SINGERS SOUND-OFF!
Jack Jones
Bernard Fowler
Schuyler Croom
Allen Stone
Alexandra Savior

EXPERT ADVICE:
A Songwriters Business & Music Tune-up

10 TIPS
Income Sources Every Creative Should Know in the Streaming Era
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PLUS: Grimes ∙ Jadakiss ∙ Joe Satriani
Armin van Buuren ∙ Unsigned Band Reviews!
COMPANY OF GREATNESS

RICHIE KOTZEN
RK5 V2 SIGNATURE

“The great thing about the RK5 Fly Rig is that I have my ideal pedalboard in a tiny little box that I can literally put in my backpack. This pedal is very versatile, it’s very convenient, extremely reliable, built to perfection.”
--Richie Kotzen

PAUL LANDERS
PL1 SIGNATURE

“Although it is so tiny, I can dial in all the sounds I need for my band. I love the fact that I have an analog path, that it is not a digital animation. It is real! And what I love most is I can plug it straight into the mixer or the computer! No amp needed for the best distortion sound I know of.”
--Paul Landers

Check out Richie’s New 50 FOR 50 Album

Check out Rammstein’s 2019 Untitled Album

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Conan Gray

In our interview with this self-dubbed “child of the internet,” Gray describes himself as an average guy whose unfailing passion for music and the internet ultimately garnered him the tremendous following he has today—nearly 2 million YouTube followers and upwards of 92 million streams.

By Andrea Beenham

Photos: Brian Ziff

Singerman Soundoff!

Once again, we’ve assembled a diverse group of singing talents—from alt-folk to edgy metal to classic crooner—who offer hard-won advice on how to prepare and perform at peak level.

By Eric Harabadian

Directory of Music Education

Directory of Vocal Coaches

Compiled By Denise Coso

20. Producer Crosstalk: Armin van Buuren
22. Exec Profile: John Powell, Pioneer DJ Americas, Inc.
30. Songwriter Profile: Tatiana Owens
45. Expert Advice: Exploring Untapped Revenue
46. Expert Advice: Songwriter’s Tune-up
70. Tip Jar: 10 Income Sources Every Creative Should Know

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Natural Supplements for Voice, Throat and General Well-Being:
Since launching its initial product line in 2014, New York-based Vita Vocal Health has helped thousands of singers, musicians and “civilians” enhance their vocal health with natural, gluten, dairy and gelatin free supplements. The company’s mission is summed up in their statement: “When you are done wasting time on solutions that don’t work, try our health products. We’ve gotten some of the best feedback from real-life performers like yourself.” Healing with green is based on the company’s belief that all problems can be solved with nature. Driven by the lack of products available to strengthen the voice and throat, the team at Vita Vocal Health has done extensive research to find an effective solution to these issues. After years of studying, observing and experimenting, they have created the best products available to improve everyone’s quality of life. All supplement products are OU Certified Vegetarian capsules, manufactured in a facility that is FDA approved. All products are GMP and made in the United States.

VitaVocal Throat & Voice Enhancer: This flagship product is a natural blend designed to boost and strengthen the voice to the max. After years of searching for the right blend, a voice specialist arrived at the perfect formula to help prevent vocal cord inflammation, minimize dryness, boost vocal clarity and soothe the throat—ensuring that the singing voice feels comfortable. It is a powerful blend of natural herbs and vitamins, including a flower known as Linden, American ginseng, slippery elm bark, chamomile and marshmallow root, plus many others. While helping broaden one’s vocal range and improving timbre, it may eliminate or reduce hoarseness, dry cough and other vocal troubles. It also loosens phlegm and may help for laryngitis. The Throat & Voice Enhancer softens the vocal cords, decreases swelling, improves vocal cords closure and flexes and protects them against over-strain, abrasion and wear. It works best when taken with room temperature water. Each bottle has 120 vegetarian capsules.

Vita Vocal Super Defense: This supplement is a natural blend designed to boost and strengthen your immune health and fight against cold and cough. Like the Throat & Voice Enhancer, it loosens phlegm and may help with laryngitis. It works in conjunction with that supplement to help clear sinus and respiratory passages and help the functions related to the lungs. Its ingredients include zinc gluconate, ginger root, olive leaf, echinacea, purpurea, white willow bark and garlic, plus many more. The bottle has 150 veggie caps.

Other Products: Calming and Anxiety Ease, a stress relief and mood booster supplement that helps with stage fright; Bone & Joint Support, with Vitamin D3, K2 Calcium, plus many more; Memory & Focus Booster, which helps memory and cognition by supporting oxygen and circulation in the brain, brain cells and neurons; and Vita Energy Boost plus Vision Support, which may assist with increased physical and mental stamina and improved endurance.

Contact Vita Vocal Health, 718-514-0773

The Model 24 has a New Baby Brother

By popular demand.

Introducing the Model 16!

A 14-input analog mixer, 16-track internal multitrack recorder, 16-in/14-out USB audio interface and built-in effects processor.

Record one track at a time, or the full performance simultaneously using the quick, easy and intuitive recording and audio control surface. Unit can be rack mounted with optional kit.
Peter Thomas
Manager Director
Biggleswade

Peter Thomas will assume the role of Manager Director of Biggleswade, a British loudspeaker manufacturing company. Thomas takes on the role with immediate effect, ensuring a seamless transition to deliver PMC’s ambitious plans for new product introductions, growth and continuous improvement to customer service. Thomas says, “It is an exciting time for PMC with the launch of globally significant professional projects and the 25i series hi-fi speakers, and we have plans for several new initiatives that will guarantee we remain at the forefront of the market for innovation, engineering and superb quality.” To learn more, contact sue@whitenoisepr.co.uk.

Colin Mitchell
Chief Technology Officer
Bandzoogle

Musician website platform Bandzoogle has announced that Colin Mitchell, a 14-year veteran at the company, has been promoted to Chief Technology Officer. Hired in 2006 as Bandzoogle’s second employee, Mitchell has been at the forefront of developing Bandzoogle’s platform and tools. As Lead Developer, he was instrumental in the release of Bandzoogle’s built-in subscriptions feature in 2019, and was the architect behind the migration of thousands of HostBaby websites to the Bandzoogle platform this year. For more information, email dcool@bandzoogle.com.

Stephanie Yu
Executive VP and Head of Business and Legal Affairs
Epic Records

Epic Records recently promoted Stephanie Yu to Executive Vice President and Head of Business & Legal Affairs. In addition to overseeing the B&LA and A&R Administration divisions, she will spearhead the new Brand Marketing and Sync Licensing Group initiatives. A 15-year Sony Music veteran, Yu has spent the past decade at Epic Records, serving as Senior VP and Head of Business and Legal Affairs since 2015. She originally joined Epic in 2011, as Senior Director, Business & Legal Affairs and was promoted two years later to VP. For more info, contact Melissa.Victor@epicrecords.com.

Dexter Batson
UK Head of Promotion
Glassnote

Glassnote announces the hiring of Dexter Batson as UK Head of Promotion. Batson comes to Glassnote from Spotify where he spent the last three and a half years as Senior Editor on the Music Culture & Editorial team where he was responsible for alternative playlistsing. Prior to his time at Spotify, Batson spent five years at the BBC, including time on the music teams of Radio 1 & 6 Music as well as production work at Radio 1 and 1Xtra. He started his career working independent radio promotions at AJPR, where he worked with artists including Klaxons, La Roux, Flaming Lips, The Wombats and more. To learn more, contact lauren@glassnotemusic.com.

Nicole Nehrbas
Publicity Coordinator
Dead Horse Branding

Dead Horse Branding has announced the hiring of Nicole Nehrbas as the company’s new Publicity Coordinator. Nicole made her move to Nashville in 2013 after graduating from the University of Arizona with a degree in Business Management. Prior to the move, Nehrbas worked at Funzalo Records, an independent record label where she worked as a publishing administrator managing an expansive song catalog and getting song placements for film and TV. This work inspired her to pursue a career in the music industry, ultimately leading her to Nashville. To learn more about this hiring, contact info@deadhorsebranding.com.

Zeke Lewis
Executive VP and Head of A&R
Epic Records

Epic Records has appointed Ezekiel “Zeke” Lewis Executive Vice President and Head of A&R. In this position, he will oversee the entire Epic Records A&R division, including A&R operations. Lewis joined Epic in 2017 and spent his first two years with the company developing the careers of 21 Savage, Tyla Yahweh and Madison Beer, among others. In 2010, Lewis founded Bar Music Group, a music publishing company administered by Universal Music Publishing Group. The company comprised a tight knit roster of writers and producers whose work spanned projects by Future, Trey Songs and many others. For more info, email Melissa.Victor@epicrecords.com.

Riggs Morales
Senior VP, A&R
Atlantic Records

Atlantic Records has appointed Riggs Morales to Senior Vice President, A&R. Morales joined Atlantic in 2014, where he guided Grammy-nominated releases from Wiz Khalifa and Janelle Monae as well as the signing of the Original Broadway Cast Recording of Lin-Manuel Miranda’s groundbreaking musical, Hamilton, on which he served as Associate Producer. Prior to Atlantic, Morales served as VP of A&R for Eminem’s Shady Records. He began his career as a noted music journalist, writing for The Fader and Vibe and serving as a music editor at The Source, where he introduced a number of previously unknown artists, including Eminem. To learn more, contact sheila.richman@atlanticrecords.com.

April 2020 musicconnection.com 9
NEW TOYS

– BARRY RUDOLPH  barry@barryrudolph.com

▶ EVANS UV1 DRUMHEADS

Evans Drumheads and D’Addario & Co., figured out how to coat drumheads and cure them immediately using ultraviolet light. This coating is applied in a silk-screen process that dramatically enhances the drumhead’s durability and its playable life.

In the past, inconsistent spray-coated drumheads would chip and flake with the sound constantly changing and causing premature tone loss and breakage. So following years of development, Evans introduced the world to their UV-cured coating in 2016 with the release of the single-ply UV1 head.

The result is a coating that resists strikes, brushstrokes and rim shots better than any other, which means drummers get to play with fresh heads for longer and spend less time tuning, modifying and changing heads.

Evans Drumheads soon followed with a 2-ply head with the same coating treatment called UV2. UV2 creates a deep, punchy, and articulate tone with lots of attack. Between the coating and the reinforced film, this is one of the most durable heads available. It is designed with heavy hitters in mind and is exceptional at medium to high volume performances.

The UV-cured coating technology can also be found in a range of Bass Batter heads, as well as the 14-inch Hydraulic Coated Snare heads in Red, Black and Blue. Both the UV1 and UV2 drumheads range from $40 to $60 MSRP.

daddario.com/products/percussion/evans-drumheads

▶ AURALEX ACOUSTICS ROOMINATOR STARTER KIT

Pictured is a Sketchup® image showing an Auralex Acoustics™ Roominator™ Starter Kit deployed in a small home studio. This is an economical way to reduce unwanted slap and flutter echo in small home studios, A/V editing suites, podcasting rooms, vocal booths and home (theater) listening rooms.

The Roominator Starter Kit will immediately improve the acoustics of any small to medium size room. Positioning the included LENRD® Bass Traps in the 90-degree corners of the room will control low-frequency room modes—uneven bass frequencies at the listening position (the chair in the picture). Shown on the side walls, the first reflection points on either side of the listening position are fitted with Studiofoam Wedges; panels that reduce mid-high frequency reflections, flutter echoes, and excessive reverberation.

The Roominator Starter Kit sells for $413.89 MSRP (with free shipping) and includes eight 24 X 24-inch Studiofoam Wedges, four LENRD Bass Traps, and 48 EZ-Stick Pro™ tabs for instantly mounting these panels to your walls. You may also use the RLX (Room Layout Express) App for suggestions about additional Auralex products to improve the sound of any room. The RLX App is available on the Apple App Store and Google Play.

You can submit a free Personalized Room Analysis form online at Auralex.com/praf/ and Auralex will diagram the room and show where all products should go. For more in-depth analysis, there is the Auralex Room Analysis Plus service. You receive a USB stick of frequency sweeps that you would play in your room and send in a recording of them made in the room. Auralex will deliver more detailed suggestions based on the findings.

auralex.com

▶ API 50TH ANNIVERSARY 862 AND 2500 BUS COMPRESSOR EDITIONS

To celebrate their recent 50th Anniversary, API is pleased to announce the debut of two new limited edition units, the 862 50th Anniversary Edition Channel Strip and the 2500 50th Anniversary Edition Stereo Bus Compressor.

The 862 Channel Strip features a combination of the API 550A Program EQ and their 312 Mic Preamp in a 1U cabinet. These used the original 500 Series PCBs designed by API’s legendary founder Saul Walker. Each 862 Anniversary Edition is individually serialized, denoting its status as part of a limited run of only 50, hand-wired units.

The new 50th Anniversary Edition 2500 Bus Compressor is in a 2U cabinet and features flexible output mix blending, LED gain reduction meters, premium VU meters, and a gold-faced chassis. As with the 862, a limited run of 50 units will be produced. Like API’s 1U standard 2500, the 2500-AE delivers warmth, clarity and punch, whether used for subtle adjustments or heavy compression effects.

The 2500 50th Anniversary Edition is $4,500 MSRP while the 862 sells for $3,600 MSRP.

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www.solidstatelogic.com/SiX

Solid State Logic
**NEW TOYS**

### AMS-NEVE RMX16 500 SERIES DIGITAL REVERB MODULE

State of the art in 1982, the original 2U RMX 16 was the first 16-bit, full-bandwidth digital reverberator that was microprocessor-controlled. Now AMS-NEVE has released the RMX16 500 Digital Reverb Module that fits into and is powered by any 500 series rack. I can confirm that it sounds exactly the same as the original and comes with the original’s nine programs plus nine more rare factory programs that were only available to RMX 16 users via an optional remote control unit.

The nine original programs are: Ambience, Room A1, Hall C1, Plate A1, Hall B3, Chorus, Echo, Nonlin2, and Reverse1. The additional nine, mostly unheard programs, are: Reverse 2, Freeze, Room A0, Room B1, Hall A1, Plate B1, Delay, Image P1, and Nonlin1.

Just about every record in the ‘80s had the original unit’s unmistakable reverb or special effect incorporated into the mix. Like the original, the AMS RMX16 500 has the same algorithms designed by ear, and then tuned and re-tuned to maximize the programs for the most natural sounding reverberation possible.

The RMX16 500 has a new Save/Recall feature with 100 user-defined memory locations and a brand new Wet/Dry Mix blend feature. The RMX16 500’s new OLED display has pages for program select, I/O Mix control, Setup, Save/Recall, and reverb parameters including: pre-delay, decay time, high frequency and low frequency decay profiles.

The new RMX16 500 comes in a 3-slot wide format and retails at $1,295 MSRP.


### AKG K275 STUDIO HEADPHONES

The new AKG K275 Studio Headphones offer accurate sound and isolation for studio work. They are the top-of-the-line in their foldable studio headphone line that also includes the K175, K245, and K371 models. It turns out that I’ve been looking for a set of proper quality closed-back, circumaural headphones that will also fold up for my backpack and travel—I think I’ve found them!

The K275 headphones start with large, 50-mm transducers that provide a 16-Hz to 28kHz frequency range and up to 109dBSPL/V. That means loud, clear and big bass-capable if your music requires it. The K275 come with a 5-meter curly cord with a locking mini-XLR connector on the end that does not come unplugged easily—a good thing! They weigh 295 grams (so light on my head) and sealed well over my ears for good studio isolation. I checked them at the loud volume levels sometimes required by drummers to play along with a click track. They fit well, so no worries here!

I found them to sound great overall with good bass and the ability to hear deep into the music. They also compared favorably to other headphones in my collection that are twice as expensive!

The AKG K272 Studio Headphones sell for $169 MSRP. You can buy direct from AKG at their website!

[akg.com/Headphones/Professional%20Headphones/K275.html](http://akg.com/Headphones/Professional%20Headphones/K275.html)

### BURL B22 ORCA CONTROL ROOM MONITOR DAUGHTER CARD

The Burl B22 ORCA is a module that plugs into either the B16 or the Burl B80 Motherships. The B16 and B80 are 16 and 80 channel (respectively) configurable AD/DA interfaces. The B22 ORCA utilizes the same analog, all-discrete circuit path philosophy as other BURL Audio products for sonic transparency and 3D-like stereo imaging. BURL NextGen BOPA14 op-amps are used to maintain a tight bass and high-definition response throughout the system.

The B22 ORCA employs four DAC (digital-to-analog converters) channels. The first two are mix/mastering grade DACs with switchable BX5 output transformers useful to feed a separate headphone amp and/or a mix/mastering chain. The second pair of DAC channels feed the main monitor section that features two stereo speaker outputs and one stereo headphone output.

With the B22 ORCA Control Room Monitor Daughter Card installed in the B16 Mothership along with a B4 MIC/LINE input card, you’ll have a complete audiophile desktop recording/mastering rig. Combine the B22 with a B16 and their BAD4M 4-channel analog-to-digital converter daughter card, and you’ll have a 4-input/4-output mastering rig. Other notable features are a directly coupled, discrete Class-A analog signal path, an external meter output, and an Alps audiophile attenuator with optional 0.1% matched resistor stepped-attenuator.

Burl B22 ORCA Control Room Monitor Daughter Card sells for $2,499 MSRP.

