MUSIC CONNECTION

SPECIAL
YEAR END ISSUE!

100 BEST
Career Tips of the Year

Hot 100 LIVE
Unsigned Artists & Bands

Our **FAVORITE** Signing Stories

REZ

TOP 25 New
Music Critiques



GIFTS
Under a Grand

NEW TOYS p. 12

TESSA VIOLET • **KANYE WEST** • **GRACE POTTER**

Vol. 43 • December 2019 • $3.95/$4.95 Canada

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COMPANY OF GREATNESS

STEVE HARRIS
SIGNATURE SH1



"ANDREW BARTA IS A REAL BOFFIN. WHATEVER HE'S DONE, HE'S MADE THIS THING SOUND LIKE MY SOUND. SO, WELL DONE, MATE." – STEVE HARRIS

[BOFFIN = TECHNICAL EXPERT]





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"THIS AWESOME PEDAL TAKES THE MOST ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS FROM MY GED-2112 RACKMOUNT AND POPS THEM INTO A REALLY PORTABLE, SMALLER PACKAGE. " – GEDDY LEE



DUG PINNICK
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December 2019 • Vol. 43 • No. 12



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Rezz

In our exclusive interview with this EDM sensation, she traces her career path, discusses her recording techniques, reveals her battles with anxiety and how she put together a dazzling headlining tour.

By Kurt Orzeck

Photos: Will Selviz



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Foo Fighters, Beck, Travis Scott, Nirvana, Andra Day, SZA,
Lukas Graham, Erykah Badu, Jenny Lewis, Pink

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Meet the 2020 Nominees for STUDIO DESIGN PROJECT

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ANAHEIM, CALIFORNIA
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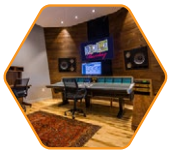
The studio is the heart of the TEC Awards. Here, artists and audio engineers merge creativity with science and technology to create humanity's greatest treasure: music. Meet this year's slate of nominees, comprising some of the most innovative facilities from across the world. **Vote today at tecawards.org/voting-info**



Battery Lane Music, Nashville, TN
Steven Durr Designs, LLC
A boutique studio miles from Nashville's famed Music Row, Battery Lane Music is a full-service music production and publishing company, possessing all the power and luxury of top commercial studios while maintaining a warm, welcoming spirit and inspirational surroundings. Featuring an SSL AWS 900+ SE Console, Battery Lane Music provides the essentials of production in an artist-friendly environment.
batterylanemusic.com



Noise Match Studios, Miami, FL
Horacio Malvicino - Malvicino Design Group
This wood-paneled studio features a spacious live room, complete with a Yamaha C7 piano and three iso-booths to allow for acoustically controlled, live recordings. The control room boasts a Solid State Logic Duality SE48. With seven Royer ribbon mics and a selection of condensers and dynamic mics, including the Telefunken Elektroakustik M260, it's no wonder Noise Match Studios stands out as a leader in the Miami music scene.
noisematchstudios.com



Old Mill Road Recording Studios, San Francisco, CA
Francis Manzella Design Ltd.
After working in bustling New York City recording studios, Old Mill Road Recording Studios was designed to be a luxurious and inviting space without the pressures associated with recording in the city. Meticulously designed and tuned by world-renowned architectural acoustic designer Francis Manzella, the studio features a pristine acoustic environment, set alongside a flowing river in the heart of the Green Mountains of Vermont.
oldmillroadrecording.com



One Union Recording Studios, San Franciso, CA
nonzero\architecture
Located in the heart of San Francisco's advertising district, One Union Recording started in 1995 with a single room and expanded to five studios, equipped with Dolby Atmos and 5.1 surround-sound rooms. Through a focus on advertising, television and film, their rooms were designed for accuracy and transparency, featuring integrated Avid systems and flawless acoustics.
oneunionrecording.com/wp



Stitcher Studios, New York, NY
Walters-Storyk Design Group
Providing a 360-degree suite of production, distribution and monetization services, Stitcher is a leader in the podcasting field. WSDG Walters-Storyk Design Group turned to studio architect and acoustician John DeLore to craft the recording space for Sticher's production facility. With three studios, two edit rooms and two iso-booths, Sticher Studios accommodates a wide range of spoken word formats.
wsdg.com/projects-items/stitcher-studios



Zhejiang Conservatory Of Music (ZJCM), Hangzhou, East China
Walters-Storyk Design Group
The Zhejiang Conservatory of Music (ZJCM) commissioned the Walters-Storyk Design Group to design a 3200 sq. ft. live recording studio with a 26 ft. high ceiling, capable of hosting 100+ member orchestras. Featuring a spacious 650 sq. ft. control room complete with an SSL mixing console station, the facility has an attractive and creatively stimulating ambiance highlighted by natural wood and contrasting dark and light shades of earth colors.
wsdg.com/projects-items/zhejiang-conservatory-of-music

CSUN MUSIC INDUSTRY ARTS PROGRAM

Music Industry Programs: Located in the heart of one of the nation's premier music and entertainment capitals, California State University, Northridge offers innovative undergraduate and graduate programs in music administration—the Bachelor of Arts in Music Industry Studies (MIS) degree and the Master of Arts in Music Industry Administration (MIA) degree. Jeffrey Izzo, Mike Curb Endowed Chair of Music Industry Studies, oversees the undergraduate MIS program. Andrew Surmani, Associate Professor, Music Industry Studies, is the Academic Lead of the MIA program. Surmani says, "We're pleased to be one of only seven universities in the world that have graduate, non-arts administration-based music industry programs. [We're one of the few] to educate students from all over the world. [It might be] who you know [that] will get you the job—but it's what you know that will allow you to keep the job and progress in your career. We offer the tools, knowledge and amazing opportunities to learn critical concepts and to go out and network with the people you need to know in the industry."

CSUN®

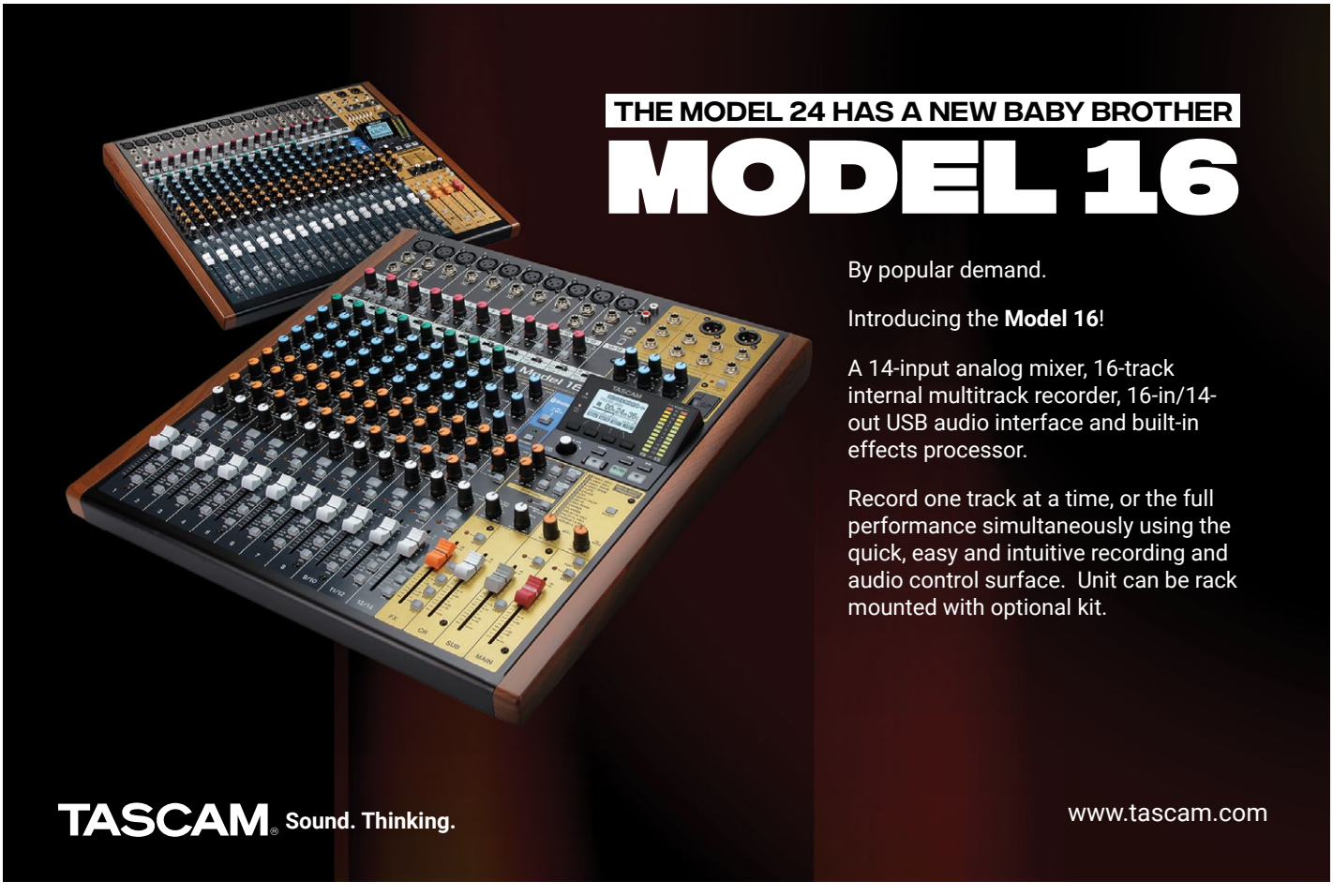
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY NORTHRIDGE

MIS: Founded in 1994 by Jazz Program Director and Professor Emeritus Joel Leach, the Music Industry Studies program offers a unique blend of the art of music and the discipline of business. Students not only participate in traditional music courses such as music theory, individual applied music lessons and performing ensembles, but are also immersed in a curriculum that provides a foundational understanding of the music business. With a strong emphasis on experiential learning, students participate in internships, student-produced events and a student-run, faculty-advised record label (Five of Five Music Entertainment). Requiring a three-part audition to be accepted, this four-year degree culminates in a music industry internship that often leads to full-time employment.

MIA: The Master of Arts in Music Industry Administration, founded in 2012 by Joel Leach and Carey Christensen, was the first graduate program of its kind in the Western US. It is an optimal solution for early to mid-career professionals seeking opportunities in distribution, data and analytics, management, music promotion and other related sectors. Because this program focuses on the industry itself, there is no performance requirement for admission. The 33-unit MIA program takes 21 months to complete. The program is offered in the cohort format, which facilitates networking and the formation of lasting professional connections.

Wealth of Guest Speakers and Events: Surmani, a longtime marketing executive at Alfred Music, says the university's proximity to the industry allows for an unparalleled opportunity to learn from guest speakers including hit songwriters, legendary producers and top executives from LA publishing, live performance and recording industry companies. There are also additional networking events on campus and at numerous LA events that are presented on a monthly basis.

For more info: MIS program - csun.edu/mike-curb-arts-media-communication/music/music-industry-studies-option;
MIA program - tsengcollege.csun.edu/programs/MIA



ASSIGNMENTS

Brian Ball

CEO
Ernie Ball Inc.



Ernie Ball Inc., a manufacturer of guitar strings, musical instruments and accessories, has announced the promotion of **Brian Ball** as its new **CEO**. In his previous role as President, Ball was instrumental in leading a significant growth phase for the company. He will continue to work alongside his father, industry icon Sterling Ball, and brother, Scott Ball, as they continue to build upon the legacy that his legendary grandfather, Ernie Ball, created in 1962. In his new position, Ball will be leading the company at a time of rapid growth, strengthening the company's market position within the guitar industry. To learn more, contact luke@ernieball.com.

Molly Neuman

President
Songtrust



Molly Neuman has been named **President** of **Songtrust**, the world's largest technology solution for global music royalty collection and publishing administration. Neuman will lead all day-to-day operations for Songtrust, including client relations, product and engineering, as well as society and services relations. Since joining Songtrust in 2017 as Global Head of Business Development, she has played a key role in developing much of the company's significant growth over recent years, leading the global business development, sales and marketing teams. For more, contact raypadgett@shorefire.com.

David Mash

Member, Board of Directors
Bob Moog Foundation



The Bob Moog Foundation has announced that **David Mash** has joined the organization's **Board of Directors**. Recently retired from his position of Senior Vice President for Innovation, Strategy and Technology at Berklee College of Music in Boston, MA, Mash previously served as the founding chair of the Music Synthesis Department. A leading authority on music technology and education, Mash has been featured on national and international media broadcasts. In 1997, he was named an AppleMaster by Apple Computer for his contributions to the fields of music, technology, and education. To learn more, contact bmf@getitinwriting.net.

Dave Cool

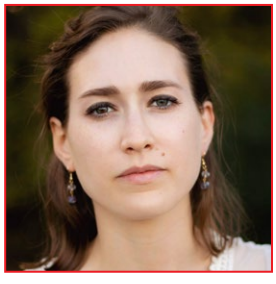
VP of Business Development
Bandzoogle



Musician website and marketing platform **Bandzoogle** has promoted **Dave Cool**, an eight year veteran at the company, to **Vice President of Business Development.** Cool was instrumental in the recent Bandzoogle partnership with CD Baby that led to thousands of musicians' Host Baby sites migrating to Bandzoogle. Cool has engaged thousands of artists and created valuable content with the aim of empowering musicians. As the company's Director of Artist Relations since 2014, he has leveraged industry partnerships to help lead the company to record growth.

Erin Fligel

Publicity Manager
117 Entertainment



117 Entertainment has announced the addition of **Erin Fligel** as **Publicity Manager**. She will assist with publicity efforts across the PR roster which includes Randy Travis, Kalie Shorr and Jerry Lee Lewis, among others, as well as the management roster which includes Bobby Bare, Honey County, Paul Bogart and Scooter Brown Band. Living in Nashville opened Fligel up to the idea of having a career in the music business. With a passion for helping other people achieve their goals, publicity seemed like a good fit for her as she begins her new endeavor. For more, contact zach@117group.com.

Bruce Wheeler

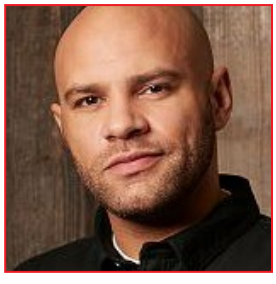
General Manager
The Capitol Theatre



The Capitol Theatre in Port Chester, NY has announced the promotion of **Bruce Wheeler** to **General Manager.** Wheeler, an award-winning event production executive, was previously the theater's Director of Production, hosting an average of 120 events a year and overseeing the venue's intricate production system. Before The Capitol Theatre, Wheeler was GM of the Central Park Summerstage venue in NYC and acted as tour and production manager for A-list artists including Regina Spektor, Jimmy Fallon and Cage The Elephant. If you want to learn more, contact mlefkowitz@shorefire.com.

Paul Smith

VP, A&R and International Songwriters
Warner Chappell Music



Paul Smith has been promoted to the newly created role of **Vice President, A&R and International Songwriters** at **Warner Chappell Music (WCM)**. He will further strengthen relationships between the songwriters on the music publisher's global roster, driving collaborations both between them and with major recording artists worldwide. Smith has been with Warner Chappell since 2016, beginning as Senior International Creative Manager and moving up to Creative Director. He's boosted the frequency of international collaboration among WCM songwriters with songwriting camps in London, Stockholm, Los Angeles and Nashville.

Jeff Ballard

SVP, Promotion and Streaming Strategy
Nettwerk Music Group



Nettwerk Music Group has announced the promotion of **Jeff Ballard** to **SVP, Promotion and Streaming Strategy**. In his new role, Ballard will lead a newly unified team called the Digital Commerce & Promotion Department tasked with developing strategies to optimize opportunities at Digital Service Providers while continuing to promote a growing Nettwerk roster to national radio. In his past role as SVP of National Promotion, he built relationships across a variety of radio formats for a multitude of Nettwerk artists, including Passenger, Guster, Mallrat, SYML, Family Of The Year, Angus & Julia Stone, Boy & Bear and John Butler Trio. For more, contact romeo@nettwerk.com.

► CENTRANCE MICPORT PRO 2



CEntrance's MicPort Pro 2 is a portable yet professional recording interface for your laptop, tablet or smartphone. It is a streamlined version of the CEntrance MixerFace R4 multi-channel interface also reviewed in these pages. Its single microphone XLR input has switchable phantom powering making this small unit great for podcasts, remote dialog recording, voiceover artists and musicians recording on the road.

This new model has a lower noise and higher gain Jasmine™ microphone pre-amp, an internal rechargeable battery and phantom powering for your condenser microphone for up to six hours—no power is required from your phone or laptop.

Many MixerFace R4 features are included, notably, a switchable high pass filter and a wonderful headphone monitoring system that can monitor both your phone's audio and/or live audio, latency-free. The MicPort Pro 2 will mount on top of a camera or a mic stand and provides higher audio quality compared to USB mics. It interfaces to your computer or phone using either a USB C or Lighting cable.

MicPort Pro 2 is available in the basic model for $249 or with a peak limiter at $279. Because of its excellent headphone amp, built-in soft-knee limiter option, 12dB safety margin track recording and built-in battery, most voiceover and podcasters are now leaving their laptops at home and just using their smart phones.

centrance.com/micportpro



◄ MIXCDER HD901 BLUETOOTH HEADPHONES

The Mixcder HD901 Bluetooth Headphones are full-fidelity stereo headphones that connect to your smart phone using Bluetooth technology (ver. 4.2). In addition to playing music from any application running in your phone, they also work to make and answer phone calls—even while playing music.

The Mixcder HD901 headphones cover just enough of my ears to provide isolation from noise, but I don't feel occluded from the world as I'm able to hear people talking around me as well. Plus, the HD901s are so lightweight (141 grams) and they don't clamp on my head like I'm used to with studio headphones. The drivers are 40 mm in diameter and the headphones have 20 Hz to 20 kHz frequency response. That will make up to 108dB SPL with plenty of bass!

After charging them up with the included USB cable plugged into the Micro USB slot, I was ready for up to 8 hours of playing time with 2,000 hours of standby time. Besides the built-in battery, on/off switch and microphone, there are buttons for up/down volume and a TF memory card slot for playing already recorded MP3s.

The Mixcder HD901 Headphones are designed to travel with a fold-up design that I liked for throwing into my backpack when walking to school. The headphones "paired up" nearly instantly—up to 33-feet away—with my iPhone X and also come with a wired headphone cable.

I like these little guys a lot and the most amazing thing is that Mixcder HD901 Headphones sell for $19.99 and have a 1-year warranty!

Totally recommended!

mixcder.com

► CORT LITTLE CJ SERIES ACOUSTIC GUITAR



The Little CJ Series acoustic guitar "speaks" to musicians looking for a smaller instrument for portability, that also fits their own smaller body size. The Little CJ is a high-quality instrument with a 3/4-scaled down body and arched back said to improve tactile response and provide a rich sound.

Perfect for smaller hands, the 20-fret mahogany neck has an ovangkol fret board with a 597 mm (23.5 inch) scale length and a comfortable V-neck shape that is commonly used on downsized acoustics. Cort uses their exclusive scooped surface bridge to enhance, sustain and also attain a greater string angle from the saddle to the body. The nut width is a standard 43 mm (1 11/16 inches).

The Little CJ has a Fishman Presys II Preamp with two band equalization, built-in tuner and a phase switch for effective tone shaping and noiseless operation during live performances. The Little CJ is available in mahogany, black wood and walnut finishes with black binding and white purfling, plus a gig bag is included. It is available for $599.

cortguitars.com

THANKS to the panelists, The SCL and American Film Market attendees who joined our panel on film & TV scoring.

watch it here: fmsmf.org/afmpanel2019



(L to R): **Ashley Irwin, President, *SCL*, John Debney, Composer, Gina Zimmitti, Music Contractor/Coordinator, Donald Petrie, Director, Kim Roberts, Exec. Dir., *FMSMF***

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◄ MACKIE PROFXV3 SERIES EFFECTS MIXER

The Mackie ProFXv3 Series Effects Mixers come in 6, 10, 12, 16, 22 and 30 channel versions and all have built-in 2x4 USB interfaces, 24 different preset digital effects and Mackie's Onyx microphone pre-amps. Built for live sound mixing and recording, you can record up to 24-bit/192kHz and monitor latency-free with the handy Blend knob feature that crossfades between the stereo USB audio coming from your DAW and the mixer's live audio.

I received the 10 channel model and quickly got into the single-knob compressors available on channels 1 and 2. They were perfect for instant control with a reasonably fast attack time to bring sudden unexpected peaks under control quickly—it's basically grab and go. Also a winner for me is the GigFX™ effects engine for quickly finding a pre-set digital effect. I used it on lead vocals, drums, keyboards and guitars as well on entire track mixes. I thought #24 Slap/Reverb and #13 Doubler were especially good effects.

I also tried the Onyx Mic Preamps and they are quiet and have enough gain (up to 60dB) for most modern microphones and applications.

The 2x4 USB I/O means you can play two stereo mixes from your computer at the same time. You could have a full track mix plus another mix when you might need extra control. This works great for recording vocals alongside a pre-recorded track—a popular hip-hop production method.

The Mackie ProFXv3 Series Effects Mixers are built super-tough with a steel chassis with optional protective dust covers available. With Mackie's ProFXv3 10 channel mixer ($229.99 MSRP) tucked under your arm, you could walk into and be ready for most any gig. Prices range from $149.99 MSRP for the six channel model up to $899.99 MSRP for the 30 channel console.

mackie.com/products/profxv3-effects-mixers

► MAAT THEQORANGE EQ MASTERING PLUG-IN

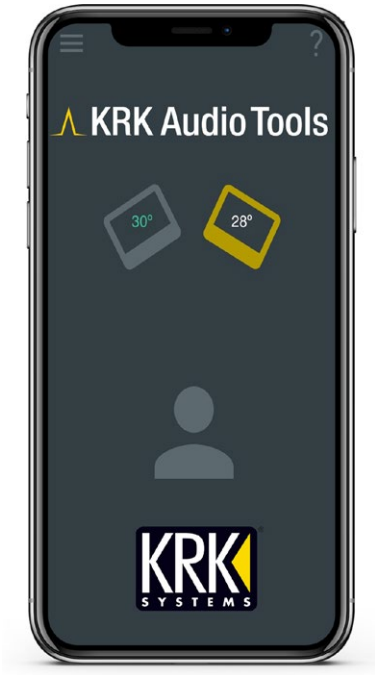


The new thEQorange EQ continues the legacy of Algorithmix's famed Linear Phase PEQ Orange no-compromise equalizer. thEQorange is a two-pass, time domain, linear phase EQ that employs 80-bit floating-point internal precision. It reduces pre and post-echo, while also providing exceptional pass and stop band ripple behavior, normally not achievable with frequency domain linear phase equalizers.

With MAAT's exclusive Contribution Control™, mastering engineers have a way to isolate only positive or negative additions, the sum of both, plus "normal" mode where all EQ changes factor into the final output signal. The Contribution Control helps to aurally keep track of your progress and can speed up and improve your work product.

MAAT's thEQorange plug-in is delivered in all modern formats, including 64 bit cross-platform AU, AAX and VST 2 and 3. Sample rates up to 384kHz are supported for post-production of true HRA workflows. Perpetual and annual subscription licenses for thEQorange are available now, exclusively from MAAT.

maat.digital/theqorange



◄ KRK AUDIO TOOLS APP

KRK, part of the Gibson family of brands, has introduced the KRK Audio Tools App for iOS and Android phones. This is a free suite of six studio tools for analyzing your loudspeaker monitoring system—five of the tools work with any studio monitor setup and the way they work within your room's acoustics.

Using your phone's internal microphone, the EQ Recommendation analysis tool works specifically to help set up the KRK ROKIT G4 monitors I previously reviewed in these pages. It works by sending pink noise through your monitors, analyzing the room and then recommending the best setting on the DSP-driven EQ on the G4's rear-panel LCD display.

In addition to the EQ Recommendation tool, the app also includes a Real Time Analyzer (RTA), SPL Level Meter, both Delay and Polarity checkers, as well as a Monitor Align tool that aims and matches the angle of the left and right monitor speakers accurately.

I like the sound generator with frequency-adjustable (20Hz to 20kHz) sine wave output, a sweep function with an adjustable time from 0.5 to 20 second duration. All test tones are available from your phone and can be adjusted in level to accommodate any external monitoring speakers.

Go to KRK Systems on your app store to download this free App.

