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Electronic Music Roundtable **2025**

EXEC PROFILE

Dawn Kamerling
(The Press House)

TOK i mon STA

The War and Treaty

Melba Moore

Rico Nasty

José James

New Music Critiques

LEGAL BEAT

Limp Bizkit vs.
UMG: **Round Two**

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Tokimonsta

GRAMMY-nominated electronic artist TOKIMONSTA took a break from music but is back with stunning new album *Eternal Reverie*, and she spoke with MC about her career so far.

By Brett Callwood

Photos: Gabriella Hughes



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Producer Crosstalk: Rodney Jerkins

By Rob Putnam

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The Electronic Music Roundtable: 2025

MC spoke to five electronic artists from various genres about their experiences in the industry up to this point.

By Brett Callwood



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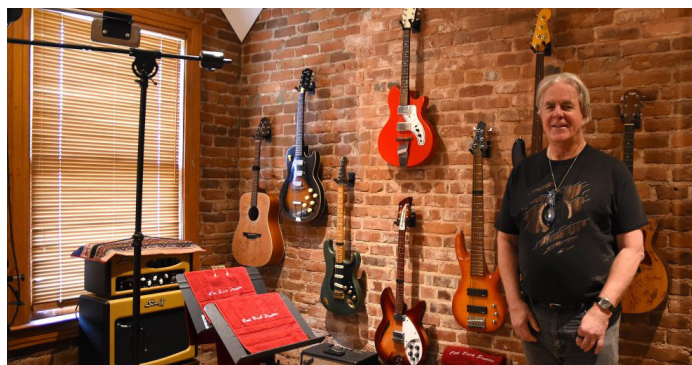
Cool Brick Studios

coolbrickstudios.com

A Fresh Musical Headspace in the Aspen Valley: Launched in 2011 in a 1900s-era historic house in Carbondale, CO (40 minutes northwest of Aspen), Cool Brick Studios offers a small-town Colorado experience for musicians seeking state-of-the-art recording, mixing, and mastering. Owner/engineer Dave Taylor describes it as a "cowboy, hippie, and artist community that's the perfect place to come to get out of their regular day-to-day headspace, be creative, and rejuvenate. It's quiet and friendly, and besides recording, the area offers a multitude of recreational opportunities, including horseback riding, rafting, fishing, hiking in summer, and of course skiing in the winter."

Owner's Background: In addition to being a veteran acoustic rocker, guitarist, and bassist, Taylor's multi-faceted background includes stints in broadcast radio, voiceovers, being a DJ and music director, and six years learning the recording and mastering ropes in N.Y.C. Eager for a lifestyle change, he moved to Colorado and worked with horses for a number of years before opening his studio. Over the years, hip-hop/rap artists, singer-songwriters, country performers, fellow rockers, and more have been welcomed in. "My time working with horses taught me patience and how to be conservative with the expertise I bring to the table for my artists," Taylor says. "I help them get what they need without being heavy-handed and keeping the focus on their musical vision."

PhantomFocus: The opportunity to purchase the house where Taylor runs Cool Brick Studios led him to fulfill his dream of becoming the only commercial recording studio in Colorado featuring a Carl Tatz PhantomFocus™ Mix Room. The system is the world-leader in near-field monitoring with customized acoustic treatment and tuning for those who demand the highest level of accuracy and performance. Hardware includes dual subwoofer modules, the PhantomFocus Processor, PhantomFocus PFM HD 1000 monitors, and the PhantomFocus eChair™



ensemble, rendering the ultimate monitoring experience. On the studio's website, Taylor writes, "Your tracks will explode with richness, warmth, and presence in any genre!" He adds, "When they set it up, they sat me down in my sweet spot and started running their playlist. Ten seconds into the first song, I felt a monumental shift, knowing I could offer a sonic experience like few others can!"

On-Site Services and Remote Mixing and Mastering: For clients who generally come from the four-state surrounding region, Cool Brick, in addition to Taylor's engineering and mastering experience, offers two studios with a vocal booth and separate drums, which can be used individually or combined. The studio has a dynamic array of vintage mics (Neumann, Telefunken, etc.), a Burl Mothership 80 which offers warm analog sound with pre-amps from Grace, Neve, Burl, and Audient, and a drum room featuring a '70s birch Pearl drum kit. Cool Brick also offers affordable stereo and 5.1 Surround Sound design and Adaptive Scoring™ for independent filmmakers. Based on his rep for creating a pure, accurate listening environment, Taylor is currently experiencing a booming global clientele seeking his mixing and mastering skills via digital transfer.

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Joel Gomera

Sales Agent for Central & South America
JHS

JHS has announced **Joel Gomera** as the company's new **Sales Agent in Central and South America**. Located in the Dominican Republic and with strong communication skills, Gomera is perfectly positioned to further build closer relationships and sales strategies with JHS distributors and customers in Central American countries. Gomera says, "JHS has a long-standing reputation for excellence in the music industry, and I am excited to contribute to its legacy by expanding its presence in this market and connect musicians with the quality, craftsmanship, and innovation that define JHS." For more, contact joelg@jhs.co.uk.



Shannon McConnell

Co-Executive Director, Marketing, Publicity
Fly PR

Fly PR has named **Shannon McConnell** **Co-Executive Director, Marketing, Publicity**. Fly PR founder Ilka Erren Pardiñas says, "Shannon is an amazingly talented publicist! And her marketing skills are massively impressive. She has great intuition, and an uncanny understanding of social media platforms." Since joining Fly PR in early 2021, McConnell has worked on national and international publicity campaigns for artists around the globe, including Thundermother, BillyBio (Biohazard) and Danko Jones. For more, contact flypr@flypr.net.



Brandon Silverstein

CEO
Avex

Japanese entertainment company **Avex** named music industry veteran and S10 founder **Brandon Silverstein** as **Chief Executive Officer** of the newly formed **Avex Music Group (AMG)**. In this role, Silverstein will oversee all company operations for AMG, including the S10 Music Publishing and S10 Management roster, as well as the full roster and activities across AMG. Silverstein will be a partner in AMG with an equity stake in the company and will join its board of directors. The acquisition gives Avex the largest share in S10 Management alongside Silverstein and Roc Nation. For more, contact jv@spinlab.net.



Matt Hohmann

Senior Director of Production Services
Production Resource Group

Production Resource Group (PRG) has announced veteran **Matt Hohmann** as their new **Senior Director of Production Services**. "I am glad to be a part of a company that is continuously innovating and understands how technology can propel the ideas and visions of event producers. Combining strategic planning with a deep production acumen, we'll ensure that every show is planned, advanced, and resourced properly. We're proud to reinforce PRG's commitment to innovation, efficiency, and technical excellence," said Hohmann. For more, contact pr@hustleandco.com.



Chris Martignago

VP of A&R
Prescription Songs

Independent publishing company **Prescription Songs** has announced the promotion of **Chris Martignago** to **VP of A&R**. Rhea Pasricha, Prescription Songs' Head of A&R, West Coast, says Martignago "has championed and ushered in diverse talent and has helped to shape the future of our roster with his keen ear and passion for artistry." "I am looking forward to continuing to champion our exceptional creative team and roster with the opportunity of this new role. I am grateful to Rhea for the faith she has in me and my ability to step up to the challenge," says Martignago. For more, contact amoreno@falconpublicity.com.



Michelle Bower

President, Strategic Partnerships
The Neal Agency

With 15 years of experience leading brand development and brokering innovative partnerships for products and artists alike, **Michelle Bower** has joined **The Neal Agency (TNA)** as **President, Strategic Partnerships**. "The entire Neal Agency team exudes passion, energy and excellence when it comes to representing our roster of artists and building a company culture that fosters creativity and empowerment," Bower said. "It's an honor to join such a well-respected group of individuals in the industry to usher in a new era of innovative partnerships and successes for our notable and emerging clients." For more, contact michelle@thenealagency.com.



Rodney Faulk

General Manager of Duke Energy Convention Center
ASM Global

ASM Global, the development and full-service venue company, has named **Rodney Faulk** as **General Manager of Duke Energy Convention Center**. A seasoned venue-management executive, Faulk comes at a pivotal time for the convention center, which is undergoing an 18-month remodel and expansion project set to be completed in January 2026. "I am thrilled to take on this new role and lead our ASM Global local efforts as part of an exciting chapter for the City of Cincinnati," said Faulk. For more, contact carla@breakwhitelight.com.



Lauren Camp

Head of Strategic Partnerships
Creed Media

Creed Media is making a major push into the U.S. market with the expansion of its Los Angeles operations and the appointment of **Lauren Camp** as **Head of Strategic Partnerships**. Based in L.A., Camp will lead the charge in establishing Creed's West Coast presence, spearheading new business opportunities, high-impact partnerships, and revenue growth as the company scales in North America. Camp brings over a decade of experience across the music, entertainment, tech, and sports industries. For more, contact lauren@onrecordla.com.



▼ FREQPORT FREQINOUT FO1

Freqport is a company based in Copenhagen, Denmark with a distinctive mission. *MC* met the guys from Freqport at NAMM in January where one thing became apparent: they have a real talent for making products that seem obvious only after they have invented and made the first one. Their innovative approach fills a unique void. Their latest product, the FreqInOut, is a user-friendly hardware interface for connecting analog outboard audio gear that integrates with their software. The interface appears as a software insert to bring your outboard effects into your DAW. The plugin also has

features to assist with recalling settings. With four inputs and four outputs, you can have two stereo devices, four mono devices, or any combination. This connectivity is not limited to effects; you could plug in synths, guitar pedals, or a drum machine as well. The plugin can appear in your DAW as two stereo plugins or up to four mono plugins. If you need more channels, you can attach a second FreqInOut FO1 hardware interface.

To use the FreqInOut, establish a user account on their website and install the Freqsoft software in your user portal. FreqInOut has a hardware configuration wizard to help whenever you hookup a new piece of gear. Take a picture of your outboard gear to capture device knob positions, and

an edit mode creates a QR code to import the photo. The photo becomes a preset and skin for the plugin that can be saved and loaded.