[burlaudio.com/b22-orca](http://burlaudio.com/b22-orca)

BARRY RUDOLPH is a recording engineer/mixer who has worked on over 30 gold and platinum records. He has recorded and/or mixed Lynyrd Skynyrd, Hall & Oates, Pat Benatar, Rod Stewart, the Corrs and more. Barry has his own futuristic music mixing facility in North Hollywood called Tones 4 $ Studios. He is a lifetime Grammy-voting member of NARAS and a contributing editor for Mix Magazine. barryrudolph.com
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MULTIPLE SOCAL LOCATIONS
Music Marketing for the DIY Musician and Business Basics for Musicians (Second Editions)

By Bobby Borg
(paperback) $34.95 each

These new books are a one-two punch of essential information for career-minded music-makers, delivered with a straight-ahead attitude. Borg's hands-on experience as a professional musician and dedicated instructor (UCLA, Musicians Institute, USC) enables him to invest his writing with a level of authority that most authors can't match. And at all times he is mindful that he is writing for DIY artists who want to take their career to a higher level. That is why both of these books are in their Second Edition phase—they provide the reader with the most up-to-date insight and advice on how to navigate the fluid, ever-changing landscape of today's music industry.

The Pilgrim: A Wall-To-Wall Odyssey

By Marty Stuart
(hardcover) $39.99

This handsome book delivers the story of Stuart's key album, *The Pilgrim*, with unique photos that bridge the old world of country and the new. The book takes you through the excitement, doubt and wonder that come with forging your own creative path. A testament to Stuart's passion, creativity and preservation of traditional country music, the book also comes with a CD of *The Pilgrim*, featuring previously unreleased bonus tracks.

To Be The Change: A Story of Transformation

By SaulPaul
(paperback) $16.00

From growing up next to a dope house and being incarcerated in his early twenties, to graduating with a 4.0 from the University of Texas, lecturing at Harvard and performing at the Kennedy Center, Saul Paul has become an inspiration to anyone who wants to make a positive change in their life. *Be the Change* is the memoir of that transformation. His message is clear: that anyone, no matter where they're from, can be the change they want to see in the world.

First 50 Recording Techniques

By Bill Gibson
(paperback) $14.99

A practical guide to tracking music, this book provides the groundwork for aspiring record makers looking to understand and apply the fundamentals of music recording. Areas covered include pre-production, DAW management, mic placement for vocals, drums, guitars basses and more, as well as live tracking. The book also provides practical guides for effects like delay, reverb, compression and gates. Recording techniques are presented with step-by-step instructions and context linking them to the bigger picture. The author has worked with studio legends like Quincy Jones and Bruce Swiedad.

Rip It Up: The Specialty Records Story

By Billy Vera
(softcover) $21.99

One of the most pivotal indie record labels for African-American artists in the 20th century, Specialty was established in the center of the African-American community in 1940s Los Angeles. Label founder Rupe went on to sign and record R&B acts like Don Dewey, Jesse Belvin and Floyd Dixon, as well as giants like Sam Cooke and Little Richard. *Rip It Up* documents a pivotal moment in American music history. Vintage photos round out a concise, well-researched read.
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americanfest.com
Major Label Musician Turns Bestselling Author and Lecturer: Bobby Borg’s 30-plus years in the industry have been full of extraordinary, unexpected twists and turns that have taken him from US and international tours as a drummer to being a hugely popular author and university lecturer. After graduating from Berklee College of Music in 1988, he joined the rock group Beggars & Thieves, which worked with songwriters like Desmond Child and signed to Atlantic for their self-titled debut. In 1991, Borg formed the indie alt-rock band Left For Dead, which toured the US in small vans and earned him major equipment manufacturer endorsements that exist to this day. He spent four years in the mid to late ’90s skinning for Warrant, helping write and record two albums (Belly to Belly and Warrant Live), touring throughout North America and Japan and opening for Alice Cooper and Vince Neil.

The Musician’s Handbook: Frustrated with numerous aspects of the music industry, he vented his frustrations and compiled his experiences and empowering advice in a groundbreaking bestselling volume, The Musicians Handbook. Published by Billboard in 2002, its widespread success led to lecturing and curriculum development opportunities at numerous music schools and conferences. Among others, he has taught at Musicians Institute, UCLA and USC’s Thornton School of Music. He is also an in-demand industry consultant for managers, producers, production companies, indie and DIY artists and songwriters. The Musicians Handbook investigates the realities of the music business and is designed to help the reader understand the ins and outs of the industry.

New Books Published in 2020: Music Marketing for the DIY Musician, Second Edition, provides the complete marketing process from researching to goal setting to strategizing to assembling and executing. It includes handy templates to help artists create a customized marketing plan of attack. Business Basics for Musicians, Second Edition, provides a fully updated intro to the music business so readers can focus on creating music. Topics include career execution, business relationships, pro teams, deals and dollars and future predictions. “It’s all about managing your music business,” Borg says.

New Video Blog and Overall Mission: In mid-March, Borg launched on his site “Borg’s Blog,” a weekly video blog that helps break down music business and marketing basics. His wide range of topics will include: sexual harassment in the industry; going from “gang life” to a music career; securing more fans and monetizing one’s fan base; how to get more streams; and LGBTQ issues and diversity. His top-level guests will include USC professor Michael Cody; former Warner Bros. A&R exec Barry Squire; and Taxi Music President Michael Laskow. “Everything I teach and put out there is more about the rules than the tools,” Borg says, “because as time passes, the rules typically don’t change, but the tools do. Unlike many others who try to just reflect the current moment, I take traditional business and marketing concepts and theories, break them down and apply them to the industry so everyone can benefit.”
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CRAS Graduates Find New Home
Conservatory of Recording Arts & Sciences graduates Jaramiah Rios (left) and Jason “JayBull” Patterson (right) were recently hired by The Studio at the Palms in Las Vegas. They are pictured with acclaimed industry veteran and director of studio operations, Zoe Thrall. This hiring places these CRAS grads in the company of fellow engineers who have earned every award from Gold and Platinum Record certifications to Oscars, Grammys, Tonys and Emmys. For more info, contact charlie@crl-pr.com.

Warbringer Leaves It All in the Studio
Warbringer vocalist John Kevill lets it rip in the studio as the band prepares for the release of their new album, Weapons of Tomorrow, which will release on April 24 via Napalm Records. For more info, contact natalie.camillo@napalmrecords.com.

Apocalypse & Chill With Delain’s Martijn Westerholt
Delain’s co-founder, producer and keyboardist Martijn Westerholt finishes a track at his home studio. The group released their new album Apocalypse & Chill earlier this year, which marks their sixth studio album. Westerholt produces the majority of the group’s work in his home studio, which the band claims is fantastic for the scale and magnitude of their sound. To learn more, contact natalie.camillo@napalmrecords.com.

Between Kings Preps for New Release
Rock band Between Kings joined legendary producer and founder of Parts and Labor Records, Jimmy Messer, in his LA studio to work on their new album Young Love, releasing on April 24th. Pictured (l-r): Nick Fanning (drums), Jayden Marsh (bass), Jordan Coyne (guitar), Jimmy Messer and Nic Machuca (vocals). Contact Bari@pressherepublicity.com to learn more.

Producer Playback
“To me, getting the best out of someone is to get them to explore themselves.”
—Tony Moran (Gloria Estefan, Luther Vandross)
The Brilliance Flexes Their Strings in the Studio
Conductor Marlin Owen and The Brilliance pianist John Arndt lead the Biola University Orchestra at the Lansing Recital Hall as they recorded pieces of their newest album, *World Keeps Spinning: An Antidote to Modern Anxiety*, which released independently earlier this year. The release is a concept album that explores the root causes of modern anxiety and searches for ways to cope in the face of existential dread. Featuring full orchestra and choir, the album displays the group’s sonic influences from Bach and Stravinsky to Jon Brion and The Beatles. Contact meijin@ei-pr.com for more info.

2KBABY is Next Up
Louisville-raised melodic rapper 2KBaby was signed last fall by Masked Records, a recently created label under the Warner Records umbrella, after Masked founder Roger Gengo came across the viral music video for 2K’s breakout hit, “Old Streets.” His new single “Faxts” was released last month, and he frequently hints at new music on his Twitter page, insinuating 2K is spending plenty of time in the studio. For updates, follow 2KBABY at twitter.com/2kbaby.

Elevado Takes Lettuce Past the Threshold
Members of Lettuce share a few laughs with producer Russ Elevado at Bunker Studios in New York, NY. The band joined forces with Elevado on their upcoming album, *Resonate*, and also on their 2019 Grammy-nominated album, *Elevate*. Pictured (l-r): Russ Elevado, Erick “Jesus” Coomes, bass; Ryan Zoidis, alto, baritone, tenor sax, Korg X-911; and Adam Ditch, drums, percussion. To learn more, contact Bari@pressherepublicity.com.

The debut EP from alt RnB duo
blakk.nostalgia
drops worldwide 04.17.20
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Dutch DJ and producer Armin van Buuren’s career began its agile ascent in the mid-’90s when his seemingly endless efforts finally triggered success and began to grab notice. The move that catapulted him into prominence was in 1996 when one of his tracks was included on Sasha & John Digweed’s mix album **Northern Exposure**. It won him both recognition and the interest of AM PM Records. A deal was signed and his career soared even higher. Soon thereafter, his track “Communication” cracked the UK Singles Chart and shot to #18.

The radio/YouTube show **A State of Trance** has aired for nearly 20 years with van Buuren at its helm. He drew inspiration from fellow Dutchman, Ben Liebrand, a producer and mix engineer who hosted the popular early ‘80s radio show **In The Mix**. With the aid of the advent of recently accessible home computers, he channeled his talent and lifelong love of music into a successful career.

To enable artists in the studio, he ensures that the physical conditions are as close to ideal as possible and that the vibe is right. “The big thing is to come prepared,” he explains. “When you expect an artist for a session, make sure that all of your gear works. I always have a couple of instrumentals on standby so when we’re stuck, it’s always great to have 10 or 20 ready to go. You can sit together, listen to them and usually it sets you off; it generates new ideas or directions.”

In 2014 his single “This Is What It Feels Like” from the previous year’s **Intense** was nominated for a Grammy for Best Dance Recording. Beyond the obvious honor, he feels that it boosted his confidence, credibility and marketability. “Being nominated is enough,” he asserts. “It’s almost like a Green Card. It can help with visas and things like that.”

The following year van Buuren worked with Dutch rock outfit Kensington on the song “Heading Up High” from his record **Embrace**. It was like an ampoule of adrenaline injected directly into his career’s bloodstream, but it also represented one of his biggest challenges. “It was a big deal because the band is exclusive to the rock world,” he observes. “We wanted to make a track that wasn’t just a beat with the lead singer and a guitar line. We wanted the entire band to be part of it and it had to have both of our DNA. ‘Heading Up High’ is one of the tracks I’m most proud of because so much work went into it to get a hybrid of the band’s sound and mine.”

As a European producer and DJ, van Buuren faced some unique difficulties when it came time to break into the American market. “I had a lot of success in the US,” he observes. “But it’s definitely harder, for some reason. The DNA of [American] dance music is different from the dance music in Europe. R&B and hip-hop have a much bigger influence. It’s a radically different game. But I never see that as a problem. It’s a challenge.”

Contact instagram.com/arminvanbuuren; arminvanbuuren.com; twitter.com/arminvanbuuren; Ari Kilian - Miller PR, 323-761-7220, ari@miller-pr.com
Fusion

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www.solidstatelogic.com/fusion
John Powell  
President  
Pioneer DJ Americas, Inc.  

Years with Company: 2.5 years  
Address: 2050 W. 190th St., Suite 109, Torrance, CA 90504  
Phone: 424-488-0480  
Web: pioneerdj.com  
Email: john.powell@pioneerdj.com  
Clients: Millions of DJs and producers  

BACKGROUND  
Having worked on the manufacturing side of the industry at places like Harman, Boston Acoustics and JBL, joining Pioneer DJ was both a new and familiar experience for John Powell. While the move in May of 2017 meant he remained within the manufacturing sector, the generalized world of audio he’d inhabited narrowed specifically to the world of DJs.

Why Pioneer?  
I was looking for a change and new challenges in my career. Pioneer DJ offered me an opportunity to do something different. It’s the market leader; it’s constantly innovating. And I’d never worked for a non-American company, so that was intriguing as well.

Focusing on Deejaying  
At JBL, usually DJs were the ones who broke my speakers. I was intrigued because deejaying is an up-and-coming segment of the music business. The early days of deejaying were people taking a couple of records and mashing them up. Now there’s so much creativity. I love the music of Avicii. He was always really interesting to me. He was one of many to bring this sort of music into the mainstream.

The Learning Curve  
I had a couple weeks between jobs when I left Harmon. Before I started here, I spent a lot of time talking to people who knew more than I did. I asked a lot of questions. I’m still learning.

Why Pioneer Rules  
It’s the quality of the products. They last a long time. There’s a well-known event called Burning Man in Northern Nevada in an ancient dry lake. It’s super-fine dust; you can’t use a controller or laptop out there. It would be dead in seconds because the fine dust will get in there and try to kill it. Our gear has survived it every single year.

Historically, we’ve been very good at listening to the customer and developing products they want. I’m never going to please everybody all the time, but we’ve been and continue to be very good at listening to the customer and trying as best we can to incorporate what they want into the product and allow them to be as creative and as efficient as they can. We want to be a tool, not an impediment, to their creativity.

Compatibility  
One of our new products incorporates the ability to use Serato DJ, which is an independent company that does software. They’re one of the main software choices out there, so having cross-platform compatibility was a big thing. We worked closely with Serato so right out the gate you can use our new player with their product.

All-In-One  
We just launched a new all-in-one called XDJ-XZ. That’s the third model in our all-in-one platform. That is the first product we’ve launched that works with both rekordbox dj, our software and Serato. It basically takes our famous Nexus 2 rig, which is two players and a mixer—two CDJ-2000s and a DJM-900 Nexus 2 (so you’ve got the mixer in the middle and a player on either side), and puts it in one platform. It’s portable and about a third the price of the classic setup.

Intercompatibility  
The way we’ve designed our products, be it controllers, players or mixers, is that you’re kind of in our ecosystem, so it’s easy to move up and down through the range. With the better ones you have more control, but the layout and functioning are very similar.

Entry-Level  
Everybody wants to play guitar, so [for that instrument] you pretty much have an infinite audience. DJs are much more limited, so one of our interests is how we get more people interested in becoming a DJ. So we’ve launched our entry-level product, the DDJ-200. Basically, we offer it off a smartphone and you just have a fader face. All your music is coming from your phone and right on the unit you can start playing.

When (and When Not) to Stream  
Once 5G is truly here, then streaming becomes viable. Far and away, the biggest number of our clients would be mobile DJs. That’s the guy who has his gear and goes wherever the event is, whether it’s a wedding, party or a bar mitzvah. Those guys have a lot more need for streaming out the gate, and they can do it now through their laptops. You’ve got your set, but maybe at the end of the night someone has a special request. There are billions of songs you don’t have, so you either download or stream it. You would never stream at a festival. You can’t take a chance on getting the circle of death when you’ve got 100,000 people out there.

Focusing on Innovation  
For us, the challenge is—what product can we do that we don’t already have? A lot of products we have are evolutionary. It’s hard to do something totally new because a lot of it has already been done. How do you make a better turntable? You can’t really do that. So what do our customers want from us in a next generation product that they don’t currently have? That’s something we spend a lot of time on.

By and For DJs  
We’re not this massive, behemoth company. We’re a lot of people who really share a passion and love of the music. I’m looking through my window at our mission statement—to innovate, inspire and entertain. By and large, everybody here, in our head office in Japan, in our office in Europe, lives and breathes that. I’m one of the oddballs in that I’m not a DJ. Almost everybody here who has anything to do with the customer or product development is a DJ. Some of them were famous in their time. We’re not gunning for massive profit. It really is about the passion and pride of the product. If there’s something we do wrong or there’s a product recall, it’s devastating to us, emotionally and psychologically. There’s a lot of passion here.

Practice Makes Perfect  
Being a DJ is equivalent to learning the guitar or piano—you’ve got to commit. You’ve got to dedicate time and it’s not going to happen overnight. There are tons of videos online; it’s so much easier now than it was 10 or 15 years ago.

Make friends with someone who is a DJ who’ll give you tips. Learn the craft and then, if you want to actually make money at it, take some business classes and think about how you add value. Find out beforehand what kind of music people want to listen to and make sure you’re prepared.

Experience and Challenge  
After 30 years of experience, I can call on different things I’ve learned over time to apply and be able to do things better. I live for the challenge of—how can we be better? How can we please our customers more? How can we be more efficient? For instance, we changed the way we serve our customers. We use an agency, so when people call with a question or problem they’re attended to much faster.

Rise of the DJ  
I think the days of explosive growth are probably behind us. The industry’s certainly matured. What bodes well for us is that for the younger generation electronic music is mainstream now. It didn’t even exist when I was a kid. A lot of DJs are collaborating with hip-hop or rock artists. That’s exciting. The future bodes well.
Spotify is looking for an Artist Marketing Lead, Music Marketing. The Music Marketing team plays a critical role in defining and driving Spotify’s promotional strategy around new and existing content, focused on the holistic music experience. As part of the Music Marketing team you will help build and shape the marketing processes, cross functional infrastructure, operations and implementing innovation and best practices across new album releases, individual artist and industry moments and Spotify’s original and programmed artist content. This position requires experience and passion for the music and entertainment industry with a firm pulse across a wide range of genres. Apply at doorsopen.co.

The Fox Network is looking for a Music Coordinator. You will be responsible for overseeing, ingesting, and reporting of cue sheets and have a heavy hand in the facilitation of music licenses and clearances, registering Fox owned original music, light drafting (NDAs, release forms, re-use agreements, clip licenses), overseeing work-for-hire execution, developing data for music budgets, and reporting of all in-show and promo music used for royalty distribution. Fox is looking for someone who can take on its fast-paced environment with time management skills. Apply at ziprecruiter.com.

The Los Angeles Film School needs a Music Business Online Instructor. The Los Angeles Film School is to prepare the next generation of creative professionals for a future in the entertainment industry. They are seeking online instructors to teach courses for their online music business program: Music Industry Marketing and Music Evaluation for A&R. They are seeking instructors located in either the Los Angeles, CA or Orlando, FL area. Apply at Glassdoor.