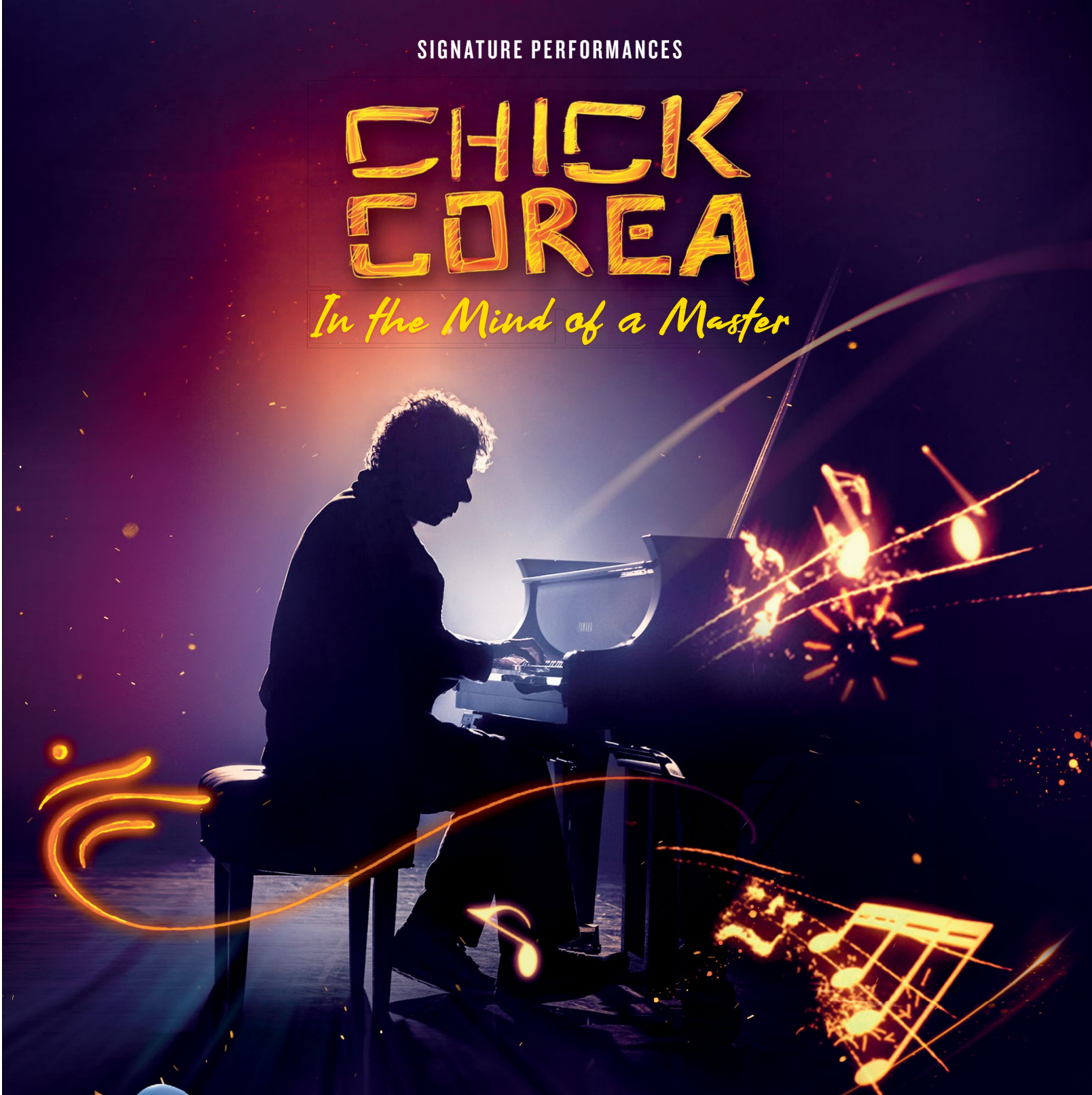
apps.apple.com/us/app/krk-audio-tools/id1453700300

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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TUNE IN TO DIRECTV CHANNEL 320

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STOCKING STUFFERS 2-0-1-9

BY ROB PUTNAM



'TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS and all through the stores, shopping for musician friends was still a tall chore. Don't let another Christmas Eve arrive only to find yourself in a panic as you scour the nearly-naked shelves of Guitar Center 10 minutes before closing time. This year you won't have to because *Music Connection* has taken much of the pain out of what can easily become a Christmas calamity. (If that wasn't a '70s punk band, it should have been.) We've compiled a list of living-in-your-parents'-basement-priced gifts for the musically inclined on your setlist, all under $100. No need to feel like a sonic Scrooge. Read our list, check it twice, *Music Connection*'s got some sound advice.

A ONE-POUND BAG OF BROWN M&MS

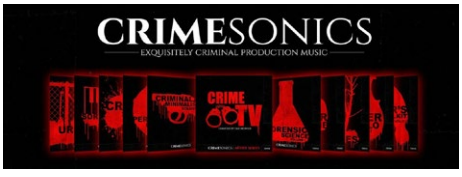
Remember Van Halen's infamous "brown M&Ms" rider in their early-'80s tour contract? No? Then come all ye faithful and hear the tale. Sometime around the 1982 world tour, frontman David Lee Roth realized that important conditions of the band's contractual requirements often weren't met. That held the potential to be annoying at least and dangerous at worst. So he had a crafty clause buried deep in the 50-odd-page pact's technical specs that called for no brown M&Ms backstage. (The candies were specified earlier in the "Munchies" section.) If any were found, the band could cancel the show yet still be paid—"upon pain of forfeiture of the show, with full compensation" is how it was phrased, according to Roth. Sound crazy? It wasn't and here's why. If any of the guys spotted a single brown M&M backstage, he'd know that the most important part of the band's contract had been ignored. If that were true, then what else had been overlooked?

To make it even more rock-worthy, print Van Halen's actual M&Ms contract rider (easily found online) and use it as wrapping paper. Make M&Ms stand for musical mayhem this year (if you didn't already last year).

One-pound bags of single-color M&Ms can be found a number of places online for around $22, so look around. If you get stuck, try one of these:
mms.com/en-us/shop/single-color
amazon.com/Brown-Milk-Chocolate-Candy-1LB/dp/B0080JIV2C (Free shipping!)

CRIMESONICS COMPOSITION TOOLS

Do your musically-inclined co-conspirators ever harbor criminal tendencies when it comes to composition? Then one of the many felony-friendly tools offered by CrimeSonics specifically geared towards composition for crime movies or TV shows can make for a killer gift. Note that the tools are either add-ons/extensions to Omnisphere, a synthesizer widely used by composers, or they run in KONTAKT 6, which is a sampler for Pro Tools, Logic and other such DAWS. Be sure your sonic sidekick uses these before you buy.



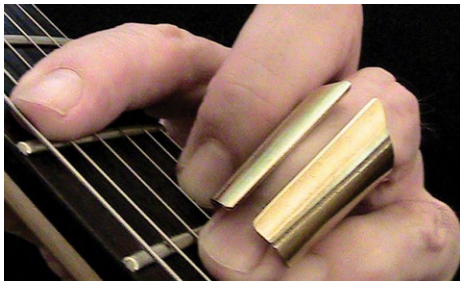
Creator Dan Brown, Jr. went to great lengths to ensure that all of the included sounds were as authentic as possible. For example, to capture the true tones of the harp, he procured a vintage instrument and learned to play it. Tools under $100 include CrimeSonics Vol. 1 ($99, runs in Omnisphere 2.6) or Forensic Glass ($20, runs in KONTAKT 6). Interrogate the sounds yourself at *CrimeSonics.com.*

A FRAMED GOLD OR PLATINUM RECORD OF YOUR FRIEND'S ORIGINAL SONG

Certainly a gold record of your musical mate's favorite original song can be a lot of fun. But it can also represent a physical manifestation of the coveted gold disc. You can make your own, obviously, but it may be preferable to leave the job to the practiced pros. A number of outfits offer the service for as little as $35. Others with slight variations are offered on Etsy for about $50. They've also been spotted for roughly the same at Gold Record Creations.



A frame may cost extra, but sometimes even Señor Claus has to resort to Targèt.
goldrecord.com - $35
platinum-gold-record-disc.com



THIMBLE SLIDE

For all of your ax-wielding associates, the Thimble Slide makes the nearly instant transition from slide-playing to fretted notes a snap. It simply slips over the finger and resembles an overly-ambitious brass ring. They're only available from about five stores in the US, only one of which is in California. As is often true, the best bet is to snag one online. The official site includes a sizing chart, and the slides roll in at $24.95.
thimbleslide.com



PORTABLE MINT-TIN GUITAR AMP AND SPEAKER

Here's an amp that's almost beyond portable. In fact, it's practically pocket-sized. Packed into an Altoids tin, this handmade micro-stack is available from the Etsy shop "ampoids" for $35, delivered. May not be suitable for stadium shows and almost certainly won't go to eleven.
etsy.com/shop/ampoids

CUSTOM-MADE BAND T-SHIRTS

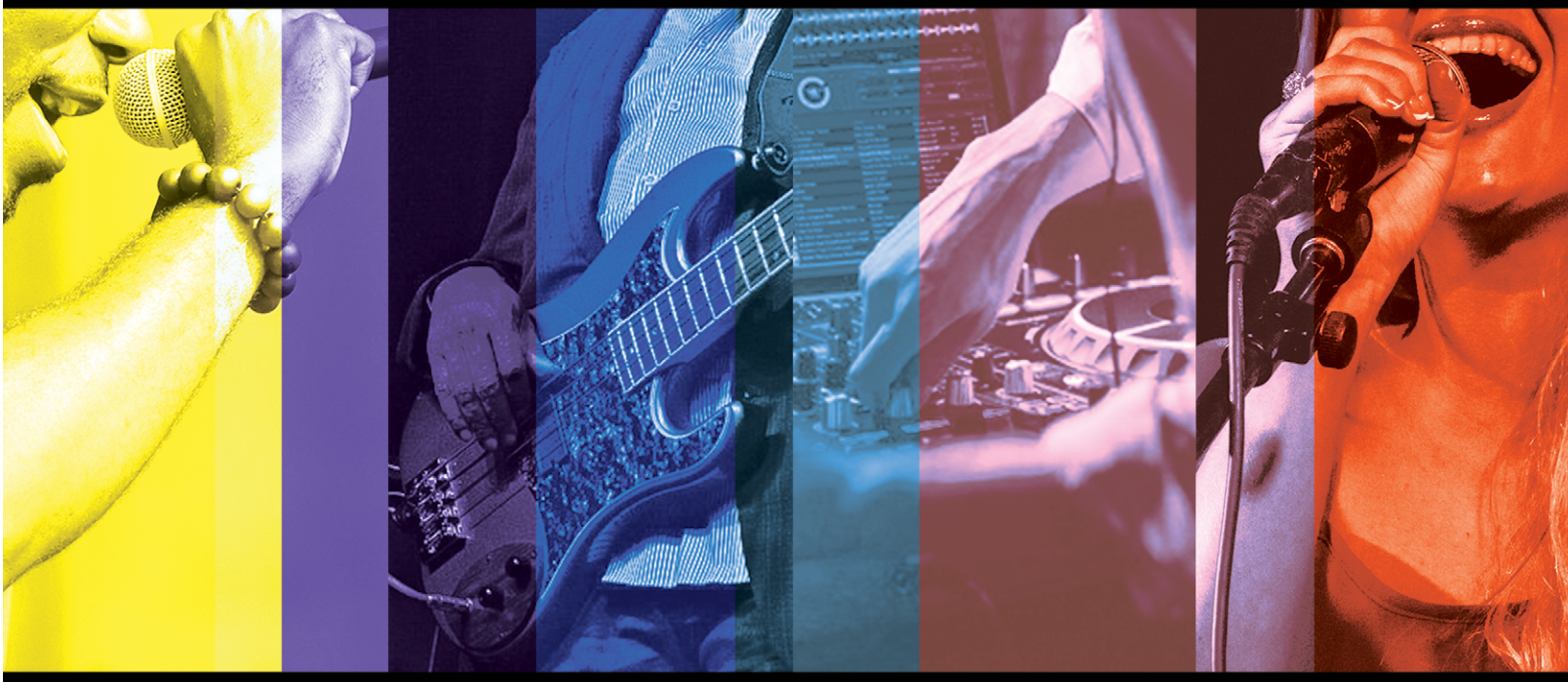
Few things can make an act feel as if it's arrived more than a front-row fan decked out in a band T-shirt. There are countless sites that offer the service, and prices vary commensurate with things such as quantity, so weigh multiple options. Many of the sites have a built-in design tool, which renders customization a breeze. Gift givers should be able to score at least five for less than $100. If local pickup is an option, it will likely make for a time and money-saver as well. Bespoke garment-seller Merchly offers free quotes, free shipping and express delivery.



If your friend will appreciate the joke, perhaps add unlikely tour dates (Woodstock '69, for example) or outrageous opening spots, such as for The Rolling Stones or Elvis. If anyone challenges the claims, it will simply mean that people are talking about your friend's band.
merch.ly
customink.com
rushordertees.com

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The Rokit 10-3 G4 features a pro-grade 3-way design, with low-distortion Kevlar drivers pushed by an efficient Class D power amp with a built-in brickwall limiter. An optimized high-frequency waveguide ensures a wide, deep, dynamic sweet spot and imaging, while a low-resonance enclosure and front-firing port yield low-end response and straightforward speaker placement. The DSP will maximize your acoustic environment with room correction, an LCD visual EQ and more. And everything is easily controlled via the KRK app on an iOS or Android smart device. The KRK Rokit 10-3 G4 includes Iso-foam pads and an optional faceplate with a protective metal grill.

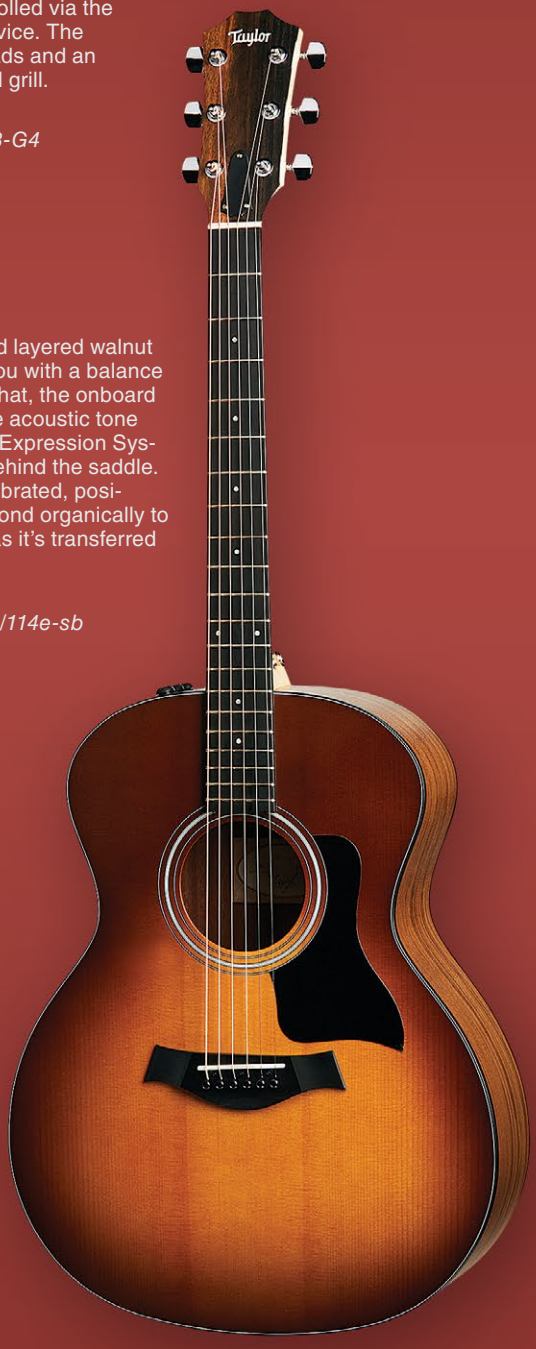
$499 each
krksys.com/Studio-Monitors/ROKIT-10-3-G4



TAYLOR 114E - SUNBURST

The Taylor's solid Sitka spruce and layered walnut tonewood combination provides you with a balance of warmth and sparkle. On top of that, the onboard ES2 electronics translate your true acoustic tone when playing plugged-in. Taylor's Expression System 2 uses a proprietary pickup behind the saddle. The pickup's three individually calibrated, positioned piezo-electric sensors respond organically to the instrument's acoustic energy as it's transferred through the saddle.

$799
taylorguitars.com/guitars/acoustic/114e-sb



PETERSON STROBOSTOMP HD PETAL TUNER

The StroboStomp HD rocks a high-definition LCD screen with a variable color LED backlight. Personalize the tuner with user-selectable colors to increase display viewing quality in different levels of ambient lighting depending on the usage environment. The screen colors can be assigned to stock or saved to user presets to significantly reduce menu navigation time and increase onstage tuning confidence at gigs. The StroboStomp HD has three modes of operation: silent pop-free true bypass, buffered output, and buffered monitor, to suit any setup scenario.

MSRP $169
petersontuners.com/products/stroboStompHD



PRS SE SANTANA - SANTANA YELLOW

The all-mahogany body of the SE Santana gives you warm, detailed tones. The SE Santana's mahogany neck has a wide-fat carve, making it very comfortable for players who prefer a vintage feel. And the distinctive neck joint means you can reach all 24 frets easily. The hardware is very stable and dependable. The PRS-designed tremolo bridge and tuners keep the SE Santana in tune. The PRS SE Santana even boasts a pair of Santana "S" humbucking pickups, further nailing Santana's tonal character.

$799
prsguitars.com/index.php/electrics/model/se_santana_2019



WA-2A OPTO COMPRESSOR

The WA-2A is a high-voltage, Class-A opto-compressor, utilizing large-core CineMag USA Transformers, four premium vacuum tubes and the legendary Kenetek opto-cell—considered by many to be the world's finest. The WA-2A operates on four tubes: two 12AX7's, one 12BH7 and one 6aq5 (or 6P1J). We proudly use Tung-Sol and Electro-Harmonix brand tubes in the signal path, which sound very "open" and LARGE. All 4 tubes are socketed for easy swapping and replacement.

MSRP $899
warmaudio.com/wa-2a





MOJAVE MA-201FET

The MA-201fet is a large diaphragm, phantom-powered, solid-state condenser microphone with a fixed cardioid pattern. Utilizing a 3-micron gold-sputtered capsule, high-quality Jensen audio transformer, military-grade FET and custom designed low-noise resistors, the MA-20fet performs at a level reminiscent of some of the best loved classic condenser microphones. Each MA-201fet microphone is carefully tested and evaluated, then packaged in its protective case with a professional grade shockmount.

MAP $799
mojaveaudio.com/product/ma-201fet

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Available in 3.5" and 4.5" driver configurations, Eris Bluetooth monitors add the convenience of Bluetooth connectivity to Eris' already-lauded audio quality and accessibility. Ideal for gaming and home video production, the Eris BT-series employ the same technology as larger Eris models to deliver studio-quality sound with a smooth and accurate frequency response; yet they're compact enough to fit almost anywhere.

$199.95
presonus.com



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www.TRENDPR.com

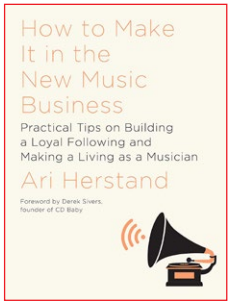
BOOK STORE

How To Make It In The New Music Business, 2nd Edition

By Ari Herstand

(hardcover) **$29.95**

We said it before and we'll say it again: this is the best book ever about how an artist should navigate his or her career in today's music business. Author Herstand is an artist himself—he has been there, done that and gotten the t-shirt (for sale at his merch table, of course!)—and he has plenty of inside advice on the do's and don'ts of forging a successful DIY music career. Addressing the most recent changes in the music world, Herstand's 2nd edition provides lots of fresh, cutting-edge information including smarter, more efficient techniques that other artists have utilized successfully.



Green Day

Photographs by Bob Gruen

(hardcover) **$24.99**

It's been 25 years since the breakthrough album *Dookie* put punk rockers Green Day on the map, and photographer Bob Gruen has been taking photos of the band ever since. *Green Day* includes behind-the-scenes photos as well as concert images from their international tours, many of which are previously unpublished—along with photographs from their Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony in 2015 and in the recording studio. The book has the full support of the band, with quotes and commentary from Billie Joe Armstrong, Tré Cool, and Mike Dirnt throughout.

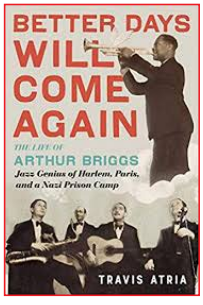


Better Days Will Come: The Life of Arthur Briggs

By Travis Atria

(hardcover) **$27.99**

"Genius of Harlem, Paris, and a Nazi Prison Camp," Briggs was a man wrapped up in the swirling world of the Lost Generation and jazz in the 1920s—and eventually swept up by events out of his control. Briggs played with infamous jazz luminaries like Josephine Baker, Django Reindhardt and Sidney Bechet at famous nightclubs like the Moulin Rouge and Bricktop's. Most remarkably, the book recounts the time Briggs spent in a Nazi prison camp during WWII, where he formed a makeshift orchestra, playing Mozart, Beethoven, Strauss and other classical pieces for the Nazi commanders until the liberation of Paris.



Musso & Frank Grill

By Michael Callahan

(hardcover) **$40.00**

This eye-catching coffee-table tome is a fitting tribute to a legendary Hollywood venue whose history over the past 100 years has, in many ways, mirrored that of the entertainment industry itself. The list of luminaries who have eaten at this earthy enterprise is long and includes plenty of music biz superstars. Keith Richards is a Musso's fan, and we saw Neil Young there one night at a long table with his whole crew, Neil's vintage Cadillac hearse parked outside. Lots of great photos, cool quips and anecdotes make this elegant book a tasty dish.

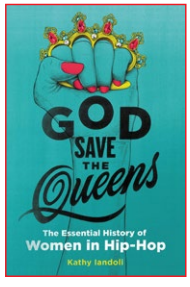


God Save the Queens: The Essential History of Women in Hip-Hop

By Kathy Iandoli

(hardcover) **$27.99**

Women in hip-hop have never been more present or powerful than right now. But things didn't start that way. Interviews include superstars like Nicki Minaj and Lil' Kim and underground artists like Remy Ma, Rapsody and Gangsta Boo. Pioneers Debbie D, Sylvia Robinson and Roxanne Shanté are also given the recognition they deserve. Unlike previous books on hip-hop, this one delivers the respect due to the female artists who have been largely excluded from its history. Iandoli aims to empower future generations of female artists by showing them the rich history they have.

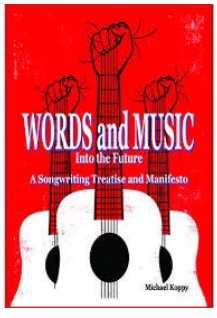


Words and Music Into the Future: A Songwriting Treatise and Manifesto

By Michael Koppy

(paperback) **$16.00**

Koppy takes a cold, hard look at the state of modern songwriting and, well, let's just say he has some serious issues with it. Yes, he nitpicks and he slags some beloved songs. And, yes, you might disagree with his attitude toward the work of some revered artists. But, then, if you're honest with yourself, you'll admit that, here and there, the man has a cogent point to make. Provocative to the max, and surely funny at times, the book also offers Koppy's opinions on how songwriting standards and our listening habits can be improved.



FOR THOSE SEEKING THE VERY BEST



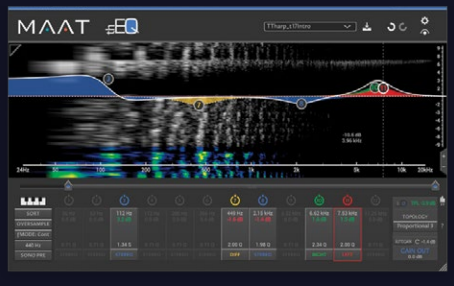
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eclecticladylandrecording.com
10kiyaway.com

Eclectic Lady, Eclectic Studio and An Eye-Popping Estate Up For Sale: Branding herself as "Gramma Rikki," Rikki Swin (grikki.com) is a fast emerging indie artist with a retro-Beatlesque vibe whose debut single "You"—from her album *Blind Leading the Blind*—hit #1 on the fan-interactive National Radio Hits AC40 chart and earned a "Favorite Single Nomination" from the 2019 Independent Music Network Awards. Her follow-up single, "Earth Ship," nominated for Mainstream Breakout Single, is rising on that same chart alongside smashes by The Jonas Brothers and Taylor Swift.

Swin started her career in the music industry in the '70s, building six separate studios in the Chicagoland area, hosting everyone from Gregg Allman to Scotty Moore. Since 2009, she has owned and operated one of the Pacific Northwest's premier state-of-the-art all-digital independent recording studios, Eclectic Lady Land Recording Ranch, LLC—which is located on her currently for sale, sprawling and picturesque 11 acre estate located amid a lush forest in the Mount Dallas area of San Juan Island, Washington, 90 miles north of Seattle. She and chief producer-engineer Darvis Taylor have recorded everything from hip-hop to rock, jazz and classical, with clients ranging from local high school students and hobbyist musicians to Grammy-winning producer Adam Kasper (Foo Fighters).



Ideal Location for Artist Retreat: The estate, including the studio, is currently on the market, with an asking price of $4.7 million (excluding studio gear) to $4.9 million (including all studio gear, i.e. computer, DAW, all microphones like high-end Neumann digital mics, monitors, all outboard and instruments, including a Yamaha CF III concert grand piano and a drum kit modeled after Steve Gadd's.) At a quarter of the cost of what a similar property would run in LA, it offers a stunning blend of serious music making/recording, crisp clean air, rustic Northwestern architecture, woodsy surroundings and stunning vistas.

Eclectic Lady Land Specs: Designed by the late, world renowned studio designer and acoustical consultant Lawrence Swist, it's an all-digital facility that takes a uniquely expensive approach to achieving crystal audio clarity, dispensing with analog gear and analog to digital converters (which don't translate 100% encoding or decoding) in favor of an all-digital signal chain featuring top of the line Neumann digital mics and Genelec active monitors—a system that creates a superior signal to noise ratio. The floor and ceiling are "floating," the walls and double doors have air gap separations and the acoustic panels (baffles) are on movable racks to allow for desired audio signatures. Included are a quadratic residue diffuser, bass trap and stealth soffits.

The Property: The studio facility nestles between the rustic wood, stone meets Gothic splendor and wild angles of the 5,558 sq. foot main house and the two-story 3,560 sq. foot guest house. The main house is a custom designed masterpiece out of Architectural Digest boasting a dazzling master bedroom/bath, an elegant dining room, a massive shelf-lined work space and classically styled movie theatre down below. The guest house, once designated a five-star vacation rental, includes four bedrooms, a living room, kitchen, kitchenette, game room, huge dining table, breakfast area, computer desk, laundry room and elevated deck that looks out towards Haro Strait in the distance. Both houses are situated adjacent to a beautiful, tranquil, property centering pond usable for swimming in summer.

Contact Rikki Swin, 360-298-4249

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▲ Eilish Treats Fans to an Acoustic Set at Third Man

Billie Eilish, accompanied by her brother and chief collaborator FINNEAS, performed an intimate acoustic set for a room of excited fans and friends in The Blue Room at Nashville's Third Man Records in November. She was introduced by Jack White. Eilish scored her first No. 1 single on the Billboard Hot 100 with "bad guy," which has since become the longest-running Hot 100 top ten hit by a female artist in the last century and the most-streamed song on Spotify throughout 2019.



