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EXEC PROFILE

Rachel
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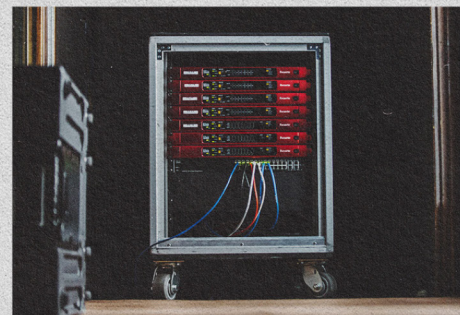
Forty years ago in **1985**, home recording was limited in equipment and accessibility, and professional studio time was out of reach for most musicians. In that environment, Focusrite emerged with the legendary large-format **Forte** and **Studio Consoles**; tools that set a new benchmark for sound quality and quickly became sought-after in the world's top studios. By the early 1990s, as engineers and producers fell in love with the sound, Focusrite began producing rack-mounted versions of the console's **ISA** mic-pre modules, which fast became highly desirable outboard gear used in studios worldwide.



In 2002, the first **Mbox** audio interface by Digidesign (later, Avid) featured Focusrite mic preamps, helping to usher in the DAW era. When Avid released Pro Tools 9 in 2011, opening their platform to interfaces from any brand, millions of musicians gained access to professional quality audio recording at home via the, now iconic, "little red box" called **Scarlett**. Now in its 4th generation, over 8 million Scarlett interfaces have been sold worldwide, empowering all creators to sound their best, whatever their budget or setup.

With the momentum of innovation, in 2011, Focusrite partnered with Audinate and developed **RedNet**, the modular audio-over-IP solution, designed for high-channel-count audio systems using Dante® networking technology. RedNet continues to evolve and power audio workflows from immersive to front of house, broadcast, and the world's best studios.

What's next? While the future of audio is always unfolding, one thing is certain: Focusrite will be there, driving the next evolution of recording.





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Marina

MC spoke to singer, songwriter, poet, and producer Marina about her new *Princess of Power* album, previous life with Marina & the Diamonds, ongoing tour, and future plans.

By Lina Lecaro

Photos: Bethany Vargas

Video Game Composer Roundtable

Four video game music-makers talk shop.

By Andy Kaufmann



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Compiled by Robin Rose



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By Rob Putnam

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MUSIC CONNECTION

E. Eric Bettelli PUBLISHER

E. Eric Bettelli
GENERAL MANAGER /
ADVERTISING DIRECTOR
ericb@musicconnection.com

Robin Rose
OPERATIONS MANAGER /
DIRECTORIES EDITOR
robinr@musicconnection.com

Jon K
ADVERTISING / MARKETING
jonk@musicconnection.com

Ray Holt
DIGITAL MARKETING DIRECTOR
rayh@musicconnection.com

Brett Callwood
SENIOR EDITOR
brett@musicconnection.com

John Curry
ART DIRECTOR
artdirector@musicconnection.com

Ruby Risch
ASSOCIATE EDITOR / SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER
rubyr@musicconnection.com

Michael Stern
NEW TOYS
newtoys@musicconnection.com

Andrea Beenham
SONG BIZ
drea@dreaajo.com

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

FEATURE WRITERS

Andy Kaufmann andy.kaufmann@verizon.net • **Rob Putnam** toe2toe6@hotmail.com
Jonathan Widran lew522@aol.com

EDITORIAL INTERNS

Anna Jordan, Cade Pinkerson intern@musicconnection.com

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

David Arnson, Bobby Borg, Miguel Costa, Shana Nys Dambrot,
Gary Graff, Eric Harabadian, Ari Herstand, Dan Kimpel, Glenn Litwak,
Lina Lecaro, Joseph Maltese, Megan Perry Moore, Emily Mills.
Jacqueline Naranjo, Kurt Orzeck, Lyndsey Parker,
Steve Sattler, Adam Seyum, Daniel Siwek, Eric Sommer,
Brian Stewart, Ellen Woloshin

PHOTOGRAPHERS

David Arnson, JB Brookman, Alex Calise, Miguel Costa,
Kevin Estrada, Apple Kaufmann, David Klein, Alex Kluff, Heather Koepp,
Charlie Meister, Jacqueline Naranjo, Scott Perham, Garrett Poulos,
Alexander G. Seyum, Daniel Seyum, Mark Shiwohich, Daniel Siwek,
Brian Stewart, Ellen Woloshin

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Founded by: J. Michael Dolan / jmichaeldolan.com

CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS

3441 Ocean View Blvd., Glendale, CA 91208 Office: 818-995-0101
Fax: 818-638-8015 Email: contactmc@musicconnection.com
Web: musicconnection.com
Legal Counsel: Christopher J. Olsen / chris@chrisolsenlaw.com

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Legendary Session Drummer's Revolutionary Streaming Venture:

Once voted by *Modern Drummer* magazine's reader's poll as one of the top five studio drummers in the world for three years in a row, Russ Miller brings decades of diverse industry experience to his role as founder and CEO of the premium live streaming and on demand entertainment platform Hitkor. Namely, performances on 300 albums, work with superstars in many genres (Ray Charles, The Psychedelic Furs, Andrea Bocelli, Nelly Furtado), touring and recording with his own band Arrival, performing on countless film soundtracks, and being the house drummer on *American Idol*. Touring in the pre-streaming era, he remembers the euphoric feeling of playing his most amazing solos, then realizing it was only for the fans in that room and then gone. Hitkor's array of technological advances, rooted in the filmmaking software of the German company Olid, ensures that captured performances can be enjoyed in perpetuity.

The Hitkor Experience: Hitkor's mission is to use modern technology to provide fans with a customizable and immersive experiences of concerts and other live performances, allowing them (in the later, on demand KorPlayer mode) to switch camera angles and audio streams to control their view/perspective. It offers artists a fresh way to reach fans across the globe, giving them a front-row seat (for just \$9.99, plus \$4 for 30-day post show Video on Demand access) without the need for expensive touring and offers numerous assets, including a state-of-the-art recording of their show. The 20,000 sq ft. Simi Valley facility where Hitkor is based has a 36' x 30' performance stage, 30 ft. ceilings, and an audience seating capacity of 100. There are also several loading docks and 100 parking spaces. Viewers can watch anywhere, anytime with optimized web based streaming. The KorPlayer allows them to alternate between the main show, 180-degree VR, REEL AUDIO™ spatial audio, and multi-camera mode.



Multiple Experiences and Participating Artists: Hitkor offers three types of shows, starting with Premiere events with major artists like En Vogue, Filter, and Jordin Sparks. Showcase events invite jazz and Latin performers, as well as up-and-coming pop stars like *American Idol* Season 16 winner Maddie Poppe and country singer Mitch Russell. Hitkor's Exclusive Series expands beyond music to include *Comedy Overload*, hosted by D.L. Hughley, and Pickin' and Grinnin' featuring a mix of country music and comedy. Some of the artists and musicians who have discovered the excitement of Hitkor include Steve Smith & Vital Information, Lo-Cash, Judith Hill, Ministry, Haley Reinhart and jazz greats Peter Erskine, Tom Scott and The Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra. Encore also has recorded interviews by the likes of Martina McBride, Jon Secada, Steve Lukather, Sam Moore and the late Chick Corea.

Contact contact@hitkor.com

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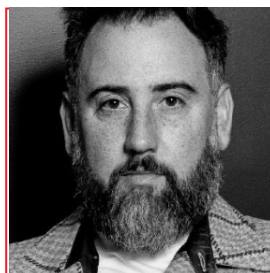
Ross Golan

Co-Chair of the S&C Wing

The Recording Academy® Songwriters & Composers Wing™

The Recording Academy® Songwriters & Composers Wing™ has welcomed

award-winning songwriter **Ross Golan** as their new **Co-Chair of the S&C Wing**, where he will work in tandem with multi-platinum songwriter and current Chair Evan Bogart and S&C Wing Senior Managing Director Susan Stewart to shape programming, promote membership, and collaborate with industry partners. In addition to continuing his role as Co-Chair, Bogart will also represent the Academy on a national level as Vice Chair of its Board of Trustees. For more, contact britta.purcell@grammy.com.



Stephanie Wright

Executive Vice President/Head of A&R
Music Corporation of America

Music Corporation of America (MCA),

has announced the appointment of **Stephanie Wright** as **Executive Vice President/Head of A&R**. In this role, Wright will lead the A&R team in talent scouting as well as the label's creative direction and development. She will report to Mike Harris, MCA President & CEO. "Rejoining MCA is an exciting opportunity to continue doing what I love most: discovering and developing incredible artists while helping them realize their full creative potential," says Wright. For more, contact stephanie.wright@umusic.com.



Grey Gordon

Communications and Digital Marketing Manager

American Association of Independent Music

The American Association of Independent Music (A2IM) has appointed **Grey Gordon** as the new **Communications and Digital Marketing Manager**. "We are thrilled to welcome Grey Gordon to the A2IM team as our new Communications and Digital Marketing Manager," said Richard James Burgess, President & CEO of A2IM. "I'm so excited and honored to be joining the A2IM team," says Gordon. "I look forward to helping expand the visibility of our members and community." For more, contact grey@a2im.org.



Anne Rohosy

Chief Commercial Officer
Gibson, Inc.

Gibson, Inc. has announced the appointment of **Anne Rohosy** as **Chief Commercial Officer (CCO)**. In this expanded role, Rohosy will lead Gibson's global commercial strategy, overseeing wholesale, direct-to-consumer, and retail channels as the company accelerates its growth and brand presence worldwide. "Gibson has a legacy unlike any other, and we have incredible opportunities ahead to expand our reach, strengthen our brands, and deliver for our fans and partners worldwide," said Rohosy. For more, contact lcoffey@primeprgroup.com.



John Pershing

Senior Vice President and Chief Technology Officer
ASCAP

The American Society of Composers Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) has named **John Pershing** as **Senior Vice President and Chief Technology Officer (CTO)**, effective September 22. Pershing brings a wealth of experience to ASCAP as a forward-thinking and transformative technology leader with deep expertise leading corporate IT teams to drive business growth. ASCAP CEO Elizabeth Matthews commented, "ASCAP is excited to bring John on board as we continue to drive innovative global technology solutions." For more, contact liossa@ascap.com.



Ed Poston

Head of A&R
Symphonic Distribution

Symphonic Distribution has hired **Ed Poston** as **Head of A&R**. Reporting to Symphonic's Chief Creative Officer, Randall Foster, Poston joins the team with over 15 years of experience. Based in New York City, Poston will work alongside Foster and Tim Bruno, Symphonic's SVP of Sales Operations, to expand Symphonic's artist relationships and help fuel the company's continued global growth. "I've long admired the team and their commitment to artist empowerment, and it is clear that we have unlimited growth potential together," says Poston. For more, contact laurie@jaybirdcom.com.



Emily Kennedy

VP, Business Development, Pop
Wasserman Music

Emily Kennedy has joined **Wasserman Music** as **VP, Business Development, Pop**. In this role, Kennedy will help spearhead growth initiatives across several key verticals: Film and TV, Digital and Gaming, Literary Branding, Sponsorship, and International. She will also work closely with all Wasserman businesses globally including Sports, Talent, Creators, and Brands and Properties. "Emily brings deep artist management and talent buying experience to our Pop division, reinforcing our artist-first approach," says Wasserman Music SVP, Artist Services Vince Amoroso. For more, contact wassermanmusicpr@shorefire.com.



Brianne Deslippe

SVP of Marketing
Big Loud Records

Big Loud Records has promoted **Brianne Deslippe** to **SVP of Marketing**. Deslippe will oversee Big Loud's marketing, creative, digital, publicity, streaming, and international departments. Most recently, she was SVP of International, spearheading global campaigns for Big Loud artists and imprints. Deslippe is a two-time winner of the CCMA's Industry Person of the Year Award. "This marks an exciting new chapter for Big Loud Records," says co-founder and CEO Seth England. For more, contact corey@bigloud.com.





▲ CORT GUITARS: THE ESSENCE SERIES

Cort Guitars, with a 53-year history of creating instruments known for both value and quality, introduces the Essence Series. This set of acoustic guitars is designed for musicians looking for the features of a classic acoustic guitar with great tone at a modest price point. The Essence Series features two body shapes: The Grand Auditorium and the OC Cutaway.

The Essence-GA-4 is a Grand Auditorium acoustic. Wider than a dreadnought, the Essence-GA-4 features a deep body with a narrower waist and a width of 1 3/4" (45mm) at the nut. The result is a guitar that Cort says is optimized for both picking and strumming. The Essence-OC-4 features a shallower body advertised as creating a closer connection to the player for ease of use on stage. With its one 11/16" (43mm) nut width, this Orchestra Model has a smaller neck as well, and may be suited for younger players.

Both acoustics are topped with a torrefied solid Sitka Spruce top using Cort's ATV process. The "Aged to Vintage" technique "ages" young Spruce by a baking procedure to remove moisture. With aged tonewoods being more costly and in shorter supply, torrefied wood has become popular and is regarded as having good tone. The tops bracing is also made of torrefied spruce. The mahogany neck, back, and sides are materials you would expect on a classic steel string guitar, as well as the rosewood fingerboard and bridge. The result is a competent and inspiring guitar. 18:1 Vintage Open Gear Tuners on the headstock offer precise tuning with old school styling. The herringbone rosette inlay and purfling give a look that usually comes on guitars that cost well into four figures. The nut and bridge saddle are "genuine bone," which used to be a standard feature on premium guitars long ago, but is less common these days.

A Fishman Presys VT EQ System is installed inside the body and offers the simplicity of only Volume and Tone controls. Cort states their installation method versus other systems that cut into the body preserves the guitar's natural resonance. The Essence Series are strung with Elixir Nanoweb Phosphor Bronze Light .012-.053 Acoustic Strings. While coated strings provide extended tone life, some players will want to restring the guitar with a non-coated string that has less of a dampening effect.

The playability and action on this guitar exceed that of some guitars offered at many times the price. While the price point is entry level to mid-level, this guitar could be used in a professional context. If you are looking for a great quality acoustic guitar that looks and sounds good on a modest budget, Cort Guitars are well worth a serious look. Available in a natural aged semi-gloss Sitka spruce finish or black. \$449

cortguitars.com

▼ HEADRUSH VX5 VOCAL PROCESSING PEDAL WITH AUTOTUNE BY ANTARES

AutoTune. The very mention of it conjures up images, love it or hate it. In the right hands, it can be imperceptible and help produce stunning vocals. Major singers whom you would think have no need of it, insist on it. Or it can make genres and styles through its use as an extremely stylized effect. Post Malone thanked AutoTune in his 2021 GRAMMY acceptance speech. AutoTune is not without controversy.

Historically, AutoTune has been the exclusive domain of producers, engineers and artists who took the time to learn the software. Until now. The Headrush VX5 brings instant live AutoTune technology to the hands of any artist in the form of an accessibly priced stomp box, with highly comprehensive features.

The HeadRush VX5 is a dedicated vocal effects pedal featuring the industry-standard Antares AutoTune pitch correction technology. Designed for both live and studio use, it provides a portable solution for vocalists to enhance their sound. The core of the pedal is its Antares AutoTune algorithm, which can be used for subtle, transparent pitch correction or for the classic hard-tuned, robotic vocal effect. Dedicated "Retune Speed" and "Humanize" knobs allow for precise, real-time control over the effect's intensity. For live performance, Talk Mode is enabled by a footswitch that bypasses all effects, allowing you to clearly address the audience between songs.

The VX5 also includes studio-quality effects from AIR Music Technology. These effects are arranged in a fixed signal chain: Compressor, Flavor (including distortion and saturation), Chorus, Reverb, Delay, and Intelligent Harmonizer.

This last feature can automatically generate vocal harmonies that are in key with your performance. It can either track your voice or listen to a connected instrument, such as a guitar or keyboard, to create dynamic harmonies. A/B Mode allows you to toggle individual effects on or off within a single preset using the footswitches for seamless transitions during a song. The pedal comes with 99 factory presets and can store up to 250 user-customizable presets.

The VX5 can function as a 2-in/2-out, 24-bit/48kHz USB audio interface, allowing you to record vocals and effects directly to a computer or mobile device. It features a premium XLR mic preamp with switchable +48V phantom power to support both dynamic and condenser microphones. There is also a 1/4" input for a guitar or keyboard to control the Intelligent Harmonizer. It has both an XLR line-level output with a ground lift and a 1/4" thru output. A 1/8" headphone jack is also included for monitoring.

When learning the pedal, *MC* found it useful to have the VX5 controls accessible by having it on a table instead of the floor. The VX5 is an innovative unique pedal that brings modern AutoTune effects and more, front and center. \$299

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► STAGETEC NEXUS COMPACT

Stagetec was founded in Berlin in 1993 by a group of former Neumann engineers. An Emmy-Award winning innovator in digital audio technology, with a focus on broadcast, theater, and AV systems, they have installations in The Bolshoi Theater, Vienna State Opera, Sydney Opera House, Vatican Radio, BBC, Moscow Kremlin, and Berlin Philharmonic—all world-renowned venues. While being well known in Europe, this year Stagetec made a formal expansion into the U.S. market, and capitalizing on their prior products, introduced the Stagetec NEXUS Compact.

The Stagetec NEXUS Compact is a premium audio interface and converter for a wide array of applications. Featuring eight 32-bit TrueMatch microphone inputs, NEXUS offers an extremely high dynamic range of 158dB. This technology eliminates the need for external analog microphone preamplifiers. Offering sampling rates up to 192kHz, NEXUS onboard digital signal processing allows it to function as a compact mixer for on-site productions. The internal processing engine provides powerful mixing and signal processing capabilities. DSP functions include a 120x16 mix matrix, 16 channels of input processing (delay, expander, EQ, and compressor), and 16 channels of output processing (delay, EQ, compressor, and limiter).

Entering the interface IP address or URL in any browser on a tablet or laptop operating in the same domain will call up the user interface. The web-based control enables all functions and parameters of the device to be configured using a standard web browser on a laptop or tablet. The software interface follows the established NEXUS control workflow, so engineers familiar with larger Stagetec systems will not need to learn a new platform.

The NEXUS Compact has been called a "digital Swiss Army knife" and converts analog and digital audio signals to support 64 channels of Audio-over-IP networking via Dante or AES67 protocols. This allows for turnkey integration into broadcast and production networks. The MADI options also allow for interfacing with consoles and multitrack recording systems for live sound and broadcast workflows. As well as digital output and network options, it also provides eight analog outputs.

NEXUS Compact is a smaller, modular version of Stagetec's NEXUS audio system first released in 1994. It provides the same function, but in a space conserving form-factor. The high-quality audio, modular expansion capability, and flexibility of the NEXUS Compact make it ideal for remote and mobile recording live events, field recording, or in a broadcast van. It can be used for studio expansion as part a larger NEXUS network or as a compact I/O solution for workstations. It can be integrated into larger broadcast systems via AES67, Dante, and Ember+ protocols. It can be used with a PA system for live sound and location mixing or as a breakout box for delay towers. NEXUS Compact is a premium audio interface suitable for a vast array of applications. \$6,500

stagetec.com



▼ PSP DRC-DYNAMIC RANGE CONTROLLER DAW PLUGIN

PSP DRC is a powerful new dynamic processor plugin inspired by the vintage 1976 DBX 118 compressor-expander. If you've never heard of the DBX 118, you are not alone. Not sold for recording studio use, the DBX 118 was originally marketed to consumers in the late 1970s and early 1980s for use with home audio systems. It was adopted by recording studios for its distinct character: it produces a "classic and dirty" compression effect with a desirable "snap and thump," especially suitable for drums, bass, and other rhythmic elements. The 118 offered a single linear dial to continuously vary the ratio from compression to expansion. This allowed users to either reduce dynamic range (making quiet parts louder and loud parts quieter) or increase it (making quiet parts quieter and loud parts louder). For those in the know, the DBX 118 provided an affordable alternative to the well-known and more expensive DBX 160 VU compressor, making it a budget-friendly option for engineers.

While the PSP DRC draws inspiration from the DBX 118, it is not a direct emulation of the original hardware. The plugin expands upon the original concept, incorporating additional features to enhance its utility in various audio processing scenarios. This approach allows users to harness both

compression and expansion across the entire dynamic range of the signal. Additionally, the processor can isolate and handle signals above or below the threshold, providing a more refined level of control. The PSP DRC also adds simultaneous compression and expansion and sidechaining which can be achieved by setting the Ratio to 2:1 in the compressor and down to 1:2 in the expander. The inclusion of advanced side chain features and external side chain support further increases DRC's capabilities, transforming it into a comprehensive compander or De-Essing plugin.

In testing within Pro Tools, MC found the PSP DRC to be very powerful and user friendly. Its user interface is clean and simple, and if you are familiar with a DBX 160, you already know how to use it. There are 132 user presets which are a great starting point, with names like tape compression, thick snap, and vocal leveler. These presets are further broken down into standard categories, Mix & Master, Tape, Vocals, Guitar & Bass, and more. There are also designer presets and a location to store your own. It is easy to get a remarkable quantity of different sounds from not subtle crushing, distortion, to very smooth and balanced, which were our favorites.

Consistent with all the PSP plugins that MC has tested, DRC has its own sound and is a great addition to your plugin toolbox. 30-day free trial available with download. \$99

pspaudioware.com

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

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BOOK STORE

Tales From the Bedroom Wall

By Steve Blacknell

(paperback) \$24

Blacknell used to host the MTV fashion show *London Calling*, at one point pulling in 23 million viewers. This, his memoir, is tagged "The Life and Times of a Serial Thrill Seeker," and that mission led him to many highs but also his fair share of lows. His book, which



includes a foreword by former Rolling Stone Bill Wyman, is jam-packed with anecdotes that run the gamut from hilarious to inspiring to heart-breaking. He's known and worked with a ton of the greats, and we hear about a lot of them, but ultimately this is a very human tale.

How to Build Your Music Empire

By Binx

(hardcover) \$19.99

Musician, entrepreneur, and artistic bumblebee, Binx has appeared in the pages of *MC* on more than one occasion due to her recorded output. She's a doer, a hard worker, and she's put pen to paper for this, an exhaustive guide to surviving in the notoriously unpredictable music industry. "Turn passion into profits" is the book's subhead, which is great, if not



necessarily easy to follow, advice. Binx takes you through strategies with labels, management, press, social media, networking, general well-being and much more as she proves that a musician doesn't have to reach arena levels to have a solid career.

Sanctuary of Sound: The Church Studio Story

By Teresa Knox

(hardcover) \$59

First off, hats off to the packaging. This stunning coffee table pictorial by Teresa Knox about the Tulsa, OK landmark is packed with gorgeous, glossy photos, blueprints and more, dating back to the building's old days as native land then an active church and, "in 1972, its celebrated rebirth as a recording studio under the legendary musician and producer Leon Russell." We see in vivid detail the many incredible



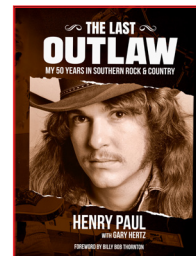
artists that have recorded at The Church, and we get, "insightful stories and milestones highlighting Leon Russell's influence and the artists who made history within its walls."

The Last Outlaw

By Henry Paul with Gary Hertz

(hardcover) \$29.99

Southern rock artist Henry Paul has joined forces with ghostwriter, producer, screenwriter, and superfan Gary Hertz to tell his story, and tell it properly. "A candid and compelling account of his 50-year journey as singer, songwriter, performer and founding force behind legendary acts the Outlaws, The Henry Paul Band, and multi-Platinum trio Blackhawk," is how the



press release describes it, and that's about right. Tours with Lynyrd Skynyrd, The Allman Brothers, The Marshall Tucker Band, The Charlie Daniels Band, The Who, and The Rolling Stones are examined in detail as we're forced to ask, what is a musical outlaw?

Cat: On the Road to Findout

By Yusuf/Cat Stevens

(hardcover) \$35

He became something of a divisive figure in some quarters for non-musical reasons, but nobody can deny that the man known as either Yusuf or Cat Stevens is one of music's great singer-songwriters with a voice that can soothe the most savage of beasts. His long-awaited memoir is being released to coincide with a



new compilation album, and a statement reads: "The new autobiography is an extraordinary transformative journey through the triumphs, trials, and boundless quest of one of music's most enigmatic figures of all time." Those that already enjoy his lyrics will find a similar vibe in the prose here.

