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▪ U.S. Mastering Studios

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for the Initial
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- Grant-Lee Phillips
- Silas Hite
- Malibu Babie
- Eric Bass

+

Pixies

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Billy Joel

In this candid Q&A, the legendary piano man discusses how and why he has pivoted into a career as a live performer, with monthly appearances as a "franchise" at New York's Madison Square Garden and, during the outdoor months, gigs at stadiums all around the U.S. And, we've also got a sidebar with his scorching saxman, Mark Rivera, who recalls playing Joel's 1990 landmark show at Yankee Stadium.

By Gary Graff

Photos by Myrna Suarez



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When the Phone Starts Ringing...

By Kris Hawkins

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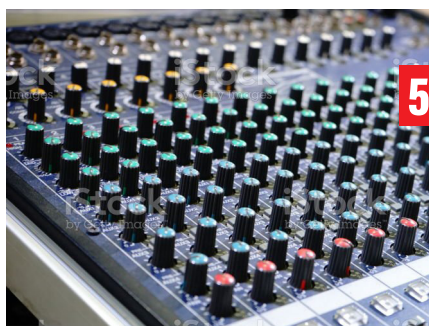
Finding Their Tone at Home

MC speaks with an array of artists, including hitmaker Malibu Babie, Eagles legend Timothy B. Schmit, and acclaimed singer-songwriter Grant-Lee Phillips, about their home recording studios—the steps they've taken to build a creative crib that suits their special needs.

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Contemporary Musical Arts Program at New England Conservatory

necmusic.edu/contemporary-musical-arts

History and Boundary Breaking Innovation: Founded in 1867, the New England Conservatory in Boston is the oldest independent conservatory in the U.S. and the only music school designated as a National Historic Landmark. One of the institution's most dynamic and innovative crown jewels is its transformative Contemporary Musical Arts program, whose emphasis on ear training, technique, conceptual ideas, interdisciplinary collaboration and a wide range of improvisational traditions uniquely positions it to produce the complete 21st Century musician. Created under the name "Third Stream" by Gunther Schuller and Ran Blake, the CMA program is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year with concerts, residencies and conservatory wide collaborations during the 2022-23 season.

Eclectic Array of Musicians: Over the decades, it has launched and expanded the careers of artists from a multitude of genres—a Japanese koto player, a flamenco guitarist, singer-songwriters, klezmer musicians, world, jazz, folk, new music and rock musicians, artists specializing in Persian music and Latin jazz, an Arabic music scholar, a Tango vocalist and more.

Diverse Ensembles and Workshops: As Grammy-winning singer-songwriter Sarah Jarosz has noted, the department "pushed me out of my musical comfort zone. There are no musical lines or boundaries that can't be crossed. It is that adventurous spirit that makes the programming so unique and compelling." The Boston Globe calls it "a forward looking cabal within this classical conservatory...a thriving hub of musical exploration."

Currently, the department offers ensembles and courses that focus on African American Roots, Songwriting, Jewish Music, Interdisciplinary Collaboration (drawing on poetry, painting and dance for inspiration), World Music, 21st Century Repertoire, American Roots Music, Film Noir,



John Zorn's game pieces (including "Cobra" and "Hockey"), Indian Modal Improvisation, Persian and Middle Eastern music, music and ecology, music and spirituality, and composition and improvisation.

What Makes CMA Unique: The program is unparalleled for its emphasis on aural learning and development of personal style, with a structured approach to ear training involving singing, memorization, harmonic sophistication, aesthetic integrity, and stylistic openness. Renowned international violinist and vocalist Eden MacAdam-Somer, who serves as department Co-chair with Klezmer Conservatory Band founder Hankus Netsky, says, "What sets us apart is the opportunity to develop one's personal voice through exposure to many different kinds of music, combined with a rigorous approach to aural learning, independence and creativity. The first step in any area is listening, then singing or playing back what you've heard, assimilating that into one's own voice, repeating that process, re-examining it, and drawing on it respectfully in your own creative work. The point is that students develop a deep respect for and absorb the skills, sounds, and structure of many kinds of music which enriches their own work and, hopefully, their whole selves."

Contact NEC Contemporary Musical Arts Program, 617-585-1388

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Lindsay Conlin

SVP of Revenue
Exactuals

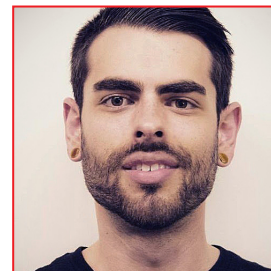
Exactuals has promoted **Lindsay Conlin** to **SVP of Revenue**. In this role, Conlin will oversee all sales and marketing operations for Exactuals and its suite of products, including flagship platform PaymentHub, and royalty calculation and statement generation service, SR1. Conlin is based in Nashville, TN, and will report to Exactuals CEO Bryan Walley. Before her promotion to SVP of Revenue, Conlin served as Director of Business Development at the company, where she focused on building partnerships, negotiating deals, and more. Conlin has also been an advocate for proper metadata in the music industry. For more information, contact laurie@jaybirdcom.com.



Dave Hansen

A&R Manager
FiXT

FiXT has added **Dave Hansen** to the company's label team as its **A&R Manager**. Reporting to FiXT's owner, founder and A&R Director Klayton, Hansen brings a wealth of knowledge across the worlds of rock, metal, and EDM, and multi-genre combinations thereof, for which FiXT is known. As A&R Manager at FiXT, Hansen will be working closely with the company's executive team and James Rhodes, FiXT Vice President & Co-Founder, who says, "The addition of Dave to the FiXT team is a testament of our commitment to our 25+ artist roster, as well as pave the way for more artists to join the family." For more information, contact leasia@fixtmusic.com.



Niki Robertson

SVP, Creative
RCA Records

Niki Robertson has joined **RCA Records** as **Senior Vice President, Creative**. In this newly created role, Robertson will spearhead overall creative direction, live events, experiential initiatives, and online content. Robertson joins RCA Records from IAMSOUND, which she founded in 2007, as a record label that launched the careers of Florence and the Machine, Lord Huron, Charli XCX, with more recent work including Mitski and The Weeknd. Robertson, who has been recognized with multiple Clio Award wins for work with artists such as Billie Eilish and Solange, started her music career scouting for Parlophone Records. Contact jamie.abzug@sonymusic.com for more.



Theresa Wolters

Vice President of Health & Human Services
MusiCares

MusiCares has appointed **Theresa Wolters** as the **Vice President of Health & Human Services**. Wolters is in charge of developing, implementing and overseeing MusiCares' programs and services nationally. She is responsible for executing and advancing the vision and direction of all mission-based programs and services for MusiCares. "Her incredible career and experience will undoubtedly help the organization serve the music community in a greater capacity," says Laura Segura, Executive Director of MusiCares. For more information, contact jennifer.kerr@porternovelli.com.



Rich Hoalst

*Executive Vice President,
Chief Customer Officer*
Guitar Center

Guitar Center has announced the appointment of **Rich Hoalst** to the position **Executive Vice President and Chief Customer Officer**. As a member of the Management Committee, Hoalst will report directly to Ron Japinga, President and CEO. "We are thrilled to add Rich to our executive team and combine the marketing and eCommerce departments into one super task force with a unified message," says Japinga. This newly created position represents an organizational realignment for Guitar Center Inc. For more information, contact pr@clynemedia.com



Craig Paller

Director of U.S. Sales
QSC

QSC has announced **Craig Paller** has joined the organization as **Director of U.S. Sales - East** for the company's Pro Audio Division. Paller joins the QSC management team with 30 years of senior leadership and management experience at notable brands including Electro-Voice, Shure, HARMAN and ClearOne. "I am very excited to have Craig join our team," states Perry Celia, VP Global Sales and Service, QSC Pro Audio. "Craig's considerable business acumen, passion for the business, our customers, and end-users, will make him highly successful in his new role." For more information, contact kristine.fowler@qsc.com.



Kimberly Horton

President, CEO
The Blues Foundation

The Blues Foundation has named former music manager/agent and former board member **Kimberly Horton** the **Interim President and CEO** of the 42-year organization. A native of Jackson, MS, the longtime manager and agent, and the founder of Heathrow Muzik Box, LLC, Horton has guided the careers of many internationally renowned Blues artists including Johnny Rawls, Billy Price, Lattimore, Dexter Allen, Lady A, Big Llou Johnson, and Eric Nolan of the R&B group, The O'Jays, and more during her 15-year career as a manager/agent. She is also the personal business assistant for Taj Mahal. For more, contact gwendolynquinn@aol.com.



Allison Hamamura

*General Manager/LA and
VP of A&R*
ONErpm

ONErpm has announced the hiring of **Allison Hamamura** as **General Manager/Los Angeles and VP of A&R**. Hamamura will oversee the Los Angeles office and acquisition of new business while supporting the growth of ONErpm's artist services and development. Hamamura spent a decade at Hollywood Records as VP of A&R, working with superstar artists. Allison Hamamura will report directly to ONErpm's Founder and CEO Emmanuel Zunz. Additionally, ONErpm's Los Angeles-based A&R team sees executive **Joseph Adulaimi** promoted to **VP of A&R**. For more information on these hirings, contact alexandra@adprco.com





◀ D'ADDARIO XS COATED ELECTRIC GUITAR STRINGS

The XS coated strings were originally developed for acoustic guitars, but now they are also offered as the XS Electric with maximum life, strength, tuning stability and great tone. D'Addario uses their proprietary NY Steel for the core wire and plain string wire for the highest break strength, and hex-core construction for superior dimensional stability, enhanced durability, and precise intonation. They also use their proprietary Fusion Twist technology on the plain steels for significantly enhanced tuning stability.

The XS Electric strings include a reformulated nickel-plated steel wrap wire to provide a bright tone, high output, bite, and sustain.

Long string life comes from a super-thin film coating (1/10 the thickness of a human hair) that protects the wound strings from corrosion.

I tried out a set of XS nickel-plated steel (10-46s) on my Fender Strat and just love them for their smooth feel and great sound. I also put a set

of their Super Lights (9-42s) on my Tele and liked them as well—especially for easier string bending!

The XS line, now with both acoustic and electric sets, offers a choice between XT—for enhanced life and a natural feel—or XS—for maximum life and a smoother feel. Either set has great tuning stability and rich D'Addario tone.

ddar.io/XSE.PR

► SPL BIG STEREO IMAGE CONTROL

SPL's BiG is a double-slot 500 series module designed by the same minds that brought you the SPL Iron Mastering Compressor. BiG uses stereo information—audio with little or no correlation between the left and right channels and allows manipulation using three simple hardware controls. No matter how much you use it, BiG processing collapses accurately down to mono.

The stereo L and R audio inputs of BiG are algebraically summed to produce a full-spectrum mono signal that no longer contains out-of-phase (non-correlated) information such as reverb and delays. This signal is processed through a specialized filter set that has three, interacting controls: Range, Stage, and Bigness. I tried BiG on full mixes as well as individual stereo instruments that had L/R channels of un-correlated sound.

With the Bigness knob set to mid-way and both the Range and Stage controls off, I did notice hot percussive levels were compressed and re-adjusting working levels downward ameliorated some of the loss of transients.

I tried the Range control that selects the frequency processing range. Range set to High dials in a "fizz factor" with cymbal crashes and other bright sounds taking on a new clarity. Range set to Open seems to bring up the lower mid-range band and is noticeable on electric guitars and vocals.

The Stage control moves the frequencies set up in Range backward or forward in the stereo field with the effect of the sound either wrapping around you or it is positioned more in front of your listening position. Lastly, there is a switchable 1.5dB @ 80Hz bass boost using a passive filter circuit similar to the Iron's AirBass function. For me, this can stay on all the time.

The SPL BiG 500 Series module is distributed by Focal-Naim America in the U.S. and Canada, and sells for \$649 MSRP.

spl.audio/en/spl-produkt/big



▼ FIX AUDIO DESIGNS THE BUCKET

Fix Audio Designs' The Bucket is an eight-slot 500 Series rack that is the same system as used in the company's large format professional analog audio consoles. The Bucket is standalone and powered by a small, included power supply that will power up to two Buckets—a second output connector is provided for chaining power to another Bucket.

500 Series module processors—microphone pre-amps, EQs, compressors, reverbs, delays, filters have become a popular way to build a collection of professional audio processors. These are smaller and usually cost less for the same processing and nearly every gear manufacturer offers 500 series module versions of their gear.

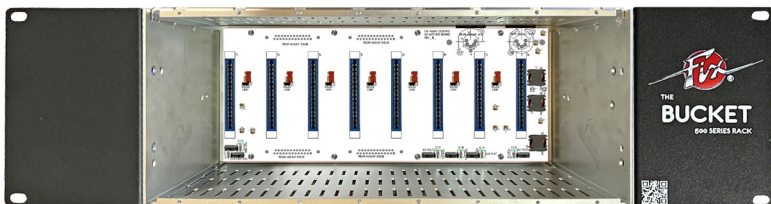
The Bucket chassis is well made from plated steel and comes with all the necessary hardware plus rubber feet to either rack mount it or easily carry it to the studio or a live sound gig using the included stainless steel handle.

Each of the eight slots has its own edge connector for its input and output balanced audio connections, regulated +/- 16-volts DC power, and +48-volts DC for phantom mic power (if required). There are pairs of duplicated DB25 connectors on the Bucket's rear panel (that conform to Tascam standard pin-out) to connect the rack to the rest of your studio. You can buy cables that fan out to regular XLR balanced audio connectors; multi-channel I/O boxes will directly connect to route line level signals back and forth to the Bucket.

Adjacent modules can be stereo-linked. If you have two identical single-channel compressors, know that you can use them on stereo mixes with linked side-chain operation.

The Fix Audio Designs Bucket is a great choice for a 500 Series rack to start your collection of professional gear. You can save money and build any signal chain and experiment endlessly. The Bucket sells for \$499 MSRP.

fixaudiodesigns.com





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◀ PRESONUS REVELATOR IO24 USB INTERFACE

There are a lot of modern capabilities built in to the Revelator io24 interface. This is an USB-C stereo audio interface with two XMAX-L microphone pre-amps, a loopback mixer, software that runs their Fat Channel DSP consisting of a 4-band parametric EQ, compressor, gate, and limiter. This software uses a nice sized GUI with presets, mixer panel, and controls for the Fat Channel and other setups. It's complete!

I liked the io24 as a compact desktop unit—it tilts up slightly with two XLR Comb jacks, channel 1 and 2 select buttons and a multi-purpose volume control for speakers, headphones, and track-to-mic blending. After downloading Universal Control (ver 1.21) and updating the firmware, I was ready to get going using it in my sessions in Pro Tools Ultimate 2022.7 running Mac OS 10.14.6. It worked great without a hitch!

The audio interface software mirrors the unit's controls for professional-grade high-headroom mic/line preamps, a two-channel loopback mixer, and extensive processing for streaming, podcasting, and music production.

Its easy-to-use mixer lets you quickly record Zoom calls or Skype interviews and add backing tracks and sound effects, live streamed performances, music productions, and more. There are built-in effects like: a detuner, vocoder, ring modulator, filters, and delay to create crazy effects.

Unlike previous USB interfaces I've reviewed, you may go to Stream Mix mode with the click of a button and your analog inputs, loopback channels, reverb, and effects are routed to the USB output.

I'm having a great time running the io24 as my audio interface connected to my iCloud powered monitors! Revelator io24 comes with Studio One Artist and Studio Magic Suite, Ableton Live Lite plus an impressive collection of virtual instruments and effects plug-ins. Revelator io24 sells for \$199.95 MSRP.

presonus.com/products/Revelator-io24

▶ DPA 4055 KICK DRUM MIC

The latest addition in the brand's instrument microphone line, DPA's new 4055 is a pre-polarized condenser microphone with an open cardioid pick-up pattern and a 20Hz to 20kHz frequency response. Unlike some other kick drum mics, there is no built-in frequency response curve or shape that the manufacturer has deemed correct for recording kick drums.

The DPA 4055's frequency response curve shows a remarkably flat response, with a slight boost starting at 8kHz and extending out to about 12kHz. The key to this measurement is that the phase response specification looks like one of DPA's measurement microphones—remarkable for an instrument mic that costs \$730 MSRP.

Maximum SPL is 164 dB SPL (peak) and the dynamic range is specified at 132 dB. The transformer-less active output electronics requires +48-volt phantom power and will drive up to a 100-meter mic cable making it perfect for live stages and studios. The mic measures: 5.19-inches in length and has an asymmetrical design—offset from center line, so the 2.2-inch-wide, removable wind-screen (for cleaning) can be placed exactly out in front, inside, against the beater head, or anywhere you want around a kick drum.

To enable this freedom of placement, the DPA 4055 is internally shock-mounted and comes with a locking mic clip called the UA0961. This all-metal clip grips the mic solidly and, along with the windscreen, allows confidence for whatever placement gets the sound you're looking for. And that is the whole idea here: easily provide a flat, non-distorted capture of high SPL sound that's ready to be "carved" into shape later, if needed.

I found that the DPA 4055 does the job in the most elegant and non-intrusive way in the recording studio. Highly recommended!

dpamicrophones.com/instrument/4055-kick-drum-microphone



◀ NANOPULSE BY JMG SOUND/UNITED PLUGINS

Nanopulse is a three-band transient modifier and is the most comprehensive tool I've seen with global level controls for both the Enhanced and the Original transients.

The Shaper section has three frequency bands each having controls over the level of the attack itself and the length of the remaining sustain portion. Shaper includes a Listen button for soloing the individual bands' Attack and Sustain components although this function is a little "fiddly" to operate in the large, resizable GUI.

Powerful controls allow the ability to change the exact crossover frequency between the bands and there are switchable filter slopes of 6, 12, and 24dB/octave to dial in the exact width of the processing.

Nanopulse's Enhancer section offers 64 transient types captured from snare skin, woodblock, kick beater, glass ping, string pluck, cymbal tap, and more. You may replace the original attack of an instrument with one of these available in a list. The default is

Alpha Strike and works well on most sources. There are Global controls for the pitch (+/- 24 semitones) of the transients, Tone, anywhere from bright to dark, and a Resonance control for adding ringing resonant peaks.

I found Nanopulse to be indispensable for any percussion instrument with individual drum tracks a "natural" for the biggest benefit. I found the three modes in the Detector section essential for setting up the process properly. The default Smart mode works to detect any transient while Spectral worked well for keyboards and synths. The Fast detector seemed better at tracking a drum loop with 1/16th note accents.

What a fantastic tool to enhance or even restructure the percussive impact of any instrument in your mix. Highly recommended! There are free trials and intro pricing. Nanopulse sells for \$82 MSRP as a download.

unitedplugins.com/nanopulse

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



"I create music to make your Self better. Music to raise your vibration. Music encouraging you to find all of the parts that we hide, music to inspire the confidence to bring those to the world."

Balancing pensive delivery with focused intention, Producer / DJ / Artist GEM's blend of liberating lyricism and soundscapes transports your body and soul into the subtle beauty of the world surrounding her new EP; **HEALING FEELINGS**. This EP brings in the next wave of New Age. Both rapid

evolution of the genre and true to its roots, produced in the science of ancient Solfaggio frequencies. Deeply personal, showcasing depth & sincerity, GEM encourages confidence and self discovery with this sonic journey. You don't need to be a traditional New Age fan, it immediately appeals to any human being with a heart.



"Truth be told, this wasn't the EP I started to make. Or the one I was supposed to make for my music career. I had to make peace with that inside my heart. I felt myself being pulled towards a very conscious creation process. I made a deliberate decision to connect all the pieces of myself and be whole, regardless of how popular it might be. I started producing my own spiritual music and decided that I would blend wellness benefits into the mix so it was more than just a song in the background. I'm reminding you on a deep level that there are better days ahead, that you can stop and start again at any moment and that you can manifest a healthy beautiful life. I was told New Age music was boring and that no one would listen, I was told that positivity was lame and people wouldn't connect with it. That I should dig deeper past just things I love. That music should express pain. But how can I dig past love? Isn't love the very reason for existing?" - GEM.

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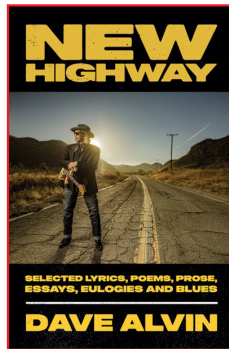
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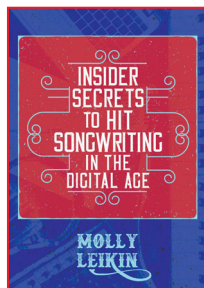
New Highway includes a generous selection of Alvin's celebrated poetry; excerpts of his moving prose; newspaper articles and essays on artists including Frank Zappa, Bo Diddley and Ray Charles (a piece which earned Allen a Grammy nomination); tributes to friends and influences such as Nanci Griffith and Merle Haggard; a long-lost interview with Buck Owens; several of his album notes and, of course, a carefully curated representation of Alvin's lyrics.



Insider Secrets to Hit Songwriting in The Digital Age

By **Molly Leiken**
(paperback) **\$17.99**

This thorough, easy-to-read guide features exclusive and highly informative interviews with insiders across multiple genres, including Tim Wipperman, "the publisher's publisher" in Nashville, Grammy-nominee J.P. Saxe ("If the World Was Ending") and Grammy-winner Debbie Hupp ("You Decorated My Life"), R&B mega-producers-writers for Rihanna, Carl Sturken and Evan Rogers.



Innovative Techniques for Pro Tools

By **Craig Anderton**
(eBook) **\$19.99**

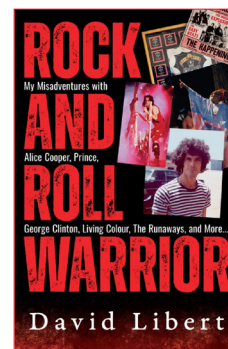
This eBook delivers over 100 practical tips about Pro Tools versions, from Artist to Ultimate. The downloadable package includes the 236-page eBook in PDF format, over 80 audio examples, and "learn-by-doing" Session, Track Preset, and Effects files. Readers can load the files into Pro Tools, and follow along with lessons presented in the eBook for an immersive hands-on experience and an alternative means for learning. Purchase at sweetwater.com



Rock And Roll Warrior

By **David Libert**
(paperback) **\$19.60**

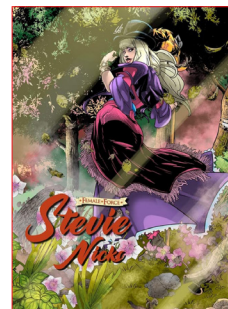
Former tour manager, artist manager, musician-songwriter, producer, and agent David Libert takes you on a completely wild ride through the rock & roll trenches. Meet the legendary groupie, Connie from Little Rock, AR, as well as the artists Libert handled: Alice Cooper, Prince, George Clinton and Parliament-Funkadelic, Living Colour, The Runaways, and more. The book gives you more than a hint at the craziness at the heart of those wild rock tours.



