

MUSIC CONNECTION

EXCLUSIVE DIRECTORY

Film/TV Music Supervisors
+ Post-Production

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PATULLO

LIVE REVIEW

Panchiko

JOHN
CARPENTER

EXEC PROFILE

Mark
Alexander
- Erber

LEGAL BEAT

The RAP Act

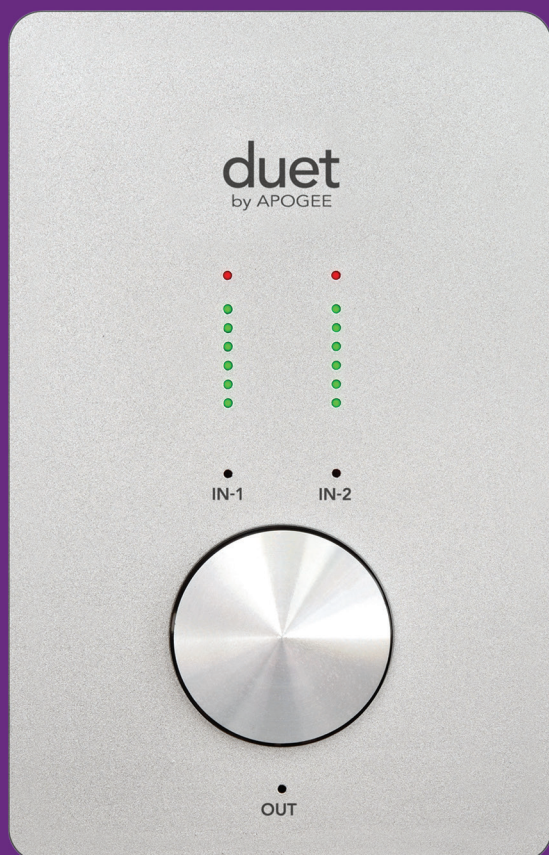
L7 ■ Barbara Nadas ■ Neumann + NEW MUSIC CRITIQUES

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EMILIANO
MAZZENGA

MEET THE COMPOSERS





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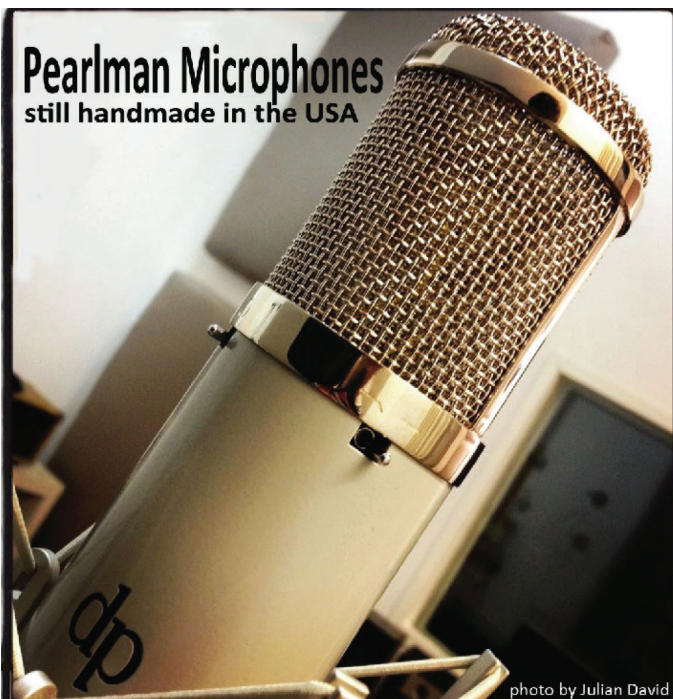


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Pearlman Microphones

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Shout Out from a Legendary Engineer: With all the success Dave Pearlman has had over the last 20 years since launching Pearlman Microphones, nothing has made him feel as proud and accomplished as seeing one of his flagship products (the "CHURCH" microphone) mentioned prominently in the late 20-time GRAMMY-winning engineer Al Schmitt's 2018 autobiography *Al Schmitt on the Record: The Magic Behind the Music*. It was among three go-to mics Schmitt used for vocals at Capitol Studios. Pearlman had a diverse history in the music industry when he started his independent company in 2005—including years as a pedal steel guitarist for the likes of Dan Fogelberg, Phil Everly, Pat Boone, and Bobby Womack—opening and running the indie facility Rotund Rascal Studio for 26 years. During the studio era of his career, he was one of the engineers on a GRAMMY-winning project by the Zydeco band Beausoleil. To save money on outside techs, in the early 2000s he began doing modifications on classic mics like the U47, 67, and AKG C12. Creating what was originally a powerful client magnet, Pearlman filled a key niche creating "super high-quality mics at a super low price."

Key Products: Pearlman's line of custom-built products began with the TM-1, a high-quality mic made for professional studio use but priced for the home recordist. Based on the U47, it's built around a tube that doesn't require the same power supply;

each unit is hand-wired, point to point, and voltage tuned for maximum performance. Two other popular items include the aforementioned Pearlman CHURCH microphone and the TM-47. The CHURCH mic is a faithful remake of the Stanley Church MGM mic from the 1950s which stays true to the original schematics, including the use of refurbished vintage K47 and M7 capsules. The TM-47 is a cardioid mic based on the venerable U47 and built in a body reminiscent of the classic look of the '50s and '60s. The stock TM-47 is made with the Pearlman K47 style capsule, a 6SJ7 or 6AC7 tube, hand-wired, point-to-point circuit with paper-in-oil output capacitor, and the Pearlman BV8 type output transformer.



Looking Ahead: Pearlman will soon introduce the TM12A, his updated version of another classic, the C12A, which was used regularly in studios throughout the '60s and '70s and was the forerunner to the 412, which became the 414. It offers a unique combination of a nuvistor tube, original circuitry, a special transformer Pearlman custom-made by Cinemag and a CK12 capsule made by Tim Campbell in Denmark. Pearlman says, "The main difference with my mics is that I always use vintage style components, large capacitors, and old-style resistors, whereas a lot of those inexpensive new mics are made with surface mounts. While they may sound good, and I'm certainly not denigrating surface mount mics, there's that extra five percent quality that comes by crafting a product by hand and using vintage components. I assemble all my capsules by hand and tune them, in addition to repairing Neumann K47 and K67/87 capsules here."

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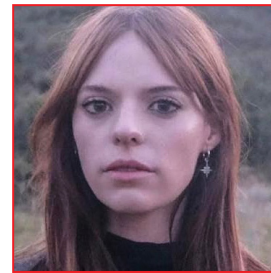
Global music agency **Wasserman Music** has appointed **Emily Kennedy** as **VP, Business Development, Pop**. In this role, Kennedy will help spearhead growth initiatives across several key verticals: Film and TV, Digital and Gaming, Literary (Books, Podcast, Audiobooks) Branding, Sponsorship, and International. She will also work closely with all Wasserman businesses globally including Sports, Talent, Creators, and Brands and Properties. Kennedy joins Wasserman from LoyalT Management, which she helped co-found in 2017. For more, contact wassermanmusicpr@shorefire.com.



Jill Irvine

Manager
Stern Management

Stern Management is expanding with the hiring of **Jill Irvine** as **Manager**. Colorado-based manager Irvine has worked with GRAMMY-winning talent, helping elevate their visibility and streamline their touring and promotional efforts. She began her music industry career at Larimer Lounge in Denver before moving on to roles at Saddle Creek Records and Paradigm Talent Agency, where she expanded her expertise. With over a decade of experience across management, agency, and venue operations, she brings a well-rounded approach to supporting artists and driving their careers forward. For more, contact jaclyn@grandstandhq.com.



James Mack

Manager
The Shalizi Group

Longtime dance music business executive **James Mack** has joined management company **The Shalizi Group (TSG)** as **Manager**. Mack brings his existing management clients Snakehips and OMNOM and will be contributing his expertise to TSG's Afrojack management team, alongside TSG founder Moe Shalizi and Adam Chaves, as well as working across the company's wider roster. "I'm extremely excited to be joining forces with Moe and The Shalizi Group," says Mack. For more, contact agreenberg@falconpublicity.com.



Hannah Galluzzi

Vice President, A&R
MCA

MCA, a division of **Universal Music Group**, has announced the appointment of **Hannah Galluzzi** as **Vice President, A&R**. Galluzzi will oversee the creative development of MCA's artist roster, working closely with both emerging and established talent to foster artistic growth and strategic career development. "We are thrilled to welcome Hannah to the MCA team," said Mike Harris, President and CEO of MCA. "Her strong A&R skills, combined with her passion for nurturing artist relationships will be invaluable as we continue to develop the MCA roster. For more, contact hannah.galluzzi@umusic.com.



Tina Warwick

Senior VP, Commerce and Sales
MNRK Music Group

MNRK Music Group announced the promotion of **Tina Warwick** to **Senior Vice President, Commerce and Sales**. In this expanded leadership role, Warwick will spearhead MNRK's global strategy across streaming, digital, and commercial platforms and partnerships. COO Chris Moncada says, "Tina's unique perspective and leadership have been a great asset to MNRK from the very beginning of her tenure. With this well-earned promotion, our full artist roster stands to benefit even more from her expertise and strategic vision." For more, contact gmelchiorre@mnrk.com.



Mark Dinerstein

CEO
Marathon Live

Mark Dinerstein Consulting and **JPB Partners** announced the purchase of **Marathon Live**, the Nashville-based full-service facility promoter and operating company from founder Josh Billue. As part of the transaction, **Dinerstein** has been appointed **CEO** of the organization. Josh Billue remains with the company and has accepted the role of Chief Development Officer. "I am thrilled to join the Marathon Live team, work with a uniquely talented group and lead our network of owned and operated facilities into the next era of growth," said Dinerstein. For more, contact agreenberg@falconpublicity.com.



Christian Conant

Senior Director, A&R
Prescription Songs

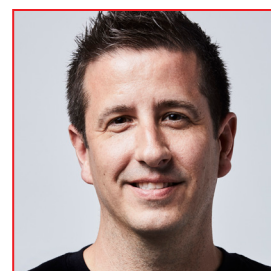
Independent publishing company **Prescription Songs** has announced the promotion of **Christian Conant** to **Senior Director, A&R**. Conant, who is based out of the company's Nashville office, looks after a diverse roster of artists, songwriters, and producers. "We are so proud to promote Christian to Senior Director of A&R," says Rhea Pasricha, Prescription Songs' Head of A&R, West Coast. "He has proven himself to be a valuable part of not just our Nashville team but far beyond. He is the epitome of hustle and integrity mixed with great creative passion and talent." For more, contact amoren@falconpublicity.com.



Paul Sinclair

Chief Music Officer
Suno

Music technology company **Suno** announced that **Paul Sinclair**, former General Manager and EVP of Atlantic Records, is joining the company full time as **Chief Music Officer**. Sinclair brings more than two decades of experience in artist development and emerging digital technologies to the new position. In his new role, Sinclair will guide how Suno's A.I.-powered tools are integrated into the process of songmaking, helping to empower creators of all skill-levels to make music, expand creative expression and unlock new experiences between artists and fans. For more, contact cc@wearetheuntold.com.



▼ PRESONUS STUDIO LIVE SERIES III SE 24 DIGITAL CONSOLE MIXER

Power up the PreSonus StudioLive Series III SE 24 Digital Console Mixer and a progress bar lights up while the software loads to let you know that this is no ordinary mixing console. This mixer is a full-featured computer, featuring extensive mixing, recording, monitor-mixing, networking, and remote operation capability. Offering 25 touch-sensitive motorized faders, one of which is the master fader, the console is designed for both live sound and studio environments. With its touchscreen interface and "Fat Channel" processing, users can access channel parameters, dynamics, and EQ with a master section that can be toggled to address whatever channel you want to work on. Seven modeled EQ and eight vintage-inspired compressors are available on every input and bus.

The PreSonus StudioLive Series III is available in three sizes.

The SE 16 has 17 faders, the SE24 has 25, and the SE 32 has 33. The SE 16 has 16 mic preamps and the SE

24 and SE 32 both feature 32 mic preamps. All three have 40 mix channels, 16 "FlexMixes," and four subgroups. Networking

and remote control are facilitated through PreSonus' UC Surface software,

available for macOS, Windows, and

iOS. With this number of submixes available, engineers will be able to create multiple

monitor mixes to satisfy bands with in-ear monitors and more.

Surprisingly the only model that has Bluetooth input is the SE 32. The mixer includes a metal chassis and rubberized encoders.

The Series III SE 24 has 32 analog mic preamps with the advantage of digital recall in a compact form factor. It features remote preamp control, offering integration with PreSonus' AVB networking system. The mixer includes a built-in SD recorder and USB interface, making it functional as a standalone recording unit or audio interface for DAWs. You can record up to 34 tracks simultaneously to an SD card. This includes all 32 physical inputs, plus the main left/right mix. As a USB 2.0 audio interface it allows for recording of 64 channels at 48kHz. To facilitate this, PreSonus includes both Studio One Pro DAW and Capture Multitrack software.

The design of having an addressable master section that can be any audio channel is not new and does require knowledge of the console architecture. Engineers that insist on dedicated controls for each channel will not be fans of this design. Yet, when you become familiar with this layout, you can be efficient with a little bit of experience on the board.

The Series III SE 24 is a hybrid mixer that can bridge the studio and live sound worlds and sounds great. While optimized for live sound reinforcement, it does have features that support multitrack recording as well. At this price point and feature set, it should satisfy the needs of most moderately sized music venues, clubs, or theatres. MAP \$2,999.99

presonus.com

► GIBSON LES PAUL STUDIO FIGURED ELECTRIC GUITAR

A Guitar Center exclusive, the Gibson Les Paul Studio Figured Electric Guitar comfortably straddles the midline price point while still being a fully professional instrument. Aimed at the working musician who wants a great Gibson electric guitar without breaking the bank, the LP Studio Figured blends the practicality of a Les Paul with great tone, playability, and versatile features that will excel in both live and studio settings.

If you are a Gibson Les Paul fan, you are aware of the Studio Series. First introduced in 1983, it was designed as a more affordable alternative to the Les Paul Standard, offering a stripped-down version with fewer cosmetic features while maintaining the core Les Paul sound and styling. This GC exclusive is designed to be the highest appointed model of the Studio Series, boasting a gorgeous bookmatched tiger stripe maple flametop reminiscent of the classic late '50s Les Pauls that Jimmy Page and others made famous.

The LP Studio Figured that *Music Connection* received played immaculately right out of the case. The SlimTaper neck is what many players would describe as a '60s style without the '50s style baseball bat chunkiness. The neck is smooth and fast and will suit players who prefer that profile. Aside from the obvious styling simplicity, one of the features that makes this guitar so great is the push-pull volume potentiometers that enable both Burstbucker Pro pickups to be either humbucker or single coil. While it doesn't sound like a Strat or P-90 Les Paul in single coil mode, the sound is sweet, funky, and has a lot of character. The full humbucking mode offers the classic Les Paul sound. This is a feature that is not common on Les Paul Standards, and it is a very attractive and usable feature. In hands-on use, the bandwidth of this instrument layered perfectly within a band, carrying its own weight well with a distinctive and powerful presence.

The Les Paul Studio appointments are all there—Indian Rosewood fretboard, a one-piece mahogany body and neck. And at 8.2 lbs, this sample guitar showed off its weight-relieved body. The real leather Gibson gig bag is among the nicest that *Music Connection* has ever seen. While not an entry-level guitar in terms of its price point, the LP Studio Figured is a truly excellent professional guitar that does not sacrifice quality, tone, playability, and value on any level. Available only at Guitar Center and highly recommended. \$1,799

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► NUGEN AUDIO DIALOG-CHECK PLUGIN FOR POST-PRODUCTION

Nugen Audio's Dialog-Check is a plugin aimed at helping post-production audio mixers ensure that dialog tracks are clear and intelligible. Positioned as a tool for both broadcasters and film sound professionals, it offers a range of features designed to focus on speech clarity. Dialog-Check is inserted on your master fader and supports mono, stereo and multichannel formats up to 7.1.4.

It's important to know going in that Dialog-Check is a powerful "dual AI neural network" metering device that recognizes the human voice and provides analysis tools made to guide the user to make mix adjustments, but in and of itself, contains no effects to rectify dialog intelligibility problems. It will give you insights into your mix so that you can make informed decisions. Also contributing to this plugin development was input from Netflix to ensure that the film mantra of "dialog is king" is front and center.

One of the highlights of Dialog Check is its ability to visually represent the audio like its Nugen predecessor VisLM, offering a spectral display that allows users to pinpoint where problems may lie in the frequency spectrum. The plugin provides detailed analysis of the dialog, highlighting areas where clarity might be compromised. This is accomplished with a linear, tiered graph on the timeline where green represents good intelligibility, yellow represents probably unclear, and red means the dialog intelligibility is very poor. Audio selections that contain no dialog are greyed out. There are four numerical readouts paired that give momentary clarity and average analysis of the audio that correspond to the three categories of intelligibility on a 0-100 scale on which 100 is the best. Dialog is analyzed for recording quality, EQ, background noise and reverb.

The plugin is equipped with a set of preset profiles tailored for various types of content, from film and TV to podcasts and voiceovers. These presets serve as a useful starting point, and you can also save your own presets.

Dialog-Check is a great tool for audio professionals seeking to ensure dialogue intelligibility. Its straightforward interface and visual feedback make it easy to understand. Sometimes when you are mixing dialog and you have a script and already know what someone is saying, it's helpful to have an objective ear. Aimed at rerecording mixers, dub stages and audio engineers who are navigating dialog intelligibility versus ambient sound, sound effects, and music, it provides a strong analysis of audio that can help you make sure you have a highly technical yet easily accessible analysis that your dialog is clean and clear. \$399

nugenaudio.com/dialogcheck



▼ SENSAPHONICS DB CHECK PRO SOUND LEVEL ANALYZER

Celebrating its 40th anniversary, Sensaphonics, a leading designer of custom-fit in-ear monitors, earplugs, and pro audio electronics, has announced its dB Check Pro sound level analyzer. "Like a speedometer for your ears," the dB Check Pro is an in-line measurement device for in-ear monitors and headphones. Designed for musicians, audio engineers, and hearing professionals who need to monitor sound exposure with precision, this analyzer is intended as a device for those concerned about hearing protection. It uses patented technology to analyze and display the real-time and average dBA-SPL levels, along with safe listening times. Programmed for use with over 150 earphones from 15 major brands, the dB Check Pro is the long-awaited answer to this question from IEM users: How loud are you listening?

Inserted in-line between the in-ears (or headphones) and sound source, dB Check Pro automatically displays the key "how loud, for how long" information, including safe exposure time under both NIOSH and OSHA guidelines. It also includes an integral microphone to show ambient room levels and can display either the IEM SPL level or the combined IEM and ambient level. The dB Check Pro has no effect on sound quality or level and passes audio with the power off. While the 11-hour run time of the rechargeable Li-Ion battery should be sufficient, it's nice to know that if your battery quits, your IEM will continue to work without any mid show rewiring. The unit is compact and has a user interface built around a monochrome OLED screen and a single multifunction button. It is designed to be worn and can be hidden along with a wireless IEM receiver.

The dB Check Pro is the only device on the market that provides IEM and headphone end users with calculated at-ear real-time and average sound pressure level estimates (dBA SPL). In practice, the dB Check Pro delivers a snapshot of sound exposure that goes beyond guessing or trusting manufacturer specs. For those working in environments with long sessions or high volume, it provides a data-driven method to inform level choices and potentially preserve hearing health. The dB Check Pro is designed to help musicians and sound engineers make smart, informed choices on their hearing health, an area that is often overlooked. "This dB Check Pro reflects our mission to protect the hearing of those who rely on it most," says Dr. Michael Santucci, Au.D, founder and president of Sensaphonics and longtime advocate for safe listening through his work with artists and engineers. Of interest, Sensaphonics products are used exclusively on all manned NASA missions and on the International Space Station. \$299

sensaphonics.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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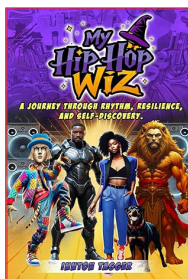
BOOK STORE

My Hip-Hop Wiz

By Innton Tigger

(paperback) \$14.99

Innton Tigger wants to make it clear that his *My Hip-Hop Wiz* passion project is not your grandma's *The Wizard of Oz* and it's not your mom's *The Wiz*. "Dorothy," he says in the preface, "isn't some fragile figure wandering through a



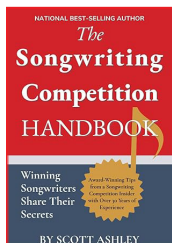
fairytale. She's a force of her own; a queen with a crown stitched together from struggle, laughter, and the music that pulses through her veins." That's the general vibe here: a classic story retold with a contemporary edge. It's fun, and any clunkiness in the prose is forgivable due to the sheer joy on display.

The Songwriting Competition Handbook

By Scott Ashley

(paperback) \$17.99

Author Ashley has gone super-specific with his second book, the follow up to *How to Write Better Songs*. Rather than a general songwriting guide, this niche tome offers drilled-down advice for winning songwriting competitions. "Every songwriter who wishes to enter or has entered a songwriting competition can use this book to get inspiration and guidelines," Ashley writes



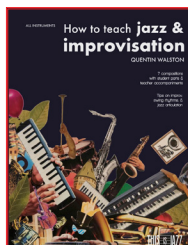
in the introduction. So he offers advice for getting in front of judges, and how to appeal to them once you get there. How to stand out from the crowd, with additional advice from past competition winners. For those who enter these comps, the book is gold.

How to Teach Jazz & Improvisation

By Quentin Walston

(paperback) \$39.95

The key word here on the cover of Walston's latest spiral-bound guide is "teach." This isn't a guide for how to "play" jazz and improvisation, but very specifically how to teach it. "Helping educators of all backgrounds teach jazz is underrepresented in pedagogy, and somehow I am incredibly passionate about it," says Walston, and that passion somehow bursts out



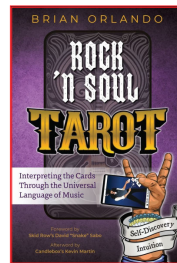
of the academic work. Make no mistake, this book isn't for anyone. But it's an invaluable resource for those music teachers looking to impart wisdom about the finer points of playing jazz. How do you teach improvisation? This is where you find out.

Rock 'N Soul Tarot

By Brian Orlando

(paperback) \$16.99

"What happens when decades of rock radio stories collide with ancient Tarot wisdom?" we're asked in the press release for this fascinating, unusual tome. "You get *Rock 'N Soul Tarot*, the debut book from longtime rock radio host, music historian, and second-generation psychic Brian Orlando." Part memoir, part musical guide to tarot, this volume is a fun,



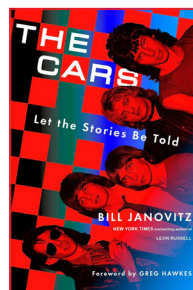
compelling read even if you have zero interest and don't know who Orlando is. "This book won't tell you what to believe," the blurb tells us. "Instead, *Rock 'N Soul Tarot* will help you build your own interpretations using the music that moves you." Nice!

The Cars: Let the Stories Be Told

By Bill Janovitz

(hardcover) \$32.50

Author Janovitz has followed up his biography of Leon Russell (a *New York Times* bestseller) with the definitive story of new wave icons The Cars. So often the poster children for the softening and sanitization of punk rock, The Cars' story is obviously far more nuanced, interesting, and honestly impressive than that. "Janovitz explores the musical, cultural, and



commercial impact of the band with articulate and knowing insights," reads the blurb. "He draws on his own exclusive new reporting along with the enthusiastic participation of the surviving members of the band, as well as nearly everyone who surrounded them over the years."

The Royal We: A Memoir

By Roddy Bottum

(hardcover) \$27.95

Faith No More founding member, queer icon, and all-round good guy Roddy Bottum has released a memoir that is in turn touching, funny, devastating, and ultimately beautiful. The keyboardist, also known for his indie pop group Imperial Teen, takes us by the hand and leads us



through his journey from Los Angeles ("growing up gay with no role models") to San Francisco. It was there that he formed FNM, survived heroin addiction and the AIDS plight, and came out on top. Bottum is a gifted musician—a true creative—and as it turns out, he's a talented storyteller too.