FreqInOut has level controls for each channel to maximize

your gain settings, input-output metering, as well as a wet/dry mix control to enable parallel processing and blend the amount of wet-to-dry signal. Also present is an analog matrix enabling you to pair stereo channels and change effects order. A mid-side control enables mid-side processing.

Bear in mind that real-time bouncing/rendering is required when using outboard effects. The FreqInOut is a very handy and unique solution that addresses the ability to implement your outboard gear into the DAW world.

FreqInOut FO1 supports Mac and Windows, and all major DAWs that support VST3, AU, AAX (64bit plugins). \$599

freqport.com



► FURCH GUITARS BLUE PERFORMANCE EM ACOUSTIC

Crafted in the Czech Republic, you might think that Furch Guitars is a newcomer on the scene. In fact, their history dates back to the '70s when František Furch found a lack of high-quality musical instruments in Czechoslovakia. Importing instruments was too complicated and costly, so Furch turned to his metalworking skills, crafting his first banjo from an old drum. In '81, he built his first acoustic guitar with a spruce top sourced from an old piano. Positive responses from fellow musicians were immediate, sparking a wave of interest and commissions from friends. Furch's early guitars became highly sought after. He continued to make guitars for decades, including his son in his process, and now Furch has a full line of premium guitars that are worth a serious look.

Their series categories are organized by colors with the Blue Series second in ascending quality and price echelons of six model lines. We tried a Blue Performance EM and found it bright, responsive, and easy to play. Dreadnought-sized with a cutaway, every aspect of the guitar feels high quality. The fingerboard is ebony, the soundboard is Engelmann spruce, and back and sides are African mahogany. Most guitar players are familiar with Sitka spruce. Sourced from Western North America, Engelmann spruce offers a warm, delicate sound and Sitka a brighter, louder tone. But the loudness is made up for by six slots in the top bout they call a Booster Soundport resonator. Promising enhanced sound projection, the Booster Soundport design is immediately apparent—it's louder than most acoustic guitars. The styling of the guitar is also unique, with oblong pearl fret position markers that are unusual, functional with increased visibility, and attractive. A beveled top and back add to the ergonomics, making the guitar feel sleek and comfortable against your body. The feel of the neck is what we would describe as '60s, meaning that it is slim and fast with a nice, soft V contour.

Furch also has a neck stability technology called the CNR System. This design adapts to changes in humidity and features a dual-action truss rod encased in a rigid carbon structure. The system has a solid-wood expansion element that automatically adjusts the neck angle to maintain consistent string action over time.

The Blue comes with a soft case that is the nicest *MC* has seen. Supplied with light coated strings, we suspect this guitar would really open up with non-coated strings, as most guitars do. If the idea of a premium guitar that is a bit different than the usual suspects appeals to you, Furch Guitars are well worth looking at. \$1,810

furchguitars.com



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► MESA BOOGIE MARK IIC+ SUITE AMP SIMULATOR PLUGIN

Neural DSP makes some of the finest amp simulator plugins, and the Mesa Boogie Mark IIC+ Suite Amp simulator plugin continues this trend. Originally made in the early '80s, The Mark IIC+ is a distinctive part of guitar amplifier history. The Mark IIC+ is the most coveted vintage Boogie and can command double its original price due to its buttery "Liquid Lead" mode and its warm, clean rhythm mode. Most amps from that era had one or two channels that were not designed for a solo to step out. The Mark IIC+ pioneered switchable lead and rhythm channels. The lead channel had a dual cascading drive stage which created an overdrive, sustain, and singing tone that turned heads of musicians with its rich, complex sound. Used by guitar legends from Metallica, Prince, Toto, Journey, and Dream Theater, the IIC+ is revered for its versatility.

Neural DSP designed their Boogie plugin to replicate every nuance of the original amplifiers, and it really does sound great. The menu architecture of the Neural plugins is similar. If you own any of their plugins, you will find the Boogie easy to operate. It opens with the front panel of the Mark IIC+ at your fingertips. All the original amp controls are presented in both a front and rear panel view. There is nothing left out, and you can also select mono or stereo input, a doubler with spread control, and even a real time transpose control that can go up or down as much as an octave. The tuner is stable and accurate. As you would expect, there are dozens of preset tones, as well as artist faves to get you started.

Like a great pedal board, the Mark IIC+ incorporates a comprehensive menu of effects. Pre FX include a compressor, two discrete overdrives, and a chorus. Cabsim is next, with a full compliment of different speakers and mics. Following that is an additional graphic EQ. Post FX include highly configurable delay and reverb units.

The rear of the amplifier has Presence and Reverb controls and a switch between Simul-Class and Class A, allowing you to choose different power amp sounds. User tip: the reverb control here simulates the mono reverb that the amp came with, so if you've turned off the stereo reverb that is available in the FX section and are wondering why you are still hearing a mono reverb ringing, here is where to find it.

The Mark IIC+ is an excellent plugin for those who love great guitar sounds. Highly recommended.

Mesa Boogie Mark IIC+ Suite comes in 64-bit VST / AU / AAX / Standalone.

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◀ QSC KC12 K ACTIVE 3-WAY COLUMN LOUDSPEAKER SYSTEM

QSC Audio has been making high quality high-performance loudspeakers, digital mixers, power amplifiers, software, and accessories since '68. A staple in both concert hall arenas and intimate venues, the new KC12 is a three-way, 3000-watt active loudspeaker system in the popular column form. Designed to exceed the acoustic performance of conventional designs, the KC12 is intended for solo entertainers, musicians, bands, mobile entertainers, and DJs, as well as corporate AV, event production, and static installations.

Column-style portable loudspeaker systems are desirable due to their unobtrusive form factor. However, many designs can be harsh and lack clarity and definition, particularly when pushed to high output levels. QSC's solution with the KC12 is a three-way design featuring their patented LEAF waveguide (which was tried and true in their L Class Active Line Array Loudspeakers) combined with a true one-inch compression driver, two four-inch midrange drivers, and a high output 12-inch subwoofer. The KC12 produces full-range horizontal coverage of 145 degrees, and 35 degrees of audience-directed vertical coverage with clean and natural sound at all output levels.

The system features three inputs: a Bluetooth input combined with a 3.5 mm TRS stereo input, as well as two combo XLR inputs (Mic/Line/Hi-Z and Mic/Line/+48 V), with independent, assignable Factory Presets for each XLR input, making it ideal for small events where two microphones are needed for different uses. The rear panel incorporates a multi-function digital display, offering control and selection of several loudspeaker functions, including Global Parametric EQ, Subwoofer level, Presets and Scenes, Bluetooth configuration, and Delay (maximum of 200 ms) or Reverb. Bluetooth functionality also provides True Wireless Stereo (TWS), which ensures low latency pairing between the music source and both left and right loudspeakers simultaneously.

MC found the LED menu screen very easy to navigate. We were able to pair the KC12 with our iPhone and within seconds were able to play from our iTunes library. The KC12 goes louder than we cared to push in a 32' x 22' studio. It sounded crisp and precise, and the bottom was big and tight, thanks to the subwoofer. Additionally, the KC12 can be deployed with or without its lower column pole, making the system more compact. KC12 Black: \$2,199; KC12 White: \$2,299

qscaudio.com



MICHAEL STERN, C.A.S., is a Music Engineer based in Los Angeles. He has recorded and mixed 260 film scores including *Iron Man 2*, *Sex And The City 1 and 2*, *The Notebook*, and *Borat Subsequent Moviefilm*. He has also worked with the artists Strawberry Alarm Clock, Richard Marx, Kenny Loggins, Jackson Browne, Micky Dolenz, The Cowsills, Bon Jovi, Tom Jones, Chick Corea, Lisa Loeb, and Rob Morrow. He can be reached at newtoys@musicconnection.com.

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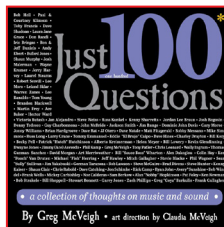
BOOK STORE

Just 100 Questions

By Greg McVeigh

(paperback) \$38

Writer McVeigh had the solid idea of asking a ton of people in the music industry one solitary question. He then compiled 100 of these into *Just 100 Questions*, and a fascinating collection of tips and anecdotes was born. Managers, engineers, mixers, producers, and of course musicians have their say, and we're



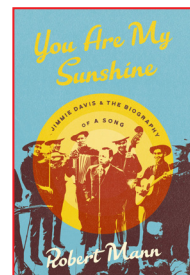
left inspired by Colin Hay (Men at Work)'s tale of audience growth, and the fact that MC5 guitarist Wayne Kramer was highly motivated to create right up until he tragically left us last year.

You Are My Sunshine: Jimmie Davis and the Biography of a Song

By Robert Mann

(hardcover) \$29.95

It can be hard to separate the artist from the art when the artist holds particularly odious views. That country musician and politician Jimmie Davis was an outspoken segregationist who vigorously opposed integration in Louisiana schools is indisputable. That said, author Mann is a gifted storyteller, and Davis' life



is interesting if not to be admired. His close association with the song "You Are My Sunshine," which he purchased the rights to, makes for compelling reading. We're left bewildered by a man whose musical know-how was rendered null-and-void by his lack of decency.

Buzz Me In: Inside the Record Plant Studios

By Martin Porter and David Goggin

(hardcover) \$39.95

Buzz Me In is, as the subtitle suggests, the inside story of Record Plant Studios, of which there were several facilities—including in New York, Los Angeles, and Sausalito. Record Plant was founded in '68 by "charismatic audio engineer Gary Kellgren and ace businessman Chris Stone." From there, Record Plant would



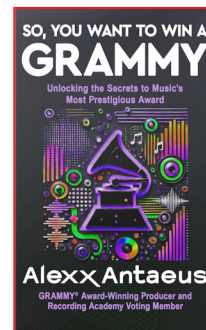
have its say in shaping modern music. In '76, three number one albums were produced there: Stevie Wonder's *Songs in the Key of Life*, The Eagles' *Hotel California*, and Fleetwood Mac's *Rumours*. The authors take us through it all, play-by-play.