Female Force-Stevie Nicks

By **Michael Frizell and Ramon Salas**
(hardcover) **\$19.99**

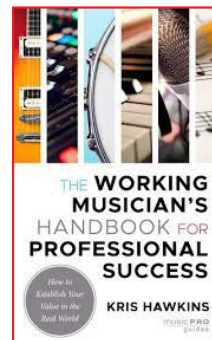
A multiple Grammy winner as a solo artist and as a member of Fleetwood Mac, Stevie Nicks' passion and unrelenting drive to succeed as an artist are explored in this new comic book from TidalWave Comics. It's part of a series that celebrates powerful, influential and, in some cases, musically talented women. It is part 1 of the "Female Force" series that includes Tina Turner, Dolly Parton and others.



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—successes as well as failures—in the hopes that you will learn from his missteps and triumphs. The book 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.



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Entering the music consumer market in 1995, Solcor Cables created a popular and innovative line of microphone cables, snakes and speaker cables—and by 2000, the music aspect of the business had taken precedence over extension cords. They also make ethernet cables for digital audio. Solcor Cables currently has nearly 400 brick and mortar dealers in Mexico and is quickly building a base in the U.S., selling its products in over 30 outlets. With solid manufacturing and supply experience, the company under Tirado's leadership is also expanding into Canada and Europe.

"Yes, it Makes a Difference": Tirado and his Corpus Christi-based U.S. marketing consultant Jerry Colmenero have used this phrase so many times in their dealings with potential brick and mortar suppliers that they have trademarked it as part of Solcor's branding. "We walk into instrument stores and I say to the skeptical manager, who thinks all cables are alike, 'Give me your worst sounding guitar.' Usually they'll offer up a Fender Telecaster or some single coil pickup guitar. I hand them one of our cables, plug it in and they say, 'Wow, cable really makes that much of a difference?' and eventually, 'That sounds great.' They look at our cable and see how meticulously it's built and realize nobody else is making cables of this quality."

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Tirado adds, "The assembly of our instrument cables includes a double shrink tube and a silicon bead to keep the conductors separate. These protective layers prevent breaks at the most common failure point. Each cable is created by hand. People are very attracted to the vivid two- or three-color braids, as well. Unlike most manufacturers, we also pride ourselves on developing personal, hands-on relationships with our customers."

Variety of Cables: Solcor's website currently lists seven categories of cables: 100% Rock, Standard, Style Line, Classic Pro, Heavy Line, Snakes and Bulk Cable—and they will soon introduced the Duro Style. In addition, Solcor has a Custom Shop, offering a competitive price and quick turnaround for cables designed for special projects. The website lists key qualities that set Solcor Cables apart from their competitors: noise free; handmade with precision instruments; anticorrosive soldering; oxygen-free conductors; 8mm flexible PVC jacket insulation; a conductive PVC inner layer and high-density copper braid shield that offers 95% interference protection and full metal connectors with gold plated conductors.

Another key to Solcor's success is its prime core values: Teamwork, Honesty, Communication, Innovation, Responsibility and Discipline.

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▲ BROOKLYN HARDCORE SHUTDOWN

It has been exactly 22 years since Brooklyn Hardcore Punk band Shutdown released *Few and Far Between* (2000) and, after momentum of international reunion tours, the group has been excited to start recording their third album with longtime friend and producer Jerry Farley at Nova Studios NY on Staten Island. Pictured (l-r): Dion DeNardo, Steve Della Croce



▲ NIGHT CRICKETS AND VIOLENT FEMMES' DELORENZO

Night Crickets, the new collaborative project from David J of Bauhaus, Victor DeLorenzo of Violent Femmes (pictured), and multi-instrumentalist Darwin Meinert, released their debut album *A Free Society* on vinyl for the first time ever. At his studio, The Past Office in Milwaukee, WI, DeLorenzo says, "I recorded drum and percussion tracks, my vocals, some keyboards and Janet Schiff's cello parts."



▲ COLORADO SOUND STUDIOS

Studio W Soundstage in Denver's Colorado Sound Studios hosted an interview taping of Festival Director, Talent Buyer Shannon Brock (left on stage), record producer Rick Cabot Podmore (middle), and multi-instrumentalist Kelly Sheridan (right), shown in a one-of-a-kind "Urban Artware" jacket by graphic artist Lonnie Lardner.



▲ JAGWAR TWIN TRIPS TO JOSHUA TREE

"In the pandemic, I was reflecting a lot on how I felt in online spaces and also being in my physical body and working to get back to my child-like state of being," says Roy English. "This led to a couple Joshua Tree trips to work on what would become 33. The music just felt like it was flowing through me and all I had to do was get out of the way. Working with Matt Pauling always creates the magic dynamic tension, we are like mirrors for each other, each of us looking at ourselves in reverse."

Producer Playback

"You don't really understand the way audio gear works until you have your own and do it yourself."

— BRIAN TARQUIN (BHP Music-Guitar Trax Records, Jungle Room Studios)





▲ HOUR OF GOON EVENING

Los Angeles-based band Goon consists of best friends: Kenny Becker (pictured), Andy Polito, Tamara Simons and Dillon Peralta. "We live in Los Angeles and are eagerly awaiting the release of our second LP, *Hour of Green Evening*," says Becker. "We recorded it at Tropico Beauty in Glendale. Together we all endeavored to capture some hot jams on tape. It was then mixed by the one and only Brian Rosemeyer."



▲ KEVIN HART TRAVELS WITH TELEFUNKEN MIC

As a Connecticut native, Showtime Sound Director of Technical Operations Marc Chauvin has developed a strong association with nearby TELEFUNKEN microphones. Chauvin says that the longtime pairing of the TELEFUNKEN M80 dynamic microphone with Showtime's client, Kevin Hart, has resulted in "flawless performances" for more than a decade.



▲ HART 2 HEAVY

22-year-old R&B-trap artist, Hart2Heavy's career reached a new height in 2021, with the release of "You Changed Me." Since 2019, he has put out music on a regular basis, amassing over 100,000 streams on Spotify. Says Heavy, "My music is me really writing out my thoughts and point of view on past experiences and future desires."



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Roots, Americana and blues producer Steve Dawson logged countless hours in Vancouver studios while he was on the rise. He co-produced instrumental records for his collaboration Zubot and Dawson, which were well received, won some Juno Awards and sounded a call to other artists who sought his services. He segued into production full-time in 2002, relocated to Nashville in 2013 and has since produced, engineered and mixed for artists such as Kelly Joe Phelps, Jim Byrnes and others. He ran a slick home studio where he did most of his work but following a recent move, he built a new one from scratch.

To coax the best out of artists, Dawson works to set a supportive studio tone. "Some people are so good at what they do that it's really just about making them comfortable," he observes. "I don't have to work that hard on the performance side of it. It's like being an NHL coach: I don't need to tell [artists] how to do what they do. I just need to organize and get them functioning in a space. I learned a lot from Lee Townsend, who's produced many records with Bill Frisell. He's old-school and doesn't really touch any equipment, because he's there to produce. Bill taught me how to push the best out of people in the least amount of time."

Among his most-valued experiences is the time he spent with famed Canadian producer Bruce Fairbairn. "I got a call out of the blue one day," the producer recalls. "He'd read something about me in a local paper and was looking for a guitar teacher for his son Scott. He started to invite me to sessions and I got to see the care and craft that went into making records with bands like the Scorpions, Yes and the Cranberries. The coolest thing was watching guitar chords being recorded one note at a time. [Engineer] Mike Plotnikoff would work all night summing them, we'd come back in the morning and he'd have the chord sitting on one track." Interestingly, Scott went on to contribute to records by bands including Aerosmith, the Scorpions and Bon Jovi.

In 2016 Dawson launched his podcast "Music Makers and Soul Shakers" in answer to the shortcomings he heard in similar shows. But like so much that is undertaken out of necessity, it has grown beyond its original intention. "The podcasts that featured musicians disappointed me because they didn't go into as much detail as I would have liked," he recalls. "So, I decided to do one myself. It's an in-depth discussion with musicians about making records and all that nerdy information that doesn't get touched on enough. We also talk about songwriting, inspiration, how they got certain sounds and so forth."

During the pandemic, Dawson started his "Henhouse Express" service, which enabled him and some friends to record remotely. Once it began to gain traction, it was opened to the greater public and blossomed into a viable business. Recently he completed mixing an album for big band artist Matt Anderson as well as production with Vancouver band the Matinee. He also works frequently with Allison Russell, lately of Birds of Chicago. His record *Gone, Long Gone* dropped earlier this year and he's on tour currently in support of it.

Contact stevedawson.ca
makersandshakerspodcast.com

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... lessons he's learned as a producer are:

- You can't get away without having some technical knowledge anymore.
- Fine tune your ears. Here in Nashville, you have to know the Nashville Number System. It's basic music theory.
- Understand how to balance patience with efficiency. You can be the most patient person in the world but you're going to run out of time [if you're too patient].



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BACKGROUND

Getting burned in a record deal was a seminal moment for Sam Saideman. Later, he discovered the business side of the industry, and this experience informed his choices. His company, which started with artist management, has since expanded to include social media influencers, project management, and brand marketing.

Hip-Hop Dropped

In New York in the early 2000s, hip-hop was prevalent. I started freestyling with friends and writing music. I went to college for a semester and was releasing records, then dropped out to come home and focus on [music] full-time. I put out a full-length concept album and was approached by this independent label in Philadelphia. I didn't know anything about the industry. I did my due diligence, as much as an 18-year-old with no money can, and signed. I put together a second album, so they had a fresh record, and the money never came. I consulted attorneys and was told, "You're owed this money, but you could be in court for two or three years."

By that point, I was moving on with my career. I was sharpening my general business background, doing door-to-door sales, social media marketing, real estate investing... [I had this] ah-ha moment where I realized there was a business side to the music industry.

Knowing You

I don't sign [a client] until I have significant conversations with them. We build a working relationship prior to any contracting or negotiations. I do my due diligence, because it's a partnership. I try to gauge how they handle conflict, how they handle money

The Manager's Role

We're a small team, so we're not constantly signing musicians. Every so often, a pitch catches my eye, either because they already have parts of a team going or they have built-in revenue. There's a common misconception that an artist of any size should have a manager. If there's not yet a career to manage, there shouldn't be one on board. Or they should work with a manager who's at the same position as that artist.

Project Management

We have to see viability in the music. It's pretty rare that we turn campaigns down, but when we do it's because we know certain sounds aren't going to translate with our network. And we



"There's a common misconception that an artist of any size should have a manager. If there's not yet a career to manage, there shouldn't be one on board."

don't want to take on projects we can't be sure are going to be successful. As a small business, we're hesitant to take projects that we're not 100% sure on. And we have to like the music.

New Project, Old Project

One of our favorite things is when a small artist has a significant budget. We can kind of shape the narrative and build a campaign that's impactful. They trust us, listen to us, and allow us to do that.

There's nothing more frustrating than when we work a big project, the team's been in the game 30 years, and they don't want to do things certain ways, be scrappy, or take risks. A lot of these more traditional teams don't want to risk spending money in places like TikTok. There are also great things about working with those teams, but there is beauty in working with an artist who is willing to let us lead the charge.

Hourly Consultations

We saw artists being steered in the wrong direction with certain things. [There was] a lack of information with certain topics, like publishing. Synch licensing is confusing for artists if they have no relationships in that space. And YouTube University only gets you so far. We find consultations are a great way to realign visions and goals. Sometimes, we even open doors if it's something that's not going to risk our reputation.

My favorite thing about hourly consults is when someone hires us for a significant batch. We're essentially coming in as a paid consultant. Not every artist's goals are the same. Some want to tour regularly. Some want to build publishing income. Some want to be the next big thing. And there's everything in between. It's helping them put clear, tangible goals in place.

Influencer Management

We hired a couple of influencer marketing agencies to promote some of our music management clients and watched them mess up. We watched them choose the wrong creators, create the wrong narratives, not review content, use the wrong hashtags, tag the wrong artists... Tons of mistakes. We realized we could implement the same music-first mentality to influencers. We can just pivot to widen the mission from "put the music first" to "put the art first."

You could spend your whole life planning, but you'll miss your mark if you don't jump in. So, we jumped in. We started reaching out to creators and pitched them on being early movers with us rather than going to a company where they'd be one of 1,000 creators.

Brand Marketing

We launched another division within the influencer sphere—brand marketing. A couple different agencies and brands started saying, "You guys are easy to work with. Could you get us more creators?" So, we started finding creators that fit the brands' parameters and contracting influencers. We've worked with some household names and probably activated over 1,000 influencers. It's awesome to put income in people's pockets from nontraditional methods.

Key Performance Indicators

A large part of what we do is making sure the KPIs of a campaign are aligned with what we know. Sometimes, we get approached by brands and they're like, "We have a \$10,000 budget and our KPIs are 3,000 influencers." And it's like, "That's not how the space works. Let's educate you on why and then see if we're still a fit once those expectations are managed."

Oftentimes, they haven't worked in the space. They're guessing. Realignment usually works. But every so often, we get a brand or artist that doesn't see it the same. We don't touch those campaigns, because the ones where their expectations are different never end well.

Overlapping Clients

Our managed influencers also take part in the brand marketing campaigns. If we're doing a Tupperware campaign and we manage an influencer who does cooking videos, we naturally migrate that influencer into that campaign. And we don't commission it the way we commission usual campaigns. We don't double dip, because that goes against everything we believe.

I've been working with danny G since he put out music under a different name. He hired us on the project management side. I was helping him book bigger features and a bunch of stuff, almost like an interim manager. And it went so well we transitioned to a traditional music management deal. Since TikTok launched, he built almost a million followers on the platform. Now, he's included in our brand marketing campaigns and our influencer management roster list, and I manage his music career. It wasn't plotted or planned. It just happened.

OPPS

Riot Games wants a Senior Music Product Manager—Riot Music Group. As Senior Music Product Manager Music Universe on Riot Games Music, you will report into and work with the Initiative Product Lead to drive strategy, creative execution, and delivery of long-term strategy, franchise planning, IP expansion, and artist development within the K/DA universe. You will engage deeply with the community and player data to ensure that the team is delivering resonant content, maintaining a singular focus on providing the best possible player experience. Apply at [Linkedln](#).

Sony Music is seeking a Senior Vice President, Hip-Hop and R&B, AWAL. As SVP, Hip-Hop and R&B, you are a "culture builder" who will lead a team and drive priorities across the company, and help guide the team in the space. You will lead and shape campaign strategies across AWAL's growing roster of hip-hop and R&B artists. This position will work closely with the international team to create and synchronize global marketing campaigns including, budgeting and scheduling. In addition, you will oversee cross communication with radio promotion, digital marketing, creative marketing, synch, publicity and their commercial partnerships teams. Apply at [EntertainmentCareers.net](#).

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▲ CHILD SEAT TAKE A BAD HOLIDAY

Indie pop-rock duo Child Seat have announced a string of West Coast tour dates, following the release of their *Bad Holiday* album via Moonboot! Records. Child Seat formed in 2021 and is composed of Madeleine Mathews and Josiah Mazzaschi. A month after coming together, an album was about finished and the group was up and running. A mini tour started in Chico, CA in September and ended in San Francisco. Contact caroline@clarioncallmedia.com for more info.

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LABELS - RELEASE SIGNINGS

Bassist Stu Brooks has signed to Dine Alone Records. Two-time Grammy-nominated bassist, producer, songwriter and musician

Stu Brooks has signed with **Dine Alone Records** and announced that his first release for the label will be *The 40HZ EP*, due out on Dec. 8. "I took these two genres and tried to tie them together into a song," Brooks says of the song "Sound the Alarm." "Between the chorus groove and verse groove, there are abrupt stylistic transitions that I think have the effect of pulling the rug from under you." Contact shane@thesyn.com for more info.

DIY Spotlight

AIMEE NOLTE

Los Angeles-based jazz singer, pianist, and YouTube star Aimee Nolte started playing music when she was just three years old, taking classical lessons between the ages of 5 and 15.

"I performed everywhere I could and always had the need to be trying new things and figuring out everything I could about music the whole time I was growing up," Nolte says. "Mostly as a kid, I wanted to reproduce whatever songs I heard on the radio and play and sing them myself. I also wrote a lot of music from a young age."

Taking inspiration from the likes of Keith Jarrett, Oscar Peterson, Bill Evans, Bonnie Raitt, Edie Brickell, Peggy Lee

and Karen Carpenter, among many others, Nolte ran with her talent and found a home, and an audience, on YouTube.

"I've gotten a lot of opportunities because of YouTube in the last six years," she says. "I got to play a duet with the great jazz bass player, John Clayton, on my album, *Looking For The Answers*, and the only reason I met him was because he saw one of my videos and came to my gig one night. I also am asked frequently to be the featured artist at jazz festivals all around the nation and I really enjoy that."

YouTube, of course, offers an outlet for everyone, but standing out from the crowd can be a challenge.

"I think maybe the fact that I came from a small town, grew up with a lot of siblings, and have four kids of my own has given me a kind of relatable nature that lets me teach concepts in a unique way," Nolte says. "I try to keep things really real on my channel. I don't like to pretend that I'm better than I am, and I don't mind showing my mistakes or my thought processes. Even if they seem unorthodox."

Nolte continues to perform regularly, while imparting her knowledge to others on YouTube, and in her jazz education classes on the Nebula streaming service.

For more information, visit aimeenolte.com.



Tennessee death metal band Brodequin has signed to Season of Mist. They'll immediately get to work on their fourth album, the first for their new label, due out in 2023. "In addition to **Season of Mist's** excellent support on every level, we will now have the best distribution we've ever had in both the United States and Europe," says the band. "This will not only alleviate the high shipping costs from the U.S. to our European friends, but extend our reach overall." Contact katy@season-of-mist.com for more info.

PROPS

Lee Brice's "Soul" has been certified gold. Impressively, "Soul" is Brice's 13th consecutive single to receive RIAA certification. "I am completely bowled over time and time again by how amazing the fans are!" Brice said. "I'm truly honored and feel like one lucky son-of-a-gun to get to do what I love." Contact asst1@truepublicrelations.com for more info.

Blxst goes platinum with Ty Dolla \$ign and Tyga. Hip-hop star Blxst received his first RIAA certification with the "Chosen" single, featuring Ty Dolla \$ign and Tyga, reaching

platinum status. **Greg Hammer**, Managing Director of **Red Bull Records**, says that, "Blxst is a game changer and we are thrilled to see the continued success of 'Chosen' and his monumental growth as an artist." Contact chris.borsellino@redbullrecords.com for more info.

THE BIZ

Gibson partners with Noel Gallagher. Gibson and Epiphone have partnered with the former Oasis man to recreate his **1960 Gibson ES-355 and Epiphone Riviera** guitars. "Fuck me, what a guitar!" said **Noel Gallagher** of the 1960 Gibson ES-355 in a statement. Contact lcoffey@primeprgroup.com for more info.

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



▲ \$20 MILLION IN ROYALTIES MAKES FOR HAPPY SINGERS

Vocalists will be happy to know that The SAG-AFTRA and Industry Sound Recordings Distribution Fund (SRDF) had another record distribution in 2022, just shy of \$20 million in royalties. The SRDF pay vocalists royalties for their interactive streaming and licensed recordings under the SAG-AFTRA Sound Recordings Agreement established in 2012. The Agreement covers more than 600 signatory companies, including the four (4) major labels: Disney, Sony Music Entertainment, Universal Music, and Warner Music Entertainment Group. SRDF Fund Manager Terry O'Neal (Pictured) has worked with singers to get their residuals for over 30 years and used his experience to build a great team at the SRDF. Contact BStewart@afmsagaftrafund.org for more info.

The LEGAL Beat

BY GLENN LITWAK



Post Malone's trial regarding his hit song "Circles" will begin on Dec. 13, 2022. It had previously been scheduled for Oct. 11, 2022. The judge agreed to continue the trial after both sides stipulated to it and Malone agreed to attend the trial and testify.

The case was filed by plaintiff Tyler Armes in the Central District Court of California in Los Angeles and is before U.S. District Judge Otis D. Wright.

Plaintiff sued Malone and his co-defendant, Frank Dukes, over claims he was not given authorship credits on "Circles" after the three of them allegedly collaborated on

a mix of the song in 2018. Plaintiff's claim regarding the master for "Circles" was dismissed earlier in the case leaving only the composition at issue.

Malone has admitted that the plaintiff attended one session for "Circles" but claims he did not contribute anything "original." Malone asserts that all plaintiff contributed "was an admittedly extremely commonplace guitar chord progression" and perhaps a "fragment" of a guitar melody that was not recorded.

Plaintiff says he was offered five percent of the music publishing on "Circles" but demanded more. Plaintiff indicates Malone's offer was then withdrawn.

Malone's attorneys had filed an emergency motion with the court, requesting that the judge authorize a last minute "forensic examination" of the plaintiff's cell phone, which was denied. The judge came down hard saying it was "patently improper" for Malone's attorneys to request the cell phone data utilizing an emergency motion for sanctions against the plaintiff.

The federal courts can be very zealous about enforcing their

complex rules and the judge stated that sanctions "are only for instances of egregious discovery abuses" and that plaintiff's alleged failure to turn over some text messages did not meet that requirement.

Federal judges are appointed for life and have wide discretion in handling their cases. They can sanction lawyers or parties who do not follow the rules. Sanctions can include monetary ones, limiting evidence, striking pleadings or even dismissing a case. The judge ruled that Malone's attorneys had filed the wrong type of motion and the proper motion would have been a request to reopen discovery in the case. Judge Wright even said Malone's attorneys might be subject to sanctions themselves for "abusing" court procedures.

Malone's lawyers subsequently filed papers stating, "we believed in good faith that we were following the court's procedure," an obvious attempt by Malone's lawyer to avoid sanctions for intentional wrongful conduct.

We will see if the case settles or goes to trial, but one may wonder

why Malone would have offered 5% of the publishing if plaintiff had not contributed something original. Malone may say he made the offer simply to avoid expensive and time-consuming litigation.

It is important for songwriters who collaborate to document as much as possible regarding their contributions to compositions. And if you end up in federal court, make sure you have a very experienced federal court litigator representing you, familiar with the music industry.

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

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



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

Matthew Vander Boegh, TAXI Member

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

I joined TAXI.

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



It Didn't Take That Long

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

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

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

My Two Secret Weapons

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

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: March 31, 2022
Label: Cleopatra Records
Type of Music: Pop Industrial Metal
Management: Jeremy Saffer - jeremysaffer.com
Booking: N/A
Legal: N/A
Publicity: Maria Ferrero - maria@adrenalinepr.com
Web: itsbabychaos.com
A&R: Kyle Perera - Cleopatra Records

Larosa self-released her first song when she was about to turn 20. Even though she had nothing by way of a music industry support system, she figured she'd make a go of it on her own. Larosa started doing everything herself, from songwriting and vocal engineering to photo taking and graphic design. She even dabbled in self-production.