DIY Spotlight

Country-blues singer-songwriter Jennifer Westwood was performing solo around Detroit for years before meeting her future musical partner and husband, Dylan Dunbar. Alongside a rotating rhythm section, Jennifer Westwood & the Handsome Devils was born. Touring regularly, Westwood and Dunbar play smaller gigs as a two-piece, flying more musicians out when required. Perhaps surprisingly, it makes financial sense to keep the costs as low as possible until necessary and then spring for a plane seat or two. “We pay a weekly salary to our band members and it’s gone up over the years,” says Westwood. “You can’t complain about the treatment of musicians if you treat musicians poorly. We have a lot of opportunities to do different things and work with different people, and if we’re paying a week’s salary it’s really hard to stop, slow down and take advantage of something. We travel with a full backline, so people just have to jump on an airplane with a bag, their bass, their sticks and it’s all good.”

The group has an album available, the independently released Marfa Lights. “If we’re not making a lot of money through Spotify, then developing a relationship with people and building your following from the grassroots level is important,” Westwood says. “As far as selling your music, you just have to put the elbow grease into it.”

For music and tour dates, visit jwhandsomedevils.com. For more info, contact msjwestwood@gmail.com.

LABELS•RELEASES

SIGNINGS

Louisiana rockers The Revelries have signed to Edgeout Records. “Edgeout Records is committed to discovering the next generation of rock artists,” said label chief and veteran music executive Tony Guanci, who has signed a global deal to release through Universal Music Group/UMe. “The Revelries’ talent, drive and desire are only rivaled by their work ethic. We expect great things from the band.” The Revelries are the first band to have access to the many resources offered during The Studio,” added Cheryl Benson-Guanci, Edgeout co-founder and head of Artist Development/A&R.

Email sujata.murthy@umusic.com or cathy@121comm.com for more info.

Multi-platinum rapper YG has entered a high-profile joint venture with Epic Records. Epic will exclusively release, distribute and market new music from 4HUNNID, YG’s Los Angeles-based independent record label. Supporting YG’s vision, Epic intends to cement 4HUNNID as the epicenter for West Coast rap. The label is now readying the debut album release by hip-hop femme fatale Day Sulan. Contact Melissa.victor@epicrecords.com.

PROPS

Congratulations to pop queen Madonna, who has become the first artist to achieve 50 number ones on any Billboard chart. The artist said in a statement that, “Dance is my first love, so every time one of my songs is celebrated in the clubs and recognized on the charts it feels like home.” Email rusry@id-pr.com for more info.

Pandora has honored the Florida Georgia Line with a “Billionaire” plaque for surpassing a billion lifetime spins. “We are constantly blown away by the support from our fans and are grateful to Pandora for sharing our music around the world,” said FGL’s Brian Kelley. “This honor inspires us even more and we can’t wait for you to hear what’s coming next!” Email jensen@sweettalkpr.com for more info.

THE BIZ

Vinyl Alliance is optimistic about the future of vinyl despite the devastating fire at Apollo Masters on Feb. 6. “There are already alternatives available,” says the group’s president Gunter Loibl, “which
will help bridge the shortage of lacquer discs. This can also be an opportunity to embrace new technologies and to strengthen collaboration within the industry.” Email bryan.ekus@vinylalliance.org for more info.

New music platform Beatchain aims to allow artists to take control of their own careers — share music, connect with fans and earn money all at the same time. “Too many artists are seeing music streaming as a talent show where they upload one song to Spotify with zero promotion, and suddenly they’re being signed to a label or played on the radio,” said Ben Mendoza, Beatchain CEO. “Unfortunately that’s not how the music industry works in the streaming era. To get heard above the noise, you need the complete set of tools to grow and engage your fanbase, get them hyped for your new release, and then direct them again and again to your music, your shows and your merchandise. The unique thing about Beatchain is that you can do all this with one platform, without the artist needing to become an expert marketer or music promoter.” Email kgavlani@rubensteinpr.com for more info.

BMG has announced the launch of Renew Records to focus on an eclectic mix of artists and special projects rooted in American-roots and Americana music. The Los Angeles-based label will be led by BMG EVP David Hirshland. The launch of Renew Records comes just three months after the announcement of Modern Recordings, a BMG label dedicated to new classical, jazz, and electronic music, and the first new label to be launched by BMG since it commenced operations in 2008. Contact paki.newell@bmg.com.

The unique thing about Beatchain is that you can do all this with one platform, without the artist needing to become an expert marketer or music promoter.
“How I Got My Music Licensed 1,205 Times”

Barry French – TAXI Member – BigBlueBarry.com

I took some time off from music, then my grandfather passed away and I re-evaluated what I was doing with my life. I felt the “call” of music, so I started writing again, decided to get serious about my music career, and joined TAXI in 2008.

Honestly, I Was Skeptical at First...

I did some research. I lurked on TAXI’s Forums, and found that TAXI’s successful members were real people just like me. Though I’d co-written with an Indie artist, and charted at #15 on the Radio & Records Christian Rock charts, I was clueless how to even get a film or TV placement — a complete newbie!

But TAXI’s Industry Listings gave me goals to shoot for and helped me stay on task. I became more productive and motivated to get things done because I didn’t want to feel like I "missed out" on an opportunity.

How to Build The Right Catalog

If you want to create music for art’s sake, then by all means, go ahead and do that. But, if you want to have a music career, why not use TAXI to learn how build the right catalog full of music the industry actually needs?

Expand Your Possibilities...

TAXI can help you learn to write for genres you never thought you could do. I used to do mostly Hard Rock and Metal. Because of TAXI, I branched out into other genres—first Pop/Punk, and then Tension and "Dramedy" cues. I used the feedback from TAXI’s A&R staff to improve my work. In many cases, my tracks improved to the point that they got signed and ultimately placed in TV shows!

350 Placements in the Last Year!

The first placement I ever had resulted from meeting a Music Library owner at the Road Rally — TAXI’s free convention. In a little more than 3 years, my music has been licensed more than 1000 times, with nearly 350 placements in the past year alone!

A “Lucky Duck?”

My 1,000th placement was a Southern Rock track on A&E's hit show, Duck Dynasty. A TAXI connection resulted in me becoming a "go to" composer for a company that provides music directly to that series. How cool is that?!

TAXI’s Listings, community, convention, and networking opportunities have helped my career immensely. The ONLY regret I have about joining TAXI is that I didn't sign up sooner! If you’re willing to invest in yourself, call TAXI and let them help you too.

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Ian Gothe

Inspired by The Doors, singer-songwriter Ian Gothe discovered his love of music as a 12-year-old in Iran. He’s since lived in various cities throughout the world including London, Manchester and Baltimore, but in 1981 he settled in LA and it remains his home. While performing at an open mic 10 years ago at former LA hotspot Whispers (now The Roar Room), he met and befriended fellow artist Manda Mosher. Six years later she launched Blackbird Record Label and his signing at that point was virtually assured.

“Manda is a friend of mine,” Gothe explains. “When she started [Blackbird Record Label] a few years ago, I knew that her knowledge and industry connections were both vast. For me, it was a no-brainer. She was the one who introduced me to the legendary [Grammy-winning producer] Jim Scott. Signing with her label was the obvious choice for me and I’ve felt very lucky. She’s always been a help to me in all kinds of decisions that had to be made along the way. I could see the benefits of signing with her.

“They helped in a lot of ways so I could focus more on music, especially with social media,” the artist continues. “I’d been involved with it, but not nearly as active [as I am now]. They’ve helped with publicity, the CD release and venue coordination. I’m kind of old-school and I see my job as to focus on music. They were doing all of the [admin] work for me and it was wonderful.”

The first single from Memento was a cover of The Doors’ “Spanish Caravan,” one of Gothe’s all-time favorite songs. Indeed, the song found its way to former Doors guitarist Robby Krieger, who reached out to Gothe, shared his love of his rendition and, indeed, endorsed it.

Gothe’s 10-track record Memento dropped on Feb. 7. The occasion was marked by a release show at LA’s famed Hotel Café. The record was co-produced by the artist and seven-time Grammy-winning producer and engineer Jim Scott, whose credits include Wilco and Tom Petty, among others. It was recorded at Scott’s PLYRZ Studios in Valencia, CA. – Rob Putnam

He was always listening, giving me input and being supportive.”

“...to focus on music.”

“TAYLOR YOUNG BAND

Date Signed: Oct. 14, 2019
Label: Hand Drawn Records
Band Members: Taylor Young, vocals; Toby Pipes, bass; Kenny Wayne, guitar; Josh Hoover, drums
Type of Music: Power Pop Americana
Management: taylor@tayloryoung.com
Booking: booking@tayloryoung.com
Legal: N/A
Publicity: Monica Hopman - Sideways Inc., monica@sideways-media.com, 323-661-7802
Web: tayloryoungband.com
A&R: John Snodgrass - Hand Drawn Records

Whether signing with a major label or a minor one, every artist wants their new home to be flush with resources. With Hand Drawn Records, the label is an outgrowth of one of the country's largest and most successful vinyl pressing plants. So when the label re-launched, Taylor Young knew choosing them made sense. "Toby and I both wanted to do a vinyl release on this [album]," communicates Young, referencing bass player Toby Pipes.

Hand Drawn is located in Addison, TX, near where Young grew up, so he’d been aware of the plant, but Hand Drawn had their eyes on him, too. As Young performed songwriter nights, testing out material that would eventually make its way to Taylor Young Band’s debut, John Snodgrass, the label’s VP of Business Development, consistently showed up. “He was always listening, giving me input and being supportive,” testifies the singer. “That’s the kind of person we want to work with.” After a series of evenings out together, Snodgrass raised the possibility of signing Young. Having both played in other bands (Young in groups like Polyphonic Spree and Young Heart Attack, Pipes in Deep Blue Something), they’ve each had their share of signings. Subsequently, they knew what they wanted from a label—support. And thanks to Hand Drawn’s alternative source of income, they knew they’d get it.

Pipes concedes that much of Hand Drawn’s interest stemmed from their previous work. “They got excited that we were working together,” attests the bassist. Although the deal amounts to what Young calls a “very long verbal contract,” they wouldn’t have it any other way.

A vinyl release party took place on Feb. 28 at Club Dada, one week before the album’s premiere in all other formats. – Andy Kaufmann

“I see my job as to focus on music.”
With her many tattoos and colored hair, not to mention the fact that she has “Goth” in her name, casual observers could be forgiven for thinking that Baby Goth is coming from a punk/alt-rock side of the musical spectrum, but in fact not at all. Yes, she has an edge and an attitude that is decidedly punk rock. But musically, she is very much in the R&B/hip-hop realm. She swaggers, struts and croons her way through songs such as her single “Swimming.”

“I love all types of music, but I definitely went through a hardcore metal stage,” she says. “But my name is a reflection of my personality. I love light and dark things. That’s what my music has—a sinister lullaby feel to it. Everything plays into my personality.”

“Sinister lullaby” is a perfect description of Baby Goth’s vibe, and that’s rooted in the poetry that she wrote when she was much younger and starting to explore her creative side.

“That was something that I used to cope with things like anxiety and depression,” she says. “Eventually, I started singing my poems, and then I taught myself some instruments. I’ve always wanted to do music, so I started using Instagram as a platform to do covers.”

Through her internship at a music studio, Hines began meeting new artists and learned the do’s and don’ts that helped him to finesse his sound. Hines’ music eventually got into the hands of Ethan Schiff from Backbeat Management who expressed interest in helping his career. “I’d been meeting with managers and A&Rs on my own,” he says. “Everybody thinks they got a solution for you, but as an artist, you know the right solution for you. You feel it in your gut when you’re talking to people. He had to trust my music and I had to trust him from a business standpoint. We were going to take the music out and make something happen.”

Schiff eventually showed Hines’ music to an A&R rep from Capitol Records, who asked to meet him the next day. “I talked to Capitol and it was just a mutual thing from the jump. From walking through the door to talking about the vision of the music,” says Hines.

Capitol’s work ethic and diversity were part of the reason Hines agreed to a deal, “If I want to make music and start the whole music industry thing, I want to be around a diverse group of people that are artists and are creative and driven too. I feel that kind of energy from Capitol.”

Another selling point was the label’s realistic advice, “Capitol prioritizes how to get stuff out the right way. It’s good to have people in line who are like ‘Okay, you want to do this, let’s take these steps to get here before you want to do this. But you might not get the results you want.’”

Terrell Hines released his debut EP, St. Mark Rd., through Capitol in 2019 and is currently working on new music.
ASCAP Experience Cancelled

ASCAP has pulled the plug on its 2020 ASCAP Experience, originally scheduled for Apr. 1-3 in LA. “Out of consideration for the health and safety of our members and all other participants, and due to rising concerns about the spread of COVID-19 (Coronavirus), the determination has been made to cancel the 2020 ASCAP Experience,” said the organization in a statement. Stay tuned for updates and further news or visit Ascap.com.

Open Mic Opps for Songwriters

On the fourth Friday of each month, the Songwriting School of Los Angeles hosts an open mic. It is free to perform or attend, and you may receive a video copy of your performance in a four-camera shoot for a $40 donation. The school is located at 4100 W. Magnolia Blvd. in Burbank. Check-in is 7:45 pm for the 8:00 pm show. The number of songs and the length of the set are based on attendance. Generally, performances consist of one or two songs. A simple backline and a keyboard are provided. Acoustic duos and trios are welcome, but no full bands. The next event will be held on Apr. 25. See thesongwritingschool.com.

BMI Streamlines Setlists with Muzooka

BMI announces a new partnership with live concert asset management company, Muzooka, to help streamline setlist reporting for its songwriters and composers worldwide. This marks the first partnership with an American performing rights organization for Muzooka, who have previously partnered with international PROs, including SOCAN and BUMA/STEMRA, among others.

In addition, reporting on BMI.com, BMI songwriters and composers who already use the Muzooka platform to manage their live concert assets including artist photos, setlist reporting, and camera shoots, can now also benefit from BMI’s setlist reporting service.

Willie J Releases Single to Support Puerto Rico Relief

Aware of the depth of recent tragedy and determined to let the citizens of Puerto Rico know folks on the mainland still have their backs, St. Louis-based singer, entertainer and producer Willie J joined forces with Aaron Emig, his partner at Pure Mission Entertainment, to create and release “We Love You Puerto Rico.” Pure Mission Entertainment is currently working on the production of an official video for the single to raise funds for still struggling survivors of Hurricane Maria, which struck in 2017 and devastated Puerto Rico and surrounding islands.

The song has several features, including Arthur “Flash” Johnson, LaTanya Johnson, Jade, and Crystal Haywood. “I wanted an anthem-like ‘We are the World’ type feel to it and picked the best artists I know and work with to create solo spots that would seamlessly come together and create an undeniable chemistry that would help get our message across,” Willie J said.

BMI Partners with Muzooka to Streamline Setlists

BMI, a global leader in the administration of music rights and performance royalties for over 300,000 registered songwriters, composers and publishers, has partnered with Muzooka, a music tech company, to help simplify setlist reporting for its songwriters and composers worldwide.

“BMI is always looking for ways to help our songwriters and composers simplify the workflow with their live performance assets,” said BMI President and CEO Linda Moran. “Partnering with Muzooka provides BMI members with a single point of contact for streamlined setlist reporting.”

Muzooka is a music technology company that helps music creators manage their live performance assets. The company’s platform allows artists and their teams to create custom setlists, track performance data, and automate camera shoots for a $40 donation.

“Working with BMI will enable us to continue delivering a service that makes it easy for artists and their teams to manage their live performance assets, while also helping BMI members,” said Willie J, songwriter and producer. “BMI is a leader in the world of performing rights organizations, and working with them is an incredible opportunity to provide a service that helps artists and their teams manage their live performance assets.”
bios, and social media links, now also have the option to report selllists from one central concert management hub. The convenience of this alternative will expand BMI’s efforts to ensure timely selllist reporting and help facilitate payments to its affiliates when their music is played on stage. See BMI.com, Muzooka.com.

**NMPA and Peloton Work it Out**

Keeping up your exercise regime might be a bit more profitable for songwriters. The National Music Publishers Association (NMPA) has settled litigation instigated by 15 NMPA members against Peloton, the exercise bike system.

Peloton, a billion dollar company, was sued for alleged infringement of over 1,000 music works—a $300 million dollar suit. Peloton fired back that NMPA was in violation of antitrust laws, a counter claim dismissed by a New York judge.

Peloton and the NMPA are now riding a smoother road—with “a joint collaboration agreement” that will see the two entities work together to “further optimize” Peloton’s music licensing systems and processes.” Find out more at Nmnap.org.

**Songwriting Workshop in NELA**

On Sat. April 11, a workshop titled “The Singer and the Songwriter” will be held 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. at a private residence in the Highland Park neighborhood of Los Angeles. The workshop welcomes all levels of songwriters, and will cover: how to gather inspiration for songs, the nuts and bolts of a song’s structure, processes.” Find out more at thesingerandthesongwriter.com. Space is limited, so please RSVP to sayrenancylee@gmail.com.

**Kulak’s Woodshed: 20 Years of Tunes**

Over the past two decades, Kulak’s Woodshed, at 5230 Laurel Canyon Blvd. in North Hollywood, CA, has hosted thousands of songwriters. The venue’s décor, somewhere between a crazed grandmother’s attic and an Amsterdam cannabis emporium, must be experienced to be believed. Thanks to live webcasts, shows at the Woodshed can be seen worldwide.

Founded and operated by namesake Paul Kulak, the venue is truly a labor of love, operated by skilled volunteers and supported by audience donations. All genres of music are presented, pets can attend the shows and snacks, soft drinks, tea and coffee are available. Donations are welcome. You can make PayPal donations or become a monthly sponsor at kulakwoodshed.com/support.