▲ Legendry are High Rollers

Classic epic metallers Legendry are set to release their third album *The Wizard and the Tower Keep* via High Roller Records. The band was formed in Pittsburgh, PA in 2015 by mastermind Vidarr who provides guitar, vocals, mellotron, mandolin and swords on the band's songs. Along with Vidarr are Evil St. Clair on bass, backing vocals and battle axes and Kicker on drums, percussion and necromancy. The album was produced by Arthur Rizk at Creep Record Studios in Philadelphia. Pictured are a vintage modified Fender Telecaster Bass and Mapex drum kit. The amp is a vintage Fender Bassman and 215 cabinet, dampened with an acoustic panel and moving blanket for live in-studio tracking with the band.



▲ Ainlay Leads Csaba Petocz Master Class at Frampton's Studio

The third annual Csaba Petocz Master Class Scholarship was held in Peter Frampton's Studio Phenix in the Berry Hill district in Nashville. The Master Class was led by mix engineer Chuck Ainlay (Mark Knopfler, Peter Frampton, Miranda Lambert) and sponsored by Audio-Technica, Recording, Radio and Film Connection and Clyne Media. The annual master class serves as an audio education event created to honor the legacy of the beloved producer-engineer. Pictured: Chuck Ainlay (right) adjusting the mix while students look on.

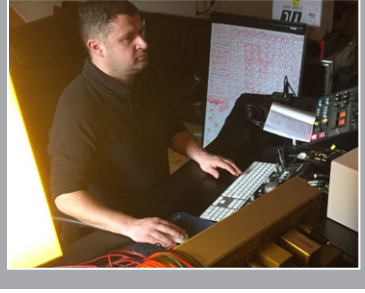


▲ Jeanne Cherhal Records New Album L'an 40 at United Recording

Universal Music France recording artist Jeanne Cherhal recently recorded her new album, *L'an 40* (Year 40) at United Recording. For her sixth album, the Parisian singer-songwriter and pianist worked alongside fellow country-man and executive producer Philippe Rault. Pictured in United Recording's Studio A (l-r): Sébastien Hoog, producer, guitarist; Jeanne Cherhal; Jim Keltner, drummer; Monique Evelyn, United staff engineer; Philippe Rault; and Ryan Freeland, recording engineer.

Producer Playback

"Get your band into a room where you're not spending money. Make all your mistakes there. Try all the crazy ideas you might have." – Rob Kirwan *(PJ Harvey, Hozier)*





◀ Fever Recording Mixed Up the Industry

Fever Recording is a newly established high-end expansion of Eric Milos' Clear Lake Recording. The studio offers production, recording, mixing, post-production and voice over services, among many others. The studio held its second annual industry mixer where guests were able to tour the studio/recording facility, enjoy food, an open bar, live music, games and raffle prizes. Pictured (l-r): Roxy Flo, Director of Business Development; Eli Smith, Studio Manager; and Eric Milos, Owner.



▲ Dan Deacon Is Back on the Scene

Following some seismic life changes after 2015's *Gliss Riffer*, Dan Deacon is back on the music scene with his latest album *Mystic Familiar*, scheduled to be released on Jan. 31 via Domino. In between the two albums, Deacon has been busy working on film scores for projects including HBO's *Well Groomed* and *Rat Film*. He bares all in this album—a culmination of years of obsessive work, play and self-discovery. Deacon self-produced, engineered and mixed the album and recorded it at Shanch Studio in Baltimore, MD.



▲ "Cinnamon Girl" Live At EastWest

MC cameras caught producer-engineer John Hanlon mixing a live version of Neil Young's classic song "Cinnamon Girl" in EastWest's Studio 3. This live version was recorded at the Catalyst Club in Santa Cruz in 1990. Pictured (l-r): John Hanlon and engineer Bo Bodnar.



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- Pitch (Correction)
- Layering (Mults)
- Modulation (Vibrato)
- Timing (Correction)
- Harmonies (from your voice)

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NOT AUTOTUNE

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ANDY MEYER

Like many in the field, front-of-house (FOH) engineer Andy Meyer learned his craft by immersion. That is, simply by doing it. In his late teens, he was invited to tour with a friend's band. He'd recently relocated from New Jersey to South Carolina and didn't fit in with his surroundings. So when the offer to hit the road came, he didn't think twice. As his time on tour grew, so did his skills. Today, at the zenith of his career and nearly 40 years of experience, he's delivered live sound services to Mötley Crüe, T-Pain, Alicia Keys and countless others.

When Meyer first began FOH, his biggest challenge was system integration. Now armed with just shy of a half-century of on-the-job training, he finds that performing at the peak of his profession is what drives him. "Now my biggest challenge is consistently mixing excellence," he observes. "There's a lot of supplemental audio with most artists that we mix, which is handled by a playback engineer. There has to be, because there's a limit to how many people can be on stage at any one time. But now, integrating all of that and creating a mix that maintains the integrity of the album is what challenges me."

The attainment of the best sound is commonly subjective. That is, what feels expertly engineered to FOH folk might strike an artist as soulless. "You have to talk to them and listen to what they've created in the studio," Meyer asserts. "You must present that with integrity. A lot of engineers do what they think sounds good but it's not necessarily how the artist wants to be represented. You have to be consistent on your front-end as far as your mix and your integration to keep it somewhat consistent every night because there are such a vast number of daily variables."

THE 3 MOST IMPORTANT

...lessons he's learned as a front-of-house engineer are:

- **Flexibility. Never pre-judge what someone's intentions are. You have to understand how they want things represented.**
- **Professionalism.**
- **Leave no stone unturned. I push until I find the best mic, the best mic placement and the best way to reproduce something.**

When *Music Connection* spoke with Meyer, he was mid-tour with Shinedown for 2018's *Attention Attention*. His setup is an intelligent blend of technologies that delivers the sound that all sides demand. "The rig I use has a lot of analog gear," he explains. "I've found a way to implement that in a smart, clean way. So basically I'm working in a hybrid environment of analog and digital. It gives it a good, powerful vibe. There's a lot going on with Shinedown—there are vocal inputs spread out across the stage and the [supplemental] track stuff is complex. When I decided to do this tour, the first thing I did was to pop in the record. Then when I knew the songs we would do, I built a playlist and for the first two weeks of the tour, I'd nap after the line check and listen to it very low. I'd let it get into my head. Subliminally, it helps."

The art of engineering live sound is not absolute. That is, it's often subject to the whims of weather. "Atmospherics effect more high-end," the engineer explains. "It's usually humidity that gets you. Humidity and temperature alter how the PA reproduces things. But I've carried mastering gear since 2012, so when I need more high-end I can add it without changing my mix or I can take it away as well as the frequency response. I have a way of massaging that every show because each is different. Without digging into my mix, I do it on the outboard side."

The Shinedown tour will take Meyer through the end of the year. When he's consumed by his craft, he often finds it difficult to see much beyond it. But he's been in the game long enough to know that there will always be more work. As with nearly any act, the sound improves as the tour evolves. "The difference between [Shinedown's] first show and the last one we did is night and day and I'm really proud of that," he observes. "We took it to another level."

Contact Carla Senft, carla@pressherepublicity.com



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"A good test of a lawyer is how they explain something negative or deal with something negative for a client."

BACKGROUND

An attorney for 27 years, Adam Van Straten started Van Straten Solicitors 11 years ago in London. Now, he's taken his skills to Los Angeles, where he's available for a wide variety of services under the likely banner of Van Straten Law. Besides handling music clients, the firm also tackles film, TV, sports and most recently social media influencers.

A New Path

I was training to be an attorney in the usual way, but I didn't like it very much. What I did like was music and film. And I didn't realize there were specific niches where you could be a music lawyer. I didn't know they existed.

I was lucky enough to room with someone at law school who had done a placement at a music law firm. I wrote to the principal there; he brought me in and gave me some great advice. I knew I was never going to be a divorce or real estate lawyer after that.

Going Solo

I started at a fantastic firm. The principal of that firm was Michael Eaton, who represented Eric Clapton, The Bee Gees… He had some fantastic clients. But it ended. We merged with a much bigger firm, which didn't go well.

And I just thought, you know what? I want to create the firm that I want to create. I had a vision of how I was going to work with artists, how I was going to help them. And I wanted to do it the way I wanted to do it. I'd had enough of sitting in other firms that didn't really understand music.

Coming to LA

I've been coming to the states for business pretty regularly over the years. And LA, in particular, has quite a bit of business for me. But the main reason [I'm opening an office in LA] is that I noticed there's a disconnect between the US, particularly LA, and let's say London and Europe. Also, I realized that a lot of the best people are based in LA. And the clients we work with are truly international. Part of the reason I started my own firm was to provide a truly international service.

Seeking Great Clients

We're looking for great artists across all genres. Lawyers don't tend to be that selective about which clients they represent but we try to be because we get very involved with our clients when they want us to. We're just looking for great artists, great writers, great producers. We work with artists from all around the world—a lot of West African artists, a lot of Caribbean artists, dancehall and reggae from Jamaica… More and more it's K-pop.

Being Current & Honest

Often when we find artists on YouTube or other channels, they're old in the sense that they're going in a different direction now and there are new songs you're not aware of. We want an up-to-date picture of what's going on.

Most importantly, we want artists to be honest in terms of preexisting relationships, whether it's a record label, publishing, production, management… We spend so much time getting clients out of deals that they wish they'd hadn't signed. We need to know all the history.

Avoiding Bad Agreements

Get a good lawyer as early as possible, because it's often the lawyers who ask questions that the artist doesn't and filters out whether this is an appropriate deal or not. That's not a perfect science, because sometimes everyone gets swept up in the moment. Also, signing agreements is a bit like dating; you don't know quite what you're going to get. You don't know how the relationship is going to evolve until you're much further into it.

Artists come to me and my team with agreements they've been asked to sign and they're so excited. You've got to go through the questions—why are you doing this? If you do this, you're giving away this chunk of your income. But in return, hopefully, you're going to get this. Is this the level of investment that's guaranteed?

You have conversations saying, explain to me why this person or company is worth two and a half times what they would have gotten as a manager. And sometimes they can answer it. Sometimes it's clear what this person or company's going to do. The investment they're going to put in, the expertise and the network that they have is going to help the artist. But a lot of the time, unfortunately, there isn't that value.

More Than Just Record Deals

We provide a broad set of commercial advice for clients. It's not just for artists. We work with managers. We work with PR companies. We work with labels, publishing, merchandising…

If we're talking about artists, we do their deals but it's more than that. There are a lot of artists who we quasi-manage, either because they don't have managers or don't want managers, so we sort of fit in that role. Or they have young managers who are learning but they need help so we bridge that role for them.

We want to be able to fit this artist with this producer or writer or company and add as much value as we can. In the last few years, we've become more involved than we used to. Our role is much broader than ever and that's a consequence of a lot of younger, less experienced managers coming into the industry.

Privacy Matters

In the UK, we do a lot of privacy stuff in terms of protecting clients' trademarks, protecting their name and reputation and good will. That's a much bigger area than it used to be. Recently, a client of ours, who is an extremely well known soccer player in the UK, threw a birthday party. We said to him, you can't do this without the guests handing in their phones and signing NDAs. So we created an agreement just for this party. It was agonizing trying to figure out how we could do this without damaging a 23-year-old's party. But I knew that if we didn't, the consequences could be pretty unhelpful for his career.

Positives and Negatives

Most of the time, what we do for clients is positive. We hook them up with whatever they need, we help find them deals, we negotiate deals, we put money in their pockets. And it's all positive.

I always say a good test of a lawyer is how they explain something negative or deal with something negative for a client. It's easy as a lawyer to say, I got you this great publishing deal. It's how you deal with the other issues.

How To Pick a Lawyer

You've got to want to have that lawyer as [a] part of [your] team. You feel you can connect with them. You understand what they're saying. You don't mind [calling] them or coming in for a meeting. You should understand how they charge, but you also need to decide what you're looking for in a lawyer

Fighting Spirit

My team and I are good at negotiating deals for clients. There are some lawyers, so I'm told, who don't fight hard for their clients. The deal comes in, they negotiate a bit and then they close it. Our reputation is that we fight very hard for clients, which sometimes the labels don't like but they know they've got to come back to us because we work with great talent.

Making the Complex Simple

Our clients appreciate how we explain things. Sometimes lawyers assume everyone understands what contracts say or how they operate because it's so familiar to them. But these documents are incredibly, insanely complicated, particularly record deals. You've got to explain it in a way that artists understand.

OPPS

Launch Music Conference and Festival in **Lancaster, PA** is seeking applications to perform at their 2020 festival. The fest will run from Apr. 30-May 3, 2020. Submissions must be received by Sunday, Feb. 16, 2020 at 11:59 p.m. To learn more, visit launchmusicconference.com.

Artist registration for **The Great Escape Music Festival** is now open. They are seeking bands, singer-songwriters, rappers, DJs and more to apply. Set against the seaside backdrop of **Brighton, UK**, 450+ acts will assemble on May 13-16, 2020 for the opportunity to hear up-and-coming artists and network with industry insiders. Visit greatescapefestival.com.

Submit your application to perform at the **Deep Ellum Arts Festival** in **Dallas, TX**.

Experience more than 200 decorative and visual artists selling and commissioning original works, and 100 original bands and performing artists showcasing the newest sights and sounds from six different stages and two additional performance areas. The festival represents all genres and will judge entries based upon original music only. For more, visit deepellumartsfestival.com.

LABELS•RELEASES SIGNINGS

Emerging Brazilian rock group **Ego Kill Talent** has signed a global recordings partnership with **BMG** to release their forthcoming new studio album. The band put the finishing touches on their album at the **Foo Fighters**' famed **606 Studios**. Their signing marks BMG's first international recording deal with a Brazilian artist, signed out of the recently founded **BMG Brazil**.

Freddie Mercury's ***Never Boring*** solo box set was released on Oct. 11. To coincide with this, a brand new version of his most (in)famous solo video—**"Living On My Own"** from his ***Mr Bad Guy*** album—was released on YouTube. The 2019 4K video re-created from the original film, which was filmed at Mercury's legendary 39th birthday party in 1985, featured a new audio mix of the song.

Athens, GA post-punk legends **Pylon** will re-issue their 1979 debut single **"Cool" b/w "Dub"** for **Record Store Day Black Friday** on Nov. 29 via **New West Records**. The limited edition, translucent red single was pressed at **Kindercore Vinyl** in Athens. Audio was restored and remastered by **Jason Nesmith** at **Chase Park Transduction Studios** in Athens.

Pylon's single was originally released on Atlanta's influential **DB Recs** label (**B-52s, Method Actors, Oh-Ok**). It earned Pylon a slew of excited press that immediately heralded the band as a major underground act.

Harry Styles has announced his highly anticipated new album, ***Fine Line***, will release globally on Friday, Dec. 13. ***Fine Line*** is available for pre-save and pre-order now. Styles is scheduled to go on tour in 2020. To learn more, visit hstyles.co.uk.



▲ Green Day Earns Sixth #1 with New Single "Father Of All..."

Five-time GRAMMY®-winning rock band Green Day has earned a sixth #1 on Billboard's Mainstream Rock Songs Chart with their latest single "Father Of All..." The title track is also currently #3 on Billboard's Alternative Chart. "Father Of All..." follows Green Day's previous #1's which include "Boulevard of Broken Dreams," "Holiday," "Know Your Enemy," "Bang Bang" and "Still Breathing." "Father Of All…" is the lead single and title track from Green Day's forthcoming album out Feb. 7, 2020, on Reprise/Warner Records.

PROPS

Kacey Musgraves made history by breaking the female attendance record of any genre at **Nashville's Bridgestone Arena** during the final date of her **Oh, What a World: Tour II**. Musgraves' tour has taken her around the globe, playing the biggest venues of her career. She sold out two nights each at two iconic venues—**LA's Greek Theatre** and **New York City's Radio City Music Hall**.

Taylor Swift will be honored with the **Artist of the Decade** award at the **2019 American Music Awards (AMAs)** on Sunday, Nov. 24 at the **Microsoft Theater** in LA. Swift is no stranger to the AMAs, having

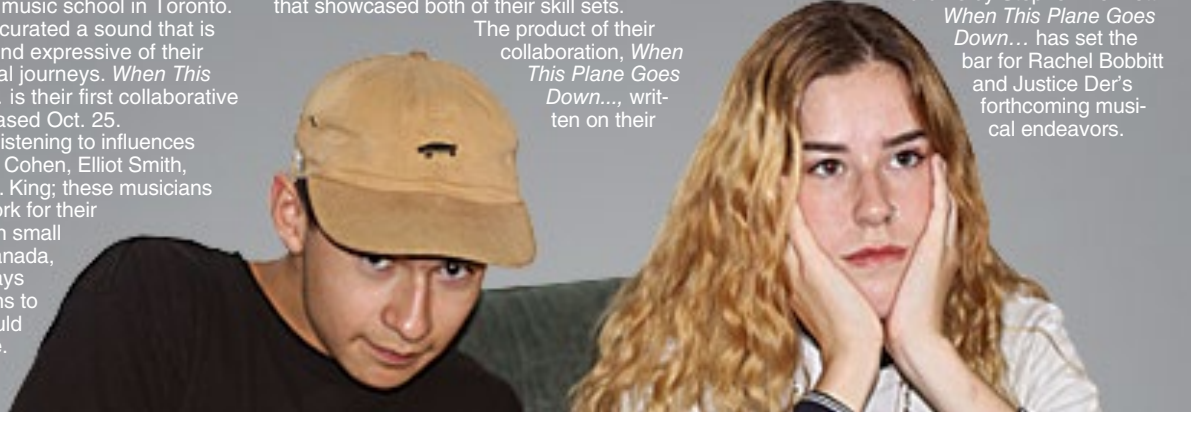
DIY *Spotlight* RACHEL BOBBIT & JUSTIN DER

Rachel Bobbitt and Justice Der are both self-taught musicians who have been infatuated with music since they were able to hold instruments. Bobbitt began her love for singing at age 6 and at 16 realized her true passion of writing and creating her own music; whereas Der picked up a guitar at age 10 and found his passion for music in high school, which led to music school in Toronto. Together they have curated a sound that is undeniably unique and expressive of their creative and personal journeys. *When This Plane Goes Down…* is their first collaborative album and was released Oct. 25.

The pair grew up listening to influences that include Leonard Cohen, Elliot Smith, John Mayer and B.B. King; these musicians inspired the framework for their sound. Growing up in small towns throughout Canada, Bobbitt and Der always had strong aspirations to make music that would resonate with people.

Even as solo artists, the two have created and released their own EPs: *Months to Fall* by Bobbitt and *Nostalgic For Things to Come* by Der, which combined have garnered nearly 1 million listens and have a combined 150,000 monthly listeners. The duo met at Humber College in Toronto and instantly realized that, as a unit, their music took on a hybrid form that showcased both of their skill sets.

The product of their collaboration, *When This Plane Goes Down...*, written on their college summer hiatus, signifies the group's transition from midlife to maturity. "The experience of converging and diverging with other passengers for a brief but concentrated period of time served as an inspiration for a larger concept," the duo explains. The title is meant to correlate with the feeling of going and coming home while being students at Humber. The project was co-written by the duo and mixed/mastered by Der. The self-produced album is independent and features drums by Stephen Bennett. *When This Plane Goes Down…* has set the bar for Rachel Bobbitt and Justice Der's forthcoming musical endeavors.



won more awards there than any other artist this decade.

Randy Travis was presented with the **ASCAP Founders Award** at the **57th Annual ASCAP Country Music Awards**. These awards celebrate the songwriters and publishers of ASCAP's most-performed country songs. Travis joins the ranks of **Rodney Crowell, George Strait, Alan Jackson, Ricky Skaggs, Jackson Brown, Garth Brooks, Emmylou Harris, Tom Petty** and **Neil Young**, among others.

Performing two of Travis' biggest hits were **Garth Brooks**, singing **"Forever and Ever, Amen,"** and **Carrie Underwood**, singing **"Promises."**

THE BIZ

On Nov. 12, the **California Copyright Conference** held a panel discussion titled "**Fair Use: Is It Really Free? When is Fair Use Not Fair?**" that focused on fair use in derivative works and transformative musical and artistic works.

Panelists included **Michael Donaldson, Esq. of Donaldson + Callif, LLP; Jacqueline Charlesworth, Esq. of Alter, Kendrick, & Baron, LLP and Evan M. Greenspan, President/CEO of EMG Music**.

The panel was moderated by **Paula Savastano, Sr. Director of Copyright and Royalties at Angry Mob Music, LLC** and **Judith Finell, Musicologist and President of Judith Finnell Music Services, Inc**.

LyricFind's merchandise service, **LyricMerch**, is announcing its first marketplace partnership with **eBay**, one of the world's largest and most vibrant marketplaces. LyricMerch is licensed to create a range of merchandise bearing lyrics from fan-favorite songs, all of which are now available on the marketplace.

As part of the partnership, LyricFind and eBay will also collaborate to create targeted merch campaigns that are tailor-made for shoppers. Music fans and eBay customers will get their first taste of the collaboration this holiday season with a special LyricMerch gift guide. Check it out at ebay.com/str/lyricmerch.



▲ C21 FX & MX and LA Personal Development Join Forces

Russ DeWolf, CEO and Founder of C21 FX & MX, the Hollywood-based sound design and music publisher and Jeff Faustman, Emmy-winning composer and singer-songwriter have announced an affiliation with artist management firm LA Personal Development (LAPD), with the goal of taking the C21 FX & MX label to a wider market. C21 FX & MX, which is known for fulfilling a wide variety of theatrical marketing, advertising and entertainment industry sound design and music needs, will now have its large catalog of recorded music available to the public. Pictured (l-r): Jeff Faustman, Emmy Award winning composer and singer-songwriter, producer at C21 FX & MX; Mike Gormley, President, LA Personal Development (LAPD); Russ DeWolf, CEO and Founder of C21 FX & MX.

The LEGAL Beat

BY GLENN LITWAK

THE RECORDING STUDIO AGREEMENT



When going into a recording studio to record, do you understand your agreement with the studio? For instance, how much you will be charged and what facilities and equipment will be made available? This article will explain a typical agreement between an artist or group and a recording studio for use of the studio on an hourly basis. Of course, before you even consider entering into a contract with a recording studio, you must do your "due diligence" and investigate the studio's reputation.

The contract should contain the following provisions:

• The location of the studio, the facilities you will be permitted to use and when you will be using them. For instance, will there be a multi-track recorder, mixing board, isolation booth, microphones and sound engineer? Also, if the studio has agreed to anything special you requested, it must be contained in the written agreement. Ordinarily, you will be responsible for supplying musicians, vocalists, arrangers, music producers, etc.

What will you be charged for going over the agreed upon hours?

• The amount you are paying per hour. What are the total charges and the amount of the deposit? Often, the balance will be due on the first day of recording. What will you be charged for going over the agreed upon hours?

• The recording studio will want a provision stating that you will not allow any illegal drugs in the studio or other illegal activities. And that you will not be recording anything that is defamatory or obscene.

• Ordinarily, the parties to the agreement will be independent contractors and the artist will own the copyright.

• Cancellation: If you want to cancel, what are the requirements? A typical provision might be you are required to give 72 hours notice of cancellation to get a refund of your deposit. The agreement might provide that if you give less than 72 hours notice, you forfeit your deposit but are not required to pay the balance due. The agreement may also provide that if you cancel, you are also responsible for any costs incurred by the studio

• The studio may insert a sentence that says they reserve the right to suspend your agreement and delay your recording session for the duration of recording sessions required by other clients of the studio.

• The agreement will provide that in the event there is a war, act of God, fire, labor disagreement or other circumstances beyond the control of the studio ("Force Majeure") the recording studio can suspend the agreement.

• Usually, the contract will have an indemnity provision which states that you will reimburse the studio for any loss or damages a result of your actions or breach of the agreement or any claims by third parties.

• The contract will typically contain some typical "boiler-plate" provisions, such as which state law will be applicable to the contract, that revisions to the contract must be in writing, whether litigation or binding arbitration will be utilized to resolve conflicts and that email signatures are as good as originals.

The above is a brief overview of the subject and does not constitute legal advice.

GLENN LITWAK is a veteran entertainment attorney based in Santa Monica, CA. He has represented platinum selling recording artists, Grammy winning music producers, hit songwriters, management and production companies, music publishers and independent record labels. Glenn is also a frequent speaker at music industry conferences around the country, such as South by Southwest and the Billboard Music in Film and TV Conference. Email Litwak at gtllaw59@gmail.com or visit glennlitwak.com.

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



Why I Don't Need TAXI Anymore

Randon Purcell, TAXI Member

My name is Randon Purcell, and I'm so busy composing for *several* film and TV music publishers that I don't have time to submit to any new opportunities. I know that sounds ridiculous, but it's absolutley true!

How did I *get* so busy?

In a word… TAXI.

Ironically, the very company that showed me the ropes, taught me how to satisfy my clients' needs, and brought me 100 new opportunities a month, is *now* the company I no longer need.

My wife and I live in Utah, we have three awesome sons, and my full-time day gig is creating software and doing web development. I make music part-time, and take advantage of every opportunity I can find to create more. The more music I make, the more placements in TV shows and films I seem to get!

How TAXI changed my life…

I was finishing up a solo album 5 years ago, and joined TAXI to market my music. There really wasn't a demand for the style of music I was making, but I noticed a huge market for instrumental music. No lyrics to write, no vocals to record, and easier mixes. I started composing for TV and film, and bam, my life was forever changed!

I got a call from a publisher about a cinematic Dubstep track of mine they got from TAXI. That really showed me that I could actually *do* this!

Need some motivation?

Prior to TAXI, I wrote 10-12 pieces of music per year, in a *good* year. Once I became a TAXI member, I started creating 70-120 pieces of music per year. And that's in my "spare" time!

When people want to *pay* you for your music, it's amazing how much more motivated and productive you become. You'll also get faster and better with each track you write and record.

How to get started

Don't wait until you've got a big catalog before you join. That's actually the wrong approach. Instead, create what the industry executives *ask* you for, once you become a TAXI member! Don't expect miracles at first, take the advice of TAXI's A&R staff, and go to the Road Rally—TAXI's free convention for members and their guests!

