

# MUSIC CONNECTION

ANNUAL GUIDE TO  
*Digital Resources & Social Media*

*How to Be a  
"Working"  
Musician*

Everything You  
Need to Know About  
**DIGITAL MUSIC  
DISTRIBUTION**

**Andy  
Grammer**

**NEW TOYS**



MeloQuest Keys and Kingdoms  
Music Learning Software



Casio CT-S1000V Vocal Synthesizer

+ Bob Davoli ■ Amber Mark ■ Chris Nardone  
The Americans ■ Evren Gökner ■ Jazz Hands for Autism  
**UNSIGNED ARTIST REVIEWS!**

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36

## Andy Grammer

In our cover Q&A, the multi-platinum Grammer, who's celebrating the release of his fifth album later this year, confesses that having to spend time alone and face his own insecurities has been challenging, but that it ultimately served as a catalyst to a new level of artistry.

By Andrea Beenham

Photos: Alex Harper



44

## Scarlett 3rd Gen Range, Hitmaker Expansion

By Steve Sattler

## Digital Music Distribution

By Frank Demilt



40

## 54 Directory of Digital Resources & Social Media

Compiled By Denise Coso



## Departments

- 08. Close Up
- 09. Assignments
- 10. New Toys
- 14. Book Store
- 16. Up Close
- 18. Studio Mix
- 23. Business Affairs
- 24. The Legal Beat
- 26. Signing Stories
- 28. Song Biz
- 32. Film-TV-Theater
- 34. Mixed Notes

## Reviews

- 48. Album Reviews
- 46. New Music Critiques
- 49. Live Reviews



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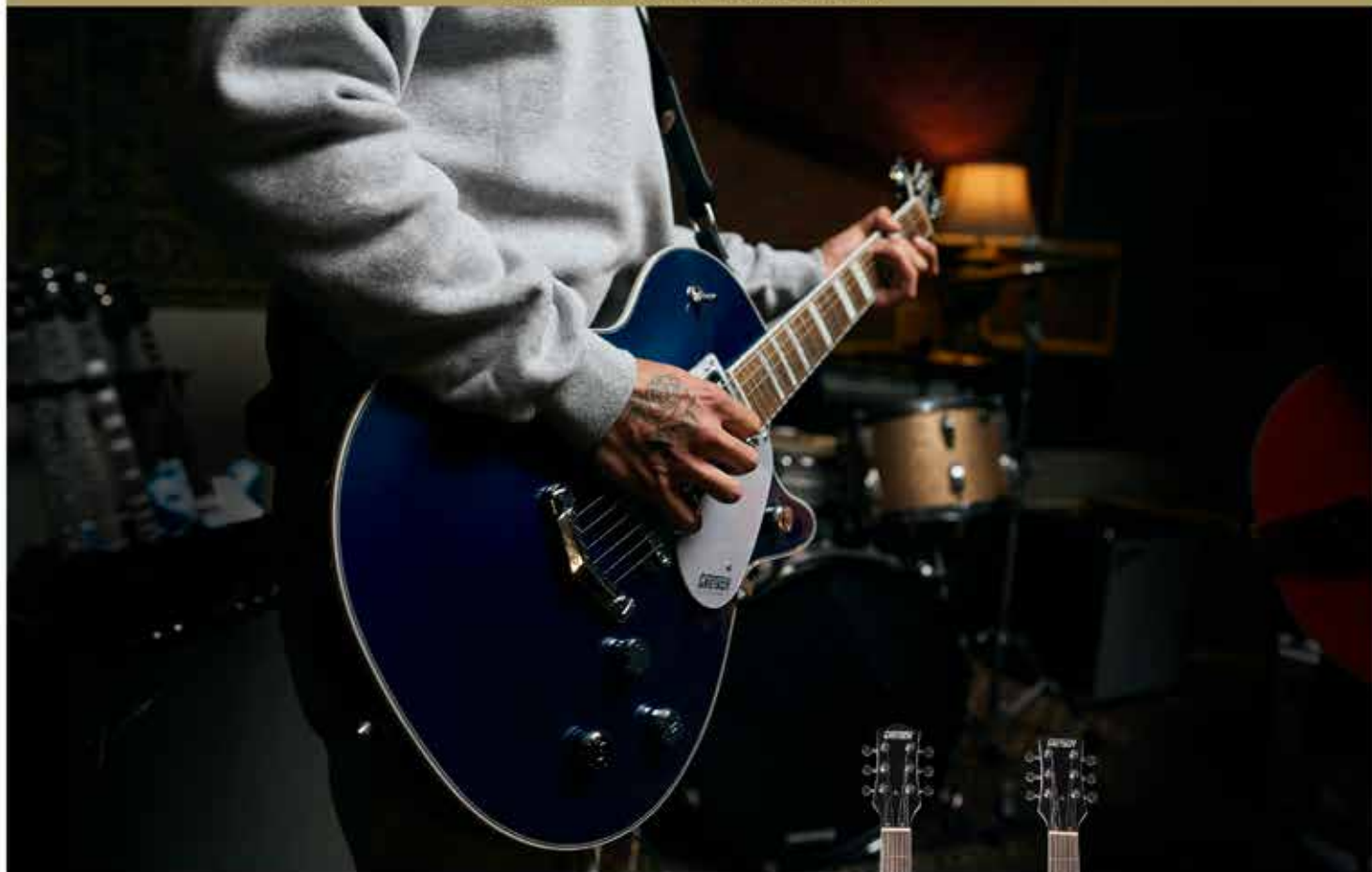


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- 20. Producer Crosstalk: Evren Gökner ..... By Rob Putnam
- 22. Exec Profile: Chris Nardone, Venture Music ..... By Andy Kaufmann
- 30. Songwriter Profile: Ava Della Pietra ..... By Andrea Beenham
- 43. Artist to Artist: Music As a Force for Good ..... By Brandyn Cross
- 45. Industry Profile: Jazz Hands for Autism ..... By Jonathan Widran
- 62. Tip Jar: Getting The Gig: How To Be A "Working" Musician ..... By Bobby Borg



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## MANUFACTURED AND PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

*Music Connection* (ISSN# 1091-9791) is published monthly by *Music Connection, Inc.*, 3441 Ocean View Blvd., Glendale, CA 91208. Single copy price is \$3.95, Canada \$4.95. Subscription rates: \$35/one year, \$59/two years. Outside the U.S., add \$25 (U.S. currency) per year. We are not responsible for unsolicited material, which must be accompanied by return postage. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or part without written permission of the publishers is prohibited. The opinions of contributing writers to this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of *Music Connection, Inc.* Copyright © 2021 by E. Eric Bettelli. All rights reserved.

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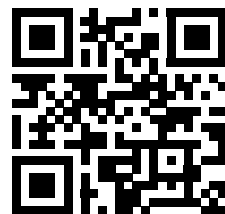


# Casiotone Find your new voice.

CT-S1000V

The new Casiotone CT-S1000V is a go-anywhere, do-anything portable keyboard that can bring your words to life with groundbreaking vocal synthesis.

- Polyphonic vocal synthesis with 22 customizable vocalists
- 800 stunning AiX tones with powerful, editable effects
- Includes WU-BT10 Bluetooth MIDI/Audio adapter
- Audio sampling, arpeggiator and 6-track MIDI recorder



Speak or type your lyrics into the Lyric Creator iOS/Android app, transfer them to the CT-S1000V, and play your words polyphonically with one of many customizable vocalists.



The included WU-BT10 Bluetooth MIDI/Audio adapter opens up a world of wireless connectivity with your favorite devices and software. You can sample from incoming Bluetooth audio, control your favorite software synths, and much more.



The bright, backlit display and intuitive real-time controls help you explore, tweak, and perfect your sound. Multi-function knobs give you control over filters, vocalist parameters, DSP effects and more, whenever you need it.



# TASCAM

[tascam.com/usa](http://tascam.com/usa)

**Five Decades of Audio/Video Recording Products:** Since its formative years in the 70's, Montebello based TASCAM—one of four divisions of the Japanese based TEAC Corporation—has dedicated itself to the creation of revolutionary products in the fields of music and audio. TEAC formed the division to manufacture recording equipment when it became obvious that their home stereo hi fi gear was outperforming the quality of the typical mainstream recording. TASCAM's mission became making equipment that had the uncompromising quality and durability of professional studio gear yet was affordable to the average consumer. These included the first 1/2-inch, 4-track cassette recorder, the first 8-track, reel to reel/mixer combo, the first R-DAT recorder and the first MiniDisc digital multitracker and CD scratcher. TASCAM's goal in the 2020s remains the same—manufacture and sell superior recording tools that keep complicated tech out of the way so artists can create their art. The company's R&D department is very receptive and responsive to consumer feedback, and has even updated firmware at times to address important concerns.

**Mixcast 4:** With a simple yet spot on branding slogan—"Podcast audio creation made easy"—Mixcast 4 is a powerful, multi-faceted podcast station with a built in recorder and USB audio interface that can be used for podcast creation, live streaming, event production or voiceovers. Veteran TASCAM Product Specialist Sean Daily notes that it follows in the tradition of the 144, the first portable studio the company created 40 years ago—and that the Mixcast 4 will do for podcasting what the earlier product achieved for recording. It is a one-stop workstation that allows for the recording and mixing of sound sources without complicated settings, providing all audio related operation and workflow needed for live streaming, events, podcasts and other applications. Among its features are a five-inch color touch panel that is as intuitive and easy to use as an iPhone or Android. It also has dual inputs that support XLR and quarter inch TRS inputs that open up more avenues for the use of electric guitars,



basses, keyboards and electronic drums. Users can connect their phone through an eighth inch TRRS cable. It has dedicated channels for mics, full size faders, USB and smartphone and Bluetooth connections.

**Portacapture X8:** Another exciting new TASCAM offering is the Portacapture X8, a new generation, high res, adaptive multi-track hand held recorder. Like the Mixcast, it has a large color touch screen that is smart phone-easy to navigate. Fitting in the palm of the hand and operated by battery or USB, it can be used by filmmakers in the field to capture the sounds of gunshots, explosions, vehicles and nature. It is the only digital handheld recorder on the market that employs the innovative 32-bit float recording technology. The format encodes audio in an IEEE-754 standard single precision format; translated into decibels, that gives a range of more than 1500 dB, more range than most users will ever need.

Contact TASCAM, 323-726-0303

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*Jazz Ambassadors Magazine*

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[songsalive.org](http://songsalive.org)



## Silvia Montello

*Chief Executive Officer*  
AFEM

**Silvia Montello** has been named **Chief Executive Officer of AFEM: Association For Electronic Music**. Founded in 2013, AFEM serves as a pillar to connect and represent the common interests of companies and artists whose business is electronic music. The non-profit organization includes more than 250 members across 25 countries, representing all industry sectors within the electronic genre. Prior to joining AFEM, Montello's 30+ years of music industry experience included senior executive positions held at Our Price Music, Gramophone Publications, PolyGram/Universal, BMG, and Kobalt Music/AWAL, where she served as the Senior Vice President of Operations. For more, contact molly@spinlab.net.



## Melanie Santa Rosa

*Operations Advisory Committee*  
The MLC

**The Mechanical Licensing Collective (The MLC)** announced that music industry veteran **Melanie Santa Rosa**—Senior Vice President, Global Administration at Spirit Music Group—has been appointed to The MLC's Operations Advisory Committee. Santa Rosa has more than 20 years of experience in performing rights, copyright, business affairs, cue sheets, licensing, royalty collections, catalog onboarding and global societies, and has helped build Spirit into a leading independent music publisher. A strong advocate for creators, she is also a board member of the NY chapter of the Association of Independent Music Publishers. Contact dave.felipe@themlc.com.



## Gina Stimler

*Global Sales Manager*  
MXL Microphones

**MXL Microphones**, a division of **Marshall Electronics** has announced the promotion of **Gina Stimler** to the position of **Global Sales Manager**. Since 2005, Stimler has worked in International Sales for MXL, most recently as Senior Sales Operations Manager for Marshall Electronics. In her new role, Stimler will be tasked with developing strategies to maximize profit across international markets for MXL's line of products in professional and home recording, podcasting, A/V and UCC markets. In addition, she will be working with her team in researching new business and client opportunities to further expand the brand across the globe. For more, contact nicoler@dpgan.com.



## Nate Smith

*Unclaimed Royalties Oversight Committee*  
The MLC

**Nate Smith** has been appointed to **The MLC's Unclaimed Royalties Oversight Committee**. Smith has compiled a diverse résumé over the course of nearly two decades as a prolific drummer. His debut album, *KINFOLK: Postcards from Everywhere*, garnered two GRAMMY nominations, and he also earned a pair of GRAMMY nominations for his composition "Home Free (for Peter Joe)." In recent years, his series of viral videos have received millions of views and inspired countless musicians and fans. It is comprised of six representatives of music publishers and six representatives of digital music providers. Contact dave.felipe@themlc.com.



## Mark Vinten

*Business Development Manager*  
David Carroll Associates

Acclaimed pro audio engineer and digital technologies consultant **Mark Vinten** has joined professional AV/Technology systems integrators **David Carroll Associates** in the role of **Business Development Manager**. In his newly-created role, Vinten will work directly with clients and partners in the Southern California region and beyond. He comes to DCA after a decade with broadcast and film industry giant Evertz Microsystems. A two-time Grammy winner and multi-platinum recording engineer, Vinten is the latest addition to the company's growing presence in the Southern California technology sector. For more, contact info@getitinwriting.net.



## Anjula Singh

*CFO, COO*  
SoundExchange

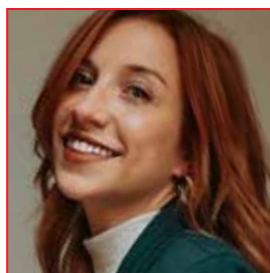
**SoundExchange** named **Anjula Singh** **Chief Financial Officer and Chief Operating Officer** to lead SoundExchange's financial, operational, human resources, and office services teams. During her 16-years at SoundExchange, Singh has played a critical role in scaling the organization for growth and investing in platforms and infrastructure that make the business of music more efficient. Singh provides leadership in the day-to-day operations at SoundExchange and in many other aspects of the organization, including the company's move into the publisher services line of business. For more, contact jv@spinlab.net.



## Jessica Bonner

*Account Executive*  
Milestone Publicity

**Milestone Publicity**—the Nashville-based full-service public relations firm—has promoted **Jessica Bonner** to **Account Executive**. This advancement recognizes her dedication to clients and ability to execute on their campaigns at a high level. Since joining Milestone in August 2021 as an Associate Publicist, Bonner quickly progressed to an Account Manager role, further sharpening her public relations skill set and deepening her knowledge of the field. Now with her ascension to Account Executive, Bonner will assume more leadership scenarios pertaining to client campaigns and internal company communications. For more, contact jbonner@milestonepublicity.com.



## Tommy Korpinen

*Chief Business Development Officer*  
SoundExchange

**SoundExchange** named **Tommy Korpinen** **Chief Business Development Officer** to oversee the SoundExchange digital footprint expansion. With 20 years of experience in music, film, television, and games, Korpinen will lead the expansion of SoundExchange's digital footprint and business partnerships as the music industry continues to evolve with emerging technologies and players. Specifically, Korpinen is responsible for establishing and executing the organization's new business development and growth strategy. This role is critical to the company's broader strategic planning and fostering long-view business transformation. For more, contact jv@spinlab.net.





## ◀ API MC531 MONITOR CONTROLLER

API's new **MC531 Monitor Controller** is a stand-alone version of the monitoring center section you'd find in an API analog console. Actually, it has a little more since it is designed to include monitor control for DAW workflows. The MC531 has exactly the same circuitry as the console with both Main and two Alternate stereo monitor speaker outputs and individual level trims for each set of speakers.

I liked the single XLR subwoofer output—you can set up linking the Sub with the Main and/or either of the Alternate outputs. There are seven stereo input sources: three analog XLR line-level inputs, both AES and USB digital inputs, and plus a Bluetooth receiver input that is paralleled using 1/8-inch mini unbalanced analog jacks front and back panels.

Bluetooth connectivity is very handy for quickly playing music directly from cell phones. Artists and producers love this capability just to play ideas right from their phone—less work too—no importing audio files required.

All analog inputs use API 2510 op amps and the stereo outputs include full mute, mono, and dim functions. There are two stereo headphone outputs switchable between the Control Room (C/R) and a Cue Source selectable from any of five inputs.

The nice looking API lighted push buttons are easy to see as is the large 18-segment LED stereo monitoring meter and the API 41-detent Control Room Knob right in the middle of the action. All connections are on the rear panel of the MC531 that's all powered by an external multi-voltage power supply.

The API MC531 will bump up your current monitoring accuracy and studio to a professional level and is backed by a five-year warranty. It sells for \$2,495 MSRP.

[apiaudio.com/product.php?id=168](http://apiaudio.com/product.php?id=168)

## ▶ UNITED PLUGINS JMG SOUND MIRROR

Reversing audio is usually done **NOT** in real time—you must record it and then flip it around and line it up with your music track. Reversing audio in a DAW is a simple task but having it happen (more or less) in real time in a plug-in is what is new here!

United Plugins' JMG Sound's Mirror is the first "reverse negative delay" plug-in. Mono or stereo audio is recorded into a buffer then it is played back in reverse. By looking ahead in time of the "play head" in your DAW, you'll have your dry audio (in any blend) along with reverb mixed together as backwards audio.

I used Mirror in a Pro Tools session on a big-sounding drum loop but first I had to set the Time parameter for the 1/4 buffer size to temporarily store the audio to be reversed. This worked fine for my loop that is right on the grid at 75 BPM. On the same song, the main acoustic guitar's finger picking part sounded awesome reversed with a little backwards reverb.

I used Mirror without Negative delay and there is no latency and the reversed audio plays right after the original dry like any reverb. If you want the reversed reverb to play from the start, use Negative delay if your system has enough delay compensation or just record it beforehand and slide it into sync.

I used Mirror on drums, guitar tracks, reverb returns, even bass tracks and I found plenty of subtle uses for choirs and keyboard pads.

JMG Sound's Mirror is available as AAX, AU, VST, and VST3 plug-in that's downloadable for a time-limited introductory of €22 with a regular price at €69.

[unitedplugins.com/mirror](http://unitedplugins.com/mirror)



## ▼ CASIO CT-S1000V VOCAL SYNTHESIZER

Casio's new **CT-S1000** is the first vocal synthesizer that turns typed-in text—such as song lyrics—into a musical phrase and then "sings" them in full harmony (if you like) based on notes played on its keyboard. Sounding like a vocoder except there is no microphone required, there are 100 Lyric Tones (phrases inspired by familiar songs) built into the CT-S1000V. These can be overwritten and/or there's space for 50 more brought in from the Lyric Creator app. The instrument works with both English and Japanese text.

Lyric Creator (app for iOS and Android) allows for typing in lyrics and then loads them into the CT-S1000V via USB. It then, under your control on the keyboard, is played using any of 22 vocalist types, including talk boxes, processed choirs, robot voices, vocoders and whispering vocals. Phrases can be played all at once rhythmically, or one syllable at a time with or without legato and then sequenced together to play complete songs. The onboard MIDI recorder can store up to five songs.

The CT-S1000V has its own AiX tone source with 800 high-resolution sounds in 64-voice polyphony, and the keyboard may be split or layered to play multiple sounds together. The accompaniment section puts a complete backup band under the player's fingers, including 243 built-in rhythms, 50 user-programmable rhythms, and auto-harmonies.

The CT-S1000V will sample up to ten seconds of high-quality audio samples via its 1/8-inch stereo input jack or wirelessly using

the included WU-BT10 Bluetooth MIDI & audio adapter. There are 100 studio-quality effects including many amplifier and cabinet simulators, modulation effects, choruses, reverbs, delays, and much more.

The CT-S1000V sells for \$679.99 MSRP.

[casiomusicgear.com](http://casiomusicgear.com)





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## ◀ PRESONUS AUDIOBOX GO USB AUDIO INTERFACE

The award for **smallest**, lightest and most portable interface goes to the new PreSonus AudioBox Go. It has a "footprint" size two, stacked packs of cigarettes yet there's everything you need to record and monitor in stereo up to 96kHz/24-bit audio.

The AudioBox GO is powered over its USB-C connection (a USB-C to USB-A cable is included) and no drivers are required. I put it right to work for a Zoom meeting with no hassle at all!

The AudioBox has two inputs: input 1 is a combo mic/line XLR and input 2 is a dedicated 1/4-inch Instrument jack. I plugged in my Microphone-Parts S-87 condenser kit mic, turned on the phantom power and then plugged in a Martin

Grand J-16E 12-string with a Fishman Matrix acoustic guitar pickup into Instrument input 2. Along with a Mac laptop, this is an outstanding rig ready to record into any DAW anywhere.

The two inputs use PreSonus' proprietary XMAX-L mic preamps and I liked that the pair of balanced 1/4-inch TRS balanced outputs on the rear panel could easily drive my IK Multimedia iLoud MTM Reference monitors plus the front panel headphone jack worked well for my Austrian Audio Hi-X65 headphones.

All controls on the AudioBox Go's miniature front panel are simple and intuitive to use; there is a single speaker volume knob and separate controls for: headphone level, Inputs 1&2 gain, a Mix/Live cross fader for zero latency monitoring, and 48-volt phantom on/off.

The PreSonus AudioBox GO is a great way to get everything you need to record at a professional level in one, easy-to-carry, small and compact place. It comes with PreSonus' Studio One®Prime recording software and the Studio Magic suite collection of virtual instruments, and effects plug-ins. The AudioBox GO sells for \$79.95 MAP.

[presonus.com/products/AudioBox-Go](http://presonus.com/products/AudioBox-Go)

## ▶ MELOQUEST KEYS AND KINGDOMS MUSIC LEARNING SOFTWARE

**Keys and Kingdoms** is educational music software that is designed for children from ages 6-15 and works on iPads, iPhones, Macs and PCs. Children learn to play piano, utilize music theory, and create songs in this musical and educational video game that progresses through multiple levels through epic adventures in the land of Harmonia. Over 100 songs are taught at the student's individual pace and a small portable USB keyboard is included.

Starting out with playing simple, one-hand intervals and progressing onto complicated patterns using both hands, kids learn to play songs, build a sense of rhythm, and compose music.

Reading music notation is always challenging for young children and the proprietary Sight Reduction Method was devised to help students develop their skills and reduce the pressure of reading musical notes. This method keeps players engaged, achieve faster, and feel the instant joy of completing the tasks (lessons) in the game.

Vivian Fang Liu, a noted child music educator, commented that she liked the one-phrase short theory lessons that take place during the software's loading times between changing lessons and tasks. The players learn everything from the definition of a half step, musical structure and theory as foundations for creativity.

The sound design is superb and the visually colorful accompaniment makes playing more entertaining to students at the same time as recognizing different time signatures and tempos for example. The game features 24/7 reporting by way of weekly e-mails with statistics and alerts for monitoring your child's learning progress.

If you are parents who are frustrated with trying to motivate your child to complete their daily piano practicing, Keys and Kingdoms is an excellent teaching aid for your child.

MeloQuest Keys and Kingdoms sells for \$99.99 with an included three-month subscription with subsequent monthly subscription at \$9.99 each.

[keysandkingdoms.com](http://keysandkingdoms.com)



## ▼ PSP IMPRESSOR PLUG-IN

**Much more than an update**, PSP's **Impressor** is a refined version of PSP's MixPressor with resizable GUI, oversampling, a choice of feed forward or feedback compression modes and, notably, a sophisticated side-chain/filter system. With it, you can crossfade between external and internal side-chain signals. I liked the Monitor/Listen button to quickly set the side-chain filter type, its frequency center and Q. You can use the Impressor as a de-esser or to reduce pumping of your mix caused by bass-heavy kick drums.

PSP Impressor emulates the classic characteristics of compressors with valve and opto-electronic circuits as well as classic modern compressors that use VCAs. It is easy to setup very precise attack, release, and hold times and get accurate measurements of gain reduction, both input and output levels to sculpt the shape, nature and strength of the compression.

I found Impressor to be very versatile for any dynamic modification task such as de-essing, smooth and gentle leveling, serious limiting, and wacky side-chain trickery. It can be very colorful sounding using the Saturation mode on its output or engage the quadruple oversampling for the most pristine processing for mastering. I understand all of its power and cannot wait to get it into my mixes!

A great value, PSP Impressor joins PSP Saturator as two, brand new great-sounding tools from my friends in war-adjacent Warsaw, Poland. PSP Impressor sells for \$99 as a download and current users of the PSP MixPack bundle will receive a 70% discount.

[pspaudioware.com/products/psp-impressor](http://pspaudioware.com/products/psp-impressor)



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





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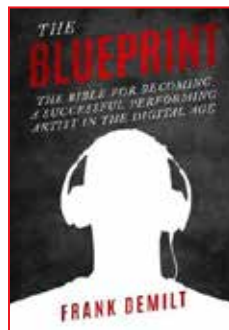
## BOOK STORE

### The Blueprint

By Frank Demilt

(hardcover) \$20.00

Here's a terrific primer on how to be a successful artist today, from A to Z. And since the author is a professional sound engineer as well as an experienced A&R representative, he spends considerable space on the ins and



outs of the entire recording process, from pre-production to mastering. All in all, the book gives excellent insights and advice on all aspects of the music industry—including distribution, marketing, touring, label submissions—particularly for up-and-coming artists.

### The Real Ambassadors

By Keith Hatschek

(paperback) \$25.00

In his timely book, Hatschek tells the story of three determined artists: Louis Armstrong, Dave Brubeck, and Lola Brubeck and the stand they took against segregation by writing and performing a jazz musical titled *The Real Ambassadors*. First conceived by the Brubecks



in 1956, the musical's journey to the stage for its 1962 premiere tracks extraordinary twists and turns across the backdrop of the civil rights movement. A variety of colorful characters, from Broadway impresarios to gang-connected managers, surface in the compelling storyline.

### My Life in Dire Straits

By John Illsley

(hardcover) \$30.00

This memoir by Straits member John Illsley gives the inside track on the band's rise from humble origins to the best-known venues in the world, the working man's clubs to



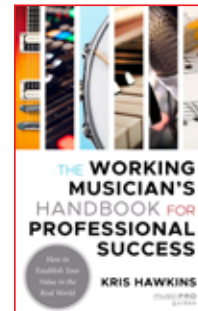
Madison Square Garden, sharing gigs with wild punk bands to rocking the Live Aid stage at Wembley. And woven throughout is an intimate portrait and tribute to Illsley's great friend Mark Knopfler, the band's lead singer, songwriter, and virtuoso guitarist.

### The Working Musician's Handbook for Professional Success: How to Establish Your Value in the Real World

By Kris Hawkins

(paperback) \$29.00

With over two decades of experience in the industry, Hawkins shares some of the insights that he has gained—via successes as well as failures—in the hopes that you will learn



from his missteps and triumphs. *The Working Musician's Handbook for Professional Success* focuses on real-life situations, including: Asserting your value, dealing with clients, protecting your work, treating your music as a business, financial management, finding work and networking.

### Mysteries in the Music

By Jim Berkenstadt

(paperback) \$19.95

*Mysteries in the Music: Case Closed* examines the secrets, myths, legends, hoaxes, conspiracies, and the wildly inexplicable



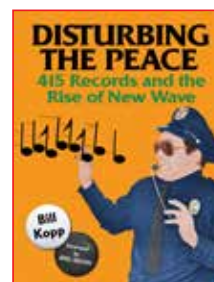
events that are such an intriguing part of rock and roll history. Author Birkenstadt covers intriguing stories about the Beatles, the Stones, the Beach Boys, Elvis Presley, Bob Marley, Nirvana and others in this entertaining and informative book.