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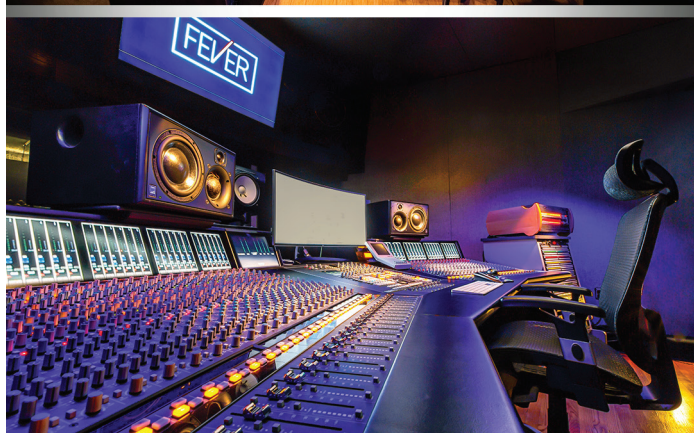
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Rock 'N' Roll Fantasy Camp

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Rock Tour Producer Makes Fantasies Come True: In the mid-'80s, former sports agent David Fishof began producing all-star rock tours, starting with the Happy Together Tour (featuring The Association and The Turtles) and continuing with the Monkees 20th Anniversary Reunion Tour, The Dirty Dancing Live Tour and, starting in 1989, the first 15 of the perennial Ringo Starr and his All-Starr Band tours. Having worked over the years with the legendary likes of Roger Daltrey, Joe Walsh, Bill Wyman, Peter Frampton, and countless others, Fishof's desire to share these experiences inspired him to create the one-of-a-kind, rock star-studded Rock 'n' Roll Fantasy Camp. Initially sparked by a practical joke played on him by Joe Walsh and Levon Helm during the first Ringo tour, in '97 he launched the first camp with a mission to allow people from all walks of life and different levels of musical talent and experience to jam with their musical heroes.

Still Going Strong: Boosted early on by being featured on *Ellen* and *The Simpsons* (in a famous episode featuring Mick Jagger and Keith Richards), the enterprise has invited thousands of truly happy campers to work on music, develop live presentations and jam with their heroes. "It's grown considerably," Fishof says, "because it reminds the big-name rock stars we bring in of what it was like for them when they started, and everyone realizes that it's life changing. My favorite thing is when campers email me daily to express their appreciation and that they've used the experience to join a band or write songs. They all find their happiness at Rock Camp. Our campers and counselors have become family." Its success has spun off a VH1 reality TV series, a Rock Camp podcast, a comedy fantasy camp (whose inaugural run in 2023 featured Jay Leno and Adam Carolla), and the 2021 documentary *Rock Camp: The Movie*, available on Amazon Prime and other streaming platforms.



A Counselor's Perspective: After careful consideration of a camper's skill level and musical preferences, campers are given a list of songs to practice before arrival. At camp, they are placed in a band of like-minded and equally skilled campers and mentored by a rock star counselor. They will also be able to learn from other counselors during daily master classes on particular instruments and vocals and during nightly themed jam rooms. One of the camp's regular counselors since 2019 is Vixen lead guitarist Britt Lightning, who also helped produce 150 online master classes with Daltrey, Alice Cooper, Yes, Joe Elliot, and others during the pandemic lockdown era. She has since become Rock Camp's musical director. "To be able to be a musician and do what I love is a gift I'm grateful for," she says. "It's wonderful to have the opportunity to help others realize their dreams and facilitate and be there for their special moments as they make their dreams come true. Playing a role in the joy our campers experience makes us all realize it's the greatest thing we can do."

Upcoming Camps: The Rock 'n' Soul camp in Ft. Lauderdale, FL (December 4-7) will allow campers to jam with Felix Cavaliere, Mark Farner, Jason Scheff of Chicago and famed members of Billy Joel's band. Running November 6-9 and November 13-16 in Phoenix, AZ, Welcome to My Rock Camp will include jams with Alice Cooper and Rob Halford. Rock Camp will also host a Singer-Songwriting Fantasy Camp in Los Angeles October 23-26 featuring Linda Perry, Narada Michael Walden, and GRAMMY-winning vocal coach Autumn Rowe.

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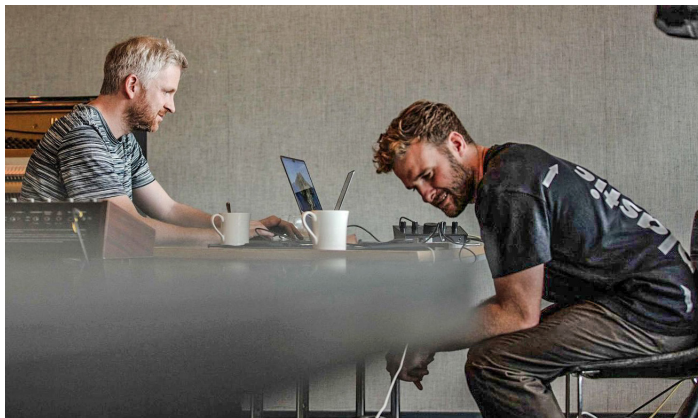


Grammy Award winning hit songwriter Barry DeVorzon and his company MasterWriter, have created a new and much needed service for songwriters named Songuard; an easy and inexpensive way to protect your songs.

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▲ ÓLAFUR ARNALDS & TALOS RELEASE *A DAWNING* (OPIA COMMUNITY/MERCURY KX)

Icelandic composer and producer Ólafur Arnalds and the late Irish musician Eoin French, best known as Talos, have released *A Dawning* on Opia Community/Mercury KX. The new album is a profound meditation on friendship, loss, and experimentation—one that began as a collaboration and became a totem of their creative kinship following Talos' passing last summer.



▲ NORTH LOUISIANA BLUES SINGER ROBERT FINLEY LENDS "HELPING HAND" WITH DEEPLY SPIRITUAL NEW SINGLE

North Louisiana blues singer Robert Finley has unveiled his deeply spiritual new single, "Helping Hand," available now via Easy Eye Sound. Produced by longtime collaborator Dan Auerbach at his Easy Eye Sound Studios in Nashville, the powerful track sees Finley infusing the sacred sounds of gospel into his already unique take on the blues, soul, and R&B, backed by an all-star combo.



▲ CLEARLY MUSIC ANNOUNCES EXPANSION AND PARTNERSHIP WITH VETERAN MUSIC SUPERVISOR MIKE TURNER

Music supervision and clearance company Clearly Music has announced a partnership with veteran music supervisor Mike Turner, as revealed by company founder Jonathan Lane. Turner joins the Los Angeles-based company as a partner to enhance Clearly Music's reach and bandwidth across all areas of media, with many new and exciting projects currently underway. Turner is an award-winning and GMS Awards-nominated film and TV music supervisor.



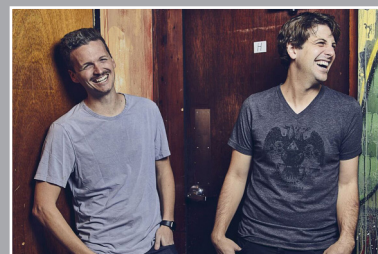
▲ ABOVE & BEYOND CELEBRATE THEIR ALBUM RELEASE WEEK WITH ZANE LOWE INTERVIEW

Above & Beyond celebrated their latest album with an interview with the legendary Zane Lowe on Apple Music 1 radio. Released on July 18, the band members reflect on the meaning behind the new album, *Bigger Than All Of Us*, staying connected to their fanbase, address mental health and burnout, and share plans for tour and new music.

PRODUCER PLAYBACK

"Listen to your feelings on a certain piece of music, and to other people. Try to understand where they come from and what their words mean. When a client says, 'I hate it,' that could mean a million things."

— JOHN SAMUEL HANSON AND KYLE BIANE, *Confidential Music*





▲ DOVER QUARTET AND CURTIS STUDIO PRESENT WOODLAND SONGS

The two-time GRAMMY-nominated Dover Quartet released *Woodland Songs: Music of Jerod Impichchaachaaha' Tate, Pura Fé, and Dvořák* on August 15 via Curtis Studio—the recording label of the Curtis Institute of Music, where the quartet was formed in 2008 and serves as Penelope P. Watkins Ensemble in Residence.



▲ NEW CARDBOARD SESSIONS FEATURING THE DANDY WARHOLS

Fresh off a run of L.A. gigs, The Dandy Warhols rolled into Paramount Recording Studios and plugged into a bunch of cardboard instruments. Performing timeless hits “Be Alright” and “Plan A,” this episode of *Cardboard Sessions* is a front-row seat to the mastery; a raw, swirling ride through neo-psychedelic swagger and distortion-drenched elegance. The Dandy Warhols will be on tour this fall with Kula Shaker.



▲ CHANCE THE RAPPER DROPS NEW ALBUM *STAR LINE*

GRAMMY-winner and global independent innovator Chance the Rapper has officially released *Star Line*, his most ambitious and personal project to date. The album reflects Chance's global journey, artistically, spiritually, and physically, over the past six years. Created with longtime producer DexLVL and shaped by travels to Ghana, Jamaica, and art fairs around the world, *Star Line* blends hip-hop, soul, and experimental sounds with lyrical meditations on identity, resilience, and legacy.



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STUDIO HEADPHONES
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Recording engineer and producer Toby Wright launched his audio odyssey while an undergrad at NYU. One day, he and a friend set themselves a challenge: to go through the N.Y.C. phonebook and see who could land a studio gig first. He soon found himself as an intern at legendary sound shack Electric Lady, earning a mere five dollars per day. Since then, he's worked with artists including Alice in Chains, Metallica, and Korn. He was active in the construction of both The Village Recorder's famed Studio D and One on One Recording, engineered Alice in Chains' *Jar of Flies* and produced the band's venerated MTV *Unplugged* session.

Wright's background in maintenance has enabled him to capture several unique sonic stories over the years, his use of a fan on Korn's *Follow the Leader*, for example. This approach is something that still serves him well. "I like to experiment to discover the best way to get a particular sound," he explains. "I was brought up in the day of 'Mic placement is your EQ.' It's amazing to start out with something that sounds like it should, evolve from there and then have fun with it."

When *Music Connection* spoke with him, Wright was dabbling the final brushstrokes on his Supertruck, a mobile recording studio with video capabilities. He was inspired to build it after a recent experience with live mixing at Flint, MI's The Machine Shop in a 10-foot by 11-foot storage container. "Live mixing is really cool," he says. "But when the winter came, I realized that I needed a truck. I found a PBS TV station backup vehicle that was rack-ready. It'll record in 4K video and I'll be able to stream all of the live events that I can get my hands on. I've got a 32-input Yamaha LS9 and four Blackmagic 6K cameras."

With engineering excellence virtually running through his veins, Wright was tapped by Alice in Chains to produce the band's *Unplugged* for MTV, a session for which, incidentally, a mobile recording studio was used. "I was mixing and did mostly everything that you see and hear," he recalls. "But Layne [Staley] hated the MTV cuts. He asked me to get it to where he came off a little better. I went to [N.Y.C.'s] Right Track Recording, set-up four video monitors behind the console and took an entire legal pad of notes. I'd never done anything that adventurous before and it was my biggest challenge." Using his interpersonal skills to evoke peak performances from artists is what he enjoys most about production and engineering. "I have a unique way of bringing out their creativity and that's what it's all about," he says. "Songs will always sell music regardless of the genre. When you have a great one, then you have something good to work with. Getting the best out of an artist depends on what they're into. I like to sit down with them and talk about their vision."

Relentlessly prolific, Wright is currently working on a few mixes and continues to develop his sound-healing therapy Taummhoms, which he began following a car accident in 2005.

Contact tobywrightmusic.com, thesupertruck.com, taummhoms.com

THE 3 MOST IMPORTANT

lessons Wright has learned as an engineer and producer are:

- Other than patience, you need a bit of psychology.
- You have to understand when things are broken, when they're not or when they are but they're broken in a good way.
- People skills. Know when an artist is having a bad day or a great day and see how to help them along.



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Mark Alexander-Erber

Founder

Golden Robot Global
Entertainment Group

Years with Company: 15

Address: Suite 998 / 11-13 Clarence

Street, Moss Vale NSW 2577, Australia

Web: goldenrobotrecords.com

Email: mark@goldenrobotrecords.com

Clients: Faster Pussycat, Orgy, Gilby Clarke, Devo, Johnny Thunders, Militia Vox, The Mary Tyler Whores, Vanilla Fudge, Rose Tattoo, John Sykes, Dizzy Reed

BACKGROUND

Golden Robot Records is the little label that could. Founded by Mark Alexander-Erber, the Australian indie with global distribution through The Orchard boasts an enviable roster that includes both well-established acts and promising newcomers.

To the Moon

I've always been an entrepreneur. I owned about 30 pubs, and we used to do music in them. I brought the Deftones to Australia in '97, Fu Manchu, a lot of bands. Then I got out of pubs and did a few other things for a while—tattoo parlors and coffee shops, etc. My son [Jagger Alexander-Erber] picked up a pair of drumsticks at an early age, and he was really good. I thought, wow, this kid's got something. He ended up on *Australia's Got Talent* when he was nine and nearly won the show. I thought, I don't want this kid to just be a novelty. I want him to have a career. So I put him in the studio with some members of a big band from the '90s, and they made this great album. They called the band Moon and the album was *The Orbitor*.

When I shopped it around, nobody was interested. I remember standing on Kris Jenner's driveway shouting, "You've got to hear this!" I'm this bald guy with tattoos. The minute she drove up, she put it in reverse, not realizing I'm a good Jewish boy from the eastern suburbs of Sydney. So I [put the album out] myself.

Taking Off

I got introduced to a successful music executive called Derek Shulman, who was president of Roadrunner Records. And he introduced me to all these people. We started doing deals. All of a sudden, Golden Robot was on the map. We released a thousand albums, had our No. 1 hits, and worked with some incredible people. I've had some fantastic successes and some disasters. I've dealt with dickhead managers and bands. I was in the middle of that Steve Riley/Tracii Guns fight, which is still going on today. I'm putting a book together, and that's going to be part of it. But I hold my head up high because, no matter where we went wrong, we gave it a go.

Changes

I've retired a lot of [Golden Robot imprints], and now I've just got Golden Robot Records and Robot Distro. Robot Distro is taking on DistroKid,



"We will do what we need to do to protect the artists and ourselves."

CD Baby, all that kind of stuff. And I'm getting my law degree. I've got time to do that, because Golden Robot sort of takes care of itself.

Recent Releases

We [released] Faster Pussycat's new single on 7". Today, we released Riley's L.A. Guns, the remastered version of *Renegades*. There are some Australian bands that haven't been around in a long time that are recording for us. And I've got a John Sykes EP coming out. He passed away in December, but we've got four tracks that have never been heard before.

Signing Fewer Acts

I still feel enthusiastic about what we do. I think Golden Robot Records has another 10 or 20 years ahead, because we own a big back catalog so we can fund things. But I'm a bit more wary these days with what we take on. We have 20 to 30 bands a week emailing us wanting to join. And some of those won't suit the main roster, so we put it under Robot Distro and give them a 70/30 deal in their favor.

Doing Right by Artists

I'm here for the bands. I don't want to lose a band over a percentage. I've done deals where I didn't necessarily make any money but was happy to be involved. It's not about the money. It's about getting [the music] out there and doing the right thing.

Fighting Spirit

In the early days, I got ripped off. I've seen it all and done it all. And I'm not afraid of anybody or anything. People say, "I'll sue you." Go ahead. I don't give a fuck. We will do what we need to do to protect the artists and ourselves.

The Appreciation Factor

Steve Riley (who was the drummer of L.A. Guns, W.A.S.P., and some other great bands) passed away, and I got the most beautiful letter from his widow. She broke down how supportive the

label was of Steve and his legacy. Letters like that make the difference. You don't always get thanked, but she sent this letter that I cherish.

Rock's Not Dead

That's the one thing I've always wanted with Golden Robot—to be a champion of rock 'n' roll. For many years, people have said, "Rock 'n' roll's dead." And I say no. Rock 'n' roll is back, baby. It might not be where it was, but it's kicking ass and going to gain momentum. That's been my vibe the whole way.

Approaching Bands and Cutting Deals

I get out there and go, "This is what I'd like to do with you. What do you think?" I approached [Devo] with this killer 7" idea, and that turned into a digital single, etc. We got involved with the thing they have each year where the fans get together. That's just me researching and saying, "What do you think?"

And you get your knockbacks. Unfortunately, there's a lot of gossip and innuendo in the industry. As we got bigger, a lot of others would put shit on us because they were worried that we were taking their landscape. But I did okay in the pubs, so I had a good bank balance and could pay for things.

Sounds Right

I like the Rival Sons/Black Crowes vibe. I'm chasing bands at the moment that have that feel and sound. I also like Americana/country rock. I love what we're doing with Riley's L.A. Guns, what Faster Pussycat are doing. Faster Pussycat's been around longer than anyone, and they're still relevant. They didn't get to the heights of Motley Crüe, but they have respect. And they've got the best name of everyone.

Be Honest About Your Commitment Level

If you're a great band but can only commit to the band twice a week or on weekends, that's fine as long as we know before we set off. I had a band called The Cherry Dolls. I had them on two or three European festivals and sent the bass player an email: "In two weeks, we're going to Germany." And he sent back a text with his bank balance—\$0.01. He said, "I've got no money." So that went down the toilet, and I'd printed up 5,000 albums.

Old School, New School

We've got an old school approach to the way we promote and put out an album. But on the flip side, it's very new school. Chasing the algorithms on Spotify, releasing things in a certain way so that it gets noticed, brainstorming with our artists... So we're old and new school.

Staying Passionate

I don't give a fuck what anyone says—nobody has passion like we do. We put our money where our mouth is. Yes, we've made mistakes, and we've had the No. 1s. But we learn as we go and love what we do. Tick the box—good PR. Tick the box—great distribution through Sony. Great marketing. Great minds. Entrepreneurial approach.



Senon Williams, bassist of Cambodian psych-rock outfit Dengue Fever, is also a dedicated visual artist and poet. His atmospheric, text-augmented drawings and luminous, large-scale paintings—along with zines, artist books, and monographs—merge harmony and dissonance, chaos and control, danger and dazzle. And the same dynamic fusion applies to his music. So how did his creative life come to span so many mediums?

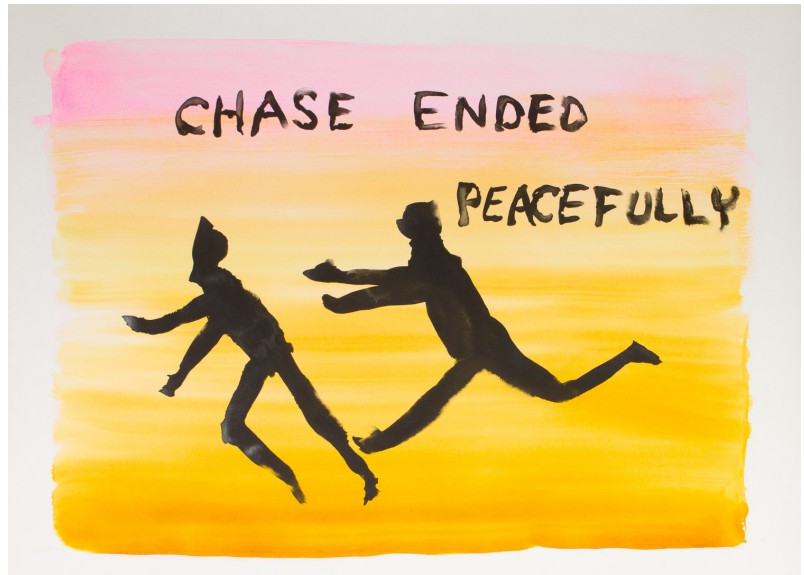
"I did not go to art school," Williams says. "When I was a child at punk shows and backyard parties, I didn't believe school was the education I needed to create art. Later, after working as an art preparator for some amazing galleries and large art moving companies, I worked as an artist's assistant—not art school, but an art education."

However it started, it's working out just fine, because Williams is currently in England, en route to the prestigious Freud Artist Residency in Příbor, Czech Republic. Over the next year, he'll return to England and Europe for exhibitions at the Freud Museums in London and Vienna.

He's also just completed a new monograph, *Scrapyard* (Hat & Beard Press), which he calls "a facsimile of a scrapbook I created over three years of studio practice." With 10 historical vignettes by Plain Sight Archive "about the history of scrapbooking," its fall release coincides with a new short film, *Tilt Horizon*, which Williams co-directed with filmmaker Tabbert Fiiller. Williams will also host upcoming events at the Philosophical Research Society around his art, poetry, screenings, and books.

This is all between tours with Dengue Fever, of course. "We played the Palupo Festival in Thailand, went to Phnom Penh to perform and record with master traditional musicians... the Levitt Pavilion in L.A., Seattle, the Winnipeg Folk Festival, Calgary Folk Festival... and have shows coming up in the fall." A new album is on the way, plus instrumental and collaborative releases.

As if that weren't enough, Williams is also now playing bass in Acetone. "Acetone stopped playing in the early 2000s when key member Richie Lee passed away," Senon says. "Due to a massive box release, my old friends Mark and Steve asked me to sit in. We've been performing live—during a N.Y.C. residency we played with the wonderful Susan Alcorn and Marshall Allen from Sun Ra Arkestra. Not originally in our plans when we started playing, we've since begun working on new material, and can expect a new album down the road." And what a road it is.



Lips Speak Louder

ANGELA LESE OF NASHVILLE-based rock duo Lips Speak Louder has dreamt of playing the drums since seeing Taylor Hawkins performing in Alanis Morissette's band in the '90s. She went to college, moved to Nashville in 2012, and started taking it seriously. Meanwhile, Rachel Brandsness started playing guitar as she was approaching her teens. After seeing Heart in concert, she was all in.

"We both had mutual friends during our time in Nashville and heard of each other's old bands, but we didn't meet until 2021 when our then bands shared a bill together," Lese says. "Once we played together, we knew we wanted to keep playing music together. So, in late 2022, Rach and I floated the idea of creating a rock duo together, and we started writing for Lips Speak Louder in 2023."

The pair say that their biggest influences are '90s grunge and 2000s indie bands, including the likes of Garbage, Jimmy Eat World, Hole, Pixies, Queens of the Stone Age, and Yeah Yeah Yeahs. All of which can be heard on the debut *Consolation Prize* album, which dropped in April.

"We recorded it in Angie's hometown of Ft. Wayne at Sweetwater Studios, and had renown guitarist/artist Emily Wolfe produce our record," says Brandsness.



"She produced her own most-recent album *The Blowback* and we loved the production on that, so we asked her if she wanted to produce our debut. We wanted to make a statement with our debut, with a raw, edgy energy that is hard to match, especially from just two people. Emily was really great at bringing that sound to life while also protecting the original integrity of the songs. The result is this bold, massive sound rooted in really relatable subject matter."

The duo believes that DIY should actually be DEY (do everything yourself). "From writing the songs to creating the artwork to designing merch to booking our own shows to buying vinyl to creating content, we do it all," says Lese. "Rach and I complement each other's talents almost too well, and we're able to work the band like a business pretty seamlessly."

With the debut album released, Lips Speak Louder plan on playing out as much as possible, while expanding their fanbase. "We love being on the road touring, so ideally we can land some big tours with some of our favorite artists," they say. "That's always the goal with music, right? Go play music with your favorite people and help everyone forget about the stresses in life for one night."

Visit lipsspeaklouder.com

THE LEGAL BEAT

BY GLENN LITWAK



SONG LYRICS, AND especially rap music lyrics, have sometimes been allowed as evidence in court. However, there is the question of whether or not they are prejudicial and/or violate the right to free speech. Many have argued that allowing evidence of lyrics in court unfairly targets Black people because rap lyrics often contain descriptions of violence.

In general, the courts will consider whether or not the lyrics are relevant to the crime alleged as they tend to prove knowledge or intent, or show membership to a gang. This is interesting as no one seems to think writing an episode

of the TV show *Dexter* is evidence that you are a serial killer.

This issue has been controversial for years. In 2022, the "Restoring Artistic Protection Act" (RAP Act) was first introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives. The bill was brought by Georgia Representative Hank Johnson and California Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove. However, the bill was never voted on by the House.

On July 24, 2025, the RAP Act was reintroduced in the House by Johnson and Kamlager-Dove. The proposed bill would make song lyrics in federal court inadmissible, unless prosecutors can meet strict requirements, such as establishing that the subject lyrics were intended to be taken literally.