So, You Want to Win a GRAMMY

By Alexx Antaeus

(paperback) \$16.99

"Do you dream of standing on stage, holding that iconic golden gramophone, and hearing your name announced to thunderous applause?" asks author Antaeus, to which most musicians reading along will enthusiastically yell, "Hell yeah, we do!" He should know; Antaeus is a GRAMMY-winning producer, a Recording Academy voting member, and a label owner. Here, he takes us through the process of adopting a GRAMMY mindset, and a step-by-step guide to getting in front of the people who have a say in these things.



Saxophone

By Mollie Hawkins

(paperback) \$14.95

For those unfamiliar with the *Object Lessons* series, these are short books that teach us about the secret lives of ordinary things. There are volumes on coffee, blue jeans, and the word "OK." This latest one looks hard at "the devil's horn" itself, the saxophone. "It has both



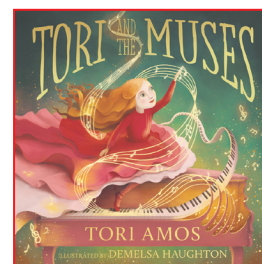
enhanced and ruined songs, it is sensuous yet abrasive, and it is the only instrument widely excluded from symphonies and orchestras." Hawkins does a great job of researching the instrument while illuminating "the dark paths that our passions can lead us down."

Tori and the Muses

By Tori Amos

(hardcover) \$19.99

Singer, songwriter, musician, and now author—*Tori and the Muses* is Tori Amos' debut children's book though, honestly, there are plenty of adults that could stand to be inspired by this beautiful piece of work. With stunning illustrations by Demelsa Haughton, the book follows a child called, surprisingly enough, Tori as she takes the advice of her muses and embarks on a journey



of magical, musical discovery. Her father might want her to concentrate on practicing for recitals, but young Tori has bigger ideas. It's hard to argue with the results.

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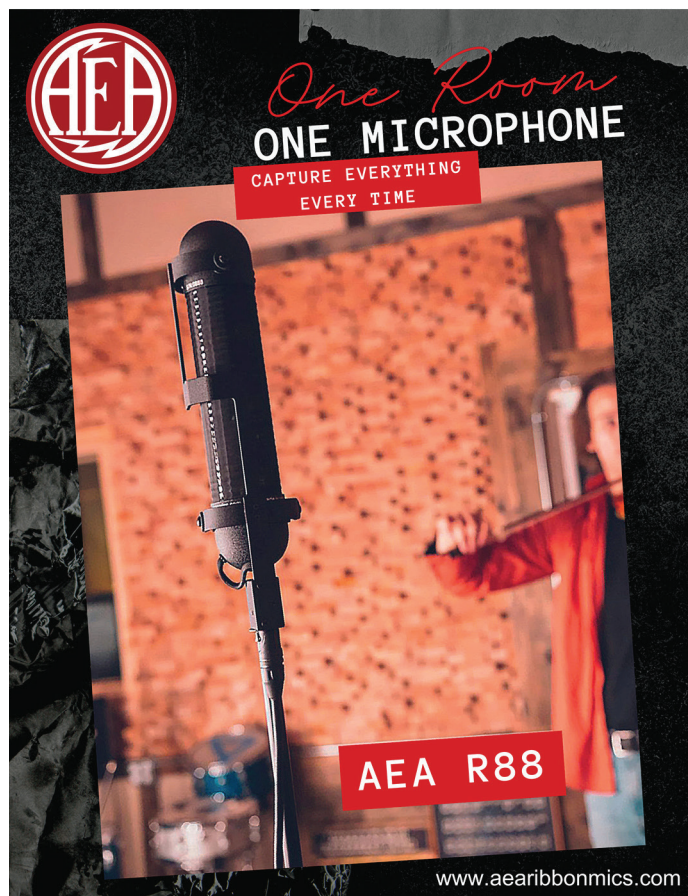
Like Hearing Music for the First Time: In 2013, after years of creating commercial installations for superstars like Coldplay, Ariana Grande, and 50 Cent, Michael Way had the time and funding to pursue his ultimate goals in audio technology. Fully understanding the drawbacks to system designs and technical compatibility issues, he founded Sound Pressure Labs (SPL) as a solution. In the 12 years since the veteran musician, sound engineer, and live audio systems designer launched his revolutionarily immersive TrueSPL™ technology, he has distilled its sonic impact to four simple branding phrases—"Like hearing music for the first time," "Most incredible sound control ever heard," "Makes live production sound like studio-produced music," and "We make cinema-quality music for every environment." From 2014-16, he leased the Garberville Theatre in Humboldt County, CA to test and apply the theories that would create the programming foundation for TrueSPL™.

Hub of Entertainment and Sonic Innovation: Over the course of 200 shows and festivals purposed for R&D, proof of concept, and scalable systems applications, "Real Time Spherical Sound" was born from a hybrid digital-analogue modification, integrated with an existing Dolby Surround Sound System that was installed in the '80s. Way and his team of partners and engineers currently have three patents, with nine more to follow. One of these was Transmigration, a modern sound bath filled with hypnotic and healing sounds—vocal flute, trumpet, mantras, chants, spherical guitar, and saxophone with live SPL Surround Music—which the company made available on DVD and Blu-Ray. Wes Dooley, founder of Audio Engineering Associates (AEA), says, "This is how Jim Dolby imagined music when he was developing Dolby systems in the '80s."

Array of Solutions: SPL has developed sound design solutions for a multitude of projects, including developing music scores, converting current scores, spherical surround for movies, qualifying music for sync, purchasing music for sync, acquiring rights to SPL Surround music, studio conversion, real-time Surround recording, arrangements, sound upgrades, video walls and projection, and offering consumer, commercial, industrial, and Surround packages.

The SPL Immersive Sanctuary and Gala: On May 31, Sound Pressure Labs will present the ultimate immersive musical experience, showcasing their powerful, transformative technology at The SPL Immersive Sanctuary and Gala in the Grand Ballroom of the Queen Mary in Long Beach. Headlined by queen of reggae Marcia Griffiths, the artist lineup includes Lloyd Parks and We the People Band, Mr. Rock Steady Ken Boothe, ska pioneer Stanger Cole, The Jeff Young Group (led by former Megadeth guitarist Jeff Young), and jazz-fusion band Sling Bad. Doors open at 6 p.m. and SPL is hosting a VIP after party from midnight to 4 a.m. There will also be a VIP meet and greet. Tickets are available via etix and on the SPL website.

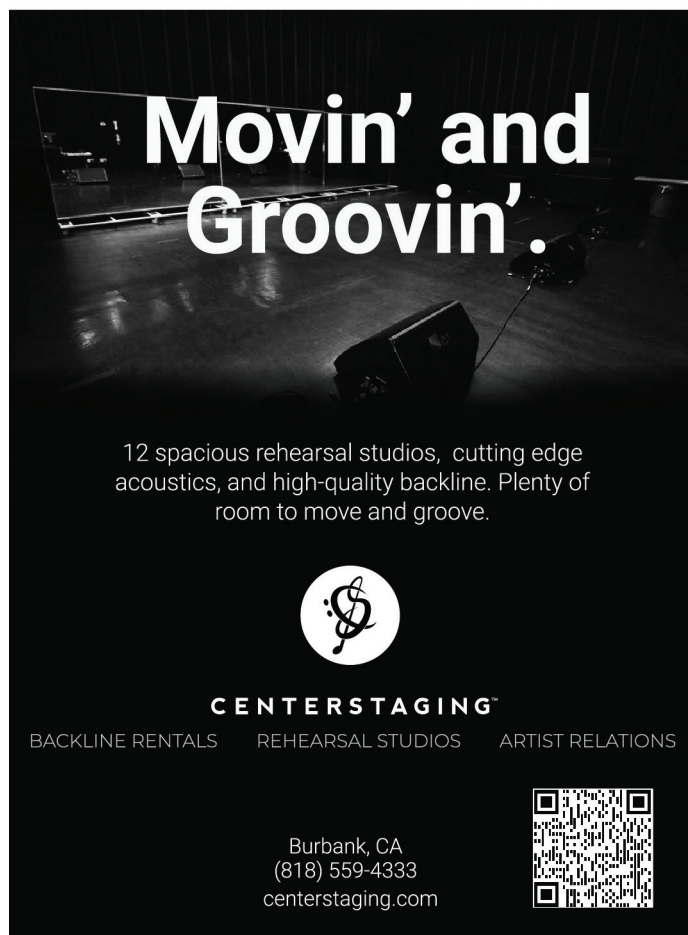
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▲ BRIAN ENO RELEASES NEW ALBUM *AURUM* IN SPATIAL AUDIO EXCLUSIVELY ON APPLE MUSIC

Zane Lowe met with Rock and Roll Hall of Famer Brian Eno at his home studio to explore the fresh and unconventional artistic theories in his latest book, *What Art Does*. Eno reflected on his early days with the English rock band Roxy Music and its influence on generative art. The acclaimed composer also delved into the sweeping effects of A.I. on society and what the future holds for technology in creative spaces.



▲ PHIL COOK BLENDS PIANO IMPROVISATIONS WITH AVIARY SYMPHONIES ON "DAWN BIRDS," NEW SINGLE AND MUSIC VIDEO FROM FORTHCOMING SOLO ALBUM

Out now on Psychic Hotline and produced by Bon Iver's Justin Vernon, *Appalachia Borealis* is a set of 11 deeply moving meditations, marking both the culmination of Cook's life thus far, and the start of a focused new solo career.



▲ GUNS N' ROSES ANNOUNCE ARRIVAL OF DRUMMER ISAAC CARPENTER

Multifaceted drummer Isaac Carpenter will hit the road with Guns N' Roses throughout their 2025 European, Asian, and Middle East Tour, headlining stadiums and festivals throughout the summer. The news follows the amicable exit of Frank Ferrer, the longest-serving drummer in the rock legends' storied run.



▲ SELENA GOMEZ ON SIRIUSXM'S *THE MORNING MASH UP*

Selena Gomez recently appeared on SiriusXM's *The Morning Mash Up* to promote her new album *I Said I Love You First*. During the interview, Gomez shared the advice she would give her younger self and discussed working with Gracie Abrams. She also revealed that an acoustic version of "Call Me When You Break Up" is coming soon.

