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## Executive of the Week: Interscope Geffen A&M Vice Chairman Steve Berman

BY DAN RYS

With over 100 million people tuning in on TV, stages don't come much bigger than the Super Bowl — and this year, the Super Bowl Halftime Show delivered an epic performance helmed by [Dr. Dre](#), with [Snoop Dogg](#), [Eminem](#), [Mary J. Blige](#), [Kendrick Lamar](#), [50 Cent](#) and [Anderson Paak](#) on hand to showcase some of the most iconic hip-hop and R&B songs in history. The resulting sales and streaming gains from the songs performed that night, which also included snippets of songs by [Tupac](#), landed 15 classic albums by those albums on the [Billboard 200](#) this week, including two in the top 10: Dre's *2001* and Eminem's *Curtain Call: The Hits*, each well more than a decade past their initial release dates.

Of those 15 albums, 12 were released by Interscope, the longtime home for most of this year's Halftime Show performers, an impressive showing for the label founded by [Jimmy Iovine](#) and [Ted Field](#) and now led by CEO [John Janick](#) that is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. The label's yearlong celebration of its catalog kicked off last month with a art installation at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art that paired

dozens of visual artists with classic Interscope albums to create new pieces of art inspired by the musical works, and with more celebrations on the horizon, Interscope Geffen A&M vice chairman **Steve Berman** — who has been with the label almost its entire existence — earns the title of *Billboard's* Executive of the Week.

Here, Berman tells *Billboard* about positioning the Interscope catalog to take advantage of the massive Super Bowl platform, the plans for Interscope 30, including a limited-edition vinyl series with the exclusive artwork from the LACMA exhibit, and how the Interscope team and Roc Nation came together to pull off the event. "Each artist performed in such a powerful way," he says. "I'm still smiling."

**This week, 12 classic Interscope albums tied to the Super Bowl Halftime Show performance appear on the Billboard 200, including two — Dr. Dre's *2001* and Eminem's *Curtain Call: The Hits* — in the top 10. What key decisions did you make to help make that happen?**

(continued)

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# SXSW 2022

This issue features cover stories on the stars headlining Billboard's inaugural stage at SXSW and a preview of other festival highlights.

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First of all, Roc Nation has done an incredible job pulling together the Super Bowl Halftime show these past three years. It was so gratifying to be able to collaborate with **Desiree Perez, Jana Fleishman** and the entire Roc Nation team on this incredible performance. The Super Bowl conversations began more than two years ago as we were putting together our long-term plans to celebrate Interscope's 30th Anniversary. Obviously, it was a dream of ours as a West Coast label to be able to honor Dre and the family of artists that he has worked with over the years — Snoop, Kendrick, Tupac, Eminem, 50 Cent and Mary J — just a few miles away from SoFi Stadium and our Santa Monica offices. Roc Nation was able to make it happen. All of the artists that performed that day are either current Interscope artists or part of the IGA family historically. Each artist performed in such a powerful way. I'm still smiling.

Collectively, the songs performed at the Halftime Show ballooned 775% in download sales and 121% in on-demand streams Feb. 13-14 over the two days prior. **What did you do to help position the songs to reap the largest benefit from the exposure the show would provide?**

It was very important to John Janick as well as me that we were very well positioned globally at the DSPs. The Super Bowl is a global event. [Chief revenue officer/global head of streaming & strategy] **Gary**

**Kelly** and his team did an incredible job at strategically and creatively positioning our catalog and really took advantage of what an enormous opportunity it is to have artists playing the halftime show. We saw a spike in chart positioning and streams not only in the U.S. but around the world.

**How did this Halftime Show opportunity differ for the label, knowing it included a half-dozen artists from your history, as opposed to one artist like a [Lady Gaga](#) or a [Maroon 5](#)? Did it expand what you wanted to do across the catalog in any way?**

Having an artist play the Super Bowl, whether they are the sole headliner or share the stage with others, is always impactful and legacy-building. It's still the biggest stage there is for any entertainer. I believe it was Dre who spoke about this halftime being a moment of family coming together. The kinship between these artists is real and years in the making and the performance they put together is one of the best of all time. Having Dre, Snoop, Eminem, Mary, Kendrick and 50, all artists who have spent time on the label, share the same stage together was hugely gratifying for Interscope executives both past and present, one which had incredible cultural importance.

Roc Nation put together an important moment where hip-hop was the centerpiece for the first time in a Super Bowl Halftime Show. It was wonderful that these legend-

ary artists were selected for this important moment.

**You also played a big role in the Interscope 30 LACMA exhibit alongside John Janick and Jimmy Iovine, which brought in visual artists to create original works inspired by some of the most iconic albums in Interscope's history. How did that come together and what was your role in it?**

The exhibition was organized by John Janick and Jimmy Iovine along with [Pulse Music Group co-CEO] **Josh Abraham** and me, from an idea that originated with our partner, The Darkroom's **Justin Lubliner**. It was a real labor of love and many of us at the label worked with them for months to ensure that our iconic artists were onboard. It was amazing for John and me to be in a working rhythm with Jimmy again. So much fun.

The complexity of navigating getting these important visual artists paired with music's biggest names was almost impossible. It's extraordinary when you think about the fact that Interscope's music resonated so powerfully with the most successful visual artists in the world, that they all dropped everything they were doing to come be a part of it. The response from the musical artists was equally enthusiastic.

The show was a perfect celebration of Interscope because it was clear that over the last 30 years we have moved culture in

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# TOP MUSIC LAWYERS

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Behind every artist, songwriter and music producer is a trusted group of advisers who provide guidance, advice and negotiate deals. Billboard's 7th annual Top Music Lawyers list will recognize the biggest names and most prominent legal minds in the world of music and entertainment law. They are the deal makers behind the major contracts and lawsuits in the music industry.

This feature will also include a round-up of top law schools attended by the notable alumni on the Top Music Lawyer list.

Please join Billboard in congratulating this year's music power lawyers. Advertise and position your law firm to the decision makers in the industry who are always in need for the best legal counsel.

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a way that has impacted even the fine arts. And to have the support of everyone at UMG behind us as we all worked to make this happen was particularly moving. It was absolutely one of the highlights of my 30 years at this label.

**Interscope also re-released 57 titles with that artwork on vinyl in sets of 100 each. What feedback did you get from the response to that limited-edition run?**

This was truly ambitious and exciting. We engaged every sector of our company to make this happen including **Jason Sangerman** and our revenue team along with digital marketing teams led by Gary Kelly and **Ramon Alvarez-Smikle**, **Chris Mortimer**, our head of production **Gretchen Anderson**, and of course our retail team with **Alex Reese**. In order to let fans participate in the collaborations between fine and musical artists, we thought selling a limited-edition series of the vinyl, each featuring a gallery edition of the new artwork, was a great way to do it. We did this jointly with our friends at NTWRK, with each organization donating 100% of our net profits from the project to the Iovine and Young Foundation which is building a high school in South Los Angeles. So, the vinyl series was also a way for Interscope to give back to the community that has been so important to us. The sales of each edition of 100 have been extremely successful and we're very happy with the results. ■

## Snoop Dogg Closes Deal on Death Row Recording Catalog

BY ED CHRISTMAN

**S**noop Dogg has closed the deal buying Death Row Music's re-recorded masters catalog, sources tell *Billboard*. The move completes his takeover of Death Row after previously buying [just the label's brand rights](#) earlier this month — enabling the rapper to generate licensing opportunities for merchandising and other lucrative ventures surrounding the imprint's name. Terms of both deals have not been disclosed.

While two of Death Row's biggest releases are [no longer part of the catalog](#) — [2pac's](#) *All Eyez On Me* and *The Don Killuminati: The 7 Day Theory* (credited as Makaveli), which have been returned to the control of Amaru Entertainment and the Tupac estate, the deal gives Snoop Dogg ownership of his albums 1993's *Doggystyle* and 1996's *Tha Doggfather*, along with some movie soundtracks, a couple of compilation albums and a few artist albums by the likes of [Lady of Rage](#), [Daz Dillinger](#) and [Kurupt](#).

Another Death Row classic, [Dr. Dre's](#) *The Chronic*, is scheduled to be given back to Dre in August 2023, though sources have subsequently told *Billboard* that it could be as soon as early 2023. That window could give Snoop Dogg time to negotiate with Dr. Dre to try and keep the album on the label, even if its only through a distribution deal.

Whatever the fate of *The Chronic*, from an ownership perspective, Snoop Dogg's catalog albums are Death Row's best sellers. Since its release on Feb. 11, ahead of Snoop's [appearance at the Super Bowl](#), his latest album *BODR* — which was released on Death Row — generated 10,000 album consumption units in its debut week, according to MRC Data. Meanwhile, *Doggystyle* has scanned 7.54 million consumption units since its 1993 release and last year generated 169,000 units in album consumption activity; his 1996 followup, *The Doggfather* last year tallied almost 8,000 units and appears to have total album consumption units of 2 million units since its release. But of Snoop Dogg's recorded music, only 142,000 units appear to be credited to the Death Row label, apparently since its release through MNRK Music predecessor company eOne Music, which took over ownership of the Death Row catalog in 2013.

Without 2pac and Dr. Dre, *Billboard* estimates that the Death Row catalog generated about \$6 million in revenue in 2021 for MNRK, the Blackstone-owned music

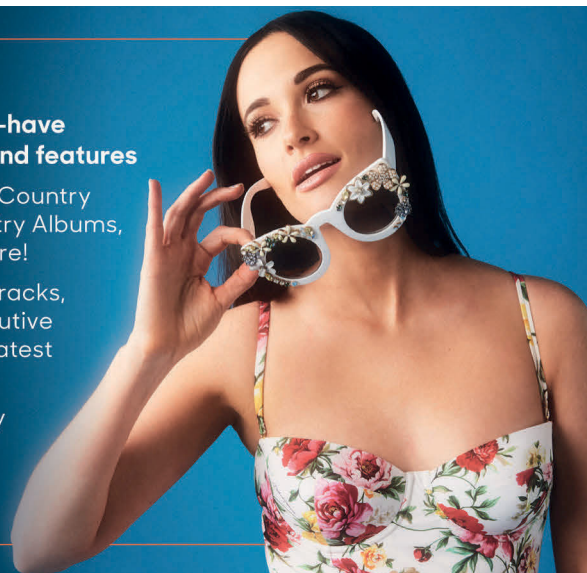
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## ASHANTI 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

Ashanti is a Grammy Award-winning singer/songwriter, actor and author. Ashanti burst onto the music scene with her smash hit, self-titled debut album Ashanti. It landed the #1 spot on both the Billboard Top 200 and R&B album charts, selling a whopping 504,593 units in its first week and set a SoundScan record as the most albums sold by any debut female artist in the chart's history, granting her a spot in the Guinness Book of World Records, which she still holds today. Ashanti has released six studio albums and received eight Billboard Awards, a Grammy, two American Music Awards, two Soul Train Awards, six ASCAP Awards, and many more awards and illustrious honors. Ashanti has continued to reign at the top as one of Billboard's "Top Females of the Decade from 2000-2010" and continues to break Billboard records as having a Hot 100 entry in the 2000's, 2010's and 2020's. To celebrate her contributions to music and recording, Ashanti will receive a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in April 2022.

Please join us in celebrating 20 years of the Princess of R&B, the Queen of Written Entertainment and "Baby" the woman that is never "Foolish" and writes the melodies that stay in our minds and hearts forever.....ASHANTI.

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company that acquired Death Row in 2013. Consequently, after discounting production and distribution fees, *Billboard* estimates that the entire deal, including the branding component, carried a valuation of about \$50 million, an amount based on conversations about the catalog with financial executives involved in buying and selling music assets. But whether Snoop Dogg — born Calvin Broadus, Jr. — had to anti-up that kind of payment is another question, considering MNRK's recent proclivity to return albums to superstars like Dr. Dre and the late 2Pac. How those transaction occurred has been kept under wraps by MNRK.

Nevertheless, sources says that Snoop Dogg owns the Death Row master recording catalog free and clear on his own, as MNRK no longer has any ownership interest in the label and in fact probably will no longer be distributing that music as the new owner apparently can now take the catalog to whatever label and/or distributor he so chooses.

As for the Death Row website, while a few weeks ago it featured about 18 Death Row albums, those pages were removed after the brand deal was announced and, currently, the only title available for purchase through the site is *BODR*.

In any event, the overall Death Row deals leave Snoop with plenty of revenue-generating opportunities as he also takes over Death Row merchandising, which is capable of generating a couple millions of dollars in annual revenue, depending on the year and merch offerings. Sources say that the company's merch revenue reached that high mark during some years, while others it only generated a couple hundred thousand dollars.

Snoop Dogg has also indicated a focus on steering Death Row towards the meta-verse's emerging economic possibilities and has big plans for exploiting the Death Row catalog [through NFTs](#) and whatever other digital opportunities emerge in that eco-system. Moreover, sources speculate that Snoop may even begin signing artists to Death Row Records as a way to revitalize the brand and enhance its revenue-producing opportunities.

A Snoop Dogg representative was not

immediately available for comment; while MNRK and Blackstone didn't respond to requests for comment. ■

## Here's How Much Lin-Manuel Miranda Has Made in Royalties From 'Encanto' Song Publishing

BY ANDREW UNTERBERGER,  
ED CHRISTMAN

**A**s *Billboard* has [written about](#) extensively recently, penning a *Billboard* Hot 100 No. 1 hit as a solo writer is a rare thing in this day and age. But being the lone song author behind an entire hit soundtrack, as [Lin-Manuel Miranda](#) has done with the songs to the runaway Disney smash *Encanto*, is even more unusual — and more lucrative.

*Billboard* estimates that the eight songs that Miranda wrote — each without co-writers — for the animated musical have thus far generated a combined \$4.7 million in global publishing royalties. (Miranda's share of the royalties will depend on what kind of publishing breakdown his deal has — but at the very least, if he has a straight publishing deal without any publisher share, he will get half that amount.)

That includes about \$1.275 million in publishing royalties from the song's U.S. streams, CD and download sales, and radio play, as well as additional millions in cable royalties from the movie's availability on the Disney+ streaming service, and general licensing from the songs being played in public spaces (like retail stores, hotels, concert halls, and movie theaters). And the revenue for the *Encanto* songs is of course compounded by the movie being a global phenomenon, with U.S. receipts accounting for just under 40% of its international box office, according to [BoxOfficeMojo.com](#).

While the most successful song from *Encanto* to date has been the Hot 100-topping “We Don’t Talk About Bruno” (performed by [Carolina Gaitán](#), [Mauro Castillo](#), [Adassa](#), [Rhenzy Feliz](#), [Diane Guerrero](#), [Stephanie Beatriz](#) and *Encanto* Cast), the soundtrack is particularly notable in that all eight of its original songs (not counting the instrumental score pieces from composer [Germaine Franco](#)) having performed well enough to reach the Hot 100.

That Hot 100 tally includes “Surface Pressure” ([Jessica Darrow](#), No. 8), “The Family Madrigal” (Stephanie Beatriz, [Olga Merediz](#) and *Encanto* Cast, No. 20), “What Else Can I Do?” (Diane Guerrero and Stephanie Beatriz, No. 27), “Dos Oruguitas” ([Sebastian Yatra](#), No. 36), “Waiting on a Miracle” (Stephanie Beatriz, No. 48), “All of You” (Stephanie Beatriz, [Olga Merediz](#), [John Leguizamo](#), Adassa, [Maluma](#) & *Encanto* Cast, No. 71) and “Colombia, Mi Encanto” ([Carlos Vives](#), No. 100). No other Disney animated film soundtrack in *Billboard* history has ever notched as many separate Hot 100 hits before.

It's also out of the ordinary for a major Disney song — let alone eight from the same soundtrack — to be penned by a solo writer. Of the songs on *Billboard's* Hot 100-determined Greatest of All Time Disney songs list, the great majority are written by a composer/lyricist duo, like [Elton John](#) and [Tim Rice](#) (“Can You Feel the Love Tonight”) or [Alan Menken](#) and Howard Ashman (“Beauty and the Beast”). The only non-*Encanto* song in the top 10 of that list to be written by a solo author is “You’ll Be in My Heart” from *Tarzan*, written and performed by [Phil Collins](#).

It all adds up to an unusually large payday for Lin-Manuel Miranda — one that has lasted for essentially the whole of 2022 thus far, as the *Encanto* soundtrack has reigned atop the *Billboard* 200 albums chart for six of the last seven weeks (starting with the chart dated Jan. 15), and shows no sign of ending anytime soon. ■

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# Influence Media Partners With WMG & BlackRock for Rights Acquisitions, Management

BY ED CHRISTMAN

**I**nfluence Media has partnered with Warner Music Group and BlackRock Alternative Investors on a deal to fund new music acquisitions and run them through the WMG corporate infrastructure as needed, the companies announced Thursday (Feb. 24).