### Disturbing the Peace: 415 Records and the Rise of New Wave

By Bill Kopp

(paperback) \$36.95

Bill Kopp's chronicle of the groundbreaking independent record label founded by Howie Klein & Chris Knab, featuring the stories of Romeo Void, Red Rockers, Translator, Wire Train, Roky Erickson, The Nuns, Pearl Harbor and Explosions, and nearly two dozen other bands. Based on nearly 100 interviews with the



artists, industry execs, producers, friends, rivals, onlookers, journalists and hangers-on, *Disturbing the Peace* also features hundreds of photos and memorabilia from the personal archives of those who were there.



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## Omega Studios

[omegastudios.com](http://omegastudios.com)

**Stronger than Ever at 54:** Founded in 1968 in nearby Kensington, MD, Rockville-based Omega Studios is one of the oldest recording facilities in the U.S. and one of the few state of the art studios in the mid-Atlantic region that specializes in live recording. Over the years, Omega has hosted sessions for a wide variety of artists and productions, including Michael Bolton, Def Leppard, Mya, the Washington Opera, the U.S. Marine Band, U.S. Army Fife & Drum Corps, Disney Cruises and, for a series of podcasts, the Broadway cast of *Hamilton* (which included President Obama coming in to record a voiceover). Studio A's capacity of up to 70 musicians has made it the go-to for international music publishers as well as feeding live shows broadcasting from downtown Washington D.C. venues with live remote orchestras in the studio. In addition to exceptional acoustics, Omega offers a massive, ever expanding mic collection, a wide selection of analog and digital equipment, vintage keyboards and other instruments.

**State-of-the-Art Rooms:** Owner Edward Peterson is happy to announce that Studio B—the room designed for live recording of moderate-sized instrumental or vocal groups and overdub tracking—has a brand new 72 channel SSL 9000 console. "Even with digital recordings, the first stage is analog, and we've got to take the sound out of the air and turn it into an



electronic signal," he says. "The better the analog stage is, the more beautiful your recording. This console offers a truly great, clean and smooth analog sound." Studio A, featuring a Neve VR-60 60x48 with Flying Faders Automation and Total Recall, is designed for live instrumental and vocal production. At 50' x 40' with 20' ceilings, it hosts ensembles of all sizes and styles—jazz trios, 65-piece orchestras and heavy metal bands. It also has iso rooms and a large control room. Studio C serves as a 24-track (analog or digital) room and as a vocal narration/radio and advertising production studio. Studio D, with its Avid/Digidesign Icon console, is dedicated to digital mastering, editing, mixing and audio for film and TV.

**Engineering School:** Founded in 1977, The Omega Studios' School of Applied Recording Arts and Sciences is a top engineering school with a comprehensive music business program that draws students from all over the world. It is dedicated to training recording engineers and providing technical education for people aspiring to work in the recording and TV/film industries. Omega's 20,000-square-foot studio/school complex's extensive array of multi-tracks, synthesis, MIDI and acoustic recording equipment is integrated into the school curriculum. The Omega programs provide experience on industry-standard "heavy hardware" found in the largest and most influential studios in the world. Peterson says, "While the basic subject matter, training and career objectives are the same, our programs are constantly evolving to keep up with the changes in technology. One of our great selling points is that nearly 75 percent of the instruction is hands-on, creating studio recordings on three of the finest consoles ever made. With five or six students in each class, our instructors can offer great amounts of individual attention. Those who graduate come out well prepared to be successful recording engineers in the real world."

Contact Omega Studios, 301-230-9100

**MUSIC CONNECTION**

"Since I've been mixing, which has been a few years, the best and only connection for me has been *Music Connection*. Cover to cover they always bring value to my music and my mind."

**-Chris Lord-Alge**



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### ▲ CULTURE WARS AT UNITED RECORDING

Electro-Rock sensation Culture Wars took a break in their busy touring schedule to drop in at United Recording in Hollywood to track some tunes for their upcoming album. Pictured (L-R) in United Studio B are Culture Wars' David Grayson and frontman Alex Dugan, engineers Gerardo Ordonez and Scott Moore, guitarist/electronics Dillon Randolph; and producer Caleb Contreras holding Pete.



### ▲ EVERGREY'S HEARTLESS PORTRAIT

Evergrey released their new album *A Heartless Portrait (The Orphean Testament)* via Napalm Records. Pictured at Division West Coast Studios in Skagerakk, Sweden, frontman Tom S. Englund is seen recording vocals.



### ▲ REGGIE WATTS

Reggie Watts can be seen nightly on TV as the bandleader for *The Late Late Show with James Corden* and was previously the co-host of variety series *Comedy Bang! Bang!* Watts relies heavily on improvisation—looping his beat-boxed rhythms and soulful vocals into spontaneous musical inventions that are funky, hypnotic and hilarious. Watts also performs and records in the electronic duo Wajatta, with John Tejada.



### ▲ NEW ROOMS AT FAB FACTORY STUDIOS

Fab Factory Studios celebrated the launch of their two new Dolby Atmos rooms featuring PMC Speakers. Owners Steve and Shaun Fabos (pictured right) designed unique studios with cutting-edge technology, the highest music and post-production standards for artists, audio professionals, and content creators. At the event, guests got the opportunity to go beyond ordinary listening with the Dolby Atmos breakthrough immersive audio experience.

## Producer Playback

*"Producers and songwriters are artists. That means you have something to say. Don't let anybody change that. Be true to yourself."*

— THE BULLITTS (*Jay Electronica, Jay-Z, Mos Def*)







### ▲ CEREBRAL PALSY RAPPER LIL' LEAN

Washington D.C.-based rapper-singer-songwriter Lil' Lean was born with Cerebral Palsy. While the artist could have been discouraged, Lil' Lean instead studied music, which helped him learn the value of dedication and never accepting defeat. Lean has competed in numerous talent shows and freestyle battles with a goal of "lyrically killing the competition."



### ▲ ANIMALWEAPON! AT OMNISOUND

Bedroom electronic act Animalweapon!, the brainchild of Patrick Cortes (pictured left), released their latest album *Set of Constraints* via Polychromatic Records. Cortes is pictured at OmniSound Studios in Nashville, TN, working with Rory Rositas (right).



### ▲ EVERCLEAR JOINS DOWNRITE

Everclear frontman, Art Alexakis, has joined Downrite, the song commissioning experience that brings fans closer to their favorite artists. Fans can now commission custom songs written and performed by Alexakis. If the song is approved for wide release by both Alexakis and the fan, then both parties will be able to share in revenue and royalties from the song.

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Like many audio pros, Grammy-winning mastering engineer Evren Göknaar touched down in L.A. with a guitar in hand and success in mind. He attended Musicians Institute for a time and performed locally before it occurred to him that he'd amplify his value as an engineer if he had studio access. So, he flipped open the latest issue of *Music Connection* magazine and found a small studio with an internship opportunity. Later he moved on to Paramount, engineered there for five years and then graduated to Capitol Mastering, where he spent the next quarter century. He has since worked with artists including Kiss, Nick Jonas and 2Pac. He also masters for the popular NBC show *The Voice*.

In 2020, Göknaar published his book *Major Label Mastering*. It was inspired primarily by his teaching experiences and desire to share the knowledge he's amassed. "We worked from one of the known books on mastering for the class I taught at Cal Poly Pomona and it was good," he recalls. "But I felt that the students needed a more step-by-step book about the process. I'd also worked at Capitol for a long time and saw that it was becoming rarer for people to come in as a runner or a second engineer and learn [on the job] the way they used to."

Although he taught himself his craft through direct experience, he also recognizes the value of a formal engineering education. "When I was coming up, it was a sort of apprenticeship system," he recollects. "You had to have the kind of personality that made people want to interact with you. There are a lot of entrepreneurial interchanges with artists, producers, labels and so forth. This field can get very technical and lean on things like electrical engineering and electronics. You need to dig in and either do some coursework or read some books. Even if you do go through a formal program, you still have to show up and do the work."

Gear can almost seem like an engineer's fingerprint or a strand of his or her DNA. It helps to identify them and may even illuminate aspects of their background. "I use these Manley Pultec-style mastering EQs," Göknaar says about one of his favorite pieces. "They don't make them anymore but they're very musical and smooth-sounding, as far as analog equalizers go. As for plugins, I love the DMG EQUilibrium. Often when I use it, I'm amazed with what they did. It models old consoles quite effectively."

After 25 years of mastering at Capitol, Göknaar now works from EGM - Evren Göknaar Mastering, his own mastering space. "I had it built from the ground up," he explains. "It's a room within a room with isolated electrical and ground. We use QuietRock, which is a sound-reducing drywall so there's no audio bleed in or out. During the pandemic I was able to transition to doing Capitol's work here and then once they closed, a lot of my old clients stayed with me."

As to his current and upcoming projects, recently Göknaar began his 11th season mastering for *The Voice*. He also works with a number of independent songwriters and producers, many of which he finds by way of previous clients. Determining where he fits into the market and how he can be of help to artists has been one of his most vital formulas for success.

Contact [instagram.com/evrengoknar](https://www.instagram.com/evrengoknar),  
[amazon.com/gp/product/B086BMNJ6M](https://amazon.com/gp/product/B086BMNJ6M)

### THE 3 MOST IMPORTANT

*The three most important lessons he's learned as a mastering engineer are:*

- Have a vast pool of experience. You have to understand various musical styles and genres.
- Be able to curate what your approach and signal path is and why to instill confidence in your clients.
- Listen and comment appropriately. Sometimes I'll address the references that I hear in songs. People love to know that you understand their music. It's how you get referrals and repeat clients.



# Who reads Music Connection?



## THE INDIE ARTIST

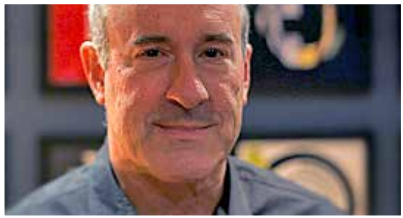
"Music Connection is a great resource for all rising artists looking to gain industry insight and development tips." - **LAW**



## THE EDUCATOR

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

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



## THE AUDIO PRO

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

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



## THE STUDIO OWNER

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

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



## THE INDIE ARTIST

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

- **Aprilann**



## THE GRAMMY WINNER

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

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



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# Chris Nardone

President  
Venture Music

**Years with Company:** Since 2012

**Address:** 1604 8th S., 2nd Floor,  
Nashville, TN 37203

**Phone:** 615-866-3945

**Web:** [venturemusic.com](http://venturemusic.com)

**E-mail:** [info@venturemusic.com](mailto:info@venturemusic.com)

**Clients:** Universal Music Group, BMG,  
Red Light Management, Quartz Hill  
Records, Flobots

## BACKGROUND

Venture Music began as a management company. Over time, it morphed into a marketing agency for musicians. The company specializes in innovative online strategies for our shifting industry, and their clientele includes scores of indie artists, with a handful of marquee names thrown in for good measure.

## Experience Beats Academics

I have a doctorate in artist management, but boots-on-the-ground, real-world experience is my foundation. I studied finance and went to business school because I wanted to be an entrepreneur. I knew learning about money and how to run a business would be tough in the real world, but the rest I had to get on my path to figuring things out.

I kind of have a vendetta against music business schools. I have a certificate in music business, but I hate the idea of getting a degree in music business. We have hired people that have music business degrees, and I like the way it creates a well-rounded, music business-focused individual. But the music business has to be learned through hands-on experience. It can't be learned in a classroom. Also, when you study music business, it tends to give this sense of entitlement that you deserve to be at a point above other people. And that's not the truth at all.

## The TikTok Revolution

You can spend thousands of dollars on an ad campaign and gain 10,000 followers. You can also make one TikTok post, organically reach hundreds of thousands of people, and hit the same marker with zero dollars spent. The dominance of TikTok has completely changed our business. It's been another disruption point for the industry that's given us more opportunity.

## What Venture Costs

We have a straightforward plan structure, but there's a lot of flexibility. Our entry-level indie plan is a \$1,500 a month retainer. With that, we cover all digital advertising needs, but we also bring two hours a month of social media planning and four hours a month of creative design work. We scale up from there, adding in social media management services.

## Word of Mouth

More often than not, somebody recommends us or hears about a campaign we worked on. We often work with new clients that submit on our site. The music industry tends to be a pretty small community, and word spreads as to who's doing what.



*"More often than not, super simple, organic posts are the best-performing advertising creative."*

## Selecting Clients, Globally

We curate our client base. We don't say yes to everything, because that doesn't maintain our ability to do good work. But we're open to any conversation. We work with artists all over. We have clients in Canada, Sweden, the U.K. We've got experience working on campaigns around the world.

## The Artist's Role

A deal breaker is when an artist is not willing to participate in content creation or get outside their comfort zone and do something that gives us a creative jumping-off point. More often than not, super simple, organic posts are the best-performing advertising creative. If an artist is expecting us to create everything and then create a meaningful connection with people, it doesn't work. People see through the bullshit; they see through your marketing plan. So, the goal is to get to know the artist, get them comfortable, see what makes them tick, and then start experimenting with how we can get that 10 or 15 seconds worth of greatness.

## Why Playlisting Sucks

We really don't like playlisting services. The algorithm does a really good job of recognizing what's reacting, so the playlisting ecosystem seems like a shortcut to get there faster. But 100% of the time, we see this huge spike and a fall off in terms of listener count. Then you have a much bigger hill to climb because there's a mess of data that the algorithm is trying to make sense of.

## Getting Over Social Media Psychological Hurdles

The job of artists is to look inside themselves and be the best creators they can be. A lot of times, social media seems like the polar opposite of that. And it is, in a lot of ways. But I try to help artists think of social media as the same experience of setting up for a show and shaking hands with new people. It's the same

outcome—a connection with a fan that will continue to support you.

## The Authenticity Factor

TikTok was very disruptive in that, up until recently, we could create a well-polished, nice-looking ad creative and expect that to do well. TikTok made people realize they're being marketed to and that they lost the excitement and connection they got from social media because of that. On TikTok, they are so resistant to being marketed to that, if you create something like we used to a year or two ago, people will comment on it and make you look like a hack. They will laugh you off the platform. You really have to get down to what makes your client unique and better. More often than not, that means putting an iPhone in front of the client and stripping everything else away.

## Pressure Makes Diamonds

When you're trying to scale a company and don't have the ability to pay people what they're worth or hire the best talent, it's tough. You have to keep your head down and disconnect from things you can't control. But we have an unbelievable team.

The pandemic adding some extra flavor to that challenge has been important for us, forcing us into remote work and putting people to the test. We're a creative company, so we're expected to not be process-driven and do the same thing every day. That's tough to do when you're not interacting in an office space. But that strengthened the core team even more and forced us into figuring shit out.

## Marketing Is Fundamental

[Marketing] can't be an afterthought. I see that in my conversations more and more. It's not like, "Hey, we had a record come out last Friday. We need an extra boost. Can you guys help us?" It's, "Hey, we've got a record coming out in August. We want to talk through the video concept. We want to talk through the rollout of all these pieces of content." It's thinking of us as part of the team.

## Paring Down

We had a successful year in 2020, because the music industry was limited in terms of options. Our mistake was forgetting that we are a music company. We're tastemakers and curators of our own. We can't get too formulaic in the work we do. We have to invest in the project alongside everybody else. We grew too fast and too quickly that year. We backtracked in a lot of ways. We started working 40% less in terms of active projects and really pushed to be a [better] marketing team versus being a digital advertiser or social media manager. Our goal is to do great work for people we care about, not focus on growth.

## Gratefulness

Being grateful for what you're doing is key. In the music industry, it's even more important, because if somebody creates a piece of content where they're trying to get people excited and they're not genuinely grateful to be doing that, people know. We're all able to recognize that. People that are successful, 100% of the time they're dramatically happy to be there. Even if they're not making money and struggling. It's what they want to do, and they know that. You're never going to make it if you're not genuinely grateful to be making music and seeing people enjoy it.



## OPPS

### Sony Music Entertainment wants a Manager, Digital Marketing.

Sony Music Entertainment is a global recorded music company with a roster of current artists that includes a broad array of both local artists and international superstars, as well as a vast catalog that comprises some of the most important recordings in history. Sony Music Entertainment is a wholly owned subsidiary of Sony Corporation of America. Develop full scope digital marketing plans to drive fan engagement across all online platforms and an overall digital creative vision for superstar, established and emerging Urban Music artists. Be part of the core team responsible for the overall artist branding and artist development. Apply at Job/Searcher.

### Warner Music Group is looking for a Merchandise Manager.

Oversee, and develop merchandising, and VIP experience campaigns for artists in order to drive revenue and maximize fan engagement. Foster close, positive relationships with artist and artist management. Obtain art and product approvals. Work closely with key department personnel to strategize and coordinate short and long range product releases for tour, retail brand licensing and e-commerce distribution. Work with key persons to plan, develop and implement merchandise marketing initiatives. Assist in the creation and submission of retail solicitation of merchandise offerings for sales staff. Apply at EntertainmentCareers.net.

### BMG Rights Management needs a Manager, Business & Legal Affairs.

Your primary mission is to represent BMG to the creative, legal and business communities in the Los Angeles music business and beyond. You will have high visibility internally as well as in the industry in general. You will be a primary point of contact for the company with artists' attorneys and business team. You will negotiate both routine and sophisticated commercial contracts in a fast-paced, dynamic company that is growing fast. Apply via Glassdoor.

### Utopia Music wants an Artist & Creator Community Manager.

The Community Manager role will focus on building a creator community footprint through digital strategies, tactics and partnerships. You will support, educate and advocate for the artist & creator community and their teams. You will be responsible for building, operationalizing and maintaining these strategies and online communities to enable and unlock the Utopia story and value proposition for artists and creators. You will do this through education, events and other innovative forms of communication. Apply at LinkedIn.

## LABELS - RELEASE SIGNINGS

### Rapper Trippie Redd has signed a global deal with 10K Projects.

The company, headed by founder and CEO Elliot Grainge, is one of the most successful independent labels in the world today. "Elliot signed me when I was 16," Trippie Redd said in a statement. "From the start he's always pushed me



### ▲ TELL WALLOWS THAT IT'S OVER

Multi-platinum rockers Wallows have released their new album *Tell Me That It's Over*, and the accompanying single "Marvelous." The album, they say, "sees Wallows continuing on their ever-evolving journey of sonic exploration, fusing a vast array of musical ideas into their own one-of-a-kind creative vision." That it does. Contact [luke@bbgunpress.com](mailto:luke@bbgunpress.com) for more info.

to do everything on my own terms which is the most important thing to me. I'm grateful to have had him as a partner for this long and excited to make more hits with 10K and keep growing together." Contact [jv@spinlab.net](mailto:jv@spinlab.net) for more info.

**Baltimore death metal band Wormhole has signed to Season of Mist.** The band will be releasing its third album later this year, the first with brand new vocalist **Julian Kersey**. "Wormhole are humbled to announce our signing with Season of Mist," they said. "We are beyond excited for our partnership and to be part of such an excep-

tional roster... A new era of technical slamming brutality is among us." Contact [Katy@season-of-mist.com](mailto:Katy@season-of-mist.com) for more info.

**Nashville singer-songwriter Bre Kennedy has signed to Nettwerk.** The artist has celebrated by releasing the "Thick Skin (Acoustic)" single, and she's currently touring with **Joy Oladokun**. Nettwerk says that "Thick Skin" is "a moving acoustic version of the triumphant anthem from her debut album, *Note To Self*, which she self-released in October 2021." Contact [tsimons@nettwerk.com](mailto:tsimons@nettwerk.com) for more details.

## DIY Spotlight

## DUST CITY OPERA

New Mexico rockers Dust City Opera was formed in January 2018 by frontman Paul Hunton. The band, completed by Clara Byom (clarinet, accordion), Travis Rourke (trombone), Chris Livingston (lead guitar), Scott Brewer (bass), and Dave Purcell (drums), hasn't looked back since.

"An opportunity came up to open for a friend's CD release," Hunton says. "I gotta credit him for trusting me to get a band assembled and rehearsed within a couple weeks. I'd been jonesing to give some of my songs the full band treatment and we did some Felice Brothers, Tom Waits, Handsome Family and Chris Cornell songs to fill out the set."

Hunton describes the sound as a blend of those very artists. "We're kind of a folk-tinged, macabre rock outfit," he says. "The clarinet,

trombone and accordion give us a range of 'old world horror' to 'tilting folk ballad.' Harmonically I like to reach for unfamiliar sounds, and sometimes that can sound a little like Muse or Radiohead or Danny Elfman."

Dust City Opera released their debut album, *Heaven*, in 2018 and they've just released the sophomore effort—the more aggressive *Alien Summer*.

"Getting *Alien Summer* out is a pretty big deal," Hunton says. "Despite the challenges of the past couple years, some personnel changes, and a new addition to our family, we managed to write and record an ambitious album and raise over \$20,000 via Kickstarter to put it out."

For Hunton, DIY is about: "Being



able to be with a song through its whole journey from 'page to stage,' from the acoustic first draft to the midi demo to recording and comping takes, giving notes on the mixes, drafting the artwork, ordering and testing vinyl, and rehearsing and performing."

Looking ahead for 2022, "We've got some regional weekend runouts planned, we're playing it safe as we've had two substantial tours canceled in the last two

years," Hunton says. "I'm also working on a YouTube project recording the entire Handsome Family catalog as a crash course study in songwriting, production and arranging, and I'm also spending a lot of time learning how to step into my new role as lead guitarist, studying up on gear and tones and theory and licks."

Go to [dustcityopera.com](http://dustcityopera.com) for more info.

## PROPS

**Aton Ben-Horin has been named Executive Vice President, Global A&R for Atlantic Records Group.** The promotion will see Ben-Horin report to Atlantic Chairman and CEO **Craig Kallman**. Ben Horin has also launched a publishing partnership with **Warner Chappell Music**. "Aton is one of the most gifted and inspired A&R people in our business," said Kallman. "He can not only hear a hit, he knows how to make a hit—pulling all the elements together that turn a song into a smash. His wide-ranging experience as a musician, songwriter, DJ, producer, studio owner, and manager gives him rare, multi-faceted expertise and insight across both the creative and business worlds." For more, contact communications@wmg.com.

## THE BIZ

**Epic Games has purchased Bandcamp.** The company behind video games such as *Fortnite* moved into the music space by acquiring the online music store for independent musicians. "Fair and open platforms are critical to the future of the creator economy,"

Epic Games said in a statement. "Epic and Bandcamp share a mission of building an artist-friendly platform that enables creators to keep the majority of their hard-earned money." For more, go to [epicgames.com](http://epicgames.com) or [bandcamp.com](http://bandcamp.com).

**Ultra Music Festival has launched a fundraiser for the children of Ukraine.** Viewers streaming their #ultralive event were able to contribute towards the Tabletochki Charity Foundation. That foundation has "spent the last ten years developing Ukraine's pediatric oncology field, and are applying that expertise toward systematic support of child-specific healthcare and hospital funding." For more info, go to [ultramusicfestival.com](http://ultramusicfestival.com).

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



## ▲ BOB MOULD IS ON TOUR THROUGH OCTOBER

The former *Husker Du* and *Sugar* mainman plays masses of mostly solo electric sets throughout the year, and he has just announced the openers: **H.C. McEntire**, **Vic Bondi** and **J. Robbins**. "I'm very excited to be touring with a variety of great artists over the next few months," Mould said. Mould's new EP, *The Ocean*, is out now. Contact [jim@bigbassle.com](mailto:jim@bigbassle.com) for more info.

## The LEGAL Beat

BY GLENN LITWAK



**British Pop star Dua Lipa was sued twice within a week for copyright infringement.** Both cases involve Lipa's 2020 hit song "Levitating."

The first case was filed in California on March 1, 2022 by a Florida Reggae band, *Artikal Sound System*, claiming Lipa copied from their 2017 song titled "Live Your Life." This lawsuit (only a few pages long) gives very little details about the claim. The lawsuit simply alleges that Lipa and her co-writers "listened to and copied 'Live Your Life'" and states the songs are "substantially similar."

The second lawsuit was filed a mere 3 days later on March 4th in New York by songwriters **L. Russel Brown** and **Sandy Linzer** ("Brown case"). In the Brown case, plaintiffs claim Lipa's song steals the signature melody from their 1979 disco hit "Wiggle and Giggle All Night" and from a 1980's disco song titled "Don Diablo". The plaintiff does not explain how the defendants obtained access to their songs, but asserts they had "reasonable access" to them as they are available on streaming services. The Brown lawsuit also names **Warner Music Group** and **DaBaby** as defendants.

Copyright law protects the "expression" but not the "idea" itself. The purpose of copyright law is to protect original works and also to promote creativity. In both cases plaintiff will have to prove substantial similarity which requires showing (1) that the defendant had access to the plaintiff's song and (2) that the defendant's song is substantially similar to the original parts of plaintiff's work. In proving substantial similarity in court, it often comes down to a battle be-

tween expert witness musicologists retained by each side.

In the Brown case, the complaint alleges that Lipa concedes in interviews she drew inspiration from other artists while creating her *Future Nostalgia* album which contains the song "Levitating." The complaint states that Lipa "admitted that she deliberately emulated prior eras" and "took inspiration" from earlier songs to create her "retro" sound. However, drawing inspiration from other artists does not necessarily mean there is copyright infringement.

In the Brown lawsuit plaintiff claims that the "signature melody" from the first part of "Levitating" where Lipa sings "If you wanna run away with me..." was misappropriated from the Brown songs. The plaintiff claims that this portion of "Levitating" is critical since it helped turn the song into a big hit on TikTok.

"The signature melody is the most listened to and recognizable part of the infringing works and plays a crucial role in their popularity" according to the at-

torneys for Brown. "Because video creators frequently truncate the already brief snippets of sound on TikTok, the signature melody often comprises fifty percent of more of these viral videos."

The Brown complaint contains a few attempts at humor when it states "Defendants have levitated away plaintiff's intellectual property," and also states "Plaintiff's bring suit so that defendants cannot wiggle out of their willful infringement."

**GLENN LITWAK** is a veteran entertainment attorney based in Santa Monica, CA. He has represented platinum selling recording artists, Grammy winning music producers, hit songwriters, management and production companies, music publishers and independent record labels. Glenn is also a frequent speaker at music industry conferences around the country, such as *South by Southwest* and the *Billboard Music in Film and TV Conference*. Email Litwak at [gtllaw59@gmail.com](mailto:gtllaw59@gmail.com) or visit [glennlitwak.com](http://glennlitwak.com).

## DUA LIPA SUED TWICE FOR COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT

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





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

Matthew Vander Boegh, TAXI Member

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

## I joined TAXI.

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



## It Didn't Take That Long

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

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

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

## My Two Secret Weapons

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

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



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

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

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



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**Date Signed:** Nov. 15, 2021

**Label:** Enci Records

**Band Members:** Angel Mariscal, Emiliano Garcia, Gianluca Exposito

**Management:** Jonathan Garrett - Scrivener Management

**Legal:** Matthew Kaplan

**Publicity:** Mike Cubillos, mike@earshotmedia.com

**Web:** instagram.com/lossaintsofficial

**A&R:** Pat Magnarella

Just north of the Mexicali border lies an alternative indie rock band comprised of two cousins and a family friend called Los Saints. Hailing from Chula Vista, CA, the three-piece ensemble formed one month before the Pandemic prompted a nationwide COVID shutdown.