By the time she released her second song, she was starting to feel burned out. "It was getting really hard," admits the witchy artist from Salem, MA, whose music traffics in dark genres, particularly industrial, and gives them a clubby twist.

A friend who was in a similar situation half-jokingly Tweeted he no longer wanted to be responsible for every aspect of his career. Larosa, professionally known as babychaos, impulsively re-Tweeted the sentiment, adding that having official help would be amazing.

"I looked at Cleopatra's roster and my jaw dropped."

Almost immediately, she received a DM from Cleopatra Records, the L.A.-based indie responsible for an endless array of artists whose work leans sinister. The label insists they'd been keeping tabs on her, yet they hadn't reached out because they assumed a label and full-on team were already in her corner. The next day, she jumped on a FaceTime with Kyle Perera, Cleopatra's A&R person.

Larosa started to investigate. "I knew of artists who had been on Cleopatra," she explains. "I'm a fan of bands like Dead or Alive. And it began to click. I looked at Cleopatra's roster and my jaw dropped."

An offer was soon on the table. She took a hot minute to mull over the proposition, especially considering she had no idea how the industry worked. "I didn't even know what the heck PR meant," she admits. Without any other industry contacts, she solicited opinions from her friends and mother. Their positive affirmations led to her saying yes. She signed without so much as having an attorney glance at the deal.

"They're taking a chance on me, someone who is such a noob," she says. "I feel blessed for them taking me on." Artists should search their souls before committing to a label, insists the model with 90,000 Instagram followers. As she puts it, "Shoot for longevity, as opposed to intensity." — **Andy Kaufmann**



Date Signed: April 2022
Label: Indie/CD Baby
Band Members: Kelly Buchanan, lead vocals and rhythm guitar; Chris Whalen, rhythm guitar and vocals; Scott Frenchek, bass, keyboards and vocals; Mollie Swartz, vocals; Jeanette Stillman, vocals; Christy Engel, drums
Type of Music: Alternative Rock
Management: Self
Booking: Self
Legal: N/A
Publicity: Mitch Schneider - SRO PR
Web: dimstoredolls.com
Radio Promotion: Robb Haagsman - shineonpromo.com

Taking a true independent approach to their career, Lancaster, PA band Dimestore Dolls took a long and pragmatic look at the best means of promotion. Adopting the lead of prime mover and shaker Kelly Buchanan, a babysteps versus giant leap philosophy was not only a good business move, but one she has pursued in her own life. The singer-songwriter and music educator embraced humility based on the significant trauma of a 2008 sports injury where she took a severe street hockey slap shot to the head. The damage was so great that it impaired her ability to walk, talk and fully function. A promising solo career for the Berklee College of Music grad was completely in jeopardy for over 10 years.

Thankfully, through diligent physical therapy and family support, Buchanan regained complete use of all her faculties and ability to sing and play guitar. "I love music and it's something I'm passionate about," explains Buchanan. "I see music as a coping thing. There's no better way to recover from trauma and unfortunate things than to be successful in what you do. Creating music is fun and soothing."

"It's a big deal to finally release original music again after all these years."

Fast forward to the present day, where Dimestore Dolls had released their full-length debut *Wooly Mamas* and were contemplating a game plan.

"We did a segment on a local NPR station, WITF," recalls Buchanan. "We played a bunch of songs and did an interview. We got a lot of great response from that. Tons of people came to our next show and we immediately understood the impact radio could have on us. So, I specifically looked into people who did radio promotion and sent them my record." Robb Haagsman at Shine On Promo heeded the call and helped guide the band to several key radio placements at select Top 20 commercial and college stations.

"It's been over 14 years since I did my last self-titled record. It's a big deal to finally release original music again after all these years," says Buchanan. "And I'm happy to be indie right now. When you talk about the adjustments of such an experience—going from being in a wheelchair to not needing help and being back on your own—I feel a lot of humility. That's huge! Maybe for our next record I'll think about labels and distribution." — **Eric Harabadian**



Date Signed: Feb. 2, 2022
Label: Nettwerk Music Group
Band Members: Jonathon Martinez
Type of Music: Hip-Hop/Rap
Management: Self-managed
Booking: N/A
Legal: Paul Sommerstein
Publicity: Penny Palmer - Nettwerk Music Group
Web: [instagram.com/presence.ig](https://www.instagram.com/presence.ig)
A&R: Shaan Chhadva

Falling out of love with basketball right before high school led Presence (born Jonathon Martinez) to pursue music, starting a YouTube channel and uploading his first video at just 14 years of age. His response to a viral rap challenge (#TenToesChallenge) got 10,000 views in month one. His follow-up remix of "Greenlights" by NF received 10,000 views in a week. Presence's verse and chorus additions on XXXTentacion's "Jocelyn Flores" from the 17 album a few weeks later garnered over a million views in two weeks. "I really started to feel like an artist—I stepped into those shoes," he shares. "Once there was that expectation, I just stepped into the role." The labels started knocking.

"I had an understanding of my worth."

Moving from remixes to originals, Presence shifted titles to reflect more personal themes, all done in the family car on an iPhone [Presence advises to be consistent and only start as much as you can consistently maintain, while producing value to sustain your audience]. When things began feeling stagnant, he started to consider a label and, having worked with Shaan Chhadva previously on a studio project, Presence learned that Chhadva was now an A&R with Nettwerk. "Jonathon has drive that sets him apart from all the other artists I've worked with," says Chhadva. "He's the only artist who will send you a completed written and recorded song about an idea you texted an hour ago."

Covering limited recording and licensing, Presence gets his full masters back on expiry. The advance came with a clear roadmap for recoup, and the signing only covers parts of his catalog. "I had an understanding of my worth, so I did a lot of the negotiating myself," he says. Presence says Nettwerk CEO Terry McBride made the decision easy, taking time to explain what the label would do to grow his career. Says McBride, "At such a young age, Jonathon is a rare kind of artist, communicating socially difficult issues, offering understanding and support to his community. His conviction is a core human value—one that the Nettwerk team and I will support day in and day out."

Following "Sad Days" and "Threads," an EP is coming soon.

- Andrea Beenham



Date Signed: May 2022
Label: RED Creative Records
Type of Music: Modern Country
Management: TBA
Booking: Meredith Jones - CAA
Legal: Sarah Smith - Keller Turner Andrews & Ghanem, PLLC
Publicity: Olivia Del Valle - Shorefire Media
Web: [mattkoziol.com](https://www.mattkoziol.com)
A&R: John Cantu

The path to singer-songwriter Matt Koziol's debut release *Wildhorse* has been a stylistically long and winding road. The bearded troubadour had invested a good deal of his career exploring different musical avenues to find who he was as an artist. He's a trained operatic vocalist that began in his native New Jersey performing in coffeehouses at 14. That was the start of a career that took him to California and, eventually, Nashville, TN.

"I spent a lot of my early- to mid-20s writing with people out in California," says Koziol. "People would always ask me, 'what's your sound?'—I had been traveling with bands to places like Nashville and knew I liked a lot of different kinds of music." A childhood fan of Elvis Presley, gospel, R&B and bluegrass, in addition to his father's James Taylor and Jackson Browne records, Koziol found his lane in the country field.

Establishing roots in Nashville seemed like a logical move for the 30-something artist. Playing in town and attending writing sessions helped him network, eventually leading to a publishing deal in 2019 with Prescription Songs and a record deal in 2021 with RED Creative Group.

"I hear your music and you're not faking it."

"Before my record came out, I put on a showcase at my producer Matt Odmark's studio," says Koziol. We set up a beautiful night with bourbon tasting, catered BBQ and a short set from my band. The team from Creative Arts Agency (CAA) was there. That was a pivotal moment where Meredith Jones and I started working together." Apparently, RED A&R rep John Cantu was telling Jones about Koziol and that opened the door to a working relationship with the booking agency.

"After my record came out, I found out Meredith had been asking about me and what I was doing," explains Koziol. "When I finally met her she told me she was celebrating Christmas with her family and that she'd be sprinkling my music into her home playlist for them to hear. She told me every time one of my songs came on folks were asking who it was. And that's how she knew we should work together. She told me 'I see you, I hear your music and you're not faking it.' I wanna help show people that authenticity." - Eric Harabadian



▲ BMI HONORS RHYMES

BMI celebrated Busta Rhymes on his 2022 R&B/Hip-Hop Icon Award. Launching his career in the '90s with the group, Leaders of the New School, hits include 1996's "Woo-Hah!! Got You All In Check," anthems "Break Ya Neck," "Dangerous," etc. With multiple collaborations, he has inspired generations of creators.

► MOTOWN MOURNS DOZIER

Heartfelt condolences to singer-songwriter-producer Lamont Dozier's family and friends on his recent passing. Responsible for much of the Motown sound as part of legendary songwriting trio Holland-Dozier-Holland, Dozier wrote hits for The Supremes, The Four Tops, The Isley Brothers, and many others.



▲ POSITION FOR WILLIS

Artist-producer-songwriter Daphne Willis has signed a worldwide publishing deal with Position Music. Her work to date includes writing for Dr. Dre, Meghan Trainor, Wyclef Jean, John Oates, VW, Xfinity/Comcast, Royal Caribbean, film/tv's *Empire*, *Grey's Anatomy*, *SpongeBob*, etc., and she has 15M+ Spotify streams.

The Road Rally Returns

The TAXI Road Rally returns live to Los Angeles next month. Nov. 3-6 at the Westin LAX Hotel. Members will reunite for industry panels, classes, and mentorships. Expect sessions on publishing, promotion, composing and arranging, songwriting advice, recording tips and much more.

Details at: taxi.com/taxi-road-rally

Demac to Kobalt

Kobalt Music has announced the signing of U.K.-based producer-mixer Tom Demac to a worldwide publishing administration deal covering his existing catalog and future works, in an agreement that includes global sync and creative services. Demac's credits to date include mixing and producing "I miss u" ft. Au/Ra and Jax's "Where Did you Go," as well as collaborations with Paul Woolford, Rudimental, Sophie & The Giants and Craig David.

With experience in the U.K.'s underground electronic scene, previous work with labels Kompakt and Hypercolor had Demac remixing: Roisin Murphy, Pet Shop Boys, Maribou State, Metronomy, and Gazelle Twin.

Mechanical Royalty Increase

After reaching a joint agreement between the National Music Publishers' Association (NMPA), Nashville Songwriters Association International (NSAI) and Digital

Media Association (DIMA) in the "Phonorecords IV" case, U.S. mechanical streaming royalty rates for songwriters and publishers appear to be going up. Culminating in a 15.35% cut of streaming revenue by 2027, rates are set to increase from 15.1% in 2023 to 15.2% in 2024, increasing by 0.5% for the remaining three years.

In addition to making it easier for the industry to grow for services, labels, publishers, and songwriters, streaming platforms can plan more predictable payouts, while payments increase for songwriters and publishers. The settlement—if finalized by approval of the Copyright Royalty Board (after a required 'comment period')—also saves all parties millions in legal fees.

The CCC Legal Panel

This month, the California Copyright Conference (The CCC) holds its annual music legal update panel via zoom. On Oct. 19, hear from legal entertainment professionals discussing the latest in legislation, the MLC, deal trends, and music litigation.

Moderated by attorney Garrett M. Johnson (NY/D.C., specializing in entertainment and tax law), panelists include attorneys Kenneth D. Freundlich (NY/CA, business, entertainment, and IP specialist), Loren Mulraine (professor of Law, Director of Music and Entertainment Law Studies at Belmont University, specializing in entertainment law and creator's rights), and Benjamin Seilhamer (paralegal, copyright enthusiast, and musician).

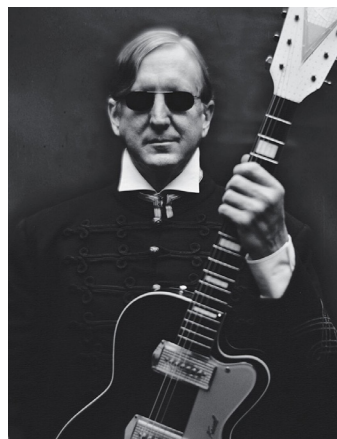
Full details at: bit.ly/2022CCC LegalPanel

MusicRow Awards

The 34th industry-voted awards from Nashville's MusicRow honored songwriters, artists, and producers in 11 categories.

Honorees include: Luke Combs as 2022 Artist of the Year (which he has received annually since 2019), Lainey Wilson for Breakthrough Artist of the Year and Breakthrough Artist-Writer of the Year, and Mackenzie Porter for the Discovery Artist of the Year Award. Nicole Galyon receiving Female Songwriter of the Year.

Full listing of winners at bit.ly/MusicRowAwards



► BURNETT BIOGRAPHY

Giving insights from T Bone Burnett's 40+ year career as a musician-producer (working with artists including Los Lobos, Elvis Costello, Robert Plant, Elton John, The Counting Crows, etc.), Lloyd Sachss' biography, *T Bone Burnett: A Life In Pursuit* is out now. See amzn.to/3AxtCw1

MLC Student Ambassadors

To ramp up ongoing education and outreach efforts, The Mechanical Licensing Collective (The MLC) has launched a Student Ambassador Program that parallels the Educator Ambassador program launched for teachers. By sharing information

about The MLC with peers and/or fellow students, qualified ambassadors can earn an official designation ("MLC Ambassador").

The idea behind the no-cost, volunteer program is to provide college students and educators a structured system to certify their expertise and spread the word about The MLC and membership benefits while educating others about digital mechanical licensing. Designated ambassadors receive access to digital resources, events and training, and private communities to encourage and support their development.

More at: themlc.com/educational-partnerships.

ASCAP Writing Camp

ASCAP is offering a three-day virtual Songwriting MasterCamp in November, which includes three days of co-writing, as well as sync brief training, and possible pitch opportunities for placement and publishing. The event also includes an online Playback Party where all songs written at camp will be played for the group of participants to hear. The cost is \$699, with discounts for ASCAP members.

Info and registration at: bit.ly/ASCAPSongwritingCamps

ROBA and AP Acquire GERIG

German-based ROBA Music Publishing has joined forces with the AP Music Royalties Fund (based in Liechtenstein) to purchase German publisher, GERIG, in a deal with an estimated value of between 10 to 20 million Euros. Much of the catalog being taken over includes

"the biggest hits from the Oktoberfest and most of the German carnival and party songs" (such as "Drink doch eine met," "Hey Baby," "Pigalle," etc. German-speaking artists Freddy Quinn, Peter Alexander, Nina Hagen, and others have already released renditions of some of the catalog's music.

The GERIG acquisition also follows BMG's announcement of their intention to purchase German indie-label Telamo, which has a big presence in Schlager music (with rumored popularity greater than rock and dance music in Germany).

WMG-Meta Partnership

Warner Music Group (WMG) has reached a licensing agreement with Facebook parent company, Meta, which will see additional revenue sharing for new and existing artists, and aims to help accelerate the creative community.

Kobalt Music recently removed its catalog (roughly 700,000 tracks) from Facebook and Instagram when the parties disagreed on terms for licensing renewal, although negotiations for a new agreement are said to be in the works.

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



▲ JUSTIN WILSON JOINS CONCORD

Concord Music Publishing has signed singer-songwriter Justin Wilson. Wilson's work encompasses over 80 recorded songs, including work with Morgan Wallen, Blake Shelton, Luke Bryan, Thomas Rhett, Granger Smith, etc., and singles "We Went" (Houser), "Drunk Me" (Tenpenny), and "Momma's House" (Lynch).



▲ SONA WARRIOR AWARDS

Songwriters of North America (SONA) wishes to thank all the volunteers, sponsors, and members who helped to create a fantastic evening of celebration at this year's Sona Warrior Awards at the Skirball Center. Honorees included P!nk, Sony Music Chairman/CEO Jon Platt and late pop-country singer busbee.



▲ SCHWARTZ AND SESAC

Known for his compositions on *The Good Place*, *Arrested Development*, *Deadwood*, *Wolf Lake*, *Rutherford Falls*, *Northern Exposure*, Amy Poehler's *Lucy and Desi*, *Almost Family*, *Reaper*, etc., Grammy-nominated composer David Schwartz has signed on to SESAC's artist roster.



▲ WARNER CHAPPELL SIGNS THE LINDA LINDAS

Female punk band The Linda Lindas have signed a worldwide administration deal with Warner Chappell. Their debut "Racist, Sexist Boy" garnered millions of YouTube views, they won Best Punk Record at 2022's Libera Awards, were named in Billboard's 21 Under 21, and have since had several sync placements.



"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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Futuristic ***Visionary Hustle***

Growing up as one of nine kids in a blended family, Futuristic (born Zachary Lewis Beck) has always been independent and self-assured, with no delusions about the necessity to lead with business first. Crediting his money smarts and work ethic to his dad's frugality, he has always known the value of a dollar and how to make things happen for himself.

Releasing 16 albums in 10 years, he has made forays into fashion, book writing, real estate partnerships, artist management, and launched a one-stop DIY platform for independent artists (Indie Amplify). Says Futuristic, "I literally had a life plan at five or six. At 30, I had done every single thing. I never took no for an answer. I manifested every single thing that's happened in my life [and] I never sold my soul to be something I wasn't."

Drawn to hip-hop through fun, happy, carefree "clean" rappers, he started rapping at five or six years old, singing in show choir in junior high. His business acumen came through siblings who worked in talent buying, artist management, and production, while his multi-instrumentalist-producer-deejay father helped him learn to record.

Being treated as an equal by both parents from the start gave him a mature perspective that affected his music and hustle. "From the time I was five years old, it was a business for me," he shares. Selling mini discs in elementary school, making money winning talent shows, mowing lawns, and selling his Pokémon collection.

After his parents split up, he had to learn to record and make money himself. He also learned to work fast in the studio, making whole compilations on weekends with his dad to sell when he returned to school the following week.

Dedicated to building solid relationships, he met videographer Jakob Owens in high school. The first music video they released was picked up by a blog and got 15,000 views. Looking to build on the momentum, Futuristic connected with producer AKT Aktion after reaching out to be a guest on his blog. Aktion began providing the beats, production, and engineering, and helped Futuristic get online and run advertising.

Digging deeper into independent artists who were using blogs (including Mac Miller, Machine Gun Kelly, and Hopsin), Futuristic reached out to manager Damien Ritter and began to work with one of the artists signed to Hopsin's label. Hearing the track, Hopsin shared it on YouTube, leading to a tour support for Futuristic. He has since then done shows with Machine Gun Kelly, Mac Miller, Kendrick Lamar, and others.

When releasing music, Futuristic has always followed a formula. "I'm going to give you fast rap eight times and I'm gonna throw in four curveballs," he says. "That was my formula, just to keep the people pleased." In 2016, after total burnout at the end of his *As Seen On The Internet* world tour, following nonstop releases and touring, he took time to travel and enjoy life before returning to the studio and starting to feel the music again. The four projects that followed—*What More Could You Ask For?*, *Blessings*, *I Am*, and *Zachary Lewis* [the last two with producer BoyLord]—were all about experimentation.

Returning to the studio recently to finish an R&B rock fusion project launched a completely new sound. The result was punk-rock single "Dead to Me," followed by 16 additional songs written in just two weeks, uncovering different lyrics, thought processes, and new writing techniques, while boldly shifting from hip-hop to punk. Futuristic says guitarist FigureItOut, Kal from The Color 8, and band This Modern are responsible for the project, confessing that, "I'm saying less words that are meaning way more—it feels amazing."

When it comes to making good music, Futuristic says, "It's not structure. It's not anything other than the feeling that you get when you listen to it."

Latest track "How Could You" just dropped alongside *Magnolia Park*, with new album, *Never Too Late*, slated for release in early December.

Contact Becky Kovach - Becky@BigPictureMediaOnline.com
See onlyfuturistic.com





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DROPS

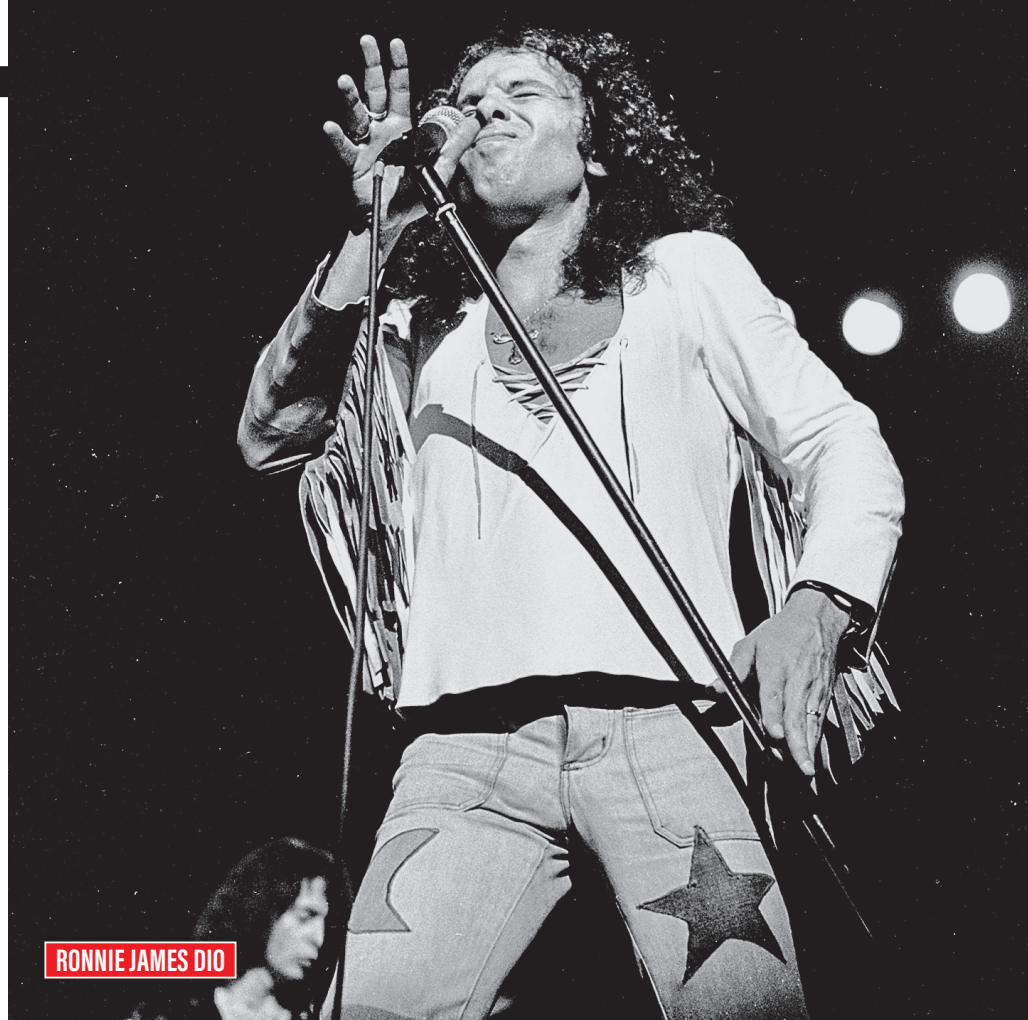
Dio: Dreamers Never Die, the first-ever, career-spanning documentary on the life and work of metal icon **Ronnie James Dio**, came to theaters for two days only on Sept. 28 and Oct. 2, with the soundtrack due out this fall. The film was executive produced by Dio's widow and longtime manager, **Wendy Dio**, chronicling the artist's rise starting as a '50s doo-wop singer, moving on to form **Elf** and play with **Ritchie Blackmore's Rainbow**, replacing **Ozzy Osbourne** in **Black Sabbath**, and finally creating his own band, **Dio**, in 1982. The film includes never-before-seen footage and personal photos with **Wendy Dio**, **Tony Iommi**, **Geezer Butler**, **Glenn Hughes**, **Vinny Appice**, **Lita Ford**, **Rob Halford**, **Sebastian Bach**, **Eddie Trunk**, and **Jack Black**. For more information, contact Erik Stein at estein@solters.com.