PRODUCER PLAYBACK

"Often now, with people seeing overnight success on Instagram, that's changed the perception of what it takes to make it. Be patient and make sure that your sound is unique. Be yourself because it's the only way we'll be able to see you in a crowd." – ERIC BELLINGER





▲ ROBERT RANDOLPH, G. LOVE JOIN TWILIGHT MUSE FOR EXPLOSIVE "LIVING FOR THE CITY" LIVE COLLAB

Genre-blending rock and funk group Twilight Muse has released their new live album, *Collabs: Live at Garcia's at The Cap*, capturing a series of thrilling, high-profile guest sit-ins that redefined the band's sound. To celebrate the announcement, the band has released the single "Living for the City," a fiery reimagination of the Stevie Wonder classic featuring the mind-blowing synergy of Robert Randolph's pedal steel mastery and G. Love's raw blues harp energy.



▲ SPARK OF LIFE ANNOUNCE SOPHOMORE ALBUM *PLAGUED BY THE HUMAN CONDITION*; THE BAND JOINED FORCES WITH FRED ARMISEN FOR A COVER OF THAT DOG'S "NEVER SAY NEVER"

Southern California post-hardcore outliers Spark of Life are set to release their long-awaited sophomore album, *Plagued by The Human Condition*, on May 30 via New Age Records. As part of the album's rollout, Spark of Life have unveiled their latest single, a cover of "Never Say Never" by '90s cult favorites That Dog. The track features a special collaboration with longtime friend and comedian/musician Fred Armisen (*SNL*, *Portlandia*), who played drums on the cover.



▲ GREENE DREAM MACHINE

Excitement is building around an upcoming and soon to be released project at The Greene Room (greeneroom.com) with producer Rex Rideout, GRAMMY-winning vocalist Ledisi Young, engineer Marc Greene, and guitarist Paul Jackson Jr. Stay tuned for more news on that soon.

GINA MILES
 WINNER OF
 THE VOICE

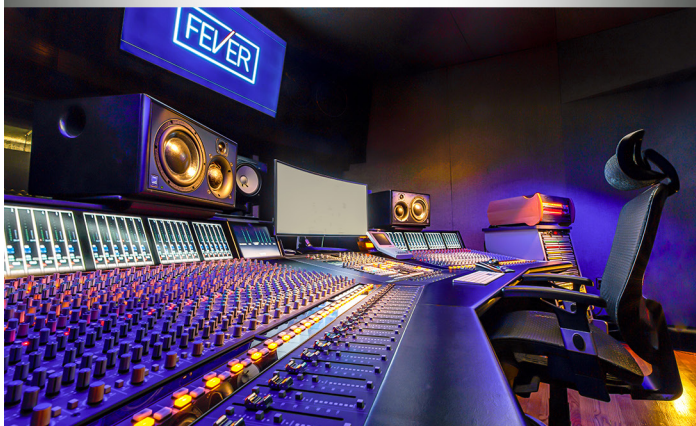
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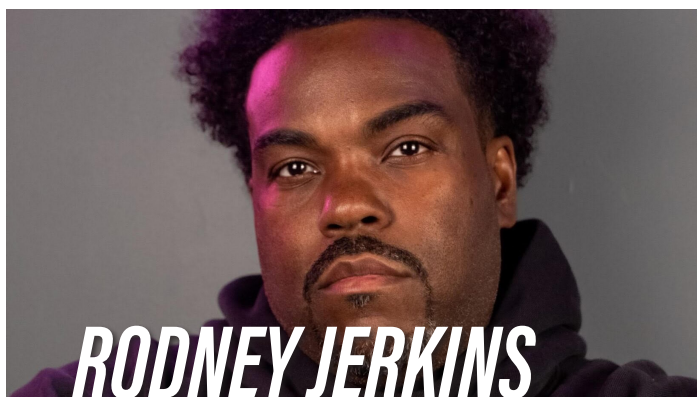
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PRODUCER CROSSTALK

- ROB PUTNAM



RODNEY JERKINS

Producer, songwriter, and musician Rodney Jerkins (A.K.A. Darkchild) launched his career when he began to learn classical piano at the age of five. In his late teens he declined several signing offers, his focus fixed on still shinier prizes. Things began to take off when he was invited to pitch ideas to Mary J. Blige when he was only 18. The two-time GRAMMY-winner has since worked with artists such as Lady Gaga, Michael Jackson, and Beyoncé. He creates largely in his Orlando commercial studio and his L.A. home space.

Artists are attracted to production for many reasons; Jerkins' primary draw is the sense of fulfillment that artistry fosters. "I love the whole creative process," he says. "Working on the idea of something that God puts in the air, you pull it and the next thing you know it turns into something dynamic."

When a producer begins a collaboration with an artist, the temptation to emulate their existing work can be strong. Jerkins' approach, however, merely begins with earlier output and then transcends it. "I want to see who they are as an artist and then I dig into who they are currently," he says. "I try to get into their psyche, into where they might be in their life. A lot of this is gaining insight into whether an artist is coming out of a relationship or maybe going into one. Understanding that leads the direction of the song. When Whitney Houston dominated with all of her ballads, I was the one to come up with 'It's Not Right but It's Okay,' which was up-tempo and out of her wheelhouse."

Jerkins' biggest challenge came early in his career. It demonstrated wisdom and maturity when, rather than recoiling from criticism, he embraced it. "Clive Davis was Whitney Houston's song guy," he says. "It was my first meeting with him and I was only 17. I thought I had something special, and he just shot it down; it wasn't even close to her level. That was humbling, especially at my age. Some people might have given up after that, but I took it as 'I'll come back and see you when I'm ready' and he allowed that. Then we hit the home run."

Come back, he did. Dramatically. "I was 18 when I was invited to play some beats for Mary J. Blige," he says. "I arrived and there were 10 producers in the lounge waiting to play her their stuff. I'd received the call two days before and I had nothing prepared. So, I locked myself into my dad's basement and recorded all of these ideas in one day. When I went to play her my music, she loved it so much that she sent all the other producers home. We started work on *Share My World* [shortly thereafter]. I have five songs on that album, all of which I'd written in that one day. That was the turning point of my career."

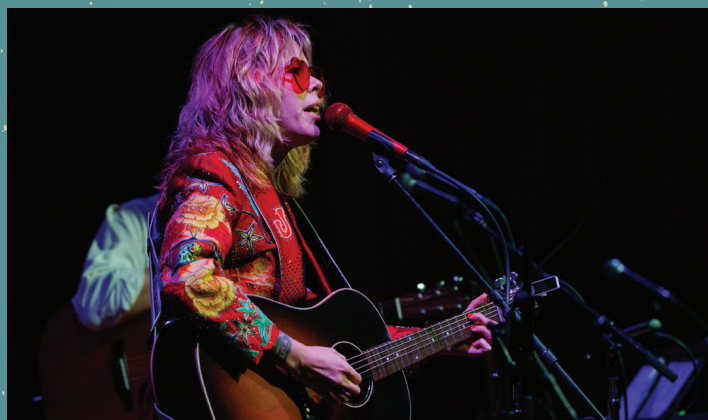
Jerkins remains prolific. Last year he established his Christian division Alienz Alive—some refer to it as a label but he's adamant that it's far more than that—and has signed several artists to production and distribution deals. Projects on his 2025 slate include work with DJ Khaled, British singer-songwriter Raye, and a handful of others that are still in the formative stage.

THE 3 MOST IMPORTANT

... lessons he's learned as a producer and musician are:

- Imperfection is perfection. It's ok to make mistakes. Sometimes they become the coolest thing on the record.
- Leave your ego at the door and do what you're hired to do.
- The artist is ultimately the star. The music is the assistant, and the production should never overpower the song.

Visit [instagram.com/rodneyjerkins](https://www.instagram.com/rodneyjerkins)
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Clients: Children in Conflict, City Winery, Dina LaPolt, Fixated, Jason Flom, Lava for Good, Morrison Hotel Gallery, Merlin, Playing for Change Foundation, The Soho Sessions, SPIN, Sun Label Group (including Gaither Music, Sun Records and artists such as Smokey Robinson and The Waterboys), True Tickets



I love when we can help a cause that's meaningful. It makes throwing a party even more important.

Playing the Long Game

There are no guarantees in PR, and there's no quick fix. When you're ready to retain a publicist, be ready to spend your marketing budget. It's not going to happen in a month. This is a long process. I feel this way when I spend money, too. What did I get for that price? That's not the way to think when you're hiring a publicist. You have to be able to see the long game.

Some of my most powerful press campaigns I worked on for a year. All of a sudden, I get people saying, "Why am I seeing this every place?" It's not that it took a year to get press. It's that it took a year for people to say that. That's what everyone's looking for—that moment where they're like, "I see you everywhere." That's a year of pushing the narrative and then it finally sticking.

Always On

There's a 24-hour news cycle. There used to be this ability to have a break, then come back and receive news again. And now it's 24/7 around the clock on a billion platforms. That gives artists the chance to be their own storefront and their own business, but it also means you have a lot more competition.

"If you're going to send a cold email, don't make it too long. Check that your links work before you send it."

BACKGROUND

Dawn Kamerling began The Press House on the floor of her apartment in 2001. That little publicity company soon began to soar. Today, it continues to make waves, providing media relations, strategic planning, event production, social media services, and brand partnerships for artists as well as charitable organizations.

It Runs in the Family

I grew up with musical parents. In the '60s, my mother was a record producer. And my father was a saxophone player who studied with Ornette Coleman. So growing up, music was my normal way of life. We were always going to concerts and hanging out with rock stars. When I was in high school, my mom would be like, "I don't want you going to keg parties," but I could go backstage at the Bon Jovi concert.

Planets Align

When I hit my early 20s, I had been working as a professional actress and got to this place where I was like, "I don't want to do this." There was a moment of, what would you do if you didn't do that? And I said to my mom, "I'd probably work in music." I googled music industry jobs, and there were two that popped up. One was sound engineer and one was publicist. I could never be a sound engineer.