The restrictions prevented Angel Mariscal, Emiliano Garcia, and Gianluca Exposito from playing songs like "Let It Out" in front of a live audience. Nevertheless, the lockdown period presented the guys with an opportunity to develop their image and focus their time on releasing the songs that they had been writing together on social media. This eventually helped them garner the attention of the A&R representatives at Enci Records.

"One of the things that I had put us on is this website called Submit Hub. [Enci Records] must have come across a blog or one of our early songs, because they emailed us and we sent them the EP and they decided to hop on board and support us," says Angel. "Which is pretty cool because [Enci Records] is owned by Pat Magnarella, the guy who managed Green Day for 27 years. So, we were really happy that they decided to help us become a backbone for their label."

*"We were really happy that they decided to help us become a backbone for their label."*

Pat Magnarella's reputation for establishing legendary rock bands, like Green Day, undoubtedly played a role in Los Saints' decision to sign with his label, but the group's lead singer was quick to point out that their decision was also influenced by the manner in which they were courted beforehand by the company's social media manager. Chris Georggin discovered Los Saints online and he was the first person to reach out to them on behalf of Enci Records.

The conference also gave the band the opportunity to ascertain what it would be like to release new music under the tutelage of such well respected music-business men. Although Mariscal, Garcia and Exposito all bought into the vision that Enci Records laid before them, they would not officially ink a deal with the record label until three months later.

Los Saints officially signed with Enci Records on Nov. 15, 2021. The terms of the deal were negotiated by the band's manager, Johnathan Garrett, and their entertainment attorney, Matthew Kaplan. Three months after signing with Enci, Los Saints released the official music video for their first single with the label, called "Found You Somewhere." - **Miguel Costa**



**Date Signed:** Dec. 7, 2016

**Label:** PMR/Interscope Records

**(Touring) Band Members:** Josh Brozovsky, Dillon Treacy

**Type of Music:** Alternative R&B

**Management:** Ian Montone, Madison Case, John Michael Picard, Sophia Sorrentino - Monotone Inc.

**Legal:** Jeff Koenig - Serling Rooks Hunter McKoy Worob & Averill LLP

**Publicity:** Rebecca Marlis - Interscope Records

**Web:** ambermarkmusic.com

**A&R:** Benjamin Parmar & Daniel Parmar - PMR Records

New York-based singer, songwriter and producer Amber Mark took her early cues from the great Ella Fitzgerald, but it was in her mid-to-late years of high school that she decided she wanted to make music her career. "I didn't really start writing until my junior and senior year of high school," she says. "Then I started finishing songs and making beats, which wasn't until after I graduated high school, probably like 2013/14."

Since then, Mark has made it her business to find her sound, and she's seen it expand immensely. She's experimenting, and it has evolved ever since her debut 3:33AM EP in 2017. "I've incorporated the older 3:33AM sound into the new project—it still has that sound but it's bigger," she says. "It sounds fuller. It just sounds clear and crisp, and all of that. It's constantly expanding and growing, and I think my sound is always going to be getting different and wider. Bigger in certain areas."

*"I feel like they really got me and got my sound."*

Mark first met with Interscope Records in 2015, and says that she immediately fell in love with the team. "I feel like they really got me and got my sound," she says. "Before I had the meeting with them, it was hard to decide which direction I wanted to go, and then after I met with them, I was like, 'these people really get me.' Still to this day."

The debut full-length album, *Three Dimensions Deep*, is out now via Interscope, and Mark is delighted with the way it turned out. "I think I'll never be done with an album, internally," she says. "I look back and think that I should have done this or added this. But putting that all aside, now that it's out and everything, I'm so happy that people are connecting with it the way they are. I was nervous because there are so many different sounds on the album, and I dabble in so many different genres, so I was a little nervous about that. But people seem to be responding really well, even to the songs I was nervous about. So, it's been really exciting and so gratifying. I'm happy that people are connecting with the music, especially on an emotional level. That's the important part."

Mark says that the main theme of the album is a journey of self-discovery. "I sprinkle in a lot of physics and quantum physics," she says. "Doing research on these theories out there has gotten me to a level of being more spiritual and tapping more into my spirituality. I'd never expect to get there through science."

Looking ahead, Mark has a North American tour happening from the end of March, and then Coachella and more festivals.

"I'm really excited to see people," she says. - **Brett Callwood**





## JEFF "GITTY" GITELMAN

**Date Signed:** May 2021  
**Label:** BMG  
**Type of Music:** R&B/Pop/Rap/Folk/Country  
**Management:** Playground Media  
**Booking:** N/A  
**Legal:** Helen Yu  
**Publicity:** Cara Wodnicki, cara@wearebmf.com - BMF  
**Web:** N/A  
**A&R:** Joshua Edmond

In-demand songwriters are rare. When they become available, there's no shortage of places wanting to work with them. This was true for Jeff "Gitty" Gitelman after his second publishing deal came to an end. A Grammy-nominated, multiplatinum producer and arranger, 2021 was a banner year for him. He's worked with everyone from Usher, Mac Miller, Anderson. Paak and Kelly Clarkson to H.E.R., Jeremih and A\$AP Ferg. It should be no surprise interest ran high.

Monti Olson signed him to his first publishing deal in 2015. When the executive vice president expressed interest in crafting a deal with BMG, Gitelman couldn't have been more ready. "Monti's been a big supporter of mine for years," declares Gitty.

*"It was important to partner with somebody who believes in me."*

The same goes for Josh Edmond, Gitelman's A&R. "He's somebody I've admired for a while, and he's been in my corner." Despite overtures from other publishers, the duo's devotion made the selection a "no-brainer." "It was important to partner with somebody who believes in me and wants to build this catalog together."

Another quality Gitelman loves about Edmond is that the A&R rep respects his desire to dabble in a variety of genres. It's part of the Moldavian-born composer's strategy to avoid getting pigeonholed. "He would actually make a point to [hire me to do something different] instead of just giving me more of what is already expected." Gitelman feels versatility, along with an ironclad work ethic, are what have taken him to the top.

The agreement is an administrative publishing deal, as opposed to a co-publishing deal. As such, Gitelman maintains ownership of his songs.

Gitelman suggests others seeking a songwriter deal to always remember the importance of copyrights. "Sometimes, we look at songs as, 'Oh, it's just a little song I wrote,'" he opines. "But it's a piece of intellectual property, with a copyright that outlives you. When I pass away, my daughter's going to inherit my copyrights." - **Andy Kaufmann**



**Date Signed:** July 2021  
**Label:** COR/TAN Records  
**Type of Music:** Pop/Rap  
**Management:** Ceremony of Roses  
**Booking:** N/A  
**Legal:** Jeremy Mohr - Rothenberg, Mohr & Binder, LLP  
**Web:** everyone loves payday.com  
**A&R:** Rhea Pasricha

When 18-year-old singer and songwriter Payday signed a publishing deal with Prescription Songs, they knew they had acquired a major talent. "From the moment I met Payday, I knew she was special," says Prescription's Rhea Pasricha. "She doesn't fit into any one box and that's what makes her so exciting."

She couldn't be more right, but it's been a long journey for the artist who started writing and recording music when she was just 12 years old.

"Soon after, I started posting tracks to Soundcloud with my friends," Payday says. "We were just doing it for fun and I thought they'd get, like, 10 streams, but each new song would get more and more listens. In my freshman year of high school, I released "Super Thicc," "Disco Dancing," and "I Don't Cry," which all blew up way more than any of my other songs and things started to get a bit more real. Then throughout 2020 I started releasing the *Puke Tape* EP series and the *It's Just Music* mixtape... things started getting pretty crazy after that and I haven't looked back since!"

Payday says that her sound blurs the boundaries between rap, pop and alternative, although she maintains that genres are less of a concern

*"I titled my Puke Tape EPs with that name because they were exactly that, puke!"*

in the current climate.

"I titled my *Puke Tape* EPs with that name because they were exactly that, puke!" she says. "The songs were all over the place (in a good way!) and were all sorts of genres, styles and sounds, almost like I puked out a bunch of different songs."

You've got to love that imagery. It's the sort of passion that brought her to the attention of Prescription Songs.

"I think Rhea reached out when I started releasing the *Puke Tape* EPs," she says. "Since the first day we met I've loved talking and working with Rhea, whether it's about music or whatever. I feel that her and Prescription really understand me and what I want to do with my music. They really empower me to be the best that I can be, while also allowing me to stay true to who I am and the music that I want to make."

Looking ahead, Payday has high plans for the rest of 2022.

"You'll have to sit tight on that one, but just know that I am planning world domination," she says. "There will be plenty more Payday in 2022—music, shows, videos, clothing... everything that you could imagine and more. And while you're at it, make sure to follow my clothing brand Paylien (@paylien\_)—you won't regret it!" - **Brett Callwood**



### ▲ KOBALT SIGNS AQUILINA

Kobalt Music has signed British songwriter-producer-artist Lauren Aquilina to a worldwide publishing deal for administration, global sync and creative for future work. 2020's *Ghost World* followed EPs *Fools*, *Sinner* and *Liars*, and has over 10 million combined Spotify streams. Fans include MNEK, Luz and Mae Muller.

### ► AVIV'S DROWNING IN THE CULTURE

16-year-old Toronto indie pop singer-songwriter Aviv returns from her 12-date Canadian tour with Imagine Dragons, on the heels of her debut release from Photo Finish Records, *Drowning In The Culture*. Her million-plus streams include singles, "Cookie Dough," "Girls In Red," "Frontlawn" and "Lonely Bitch."



### ▲ BMI HIGHLIGHTS LATIN ARTISTS

At this year's SXSW Conference, BMI showcased the best in Latin music at The ATX on their BMI Sonidos stage. Performers showcased sounds from the Caribbean and Latin America and included Andrea Cruz, La Dona, Le Coco Ramos, Nancy Sanchez, Salt Cathedral and Wired Sessions, and nu-cumbia from DJ El Dusty.

### SESAC Supports Ukraine

Lending support to the Ukrainian people and their creative community, SESAC has donated \$100,000 to support CreatorsforUkraine, a collective of CMOs, PROs and others looking to work to provide financial support for creators, songwriters and composers in the region. The Polish Society for Authors and Stage Composers ("ZAIKS") has launched the platform to help with aid money and resources to assist members of the artistic community with immediate and long-term solutions. Further details and how to help at: [creatorsforukraine.org](http://creatorsforukraine.org).

### Bluebird Golden Pick Contest

The Bluebird Café and Taylor Guitars have partnered for the return of The Bluebird Golden Pick performance contest for aspiring singer-songwriters. Entrants must post a new video playing an original song on their Instagram feed, follow @bluebirdcafe and @taylorguitars, and tag both—along with #bluebirdgoldenpick—and two other songwriter friends.

Twelve winners will be selected (one per month) and contacted via direct message on Instagram to perform at the monthly Open Mic Night, with the final performance opportunity on Dec. 19, 2022. Monthly prizes include a Taylor Grand Theater (GT) guitar, a professional video shoot of their winning song at the Taylor Guitars showroom at Soundcheck Studios in Nashville, and a merchandise pack including a pick tin, guitar strap, \$50 vis gift card, and two tickets to a Bluebird Café show.

More at: [bluebirdcafe.com/the-bluebird-golden-pick-contest-season-3](http://bluebirdcafe.com/the-bluebird-golden-pick-contest-season-3).

### Rodney Crowell Songwriting Camp

Award-winning country singer-songwriter, Rodney Crowell will again present his four-day songwriting workshop, *It Starts With A Song*.

Registration includes breakout groups led by singer-songwriters David Baerwald, Matraca Berg, Beth Neilsen Chapman, Mike Reid and Lera Lynn, master sessions with Rosanne Cash and John Leventhal, Patty Griffin and Neko Case, and nightly open mics and instructor performances. Producers Tony Brown (Reba McEntire, Trish Yearwood, Vince Gill, etc.) and Paul Worley (The Chicks, Lady A, etc.) bring their production expertise. More at: [rodneycrowellsitstartswithasong.com](http://rodneycrowellsitstartswithasong.com).

### Record Durango Registration

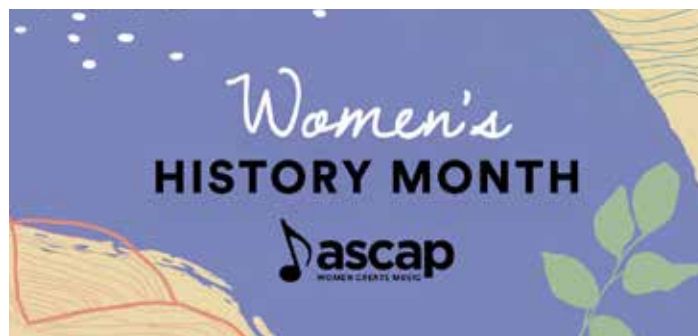
Places for The Durango Songwriters Expo sold out in record time in their first event of the year. Early registrations set a new record for the expo, with spots filling and a waitlist even before the registration deadline. Founder Jim Attebery shared, "It was an incredible event. Everybody was so excited to be there—and the quality of talent was mind-boggling."

Durango will be opening registration for the next songwriter expo event, taking place Sept. 29 through Oct. 1 in Broomfield, CO.

Information and updates at: [durango-songwriters-expo.com](http://durango-songwriters-expo.com).

### BlackRock Backs Warner

BlackRock Alternative Investors ("BlackRock")—which manages over \$10 trillion in assets—has joined forces with Warner Music Group ("WMG") in a new \$750 million fund for music copyright



### ▲ ASCAP CELEBRATES WOMEN

In case you missed it, ASCAP shared exclusive songwriter and composer videos discussing women who influenced their music and career, added playlists about women blazing a path in music, and created the "Women Create Music" podcast. More at: [ascap.com/news-events/Events/2022/womens-history-month](http://ascap.com/news-events/Events/2022/womens-history-month)



investment, in collaboration with Influence Media Partners—which has already spent \$300 million of the fund's proceeds to acquire catalogs including Bad Bunny and Tainy (J. Balvin collaborator).

The BlackRock/Warner fund has also purchased interests in the catalogs of songwriter-producers the Stereotypes (Bruno Mars), Jessie Reyez (Dua Lipa, Calvin Harris, Sam Smith) and Skyler Stonestreet (Ariana Grande, Justin Bieber). Influence and WMG will co-manage the catalogs acquired.

### Utopia Gets Absolute

Swiss Fintech Utopia Music has purchased Absolute Label Services, including Absolute Rights Management, with the Absolute distribution and services division to be integrated into Utopia's existing business unit (which launched in January 2022). Absolute was founded in 1998 for independent artists and record labels, with a client base including Jake Isaac, edbl, Deep Purple, Beverly Knight and McFly—all of who will continue to be served by Utopia.

### Exceleration Acquires Kill Rock Stars

Music investment company, Exceleration Music has purchased the Kill Rock Stars catalog to partner with the indie label to help expand their release program. Slim Moon will continue to sign and develop new artists, and the pair will develop progressive marketing strategies.

The deal follows earlier partnerships between Exceleration

and Bloodshot Records, Candid Records, Alligator Records, SideOneDummy, and alliances with the Justin Townes Earle Estate and Ray Charles Foundation.

### Wise Scoops Waxman

Wise Music Group subsidiary, G. Shirmer, has acquired worldwide publishing rights to the catalog of 12-time Oscar-winning composer Franz Waxman. The deal covers his catalog of concert works and many film scores—including Oscar winners, *Sunset Boulevard* and *A Place In The Sun*. His scoring work includes *The Philadelphia Story* (1940), *Rebecca* (1940), *Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde* (1941), *Suspicion* (1941), *Taras Bulba* (1962), *Rear Window*, *Bride of Frankenstein*, and more.

Waxman was born in Germany in 1906 and studied composition and conducting at the Dresden Music Academy, putting himself through school by playing piano in night clubs, scoring *Liliom* in 1934. Fleeing the Nazis, he found refuge and made a new home in Los Angeles. His concert composition work includes *Joshua* (1959), *Carmen Fantasie* (1946) and *The Song of Terezin* (1966), the latter based on poems of young people trapped in the Terezin ghetto.

**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](mailto:drea@dreaajo.com)



### ▲ DAVIES GETS BOB'S BURGERS

Scoring Netflix's *Maya and the Three* and orchestrating *Free Guy*, *Snake Eyes*, *Thunder Force*, *Frozen*, *Frozen II*, *Ant Man and the Wasp*, *The Christmas Chronicles*, and *Hotel Transylvania: Transformania*, Australian composer Tim Davies is conductor/lead orchestrator for *The Bob's Burgers Movie*, out May 27.



### ▲ POESY GETS CREATIVE WITH DAYTRIPPER

Her debut single, "Soldier of Love," hit No. 1 on iTunes' All Genres Canadian Chart, followed up with EPs *Glass Box Confessional* and *The Hidden Gems*. POESY has joined CCS Rights' creative division, Daytripper Music Publishing, and has written "Steel Heart," the theme for the upcoming 2022 Canada Summer Games.



### ▲ BMLG ADDS STARCRAWLER

HYBE America subsidiary, Big Machine Label Group (BMLG), has signed L.A.-based Starcrawler to its rock roster. Finishing up their debut album, the quintet heads on tour later this year, following sync placements on Netflix's *Lucifer*, Paramount's *Pet Sematary*, and DC Comics, and a feature in docufilm, *What Drives Us*.



### ▲ MOTOWN SIGNS SHEARD

Capitol/UMG division, Motown Gospel has signed Grammy, Dove, NAACP Image, Soul Train and Stellar award-winning singer-musician-songwriter Karen Clark Sheard. The youngest of The Clark Sisters has a new album coming, following seven previous records, including *All In One* (2010) and *Destined To Win* (2015)

## Ava Della Pietra

### Going For It

With her debut EP release (*truth or truth*) this month, and a full album to follow in the Fall, Ava Della Pietra is on her way to carving her spot on the pop music scene. Starting in music at age four (she plays piano, bass, guitar, violin and ukulele), the 16 year-old—best known for her role as Katie in the Broadway production of *School of Rock*—began touring nationally with *Les Misérables* and *White Christmas* while still in grade school.

Pietra's mother sings, plays the guitar and violin, voice and acting coaches helped along the way, and a supportive Broadway agent assisted in securing some auditions, but Pietra feels that the majority of her momentum came from starting early. "Getting into it so young was definitely one of the most educational experiences. When you're really little, you take in a lot of information very quickly," she shares. "I think that's part of the reason I was able to pick up the business so rapidly."

Writing a total of 32 songs during lockdown—most while quarantining with her family on Long Island—Pietra has been songwriting since she was six, but has never released anything until now. "I did my first community theater production when I was three and was always improvising melodies and lyrics about my day," she says. Ideas coming spontaneously at first—a specific sentence sometimes getting stuck in her mind and turning into a melody that she would build a song around—she now plays a few chords on the piano, while looking through her diary of song titles for inspiration.

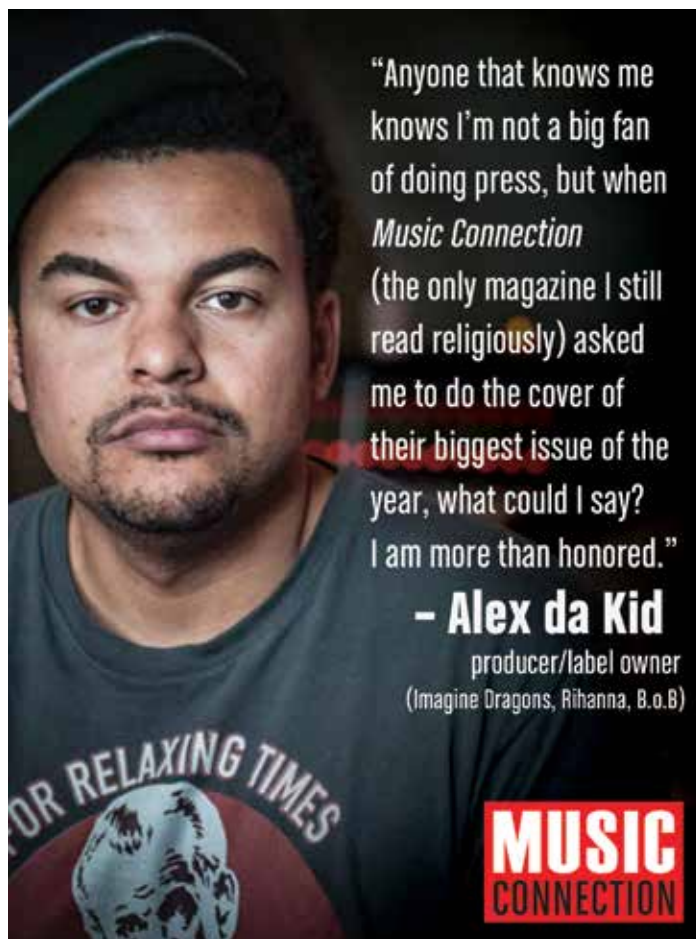
Feeling liberated by songwriting, Pietra explains that the process feels much less constrained and more personal than the scripted roles she is used to playing. Last month's single, "My Boyfriend" talks about becoming interested in boys. "It's one of my favorites so far," reveals Pietra, adding that songwriting has helped clarify her thoughts around what she thinks and feels. "Before I start writing the song, I won't completely know my stance on something" she says. Having always considered herself a pretty independent person, she began to recognize during lockdown that many of her decisions were based on the thoughts and beliefs of others. "Songwriting has definitely been like therapy to figure out what I like to do," she adds. Her single, "Power of You," is about finding her own voice.

There have been unexpected moments of encouragement along the way. First performing originals in a coffee shop at the Sundance Film Festival at age 12, an audience member close to the stage cheered enthusiastically throughout the performance. "It was the first time I thought people liked my music and that I should continue," says Pietra. Never having felt nervous on Broadway (since she couldn't see the audience), she has found the smaller shows more intimidating. "There's something very personal about performing your own music, having to make eye contact with the audience and being able to see each one," she says. "You're in a much more vulnerable state than when you're just playing a character." Another fan recently reached out via social media with an emotional voice memo about "Optimist," describing how the song helped him through a hard time. Pietra began to recognize the true impact her music could have.

Her best advice to artists is to keep trying, to power through, and that perseverance can pay off. During one round of *School of Rock* auditions, she was asked if she knew how to play the bass guitar (which she didn't). Pietra's agent relayed she would learn. In four days, she learned "Teacher's Pet," auditioned, and got the role.

With performances at the Sundance Film Festival, Great South Bay Music Festival and Madison Square Garden, Pietra won the 2021 NY State School Music Association Calls for Creation Competition "Songwriters Showcase" for songs "Optimist" and "Moon," was awarded second prize in the New York Young Performer's Prize competition for her performance of "Popular" from *Wicked*, and received the 2021 Suffolk Region PTA "Reflections" award, the largest possible for a student in the arts.

Contact John Bleicher, [jon@prospectpr.com](mailto:jon@prospectpr.com)  
Experience Ava Della Pietra, [avadellapietra.com](http://avadellapietra.com)





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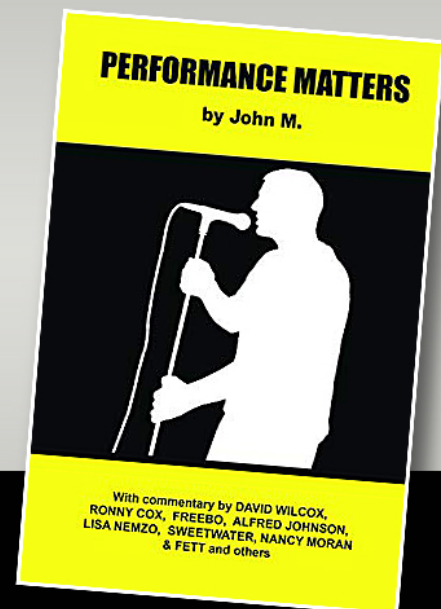


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## DROPS

**The Sound of Scars**, the new documentary on Brooklyn alternative metal band, **Life of Agony**, dropped March 22 on digital platforms. Directed by **Leigh Brooks** and named after one of the band's studio albums, the film chronicles three lifelong friends through their rise and fall as a hugely influential metal band, the release of their groundbreaking 1993 debut **River Runs Red**, their dealings with domestic violence, substance abuse, addiction and depression, and lead singer **Mina Caputo's** gender transition. For more information, contact Justin Cook at [justin@justincookpr.com](mailto:justin@justincookpr.com).



From directors **Gorman Bechard** and **Fred Uhter**, the new documentary **Where Are You, Jay Bennett?** on the late **Jay Bennett** dropped on April 19 with a subsequent special release on Record Store Day with Bennett's previous two albums, **Kicking at the Perfumed Air** and **Whatever Happened I Apologize**, available for the first time on vinyl. A multi-instrumentalist and recording studio whiz, Bennett joined Wilco before the recording of their second album **Being There** and then co-wrote most of **Summerteeth** and **Yankee Hotel Foxtrot** with **Jeff Tweedy**. He also had an illustrious solo career and contributed to the recording of the **Mermaid Avenue/Woody Guthrie** sessions with **Billy Bragg**. The film features never-before-seen performance footage, interviews with Bennett and those who knew and worked with him, and the directors. Contact **Derek Stubinski** at [derek@mvd.cc](mailto:derek@mvd.cc) for more information.

**Atlantic Records** has released the first installment of the original songs featured on NBC's **American Song Contest**. On the show, a collection of artists representing 50 states, five U.S. territories and Washington, D.C., performs their original songs in front of hosts **Kelly Clarkson** and **Snoop Dogg**, a live studio audience and

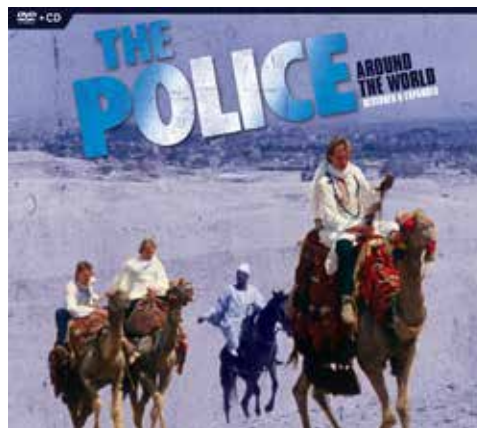


KELLY CLARKSON AND SNOOP DOGG

millions of viewers across America, competing for the country's vote for the best hit song. All original songs featured in the show will be released, and a complete list of artists can be found at [nbc.com/american-song-contest/exclusives/artists](http://nbc.com/american-song-contest/exclusives/artists). Contact **kelly.mcwilliam@atlanticrecords.com**.

Featuring classic performance footage of the **Soul Stirrers**, **Dixie Hummingbirds**, **Sister Rosetta Tharpe**, **Blind Boys of Mississippi**, **Sensational Nightingales**, the **Davis Sisters** and more, documentary **How They Got Over**—which became available for streaming and on DVD on May 3—celebrates the spirit of gospel performers and how they created a musical revolution. Through interviews with some of the greatest names in quartet music, viewers are taken through the origins of gospel in the Deep South and how the musical movement was the prelude to doo-wop, soul, rhythm and blues, and Motown, inspiring and influencing the likes of **Sam Cooke**, **Lou Rawls** and **Wilson Pickett**. For further details, contact **Kelly Hargraves** at [publicity@firstrunfeatures.com](mailto:publicity@firstrunfeatures.com).