To date, Influence Media has so far deployed \$300 million of its \$750 million in funding buying music assets including select copyrights from songwriters including Tainy (Bad Bunny, J. Balvin) the Stereotypes (Bruno Mars), Jessie Reyez (Dua Lipa, Sam Smith) and Skyler Stonestreet (Ariana Grande, Justin Bieber).

Under the new deal, WMG and BlackRock will provide funding to buy assets and also participate as investors in the Influence Media's platform. WMG will also lend support to manage the copyrights as needed from whichever of its companies is best suited for a project, on a deal by deal basis. WMG and BlackRock's involvement also allows Influence Media to access the particular financial and investment expertise of each of its partners.

WMG and BlackRock are providing the funding for the company's Influence X Music Fund II. So far, that appears to have raised \$270 million in funding from BlackRock, according to a filing with the SEC. It has received an additional \$380 million in equity and debt financing commitments from WMG, the Municipal Employees Retirement System of Michigan and other traditional music industry lenders, sources say.

The Influence Media management team consists of founders and co-managing partners **Lynette Pizarro McLean** and **Lynn Hazan**, along with founding advisors and partners **Rene McLean** and **Jon Jashni**. Their management is supplemented by Pam Chan, chief investment officer and global head of the Alternative Solutions Group at BlackRock, and **Paul Braude**, managing director and co-head of portfolio management for the Alternative Solutions Group; and from the Warner Music Group's **Temil Adeniji**, managing director of Warner Music South Africa and senior vp strategy, sub-Saharan Africa & special projects.

"In partnership with the first-rate teams at Influence Media and BlackRock, these catalogs will be cared for by a supergroup of music lovers," WMG's Adeniji said in a statement. "Together, we'll bring new opportunities to some of the most talented artists and songwriters of this generation."

Thus far, the deployed funds have been split one-third in buying master recording income streams and copyrights, and two-thirds in music publishing copyrights, according to sources. Most of Influence Media's deals also leave the artist and/or songwriter with an ownership stake in the acquired asset so that they can participate in any upside generated by the company's management of the assets, sources say.

"We are excited to be a part of this programmatic venture alongside Influence Media and Warner Music Group," added BlackRock's Chan. "Building on our experience investing in music since 2015, this investment gives our clients access to an emerging asset class with potential for meaningful income and uncorrelated returns, while aligning with our priority to invest in diverse and female-owned businesses."

While Influence Media has become a bigger player in the past year, the company was founded in 2017-2018 with bridge financing from Morgan Stanley that it used to acquire a pool of music assets from Jeff Bhasker, Shane McAnally and Ben Rector. It sold those rights to Tempo Music in 2019. In 2021, Influence Media's Fund I launched with \$100 million backing from the Municipal Employees' Retirement System of Michigan to buy select copyrights from the

catalogs of songwriter Ali Tamposi (Kelly Clarkson, Camila Cabello) and Grammy-nominated singer/songwriter Julia Michaels ("Issues," Justin Bieber). The company says it plans to scale its investment in female creators, providing them with unprecedented access to capital and licensing opportunities, as well as to expand into new categories like music entrepreneurs.

"To paraphrase what my favorite music entrepreneur Beyonce famously said, not enough women of color have had a seat at the table in the music industry, so we went ahead and chopped down the wood to build our own table," Influence Media's Pizarro McLean said in a statement. "We've built a brilliant, savvy, and diverse team that's also nimble enough to move at the speed of culture, and we couldn't be prouder to be in business with best-in-class partners like BlackRock and Warner Music Group. Our initial investments in modern evergreens represent a new generation of iconoclasts in music, both commercially and artistically." **B**

## Neumos in Seattle, in a Pandemic: 'Spring Is Going to Be Down 25-35%'

BY TAYLOR MIMS

**A**s co-owner of Seattle's popular independent venue Neumos in Capitol Hill, **Steven Severin** has been a staple in the Seattle music industry for more than 20 years. Roughly 10 years ago, he helped create the Seattle Nightlife and Music Association to bring together the area's live event insiders, and for the past 16 years has helped run Neumos with its sister club Barboza and the accompanying Runaway bar.

As part of Billboard's efforts to best cover the coronavirus pandemic and its impacts on the music industry, we have been speaking with Severin regularly to chronicle his

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experience throughout the crisis. (Read the last installment [here](#) and see the full series [here](#).)

**Washington state and King County, where you're located, now have varying mandates on wearing masks indoors. How are you feeling about that for your venues and restaurants?**

I don't know what to do. I don't know what to think anymore. By having a mandate, we didn't have to think. "You are going to be masked." "You are going to be vaccinated." Now everybody is different. All the venues in [Washington Nightlife Music Association] want to do different things. It is complicated and I don't really have the bandwidth to figure it out.

I know the government agencies don't always agree, but they shouldn't just leave us out to dry. People are going to freak out either way. If I say, "You don't have to wear masks anymore," people are going to freak out. If I say, "You still have to wear masks," people are going to freak out. It is a no-win situation. I really want nothing to do with it, but I don't have that choice.

**Do you feel like it is time to take masks off in venues?**

I don't know. That's the thing. I want health professionals telling me whether it is or is not safe to no longer wear masks inside. I want to know what the science is. If the science says that we don't need masks anymore, fantastic! If the science says that we need them, we're still going to wear them. But I need the experts to tell me that.

**Have you seen any kind of consensus from venue owners on how to proceed?**

Anyone can talk themselves in or out of COVID. You can rationalize either side now. If you want to no longer be wearing a mask, you can rationalize it. It is so up in the air right now. I hope that when masks come off, the numbers don't spike back up. I am certainly going to lag behind everybody else, let everyone else be the guinea pigs. It will be so nice for people to go back out and live a normal life like we used to. Not that it will ever be normal again. This [pandemic] changed things forever. Even the way people think about work, about offices. You would have never gotten this much freedom to work from home without this.

**Does the dramatic drop in cases after the omicron variant signal a positive turn for live music?**

If the numbers are still falling like they have been in a lot of the country, I think we're going to start seeing things revert back. People are so tired of it. If they can justify it, they're going to do it. The last two years have devastated our businesses, f-ck-ing destroyed them. It is going to take years to bounce back.

**How is this year looking so far on the books?**

People had their worst month of the entire pandemic in January this year. Omicron went through and devastated venues across the country. Neumos was closed 476 days. It is hard to do worse than zero income, except when you have a whole staff you've got to pay. Not only were you not making money, but you had to pay more expenses. I don't know when it gets easier. I keep looking at my calendar and being like, "Alright. The spring is going to be down 25-35%. Ok. Cool. We can get through that." And then I see July and the summer isn't looking great. Then I look at the fall and I'm like, "Sh-. We should have many more shows in the fall confirmed by now." This is going to last the whole damn year. ☹️

## Who Gets Paid for a Stream?

BY GLENN PEOPLES

Over a trillion times a year, somebody streams a song within the United States and sets in motion the process of paying royalties to the rights holders and creators responsible for the music. Each individual payment is minute — usually less than a cent — but for the most popular songs, royalties can add up to millions of dollars in a single year. [Dua Lipa's](#) "Levitating," for example, which was 2021's most-streamed song in the U.S., according to MRC Data, earned her, its songwriters and its various rights holders about \$4 million, *Billboard* estimates. Exactly how each involved party is paid varies, but the

recipients are the same: record label, performing artist, songwriter, music publisher and an intermediary or two.

Both the sound recording and its underlying musical work receive royalties paid from the DSP — the commonly used abbreviation for digital service provider, such as a download store or a streaming service. Most typically, except for direct deals that exist, record labels collect and pay the recording artist from their share of royalties (for audio streams that's about 80% of a total stream value for rights holders, and slightly less for video streams). Publishers collect and pay songwriters what's called a mechanical royalty that represents a musical work embedded in a copy of a recording (about 10% of a total royalty). And performance rights organizations (PROs) are paid performance royalties just as they receive royalties when a song is played on the radio, in a retail store or at a concert, that it then evenly splits between publisher and songwriter (an additional 10% of a total royalty) after taking a small fee.

Most streaming revenue comes from user subscription fees for services such as Spotify, Apple Music and Amazon Music Unlimited. In simple terms, the DSPs divvy their pools of subscription revenue according to the number of times a track was streamed in a particular month. (DSPs with freemium business models — Spotify, YouTube, Pandora, SoundCloud — also pay rights holders a share of their advertising revenue.) Once the royalties are calculated, a DSP makes separate payments to record labels for the sound recording and to publishers and PROs for the musical work.

Royalty rates differ from stream to stream because some record labels negotiate better terms than others — and exactly how different labels' royalties are calculated is hidden behind an opaque process and non-disclosure agreements, frustrating artists and some labels who feel disadvantaged by an uneven playing field. What's more, licensing agreements might call for more complicated calculations in some cases. For example, a DSP might owe a minimum royalty if the amount falls under a threshold set by the label's licensing terms. This was seen in the 2000s, the DSPs' early years, when labels

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insisted on being paid a certain amount when DSPs generated little advertising revenue. Labels might also insist on a minimum payment for low-priced subscriptions that would otherwise result in a smaller-than-desired royalty.

The owner of the sound recording — usually a record label, but also, increasingly, the artist — receives about 80% of the total royalty, which is then shared with the artist at a rate dependent on their recording contract. A 20% royalty for the artist is not uncommon, which works out to about 16% of the total audio stream value going to the artist with 64% going to the label. That money won't, however, necessarily end up in the artist's pocket. Only if an artist has recouped their advance and their share of expenses will the label pay royalties for the stream. Otherwise, royalties earned will reduce the artist's negative balance for an advance and such expenses as marketing, promotion and tour support.

An independent artist who owns the sound recording will receive the entire label share, minus any cut owed to the distributor (which can be a flat fee, or a percentage that's typically 20% or less).

A musical work — also referred to as the underlying composition, or the song itself — earns a fixed percentage of revenue regardless of how a record labels' royalty is calculated. At current rates, musical work's royalties are roughly 20% of an audio stream's total royalties. Half of those royalties are for mechanical royalties for the song embedded in the recording and are owed to a music publisher; the other half derive from the "performance" of the musical work and are paid to a PRO, which collects a fee of about 12% in the U.S. (it can be more elsewhere) before distributing the rest to the publisher and songwriter. Typically, publishers and songwriters split the musical work's share of royalties, although in some cases, a songwriter owns their own publishing rights and pays a publisher or administrator a smaller fee to collect and process their money. After considering the splits and a PRO's administration fee, publishers and songwriters each get about 9.4% of the total royalty.

Whereas a recording usually only has one

label or artist, songwriters' streaming income can drop significantly when a song has multiple co-writers. Country, R&B, hip-hop and pop songs typically have more than one writer. A song that incorporates a sample will typically give credit and pay royalties to songwriters of the song being sampled. For example, [Nine Inch Nails' Trent Reznor](#) received a songwriting credit for the sample from his song "Further" used in [Lil Nas X's](#) "Old Town Road." Producers often share songwriting credits, too. The nine co-writers on "Stay" by [The Kid LAROI](#) and [Justin Bieber](#) — three of whom are producers — must split the songwriter's share of royalties. If the publishers and songwriters have a 50/50 split, and if the co-writers receive an equal share of the songwriters' share, each of the nine songwriters would take home a little over 1% of the total royalty — about five-thousandths of a cent per audio stream.

Overall, for every \$1 a streaming service pays in royalties, rights holders collectively earn about 73 cents, creators take a little over 25 cents and the PRO gets a little over 1 cent. Breaking that down for recorded music revenue, the artist receives about 16 cents and the label takes about 64 cents. On the publishing side, in a typical case, the songwriter and publisher each get 9.4 cents.

Other music formats have far simpler royalty calculations that intuitively make sense to people. For sales of CDs, vinyl records and downloads, the record label collects money from its distributor and pays recording artists based on the terms in the recording contract. When the artist owes the label for expenses or has not recouped an advance, any royalties will reduce that negative balance. When the artist is no longer in arrears, the label cuts a royalty check to the artist. Music publishers are owed a mechanical royalty for each copy of a musical work, whether a physical or digital format. Currently, the standard rate for a mechanical royalty is 9.1 cents per track. However, when the performing artist is also the songwriter, the label will have negotiated a lower mechanical royalty rate or will cap the amount owed at 91 cents for an album (so it does not owe a standard mechanical rate for each song on an album with 11 or more songs, which would eat into

its margins). Artist-songwriters don't take a reduced mechanical rate for streams, however, because DSPs pay royalties directly to publishers and PROs.

Many people inside the industry think royalty payments are a convoluted, nonsensical mess that doesn't pay artists and songwriters fairly. Lawmakers in the U.K. have taken interest in how little some creators earn even when their songs are streamed millions of times. And there have been calls around the industry to change some royalty calculations in a way that would benefit less popular artists. For better or worse, however, the current rates and calculations are likely to remain unchanged for the foreseeable future.


### Glossary

DSP — digital service provider (Spotify, iTunes, Apple Music, YouTube et al)

PRO — performing rights organization (ASCAP, BMI, Global Music Rights, Sesac et al)

Mechanical royalty — the royalty owed to music publishers when a musical work is embedded in a copy of a recording (on a downloaded track, CD, LP, music video, ringtone et al).

Writer's share — the fraction of a musical work's royalty owed to the songwriter

Publisher's share — the fraction of a musical work's royalty owed to the music publisher (which will be the songwriter if they retained ownership of the copyright). 

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## Drakeo the Ruler's Brother Sues Live Nation Over Attack: Security Was 'Totally Absent'

BY BILL DONAHUE

**D**rakeo the Ruler's brother and several others have filed a new lawsuit against [Live Nation](#) over the attack at a Los Angeles music festival that left the rapper dead, saying they also suffered injuries that should have been prevented.

Weeks after Drakeo's son [filed a \\$60 million wrongful death lawsuit](#) against Live Nation, brother Devante Caldwell filed a new case against the concert giant Thursday in Los Angeles court, joined by other members the rapper's entourage who "fortunately survived" the December attack at the [Once Upon a Time in LA](#) music festival.

Like the earlier lawsuit, Devante accused Live Nation and other festival organizers of [legal](#) negligence for failing to provide sufficient security to keep the performers safe. The lawsuit said safety measures ranged from "lackadaisical to totally absent."

"Plaintiffs' safety was in jeopardy from the moment they arrived," Devante's attorneys wrote. "Defendants ... solicited the services of widely renowned artists to reap the benefits of the attendance of their fan base, then perpetrated an abject failure to protect them. The tragic consequence was a wholly foreseeable outcome of Defendants' rank negligence."

At the time of his death, Drakeo the Ruler was stepping up as a prolific artist and had released five music projects since 2020. The artist, whose real name is Darrell Caldwell, had recently released a 17-track mixtape, *The Truth Hurts*, that included [Drake](#) among its collaborators.

On the night of Dec. 18, Drakeo had been

scheduled to perform *Once Upon a Time* in LA but was stabbed around 8:30 pm amid a large fight backstage. The rapper was rushed to the hospital in critical condition, but he later died from his injuries. The event was also slated to feature Snoop Dogg, 50 Cent, Ice Cube, YG and The Game, but was shut down after Drakeo's death.

In Thursday's lawsuit, Devante Caldwell described the incident in shocking detail — not as a brief scuffle but rather as multiple waves of attack by dozens of men that lasted more than 15 minutes.

"This second attack lasted far longer than the first — up to 10 minutes — and was more vicious," his lawyers wrote. "Throughout that time, Drakeo and his group fought for their lives against insurmountable odds, shocked and horrified at the fact that no security ever materialized to intervene."

The lawsuit said the festival conducted only a " cursory search" of attendees and that many cars were able to enter without any search at all. The VIP area for artists had "no security guards or law enforcement officers present whatsoever," nor did it come with "cameras or other deterrents to unlawful activity or violence."

Like the previous lawsuit, Devante said the *Once Upon a Time* organizers should have been on high alert, making the security failures even more inexcusable. The lawsuit cited the fact that Drakeo was tried and acquitted for the 2016 murder of a member of the Bloods gang, putting a target on his back.

"Though he was eventually exonerated, the events and allegations surrounding his criminal case were widely circulated and he faced threats and constant hostility from gang members and other people," Devante's attorneys wrote. "Much of the animosity and danger Drakeo faced was amplified due to his success that increased his notoriety."

