web: howiewood.com
Contact: Howard Rosen
Formats/Specialties: We quarterback projects in all genres, C&H/Top 40, AC, Hot AC, AAA, Alternative Specialty, Mainstream Rock, Modern AC, Country & College for artists of all label sizes including Independent. Social Media, Video Production

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 Carmel, CA 93923
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Web: thirstyear.com

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 East Northport, NY 11731
 Melville, NY 11747
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Email: info@thomaspr.com
Web: thomas-pr.com
Contact: Karen Thomas

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 31805 Temecula Pkwy, #551
 Temecula, CA 92592
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Web: timsweeney.com
Styles/Specialties: all styles

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Web: 1888media.com
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 Roster: Coral Moons, The Haunt, Kevin Daniel, Gordon Goodwin, Teni Rane, Joanna Pearl, Sam Robbins, Afton Wolfe, The Burnt Pines

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 Los Angeles, CA
 818-990-6876
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Contact: Amanda Cagan

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Email: rockstarpr@aol.com
Web: rockstarpr.com
Contact: Jeff Albright

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 720-341-8567
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 718-881-8183
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 Nashville, TN 37212
 615-269-7071
Email: info@aristomedia.com
Web: facebook.com/aristomedia

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Email: contact@artisanspr.com
Web: artisanspr.com

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 323-904-9094
Web: facebook.com/bbgunpress
Contact: Bobbie Gale

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Web: beachwood.la, facebook.com/

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Instagram: @beachwoodentertainmentco

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Contact: Elizabeth Freund

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Web: bighassle.com

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 Los Angeles, CA 90034
 424-603-4655

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 New York, NY 10002
 212-675-3103
Email: paul@bigpicturemediaonline.com
Web: bigpicturemediaonline.com
Contact: Dayna Ghiraldi-Travers

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 Chicago, IL 60622
Email: info@biz3.net
Web: biz3.net

BLACK & WHITE PR
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 West Hollywood, CA 90046
Email: sara@phases2pr.com
Web: blackandwhitepr.net

**BOBBI MARCUS PUBLIC
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 Los Angeles, CA
 310-889-9200
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Contact: Bobbi Marcus

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 North Hollywood, CA 91602
 818-766-5967
Email: db@brokawcompany.com

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 225 West 35th Street
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 New York, NY 10001
 212-768-0860
Email: rebecca@brookspr.com
Web: brookspr.com

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 Woodland Hills, CA 91364
 818-340-4422
Email: brian@bsgpr.com
Web: bsgpr.com

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 New York, NY
 646-405-7010
Email: info@btpr.biz
Web: btpr.biz

BURSON COHN & WOLFE
 3 World Trade Center
 175 Greenwich Street
 New York, NY 10007
 212-601-3000
Email: jillian.janaczek@bcw-global.com
Web: bcw-global.com

Additional locations:
 California, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Europe, Latin American, Africa

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 Franklin, TN 37067
 615-210-3602
Email: info@campbellentertainmentgroup.com
Web: campbellentertainmentgroup.com

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 Washington, DC 20002
 202-506-5051
Email: billcarpenter@capitalentertainment.com
Web: capitalentertainment.com

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 323-363-9338
Email: hello@charmschooliee.com
Web: charmschooliee.com
Contact: Angelique Groh
Clients: Cory Helford Gallery, Alife, Lettuce

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 Norristown, PA 19403
 484-932-8951
Email: info@chipsterpr.com
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CHROMATIC PUBLICITY
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 Brooklyn, NY 11225
Email: hector@chromaticpr.com
Web: chromaticpublicity.com
Contact: Amanda Pitts, Hector Silva

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Contact: Lee Runchey, VP

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Web: clarioncallmedia.com/about
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 212-239-8384
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Web: dbaronmedia.com

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 Los Angeles, CA 90010
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Email: info@degyp.com
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Contact: Ari Nisman

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Contact: Don Lucoff, President

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 600 3rd Ave., 23rd Fl.
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Additional location:

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Coral Gables, FL 33134
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Los Angeles, CA 90025
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Web: dominion3.com
Contact: Kim Dixon

DOUG DEUTSCH PUBLICITY SERVICES

Atlantic City, NJ
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Contact: Ilka Erren Pardinas

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Burbank, CA 91602
310-734-8193
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Web: facebook.com/gailrobertspr, gailrobertspr.com
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Styles/Specialties: Longstanding music PR firm with
marketing and online promotion, internet publicity,
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media for painters, authors, corporations and ecologi-
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New York, NY 10001
212-989-2222
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Web: girlieaction.com

GLOBAL SOUND GROUP, LTD.

