9 THINGS
You Need to Know About the College Music Market (Before Trying to Break In)

5 KEYS
to Getting Added to a Playlist

CROSSTALK
with Andrew W. K.

Greta Van Fleet • Brand New
Demi Lovato • Dungen • A$AP Ferg • Soraia

MUSIC CONNECTION
40 YEARS AND COUNTING

2 UNIQUE LISTS!
• U.S. Mastering Studios
• College/Indie Radio Stations

MASTERING ROUNDTABLE
Insights From the Experts

PORTUGAL, THE MAN
The ’60s and ’70s are widely recognized as the heyday for professional recording console design. The EQ and preamp sections of these near-mythical vintage consoles are highly sought after, even to this day. Some of the most iconic guitar and bass tones in the history of recorded audio were tracked “direct” straight into these consoles’ channel strips.

The Q\Strip was designed with sophisticated features that enable you to take these highly-coveted tone shaping circuits with you, whether you’re heading to a live gig or tracking in the studio or into your DAW. It’s compact, extremely cost-effective and in an ultra-convenient DI format.

The 100% analog MOSFET circuitry in the heart of the Q\Strip provides the warmth, girth and larger-than-life tones for which vintage consoles are revered. Add in four bands of pro-audio-quality equalization, two parametric mid bands, as well as high and low shelving filters, and you have incredible control over how your instrument cuts through on stage or in a mix.

The HPF and LPF give added control over the frequency spectrum whether you’re going direct with your bass, guitar, fiddle...or even a vocal.

The Q\Strip is limited only by how far you are willing to push your creativity and how much of that juicy vintage tone you crave.
There’s nothing like that feeling...
When you know you’ve written something great!

It’s a magical moment when a song is born. Having an exceptional melody is essential, but what you say and how you say it can be the difference between a good song and a great song.


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Portugal. The Man

In our exclusive interview, frontman John Gourley discusses the band’s long, steady climb to prominence and their latest album and hit single “Feel It Still.” Gourley offers candid insights and opinions about songwriting, staying grounded, and how way too many performers f@#k-up their own shows.

By Brett Callwood
Photos: Maclay Heriot

Mastering Roundtable

Music Connection once again brings you a singular group of experts—masters of mastering—each of whom shares his or her insights on how artists can get the sonic results they want. And this year we’ve got studio legend Ed Cherney to give the mix engineer’s perspective.

By Rob Putnam

Directory of Mastering Studios

Directory of College Indie Radio

Compiled by Denise Coso

Departments

08. Close Up
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Reviews

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Purity Transformed
AT5047 Premier Studio Condenser Microphone

Building on the AT5040’s breathtaking purity of sound, the new AT5047 combines the four-part rectangular element of its predecessor with a transformer-coupled output to create a mic with exceptionally wide dynamic range and remarkable versatility. This is purity transformed. audio-technica.com
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A Rich Musical Background: Aside from studio expertise and technical knowledge, the secret to Les Cooper’s success as an engineer, audio mixer and editor over the past 40-plus years is the fact that he’s a musician working with other musicians. Although the San Fernando Valley native became known for playing trombone, he started on piano and became proficient in sight-reading, which has allowed him to “speak the same language” with thousands of the world’s top musicians. His dad’s friendship with legendary producer Bones Howe led Cooper to work his way up from equipment room manager to become a staff engineer at Wally Heider’s famed L.A. facility. A friendly pool game with Mick Fleetwood launched a relationship, which included working on Fleetwood Mac’s heyday albums and recording the USC Marching Band live at Dodger Stadium for “Tusk.”

Working with R&B and Jazz Legends and More: As he built his career, Cooper tracked at many other facilities. His success in disco and soul music with artists—including Gladys Knight, Shalamar, the Whispers, Philip Bailey/Earth, Wind & Fire, Anita Baker, Aretha Franklin and Natalie Cole—led him to become a first-call R&B engineer. Yet his resume also includes jazz greats like Herbie Hancock and Chick Corea, and legendary artists Bob Dylan, the Grateful Dead, Mel Torme, Etta James and John Lee Hooker. He has also engineered hundreds of live performances.

Working With Indie Artists: Cooper engineered for 15 years for songwriter/producer Tena Clarke (with whom he has worked for three decades) at the famed Firehouse Recording Studios in Pasadena, CA which he designed. Since it closed, he is working with various independent artists, bringing his facility for various genres to a multitude of projects.

“My experience should put people at ease,” he says. “I bring experience and confidence to every project, and all you have to worry about is your song and arranging it the way you like. I am going to get sounds that are wonderful, but if you disagree with something, I will change it to suit your needs. With every client, I get to the studio early. When they walk in, we make sure the mics are up to speed and get right to work.”

Contact Les Cooper, 310-729-0990
John Mayer  
**Regional Promotion Director**  
Caroline

Caroline has appointed **John Mayer** as Regional Promotion Director. Mayer will be based in Nashville and report to Senior Vice President of Promotion, Marci Halpern. Prior to Caroline, Mayer worked at iHeartMedia for 10 years, most recently as the Program Director of WFLZ in Tampa, FL and previously as the Program Director of WRWW in Nashville. Additionally, he has held positions at iHeartMedia as a Music Director, in marketing, and as on-air talent. Mayer has a Master's degree from Quinnipiac University in broadcast journalism. For more information on this appointment, contact Erik Stein directly at estein@solters.com.

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Elyse McKenna  
**CEO**  
Thiel Audio

**AristoMedia** has promoted **Alexa Ryncavage** to Digital Marketing Coordinator for their rebranded digital department AristoDigital. Ryncavage will concentrate in the development of digital strategy, social media management and digital media buying. A Pennsylvania native, Ryncavage relocated to Nashville to attend Belmont University. She graduated in 2015 with a degree in entertainment industry studies and a minor in music business. Ryncavage interned with Sony Music Nashville and the Country Radio Broadcasters. Following graduation, she joined the AristoMedia team as a member of AristoPR. For more information, contact Kyle Wall at kyle@jaybirdcom.com.

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Gary Richards  
**President of LiveStyle North America**  
LiveStyle, Inc.

**LiveStyle, Inc.** has named **Gary Richards** as President of LiveStyle North America. Richards is the founder of the event and festival company HARD Events. In this newly created position, Richards will be responsible for working with all of LiveStyle’s current U.S. festival operations, developing and launching new brands and activities on the West Coast. Since 1991, Richards has been a concert promoter, DJ, record label executive and festival founder. Richards was handpicked by producer Rick Rubin to handle A&R duties for the electronic music division at Def American Recordings. For more information, contact Larry Solters at solters@solters.com.

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Nick Terzo  
**VP of Strategic Development**  
Royalty Exchange

**Royalty Exchange** has appointed **Nick Terzo** as **VP of Strategic Development**. In this position, Terzo will lead the company’s new business development activities, which include artist and rightsholder outreach, corporate partnership development and maintaining industry relationships. Most recently, Terzo served as VP of Business Development & Operations at talent agency and artist management firm Madison House. He previously held senior positions at Warner Music Group’s Maverick Records, Sony Music Entertainment’s Columbia Records and The Walt Disney Company’s Hollywood Records. Contact antony@royaltyexchange.com.

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Joe Stopka  
**VP of Sales and Business Development**  
TASCAM

**TASCAM**, a division of TEAC of America, has promoted former Director of Business Development **Joe Stopka** to Vice President of Sales and Business Development. In his new position, Stopka leads TASCAM’s Sales, Marketing, and Product Marketing teams for all of the Americas. Topka is charged with building a stronger position in the pro audio and AV integration markets and further strengthening the company’s brand. Stopka launched his career as a studio guitarist, composer, and producer. He then transitioned to sales and marketing, working with MI and pro audio technologies at a leading U.S. AV integration and pro audio rep firm and distributor before joining TASCAM in 2016. Contact jstopka@teac.com.

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Katie Jelen  
**Creative Manager, Synchronization**  
Warner/Chappell Music and Warner Music  
Nashville

**Warner/Chappell Music (WCM)** and **Warner Music Nashville** has appointed **Katie Jelen** as Creative Manager, Synchronization. In this newly created Nashville-based role, Jelen will serve WCM songwriters and WMN recording artists by developing new opportunities for their music in film, TV, advertising, video game and new media. Jelen will report to Ron Brolman, Executive Vice President & Head of Synchronization. Jelen was previously Head of Artist Relations for Secret Road Music Services, and one half of the creative team for Secret Road Music Publishing, where she handled the company’s Nashville operations. Contact info@warnerchappellpm.com.

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Dan Nelson  
**SVP, International**  
Sony/ATV Music Publishing

**Sony/ATV Music Publishing** has promoted **Dan Nelson** to Senior Vice President, International. Nelson, who has been with Sony/ATV for 10 years, works across the company’s operations outside the Americas and U.K., including in continental Europe, South East Asia, Russia, Australia, India, Africa, Turkey, Israel and the Middle East. Nelson has been involved with all its major acquisitions across its international markets and is an integral member of the Sony/ATV team, which obtained regulatory approval for the acquisition of EMI Music Publishing. He is also a member of Sony/ATV’s digital team. For more information, contact info@sonyatv.com.
M-AUDIO BX D3 SERIES MONITORS

The BX5 D3 and BX8 D3 studio reference monitor speakers represent M-Audio’s latest line of super-affordable, bi-amped active monitor loudspeakers. The BX D3 Series have an all-black “stealthy” look with woofers made of military-grade Kevlar®. The tweeters have treated natural silk domes and “fire” into a computer-optimized waveguide that looks great and is said to improve sonic imaging.

The BX D3 Series is available in two sizes: the BX5 with a five-inch woofer and 1-inch tweeter and the BX8 goes with an eight-inch woofer and 1.25-inch tweeter. The BX5 D3 has a 60-watt amp for the woofer, 40-watt amp for the tweeter. Frequency response is 52Hz to 35kHz. The larger BX8 D3 has 80/70-watts respectively and a 37Hz to 22kHz range.

The BX D3 Series monitors use a bass reflex port mounted at the top of the rear control panel that includes a Volume control and both TRS and XLR input jacks for balanced or unbalanced inputs. There is also a three-position Acoustic Space Control toggle switch with flat, -2dB, and -4dB positions. You should try to keep your monitors a good distance away from walls and avoid placing them directly on desktops to prevent bass build up. But if that is not possible, try one of the three Acoustic Space switch positions.

I set up the pair of BX8 D3s on speaker stands with the Acoustic Space switch at Flat. However with them on my dining room table, I found the -2dB position good. The BX8 D3s have plenty of gain with no trouble filling the room with great sound.

I found the BX5s to have a slightly forward mid-range quality good for analyzing my mixes. It’s easy to hear music mixes I know to be somewhat lacking in high frequency air and upper mid-range edge. These speakers do not hype up the top end excessively.

Whether you’re adding a second pair of monitors to your existing studio setup or the BXs are going to be your “go-to”, main loudspeakers, I think they make a good affordable choice.

The M-Audio BX5 D3 monitors are $149 MSRP each while the BX8 D3 monitors are priced at $249 MSRP each. m-audio.com/bx8d3

STEINBERG NUENDO 8

Nuendo 8 is a complete, self-contained music, effects, dialog, sound design, ADR/Foley DAW system. Nuendo 8 now goes deeper into game audio production and has many new features aimed at faster and better workflows.

A big update is Game Audio Connect 2 that transfers entire music compositions (including audio and MIDI tracks along with cycle and cue markers) from Nuendo to AudioKinetik’s Wwise—a middleware cross-platform sound engine for authoring interactive media and video games.

Steinberg is moving towards more collaborative features where multiple users can contribute via the Internet or local network to the same project. Steinberg has Automated Dialog Replacement (ADR) system for fully integrated voice and Foley recording and has promised Remote Dialog Replacement with video soon—dialog replacement directly from any remote location in the world.

A big change is that NEK or the Nuendo Expansion Kit has been incorporated into Nuendo 8. At an additional cost, NEK gives Nuendo users all the MIDI functionality of Cubase. We liked the Screen Zones—all controls in a single unified window with access to all of the DAW’s functions.

The Sampler Track is now integrated directly into Nuendo and allows for quick editing of audio streamed from a hard drive—with the option to load a portion of the file into RAM. You can take snippets from audio clips in the Arrange page and simply drag them into the Sampler Track window for further manipulation and editing—great for re-triggering drum or percussion samples.

Another feature, first introduced in Cubase 9 and now in Nuendo 8, is side-chaining for VST3 instruments. Use the side-chain for sending audio to the filter section of the virtual-analog Retrologue 2 synthesizer, the second version of a VST instrument that was previously available within the NEK.

Besides Retrologue 2, there’s a new 8-band fully parametric EQ called Frequency EQ and Sound Randomizer creates variations of a sound using four controls: pitch, timbre, impact, and timing. VST MultiPan

Nuendo 8 is available through the Steinberg Online Shop and sells for $2,100 MSRP. steinberg.net/en/products/nuendo/start.html

MARTIN GUITARS’ ED SHEERAN DIVIDE SIGNATURE EDITION

The newest installment from Martin Guitar celebrates Sheeran’s third album, Divide. It is the third Martin Guitar commemorating a new Ed Sheeran album release.

Sheeran designed the guitar with the luthiers at Martin and stays true to his love for Martin’s LX1E Little Martin. The LX1E offers unparalleled tone from a small body guitar and continues with his mathematical-themed album cover art that adorns the guitar’s headstock and the solid Sitka spruce wood top. The guitar also features a matching blue rosette around the sound hole, and is constructed with high-pressure mahogany laminate back and sides. The model comes stage-ready with Fishman Sonitone electronics, Martin SP Acoustic strings and a padded gig bag.

As with the first and second guitars, Sheeran is again donating 100% of his royalties from guitar sales to East Anglia’s Children’s Hospices (each.org.uk), a U.K.-based charity in his hometown.

Martin Guitars’ Ed Sheeran Divide Signature Edition sells for $699 MSRP.

anyone can make your mix louder

But we're committed to enhancing the musicality of your recording.

Not obliterating it.
**NEW TOYS**

- **BURNS ENGINEERING BASS PLATE BP-20 PEDAL DOCK**

Following the successful release of their 22-inch bass drum model in early 2015, the BP-20 is the second Pedal Dock from Bass Plate. The (pictured) new BP-20 is for 20-inch kick drums and both it and the original BP-22 attach directly to bass drums that have either 8 or 10 lugs.

- Both of these Bass Plate docking devices improve the sound, protect the hoop from pedal rash and increase the stability of kick drums. They also provide a way to adjust and position kick drum pedals laterally to change exactly, where the beater hits the head.

Bass Plates are compatible with most popular bass drum pedals and carry a suggested retail of $69.99. bass-plate.com.

- **CLOUD MICROPHONES CLOUDLIFTER CL-ZI INSTRUMENT/MIC ACTIVATOR**

Cloud Microphones’ Cloudlifter CL-Zi Instrument/Mic Activator®️ is designed to be inserted into the mic line between your microphone and mic pre-amp. The CL-Zi adds a CineMag 12:1 step-down transformer so besides providing up to 25db of gain, the Zi also doubles as a variable impedance active direct box for guitar, bass or keyboards.

The CL-Zi has a single Zi control knob that continuously varies its input impedance from 150-ohms to 15k-ohms to load or unload the impedance of a connected microphone or the instrument direct input.

- When the ¼-inch DI is used for guitar or bass, varying the load impedance on the instrument’s passive pickups changes both the tone, feel and playing dynamics of the instrument. The CL-Zi’s new 6dB/octave high pass filter works in conjunction with the Zi knob for a tone shaping capability I found very useful when recording any source.

- My first test was using CL-Zi as an active direct box for my Fender Strat guitar. The More or Max gain positions came in handy when changing the load impedance with the Zi knob. I found the range between the 7k-ohm and 350-ohm knob positions to offer the best range of different variations of clean, direct guitar sounds. With the HPF switched in, rotating the Zi knob works the same except the low frequencies are reduced as well.

- The Cloudlifter CL-Zi works well with low impedance mics and the HPF feature worked great to reduce proximity effect on old mics without roll-off switches. I could adjust the high frequency amount, gain, and low frequency content in different ways. I am adjusting the source’s “size” and dynamic-ness or the relative ease with which the mic reproduces the transients from drums and percussion instruments.

- The Cloud Microphones Cloudlifter CL-Zi Instrument/Mic Activator is a “must have” here in my studio and I think everyone should have at least one or two (for stereo). It sells for $379 MAP.

cloudmicrophones.com/cloudlifter-cl-zi/

- **STOMPLIGHT DMX PRO EFFECT PEDAL AND PAL**

The StompLight DMX Pro lightshow pedals have undergone a major update including a reduction in pricing. Available in white or black, the StompLight DMX Pro sells for $299 MSRP and the StompLight Pal that interconnects and synchronizes to the DMX sells for $249 MSRP.

I received for review a StompLight DMX Pro, StompLight Pal and two PowerBank batteries and cables. Both the units come with 12.6-volt wall-wart adapters that also charge the PowerBank batteries. StompLight DMX Pro has a hinged ‘clamshell’ cover that allows the super-bright LED bank to throw light up at nearly any angle. I used the review unit here at my recording studio decoratively—and I miss it already.

There are five modes available using the Mode footswitch. The color wheel mode is my favorite mode and you can adjust the speed at which it fades from one color to the next color. The Rate/Sensitivity control allows changes from about once every half-second to about once every 30 seconds.

- My second favorite is solid color mode that offers red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and finally white. It does set a certain mood in the studio with the white mode making a good troubleshooting light.

- The third mode is a kind of color organ that works dynamically to blast light in any of the above single colors. Loud sounds produce a brighter light—an internal microphone with a sensitivity control picks up whatever sound(s) in the room. Or the fourth mode uses a mono audio signal directly connected to the unit’s ¼-inch Input jack.

- The fifth mode is a stroboscopic mode for bright flashes in any of the chosen colors with repetition rates from every 1/2-second to three times a second.

Multiple StompLight DMX Pros or StompLight Pals can be interconnected and flash in perfect sync using the unit’s In/Out XLR connectors. It easy to fill out larger stages all trigger from a single DMX Pro unit. I think this is a great product and useful in all sorts of ways for parties, music venues, nightclub/bars, and much more. All StompLight products come with a 1-year warranty.

stomplight.com.

BARRY RUDOLPH is a recording engineer/mixer who has worked on over 30 gold and platinum records. He has recorded and/or mixed Lured Skymend, Hall & Oates, Pat Benatar, Rod Stewart, the Corrs and more. Barry has his own futuristic music mixing facility and loves teaching audio engineering at Musician’s Institute, Hollywood, CA. He is a lifetime Grammy-voting member of NARAS and a contributing editor for Mix Magazine. barry@barryrudolph.com
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For the Sake of Heaviness – The History of Metal Blade Records
By Brian Slagel with Mark Eglinton
(paperback) $14.99

Slagel went from trading bootleg concert cassettes in the back of magazines to releasing the Metal Massacre compilation LP on his own fledgling label. 35 years later, and Metal Blade Records continues to thrive, thanks in no small part to Slagel’s unwavering passion for heavy music. For the Sake of Heaviness charts the history of the label in unflinching detail.

Social Media Promotion for Musicians: The Manual For Marketing Yourself, Your Band And Your Music Online
By Bobby Owsinski
(paperback) $29.99

In a fully updated second edition of Bobby Owsinski’s Social Media Promotion For Musicians, readers get to know the strategies that are essential for musicians, artists, bands, engineers, producers and songwriters to harness the power of an online presence in order to gain more fans, clients, streams and views. Owsinski also provides information that aims to help the reader to easily apply both the basic and advanced skills required to go from a social media user to a social media marketer.

Dead Boys 1977 – The Lost Photographs of Dave Treat
By Dave Treat
(hardback) $29.99

Cleveland-via-NYC punks the Dead Boys, with Stiv Bators and Cheetah Chrome in the ranks, were always pretty photogenic, but this book of rare, early pictures by Treat captures the band before their dalliances with notoriety. We’re offered a record of a group of young men learning the ropes of the rock star game, though the charisma shines through.

Maximum Volume: The Life of Beatles Producer George Martin
By Kenneth Womack
(hardcover) $30.00

Here’s a full-length bio of Sir George Martin, giving readers detailed accounts of his collaborative work with the Beatles, while also tracing his working-class childhood in North London, where he lived with his family. Author Kenneth Womack also touches on Martin’s life as a scratch pianist, his life in the Fleet Air Arm during World War II and his work as head of Parlophone Records, which before the Beatles was known for its comedy records.

Crazy Like Me
By Billy Burnette
(paperback) $17.99

In his lively memoir Billy Burnette—son of Dors-ey and nephew of Johnny—takes you through his charmed rock & roll life and the gallery of artists he has worked with. Burnette recalls his early musical career when in his mid-teens he picked up a guitar and started writing songs, then goes on to recount key moments of his solo career, his success with Fleetwood Mac and as a songwriter for the likes of Rod Stew-art, Ray Charles, Roy Orbison and many others.