Why I'm still a TAXI member

TAXI's convention is the best of its kind, and I remain an active member to take advantage of all that education, resources, and unparalleled networking. There's one more reason I'm still a member. TAXI helped me launch my music career. Maybe you should let them help you, too!



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GEORGE WILKES/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

▲ Nilsson Returns

Twenty-five years after the death of iconic singer-songwriter Harry Nilsson, producer and collaborator Mark Hudson (Ringo Starr, Aerosmith, Ozzy Osbourne) and a cadre of friends such as Jim Keltner, Van Dyke Parks, Jimmy Webb and Harry's son Kiefo Nilsson have helped bring a new album to life. The project, *Harry Nillson's Losst and Founnd*, with secretly recorded demos, will be available on all major platforms.

▶ BMI In Maui

Dec. 5-7, BMI will present the 4th Annual Maui Songwriters Festival. Among the many performers are Maren Morris (pictured), Lukas Nelson and Miranda Lambert. Visit mauisongwritersfestival.com.





▲ Miles Davis Heads Downtown

Downtown Music Publishing has signed a global deal with the Miles Davis Estate to represent the legendary jazz trumpeter and composer's entire catalog, encompassing over 250 compositions.

CCC To Party Down

On Dec. 4, the California Copyright Conference (CCC) will present its Holiday Party and Annual Apollo Awards. The event will be held at the Catalina Bar & Grill, 6725 Sunset Blvd. in Hollywood. Among this year's Apollo Award Recipients is Michelle Lewis of SONA (Songwriters of North America), the non-profit organization founded in 2014 in response to the complexities and disparities in digital royalties paid to composers and composers. Jeff and Todd Brabec, co-authors of *Music, Money and Success* will also be honored. In addition to his authorship, Jeff Brabec is Senior VP of Business & Legal Affairs for BMG Rights Management. Todd Brabec is the former ASCAP Executive VP and Worldwide Director of Membership, an Entertainment Law attorney and an industry consultant.

In addition to the Awards, the CCC will hold a silent auction to raise money for the John Braheny Scholarship Fund. Registration info is at theccc.org.

Performing Song Creative Workshops for 2020

Performing Songwriter Creative Workshops has announced the first set of sessions for the 2020 season. From Jan. 30-Feb. 1, Mary Gauthier will present "Finding Your Writer's Voice," a three-day workshop in Nashville open to 20 students of all levels. From Apr. 2-4, Beth Nielsen-Chapman presents "Full Vocal Presence" held at Ocean Way Studios in Nashville, with an intensive vocal session open to 16 registrants. May 7-9, Jonatha Brooke invites 20 registrants to "Discovering New Paths Into Songs," (noted as "Passwords, Prompts & Permission").

If a trip to Scotland is in the cards, you can join a creative retreat with 15 participants and guest teacher Gretchen Peters, May 26-June 2, at Kincardine Castle in Aberdeenshire, Scotland. Verlon Thompson reveals "The Art & Presentation of Your Song" June 20-22 in Nashville to 16 registrants. Noted for his work with the great Guy Clark, Thompson notes that he "doesn't teach songwriting as much as he inspires songwriting."

Find out more at performingsongwriter.com.

Mister Rogers Writes

Vanessa Williams, Micky Dolenz (the Monkees), Jon Secada, Kellie Pickler, Rita Wilson and Tom Bergeron pay tribute to Fred Rogers' songwriting with the newly recorded collection *Thank You, Mister Rogers: Music & Memories*. Among the highlights: The Cowsills pay loving tribute with "Won't You Be My Neighbor," also rendered in Spanish by Jon Secada. Dennis Scott helmed the project as producer.

Find out more at thankyoumisterrogers.com.

BMI Foundation Scholarships

The BMI Foundation has announced that it is now accepting online applications for its 2019 scholarship season, open to students attending colleges and universities nationwide. The Foundation will administer five distinct songwriting and composing scholarship competitions, judged by panelists of international musical acclaim. These annual programs include the BMI Future Jazz Master Scholarship, BMI Student Composer Awards, John Lennon Scholarship, peermusic



◀ Justin Tranter: Selena Gomez Hit and ACLU Award

Songwriter and activist Justin Tranter has achieved a number 1 hit on the Billboard Hot 100 chart with Selena Gomez's "Lose You to Love Me," co-written with Gomez, Julia Michaels and Mattman & Robin (Mattias Per Larsson and Robin Lennart Fredriksson). Tranter's monumental year will soon reach another high point when he is honored with ACLU's prestigious Bill of Rights Award.

Latin Scholarship and the Nashville Songwriting Scholarship.

In addition, the Foundation administers two scholarship competitions outside the area of music creation: the BMI Founders Internship Program for broadcasting students, and the Woody Guthrie Fellowship for scholars pursuing topics or themes related to the American folk music progenitor.

Most program applications must be completed online no later than Jan.15, 2020, though the Founders Award. The Woody Guthrie and Student Composer Awards have extended deadlines.

For complete details and to apply, please visit bmifoundation.org/programs.

AIMP in the Pub

The Nashville Chapter of the Association of Independent Music Publishers (AIMP) has launched the third season of its podcast series, the "AIMP Nashville Pubcast." Hosted by Tim Hunze, Senior Director, Creative at Anthem Entertainment and AIMP Nashville Board Member, the now bi-weekly series, which will run year-round, will feature 30-minute interviews with some of the most prominent music and publishing industry figures in Nashville, discussing all aspects of the music business, from lessons learned, advice for newcomers and, new this season, a broader look at pop music in publishing.

To listen to seasons one and two of the "AIMP Nashville Pubcast," visit wavve.link/aimpnashvillepubcast. The show is also available via Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google Podcasts, YouTube, Stitcher, Overcast and more.

Pandora Gives Credits

Pandora now displays full song credits for millions of tracks in their massive music library, detailing all of the people—both in front of the mic and behind-the-scenes—who have played a role in the creation of songs. Full song credits are accessible to users across all tiers of service on the web at Pandora.com and on Pandora's new desktop apps for Mac and Windows.

Pandora added 33,000 new self-pay subscribers in the third quarter ending with with nearly 6.3 million self-pay subscribers. Ad revenue at Pandora reached a quarterly record of $315 million, up eight percent over the third quarter of 2018.

Primary Wave and Robertson Partner Up

Primary Wave Music Publishing has entered into a marketing and administration agreement with the recording artist and songwriter Robbie Robertson. As part of the agreement, Primary Wave Music Publishing will now represent the majority of Robertson's catalog—both past and present—including some of his biggest hits for The Band, such as "Up On Cripple Creek," "Rag Mama Rag," and "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down."

DAN KIMPEL, author of six music industry books, is an instructor at Musicians Institute in Hollywood, CA. He lectures at colleges and conferences worldwide.



▲ Kostas Honored By Nashville Songwrtiers Hall of Fame

Montana resident Kostas Lazarides, 70, joined the likes of Johnny Cash, Dolly Parton and Chuck Berry in October when he was inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame. Known professionally as Kostas, he's written chart topping hits for Patty Loveless, George Strait and many others.



▲ WCM Signs Liz Rose

Warner Chappell Music (WCM) has extended a worldwide publishing deal with Grammy-winning songwriter Liz Rose and her publishing company, Liz Rose Music. Rose has landed No. 1 hits for artists like Taylor Swift ("You Belong with Me"), Little Big Town ("Girl Crush") and Eli Young Band ("Crazy Girl"). Most recently, Rose co-wrote Miranda Lambert's single "It All Comes Out in the Wash" with Lambert, Lori McKenna and Hillary Lindsey as part of the songwriting trio The Love Junkies. The group is also behind Carrie Underwood's "Cry Pretty."



▲ Angry Mob Inks Love-sadKiD

Angry Mob Music Group, an independent music publisher serving songwriters, composers, artists and creatives, has signed an exclusive co-publishing agreement with Los Angeles-based singer-songwriter Love-sadKiD (pronouns they/them). The deal covers all new works from the poetic rapper (real name Ben McGibboney), whose music has been described as lo-fi and wise beyond its years.



▲ Black Violin Tunes Up

Classically trained violist and violinist Wil Baptiste and Kev Marcus combine their classical training and hip-hop influences to create a distinctive multi-genre sound that is often described as "classical boom." This month they will release their latest collection, *Take The Stairs*. The duo is signed as songwriters to peermusic.

MUSIC CONNECTION

HOT 100

LIVE UNSIGNED ARTISTS & BANDS

60 EAST
Hip-Hop
Ontario, CA
instagram.com/60east

ADA PASTERNAK
Pop Fusion/Singer-Songwriter/Violinist
Los Angeles, CA
adasmusic.com

ADAM BRIXTON
Pop/R&B
San Diego, CA
jonamusicgroup.com

ADRIAN GAMBOA
Hip-Hop/Rap
Riverside, CA
agofficial.com

AMY COHEN
Pop
Los Angeles, CA
amycohenmusic.com

AMY GUESS
Alt-Pop
Las Vegas, NV
amyguess.com

ANITA SQUEEZE
Rock
North Hollywood, CA
facebook.com/anitasqueeze

ANNA DELLARIA
Pop/R&B
Los Angeles, CA
annadellaria.com

AUBREY AURA
Pop/R&B/Electronic
Los Angeles, CA
aubreyaura.com

AYONI
Pop
Los Angeles, CA
facebook.com/ayonimusic

BATFARM
Alternative Rock
Los Angeles, CA
batfarmband.com

BELLA NOVELA
Hard Rock
Long Beach, CA
bellanovela.com

BINX
Pop
Los Angeles/New York
binxofficial.com

BLANE HOWARD
Contemporary Country
Nashville, TN
blanehoward.com

BOBBY LONG
Pop/Rock/Folk
New York, NY
bobbylong.info

BONAVEGA
Experimental Rock
Los Angeles, CA
facebook.com/bonavega

BONOMO
Pop/Folk/Gospel
New York, NY
bonomoband.com

CALLING KINGS
Metalbilly
Santa Clarita, CA
callingkings.com

CANDLELIGHT CAOS
Metal
New Jersey
facebook.com/candlelightcaosband

CHACO THE BAND
Pop/Indie/Funk/Rock
Cambridge/Somerville, MA
facebook.com/chacotheband

CHRIS GREENE QUARTET
Jazz
Chicago, IL
chrisgreenejazz.com

CRAIG GREENBERG
Piano Rock Pop/Singer-Songwriter
Queens, NY
craiggreenbergmusic.com

CRIME APPLE
Hip-Hop
New Jersey
instagram.com/crimeapple

DAIZA
Avant-Pop/Electronica
Los Angeles, CA
dai-za.com

DAN JANISCH
Country Folk Rock
Los Angeles, CA
facebook.com

DAS MUERTE
Metal/Progressive Rock
Boston, MA
dasmuerte.com

DETROIT TROUBLE
Rock and Blues
Detroit, MI
facebook.com/detroittrouble

DIANA REIN
Blues/Rock
Temecula, CA
dianarein.com

DOWN NORTH
Rock/Soul
Seattle, WA
downnorthband.com

DROWSY
Shoegaze
Los Angeles, CA
drowsy.bandcamp.com

ELIZABETH WOOLF
Pop/Folk
Los Angeles, CA
elizabethwoolf.com

ERIC MCFADDEN
Rock/Gypsy-Voodoo Blues
Los Angeles, CA
ericmcfadden.com

FARTBARF
Synth-Punk
Los Angeles, CA
fartbarf.com

FORTUNO
Pop/Soul
Los Angeles, CA
instagram.com/fortunomusic

FUSE
Punk
Ventura, CA
fusepunkrock.com

GANGSTAGRASS
Hip-Hop Bluegrass
Brooklyn, NY/Philadelphia, PA/Baltimore, MD
gangstagrass.com

GENTLE TEMPER
Folk
Boston, MA
gentletemper.com

GREGORY HARRINGTON
Classical/Jazz
New York, NY
gregoryharrington.com

GUITAR & WHISKEY CLUB
Hard Rock
Ventura, CA
guitarandwhiskeyclub.com

HAL HENKEL & THE FLYING CAMELS
Blues/Rock/Funk/Jazz
Eugene, OR
facebook.com/HaroldHalHenkel

HOLY BROKEN
Rock
Los Angeles, CA
theholybroken.com

HUSTLE SOULS
Soul/Rock
Asheville, NC
hustlesouls.com

INSECT SURFERS
Psychedelic Surf Soundtracks
Los Angeles, CA
insectsurfers.com

IVY WOOD
Alternative Rock
Los Angeles, CA
ivywoodmusic.com

JASON ROBERT
Roots/Americana
Hesperia, CA
jasonrobertband.com

JEREMIE ALBINO
Americana
Toronto, ON
jeremiealbino.com

JESSICA DOMINGO
R&B/Pop
Seattle, WA
jessicadomingo.com

JUICE
Pop/Rock/Rap
New York, NY
itstimeforjuice.com

KATE GRAHN
Pop Rock/Alt
Los Angeles, CA
kategrahnmusic.com

KISMIT
Cosmic Art Pop
Los Angeles, CA
kismitmusic.com

LENNY WATKINS
Blues and R&B
Detroit, MI
facebook.com/lenny.watkins.98

LISA FINNIE
Americana
Los Angeles, CA
lisafinnie.com

***MUSIC CONNECTION'S* ANNUAL LIST OF UNSIGNED LIVE PERFORMERS** puts the spotlight on individuals and bands who brought a special excitement, impressive musicianship and intriguing songcraft to stages all over the US during the past year. In addition to *MC* staffers and freelance writers, the contributors to this list are producers, club bookers, music attorneys, managers, agents and other industry professionals. Currently, *MC* has reviewers in Los Angeles, New York, Boston and Detroit. To be considered for a free live review, go to musicconnection.com/reviews/get-reviewed.

LIVINGMORE
Alternative
Los Angeles, CA
livingmoreband.com

LONG GONE JOHN
Folk/Bluegrass
Portland, OR
longgonejohn.com

LOTUS LAND COLLECTIVE
Jazz
Los Angeles, CA
instagram.com/lotuslandcollective

LULISE
Pop/R&B
Los Angeles, CA
lulise.com

MANUEL THE BAND
Alternative Rock/Jam Band
Long Beach, CA
manueltheband.com

MICKI MAVERICK
Dark Pop
Los Angeles, CA
instagram.com/micki_maverick

MOLLY HANMER & THE MIDNIGHT TOKERS
Americana
Los Angeles, CA
mollyhanmer.com

MOTHER PARISA & THE BAND OF HEATHENS
Folk-Rock
Los Angeles, CA
facebook.com/moterparisaand theheathens

MYOA
Neo-Soul
Houston, TX
myoamusic.com

NATALIE CLARK
Soul Pop
Los Angeles, CA
natalieclarkmusic.com

NEVERWONDER
Alternative Rock
Los Angeles, CA
neverwonder.com

NEW BALANCE
Dream Pop
Los Angeles, CA
newbalance.bandcamp.com

NOA JAMES
Hip-Hop
Inland Empire, CA
noajames.bandcamp.com

POKA 1
Hip-Hop
Pomona, CA
instagram.com/poka626

RAINNE
Alt-Pop
Los Angeles, CA
werainne.com

RAMEKEGA
Pop/Rock/Alternative
Chino Hills, CA
ramekega.com

RAYE WILLIAMS
Country/Rock/Blues
Belleville, MI
facebook.com/rayewilliamsofficial

REMI WOLF
Alternative
Los Angeles, CA
remiwolf.com

RENAY
Electronic-Pop
San Francisco, CA
renaymusic.com

RUBY RED
Indie-Pop
Los Angeles, CA
rubyredsound.com

SAWDUZT
Metal
Los Angeles, CA
sawduztrocks.com

SELF-PROVOKED
Hip-Hop
San Fernando, CA
itsonahighnote.com

SOLAR EYES
Psychedelic Dark Metal
Los Angeles, CA
solareyes.bandcamp.com

SOPHIA DION
Alternative Country Soul
Los Angeles, CA
sophiadion.com

SOPHIA PATSALIDES
Pop/Neo-Soul
Leeds, UK
sophiapatsalides.com

TARAH WHO?
Grunge Punk
Los Angeles, CA
tarahwho.com

TASH
Singer-Songwriter
Los Angeles, CA
tashsings.com

TEEN AF
R&B
Los Angeles, CA
instagram.com/teenafmusic

THE AUTOMATICS
Power Pop Punk
Los Angeles, CA
facebook.com/theautomaticsofficial

THE BROADCAST
Psychedelic Soul Rock
Asheville, NC
thebroadcastmusic.com

THE COCKS
Rock 'n' Roll
Los Angeles, CA
facebook.com/thecocksband

THE CORNFED PROJECT
Southern Rock
Los Angeles, CA
thecornfedproject.com

THE HABITS
Pop Rock
Los Angeles, CA
instagram.com/habitstheband

THE NOBLE PRIX
Modern Garage Rock
Burbank, CA
facebook.com/nobleprix

THE PRETTY FLOWERS
Indie Rock
Los Angeles, CA
theprettyflowers.bandcamp.com

THE REAL STILLS
Soul, Rhythm & Blues
Los Angeles, CA
therealstills.com

THE ROBOT UPRISING
Punk
Oxnard, CA
therobotuprising.live

THE SCIMITARS
Dark Middle-Eastern Influenced-Surf Soundtracks
San Diego/Los Angeles, CA
facebook.com/thescimitars

THE WORLD RECORD
Power Pop
Los Angeles, CA
theworldrecord.net

THERE
Dark Dreamy Pop
Los Angeles, CA
instagram.com/0there

TOLAN SHAW
Pop/Rock
Nashville, TN
tolanshaw.com

TOSHA OWENS
Blues/R&B/Rock
Detroit, MI
facebook.com/toshaowensmusic

TRAMP FOR THE LORD
Garage-Country
Los Angeles, CA
soundcloud.com/tramp-for-the-lord

TRISHES
Conceptual Urban Pop
Los Angeles, CA
trishes.com

VANESSA COLLIER
Blues/R&B/Funk/Soul
Philadelphia, PA
vanessacollier.com

VERTIGO SHOCK
Alternative Rock
Los Angeles, CA
vertigoshock.com

WALKER BRIGADE
Femme-Fronted Art-Punk
Los Angeles, CA
facebook.com/thewalkerbrigade

ZELLY VIBES
Hip-Hop/Trap
Las Vegas, NV
zellyvibes.net

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SARA VUKAYLOV







SONGWRITER PROFILE – DAN KIMPEL

Jason James

The Honky Tonkin' Truth

In the '80s, the Gary Gentry and J.B Detterline Jr. penned song "The Ride," a hit for David Allan Coe, told of a hitchhiker headed to Nashville who was picked up in a vintage Cadillac driven by the ghost of Hank Williams.

Although his sonorous voice may evoke similar spirits of classic country music, Texas-based singer-songwriter Jason James is flesh and blood. With his latest release, *Seems Like Tears Ago*, James showcases a collection of songs echoing the essence of pure jukebox-ready country music.

Given the bedrock authenticity of his sound, it might seem improbable that earlier influences included Butthole Surfers-era punk. "I did rock for a long time, but I couldn't figure out why I wasn't happy. I was hanging out with my dad again, who I hadn't seen in forever, and he put on some old Hank Williams. He said, 'Yeah, I know you're having some trouble, but do you remember this?' And I knew every song. God almighty—it was talking to me." James brought some Hank Williams songs to his rock band. "That was the turning point. They thought that I'd lost my mind…and I had."



To advance his music career, James had moved from Texas City, TX, a refinery town on the shoreline of Galveston Bay, to Austin. He has since returned to his hometown. "I left to do music and that was my way to not go to work in the refineries, but I ended back here anyway. Working class people—I dig the hell out of them."

He says that being isolated is helpful to his songwriting. "I can come over here to my folks' place, sit on the back patio and write all day if I want. When I was living in Austin, I was writing too, but Lord, I was keeping up the pace of living in Austin—we didn't sleep very much."

Jason James' initial release was on New West Records. The company suggested that he sound "less traditional." James is now an indie artist with his own label and tours extensively in the Lone Star State. "When I was signed with New West we had some tours, but nothing went through. I knew I could stay down here and make some kind of a living."

As a songwriter, James is true to the craft as he balances heartbreak with tongue-in-cheek phraseology. On the title track, he bemoans lost love singing "You left these arms of mine/You find more comfort in the warmth of the wine." He taps his Texas dancehall roots for "Cry on the Bayou" and "We're Gonna Honky Tonk Tonight," songs made for dancing. "There are some good dancers," James says. "But it's mostly an older generation. I don't see as many younger ones. By the same token, different people have different ways of enjoying music. Some folks like to just sit back and listen. For the longest time I liked playing listening rooms, but I wasn't hearing beer bottles clanking and falling, and I didn't know what to do with myself."

He penned all of the songs on *Seems Like Tears Ago* by himself. "I honestly don't know where it all comes from. I know it sounds stupid, or like I'm putting it up to be strange, but that is the mystery of writing. I'm always writing. Some of these topics are old school standards. But they still can be relatable, without being rehashed too much. I go for a universal feeling. If you talk about emotions, those don't change. Everyone has had to have felt that way, otherwise, there'd be no country records sold."

Amidst the heartbreak, cheating and liquored-up lovers, he inserts the gorgeous "Simply Divine," annotated with sweeping pedal steel. "The steel can be sonic tears, where you have to roll your pants legs up because you're flooding the studio," he avows.

Plans are underway for Jason James to perform select dates in other cities. As he concludes, "I want to make a living writing country music and see the folks around the world, turn them on to traditional music, and remind them it's still here, and it's not going anywhere."

Contact Conqueroo, Wendy Brynford-Jones, wendy@conqueroo.com or Cary Baker, cary@conqueroo.com

Who reads Music Connection?



THE INDIE ARTIST

"WE ARTISTS WORK SO HARD ON OUR CRAFT AND SOMETIMES IT'S NOTICED AND SOMETIMES IT'S NOT. TO HAVE SKILLED MUSIC CRITICS AND REAL MUSICIANS TO SAY THAT YOU CREATED SOME OF THE BEST MUSIC OF THE YEAR IS AN EXTREME HONOR AND NEVER GETS OLD."

– **RĀI**, MC'S TOP 25 NEW MUSIC CRITIQUES



THE EDUCATOR

"MUSIC CONNECTION MAGAZINE IS MY BAROMETER FOR STAYING ON TOP OF INDUSTRY TRENDS. MY STUDENTS RECEIVE INVALUABLE FEEDBACK THROUGH THE NEW MUSIC CRITIQUES AND REVIEWS. ALSO, THE NATIONAL DIRECTORIES ARE A GREAT RESOURCE. THE LATEST ISSUE OF MUSIC CONNECTION MAGAZINE HAS A PERMANENT HOME IN MY TEACHING STUDIO!"

– **CHRIS SAMPSON**, VICE DEAN FOR CONTEMPORARY MUSIC, USC THORNTON SCHOOL OF MUSIC



THE RECORD LABEL EXEC

"I WAS HONORED TO SHARE MY STORY WITH THE MUSIC CONNECTION FAMILY IN MUSIC CONNECTION'S "A&R ROUNDTABLE." MUSIC CONNECTION MAGAZINE HAS BEEN A MAJOR MUSIC SOURCE FOR ME SINCE DAY 1 OF MY CAREER, 10+ YEARS AGO!"

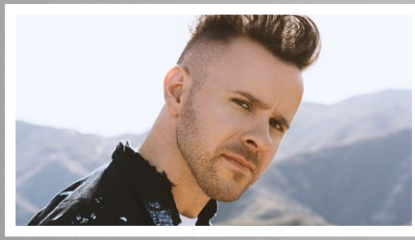
– **KATE CRAIG**, VP A&R WARNER BROS. RECORDS



THE MUSIC PROMOTER

"ADVERTISING WITH MUSIC CONNECTION HAS BEEN A GREAT EXPERIENCE THAT NOT ONLY GAVE US GREAT EXPOSURE, BUT ALLOWED US THE OPPORTUNITY TO GET INVOLVED IN CONTESTS AND OTHER FUN EVENTS. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED."

–**DAVID AVERY**, POWDERFINGER PROMOTIONS



THE PRODUCER-SONGWRITER

"I NEVER, EVER MISS AN ISSUE OF MUSIC CONNECTION!"

– **RICKY REED**, JASON DERULO, TWENTY ONE PILOTS



THE GRAMMY WINNER

"MUSIC CONNECTION IS CONSISTENTLY THE BEST SOURCE FOR HOW TO MAKE RECORDS AND SUSTAIN A CAREER IN MUSIC."

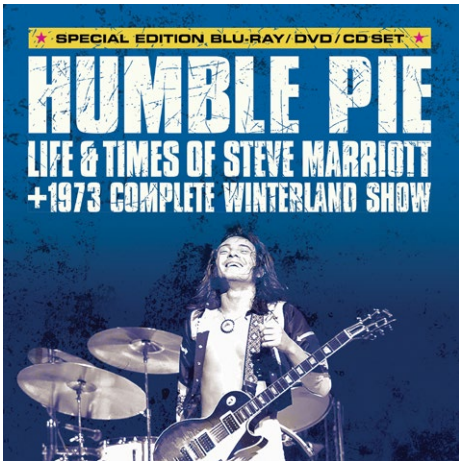
– **GREG WELLS**, KATY PERRY, PANIC!, ADELE

MUSIC CONNECTION

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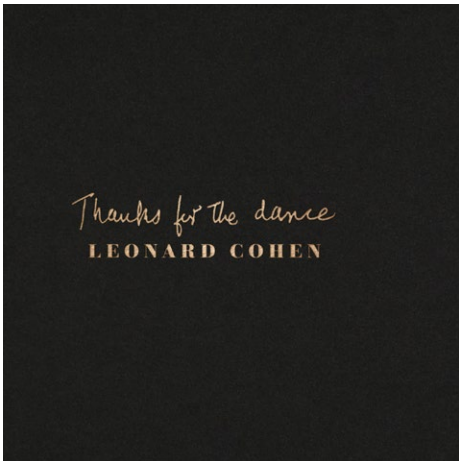
DROPS

In case you missed it, fans of 1994's then-flop but now-cult classic ***Airheads*** will be pleased to find that just over 25 years after its release—and subsequent pull from theaters two weeks after opening—Consequence of Sound conducted an in-depth interview on the film's backstory. Directed by **Michael Lehmann** and starring **Brendan Fraser, Steve Buscemi, Adam Sandler, Michael McKean, Joe Mantegna, Ernie Hudson, David Arquette, Michael Richards** and **Chris Farley**, the film is about a trio of musicians who hijack a radio station for air time. Consequence of Sound spoke with the cast, crew and film executives on how the film went from a dud to cult comedy. Read the piece at consequenceofsound.net/2019/10/oral-history-of-airheads/ and contact Katy Cooper at katy@bigpicturemediaonline.com for more information.