**The Police: Around the World Restored & Expanded**, released May 20 on DVD and Blu-ray with accompanying CD or vinyl, offers fans a behind-the-scenes glimpse of iconic band **The Police** on their six-continent world tour in 1979 and 1980. Viewers get a look at **Sting**, **Andy Summers** and **Stewart Copeland** on their first world tour spanning Japan, Hong Kong, Australia, India, Egypt, Greece, France, South America and the U.S., both onstage and off, on the begin-



nings of their path to global stardom. The documentary release includes never-before-released live audio on CD and LP with songs from The Police's first two albums. Contact **Carol Kaye** at [carol@kayosproductions.com](mailto:carol@kayosproductions.com).

**Sheryl**, a full-length documentary film on nine-time Grammy Award winner and American music icon **Sheryl Crow**, is out now. Directed by **Amy Scott**, the film

chronicling the singer-songwriter's life and career premiered at SXSW ahead of its spring premiere on **Showtime**. The film offers an intimate look into Crow's life and musical career during which she dealt with sexism, ageism, depression, cancer and the tolls of superstardom. Contact **erin.burr@bmlg.net**.



**ABBA** fans across the U.S. and Canada are set to have the time of their lives when the digitally remastered **ABBA: The Movie** dances back into movie theaters for a special showing. Celebrating 50 years since the Swedish pop sensation was formed and 45 years since the film's original release, "**ABBA: The Movie—Fan Event**" will take attendees on a flashback journey to the 1970s when disco reigned supreme, and ABBA were international pop royalty. Presented by **Trafalgar Releasing** and **Warner Bros.**, tickets for "**ABBA: The Movie—Fan Event**" are available at [AbbaMovie.com](http://AbbaMovie.com).

## OPPS

May 16 is the registration deadline for the **Palomar online summer film scoring workshop** to take place June 20-28, 2022. The workshop offers professional guidance and mentoring in composing for visual media such as films, television and games as well as a recording and mix session with a live orchestra and Hollywood scoring engineer. For more information and to apply, visit [palomarworkshops.com/pricing-registration](http://palomarworkshops.com/pricing-registration).

Aspiring musical theater songwriters who have not achieved commercial success could be eligible for the **2022 Fred Ebb Award**, for which submissions will be accepted by email June 1-30. For details about the award, submission guidelines and where to send your songs, visit [fredebbfoundation.org/fred-ebb-award/eligibility](http://fredebbfoundation.org/fred-ebb-award/eligibility).

**NYU Steinhardt's Music and the Moving Image Conference**, celebrating music in film, television and other visual media, will be May 26-29 this year and held entirely online. Film editor **Paul Hirsch** (*Stars Wars*, *The Empire Strikes Back*) will deliver the keynote address this year. For a full program and registration info, visit [steinhardt.nyu.edu/programs/screen-scoring/summer-intensives/music-and-moving-image-conference-xvii](http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/programs/screen-scoring/summer-intensives/music-and-moving-image-conference-xvii).

## PROPS

The **12<sup>th</sup> Annual Guild of Music Supervisors Awards Ceremony** took place in March as a virtual event, with awards going to **Mary Ramos** for *Being The Ricardos* (Best Music Supervision for Film Budgeted Over \$25 Million), **Pierre-Marie Dru** for *Annette* (Best Music Supervision for Film Budgeted Under \$25 Million),

**Andrea von Foerster** for *Happily* (Best Music Supervision for Film Budgeted Under \$5 Million) and "**Guns Go Bang**" from *The Harder They Fall* and "**My Father's Daughter**" from *Flag Day* for Best Song Written and/or Recorded for a Film. There are also categories in television, video games, documentaries, advertising and trailers. For a complete list of winners, visit [gmsawards.com](http://gmsawards.com) and contact Chandler Poling at [chandler@whitebearpr.com](mailto:chandler@whitebearpr.com) for more information.

The **Society of Composers & Lyricists' 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Awards Ceremony** was held in March and honored **Germaine Franco** for Outstanding Original Score for a Studio Film, for *Encanto*, **Daniel Hart** for Outstanding Original Score for an Independent Film for *The Green Knight*, and **Cristobal Tapia de Veer** for Outstanding Original Score for a Television Production, for *The White Lotus*. **Stephanie Economou** also received the David Raksin Award for Emerging Talent, a new category, for *Jupiter's Legacy*, and **Carter Burwell** and brothers **Ethan Coen** and

**Joel Coen** received the Spirit of Collaboration Award. The ceremony was hosted by **Aloe Blacc** with special guest musical performances by **Barlow & Bear**, **Judith Hill**, **Cory Pesaturo** and the **Carter Burwell Ensemble**. Visit [thescl.com](http://thescl.com) for a complete list of winners.

At the **94<sup>th</sup> Annual Academy Awards** ceremony, held March 27, **Ariana DeBose** took home the honor of Best Supporting Actress for her portrayal of Anita in **Steven Spielberg's** reinvention of the iconic and beloved musical *West Side Story*. It was DeBose's first Oscar nomination and win, and she made history

as the first openly queer person of color to score an Academy Award in any acting category. She is also only the second Latin American woman and the eighth Black woman to ever receive an award in that category. DeBose was up against **Kirsten Dunst** in *The Power of the Dog*, **Jessie Buckley** in *The Lost Daughter*, **Aunjanue Ellis** in *King Richard* and **Judy Dench** in *Belfast*. For a complete list of nominees and winners, visit [oscars.org/oscars/ceremonies/2022](http://oscars.org/oscars/ceremonies/2022).

**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](mailto:j.marie.pace@gmail.com).

## OUT TAKE



## Khiyon Hursey

Composer

**Web:** [imdb.com/name/nm10305682](http://imdb.com/name/nm10305682)

**Contact:** Kate Twilley, [kate.twilley@impact24pr.com](mailto:kate.twilley@impact24pr.com)

**Most Recent:** *Eastbound*

From *Hamilton* to the upcoming *Spirited* starring Ryan Reynolds, Will Farrell and Octavia Spencer, writer and composer **Khiyon Hursey**, whose love for musical theater began when he first saw the NBC television series *Smash*, works on projects that allow him to channel his love for musicals and popular music. His goal is to bring musical theater into the contemporary world of popular music, which means more musicals need to tell stories that are relevant to younger generations, and embrace modern music.

"I think it's important for any art form to continue to expand, grow, transform and challenge itself for it to continue to reach people. Art dies without transformation, especially radical transformation," he says. "I don't think my generation has been properly portrayed onstage, and that means we have to be creating musicals with contemporary styles like hip-hop and pop music that are really driving culture right now. That's what can really push musical theater forward."

Hursey's credits include working with the original cast of *Hamilton*, contributing to the development of the production's iconic score. Just three months out of college at the time, Hursey refers to the project as his grad school experience and a life-changing opportunity to watch talented artists and performers at the top of their game, creating a hit show that has shaped contemporary musical theater.

"The best advice I ever received is you have the talent to do the work, so do the work. It's simple advice, but an encouragement and reminder that success is only achieved through work and really hard work at that," he says. "Honing your own, original voice is really important. Study the greats—Sondheim, Rodgers & Hammerstein—but also the more modern creators like Lin-Manuel Miranda. Understanding where musical theater began, where it's going and identifying where you fit in that lexicon is really important. And just write songs, so you can learn how to write songs and how to get better."

Hursey is currently co-writing a movie musical, *Love in America*, produced by Issa Rae, and has an upcoming musical production, *Eastbound*, showing in June.



## ▶ MISSY ELLIOTT EARNS SIXTH PLATINUM ALBUM

GRAMMY Award-winning icon Missy Elliott has made musical history once again with the RIAA platinum certification of 2005's *The Cookbook*—her sixth platinum certified album to date, marking her among other female rappers as the only one ever to achieve that remarkable accomplishment.



## ▲ POET LAUREATE HARJO AT BOB DYLAN CENTER

United States Poet Laureate Joy Harjo has been named the first Artist-In-Residence at the Bob Dylan Center (BDC), in advance of its much-anticipated grand opening on May 10. Throughout the course of her six-year appointment, the Tulsa native and member of the Muscogee Nation will present educational programs and live performances, as well as curate special exhibitions, at the BDC.



## ◀ JACK WHITE TELLS LABELS TO BUILD PRESSING PLANTS

Jack White has called upon major labels to build their own vinyl record pressing plants in light of recent supply chain issues and manufacturing bottlenecks. "I truly believe that with a good faith investment in the infrastructure that got us here, we can continue on this upward trajectory and further inspire the worlds around us."



## ▲ ANISSA LEA COVERS THE RONNETTES

Up-and-coming Detroit vocal stylist Anissa Lea offers her latest single as a tribute to Ronnie Spector and the Ronettes, with her own unique spin on the classic "Be My Baby." Lea worked on the track with her regular recording crew of the finest session musicians and side artists, production manager Alex Greene and engineer Jacob Shives.



## Tidbits From Our Tattered Past



### 2009-ADELE-#2

In her first cover story interview anywhere, Adele (full name Adele Laurie Blue Adkins, who was then up for 4 Grammys including Best New Artist) told *Music Connection*, "I never thought I would have the slightest chance to get away with doing (music) as a career." Elsewhere in the issue, renowned record exec Jerry Heller said, "Record deals have become totally oppressive and focused on one thing—making money for The Man."



### 2015-ALEX DA KID-#2

Writer, producer, label head Alex Da Kid (Eminem, U2, Rihanna) was riding high with his label KIDINA-KORNER's band Imagine Dragons when he said this in our *MC* cover story: "A lot of producers start a label and it doesn't work, because they're chasing hits. It takes a lot of time and energy to create hits. You can't do that and run a label. It's a full-time job." Meanwhile, our "Vocal Producers" feature spotlighted Warren Huart, Khaliq Glover, and Jeannie Deva.



### ▲ GO-GO'S AT CRYPTO.COM ARENA

Rock & Roll Hall of Famers The Go-Go's performed to a packed house for their hometown crowd at Los Angeles' crypto.com Arena. Pictured (l-r): Charlotte Caffey, Gina Schock, Art Cisneros, The Go-Go's Manager/Co-Executive Producer of *'THE GO-GO'S'* documentary, Kathy Valentine, Jane Wiedlin, Belinda Carlisle.



### ◀ N.Y.C. MAYOR

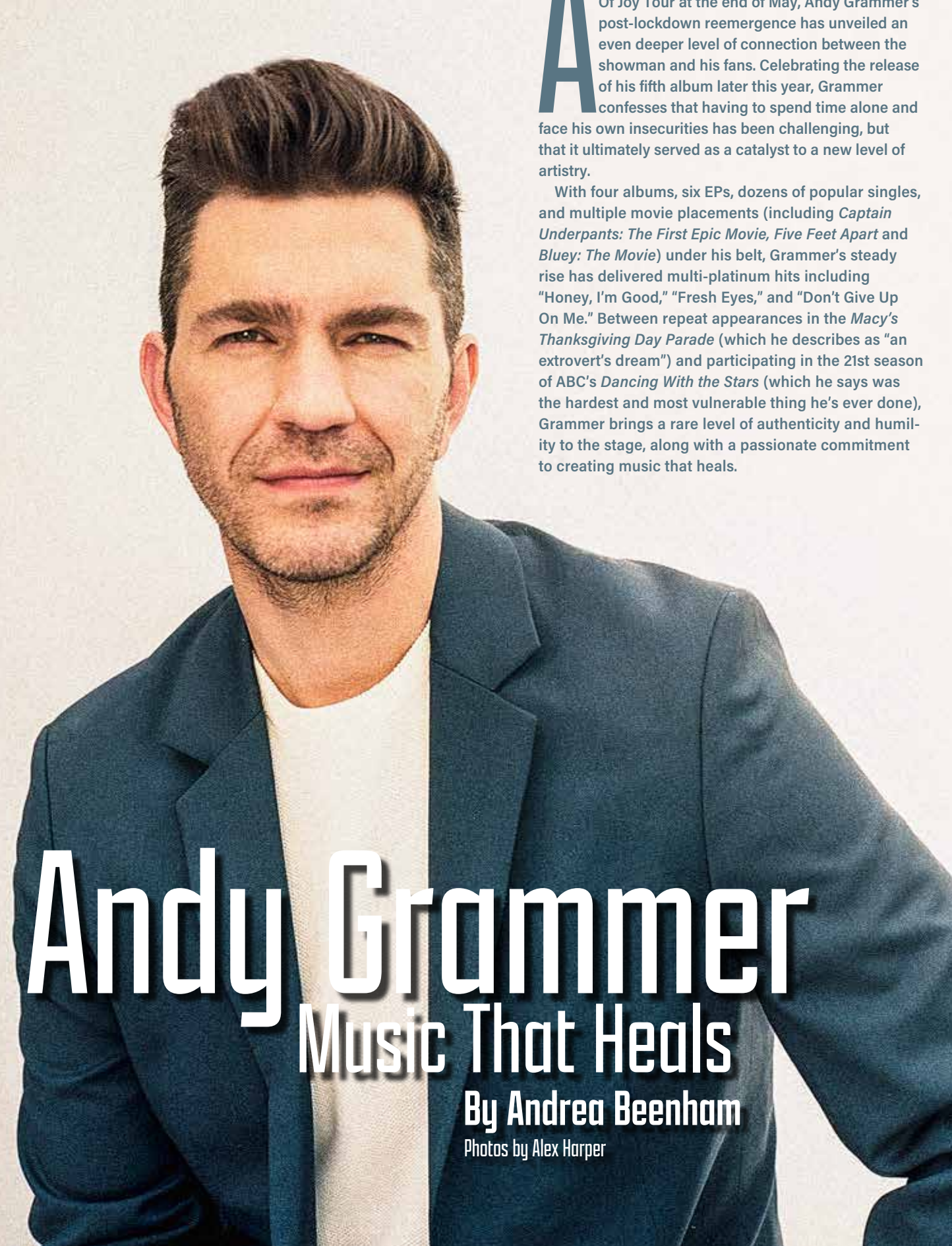
NYC's mayor Eric Adams visited Blue Note New York to celebrate the end of the city's indoor vaccine mandates and the suspension of Key to N.Y.C. rules. Introduced by Steven Bensusan, President and Owner of Blue Note Entertainment Group, the mayor shared a few inspiring words with the audience.

### ▶ MANÁ AT THE FORUM

GRAMMY-Award winning Mexican rock band MANÁ put on two record-breaking shows to sold out crowds, kicking off their historic Los Angeles Residency at the Forum. These marked the first of eight sold-out shows the band performed at the iconic venue, as they continue the once-in-a-lifetime run with upcoming performances on June 24th and 25th, July 15th, September 16th and 17th with special guests Panteon Rococó.







All set to kick off the second leg of his The Art Of Joy Tour at the end of May, Andy Grammer's post-lockdown reemergence has unveiled an even deeper level of connection between the showman and his fans. Celebrating the release of his fifth album later this year, Grammer confesses that having to spend time alone and face his own insecurities has been challenging, but that it ultimately served as a catalyst to a new level of artistry.

With four albums, six EPs, dozens of popular singles, and multiple movie placements (including *Captain Underpants: The First Epic Movie*, *Five Feet Apart* and *Bluey: The Movie*) under his belt, Grammer's steady rise has delivered multi-platinum hits including "Honey, I'm Good," "Fresh Eyes," and "Don't Give Up On Me." Between repeat appearances in the *Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade* (which he describes as "an extrovert's dream") and participating in the 21st season of ABC's *Dancing With the Stars* (which he says was the hardest and most vulnerable thing he's ever done), Grammer brings a rare level of authenticity and humility to the stage, along with a passionate commitment to creating music that heals.

# Andy Grammer

## Music That Heals

By Andrea Beenham

Photos by Alex Harper



**Music Connection:** You're such a unique artist because you have so much joy and life coming out of you—especially when there seem to be so many people “selling darkness” at the moment. This has always been your message, though, so what got you started in that way? How did you start on the path to really discovering that voice of positivity in your music, since it's not that common?

**Andy Grammer:** It's funny—I think that it's kind of what works for me? I'd be lying if I said I didn't try in different areas—to be like, “Man, am I supposed to be more sexy?! Is positivity cool?!” Hopefully as an artist you continually peel off layers and just get back to who you are. That seemed to resonate and it was always what I was best at: trying to uplift people. My purpose took me a little while, but I'm so grateful to be here—and that's always the stuff that has resonated with everybody else. I get off on finding the things that could be perceived as cheesy and figuring out how to add depth and ground them. Everybody wants to feel joyful, but a lot of times the package is not something everyone can handle, so I know what I'm wading into. The Art of Joy Tour—I'm in on the joke and I know that it could be horrible, and then I'm like, “no—there's truth in there”—and I get to work figuring out how.

**MC:** Absolutely. I'm glad you bring that up, because it really is a fine line between trying to sell joy, as opposed to showing up as joy, and it's a big difference.

**Grammer:** It's a huge, huge difference—and I think a lot of it is grounded in pain. I wrote “Keep Your Head Up”—the first song that went big—as a pick-me-up to myself. My mom had just died and I was street performing and no one cared. I was out on the street singing for 8 to 10 hours a day and when you sing “Keep Your Head Up” from that place, it's sincere. I think that a lot of people can relate to that. It's a lot of joy and optimism as a form of rebellion, as opposed to “just because.”

**MC:** You certainly seem to surround yourself with the best, and with people of like energy. Can you tell me a little bit about your management team?

**Grammer:** My manager, Ben Singer, has been with me for 12 years. He came and saw me as a street performer and the first thing we did was we bought me a better rug and a better tip jar, so he's been with me from the jump. He's like another member of the band, and all my music is in collaboration [with him]. I'll write the songs and then me and him will go into the studio and kind of close it together. He's got an incredible ear and an amazing heart, and he's been the constant to this whole thing.

**MC:** It's amazing to have that kind of longevity through various records, and to have that level of integrity at the core of your relationship is somewhat of a rarity.

**Grammer:** Yes, and to have someone else who doesn't get very excited about music unless it's doing good for people, you know? I don't think all music has to be that way—there's definitely room for all types of incredible music—it's just that what gets me going personally are songs that are like little physical chiropractors: you feel a little bit more centered or something [after listening to them].

**MC:** You have talked about the upcoming album and how it was sort of a reinvention, and that there was this whole sort of rebirth that came about for you personally and professionally from the pandemic lockdown. What were your biggest takeaways or greatest gifts through this whole challenge?

**Grammer:** The greatest thing was to be forced to be alone, which I'm terrible at. I don't like to be alone and never have, so I've very conveniently set up a life where I'm surrounded by thousands of people every day, and when it's time to go to bed, there's like 12 of my best friends who are all sleeping on a bus together. Dealing with the silence myself and realizing I was pretty unhappy—I started really getting into joy. My favorite definition of joy is “gladness not based on circumstance” and, if that's the case, then you should still be happy when you're alone in the silence. I realized that I had some real work to do there, and that's what forced me into these self-love jams. If you had asked me before the pandemic, I thought I was really good at that, but when you took all the glitz and glamour away, I just had so much

“The audience is literally six-year-olds to 70-year-olds and everybody in between. No one is excluded. I'm not just singing about the first time you fell in love, I'm singing about the soul, so everybody can get down with that ..... It's like a party that everyone's invited to.”

work to do. I write through whatever I'm going through, so songs like, “Damn, It Feels Good To Be Me,” and “Love Myself” just came from that. I'm never afraid to write about anything, because I know that if it's embarrassing to me to write it, then I'm probably on to something pretty good. Whatever you're dealing with, if you're really really dealing with it, it's probably fairly universal.

**MC:** I heard the new album is the culmination of a two-week lockdown with your favorite writers?

**Grammer:** Yeah, there's a lot of good stuff that came from that—it was a lifeline to me. I was freaking out not being able to go anywhere, so we tested everybody and we went in for two weeks with Jake Torrey, who co-wrote “Don't Give Up On Me”; Nolan Sipe, who co-wrote “Honey, I'm Good”; and my frequent collaborator, John Levine—who is just amazing and has been on all my albums. It was really cool to go in and not do it in the L.A. writing way where

you all get there at eleven, talk for two hours, write for three hours, and then it's time to go. It was like sleepover camp, and we kept going at them [the songs]. We would get some food and talk about it—a real intensive occurred that I would love to do again. I made omelets for everybody every morning and we played MarioKart every night—it was great.

**MC:** It's great that you have such tenure, have worked frequently together over the years, and that you're together again for the latest record as well.

**Grammer:** Experience is really important. To get something that actually resonates with everyone. Nobody knows that, that's a lucky thing. But I do think as you go along—the more and more songs you write—there is a bullseye, and you start hitting the board every time. On my first album, I wrote a hundred songs and some of them didn't even hit the board or the wall—not even close. Now it's usually fairly close, and then magic happens every once awhile, especially when you find people who really complement what you have (and you find those people along the way).

**MC:** You touched on joy and positivity being really just who you are, and how you choose to show up in the world, but—given everything that's going on—what do you use as your grounding point? What keeps you humble and stable and holds you in that space, or what tools do you use to keep you there?

**Grammer:** Well, one is the Baha'i faith, a religion based on the unity of religions—there is just a lot of really incredible writing there that I was raised in and I do my best to pray every day and stay grounded in that way. And then, you know, it's a lot of self-work. The therapy during the pandemic—I'm going for it on the invisible work. There's lots of invisible bricks to be carried that I'm finally coming around to that I just couldn't shake off when I was stuck in quarantine, so that's not super fun, but it's important if you want to have a brain that's happy.

**MC:** You've been through some stuff, losing your mom really early. Do you think that those experiences and a lot of the ups and downs, through busking and the rest of it, do you think that has change your outlook and do you think that's part of what keeps you humble and showing up in the way that you do?

**Grammer:** Yeah, sure. I also think it just makes it more palatable. You don't want to hear uplifting music from somebody who hasn't been through shit. I don't want to hear “Keep Your Head Up” from somebody who's never been through it. I don't want to hear “Don't Give Up On Me” from someone who hasn't really felt suffering.

**MC:** Let's talk about “Joy,” the lead track to the new album. What came first, the lyrics or the music? And what is it about this song (apart from the obvious), where did it come?

**Grammer:** I don't know whether there's a word that talks about being happy in a way that has such a grounded depth to it? Happiness is floaty; you can be happy one moment, and then not happy. Joy feels like you've done work, or you've been through something to get there. It started out as a concept of how cool it would be to play off of past relationships and be like, “I've dated all these different things”—sorrow, grief, jealousy—and write it in that form and



then land on, "I finally found joy." I really loved that idea and I brought in Michael Pollack, he's an on-fire writer right now, and I think he got it. I imagine when it comes up in your playlist and you see a song called "Joy"—like, okay, how're you going to do this?! It's not easy to pull off joy. It's really hard to say it in a genuine, authentic way. If you can do it, it makes people so happy, because we all need joy and we need to relate to each other and the things that talk about our higher nature and fill up our soul and our heart. It's just that so much of that is so freaking sweet that it's hard to get it. I had a kind of whisper that I was supposed to go in this direction—that word "joy." Horns felt like the next step.

**MC:** Speaking of which, where did you find the fantastic all-female horn section?!

**Grammer:** I knew that I needed horns and was switching out my backup singers—two of them were female and I did not want to have an all-male band. You need all the different things that women bring to the stage, the female point of view. It was really tough to do, because my backup singers were incredible, but I could feel the call that I had to go with horns and the only way I was going to do it was if they were female—and these three ladies crush!

**MC:** They're badass for sure. You've spoken recently about conversations you've had with female members of your tour and hearing about the things that they deal with. Has anything changed since those first conversations?

**Grammer:** For sure. Just being really aware that you don't know things and asking as much as possible; really open communication, making sure that everybody feels heard. Especially as a white guy, my viewpoint is not necessarily going to cover the whole spectrum of what this is, so I need to be really open to everybody else's input. It's from a place of 'oh man, I have straight up blind spots,' so I need all the information to make something great. I don't want to be in any sort of an institution that doesn't have a huge diversity of men and women—it's a terrible idea—it's a totally different energy.

**MC:** Your recent show in Anaheim was somewhat of a homecoming and wasn't far from where you started busking and where you were

first discovered. How was that for you, especially in light of the recent reinvention?

**Grammer:** It was so sweet to be around people. It's lovely to be seen. The closer you get to being authentic when you do your art, the more often you are seen—and to have all your close family and friends, as well as a lot of people who have known me as a street performer and have come to a lot of my first gigs in L.A.—it's just really sweet to share that with your hometown.

**MC:** I have to add—when I was waiting to get into your show, there was a family behind me with two little girls about the same age as your daughters, and it was their first concert. They were huge fans of yours and it was interesting that they were so young.

**Grammer:** What's so sweet is that when you're singing about the soul, which is kind of what I'm doing, there's no age for that, so the audience is literally six-year-olds to 70-year-olds and everybody in between. No one is excluded. I'm not just singing about the first time you fell in love, I'm singing about the soul, so everybody can get down with that. It's just so joyful to see such a wide array, it's like a party that everyone's invited to.

**MC:** You actually wrote an article for *Music Connection*—shortly after you were signed to S-Curve—about how to be a successful street musician, and you had some great advice! I was curious if you had anything to add to the advice you gave back then?

**Grammer:** It's amazing—I was just going a hundred percent at whatever was in front of me at that moment. Right now, there are a lot of other things in my vision but at that time that was all that there was—and I just went a hundred percent at it.

**MC:** So much of that is echoed in how you show up now, and it's clearly a formula that works.

**Grammer:** It's just the idea of "How do you give more than you're taking?"—which is hard to do on the street, but I can be done. The biggest lesson that I took from the street was when I first moved to L.A. and I'm playing music—strangers or anybody that comes to your crappy little gig at a bar—they're giving

you their attention, they're giving it to you, because you're not good. Over four years of street performing, there was a lot of tweaking and writing songs and new things to get it to where that shift actually happens, to where I'm giving it to you. Once that happens, everybody is psyched because they're getting something from you. What an incredible job to do, to fill people up?! On the whole tour, I would just get off stage and be like, "I can't believe I get to do this?!" I always equate it to...there are a lot of astronauts, and not that many get to go to the moon—but every night I get to go the moon.

**MC:** You introduced two new songs at your show: "New Money" and "Saved My Life" and you had the crowd singing the chorus on those. Where does that come from? I know it's a bit of a trademark, but is that a throwback to your busking days and always wanting to engage your crowd?

**Grammer:** Yeah. I think it's also when you're playing something brand-new that no one's ever heard. So often now at shows, people know their part. They know all the words and it's just a dream, it's amazing. You want to kind of keep that going. On "New Money," we recorded a lot of huge crowds singing that and we put it on the record.

**MC:** That's another way that you really create that investment by having everyone in the room, and your fans as a whole, be part of something. That's so important. Would you say that technology has changed that whole experience?

**Grammer:** I think technology has made it so that you can have niches that are bigger than they've ever been. It allows you to be riskier, more trickled-down on who you are as a person and as an artist, and still have a way to get to everybody, which is really liberating as an artist. It allows me to more directly communicate. There are all these playlists that didn't exist when I was just starting. My type of music has a way of getting to the people who want to hear it, as opposed to just a huge blast to everyone. The blast is smaller than it's ever been and it's even cooler to go to all these little side roads to get exactly where your fans are.

Contact Amanda Brophy,  
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- Grammer's father is singer-songwriter Robert Crane "Red" Grammer (formerly of renowned folk trio The Limelickers, Through Children's Eyes), who is best known for his children's songs ("Can You Sound Just Like Me?", "Down the Do Re Mi," "Hello World," etc.), which he first began writing for his sons.

- Born in Los Angeles, Grammer was raised and schooled in Chester, NY, but now lives back in Los Angeles with his wife and two daughters.

First starting in music by playing the trumpet, then guitar and piano as a young child, Grammer began writing his own songs at age 15.

- The nightly bath time ritual with the Grammer kids features music by jazz great, Louis Prima, including "Pennies from Heaven."