This issue of lyrics being used as evidence in court arose in Drake's defamation case against Universal Music Group. The case involved Kendrick Lamar's lyrics in his hit song "Not Like Us." Drake's attorneys contended that the lyrics defamed him and put his and his family at risk.

Many music industry organizations and major record labels support the Act. Representative Johnson stated:

"Bob Marley did not confess to having 'just killed a man' by putting 'a gun against his head' and 'pulling the trigger.'"

According to Harvey Mason Jr., CEO of the Recording Academy, "Weaponizing lyrics or other creative works in court is a harmful tactic that stifles artistic expression and undermines the voices of not just musicians, but all who create and shape culture."

Jeffrey Harleston, General Counsel and EVP, Business and Legal Affairs at Universal Music Group said:

"Musical lyrics of all genres can be alliterative, fantastical, boastful and at times even hyperbolic. But what they are not intended to be—or marketed as—is 'truth.'"

Harleston went on to state: "Prosecutorial tactics that use lyrics as 'evidence' of guilt without regards to due process and the freedom of expression are deeply disturbing and we commend Ranking Member Johnson for

introducing the RAP Act, a commonsense protection against this troubling practice."

In general, songwriters should not have to worry about their lyrics being taken literally in court as it would stifle freedom of expression.

One would think this bill in congress has a good chance of passing as it seems fair and reasonable and has a lot of support from the music industry.

GLENN LITWAK is a veteran entertainment attorney based in Santa Monica, CA. He has represented platinum selling recording artists, Grammy winning music producers, hit songwriters, management and production companies, music publishers and independent record labels. Glenn is also a frequent speaker at music industry conferences around the country, such as South by Southwest and the Billboard Music in Film and TV Conference. Email Litwak at gltlaw59@gmail.com or visit glennlitwak.com.

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



Produced by Robert A. Case and Steve Avedis
Master and Synch Licensing available
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Contact Robert Case for details: 719 632-0227
Email: rac@crlr.net



newpants.com/silence-the-white-album



Date Signed: June 2024

Label: Strap Originals

Band Members: Craig Higgins ("Clams Baker Jr."), vocals; Benjamin Romans-Hopcraft ("Mr. Salt Fingers Lovecraft"), bass guitar; Adam J. Hamer ("Quicksand"), guitar; Quinn Whalley ("The Witherer"), keyboards and electronics; Marley Mackey ("Three Piece AKA The Worm"), keyboards and electronics; Bleu Ottis ("Bleucifer"), drums

Type of Music: Post-Punk/Alternative

Booking: Tom Konitzer, Anniversary Group

Management: Karey Fisher, West

Publicity: Pamela Nashel, pam@sirenscaallpr.com

A&R: Peter Doherty and Jai Stanley

Web: warmduscher.co.uk

Taking their name from a light-hearted German pejorative, Warmduscher is a serious post-punk and alternative outfit that doesn't take itself too seriously. Born out of the South London club scene, this sextet of rockers and multi-genre enthusiasts, have been gradually building a solid reputation since 2014.

Formed from the bones of respected underground bands such as Black Daniel and Fat White Family, this progressive ensemble is rolling out their fifth release on the Strap Originals label, with *Too Cold to Hold*.

"They've been amazing and made us a priority at their label."

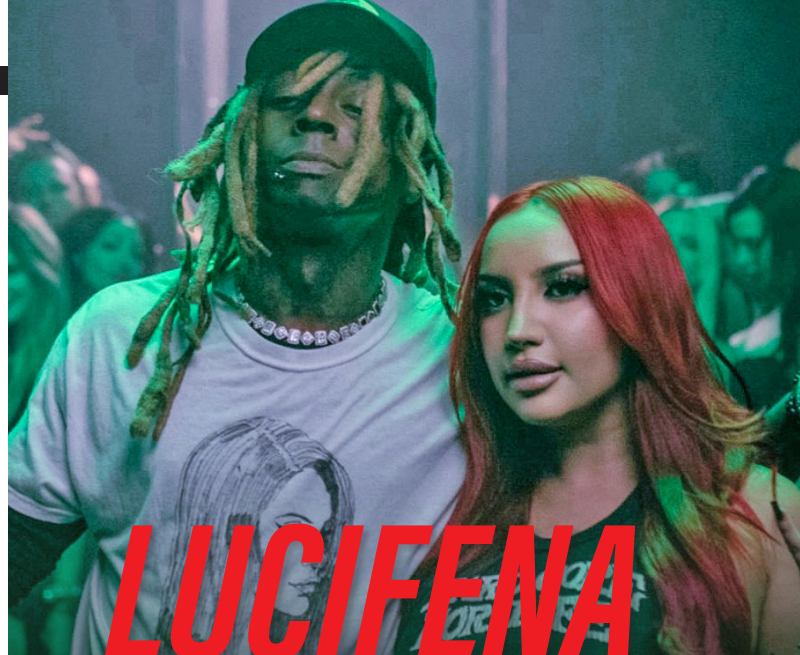
The album continues their eclectic mix of rock, funk, house and hip-hop music, with provocative and socially satirizing tunes like "Fashion Week" and "Staying Alive."

"It started from anything goes into what it is now," says Higgins, who prefers his nickname Clams. "Regardless of anything else, when we get together we find it pretty easy to write stuff. And 10 years later, we find we have more time to devote to our music, as it's not just a side project anymore. It's allowed everyone to buckle down and push ourselves and progress."

Over the course of their previous four albums, Warmduscher has achieved a modicum of success. But it hasn't been without some label turbulence and bumps in the road. For this current deal, manager Karey Fisher was instrumental in bringing the band and Strap Originals to the signing table.

"We didn't know what to do and the band morale was low," explains Clams. "But we met with Strap and laid everything out. And they told us everything we wanted to hear. They've been amazing and made us a priority at their label. They gave us complete artistic freedom and have been completely supportive of everything we've done."

The new album *Too Cold to Hold* is available globally on all platforms and is already gaining traction on playlists like BBC 6. A U.S. tour, with select European dates, is also underway for 2025. — **Eric Harabadian**



Date Signed: April 2025

Label: Young Money

Type of Music: Alternative/Metal

Booking: UTA

Publicity: Young Money

Web: instagram.com/lucifena

After being discovered directly by label head and rap star Lil Wayne, Lucifena became Young Money's first female rock signing. She celebrated by dropping the "Tyrant" single, which saw her collab with her new boss, and it's a furious hardcore metal tune, with elements of My Ruin/Tairrie B. She's reaping the rewards of years of hard work, and it's been a long journey to get here.

"I started writing when I was 13 years old with my sister Ariel, I took it serious when I was 14 by starting a band," Lucifena says. "I [then] started recording and playing shows."

Born and raised in Los Angeles, Lucifena started the band You Only Live Once which saw her touring the country and performing on the Warped Tour. She also had a project with producer morgothbeatz, which saw her makes waves in the niche world of trap-metal. Now though, she's recording under her own Lucifena name, and making moves.

"My sound today is influenced by my musical journey and by the genres I love," she says. "I went from playing in a post-hardcore band as a teen coming out the Warped Tour era. Then around 2018, I started Lucifena, making trap-metal, merging genres, and [I] was one of the first females pioneering that sound. My current music is [with a] full band, but with beats included. The genre is a mix of alternative, hardcore, shoegaze, post-punk and metal sounds."

"My sound today is influenced by my musical journey and by the genres I love."

It was after Lil Wayne worked with Lucifena on the "Tyrant" single that he decided to snap her up for his celebrated label.

"He had let me know [that] if I didn't have a deal, he had one for me at Young Money," Lucifena says. "I immediately responded and said hell fucking yeah—let's go! I'm so grateful for Wayne to let an artist like me be a part of his iconic label that has made legends. I wanna go hard, make my mark, and make the GOAT proud."

Regarding the "Tyrant" single: "The song 'Tyrant' was recorded in the trenches with Bassgawd and KingCold, so it's crazy to me to see where we took this to, and how we have the GOAT and legend Lil Wayne on it," Lucifena says.

Looking ahead, Lucifena has plenty planned for the rest of 2025. "What I've got planned for the rest of 2025 is a full-length album coming," she says. "I will be on tour with Lil Wayne this summer, and the rest of the Young Money crew. I just wanna push pop culture in a new direction with my music, and will continue to grind." — **Brett Callwood**



Date Signed: June 2025
Label: SoundOn/TikTok
Type of Music: Pop
Booking: Tour De Force Music
Legal: Alison Finley/Pierson Ferdinand
Publicity: Kip Kouri/Tell All Your Friends
Web: tiktok.com/@jewelsgold

Singer-songwriter Jewels Gold is no stranger to the world of TikTok. Gold began posting to the social media platform in 2019, around the time it was rapidly gaining momentum. Realizing the influence and popularity, Gold left Berklee College of Music to pursue her solo career and to focus on posting. Within two years, she was one of the platform's fastest growing female vocal accounts, and her daily TikTok posts since—both covers and her own songs—have seen her soar to millions of views. Now Gold is stepping into a new chapter as she has signed to TikTok's music division SoundOn.

"This platform is really different, there's such power to it. To me TikTok isn't just a social media, it's more than that," Gold recounts. "Scrolling through the For You page, and you don't know who you're gonna see and I think that's like the beauty of it. I realized pretty early on it was going to be a big change in the industry, in the way of sharing my music and building a community and reaching a lot of people. The reach is incomparable."

Although Gold and her manager Eddie Applebaum had a couple of conversations with other labels, Gold ultimately liked what TikTok and SoundOn brought to the table. "I'm very into seeing how the industry

"I'm very into seeing how the industry grows and changes."

grows and changes. I know for so long it's just been 'label is king.' But I think TikTok really changed that. It puts the power back in the artist's hands," Gold said. "I was so happy to hear that they really do seem artists first. Their deals are very artist friendly—I get to own my masters. And they've been super nice about connecting me with producers and helping. They want people to make art on their platform. They want to help people grow on their platform, and they understand that in many ways, they can be a big launching pad for people."

Since signing to SoundOn, Gold has been busy in the studio working on her upcoming EP. She gave fans a little taste of her new sound on July 11th when she debuted the single "Starry Eyes." "I'm really excited. I've been developing the sound that feels like the most 'me' music I've ever made," Gold said. "It feels so much more aligned with who I am as a person and as an artist, and so I'm just so excited to be working with them, and I can't wait for people to hear what we're doing." — **Jacqueline Naranjo**



Date Signed: June 2024
Label: Domino Recording Company
Band Members: KT, vocals; Mikey Durham, guitar; Hoff, guitar; Ausar Ward, bass; Chris Salado, vocals, drums
Type of Music: Punk
Management: Cyrus Lubin, cyrus@famousclass.com; Randy Castello, randy@tightbros.net
Booking: Kate Bell - Ground Control, katebell@groundcontrolltouring.com
Legal: Matthew Wilson, matthew.wilson@agg.com
Publicity: Erin Thompson - Domino, erin@dominorecordco.com
Web: upchuckatlanta.com
A&R: Carlos Lopez Jr. - Domino, carlos@dominomusic.com

Exploding like a supernova onto the Atlanta punk rock scene in 2018, Upchuck stirred up attention fast. The hubbub earned them a look from Cyrus Lubin, owner of Brooklyn-based indie Famous Class Records, who snatched them up right away. After the release of their debut, they hooked up with label mate Ty Segall to produce their sophomore platter.

More notice followed, including endorsements from fellow punkers Henry Rollins and Iggy Pop, who each played cuts on their radio shows. That, in conjunction with a heap of positive press, led the band to

"They definitely understand the vision."

wanting more. Luckily for them, Lubin is also the Director of US Physical Sales & Production at Domino Recording Company, where he began talking enthusiastically about the band.

Their curiosity piqued, Lawrence Bell (Domino's founder) and Carlos Lopez Jr. (Domino's Head of A&R) attended one of Upchuck's shows. Just as the quintet took the stage, the club's sound guy bailed. Lopez and Bell sensed the group's potential despite the subpar performance. Bell expressed to lead singer KT that they reminded him of why he started Domino in the first place.

Though other labels made overtures, Upchuck never considered signing with anyone else. "It just felt safe, like they would understand us," KT remarks, recalling the day they meet everyone at Domino's office. "They definitely understand the vision." The band unanimously decided to jump on board. All they needed to do was have their attorney review the contract before signing the paperwork at a Benihana in their hometown. Lubin took on the role of manager once everything fell into place.

Later on, KT scrutinized Domino's roster, which includes scads of names familiar to connoisseurs of hardcore, including Buzzcocks, My Bloody Valentine, and Sebadoh. "I didn't even know," marvels the front woman. "I'm glad there are people like us on the label." — **Andy Kaufmann**



▲ UMG'S CHINESE GROWTH

Following partnership with Liu Huan earlier this year, UMG has formed an alliance with Hong Kong-born David Tao and Great Entertainment Company (Tao previously released via Gold Typhoon, now owned by Warner). With 1.5 M Spotify listeners, Tao's eighth studio album, *Stupid Pop Songs*, is now out via UMG.

► BMI CELEBRATES DESPLAT

Following his conducting the LA Philharmonic through *The Cinematic Scores of Alexandre Desplat* at the Hollywood Bowl, BMI's multi-Oscar winner Alexandre Desplat is celebrated by SHOF inductee Charles Fox, BMI's Tracey McKnight and Mike Steinberg backstage.



▲ BIG LOUD'S MCKEEVER

Big Loud Records signs country breakout Timmy McKeever, with debut "Hold You To It," following 2024's *Devils & Angels*. After 400 live shows, 20M streams, 5M monthly impressions, 30 DSP-curated playlist spots, hits include "I've Known Better," "Tennessee Orange," "Lightning Speed."

Warner Scoops Skorpioni

Less than a month after independent Finnish label Skorpioni announced a cease of operations, Warner Music Finland has announced the IP buyout of the Helsinki-based label. With a roster including Ibe, Turisti, Nelma U, and Sliki & Hamuelos now officially forming part of Warner Music Finland, steered by Warner Music exec Ramona Forsström.

Following a \$1.2B catalog joint venture with Bain Capital last month, Warner Music is positioned to purchase additional IP going forward.

HITS Act Passes

The Recording Academy and American Association of Independent Music (A2IM) applaud the passage of the Help Independent Tracks Succeed (HITS) Act, after being five years of work. Enabling artists to deduct up to \$150,000 in recording expenses immediately when filing their taxes (instead of amortizing them over multiple years). Passed as part of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, the HITS Act will provide tremendous support for independent artists and songwriters.

In addition to the benefits to creatives, a section of the bill establishing a 10-year

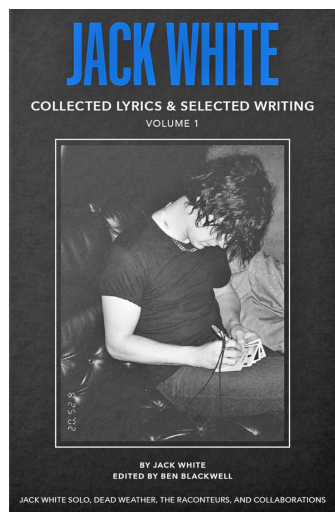
moratorium on state-level A.I. regulations was struck down. See recordingacademy.com/advocacy/issues-policy/hits-act.

SESAC's \$889M Backing

U.S.-based SESAC Music Group (SMG), encompassing SESAC PRO, Harry Fox Agency (HFA), and others, has now completed a \$889 million whole business securitization (WBS) (their fourth and largest to date), through a series of five-years senior notes. Contrary to securing financing with assets backed by music rights (like Concord's \$1.77 billion), SESAC has assessed the whole company's operations, including nearly all of SESAC Music Group's assets and revenue streams in both Performing Rights and Music Services divisions. Of note, this issuance of bonds is the largest 144A-rated WBS securitization ever completed in the music sector. With a hit roster of songwriters (Ariana Grande, Kurt Cobain, Axl Rose, etc.), television series (*Seinfeld*, *Grey's Anatomy*, *Suits*, etc.), and movies (*Cars 3*, *Ant-Man and the Wasp*, *Frozen*, etc.), the new WBS transaction brings SESAC's current total debt (the majority owned by Blackstone) to approximately \$1.1 billion.

DSE Colorado Returns

The Durango Songwriters Expo returns to Broomfield, Colorado for their 30th anniversary from October 2-4. Regarded as one of the premier songwriting events in the U.S. offering closeknit networking with top industry professionals, DSE is capped at approximately 200 songwriter/creator attendees to ensure personalized attention and high-level access to mentors (usually 40+ in attendance, including publishers, A&R reps, music supervisors). Alumni success stories include Meghan Trainor, with past attendees landing publishing, recording, or sync placement deals. Combining critiqued listening sessions, songwriters showcases, open mics, panel discussions, and one-on-one consults with industry mentors, find registration and details at durango-songwriters-expo.com, or call 970-946-9521.



▲ JACK WHITE'S LYRICS

Following *The White Stripes Complete Lyrics*, Third Man Books delivers *Jack White Collected Lyrics and Selected Writing Volume I*. Anthology includes solo recordings, *The Raconteurs*, *The Dead Weather*, collabs, select poems and writing, rare photos, Edited by Ben Blackwell. Details at thirdmanrecords.com.

SONA Offers Medical

Songwriters of North America (SONA) is now offering health insurance through Amazon One Medical as part of their primary care package for its members. Through a generous donation

from Amazon Music, SONA covers the cost for the first year of coverage, which includes care for you, your spouse or domestic partner, and your dependents. Coverage includes 24/7 on-demand virtual care. Once you apply, you will receive an email from SONA with a code for a free year of service.

AIMP Champions Legislation

In their continued commitment to transparency, accountability, and fairness for creatives, the Association of Independent Music Publishers (AIMP) maintains its support for improved State and Federal legislation to help protect copyright owners from unauthorized A.I. use. The AI Accountability and Personal Data Protection Act, introduced by Senators Josh Hawley and Richard Blumenthal, would bar A.I. companies from unauthorized copyright usage at the National level. The Act would mean individuals could sue companies using their works or data without their consent, and would impose violation penalties. The AI Copyright Transparency Act (California Assembly Bill 412) would give copyright owners the right to request a detailed list of materials being used to train generative A.I. Developers being approached for the list would be required to respond within seven days, with each day of noncompliance constituting a separate violation.

Symphonic Adds Humanable®

Leading music tech and artist services company Symphonic Distribution (whose roster includes Imogen Heap, Sublime, Jon Batiste, Ani DiFranco, Doechi, etc.) has entered into a strategic partnership with Humanable®, a patent-pending, artist-first certification system. The new technology helps artists and writers certify their master recordings as being generated without the use of GenAI. Now available as an opt-in for the Symphonic Distribution roster, music creatives will be able to certify their songwriting, performances, and recordings, as being made without the use of GenAI, helping to ensure clean copyright and emphasizing their authenticity. With industry-wide standard certification, Humanable® helps prevent GenAI music from undermining composer and artist royalties, guaranteeing authenticity to downstream gatekeepers and fans. To date, 3.4 million songs have

already been certified. For more information, visit humanable.com.

SourceAudio A.I. Data

Delivering a one-stop shop for high quality A.I. music training data, sync platform SourceAudio has established the first scalable, fully cleared AI Music Dataset Licensing Marketplace. Having generated over \$1.35 million in new annual recurring revenue for artists and publishers in May 2025 alone, the database makes 14 million songs, three million sound effects, and 200 sampled instruments available to A.I. companies and tech platforms. All pieces are full cleared and come directly from major music publishers, independent artists, and production music libraries as opt-ins, delivering a high-quality, fully cleared and licensed (for both recording and composition) data solution to train A.I. models, while justly compensating writers and publishers for their copyrighted materials. More at sourceaudio.com.

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



▲ ONERPM'S SPECIAL SAUCE

Singer-songwriter-musician Garret Dutton (of G. Love & Special Sauce) signs to ONErpm. Most of the catalog now available on DSPs for first time including *Back In The Day*, *In The King's Court*, *Has Gone Country*, *Front Porch Loungin'*, *Moonshine Lemonade*. Multiple albums coming soon.



▲ ASCAP FLAUTIST'S RELEASE

ASCAP-winning flautist-composer Hadar Noiberg joins award-winning Israeli pianist composer Katia Toobool release *Zero Point*, showcasing intimate duo and ensemble works with Finale String Quartet. Classical, Brazilian, jazz, Middle Eastern sound. Visit hadarnoiberg.com.



▲ COMMON PEOPLE PARALLEL

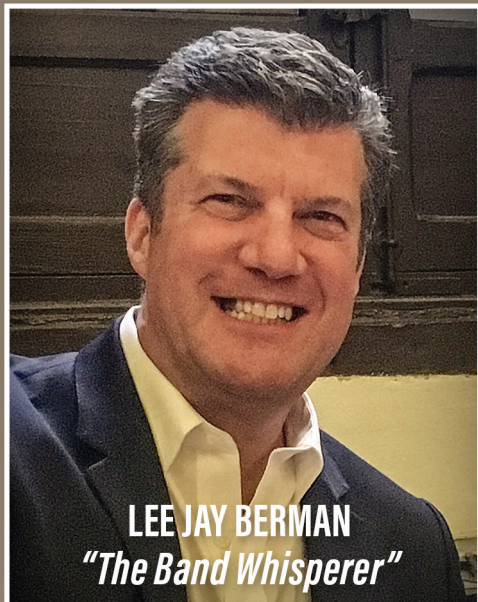
Big Loud's partner label Parallel Vision (Daniel Oakley, Cage The Elephant's Brad Schultz) sign alt rockers Common People (Nicky Winegardner, Sam Belzer, Asher Thomason, Konrad Ulich, Cormac Cadden). "Thank You" (Schultz) out now, with Cage The Elephant support dates this year.



▲ SONY RELEASES JOEL

Alongside HBO's two-part documentary, *And So It Goes*, Legacy/Sony has released a 100+ song digital album of Billy Joel music. With 60+ unreleased songs (including from *The Hassles*, *Attila*), live recordings, and 155 tracks over seven hours, the compilation forms a response to years of fan requests. See more at sonymusic.com.

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SONGWRITER PROFILE

— ANDREA BEENHAM

Barbara Nadas: Say Yes!

Receiving a little red microphone from her dad at just five years old, Barbara Nadas grew up performing for family and friends in Hungary, and received plenty of support for her musical dreams. Starting on drums from an early age (her late father also played), performing in a cover band in her teens (for 10 years), Nadas was later cast as Lambchops' in the Hungarian Operetta Theatre production of *Fame*. With instinctual rhythm from her early instrumentals, Nadas' music showcases more than just mainstream pop (as reflected in 2024's debut *Stay*). "It was important to me that I blend pop with other genres and I really love funk and soul. I don't want to put myself into a box," she says. "I stay in the range of pop, but spice it up with musical elements." With a combination of dance, jazz, soul, reggae, and rap flavoring, Nadas is not your typical popstar.

Hungarian vocal coaches Orsi Szatmári and Anita Csoka were pivotal to Nadas' growth, with Szatmári singing the theme to a popular television series (which Nadas heard daily), and opera singer Csoka helping push her technical ability and overall confidence. "We had to work on my inner self, to believe that I'm a good songwriter, that my lyrics make sense, and to perform those songs—not just sing them," adds Nadas. Recording a cappella into her phone, she was introduced to Hungarian producer Krisztián Burai through a friend, Burai produced the track within a few hours, and Nadas was hooked. Their music video ("Semmit nem ér(sz)") has since been watched almost 1.5 million times. Says Nadas, "Nothing beats the songwriting process when you hear your idea born."

Continuing to pursue her passion, Nadas was still expected to train for a stable job, and completed a degree in economics. "Sometimes I felt like a UFO in my family," admits Nadas. "Nobody really has this artistic way of thinking. They are more material and business people." She flew to the United States for the first time in 2018 and everything changed. "I finished college, took a Berklee five-week summer course, and could finally focus on music and myself." She wanted to continue professionally. Feeling like her years to be on stage were limited, she says, "that was the point I [realized] I have no time for joking around. I really have to do this now." Her time in Boston inspired her debut album, *Stay* (2024). "I had a few Hungarian songs in my pocket," says Nadas, but "Berklee influenced me to write in English and deep dive into my feelings."

