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YOUR DAILY ENTERTAINMENT NEWS UPDATE MARCH 23, 2020

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Lil Uzi Vert's 'Eternal Atake' Spends Second Week at No. 1 on Billboard 200 Albums Chart

BY KEITH CAULFIELD

Lil Uzi Vert's *Eternal Atake* secures a second week at No. 1 on the **Billboard 200** albums chart, as the set earned 247,000 equivalent album units in the U.S. in the week ending March 19, according to Nielsen Music/MRC Data. That's down just 14% compared to its debut atop the list a week ago with 288,000 units.

The small second-week decline is owed to the album's surprise reissue on March 13, when a new deluxe edition arrived with 14 additional songs, expanding upon the original 18-song set. (All versions of the album are combined together for tracking and charting purposes.)

The Billboard 200 chart ranks the most popular albums of the week in the U.S. based on multi-metric consumption as measured in equivalent album units. Units comprise album sales, track equivalent albums (TEA) and streaming equivalent albums (SEA). The new March 28-dated chart, where *Eternal Atake* holds at No. 1, will be posted in full on *Billboard*'s website on March 24.

Eternal Atake is the first album to spend its first two weeks at No. 1 since **Harry Styles**' *Fine Line* held at No. 1 for its first two frames on the charts dated Dec. 28, 2019 and Jan. 4, 2020.

Eternal Atake would have most likely held at No. 1 for a second week without the help of its deluxe reissue. Even if the album had declined by 70% in its second week, it still would have ranked ahead of the chart's No. 2 album, Lil Baby's former No. 1 *My Turn* (77,000 units). The latter set climbs two rungs, despite a 27% decline in units for the week.Bad Bunny's *YHLQMDLG* is a non-mover at No. 3 with 69,000 equivalent album units earned (down 38%).

Niall Horan's sophomore effort *Heartbreak Weather* debuts at No. 4, securing the pop singer-songwriter his second solo top five-charting album. It arrives with 59,000 equivalent album units earned, with 42,000 of that sum in album sales (making it the top-selling album of the week). The set got an assist from a concert ticket/album sale redemption offer with his upcoming tour, as well as an assortment of merchandise/album bundles sold via his webstore.

Heartbreak Weather also starts at No. 1 on the Top

(continued)

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George Harrison, Eric Clapton and Duane Allman "Layla Sessions" Played Bobby Whitlock Vintage Martin D35 Guitar

Jimi Hendrix Owned & Stage Played 1967 Custom Electric Guild Starfire Guitar

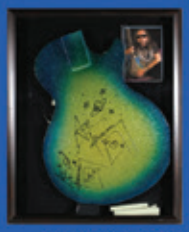
David Bowie "Absolute Beginners" Music Video Worn Suit

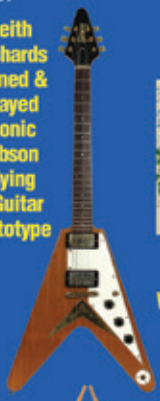
Ozzy Osbourne "Retirement Sucks Tour" Stage Worn Custom Long Jacket

Harry Houdini Signed Original Photograph JSA LOA

Gene Simmons KISS "Hotter Than Hell" Album Cover Used Goblet

Gene Simmons KISS "Hotter Than Hell" Album Cover Worn Costume



KISS Ace Frehley Signed Les Paul Prototype Blue Guitar Body

Keith Richards Owned & Played Iconic Gibson Flying V Guitar Prototype

George Harrison Hand-Drawn Artwork Created While Beatles Staying with Maharishi, India, 1968

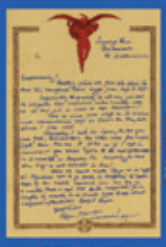
Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel Signed "Tom and Jerry" Original Promotional Photograph

George Washington Signature Display JSA LOA

Steve McQueen Extremely Rare Signed Letter JSA LOA

AC/DC Bon Scott and Angus Young Stage Worn Davy Crockett Hat

Jimmy Page Stage Played Red Fender Stratocaster Guitar



Led Zeppelin Robert Plant Handwritten & Signed Letter

Rush Neal Peart Stage Used Drumsticks and Guitar Picks with Band Signed Concert Ticket March 16, 1979

Lady Gaga 2009 German TV Show "Poker Face" Performance Worn Black and White Jacket

Lady Gaga's Personal Haus Beauty Brand Video Ad Worn Elaborate Black Jacket

Nicki Minaj "Givenchy" Concert Worn Elaborately Embellished Stage Outfit and Thigh High Boots

Rihanna "Giorgio Baldi" Worn Donnybrook Vintage Faux Fur Coat

Abraham Lincoln Signature Display JSA LOA

Ariana Grande "Don't Call Me An Angel" Music Video Worn Custom White Winged Costume

Cardi B "Femme It Forward" Tour Stage Worn Custom Purple Fringe Costume

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Album Sales chart, marking Horan's second leader on the list, following his debut album, *Flicker*.

Flicker bowed at No. 1 on the Nov. 11, 2017-dated Billboard 200 chart with 152,000 units. Of that sum, 128,000 were in album sales (again, aided by a ticket/album sale redemption offer).

Jhené Aiko's *Chilombo* falls from No. 2 to No. 5 in its second week (56,000 units; down 63%) and Roddy Ricch's former leader *Please Excuse Me for Being Antisocial* is steady at No. 6 (49,000 units; down 14%).

Don Toliver's debut studio album *Heaven or Hell* arrives at No. 7 with 44,000 equivalent album units earned (with 3,000 of that sum in album sales, aided by merchandise/album bundle offerings). It's the first charting album for the rapper and singer, who released the *Donny Womack* mixtape in 2018. *Heaven or Hell*, released through Cactus Jack/Atlantic Records, also marks the fourth top 10 album for Cactus Jack. It follows the self-titled Jackboys project (No. 1 earlier in 2020), label chief **Travis Scott**'s *Astroworld* (No. 1, 2018) and Huncho Jack's *Huncho Jack, Jack Huncho* (No. 3, 2018).

Post Malone's former No. 1 *Hollywood's Bleeding* slips from No. 7 to No. 8 (42,000 equivalent album units; down 19%) while Justin Bieber's fellow former leader *Changes* is a non-mover at No. 9 (36,000 units; down 24%).

Closing out the new top 10 is the soundtrack to *Frozen II*, which climbs 18-10 with 31,000 equivalent album units earned (up 12%). The former No. 1 album rebounds thanks to the early release of its parent film to digital retail and rental services, as well as the Disney+ streaming platform (on March 14). In a statement, Disney **announced** the film's accelerated digital release — three months earlier than scheduled — "for families during these challenging times." The film's digital arrival was likely warmly embraced by families and kids in self-quarantine owed to the coronavirus pandemic.

Roddy Ricch's 'The Box' Leads Hot 100 for 11th Week, Harry Styles' 'Adore You' Hits Top 10

BY GARY TRUST

Roddy Ricch's "The Box" rules the **Billboard Hot 100** chart for an 11th week.

Plus, **Harry Styles**' "Adore You" ascends to the Hot 100's top 10, jumping from No. 16 to No. 7, marking his second solo top 10 hit.

Let's run down of the top 10 of the newest Hot 100, which blends all-genre U.S. streaming, radio airplay and sales data. All charts (dated March 28) will update on Billboard.com tomorrow (March 24).

"The Box," released on Bird Vision/Atlantic Records, is the **26th title to top the Hot 100 for at least 11 weeks**.

The track tallies a 12th week at No. 1 on the **Streaming Songs** chart, down 8% to 41.4 million U.S. streams in the week ending March 19. It rebounds 9-7 on **Digital Song Sales**, although down 18% to 8,000 sold in the week ending March 19, and dips 10-11 on **Radio Songs**, decreasing by 1% to 65 million all-format airplay audience impressions in the week ending March 22.

"The Box" concurrently leads the **Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs** and **Hot Rap Songs** charts, which employ the same multi-metric methodology as the Hot 100, for a 12th week each.

The Weeknd's "Blinding Lights" pushes 4-2 on the Hot 100, hitting a new high. It becomes his fifth Digital Song Sales No. 1 (2-1; 16,000, down 28%) and his 10th Radio Songs top 10 (11-5; 72.7 million, up 13%). It rebounds 12-5 on Streaming Songs, after reaching No. 4 (20.8 million, down 3%).

The song, which rules **Hot R&B Songs** for a fourth week, is from The Weeknd's album *After Hours*, which was released Fri-

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day, March 20, and is **due for a strong start** on next week's Billboard 200. (Lead single "Heartless" topped the Hot 100, Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs and Hot R&B Songs charts dated Dec. 14, 2019.)

Dua Lipa's "Don't Start Now" drops to No. 3 from its No. 2 Hot 100 high, as it spends a second week at No. 1 on Radio Songs (99.9 million, up 2%).

Future's "Life Is Good," featuring Drake, slips 3-4 on the Hot 100, after peaking at No. 2 for eight weeks; Post Malone's "Circles" is steady at No. 5, after logging three weeks at No. 1; and Arizona Zervas' "Roxanne" rebounds 7-6, after reaching No. 4.

Harry Styles' "Adore You" vaults into the Hot 100's top 10, rising from No. 16 to No. 7.

The song becomes Styles' first top five Radio Songs hit, lifting 6-4 (76 million, up 8%), while rising 19-17 on Digital Song Sales (6,000, down 15%) and re-entering Streaming Songs at No. 40 (10.7 million, down 6%). Boosting the profile of "Adore You," Styles' NPR Tiny Desk Concert **premiered March 16**, with the track closing the four-song set. (The gig followed another high-profile appearance by the pop singer-songwriter, who visited SiriusXM for an **interview with Howard Stern** on March 2.)

Styles adds his second solo Hot 100 top 10, after "Sign of the Times," which debuted and peaked No. 4 in April 2017. He also made six trips to the top 10, in 2012-15, as a member of One Direction, rising as high as No. 2 with "Best Song Ever" in August 2013.

With the ascent of "Adore You," Styles ties former 1D bandmate Zayn for the most solo Hot 100 top 10s by members of the group. Zayn's "Pillowtalk" topped the chart for a week in 2016 and "I Don't Wanna Live Forever (Fifty Shades Darker)," with Taylor Swift, hit No. 2 in 2017. The act's Liam Payne has notched one top 10 to-date, "Strip That Down," featuring Quavo (No. 10, 2017).

"Adore You" is from Styles' second solo LP, *Fine Line*, which **debuted as his second No. 1** on the Billboard 200 dated Dec. 28; One Direction boasts four No. 1s on the survey.

("Adore"-able fun fact: "Adore You" is the third Hot 100 top 10 with "adore" in its title, following two No. 1s: Frankie Valli's "My Eyes Adored You," in 1975, and Color Me Badd's "I Adore Mi Amor," in 1991. Plus, Miley Cyrus took her own "Adore You," a different composition than Styles', to No. 21 in 2014.)

Rounding out the Hot 100's top 10, Justin Bieber's "Intentions," featuring Quavo, reaches a new high, climbing 10-8; Lewis Capaldi's "Someone You Loved" jumps 15-9, after posting three weeks at No. 1; and Billie Eilish's "Everything I Wanted" elevates 14-10, after peaking at No. 8.

Find out more Hot 100 news on Billboard.com this week, and, for all chart news, you can listen (and subscribe) to *Billboard*'s **Pop Shop Podcast** and **This Week in Billboard News** podcast and follow @billboard and @billboardcharts on both Twitter and Instagram. And again, be sure to visit Billboard.com tomorrow (March 24), when all charts, including the Hot 100 in its entirety, will refresh.

What More Can (Or Should) Congress Do to Support the Music Community Amid Coronavirus?

BY TATIANA CIRISANO

On Wednesday, The White House signed into law **a coronavirus aid package** expanding unemployment benefits and ensuring paid emergency leave for workers. The legislation protects the more than 2 million Americans predicted to file for unemployment claims this week, according to Goldman Sachs — but not the countless independent contractors and freelancers who make up much of the music business, which has been ravaged by virus-related concert cancellations and business closures.

Now, as Congress readies a $1 trillion economic stimulus package aimed at keeping U.S. businesses like the hospitality and airline industries afloat, music business leaders have a message for policymakers: Don't forget about us. And given the unique nature of the industry, where work is sporadic and many workers don't have a single employer, a one-size-fits-all approach won't cut it.

"When members [of Congress] think of the entertainment industry, they shouldn't just think of the big stars, [but also] the electricians and truck drivers and caterers," says longtime music industry advocate Rep. **Adam Schiff** of California. "We have a predicament because their work is not traditional employment, they don't have the same employer the whole year, and their contracts aren't regular. They are at risk of falling through the cracks."

Direct financial assistance is the most urgent priority, industry leaders agree, as dozens of artists and gig workers who were depending on the summer touring circuit or recording sessions, for instance, are now out of a job indefinitely. The examples are piling up: Austin's South by Southwest was forced to **lay off a third of its staff** after the conference and festival was canceled due to coronavirus precautions; **Zac Brown** of **Zac Brown Band** tearfully announced this week that he has **let go about 90% of his road crew**; and indie venues are **bracing themselves** for **inevitable debt**, if they can stay open at all.

"We're focusing on the actual musicians who don't get any money because they can't show up to the gig, or there's a production shutdown and there's no set to go to," says RIAA chairman/CEO **Mitch Glazier**. "They need direct relief from the government."

Most music industry leaders agree that Congress should start by expanding the paid sick leave and paid family leave provisions of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act so nontraditional workers are covered. That's the main suggestion **in a letter** that more than 40 industry organizations including the Recording Academy, RIAA and Music Artists Coalition sent to Congress Friday (March 20).