- Debut video "Keep Your Head Up" featured actor Rainn Wilson and was an iTunes video of the week in 2010, winning MTV's "O Music Awards" for most innovative video on April 25, 2011.

- Grammer and his mother Kathy were big fans of Paul Simon's *Graceland* album, and 2019's "She'd Say" (recorded with Ladysmith Black Mambazo) was written after a conversation with a medium, who channeled a message to Grammer from his late mother about writing the song.

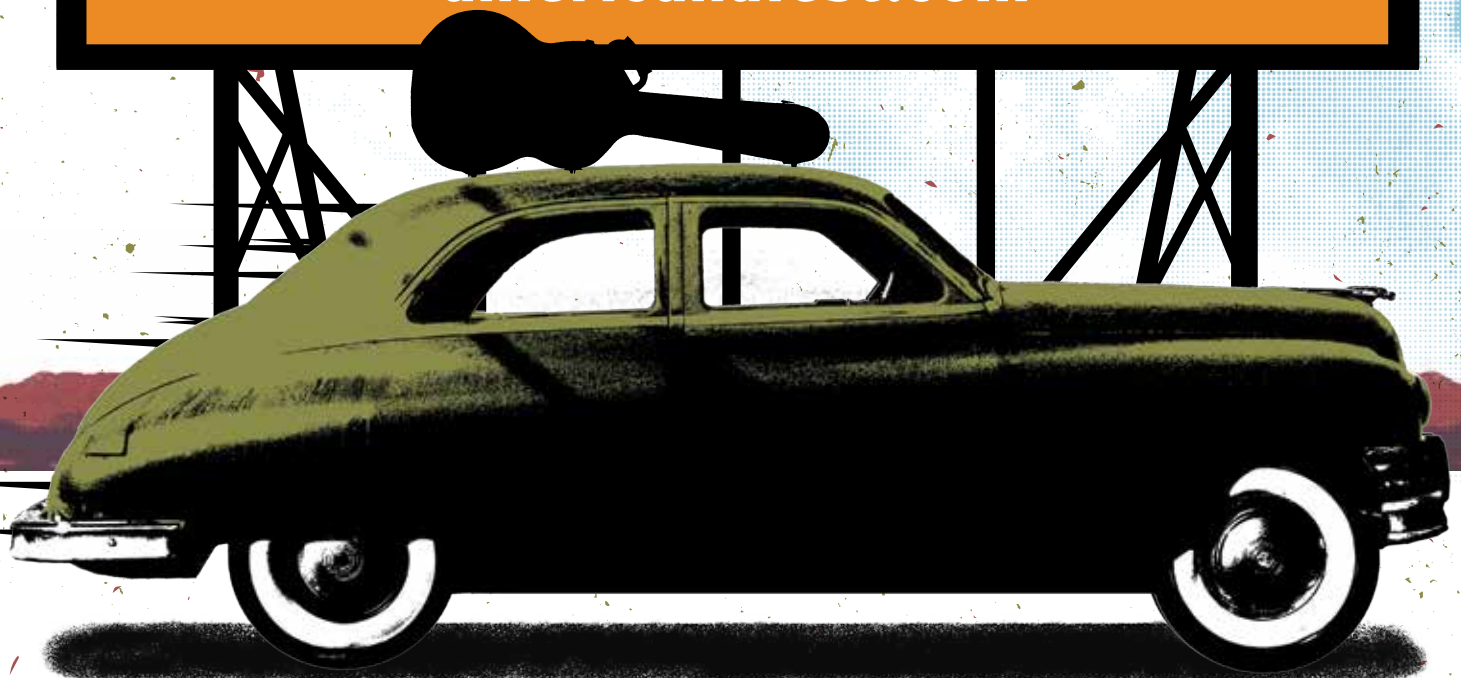


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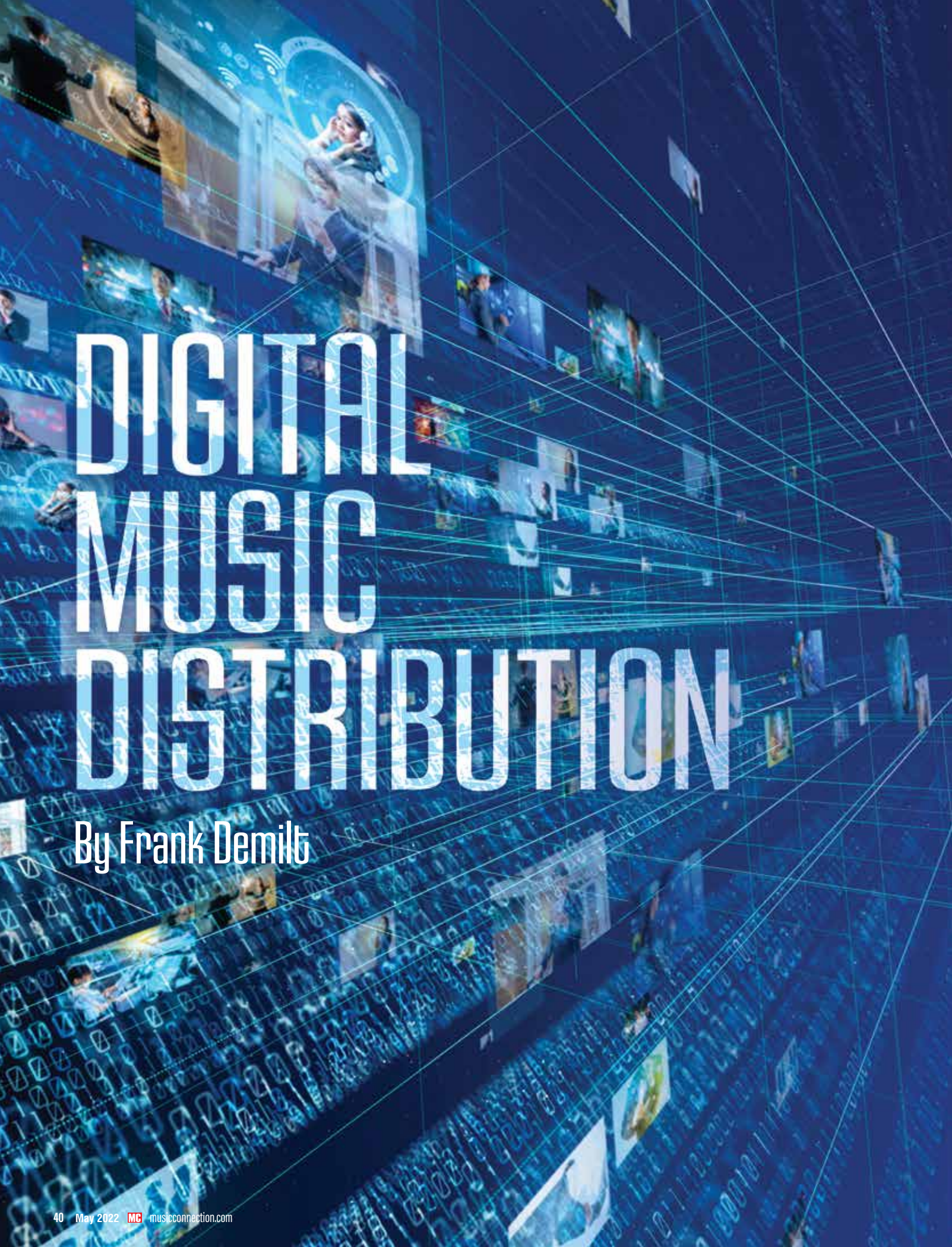
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# DIGITAL MUSIC DISTRIBUTION

By Frank Demilt



**M**usic distribution is as old as the music industry itself. Even when sheet music publishing companies ran the business, they needed someone to print out the scores and deliver them to the stores. That is where the distributors came in. While the core role of music distributors stayed the same for over a century, their workflow and business models have been subject to constant change, and those changes had a massive effect on the music industry. From the pre-2000s "era of CD" to "the era of streaming" that is used today, we still use the dominant distribution medium to define the stages of the industry's development.

In 2001, the recording industry was almost exclusively physical. Two decades later, physical sales make up less than 1/4 of all global recording revenues with the share going down to 10% for the more developed digital markets. Most of the music distributors turned from supply chain managers into providers of digital infrastructure and rights administrators.

Today, you're able to make your song available to listeners worldwide by simply uploading your song to the internet. So, why would there still be a need for distribution intermediaries? Can't the artist just, "Do It Yourself?" Not really. The distributors are still an integral part of the recording chain, taking upon themselves a few core roles:

## DISTRIBUTING RELEASES TO DSPS

There are "direct artist platforms" like Bandcamp or SoundCloud that don't require a distributor. You set up an artist page, upload your music, and that's it. However, they're just a fraction of the plethora of digital distribution resources. In today's digital environment, a well-oiled tech pipeline is a must, because most DSPs and social media platforms don't allow direct music uploads, forcing the artist to go through distributors/aggregators. Spotify recently closed off its direct upload program after a year of beta-testing, stating "music distribution is best handled by partners." DSPs would rather work with distributors to save themselves from dealing with unstandardized metadata and payout distribution. Artists can (technically) upload their music on iTunes themselves, but Apple suggests you go through a distributor to ensure the release metadata fits the platform's requirements. Some of the

broadest digital distribution networks claim to source over 600 online stores, and all the different DSPs have different metadata standards that make it virtually impossible to handle digital music distribution manually.

## ROYALTIES ALLOCATION

In the world of streaming, the rights owners now earn money the second the user presses play. The value of that stream depends on dozens of factors, and with the royalty calculation as complicated as it is now, imagine if Spotify, Tidal or Apple Music had to pay out those royalties directly to every artist. The administrative costs would go through the roof, even if they'd gotten the metadata and banking details correctly, and the rights owners themselves wouldn't be too enthusiastic about getting paid separately from each digital platform. The distributors fill that gap serving as a sorting plant for royalties from DSPs to rights owners, ensuring every "master" dollar goes back into the recording industry (while the composition/publishing royalties go through a separate pipeline of CMOs, PROs, and publishers).

## MARKETING DISTRIBUTION STRATEGY AND TRADE MARKETING

A customer walks into the record store where they're presented with hundreds of options. Each music genre section offers a variety of artists in that specific genre, the "New Release" section promotes the latest blockbuster releases and there is a "Features Shelf" at the entrance of the store.

Today we don't have many record stores anymore, but the same principle still applies. A person opens Spotify, clicks on "New Music Friday" and presses play. The track that plays is the No. 1 song of the week, the "record that every customer will see," the DSP equivalent to the "features" record store shelf. How do you get there? A handful of DSPs dominate the digital market and while some streaming giants are putting their algorithms forward as mediators of music discovery, the most popular playlists and the "feature spots" are curated by the service's editorial team. To get that desired distribution push, you need to go through them. However, the editorial team can't speak to thousands of managers and labels every week, just like streaming services can't distribute royalties directly to rights owners.

As an artist it may be time consuming to singularly upload each track to each streaming platform individually. If you're independent, it's hard to track the metrics for each platform and ensure your tracks were uploaded properly. What options do you have to make this process easier? First, you can hire a company, but the cost varies depending on the size of the company and the campaign you are looking for. Second, you can build your own team to monitor these platforms. Third (and most likely your best option), you can sign up for one of the many distribution channels available to independent artists. Last, you can get distribution through one of the major labels including Sony ATV, Kobalt, Universal, Warner, Columbia or Atlantic. However, as an up-and-coming inde-

pendent artist, you probably don't have access to one of the major label distribution channels. That still leaves you with a variety of independent options. Each platform has its own stipulations, partnerships, connections, splits, rights, and subscription fees, but each of the following independent distribution channels will upload your music to all streaming and social media platforms. Here is a breakdown of a few of the independent distribution channel options you can sign up for as an artist:

## DISTROKID

A music distribution service that distributes tracks to all the major music stores and streaming platforms. Users pay a yearly fee of \$19.99 to upload unlimited albums and songs and artists always keep 100% of their rights and royalties.

## CD BABY

Distributes your music to 150+ streaming and download services around the world for a fee of \$9.95 per single, \$49 per album, and 15% of your royalties. CD Baby also gives you access to key demographic and geographic data when you distribute your music using their service.

## TUNECORE

For a flat fee of \$9.99 per single or \$29.99 per album, TuneCore distributes your music to over 150 digital stores and streaming platforms. TuneCore artists keep 100% of the profits they earn from sales, downloads, and streaming revenue.

## AWAL

A distribution service that delivers your music to all the key stores and streaming platforms in over 200 territories worldwide. AWAL is free to join, but they take a minimum 15% share of all your streaming and download profits once your track is released. One of the major differences of AWAL is that they don't automatically accept every artist who wants to join the platform. They believe that having a curated artist roster allows them to support their artists with a higher quality of service.

## UNITED MASTERS

While it's free to distribute your music and deliver your tracks to 30+ stores and streaming platforms, including all the majors like Spotify and YouTube, they do take 10% of the profit from your streams and downloads. Every artist has access to an analytics dashboard which tracks your real-time data.

## DITTO

With unlimited releases starting from \$25 USD per year, Ditto distributes your music to over 200 stores, including all the major streaming platforms like Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube and more. Ditto has three distribution packages available for music makers at every stage of their career: Artist, Professional and Label. Ditto lets you keep 100% of your rights and royalties, has 24/7 artist support, and lets you track sales and trending data with daily analytics reports.

## RECORD UNION

A distribution platform that lets you register a free account and then charges you for every release. There are three distribution packages available depending on the number of stores you want your track delivered to, with single releases priced from \$7. Record Union artists are charged per year for every music store or streaming platform they want their track added to and take 15% of all artist royalties.

## SPINNUP

An independent record label and music distribution service owned by Universal Music Group. You can sign up for free to use their social data dashboard and special artist features, but then you pay to release every track. Single releases start at \$9.99. SpinnUp delivers to 44 music stores and streaming platforms, artists keep 100% of their rights and royalties, and the top tracks uploaded from their platform are sent to the Universal Music Group A&R team, giving you a chance to be discovered and signed by their record label.

## LEVEL

Allows you to release your music on Spotify, Apple Music, iTunes, Amazon Music, Google Play, TIDAL, Pandora, Deezer and Napster. While still in Beta, you can distribute your music free of charge, but when the full platform is launched, Level will take 8% from each of your release royalties.

If you choose to sign-up with a "Distributor," understand this isn't a specific company, rather it's a role other parts of the recording chain can internalize. Because of this, there are a wide variety of distribution channels you can go through.

## MAJOR DISTRIBUTORS

The majors are perhaps the only players in the recording market that own a catalog big enough to negotiate with prominent DSPs and get direct access to their editorial teams. They don't need distribution partners, rather the label's distribution department works 99% of the catalog. It's not only about distributing their own catalog; major labels also distribute a sizable portion of independent labels. Beggars Group is distributed in the US by Warner Music's ADA, Fool's Gold and Mass Appeal by Universal's Caroline International. On the US market, 85% of digital revenues go through Universal, Sony, or Warner (or distribution companies under their umbrella). To counteract that, digital platforms and independent labels are trying to level the playing field, and digital rights network Merlin has success mediating relationships between independent labels, non-major distributors, and DSPs. That said, the current system is far from perfect. Independent labels don't have the same 1:1 editorial team access as the major labels, and it's still easier for artists to be visible on streaming platforms if you're signed or distributed by a major label.

## INDEPENDENT DISTRIBUTION PARTNERS

Major deals aren't for everybody, and for the top-tier independent artists, there's another

option. There's been a trend of major labels buying up independent distribution companies. Recently for example, The Orchard became a part of Sony in 2015, and Universal bought INgrooves in early 2019. Today, the primary players left are Believe Digital, Idol, Redeye Worldwide and recently launched Ditto Plus (not to be confused with Ditto's open platform solution). The important thing is, for distribution partners aggregation is a side-service whose actual value is in the hands-on approach to promotion, trade marketing, and digital release strategies. From the moment you sign a distribution deal, you have a dedicated consultancy and pitching team with direct contact to editorial across the major DSPs. The deals with dedicated distribution partners will always be percentage-based, meaning distribution partners will take a portion of the recording royalties, which can be as high as 50%. The distributor will often offer an advance to the artist, recouped by the future cash flows. The independent distribution partners are more accessible than their major-affiliated counterparts, but in both cases, the up-and-coming artist must show their worth as an investment.

## WHITE-LABEL DISTRIBUTION SOLUTIONS

Not all the independent labels are looking for distribution partners. Some top-level indie labels have an in-house distribution department that only lacks the technical infrastructure. To bridge that gap, record labels can use white-label distribution services like Consolidated Independent, Sonosuite and FUGA. White-label solutions provide a technical pipeline, focusing on delivering audio and metadata to DSPs, and distributing royalties back to right holders at scale while their customers keep complete control over distribution and retail marketing strategies. Their business model targets top-end independent labels with a sizable catalog and output or distributors looking for a tech pipeline, rather than someone who wants to distribute a handful of songs.

## OPEN DISTRIBUTION PLATFORMS/AGGREGATORS

Every music professional/artist has probably heard of CDBaby, TuneCore, and DistroKid. The business model of open platforms revolves around two types of services. First is the aggregator package: go on the platform, upload your music, and they make your release available across hundreds of DSPs. This is the basic service that all the online distribution platforms offer, and depending on the service, the distributor either charges a flat per-song/album fee, an annual recurring subscription fee, or a percentage-based commission up to 15%. The second package is "premium artist services." That could mean playlist, pitching bundles, publishing administration services, airplay plugs, physical distribution, or anything in between.

The ability of open platforms to properly represent their customers on the trade marketing field is limited. With 60 thousand songs uploaded on Spotify every day, it doesn't matter how big the team is, they won't be able to provide personalized promotion services at

this scale. Most of the time, the deal is a value proposition: "Distribute your album to every DSP for \$50 and keep 100% of the royalties." However, if you go with a flat-fee distribution deal, you're on your own if you want to stand out across the DSPs.

## SEMI-LABEL DISTRIBUTION SERVICES

This last type of distribution company is relatively new. As of now, only two companies fall into that category: AWAL and Amuse. The idea of semi-label distribution is you don't need a record deal to release your music, but you still need a distributor. The thinking of these companies is, let's release your music and if it gains traction, upstream to a record label-type deal. Like open platforms, AWAL and Amuse offer a basic service of distribution administration of getting the music out there. When the artist gets a distribution deal, the consumption data gathered across the DSPs ends up with the company's A&R. Meaning if these companies see the artist is doing well, the initial deal can be upscaled to a distribution partnership or a full-blown record licensing deal. This allows them to offer their basic distribution service pro bono for the sake of powering its A&Rs with data. Labels are now focusing solely on release marketing, and it's hard for independents to expand down the chain and take on distribution unless they have special relationships with the streaming editorial community.

It comes down to which distribution channel and situation fits your needs best as an artist. They all offer relatively even splits, all of which are beneficial to the artists compared to what you would receive at a major label. The best part about going this route is that you can keep close to 100% ownership in your songs and catalogs. This means you own your masters; you own your copyrights; you own your songs in their entirety. If you were to sign with a label, especially as a new unproven artist, you would give up most of the percentage of not only your songs but also your masters (which you may not own at all).

A graduate of the Roy Park School of Communication at Ithaca College, **FRANK DEMILT** (@frankademilt) is a veteran of the music industry. Since 2013, Demilt has worked in some of the top music studios in New York City, New Jersey, Miami, and Atlanta alongside the industry's top Grammy- and Emmy-winning and -nominated artists. Beginning as an engineer at Soul Asylum Studios in Atlanta, he has since worked in various sectors of the music business. Recently, Demilt was named head of Artist Development, Sync Manager, and lead A&R at Water Music Publishing.



He's also helped launch the creative agency Sloppy Vinyl, a premier artist development and entertainment company in New Jersey. His new book can be purchased at *The Blueprint: The Bible For Becoming A Successful Performing Artist in the Digital Age* (Amazon).



# Music As a Force for Good

All types of art enable artists to bare their souls and present a message. But their differences are most striking, and where music stands alone. With paintings or sculptures, each observer internalizes a unique message. Also true with poetry.

Paintings may contain light imagery or dark, but they're not active agents. They affect people differently, dependant to their own circumstances. They then create their own call to action, their own message. It's collaborative between the artist and observer.

When writing books, screenplays and TV, I'll lace the story with cryptic and artistic imagery; but, at its heart, the story generally has a fairly simple message. Even morals tales or deep art house films really come down to only seven classic stories in literature.

Whether good versus evil, overcoming, a quest or voyage and return, its meaning isn't nearly as fluid as sculpture, paint or poetry. Rather, you're invited into the artist's world, so the viewer doesn't create a call to action. And often it's pure escapism, which isn't a bad thing. It's just different art for a different purpose. Nothing wrong with that.

Then there's music.

Music stands alone in often containing its own call to action, dictated by the artist. And that is all-important. This places a tremendous, and burdensome, responsibility on songwriters and recording artists. And labels, too. We may not have considered that before, but it should be considered because there's another side to that coin. It also provides us an opportunity that, in my opinion, far exceeds any negatives.

As a singer-songwriter, I'm primarily a Contemporary Christian country-rock artist, although I generally favor mainstream, positive moral messages versus overt Praise and Worship. I've also been involved in causes, such as participating in songs and events for MuzArt World Foundation, an organization of music professionals promoting public support for private funding of arts and music programs in public schools.

I've advocated against child abuse in the publication of an epic book series, entitled *The Legacy Series*, in current release. I also wrote, produced and directed the feature film adaptation of this series, also called *The Legacy*. This project is taken directly from a terminally ill, abused young boy's own writings, penned by the boy while this abuse took place. As such, it is uniquely unprecedented and powerful.

I specifically use music to encourage people to overcome obstacles, and pursue their

dreams and goals. As an autistic and wheelchair-bound, physically disabled artist, I wanted to use my voice, as it were, to encourage people to rise above their own challenges. But I hadn't thought much more about it than that. That is, until the most unlikely encounter.

While driving across the country, I pulled off at a rest stop in the middle of Kentucky, where a small group of local teenagers was hanging

time. In the end, he thanked me for being down to earth, friendly, and releasing songs and music videos with uplifting messages.

As I drove away, my mind was on that encounter. It was weird and surreal but, strangely, it scared the hell out of me. It put being an artist in a whole different light. I wondered... what if I'd been in a bad mood, acted like a jerk or, more importantly, released music lead-

ing these impressionable young people down negative paths? And to be truthful, controversial or not, a lot of music does this nowadays.

Airwaves and streaming services are full of music teaching very young, impressionable kids to disrespect women, glorify violence, lawlessness and drug use, and hate people over race or politics. Most damaging is music assuring kids their destiny is predetermined by intangible barriers they can never scale. That making good personal choices is irrelevant because they'll never be allowed to succeed. The call to action is to give up, to magnify anger and hate. Kids heeding these messages are led down paths to negative, unhappy and destructive lives of failure.

I realized after this Kentucky encounter that artists have not only an opportunity, but a responsibility, to inspire our listeners. By all rights, I should never have met these kids. It was only the most unlikely, random chance that brought us together. And it was profound. I could never have interacted with, and learned from, these kids had they merely attended a concert or appearance.

I'd never recognized our influence over "fans" in this way and that a tremendous responsibility is an unavoidable result. To ignore or deny that, not caring what damage we may inflict upon people we will never even know by teaching them how to fail in life, is something

karma will surely demand accountability for.

What if we teach them to succeed, to be happy? Surely karma will deliver its rewards for that, as well, and our own lives will be enriched more than we can imagine.



out. We talked for a while and the subject of music came up. I said I was a country singer and they asked my name. When I told them, they were dumbstruck; they looked utterly shocked. One said, "No, you're lying!" Now I was confused.

He said, "You're not THEE Brandyn Cross, are you?"

I slowly replied, "I didn't know there was a THEE Brandyn Cross." At this point, they freaked.

This kid showed me his phone. He had all my music and videos. That was weird.

He said, "Everyone around here listens to you; you're a country legend here." Sure. Okaaay.

We talked more, took selfies and had a great

**BRANDYN CROSS** is an autistic, multi-faceted artist who was left a wheelchair-bound amputee after a severe industrial accident. Only intensifying his drive to succeed, he has since written and recorded charting and award winning songs, acted in films and TV series, written books and screenplays, and written more than 100 episodes for TV series and specials, all while inspiring others through his motivational public speaking. See [brandyncross.com](http://brandyncross.com).



## Focusrite Scarlett 3rd Gen Range, Hitmaker Expansion

This is an exciting time to be a recording musician. For the last 20 years, successful computer-based audio recording depended heavily on hardware-based DSP (digital signal processing). Now, today's computers are for the most part powerful enough to run DSP instruments and plug-ins natively while still allowing for high track count and low latency recording sessions.

The Focusrite Scarlett range is the world's best-selling range of recording interfaces for some very good reasons. Focusrite's Scarlett range of audio interfaces are solidly built, dependable, sound consistently great and are backed up by Focusrite's world class customer service. Now in its third generation, Focusrite's Scarlett interfaces continue to be successfully used in project and professional recording studios around the world.

Focusrite offers recording interfaces across a wide range of features and specifications. All six interfaces in the Scarlett 3rd Gen range offer solid build quality, high headroom instrument inputs and powerful 24-bit/192kHz AD-DA converters capable of operating at extremely low latency. Setup with any of the 3rd Gen Scarlett range of interfaces could not be easier thanks to Focusrite's easy start tool, which walks you through the setup process making it possible to get recording literally within minutes after taking your 3rd Gen Scarlett interface out of the box.

The 3rd Gen Scarlett 18i20 shown here features eight of the best performing Scarlett mic preamps Focusrite has ever offered for tracking guitars or recording vocals. The 18i20 features two High Z instrument inputs for direct tracking, a pair of auxiliary outs for switching between two pairs of monitors, a built-in talkback mic and loopback capability via the Focusrite Control app. You also get ADAT I/O ports for expansion capability.

All the 3rd Generation Scarlett range from

the least to the most expensive features switchable AIR mode, which is based on a design first used in the Rupert Neve designed Focusrite Forte console. The ISA One preamp in that console combined a transformer-coupled mic/line preamp with a classic Neve equalizer.

Now, Focusrite is giving every newly regis-

*"Setup with any of the 3rd Gen Scarlett range of interfaces could not be easier, thanks to Focusrite's easy start tool."*

tered Scarlett owner their Hitmaker Expansion pack, an added-value bundle of software instruments and plugins that is included at no extra charge with every new Scarlett Range interface giving you a comprehensive range of recording and production tools at no extra charge.

Once you register your Scarlett interface you will (from your Focusrite customer portal) be able to download full licenses to Antares® Auto-Tune® Access, Relab LX480 Essentials, Softube® Marshall® Silver Jubilee 2555, XLN Audio® Addictive Keys, XLN Audio® Addictive Drums 2: Studio Rock Kit, Brainworx® [bx\_oberhausen, Brainworx® bx\_console], Focusrite SC,

Focusrite Red Plug-In Suite and Brainworx® [bx\_masterdesk].

As if that is not enough of a value proposition, every new Scarlett customer now gets by registering their product licensees Ableton® Live Lite Three Month Avid® Pro Tools® subscription, a three-Month Splice Sounds Subscription and Access to Focusrite's Plug-In Collective.

Using Hitmaker Expansion you can choose to work in either Ableton® Live Lite or sign up for a free three-month subscription to Pro Tools (or use any other DAW of your choosing). You can put down a drum track for a song with Addictive Drums while working out a melody with Addictive Keys. Then you can layer in some synth lines or keyboard pads with Brainworx® bx\_oberhausen soft-synth or play your guitar through the Marshall Silver Jubilee. Next, you have a great reverb from Relab® that you can use before mixing with the Red Plug-In Suite and the Brainwork Focusrite console plugin. Finally, the Brainworx mastering plugin puts the finishing touches on your tracks.