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+44 (0) 207 118 3444
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Contact: Craig Melone
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 +61-(0) 3 9695 0104
Email: customerservice@bandtshirts.com.au
Web: bandtshirts.com.au

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Email: letstalk@bandwear.com
Web: bandwear.com
Services: Manufacturing of promotional and retail
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BIG 10 INDUSTRIES, INC.
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Web: Big10inc.com
 310-280-1610 ext 1

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 of music merchandising

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Web: schoolkidsrecords.com

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Web: stickerjunkie.com

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BANDCAMP
Web: bandcamp.com
Notes: promote music, all genres

BANDS IN TOWN
Web: bandsintown.com
Notes: shows

BAND VISTA
Web: bandvista.com
Notes: band website creation

BANDZOOGL
Web: bandzoogle.com
Notes: band website creation

BOMBPLATES
Web: bombplates.com/homepage, facebook.com/bombplates
Notes: band website creation

DJ BOOTH
Web: djbooth.net
Notes: hip-hop promo, music reviews

EVENTFUL
Web: eventful.com
Notes: shows

HOMEgrown HITS
Web: homegrownhits.com
Notes: Billboard-like chart for indie artists, all genres, competition

INDIE ARTIST RADIO
Web: facebook.com/indieartistradio
Notes: music promo

INDIE ON THE MOVE
Web: indieonthemove.com
Notes: Venue reviews

MERCH DIRECT
Web: merchdirect.com
Notes: merch

PUREVOLUME
Web: purevolume.com
Notes: music promo

REVERBNATION
Web: reverbnation.com
Notes: music promo

SECTION 101
Web: section101.com
Notes: website creation

SONGKICK
Web: songkick.com
Notes: shows

STAGEIT
Web: stageit.com
Notes: stream shows

STORE ENVY
Web: storenvy.com
Notes: merch

DISTRIBUTION/ONLINE RETAIL

CD BABY
Web: cdbaby.com
Notes: distribution/online retail

CARDSCASHREWARDS.COM
Web: cardscashrewards.com
Email: info@cardscashrewards.com
Notes: NFT development from conceptualization through minting and fan-focused sales and distribution.

GUMROAD
Web: gumroad.com
Notes: Twitter app for distribution/online retail

HELLO MERCH
Web: hellom merch.com

MERCHNOW
Web: merchnow.com

ORCHARD
Web: theorchard.com

TUNECORE
Web: tunecore.com

FAN MAIL/CAREER MANAGEMENT

ARTIST GROWTH
Web: artistgrowth.com
Notes: career management

CONVERT KIT
Web: convertkit.com/fanbridge
Notes: fan management

IFANZ
Web: ifanz.com, facebook.com/ifanzdotcom
Notes: fan management

ONLYWIRE
Web: onlywire.com, g2.com/products/onlywire/reviews
Notes: Post to 47 social networks
networking/social/gigs

NETWORKING/SOCIAL/GIGS

CARDSCASHREWARDS.COM
Website: cardscashrewards.com
Notes: Live streams of artist showcases sponsored by company and its strategic Partners. Company actively accepts submissions all commercial genres

CONCERTS IN YOUR HOME
Web: concertsinyourhome.com

FESTIVAL NET
Web: festivalnet.com
Notes: find and book festival gigs

GIGSALAD
Web: gigsalad.com

MUSIC2DEAL
Web: music2deal.com
Notes: networking

MUSICIANS CONTACT
Web: musicianscontact.com
Notes: Find musicians, gigs

SONICBIDS
Web: sonicbids.com
Notes: Social music marketing platform, connects bands, promoters, brands and fans

WEGETNETWORKING
Web: wegetnetworking.com

LICENSING

BROADJAM
Web: broadjam.com
Notes: licensing

CIRCASOUNDS
Library Music/Licensing
Web: circasounds.com
Email: info@circasounds.com