"The relief that Congress has passed so far is not really applicable in our world," says **Susan Genco**, Music Artists Coalition board member and Azoff MSG Entertainment co-president. "To extend the Family

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and Medical Leave Act so that [I] have to get paid sick leave for two weeks doesn't help if you're a guy between tours."

The current legislation provides full-time American workers who are sick or quarantined due to coronavirus 100% of their normal salary, up to $511 per day (or roughly $130,000 per year). But calculating benefits for gig workers presents another set of challenges, since their salaries are less clear-cut.

To help solve the problem, Schiff and other Congress members representing entertainment hot-spots recommended Thursday that instead of looking at what a music industry worker has been making as the baseline for their paid leave payment, Congress should consider what the worker's anticipated payment was for gigs that have been canceled or postponed. "There are means of calculating benefits that would be fair and equitable to people in nontraditional employment situations," he says.

Some general provisions that are being floated in Congress would help music workers, too, such as handing every adult American a $1,000 check as an economic stimulus.

There are other ways for Congress to support the music industry in the current crisis. For example, Recording Academy chief industry, government and member relations officer **Daryl Friedman** is also pushing for emergency funding for the National Endowment for the Arts, which could be used to give grants to individual arts organizations. In turn, those organizations could employ musicians who are out of work.

And temporary changes to the Internal Revenue Code could also lift some of the financial burden. Friedman says the academy has employed experts to comb through the tax code for things that affect musicians, looking for additional deductions or policies to submit for changes.

The main obstacle, Friedman points out, is getting Congress to pay attention in the first place: "There are so many industries right now that are vying for support," he says. And of course, these are all short-term remedies, since it's difficult for anyone in the music industry right now to plan for the future. "I saw a quote from an airline CEO saying that the airlines only have enough money to last six months," Friedman adds. "That's bad, but I have my membership calling me and saying, 'we only have enough money to last six days.'"

Music Artists Coalition board member and entertainment attorney **Jordan Bromley** echoes that point: "We don't know when live performances are going to resume and how they'll be received, initially," he says. "People are trying to stay optimistic and keep their heads above the chaos, but it's hard when we don't have clear answers. Music is a binding force and we're going to make it through, but we do need help from our government."

For now, industry leaders agree that there's strength in numbers. In addition to the joint letter that music organizations sent Friday, the Recording Academy, Music Artists Coalition and other organizations have sent letters of their own, and Friedman says that more than 17,000 academy members have contacted their individual members of Congress to rally support (**you can do the same here**). And songwriter organizations including ASCAP, BMI and NMPA joined forces to **send their own letter** to Congress, outlining the need for provisions that would support independent creators.

"We just need to have our industry pop up through the clutter," Glazier says. Thankfully, he adds, "This is what record companies do. They break through the clutter and find an audience."

Paradigm Implements Layoffs, Paycuts Amid Coronavirus Shutdown

BY REBECCA SUN

Paradigm is cutting back as the industry has ground nearly to a halt amid the coronavirus pandemic.

In addition to anticipated layoffs of about a hundred or more of its 600-plus employees, *The Hollywood Reporter* also has learned that payroll will be reduced for those who remain at the company.

CEO **Sam Gores** broke the news in an agency-wide Zoom call this morning, and a second call with department heads was to follow. Although certain divisions, such as Paradigm's industry-leading music department, have been clearly impacted as live events such as music festivals were among the first to go as the virus spread, the cuts are not expected to be confined to any specific business unit.

A source tells *THR* that Gores' message was "painful but necessary," and that the agency head added that he would made every effort to provide impacted individuals with needs including healthcare.

The hope is that the crisis will subside after a few months and as business picks up again, Paradigm will be able to rehire the employees it has let go – and that it won't suffer attendant client departures in the meantime, a common fear somewhat mitigated by the fact that the pandemic has put all companies in the same boat. Although Paradigm is the first agency confirmed to undergo cuts, other firms are widely expected to follow suit.

This article was originally published by **The Hollywood Reporter**.

Cost of Coronavirus: UK Musicians Have Lost £14M in Live Earnings Already

BY RICHARD SMIRKE

LONDON — Tour cancellations and the suspension of live performances as a result of coronavirus have already cost U.K. musicians an estimated £14 million ($16.1 million) in lost earnings, according to **early research by the Musicians' Union**.

The U.K. organization surveyed its 35,000

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members about the impact of the pandemic. More than 4,000 have so far responded with 90% saying that their work has been affected. Job opportunities are down 69% on last year.

"Musicians, whether they work in theatre, teaching, orchestras [or] gig-playing, will feel the full financial force of this global disaster. Already, we have seen job opportunities drop by more than two thirds, and sadly this will only accelerate," warned Musicians' Union general secretary **Horace Trubridge**.

To support its members the London-based organization has today (Mar. 23) launched a £1 million ($1.1 million) 'Coronavirus Hardship Fund' which will offer £200 ($230) grants to musicians facing financial hardship in the wake of COVID-19.

Trubridge also called on the U.K. government to provide wider clarity on how it can support British musicians, many of whom are self-employed. Trubridge said the record industry needed "to play its part too" in supporting the live music sector, which has been left devastated by the coronavirus shutdown.

On Friday (Mar. 20), British Chancellor **Rishi Sunak** announced a huge economic rescue package that will see the government pay 80% of people's salaries, up to £2,500 ($2,875) a month, if they cannot work due to the outbreak.

Those measures only apply to employed staff, however, not freelance or self-employed workers who make up around 72% of the British music industry, according to umbrella trade organization UK Music.

So far, the only concessions to support self-employed and freelancers during the crisis are tax deferrals and access to Universal Credit at a rate equivalent to Statutory Sick Pay, currently set at £94.25 ($107.59) per week.

"While we welcome the much-needed help for those who are traditionally employed, the government's proposals fall far short of the lifeline needed by the self-employed in the music industry and creative sector," said UK Music acting CEO **Tom Kiehl**.

Paul Pacifico, CEO of AIM (The Association of Independent Music) said self-employed musicians had been left "high and dry" by the government's rescue package.

In response, the Creative Industries Federation sent the British chancellor an open letter, signed by AIM, Musicians' Union, UK Music and Featured Artists Coalition, calling for him to address the "worrying inequity" between employed and self-employed workers.

In the meantime, more than 7,000 people have signed AIM's petition to create a Temporary Income Protection Fund for freelancers and self-employed workers.

The **Music Managers Forum** has also launched a questionnaire examining the impact COVID-19 on artists and their representatives.

Germany's GEMA Launches €40 Million Aid Program to Help Blunt Economic Impact of Coronavirus

BY WOLFGANG SPAHR

BERLIN — German collection society GEMA is rolling out a €40 million euro emergency aid program in an effort to help support its members during the coronavirus pandemic.

"It is already foreseeable that the economic consequences of the pandemic will be devastating for the entire creative industry," said **Dr. Harald Heker**, GEMA CEO. "GEMA will use all its available resources to provide the best possible support for its members whose existence is threatened and to cushion the economically catastrophic consequences for our customers."

GEMA is planning a two-tiered program: 1. The "Protective Shield" stage will be aimed at helping creators who are also performers and who get into financial difficulties due to event cancellations. 2. The "Corona Relief Fund" will provide financial transitional aid for individual cases of hardship within the framework of social and cultural support.

The organization said it will publish detailed information on the emergency aid program on its website this week.

Added Heker, "The drastic restrictions to protect against the pandemic have a devastating effect on the music and culture industry. As far as possible within the scope of its fiduciary mandate, GEMA will support its clients in the licensing of music events in a pragmatic and flexible manner. This is intended to help cushion the effects of the corona crisis, which in many cases threaten the existence of many companies."

The exec also applauded the "Herculean" efforts of federal and state governments to commit relief assistance to the creative community as well.

GEMA said it acted early in order to ensure upcoming distributions to members (April 1 and June 1) will happen as planned.

"From the very beginning, our association was driven by the idea of solidarity and mutual protection and assistance," said **Dr. Ralf Weigand**, Chairman of the Supervisory Board. "And when, if not now in this unprecedented crisis, will these great principles be in demand and demand immediate action! For us on [the board], it was clear from the start that we need to provide financial support for our colleagues who are threatened due to the protective measures taken in the wake of the corona pandemic."

Kenny Rogers, Country and Pop Legend, Dies at 81

BY BILLBOARD STAFF

The entertainment world is in mourning today with the passing of **Kenny Rogers**.

The Houston, Texas native — who carved out a successful pop/rock career with backing band the First Edition in the

late 1960s, before segueing into a leading role as a massively popular country solo star — passed away from natural causes on Friday night (Mar. 20) at the age of 81, a statement from his PR confirms.

The fourth of eight children to Edward Floyd and Lucille Lois Rogers (born August 21, 1938), the future superstar grew up in the projects of Houston. One of his favorite ways to escape reality was music. Eddy Arnold was one of his early favorites, but just before he became a teenager, he caught a live performance of Ray Charles. The R&B legend cast a spell on young Rogers, and the die was cast on what direction he wanted to go with his life.

Music dominated Rogers' attention in high school, as he began to play in a local group called The Scholars. In 1957 — not yet twenty — a recording of his entitled "That Crazy Feeling" achieved some local airplay. However, there was no follow-up success, and Rogers began to look for direction in his career. He came to the attention of The Bobby Doyle Trio, a jazz ensemble. Rogers earned a long stay with Doyle playing bass, staying there until 1966.

His next move was to join the folk group The New Christy Minstrels. However, the creative direction that the group was veering toward felt stifling — and Rogers, along with Mike Settle, Terry Williams, and Thelma Camacho, left the group to form The First Edition. They inked a deal with Reprise, and soon released their first single, "I Found A Reason," which failed to chart. However, their next record, "Just Dropped In (To See What Condition My Condition Was In)," climbed all the way to No. 5 on the Billboard Hot 100. Subsequent hits to make the chart's top 40 included "But You Know I Love You," "Something's Burning," "Tell It All Brother," and Mel Tillis's "Ruby, Don't Take Your Love To Town," which became their other top ten hit on the Hot 100, landing at No. 6. The song also hit No. 39 on the Country Songs chart -- a sign of things to come.

By the early 1970s, the First Edition (now recording as Kenny Rogers & The First Edition) saw their success began to wane a bit. Their final significant chart action came with 1971's "Someone Who Cares," which topped out at No. 4 on Adult Contemporary songs. However, the group continued to perform until the mid-1970s. With several of the group's recordings having a Country slant, Rogers decided that he would attempt a move to Nashville, where he signed with Larry Butler and United Artists Records in 1975.

His first release for his new label, "Love Lifted Me," would hit No. 19 on Country Songs in 1975. He would take a cover of Leon Ashley's "Laura (What's He Got)" to the same position the next year. By the winter of 1977, he was ready to hit paydirt in a big way. His recording of breakup ballad "Lucille" would top the Country charts — and hit No. 5 on the Hot 100, pleasing everyone in the country — except his mother. Granted, Lucille Rogers was pleased for her son's Country breakthrough, but several thought the song was about her!

"She called me up on the phone one day, and said 'Kenneth Ray, what are you doing?' I knew when she said that I was in trouble. She thought I was putting her business out on the street. She said 'How dare me tell people she had four hungry children.' I told her 'First of all, you have eight kids. Secondly, I didn't write it, and thirdly, it's not about you. Then she tamed down a little bit," he recalled to *Billboard* with a laugh in 2013.

Once "Lucille" hit, the floodgates swung wide open. For much of the next seven years, much of Rogers' recorded output hit the top positions on the Country and Pop charts. Among his biggest hits of that period included "Love Or Something Like It," "The Gambler" (which also served as the basis for a successful movie series for Rogers — and **a very popular Geico commercial** in 2014), "She Believes In Me," and "Lady," written and produced by Lionel Richie, which became his first Hot 100 No. 1 hit. He also established an award-winning string of duets with Dottie West from 1978-84.

The 1980s saw no slowdown for Rogers — either as a recording artist or a live performer. His concerts sold out throughout the States, and he added such hits to his resume as "Through The Years," "Love Will Turn You Around," and "We've Got Tonight," a Bob Seger cover duet with Sheena Easton that topped Country Songs in the spring of 1983. As big as that hit was, it was another collaboration that made headlines that fall -- as he kicked off a new recording deal with RCA by teaming up with Dolly Parton on the Bee Gees-written "Islands In The Stream," which hit No. 1 on both Country Songs as well as the Hot 100. The two also teamed up for a Yuletide record, *Once Upon A Christmas*, in the fall of 1984.

His RCA years included such smashes as "Crazy," "Morning Desire," and "Twenty Years Ago," though by the end of the 80s, a shift to a more traditional Country sound slowed down his success on the airwaves. He still sold records, however. Releases such as 1989's *Something Inside So Strong* and 1990's *Christmas In America* were both certified gold by the RIAA. He also released several books of his photography, including *Kenny Rogers' America*.

The 1990s saw him in the headlines as much for his Kenny Rogers Roasters chicken restaurant chain as for his music, although by the end of the decade, he made an improbable comeback in 1999 with "The Greatest," which hit Country Songs' top 30 — his best showing in eight years. The next release (on Dreamcatcher, his own label), "Buy Me A Rose," would do even better — climbing all the way to No. 1 to the chart. It would be his first trip to the summit since "Make No Mistake, She's Mine," a duet with Ronnie Milsap, in 1987.