The New Electronic Guitarist
By Marty Cutler
(paperback) $29.99

With breakthroughs in music technology, the music your electric guitar once made is now more eclectic with the hardware use of synths and effects—animating, molding and morphing sounds. In Marty Cutler’s The New Electronic Guitarist, readers are given more than 30 years of expertise. Explanations of the nature and history of sound, guitars and guitar synthesis are given before delving into the tools needed to sculpt and record your guitar’s sound.
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www.afmsagaftrafund.org/ShowMeTheMoney
The Holy Grail of Digital Audio: Larry Ryckman and Shelly Yakus are the co-founders of the award-winning, cutting-edge Hollywood-based audio technology company specializing in the development of proprietary and groundbreaking audio technologies and products. Partnering with producer Rodney Jerkins and artist Justin Timberlake, the two bring decades of producing, engineering and mastering experience to the venture they call “the answer to all your audio needs.”

Aftermaster was founded upon a multi-year, multi-million dollar development effort driven by innovators focused on exploring bold new possibilities in digital audio processing. Aftermaster Audio brings unparalleled amplitude, depth, clarity and fullness to any audio recording throughout its entire frequency range without compromise.

For TV, Aftermaster raises all dialogue levels while making all surrounding audio sound substantially better. “We found the Holy Grail,” Ryckman says. “We did something that no one else has been able to do: make a digital audio event sound better throughout the entire frequency range with a process. We’re the only audio technology in the world that can remaster music without changing the original intent of how the music was created.” Legendary mastering engineer Peter Doell heads up the mastering department.

ProMaster: Aftermaster Audio Labs operates state-of-the-art recording and mastering facilities in Hollywood. The facility comprises six recording and mastering studios, boardroom, lounge, production rooms and executive offices. In addition, the company is leveling the playing field for indie artists via its ProMaster service. For only $9.99 per track, they offer studio quality sound created by a team responsible for some of the biggest hits of all time—right to the customer’s inbox, for direct use on Soundcloud, iTunes or any other platform. Users can hear 90 seconds of each ProMastered version before they commit to buying the track.

The Aftermaster Pro: Non-musicians can enjoy the Aftermaster difference with The Aftermaster Pro, the world’s first Personal Re-Mastering Device. The same award winning and unparalleled sound and clarity that Professional Recording Artists use is now available in one’s own personal unit. Users simply install the Aftermaster Pro TV unit between an input and television thru HDMI cable. It can be used with cable boxes, satellite, video gaming consoles, streaming devices, computers, tablets and other devices.
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Lollartron 2017
J.D.’s Musical Return
J.D. King (left) sits in the control room of his analog home studio at The Ramones Ranch in the hills of Los Angeles, with friend and collaborator Jack Kilmer. King is putting the finishing touches on his solo album, *Moon Gardens*, out later in 2017. For more, visit jdkingmusic.com

Prism Sound Celebrates Its Anniversary At AES New York
Prism Sound celebrated its 30th anniversary this year and will mark the occasion by displaying its full range of award-winning audio interfaces and converters at the 143rd AES convention in New York. Among the products on display will be the ADA-8XR multichannel AD/DA converter, Lyra, Titan and Atlas audio interfaces, the latest SADIE 6 software and various products from the MASELEC range. Pictured: Prism Sound Technical Director and co-founder, Ian Dennis. For more, visit prismsound.com.

Music Connection Magazine Podcast Is Here!
Music Connection magazine has launched its very own podcast through the PodcastOne network (Adam Carolla) titled Music Connection Magazine Podcast.pictured standing at PodcastOne Studio is (l-r): co-host Arnie Wohl (Michael Jackson, Paula Abdul, Coldplay); MC Senior Editor Mark Nardone; co-host Randy Thomas (announcer, Rock N Roll Hall of Fame, the Academy Awards and Tony Awards), artist Miles Mosley; and MC Publisher Eric Bettelli. Every Wednesday brings an all-new podcast with exclusive interviews with the hottest music-makers. Visit podcastone.com/music-connection.

Producer Playback
“You have to have a great song, a great artist that can take it all the way and you need a partner—indie or major—that has the patience to grow and develop it.”

– RedOne (Nicki Minaj, Lady Gaga, U2)
Aftermaster Enriches Studio with TELEFUNKEN Diamond Series ELA M251E

Aftermaster, Inc. has added another piece of equipment to its arsenal at the newly opened Aftermaster Studios Hollywood, a TELEFUNKEN Diamond Series ELA M251E large diaphragm tube microphone. Personally chosen and delivered by TELEFUNKEN founder and CEO Toni Fishman, this microphone would capture a number of smashes over the years, including Brian Wilson, Cee-Lo, The National and Duran Duran. Pictured (l-r): Daniel Polselli, TELEFUNKEN consultant; Toni Fishman, TELEFUNKEN CEO and Founder; and Aftermaster CEO and Founder Larry Ryckman.

EastWest Parties with Producers

EastWest Studios threw an impromptu party that brought out esteemed producers and engineers including Beatles engineer Geoff Emerick, Ross Hogarth and Spike Stent, who is pictured (right) with AFM & SAG AFTRA Fund PR & Marketing Manager Brian Stewart.

METAlliance Academy Records New York Voices

Jazz vocal group New York Voices will be tracked and mixed live by the METAlliance founders during their “In Session with The Guys” event, happening Oct. 21 and 22 in NYC at Power Station BerkleeNYC. Pictured (l-r): Darmon Meader, Lauren Kinhan, Peter Eldridge and Kim Nazarian from New York Voices.

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Rocker, motivational performer and producer Andrew W.K. (Wilkes-Krier) embarked on his lifelong courtship of music when he studied piano as a child. His single “Party Hard” from his debut album *I Get Wet* became a party staple and its YouTube views number in the eight figures. In addition to producing his own material, he’s worked with artists including Wolf Eyes and dub pioneer Lee “Scratch” Perry on Perry’s 2008 Grammy-nominated *Repentance*.

W.K. had his first taste of production early when he discovered that his parents’ hi-fi included a stereo microphone. He began to record himself on piano and discovered the power and allure of working in audio. He was fascinated by the process and soon came into possession of a 4-track recorder. Unlike learning to read music, which he often found painful, recording provided instant gratification.

His production mindset resembles a hybrid of his motivational inclinations with liberal sprinklings of Zen.

“I’ve always felt fortunate to produce for artists that I consider dream clients,” he observes. “They’ve been people I’ve dreamed of working with and it’s become a sort of magical situation. Many of them I wouldn’t even have had the nerve to hope to work with.

“I always felt that I got more out of working with these people than they [got from me],” he continues. “It’s a wonderful release and contrast to serving your own sonic vision. You take a break from what you’re doing and say ‘How can I make this person happy? How can I get them the sound they’re looking for?’ That’s the gift they give me.”

It’s tempting to presume that a producer’s chief role is to voice his or her opinion regularly. W.K., however, takes the opposite view. He feels that often times silence conveys infinitely more meaning than the voice can.

“Not saying things is probably the biggest lesson I’ve learned,” he asserts. “Sometimes I’ll have a specific idea but instead of saying it—let alone force it upon them—I swallow it and it seems to end up happening. Either someone else suggests it or it happens on its own. When pushing toward the best result, sometimes less feels like more. If it’s meant to happen, it seems like it does happen.”

What’s commonly key for a producer is the ability to sense a strong song. Each producer comes to this knowledge in his or her own way. For W.K., a visceral response is his cue. “What I’m interested in are those undeniable physical reactions,” he explains. “If I feel chills, that’s what I’m trying to get to. It tells you you’re alive. It’s emotional in a way that you can’t define as happy or sad. It’s just being moved.”

The tour for his latest record kicked off this September in Denver and, among other dates, included Chicago’s three-day Riot Fest.
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**Email:** themundi@axismundirecords.com  
**Clients:** Is Tropical, Psymon Spine, Simon Doom, Sun Abduction, DrugsNDreams, Jack Killen, Bakery, Mr. Divisadero, Dead Bees, Dumb.

**BACKGROUND**


**Organic Origins**

After touring for a few years with Crystal Fighters, people started asking me to produce their music. People were looking to me for creative advice and how to navigate life in the music world.

After one summer of doing festivals, a band named Psymon Spine, who’s now on the label, reached out to me. I was on tour with Crystal Fighters (we were supposed to play a show in Albany, NY) and they were going to college [about] an hour away. They sent me a song, said they liked my band and were friends with other friends of ours, a band called Is Tropical. They’d remixed one of our songs, so they kind of made the connection and asked if we could hang out if they came to the show. I listened to the song and thought it was amazing. I invited them and they came; we really connected and partied all night. That night, they asked me to produce their album. I asked them if I started a record label would they want to put it out with me. And they were like, totally, we’d love that.

On the same tour, another friend’s band, DrugzNDreams, also asked if I’d produce their record and I threw out the idea of a label. In the fall of 2014, I moved back to New York and overnight signed three bands, including Is Tropical.

**A Mission of Unity**

Our mission is to work with likeminded musicians. So if you’re in line with our ethos, we will happily work with you. Axis Mundi is a place where music and fun come first and everything else comes second. My label partner, Bill [Toce], and I consistently ask ourselves, “What do we wish our favorite labels would do?”

What sets us apart is that we really focus on unity, having the bands work as a collective. A lot of our bands produce each other’s music, engineer it or are involved in it one way or another. We like that.

**Copacetic Contracts**

I was inspired to break the mold a bit with contracts. With Crystal Fighters, I’d never signed a deal that was just one album or project. Signing a multi-record deal can have its benefits and its downsfalls. We’re uninterested in keeping a band with us if they don’t want to be, so everything is very short-term. We’re not trying to fool anyone with the language in our contract.

**A Nurturing Environment**

Once you get to a certain point, you need a major label to get to the next level, but not all bands are aspiring to reach that level of fame. We’re focused on the birth of music and long-term development of projects. We’re aware of the peaks and troughs of anyone’s journey in music.

We don’t love just one album from a band; usually, we love years and years of their output, rather than just one moment. It seems the majors aren’t taking as many risks and are less interested in artist development or giving bands time to evolve. We like to watch bands grow and do what we can to help.

**Stay True**

You’ve got to have a voice, stay true to it and try not to worry too much about what other people are doing. Make sure to develop your sound so it’s exactly what you want it to be before you start pushing it out to the world.

**Inside and Outside the Industry**

We’re not trying to be a totally punk, D.I.Y. label and reject everything that is the music industry. We don’t throw money at something and hope it sticks. We only spend money when it’s necessary. Sometimes, that’s paying for a PR company that’s known. Other times, it makes more sense for us to use our own resources. We have enough of a following that we can introduce a new project just to the Axis Mundi fan base and have that create a bit of a wave.

**Personality First, Music Second**

We’re always looking for new artists. We’ve found that if we like the person and are inspired by what they’re up to outside the studio we usually like what they’re doing inside the studio. So the first thing we do is hang out or talk to them on the phone and try to catch their vibe. Then, we listen to the music. That’s how it usually goes.

If you want to send us music, our email address is on our website. We listen to all of it and love that. Or play a crazy show and have us find out about you that way.

**Vinyl Value**

We’re huge supporters of vinyl and the physical element of music—buying a record, getting that record in your hands for the first time, taking it out of the packaging and putting it on the record player. The whole experience has a richness that sometimes the digital experience doesn’t provide. So, where possible, we print vinyl.

I have my father’s collection mixed in with my own and some of those records of his were from high school. I’m listening to those the same way he listened to those. You can experience listening to music in a timeless way when you put on a record.

**Make Your Own Label**

Go for it; there’s no better time. It’s very simple these days to set up a label and it’s incredible how easy it is to have a voice and generate awareness. What’s the worst that could happen? You end up doing it for a bit and then stop doing it.

**New Joints**

We have a few projects we’ve recently released. One is Jack Killen, who goes by the king of detective rock. I produced his EP in 2016. It’s all influenced by pulp literature. He’s like a mixture of Frank Zappa, Ween, Meatloaf and Journey. He writes these anhemic power ballads that are incredible.

Is Tropical’s third album is out, Black Anything. They recorded that on five different continents and we released the album in two track installments, each with a unique transparent vinyl printed with the continent that they recorded that installment on, so once you get all five records you can stack them up and it creates a map of the world.

Our newest signing is a band called Dumb from Austin, TX. They just released their album, Live Fast Die Dumb. They play an amazing hard, deep-fried Southern rock & roll. Bakery is one of our bands from Berlin; we just released their debut album. They’re an amazing mixture of electronic and organic instrumental psychedelia. And we have four or five more albums coming out this year.

**Growing and Surviving**

At the moment, we’re just trying to stay afloat. We’ve always talked about an Axis Mundi festival or having a series of festivals around the world. We’re starting a new imprint called Koala Zone. It’s an international dance party series, which we’ve just started getting off the ground. So the idea is to take this day-by-day, but hope this will last a lifetime.
OPPS

ArtistPR has been around since 2005 and is one of the largest submission firms and news wires for the music industry. Many artists and labels use ArtistPR as a vehicle to submit their music to radio and press. They will digitally submit your music to national publications, internet radio and college radio. And, they will also submit music to hundreds of e-zines, blogs, podcasts...anywhere that makes sense for your genre of music. You can get your music the attention it deserves by checking out what ArtistPR can do for you at artistpr.com.

Digindie is looking for talented up and coming artists in all genres to feature on their popular site. Founded in 2012, Digindie is the internet’s oracle for the latest music, videos, web shows and more from the best independent and mainstream creatives. With 2.5 million viewers, they are well on the way to becoming the world’s best blog. They also offer social media promotion on all the top websites and apps like Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Soundcloud and more. You can go to digindie.com to submit your material, or get special consideration by submitting via MusicClout.com.

Allihoopa is a social network that connects people, music content and music apps. They have also launched an app and offer integration with Korg.

Soundtrap and Propellerhead. From its start in 2016, more than 500,000 users have signed up for Allihoopa. On the site people can find music that inspires them and create their own music, follow friends, give kudos and get feedback on their own music. Allihoopa users can freely use anything they find from the growing pool of over one million music pieces. You can check it all out at allihoopa.com.

The Indie Radio Directory, the gateway to over 500 influential commercial specialty, non-commercial college and public radio stations in North America, is now available. Carefully curated, it lists and references key Program Directors, Music Directors and DJ’s across the country who support new music and help to break new acts. If you would like to get airplay, go to musicblogdirectory.com to see what is offered.

Mint 400 Records is currently seeking new indie rock and folk artists who have exceptional songwriting skills and an original singing voice. Formed in 2007, Mint 400 Records offers digital distribution, recording, producing, engineering, mastering, video editing, web design, graphic design, music licensing, radio promotion and a little PR. If interested, mint400records.com is accepting submissions instructions via MusicClout.com.

Sound Royalties, an innovative company providing creative new financing strategies tailored for songwriters, artists, producers and other music professionals, revealed plans to invest a whopping $100 million in the music community over the next two years. This game-changing investment and revolutionary business model hopes to fill the music industry’s financing void that has often left creatives either waiting months or years for earned funds, or forced them to sell away their catalogues and copyrights. Instead, Sound Royalties offers fast, non-credit based advances that provide funds based on future earnings and allows music professionals to retain rights to their music. This delivers the upfront money songwriters and others working in the industry need to fund ongoing work, new projects or simply help pay their bills. If you could use a little extra funding, go to soundroyalties.com for details.

MORRISSEY GOES LOW

Morrissey’s first studio album since 2014, Low in High-School, celebrates his partnership with BMG and the launch of his new label, Etienne Records. The album was recorded at La Fabrique Studios in France and in Rome at Ennio Morricone’s Forum Studios. Produced by Joe Chiccarelli, the album will be released digitally and in physical formats: CD, colored vinyl and limited-edition cassette. Tour dates are coming soon…but L.A.’s most iconic venue, the Hollywood Bowl, has announced one of the first shows to feature some of the soon-to-be released material in concert, along with many of his classic songs on Nov. 10. For more, visit facebook.com/Morrissey.

MARTEEN INKS HOT DEAL WITH WARNER BROS.

Warner Bros. Records, via platinum-selling music producer J.R. Rotem’s label Lyon Estates, has signed 16-year-old singer-songwriter Marteen. This artist made waves with his independently released 2016 mixtape, Focused. WBR recently released a video for Marteen’s spicy debut single, “Sriracha,” produced by and co-written with Rotem. “I love Sriracha,” says Marteen. “I was eating it one day on my fried rice and, partially joking, told my producer J.R. that we should make a song about it.” Marteen opened for Kehlani on her recent “Sweet Sexy Savage” tour and has also shared the stage with artists such as Fifth Harmony, Super Duper Kyle and Lil Uzi. For more, visit marteenestevez.com.

Noisy is hosting a three-day tastemaker event in the heart of the Las Vegas Strip from Nov. 16 to 18. Featuring 100 emerging musicians and 30 speakers, EMERGE will reimagine the conference and festival experience by blending a progressive lineup of next-generation musicians with inspired speakers to illuminate relevant social themes. Noisy was founded in 2011 as a way to document new and exciting music across the globe. Since then, it has grown into one of the most important destinations for music, creating the web’s most influential music documentaries, a TV show on VICELAND, a radio show on Apple’s Beats 1 and more. With in-depth reporting and incisive storytelling, Noisy uses music as a lens to investigate the movements, stories and scenes that drive our culture. For additional information, go to Emergenv.com.

LABELS+RELEASES SIGNINGS

Continuing to celebrate 50 years of making music, the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band’s extraordinary career is encapsulated in a new retrospective two-disc set, Anthology, via Capitol Nashville/UMe. Beginning with “Buy for Me the Rain,” their first track from their 1967 self-titled Capitol Records debut, and culminating with “The Resurrection” from their most recent studio release, 2009’s Speed of Life, the all-encompassing collection is an extensive 39-track career overview, which includes illuminating liner notes from renowned journalist and author Holly Gleason. Long before Americana music had a name, the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, helped lead the charge, mixing elements of country, bluegrass, folk, mountain music, and rock & roll

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into a sound that celebrated the full range of American music. Formed in Long Beach, CA in 1966, the guys were traditionalists and trend-setters, performing songs that nodded to the past while still pushing toward the future. Go to nittygritty.com for more on this enduring act.

EastWest/Quantum Leap is releasing Voices of the Empire, a brand-new product perfect for epic film, TV and game soundtracks. Featuring the raw, primal vocals of Uyanga Bold, the recording makes the perfect companion to the highly-anticipated blockbuster Hollywood Choirs. Bold is a unique talent, melding the ethnic musical traditions of Bulgaria, Serbia, Mongolia and beyond. She is a trained opera singer, fluent in Russian, Mongolian, French, English and German. It’s East meets West like you’ve never heard before. Produced by Doug Rogers and Nick Phoenix, it is available for purchase at the Composer Cloud, soundsonline.com/composercloud, which is EastWest’s multiple award-winning subscription service that has revolutionized the virtual instrument industry.

The legendary punk band The Damned signed a new label deal with Search & Destroy and announced plans for their 11th studio album. Now, the band is pleased to announce that preparations are underway. The band’s raw, primal and macabre energy will see its match in the studio this October in Brooklyn, NY with famed producer Tony Visconti who for over five decades has produced some of the world’s most influential artists and their greatest albums (David Bowie, T.Rex, Morrissey, U2, the Stranglers, Iggy Pop and Thin Lizzy). The New York Observer proclaimed, “The Damned are a band of infinite depth and a wide variety of pleasures... high-quality blur of melodic punk, Beach Boys-ish flowery psych-pop, chiming, bitersweet post-punk, Moody Blues-ish bombastrophemers, spiraling goth and soaring faux soul, all brilliantly executed.” For additional news, visit officialdamned.com.

Nashville’s alt-rock five-piece Moon Taxi has just signed to RCA Records. The band’s newest single, “Two High,” is nearing 50 million streams on Spotify, is in the Top 10 at Triple A Radio and is being played on Sirius XM’s The Spectrum, All Nation and Jam On. The band will continue their “Put ‘Em Up” and will be on the road throughout the end of October with dates in Los Angeles, New York City, Nashville and more. For a full tour itinerary, go to ridethe-moontaxi.com.

PROPS
The music of David Bowie reached a major milestone with the one billionth stream on Spotify from his stellar 50-year career. The No. 1 streamed song, “Heroes” (originally recorded in English, French & German), has become an inspirational anthem and is this year celebrating its 40th anniversary. The track forms the cornerstone of the boxed set A New Career in A New Town 1977-1982 and will also be released, via Parlophone, as a special limited-edition picture disc. For additional details, go to davidbowie.com.

The Supreme Court of the United States of America unanimously affirmed that The Slants have the right to trademark their name, ending an eight-year battle for the Portland, Oregon rock band. The Slants are an Asian-American rock band who applied for a trademark in 2010, but a trademark examiner rejected the application, stating that “The Slants” was a disparaging term. Judge Kimberly Moore stated, “Courts have been slow to appreciate the expressive power of trademarks. Mr. Simon Tam named his band The Slants to make a statement about racial and cultural issues in this country. The band name conveys more about our society than many volumes of indisputably protected speech.” The Slants are currently touring and promoting their latest release, The Band Who Must Not Be Named, which has spawned two singles—“From the Heart” and “Level Up.” You can follow their latest activities at theslants.com.

THE BIZ
KCSN, the AAA formatted non-commercial radio station based out of Los Angeles’ Cal State Northridge, is massively expanding its broadcast reach to a nearly four-fold coverage area that will increase its potential listeners from 3 million to a whopping 11.5 million. “The New 88.5,” as the station will be branded, is a result of a broadcast agreement between KCSN and KSBF-FM out of Mission Viejo’s Saddleback College. The broadcast signal will originate from both stations’ campus studios as well as a remote studio at The Village in Westfield Topanga.