Then I clicked on publicist. The Planetary Group in Boston was looking to hire [one]. I read the description and was like, "I could totally do that." So I applied for the job. I interviewed with Chris Davies and Adam Lewis, who I still talk to. And they were like, "You have no experience?" "Right." "You have no contacts in media?" "Correct." "Why should we hire you?" "Because I'm fearless." And they hired me.

You Are Not Alone

One of my first clients was Skout. They came with me from The Planetary Group. Then I had Josh Ritter, Lori McKenna, Deb Talan—a lot of artists from that singer-songwriter scene.

In 2004, I moved the business to New York. It didn't occur to me that there were other PR firms. When I realized there were a lot of people doing what I was doing, I had a moment of, am I going to stand out? And then

it didn't matter, because New York had enough for everybody. Now, instead of thinking of other publicists or companies as competition, they're my dearest friends.

Asking Big

[In the past,] I would ask for the cover and get it. Media is very different now. But at the time, I would just ask big. People would hire me, not because I checked the boxes of how firms did their stuff; they hired me because they heard I could get results. They kind of gave me a pass on a lot of other things.

Building Strategies

Every client comes with different goals. You have to think about each client individually. And you have to know the media you're in. If I'm sitting down with a client and they say to me, "We want this part of the story told," for me to be good at my job and advise on strategy, I have to know who's telling those types of stories. Not just who as a journalist, but what's the platform. Is that happening more in podcasts? Is that happening more in broadcast? Is that happening more in print? Who's writing the long form narrative pieces versus blurbs?

Have you ever watched *Homeland*? The Claire Danes character has this whiteboard with all these strings going across. It looks manic, but it makes sense to her. That's how a media strategy can look. It's not linear. You have to almost think in a visual way.

Making a Difference

We work with clients that are doing good. Jason Flom is a founding member of the Innocence Project. And when Lava hired us to do PR in 2018, it was incredible. I was helping get innocent people out of prison. When you do that, you really see the power of media. This is a perfect example of how one or two press stories in the right publications matter.

The Art of the Email

If you're going to send a cold email, don't make it too long. Check that your links work before you send it. Make sure you have the person's name right. Don't send a novella or your full-length bio. No one is going to read it. Just send a catchy subject. "Check out my songs." Put your Instagram in there. Put your Spotify, SoundCloud, or whatever in there, and follow up a week later if you haven't heard back. Make it digestible.

Multiply Times Six

Every client is like six clients, because each client is asking you to do PR for many different things under their brands. An artist wants you to do PR for their new single. They also want you get hometown press. They also want to talk about the foundation they're involved in. These are all different angles and stories. And if you're good at your job, you're pitching them separately. And together. And you know the difference of where to bring each part.

Rock Star Moments

I realized that, at the end of the day, everybody wants to be the rock star. So the model for PR is the same whether you're talking about a restaurant opening, a CEO, or a tech company. Success looks like you created a rock star moment.

Everybody Hurts

A journalist friend and I were out to dinner last year. I said, "When I don't land press, I still get upset." And he's like, "That's what makes you good at your job." It reframed it for me. I looked at it differently and thought, maybe it's just because I really care.

The National Independent Venue Association

Back in 2020, when the global COVID-19 pandemic led to necessary but financially devastating lockdowns, the impact on the live music industry led to the birth of the National Independent Venue Association (NIVA). In April of that same year, NIVA sent a letter to Washington.

"The National Independent Venue Association (NIVA), whose members, employees, artists and local communities are facing an existential crisis as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic are in urgent need of targeted legislative and regulatory assistance," read a press release. And by God, they got it. The Save Our Stages Act, now officially renamed the Shuttered Venue Operator Grant, was passed with bipartisan support in December.

"When COVID hit, independent venues were in a panic, because we had no idea how long we would be shut," says Audrey Fix Schaefer, communications director. "We'd never been mandated to shut before. We knew that no matter how much history an organization has or how loyal the customers or the artists are, there's a bank account. And when you have no incoming revenue, but you have all the outlay for expenses, that is a recipe for disaster."

The collaboration between venues was incredibly impressive and far-reaching. Fix Schaefer received a message from Dayna Frank, owner of First Avenue Productions, about forming an association with the intention of lobbying congress, and that's what they did.

"Beyond all odds, we were successful and got a \$16 billion bill passed," Schaefer says. "Not bad for an organization that didn't exist before COVID. It was a slow start, getting the Small Business Administration to write the checks and deposit the money. Once that was happening, we were already thinking about, 'OK, now that we've come together, we know that we have a lot of needs that are similar.' Once we came together, we knew that we wanted to keep that going, and to make it even broader and more meaningful."

With the lockdowns lifted for a couple of years now, one might leap to the assumption that things are back to normal. According to NIVA's executive director Stephen Parker, nothing could be further from the truth.

"I think there are a number of venues that have popped back and are doing okay," Parker says. "Some of them are right around where

they were at in 2019. It's just so dependent on the market, and it's so dependent on a variety of factors, including the willingness of the people around you and the fans around you to spend. So we have a number of venues that likely were not doing incredibly well before the pandemic, but truly are struggling to keep their doors open."

Parker says that the Save our Stages funding was a lifeline. "It was a bridge that allowed a lot of people to keep their doors open even beyond the period in which that grant was supposed to cover, just because it gave them the relief and allowed them the breathing room to be able to potentially keep their doors open long beyond that period. But now the money is gone and the resources are limited."

According to Parker, the pandemic, while devastating, isn't fully responsible for the

dire straits that independent venues are finding themselves in.

"It's caused by a lack of competition here in the United States, due to the practices of Live Nation," he says.

"It's caused due to the secondary market that continues to prey upon fans and prey upon artists and venues due to their use of fake tickets, deceptive websites and a whole variety of bots that they use to take tickets at face value from underneath fans and price gouge them. And it's due to changes in consumer behavior. People are drinking less. Alcohol is so important to the bottom lines of venues. These are all things that we are monitoring, and these are all things that are applying a significant amount of pressure on the independent venues, festivals, performing arts centers, and promoters across the country."

So, while NIVA proved invaluable when it formed as a direct result of the pandemic, the industry could have benefited from its influence decades ago when the secondary market was growing in power.

"Knowing the mentality of the people who have the guts to open up an independent music place, they are taking this risk because they believe in something," Parker says. "Nobody's going to tell them what to do. The other part, also by nature of any association, is that the other members are competitors. So like in the D.C. area, we have probably 15 venues. Theoretically we're competitors. But when you are all under the same risk of collapse, you come together like you do, I suppose, in a war or some other kind of traumatic situation. And then we learned, 'oh, we can work together for the greater good.'"

Part of the problem that NIVA faces is that it doesn't have a complete picture of where independent venues are at in 2025 because, due to the nature of each entity being independent, it's tough to track.

"We spent the first two years of our existence trying to get resources, and succeeded," says Fix Schaefer. "We're trying to answer questions about independent venues and stages that have never been answered before. So basically, we are doing a data collection. We can send you a link so you've got some information. We've been collecting information, survey data, capacity data, economic data from venues across the

country. And that's going to help answer a lot of questions when you ask me this six months from now."

Ultimately, it all comes down to educating the public about the issues that indie venues are still facing.

"Live performance has existed on this continent since before the U.S. was a nation, and it's only in the last four, soon to be five, years that there's actually been a national voice to tell the story of a

sector that's not been a major corporation," says Parker. "From where I sit, it's going to take time. Speculators lined up to buy tickets at face value and sell them at inflated prices when Charles Dickens came and did his tour of this nation in the 1800s. None of this is new. We're just talking about it. And I think from where I sit, there's an opportunity with 1500 venues, promoters and festivals nationwide that are willing now to tell their story. Now they have an outlet to do it, and that's NIVA, and it's fortunate that Audrey and a whole bunch of other people decided to start it."

For more info, visit nivassoc.org.



AUDREY FIX SCHAEFER



STEPHEN PARKER

Juanita and Juan

JUANITA AND JUAN IS the name of a thrilling new project featuring the talents of punk rock luminaries Alice Bag (The Bags) and Kid Congo (Pink Monkey Birds/Cramps/Gun Club). The two respected musicians have a combined resume that is remarkable, but how did this duo come to be?

"We were invited to write a song for the Peacock series *The Resort*," says Bag. "The idea was that we would write a song for them and then pretend to perform it poolside at a Mexican resort."

"It was really fun, and the characters we played seem to have further things to say beyond 'Arenas De Amor,'" adds Congo. "Our lounge duo seemed more unruly than a traditional lounge act, although we were trying to play it straight! We could not disguise our rebellious nature, so we brought the fictional characters into our real lives."

Bag says that this project has allowed her to explore different configurations of sound, and experiment a little.

"We even have a couple of songs that are cumbias," she says. "Also, the fact that we don't use a full band but perform with our own pre-recorded tracks has really allowed me to go crazy with instrumentation."

"I like to say it's LOUD Lounge because I like it to be a party," adds Congo. "A party at a Mexican beach. Electric guitars fuzzy and raucous, and keyboards melodic and demanding. With drum machine, Latin beats mostly, and Alice is a fantastic soulful and punk singer. I'm channeling a Barry White kind of talk-singing. We sing in Spanish and English language—I suppose Spanglish."

The new album, *Jungle Cruise*, was recorded at Waterworks Studios in Tucson, AZ with Jim Waters, on Larry Hardy's In The Red Records. "Fortunately for us, he was willing to take a chance on this kookie endeavor," says Bag.

It's all a fine example of the DIY ethic that the pair have long adhered to: "If you're bold enough and creative enough, no one will guess that



you don't know what you're doing," says Bag.

"No rules in music," adds Congo. "Simple recording. Say what you mean. Defy expectations."

Look out for Juanita and Juan on tour, and get *Jungle Cruise*. Bag has a Spanish language translation of her book, *Violence Girl*, coming out in the summer, and Congo will be doing some shows with his Pink Monkey Birds.

Visit alicebag.com, officialkidcongo.com.