Originally meeting artist-producer Smithmusix (Norbert Kovács) through a dating app, they never actually dated, but quickly jumped into songwriting (and still work together). Her work with GRAMMY-winning producer Mark Urselli came following selection of her song "Lawyer of the Earth" as part of a production contest. Chosen from almost 100 submissions, Urselli's praise gave further credence to Nadas' English material.

What makes a great song? "Soulful tones and chords, and an inspiration to move or feel deeply," says Nadas, and her creative process starts with an emotion ready to be expressed. "I usually write the lyrics together with the melody, [but] don't really know where it comes from, it's like a download." Inspired by music of all genres, and tracks and instrumentals forwarded by her producers, she tries to imagine what the music around the emotion she is feeling would sound like. Her lyrical component is strict, holding a specific moral to the story, while instrumentals can be more diverse.

Recognizing each song as representing a better, more healed version of herself, Nadas adds, "I want to express things people are afraid to express in more of my songs. I have always been like that. I can't keep my mouth shut."

Contact: Maverick Alexander - Miller PR, maverick@miller-pr.com;
Visit Barbara Nadas, barbaranadasmusic.com



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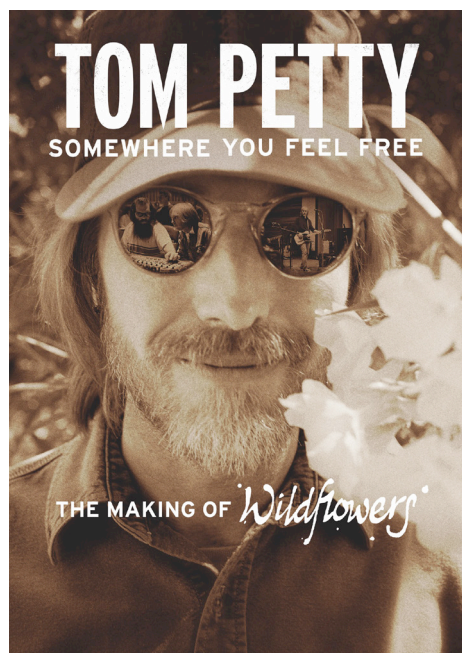
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DROPS

Tom Petty, *Somewhere You Feel Free: The Making of Wildflowers* will make its Blu-ray debut on September 12, marking the first physical release of the critically acclaimed documentary. In addition to the original film that captured the late artist's journey through the making of one of his most iconic and beloved albums, the Blu-ray edition includes 30 minutes of bonus material, featuring rare outtakes and four promotional videos from 2020. Directed by award-winning filmmaker **Mary Wharton** and produced by **Peter Afterman**, the film offers an intimate look at Petty during the creation of 1994's *Wildflowers*, showcasing newly unearthed 16mm footage and interviews with Petty's closest friends, family and collaborators. The film won Best Documentary Film at the Boulder Film Festival, Outstanding Producer of Televised or Streamed Motion Picture at The Producers Guild of America Awards, and more. Contact Carla Sacks at carla@sacksco.com for details.



Superman (Original Motion Picture Soundtrack) was released this summer, featuring a bold new orchestral score to usher in a new generation of fans by composers **John Murphy** and **David Fleming**. The soundtrack accompanies **James Gunn's** recent DC Studios film, *Superman*. The soundtrack reimagined **John Williams'** iconic theme with an electric guitar arrangement and introduced new motifs for characters like **Lois Lane**, **Lex Luthor**, and the **Justice Gang**. In addition to availability on digital formats, there is also a 2xLP vinyl edition with two color options: blue and red, and blue, red and white spinner. For further information, contact Thomas Mikusz at thomas@whitebearpr.com.

Milan Records released *The Naked Gun (Music from the Motion Picture)*, featuring a new score by GRAMMY-winning composer **Lorne Balfé**. Available now, the 13-track album accompanies the theatrical debut of Paramount's reboot of the original comedy



franchise. Balfé's score pays homage to **Ira Newborn's** original theme with noir-inspired brass while bringing a fresh new sound to the score. The album also includes two original comedic songs performed by the cast, including "**Sassafras Chicken in D**" and "**My Sweet Beth**." Balfé has said the music plays it straight—heightening both the drama and absurdity at the heart of both the original and new film. Contact Christian Endicio at christian@whitebearpr.com for details.

CBS and **MTV** revealed the 2025 **Video Music Awards** nominations earlier this summer, with the show and ceremony set to air live from UBS Arena on CBS, MTV and streaming on Paramount+ September 7. With Lady Gaga leading this year's nominees with 12 nominations, she is followed by **Bruno Mars** with 11, **Kendrick Lamar** with 10, and **Rosé (singer)** and **Sabrina Carpenter** with eight each. First-time nominees include **Rosé**, **Alex Warren**, **Gigi Perez** and more. New categories Best Country and Best Pop Artist debut this year. Fan voting is open through September 5. Learn more at mtv.com/event/vma.



OPPS
The **54th Annual Dance on Camera Festival**, slated for February 6-9, 2026, has opened its call for submissions for dance films of all genres and lengths with a late deadline of September 19, 2025. As the world's longest-running dance film festival, Dance on Camera provides a

platform for choreographers and other artists to showcase their creative work and network with others in the field. Submit your work for consideration at filmfreeway.com/danceoncamerafestival.

The **Oticons Film Composers Talent Agency**, which champions emerging film composers, has opened registration for its 2026 competition to discover and showcase upcoming talent within the

film composing world and help advance their careers. Learn more about submitting your work at faculty.oticons.com.

Submissions are open for the 2025 **Dances with Films Festival** in N.Y.C., with an array of categories for indie filmmakers to showcase their

work. Shorts, including music videos, are also accepted. Learn more and submit by September 19 deadline (extended deadline October 10) at danceswithfilms.com/submissions.

PROPS

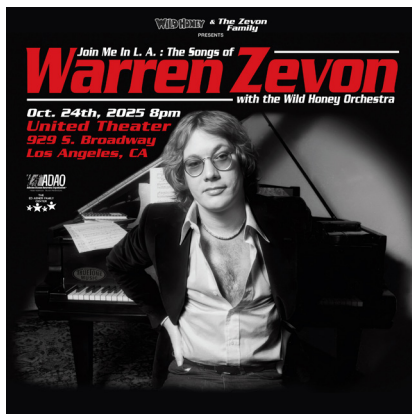
The Society of Composers & Lyricists (SCL) is celebrating the passage of the **HITS Act**, which is designed to deliver long-awaited tax relief for independent music creators across the U.S. and align the music industry with other creative sectors such as film, television and live theater. Through the legislation, eligible songwriters, lyricists, composers and music producers can deduct up to \$150,000 in recording and production expenses in the year incurred. The SCL, a longtime advocate for the bill, and contributed to coalition efforts to see its passage. With the HITS Act now enacted, independent songwriters, composers, and producers gain crucial financial tools to support their careers in an evolving industry. For more information, contact Ray Costa at rcosta@costacomm.com.

Moises, the A.I.-powered music platform with 60 million users across the globe, has announced its 2025 sponsorship of NPR's **Tiny Desk** series, in support of a shared mission to uplift musicians. Moises and NPR are launching a major giveaway: one winner and a guest will attend a live Tiny Desk Concert at NPR's Washington, DC headquarters, with travel, hotel, and NPR+ perks included. All entrants also receive a free five-year Moises Pro license. Open to U.S. and Canadian residents (excluding Quebec), the contest runs through September 12. Contact Emily Frances at emily@rockpaperscissors.biz for details, or visit npr.org/2024/03/14/1235248393/tiny-desk-giveaway.

Multi-E Emmy-winning composer **Jeff Beal** has been awarded the United Nations-backed **High Note Global Prize** for the song "We Believe in Hope," created with renowned Afghan artist and advocate **Aryana Sayeed** and lyricist **Joan Beal** for the film **Rule Breakers**. This marks the first time a song has received the honor, recognizing its powerful message of unity, equality and women's empowerment. Featured in Angel Studios' film about

Afghanistan's first all-female robotics team, the anthem—performed by Sayeed and the **Brooklyn Youth Chorus**—was also dedicated to the UN's new International Day of Hope. Past recipients of the prize include **Cyndi Lauper** and **John Legend**.

Find the video on YouTube, and contact Rebekah Alperin at reb@gostoryboard.com for more information.



Browne, Shooter Jennings, Marshall Crenshaw, Jorge Calderón, and more. Proceeds will benefit the **Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization** and the **Ed Asner Family Center for the Autism Community**. For more information, contact wildhoneyfoundation@yahoo.com.

From October 16-18, the **Eastman School of Music** at the **University of Rochester** will present the inaugural **Soundtrax Film Music Festival**, North America's first dedicated film-music festival and conference, in Rochester, New York, which is considered the birthplace of motion picture film. Co-directed by Emmy winners Mark Watters and Jeff Beal, the event will feature sessions with Oscar-nominated composer **Carter Burwell** (*Twilight*, *Fargo*, *True Grit*), Disney's

former VP of Music **Bambi Moë**, and Oscar-winning composer **John Corigliano** (*The Red Violin*). Attendees will experience concerts of *Interstellar*, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2* and *John Williams: Reimagined*. For more, contact Luci Paczkowski at lpaczowski@shorefire.com.

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

OUT TAKE



Cameron Moody
Composer

Website: cameronmoodymusic.com
Most recent: *Washington Black*

"I THINK WHAT DRAWS ME to a project is also what scares me: it's new," says Cameron Moody, who at 22 is one of the youngest composers ever to score a 20th Century Television series with *Washington Black*. "In the case of *Washington Black*, it was a story that leapt off the page. It felt like there was an opportunity not just for the score, but for the story as a whole, to resonate. That's what I look for: a project with something to say."

After becoming emotionally attached to the music of *Star Wars* at age five, Moody began his musical trajectory by learning trumpet, piano and seeking out as many books on harmony, theory and scoring that he could. This ultimately led him to studying at NYU, making an impression on a guest visitor to the school—composer Michael Abels—following up with a social media message, and being offered an assistant job.

Years later, when the opportunity to write the music for the Selwyn Seyfu Hinds-created series *Washington Black* came along, the producers and showrunner told Moody their musical vision was along the lines of Steven Spielberg's *E.T. Undaunted*, Moody delivered a sweeping, uplifting score, leaning into his love and talent for orchestra and acoustic instrumentation. "The story takes us all around the world, and they wanted the score to be in line with that in terms of its scope. We also wanted the music to appeal to people's emotions and not be tied down geographically."

Also a talented conductor, Moody served as composer-in-residence for the National Symphony Orchestra of Costa Rica in 2022. He said the experience helped him grow as a composer by helping him better understand how to communicate with musicians: "First, learn the craft," he says. "Second, have patience. You can learn to enjoy the stepping stones."

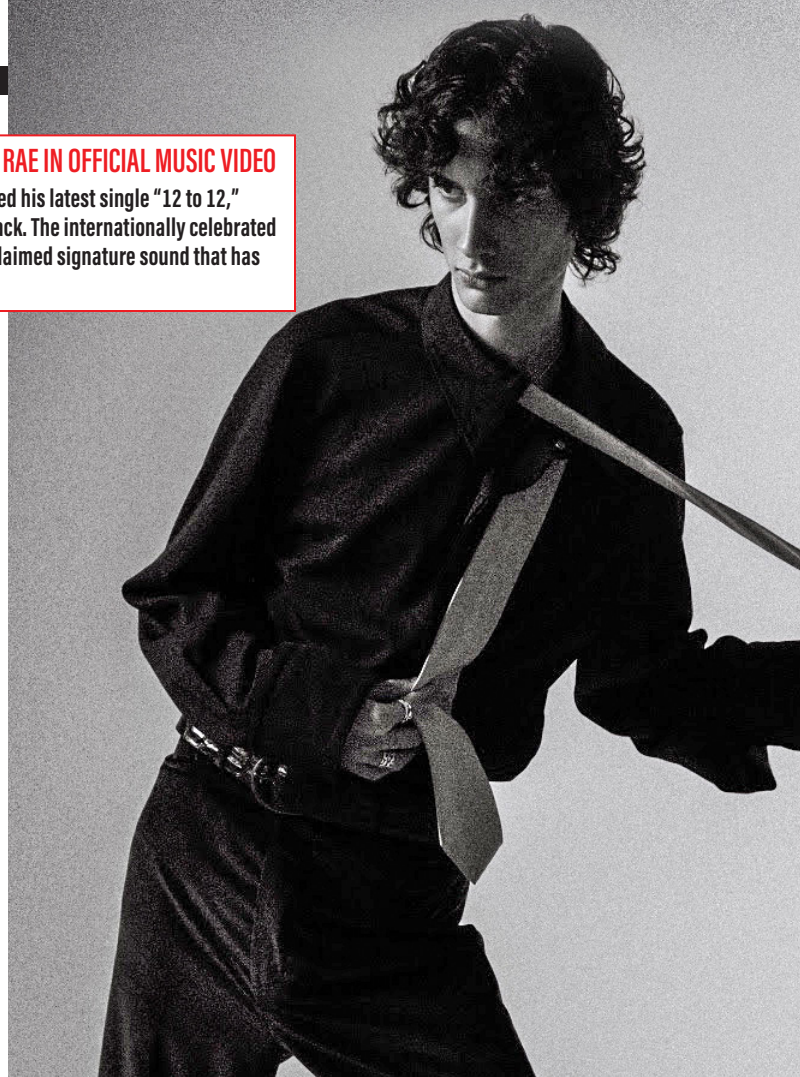
► **SOMBR RELEASES NEW SINGLE "12 TO 12," STARS ALONGSIDE ADDISON RAE IN OFFICIAL MUSIC VIDEO**

Twenty-year-old New York City born-and-raised alternative-pop-phenom sombr released his latest single "12 to 12," accompanied with an official music video starring Addison Rae and directed by Gus Black. The internationally celebrated breakout-artist writes and co-produces all of his own music to create his critically acclaimed signature sound that has resonated and transcended across generations.



▲ **SHWETA HARVE DISPLAYS A MUSIC AWARD FOR HER DEBUT SINGLE, "WHAT THE TROLL"**

Shweta Harve's "What The Troll" was promoted by Larry Weir and his National Record Promotion company on behalf of independent label MTS, led by Michael Stover. A full-length debut album from Harve is currently in development.



◀ **JJ BRAVES RELEASES NEW SINGLE "FIX FOR A BROKEN HEART"**

Portland-based musician and producer JJ Braves returns this summer with his new single, "Fix for a Broken Heart," an emotionally-charged anthem of resilience—arriving ahead of his forthcoming full-length album. JJ Braves is the throwback rock project of L.A.-based artist Joshua Kever, blending synth-driven hooks, classic rock theatrics, and deeply personal lyricism.

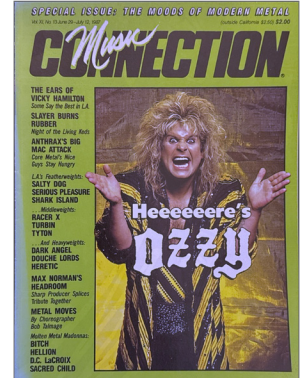


▲ **KIESZA'S NEW ALBUM DANCING & CRYING: VOL 2 IS A SEXY, INTIMATE EXPLORATION OF FEMALE DRIVEN HOUSE MUSIC**

Kiesza's *Dancing and Crying: Vol 2* channels dark, late night house vibes, created in an environment of collaboration and spontaneity. This volume surrounds the theme of friends coming and going from Kiesza's home studio, late-night linkups, and a hunger to keep a consistent mood throughout the album. In support of her new music, look for Kiesza to return to the road this summer as she continues her Dancing and Crying tour with fellow pop artist Bonnie McKee.

MUSIC CONNECTION

Tidbits From Our Tattered Past



1987 - Ozzy Osbourne - #13

The late legend Ozzy Osbourne graced our 1987 cover. Osbourne set the record straight with Kenny Kerner, "I do not sleep upside down from rafter and I don't drink blood. I eat cornflakes!" Reflecting on touring, Ozzy said, "I'm slowing it down to a more leisurely pace," refusing to "sacrifice my family like I did before." On music, he declared, "If I no longer have any appeal to the public, then I'll stop." When asked about the future, he simply said, "I'm gonna sit down and have breakfast now. Nice to see you again."



1989 - Living Colour - #5

Our 1989 cover featured Living Colour, a groundbreaking band proving that rock 'n' roll wasn't just for white guys with guitars. "Music is universal," said guitarist Vernon Reid, as the band pushed back against both musical and racial barriers. "People don't like the music because they're black or white or because they're from Brooklyn or Kansas. People like music 'cuz they can identify with it and it affects them in a certain way emotionally. And that's what makes us all the same—not necessarily where we're from or our skin color... it's an attitude."

Limited back issues available to order
at musicconnection.com



▲ FRANKIE'S BEACH HOUSE PREMIERES LIVE FROM HAWAII—A BRAND-NEW SERIES KICKING OFF AT THE ICONIC ISLAND SOUND STUDIOS

Frankie's Beach House, a brand-new monthly livestream music series created and headlined by Frankie Moreno, is an up-close two-hour performance broadcasted live from the Hawaiian Islands. "This is a one-of-a-kind experience blending music, storytelling, and soul—set right here at The Lounge in Hawai'i Kai. Each episode will bring you intimate performances and conversations with me and my friends from the island and beyond," Moreno shares.



◀ NATALIE BERGMAN RELEASES ALBUM MY HOME IS NOT IN THIS WORLD, HEADLINE TOUR DATES ANNOUNCED

Following her debut solo record, *Mercy*, Chicago-born, Los Angeles-based artist Natalie Bergman unveils her latest LP *My Home Is Not in This World*. Co-produced by Bergman herself, the album draws on the timeless grooves of the 1960s while layering in soulful basslines. It's a deeply personal body of work that balances heartbreak and loss against the transformational theme of motherhood. Bergman is heading off on a run of headline shows to support the album, she will also be supporting Rilo Kiley on their highly anticipated reunion tour this summer, performing across select dates in major cities throughout North America.

► OF MONSTERS AND MEN TUNE BACK IN WITH "TELEVISION LOVE"

Following five-years of quiet evolution, Icelandic indie-folk icons Of Monsters and Men have broken their creative silence with "Television Love." Written and recorded in their studio in Iceland, "Television Love" is an ongoing conversation that keeps picking up where it left off; layered with time, emotion, and the kind of honesty that only comes with reflection. The music video for "Television Love" was filmed around the solstice and shot entirely on 35mm film during a summer night in Iceland.



JOHN CARPENTER

MASTER OF MACABRE MELODY

BY BRETT CALLWOOD

PHOTOS BY SOPHIE GRANSARD



THINK JOHN CARPENTER, and all manner of creepy, skin-crawling images flood the brain: A knife-wielding Michael Myers in the shadows (*Halloween*), heads slowly falling to the floor and turning into alien spiders (*The Thing*), ghosts in the fog (*The Fog*), and a '58 Plymouth Fury squeezing down a narrow alley to crush its victim (*Christine*). Some of the most iconic images in horror cinema are down to the talent of Carpenter. He's responsible for countless nightmares, literal goosebumps, screams, and general good times.

He's also a gentleman. Now 77 years old, Carpenter is as passionate about his art as he ever was. He speaks about directing movies with the enthusiasm of a recent film school grad; a ball of kinetic energy that is genuinely infectious. As a result, he's a joy to have a conversation with. This interview took place on the phone, but his personality travelled across cell towers. The man is an icon within the horror genre, sure. But he's also a force of nature.

As well as writing and directing movies, Carpenter has also famously scored many. The son of a music teacher, music has been in Carpenter's blood from an early age. The fact that he co-wrote the first *Halloween* movie (with Debra Hill), creating iconic slasher Michael Myers in the process, and then developed the distinctive score as well as directing the shots, means that Carpenter can feel largely responsible for the entirety of Myers' foreboding character.

That creepy keyboard refrain essentially scrapes at your spine, especially when matched with Myers' unrelenting, lumbering screen presence. *Halloween* is far from the only movie that Carpenter has scored, though it's likely the most memorable. More recently, he's released a series of albums called *Lost Themes*. The fourth, *Lost Themes IV: Noir*, dropped last year but he's just put out a 10th anniversary expanded edition of the first *Lost Themes* album, and he's playing some shows in October to celebrate.

"John will be joined for these special concerts by his longtime



collaborators Cody Carpenter and Daniel Davies, with whom he has created four *Lost Themes* albums, as well as scoring all three entries of the recent *Halloween* trilogy and 2022's *Firestarter*," a statement reads. "In celebration of the trio's decade-long run, today they have launched preorders for the forthcoming *Lost Themes 10th Anniversary Expanded Edition*, due May 9th from Sacred Bones. The updated edition features new artwork by Greg Ruth, expanded liner notes, and a bonus 7" containing two previously unreleased songs from the album's original recording sessions, "Dominator" and "Cruisin' With Mr. Scratch."

A conversation with Carpenter is a thrill, not least because his passion for his art (all aspects of it) is infectious. After the interview, we felt like we could write, direct and score a movie. 51 years after his first movie, the low budget *Dark Star*, set him on his path, 77-year-old Carpenter still talks about his craft like a teen who is just starting out.

It's one thing to score films, another thing entirely to take the show on the road. Dreaming up music to complement what we see on the

screen is a particular skill, but playing that music out of context in a live environment is another. Carpenter, however, is psyched.

"I love it [performing live] with all my heart," he says. "It's such a joy. I can't tell you how hard directing is, so music is just a joy."

One of the aspects of live musical performance that Carpenter picked up on as particularly enjoyable is the instant reaction one receives from the audience—not a usual situation for a director, screenwriter and/or score composer. In recent years, the likes of Danny Elfman, German synth pioneers Tangerine Dream and Italian prog-rockers Goblin (two iterations) among others have taken similar movie-themed shows directly to audiences, and they're generally incredible experiences, often with screens playing scenes from the relevant movies behind the musicians. So Carpenter's approach is hardly unique. But again, the fact that the man performing music also, in many cases, wrote and directed the movies is unusual.

He's a part of the creative process to a more intimate and involved

degree than one would normally expect. So when Carpenter is scoring one of his own movies, he has an insider knowledge of exactly what a scene needs. There's a domino effect too; if Carpenter is scoring somebody else's film, as he did with the recent remake of Stephen King's *Firestarter* (2022) among many others, he has a director's insight into what a scene needs. Conversely, when a different composer is scoring one of Carpenter's films (for example, *The Thing* was scored by the incredible Ennio Morricone), Carpenter would have the language as a musician to be able to convey what he's looking for. He might not—he may prefer to trust the composer and let them do what they feel. But he has the skills should he need them. It's all in place.

Despite all of that, and Carpenter's professed adoration for music and scoring, he maintains that directing movies is his first love.

"The love of my life is directing movies," he says. "It's all I ever wanted to do. The only thing that matters is the movie."

When he is scoring somebody else's movie, such as *Firestarter*, he has a lot of fun though in that particular case, he says that he didn't look to the Tangerine Dream score of the original 1984 movie for inspiration.

"I love Tangerine Dream, but I didn't pay attention to their original score at all," he says, while adding that it wasn't at all strange to score that movie. "Not at all—[Keith Thomas] is a great director."

For that score, the *Lost Themes* series and other recent work, plus these forthcoming dates, Carpenter has been writing and performing with his son Cody, plus his godson (and son of the Kinks' Dave Davies) Daniel Davies.

"Cody is the maestro," says Carpenter. "I can say something, and he'll play it. He's got the chops—I don't know where he gets it from. Daniel is the ideas man."

When asked about the relationship between the families, Davies recalls a family tale. "Dad had written [Carpenter] a letter," he says. "He was a fan of John's movies—I remember them all from when I was a kid. John was in London,

so they hung out and became fast friends. Every weekend, the kids would get together at John's house, eat pizza and watch movies. It was a place for the kids to hang. I remember living with John and Sandy [King, Carpenter's wife] when they were making *Village of the Damned* [the 1995 remake]."

Davies says that music was always around the house too, and John had an acoustic guitar readily available.

"He and dad would show me chords," Davis says. "I remember Cody taking piano and guitar lessons, and we would play. It was always around. We would buy an album, and analyze it. We'd do the same thing with movies, such as *Apocalypse Now*. It was an education on film and scoring. Always learning."

Despite the fact that Davies was spending a chunk of his childhood hanging out at horror master's place, he didn't really see it like that. "When you're really young, you're not aware that you're around talented people. It's later in your teens that you realize."