When reached for comment on the incident previously, a spokeswoman for Live Nation referred *Billboard* to a statement from festival organizers: "Once Upon a Time in LA joins Drakeo's family, friends, and fans in grieving his loss. The festival is continuing to support local authorities in their investigation as they pursue the facts." The organizers did not immediately return a request for comment on the new case.

Joining Devante as plaintiffs were Calvin Webb, Terrence Hackett; Kevin Gomez, Jorky Peralta, Felton Binns, Jerome Watkins, each of whom said they too had suffered harm in the attack. The new lawsuit also named C3 Presents, a subsidiary of Live Nation, as well as Bobby Dee Presents. A spokeswoman for Bobby Dee Presents did not immediately return a request for comment. ■

## Jay-Z Wins \$4.5M In Unpaid Royalties Over Failed Cologne Partnership

BY BILL DONAHUE

**J**ay-Z won \$4.5 million in royalties Thursday (Feb. 24) from a fragrance company called Parlux that sued the rapper after their cologne endorsement deal went south.

Three months after a Manhattan jury [cleared the superstar](#) of wrongdoing and potentially \$67 million in damages, a New York state appeals court went even further, ruling that it was Parlux that must pay up. The court said the fragrance brand owed past royalties, plus interest, for sales of the product made after the deal soured.

"The record is clear: Parlux sold licensed products after July 31, 2015, but failed to pay royalties on those sales," wrote Justice John Higgitt of the New York Appellate Division.

The ruling came after more than six years of litigation over "Gold Jay-Z," a cologne brand that the superstar, whose real name is Shawn Carter, launched in 2013 through a partnership with Parlux.

In its lawsuit, the company accused the rapper and his S. Carter Enterprises of failing to properly promote the brand, breaching his contract and dooming the product to failure. Jay-Z quickly countersued, claiming he had fulfilled his obligations despite numerous missteps from Parlux — and that the


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company still owed him money.

A [three week trial](#) was held last fall, featuring heated testimony from the star himself, during which he verbally sparred with opposing attorneys and even threatened to file a new countersuit. Eventually, jurors largely sided with Hov, finding that Parlux was entitled to nothing.

Confusingly, Thursday's ruling was not based on an appeal from that verdict. Instead, both sides had lodged appeals earlier in the litigation, challenging intermediate rulings issued by the judge overseeing the case. The new decision mostly rejected those challenges, but held that Jay-Z was "correct" when he claimed he was owed \$4.5 million in royalties for the period after July 31, 2015.

An appeal of the verdict could still be coming. The case remains in the trial court, where Parlux is asking the judge to set aside the verdict and order a new trial. Once the judge rules on those motions, the case could head back to an appeals court.

Jay-Z's attorney, Alex Spiro of the law firm Quinn Emmanuel, declined to comment on the decision. Parlux's lawyer, Anthony J. Viola of the firm Mintz Levin, did not return a request for comment on Thursday evening. 

## Oak View Group Rebrands Facilities Division as OVG360, to Launch New Suite of Services

BY DAVE BROOKS

**M**onths after finalizing the purchase of Spectra, **Tim Leiweke's** Oak View Group has rebranded its OVG Facilities division as OVG360 and announced plans to launch a new suite of services for its venue management and hospitality clients.

The news comes after six years of rapid growth across Oak View Group in partnership with music executive **Irving Azoff** and private equity firm Silver Lake, going from six employees in 2015 to more than 25,000 employees and more than \$5.3 billion in deployed capital across nine projects, including the recently opened Savannah Enmarket Arena in Georgia. Last year, Oak View Group opened the \$1.2 billion, 18,100-seat Climate Pledge Arena in Seattle as well as UBS Arena, a \$1.1 billion multi-purpose, state-of-the-art arena located on the grounds of Belmont Park in Elmont, New York that serves as home to the NY Islanders hockey team. Starting in 2022, OVG is on track to spend \$1 billion annually on building new arenas and redeveloping existing facilities, host more than 1,000 events per year across OVG venues for nearly 10 million guests and generate nearly \$1 billion in ticket sales and \$200 million in food and beverage sales across OVG venues.

"This isn't about having the most accounts," Leiweke tells *Billboard*. "This is about walking in the shoes of each of our clients, because we have been there. We have done that and we are them. We have a unique relationship and understanding of the challenges that they face and what they're looking to solve, because we are the same."

Leading the services initiative will be **Chris Granger**, who will serve as president of OVG360 and build out what Leiweke says will be 16 service companies for OVG's clients in arenas, stadiums, convention centers and performing arts centers.

"Each one of these service companies is a resource and an expertise that we can give to our accounts that will help them find a better level of customer service and financial accountability," Leiweke tells *Billboard*.

The 16 divisions of OVG360 will include hospitality and food services, booking and content development, private events and curated experiences, global partnerships, premium sales, integrated marketing solutions, public safety, public health, sanitization and ventilation, sustainable operations, parking and mobility services, customer service and training, venue financing solutions, technology and integration consulting,

procurement support, owner's representative and project management services and retail development.

"The purchase of Spectra at its core was meant to round out our OVG offerings," Granger tells *Billboard*. "Our vision here is to be a full-service venue management and hospitality company that can enrich the value created for our clients and our communities." Adding Spectra and its food services division, which manages more than 200 accounts, "allows us to go to venues and offer them services in every aspect of what a venue does," Granger explains. "The idea is to meet the venues where they are and offer best-in-class services that can help them no matter what their needs are."

OVG360 will also assist venues and client-partners working to address challenges around climate change with its new program GOAL (Green Operations and Advanced Leadership) and provide them with a roadmap to improve sustainability initiatives for their operations. The new global certification program, expected to launch shortly, will focus on environmental sustainability, health and wellness and equity and social justice in venues and the local communities they support.

Oak View Group has six projects currently in development, including the \$280 million, 320-acre complex Bell Bank Park in Mesa, Arizona; Co-op Live, a 23,500-seat arena located in Manchester, U.K. which, when completed in 2023, will be the largest arena in the UK; the 20,000-seat Arena São Paulo in partnership with Live Nation Entertainment and GL events; renovations for the \$150 million Royal Farms Arena in Baltimore, which OVG is leading in partnership with Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC) and Thirty Five Ventures, co-founded by NBA All-Star Kevin Durant; FirstOntario Centre Arena in Canada; and a new arena located at the Atlantic Wharf in Cardiff, Wales, in partnership with Live Nation Entertainment.

Prior to working at OVG, Granger worked for the NBA, the Sacramento Kings and at his most recent job with Ilitch Holdings, where he was responsible for all aspects of business operations for MLB's Detroit Tigers, the NHL's Detroit Red Wings and the

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company's joint venture interest in concert promoter 313 Presents. He recalls inquiring about OVG when a competitor was trying to recruit him for an executive position.

"And the comment was, 'OVG is not even on our radar. We don't come across them at all,' which I thought was a bit bold and is something I carry with me," Granger said, laughing.

"We don't really listen to the compliments," Leiweke says. "We do pay attention to criticism and we are only getting started here. We never think we're at a point where we're putting our head up out of the sand and looking around and saying, 'Okay, so how are we doing?' There's none of that here. I think we are all highly focused on the next few chapters and I don't think we're anywhere near where we're going to get to. I think we get bigger. I think we get better. I think we get smarter. And I think we're still just a fraction of what we're going to grow into eventually. What we would judge to be success is all ahead of us." ■

## WME Fires Back at 'La La Land' Lawsuit, Says Composer Demanded 'Unparalleled' Profits

BY BILL DONAHUE

**W**illiam Morris Endeavor is asking a judge to dismiss a lawsuit filed last month by the Oscar-winning composer of *La La Land*, scoffing at the notion that the talent agency duped a former client who is "meticulous and Harvard-educated."

**Justin Hurwitz sued last month,** accusing WME of "cynically and systematically" defrauding him out of profits for live concerts of the movie's Oscar-winning

score. He claimed his former agency had secret conflicts of interest with the company that produced the concerts, among other wrongdoing.

But in its first formal response to the lawsuit on Tuesday (Feb. 22), WME said Hurwitz was hardly an unsuspecting victim.

"From the outset, Hurwitz was fully aware of the initial affiliation between his talent agency and the production of the *La La Land* in Concert series," wrote the agency's attorneys from the law firm Greenberg Traurig. "The meticulous and Harvard-educated Hurwitz understood and agreed to this arrangement, later admitting in writing that he was 'fine with' Endeavor Content making more money than him under the circumstances."

The agency said Hurwitz had willingly agreed to a deal in which he "earned hundreds of thousands of dollars" in fixed fees and income, while others paid upfront costs and did all the heavy lifting of producing a concert series.

"Years later, despite paying no costs and taking no risk, Hurwitz demanded more money, insisting on profit participation in the production unparalleled in the industry," WME wrote. Even after he was given more money, the agency said it was still "not enough for Hurwitz," who resorted to "this unfounded lawsuit."

In a statement to *Billboard*, Hurwitz's attorney **Bryan Freedman** responded to WME's filing by calling it "a clear admission of wrongdoing."

"WME had a fiduciary duty to build Justin's career and create more opportunity for him; instead, they cynically engaged in self-dealing and made ten times more compensation off of their client's work than he did," Freedman said. "Now they're attempting to victim blame. But the facts are clear. And we're excited for trial."

Tuesday's response came six weeks after Hurwitz filed his lawsuit, which accused WME of "abusing" its relationship with him to secure control of the *La La Land* concerts. He says the agency essentially tricked him into the arrangement, which saw him "accept a minimal piece of the pie" of revenue.

Hurwitz's lawsuit echoes a recent legal battle waged by the Writers Guild of America against WME and other agencies.

In that case, the union claimed that the agencies had created a conflict of interest by both representing talent and producing content themselves. That dispute ended last year with a settlement in which the agencies agreed to sharply limit their ownership in production companies.

In technical terms, Hurwitz is accusing WME of breach of its fiduciary duty to him, as well as breach of contract and breach of the so-called implied covenant of good faith and fair dealing – the basic obligation to act fairly in any deal. The lawsuit also accuses WME of negligence, negligent misrepresentation and fraud. Tuesday's filing was an "answer," which is typically the first response from a defendant in civil litigation.

**UPDATE:** This story was updated on Feb. 25 at 2:50 pm EST with a statement from Hurwitz's lawyer. ■

## Executive Turntable: Spotify Names International & Latin Heads, EMPIRE Launches in Africa

BY CHRIS EGGERTSEN

**S**potify elevated two executives in its international and Latin departments. **Monica Herrera Damashek** was promoted to North American lead, international music, while **Maykol Sánchez** was upped to head of artist & label partnerships, Latin America & U.S. Latin.

In her newly-created role, Damashek will identify strategic opportunities in the U.S. and Canada while expanding collaboration with Spotify's global music team across markets. She has been with Spotify for seven years and was most recently head of U.S. Latin artist & label partnerships in

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North America.

Maykol, who has been with Spotify for nearly four years, already led the artists and label partnerships team in Latin America but will now be responsible for those functions for the U.S. Latin market.

Independent label, distributor, and publisher EMPIRE launched **EMPIRE Africa** and hired **Ezegozie Eze Jr.** as vp, market development; **Kareem Mobalaji** as regional head, West Africa; and **Titilope Adesanya** as project manager.

In their roles, Eze, Mobalaji, and Adesanya will broker new talent partnerships and promote artists in Western Africa as well as the rest of the continent. All three are based in Lagos, Nigeria.

Eze joins EMPIRE from Universal Music Nigeria, where he served as general manager. Mobalaji was previously a marketing executive at mobile technology company MTech and also founded his own digital marketing agency, Ingle Mind, where he worked developed and worked with **Burna Boy**, **Tiwa Savage**, **WizKid** and more. Adesanya most recently worked at digital music distribution company Africori in product management and communications.

At launch, EMPIRE Africa boasts strategic partnerships with African artists including **Olamide** (and his YBNL label), **Afro B**, **Zlatan** and many more.

**Paul Smith**, formerly the global head of international licensing at Spotify, joined **YouTube APAC** as director, YouTube Music.

In his new role, Smith will run YouTube's Music business in the APAC region, heading up music partnerships and further strengthening relationships with artists, rights holders and industry stakeholders.

At Spotify, Smith led the licensing of digital content from the international community of rights holders globally, playing a key role in launching and introducing Spotify around the world. Before that, he held leadership roles at Nokia, Microsoft, MixRadio and Universal Music.

**Ged Doherty** will step down as chair of **BPI**, the U.K. record labels association, after seven years. He'll continue in the role until a successor is found.

Doherty is departing to focus on his film

company Raindog Films, which he founded in 2012 with actor **Colin Firth**.

"I have loved every minute of working with the BPI and its members and its amazing team led by Geoff Taylor," said Doherty in a statement. "I can look back with pride at many achievements accomplished together, but after seven years in the role I feel the time is now right for me to move on – especially as this year is Raindog's 10th anniversary and is set to be our busiest ever, with several films and documentaries about to be announced including the filming of a \$60m TV drama series to be shot in the UK this summer."

**Geoff Taylor**, CEO of BPI, BRIT Awards & Mercury Prize, thanked Doherty "for his support not just to the BPI and its members, but also his dedication to our charity The BRITs Academy to ensure the continuing relevance and success of The BRIT Awards. He will always be part of our music family."

**Anthony Rodol** was promoted to managing director, U.S. music at **YMU**. He was formerly general manager.

The Los Angeles-based Rodol joined YMU in 2017 when Deckstar Management was acquired by James Grant Group (now YMU). During his time there, he has worked on teams representing **Common**, **Steve Aoki** and **Vicetone**, among others. In his new role, he'll reported to **Matt Colon**, global president of YMU's music division.

Rodol started his career at Universal Music Group, where he worked on the U.S. launch of the **NOW** compilation series. He went on to a variety of marketing roles at Warner Music Group and switched over to management as general manager at Complete Control Management.

**10K Projects** promoted **Molly McLachlan** to executive vp, global marketing. She will continue overseeing global marketing for the label and its artists in the new role.

During McLachlan's time in international at 10K, the label claims it has seen a nearly 200% increase in streams outside of the U.S. Major successes have included **Internet Money's** "Lemonade" hitting No. 1 on the UK singles chart, **iann dior** racking up more streams in territories outside the U.S. than

within it, **Surfaces'** "Sunday Best" breaking globally and salem ilese's single "Mad At Disney" charting in multiple territories.

"From the day Molly took on oversight of international at 10K, we saw an immediate positive effect on the success of our artists outside the United States," said **Zach Friedman**, co-president of 10K Projects. "She continues to evangelize for our artists overseas in powerful ways and we are pleased to be able to offer her this expanded role at the label."

**Troy Carter** and **Suzy Ryoo's Venice Music** tapped three new executives to fill leadership roles on its global streaming team: **Beth Cherry** as head of streaming, U.K.; **Isobel Kelly** as head of alt/pop streaming U.S.; and **Jamal Jimoh** as head of hip-hop/R&B streaming U.S.

Cherry joins Venice Music from Parlophone, where she served as streaming lead across the label's entire roster. She previously worked at Eleven Seven Music Group and wrote for **NME**.

Kelly arrives from Premier Music Group & Downtown Records, where she led commerce and streaming initiatives at **Barry Weiss' RECORDS**. She previously worked at Sony Music in the U.K.

Jimoh has served in leadership roles at a variety of companies, including as vp & head of commerce at HITCO; vp, marketing & revenue at Rostrum Records; senior director, urban programming & revenue at Premier Music Group; director, urban digital marketing at Entertainment One; and general manager at **Nick Cannon's** Ncredible Entertainment. Earlier in his career, he oversaw Island Def Jam's Teen Island marketing arm.

**AEG Presents** promoted **Adam Weiser** to senior vp, global touring and talent out of Nashville. In the new role, he'll work with agents, managers, and label partners to identify new talent and artist-development opportunities and oversee the continued growth of the division's Nashville office. He'll also continue producing and promoting tours.

Weiser has been with AEG Presents for 15 years. He currently books and promotes tours for artists including **Kelsea Ballerini**, **Kane Brown** and **Luke Combs**. He was

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named to *Billboard*'s Country Power Players list in 2020 and 2021 and has also garnered three nominations for Promoter of the Year from the Academy of Country Music.

Prior to his move to Tennessee, Weiser was a senior talent buyer for AEG Presents in the Northeast region.

**Kabiru Bello**, more commonly known as simply Bello, was promoted to the new role of vp, global A&R at **Warner Recorded Music**. He'll continue to lead Asylum Records Nordics.