If you look at the software in the Hitmaker Expansion pack as sold individually, it adds up to about \$1300 and you're getting all this with all Scarlett's from the \$120 Scarlett Solo up to the \$550 Scarlett 18i20. It is a solid value proposition and is as well-rounded and comprehensive a software package that is currently included with any audio interface at any price.

Whether you are a seasoned professional or just getting started, Scarlett 3rd Gen recording interfaces and the added value Hitmaker Expansion bundle from Focusrite make it possible to get radio/distribution tracks professionally recorded on just about any newer PC or Mac.

*Details about the entire Focusrite Scarlett Range and the Hitmaker Expansion bundle of software instruments and plug-ins are available now at focusrite.com.*



## Jazz Hands for Autism—Not Just for Jazz Musicians

In 1972, the Autism Society launched the first annual National Autistic Children's week, which evolved into Autism Acceptance Month (AAM). April is National Autism Awareness Month, and April 2 is World Autism Awareness Day. But for Jazz Hands For Autism founder Ifunanya Nweke and her dedicated team of advisors, staff, instructors and coaches, every day offers a fresh opportunity to serve a community of talented musicians and musically inclined people of all ages who just happen to be on the spectrum.

Founded in 2014 by Nweke—a behavior interventionist and a musician herself—Jazz Hands For Autism is a unique non-profit post-secondary music education and vocational training program dedicated to the teaching and training of these often underappreciated musicians whose talents are too often hidden or overlooked. Driven by a passion that has its roots in a childhood home where she always advocated for and defended her younger brother (who is neurodivergent), Nweke's goal was to create a platform that enables individuals on the autism spectrum who love music and performing to express and explore their talents.

Over the years, she has continued to fulfill this mission with the help of a growing staff of mentors who have either acted as behavioral interventionists or have the ability to coach individuals on the autism spectrum. Though her mission is ever-evolving, under Ifunanya Nweke's vision and direction, JHFA has grown into a talent advocacy group and an educational program that provides musician focused job-readiness training and performance and job scouting for musicians on the autism spectrum. Education is key not only to the world at large that needs to understand more about autism, but in-house as well. Nweke's passion for learning extends now to her dynamic web docu-series called *3 Minutes with Ifu*, where she interviews influential people in the music industry and experts from mainstream autism organizations with the goal of advancing the importance of neurodiversity.

Thus far, Jazz Hands For Autism has provided support and performance opportunities for over 200 individuals with autism and their families (with 30 enrolled at any given time) via their two main programs, the Jazz Hands Concert Series (JHCS) and the multi-faceted Jazz Hands Musicians Academy (JHMA). The concert series is a twice a year festival event where selected musicians on the autism spectrum of all ages, genres and skill levels come to the stage to share their gifts in front of a supportive and diverse audience. These events foster socialization and confidence building, while offering an opportunity and safe space to explore the possibility of a career in music.

"JHFA is breaking through the veil of under-representation of the neurodivergent music community by reaching out to local music communities such as local concerts, music festivals, and studios to create an

environment of inclusivity and diversity within the music industry," says Esbeth Heredia, the organization's Job Placement Coordinator.

The Musicians Academy is a comprehensive 3-stage vocational and integrated employment program that provides individualized social, professional and musical training tailored to encouraging musicians on the spectrum (age 18+) to succeed in music-related jobs. Its three primary functions are job training (music theory, music software, instrument/onstage training, digital branding, etc.), job development (resume/cv/portfolio creation, job searching, professional development and work-adjustment training) and skills and interest-based job placement. JHMA students and graduates work and are paid for performing, collaboration projects, teaching studio work, original compositions, etc. In addition to the academy for those 18 and older, the organization has a Jazz Hands Junior Academy (JHJA), a newly launched program that offers private music lessons to school age children and teens from ages 8-17. There are over 40 different courses offered.

Despite its name, Jazz Hands For Autism is not just for jazz musicians. It's a musical theatre term that refers to a dramatic gesture signifying the end of a production. In the basic

*"JHFA is breaking through the veil of under-representation of the neurodivergent music community."*

jazz hands position, the hands are open, the palms face forward, and the fingers are splayed. Nweke says, "It represents the idea of triumph, something conquered. In the autism realm, handclapping with jazz hands reflects their and our excitement as we triumph over stigma that creates barriers to the creativity and expression of individuals on the Autism Spectrum."

One of the most exciting new outgrowths of Jazz Hands For Autism is the commercial release of three albums by JHFA affiliated musicians/artists, each in a different genre—all recorded, engineered and/or promoted by the organization. *Turquoise Apricot* by singer-songwriter Sam L. Williams is the first full-length project by this '60s aficionado, and is an ode to the music and instrumentation of that era, with a modern twist. Sean McRae's *Racer* is a multi-genre neo-soul jazz album fully produced by the artist, featuring saxophonist Rickey Washington (father of acclaimed jazz artist Kamasi Washington), music teacher George Earth and others. Shayne Holzman's full-length debut recording under the name Starving Darling (also the album title) is a re-imagined update of his 2019 EP. Offering an expansion of her indie rock repertoire,

she expands her instrumentation by adding piano and guitar in the mix while creating a fascinating melting pot of buzzing guitars, knocking drums, melodic keys and her powerful voice.

"These albums are a cumulative expression of everything we do at Jazz Hands For Autism," says Nweke. "They are the deliverables of a program that not only provides training to musicians learning to sing, play instruments, compose and understand music theory, but also how to record with Pro Tools and Logic, do digital marketing, create an EPK and adjust to studio, work and gig environments."

Outreach Coordinator Folarin Ajileye adds, "Our musicians at JHFA are defining the new standard when it comes to diversity, acceptance and what it means to be talented within the music industry. We have committed to not only promote the concept of neurodiversity so as to open more doors, but we are bringing a fresh perspective from musicians who originally would go unheard."

The concept for Jazz Hands For Autism took root just months after Nweke graduated from her undergraduate studies at UCLA. She was working with a colleague to complete her training to be a behavior interventionist when she met a young student named Ruben. Ruben, who was the only person with autism in his group, walked into his music class, spontaneously sat down at the piano and began singing a song. His classmates flocked to the remaining instruments and a jam session broke out. Nweke quickly realized there must be more musicians on the autism spectrum, with their potential to be leaders yet to be revealed. She and some likeminded associates put on the first Jazz Hands Concert a few months later—and the creation of an actual, now thriving non-profit took shape with a literal ensemble of likeminded souls.

"Ruben had a naturally beautiful voice and velvety tone," she says. "He knew the chords to play and was a serious natural talent. He was a leader in that setting, which was a stark contrast to his other classes where he would sit off to the side, managing his 'challenging behaviors.' That day made me realize that when we give individuals with autism room to be who they naturally are, they can not only communicate but build and lead a community around themselves. I see the individuals we work with not just as people with autism, but as talented, budding artists who need their creativity and skills supported, nurtured and advocated for. I see autism not as a limiting or defining factor of ability, but rather an indicator of where the individual needs additional support and scaffolding. I also believe that it behooves us as a society, and more specifically as an industry (the music industry), to find ways to create opportunities for Neurodivergent creatives who are on the autism spectrum."

Contact Jazz Hands for Autism, 424-298-8702  
[info@jazzhandsforautism.org](mailto:info@jazzhandsforautism.org)  
[jazzhandsforautism.org](http://jazzhandsforautism.org)



## Doxy

**Contact:** doxymusicofficial@gmail.com

**Web:** linktr.ee/doxyband

**Seeking:** Label, Film/TV

**Style:** Indie Rock

This pop-rock project is spearheaded by Oren Elazar, who has a special gift for super-catchy post-punk hooks. He absolutely knows how to spin simplicity into gold. No virtuosity, just simple post-punk, pop-rocking bliss. "Autopilot" stands out with its punchy bass guitar and basic keyboard solo. Same with "Wake Up," another catchy post-punker that conjures comparisons to Franz Ferdinand and even INXS. But "Digital Age," with its megaphone vocal, infectious guitar and catchy-as-hell riffs, sounds like a dead-ringer for The Strokes, whose early-2000's garage rock style is loud and clear. We urge the talented Elazar to update his attack, maybe via keyboard and electronics, and make his Doxy sound distinctive.

Production	7
Lyrics	7
Music	9
Vocals	8
Musicianship	7

SCORE: 7.6



## Sarah Harralson

**Contact:** sarahharralson@gmail.com

**Web:** sarahharralson.com

**Seeking:** Booking, Film/TV

**Style:** Country

From Knoxville, TN, artist Sarah Harralson's recordings are strong on all levels, and her husky voice is a real force when needed. On "Whiskey History" her vocal glides amid a low-key arrangement that includes a tasty mandolin and a pedal steel that is not just heard but truly felt. Terrific band on all accounts. "Put a Rock on This Rolling Stone" is a mid-tempo country-rocker whose organ part warms the room as it contributes to a comfy fabric of sound that seems to us like a hit single. That quality continues with "The Chance" where Harralson sings her advice to a friend about life's limited opportunities to connect with the ones we love. Hats off to the producer, who has maintained an expert level of sound and arrangement.

Production	9
Lyrics	9
Music	9
Vocals	9
Musicianship	9

SCORE: 9.0



## Fiddyolaa

**Contact:** fiddyolaamgmt@gmail.com

**Web:** youtube.com, @fiddyolaa

**Seeking:** Exposure

**Style:** Hip-Hop

Brooklyn rapper Fiddyolaa demonstrates his skills at the mic, apparent immediately upon unleashing his flow. Fiddyolaa is a clever lyricist and his style of rapping exudes the spirit of street cyphers in N.Y.C. The subject matter and melodies are adequate (some hooks are just too repetitive to our liking), but what keeps Fiddyolaa from truly shining are some bizarre choices in instrumentals and production. That is to say the caliber of detail by the producer is above standard mixtape-quality. We can't help but get lost, distracted by the horror/*X-Files* theme that is well-mixed behind the emcee on "Slaughter." "Top 5" and "Big Mad" are upbeat, but suffer from out-of-place chimes and jingle bells. We commend taking risks, but...

Production	8
Lyrics	7
Music	7
Vocals	8
Musicianship	7

me choices are in  
SCORE: 7.4



## Ricardo Pinzon

**Contact:** rpinzp@gmail.com

**Web:** ricardopinzonmusic.com

**Seeking:** Review

**Style:** Jazz

We have a mixed reaction to recordings by guitarist-composer Ricardo Pinzon. Unlike many instrumentalists, he thankfully does not deliver an onslaught of manic virtuosity. Instead, his recordings are relaxed, expansive but, unfortunately, meandering. And it sounds as if the composer often employs digital instruments, instead of actual bandmates, and it's a continuous distraction. That's especially true of "Aligator," a moody, low-key composition in which a saxophone takes flight and inspires a quickened pace. What mars this recording and the others, however, is that Pinzon's compositions too often sound like warmups, with themes that are absent or at least elusive, leaving the listener underwhelmed.

Production	7
Lyrics	X
Music	7
Vocals	X
Musicianship	8

SCORE: 7.3



## Boonie Mayfield

**Contact:** info@booniemayfield.com

**Web:** booniemayfield.com

**Seeking:** Film/TV, Management, Representation

**Style:** Electronic, Lo-Fi, Neo-Soul

Artist Boonie Mayfield brings lots of character and style to his recordings, like on "The Doubt Monster" where he spews a huge, monstrous sound with lots of retro-ness (including 808 drums) in its depiction of a man dogged by depression. "Wherever I go, it keeps following me." The retro-vintage flavors keep coming on the slow, soulful "Dream a Mile High" where a chill, lo-fi beat features classic synths for days. Mayfield proclaims his independence—actually yells it out—on "The Self Made Era" with some distorted high-energy guitar and organ licks (a la Rage Against the Machine) in the beat as the artist shouts and shouts his message. Not for everybody, this eccentric artist (and his off-key vocal style) are an acquired taste.

Production	8
Lyrics	7
Music	8
Vocals	7
Musicianship	7

SCORE: 7.4



## John Armato

**Contact:** tometesteypr@yahoo.com

**Web:** thedrummerlovesballads.com

**Seeking:** Review

**Style:** Jazz

Jazz drummer John Armato (& company) devotes his well-seasoned talents in tribute to a collection of choice ballads. In fact, Armato states this fact beautifully in the spoken-word intro to his new album *The Drummer Love Ballads*. It's a great idea for an opener. Next, "Dreamsville," written by the legendary composer Henry Mancini, is given an excellent arrangement (with standout trumpet) and is recorded expertly. Armato pays tribute to the City of Light with a version of Brahms' "The Shadows of Paris" featuring the moody, deep voice of Lucy Wijnands, not to mention organ, violin and an achingly effective Parisian accordion. Altogether, these atmospheric elements meld into a slow, melancholy delight.

Production	8
Lyrics	8
Music	9
Vocals	8
Musicianship	9

SCORE: 8.4

Music Connection's executive committee rates recorded music on a scale of 1 to 10. Number 1 represents the lowest possible score, 10 represents the highest possible score.

A final score of 6 denotes a solid, competent artist. For more information, see Submission Guidelines on the next page.





## Move Like Creatures

**Contact:** [nick@pressherepublicity.com](mailto:nick@pressherepublicity.com)  
**Web:** [movelikecreatures.com](http://movelikecreatures.com)  
**Seeking:** Management, Label, Booking  
**Style:** Indie Pop

Fronted by Nancy Bombard, this fourpiece band delivers a vibrant radio-ready amalgam of sounds that cuts across genre lines, including '80s bells & whistles and plenty of tasty synthesizers. Bombard's voice is perfect for material such as "Mind Reader," where she gets help from a background chorus that contributes to the dancing/party atmosphere, even if the production is a tad too busy with a surfeit of synth fizz. The band downshifts the energy on the lo-fi, laidback "Space Case," which is less sonically chaotic. We love its background ambience, Bombard's wails, and how the lyrics address ADHD. Best song of the bunch?... That would be "Ghost Me," where the artists' material and the production choices are ideal.

Production	9
Lyrics	7
Music	8
Vocals	8
Musicianship	8

SCORE: 8.0



## Yudan Zou

**Contact:** [yudanwendyzou@gmail.com](mailto:yudanwendyzou@gmail.com)  
**Web:** [spotify.com](https://open.spotify.com/artist/yudanwendyzou)  
**Seeking:** Review  
**Style:** Experimental Electronic

Listening to these works by hardcore experimental composer Yudan Zou, the listener should be prepared for some harsh, jarring sonics. We're talking atonal, industrial machine sounds ("clip 4") that truly seem like mashing keys and samples. It's a jarring experience, hardly one you could call musical. Appropriately titled, "The pain threshold" delivers 10 minutes of myriad starts and stops in which an occasional humanoid voice-command emerges from a persistent electrical dissonance. Perhaps the most approachable composition by Zou is "OKB-X Saturn RD 57," which prominently features neo-classical piano (treated and effected, of course) contributing some playful, if atonal, elements.

Production	7
Lyrics	X
Music	7
Vocals	X
Musicianship	7

SCORE: 7.0



## Lynn Drury

**Contact:** [lynndruryrocks@gmail.com](mailto:lynndruryrocks@gmail.com)  
**Web:** [lynndrury.com](http://lynndrury.com)  
**Seeking:** Booking, Film/TV  
**Style:** "Nolamericana"

New Orleans-based Lynn Drury delivers straightforward, downhome songs sweetened and spiced with some cool instrumentation, like the tremolo effect and fiddle solo on "'Good." And the organ solo on "Dancin' In The Kitchen" ("stirrin' somethin' up!") has a cool effect, as well. Both songs, though, have their downsides. The former needs a better, more memorable chorus and the latter is marred by silly, outdated '80s synths and could use more punch from the backup singers. Drury's own voice could also make a stronger impact. Her best song is "Safe Space," a poignant number with subtle handclaps and solid support from her backup band. Overall, we suggest Drury work to invest even more NOLA flavors into her music.

Production	8
Lyrics	6
Music	7
Vocals	7
Musicianship	8

SCORE: 7.2



## Prime 1

**Contact:** [primelent@yahoo.com](mailto:primelent@yahoo.com)  
**Web:** [reverbnation.com](http://reverbnation.com)  
**Seeking:** Label, Booking  
**Style:** Rap/Hip-Hop

Los Angeles-based Prime 1 is not new to the music scene, having started as a gospel rapper in '99. On the R&B-tinged "Still So Untouchable" we hear Prime 1 command the track with an impressive fast flow, easing in and out of different paces. "My Next Move" is inspirational ("Everything I do is because I grind,"), and we hear the rapper's versatile sound and voice in more subdued choruses. He is not a bad singer, but we suggest recruiting different artists for varied textures. "Got It Locked" sounds like a track from a whole different artist—"Shoutout from 2015" outs that it is an old track and we can tell—the song is excellent, featuring guests and auto-tune, but also makes it clear there have been personnel changes in the team.

Production	7
Lyrics	7
Music	8
Vocals	8
Musicianship	8

SCORE: 7.6



## Corey Stapleton & The Pretty Pirates

**Contact:** [coreystapletonmusic@gmail.com](mailto:coreystapletonmusic@gmail.com)  
**Web:** [coreystapleton.com](http://coreystapleton.com)  
**Seeking:** Label, Booking, Distribution  
**Style:** Country

Montana country artist Corey Stapleton's polished productions showcase his solid-as-a-rock values about life and love. Delivered in a sometimes boyish tenor voice, tunes such as "Western Son" are inspirational songs about harmony, togetherness and perseverance. "Make This Work" is a downtempo love ballad ("But your mom, were she here, would say to make this work") whose earnest lyrics might veer too close to cheesiness, is helped by a polished band, particularly the guitarist who's nice and precise. Stapleton and Co. let their hair down just a bit on the politely brash-sounding rocker "My First Rodeo.Not" (great title) includes bango and organ licks and is the least corny of his songs.

Production	8
Lyrics	7
Music	7
Vocals	7
Musicianship	8

SCORE: 7.4



## Don Tocabajo

**Contact:** [don.tocabajo@gmx.de](mailto:don.tocabajo@gmx.de)  
**Web:** [dontocabajo.de](http://dontocabajo.de)  
**Seeking:** Film/TV  
**Style:** Instrumental Electronic Soundtrack

Heidelberg-based composer Don Tocabajo deploys a regiment of deep dark EDM synths and runs them (not so seamlessly) through a series of vignettes that verge on funk, world music, and dance. That would describe "Audio Cocktail." Next, "War of Truths" has a great beat & persuasion touches, but like the previous composition it shifts abruptly from movement to movement, showing a brash disregard for subtlety. Listening to "Spiced Vibes," it suddenly occurred to our listening team that Tocabajo, armed with his snarling battery of synthesizers, clearly has a knack for the kind of driving, pulsing, effervescent instrumental music that works so well with science-fiction and superhero film & TV projects.

Production	7
Lyrics	X
Music	7
Vocals	X
Musicianship	7

SCORE: 7.0

## ALBUM REVIEWS

### Michael Gettel

*The View from Here*

First Snow Music

Producer: Michael Gettel

On pianist-composer and '90s new age great Michael Gettel's first album in 20 years, he often begins a tune in a space of gentle, peaceful reverence for his subject, usually a specific place or concept centered around the world's natural beauty. He then eases into more rhythmic movement before bursting into an ecstatic energy ahead of an ultimate return to a place of gentle reflection and grace. The narrative arc of each track, and the album as a whole, makes for the most compelling solo piano work of his career. — **Jonathan Widran**



### Michael Veitch

*Wachtraum*

Burt Street Music

Producer: Michael Veitch

"Wachtraum" is German for "days of dreams." And that theme focuses on each song representing a calendar month or seasonal state of mind. The Greenwich Village music scene vet opens, appropriately, with a chance for redemption and renewal in "First Day." "Valentine's Day" features choice hooks and romance. "April Fools" is a cynical rocker, while "August Nights" is pure pop. "Always Vermont" and "Last Days of Summer" are particularly noteworthy. Here his vocals and storytelling prowess truly define the album. — **Eric Harabadian**



### Miles Francis

*Good Man*

Self-Release

Producer: Miles Francis

Francis' unoriginal music sounds like it came straight out of an early-aughts digital jukebox—but the artist's story is far more compelling. Pre-COVID, Francis wrote 10 songs analyzing manhood. But during the pandemic, the musician realized that the material actually captured Francis' inner desire of identifying himself as nonbinary. While Francis sounds years away from true self-discovery, *Good Man* could endure as a rare musical artifact capturing, on a personal level, today's most compelling cultural subject. — **Kurt Orzech**



### Professor Louie & The Crowmatix

*Strike Up the Band*

Woodstock Records

Producer: Aaron L. Hurwitz

Aaron Hurwit (Professor Louie) is renowned for producing The Band. He's also a singer, songwriter and artist, earning a Grammy nod for his work with The Crowmatix. The group's latest effort should appeal to lovers of Dylan's famous backing act, as well as other classic rockers. Album closer "Flaming Ray" is a heartfelt ballad, while "Livin' In This Country" fits the nation's mood like few tunes can. The other eight tracks are as delightful, yet persistently unremarkable. — **Andy Kaufmann**



### The Americans

*Stand True*

Loose Music

Producer: The Americans

Americana appeals on an intellectual level instead of an immediate one. Because it is built for pathos and sepia-toned richness, it's tough to find a roots rock sound that has wide appeal. The Americans suffer greatly from this conundrum. While the trio from L.A. has the lavishness and liquor-soaked lyrics down pat, too often their vision drowns in seas of soppy sentiment and overly dramatic instrumentation. Despite this downfall, singer Patrick Ferris has an undeniable tone that demands the spotlight. — **Andy Kaufmann**



### Bob Davoli

*Hello Out There*

Gutbrain Records

Producer: Bob Davoli

Davoli's latest sheds light on the catalog of songwriting legend John Prine. The financial wizard-turned troubadour stays true to the heart and spirit of Prine's humanity and intent. From the war veteran lament "Sam Stone" to the aging tome "Hello in There," Davoli's earthy and temporal vocals set the stage and suit the songs perfectly. Kathleen Park's sweet harmonies and fiddle accompaniment raise the emotional bar. The subtle and spacious arrangements allow the words to fluidly evolve and bloom in your mind. — **Eric Harabadian**



### Noel Paul Stookey

*Fazz: Now & Then*

Newworld Multimedia

Producer: Noel Paul Stookey

The new album from folk legend Noel Paul Stookey features infectious brand-new tracks and some delightful revamped deep cuts from his extensive archive showcasing his spirited, sometimes quirky and humorous, often poignant and insightful storytelling with vocal and instrumental ventures into rousing gospel, charming and romantic Brazilian music, classical string trio, a bossa nova featuring saxophonist Paul Winter, a koto meditation and beautiful fresh versions of inspirational standards. — **Jonathan Widran**



### The Weight Band

*Shines Like Gold*

The Weight Band Records

Producer: Colin Linden

If you're an aficionado of The Band and aren't familiar with this spiritual successor featuring guitarist Jim Weider, bassist Albert Rogers, and others connected with the plain-titled act, you're in for a treat. The title track to their second studio album, "Shines Like Gold," is a clever meditation on the nature of optimism, while "Time Is a Thief" ponders the limits placed on us by mortality. Depending on your perspective, though, it's the instrumental fireworks concluding "Long Journey" that could justify the price of admission. — **Andy Kaufmann**



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.



## LIVE REVIEWS

**Livestream** Copiague, NY

**Contact:** nick.losseaton@gmail.com

**Web:** christinesweeney.com

**Material:** New Yorker Christine Sweeney is a singer-songwriter with an oversized heart and a zest-filled personality to match. Although she often plays and records with her band, The Dirty Stayouts, on this occasion she strummed an acoustic solo set as the opening act for longtime friend Rorie Kelly. Her style has been likened to a blend of R&B, folk, pop, soul, and blues. Those stylistic threads are perfectly detectable in her yarns, which cover topics including existential crises ("Feeling So Low," "Wishes"), relationships that go in circles ("Anywhere, Anyway"), and cats and coffee ("The Better Parts"). "Coyote" features an irresistible, bluesy howl.

**Musicianship:** There's only so far an artist can take a vision when playing alone, especially when expressing that perspective over a less-than-prime online connection. Nonetheless, Sweeney pours her emotions into every note she wrings from her acoustic guitar, and her voice feels like an autumn morning bursting with hope and promise. The stream would have benefitted, though, if the camera position had allowed watching her hands as they flitted up and down her instrument.

**Performance:** Sweeney played for a full hour, bookending her appearance by



interacting with Kelly. Smartly, she publicly thanked the *Music Connection* reviewer in attendance for checking her out. (How come more artists don't do this?) Her personality is positively brimming, and many moments were marked with infectious laughter, making between-song banter as enjoyable as any of her ballads. Sweeney's talents would have been better showcased, though, if she'd played in front of something other than a shimmery background. She also should have been more explicit about name checking who was originally responsible for the tunes she covered.

**Summary:** There are many reasons why audiences might fall for Sweeney and her not-too-cool-for-school songcraft. She's the genuine article, playing for the love of music and a pure desire to imprint her personal experiences onto others. Her strumming skills and vocals are similarly commendable. One only wishes that the gig had been better promoted so it attracted more than a handful of watchers. Those with piqued interest should seek her latest recording, *Heart In a Hurry*. That album surely presents a better taste of Sweeney's capabilities.

– Andy Kaufmann



**The Hotel Cafe** Hollywood, CA

**Web:** ninemilestationmusic.com

**Contact:** ninemilemusicco@gmail.com

**Players:** Will Hawkins, guitar, vocals; Fernando Perdomo, guitar; Brendon Vasquez, bass; Nick Moran, drums

**Material:** Nine Mile Station is a rockin' Americana/country music band like no other.

They came out firing from the hip and didn't miss a beat. The music is extremely well crafted, put together with care and attention to detail, both musically and lyrically. Each tune told a story that you could visualize as the song was being played. Imagine, if you will, Americana music, beautifully performed on acoustic guitar, and then someone lights a can of rocket fuel and sets off the rock & roll. Energy plus well-written tunes equals a superb show.

**Musicianship:** Perdomo was on fire. His electric guitar matched his suit, which matched his play, which was red hot! Everyone fed off of his energy. Hawkins is a great frontman with an incomparable stage presence. Extremely good vocals and likable personality, he gave the audience something to love. Vasquez was in his own little world, singing along to all the songs without a mic. His bass playing was on cue and, together with Moran on drums, the rhythm section was superb.

**Performance:** Energy. Energy. Energy. Nine Mile Station came with a full load and they delivered it. Antics offstage during some of the songs had the audience captivated as to what was coming next. Great musicianship just added to the excitement and everything went off without a hitch.

**Summary:** If you like honest, heartfelt Americana songs that are soul-shaking and rock you to the core, you'll love Nine Mile Station. Songs like "California," "Never Hit The Ground" and "Who You Love" will have you dancing in your seats, while "Falling To The Sea" and "Santa Ana Winds" will have you crying in your beer. Look for Nine Mile Station's debut album coming out on May 23, 2022, titled *Open Highways*, and you don't want to miss their next show.