**Celebra a Las Mujeres de Musica Latina Con AIMP**


**Nick Furlong has Reach**

Reach Music Publishing (Reach) has announced the conclusion of a multi-dimensional deal with producer-songwriter-artist Nick Furlong, including a new joint venture to sign new writers. Also included is an extension of the company’s existing exclusive, worldwide agreement to co-publish his entire song catalog. Pictured at a ceremony presenting Furlong’s plaque for co-writing Avicii’s “The Nights,” (l-r): Nick Furlong and Michael Kloster, President, Reach Music.

**BMI Speed Dating**

BMI’s UK team recently hosted “Speed Dating for Songwriters” in BMI’s Nashville, LA and New York offices. The gathering enables 12 to 15 participants to meet, get acquainted and listen to each other’s music with the aim of fostering creative collaboration among promising songwriters, producers and artists. Pictured (l-r): artist-songwriter Benedict Cork and songwriter-producer Matt Rist.

**Time Two: Duets from Carla Olson**

Iconic LA-based songwriter, singer and guitarist Carla Olson is a powerful musical voice, from her stint in the band The Textones, collaborations with the late Gene Clark, and solo projects. Have Harmony Will Travel 2, her latest release on Sunset Blvd. Records, includes new and historic duets with everyone from Clark, Percy Sledge and Eagle Timothy B. Schmit to Stephen McCarthy from The Long Ryders. Check out Carloolson.com.
SONGWRITER PROFILE

Tatiana Owens
Soul, Style and Sync

In Los Angeles from New York for a week of songwriting collaborations, under a cascading crown of curls, Tatiana Owens lights up the corner of a Sunset Boulevard coffeehouse with charisma as luminous as her retro chic neon workout gear.

A powerhouse vocalist and a riveting live performer, Tatiana Owens is also a prolific songwriter. Her lyrics and music have been featured on NBC, CBS, MTV, VH1, Logo, Lifetime, ABC Family, Freeform, CMT, BET, USA and CW Networks. Her track “Pendulum” was included on the Universal/Def Jam Love and Hip Hop Compilation, and “Trigger” from her EP Colorful, has been utilized on multiple series including Ray Donovan and Shameless on Showtime, The CW Network’s Dynasty, American Women on the Paramount Network and the UK series Guilt.

Owens has a long relationship with the LA-based company Angry Mob Music, who procure these extensive placements. She addresses the psychology of sync: “I know that music supervisors love female empowerment songs like ‘Roar’ by Katy Perry; songs that are ‘Should I stay or go?’ and songs with a lot of positivity, about believing in yourself.” She says her song “Trigger” is emotionally adaptable. “It’s been used in a kissing scene, in a sex scene, and on Ray Donovan, after a shooting, when it was used literally. It’s good to have songs that mean more than one thing, but generally what works are relationships, empowerment and self-love.”

Although she had written poems and stories, Owens was not yet versed in songwriting when she arrived in New York from her hometown, Toledo, OH. “I was singing on a demo,” she remembers. “The songwriter didn’t have a second verse on a track I was recording, and asked if I wanted to take a stab at it. I wrote the second verse in five minutes, and he thought it was the best part of the song.”

Owens was raised on gospel music. “Israel Houghton was one of my mentors, and Shirley Caesar was my hometown pastor’s godmother, so I got a taste of these legends.” When Owens would visit her aunt’s house, it was a more secular vibe. “She would have on Stevie Wonder, Earth, Wind & Fire, and Chaka Khan. It opened me up to different worlds.”

Studying ballet at age three and tap-dancing by five, Owens was a student at Toledo School for the Arts from seventh grade through graduation. She studied jazz, pop, classical and opera and evolved to funk and soul. Musical theater expanded her range as she performed student roles in The Wiz and Rent. She was also booked for a professional gig at the historic Crosswell Opera House in Adrian, MI. “I love the experience of musical theater, because I love to act as well as sing.”

In December, Owens headlined a week at the Peninsula Hotel in Hong Kong. In New York, she performs regularly, including a monthly residency at The Groove, a funk/soul club in Greenwich Village. “It’s a well known tourist spot with visitors from Europe and Japan. A group of people from Africa tagged me on Facebook, and it’s amazing to realize that there are people from all over the world who can experience you as an artist,” she declares.

With the release of her EP, Colorful, Owens explores a sound with classic reference points counter-balanced by a 21st century perspective. She has been working on her full length, which she will title Colorful Too.

Some of her newest songs are for that project, some for the sync uses, and she is also open to writing for other artists. “With the way the industry is always moving, I feel that it’s good to be diverse and open in your writing,” she confirms.

Although she doesn’t define herself strictly as a songwriter, Owens’ voice is a powerful creative instrument. “Writing is not what I do every single day, but it comes along,” she says. And she finds inspiration everywhere. “I used an announcement from the subway for an opening line in one of my songs. I sang, ‘Stand clear of the closing door.’”

Contact Tom Bradley, TC Music, tc@Tandcmusic.com
NEW DATES
AUGUST 16-19

We look forward to bringing the global music industry together in Nashville this August.

For the preliminary schedule, registration, and more, please visit:

MUSICBIZ2020.COM

Above all else, we wish you, your families, and the global music business community health and safety during this time.
Drops

The original motion picture soundtrack to 1999 sci-fi Wachowski Brothers-directed hit The Matrix, scored by composer Don Davis, was released for the first time as a picture disc LP on March 13 via Varèse Sarabande Records. Side A features an image of the Matrix’s green code, while Side B pictures Keanu Reeves in character as Neo, the film’s computer hacking protagonist. This new release of the moody, postmodern score comes as fans await a fourth installment of the billion-dollar franchise, due out in 2021. Contact Maike Eilert at maike@whitebearpr.com.

Spike Lee will direct a filmed version of the acclaimed Broadway show, David Byrne’s American Utopia, for a release sometime in 2020. The Broadway show opened in Oct. 2019 and ended in Feb. to sold-out, record-breaking audiences, featuring acclaimed and quirky Talking Heads frontman David Byrne performing songs from his seventh solo album American Utopia with musicians from around the globe. For more information, contact Kate Jackson at katej@grandstandhq.com.

Milan Records has released The Staggering Girl Original Motion Picture Soundtrack with music by Academy Award, Golden Globe and Grammy Award-winning composer and one-third of Yellow Magic Orchestra, Ryuichi Sakamoto. Sakamoto has said the score utilized sounds created using actual fabrics from the iconic fashion designer Valentino, whose couture is featured in the Luca Guadagnino-directed short. The film, which follows a troubled woman to her Italian childhood home, was produced in collaboration with Valentino’s creative director Pierpaolo Piccioli. Contact George Corona III at geo@terrorbird.com.

After a run of screenings in early 2020, Dudeski/Chip Baker Films will release Rolling Stone: Life and Death of Brian Jones on DVD in mid-April. The film, directed by Danny Garcia, is the first documentary about the founder and original leader of The Rolling Stones. Jones emerged in the mid-1960s as the face of London’s bohemian scene, but his rising career came crashing to a halt due to his excessive lifestyle and vices. He was found dead at the bottom of a swimming pool at the age of 27. The film premiered in December at London’s Regent Street Cinema. Contact Mike Schnapp at unclenike212@gmail.com.

Drawing from The Avett Brothers’ vast body of work, stage production Swept Away tells the story of a violent storm that sinks a whaling ship, and the four surviving souls—a young man in search of adventure, his older brother who has sworn to protect him, a captain at the end of a long career at sea, and a worldly first mate who has fallen from grace—who each face a reckoning: How far will I go to stay alive? And can I live with the consequences? Contact Taylor.Vaughn@umusic.com.

Documentary José Feliciano: Behind This Guitar, chronicling the life and ongoing career of nine-time Grammy and Latin Grammy Lifetime Achievement winner José Feliciano, was set to premiere at SXSW Film Festival in March until the festival was cancelled due to the rapid spread of the Coronavirus. Considered one the world’s greatest guitarists and a trailblazer for Latin artists, the Puerto Rican-born Feliciano is the first Latin American to win Best New Artist and Best Contemporary Pop Vocal Grammy Awards and is the first global Latin crossover artist. The film includes both the original hits and beloved covers of the artist, in addition to interviews with Carlos Santana, Gloria Estefan, Emilio Estefan and Rudy Perez. Contact info@btpr.biz for more information.

With never-before-seen footage and interviews with Smokey Robinson, Tony Bennett, Johnny Mathis, Norma Miller and the late singer’s son, Ray Brown Jr., Just One Of Those Things presents a portrait of Ella Fitzgerald as she was on- and offstage. Known as “The First Lady of Jazz,” Fitzgerald held a six-decade career in both music and activism. The documentary, directed by Leslie Woodhead, opens in select theaters April 3. Contact carol@kayosproductions.com.

A new documentary film The Vinyl Revival charts the resurgence of vinyl over the past several years. The film explores the whys and hows with industry pundits, artists, record shop owners, vinyl fans and more. Directed and produced by Pip Piper, we hear from passionate new record shop owners as well the established die-hards still going and thriving. Record collecting has lost its image as a hobby for middle-aged men and become instead a pursuit of the most fashion-conscious consumer. Will it last? What is the future for record shops when vinyl becomes less fashionable? The film arrives April 10. See the vinylrevivalfilm.com.

Rolling Stone: Life and Death of Brian Jones
**OPPS**

The LA Dance Festival is offering performances, events and classes throughout April, featuring top talent in the contemporary dance scene whose work is focused around the world in theaters, film, television, music videos, commercials and live performance. For tickets, schedules and more information, visit lagdancfest.org.

The LA Games Conference will take place May 11 this year, bringing together the industry’s major influencers to network and partake in panels and discussions on the state and future of gaming. An agenda, list of speakers and registration information can be found at lagamesconference.com.

NYU Steinhardt’s annual Music and the Moving Image Conference will take place May 29-31 with award-winning composer, Blake Neely (The Flash, Supergirl, Legends of Tomorrow) as the keynote speaker. Discussions will focus on the relationship between music and film, television, video games and other moving images. To register and see a full list of speakers, visit steinhardt.nyu.edu/programs/screen-scoring/screen-scoring-summer-intensives/music-and-moving-image-conference-xvi.

**PROPS**

BMG has announced that its next feature-length film will be the first-ever, career-spanning documentary on the life and times of rock icon Ronnie James Dio. The documentary will be helmed by Don Argott and Demian Fenton (Framing John DeLorean, Believer, Last Days Here), produced by Argott and Sheena Joyce for 9.14 Pictures, executive produced by Wendy Dio for Niji Productions and Kathy Rivkin Daum for BMG. Contact paki.newell@bmg.com.

Radar Pictures has secured the rights to “Karn Evil 9,” the futuristic rock song from classic prog-rockers Emerson, Lake & Palmer, to develop as a science fiction film. Best-selling author Daniel H. Wilson is writing the script, centered on a society that has drained all its blood with a dependence on technology. Michael Napolitano and Maria Frisk will produce for Radar. The project has the full cooperation of ELP and its management. Contact justin@justincookepr.com.

The 10th annual Guild of Music Supervisors Awards took place in February, honoring Bob Hunka with the prestigious Legacy Award and composer and lyricist Burt Bacharach with the Icon Award. The annual event celebrates the best and highest achievements in music use in video games, film, television, advertising, trailers and promos. See gmsawards.com. Contact Adrianna Perez at adrianna@whitebearpr.com.

HBO Max has acquired the critically acclaimed documentary, On the Record from Impact Partners and Jane Doe Films. Directed and produced by Kirby Dick and Amy Ziering. On the Record tells the story of music executive Drew Dixon making the difficult decision to become one of the first women of color during the #metoo movement to publicly accuse hip-hop mogul Russell Simmons of sexual misconduct.

Dixon and other accusers including Sil Lai Abrams, Sheri Hines, Jenny Lumet and Alexia Norton Jones come forward with accounts that illustrate how women of color are often silenced and ignored when reporting crimes of a sexual nature. Contact hbomaxreleases@warnermedia-group.com.

The celebrated cross-cultural documentary on New Orleans music culture and history, Up From the Streets: New Orleans, The City of Music, had its West Coast premiere in February at the LA Pan African Film and Arts Festival. The film, for which six-time Grammy winner and composer Terence Blanchard served as executive producer and music director, takes viewers on a journey through the city’s musical roots from jazz to R&B and funk with interviews from Blanchard, Harry Connick, Jr., Bradford Marsalis, Wynton Marsalis, Mannie Fresh, Dr. Michael White and more.

The film was directed by music-documentary filmmaker Michael Murphy, and includes archival and newly filmed performances by Louis Armstrong, Mahalia Jackson, Professor Longhair, Fats Domino, Dr. John, Bonnie Raitt, Allen Toussaint, Preservation Hall Jazz Band, Irma Thomas and The Neville Brothers. Contact Alisse Kingsley at alissethemuse@aol.com or visit facebook.com/upfromthestreetsnola/ for further information.

**Out Take**

Mark Engebretson
Filmmaker/Composer

Web: longhornfilm.com
Contact: press@longhornfilm.com
Most Recent: Jay’s Longhorn

In the late ’70s, Minneapolis had no place for a burgeoning alternative rock scene. Music venues hosted bands that either played covers or original bands that played music like heavy metal or R&B—not the new wave that was breaking around the country. Then Jay’s Longhorn opened in 1977.

Mark Engebretson was in a band called the MORs that played the venue, which became the springboard for the city’s DIY-alt rock scene, and the chosen stop for the B-52’s, The Police and Elvis Costello. Over 40 years since it opened its doors, Engebretson released Jay’s Longhorn, a documentary chronicling the venue’s history through the bands that launched there. With no filmmaking experience apart from some promotional shorts he’d created for the University of Minnesota, Engebretson navigated this labor of love as he went along, funding it out-of-pocket, relying on friends for equipment, and getting a few lucky breaks: “I was very lucky with the original songs by area musicians used in the film,” he says. “Almost every band owned their own publishing rights, but one band had turned their catalog over to a publishing firm, so I had to negotiate and knew absolutely nothing about licensing. I was able to rely on a couple attorneys and a copyright librarian who helped me out. If this film had involved a lot of publishing firms, I wouldn’t have had the money.”

A past stint as a journalist also helped with the interviewing process and narrative. “As a former journalist, I knew I wanted it to ring true. And I haven’t had one person say, ‘You got that wrong.’”

The film was released on Vimeo in December and landed a spot in a few small film festivals.

“It’s done better than I thought it would. I’m thinking it’s a one-off, but people keep asking me what my next project is. Maybe I could do something else,” he says. “If it’s important and you have something to say, then do it. It’ll make a lot of people happy.**
Rüfüs Du Sol Makes a Surprise Appearance
Grammy-nominated musical trio Rüfüs Du Sol closed out the CRSSD After-Dark Party at Oxford Social Club with a surprise performance. The Grammy-nominated group jumped up on stage for a surprise set around 1:20 after Etinne De Crecy and Perseus headlined the evening at the sold out venue.

BMG Executives Celebrate Their Master of the Moon Award
Skid Row’s Sebastian Bach presented the Master of the Moon Award to BMG executives at the Memorial Awards Gala arranged by Ronnie James Dio Stand Up and Shout Cancer Fund. Pictured (l-r): Jeff Christian, Director, Catalog; Michael Kachko, SVP; Thomas Scherer, EVP, Repertoire & Marketing L.A., Global Writer Services & China; Kathy Rivkin, Daum Senior Director, Films; and Sebastian Bach.

David Nail Visits The Country Rebel Ranch
David Nail recently filmed a series of "Fireside Sessions" at the Country Rebel Ranch. He’s pictured with Darin (l) and Kevin Blue (r), co-founders of Country Rebel, the world’s largest country music network. The network’s new acoustic performance series will be released in the coming months.

An Evening With Manilow
The National Record Promotions team paid a visit to Barry Manilow during his residency at the Westgate Hotel in Las Vegas. Larry Weir is currently promoting Barry’s latest single "My Funny Valentine" at radiotaken from Manilow’s current album Night Songs II. Pictured (l-r): NRP’s Masika Swain Weir, Larry Weir, Barry Manilow, Janeen Damian, Michael Damian, JoBee Croskery and Carl Geist.

Stephanie Cabra
Despite the Cancelled Tour, Ozzy Still Connects with His Fans
Though he had to cancel his “No More Tours 2” concert tour due to health issues that have nagged him in recent years, metal music legend Ozzy Osborne kept busy by making public appearances in Hollywood recently to promote his latest solo album, *Ordinary Man*. First, Osborne was the guest of honor at a party thrown for him at historic rock & roll watering hole, The Rainbow, where attendees included Machine Gun Kelly and Yungblud. The following day, Ozzy was greeted by hundreds of fans at the cavernous Amoeba Records store where he signed copies of the album for three hours.

Nederlander Celebrates Barry McComb’s Career
Nederlander Concerts presented a sold-out Chicago concert at the Bank of America Performing Arts Center in Thousand Oaks on March 3rd, which also marked Cultural Affairs Director, Barry McComb’s retirement. McComb worked for the city of Thousand Oaks for eight years.

AIMP NY Hosts Industry Up-and-Comers
AIMP NY previously put out a call for nominations of young up-and-comers in the independent music community, selecting Jason Rezvan, Spirit Music Group; Livia Piomelli, Big Noise Music Group, Motion Creative; Katie Kilgallen, BMI; Jacob Wunderlich, Exploration; and multi-genre harpist Brandee Younger to participate. The panel shared their perspective on music trends and where the industry is headed.

1991—Roxette—#12
Swedish sensation Roxette became an overnight success in the US before they even had a record deal here, eliciting this statement from Gessele during our interview: “We’re not an oversight success. We’ve been doing this for 12 years.” The issue also includes a chat with talent agent David Fishof and a profile of new Mercury Records signing, Material Issue.

2010—Bruno Mars—#12
In MC’s interview with the soon to be huge Bruno Mars, the artist gave us a peek at his songwriting process: “We try to make sure that, when we’re writing, the music alone is something memorable.” Also in the issue is the feature article “85 Ways to Beat this Recession” and an overview of our “Favorite Signing Stories of the Year,” including BlackVeil Brides, Y.G., Andy Grammer and Curren$y.