The expanded role will see Bello driving hip-hop and R&B-focused collaborations across the global Warner Recorded Music network. He'll continue working from Stockholm and report to **Eric Wong**, president and CMO at Warner Recorded Music.

"This role gives me the chance to push culture forward, creating and growing new collaborations across our global A&R network, and enabling our artists to connect with fans in places they've never previously reached," said Bello in a statement.

Wong added, "As we continue to build our domestic repertoire centers, it's vital that we strengthen the connections across our entire A&R team around the world – a mission that Bello will do a first-class job at driving, while continuing to oversee the powerhouse that is Asylum Records Nordics."

Bello has been with Warner Music Group since 2017, when he joined the A&R team at Warner Music Sweden. In 2018, he launched Asylum Records in the Nordics, where he's signed **1.Cuz**, A36 and Ricky Rich, among others. Over the course of his career, he additionally launched 20/20 Records, a Stockholm-based music company encompassing a record label, music publisher and management division.

**Tricky Bizness Entertainment** promoted **Sarsha Venord** from vp, operations to president. Venord started at Tricky Bizness as an assistant in 2010.

In a statement, CEO **Tricky Montgomery** said, "Whether she is negotiating a deal or advocating on a client's behalf with a record label, she shows up consistently in the best interest of our clients. This promotion was a natural progression based on Sarsha's unrelenting commitment to our talent."

"I'm looking forward to delivering even

more successes, taking our artists to the next level and working with new talent," added Venord. "It's also very important for me to mentor younger women as they learn and grow in their careers."

Venord's promotion to president comes as Tricky Bizness transitions into additional genres and spaces, including film/TV projects, the metaverse and NFTs.

Tricky Bizness Entertainment's clients include **NLE Choppa**, Unghetto Mathieu and producer Da Honorable CNote.

**Republic Records** hired **Alyssa LoPresti** as vp, marketing strategy.

In her new role, the New York-based LoPresti will develop and execute marketing campaigns and initiatives for Republic artists including **James Bay**, **Bastille** and **Of Monsters and Men**.

Before arriving at Republic, LoPresti worked at Columbia Records for a decade, rising from marketing assistant to director, marketing.

**Dan Parrott** was promoted to vp, commerce at **Atlantic Records**. In the newly-created role, he'll help the label manage an integrated physical release schedule.

"Dan and the entire Commerce Team will be Atlantic's one-stop shop for all physical formats (CD/MOD, vinyl, cassette, etc) and all artist D2C offerings," said Atlantic senior vp, creative services **Catherine Ciapas**.

"They will leverage WMX for account setup (Target, Amazon, etc), continue to work with WMX merch product managers to create and launch D2C offerings, and help increase the number of physical releases through products like music-on-demand (MOD)."

Parrott's previous title was senior director, e-commerce marketing.

The **Academy of Country Music** announced new hires across several departments. They include **Lori Kraft**, joining as director, brand creative & design; **Steve Mekler** as director, brand marketing & partnerships; **Jennifer Davis** as manager, events; **Rebecca Fisher** as manager, strategic partnerships; **Jesse Knutson** as manager, publicity & media relations; and **Kristan Pridgen** as executive assistant to CEO Damon Whiteside.

Kraft most recently served as a freelance

art director and has worked with magazines including *US Weekly*, *Field & Stream* and *Better Home & Gardens*. She will steer the overall visual branding and identity of the academy.

Mekler comes to the academy from more than three years at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, where he was senior digital manager. He also founded and currently serves as creative director at Stove Creative. In his role, he will lead and manage the Academy's organic promotional reach through partnerships and collaborate with the marketing and creative departments to develop and maintain a clear brand identity for the organization.

Davis most recently led VIP and fan experience and events for FirstBank Amphitheater's inaugural concert season in Franklin, TN. In her role at the academy, she'll manage venue logistics and event operations for the ACM Awards, Academy of Country Music Honors and ACM Party for a Cause events, among other duties.

Fisher arrives at the academy from the Nashville-based commercials, branded content, live television programming and music video production company Taillight, where she created campaigns for major brands including Kleenex, Cottonelle, Ram Trucks and Camping World. At ACM, she'll manage and activate partnerships for the Academy and manage relationships with key strategic partners, communicate sponsorship needs internally and secure new ACM brand partners.

Knutson is a journalist who has worked in both producing and reporting roles for TV stations in Los Angeles, Seattle, Harrisburg, PA and, most recently, Nashville, where he covered the entertainment industry while reporting for NewsChannel 5 (WTVF). In his new role, he will support publicity and media relations efforts for the Academy of Country Music.

Pridgen joins the academy from WME, where she worked for 12 years in a variety of roles. She will provide administrative support to the academy's CEO, board of directors and executive team.

Music industry veterans **Hallie Anderson**, **Hana Mogulescu** and **Jessica Page** launched **Rareform**, described as an "artist

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services hub where musicians can harness expert industry executives and create their own team to perfectly tailor and suit their release needs,” according to a press release.

Rareform provides direct marketing support to artists and label teams to help realize goals beyond traditional album campaign cycles. The company does not own a percentage of artists’ business.

Anderson most recently served as marketing head and co-general manager of Mom + Pop Records (alongside Page). During her time there, she helped run global marketing and release strategy for artists including [Courtney Barnett](#), [Flume](#) and [Alice Merton](#). She’s also worked at AEG Live NW and Foundations Artist Management.

Mogulescu most recently worked as vp, management and label manager at September Management, where she helped launch the September Recordings label and run the global marketing campaign for [Rex Orange County](#)’s *Pony* album. Prior to that, she oversaw campaigns at Beggars Group as senior product manager.

Page served as streaming and digital strategy head at Mom + Pop Music for five and a half years before being promoted to co-general manager alongside Anderson, a role she served in for two years. During her tenure at the label, she led digital strategy and fostered relationships with DSPs. Before Mom + Pop, she worked in distribution at Virgin Music and label services at Caroline.

Rareform’s company client list includes Interscope, The Orchard, September Management and threesixzero, while artist clients include [Faye Webster](#), Jawny and Oberhofer, among many others.

**Magnolia Music Group** launched with [Randy Houser](#) as its flagship artist. The company is being distributed by Empire and will use Thinkswell’s marketing services.

At launch, **Heather Propper** and **Kim-mie Trosdahl** joined Magnolia as co-vps, radio promotion. Propper previously spent five years at KMLE in Phoenix, followed by over 10 years at Stoney Creek/BMG and Warner Music Nashville. Trosdahl previously worked at Warner Music Nashville, with other career stops including Wheelhouse/BMG and Bigger Picture.

**Kyleigh Roberts** also joined as director,

content, while **Emily Hoch** joined as coordinator. Roberts previously worked at Still Working Music Group.


“I couldn’t be more excited about the creation of Magnolia Music Group and feel like it’s time to be more present than ever,” Houser said. “Magnolia’s commitment to artistry is very important to me and has been a cocoon of safety for me while writing and recording new music. I can’t wait to emerge and share what we’ve been creating!” – *Jessica Nicholson*

**Triple Tigers Records** regional promotion managers **Annie Brooks**, **Parker Fowler** and **Julianna Vaughn** were promoted to director roles at the label, effective immediately. All three executives have been with Triple Tigers since launch and have led the label’s radio-driven success in their respective regions.

Brooks represents Triple Tigers in the west from her home base of Portland, OR. Before joining Triple Tigers, she served as marketing and promotion director for KWJJ.

Fowler covers the southeast from Nashville. He previously served as a promotion specialist at RCA Records before joining Triple Tigers.

Vaugh, also based in Nashville, covers the southwest. She started as promotions coordinator at MCA Nashville.

Triple Tigers’ roster includes [Scotty McCreery](#), [Russell Dickerson](#) and Jordan Fletcher. 

## David Dormon Returns to Downtown Music Holdings as General Counsel

BY LARS BRANDLE

**D**avid Dormon is back in the fold at Downtown Music Holdings, where he’s appointed general counsel.

Based in New York, Dormon returns to

the music services provider following his departure last fall as vp, legal and business affairs, whereupon he joined international law firm Reed Smith LLP.

At Downtown, Dormon succeeds current general counsel **Peter Rosenthal**, who is exiting to “pursue another opportunity,” according to a statement issued Friday morning (Feb. 25).

“I know I speak for the entire company when I welcome David back into the Downtown family,” comments **Andrew Bergman**, CEO of Downtown Music Holdings. “David has a deep knowledge of all of our operations, keen negotiating skills, global M&A expertise and the respect of the entire industry. I am pleased to be able to offer him this very important role at Downtown. I would be remiss in not mentioning the impact Peter Rosenthal has had on Downtown and we all wish Peter the best of luck.

Dormon joined Downtown Music Holdings in 2018 as legal counsel and director of acquisitions and, [soon after](#), was appointed vp, legal and business affairs.

During his first stint with the company, Dormon played a key role in the game-changing sale of Downtown’s library of copyrights to Concord, its purchase of the catalog of the Belgium-based publisher Strictly Confidential in 2019, and its acquisition of FUGA the following year.

Prior to that, he served at the law firms of Vedder Price and Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP in Chicago.

“It’s an exciting new chapter for Downtown,” Dormon says in a statement, “and I’m excited to rejoin my colleagues and begin contributing to the continued success of the company.”

Dormon returns to a company that’s a year into a major reinvention.

In April 2021, Concord acquired Downtown Music’s 145,000-song publishing copyrights, triggering the business’ shift towards music services. As part of that new direction, the company switched focus to being a multi-faceted service organization for unsigned artists and songwriters, and, in phase one of its realignment, DashGo and Downtown Music Publishing were rebranded Downtown Music Services.

Downtown currently manages over 23

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million music assets on behalf of over 1.7 million artists and enterprise clients representing 145 countries. 📺

## ‘A Thinly Veiled Attempt To Extort’: Snoop Dogg Blasts Sexual Assault Lawsuit

BY BILL DONAHUE

**S**noop Dogg told a federal judge on Thursday (Feb. 24) that a dancer’s recent sexual assault lawsuit was a “thinly veiled attempt to extort defendant for money” just days before he was set to appear during the Super Bowl halftime show.

In a motion to dismiss the case filed in Los Angeles federal court, the rapper’s attorneys said [the Jane Doe accuser’s lawsuit](#) was legally flawed in a variety of ways, including that it was filed years too late. But, according to Snoop’s lawyers, sound [legal](#) arguments were not the main purpose of bringing the case.

“Plaintiff’s complaint, launched just days before defendant’s Super Bowl Halftime performance, was a thinly veiled attempt to extort Defendant for money to stop Plaintiff from continuing to assert her false claims publicly,” wrote Jennifer L. Keller of the law firm Keller/Anderle LLP. “But the fatal deficiencies in her complaint ensure her gambit will not succeed.”

Snoop’s attorneys also flatly rejected the factual accusations of the lawsuit.

“Nothing remotely resembling plaintiff’s story about defendant Calvin Broadus ever happened,” Snoop’s lawyers wrote, using the rapper’s legal name. “He vehemently denies ever engaging in any sex act with plaintiff or assaulting or battering her.”

The attorney who represents the Jane Doe accuser, Matt E.O. Finkelberg, did not immediately return a request for comment on Thursday evening.

In her lawsuit filed on Feb. 9, the Jane Doe accuser alleged that both Snoop Dogg and Bishop Don “Magic” Juan separately assaulted her over a 24-hour span in May 2013. She also says she was not hired again because she rebuffed their advances.

The complaint included startling and explicit allegations against both men. The lawsuit claims that Doe was first assaulted by Juan — whose real name is Donald Campbell — after she accepted a ride home, fell asleep in the car and woke up at his house. She claims he “repeatedly shoved” himself into her mouth the next morning.

The pair then traveled to Snoop Dogg’s recording studio, the lawsuit says, where Doe claims the rapper barged into a bathroom while she was using it and demanded oral sex. She says she reluctantly complied because she was “afraid for her safety and for her life.” She claims he then masturbated onto her.

In Thursday’s response, Snoop’s attorneys said that each of the lawsuit’s specific claims was meritless. For instance, they argued that a claim for federal sex trafficking was not the kind of thing the statute was designed to prevent.

“If accepted as a sufficient pleading, Plaintiff’s claim would transform into federal sex trafficking every alleged sex act between a defendant and a plaintiff with lesser means, fame, or influence,” Snoop’s lawyers wrote.

As for the primary claims of sexual assault and sexual battery, Snoop’s attorneys said they were clearly barred by California’s two-year statute of limitations for such accusations.

Meanwhile, attorneys for Bishop Don “Magic” Juan also filed a separate motion to dismiss the claims against him, making similar arguments to Snoop’s attorneys. 📺

## Eurovision Song Contest Bans Russia From Competing in 2022

BY ANNA CHAN

**O**ne day after saying that [Russia would be allowed](#) to compete in the 2022 [Eurovision](#) Song Contest despite the country launching an all-out invasion of Ukraine, the European Broadcasting Union has reversed its decision.

“No Russian act will participate in this year’s [Eurovision](#) Song Contest,” the EBU announced on Friday (Feb. 25). “The decision reflects the concern that, in light of the unprecedented crisis in Ukraine, the inclusion of a Russian entry in this year’s contest would bring the competition into disrepute.”

The organization noted that it had spoken to its membership before coming to the decision.

“The EBU is an apolitical member organization of broadcasters committed to upholding the values of public service,” the statement continued. “We remain dedicated to protecting the values of a cultural competition which proves [international](#) exchange and understanding, brings audiences together, celebrates diversity through music and unites Europe on one stage.”

Just a day earlier, the EBU said in a statement to [NPR](#) that Russia would be allowed to compete. “The Eurovision Song Contest is a non-political cultural event. The EBU is however concerned about current events in Ukraine and will continue to closely monitor the situation,” organizers said at the time.

Ahead of that decision, Ukraine’s national public broadcaster had argued that Russia should not be allowed to compete. “The Eurovision Song Contest was created after the Second World War to unite Europe,” Mykola Chernotytsky, chair of the broadcaster, noted

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in an [open letter to EBU](#), arguing for the ban on Russia. “In view of this, Russia’s participation as an aggressor and violator of international law in this year’s Eurovision undermines the very idea of the competition.”

After months of military buildup along the Ukrainian border, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced in the early morning hours of Feb. 24 that he was deploying a “special military operation into Ukraine. That has since turned into a full-on, unprovoked attack on the country, with Russian troops nearing the capital of Kyiv on Friday.

See the EBU’s latest statement below: [B](#)

## Jazz Legend Ernie Andrews Dies at 94

BY JOE LYNCH

**E**rnies Andrews, a jazz and blues singer who began performing in the ’40s and continued entertaining until well into the 21st century, died at the age of 94 on Monday (Feb. 21), his family tells *Billboard*. After suffering a broken hip from a fall, he was taken to a hospital in Conroe, Texas, where he passed away late Monday evening.

Born on Christmas Day in 1927 in Philadelphia, Andrews began singing in the Baptist church and continued to do so when his family moved to Los Angeles in his teenage years. After winning an amateur show in L.A., he caught the attention of songwriter Joe Greene, who brought him into the studio to record his first hit record, “Soothe Me,” in 1945 at the age of 17. One of the best-selling records of the year according to contemporary issues of *Billboard*, it would go on to sell 300,000 copies.

His velvety, deep voice eventually caught the attention of the Harry James Orchestra, which he performed with for several years. “Harry stood behind me during racism,” Andrews told the *Los Angeles Times* in 2014. “A lot of hotels would want to put me in a different hotel, and he wouldn’t allow that.”

Capable of conjuring the grit of the blues, the swing attitude of the big band era and the ache of ’60s soul, Andrews performed with everyone from saxophonist Cannonball Adderley to Wrecking Crew drummer Frank Capp to jazz guitarist Kenny Burrell over the course of his lengthy career, which saw him tour everywhere from Australia to Europe to South America.

“He could sing the blues, jazz, ballads, rhythm and blues. Probably the most versatile singer I’ve ever worked with, and the people loved him,” says friend and collaborator Burrell, who began working with Andrews in the ’70s (including on the *El-lington Is Forever* album) and kept in touch with him until his passing. “He had amazing range, very expressive. He let it come out. His voice was a great instrument.”

While hits and commercial success waned as the years went on, he enjoyed a resurgence in the ’80s and ’90s. Lois Shelton’s 1986 documentary *Ernie Andrews: Blues for Central Avenue* helped re-introduce him to audiences and shed some light on the stops and starts of his career; according to a 1987 review of the film in *The New York Times*, “Like many other singers [of his era, Andrews] had also signed a recording contract he came to regret. As he talks about his reversals, and as he sings the blues in recent performances, the pain in his eyes is unmistakable. But his voice still trumpets his vitality.”