Humble Pie: Life and Times of Steve Marriott hit the street in November, telling the story of one of rock's largely unsung heroes, **Steve Marriott.** The documentary features interviews **Humble Pie's Peter Frampton, Jerry Shirley** and **Greg Ridley,** as well as **Bun E. Carlos** of **Cheap Trick, Black Crowes** members, Marriott historian **John Heller** and more, in addition to previously unseen photos and video to tell the story of the late artist. It also includes performance footage of **The Small Faces** and Humble Pie. Contact Clint Weiler at clint@mvdb2b.com for details.

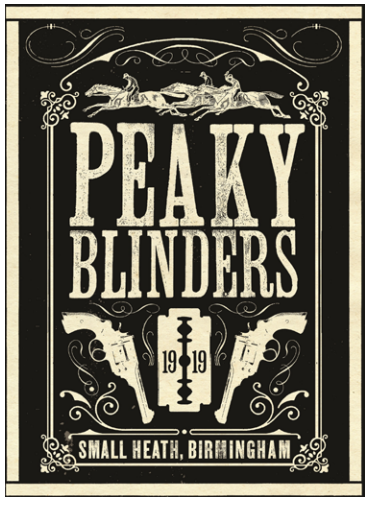
Atlantic Records releases ***Jagged Little Pill***, the original Broadway cast recording, a day after the hugely anticipated musical's Broadway





debut, inspired by Canadian singer-songwriter **Alanis Morissette's** groundbreaking 1995 album of the same name. Following last year's record-breaking, sold-out world premiere at the **American Repertory Theater**, this production opens Dec. 5 at Broadway's **Broadhurst Theatre**, lauded by the New York Times as "a big-hearted musical that breaks the mold." Find the companion video to the musical adaptation of "You Learn" on YouTube, and contact Christina.Kotsamanidis@atlanticrecords.com for more information.

In November, UMe dropped the first-ever official soundtrack to the popular BAFTA-winning BBC series ***Peaky Blinders***, which is on Netflix and debuted in 2013. The soundtrack for the gritty Birmingham-based gangster drama, inspired by a real group of post-World War I gangsters, features a previously unreleased rendition of the show's iconic theme song, **Nick Cave & the Bad Seeds' "Red Right Hand."** The track was recorded specifically for the show by **PJ Harvey**. Also, exclusively on the album, are **Jehnny Beth's "I'm The Man"** and **Anna Calvi's** season five score, **"You're Not God,"** along with **Richard Hawley's** cover of **Bob Dylan's "Ballad of A Thin Man."** The album includes songs from **Nick Cave, Arctic Monkeys, The White Stripes, Royal Blood, The Last Shadow Puppets, Queens of the Stone Age, Black Sabbath, David Bowie, Laura Marling, Foals** and more. For further details, contact Todd Nakamine at todd@funhouse-ent.com.



In the new series ***Behind the Board*, Gibson Guitar** takes music fans on an inside and in-depth look at the creation of the groundbreaking music behind their favorite songs, albums and films. In a recent film, the company sits down with composer **Charles Bernstein** to discuss the writing, performing, recording and production of some of the most unforgettable and terrifying compositions in film history and his original score for **Wes Craven's *A Nightmare On Elm Street***, which is considered a classic in horror film history. Watch the exclusive interview with Bernstein at youtube.com/watch?v=_3z_bCXCcHY. Contact Libby Coffey at lcoffey@primeprgroup.com for more information.

Thanks for the Dance, the unexpected album of new songs from beloved and iconic late songwriter **Leonard Cohen,** is out now and was produced by Cohen's son, **Adam Cohen**, and engineered and mixed by **Michael Chaves. "Happens To The Heart"** is the album's first official single, which features longtime collaborator **Javier Mas**, who flew from Barcelona to LA to capture the artist's spirit on the late musician's own guitar; the Berlin-based **Stargaze Orchestra**; famed producer **Daniel Lanois** on piano; and **Zac Rae** from **Death Cab For Cutie** on felt piano. Also, in celebration of the album's release, the video channel **Nowness** has collaborated with Adam Cohen to commission new moving-image works from a global roster of filmmakers and visual artists for ***Thanks for the Dance: Artistic Responses to Leonard Cohen***. This creation offers video representation of the album's music,

and an interpretation of Cohen's life and lyrics by the filmmakers/creators involved. Go here for more nowness.com/series/thanks-for-the-dance-leonard-cohen. For further information, contact Maria.Malta@sonymusic.com.

OPPS

Women in Music, a nonprofit working toward gender equality in the music industry, offers multiple opportunities year-round to get involved, as a mentor or mentee, with the organization, from hosting webinars or starting a local chapter to being a speaker at a WIM event. For details on how to get involved, visit womeninmusic.org.

FIVE VECTORS

The **71st Annual Southeastern Theatre Convention** will be held Feb. 26 through March 1 in **Louisville, KY,** convening over 5,000 members of the theatre community—from actors and dancers to stage managers, directors and playwrights—together for workshops, panels, performances, auditions, job interviews and more. The early-bird registration deadline is Dec. 13 with a pre-registration deadline of Jan. 22, 2020. For registration information and more about the conference, visit setc.org/convention.



Sync Con, a music in film and TV conference in **Hollywood**, takes place Dec. 6-8. The event is dedicated to training music producers, songwriters, supervisors, creators and aspiring industry professionals how to build successful careers in the film and TV music world, and the instruction comes from some of the best in the business. You can register to attend in-person or online at sync-con.com.

PROPS

Lifetime's highly anticipated three-hour biopic on pioneering female rap group **Salt-N-Pepa** has found its leading cast with **GG Townson** (*In the Cut, Everybody Hates Chris*) as **Cheryl "Salt" James** and **Laila Odom** (*The Bobby DeBarge Story, Undercover Brother 2*) set to portray **Sandra "Pepa" Denton**. Currently in production in Toronto, the authorized biopic uncovers the women behind the music and reveals how their very different personalitie—one salt of the earth, the other hot and spicy—fueled their creativity and tested the bonds of their enduring friendship. See press.aenetworks.com.

Grammy-winning band **Bon Jovi** recently released their latest song, **"Unbroken,"** which will be featured in the forthcoming documentary ***To Be of Service.*** Written by **Jon Bon Jovi,** and produced with **John Shanks**, this anthem is an ode to veterans living with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, written from a soldier's point of view. Over the next year, the band and Island Records will donate 100 percent of net proceeds from the download of "Unbroken" to the **Patriotic Service Dog Foundation**. The documentary was released on Netflix on Veterans Day, Nov. 11. To view the trailer, visit tobeofservicefilm.com.

Founded on the idea that games help users connect to virtual experiences and music allows for a more immersive experience, new LA- and Berlin-based startup **Five Vectors** aims to find ways to bridge the gap between the esports and music industries with a new approach to music licensing and gamer engagement. Founders **Andres Lauer** and **Wasae Imran** have created tools to analyze data on how gamers engage with music to gain insight on how to reach broader audiences with music and better engage with music fans. Contact Ali Scott at ali@rockpaperscissors.biz.

In honor of the company's 10-year anniversary, **Vevo**, the world's largest all-premium music video platform, has announced its Top 10 lists of the decade's most-watched music videos. Globally, the most-watched music video accolade goes to **Luis Fonsi's "Despacito"** featuring **Daddy Yankee**, with 6.4 billion views since its release in early 2017. Coming in second is **Mark Ronson's "Uptown Funk"** featuring **Bruno Mars**, with 3.6 billion views, followed by **Justin Bieber's "Sorry (PURPOSE: The Movement)**," with 3.1 billion views. In the US, Ronson's video takes the top spot with 628 million views, followed by **Silentó's "Watch Me (Whip/Nae Nae)**," with 527 million views and **Taylor Swift's "Shake It Off"** coming in third with 517 million views. Ronson's "Uptown Funk" also takes the top spot on the UK's most-watched list, followed by Justin Bieber's "Sorry (PURPOSE : The Movement)" and Taylor Swift's "Shake It Off." Contact Conor.Mallon@LDCommunications.co.uk for further details.

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

Out Take



Justin Levine

Producer/Arranger/Performer/Composer

Web: justinlevineonline.com
Contact: Meghan.Kehoe@rcarecords.com
Most Recent: *Moulin Rouge!*

The cast album for the new Broadway musical adaptation of *Moulin Rouge!* debuted at No. 1 on Billboard's cast albums chart this past summer, featuring an impressive mashup of more than 70 popular songs into 17 tracks, which can be attributed to producer-arranger Justin Levine. The resulting track list features a reworking of hits including Lady Gaga's "Bad Romance" and Sia's "Chandelier" along with original film favorites like "Come What May."

"*Moulin Rouge!* is the most challenging project I've ever worked on, partly because I wear so many hats on the show, and also because you have the responsibility of authorship and you're also not the author, so it's a delicate dance with your collaborators," Levine says. "Also, [there's a built-in] expectation when you're adapting someone else's work."

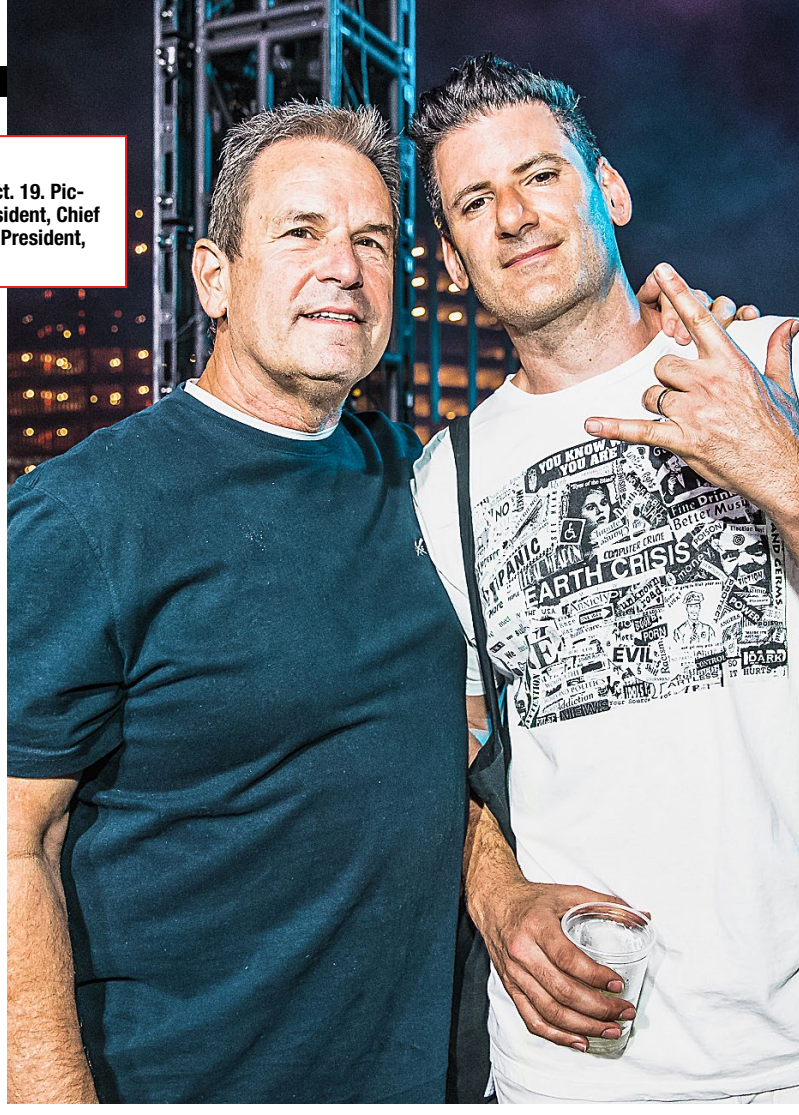
Levine was studying to be a performer and writer when he began writing music for friends' projects. "I love to be creative, and my only strategy has been [to do things that interest me,]" Levine says. "Work begets work. I don't think I had a specific plan to be a music director."

For *Moulin Rouge!*, Levine was tasked with telling a story through other musicians' work, which he says was like "solving a musical puzzle" by searching for lyrics that helped a character express something or fulfill a narrative need. He says "being as open-minded as possible" and working with a trusted team who feels comfortable enough to disagree are key to navigating a project like this.

"The best advice I could give is to really know what it is that brings you joy and pursue that. It's a long commitment, so [pursue] projects good for you professionally but are also things you're passionate about," he says. "[Be] mindful of your work/life boundaries. When you're a freelancer, it's hard to turn work down because you don't know where the next job is coming from, but [so many projects] leave very little room for your own sanity. At the end of the day, that's bad for your work."

▶ Destructo Performed for Friends at the Skylight DTLA

All My Friends Music Festival hit the Skylight ROW in Downtown Los Angeles on Oct. 19. Pictured backstage following Destruco's set were Chuck Ciongoli, Executive Vice President, Chief Financial Officer and Director of LiveStyle, Inc. and Gary Richards (aka Destructo), President, North America, LiveStyle, Inc.





▲ It Was a Player's Paradise at the LA Amp Show

This year's "Players Paradise" panel discussion was standing room only at the 15th annual LA AMP, Guitar, and Pedal Show. It was once again held at the Airtel Plaza Hotel in Van Nuys, CA, on Oct. 12 and 13. Pictured (l-r): Joe Bonamassa and Elliot Easton. Other panel participants were Jeff Kollman, Gregg Wright, JP Cervoni, Phil X and moderator Oscar Jordan.



◀ Music in the Vineyard

Live In The Vineyard (LITV) wrapped up their four-day event on Nov. 3 in Napa, CA. Attendees were treated to a number of performances by Avril Lavigne, Maren Morris and A Thousand Horses, among others, and enjoyed the grandiose vineyards and wineries and locally driven cuisines. LITV serves as host to industry insiders representing radio programming, music supervision, label executives, as well as grand prize winners from radio station promotions across the country. Pictured (l-r): Maren Morris and Avril Lavigne.



▲ Carteris Congratulates Funds on Record Royalty Distributions

The AFM & SAG-AFTRA Fund and the SAG-AFTRA & Industry SRD Fund attended the 4th SAG-AFTRA National Convention and got a big thumbs up for their record-setting royalty distributions this year from SAG-AFTRA President Gabrielle Carteris. Pictured (l-r): SRD Fund Manager Terry O'Neal and SAG-AFTRA President Gabrielle Carteris.

– CARMINA TAYLOR carminat@musicconnection.com



▲ Badflower Partners Up with Varvatos

Southern California rockers Badflower made their way east for a special show at John Varvatos Bowery in NYC on Nov. 5. The launch event celebrated the band's latest partnership as the face of the new John Varvatos Star USA Fall/Winter 2019 Campaign. Badflower consists of Josh Katz on vocals, Joey Morrow as lead guitarist, bassist Alex Espiritu and drummer Anthony Sonetti. Recently wrapping their OK, I'M SICK TOUR in the US, Badflower will hit the road touring throughout Europe to close out 2019. Pictured (l-r): Joey Morrow, Josh Katz, Anthony Sonetti and Alex Espiritu.



◀ The FMSMF Scores Big

The Film Musicians Secondary Markets Fund and The Society of Composers & Lyricists held a Film & TV Scoring Panel at the 2019 American Film Market in Santa Monica. The panel offered insight into budget, time and creative constraints faced by composers and also offered specific information about film musicians residuals. Pictured (l-r): Ashley Irwin, President, SCL; John Debney, composer; Gina Zimmitti, music contractor/coordinatory; Donald Petrie, Director; and Kim Roberts, Executive Director, FMSMF.

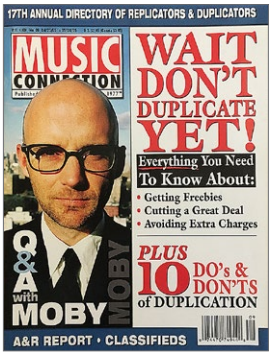
► Waybill Praises Vanston on Lukewarm Show

The Tubes singer Fee Waybill gave praise to CJ Vanston for his for his stellar performance with Derek Smalls at the Lukewarm Water Live concert at the Wiltern. Vanston helped Smalls blow the roof off the venue with guests Billy Idol, Steve Lukather, Steve Vai, Dweezil Zappa, Jane Lynch and The Hollywood Chamber Orchestra along with live satellite performances from Donald Fagen and Rick Wakeman. Vanston, who served as musical director and keyboardist, also produced Smalls' latest LP *Smalls Change (Meditations Upon Ageing)*. Pictured (l-r): CJ Vanston and Fee Waybill



MUSIC CONNECTION

Tidbits From Our Tattered Past



2005–Moby–#9

Multifaceted artist Moby was our cover subject this time as he promoted his latest album, *Hotel*. Said Moby, "If you spend a year working hard to make a record under your own name, it can be fun to take a week and make a record that doesn't have as much pressure on it." The issue also features on interview with indie queen Michelle Shocked.



2012–Rodrigo&Gabriela–#4

In an issue that featured interviews with awesome guitar and bass talents like Steve Hillage, Tom Petersson and Bootsy Collins, we interviewed super-dynamic guitar duo Rodrigo & Gabriela about ther unique sound. "We never thought about two guitars playing a little bit of Latin music and a little bit of metal," revealed Rodrigo. "We were playing on the streets and that's what came out."



REZZ: MAD REZZPECT

BY KURT ORZECK

PHOTOS BY WILL SELVIZ

In 2013, Isabelle Rezazadeh went to Hard's Day of the Dead festival in Los Angeles, where electronic music titans Skrillex, Deadmau5 and others partied deep into the night the weekend after Halloween. At the time, Rezazadeh was living with her parents in Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada and waitressing at a nearby Hard Rock Cafe.

Inspired by the event, Rezazadeh taught herself at 16 how to produce electronic dance music—more specifically, music that blends bass with downtempo electronica (read: not techno). Once she started spreading her musical content on social media, Skrillex took notice.

Fast-forward to six years later, and the EDM sensation has already partnered with her idols Skrillex and Deadmau5. She then released her *Beyond the Senses* EP through her own label over the summer—and, as an indication of just how large her fanbase has already become, more than 75,000 fans participated in a global virtual reality listening party. She's already played Coachella, Lollapalooza and Austin City Limits.

Rezz's Instagram feed is littered with imagery that accurately reflects her live performances: psychedelic scarecrow characters conspiring with aliens in *Dark Side of the Moon*-esque lasers, along with spiders and pyro. She makes no secret of her love for Budweiser and partying, either. Rezz liberally peppers YouTube with lengthy remixes, live performance videos and shorter cuts that have drawn hundreds of thousands of views. And her Spotify page attracts nears 780,000 listeners on a monthly basis, with "Edge," "Lonely" (featuring the Rigs), "Falling," "Relax" and "Hex" ranking as the most popular listens.

Social media included, what Rezz perhaps best represents in the entertainment industry of 2019 is that music must be a multifaceted experience that extends well beyond the medium itself. Immersive visuals, community involvement and even cult appeal are all essential traits of a contemporary music sensation. If it ain't multi-sensory, it ain't getting attention from the kiddos.

But mystery factors into the equation too. Rezz's Facebook profile is practically devoid of personal details, and her eyes are usually cloaked by those glowing spiral glasses. The "story" she lists in the "About" section of her profile simply lists all the releases she has issued to date—at least one for each year: 2019 (*Beyond the Senses*), 2018 (*Certain Kind of Magic*), 2017 (*Mass Manipulation*), 2016 (*Something Wrong Here* and *The Silence Is Deafening*) and 2015 (*Insurrection*).

Being prolific is one of this artist's hallmarks, with the relative newcomer already having dropped 16 singles in a mere four years: "Alien" (with Raito), "Fourth Impact" (with K?d), "I," "Silent Hill," "Relax," "Diluted Brains," "Premonition" (with Knodis), "Drugs!" (with 13), "Witching Hour," "Hex" (with 1788-L), "Flying Octopus", "Mixed Signals" (with Blanke), "Dark Age," "Falling" (featuring Underoath), "Kiss of Death" (with Deathpact) and "Criminals" (with Malaa).

That's hardly the limit of Rezz's bevy of friends. In late July, she performed at Diplo Presents the Super Mega Ultra Giant Mad Decent Block Party Festival at the New England Patriots' stadium alongside Major Lazer, G-Eazy, Miguel and Rezz's idol, Billie Eilish. In late October, at the Houston Raceway, she rubbed elbows with Armin Van Buuren, Steve Aoki, AC Slater and the Crystal Method as part of the second edition of Freaky Deaky Texas.

In other words, if it's EDM, Rezz is there.

Rezz is currently headlining a massive Beyond the Senses tour that saw her play the famed Red Rocks in Colorado, despite having no radio hits to her name. Recent appearances have included headlining spots at festivals including Bumbershoot, VooDoo and the Imagine Festival, as well as famed the Greek Theatre in Los Angeles, where she unveiled a brand-new stage production. The tour is set to stretch at least until Dec. 21 in Seattle, with already-sold-out shows in Salt Lake City, Las Vegas and San Francisco along the way.

> "I try to be in the moment and not live in the past or future. That's what I've learned over the last four months. My nerves and anxiety have decreased. Fear and anxiety cancel out when you're feeling grateful."

On top of it all, Rezz—like most EDM success stories—is amassing rampant global appeal. Over the summer, she hit Germany's New Horizons Festival, Creamfields in England and South West Four in London. *Beyond the Senses* debuted at #1 on not only the Apple Music and iTunes electronic charts in the US but in Canada as well. Next year, she will make her first appearances in South America at Lollapalooza with performances at the festival's stops in Chile and Argentina in March, and Brazil in April.

The music industry may be virtually unrecognizable from its form a few years ago, but some of its traits—like overnight success—have undeniably stayed the same.

Rezz's debut EP, *Insurrection*, dropped in 2015 on Skrillex's OWSLA/Nest HQ label, after which Deadmau5 released her EPs *The Silence is Deafening* and *Something Wrong Here*, and LPs *Mass Manipulation* and *Certain Kind of Magic*, between 2016 and 2018 on his Mau5trap label.

During her recent tour, we caught up with Rezz about her head-spinning headlining shows, staying fiscally prudent as her star soars—and how she has conquered the fears that come with overnight success.

Music Connection: How is the tour going so far? Have you experienced a best and worst show yet?
Rezz: It just started over the weekend. My first show was at Red Rocks. It was absolutely amazing. The venue itself is so beautiful and there was a crazy amount of people there. Before walking onstage, seeing the view was indescribable. Everything went perfectly.

MC: Was that your biggest headlining show to date?
Rezz: I've played in front of 60,000 people, so it's not the biggest, but yes, it was the biggest headlining show. Red Rocks was the one that I was freaking out about. I actually am glad we started the tour with it, because it was high-pressure show. Sixty percent of the crowd traveled from another city to see that show. That's what you call a high-pressure show.



MC: How did Red Rocks feel different from your other major performances?
Rezz: [It appeared like] every single person knew the words to every single song. I met literally 1,000 fans before the show, but the most interesting interactions happened afterward when they said how I changed their lives. There were parents with their kids … people from all ages.

They said they were going through points in their lives when they didn't want to be alive anymore, and my music saved them. That was never my intention, but obviously that's amazing.

MC: Have these high-profile performances altered how you approach your live performance or even songwriting?
Rezz: It hasn't really changed my approach, because I always do whatever I want to do.

MC: In that case, how do you manage to collaborate with Skrillex, Deadmau5 and the like?
Rezz: It depends. If I'm collaborating with a vocalist, I'll send them a really short idea, or they'll send me an idea, and we'll go from there. But if it's my own song, I look for a moment that inspires me.

MC: Do you use any traditional instruments or mostly laptops to make your music?
Rezz: Yeah, mostly computers, I actually don't use any hardware. I make some samples myself. When I have a bunch of random synthesizers, I can mess around. The whole point is I try to collect as many quality ones as I can on my computer. I don't even use a studio.

MC: Fascinating. Have you ever actually been in a recording studio?
Rezz: Yes, I've been in a studio a couple of times, but it's only been to test vocals out and use a track. I need help from my friends. I've been in Deadmau5's studio—but I don't prefer that. I prefer being in my own room, on my couch. I feel like the less I have to work with, the more I'm forced to work with what I have. I really like being minimalist.

MC: If you work mostly in isolation, how do you know when a song of yours is finished?
Rezz: When I finish a song, I don't send it to anybody. I keep it for myself and test it on a bunch of different sounds systems. I have a speaker that's right around me, and I test it in my car … and in my other car.

> "I actually don't use any hardware. I make some samples myself. When I have a bunch of random synthesizers, I can mess around. The whole point is I try to collect as many quality ones as I can on my computer."

MC: You're 24 years old and were working at the Hard Rock Cafe a few years ago. When did the second car come into the picture?
Rezz: Like eight months ago. I got an Audi R8. My other car is an Audi.