The 2000s would see Rogers continue to record and tour. Highlights in the later years of his career included 2007's *Water & Bridges*, 2011's gospel disc *The Love of God*, and 2013's *You Can't Make Old Friends* -- which reunited him one last time with Parton on the title track. The latter album was released in the same year that he was inducted as a member of the Country Music Hall of Fame. In 2015, Rogers announced plans for a final tour, which was titled *The Gambler's Last Deal*. The shows were a celebration of his past, complete with film highlights of his long career, which he said made him pause and reflect.

"It's much more than I ever expected to – and much more than I deserve. It's really been something to behold for me," he admitted in 2016. "It's very hard to put it in perspective and say 'That was my career,'

because it wasn't what I set out to do. I was just trying to survive in the business." He continued to play shows through December 2017, and still had a few on the books in 2018, when health issues forced him from the road.

Rogers is survived by wife Wanda and their two children, as well as three children from his previous marriages. The family is planning on commemorating Rogers' life with a small private service, due to concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic, and hopes to celebrate in a larger service at a later date to be determined.

This obituary was originally written by longtime Billboard *contributor Chuck Dauphin prior to* **his own passing** *in 2019.*

Broadway Producers and Unions Reach Emergency Relief Agreement

BY JONATHAN HANDEL

In the wake of a complete shutdown of New York theaters, a coalition of stage unions reached a deal Friday afternoon with the organization representing Broadway producers for cash payments and additional health contributions to aid stage workers in distress.

The emergency relief agreement provides short-term pay and health benefits, and applies to for-profit Broadway theaters and, in a pact **announced** Saturday morning, to Broadway shows on tour as well.

"We are grateful to be able to tell our members that the industry came together to provide some compensation during this terrible time," said the Coalition of Broadway Unions and Guilds (COBUG), representing 14 labor organizations with about 75,000 members. "Broadway needs to come back and working together is the best way to make that happen. Now Congress must do its part for arts and entertainment workers on Broadway and beyond to ensure they have access to unemployment insurance and health care during this industry-wide shutdown."

Theaters went dark on March 12. The Broadway deal, according to a union representative speaking on background, includes payment for the remainder of the interrupted week at normal salary but capped at 150 percent of the contractual minimums — which means a pay cut for some — followed by two weeks of salary at minimum scale, implying a pay cut for even more workers. They'll receive health, pension and 401(k) benefits during those 2-1/2 weeks, and then health benefits only through April 12, with a commitment to discuss the possibility of additional health contributions the week of April 6.

"The leaders of our industry have been working tirelessly with our partners at the unions to forge an agreement that will address many of the needs of our employees during this crisis," said Charlotte St. Martin, President of the Broadway League, which represents over 700 producers and theaters. "We are a community that cares about each other, and we are pleased that we can offer some relief. Once we are past this challenging moment, we look forward to welcoming everyone back to our theatres to experience the best of live entertainment together once again."

The deal for shows scheduled to tour through Sept. 20 is the same as the Broadway agreement, while for shorter shows the salary payments last only one to one and a half weeks. But while the for-profit New York flagships and their touring equivalents are receiving some relief, no deals are in place with non-profits, off-Broadway houses, off-off-Broadway venues and theaters large and small throughout the rest of the country, such as so-called League of Resident Theaters (LORT) houses. None of those are members of the Broadway League.

"It's the best deal we could get under trying circumstances," said Actors Equity president Kate Shindle, as quoted in **The New York Times**. "We've been trying to find the sweet spot between getting the greatest number of benefits for our members, while still trying to make sure we don't bankrupt the individual shows in the process. Our members would like to have jobs to go back to."

The League echoed that point.

"We worked really hard with our colleagues in all 14 unions to come up with a fair and generous contract that we hope will tide everyone over until other forms of support can be developed," said St. Martin in the NYT piece. "Our goal was also to get as many shows to come back as possible, and with the slim margins for 90 percent of the shows on Broadway, we had to take that into consideration."

A hoped-for reopening on April 13 seems unduly optimistic in light of current forecasts and the surging caseload in New York — nearly 12,000 as of this writing. Meanwhile, some theaters in California, New York and elsewhere are streaming recordings of their productions under a special agreement with Actors Equity.

COBUG-affiliated unions represent actors, artists, dancers, singers, musicians, playwrights, directors and choreographers, makeup artists, set, costume, lighting, sound and projection designers, stagehands, stage managers, ushers and ticket-takers, box office personnel, wardrobe workers, hairstylists, porters, press agents, company managers and house managers.

Among them, it was not clear how the relief deals work for playwrights, whose organization — the Dramatists Guild — is part of COBUG but is not actually a union and does not set minimums. (Disclosure: this reporter is an associate member.) Playwrights are sole proprietors who license their work to producers for negotiated prices that can include sharing in a profit pool. A DG spokeswoman did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

This article originally appeared on **The Hollywood Reporter**.

Rihanna's Clara Lionel Foundation Donates $5 Million to Coronavirus Response Efforts

BY HILARY HUGHES

Rihanna's nonprofit organization, the Clara Lionel Foundation, has donated $5 million towards Coronavirus response efforts on a global scale.

The pop star and mogul's initiative — which she launched in 2012, and named for her grandparents — will be supporting Direct Relief, Partners In Health, Feeding America, the International Rescue Committee, World Health Organization's COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund and other organizations as they continue to battle the pandemic in the U.S., the Caribbean and Africa.

"Never has it been more important or urgent to protect and prepare marginalized and underserved communities — those who will be hit hardest by this pandemic," said Justine Lucas, Executive Director of the Clara Lionel Foundation, in a statement.

The funds provided by the Clara Lionel Foundation will go towards local food banks serving the elderly and other at-risk communities in the U.S.; protective equipment for healthcare and lab workers; establishing (and maintaining) ICUs; distributing respiratory supplies, testing, care and support for native communities and countries such as Haiti and Malawi, and more.

The Clara Lionel Foundation has focused on health and disaster preparedness since the founding of the organization, especially in the Caribbean and sub-Saharan Africa, and these COVID-19 efforts further their mission in the face of this global threat.

Bandcamp's Friday Haul: Fans Spent $4.3 Million on 800,000 Items

BY TATIANA CIRISANO

Music fans came out in full force to support acts on Bandcamp last week, when the online music marketplace **pledged** to waive its revenue share for all sales made on Friday, March 20.

On a typical Friday, Bandcamp says that fans buy roughly 47,000 items on the site, from album downloads to merchandise. But on March 20, fans bought nearly 15 times that — 800,000 items, spending a total $4.3 million. That's 11 items per second at the peak of purchasing, Bandcamp says.

Bandcamp took zero cut, meaning that 100% of that money went directly to the artists and labels fans purchased from. In addition, **many labels** with accounts on the platform voluntarily gave 100% of revenue on March 20 to their artists, including ANTI- Records, Father/Daughter, Sub Pop and Third Man Records.

"We don't yet know the long-term impact of Covid-19, but we know that we all need music — to uplift and inspire us, to heal us, and to give us hope," Bandcamp co-founder and CEO **Ethan Diamond** wrote in a new company **blog post**. "We'll continue working to make Bandcamp the best place for fans and artists to come together and sustain each other in the challenging times ahead."

The one-day purchasing event was created by Bandcamp to support artists who have suffered financial losses due to coronavirus, as virtually all U.S. tours have come to a halt to prevent contagion.

Artist accounts on Bandcamp are free, but normally, Bandcamp takes a 15% revenue share for digital sales and 10% for merch. As always, Bandcamp says that funds from Friday's event reached the artists and labels within 24–48 hours.

Cirque du Soleil Lays Off 95 Percent of Staff After Closing Shows

BY ETAN VLESSING

Cirque du Soleil, creator of many of the most popular shows in Las Vegas, has temporarily laid off 4,679 employees, or 95 percent of its global workforce, after suspending 44 shows worldwide because of the coronavirus outbreak.

"We're deeply saddened by the dramatic measures taken today, as the temporary layoff includes many hardworking, dedicated people. Unfortunately, this decision is our only option as we are forced to position ourselves to weather this storm and prepare for eventual re-openings," Daniel Lamarre, president and CEO of the Cirque du Soleil Entertainment Group, said in a statement.

The Montreal-based company said the coronavirus pandemic had forced the closure of its shows in cities and countries worldwide where local health officials took measures for social distancing. The canceled shows in Las Vegas include *O* at the Bellagio, *KA* at MGM Grand, *The Beatles LOVE* at the Mirage, *Mystere* at Treasure Island, *Zumanity* at New York-New York and *Michael Jackson ONE* at Mandalay Bay.

Cirque du Soleil shows in Austin; Chicago; Houston; New Orleans; Salt Lake City; Montreal; Boston; Tel Aviv; Meloneras, Spain; Munich; Costa Mesa, California; Denver; and the Australian cities of Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth were also canceled.

"Consequently, the company was left with no other option but to call for an unprecedented halt in activity until the pandemic is controlled and its performers, employees and audience members are no longer at risk," the company said in a statement.

Cirque added a "core support team" will remain with the company to maintain tour

planning and ticket sales for shows set to run later this year and in 2021, and to "prepare for rehiring as soon as productions are allowed to resume."

This article originally appeared on **The Hollywood Reporter.**

Academy of Country Music Awards 2020 Sets New Date

BY LARS BRANDLE

The 2020 Academy of Country Music Awards has a new date.

Hosted by **Keith Urban**, the 55th ACM Awards will take place Sept. 16 on the CBS Television Network, organizers announced Monday (March 23). CBS All Access will stream the rescheduled event live and on-demand, though it remains unclear where the annual gala will take place.

The new date replaces the awards ceremony at MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas, which was originally-slated for April 5. That show date was moved as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. As previously announced, a new special *ACM Presents: Our Country* will fill the now-vacant spot, for a night "filled with entertainment, hope and reflection," reads a statement, "bringing the healing power of music to Americans at a time when they need it most."

On March 11, the ACM Awards, which is produced by dick clark productions, stated that it was "closely monitoring the situation along with the MGM team, who are in continuous contact with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Southern Nevada Health District, and other agencies and experts for guidance."

The same day, they announced its first round of performers, including first-time host Urban, **Miranda Lambert**, **Lindsay Ell** and **Ashley McBryde**.

Later that week, the Academy of Country Music announced its flagship show would move to September.

Further details on the 2020 ceremony, including the venue and performers, will be announced in due course.

dick clark productions and Billboard share a parent company, Valence Media.

The Weeknd's 'After Hours' Album Off to Fast Start

BY KEITH CAULFIELD

The Weeknd's new album *After Hours* is off to a hot start, according to industry forecasters. Those in the know suggest it could earn over 400,000 equivalent album units in the U.S. in the week ending March 26. That forecast could grow higher, as it is based off just two full days of activity. The set was released on March 20.

The Billboard 200 chart ranks the most popular albums of the week based on multi-metric consumption, which includes traditional album sales, track equivalent albums (TEA) and streaming equivalent albums (SEA). The top 10 of the April 4-dated Billboard 200 chart (where *After Hours* will make its splashy debut) is scheduled to be revealed on *Billboard*'s website on Sunday, March 29.

After Hours has its eyes set on 2020's current largest week for an album, registered by **BTS**' *Map of the Soul: 7*, which launched with 422,000 units on the March 7-dated list, according to Nielsen Music/MRC Data. The Weeknd could snare a personal best week, as his largest frame was registered with *Beauty Behind the Madness*, which blasted in atop the list with 412,000 units (Sept. 19, 2015-dated chart).

After Hours will undoubtedly be a streaming giant by week's end, and will have a robust sales figure. The latter is getting a boost from a concert ticket/album sale redemption offer for The Weeknd's upcoming tour, which is scheduled to kick off on June 11. The album's sales are also aided by more than 50 merchandise/album bundles currently available in *The Weeknd*'s official webstore.

After Hours was released via XO/Republic Records and is the singer-songwriter's first release since his six-song *My Dear Melancholy* EP debuted at No. 1 on the chart dated April 14, 2018 with 169,000 units earned in its first week.

After Hours is The Weeknd's first full-length project since *Starboy*, which entered at No. 1 with 348,000 units in its first week (chart dated Dec. 17, 2016).

After Hours is one of a number of albums that will debut on next week's chart. Other efforts on course for noteworthy arrivals include **Kelsea Ballerini**'s *Kelsea*, **J Balvin**'s *Colores* and **Conan Gray**'s *Kid Krow*. And then there's **Childish Gambino**'s surprise-release *3.15.20*, which dropped on March 22. It's his first album since *Awaken, My Love!* bowed at No. 5 on the Dec. 24, 2016-dated chart with 101,000 units earned in its first week, according to Nielsen Music.

Netflix Pledges $100 Million In Relief to Out-of-Work Production Community

BY MICHAEL O'CONNELL

With a continued lack of clarity about how the government plans to aid those workers hit hardest by coronavirus-related work stoppages, several institutions are pledging money to help those most affected in Hollywood. Netflix on Friday announced that it has set up a $100 million relief fund for out-of-work production professionals, including the hundreds of thousands of crew and cast without jobs.

In a letter from one of the Hollywood's most visible creative executives, Netflix chief content officer Ted Sarandos noted the

unprecedented effects that the pandemic has had on the community — particularly electricians, carpenters and drivers, many of them paid hourly and project to project.

"Most of the fund will go towards support for the hardest hit workers on our own productions around the world," wrote Sarandos. "We're in the process of working out exactly what this means, production by production. This is in addition to the two weeks pay we've already committed to the crew and cast on productions we were forced to suspend last week."