“He didn’t get enough credit, as far as I was concerned and other musicians were concerned,” says Burrell. “The thing that saved him was that the people loved him — they loved the way he sang and his humor, the way he’d talk on stage. The critics never gave him the credit he deserved.”

His wife of 52 years, Dolores, died in 1997. Andrews is survived by four children, 12 grandchildren, 22 great grandchildren and seven great-great grandchildren. [B](#)

## Bad Bunny Is Top Winner at Premio Lo Nuestro With 6 Awards

BY LEILA COBO

**B**ad Bunny, currently performing the Los Angeles stop of his U.S. arena tour, was the big winner of the 2022 edition of [Premio Lo Nuestro](#). Although not present at the awards, Bad Bunny won six trophies, including album of the year. He was followed in a number of wins by Calibre 50, Camilo, CNCO, Grupo Firme, Karol G, and J Balvin with three each.

Winners for Premio Lo Nuestro, which aired live on the Univision network, are voted upon by fans, who choose from a list of finalists provided by the network.

Special awards were given to Paulina Rubio (“Premio a la Trayectoria”), Maluma (“Ídolo Global”) and Farruko (“Premio Lo Nuestro a la Excelencia Urbana”). Maluma shone with his message of optimism for Colombia, delivered alongside buddies Blssd, and Kapla y Miky, who all wore t-shirts that said “Medallo en el mapa. +Música, – violencia” (Medellín on the map. More Music, less Violence).

But the evening’s show-stopper was Farruko, who recently announced his embracement of Christianity and performed an emotional medley with fellow believers Pedro Capó and O’Neill, backed by a string orchestra and gospel choir and with motivational speaker Daniel Habif augmenting the message. It was Habif who introduced Farruko’s four children onstage to give their dad his award. Tears flowed from everyone onstage as Farruko said: “The glory I give to God. Love your fellow man, love your enemy, forgive, be forgiven and have compassion others.”

The tableaux was a startling contrast to Romeo Santos inside a bathtub and Anitta doing some of the most explicit moves in recent memory on television.

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But beautiful live performances also abounded, including the opening mariachi number dedicated to Vicente Fernandez.

Beyond album of the year, Bad Bunny's wins included artist of the year and male artist of the year. Calibre 50 won Regional Mexican norteña and Mariachi song of the year, while Camilo won artist of the year, pop and pop/ballad and tropical song of the year. CNCO won pop song, album and group of the year while Grupo Firme took home Regional Mexican group of the year, Banda song of the year and Regional Mexican album of the year. J Balvin won crossover collaboration of the year, urban collaboration of the year and pop/urban song of the year.

And Karol G won song of the year, urban song of the year and urban female artist of the year. **B**

## Publishing Briefs: John Lee Hooker and Henry Mancini Estates Strike New Deals

BY KRISTIN ROBINSON

**B**MG and its partner **FujiPacific Music** **acquired** the music publishing catalog of **John Lee Hooker**. On its own, BMG also purchased the singer-songwriter's recorded masters royalties, as well as some of his recorded masters spanning from 1980's *Alone Vol. 1* through 2020's *Black Night Is Falling*.

The royalty agreement, the terms of which were not disclosed, encompasses songs including "Boogie Chillen," "Boom Boom" and "One Bourbon, One Scotch, One Beer." According to an announcement from BMG, "some rights will still remain with third parties, but BMG will now take a lead role in promoting Hooker's outstanding catalog."

This is the latest in BMG's larger push into forging partnerships with the biggest

names in American blues, including **Muddy Waters**, **Willie Dixon** and **Howlin' Wolf**.

**Primary Wave** and the family of **Henry Mancini** have entered a marketing and publishing administration deal of selections from the late composer's catalog, in addition to his name and likeness.

One of the most lauded composers in American history, some of Mancini's greatest works will be repped by Primary Wave worldwide, including "Charade," "Dear Heart" and a selection of songs from *Peter Gunn*. "The Pink Panther Theme" will be represented by Primary Wave in North America only.

"We're honored to welcome the legacy and legendary music of Henry Mancini to Primary Wave," said **Marty Silverstone**, partner and senior vp, creative/head of sync at Primary Wave Music. "There are very few composers or songwriters in all of modern music whose body of work and very name carries so much weight."

**Endurance Music Group** has acquired the catalog of country songs written by the songwriting trio of **Jimmie Allen**, Ash Bowers and **Trent Tomlinson** during their deal term with the company Wide Open Music. WOM was purchased by EMG in 2020, and this purchase is considered by the company to be a "follow-on investment," according to a press release.

"In Case You Didn't Know" by **Brett Young**, "Prayed for You" by **Matt Stell** and "Best Shot" and "Freedom Was a Highway" by Allen are all included in the deal.

**Avex USA** has partnered with **Sony Music Publishing** to provide the company with worldwide administrative services. The deal excludes Japan, given that Avex USA's parent company, Avex Group, is a Japanese-based leader in music and entertainment.

The Avex House, a West Hollywood studio and creative hub owned by the company has already hosted a number of successful writing sessions and camps with SMP songwriters. For Avex USA, the decision to administer through SMP will allow the company to offer its artists "an expansive network of support and opportunities for their songs worldwide, while maintaining Avex USA's boutique, familial approach to working," said **Naoki Osada**, president of

Avex USA.

**Jordan Reynolds**, a songwriter behind **Dan + Shay** hits like "10,000 Hours," "Tequila" and "Speechless," has launched a boutique firm called **Hit Ranch** to help broker the sale of songwriters' catalogs.

Co-founded with **Nick Burnett**, Hit Ranch used Reynold's own catalog of songs as a test run, ultimately landing a deal with Warner Chappell Music.

"I was interested in possibly selling my catalog but realized I really didn't know where to start. There's still a lot of ambiguity around the process," Reynolds said. "In talking to my songwriter friends, I realized many of them felt the same way. I wanted to figure out a way to change that and offer a simple solution to anyone considering selling their catalog."

**Downtown Music Services** has signed a worldwide publishing administration deal with **Alejandra Gherzi Rodriquez** (best known as **Arca**). The Venezuelan-born non-binary artist is now based in Barcelona and has a prolific career as a songwriter and artist, with 12 official projects, along with a Grammy and a Latin Grammy nomination.

Arca, as a producer, has been credited on groundbreaking records including **Ye's** *Yeezus*, **Bjork's** *Vulnicara* and *Utopia* and **FKA Twigs' Caprisongs**, as well as the remix of **Lady Gaga** and **Ariana Grande's** "Rain On Me."

Arca said of the deal, "Downtown is as real as it gets. I'm talking NYC, I'm talking Arthur Russell, I'm talking hustlers and queers, I'm saying It Takes A Nation of 1000000s to hold us back, I'm telling you pre-LVMH SoHo, I'm talking Live From The Kitchen, te digo east coast exuberance, I'm saying Down, fucking, town, publishing. Bless my team. It's Legacy, Laurie and Lou, post punk, I'm expressing it: freedom."

**Sony Music Publishing Scandinavia** is now the administration partner for **Vertical Rights** (the publishing arm of Lateral Management). The deal will see SMP Scandinavia's team working with Vertical Rights' roster of songwriters in sync licensing, creative and more.

The independent publishing company, founded by the owners of Lateral Management (**Christian Wählberg**, **Jamie Binns**

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and **Jan Carl Adelswärd**), represents songwriters including **Klas Åhlund** (**Robyn**, **Katy Perry**, **Usher**), Jocke Åhlund (Robyn, **Cee Lo Green**, **Iggy Pop**) and dance music producers **Michel Zitron** and **John Martin** (**Swedish House Mafia**, **Martin Garrix**, **David Guetta**).

Wählberg, who serves as managing director at Vertical Rights and co-founder of Lateral, said, “Our passion has always been to make great music with good people. I am convinced that working together with Sony Music Publishing’s team under the leadership of Johnny Tennander will inject new energy into the vibrant network of artists, songwriters and producers that make up the Lateral and Vertical family.”

**Ella Bric**, the first woman to ever win the Latin Grammy Award for Producer of the Year (2018), has extended her deal with **Universal Music Publishing Latin**. The Venezuelan-born artist, who started her career in the jazz world as a trumpeter, is now focusing on her path as a singer-songwriter as well as her work producing for Latin artists in all different genres, including R&B and trap.

“I am very honored and proud to join the Universal Music Publishing family, not only because it’s the home of so many iconic artists, including Billie Eilish, Rosalia, and Elton John, but also because I was signed by a team that is primarily female-led, which is very important to me,” Bric said.

**Bucks Music Group** has inked a go-forward publishing deal with UK-born **James Dring**, the versatile Grammy-nominated producer/writer/mixing engineer behind songs from **Gorillaz**, **Lana Del Rey** and **Jamie T**, among others.

Bucks senior A&R **Flash Taylor** said of the deal, “James is extremely talented and highly sought after in everything that he does. He’s worked with some incredible artists on a range of amazing projects and there’s loads more to come from him. We’re super excited that he’s chosen Bucks as his publishing home.”

Dring added, “I’m really excited to join the Bucks family of artist and songwriters. I have huge admiration and respect for their integrity as an independent publisher. I can’t wait to start working with Flash and

the rest of the team!”

**Unknown Music Publishing** has signed UK-born producer/songwriter **Phil Simmonds** to a global co-publishing agreement. The independent publisher, founded by famed songwriter Ross Golan, will be working with Simmonds’ entire previous catalog of work as well as future works.

Simmonds’ past works include **Olivia O’Brien**’s “Josslyn” and **JP Cooper**’s “Holy Water.” He has a slew of forthcoming credits on the way this year, including songs with **Kenzie**, Sam Tompkins and **New Hope Club**.

“Phil can produce any genre with his versatile skill set,” says Golan said. Unknown Music Publishing’s head of A&R **Kelley Fox** added, “His musicality, talent, and overall kindness as a person is truly unmatched. He will be a force to be reckoned with.” ■

## With Russian Attack Underway, Ukrainian Band Kazka Unlikely To Perform At SXSW

BY STEVE KNOPPER

**T**he day before Russia invaded **Ukraine**, Kyiv pop trio **Kazka** was in a downtown studio in the capital rehearsing for its scheduled South by Southwest showcase next month.

After an hour and a half of music, Sasha, the band’s singer, contemplated what might soon happen to her country and suggested they cover **Bob Dylan**’s “Masters of War” for the Austin, Texas performance.

“We discussed doing it next day,” says **Andriy Urenov**, the band’s producer, from central Kyiv, where he lives with his dog, Del. “And next day didn’t happen.”

Formed in 2017, Kazka is composed of vocalist Oleksandra Zaritska (Sasha), sopilka player Dmytro Mazuriak and multi-instrumentalist Mykyta Budash. With three studio albums under their belt, the band is most

known for its 2018 hit “Plakala,” which was the first Ukrainian language video to get over 200 million views on YouTube, according to Russian-language media reports.

After SXSW the band expected to tour with fellow Ukrainian **Tina Karol**, with six U.S. dates scheduled beginning on March 25.

Now that plan seems unlikely. On Thursday, Russian forces began a full-scale assault on Ukraine by air, land and sea, in what is the largest military attack on a country in Europe since World War II.

On Friday, as Russian forces encroached further on Kyiv — despite some resistance from Ukrainian forces — Urenov, the 50-year-old A&R and music director for Ukrainian record label Mamamusic, who previously worked for MTV Ukraine and regional radio, spoke by phone with *Billboard* during a rare break from the wails of sirens and military planes.

**Where do you live? What’s happening around you?**

**Andriy Urenov:** I’m living quite in the center of the city. A lot of sirens, and sometimes they’re scary, and the explosions occur from time to time. It seems a little bit surrealistic. We couldn’t believe we can just wake up in the middle of the war in our city here.

**Where is Kazka located? How are they?**

All of the band members of Kazka are in Kyiv right now. Sasha, the vocalist, has the house in the countryside, but she’s very close to the war zone. It’s [near] the military airport, which is important to Russian military forces, because they can land their planes there. We cannot say, “How dangerous is it?” because we’ve never been in this kind of situation. But the friends who are in the army say, “This is the real war,” and we cannot get used to that. We just don’t believe our eyes and our ears.

**What do you expect will happen to you? Do you have a pathway to safety at this time?**

There is no forecast for this particular situation. Right now, no flights into and outside the Ukraine, because it’s very dangerous for the people to fly here.

**Tell me more about where you are living.**

I live in the center of the city with my

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dog, a brown Labrador. We have a bomb shelter in two-minutes reach from my home. Today, I just walked there to check the doors. I went there to find out how it's working. They have electricity there, like 100 can be placed there. It's in the territory of the school. The shops, the food stores, the supermarkets are open. Despite the lines, the people are all very polite, and I was surprised with how calm people are. They have the full baskets of food, because they know tomorrow there possibly will be no supplies. The personnel in the store, we see they're very tired, but they're smiling and saying, "Have a good day."

**Where and when did Kazka's rehearsal take place?**

In the center of Kyiv, just a skyscraper, like a business center. A new studio opened this month. It was 4, 5, 6 in the evening. We have the man who was trying to document the preparation for the festival and it was the first video we made for the festival. It was the sound engineer, myself and the cameraman and the band.

**What are you thinking as far as traveling to the U.S. next month for South by Southwest? Can that happen?**

It depends on what comes next. We've been going to the festival two years, before the pandemic times. We've been preparing for the program. Just the day before the war started, we'd been rehearsing. We were just laughing and sitting and playing music. Of course, we would like to represent our Ukrainian music there. [Lizzo](#) is the favorite of our singers and we wanted to contact her for the concert and invite her personally for the gig. We had plans for an American tour and now it's absolutely unclear whether this can be possible. The sky above Ukraine is closed. It's prohibited for the men ages 18 till 60 to leave right now. They may be called by army to be served as military.

**You're a music producer who might have to fight to defend your country.**

That is terrifying, but it's in the rules of wartime. We have a real war here. I'm reading the news and I'm crying. These young guys who are defending Ukraine, the Zmiinyi island, it's a very small island in the Black Sea. They [didn't surrender](#). Thirteen people were killed by Russians there. The

dialogue — this is the Russian battleship, "Please leave your arms and give up." And [the Ukrainians] say to the Russian military, "Go f— yourself." Then they killed all of them. I cannot process it. I'm originally from [nearby] Odessa. I worked in Russia years ago, and I cannot believe I can be happy that our army killed some Russian soldiers. It's unbelievable.

**Just two days ago, the band was rehearsing for South by Southwest, and now it's preparing for war.**

We have been making new equipment, because on the American tour, we should have been touring with another Ukrainian artist, Tina Karol, and she had another kind of mixing console. We made this rehearsal to try all this equipment, we've gone through our regular program, like an hour and a half. We've been preparing some new songs. Sasha wanted to perform "Masters of War," by Bob Dylan, because she likes the song. It was perfect for [the] times. Which is now. We didn't expect it would happen next day. 🇺🇦

## Only Two Percent of Charting Producers Are Non-Male — LP Giobbi's Femme House Tour Aims to Change That

BY ANA MONROY YGLESIAS

In 2018, [LP Giobbi](#) was on tour with [Sofi Tukker](#), chatting with them about struggling to define her sound. "Why do you keep trying to put yourself in a box?" she recalls the duo asking her. "Why do you keep trying to force yourself to just make one kind of sound? What if what you care about is uplifting the female voice? What if your genre was just femme house?"

It was a pivotal moment that gave the artist, born Leah Chisholm in Oregon, a vision

to move forward.

"Talk about hitting the lottery! That freed me to be an actual artist in a way that I don't know if I ever could have done for myself. The power of community is so real," LP tells *Billboard* via Zoom from her place in Austin, Texas, surrounded by music gear and wearing a colorful sweatshirt. "As far as the sound, it started as, 'Does this make me feel good? Is this positive music on the [dance](#) floor? Does this uplift the feminine voice?'"

Thus the inclusive, uplifting and ever-evolving genre of Femme House was born. LP was ready to foster it, and by doing so, bring more women and gender-expansive people into dance music. Starting today (February 25), aspiring creators across the country can get involved in-person.

Through LP Giobbi's Femme House Takeover Tour, she and her team are bringing classes to 12 cities across the U.S., the first time they've done it in-person lessons outside of L.A. The trek kicks off today in Philadelphia and wraps on April 9 in Denver, with classes during the day and club shows featuring an all-female and gender-expansive lineup at night.