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Conan Gray
by Andrea Beenham
I just 21 years old, and with a following of nearly 2 million YouTube subscribers, Conan Gray has also garnered over 92 million streams of songs from his new album Kid Krow (including the tracks “Maniac,” “Comfort Crowd,” and “The Story”), even before its official release.

Following the massive success of his debut EP, Sunset Season (with hits including “Crush Culture,” “Idle Town” and “Generation Why”), the self-dubbed “child of the internet” describes himself as an average guy whose unfailing passion for music and the internet ultimately earned the tremendous following he has today.

After selling out three headline US and UK tours and traveling with Panic! at the Disco, Gray was gearing up for a debut at Coachella later this month as well as a 27-date spring/summer international 2020 tour that was already a third sold out. Those plans, of course, have been put on hold as the Coronavirus crisis unfolds. Nevertheless, in our interview with Gray, conducted before the crisis hit, the ever humble and transparent artist spoke with Music Connection about the evolution of his music, and he gave us plenty of details about his remarkable journey thus far.

**Music Connection:** A lot of your music is about overcoming and escaping challenges, and the restrictions of living in a small town. With your new record, Kid Krow, there has been a shift toward relationships. Given that you’ve said you didn’t talk much when you were younger, how did you find the strength to write about all of this?

**Conan Gray:** When I would write a song, it was like me telling a secret. I was just telling people how I felt, but in a way that they were able to understand. I didn’t talk a lot as a kid [because] one, nobody liked me, nobody cared that I existed, and two, I think when I did want to talk, I didn’t know how to. I spent so much of my life being the new kid and being the outcast that I just felt like nobody understood me. And when I started writing songs, it was the first time that people [said], “Oh, you know, that thing that you felt? I felt that too.” Then I started to gain confidence in writing about those things so much that it just sort of happened supernaturally.

“I think if you’re passionate about something, work really, really hard on it and give it your all, people will take notice. For me, it was my love of the internet and my love of music that was making everything happen. I was just a normal kid Krown TX]. I wrote all of the songs my senior year of high school [in Georgetown, TX]. I wrote all of the songs my senior year. Kid Krow differentiates from that because it’s about my entire life. It’s about every single thing that made me into the demented, strange, angry and highly emotional person that I am today. I say a lot more in the album than the EP. The album talks about everything before and everything after, [from] when I was really, really poor, living in a house that had a cardboard back door. It talks about how weird it has been for me to go from being super poor to this new world where everyone is rich. Then it also talks about falling in love for the first time and getting my heart broken seven thousand times.

“I wanted the album to be the things I would say to my best friend. I have a best friend that I talk to every day. If you listen to the album from top to bottom, you know the same amount of secrets about me that my best friend would know because I tell you everything . . . . I always try to tell the truth in my life because I’m not a very good liar, and in my song writing, I just have to say what I say. It’s me, and it’s an album.”

**MC:** You said recently that the new record is a reflection of the people you’ve met since making your first EP, but it’s also deeply personal. How is it different from your first record?

**Gray:** My first EP was definitely based on my senior year of high school [in Georgetown, TX]. I wrote all of the songs my senior year. Kid Krow differentiates from that because it’s about my entire life. It’s about every single thing that made me into the demented, strange, angry and highly emotional person that I am today. I say a lot more in the album than the EP. The album talks about everything before and everything after, [from] when I was really, really poor, living in a house that had a cardboard back door. It talks about how weird it has been for me to go from being super poor to this new world where everyone is rich. Then it also talks about falling in love for the first time and getting my heart broken seven thousand times.

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**MC:** You don’t know if it was YouTube in particular. I’m a child of the internet, I was raised on the internet. I was on every single platform 24/7, it was ridiculous. I still am that way. I think me and my friends are internet people—especially because I grew up in a small town and had no way of escaping. I was on my phone all the time, consequently. A YouTube video of me singing a song called “Idle Town” was the first time that I ever went viral. That song was the moment that kind of changed everything, and then I put it up on Spotify on my own, just using some sort of weird website, and it ended up charting.

**MC:** You said in an interview that you recognize now that everything can change in a moment. Looking back on what’s unfolded—and appreciating that you just said it still doesn’t feel that real—what is the best advice you would give someone about how or how not to go about getting noticed?

**Gray:** When “Idle Town” went viral and I started getting attention, it wasn’t conscious. I didn’t realize it was happening until a year later. I didn’t really notice because I was just doing what I loved. I think it shows when people love what they’re doing and when they have a passion for something. I would still be writing songs every single day of my life whether or not anybody cared, because I am obsessed with it. It’s unhealthy. It’s insane.

“I write songs every day and I would still be doing that whether there was one person listening or 50 million people listening. I love writing and I love making content. I love photos, I love videos, I love going on the internet. I love all of those things so much that it just sort of happened supernaturally.”

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**MC:** What helped you keep the right mindset to push forward?

**Gray:** I really just take it day by day. My life completely changed in the past year—in the past four years. It completely flipped upside down. Every day I wake up and [think], is this reality? And to be honest, it doesn’t feel like reality most of the time. In my head, it’s like, “I love writing songs—if I could write songs every single day of my life, I would.” And I get to write songs every single day of my life. The opportunity to be able to write music for people to listen to is such an honor. And the fact that people are able to tell me that they relate to the music and that the music helps them process their own emotions makes me really happy because I write the songs in order to process my own emotions.

**MC:** Your debut EP, Sunset Season, had a huge response on social media—over 300 million streams. Would you say YouTube was the secret to that, or were there other platforms that you feel helped you to connect with people?
Gray: It’s hard to say, because each song is like a different facet of me. “The Story”—the last song on the album—tells my whole life story. It’s scary to give people that much information about me, especially on the internet. I don’t really know how people are going to react to the things I have to say on the album. A lot of those things—I don’t really like to admit—I kind of wish I didn’t feel, but I do feel. . . . I think there’s a lot of magic in writing a song that doesn’t necessarily paint you in a good light, but paints you in a true light, and I want people to understand that everything I say on the album is me and I say a lot of things I don’t really want to say but I say them because I think people deserve to know.

MC: You wrote Kid Krow while navigating not only three North American tours, but a European headlining tour as well, in addition to supporting Panic! at the Disco and doing Lollapalooza. How in the world did you manage your time between all the performances and commitments on the road?

Gray: Well, when you put it like that, it does feel insane, but I guess I’ve always been hyperactive. My friends back home used to tell me that I was really strange because not a second of my time I wasn’t working. I would go tour and then come back for two days, record vocals with my producer, Daniel Nigro, and then go on tour again. And when I’m on the road, I still write a song basically every day. I’ve done a song every single day since I was 12 years old. The album grew up with me, in a sense, as I was making it in the past year. It was a lot of me sitting in a hotel room with a notepad and a pen, doodling something for a music video or the artwork for the album—I made all of that while I was on the road. It was just DIY.

MC: Given that you’ve said your first EP was a kind of unfolding—there wasn’t really a map in your mind, so to speak—do you ever set clear goals or checkpoints? Do you visualize how you want things to unfold moving forward in your career?

Gray: I take it day by day because I never thought I would make it this far in the first place. I thought I was just going to live in Texas and go to college and get married and get a dog and a cat. It’s kind of a surprise, so I think, what’s the most I can do today and the most I can do tomorrow? My whole entire life is planned out for the next two years of my schedule—and that makes me want to vomit and die—so I take it day by day. . . . I’m excited to keep making music. I don’t really have a clear plan. I’m just kind of going and going and going. I’m writing music like I love to do every single day. I’m going on Twitter and talking to fans like I love to do every single day, and just living my life and seeing where it takes me.

MC: It seems that younger and younger artists are making an impact on the music scene with the rise of social media. How do you fit into that?

Gray: It wasn’t a conscious decision. I’m just part of the group of kids who have had a computer since they were, like, five. I’ve had Instagram since I was in the sixth grade. You can’t hide anything [on the internet]. It holds people accountable, and these days I just love the way that music is so brutally honest because people can tell when it isn’t, and I love making extremely brutally honest music . . . you have to be as real as you can possibly be. And my music is literally just me. Just me writing music on my guitar, and that’s how it happened. It’s pretty fun. I think that me and this internet generation of kids, we really just love music and a lot of us got discovered because we made songs in our bedrooms that were good enough for people to hear. . . . We’ve grown up on YouTube—that’s just how it is.

MC: What’s the best advice you’ve ever received and who did it come from?

Gray: The other day I met Matt Healy, and he’s one of my songwriting heroes. I adore him so much. I blasted The 1975 in the car all of high school, all of middle school, and I met him and he was so nice. He looked at me and he said, “You’re going to have an exhausting year. You’re going to have a horrible and exhausting year. I really hope you’re ready for it.” And I was, like, oh, no, and he told me, “Keep your head down and just work.”
MC: That sounds like good advice given the whirlwind you’ve been on. If you could have your fans remember one thing about you, or if you had one message for them, what would it be?

Gray: I hope they remember me as a friend and that they remember me as someone they can tell the truth to and someone that will tell the truth to them. I’m always real with them, even when it’s the bad side. I want to be as real with them as possible because young people and people like me need that. In a world where we can’t really tell what’s real and what isn’t, they need someone who is real. I would want them to know that life can be very, very insane sometimes. But looking at my life in times when I thought that I wasn’t going to be able to keep going, life just kept going and kept getting better and better, so I hope they can see that in me and have faith that it will happen to them.

MC: Getting back to your shows, you’ve played some fantastic venues. How in the world did you transition from essentially performing into a camera in your bedroom to the huge stages that you play on now?

Gray: It was pretty insane. I mean, I wasn’t really prepared. When I had to play my first show, it was, like, let’s see what happens, you know? I played my first show only about a year ago. The only time I’d ever been on stage was for high school graduation. I had no idea how I was going to react, but I knew that touring was something I was built for because I spent my whole entire life just moving around. And the second that I went on stage for the first time, my brain clicked into a different mode of existing where I realized that the people who are standing in this crowd right now want to hear this music. So, sing the music for them. They’re not here to judge you, they’re not here to make fun of you like people have in the past. These people are here to sing songs and have a good time. And so, when I go up on stage, I sing songs and I have a good time. And it feels like a party. We’re having so much fun.

It feels very, very personal. I mean, I do know these people very well. I know them from the internet and I see them at every single show since I was 19. It’s bewildering how fast we’ve gone from playing to 200 capacity to 4,000 capacity. But I’ve handled it like, oh, look—it’s getting bigger and we’re just hanging out with bigger crowds. I feel safe among them because they understand me and I understand them. I don’t feel like I’m with strangers at all. I’m in front of people I know, and they know me so, so well. I’m not scared. I still get nervous before shows, but the idea of touring is so fun for me. Every show is so different and so weird and whether I’m opening for Panic! at The Forum or playing a tiny room, I find it’s such a unique experience that it’s hard to compare them.

MC: Have you had any memorable moments with any of your A-list fans?

Gray: Billie Eilish and I have been friends since we were really young. I’m so, so proud of her. I think that she and I are very bewildered by everything that happened to both of us. And when I look at her, I think, wow, that’s crazy. It’s not crazy, because I know her and she’s the real deal, and she really deserves everything, but it’s kind of crazy.

It always makes me feel so inspired to have people, anyone, really anyone, show support for the music.

Contact Taylor.Vaughn@umusic.com

Quick Facts

1. Gray’s 2019 EP, Sunset Season, received over 300 million streams.
2. He made his television debut in January 2019 on Late Night with Seth Meyers.
4. He has sold out three headline US and UK tours and joined Panic! at the Disco on tour.
5. Songs from Kid Krow have been streamed over 92 million times before the album’s release.
6. Gray has been featured on Spotify and Apple’s Today’s Top Hits and was previously #1 on Spotify’s Pop Rising.
7. His fans include Billie Eilish, BTS, Halsey, The 1975, Brendon Urie, Troye Sivan, Lewis Capaldi and Noah Cyrus.
9. At just 21 years old, Gray has already garnered press from Vogue, VMAN, Teen Vogue, Paper, The Fader, MTV, I-D, Billboard, People, Seventeen and OnesToWatch.

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WELCOME TO OUR ANNUAL ARRAY OF VOCAL DELIGHTS. We consistently offer, arguably, the best and most eclectic mix of singers anywhere, and they come from all areas of the artistic spectrum to generously share their wealth of performance tips, career advice and amusing anecdotes. On board this year we’ve got emerging singer-songwriter Alexandra Savior, He is Legend frontman Schuyler Croom, rising R&B/pop star Allen Stone, veteran session/sideman and solo artist Bernard Fowler and legendary crooner Jack Jones.

By Eric Harabadian
The energy you get from an Allen Stone performance is infectious and steeped in a heavy dose of classic R&B, jazz, funk and soul. The spirited singer-songwriter has released four albums, with his latest being Building Balance (ATO Records). Aside from chart-topping singles and sold out concerts, Stone has made some memorable appearances in recent years on TV via The Ellen DeGeneres Show, Jimmy Kimmel Live and Daryl Hall’s Live from Daryl’s House.

**Vocal Background**
My folks were ministers so we all sang as a family growing up. When you grow up singing in church, you’re singing at least twice a week. Other than that I was just listening to records and trying to mimic what I was hearing.

**Early Influences**
I was getting into music when I was around 11 or 12. I was picking up my dad’s guitar and kinda learning some songs on it. Weezer and Red Hot Chili Peppers were popular at the time. When I was 15 or 16 I got into hip-hop artists like Common and Q Tip. And then a buddy of mine showed me a bunch of Stevie Wonder albums and I got hooked on it. I started discovering similar artists like Gladys Knight, Donny Hathaway and all the quality stuff.

**Warm-up Routine**
I do a breathing exercise I learned from my buddy Andrew McMahon when I toured with him. It was made famous by this German guy named Wim Hof. It’s essentially 30 deep breaths through the nose in succession. And on the 30th breath you breathe it all out and hold it for a minute and a half. Do that three times. By the last round it’s pretty amazing how lifted you feel. And then I follow that with a vocal warm-up in the baritone realm. I do another round of breathing and then I do a tenor warm-up. If I’m not up to my neck in other stuff, to do that would be my preferred exercise before a show.

**Vocal Support**
The most important thing on the road is sleep. Anything under six hours and you’ll be fighting that fatigue. I try to drink a lot of water throughout the day. Throat Coat, with a little lemon and honey, is a wonderful thing for the voice and the cords.

**Best Career Advice**
When I started out I was kind of a traditionalist and kind of an old soul. I was sort of opposed to using the internet to connect with fans. I had a friend who was in publishing and the music game for a long time. A few years ago he sat me down and said, ‘Al, it’s not the focus, it’s not the music, but it’s another dimension to this universe that you’ve created. And if you utilize it really well you can say anything you want, you can express yourself any way you want and it can be a very useful asset.” That really stuck with me. So, play out as much as you can, play in front of as many real people as you can and get good on the internet.

**Schuyler Croom**
Contact: Jon Freeman freeman@freemanpromotions.com heislegendnc.com

Schuyler Croom has been the lead vocalist for modern hard rockers He is Legend since their inception in 2003. The North Carolina-based quartet has steadily been building an avid cult following by consistently delivering energetic shows, inventive arrangements and a take-no-prisoners attitude. Their sixth album release on Spinefarm Records is 2019’s White Bat.

**In-ear Monitoring**
No. I usually have a monitor mix on stage and we’re lucky if we have side fills. But I don’t like in-ears or wireless microphones. I like to have the music blasting pretty loud. And I would rather not hear myself on stage as much as a lot of singers would. The vibe will hit the way that it needs to if I hear myself through the mains. I don’t really remember my stage time. That’s the part of the show that usually disappears. I like the vocals a little under the mix, like a classic Ozzy/Black Sabbath style.

**Working In The Studio**
We track the drums first, all of the guitar work and then I usually go to Mitch Marlow, who played in our band for a while. He’s a lifelong friend and producer. He knows my vocal stylings and I trust what he can pull out of me. It’s a very intimate thing doing vocals. It’s a part of you that takes a certain warmth and grit. You essentially have to pretend like you’re doing the best show of your life to an audience of one who is your engineer. And you have to capture that energy and emotion that would only come as a conduit through the fans.

**Selecting The Proper Vocal Approach**
White Bat called for more aggressive or metal vocals. But mostly, I’m looking for the pop sensibility in these jarring moments. I like wordplay. I like to think about a sentence for a long while. I’ll walk outside and sit with a melody between takes and know that it will change the entire structure of a song.

**Best Career Advice**
When I was young we were signed to the same label as this guy Chris McClain. And I remember I was so excited to talk with him. And the only thing he told me was, “Get it in writing.” Also, for aspiring bands, play every show you can, try to get out of your town as much as possible and just get out there and continue.
Alexandra Savior

Contact: Leigh Greaney
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alexandrasavior.com

Singer-songwriter Alexandra Savior hails from Portland, OR, and debuted nationally in 2017 on Columbia Records with the album Belladonna of Sadness. Her mesmerizing delivery and dreamy songs laid the groundwork for a unique sound mixed with melancholy and personal reflection. Her sophomore release The Archer (on Danger Mouse’s 30th Century Records label) is an eerie and somewhat surreal tapestry of material. NME states “This is a timeless collection.”

Description of Her Sound
That’s a hard question. It’s just me. I usually say my music sounds like the ‘60s when UBER drivers ask me that question.

Influences
I’m really inspired by female artists who have life stories that interest me. Artists like Karen Dalton and Sibylle Baier; they have stories where they were never recognized until they died.

About The New Album The Archer
I feel more established as a person on this album. And I think it embodies how I feel about myself. I think this portrays more who I am than the past work did.