Noted A&R executive Johnny Monarda has joined Fueled by Ramen and Roadrunner Records in a dual role as Senior Director of A&R for the sister labels. This marks Monardi’s return to Fueled, where he played a prominent role in developing the label’s roster, signing artists such as the Academy Is, A Rocket to The Moon, This Providence, Forgive Durden, the Swellers and the Friday Night Boys. Most recently, Monardi has been doing A&R for Equal Vision Records, where he signed Sleep On It and Nothing, Nowhere... the latter in partnership with Pete Wentz’s DCD2 label.
Hi Friends,
It's been awhile, but I'm still here!!

TAXI has been the singular catalyst for me in the past 2 years. I am closing in on 2 years of membership and my experience has been overwhelming. I will be at the Road Rally this year, as I've recently been invited to speak at the 'Successful Members' panel.

This is all beyond humbling to me, and I feel indebted to Michael and his incredibly talented staff.

Taking Risks...
In a nutshell, TAXI has motivated me and allowed me to take creative risks; to dabble in genres I didn't even know existed, and to develop relationships with high-level music professionals I otherwise would NEVER have had access to.

Major Publishers
So far this year I've signed 13 songs with major publishers. I'm writing with people all over the USA, and have made regular trips to Nashville a part of my routine. I've been co-writing with a guy who has had multiple (recent) #1's. It boggles my mind actually.

Once in a Lifetime Opportunity!
I'm writing Hip Hop tracks for a well known rapper's next project, and I'm connected to a Multi-Platinum, Grammy-Winning Producer who allows/asks me to regularly send him material to pitch to the biggest artists in music. That in and of itself is enough is a once in a lifetime opportunity, and it's been ongoing for nearly a year.

There's more, but this isn't about me. It's about: T-A-X-I Have I mentioned that I live in GREEN BAY, WI? I mean, sure, we have the Packers — but it isn't exactly a music hub for anything more than Journey tribute bar bands.

I really can't stress how invaluable TAXI is to people who are willing to put the CRAFT into the ART of songwriting and music production. The "Forwards" section of the [TAXI] forum itself is worth the membership fee. Why?

Figured Out What Elements I Missed...
It's not to brag about Forwards. What I did was hit the [TAXI] Forums after I got “Returns” and found members who received “Forwards” for the same listings. Then I went and LISTENED. I analyzed the differences in our songs. Lyrics. Vocals. Arrangements. Instrumentations. Productions. I re-read the listings, and figured out what elements I missed. And I adjusted accordingly.

Where else can you get that?

The success of members (at least this member) is a TEAM effort. And I am honored to consider TAXI part of my team. It is possible to succeed. To “make it.” To realize our dreams.

Don't quit. Don't settle. Don't lose hope. And stick with TAXI.
I
n the tradition of studio session hit makers like the Wrecking Crew, the Funk Brothers and the Muscle Shoals Swampers comes a contemporary outfit of studio cats-turned-recording artists known as the Texas Gentlemen. This Dallas-based quintet has backed everyone from the legendary Kris Kristofferson to eclectic singer-songwriters like Leon Bridges, Shakey Graves, Jack Ingram, Joe Ely and many others.

“We were playing around the Dallas area and got a residency playing covers for fun,” says Beau Bedford. “In between that we were working with artists and cutting as many records as possible. That really laid the groundwork for us to become what we have now playing live.”

All the members of the Texas Gentlemen were already successful as musical stylists and songwriters in their own right. Entering the studio to record under the “Gents” umbrella just seemed like a natural progression. “Before we signed with New West we cut [the album] TX Jelly last August in Muscle Shoals, Alabama at Fame Studios,” says Bedford. “I produce records and had an artist that dropped out of some dates. We had just

“our manager ran into
new west president john allen
at sxsw”

come back from playing the Newport Folk Festival with Kris Kristofferson. I thought this would be a perfect time to have everyone come out and let’s make a Texas Gents record. We cut 27 tunes in four days—11 of which ended up on TX Jelly.”

The band had plans to release the album independently when a performance at this year’s SXSW festival redefined their course. “Our manager ran into New West president John Allen there,” explains Bedford. “John caught our show and thought it was insane. From there we had a conversation about teaming up with them. We felt it was a great connection to find these dudes. We’re excited to be releasing this record with them.”

True to form, the band was not intentionally looking for a label deal, yet one fell in their lap at the right time. “That is the story of the Texas Gentlemen,” claims Bedford with a laugh. “We pick things we love to do and seek out artists we love playing with, and that has begat one thing to the next. It’s just really a blessing to see all of the doors that have opened on our behalf.”

Their full-length album TX Jelly was released globally by New West Records on Sept. 15th. – Eric A. Harabadian

S
amantha Ronson—that’s right, the reputed London DJ whose romance with Lindsay Lohan drew her enough limelight for a lifetime—is shy about her music.

In March 2015, Ronson, along with drummer/producer Pete Nappi and singer/songwriter Ethan Thompson, wrote a batch of songs and recorded them to analog. “We did it altogether,” Ronson says. “Pete did 90 percent of the production, Ethan and I did 90 percent of the writing—and we tortured each other 100 percent of the time.”

Thing is, once the songs were finished, Ronson wasn’t too keen on sharing them with anyone: “I didn’t want to be rejected, so I didn’t want to play them for anybody and have them say they weren’t any good.”

Regardless, a friend of hers who was freelancing as an A&R rep and manager for various labels in New York, slipped the songs to the A&R department at Hollywood Records. Based solely off those demos (well, Ronson’s reputation probably didn’t hurt, either), Hollywood Records signed Ocean Park Standoff to a 360 deal on March 17, 2016, even before seeing the band perform live.

Following the signing, the pop/rock group played a gig in front of 200 people at South by Southwest. On the way back to their hotel, they heard one of their songs on the radio for the first time.

“It was such a cool moment, we’ll never forget it,” Nappi said.

Indeed, the memories are already piling up for the young band, whose self-titled EP dropped in early March. To date, they’ve toured with Silversun Pickups and Third Eye Blind, staged their own tour and played on the Today show in front of Kathie Lee Gifford.

Despite all the attention the newbies are drawing, each of the three bandmates emphasized throughout our conversation that they chillax as much as possible. Thompson says the trio “writes songs in [Ronson’s] backyard for fun,” adding that Hollywood is letting them format their music to the band’s liking.

“We tortured each other 100 percent of the time.”

With an arrangement like that, it seems like only a matter of time before Ronson’s shyness wears off.

“We keep waiting for something to go wrong, but it hasn’t,” she says.

– Kurt Orzech
**The Aces**

**Date Signed:** Oct. 21, 2016  
**Label:** Red Bull Records  
**Band Members:** Alisa Ramirez, Cristal Ramirez, Katie Henderson, McKenna Petty  
**Type of Music:** Alternative  
**Management:** Saiko Management  
**Booking:** David Galea - UTA  
**Legal:** Ed Shapiro - Davis, Shapiro, Lewitt, Grabel, Levon, Granderson, and Blake LLP  
**Publicity:** Jamie Garabedian - Red Bull Records  
**Web:** theacesofficial.com  
**A&R:** Kenny Salcido, Red Bull Records

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**Name a band—any band—that got signed to a label before playing a single concert. Used up all your lifelines yet? Well, in the Bandcamp Era—a time when labels rely as much on search results as they do concert-scouting—that’s now a thing.**

A few years back, a +1 Records rep searched for “#indiepop” on Bandcamp and stumbled across some tunes written and produced by guitarist Luke Atlas and drummer Coleman Trapp. 

“We weren’t really a band at all and weren’t planning to be one, we were just producers and songwriters working in L.A. and getting burned out on the pop scene,” Atlas says.

Trapp’s hopes of making it big had shrunk so small, in fact, that he had returned to his Denver hometown and “written off the music industry entirely,” according to Atlas.

Nonetheless, the working relationship between the two endured. Then, for the hell of it, the duo posted a couple of the songs on Bandcamp. Within a month, they received an email from the +1 rep, asking if the duo had other material. They didn’t, but thanks to some BS’ing and a week’s worth of time, the pair cobbled together more songs.

One of them, 2015’s “Hollow Life,” was a game-changer. It reached #2 on The Hype Machine in its first week, garnering 10,000 plays. The Aces signed with Red Bull Records in October after self-releasing the “Stuck” single in May. A bunch of labels were sniffing around, and the musicians took their time making the decision. Ultimately, Red Bull just felt right.

“They’re like family to us,” Ramirez says. “They’ve all come from major label backgrounds and have worked with amazing acts. It’s a small team of people who are really passionate, really want to develop artists, and have a small roster so that they can concentrate on their artists and help them. We’re really stoked for the album and what’s to come.” The Aces’ debut EP, I Don’t Like Being Honest, is out now. – *Brett Callwood*

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**Our label has told us to ‘embrace the chaos’”**

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A few years back, a +1 Records rep searched for “#indiepop” on Bandcamp and stumbled across some tunes written and produced by guitarist Luke Atlas and drummer Coleman Trapp. 

“We weren’t really a band at all and weren’t planning to be one, we were just producers and songwriters working in L.A. and getting burned out on the pop scene,” Atlas says.

Trapp’s hopes of making it big had shrunk so small, in fact, that he had returned to his Denver hometown and “written off the music industry entirely,” according to Atlas.

Nonetheless, the working relationship between the two endured. Then, for the hell of it, the duo posted a couple of the songs on Bandcamp. Within a month, they received an email from the +1 rep, asking if the duo had other material. They didn’t, but thanks to some BS’ing and a week’s worth of time, the pair cobbled together more songs.

One of them, 2015’s “Hollow Life,” was a game-changer. It reached #2 on The Hype Machine in its first week, garnering 10,000 plays. The Aces signed with Red Bull Records in October after self-releasing the “Stuck” single in May. A bunch of labels were sniffing around, and the musicians took their time making the decision. Ultimately, Red Bull just felt right.

“They’re like family to us,” Ramirez says. “They’ve all come from major label backgrounds and have worked with amazing acts. It’s a small team of people who are really passionate, really want to develop artists, and have a small roster so that they can concentrate on their artists and help them. We’re really stoked for the album and what’s to come.” The Aces’ debut EP, I Don’t Like Being Honest, is out now. – *Brett Callwood*
**BMI Brings In Over a Billion**

BMI reports that it brought in $1.13 billion in revenue for a third straight year during its fiscal year ending June 30, 2017, a 6.6 percent increase over the $1.06 billion it collected in the prior year. Broadcast Music Inc. showed an even bigger increase in distributions to songwriters and publishers, paying out $1.023 billion, a 9.9 percent increase over the $931 million the organization paid out in the prior year.

Breaking out revenue by source, media revenue—which includes television, cable and radio—totaled $524 million, a 6.5 percent increase over the $492 million in collections in fiscal 2016; while general revenue (which includes background music in stores, hotels, airlines and bars and clubs) totaled $149 million, up 6.43 percent from the $140 million collected in the prior fiscal year.

BMI said it licensed an additional 13,000 businesses last year, which is on top of the 15,000 businesses it added in fiscal 2016.

BMI said it processed nearly 1.4 trillion performances this year, 40 percent more than the 1 billion announced last year. Of that total, 1.35 billion, or 96.4 percent, were digital performances, which the organization said highlights its ability “to manage big data and convert it to actionable information.”

**Lennon Songwriting Contest Open For Entries**

The John Lennon Songwriting Contest, an international songwriting contest that began in 1997, is open to amateur and professional songwriters who submit entries in any one of 12 categories. The JLSC is open year-round and features two Sessions, with 72 Finalists, 12 Lennon Award Winners and one “Song of the Year.” All entry fees from the contest help support the non-profit John Lennon Educational Tour Bus mobile recording studio.

You don’t need a professional recording. Entries will be judged on originality, melody, composition and lyrics (when applicable). Your songs may be entered in any of the following categories: rock, country, jazz, pop, world, rhythm & blues, hip-hop, gospel/inspirational, latin, electronic, folk, and children’s. Instrumental compositions are encouraged. George Clinton, the Black Eyed Peas, Prince Royce, 311 and Jim Steinman are some of the members on the Executive Committee of Judges.

The 2017 John Lennon Songwriting Contest Session II is now open. The deadline for entry is Dec. 15. Visit jlsc.com.

**Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame Inductees 2017**

Vern Gosdin, Jim McBride, Walt Aldridge and Tim Nichols are set to be inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame later this year. The four tunestmiths make up the Hall of Fame’s Class of 2017.

Gosdin (2017’s songwriter/artist inductee), McBride (this year’s veteran songwriter inductee), Aldridge and Nichols join the 203 prominent and successful songwriters that are currently part of the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame. Aldridge is known for songs such as “(There’s) No Gettin’ Over Me” (Ronnie Milsap “Holding Her and Loving You” (Earl Thomas Conley) and “Modern Day Bonnie and Clyde” (Travis Tritt.) Nichols has penned “I’m Over You” (Keith Whitley) “Heads Carolina, Tails California” (Jo Dee Messina) and “Live Like You Were Dying” (Tim O’Neill, BMI President and CEO; Patti LaBelle, and Catherine Brewton, BMI Vice President, Writer/Publisher Relations.}

**Bishop on CCC Panel**

Acclaimed singer-songwriter Stephen Bishop was a panelist at the recent gathering of the California Copyright Conference at the Sportsmen’s Lodge in Studio City, CA. Among those in attendance were (l-r): Dan Perloff, Head of Research at Copyright Termination Experts; Charley Londoño, Esq., California Copyright Conference President; Eric M. Jacobson, Esq., The Music Industry Lawyer; Evan Cohen, Esq., Attorney at Copyright Termination Experts; Stephen Bishop, Grammy and Oscar nominated songwriter. For more info, go to theccc.org.

**Patti LaBelle: BMI Icon**

BMI celebrated the songwriters, producers and publishers of the year’s most-performed R&B/hip-hop songs during the 2017 BMI R&B/Hip-Hop Awards held in Atlanta. Multiple Grammy Award-winning singer-songwriter Patti LaBelle took home the night’s highest honor as BMI Icon in recognition of her distinguished career, spanning more than 50 years. Pictured (l-r): Wardell Malloy, BMI Executive Director, Writer/Publisher Relations; Mike O’Neill, BMI President and CEO; Patti Labelle, and Catherine Brewton, BMI Vice President, Writer/Publisher Relations.

**עץ The Spirit**

The Colombian artist Gregorio Uribe, whose combination of contemporary cumbia and timeless charisma have marked him as an artist to watch, has been signed to a publishing deal by Spirit Music Latino.
McGraw). McBride’s most famous songs include “Rose in Paradise” (Waylon Jennings), “Chasing That Neon Rainbow” and “Chatahoochee” (both made famous by Alan Jackson) and Gosdin’s well-known recordings “Set ‘Em Up Joe,” “I’m Still Crazy” and “Chiseled in Stone.”

The induction will take place during the 47th anniversary Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame Gala, set to take place on Oct. 23 at Music City Center in Nashville. See Nashvillesongwritersfoundation.com.

**BMG Launches App**

BMG has made its royalty portal MyBMG available as an app for Android and iOS for the first time, allowing thousands of BMG songwriters to see up-to-date worldwide information on the value and source of their income from their songs at any time.

The app was engineered by BMG’s technology team in consultation with a team of songwriter clients including Grammy-nominated songwriter Jenn Decilveo (“Rise Up”), Eurythmics co-founder Dave Stewart and Broadway composer Maury Yeston.

The new app is based on the latest MyBMG.3.0 web portal launched in March this year with both featuring the newest tech standards and features such as current period (pipeline) royalty information and highly intuitive analytics. Before the end of the year, MyBMG will incorporate BMG’s recording artist clients into one single publishing and recorded portal.

MyBMG is the latest in a string of digital efforts from music companies that aim to help songwriters track and understand their earnings in real-time. Sony/ATV Music Publishing upgraded its own royalty portal, SCORE, in May, and the Kobalt-owned AWAL released a similar app for artists, labels and managers to track presence on Spotify and Apple Music.

**LANDR Digital Distribution**

LANDR, an A.I.-powered platform for music creators, has announced that it has expanded to empower artists to release and sell their music online. LANDR aims to democratize digital music distribution the same way it has democratized mastering. With over 1,300,000 music creators in over 200 countries around the world, LANDR’s digital distribution platform launched globally in nine languages.

LANDR proclaims an affordable solution for releasing music starting at just $1/month. LANDR users keep 100% of their royalties and revenue, and there are no hidden fees for extra services—like adding albums to new streaming stores or registering new songs to Shazam. LANDR also offers fast and responsive multi-lingual support.

LANDR users receive updates on their release submission within two hours, thanks to LANDR’s support team of musicians and engineers.

LANDR also crunches data on streams, listeners location, downloads and revenue into an actionable, easy-to-understand dashboard, helping creators decide what to do next to promote themselves and their work.

The listener data dashboard offers lightning-fast insights, featuring next-day trends for Apple Music, iTunes and Spotify. Read more at landr.com.

**ASCAP To Honor Rodney Crowell**

ASCAP, the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, will present celebrated Americana and country music songwriter-artist Rodney Crowell with its prestigious ASCAP Founders Award at the 55th annual ASCAP Country Music Awards. The exclusive, invitation-only gala, which celebrates the songwriters and publishers of ASCAP’s most performed country songs of 2016, will take place at the historic Ryman Auditorium in downtown Nashville, TN on Monday, Nov. 6.

**Koramblyum Promoted at Downtown**

Downtown Music Publishing has promoted Bea Koramblyum to VP of Business Affairs from her previous role as Sr. Director of Business Affairs. The new role will see Koramblyum taking the lead role in Downtown’s business and legal affairs department both with respect to external negotiations and internal affairs. She will report directly to COO and General Counsel Andrew Bergman. Koramblyum also serves on the the Board of Directors and as Events Co-Chair for the professional non-profit organization Women In Music.

**Ilsey Juber Extends with Sony/ATV**

Sony/ATV Music Publishing has extended its worldwide deal with L.A.-based singer and songwriter Ilsey Juber. The new agreement includes global hits such as Shawn Mendes’ “Mercy,” Martin Garrix’s “In The Name Of Love” (featuring Bebe Rexha) and Pitbull’s “Fireball” as well as her contributions to recent chart-topping albums by Beyoncé, Drake and Linkin Park as well as future compositions. Pictured (l-r): Lou Al-Chamaa, Sony/ATV; Evan Taubenfeld, Juber mgr./Crush Music Head of A&R; Rick Kim and Tyler Childs, Sony/ATV; Ilsey Juber; Jennifer Knoepfe, Amanda Berman-Hill and Nick Bril, Sony/ATV.
When he first arrived in Nashville over a decade ago, Mando Saenz was already a signed songwriter. "I backed into a publishing deal before I knew what a publishing deal was," he laughs. Inked by heavyweight producer Frank Liddell to Carnival Music, he was concurrently signed as an artist to Liddell’s Carnival Recording Company.

Saenz avows that Nashville was fundamentally different than Corpus Christi, where he had spent most of his life, or Houston, where he moved shortly after college. "I’ve never lived in a city that became that place everyone came to. I always lived in cities that were outside."

While Austin is a well-known Texas musical destination, Saenz says that Houston was a fertile incubator for his artistry. "It was really rich and that’s what inspired me to write; the inner city of Houston and Anderson Fair, which was a legendary venue where Lyle Lovett, Lucinda Williams and Eric Taylor all played. Everybody talks about Austin as the music capital of Texas, but Houston has its own kind of place in the history of Texas songwriting."

Now based in Nashville, a city famous for co-writing sessions, Saenz does his share. "Not every day, but two times a week maybe. But I write on my own when I’m not writing with other people." This solo writing is one of the key factors that gives Saenz his distinctive lyrical focus. "Writing on my own is important to me. It’s good for my head, and good to keep the writing muscles strong. And writing on my own is good for coming up with ideas that might maybe be right for someone else."

Among his prominent cuts is "When I Come Around," recorded by Lee Ann Womack on her recent collection The Way I’m Living. The song, written solo, was included on his debut CD release, Watertown, in 2004. "It’s from the first batch of songs that I ever wrote. It’s one thing to get a song that you co-wrote cut, but to have a song that’s close to you performed by someone who sings like Lee Ann does…she’s all about the music, which is so refreshing."

The song "Breakaway Speed," was co-written with, and performed by, Kim Richey on her release Thorn in My Heart with backing vocals from Jason Isbell and Trisha Yearwood. It was named No. 20 of American Songwriter magazine’s Top 50 songs of 2013. "Kim Richey is one of the first people I co-wrote with. I was a fan, which was kind of nerve wracking. We met up in Austin. We’ve become good friends. And we work and hang and sing together. We’re doing a show at the Americana event in Nashville. Any chance we get to play and sing together is a good time."

While Saenz’s solo releases maybe haven’t sold millions of copies, they offer an effective showcase for his catalog. "That’s a cool way of having a song cut, to have someone discover something that I wrote for myself. Even though I co-write as much as I do, I try not to write with other people in mind. Not to sound self-absorbed, but that’s what made me start writing in the first place, creating something I would like to play or record. It’s a different thing, but it’s the first thing I ever did as far as writing goes, and I think most people would say the same."

Noting that it has been a few years since his last solo release, Saenz will be heading into the studio to work on his next project. "At the end of the day I’m a working Nashville songwriter, but I’ve got to keep the artist thing going for my head or I wouldn’t feel complete."