"Your support of this tour isn't just a concert ticket," LP says, "it's a way for you to create the change we all want to see."

Intro to [Ableton](#), one of Femme House's signature programs, will be taught during the day by female Ableton-certified trainers, along with LP and synth pop artist and Femme House Chief Education Officer Mini Bear. (Participants need to provide their own laptop and headphones. Those without Ableton can access a free 90 day trial.)

In the evening, the festivities move to the club, with shows headlined by LP and supported by rising U.K. DJ/producer BKLAVA (one of *Billboard*'s [2022 Dance Artists to Watch](#)) and local artists from each city, with priority given to artists of color. [Coco & Breezy](#) will play in Brooklyn, Nala in L.A., with more announced closer to the show dates. Over half of the cities' workshops have already sold out.

"It's hard to be what you can't see. So, having full electronic lineups that are all women-led or gender-expansive-led, that's also one of the important key missing factors," says LP. "I played a really wonderful

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electronic venue in D.C. Afterwards, I was walking through the audience, taking my keyboard out of the club. This girl comes over to me and she's like, 'Hey, I just wanted you to know that I've been coming to this venue for a decade and I've never seen a woman DJ here. Not that I necessarily want to be a female DJ, but just seeing you made me think I can be anything I want to be.'"

Back when LP was a synth player in the band LJ Laboratory in Los Angeles, she experienced a similar feeling herself when she read that [Grimes](#) produces her own music. "I went, 'What else do I not think I can be because of the lack of visual presentation — because I've never seen myself in that role, so it didn't even occur to me?' And that just made me expand my concept of myself larger. More females and gender-expansive people thinking they can do anything does, I believe, change the world."

It's thus no surprise that two key tenants of Femme House are vision are visibility — seeing more diverse faces behind the DJ decks and in the studio — and removing barriers, namely by providing tools to support those who have generally been excluded or overlooked for such roles. (In a press release for the tour, LP cites a statistic that only about two percent of charting producers are non-male.)

LP and artist management consultant Lauren A. Spalding thus founded the Femme House nonprofit in 2019, focusing on giving women and gender-expansive people educational resources to DJ, produce and step into the technical side of music making.

Femme House launched at MoogFest 2019, with a conversation about the root of inequality in electronic music, and shortly after began offering free in-person classes in Los Angeles on production, DJing, songwriting and more. The pandemic led them to adapt classes and offer them online, allowing them to expand their community worldwide, with over 3,600 people taking their online courses so far.

Femme House also offers a scholarship for BIPOC creators, providing four artists per year with one-on-one mentorship and free gear. In 2021, they also launched the free four-week virtual bootcamp [She Is The Producer](#) in partnership with [Alicia Keys](#)'

and Ann Mincielli's [She Is The Music](#) and Emily Lazar's [We Are Moving The Needle](#), with support from Ableton, who offered free software licenses to every participant. In less than 24 hours, they received over 3,000 sign ups from over 1,400 cities in 77 countries worldwide.

In addition to Spalding and Mini Bear, the small but mighty Femme House team consists of Brand Marketing Manager Sofia LeBlanc, and Tory Pittarelli and Hilary Gleason, consultants from the philanthropic consulting firm Level. A central tenant the team always considers is "How are we lifting as we're climbing?"

When asked how the feminist lens impacts her decision-making, LP says she sees her collaborations as a platform for women, especially women of color, and gender-expansive people. 2021 single "Say A Little Prayer" features Black non-binary artist Amazonian Rockstar and "Carry Us" (one of *Billboard's* [best dance songs of 2021](#)) features Black queer artist Kaleena Zanders. For LP, who had a breakout year in 2021, the primary question is: "How am I opening the door behind me?" Part of the answer is found in suggesting other female and gender-expansive artists when she gets booked and consulting with fests on their lineups.

"If you're in a position of power, whether that's the booker or the promoter, the label, the publisher, [it's important] to be really aware of what your rosters look like," LP says. "What are you representing? There's this really weird thing where it's easy to get booked for a festival if you've been booked for a festival [before]. What a silly conundrum. That is because the festival bookers will look at other festival lineups and see who's on them, which sort of says how big they are. So, if you're not already being booked, how do you get on there? It's the role of the gatekeeper to be aware of that.

"Let's be honest," she adds, "the headliners are the ones selling tickets, and maybe the second billing on a festival poster... So that means that most festivals have 50 slots available to really diversify."

LP shares a framework experimental artist [Madame Gandhi](#) often talks about: "be the change" feminism versus "activist


feminism," and how both are necessary. LP points out to how DJ Tennis' beloved Rakastella party at Art Basel in Miami has a 50-50 gender split among its performers — even though Tennis never advertises that — as an example of "be the change" feminism. The Femme House tour is "activist feminism," as they explicitly advertise their all-female and gender-expansive lineup and offer classes to directly address inequality in music production. LP underscores that male feminists (like DJ Tennis) are crucial, and that she's always had great experiences working with male producers, as well as labels and brands that are supportive of her and Femme House.

[Insomniac](#), the producer of EDC Las Vegas and many other large-scale global dance events, is one such brand. Next month, a compilation featuring Femme House alumni and new acts is dropping on Insomniac Records, with a second volume to follow. Many of the compilation artists are set to perform at May's EDC Las Vegas during the Femme House art car takeover. Both projects create the essential element of visibility, notably in front of the massive and largely young Insomniac fanbase, hopefully inspiring more young women and gender expansive people to get behind the decks.

As for her own releases, LP has been busy with a string of hot remixes. One of her most recent was an edit of Ben Kim's dancefloor rendition of [Jefferson Airplane's](#) "Somebody to Love," for [Gorgon City's](#) REALM imprint. Adding her euphoric piano house touch to the psych-rock classic was an especially fun one for her, as she was raised by Deadheads — so music by [Grateful Dead](#), Jefferson Airplane and other jam bands was her family's church. For her (and her dad), ravers are the modern hippies: She says, when she took him to his first rave, Snowglobe Festival in South Lake Tahoe, "He [was like], 'Oh, I get it! If I was born now, I'd be a raver instead of a hippy.'"

She adds, "The PLUR community is the same ethos [as the Deadheads] — we're all part of something greater than ourselves. The dance floor, unity, love, it's all there. That's literally what raised me, so getting to find that with my own generation has been cool."

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Find more info on the [FEMME HOUSE TAKEOVER](#) [here](#). All workshops are donation-based, with money collected helping fund additional programming. 

## Take a Tour of Stockholm's Newly Opened Avicii Experience Tribute Museum

BY KATIE BAIN

**A**fter years of planning, the Avicii Experience tribute museum opens Friday (Feb. 25) in the late producer's hometown of [Stockholm](#).

In a testament to the strength of the legacy of the artist born Tim Bergling, the space was inaugurated Thursday by Sweden's Prince Carl Philip and Princess Sofia. As part of this opening, the latter royal read the lyrics of the 2014 [Avicii](#) track "The Nights" to Avicii's father Klas Bergling, reciting "One day my father, he told me/ Son, don't let it slip away/ He took me in his arms, I heard him say/ When you get older/ Your wild heart will live for younger days/ Think of me if ever you're afraid."

It was a teary moment to launch the emotional facility. Others at the opening event included Per Sundin, the CEO of Pophouse Entertainment, the producer of the Avicii Experience and the same group behind Stockholm's ABBA museum and other cultural installations and hotels throughout the city, along with the Experience's Content Producer Lisa Halling-Aadland.

Months prior to the opening of the space, *Billboard* joined Halling-Aadland in Stockholm for a tour of the Experience, which then existed only as a miniature model. Halling-Aadland notes that while the Experience is "Ultimately for his fans and [EDM](#) lovers and culture lovers," many people who visit may be new to Bergling's story, particularly given that the Avicii Experience

is working with myriad Stockholm tourism agencies to drive attendance.

Thus, the Experience is packed with information intended to resonate with both those with deep knowledge of Bergling's life story and those who are discovering him and electronic music culture for the first time. Located inside digital culture center Space, the roughly 3,700-square foot Experience thus starts at the beginning of Bergling's life via a replica of his childhood bedroom, complete with the video games the young Tim Bergling spent countless hours playing during his childhood.

"The idea here is to give the visitor a sense of, 'This could have been my brother; this could have been my friend,' super relatable," says Halling-Aadland.

This area and other parts of the Avicii Experience were furnished with many of the actual items Bergling had in his room as a boy, as provided to the space by Klas Bergling and his wife Anki Lidén. "There's no way any of this could have happened without Klas and Anki," Halling-Aadland adds. "They provided props, information, instruments, guidance, literally everything."

From the bedroom, the experience transitions into a space exploring Bergling's teenage friendship with Filip Åkesson, who produced music under the name Philgood. While even many hardcore Avicii fans aren't aware of Åkesson and the role he played, "he's actually the first guy that Tim met that he started making music with," explains Halling-Aadland. "He's a really big deal in Tim's musical life."

Åkesson worked with Halling-Aadland on the project, which benefits from the fact that Åkesson saved his PC from this early era. The team was thus able to excavate never-released early productions by Avicii and Philgood. These productions are available for listening, along with an interview video with Åkesson discussing this first phase of Bergling's career.

From there, the space leads to a replica of the Stockholm studio first used by Bergling and his first manager, Ash Pournouri. Working with the Avicii Experience, Pournouri provided many of the actual items that had been in the studio, including the purple faux fur tapestry they pinned to the wall to

improve the sound quality in this basement space. ("People made some really good choices back then to keep things that we're now so lucky to have," says Halling-Aadland.) This area also features a replica of the "tiny, tiny" apartment Bergling rented from his older brother in this era, a shoebox-sized room where he'd stay up all night making music.

Beyond that is one of the Avicii Experience's most exciting areas: a space where visitors can hear different — and previously unreleased — versions of the all-time Avicii classic, "Levels." Here visitors can also try their hand at remixing this genre-defining 2011 hit. Just beyond is a space where visitors can also interact with 2013's "Hey Brother." There's also a film about the *True* album era, including reflections on Bergling getting booed at [Ultra Music Festival](#) 2013 when he debuted "Wake Me Up," a story that has since become EDM lore. Instruments used by Bergling, including many guitars, are featured throughout the Experience.

"The tragedy, the sadness is always present," Halling-Aadland says of the space that tracks the Avicii story from its humble beginnings to tragic end. "It's everywhere when you think about Tim. There's no way of not. But we do want to give all the fans and visitors a lovely experience with his music. And not just listening — because they have Spotify — but interacting."

Such interaction continues in an area where visitors can sing VR karaoke with the Avicii songs "Broken Arrows," "Wake Me Up" and "Without You." Upon putting on the VR headset, visitors are greeted by each song's respective collaborator — Carl Falk, Aloe Blacc and Sandro Cavazza — who invite guests to belt out the lyrics. ("It's super soundproof, by the way," explains Halling-Aadland.)

This installation is followed by two spaces intended to contrast Bergling's existence as a thoughtful introvert and the often overwhelming realities of his hectic life as a global superstar. In a meditation room, existential questions are projected on the wall while the sound of ocean waves plays softly. Next to it plays a three minute loop of airplanes taking off, cars honking and pa-

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parazzi cameras flashing, with mirrors making it so each visitor sees themselves in the context of this overwhelming cacophony.

The next area tracks the roadtrip Tim and a bunch of his closest friends and collaborators did across the U.S. after Bergling announced his retirement from touring in 2016. This is followed by a replica of areas of Bergling's sprawling house in Los Angeles, including a view of the twinkling L.A. skyline and a replica of the house's studio that was built by the same Swedish team of engineers that built the original.

Beyond this, the Experience transitions into the era following the end of Tim's life, with a room featuring 360-degrees of LED screens showing footage from the 2019 Avicii Tribute Concert in Stockholm — which [featured performances](#) from David Guetta, Kygo, Aloe Blacc and many others — allowing fans to be part of a show that many around the world would have liked to attend in person.

Towards the end, a replica of an area of the Stockholm church where Bergling's 2018 memorial was held serves as a quiet place of reflection, with both digital and physical guest books allowing visitors to leave their thoughts and reflections. And finally, just outside the exit, in area open to the public, is information on the Tim Bergling Foundation, which works to further suicide prevention among young people.

"This is on the outside — because you shouldn't have to pay to get the information," says Halling-Aadland.

Altogether, the Avicii Experience offers both massive fans and those new to the Avicii story the chance to immerse themselves in Tim Bergling's story, his music and his legacy — one that becomes further cemented with the opening of a facility created via years of intense research and tremendous respect for both the artist at its center and the musical genre he forged. **B**

## How Jamee Ranta Went From Executive Producing Music Videos For Justin Bieber and Jennifer Lopez To Managing Her First Client

BY MEGAN ARMSTRONG

**G**rowing up in income-based housing in Dayton, Ohio, Jamee Ranta says "opportunities were nonexistent" — and while she dreamed of becoming an astronaut, music had a more formative impact. Ranta has now worked alongside some of music's biggest stars as CEO of Artifact Content, a multimedia production company she founded in 2017. She first arrived in Los Angeles nearly a decade prior and hustled to break into the industry, working on as many music video sets as she could. Self-employed since 18, Ranta's bet on herself has more than paid off: Her work on Cardi B's "WAP" helped the clip win the 2021 BET video of the year award, and she more recently executive-produced the visual for [Justin Bieber's](#) Grammy Award-nominated "Peaches."

Now, Ranta is eager for her next adventure: management, signing burgeoning Colombian American singer-songwriter Nathalie Paris as her first client near the end of 2021. "I love the logistical side of making art because it's very commonly underappreciated," says Ranta. "I enjoy being part of those systems to support the artist."

[Halsey's](#) hourlong film *If I Can't Have Love, I Want Power*, released in 2021 to accompany their fourth album by the same name, was Ranta's first theatrical release. "Every time I do a project, I live and breathe

it," she says. "This had a very dark storyline. We were in a dark castle. You learn about who you are in the midst of darkness." Filmed over six weeks in Prague, the project faced various obstacles, from the country shutting down due to COVID-19 restrictions to Halsey's health during the artist's pregnancy. "We were all able to pull from personal things," she adds. "But you need darkness to see the stars."

Ranta previously worked with Lopez in 2019 on the visual for "Medicine" (featuring French Montana) and the accompanying It's My Party tour visuals. But for the pair's latest collaboration, "Marry Me" — the lead single from the rom-com soundtrack of the same name — the executive producer was able to fulfill a dream by partnering with Academy Award-winning cinematographer Robert Richardson. Produced through Artifact this year, the video for "Marry Me" was also its most ambitious venture yet. "It's a raw deconstruction of who she is," says Ranta, "and the not-so-luxurious parts of the daily life of an artist like Jennifer."

Ranta first met Bieber in 2012 while working on a treatment of his "Boyfriend" video. Ten years later, she says she's "in awe of his trajectory" and feels particularly proud of watching his growth "translate into his music and the videos we created." Those most recently include the 2021 *Justice* visuals that Ranta executive-produced, from the Diane Keaton co-starring "Ghost" (in which she says Keaton brought "the most magical" energy to the set) to "Peaches," which earned Ranta her first Grammy nod for best music video/film. The objective for the latter visual was simple: "Show Justin in his element. We hadn't seen that since he was a kid."

*This story originally appeared in [Billboard's](#) 2022 Women in Music issue, dated Feb. 26, 2022. **B***

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## ‘Broadway Bares’ Benefit Sets Live Onstage Return for June

BY KEITH CAULFIELD

**B**roadway is back, and so too is the long-running *Broadway Bares* spectacular.

The annual, one night only charity burlesque show will return — live, onstage and in-person — for its 30th anniversary celebration on June 26 at the Hammerstein Ballroom in New York. For the last two years, COVID-19 sidelined the show to a virtual event.

The theme for 2022 *Broadway Bares* show will be announced at a later date, along with any special guests that may take the stage. Previous installments of the show have included appearances from musicians like [Billy Porter](#), [Vanessa Williams](#), [Cyndi Lauper](#) and [Adam Lambert](#). The extravaganza is a showcase for the dancers of Broadway and New York, and [in 2019](#), more than 200 performers took the stage.

The 2022 show will be directed by Laya Barak, who also helmed the 2019 edition. *Broadway Bares* was launched in 1992 by two-time Tony Award winner Jerry Mitchell. (Mitchell continues to be a part of the show in 2022, as an executive producer.)

Per tradition, the 2022 *Broadway Bares* show will be performed twice on the same night, at 9:30 p.m. and midnight. Tickets are on sale at [BroadwayCares.org](#).