The Invitation (Original Motion Picture Soundtrack) is out now on all digital platforms, featuring music by composer **Dara Taylor**. The horror/mystery film, directed by **Jessica Thompson** and written by **Blair Butler**, is underscored by Taylor's combination of classical, romantic orchestration with unsettling synthetic sounds. The film tells the story of **Evie (Nathalie Emmanuel)**, who attends an upscale wedding in the English countryside after connecting with a distant relative, only to find herself uncovering gruesome family secrets and fighting for survival. Contact **Kyrie Hood** at kyrie@whitebearpr.com.

A new documentary, **Darryl Jones: In the Blood**, offers a look into the life and career of the bass player who replaced **Bill Wyman** in the **Rolling Stones**. In his directorial debut, **Eric Hamburg** examines the intersection of music, politics and racism in America through the story of **Darryl Jones**, from his upbringing on the South Side of Chicago to playing music with **Miles Davis**, **Sting**, **Madonna** and more. The film features interviews with the **Stones**, including the late **Charlie Watts** in one of his last filmed interviews. Contact **Jerome Ware** at jware@shorefire.com.

The soundtrack to the film **The Comeback Trail** is out now, featuring an original score by acclaimed composer **Aldo Shillaku**. Directed by **George Gallo** (**Bad Boys**, **Midnight Run**, **Vanquish**), the film is a tribute to the Golden Age of Hollywood and stars **Robert De Niro**, **Tommy Lee Jones**, **Zach Braff**, **Emile Hirsch**, **Eddie**



Griffin and **Morgan Freeman**. It tells the story of two producers who plot to kill their aging film star for the insurance money to pay their debt. Composer **Shllaku**, who utilized orchestra and choir for the film's score, and director **Gallo** have collaborated previously on **The Poison Rose**, **Vanquish** and **Muti**. Contact **bobbi@bob-bimarcuspr.com**.

The 50th anniversary of **Elvis Presley's** 1972 concert tour will be celebrated with a Dec. 2 release of a seven-disc box set, **Elvis on Tour**. The release will include previously unreleased recordings from three concerts and pre-tour rehearsals, liner notes by Elvis' long-time friend **Jerry Schilling**, an essay by rock historian/musician **Warren Zanes**, founding member of **The Del Fuegos** and professor at NYU, and the film **Elvis on Tour**, which won Best Documentary at the Golden Globes in 1973. The box set was produced by **Ernst Mikael Jørgensen** and mixed by Grammy-winning producer **Matt Ross-Spang**. The original recordings were made by **Felton Jarvis** and **Al Pachucki**. Contact maria.malta@sonymusic.com.

The **Bad Sisters Original Soundtrack Album** by multi-Grammy award winning artist **PJ Harvey** and composer **Tim Phillips** (**Shameless**, **Shin-**

ing Vale) is out in October, including the two artists' cover of the **Leonard Cohen** classic, "Who By Fire." A new episode of the black comedy murder mystery series will continue to release each Friday through Oct. 14. **Bad Sisters** executive producer, writer and star **Sharon Horgan** personally sought Harvey to record a rendition of Cohen's song specifically tailored to the series, which tells the story of the Garvey sisters who are bound by the premature death of their parents and a pledge to always look out for each other. Contact sharrin.summers@disney.com for more.



Universal Production Music (UPMG's global company) has announced an exclusive production venture, titled **Scored By: Harry Gregson-Williams**. The collaboration will feature work by **Gregson-Williams**, as well as that of his label partner **Tom Howe** and builds on an exclusive global administration partnership between **Gregson-Williams**

and UPMG that began in 2019.

Gregson-Williams has worked on Ridley Scott's **The Last Duel** and **House of Gucci**, Disney's live-action **Mulan**, HBO's **The Gilded Age**, and Netflix documentary **Return to Space**. **Gregson-Williams** has also earned a BAFTA nomination for **Shrek** (and has worked on all four in the franchise), Grammy and Golden Globe nominations for work on **The Chronicles**

of *Narnia: The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*, and received Emmy nominations for an episodic score for the *Electric Dreams* series.

OPPS

Oct. 18 is the deadline to submit your work to the SXSW Film & TV Festival, which includes the categories 24 Beats Per Second, "showcasing the sounds, culture and influence of music and musicians, with an emphasis on documentary," and Music Videos. For more information and to apply, visit sxsw.com/apply-to-participate/film-submissions.

Independent film festival Dances With Films, which showcases features, documentaries and shorts including music videos, is accepting submissions until Oct. 19 for its upcoming New York festival in December. Rules and guidelines can be found at danceswithfilms.com/submissions. **The Palm Desert Choreography Festival** will take place Nov. 12-13 at the McCallum Theatre.



The event features dance workshops, presentations and a choreography competition that offers a \$10,000 grand prize. Visit mccallumtheatre.com/index.php/education/choreography-festival/submit-choreography.

PROPS

Women made history at this year's MTV Video Music Awards. As **Taylor Swift** noted onstage when accepting her award for Video of the Year, four of the directors nominated for the Video of the Year category were women—a first in VMA history. Swift took home the top honor for her 10-minute "**All Too Well**" video, and announced a new album coming in October. Brazilian pop superstar **Anitta** also became the first Brazilian to win for a solo project in VMA history when she took home the "moon person" trophy in the Best Latin category. The win followed Anitta's VMA broadcast performance debut of her hit "**Envolver**." See mtv.com/vma.

The late singer and actress **Olivia Newton-John**, who found her most iconic role as Sandy in the 1978 smash musical film *Grease*, singing hits including "**You're the One that I Want**" and "**Summer Nights**" alongside **John Travolta**, passed in August after a 30-year

battle with breast cancer. Her life and career were subsequently honored with outpourings of fan tributes including famous ones from the likes of **Kelly Clarkson**, **Rita Wilson** and **Kate Hudson**—as well as tribute screenings of *Grease*. Harkins Theatres of Oklahoma City showed the classic film with all proceeds going to benefit the **American Cancer Society** in honor of Newton-John, who was remembered as a champion for cancer research.

Documentary film ***Sir Doug and the Genuine Texas Cosmic Groove***, directed by author and journalist **Joe Nick Patoski**, tells the story of **Doug Sahm**. Growing up in San Antonio, Sahm was a child prodigy on steel guitar and fiddle, found international fame in his band the **Sir Douglas Quintet**, and pioneered what is known today as Americana. Patoski's film was met with praise since its 2015 premiere at SXSW film festival, but in 2020, the film vanished from the public realm, as its music licensing rights expired. But high demand from fans has inspired

The Society for the Preservation of Texas Music, which funded the documentary, to try to rerelease the film and bring Sahm's story back to the public. For info on the fundraising campaign, visit: societyforthe preservationoftexasmusic.org/freedoug.

Legendary art-rock group **The Residents** announced the "California Premiere" of their debut feature film, ***Triple Trouble***, as part of the **45th Mill Valley Film Festival** screening at The Roxie Theater in San Francisco on Oct. 15, at the Sweetwater Music Hall on Oct. 13. The Residents will showcase music from their 50th Anniversary tour ***Faceless Forever*** with a live performance in Mill Valley (film screening tickets: mvff.com). Written and directed by **Homer Flynn** and The Residents and produced by **Starr Sutherland**, *Triple Trouble* features a cast of independent actors including **Dustin York**, **Gerri Lawlor**, **Isabelle Ellingson**, and **Isabelle Barbier**.

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

OUT TAKE



Joy Ngaiw

Composer

Web: joyngaiw.com

Contact: Kate Twilley, kate.twilley@impact24pr.com

Most Recent: *Rescued by Ruby*

Joy Ngaiw fell in love with composing in high school, sneaking into the school auditorium during her lunch break to play the grand piano and "try to mimic the emotion" on her mind through music. When her music teacher suggested she explore composing, Ngaiw began to pay attention to music in film and television. "I saw that the music is a character; it helps connect the audience to the story," Ngaiw says. Her music can be heard on the video game *What Remains of Edith Finch*, Disney Animation *Short Circuit: Jing Hua* and Netflix's *Rescued By Ruby*, and in 2021, she received Best Score in the Hollywood Music in Media Awards for her music in the animated film *Blush*.

"*Blush* was one of the most memorable projects I've worked on. It's a story about grief and love and healing and hope, inspired by a personal story of director Joe Ma-teo's about his late wife," Ngaiw says. "The director said, 'Our family is our oxygen,' and wanted the film to represent that. It inspired me to add some breathy vocal elements, chimes, things that have an air quality to the score. I expanded from my comfort zone."

Ngaiw says her primary inspiration in accepting projects is human connection. "I love to connect with people, learn about their stories, their past and their inspiration," she says. "Everyone has a unique story to tell, and I love when everyone brings personal experiences into their art. I draw from that." The story element is also what assists her when she encounters writer's block when composing: "I detach from the music, but come back to the story," Ngaiw says. "I come back to the question: Why am I doing this? Why does the filmmaker want to tell this story? What are the characters saying? Focus on the emotion, not the technical stuff. Come back to the 'why.' That always grounds me again."

Ngaiw advises new and aspiring composers to keep an open mind with every experience, and to honor their authentic musical voice. "The best collaborations I've had came from me being myself and being authentic to my music and composition process," she says. "Never be afraid of trying something new or unusual, and I think having a curious mind, too, is important."

MIXED NOTES

► MADONNA AND NILE RODGERS

For Madonna's forthcoming compilation album *Finally Enough Love: 50 Number Ones*, the pop culture icon and Grammy-winning singer joined musician Nile Rodgers for a roller disco-themed celebration. The colorful event took place at DiscOasis in New York City's Central Park.



▲ CD BABY'S DIY CONFERENCE

Pictured (l-r) at the 2022 CD Baby DIY Conference in Austin, TX: CD Baby's SVP of Marketing, Kevin Breuner; musician and DIY Public Relations' Cristina Cano; CD Baby's Senior Content Marketing Manager Chris Robley.



◀ PALOMA FORD AT NY FASHION WEEK

Rising R&B superstar Paloma Ford kicked off New York Fashion Week 2022 with a unique, one-night-only music showcase at Brooklyn's National Sawdust, in partnership with UnitedMasters and Crown Royal Apple via their renowned 'Breakout Sessions' series.



▲ KYLIE MORGAN DEBUTS AT THE OPRY

EMI Records Nashville singer-songwriter Kylie Morgan made her Grand Ole Opry debut this fall. Sporting a 1000-watt smile and a stunning sequin dress, she stepped onto the historic stage to perform her debut single "If He Wanted To He Would" and "Mean Girls," a personal, empowering track from her recently released EP, *P.S.*



▲ COLDPLAY 'MUSIC OF THE SPHERES' TOUR

Completing the 2022 European leg of their Music Of The Spheres World Tour in Glasgow, Coldplay have seen astonishing demand for their newly announced 2023 dates. A total of 1.4 million tickets have already been sold for next year's shows in Portugal, Spain, the U.K., Italy, Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands, including a host of extra dates added due to interest.



◀ BURGER QUEEN LATTO

In celebration of Burger King's music partnerships, the fast food chain has partnered with livestream shopping app NTRK to honor the company's iconic crown as an object of empowerment, encouraging fans to "Rule Your Beat." Proceeds from the campaign will be donated to the Save The Music Foundation. This limited edition, one-of-a-kind crown was designed and crafted by celebrity jeweler and "Queen of Chain & Metal" Laurel DeWitt, and was debuted by rising rapper Latto at the 2022 MTV VMAs.

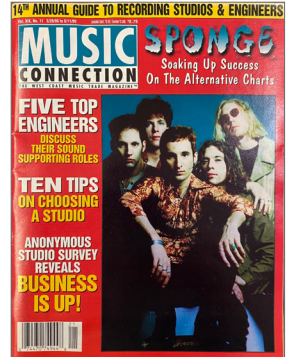
▶ OZZY OSBOURNE

The Prince of Darkness promoted his 13th solo album, *Patient Number 9*, with a fan meet-and-greet and record signing at Fingerprntz Records in Long Beach, CA.



MUSIC CONNECTION

Tidbits From Our Tattered Past



1995-Sponge-#11

In an issue filled with great interviews, including singer-songwriter Peter Case, queer-core music label Outpunk Records honcho Matt Woben-smith, and sonic wizards Tom Lord-Alge and Ed Cherney, we featured alt-gloom rockers Sponge on our cover, whose frontman Vinnie told us "I'm usually pretty impatient in the studio. I go in, and an hour later I'm bored."



2010-Red One #7

Morocco-born producer-songwriter Red One, a two-time Grammy winner, was our cover subject in this issue and he had lots to say about career breakthroughs. "So many years of trying to make it made sense when I met Lady GaGa," he stated. "She showcased me and we showcased each other." Also in the issue there's interviews with producer-engineer Andy Johns and Tommy Boy Entertainment CEO Tom Silverman.

A photograph of Billy Joel performing on stage. He is seated at a piano, wearing a dark suit jacket over a dark shirt. He has a goatee and is looking towards the right. A microphone on a stand is positioned in front of him. The background is dark with some stage lights visible. The text "BILLY JOEL" is overlaid in large white letters.

BILLY JOEL

Hits One Out of the Park

BY GARY GRAFF
PHOTO BY MYRNA SUAREZ

The Piano Man is still playing us a song—just a little differently than he once did. Billy Joel hasn't released an album in 20 years, and his last was a set of classical piano compositions. He hasn't released any new songs since "All My Life," a one-off, in 2007—and that was his first in nearly 14 years back then.

Instead, Joel, 73, has pivoted into a career as a live performer, with monthly appearances as a "franchise" at New York's Madison Square Garden and, during the outdoor months, gigs at stadiums around the country. Nice work if you can get it, right?

But it's not like Joel hasn't earned his spot. He's a bona fide—as the songs says, "Big Shot"—with more than 160 million records sold worldwide, 18 platinum or (mostly) better albums to his credit, and a ranking as the fourth best-selling solo artist of all time in the U.S. according to Recording Industry Association of America. Joel has also logged nearly two dozen Top 40 singles, and his 1985 compilation *Greatest Hits Volume I & Volume II* is the second best-selling album by a solo artist, behind only Michael Jackson's *Thriller*. Add to that five Grammy Awards, inductions into the Rock and Roll and Songwriters Hall of Fame, the prestigious Johnny Mercer Award from the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 2001 and a Kennedy Center Honor 12 years later and it's an abundance of laurels to rest on.

But check out Joel's still-exciting concerts these days and you know the man isn't exactly resting on any laurels. He's just working in the different kind of manner all those achievements allow for....

Music Connection: You had an unexpected 17 months off during 2020-21. What was that like for you?

Billy Joel: It was kind of frustrating, 'cause I don't like to have to reschedule or cancel. It was a two-year period where we weren't working at all, so it was very frustrating. Musicians have to perform live. That's what we do. And when you can't do that, what are you doing? You're not doing anything. You're just sitting around twiddling your thumbs.

MC: And since the mid-'90s you've been almost entirely a live performer rather than a recording artist.

Joel: Yeah, I don't even record anything anymore. The only kind of music I write now is instrumental music for my own gratification, and there's not a whole lot of other interaction with other musicians going on. I have two cute little girls and it's a lot of fun, but once in a while I feel like I have to justify my existence.

MC: You play your monthly shows at the Garden and then go out and play a few stadium dates every year—kind of like a home and away series. Do you treat them differently?

Joel: Well, yeah, there's a big difference. The Garden, even though it's a famous venue, it's basically a coliseum and an arena, whereas

the stadiums are these outdoor monstrosities where you can have up to 80,000 people. So, there is a big difference, especially if you're a piano player, because you're fairly static, and when you're sitting at a piano it's not like you can jump around and make guitar faces.

MC: So how do you make it work in that kind of setting?

Joel: I guess because we've done it enough, I just talk to the audience like I'm in my living room. I have a sound man who's been with me now for almost 50 years, so he knows how to EQ my voice so that people can understand what I'm saying in a baseball stadium. I don't even know what they're saying in a baseball stadium when they're announcing the players, but he's able to get that place to be audible for an audience. So, I'm just comfortable. I sit there and talk. I'm not Mick Jagger, so I don't have to worry about bopping around and dancing. We're pretty used to it now.

MC: How have the shows felt any different since coming back from the pause?

Joel: When we went to do the first gig after the Covid layoff (Aug. 4, 2021 at Fenway Park in Boston), yeah, I had a little bit of nerves. Two years is a long time for a musician to be off. You wonder, "Do I still have muscle memory? Am I gonna screw up the lyrics? Are we any good anymore?" So, it was a little nerve-wracking. But after you get that first show over with, you're like, "Oh, I can do this. Right. I'm THAT guy." You forget you're THAT guy. So, it comes back.

MC: "That" guy has a pretty formidable legacy after all these years. What's your own view of who "that" guy is?

Joel: I kinda have a split opinion about it. Part of me thinks it's absurd; I'm 73 years old and I'm doing the same gig I was doing when I was 16! This is a job for a young person. I am now considered elderly, and I'm still doing the same crazy-ass job, so that part of it is kind of absurd. The other part it means to me is it's wonderful. I picked a great job to have. They're paying me all kinds of money. The audiences are bigger than they ever were. People are still coming to see me, and there's a lot of young people out in the crowd who still know my stuff. That's wonderful. I'm a lucky guy.

MC: Not only that, but you've had shout-outs in songs by Bob Dylan...and Olivia Rodrigo, among others. How does that happen?

Joel: You got me. I have no idea where it's coming from, but I'm very grateful for it. I appreciate the shout-outs and the recognition. It's nice to feel like you're somewhat relevant in this day and age, 'cause I'm a dinosaur. But I guess dinosaurs have antique value. So, it's kind of a miracle. If anybody had said I'd be doing this at this age and have the kind of success we're having, I'd have told them they were nuts. This is rock & roll. I didn't cure polio.

MC: Do you ever allow yourself a moment of pride, though, to appreciate what you've accomplished—musically as well as statistically?

Joel: From time to time. There are songs in the show that I really like to do, which are the more obscure ones. I tend to like the album tracks more than the hit singles. I feel a certain sense of pride and satisfaction after I finish those songs. I think to myself, "That wasn't bad. I don't

remember how I wrote it or why I wrote it, but that's pretty good." So that hits once in a while.

MC: Are we ever going to hear the piano music you mentioned you're writing?

Joel: No. I try to play some of those pieces from time to time, but it kind of lays there like a lox. It's not something people are very familiar with. I've tried it, but I'm not beating it to death.

MC: And you're still not writing songs?

Joel: Not yet. I haven't shut the door on it. I am still writing music; I'm just not writing lyrics now. I'm not writing in song form. I'm writing in a more abstract form, and I'm comfortable with it. But if I get an idea for a song I'm not gonna stop myself from writing it. I'll do it. I just haven't woken up recently with a great song idea. The reason I stopped writing pop songs, and songs in general, is because I felt constrained by song form. There's an orthodoxy to pop; you're writing inside of a box. Y'know, it can't be too long, you have to repeat the verse over and over, you gotta have a hook, you gotta have lyrics in it, you gotta have rock n' roll instrumentation, you gotta have bass, drums, guitar, there has to be a voice taking the lead. Then I thought to myself, "Well, why? Why? Who says I have to do this?"

MC: After writing it for so long, is it disappointing not to, or are you liberated in a way?

Joel: For me it's liberating because I never enjoyed writing. I always enjoy having written. When I would get to the end of a song I was writing I was wrung out, 'cause I wanted it to be a certain quality. I have high standards, and if I don't meet those standards I'm pretty angry with myself and I'm hard on myself and I beat myself up.

I read a quote once from Neil Diamond where he said he's come to grips with the fact that he's not Beethoven. He's forgiven himself that he's not Beethoven. And when I read that, I realized I haven't forgiven myself for not being Beethoven. I struggle and I suffer from it. So, I'm happy not to do that anymore, because I beat myself up enough during my lifetime.

MC: You have written classical music, on the other hand.

Joel: Yeah, but I didn't record it. I actually had a classical pianist (Richard Hyung-ki) play those pieces, because I'm not good enough to play them properly. I didn't study long and hard enough to be able to play that kind of music. I can write it, but you only write it in short shifts. You don't sit down and write the whole thing in one fell swoop. Once in a while I'll kind of play a little piece, but that's about it.

MC: It's been a long enough career that you have some significant anniversary pop up about every year. This year it's 35 years since your groundbreaking tour of the former Soviet Union. What's your perspective that trip now?

Joel: Well, with what's going on with Russia nowadays, I'm very disappointed. I mean, I'm glad we did that trip. I was very proud of that trip, and I think we helped kick the door in a little bit to open it up to democratic stuff. But nowadays...I'm hoping the Russian people really get to know what's actually happening, but I don't know how much real information they get, because they're kinda in a closed medi-anow, between Trump and what's going on with

Russia and Covid and what's going on with the economy, this is a hard time now.

MC: As an artist do you feel a responsibility to reflect that or provide escape from it? Or both?

Joel: Well, I realize at this point I'm more a court jester than a court philosopher. There's a line in "Piano Man" that I sing—"I know that it's me that they're coming to see to forget about life for a while"—and the audience applauds after that line and I realize, "Wow, they're really here to get away from the news. They needed a break." They wanted something to take them somewhere else, and that's my job. I never thought of myself as having to be a socially conscious documentarian. My politics are my politics, but the music is something else.

MC: You took on that role with the *Nylon Curtain* album, which turns 40 during September.

Joel: Yeah, well, that was right in the middle of the Reagan era, and things were changing in America. I was very aware of it. It was baby boomer peaking time, the early '80s. Things did change then. I was very proud of that album. The songs seem to still resonate with audiences, and with younger people as well. I'm always amazed at how many kids are in the crowd. Here I am, I'm 73, I figure there'll be a lot of gray hair out there but there's a lot of kids, and they're relating to what I'm singing about. So, it has resonance.