And Saenz doesn’t sit down to create with hits on his mind. "I don’t write from titles, although a lot of people in Nashville do that. I tend to start with music and hopefully a lyric and title comes out. Titles and hooks—I didn’t think about those when I started writing, and I try not to think about them now."

Contact Sarah Frost, The Press House, sarah@thepresshouse.com
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Grammy Awards Winners & Nominees:
IAMA is extremely proud to announce that our winners Meghan Trainor & Ron Korb were nominated for at the recent prestigious Grammy Awards. This shows that anything is possible for all your music artists; they all started as unsigned artists!

Meghan Trainor stunned the music world as she went from winning IAMA to get signed and hit the charts. She won Best New Artist. She hit #1 on the Billboard Hot 100 Charts for the 9 weeks, making it the biggest hit of last year by a female artist, her debut single sold over 15 million copies, making it one of the best selling singles of all time by a debut artist. She has currently a total of 8 songs that have hit the Billboard Hot 100 Charts. Her debut album debut at #1 on the Billboard 200 Charts, and it went multi Platinum!

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**DROPS**

**Thugs And The Women Who Love Em,** a hip-hop musical inspired by New York Times bestselling author Wahida Clark’s 2005 book, kicked off a fall tour in Oakland, CA, on Oct. 3. The stage production includes an all-star cast of R&B and hip-hop artists including Ray J, K. Michelle, Sevyn Streeter, Jamal Woolard, Boosie Badazz, Lyfe Jennings and Karlie Redd. Produced by veteran theater producer Melvin Childs and directed by Zadia Ife, the production features songs from each of the artists. For a list of tour stops and to purchase tickets, visit MelvinChildsPresents.com. Contact Simone Smalls at info@strategicheights.com for more information.

**Beside Bowie: The Mick Ronson Story,** will be released on DVD and Blu-ray on Oct. 27. The Jon Brewer-directed documentary special captures the collaboration between mega-star David Bowie and the less-celebrated but equally talented guitar virtuoso Mick Ronson, who died in 1993 while working on a solo album. Ronson’s musical resume includes contributions to The Man Who Sold the World, Aladdin Sane, Hunky Dory and The Jean Genie. The film includes exclusive voiceover contributions from Bowie, who first initiated what would become a key working relationship with Ronson. For more information, contact Clint Weiler at Clint@mvdb2b.com.

After a string of September theater showings, **Beside Bowie: The Mick Ronson Story,** will be released on DVD and Blu-ray on Oct. 27. The Jon Brewer-directed documentary special captures the collaboration between mega-star David Bowie and the less-celebrated but equally talented guitar virtuoso Mick Ronson, who died in 1993 while working on a solo album. Ronson’s musical resume includes contributions to The Man Who Sold the World, Aladdin Sane, Hunky Dory and The Jean Genie. The film includes exclusive voiceover contributions from Bowie, who first initiated what would become a key working relationship with Ronson. For more information, contact Clint Weiler at Clint@mvdb2b.com.

**Step Up: High Water,** YouTube Red’s first major big-budget original drama series, will debut this December featuring Ne-Yo, Naya Rivera and Faizon Love as well as newcomers Jade Chynoweth, Lauryn McClain, Petrace Jones, Marcus Mitchell, Carlito Olivero, Terrence Green, Eric Graise and R. Marcos Taylor. Based on the hugely successful Step Up film franchise, the drama revolves around ambitious young dancers enrolled in a contemporary performing arts school in Atlanta. Co-stars Channing Tatum and Jenna Dewan Tatum are reuniting with Adam Shankman as executive producers, and viewers will hear songs from 2 Chainz and Grammy-winning singer-songwriter Jason “PooBear” Boyd and “Jingle” Jared Gutstadt.

For more info, contact Shae Dewaal at SDewaal@RogersAndCowan.com.

Following a September digital release, ‘king of cult’ John Waters’ audio album Make Trouble was released Oct. 6 as a 7” vinyl single via Third Man Records. The album features Waters reading his commencement speech delivered at Rhode Island School of Design and published earlier this year by Algonquin Books. The recordings are produced by Grammy winner Ian Brennan (Tinariwen, Ramblin’ Jack Elliott, Zomba Prison Project), Contact Ken Weinstein at Weinstein@BigHassle.com for more details.

Three new television series are in the works as part of a collaboration between Universal Music Group and entertainment production company Grace/Beyond, led by Beat Bugs creator Josh Wakely, Mikael Borglund and Trevor Roy. The series titles include 27, Melody Island and Mixtape. Inspired by the legendary figures who died tragically at this young age, 27 explores the lives of a variety of fictional characters who come to a crossroads at age 27 and features songs from artists spanning the UMG publishing catalogs. Melody Island is a children’s series with each episode inspired by a classic UMG master or composition. Mixtape is a drama mirroring the way a mixtape works—fast-forwarding, pausing and rewinding on the pivotal moments that define the characters’ lives. Contact Adrianna Piaidas at Adrianna.Piaidas@beckmedia.com for more info.

Just in time for Halloween, a special edition DVD of **Alice Cooper’s Welcome to My Nightmare** concert film is out now, including the first-ever DVD release of the 1975 television special. Alice Cooper: The Nightmare, also starring the late horror film actor Vincent Price. For further details, contact Shanna Wynn-Shirreffs at Shanna@KayosProductions.com.

Music from the television series **This Is Us** is out now via UMe as well as the complete first season on DVD. The hit show features a 20-song soundtrack curated by show creator and executive producer Dan Fogelman, music supervisor Jennifer Pyken and composer/musician Siddhartha Khosla. The soundtrack features songs by Wilco, Paul Simon, This Is Us star Mandy Moore, Sufjan Stevens, Gene Clark, Jackson C. Frank and more. Contact Sujata Murthy at Sujata.Murthy@UMusic.com for details.
Want to be considered to appear on The Jimmy Lloyd Songwriter Showcase? Send a link of your music to songwritershowcase@jimmylloyd.tv. The New York-based talk and performance show is described as “Jools Holland meets Inside the Actor’s Studio” and has grown into a nationally syndicated television program featuring under-the-radar musical talent. Watch episodes and learn more at jimmylloyd.tv.

A Los Angeles-based composer and orchestrator who works on independent films and television shows is in search of a part-time assistant. The paid position requires an extensive knowledge of Pro Tools, Sibelius, Vienna Ensemble Pro and Kontakt, a means of transportation, making cue sheets, troubleshooting tech issues, and prep work for recording sessions with the possibility of some additional music writing and orchestration. Visit bit.ly/2wxI4wf for application instructions.

A Brooklyn photo studio is searching for a paid studio production assistant who can build and maintain photo sets, assist with rigging and lighting, source and shop materials, manage production on multiple sets, collaborate with studio teams and complete general administrative tasks in a fast-paced environment. To apply, contact Thomas Graves at j.marie.pace@gmail.com.

PROPS

Oscar- and Grammy-winning film score composer Hans Zimmer is ending an extensive world tour this month with an Oct. 7 performance at the Olympic Stadium in Seoul, South Korea, his first and only stop in Asia on this tour. The sets, featuring nearly 20 musicians, have spanned almost three decades of soundtracks from The Lion King to The Dark Knight. The concert will take place as part of the new Slow Life Slow Live festival, which will also feature film music composer/television writer Justin Hurwitz, who scored La La Land as well as Curb Your Enthusiasm and The Simpsons. Tickets to the festival can be purchased at ticket.melon.com.

One of the highlights of this year’s MTV Video Music Awards was, indisputably, Pink’s speech and personal anecdote as she accepted the Video Vanguard Award. When her six-year-old daughter told her “I’m the ugliest girl I know; I look like a boy with long hair,” the pop star responded by making her daughter a PowerPoint presentation filled with androgynous rock stars like Prince, David Bowie and Annie Lennox who “live their truth, are probably made fun of every day of their lives, and carry on, and wave their flag, and inspire the rest of us.”

Australian composer Mark Bradshaw, who wrote the underscored, eerie score for director and screenwriter Jane Campion’s lauded and equally eerie television miniseries, Top of the Lake, was tapped again for the series’ second season, which premiered on Sundance last month. In Top of the Lake: China Girl, Bradshaw provides another ominous musical backdrop to the mystery-drama. In 2014, Bradshaw received nominations for the Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts’ Best Original Music Score in Television and the British Academy of Film and Television Arts’ Best Original Music for his work on the show. For more information on the series and how to watch, visit Sundance.tv/series/top-of-the-lake.

Elite “First Call, A-List” musicians get their due in the new documentary film Hired Gun: Out of the Shadows, Into the Spotlight, and they share their behind-the-scene stories of touring, what it takes to play next to the world’s most iconic musicians and create some of the world’s most popular songs. To complement the storyline, Platinum-certified electronic dance innovator the Crystal Method with Tobias Enhus have crafted the original music score for the film, out Sept. 22 on Tiny E Records.

The film presents revealing stories about the origins of some of the most widely cherished music and its true players. Tales from Alice Cooper, David Foster, Ray Parker Jr. (Ghostbusters), Steve Vai, Jay Graydon (Steely Dan), Jason Hook (Five Finger Death Punch), Phil X (Bon Jovi), Kenny Aronoff (John Mellencamp), Rudy Sarzo (Ozzy Osbourne), Jason Newsted (Metallica) and more are featured.

Contact Alexandra Greenberg, agreenberg@msopr.com.

JESSICA PACE is a music journalist-turned-news-reporter based in Dunwoody, GA. 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

Randy Frisch
President, LoveCat Music

Web: LoveCatMusic.com
Contact: lovecatmusic@gmail.com

When Randy Frisch established LoveCat Music in 1999, he envisioned an independent music publishing company that licensed songs of all genres, from all over the world, that were available on a one-stop license basis. Today, LoveCat has licensed songs for hit films like Deadpool and Split as well as hundreds of television series, including Stranger Things, Gilmore Girls, The Good Wife and more.

“My inspirations included the great independent musicians like Island and Virgin that had high-quality music across many genres. I wanted to reproduce that diversity on a smaller scale,” Frisch says. “I was a fan of rock, but also of popular music from around the world. One of our first clients was (the HBO series) Sex and the City. They were looking for Latin music, so we took off in that direction and licensed a lot of songs in that show.”

The company prides itself on signing developing, new artists and pushing not just American popular music, but Latin, German, Russian and other world music. Frisch says the company researches by reading trade publications, watching television to keep up with new shows and staying in touch with studios. When negotiating on film and television music placements, Frisch says “tess is more.” “If someone is looking for music, it’s tempting to send them a lot of songs, but you should give them a few great choices rather than sending everything, because no one has the time for that,” he says. “Sometimes an older song works as well as a new one. Shows aren’t only looking for new music. It’s about what fits and what’s right. Also, Latin music isn’t just for Latin shows – Country music isn’t just for country shows. Shows are open to a variety of music. Challenges of the job include interpreting the client’s music needs and maintaining relationships with clients, he says.

“You have to be hassle-free. To deliver on what you offered, meaning if you pitch a song, and the client bites, you must be able to deliver. The worst that can happen is a client wants a song and you say, ‘No, actually, that’s not available,’” he says. “It may seem obvious, but that’s a relationship killer.”
Demi Does A Benefit Night
Demi Lovato performed during the Alcides & Rosaura (ARD) Foundations’ “A Brazilian Night” to Benefit Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSK). The event was held at Cipriani 42nd Street on Sept. 7 in New York City.

BMI Takes Over LouFest
BMI returned to LouFest for its fifth year showcasing up-and-coming acts at the St. Louis festival. This year’s lineup included Rainbow Kitten Surprise (pictured), Lizzo, 18andCounting and Ron Gallo.

Minor “Takes The Stage” for An Emmy
Ricky Minor won this year’s Emmy for Outstanding Music Direction for Taking The Stage: African American Music And Stories That Changed America. The Seven-time Emmy nominee was quoted as saying: “I’ve never won anything anywhere, but what I’ve won is the love and gift of music—music saved my life.” Pictured (l-r) at the Society of Composers & Lyricists Emmy event are Ricky Minor; AFM & SAG AFTRA Fund COO Shari Hoffman; and SAG - AFTRA SRDF Manager Terry O’Neal.

Bruno Brings Magic to N.Y.
Grammy winner Bruno Mars, alongside his band the Hooligans, lit up New York City’s Madison Square Garden Arena with his sold-out 24K Magic World Tour on Sept. 22.
Tidbits From Our Tattered Past

From Leeds, England, the band Spacehog were rising high with their Resident Alien album when MC spoke with singer Royston Langdon, who explained the band’s lighthearted demeanor. “There was the grunge thing, which I loved. But when Kurt Cobain blew his head off, it was getting a bit too serious. There was a bit of a renaissance necessary.”

Aussie singer Imbruglia was following up her monster hit single "Torn" with a new album when MC sat down with her for a chat. "I made the fatal mistake of taking an entire year off.... I wasn’t ready to go back to work. I was quite scared.”

The Clara Lionel Foundation, founded by Robyn Rihanna Fenty, held its third annual Diamond Ball on Sept. 15 at Cipriani Wall Street. Hosted by comedian Dave Chappelle, the benefit raised over $5 million to support CLF’s global education, health and emergency response programs around the world. The evening featured performances by Grammy Award-winning recording artists Kendrick Lamar and Calvin Harris. For more, visit claralionelfoundation.org.

Hall and Oates at STAPLES
Daryl Hall and John Oates, from the duo Hall and Oates performed at the STAPLES Center on Sept. 14 & 15. Pictured (l-r): Peter Pappalardo, Artist Group International; Jonathan Wolfson, Wolfson Entertainment; Rick Mueller, AEG Presents; Daryl Hall; John Oates; Christy Castillo Butcher, STAPLES Center; Jen Sandstrom, STAPLES Center.

Rocking JammJam Event
Jammcard hosted their curated live music event JammJam at Tower Records (Gibson Brands Sunset). The event featured performances from the Brandon Brown Collective (Stevie Wonder), Tal Wilkenfeld (Jeff Beck), Ty Taylor (Vintage Trouble), Victoria Theodore (Beyoncé), among others. For more info, visit jammcard.com.

Diamond Ball Raises Over $5 million
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2002–Natalie Imbruglia–#4
Aussie singer Imbruglia was following up her monster hit single "Torn" with a new album when MC sat down with her for a chat. "I made the fatal mistake of taking an entire year off.... I wasn’t ready to go back to work. I was quite scared." Elsewhere in the issue we profile the Viper Room’s booker Dayle Gloria and engineer/mixer/producer Chris Vogel (U2, Sheryl Crow, Alanis Morissette).
A
fter most of a decade learning their craft in the murky depths of the punk rock underground, Alaskan rockers Portugal. The Man entered the big leagues and signed to Atlantic Records in April 2010. While the major label debut, 2011's *In the Mountain in the Cloud*, was the band's sixth album, frontman John Gourley considers it their first "real" full-length. 2013's *Evil Friends* saw them progress further and receive wider attention thanks to the "Modern Jesus" single.

But this year, the game changed. The *Woodstock* album, produced by, among others, the Beastie Boys' Mike D, John Hill and Danger Mouse, earned rave reviews and spawned the "Feel It Still" single, a quirky, funky little alt-rock gem that has helped musically define the summer of '17. Portugal. The Man has gone up a level, but Gourley is adamant that they're still the regular, hard-working dudes that they've always been—not looking to please anybody but themselves with their tunes, but happy when others do tag along for the ride.

We chatted with Gourley about his band's long and steady rise...

**Music Connection:** The band formed in 2004, but you went through quite a lot of members early on. Is it fair to say that there was a settling-in period before you really got going?

**John Gourley:** You know what it was? We all originally came from Alaska. The entire band moved down to Portland together and started touring. The thing about growing up in Alaska is, we never knew that jobs in art were even a possibility. We never thought that going to art school was a real thing. Once we got out of there, everybody saw the world and realized that they could be an artist and a musician. So everybody kind of fell into their own thing. Once everybody went their separate ways, it was just about whoever was around, we would take them on tour. Whoever wanted to come out with us. We did tours where there'd be 12 people on stage in the beginning. If people wanted to come and hang, that's what we were doing.

**MC:** Drummer Jason (Sechrist) has been in and out of the band over the years—what explains that?

**Gourley:** With Jason, he's our drummer. I say that in the sense that he's got this crazy approach to drums. It's something that you can't really replicate. It's just the way he and I play off each other. When you tour constantly, you get to see a lot of the good sides and bad sides, and not everybody can tour as much as we did.

Ultimately that's the reason so many people have come in and out, because we were doing 300 shows a year in the beginning. Sometimes he just wanted to be back in Portland.

The fun thing about being able to cycle out like that, and just the way this group has worked, we always had a spot for Jason. If he wants to stay in Portland, sure. Stay in Portland, hang out for a little bit. We'll find somebody to fill in while he's away. We get to play with other drummers from time to time, and just see how other people interpret the music. Jason gets to come to a show from time to time, and experience the show as an audience member. That's something that you don't really get to do. He has a unique take on the band and what we do.

**MC:** How settled is the band now?

**Gourley:** I feel like the band is what it is. It's still open. If somebody wants to stay home, they can. That being said, this lineup is great. Eric Howk—we grew up playing music with him. Zachary (Scott Carothers) and Eric played in their first band together. Zac taught me how to play bass, and all the Minor Threat songs. Rage Against the Machine basslines. We’ve all been around each other throughout this. It's been rad, being around him for all this time, because we know that we played Cannibal Corpse, or Metallica, or Slayer in high school, and we can pull out any of those riffs live. We can go back to that stuff. It's a lot of fun.

**MC:** You've released eight albums in 11 years, which is impressively prolific. How has sound evolved in that time?
Gourley: If you look at the history of the band, it was almost like we were going to school, in the sense that we just wanted to tour as much as possible, and put out as much music as possible. We were putting out music for the sake of learning. I don’t think a lot of people know this, but I was really learning to play guitar as we were going. I will play the way some people play piano or type—with two fingers.

I really feel like, when we signed to Atlantic, that was when we put out our first album. I know a lot of people hate that I say that, especially older fans, but that’s really what we were working toward. We were young and playing music was just fun. It was crazy that we had this opportunity in the first place. Getting a pizza after the show, and gas money? That’s totally fine. But I feel like we’re always going to make different albums when we go into the studio, just because I don’t really like repeating myself. I don’t like the monotony of that. You have so many bands who fall into that world of, I’m just a rock band. I’m just a hip-hop artist. That’s what I like about A$AP Rocky. He will sing on a track, rap on the next. It can be super-hardcore or pulled back and be more soul/R&B. You never want to be pigeon-holed or stuck writing the same song over and over again, trying to replicate that success.

MC: Your early albums were with Fearless and then Equal Vision Records, both punk labels, though Fearless has more of a pop-punk vibe while Equal Vision is generally known for hardcore… Did your sound change with the label at all?

Gourley: Not necessarily. There are things that come along with all of that. Scenes and built-in fanbases that come along with the labels. Honestly, they were just good friends of ours. They were people that we knew. We were playing the bar shows, but also with hardcore bands and pop-punk bands. At the end of the day, we just wanted to get better at playing music. I like the idea of just getting in front of an audience that is unfamiliar with your music. That’s the ultimate test. When signing to labels, it just came down to, “I like this guy.”

MC: Do you miss anything about the indie punk days?

Gourley: We’re the same dipshits we were. I could honestly tell you, had we had a song like “Feel it Still” on the first album take off the way it did and the way it has, I’d probably be a different person today. But the fact that we worked for so long, which is totally indifferent to what everybody else is doing, it helped us maintain what we do and who we are. We don’t care what you think. We’re going to keep doing what we do. I think that’s been really fun.

MC: Why was there a four-year gap between the last two albums?

Gourley: It’s a hard thing to explain to people. The thing that I learned working on this album and what I honestly feel took the most time was actually just “wanting it.” We started out recording with Mike D in Malibu, in this crazy private community, recording in Rick Rubin’s private studio in Shangri-La, and it was just us and Kanye in the studio at the time. Whenever he was out, we’d be in. It was just a situation where we were drinking smoothies, living on the beach in this private community. What do you have left to work for? We had to take a step back from that.

MC: A lot of bands go through that but don’t acknowledge it…

Gourley: I think it’s a tough thing. It’s hard to admit to yourself. I trashed, like, 40 songs. Maybe they’ll come back around in some way. But trying to convince the band that we need to step back—I’m going to throw out these songs. The...
fear that I saw in everybody—I imagine that lots of bands feel that. But if you can't trust yourself to write a better song tomorrow, then you shouldn’t be doing it.

MC: It worked, and “Feel it Still” has been a smash. Could you tell, when working on it, that you had something special?

Gourley: You know. When you put down a song like that, you definitely see it, and there’s definitely a feeling in the studio. We felt that on “Modern Jesus” on the last album. It may not have been the hit that it could have been, but there’s something about that song, and you feel these things as they go down.

“Feel it Still” is a completely different beast. You cannot predict if it’s going to be a hit with people, you just know that what you’re working on is special. We were working in the studio and it was the end of the day, and we started mixing a different song that we were working on that day. I stepped into a side room, and I started playing that bass line. Then the producer handed me the mic. Everything but the bridge was recorded in 45 minutes. It was so natural and off the cuff.