*Broadway Bares* benefits and is produced by Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS (BC/EFA). Though the years, *Bares* has generated over \$21 million for BC/EFA. Through BC/EFA’s many fundraising endeavors and events, the organization has raised more than \$300 million for essential services for people with HIV/AIDS, COVID-19 and other critical illnesses across the United States since 1988. [B](#)

## Jazmine Sullivan Cancels Show After Testing Positive for COVID-19: ‘Health & Safety Come First’

BY ANNA CHAN

**J**azmine Sullivan has tested positive for COVID-19, the singer-songwriter announced on social media Thursday (Feb. 24). She also shared she would be canceling at least one show on her Heaux Tales tour.

“My doctor confirmed today that I’m positive with COVID,” she shared. “I am taking every precaution to isolate myself. I’m truly sad to have to cancel more shows but my health and safety come first for myself, my team, and all of you.”

She announced that the Friday, Feb. 25, in Los Angeles has been nixed, with potentially more cancellations to come. “We are likely cancelling shows for next week based on my condition and the condition of my crew,” she noted. “We will let you know when the tour will resume once we have made that decision.”

Just a day earlier, on Feb. 23, the “Girl Like Me” singer shared with fans that [she wasn’t feeling well](#), and canceled that evening’s show in Sacramento, Calif. “While I’ve tested negative for COVID, I am feeling extremely under the weather,” she explained on social media at the time. “The last thing I want to do is give a subpar performance. ... I’m working on resting my body and my voice.”

Sullivan launched the Heaux Tales tour on Valentine’s Day, with Tiana Major9 as her special guest. Days before that, the 15-time Grammy nominee released her second EP, *Heaux Tales*, Mo’ Tales: The Deluxe on Feb. 11. Her first EP, 2021’s *Heaux Tales*, debuted

at No. 1 on the Billboard Top R&B Albums chart dated Jan. 23 that year, and is up for this year’s Grammy for best R&B album.

The 34-year-old is among several artists who have canceled shows in recent days due to contracting the [coronavirus](#). John Mayer announced Feb. 24 that he had come down with [COVID-19 for a second time](#), and postponed four shows. Justin Bieber also [tested positive](#), and postponed his Feb. 20 Las Vegas concert.

See Sullivan’s announcement below: [B](#)

## New Around the World: BTS’ Jungkook Scores a First on Global Charts

BY ERIC FRANKENBERG

**B**TS has been one of the most dominant acts on *Billboard*’s global charts since the lists launched in September 2020, with six No. 1 hits on the [Billboard Global 200](#) and five leaders on the [Billboard Global Excl. U.S.](#) chart — the top sums among all acts on each ranking.

The group’s success now extends further among its members, as [Jungkook](#) notches a top 10 debut on the Global Excl. U.S. chart — the first top 10 on either survey for any BTS member on his own.

“Stay Alive,” co-written and co-produced by Jungkook’s BTS bandmate Suga, arrives at No. 8 on Global Excl. U.S. and No. 13 on the Global 200. Jungkook is the fourth member of the group to hit the global charts as a soloist and the first to crack the top 10 solo.

“Stay Alive” drew 28.6 million streams and sold 45,200 downloads worldwide in its first week (Feb. 11-17), according to MRC Data, making it the best-selling song in the world by a margin of nearly 2:1 (over Dr. Dre’s “Still D.R.E.,” featuring Snoop Dogg, following their performance at the [Super Bowl 2022 Halftime Show](#) Feb. 13).

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All solo entries by BTS members have hit the global charts in the last few months. Jin kicked off the haul when “Yours” arrived and peaked on the Nov. 20, 2021-dated Global Excl. U.S. and Global 200 lists at Nos. 67 and 90, respectively. Suga then hit the Dec. 25 charts at Nos. 55 and 37 with “Girl of My Dreams,” alongside Juice WRLD. Most recently, V’s “Christmas Tree” debuted and peaked at Nos. 43 and 51 on the Jan. 8 rankings.

Streams for “Stay Alive” split 10% from the U.S. (2.9 million) and 90% outside (25.7 million). This is almost the same as activity for “Christmas Tree” in its debut week, when it split 9% vs. 91%. Further, both tracks fall in line with recent BTS debuts – No. 1 arrivals for “Life Goes On,” “Butter,” “Permission to Dance,” and “My Universe,” with Coldplay, yielded 88-91% of streams from beyond the U.S. in their respective opening weeks.

With 25.7 million streams and 30,400 sold outside the U.S., “Stay Alive” also enters a variety of *Billboard*’s new Hits of the World charts. It ranks at No. 2 on Malaysia Songs, No. 4 on Singapore Songs and No. 8 on both Indonesia Songs and Russia Songs. It also appears on the 25-position tallies for the Philippines (No. 18) and Taiwan (No. 20).

On *Billboard*’s all-genre U.S. charts, “Stay Alive” debuts on Digital Song Sales at No. 6 and the [Billboard Hot 100](#) at No. 95. **B**

## Simple Minds’ ’80s Classic ‘Don’t You (Forget About Me)’ Returns to Charts Thanks to Super Bowl Ad

BY KEVIN RUTHERFORD

**S**imple Minds’ ’80s smash “Don’t You (Forget About Me)” returns to *Billboard*’s [Hot Rock & Alternative Songs](#) chart thanks to a Super

Bowl ad featuring the former [Billboard Hot 100](#) No. 1.

“Don’t” re-enters Hot Rock & Alternative Songs — where older songs are eligible to appear if in the list’s top half and with a meaningful reason for their return — at No. 19. It also revisits [Hot Alternative Songs](#) at No. 17. The new charting success of “Don’t” comes after the song was featured in an ad for Meta, Facebook’s parent company, that aired during the Super Bowl Feb. 13. In the game, the Los Angeles Rams defeated the Cincinnati Bengals.

In the Feb. 11-17 tracking week, the song earned 2.1 million U.S. streams, a 4% boost, and sold 800 downloads, up 96%, according to MRC Data. A staple of classic hits and adult radio, it also drew 5.1 million in airplay audience among the 1,300 stations that report to *Billboard*’s [Radio Songs](#) chart, largely consistent with its typical weekly radio play.

The track also re-enters [Alternative Digital Song Sales](#) and [Rock Digital Song Sales](#) at Nos. 12 and 20, respectively.

The song previously reached Hot Rock & Alternative Songs a year ago, with a peak of No. 14 on May 8, 2021, its return then owed to a 69-cent sales pricing on iTunes alongside other songs featured prominently in movies.

The song was originally released on the soundtrack to the [revered](#) 1985 box office hit *The Breakfast Club* and crowned the Hot 100 for a week that May. It also led the [Mainstream Rock Airplay](#) tally for three weeks in its original run, marking the first of six top 10s for the Scottish band. **B**

## John Mayer Tests Positive for COVID-19 Again: ‘This One’s Got the Better of Me’

BY ANNA CHAN

**C**OVID-19 has derailed [John Mayer](#)’s Sob Rock tour once again. The musician announced late on Thursday (Feb. 24) that additional members of his band have contracted [coronavirus](#), including himself — for a second time.

“More members of the band tested positive for Covid today, and I was one of them,” the “Wild Blue” singer shared in an Instagram post, explaining that the next four shows will be rescheduled once again. “This is a bummer for everyone in the band and crew, to say nothing of the question hanging over everyone’s head — mine included — as to how I tested positive on PCR twice in two months.”

He added that while his first bout with COVID was “extremely mild,” he hasn’t been quite as fortunate this time. “This one’s got the better of me,” he shared.

Mayer concluded his message with a promise to give it his all when he’s on the stage again. “We’ll give you everything we’ve got at these upcoming shows, just as soon as we rest up and regroup,” he wrote. “With love and appreciation... me.”

The rescheduled shows — which had been set for Pittsburgh; Belmont Park, N.Y.; and Boston for Feb. 27 through March 5 — have been postponed until May.

Just days earlier, on Feb. 21, the singer-songwriter announced hours ahead of his Madison Square Garden show that his [touring drummer had tested positive](#), but that the show would go on. Though Mayer didn’t share at the time who would be sitting behind the drums, [Questlove made a surprise appearance](#) behind the kit for part of the show. Mayer [wrote on Instagram](#)

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after the concert: “My boundless appreciation goes out to the legendary @questlove, who stepped in on an hour’s notice to help end the show on such a powerful and definitive note.”

Mayer himself [first tested positive](#) for COVID-19 in January. The diagnosis forced him to miss his scheduled appearance with Dead & Company at the Playing in the Sand Festival.

See his Instagram post below: [📷](#)

## Jazmine Sullivan Is a Triple Winner in 2022 NAACP Image Awards’ Pre-Telecast Awards

BY PAUL GREIN

**J**azmine Sullivan was the big music winner at the NAACP Image Awards on Thursday (Feb. 24). She won outstanding album and outstanding female artist for her album *Heaux Tales*. She also won outstanding soul/R&B song for “Pick Up Your Feelings.”

Sullivan is nominated for three Grammy Awards this year for those same recordings. This brings her total of Grammy nominations to 15. She has yet to win, but this could be her year.

Tobe Nwigwe featuring Fat Nwigwe, [Wizkid](#) featuring [Tems](#) and gospel star [Tamela Mann](#) were each double winners at the NAACP Image Awards, which are following the lead of the Primetime Emmys’ Creative Arts Awards in stripping their “pre-telecast” awards across an entire week. The focus on Thursday was on music.

[Saweetie](#) took outstanding new artist for “Best Friend” (featuring Doja Cat). Saweetie is nominated for best new artist at the Grammys on April 3.

[JAY-Z](#) & Jeymes Samuel took the award for outstanding soundtrack/compila-

tion album for *The Harder They Fall*. On Wednesday Feb. 23, *The Harder They Fall* won outstanding ensemble cast in a motion picture, while Samuel, who directed, co-wrote, co-produced and scored the film, won outstanding breakthrough creative (motion picture).

*The Daily Show With Trevor Noah* and *Red Table Talk* also won two awards on Wednesday.

Shaka King won two NAACP Image Awards on Tuesday Feb. 22 for his work on *Judas and the Black Messiah*. The filmmaker won for outstanding directing in a motion picture and shared the award for outstanding writing in a motion picture.

“Jemele Hill Is Unbothered” was the only double winner on Monday Feb. 21. It won for outstanding society and culture podcast and outstanding arts and entertainment podcast.

[Will Smith](#), who received two Oscar nominations for his work on *King Richard*, won an NAACP Image Award on Monday for outstanding literary work – biography/autobiography for *Will*. Smith is also nominated for outstanding actor in a motion picture and outstanding motion picture. Those awards will be presented on the 53rd NAACP Image Awards, which are set to air on Saturday (Feb. 26) at 8 p.m. ET/PT on BET.

Non-televised awards will be announced nightly through Friday Feb. 25 at 8 p.m. ET/5 p.m. PT on [naacpimageawards.net](#) and the NAACP Image Awards YouTube channel.

*Billboard* will update this story each night this week with the most recent winners on top.

### Thursday, Feb. 24

**Outstanding Album:** *Heaux Tales*– Jazmine Sullivan (RCA Records)

**Outstanding Male Artist:** Anthony Hamilton – *Love Is the New Black* (My Music Box LLC/BMG)

**Outstanding Female Artist:** Jazmine Sullivan– *Heaux Tales* (RCA Records)

**Outstanding Duo, Group or Collaboration (Traditional):** Silk Sonic– “Leave the Door Open” (Aftermath/Atlantic)

**Outstanding Duo, Group or Collaboration (Contemporary):** Tobe Nwigwe Feat. Fat Nwigwe– “Fye Fye” (Tobe Nwigwe, LLC)

**Outstanding New Artist:** Saweetie –

“Best Friend” featuring Doja Cat (ICY/Warner Records)

**Outstanding Soundtrack/Compilation Album:** *The Harder They Fall* (The Motion Picture Soundtrack) – JAY-Z & Jeymes Samuel (Geneva Club/Roc Nation Records, LLC)

**Outstanding International Song:** “Essence”– Wizkid featuring Tems & Justin Bieber (RCA Records/Starboy/Sony Music International)

**Outstanding Music Video/Visual Album:** “Essence”– Wizkid featuring Tems (RCA Records/Starboy/Sony Music International)

**Outstanding Soul/R&B Song:** “Pick Up Your Feelings”– Jazmine Sullivan (RCA Records)

**Outstanding Hip-Hop/Rap Song:** “Fye Fye” – Tobe Nwigwe Feat. Fat Nwigwe (Tobe Nwigwe, LLC)

**Outstanding Jazz Album – Instrumental:** “Sounds from the Ancestors” – Kenny Garrett (Mack Avenue Music Group)

**Outstanding Jazz Album – Vocal:** “Generations”– The Baylor Project (Be a Light)

**Outstanding Gospel/Christian Song:** “Help Me”– Tamela Mann feat. The Fellas (Tillymann Music Group)

**Outstanding Gospel/Christian Album:** *Overcomer*– Tamela Mann (Tillymann Music Group)

**Special Award: NAACP Humanitarian of the Year:** Darnella Frazier

**Wednesday, Feb. 23**

**Outstanding Talk Series:** *Red Table Talk* (Facebook Watch)

**Outstanding Host in a Talk or News/Information (Series or Special) – Individual or Ensemble:** Jada Pinkett Smith, Adrienne Banfield-Norris, Willow Smith– *Red Table Talk* (Facebook Watch)

**Outstanding Reality Program/Reality Competition Series:** *Wild ‘n Out* (VH1)

**Outstanding Host in a Reality/Reality Competition, Game Show or Variety (Series or Special) – Individual or Ensemble:** Trevor Noah– *The Daily Show with Trevor Noah* (Comedy Central)

**Outstanding Variety or Game Show (Series or Special):** *The Daily Show with Trevor Noah* (Comedy Central)

**Outstanding News/Information (Series**

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**or Special):** *The Reidout* (MSNBC)

**Outstanding Documentary (Television):** *High on the Hog: How African American Cuisine Transformed America* (Netflix)

**Outstanding Children's Program:** *Family Reunion* (Netflix)

**Outstanding Animated Series:** *We the People* (Netflix)

**Outstanding Character Voice-Over Performance (Television):** Cree Summer- *Rugrats* (Nickelodeon)

**Outstanding Character Voice-Over Performance – Motion Picture:** Letitia Wright- *Sing 2* (Universal Pictures)

**Outstanding Breakthrough Performance in a Motion Picture:** Danny Boyd Jr.- *Bruised* (Netflix)

**Outstanding Breakthrough Creative (Motion Picture):** Jeymes Samuel- *The Harder They Fall* (Netflix)

**Outstanding Ensemble Cast in a Motion Picture:** *The Harder They Fall* (Netflix)

**Outstanding International Motion Picture:** *7 Prisoners* (Netflix)

**Outstanding Guest Performance:** Maya Rudolph- *Saturday Night Live* (NBC)

**Special Award: Roy Wilkins Civil Rights Award:** Members of the Mexican American Legislative Caucus, Texas House Democratic Caucus, and Texas Legislative Black Caucus

**Tuesday, Feb. 22**

**Outstanding Short-Form Series – Comedy or Drama:** “Between the Scenes” – *The Daily Show* (Comedy Central)

**Outstanding Short-Form Series or Special – Reality/Nonfiction:** “Token of a Great Day: Lynching Postcards” (Paramount +)

**Outstanding Short-Form (Live Action):** “When the Sun Sets (Lakutshon’ Ilanga)” (Universal Pictures)

**Outstanding Short-Form (Animated):** “Us Again” (Walt Disney Animation Studios)

**Outstanding Writing in a Comedy Series:** Issa Rae- *Insecure* – Episode #510 “Everything’s Gonna Be, Okay?!” (HBO)

**Outstanding Writing in a Drama Series:** Davita Scarlett- “The Good Fight” – 505, “And the Firm Had Two Partners” (Paramount +)

**Outstanding Writing in a Television Movie or Special:** Abdul Williams- “Salt-N-

Pepa” (Lifetime Movie Network)

**Outstanding Writing in a Motion Picture:** Shaka King, Will Berson, Kenny Lucas, Keith Lucas- *Judas and the Black Messiah* (Warner Bros. Pictures)

**Outstanding Directing in a Comedy Series:** Bashir Salahuddin, Diallo Riddle – *South Side* – “Tornado” (208) (HBO Max)

**Outstanding Directing in a Drama Series:** Barry Jenkins- *The Underground Railroad* “Indiana Winter” (Amazon Studios)

**Outstanding Directing in a Television Movie or Special:** Kenny Leon- *Robin Roberts Presents: Mahalia* (Lifetime)

**Outstanding Directing in a Documentary:** Samantha Knowles, Yoruba Richen, Geeta Gandbhir, Nadia Hallgren- *Black and Missing*– Ep 103 (HBO)

**Outstanding Directing in a Motion Picture:** Shaka King- *Judas and the Black Messiah* (Warner Bros. Pictures)

**Special Award: NAACP Activist of the Year:** Scot X. Esdaile, president of the Connecticut State Conference of NAACP Branches and a member of the NAACP national board of directors.