MC: *The Stranger* turns 45 this year, too. Want to weigh in on that one?

Joel: My thoughts nowadays are I can't believe how long ago that was. I don't do a whole bunch of retrospective on my own material. I'm not someone who sits around and thinks

about the old days. I've got my hands full with the little ones.

MC: They're very young, but do they keep you up on current music at all?

Joel: They love Taylor Swift. They love Olivia Rodrigo. They like what kids are listening to

"Two years is a long time for a musician to be off. You wonder, 'Do I still have muscle memory? AM I GONNA SCREW UP THE LYRICS? Are we any good anymore?' So, it was a little nerve-wracking."

now, and they know a lot of the music. They kind of educate me because I don't really listen to it, consciously. They'll just point to me, "Dad, listen to this." They know what I do. They like the fact I have this job. They like going to gigs and hanging out. They like the rock & roll life.

MC: Do you get inspiration from watching colleagues like Paul McCartney or the Rolling

Stones keep going?

Joel: It does make me aware that it's doable. I figure they're going to stop eventually, so I can stop. I love the job, but I don't want to get to that point where I outstay my welcome. Like I said, I'm considered to be elderly now, so the fact that I'm doing this...we go back to absurd. If I get to a point where I don't think I can do it well anymore—if people stop coming, or if they boo—then I'm gonna stop, 'cause I love the job too much to not do it well.

MC: Any idea how you'd say goodbye?

Joel: I had an idea for a farewell tour. Everybody's doing these farewell tours and they just keep going. I think the Who have done, like, 20 farewell tours, right?

So, my idea for a real farewell tour is the stage is set like a living room—there's a TV, there's a couch, there's some chairs, there's a refrigerator with some food in it. I come out, look in the fridge, take something out, make a sandwich, then I turn on the TV and I sit on the couch and watch TV. Now, the stage will be surrounded with bulletproof Plexiglas because eventually the crowd is going to start going, "Boo! Boo! Do something!" And after about 15 minutes I'll pick up a mic and say, "Hey, I just said I was gonna be here. I didn't say I was gonna do anything."

And then we'll know that they'll never pay a nickel to see me again. THAT's a farewell tour. So, if you ever see me just watching TV, you'll know it's over.

Contact Claire Mercuri,
claire@clairemercuri.com

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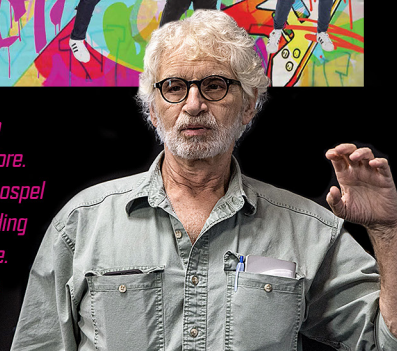
The Detroit Youth Choir brings the youthful spirit of Metro Detroit to classic hits. The choir, 2nd place winners on America's Got Talent, features young vocalists ages 8 to 17.

With music produced by the legendary Jack Douglas, the choir knocks out fresh and exhilarating harmonies on classics from Motown to Woodstock.



"Nothing excites me more than something I've never done before. This combination of rock and gospel I found challenging and rewarding beyond anything I've ever done."

— Jack Douglas



Sidebar with Sax Man **MARK RIVERA**

During the nice weather months each year, you'll find Billy Joel playing a selection of mostly baseball stadiums around the U.S. in addition to his monthly shows at New York's Madison Square Garden. But this fall he's taking fans back to a particularly special outdoors engagement—June 22-23, 1990 at the old Yankee Stadium in the Bronx, which was filmed and released later that year. An expanding edition of the film returning Oct. 5 and 9 for screenings at theaters around the world (BillyJoel.film for locations and tickets) and on Nov. 4 will be released in Blu-ray, CD and LP formats. These were landmark shows that paired the man who made the "New York State of Mind" with one of the Big Apple's most iconic spots, a match made in musical heaven. As the release nears, multi-instrumentalist Mark Rivera—celebrating his 40th anniversary as a member of Joel's Band—took us back to the Bronx to remember those special shows...

MC: It must've been a thrill for a New Yorker like yourself to perform at Yankee Stadium back in 1990.

Mark Rivera: Oh man, you have no idea. It was incredible. It was hallowed ground—it really was. I have these pictures of myself with a Jimi Hendrix T-shirt on, hugging the monument of Babe Ruth, back there with (Mickey) Mantle. And it was my second son Derio's sixth birthday, on June 23rd, when Billy introduced me, "Playing center field, from Brooklyn, New York, Mark Rivera" and he added "It's his son Derio's sixth birthday!" It was wonderful, just wonderful.

MC: And the gig itself?

Rivera: It's hard for me to put into words particular things that stood out. The whole thing was amazing. It's joyous to see it—the players, the faces, the crowd. It's Yankee Stadium, and now we're the house band at Madison Square Garden. You know what I mean? It doesn't stop.

MC: Playing stadiums is a challenge, not only technologically but also for performing. How do you do it successfully?

Rivera: I think the biggest challenge is your enthusiasm, your own, personal enthusiasm. I think Nureyev or somebody like that said that if you try to project out as far as you can go—in other words as far as the venue is—you'll always lose. You can't go out and try to reach everybody. But if you go inside and you're there and you're present in that moment, people will see it from the rafters. I've had people say to me, "I was up in the (section) 200, 300 seats. I saw you smiling." I'm like, "Really?," and I guess it's true. Presence is everything.

MC: Interestingly, Billy is the only performer to play both Yankee and Shea Stadiums (July 16 and 18, 2008). Can you compare the two?

Rivera: It's so different. First and foremost, it's a completely different band and technologically speaking it was a completely different animal. We also had, what, 12 different people come up and join us, and you had (Paul) McCartney to put a cherry on top. But I'll tell you, the hardest thing to do is carry a stadium alone, which Billy did at Yankee Stadium. It was just the band. There weren't any guests—not to negate how great Shea was, because Shea was fanatics, and one of my favorites. But at Yankee Stadium, Billy stood alone with his band, and that to me was huge.

MC: You're 40 years with Billy this year, a very long and happy tenure. Do you get a watch or a fruit basket or anything?

Rivera: I'm gonna have a mud wrap at the spa of my choice. (laughs) But y'know what? Forty years, and I hope he tells me that we still have another chapter ahead of me, and I believe we do. Someone said, "When are you going to retire," and (Joel) said, "What the hell would I do?" This is what we do—we play, we perform. Being on stage and performing, it's oxygen for us, and without it we perish. I really believe that. It's not ego, it's just a sense of purpose, and believe me we have a sense of purpose in this band, and as musicians it's very important to us. •

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Artists Finding Their Tone at Home

BY ROB PUTNAM

Music Connection speaks with musicians, composers and songwriters who've invested their time and money in a home recording studio. Each provides hard-won advice on the ups and the downs, their favorite gear and the best ways to dial in the exact sound you desire.

Malibu Babie

Contact: [instagram.com/malibubabie](https://www.instagram.com/malibubabie), [ffm.to/mbgoodtime](https://www ffm.to/mbgoodtime)

Songwriter and producer Malibu Babie began her career in Nashville with a scholarship for music and dance at Vanderbilt University, mere steps from Music Row. She landed a publishing deal with Prescription Songs shortly after graduation and relocated to Los Angeles in 2020. She's produced for a number of artists, notably Nicki Minaj and Megan Thee Stallion. Indeed, she co-produced Minaj's "Super Freaky Girl," which debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100 chart. With Megan Thee Stallion, Malibu Babie co-wrote and co-produced her 2022 single "Her." "GOODTIME"—her own single, linked above—dropped in August.

When and how did you begin to build your studio?

I started when I moved to L.A. two years ago. I've got my big Yamaha speakers, my UA gear and I made sound panels myself from ROCKWOOL and boards from Home Depot. I have a bunch of MIDI keyboards, Native Instruments Komplete Kontrol and my little studio keyboard that I bring with me everywhere.

What sets your studio apart?

Inspiration-wise, I have a window that perfectly frames the Wisdom Tree. It's a famous, magical tree on the other side of the Hollywood sign. It survived a fire, so people say that it's magical and it represents perseverance.

What are some of the biggest challenges about running your home studio?

Properly sound-treating and getting an accurate flat sound are a bit tricky, due to the size and shape of the room. I use room-correcting software called Sonarworks. It measures the frequency response of your room and adjusts the output of your speakers to reflect a flat response. My mixes got noticeably better once I started to use it.

What have been your favorite tech developments over the past few years?

I switched to Ableton 11 recently. I love the development of vocal comping. A simple plugin I just discovered is [Unfiltered Audio's] Bass-Mint. But the industry as a whole: anything you want to make now, there's a way.

How do you establish a strong relationship with a mix and/or mastering engineer?

I've used recommendations from friends and I've done a few things myself.

What's the biggest challenge you've ever faced in your studio?

The fact that my studio is in my home. Two problems arise. One is that I can't stop working. The other is that if I'm not inspired, it's easy

to walk out of the door and get distracted. Finding the appropriate amount of focus is difficult.

Is there a resource you'd recommend for someone getting started at building their home studio?

I utilized YouTube to figure out sound treatment, how to place speakers and what gear will absorb vibrations. I'm also lucky that I know a lot of people who design studios. They'd help me measure and pick out ROCKWOOL.

What are the three most important things you've learned about operating your own studio?

- Don't make excuses for yourself.
- Hit records have been made on nothing more than MacBooks in hotel rooms. Do the best with what you have.
- Do everything you can to achieve a flat room. When I built my sound panels, my mixes got phenomenal. Cultivate whatever vibe makes you feel inspired. It's more important than you think. I love natural light and colors.

What's a favorite professional studios in which to work?

The Village. It's historic and you can feel the energy. It has a special vibe.

Final thoughts?

Inspiration can strike anywhere. Prime your environment to receive it. •



Grant-Lee Phillips

Contact: grantleephillips.com

Nashville-based multi-instrumentalist Grant-Lee Phillips co-founded Grant Lee Buffalo, has composed for a number of films and collaborated with a range of artists. He was always interested in the recording process, but his gear collection began to explode when he acquired a four-track recorder in the '80s. Early in his career, Phillips lived in Los Angeles where he worked in a number of rooms and recorded in a shed at his home. Ultimately, he relocated to Nashville and began to assemble his home studio. Phillips has recorded several solo albums there as well as created scores for multiple films.

When and how did you begin to build your studio?

I started to mess around with four-track recorders back in the '80s. There was a big gulf between that and doing anything legitimate at home that didn't involve a lot of money. Around 2000 I began to investigate a home studio.

What are some of the biggest challenges about running your home studio?

Learning its parameters. If you go in with the notion that you can create any kind of space, you might be fooling yourself. You have to come to terms with the limitations of your room and work as much as possible. You'll come to know its strengths. Your ears will lead you.

What have been your favorite tech developments over the past few years?

The UA [Universal Audio] stuff is fantastic and I'm impressed with Native Instruments. I also have the Radial Reamp, which is somewhat new. You can take a part that was written on a MIDI keyboard and run it through your guitar pedal.

How do you establish a strong relationship with a mix and/or mastering engineer?

It helps if you can click with a mastering engineer. If you have the opportunity to work with one more than once, you can develop a rapport. Often, I'll ask a mix engineer about who mastered a specific album they did.

What's the biggest challenge you've ever faced in your studio?

Because of the pandemic, I worked a lot by myself and that made it hard to remain objective and excited. It helps if you can listen in a different environment. I take my mixes out to the car, roll down the windows and think of something else.

Is there a resource you'd recommend for someone getting started at building their home studio?

Tapeop.com. It started as a print magazine and now has a website. You can read how artists have wandered into the producer or engineer seat.

What are the three most important things you've learned about operating your own studio?



- Engineering for myself has been rewarding, and whatever insecurities I had have dissipated in the process.

- It's a much more economic approach. Artists have come to embrace self-reliance out of necessity.

- [Recording] is an art form at which you can get better; you can grow.

What's one of your favorite professional studios in which to work?

The Sound Factory. I made a record there in 2004 called *Virginia Creeper*. We did it all live. There's also Lucy's Meat Market in L.A. run by Pete Min.

Final thoughts?

Building a home studio starts with the most humble of means. For many of us it's one good mic. You build from there. It's the most empowering thing you can do as a musician.



Timothy B. Schmit

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Bassist Timothy B. Schmit has been active in music since the early '60s. That's an impressive tenure. But the story goes deeper. He did nine albums with country rock band Poco and has been a member of legendary rock outfit the Eagles since 1977. Schmit's first outing with the band delivered the hits "The Long Run," "Heartache Tonight" and "In the City." Those iconic jams alone would merit his 1998 induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. But he remains prolific and his latest offering, *Day by Day*, dropped in May.

When and how did you begin to build your studio?

In 1994 we moved into a new place and there were already plans for a guesthouse. My wife is an artist and, originally, I was going to make it half a studio for her and the other half a demo studio for me. Soon after it was built, she wanted me to take the entire space. I had no idea it was going to grow into this monster.

What sets your studio apart?

The fact that it turned into a professional studio. The studio garage is now my drum room. Every room is wired to record.

What are some of the biggest challenges about running your home studio?

I'm not particularly technically minded. I can go so far, but then it gets in the way of my creativity. I met [recording engineer] Hank Linderman through Gerry Beckley of the band America. I hired him to engineer for me. I've since been able to do more on my own, but I mainly depend on others.

What have been your favorite tech developments over the past few years?

I work a lot with Jeff Peters, who did live sound for the Beach Boys. I don't have a favorite plugin or device, but I tell him what I want and he'll try out things. I used to love Lexicon stuff. The LXP-1 was a great echo device.

How do you establish a strong relationship with a mix and/or mastering engineer?

It's usually Jeff [Peters] and I. We mix as we go. He did so much work on this last record [Day by Day] that he got a co-producer credit. Mastering for my last two records has been done by Joe Gastwirt. I've worked with him before and he knows what we want.

What's the biggest challenge you've ever faced in your studio?

The daily glitches; the little things. When the screen doesn't cooperate. Where I live is kind of rural and the power goes out occasionally.

Is there a resource you'd recommend for someone getting started at building their home studio?

It's always good to find someone who knows more than you to sit and [work with some gear].

What are the three most important things you've learned about operating your own studio?

- You have to have people you can work with. Otherwise, it's going to be too much of a push and pull rather than something that flows.
- Keep your studio updated.
- Surround yourself with comfortable things. I like tea and have a tea maker handy.

What's one of your favorite professional studios in which to work?

Capitol Studios. It's got such history. The Village is also really great. I worked there with Steely Dan as well as the Eagles. I also did some strings for my latest record at Sunset Sound.

Final thoughts?

If you have the good fortune to build a home studio, don't forget to be grateful for it. It's a bonus; icing on the cake.

Lastly, I don't like to send out files. I've turned down people if they couldn't make it to my studio. I like the one-on-one; the back and forth. It just makes sense rather than wait for a file. I'll do it for other people, though. •



Silas Hite

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Emmy-winning composer and multi-instrumentalist Silas Hite studied music at The University of Arizona, worked in a local studio briefly and then set out for Los Angeles. There, he landed work at Mutato Muzika, which, fortuitously, was and is owned by his uncle Mark Mothersbaugh, co-founder of Devo. In addition to his own original music, much of Hite's work is composition for TV, film, commercials and video games. Indeed, he's scored several of *The Sims* games, *Tetris* mobile and EA's *The Simpsons*. His latest score is for the forthcoming HBO Max show *Big Brunch*.

When and how did you begin to build your studio?

I started by collecting quality gear and instruments when I worked at Mutato Muzika. I built my studio in 2016. I hired a company to soundproof the tracking room, because I've got a Neumann U47 running through Neve mic preamps and that picks up everything. My friend Jason Tarulli, who does front-of-house for the Black Keys, helped me finish it.

What sets your studio apart?

My instrument collection. I have a ton of interesting vintage and new instruments. An 1880's pump organ, for example.

What are some of the biggest challenges about running your home studio?

Keeping my instruments, mics and computer running properly. Especially the computer.

What have been your favorite tech developments over the past few years?

I love the iZotope RX plugins for cleaning up audio. The PSP plugins are also fantastic. Their

VintageWarmer is great. I use that for snare or lead guitar. I also like their SpringBox.

How do you establish a strong relationship with a mix and/or mastering engineer?

I've used the same mastering engineer for the past 15 or 20 years. His name's Hans DeKline. I worked with him once, we hit it off and became friends. He's a good communicator, which is key. When I find someone who does a good job, I like to stick with them.

What's the biggest challenge you've ever faced in your studio?

The pandemic. Work stopped, pretty much. No one was doing anything. I did get some work, but I also made records I'd wanted to and have been able to license those songs.

Is there a resource you'd recommend for someone getting started at building their home studio?

Tapeop. It helped me to learn on the fly when I was young. It's always had the viewpoint of people who don't have huge studio budgets. I still read it. It's a fantastic resource.

What are the three most important things you've learned about operating your own studio?

- Don't spend money on things that won't make you money.
- Reinvest a chunk of every paycheck into your studio.
- Keep it clean and tidy, with everything working.

What's one of your favorite professional studios in which to work?

Mutato Muzika. It was like the Pee-wee's Playhouse of recording studios: a cross between a music or toy store, an instrument museum and an art factory.

Final thoughts?

Friendly people get more work. Be nice. •

Eric Bass

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Bassist with Shinedown, Eric Bass also produces and engineers. Earlier this year he hung the final baffle in his home studio, Big Animal. In 2018, Bass produced his band's gold record *ATTENTION ATTENTION* at his previous offsite studio, Ocean Industries. He helmed the follow-up, *Planet Zero*, at Big Animal, which dropped earlier this year. Bass plans to build an expanded control room soon and emphasizes the importance of quality mic stands. He's also writing *The New Dark Eaters*, a graphic novel which he'll pair with original music. It's targeted for publication sometime in the next 16 months.

When and how did you begin to build your studio?

At first, I had this disdain for my new place, because I didn't have the tricks that I did at my old one. I'm having to relearn a lot of things. It's much like walking into a commercial studio at which you've never worked. The first thing I recorded in my new drum room I over-compressed because my other place was larger and had a 16-foot ceiling.

What sets your studio apart?

I don't understand how anyone has ever been able to be creative in a corporate studio. I need a place where there are no time constraints or corporate feeling. And I've got a great view here. I can see the river and dolphins going by. Also, I charge a daily rate, not by the hour. Sometimes I even charge by the song.

What are some of the biggest challenges about running your home studio?

When I drove 20 minutes to get to Ocean Industries, abandoning something wasn't as easy. That's a growing pain I'm still not over yet. All of the distractions of home are here. But at 4:30 in the morning I can walk the 50 feet to my studio. Asking Alexandria will record its next album here and I'll be nervous as hell about everything working.

What have been your favorite tech developments over the past few years?

Watching software and plugins become so good at doing what they were never designed to do. The imperfect stuff, like tape and tubes, colored the sound and made it darker. But we realized that [digital] made music sterile. The things that were seen as bad we now see as needed and plugins will do that.

How do you establish a strong relationship with a mix and/or mastering engineer?

I do a lot of my own mixing, because there are certain things I want to hear and a certain vibe I want to have. I have a great relationship with Ted Jensen [of Sterling Sound]. He masters everything we do. He's a fantastic person and really cares about what he's doing. He's a music fan.

What's the biggest challenge you've ever faced in your studio?

We built a barn for my wife and, because permits are hard to get here, we pulled off of

the studio box and ran the electrical out to it. Now there's a noise that shows up in the lines occasionally. It's the barn water pump. Every time it runs, it feeds back through the line. Dirty power is probably common in studios, but I've never had issues with it.

Is there a resource you'd recommend for someone getting started at building their home studio?

There's a computer program that you feed your studio dimensions and it'll spit out the math for a quadratic diffuser. I got better mixes out of this room when it was just a box that I'd lightly treated. I discovered Green Glue. It disperses the low end into the wall and leaves it in the room.

What are the three most important things you've learned about operating your own studio?

- The more you know, the more you realize you don't know anything.
- Hang some things to get rid of reflections and you don't have any flutter echo. I use IK Multimedia's ARC system – room-correction software. I track and mix with that on.
- Concentrate on making music and don't beat yourself up about the space. Less gear is more sometimes.

What's one of your favorite professional studios in which to work?

Ocean Way [now United Recording]. I worked in their Studio A. Also, Studio B at Capitol. •

For an expanded version, go to musicconnection.com



Apogee BOOM

Just released, Apogee's new BOOM is a two-channel audio interface perfect for content creators, bloggers, musicians, singer songwriters or anyone who looking for a professional quality audio interface in a ruggedly built, portable form factor.

BOOM is solidly constructed into an all-steel chassis crafted in a great looking piece of industrial design that cleverly understates the Apogee logo while providing a routing point for cables underneath it. BOOM feels substantial, almost hefty in your hand, and stays put on your desktop or wherever you happen to be using it. BOOM is built to be road ready and, unlike a lot of audio interfaces out there that claim to be a "grab and go" solution, I would have no considerations putting BOOM in my laptop bag without a case. Nothing on BOOM feels cheap or plasticky.

BOOM's one combo XLR input is recessed into BOOM's front left side. The one, large rotary high-quality indented knob encoder/volume control, located on the front right side of BOOM, feels solid in your hands. The push-button-enabled rotary encoder allows you to select each of BOOM's two inputs, The encoder can control gain for each input, listening level for the active output and muting of the active output (by pressing and holding the rotary encoder). This will define BOOM's active output as such—if the headphone output is connected, it is active and the line outputs are muted; if the headphone output is disconnected, the line outputs become active.

BOOM features Apogee's professional AD/DA conversion technology and best-in-class preamps. The included Apogee Control 2 software gives you comprehensive control over each of the two available channels as well as general recording settings. BOOM is bus powered via USB C; there is no external power jack or capability.

BOOM's combo XLR input can take balanced or unbalanced inputs for plugging in microphones, acoustic or electric guitars etc. Phantom power for microphones that require it is available to be switched in via the included Apogee Control 2 software. There is a second instrument input next to the XLR input for plugging in electric or acoustic guitars, guitar preamps, etc. The Instrument input impedance is determined by the PAD button. When the PAD is engaged, the impedance is low; when disengaged, the impedance is high. While having only two available inputs might be considered too minimal for some customers, the overall feature set and included Apogee Control 2 software will be more than enough for a lot of musicians, songwriters, and content creators to produce professional results.

The back of BOOM has a headphone jack and two TRS jacks for connecting a pair of

powered monitors as well as a USB C port for bus powering the unit. There is also a Kensington lock point on the back for securing BOOM to your desktop or workspace. BOOM features Apogee's loopback technology that makes streaming from different audio sources easy. A level meter built into BOOM's chassis shows input and overall output levels as selected by the rotary volume control.