Giant Steps

By Derek Shulman

(paperback) \$24.95

With a tagline of "My Improbable Journey from Stage Lights to Executive Heights," *Giant Steps* is a memoir by renowned executive Derek Shulman, detailing his journey "from 1960s pop fame with Simon Dupree & The Big Sound to cult status as frontman of progressive rock pioneers Gentle Giant, and later as a record executive who signed



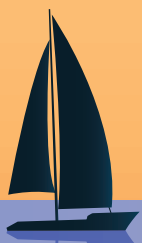
and developed global acts like Bon Jovi, Dream Theater, and Slipknot." It's a fascinating tale that allows us to see Shulman transform from star to star-maker before our very eyes. There's a foreword by the iconic Tony Visconti, and what follows is a compelling read.



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Exhibits: October 23-24

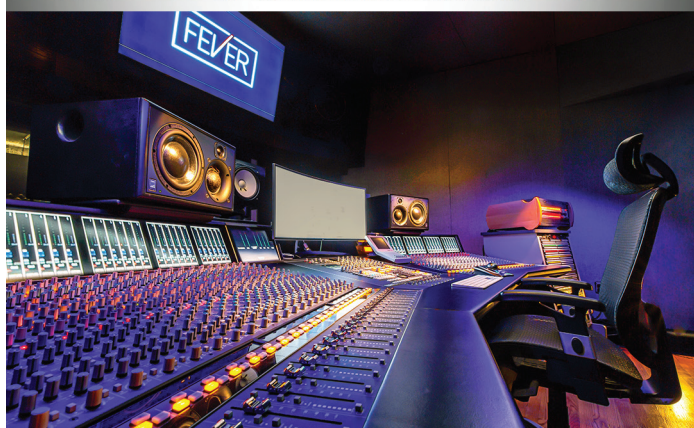
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Heavy Metal Drummer Turns Talent Booker and Promoter: A Denver-based national and international production company providing services to artists and corporations on a global scale, Bands4Bands (B4B) Entertainment was launched in 2008 by veteran heavy metal drummer Elan Schwartz, who had experienced all the ups and downs (including almost being signed to a major label) of being a regional headliner in his decade with "Mile High Metal" band Apathy. As the designated booker/manager for his band, Schwartz developed relationships with numerous venues (including 1,000 cap rooms) throughout the Western U.S., prompting other bands to seek his expertise and services and venues to reach out and ask him to put together shows. With a founding mission of "musicians helping musicians," he started B4B as a side gig while working a day job at a life science chemical analysis engineering company. Schwartz not only wanted to start his company to establish independence in his musical career, but to support his daughter while raising her as an infant.

Growing the Business:

Securing capital, he developed a platform and began booking bigger names—including Great White, Skid Row, and Lita Ford to name a few—in collaboration with international agencies across the globe. Schwartz was also a talent buyer for the popular Casselman's Bar & Venue in the RiNO district of Denver (during which time he booked major bands like Buckcherry, Saliva, and Fuel) as well as teaming up with other venues like The Gothic theater and Herman's Hideaway. Focusing on Colorado, California, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico while also having contacts in Montana and New York, B4B's ongoing mission is to "enlighten and educate the community to assist with fundraising, business growth and artist development."



B4B Services: On the booking front, Bands4Bands books all genres of music, local and national, including but not limited to rock, reggae, jam, metal, country, folk, classical, acoustic, singer-songwriter, funk, jazz, hip-hop, and big band, in addition to special events, corporate events, parties, promotions, and fundraisers for non-profits. Schwartz and his team also offer extensive artist development services for up-and-coming artists, including creating EPKs, bios, PR, social media marketing outreach, building email contact lists, brand enhancement, assistance with merchandising, and helping them gain more regional exposure. "Bands4Bands' unity and leadership are unmatched," Schwartz says. "We're all about artists supporting other artists, people standing behind one another and helping to strengthen the community and industry so all may have an opportunity to succeed."

Other Musical Endeavors: Schwartz recently departed his longtime stint as drummer for the well-known Denver hard rock/alt metal band Lola Black to work on his endeavors as a solo composer, musician, and artist, with a focus on solo piano and instrumental classical new age music. He is also a licensed music therapist specializing in working with children with autism. For more information, visit elancomposer.com.

Contact B4b Talent and Entertainment at bands4bands@live.com;
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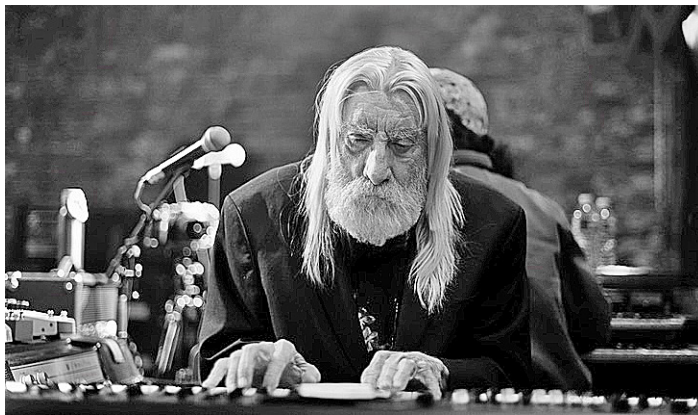
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▲ SWEET RELIEF MUSICIANS FUND LAUNCHES THE TOM "TC" CONSTANTEN FUND

Sweet Relief Musicians Fund has launched the Tom "TC" Constanten Fund in support of keyboardist and former Grateful Dead member Tom "TC" Constanten who is in urgent need of financial assistance due to a current battle with lung cancer. Constanten faces significant health challenges that require ongoing care, treatment, and support. Visit sweetrelief.org/tomconstantenfund to donate.



▲ AES PRESENTS "INSIDE THE PRODUCTIONS OF BRIAN WILSON" WITH GRAMMY®-WINNING ENGINEER MARK LINETT AND PRODUCER WARREN HUART

The Audio Engineering Society announced a featured session at the upcoming AES Show 2025 in Long Beach: "Inside the Productions of Brian Wilson: GRAMMY®-winning Engineer/Producer Mark Linett in Conversation with Warren Huart (pictured)." This in-depth conversation will take place Friday, October 24, from 2:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. PDT and will offer attendees behind-the-scenes insights into the studio techniques, challenges, and creative decisions that shaped Wilson's most iconic projects.



▲ O'SULLIVAN AUDIO OPENS NEW STUDIO IN FROGTOWN L.A.

Five-time GRAMMY-nominated engineer/producer and studio integrator Tim O'Sullivan has opened his new studio in the Frogtown area of Los Angeles alongside the L.A. River. Formerly the home of Beastie Boy Money Mark, O'Sullivan's renovated space features large, vaulted ceilings, a motorized Drumbrella, and iso booth adjacent to his spacious control room. Pictured: O'Sullivan and Mark with Eastwood La Baye 2x4 Devo signature guitar.



▲ NEW DOCUSERIES IOMMI: THE GODFATHER OF HEAVY METAL TO STREAM THIS FALL ON GIBSON TV

Gibson hosted a special event to celebrate legendary Black Sabbath guitarist Tony Iommi and launch the return of his Tony Iommi Signature Humbucker™. Music fans gathered at the Gibson Garage London for an intimate interview with Iommi—moderated by Liz Barnes (BBC Radio 2)—which was followed by a brief performance and a screening of the "first look" trailer for *Iommi: The Godfather of Heavy Metal*, a new limited docuseries from Gibson Films, which will stream worldwide this fall on Gibson TV.

PRODUCER PLAYBACK

"Never pre-judge what someone's intentions are. You have to understand how they want things represented." – ANDY MEYER





▲ **MICHAEL REPPER, THE NATIONAL PHILHARMONIC, AND CURTIS STEWART CELEBRATE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF SAMUEL COLERIDGE-TAYLOR**

GRAMMY® Award-winning conductor Michael Repper, GRAMMY®-nominated violinist Curtis Stewart, and the Washington D.C.-based National Philharmonic celebrated the 150th anniversary of the birth of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor with an album featuring world-premiere studio recordings of the composer's tone poem *Toussaint L'Ouverture* and *Ballade Op. 4 for Violin and Orchestra*.



▲ **RIAN LEWIS TRACKING SUCCESS WITH TELEFUNKEN**

GRAMMY Award-winning producer and top mix engineer Rian Lewis has engineered/mixed for artists such as Doja Cat, Post Malone, and Thundercat. Now, Lewis has chosen the TF39 Copperhead Deluxe from TELEFUNKEN's popular Alchemy Series for his own studio. The TF39 features three-pattern selections of Cardioid, Omnidirectional, and Figure-8, giving the mic much flexibility and options in the studio.



▲ **DIJON ANNOUNCES HEADLINE TOUR, NEW ALBUM BABY OUT NOW**

Following the release of his sophomore album, *Baby*, Dijon has announced his international headlining tour. The tour, promoted by Live Nation, will begin in North America this October, hitting 23 cities across the U.S. and Canada, with dates in the U.K. and Europe coming in 2026. *Baby* was made at home, mostly in isolation, along with musical kindred spirits Andrew Sarlo, Henry Kwapis, and Michael Gordon.

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MARIO CALDATO JR.

Producer and engineer Mario Caldato Jr. (AKA Mario C) was born in Brazil and came to L.A. as a child. He learned piano early and was a member of various bands in his teens, which is when he discovered his love of recording and taught himself to make records. That knowledge helped him land a sound gig at legendary L.A. nightclub Power Tools, where he met DJ Matt Dike, co-founder of hip-hop label Delicious Vinyl. Dike introduced him to the Beastie Boys and he went on to engineer the trio's acclaimed *Paul's Boutique* and later to co-produce *Check Your Head*, *Ill Communication*, and *Hello Nasty*. He's also worked with Jack Johnson, Beck, and Björk, among others.

When he begins a collaboration with a new artist, Caldato is more interested in where they are creatively than where they've been. "Before I start a project, I like to hear a demo, even if it's just basic elements," he explains. "I don't even listen to their past records for various reasons such as I don't want to be biased by them. I want to be open to what's going forward especially since artists change their sound often."

Something that struck him while working with a pro player once was that it's not always easy to infer their process. "One time I tried to help in a situation where it sounded like a bassist was struggling to understand a song," Caldato recalls of the experience. "He kept playing the wrong notes and when I'd point it out, he'd say 'I got it.' But he continued to play incorrectly, and I couldn't understand why. When he was finally ready, he actually played all of the right notes. His technique was to play every note that wasn't right, so he'd know not to play them."

Caldato helped build the Beastie Boys' G-Son Studios, where the trio made several multi-platinum records. It comes as little surprise, then, that his past projects that shine brightest for him are *Hello Nasty* and *Check Your Head*. "I'm proud of *Check Your Head* because we built G-Son from the ground up for it," he says.

Caldato has been involved in music for practically his entire life. Indeed, his vinyl collection could just as easily be measured in metric tons as it could in raw numbers. Advice he offers to rising producers or engineers is to love the craft and to pursue it doggedly. "Follow your heart and go for it," he advises. "Recording is a lifestyle and there are so many tutorials online that you can teach yourself to make records."

The seasoned sonic stylist works primarily from his L.A. home studio, which boasts dozens of keyboards and even a vinyl cutting lathe. One of his first pieces of gear was a TEAC four-track recorder, which he still uses and loves. He's also a fan of the Universal Audio 1176LN compressor and AKG C414 microphones. When he worked with the Beastie Boys, they often relied upon an inexpensive Sony karaoke mic. Recently he and his wife Samantha launched their label Amor In Sound, and plan to release noted actor and singer Seu Jorge's *The Other Side* soon.

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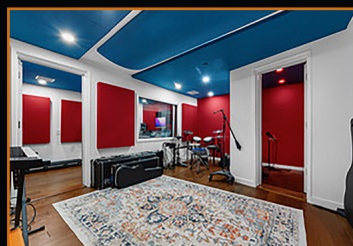
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THE 3 MOST IMPORTANT

lessons Caldato has learned as an engineer and producer are:

- Listen.
- Be open to ideas, suggestions and sounds. Don't shoot anything down. Try to understand it. You can make anything sound like music.
- Be able to communicate and work as a group. Find a common goal.



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Rachel Stilwell

Owner
Stilwell Law

Years with Company: 11

Address: 26565 Agoura Road, Suite 200,
Calabasas, CA 91302

Phone: 818-330-6819

Web: rmslawoffices.com

Email: rachel@rmslawoffices.com

Clients: LeAnn Rimes, Noel Schajris,
Take 6, musicFIRST Coalition, Future of
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BACKGROUND

Rachel Stilwell has been named one of *Billboard's* Top Music Lawyers for the last seven years. Well versed in intellectual property and copyright law, she represents artists, songwriters, recording engineers, and more. This October, she'll appear at NAMM on a panel regarding the intricacies of producer agreements.

Paradigm Shift

The music industry changed overnight when Napster hit. I had segued from running Verve's radio promotion department to sales and marketing. All of a sudden, sales and marketing plummeted, because everyone was stealing music. It looked like a good time to get out of the record business, so I said, "I'm going to law school." I thought I was leaving the music business, yet I realized that I was interested in music law, intellectual property, and media law. I wound up getting sucked right back into the music business.

Having Industry Experience

Once you've worked in the record business for a decade or two, you become familiar with what makes artists tick, how their teams work, and all the types of business deals that surround artists. If you understand the business and the relationships between artists, managers, booking agents, lawyers, and licensees, it makes doing contracts a lot easier.

I never took copyright or trademark law when I was in law school. It wasn't until my first year as an attorney that I started learning copyright and trademark law by doing it. But it came easily because I understood protecting and exploiting intellectual property.

Solo Performer

My first job at a law firm was working for music attorney Owen Sloane. He had been around forever, and I didn't have to bring in my own business. I worked on contracts, deals, and licenses for artists on his roster. Eventually, I left to start my own firm. I had enough clients, so I would make more money and have more control if I became an entrepreneur.

One Attorney, Three Purposes

A third of my practice is representing creative individuals (recording artists, songwriters, producers, engineers, mixers, that kind of thing) with contracts, licensing, employment agreements, anything they need. Another third of my work is straight up trademark. During



"Sometimes, it's hard for an artist to figure out the value of an incoming deal and what's reasonable for them to negotiate."

the pandemic, a lot of musicians created side hustles and new brands. And those brands needed to be protected. Suddenly, all these new entrepreneurs needed help protecting their trademarks. And a third of my practice is doing policy work, mostly before the Federal Communications Commission.

Be Mindful of Branding

Brands are valuable. If you cross-pollinate across a lot of different media, each of those things can help your underlying music brand. Be careful about who you're doing an endorsement deal with, because if the reputation of the brand you're helping changes, that can harm your reputation. Also, you don't want to undersell what your endorsement is worth. Sometimes, it's hard for an artist to figure out the value of an incoming deal and what's reasonable to negotiate. That's where I come in.

Register Your Work

Make sure you register your copyrights with the United States Copyright Office, which can usually be done D.I.Y. If you don't have an ownership dispute, there's no excuse for not registering your work. If you have work that is copyrightable and it is infringed before you have a registration with the Copyright Office, you have much less recourse against the infringer.

And the difference is vast. If you have a registration prior to an infringement, you can file a case in federal court. These days, there's a small claims court in Washington, D.C., and you can ask the judge for statutory damages. You can ask for up to \$150,000 per work infringed if it's willful infringement. And you can ask the court to consider having the infringers pay your attorney's fees, which are the bulk of your expenses in that kind of case. If you don't have a registration prior to the infringement, you can't do any of those things. You can consider filing a case in state court, but it's an uphill climb with less chance of winning.

The other thing is that, if you have a copyright registration on your work, it creates what's called a prima facie presumption that everything in your registration is true. If anybody disputes you, it's their burden to show that you're wrong.

Trademark Matters

If you have a band, you want to register that name with the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO). In order to do that successfully, you need to make sure you don't have competitors whose names sound too much like yours that have been around longer than you have. Only once you get a registration in the U.S. can you look at getting trademark registrations abroad.

Fair Use

Training on other people's work without consent for the purpose of generative A.I., if that work is copyrightable, it's infringement. The question becomes—is it fair use? And you never know until you get into a court of law. If people say, "I'm relying on an honest fair use defense," that's risky because you never know

whether something is fair use until you're litigating. We're waiting on some cases to be decided and published on this subject. There are a lot of technologists who think they can do whatever they want because they [believe] there aren't laws in place. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Rights of Publicity

A lot of people call rights of publicity law "name, image, likeness" because they often come from sports. But we're music people. We care about voices. So it's rights to name, image, likeness, and voice. California, New York, and Nevada have pretty robust state laws that protect against misappropriation. But New Mexico doesn't have a law like that. It is not optimal to have a patchwork of state laws where some states safeguard against misappropriation and others don't. For that reason, I and my fellow music advocates have been working to pass the NO FAKES Act that would federalize a right of publicity and provide special safeguards.

Inspiration To Legislate

In 1985, I was in high school watching a Senate committee hearing involving Frank Zappa, Dee Snider, and John Denver, who were testifying about the dangers of censoring musical works. They were incredibly articulate. I said, "I want to be just like Frank Zappa." It was an inspiration that artists could use their voices to protect their own, their listeners, and the public interest. I later heard about an event called GRAMMYS On The Hill. I read about it in *Billboard* and wanted to be part of it, but you had to be a member of The Recording Academy. I thought, "I'm a music lawyer. They would never take me." But wanting to be part of this event made me ask to join The Recording Academy, and they welcomed me. I've been to almost every GRAMMYS On The Hill and led dozens of meetings between musicians and members of the House of Representatives and Senate.

Scary Candy

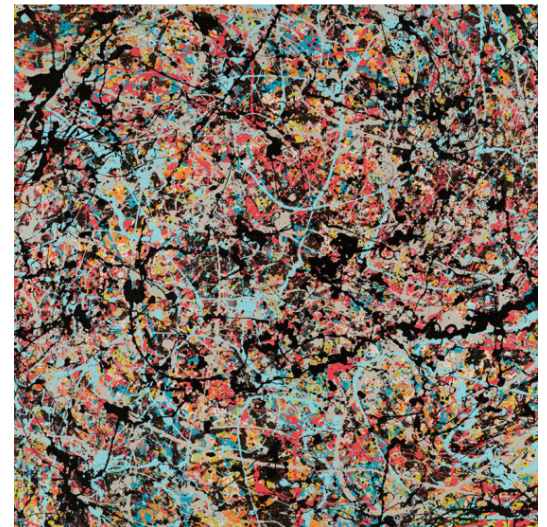
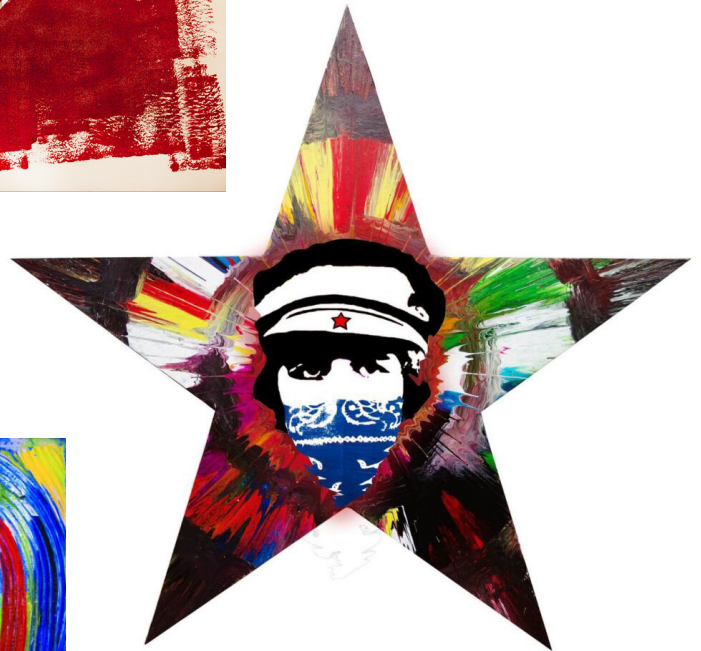
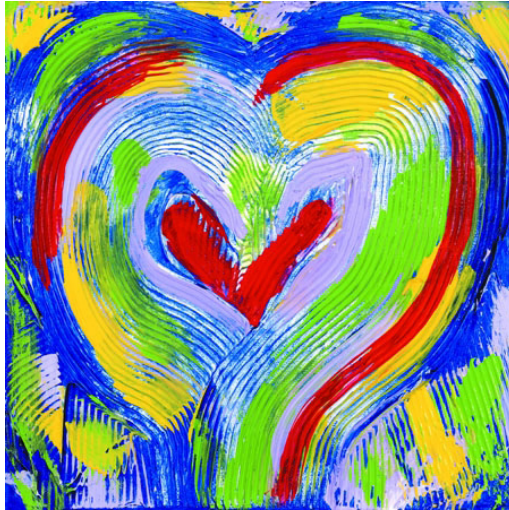
Because even bona fide rock stars can be bested by the paintbrush, please enjoy this unscientific roundup of musical icons who pursue robust, very public-facing visual art practices—with tricks, treats, and mixed bags. Each of them has some admirable qualities, and they're giving it their all and we love that for them—but they might bear in mind that not everything always needs to be seen. Perhaps that's a challenge for someone stalked by the spotlight. Spoiler alert: every single one of these guys paints exactly how he makes music.

If Andy Warhol and Jackson Pollock had a sort of goth baby and gave it a Church of Satan baptism, that baby would paint like Gene Simmons. The large-scale work has a certain expulsive, assaultive aesthetic, peppered with risqué puns and a theatricality that befits the spectacle created by Kiss. For his part, as the band's other painter, Paul Stanley, actually has his moments. He has a terrific and, perhaps unexpectedly, bright and buoyant color sense, and his portraits and color studies are genuinely interesting, especially when he is working loosely with lots of pigment and bold wide strokes.

Serj Tankian is punk, gothic, and full of pain, so if that's your thing on the radio, his paintings will be your thing on the wall. To me, both feel too raw, angry, even violent. But there's a cathartic, vulnerable quality to his explosions of color, texture, emotion, and image that is definitely relatable—even if his images and texts are a bit too heavy-handed. I mean, no one goes to his music for nuance, so that's fine.

The thing about Ringo Starr is that he's a lovely man. A truly delightful human. But I am so sorry that this ebullience does not really hold its own on the canvas. His paintings are mostly gusts of pure energy, empty calories steeped in nostalgia, bowl cuts, and peace signs.

Ed Sheeran's artwork begs the question anew—what did poor old Jackson Pollock ever do to deserve this relentless style-biting. It's understandable how its syncopations and sense of action appealed to Sheeran's jazzy soul, and he did a pretty good job but... Is it because Pollock was truly a tortured soul who was reaching into the unknown for something new, and Sheeran is a nice boy having a fun time? Yes, that's probably it.



IMAGES (from top)

Gene Simmons, courtesy of the artist and Animazing Gallery: animazing.com/gene-simmons

Ringo Starr, courtesy of the artist: ringostarrart.com

Paul Stanley, courtesy of the artist: paulstanley.com/artwork

Ed Sheeran, courtesy of the artist and Heni Editions: heni.com/editions/cosmic-carpark-editions

Serj Tankian, courtesy of the artist: serjtankian.com/pages/artwork

AINA

LOS ANGELES-BASED SINGER, songwriter, and producer AINA says that she wrote her first song when she was just nine years old. By the time she reached her teens, she realized that music is what she's meant to do.

"At 15, I taught myself to produce," she says. "Sometimes it's hard to explain the exact sound I hear in my head, and there weren't a lot of people willing to produce a little girl's songs, so I didn't wait for anyone to believe in me—I learned to produce myself. Learning to produce gave me the freedom to create songs exactly the way I envisioned them. That's when it stopped being just a dream and started feeling like my purpose."

According to the musician, she describes her sound as pop but elaborates by saying that it's her own version of pop.

"Sometimes fun and playful, sometimes edgy and moody, and sometimes big and cinematic," AINA says.

MC caught an AINA show last year, when she weirdly opened for hair metal band Heaven's Edge at the famous Whisky A Go-Go in Hollywood. That wasn't her crowd, but we were impressed by the manner with which she held her own. Her latest release is the "Dying to See You" track.

"[It's] about that butterfly-in-your-stomach feeling you get when you're missing someone or about to see someone you love," she says. "I wrote it, produced it, and designed the cover myself. It's a fun, feel-good song that works anywhere whether you're listening alone, sharing it with someone special, or playing it loud at a party."