There have been widespread calls for the government to offer economic support to various businesses, most notably the restaurant and service industries that have been decimated nationwide, sending unemployment skyrocketing, but the entertainment industry standstill has been particularly hard on below-the-line workers, including Hollywood's Teamsters.

Netflix's relief pledge is not limited to its own productions. "Beyond helping workers on our own productions, we also want to support the broader film and television industry," Sarandos continued. "So $15 million of the fund will go to third parties and non-profits providing emergency relief to out-of-work crew and cast in the countries where we have a large production base."

Pledges to current non-profits aiding workers include $1 million to the SAG-AFTRA Covid-19 Disaster Fund, the Motion Picture and Television Fund and the Actors Fund Emergency Assistance in the U.S and $1 million between the AFC and Fondation des Artistes.

Read Sarandos' full memo, posted to the company blog, below.

The Covid-19 crisis is devastating for many industries, including the creative community. Almost all television and film production has now ceased globally – leaving hundreds of thousands of crew and cast without jobs. These include electricians, carpenters and drivers, many of whom are paid hourly wages and work on a project-to-project basis.

This community has supported Netflix through the good times, and we want to help them through these hard times, especially while governments are still figuring out what economic support they will provide. So we've created a $100 million fund to help with hardship in the creative community.

Most of the fund will go towards support for the hardest hit workers on our own productions around the world. We're in the process of working out exactly what this means, production by production. This is in addition to the two weeks pay we've already committed to the crew and cast on productions we were forced to suspend last week.

Beyond helping workers on our own productions, we also want to support the broader film and television industry. So $15 million of the fund will go to third parties and non-profits providing emergency relief to out-of-work crew and cast in the countries where we have a large production base.

In the United States and Canada non-profits already exist to do this work. We will be donating $1 million each to the SAG-AFTRA Covid-19 Disaster Fund, the Motion Picture and Television Fund and the Actors Fund Emergency Assistance in the US, and $1 million between the AFC and Fondation des Artistes. In other regions, including Europe, Latin America and Asia where we have a big production presence, we are working with existing industry organizations to create similar creative community emergency relief efforts. We will announce the details of donations to groups in other countries next week.

What's happening is unprecedented. We are only as strong as the people we work with and Netflix is fortunate to be able to help those hardest hit in our industry through this challenging time.

Ted Sarandos, Chief Content Officer

This article originally appeared in **THR.com**.

Lizzo Asks Judge to 100% Dismiss Producers' 'Truth Hurts' Ownership Claims

BY ASHLEY CULLINS

Lizzo is asking a California federal judge to dismiss "opportunistic and legally bankrupt" copyright counterclaims in a dispute over her hit "Truth Hurts." The Grammy winner fired first in October asking the court for a declaration that Justin Raisen, Jeremiah Raisen and Justin "Yves" Rothman have no ownership rights in the song, or the now-famous line "I just took a DNA test, turns out I'm 100 percent that bitch."

The trio **filed its own suit** alleging Lizzo's hit was the result of a 2017 songwriting session for an unreleased demo called "Healthy" that never fully panned out, but key elements of which were used in her chart-topper. Now, Lizzo is asking the court to dismiss their request for a declaration that they jointly authored and jointly own the song and a series of related claims. "Defendants are wrong that they can co-own 'Truth Hurts' because (1) Defendants allegedly co-own the unreleased demo and (2) 'Truth Hurts' contains the same DNA test line and melody as contained in that unreleased work," writes attorney Cynthia Arato.

"As both the Ninth and Second Circuits have recognized, it would 'eviscerate' fundamental copyright law if new works based upon jointly authored works could be transformed into joint works, regardless of whether there had been any joint labor on the subsequent version. "Arato notes that while Lizzo and the producers disagree on whether the Raisens and Rothman actually co-own the unreleased demo, whether the similarities between the two works are limited to the meme-generated DNA test line and whether defendants waived their claims

in writing those arguments can and will be addressed later in litigation.

Read the full filing below.

This article originally appeared on **The Hollywood Reporter**.

Goldstar Launches Donations Project for Struggling Live Industry

BY ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ticketing outlet Goldstar focuses on live entertainment events. Now, with that industry crippled, the company is encouraging users to keep live events alive.

Subscribers are being asked to donate to live entertainment and arts organizations nationwide, giving the option of $10, $20 or $50 amounts.

The push is open to **all genres**, for profit and not, from the Center Stage Children's Theater in San Diego to The Theatre School at DePaul University in Chicago.

"We're tapping into our audience of 10 million subscribers to encourage them to donate at this critical time to support the artists, the people behind the scenes and all who bring so much to our lives," said Goldstar CEO **Jim McCarthy**.

Amazon, Apple, Facebook, Instagram Throttle Internet Streams in Europe

BY SCOTT ROXBOROUGH

Amazon, Facebook, its Instagram and Apple have joined Netflix, YouTube and Disney+ in complying with government requests in Europe to temporarily reduce online video bitrates as streaming demand surges during the coronavirus crisis.

Across the board, media and technology giants are temporarily throttling their online streaming services in Europe to avoid congestion or breakdown in service as more people are forced to stay at home.

"To help alleviate any potential network congestion, we will temporarily reduce bit rates for videos on Facebook and Instagram in Europe," Facebook, which has more than 300 million daily users, said in a statement. "We are committed to working with our partners to manage any bandwidth constraints during this period of heavy demand, while also ensuring people are able to remain connected using Facebook apps and services during the COVID-19 pandemic."

Amazon, whose originals include The Grand Tour, has also reduced bitrate speeds in Europe for its Amazon Prime video service. Following a similar move by Netflix, Amazon has removed the option to stream series and films in the bandwidth-heavy high-definition (HD) format.

Google-owned YouTube, Europe's largest video streaming site, set the default option for all of its videos to standard definition across Europe, but users still have the option to toggle viewing quality to HD.

Over the weekend, Disney announced it would put in place measures to lower the overall bandwidth utilization of its Disney+ service when it launches across much of Europe on Tuesday. Disney said the measures should "lower our overall bandwidth utilization by at least 25 percent" in all European territories where Disney+ is launching March 24, including the U.K., Ireland, Germany, Austria, Italy, Spain and Switzerland. Disney has pushed back the launch of Disney+ in France to April 7 at the request of the French government.

Apple, which bowed its Apple TV+ online service last November, has also voluntarily throttled its video bitrate in Europe to avoid straining the continent's network.

The moves come after the European Union's Internal Market and Services Commissioner Thierry Breton called on online video companies to do their part in reducing bandwidth demand. Breton expressed concerns that as millions of Europeans remain indoors amid stay-at-home orders, increased demand could tax online networks.

Netflix on Thursday said it was reducing bitrates across Europe, initially for 30 days, a move expected to reduce bandwidth demand for Netflix traffic by around 25 percent.

On Friday, Europe's government and regulatory bodies have authorized the European Union's telecom operators and internet service providers to apply exceptional measures, including the throttling of online speeds, to prevent network congestion.

With most of Europe's citizens under stay-at-home orders, demand for online services, from teleworking tools and online classes to video and gaming streaming sites, has shot up. So far, however, there have been no reports of major network disruption.

Other countries appear to be copying Europe's preemptive throttling approach. In India, the association of cellular operators, COAI, has written to streaming platforms and the government's department of telecommunications to take measures, including temporarily moving to standard definition streaming, to ease the pressure on the nation's online infrastructure

Meanwhile, in Israel, the communications ministry on Monday said Netflix will comply with a government request to reduce streaming quality in the country to help ease data congestion. Israeli Internet service providers have reported an average increase of as much as 30 percent since the coronavi-

rus outbreak.

This article was originally published by **The Hollywood Reporter**.

New Orleans Bounce DJ Black N Mild Dies at 44 After Coronavirus Diagnosis

BY KATIE BAIN

Longstanding New Orleans bounce DJ and radio personality Black N Mild has died after testing positive for coronavirus. The Orleans Parish coroner's office confirmed Friday (March 20) that the DJ, born Oliver Stokes Jr., died Thursday after contracting the virus. He was 44.

Stokes is known for bringing New Orleans bounce music to the radio. "I was the first DJ in Nola history to have a radio mix show dedicated to Nola Bounce from 03-05 (up to Katrina)," he wrote in a Feb. 3 **Facebook post**. After Hurricane Katrina, Stokes relocated to Houston, where he hosted a mix show on local radio. His *Rhythm and Bounce* show was featured on Saturday nights on New Orleans AM station WBOK from 2013 to 2017, an era Stokes also spent DJing at clubs, bars and parties throughout the region.

"One of the biggest and best compliments I ever got from somebody in the industry," Stokes said in **a 2012 interview** with Tulane University, "is when I was playing an industry event I was doing in '04. ... I was DJing the event and there were a lot of industry people there and **Doug E. Fresh** was hosting. ... Doug E. Fresh pulled me to the side and was like, 'Man, I've heard a lot of DJs in my time; you were one of the smoothest DJs I've ever heard.'"

The father of four also worked at the Arthur Ashe Charter School in New Orleans' Gentilly neighborhood. **According** to *The Times-Picayune*, Stokes Jr. left the school with a fever on March 9 and documented the early stages of his sickness on social media, writing his last post — "pneumonia not the flu" — on March 11.

The late DJ is not to be confused with New Orleans producer Adam "BlaqNmilD" Pigott, who has worked with artists including **Drake** and Lil Wayne.

IMS Ibiza 2020 Postponed Due to Coronavirus

BY KATIE BAIN

The annual dance music industry conference IMS Ibiza has been postponed due to the coronavirus. Originally set to take place May 20-22 in Ibiza, conference organizers have announced a virtual version of the event will take place instead in 2020. Dates are yet to be announced.

"Once the current situation has stabilized," reads an email from organizers sent earlier today (March 23), "we pledge to work with our friends and colleagues in the industry to find solutions to support all those in the electronic music ecosystem that will be directly impacted by ongoing cancellations, illness, financial uncertainty and self-isolation."

The conference also announced that much of the income from ticket sales has already been spent to produce the event. As such, the conference will offer badge and hotel refunds to attendees who request it, "but we ask our community where possible to transfer their tickets to the 2021 event to ensure the long term survival of the summit. Delegates will be contacted soon to confirm their preference, we thank you in advance for your patience whilst we navigate this unprecedented situation."

The conference was scheduled to feature **a keynote address** from Brian Eno, who himself was going to attend virtually in an effort to reduce carbon emissions.

"The COVID-19 pandemic will have a deep and long lasting impact on the global community," the statement continues. "We would like to take this opportunity to express our deepest sympathies and solidarity with all those that have been affected... IMS was launched in 2007 during a crisis moment for electronic music; we are as committed now as we were then to driving our industry forward."

Cardi B's Coronavirus Rant Remix Heading for Billboard Chart Debut

BY KEITH CAULFIELD

Cardi B's buzzy Instagram **rant** about coronavirus is now headed for the *Billboard* charts.

A **remix** of her rant, produced by DJ iMarkkeyz, is aiming for a debut on a number of charts next week, including the all-genre **Digital Song Sales** tally and **R&B/Hip-Hop Digital Song Sales**. According to initial sales reports to Nielsen Music/MRC Data, the song has already sold more than 3,000 downloads in the U.S.

The song's final sales tally for the week ending March 19 — along with its streaming total for the week — will be available by Monday, March 23. The above-mentioned charts, dated March 28, will be updated to *Billboard*'s website on Tuesday, March 24.

On March 19, Cardi B — who has helped promote the DJ iMarkkeyz remix through her social channels — said that she wants to **donate proceeds** from the sales and streams of the remix to charity. DJ iMarkkeyz agreed, tweeting to Cardi that was his "goal."

6ix9ine Seeks Early Prison Release Amid Coronavirus Outbreak

BY CARL LAMARRE

Though 6ix9ine is mere months away from being a free man, the rapper is looking to get out even sooner. In a letter obtained by *Billboard*, 6ix9ine's lawyer Lance Lazzaro states to Judge Engelmayer that his client is at high-risk for not only catching the coronavirus but also dying from it.

On Sunday (March 22), Lazzaro argued in a legal filing that 6ix9ine should be moved to home containment because he's suffering from "shortness of breath." He apparently also has a history of asthma, bronchitis, and sinusitis. "It seems like just a matter of time before all prisons in the area are hit with this virus, both inmates and guards," says Lazzaro.

Lazzaro also revealed that the facility's warden refused his client's pleas of needing to go to the hospital. "Mr. Hernandez has been complaining to prison officials this week of shortness of breath, but apparently, the warden of his facility will not allow Mr. Hernandez to go to the hospital," says Lazzaro.

Last December, 6ix9ine was **sentenced to two years** for his participation in a New York street gang but was granted an early release date of July 31.

"While I recognize that his release date is only about four months away, given the health crisis that is currently tearing through this region and Mr. Hernandez's compromised medical condition, please strongly consider modifying Mr. Hernandez's sentence so as to immediately make him eligible for home confinement," Lazzaro tells the judge.

He adds: "Given that Mr. Hernandez is at very high risk of death or serious complications if he contracts the coronavirus, please issue an order modifying his sentence to allow him to begin home confinement immediately."

Billboard reached out to 6ix9ine's reps and Lazarro for comment.

Kenny Rogers Was the Stream Between the Islands of Pop and Country

BY STEPHEN THOMAS ERLEWINE

Kenny Rogers always acknowledged he wasn›t a hard country singer.