It was all spawned from a George Carlin quote, “Fighting a war for peace is like screwing for virginity.” It was just on the spot. “Rebel just for kicks” makes me think of George Carlin. He’s going to tell you all the things that are wrong with politics and religion today, but he’s also the guy who isn’t going to vote. I’ve always been drawn to that. It’s not being apathetic, it’s just who we are. Everybody who heard the track thought we had something.

MC: Started thinking about the next album yet?

Gourley: I feel like, when a song’s doing what this song’s doing, you don’t want to get in its way.

I’ve always felt that way. You have to give things room to breathe, to get out there and do what they’re going to do. For the average listener, it may seem like, “These songs are great—they should just follow them up.” It all comes down to promo teams and pushing that radio.

It’s sad to say, but you can’t push two songs at once. As much as I’d like to think this song is fully there, and as much as we’ve gotten off of this song, and as cool as it is to see, it’s not there-yet. We’ve been Number One on Shazam in the U.S. twice now. We’ve been in the Top 10 forever. That tells me that many people are still unaware of who the band is. Until we drop off that list and people just know who we are, we can’t change anything.

MC: You've played plenty of festivals over the years, like Bonnaroo. How do you make the most of a festival opportunity?

Gourley: We got lucky with our first Bonnaroo experience. We came out and there was a storm. I think it was Delta Spirit that was supposed to play right before us, and we landed in this spot where Delta Spirit’s flight got canceled and they couldn’t make their set. So we had almost two hours of set-up time before we actually played our first major open air festival. We had this crazy opportunity that not many people get. During our set, it started pouring rain. I mean, it was packed in the first place, which was crazy to see. It was a wild experience for all of us, because nobody expected it to be as big as it was. When it started raining, everybody packed in, and it’s something I feel lucky about, everything falling in place.

But that also came with years of hard work and touring, and years of preparation to be that band that can get on stage and not freak out if your monitor’s not working. And not stress the small shit. That’s the biggest thing you have to understand. If you’re playing a festival and
your monitor’s not working, just fuck off and play your set. Nobody wants to see you flip out about your monitor not working or having sound issues on stage. Nobody wants to watch that. You have 45 minutes. Play your set and play the best you can. You better be a good enough band to know that your guys are hitting the notes and tempo.

We came in with a lot of experience. We played a lot of festivals where I got Zac’s monitor mix in my face. Damn fucking straight I played through it and I didn’t say shit. That’s your opportunity. Don’t fuck it up because you think you’re not presenting the best you. Just getting out and playing your set is what you need to do. The best you is definitely not shouting at the monitor person, flipping out about monitor mixes. You see it way too often, and it’s the most unprofessional shit. I lose respect the second I see it. If you can’t play through that shit, I don’t need to see you. You’re a rock band and there are so many rock bands. Or rappers playing to tracks. How many rappers have I seen playing to tracks and asking for their vocals to be turned up in the monitors? Fuck man, how much do you love yourself?

MC: Do you still like playing the old songs live?
Gourley: I’m on Reddit pretty much constantly, talking to people about our setlist and why we do what we do. That’s also the advantage of being a band for such a long time and not giving a shit. We can have an interaction. That’s who we are. Lords of Portland is our pseudonym, when we go out there and play older stuff. But this band was working up to the point when we signed to Atlantic. When we signed, we put out our first album. There are a lot of fans who came on board over the last couple of years who know the stuff that’s been on the radio or in commercials. I think it’s mainly, if you’re at a Portugal. The Man show it’s going to be about us putting together the best flowing set. We work on transitions a lot. Jams. It takes a long time to work that stuff out. We’ll play any of it if we end up in a situation where it makes sense.

MC: How are decisions made within the band? Is it a democracy?
Gourley: Our keyboard player has a really great off-the-cuff quote for this question. Brian said it’s a “dick-mocracy.” I thought that was so funny, and scarily on-point. We need somebody to direct it and that’s just a role I’ve taken on. It’s like working with producers. I like the idea of somebody saying, “There it is. That’s the thing.” When it comes to commercials and things like that, I try to stay the fuck out of it. Where we get involved is if we see something going on in the world that we believe in or want to fight against. For the most part we let it run its course.

MC: Finally, what do you have planned for the rest of the year?
Gourley: I think we’re just touring. It’s just constant. I’m super-excited to head back to Europe. The thing I’m most excited about right now is playing Ellen. She’s so funny and so likable. There’s something about Ellen. I watched her show growing up, and I remember when she came out. She’s just always been a cool and strong person, somebody that I’ve always respected, that probably not a lot of people realize how much of an impact she’s had on all of us.

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Ron McMaster
Company: Capitol Mastering
Clientele: Elvis Costello, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Miles Davis
Contact: capitolstudios.com/studios/#mastering

A former drummer, Ron McMaster jumped into the mastering game in the late ’70s when a friend who mastered nights at A&M Records allowed him to come observe and absorb the process. When United Artists’ Liberty Records began its search for an apprentice, McMaster rallied for and won the position. He’s now Capitol’s resident vinyl expert, which comprises about 80 percent of his output. He works regularly with production juggernaut Don Was and mastered the Rolling Stones’ 2016 album Blue & Lonesome.

Aside from budgets, what are some of the biggest challenges that you face today? Because vinyl is so popular now, I have to explain its limitations to clients. They’re much greater than for a CD. The biggest issue is the length. To get a good record, it should be 20 minutes [per side] or less. Many people come in with 55 or 60 minutes-plus of music. I explain that they’ll either have to make it a double album or cherry pick 10 or 12 songs to get to 20 minutes per side.

How often do you speak with a mix engineer and at what point does that happen? Usually when I’m delivered the files. We’ll discuss the program so we can get it the best we can.

What are the best ways to communicate with clients so that you’re sure you can give them what they want? I’ll ask what they want and expect from the record. Sometimes there are inconsistencies brought down some. The best approach is to back off on the level a little and let the mastering engineer do his or her job. Then you’ll still have some dynamics and loudness so when a song does go to one of those players, the music won’t sound even more compressed.

Because of multiple platforms (Spotify, YouTube, Apple Music, etc.), do you sometimes give artists more than one master? Or do you try to give them one pass that will sound good universally? I give them one master that will sound good on all formats. That usually holds up across all of them.

How does automated mastering compare to mastering done by an engineer? Is it a serious threat? There’s no comparison. You need the human ear and talent. Automated mastering is kind of deceiving for many young artists who don’t have a lot of money. When they do an automated master and then later put it up against something that’s been mastered properly, there’s no comparison. It won’t fly in the real world of audio.

What happens with vinyl reissues? Are they always mastered for vinyl? Maybe sometimes a disc was made from an existing CD master. I see a lot of the reissues that are properly done and remastered in a high-resolution form. They’ve gone back to the original tapes, remastered in high-resolution form, they’ll make a disc-cutting side and I can cut from that.

Many artists want to get their stuff in film or on TV. Are there any special considerations for mastering for those mediums? I make sure that the bottom end isn’t too bass-heavy. But you have to be concerned about the low end because it might be too much for TV or film. I also lower the level so it’s not distorted through a TV speaker.

It’s been said that monitor setup is the most important tool. What do you use? PMC AML2’s for my near-field monitors and Altec Lansing speakers upstairs.

What contributes to the truest sound? The shape of the room and the monitors. My room at Capitol is an older one and the sweet spot is pretty much where I sit. When clients come in, I have them sit in my chair. A lot of the newer rooms you can move around and everything sounds the same.
Maor Appelbaum began his self-led engineering training while living in Israel. He soon learned that his talents were best suited to mastering and moved to California. There he worked with Grammy nominee Sylvia Massy (Red Hot Chili Peppers, Tool). He later relocated to Los Angeles and launched Maor Appelbaum Mastering. In addition to mixing alongside Massy, he’s also worked with producers Mike Clink and Matt Wallace, among others.

Aside from budgets, what are some of the biggest challenges that you face today? There are limitations when the mix isn’t balanced well. People assume I don’t get bad stuff because I’m not cheap and that would act as a filter. It doesn’t always. Today the possibilities are bigger and you have to be open to work with things that aren’t always consistent. There’s less of a gatekeeper now.

How do you help clients communicate what they want from you? The first thing I do is have a conversation about what they’re looking for and what they’re not looking for. Sometimes what they’re not looking for is more important than what they are, because perhaps you’re dealing with a client who’s had a bad experience somewhere else. I can work by intuition as long as we can communicate to ensure the client is happy with the results. In some cases they want changes and I can accommodate those.

A number of online music players employ loudness normalization. Are you mindful of this when mastering? Does it create unique challenges?

It’s good that everyone’s trying to standardize. Work with things that aren’t always consistent. There’s less of a gatekeeper now.

How does automated mastering compare to mastering done by an engineer? Is it a serious threat?

Currently it’s not, but possibly in the future. If automated cost the same as hiring an engineer, most people would go with the engineer because they can have a discussion about what they want. The fact that it’s way cheaper is what makes automated a threat. Is it getting better? Maybe if they’ve integrated feedback or their algorithms have improved. But with [engineered] mastering, you’re still dealing with artistic elements.

What happens with vinyl reissues? Are they always mastered for vinyl? Some of them don’t sound like they have been.

A lot of what’s released now is being transferred to vinyl. Back in the day, there were vinyl masters. Now it’s usually a digital master that’s translated to a vinyl transfer. Some of the releases are specifically mastered for vinyl.

Many artists want to get their stuff in film or on TV. Are there any special considerations for mastering for those mediums? If the music is done like placement music, master it like a song. Try to think of it visually. If it’s a movie vibe, I make it as cinematic sounding as I can.

What’s your monitor setup? How has it evolved?

I have a digital-to-analog converter that’s connected to my mastering console—a Maselec MTC-1X. That’s hooked up to a Bryston 4B SST Square amp and then to the PMC IB1S monitor—my main three-way speaker. I also have smaller speakers... Neumann KH 310’s, KRK V4/4’s and Rottone monitors.

What contributes to the truest sound? The sum of the parts. A good monitoring system. Power conditioning is important. I have a rack of Furman regulator power conditioners and balancers. It’s not just one thing. You also want a good digital-to-analog converter, amp and transfer console: cables and amps. Everything adds but it also subtracts differently. You want the least subtraction possible in the system.

Do you try to give them one pass that will sound good universally? The problem with multiple masters is that if you make one that’s lower in terms of limiting, clients might like the sound or tone of the loud one. Having one that works the best is the ideal choice. You can always print alternate versions.

Aside from budgets, what are some of the biggest challenges today? There are so many resolutions and people want different things: vinyl, Mastered for iTunes, CDs and even MP3’s. I sometimes wish we could find a standard. We might get to that, but there’s a difference between all of those formats and it’s sometimes difficult to explain to those clients.

Mastering is a technical pursuit that many artists may not always grasp. What are the best ways to communicate with artists to give them what they want? At the beginning, I point out what I think I’ll be working on. Not the mistakes, but what I think we can do to improve the mix. Then I’ll have a conversation about what they’re expecting and what they want. I may ask for a sonic reference—an album or artist that they like.

How do you help clients communicate what they want from you? They’ll use abstract words rather than technical terms. Through the years, you start to understand what they want and how they’re asking for it. It’s all trial and error. I’ll start to work on something and they’ll listen to it. We might go back and work on something else and return to it. If they want changes, we’ll redo it.

The number of formal engineering education programs seems to increase constantly. Why are there so many? Are they worth it? It’s irresponsible for these programs to take money from students and not be able to place them. I was lucky that I got to work in a big studio, but how many are there now? Many people come out of school thinking that they’re an engineer, and when they start working they realize that this is something they have to learn with people, not just by themselves in a room with a teacher. It’s a craft. We’re losing the art of recording, in a sense.

How should people new to the field approach formal engineering programs? When I was in school, there wasn’t a mastering program. What helped me to think technically was learning about signal flow and then applying it in the studio.

A number of online music players employ loudness normalization. Are you mindful of this when mastering? Does it create unique challenges? For all of them, it’s kind of different. But I’m mindful not to get caught up in the loudness war and to be dynamic. Once you’re dynamic, even though the files get compressed, they’ll still have a life to them.
How does automated mastering compare to mastering done by an engineer? Is it a serious threat? Maybe that works if someone is trying to sell a track and they just want to show it. But artists want their tracks to sound good and not just be normalized. There’ll still be a market for mastering [engineers]. Each has an idea of how they want sound to be and that’s why you choose a [specific] mastering engineer: because you like their sound. That also allows artists to have input. An algorithm doesn’t.

What happens with vinyl reissues? Are they always mastered for vinyl? We get the tapes and a reference. Hopefully we have a good pressing for comparison. But each is going to be different. Some people might think that [records] sound different because they might not have the pressing that was used for the mastering session. What we do is compare it to the tape and match what was done for vinyl. Then we create the files for vinyl. Usually the tape sounds better than the vinyl. It varies.

Many artists want to get their stuff in film or on TV. Are there any special considerations for mastering for those mediums? It’s the same thing as delivering files for Mastered for iTunes or any digital format: it’s compression. It will get compressed. You just have to be mindful of your work so it will replicate correctly.

It’s been said that monitor setup is the most important tool. What do you use? How has your setup evolved? I have near-fields. I use them every day and at home. The fact that I use the same room, the same setup, always allows me to get control of the sound.

What contributes to the truest sound? The actual sound of the room: how it’s been isolated and the placement of your speakers. The overall room design. A small speaker move can make a big difference.

ED CHERNEY

Company: Ed Cherney

Clientele: Wynonna Judd, Bob Dylan, the Rolling Stones

Contact: edcherney.com

Mix engineer Ed Cherney launched his career in Chicago just after college. He was bound for law school, but some musician friends waylaid him and he became their roadie. One night when the sound guy went MIA, Cherney was tapped to step in. When the band went into Chicago’s P.S. Recording Studios to lay down some demos, he says that’s when “I got hit by the lightning bolt.” He started as an intern with Chicago’s Paragon Studios and has since won several Grammys, Tech Awards and even an Emmy. Cherney has worked alongside greats such as Quincy Jones, Phil Ramone and Bruce Swedien.

Aside from budgets, what are some of the biggest challenges that you face today? Way more people have wanted to succeed as a recording engineer or producer than could ever do it. The only place you could record was a studio and it was kind of a gatekeeper. Now anyone with a laptop and a keyboard has an entire studio at their fingertips. That’s been good and bad. It changed everything, just like the Industrial revolution did.

How important is it for a mixer to be mindful of mastering issues and considerations? I see guys that work in Logic or Ableton and their music has never left their laptop. For them, mastering might not be as important. But I rely on it to get competitively loud and to put a good EQ curve on a mix.

How closely do you work with a mastering engineer, and at what point does that happen? Very closely, but it often depends. It’s rare now that I work on a whole album. Usually it’s a song or two or a single. Then I send it to the label and they use the mastering engineer that they want. There are certain people I’ve used for a long time. Doug Sax was my engineer of choice before he passed. Now I use Eric Boulanger, Doug’s protégé.

Do you ever have to explain to a client why an element of a mix could present a challenge for a mastering engineer? Not in a long time. When we cut to vinyl, there were certain things—the amount of low end in particular. Maybe you had to shape the bass a little differently if you wanted the low frequencies to pop. I was always willing to push the technology before we had to limit anybody’s idea.

The number of formal engineering education programs seems to increase constantly. Why are there so many? Because there’s a demand. There aren’t as many professional recording studios and the way engineers came up was by serving an apprenticeship: starting at the bottom. That doesn’t exist as much anymore. Another reason is that as an artist now you need to know how the technology works; you need to know how to engineer, mix and arrange.

A number of online music players (Spotify, YouTube, Apple Music) employ loudness normalization. Are you mindful of this when mixing? No. If I can get a great mix and a great balance, it’ll translate to everything—eight-dollar earbuds, five-hundred-dollar headphones or laptop speakers. If I do it right, [loudness normalization] won’t mess with my balances.

How does automated mastering compare to mastering done by an engineer? Is it a serious threat? It’s not to anyone who’s serious about their music. It’s a viable thing and I understand that people doing their records themselves may use it. With mastering, there isn’t one size fits all. You want to add a certain personality to your record and today there isn’t any automated algorithm that can do that.

Many artists want to get their stuff in film or on TV. Are there any special considerations for mixing for those mediums? I might mix a song that lends itself to more cinematic things: a little more echo, reverb or the shape. I may mix a little darker to stay out of the dialogue’s way.

It’s been said that monitor setup is the most important tool. What do you use? How has your setup evolved? I’m a proponent of good speakers. They’re my eyes and ears to the world. In my studio I like to turn it up, especially when an artist or producer comes in. I’ve got an old pair of KRK E8’s that I use when I track in other studios. In my room now I have a pair of ATC 45’s. They’re the greatest speakers I’ve ever had.

What contributes to the truest sound? Perception. We have the propensity to make it work by changing the perception. If there’s no low end in your speakers, you figure out a way to get the shape of it and make it work everywhere.

“

A SMALL SPEAKER MOVE CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE.
ERIC BOULANGER

Company: The Bakery
Clientele: Neil Young, Green Day, Imagine Dragons
Contact: thebakery.la

Eric Boulanger started classical violin as a fresh-faced three-year-old. His formal engineering training, however, was completed at Carnegie Mellon University in 2007. While working at Capitol Records as its first-ever intern, legendary producer and engineer Al Schmitt suggested that Boulanger meet with the mastering maestro Doug Sax. He worked under Sax for several years and in 2015 opened The Bakery, his own Los Angeles facility.

Aside from budgets, what are some of the biggest challenges that you face today? Because so many artists are self-produced or on an indie label, you have a lot of people with no clue what they’re doing on the production side. Often times I’ll even get files that don’t have an artist’s name on them. It’s hard to get the label copy—all the stuff we need to encode on the record.

How often do you speak with a mix engineer and at what point does that happen? Almost always and usually even before I get their mix. The only time that can get squirrely and impersonal is when I’m working on a big soundtrack. You have many people involved and there’s a label or project coordinator.

What are the best ways to communicate with clients so that you’re sure you can give them what they want? Very simply: I speak in music. When a client tries to talk with me in technical terms, I tell them to imagine that they’re on stage. Who would they turn to and tell to shut up?

The number of formal engineering education programs seems to increase constantly. Why are there so many? Because they’re profitable. Are they worth it? It’s hard to criticize education, but it’s what you make of it. My criticism is that any school will promise that you’ll get a job, but you never do. The programs are so focused in one direction.

How should people new to the field approach formal engineering programs? I don’t see the point of school. If you’re determined to pursue the craft, you may as well spend your time actually doing it and not earning a degree. Learning Pro Tools isn’t that hard.

A number of online music players employ loudness normalization. Are you mindful of this when mastering? Does it create unique challenges? I’ve been mindful of it for a long time. A lot of my testing has been surprising. At this point, it hasn’t entered my workflow but I see that changing in the next few years. Why it hasn’t entered yet is because there’s no standard. It may as well not even exist because of the vast differences in implementation.

Because of multiple platforms (Spotify, YouTube, Apple Music, etc.), do you sometimes give artists more than one master? I give them one. It’s a romantic thought to provide more than one, but that’s the business kiss of death. If you give a client two different versions and try to explain it, good luck.

How does automated mastering compare to mastering done by an engineer? Is it a serious threat? It’s not a serious threat. It’s the same thing as AI composition or MIDI performances. That isn’t what people are making, what they want to hear or what they’re buying.

What happens with vinyl reissues? Are they always mastered for vinyl? Sometimes the label will only have the CD master and you have to get it onto vinyl. That’s one end of the spectrum. The other end is that I just remastered the famous Telarc Tchaikovsky 1812 Overture. It was originally recorded to a Soundstream machine, one of the first digital tape recorders from around 1978. But it had no digital interface. Someone figured out how to put its internal bit structure into PCM (pulse-code modulation). It originally ran at 50K. They did an SRC (sample-rate conversion) up to 96K. This is the closest anyone’s gotten to the data on the tape.

Many artists want to get their stuff in film or on TV. Are there any special considerations for mastering for those mediums? No. Unfortunately, in the wild west of music supervisors, most of them want the loudest master known to mankind. Mainly because producers want music supervisors listening on their laptops to have something jump out at them and be chosen.

It’s been said that monitor setup is the most important tool. What do you use? ATC 150s, which is what we used at The Mastering Lab. Since my room is bigger than the one they had, I presumed I’d need the dual-woofer 350’s. When I gave [ATC’s] Ben Lilly the dimensions of my room, he laughed and told me I only needed the 150’s. My room dimensions were exactly what they were designed for.

What contributes to the truest sound? It’s only obtained by the philosophy that AI [Schmitt] imparted to me when I first started: get it right the first time. Any notion of getting something right later takes you a step away from fidelity. The goal is to make what’s coming out of your console sound exactly like the master.

VLADO MELLER

Company: Vlado Mastering
Clientele: Paul McCartney, Metallica, Barbra Streisand
Contact: vladomastering.com

Mastering veteran Vlado Meller has worked in the business for nearly 50 years and has mastered everything from hip-hop to classical. He began his career at CBS in 1969. Seventeen years later his division was acquired by Sony. When it shuttered in 2007, Meller moved on to Universal but soon it too went the way of Sony. Afterwards he spent a short time at Masterdisk until it became clear that he needed to strike out independently.

How often do you speak with a mix engineer and at what point does that happen? Often. They have the same interest in the project as I do. If a mix is bad, I’ll be the first to be attacked because people will think the mastering engineer messed up the project. If I hear something wrong with a mix, we’ll have a nice consultation. I’m not attached to the project, so I can tell them what I feel. Mastering engineers are the X-ray of the mixers.