Her Distinct Vocal Style
I think it evolves over time, from when I write a song to touring a song. The vocal treatment I give it changes quite a lot. I think to tour, in particular, changes the way you sing songs because you have to sing much louder than when you record them. I have techniques to maintain some consistency with the songs when I’m singing them live.

Songwriting Inspiration
Generally, what I’m going through in my life. I think that’s changing now as I mature. A lot of my writing has been about manipulation and power dynamics from the perspective of a young girl or woman. Now I’m writing about trying to find happiness in life.

Bernard Fowler

Contact: Jill Richmond
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You may not immediately recognize his name, but if you’ve heard a Rolling Stones album over the last 30 years or seen them in concert, you have been graced by the voice and presence of Bernard Fowler. In addition to the Stones, Fowler’s resume includes backing vocal work with Herbie Hancock, Material, Sly & Robbie, Yoko Ono, Duran Duran, Public Image Ltd., Philip Glass and a host of others. His current solo album is a collection of spoken-word interpretations of deep tracks by The Rolling Stones called Inside Out (Rhyme and Reason).

Early Influences
I guess I learned about singing from the radio. It was predominantly soul and rock music. I always liked anyone who sang with George

Preparing For Stage vs. Studio Performance Stage performance is a lot more demanding because it's a lot more physical. Some people just stand there and sing, and that's alright. But most people have some sort of little jig they do when they're performing. And to prepare for that, it's just not vocal, it's physical.

Vocal Health I don't do the lozenges anymore. I do gargle with salt water and warm water. There is a product called TMRG which is an herbal elixir that you put in warm water and you gargle with it. It's from Israel and only available online. I found that to be really helpful, especially when I have a long tour, with a bunch of back-to-back dates.

Working With The Stars On the Voodoo Lounge album there's a song Keith Richards wrote called "How Can I Stop." I was lucky enough to be with him when he wrote the song. All the background stuff on that song I had begun formulating in my head. When the song was actually recorded I was able to do the exact vocal arrangement I was hearing. Another time I was working with Alice Cooper on his Along Came a Spider album. And there was a song on there he wanted to do as a duet with Ozzy Osbourne. For some reason Ozzy's wife Sharon didn't want him to do the song. Alice was really disappointed and I told Alice I would do it with him. He said "Bernard bless your heart, but I really wanted Ozzy." So, I went into the bathroom and put some tissue in my nose. I went back in the studio and said, "Roll the tape!" I actually sang the duet with Alice. When the record came out someone from the press even made a comment that Alice did a song with Ozzy. But it wasn't him, it was me!

Versatility As A Vocalist Most people find something they like and that's what they do. I've never been that way, because I like so many different kinds of music. If it's something that feels good to me I will try it. In the early days it was a little intimidating, but I found I had a niche for it. I doubled voices for Ozzy, Lemmy and John Lydon. If you don't stretch out you'll end up staying in one place.

Jack Jones Contact: Jim Della Croce jim@thepressoffice.com jackjones.lolipop.jp

Born in Hollywood, CA, Jack Jones' list of hits spans several decades and generations. From '60s gems like "Wives and Lovers" and "Lollipops and Roses" to the iconic '80s TV theme "The Love Boat," he truly has been a man for all seasons. With a catalog of 60-plus albums under his belt and now celebrating his 82nd year around the sun, Jones is as vital now as ever. Evidence of that is his soon-to-be-released album, produced by Tom Scott, called Every Other Day I Get the Blues (Calvary Records).

Vocal Training When I was in high school my father, who was a singer himself at the time, was not a jazz singer but a legit operatic singer. He wanted me to get a good foundation so I didn't abuse my voice.

He sent me to these two Frenchmen who were vocal teachers in Hollywood. I learned about breathing through the diaphragm and stuff like that. They helped me a lot.

Early Influences I liked Mel Torme. There were quite a few instrumentalists, like the Dave Pell Octet. My head was in that direction, but I was singing pop. And the number one guy for all of us back in those days was Frank Sinatra. I didn't wanna sound like Sinatra, but I wanted to think like him and phrase like him. I wanted to be that actor that he was when he sang.

Working With Michel Legrand Back in the early '70s I flew to Paris to rehearse in the country with Michel Legrand. When we had the music rehearsed and we knew what we were doing, we went to this old church and all these wonderful musicians filed in. We didn't know each other, but you could feel it happening as we started recording the first day. We bonded and it was a beautiful album. We weren't just making tracks where I was in a soundproof room apart from the band. I was right there in the middle of them. At the end of the session I walked up to Michel, kissed him on the mouth, and said, "Thank you very much!" And he's the only male I've ever kissed on the mouth (laughs). He was a brilliant man.

Keeping Songs Fresh I just really like to tell good stories with the songs. I usually don't do two ballads in a row unless there's a good reason for it. I just like to make it interesting and make it feel good. I try to change things up.

#MeToo I got a lot of flak for the song "Wives and Lovers" from the National Organization of Women. They spoke out against it. I was doing a theater-in-the-round in Massachusetts and as I was going to my car this woman wanted to punch me. It created so much drama and was so silly. I had to take the blame for it and I didn't even write it; Burt Bachrach and Hal David did (laughs). I hesitate to talk about it, but I agree with the Me Too movement and think it's disgusting what's going on out there.

The New Blues Album This is not your grandfather's Jack Jones album. I've known Tom Scott for years and his arrangements are wonderful and full of energy. And the songs are not typical, either. We've got three or four on there by Keb' Mo'. There are a lot of comedic and quirky things about it. It swings!

Best Career Advice When I was starting out, a guy once told me you need to look at the audience and tell them your story. Bring them in to your world. I started out as a frightened singer who was not used to being in front of people and letting it all hang out. And I did it without drugs. Taking drugs is a way of losing your inhibitions, but that's the worst thing you can do.

Jackjones.lolipop.jp
Fender’s Eric Johnson “Virginia” Stratocaster

At the Winter NAMM 2020 show, Fender launched a new series called the Stories Collection, which features tributes to modded Fender guitars owned and played by acclaimed artists who made extraordinary music. The first guitar in the series is a recreation of Eric Johnson’s 1954 “Virginia” Stratocaster, one of Johnson’s favorite guitars. The project to build the Eric Johnson Virginia Stratocaster was spearheaded by Joey Brasler, VP of Product Development, who worked with Eric on the specs and features that mirrored his original Virginia. Master Builder Carlos Lopez is hand-building all limited-edition Custom Shop Virginia models.

Eric’s original “Virginia” was a 1954 Stratocaster that he acquired in a trade back when he was in his twenties. As the story goes, he was in a music store getting a blown speaker repaired and saw a guitar sitting in a corner. He picked it up, fell in love with it immediately and called the owner to ask if he would sell it. The owner didn’t want to sell, but he said he’d trade it for another guitar, which Eric quickly bought and traded to get the ’54.

Eric bought the guitar at a time when you could still buy a ’50s Stratocaster very inexpensively. The notion of “vintage” was still in the future. As a result, Eric Johnson was inclined to experiment on his Stratocaster. He proceeded to modify it over a number of years until he came up with the perfect combination of old and new parts to give him exactly the tones he was looking for.

Eric named his Strat “Virginia” because in 1954 (the first year of production for Stratocasters) the Fender final assembly team would put a piece of masking tape inside the body with their first name and finish date. Eric took the pickguard of his guitar off one day and, sure enough, there was a piece of marking tape with the name “Virginia” written on it—so that’s what he named his guitar.

Eric Johnson noticed that his 1954 Stratocaster had really different tones than any other guitar he had ever played. One of the reasons for this, Eric discovered, is that his original guitar had a body that was made of Sassafras wood. The story goes that Leo Fender, back in 1953 and 1954, had gotten a little bit of Sassafras wood and built some Telecasters and Stratocasters with it. Sassafras, as it turns out, has a very resonant, light and airy sustain quality, and when turn up the volume it emits almost a violin like vibe. When Fender asked the guitarist what features he wanted in his “Virginia” Stratocaster reissue, one of his requests was that the guitar body be made of Sassafras.

Today, the minute you pick up the Fender Eric Johnson Virginia Stratocaster you can tell it has the soul and the magic of a real 1954 Stratocaster. The neck on the guitar features a 12-inch radius and 21 jumbo frets. The neck has been flattened out a little bit, so you get a little lower action than on a regular Stratocaster. It’s very similar in every way to a real 1954 Stratocaster neck, which means by design and purpose it’s a little thicker than a standard Strat neck but not so wide that it’s uncomfortable to play. It makes it very easy to get some unique voicings out of the instrument.

The Eric Johnson Virginia Stratocaster features—Eric’s request—a 500k ohm volume pot instead of the vintage spec 250k ohm volume pot for an overall brighter sound. The two front pickups are the same polarity, opposite to the DiMarzio, for hum-free operation when using the middle and bridge pickups. The neck and middle pickups are out-of-phase with each other, so if you’re in the middle position between the two pickups you’ll notice it has a really thin tone, which is unique for this guitar. It almost has kind of a Japanese tone to it, and sounds almost like a Koto, which is one of Eric Johnson’s signature tones.

The Eric Johnson Virginia Stratocaster successfully brings back to life an historically important guitar. It’s a unique musical instrument that showcases amazing attention to detail and effectively recreates some modifications and improvements that were devised through trial and error by one the world’s iconic guitar players.

The Eric Johnson Virginia Stratocaster is MAP Priced at $2,495 and is now available as a limited edition production-run guitar.

Find out more at fender.com


How to Secure the Bag:
Exploring Untapped Revenue

Many creators wear multiple hats while juggling the business of music. Overseeing production schedules and budgets, coordinating release dates, uploading tracks to the appropriate services and registering works with all relevant societies can be both time consuming and extremely frustrating—frequently resulting in critical pieces of information falling through the cracks. Too often, the importance of fully registering accurate metadata is lost, leaving money on the table. Consequently, music creators have been losing out on billions of dollars globally. When music is streamed, downloaded or digitally broadcast, there are royalties due for the performance in a sound recording payable to copyright owners and performers in addition to those for the composition.

Exploring these untapped revenues and how to monetize recordings based on domestic and international regulations cannot be fully addressed in just one short article, but I will attempt to provide the tools and guidance to point you in the right direction.

What is Equitable Remuneration?
The right to equitable remuneration is the right of all recording artists to be paid fairly for the broadcast and public performance of their works. For many years composers and publishers have received royalties from the broadcast or public performance of their songs. In the US, these royalties are collected by PROs such as ASCAP, BMI, SESAC and GMR. For nearly 80 years, performers throughout Europe enjoyed these rights. However, it was not until 1992 with passage of the Audio Home Recording Act that provided US performers for the first time with a private copyright in sound recordings.

Following that, in 1998 with the passage of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act, the door was finally opened to equitable remuneration in the US for artists and record companies, bringing us at least a little more in line with the rest of the world. This right to equitable remuneration is often referred to as a “Neighboring Right,” as it is a neighbor to rights that exist for composers and publishers. Technically the term “Neighboring Right” is only applicable to those royalties outside the US. Since our rights are a bit more limited than those in Europe and parts of Asia, ours are more correctly referred to as equitable remuneration or public performance rights in sound recordings.

Up until this time, no matter how often a song was played, only the songwriter and publisher received royalties. In Europe and parts of Asia these rights include all broadcasts, including terrestrial radio (e.g., AM/FM), all the various digital platforms, and private copy royalties, while in the US we are limited to just a few of these rights (Digital Subscription Services, Webcasting and Private Copy). What this meant in the past was that while US sound recordings were by far the most played recordings in the world, US performers could not share in any of these royalties because performers were not paid for these rights in the US. The failure of the US to sign international copyright treaties (Berne Convention in 1886, which set the precedent for international copyright protection and the Rome Convention of 1961, which established a performance right in sound recordings) meant artists and record companies (e.g. record companies, DIY Artists who own and/or control their masters) and Record Producers who have an LOD with a Featured Artist need to register in the US with SoundExchange for the collection of royalties for non-interactive subscription services and webcasting.

How do I get my fair share?
• Featured Artists, Rights Owners (e.g. record companies, DIY Artists who own and/or control their masters) and Record Producers who have an LOD with a Featured Artist need to register in the US with SoundExchange for the collection of royalties for non-interactive subscription services and webcasting.
• Featured Artists and Rights Owners need to register in the US with AARC (Alliance of Artists and Record Companies) for private copy royalties.
• Non-featured performers (session musicians, background vocalists, record producers who contributed a musical contribution to the recording) are paid by the AFM & SAG-AFTRA Intellectual Property Rights Distribution Fund for domestic royalties based on a playlist of top performed recordings (union and non-union). There is no registration prerequisite. The Fund does collect some foreign royalties for union members, but does not collect foreign royalties for non-members.
• Featured Artists, Non-Union Performers and Rights Owners can register with one or more foreign CMOs (Collective Management Organizations - e.g. foreign collecting societies such as PPL in the UK, GVL in Germany, etc.). Or, these Artists and Rights Owners can sign with an Agency to coordinate all of this for them.

Other Options
• Absent reciprocity, Rights Owners can still register their works with foreign CMO’s and collect neighboring rights, even when the CMOs would otherwise not pay an artist because the recording was not made in a country signed to the Rome Convention (i.e. the US, Iraq, Iran, Guam).

Other Important Info
• Having a distribution deal, uploading sound recordings on TuneCore, CD Baby, DistroKid, etc., registering your songs with ASCAP, BMI or SESAC will NOT get you Neighboring Rights royalties for the public performance of the sound recording. These organizations collect royalties such as mechanicals and interactive. Featured Artists and Rights Owners must register with multiple CMOs or engage an experienced representative or organization to handle this for you in order to collect these rights.

Music creators have been losing out on billions of dollars globally.”

DENNIS DREITH is a recognized expert on Intellectual Property Rights and a frequent lecturer and panelist on this topic. He is the Chairman of Transparency Entertainment Group, a music rights organization that collects and distributes worldwide performance royalties on behalf of recording artists, master rights holders, producers, and DIY music creators. For more information on uncovering specific details involved in properly registering works that result in increased royalties worldwide please visit teg-intl.com. Money Sounds Good, Right?

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A Songwriter’s Music & Business Tune-up

I recently had the distinctly distasteful experience of going shoe shopping. I dislike shopping for shoes. Most stores don’t carry my size, and, if they do, their selection is usually a choice between ugly and bad looking. But while last week’s adventure did not yield a new pair of kicks, it did provide some insight into the music business and also some useful reminders about how pop music is constructed.

Like just about everywhere else on earth, the shoe shop (where I spent way too long anguishing over poor choices) was playing background music through loudspeakers scattered throughout the store. Since the speakers were hidden, the effect was that the music was truly part of the ambiance. Of course, that was the idea: the music, along with the decorations, architecture, lighting and store smell helped create what the owners decided would provide a pleasant (and therefore mutually beneficial) shopping experience.

So, what about that background music? Who produces it and who selects what the stores play?

Here are a couple things I noticed about the shoe store’s environmental music. (That’s what publishers call music that is played in the background in stores, restaurants and other places of business.)

• First, it is apparent to me that someone put serious thought into determining what kinds of shoppers the storeowners wanted to sell to and what style of music would lure them in (or at least not chase them away). The selection of recordings seemed custom tailored to the perceived musical tastes of this particular segment of the population. This makes good business sense and aligns with the research of Professor Sven-Olov Daunfeldt of Sweden’s HUI Research. He found that a “congruence between in-store music and brand values increased sales.” In other words, a smart businessperson would likely not want to play Puccini arias in a skateboard shop or a medley of Legion of the Damned’s greatest hits in an elite French restaurant. In either example, the environmental music selection would be wrong and likely give potential customers the heebie-jeebies.

• Second—and more interesting to me as a writer, producer, and publisher—the recordings were of songs I had never heard before, performed by singers I did not recognize. I was hearing well-produced master recordings of songs that (to the best of my knowledge) had not had significant success through exposure in the popular media.

• Third, I noticed while suffering through my shoe shopping purgatory that one of the tunes was supported by the very well-worn I—vi—ii—V chord progression. In the key of C-major, this would amount to the C—A-minor—D—minor—G progression every nine-year old assaulter of the piano whacks out when attempting to play “Heart and Soul,” the Hoagy Carmichael/Frank Loesser hit from 1938.

So, here I was—a total music nerd analyzing the chord progressions and production values of unknown songs written in pop style carefully chosen to appeal to my assumed musical sensibilities. The fact that I was totally disappointed by not finding shoes I liked in my size hardly bothered me. At least I was musically satisfied. Not!

Not really—but I did get to thinking…about all the songs there are that use that same I—vi—ii—V chord progression, about who it is that programs music for stores, and about the origin of all of this well-made music.

The I—vi—ii—V and I—viii—V Chord Progressions

(I am using the musician’s Roman numeral shorthand to define the chord progressions I discuss in the following sections. Using Roman numerals helps one to readily transpose chord patterns from one key to another. A more complete explanation of chord symbol notation and the use of Roman numerals will be found in my book, The Professional Songwriter, and many theory textbooks.)

The I—vi—ii—V chord progression is heard in hundreds of songs. These include the “standards” “Blue Moon” (by Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart), “These Foolish Things” (by Jack Strachey and Eric Maschwitz) and “Since I Fell for You” (by Buddy Johnson). Many other hit songs (like Leonard Cohen’s “Hallelujah” and Sting’s “Every Breath You Take”) use a closely related chord pattern, I—vi—ii—V, for their harmonic foundation. Composers sometimes modify the progression. For instance, Leonard Cohen extends the essential I—vi—II—V chord progression by preceding it with another I—vi chord pair. This yields the chord progression I—vi—I—vi—II—V.

Other writers further vary the progression by changing the ordering. In his 2013 hit “All of Me,” John Legend uses the four chords, I, vi, IV, and V, but re-orders the progression to be vi—I—IV—V. The same thing, only different! Jason Mraz uses yet another re-ordering of the same four chords (I, vi, IV, and V) in his song “I’m Yours.” Released in 2008, Mr. Mraz’s tune follows the progression I—vi—II—IV for both the verses and choruses.