AINA is still at the start of her career, but she has a great DIY work ethic. "DIY means not waiting around, you have to do it yourself (produce, write, make your own cover art, etc.). For me, it's about being self-reliant. It's not asking permission or waiting for someone else to believe in you. It's making music without a manual, just you, your vision, and the will to figure it out."

Looking ahead, AINA has plenty planned for the coming months. "I have a lot planned," she says. "I'm releasing a new single every month this year. My next one comes out September 30. I'm excited to keep experimenting, keep creating, and show different sides of me and my music."

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



THE LEGAL BEAT

BY GLENN LITWAK



A COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT lawsuit against Colombian superstar Karol G and famous Dutch DJ and producer Tiesto was recently dismissed. The plaintiff asserted that the 2021 Karol G song "Don't Be Shy" was substantially similar and infringed on his 1998 song "Algo Diferente."

The plaintiff was Cuban American songwriter Rene Lorente, who alleged that the two compositions shared elements such as rhythm, melody, structure, and harmony; but these elements shared between two songs does not mean you automatically win a copyright case. To win a

copyright infringement case, the plaintiff must prove access and that substantial similarities are not coincidental or because of common musical elements.

The federal district court judge in Florida did a technical analysis of the two songs and decided to dismiss the case indicating there was insufficient evidence of access and copying, two crucial elements in a copyright infringement case. The Court ruled that there was no evidence that the Defendants had prior knowledge of Lorente's composition.

In a copyright infringement lawsuit, the plaintiff has the burden of proving (amongst other things) access and copying. Proving access refers to the plaintiff having access to the material that was allegedly copied. In this case, the plaintiff's obscure song was not widely distributed or known. The plaintiff's song had only 3000 shares on Spotify and 670 views on YouTube.

The Judge also reviewed a report by the plaintiff's

musicologist and held that he was not qualified. The Judge ruled that the "expert" did not have basic musicological knowledge, such as the "circle of fifths" as well as the ability to identify chords and key signatures in both compositions.

Copyright cases often become a battle of experts. In this particular case, the Plaintiff chose a former A&R executive at Capitol Records as his expert. It was an unusual choice to use a music business executive as a music expert. More commonly, an expert in this type of case would be, for instance, a professor of musicology at a prestigious university. Choosing the right expert is critical in copyright infringement cases.

The plaintiff's attorney, James Sammataro, stated:

"One of the frustrating things we kept hearing from the plaintiff was that our clients stole his life's work, his so-called legacy, but there was no evidence that they ever heard the song."

The Judge's ruling in this case demonstrates that there are limits to copyright protection

of musical compositions. For instance, songs often share similar or the same chord progressions, basic harmonies, and rhythms, but this in and of itself, does not prove plagiarism. It is the way these elements are utilized that matters in determining originality.

This case and others may indicate a trend toward requiring stronger evidence to prevail in a music copyright infringement case.

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. Litwak 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. Litwak has been selected as a "Super Lawyer" by *Super Lawyer* magazine for 2022-2025. Email Litwak at gtllaw59@gmail.com or visit [glennlitwak.com](https://www.glennlitwak.com).

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



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GRAMMY CONSIDERED





Date Signed: March 2025

Label: Fearless Records

Band Members: Chris Mackertich, vocals; Zak Thom, guitar; Caleb Brew, drums; Aiden Zovic, bass

Genre: Metal, Nu-Metal

Booking: Jayden Roy, Destroy All Lines

Publicity: Amy Sciarretto, Atom Splitter PR

A&R: Cody Demavivas

Web: dreggmusic.com

When Melbourne's DREGG formed in 2015, they weren't just another group of mates bashing out riffs in a garage. "From the get-go, we were serious about it," the band recalls. "We didn't really have an identity yet or know what we wanted to achieve but whatever it was, we wanted to do it right."

That restless ambition, along with their refusal to be boxed in, quickly became the band's defining trait. "Our sound is rooted in heavy music, but we expand all the way from EDM to folk to hip-hop and everything in between," they say. "The music constantly evolves with us and what we're listening to."

Unwilling to censor themselves, they "draw inspiration from each other and the world around us. No topic is off limits for lyrics and

"Chase originality, not success."

we are constantly on the hunt for sonic gold." That ethos of fearless experimentation is the backbone of everything they do, turning unpredictability into the point.

That hunt led to *The Art of Everything*, the band's debut record and the album that caught the attention of Fearless Records. "We poured it all into this album and wanted to make something we'd be proud of. Something that represents each of us as artists and people," they say.

The way they got signed feels as modern and unpretentious as the band itself: "Cody at Fearless followed the band and liked our video for 'Butterscotch Biscuits.' We sent him a DM with a link to the album and the rest is history!"

Before *The Art of Everything* saw the light of day, the band pressed pause on the road. "We took a year off touring and playing shows to work on the album. We wanted to take time to really get lost in the process of creating. The theme of the album is really whatever you want it to be. We all found our own meaning in it which was always our goal." Recorded by guitarist Zak Thom and mixed and mastered by Lance Prenc, it's a project that feels wholly DREGG—raw, uncompromising, and impossible to pin down.

Now, their intention is clear: "Touring is our main focus for now while we write new music in the background. We want to perform these songs to as many people around the world as we can."

As far as advice, the band keeps it simple: "Chase originality, not success." It's the kind of mantra that's shaped how they write, perform, and approach their music—no shortcuts, no compromises. — **Ruby Risch**



Date Signed: September 2024

Label: AWAL

Genre: Alternative Pop, Rock

Management: Ben Carey, Fred Lane Fox - Gum Music Management

Booking: Ben Coles, Carly James, Ben Buchanan - CAA

Legal: Paul Lennon - SGD

Publicity: Toast, AWAL

A&R: Will Hunt

Web: luvcat.co.uk

Remember the name Luvcat. Soak it in, marinate in it, file it in the mental lockbox. Rarely are we presented with a new artist who seems so ready-made, so completely built, for success. Liverpool-born artist Luvcat, born Sophie Morgan Howarth, has a sound that is absolutely and undeniably her own, while also being instantly relatable and radio-friendly. Her aesthetic is fabulous, she's talented and super-fucking-badass—Luvcat is the real deal.

She's worked hard to get here, mind you. Luvcat honed her sound in the pubs, clubs, and streets of Northern England. "I was singing before I could speak," she says. "I started learning piano when I was a very young child, and reading poetry, and then writing my own rhymes. I wrote my first song when I was nine or 10, and then I started singing in the pubs and clubs when I was 14. I was just doing that and busking. Life changed drastically about a year and a half ago when I played my first Luvcat show in Paris, and then came back to London and played the pubs in London. Videos of us in those little shows went mad on the internet, and that's where it all began."

"I wrote my first song when I was nine or 10, and then I started singing in the pubs and clubs when I was 14."

Luvcat says that she grew up with her dad's and granddad's record collection, which included the standards such as Frank Sinatra and the Rat Pack, West End musical soundtracks, Barbra Streisand and Judy Garland, but also The Smiths, The Cure, the Velvet Underground and Nick Cave. She discovered Leonard Cohen and Tom Waits when she hit her 20s. She cites Waits as her biggest influence, which makes sense when diving into her boozy, smokey pop-vaudeville tunes. Though it was a classic Cure song that inspired her name.

It's been a year since Luvcat signed with AWAL, joining a roster packed with talent like Little Simz, CMAT and The Beaches. A&R man Will Hunt saw an early video and then caught a show in Brighton. The deal got done, and Luvcat says that she feels privileged to be on such an amazing roster of independent-minded musicians.

Her debut album, *Vicious Delicious*, is out on Halloween and it's a contender for album of the year. "It's like a swinging pendulum between two extremes," she says. "Like innocence and eroticism, love and kink or life and death. It had a bit of both of those things, and never too much. It's tongue in cheek in places, and it's sometimes sincere." — **Brett Callwood**



JAKE & SHELBY

Date Signed: March 2022
Label: Cedarstone Entertainment / Empire
Band Members: Jake Lawson, Shelby Hiam
Genre: Pop Singer-Songwriter
Management: Kevin Lawson - Cedarstone Entertainment, kevin@cedarstone.com
Booking: Russell Brantley - 33 & West, russell@33andwest.com
Legal: Rush Hicks - Keller Turner Andrews & Ghanem, PLLC
Publicity: Ashley Natareno - Big Feat PR, ashley@bigfeatpr.com
A&R: Eric Hurt
Web: jakeandshelby.com

Shelby Hiam, a singer who began learning piano at age seven, met guitarist Jake Lawson at Cedarstone School of Music in Hendersonville, Tennessee, an institution founded by Kevin Ray Lawson, Jake's father. The students fast recognized they had a musical connection and began writing together.

Next, they started posting acoustic covers on social media, triggering a wave of followers. A boost came when Michael Bublé heard their version of the crooner's tune "Sway," and collaborated with them on an updated rendition. The duo's fan base grew even greater once Kim Kardashian joined the fold.

With all this attention, it became clear the pair was becoming a hot commodity. The elder Lawson decided to start Cedarstone Entertainment and make Jake & Shelby his inaugural signing. Additionally, he assumed the role of manager. Taking the job seriously, he reached out

"We both felt really comfortable. They were encouraging and believed in us."

to entertainment consultant Gator Michaels, who talked them up with noted label Empire. What the company's brass heard spurred them to invite Jake & Shelby to their San Francisco headquarters, where the newcomers gave an intimate performance. "We both felt really comfortable," explains Jake, now 21 years old. "They were encouraging and believed in us."

Ultimately, Empire's decision to move forward was sparked by that live showcase. "I don't know if they ever listened to any recordings," Hiam speculates. "They probably did on Spotify or something, but we didn't have much [music] out at the time." They discussed the offer with their father/manager before moving forward. "We trust his opinion," puts forth the act's female half, currently 19. "Rather than solely signing to Empire, they crafted a joint venture with Cedarstone." - **Andy Kaufmann**



Date Signed: June 2025
Label: Severance Records / Big Loud Rock
Band Members: Chris Kelly, lead vocals, guitar; Jake Zimmerman, lead guitar, vocals; Aidan Cunningham, drums
Genre: Indie Rock
Management: Chris Georggin, Pat Magnarella Management
Booking: Ron Opaleski, Justin Edwards - WME
Legal: Joshua Hefner, Mark Music & Media Law, P.C.
Publicity: Jenny Huynh - Big Loud Rock
A&R: Steve "Steveo" Robertson - Severance Records
Web: edgehillband.com

Chris Kelly and Jake Zimmerman were students at Vanderbilt University when they met at a casual jam session in 2021. They began writing together and came up with their first song, "Shooting Glances." Kelly later met drummer Aidan Cunningham while they were both working at local coffee shop Frothy Monkey, thus cementing the lineup.

The trio began playing free shows at East Iris Studios, located south of downtown Nashville. "The person who runs it is Pat Kraus," mentions Kelly, the punky act's lead singer. Kraus enjoyed their music and invited them to record at the UMG-owned space with no strings attached.

"They were so down to earth. It was all about the music."

Among the industry people Kraus knows is Steve "Steveo" Robertson of Big Loud Records. Robertson attended one of Edgehill's performances and liked what he saw. Approaching the guys after the gig, they bonded over their love of Radiohead and The Backseat Lovers. Big Loud's modern rock-focused co-venture, Severance Records, would be a perfect fit.

Before long, the band was shaking hands with everyone at the label's headquarters. "They were so down to earth," remarks Kelly. "It was all about the music." In the eyes of the group, this lifted them above the other labels expressing interest. Plus, the attention likely incentivized Robertson and his partners to present Edgehill with a sweeter offer.

"We wanted to keep our catalog," Kelly notes regarding the deal's particulars. "That was a big thing for us." Additionally, the contract states that delivered music must be released within a certain period, ensuring they don't get shelved.

Edgehill recently performed a showcase in Los Angeles with the boutique's other signings, Dogpark, and Dexter and The Moonrocks. Their recorded efforts are doing brilliantly, already racking up more than 7.5 million global streams. "We feel incredibly lucky," plainly states the front man. "It's surreal." - **Andy Kaufmann**



▲ WISE SIGNS LONGSTRETH

Wise Music Group and WME sign singer-songwriter-composer-producer David Longstreth, whose work includes indie-pop *Bitte Orca* (2009), *Swing Lo Magellan* (2012), collabs with Solange, Rihanna, Björk, and co-writes with David Byrne. There are two *Dirty Projectors* albums and a solo project in progress.

▶ SCAGGS' LATEST DETOUR

His first album in seven years, Boz Scaggs releases *Detour*, turning his attention to jazz and the Great American Songbook. Growing from casual demos with pianist Seth Asarnow, it features Hans Trossea, Jason Lewis, Jim Cox, Jeremy Cohen, Michael Miller, and Ashra Weston and is produced by J. Michael Rodriguez.



▲ SMP SIGNES PATE

Sony Music Publishing signs rising singer-songwriter Aniston Pate to global publishing. The Texas-born Belmont grad delivers heartfelt lyricism, winning 2025's Country Showcase Champion and success with "Honky-Tonk Without a Woman." A new project with Rob Williford/Aaron Raitiere is coming soon.

Hard-Headed Price

SESAC's Margo Price has released her fourth studio album (the first in two years), *Hard-Headed Woman*, leaning into her country roots with feisty war-cry lyrics: "I'm a hard-headed woman/and I don't owe you shit." Produced by Matt Ross-Spang (producer for 2016's *Midwest Farmer's Daughter*) and recorded at RCA Studio A in Nashville, all tracks were written/co-written by Price and husband Jeremy Ivey. Collabs include Rodney Crowell and Kris Kristofferson; features add Tyler Childers and Jesse Welles. In a project that started in 2023 after playing Orville Peck's annual rodeo in Joshua Tree (at Pappy and Harriet's), Price stayed at a friend's house built into the side of boulders (once the home of the first Native American Playboy Bunny). She wrote "Close to You" with her husband during the stay, and the rest unfolded from there. More at *Nashville Now* podcast, and in detailed memoir, *Maybe We'll Make It*.

IAMA Music Awards

Now in its 22nd year, the International Acoustic Music Awards (IAMA) provides acoustic artists in various genres radio and web exposure through competition. The overall winner

receives \$11,000 worth of merchandise and services (first prizes in all categories win \$900 worth of prizes; runner-up winners receive \$600 worth). All first prize and runner up winners will receive a track on an IAMA compilation CD which goes out to radio stations. The entry fee is \$35 per song, with details and submission information at inacoustic.com.

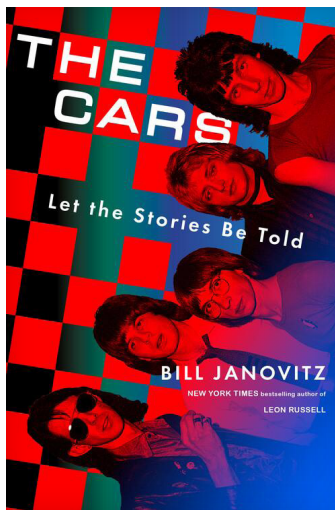
Songsalive! Ongoing Mentorship

Songsalive! is your all-access pass to the craft and business of songwriting. For over 25 years, the non-profit has been offering support, education, and songwriting opportunities to creatives of all ages, abilities, and genres. Run by songwriters for songwriters, a team of innovative, passionate experts provide a global platform for community, connection, support, promotion, education, and an opportunity to improve your writing. Connecting you with a global collective of songwriters, composers, and lyricists who can share their songwriting journey, members are inspired and encouraged with valuable feedback and advice from industry professionals. Membership means: a global community, expert guidance, endless learning, networking opportunities, and personalized support. Details at songsalive.org.

BMI Honors Smith

British multi-platinum producer-songwriter behind hits for Adele, Craig David, Drake, Florence and the Machine, Gorillaz, Kano, Stormzy, Sam Smith, Snow Patrol, and more, receives the 2025 BMI President's Award. Dominating U.S. streaming, radio, film, television, and visual media with his work over three decades, Smith crosses genres and generations.

Starting as a session guitarist with over 200 recording credits before doing any production, Smith first met Craig David as his guitarist for five years, before producing three of his albums (*Born to Do It*, *Slicker Than Your Average*, and *Trust Me*). Smith has seven No. 1 U.K. singles to his credit, two U.S. Billboard chart-toppers, and 18 No. 1 albums, winning a GRAMMY for his work on Adele's *21* (as well as a nomination for Sam Smith's *In the Lonely Hour* and a Latin GRAMMY for work with Jesse & Joy on *Un Besito Más*). Shortlisted for the Mercury Prize, nominated for a Brit Award, winning Best Album at the MOBO Awards, and recognized for work on Stormzy's *Brit* and Ivor



▲ THE CARS' STORIES

Following his bestselling Leon Russell biography, Bill Janovitz delivers *The Cars: Let the Stories Be Told* (via Da Capo). Sharing first-hand knowledge and input from surviving members, Janovitz chronicles the journey, the conflicts, and the legacy of The Cars nearly five decades later. See bit.ly/4fy0mRw.

Novello-winning debut, *Gang Signs & Prayer*, newer work includes *The Forest Is The Path* (Snow Patrol) and production of Kae Tempest's *Self-Titled*. Smith also has solo work under his belt under the moniker Future Utopia.

Full BMI Brit Awards details at bmi.com/news.

SONA Songwriting Summit

Saturday, October 11 at the Village Studios, Songwriters of North America present their annual Songwriting Summit. Details and registration at wearesona.com/pages/events.

Taxi Road Rally

Taxi's free convention returns to Los Angeles next month. From November 6-9, artists, musicians, songwriters, producers, and music industry experts join forces for three days of panels, speakers, mentorship, and networking. From licensing and sync information, to industry pitch opportunities and open mic jams, the event presents a great opportunity to mingle and learn. Full details at taxi.com/taxi-road-rally.

ASCAP Settles Rates

The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) announces a new settlement agreement with the Radio Music License Committee (RMLC), securing increased rates payable for almost 10,000 American commercial radio stations to publicly perform more than 20 million ASCAP musical works. The list includes a dynamic group of works across all genres and accounts for a year-over-year increase in revenue rates paid by stations, better reflecting the ways AM/FM stations broadcast while acknowledging the difference between terrestrial and internet services. Find out more at ascap.com.

This latest increase follows BMI's announcement of their royalty increase negotiated with the RMLC, with broadcasters now required to pay 2.14 percent of gross revenue royalties for 2022 and 2023, rising to 2.20 percent for 2026-2029, up from 1.78 percent for 2017-2021. The agreement will be in force retroactively to January 1, 2022. More at bit.ly/4g4SRdt.

Kobalt Joins ElevenLabs

Kobalt has penned an opt-in licensing agreement with Eleven Music, ElevenLabs' new A.I. music platform (rival to Suno), moving published and recorded music

revenues closer to par, with each side receiving 50 percent of royalties generated on the A.I. platform (the same terms as a separate deal with Merlin and other recorded music deals). Kobalt has also secured a Most Favored Nation (MFN) clause, meaning that if any recorded rightsholder obtains better terms, Kobalt's terms will automatically be upgraded to match. While Eleven Music is currently trained on production music (through their basic tier), the updated iteration (Eleven Music Pro) will be trained on cleared catalog music from Kobalt and Merlin.

Eleven Music's pricing model reflects a departure from traditional sound recording compensation, which has the publisher's share receiving about 25 percent of total royalties, while recorded music traditionally receives about a 75 percent share. Gen A.I. has presented an opportunity to negotiate more freely for publisher compensation, since it is not governed by Section 115 of the US Copyright Act as traditional publishing and recording is.

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



▲ FALCONER'S MANY MILES

With eight albums behind him, 50 years of songwriting brings Jeff Falconer to his latest release, *Many Miles to Go* (via the Little Village Foundation). The project is a mix of electric/acoustic originals featuring Cliff Hugo, Terry Baker, Annie Stocking, Rob Zuckerman, David Zirbel, Dennis Cordellos, and David Kessner.



▲ PRESCRIPTION SONGS' HAMZAA

Prescription Songs adds British soul, R&B, pop singer-songwriter and diversity advocate Hamza to their roster. 2018's *First Signs Of Me* landed her a *Later...with Jools Holland* spot; "Sunday Morning" hit 18 million Spotify streams, and collabs include The Bonfyre, TA Thomas, The Amours, Geezy, and Capri Everitt.



▲ NASHVILLE WOMEN HONORED

Source Nashville's Hall of Fame Awards honored 2025's "women behind the music." Since 2003, Source has fostered relationships, education, networking, and community service for women in Nashville's music business, many who have built and sustained Music Row. See bit.ly/47Qixxe. Pictured (L-R, top row): Lori Badgett, Pam Russell, Kay West, Gina Keltner and Mary Self; (L-R, bottom row): Co-Host Kelly Sutton, Cheryl Harris and Co-Host Mandy Barnett.



▲ COCHISE ADDS RPM

Florida rapper-entrepreneur Cochise has partnered with ONErpm to maximize marketing, distribution, fan initiatives, and increase artistic momentum. First single with ONErpm "I Lie" had three million streams, while follow-up viral "Braces" had organic videos from Coi Leray, Lola Young, etc.

Lanz Pierce: Her Way

Raised by a single mom whose fearless dedication inspired her to become her own powerhouse, Lanz Pierce doesn't back down, and clearly understood what autonomy looked like from a young age. "She'd be so tired, she'd commute into the city from Jersey," Pierce says of her mom. "There's no room to complain, no 'woe is me.' I come from a line of small heroes who were like, 'you either do it or you don't, and if you don't, that's on you.'"

Motivated by the big-voiced bravado of hip-hop—including Eminem, DMX, and Nas—Pierce felt trapped by the school system (despite doing well academically and being offered a John Hopkins scholarship early). Home life was unstable, she challenged authority, and always felt there was something else available. "As a kid, you have that naivete that 'I'm gonna be a star,'" says Pierce. "I started cutting class, finding recording studios, looking up ads."

Looking back, Pierce confesses that music stuck because of proximity and accessibility (movies were still rented or seen in theaters). Her babysitter blasted hip-hop pulling into the school zone pickup. Her mother always wanted to be a singer, her grandfather made records in the '40s, and, while her father was an attorney, he DJed on the side. "I used to go with him and sit on his lap at the radio station," says Pierce. Possibility was everywhere, and the road led beyond music, into video direction (for herself and Nellie), and work in fintech. Determined to get signed to a label with Jimmy Iovine, she once told her agent that, if it wasn't Iovine, she didn't want to be signed. Working through New York's club scene as a teen, rising up the hip-hop ranks, Pierce garnered attention from Tony Yayo's "So Seductive" producer, Punch (managed by Michael Austin), who encouraged Nile Rogers to check her out. Pierce's rapping and singing in the booth made an impression. "I was doing the Drake thing before Drake, that rap-sing formula. Nobody was doing it," adds Pierce, "especially females." Her "Grow Up" track with Rogers (Dr. Dre's partner, "Focus") got Pierce signed with Interscope, later touring with Snoop Dogg. "Jimmy Iovine signed me because I came with Nile Rogers [as] this little white girl rapper from New York City," she admits.

Taking time to recalibrate after the deal ended, Pierce launched her own label (Innovators & Aviators, now under Luminary Creative Agency), but was hurt no one tried to comfort her. "You're a kid, you drop out of school, your whole identity is this—and it feels like death," she reveals. "I was so angry that I didn't make music for quite some time." The majors also seemed less relevant. "I looked at guys like Childish Gambino and Chance the Rapper, they were putting out music without a major," shares Pierce. Finding an investor at a GRAMMY party, Pierce released more music, watching where the momentum was going: tech.

Creating a branding agency to help founders with their identity felt similar to the visuals created in her music videos. Pierce found herself in fractional COO roles. Parallels between music and tech became clear. "The label [is] a bank. It has a mandate like venture capitalism. It's not personal; it's all followers," she shares. "If you're a pre-rev company, they won't invest past a certain amount because they want you to find product market fit and prove you have an audience, but there's exceptions. If you have something genius, that they have never seen, and somehow have celebrity backing, they'll go out of their way. The label is the same."

A film in the works, and new record on the way, "Get It," "Like That," and "I Loved Her" are out now.

Contact jon@prospectpr.com; Visit [instagram.com/lanzpierce](https://www.instagram.com/lanzpierce)





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DROPS

Mercury Studios has announced the Blu-ray release of *Peter Gabriel: Taking the Pulse*, which drops on October 10 and captures the former **Genesis** front man's powerful performance with the **New Blood Orchestra**. Filmed at the historic **Arena di Verona** in Italy in 2010 and directed by **Anna Gabriel**, the concert features Gabriel performing songs from his album *New Blood* with bold orchestral reinterpretations of his beloved songs, arranged by **John Metcalfe**. With 50 musicians, vocalists **Melanie Gabriel** and **Ane Brun**, and a striking visual backdrop, the film showcases Gabriel's enduring artistry through a dramatic, reimagining of his most popular songs. Get it at store.mercurystudios.co.