THE LEGAL BEAT

BY GLENN LITWAK



ON MARCH 25, 2025, Fred Durst of Limp Bizkit and his label, Flawless Records (Flawless), filed a new lawsuit against Universal Music Group (UMG) in California state court in Los Angeles. By way of background, Limp Bizkit has been pursuing an action against UMG in federal court for some time. On March 17, 2025, the federal court judge dismissed part of the case against UMG on jurisdictional grounds. However, the judge did not dismiss the copyright infringement claims. In response to the dismissal of part of the federal case, Durst refiled the case in state court.

Limp Bizkit Refiles Case Against UMG In State Court

Durst alleges that in 2024, after he retained a new team of representatives, they discovered that millions of dollars in royalties were due to Limp Bizkit from deals with Flip Records (Flip), Interscope, and a joint venture with Flawless.

Although many of the claims in the new state court action mimic the federal court case, there are some new allegations. The federal court action involves claims of copyright infringement, breach of contract, and fraudulent concealment. A new claim in the state court action is that UMG breached the deals in dispute, thus they are null and void. Consequently, Limp Bizkit contends that it owns its masters.

The new state court action also makes allegations against Jordan Schur, who was the founder of Flip and former President of Geffen Records. The Complaint states that Schur misrepresented that Durst would be a 50-50 partner of Flip and receive 10 percent of the profits from artists he signed and discovered, including the group Staind.

According to the state court Complaint: "For a period of time, Schur did, in fact, remit to Durst 10 percent of the profits received in relation to Staind, confirming the existence of the deal. However, beginning in approximately 2012 and continuing until 2024, Schur repeatedly told Durst that he was not receiving any more money with respect to Staind, and stopped remitting any profits to Durst."

Another issue is an alleged ambiguous definition of "new medium" in the earliest contracts, which allegedly means Limp Bizkit is due millions of dollars in streaming profits. The suit also contends UMG committed accounting errors.

According to the state court suit, "these same issues, including but not limited to applying negative royalty rates, negative units, negative royalty earnings, incorrect royalty rates, incorrect unit pricing, and the failure to account for or calculate 50 percent of net receipts, appear across all of the accounting statements that Plaintiffs have access to and are not limited

to those accounts that are supposedly still unrecovered."

Plaintiffs also contend that they are continuing to find problems with the "grossly overinflated" total of \$43 million in advances and recoupable costs attributed to Limp Bizkit. According to the suit, the actual amount is closer to \$13 million.

The total amount of advances should be easy to prove in court. But the determination of recoupable costs will be much more complicated.

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

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

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Date Signed: July 2024

Label: MNRK Heavy

Type of Music: Hard Rock, Metal

Management: SL Management

Booking: Mike Monterulo TKO

Publicity: Atom Splitter PR

A&R: Scott Givens

Web: shadowsfallmusic.com

Shadows Fall have, as they say, lived a life. Emanating from the primordial soup of Boston's heavy music scene in the mid-'90s, the quintet had a helluva run in its first 20 years, cementing Shadows Fall as a critical component of metalcore at large. Amid the waning of the subgenre, the band broke up in 2014 and spent a solid seven years in dormancy before finally reuniting. Thankfully for fans, that reunion also promised new material, with Shadows Fall whetting fans' appetites with new single "In the Grey."

Facilitating the rebirth of the band led by vocalist Brian Fair is MNRK Heavy, the independent, New York-based record label that inked a deal with Shadows Fall late last year.

"I had MNRK on my radar as a label we wanted to approach because of how perfect the roster was for a band like us," Fair says. "Our manager, Scott Lee, had a great relationship with some of the people there, so they came out to Massachusetts to hang with us and things felt great, right from the start."

"Both sides came to the table with a realistic vision of where a band like Shadows Fall was at this point in our career."

When pressed further on which MNRK bands most attracted Shadows Fall to the label, Fair noted Ace Frehley and Creeping Death.

"They cover a wide spectrum of heavy music, and it felt like a perfect match for us," Fair says. "[MNRK] were also willing to be creative with how we release songs, which was also important to us."

Fair said Shadows Fall's stipulations primarily revolved around the fact that the other band members—lead guitarist/backing vocalist Jon Donais, rhythm guitarist/clean vocalist Matt Bachand, bassist Paul Romanko, and drummer Jason Bittner—are in other projects. That means it'd take a minute for the band to record a new album, and that Shadows Fall can't commit to touring too heavily.

Fair also negotiated a song-release arrangement that he feels is an adaptation "to the new music industry landscape."

"We wanted to be able to drop singles as they were completed and then try and drop the full album when all the songs were completed," Fair said. "Before Shadows Fall went on hiatus, the music business was in a much different place with very traditional record contracts and release schedules, but those days are really gone."

In all, he's happy and humbled by Shadows Fall's new record deal.

"I'm super-stoked to be labelmates with Zakk Wylde, Underoath, Crowbar, Toxic Holocaust, and a bunch more," Fair said. — **Kurt Orzeck**



Date Signed: March 2025

Label: Alligator Records

Type of Music: Blues

Management: Michael Kinsman - Hoodoo Productions, mkinsman2020@gmail.com

Booking: Intrepid Artists International

Legal: Bruce Newman, Newman/DeCoster

Publicity: Marc Lipkin, publicity@allig.com

A&R: Bruce Iglauer

Web: dkblues.com

D.K. Harrell is a young man in terms of age, but an old soul when it comes to attitude, work ethic, and influences. Some of his earliest musical inspirations came in the form of movies like *The Blues Brothers*, *Cadillac Records*, *Ray*, and *Hail Rock 'n' Roll*. It was through this media that he had some of his first exposure to artists like John Lee Hooker, Ray Charles, Muddy Waters, and Chuck Berry.

While film set him on his career path, the Louisiana-born blues man's very first gig was in 2019 at the B.B. King Museum in Indianola, MS. Fast forward to 2022 where famed songwriter/producer/keyboardist

"You're trying to be as professional as all these legends that are in the studio with you."

and Little Village label founder Jim Pugh and San Diego Blues Festival producer Michael Kinsman caught Harrell performing a set at the International Blues Challenge. Although there were mixed opinions on Harrell's heavy B.B. King persona, a recording deal was eventually offered and accepted. Pugh played with Harrell on the Legendary Blues Cruise and the two famously hit it off. That relationship resulted in Harrell's debut recording for the Little Village label, "The Right Man."

Although "The Right Man" was the young singer-songwriter/guitarist's maiden voyage, he exuded a Spartan work ethic, recording an entire album in just a few days. "You're trying to be as professional as all these legends that are in the studio with you," says Harrell on his first record. "But you're a trainee and that's your first time on the job."

During this initial period, Kinsman became Harrell's manager and assisted in paving the way for a relationship with Alligator Records. Harrell spoke with Alligator Records president Bruce Iglauer in 2023 and maintained a friendly rapport. The turning point happened when Harrell was on tour in Germany. Kinsman called him and confirmed that Iglauer wanted him on the Alligator roster.

"About 10 or 12 years ago, when I was first playing guitar, I was horrible. I can admit that," says Harrell. "But I was so confident in myself that I actually sent Bruce a burned CD of videos of me playing at home. And he responded very politely, saying I had potential, but they weren't looking for new artists at the time. I highly doubt he would remember that, but I was 13 or 14 then. So, being able to get in on the label all these years later is pretty cool."

D.K. Harrell's *Talkin' Heavy*, his Alligator Records debut, is slated to drop on all platforms in June. — **Eric Harabadian**



Date Signed: July 2024
Label: Golden Robot Records
Band Members: Lily Chellingsworth, vocals, guitar; Riley Doherty, drums, backing vocals; Kailee Butcher, bass, flute
Type of Music: Punk Rock
Publicity: Sarah Facciolo - Facci PR, sarah@faccipr.com
A&R: Sarah Facciolo and Kay Macauley
Web: linktr.ee/vipersnatch

The impact that Australia has had on modern, shit-kicking, rebellious music is immeasurable, and rock 'n' roll continues to flourish down under. Take ViperSnatch, a no-bull riot grrl trio from Central Queensland's Darumbal Land that have been releasing a wonderfully punky, grungy noise since 2018.

After dropping their most recent single, lead vocalist and guitarist Lily Chellingsworth figured she'd send it off to various labels. An internet search brought her to Golden Robot Records, which names Faster Pussycat, Judas Priestess, Devo, and Johnny Thunders as part of its fearless roster. Fortuitously, Golden Robot was actively taking submissions.

Though ViperSnatch approached other labels, Golden Robot was the one that returned the most enthusiastic response. Kay Macauley, the label's manager, delivered the assessment. Macauley lives a short four hours away, so they went to meet her and the label's founder/president, Mark Alexander-Erber. A deal was soon falling into place.

"The biggest thing for us is staying true to ourselves."

Regarding the quest for an entertainment attorney to review the proposed contract, drummer Riley Doherty attests they "reached out to a few." Ultimately, the players wound up chatting with a friend who's knowledgeable about the legal aspects of the music industry. They returned the document with numerous changes. Happily, the label was agreeable. Says Doherty, "Once we were comfortable with everything, we were like, fuck it, why not?"

Since getting signed, the ladies have been able to spend time in a proper studio, where they've been busy crafting their new EP. "It allowed us to experiment and add more layers," Chellingsworth says. Up until then, all their recordings were done in their friend's garage.

Most important to ViperSnatch is the artistic freedom that Golden Robot provides. "The biggest thing for us is staying true to ourselves," says bassist Kailee Butcher. "We've got a message that we're passionate about and strongly want to push." - **Andy Kaufmann**



Date Signed: November 2024
Label: Warner Chappell Music Benelux
Type of Music: House
Management: spags@luckygroup.au
Booking: david.gordoni@unitedtalent.com
Legal: rob.glass@mediaartslawyers.com
Publicity: amanda@bluemusicservices.com
A&R: jorn.heringa@spinninrecords.nl
Web: instagram.com/itsyaboyciz

Australian DJ Cyril, A.K.A. Cyril Riley, initially garnered notice in 2021 when he began uploading stylish remixes to various online platforms. Yet it wasn't until '23 that he unleashed his version of "Stumblin' In," a song originally performed by Chris Norman and Suzi Quatro. As of today, that track has surpassed 570 million streams.