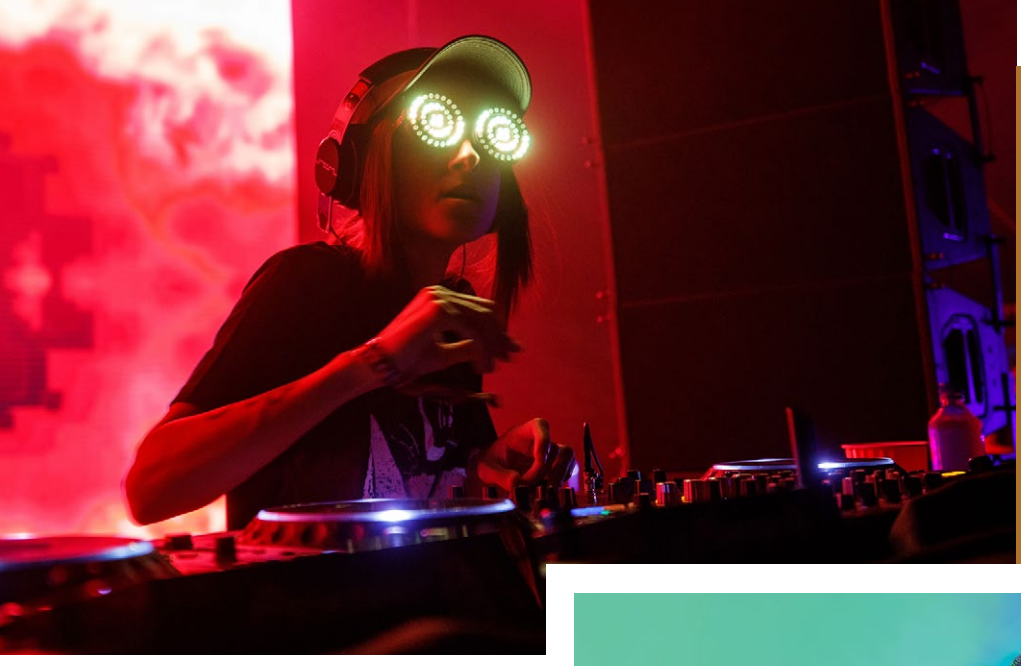
I'm really good with money and saving, because my parents raised me that way. I don't spoil myself too often. As soon as I started getting financial gain, I was really good. I bought a house, paid off my mortgage and bought a car. I don't spend $20,000 on clothing or $10,000 at the casino because I can. But I am donating $50,000 [to help efforts to stop] the fires going on in the Amazon.

MC: That's a surprisingly mature approach to finances for someone as young as yourself.
Rezz: When I was 21, 22, and even 23, my brain was very all over the place, and I was always bouncing off the wall and super stressed out. Everything was too good to be true. I still get nervous before shows, but for some reason lately, it's not like that at all. I felt like I was more fearful before.

MC: So what changed?
Rezz: I know I'm going to look back and be like, "I should've calmed the fuck down." I know that'd be the number one thing I'd do when I'm older. So I try to be in the moment and not live in the past or future. That's what I've learned over the last four months. My nerves and anxiety have decreased. Fear and anxiety cancel out when you're feeling grateful.

MC: Did Skrillex and Deadmau5 impart any especially useful advice?
Rezz: I asked Deadmau5 what his best advice would be to himself, he said he'd say to calm the fuck down. I'm not even old, but I can see how valuable that advice is. Everybody needs to calm down. Everybody needs to stop and be in the moment they're in and not be caught up in the future. It's such a simple thing, but it's one of the keys to life, really.





QUICK FACTS

- The Ukraine-born Rezazadeh was raised by her Ukrainian mother and Iranian father, then relocated to Canada when she was young.
- Rezz got the boot from the Hard Rock after skipping work to attend festivals instead.
- Rezz's signature accessory is a pair of light-up LED pixel glasses.
- Surprisingly, Rezz counts rock bands My Chemical Romance, Bring Me the Horizon and Marilyn Manson as her inspirations.
- Rezz said on a 2017 Reddit AMA that she falls near the center of the Kinsey scale.
- Rezz shares a birthday (March 28) with Lady Gaga and Reba McEntire. Here's to hoping a tour featuring all three superstars happens somewhere down the line. •

MC: Do you generally feel calm going onstage?
Rezz: I have a whole team that programs lights and visuals. Because I'm so prepared, I've been having a much easier time living in the moment of my set. My brain was all over the place before. Even last year, I was a different person in regards to my perspective on what I do. I was so nervous and fearful and could barely enjoy the show.

When I was 20-ish, I was completely alone but wasn't as anxious. The anxiety started to build as soon as I blew up. Twenty-two to 23 is when I started to feel the anxiety, when I had a team. Near the beginning, I had to overlook a lot of things to make sure everything was dialed in. But now my tour manager takes care of everything.

MC: If more than 60 percent of the people who attended your Red Rocks show came from other places, your fanbase must be fervent.
Rezz: I don't think I ever could've anticipated the amount of loyalty and dedication they have to me. They call themselves the Cult of Rezz. They're so passionate about me. They know every single song I've ever made.

MC: Is it because of their ardent support that you felt comfortable releasing *Beyond the Senses* on your own?
Rezz: We wanted to self-release because it showed I was at a level where I could do so and didn't have to release on a label. We all agreed it was time for a switch-up.

MC: Are you planning more self-releases?
Rezz: I think so. I have a couple of tracks we're trying to pitch to major labels. They will be an evolution of myself. I'm going to release singles throughout 2020. My first track is a collaboration with Malaa next month [named "Making Fire"].

MC: What are some of your dream collaborations?
Rezz: I already sent a track to Grimes. She said she's down, so I'm going to wait for her to send me a vocal, which will be sick. Zedd. I already started a song with Deadmau5, so I'm going to hit him up soon to get that done. My absolute dream would be Billie Eilish, but that's super out of reach at the moment. But you never know what can happen.

Contact Grace Fleisher
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100 BEST CAREER TIPS OF 2019

Compiled by Carmina Taylor

***Music Connection* readers know that *MC* is the place to go for career advice and industry insights from experts in the field. Listed below are what we believe to be the very best career insights we've published during the past year. Each quoted tip cites the month it first appeared on musicconnection.com.**

BUILD A SOLID BRAND

There has to be a story… That creates the brand as long as it's consistent. It should relate to everything you do—bios, press releases, videos, photos, blogs. You need to let people know 'who you are,' in addition to your music. Artists need to understand; it's not just about their music. It's about everything they do.

– Jonathan Wolfson
Manager
(Hall and Oates, Huey Lewis and the News)
June



There are tons of places you don't have control over. The places you do control, make sure it's high quality and what you want your brand to look and sound like.

– Amy Stroup
Composer
January

In this era, media gravitates to artists who have already been validated by other outlets. You need reviews, playlists and social media all working together. You have to be consistent across all platforms to establish a strong brand.

– Mitch Schneider
SRO PR
June

[Entertainment] involves your clothing, your look, the way you move, everything about you. You have to be consistent, in all aspects of your art, to establish an identity. If you're all over the place, you will confuse people.

– Larry Butler
Live Performance Coach
March

I think I entered [the industry] being obsessed with having a certain brand, but I think you cultivate that as years go by.

– Dano Cerny
Director-Filmmaker
November

You need to find some connection with your audience. And sometimes that's about your interests and things you care about…Those things will help establish your brand.

– Amanda Blide
Trend PR
June

STAY TRUE TO YOURSELF

I would rather fail and be who I am than be the biggest pop star in the world and not be me.

– Madison Beer
May

There are no absolute do's and don'ts, especially on YouTube. That is why it has opened so many doors because [people] can be themselves.

– Reneé Dominique
Songwriter
November



I can't be someone that I'm not. There's no sense in trying to sing songs that don't speak to me or reflect what is in my soul.

– Myoa
Singer-Songwriter
July

Remember why you started and stay true to that reason—get out on the scene, make friends and figure out who you want to associate with, do your own thing, telling your own story and it will find an audience.

– Joe Normal
September

I get a pang of fear: Does my story even matter? But then I listen to a deeper voice within and hear the truth: Yes, yes it does.

– Birch
Singer-Songwriter
April

When I was nine years old, I used to take lyric books from CDs and copy the lyrics down verbatim. I would think I had written a song. What that transcended into was figuring out that songwriting was creating something of my own.

– Nick Furlong
Songwriter
(Diplo, Steve Aoki, Avicii)
June



The composing world is a very complex one now, and the most difficult thing is to find yourself. You have to dive deeply into yourself. You have to find what's good for yourself and define your direction.

– Ludovico Einaudi
Composer
(Seven Days Walking)
July

I got fired from my first TV show after four episodes because I needed to learn that confidence and simplicity were key.

– Christopher Lennertz
Composer
(Sausage Party, Agent Carter)
September

Always be yourself. Don't try to copy anything. Create music that is your sound and then, if you send it to a label, do a quick introduction.

– Maykel Prion
Co-Founder/CEO
Armada Music
July

Criticism is not judgment. You do need to be self-aware and objective about your art and performance, but you can't let someone else's opinion sway you from your mission.

– Storm Gardner
Singer
March

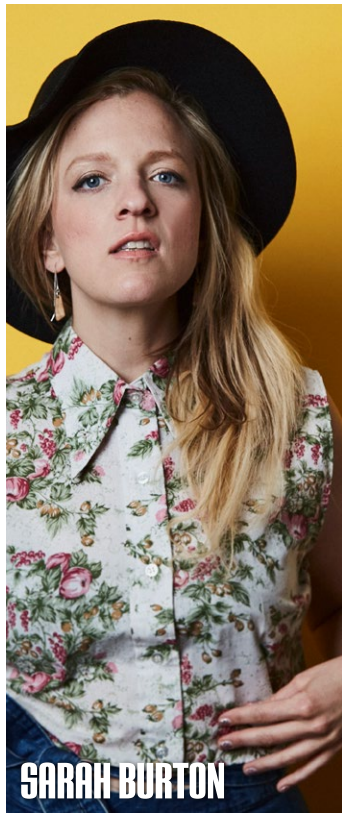
Focus on being authentic on all sides of your career.

– Tommy Stalknecht
CEO of Single Music
May

SONGWRITING IS AN OBSESSION

A lot of my songs and compositional elements started life as either licks I'd play in improvisation, or groovy vamps I'd riff on when practicing or jamming with mates.

– Johno
Songwriter
March



The most important thing in the room is the song—not the people. They are all working for the benefit of the song, not for their egos and ideas.

– Richard Harris
Songwriter (BBC, ABC)
September

In my earlier days, when I was waitressing, I had drawers full of cocktail napkins with lyrics written down on them.

– Sarah Burton
Singer-Songwriter
May

What's cool now is understanding the process. Maybe if I write something on piano when it's time to try it with a rhythm section, I might switch to guitar. And based on what guitar I'm using, this might determine the arrangement. I've set myself up by going through each step in the process.

– Nick Waterhouse
Songwriter
April

Whenever I feel inspired, I try to capture that much of it. That's how I've written since I was 13. It's where the seed of inspiration is.

– Steve Vai
Producer
(David Lee Roth)
July



A lot of times, the songs start life on my laptop. I'll start writing and producing sort of at the same time, so a lot of the musical parts and the meat of the idea I'll program as I'm writing the tune.

– Dan Smith
Bastille
September

What I like to do is take a first pass at it and then get everyone's opinion.

– Suzi Quatro
May

Lyrically, I just wanted to be as honest as possible and use music to tell the story of my life. I began incorporating organic instruments and EDM elements. I realized that to be authentic, we can't shy away from writing about all we're going through.

– Elle Winter
Songwriter
June

You won't always hit the bullseye, but that's part of the process.

– Kevin Teasly
Composer, Music Director
April

"I'm mostly a phone writer, it's super handy, and the voice memo is amazing. I tend to write in transit, so it's handy.

– Sarah Burton
Singer-Songwriter
May

I wasn't hearing the people I was working for, who were looking for emotion and storytelling, and I made it too much about the music. I learned that story is the answer, story is the boss.

– Christopher Lennertz
Composer
(Sausage Party, Agent Carter)
September

BE ORIGINAL

If you want to succeed, you must come to life with original thoughts, style and attitude. The best artists enlighten the world.

– Storm Gardner
Singer
March

Be innovative. That's why I got into this field; because I wanted to take a different approach to audio. Stay humble and curious. Teamwork is crucial.

– Yao Wang
Composer-Producer
-Entrepreneur
April

I always create from my heart. I don't chase trends, sounds or styles. I just do me and that's the best way to create because you give an artist your heart and soul.

*– **Amadeus***
Producer
(Chris Brown, 50 Cent)
November

Singers need to develop their own vocal style; otherwise they'll sound like every other good singer. There's nothing special about that. They need to develop two voices, one for ballads and another for up-tempo numbers. Most importantly, they have to connect emotionally with the material. Audiences don't care about perfection—they want to feel something.

– Larry Butler
Live Performance Coach
March

Each artist has to set their own trend that's true to their music. With streaming services, we may see consumers peruse more genres than they would have in the past. With Florida Georgia Line, I'll bet a lot of country fans now know who Bebe Rexha is.

– Allison Jones
SVP of A&R at BMLG
January

Building unique sounds has always interested me. A straight, up the-middle pop song can get boring. I need something to take it out of that zone and make it a little bit unique.

– Christian Medice
Producer
(Halsey, Pink)
March

You need to learn how to listen with your ears and eyes. Influences can help you, but they can also get in the way. You need to add your own personality and perspective to make what you do special and unique.

– Storm Gardner
Singer
March

KNOW THE MUSIC BUSINESS

With technology today, it doesn't matter where you live. A lot of [the work] happens online. Many records I've created, I wasn't even in the studio. But to actually be hands-on and in the studio collaborating, I'd say that LA would be the place.

– Amadeus
Producer
(Chris Brown, 50 Cent)
November

I recommend the MIDEM Convention to anyone who can afford it! And the NAMM Convention. Introduce yourself. The people there are the people you need to meet. The face-to-face is so important. People remember you.

– Karolina Rose
Songwriter
April

In the beginning, experience as much as you can; chase the ones you know you're a good fit for, but also the ones that you think might be a creative mismatch—try it. You might learn something.

– Tony Morales
Composer
February

It's in your best interest to create a business entity such as a Limited Liability Company or S-Corporation. A good accountant or business manager can help you do this, and will not only simplify your budgeting and taxes, but will also protect you in the event of a legal conflict.

– Joshua Martin and Reggie Gooden
818 Talent
September

Before you even consider entering into a contract to perform, you need to do your "due diligence" and investigate the person or company you will be contracting with.

– Glenn Litwak
Music Attorney
October

Coming up, no one schooled me on the business. I had to figure it out on my own. Years ago I picked up a book called *Everything You'd Better Know About the Record Industry* by [the late artist and producer] Kashif.

– Amadeus
Producer
(Chris Brown, 50 Cent)
November

Attention to detail before you get a label, or a manager, or a booking agent is paramount to getting those things.

– Jason Hawk Harris
April

Reading music changes is key. Understanding what the trends are and moving that into your language.

– Richard Harris
Songwriter (BBC, ABC)
September

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media allows artists to connect with people they may never have met before. If you do it right, it can create a community that follows and supports you for years.

– Hunter Scott, Founder
Trend PR
March



[In] social media culture, we can curate what we want to represent us as artists and not advertise things we're less proud of.

Dano Cerny
Director-filmmaker
November

You don't want to merely be a follower on Instagram. You want to be a leader and experiment with ways to engage and grow your audience. Learn from other successful accounts, but come up with ways that showcase your personality and skills best.

– Sam Blakelock
@pickupjazz on Instagram
April

With social media and online platforms, everything is possible.

– Mattia Esposito
COO of Rehegoo Music Group
October

You can get attention online and build a decent fan base. But, you still have to play live for fans—that's where it is today. Social media can maintain an audience, but playing live can build one.

– Jonathan Wolfson
Manager
(Hall and Oates, Huey Lewis and the News)
June



Originality, talent and a large social media following are the main ingredients that will attract labels and publishing companies as well.

– Josquin Des Pres
JoNa Music Group
November

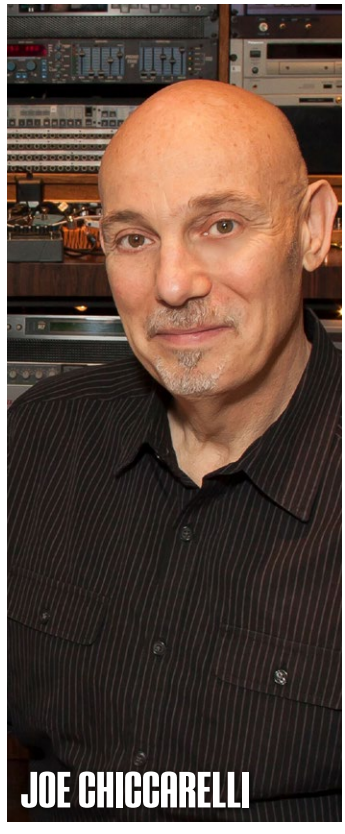
Before I was signed, if I was going to cover or remix a song [for posting], it would be a song that was big at the time. Then, I had to make sure that whatever I did with the song was as different as could be. I would make sure my version sounded completely different.

– Conor Maynard
October

PRODUCING

It's important to differentiate yourself. It will help you build a career. Otherwise, you'll be just like everybody else. It's especially important for producers to differentiate themselves with identifiable sounds and productions. For example, you can clearly hear the difference between Dr. Dre and Timbaland.

– Al Shaw
Machinewerk
March



Songs and melodies don't exist in isolation. There's generally some kind of sonic aesthetic that's required. That's where the production comes in. Usually you can tell if you're pleasing somebody. If you want to please them, you'll do more of that. I get into what I think somebody wants and then try to push them way beyond it to see what's too far.

– Jacknife Lee
Producer
(Taylor Swift, Weezer)
January

One problem was when do you try to reinvent the song and make it your own and when do you say "This is what the song is and we need to respect the original?"

– Joe Chiccarelli
Producer
(Morrissey, Vance Joy)
August

The great thing about collaboration is that if you put five producers in a room, what you'll come up with is epic because that's five different points of view.

– Amadeus
Producer
(Chris Brown, 50 Cent)
November

I don't want speakers to be too flattering. I don't want it to sound great in the studio and then pay it on the kitchen stereo and it doesn't have that vibe anymore. My mix test was my rental Hyundai [car stereo].

– Mr Hudson
Producer
(Kanye West, Duran Duran)
September

The ultimate expression of recording as an art form is to capture and document [the feeling when they wrote it] perfectly. To get as close to the bone as possible.

– Jack Antonoff
October

Listen more than you talk. Check your ego at the door.

– Rob Jaczko
Berklee College
May

I have a big toolbox of stuff, in the same way that a serious photographer has a lot of lenses and camera or a serious chef has a lot of knives and the pots and pans they adore and feel lost without. I'm like that with gear and instruments and



microphones. But it doesn't mean I'm going to use all of them. If the song is great, the song will tell you what it needs.

– Greg Wells
Producer-Songwriter
(Katy Perry, Adele)
February

Mixing something you've produced is a challenge, because you don't have fresh ears on it and you're attached to certain performances or parts.

– Mr Hudson
Producer
(Kanye West, Duran Duran)
September

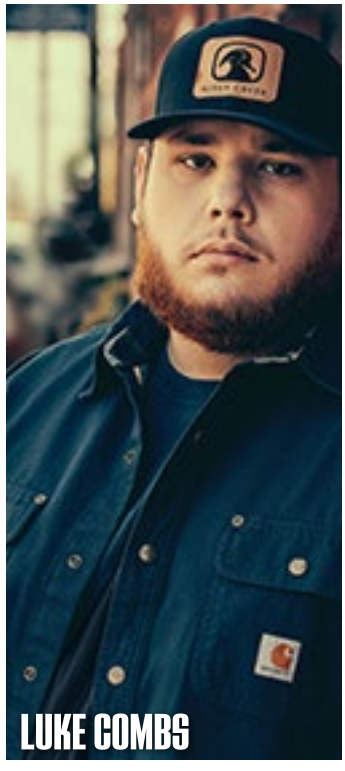
RELATIONSHIPS ARE KEY

I think the unique thing is bringing [co-writers] in, fostering that relationship I have with them and letting them know that I appreciate their input.

– Luke Combs
August

You may have more of a personal relationship with an independent [label]; you may feel they "get you" and afford you more creative freedom.

– Glenn Litwak
Music Attorney
March



Any free time I have where I'm not working on our new stuff, I'm just meeting new songwriters and meeting different artists, producers and just trying to see how they do it and work with them and learn and have fun writing songs.

– Dan Smith, Bastille
September

You have to be technically savvy, and you really have to develop your team from the beginning.

– Kevin Teasly
Composer, Music Director
April

You can go to school, learn every program, but at the end of the day, this is a people game. I've had interns that know more key commands than me, but not how to deal with five people in a room, recording a song, especially when things get tense.

– Charlie Waymire
Engineer-Producer
August

I played my first open mic in Nashville three days after I moved here. I was terrified, but once I got used to it, it's pretty similar—making a connection with the audience.

– Lucy Isabel
Songwriter
November

Your business is only as good as the network you have. You have to build relationships.

– Richard Harris
Songwriter (BBC, ABC)
September

It's a social business. You've got to deal with people and you have to keep your ego in check. You never know where stuff's going to come from."

– Shawn Clement
Composer-Producer-Engineer
May

Make strong connections with the fans you have at the very beginning. They will follow you through all your highs and lows, so make sure to let them know how much you appreciate them. They will be the most willing to share your music and watch you grow.

– Caly Bevier
Singer-Songwriter
August



It's good to establish a relationship with the mastering engineer and to ensure that an artist is comfortable with them.

– Colin Leonard
Sing Mastering
October

If you're not playing music because you love the people that you're being creative with, and you just want some awesome version of expression...you're doing it for the completely wrong reasons.

– KW
Vile Creatures
May

There are some amazing groups [on LinkedIn]—music industry groups—that you can put questions to and be involved in. It is overwhelming and the amount of people willing to help is outstanding.

– Lena Tufenkjian
Musician, Career Coach
April

Above all, it's important to get honest, qualified people on your team, but it's also a good idea to hire people you get along with personally. Your team should be with you for the long haul.

– Joshua Martin and Reggie Gooden
818 Talent
September

WORK HARD, WORK SMART

Don't be lazy. Get out there, do the work. Don't rely on just social media to promote. Pound the pavement. Hand out stickers and flyers. Canvas shows after [the crowds] come out. Create the scene in your local hometown. Build up your following. Build up the noise. Build up the buzz.

– David Draiman
Disturbed
January

We're kinda realizing that if we put something out there in the air, if we ask for it and work hard enough, it comes to us.

– Tarriona "Tank" Ball
Tank and the Bangas
November

The more you combine [the label's work and the work that you do,] the more you'll be able to break.

– Mattia Esposito
COO of Rehegoo Music Group
October

Music is a lifetime commitment—it's the thing that called me. A great chef knows how to make a lot of types of food and that informs the food he makes. A classical conductor plays a number of instruments very well, but when they're in front of the orchestra they're not playing anything. That's how they got the gig—by being experts.

– Greg Wells
Producer-Songwriter
(Katy Perry, Adele)
February

You have to have thick skin in this business. Don't have feelings when it comes to what people think.

– Sean Paul
June

[The door] wasn't going to stay open forever. And I had to work my ass off. I still feel like that every day. None of this is permanent.

– Jack Antonoff
October

It's the most difficult period of time to ever try and become a commercially successful musician in the history of music. Prepare to sacrifice everything for your art and then be prepared to sacrifice a little bit more. Because the chances of you breaking in this environment are about equivalent to winning a Powerball lottery.

– David Draiman, Disturbed
January

BE PASSIONATE

Ask questions. Ask for the details. Find that one person with passion and ideas. They make the most amazing things.

– Adam Grahn
Royal Republic
July

Making music was the only thing that kept me from going insane. Even though I still went a little insane.

– Alyse Vellutro
Pronoun
May

It can take time before you get any results, and you have to really love it because there will be times when it's not fun, and the constant rejections are going to add up.

– Tony Morales
Composer
February

At one point, I believed basketball was my calling. It didn't pan out the way I wanted to—but I've always been an artist before I picked up a basketball. Even though I feel free on the basketball court, art is a connection to my soul.

– Maez301
June

It's a matter of committing: I try to get in, learn as much as I can, make decisions and just go for it.

– Lucy Isabel
Songwriter
November

There would be no reason to be in the studio if it wasn't a group of people trying to reach [a common] place. That's the glory of it, to have this crazy idea and chase it.

– Jack Antonoff
October

I made myself a promise when I left the military that I would pursue music. If you risk your life for a cause you don't fully believe in, why not risk everything for what your heart tells you to do?

– David Macias
Songwriter
July

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE

Rehearse. A LOT. The more you know, the less is unknown, and the less you have to fear.

– John M.
Singer-Songwriter, Author
May

If each band member does his or her homework and learns the material before coming to a rehearsal, things will go much faster and much more smoothly.

– John M.
Singer-Songwriter, Author
May



Break up your practice time instead of spending all of your energy at once.

– Reeve Johnson
Performer
May

Practicing is what all musicians and performing artists do, (or should do) every day to maintain their technical skills on their instrument.

– John M.
Singer-Songwriter, Author
May

When I'm not singing, I'm doing scales.

– Josh Todd
Buckcherry
May

MARKET YOURSELF

[Lucidious] is an artist who utilized direct marketing strategies on Facebook and Instagram to find his audience and get them into his world…He mastered the Facebook Business and Ads Manager and ran all different kinds of video ads targeting fans of similar artists. They came pouring into his world and eventually he was getting fans to click on his ads at around $0.02 per click.

– Ari Herstand
Artist, Blogger, Author
April

We really push our fans to presave us on Spotfiy, things like that. We're focusing on branding, marketing and getting the best songs out each month.

– Chris Evanko
The Stash
November

The way in which you build your audience on Spotify is very different than the way you build your audience on SoundCloud.

– Jeff Ponchick
Co-Founder/CEO Repost Network
June



The best way to find and grow your audience now is through direct marketing. Not PR. Not playlists. Not touring. Not blogs. Marketing.

– Ari Herstand
Artist, Blogger, Author
April

TAKE A BREAK

Often when we come back [to the studio], the answer is right in front of us. It's a good way to get out of our heads for a minute.

– Christian Medice
Producer
(Halsey, Pink)
March

I'll give myself 15 minutes and do three ideas. That breaks the cycle, and one of those ideas is going to be cool and I'll want to run with it.