Depeche Mode's concert film *Depeche Mode: M* will receive a limited theatrical and IMAX release beginning on October 28 and following the film's Tribeca premiere earlier in the year. Directed by **Fernando Frías de la Parra** (Oscar-nominated *I'm No Longer Here*), the documentary captures the band's three sold-out Mexico City performances to more than 200,000 fans at Estadio GNP Seguros during the English electronic group's **Memento Mori Tour** in 2023. Released through **Sony Music Vision** and **Trafalgar Releasing**, the film screened in more than 2,500 theaters worldwide. Blending live performance with cultural storytelling, *Depeche Mode: M* examines music, mortality and Mexican death traditions, while celebrating the musical legacy of the band. Find out if the film will be showing near you at depechemodem.com.

GRAMMY Award-winning composer **Carla Patullo** released her new album *Nomadica*, inviting listeners into a "dreamlike realm of memory and music." Influenced by the loss of her mother, Patullo crafted an entrancing soundscape of ethereal vocals, orchestral swells and electronic pulses, while weaving in recordings of trains, water, and wind. Featuring



contributions from **Martha Mooke**, **Lorenza Ponce**, **Leah Colloff**, **Tonality choir**, **Martha Wainwright**, **Frederika Krier**, and the **Scorchio Quartet**, this album is a musical journey through grief and healing, and a meditation on love and connection. For more information, contact Sarah Roche at sarah@whitebearpr.com.

T-65b Records has released the Original Game Soundtrack for *Giant Squid's Sword of the Sea*, featuring music by award-winning composer **Austin Wintory**. Departing from his lush orchestral and global folk styles, Wintory crafted a score centered on solo piano and children's choir, with solo strings contributed by cellist **Tina Guo**, custom Native American drone flutes and winds by **Kristin Naigus**, men's choir, and electronics. As in all *Giant Squid* titles, the score is dynamic and adapts to gameplay, underscoring an atmospheric surfing adventure that explores humanity's relationship with nature. It's inspired by classic

skateboarding and snowboarding games. Contact Chris Galasso at chris@whitebearpr.com for further details.

FX and Hollywood Records has released *Alien: Earth (Original Soundtrack)*, created by Emmy-winning composer **Jeff Russo** (*Star Trek: Starfleet Academy*, *The Last Rodeo*) as

the musical companion to the first of the sci-fi horror *Alien* franchise to take place on Earth. Russo brought in new musical textures while honoring the franchise's earlier two scores, sustaining the haunting tension of the original film—the **Ridley Scott** creation released in 1979—while channeling the momentum of the second film. Russo used voices with acoustic instruments to humanize the score, which he said was to

find the connection between alien, human and hybrid, amplifying the series' high-stakes narrative of survival and terror on Earth. For more information, contact Chris Galasso at chris@whitebearpr.com.



OPPS

October 23 is the submission deadline for the Indie Game Music Contest, a competition "focusing on musical storytelling while ignoring sound quality to give beginners a fair chance to compete." Registration is open until October 18, and winners will be announced by December 19. Learn more about the competition and how to submit at indiegamemusiccontest.com.

There is still time to get your work in for consideration in the 2025 Dances with Films Festival in N.Y.C. Indie filmmakers will have the opportunity to showcase their work in a range of categories that include music videos. Submissions due by October 10. For submission guidelines, visit danceswithfilms.com/submissions.

Applications will be accepted through October 8 for the 2026 National Music Theater Conference through the O'Neill Theater Center, with conference dates TBD. This annual event is the nation's premier program for the development of all styles and genres of music theater, and it offers selected works a two-week, writer-focused development process. More information at theoneill.org/nmtc.

PROPS

The 2025 World Soundtrack Awards—an annual celebration of film music and composers—are set to take place October 14-16 this year, and the nominees have been announced in categories including Film Composer of the Year, Television Composer of the Year and Best Original Song. In addition to the usual awards, this year's event will honor the vast musical legacies of composing icons **Philip Glass** and **Michael Nyman**, both of whom will receive a Lifetime Achievement Award. One of last year's winners, **Jerskin Fendrix**, will return with live renditions of his acclaimed scores for *Poor Things* and *Kinds of Kindness* by **Brussels Philharmonic**, conducted by maestro **Dirk Brossé**. Learn about the nominees and how to get tickets at worldsoundtrackawards.com.

GameSoundCon 2025, a two-day event filled with music, talks and tutorials on the video game music industry, is slated for October

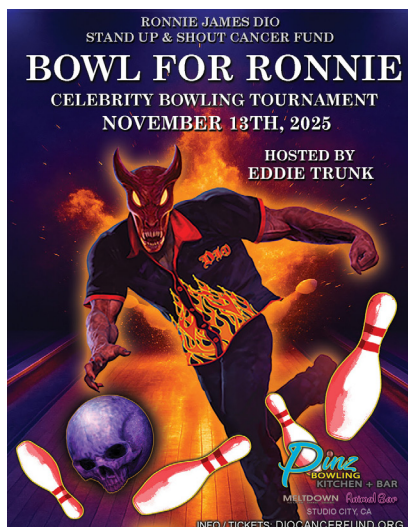
28-29 and will be offered virtually for those who cannot attend in person in Burbank, CA. Composers, sound designers, dialogue specialists, researchers, educators and others who want to keep up with the latest in video game sound, music, dialogue and technology are welcome, and topics include video game music composition, sound design, technology, interactive audio research, and more. You can register and learn more about this year's sessions, speakers, sponsors and more at gamesoundcon.com.



Iconic heavy metal band **Metallica** is performing at the upcoming 2025 Dreamfest benefit concert, which is slated for October 15 at the Chase Center in San Francisco and will raise money for the **UCSF Benioff Children's Hospitals**. It will be hosted by the tech company Salesforce as part of the company's annual

Dreamforce conference. This year's musical lineup also includes singer-songwriter **Benson Boone**, and the concert will be followed by an after-party. Metallica performed previously at Dreamfest in 2018 and offered a chance to win tickets to members of the band's Fifth Member fan club. Get your tickets, learn more about sponsorship options and see how your money will make an impact at theconcertforkids.org.

The annual **Bowl For Ronnie Celebrity Bowling Party** will return once again this year on November 13, at PINZ Bowling Center in Studio



City, California, to benefit the **Ronnie James Dio Stand Up and Shout Cancer Fund**. Hosted by television and radio personality **Eddie Trunk**, the evening will feature a celebrity bowling tournament, a raffle of prizes and memorabilia, and a VIP pre-party for lane sponsors and guests. Building on last year's sold-out event, which raised over \$70,000, this year's fundraiser will once again unite musicians, other celebrities, and fans to raise awareness and funding to support cancer research. The fund is named after the late heavy metal vocalist **Ronnie James Dio**, who

passed away of cancer in 2010. To learn more, visit diocancerfund.org/events.

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



Charlie Rosen

Composer, musical director

Website: charlierosen.com

Most recent: 8-Bit Big Band tour

Charlie Rosen might best be known for his work on Broadway, but he's also the music director behind the GRAMMY Award-winning video game music jazz orchestra The 8-Bit Big Band, which has been bringing the sounds of *Mario*, *Zelda*, *Final Fantasy*, *Sonic the Hedgehog*, and other video game classics to life onstage on a U.S. tour that concludes in December this year at New York's Sony Hall.

As music director, Rosen chooses the songs, comes up with new takes on the classics, decides on arrangements, produces demos, books the musicians, schedules recording sessions, and serves as the all-around band leader for 8BBB, which began in 2017 as a passion project to uphold what he calls the Great Video Game Songbook. "We made some videos, threw it online, and little did I know there is an incredibly vivacious, active and enthusiastic community for covers of video game music," Rosen says.

For him, the thrill of leading 8BBB is worth the logistical and financial challenges. "No one gets into orchestra to become a billionaire," he says. "Even though we sell well, it's an incredibly expensive hobby, but I don't do it to make money. It's because we love the music, and there is nothing more powerful than a big group of live musicians playing well."

Rosen urges aspiring composers to find what's original to them. "I found something I could create that was a uniquely personal calling card and used that to make people aware of what I can do. That thing was 8BBB," he says, also emphasizing the importance of being multi-faceted with your musical knowledge. "You don't have to play a lot of instruments at a high level, but the more you can at least somewhat play, the better you'll be at writing with those instruments and communicating with musicians who do play them. With visual media, think about the point of what's occurring onstage or onscreen."

► **GOOGLY EYES, TOVE LO, AND FLUME TEAM UP FOR "I DON'T GO OUT"—OUT ON PRETTY SWEDE RECORDS/NEON GOLD RECORDS**

Rising electronic pop auteur Googly Eyes returns with "I Don't Go Out." Created entirely in collaboration with Tove Lo and Flume, it's the first track ahead of a full forthcoming collaborative EP. Co-written by all three artists, the song arrives accompanied by a visualizer directed by Maya Sassoon.



▲ **ADRIAN LYLES UNVEILS DEBUT EP HORIZONS: DAWN**

Rising alt-pop singer/songwriter Adrian Lyles has released his highly anticipated debut EP, *Horizons: Dawn*, out now via Hollywood Records. The EP, the first in a series of three *Horizons* EPs, reflects Lyle's evolution as an artist and reunites him with past collaborators including GRAMMY®-winning producer Oak Felder (Ariana Grande, Childish Gambino, Alessia Cara, Demi Lovato). *Horizons: Dawn* is accompanied by a series of four connected music videos directed by Cole Santiago.



◀ **NESSA BARRETT RELEASES NEW LIVE ALBUM AFTERCARE TOUR (LIVE IN LOS ANGELES)**

Alt-pop breakout Nessa Barrett unveiled her new live album, *Aftercare Tour (Live in Los Angeles)*, marking her first live record and capturing the rising star at her most raw and real. The album boasts eight tracks from Nessa's sold-out show at The Wiltern in Los Angeles, CA during her fan favorite Aftercare Tour. The success of the album carried into a global run with the Aftercare World Tour, including a sold-out European leg with special guest Sombr.



▲ **GOO GOO DOLLS SELL OUT THE GREEK THEATRE**

After a sold out show at the Greek Theatre in Los Angeles, Goo Goo Dolls frontman John Rzeznik reunited with friend and former manager of Sound Castle Studios (where the band recorded much of their acclaimed album *A Boy Named Goo* 30 years ago) Candace Stewart backstage. Stewart has managed EastWest Studios since 2009, where the Goo Goo Dolls also recorded their 2022 Top 10 Billboard hit album *Let Love In*.

Tidbits From Our Tattered Past



1988 - Metallica - #24

On the cover of our 1988 issue were heavy metal icons Metallica shortly after the release of their multi-platinum album *And Justice For All*. Formed in San Francisco, CA, the band remained steadfast in their identity, "We know we haven't catered to anyone or compromised. We followed our instincts. We wrote the way we wanted, recorded the way we wanted, and released the album the way we wanted," said drummer Lars Ulrich. "The music comes out in a very natural and instinctive way," he said, "that's why all this shit that is happening is so gratifying."



2005 - Black Eyed Peas - #13

Fresh off their single "Don't Phunk with My Heart" reaching No. 1 on L.A.'s KISS-FM, genre-blurring gurus Black Eyed Peas graced *MC's* 2005 cover. Co-founder will.i.am disclosed his songwriting techniques, "I don't write my lyrics on a piece of paper; I write to ProTools... If you write it on paper, you've sat with it too long and you've forgotten the idea because you're trying to finish the next line." Regarding the chaos of an endless road tour in support of their hit album *Elephunk*, the artist said, "I didn't come all the way this far to get lazy on a good run."

Limited back issues available to order
at musicconnection.com



▲ ROCHELLE JORDAN RELEASES TRACK "DOING IT TOO" WITH NEW ALBUM THROUGH THE WALL OUT SEPTEMBER 26TH

Critically acclaimed British-Canadian singer, songwriter, and producer Rochelle Jordan has released her searing new track "Doing It Too" from her highly anticipated album *Through The Wall*, slated for release on September 26th via Empire. The track is produced by Japan's very own Initial Talk, Virginia's enigmatic architect in alt-R&B/electronic music KLSH and Alabama powerhouse Byron the Aquarius.



◀ JISOO SHARES NEW MUSIC VIDEO FOR "YOUR LOVE," TOURS WORLDWIDE WITH BLACKPINK

South Korean superstar singer, actress, and international style icon Jisoo has unveiled the stunning and cinematic new music video for her fan favorite single "Your Love" out now via Warner Records. The song adorns her acclaimed debut mini album, *Amortage*. Jisoo has been performing "Your Love" during her solo set on Blackpink blockbuster Deadline World tour, which has already sold out stadiums on multiple continents.

► ONERPM SIGNS DAYA, TIL EVERY PETAL DROPS OUT OCTOBER 10

GRAMMY® Award-winning artist Daya has signed with ONERpm ahead of the forthcoming release of her second full-length album, *Til Every Petal Drops*. In support of the release, including the new single "Agnostic," Daya will be empowered by the full strength of ONERpm's global infrastructure.



A full-page photograph of Marina Diamandis sitting on a swing. She is wearing a white, ruffled, off-the-shoulder dress and black high-heeled sandals. Her long dark hair is blowing in the wind. The background is a bright, hazy yellow. The text 'MARINA SHINES BRIGHTER THAN EVER' is overlaid on the right side of the image in a large, bold, black sans-serif font. Below it, in a smaller font, is 'BY LINA LECARO'.

MARINA

SHINES BRIGHTER THAN EVER

BY LINA LECARO

On her sixth studio album, *Princess of Power*, the multi-faceted pop sensation reclaims her energy, her sexuality, and her music.

The world may not be the most empowering place for women right now, but in spite of this, or maybe because of it, female music artists are having a moment that feels like a reckoning—getting real about their personal challenges, pushing themselves creatively, and owning their vulnerability and humanity in ways that are both relatable and aspirational.

For the past decade and half, Marina Diamandis—formerly known by the stage name “Marina and the Diamonds” and since 2018, mononymously as just “MARINA”—has used the ups and downs of her journey as a performer and a person as fuel for her music, which clearly inspired the current slew of mold-breaking singers who’ve come up behind her, from Charli XCX to Chappell Roan.

Her latest, *Princess of Power* (released in June), uses reflection as celebration, elevating her expressive energy in inventive and intentional ways as only a seasoned performer can. In the process, the 39-year-old Welsh pop sensation continues to redefine herself and what it means to be a pop star.

Finding her “power” again wasn’t easy, though. As the L.A.-based star tells it, there was a lot of struggle to get here, especially where her mental health and physicality were concerned. She was diagnosed with chronic fatigue syndrome in 2023, following years of “deep fatigue, numbness, tingling, low appetite, brain fog, rashes, insomnia and a feeling of being ‘poisoned,’” as she described on her social media at the time.

“It’s tied to exhaustion but it’s not really about that,” MARINA shares with *Music Connection* during a candid and all-encompassing Zoom chat to promote the new album and tour. “It’s about life events that precipitate your brain and nervous system working in a certain way. It had been kind of building up for a long time. And of course, this career is intense. Once I figured it out, I was like, ‘Okay, I’m on the road out of this.’”

Identifying a medical reason for the obstacles she’d been fighting for years allowed for a much-needed release and refresh. She even tried a new medium, writing a book of poetry called *Eat the World*, released late last year. The collection of 38 poems and essays marked another mode of storytelling for her, though fans of her early work will note symbolic and aesthetic references from her colorful oeuvre.

Known for audacious themes since she first hit the charts in the U.K. and later the U.S., MARINA’s quirky and catchy 2010 debut *The Family Jewels* lived up to the hype it received online. The shimmering new wave and pop hybrid saw her compared to everyone from Katy Perry to Kate Bush—which she didn’t necessarily appreciate.

She followed the debut up with an even more attention-grabbing sophomore release, 2012’s *Electra Heart*, a conceptual commentary on archetypes and objectification that skewered the corporate pop machine that sought to classify and constrain her. If the fantastical frolic and frocks of it all were misconstrued by some as selling out, then collaborations with producers such as Dr. Luke probably deepened that impression.

But MARINA’s gift for inventive hooks and arty imagery felt anything but manufactured, even if the satire was lost on mainstream audiences. She was still weirder and more unique than her peers and, like Lady Gaga, her persona(s) always felt authentic even when she embraced provocative, pop star-style promotion.

Following up her early successes, 2015’s *Froot* offered more whimsy and bite as she continued to court the teen Tumblr crowd and eventually, a wider array of music fans who saw her enchanting live sets at festivals like Coachella and Glastonbury. Her vibrant music videos on YouTube over the years always sealed the deal.

Revisiting different ideas and guises from her 15-year career as she moves forward, her latest is a fearlessly fun assortment of melodic confections, serving sass and dancey singles for new fans to devour, and more thoughtful compositions that put the star’s trajectory into creative context for her longtime followers.

Princess of Power is also her first independent release (via a partnership deal with BMG) since leaving Atlantic records. Striking out on her own and getting to make her own decisions, along with finally figuring out what’s been ailing her body, seems to have reinvigorated her soul. The album is as beguiling as anything she’s ever done, inspiring movement and an array of moods that hone in on the female experience—her female experience—and solidify the idea that time teaches us things.

“I think this album—thematically and because of what I was going through in my life at that time—was really about taking back ownership of myself as a woman and sexuality-wise,” MARINA shares. “I was going through, like, a very transformative period, personally. And even though the term ‘self-empowerment’ is so bandied around, it really felt like this record was about that and self-reclamation, essentially.”

While *Princess* asserts more control than ever, she says the “power” she’s exploring isn’t necessarily about politics. “I think power is political, and for me, it was about redefining that word as a whole,” she explains. “There are so many examples of masculine power and not many examples of feminine power. You know, it’s kind of like the ‘being’ versus ‘doing’ thing. So for myself, it’s really been applied to love and vulnerability and seeing how powerful it is to have the ability to override fear instincts when it comes to love in general and relationships. For me, that’s what makes somebody powerful.”

The power of love she’s talking about has nothing to do with Disney clichés or cartoon warriors—which the album title might conjure for pop culture-obsessed consumers. It’s about owning one’s choices, desires and even shortcomings and celebrating them all. The overall vibe brings to mind a Madonna-like moxie and a disco-driven decadence and freedom.

MARINA has maintained all the attitude and style that first garnered her a cult-like following (her fans have adopted the “diamonds” tag for themselves). But she’s also wiser, with tracks touching upon depression and despair (“Everybody Knows I’m Sad”), transformation (“Butterfly”), and finding your inner badass (“Cuntissimo”).

The latter exemplifies how the “C word” has been taken back, first by the queer community which has always adored her, and today, by women themselves. It feels like a more wicked bookend to her *Electra Heart* hit, “Bubblegum Bitch,” and it might be the most overt proclamation of power on the album.

“It’s the power when I’m walkin’

On the streets, sweet-talkin’

Push-up bra in my diamonds

Gift from my ex-husband

(Cuntissimo) Oh baby, it’s a way of life

(Cuntissimo) Don’t let nobody dull my shine

(Cu-cuntissimo) This ain’t no Bonnie and Clyde

(Uh-huh, uh-huh) But you can be my Thelma on the side”

Even with explorations of self that aren’t always pretty, MARINA is exuberant on record—and clearly from speaking with her—in her life right now. “It’s just what I needed and what I still need. I feel like we came out of this period of the pandemic, and I think we’ve all taken a bit of time to get back to what life looks like... Socially, politically, we’ve all changed so much,” she explains. “And so when I was writing, I guess it was 2024, and I just had this real craving for fun and playfulness. And I also had this mission or intent for this record, where I wanted to make something purposefully positive for people so that they can feel just energized by it, even if they’re not listening to the lyrics so much, because we all listen to music so differently.”

Different generations listen differently, too. The disco diva moments might read retro depending on your cultural references, with both ‘70s and ‘80s elements popping off, but all together as backup to her gorgeous vocals, the sound feels novel and very now.

“It wasn’t conscious, but weirdly, it worked its way in along with these, like vintage video game sonics. It’s probably related to that era, which is, energetically, what I was trying to channel and bring into my own life,” MARINA says of the dance floor beats. “So it’s like these really high vibe songs that were so reminiscent of that era in music. And I’m a huge ABBA fan as well, so I was listening to them a lot at the time, but also listening to more modern artists like Kylie [Minogue] and a lot of old Madonna. I was honing in on only consuming music that was in that frequency.”

There’s a joyful kind of depth too, especially on the ballads. “Adult Girl” in particular is sure to resonate with fans who’ve grown up with the star. In a world where “40 is the new 30,” and women can wear whatever they want, maintain youth thanks to beauty technology and act however they choose with abandon, it solidifies the idea that feminism is multi-faceted and ageless, and that we can be many things at once.

*"I can let go of the flower, now my power has returned
I can look back at the past, now I see what I have learned
Try my best to act my age, but the child won't behave
She wants to scream and cry and rage, and who am I to dig her grave?
The teenage years I never lived
The innocence of high school kids
Young romance and endless nights
Of carefree joy and pure delight
Didn't grow up in a normal world
And now I'm just an adult girl"*

"I read in a book once that 'emotion is energy in motion,' so the energy comes up in your field, you know, your nervous system, and it seeks to be released," she says. "So what happens when you blunt it down and you're like, I don't want to feel that emotion. It gets stuck in your system and basically loops... it wants to be felt."

Princess of Power offers permission to process a wide range of emotions, especially for women, so that eventually they can release them like MARINA did. "I think music is magical for that reason," she says. "I think for all of us, whether we make it or we listen to it, it can transmute energy very effectively."

With its gentle melody and potent message, "Adult Girl" sort of brings to mind Billie Eilish's "What Was I Made For" from the *Barbie* movie soundtrack. Which isn't surprising as Eilish has spoken out in a few different interviews about being a big MARINA fan.

As for other contemporaries, her much-speculated relationship with Charli XCX—which some media pushed as a rivalry—seems to be good, especially after MARINA shared positive thoughts on the *Brat* remix of "Girl So Confusing" on social media last year. The collab, which featured Charli and Lorde not just putting their issues aside but airing them out as a way of healing, was seen by many as the ultimate girl power move. Clearly, coming together and supporting fellow princesses is helping them all rule the world.

Social media continues to play a huge role in exposing pop music to new fans too, but these days it's less niche-driven and wider than it used

to be, with TikTok leading the way. MARINA has seen the social media platform's reach first hand, with cuts like "Primadonna" and "Are You Satisfied?" finding new audiences recently.

"I was lucky that, just like two years ago, *Electra Heart* went platinum because of TikTok," she says. "Like three different songs... and then a bunch of my other ones from my first record. And I didn't have to do a thing."

"The greatest challenge is really holding your own sense of what you want to do—holding your own compass, because I think what's expected of us online now is to be content creators," she admits. "There are some artists who can do both effectively, but I think most artists are in one camp or the other. And I think artists who really want to be visionaries, shouldn't focus on content. I think the content is going to be created by your fans anyway."

Princess of Power tracks that have the potential to join her older hits as online faves include "Hello Kitty," "Final Boss," and the title track which opens the record. "I <3 You" and "Cuntissimo" are already gaining traction. Though MARINA says she doesn't think about it when she writes, she is developing "a sense for songs that might do well online."

During our interview, her mind is more excited by how she'll be interpreting her new and old material in real life. After lauded performances at Coachella 2025, her 32-date Fall *Princess of Power* tour—which kicked off in Seattle in September and ends near the end of October with three dates in California—is her focus. She's inspired to stage an engaging new experience for fans with fabulous fashion, "referencing a cosmic, galactic '70s vibe with knee-high glam rock boots, glitter, hot pants... and star makeup that I've been doing recently," and production conjuring "a video game concept where each song is a new level...it's like the game of life!"

MARINA continues to play it with passion and enduring pizzazz as she discovers new layers

and new kinds of power moving forward. "The one thing that hasn't changed is I've always been very confident in the creativity," she says. "When I think of my first few records, there was so much tension, anxiety, you know, desire for it to be a certain thing, which is very normal, very natural. But these days I think our music industry has shifted so wildly that you need to let go of the work and let it find its own home."

Visit marinaofficial.co.uk.

"Just like with books,
they always find
people when they
need them... I think
my music's a little
bit like that."