It worked out. Now, the three men are a musical force. A creative unit, each bringing something different to the table.

"We've all grown together," says Davis. "We have our own language, based on intuition. We make music on impulse."

That musical relationship and fluidity resulted in the *Lost Themes* series. "John and Cody were making demos, writing on weekends," says Davies. "I was touring with bands. John had a new music attorney, and she asked him what music he had. She got it to Sacred Bones Records, and they asked him if he wanted to make an album. It became a collaboration, and we just kept going with movie scores, more albums, and tours."

The music on *Lost Themes* might not be taken from a movie, but it has that same "score" feel. That's all the more impressive when considering the fact that the three musicians didn't have a story and visual cues to guide and inspire them.

"It's inside us," says Carpenter. "We're scoring your thoughts and dreams. Whatever you can think up, I'm here to score it. Music is the greatest artform created by man. You don't need words to enjoy it."

Indirectly, Carpenter came up with the perfect endorsement for the four *Lost Themes* albums there. He also slips in that there's a new album

in the works for next year, but says that he "can't talk about it yet." That's spoiling us anyway; the expanded version of the first *Lost Themes*, with two added songs, plus last year's *Lost Themes IV* really has given fans plenty to chew on. When the guys perform in Los Angeles, we'll be hearing lot of that stuff, and more.

"We're going to do themes from John's movies, and songs from *Lost Themes*," says Davis. "Each night will be different in some way."

Regarding gear, Carpenter references Apple MainStage, and says that the music performed on stage will be as close to the recordings as possible.

"[We use] anything we can get our hands on," adds Davies. "Dave Smith stuff, the Oberheim OB-6 [synthesizer], Mellotron, Moog Voyager—all of the Moog stuff. The Grandmother, to recreate older sounds. On the computer: Spitfire Audio, and Arturia. Various pianos; Tons of effects to make beds; Old Blood Noise [Endeavors, pedals]; EarthQuaker [Devices]; LinnDrums."

Davies is continuing to work on his solo material—he puts out instrumental albums with the last one being *Signals* in 2020. The *Spies* EP came out the following year. His rock album, *Ghost of the Heart*, dropped last year. The musician, previously a member of rock bands Karma to Burn and CKY, is continuously busy thanks to his diverse skillset and obvious talent.

But his work with Carpenter certainly keeps him happy, and there's also a box set of music from recent *Halloween* movies coming soon. "Now, for the first time, expanded editions of all three scores are being made available by Carpenter's longtime label, Sacred Bones Records," reads a statement. "*Halloween: The Complete Expanded Collection*, a deluxe box set collecting the definitive editions of all three scores, plus standalone versions of the expanded *Halloween*, *Halloween Kills* and *Halloween Ends* soundtracks, will be out on October 3, 2025... The scores for the new films may be centred on familiar themes, but they're also a lot

more sonically diverse and musically audacious than anything John could have pulled off in 1978, when he made the original *Halloween*."

"Oh my God, I had three days, and I had me," Carpenter says. "I didn't have anybody who could play anything. No picture, no nothing. Just sit down and play. I

would say, 'let me have a beat.' And Dan Wyman, the synthesiser teacher at USC, would tune up the tube amps and I'd play that. It was really crude. If you listen to those scores, there's not a lot of variation. It repeats a lot of the same music, over and over again. I'd go back with four or five pieces and cut it into the movie."

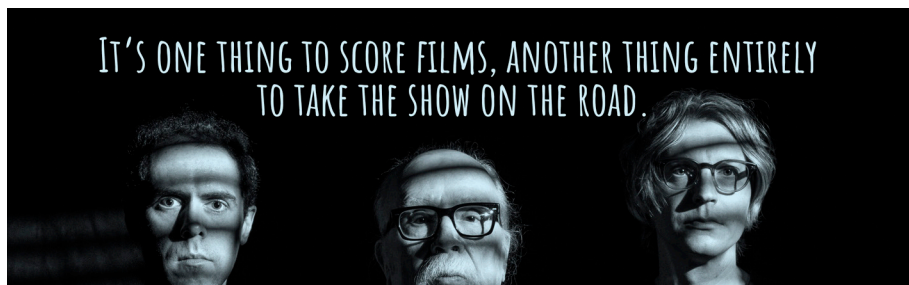
"The *Halloween* box is amazing," Davies says. "There's stuff on there that didn't make it into the movies. And then the shows will be fun. I'm excited."

"These definitive versions feature previously unreleased music cues that reveal new layers of the iconic scores," the statement continues. "The expanded version of *Halloween Kills* features 25 unreleased music cues, while *Halloween Ends* adds 10 new tracks, deepening the movie's haunting sonic energy. *Halloween Expanded* also returns with a brand-new visual presentation, featuring all new artwork by Chris Bilheimer. These expanded scores are finally hitting streaming platforms, and will also be available in a wide range of physical formats, including various LPs and CD, with each expanded edition containing a poster designed by Creepy Duck."

For Carpenter, this is just the continuation of a journey he started many years ago. He remains a creative force, and continues to have an impact on listeners and viewers. As he always has.

"People always tell me that they watched my movies when they were too young," he says with a laugh. "I don't know what happened to our code. I'm kidding—I loved that stuff when I was young too."

That's what John Carpenter is all about. He's the father of so many memories. The first time we hid behind the sofa, wanting to watch *The Thing*, *Christine*, or *Halloween* but also not wanting to watch, was because of John Carpenter. He has petrified us and delighted us in equal measure. He's taken our nightmares and our dreams, and shaken them like a paranormal barrister, rendering them indistinguishable. We wouldn't have it any other way.





CARLA PATULLO / FREE TO FEEL

BY ANDREA BEENHAM

Following 2024's GRAMMY win for (self-produced and self-released) debut solo project *So She Howls*, Carla Patullo returns with *Nomadica*, a stunning collection of sound reuniting the Scorchio Quartet (Lorenza Ponce, Frederika Krier, Martha Mooke, Leah Coloff + Philip Glass, Laurie Anderson) and Tonality (led by Alexander Lloyd Blake), and featuring Martha Wainwright. While *So She Howls* rode an undertone of gentle, unresolved angst, Patullo's latest offering feels more open and vulnerable. Having lost her mom suddenly in a car accident 20 years ago, she had never fully processed the grief. This record opened the door.

"She had been at my apartment and had just left," shares Patullo. "It was just this sudden grief and shock. I think you just process it a little bit different. You still have to accept this unexpected shift in your life, but for many

years I think I had this anger inside me about it. I think this ties into *So She Howls*. Going through my [own] experience and becoming close with death myself, I was able to have this gratitude for life. There's been this shift in me to be able to accept things more. After that journey with *So She Howls* and cancer, I was able to look at this from a different lens and really appreciate the moments I had with her [and] the strength that she left me that helped me get through my own personal struggles."

Just before her win for Best New Age, Ambient, or Chant Album, Patullo recalls seeing her mum smiling. "I am spiritual, but not in a religious way," she says. "It was the weirdest thing. You're in that intense moment of the GRAMMYS [and] 10 seconds before they announce, I could see my mom smiling. It was the image I thought of going through this whole [new album] process. Maybe that's when things really started to open up for me?" Patullo just reached her five-year cancer-free anniversary, and the commemoration of 20 years since losing her mom, which landed differently this year. "I hadn't been able to go to the cemetery and do all the things, especially in the beginning," Patullo confesses. "People would host these vigils or masses and I would be there, but I wasn't really there. I just felt this need to celebrate her, that I could celebrate her now. I'm just grateful for the time I did have, even though it wasn't as long as I had hoped for."

Patullo's new album was also inspired by Andrew Haigh's movie *All of Us Strangers*, a story that navigates unspoken words following unexpected loss. Patullo says the film got her "brewing with music," that she could relate to the unheld conversations, and says the album started there. "I hadn't come out to my mom. All these life things that happened...she never met my partner," she admits. "Conversations have been brewing inside me. I've been wanting to connect with my mom. The music just started coming and kind of flowed out again." Revisiting the sudden loss, she imagined an encounter with her mother and navigated through dreamlike memories of conversations she wishes she had been able to have, recognizing a newfound absence, and reaching a place of acceptance, connecting with support from the other side. From the opening ethereal invitation of "Our Love Is," gently soothing title track "Nomadica," and tear-inducing comfort of "Arrival," to the gentle journey of "Undercurrent," and inspirational, uplifting energy of "Isochronic Waves," Patullo's new project does not disappoint. The celebratory release of "Lightning" and exhalation of "Below the Surface" lead into the relieving acceptance and sendoff in "Fly Under" (Patullo's collaboration with Wainwright). Grief, healing, redemption, and joy are all painted through her orchestral passages, lush acoustics, dreamy vocals, and adventurous electronic sound, delivering a spellbinding and genre-fluid oasis of human emotion. Meandering a path to closure and healing, having met herself more deeply with the new album, and giving herself permission to feel, it is clear that another level of Patullo's artistry has been opened.

A source of constant inspiration for much of Patullo's approach to her work stems from 1920s art and animation pioneer Lotte Reiniger (animated documentary feature, *Shadowmaker*

is in the works). Drawn to Reiniger for her strength and perseverance in following her own passion at a time and in an industry where she was never truly acknowledged, Patullo says Reiniger, "just kept doing it and found the people who believed in her to be part of her team. I can totally relate with that." Wanting to share her love of her creative work, Reiniger kept working well into her later years and was passionate about leaving her technique behind. Adds Patullo, "she loved shadow puppets and film so much. She has a whole book with instructions on how to turn your coffee table into a multi-plane camera. She really wanted people to do this at home because it brought her so much joy. I think that's just so beautiful of her. It's not just about being the first animator, she loved her puppets and continued to do live action shows with them." Despite being overshadowed by Disney (1936's *Snow White* followed Reiniger's preceding 1926 film, *The Adventures of Prince Achmed*), she did a workshop on their lot where Disney teams were all inspired by her presentation and began doing stop-motion animation again.

Patullo definitely shares Reiniger's level of passion, and part of the magic of Patullo's work lies in the authenticity of her recordings (like the raw vocals of *So She Howls* that captured the real-time emotion of her cancer journey), and the most powerful takes on many of her projects end up being the less polished ones (Patullo's vulnerable, intimate vocals are also sprinkled throughout *Nomadica*). This can sometimes be a tricky on projects for others, but Patullo emphasizes that it is worth having the conversation for the powerful track that often ensues. "Definitely try to let them in on what you're doing and tell them, 'listen, you know, this first take, I know it's not as polished, but have a listen to it again and this is what I like about it.' Sometimes filmmakers are editing and perfecting things where you just want the perfectly tuned vocal, or perfectly edited cut, and you don't want that rawness to come through," shares Patullo. "But sometimes you just need to be reminded, 'oh, actually this is raw and beautiful. This is special. You cannot recreate this.' I double my vocals a lot and I've learned that lesson where there's a line where the way I sang it is so cool—so cool that it can't be doubled." The same is true for the edits and knowing when a piece is finished. "It's just this overwhelming feeling where you're like, 'I've said it all. This is it,'" says Patullo. "When you're in editing mode and you want to fix everything, you

[often] realize it's getting worse, so you go back to where it was. That's the tricky part."

Bridging the gap between projects for others and her own creative work all comes down to the storytelling. The films Patullo chooses to work on always resonate on some level. "When I look at a film project, I want it to be something that I can connect with, something I have experience with," says Patullo. "A lot of times in the films I work on, there's something personal to me that I'm able to bring to the project. The collaborators who worked on my project [*Nomadica*] were able to bring their moms into it and that makes it much more poignant when it's performed together." She continues in saying that not every collaboration is the best, but that she has learned to make space for the unexpected. "I think that's really important. I do it with my personal work too," she adds. "You



have the song crafted and then take away that layer. [Don't] be afraid to change—film scoring will teach you that—and believe that you can create something better than what you [had]." She openly acknowledges that she is often inspired by her creative team and others.

Incorporating space is paramount within Patullo's pieces. "It's a thought. It's breath. It's a roadmap in a way, where you need to pause to know where you're going next," she says. Working with Martha Wainwright on *Nomadica*, Patullo says Wainwright (who, along with brother Rufus, lost their mother—folk musician Kate McGarrigle—to cancer in 2010) has her own way of phrasing things. "We were figuring out how this song evolves and where it goes," Patullo shares. "There was a line in our track 'Fly Under' that had a breath in it and she connected the whole line together. All of a sudden, it had this different weight to it. That is so cool—just to be able to flip the weight around, give it more impact, or change

it in this way. It's subtle. Those spaces are so delicate." Leaving space to breathe magnifies the weight of what's being delivered. Adds Patullo, "allowing the space for beautiful things to come in and giving yourself that space to listen, I stand by that. Being able to listen and not always [having] output."

Being more established now, Patullo is also careful to only work with those who see value in her work as a creative. "I want to know what the director sees in my music and my sound to begin with, and what drew them to me. We both need to know how we connect, you know? If they're looking for a John Williams' score, I'm not the composer for that, I don't write in that style per se," says Patullo. "I [want to] be artistically honest and do the music I love. There are a lot of film composers out there who do all the genres, do everything, will do a sound-alike. I'm at a point where I really just want to do what I do, and if someone sees that as something that connects with their film, then I'm the right

prominent with 2019's *Stonewall OutLoud* documentary, using archival and ambient sound to intensify the emotional and historical impact of the piece. *So She Howls* used extensive field recordings of nature and live machinery, taking her process up a notch with forest, breath, and ritualistic sounds that included members of the TheaWave collective. "Music's this portal where you can escape to this world, create, have intimate emotions and conversations with yourself, and really be able to explore things," says Patullo. "It's almost like meditation in a way. You're in this still place where you can create and explore your feelings."

Creative success is also about knowing when not to work. "I learned going through *So She Howls* and with cancer that when you sit in a room and you just start butting your head and you're like 'I'm gonna write this, stay up all night and just finish this'—that's when I get into trouble." When she gets stuck, Patullo says it's about returning to her life: going for a walk,

really reflect on and absorb it." With colleagues advising her to stop making records, and to instead release singles and short content, Patullo says, "I feel like the album is something so special. Having an album so that you can create and have a story—that's at the core of what I do." While she doesn't listen to her own music after it is released, she admits that 2024's *So She Howls* will remain a pivotal milestone, and a bookmark for a time of deep personal challenge—and triumph. "It's always going to be there for me as this remembrance of what I went through, even though it was hard. There's this joy and connection in it. The ability to connect with people through music was really beautiful," she adds. "I had a lot of people reach out to me, people going through cancer, [or who have] someone affected by it, and people who are struggling. To know their stories, to know that there is this connection, I think is so important. That's what helps people get through their stuff. When I was going through it and I was in a room with other cancer patients, that connection helped me, knowing that there were people with me and I wasn't isolated and alone. [It was the] same when I was coming out of the closet. I have a community to fall back on and *So She Howls* is a reminder."

Patullo's work—and entire being—is all about connection and community, recognizing the safety and support in being around like-minded people. Championing women, immigrants, and members of the LGBTQ+ community, she is proud to be a Board Member of the Alliance of Women Film Composers and credits her mentor Laura Cartman as being a huge support to her. Patullo worked on *Built for Zero's* documentary about homelessness that chronicled communities coming together to help people one-on-one to get off the streets, start over, and rebuild. Even in her GRAMMY acceptance speech for *So She Howls*, she was quick to credit the pioneering team of women in the early 1990s Herceptin drug trials with saving her life (she watched the Harry Connick, Jr. film *Living Proof* and learned about it while navigating her own treatment). Her life and work continue to be about shared experiences and feelings, and showing how we are all connected, and Patullo hopes the new record will help listeners connect in a way that helps them process their unresolved grief. "With *All of Us Strangers*, when I watched that film (and I watched it quite a bit), it really unlocked this emotionally shut door that I couldn't get to. I hope maybe [*Nomadica*] can do this [for someone]," she shares.

With multiple score and soundtrack credits, including Tribeca and Sundance films, and over 100 song placements in television and film (Disney+, HBO, PBS, *Spa Night*, *Sabrina The Teenage Witch*, *Teen Titans Go*, *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*, *Skins* (UK)), Patullo's work is well-respected and she has become recognized for an ability to extract deep feeling from the listener (and/or viewer). The release of a project with Martha Mook from the Scorchio Quartet and film *Bitter Root* (for which she wrote) are in the works. New record, *Nomadica* is out now.

Contact Jeff Sanderson - Chasen PR,
jeff@chasenpr.com; Visit Carla Patullo at
carlapatullo.com

"THERE ARE A LOT
OF FILM COMPOSERS
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EVERYTHING, WILL DO
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I'M AT A POINT
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person." Projects have to have coherence and Patullo guards her artistic integrity.

Nature is also big component of Patullo's work. An (as-yet unannounced) upcoming project involves building a soundtrack from the script and traveling to the set for field recordings to incorporate into her soundscape. First using this method in her early film scores and projects, Patullo's process became more

taking a nap, and taking care of herself to get back into creative flow. "Sometimes we can be our own worst critic. Being able to just be—and it's hard—I have to remind myself what to do." You're allowed to be human.

"Everything is so fast. You pick up your phone, you're on social media, and you've got feeds... everything is just a lot," expresses Patullo. "What I love about ambient music is the listener can

KPop Demon Hunters Score Hit of the Summer

Nobody saw Netflix's *KPop Demon Hunters* coming, but it ended up being an enormous hit for that streaming service. At the end of July, Netflix announced that it was their most watched original animated movie of all time. As of August 7, 158.8 million people or families have viewed the film.

According to the press release, "*KPop Demon Hunters*, a Netflix film from Sony Pictures Animation, follows KPop superstars Rumi, Mira and Zoey—when they aren't selling out stadiums, they use their secret identities as badass demon hunters to protect their fans from an ever-present supernatural threat. Together, they must face their biggest enemy yet—an irresistible rival boy band of demons in disguise. *KPop Demon Hunters* stars Arden Cho, Ahn Hyo-seop, May Hong and Ji-young Yoo, and is available now on Netflix."

Collectively, Rumi, Mira and Zoey are the

producing game? What else have you worked on?

I spent the first 15 years of my career working in Broadway theatre, focused on developing musicals and music-driven projects for the stage, as well as producing soundtracks of Broadway shows that I supervised and musically directed. Benj Pasek and Justin Paul (*The Greatest Showman*) were close collaborators of mine and when the pandemic hit, they asked me to work on a number of their musical films. I fell in love with the film world, which seemed like the perfect marriage of my many passions—developing songs and working closely with songwriters and filmmakers to fully realize their vision, coaching singers, producing the vocals, overseeing the mixing and mastering process, conducting, and being involved in the creation of the film from day one through final mix.

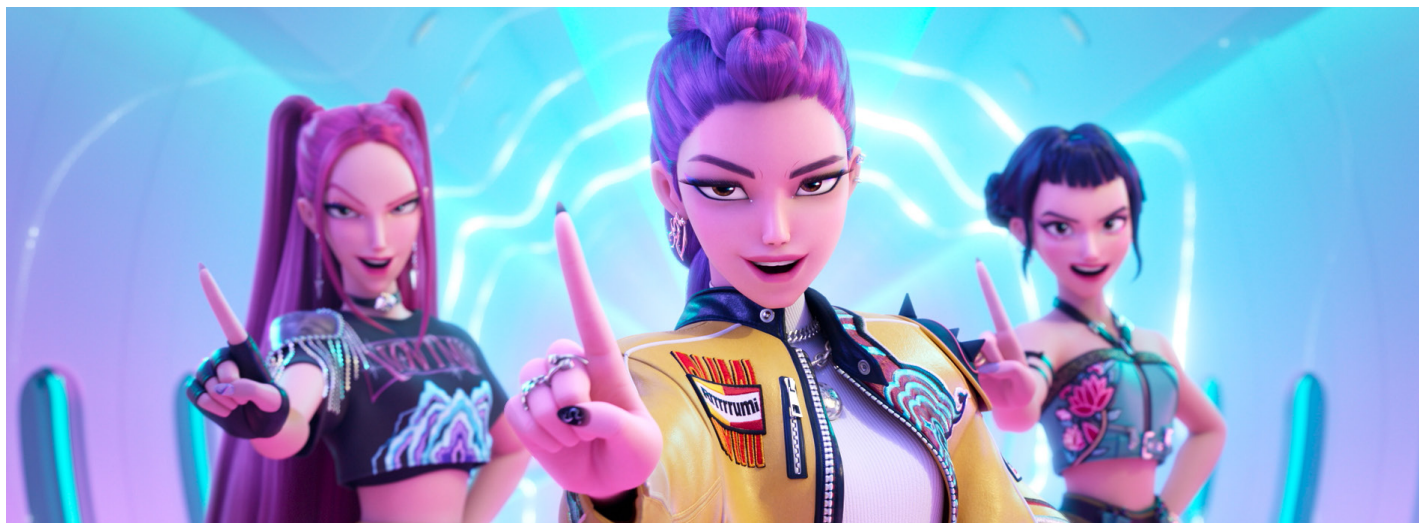
the ugly...is okay and acceptable. I love what this film has to say.

Have you worked with KPop and/or anime themes before?

No! But my daughter has been obsessed with both KPop and anime, and turned me on to both...so I was thrilled to get to work with this team of KPop hitmakers to bring their songs to life in the film and on the soundtrack.

I know it's not the first animated band (Josie & the Pussycats, Jem, etc.).... How did you set about creating/choosing music to bring Huntr/x to life?

The goal was to create a set of songs that truly hit like KPop songs, but also forwarded story and character development...this meant many years of careful calibration. The songs could never lose their pop edge, the lyrics had to feel



fictional band Huntr/X and, while this isn't the first animated band (The Archies, Josie & the Pussycats, Jem & the Holograms, etc.), it feels like *KPop Demon Hunters* has increased the scale. The cultural impact of the film is enormous and, in turn, the soundtrack has now seen over a billion global streams.

"The soundtrack features original songs written by Danny Chung, Ido, Vince, Kush, Ejae, Jenna Andrews, Stephen Kirk, Lindgren, Mark Sonnenblick, Daniel Rojas, and produced by Teddy Park, 24, Ido, Dominsuk, Jenna Andrews, Stephen Kirk, Lindgren, Ian Eisendrath," they say. "Original songs are performed by Ejae, Audrey Nuna, Rei Amil, Andrew Choi, Danny Chung, Kevin Woo, samUIL Lee, Neckwav, and Lea Salonga. The soundtrack also includes the original song 'Takedown' featuring Jeongyeon, Jihyo, and Chaeyoung from K-Pop powerhouse girl group, Twice."

Ian Eisendrath is the music executive producer, and he talked to *MC* about the experience.

Could we get a little background first? How did you get into the music executive

How did you get involved with *KPop Demon Hunters*?

I had just finished *Lyle, Lyle Crocodile* at Sony, and Spring Aspers (President of Music at Sony Pictures) called me and said "I have an incredible opportunity for you...you're gonna want to do this." When I heard more about it...KPop, Sony Pictures Animation's cutting edge aesthetic, and a story with such profound depth and meaning, I was in.

What were your initial thoughts when presented with the movie outline?

I was deeply impacted by the themes and message of the film—which explores what it means to be your complicated, sometimes contradictory and multi-hued self in a binary, black and white world. It felt so topical and interesting to me personally. As I grow older, the things that seemed so straightforward and clear become more complicated because we are all complicated and constantly changing, and I loved being part of creating something that told the next generation that it's okay to not fit into a box, to be different, to be honest, and that all of you...the good and the bad and

hooky and universal like the best pop songs, while consistently forwarding the plot.

Did the huge success of the film, and then the soundtrack, surprise you at all?

It honestly did surprise me—I hoped people would like it, I hoped the soundtrack would hit, and I absolutely loved what this incredible community of artists created, but I never imagined it would become this kind of sensation. It's lightning in a bottle, and we are all so fortunate to have been part of it.

Any plans for a sequel?

Crossing my fingers there will be many!

What else are you working on?

I am sitting in a theatre at La Jolla Playhouse where we are developing a brand new EDM/electronic-driven musical for the stage. I am also about to begin work on a couple new animated musicals. I am so excited to continue working on music-driven projects that aim to push boundaries in music and storytelling.