What are the best ways to communicate with clients so that you’re sure you can give them what they want? The mix engineer already knows what the artist is looking for. Do they want dynamics? Warmth? They’ll tell you where [the client] wants to be. Often an artist will send a song they like from another album and that’s where they want their loudness. That’s the immediate guide for us.

How do you help clients communicate what they want from you? We discuss the project and I ask about the specific release—CD, streaming or something else. They tell me how they want to hear it. Often they compare the sound of previous albums I’ve mastered and that gives me an idea of what
they’re looking for. I’ll prepare separate masters for the various formats: CD, Spotify, whatever.

The number of formal engineering education programs seems to increase constantly. Why are there so many? Are they worth it? There are a lot of engineering programs, but they’re all about mixing. There are workshops for mastering, but only a few. I’ve started several myself.

A number of online music players employ loudness normalization. Are you mindful of this when mastering? Does it create unique challenges?

I’m becoming mindful of it and we follow the rules. With the streaming services, I caution clients that Spotify will lower a song 10 dB and it won’t be the same. So they might as well prepare the lower level with more dynamics and they’ll have a better quality [master].

Because of multiple platforms (Spotify, YouTube, Apple Music, etc.), do you sometimes give artists more than one master? Or do you try to give them one pass that will sound good universally?

I give them more than one. I’ll do one for iTunes. A vinyl master is completely different. You can’t put the same sound on vinyl that you hear on a CD. The level is too high and vinyl wouldn’t play it correctly. If it’s under 17 minutes per side, maybe it’ll play. If it’s more than 25, the record will skip from beginning to end because the cartridge stylus can’t track it; it’ll be thrown out of the groove.

How does automated mastering compare to mastering done by an engineer? Is it a serious threat?

I don’t believe in it. What kind of algorithm can they have that will be able to distinguish between hip-hop and classical? They can definitely enhance the sound, though. A slight EQ on anything can make it better. But there can’t be one rule for all types of music.

What happens with vinyl reissues? Are they always mastered for vinyl?

The ideal reissue would go to the original tape. If it’s older than 25 years, it’ll be quarter-inch. You’ll try to create a brand new sound for it because you can create a better one now than you could 20 years ago, thanks to EQ.

Many artists want to get their stuff in film or on TV. Are there any special considerations for mastering for those mediums?

For TV, yes. Congress passed a loudness act several years ago. There are certain requirements as far as levels go. You can’t go crazy with them. You can still create a dynamic sound, but the level has to be gentle. It can’t be a CD level.

It’s been said that monitor setup is the most important tool. What do you use? How has your setup evolved?

I’ve stuck with PMC monitors. They’re massive. They don’t color the sound, they don’t take anything away from it. I can play 20 or 30 seconds of a mix and I’ll know exactly where to go; what frequencies should be corrected.

What contributes to the truest sound?

Speakers are the most important thing. You can get the cheapest EQ, but as long as you have the best speakers, you can create the sound you want. Spend money on speakers, not plug-ins, EQs and compressors.

Jett Galindo

The Bakery
thebakery.la/mastering-engineer/
Jett-Galindo

When Eric Boulanger launched his mastering studio The Bakery in 2015, he brought female mastering maven Jett Galindo along. Currently, mastering matriarchs are something of a rarity in the industry. Here are a few of her career highlights.

Galindo graduated Summa Cum Laude from Boston’s Berklee College of Music.

She had her career beginnings as producer Jerry Barnes’ recording engineer at New York’s Avatar Studios.

She was mentored by mastering legend Doug Sax when she migrated to the West Coast approximately five years ago.

Galindo has mastered for Bette Midler, Roberta Flack and Nile Rodgers, among others.

She’s active with Soundgirls, an outfit for women who work in audio engineering.

“AS LONG AS YOU HAVE THE BEST SPEAKERS, YOU CAN CREATE THE SOUND YOU WANT.”
A whirlwind of activity has surrounded the burgeoning rock quartet Greta Van Fleet since they graced the pages of Music Connection in June 2017. At the time they were newly signed to Lava/Republic Records and rolling out their 4-song EP Black Smoke Rising to eager fans everywhere.

Twenty-one-year old twins Jake and Josh Kiszka (guitar and lead vocals, respectively), 18-year-old brother Sam Kiszka (bass and keyboards) and fellow 18-year-old Danny Wagner (drums) are, of course, very young, but collectively possess a classic and timeless view of the arts. They wanna rock! And with a sound forged in the blues and legendary artists like Led Zeppelin, the Who, Joe Cocker and Wilson Pickett, are single-handedly turning the music world on its ear.

Here are the facts: Leg one of the band’s first-ever headlining tour is completely sold out. The EP Black Smoke Rising debuted Aug. 17 at No. 1 on both the American and Canadian iTunes rock charts. GVF was nominated for a 2017 Loudwire Music Award for Best New Band. Their debut single “Highway Tune” received 3.6 million Spotify streams. And the list goes on.

We recently caught up with guitarist Jake Kiszka, who shared insight into the band’s humble beginnings hailing from small-town Michigan to their seemingly overnight catapult to stardom.

**Music Connection:** Can you talk about growing up in Frankenmuth, Michigan and how did that inform or influence who you are?

**Jake Kiszka:** It’s not the usual up-bringing coming from a small town. That certainly had a lot of influence into our musical selection. We grew up like 10 minutes outside of Frankenmuth in the country. We weren’t around a lot of modern influences so that contributed to our musical growth.

**MC:** You’ve had a tremendous amount of success in a relatively short period of time. Can you talk about that experience from the inside?

**Kiszka:** I think that none of us expected such an immediate reaction to the music we were making. It’s very difficult to perceive what’s going on because we’re in the midst of it. In a way it’s sort of like being in the eye of the storm. There’s a lot going on around you, but it’s pretty stagnant in the center. But I think all of the attention and the overwhelming reaction to the band stems from the truth in the music. I think just making pure music in a world, where there is so little pure music anymore, could have something to do with it certainly.

**None of us expected such an immediate reaction to the music we were making.”**

**MC:** Was working with Al Sutton and Marlon Young of Detroit’s Rust Belt Studios a big part of your crafting that pure music sound you were going for?

**Kiszka:** Yeah, I think they helped us get to where we wanted to go as far as crafting a sound. We are very live-based musicians, and I think we’ll always be. But I think there was a great deal learned in the studio in the last two years. And those two guys certainly trained us to be better studio musicians.

**MC:** How did you hook up with Sutton and Young?

**Kiszka:** We had worked at a few different studios, with Metro 37 being one of them. It was all about finding the right producer who could produce the kind of music we wanted to make. And I think the closest we could get was Al Sutton. We sent him some of our music and he decided to work with us. We started demoing songs and it took off from that point.

**MC:** You say there’s a lot of honesty and truth in the music. Can you be more specific about that?

**Kiszka:** Yeah, you can’t really manufacture emotion and put it into a song. It should be about music that speaks to you and you don’t feel like you’re being lied to, or that it’s over-produced, I suppose. There are also real instruments being played. These are the elements that, to me, define truthful music.

**MC:** What is your writing process?

**Kiszka:** There isn’t particularly one person who writes the majority of any songs, and it’s not a process either. The songs sort of present themselves in different ways. And every song we’ve written to this point has been written from a different angle. One song could be written on acoustic guitar, the next couple could be written on a mandolin or piano or from a riff I’ve been toying with. It’s a group effort.

**MC:** What kind of audience response have you been getting at your shows?

**Kiszka:** It’s overwhelming and humbling. The mass audience and their reactions are usually screaming and cheering until we get our gear off the stage. I didn’t expect that.

**MC:** I’m sure they’re all important in some way. But are there any significant shows that have stood out so far?

**Kiszka:** Yes. We just opened for Bob Seger last night. Being from Michigan and growing up listening to him, it was something very special, wonderful and kind of surreal. And I don’t think any of us have processed it yet because it feels like it didn’t even happen.

**MC:** I know you’re just getting started, so I don’t wanna throw too much at you. But what direction do you wanna take your music and career from here?

**Kiszka:** Well, I’ll speak first to the music. There’s a natural evolution to it so it takes its own changes. But the overall sound doesn’t change. But I hope, as we hopefully can play in front of larger audiences we can spread the message that we want to.

**MC:** And what is that message?

**Kiszka:** As we started to get more serious about what we were doing we started to think about what we truly stood for and what message we wanted to get across. And I think we came up with the three pillars of love, peace, unity, and all those things that music, and nothing else, can provide.

**Contact** Heidi Ellen Robinson Fitzgerald, herfitzgerald@roadrunner.com
The 5 Keys To Getting Added To A Playlist

While radio airplay used to be the lifeblood of a hit (and in some cases still is), today it’s the streaming service playlist that really sets the tone for listener music discovery. If a track is added to a popular playlist, its streams will spike and listeners will add it to their personal playlists, which sometimes adds a viral element that spreads to playlists on other networks as well. What’s more, hot playlists are now watched by radio programmers to see both what’s trending and what’s not.

The problem is that while the playlist culture has been great for music discovery for the listener, it turns out it hasn’t been that great for artist development. Where before listeners were getting to know the artist’s music via multiple songs on an album, that’s all changed as streaming has made the business more song-driven instead of artist-driven.

As a result, songs tend to come and go faster, as do artists. The good news is that means there are always spots open on popular playlists for new songs. The bad news is that it’s more difficult for an artist to get long-term traction.

That said, Spotify and Apple Music playlists are getting harder and harder to crack, especially if you’re not on a major label. Here are a few tips from my Social Media Promotion For Musicians 2nd Edition handbook that can land you a spot on a Spotify playlist or on any other streaming service.

Key #1: Verify your profiles
The first thing you have to do is make sure you have a presence on the service itself. In-house playlist curators will usually not feature anything by artists who’ve not already verified their profile on the streaming platform.

To verify your Spotify account you must first submit your account for verification. This requires:
- Your Spotify URL link
- Your Spotify personal username
- Your artist profile name
- Your Twitter account

On Apple Music, claim your artist profile via Connect.

Key #2: Get some followers on the streaming platform
You don’t need millions of followers or streams, but you do need enough to get a curator interested. Now’s the time for a social media or email campaign to turn those fans into followers.

Key #3: Make sure your online presence is ready
If a curator is interested in your music, he or she will probably check you out further by looking at your website, photos, press, social media, upcoming gigs and all the things that most industry execs look at. If you’ve been diligent about your online presence, here’s where that all comes into play.

Key #4: Find some playlists to follow
Find some playlists that you love and begin to follow them with the idea of learning if your music is a fit. Don’t limit yourself to Spotify’s in-house curators. In this game, all curators count because the idea is to ultimately get on a number of smaller playlists first so you’ll be noticed by the Spotify team, so expand your horizons a little. Also make sure to follow them on social media, and make comments where and when you can.

Who should you follow? How about:
- Music bloggers and music news websites
- Magazines and weeklies
- Political figures
- Authors and poets
- Radio stations
- Other bands and artists
- Brands
- Music fans
- Spotify curators (or the curators on the service or your choice)

And finally, your own playlist (you do have one, don’t you?)

Key #5: Make your pitch
Make sure that the playlist owner is well aware of you before you begin your pitch. You’ll be taken much more seriously if you’re recognized as a supporter rather than someone just cold-calling. Send a personally crafted email to the playlist owner or curator. Make it brief and to the point and tell them why you think your song is perfect for their list. Be as specific as you can and avoid being long-winded. If a curator has a submission policy, make sure that you follow it to the letter or chances are your submission won’t even be read.

Remember that some curators for the larger lists make their playlist selections in a fairly closed environment, so they don’t allow pitches and will usually make that clear in their submission policy. If that’s the case, it’s best to respect their guidelines and not hassle them.

You’ll need to get on other some other playlists first before you’ll get noticed.

Yes, There’s Such A Thing As Playlist Promotion
Not surprisingly, pay-to-play has come to the digital age as a new form of payola that now attempts to influence what consumers listen to. Playlist promotion, or “playola,” has become a big part of the promotional campaigns for many managers and labels.

Prices for playlist promotion can be as little as $100 to a small blogger with a modest following, to as much as $10,000 for a six-week campaign for a major playlist owner. A quick Google search will turn up dozens of promotion companies that specialize in trying to get your songs placed on playlists everywhere.

Just like in the old days of radio promotion, competition is now fierce for these playlist spots, so don’t be surprised if the prices continue to rise and placements harder to buy.

Just a few years ago, playlist promotion wasn’t even on the radar for most artists or bands, and that meant that there was far less competition for playlist slots. That said, record labels and managers were already ahead of the curve in that they were actively campaigning for the highest profile spots for their artists. Now that most of the music industry is aware of the importance of these lists, they’re getting tougher and tougher to crack, but it’s certainly not impossible. Follow the 5 keys above and you’ll have a great chance of finding a playlist slot, but remember, it’s all for naught if your song doesn’t rock.
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.
200 podcasts, all on one app.
podcastone.com/app

NOW FEATURING

MUSIC CONNECTION
MAGAZINE PODCAST
Harmful If Swallowed

Contact: amanda@lafamos.com
Web: HarmfulIfSwallowedBand.com
Seeking: Label, Film/TV, Booking, Mgmt
Style: Punk-Rock

Production 8  
Lyrics 8  
Music 8  
Vocals 8  
Musicianship 8  

Score: 8.0

Rock trio Harmful If Swallowed delivers with an intense, clockwork precision that highlights each band member. Drums are spot-on at all times and singer Greg Martin sings with conviction. “Blame” is a good example of their work, and not only features guitar solo dazzlement, but even injects a star (!) into the arrangement. “Sleepless” is cut from the same cloth, though shaded a bit differently. Best is “Forever,” where high-minded Martin tells his girl “I wanna feel this way forever!” From its gentle-jangle intro to its pop-punk sound, which is driven by synthesizers and just a touch of twang. There are effectively sweet vocal blends in the song, though we feel Alexander could be even more emotive on the chorus. “I Don’t Want To Catch My Breath” is where she really shines. On this ballad (something Taylor Swift might have sung when she was country) Alexander’s aching sincerity and the epic guitar tone are a winning tandem. On “Wanted,” the chiming guitars mirror the singer’s convincing spirit of longing. We urge this promising artist to ask even more of her voice.

Natalie Alexander

Contact: Jessica@monaloring.com
Web: nataliealexandermusic.com
Seeking: Nashville Opportunities
Style: Country

Production 8  
Lyrics 8  
Music 8  
Vocals 8  
Musicianship 8  

Score: 8.0

Singer Natalie Alexander lends her appealing voice to these well-chosen tunes by Nashville pro Hillary Lindsey and co-writers. “Cruel” showcases the pop-country sound, which is driven by synthesizers and just a touch of twang. There are effectively sweet vocal blends in the song, though we feel Alexander could be even more emotive on the chorus. “I Don’t Want To Catch My Breath” is where she really shines. On this ballad (something Taylor Swift might have sung when she was country) Alexander’s aching sincerity and the epic guitar tone are a winning tandem. On “Wanted,” the chiming guitars mirror the singer’s convincing spirit of longing. We urge this promising artist to ask even more of her voice.

Souleye

Contact: souleye@souleye.net
Web: souleye.net
Seeking: Booking
Style: Positive Rap

Production 8  
Lyrics 8  
Music 8  
Vocals 8  
Musicianship 8  

Score: 8.0

Rap artist Souleye demonstrates a consistent ability to craft a catchy, upbeat, inspirational hook and drive it home. His “Hip-Hop Medicine” is a case in point: bold, stabbing synths support a pop-centric “be a better person” chorus that echoes Backstreet Boys at their best. “Follow Your Heart” is an equally bright, optimistic jingle. Perhaps the artist’s best tune is “Wildman” which features guest male and female vocal interplay—he raps the verses, she delivers the catchy chorus, and all of it is caught in the upbeat and jarring dynamics. Most appealing is “FYE” where the artist’s playfulness is cut from the same cloth, though shaded a bit differently. Best is “Forever,” where high-minded Martin tells his girl “I wanna feel this way forever!” From its gentle-jangle intro to its pop-punk sound, which is driven by synthesizers and just a touch of twang. There are effectively sweet vocal blends in the song, though we feel Alexander could be even more emotive on the chorus. “I Don’t Want To Catch My Breath” is where she really shines. On this ballad (something Taylor Swift might have sung when she was country) Alexander’s aching sincerity and the epic guitar tone are a winning tandem. On “Wanted,” the chiming guitars mirror the singer’s convincing spirit of longing. We urge this promising artist to ask even more of her voice.

Paradise Kings

Contact: dougdexterschep.com
Web: paradisekings.net
Seeking: Booking, Licensing, Film/TV
Style: Rock/Swing/Blues

Production 7  
Lyrics 8  
Music 8  
Vocals 8  
Musicianship 8  

Score: 7.8

To Paradise Kings, the F word means Fun and these dudes bring it in high style. With confident vocals, tasty guitar tones and some rollicking piano, they have a vintage ’50s sound that really swings. No listener could help but smile when hearing this band, especially their humor-laced lyrics, as in “I’d Sing The Blues If I Had ‘Em,” a song about one man’s incredible luck at pulling coolness from calamity. They even find humor in incarceration as in “Three Strikes” with the shouted tagline “turn out the lights!” “69 Chevy” showcases the band’s stellar musicianship. Yes, the songs’ sometimes lumpy lyrics need some Turtle Wax. But it’s clear that this feel-good four-some knows how to entertain a crowd.

Joel Jasper/Apollo

Contact: apollobluemusic@gmail.com
Web: apollopardise.com
Seeking: Distribution
Style: Electronica

These compositions from artist Joel Jasper (who goes by the handle Apollo) showcases electronic themes whose vocals are simply part of each tune’s fabric. The lengthy opus “Sky Dive” is a composition that delivers a calming nimbus of synthesizers, r&b voices, a gently propulsive groove and a pervasive, playful keyboard hook. The composer shifts gears with “Arrival,” which sounds like a lot due to its syncopated distortions and jarring dynamics. Most appealing is “FYE” where the artist’s playfulness is cut from the same cloth, though shaded a bit differently. Best is “Forever,” where high-minded Martin tells his girl “I wanna feel this way forever!” From its gentle-jangle intro to its pop-punk sound, which is driven by synthesizers and just a touch of twang. There are effectively sweet vocal blends in the song, though we feel Alexander could be even more emotive on the chorus. “I Don’t Want To Catch My Breath” is where she really shines. On this ballad (something Taylor Swift might have sung when she was country) Alexander’s aching sincerity and the epic guitar tone are a winning tandem. On “Wanted,” the chiming guitars mirror the singer’s convincing spirit of longing. We urge this promising artist to ask even more of her voice.

Yung PeSo

Contact: Bookyungpeso@gmail.com
Web: soundcloud.com/realyungpeso
Seeking: Label, Film/TV
Style: Rap/Hip-Hop

Yung PeSo’s got a southern “mumble rap” vibe not unlike HotU artist such as Migos and 21 Savage. That comparison aside, PeSo got us hooked from jump on his “Sufferin’,” which comes off like his own personal movie narrated with raspy, muttering introspection. His quirky monologue has a haunting quality where he reveals his pains, pleasures and struggles—then shows a survivor’s ability to laugh it all off.

Music Connection’s listening committee rates recorded music on a scale of 1 to 10. Number 1 represents the lowest possible score, 10 represents the highest possible score. A final score of 7 denotes a solid, competent artist. For more information, see Submission Guidelines on the next page.
**V2**

**Contact:** anthony@rockstaruniversity.com  
**Web:** vsquared.rocks  
**Seeking:** Opening tour slot for major act  
**Style:** New rock songs with the sound from the past

On a collection of beloved oldies and spirited originals, young brothers Vittorio & Vincenzo (as V2) have a novel album *Rock N Rods* that showcases their love of vintage rides and playful double meanings. The boys’ own “59 Caddy” and “40 Ford” are quick off the line, racing to their simple, catchy choruses (“Make you feel good underneath the hood!”). Along with some bitin’ guitar tone, V2’s vocal blends are especially effective. A most promising original is “I Got A Woodie!,” the boys’ ode to the classic surfer wagon. This song is delivered with such a kick and a snicker that its novelty factor could make it ripe for a memorable placement in a raucus teen comedy soundtrack.

**Score:** 7.6

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**The Squawks**

**Contact:** thesquawks.band@gmail.com  
**Web:** thesquawks.bandcamp.com  
**Seeking:** Label  
**Style:** Folk-Rock

Sardonic lyrics and a scorching guitar player highlight recordings by the Squawks, a folk-rock foursome whose superior musicianship is ultimately undermined by subpar lead vocals. “Muse” is a cry for inspiration from an unlikely source—“someone cruel who’s just like you.” “Destroyed” continues the wry, jaundiced view of life with references to “my little disaster.” Lead vocals actually enhance the funny, clever, folkish number “They Lie” where the nasally vocal tones gel quite naturally with the song’s inherent novelty factor. On every track, you can count on superior musicianship, especially from the group’s guitar player, who is given ample opportunities to wail like the best of them.