– J. Worra
Producer
October



If a writer hits a wall while recording, one option is to put [whatever they're working on] away. Another is to sit and be still for a short time. You don't try to figure out what the song means. You have to stop the voice in your head and be present for a moment. You listen and the song will tell you what it needs to be.

– Steve Vai
Producer
(David Lee Roth)
July

AND FINALLY...

Stop trying to be cool, stop trying to be relevant. Just focus on making the best music you can make.

– Jason Hawk Harris
April

For more Expert Career Tips, check out musicconnection.com/?s=Tip MC

Musicians Contact

Aside from the Rolling Stones, The Who and some major record labels, not many entities have lasted 50 years in the rock-music industry. Especially when one flies under the radar. But an oft-overlooked music industry service recently claimed the gold prize this year —and is still going strong.

Meet Los Angeles-based Musicians Contact, if you haven't already, a mostly one-man operation run by 72-year-old Sterling Howard that has a simple mission: connecting musicians through classified ads and referral services.

"It's a very narrow business. I don't book bands. I'm not a manager. I just connect musicians," Howard states. "[Musicians Contact is] not a place to sell your song or make a record deal. It's just a referral service between the musicians. People think I must produce groups, but I just find members and that's that. It's not an employment agency."



With the tagline "Connecting Musicians to Working Bands Since 1969," Howard's sterling service has been utilized by famous musicians ranging from Rick Springfield to David Hasselhoff to the Smashing Pumpkins, not to mention more lesser-known artists than he can count.

That said, "As a rule, I've never told people to join [Musicians Contact] to try to get famous, because it's such a longshot," Howard discloses. "At least 99.9999 percent of bands we've booked are garage bands, wedding bands, festival bands, original bands, cover bands, full-time and part-time bands."

Howard started the business because he himself was an aspiring rock singer trying to find bandmates in Hollywood in the late '60s. With no magazines or newspapers featuring classified-ad sections where musicians could connect, he opened an office upstairs at the Whisky A GoGo, paying rent at a rate of $75 a month, and launched his innovative business.

"Dr. John, Todd Rundgren, Canned Heat, Strawberry Alarm Clock … the reason I got those bands was because they were already going up to the Whisky office and noticed mine," Howard recalls. "I'd walk the street with fliers, and anyone who looked like a musician, I gave them a flier [for Musicians Contact]."

Back then, the phones at Musicians Contact used to ring about 300 times a day.

"In the good old days, bands played five days a week—at everywhere from a big club to a Ramada Inn," he continues. "When those shut down, it put thousands of bands out of work."

Howard evolved his business with the times, opening a second office near Disneyland and using custom-made computers connected to tape recorders. But the biggest change probably came 20 years ago when a little thing called the internet came along.

Howard suddenly found other websites competing with his company—not to mention Craigslist—where musicians can post ads seeking other band members for free. But while the internet increased competition, it also gave Musicians Contact a presence across the US. Whereas the company used to be a "low-goal SoCal service" for 30 years, in the last 20, it's served as a national organization.

"We're getting gigs from all over the country we've never gotten before," Howard says. "A band can put in an ad from New York now, and gigs have expanded across the country. Thanks to the internet, I don't need to enlarge our staff."

Currently, Howard works full time, and his wife and son support his business on a part-time basis. While Musicians Contact's Facebook page has about 7,000 fans, and a monthly newsletter list of more than 47,000 subscribers, he says the company drums up most of its business thanks to word of mouth.

"Social media has done very little impact because I'm not a heavy social media person," he frankly admits.

Howard adds that he could grow his business significantly without having to expand the size of his workforce — but he simply doesn't feel the drive to do so.

"I would have to be more busy," he laughs.

Howard has kept Musicians Contact alive and stable by following two simple mantras that are typically antithetical to others working in the music business.

"I've remained relevant as a businessman by being honest," he says. "This is not a big moneymaking company. Customers are paying me flat little fees in order to survive. This has been my only job, it's allowed me to buy a house and have a family. I'm pretty much an average American.

"Persistence would be the other thing," he adds. "A lot of people after doing this for a while would've quit, but I actually enjoy it. I don't even see retiring because I've still got bills to pay."

In Howard's dream world, more concertgoers would attend shows by not just original bands but also cover bands, as they comprise the majority of his business. But those gigs have tanked drastically due to the rise of karaoke, DJs, booze laws and sports bars, he says.

On the flip side, Howard is pleased with the current state of Musicians Contact and optimistic about its future.

"When I start reading the testimonials on our website from artists we've connected, that lifts me up," he imparts.

One of them, by Gentlemen's Blues Club leader Mick Stover, reads as follows: "I consider MC to be THE go-to resource for finding musicians and gigs. I've been successfully using MC for many years. Sterling has always been friendly, knowledgeable, and super helpful. The first time I used MC, I landed a four-month touring bass gig. MC is the real deal..."

Naturally, Howard is flattered by such remarks—and honored that he has helped some musicians achieved their dreams.

"Some of these people, I've changed their lives without even knowing it," he says. "I recently talked with a guy who, after seven years, came back from Singapore, and he says he got a job because of me. That's good-old gratification."

Visit musicianscontact.com



DALI MRAZ - 9.0

Contact: dalibormraz@gmail.com
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A superior skinsman, Czech artist Dali Mraz enlists a raft of equally adept players on his attractively rendered album, *Level 25*. In fact, the musicianship has a wow factor that cannot be understated. What's more, Mraz's themes provide the mortal listener with calmness and breathing room between each succeeding display of audio adrenaline. "November" deploys every weapon of this project: fluid fretwork, funky mega-thwack bass parts, dexterous drums & percussion. "No Ego" is a moody, Chopinesque piano interlude. "atoN" features bass parts that are absolutely insane. Above all, Mraz has accomplished what many proggers fail to do—compose themes that are more than mere frame-works for self-indulgence.

TOP 25 NEW MUS

One of *Music Connection*'s best-known specialties is reviewing the work of unsigned recording artists. Over the past year, our listening crew heard some stellar talents and it's now time to present the cream of the whole crop. Below are the highest scoring artists and bands—as well as an additional page of Top Prospects who are just too talented to overlook. *MC* invites all unsigned recording artists to sign up for a free review at musicconnection.com/reviews/new-music-critiques.



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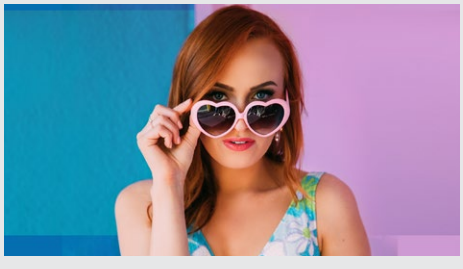
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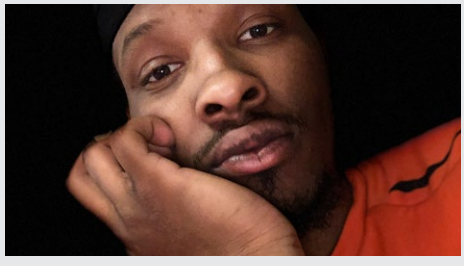
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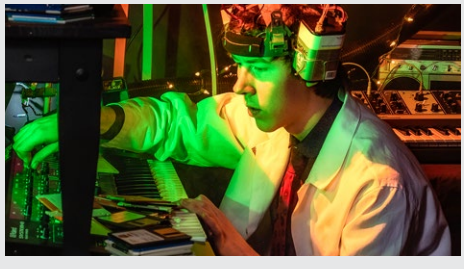
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TOP PROSPECTS 2·0·1·9



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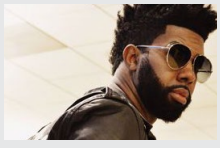
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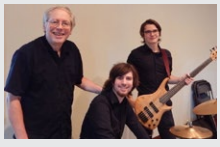
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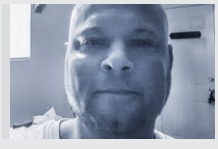
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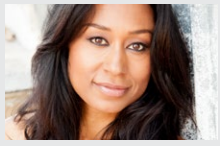
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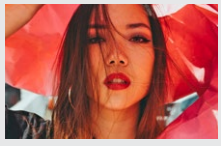
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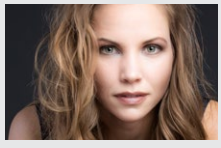
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Contact: info@cel36.com
Web: cel36.com/artists/album-acrobotik



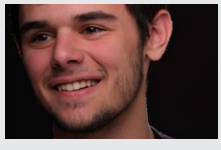
CARMEL HELENE - 8.0
Contact: carmelhelene@me.com
Web: carmelhelene.com



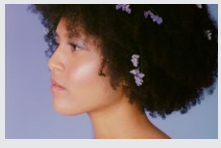
ABI - 7.8
Contact: abigailkimmusic@gmail.com
Web: abimusic.us



DIANA CHITTESTER - 7.8
Contact: dianachittester@gmail.com
Web: dianachittester.com



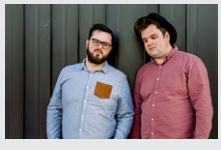
SAM LEVIN - 7.8
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Web: thesamlevin.com



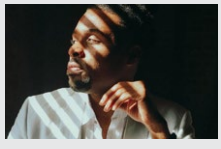
CECILY - 7.8
Contact: cecilymusic@gmail.com
Web: cecilymusic.com



ROYALJAG - 7.8
Contact: jaz@mijamgmt.com
Web: royaljagband.com



THE STATISTICS - 7.8
Contact: becky@bigpicturemediaonline.com
Web: soundcloud.com/the-statistics



MARTELL LACEY - 7.8
Contact: songsunlimitedmusic@gmail.com
Web: martelllacey.com

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OUR FAVORITE SIGNING STORIES OF 2019

***MUSIC CONNECTION'S* Signing Stories are a regular and quite popular offering for readers like yourself who want the inside scoop on the who, what, when, where and why an artist or band decided to sign with a particular label, management firm or music publisher. For one reason or other, we feel the following artists' stories stood out as the most enlightening to our readers.**


DIRTY HONEY

DIRTY HONEY

Band Members: Marc LaBelle, vocals; John Notto, guitars; Justin Smolian, bass; Corey Coverstone, drums.
Type of Music: Rock & Roll
Management: Mark DiDia - Red Light Management
Booking: Ken Fermaglich - UTA
Legal: Greg Cimino
Publicity: Heidi Ellen Robinson-Fitzgerald, herfitz@mac.com
Web: dirtyhoney.com

At a time when labels are reluctant to take a chance on a hard rocking young rock band like Dirty Honey, we are impressed by how these artists aligned with a prominent management firm and self-released their record—which spawned a single, "When I'm Gone," that made history in October, making Dirty Honey the ONLY UNSIGNED BAND in history to go to #1 on Billboard's Mainstream Rock chart.

Goes to show you how much the record industry is changing. Apparently, you don't necessarily need a major label to make it to the top of the chart. Rather than beg and plead with labels, Dirty Honey signed with Mark DiDia's Red Light Management and self-released their album on Dirt Records.

"I ran labels for years, that's my background," says DiDia. "So we have a promotion system [at Red Light] for radio. I thought we'd have a good shot at that. [I tried] to get them a record deal last year. I shopped the EP to every label I could think of, and nobody wanted to take the dive with me. Instead of waiting around and begging, I figured I'd do it myself."

Singer Marc LaBelle confirms that they put a lot of energy into trying to get a label partner at the beginning. "We like the path that we're on. We're still taking every label meeting we can get, but there seems to be an authenticity in [not having a] mission statement. It's just a cooler thing. But if Atlantic were to give us a million dollars, that's a conversation we'd be having."

The band has already opened for The Who and Slash. Without a label, but with a seasoned manager, they're taking giant strides. "Good, old- fashioned, fun, riff-based rock records never go away," says DiDia.

JOCELYN

Label: BMG
Type of Music: Pop/Singer-Songwriter
Management: Jeff McClain - Midlands Music Group
Booking: Jeff McClain - Midlands Music Group
Legal: Steven R. Lowy
Publicity: nathalie.rubin@bmg.com
Web: jocelynmusic.com
A&R: Russell Gaskins - BMG

Trying to make it in the rough and tumble music biz jungle is never easy, and it sure helps if, like this young artist, you have an unbreakable spirit fueling your passion.

Having learned the value of building a team, artist Jocelyn initially hooked up with a manager and attorney. She credits her latter teammate, Steven R. Lowy, with setting up an initial appointment with a music publisher and BMG A&R rep Russell Gaskins.

"Russell really loves my stuff," Jocelyn says. "I sang BMG seven songs [including the viral hit 'Just Like Everybody Else'], and they … asked me if I wanted to come back and sing for the president [of BMG]. … It was a shock to me." After doing just that, Jocelyn became BMG's then-newest signee in January 2018. And, in true major-league style, BMG hooked her up with five producers, with whom she spent a month in LA writing her debut album.

Her record's overarching message: self-


JOCELYN

empowerment. "Telling people that it's okay to be down, but at the same time, you gotta pick yourself up, you gotta keep moving and going forward," the 21-year-old says.

Jocelyn has already learned some hard life lessons that give her authority to speak on the subject of self-esteem. After performing for Steve Harvey on *Showtime at the Apollo*, the singer surprisingly received "so much hate mail, people being terrible to me … [that] I ended up going into the studio that day and writing a song called 'Speak Up.' [It's] about someone bringing you down and, instead of reacting with negative energy and trying to bring them down, reacting with positivity and love."

The upbeat Jocelyn, who already has more than 100 songs under her belt, credits one music idol in particular with inspiring her to inspire others: Ed Sheeran.

"He's the reason I started playing music," she gushes. "I'm going to work with him. It is going to happen."

KAROLINA ROSE

Label: Violet Sunset Records
Band Members: Karolina Rose, vocals; Bryan Percivall, Max Tholenaar-Maples, Tommy Eichman, Jonathan Schmidt: various programming and percussion
Type of Music: Alternative Pop
Management: Kayla Shea, Kayos Management
Booking: k@kayosmgmt.com
Legal: Jay-Jay Lord
Publicity: hasan@shebops.net
Web: karolinarose.com

Face-to-face networking can be indispensible to a successful career in music. Look at singer-songwriter Karolina Rose. When she graduated from the prestigious Wharton School at University of Pennsylvania, it seemed unlikely that she would pursue a career in the music


KAROLINA ROSE

business—as an artist. One thing still sticks from her business school education: her use of spreadsheets, and the art of the pitch. "I use spreadsheets to document every person I have had contact with—music supervisors, agents, licensing people,"Rose says.

This artist's skills at researching and targeting certain influencers have paid off. Her songs are in the catalog of 411 Music Group and the Leo Burnett Agency. "I reached out with pitch emails to all of the music supervisors and other outlets looking for songs for their catalog," Rose says. "I also worked with Tinderbox music for a radio campaign."

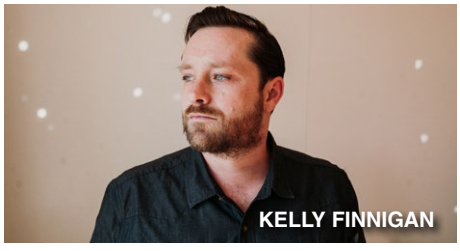
She credits the annual MIDEM conference in France for creating the best connections. "I went with an artist pass [cheaper than standard admission] and they also had special artist rates for flights. It's like the European version of NAMM. It is attended by all of the senior executives of music licensing companies, labels, etc. I went to panels and introduced myself to the speakers afterwards. There are after-parties where I met a lot of people. The face-to-face is so important. People remember you."

Social media has played a role in her success as well. "I found my producer on social media. I researched several producers, but looking at his credits for programming, mixing, vocal production, I saw that he had worked with a lot of artists I enjoy."

"I wasn't looking to get signed, so I created my own label. I recommend MIDEM to anyone who can afford it! And also the NAMM

OUR FAVORITE SIGNING STORIES 2•0•1•9

convention. Introduce yourself. The people there are the people you need to meet. I went in my business coat and did it myself. It's exciting for the execs to meet the artists. They don't forget it. Face-to-face is indelible. I emailed all the contacts I made at MIDEM and received a great response ratio."


KELLY FINNIGAN

KELLY FINNIGAN

Label: Coalmine Records
Type of Music: Soul
Management: Terry Cole - Colemine Records
Booking: Jake Lankheit - Intrepid Artists
Legal: Vivek Sridharan - Counsel LLP
Publicity: anorton@shorefire.com
Web: kellyfinnigan.com

What's an artist to do when he wants to take a break from his band to do a solo record? As a member of SF Bay Area psychedelic soul band the Monophonics, Kelly Finnigan has made a name for himself as a wonderfully emotive, honest and eclectic songwriter. That band has released a string of superb, genre-bending albums, and Finnigan has played a key role in their creation.

But there comes a time in an artist's career when he has to step out of his comfort zone and try something new. That's the basic story behind Finnigan's 2019 solo album *Tales People Tell*, released via Coalmine Records.

"It's a different kind of approach," Finnigan says. "Also, there's somewhat of a conscious wanting to do it different. The last thing I want to do is—as big of a piece as I am to the Monophonics puzzle—I definitely don't want to do a record the same. The first question was like, "Did you use the Monophonics as your band?" Why would I? It doesn't make any sense. I need to step outside of that and just do this. Which is just doing me. Instead of thinking of it as a 'we,' it's 'I.'"

The singer-songwriter admits that the process is slightly scary, a little anxiety-building, as he doesn't have his band members to fall back on. But ultimately, he's finding the solo route rewarding. The sound is noticeably different, too. The Monophonics blend soul and rhythm and blues with psychedelic rock and '60s pop.

"With this, I wanted to make a traditional R&B record steeped in soul, with doo-wop and gospel influences sprinkled in," he says. "From the get-go we made a decision that we love the Sharon Joneses of the world, but we don't want to try to go in that direction, whereas me being a solo artist I would definitely say it's more in that straight-up R&B soul thing."

He's certainly made a deeply personal record, highlighted by the fact that his dad makes an appearance on it. Meanwhile, he says that Coalmine Records is the perfect home for it.


THICK

THICK

Label: Epitaph Records
Band Members: Nikki Sisti, guitar, vocals; Shari Page, drums, vocals; Kate Black, bass, vocals
Type of Music: Pop-Punk
Legal: Alex Ploegsma - Ploegsma & Shulman, LLP
Publicity: christine@epitaph.com
Web: thick.band
A&R: christine@epitaph.com

Brooklyn-based trio Thick slaps sweet, harmonic vocals and biting lyrics on top of driving, rhythmic, punky guitars, providing some fresh girl power to 2019. It is a sonic attack that really impressed a new label located close to the band's home base. But instead of signing, the members of Thick decided that, despite being a New York band, they fit best with iconic LA-based punk label Epitaph.

"The label emailed us after reading an interview/write-up for a single we released on Stereogum," says Kate Black, Thick drummer. "We thought at first it was spam...it was too good to be true!" But indeed it was. "They caught one of our sets at SXSW. When we got home, we had a few calls with the A&R team, and they invited us to their offices in LA." Thick soon launched their first West Coast tour, during which the band met with the Epitaph team. Soon after, a deal was being discussed.

Thick had record label experience from working on a compilation album on Glassnote Records. Prior to being approached by Epitaph, the band had been actively seeking a label deal and was in discussions with a new indie label to release a completed EP. "As we worked through the details of that deal," Black says, "we realized it wasn't a good fit. We had been self-funding our recordings, releases and managing distribution on our own, so we were able to take a step back away and say 'No,' instead of getting locked into a deal that we weren't comfortable with."

How does a Brooklyn band fit into the Epitaph stable? "We all grew up on West Coast punk rock, so it's surreal for us to be on the same label as a lot of the bands that were formative for us. Also, it's refreshing to be working with people who aren't so ingrained in our (NY) scene."

SARAH ROGO

Label: Funzalo Records
Type of Music: Blues/Americana
Management: Michael Lembo and Dan Agnew - Mike's Management
Booking: Michael Lembo and Dan Agnew
Legal: Roger Cramer
Publicity: Dana Gordon, hidanagirl@aol.com
Web: sarahrogomusic.com
A&R: Michael Lembo and Dan Agnew

Attending a good music conference can be a key component of a successful career these days. Ask Sarah Rogo.

Nearly two years ago, the 25-year-old singer-songwriter-guitarist moved from the east coast to Encinitas, CA. Like many budding musicians, she relocated in search of her artistic goals and dreams. The blond-haired National and Fender guitar endorsee immersed herself in the San Diego scene, performing at every restaurant, coffee shop and venue that would have her.

Things took an upswing when she attended the Durango Songwriter Expo in Ventura. "I was standing around watching a showcase and struck up a conversation with this guy Mike. We had a good feel for each other. I didn't know he was a manager. He ended up hearing me play later that weekend," says Rogo. Michael Lembo became, not only her manager, but is also owner of the label she eventually signed with,


SARAH ROGO

Funzalo Records.

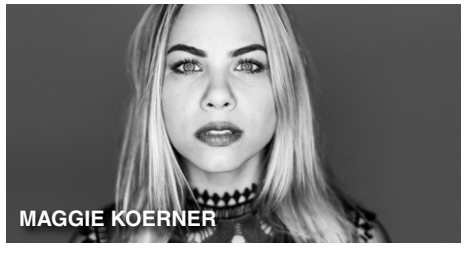
Since she was very young, Rogo knew she wanted to dive deep into the music industry. And working with the team at Funzalo Records, she expressed how she is able to accomplish that. "I knew working with Michael and the label were a good fit, because I have the artistic freedom to be creative and do what I do," says Rogo. "Their goal is to release 'real music' and not some mass produced kind of sound."

MAGGIE KOERNER

Date Signed: September 2018
Label: Concord Records
Type of Music: Rock/Folk
Management: Reid Martin - MidCitizen Ent., 239-405-1214
Booking: dave@highroadtouring.com
Legal: tkappel@fpwlegal.com
Publicity: mike.wilpizeski@concordrecords.com
Web: maggiekoerner.com
A&R: Nick Haussling

It can take years of hard work to finally get a label deal. And there are moments when your confidence, your belief in your talent, has to be strong. You gotta just take the microphone and show what you can do.

New Orleans-based singer-songwriter Maggie Koerner sharpened her skills for years at various venues before she landed a label deal. When the offer came, it was due, primarily, to two crucial factors: her diligence and friendships forged in the fires of touring.

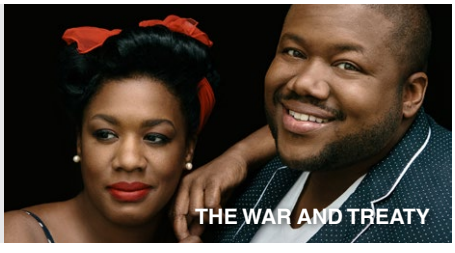

MAGGIE KOERNER

Her story began one night at a bar in Shreveport, LA when she caught New Orleans band The Revivalists' set. "I said that I could sing and asked if I could join them for a song," she recalls. "They were three hours into a four-hour gig and were tired so they let me do it. They saw that I was good and we became friends."

Koerner moved to New Orleans and began to write with David Shaw, The Revivalists' vocalist. "Dave knew [Concord Records' A&R rep] Nick Haussling," she explains. "He told him he should listen to me. [Dave] has always been my number-one believer, even when I didn't believe in myself. I had to pave my own way, but he was always there with a helping hand."

After continual coaxing from Shaw, Haussling, label president John Burk and several other Concord comrades came out to see Koerner at famed Los Angeles venue The Hotel Café. "John had a twinkle in his eye," the singer recollects. "I could tell that he saw it; that I wasn't trendy. I came back to LA and had my publisher set up some songwriting sessions. I had pretty much the greatest meeting possible with Nick, John and my manager Reid [Martin].

"I felt like I'd known [John] my whole life," Koerner continues. "He's the real deal. When they later sent the contract, I looked at Reid and said, 'Can I breathe now?' Then I collapsed in tears. It's been a nine-and-a-half year journey. When you do it slowly and right, you appreciate it so much more."


THE WAR AND TREATY

THE WAR AND TREATY

Label: Rounder Records
Type of Music: Soul/Americana
Management: Mark Cunningham - Red Light
Booking: Buster Phillips - WME
Legal: Jeff Colvin - Marcus & Colvin
Publicity: regina.joskow@rounder.com
Web: thewarandtreaty.com
A&R: John Strohm - Rounder Records

There's a deal on the table from a prominent label, but are you truly ready to sign it? Should you wait?

Michael Trotter and Tanya Blount-Trotter are the Americana and rootsy soul-infused duo who, since forming in 2014, have achieved tremendous acclaim culminating in a pivotal 2017 performance at the Americana Music Festival in Nashville. "Nobody knew who we were" says Michael. But over the past few years they built an impressive buzz and, even Emmylou Harris gave them an artistic boost by introducing them. From that landmark performance and Buddy Miller's personal endorsement and tutelage, better gigs and opportunities followed.

Playing subsequent events like Bonnaroo and the Newport Folk Festival caught the attention of Rounder Records' head John Strohm. Says Michael on their relationship with Strohm. "He wanted to sign us right away, but we didn't feel we were ready. So we signed with Thirty Tigers instead and released our first full album *Healing Tide* in 2018." But Michael and Tanya kept in touch with Strohm and their inevitable partnership finally emerged. "It really was a no-brainer going with Rounder," explains Michael. "A lot of our favorite artists are on the roster and John has always believed in us and our message within the music."

The War and Treaty's Rounder Records debut is scheduled for release sometime in 2020.

THE STASH

Label: Anchor Eighty Four Records
Band Members: Christian Evanko, vocals; Tristen Whitehead, keys/producer; Austin Pritz, guitar; Andrew Gyomal, bass; Michael LaPick, drums
Type of Music: Pop
Management: erick.droegs@gmail.com/Word is Bond, inc.
Booking: Word is Bond, inc.
Publicity: becky@bigpicturemediaonline.com
Web: instagram.com/thestashny
A&R: Cody Jones

After two years in a band that he thought was going places but didn't, Christian Evanko found himself disillusioned with the music business. "After the experience of being signed for two years," recalls the Stash lead man, "I found it difficult to trust anyone."