"I've always been too pop for country and too country for pop," Rogers told Rob Tannenbaum at *Rolling Stone* **back in 2001,** when he was still basking in the afterglow of the success of "Buy Me a Rose," the last single of his to top the Billboard Country charts. A decade later, Rogers **told Dan Rather** he was a "country singer with a lot of other musical influences," a framing that acknowledged how the icon had strayed from the genre›s ideals — while reinforcing the idea that Kenny Rogers is still, at his core, a country singer.

It'd be silly to claim Rogers wasn't country. He was one of the biggest stars the genre ever produced, racking up 21 No. 1 hits on the Billboard Country Songs chart, all but one arriving between 1977 and 1987. But Rogers came to country music late in life, adopting the style after his chart-topping pop-rock group the First Edition imploded in the mid-1970s. By that point, he had been playing music in some professional capacity for the better part of two decades, so he recognized he had limited options as a singer pushing 40. Country was one of the few genres of American popular music that allowed plenty of space for music and sentiments of adults in their middle age.

As it happens, country was also one of the few genres this native Texan didn't play during his formative years. Raised on the poor side of Houston, Rogers started playing music the way so many children do, participating in church choir and singing in school. At the age of 12, he tagged along with his big sister to see Ray Charles play a concert and his world opened up. Soon, he was playing some rock & roll and singing doo-wop with his high school combo the Scholars, who released a handful of singles in Houston starting with 1956's **"Poor Little Doggie."**

He quickly went solo as Kenneth Rogers, scoring a modest regional hit in 1958 with **"That Crazy Feeling,"** but wound up abandoning rock & roll for jazz, taking a regular gig as the bassist for the Bobby Doyle Three. The trio played regularly and cut a record called In A Most Unusual Way for Columbia in 1962 (a youthful, clean-shaven Rogers is beaming brightly on the LP›s cover) but a few years later the group went their separate ways, with Rogers landing in a latter-day incarnation of the folk institution the New Christy Minstrels.

All these quick changes in direction happened over the course of ten years, a decade that failed to secure Rogers anything close to a national hit — a situation that changed quickly once he formed the First Edition with some fellow New Christy Minstrel refugees in 1967. The First Edition was designed to reflect their moment: namely, the paisley-spangled Summer Of Love. With Mike Post, an emerging hotshot record producer who'd later earn fame as a television composer, behind the board, they cut "Just Dropped In (To See What Condition My Condition Was In)," a trippy tune written by fellow Houstonite Mickey Newbury.

Filled with splashy studio trickery, it was a Hollywood version of an acid trip — no wonder it wound up famously **scoring the Dude's fever dream** in The Big Lebowski — but its kitchen-sink razzle-dazzle was anchored by the honeyed voice of Rogers; he didn›t so much lend it gravity as made all the weirdness seem safe, even attractive. Rogers wasn›t the only lead singer in the First Edition, but by the time they earned their second Top Ten hit, **"Ruby, Don›t Take Your Love To Town,"** in 1969, his name was above the band›s — the first star-

move in a career filled with them.

It also turned out to be a little premature. Rogers and the First Edition had one more big success (**"Something's Burning,"** a No. 11 hit that built from a simmer to a quick boil) in 1970, before struggling through the first part of the decade. Records kept coming, but the hits dried up — and eventually, the group did too, leaving Rogers grinding out a living singing to 600 people at Steve Wynn›s Golden Nugget. He was lucky enough to have developed a strong relationship with Larry Butler, a record producer who was appointed the head of United Artists› Nashville branch in 1973. Butler signed Rogers in 1975, and quickly laid the groundwork for Kenny›s country makeover.

The mid-'70s were rife with smooth country operators, and Butler steered Rogers down a path forged by Don Williams and Conway Twitty. The slow, steady country waltz of "Lucille" — a weary story song that gave Rogers first smash country hit in 1977 — crawled at the same deliberate tempo and delivered with the same slow hand as Williams, but Kenny's vibe veered toward Twitty. Like the latter, he was mature, masculine and seductive, singing about adult romances, whether they were unrequited, shattered or fulfilled. What set Rogers apart was a sly sense of showmanship, rooted equally in Hollywood and Vegas. He knew how to spin warmth and drama into his love songs, but those skills blossomed in the story songs he made his signature.

Chief among those story songs was "The Gambler," a Don Schlitz tune debuted by Bobby Bare on his 1978 album *Bare*. **In Bare's hands**, "The Gambler" was lean, lanky and just slightly mischievous, tall tales told by two professional drinkers at the end of the long night. Rogers realized that he was merely recounting the wisdom he learned from the old rounder; he was witnessing the revelry and life experience, not participating. That slight sense of distance is the reason why Kenny's version of "The Gambler" not only became a crossover smash over the course of 1979, but the defining song of Rogers' career: He coaxed out the universal truths and the pop hooks within this hard country song.

"The Gambler" changed everything for Kenny Rogers, pushing him out of the confines of the country charts, giving him a lasting career as a crooner and even opening up a side career as an actor, as the song was adapted into a TV movie in 1980. Despite this massive success, Rogers only tried to replicate its story song formula once more, with "Coward of the County," a cautionary tale that did even better than "The Gambler" on the Hot 100 (and was also turned into a TV movie).

Instead, Rogers turned his attention to ballads, amiable trifles, **and duets** with female hitmakers like Kim Carnes, Sheena Easton, and Dolly Parton — music that walked the thin line separating country-pop and adult contemporary. Underneath the slick surfaces, Rogers was more adventurous than he›d seem upon first glance: He invited Carnes and her husband Dave Ellingson to write the 1980 concept album *Gideon*, drafted Lionel Richie to write the country-soul ballad **"Lady,"** incorporated elements of disco and quiet storm when both R&B sounds were fashionable, and even recorded a Prince song called **"You›re My Love"** in 1986. He also teamed up with the Bee Gees for Eyes That See In The Dark, a 1983 yacht-country masterwork that underscored how Kenny Rogers was at his best when he was navigating the shady gap separating country and pop.

Eyes That See In The Dark contained his last big smash in "Islands In The Stream," a duet with Dolly Parton that became a standard on the level of "The Gambler." Rogers racked up country hits for a couple more years — his last number one arrived in 1987 with the Ronnie Milsap duet **"Make No Mistake, She›s Mine"** — but he didn›t attempt to expand his reach after 1984, when he threaded modern soul into What About Me? He had found his audience, and he spent the next three decades maintaining his connection with his fans, touring constantly and recording the kind of albums that are sold in gift shops, Cracker Barrels and fan clubs: collections of holiday songs, gospel, and re-interpretations of his old tunes — punctuated by the occasional high-profile project, like 2013›s originals set *You Can›t Make Old Friends*.

None of this activity enhanced his stardom but it hardly diminished it, either. Kenny Rogers had long ago achieved the kind of fame where his persona was a rock that could neither be sculpted or eroded: he was a fixture in American culture, providing reassurance and warmth with his presence, whether it was on stage or on record. Rogers bid farewell to the road in 2017 and died three years later, but his hit singles still have the ability to offer comfort and console now that he's gone.

'Frozen 2' Early Digital Release Brought Soundtrack Back to Top 10 on Billboard 200 Chart

BY KEITH CAULFIELD

The soundtrack to *Frozen 2* returns to the top 10 on the **Billboard 200** chart for the first time in two months thanks to the film's early arrival to digital retail and rental services, as well as the Disney+ streaming platform (on March 14).

The former No. 1 album rebounds with an 18-10 jump on the list, earning 31,000 equivalent album units in the U.S. in the week ending March 19, according to Nielsen Music/MRC Data. The set was last in the top 10 on the Jan. 25-dated list, when it ranked at No. 8.

The Billboard 200 chart ranks the most popular albums of the week in the U.S. based on multi-metric consumption as measured in equivalent album units. Units comprise album sales, track equivalent albums (TEA) and streaming equivalent albums (SEA). The new March 28-dated chart, where *Frozen 2* jumps 1810 (and Lil Uzi Vert's *Eternal Atake* **holds at No. 1**), will be posted in full on *Billboard*'s website on March 24.

In a statement, Disney **announced** the film's accelerated digital release — three months earlier than scheduled — "for families during these challenging times." The film's digital arrival was likely warmly embraced by families and kids in self-quarantine owed to the coronavirus pandemic.

'Islands in the Stream,' 'The Gambler' & More: Kenny Rogers' Biggest Billboard Hits

BY GARY TRUST

Kenny Rogers, who **died March 20 at age 81**, forged an extraordinary career on multiple *Billboard* charts, most notably on the **Hot Country Songs** survey.

The legend tallied 21 Hot Country Songs No. 1s, among 36 top 10s, from "Lucille," in 1977, through "Buy Me a Rose," with Alison Krauss and Billy Dean, in 2000.

Rogers first reached the ranking dated July 19, 1969, with "Ruby, Don't Take Your Love to Town," credited to Kenny Rogers and The First Edition (before he went solo in 1973). He most recently appeared on the chart dated May 5, 2007, with "Calling Me," featuring Don Henley.

Rogers scaled the chart with duets with fellow country icons Dottie West, Dolly Parton and Ronnie Milsap, among others, while, reflecting his sonic versatility, he recorded songs written by Lionel Richie ("Lady"), Bee Gees ("Islands in the Stream") and a nascent Richard Marx. "Crazy," which the pair co-penned, topped Hot Country Songs in 1985, two years before Marx's own breakthrough as an artist.

On **Top Country Albums**, Rogers earned 12 No. 1s, among 26 top 10s, first leading with his self-titled set in 1977. He most recently reached the top 10 with *You Can't Make Old Friends* (No. 9, 2013).

On the all-genre **Billboard Hot 100** songs chart, Rogers banked 42 titles between 1968 and 2006. He reached the Hot 100 before Hot Country Songs, with two titles credited to The First Edition: "Just Dropped In (To See What Condition My Condition Was In)," a No. 5 hit in 1968, and "But You Know I Love You" (No. 19, 1969). Rogers notched 11 Hot 100 top 10s, including two No. 1s: "Lady," for six weeks in 1980, and "Islands in the Stream," with Parton (two weeks, 1983).

Rogers' pop crossover appeal extended to his version of Bob Seger's "We've Got Tonight," which he covered with Sheena Easton (No. 6 on the Hot 100, 1983), and he took a turn as one of the soloists on USA for Africa's all-star "We Are the World," which ruled the Hot 100 for four weeks in 1985.

On the all-genre **Billboard 200** albums chart, Rogers posted 44 titles, including four top 10s, one of which reigned: *Kenny Rogers' Greatest Hits*, for two weeks in 1980.

Rogers additionally achieved 28 top 10s on the **Adult Contemporary** airplay chart, including eight No. 1s. He graced the chart as recently as 2016, when "Here It Is Christmas"/"Baby, It's Cold Outside," featuring Jennifer Nettles, hit No. 18.

In honor of the musical titan, here is a recap of Rogers' 40 biggest hits on *Billboard*'s Hot Country Songs chart.

Kenny Rogers' Biggest Billboard Hits

1, "Islands in the Stream," with Dolly Parton, No. 1 peak (2 weeks), 1983

2, "Coward of the County," No. 1 (3 weeks), 1980

3, "She Believes in Me," No. 1 (2 weeks), 1979

4, "Morning Desire," No. 1 (1 week), 1986

5, "Real Love," Dolly Parton with Rogers, No. 1 (1 week), 1985

6, "The Gambler," No. 1 (3 weeks), 1978

7, "Love Will Turn You Around," No. 1 (1 week), 1982

8, "I Don't Need You," No. 1 (2 weeks), 1981

9, "Tomb of the Unknown Love," No. 1 (1 week), 1986

10, "Love or Something Like It," No. 1 (1 week), 1978

11, "What Are We Doin' in Love," Dottie West with Rogers, No. 1 (1 week), 1981

12, "Every Time Two Fools Collide," Rogers & Dottie West, No. 1 (2 weeks), 1978

13, "We've Got Tonight," Rogers & Sheena Easton, No. 1 (1 week), 1983

14, "I Prefer the Moonlight," No. 2, 1987

15, "All I Ever Need Is You," Rogers & Dottie West, No. 1 (1 week), 1979

16, "Lady," No. 1 (1 week), 1980

17, "Lucille," No. 1 (2 weeks), 1977

18, "Twenty Years Ago," No. 2, 1987

19, "Don't Fall in Love With a Dreamer," No. 3, 1980

20, "A Love Song," No. 3, 1982

21, "Anyone Who Isn't Me Tonight," Rogers & Dottie West, No. 2, 1978

22, "Make No Mistake, She's Mine," Rogers & Ronnie Milsap, No. 1 (1 week), 1987

23, "Crazy," No. 1 (1 week), 1985

24, "You Decorated My Life," No. 1 (2 weeks), 1979

25, "Daytime Friends," No. 1 (1 week), 1977

26, "Through the Years," No. 5, 1982

27, "Buy Me a Rose," with Alison Krauss & Billy Dean, No. 1 (1 week), 2000

28, "Love the World Away," No. 4, 1980

29, "The Factory," No. 6, 1988

30, "Share Your Love With Me," No. 5, 1981

31, "Scarlet Fever," No. 5, 1983

32, "Till I Can Make It on My Own," Rogers & Dottie West, No. 3, 1979

33, "Buried Treasure," No. 3, 1984

34, "The Vows Go Unbroken (Always True to You)," No. 8, 1989

35, "Blaze of Glory," No. 9, 1982

36, "Sweet Music Man," No. 9, 1977

37, "If You Want to Find Love," No. 11, 1992

38, "All My Life," No. 13, 1983

39, "Evening Star," No. 11, 1984

40, "I Can't Unlove You," No. 17, 2006

Kenny Rogers' Biggest Billboard *Hits are based on actual performance on the weekly Hot Country Songs chart, through the March 21, 2020, ranking. Songs are ranked based on an inverse point system, with weeks at No. 1 earning the greatest value and weeks at lower ranks earning lesser values. Due to changes in chart methodology over the years, certain eras are weighted to account for different chart turnover rates over various periods.*

A 'Stupid' Ask Billboard Mailbag, From Lady Gaga to BTS, Elvis Presley & More

BY GARY TRUST

Submit questions about Billboard *charts, as well as general music musings, to* **askbb@billboard.com**.