**Score:** 7.2

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**Highland Kites**

**Contact:** marissaa.lamar@gmail.com  
**Web:** highlandkites.com  
**Seeking:** Booking, Film/TV  
**Style:** Indie Folk/Rock

Artful rock trio Highland Kites are not about crafting tunes for the mainstream. Singer-songwriter Marissa Lamar sets the tone, showing herself to be a soul-baring artist who’s more of a communicator than a singer. “I’m Not Weak” is glazed with a pond full of reverb and dreamy ambiance that effectively counterbalances its edgy upwelling of guitars. It’s an intriguing piece of work that would have more impact if it were shorter. Pounding drums propel “This War Inside” and is another example of Lamar’s dark, confessional style. “Let Me Run” is lulling, lengthy and overworks its hypnotic groove. The intriguing Kites might do well to find ways to inject more drama and dynamics into their arrangements.

**Score:** 7.6

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**Resin**

**Contact:** niko@resinofficial.com  
**Web:** resinofficial.com  
**Seeking:** Label, Film/TV, Booking, Mgmt  
**Style:** Downtempo/Electronic

Self-produced solo artist Resin (Niko Antonucci) conjures a dark, mysterious landscape inhabited by her slurring, unsettling vocal rasp. “I’m In Love” is a world whose grim, tune-free intensity will challenge most listeners. Others will be drawn by the avant-garde nature of these non-commercial recordings, which sound like folk poems brimming with psychosis and lurking menace. While “Hoarse” and “Lie” are interesting, we are most taken with “One Silver Dollar” where Resin’s murky vocals actually enhance the funny, clever, folkish number “They Lie” where the nasally vocal tones gel quite naturally with the song’s inherent novelty factor. On every track, you can count on superior musicianship, especially from the group’s guitar player, who is given ample opportunities to wail like the best of them.

**Score:** 7.2

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**Kaz Bielinski**

**Contact:** howie@howiewood.com  
**Web:** kazbielinski.com  
**Seeking:** Label, Booking, Film/TV, Distr.  
**Style:** AC/Hot AC

Artist Kaz Bielinski is a stylistically diverse vocalist, though the results of his efforts here prove more interesting than satisfying. That’s mainly due to subpar audio production, which undermines him time and again. “I’m On The Road” is a classic garage-rocker with a decent hook, but Kaz’s lead vocal should be far more forceful in the mix. He shifts gears to a sexy Latin mellowness on “Love Situation,” and there’s kind of a good song in there somewhere, but the chorus doesn’t soar as it should. Another stylistic shift is “The Rainbow” where he goes for a chamber-pop effect, complete with piano, violin and a sad, straining lead vocal. We urge this artist to get with a producer who can elevate his diverse material.

**Score:** 6.8
The Drafting Table  Detroit, MI
Contact: mike@procarpetmichigan.com
Web: reverbnation.com/rusticunion
The Players: Mike Leavitt, acoustic guitars, vocals; Jaime Omera McDermott, vocals; Jacob Gibson, vocal beat boxing, percussion; Jennifer Hall, violin.

Material: Rustic Union is an acoustic-based rock and Americana-flavored act. They feature a familiar and seamless blend of classic covers and original songs that pair together quite well. Country rock standards like John Denver’s “Country Roads” and CSN&Y’s “Teach Your Children” align perfectly with Rustic Union fare like the Byrds-ian “Take My Hand” and the spirited “Fly Me Away.” Select tunes even get a fresh renovation such as the bluegrass-tinged, fiddle-fueled take on the Stones’ “Honky Tonk Women.”

Musicianship: Mike Leavitt is a highly skilled singer-songwriter and guitarist equally adept on 6- and 12-string. His vocals are deep and robust, interweaving effortlessly with the ethereal Jaime Omera McDermott. This is certainly their strong suit as Leavitt and McDermott harmonize in almost a stream-of-conscious manner. Both Jacob Gibson and Jennifer Hall are technically side players, but their contributions to this performance are undoubtedly essential. Gibson is a unique talent utilizing vocal beat boxing in more of a traditional percussive manner. He also doubles on Djembe rounding out his ample skill set. Violinist Hall provides vivid color and billowy textures that effectively complement the ebb and flow of each song.

Performance: “Relaxed,” is probably the adjective that best describes Rustic Union’s stylistic aura and demeanor. Transitions from song to song were friendly and engaging. There wasn’t a whole lot of down time on stage and Leavitt did some nice set-ups, particularly on the original tunes, where he would share some background on the motivations behind the music. The room was pretty vast, abuzz with a fair amount of chatter and revolving traffic. But the music and concept is certainly there. Now it’s time to loosen up as performers and personalities and embrace the spotlight. The audience will appreciate that fact and come along for the ride. – Eric A. Harabadian

Summary: Rustic Union is probably one of the best vocal duos this reviewer has heard in quite awhile. Their strength surely comes from time-intensive hours devoted to crafting the songs and honing a signature sound. But it would be nice to get a glimpse into Leavitt and McDermott as individuals. The music and concept is certainly there. Now it’s time to loosen up as performers and personalities and embrace the spotlight. The audience will appreciate that fact and come along for the ride. – Eric A. Harabadian

Rustic Union

Material:

More often than once, due to some serious songwriting chops, this artist makes you do a double take thinking you might just be listening to John Denver. The music is an eclectic blend. Petree does what a writer is said to do best—write what one knows, from the heart and staying true to his roots. With roots in Louisiana, Petree’s music does make some Cajun nods, while at the same time clearly seems to be influenced by a broad range of rock, country and even punk music. The addition of harmonica adds a John Lennon quality.

Musicianship:

The bass and vocals are low at points, but the drum levels aren’t too overpowering so those issues are a minor concern. McKinsey and Novak are very in sync, clean and consistent. Together they bring down and ramp up temps expertly. The group is joined by Guzman and Pennison, both members of Petree’s opening act, the High Life Cajun Band. Together they perform a medley of Cajun numbers including “Louisiana Saturday Night,” “Diggy Liggy Lo” and “Play Cajun Man.”

Performance: Petree is very in command, animated and stylized. This clearly seasoned performer is comfortable working the stage and interacting with his audience. At one point Petree seems to be challenged with his tuner and Novak wisely fills that time with banter. Together they work up their audience with hand clapping, feet stomping and tambourine. In particular for “The Rapture” they get the joint jumping with lots of stops and double timing.

Summary: While all aspects of the act are engaging and fun it feels like the set list could have left on a high note rather than reverting back to the initial pace of the performance. Given that this music is so lyric-heavy, having an instrumental section within the structure of each song might help with energizing the overall set as well as adding additional instruments to perform said solos, such as saxophone or keys. – Brooke Trout

Rustic Union
**Rocks Off Cruise**  New York, NY

**Contact:** bowen@silverbackmusic.net  
**Web:** flowtribe.com

**The Players:** KC O’Rorke, vocals, trumpet; John-Michael Early, harmonica, washboard, vocals, keyboards; Russell Olschner, drums; Chad Penot, bass, vocals; Bryan Santos, guitar, timbales; Mario Palmisano, guitar.

**Material:** Lit up in all its splendor, what better way is there to take in the sights of Manhattan than a nighttime boat ride complete with music, drinks and dancing. At the helm was New Orleans-based indie-funk band Flow Tribe, a good fit for setting the evening’s tone. After years of history together, they went their separate ways, re-uniting when they returned to New Orleans to help with rebuilding efforts following hurricane Katrina. Their music is high energy, genre crossing and flirts with various styles from funk to rock and rap, which all contributed to making the night a success. Most of their material was original with enough rhythmic variety to keep the toes tapping and the drinks flowing. As this was not a listening event, the lyric content or songs’ meaning was peripheral to the celebratory nature of the evening. Danceable numbers like “You Know What It’s About,” “Walk Like An Animal” and “Won’t Be Long” are just some of what was on the menu served up to an enthusiastic boat crowd eager to party.

**Musicianship:** The band members deliver a tight and spirited performance. There are some standout lead guitar lines and good bass moves, but above all, the band is in sync with each other and the pockets for vocals lay smoothly within the arrangements. As for front-man O’Rorke, he raps, he sings, he dances and plays trumpet—all an integral part of his showmanship.

**Performance:** Maintaining a festive vibe was key, and from that standpoint, the band fulfilled expectations. Judging their artistic merits based solely on this event would be unfair as it was interspersed with drinking, dancing and socializing. However, Flow Tribe fully embraced their entertainment role right down to O’Rorke’s flashy hot pink suit and black polka dot shirt. Their cover of Rod Stewart’s “Do You Think I’m Sexy” rounded out the set and blended well with their own material. Infusing a few more big covers into the mix would further buttress their performance.

**Summary:** Flow Tribe is a party natural, which in itself offers many opportunities of this ilk. It’s a notable skill to keep a crowd engaged for two hours when your competition is the skyline of Manhattan. Adding a few more heavy hitting well known songs and putting their own stamp on them, will have even more mass appeal and blend well with their own songs. A more listening oriented environment is necessary to really capture the entire Flow Tribe experience. – Ellen Woloshin

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**Hotel Café**  Hollywood, CA

**Contact:** Cary Baker, cary@conqueroo.com  
**Web:** korbylenker.com

**The Players:** Korby Lenker, guitar, vocals.

**Material:** If you’re looking for heartache, sincerity, passion and intelligence all in one musician’s body of music, you will find that Korby Lenker is the guy for you. Through his singer-songwriter tales, Lenker’s words are not just lyrics that are sung. Performing a handful of songs, all with one commonality, Lenker truly tells a story within each track. With a country yet unique twang, he conveys vibrant imagery that overlaps distinct acoustic instrumentals; particularly in “Northern Lights,” he paints a scene of a “night sky [that] is a chandelier.”

**Musicianship:** Lenker is a technically skilled musician with a sense of fluidity in his playing. Performing as a one-man-show, he demonstrated versatility through his use of distortion and reverb. Specifically, his use of a pedal effect that takes his acoustic instrumentals, reverses them, and is played back depending on how hard he strums his guitar is an interesting yet subtle approach. Lenker also manages to match his firm vocals to his instrumentals, something that can be heard in the creativity of his acoustic guitar that matches the vulnerability in his voice. To close out his set, he tuned it down a bit by bringing out his ukulele to perform softly and sweetly his song “My Little Life.”

**Performance:** Lenker is charismatic and charming. With each song he is consistent and keeps a solid pace. No stranger to the audience, he is comfortable with engaging, and might even reveal too much sometimes by oversharing his personal life. But that’s not a bad thing, as it elevates the performance element, making for a more personal experience. His humor is sometimes self-deprecating, introducing song “Forbidden Fruit” as a track that has “no redeeming value whatsoever.” However, this song specifically brought out Maya Bloomfield for “Let’s Just Have Supper,” a song that was upbeat but full of social commentary; the jam session felt like something among a group of friends and truly showed a sense of camaraderie.

**Summary:** The level of sincerity in this performer’s voice, along with his eclectic lyricism, is refreshing and strong. For an artist who doesn’t take himself too seriously, Korby Lenker proved to the audience that he is a professionally skilled musician with a lot of talent, a lot of soul and plenty of potential to move forward in his career. – Whitney Levine
Hotel Café  Hollywood, CA
Contact: koianunta@gmail.com
Web: julesgalli.com
The Players: Jules Galli, vocals; Koi Anunta, violin; Oscar Bugarin, electric guitar; David Henning, bass; Marshall Thompson, keyboards; Josh Herbst, drums; Al Keith, percussion; Andre Cotman, sax.

Material: Jules Galli’s approach to soul and funk music isn’t necessarily unique in that it incorporates elements of contemporary indie rock and dance music, but it sure is exciting. The thrill is in the dichotomy; Galli’s voice is classically R&B. The guy charms the crowd at the Hotel Café with every vocal inflection. This music wouldn’t sound out of place on alternative radio.

Performance: Galli, in particular, leaves every inch of himself, including a hat or two, on the stage. He writhes and pulsates through every song, his face betraying the fact that he’s feeling every note. Alright, now and again, he goes a little too “full-on” Michael Jackson and threatens to dip into Corey Feldman territory, but he pulls himself back just in the nick of time.

Summary: This blend of rock, pop and R&B is so very marketable right now, mainly because the potential audience is so vast. This could be played to mainstream and underground crowds, not to mention fans of all of the aforementioned genres. Frankly, the talent is there, and the songs are awesome. All Galli and his band need now is a bit of luck.

– Brett Callwood

Hotel Cafe  Hollywood, CA
Contact: rebecca@bigpicturemediaonline.com
Web: jocelynnachrismusic.com
The Players: Jocelyn Arndt, lead vocals; Chris Arndt, lead guitar, songwriter.

Material: Sibling rivalries be damned. Jocelyn Arndt and Chris Arndt go together like “peas and carrots.” Or better yet, small sweaty blues clubs and rock & roll. Musically, they sound like a boogie-woogie blend of Janis Joplin, Heart, Aerosmith and Wolfmother. Physically, they look like a pair of identical twins. And spiritually, they are. “I don’t even consider us as ‘two people,’ music wise, we’re a team,” said Jocelyn Arndt. “The music would not be what it is, if either one of us were doing it without the other.” Perhaps their optimistic mindset can be associated with their youthfulness. Or perhaps it could be attributed to their idyllic upbringing in Upstate New York.

Performance: At first glance, it is very clear why NBC’s The Voice has tried to convince Jocelyn to ditch her younger brother for a solo career on two separate occasions. On stage, Jocelyn moves with the passion of Alanis Morissette in her prime. So as a spectator, it is very easy to get lost in her showmanship. But as her live performance unfolds, something amazing happens. As if she is handing an Olympic baton to her brother in a heated track and field race, Chris begins to takeover. As the spotlight shines on Chris, you immediately notice his leadership and command of all the musicians. Not only is Chris the conductor, he too is a showman. His Joe Perry meets Tom Petty aura makes it very hard to resist the urge to play your “air guitar” as he strums his axe.

Summary: There is nothing more cliché in rock & roll than a band with two main songwriters fighting over the creative control of their music. The only thing more cliché than that is learning how to play the guitar, while strumming along to Led Zeppelin’s “Stairway to Heaven.” In the case of Jocelyn & Chris Arndt, the latter is true and the former is not. Not to sound cliché or anything, but this sibling duo has the potential to become the music industry’s “Next Big Thing.”

– Miguel Costa
is marvelously produced and engineered by Bruce Witkin and Ryan Dorn, and even if you don’t like this genre it is worth a listen to if only for the production value.

Musicianship: The musicianship was a bit lackluster at this show. The Glam Skanks were really hamming it up for the crowd and cameras, looking majestic as they posed for every photo opp, but it took away from the music. Cassie saved the night by being a machine on the ticker and not missing a beat, while her bandmates were having the times of their lives playing to and with the crowd. Another saving grace was the guitar rhythm parts, which were damn near flawless, and although the lead parts needed some work you can feel the potential.

Performance: Scantily clad, loaded with energy and with treats in hand, the Glam Skanks were spectacular. They had the audience dancing and grooving to the pounding thud of every beat and eating out of their hands. The crowd demanded more after each song. During the songs the band would playfully taunt the audience and egg them on to scream and have a great time. Superb performance!

Summary: JunkShop Glam is a nuanced music genre coined in the early 2000’s by Tony Barber, bass player for the Buzzcocks. It describes the forgotten vinyl records of the ’70s glam rock bands whose unsuccessful records had very limited release, no airplay and have thus been relegated to the cheap record bins. The Glam Skanks have rightfully earned their place in the junkshop hall of fame with their interpretation of this hard rockin’ genre. They’re a group of very young, talented girls with lots of room to grow and develop in this ever-changing music industry. Although some of the songs sound like an 8th grader wrote them (like “F*** Off” and “High Wasted”), this band can also play a professional well-put-together song like “I Want It Now.” The Glam Skanks have been busy this past year playing all over the U.S. and Europe, opening up for Adam Ant, Alice Cooper, the Skids, and it wouldn’t be a party if they weren’t the official backing band to Cherie Curry of the Runaways. – Pierce Brochetti

The Redwood Bar n Grill Los Angeles, CA

Contact: Info@ChromePR.com
Web: GlamSkanks.com
The Players: Veronica Volume, guitar; Millie, bass; Cassie, drums; Ali Cat, vocals.

Material: The Glam Skanks are very punkish in their delivery and are reminiscent of the Runaways when that band first came up—but with a lot more edge. Screaming lyrics themed with sex, drugs ‘n rock & roll, the Glam Skanks dig deep to bring back the old punk scene of the ’70s as each and every song is played with fury. Their latest effort Glitter City

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<td>MASTRO STUDIO</td>
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<td>Contact: Dave Morse</td>
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<td>METRO STUDIOS</td>
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<td>Contact: Maor Appelbaum</td>
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<td>MIKE WELLS MASTERING</td>
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<td>Contact: Mike Wells</td>
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<td>Notes: Skephy music mastering</td>
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<td>Contact: Mike Wells</td>
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<td>Contact: Mike Wells</td>
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<td>Contact: Brian Boustead</td>
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<td>Basic Rate: please call for information</td>
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<td>THE BEATLES</td>
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<td>Contact: John Goodenough</td>
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<td>TILDA STUDIOS</td>
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<td>W. W. STUDIOS</td>
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<td>Contact: Maor Appelbaum</td>
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DIRECTORY OF U.S. MASTERING STUDIOS

CUTDOWN STUDIES
North Hollywood, CA 91616
818-361-1157
Web: cutdownstudios.com
Contact: Billy Sullivan
Basic Rate: please call for info

SUN 7 MUSIC
5303 Inradale Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90043-1543
323-296-1052
Email: sun7@sun7production.com
Web: sun7production.com
Basic Rate: please call for info

THETA SOUND STUDIO
1300 W Riverside Dr., Burbank, CA 91505
818-956-3668
Email: randy@thetasound.com
Web: thetasound.com
Contact: Randy or Cyndie Tobin
Basic Rate: please call for info

THRESHOLD MASTERING
2114 Pico Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90405
310-566-6677
Email: michael@thresholdsounds.com
Web: thresholdsounds.com
Contact: Michelle Blankenship or Peter Barker
Basic Rate: custom rates for indies

TIME ART STUDIO
860-247-8606, 818-980-6700
North Hollywood, CA 91605
UNITED AVG, INC.
714-634-4678
Anaheim, CA 92806
TRU-ONE STUDIOS
Basic Rate:
Contact:
Web:
Email:

COLORADO
AIRSHOW BOULDER STUDIO
Boulder, CO 80301
P.O. Box 17632
303-247-9055
Web: airshowmastering.com
Basic Rate: please call for info
Additional location:
7014-C Westminster Ave., P.O. Box 569
Tacona Park, PA 20913
301-891-9035
ASPER LEAF RECORDING STUDIO
P.O. Box 60551
Grand Junction, CO 81508
243-216-6161
Email: aspenleafrecording@gmail.com
Web: aspenleafrecording.com
Contact: Ken Dravis
Basic Rate: please call for info
AUDIOPARK RECORDING & MASTERING
Avoca, CO 80022
303-456-6122
Email: audioparkrecording@gmail.com
Web: facebook.com/AudioParkRecordingStudio
Basic Rate: please call for info
AV SERVICES
2343 S. Downing St.
Denver, CO 80210
303-777-5900
Email: info@av-services.com
Web: av-services.com
Basic Rate: please call for info
CHERRY SOUND STUDIOS, LLC
1600 Downing, Ste. 120
Denver, CO 80218
303-910-5359
Email: info@cherrysoundrecording.com
Web: cherylsoundrecording.com
Basic Rate: please call for info
COLORADO SOUND STUDIOS
3100 W. 71st Ave.
Westminster, CO 80030
303-430-8811
Web: coloradosoundstudios.com
Basic Rate: please call or see website

GLOBALSOUND REC, STUDIO
555 Alber St., Unit 19-F
Broomfield, CO 80020
303-439-7596
Email: office@globalsoundstudio.com
Web: globalsoundstudio.com
Basic Rate: please call for rates
QUAM AUDIO PRODUCTIONS
Boulder, CO 80305
720-890-2200
Email: info@quamaudio.com
Web: quamaudio.com
Contact: Michael Quam
Basic Rate: please call for info
SUMMERTOWN STUDIOS
S. S. Miller Corner of College & Harmony
4561 S. Mason St.
Fort Collins, CO 80525
970-377-8866
Email: producer@summertownstudios.com
Web: summertownstudios.com
Contact: Bob Buford
Basic Rate: please call for info

CONNECTICUT
BEANSTUDIO MASTERING
Bridgewater, CT 06759
jm@beanstudio.com
Basic Rate: please call for info

NOISEMATCH STUDIOS
169 N.W., 23rd St.
Miami, FL 33127
954-530-4710
Email: info@noise-match.com
Web: noise-match.com
Basic Rate: Call for info

PROGRESSIVE MEDIA & MUSIC
2118 5th Ave.
Tampa, FL 33606
813-251-8003 Fax 813-251-8050
Email: info@progressivecds.com
Web: progressivecds.com
Basic Rate: project rates available - call for a quote

GEORGIA
GLENN SCHICK MASTERING
1286 West Paces Ferry NW
Atlanta, GA 30327
404-316-4655
Email: info@glenschick.com
Web: glenschick.com
Basic Rate: please call for info

OYDOSSEY STUDIO, THE
198 N. 1st St.
Columbia, SC 30628
706-540-1076
Email: jones@theoydysseystudio.com
Web: theoydysseystudio.com
Basic Rate: $550/hr. see web for details

SING MASTERING
781 Wheeler St. N.W.
Studio B
Atlanta, GA 30318
404-827-8000
Email: info@singmastering.com
Web: singmastering.com
Basic Rate: please call for info

HAWAII
ISLAND SOUND STUDIOS
377 Keaohole St., Ste. D-03
808-671-8417
Email: info@islandsoundstudios.com
Web: islandsoundstudios.com
Basic Rate: please call for info
With **premium sound** and **aesthetics**, our panels and bass traps are **lab-tested** and handcrafted with the **professional** in mind. Treat your music and studio with **LA Sound Panels**.