L7's Donita Sparks Talks Heavy Sounds, Hot Topics, and Random Hashtags

When it comes to thunderous rock 'n' roll that makes you think but never takes itself too seriously, L7 are (still) the reigning queens of noise. Though lumped in with the grunge and riot grrl scenes when they first broke through after forming in 1985, the Los Angeles-based band—Suzi Gardner (guitars, vocals), Donita Sparks (vocals, guitars), Jennifer Finch (bass, vocals), and Dee Plakas (drums, vocals)—has stood the test of time, musically and culturally.

Ending a long hiatus after releasing an acclaimed documentary and watching social media re-ignite interest in the band, they returned bolder than ever in 2015 and they've been rocking fans old and new ever since. Biting anthems like "Pretend We're Dead," "Shit List," and "One More Thing" (from their Butch Vig-produced classic, *Bricks Are Heavy*) are more resonant than ever right now, and they've inspired a whole new generation of musicians of all genders. In the '90s, the group also created Rock For Choice, an epic series of benefit concerts for abortion rights supported by The Feminist Majority and featuring everyone from Nirvana to Rage Against the Machine.

Last year, frontwoman Donita Sparks curated another impactful festival called the Fast and Frightening Takeover at Downtown L.A.'s Belasco Theater, featuring over a dozen young bands (many women-led) and fellow-legends Redd Kross on the bill. This year L7 returns to the venue to celebrate its 40-year anniversary alongside two huge supporting acts: New York's The Lunachicks and Brazil's CSS.

MC spoke with Sparks about the milestone bash, the band's trajectory, and what advice she'd give to up-and-coming rockers.

Celebrating 40 Years

We'll be taking over the Belasco Theater every year, whether we're the headliner or not. We might bring it to other cities too. After Fast and Frightening last year, this year we decided to scale it back, because it's our 40th anniversary. We've got two incredibly strong co-headliners:

The Lunachicks, our sisters from New York City, and CSS, our sisters from Brazil.

The Lunachicks started just a couple years after us. It's weird, at that time, it's like we were echoing off of each other. We were both playing aggressive rock and playing with beauty myths, feminism, wildness and not really giving a fuck. I was trying to remember the last time we played together, and I thought it was 1989 at CBGBs, but it was actually 1991 or '92 at a Rock for Choice show at the Palladium in Hollywood.

CSS were on Sub Pop Records for a while. I first became aware of them because they were covering the L7 song called "Pretend We're Dead." It was around 2007-2008 and I was at a very low ebb in my life. I felt kind of forgotten about, and here was this really cool band covering us. That really made me happy. All three bands have a sense of humor. All of us have our own style and all of us see the absurdity of life.

Songs Are Heavy

We all have a sense of humor, but we also take our bands dead serious. But I'm not the kind of person that can be like, 'Okay, I want to write a song about abortion rights.' It doesn't work for me. I wrote a song called "Wargasm" because I was upset about the war that was going on, but I also just loved the word. I wrote 'Pretend We're Dead' about apathy, because a lot of my friends back then weren't voting, and it was just maddening. Now it's like that song came true. For me, it's always gotta have a bit of humor in it and cleverness and turning idioms upside down and switching things up. If I were to have a case of 'the sincerest,' as I call it, I don't think it would be very successful.

#Femalerockers

When we started, we were all females out there lugging our own amps and doing it ourselves. There weren't a lot of us, so we were always lumped in with bands like Babes in Toyland and The Lunachicks, even if we weren't necessarily musically similar. Being categorized by having

a vagina or not, as opposed to our music or our influences... that used to irritate me. But now, if it's helpful for young people to find us, I get it. #tamponthrower #riotgirl... Hashtag me anything if it helps get us seen by one more person. I believe L7 have transcended that stuff from the past. But I think that there is a need for some people to put us in context, historically.

Rock For Choice

I'm very proud of it. I was raised a feminist and choice has always been an important issue. I'm really happy we pulled that off and that so many bands sacrificed their time and money to play those benefits. And I sure wish someone would pick it up again. That would be great.

L7 Magic

When we went on a hiatus, it was the advent of social media. First there were MySpace fan pages, and then I was seeing old clips on YouTube. Then Facebook came along... Now I'm seeing young gals wearing *Smell the Magic* shirts, who are in bands, and they're wearing them on stage. That's very cool.

Fuel Your Fire

My advice to young bands, as far as political stuff, is absolutely do it if you feel it. But if it's not your forte, don't. And don't feel forced to either. Not every writer is good at every kind of sentiment. Don't pay attention to trends, because trends come and go. Right now, we're in a feisty punk rock kind of front person mode, but in two years it's going to be something else, and it just keeps changing. So do what you want to do, be brave.

More New Things

We're going to release a couple new songs this year, and we'll probably release an EP of some of the singles we've done since the hiatus ended. So we're going to combine those and put it out. We may do a bit of touring next year.

Visit l7theband.com.

Neumann NDH 30

In today's hybrid production environment where sessions happen everywhere from acoustically treated rooms to hotel suites to mixing on a laptop on an airplane, monitoring accuracy needs to translate accurately no matter where you may happen to be working. For decades, Neumann has been known for microphones and monitors that define sonic clarity. Designed as a reference-grade alternative to nearfield monitors, the NDH 30 is ideal for stereo, binaural, and immersive mixing tasks where accurate playback and spatial transparency are essential.

From the first impression, NDH 30 looks and feels like a premium product. We have tested or owned most of the premium headphones on the market and after putting on the NDH 30, we were immediately impressed with the quality and comfort of these headphones. The housing is milled from anodized aluminum and spring steel, offering durability and a reassuring heft without being uncomfortable. Unlike the NDH 20, the NDH 30 does not use memory foam. Instead, they utilize specially selected "normal" foam material. Also notable, the folding design makes transport easy for mobile engineers. Weighing just 352 grams, the NDH 30 strikes a balance between rugged studio utility and portability.

At the heart of the NDH 30 is a pair of precision-engineered 38mm dynamic drivers with neodymium magnets, optimized to deliver a wide frequency response from 12 Hz all the way up to 34 kHz. This extended range helps to give the headphones incredible detail and clarity, especially in the upper registers where air and spatial cues are most noticeable. With a sensitivity of 104 dB SPL at 1 VRMS and impressively low distortion (less than 0.03 percent at one kHz, 100 dB SPL), the NDH 30 delivers sonic accuracy. The impedance sits at 120 ohms, meaning they pair beautifully with professional headphone amps and interfaces.

Neumann has voiced the NDH 30 to match the same flat, diffuse-field response used in their KH-series studio monitors. The result is a color-neutral, honest presentation of your source material that translates reliably to speakers and other listening environments you may happen to be in. The bass is tight and accurate while the midrange remains clear and uncolored. The top end is detailed without harshness, and the stereo imaging is excellent. All of this sonic consistency makes the NDH 30 a great solution for on-the-go tracking and mixing. You can be assured that whatever you track and mix on the NDH 30, it will accurately translate to whatever pair of Nearfield monitors you have back at your studio.

Every pair of the NDH 30 is individually calibrated at the factory to ensure extremely tight driver matching, making them ideal for mastering, surgical editing, and immersive audio applications. When paired with a high-

resolution audio interface like a Universal Audio Apollo x8 Gen II or an RME Fireface UCX II, the NDH 30 reveals a level of accuracy and clarity that's truly exceptional.

One of the things that immediately impressed us about the Neumann NDH 30 is the spatial openness which for lack of better way to describe it, really did feel like we were sitting in a correct mix position with a pair of correctly placed pair of nearfield monitors in front of us. This experience was so noticeable and transparent that we found ourselves taking off the headphones to confirm the sound was coming through the headphones and not our Nearfield monitors. Seriously, these



headphones have a spatial openness we can't remember experiencing.

What makes the NDH 30 even more powerful is its integration with Neumann's RIME (which stands for Reference Immersive Monitoring Environment) app. This Mac and PC compatible software emulates the acoustic behavior of Neumann KH-series monitors.

Neumann's RIME software is designed to bring a finely tuned, three-dimensional monitoring experience directly to your headphones. Available as a DAW plug-in for formats like Dolby Atmos, RIME leverages Neumann's state-of-the-art hardware and Sennheiser's AMBEO virtual acoustics algorithms to create a stunningly realistic 3D sound field. Instead of overwhelming users with multiple virtual rooms, RIME offers a single, ultra-accurate reference environment—captured in a purpose-built studio using Neumann's KH Series loudspeakers, subwoofers, and the state-of-the-art KU 100 Dummy Head Binaural Microphone.

What truly sets RIME apart is its integration with Neumann headphones, making it an ideal solution for immersive mixing and mastering when a full multichannel setup isn't available. The software is custom-tailored to Neumann's headphone acoustics, allowing for dependable, consistent monitoring in stereo and spatial formats. With AMBEO algorithms at its core, RIME avoids the phasiness and colorations common in other virtual solutions, delivering razor-sharp imaging and emotionally rich audio experiences. And for those seeking even greater realism, RIME supports OSC-compatible head-tracking devices—so your sonic perspective shifts

naturally with your movement. Whether you're in the studio or on the road, RIME lets you create immersive content with Neumann precision, anywhere.

In practice, RIME shifts the phantom center image out in front of you, just like in a speaker setup. Panning becomes more precise, reverb tails are easier to judge, and EQ moves translate with greater consistency across playback systems. Unlike generic spatializer plug-ins that often exaggerate width or smear the stereo field, RIME is surgical and transparent. When activated, it transforms the NDH 30 from a high-end headphone into a full-fledged portable monitoring system.

For immersive formats like Dolby Atmos, RIME is even more impressive. It simulates multichannel speaker arrays in 360 degrees, allowing you to place and preview objects in three-dimensional space—front to back, side to side, and overhead. In combination with the NDH 30's exceptional phase coherence and linear frequency response, RIME provides a reliable way to produce spatial audio without needing an expensive multi-speaker setup. Whether you're building an immersive podcast, a live mix for in-ear

monitors, or a full Atmos mix for streaming platforms, NDH 30 + RIME gets you there with clarity and confidence. We should mention that as of this writing RIME only works with Neumann's open-back NDH 30 and closed-back NDH 20 Headphones.

It's worth noting that the NDH 30 is built around an open-back design, meaning it leaks sound and doesn't completely block external noise which, depending on where you're working, may make them not an optimal choice, for example, if you are tracking vocals and drums. NDH30's are best used in quiet environments where isolation isn't critical. Like many reference headphones, they benefit from a short break-in period.

The Neumann NDH 30 Professional Headphones are available for \$649. RIME is available for \$99 and can be downloaded directly from the Neumann website. More at neumann.com/en-us/products/headphones/ndh-30 and neumann.com/en-us/products/software/rime



Utonium Music Capitalizes on Bringing Together Creators From Different Cultures

Eureka moments are rare. Such flashes of inspiration can also be transformative and set the recipient on an unexpected journey. That was the case for Josquin Des Pres, whose own experience inspired him to create a label that operates under the slogan “Songs Without Borders.”

Des Pres was enjoying a moment of peace and drifting off to slumber land when a song on the television jolted him awake. It was a cover of Keane’s “Somewhere Only We Know” sung by vocalist René Dominique being used in a Samsung Galaxy ad. It’s a story he recounted in the pages of *Music Connection* back in October of 2019.

“We reached out to her and realized she was in the Philippines,” remembers Des Pres. Through research and chatting directly with Dominique, the industry veteran learned her music has been part of numerous other commercials, including spots for Michael Kors and Audi. Even back then, the ukulele strummer and singer boasted millions of online followers.

Des Pres smelled an opportunity—why not take this major overseas talent, hook her up with an American superstar, and introduce her to a stateside audience through a duet? Jason Mraz is one of the artists with which he maintains a working relationship, so he sent the pop hit-maker a link to the Filipina’s music. “He didn’t seem to think much of it,” Des Pres recounts. “But then he overheard us writing a song for her.” Mraz liked what they were creating yet surmised he could improve it by incorporating elements from a piece he’d been working on.

The resulting track, “Could I Love You Any More,” was released on Virgin Germany and has surpassed over 200 million streams. Mraz took Dominique on tour, giving her massive exposure and a major career boost. “That success

inspired us to build a label focused on bringing together artists from different worlds to create songs that resonate everywhere,” explains the President and CEO. Along with Vice President Roxanne Stone, who boasts a dozen years in the management space, he brought the label to life.

Every company needs a good name. The story behind this one is almost comically benign. Several years ago, the Frenchman who migrated to Los Angeles in the ‘70s was strolling about Nashville with a friend when he wondered aloud what would be a good name for a label. His pal’s offhand response? Utonium. “It sounds like an element,” observes the newly minted label boss wryly. The fact that there is a character named Professor Utonium in the animated series *The Powerpuff Girls* remains a coincidence.

Though he’s never run a label before, De Pres has the knowledge and industry connections to make Utonium Music an unparalleled success. He began his career as a bass player, spilling out tasty progressive jazz fusion and rock licks alongside greats such as Aerosmith’s Jimmy Crespo and Didier Lockwood. Later on, he would either produce or play with everyone from Gipsy Kings and Jeff Porcaro to Slightly Stoopid, Charley Pride, and The Young Dublins.

Other accomplishments include authoring a collection of music instruction books, helping develop plugins for digital audio workstations, and composing over 2,000 movie, TV, and multimedia syncs. De Pres marvels at the journey he’s taken, having grown up a child of humble means in a house without running water. “It’s all about direction and drive,” as he tells it. “And you always have to be ready to be thrown on the ground and get back up.”

Recently, the label connected Selena Gomez with Nigerian singer and rapper Rema. He also

hooked up Ed Sheeran to singer-songwriter Fireboy DML, who also hails from the African nation. Another production is a Spanish-language version of Mraz’s “I’m Yours,” as performed by French Gypsy Flamenco singer Loukas. Upcoming tracks feature Disney actress Laura Marano and Indian social media influencers Kiran & Nivi.

Connecting artists and songwriters from across the globe is a skill unto itself. “It’s part instinct, part experience,” says Des Pres. “We look at vibe, vocal style, originality, and how it fits in today’s music scene. The best pairings happen when artists from different cultures click. It feels fresh but authentic.” Fortunately, technology makes joining forces continents away as easy as the press of a button. By way of example, he references the video for Loukas’ Mraz cover, which his team was able to direct from the West Coast while the artist and camera crew toiled away in France.

De Pres insists that the deals Utonium offers are simple and fair. Contracts are typically based on single songs, though he isn’t ruling out the possibility of producing an EP. Additionally, they’re non-exclusive, allowing artists maximum flexibility. Utonium remains small but mighty, capable of handling distribution, production, and promotion with no strings attached.

The label continues to seek talent with which it can make magic happen. Des Pres encourages creative types to get in touch. “We’re looking for artists with strong originality, media presence, and solid streaming numbers,” he states. “We want Utonium to be the go-to place for artists looking to create something truly global and meaningful.”

utoniummusic.com

Norman's Rare Guitars Celebrates 50 Years

Celebrating their 50th year in business, Norman's Rare Guitars is a unique and renowned vintage guitar shop in Los Angeles. It evolved from Norman Harris' side hustle of buying and selling guitars, initially as a way to supplement his income as a musician in Miami. His store's history is intertwined with the rise of the vintage guitar market, fueled by the music industry's demand for historically accurate instruments and the growing appreciation for their unique sound. Norm is beloved by the "who's who" of the most famous guitarists in the history of rock 'n' roll and has met and found guitars for everyone from George Harrison to Joe Bonamassa, Slash, Eddie Van Halen, Tom Petty, Orianthi, Richie Sambora, and hundreds more. Norm is respected not only for his collection of vintage instruments but also for his ability to pair the right guitar with the right player. Many would credit him as a seminal pioneer in the vintage guitar industry.

Norman Harris, a Hammond organ player and occasional guitarist, began buying and selling guitars in the late 1960s in Florida. He moved to Los Angeles in the early 1970s, initially pursuing a music career but soon focusing on his guitar business. In 1975, Harris opened Norman's Rare Guitars on Ventura Boulevard in Reseda, CA. At the time, the concept of "vintage" guitars wasn't widely recognized, but Harris recognized their value, especially with the growing demand from musicians and the film industry. As Hollywood and the recording industry embraced vintage instruments for their unique sound and historical accuracy, the market for these guitars grew, with Norman's Rare Guitars at the center of it all. The store has become a haven for musicians. Norman's Rare Guitars has been featured in documentaries, books, and numerous articles, solidifying its place as a cultural institution and a testament to Norm's passion and expertise.

Norm's long history was recently featured in *Norman's Rare Guitars Documentary*, now running on Netflix. Kiefer Sutherland executive produced the film, and if you love guitars and rock 'n' roll, this is a must see. Norm's brushes with film have been around for many years. He famously supplied the vintage guitars for the 1984 cult classic, *Spinal Tap*, as well as the Marshall amp that's volume control went to "11." Christopher Guest, who plays Nigel Tufnel, requested the unique instruments. Norman's Rare Guitars also supplied the "Norman's" t-shirt worn by Nigel in the film and even his

t-shirt is a part of R&R lore. Tourists from all over the world make Norm's a destination when in L.A., as there is often a scene at Norm's where musicians and tourists hang, play music and chat, take pictures, and hope for celebrity sightings. And even if they don't buy a guitar, they usually buy an NRG t-shirt with a choice of dozens of designs.

Norm has been actively involved in giving back and supporting charities in L.A., both with musical instrument donations and events. Norm says, "We're very involved with the Midnight Mission, which is a homeless charity. One day I was watching the news, it was Christmas Day, and they were handing out toys to homeless kids. And I went, you know, 'the city's been really good to me, next year I'm going to rent a van, I'm going to load it up with toys, go down there and just give them to the kids.' So, I did that the following year, and when I did that, I got emotional about it, and I wanted

Norm survived a severe and devastating blow of cancer in 2023. Thousands of Angelenos and musicians reached out to Norm via his social media which kept fans apprised of his progress. The outreach, love and messages to Norm were spectacular. His condition was updated on a daily basis and it was clear that the love people feel for Norm went beyond him being a guitar dealer. Now, Norm has returned to his store with an eye on the daily operations as well as the future.

Norm is hoping that the store will continue with his legacy when he is at some point ready to cease his involvement, although he intends to keep going as long as he can. His staff operate not only as a business, but as a family. Norm is outright proud and affectionate of his employees and was happy to tell *Music Connection* what the strengths and assets of each member of his team are. Each one is a guitar specialist in his own right. Norm loves

social media and his YouTube channel, where he features the amazing musicians that frequent his store with performances that spontaneously happen there. Also featured is the guitar of the day where Michael Lemmo, a multistylist and extraordinary guitarist, showcases guitars in the styles there were meant to be played.

"Norm Harris is a visionary, who was among the first people to recognize that 'old, used guitars' were special. He always has the best stuff, and he also had the vision to salt away incredible



to do something for the Midnight Mission. I said, maybe I could put together some concerts and we could raise some money for the mission. The very first person I called was Richie Sambora. And I was waiting for Richie to basically, and if he would have said no, I might have given up on it, thinking, no, but he's going to do this. But I said, 'Richie, you know, I'd like to do a concert for the homeless.' And Richie said, 'I'm in.' And when he did that, we ended up getting Laurence Juber, Jackson Browne, and Los Lobos. We also had Don Felder from the Eagles. Tom Petty did it three times for us and promised to do it again. But unfortunately, you know, we lost Tom. So we've done a number of concerts, raised millions of dollars for the Midnight Mission. Last year we did one with Jackson Browne, with Vince Gill, Albert Lee, Dean Parks. And Joe Bonamassa has done several for us. I call him my nephew, who I love, Joe. And he is probably the guitar hero of this generation. He is on the highest level. He's incredible. And anybody who goes to one of his concerts, it's a lesson."

instruments for the future in his legendary warehouse. Accordingly, he asks for—and gets—top dollar for his instruments. What many people don't realize about Norm is that he is also a true music fan, with great ears for talent. He also has a heart of gold, and while he is a fierce negotiator as a businessman, he is also a great big old softie, who would give you the shirt off his back if you really needed it. I love Norm to pieces!" - Grant Geissman, Chuck Mangione, L.A. Studio Guitarist.

"I have known Norm Harris since the '80s, when he had his first shop on Tampa Ave. I always love visiting Norm. I consider him a dear friend and always feel so at home in the friendly, open atmosphere in his shop, so different from a big box music store. Love ya Norm!" - Elliot Eastman, lead guitarist of The Cars

Visit Norman's Rare Guitars at 18969 Ventura Blvd, Tarzana, CA 91356. (818) 344-8300

Open only on Tuesday, Friday and Saturday 11:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. or by appointment.

normansrareguitars.com

Cobra Kai Never Dies

The Netflix show *Cobra Kai*, which offered viewers a chance to return to the '80s *Karate Kid* universe, was so well-received by both fans and critics that the men behind the excellent score, Zach Robinson and Leo Birenberg, have been performing the show's music at live events. They recently joined forces with Mick Giacchino, who composed the score for the *The Penguin* TV series, for a show in Hollywood. We chatted with them about it all...

How do you have to prepare for a live show, given that you're normally "behind the scenes" score guys?

Zach Robinson: The first thing we had to do was elongate the material itself, because most of our tracks, the original cues, are very short. Most of them are between a minute and two, and the longest one was three minutes. That's on the long end. Most of these we needed to turn into real songs, instead of just television music. So it actually feels like you're going to see a band play songs, rather than just the composers playing minute-and-a-half TV music cues. Once we designed all the new songs, we put together a band: It's me and Leo, we have a keyboardist, a drummer, bassist and another guitarist. I'm playing guitar, Leo is playing keys and the EWI which is an Electronic Wind Instrument. We're just getting together and rehearsing the tracks.

How did you originally get the *Cobra Kai* gig?

Leo Birenberg: Honestly, we cold-called, blind pitched for it. We read that it was happening in *Variety* or one of the industry trades, and then felt that this would be a good fit for our particular aesthetic. Zach and I come from a diverse musical background, though we have a lot of overlap between us, and he is an amazing guitar player, grew up playing in rock bands and loves the '80s. I am a woodwind player, into ethnic flutes and Japanese music. This seemed like a good collaboration, so we made a reel of what we thought the show sounded like. They called us in for a meeting and we had an awesome bonding experience with the three creators and got hired.

Was *Cobra Kai* your first TV show?

LB: I did a show called *Son of Zorn* on Fox, and I already did a show called *Big Time in Hollywood, FL*, on Comedy Central, which was small but mighty.

ZR: We come from more of a movie background. We also did a YouTube Red show called *Sing It!* We worked on *Ant-Man*, *Edge of Tomorrow*, *Frozen*...

LB: We both worked for another composer, Chris Beck, for five or so years.

What do your live sets look like?

LB: Zach has played live concerts like this before. I am very new to this arena. I was in a quasi Dave Matthews cover band in high school and we did win Battle of the Bands 2006.

You don't see a lot of score composers going out...

LB: I think that film and TV music is having a moment right now, and people are much more interested in the music in general and watching it performed live. But it's usually on the scale of going to the Hollywood Bowl and watching *Raiders of the Lost Ark* performed by a live orchestra. It felt like we were doing a show that has a lot of music in it, that people have been really into.

With *Cobra Kai* now over, has the success of the series in reinvigorating the universe surprised you at all?

LB: One of the most surprising and now integral aspects of the show/franchise is just how strong the fandom is. When we started, we were just excited to be able to release a soundtrack album, and now we have fans all over the globe playing our music. We've played concerts, gone to conventions, met countless fans, and it's all a testament to how passionate people feel about these characters and this story. And rightly so! The series handled the material with incredible care and managed to flawlessly land the plane after 65 episodes, which isn't so common these days.

Have you heard anything about a possible new series from the *Karate Kid* universe?

LB: There's a lot of rumors floating around, but that is all we know! The chance to keep exploring anything in the Miyagi-verse would be an honor.

What made the three of you [Robinson, Birenberg, and Giacchino] want to perform together?

LB: 'Cause we are all chillers so we knew it would be a fun time! Collaborating with other composers is so fun and doesn't happen enough. Mick is a peer of ours and his score to *The Penguin* is terrific, and we just thought the combo with *Cobra Kai* would be great programming for the audience. And excitingly, Mutant Records has released both scores on vinyl, so this was a unique way to celebrate.



Are you *Karate Kid* fans?

LB: Absolutely, in the way that that was one of those movies that

was always on if you went over to a friend's house to hang out in the basement. I always say I've seen that movie from a million different start points but almost never from top to bottom in one go.

ZR: When we met with them, we pitched a nostalgic but new approach, and that's basically what they had decided to do as well.