– Pierce Brochetti



**Livestream** Boston, MA

**Contact:** venomandmayhem@gmail.com

**Web:** venomandmayhem.bandcamp.com

**Players:** Tanya Venom, vocals, acoustic guitar;  
Tia Mayhem, vocals, congas, shakers

**Material:** As two-thirds of the Boston-based heavy metal power trio Stormstress, the duo Venom and Mayhem bring that same energy and excitement to an acoustic context. And they know no boundaries when it comes to the depth and scope of their rock backgrounds and focus. They cast a wide net of tunes that includes everything from Eurythmics' "Sweet Dreams," The Cranberries' "Zombie" and The Beatles' "Eleanor Rigby," to select original compositions.

**Musicianship:** Identical twins Venom and Mayhem offer plenty in terms of big voices, superb harmonies and seamless interplay. They are a well-honed machine that is able to swiftly shift the tone and timbre from song to song. Venom plays smooth and prominent chords, fully complemented by her wide vocal range and dynamic stage persona. Mayhem, who is also a bassist, has a great rhythmic feel on congas and gives each tune just the right amount of push and groove. Together this act's greatest strength lies in their ability to harmonize and build intricate vocal parts. There are only two voices, but the way in which they alternate stanzas and so forth comes across rich and full.



**Performance:** This livestream preceded their birthday by a few days and the sisters celebrated with a collection of "fun facts" on being identical twins. They also did a nice job setting up a number of their original songs. Venom's "Buried in the Snow" was a minor key piece about letting go of the past. It had an urgent, driving feel. Mayhem's song, "Calm the Chaos," featured strong hooks and an uplifting vibe. The latest Stormstress single is a power ballad called "Fall With You," a stellar vehicle that highlighted Venom's range and songwriting prowess. The duo has shared the stage in the past with the legendary

Cherie Currie. They did a cool version of The Runaways' "Cherry Bomb" that really brought the house down. Also, the reworked acoustic take on Rob Zombie's "Dragula" was an unexpected treat.

**Summary:** Venom and Mayhem are a consummate duo that shines as brightly in an acoustic setting as in an electric one. They know how to effectively sequence covers and originals for a satisfying and entertaining effect. A number of their original songs are lyrically strong and poignantly express multiple layers of darkness and light. - **Eric Harabadian**



**The Black Rose** Los Angeles, CA

**Web:** fianyxx.com

**Contact:** fianyxxempire@gmail.com

**Players:** Fia Nyxx, vocals; Nick Sampson

drums; Adrian Seely, bass; Alex Palazzo, guitar

**Material:** Fia Nyxx is a mix of pop, soul and hip-hop, all wrapped up in a nice little R&B package. The package is then sprinkled with

bits 'o jazz 'n' blues and finally, unwrapped onstage, to the delight of her fans. Tunes like "Don't Shame Me," "AEIOU" and "I Still Love You" started out the set in a very "catwalk" style, drenching everyone in Etta James, Britney Spears and Celine Dion style pop tunes, respectively. Each song was so different in style from the previous one, it was a welcomed shock to the senses.

**Musicianship:** The musicians are solid on all grounds. They keep the music flowing and in great fashion. Nyxx has great vocals and she's not afraid to use her pipes any way she can. Solid and strong in-your-face vocals mesmerize her fans into submission as Nyxx sings her way into their hearts.

**Performance:** Reminiscent of the models in New York, an intro of sorts, "Red Umbrella," was to be the beginning of everyone just letting it all hang out. Superb performers, Nyxx and her crew kept you riveted throughout the concert, making you wonder what was yet to come. The choreography was great; sultry, erotic and sexy dance moves ruled the evening; the great backing band was the icing on the cake.

**Summary:** Fia Nyxx's first album, *Everything Girl*, was marked by top-notch producers and musicians who have worked with the likes of Etta James, Bonnie Raitt, Michael Jackson, Bobby Blue Bland, Queen, Madonna and the list goes on. The artist's latest album, *Red Umbrella*, debuted in March.

- **Pierce Brochetti**





# KATI NEIHEISEL

MARK SHWOLCH

**Pange** New York, NY

**Contact:** kati.neiheisel@gmail.com

**Web:** kati.neiheisel.com

**Players:** Kati Neiheisel, vocals; Gregory Toroian, piano, music director; Skip Ward, bass; Dave Silliman, drums; directed by Lina Koutrakos

**Material:** In her recent show, "Yesterday... Once More," singer Kati Neiheisel takes us on a musical journey of one of the most extraordinary sibling acts of all time, The Carpenters. With songs like "We've Only Just Begun," "Rainy Days And Mondays," and of course the song the show is named for,

"Yesterday Once More," Neiheisel brings to the fore the Carpenters' vast body of work, featuring some of the best pop songwriters of that era. Employing a chronological timeline, she supplies informative background corresponding to each selection, including some TV jingles the duo sang. The show kicks off with "Yesterday Once More," lyrically recounting memories of listening to the radio, which Neiheisel weaves together with memories of riding in the car with her family, waiting for their favorite songs to play.

**Musicianship:** Capturing the purity and unadorned quality of Karen Carpenter's voice is something that Neiheisel does with ease.

Accompanied by a top-shelf trio—pianist and musical director, Gregory Toroian, along with Skip Ward on bass and Dave Silliman on drums—they take the songs to another level while preserving the integrity of the original versions.

**Performance:** The setting for this show was warm and intimate, and Neiheisel's endearing quality made her a likeable presence on stage. Though the performance space is on the smaller side, Neiheisel could have used it in more varied ways (i.e. sitting for one or two numbers, or standing in a different position) to change up the visual landscape of her show.

It is common knowledge that Karen Carpenter struggled with an eating disorder that ultimately ended her life, and it is that aspect of her life that presented a golden opportunity for Neiheisel to find a parallel in her own life, a way to understand Carpenter's pain. It proved to be the most affecting aspect of the evening.

**Summary:** Kudos to Kati Neiheisel for taking on such a huge task of putting all these songs together and for gathering all the factual background on the Carpenters' life and work. It's also a savvy way of getting your name out there, aligning yourself with a known quantity. An even deeper dive into revealing more of her own feelings could make Neiheisel's show even more poignant. — *Ellen Woloshin*

**Alex's Bar** Long Beach, CA

**Contact:** frank@sweetheartpr.com

**Web:** dillonvandersmusic.com

**Players:** Dillon Vanders, vocals, guitar; Heather Sommerhauser, backing vocals; Alyssandra Nighswonger, backing vocals

**Material:** Sandwiched between two other, very different, country artists on a night of country music in Long Beach is Dillon Vanders, an artist who soaked up the sounds of Simon & Garfunkel and Joni Mitchell early on before turning to Johnny Cash and Marty Robbins. That classic songwriter approach is overt in songs such as the opening "The Road Ahead" in Long Beach; genre is at the background and the lyrics and melody come first. That said, Vanders' vibe is undeniably country/Americana highlighted beautifully on songs such as "Healing Touch" and "Truth and Lies."

**Musicianship:** Vanders is an accomplished guitarist who doesn't overplay. He knows how to use his instrument to enhance the song, to frame it and to make tunes like "For Peat's Sake" and "Racing in Circles" shine. On his website, he says that the aforementioned "The Road Ahead" is influenced by Simon & Garfunkel's "The Only Living Boy in New York," and that comes across, partly thanks to the harmonies created by backing singers Heather Sommerhauser and Alyssandra Nighswonger. The three voices and guitar work beautifully together, the tones blending seamlessly and allowing a song such as "Russian River Blues" to soar.



# DILLON VANDERS

**Performance:** Vanders isn't one to jump about the stage. He's not a showman in the classic sense at all, in fact. He stands center stage, Sommerhauser and Nighswonger behind him like nightclub chanteuses, and just plays and sings. There's authenticity in the simplicity. All of the focus is on the songs, and that works massively to Vanders' advantage. There's life in his eyes, signs of experience—of joy and of heartbreak. As such, the songs feel intensely human. He's here, in the right now, pouring his heart out for the entertainment of Long Beach punters. It all just works.

**Summary:** Vanders' debut album *Wildfires* was released on April 8, and his website describes it as having "much to appeal to fans of '70s-era country-pop, with Vanders' palatable, dulcet voice offering just the right amount of rasp and a tip of the hat to Graham Nash and, at times, Chris Hillman." That just about hits the nail on the head. At this show, the Laurel Canyon '60s vibe blended with some southern dust to create the perfect California country sound, and it'll be exciting to see where his career goes from here. We'll start by checking out *Wildfires*. — *Brett Callwood*

# SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDE-2022

**The DIY musician and pop star** alike have had to learn to navigate their careers during the pandemic, which largely meant pivoting to being as online as possible. Between livestreaming concerts from home studios and interacting with fans directly on social media platforms, artists are renegotiating their roles by becoming their own marketing team.

Every entry in this Guide to Digital Resources & Social Media was nominated by your fellow music-makers, Music Connection readers like yourself. Be sure to check out the newly added categories such as Beat Selling Websites, Music Sales Tracking, Online Instruction, Film/TV Licensing and Monetized Video Posting.



## SOCIAL MEDIA & DIGITAL MARKETING TOOLS

### BITLY

Web: [bitly.com](https://bitly.com)

Services: URL Shortener, Custom Branded URLs, API & Link Management.

### CANVA

Web: [canva.com](https://canva.com)

Services: Graphic-design tool website. Design presentations, social media graphics, and more with thousands of beautiful layouts.

### CROWDMOUTH

Web: [crowdmouth.com](https://crowdmouth.com)

Services: Crowdmouth is a direct-to-fan platform empowering creators to engage, monetize and grow their audiences.

### FORTUNES

Web: [fortunes.io](https://fortunes.io)

Services: Cross-platform music data analytics, career recommendations to increase revenues.

### FLYTEVU

Web: [flytevu.com](https://flytevu.com)

Services: Full-Service entertainment marketing company based in Nashville, TN.

### HOOTSUITE

Web: [hootsuite.com](https://hootsuite.com)

Services: Social media marketing and management platform. Helps you keep track and manage your many social network channels. It can enable you to monitor what people are saying about your brand and help you respond instantly. Fee: Professional - \$49/mo.

### LINKMY.PHOTOS

Web: [linkmy.photos](https://linkmy.photos)

Services: Instagram photos and captions are currently not linkable. The only place where you can add a link to your website is through the URL in your Instagram bio. Link My Photos has created the destination for your Instagram bio. Your personalized Link My Photos page displays all of your clickable photos to help your followers get to the content and products that you post. Fee: Free, Shutterbug - \$4.99/mo., paparazzi - \$9.99/mo

### MAILCHIMP

Web: [mailchimp.com](https://mailchimp.com)

Services: Email marketing tool that allows you to send emails to hundreds or thousands of recipients all at once. It is essentially a tool you can use to create and manage mailing lists and newsletters, as well as automate your email campaigns and collect leads. Fee: Free, Grow \$11, \$17/mo, Pro - \$299/mo.

### NUMBER ONE MUSIC

Web: [N1m.com](https://N1m.com)

Services: A music portal dedicated solely to the development and exposure of indie artists/bands

### VENTURE MUSIC

Web: [venturemusic.com](https://venturemusic.com)

Email: [info@venturemusic.com](mailto:info@venturemusic.com)

Clients: Universal Music Group, BMG, Red Light Management, Quartz Hill Records, Flobots

### VERTIGO

Web: [vertigomusic.com](https://vertigomusic.com)

Services: Fans can access artist content on Vertigo from anywhere, no app download required. Artists can further boost streams and sync any content to subscribers' accounts. Independent Artists/Bands.

### SPROUT SOCIAL

866-878-3231

Web: [sproutsocial.com](https://sproutsocial.com)

Services: Social media management and optimization platform for brands and agencies of all sizes. Gives you a single hub for social media publishing, analytics and engagement across all of your social profiles.

Fee: Standard - \$89/mo, professional \$149/mo, Advance \$249/mo.

### UNSPLASH

Web: [unsplash.com](https://unsplash.com)

Services: Database of high-resolution, watermark-free images that are free for use.

## WEB DESIGN

### BANDZOOGLE

Email: [support@bandzoogle.com](mailto:support@bandzoogle.com)

Web: [bandzoogle.com](https://bandzoogle.com)

Features: Unlimited support, free domain name, premium hosting, unlimited bandwidth, mobile-ready themes, music player, SEO tools, tour calendar, EPK's, more.

Fee: Lite - \$8.29/mo, Standard - \$12.46/mo, Pro - \$16.63/mo.

### NING

855-233-6436

Web: [ning.com](https://ning.com)

Services: Social integration, custom design, 24/7 support, basic features toolkit, monetization options

Fee: Basic - \$25/mo, Performance - \$49/mo, Ultimate - \$99/mo.

### SQUARESPACE

Email: [support.squarespace.com](mailto:support.squarespace.com)

Web: [squarespace.com](https://squarespace.com)

Features: Modern templates, adobe image editor, audio collections, social sharing, email campaigns, product merchandising

Fee: Personal - \$12/mo., Business - \$18/mo., Commerce, \$26/\$40

### WIX

Web: [wix.com](https://wix.com)

Features: Design freedom, SEO, mobile optimization, unlimited fonts, media galleries, custom domain name, social tools, customizable music player, music selling options, stats.

Fee: Free version available, Combo - \$14/mo, Unlimited - \$18/mo., Pro - \$23/mo., VIP - \$39/mo.

### WORDPRESS

Web: [wordpress.com](https://wordpress.com)

Features: Custom domains, mobile friendly, built-in social sharing, in-depth stats, search engine optimized

Fee: Free, Personal - \$4/mo, Premium - \$8/mo, Business - \$25/mo.

## LEGAL SERVICES/ADVICE

### AVVO

Web: [avvo.com](https://avvo.com)

Services: Ratings, reviews and disciplinary records for lawyers in every state. Get free legal advice, find the right lawyer, and make informed legal decisions.

### FREE LEGAL ADVICE

Web: [freeadvice.com](https://freeadvice.com)

Services: Comprehensive legal and insurance advice, articles, answers, videos and news.

### LAWCHAMPS

866-653-3017

Web: [lawchamps.com](https://lawchamps.com)

Services: Instantly matches consumers with solo attorneys based on budget. Clients and attorneys can instant message, call & video chat with members only app.

### LAWHELP.ORG

Web: [lawhelp.org](https://lawhelp.org)

Services: Created for people living on low incomes and the legal organizations that serve them.

LawHelp.org provides referrals to local legal aid and public interest law offices, basic information about legal rights, court forms, self-help information, court information, links to social service agencies, and more in your state.

### LEGALZOOM

800-773-0888

Email: [support@legalzoom.com](mailto:support@legalzoom.com)

Web: [legalzoom.com](https://legalzoom.com)

Services: Online legal help on business, intellectual property, contracts & agreements, legal advice.

### LEGAL SERVICES LINK

844-529-3279

Web: [legalserviceslink.com](https://legalserviceslink.com)

Services: Anonymously post your legal needs quickly and for free. Lawyers interested in helping you contact you via email. Review the emails and select the best lawyer for you.

### MUSIC CONNECTION

Web: [musicconnection.com/directories](https://musicconnection.com/directories)

### NOLO

800-631S-5158

Web: [nolo.com](https://nolo.com)

Services: Answers to everyday legal and business questions, lawyer directory

### UCLA SCHOOL OF LAW'S MUSIC INDUSTRY CLINIC

Email: [mic@law.ucla.edu](mailto:mic@law.ucla.edu)

Web: [law.ucla.edu/academics/clinical-education/clinics/music-industry-clinic](https://law.ucla.edu/academics/clinical-education/clinics/music-industry-clinic)

Services: Free 30-minute consultations to individuals who need legal advice relating to their careers in the music industry on selected dates.

### VOLUNTEER LAWYERS FOR THE ARTS

212- 319-2787 ext. 1

Email: [vlany@vlany.org](mailto:vlany@vlany.org)

Web: [vlany.org](https://vlany.org)

Services: VLA provides legal services to low-income artists and all non-profit arts organization in every artistic discipline.

## FUNDRAISING/FINANCIAL MATTERS

### ARTISTSHARE

Email: [support@artistshare.com](mailto:support@artistshare.com)

Web: [artistshare.com](https://artistshare.com)

Services: Operates as a record label and business model for artists which enables them to fund their projects by allowing the general public to directly finance, watch the creative process, and in most cases gain access to extra material from an artist.

Fees: 5% fee on contributions raised in addition to third party credit card processing fees (3-5%).

## BEATBREAD

Web: [beatbread.com](http://beatbread.com)

Services: The pioneering music funding platform that enables artists to access growth capital while maintaining control of their careers and ownership of their music

## CENTTRIP

Web: [centtrip.com](http://centtrip.com)

Services: global fintech providing expense management and card payment technology, has launched its platform, app, and card in the United States, to change the way music and entertainment industry manages tour and team expenses

## FUNDLY

Web: [fundly.com](http://fundly.com)

Services: Crowdfunding site for online fundraising. Raise money online from friends, family, colleagues, donors, and other supporters via email, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google, and social media networks.

Fees: Platform fee of 4.9% per transaction in addition to payment processing fee of 3% + 30 cents per transaction.

## GOFUNDME

Web: [gofundme.com](http://gofundme.com)

Services: For-profit crowdfunding platform that allows people to raise money for events. 0% platform fee.

Fees: Fees vary based on country. United States is 2.9% + 30 cents per donation.

## INDIEGOGO

Web: [indiegogo.com](http://indiegogo.com)

Services: International crowdfunding website. Indiegogo allows people to solicit funds for an idea, charity, or start-up business. Indiegogo charges a 5% fee on contributions.

Fees: 5% of funds raised in addition to processing fee of 3% + 30 cents per transaction. Bank may charge additional fees depending on currency and bank account location.

## JACKTRIP FOUNDATION

Web: [jacktrip.org](http://jacktrip.org)

Services: The JackTrip Foundation Equipment Grant supports nonprofit arts, education, and technology organizations, as well as individuals applying through organizations. The funds are for purchase of equipment for network arts projects to further innovation and access in this cultural work.

## KICKSTARTER

Web: [kickstarter.com](http://kickstarter.com)

Services: Crowdfunding platform for creative projects. A home for film, music, art, theater, games, comics, design, photography, and more.

Fees: Kickstarter fee of 5% of total funds raised in addition to payment processing fees of 3% + 20 cents per pledge. (Pledges under \$10 have a discounted micropledge fee of 5% + 5 cents per pledge)

## MUSIC BENEFACTORS

Web: [musicbenefactors.com](http://musicbenefactors.com)

Services: We work with recording artists, indie labels, publishers, venues, and other music businesses to sell debt and equity securities to investors. The capital raised is used to help fund their businesses.

## PATREON

Web: [patreon.com](http://patreon.com)

Services: Membership platform that provides business tools for creators to run a subscription content service, with ways for artists to build relationships and provide exclusive experiences to their subscribers, or "patrons."

Fees: 5% of successfully processed fees in addition to an effective payment processing fees that may vary based on transaction amount and method of payment and a fixed fee. These average around 5% and 30 cents per transaction. There are also Payout fees for moving your funds from your Patreon account to your bank account.

## PLUMFUND

Web: [plumfund.com](http://plumfund.com)

Services: Free to fundraisers and donors. There are no transaction fees for organizers or contributors, and no setup fees.

Fees: Third party fee of 2.8% + 30 cents deducted from each transaction.

## ROYALTY EXCHANGE

1-800-718-2269

Web: [royaltyexchange.com](http://royaltyexchange.com)

Services: Online marketplace/auction platform where investors & owners of royalty streams can buy royalties and sell all types of royalties.

Fees: Commission is collected after auction at rate determined prior to listing from sellers. Third party fees for transfers depending on bank account, location, and method of payment for buyers.

## SOUND ROYALTIES

Email: [info@soundroyalties.com](mailto:info@soundroyalties.com)

Web: [soundroyalties.com](http://soundroyalties.com)

Services: Offers music professionals non-credit based financing and funding without having to deal with banks or traditional lenders.

## MUSIC REVIEW/OPINION/FEEDBACK

## FLUENCE

Email: [contact@fluenceapp.com](mailto:contact@fluenceapp.com)

Web: [fluence.io](http://fluence.io)

Services: Promotion, makes curators directly accessible to artists, promoters through their platform.

## MUSIC CONNECTION

(Live Reviews, New Music Critiques)

Email: [contactmc@musicconnection.com](mailto:contactmc@musicconnection.com)

Web: [musicconnection.com/reviews/getreviewed](http://musicconnection.com/reviews/getreviewed)

Services: 12 recorded artists and 7 live performances are selected to be reviewed by Music Connection staff from artist submissions every month. Unsigned Artists only.

## REVERBNATION [CROWD REVIEW]

Email: [support@reverbnation.com](mailto:support@reverbnation.com)

Web: [reverbnation.com/band-promotion/crowd\\_review](http://reverbnation.com/band-promotion/crowd_review)

Services: Artist feedback from targeted sample, data analytics.

## SONGCHECKS

Web: [songchecks.com](http://songchecks.com)

Services: Songchecks is a curated platform for Producers, Mixers, Bands, and Songwriters of all levels and locations to get affordable written feedback on your songs from the world's best music talent.

## SONGU.COM

Web: [songu.com](http://songu.com)

Services: Provides multi-level song writing courses developed by award winning songwriters, song feedback, mentoring, one-on-one song coaching, cowriting, unscreened pitching opportunities and more.

## TUNECORE [FAN REVIEWS]

646-651-1060

Web: [tunecore.com/artist-services](http://tunecore.com/artist-services)

Services: Artist feedback, data analytics

## GIG FINDER

## AIRGIGS

Email: [help@airgigs.com](mailto:help@airgigs.com)

Web: [airgigs.com](http://airgigs.com)

Services: platform for hiring professional session musicians, vocalists and audio engineers online. Songwriters, music producers, bands and creatives can hire talent to enhance their existing productions, or they can produce an entire song from composition to mastering completely online.

## GIGMASTERS

866-342-9794

Web: [gigmasters.com](http://gigmasters.com)

Services: Event services booking platform. Hire local musicians, DJs, bands, photographers and speakers for special event.

## GIGSALAD

Web: [gigsalad.com](http://gigsalad.com)

Services: Find and book everything from bands, musicians, and DJs to entertainers, speakers and event services.

## REVERBNATION

Email: [support@reverbnation.com](mailto:support@reverbnation.com)

Web: [reverbnation.com](http://reverbnation.com)

Services: Online platform that provides marketing tools and industry opportunities for musicians, artists, and bands to manage their careers.

Fee: Free, Basic- \$12.95/mo., Premium - \$19.95/mo.

## SONICBIDS

Email: [support@sonicbids.com](mailto:support@sonicbids.com)

Web: [sonicbids.com](http://sonicbids.com)

Services: Connects bands, music promoters and major brands through an online platform. Engage new fans, discover new music and find gigs.

Fee: Sonicbids Basic - Free, EPK Pro - \$5.00, Gig-Seeker Pro - \$19.99

## SOUNDBETTER

888-734-4358

Email: [info@SoundBetter.com](mailto:info@SoundBetter.com)

Web: [soundbetter.com](http://soundbetter.com)

## SONG SUBMISSIONS/PLACEMENTS

## ADAPTR

Web: [adaptr.com](http://adaptr.com)

Services: An all in one platform to easily add hit music to your apps and digital experiences

## MUSIC CONNECTION

Web: [musicconnection.com](http://musicconnection.com)

## MUSIC GATEWAY

Email: [support@musicgateway.com](mailto:support@musicgateway.com)

Web: [musicgateway.com](http://musicgateway.com)



Hip-Hop, Jazz, Instrumental, etc.  
 Fee: \$35.00 per song

## ON THE ROAD: LODGING

### AIRBNB

415-800-5959, 855-424-7262  
 Web: [airbnb.com](https://www.airbnb.com)  
 Services: Find hosts with extra rooms, entire homes and unique accommodations.

### COUCH SURFING

Email: [support@couchsurfing.com](mailto:support@couchsurfing.com)  
 Web: [couchsurfing.com](https://www.couchsurfing.com)  
 Services: Arrange homestays, offer lodging and hospitality, and join events such as "Couch Crashes."

### HOTEL TONIGHT

Email: [help@hoteltonight.com](mailto:help@hoteltonight.com)  
 Web: [hoteltonight.com](https://www.hoteltonight.com)  
 Services: Last minute hotel deals, discounted room rates

### INDIE ON THE MOVE

Email: [info@indieonthemove.com](mailto:info@indieonthemove.com)  
 Web: [indieonthemove.com](https://www.indieonthemove.com)  
 Services: Show & tour booking, Music Venues Database, QuickPitch Emailing, College & University Show Booking Database, Bands Directory, Show Availabilities, Classifieds  
 Fee: Free, Premium - \$9.99/mo.

### PRICELINE

877-477-5807  
 Web: [priceline.com](https://www.priceline.com)  
 Services: Discount rates for travel-related purchases including airline tickets, hotel stays, cars, cruises

## ARTIST COLLABORATIONS

### AIRTABLE

Web: [airtable.com](https://www.airtable.com)  
 Services: Shared database/spreadsheet  
 Fee: Free or paid membership (\$10/mo, \$24/mo.).

### AUDDLY

Email: [info@auddly.com](mailto:info@auddly.com)  
 Web: [auddly.com](https://www.auddly.com)  
 Services: Allows music creators to collect their song data and make it accessible for the business side, in order to secure transparent and correct credits and payments for everyone involved.

### AUDIOBRIDGE

Web: [audiobridgeapp.com](https://www.audiobridgeapp.com)  
 Services: Mobile recording studio, tool for mobile music collaboration. Communicate directly with your collaborators with dedicated chat-rooms for every session. Keep track of your entire history of edits in one place with both real-time and delayed collaboration.

### AVID

Web: [avid.com](https://www.avid.com)  
 Services: Provides information on alldigital solutions for capturing, creating, editing and distributing digital media.

### BANDHUG

Web: [bandhug.com](https://www.bandhug.com)  
 Services: Bandhug is an international music platform that fosters collaboration between musicians and the globe.

### BANDLAB

Email: [hello@bandlab.com](mailto:hello@bandlab.com)  
 Web: [bandlab.com](https://www.bandlab.com)  
 Services: Social media network for musicians and fans with unlimited cloud based storage.  
 Fee: Free

### BANDMIX

877-569-6118  
 Web: [Bandmix.com](https://www.bandmix.com)  
 Services: Online classified network for connecting local musicians and bands.  
 Fee: Free or premier membership (\$12.95/\$17.90mo)

### BEATSTARS

Web: [beatstars.com](https://www.beatstars.com)  
 Services: Digital production marketplace that allows music producers to license and sell beats and give away free beats.  
 Fee: Free or Unlimited for \$9.99/\$19.99mo

### BLEND

Web: [blend.io](https://www.blend.io)  
 Services: Makes the process of producing music interactive. The social platform helps music producers share music projects in source format, perfect for remixing, collaborating, learning from, and gathering feedback from others in the global community.

### DOWNWRITE

Web: [downwrite.com](https://www.downwrite.com)  
 Services: Downwrite is the premiere platform for the co-creation of music between fans and artists. It allows fans to bring a personal experience, idea, or occasion into the creative realm of an artist, who through their unique talent, transforms the shared experience into music.

### DROOBLE

Email: [team@drooble.com](mailto:team@drooble.com)  
 Web: [drooble.com](https://www.drooble.com)  
 Services: Social media network for musicians with promotional features, also allows users to submit reviews of other users music for payment.  
 Fee: Free

### FRETTIE

Web: [frettie.com](https://www.frettie.com)  
 Services: Connect with other songwriters from around the globe. Frettie is a valuable songwriting community made up of students, professionals and hit songwriters who are all eager to learn, discover, give feedback and connect with each other.