BOOM onboard digital signal processing capability incorporates Apogee's ECS channel strip, which is also available as a native plugin. The ECS Channel Strip can be inserted on each of the two available channels and gives you a quick way to dial in equalization, compression, harmonic saturation and drive effects for real time, super low latency recordings. The ECS Channel Strip also includes a selection of Bob Clearmountain tuned presets making dialing in great sounding tracks for guitar and vocals quick and easy. Latency while tracking and playing back audio with BOOM is overall extremely low and will be a non-issue for most workflow applications.

BOOM, in short, comes with everything you need to make professional quality record-

customers in, but also outside, the traditional MI marketing channels. Those markets might include education, big box vertical market retailers, specialty stores, catalog retailers, corporations, private business and even governments, in short anything BUT the traditional MI retail or professional audio marketing channels.

Clearly, Apogee put a lot of thought into BOOM's industrial design. It is colorful, extremely well built and doesn't look like a typical pro audio recording interface. End users outside of traditional MI channels will be attracted to BOOM simply because it looks like a cool, solidly built piece of technology and features super high-end AD/DA audio conversion. Once BOOM is set up (the setup process is easy even for people who do not have any direct experience with pro audio equipment) potential customers will be impressed by how great BOOM sounds just playing back their favorite computer audio. For a lot of customers outside the traditional MI marketing channels, that will be enough of a reason to buy it. Much as we might take it for granted, there are still a lot of people in the world who have never experienced audio playback with the level of AD/DA

conversion BOOM is capable of. For education, corporate or other vertical markets, BOOM offers a cost-effective way to equip entire schools and businesses with a professional quality recording interface on an enterprise-wide level.

BOOM is a global product and, I think, it is on-point for the times. Again, it is, I think, a super-smart move on Apogee's part to have put so much thought into how BOOM looks,

as well as how good it sounds. The point is, BOOM is designed (and very likely will) sell itself to prospective buyers who do not necessarily need to know anything about Apogee's thirty-five-year history of pro audio innovation or even know anything about recording technology or BOOM's recording feature set to make them want to own one.

To sum it up, BOOM looks super cool sitting on your desk and offers high-end recording features as good and, in many cases, better than any professional quality audio interface currently on the market at its price point. That said, in my opinion, one of the biggest problems facing manufactures of recording technology is not looking outward to new markets and untapped potential customers, which an audio interface like BOOM is perfect to capitalize on. The point is, there are a lot of consumers and businesses out there that represent significant untapped markets, and they will very likely find BOOM's overall feature set and great sounding audio playback capability—not to mention its affordable price point—to be exactly what they are looking for. Excellent job, Apogee!

BOOM is available now for \$299. Find out more at apogeedigital.com



ings on the go or at home, work, classroom, wherever, whenever. All you need is BOOM, a modern laptop, a decent pair of headphones, your DAW of choice and you're good to go.

BOOM is compatible with any iOS device, and once the unit is registered you get a free license to Ableton Live Lite as well as a download link for Apogee's Control 2 software for Mac and Windows. Apogee's list of recommended DAW's includes Pro Tools (mac OS/Windows), Logic Pro X (macOS), Ableton Live (mac OS/Windows), Garage Band (mac OS/iOS), and FL Studio (macOS/Windows).

BOOM is Apogee's most affordable two channel audio interface ever. That said, the specs for what you are getting for the price are impressive. BOOM, in short, succeeds in distilling the essence of Apogee's legacy of digital audio technical innovations into a mass marketable digital audio interface. Sure, Apogee's long history of audio innovation is well known within the pro audio industry, but that's not really the point. Notice the name BOOM has no immediate tie back to Apogee or typical name for an audio interface. This is, I think, a very smart marketing move on Apogee's part as BOOM is designed to be targeted to potential

When the Phone Starts Ringing or the Texts Are Flying (Preparing for the Initial Meeting/Gig)

In your day-to-day career as a working musician, how you move forward with potential new clients is just as important as the I always take a potential new client on a "date" before any work begins. Having an initial meeting does a few things: The first is that you can get a feel for how your personalities mesh. Second, you can get on the same page with the client as far as what's expected on both ends. Don't ever agree to do a job for someone for which you know you can't deliver. Have a good understanding of what you can and can't do. This will help you decide if it's the right fit for you or not.

If everything looks good and you can do the job—great! But there is an elephant in the room that hasn't been discussed yet—compensation.

Compensation

Perhaps, you may feel that you're not quite ready to ask for it just yet. My advice, rip the Band-Aid off and just dive in. Here's how you bring up the subject in a nonchalant kind of way:

"Yeah, I'd love to help, what's your budget?"

How they react will dictate how you are to proceed.

If they say they weren't expecting to have to pay you for your time, you've just quashed that notion. And now it's up to you if you decide to proceed or not.

Even if they don't have the financial compensation for you, you do have options. Here are three:

Say no. Nothing wrong with turning work down. Saying "no" is one of the most powerful words you can learn to use.

Say yes. Maybe it's a fun project with great people. The point is that you get to decide whether you spend your time on the project or not.

Barter or trade. I love the barter system and still use it to this day. However, the best part about using the barter system is that you are getting used to the idea of getting something for your time, and you are teaching your clients that you need them to come to the table with something, if they want you to provide your services.

Compensation Part II (How Much?)

Now, time to talk money. How much is too much? What is this service worth? Trying to figure out your rates can be

complicated at first. Here are some thoughts: For instance, the client has \$1,000 dollars to pay you for your services. Sounds good, right? This is what is known as working for a "flat rate." While there is nothing wrong with flat rates in most one-off gig situations, working in the studio can be different. Meaning, most artists are never satisfied with their work. It could take six months for the artist to be "happy"; that \$1,000 isn't worth so much now.

It's not advisable to do flat rates unless

sticker price up. I like to say that you should double it, so maybe start your negotiation at \$40/hour. Your client may respond by saying that that's too expensive. You now have the ability to say something like "You know, I like the project, I like you. How about \$30 dollars and hour?" Make the client feel like they're getting a special deal. All the while, you are making a living wage for yourself.

Getting Paid

Now, actually getting the money you are owed can be an issue with some clients. Here are some thoughts about different methods of getting your money.

Getting Paid Up Front

This one is tricky, especially if you're charging hourly, as you don't know how long you'll be working on the project. However, for live gigs or session work, this could be an option.

Getting a Deposit

Same problem as getting paid up front: With some live and studio gigs you can do this.

Contracts

While I am an advocate of having a contract with all of my clients, it is in no way a guarantee that you will be able to collect your money.

Putting it another way: You may end up spending more time and money trying to enforce a contract than you would have been paid.

How I Get Paid Every Time

I have discovered a fool-proof way of getting paid for my work in the studio every single time. And it's a very simple solution: First of all, I expect to be paid at the end of each day. However, what do I do to ensure payment? I give the client nothing, until I'm paid. Once you give a client the work that you've done, you've lost all leverage in the situation. And now you're chasing them to pay you. Hold on to all the work and tell the client that you'll be happy to give them everything you've done; they just need to pay what they owe.

KRIS HAWKINS is an Emmy-winning music producer, award-winning educator, and author of *The Working Musician's Handbook for Professional Success* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers). For more information: krishawkinsmusic.com, info@krishawkinsmusic.com



"Once you give a client the work that you've done, you've lost all leverage in the situation."

some certain parameters are met. The main one being the project has a firm end date. Live performance gigs are a good example of charging a "flat rate." The night's over, you get paid. Boom. Done. A better use of your time is to get in the habit of charging by the hour.

Finding Your Rate

Here's a basic formula that can help you get an idea of what you should charge: The first thing you need to figure out is what your monthly "survival" budget is. Say that number is \$1,500 per month.

Now double that: $\$1,500 \times 2 = \$3,000$
Next, divide by 20 working days in per month:
 $\$3,000 \div 20 \text{ days} = \$150/\text{day}$
Now, divide \$150 per day by 8 hours.
 $\$150 \div 8 \text{ hours} = \$18.75/\text{hour}$

You've come up with \$18.75 per hour. What this is, is your minimum wage, your super-bro/sis rate. The idea behind this is just like a car dealership. What you do is when someone asks you how much you charge, you mark your



KRK S10.4 Subwoofer

Recently updated in 2021, the 10-inch KRK S10.4 Studio Subwoofer is the mid-sized of the three options in KRK's subwoofer range, which includes the S8.4, S10.4, and S12.4, featuring 8," 10," and 12" drivers, respectively.

The S10.4 utilizes a front-firing, 10-inch glass aramid composite driver with KRK's distinctive yellow and black "bumblebee" color scheme. It features a front-facing slotted port, allowing the subwoofer to be placed vertically or on its side. The S10.4 is a relatively large subwoofer and can generate up to 117 dB SPL, which means it can generate serious wall-shaking low frequencies.

The KRK Subwoofer line also features some significant improvements over the previous versions, including a redesigned MDF cabinet and a newly designed slotted front-firing port. Rear-mounted controls include stereo inputs and outputs for both unbalanced (RCA) and balanced (XLR and TRS) connectors, volume, and input sensitivity (Normal/High), as well as a polarity switch (0 or 180 degrees). The sub also features a ground lift (on/off), auto standby (on/off), and a four-position crossover to help balance the frequency curve of whatever studio monitors you choose to pair it with. The crossover has four notched settings (60, 70, 80, and 90Hz), allowing you to tailor the S10.4 to work within your studio monitors' optimal frequency range. Typically, your studio monitors will be able to manage low frequencies approximately 10 Hz above the lowest frequency that they are capable of reproducing.

A subwoofer with the sonic power of the S10.4 will, in a lot of cases, not be a viable choice for smaller rooms, because it can cause more acoustical problems than it solves. These problems might include room modes (when a sound wave travels between two opposite boundaries) and standing waves (a combination of two waves moving in opposite directions). Depending on the size and sophistication of your studio and the style of music you

are working on, you may want to consider going with the smaller KRK S8.4, which is still capable of generating significant bass frequency response.

As with any bass management function, it helps to let your ears be your guide to achieve the best sounding results, and you will have to experiment with different mixes, room tuning, and speaker settings to dial in the optimal

The KRK S10.4 will help you to hear, and even feel, frequencies that are much lower than those able to be played through a typical mid-range studio monitor.

frequency curve for your studio space. Plan to take some time to correctly dial in your S10.4 into your studio space.

If you are still experiencing acoustic problems in your room, it is possible that your nearfield monitors are placed too close to the wall, or they might not be separated far enough from each other relative to your mix position. It is also possible your subwoofer might be placed at a point in your studio where standing waves are causing phase issues. Acoustically treating your studio space with bass traps, acoustic panels, diffusers, etc., or placing your S10.4 on a speaker stand or thicker isolation pads will help reduce these kinds of acoustical problems.

The KRK S10.4 has a footswitch input jack which, when engaged, bypasses the sub and it filters out the sub's frequencies, so your monitors receive the full frequency signal. You

can use any generic latching footswitch. The footswitch input is a particularly helpful feature to have, especially if your studio is in proximity to neighbors or family members who may not appreciate the sonic disruptions a subwoofer like the S10.4 can generate. The footswitch also makes it possible to be able to switch the subwoofer in or out during tracking sessions and while comparing mixes.

The KRK S10.4 delivers tight, not flabby, low frequencies suitable for most musical genres and will deliver extra punch in your mixes under 60 Hz that you may not be getting from your main pair of nearfield monitors. The KRK S10.4 delivers universal connectivity via XLR 1/4-inch TRS and RCA inputs and outputs, making it compatible with just about any pair of powered monitors you might be using. The input sensitivity controls and ground lift switch will help prevent ground loops, and the KRK S10.4 crossover function will help to isolate the low-end frequencies relative to the frequency curve of your nearfield monitors.

The KRK S10.4 is a professional-grade studio subwoofer that will be an excellent choice for a wide range of home and professional studios. To help you dial in the S10.4 into your studio, the KRK website has detailed setup instructions, downloadable test tones, and placement suggestions on how to correctly set up and get the most out of using your KRK studio subwoofer. The KRK S10.4 will help you to hear, and even feel, frequencies that are much lower than those able to be played through a typical mid-range studio monitor. If you are mixing audio for TV or film, then a subwoofer like the KRK S10.4 is practically essential, especially if you are mixing in surround sound, which is becoming increasingly more common at the home studio level.

The KRK S10.4 Studio Subwoofer is available now for \$499 MAP. To learn more, go to krkmusic.com.

Brian Jonestown Massacre

Fire Doesn't Grow On Trees

A Recordings Ltd.

Producer: Anton Newcombe

This exemplifies what BJM does best—drawing from psychedelic rock (especially U.K. stylings) of the '60s, '70s and '80s to make fresh dark music for the new millennium. Frontman Anton Newcombe works the concept of “the drone” of both fuzz guitars and keyboards for a spacey yet driving effect. His vocals are world-weary, but he sings of triumph over adversity. BJM delivers another home run here! – **David Arnson**



Deb Morrison

The North Fork

Blackbird Record Label

Producer: Nic Capelle

You know the way music can elicit tears of joy? The feature-length debut from singer-songwriter Deb Morrison is loaded with such misty-eyed moments. Inhabiting the space between a left-coast country aesthetic and modern Americana, her tunes are as personal as they are delectable. The disc's closer, “Jaded,” is a live track so slick it could be passed off as a studio cut. Regretfully, the preceding song, “One More Thing,” would have been a more fitting sendoff. – **Andy Kaufmann**



Dean and the Singing Blue Jeanne's

Crossing the Boundaries

4 Cats Recordings/Distrokid

Producer: Dean Bailin

What happens when you combine “yacht rock” royalty and vocal excellence? You get a sophisticated lean and mean pop music machine! Dean Bailin played the signature guitars on Rupert Holmes' perennial “Escape (The Piña Colada Song).” And Jeanne Waller cut her teeth on stages from coast to coast. The duo offer a virtual buffet of auditory delights that touch on surrealistic funk, prog, and Motown-flavors. Too cool! – **Eric Harabadian**



Jeff Berlin

Jack Songs

Jeff Berlin Music Group

Producer: John McCracken

The legendary Jack Bruce described Berlin as “The best bass player I've ever heard.” With this dynamic, explosive and adventurous album, Berlin pays incendiary, often sweet and lyrical homage to the late Hall of Famer. Much more than a cover album, Berlin and John McCracken draw inspiration from Giles Martin's production of The Beatles' *Love* to create a unique pastiche of intense rockers and folky ballads (and many vibes in between) extending from Bruce's pre-Cream days to his fascinating '70s solo work. – **Jonathan Widran**



Westerner

Kali Yuga Kama Sutra

Coconut Spaceship Records/Symphonic

Producer: Self-produced

This L.A.-based trio blends electronic sounds, intriguing digital textures, odd meters and catchy melodies into a singular indie rock whole. They are esoteric and eclectic without being snobbish. Guitarist Cooper Bombadil's high vocals really suit the neo disco grooves of “Yesferatu” and “Restless.” “Nothing Personal” is cool for its prog-like rhythms and dense harmonies. and “Hypnogagia” is appropriately hypnotic, with its languid movements and atmosphere. Fans of Foals or Glass Animals will approve. – **Eric Harabadian**



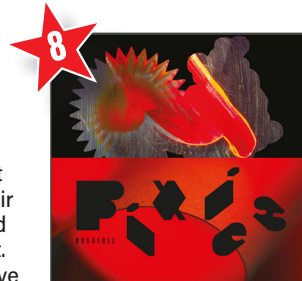
Pixies

Doggerel

BMG

Producer: Tom Dalgety

Only a mindless fop would spit venom at these pioneers of alt-surf-punk rock. Their trademark guitars, randomized lyrics and tsunami-like swells are back in full effect. Black Francis' howls, followed by sensitive patches (and vice versa), are soul piercingly effective. The troupe's punch comes on subtly, like a slow-crawling lava flow approaching a sleepy village. Here's more evidence why they've influenced so many. Doubters should check out the trippy video for barroom brawling single “There's a Moon On.” – **Andy Kaufmann**



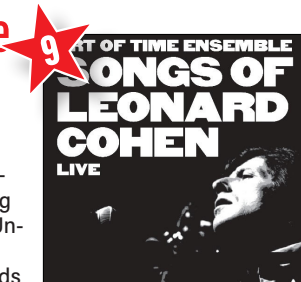
The Art of Time Ensemble

Songs of Leonard Cohen Live

Art of Time Recordings

Producer: Andrew Burashko

With iconic artist and producer collaboration, Andrew Burashko delivers a stunning live-recorded tribute to Leonard Cohen. Underpinned by gypsy jazz stylings (“Dance Me To The End of Love”), orchestral ballads (“Treaty” and “Anthem”), and tango flavor (“I'm Your Man”), the compilation magnifies Cohen's powerful storytelling with Art of Time Ensemble's unique jazz-pop-classical sound. Vocal contributions include Steven Page, Sarah Harmer, Tom Wilson, Sarah Slean and Gregory Hoskins. – **Andrea Beenham**



Kaya Stewart

If Things Go South

Bay Street Records

Producer: Dave Stewart

Coming off some early success with Warner Records, singer-songwriter Stewart decided to go indie with this personal and pivotal release. Her songs and stylistic approach are intimate and intriguing in the way in which the tunes simmer and build. Her poetic and revelatory manner recalls some of Debbie Harry's, Chrissie Hynde's and Patti Smith's best work. The title track has a Roxy Music-like soul groove and “Jealous” is a highlight that features intricate riffs and understated guitars. At 22, there's much promise! – **Eric Harabadian**





Uni*

Contact: andrejadavis@gmail.com

Web: linktr.ee/unireign

Seeking: Film/TV Syncs, Distribution, Label

Style: Rap, Hip-Hop

Los Angeles rapper Uni* (Andre Davis) commands the mic on "NTT (Not the Type)." The instrumental is great, composed of dizzying polyrhythmic beats, invoking a classic hypnotizing Chopped and Screwed treatment. "Dirty 4," a duet with Rahli, gets real fun, with the introduction of revolving characters, a la Childish Gambino and Tyler, the Creator's Odd Future. Uni*'s lyrics become redundant and offensive, but the attention to detail and adopting new personas on-mic keeps us listening. "A Little Static" is a trap-drenched mumble-filled hit, with the sensibility of a freestyle, over a hard, ominous piano line and excellent singsong refrain: "Bitch, fuck it..."

Production	8
Lyrics	7
Music	8
Vocals	8
Musicianship	7

SCORE: 7.6



Eternal Frequency

Contact: eternalfrequencyband@yahoo.com

Web: eternalfrequencyband.com

Seeking: Label, Film/TV

Style: Hard Rock

"I'm more than just a bitch," wails Emmele of Central PA fivesome Eternal Frequency. And we do agree—she's a great singer, bringing her powerhouse GaGa/Benatar pipes to bear on electro-seasoned hard-rock songs such as the inspiring "Breathe In/Breathe Out." Excellent production bathes Emmele and the band in cavernous reverb, yet makes sure her every word is crisply delivered. The aggression level rises on "A.I." ("F*ck your Artificial Intelligence!") adding an industrial element, a dubstep breakdown and a brief male screamo feature to the mix. It is a recording that should be considered for video game licensing. Strong drums, both live and programmed, are central to the impact of "Step Up."

Production	9
Lyrics	7
Music	8
Vocals	9
Musicianship	8

SCORE: 8.2



Proper Einstein

Contact: properbeats7@gmail.com

Web: YouTube.com

Seeking: Label, Film/TV

Style: R&B, Rap, Pop, Alternative

Georgia's own Proper Einstein draws on broad influences and blends R&B, rap, pop, alt-rock and electronica. Though ambitious, these genres meld well with his light subject matter and flexible vocal performances. Einstein channels MJ on "Music is a Universal Language," with a repeated melodic line from *The Sound of Music*. With funky guitar and jazz piano, the song is subdued. Another few textured layers in the mix would go a long way. "Like This" is more of a modern rap, in sound and structure, and Einstein's vocals are amusing, like D.R.A.M. or Lil Yachty. "Unique" is unfortunately anything but, demonstrating a remedial rhyme scheme and rock guitar. We suggest Einstein focuses on just a few influences and hone the craft.

Production	7
Lyrics	7
Music	8
Vocals	8
Musicianship	8

SCORE: 7.6



Anna Moon

Contact: tsmith@milestonepublicity.com

Web: instagram.com/anna_moon_music

Seeking: Booking, Film/TV

Style: Indie-Folk, Singer-Songwriter

Anna Moon's intimate, acoustic songs showcase her sweet voice and tender heart. The breakup song "Psychic Visions" (along with singer Greg Laswell) is as sad and poignant as you'd expect, and would be ideal for a teen film/tv melodrama. As with all of her recordings, this one sounds amazing and it benefits from sterling Nashville production. "Holy Water" again shows Moon as an earnest, intimate storyteller. And the pedal-steel whine and the lead guitar solo are things of beauty. "I Don't Want It That Bad" is cut from the same sonic fabric as the previous two songs—even though the theme is defiance, she sounds unusually laidback. We urge the talented Moon to develop even more dimension to her sound and vision.

Production	9
Lyrics	7
Music	8
Vocals	8
Musicianship	8

SCORE: 8.0



PEACEARTHOPE

Contact: peacearthope@gmail.com

Web: samortolano.com/music

Seeking: Agent, Film/TV

Style: World Fusion Instrumental

Every tune from this world music ensemble dazzles the listener with an express-train energy that threatens to go off the rails yet never does. Excellent players shine as soloists and as a team on tunes that instantly suggest a Spanish/Latin style, but infuses the proceedings with so much more. "So Say the Soothsayers" has dazzling guitar flair amid complex percussive instruments. "Senor Peacock" suggests flamenco with its castanets, yet its Indian raga flavors and syncopated world rhythms are unmistakable. Again, the listener is treated to frenetic fretwork from the guitarist on "Eternal Joy of You," which starts at 100 mph and proceeds through a gauntlet of constantly shifting time sigs. This band is a blast.

Production	8
Lyrics	X
Music	9
Vocals	X
Musicianship	9

SCORE: 8.6



Sara Niemietz

Contact: patidevries@deviousplanet.com

Web: saraniemietz.com

Seeking: Film/TV, Label, Booking, Distribution

Style: Indie Pop/Rock

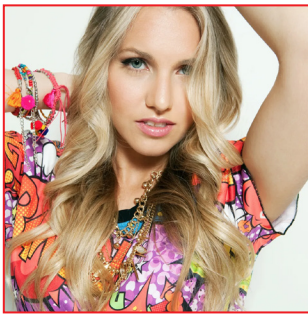
These excellently produced songs by Sara Niemietz are an intriguing showcase of the artist's various dimensions. On the song "Locks" we're intrigued by her deep, husky voice. And even though it's far from her best vocal, the band and melodies are awesome, and the subtle effects, vocal whispers and doubling are deftly deployed. Next, the pulsing, thumping "I Want You" has a bluesy-rock vibe, with echoing production, dreamy backup vocals, and organ undercurrent. Her raspy lead vocals, especially, sound so good. The artist shifts gears with the song "Words," veering into darker, heavier territory, one that soon transforms into a smoldering psychedelia, complete with thick, spaced-out guitar tone and chanting backup voices.