Lettuce

Cook

Lettuce Records

Producer: Lettuce

For renowned jam band Lettuce, perpetual groove has always been the essential ingredient, and that remains the case with *Cook*. Each track bumps and grinds with mouth-watering aplomb, and some soar past the heavens toward unmapped locales. Though mostly instrumental, several cuts incorporate savory vocals, such as the retro-tinged "Rising to the Top." There's no telling what walls this sextet could topple by stretching out, but who cares when every beat tastes this good? – **Andy Kaufmann**



Whitney Tai

American Wasteland

Self-released

Producer: TommyHatz

The joy of an album like *American Wasteland* is that each listen reveals something new. That betrays the fact that there's a depth to the songwriting that transcends genres and trends. Tai has the sort of voice that tears away at your soul with unrelenting passion; as the emotions pile up, we're left drained and satisfied. She has a gift for anthemic pop, resulting in swathes of epic melody washing over us in glorious waves. The combo of strength and vulnerability has yielded a killer record. – **Brett Callwood**



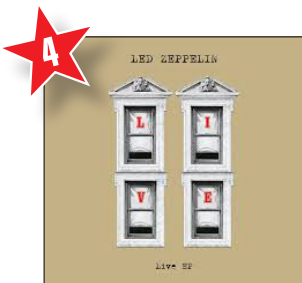
Led Zeppelin

Live EP

Rhino

Producer: Jimmy Page

Archival Led Zeppelin material almost always boils down to semantics, and this collection of four songs is the ultimate case in point. You'll be misled unless you read the fine print: These four recordings previously appeared on the 2003 DVD *Led Zeppelin*—which is a stunning visual treasure. That's not the case with *Live EP*, which even completists should rethink picking up as they're dizzied by the idea of a new Zep package. There's hardly any purpose to owning this short-player. – **Kurt Orzeck**



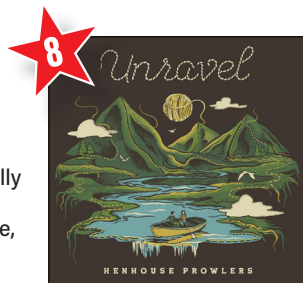
Henhouse Prowlers

Unravel

Dark Shadow

Producer: Stephen Mouglin

Celebrating two decades as internationally acclaimed, richly storied cultural ambassadors in grand, freewheeling style, Chicago based bluegrassers Henhouse Prowlers' 10th album is musically and harmonically sublime, rhythmically eclectic, and thematically diverse. Sometimes decidedly quirky and quite literally an "out there" affair, it will inspire fun, furious toe tappin' and thought-provoking conversations in equal measure. There's no title track, and that's by design. – **Jonathan Widran**



Kilo Kish

Negotiations

Independent Co.

Producer: Raymond Brady

Retro electronica, syncopated rhythm, and quirky lyrics abound in the sixth EP for synthpop artist Kilo Kish (Lakisha Kimberly Robinson). A blend of pop vocals and synthesized instrumental voicings shift into dance energy ("digital emotion") to open the album. Deeper grooves follow ("r3program"), before title track "negotiate ft. miguel," "when I came to myself" and "DCMU" add darker undertones. Closing song "enough" adds a gentle but robust vocal-lead track with fuller layered harmonies. – **Andrea Beenham**



Ruby Friedman Orchestra

Chimes After Midnight

Label 51 Recordings

Producers: Ruby Friedman, Ben Landsverk

There's a boot-stompin' joy running through *Chimes After Midnight*, rooted in a spirited dose of classic alt-Americana country-folk-rock storytelling. Ruby Friedman's voice is gritty and graceful, often slipping into an almost ethereal twang that gives the tracks a ghostly edge. The performance radiates a real sense of joy, especially on tracks like "The Book Woman's Daughter." There's big band drama without slipping into honky-tonk hokeyness. – **Ruby Risch**



Peter White

Light of Day

Lobster Music

Producer: Peter White

British acoustic guitarist White puts jazz, pop and classical stylings into a blender, adds a surprise dash of electronic beats, and pours the results into an aural smoothie glass for your proverbial pleasure. *Light of Day* isn't without its charm; at its best, namely the title track which concludes the album, White channels emotions and paints them with lashes of gentle joy. At its worst, as is the case with "Catalonia," the listener is left feeling like they're on hold with a bank. Overall though, a good effort. – **Brett Callwood**



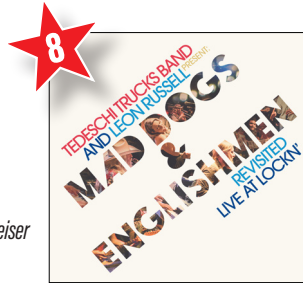
Tedeschi Trucks Band and Leon Russell

Mad Dogs & Englishmen Revisited (Live At Lockin')

Fantasy Records

Producers: Leon Russell, Derek Trucks, Bobby Tis, Brian Speiser

Joe Cocker's *Mad Dogs & Englishmen* (1970) is on the short list of greatest live albums. Four and a half decades later, Susan Tedeschi and Derek Trucks gathered the surviving participants, along with bandleader Leon Russell and special guests (Warren Haynes, etc.) to do it again. The songwriting and musicianship remain unmatched. – **Andy Kaufmann**





Technical Program: October 23-25
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Embryonic Devourment

Contact: embryonicdevourment@gmail.com

Web: embryonicdevourment@bandcamp.com

Seeking: Booking, Film/TV

Style: Death Metal

Death metal can be a bit of an acquired taste. It's not the sort of sub-genre that people generally have passing interest in. Rather, the death metal community tends to be a devoted and passionate bunch. The lyrics might be incomprehensible, but it's not about that. It's about a healthy outlet for aggression, and dazzling, technical musicianship. Embryonic Devourment understands this. The name is appropriately offensive, the sleeve art is gloriously gore-soaked, and the music is utterly brutal. There's a total and graphic abhorrence for authority on songs such as "Murder of the Ancients" and "It Began With Lizards," that should appeal to rebellious metal-heads young and old.

Production	8
Lyrics	8
Music	8
Vocals	8
Musicianship	9

SCORE: 8.2



Johnny McGowan

Contact: johnny@johnnymcgowan.com

Web: johnnymcgowan.com

Seeking: Booking, Label

Style: Country

Texas country man McGowan offers a refreshing take on country in this super-polished world of rhinestones and over-white teeth. The artist offers "Ernest Tubb circa 1966" as a reference, elaborating with "twangy guitars, haunting melodies, fiddle and pedal steel doin' the rest." So there are shades of bluegrass creeping in, largely due to that fiddle work on a song like "Easy Come and Easy Go," which all adds to the general vibe of dusty authenticity. Country music, like blues, relies on the listener absolutely buying what the lyrics tell us, and McGowan commands that sort of trustworthiness.

Production	8
Lyrics	7
Music	8
Vocals	7
Musicianship	7

SCORE: 7.4



Azul Paola

Contact: azulenterprise@outlook.com

Web: music.apple.com/us/artist/azul-paola/1809893081?ls

Seeking: Label

Style: Latin

Azul Paola's tracks promise movement but often feel stuck in neutral. "Orgullo Mexicano" plays like club music cruising at half-speed, anchored to a single octave. "Mujer de oro" brings improved production and a flicker of vocal elevation, but without a beat drop, the payoff never lands. "Azul Tremenda Freestyle" shows the most promise, but the delivery doesn't always hit the right pockets. There's confidence and passion here, no doubt, but technique hasn't caught up. The intent is there. The execution needs more mileage.

Production	5
Lyrics	6
Music	5
Vocals	5
Musicianship	7

SCORE: 5.6



Slainte, Baby

Contact: reevesongs@gmail.com

Web: slaintebaby.com

Seeking: Review

Style: Rock, Soul

Slainte, Baby's bio casually drops that songwriter Paul Reeves "honed his craft with the honor of mentorship by the late, great Merle Haggard," and that legacy rings through. "Sure Took A Long Time" is the standout: warm, full-bodied, and worth a toe-tap. Jessica Reeves' vocals glow with depth and control, while Paul's songwriting leans into vintage stylings without sounding dated. "It Ain't Lost On Me" dials it down with ballad-level tenderness, revealing emotional range. There's warmth here, a worn-in, lived-through musicality that hints at a love for the golden age of soul-rock.

Production	8
Lyrics	8
Music	8
Vocals	7
Musicianship	8

SCORE: 7.8



Rolando Gori

Contact: tribal.bogs.9w@icloud.com

Web: rolandogori.com

Seeking: Film/TV

Style: Alt-Rock

Born in Italy and raised in Canada, multicultural has served Rolando Gori well. His dreamy alternative/indie sounds are tailor-made for soundtracks, as proves to be the case; Gori has composed music for a multitude of films. A song like "Morning Light" has a punk rock, nasal vocal quality, while the mood music feels like something that Nick Cave or even Tom Waits would pen. All of which ties together quite nicely into a body of work that soothes and intrigues in equal measure. "Before the First Shot," from last year's *Abandoned Structures*, recalls Eno-era Bowie, and that's no bad thing.

Production	8
Lyrics	7
Music	7
Vocals	7
Musicianship	8

SCORE: 7.4



Tom LaRotonda feat. 22Tilt

Contact: tom.larotonda@gmail.com

Web: 22tilt.com

Seeking: Label, Public Relations, Press

Style: Pop-Rock

The light-hearted romps of LaRotonda and 22Tilt are composed with good vibes in mind, and they're impeccably performed and produced. There's a joy in a song like "This Broken City" that belies the cynical song title, a title that suggests greater social commentary. There's talent there, make no mistake. Unfortunately, that's not always enough and far too often LaRotonda/22Tilt's music sounds like an experiment in adding vocals to elevator music. The sort of thing that might be playing on a cruise ship while punters wait for the shrimp buffet to be restocked. We need more soul.

Production	7
Lyrics	6
Music	6
Vocals	5
Musicianship	6

SCORE: 6.0

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.



Tyler Stone

Contact: tstone1988@gmail.com

Web: tylerstoneofficial.com

Seeking: Label, Exposure

Style: Alt-Rock, Pop-Rock, Pop-Country

There's nothing gimmicky about Los Angeles-based Tyler Stone. He isn't reinventing the wheel, and he doesn't need to. "Can You Feel It" is woozy and immersive—more haze than hook, but quite charming in its atmosphere. "Southern California" hits the mark: catchy, smooth, made for warm nights and freeway drives. This is clean, confident pop-country with an easy touch and a clear sense of space. It's a subtle kind of magic that lingers, offering mood over spectacle and warmth over flash—Stone isn't chasing fireworks, he's building sunsets.

Production	8
Lyrics	8
Music	8
Vocals	8
Musicianship	8

SCORE: 8.0



Peter Xifaras

Contact: artistrelations@musicwithnoexpiration.com

Web: peterx.music

Seeking: Publicity

Style: Jazz

Jazz musician Xifaras claims in his online bio that his, "versatility is striking. Whether crafting compositions for symphonic orchestra or delivering impassioned guitar solos, Peter is at ease." That's all clear on the pieces that Xifaras submitted. "Adagio Blue" and "Adagio Groove" would be equally at home as the sweeping score to a big budget TV or film production as listened to independently. Xifaras is willing, keen even, to venture outside of traditional jazz trappings and blend genres without sounding like he's forcing the issue. His music is natural and sounds effortless, despite the fact that he's clearly put a lot of effort into his art.

Production	8
Lyrics	X
Music	7
Vocals	X
Musicianship	7

SCORE: 7.3



Caddy Pack

Contact: info@caddypack.com

Web: caddypack.com

Seeking: Booking, Film/TV, Licensing, Collaborations

Style: Hip-Hop, Pop, Soundtrack

"As tough as concrete, as free as a bird in the sky—what a contrast but it's what describes her music best," reads Caddy Pack's online bio, and it does make sense. Her atmospheric hip-hop grabs you in the feels in all of the right ways. She's been doing this since she was 14, and the German-American artist has developed a style which, if not entirely unique, is distinctive. The Harry Hawaii remix of "Flower" that she submitted is both chill and incisive, and "Moment" follows suit. This feels like sunny weather rap, and we'd like to hear more.

Production	8
Lyrics	8
Music	7
Vocals	7
Musicianship	7

SCORE: 7.4



Cowboy Mouth

Contact: rob@1888media.com

Web: cowboymouth.com

Seeking: Film/TV

Style: Rock, Funk, Classic Rock

Tackling covers is no easy feat, and Louisiana natives Cowboy Mouth approach it with confidence. Their rendition of "My Way" is a bold swing, amped up with rock theatrics and a hint of twang. "Can't Hardly Wait" is a full-bodied rock 'n' roll moment: vocals punchy, solos tight, and energy high. It's a big undertaking, trying to reinterpret a classic track, and Cowboy Mouth mostly delivers—but with only covers submitted, their songwriting chops remain a mystery, which might be the biggest missed opportunity. Still, the band's sheer charisma and live-wire delivery make the performances hard to ignore.

Production	7
Lyrics	X
Music	7
Vocals	7
Musicianship	8

SCORE: 7.2



Daniella Mutai

Contact: daniellamutai@gmail.com

Web: YouTube

Seeking: Label

Style: Singer-songwriter

There's an undeniable intimacy in Daniella Mutai's work, just her, a piano, and quiet emotional undercurrents—even if the recordings are rough around the edges. Backed by sparse keys, her voice carries intention, and the unpolished recording quality makes room for the rawness to shine. That said, this is clearly an early chapter, not a final draft. Mutai's potential is there, visible in the bones of each track. With time, more experimentation, and experience, she could easily level up. For now, the promise outweighs the polish, but there's something real here worth watching.

Production	6
Lyrics	7
Music	6
Vocals	7
Musicianship	8

SCORE: 6.8



Corey Congilio

Contact: campbell@milestonecollective.com

Web: Spotify

Seeking: Label, Booking

Style: Blues Rock

According to his website, Corey Congilio's "experience as a touring guitarist, session musician, educator and presenter has proven to be invaluable in connecting with audiences around the world"—and that lived-in skill set is all over these tracks. His seasoned technique is front and center across songs like "I Wouldn't Treat A Dog (The Way You Treated Me)," which saunters with bluesy Mayer-esque soul and lands somewhere between heartbreak and swagger. "Two Headed Woman" punches harder, flexing guitar chops and a rock vocal that oozes stank-face energy. All in all, it's a tight showcase of chops, tone, and taste.

Production	8
Lyrics	8
Music	8
Vocals	8
Musicianship	9

SCORE: 8.2

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

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

Cat's Cradle Carrboro, NC

Contact: daniel@truecho.com

Web: chuckprophet.com

Players: Mario Cortez, percussion, backing vocals; Alejandro Gomez, keys, guitar, backing vocals; Chuck Prophet, guitars, lead vocals; Vicente Rodriguez, drums, backing vocals; Mike Anderson, bass; James DePrato, guitars, backing vocals

AUTHENTICITY AND RAW COURAGE have found their way out of the wilderness in Chuck Prophet's insanely cool, delightfully unvarnished and in-you-face show at The Cat's Cradle.

As the band took their places, the stage swaggar melted this already adoring crowd—although small, they were all-in for the Chuck Prophet Groove—and “Avien Dense Todos” was a perfect opening tune. The instrumentation was unique, and the audio cacophony this tight ensemble delivered was like a wave of sonic comfort—soothing and endlessly resilient. Chuck was back and forth on his mic, working it like a street hustler, and the ensemble seemed to get tighter and tighter as the set moved forward. “Same Old Crime,” “Wake the Dead” and “Wish Me Luck” were delightfully robust sonics, and here's the thing: Chuck Prophet is a hell of a songwriter, quite the groove-poet and you could hear the lyrics clearly and with remarkable clarity.

And everyone onstage had a dedicated mic which meant deliciously deep and



CHUCK PROPHET

resonant five-part harmonies! Not something you see too much of but here, far from the Mission District, they soared! And they had an early Byrdsian jang-a-lang feel, run thru the Sweetheart of the Rodeo spank-box, then a detour to the Imperial Valley and out came a beautiful, distinctly Chuck Prophet audio wave: a wave that had everyone checking their footwear, sure they'd been in their Cumbia Shoes all evening!

“Dance Pajaritos,” “Just 2 Cu/Jesus” and “Killing Machine” rolled the set into a short break. The room filled up to capacity at that point, and things ploughed ahead in an unrelenting Cumbia-flavored jam that had Mike Anderson on bass holding up the bottom and Vicente Rodriguez, although back of the stage, supplied that relentless snap-crackle-

pop, beat-a-ponic, driving four on the floor rhythm-box, keeping everyone low pogoin', swaying, shimmerin' and sashayin' to this most excellent ensemble!

Leading off with “Sally Was a Cop,” and “Into the Shadows” and the deliciously low and confessional ear worm “One Lie For Me,” Chuck stepped back and gave plenty of room for his ensemble to demonstrate the clarity of their collective mission. While no shredding soloists, their beauty was in their interactive and ensemblic cohesion, solos were complementary and musically right on time.

The room energy was at its peak when the two closing songs worked it into a grooved-up frenzy with “West Memphis Moon” and closing with “Sugar Into Water.”

– Eric Sommer



CORY HANSON

Neurolux Boise, ID

Contact: joe@groundcontroltouring.com

Web: dragcity.com/artists/cory-hanson

Players: Cory Hanson, vocals, piano, guitar; Evan Backer, bass; Evan Burrows, drums, percussion; Heather Lockie, viola; Emily Elkin, cello; Erik KM Clark, violin; Max Whipple, contrabass; Nicole McCabe, tenor

and alto sax; Alex Wasily, trombone; Ryan Parrish, baritone sax

CORY HANSON, now four albums deep into his career with Drag City Records, is one of the label's alt-rock/folk/psyche/psychedelic rock artists du jour. Best known as the frontman of Wand, which formed in 2013 and is another Drag City mainstay, Hanson is also a Ty Segall

collaborator and began occasionally stepping out on his own in 2016 to do his own “stripped down” thing (often with a large backing band in tow).

Hanson has clearly put in the 10,000 hours that Malcolm Gladwell claims makes someone an expert at their craft. Hanson makes it all look so damn easy, but his charm is firmly rooted in his acumen at presenting himself as comfortable and collected, but never too cool or arrogant.

Hanson is performing selections from his recently released full-length *I Love People* with the same grace as if they had been in his oeuvre since the very start of his career. He never appears like he's trying to sell his new material to the audience or convince them to stay watching instead of getting a refill at the bar.

The song “Bird On a Swing” features the lyrics “I've rode on the darkest range, I've worked a thousand graveyard hours, I have no blood left in my veins, I gave it all up to the empire,” and they hit home in the live environment. As a recent press release reads, “*I Love People's* songs are rendered with immediacy and a deep-pile Hollywood production sound that radiates affluence and comfort.”

It's always a challenge for any artist to play Boise, the most remote city in the U.S., in the dead of winter. But playing in the dead of summer is no breeze either; the music scene here is simply not animated enough, and the Neurolux was too sparsely attended, to make Hanson's trek here worth the trip. He deserves more. – Kurt Orzeck



MARINA FLEMING

Hotel Café Los Angeles, CA

Contact: taylor@trendpr.com

Web: instagram.com/marinawfleming

Players: Marina Fleming, vocals, guitar; Troy Dillinger, accordion; Lomie Blum, bass; Aidan Steckley, drums

THE SECOND STAGE AT the Hotel Café in Hollywood, midweek, can provide the most intimate of experiences. The way the stage is set up with a few seats in front of it, facing the bar, it really does feel like you're among friends

if you pick the right night.

On one particular evening in June, MC was on hand to catch Marina Fleming, who had recently scored fairly well with a New Music Critique in these very pages, and is celebrating the release of her *Groupies in the Age of Consent* album.

In our NMC, we wrote that, "Fleming lists The Smiths, Cat Stevens, Fiona Apple, and Amy Winehouse among her influences, and that blend of indie rock, '60s folk, and '90s alternative certainly tracks." We stand by that assessment after catching her perform live.

We also stand by the fact that we scored her at a 7.4, which is entirely commendable. Live, however, she really comes into her own. All of the lyrical honesty, that desire to journal her life in the form of song, comes crashing forward in a glorious wave of strength in vulnerability. It's a joy to behold; Fleming appears very comfortable in and of herself and, if she isn't, she's channeling that humanity into her art remarkably effectively.

She's also an engaging host; she introduces most of the songs with an anecdote that offers genuine insight into her process. One song ("Pills") is about the antibiotics she took after surgery. C'mon, that's hilarious when everyone is assuming that the song is going in a less wholesome direction.

Another song is about her friends not being her friends anymore but loving them anyway. "Kiss" is relatively self-explanatory. Through it all, we presented with very real stories, told in a relatable manner. Fleming's vocals and guitar playing only enhance the songs, and she's ably backed by her bandmates.

Bassist Blum and drummer Steckley prove a gifted rhythm section, but the secret weapon is the accordion playing of Dillinger. That instrument just adds a curveball, a little quirk that takes the tunes in unexpected directions.

Overall, Fleming is still at the start of her journey but there's so much promise here, the next chapter could well be a thrill-ride.

— **Brett Callwood**

Sunset Tavern Seattle, WA

Contact: andrew.borstein@redlightmanagement.com

Web: laney-jones.com

Players: Laney Jones, guitar, lead vocals; Carson Lystad, guitar; Glen M. Hruska, bass, vocals; Brian Dowd, drums, vocals

DURING THEIR DEBUT Seattle performance at the Sunset Tavern, Laney Jones and the Spirits unearthed music's rootsy, lo-fi past and hurled it into the present, blending gritty guitar tones, gravel-edged vocals, and rock-steady song structures.

This was clear the moment the Nashville-based band stepped onto the red-lit stage and dug deep into the hazy, stratified sounds of "We Belong Together" and "Bitch Year." Both tracks — from 2025's *Our Vinyl Sessions* EP—were elevated by Laney's distinctive raspy vocals, effortlessly shifting between registers, cutting through the songs' sultry, sway-in-time rhythms.

Riding on shotgun old-school sonics, Laney Jones and the Spirits pulled their West Coast fans further along their retro garage rock adventures, dialing into several backroad songs that could just as easily be heard on a staticky AM station, a spotty FM auto-scan, or a carefully curated aux playlist.

The band's attitude-drenched, flanged-filled single, "Another Rolling Stone"—with a dueling guitar shred sesh—drew from the well of the Black Rebel Motorcycle Club's *Americana Noir*, while the ebullient Nashville twang on "Not Alone"—from 2022's *Stories Up High*—rode the



LANEY JONES AND THE SPIRITS

radio-friendly, feel-good waves reminiscent of Sheryl Crow's smooth voiced grooves.

Organic rock tunes made a strong statement during Laney Jones' set, but were beautifully counterbalanced by intimate, singer-songwriter-centered tracks. The aching atmospherics of "Long Way" (*Stories Up High*) and the spacey textures of the single "Stay at Home" tapped into boygenius' wellspring of

rich, indie-driven sound.

Wrapping up their rock-edged set, Laney Jones and the Spirits threw some love to the crowd with a heartfelt "thanks," followed by the inspiring lyrics and soaring chords of "Secret Weapon" (*Stories Up High*). A fitting finale—part resolve, part rally cry—from a band redefining alt-Americana, boldly throwing it into the future. — **Megan Perry Moore**

The Miracle Theater Inglewood, CA

Contact: Leah Concialdi, leah@champagnehousemedia.com

Web: coryhenry.com

Players: Cory Henry; The Funk Apostles; The Apostle Community Choir; Lena Byrd Miles

RAISED IN A BROOKLYN CHURCH, Cory Henry returned to his roots for the fourth edition of The Church Experience at Inglewood's Miracle Theater, with a blend of gospel, jazz, R&B, funk and pop sound. Having performed piano and B3 since the age of two, the GRAMMY winner's exquisite musical delivery and passionate performance lit up the space, with backing from a stellar group of talented musicians. The Funk Apostles added gorgeous instrumentals alongside a stunning combination of tight vocals from Henry's new ensemble, The Apostle Community Choir (30 members of all ages and backgrounds). The evening delivered an uplifting experience.