MUSIC SUPERVISOR
Web: musicsupervisor.com

SONG & FILM
Email: licensing@songandfilm.com
Web: songandfilm.com
Contact: Osie "OZ" Brown
Comments: One-Stop song licensing for independent artists. S&F has placed songs in TV shows including NetFlix, film, and sport networks and events.
Submit music via the website on the "submit" page

TAXI
Web: taxi.com
Notes: licensing

INFORMATION/OPPORTUNITIES

CARDSCASHREWARDS.COM
Website: cardscashrewards.com
Notes: Company actively accepts music submissions for sponsored marketing services

DATAMUSICATA
Web: datamusicata.com
Notes: info/articles for artists, blog style

DIGITAL MUSIC NEWS
Web: digitalmusicnews.com
Notes: Up-to-date industry news

HIP HOP MAKERS
Web: hiphopmakers.com
Notes: articles for hip-hop producers

HYPEBOT
Web: hypebot.com
Notes: music business news and articles

INDIE BIBLE
Web: indiebible.com
Notes: contacts, info

KINGS OF A&R
Web: kingsofar.com
Notes: opps

MUSIC CONNECTION
Web: musicconnection.com

MUSIC NOMAD
Web: musicnomad.com
Notes: music industry resources listing

MUSIC REGISTRY
Web: musicregistry.com
Notes: music industry directories

MUSIC XRAY
Web: musicxray.com
Notes: submissions for opps, licensing

SONICBIDS
Web: sonicbids.com
Notes: opps

TAXI
Web: taxi.com
Notes: opps/info

TRUE TALENT MANAGEMENT
Web: truetalentpr.com
Notes: articles/info

BLOGS

2DOPEBOYZ
Web: 2dopeboyz.com
Notes: hip-hop blog

ALLHIPHOP
Web: allhiphop.com
Notes: hip-hop blog

AQUARIUM DRUNKARD
Web: aquariumdrunkard.com
Notes: blog

ARI'S TAKE
Web: aristake.com
Notes: Artist blog on the industry

BROOKLYN VEGAN
Web: brooklynvegan.com
Notes: blog

DATAMUSICATA
Web: datamusicata.com

DJ BOOTH
Web: djbooth.net
Notes: blog, hip-hop, R&B, soul

HIPHOPDX
Web: hiphopdx.com
Notes: blog, hip-hop, R&B, soul

INVISIBLE ORANGES
Web: invisibleoranges.com
Notes: blog, heavy metal

KINGS OF A&R
Web: kingsofar.com
Notes: blog

LHYPE
Web: lhype.com
Notes: up-and-coming indie music and food fusion website out of Nashville. They feature a different indie artist each week or month and create recipes inspired by the artists background, music style, lifestyle and favorite foods.

LOSANGELOUS
Web: instagram.com/losangealous
Notes: blog, show listings

MICHAEL DOLAN'S BLOG
Web: jmichaeldolan.com
Notes: Founder and previous Publisher of Music Connection

PITCHFORK
Web: pitchfork.com
Notes: blog

RADIOLAB
Web: radiolab.org
Notes: blog

SINGERSROOM
Web: singersroom.com
Notes: blog, R&B/Soul

STEREO GUM
Web: stereo gum.com
Notes: blog

THE HYPE MACHINE
Web: hypem.com
Notes: blog

OTHER

ARTIST SHARE
Web: artistshare.com
Notes: fan funding like Kickstarter

KICKSTARTER
Web: kickstarter.com
Notes: fund raising website for DIY artists

SONGDEX
Web: songdex.com
Notes: Industry song database

SOUND EXCHANGE
Web: soundexchange.com
Notes: collecting online royalties

TUNESAT
Web: tunesat.com
Notes: collecting royalties

For hundreds more contacts from current directories (producers, engineers, managers, agents, vocal coaches, major and independent record labels, publicists, college/indie radio, recording/rehearsal studios, mastering studios, publishers, film/TV and more), visit our website: musicconnection.com.