Production	9
Lyrics	8
Music	8
Vocals	9
Musicianship	8

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.



Jenna Nation

Contact: attention@rogers.com
Web: soundcloud.com/thejennanation
Seeking: Label, Booking, Film/TV
Style: R&B, Pop

The ups and downs of love are explored by Nashville-based R&B/Pop artist Jenna Nation, and though her voice did not at first impress us, she nevertheless proved to have the sex appeal her songs require. "Brand New Ex" is a memorable title for a catchy breakup tune whose prominent beat and ghostly backups vocals carry the load. Strong vocal blends again impress us on "Roses," a sultry slow jam. Best production of all is "Bottled Up," a sexy song in which the singer demands "I want to know what you're thinking." This artist has a good grasp of her genre, with relatable lyrics enacting situations that she knows all too well. We urge her to work with a coach to take her voice into even stronger territory.

Production	8
Lyrics	7
Music	8
Vocals	8
Musicianship	7

SCORE: 7.6



Kyante'

Contact: kyjuswanaseing@gmail.com
Web: linktr.ee/kyjuswanaseing
Seeking: Label, Booking
Style: R&B/Soul

Recordings by solo artist Kyante' have a mixtape quality that is raw, real, and relaxed, with her husky voice close to the mic. On "Wake Up" she sings over a stark, spare, echoed arrangement that features drums, percussion and awesome keys before a male feature takes the mic and later duets with Kyante' for a nice outro. On the downtempo R&B number "Cloud Nine," Kyante' shows some of her rapper side as she is overjoyed by a brand new lover ("chillin' on cloud nine") and is joined by an accented female. Best of all is the catchy, vibrant "Crown," which is powered by impressive percussion and jazzy electric piano as Kyante' sings in praise of her friends. The song's call & response vocal aspect is a winner.

Production	7
Lyrics	8
Music	8
Vocals	8
Musicianship	7

SCORE: 7.6



Joe Marcinek Band

Contact: josephmarcinek@gmail.com
Web: joemarcinekband.com
Seeking: Label, Film/TV
Style: Jazz-Rock

Marcinek and his bandmates are expert improvisors, and on these jazzy instro themes each gets to show off his stuff. "Dog" is a 6-minute head-bobbing jam in which precision guitarist Marcinek leads the way on a relaxed, well-structured tune. Island rhythms abound amid complex Latin beats on "Reciprocity," and though the guitarist again leads the way on this one, he steps aside as the organist steps up and goes on a terrific tear. All in all, it's a nice, pleasant vibe through and through. Finally, there's the downtempo piece, "Vitalizing," in which a strummed guitar and a trap snare-drum thwacks away as the organist again takes the wheel and shines brightly. Expert players, their skills are well presented here.

Production	8
Lyrics	x
Music	7
Vocals	x
Musicianship	9

SCORE: 8.0



Rose City Cinema

Contact: rosecitycinemaband@gmail.com
Web: rosecitycinemaband.com
Seeking: Label, Booking, Film/TV, Publicity
Style: Alternative Rock, Electronic Rock

Fast, fun pop-rock from a fourpiece led by vocalist Ian Stahl, who brings a vibe that will strike some as a combo of, say, Maroon 5, Father John Misty, and certain '80s mainstays. That's what we hear right away on "Manhattan Pier." The band's sound is electric guitars and keyboards spurred on by a brittle snare drum tone. A more electro vibe permeates "Strange Chemistry," with hard synths and a tightly compressed sound. Life laments abound on "Brighter Day," our favorite. It's a softer song and it features a strong guitar tone on the solos, as well as a vocal duet with a female. One thing we all agree on: Stahl's voice, when carrying a song alone, somehow does not have the ideal tone for these songs.

Production	7
Lyrics	7
Music	7
Vocals	8
Musicianship	8

SCORE: 7.4



Ghoul of Hollywood

Contact: contact@thrillertracks.com
Web: ghoulsofhollywood.com
Seeking: Film/TV
Style: Production Music, Film Score

These instrumental themes, each clocking in at under 1:20, are immediately recognizable as haunted house music, the kind of stuff where the ghouls' tongues are planted firmly in cheek, not their fangs in your neck. Each similar-sounding theme—"Ghost In The Stereo," "Svengali Lives," "Scary Stories"—has a propulsive beat, a relentless synth flow and a bombastic organ tone that has just enough gooey cheese on it to give the music an element of over-the-top fun. It's the kind of music that'll lure you into a Halloween Haunted House ride, as opposed to fleeing in terror from a sadistic psycho's lair. The Ghoul of Hollywood could likely find interest in this music from seasonal theme parks and family-style TV programs.

Production	8
Lyrics	x
Music	7
Vocals	x
Musicianship	7

SCORE: 7.3



Yony

Contact: yonytheband@gmail.com
Web: linktr.ee/yonymusic.com
Seeking: Label, Booking, Film/TV
Style: Indie Rock

Spearheaded by Mike Cionni, this Los Angeles-based quintet specialize in a fun pop-rock vibe akin to, say, Fountains of Wayne and Death Cab, with Cionni's voice providing the appropriate tone on upbeat tunes such as the dancey "Leave Our Heads Behind." Cionni sings a cappella on "Drift Away" until the band bursts forth with guitars, synths, a rollicking organ and some nice "oohs and ahhs" from female backups. Cionni's vocals are best on "More Truth Than Fiction," another upbeat but nevertheless biting commentary on an unfortunate reality of modern life. As adept as this band is, we feel their recordings could do more to capture, project and enhance the dynamics and vitality that's still untapped.

Production	7
Lyrics	8
Music	8
Vocals	8
Musicianship	8

SCORE: 7.8

LIVE REVIEWS

The Hotel Café Hollywood CA

Web: krisangelis.com

Contact: krisangelis@gmail.com

Players: Kris Angelis, guitar, vocals; Dana Bisignano, bass, piano; Charles Wiley, drums; Ashley Ng, cello; Alix Angelis, harmonies

Material: Kris Angelis' music is Americana/pop with a dash of country sprinkled on top for good measure. Most of the tunes cry sadness and heartbreak, and although that is the case, the songs have a beautiful energy to them, conveying to the listener that "everything will be alright." The opening song, "Win the Game," set the stage for what was to come—a set of tunes that revealed the inner Kris Angelis, down to the core.

Musicianship: Excellent musicianship graced the stage at the Hotel Café. Kris, with her superb vocals and guitar playing, intertwined vocally with her twin sister, Alix, to bring the audience some outstanding harmonies. Ashley Ng took each song to a whole new level as her cello danced with each song ever so elegantly. The rhythm section, comprising Bisignano and Wiley, held the reins to each song and walked, trotted and galloped with Kris at every moment, making the whole thing worthwhile.

Performance: The performance was great. Light and airy, everything went off without a



hitch. Everyone was confident and relaxed and it showed. Storytelling and background to the music kept things very interesting as each song got a little intro about where it came from or how it was developed. Terrific audience acknowledgement kept everyone engaged and waiting for the next song.

Summary: A beautiful performance overall by Kris Angelis and her crew. Winner of many

coveted awards, like Best Female Album of 2013 for *The Left Atrium* and Best Female EP in 2016 for *Heartbreak is Contagious*, both given out by the LA Music Critics Awards. Although dark and eerie at times, Angelis' music is well written and great to listen to. Her latest effort, *Damn, Shame, Waste*, is out now at all your local outlets and it would be a damn shame and waste to miss her next show. – **Pierce Brochetti**



The Universal Bar & Grill N. Hollywood, CA

Web: reneecasanova.com

Contact: renee.yoga@icloud.com

Players: Renee Casanova, vocals; Eric Jenkins, guitar; Robert Golden, drums; Stan Gefler, guitar; Diesel, bass

Material: The Renee Casanova Band is an all-out, in-your-face, hard-hitting rock &

roll outfit equipped with two solid guitar players, an excellent rhythm section, and very strong, robust vocals. On the opener, "Black Night," a tune written by Deep Purple, Gefler ripped through a solo that caught everyone's attention and set the stage for an evening of fantastic rock & roll. The music was hard and loud, but very melodic and soothing at the same time. Juicy licks pulled you in and the voice just kept you glued.

Musicianship: Great musicianship all around. Jenkins and Gefler both had their fretboards ablaze; both extraordinary in their own right. Golden and Diesel were a solid backdrop for Casanova and her vocals to draw and paint as she wished. The vocals were very strong and solid and not a single missed note was heard all night. All great individual musicians, but put them together and you have a powerhouse team that's hard to beat.

Performance: The performance was great. Everything was clicking for the band. The music sounded great, and that gave Casanova the opportunity to dance seductively and address the audience. Smiling to her hearts content, she had everyone's attention from the onset. Everyone onstage looked very relaxed and confident and that translated well to the audience.

Summary: From the opening tune, the Renee Casanova had the audience eating out of the palm of her hand. Tunes like "Why Did You Lie to Me," "At All" and "Touching Me," all drove that rockin' metal vibe deep down to your soul and didn't let up. It wasn't all hard-driving tunes that melted the audience, though. "Lessons" was a pop-rock heartbreak tune that tugged at your heart strings and made you want to comfort the whole band. The hard hitting "Dirt" was the number of the night as the rockin' country-metal tune left every audience member in awe. If you want to experience some great rock & roll music, check out the Renee Casanova Band live now! – **Pierce Brochetti**



The Wiltern Theatre Beverly Hills, CA

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

Web: casey-baer.com

Players: Casey Baer, vocals; Gray Trainer, guitar; Shep Martin, drums

Material: Covering tracks from her 2022 album, *Not That Girl*—as well as a sneak-peak of an unreleased new single (“The Meeting”), and a cover of Tate McRae’s “She’s All I Wanna Be”—Casey Baer played to a bubbly, youthful crowd at the last of her tour stops in Los Angeles. With lyrics around love, identity, the

strength of a woman (and navigating your own moral compass), Baer shifts between a pop dynamo and a dark rocker with an energetic, confident performance—and no shortage of fan interaction.

Musicianship: With a driving drum push and flying guitar riffs injected into the show (alongside polished backing tracks to fill out the sound), the trio of musicians delivers a cohesive, comfortable exchange, with Baer demonstrating a strong understanding of, and dedication to, her instrument through her great breath control and vibrato, and beautiful melody lines. While there were a few

shakey moments in the lower register, her octave leaps and head voice, vocal projection and melismatic decoration come across effortlessly.

Performance: With the drummer and guitarist jumpstart, Baer launched onto the stage to break-up song “Take It Personal”—in Avril Lavigne-esque stage style—the crowd roaring on the sharp cutoff ending. “Not That Girl” continued as a shoutout to women standing their ground in relationships (with the crowd echoing the “not that girl” section), and “Never Have I Ever” presented a gentler guitar intro with a melancholy theme centered around the end of a relationship. The crowd jumped right in, swaying along with mobile phone flashlights in the air.

Summary: Finishing the night with an ode to singledom, “R.I.P.” highlighted Baer’s unfiltered and conversational style. Speaking to her audience throughout the set, Baer appears naturally charismatic and has a very theatrical stage persona. Her danceable pop tracks reel in the attention of her fans and keep them connected to her storytelling, while the lighthearted ease between the group on stage make for a collaborative production. Casey Baer delivers an engaging, dynamic collection of journal-entry stories and presents a lively, upbeat evening of music; perfect for the young, raving pop fan. – **Andrea Beenham**

Hart Plaza/ Absopure Waterfront Stage/ Detroit Jazz Festival Detroit, MI

Contact: alex@agreenegroup.com

Web: anissalea.com

Players: Anissa Lea, lead vocals; Adam Allen, guitar; Rob Emanuel, drums; Kurt Krahnke, upright bass; Kurt Schreitmüller, keyboards; Keith Kaminski, saxophone; Justin Garrett Walker, trumpet

Material: A seamless and stunning cross-section of modern jazz peppered with classic soul and pop flavorings is what you will find in this artist’s catalog. Lea also works original songs into the mix that are unique, yet reflective of her cover choices. Intricate and lyrically compelling tunes like “Face to Face” and “Life” give you a window into the singer’s soulful inventiveness. Deep cuts like Barrett Strong’s “Misery” and Billie Holiday’s “Good Morning Heartache” display a rich musical knowledge base and a deep respect for all that has come before.

Musicianship: Simply put, you’ve got the cream of the crop for jazz in Detroit and beyond. Lea is just beginning to make her transition to larger venues and audiences, yet she has all the style and panache of a veteran performer. Kaminski and Walker play with stellar precision and push each selection forward with their punchy charts and well executed accents. Krahnke and Emanuel create a gossamer ebb and flow that shifts the collective groove from sambas to swing at a moment’s notice. On the melodic front, Allen elicits an array of complementary lead lines



and accompaniment, while Schreitmüller offers sharp counterpoint and ambience.

Performance: A capacity crowd and a lovely day in close proximity to the Detroit River set the mood for the main event. This was the young raven-haired chanteuse’s international festival debut, and she brought all the gravitas and attitude one would expect from a headliner. Lea darted all across the stage, interacting with her guitarist, taking cues from the band and keeping friendly and engaging dialogue with the audience. Highlights included the Peggy Lee-inspired “Black Coffee,” where Emanuel’s drumming created exciting syncopation and an uptempo spirit. The Drifters’ “This Magic

Moment” was one of Lea’s strongest vocals and the band provided an ample platform for her to riff and show her stuff. The aforementioned “Life” was one of the more personal songs for the young songstress and the pianist’s Kenny Barron-like support truly brought out the best in her heart-gripping message.

Summary: Anissa Lea has been singing since her pre-teens and is now transitioning into, not just a consummate interpreter of timeless jazz and pop standards, but an insightful and savvy songwriter in her own right. Her pairing with these international Motor City heavyweights is a natural and brilliant combination. – **Eric Harabadian**

LIVE REVIEWS

SIR Studios Hollywood, CA

Web: trupitch.com/circle-the-earth

Contact: Johnny Miller, 310-435-7195

Players: Michael McBay, bass; Sandro Feliciano, drums; Kazuki Tokaii, guitar; Sandy Chao Wang, keys; Khadia, vocals

Material: Circle the Earth is a pop/rock outfit with many influences oozing out of their pores. From R&B to '80s/'90s rock to rap to jazz to pop, it all comes together nicely in well-written tunes that uplift and nourish the soul. Most of the songs are rock guitar-driven with nice solos complementing the rhythm section. The keys also helped bring the songs to life as Wang and Feliciano, playing off each other, added another fantastic layer of music to each song.

Musicianship: Good guitar leads, along with a solid rhythm section, kept the energy going as Khadia, with her sultry, "Beyonce-like" voice, crooned the mellow songs and belted out the melodies when called upon. All the members of the band pitched in to make each tune blossom. Wang and her keys, in particular, were a nice addition to all the tunes.

Performance: Circle the Earth integrates many types of melodies and genres. Not only that, they incorporate dance and choreography, as well. This makes for an entertaining visual to go along with the



music. McBay and Khadia are naturals onstage and they got everyone else going, but that's not to say Wang, Feliciano and Tokaii didn't bring it, as well.

Summary: Circle the Earth's repertoire of songs is as diverse as the members' ethnicity. Taiwan, Japan, Brazil and the Americas all come together to play rock, jazz, pop and hints of country music to your soul's delight. Songs

like "Sweetest Pain" and "All The Way" keep you dancing to the music, while the hard-hitting "Dead" will make you want to bang your head. The songs are original and creative and you can feel the passion exude from all the members as each tune is played. If they weren't rocking you out with "Dead," they were wooing you with "The Other Side" and "Ai, Ai, Ai." Great all-around performance. Circle the Earth are not to be missed! - **Pierce Brochetti**



Troubadour Hollywood, CA

Players: Jeff "Skunk" Baxter, guitar, vocals; CJ Vanston, keyboard, vocals (produced Def Leppard, Toto, Joe Cocker, composer, engineer, studio); Hank Horton, bass, vocals (Detroit, MI, studio, Detroit symphony); Mark Damian, drums, vocals

Materials: Playing to a packed house at The Troubadour, Jeff "Skunk" Baxter showcased 11 of 12 tracks from his first solo release *Speed of Heat*. From his opener, the rock & roll ceilidh/drum corps salute, "Ladies From Hell" (a nod

to Baxter's Scottish heritage and the kilted warriors of WWII) to the downhome sticky blues of "I Can Do Without," gritty, soulful stylings of "Bad Move" and fat, nasty funk of Billy & The Nightriders' "Insecurity" (featuring fantastic vocals from drummer Mark Damian), the audience was entranced, hanging on to every note of the 90-minute set.

Musicianship: Each player presented absolute magic, between their unison on ethereal instrumentals and moody harmonies ("Giselle," "My Place In The Sun," "Juliet"), while adding grungy, pulsing drum and bass lines ("Speed of

Heat") under Baxter's gorgeous guitar licks, and through vocal contributions from all on stage. Reimagined instrumentals on "My Old School" (Steely Dan) were tight and flawless, with backing vocals from Mark and Kipp Lennon (of the band Venice). Hank Horton lent delicious bass work and incredible vocals (especially on "My Place In The Sun," "I Can Do Without" and "Bad Moves"), with Damian adding sensitive, otherworldly drum work ("Do It Again").

Performance: Demonstrating true versatility and humble appreciation for the musicians in his orbit, Baxter appeared to be in his element, openly chatting with the crowd and sharing stories of his career between songs, taking every opportunity to shine the spotlight on fellow musicians. "Apache" (The Shadows) highlighted his furious finger work, in defiance of his staunch humility (casually referring to himself and his colleagues as "studio sausages").

Summary: Closing with Steely Dan and Doobie Brothers covers, the stylistically shaken up, hoedown version of "China Grove" proved once and for all that a great song is a great song, and delivered the ultimate testament to the caliber of players on stage. With lifelong fans and music aficionados, and a rotation of industry heavyweights trickling through the club all night, Baxter and his colleagues delivered a seamless blend of rhythm and sound showcasing the best of 50-plus years of beloved music, along with a prelude of what lies ahead. - **Andrea Beenham**



KRISTY CHMURA

LiveStream Caldwell, NJ

Contact: beatrice@empktp.com

Web: kristychmura.com

Players. Kristy Chmura, harp, vocals; Damien Musto, electric guitar, background vocals; Chris Sulit, keyboards, acoustic guitar, background vocals, Kevin Walters, drums, percussion; Rob Fitzgerald, bass

Material: Most of us are accustomed to seeing a harp in a symphony orchestra or in some form of orchestral setting, but harpist and indie songwriter Kristy Chmura takes the instrument in a whole different direction. In her recent streamed event, Chmura combined just a few

choice songs interspersed with a prologue about each one. The song content touches on several themes, from trying to revive a previous relationship to resolving an existential crisis.

In "Come Back Home," Chmura beseeches a partner to return to her. The payoff line, also the song's title, repeats numerous times, further establishing the hook and the angst associated with the central message. With its captivating percussive treatment, Chmura is able to merge seamlessly with the band.

In "Leigh," a soul-searching exercise and her most vulnerable song, she questions how to continue navigating life: *Trying to figure out a way to keep on going but this world is so unkind...I feel dead inside/help me come*

alive.../one day I hope you find your tarnished batch of bravery/I want to touch the sky again. Kicking off with just an acoustic guitar accompaniment, the song then builds to a fuller band sound.

Musicianship: Chmura demonstrates mastery over her instrument and plays it as if were an extension of herself. In a stark contrast to the more ethereal sounds of the harp, her vocals work well against it to establish more sonic depth. Comprising a significant number of musicians, the band forms a backdrop for the harp and vocals to stay front and center and, when necessary, meld with the band.

Performance: When speaking about the material, Chmura plainly stated her intention for the songs and what each one means to her. When it came to the actual performance, she was totally immersed in the moment. Presented with all new material, a listener might welcome a rendition of a popular song, most likely one that has never been heard on the harp!

Summary: Kristy Chmura offers something unique by incorporating harp into the pop format, which can also serve as a great marketing and branding tool. The harp, by nature, has a very Zen effect on the listener and the vocals and backing band bring in that element of excitement. – *Ellen Woloshin*

The Hotel Café Hollywood, CA

Web: thevindys.com

Contact: info@thevindys.com

Players: Jackie Popovec, guitar, vocals; John Anthony, guitar, vocals; Rick Deak, guitar, vocals; Nathan Anthony, keyboard; Bredan Burke, bass; Owen Davis, drums; Kyle O'Donnell, trumpet; Brian Mayle, trombone; Tim Harker, sax

Material: The Vindys is a straight-forward, in-your-face, rock & roll outfit with a few twists and turns. Equipped with a horn section, they came out swingin' for the fences and were hitting home runs all night long. Rock & roll in the style of Led Zeppelin with two solid guitars leading the way for Popovec to cut through the chaos with superb vocals. A little bit country, a little bit reggae and a lot of rock & roll will brighten up anyone's day.

Musicianship: When nine, Grade AAA musicians are put together in one room, only one thing can happen—fantastic music! The opening tune, "Are You Ready," was a stunner from start to finish. The chemistry of rhythm section Burke, Nathan Anthony, Deak and Davis was exceptional, to say the least, and proved to be the perfect drawing board for Popovec and the rest of the crew to illustrate their creative abilities.

Popovec's voice is so strong and on cue, you would think you were listening to a young Ann Wilson of Heart. Then the horns took over and it was a one upmanship that couldn't be beat. For icing on the cake, John



Anthony played a superb, blistering solo that blew everyone away.

Performance: Super-fun performance. It was so overly crowded on the stage, but that just seemed to add to the excitement. The horns were very playful at one end and Popovec and the rhythm section were more serious on the other. That seemed to balance everything out just perfectly.

Summary: Hailing from Youngstown, OH, The Vindys are a class act not to be missed.

Great rock & roll tunes like "Don't Tell Me, Just Love Me," "Judas" and "Bugs," balanced with the reggae inspired "Red Wine" and the ballad "All and Everything." The Vindys give you an exceptional collection of songs. With three albums to their credit (*Red Wine*, *Keep Going* and the newly released *Bugs*), the Vindys have everything going for them: a super-powerful voice, a searing guitar and a fantastic rhythm section topped with a horn section. Rock & roll at its finest.