424.262.0622

info@lasoundpanels.com

www.LaSoundPanels.com
### Directory of U.S. Mastering Studios

#### Hawaii
- **ARST STUDIOS**
  - Home: Homestead, HI 96720
  - Web: satarnstudios.com
  - Email: info@arststudios.com
  - Contact: Gaylord Holomalia
  - Basic Rate: please call

- **MASSEY MASTERING**
  - PO Box 68143
  - Chicago, IL 60608
  - Web: massymastering.com
  - Contact: Don Perry
  - Basic Rate: please call

- **LIGHTNING STRUCK STUDIOS**
  - 2384 E Co Rd., Ste. 103
  - Wailuku, Maui, HI 96793
  - Web: lightningstruck.com
  - Email: mperry@lightningstruck.com
  - Contact: Kitty Tatman
  - Basic Rate: please call for info

#### Illinois
- **AUDIO MASTERING STUDIO**
  - 209-956-0621
  - Web: audio masteringstudio.com
  - Email: master@audiomasteringstudio.com
  - Basic Rate: 575 per song (minimum two songs) or project discount 7-10 songs, $500

- **BOILER ROOM, THE**
  - 1440 N. Western ave.
  - Chicago, IL 60622
  - Web: playgroundstudio.com
  - Email: admin@playgroundstudio.com
  - Contact: Steve
  - Basic Rate: $500/day recording, $65/hr. mastering

#### Indiana
- **INDIANA**
  - **APPLEGATE AUDIO VISUAL**
    - 5609 Emerson Ave.
    - Indianapolis, IN 46237
    - Email: mastering@applegateaudiovisual.com
    - Web: applegateaudiovisual.com
    - Basic Rate: $259.95 per track (up to six min. in length)

  - **CHICAGO MASTERING SERVICE**
    - 773-256-1733
    - Email: info@chicagomasteringservice.com
    - Web: chicagomasteringservice.com
    - Basic Rate: please call for info

  - **DISC MAKERS**
    - 560 W. Washington Blvd., #410
    - Chicago, IL 60661
    - Web: discmakers.com
    - Email: info@discmakers.com
    - Basic Rate: please call for info

  - **LIGHTNING STRUCK STUDIOS**
    - 2384 E Co Rd., Ste. 103
    - Wailuku, Maui, HI 96793
    - Web: lightningstruck.com
    - Email: mperry@lightningstruck.com
    - Contact: Kitty Tatman
    - Basic Rate: please call for info

#### Iowa
- **IOWA**
  - **CATAMOUNT RECORDING, INC.**
    - 5737 Westminster Dr.
    - Cedar Falls, IA 50613
    - Web: catamountrecording.com
    - Contact: Kitty Tatman
    - Basic Rate: please see web for info

  - **INNER LIGHT RECORDS**
    - 5737 Westminster Dr.
    - Cedar Falls, IA 50613
    - Web: innerlightrecords.com
    - Email: innerlightrecords@gmail.com
    - Contact: Ari
    - Basic Rate: please call for info

  - **MASSIVE MASTERING**
    - PO Box 68143
    - Schaumburg, IL 60168
    - Web: massive mastering.com
    - Email: master@massivemastering.com
    - Contact: John Scipri
    - Basic Rate: hourly/project rates on web

#### Kansas
- **KANSAS**
  - **CORNERSTONE STUDIOS**
    - 316-263-4464
    - Email: cornerstone@cornerstonestudios.com
    - Web: cornerstonestudios.com
    - Contact: Steve
    - Basic Rate: please Email for info

#### Kentucky
- **KENTUCKY**
  - **CHAPMAN RECORDING & MASTERING**
    - 8805 Monrovia St.
    - Lenexa, KS 66215
    - Web: chapman recording.com
    - Email: chuck@chapmanrecording.com

#### Louisiana
- **LOUISIANA**
  - **MUSIC SHED, THE**
    - 929 Euterpe St.
    - New Orleans, LA 70130
    - Email: info@musicshedstudios.com
    - Basic Rate: please call for info

#### Maine
- **MAINE**
  - **GATEWAY MASTERING STUDIOS**
    - 428 Cumberland Ave.
    - Portland, ME 04101
    - Web: gatewaymastering.com
    - Email: info@headfirstmedia.com
    - Basic Rate: please call for info

#### Missouri
- **MISSOURI**
  - **MUSIC CONNECTION**
    - October 2017
    - musicconnection.com

---

**Ensuring music creators get fair pay for their work everywhere it is played**

**YOUR SUPPORT MAKES A DIFFERENCE**

**SUPPORT THE FAIR PLAY FAIR PAY ACT NOW**

You are joining thousands of musicians and music lovers in supporting bipartisan legislation to reform music licensing and make sure music creators receive fair pay for their work.

The Act requires fair pay on all types of radio, ending the FM Radio loophole that lets FM radio play artists’ music without their permission and without paying the artist (unlike SiriusXM and Pandora), and stops digital services’ groundless refusal to pay artists for airplay of music made before 1972.

**Tell Congress to stand up for fair pay for music creators.**

[www.musicfirstcoalition.org](http://www.musicfirstcoalition.org)
MASSACHUSETTS

BOSTON RECORDING STUDIO

131 W. Concord St., Ste. 1

Boston, MA 02118

857-207-2247

Email: record@bostonrecordingstudio.com

Web: bostonrecordingstudio.com

Basic Rate: $80/hr.

JP MASTERS

Boston, MA

704-779-1043

Email: dave@jpmasters.com

Web: jpmasters.com

Contact: Dave Locke

Basic Rate: please refer to web

M WORKS MASTERING

60 Hampshire St.

Cambridge, MA 02139

617-577-0089

Email: studio@m-works.com

Web: m-works.com

Basic Rate: reasonable rates

OAK GROVE RECORDING

65 Clinton St.

Malden, MA 02148

781-321-3093

Email: oakgroveRecording@comcast.net

Web: oakgroveRecording.com

Basic Rate: please call for info

PEERLESS MASTERING

161 N. St.

Newtonville, MA

617-238-5200

Email: info@peerlessmastering.com

Web: peerlessmastering.com

Contact: Jeff

Basic Rate: please call for info

REAR WINDOW RECORDING SERVICE

25 Dwight St.

Brookline, MA 02446

617-901-2441 Fax 617-730-5611

Email: mlhops@asl.com

Web: rearwindowstudio.com

Basic Rate: please call for info

SOUNDMIRROR, INC.

76 Green St.

Boston, MA 02133-2271

617-522-1412 Fax 617-524-8377

Email: info@soundmirror.com

Web: soundmirror.com

Basic Rate: please call for info

WATERFALL STUDIOS

11389 S. Forrest Sideroad

Duffer, ON H9J 2T4

702-818-2479

Web: waterfallrecordings.com

Basic Rate: please call for info

MINNESOTA

GERRY STINSON AUDIO

3720 Cooper Ave. S.

St. Cloud, MN 56301

320-249-5925

Email: gerry@gerrystinsonaudio.com

Web: gerrystinsonaudio.com

Basic Rate: please call for info

RARE FORM MASTERING

712 Ontario Avenue

Minneapolis, MN 55403

612-327-8750

Email: info@rareformmastering.com

Web: rareformmastering.com

Contact: Greg Reisen

Basic Rate: please contact for info

MISSISSIPPI

MALACO MUSIC GROUP

3023 W. Northside Dr.

Jackson, MS 32313

601-982-4522

Email: malaco@malaco.com

Web: malaco.com

TAPROOT AUDIO DESIGN

350 Co Rd. 102

Oxford, MS 38655

662-236-2167

Email: info@taprootaudiodesign.com

Web: taprootaudiodesign.com

Basic Rate: please call for info

MISSOURI

CO MASTERRING SERVICES

P.O. Box 672

Cedar, MO 65634

662-236-2167

Email: info@comasterring.com

Web: comasterring.com

Basic Rate: please call for info

REAR WINDOW RECORDING SERVICE

25 Dwight St.

Brookline, MA 02446

617-901-2441 Fax 617-730-5611

Email: mlhops@asl.com

Web: rearwindowstudio.com

Basic Rate: please call for info

SOUNDMIRROR, INC.

76 Green St.

Boston, MA 02133-2271

617-522-1412 Fax 617-524-8377

Email: info@soundmirror.com

Web: soundmirror.com

Basic Rate: please call for info

WATERFALL STUDIOS

11389 S. Forrest Sideroad

Duffer, ON H9J 2T4

702-818-2479

Web: waterfallrecordings.com

Basic Rate: please call for info

STUDIO 24

800 1st. S.

Omaha, NE 68112

402-342-9090

Email: rcb@studio24omaha.com

Web: studio24omaha.com

Contact: Chuck Becker

Basic Rate: please call for info

WAREHOUSE PRODUCTIONS

206 S. 44th St.

Omaha, NE 68131

402-553-8523

Email: whp@qwestoffice.net

Web: warehouserproductions.net

NEVADA

THE HIDEOUT RECORDING STUDIO

14 Sunset Way

Henderson, NV 89014

702-445-7705

Web: audiomixhouse.com

Basic Rate: please call for info

BLACK DOG RECORDING STUDIO

260 E. Flamingo Rd., Unit 327

Las Vegas, NV 89169

813-434-1483

Email: blackdogmastering@gmail.com

Web: blackdogmastering.com

Basic Rate: please call for info

TOM PARHAM MASTERING

8260 Haven St

Las Vegas, NV 89123

702-481-1663

Web: tmparham.com, tomparham@mac.com

NEW HAMPSHIRE

CEDAR HOUSE SOUND & MASTERING

P.O. Box 333

North Sutton, NH 03260

603-743-6363

Email: gerry@cedarhousesound.com

Web: cedarhousesound.com

NEW JERSEY

BEANSTUDIO CD & DVD MASTERING

214 Webb St.

Bergenfield, NJ 07603

201-620-9363

Email: info@beanstudio.com

Web: info@beanstudio.com

Contact: Jim DeSalvo

Basic Rate: please email for info

DISC MAKERS

7200 N. Rte. 130

Pensauken, NJ 08110

856-468-9353

Email: info@discmakers.com

Web: discmakers.com

Basic Rate: please call for info

ED LITTMAN MASTERING

35 Harris Ct.

North Salem, NY 10508

201-824-7860

Web: edlittmanmastering.com

Contact: Ed Littman

Basic Rate: available on website

JOE LAMBERT MASTERING

115 Christopher Columubus Dr., Ste. 334

Jersey City, NJ 07302

201-332-7090

Web: knackbeta.com

Contact: Joe Lambert

Basic Rate: available on website

KNACK MASTERING

121 West 4th St.

New York, NY 10014

212-222-5749

Email: kimrosen@knackmastering.com

Web: knackmastering.com

Contact: Kim Rosen

“There’s more to mastering than meets the eye... it’s an ear kind of thing.”

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– Neil Portnow, The Recording Academy President/CEO

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Quite simply, Vlado Meller is one of the undisputed masters of mastering. His discography includes many of the greatest records ever recorded.

Today, the world’s leading producers, engineers & artists trust his ears as the final authority.

You put your heart, your soul and your career into your new record. Doesn’t your music deserve Vlado?

Contact Peter Cho
917-902-9909
peter@vladomastering.com

Vlado Meller Mastering
816 St. Andrews Blvd.
Charleston, SC 29407
818-571-2769
Email: info@VladoMastering.com
Web: vladomastering.com
Contact: Peter West

SOUTH DAKOTA

PRAIRIE DOG STUDIOS
P.O. Box 9106
Sioux Falls, SD 57109
605-361-0939
Email: topdog@prairiedogstudios.com
Web: prairiedogstudios.com
Basic Rate: please call for info

TENNESSEE

BLACK MATTER MASTERING
601 Lomont Drive
Nashville, TN 37216
615-424-6560
Email: dan@blackmattermastering.com
Web: blackmattermastering.com
Services: Mastering, lacquers, vinyl etching
Basic Rate: please call for rates

DAVE TOUGH PRODUCTIONS
Nashville, TN
615-554-6693
Email: dave@davetough.com
Web: davetough.com
Contact: Dave
Basic Rate: $65/hr - specializing in internet mastering

DIAMONDISC AUDIO
204 Still Water Cir.
Nashville, TN 37221
615-642-6870
Email: info@diamondiscaudio.com
Web: diamondiscaudio.com
Contact: Doug Diamond
Basic Rate: Mastering Package "O" - $30/song

ELECTRAHEAD ART & MEDIA
1022-B Joyce Ln.
Nashville, TN 37216
615-525-1504
Email: info@electraheadmedia.com
Web: electraheadmedia.com
Basic Rate: please call for info
Credits: Aevory, Wilson Quick, Natu Visinia, the Colored Parade, Lions for Real

EUPHONIC MASTERS
Arlington, TN
901-206-6675
Email: info@euphonicmasters.com
Web: euphonicmasters.com
Basic Rate: please call for info

FOXWOOD MASTERING
108 Foxwood Ln.
Franklin, TN 37069
615-257-3929
Email: info@foxwoodmastering.com
Web: foxwoodmastering.com
Basic Rate: please call for info

GEORGETOWN MASTERS
AUDIO, LLC
33 Music Sq. W., Ste. 108b
Nashville, TN 37203 USA
615-254-3233 Fax 615-254-3237
Email: info@georgetownmasters.com
Web: georgetownmasters.com
Contact: Shelley Anderson
Basic Rate: please call or see web

HILLTOP RECORDING STUDIOS
901 Due W. Ave.
Nashville, TN 37203
615-865-5272
Email: info@independentmastering.com
Basic Rate: please call for info

INDEPENDENT MASTERING
1312 16th Ave. S.
Nashville, TN 37212
615-653-0789
Email: eric@independentmastering.com
Web: independentmastering.com
Contact: Jon Nicholson

JAMSINC
1322 11th Ave. S.
Nashville, TN 37212
615-320-5500 Fax 615-340-9559
Email: info@jamsync.com
Web: jamsync.com
Basic Rate: please call for info

MASTERFONICS
28 Music St. West, E
Nashville, TN 37203
615-720-2761
Email: tommy@masterfonics.com
Web: masterfonics.com
Contact: Tommy Dorsey
Basic Rate: please call for info

MASTERING STUDIO, THE
9 Music Rd., Ste. 148
Nashville, TN 37203
615-828-1877
Email: info@themasteringstudio.com
Basic Rate: please call for info

MASTERMIX
1921 Division St.
Nashville, TN 37203
615-321-5970 Fax 615-321-0764
Email: info@mastermix.com
Web: mastermix.com
Contact: Ken or Hank
Basic Rate: please call for info

MAYFIELD MASTERING
2825 Erica Pl.
Nashville, TN 37203
615-383-3708
Email: info@mayfieldmastering.com
Web: mayfieldmastering.com
Basic Rate: please call for info

MUZI MUSIC
Nashville, TN
844-689-4227 Ext. 3
Email: mike@muZiMusic.com
Web: muZiMusic.com
Contact: Mike Farnoma
Basic Rate: special rate for indie and unsigned artists

NASHVILLE RECORDING STUDIO 19
112 Seaboard Ln.
Franklin, TN 37067
270-625-3357, 733-607-6810
Email: info@nashvillerecording.com
Web: themasteringstudio.com
Contact: John Lebowski

PARLOR STUDIO, THE
1317 16th Ave. S.
Nashville, TN 37212
615-385-4466
Email: larry@parlorproductions.com
Web: parlorproductions.com
Contact: Larry Sheridan

THE PLACE...FOR MASTERING
5543 Edmondson Pike #100
Nashville, TN 37211
615-686-1725

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9 Things You Need To Know About The College Music Market
(Before Trying To Break In)

A lot of musicians want to play colleges, but most don’t really know what that means. As someone who has played over 100 official university-sponsored shows around the country, it’s a field I know quite intimately. From the schools surrounded by a hundred miles of corn to those with 40,000 students located in the center of densely populated metropolises, I’ve done them all. But these kinds of shows aren’t quite what you’d think. If you know and understand club and festival touring, prepare for your world to be turned upside down.

Here are 9 things that you need to know before attempting to break into the college market.

1. There Is Very Little Overlap Between the Music Industry and the College Industry
The college industry is not the music industry. You cannot approach college shows like you approach club shows. You cannot approach college booking like you approach club booking. You cannot approach advancing college shows like you approach advancing club shows. You cannot approach sleeping arrangements for college shows the same way you approach sleeping arrangements for club shows (unless you want to get arrested or sued by daddy). These are completely different industries. Building a fan base for your career is quite different than building a career within the college circuit. Some acts who make $100,000 a year in college bookings, can’t bring 20 people out to a club show in their hometown. It’s a different scene. A different approach.

2. You Don’t Need A Fanbase To Get High Paying Bookings
Colleges book talent to entertain their students. Whether you are a comedian, singer/songwriter, band, hypnotist, magician or juggler, you serve the same purpose: entertainment. The entertainment committees at these schools don’t care if you bring 1,000 people to your clubs shows or 10. They care that you will entertain their students. Of course if you are a famous act to the school’s students you can demand more money, but in general, colleges will book high-quality talent regardless of their draw, sales numbers, radio plays or Facebook Likes.

Whether 5 or 500 come to the show, you get paid the same. Unlike splitting the door with a club, colleges hand you a check after your show for the job you performed. It’s the school’s sole responsibility to get people to their “event.” You just need to show up and play.

3. College Shows Pay An Average Of $1,400 + Expenses For A 70 Minute Set
I’ve been paid upwards of $3,200 for a 70 minute set of mostly original music (where exactly no one on campus had ever heard of me), but on average, most unknown bands and singer/songwriters make about $1,400 plus all expenses, including plane tickets, rental car, sound, lights, hotel and food.

4. The People Who Book You For The Big Money Shows Are On The Campus Activities Board
Of course you could get “booked” by the chess club to play their spring dance for $100 or the college radio station for their fundraising event for $250 and lots of spins, but the big money comes from the university’s entertainment budget. Nearly all 4,000 schools in the US have an annual entertainment budget, ranging from about $10,000 – $300,000 (depending on the size and wealth of the school). And most mid-size – large schools have a Campus Activities Board (CAB) (it’s called something different at every school) with various sub committees that organize events throughout the year. The smaller schools, however, may just have one employee in charge of scheduling all events and booking all talent.

5. There Are Set Dates Colleges Need To Fill With Entertainment
Unlike booking a club tour, colleges typically set dates before the academic year begins with events that they need to fill with entertainers. These range from freshman orientation, welcome week, homecoming, coffee house night, Spring Jam, big concerts, and so on. You don’t approach CABs with a date that works best for you, they come to you with a few dates that work best for them. You either accept a date or don’t. There is very little wiggle room when it comes to these dates. Often times the dates they have set coincide with other events happening on campus and cannot be moved to fit your touring schedule. They’ll just find another act.

6. There Are College Booking Agents Who Don’t Book Anything BUT Colleges
Most of the top college booking agents represent comedians, hypnotists, speakers, a cappella groups, bands, singer-songwriters and have ways to provide inflatable moon bounces, cotton candy machines or silent discos for whatever event the college needs. The agencies like to be one-stop-shops for all campus entertainment needs. These agents won’t book you a club or festival tour, but they will help you route a college tour.

7. Don’t Attend NACA or APCA Without a Showcase (and an Agent)
If you’ve done any research on the college market, you’ve probably heard of NACA (and APCA) pop up. These are annual conferences where hundreds of schools (send thousands of campus representatives) to scout out talent for the coming year. I’ve showcased at four NACA conferences and three APCA conferences (and Nationals for both)—all with a college agent. You’re at an extreme disadvantage if you attempt to represent yourself at these conferences without a showcase or an agent. There is an extreme learning curve with navigating how these conferences work. If you don’t showcase and attend without an agent you will walk away extremely disappointed (and about $3,000 poorer).

8. Cold Calls To Colleges Are Extremely Difficult And Rarely Work
Not only do most committees completely turn over every couple years, many schools like to go to NACA and/or APCA first to find the hot new talent, and then fill the holes with talent from the agencies they already have relationships with (that they made from booking their acts from NACA). The reason colleges like booking through agents and NACA is because these organizations vet the talent. If you mess up, the agency messed up.

9. Most Of The Shows Aren’t That Glamorous
Yeah, I’ve opened for superstars in giant arenas on campus, but the very next day I played a cafeteria at 11 in the morning to the backs of hun- dred of school kids. I’ve been paid upwards of $3,200 for a 70 minute set of mostly original music (where exactly no one on campus had ever heard of me), but on average, most unknown bands and singer/songwriters make about $1,400 plus all expenses, including plane tickets, rental car, sound, lights, hotel and food. The college booking committee at those schools aren’t that glamorous. These organizations vet the talent. If you mess up, the agency messed up.

ARI HERSTAND is the author of How To Make It in the New Music Business, a Los Angeles-based musician and the creator of the music biz advice blog Ari’s Take.
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