**Monday, Feb. 21**

**Outstanding Literary Work – Fiction:** *Long Division* – Kiese Laymon (Simon & Schuster)

**Outstanding Literary Work – Nonfiction:** *The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story* – Nikole Hannah-Jones (Penguin Random House)

**Outstanding Literary Work – Debut Author:** *Just as I Am* – Cicely Tyson (Amistad)

**Outstanding Literary Work – Biography/Autobiography:** *Will* – Will Smith (Penguin Random House)

**Outstanding Literary Work – Instructional:** *Feeding the Soul (Because It’s My Business)* – Tabitha Brown (HarperCollins Publishers)

**Outstanding Literary Work – Poetry:** *Perfect Black* – Crystal Wilkinson (University Press of Kentucky)

**Outstanding Literary Work – Children:** *Stacey’s Extraordinary Words* – Stacey Abrams, Kitt Thomas (HarperCollins)

**Outstanding Literary Work – Youth/Teens:** *Ace of Spades* – Faridah Àbíké-Íyímídé (Feiwel & Friends / Macmillan)

**Outstanding News and Information**

**Podcast:** “Blindspot: Tulsa Burning”

**Outstanding Lifestyle/Self-Help Podcast:** “Two Funny Mamas,” Sherri Shepherd & Kym Whitley

**Outstanding Society and Culture Podcast:** “Jemele Hill Is Unbothered”

**Outstanding Arts and Entertainment Podcast:** “Jemele Hill Is Unbothered”

**Special Award: Youth Activist of the Year:** Channing Hill, NAACP chapter president, Howard University.

[Here’s a link](#) to a complete list of nominees for the 53rd annual NAACP Image Awards. 📺

## Jay Wheeler’s ‘El Amor y Yo’ Debuts at No. 2 on Latin Pop Albums Chart

BY PAMELA BUSTIOS

**J**ay Wheeler’s latest full-length album *El Amor y Yo* debuts at No. 2 on *Billboard*’s [Latin Pop Albums](#) chart (dated Feb. 26). The set arrives less than a month after his EP *De Mi Para Ti* opened at No. 3 on the Jan. 29-dated survey.

*El Amor y Yo* starts with 5,000 equivalent album units earned in the U.S. in the Feb. 11-17 tracking period, according to MRC Data. The 12-track set, released Feb. 11 via Linked/Dynamic/Empire, includes love song ballads and rhythmic-pop tunes produced by reggaetón DJ Nelson alongside Luis Suárez.

The Latin Pop Albums chart ranks the most popular Latin pop albums of the week in the U.S. based on multi-metric consumption as measured in equivalent album units, compiled by MRC Data. Units comprise album sales, track equivalent albums (TEA) and streaming equivalent albums (SEA). Each unit equals one album sale, or 10 individual tracks sold from an album, or 3,750 ad-supported or 1,250 paid/subscription on-demand official audio and video streams generated by songs from an album.

Of *El Amor y Yo*’s starting sum, 4,000

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derive from streaming-album equivalents. That represents 6.47 million on-demand streams of the set's tracks). The remainder of the sum comprises traditional album sales and track-equivalent units.

The album's No. 2 arrival earns Wheeler his second top 10, both in less than a month. The set also bows at No. 13 on [Top Latin Albums](#), the Puerto Rican singer-songwriter's highest ranking in the all-Latin genre tally. **B**

## Flying 'High': The Chainsmokers Top Dance/Mix Show Airplay Chart

BY GORDON MURRAY

**T**he Chainsmokers' "High" bounds from No. 6 to No. 1 on Billboard's [Dance/Mix Show Airplay](#) chart (dated Feb. 26). Reigning in only its fourth week on the list, "High" wraps the fastest rise to the top since Regard, Troye Siwan and Tate McRae's "You," which needed just three weeks last May (and went on to rule for 11 weeks).

The duo also matches its quickest Dance/Mix Show Airplay coronation, as "Closer," featuring Halsey, hit No. 1 in its fourth frame in September 2016. It led for a record 20 weeks.

"High" is The Chainsmokers' eighth No. 1 on the chart, pushing them past Madonna for a solo claim of the fourth-most toppers dating to the ranking's 2003 inception. Calvin Harris and Rihanna boast 12 each, followed by David Guetta with 11.

The poppy "High" is receiving mix show play as well as core-dance attention (thanks to an up-tempo Quinten Circle remix, among others) on SiriusXM's BPM, Music Choice's Dance/EDM Channel and WZFL (Revolution 93.5) Miami, according to MRC Data. (The Dance/Mix Show Airplay chart measures radio airplay on a select group of full-time dance stations, along with plays during mix shows on nearly 80 top 40-formatted reporters.)

Continuing on Dance/Mix Show Airplay, Sam Feldt scores his second top 10, and Rita Ora earns her fourth with "Follow Me" (13-9). The track is earning the entirety of its airplay on the chart's reporting panel from core-dance outlets, including Music Choice, WZFL and iHeartRadio's Evolution Network.

Similarly, DVBBS darts to its second Dance/Mix Show Airplay top 10 and Icona Pop collects its fourth with "Do It Anyway" (18-10). Likewise, core-dance airplay dominates, led by Music Choice, KMQV-HD2 San Francisco and Evolution.

On the multi-metric Hot Dance/Electronic Songs chart, Diplo and Miguel debut at No. 8 with "Don't Forget My Love." Diplo's fifth top 10 and Miguel's second, "Love" locked in 2.4 million U.S. streams and sold 1,500 downloads in the Feb. 11-17 tracking week. Concurrently, the song starts on Dance/Electronic Digital Song Sales (No. 4) and Dance/Electronic Streaming Songs (No. 13).

Also entering the Hot Dance/Electronic Songs top 10 is ODESZA's "The Last Goodbye," featuring legendary soul singer Bettye LaVette (17-10). The first top 10 on the chart for both acts, "Goodbye" garnered 1.9 million domestic streams, up 106%, in the tracking week.

"Goodbye" eclipses ODESZA's previous best, achieved in its first appearance with "Say My Name," featuring Zyra (No. 16, 2015).

Aiding its profile going forward, the official video for "Goodbye" premiered Feb. 18. **B**

## Prince Harry & Meghan Markle to Receive President's Award at 2022 NAACP Image Awards

BY PAUL GREIN

**P**rince Harry and Meghan Markle, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, are set to receive the President's Award during the 53rd NAACP Image Awards, which airs live on Saturday, Feb. 26 at 8 p.m. ET/PT on BET.

The President's Award is presented in recognition of special achievement and distinguished public service. Previous recipients from the world of public affairs include the Rev. Jesse Jackson, Alexis Herman (secretary of labor under President Clinton), President Bill Clinton, Condoleezza Rice (secretary of state under President George W. Bush), Colin Powell (also secretary of state under President George W. Bush) and Lonnie Bunch III (secretary of the Smithsonian Institution).

The NAACP and Archewell Foundation, co-founded by the Duke and Duchess, are also partnering on a newly created annual NAACP-Archewell Digital Civil Rights Award. Dr. Safiya Noble is the inaugural recipient.

"We're thrilled to present this award to Prince Harry and Meghan, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, who together have heeded the call to social justice and have joined the struggle for equity both in the US and around the world," Derrick Johnson, president and CEO of the NAACP, said in a statement. "Not only do they continue to lead by example, the Duke and Duchess have also decided to inspire the next generation of activists through the NAACP-Archewell Digital Civil Rights Award, ensuring the support and recognition of generations of civil rights leaders to come."

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“It’s a true honor to be recognized by president Derrick Johnson and the NAACP, whose efforts to propel racial justice and civil rights are as vital today as they were nearly 115 years ago,” Prince Harry and Meghan Markle said in a statement. “We’re proud to support the NAACP’s work and to also partner with the organization on the newly created annual NAACP-Archewell Digital Civil Rights Award, which will be bestowed to Dr. Safiya Noble as part of the 53rd NAACP Image Awards.”

Dr. Noble is an internet studies scholar and professor of gender studies and African American studies at UCLA, where she serves as the co-founder and faculty director of the UCLA Center for Critical Internet Inquiry, which is a partner to Archewell Foundation.

Dr. Noble has pioneered the study of how digital technologies intersect with culture, race, and gender. In 2021, she was recognized as a MacArthur Fellow for her work on algorithmic discrimination, which enabled her founding of Equity Engine, a non-profit committed to creating the conditions for Black women and other women of color to thrive through access to education, investment, mentorship, and mutual aid. She is the author of a highly-regarded book on racist and sexist algorithmic bias in commercial search engines, entitled *Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism* (NYU Press).

“At both the UCLA Center for Critical Internet Inquiry, and at the Equity Engine, we are working toward greater possibilities for vulnerable people,” Dr. Noble said in a statement. “Digital civil rights and protections from harm on the internet are a crucial pathway to a more just world, and I am grateful for the support of the NAACP and Archewell Foundation for contributing to our efforts to create more compassionate and democratic societies where Black women and women of color can thrive, too.”

The NAACP-Archewell Digital Civil Rights Award, supported by Archewell Foundation and administered by the NAACP, is a newly created annual award that recognizes leaders creating transformational change at the intersection of social justice and technology.

The award seeks to recognize long-term

contributors to the digital rights space while also supporting a new generation of visionaries working to expand equity, including issues related to discrimination, misinformation, privacy, countering biases, limiting profiling and surveillance, improving transparency, increasing diversity in the tech sector, and more. Each year, the honoree will be awarded an unrestricted \$100,000 stipend.

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex won’t be the only royalty in the house at the NAACP Image Awards. The show will feature a performance by the queen of hip-hop soul, [Mary J. Blige](#).

The show will also feature appearances by Issa Rae, Kerry Washington, LL Cool J, Michael Strahan, Morgan Freeman, Nikole Hannah-Jones, Paula Patton, Questlove, Samuel L. Jackson, Simu Lius, Tiffany Haddish and Zendaya.

For more information, follow NAACP Image Awards on Instagram @NAACPImageAwards. 📺

## Aimer’s ‘Zankynosanka’ Spends Eighth Week at No. 1 on Japan Hot 100

BY BILLBOARD JAPAN

**A**imer’s “Zankynosanka” spends its sixth consecutive and eighth total week at the top of the [Billboard Japan](#) Hot 100, tallying the week ending Feb. 20.

The *Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba* opener ruled four metrics of the chart’s methodology on the chart released on Wednesday (Feb. 23): streaming with 10,619,447 weekly streams, downloads with 23,562 units, video views with 4,439,104 views, and look-ups, which counts the number of times a CD is ripped to a computer. The track also performed well in physical sales (No. 8) and Twitter mentions (No. 31), to maintain its firm grip on the peak position.

Eight weeks at No. 1 catches up to LiSA’s “Homura,” the long-running hit song that served as the opener to the record-breaking anime movie of the same series from 2020, *Demon Slayer: Mugen Train*.

“Zankynosanka” actually performed better in sales, streaming, and karaoke compared to the week before, with CDs selling consistently well each week since it was released about a month ago: 9,186 copies this week, up by about 3,000 copies from 6,004 the previous week, reaching 83,254 total copies and set to clear the 100,000 mark in just a few weeks. Streaming has also increased slightly from 10,147,102 to 10,619,447 streams this week, bringing the total to 98,085,437, just short of 100 million streams.

≠ME’s “Chocolate Melancholy,” the lead song of the group’s third single, sold 69,012 copies in its first week to rule sales this week. The eleven-member girl group — pronounced “not equal me” — couldn’t generate enough points in other metrics (No. 22 for look-ups, No. 17 for Twitter, No. 40 for radio airplay, No. 90 for downloads) and debuts at No. 4 on the [Japan](#) Hot 100 this week.

The Billboard Japan Hot 100 combines physical and digital sales, audio streams, radio airplay, Twitter mentions, YouTube and GYAO! video views, Gracenote look-ups and karaoke data.

For the full Billboard Japan Hot 100 chart, tallying the week from Feb. 14 to 20, [head here](#). 📺

## Saweetie Reaches No. 1 for Third Time on Top Triller U.S. Chart

BY KEVIN RUTHERFORD

**S**aweetie reaches No. 1 on *Billboard*’s [Top Triller U.S.](#) chart for the third time with “Closer,” featuring [H.E.R.](#), which debuts atop the Feb. 26-dated survey.

The Top Triller U.S. and [Top Triller Global](#) charts highlight the biggest songs

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on Triller based on a formula blending the amount of views of videos containing a respective song, the level of engagement with those videos and the raw total of videos uploaded featuring each song, according to Triller. Data for the charts is represented on a Friday-Thursday tracking week, with the latest period running Feb. 11-17.

Saweetie previously hit No. 1 with “Tap In” in mid-2020, followed by “Fast (Motion)” in mid-2021.

She ties [Cardi B](#) for the second most No. 1s since Top Triller U.S. began in 2020; [Dixie D’Amelio](#), [Megan Thee Stallion](#) and [Young Thug](#) lead all acts with four rulers apiece.

Meanwhile, “Closer” is the first No. 1 on Top Triller U.S. for H.E.R.

The week’s [top video](#) in the U.S. for “Closer” came from Saweetie herself, with 532,000 views thus far.

“Closer” concurrently bows at No. 2 on Top Triller Global, which is instead led by Rema’s “Calm Down,” which debuts atop the tally. **B**

## Midnight Oil Blasts to No. 1 in Australia With ‘Resist’

BY LARS BRANDLE

**M**idnight Oil fires up [Australia’s albums chart](#) with *Resist* (Sony), which blasts to No. 1 on debut.

*Resist* is the sixth No. 1 for The Oils, as they’re affectionately known in these parts, and the followup to *The Makarrata Project*, an EP with First Nations Collaborators, which bowed at the summit [in November 2020](#).

Peter Garrett and Co. previously hit led the chart with *Red Sails in the Sunset* (November 1984), *Diesel and Dust* (August 1987), *Blue Sky Mining* (March 1990) and *20,000 Watt RSL – The Midnight Oil Collection* (October 1997).

Spanning a dozen, politically-charged tracks, *Resist* is the legendary Aussie rockers’ first full-length studio album in nearly 20 years, their 13th overall. And it’s said to be their finale.

The band is currently on road in their homeland for *Resist: The Final Tour*. North America dates are expected to be announced today (Feb. 25)

There’s little movement in the Top 5 as Disney’s [Encanto](#) soundtrack and [Olivia Rodrigo’s](#) *Sour* (Interscope/Universal) stay at No. 2 and 3, respectively, while [Doja Cat’s](#) *Planet Her* (RCA/Sony) lifts 5-4, and [Adele’s](#) 30 (Columbia/Sony) dips 4-5.

The next highest new entry belongs to Perth, Western Australia indie poppers Methyl Ethel with *Are You Haunted?* (Future Classic), new at No. 22. *Haunted* is the follow-up to *Triage*, which peaked at No. 11 in February 2019, for the band’s career high. *Are You Haunted?* debuts at No. 1 on the latest [ARIA Vinyl Albums Chart](#).

Over on the [ARIA Singles Chart](#), [Elton John](#) & [Dua Lipa’s](#) “Cold Heart ([Pnau](#) Remix)” (via Warner/Universal) extends its

reign into a tenth week. With that feat, the track joins some elite company. According to ARIA, just three other tracks have logged a total of ten weeks at the summit: Whitney Houston’s “I Will Always Love You” (December 1992), Sandi Thom’s “I Wish I Was A Punk Rocker (With Flowers In My Hair)” (September 2006) and LMFAO’s “Party Rock Anthem” (April 2011).

Meanwhile, U.S. hip-hop artist [Jack Harlow](#) earns a second solo appearance in the ARIA Top 50 as “Nail Tech” (Atlantic/Warner) starts at No. 36, the highest debut this week. His first solo entry was “WHAT’S POPPIN’”, which peaked at No. 8 in July 2020, and he collaborated with Lil Nas X on 2021’s “Industry Baby,” which has a chart best of No. 4.

Finally, Los Angeles born-and-raised singer and songwriter Em Beihold makes her first appearance on the ARIA Singles Chart with “Numb Little Bug” (Universal). Powered by TikTok, where it’s been used in more than 60,000 videos, the song starts at No. 48. **B**