After a brief stint as a solo folkie, he thought, "Hey, folk lends itself to the blues, so why not get a whole backing band and bring the songs to light in a different way. We loved folk, classic rock and the blues, but realized we weren't Mumford and Sons or the Lumineers, and what we really loved was the pop element in all these genres. We decided to be a pop band."

The Stash were working with manager Erick Droegmoeller and decided to put out some singles online, each with a video attached. Once the video singles got attention, Droegmoeller pitched them, and interest landed with Cody Jones at Anchor Eighty Four. The label struck a deal with the band for all of the songs they had in the can and continue to produce. The strategy has been to release a song each month (with video) online, and seasonal EPs, four songs that lyrically and/or sonically connect to each season. The packages are released on Spotify. "It's up to the label whether or not to release them physically," says Evanko.

Evanko also has a deal with a company to pitch TV and movie placement for his songs. "I love it all—I love all the arts," he says. But when it comes to The Stash, it's a real partnership. "Production of the music, the videos, we all contribute. Everyone is a one-fifth partner."


THE STASH

While the band does play live, Evanko notes, "For our genre, just to go out and put dates on a calendar might not be the most effective thing. We look at bands like The Chainsmokers, who have a DJ element but also rock out."

Wait for the internet to create a fan base. You can't just play dive bars and do proper service to the music—you need the right sound system. So we really push our fans to pre-save us on Spotify, things like that. We're focusing on branding, marketing, and getting the best songs out each month."

"If we had kept going DIY, we would have run out of funding," Evanko says. Anchor Eighty Four provides the band with distribution, publicity, press, and funding for recording music and videos. "Cody [label head] has been in the business for more than 10 years, he's helped develop a lot of successful artists. Every time we speak with him we learn something."

THE JACKS

Label: Edgeout Records/UMe
Band Members: Jonny Stanback, vocals, guitar; Tom Hunter, guitar; Scott Stone, bass; Josh Roossin, drums
Type of Music: Rock
Booking: Andrewgoodfriend@tkoco.com
Legal: Renee Karilian at Carroll Guido and Groffman
Publicity: sujata.murthy@umusic.com
Web: thejacksbandla.com
A&R: Cheryl Benson-Guanci

Struggling, unsigned band wins high-profile performance competition… Label deal is offered… Band turns down the deal. Huh?

The band in question is The Jacks, four young men from Los Angeles who recently signed with Edgeout Music (under the Universal Music Group umbrella) and just released their self-titled debut EP. The band was formed just over two years ago, initially by school pals Scott Stone (bass) and Thomas Hunter (lead guitar). Lead singer Jonny Stanback joined when the pair heard him singing at an acoustic open mic, with drummer Josh Roossin the last to become a Jack.

The sound, while lively and drenched in contemporary garage edge, is heavily influenced by '60s and '70s rock.

"We got lucky in that all four of us have a good core of influences that overlap, and we just wanted to make music that could be representative of a live four-piece band," Stanback says. "We wanted to have that raw rock & roll energy."


THE JACKS

The band signed with Edgeout when they took part in KLOS-FM's neXt2rock competition and won the Los Angeles regionals. They performed at the Viper Room and were offered a contract as part of the prize, but they didn't much like the terms so they turned it down and waited for Edgeout to get on its feet.

"Through Scott's friends, we knew Tony Guanci, the head of the label," Stanback says. "We had been loosely associated with him for a little bit. Once we got that neXt2rock thing, he and his wife Cheryl [Benson] took us aside and said they were starting a new label and they wanted us to be a part of it. That's what we did. We turned down the KLOS thing, and then it took about a year for their label to be fully off the ground."

COMPILED BY MC SENIOR EDITOR
MARK NARDONE

Jerry Leger

Time Out for Tomorrow

Latent Recordings

Producer: Michael Timmins

8



This Canadian artist returns with a strong effort that echoes Rolling Thunder-era Dylan, Arlo Guthrie, vintage Springsteen and The Band. Heady comparisons aside, Leger carves a path that stands on its own. His stories are compelling and vivid and his backing by The Situation is diverse and rolls with each thematic tide. Highlights include the legato-infused poetry of "Justine," the awkward break-up song "Between the Lines," the country rocker "Burchell Lake" and the pensive "I Would." Cowboy Junkies' Michael Timmins places Leger's expressive and rustic voice front and center and the overall feel is organic and very live. ***– Eric Harabadian***

Death By Romy

Love u - to Death

Universal Music Group

Producer: Doctor Rosen Rosen

9



Love u - to Death is a dark and beautiful EP with a wonderfully disruptive mixture of gothic rock, trap music, alternative R&B and pop. When Death By Romy sings the chorus on "Sleep at Night," it is as if the lyrics are coming from the depths of her soul. Her rap cadences during the bridge section of this song definitely highlight her versatility as an artist. The most radio friendly composition from this EP is a synth-pop track called "Diamond Tears." It's a love song that highlights her sensibility and vocal range. Death By Romy has officially arrived, and her new EP is a force to be reckoned with. ***– Miguel Costa***

The Schizophonics

People in The Sky

Pig Baby Records

Producers: Dave Gardner, Pat Beers

9



The Schizophonics are one of the most exciting live bands on the garage/punk scene right now, and this release shows they can back it up in the studio. The music is based on insistent riffs a la The MC5, The Sonics and early Kinks, and the singing is as passionate as the playing. Special nods go to the propulsive drummer Lety Beers, who anchors husband Pat's fuzzed-out chords. He does fantastic bursts of psychedelic lead guitar as well, especially on "Like A Mummy." The Schizophonics are not out to re-invent the wheel musically, they just want to strap a nitro-fueled rocket to it. ***– David Arnson***

Grace Potter

Daylight

Fantasy Records

Producer: Eric Valentine

8



While 2015's *Midnight* featured a break from Potter's tried and true bluesy-rock sound, her newest, *Daylight,* represents a return to her roots. Fans will rejoice when her signature smokey vocals erupt from the speakers on the energetic rocker "On My Way." Other standouts include "Repossession," a message to a jilted lover with an old country twang and the thought-provoking, heart-wrenching "Shout It Out." Baring all, *Daylight* shows Potter at her truest. If *Midnight* caused her to consider leaving music, then *Daylight* is Potter's wholehearted message to everyone that she's here to stay. ***– Carmina Taylor***

Exhumed

Horror

Relapse

Producer: Alejandro Corredor and Exhumed

7



Time flies—but not as fast as the grinding riffs churned by Exhumed. Their latest LP is a reminder that their speedy gore-centric death metal is three decades old, but that they haven't lost any of their edge. While the current incarnation of Exhumed only features two members from back in the day (guitarist-vocalist Matt Harvey and bassist-vocalist Ross Sewage), they've crafted at least two new tracks—"Naked, Screaming & Covered in Blood" and "Utter Mutilation of Your Corpse"—that they'll regularly exhume at their concerts. ***– Kurt Orzeck***

Kanye West

Jesus Is King

GOOD/Def Jam

Producer: Various

9



Nine studio albums deep, and Kanye West significantly decides to release a gospel/hip-hop album as a convert to the Christian faith. Instantaneously the listener is brought into Church, as Sunday service is in session. From "Every Hour" to "Selah" to "Follow God" to "Water," Yeezy fervently displays his love and understanding of his Lord and Savior and of the Gospels. With features from Kenny G, The Clipse, Ty Dolla $ign and Timbaland, among others, this album is something every listener, whether a fan of Kanye West or not, can gain knowledge and insight from.

– Adam Seyum

The Body

Remixed

Thrill Jockey

Producer: self-produced

6



Providence-based experimentalists Chip King (guitars-vocals) and former Blue Man Group member Lee Buford (drums-programming) have had no shortage of inspiration since joining forces in 1999. Twenty years later, they have more than 25 releases to their name (seven of them full-lengths). Their latest, which marks the band's 20th anniversary, isn't really their own doing—the duo enlisted friends and other musicians to reimagine some of their songs. Intrigue lies particularly in Container's bleepy contribution and Peter Rehberg's ethereal number, but this limited release is for completists only. ***– Kurt Orzeck***

Tessa Violet

Bad Ideas

Tag Music

Producer: Seth Earnest

7



"Lovesick" doesn't begin to describe Tessa Violet in *Bad Ideas*. This collection gives us all the messy bits of falling for someone—whether it be a friend you've known forever or a stranger you made prolonged eye contact with in the supermarket once (see: hit single "Crush"). Title track "Bad Ideas," brutally honest "Games" and exhaustingly relatable "Bored" are pumping with road trip scream-sung self-awareness. Then, "Words Ain't Enough" slows up and strips down the moody, unrequited and harmful obsession. Yet, they all resonate. Because Tessa Violet gets how crushing it can all be, and she makes sense of even the worst ideas. ***– Elena Ender***

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.



MUHAMMAD SEVEN AND THE SPRING

APPLE KAUFMANN

Midway Café *Boston, MA*

Contact: muhammad7even@gmail.com
Web: muhammadseven.com
Players: Muhammad Seven, lead vocals, rhythm guitar; Valerie Sussman, harmony vocals, violin; Pat Mussari, lead guitar; Clark Goodpaster, drums; Jose Downes, bass

Material: Iranian-American singer-songwriter Muhammad Seven helms this enchantingly melodic five-piece that might be mistaken for the missing link between folk and Americana. Drenching curious listeners with mellifluous vibes and beautiful times, their material covers matters such as the scourge of gun violence, President Trump and strong, independent women. Their brand of crunchy, hipster-adjacent sentimentality, equally rooted in the past and present, fits snugly within the metropolitan, East Coast zeitgeist from which it sprang.

Musicianship: Seven's honeysuckle voice pairs superbly with the feminine coos and mews of Valerie Sussman, who additionally adds welcome body to their set when strumming her violin. Most noticeable is lead guitarist Pat Mussari, whose country- and blues-tinged flights of feeling carve his style deep upon one's soul. Theirs isn't a display of rat-a-tat technical pyrotechnics. Instead, we have the soft, warm communion of cleverly adept players, each of whom tenderly caress every note, creating something greater than the sum of all parts.

Performance: While Seven's understated presence matches this crew's melancholy sound, he's manifestly skilled at pithy comments. "This ends the astrological portion of our show," he quips after launching the evening via a pair of planetary-themed songs. Guitarist Mussari suffered a serious technical setback during song three, but quietly and professionally overcoming this obstacle allowed him to subsequently fulfill some of the act's most delectable licks. Counter-intuitively, the self-assured, plucky Seven apologized for his mistakes mid-set.

Summary: Resplendently crafted and elegantly simple, Seven's songwriting anchors this project borne aloft by manifestly capable and delightful strummers. Thematically, undertones of struggle and adversity are buoyed by notions of hope, overshadowing their bitter side with a heaping dose of sweetness and light. Surging ahead upon fuel provided by the release of their recorded debut, Seven and company have made ample headway in staking out their slice of a specific, albeit limited, audience—highly liberal, urban listeners seeking cutting edge folk. ***– Andy Kaufmann***



ANGELES

BRETT CALLWOOD

The Whisky A GoGo *West Hollywood, CA*

Contact: angelesbandcrazy@gmail.com
Web: angelesband.com
Players: Demon Dale Lytle, guitar; Gwendolyn Casella, vocals; Danny Basulto, drums; Mark Ludmer, bass

Material: There are plenty of bands like Angeles in Los Angeles, and indeed in the States. Hell, all over the place! This is one of those bands that were part of a thriving scene at one point—they played up and down the Sunset Strip with many of the bands that went on to sell hundreds of thousands of records. They watched it all go down. They were there. But for a variety of reasons, it just didn't happen for them. Angeles were unable to take that next step.

Maybe it's that band name, which we all have to concede is just not cool, especially in this town. Maybe it's the fact that members have come and gone over the years, including a whole range of female singers. Or maybe they just didn't have the songs to grab radio's attention. That would be as much down to dumb luck as anything else, because they do have some great tunes. The music is a wonderful, powerful blend of classic, bluesy rock & roll and power-metal. There are nods to Iron Maiden's bombastic "guns and glory" approach, while elsewhere it's all Hollywood sleazy riffs and bubblegum choruses. There's much to love.

Musicianship: Demon Dale Lytle is clearly running this show; he's the guitar hero with the exuberant amount of facial hair, pulling out every rock star pose he can muster. He's a gifted player, though—and his enthusiasm for this band is infectious. When he plays the acoustic during one song's introduction, his transition to the electric is seamless. In his mind, he's probably playing The Forum in front of thousands. Meanwhile, Casella is charged with fronting this band, and she has the larynx to do it. The rhythm section is a powerhouse, and it all results in a pummeling hard rock set.

Performance: These guys just love what they do. They're lifers—lesser characters would have quit decades ago, but the people in Angeles are doing this because it's in their blood. Who can deny them—all these years after forming, they still get to play at The Whisky (on this occasion opening for '70s hard rockers Angel) and other similarly prestigious venues in the area, they're having a ball and the music is great fun.

Summary: We started this piece by saying that there are bands like Angeles all over the place, and there are. But the truth is, the music world needs bands like Angeles to be all over the place. Fads will come and go, but the warriors that just won't quit—they're the people that will outlast everything else. ***– Brett Callwood***



THE MIDNIGHT MISSION

Factory West *Los Angeles, CA*

Contact: zanamusic@gmail.com
Web: zanamessiamusic.com
Players: Zana Messia, vocals; Felipe Melanio, guitar; Viny Melanio, bass guitar; Joseph Vallery, drums

Material: As a Balkan refugee growing up in Sweden, Zana Messia faced several trials and tribulations. But as a teenager living in a foreign country, she was also exposed to the beauty of international music. The experience of living in a cultural melting pot has certainly contributed to her confidence in leading a new ensemble called The Midnight Mission, a band of musicians from all over the world. Zana Messia often refers to this new group as her "altered ego," because the project allows her to detour from writing contemporary pop songs, to penning music from edgier genres like punk rock, alternative and soul. One of the band's most eclectic live compositions is an unreleased love song called "Enuff." This track combines elements of reggae-rock and ska with pop-rock.

Musicianship: Over the years, Zana Messia has developed a penchant for writing soulful music that incorporates music from different countries. The success of experimental R&B songs by Messia's former band, The Balkan Soul Orchestra, has led to the inception of her new band. With a live sound that is often spearheaded by the Brazilian tandem of Felipe and Viny Melanio, their extensive background in rock music provides a solid foundation for the R&B drum grooves of Joseph Vallery. The Midnight Mission will be releasing this new music as part of a collection of songs that Messia co-created with her Grammy-nominated producer, Billy Mohler.

Performance: This live performance coincided with the taping of a film called *The Midnight Mission at Factory West*. This visionary display featured four alternative rock songs by the band. The performance was greatly enhanced by a memorable guitar solo from Felipe and the plucking bass guitar technique of his brother Viny. The two Brazilian natives made their presence felt on original compositions like "Ride This To The End" and "How Did We." With the help of drummer Vallery, they both engaged their leader quite often as she danced in front of the live spectators.

Summary: The Midnight Mission concluded their live taping with a performance of a track called "LA Minute," a pop-rock song about how fast someone's fortunes can drastically change in the city of Los Angeles. That premise could also be a narrative for the way that Messia has evolved from a solo pop singer to an integral part of The Midnight Mission. This band has already become more than just another side project. They are a vision that encompasses the friendships that she has made from all over the world and the showmanship they all have to offer.

– Miguel Costa



GEORGIA WEBER

Rockwood Music Hall *New York, NY*

Contact: beatrice@empktpr.com
Web: georgiawebermusic.com
Players: Georgia Weber, double bass, vocals; Kenji Herbert, guitar; Nathan Ellman-Bell, drums; Camille Harris, backing vocals

Material: Expanding the role of the double bass, Georgia Weber's journey from punk bands in Australia to her performances with her trio The Sleeved Hearts stretches the imagination as to what this instrument can do. Her music, rooted in jazz, is the launchpad for multiple genres. Showcasing songs from her new release, *Keeping It Real*, Weber mixes traditional jazz, improv and post-punk elements to form her unique musical statement.

The set, consisting predominately of originals with a sprinkling of jazz standards (most notably "Good Morning Heartache"), is hard to pigeonhole; it is somewhat quirky, humorous but still curiously interesting, and like many fine things it is an acquired taste. Most memorable is "A House In Just My Name," metaphorically dealing with taking back one's life: *Somehow I can't shake the feeling/start to healing that I should have known/that all these years was just to find that you have never grown…./ Cause I'll be on my way/and I will find the new keys to the house in just my name.*

While the music has an almost formless feel, there is an underlying structure to the song.

Musicianship: A finalist in the 2015 Australian National Jazz awards, Weber plays with strong technique and fluidity and seems truly at home with her instrument. And while it all appears effortless, it is evident that numerous hours have gone into honing her craft. While the trio provides more compelling movement underneath, Weber's more subtle vocal and bass lines, together with the backing musicians, result in polyrhythms that add more complexity to the music.

Performance: Weber's presentation was understated but classy. She brought a certain grace to the stage in her demeanor as well as her stage garb. There was an almost extemporaneous feel to the set, which is more stylistic than actual. Adding a few more big standards or classic songs would help make her original music more accessible to a larger audience, especially since her approach has already put a spin on the music.

Summary: If you are looking for big splashy numbers or choruses you can sing to, you won't find that in Georgia Weber's music. You will, however, find originality, considerable musicianship and a renewed perception of what the double bass can bring to the party. Adding more known quantity will cast a wider net, while still maintaining her purity of statement.

– Ellen Woloshin



NATALIE CLARK

TONY SHIBUMI

The Hotel Café *Hollywood, CA*

Contact: kirsten@bigpicturemediaonline.com
Web: natalieclarkmusic.com
Players: Natalie Clark, lead vocals, guitar; Kyle Rothfield, guitar, backing vocals; Bret Paddock, keyboard, piano; Ryan Nealon, backing vocals; Johannes Gritschacher, drums

Material: Kicking off the launch of her first EP, *Head North*, Natalie Clark was an absolute dynamo from beginning to end and brought a refreshing burst of talent and a graceful power to the stage. From the beautiful harmonies and phenomenal soprano lines of "Here," to the sassy country flavor of "Grown Ass Woman" and "More Than A Mountain," Clark's vocal stylings feel like a seamless nod to both Adele and Feist. She was spirited and entertaining throughout the show, and her lovely Scottish brogue left an endearing impression.

Musicianship: Accompanied by a polished and engaging group of talented musicians, Clark and her band delivered a fantastic concert. Kylie Rothfield's beautiful guitar lines on "Heaviest Low" were stunning, and the vocal harmonies between Rothfield, Clark and Ryan Nealon on "Here" and "Grown Ass Woman" were perfectly intertwined, creating warm melodic lines from heartfelt lyrics that speak to Clark's journey from education to music and the challenges of being an artist. All members of this perfectly balanced group appeared to be genuinely enjoying themselves.

Performance: Clark captivated with her vulnerable engagement of the crowd, authentic nervous energy and seemingly effortless soprano passages that blended pop with Americana and country to create a spellbinding sound. While not on the EP, her impromptu cover of Whitney Houston's "I Wanna Dance With Somebody" was an absolute delight and showed off Clark's unique stylings and incredible vocal ability. Her self-assured presence gives her an easy command of the stage without coming across as bossy or overbearing—a rare gift and especially surprising given that this was her first time ever performing with a live band.

Summary: Clark is definitely one to watch. Her gentle, honest lyrics and genuine stage persona combine with fantastic vocal prowess and an inner fire committed to delivering the best for her audience. She is very clear about who she is and what she wants to say, and her show is an easy, fun journey for those who enjoy a pure, relaxing and uplifting night out.

– Andrea Beenham

Liaison Restaurant and Lounge
Hollywood, CA

Contact: joddith@aol.com
Web: instagram.com/katrinastuartofficial
Players: Katrina Stuart, vocals; Jacob Plough, keys; Chase Bell, electric guitar; David Cannava, drums



KATRINA STUART

ASHLEY KAMPHAUS

Material: Katrina Stuart's "Blue Roses," which she showcased at this event, is an exceptionally polished pop song recycled from other pop acts before her. The song is catchy; the production value is top-notch and the melodies are strong. Lyrically, however, "Blue Roses" is far from revelatory. The words are framed in such a simple way that one might assume it had been written for the lowest common denominator. All this to say that Stuart is clearly being groomed as the "next big thing," but she and her team may do well to remember that pop icons can do more than just look pretty and carry a tune.

Musicianship: Stuart's band did exactly what they were meant to do: namely, support the act and do little else. This band would be excellent as session players, as all of their parts were placed snugly together like a pageant queen—nary a hair out of place. It was unclear, however, how much Stuart actually had to do with the song. Her vocal, while strong in the music video played beforehand, was soft and fragile. Standing close to the stage made it easy to note how extraordinarily loud the guide vocal was in the mix. It would have been much more impressive to hear Stuart's real voice during the performance, instead of a mix of the produced track.

Performance: Stuart has a community of people who love her and that much can be commended. Her crowd was excited about everything she did, and her team of band members and dancers were equally passionate. Unfortunately, the person who seemed the least passionate was Stuart herself. Perhaps due to nerves or the desire to look effortless, Stuart was late entering the stage and seemed to be enjoying herself as little as possible. The mix, and maybe her label team, didn't seem to trust her ability to put on a performance of her own—which is deeply upsetting to witness. This performer might do well to let more of her personality shine through for this project.

Summary: The song is fine, that's not the real problem with this act. For Katrina Stuart and her team, please remember: when you're trying to think of what will sell, don't forget to wonder if your song will impact your audience or if it will, ultimately, become forgettable. Trust yourself and use your individuality instead of trying hard to fit the mold. As it is now, Katrina Stuart is set squarely to become the next flash in the pan. Please prove me wrong.

– Kara Bradford

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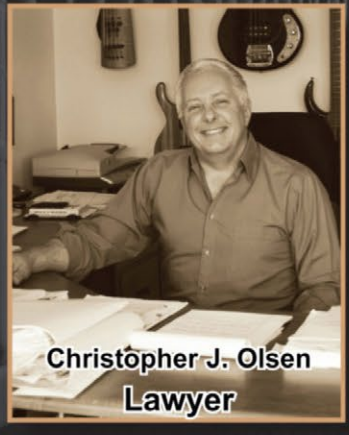
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What It Takes to Write A Hit Song

We learn to love an artist who creates lyrics that we can personally relate to. While listening to these songs, the listener begins to form a personal relationship with the artist. So, how does a songwriter create the songs that will turn views into fans and a hobby into a lifelong career? In the following article, music business veteran Jason Davis has some keen insights to offer.

1. Irrespective of time, genre, or talent, the song is king. A good song and a hit song have always separated those who hit the Billboard charts versus those who might be featured on a few local stations. Writing the right song is the hardest thing to accomplish in the industry.

With the goal being to write a song that others can't wait to download, you have to consider structure, meaning and, most of all, emotion. The best advice is to persistently work on your craft. Don't be discouraged when the song isn't perfect. It doesn't matter if others initially don't see your talent. If you are writing daily, you naturally improve.

Success is the result of hard work and what you learn from the failures and achievements along the way. So challenge yourself and make sure to finish—write at least one song every week.



"It's been my experience that with the right song you can knock on doors that will actually open and change your life forever."

2. Dare to be crazy creative. Study the song titles and song content of the top 20 to 50 songs on Billboard's charts to see what tactics are used by successful writers. If you're writing for a specific genre, concentrate on the genre you're trying to succeed in. Taking the time to study all genres can be beneficial as well. If it's a song that has impacted people—either by its catchy tune or emotional lyrics—it is worth the review.

3. The emotion of the song is what draws in the listener. The song needs to work toward building a relationship with the listeners. Understand how your song is relatable. People want to be moved. They want to laugh, cry and relate. You need your song to be different, yet universal all at the same time.

Social media has made people impatient. Capturing the attention of fans within the first minute is more critical than ever before; consequently, it is advised to start with a short intro, have a couple sections of verse/chorus, have a bridge, climax with the highest amount of energy with a chorus, and then end with an outro.

4. Attention to detail is critical. Understand that songwriting is like athletics. In basketball, you have a hoop and a backboard. If the ball is not making it into the hoop, you know you need more work. If your song isn't good enough, it's not going to make it into the hoop. The problem is that many songwriters don't recognize that their song is bouncing off the backboard.

Don't be afraid to continue to work to change or perfect your song. Companies rise and fall on the smallest of details. If one pinhole can sink a ship, then know that digging into the key elements of your song can make all the difference. The more you do this, the more you will improve. Don't be afraid to ask for honest opinions and grow from the comments.

5. Tear your songs apart. One of the best ways I know to identify the components of a hit song is simply to dig in and tear it apart. While studying other songs that have hit the billboard charts, listen from a new perspective to understand how that song achieved that level. Listen to the melody and lyrics, and think about what separated this composition from others.

I started my career in music as a songwriter. My first ASCAP award-winning hit was one of the most radio airplayed songs 20 years ago, and the idea that practice makes perfect has never changed. By starting to write daily at 13 years old, by 23 I was making breakthroughs that changed the course of my career. That success sent me down a path that would even include an award in Latin music.

Knowing the artist's potential for success will be defined by this product, I spend a significant amount of time torturing the details of songs that are sent to me. It's been my experience that with the right song you can knock on doors that will actually open and change your life forever.

So, how is a hit song written? There is never a guarantee, but you can certainly increase your chances by analyzing the songs on the charts of today. Work to connect in every way possible with your listeners and lead with your strengths. As you work on your craft, you will begin to understand what is necessary to achieve your goal as a songwriter and begin to recognize what has the potential to be a hit—and what does not.

Write, re-write, repeat.

JASON DAVIS is a music business veteran with two decades of experience. He's co-founder and president of multiple companies including One One 7, Radar Label Group, Noble Management, and Awaken Records. He has worked with artists such as P. Diddy, Boyz II Men, Jay-Z, Dolly Parton, Lonestar, and many more. He and his clients have secured record deal offers from several of the largest music companies in the world, including Capitol, Sony, Interscope, Island/Def Jam, Epic, Atlantic and RCA. Jason can be reached at info@oneone7.com.

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