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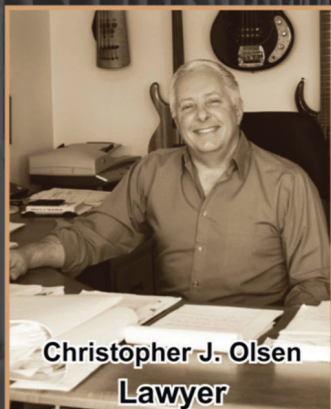
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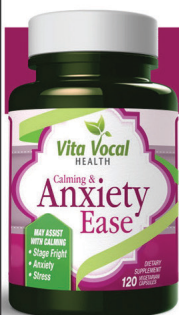
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A Tale of Loss, Redemption, and Fulfillment That Is All True and Uplifting

When I was just back from my first year in college, I was staying in the house in Lexington on Hunt Road, and I was just getting things together and rehearsing and playing at the house. We had a big open basement and I had a great little set-up there with guitars, a turntable, and a collection of records I was trying to practice off of—and lift licks from—Paul Butterfield Blues Band and Al Kooper and Mike Bloomfield solos.

So, guitars were a big thing for me, and I had a Fender acoustic and had just bought a beautiful Fender Stratocaster, white and in perfect condition.

My parents had gone away for the weekend and my younger brother invited all his slacker and stoner friends over to drink beer and hang out. They were a real bunch of thugs and dopers and the party got started and I was downstairs when the police showed up at the front door and created quite a mad dash for the doors and exits. Kids came running down the back stairs for the garage door exits, and I got hit from behind with a table leg and was out like a light.

When I came to, the police were everywhere, quite a few items had been stolen from the house... and when I looked over at my little studio, my beautiful 1971 white Strat was gone. I was heartbroken. How could my brother have friends like this and what in the world had he done to these people?

My younger brother vanished, turns out he didn't know any of these people, and I spent two days cleaning the place up and trying to track down my Strat and the person who had taken it from me.

I tried for years to ask people for leads—try to find the people who were there that night—but I was met with a dead-end at every turn. It was really sad because, as the years wore on, that 1969 Jimi Hendrix Strat had become pretty valuable. But time moves on and as the decades went by, it became a smaller burr under my saddle, but still a pain in my heart, and I learned to live with the sadness and the disappointments of life and various circumstances beyond my control.

"I am sorry for what I did 40 years ago. Please understand that my few years as a lost teenager do not represent the person I am and try to be. I've thought about trying to find you



and make amends for many years. I'm glad I finally did.

I wish you well. I'm guessing your music career brings you much happiness and I hope that continues for many more years."

One afternoon as I was driving west through Dallas, heading to Marfa, when I got a text on my phone—nothing new there, but the message was a bit odd: it said, "are you Eric Sommer? Are you Stevie's older brother?" That was

interesting, so when I got it again the next day, I responded and said, "yes, that's me... what can I do for you?"

"I am the guy who stole your guitar from your basement 40 years ago. I am in a much better place now, and what I did that night has haunted me for all this time. I would like to try and give you your guitar back and ask forgiveness for what I had done so long ago."

It was a haunting message, and I was pretty taken aback. I said that would be fine, I am glad he called, and it showed his true character. I gave him my address and he said he was a lost, messed-up kid, high on

drugs that night... and sold it the next day. He had no idea what happened to it, but he had something that I would like, that was the same brand, and model but a little different year and he will have it re-fretted, set-up, and sent as soon as possible.

The box arrived a few weeks later, along with the letter enclosed here.

"Here's my American Standard Strat. I think its model year is 1995. I bought it brand new at Ray Hennig's store in Austin in 1996. I bought it off Ray himself and he regaled me with stories about how Stevie Ray Vaughan used to hang out in his store every day. Check him out on YouTube."

I've spent most of my life on the road believing guitars are vessels. They carry songs, sweat, rooms, and years. But sometimes they also carry memory—unfinished business vibrating quietly inside the wood. That white Strat didn't just come back as an instrument; it came back as proof that time doesn't only take things away. Occasionally, if you're lucky, it gives something back in a different key.

We don't get many chances to resolve the long echoes of our younger selves. Fewer still arrive unexpectedly, wrapped in cardboard, with an apology inside. When I play that guitar now, I don't hear the loss anymore. I hear distance traveled—by both of us. And that feels like music doing what it's always promised to do: turn noise into meaning, and history into something you can finally lay down.



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