### INTROBOT

Web: [introbot.co](https://www.introbot.co)  
 Services: App for musicians, filmmakers, actors, models, photographers, writers, dancers, artists, designers, and people with ideas, to collaborate with people from around the world who have the skills to realize their creative idea

### KOMPOZ

Web: [kompoz.com/music](https://www.kompoz.com/music)  
 Services: Social network platform for musicians, to share, collaborate, distribute music and crowdsourcing production/ performers  
 Fee: Free or premier membership (\$5/ mo., \$10/ mo., \$20/mo.).

### LEDO

Web: [ledomusic.is](https://www.ledomusic.is)  
 Services: A 'Collab-House' platform for music makers and content creators to connect and reach new audiences.

### METAPOPOP

Email: [support@metapop.com](mailto:support@metapop.com)  
 Web: [metapop.com](https://www.metapop.com)  
 Services: Upload and share tracks, join communities, and enter competitions.

### MUSIVERSAL

Web: [musiversal.com](https://www.musiversal.com)  
 Fee: \$49/mo, \$490/yearly  
 Services: Access to world-class session musicians, vocalists, producers, and audio engineers

### MUSICIAN'S CONTACT

818-888-7879  
 Email: [info@musicianscontact.com](mailto:info@musicianscontact.com)  
 Web: [musicianscontact.com](https://www.musicianscontact.com)  
 Services: Connecting musicians and bands together for over 45 years, from club and casual groups, to traveling bands, to concert and recording acts.

### MUSIC LAUNCH HUB

Web: [musiclaunchhub.com](https://www.musiclaunchhub.com)  
 Services: Global music network where working musicians and the next wave of music professionals, come together to better navigate their future in music.

### OFFTOP

Web: [offtop.co](https://www.offtop.co)  
 Services: Mobile recording studio to rap and sing over beats. Explore library of fresh instrumentals, record freestyle or written verses, and share your rap or song with the world.

### PROCOLLABS

Web: [procollabs.com](https://www.procollabs.com)  
 Services: online music collaboration service that gives you access to experienced and talented songwriters, musicians, audio engineers, and music producers from all around the world.  
 Fee: Free or premier membership (\$20/ mo., \$50/ mo., \$95/mo.).

### SHOWX

Web: [showx.io](https://www.showx.io)  
 Services: Mission-driven platform that creates a forum through which artists can network, collaborate, co-promote and create with the goal of empowering careers.

### SLACK

Web: [slack.com](https://www.slack.com)  
 Services: Collaborative hub for work colleagues with features such as messaging, file sharing, screen sharing, searchable history, and integration with other filesharing/messenger apps. Organizes conversations between work colleagues into streamlined layout.  
 Fee: Free or paid membership (\$6.67/mo., \$12.50/ mo.).

### SONGSALIVE!

Web: [songsalive.org](https://www.songsalive.org)  
 Services: Largest global songwriters squad. A non-profit organization supporting, promoting and educating songwriters and composers worldwide.

### SONGSPACE

Web: [songspace.com](https://www.songspace.com)  
 Services: Helps music creators and publishers collaborate, pitch, track and share song projects and playlists.  
 Fee: Creator - \$8/mo., Business - \$15/ mo.- Plus - \$28/mo

## SONGTOWN

Web: [songtown.com](http://songtown.com)

Services: A virtual music "town" where creative people gather to be encouraged, educated and inspired. Writers of all genres, from all over the world come to SongTown to find other creative cowriters, to learn how to improve their craft from #1 hit songwriters and publishers, and to be mentored by successful music industry pros.  
Fee: Platinum Annual Plan \$197 per year, Diamond Fast Track \$649 per year, monthly membership for \$24.99/mo.

## SONGWRITER LINK

Web: [songwriterlink.com](http://songwriterlink.com)

Services: Songwriting collaboration website that makes finding the perfect co-writer faster than before. It's the only website that uses matching engine technology—the same kind that dating websites use—to help find you exactly the type of songwriters you're looking.

## SOUNDSTORMING

Web: [soundstorming.com](http://soundstorming.com)

Services: Helps musicians to connect, collaborate and promote themselves using their musical ideas, riffs and fragments.

## SOUNDRAP

Web: [soundtrap.com](http://soundtrap.com)

Services: Online recording studio/DAW with collaborative features, plugins/ drumtracks, autotune, other audio engineering features. Also educational features  
Fee: (Free, \$7.99/mo., \$11.99/mo., \$13.99).

## SPLICE

Web: [splice.com](http://splice.com)

Services: Musicians use Splice to find sounds, get gear, enter contests, discover projects and connect with one another.

## STUDIOTRAXX

Web: [studiotraxx.com](http://studiotraxx.com)

Services: Provides instant access to a vast global network of musicians-for-hire who are ready to work and collaborate via the web. Private collaboration areas are also available to those who don't need to find and hire musicians but simply need an efficient way to manage files across partners.

## TUNEBLADES

Web: [tuneblades.com](http://tuneblades.com)

Services: Empowers both professional and non-professionals to quickly resize and remix songs To match any duration, remove vocals from songs, and stream indefinitely for live presentations or programs.

## TULLY

Web: [tullyapp.com](http://tullyapp.com)

Services: Recording artists and songwriters can play, write, and record song ideas all within one application. Artists can share their projects with their engineer before studio sessions, allowing instant access to the audio file, lyric sheet, and recording ideas. When using Tully, all your files are organized and stored to the cloud, keeping all your creative work safe in one location.

## VAMPR

Email: [support@vampr.me](mailto:support@vampr.me)

Web: [vampr.me](http://vampr.me)

Services: App that helps you discover, connect and collaborate with fellow musicians, the music industry and music lovers alike.

## VOCALIZR

Web: [vocalizr.com](http://vocalizr.com)

Services: Created to connect professional singers and producers world-wide. Community of producers looking for talent.

Fee: Free or Pro Membership (\$9/mo).

# MUSIC SALES TRACKING

## CHARTMETRIC

Web: [chartmetric.io](http://chartmetric.io)

Services: Music data analytics company. They combine hundreds of thousands of real-time data points across iTunes, Spotify, Youtube, Google, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram in order to make sense of the increasingly complex landscape of the music industry.

## CRYPTO.COM

Web: [crypto.com](http://crypto.com)

Services: Crypto.com is a cryptocurrency tracking app, and has recently expanded to covering and paying NFTs for artists and audiences.

## NEXT BIG SOUND

Web: [nextbigsound.com](http://nextbigsound.com)

Services: Provides online music analytics and insights, tracking hundreds of thousands of artists around the world. As part of Pandora, they deliver powerful analytics tools used by music makers, labels and marketers looking for data and insights about artists and their fans.

## MAYKI

Web: [mayki.it/songs](http://mayki.it/songs)

We are mayki, a virtual studio where you can create music on demand with our team of producers. Make your first song today!

## RCDRSH STUDIO

Web: [app.rcrdshp.com](http://app.rcrdshp.com)

Email: [newsletter@rcrdshp.com](mailto:newsletter@rcrdshp.com)

Services: a curated digital collectibles platform, built by and for the electronic music industry, and validated by technologies like the blockchain and non-fungible tokens.

## SONGTRUST

Web: [songtrust.com](http://songtrust.com)

Services: World's largest global royalty collection service, Songtrust streamlines the music publishing administration of 1,000,000+ songs.

## SOUNDCHARTS

Web: [soundcharts.com](http://soundcharts.com)

Services: A full-stack solution (database, desktop, mobile apps & API) that brings together real-time and historical music consumption data, (social, charts, playlist, airplay monitoring) to improve project management, reporting and artist scouting.

## WIO PRO

Web: [wiopro.com](http://wiopro.com)

Services: empowers entertainment stakeholders to track the airing of movies and television episodes, vital information that drives the payment of guild residuals, composer royalties and profit participations.

# ONLINE INSTRUCTION

## ARI'S TAKE ACADEMY

Web: [aristakeacademy.com](http://aristakeacademy.com)

Services: Multiple individual courses available,

created by indie musician and music business author Ari Herstand. Courses range from topics such as managing tours to streaming and social media growth.

## BERKLEE COLLEGE OF MUSIC

Web: [berklee.edu](http://berklee.edu)

Services: Multiple online degree and certificate programs. Interactive 12-week courses. World-renowned faculty and collaboration with classmates.

## FILM MUSIC INSTITUTE

Web: [filmmusicinstitute.com](http://filmmusicinstitute.com)

Services: Offers state of the art professional education courses designed specifically for film and television music professionals that deliver practical skills and focus on improving your musical and music business skills. Training is detailed and comprehensive, and our instructors are some of the best in the business. Online courses can be accessed from anywhere 24/7 so you can get the training you need and the skills you want in a setting that's right for you—on your terms, and including full access to your instructors for any questions.

## LESSONS.COM

Web: [lessons.com](http://lessons.com)

## MELOPHY

Web: [melophy.com](http://melophy.com)

Services: Melophy is a teaching site by artists for artists to organize calendars, live lesson streams to individual and groups of students, and schedule virtual performances, all while promoting artists' music.

## MUSICIANS INSTITUTE

Web: [mi.edu/programs/mi-online](http://mi.edu/programs/mi-online)

Services: Access to acclaimed curriculum and supportive interactive course content. Certificates in guitar performance and artist/entrepreneur/production and Associate degrees in guitar performance and music business.

# MUSIC CREDITS DATABASES

## DISCOGS

Web: [discogs.com](http://discogs.com)

Services: Discover new music. Track your collection and want list. Contribute to the database.

## GENIUS

Web: [genius.com](http://genius.com)

Services: Wide collection of song lyrics and musical knowledge.

## MUSICBRAINZ

Web: [musicbrainz.org](http://musicbrainz.org)

Services: Open music encyclopedia that collects music metadata and makes it available to the public. MusicBrainz captures information about artists, their recorded works, and the relationships between them.

# TOUR DATES CALENDAR

## BANDSINTOWN

Email: [support@bandsintown.com](mailto:support@bandsintown.com)



Web: [bandsintown.com](http://bandsintown.com)

Services: Music website billed as a "platform where artists and fans connect." The site allows users to receive notifications about tours and bands playing in the user's area. It also has tools for artists to manage tour dates.

## FANPASSIVE

Web: [fanpassive.com](http://fanpassive.com)

Services: A platform and true artist partner that allows artists and their fans (both old and new) to interact in authentic ways, right from their smartphone or other connected devices

## LYTE

Web: [lyte.com/events](http://lyte.com/events)

Services: Lyte is a platform that enables event organizers, venues and artists to enhance their ticketing, ensure shows are full and keep fans happy. Lyte provides a safe, official reservation system and allows fans to return their tickets to the official point of purchase for a fair price.

## SONGKICK

Web: [songkick.com](http://songkick.com)

Services: Provides concert discovery services and ticket sales for live music events.

## LIVE STREAMING

### DREAMSTAGE

Email: [support@dreamstage.live](mailto:support@dreamstage.live)

Web: [dreamstage.live](http://dreamstage.live)

Services: A streaming platform where musicians of all genres perform and interact with fans worldwide.

### PAARTI

Web: [paarti.live](http://paarti.live)

Services: Provides a venue-like experience for users, merging livestreaming and social networking.

### PERISCOPE

Web: [pscp.tv](http://pscp.tv)

Services: Offers live broadcasts with a twist—the ability to replay them at any time. Every video comes to life with a league of integrated social features: while watching streams, you'll also see people join, leave hearts, comment in real time, and more.

### STAGEIT

Web: [stageit.com](http://stageit.com)

Services: Artists perform live, online shows from their laptop that are never recorded or archived. Fans are encouraged to ask the artist questions, request songs, and even chat with other fans during the show. Virtual tip jar available on every show.

### TWITCH

Web: [twitch.tv](http://twitch.tv)

Services: Site primarily focuses on video game live streaming, including broadcasts of eSports competitions, in addition to music broadcasts, creative content, and more recently, "in real life" streams. Content on the site can be viewed either live or via video on demand.

### YOUKNOW

Web: [younow.com](http://younow.com)

Services: Discover talented broadcasters, watch

live streams and video chat live with people from around the world.

## T-SHIRTS & MORE: MERCH & MANUFACTURING

### 9 CAFE PRESS

877-809-1659

Web: [cafePress.com](http://cafePress.com)

Services: Create and sell your personalized designs on t-shirts, bags, mugs, posters and many more unique gifts.

### BANDS ON A BUDGET

866-471-3868

Web: [BandsonABudget.com](http://BandsonABudget.com)

Services: Prints custom merchandise for all types of businesses and brands, with a large majority of its customers being up-and-coming musicians. With products varying from shirts to stickers, banners to tour posters, BandsonABudget.com can help you cover all of your bases in one shot, eliminating the need to deal with a different company for each item you want.

### BIG CARTEL

Web: [bigcartel.com](http://bigcartel.com)

Services: Build a unique online store, sell your work, and run a creative business. Perfect for clothing designers, bands, jewelry makers, crafters, and other artists.

### CUSTOM INK

800-293-4232

Web: [customink.com](http://customink.com)

Services: American-based online retail company that makes custom apparel such as T-shirts and sweatshirts.

### DISC MAKERS

Email: [info@discmakers.com](mailto:info@discmakers.com)

Web: [discmakers.com](http://discmakers.com)

Services: Disc Makers is the world's largest CD, DVD, and Blu-ray manufacturer for independent musicians, filmmakers, and businesses. They offer duplication, replication, printing, graphic design, audio mastering, DVD authoring, worldwide distribution and more.

### FIVERR

Web: [fiverr.com](http://fiverr.com)

Services: Online marketplace for freelance services including digital marketing, graphic design, music, audio and more.

### KILLERMERCH.COM

Web: [killermerch.com](http://killermerch.com)

Services: Full-service branding agency, global merchandising, product development

### MERCHCAT

Email: [info@merchcat.com](mailto:info@merchcat.com)

Web: [merchcat.com](http://merchcat.com)

Services: Merch sales, inventory management, track payments and get real-time reports.

### MERCH.LY

866-522-4012

Web: [merch.ly](http://merch.ly)

Services: Custom t-shirts, hoodies, bags and more customized with your band logo or design, all at affordable prices.

### PRINTFUL

818-351-7181

Email: [support@printful.com](mailto:support@printful.com)

Web: [printful.com](http://printful.com)

Services: On-Demand order fulfillment and warehousing service that fulfills and ships products including clothing, accessories, and home & living items for online businesses. It's free to set up, with no monthly fees or minimum order.

### REDBUBBLE

Web: [redbubble.com](http://redbubble.com)

Services: Global online marketplace for print-on-demand products based on usersubmitted artwork.

### RUSHORDEERTES

2727 Commerce Way

Philadelphia, PA 19154

800-620-1233

Web: [rushorderteetees.com](http://rushorderteetees.com)

Email: [sales@rushorderteetees.com](mailto:sales@rushorderteetees.com)

Services: Screen printing, embroidery, rush t-shirt delivery

### SONGLORIOUS

Services: Employs a stable of hundreds of musicians who create customized songs for anniversaries, birthdays, and yes marriage proposals. Customers simply fill in details for their song, choose a genre song length and in four days-time a certified musician will send back a customized song ready to share. Cost for song starts at \$90.

### SHOPIFY

Web: [shopify.com](http://shopify.com)

Services: Shopify is a commerce platform that allows anyone to easily sell online, at a retail location and everywhere in between. Shopify offers a professional online storefront, a payment solution to accept credit cards, and the Shopify POS application to power retail sales. Fee: Basic Shopify - \$29/mo., Shopify - \$79 /mo., Advanced Shopify - \$299/mo.

### SPREADSHOP

800-381-0815

Email: [help@spreadshop.com](mailto:help@spreadshop.com)

Web: [spreadshop.com](http://spreadshop.com)

Services: Create and sell custom merchandise on your own online shop for free.

### SQUARE

Web: [squareup.com/us/en](http://squareup.com/us/en)

Services: Financial services, merchant services aggregator, and mobile payment company

Fee: Charges 2.75% per swipe.

### STICKER MULE

Web: [stickermule.com](http://stickermule.com)

Services: Custom stickers, labels, magnets & more. Get free proofs, free shipping, 4-day turnaround & 24/7 customer support

### TEEPUBLIC

Web: [teepublic.com](http://teepublic.com)

Email: [help@teepublic.com](mailto:help@teepublic.com)

Services: The world's largest marketplace for independent creators to sell their work on the highest-quality merchandise

## VISTAPRINT

866-614-8002

Web: vistaprint.com

Services: Design and order custom printed marketing materials, signage, t-shirts, hats, pens

## ZAZZLE

Web: zazzle.com

Services: Allows designers and customers to create their own products with independent manufacturers, as well as use images from participating companies.

# MUSIC DISTRIBUTION & FILM/TV LICENSING

## AIMI

Web: aimi.fm/about

Services: World-class artists have collaborated with the platform to present original compositions and Experiences, oftentimes they provide an album's length of material. Aimi's unique AI proactively chooses the right pieces of audio to play at the right moments, constantly rearranging and repurposing segments, to generate brand new presentations of these artists' material.

## AMUSE

Email: support@amuse.io

Web: amuse.io

Services: Strategic planning, marketing, financing, branding and PR, 50/50 profit.

## AWAL

Email: info@awal.com

Web: awal.com

Services: Global distribution, marketing and release management, A&R, funding, playlist promotion, radio & PR, YouTube monetization, and music data and insights through the AWAL App.

## BEATBREAD

Web: beatbread.com

## BEATCHAIN

Email: enquiries@beatchain.com

Web: beatchain.com

Fee: Free sign-up, \$14.99/mo., \$19.00/mo.

Services: distribution, insights, marketing

## CD BABY

800-289-6923

Web: cdbaby.com

Services: Digital distribution, YouTube monetization, sync licensing, publishing administration, CD & vinyl sales

## DISTROKID

Email: support@distrokid.com

Web: distrokid.com

Services: Distribute cover songs legally, get paid when other people use your music on YouTube, unlimited backups, instant Spotify verified checkmark, manage your Apple Music page, get your credits & lyrics into stores, Spotify pre-save.

## DITTO MUSIC

Web: dittomusic.com

Services: Distribution service offers unlimited releases to all major online stores on an annual subscription basis. Non-exclusive deals with artists

keeping 100% of their royalty earnings. Record label services including PR, social media and playlist pitching to independent artists.

## FWAYGO

Web: fwaygo.com

Services: Built by music artists and powered by fans, the platform provides a first-of-its-kind music discovery experience for consumers as well as a disruptive business model enabling undiscovered artists to increase both their exposure and their earnings by avoiding the exploitative music ownership, royalty and streaming revenue policies of traditional labels and streaming services.

## LANDR

Email: contact@landr.com

Web: landr.com

Services: AL mastering, collaboration workflows, artist-friendly distribution, promotion tools, free samples, stats.

Fee: \$24.99/mo/\$207yr/\$149.99yr (billed upfront)

## OCTIVE

Email: support@mondotunes.com

Web: octive.com

Services: Distribution, marketing, mastering, licensing opportunities.

## ONERPM

Email: support@onerpm.com

Web: onerpm.com

Services: Music distribution, marketing, business intelligence, rights mgmt. & publishing, video network.

## QOBUZ

Web: qobuz.com

Services: Offers high-quality sound and unlimited listening, anytime, everywhere, on all devices.

## REPOST NETWORK

Web: repostnetwork.com

Services: Offers SoundCloud monetization, content protection, and upgraded profile features to musicians and podcasters on the platform.

## REVELATOR

Web: revelator.com

Services: State of the art full-stack copyright management platform for independent artists, labels, and distributors to distribute to music digital platforms, manage revenue reporting and royalty settlement to all rights holders

## REVERBNATION

Email: support@reverbnation.com

Web: reverbnation.com

Services: Opportunities, digital distribution, site builder, fan reach, crowd review, gig finder, sell direct, electronic press kits.

## RIGHTSHOLDER.IO

Web: rightsholder.io

Services: A simple music rights search engine designed with music licensing & synchronization professionals in mind.

## SONGTRADR

424-744-8190

Email: support@songtradr.com

Web: songtradr.com

Services: Free sign-up, online music licensing, free submission to music licensing opportunities, unlimited music storage, non-exclusive licensing.

## SPINNUP

Contact: support.spinnup.com

Web: spinnup.com

Services: Keep 100% royalties, streaming statistics and sales reports.

## SYMPHONIC DISTRIBUTION

813-907-3128

Web: symphonicdistribution.com

Services: Video distribution, publishing administration, neighboring rights, marketing, video marketing, sync licensing, web and graphic design, YouTube "website monetization" and SoundCloud monetization.

## SYNC SONGWRITER

Web: syncsongwriter.com

Services: Selectively licenses music with licensing agent. The goal of the site is to teach you how to get your songs into TV & film.

## THE ORCHARD

Email: communications@theorchard.com

Web: theorchard.com

Services: distribution, marketing, data analytics, performance rights, accounting

## TUNECORE

Web: tunecore.com

Services: Vinyl pressing and distribution, physical copies of your music, guaranteed plays on services like Deezer and 8track, engagement stats, custom artist website using designs tailored for musicians

## UNITEDMASTERS

Email: info@unitedmasters.com

Web: unitedmasters.com

Services: Distribution, marketing, data analytics

Fee: \$100 monthly payment made through paypal, UnitedMasters keeps 50% of royalties.

# MONETIZED VIDEO POSTING

## DROPP TV

Web: dropp.tv

Email: support@dropp.tv

Services: Dropp Tv unleashes the power of the creator through an innovative blend of art, technology and e-commerce creating a new mode of digital interaction.

## SONGFLUENCER

Web: songfluencer.com

Email: info@songfluencer.com

Services: Strategically pairing songs, artist, and brands with key tastemaker influencers on music-forward social media platforms including TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube.





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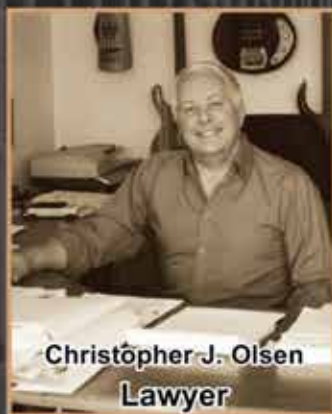


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# Getting The Gig: How To Be A "Working" Musician

Not everyone is destined to be a singer-songwriter, or a composer, or a longtime member of a band. Some of us are born with a special gift for wailing on our instrument, knocking people out with our dexterity, virtuosity and "feel." And that sort of talent and skill can lead to a vibrant career as an in-demand session musician or as a traveling sideman.

So, how does one go about getting that gig—and gigs for years, even decades, to come? In short: you'd better have some skills to pay the bills.

Read on to get 25 helpful tips (from Bobby Borg's book *Business Basics for Musicians, 2nd Edition*) spanning every period of your career—from the preliminary necessities, to breaking into the scene, to lasting over the long haul.

## The Preliminary Necessities

First things first: to get that happening gig, you must hone your skills as a musician and become a force to be reckoned with. Consider the following:

- **Be Amazing:** Invest thousands of hours of practice first and foremost and be a great musician, because nothing else in this chapter or book will otherwise matter.
- **Be Versatile, but Have a Focus:** Learn to play several styles of music so that you can survive and pay the bills, but have one style that you play better than the rest and that forms the essence of "your brand."
- **Be Unique:** Don't be afraid to develop your own style and break some rules. Jimi Hendrix played a right-handed guitar upside down, and Stanley Jordan developed the "touch technique" and played chords and soloed at the same time.
- **Sound Awesome:** Find the right combo of amps, effects, strings, cymbals, snare drum heads, turntables, or whatever gadgets you play. In the crowded marketplace, your distinctive sound can mean everything.
- **Look Interesting:** Become visually appealing—whether by exercising, dressing a certain way, or wearing your hair in a certain style. Just create your own brand.
- **Know How to Hang:** Develop a happy, warm, and outgoing personality. Be fun to hang with. Learn to make people laugh, even if that means memorizing a few jokes or famous lines from a great movie. And finally...
- **Learn How to Read Music:** Learn how to read and write music. Many gigs won't require reading charts, but understanding what you're playing helps you to play it better and prepare for rehearsals.

## Breaking into the Scene

Once you've developed some serious skills as a musician, you need to let people know you exist. Consider the following tips:

**Know How to Promote Yourself:** Inform people about your special skills and, most importantly, how these skills can save them time and money in the studio, on the gig, and on the

road. Communicate this message via personal websites, social networks, message boards, your local branch of the union (AFM or SAG-AFTRA), and more.

- **Record with Everyone:** Volunteer to play on as many indie artists' demos and recordings as possible. A seasoned producer or engineer on the session may call you for another session down the line, and/or the artist may rehire you when he or she hits it big.
- **Jam at Open Mics:** Sit in frequently at open mics and jams.
- **Play at Church:** If you belong to a church, get involved with performing there (not only will it make you feel good, you never know who is a member of your parish).
- **Study with Working Pros:** Take lessons with actively gigging teachers and impress the hell



out of them. Who knows, one day they may need a sub and recommend you.

- **Form Your Own Band:** Form your own band that features the style of music you play best, and get out there and be heard.
- **Learn from the Old-Timers:** Consider working with an older artist, one who may not be currently in the spotlight, but with whom you can gain valuable experience. Many artists seek out musicians to form regional bands across the United States to be their touring act for a specified region. Perhaps you can put one of these bands together.
- **Become a Roadie for a Minute:** Consider becoming a road technician for your favorite artist, learn all of his or her songs, and cross your fingers that a spot will open up in the band. At the very least, you'll learn a great deal about life on the road, and make some really good friends as well.
- **Get Great at Auditioning:** Learn to transcribe songs note for note, get your musician friends to rehearse the songs with you, and visit the audition hall long before the actual audition—all of this will help you to reduce your nerves

on that "big day."

- **Get Great at Interviewing:** Know everything about your potential employers—from what they are looking for in an employee, to what their favorite sports teams are, to what their needs are. It's not just what you play, it's what you say. And finally...
- **Befriend Everyone in the Business:** Make friends with other musicians, bands, roadies, club promoters, producers, managers, talent agents, attorneys, equipment manufacturers, photographers, journalists, actors, models, and others in the business. You never know who may hear of the perfect working situation and recommend you.

## Lasting for the Long Haul

The last group of tips deals with going the distance. Remember that it's not enough just to find work today; you have to keep on working over the long term. The following tips can help:

- **Keep in Touch:** Maintain a relationship with all past employers. Reach out to them with holiday greeting cards at the end of the year, or take them out to lunch now and again. Not only is it good karma to say thanks, but their referrals are invaluable.
- **Act Like a Pro, Always:** Never be late for a gig, play your ass off every night, and never cancel on anyone at the last minute and leave them hanging. Maintaining your good reputation is everything.
- **Maintain Your Gear:** Make sure your equipment is always up-to-date and in great shape for both the road and the studio. This includes road cases, electronics, and more.
- **Maintain Your Passport:** Be prepared to travel abroad. As a professional working musician, you must always be ready to leave today. Renew those travel documents. Now!
- **Change with the Times:** Be prepared to adjust your look, playing style, and attitude. That said, you must always be true to yourself. Find a balance.
- **Stay Healthy:** Eat well and stay away from all unhealthy habits.
- **Love Music:** Always remember why you started performing—for the fun and the love of it—no matter how challenging your career gets. Don't fall out of love.
- **Stay Happy:** Finally, keep smiling inside and out. Remember, no one likes a "downer."

**BOBBY BORG** is a professor of music industry studies and the author of several music industry books, including *Music Marketing for the DIY Musician*, *Business Basics for Musicians* and (with Michael Eames) *Introduction to Music Publishing for Musicians* on sale at finer book sellers. Contact him via [bobbyborg.com](http://bobbyborg.com).

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