Video Game Composers Roundtable 2025

BY ANDY KAUFMANN

Financial analysts expect the video game industry to pull in more than \$522 billion worldwide this year alone, and developers are increasingly interested in creating lush and more expansive scores. We chatted with four artists exceling in video game composition to gain insight into how making music for interactive entertainment really works.



WOODY JACKSON

Web: woodyjackson.com

Notable Works: *Grand Theft Auto V*, *Red Dead Redemption*, *Red Dead Redemption 2*, *L.A. Noire*

Tell us about the art of creating music for video games.

When I started, there weren't a lot of rules. I was playing on a lot of film and TV stuff for other composers. And I knew this company, Rockstar [Games]. I knew of *Grand Theft Auto*. They were doing a new game [*Red Dead Redemption*], a western. That just came as a great opportunity. I kind of went overboard, writing 15-minute loops. I know from playing games that, if you hear it looping, it takes you out of the vibe. That's always a problem.

A lot of it was experimentation. It's great when you work on something and it's never been done. You have to have themes and variations on themes. But you also have to have energy. Working with musicians always brings the energy, sometimes too much. You have to figure out how to make them play less, because it's not a performance. It's something that's supporting visuals.

It's crazy the quantity of music you have to put out.

I think *Red Dead Redemption 2* was at least 40 hours, which sounds unfathomable. But then again, it was over a period. It is a bit of back and forth, because you are writing for a company. Everyone has to be pleased, and everyone has an opinion. So you have to deal with that. My assistants would get upset with the process of working for a company where there are revisions. I always looked at it as, well, those two weeks we spent recording, that's the fun part. The rest of it's a job.

How much freedom are you normally allowed to create whatever you want?

With Rockstar, I was allowed anything, really. After that, I worked on another game that needed more music than was already recorded. I ended up working on it in a month by myself. And then I asked if I could be part of *Grand Theft Auto V*. They said no, but I had to ask. Probably six months later, I got a call—"We need your help." It was great to work on such a seminal game.

I was kind of known for problem solving. I guess my brain works in a strange way, but it would keep me going. "What would it be like if this person played with this person?" I remember having a recording where I thought, "What if I had James Gadson and Joey

Waronker playing drums together?" Or, "What if I had Mike Watt and Mikey Shoes [Michael Shuman] from Queens of the Stone Age playing bass with Jon Theodore playing drums?"

In a conventional recording, nothing's separated, or it's separated enough but there's bleed. In video games, I always have to think of the least amount of bleed, because you might have to drop it down to one instrument. When I started, I was recording in my house. I remember turning in some upright bass stuff. They got back to me and said, "It sounds great, but we hear birds in the background." So I rerecorded that. It's these problems you don't really think about with movie composing.

Is writing music for video games becoming easier or harder?

Everything's becoming easier. A.I. tools are great, but I still love the human aspect of things. To give an example, on the first *Red Dead Redemption* you went into a bar and there was a guy playing piano. And when technology got better, people were like, "We're going to use a MIDI piano and have any song you want." I stepped back and said, "The human element's being taken out. Are you going to make it play Jay-Z songs?" Two weeks later, a TV show called *Westworld* came out where they had Nirvana songs on a player piano. That's always going to be a fight with technology. Hopefully, there are still people battling to keep it human.

What are your recommendations for composers who want to write music for video games?

They say do it for love, but you have to make money. I didn't approach it that way. I looked at it like—this is an outlet where I could contribute. I was lucky enough to play with Ry Cooder. I was in his son's band. We used to rehearse at

Ry's house. Joachim [Cooder] would give me one of Ry's soundtracks every week, because I told him I was into it. I remember telling Ry, "This one song you wrote is the best bath-taking music I've ever heard." It got into my head—what would be the best music for taking a bath? People thought it was a joke, but I really was like, "I've got the best bath-taking music for this part." Those are the things you should think about, not, "I want to write music for video games." It's, "Maybe my music would fit in this."



MASON LIEBERMAN

Web: masonlieberman.com

Notable Works: *Overwatch 2*, *Playerunknown's Battlegrounds Mobile*, *League of Legends: Wild Rift*, *Royal Match*

How did you learn the art of creating music for video games?

Scoring video games is a bit like solving an audio Rubik's Cube. We're not just thinking in terms of the linear narrative experience. It's exciting to dive into as a creative process. I started learning video game scoring at Berklee College of Music from Michael Sweet, who had what I believe is the first video game scoring curriculum in America.

Was the goal always to compose for video games?

Oh, yeah. My dream gig as a kid was getting to work on a Nintendo game. And I didn't realize that composition was a job. I just knew I liked music. I started playing cello when I was five years old. I made my debut at Lincoln Center at 13. So I've been playing for a long time. But as I got toward college, composition became a real thing I could pursue and that became my focus.

How much freedom are you normally allowed to create whatever you want?

It's always a conversation with the rest of the creative and development team. Sometimes they're very particular, and to a certain degree it's about solving within those confines. But some developers are excited by the idea of working with an artist and telling them, "You tell us what you think this should be, and we'll figure out how to make that work within our gameplay design." Ultimately, the answer is it varies a lot.

So every situation is different?

At the end of the day, you are working on

someone else's game. You're not the game director. You're the composer. That means someone else's vision is more important than yours. The odds are they trust you to have a meaningful say and impact what they're trying to do. But if your director says, "That's not right. Do it again," you say, "Okay, sounds good."

Is there a genre of game you like to work in?

I don't know if there's one specific kind that beats everything else. One of the things I love about games is we have so many different types that every project has unique challenges I've never had to confront prior.

How do you learn to work with a team?

Whenever you're working in media scoring, and especially in games, you are probably working with people who do not understand music at a fundamental level. It is your job as a composer to understand how to communicate, rather than expect them to communicate with you in musical terms. I don't need my game devs to say, "I want something a bit like [Claude] Debussy here," and "I want this section in melodic minor," or "In this section, I want you to bring the ostinato out." All I want is what the player is supposed to feel. Tell me what the experience is. Show me the game design documents. Show me what it is we're trying to get the players doing. And I will figure out the best solution.

What do you need to know to understand game design documents?

Some are incredibly detailed. They might be hundreds of pages. For others, it's a PowerPoint and a prayer. But the goal is always that you're trying to break out what is fundamental to the game. Being able to understand game design, having an understanding of programming or art or the other major disciplines across game dev, all that stuff can help for better perceiving your place as the composer.

Is writing music for video games becoming easier or harder?

In many cases, it has become easier, as the toolsets have evolved to make certain things simpler. Maybe the production standards and expectations are higher. You're not just working with General MIDI or mod files. You're working with live audio and recording ensembles. You also have to be a great orchestrator and producer. You have to have a fundamental understanding of music implementation. There are a lot of things you could probably get away with being worse at 15 or 20 years ago that now you just won't get hired if you don't have that skillset.

I would think the hardest thing is creating the amount of music you need for video games.

Honestly, I don't consider it one of the bigger challenges, mostly because at the exact same time that the scale of games has been ballooning so have the development cycles. Twenty years ago, a game might be produced in nine to 18 months. Now, we have major titles that are going on 10 years. I find that video games have a bit more of a relaxed development cycle in terms of music compared to most other forms of media.

What are your recommendations for composers who want to write music for video games?

Start writing for games. I know that sounds silly, but there are many opportunities if you know where to look. There are game jams just about every weekend, where random people come together and create games. And because there are so many games getting made, there are more composers than ever looking for assistants, additional writers, or people who'd be able to help. So start scoring video games and meeting people who work in those spaces. Come to events like GameSoundCon, GDC [Game Developers Conference], High Score in Australia, or Devcom [Developer Conference, now renamed Gamescom Dev].

Of all the projects you've worked on, do any have a special place in your heart?

One of the most emotionally resonant is an upcoming title for THQ Nordic, *The Eternal Life of Goldman*. It's the first time I ever got to write music that was resonant with my religious upbringing. *Overwatch 2*, every time they call me, it's for the funniest, craziest shit. I love those opportunities. *Apex Legends Mobile*, that was the first project that I was music directing for Tencent, so that was special. At the same time, it hurt when that project got cancelled. I realized how impermanent these live service projects can be. If they disappear, they're gone forever.

Sometimes, they don't even come out.

If you were to ask most game composers what is the coolest project you've ever worked on, nine out of 10 would say, "I can't talk about that; it was cancelled." For me, the coolest project I've ever been part of I will never be able to talk about in a meaningful capacity.



EIMEAR NOONE

Web: eimearnoonemusic.com

Notable Works: *World of Warcraft: Warlords of Draenor*, *World of Warcraft: Mists of Pandaria*, *Runes of Aran*

How did you learn the art of creating music for video games?

My background is classical, with a whole lot of traditional Irish music thrown in. But what I really loved was music that told a story or made you feel something viscerally without explaining anything. So I studied film scoring alongside my traditional studies. I wasn't so

aware of orchestral scores in video games yet.

Asking how you learn to write video game music is like asking how you learn to write your name. At this point, I can't remember how I learned. I've been doing it since I was a kid. It's about finding your voice and the right collaborators. And the best collaborators are artists who take you somewhere that you wouldn't have gone on your own and stretch you creatively.

Did you aim to get into video game music or was it an opportunity that opened up?

All I've ever thought about is the music. Communicating with people—that's what it's about for me. I never said, "I want to write video game music." I was totally focused on the music. That's my job. I'm horrible at networking. Conventions are overwhelming. I give people advice—go to the conventions, shake hands and meet all the people, things that I've never done and never will.

Does the skill of conducting help you with video game composition?

It absolutely does. There are things I'm thinking when I'm writing for a game. Could we perform this on stage? I also conduct the music of friends and colleagues. I get to know them on a different level. I have to memorize their music. I'm looking at every detail. That's special, because it's a tight knit community. I'm constantly looking at different styles of orchestration, at different styles of composition. The other thing is, when I'm writing, sometimes I'm visualizing the players playing. Conducting brings a different dimension to the headspace when you're scoring a game.

How much freedom are you normally allowed on a project?

That depends on your team. Also, what is the sound of the game? Is it orchestral? Is it electronic? We started a game a couple years ago that we thought was going to be orchestral, and [my husband] Craig [Stuart Garfinkle] and I really got into it. We work together on everything. We both went, "I don't think this is an orchestral score." So it became a guitar-based, electronic score with some solo instruments. We had a lot of freedom on that game. The team trusted us a lot. They had great notes. When you get great notes from a team, you've got a certain amount of freedom to be an actual, expressive artist. That's what we live for.

The great thing about working in games is the deadlines aren't as intense as film. And it's much more collaborative. There's much more interaction with the audio team. You get to build a work family. And depending on the game, there can be a lot more music.

What are the skills you need to work with a team and interpret a game director's vision?

You need to listen with an open mind and the perspective that these guys have been working on this forever. This is their baby. We're trying to interpret musically what they don't know they're hearing yet, what's going around in their heads, and give it voice. So interpersonal skills where you can take your ego out of it and be empathic for the game designers.

Is writing music for video games getting harder or easier?

Both are going to happen in different ways, with

the advent of A.I. It's going to get easier and harder at the same time. I don't want to say how I think that's going to happen, because I don't want to give anyone ideas. I want composers to remain employed, thank you.

What is your advice to people who want to get into video game composition?

Arm yourself to the teeth with skills. But keep your eyes and ears open for new technologies and where the industry is headed. Also, keep the live side of your work going. Take a 360 [degree] approach to your career. Get out there and put a human face on things, because we're going to need that. We're going to have to step out from behind the curtain a bit. That's our only insurance against artificial intelligence.



OLIVIER DERIVIÈRE

Web: olivierderiviere.com

Notable Works: *South of Midnight*, *Alone in the Dark*, *Remember Me*, *Streets of Rage 4*

How do you learn the art of creating music for video games?

I love video games. And game design is the core of every game, what will make the game fun. A composer writing music for games should focus on the game design aspects. Music design is—what is your game play loop? What can we do with music to help this game play loop become more immersive and rewarding?

Look at the first Mario Brothers [*Super Mario Bros.*] In this game, you have [does *Super Mario* theme]. Then, the music switches to indicate something's changing. And there's a timer; if you're getting close to zero, the music accelerates. That's music design. When I was a kid, this is what I wanted to do.

How much freedom are you normally allowed on a project?

Full freedom. And you know why? It's because the way I work with people puts me close to the game. I understand what the game is about. We're making the game together. They see me as part of the team. My role is to translate whatever ideas they have, enhance them into music, and make that work within the game. The freedom is full as long as I collaborate and celebrate the vision.

What are the skills you need to work with a team and interpret a game director's vision?

My role is to listen. I'm not here to impose. And when I understand enough, I can start offering things. Most of the time, there's a sense of surprise. "I didn't expect this." But a few moments later, they're like, "It's exactly what this game needs." The one thing I never talk about with them is music. I'm talking about intentions. It's much easier for them.

Is writing music for video games getting harder or easier?

It depends on the composer, approach, and experience. Technological progress makes it much easier for somebody like me. You can have reverb, EQ... You can change the music in real time. For some, that's terrifying because they're like, "I just write music." For these people, it must be even harder to look at what you can do. But for somebody like me, this is party time.

I'm frustrated, because I know what we can do with music. I know the possibilities. What are gamers looking for? The next wow thing. Wow, the graphics. Wow, the physics. Wow, the A.I. This is what gamers want. They want games to provoke something they've never felt or experienced. But of course, [doing something new] requires more time, more budget. It's much easier if you just compose music and send it over. You can do 30 games a year, whereas I only do two or three.

Is the best way to learn the necessary skills to start composing for video games? Or do is it better to go to school first?

I don't know. Schools can be good. It depends what they teach and how they teach it. We live in a world where there is enough on the internet for you to learn so much. This is crazy, the amount of documentation, shared tutorials, and the tools themselves. Wwise and FMOD are free to download and use. In the end, it's on you. Everything's possible, as long as you're willing and persistent.

What is your advice to people who want to get into video game composition?

Be interested in games. [Young composers] come into the video games world, and the video games world is like, "Okay, what's the gameplay?" "What are the parameters?" "How can we set up this?" You need to understand what they're saying, because at some point someone will say, "Oh, it's like *Elden Ring*." It facilitates a lot of communication. And focus on understanding the tools.

I played the *A Plague Tale* games. It must have been great composing for a game featuring rats.

People think games are about killing zombies or whatever. [The *A Plague Tale*] games are about death. They're about acceptance, grief, disease, insanity... They're very deep in meaning. I like to talk about the human condition with my music. It's weird to see the way video games are seen as violent and encouraging kids to do bad things. But I love that people look down on us, because this is the only way we can be creative. Let them believe we're just kids having fun so we can do our own thing.

IK Multimedia TONEX Cab

Whether you're on stage, in the studio, or producing content on the go, the IK Multimedia TONEX Cab delivers the kind of amp-like feel and sonic precision today's guitarists and creators' demand. Designed to bring digital rigs to life, this compact, road-ready FRFR (Full-Range Flat Response) powered speaker cab bridges the gap between digital modeling and the dynamic feel of a real guitar amp.

Weighing under 28 lbs. and pumping out 350 watts RMS (700W peak) through a custom 12" Celestion speaker and a 1" Lavoce compression driver, the TONEX Cab offers punch, clarity, and power wherever you play. It pushes up to 132 dB SPL across a full 60 Hz–20 kHz frequency range, ensuring your IRs, amp sims, and backing tracks sound massive without added coloration.

Unlike many FRFR systems, the TONEX Cab feels and reacts like a real guitar amp, delivering the kind of tactile response and harmonic richness that gigging guitarists are

you to send either a dry signal or a fully processed tone (including EQ, IR, and AMP TONE) to front-of-house or your recording interface. A 1/8" aux input makes it easy to play along with backing tracks, click, or reference audio during rehearsals or content creation. MIDI In/Thru ports allow for seamless integration with larger rigs and preset switching, making live setups more streamlined. A rear-panel USB port enables quick loading and management of impulse responses via software. And to ensure clean, noise-free operation in any venue, a ground lift switch is also included.

Whether you're running a TONEX One, Kemper, Helix, Quad Cortex, or plugin-based rig, the TONEX Cab delivers your digital tones with analog realism. Its AMP TONE feature subtly alters dispersion and midrange behavior, offering the warmth, air, and punch often missing from digital playback speakers.

AMP TONE is a proprietary midrange-shaping control that mimics how a real amp

TONEX Cab app to load your favorite IRs into one eight instantly recallable presents.

A balanced XLR out with Pre/Post switch sends either a dry signal or fully processed tone—including EQ, IR, and AMP TONE—to front-of-house or a recording interface. Additional connectivity includes a combo XLR/1/4" input, 1/8" aux input (for tracks or click), USB, MIDI In/Thru, and ground lift.

Use the TONEX Cab Control (Mac/PC) software App to custom IRs, and configure presets, making deeper customization easier. Customize your rig further by pairing the Cab with ToneNET distributed models captured amp/head models, and VIR cab simulations.

Thanks to the XLR out with Pre/Post switch, you can send a dry DI or full-processed tone—EQ, IR, and AMP TONE—to the PA or your DAW. For gigging musicians, this means you get your stage tone and your captured tone at the same time.

Whether you're playing bars, theaters, or fly dates, the TONEX Cab gives you consistent



used to. Whether you're gigging with backing tracks, jamming with your band, or tracking parts for your next session, TONEX Cab brings your digital modelers tone to life.

The sleek wood enclosure, customizable grille, and angled design give it stage presence and smart utility. Built-in tilt-back legs improve projection when floor-placed, while its compact size (546 x 432 x 230 mm) makes it ideal for cramped stages, fly dates, traveling, or home setups.

Front-panel controls include a Master Volume, 3-band EQ, and AMP TONE—a unique midrange sculptor that mimics how a real amp blooms and breathes in a room. Add in an LED screen, preset selector, and save button, and you've got a cab that's as functional in a dark venue as it is in your studio.

Around the back, the TONEX Cab offers all the connectivity options a modern musician or content creator could ask for. A combo XLR/1/4" input provides flexible compatibility with a variety of gear, while a balanced XLR output features a Pre/Post switch—allowing

interacts with a room. It subtly alters dispersion and harmonic behavior, giving digital tones the bloom, warmth, and air-pushing sensation that guitarists crave, especially on silent stages where feel often gets lost in the mix.

When paired with IK's TONEX One—a compact pedalboard amp modeler and IR loader—the TONEX Cab becomes part of an all-IK rig that's powerful, portable, and performance-ready.

TONEX One stores up to 20 Tone Models (captured amps, pedals, or full rigs) and 20 IRs, letting you build complete amp-and-cab sounds inside a mini pedal. The Cab then delivers those tones with high SPL and stage feel. You can choose to use the Cab's IR engine, bypass it, or combine it with the pedal's IRs for layered tone shaping.

When you register your TONEX Cab on the OK Multimedai website you can download 50 high-quality impulse responses. Each IR captures the sonic character of a professionally mic'd speaker cab, including mic placement and room acoustics. Use the

tone night after night. It sets up fast, fits in small stages, and keeps volume under control without sacrificing feel. Perfect for silent stages, in-ear setups, or when venue rules nix traditional amps. Back in the studio use TONEX Cab as a monitor or mic-free speaker for overdubs, playthroughs, or livestreams. Its cab-like dynamics and high SPL mean you can capture real amp energy without the bleed, the noise, or the room limitations.

Summing up, The IK Multimedia TONEX Cab is much more than a powered FRFR speaker, it's a performance-grade tone solution built for musicians who work across real-world stages, home studios, and digital platforms. Whether you're on the road, in the studio, or Between Sessions, TONEX Cab lets you keep your entire rig mobile ready and sounding great—no mics, no amp hauling, no guesswork, just great tone night after night. Highly recommended!

TONEX Cab is available now for \$799.99 – find out more at ikmultimedia.com/products/tonexcab

The Evolution of Radio Evolve

Radio Evolve is a recently-launched endeavor from Evolve Entertainment Network, which was: "created to produce and provide family-friendly content that inspires you. Told through our guests' unique experiences, our mastered high-quality audio stories offer possibilities and thoughtful perspectives through a familiar shared story with the world's most fascinating guests in music, food, film, fashion, and business."

Jeremiah D. Higgins is the executive producer, director of programming and also a host at Radio Evolve, and he told *MC* about what they have in store for listeners...

Where did the idea for Radio Evolve come from?

In March 1994, when I was in college in Santa Barbara, a new station, KJEE 92.9 FM, went on air. This was a full six years before the first iPod was released and radio was god. Suddenly, KJEE was just there on the dial, introducing us to alternative rock and the "Seattle Sound" for the first time. The station played mainly bands like Nirvana, Stone Temple Pilots, Pearl Jam, Mother Love Bone, and Alanis Morissette. There were no commercials, no DJs talking. Only grungy alternative music. Every couple of hours or so, a monotone voice would come on the air and say, "KJEE Santa Barbara." That's it. It was so novel, so strange, and the music was so good, that before long everyone was talking about it and tuning in. It was *our* station; it was the only station we listened to; the college kids adopted it. It was gritty, reflecting how we felt; it was the soundtrack to our parties on the beach, it fueled our anxiety as we studied, it was on in the car and the background, always. It never went off.

KJEE and what it stood for in those early days is my inspiration for Radio Evolve Santa Barbara, but featuring indie artists mostly without record deals. Radio Evolve strives to be a station where you can discover new artists in their purest form with minimal interruption. Music keeps us young and reminds us that the world remains exciting, encouraging us to embrace it. Music and those who create it are our guides. I want Radio Evolve to be turned on and never turned off. I want the world to discover the new sound coming from authentic indie artists, just as I did in the '90s.

My friend Marc Platt has dedicated the majority of his life to helping music artists get their music on the air. His company is called Radio Candy Media. Along with his music business partner, Jenny Klein, he oversees a handful of radio stations across the world on the Radio Candy Media platform, including Radio Evolve. He maintains relationships with a few hundred additional radio stations.

How does it differ from other indie music stations?

Radio Evolve stands out from other indie stations by primarily featuring local music artists from the Santa Barbara area. When you tune in from anywhere in the world, you hear music by people who live and create in Santa Barbara, giving you a taste of the local music scene. About 90 percent of the music played is from Santa Barbara musicians, while the rest is from indie musicians from around the world.

Who is involved in production, hosting, etc?

I serve as the Director of Programming for Radio Evolve. I receive nearly a hundred music submissions each week. I listen to each and every song submitted to me, and I reply to every artist personally. I have enjoyed every



artist's submission. I consider it a *huge* honor to receive their music; they have worked so hard, and I want them to know I hear them as artists. The music I have received to this point fits in with our overall "sound," which is, in general, folk-rock, alternative rock, and pop-rock. We call it "Indie Gold." We offer various hours dedicated to genres like jazz in the mornings ("Birdland Mornings") and hip-hop in the afternoons, and "College Indie" to study by late-night, with high-charged garage band sounds to keep up the energy at the end of the day. At midnight, we switch to "Lounge," featuring artists and DJs to set the mood in the late-night hours.

Another unique aspect of Radio Evolve is the Evolve Entertainment Network roster of talk shows on the weekends. Currently, the Evolve Entertainment Network produces: *The Jeremiah Show*, celebrating 10 years on air featuring Pop Culture, Music Icons, and Food Gods; *The Arwen Lewis Show*, featuring indie musician gold; *The Mike Gormley Show*, featuring the world's biggest rock stars for the past 50 years; and *The Kimi Kato Show*, featuring current Japanese music artists and showcasing the colorful world of Japan.

New talk shows premiering on Radio Evolve include Michele Kawamoto Perry's *Expressions of Leadership*, which features fascinating entrepreneur stories providing lessons that they have learned. Host Gary Dranow of *The Gary Dranow Show* sits down with top music artists and compelling voices—from industry powerhouses to local and remote Shakers and Movers—to uncover the stories behind their passion and impact.

What can we expect to see coming up?

I'm very excited to premiere live at The Lost Chord Guitars Residency every Wednesday night this fall, hosted by Chris Pelonis and friends. Chris is a long-time music artist and sound designer who built a state-of-the-art music venue that is the destination for indie musicians and music fans everywhere, a music

Mecca just over the hill from Santa Barbara in Solvang. A few of the past notable musical guests that have joined Chris on stage have included Michael McDonald, Jackson Brown, Kenny Loggins, Steven Stills, and Jeff Bridges. You never know who may show up and join Chris on stage! This show will be aired live.

How do you see it growing?

The biggest compliment to me would be if our growth came from music indie artists legitimizing our station by continuing to send me their new music and sharing it with their fans. Equally, it is a success if listeners tune into the station and think of us as the place to hear and discover new talented musicians.