Please include your first and last name, as well as your city, state and country, if outside the U.S.

Or, tweet **@gthot20**.

Let's open the latest mailbag.

Hi Gary,

Lady Gaga gave us one of her best tunes with "Bad Romance." Now, we have an update of sorts, musically and title-wise, thanks to "Stupid Love."

It's also the latest **Billboard Hot 100** hit with a simple adjective descriptor in front of the word "Love."

I think it would be a fun idea to run down all those types of songs, and certainly not a "stupid" one (or a "stoopid" one, to paraphrase Alice Cooper's "Hey Stoopid," a No. 78 Hot 100 hit in 1991).

So many silly "love" songs to celebrate, especially in a time when we could all use the best of humanity's love.

Pablo Nelson

Oakland, California

Hi Pablo,

Thanks as always. Hope you're staying safe.

(And if you're like the *Billboard* staff, perhaps you're actually seeing more of your co-workers these days, even at home, via video chats. The downside? Finding a view that shows the least clutter. [Tip: aim your computer's camera toward a window ...] The upside? Pets!)

Let's all take our minds off the more serious issues facing us these days with a chart-geeky topic like this.

How has love been represented over the years on the Hot 100? Let us count the ways.

Here's a look at notable "love" stories that have hit the chart's top 40. As musical artists are poets, we've seen, and heard, no shortage of viewpoints.

"Afire Love," Ed Sheeran, No. 37, 2014

"Baby Love," The Supremes, No. 1 (four weeks), 1964

"Baby Love," Regina, No. 10, 1986

"A Better Love," Londonbeat, No. 18, 1991

"Big Love," Fleetwood Mac, No. 5, 1987

"Burning Love," Elvis Presley, No. 2, 1972

"Butta Love," Next, No. 16, 1997

"Cold Love," Donna Summer, No. 33, 1981

"Cool Love," Pablo Cruise, No. 13, 1981

"Crazy Love," Poco, No. 17, 1979

"Crazy Love," The Allman Brothers Band, No. 29, 1979

"Endless Love," Diana Ross & Lionel Richie, No. 1 (nine weeks), 1981**"Endless Love,"** Luther Vandross & Mariah Carey, No. 2, 1994

"An Everlasting Love," Andy Gibb, No. 5, 1978

"Everlasting Love," Carl Carlton, No. 6, 1974

"Everlasting Love," Rex Smith & Rachel Sweet, No. 32, 1981

"Everlasting Love," Howard Jones, No. 12, 1989

"Everlasting Love," Gloria Estefan, No. 27, 1995**"Fake Love,"** BTS, No. 10, 2018

"Fastlove," George Michael, No. 8, 1996

"First Time Love," Livingston Taylor, No. 38, 1980

"Forever Love," Color Me Badd, No. 15, 1992

"Ghetto Love," Da Brat feat. T-Boz, No. 16, 1997**"Greatest Love of All,"** Whitney Houston, No. 1 (three weeks), 1986

"A Groovy Kind of Love," The Mindbenders, No. 2, 1966

"Groovy Kind of Love," Phil Collins (two weeks), No. 1, 1988

"Higher Love," Steve Winwood, No. 1 (one week), 1986

"Honey Love," R. Kelly & Public Announcement, No. 39, 1992

"Jungle Love," The Steve Miller Band, No. 23, 1977

"Jungle Love," The Time, No. 20, 1985

"Lady Love," Lou Rawls, No. 24, 1978

"Letting Go (Dutty Love)," Sean Kingston feat. Nicki Minaj, No. 36, 2010

"A Little Love," Corey Hart, No. 37, 1990

"Lost Love," H.B. Barnum, No. 35, 1961

"Lotta Love," Nicolette Larson, No. 8, 1979

"A Love Bizarre," Sheila E., No. 11, 1986

"A Love So Fine," The Chiffons, No. 40, 1963

"Lucky Love," Ace of Base, No. 30, 1996

"Mighty Love – Pt. 1," The Spinners, No. 20, 1974

"Modern Love," David Bowie, No. 14, 1983

"More Love," Smokey Robinson & The Miracles, No. 23, 1967

"More Love," Kim Carnes, No. 10, 1980

"Muskrat Love," Captain & Tennille, No. 4, 1976

"My Love," Petula Clark, No. 1, 1966

"My Love," Paul McCartney & Wings, No. 1 (four weeks), 1973

"My Love," Lionel Richie, No. 5, 1983

"My Love," Justin Timberlake feat. T.I., No. 1 (three weeks), 2006

"My Own True Love," Jimmy Clanton, No. 33, 1959

"My Own True Love," The Duprees, No. 13, 1962

"My Summer Love," Ruby and The Romantics, No. 16, 1963

"My True Love," Jack Scott, No. 3, 1958

"Old-Fashion Love," Commodores, No. 20, 1980

"Our Love," Natalie Cole, No. 10, 1978

"Our Winter Love," Bill Pursell, No. 9, 1963

"Part Time Love," Little Johnny Taylor, No. 19, 1963

"Part Time Love," Gladys Knight and The Pips, No. 22, 1975

"Part-Time Love," Elton John, No. 22, 1978

"Precious Love," Bob Welch, No. 19, 1979

"Puppy Love," Paul Anka, No. 2, 1960

"Puppy Love," Barbara Lewis, No. 38, 1964

"Puppy Love," Donny Osmond, No. 3, 1972

"Radar Love," Golden Earring, No. 13, 1974

"Real Love," The Doobie Brothers, No.

5, 1980

“Real Love,” Jody Watley, No. 2, 1989

“Real Love,” Mary J. Blige, No. 7, 1992

“Runaway Love,” Ludacris feat. Mary J. Blige, No. 2, 2007

“Same Love,” Macklemore & Ryan Lewis feat. Mary Lambert, No. 11, 2013

“Saturday Love,” Cherrelle with Alexander O›Neal, No. 26, 1986

“Second Hand Love,” Connie Francis, No. 7, 1962

“Secret Love,” Billy Stewart, No. 29, 1966

“Secret Love,” Freddy Fender, No. 20, 1975

“Sexy Love,” Ne-Yo, No. 7, 2006

“Stone Love,” Kool & The Gang, No. 10, 1987

“Stoned Love,” The Supremes, No. 7, 1970

“Stupid Love,” Lady Gaga, No. 5, 2020

“Sweet Love,” Commodores, No. 5, 1976

“Sweet Love,” Anita Baker, No. 8, 1986**”Tainted Love,”** Soft Cell, No. 8, 1982

“Tender Love,” Force M.D.›s, No. 10, 1986

“The Greatest Love of All,” George Benson, No. 24, 1977

“The Real Love,” Bob Seger & The Silver Bullet Band, No. 24, 1991

“The Right Kind of Love,” Jeremy Jordan , No. 14, 1993

“This Love,” Maroon 5, No. 5, 2004

“True Blue Love,” Lou Gramm, No. 40, 1990**”True Love,”** Glenn Frey, No. 13, 1988

“Warm and Tender Love,” Percy Sledge, No. 17, 1966

“Wasted Love,” Matt McAndrew, No. 14 , 2015

“Wild Wild Love,” Pitbull feat. G.R.L., No. 30, 2014

“Yester Love,” Smokey Robinson & The Miracles, No. 31, 1968

“Young Love,” Air Supply, No. 38, 1982

“Your Love,” Graham Central Station, No. 38, 1975

“Your Love,” Marilyn McCoo & Billy Davis, Jr., No. 15, 1977**”Your Love,”** The Outfield, No. 6, 1986

“Your Love,” Nicki Minaj, No. 14, 2010

“Your One and Only Love,” Jackie Wilson, No. 40, 1961

“Your Other Love,” Connie Francis, No. 28, 1963

“Your Precious Love,” Marvin Gaye & Tammi Terrell, No. 5, 1967

“Your Unchanging Love,” Marvin Gaye, No. 33, 1967

Lucia Bosé, Italian Actress and Mother of Pop Star Miguel Bosé, Dies at 89

BY JUDY CANTOR-NAVAS

Lucia Bosé, the Italian actress and mother of Spanish Pop star Miguel Bosé, has died at age 89.

Miguel Bosé confirmed his mother’s death via social media on Monday (March 23). “Dear friends...my mother Lucía Bosé has just passed away. She is in the best of places,” he wrote.

According to **Spanish news reports** that cited information provided by family members, Lucia Bosé died of pneumonia in her Brieva, the small town in Spain where she lived. **Some outlets** reported that her death came after being infected with the coronavirus, though *Billboard* has not yet been able to confirm.

Bosé was known for her roles in movies including Fellini’s Satyricon and Death of a Cyclist, directed by Jaun Anotnio Bardem (Javier Bardem’s father). A great beauty who was crowned Miss Italy when she was a teenager, she married the famous Spanish bullfighter Miguel Dominguín.

The dashing couple, who were married from 1955-1967, had three children, Miguel, Lucia and Paula. After leaving her career to raise her family, Bosé occasionally returned to the screen in small film roles.

See Miguel Bosé’s tweet below.

Cali Roots Postponed, Organizers Announce Plans to Release Unheard Music by Participating Artists

BY TAYLOR MIMS

The California Roots Music & Arts Festival has moved its annual event from May 22-24 to Oct. 9-11 at the Monterey County Fair and Event Center. According to the festival, 99% of its original lineup plans to return on the rescheduled dates with headlining appearances from Damian Marley, **Rebelution**, **Stick Figure**, **Sean Paul**, **Ice Cube**, **Atmosphere**, **Chronixx**, **Sublime with Rome** and many more.

The California festival has partnered with Ineffable Records to release 21 never-before-heard tracks from artists from the Cali Roots scene called *Cali Roots Riddim 2020*. Starting Friday with **Collie Buddz**’ “Hold Firm,” a new song from the project will drop on all digital music platforms with the full project coming out on May 22, the original kick off date for Cali Roots 2020.

“As we continue to deal with these unprecedented circumstances, we want to thank our community for being so patient. We hope that the release of ‘Cali Roots Riddim 2020’ will keep fans quenched with new music as we all wait a bit longer to enjoy our annual weekend together,” said Cali Roots co-producer and Ineffable partner **Dan Sheehan** in a release. “The project is exciting, as we are the first festival to launch its own ‘riddim.’”

A riddim is an instrumental that is sent to a number of artists, each recording vocals and creating a unique song over the same

exact instrumental. Riddim compilations have been a part of Jamaican and reggae music culture for decades and in this case will feature top reggae acts from the US, as well as incorporating Jamaican acts and acts from around the world.

Cali Roots Riddim 2020 is produced by Bermudian reggae star Collie Buddz and will include American reggae artists like **SOJA**, **Pepper**, Common Kings, and The Movement who have joined Jamaican stars like Jesse Royal and **Anthony B**. Other international acts like France's Dub Inc and Germany's **Gentleman** will add their own unique song over the same beat.

Beginning Friday, a single from the project will be released each Friday leading up to the full 21 track compilation's release. The version with Collie Buddz's vocals, "Hold Firm" will drop on March 27, The Movement's track "Alien" will drop on April 3, and Anthony B's track "Chill Out" will drop April 10.

"We're living in a time that has decimated the music industry amongst many other industries. A lot of our business revolves around the live side, so right now we need to be creative. While we started this project before the crisis hit, we believe projects like these are what the industry needs to focus on for the time being," said Ineffable Music's head of label services and Cali Roots Riddim executive producer **Adam Gross** in a release. "21 acts all around the world banding together to promote each other's music is really a beautiful thing, and we need to do all we can to unify and lift all boats and help each other out right now. This virus can take away a lot of things, but it cannot take away our ability to stream music to support independent artists."

California Roots Festival and Ineffable Records are both part of the Ineffable Music Group umbrella.

Apple Music's Beats 1 Hosts Shift to Remote Broadcasting

BY TATIANA CIRISANO

Apple Music's Beats 1 global radio station will return to the airwaves today (March 23) with one notable change: In light of the coronavirus outbreak, all hosts will now broadcast remotely from their homes.

"To prioritize the health and safety of its staff and guests, beginning today, Apple Music hosts will record their shows with field equipment from their homes, working virtually via FaceTime on iPhone," reads a press release from the company. "Tune in for an array of fresh and genre-spanning shows through out the week as Beats 1 remains committed to continuing to deliver its eclectic programming to passionate music fans across the globe."

The new programming kicks off at 9:00 a.m. PST today, when lead anchor **Zane Lowe** will host FaceTime discussions with the likes of **Elton John**, **Miley Cyrus** and **Lil Nas X**. Then, at 12:00 p.m. PST, host **Ebro Darden** will hop online to speak with **Jhene Aiko**.

Apple Music hosts **Rebecca Judd**, **Brooke Reese**, **Nadeska Alexis**, **Julie Adenuga**, **Travis Mills**, **Hanuman Welch**, **Kelleigh Bannen**, **Sandra Peña**, and **El Guru** will also all be on the air in their regular time slots.