Hosted by Jor El Quinn, who opened with an incredible crowd warm-up to get the evening started, the show went for over three hours, with attendees on their feet for most of the show. Songs included Rev. Milton Brunson's "It's Gonna Rain," with powerhouse vocals and an unbelievable soprano section. "How Much Can We Bear" (Hezekiel Walker & The Love Fellows) added a fabulous three-piece horn section, before surprise guest vocalist Lena Byrd Miles sat in with The Apostles and



held the room captive with her extraordinary mastery. With New Orleans shuffle, call and response moments, perfectly blended voices and precise cutoffs, the impassioned group was clearly in their element. Choir Director Matia Celeste Washington brought fantastic energy to the stage (and tremendous vocals of her own) and communicated effortlessly with Henry and the band.

Wrapping with "24" (Henry's co-write for Kanye West's *Donda*), before showcasing

unreleased "Never Alone" (written during January's Los Angeles fires) with horns, choir, and Henry on the Hammond, Henry is giving back to his community after 10 years in Los Angeles (and unofficial retirement from touring). Supporting an independent venue in the process, the evening's production followed a laid-back soul food dining experience. Commit for the evening and leave inspired by a dedicated group of community changemakers. - **Andrea Beenham**



Motorco Durham, NC

Contact: kevin@redlightmanagement.com

Web: thisisdeepseadiver.com

Players: Jessica Dobson, lead vocals; Peter Mansen, drums; Michael Dondero, bass guitar; Elliot Jackson, guitar, synthesizer; Kristyn Chapman, guitar, vocals

THE ROOM WAS ALMOST sardine-packed when Jessica Dobson, sonic provocateur, kick-ass guitar slinger and lead vocals for Deep Sea Diver, guided her band on stage. By the time they found their places she had already unleashed a sonic tidal wave of reverb-

distortion-delay on her audience that was as breathtaking as it was unexpected, a sheet of sonics, staggering in sheer volume and sonic intensity, staking her claim on the Motorco stage with poise, brashness and unmerciful musical honesty.

Let's face it, if Kick Ass and Hit Girl had a musical love child, it would be Jessica Dobson.

"Billboard Heart," the first song of the set, was awash in twangy guitar, specifically her Jazzmaster, one of the legendary Fender series, and the ensemble was effortlessly tightening up behind her soaring vocals. With a swift adjustment to her pedal board, Deep Sea Diver careened through "Emergency," Lights

Out," "Wide Wake," and the ballad-y "What Do I Know." The sonic manipulations became ever more pronounced, and the pedal magic continued as delays, overdrive and feedback turned simple songs into complicated, unrelenting sound cyclones, turning the stage into an electronic racetrack as electrons chased electrons into backwash feedback, and making "Shattering," "See in the Dark," and "Tiny Threads" outstanding soundscapes that had this now capacity crowd going bashi-bazooks for this unique ensemble. They stood in rapt attention, mouths agape trying to process this glorious sound show!

The band was as tight as you could imagine, and rock it did, hitting all the right notes and checking all the right rock boxes as it led the now adoring crowd to sonic nirvana with "Be Sweet," "Always Waving," and "You Go Running." For one guitar player with a capacity crowd on the verge of combustible sonic insanity, Dobson was in complete control; she was the band's ringleader, tune caller and musical magician. She used every dynamic at her disposal to present her songs with grace and supreme confidence.

What's remarkable about this arsenal of audio manipulators is this: on "Shovel," for example, is her innate sense of scale—minimal use accentuates the sonics. Take "Shattering" and "Eyes Are Red" for instance where her pedal work deftly supported the chorus, then filters back to the groove.

Deliciously loud, unapologetically raw, all she needs is a hit song and this show is headed for the stadium circuit. - **Eric Sommer**



Hollywood Palladium Hollywood, CA

Contact: panchikomanagement@gmail.com

Web: panchiko.net

Players: Owain Davies, vocals; Andy Weight, guitar and keyboard; Shaun Ferreday, bass; Rob Harris, guitar; John Schofield, drums

THE HOLLYWOOD PALLADIUM welcomed British indie rock group Panchiko and a legion of their fans—and their fans' nose rings—for their tour following the release of their latest album, *Ginkgo*. From the get-go, the audience was ridiculously enthusiastic in anticipation of Panchiko, contrasted by the more laidback and gentle performances from both openers, untitled (halo) and Kitty Craft, respectively. Despite some

technical difficulties during Kitty Craft's set, the shoegaze angle of untitled (halo) along with Kitty Craft's warm tonality teased the artistry yet to come from the headliners.

Panchiko's artistic identity is built on the DIY attitude characteristic of the late-20th century rock scene alongside the group's mythologized origin story in which they remained in obscurity since their inception in the late 1990s—that is, until a CD of their demo was found in a charity shop in 2016 and uploaded to the internet where they gained a cult following online, eventually leading to the group being tracked down in 2020 and remastering their older music later that year.

Despite the momentum Panchiko has steadily gained since remastering their music

and releasing several albums, the members of Panchiko reflected their roots as each member came out on stage one at a time to set up their own gear on stage in the half hour leading up to their showtime, earning frenzy from the crowd before the biggest show they have ever done had even started.

After much ado and a light show, the five members finally emerged at the same time to kick off with "Stabilisers for Big Boys," a bombastic opener that instantly paid off the static electricity in the crowd. The set continued to relieve the built-up tension with track after track from their fresh record, *Ginkgo*, though they peppered in some more nostalgic tunes like "Untitled Demo 1997." The glue holding the distance between Panchiko's past and present tracks together was each member's impressive musicality. John Schofield's work on the drums was jaw-dropping, to say the least, the beating heart of a wall of sound that the group erected with the start of each song.

Despite the show being incredible for the entirety of its duration, Panchiko really knows how to stick the landing. The final stretch began with their most popular song, "Death Metal," a performance so lush that the crowd began chanting the band's name for a minute straight once the song was over. In a proper moment of using his gift of the gab, Davies dubbed the audience a bunch of "silly sausages" before launching into "Laputa" and breaking away to set up the encore of "All They Wanted" and "Kicking Cars." — **Anna Jordan**

Hotel Café Los Angeles, CA

Contact: booking@hotelcafe.com

Web: bmi.com

Players: Chuck Ellis, vocals, guitar; Blake Stokes, vocals, guitar; Alix, vocals

Taking place on the first Monday of every month in the intimate, wonderful surroundings of the Hotel Café's second stage in Hollywood, the good people behind the BMI Acoustic Lounge showcase describe the event online as a, "singer/songwriter showcase series featuring acoustic performances in an intimate setting as well as networking opportunities with other songwriters and BMI representatives."

That proved itself to be the case on a Monday in July, when that second stage room was blessed with a respectable number of people, including BMI peeps and friends of the performers but also a good few who just want to check out some quality singer-songwriters. Respected artists such as REL, Jelly Ellington and many more have played this showcase in the past, and as a result, the BMI Acoustic Lounge has earned a level of trust and respect—people will go to check out whichever artists happen to be performing at the event. There are other similar showcases at the Hotel Café, including Open Folk and Monday Monday. It really is the premier venue for checking out new and rising singer-songwriters.

The format at BMI Acoustic Lounge sees all three on stage at the same time, playing one song each in turn, then starting again, while the other two watch on at close quarters.



First on in July was Chuck Ellis, who signed a publishing deal with Skrillex a decade ago, and has since released a string of records including four albums. The most recent is this year's *Nice & Sweet*, featuring contributions from Yeti, BloodPop, Dahi, Imad Royal, Gesaffelstein, Switch, and Chance the Rapper among others. So he's worked with some big guns, and his performance at the event would suggest that the respect he's generated is entirely justified.

Blake Stokes was second, and he had a similarly emotive, heartfelt approach. Both

Stokes and Ellis are gifted guitarists and songwriters, with voices that prove to be adept vehicles for their lyrics.

The third performer was Alix, who admitted from the stage that this was her first live performance in some years. While she did look quite nervous, once she got into her flow Alix was a compelling and wonderful performer. Her songs blend sweet melodies with honest introspection, and that makes for a heady brew.

Three interesting performers, one great night. — **Brett Callwood**

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Email: info@soundtrackcentral.net
Contact: Jay Warsinske & Madeleine Smith
How to Submit: by email only

35 SOUND

P.O. Box 217
Pacific Palisades, CA 90272
310-454-1280 Fax 310-454-3443
Email: gmarq@35sound.com
Web: 35sound.com
Music Supervisors: G. Marq Roswell, Carter Little
Credits: Man With the Iron Fists, Half the Sky, Birth Story, The Bronx is Burning
How to Submit: no unsolicited material

5 ALARM

2140 N. Hollywood Way, #11028
Burbank, CA 91505
626-304-1698, 800-322-7879
Email: terriylenn@rescuerecords.net
Web: Salarmmusic.com

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1416 N. La Brea Ave.
Hollywood, CA 90028
323-802-1670
Web: airedel.com
Credits: see web
How to Submit: does not accept unsolicited composer submissions

Additional location:

Air-Edel Associates Ltd.
18 Rodmarton St.,
London W1U 8BJ
+44 (0)207 486 6466

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305-859-1697
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Web: audiomotionmusic.com
Additional locations:
Atlanta, Boston, New York, London

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San Francisco, CA 94111
415-561-3333
Email: bmw@rightsworkshop.com
Web: rightsworkshop.com
Contact: Brooke Wentz
Comments: Music director for ESPN, TechTV, Times Square Millennium Celebration, award-winning soundtrack producer; extensive music and IP rights experience. MBA.
How to Submit: submissions@rightsworkshop.com

CINECALL SOUNDTRACKS

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732-450-8882
Web: cinecall.com
Contact: George McMorrow
How to Submit: no unsolicited material

CLEARSONGS

244 Fifth Ave, Suite 2262
New York, NY 10001
212-627-8767
Email: jim@clearsongs.com
Web: clearsongs.com/contact.html
Contact: Jim Black
Credits: HBO, Artisan, Lion's Gate, October Films, USA Films, Oxygen Music Works, Miramax, Columbia, Searchlight
How to Submit: no unsolicited material

Additional location:

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323-419-3898
Email: gabe@clearsongs.com
Contact: Gabe Hilfer

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Email: margaret@codamusicervices.com, kelly@codamusicervices.com
Web: codamusicervices.com
Music Supervisors: Margaret Guerra Rogers, Kelly Bennett, Alvaro Morello, Dayna Demaine
Credits: 30 Días con Anuel, HBO Live on Max Series, Así Se Baila, Enamorándonos, Real Women Have Curves, East Los High, La Voz, En Letra de Otro, Mariposa del Compo, Decades of Fire, Jodi Arias Story, Pequeños Gigantes, La Banda, Escaramuza: Riding from the Heart, Tortilla Heaven, Tales of Masked Men, The Outsiders (series), Highlander (series); Price of Glory, Chicano Rock! The Sounds of East Los Angeles, Gloria Estefan: Sangre Yoruba, For Love or Country: The Arturo Sandoval Story
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Web: creativecontrolent.com
Contact: Joel C. High
How to Submit: Email before sending material

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Sherman Oaks, CA, 91403-USA
Cell: 310-721-3977, 818-922-2096

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Porter Ranch, CA 91426
818-216-6493
Email: dayrowshay@gmail.com
Contact: Jonathan deRoche, Ross deRoche
Credits: Comic-Con San Diego (2023), John Wick: Chapter 4 (2023), Boogeyman (2023), Pearl (2022), Dayshift (2022), The Swearing Jar (2022) Deadpool 2 (2018), The Magnificent Seven (2016), SWAT, Castle, Guardians of the Galaxy, The Spy Who Dumped Me
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78677 Rainswept Way

Palm Desert, CA 92211-3035

760-972-4559

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Web: desertcamstudios.com

Contacts: Chip Miller (Director/Producer/Writer/Music Producer) & Daniel Pomeroy (VP Music Supervisor/Film & TV Licensing)

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Web: emotomusic.com
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Contact: Janet Fisher
Credits: HBO, Showtime, NBC
How to Submit: please see web

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1178 Broadway
New York, NY 10001
Email: miriam.westercappel@idmmusic.com
Web: idmmusic.com

Comments: Music licensing and music clearance, music representation; master and publishing, music supervision, catalogue and copyright admin.

Credits: ABC, BBDO, CBS, Disney, Fox, HBO, MTV, Showtime, Grey Worldwide,

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Web: sylvesterrivers.com
Contact: Sylvester Rivers
Music Supervisors: Sylvester Rivers

INAUDIBLE

Los Angeles, CA
818-385-3400 Fax 818-385-3456
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Music Supervisors: Peter Afterman, Alison Litton, Jane Berry
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Burbank, CA
Web: mikeflicker.com
Contact: Mike Flicker
Music Supervisors: Mike Flicker, CEO
Credits: Viacom, 20th Century Fox, Showtime, Granada Entertainment, WB, ABC
How to Submit: no unsolicited material

MORRIS & YOUNG

310-699-7026
Email: music@morris-young.com
Web: morris-young.com
Contact: Wendy Morris
Credits: The Tonight Show with Jay Leno, Project Runway, CBS Sports Spectacular

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Web: musicorange.com

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Email: info@musicconsultant.net, shows@musicconsultant.net
Web: musicwithoutborders.com
Contact: Steve Lurie, Founder and President

NAXOS OF AMERICA

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Franklin, TN 37067
615-771-9393
Email: customer.service@naxos.com
Web: naxos.com
How to Submit: no unsolicited material

NEOPHONIC, INC.

Los Angeles, CA
310-550-0124
Web: neophonic.com
Contact: Evyen Klean, music supervisor; PJ Bloom, music supervisor
How to Submit: We do not accept unsolicited music submissions.

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Brooklyn, NY
718-789-1689
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Web: peacebisquit.com
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Studio City, CA 91604
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Email: info@reelent.com
Web: reelent.com
Contact: Mark Wolfson
Credits: The Playtone Company, Mi Vida Loca, Philadelphia, Stop Making Sense, Silence of the Lambs, Colors
How to Submit: Email submission request

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818-618-REEL (7335)
Email: reeloundinc@aol.com
Contact: Michael Becker
How to Submit: Email before submitting

RIGHTS WORKSHOP, THE

230 California St. Suite #602
San Francisco, CA 94111
415-561-3333
Email: submissions@rightsworkshop.com
Web: rightsworkshop.com, bmw@rightsworkshop.com
Contact: Maryam Soleiman, Brooke Wentz
Credits: La Mission, Everyday Sunshine: The Story of Fishbone, The Devil & Daniel Johnston, American Hardcore
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Web: feldman-agency.com
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Contact: Otto Vavrin II
How to Contact: call before submitting material

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4079 Governor Dr. Ste. 185
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Email: glorytvfilm@gmail.com

Web: songandfilm.com

Contact: Glory Reinstein
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Web: songfinderlicensing.com
Contact: Melissa Love, Sr. Director

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1601 North Sepulveda Blvd. #579
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266
310-260-1023
Email: info@soundtrk.com
Web: soundtrk.com
Contact: John Tempereau, Roxanne Lippel, Koyo Sonae
Music Supervisors: George Acogny, Anastasia Brown, Kathy Dayak, Jason Eldredge, Matt Kierscht, Frankie Pine, Michelle Silverman, Koyo Sonae
How to Submit: no unsolicited material

STEELMAN STUDIOS

818-465-3357
Email: steelmanstudios@live.com
Web: steelmanstudios.net
Contact: Devon Steelman
Credits: TV Networks, Film Studios, Ad Agencies
How to Submit: no unsolicited material
Basic rate: call for info

TLS MUSIC SERVICES

818-848-2330
Email: tracy@tlsms.com
Web: tlsms.com
Music Supervisor: Tracy Lynch-Sanchez
Credits: Napoleon Dynamite, 20th Century Fox, Universal Studios Home Entertainment, MGM
How to Submit: No unsolicited material

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Web: visualmusicservice.com
Contact: Rick Fleishman
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New York, NY 10019

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Web: musicsales.com
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Additional locations:

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845-469-4699

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Email: bellsound@bellsound.com
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Basic Rate: call for info

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310-691-2347, U.K. +44-20-7096-1652
Email: brian@brianbanksmusic.com
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Basic Rate: call for info

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Email: booking@capitolstudios.com
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Los Angeles, CA 90068

818-766-5000 Fax 818-623-7457

Email: info@cineworks.com
Web: epscineworks.com
Basic Rate: call for info

Additional locations:

12121 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90025
818-766-5000

935 Gravier St., Ste. 1054
New Orleans, LA 70112

12054 Miramar Pkwy.
Miramar, FL 33025
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Email: scott@themusiccollective.com
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Additional locations:

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Suite 309
Los Angeles, CA 90048
310-652-1413

STEELMAN STUDIOS

818-465-3357
Email: devonsteelman@hotmail.com
Web: steelmanstudios.net
Contact: Devon Steelman
Credits: TV Networks, Film Studios, Ad Agencies
How to Submit: no unsolicited material
Basic rate: call for info
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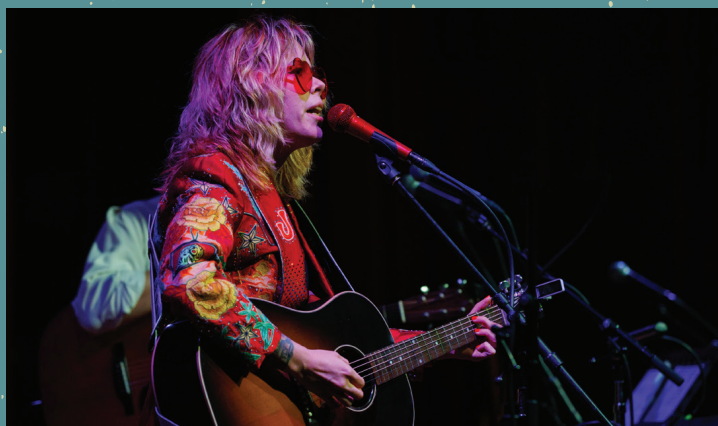
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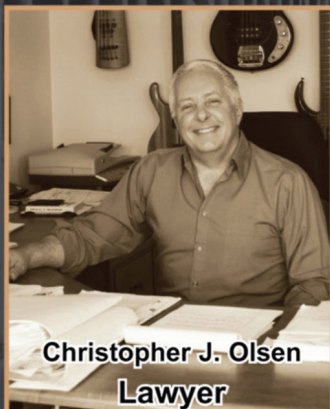
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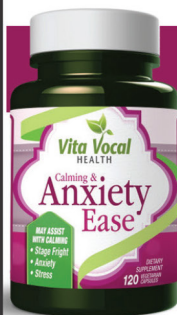
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Songwriting From The Heart

Before I share my story about how I became a working songwriter, it's important right off the bat to encourage the new songwriters out there, folks trying to express themselves through music as I've always done, that the most important thing is to be true to yourself. That's Tip No. 1, because the personal experiences you've had and choose to write about are likely similar to those of the listeners whose ears and emotions you want to capture. The purest place you can come from is your heart.

My No. 2 tip is to listen closely to people around you because you never know when they'll say something amazing that can spark a title or a concept for a song. Likewise, be more aware of incredible things that you may say, without even thinking about it. That's happened to me. One time in conversation with a friend, I blurted out that I would love to have dinner with Gershwin—and the song I wrote about it, "Dinner with Gershwin," became a Top 10 R&B hit for Donna Summer!

I suppose you could say music was in my blood. My dad Gus Gordon was a great singer who performed with the classic vocal group The

Inkspots, and my mom was a singer/songwriter and a very good teacher. They played all kinds of music, mostly Black music, and I went nuts when my dad played "April in Paris" by the Count Basie Orchestra when I was nine. I made him play it over and over again. When I watched those old Jerry Lewis and Dean Martin movies, I loved when Jerry would pretend to conduct a band, and I imagined myself someday conducting a real one! I began hearing music in my head at eight or nine and remember writing my first song with an Italian girl from my Brooklyn neighborhood around age 13 before I moved to Canada. We called ourselves Salt and Pepper, like the future hip-hop duo. I didn't get serious about songwriting till much later, though.

When I was 19, I joined the Toronto cast of the musical *HAIR*. I started playing the white grand piano that was in the theatre. I wrote my first song called "Jump Down, Turn Around" and I started crying my eyes out and got depressed because I didn't know what I was doing. I had never had a singing or piano lesson. When the owner of the theater heard about me playing his "white grand piano," he had it locked because he didn't want "no dirty hippies" playing his piano! When the musical director of *HAIR* found out, he got me my first piano.

I met my future husband Brian Russell at an audition for an eight-piece vocal group called Dr. Music and we were both invited to join. The ensemble was asked to perform weekly on a national CBC TV POP music show. We also had a national weekly Gospel Radio show. The head of the show asked me if I could write a new gospel song every week, which I did. Having a deadline like that helped me learn the discipline of writing very quickly. I started writing about anything I could feel—and realized that the only way to be successful as a songwriter, even if you're being assigned to do it, was to be original.

So my No. 3 tip would be: Never copy anyone. If you have the inclination to write, you have the inclination to be original. Of course, you're going to be influenced and inspired by great songwriters you grew up with, the way I did with Motown's Holland-Dozier-Holland and Lennon-McCartney. In general, everything my generation grew up listening to had strong structure and hooks. The Beatles were the first ones who started letting go of structure and taught all songwriters how to be free.

My career accelerated quickly when Elton John signed me and Brian to his label Rocket Records. We wrote romantic songs because everyone was doing it, but we always tried to be unique. As my songwriting developed, it became clear that I loved (and still love!) to inspire people, so I

mostly write about things that are positive. Whether it's about falling in love or out of love, I may make you cry, but I will always tell a great story.

In general, and this could be Tip No. 4, I would say that if you don't love songwriting, don't do it. But if you feel you have the gift and can't do anything else with your creativity, that's when you've got to go for it. Self-reflection is important. Passion is the key word. Now, if it's just your mother saying that's a great song you wrote, take that with a grain of salt. You need others to tell you that as well from an objective standpoint. If more than one person says they like what you write, that's when you keep going.

Tip No. 5: One of the best things you can do for your audience is to be honest and truthful about your heart. People love that. It's what they want and need from the music they listen to. If you have that desire, you will draw the music and people to you as you move along your path.

I remember being so fearless about what I wanted to do, but that doesn't mean I didn't have moments of self-doubt. Elton once hired me, Brian and Donny Gerrard to sing backup on one of his European tours.

We flew to Amsterdam and went to the rehearsal in this huge, empty stadium. Elton sat at his piano and played and sang very theatrically, as if there were thousands of people there. He was giving 150 percent even in rehearsal! Brian, Donny and I looked at each other like, how could we ever be stars when we're competing with that? But Elton helped us realize just what it would take to be successful.

Final tips: Don't get discouraged if you experience writer's block, or if a song you write that you love is initially turned down by those who can make things happen for you. My recent single "What Will It Take" is perfect for the world right now but when I wrote the original version in the '90s, I gave the demo it to my publisher who didn't "hear it" nor feel it had potential at all. I was sad about it, but I filed it away and hoped one day it would see the light. A few years ago, when I began talking about recording a new album, my assistant suggested I revisit some of my older songs that I had never recorded. When I listened to "What Will It Take," I knew immediately I had to record it. I called my co-producer Stephan Oberhoff and we brought it back to life better than I could have imagined it.



About Brenda Russell:

In 1979, Brenda released her self-titled debut album on A&M Records, which rose to No. 20 on the Billboard Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart. The track "So Good So Right" reached No. 8 on the Billboard Adult Contemporary Songs chart and No. 30 on the Hot 100. As a songwriter, her credits include Luther Vandross ("If Only for One Night"), Donna Summer, Earth, Wind & Fire, Diana Ross, Phil Perry, Chaka Khan, Sting, Tina Turner, Patti LaBelle, Patti Austin, Ivan Lins, Ariana Grande, Mary J. Blige and Joe Cocker.

Brenda's breakthrough trademark hit "Piano in the Dark" charted on the Billboard Hot 100's Top 10, and earned GRAMMY nominations for Song of the Year and Best Pop Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocals. Her album *Get Here* was also nominated for Best Pop Vocal Performance, Female in 1991, the same year Oleta Adams cover of Brenda's song "Get Here" became a massive global hit, reaching No. 5 in the U.S. and No. 4 in the U.K.

Brenda co-wrote with Stephen Bray and the late Allee Willis the hit Broadway musical *The Color Purple*, produced by Oprah Winfrey, Steven Spielberg and Quincy Jones, which opened in 2005. *The Color Purple* Revival on Broadway in 2015 earned a GRAMMY Award for Best Musical Theater Album and won the Tony Award for Best Revival of a Musical.

Brenda's upcoming album, her ninth overall, is called *Songpainter*.

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