We have a great music network.

I will continue to work within this powerful network to spread the word that we welcome musicians on the station and our talk shows. We aim to become the go-to destination for musicians, honoring their hard work and providing genuine support. We are in their corner.

Based on the artists covered so far, who should we be keeping an eye on?

There is a very talented hip-hop artist I'm into named Djauthentic. His music is on fire! He's going to go far!

Keep an eye on Joe Woodard and Lucinda Lane, Naomi Jane, Arwen Lewis, Nicole Sophia, Manuel The Band, Electron Veil, Robbi Kay, Fran The Singer, Sean Kirkpatrick, The World Is Haunted, Modongo (ft. Kopzen RSA) Tebogo Patrick Mokonyane & Kopano Phillip Mokgotho, Beau James Wilding, Reverend Ross, The Warning, Kevin Virgil Wallace, Old Folk, Chris Pelonis, Lois Mahalia, Jena Douglas, Michele Villegas, Todd Duda, Michael Wilds, Leonard Shubin, Cool Hand Luke, Frode Holm of Chanel 5, John Denicola, and Dear Southern Belle.

Visit radio-evolve.ocks

Focusrite Celebrates 40 Years of Helping Artists Realize Their Creative Visions

Whether recording an album or jamming out in front of a live crowd, musicians need technology to get the job done. Everyone knows players require instruments, microphones, and speakers to generate sound. What often goes unrecognized is the necessity for audio interface devices.

Focusrite's sole focus is helping artists in this department. Founded in England in 1985, the renowned product manufacturer specializes in audio interfaces, ISA-series mic preamps, and RedNet Audio-over-IP solutions. Beatles producer Sir George Martin famously became one of Focusrite's earliest clients. Founder Rupert Neve built him a custom mic preamp and EQ for his AIR Studios back in 1985. That paved the way for the ISA 110, which set a new industry benchmark for quality. In 1988, Focusrite would release the fabled Forte console.

"Forty years ago in 1985, home recording

iconic Scarlett range along with their RedNet range of audio-over-IP products. A more recent innovation is the Vocaster, a unit specifically built to satisfy the needs of podcasters.

Most popular is the Scarlett range. There are currently more than eight million of these units out in the wild. Though more affordable than many of Focusrite's other offerings, the Scarlett line is used by professionals in addition to hobbyists and beginners. To celebrate 40-years of Focusrite, a very limited anniversary edition of the Scarlett 2i2 was released at the end of September.

Considering the many options available, it can be difficult to know which choice is right for you. The Focusrite website features a simple-to-use Interface Finder to help identify the most appropriate solution. Simply answer a few basic questions and let the program do its magic.

Another way to narrow down your options is

all the included plugins. (Brainworx, Antares AutoTune, Softube and XLN have all partnered with Focusrite to provide plugin software at no extra charge.) "At the end, it says, 'Are you up and running?'" adds Hughley. "And if you say no, it connects you with support."

Integrating useful features, such as Clip Safe and Air mode, into its products remains a continuing mission. Focusrite's development team is always seeking ideas on how to make it easier for creatives to bring their sounds to life. One way they do so is by soliciting feedback from their customer base. The website offers a form through which artists can reach out. It helps that their staff is filled with musicians. "We like to think we know," Hughley remarks regarding what people desire, "but we look outside our walls to see what consumers want."

The manufacturer does what it can to keep prices down, starting with how much it pays for



was limited in equipment and accessibility, and professional studio time was out of reach for most musicians," reads a company statement. "In that environment, Focusrite emerged with the legendary large-format Forte and Studio Consoles, tools that set a new benchmark for sound quality and quickly became sought-after in the world's top studios. By the early 1990s, as engineers and producers fell in love with the sound, Focusrite began producing rack-mounted versions of the console's ISA mic-pre modules, which fast became highly desirable outboard gear used in studios worldwide."

Phil Dudderidge, who formerly served as Led Zeppelin's live sound mixer and co founded Soundcraft Electronics Ltd., acquired the assets of Focusrite Ltd. in 1989, re-launching it as Focusrite Audio Engineering Ltd. Under Dudderidge's leadership, the business went on to create many unique audio interface designs, including the Red range line of EQs, dynamics processors, and analogue mic pres. Following that came the Green 3 Voicebox in the mid-'90s, then the Platinum range, the Focusrite Liquid Channel, and a partnership with DigiDesign who chose Focusrite mic pres for their M-Box in the 2000s. Then in the early 2010s, Focusrite released the new

thinking about how many inputs and outputs you'll need. The more you desire, the higher the price. However, Daniel Hughley (Sr. Manager, Brand Marketing, Focusrite, Americas) points out that many of their products are expandable, especially those in the Scarlett range. For instance, with the Scarlett 16i16 4th Gen, you can add eight more channels quickly and easily with a simple ADAT cable. He goes on to mention that everything in the RedNet ranges is built to be expandable in similar fashion.

Setting up a recording session for many instruments can be a significant time-suck. Some Focusrite products, such as those in the Scarlett series, reduce the amount of effort required by offering Auto Gain. Using this feature automatically sets gain levels for every microphone within seconds. It's a feature Hughley happily uses in his home studio, even though he has a degree in audio engineering and is perfectly comfortable setting gain levels manually.

Focusrite also tries to make their interfaces simple to install. The first time anyone plugs in a Scarlett, their computer will automatically return a prompt inviting users to engage in the onboarding process, helping them register their purchases and making sure they have

components. "We've had longstanding relationships with our suppliers," Hughley observes, "so we're able to keep costs low."

Then there is the environmental pledge. Anyone concerned about the impact of his or her buying habits on the planet will be comforted to know that Focusrite cares about reducing its carbon footprint. The company spends time thinking about everything from how many flights staffers take to what happens with their products once they become obsolete. They even employ a sustainability director whose sole purpose is to focus on these initiatives.

Most important for the public to realize is that Focusrite exists to serve every musical creator at all levels of expertise, from young visionaries alone in their bedrooms toying with fantasies of superstardom to fulltime professionals, such as Cypress Hill and Fear Factory bass player Christian Olde Wolbers, who uses tons of Focusrite gear in his California studio. Through presidential inaugurations, Super Bowls, and countless Coachella festivals, their wares remain ubiquitous.

"We're here for everybody," declares Hughley. "I can't stress that enough."

focusrite.com

Wavemakers

Paving the Way for 40+ Women Musicians

Navigating the music business presents many challenges regardless of age or sex; however, women 40 and over face their own unique set of obstacles. In our youth-centric culture, this segment of the business is often overlooked, perpetuating the cycle. Tackling this head on, Ladd, an Austin-based musician and entrepreneur, recently launched Wavemakers, a movement geared towards raising awareness how women over 40 are perceived, particularly in the music business. Ladd is seeking to debunk this parochial thinking by exploring ways women over 40 can make their mark pursuing their passions while earning a living.

Literally 25 percent of the U.S. population are women over 40. This translates to roughly 800+ million or one in every four people. This age group often has more purchasing power than a younger demographic and are frequently the heads of their households deciding how money is spent. Brands not only want them but need them. So, the goal is for both businesses and artists to mutually reap the potential benefits by embracing this often-underserved demographic. At this pivotal stage of their lives, women who are launching or re-launching music careers require more robust income streams. This includes securing substantial ways of earning a living and funding projects that can achieve broader impact.

Most ideas that re-shape mass thinking usually grow out of one person's dissatisfaction with the status quo, realizing that what they are experiencing, others may be too. Ladd, who launched her music career as she states, "later in life," was feeling behind those who had a head start. When she released her second album, facing various obstacles, she did a nationwide search to find an act to open her release show, specifically targeting women in this age group. When she learned how many women out there were facing the same challenges, she took action. "I founded Wavemakers with the assumption that I would connect these women to each other and then I wanted to make sure that there was economic opportunity." The goal is not to try to change the music industry but to create an environment where women in this demographic can flourish which in turn can potentially change how they are perceived in an even bigger way.

One of the early steps toward realizing her vision took place this past May when Ladd learned that the Austin Woman's Way Busi-

ness Awards and Gala could not use music from established songwriters creating an opportunity for independent artists. Becoming the official music sponsor of the event, Wavemakers enlisted members to submit tracks written and performed by the members themselves to be used during the award ceremony. They received a license fee for use of their music while raising their visibility in the Austin business community.

For members with a body of work, but for

specialized services—ranging from production support funded through grants, to amplified promotion via social media and our Wavemaker network, to strategic distribution aimed at licensing music with brands, plus personalized professional consulting, and coaching.

To assist women with putting plans in motion, Ladd has joined forces with musician and life coach Wendy Colonna to help women not only bring their projects to fruition but offer support with any professional challenges

a member may face. For example, releasing an album entails its own process from budgeting to production, distribution, and marketing, which is just as important as the production itself. Whether it's being educated about the process or just knowing someone is in your corner can go a long way.

Wavemakers is also exploring ways that brands and artists can benefit each other. Most recently, Ladd hosted an event which attracted some national brands, including Google, AT&T, Next Tribe, Consuela Bags, and more. The goal is to see how music might be tied to these brands and others, creating a revenue stream for members as well as raising their visibility.

Playlists are another avenue they are pursuing. It's a proven fact that fan power goes a long way and can be as effective as any marketing tool. Based on this premise, the group has created seasonal playlists consisting of members' only tracks with the intention of reeling in more fans.

In short, there are a multitude of resources an artist needs, from help with the recording process to promoting live shows, monetary support or just simply someone to share the journey with. While there are many women's music support groups and networking outlets, Wavemakers is the only organization with this unique mission and platform. Though still a young movement, the intention is to spread the word with an aim toward rolling it out in other cities, ultimately becoming a national organization.

To sign up for membership and/or to receive the newsletter go to wwimusic.com. That is the best way to find out what events are going on around town and receive updates about the community that Wavemakers is building. And of course, you must be a woman musician 40 or older to join.

Though there is still a lot to flesh out, there is no shortage of dedication and enthusiasm on Ladd's part. Knowing there is an organization standing behind them is a huge step in the right direction.

wwimusic.com



various reasons needing help completing a project, Ladd initiated a grant program where recipients were chosen based on the strength of their personal story, with each submission consisting of why that project was meaningful vis-à-vis their story, and how the money would benefit them. \$35,000 in grants were ultimately awarded to 11 winners to use towards their musical endeavors.

All women musicians ages 40+ are welcome to join Wavemakers free of charge and enjoy access to their core resources. Members who want to take their music further can opt in for

How To Build Your Music Empire

Types Of Music Licenses

I've always known about the sync world. Still, it wasn't until 2021 when I discovered through a BMI royalty statement that one of my songs had been placed in an HBO TV show two years prior (in 2019), that I really started immersing myself in all this world has to offer. The moral of the story is to read your statements! I could have caught this sooner.

I was ecstatic when I discovered my music was featured in a pivotal and emotional scene on a popular TV show. Hearing my voice and lyrics in the episode was a special moment in my career. I eagerly jumped up and down and called all of my family and friends. After several calls, it became clear that I was supposed to have been paid for this TV placement, but I brushed it off.

I was more interested in seeing my music infused with pictures than concerned about a paycheck (even though I was hardly covering my expenses at this stage). After thorough research, I realized that someone was supposed to have obtained permission from me to use my song and that I should have been paid a couple thousand dollars. My royalty statement only reflected about \$1 or \$2 dollars here and there over the course of about two years.

Long story short...

The bad news is that I discovered I was supposed to be paid but wasn't, let alone informed of this placement. The company that placed the song also no longer exists.

The good news was that it led me to explore the sync world in a way I don't think I would have if this hadn't happened to me. It led me down the path of learning how to monetize my music. Within my first year and a half or so of discovering this whole new world, I earned a whopping \$35,000+ in sync income (and I wasn't even focusing on sync as much as I would have liked), turning my music career into a full-blown business.

When placing a song, two essential things to note are:

- The agreement (contract)
- The payment (money, money, money, it's a rich man's world)

In sync, there are two main ways to earn, and I like to think of it like this:

Storytime: Picture yourself walking on a beach with a metal detector. On top of the sand, you discover some enchanting and valuable seashell treasures (upfront sync fees).

After digging a little, you come across a treasure chest of gold (backend royalties) below the sand.

The 'above the sand' treasures are your upfront sync fees, which a production company will initially pay you to use your track.

The treasure chest 'below the sand' is your backend royalties. You will receive this money in increments through your PRO (performing rights organization) each time the TV show or film is streamed or shown on TV.

When your song is used in TV or film, here are some examples of the different kinds

of Sync Licenses you will encounter and, which should be brought to your attention before your song can be used. Remember, if you discover someone used your song without your permission or paying you, that's a big no-no. But remember to read your licensing agreements carefully if you sign with an agency to ensure you did not approve something you didn't realize you did.

There are two types of copyrights in sync licensing:



1. Master use licence (Sound recording)

2. Synchronization licence (Composition)

This means you will need to sign two separate agreements when one of your songs is placed. You need to sign off on the sound recording (audio/master) and the composition (songwriting/publishing).

Different Types Of Music Licenses

1. Synchronization License (sync license)

This is the most commonly used license of them all. Commonly used for TV.

2. Master License

The copyright owner signs a master license and grants permission to use the sound recording. However, this is only halfway done—the copyright owner must also sign a sync license agreement. Commonly used for TV.

3. Blanket License

This is used when someone pays a yearly or one-time fee for a group (more than one) of your songs. Commonly used by Television networks.

4. Mechanical License (audio-only)

This is used when creating a cover of another artist, such as Post Malone, Eminem, Lorde, etc. If you release this recording, you will need a mechanical license for the audio and a sync license. Commonly used by artists creating cover songs.

Request a copy of the cue sheet.

If a small indie film wants to use your music in its movie and has yet to create licensing agreements, you could provide your own. Work with a lawyer to create a licensing agreement template that you can use repeatedly to protect yourself.

Fun tip: If someone places your music, it's always a good idea to send them a gift or write them a note to thank them for supporting you and show your appreciation! It is not required or expected, but it will go a long way. If someone takes time to do something for me, I ensure I make the time to return the favor. Music is so accessible these days, and the pool of artists is endless. If someone chooses my music over someone else's, I go above and beyond to show my gratitude.

How To Get Your Song Synced

1. Create music
2. Pitch music
3. Agree to sync terms and or production agreement
4. Song is placed on TV show
5. Issue invoice, W9 and fill out or sign forms
6. Get paid!

If your music does not get selected for a placement, it does not mean your song is terrible or isn't good enough; it simply means it wasn't the right fit currently. Keep going.

Excerpt taken from Binx's book How to Build Your Music Empire, reviewed on page 14. More at binxofficial.com.

Binx, The African Bee, is a South African pop artist, producer, and Amazon Best Selling author of *How To Build Your Music Empire*. With over 35 sync placements on platforms like Netflix, HBO, and MTV, she has performed at global events from the US Open to the South African Traditional Music Awards. Featured in *The New Yorker* and a finalist in the John Lennon Songwriting Competition, Binx has released 85 songs and seven albums, consistently delivering new music every month.

Amorphis

Borderland

Reigning Phoenix Music

Producer: Jacob Hansen

It does a disservice to Finnish band Amorphis to label them death metal. There was a period early in their development that they sounded like they had been dragged from medieval times. They've also utilized metal grunt vocals over the years, and a song like "Bones" on this, their 15th studio album, allows the band's brutal side to shine. But the opening "The Circle" is just as impressive, an epic prog-metal anthem with power-metal riffs, and the cleanest production. - **Brett Callwood**

8



Ghostface Killah

Supreme Clientele 2

Mass Appeal

Producers: Various

Ghostface Killah's *Supreme Clientele 2* is praiseworthy with its dynamic vibe, in his essence rapping over emotional and stark production. Though not quite as good as *Supreme Clientele*, part 2 has standout moments with street tales and imaginative dialect; such as, "Pause (skit)," "Rap Kingpin," and "The Trial." *Supreme Clientele 2* is a reminder that Ghostface Killah has long-lasting flair, when it comes to "bars" and telling stories. - **Adam Seyum**

8



Maia Sharp

Tomboy

Crooked Crown

Producer: Maia Sharp

Tomboy, Maia Sharp's 10th solo release, is an absolute self-embrace, albeit one that tiptoes the line of unremarkable empowerment. These self-produced tracks are playfully simplistic in their singer-songwriter instrumentation and Sharp's rich vocals. The title track, inspired by Sharp's childhood memories, sets a nostalgic tone, one that encompasses her "Americana-adjacent record." Even as some tracks feel comfortably predictable, the album exudes charm and warmth, making it a pleasant if not garden-variety listen. - **Ruby Risch**

6



Mavis Staples

Sad and Beautiful World

Anti Records

Producer: Brad Cook

If ever there was a moment for unity, empathy, and common sense, it is right now. And the legendary Mavis Staples is the musical messenger. With a songbook written by artists as diverse as Tom Waits, Leonard Cohen, and Curtis Mayfield, and assisted by luminaries such as Buddy Guy, Jeff Tweedy, and Derek Trucks; it is truly a healing salve for our times. Songs like "Chicago," "Anthem," and "We've Got to Have Peace" offer hope and reflection. Let Ms. Staples elevate your consciousness. - **Eric Harabadian**

8



Lana Love

Sorry I'm Human

WMG / Sparta

Producer: Ray Scavo III

From dark-flavored electronica ("Antidote") and precisely delivered feminine vocals ("Sorry I'm Human") to syncopated, edgy storytelling layered atop powerful harmonies ("Lost Boyz") with evocative lyrical delivery ("Godspeed Superman"), Lana Love releases her second EP *Sorry I'm Human*. Including nods to pop, hip-hop, Americana ("Trippin' Over Blurred Lines"), and classical lanes, Love's latest album showcases her diverse ability and strong, smooth octave and stylistic range. - **Andrea Beenham**

7



Whiskey Myers

Whomp Whack Thunder

Wiggy Thump Records

Producer: Jay Joyce

Self-released seventh album *Whomp Whack Thunder* brings country rockers Whiskey Myers back into the spotlight with their trademark earthy-meets-edgy sound. From East Texas gigs to over 3,000 live shows since 2007, and selling out arenas, nine RIAA certifications, fans include The Rock and Eric Church. Gritty, brash, and fiercely honest in their lyricism, the rowdy 'guys next door' are known for their invigorating live performances. Their latest project delivers more southern magic. - **Andrea Beenham**

8



Luvcat

Vicious Delicious

AWAL

Producer: Oli Barton-Wood

A star is truly born. Liverpool-born British singer, musician, and songwriter Luvcat has released what is absolutely and undeniably one of the albums of the year. *Vicious Delicious* is a dark, glammy, jazzy, alt-pop masterpiece. There are elements of the likes of Raye and Amy Winehouse in there, glimpses of PJ Harvey and Lene Lovich too. But ultimately, the incredible title track, "Love & Money," "Blushing," and every other track on this record prove that she has a sound that's very much her own. Incredible! - **Brett Callwood**

9



Belinda Carlisle

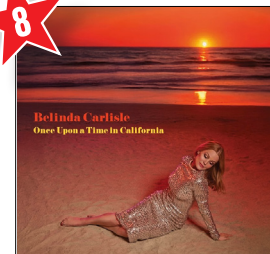
Once Upon a Time in California

Demon Music

Producer: Gabe Lopez

Belinda Carlisle's *Once Upon a Time in California* is a welcome return to timeless California-soaked melodies and emotional resonance. Her voice—those beloved Go-Go's vocals—is still rich and unmistakably hers, wrapping itself around classics from Lightfoot, Bacharach, Nilsson, and more, giving them a new shimmer without losing their soul. It's not just a covers record; it's a reclamation of the golden pop drama she helped define. In short, the record is her joyous restoration of heart-on-sleeve pop, oozing golden sounds that double as a heartfelt tribute to the California spirit that raised her. - **Ruby Risch**

8





Joshua Josué

Contact: alex@inmusicwetrust.com

Web: joshuajosuemusic.com

Seeking: Label, Booking, Film/TV

Style: Americana/Chicano-Rock

There's so much warmth emanating from the music of Joshua Josué that one could practically use it as a heat source during the winter months. His blend of traditional Chicano sounds, Americana and rock results in something that sounds like Tom Petty fronting Los Lobos. Nothing wrong with that, especially when we get a song as earthy, heartfelt and well-executed as "La Chica Me Cantó." The mix of Spanish and English is extremely welcome, and the songs are memorable enough that it doesn't matter if you don't understand either language. The new *Beneath the Sand* album has just dropped, so look out for that.

Production	8
Lyrics	8
Music	8
Vocals	9
Musicianship	9

SCORE: 8.4



Curtis

Contact: curusmrecordings@yahoo.com

Web: curusm.com

Seeking: Review

Style: R&B/Pop

Curtis' "Summer Love" single is the follow-up to the 2024 EP *Snowman in a Winter Wonderland*. Apparently, the guy likes to make his pop-infused soul seasonal. All of the main ingredients for radio-friendly R&B are here: whispered vocals leading to enthusiastic choruses, shiny-clean production, love and romance, etc. What we're missing is some memorable hooks. The vocalist has a sweet, smooth voice and he's capable of conveying emotion. But his voice is slightly let down by the songwriting, which lacks depth and a knack for melody. That said, there's plenty here that can be worked with. Curtis should keep at it.

Production	7
Lyrics	6
Music	6
Vocals	7
Musicianship	7

SCORE: 6.6



Sweet Water

Contact: alex@inmusicwetrust.com

Web: sweetwaterrocks.com

Seeking: Film/TV, Booking

Style: Rock, Alternative

You gotta love a band that's nailing original rock 'n' roll in a climate where many think that that genre-grave has already been dug. Seattle band Sweet Water's combination of nostalgia, craftsmanship, and infectious energy proves a complete resurrection. Their alt-rock style merges chill vibes with energetic punch, with the vocals carrying a distinctive Bono-like quality. On "State of Grace" they open with some delicious old-school finger-picking that immediately draws you in. The band's sound is versatile, equally suited for a *Scott Pilgrim*-esque soundtrack or a backyard BBQ. They show genuine promise for reinvigorating modern rock with songs that linger in memory.

Production	8
Lyrics	8
Music	8
Vocals	8
Musicianship	8

SCORE: 8.0



Christina Gaudet

Contact: christinagaudet@gmail.com

Web: christinagaudet.com

Seeking: GRAMMY submission

Style: Rock, Soft-Rock

Rocker Christina Gaudet says that she's chasing that elusive and prestigious GRAMMY nomination, and it's certainly an admirable trait to have lofty ambitions. We can only wish her luck, although nothing is guaranteed in this most unpredictable of industries. Gaudet has put her best foot forward with the *Rockoforte* album. The immediate and overt reference point is Stevie Nicks. Gaudet shares a vocal quality and a gift for epic melody with the Fleetwood Mac vocalist. The title track and "Fire in the Belly" are driving, insistent classic rock bangers that are well constructed, solidly performed, and utterly charming.

Production	8
Lyrics	7
Music	8
Vocals	8
Musicianship	8

SCORE: 7.8



Black Sunday

Contact: dtdminor2007@yahoo.com

Web: blacksundayband.com/home

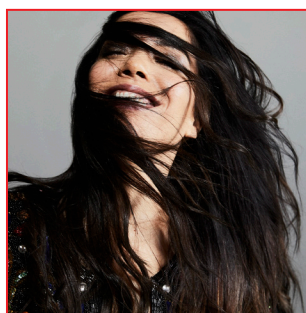
Seeking: Label, Booking, Film/TV

Style: Rock

San Diego-based Black Sunday aims to "bring raw, in-your-face, original hard rock back to the forefront," and tracks like "Wear The Crown" prove they have the chops. Guitar solos punch with serious knuckles, even if production quality could use some polish to fully match their ambition. Their energy, grit, and authenticity are undeniable, and with a bit more chaotic refinement, Black Sunday could stand out in the modern hard rock scene, making them a band worthy of fans craving original, hard-hitting sounds.

Production	6
Lyrics	8
Music	7
Vocals	8
Musicianship	8

SCORE: 7.4



Elinor Sitrish

Contact: elinorsmusic@gmail.com

Web: elinorsitrish.com

Seeking: Label, Booking, Film/TV, Review

Style: Pop

It seems that with each release, Israeli-American singer-songwriter Elinor Sitrish demonstrates a capacity to craft memorable pop moments while maintaining emotional resonance. She offers very clean, confident vocals, particularly on songs like "Black Heart," where emotion seeps into every line to create a deeply affecting ballad. Tracks like "Shout!" infuse groove and liveliness into her pop sensibility, showing versatility and a knack for rhythm that complements her heartfelt lyricism. Sitrish blends polish with intimacy, producing songs that feel both personal and universally accessible.