The gargantuan success of that cut earned the attention of Dutch electronic label Spinnin' Records, an imprint of Warner Music Group. Seeing his potential, the company offered a deal. The superstar's girlfriend went into labor as that agreement came together, making the moment especially momentous.

Cyril soon began spending time at Spinnin' Records' headquarters in Amsterdam, during which a pair of Warner Chappell's "top fellas"

"I like to work with good people, because it's really hard when you don't get along."

befriend him. "We'd go out for lunches, have a few drinks and just had a good time," he says. The DJ didn't realize he needed a publishing contract until the importance of having one was explained. While numerous publishers expressed interest, he elected to stay in the Warner family by signing with Warner Chappell Music Benelux. This made particular sense to Cyril, as he prioritizes strong personal connections with everyone on his team. "I like to work with good people. That's my main thing, because it's really hard when you don't get along."

Before inking the deal, Cyril journeyed to Warner Chappell's Nashville offices, where the corporate brass feted him with sessions and sent him to writing camps. It seemed fortuitous that they were pushing for his success even before he signed. Plus, "It was super fun," says the ARIA nominee.

Regardless, Cyril refused to make anything official without having his legal representation weigh in. Though everything took a hot minute, experience meant it was less stressful than signing with Spinnin'. He recommends other artists exercise patience as well. "There's no point in rushing something," the 27-year-old says. "Work on your craft, and have things you can negotiate with. You can't negotiate if you have nothing." - **Andy Kaufmann**



▲ MALI HÂF

Rising Welsh Celtic Soul singer-songwriter Mali Hâf is working on her debut album following debut EP *Jig-So*. Working to challenge the perception of Welsh culture, Hâf brings a bold, modern sound with feminist reframe of "Old Land of My Fathers" (now "mothers"), single "H.W.F.M" (Hen Wlad Fy Mamau) out now.

► BROWN'S JAZZ ALBUM

Legendary Kool & The Gang co-founder George Brown's posthumous jazz album, recorded in his home studio during lockdown (2023), is out now. Inspired by clubs in Paris and New York, and the music of Miles Davis, *Jazz in Paris* includes collabs with Curtis F. Williams (keys), Mark Cardone (horn), and Philip Wack (sax).



▲ NMPA GOLF FUNDRAISER

The National Music Publishers Association (NMPA) annual NMPA Songs Foundation Golf Tournament raises \$350,000 for fire relief. Hit songwriters, performers, producers, publishing execs, L.A. firefighters attend, with Amazon and TikTok support and Wrabel performing Teddy Swims co-write, "All That Really Matters."

Notorious B.I.G.'s Wave

Primary Wave has officially announced its 50 percent interest purchase of the late Notorious B.I.G.'s catalog, for a rumored price of roughly \$200 million. The deal includes recordings, publishing, and use of his name and likeness, with rumblings of a possible Broadway production and/or immersive show (which could include the use of a digital avatar). While B.I.G.'s mother (who was largely in charge of managing his catalog) passed away recently, daughter T'yanna Wallace remains CEO of Notorious Clothing and the Biggie Experience museum.

ASCAP Jazz Composers

The ASCAP Foundation extends congratulations to recipients of the 2025 Herb Alpert Young Jazz Composer Awards, named for The Herb Alpert Foundation's multi-year financial commitment to the program (with additional funding provided through The ASCAP Foundation Bart Howard). Winners (up to age 30) were selected via jury (Theo Crocker, Zaccai Curtis, Endea Owens, and Erica Seguíne) through a national competition and will receive monetary awards. This year's recipients include Jonah Barnett, Eli Feingold, Michael Hilgendorf, Benedict Koh, Aditi Malhotra, Giovanni

Martinez, Alan Montañó, Bakhari S. Nokuri, Marc Perez, Artur Ponsà, Jahari Stampley, Katie Webster, and Alejandra Williams-Maneri. Honorable mentions include KiMani Bridges, Austin Ford, Evan Kappelman, Spencer Merk, and Adithya Vaidhyan. Details at ascapfoundation.org.

Annual Songwriting Competition

Now in its 30th year, submissions for the USA Songwriting Competition close Friday, May 30. Participants in 15 categories will be evaluated by top industry professionals, with prizes including radio airplay, \$50,000, and gear (including Korg, PreSonus, Reason, etc.). Open to all nationalities, the competition honors songwriters, composers, bands, and recording artists around the world, with previous winners having gone on to receive publishing and/or recording contracts and climbing song charts following their win. For more details and to enter, visit songwriting.net/ascap.

SESAC Diversifies Scoring

Announcing a new three-year commitment, SESAC Performing Rights joins New Music USA in launching Reel Change: The Fund for Diversity in Film Scoring. Supported by SESAC and composer Christophe Beck and administered by New Music USA, the grant and mentorship program has been created to support composers of diverse backgrounds who have been marginalized in film composition. First established in 2020, Reel Change has provided over \$450,000 to 29 grantees over the past five years.

Four to six grants of roughly \$20,000 will now be available annually, with eligible expenses including composer and musician fees, mastering and studio expenses, orchestration, production equipment, etc. An ongoing review of applications will be provided by members of an advisory board of leading film composers, who will also offer additional grantee mentorship. Visit bit.ly/42oiXSk.



▲ DYLAN BY EGAN

U.K. author-journalist Sean Egan releases *Decade of Dissent*, exploring Bob Dylan's influential songwriting. A study of Dylan's poignant lyricism, indelible protest music, and personal navigation of fame and industry, it includes exclusive interviews and anecdotes from Al Kooper, Mike Bloomfield, The Beatles, and The Byrds.

Ongoing AIMP Events

Introduced by AIMP President Frank Handy, NMPA's President and CEO David Israelite spoke at the annual AIMP Los Angeles GRAMMY luncheon address (postponed from January due to the California wildfires), sharing an overview of new revenue sources, continued efforts to protect the rights of creatives

in the face of evolving A.I., and ongoing DSP bundling challenges. Israelite also praised the efforts of the MLC, BMI, and ASCAP in pushing towards more industry transparency and equitable pay. More at aimp.org/newsroom.

AIMP Nashville held the first annual "AIMP U—A Holistic Peek Into the Business of Songwriting" event, providing a deep look into publishing, records, royalties, and how best for independent creators to collect them (video available at aimp.org).

AIMP's New York Chapter hosted their "I Purchased a Catalog... What Now?!" event, featuring a panel discussion around the process of catalog acquisition. Guest speakers included Joyce Dollinger (Kendrick & Barron, LLP), Brooke Primont (Concord Music Publishing), and Melanie Santa Rosa and Amber Charania (both of Downtown Music Holdings).

Crowell Songwriting Camp

Legendary singer-songwriter Rodney Crowell returns with his "It Starts With A Song" intimate four-day immersive songwriting camp. Limited to 65 participants, Crowell's event is open to all ages, levels, and styles. Registration includes four days and nights of songwriting with Crowell and friends, daily masterclasses with Crowell, Vince Gill, T Bone Burnett, and Mike Campbell, daily instructor performances, one-on-one co-writing sessions with rising songwriters (including Alysa Bonagura, Carolyn Dawn Johnson, Dave Berg, Jaime Moore, and Steinza), multiple daily open mics, and three meals a day. Details and registration at rodneycrowellsitstartswithasong.com.

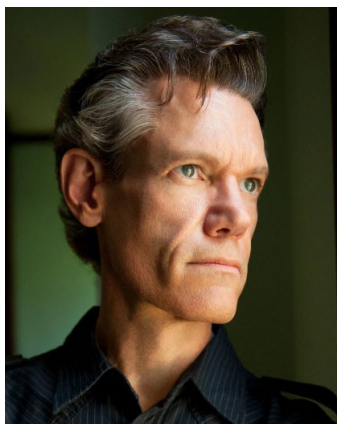
Willis Songwriting Legacy

Award-winning songwriter Allee Willis remained unapologetically herself and leaves behind an incredible catalog of hits (including "September" and "Boogie Wonderland" for Earth, Wind & Fire, Pet Shop Boys' "What Have I Done to Deserve This?," and The Rembrandts' theme song to *Friends*, "I'll Be There For You"). Having documented her own life on video since the 1950s, Willis' documentary is what she wished to leave the world. With cameos from Mark Cuban, Cyndi Lauper, Lily Tomlin, etc., *The World According to Allee Willis* is available now. More at alleewillis.com.

Seals' Posthumous Induction

The 2025 Texas Heritage Songwriters Association Hall of Fame induction ceremony honored four legendary songwriters, including David Lee, Leslie Satcher, and the late Charlie Robison and Dan Seals. Seals' music crossed into pop and country, first making his mark in England with Dan & John Ford Coley ("I'd Really Love to See You Tonight," "Nights Are Forever (Without You)") before moving to country music and achieving 11 No. 1 Billboard country hits ("God Must Be a Cowboy," "Bop," "Everything That Glitters (Is Not Gold)," "Meet me In Montana"), CMA awards, and ACM and GRAMMY nominations. A non-profit organization honoring and celebrating Texas culture, the Texas Heritage Songwriters Association celebrates artists keeping Texas traditions alive. See texassongwriters.com.

ANDREA BEENHAM (aka Drea Jo) is a freelance writer and marketing consultant based in Southern California. The South-African born, Canadian-raised California transplant has a passion for music, people and fun. She can be reached at drea@dreaajo.com



▲ GRAMMY'S AWARD TRAVIS

The Recording Academy honors Randy Travis for his dedicated artist advocacy, supporting the fight for creators' rights, fair compensation, and the ethical use of emerging tech as part of GRAMMYS on the Hill. Travis' work includes the No Fakes Act and the American Music Fairness Act after testifying for congress in 2024.



▲ UMG INKS CONNOR

SRG-ILS Group (Virgin/UMG) adds R&B singer-songwriter/media personality Elijah Connor to the roster through imprint Purple Rain Entertainment. Detroit-born, raised on gospel and R&B, Prince's young cousin gained attention on Fox's *The Four* and music videos on BET and MTV. EP *The Book of Eli* arrives July 18.