The chords ii and IV often substitute for one another. (A chord can substitute for another chord if they have at least two chord tones in common.)

For a long list of songs that use the I—vi—ii—V and I—viii—V chord progressions, visit my website at LouisAnthonyDeLise.com.

All The Great Recordings That No One Ever Hears...except in businesses!

I am guessing that most of the recordings I heard piped through the store’s speakers were what I call “remnant recordings.” These are professionally written and produced recordings where the “magic” just did not happen. For any number of reasons, some recordings just do not make it. They don’t gain traction in the commercial marketplace. These things happen.

Actually, they happen more often than not: there are more “misses” produced than there are “hits.” Sometimes when records are not commercially successful in one marketplace, the copyright owners will look for other venues. These can include background music services. They always want new tracks for their customers’ playlists.

Here are some of the companies that specialize in supplying background music to businesses:

• 3M Background Music
• Songtrader
• DMX Music (owners of Muzak and Mood Media)
• Trusonic
• InStore Broadcasting Network
• Play Network
• Applied Media Technologies Corporation

Each company has its criteria for evaluating and accepting outside material. All of them need songs that are well crafted with productions that sound as good as anything on Billboard’s Top 100 list.
To be considered for review in the Album Reviews section, you must have a record deal with a major label or an independent label with an established distributor. If you do not, please see our New Music Critiques section.
Luba Dvorak
Contact: david@powderfingerpromocom
Web: lubadvorak.com
Seeking: Label, Booking, Management, Publishing
Style: Country, Americana

Texas-based Luba Dvorak shows her love of trad country in her clever “Single Scoop, Single Lady” in which a good-natured spirit, generous sprinkles of pedal steel and low-on-the-neck guitar twang combine for a tasty sundae. “Brooklyn Twang,” a tribute to his former hood, has a similar amiability. On both tunes, though, Dvorak’s voice is unremarkable, and the songs could benefit from a stronger presence at the mic. Dvorak, however, is absolutely right for “American Sin,” a timely tale about a father and four-year-old son who are rejected at the US border. Good lyrics, beautiful accordion and authentic lead vocal add up to a powerful tug on the heartstrings.

Production:
Lyrics:
Music:
Vocals:
Musicianship:

SCORE: 7.4

Steve Baskin
Contact: mgowen@milestonepublicity.com
Web: soundcloud.com/stevebaskin
Seeking: Label, Booking, Film/TV
Style: Rock

Baskin and his backups bring a solid, classic old-school rocker attack, complete with organ licks underneath and a bluesy guitar solo on top. On the second tune, the backup singers are indeed strong, but the song’s hook and its plodding pace grow tiresome. “Big Wedding, Small Divorce,” however, is a real revelation as Baskin switches entirely to a lively country vibe, complete with pedal steel licks and clever lyrics that are both funny and sad. Best of all, his voice emits a tenor tone that sounds natural and true.

Production:
Lyrics:
Music:
Vocals:
Musicianship:

SCORE: 7.2

Natalie Jean
Contact: nataliejean36@gmail.com
Web: natalie-jean.com/music
Seeking: Booking, Film/TV
Style: Americana

Few artists confront difficult themes with the intensity of Natalie Jean. Her work dwells on raw, downbeat subjects—so listeners beware. For example, she addresses her rapist in “I Told You No,” conveying the psychic and physical effects of a sexual attack. “Heroes,” despite its optimistic pedal steel guitar twang, tells of a young boy who is hailed a hero—after he falls victim to a shooting. Perhaps her most successful song is “I Am,” showing her impressive resourceful solos. We suggest her work would be even more powerful if she’d invest more poetry and craft in her verses, whose current spoken-word qualities sometimes feel choppy and ill-fitting amid her well-produced arrangements.

Production:
Lyrics:
Music:
Vocals:
Musicianship:

SCORE: 7.4

Qro
Contact: gro.theartist@gmail.com
Web: spoti.fi/3aaP5N0
Seeking: Label, Booking, Film/TV, Distribution
Style: Chill, Rap, Hip-Hop

We’re impressed by the potential of this NC-based rapper whose work has solid hooks and a clear J. Cole influence. “This Is Life” is powered by a good bass throb and timely transitions, as well as the artist’s commanding flow that’s centered in the mix so we hear every word—“This is my skin; the one I live in.” The next song, “Jealous,” has strong drums and layering in the track—an artful weave that keeps things interesting. With “Tough Luck” we notice a similarity among his tracks and urge Qro to work with different producers to give his flow even more variety to work with. We also suggest he develop his singing voice to make the most of his songs’ melodic sections.

Production:
Lyrics:
Music:
Vocals:
Musicianship:

SCORE: 8.4

mutesite
Contact: liperez.ph@gmail.com
Web: facebook.com/mutesite
Seeking: Booking, Film/TV, Radio Play
Style: Instrumental

We’re impressed by this instro project whose assorted keys, drums and bass guitar take on a whole array of rhythms, genre styles and tricky time signatures that amount to a form of math rock that can constantly surprises you. “esiotrot” has a breezy, optimistic energy and plenty of drum power, bass runs and even a kiddie chorus that comes out of nowhere. A delicate shimmer, elegant strings, fantastic drumming and a vocal choir brings an air of majesty as the entire theme climbs to its climax. “Cacophony” has syncopated rhythms that are awesome as all band members get to contribute. We question the heavy use of piano on these recordings. How about replacing some of that with a killer trumpet?

Production:
Lyrics:
Music:
Vocals:
Musicianship:

SCORE: 8.3

Stereorush
Contact: stereorush@gmail.com
Web: soundcloud.com/stereorush-music
Seeking: Label, Film/TV, Radio
Style: Alternative Rock

Hearing Stereorush’s “No Time” and “Polaroids,” we were a bit underwhelmed. The sparse, downbeat subject—so listeners beware. For example, she addresses her rapist in “I Told You No,” conveying the psychic and physical effects of a sexual attack. “Heroes,” despite its optimistic pedal steel guitar twang, tells of a young boy who is hailed a hero—after he falls victim to a shooting. Perhaps her most successful song is “I Am,” showing her impressive resourceful solos. We suggest her work would be even more powerful if she’d invest more poetry and craft in her verses, whose current spoken-word qualities sometimes feel choppy and ill-fitting amid her well-produced arrangements.

Production:
Lyrics:
Music:
Vocals:
Musicianship:

SCORE: 7.0

Music Connection’s executive committee rates recorded music on a scale of 1 to 10. Number 1 represents the lowest possible score, 10 represents the highest possible score. A final score of 6 denotes a solid, competent artist. For more information, see Submission Guidelines on the next page.
**Savan**

**Contact:** brayhan@creativebox.studio

**Web:** spoti.fi/2vBG69y, apple.co/2vC9kDk

**Seeking:** Film/TV, Licensing, Label

**Style:** Rock, Electronic, Hip-Hop

We’re impressed by the production skills of this self-produced artist, whose vision is a meld of ‘80s synth-pop with ‘90s hip-hop features. “Only One” has clean and clear sonics that allow SAVAN’s devotional words, 4/4 dance beat and guest rapper to play together. Also well-produced is “Too Late,” where the artist sings of his struggle to move on after being dumped. Best of all is “Breathe Again” (“I can breathe again; the walls are coming down.”) What makes it most promising are the guest vocalists (a female singer and a rapper) who both emit an exciting resonance that diminishes NAVAS’ adequate-at-best lead vocals. In fact, we suggest NAVAS find a lead vocalist who can elevate his songs to their full potential.

**Score:** 7.0

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**Ghostmod**

**Contact:** benaustin24@gmail.com

**Web:** ghostmod.bandcamp.com

**Seeking:** Label, Film/TV, Booking

**Style:** Electronic

Ghostmod is brimming with ideas and his recordings sound as if he included them all—the good and the not so. A bit of judicious trimming could go a long way toward making these songs click. Most of all, the use of heavily fx’d vocals proves to be a turnoff for us as the muted voice muddles the lyrics and tends to sound as if subsumed into the murky mix of ultra-dynamic electro effects. While we admire some of the dynamics that are detonated in “Lovers Don’t Make Me” and “Surprise!,” the over-treated lead vocals just don’t fit. Best track of all is the propulsive and bright “Are You Scared of the Dark?” which has cool ideas for drums, melodies and overall dynamic shifts. Keep working.

**Score:** 7.0

---

**Issadora Ava**

**Contact:** d_ventura1@u.pacific.edu

**Web:** pacaverecords.com/issadora-ava-epk

**Seeking:** Bookings/Label

**Style:** Indie Pop

It is always compelling when an artist’s voice and material are an ideal match, and that’s what we hear in Issadora Ava, who has the ability to exude a soulful sensitivity, an intimate honesty, without over-singing. “Melting Magnets” glows with a wistful optimism (“I’ll still be your friend. I’m ready to try again.”) Her best is the relaxed, jazzy “Premonitions,” where the artist takes a heartfelt theme of devotion and sensitivity into a wholly sensual realm of unabashed surrender. Keeping her tone low-key, direct and personal, Ava’s “NYE” juxtaposes powerful images of celebration with an equal amount of sadness as she documents a relationship that’s faltering on the cusp of a new year.

**Score:** 7.8

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**The Gary Douglas Band**

**Contact:** mgweno@milestonepublicity.com

**Web:** soundcloud.com/the-gary-douglas-band

**Seeking:** Booking, Film/TV

**Style:** Americana, Roots

A catchy hook, expert musicianship and cool lyrics draws us into “Deep In The Water” by The Gary Douglas Band. Douglas’ voice provides a rootsy/raspy flavor that is ideal for this genre. A breezy slice of open-road escapism, “Out On The Highway” is a mid-tempo chugger with terrific turns on organ and guitar as the song’s catchy chorus encourages “Captivated.” “Voices” is an energetic rocker with lyrics that tell a story and where Douglas is well supported by a bevy of backup singers. It is more than likely that this band can really hum when delivering a live performance, and the rich production values of the recordings make them a good candidate for film/TV licensing.

**Score:** 8.0

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**Slim Polk**

**Contact:** heidijallday@gmail.com

**Web:** soundcloud.com/slim-polk

**Seeking:** Booking/Film/Features

**Style:** Rap

With deep set vocals and a rowdy, somewhat relaxed delivery, Polk reminds us of a young 2 Chainz, especially on “Side Chic,” with a behind-the-beat but well-enunciated bar, “Euro-step, you’s a side piece. Your feelings hurt, Dwyane Wade knees.” “Polk reiterates rap stereotypes: money, clothes and women. This is most notable on “Broke With a Clean Ass Fit.” But the lyrics are certainly not an issue, especially with the tone of his voice and his style of rap. Polk could benefit from more modern beats. “JUUG” displays effort in production, but most of his tracks suffer from mundane, YouTube-esque “type-beats.” Polk could take his whole rap persona to another level if he teamed up with a fresh new trap producer.

**Score:** 7.0

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**Carolena**

**Contact:** carolena统筹@gmail.com

**Web:** carolena统筹.com

**Seeking:** Label, Film/TV, Booking

**Style:** Alternative Pop

A trio of tracks by singer-songwriter Carolena have an artful intimacy thanks to savvy production touches that enhance, but never intrude upon, the artist’s intelligent voice and the words she’s conveying. “Backwards. Not Broken” begins with just the artist’s voice and a pensive piano that is soon joined by strings that help to underscore the emotion in a song about a suffocating relationship. Harmonic vocal blends are a highlight of the optimistic “Captivated,” perhaps her best overall song. A message-over-music framework continues with the similarly arranged “Places Like You,” suggesting to us that this artist, so focused on her words, should work to sharpen her music hooks.

**Score:** 8.2

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**SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:** There is absolutely no charge for a New Music Critique. We critique recordings that have yet to connect with a label or distributor.

To be considered please go to musicconnection.com/get-reviewed. All submissions are randomly selected and reviewed by committee.
The Hotel Cafe  Hollywood, CA

Contact: meijin@ei-pr.com
Web: thebrilliancemusic.com
Players: David Gungor, guitar, vocals; John Arndt, piano, vocals; Jean-Paul Barjon, cello; Allie Stamler, violin

Material: The Brilliance’s music is nothing short of baffling. Considering this was pitched as an ‘Orchestral Indie’ group leaves out the crucial religious aspect of the band’s material. The first few songs, labeled “The Dream Suite,” were pulled straight out of a church camp song book, which made the shift to “Release Me,” a song about wishing for death, even more jarring. The lyrics were so general that they became unrelatable and impersonal, and at times the arrangements were fractured and confusing. The heart was there, the love was there, but the follow through was just short of what it needed to be memorable.

Musicianship: There is no denying the caliber of these musicians. The string players, seeing the music for almost the first time, did an impeccable job of showcasing the strengths of the music. John Arndt played the piano brilliantly, so well in fact his performance was too ornamental for the songs. David Gungor’s vocal tone was warm and comforting, with stellar pitch and impeccable timbre. Overall, the performance was strangely disjointed—a pop vocalist with a classical pianist.

Performance: A typical problem seen at The Hotel Cafe is the size of the stage. It’s small and can make interaction difficult; that being said, I don’t feel as though a bigger stage would make a difference to this act at this point in time. The songs aren’t in the right place, which makes the rest of the performance far less important. The songs themselves, so distracting in their lyrical and instrumental content, need to be corrected before the band can move forward.

Summary: What kind of band is The Brilliance? Well, that cannot exactly be explained. Their songs are equal parts too much and too little, and this is so wild that little else can be said. Creativity is often found not by thinking outside of the box, but instead by trying to fit the constraints inside of it. Do not fight structure, do not fight melody, do not fight writing specific or unique lyrics; follow the rules of song structure and pop formats before you break them. You’ll learn something.

– Kara Bradford

The Resident  Los Angeles, CA

Contact: info@loveghostband.com
Web: loveghost.com
Players: Finnegann Bell, guitar, vocals; Ryan Stevens, bass guitar, background vocals; Samson Young, drums, background vocals; Nicky Renard, guitar; Cory Batchler, keyboard

Material: Another day, another poor house mix. Muddy vocals, overpowering guitars, and an abundance of midrange frequencies made deciphering lyrical content next to impossible.

That being said, there was a notable difference in quality of songwriting. The arrangements were more dynamic and the parts were more clearly defined. However, it would have been nice to hear more melodic power from the vocal and a bit more variety in the frequencies—the guitars, keys, and vocal all sat in the same range and at times it felt particularly flat.

Musicianship: This was where there was less progress from Love Ghost; the performance was messy. The drum machine used during “Let It All Burn” was a strange addition and didn’t quite enhance the song as desired. The scrapped viola took a bit of the individuality away from the group, and the rhythm section was very frequently outside the pocket. That being said, the messiness was almost welcome in the room. For a band like this, channeling Muse and Nirvana, the tight parts weren’t necessarily needed. But get that rhythm section working together; it will make a difference.

Performance: Opening up the show with a song featuring a bass solo was a pleasant surprise. “Dead Brother” got the crowd excited, which was frustrating considering Love Ghost then played quite a few downtempo songs in a row. The slow songs made the crowd lose focus, a common problem for rock bands. Finding a way to keep those ballads engaging will be a gamechanger. “Tribe” was a highlight in the set; lots of energy, great vocal arrangement, and a little something special that could be a hit if polished properly.

Summary: What a pleasure to get the opportunity to see a band grow over a few years. Love Ghost is moving in the right direction, albeit rather messily. The songwriting has vastly improved and the band is obviously closer to finding their sound. The great grunge bands of yesteryear may have had the luxury of not having all of their parts in the right place, but that isn’t a possibility for today’s groups. There are so many things being done right, but it just has to be cleaned up before it can see its true potential. – Kara Bradford
Williamsburg Music Hall  Brooklyn, NY

Contact: chrissy.borsellino@wma.agency
Web: thisisjanetmay.com
Players: Janet May, electric guitar, vinyl violin line

Material: Janet May’s vision of change and social activism made its way to her home turf as part of the artist’s current national tour.

Her causes run the gamut from women’s rights, to those of immigrants and the LGBTQ community, packaging those messages with accessible musical moments and performed with tender fortitude. She has helped open shelters for those affected, as well as a monthly residency at Riker’s Island Women’s Jail, bringing awareness to massive incarcerations.

Apropos that topic, in the most poignant socially conscious song might bring even more value. Adding a well-known cover of another activist, May brought an elegance and presence to the stage, furthering her brand. The choice of wardrobe, juxtaposed with subject matter, was often incongruous with the delicate nature of the music, but proof that there are many ways to convey a message. To buttress her mission, it might be a plus to add a memorable cover that once rallied people to a particular cause.

Summary: May opts for the more subtle and reflective approach to put forth her agenda. If activist issues are not your thing, there is enough in May’s music to appreciate it at face value. Adding a well-known cover of another socially conscious song might bring even more listeners into the fold. — Ellen Woloshin

The Whitley  Hollywood, CA

Contact: davedissaro@gmail.com
Web: facebook.com/pestrockband/
Players: Zach Erfort, vocals, guitar; Adrian Estrella, guitar; Dave Dissaro, bass guitar; Dan Parker, drums

Material: There is no logical explanation why Pest was able to pull off their first live show, while having only rehearsed for one hour the night before. Other than the fact that a few of the core members forged a friendship that predates the band by nearly 10 years. Pest is the brainchild of frontman Zach Erfort. From his original music to the group’s stagewear and masks, he has strategically crafted a brand that is heavily influenced by the music of Guns N’ Roses and Green Day. Songs like “Confess To Me” are a gritty depiction of the way he combines hard rock with alternative rock.