Production	8
Lyrics	8
Music	7
Vocals	8
Musicianship	8

SCORE: 7.8

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

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



Dronehands

Contact: info@dronehands.net
Web: dronehandsvsuniverse.com
Seeking: Review
Style: Experimental Electronic

From the moment we pushed play on the YouTube video for Dronehands' track "Paper Animals," we kinda allowed ourselves to disappear into the artist's world. And it's not only the joyous, hypnotic, experimental, instrumental jam; the video for that tune is glorious too. The whole thing attaches itself to your brain and never lets up. One could imagine it scoring a TV show or indie movie. That theme carries, although "Skip Tracer" is a little more sedate. Still beautiful, utterly compelling and absolutely fascinating though. It's great when we think we know what we're going to get, and an artist can throw curveball after curveball. Kudos, Dronehands!

Production	9
Lyrics	X
Music	8
Vocals	X
Musicianship	8

SCORE: 8.3



Binx

Contact: binx@binxofficial.com
Web: binxofficial.com
Seeking: Film/TV
Style: Pop

South African artist Binx delivers catchy pop tunes that immediately stick to the sides of your skull, explaining why "Borders" and "Beekeeper Of My Dreams" found their way onto the likes of *Love Island*. The vocals are consistently strong, bringing warmth and clarity, while tracks like "I'm Not British" explore a rap-infused style that could use more mileage. Her lyrics show ambition and versatility, signaling an artist poised to grow in the global pop scene. With infectious hooks and a natural charisma, Binx is definitely an artist to keep an eye on.

Production	8
Lyrics	7
Music	7
Vocals	7
Musicianship	8

SCORE: 7.4



Jake Worden

Contact: jakewordenmusic@gmail.com
Web: jakewordenmusic.com
Seeking: Agent, Label
Style: Orchestral Doom Metal

First of all, it's unusual to find an artist from the more extreme end of the metal scale who goes by his actual name. On his website, we see the words "Jake Worden" in a scary metal font, and we're here for it. The music is superb; grandiose and overblown in all of the right ways, Worden's super-deep voice has a Pete Steele (Type O Negative) croak, lending a gothic-metal edge to the proceedings that recalls Paradise Lost and My Dying Bride, as well as Type O. A song like "Born Into Black" is dark, operatic, intensely heavy and a tone of fun.

Production	8
Lyrics	8
Music	9
Vocals	8
Musicianship	9

SCORE: 8.4



Votan

Contact: votanband@gmail.com
Web: YouTube
Seeking: Label
Style: Epic Black Metal

It's been a while since we had any black metal within these pages, so it's an absolute joy to wallow in the "evil" darkness with Texan band Votan. "Trapped in this rotted place so long that I am reborn It's a place where souls come to rest and then return from the lamented," they explain in the song "Eye of the Wasteland," which shines a light on where they're coming from. Not that you can necessarily make out the lyrics when listening to the rapid-fire riffs, grunts and shrieks. But it doesn't matter; the intensity and dark vibe is key.

Production	8
Lyrics	8
Music	8
Vocals	8
Musicianship	8

SCORE: 8.0



Blvd Hvnny

Contact: cito@cito1974.com
Web: blvdhvnny.com
Seeking: Radio
Style: Alternative Rock

Blvd Hvnny's bio states that they are "a spectral pulse in the gathering dark" of the world, though, not to be dramatic, these tracks ring closer to a ghostly heart on life support (not lifeless, but not thriving). "Winter Kills" showcases deep vocals with a Leonard Cohen-esque quality, lending a haunting gravitas to their sound. In contrast, "Joaquin" is a chaotic jumble of sounds, with lyrics that, presumably, don't land with the impact the band may have intended. Though their edgy beats echo familiar territory rather than carving new ground, there's a compelling aspect to the music that hints at potential growth.

Production	7
Lyrics	6
Music	6
Vocals	7
Musicianship	7

SCORE: 6.6



Cionico

Contact: yukidrums@gmail.com
Web: cionico.com
Seeking: Film/TV
Style: Rock

Latin American band Cionico's rock style straddles the line between classic cool and modern swagger, tipping a respectful hat to the legends while staking out their own turf. "Everything's Alright" hits like a shot of Billy Idol energy with rich vocals and reflective lyrics. Their sentiment feels sincere, not staged, hinting at a band with limitless potential if they keep at it. With clean, forward-looking production and compelling melodies, the sun won't set on Cionico anytime soon—worth a listen, worth watching closely.

Production	8
Lyrics	8
Music	8
Vocals	8
Musicianship	8

SCORE: 8.0

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

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

The Mercury Lounge *New York, NY***Contact:** bari@pressherepublicity.com**Web:** tazguitar.com**Players:** Taz, guitar, vocals; Matthew Godfrey, keys, backing vocals, playback; Kendall Everett, drums; Nathaniel Coben, bass; Dylan Niederauer, bass

Wowing audiences at the Lower East Side's Mercury Lounge, Brandon Niederauer (AKA Taz), showcased his fierce guitar chops to a sold-out crowd. The performance was an opportunity for him to roll out some new material while taking center stage as a performing singer/songwriter.

Taz's backstory is inspiring and key to his success at such an early age. Deciding when he was just eight years old that the guitar was his destiny, he picked it up and has not put it down since. He originated the role of "Zack" in Broadway's *School of Rock*, and has either opened for or shared the stage with members of the Allman Brothers, Stevie Nicks, Lady Gaga, and Jon Baptiste (to name a few) including appearances on the *Stephen Colbert* show. In addition to his music success, Taz is a recent Yale graduate.

He earned the name "Taz," as one childhood friend explained, as a reference to the Tasmanian Devil, a complex cartoon character described as having a ferocious nature tempered by sweetness, a direct reference to his playing style.



Kicking off the set with "Jump," a spirited up-tempo number with a catchy chorus and an engaging groove, was comprised of one repetitive line, "jump for you," making it instantly memorable. Picking up the acoustic guitar for a more mellow approach, the audience experienced a softer side of Taz. The set was varied but each song highlighted some aspect of Taz's guitar wizardry. At times one is reminded of Prince or Jimi Hendrix but a bit more toned down in stage antics. He has enlisted a top shelf band with a standout drummer where tight rhythms are key.

While most of the songs are guitar-driven,

Taz's vocals do rise to the occasion. Appearing comfortable and self-possessed, he is remarkably unassuming for a player of his caliber.

No longer just supporting a well-known performer, Taz is stepping into the limelight as an artist in his own right. As he continues to hone his songwriting, coupled with his incredible guitar talent, he is surely on the path to big things. Taz will be releasing his next original single "Running After You Again," in September, with more music to follow. In addition to touring with Jon Batiste this fall, Taz also has a handful of solo shows scheduled. - **Ellen Woloshin**

**Redwood Bar & Grill** *Los Angeles, CA***Contact:** instagram.com/cliffroman**Web:** facebook.com/p/romans-weirdos-100086473389541**Players:** Cliff Roman, guitar; Jeremy Eagle, vocals; John Dimambro, guitar; Danny Dorman, bass; Sean Antillon, drums

It's always awkward when there are more than one version of a band doing the rounds, and yet we've seen it multiple times over the years. Think of Gene Loves Jezebel, LA Guns,

Great White, Sweet, Bow Wow Wow, When In Rome, and many more, and it's easy to shrink inside yourself at the sheer weirdness of the situation. These people can't get their shit together enough to work together for the sake of the music, so the fans are left to decipher their disfunction. It's fucking silly.

On the subject of silly weirdness though, there are two versions of L.A., punks The Weirdos floating around, for better or worse. There's the band led by frontman John Denney, with Bruce "Ravens" Moreland in the ranks. That group is known simply as The Weirdos.

Then there's Roman's Weirdos, featuring relative mainstay guitarist Cliff Roman. On all of the online stuff, on the flyers, etc., this band is called Roman's Weirdos.

Again, it's all really odd and super cringe-inducing. It's akin to watching a couple argue at a nearby restaurant table. Even for the punk rock scene, it's really not becoming.

All of that aside, there's music to be judged. Due to the fact that Roman's Weirdos only has the partial weight of the Weirdos name behind them, they tend to play slightly smaller shows and, in fact, that works to their benefit. The Redwood Bar & Grill has turned into a bit of a punk and rock 'n' roll Mecca in recent years; a shelter for misfits, miscreants and reprobates. There's a fun dichotomy there though, because at first glance it's quite a nice restaurant/bar.

As such, it's the perfect venue for Roman's Weirdos. Denney is one of punk's great frontmen, so Jeremy Eagle has quite the task filling his boots. In all fairness, Eagle acquits himself admirably. There's gleeful mischief etched on his face as he barks through Weirdos gems like "Happy People." The cover of Love's "7 and 7 Is" is a joy, and the iconic punk rock tune that is "We Got the Neutron Bomb" is given the performance that it deserves.

The rest of the band is solid, and Roman is given an appropriate hero's reception by the Redwood crowd. Regardless of your opinion of the larger Weirdos situation, Roman has assembled a great band that puts on a superb show. That's more than enough. It's still weird though. - **Brett Callwood**



The Fonda Hollywood, CA

Contact: andrew.george@atlanticrecords.com

Web: sambarbermusic.com

Players: Sam Barber, vocals, guitar; Luisa Marion, keys, fiddle, backing vocals; Luc Nyhus, guitar, banjo; Gregory Garner, bass; Kevin McGowan, drums

For close to an hour and a half, breakout singer-songwriter Sam Barber delighted Hollywood fans with early hit singles and most of 2024's *Restless Mind*, to this year's EP *Music for the Soul* and

single, "Burn Me." The happy and relaxed down-to-earth atmosphere felt refreshingly different for a Friday night in Hollywood.

With a jovial, packed house (after line-ups for blocks to get inside), the evening opened with a smokey, low-lit stage, synth sounds and gentle guitar strumming (after an acoustic guitar/upright bass and lovely falsetto set from Ethan Regan). Kicking things off with "Better Year," Luc Nyhus opened with a solid guitar solo, backed by the rhythm section, and most of the room singing along. Audience participation continued on "Tear Us Apart"

(from 2024's *Twisters*), with smooth fiddle layered over beautifully balanced sound. A fiddle/deep bass intro and guitar and fiddle solos on "Run Away High" appeared before the kickdrum transition to a wailing guitar solo.

Hit single, "Man of the Year" added tambourine and punctuated drumming, building to full drumkit drive and great gravel-accented vocals. A slower drum intro on "Thought of You" transitioned to guitar, mournful vocals, and impassioned storytelling. With a powerful contrast of busy lyrical lines against carefully placed individual words, before a guitar/vocal transition to wailing fiddle outro, theatregoers sang along, transfixed.

Follow up songs, "Ramblin' Man" and "Burn Me" added more singalongs, gorgeous harmonies between Barber and fiddler Luisa Marion (on vocals), twinning guitars and work on the keys. "Lord" delivered a fiddle/guitar intro, while "Restless Mind" (lead track to 2024's album) demonstrated a brilliant use of varied dynamics, speed, timing and performance intensity.

Returning for an encore, Marion and bassist Gregory Garner shared a suspenseful instrumental track and dark guitar/fiddle duet welcoming Barber back to the stage. Encore closer was "Dancing in the Sky," with a beautiful guitar/fiddle duet, and stunning soprano fiddle solo. Lights off, phones out, cheers from the crowd; a beautiful evening.

- Andrea Beenham

Cat's Cradle Carrboro, NC

Contact: ahong@mosaicla.com

Web: bethstelling.com

Players: Beth Stelling, vocals

Stand-up comedy is hard. And the transition from a TV writers' room (funny behind the scenes) is a complicated metamorphous. Bob Odenkirk did it, and George Carlin slid into stand-up from a successful radio jam...

Beth Stelling has the resumé and she's worked on numerous TV Specials and smaller Hollywood gigs before her breech-birth onto the Cat's Cradle Sage. Stelling jumped onto the stage and opened with a few bits from her "Landlord Special" which hit the funny bone dead on of the small but very appreciative crowd.

Her observational humor centered on the people in her life, people in her L.A. community and her neighbors who were an endless source of mirth and merriment! With mic in hand, she walked back and forth across the stage, made bigger and larger by her expansive personality, flipping between scenes of unimaginable refrigerator science project horror and landlord escapades, all delivered with energy and endearing self-deprecation.

Most of the audience were left waiting for the punch lines, many of which never appeared, but that is the playbook for stream of consciousness, on the spot off the cuff.

It's a credit to her power of delivery that she got high mileage in the neighbor and landlord bits department. She's on her way to being the Taylor Swift of wacky delivery and split-



second timing. This was a study in deadpan, but not the Steven Wright deadpan. This was a slow burn that took a few minutes for the punchlines to catch up.

She got plenty of mileage out of marriage,

travel, family, and college which provided endless opportunities for funny, which she exploited effortlessly.

Funny? Sort of.

- Eric Sommer

Hotel Café Los Angeles, CA

Contact: elliott@oracle-artists.com

Web: app.getpinpoint.io/iamsavannahpope

Players: Savannah Pope, vocals; Adam Gimenez, guitar, keys; Jonas Sheeks, drums

Savannah Pope was born to perform. From the moment she makes her grand entrance at the Hotel Café's main room, it's clear that the stage is Pope's natural surroundings, her stomping ground. It's a slight shame that the crowd is quite sparse for this midweek Hollywood show, but if it bothers Pope she doesn't let on. She's a tornado of glamor, glitter, theatricality and strength in femininity.

This particular show was dubbed Goddesscore: A night of high femme frequency. On the bill with Pope was rising alt-pop star Charlotte Dickson and Americana singer and songwriter Sheva Elliot. That proved to be a strong lineup—each of the three female artists had a distinct sound, and the diversity in sound made for a fascinating musical evening. What they had in common was talent, and passion. But there can be little doubt that Pope is the show-person of the three.

There are elements of Ziggy Stardust about Pope's stage presence, but also of Stevie Nicks' witchy wonder. That also translates into the music, which is especially special because of the natural blend of glam rock and earthy poeticism. It's as much Adele as Alice Cooper and, on a musical level, they make for far easier



SAVANNAH POPE

bedfellows that you might expect.

"Savannah Pope is a genre-defying singer, songwriter, and visual artist based in Los Angeles, crafting darkly operatic music that fuses glam rock, cinematic pop, and poetic introspection," her bio reads. "With baroque arrangements, raw emotional depth, and a distinctive visual identity, Savannah creates immersive worlds where sound, story, and spectacle collide. A former frontwoman and SXSW performer with a cult following, Savannah has been featured in major music press, sold out her L.A. release show following a successful fan-funded campaign, and garnered over 2 million views on Instagram for her video content."

Last year she released the *Pandemonium* album, an ambitious glam rock opus with elements of operatic prog that recalls Queen and, on occasion, Emerson, Lake & Palmer. The lengthier tracks highlight her ambition, and that's her greatest strength. It's also evident in everything she does—from her attire to her videos, artwork to stage show. Pope has a larger vision and her refusal to compromise, regardless of how many people she's performing in front of, is impressive. If there's any justice at all in this industry, and history tells us that there isn't necessarily any, then Savannah Pope's efforts, and talents, will reap their rewards. — **Brett Callwood**



COLIN BLUNSTONE AND ROONEY

Majestic Theater Detroit, MI

Contact: fiona@thebloomeffect.com

Web: colinblunstone.net; rooneymusic.com

Players: Colin Blunstone, vocals; Robert Schwartzman, vocals, guitar; Sean Sobash, bass; Brad Goodall, keyboards, vocals

It was a multi-generational meeting of the minds where members of alternative power pop band Rooney joined forces with one of their prime musical heroes and inspirations, Colin Blunstone of The Zombies. Actually this was not the first time for the pairing as Rooney has toured with Blunstone and his legendary

British counterparts in years past.

But this particular show had unique relevance for it was part of a select U.S. cities tour promoting Rooney front man Schwartzman's new documentary on The Zombies called *Hung Up on a Dream*. The evening was a complete entertainment experience where the audience was treated to a screening of the 90-minute film, followed by a live semi-acoustic performance and a Q&A segment afterwards, with documentary director Schwartzman, Blunstone and *Music Connection* contributor and moderator Gary Graff.

Following the film screening, the members of Rooney jumped on the somewhat barren

stage and warmed up the crowd, with a few of their radio-ready hits of the last decade or so. Sans drums, they burst out emphatically with their rapturous song "If It Were Up To Me." Schwartzman commanded the stage from the outset, with strong lead pipes and a taut heavy pop feel. The wall of harmonies was textbook and clear as Sobash's driving bass locked in seamlessly with the overall enveloping mix. In the vein of classic '60s/'70s stylists like Badfinger, Nilsson, Big Star and the like, descending chord sequences blended with joyous harmonies that led into one of their biggest singles "When Did Your Heart Go Missing?" Schwartzman was like a man possessed, darting back and forth, singing the hook with laser focus as Goodall matched the lead vocal melodies note for note on the keys.

When Blunstone entered the fray it was an almost surreal moment. The crowd rose to their feet and stayed there from the incessant refrain of "Tell Her No," onward. "She's Not There" retained that cool jazzy cadence as Goodall covered original keyboardist Rod Argent's parts perfectly. And that's no mean feat, indeed! Rooney and Blunstone also played deep cuts like the baroque-inspired "This Will Be Our Year," an early solo single for The Zombies' front man, "Caroline Goodbye" and the film's namesake "Hung Up on a Dream."

The set closer "Time of the Season" appropriately brought the house down. It was a great vehicle to get the crowd involved and served as a memorable way to leave everyone in a very satisfied and engaged state of mind. — **Eric Harabadian**



The Troubadour Hollywood, CA

Contact: jon@prospectpr.com

Web: thecardinalblack.com

Players: Tom Hollister, vocals; Gregg Hollister, keys; Chris Buck, guitar; Sam Williams, bass; Adam Roberts, drums

Sharing songs from 2023's debut *January Came Close* and this year's *Midnight at the Valencia*, alt-rock Cardinal Black lit up The Troubadour as they embarked on their first U.S. tour. Delivering a spellbinding performance, they held the room in the palm of their hands. Opening with a synth build-up as members assembled on the stage, they started strong with warm vocals and gorgeous bass lines from

Sam Williams ("Ride Home"), before "Keep On Running" brought a heavier feel and highlighted Tom Hollister's ability to entrance an audience, alongside suspenseful guitar notes that led to a vocal crowd refrain. R&B-tinged, Stapleton-esque "Holding My Breath" shared a comforting groove and perfect feel with fabulous steady bass underpinning from Williams, solid kit delivery from Adam Roberts, and a delicious, easy-feeling guitar solo from Chris Buck.

Ambient Floyd-esque guitar sound unfolded syrupy ballad "Terra Firma," magnifying the concept of 'less is more' with a phenomenal use of space and timing to add tension and enthralling lyrical delivery. Written for his daughter while on the road, "Adeline" included Hollister's beautiful falsetto and harmonized

vocals from keyboardist Gregg Hollister and guitarist Chris Buck. "Breathe" brought a hi-hat and keyboard intro beside Hollister's vocals, with gentle backing vocals and a haunting guitar outro 'leave' from Buck. The reciprocal respect was palpable.

Darker ballad "Jump In" demonstrated incredible songwriting and an ability to take the listener on a journey. Beautiful harmonies from Buck, gentler rimshot work from Roberts, and frontman Hollister's incredible vocal tone, timbre, and slightly-graveled honest edge, make sweet alchemy. Kickdrum and hi-hat play behind Tom and Gregg Hollister, adding Buck for a divine three-part harmony before a blast of full band sound on "Morning Light" brought a fantastic contrast of dynamics and style. Three-part harmonies continued with a kickdrum outro before Hollister enlisted the audience (AKA "the LA choir") for a harmonized sing-along, which continued on "Your Spark (Blows Me to Pieces)," adding great falsetto harmonies and yummy guitar solo sound.

Fan favorite, "Tell Me How It Feels" (which hit No. 1 on iTunes overnight in 2021) built from a guitar/drum intro and bass before breaking down to lead vocals and kickdrum, while bluesy ballad "Warm Love" shared a screaming guitar solo and reengaged the audience with rounds of "yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah." This group reminded everyone in the room of what live music *should* feel like: a delectable, moody, perfect combination of patience and passion. Absolute magic! – **Andrea Beenham**

BMO Stadium Los Angeles, CA

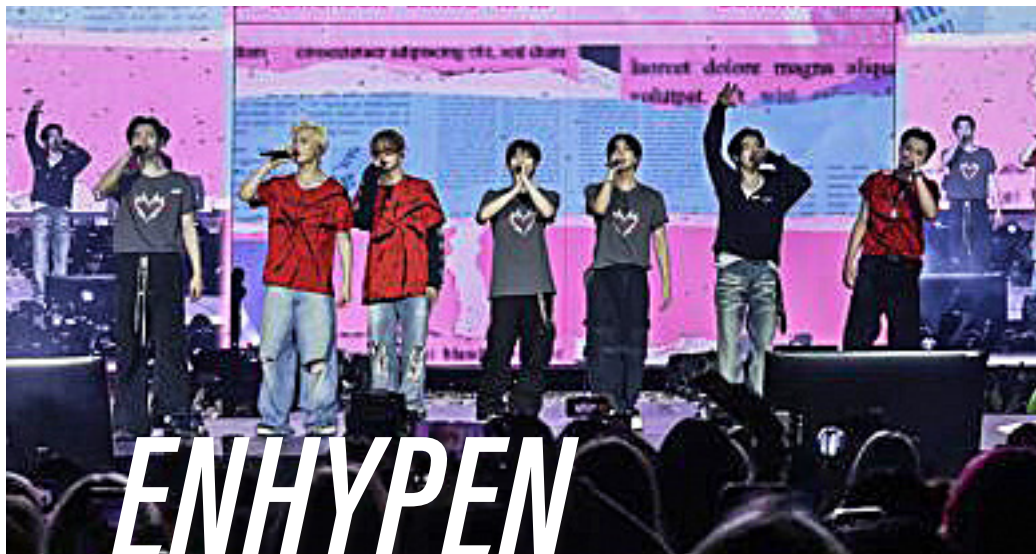
Contact: amanda@theoriel.co

Web: beliftlab.com/artist/profile/enhpyen

Players: Heeseung, Jay, Jake, Sunghoon, Sunoo, Jungwon, Ni-Ki

The energy was palpable as South Korean boy band Enhypen closed out the U.S. leg of their third world tour, Enhypen World Tour 'Walk The Line' In U.S. (hereinafter 'Walk The Line'), on August 16th with a sold-out show in Los Angeles. Piercing screams rattled the BMO Stadium as members Jungwon, Heeseung, Jay, Jake, Sunghoon, Sunoo, and Ni-ki walked on stage for an electrifying performance. The show served as a lens into Enhypen's growth, walking with their fans (nicknamed Engine) through every step of their journey—from their early days of stepping into the spotlight, to the present and future. The group was formed through the 2020 survival competition show *I-Land*, which was a joint venture between CJ ENM and Hybe Corporation (formerly Big Hit Entertainment) under Belift Lab. The show featured 23 male trainees competing for a spot in the final group. They debuted on November 30, 2020, with their first mini album, *Border: Day One*. The group name Enhypen is a play on the words "en dash" and "hyphen," symbolizing the members' journey of connection, discovery, and growth.

Since their debut in 2020, Enhypen have worked hard to become household names and have rapidly expanded their global influence. In five years, they've placed five albums in



the Billboard 200 Top 10. Their second studio album, *Romance: Untold*, marked the group's career-high, debuting at No. 2 on the Billboard 200 and ranking highest among K-pop acts on the 2024 IFPI Global Album Chart. Enhypen's music is a terrific mix of catchy hooks and layered arrangements. None of the seven members have designated roles; they are all well-rounded in dance and vocal skills. They're the perfect introduction for those who want to get into K-pop, as their music has the right blend of English and Korean.

In total, Enhypen performed a big setlist of

24 songs in just over two hours. Delivering a fun-paced show filled with showstopping dance performances and impressive live vocals. Once the end was near, the group made sure to give their heartfelt goodbyes to their fans—promising to be back and teasing some new music. The group also mentioned that their first VR concert, *ENHYPEN VR Concert: Emergence*, is coming to theaters in the U.S. in September. Enhypen sent their fans into a frenzy as they finished with an explosive EDM version of "Drunk-Dazed" and a fitting reprise of their bombastic hit "Go Big or Go Home." – **Jacqueline Naranjo**

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All data has been updated with approved info supplied by the listees.