Later this week, Lowe will catch up with **Charli XCX**, **Harry Styles** and **Hayley Williams**; while Darden will check in with Lil Baby, **A Boogie wit da Hoodie** and **Don Toliver**. The week's schedule also includes radio shows from Elton John, **The Weeknd**, **Queens of The Stone Age**'s Josh Homme, **Vampire Weekend**'s Ezra Koenig, **DJ Khaled**, **Jax Jones**, **Action Bronson**, Briggs, and more recorded on their iPhones.

The Weeknd Enters Week Nine Atop Australia's Singles Chart With 'Blinding Lights'

BY LARS BRANDLE

The companion album to the historic Fire Fight Australia concert last month in Sydney has lit up the **Australian chart**, while **The Weeknd's** "Blinding Lights" (Republic/Universal) enters a ninth week atop the **national singles chart**.

Artists Unite For Fire Fight: Concert For National Bushfire Relief, the new No. 1 on the ARIA Albums Chart, features live cuts from the Fire Fight concert at Sydney's ANZ Stadium on Feb. 16.

Released on March 13, the double-album features recordings from all 23 artists who performed on the day, including **k.d lang**, **John Farnham** & **Olivia Newton-John**, **Queen** + **Adam Lambert**, **5 Seconds of Summer** and more.

To increase the profit for donations, Sony Music Australia has only made the album available in CD and download formats, but not on streaming platforms.

The Fire Fight spectacular was a sell-out with more than 75,000 attending the show in Olympic Park, generating upwards of $9.5 million for good causes.

All proceeds from Fire Fight album sales go to Sony Foundation Australia to support young Australians in bushfire affected communities.

With the all-star album bagging top spot this week, **Niall Horan** opens at No. 2 with *Heartbreak Weather* (Capitol/EMI), his second solo album. *Heartbreak Weather* starts at No. 1 in the U.K.

It's the followup to 2017's *Flicker*, which also hit No. 2 on the ARIA Albums Chart and is now certified gold. The former **One**

Direction singer is booked for a three-date arena tour of Australia this September and October, produced by TEG Live.

The Irishman's fellow former 1D star **Harry Styles** occupies the No. 3 position with *Fine Line* (up 4-3 via Columbia/Sony) while **Billie Eilish's** *When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?* (down 3-4, Interscope/Universal) and **Lil Uzi Vert's** *Eternal Atake* (down 1-5 via Atlantic/Warner) complete the top 5.

Australian country star Adam Brand bags his sixth top 10 with *Speed Of Life* (ABC/Universal), his first studio album in more than three years. It's new at No. 6.

Just days after announcing one of its members had contracted the **novel coronavirus**, **Ocean Grove** receive some good news. The Melbourne metalcore band's sophomore album *Flip Phone Fantasy* (UNFD/Sony) opens at No. 8 on the national albums chart, and rules the ARIA Vinyl Albums Chart.

Award winning country singer-songwriter **Fanny Lumsden** makes her first appearance in the top 10 with *Fallow* (Cooking Vinyl/Sony). Lumsden's third album bows at No. 10, eclipsing the No. 23 peak of her 2017 set *Real Class Act*, which was nominated for an ARIA Award and won best independent country album award at the 2018 AIR Awards.

Over on the ARIA Singles Chart, The Weeknd's "Blinding Lights" continues its winning streak with the Canadian R&B singer's fourth and latest album *After Hours* expected to bow debut high this weekend.

After vaulting 18 places last week, **SAINt JHN's** "Roses" (Sony) leaps 12-7, for its first stint in the top 10.

After taking out triple j's Hottest 100 of the Decade on March 14, **Tame Impala's** modern classic "The Less I Know The Better" (Modular/Universal) bursts back onto the chart. The track hits No. 17 on the ARIA Singles Chart, easily beating its previous peak of No. 66 back in February 2016. Tame Impala's newest album *The Slow Rush* opened at No. 1 on the ARIA Albums Chart last month, and is at No. 15 this week.

And finally, **Tones And I** returns to Australian singles chart with "Bad Child" (Bad Batch/Sony), her first new release in 2020. "Bad Child," released as a double A-side along with "Can't Be Happy All the Time," starts at No. 18.

The former busker (real name Toni Watson) ruled the national chart for a record-setting 24 weeks #1 with "Dance Monkey" and scooped four trophies at the 2019 ARIA Awards, including best female artist.

Forever No. 1: Kenny Rogers & Dolly Parton's 'Islands in the Stream'

BY ANNIE ZALESKI

Forever No. 1 is a Billboard series that pays special tribute to the recently deceased artists who achieved the highest honor our charts have to offer — a Billboard Hot 100 No. 1 single — by taking an extended look back at the chart-topping songs that made them part of this exclusive club. Here, we honor the late Kenny Rogers by diving into the second of his two Hot 100 toppers, the timeless Dolly Parton duet "Islands in the Stream."

Released in summer 1983, the **Kenny Rogers** and **Dolly Parton** duet "Islands in the Stream" is the kind of easy, breezy pop song that›s the platonic ideal of adult contemporary. Anchored by a laid-back tempo, open-hearted vocals, and lush orchestration — a mellow latticework comprising sparkling keyboards, rakish horns, and string swells — the song became Rogers' second No. 1 hit.

"Islands"— written by Maurice, Barry and Robin Gibb, a.k.a. the Bee Gees — is also the perfect soundtrack to a warm-weather fling. The lyrics describe the lightning-bolt feeling of intoxicating love at first sight: "Baby, when I met you there was peace unknown/ I set out to get you with a fine-tooth comb." However, the song's protagonists are in sync with each other's desires. This isn't an unrequited crush, but head-over-heels romance that endures.

That's evident in the verses ("All this love we feel needs no conversation/ We ride it together"), and even more obvious in the chorus. The two lovebirds are inseparable "islands in the stream" who beckon each other to "sail away with me to another world" where they "rely on each other."

Parton and Rogers frequently sing the song's verses together, which underscores the unity of the romantic union being described. However, they never overwhelm each other's parts, and are generous and respectful of vocal space — something that seems natural, since their voices blend together perfectly. And when they do occasionally take solo turns to emphasize lyrical gravity, the emotional resonance is striking. For example, Parton sounds vulnerable and forlorn as she envisions what might happen if she and her beau were parted: "I can't live without you if the love was gone/ Everything is nothing if you got no one." Rogers, meanwhile, draws on his time in the '60s rock group the First Edition to belt out his parts with grit and confidence — he's gruff but sensitive, the perfect tone for this tune.

On the **chart dated October 29, 1983**, "Islands in the Stream" ascended to No. 1 on the Hot 100 in its tenth week on the charts, replacing Bonnie Tyler's "Total Eclipse of the Heart" on top. The song also reached the top of the country charts that same week, and was spending its third week at No. 1 on the Adult Contemporary chart as well. This multi-chart dominance is even more impressive when you consider that the song didn't have a video on MTV, a rarity for the pop charts at this juncture. Of that week's top 20 songs on the Hot 100, 11 had videos in medium or heavy rotation on the channel; a twelfth song, Lionel Richie's "All Night Long (All Night)" had a clip added to the channel that week.

"Islands in the Stream" was the second Hot 100 No. 1 for both Parton and Rogers: The former's **"9 to 5"** reached the peak for two weeks in 1981, and the latter›s **"Lady"** reigned for six weeks in 1980. At the time the song hit, Parton and Rogers were running somewhat parallel careers: Not only were they enjoying crossover success, but

each had branched out into acting. Rogers starred in the 1982 movie Six Pack and the beloved made-for-TV movies based on his hit "The Gambler." Parton, meanwhile, was on a cinematic hot streak thanks to star turns in 1980›s 9 to 5 and 1982›s The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas.

Incredibly enough, however, Parton and Rogers had never collaborated musically before "Islands in the Stream" — save for Rogers' **appearance** on a 1976 episode of the variety show Dolly! That fact wasn›t lost on Maurice Gibb, as he recalled in The Ultimate Biography Of The Bee Gees: Tales Of The Brothers Gibb. "We imagined Dolly singing the other part on ["Islands in the Stream"], because she was the queen of country, he was the king, [but] they never sang together [before]. So it's a perfect sort of marriage." However, Rogers at first tried to sing the song solo; after four days of trying to nail his vocal part, he was frustrated.

"I finally said, 'Barry [Gibb], I don't even like this song anymore' and he said, 'You know what we need? We need Dolly Parton,'" Rogers told **People** in 2017. Incredibly enough, Parton happened to be downstairs from Rogers in the same studio complex, he recalled. "My manager Ken Kragen said, 'I just saw her!' and I said, 'Well, go get her!' He went downstairs and she came marching into the room, and once she came in and started singing the song was never the same. It took on a personality of its own." That spark was evident from the pair's first live performance of the **song**, which came on the CMA Awards telecast on October 10, 1983.

Yet making "Islands in the Stream" a duet was **a go-to move** for Rogers during this era. In 1978, he teamed up with country legend Dottie West for the duets album Every Time Two Fools Collide, whose title track topped the country charts. Rogers further expanded his sonic range (and earned pop crossover success) with the Kim Carnes collaboration "Don't Fall In Love With A Dreamer," a No. 4 Hot 100 hit in 1980. And in early 1983, Rogers and Sheena Easton teamed up for a cover of Bob Seger's "We've Got Tonight" that peaked at No. 6 on the Hot 100.

A desire for new collaboration also led Rogers to enlist Barry Gibb to co-produce his 1983 album Eyes That See in the Dark, where "Islands" eventually found its LP home. At the time the country star came calling, Gibb and brothers Robin and Maurice had retreated from their own music and were focused on writing for other artists. The move was wildly successful: After dominating pop music during the late-'70s disco era with the Bee Gees, the trio continued to have a prominent chart presence in the early '80s — only this time as songwriters, producers and guest stars.

In 1980, Barry co-produced Barbra Streisand's studio album Guilty and co-wrote (along with Robin) "Woman In Love," which spent three weeks atop the Hot 100 (before giving way to Rogers› "Lady"). The following year, Streisand added two more top 10 smashes from Guilty, both duets with Barry: the title track (No. 3) — which was written by all three brothers—and "What Kind of Fool" (No. 10), another Barry co-write. Conway Twitty took a cover of the Bee Gees' 1978 b-side "Rest Your Love on Me" to No. 1 on the country charts in 1981. And in 1982, Dionne Warwick topped the adult contemporary chart and peaked at No. 10 on the Hot 100 with "Heartbreaker," another song by all three Gibb.

"Islands in the Stream" also had roots in R&B. Although widely cited as being written for Marvin Gaye, the Bee Gees actually had another Motown legend in mind as it came together. "We were writing a song for Diana Ross, but she never got [a]round to hearing it, and Kenny wanted a song and we came up with this one," Barry Gibb said in The Ultimate Biography Of The Bee Gees: Tales Of The Brothers Gibb. "It was written as an R&B song, so it just shows you the relationship between the two types of songs that it could, in fact, turn into a country song very easily."

Rogers prided himself on this malleable vocal nature, as he said in the liner notes of Kenny Rogers Through the Years: A Retrospective, although he never lost sight of his strengths. "I am a country singer with a tremendous amount of other influences. No matter what I do, it's always going to have a country influence to it. That's just where my heart is." That assessment proved prescient, as Rogers continued to enjoy major country success for the rest of the '80s, but "Islands in the Stream" would mark the end of his upper-echelon pop success. He only reached the Hot 100's top 40 three times after this, with the high point being "What About Me?" with Kim Carnes and James Ingram, which hit No. 15 in 1984.

However, "Islands in the Stream" cemented a decades-long association with Dolly Parton, which kept Rogers in the mainstream eye. The pair had another No. 1 country hit in 1985 with **"Real Love,"** and teamed up for the title track of Rogers› 2013 album You Can't Make Old Friends. Parton and Rogers also released a best-selling holiday album, 1984's Once Upon a Christmas, and followed that up several popular TV specials.

And "Islands in the Stream" has taken on a life of its own over the years. It's been covered multiple times by country and pop acts: Barry Gibb did the song **live** with Olivia Newton-John, Barry Manilow and Reba McEntire cut a version in 2008, and Miley Cyrus and Shawn Mendes **dueted** on it just last year. Indie musicians have also embraced the song, in particular a live version by **My Morning Jacket and Neko Case**, and a luxurious studio version by **Feist and Constantines**.

The song would also spawn many inspired interpretations — most notably in 1998, when Fugees MC Pras used elements of the song for the chorus to **"Ghetto Supastar (That Is What You Are),"** a top 20 hit alongside Mya (who sang the "Islands"-derived hook) and Ol› Dirty Bastard. A **2009 cover version** by actors from the BBC sitcom Gavin & Stacey would also hit No. 1 in the U.K., while the U.S. version of The Office even used the song in a beloved episode, where Michael and Jim sing it at karaoke. To nobody's surprise, it's also a real-life **karaoke staple**.

Rogers also performed "Islands in the Stream" with other collaborators over the years, **including Sugarland's Jennifer Nettles**. However, nothing compared to when he and Parton performed the song together, which they did multiple times throughout the years. **The final time**, at 2017's "All In for the Gambler: Kenny Rog-

ers' Farewell Concert Celebration," was both emotional and reassuring: Parton and Rogers had the easygoing demeanor of old friends, and while the swagger of previous live duets wasn't quite there, the magical musical spark that always powered the song still burned bright.