Performance: When the four-piece band began their live set, the stage lights went so dark that all you could see as a spectator were the glowing red devil horns worn by go go dancers throughout the Goth Club. As the lights slowly started to brighten, Zach Erfort belted out the lyrics to a hard rock composition called “Groove Me To Hell.” The loud licks blaring from his guitar blended quite well with the riffs played by the rhythm guitar player, Adrian Estrella. This show took a wild and crazy turn for the better when Pest pulled an audience member on stage for a lap dance from the go go dancers—while they performed a hard rock song called “Crazy.” Dave Dissaro kicked the antics into a higher gear when he jumped off stage and incited a mosh pit with the audience members….much to their satisfaction.

Summary: The imagery of smoke machines, dim stage lighting and cutting-edge attire certainly enhanced the impact of this show. Pest presented a track called “Generation Fuck You” with a theatrical flair that was reminiscent of bands like Velvet Revolver and Poison. If this band can put on such an entertaining show after just one hour of rehearsal—one wonders what they could achieve with more time and effort. — Miguel Costa

JANET MAY

Performance:

- My mistakes seem to repeat/only like a revolver/
  and we whispered your name and we
  prayed…why does this happen to me.

- Further highlighting women’s causes,
  “Lessons To Learn” warns of the struggle
  women face to be recognized for who they fully
  are, without repercussions: A woman who loves
  herself is one of most dangerous of gods/and
  that ain’t so easily done/but I’m aiming high…
  My mistakes seem to repeat only like a revolver/
  and the lessons I have to learn can be over and over.

Musicianship:

- The natural chemistry
  between Zach Erfort and Dave Dissaro was
  a glaring testament to their familiarity with
  one another. The lead singer and bassist are
  part of another Los Angeles band, High Risk,
  but unlike the aforementioned punk band,
  Pest often inserts elements of progressive
  rock and pop punk into their music. Pest’s
  drummer, Dan Parker, produced every studio
  version of six songs that Pest played live at
  The Whitley. His live drum fills did a nice job
  of building the tension for their hard-hitting
  tracks like “Pest.”

- Janet May’s vision of change and
  social activism made its way to her home turf
  as part of the artist’s current national tour.

- There is no logical explanation why
  Pest was able to pull off their first live show,
  while having only rehearsed for one hour
  the night before. Other than the fact that
  a few of the core members forged a friendship
  that predates the band by nearly 10 years.

- Pest is the brainchild of frontman Zach
  Erfort. From his original music to the group’s
  stagewear and masks, he has strategically
  crafted a brand that is heavily influenced
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  Day. Songs like “Confess To Me” are a gritty
  depiction of the way he combines hard rock
  with alternative rock.

- The imagery of smoke machines,
  dim stage lighting and cutting-edge attire
  certainly enhanced the impact of this show.
  Pest presented a track called “Generation
  Fuck You” with a theatrical flair that was
  reminiscent of bands like Velvet Revolver
  and Poison. If this band can put on such
  an entertaining show after just one hour of
  rehearsal—one wonders what they could
  achieve with more time and effort. — Miguel Costa
The ABC Club  Los Angeles, CA

Web: BenRiceLive.com
Contact: DougDeutschPR@gmail.com
Players: Ben Rice, guitar, vocals; Mark Banner, drums; Calen Uhlig, bass

Material: You can call Ben Rice a blues artist, but his sound is in fact a rich fabric of earthy genres. When you first listen to his recorded material, it comes off as very traditional: dirty, lowdown blues that was recorded on homemade, cigar box guitars and inspired by the Mississippi mud whistle. You get the feeling that you’re floating down the O’Muddy on a riverboat heading toward the bayou for some delectable seafood gumbo. Tunes like “Hoodoo Working Overtime” and “Retreat” take you way back to the days of Robert Johnson and Muddy Waters. Sometimes soulful R&B, sometimes gospel, sometimes rock & roll, Ben Rice delivers them all.

Musicianship: Excellent play by Rice and his crew. The rhythm section, comprising Uhlig and Banner, were perfect in their delivery. A faultless shroud of bass and drums was placed around the ABC Club for Rice to sketch his dance, play and song upon. The songs were dressed up neatly in tuxedo fashion in the live music environment. The boys in the band added spunk and pop to each blues song, bringing them to life and then making them over on stage as Rice told his story to the audience. The tunes were superbly polished as they were transformed from traditional blues to a full-on original, self-proclaiming brand of blues music that touches the soul. Superb playing all around.

Performance: Rice is very comfortable in the public eye. His stage presence invokes reverence and his guitar skills summon respect and admiration. Self confidence oozes out of every note that Rice and his bandmates produced as he talked to the audience about events that have happened throughout his career. Rice is very intuitive on stage; he knows when to take control and when to let go. And let go he did; the songs developed their own persona when compared to the original recordings and was a great, tasty treat for the ABC audience.

Summary: You get everything with Ben Rice: old-school blues recorded in a quality studio; 2015 International Blues Challenge finalist and then the St. Blues Guitarist Award for best guitar; a band that brings the old-school blues to life right before your very eyes (and ears) and a fun live show that will have you dancing in your seat. From mellow, honest, soul searching blues like “Peace Will Overcome,” to wobbling The ABC Club with rockin’, soul shaking blues like “Working,” Ben Rice has something for everyone. A delicious audio delight. – Pierce Brochetti

Midway Café  Boston, MA

Contact: bensontheskeleton@gmail.com
Web: slacktideofficial.com
Players: Chris Cyrus, lead vocals, guitar; Michael Wingate Seavey, vocals, keyboards; Jake Smith, drums; CJ Vaigrt, harmonica, tambourine; Adam Jeffrey, bass

Material: Ever wondered what it would sound like if Blues Traveler were into ska with an added touch of psychedelia? If so, Slack Tide might be your answer. The very definition of a jam band, they claim The Grateful Dead and Phish as primary influences. As proof, their set launched with a Dead cover, a snap adjustment tailored to satiate the tastes of those who’d come for the previous act, Hippie Hour. Generous harmonica makes for a welcome breath of fresh air.

Musicianship: The group’s founder, guitarist-vocalist Chris Cyrus, attended Berklee College of Music and within four years of existence, Slack Tide has already scored two Battle of the Bands triumphs and the title of Top Instrumental Performance from Hard Rock Café. Is it any wonder they’re talented? What particularly impresses is their ability to transfer instrumental leads from one to the next with elegant subtlety, never ceding ground to their overall sound.

Performance: If there’s a criticism to be given, it’s that Cyrus could level up his stage presence. Yet while he falls short in that department, he amply compensates via his instrument. Vocally, Cyrus remains above average, though lyrical flights aren’t the focus. Instead, the songs are about rhythmic exploration, mapping new territories of groove that nourish the soul while making you move. Easter eggs, like the sudden appearance of the cantina theme from Star Wars, contribute an element of whimsy and surprise. Gulping the last of his beer, Cyrus ran his glass along the length of his Fender by way of kicking off their mind-blowing finale.

Summary: Slack Tide covers new ground, but not enough to scare away casual interlopers. For some reason, the crowd responded appreciatively though not enthusiastically. Perhaps the band lacks the theatricality that other acts exemplify or maybe it was merely the weather. Regardless, Slack Tide owns something special. Let’s pray they’re prepared when it inevitably comes time for them to share their brilliance inside a brighter spotlight.

– Andy Kaufmann
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<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Program</th>
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<th>Duration</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>HARRISON SCHOOL OF MUSIC</td>
<td>HSP Instrument Specialist</td>
<td>A.A.</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td><strong>Contact:</strong> 818-887-8870; <strong>Email:</strong> <a href="mailto:contact@guitarshowcase.com">contact@guitarshowcase.com</a>; <strong>Web:</strong> guitarshowcase.com; <strong>Email:</strong> please call or see web for info</td>
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<td>GUITAR MERCHANT, THE</td>
<td>GUITAR MERCHANT</td>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td><strong>Contact:</strong> 323-953-4000 Ext. 2880; <strong>Email:</strong> <a href="mailto:ccrae@lbcc.edu">ccrae@lbcc.edu</a>; <strong>Web:</strong> lbcc.edu; <strong>Duration:</strong> Approx. 2 years; <strong>Program:</strong> The Los Angeles Recording School is a 2-year, Associate of Science Degree program; Study recording arts, music production, and music business</td>
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Whether you’re a novice or pro singer, this one-of-a-kind MC list enables you to connect with experts who can address your special needs as either a live singer or recording artist. The following information has been verified by the listees.
Additional locations: 10852 Burbank Blvd, North Hollywood, CA 131 W. 72nd St, New York, NY

MARK FOREST 310-712-1621 Basic Rate: please call for info Clients: Jackson Browne, Verdiine White (Earth, Wind and Fire), Sissy Spacek and Roseanne Cash

MARK JOHNSON Nashville, TN 615-926-2516 Email: MarkLaneBand@gmail.com Web: MarkLaneBand.com Contact: Mark Rates: call for rates Clients: All Ages, All Levels (Skyeabe available) Styles/Specialties: Guitar lessons, All Styles, Ear training, Songwriting, Music Theory, Music Business, Marketing

MARTA WOODHULL Singing For a Living 808 N. Spring St., #707 Los Angeles, CA 90012 818-752-0833, SKYPE Email: marta@singingforaliving.com, SKYPE Web: singingforaliving.com Basic Rate: private lessons, $150/hr, package rates available. Specializing in double and triple time vocal coaching for film, stage and recording. Grammy-nominated arranger, educated in New York. Woodhull is one of Hollywood’s most respected coaches. Clients have won Tony’s, Emmys, Grammy’s, Oscars.

MICHAEL LAVINE 165 W. 66th St., Ste. 10 New York, NY 10023 212-864-2116 Email: broadwayhi@aol.com Web: MichaelLavine.net Basic Rate: email for info Notes: Coaches on both coasts

MICHAELA FLEMING Vocal Coach 403 S. Anaheim Hills Road, STE A Anaheim, CA 92807

PEISHA MCPHEE 849 S. Broadway Los Angeles, CA 90014 323-273-3523, SKYPE (Mica, Plissner) Email: peisha@peishamcphee.com, SKYPE Web: peishamcphee.com Twitter/peishamcphee, peishamcphee, instagram.com/peishamcphee Basic Rate: please email for information Clients: from amateurs to professional actors and singers Services: the art of vocal technique, styling, patter, subtext and stage presence. Specializing in pop, belt and legitimate placement. Peisha McPhee is a celebrity coach who’s worked for American Idol, and on Disney’s Moana. Owner of McPhee International vocal studios in Sydney, Mother of NicC Smash and Broadway’s, Katharine McPhee, and American Idol vocal coach. Adrianna Adorina

PHIL PELKINGTON VOCAL STUDIO New York, LA Studios Email: philpPelkington.com Web: philippelkington.com Contact: Phil Pelkington Basic Rate: contact by email for rates Services: Professional vocal technique for singers from beginners to professionals. Specialty, working with and mentoring children and teens. Will do Skype lessons. Pop, R&B, cabsaret, Broadway, live performance, recording studio coaching and in-studio vocal production for CD projects, etc.

PRO LESSION by FAWN Los Angeles, CA 90068 323-818-8701 Email: fawn@musicconnection.com Basic Rate: please visit website, Lessons: 4x or 2x a month, 30 min, 45 min, 60 min, 30 min. 120+ sessions.

Services: International private vocal, piano, songwriting, vocal rehabilitation and speech coach. In person lessons held at Terranea Studios, a recording studio located near Universal Studios. All ages accepted and styles range from classical opera to Broadway, Jazz, Rock, R&B, Hip-Hop, Rap, Folk, Film/TV, Big Band and Movie production. Vocal Production and editing in Logic; Body Mechanics to singers, actors, dancers and speakers for over 20 years. Specializes in pop, belt and legitimate placement. Peisha McPhee is a celebrity coach who’s worked for American Idol, and on Disney’s Moana. Owner of McPhee International vocal studios in Sydney, Mother of NicC Smash and Broadway’s, Katharine McPhee, and American Idol vocal coach. Adrianna Adorina


RENEE GRANT-WILLIAMS 617 Palisades Court Brentwood, CA 90049 310-244-3280, SKYPE Email: rjvoicecoach@comcast.net Web: myjvoicecoach.com Basic Rate: please call for info Services: all styles, aspiring performers and celebrities, “Tricks of The Trade” that can help anyone improve.

ROBERT & THE VOCALIST STUDIO Virtual Training / Anywhere in the world 420-448-1126, SKYPE Email: robert@thevocaliststudio.com Web: thevocaliststudio.com Book a meeting bit.ly/TVSDiscoveryCall Contact: Robert J. Lunte Basic Rate: please call for rates Clients: The TVS Method specifically focuses on training theatrical and operatic singers. The TVS Method will build the strength and motor skills for register bridging and blending in the voice. TVS is an Internationally recognized voice training school for Broadway, Musical, Classical, Hip Hop, Rap, and more. Vocal coaching, pre-production vocals, auditioning, vocal arrangements, solid vocal technique, lyric writing songwriting, vocal repair for pro and semi-pro, teen’s, young artists, vocal producers, special needs teens. Also teach piano and guitar lessons. Teach by Skype anywhere.

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10 Income Sources Every Creative Should Know in the Streaming Era (And More!)

The RIAA recently reported that digital streaming now accounts for at least 80 percent of the total revenue generated by the US recorded music industry. As streaming becomes increasingly dominant, the newly emerging and evolving classes of royalties, licensing fees and other income streams available to songwriters, recording artists, musicians, and producers can be difficult to navigate, often resulting in significant revenue going uncollected.

To help bring clarity to creatives, Sound Royalties released a comprehensive guide to the royalty and non-royalty income available to music creators. *50 Income Streams Music Creatives Should Know About, And Where to Find Them* details this information, with direct links to industry resources, and can be found on our website blog at soundroyalties.com.

As regular readers of Music Connection know, every song is protected by copyrights in two categories: A copyright for the songwriting or composition, and a copyright for the sound recording. Depending on one’s role in the writing, production, performance or recording of any given song or album, an individual may earn royalties in one copyright category or both.

For this article, I’ve pulled highlights from our guide that focus on royalties directly related to streaming. Artists are encouraged to learn as much as possible about the changes underway in our industry effecting publishing and recording copyrights. This is a great place to start.

1. Public Performance Royalties (songwriter) are earned every time a song is played in public, whether on the radio, on TV, streamed online, at live events or in bars and restaurants. These are collected and paid through a PRO like ASCAP, BMI, SESAC or GMR and typically split between the song publisher and the songwriter. On the sound recording side of the copyright, recording artists can earn digital performance royalties, but public performance royalties are for songwriters only. If you’re a songwriter, know your PROs—and your publisher or publishing administrator—and learn how these royalty deals work.

2. Digital Performance Royalties (recording artist, producer) are the digital version of the public performance royalties paid to songwriters. As specified in the sound recording copyright, this royalty is paid to the recording artist (and producers who have a negotiated percentage of that copyright) when songs are played on non-interactive platforms like Sirius XM and Pandora. These revenues are collected and paid by SoundExchange, a PRO exclusively for digital performance royalties. Both artists and producers must register with SoundExchange to be eligible for this income stream.

3. Streaming Mechanical Royalties (songwriter), sometimes referred to as “streaming sales,” are paid specifically for songs played on on-demand streaming services like Spotify or Apple Music. These streaming platforms pay licensing fees for the music to agencies such as Harry Fox (in the US), which pays the songwriter. Beginning in 2021, the federally mandated Mechanical Licensing Collective (MLC), created under the Music Modernization Act, will help track and administer streaming royalty payments.

4. Synch Licenses (songwriter and recording artist) generate revenue for music used in films, TV shows, advertisements, song sampling, video games and other commercial properties. Royalties are paid for both the songwriting copyright and the recording copyright. Songwriters are paid through publishers or administrators and recording artists are either paid through the label or through direct licensing deals for use of the master recording. Streaming platforms such as Netflix and many others have created an unprecedented demand for content resulting in a booming market for synch licensing.

5. Neighboring Rights Royalties (recording artist) are foreign public performance royalties paid either to the sound recording copyright holder, or the recording artist’s label. To collect on these royalties, register with your local collection society and the territories where the recording is performed or broadcasted in public.

6. Producer Points (producer) can be negotiated as part of the sound recording copyright contract based on the producer’s contributions to the recorded track or album. Contracts can be structured for the producer to be paid either by the label, the recording artist or the studio.

7. Writer’s Credit (producer) can also be negotiated by producers who make contributions to the writing or composition of songs. A writer’s credit royalty is part of the songwriter’s publishing deal and is paid through the publisher or publishing administrator.

8. Instrumentalist/Non-Featured Artist (musician/performer) royalties are tracked and collected by SoundExchange and directed to the intellectual property rights distribution fund administered by AFM SAG-AFTRA. When a recording hits a predetermined sales plateau in the US, five percent of the digital performance royalties are paid out to non-royalty artists. Very often, producers don’t realize that they are the instrumentalists on their own tracks.

9. YouTube Revenue (recording artist) can be generated by YouTube Royalties and the YouTube Partner Program. YouTube Royalties are paid by YouTube based on the number of streams and use content ID. The Partner Program is shared advertising revenue paid to the artist when they qualify and sign up as an official partner.

10. Royalty Financing (songwriter, recording artist, producer, musician) typically refers to a capital advance secured against future royalty earnings. As streaming and related royalties expand, artists can scale their careers by funding new creative projects, distributing new content to digital platforms, and generating more royalty-based revenue. The Sound Royalties financing model is based solely on future royalty income and does not require copyrights to be leveraged as collateral.

The Sound Royalties guide to music royalties and revenue is designed to help all music professionals flourish and sustain their careers. It is meant to be a living document that will be updated with the most current information available. Suggested additions or changes to the chart can be emailed to us at info@soundroyalties.com to help provide creatives with the best possible resources as the music industry evolves.

Alex Heiche, a frequent speaker on music royalties, licensing and copyrights, is the founder and CEO of Sound Royalties, a next-generation financial services company helping creatives obtain funding without putting copyrights at risk.
A SONGWRITER’S WORST NIGHTMARE...

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