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Basic Rate: Call for rates.

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Basic Rate: call for a custom quote.
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Web: raneyrecordingstudio.com

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Web: audiovista.com
Contact: Jim LaForest

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Web: diamonddreamsmusic.com
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Web: facebook.com/dinom4recording
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Web: phuturetrax.com
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Email: romesempire@gmail.com

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Encinitas, CA 92023
858-231-1541
Web: zenmastering.com
Contact: Paul Abbott

COLORADO

1116 STUDIOS LLC
1753 S 8th St
Colorado Springs, CO 80905
419-704-8253
Email: misterg@1116studios.com
Web: 1116studios.com, facebook.com/1116studios
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
11919 I 70 Frontage Rd. N.
Wheat Ridge, 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
Email: colorsnd@coloradosound.com
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

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

WASHINGTON, 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

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

FULLERSOUND INC.

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

NOISEMATCH STUDIOS

4306 NW 2nd Ave
Miami, FL 33127
786-796-7980, 800-609-4137
Email: info@noisematch.com
Web: noisematchstudios.com
Basic Rate: Call for info

UPCOMING STUDIO, INC.

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

GEORGIA

B CHILL MUSIC

17350 State Highway 249
Ste. #220, #28843
Houston, GA 77064
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

HAWAII

ISLAND SOUND STUDIOS

377 Keahole St.,
Ste. D-03
Honolulu, HI 96825
888-458-2312
Email: aloha@islandsoundstudios.com
Contact: Kyle Spicer

Web: islandsoundstudios.com

Format: 2 SSL9000J, Digital/Analog

LAVA TRACKS RECORDING

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

SEASIDE RECORDING

1320 W. Hiahia Pl.,
Wailuku, Maui, HI
808-280-0722
Email: joel@joelkatzmaui.com
Web: seasiderecording.com, joelkatzmaui.com
Contact: Joel Katz
Basic Rate: reasonable rates by hour/week/job

IDAH0

COTTONWOOD STUDIOS

4436 E. 49th S
Ammon, ID 83406
208-757-7328
Email: dudleys100@gmail.com
Web: cottonwoodstudios.net

DASH MASTERING STUDIO

Boise, ID
208-639-1282
Email: dashmastering@gmail.com
Web: dashmastering.com

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

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

3052 W Carroll Ave.
Chicago, IL 60612
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@studiovrmr.com
Web: studiovrmr.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

MASSIVE MASTERING

P.O. Box 68143
Schaumburg, IL 60168
630-237-4393
Email: master@massivemastering.com
Web: massivemastering.com
Contact: John Scrip
Basic Rate: hourly/project rates on web

INDIANA

AZMYTH RECORDING

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

THE ROUND TABLE

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
319-268-1011
Email: catamount@cfu.net
Web: catamountrecording.com
Contact: Kitty Tatman
Basic Rate: please see web for info

MAINE

AYAN MASTERING

45 Casco St.
Portland, ME 04101
Web: ayanmastering.com

BELLWETHER MASTERING

45 Casco Street Ste. 200
Portland, ME 04101
619-228-6941
Email: joe@bellwethermastering.com
Contact: Joe Goodwin
Basic rates: varies, see website

PATRICK KEANE AUDIO MASTERING

103 Hanover St.
Portland, ME
207-807-5379
Web: patkeanemastering.com

MARYLAND

ABOVE GROUND STUDIOS

3200 Annetta Ave.
Baltimore, MD 21213
443-255-5016
Email: abovegroundstudios@gmail.com
Web: abovegroundstudios.com
Basic Rate: please call/email for info
Credits: Tate Kobang, Lil Mo, The Beatnuts, DITC, Moneybagg Yo
Specialization: Mastering for iTunes and vinyl, radio ready mastering

BLUE ROOM PRODUCTIONS

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

HIT AND RUN RECORDING

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

OMEGA RECORDING STUDIOS

12712 Rock Creek Mill Rd., Ste. 14A
Rockville, MD 20852
301-230-9100
Email: admissions@omegastudios.com
Web: omegastudios.com
Basic Rate: 125/hr. (tax/materials separate)

TONAL PARK

7014-C Westmoreland Ave.
Takoma Park, MD. 20912
301-891-9035
Email: contact@tonalpark.com
Web: tonalpark.com
Basic Rate: see web for info

MASSACHUSETTS

M WORKS MASTERING

1 Fitchburg St.
Somerville, MA 02143
617-577-0089
Email: studio@m-works.com
Web: facebook.com/mworksmastering/
Basic Rate: reasonable rates

PEERLESS MASTERING

Physical Address:
161 N. St.
Newtonville, MA 02460
Mail Address:
1089 Commonwealth Avenue #322

Boston, MA 02215

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 01236
413-274-1073
Email: info@pilotrecording.com
Web: pilotrecording.com
Contact: Will Schillinger
Basic Rate: please email for info

SOUNDMIRROR, INC.

16 Hurd St.
Lowell, MA 01852
617-522-1412
Email: info@soundmirror.com
Web: soundmirror.com
Basic Rate: please call for info

MICHIGAN

BROADSIDE PRODUCTIONS

901 S. Westnedge
Kalamazoo, MI 49008
269-720-2068
Web: broadsideproductions.com
Contact: Mike Roche
Basic Rate: by appointment only. Call for rates

STUDIO A RECORDING

313-561-7489
Email: eric@studioarecording.com
Web: studioarecording.com
Contact: Eric Morgeson
**No degree, Avid Pro Tools certificate

THIRD MAN MASTERING

441 W. Canfield
Detroit, MI 48201
313-209-5212
Contact: Bill Skibbe, Warren Defever
Email: mastering@thirdmanrecords.com
Web: thirdmanmastering.com

MINNESOTA

FLOWERS STUDIO

Mailing Address (Not Physical):
2751 Hennepin Ave. #161
Minneapolis, MN 55408
612-567-1219, 612-327-8544
Email: info@flowersstudio.com, kjaudio75@gmail.com
Web: flowersstudio.com

OMG STUDIOS

550 Vandalia St. Ste. #220
Saint Paul, MN 55114
612-238-5300, 612-238-5303 (vm Studio B)
Web: omgmediasolutions.com, kzmohd.com
Email: monique@omgmediasolutions.com
Contact: Monique Linder, Owner
Studio Features: OMG Studios is located in St. Paul's Creative Enterprise Zone – a thriving district of creativity and innovation (just off I-94/Vandalia). OMG Studios, the only Black-woman-owned space of its kind in Minnesota, headquarters its own innovations, features 3,200 square feet of studio production space, including: Podcast Studio, Live Performance Lounge and rehearsal space ("Flyte Tyme Sound Lounge"), Recording Studio and Artist Green Room. OMG Studios is outfitted with state of-the-art technology, fiber-optics network, live event sound, and lighting. Our boutique space pays homage to Minnesota's very own, the late Prince Rogers Nelson, who I had the distinct honor of working with and my greatest source of inspiration, both creatively and spiritually to this day. Studio Gear List: bit.ly/4gyb1CH Rates/Reservations: bit.ly/3T9C2Dc

RARE FORM MASTERING

712 Ontario Ave. W. #200
Minneapolis, MN 55403
612-327-8750
Email: info@rareformmastering.com
Web: rareformmastering.com
Contact: Greg Reiersen
Basic Rate: please contact for info

SKYLAND STUDIOS

7452 236th St. E
Lakeville, MN 55044
Email: skyland@me.com
Web: skylandstudio.com

MISSISSIPPI

MALACO MUSIC GROUP

3023 W. Northside Dr.
Jackson, MS 39213

P.O. Box 9287
Jackson, MS 39286 - 9287
601-982-4522, 800-272-7936
Email: malaco@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
Basic Rate: please call for info

MISSOURI

EMERALD DREAMS LAB
11802 East 23rd St. S
Independence, Missouri 64050 S
816-226-6490, 816-527-3282
Email: ls@emeralddreamslab.com or thahiphopmonk@gmail.com
Web: dreamlabkc.com
Notable Projects: Joey Cool, Holli, LS810, Shawn John, Tha Gooniez, D Twist Yung Cat, Soopa Mooni, Wahyo
Contact: Julius Hitchyhe

ENDEAVOR STUDIO
211 South College St
Arcadia, MO 6449
573-944-4409
Email: greggill45@gmail.com
Web: endeavorav.com

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

STUDIO 2100
2100 N. National Ave
Springfield, MO 65803
417-894-0692
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

NEVADA

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

HIT TRACK RECORDING STUDIOS
Las Vegas, NV
702-481-1663
Email: tomparham@mac.com
Web: hittrackstudios.com

NEW HAMPSHIRE

CARDINAL MASTERING
71 Lafayette Rd #2b
Hampton Falls, NH 03844
603-944-6710
Email: contact@cardinalmastering.com
Web: cardinalmastering.com

CEDAR HOUSE SOUND & MASTERING
P.O. Box 333
North Sutton, NH 03260
603-927-6363
Email: cedarhousesound@gmail.com
Web: cedarhousesound.com

JACOB'S WELL MASTERING, LLC
79 East Wilder Rd.
West Lebanon, NH 03784
619-754-5050
Email: contact@jacobsowellmastering.com
Web: jacobsowellmastering.com

NEW JERSEY

ED LITTMAN MASTERING
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

HERB POWERS, JR.
PM Mastering, Inc.

Email: pmmastering@mac.com
Web: pmmastering.com
Contact: Angie Powers
Masterclass: redbullmusicacademy.com/lectures/herb-powers

KNACK MASTERING
Ringwood, NJ
973-556-5749
Email: kimrosen@knackmastering.com
Web: knackmastering.com
Contact: Kim Rosen
Services: specializes in analog audio mastering for digital & vinyl formats, audio restoration and vinyl and tape transfers

THE SoundLAB AT DISC MAKERS
7905 N Crescent Blvd.
Pennsauken, NJ 08110
800-468-9353
Email: info@discmakers.com
Web: discmakers.com/soundlab
Contact: Brian Lipski

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

Additional location:
805 Meridian Street
Nashville, TN. 37207

STORY BOOK SOUND
Maplewood, NJ
Email: info@storybooksound.com
Web: storybooksound.com
Contact: Scott Anthony, Rebecca Turner

NEW MEXICO

HIGH FIDELITY MASTERING
8100 Wyoming Blvd. N.E., Ste. 315
Albuquerque, NM 87113
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: bangzoomprod@gmail.com
Web: masteringzone.com
Contact: Steve Vavagiakis
Services: Analog and Digital Audio Mastering

BATTERY STUDIOS
(Sony Music Entertainment)
321 W 44th St, Suite 1001
New York, NY 10036
212-833-7373
Email: donna.kloepfer@batterystudios.com, vanessa.gonzalez@batterystudios.com
Web: batterystudios.com

ELECTRIC KINGDOM STUDIOS
Hartsdale, NY 10530
800-933-1305
Email: info@electrickingdom.com
Web: electrickingdom.com

ENGINE ROOM AUDIO
42 Broadway, 22nd Fl.
New York, NY 10004
212-625-3467
Email: info@engineroomaudio.com
Web: engineroomaudio.com
Basic Rate: please call for info

JOE LAMBERT MASTERING
3 Marsala Ct
Cortland Manor, NY. 10567
914-737-2795
Email: joelambert@jmlsound.com
Web: joelambertmastering.com

KEVORKIAN MASTERING
441 W 53rd St.
New York, NY 10019
917-406-9147
Email: fkik@aol.com
Web: kevorkianmastering.com
Contact: Fred Kevorkian, fkik@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

MASTERDISK STUDIOS
8 John Walsh Blvd., Ste 411
Peekskill, NY 10566
212-541-5022
Email: scott@masterdisk.com
Web: masterdisk.com
Contact: Scott Hull
Basic Rate: premium services, Indie mastering
Services: Mastering for All formats (Vinyl, CD, Streaming, iTunes, Video, Surround, HD), Vinyl Disk Cutting Form HD Digital, Vinyl Disk Cutting from Analog Tape, Direct to Disk Recording, Restoration and archival of historic formats. (Disk, Tape & Digital), Recording, Mixing and Mastering, Mix evaluation and consulting

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

THE MASTERING PALACE
307 W. 121st St.
New York, NY 10027
212-665-2200
Email: mleedy@themasteringpalace.com
Web: themasteringpalace.com
Contact: Michael Leedy

THRESHOLD RECORDING STUDIOS NYC
517 W. 45th St.
New York, NY 10036
212-244-1871
Email: thresholdstudiosnyc@gmail.com
Web: thresholdstudios.com
Basic Rate: please call for info

TIMELESS MASTERING
361 Stagg St, Suite 401
Brooklyn, NY 11206
Email: info@timelessmastering.com
Web: timelessmastering.com

TRUTONE MASTERING LABS INC.
228 E. Route 59, #306
Nanuet, NY 10954
845-680-6490
Email: sales@trutonemastering.com
Web: trutonemastering.com
Basic Rate: please call for info

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

NORTH CAROLINA

BLUEFIELD MASTERING
1408 Fairway Ridge Dr.
Raleigh, NC 27606
919-859-0102
Email: info@bluefieldmastering.com
Web: bluefieldmastering.com
Contact: Jeff Carroll
Basic Rate: please call or Email

CATALYST RECORDING
Contact: Rob Tavaglione
Charlotte, NC
(704) 526-8400
Web: catalystrecording.com
Email: rob@catalystrecording.com
Text: 704-526-8400 — during business hours only 9 am to 6 pm
Basic Rate: please call or email

KITCHEN MASTERING
109 Brewer Ln., Ste. A
Carrboro, NC 27510
919-929-4494
Email: info@kitchenmastering.com
Web: kitchenmastering.com
Contact: Brent
Basic Rate: hourly and track rates available

STUDIO B MASTERING
821 Louise Ave.
Charlotte, NC 28204
704-372-9661
Email: dave@studiobmastering.com, joey@studiobmastering.com
Web: studiobmastering.com
Contact: Dave Harris
Basic Rate: please call for info

OHIO

ACOUSTIK MUSIC, LTD.
511 W. College St.
Oberlin, OH 44074-1446
440-775-3681
Email: acoustikmusik@gmail.com
Web: acoustikmusik.com
Contact: Tom Bethel
Basic Rate: please call for info

CAULIFLOWER AUDIO
1305 W 80th St, Suite 104B
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
10200 Royalton Rd. Ste 3
North Royalton, OH. 44133
216-374-8458
Email: starsoundstudioscleveland@gmail.com
Web: starsoundstudios.com

OKLAHOMA

KL MASTERING
25 S. Oklahoma Ave
Oklahoma City, OK 73104
405-410-2706
Email: kevinlivelymastering@gmail.com
Web: kevinlivelymastering.com

VEUX STUDIOS
6729 Well Oak Cir
Oklahoma City, OK 73127
323-486-3193
Email: booking@veuxstudios.com
Web: veuxstudios.com
Contact: James Conner

OREGON

CRAZY DAISY PRODUCTIONS
Beaverton, OR 97008
541-517-1458
Email: info@crazymastering.com
Web: crazymastering.com

FOSTER MASTERING
4711 S.E. 26th Ave.
Portland, OR 97202
503-222-9444
Email: ryan@fostermastering.com
Web: fostermastering.com
Basic Rate: please call for info

FUTURE DISC LLC
15851 N.W. Willis Rd.
McMinnville, OR 97128
213-361-0603
Email: steve@futurediscsystems.com
Web: futurediscsystems.com
Contact: Steve Hall
Basic Rate: please call for rates or more info

LIQUID MASTERING
1393 W 40th Ave,
Eugene, OR 97405
541-286-5434
Email: liquid@liquidmastering.com
Web: liquidmastering.com
Contact: Thaddeus Moore
Basic Rate: \$10/min of processed audio, Stem Mastering, and Mixing available. Contact for budget details. Any Style or Genre, Film Audio, Podcasts, Forensic Recovery. 24 years experience in audio.

SPECIALIZED MASTERING
15438 S.W. 81st Ave.
Portland, OR 97224
503-866-8383
Email: dana@specializedmastering.com
Web: specializedmastering.com
Contact: Dana White
Basic Rate: please call for info

PENNSYLVANIA

IMMERSIVE MUSIC MEDIA GROUP, LLC
1630 Manheim Pike, Suite 3A
Lancaster, PA 17601
717-621-2441
Email: info@imgstudios.com
Web: imgstudios.com
Format: Digital, Dolby Atmos
Basic Rate: please call for info

MASTERING HOUSE INC., THE
Trythall Rd
Elverson, PA 19520
484-802-2624
Email: info@masteringhouse.com
Web: masteringhouse.com
Basic Rate: please call for info

SI STUDIOS
945 S. Main St.
Old Forge, PA 18518
570-457-0147
Email: tom@studios.com
Web: sistudios.com
Basic Rate: please call for info

TREELADY STUDIOS
1256 Franklin Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15221
412-816-0300
Email: info@treelady.com
Web: treelady.com
Basic Rate: please see web

RHODE ISLAND

STATIC PRODUCTIONS
46 Glenwood Dr.
North Kingstown, RI 02852
401-267-8236
Email: record@staticproductions.com
Web: staticproductions.com
Basic Rate: please call or see web

SOUTH CAROLINA

SIT N SPIN STUDIOS
10 Michael Dr.
Greenville, SC 29611
864-586-0557, 864-414-4855
Email: sitnspinstudios@gmail.com
Web: sitnspinstudios.com
Contact: Matt Morgan

STRAWBERRY SKYS RECORDING STUDIOS
1706 Platt Springs Rd.
West Columbia, SC 29169
803-794-9300
Email: info@strawberryskys.com
Web: strawberryskys.com
Basic Rate: call for rates

VLADO MELLER MASTERING
c/o Truphonic Studios
816B Saint Andrews Blvd.
Charleston, SC 29407
304-633-4296
Email: andy@vladomastering.com
vlado@vladomastering.com
info@vladomastering.com
Web: vladomastering.com
Contact: Andy Rivas, Vlado Meller

TENNESSEE

BLACK MATTER MASTERING
601 Lemont Dr.
Nashville, TN 37216
615-424-6509
Email: dan@blackmattermastering.com
Web: blackmattermastering.com, facebook.com/bmmastering
Services: Mastering, lacquers, vinyl etching
Contact: Dan Emery
Basic Rates: Check Website for Rates

DAVE TOUGH PRODUCTIONS
Nashville, TN
615-554-6693
Email: dave@davetough.com, trehouston.info@gmail.com
Web: davetough.com
Contact: Dave
Basic Rate: \$75/hr - specializing in internet mastering

DIAMONDSC AUDIO
8161 Highway 100, Suite 262
Nashville, TN 37221
615-662-6870 (voice only), 615-212-8410 (text only)
Email: info@diamondscaudio.com
Web: diamondscaudio.com
Contact: Doug Diamond
Basic Rate: Mastering Package 'D' - \$30/song

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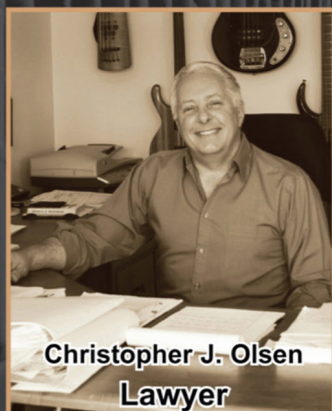
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Bringing Music To Life In A Visually Authentic Way

To help put what I do as a producer and director into perspective from a musical lens, I'll start off by rewinding to my early career—before working with incredible talents like Taylor Swift, Backstreet Boys, Usher, and P!nk. I was on a path to becoming a classical musician and playing in a symphony orchestra after university.

I worked in the national concert hall in Dublin, Ireland and became friendly with a lighting technician. During my shifts, I would pull out a handful of lights, turn on the radio and try to program a musical sequence before the song finished. Sort of like a sprint. I quickly developed this passion for how the lights can become a musical instrument.

This next part is pretty cliché... When I was 18, I was hanging floodlights on lampposts to light Guinness banners on a rainy night in Cork (a city in the south of Ireland). I had no idea who the client was, but it turned out to be a gentleman who was the lighting designer for many of the great rock bands of the '80s. He traveled all over the world and lived a life I knew nothing about. I had no idea that touring existed up until this point. He was enamored by the fact that I was willing to climb a lamppost in the rain and risk electrocution and thought there was something there.

He gave me the opportunity to be the lighting roadie on tour with Jethro Tull in the U.K. I thought it would just be to make some money over the summer and ended up falling in love with it. Sort of like joining the circus, I never came back.

I loved the creation in this role and the fact that you're contributing to how the music is being received by the audience. I was the lighting designer for Queen when they reformed after Freddie's passing, with Paul Rodgers as the frontman. The music of Queen is a lighting designer's dream. The complexity, the variety and the energy of the

music lends itself so perfectly to theatrics and dramatic lighting. When the music hits that peak, or when there's a sudden crash out, a drum fill, a guitar solo, being able to mimic those musical moments with the visuals felt like I was contributing to the experience of the music.

As a designer, you have that responsibility to understand musically what's going on. It's not just flashing lights to a beat, but finding the different instrumentation. What's going to represent the strings when they enter? How do you leave yourself enough space to make everything look bigger and bigger if the song keeps going? Harry Styles' "Sign of the Times" is a classic example of this.

Fast forward to now, I am a director and producer, and the Founder and CEO of Silent House Group, an award-winning creative studio and production company out of L.A. To sum it up, I am responsible for bringing the music to life visually. So how do you do this in an authentic way and truly connect with your audience? Here are my tips from nearly three decades in this industry.

TIP No. 1: My first tip for anyone looking to add lighting into their show starts with emotion. It can be expressed through lighting in many ways with color being the most obvious. I've always attributed certain music to specific colors (synesthesia) and it seems mostly nonnegotiable. Music connects and moves you in such a primitive, subconscious way and light has a similar trait.

TIP No. 2: You don't need to do everything all of the time. Don't be afraid to go full bore and commit, but also don't be afraid of drama or darkness. I think a lot of people get uncomfortable if there isn't enough light on stage or if it's a total blackout or if there's a single spotlight on a singer.

When you're sculpting the light, you're creating images and pictures. You're telling a story by giving a visual home to the sonics you hear. It doesn't always need to be flashing in time to the music. It doesn't always need to be the brightest thing in the world. It just has to have light and shade.

TIP No. 3: The third tip is to always have a clear line of communication with your lighting designer. The more descriptive you can be as an artist, the more educated your designer or creative director can be, and the better the final product. Oftentimes, what you don't like is just as valuable as what you do like. Being able to reference images or other artists helps this tremendously.

TIP No. 4: Originality. This can be the hardest thing, especially when we're living in an age of algorithms. As an artist, look for somebody who has an original look, can understand you, and create something that is uniquely you. You want to stand out and be unique.

I often hear artists saying they want to do something that's never been done before. For the most part, everything has been done before, it's just done in different ways. So it's carving something out for you that feels original, but also feels authentic. Fans have a very clear understanding of their artists, and there's sort of a contract when they come to see a show.

BAZ HALPIN, Silent House Group CEO and Founder, is a three-time Emmy Award winner who most recently produced Netflix's first-of-its-kind live streaming event called *Tudum 2025*, Las Vegas Sphere residencies for Backstreet Boys and The Eagles, the live television special *Opry100* on NBC, and returned for the second year to produce the 31st SAG Awards on Netflix. In 2024, Halpin produced the blockbuster film *Taylor Swift | The Eras Tour*, the 98th Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, Usher's 2024 Super Bowl Halftime performance, and Noche UFC at Las Vegas Sphere. Previously, he served as a producer on shows such as *American Idol*, *American Music Awards*, *MTV European Music Awards*, *Academy of Country Music Awards*, and *iHeartRadio Music Awards*. He is also known for his work in producing and creating concert tours and residencies, including but not limited to: Britney Spears' Las Vegas residency, Katy Perry's Play Las Vegas residency and Super Bowl Halftime performance; Taylor Swift's Eras, Reputation, 1989, Red, and Speak Now tours; Harry Styles' Love On Tour, Live On Tour, and his 2022 Coachella-headlining performance; Jonas Brothers' Happiness Begins Tour; and P!nk's Truth About Love, Beautiful Trauma, Summer Carnival, Funhouse, and I'm Not Dead tours. Halpin has also directed and produced performances at the Academy Awards, GRAMMY Awards, King Charles' coronation, and President Joe Biden's inauguration.



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