– *Pierce Brochetti*

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Contact: Randy or Cyndie Tobin
Basic Rate: please call for info

TIME ART STUDIO
 Studio City, CA
 818-980-2840
Email: darlene@darlenekoldenhoven.com
Web: darlenekoldenhoven.com/timeart
Contact: Darlene
Basic Rate: please call for info

TOMCAT ON THE PROWL PRODUCTIONS
 Canoga Park, CA 91304
 818-533-8669
Email: studio@tomcatonthehowl.com
Web: tomcatonthehowl.com
Contact: Thomas Hornig
Basic Rate: visit website for more info

UNITED RECORDING STUDIOS
 6050 Sunset Blvd.
 Hollywood, CA 90028
 323-467-9375
Email: vic@unitedrecording.com
Web: unitedrecordingstudios.com

VENETO WEST MASTERING
 PO Box 6363
 Pine Mountain Club, CA 93222
 310-200-9010
Email: rcm@venetowest.com
Web: venetowest.com/mastering
Contact: Ronan Chris Murphy
Basic Rate: Please contact for rates

WESTLAKE RECORDING
 7265 Santa Monica Blvd.
 West Hollywood, CA 90046
 323-851-9800
Email: bookings@thelakestudios.com
Web: thelakestudios.com
Basic Rate: please call for info

WOODRUM PRODUCTIONS
 Burbank, CA
 818-848-3393
Email: michael@woodrumproductions.com
Web: woodrumproductions.com
Contact: Michael Woodrum
Basic Rate: please call for info

ZENMASTERING
 P.O. Box 231097
 Encinitas, CA 92023
 858-231-1541
Web: zenmastering.com
Contact: Paul Abbott

COLORADO

1116 STUDIOS LLC
 1753 S 8th St
 Colorado Springs, CO 80905
 419-704-9253
Email: MisterG@1116Studios.com
Web: 1116Studios.com, Facebook
Contact: John "Mister G", Office Manager
Basic Rate: \$60/track for mastering; \$200/track for mixing; \$45/hr. for tracking

AIRSHOW MASTERING
 Boulder, CO 80301
 P.O. Box 17632
 303-247-9035
Email: Studio@airshowmastering.com
Web: airshowmastering.com
Basic Rate: please call for info

AUDIO PARK RECORDING & MASTERING
 Arvada, CO
 303-456-6122
Email: audioparkrecording@gmail.com
Web: facebook.com/AudioParkRecordingStudio
Basic Rate: please call for info

COLORADO SOUND STUDIOS

3100 W. 71st Ave.
Westminster, CO 80030
303-430-8811
Web: coloradosound.com
Basic Rate: please call or see website

QUAM AUDIO PRODUCTIONS

Boulder, CO
720-644-9899
Email: info@quamaudio.com
Web: quamaudio.com
Contact: Michael Quam
Basic Rate: please call for info

TONAL PARK

3063 Sterling Cir., Ste. 3
Boulder, CO 80301
303-247-9035
Email: contact@tonalpark.com
Web: tonalpark.com
Basic Rate: see web for info

CONNECTICUT

SAGE SOUND STUDIOS

549 Howe Avenue, Suite 404
Shelton, CT. 06484
203-922-0491
Web: sagesoundstudios.com
Email: info@sagesoundstudios.com

DELAWARE

JAMLAND STUDIO

2326 Empire Dr.
Wilmington, DE 19810
302-475-0204
Email: music@jamlandstudio.com
Web: jamlandstudio.com

OCCUPY STUDIO

170 East Main Street
Newark, DE 19711
302-223-4441
Email: record@occupystudio.com
Web: occupystudio.com

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA (D.C.)

LISTEN VISION LLC

2622 Georgia Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20001
202-332-8494
Email: info@listenvision.com
Web: listenvision.com
Basic Rate: please call for info

BLUE ROOM PRODUCTIONS

7718 Bradley Blvd.
Bethesda, MD 20817
240-505-5544
Email: info@blueroommusicstudio.com
Web: blueroommusicstudio.com

FLORIDA

BLACK DOG MASTERING STUDIO

3837 Northdale Blvd, Suite 271
Tampa, FL. 33624
813-434-1483
Email: BlackDogMastering@gmail.com
Web: blackdogmastering.com
Basic Rate: please call for info

EMERALD CITY RECORDING, INC.

105 Dunbar Ave., Ste. A
Oldsmar, FL 34677
813-814-1062

Email: info@emeraldcityrecording.com

Web: emeraldcityrecording.com
Basic Rate: please call for rates

FULLERSOUND INC.

3551 S.W. 116th Ave.
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33330
305-556-5537 Fax 954-727-5303
Email: info@fullersound.com
Web: fullersound.com
Basic Rate: please call for rates

UPCOMING STUDIO, INC.

601 W. Oakland Park Blvd., Ste. 13
Wilton Manors, FL 33311-0913
954-530-4710
Email: mastering@upcomingstudio.com
Web: upcomingstudio.com

NOISEMATCH STUDIOS

4306 NW 2nd Ave
Miami, FL 33127
786-356-6096
Email: info@noisematch.com
Web: noisematch.com
Basic Rate: Call for info

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4002 Hwy 78 Ste 530. #167
Snellville, GA
678-660-8744
Email: bchillmusic@gmail.com
Web: bchillmusic.com

COS MASTERING

800 E. Ave., NE
Atlanta, GA 30312
404-524-7757
Contact: Larry Antony
Email: larry@cosmastering.com
Web: cosmastering.com

SING MASTERING

781 Wheeler St. N.W.
Studio 8
Atlanta, GA 30318
404-827-8503
Email: info@singmastering.com
Web: singmastering.com
Basic Rate: please call for info

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LAVA TRACKS RECORDING

P.O. Box 6564
Kamuela, Big Island, HI 96743
808-885-6558
Email: cb@lavatracks.com
Web: facebook.com/LavaTracks
Contact: Charles Michael Brotman, Grammy Award winner
Basic Rate: call or check our website for contact info.

SEASIDE RECORDING

Wailuku, Maui, HI
808-280-0722
Web: seasiderecording.com,
joelkatzmaui.com
Contact: Joel Katz
Basic Rate: reasonable rates by the hour, week or job

IDAHO

TONIC ROOM, THE

1509 S. Robert St., Ste. 103
Boise, ID 83705
208-338-8433
Email: info@tonicroomstudios.com,
mastering@tonicroomstudios.com
Web: tonicroomstudios.com
Basic Rate: see web for info

COTTONWOOD STUDIOS

4436 E. 49th S
Idaho Falls, ID 83406
208-757-7328
Web: cottonwoodstudios.net

DASH MASTERING STUDIO

225 W Franklin Road
Meridian, ID. 83542
208-284-5688
Email: dashmastering@gmail.com
Web: dashmastering.com

ILLINOIS

BOILER ROOM, THE

1440 N. Western Ave.
Chicago, IL 60622
773-525-8551
Email: collin@brmastering.com
Web: brmastering.com
Basic Rate: please call for info

CHICAGO MASTERING SERVICE

Chicago, IL
773-265-1733
Email: info@chicagomasteringservice.com
Web: chicagomasteringservice.com
Basic Rate: please call for info

DON GRIFFIN MASTERING AND MIXING

5818 S. Archer Road
Summit, IL. 60501
708-267-2198, 312-286-5018
Email: don@studiovmr.com
Web: studiovmr.com

GRAVITY STUDIOS

2250 W. North Ave.
Chicago, IL 60647
773-862-1880
Email: info@gravitystudios.com
Web: gravitystudios.com
Basic Rate: Call for more info

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P.O. Box 68143
Schaumburg, IL 60168
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Email: master@massivemastering.com
Web: massivemastering.com
Contact: John Scrip
Basic Rate: hourly/project rates on web

PLAYGROUND RECORDING AND MASTERING STUDIO, THE

Chicago, IL
312-498-8265
Email: admin@playgroundstudio.com
Web: playgroundstudio.com
Basic Rate: \$500/day recording, \$65/hr.

INDIANA

AZMYTH RECORDING

5130 Brouse Ave.
Indianapolis, IN. 46205
317-281-3670
Email: info@azmythrecording.com
Web: azmythrecording.com

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6345 Carrollton Ave
Indianapolis, IN 46220
317-981-5351
Email: booking@TheRTRC.com
Web: thertrc.com

MAHERN AUDIO

2051 W Vernal Pike
Bloomington, IN. 47404
812-320-2437
Email: info@mahernaudio.com
Web: mahernaudio.com

IOWA

CATAMOUNT RECORDING, INC.

5737 Westminster Dr.
Cedar Falls, IA 50613
319-2268-1011
Email: catamount@cfu.net
Web: catamountrecording.com
Contact: Kitty Tatman
Basic Rate: please see web for info

KANSAS

CHAPMAN RECORDING & MASTERING

8805 Monrovia St.
Lenexa, KS 66215
913-894-6854
Email: chuck@chapmanrecording.com
Web: chapmanrecording.com

LOUISIANA

MUSIC SHED, THE

929 Euterpe St.
New Orleans, LA 70130
504-975-1294
Email: info@musicshedstudios.com
Web: musicshedstudios.com
Basic Rate: please call for info

MAINE

BELLWETHER MASTERING

Portland, ME
619-228-6941
Email: Joe@bellwethermastering.com
Web: bellwethermastering.com
Contact: Joe Goodwin
Basic rates: varies, see website

GATEWAY MASTERING STUDIOS

428 Cumberland Ave.
Portland, ME 04101
207-828-9400
Email: staff@gatewaymastering.com
Web: gatewaymastering.com
Basic Rate: please call for info

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Web: abovegroundstudios.com
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Specialization: Mastering for iTunes and vinyl, radio ready mastering

HIT AND RUN RECORDING

18704 Muncaster Rd.
Rockville, MD 20855
301-948-6715
Email: info@hitandrunrecording.com
Web: hitandrunrecording.com
Contact: Steve Carr
Basic Rate: please call for info

LION AND FOX RECORDING STUDIOS

9517 Baltimore Ave.
College Park, MD 20740
301-982-4431
Email: mail@lionfox.com
Web: lionfox.com/mastering.htm
Basic Rate: please call for info

OMEGA RECORDING STUDIOS

12712 Rock Creek Mill Rd., Ste. 142
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301-230-9100
Web: omegastudios.com
Basic Rate: 125/hr. (does not include tax or materials)

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M WORKS MASTERING

60 Hampshire St.
Cambridge, MA 02139
617-577-0089
Email: studio@m-works.com
Web: m-works.com
Basic Rate: reasonable rates

PEERLESS MASTERING

161 N. St.
Newtonville, MA 02460
617-527-2200
Email: info@peerlessmastering.com
Web: peerlessmastering.com
Contact: Jeff
Basic Rate: please call for info

PILOT RECORDING STUDIOS

1073 Main St.
Housatonic, MA
413-274-1073
Email: info@pilotrecording.com
Web: pilotrecording.com
Contact: Will Schillinger
Basic Rate: please email for info

SOUNDMIRROR, INC.

76 Green St.
Boston, MA 02130-2271
617-522-1412 Fax 617-524-8377
Web: soundmirror.com
Basic Rate: please call for info

MICHIGAN

BROADSIDE PRODUCTIONS

901 S. Westnedge
Kalamazoo, MI 49008
269-226-0948
Email: studio@broadsideproductions.com
Web: broadsideproductions.com
Basic Rate: by appointment only. Call for rates

THIRD MAN MASTERING

441 W. Canfield
Detroit, MI 482301
313-209-5212
Contact: Bill Skibbe, Warren Defever
Email: mastering@thirdmanrecords.com
Web: thirdmanmastering.com

STUDIO A RECORDING

5619 N. Beech Daly
Dearborn Heights, MI 49127
313-561-7489
Email: info@studioarecording.com
Web: studioarecording.com
**No degree, Avid Pro Tools certificate

MINNESOTA

RARE FORM MASTERING

712 Ontario Ave. W.
Minneapolis, MN 55403
612-327-8750
Email: info@rareformmastering.com
Web: rareformmastering.com
Contact: Greg Reiersen
Basic Rate: please contact for info

FLOWERS STUDIO

2751 Hennepin Ave. #161
Minneapolis, MN 55408
612-567-1219
Email: info@flowersstudio.com
Web: flowersstudio.com

SKYLAND STUDIOS

7452 236th St. E
Lakeville, MN 55044
Web: skylandstudio.com

MISSISSIPPI

MALACO MUSIC GROUP

3023 W. Northside Dr.
Jackson, MS 39213
601-982-4522, 800-272-7936
Email: kbruce@malaco.com
Web: malaco.com
Basic Rate: please call for info

TAPROOT AUDIO DESIGN

108 Co Rd 411
Oxford, MS 38655
662-801-3273
Email: info@taprootaudiodesign.com
Web: taprootaudiodesign.com
Basic Rate: please call for info

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211 South College St
Arcadia, MO.
573-944-4449
Email: greggill45@gmail.com
Web: endeavorav.com

GRM RECORDING

1118 W Main Street
Blue Springs, MO. 64015
816-598-8810
Email: gfmmodernrecording@gmail.com
Web: gfmmodernrecording.com

STUDIO 2100

2100 N. National Ave
Springfield, MO 65803
417-864-0028
Email: jeff@studio2100.com
Web: studio2100.com
Contact: Jeff Smith
Basic Rate: please call for info

NEBRASKA

FOCUS MASTERING

6866 Willow St.
Omaha, NE. 68152
402-915-0557
Email: Doug@focusmastering.com
Web: focusmastering.com

STUDIO 24

8601 N. 30th St.
Omaha, NE 68112
402-342-9090
Email: chuckbeckler@studio24omaha.com
Web: studio24omaha.com
Contact: Chuck Beckler
Basic Rate: please call for info

NEVADA

THE HIDEOUT RECORDING STUDIO

14 Sunset Way
Henderson, NV 89014
702-445-7705
Web: hideoutlv.com
Basic Rate: please call for info

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603-927-6363
Email: cedarhousesound@gmail.com
Web: cedarhousesound.com

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35 Harring Ct.
North Haledon, NJ 07508
201-824-7860
Email: littmuze@edlittmanmastering.com
Web: edlittmanmastering.com
Contact: Ed Littman
Basic Rate: available on website

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917-886-7444
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Masterclass: redbullmusicacademy.com/
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Web: knackmastering.com
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Contact: Scott Anthony, Rebecca Turner

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8100 Wyoming Blvd. N.E., Ste. 315
Albuquerque, NM 87123
505-459-6242
Email: andy@highfidelitymastering.com
Web: highfidelitymastering.com
Contact: Andy Rogulich
Basic Rate: please call for info

NEW YORK

BANG ZOOM MASTERING
P.O. Box 145
Orangeburg, NY 10962
845-445-4460
Email: steve@bangzoomonline.com
Web: masteringzone.net
Contact: Steve Vavagiakis
Services: Analog and Digital Audio Mastering

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New York, NY 10036
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Email: donna.kloepfer@batterystudios.com
Web: batterystudios.com

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Email: info@electrickingdom.com
Web: electrickingdom.com

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New York, NY 10004
212-625-3467
Email: info@engineroomaudio.com
Web: engineroomaudio.com
Basic Rate: please call for info

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9 Marsala Ct
Cortland Manor, NY. 10567
914-737-2795
Email: dianazinni@JLMSound.com
Web: joelambertmastering.com

KEVORKIAN MASTERING
Greenpoint NY
917-406-9147
Web: kevorkianmastering.com
Contact: Fred Kevorkian, ftkf@aol.com; Larry
Lachmann, larry@kevorkianmastering.com

LODGE, THE
740 Broadway, Ste. 605
New York, NY 10003
212-353-3895
Email: info@thelodge.com
Web: thelodge.com, facebook.com/lodge-
mastering
Basic Rate: please call for info

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543 Middle Country Rd.
Coram, NY 11727
631-804-0201
Email: info@musichousemastering.com
Web: musichousemastering.com
Contact: Michael Dominici, owner
Basic Rate: cal for rates

RIGHT TOUCH MASTERING
New York, NY
800-933-1305 ext 1

Email: info@righttouchmastering.com
Web: righttouchmastering.com
Basic Rate: Call for Info

SKYELAB MUSIC PRODUCTIONS
37 W 37th St., 12th Floor
New York, NY 10018
212-789-8942
Email: info@skylab.com
Web: skylab.com
Basic Rate: please call for info

STERLING SOUND
33 Hilliard Avenue
Edgewater, NJ 07020
212-604-9433
Email: mark.glaser@sterling-sound.com
Web: sterling-sound.com
Basic Rate: please see web

Additional location:

805 Meridian Street
Nashville, TN. 37207

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307 W. 121st St.
New York, NY 10027
212-665-2200
Email: mleedy@themasteringpalace.com
Web: themasteringpalace.com

THRESHOLD MUSIC
212-244-1871
Email: thresholdstudiosnyc@gmail.com
Web: thresholdmusic.com
Basic Rate: please call for info

TIMELESS MASTERING
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Brooklyn, NY 11206
Email: info@timelessmastering.com
Web: timelessmastering.com

TRUTONE MASTERING LABS INC.
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Nanuet, NY 10954
845-680-6490
Email: sales@trutonemastering.com
Web: trutonemastering.com
Basic Rate: please call for info

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Amherst, NY
888-878-3292
Email: anthony@xtreamaudio.com
Web: xtreamaudio.com
Contact: Anthony Casuccio
Basic Rate: call for customized quote

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Web: bluefieldmastering.com
Contact: Jeff Carroll
Basic Rate: please call or Email

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Carrboro, NC 27510
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Web: kitchenmastering.com
Contact: Brent
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Contact: Dave Harris
Basic Rate: please call for info

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440-775-3681
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Web: acoustikmusik.com
Contact: Jimmy Pearson
Basic Rate: please call for info

CAULIFLOWER AUDIO
1305 W 80th St., Suite104B
Cleveland, OH. 44102
440-539-5457

Email: info@caulifloweraudio.com
Web: caulifloweraudio.com

THE DREAMCATCHERS RECORDING STUDIO
7384 E Main St. Suite B
Reynoldsburg, OH
614-434-6012
Email: info@thedreamcatchers.studio
Web: thedreamcatchers.studio

STARSOUND STUDIOS
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North Royalton, OH. 44133
216-374-8458
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Web: starsoundstudios.com

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Web: fostermastering.com
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15851 N.W. Willis Rd.
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Email: steve@futurediscsystems.com
Web: futurediscsystems.com
Contact: Steve Hall or Laura Hall
Basic Rate: please call for rates or more info

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Web: sitnspinstudios.com
Contact: Matt Morgan

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 917-902-9909
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 Vlado@VladoMastering.com,
 PaulWest@Vladomastering.com
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Songwriting's Commercial "Reality"

Being a songwriter today should be easier than it has ever been in the past. You have easier access to affordable instruments, software, samples, DAWS (digital audio workstations), networking, workshops, and even educational programs including degrees specifically designed for a career in commercial songwriting. With developing your commercial songwriting craft, you can be better equipped as an artist and/or a producer. It is absolutely true to say if you can write the hit song, you can write your own ticket to any place in this business.

I have been fortunate to work with songwriters at every level and there are some common things that I have tried to express for successfully advancing their developments. Writing a song versus writing a commercially viable song can be miles apart, and if we don't consider what makes a song commercial, we may be doing nothing more than enjoying an incredible hobby. We always have to remind ourselves what it is that makes songs valuable in the marketplace. Many songwriters study and take an analytical look at the craft. That can be beneficial, but if studied too much, it becomes just that...a "craft of creation." I can be terrible with words, but just like writing songs, I have a better chance of being understood if I can explain this challenging situation with analogies.

Music can be like television. If I asked what have been the most popular types of television shows in recent years, we might agree that they have been referred to as "reality" shows, even though we know those shows are actually "scripted reality." Nevertheless, the audience seems to tune in week after week after week. They are addicted to the "reality" of the situation. On the other hand, we as "creatives" could let the viewers know there is something better to see. We could tell them about that awesome movie on another channel that has a great plot, cinematography, character development, score, and wonderful acting, but the cold reality is learning when we make viewers aware of that wonderful movie, they are still likely to choose the non-artistic entertainment of what appears to be actions and reactions of real,

raw, honest emotions with no plot or planning. The knowledge of that can be very sobering to artistic creatives in the TV and film world. Doesn't the audience appreciate the craft? The "Reality TV" scenario helps communicate key points that we songwriters need to let sink in.

As commercial songwriters, we need to always write with the listener in mind. The content is for them. I'm not saying to avoid writing those personal songs, but just realize your personal songs are not to be confused with commercial songs. Commerciality is the priority for the professional songwriter, but occasionally the song can cater to both self and audience. When those songs show up, they are true gifts to pen.

is hiding all the puzzle pieces. Puzzle pieces expose "fabrication" and that extinguishes the "perceived reality" that listeners crave.

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

Another mistake that averts the reality needed in songs is when songwriters start trying to prove they are songwriters by flexing their expertise and skills. It is hard not to prove you are valid. After all, you have endured and succeeded with a lot of skill and development. Again, as a professional songwriter, you have to keep your goals in check. The songs are for

the audience and to be received realistically, flexing well-accomplished skills and deep artistic thoughts to impress other creatives may push your songs out of "commercial" bounds while the listeners are exposed to the skillful and artistic fabrication.

As songwriters have many things available for developing and refining their craft today, perhaps their cheapest and most valuable tool will always be the proper perspective. For success and the audience's sake, KEEP IT REAL no matter how much you are fabricating.

When songwriters figure out how to create songs with commercial "reality,"

the odds swing in their favor for opportunities of success. Those types of songs are competitive and the industry should discover them so the audience can too. Amazing-Songs.com is a professional and private platform that exposes commercial songs for industry executives' awareness when ready.

Commercial "Reality" = Commercial Songs
Hide the puzzle pieces - Show the picture.
Write On!



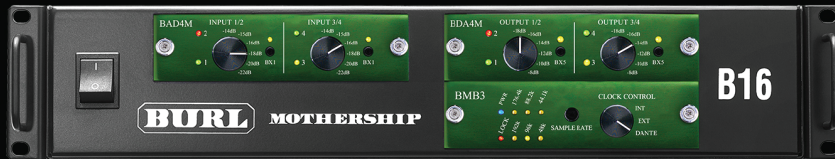
"Writing a song versus writing a commercially viable song can be miles apart, and if we don't consider what makes a song commercial, we may be doing nothing more than enjoying an incredible hobby."

Just like television, the song appeal for the audience is found in their interest to witness "reality," but let's be honest, when we write songs we are making stuff up, a little or a lot. Either way, perceived "reality" is the goal. Here comes another analogy...

Being a songwriter is like being a puzzle master. We are putting puzzles together. As a puzzle master, I can skillfully put together large jigsaw puzzles and if I finished a 5,000-piece puzzle of the Nashville skyline, I would want to show you my accomplishment. You would be sure to say it is a "huge puzzle" of the Nashville skyline. The difference in putting together puzzles as a puzzle master and then, putting together puzzles as a professional songwriter takes even more skill. When I'm done as a writer and present my work, you should only say that is a "picture." The audience should never see any puzzle pieces involved in the "song" picture. The art of writing commercial songs

SHELBY KENNEDY is an accomplished songwriter whose discography contains cuts by artists like Ray Charles and Reba McEntire. He is the President of Amazing Radio's North American division (@AmazingRadioUSA), which owns and operates Amazing Radio, CMJ, and Amazing Songs. Learn more about Amazing Songs here: amazing-songs.com

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