Forever No. 1: Kenny Rogers' 'Lady'

BY BRAD SHOUP

Forever No. 1 is a Billboard series that pays special tribute to the recently deceased artists who achieved the highest honor our charts have to offer — a Billboard Hot 100 No. 1 single — by taking an extended look back at the chart-topping songs that made them part of this exclusive club. Here, we honor he late Kenny Rogers by diving into his first No. 1 hit, the Lionel Richie-penned ballad "Lady."

It was 1980. Punk had detonated, disco was dying, new wave was on the ascent, and **Kenny Rogers** was playing with house money. Five years prior, he had shaken off the dissolution of his folk-rock concern to reach the top of the country charts, again and again. Turns out people enjoyed Kenny Rogers & The First Edition just fine; but Kenny Rogers, they loved.

Like most country A-listers of the time, he had a regular duet partner in Dottie West and a place on television to stretch his legs. But instead of a variety show — the format had succumbed to saturation — he starred in the 1980 CBS movie The Gambler, drawn vaguely from his 1978 Don Schlitz-written Country Songs No. 1 of the same name. Rogers had a knack for the story song, that peculiar genre that inspires execs try to turn four-minute tales into 90-minute films. **"The Gambler"** was followed by **"Coward of the County,"** which was followed by Gideon, a cowboy concept album co-written by Kim Carnes. It featured **"Don't Fall in Love With a Dreamer,"** a Carnes duet that was Rogers's third single to hit the top five on the pop, AC, and country charts. He nearly made it through disco **scot-free**. Things were looking real good for Kenny.

But Rogers was leery of being pigeonholed. His mailbox was bursting with demos of stagecoach-and-sagebrush sagas, most of them terrible. Still, from all angles, he was at an apex. A greatest-hits collection was scheduled for the fall, and it required padding. He'd been keeping tabs on a Motown funk act that had, over the previous couple years, shown a startling aptitude for soft pop. Not the quiet storm of weekend R&B radio: pure, uncut adult contemporary. Through EMI America president Jim Mazza, Rogers reached out to the architect of the Commodores' new sound: Lionel Richie. Intrigued by the possibility — and by the potential payday of a Kenny Rogers best-of record — Richie boarded a plane to Las Vegas to sit at a battered backstage piano and sing the first (and, to that point, only) verse of "Lady".

Looking back on the result in his 2012 memoir Luck or Something Like It, Rogers savored the fact that "[a] black guy from R&B and a white guy from country had created a color-blind hit." But that wasn't quite true: Rogers was less a country singer than an entertainer: a born performer with the personality necessary to mold the material at hand. His 1957 debut single was **rock 'n' roll** and **doo-wop** filtered through his Houstonian twang; after that, he spent a number of years as a jazz bassist before joining the folk group New Christy Minstrels. Richie was similarly malleable. He grew up in Alabama, singing in the Tuskegee Institute's choir, observing his grandmother, a **classical pianist**, and listening to soul and country on the airwaves. When the Commodores auditioned for Motown, Richie sang **"Wichita Lineman."**

"Lady" is wired much the same way as "Lineman": melancholy and plaintiveness intertwining. Richie was starting to operate in the softer, less heralded (but lucrative) registers of pop: the tones of adult contemporary, soap opera themes, string-soaked showcases. He knew that a Kenny Rogers hit, fairly or not, would have more reach than a Commodores hit. But Rogers would have to meet his composition more than halfway. He had, essentially, shifted his band's own No. 1 hit **"Still"** to a minor key. (Both songs start with the word "Lady".) A worrying piano ostinato taps the table; an electric guitar sighs out the window. A string section is assembled largely to voice chords. The sense of romantic isolation is overwhelming; when the rhythm section finally steps into the room, it's like Rogers tore down the curtains.

A lesser singer would have sunk into the maudlin furnishings. Rogers, though, was a supreme **interpreter**. He neither hectors his lost love nor luxuriates in the pain. On each line, he reveals a small devastation, showing just a hint of grain in his vocal. The back half finds Rogers finally singing from his heels a bit, but he never threatens to tip. He navigates a text that's a thicket of conversational asides, switches from melancholy to wistfulness and back again, and lets Richie's forlorn arrangement have the last word. He's out in under four minutes.

"Lady" was the sound of two men taking a flyer on each other, and themselves. Up to this point, Rogers's solo career had been tracked by one producer, Larry Butler. In February of 1980, largely due to his work with Rogers, Butler had won the Grammy for producer of the year, still the only Nashville producer to do so. Though clearly a young hitmaker, Richie had never produced a session before Kenny asked him to helm "Lady." (In **interviews decades later**, the two would cackle at the memory of Richie stopping the recording to write a second verse in the bathroom.) Released to radio in the fall, the song topped the AC and Country charts, and on **the chart dated Nov. 15th, 1980**, it replaced Barbra Streisand's "Woman in Love" atop the Hot 100 — where it would reign for six straight weeks. Rogers' next album, 1981's Share Your Love, was produced by Lionel Richie.

The song's success hastened the Commodore's decision to launch his own blockbuster solo career. On Billboard's 1981 year-end Hot 100, the top three entries belonged to Carnes ("Bette Davis Eyes"), Richie ("Endless Love" with Diana Ross) and Kenny Rogers's "Lady". Whether or not he fully realized it, Rogers had charted a course out of country pop. Barnburners like the Charlie

Daniels Band and smooth operators like Pure Prairie League weren't long for crossover success. Down-home dilettantes — at one point, Tom Jones wore a hat on three straight album covers — would soon be shoving their boots back under the bed.

But in the age between arena rock and MTV, Kenny Rogers was part of the pop firmament. Suburban discos turned into urban cowboy honky-tonks, while back home a thousand basements hummed with DIY energy. But they were all just counter-programming to the agreeable omnipresence of Rogers and his peers.

Valentina, Blair St. Clair & Over 40 New Artists Added to PEG's 'Digital Drag Fest'

BY STEPHEN DAW

When Producer Entertainment Group announced their first-ever online performance series, Digital Drag Fest 2020, would take place on Stageit over the next two weeks, they were immediately overwhelmed by fans' response — within 48 hours, many of the lineup's shows had been sold out. So, as a response, PEG is making their new online festival even bigger than before.

On Monday (March 23), PEG announced that they had added over 40 more artists, drag queens and otherwise, to their growing lineup of talent for Digital Drag Fest. Among that group are current and former *Drag Race* & *Drag Rrace UK* contestants like Blair St. Clair, Valentina, BenDeLaCreme, Jan Sport, Baga Chipz, Raja Gemini and many more. Artists like John Cameron Mitchell, Rayvon Owen and Justin Vivian Bond will also be joining the massive lineup.

"We launched this festival hoping to unite a few fans with the drag artists they love during a hard time," PEG's founder and president David Charpentier said in a statement. "We could never have anticipated how overwhelming response would be around the world, from both artists and fans alike. We're excited to work with so many talented artists on this lineup, and so pleased that GLAAD and Amazon will be part of this experience with us."

The organization also announced that **GLAAD** has joined on as a partner, and that 50 percent of the proceeds from the event's merch, thanks to partner **Merch By Amazon**, would be donated to the organization. In addition, multiple performers from the event have also pledged a portion of their ticket sales to the organization.

"The LGBTQ community often feels more isolated than others and during this pandemic calling for social distancing," GLAAD's head of talent Anthony Ramos said in a statement. "GLAAD is actively working to ensure our voices are heard, and to find innovative ways to bring people together, and we are thrilled to be partnering with Producer Entertainment Group on Digital Drag Fest which is set to connect people with some of today's most dynamic LGBTQ performers and personalities."

As for the drag stars joining in for the new festival, they said they were simply excited to lift their fans' spirits. "My favorite thing about performing in bars and clubs is to be able to spread joy through the art of drag," said *Drag Race* season 12 contestant Jan Sport. "Since we can't do that in person right now, I'm pulling out my best mixes, live sung numbers and all my banter to put a smile on people's faces from home! Drag has always been on the front lines of responding to national events, and this one shouldn't be any different!"

Tickets to each of the limited 30-minute shows, along with a full lineup of performances, is available **here**.

Check out the official trailer for Digital Drag Fest 2020 below:

Production Team TMS on the Unlikely Success of 'Someone You Loved'

BY ROB LEDONNE

When you're looking for a voice, you never know where it's going to come from."

Pete "Merf" Kelleher, one-third of the English production trio TMS, is musing about the runaway success of Lewis Capaldi's sparse and aching "Someone You Loved," which marks the biggest track in their already stacked discography.

"Traditionally, we've definitely been keen to overproduce records and just throw loads of sh-t in there," Kelleher explains to Billboard from the trio's home base in London. "It's really interesting that it's one of our biggest song ever and there's such minimal productions. There have been songs that took us months, meanwhile here we are with our most successful and it's so chill."

Kelleher, alongside cohorts Tom "Froe" Barnes and Ben Kohn, have carved out a unique niche on the charts. The childhood friends initially started out with hip-hop records, but a stint working on the U.K. iteration of *The X Factor* led them to a collaboration with Little Mix, which then enabled them to dive headfirst into the world of pop. Before long, they were focusing on crafting bubblegum singles for a range of British acts, whether the aforementioned girl group ("Wings" and "DNA"), boy band The Vamps ("Last Night") or singer-songwriter James Arthur ("You're Nobody 'til Somebody Loves You"). G-Eazy and Bebe Rexha's "Me, Myself and I" also served as an early glimmer of global success, peaking on the Hot 100 at No. 7 in 2016.

But it's with another singer-songwriter, the Scottish-born Capaldi, that the group has enjoyed their most impressive smash.

"We've released a lot of stuff, but 'Someone You Loved' felt like a perfect storm," says Kohn of the sleeper hit's critical and commercial success which resulted in three weeks at No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100 and seven weeks atop the chart in the U.K. While it was subsequently nominated for a Grammy, it wound up taking home song of the year honors at the recent Brit Awards, the latter experience being a mixed bag. "Not to totally sh-t on them, but you finally win and (as a producer or songwriter) you're lucky if you even get a seat, and if you get an award you have to pay for it," says Kohn, who noted that sharing the success with Capaldi made the honor a bit sweeter.

"We've all been best friends since we were kids, and to get to that point where you have this mad ride and it culminates in actually winning an award is absolutely mental," says Kelleher of the celebratory night. "Lewis and his team organized a boat trip on the river afterwards with his friends, family and all of us. We were trying to thank him for everything he had done for us and he wasn't having it. He was too busy thanking us. We couldn't get him to accept it."

The slow-burn success of "Someone You Loved," which was released in November 2018 and didn't top the Hot 100 until **a few days shy of a full year later** (a strategy the trio credits to Capaldi's manager Ryan Walter), mirrored the gradual collaborative process that birthed the future hit. "Our first session with Lewis was in the summer of 2017," remembers Kohn of the creative rendezvous that was set up between Capaldi and their manager Paul Centellas. "The songs we wound up making that day were all above average. Lewis' voice was amazing and there was really good energy, so with all that we knew there was something there." Those initial tracks have yet to see the light of day, and the trio and Capaldi didn't meet again until a year later.

During a third session in August 2018, however, TMS and Capaldi bore tangible fruit. "We wrote another song and then there was a little lull, so we said, 'Let's work on something else for a couple of hours.' Then we made and pretty much finished 'Someone You Loved.'"

"Lewis only did three takes of the chorus and almost every sound you hear in that record was made in those two hours," says Barnes of the rapid fruition, which was also a result of a budget as minimal as its eventual production. (The song is inspired by Capaldi's grandmother, with the singer creating the song's melody 10 minutes prior to his session with TMS.) "Production-wise there's not much in there, but what is, is important," explains Barnes, who also helped Capaldi co-write its tender lyrics with Kohn and Kelleher. "The only thing that was added and taken away was strings. I also think there might have been a hint of a halftime snare for five minutes in my headphones, but it was quickly taken away."

Did the guys think the song would become a milestone in their career? "We write 250 or 300 songs a year," notes Kelleher. "It was another great cut with Lewis, but whenever somebody says 'This is a hit!' what they mean is, 'This is one of the better ones.' Like, so much sh-t has to happen for it to be a hit. It almost didn't make the album."

The trio, who first started concocting tracks a full two decades ago, has no doubt entered a new career phase after the explosive success of "Someone You Loved." With the commercial peak of the Capaldi track behind them, they're now looking forward to the release of a pop record with another yet another English artist: Dua Lipa. TMS is credited with producing Lipa's "Cool" from her upcoming *Future Nostalgia*, and much like the incongruous journey that birthed "Someone You Loved," "Cool" has faced similar twists and turns.

"We actually started it at a writing camp for Rihanna at (London's) RAK Studios," says Kelleher of the massive opportunity, with TMS working alongside British singer-songwriters Kamille and Shakka. "You turn up with all of your gear and it was promised Rihanna would be there, so we brought our A-game."

While the pop superstar never actually appeared, the enticing possibility of an impending visit pushed the group to concoct four songs within a 12-hour period. "Out of those four, three have been cut," says Kelleher. "One was a Kamille record, one was cut by Gorgon City and then 'Cool' is coming out with Dua. It underwent a rewrite and it's now pretty wildly changed, she made it her own. We're pretty proud of it and can't wait to hear it in the context of the album."

With the "Someone You Loved" cycle coming to a close and a new era dawning, the trio likens their success to a video game. "It's like reaching another level," says Kohn. "You're not worried about the boss you just beat, you're trying to beat the next boss. I think when you're experiencing everything in the moment you're going, 'Wow, that's crazy,' but I don't know how much you're feeling it. It's really about what's next."