▲ CAPITOL SIGNS BABYMETAL

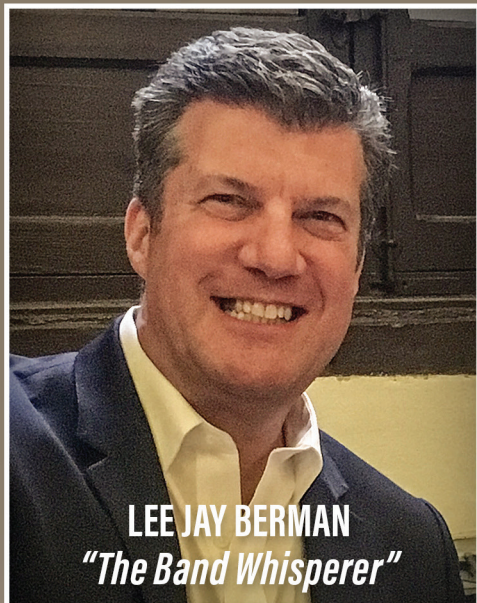
Fueling the J-Pop momentum, Capitol Records signed pop metal band BABYMETAL to global representation, making them "the first Japanese artist to sign a frontline deal with the label." Launching their first U.K./European headline tour this month, *METAL FORTH* arrives June 13, with U.S. and Asia tours to follow.



▲ RUTH'S LOST RECORDINGS

Sunset Blvd. releases two-CD *Secret Love* unheard collection of Ruth Brown recordings from the 1970s. Disc 1 comprises 1976's funky *Sugar Babe* (produced by Jerry "Swamp Dogg" Williams), Disc 2 includes material from two albums navigating Great American Songbook standards and select contemporary songs.

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SONGWRITER PROFILE

- ANDREA BEENHAM

José James

Era Blender

Born in Minneapolis and launching into music through hip-hop, genre and era-blurring jazz artist José James cultivated his sonic chops from a young age, inspired by samples in his favorite music. "Buying cassettes, records, reading liner notes, that's how I discovered this whole other world," says James. "I remember looking at A Tribe Called Quest record, and a sample of Roy Ayres. I realized the producers and rappers I love know this vast catalog of jazz, soul, R&B, and funk. I wanted to be like them, so I started collecting records."

Working with legends Chico Hamilton, McCoy Tyner, Christian McBride, Flying Lotus, and Robert Glasper, James is clear on the credit for his musicology. His mom's vinyl collection included classical, funk (Ohio Players), folk (Baez, Dylan, Crosby, Stills & Nash), and jazz (Billie Holiday), the radio was always on, and they frequented live shows. James' dad was a saxophone player and Latin percussionist who inspired his love for the classics, including Herbie Hancock. "Dad grew up in Panama City [and] played in bands around the world," says James. "That seed was planted deep: music can be a passport to the world."

Joining avant-garde band Ancestor Energy at 17, James still considers bandleader/performance poet Louis Alemayehu a mentor. Jazz players Douglas Hubert, Kerry Thomas (both AACM members), and Donald Washington were members. "I thought I was cool because I knew Coltrane. He was just the beginning," admits James. "I had never heard of Albert Eiler, Henry Threadgill, or any deeply Black, post-Coltrane stuff. [It] doesn't get taught in school, a part of Black History that is under-acknowledged." With a focus on finding a voice as a writer, James says the band, "aligned with the philosophy of having your own voice and not taking anything too seriously."

Today's kids are doing what James wanted to do: multi-hyphenates exploring modeling, singing, rapping, acting. James' dynamic creative process is more like an evolution. "It's what you're into at that moment. You exhaust that field, and then you move on. It evolves, but everything leads you to the next space," he says. "To me, music [is] an encapsulation of human emotion in a purposeful, three to five-minute way. That's what makes music unique among all the other art forms."

James' passion for '70s sound was sparked by Pino Palladino. "Pino spoiled me forever," reveals James. "He's one of the greatest electric bass players in the world. He's also the kindest person." James was between labels. "Make It Right" was their 15-minute co-write. Palladino told James it was going to be a great album, to which James replied that there is no album. Palladino repeated himself four times, adding that he will play on said album. "I was in shock," says James, "That moment has stayed with me. I try to employ visualization and pure positive energy with younger generation[s] because you really have to see it. Have people around you that believe in you. It's a myth as an artist that you're always going to believe in yourself."

No Beginning, No End II (2020) and *1978* (2024) followed on James' own label, Rainbow Blonde, which clarified how drained he had been by the pressure for sales targets and social relevance.

Out this month, *1978: Revenge of The Dragon* was recorded in one take, combining jazz, soul, and funk. Concludes James, "All of the greats in jazz, whether it's Billie Holiday, Duke Ellington, Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, or Nina Simone, never let training overwhelm their sense of adventure. I think that's the real freedom of jazz."



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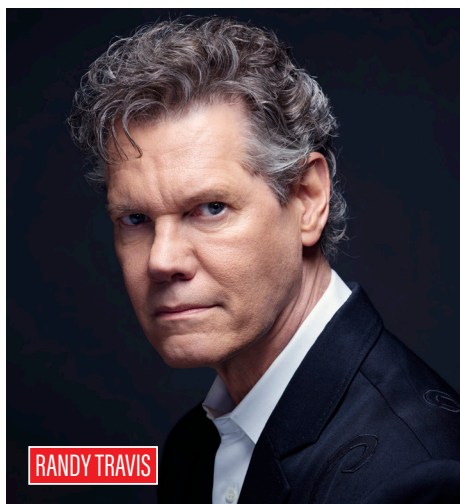
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DROPS

Country Music Hall of Fame inductee and multi-GRAMMY winner **Randy Travis** is the subject of a new, forthcoming biopic entitled *Forever and Ever, Amen* about his life and career. Veteran film producer **Eric Groth** (*Ethan Hawke's Wildcat*) and writer/director **Andrew Hyatt** (*Paul, Apostle of Christ* from Sony Pictures) of *Sacred Arthouse* and **Zach Dasher** and **Korie Robertson** of *Tread Lively*, are behind the new project, which Hyatt will direct off his own script. Travis and his wife, Mary Travis, will executive produce, alongside country music star **Clay Walker**. The film is being cast by **Anne McCarthy**, **Kellie Roy**, and **Morgan Robbins**, and Travis will be played by three actors of different ages, including Walker as Travis in his 40s and 50s. In March, the Grand Ole Opry played host for the announcement of the biopic alongside performances by friends of Travis including Walker, **Collin Raye**, **Lady A**, **James Dupré**, and more. For more information, contact Zach Farnum at zach@117group.com.



RANDY TRAVIS

Josefina López, acclaimed playwright who first made a splash for capturing the Latina immigrant experience with *Real Women Have Curves*, made her Broadway debut in April with *Real Women Have Curves: The Musical* at the James Earl Jones Theatre in New York. The new musical is based on López's original '88 play and the 2002 award-winning film of the same name. Her 37-year journey from an undocumented immigrant in Boyle Heights to celebrated Broadway creator comes full circle in New York City, where she first shared her story. López also taught free classes in playwrighting at INTAR Theatre, where she was once mentored, and appeared at The Drama Book Shop for a Q&A and book signing. Contact Steve Moyer for more information at moyerpr@earthlink.net.

A Noise Within presents *A Man of No Importance*, an intimate musical set in 1960s Dublin, which runs May 10-June 1. Directed by **Julia Rodriguez-Elliott** with music direction by **Rod Bagheri**, the show follows **Alfie Byrne**, a bus conductor attempting to stage *Oscar Wilde's Salome* with his amateur troupe while confronting societal prejudice and personal identity. Featuring a cast with Kasey Mahaffy in the leading role and a live, five-piece orchestra,



the story is a celebration of love, theater, and community. Previews run May 4-9. Learn more by contacting Lucy Pollak at lucy@lucypr.com.

Pasadena Playhouse presents *A Doll's House, Part 2* by **Lucas Hnath**, which is slated to run May 14-June 8 with a press opening on May 18. Directed by **Jennifer Chang**, the production stars **Elizabeth Reaser** (*The Twilight Saga, Grey's Anatomy*) as Nora and **Jason Butler Harner** (*Ozark, The Handmaid's Tale*) as Torvald, alongside **Kimberly Scott**, **Kahyun Kim**, and **Adam J. Smith**. Set 15 years after Nora's dramatic departure in the first production, the Tony-nominated sequel confronts independence and womanhood with bracing wit. Featuring onstage seating through a partnership with TodayTix, this production will be brought to life at the Pasadena Playhouse. Contact Peter Goldman for further details at p.goldman@dcpublicity.com.

The original motion picture soundtrack for *A Nice Indian Boy*, composed by **Raashi Kulkarni**, is now available on all major digital platforms. Blending Western orchestral sounds with Indian musical traditions, Kulkarni's music underscores the film's themes of identity, love, and family. Her collaboration with director **Roshan Sethi** results in a rich, emotionally resonant soundscape for the romantic comedy that follows Naveen (**Karan Soni**) and Jay (**Jonathan Groff**) as they navigate cultural expectations, personal truths, and family dynamics—all leading to the



"big Indian wedding" of their dreams. Contact Sarah Roche at sarah@whitebearpr.com for more information.

OPPS

Are you an aspiring musical theater songwriter who has yet to find commercial success for your work? You might be eligible to apply for the Fred Ebb Award, named after Fred Ebb of the legendary songwriting duo John Kander and Fred Ebb. Submissions will be accepted throughout the month of June and can be sent to fredebbfound@gmail.com. The winner receives \$60,000. Learn about the award and if you're eligible by visiting fredebbfoundation.org/fred-ebb-award/eligibility.

May 15 is the deadline to apply for the 2026 Kleban Prize in Musical Theatre. Administered by New Dramatists by The Kleban Foundation, the prize is awarded annually to a librettist

and a lyricist who show great promise with the intent of allowing them time to focus on their craft by providing financial support. The late Edward Kleban, the lyricist of *A Chorus Line* and other works, established the prize through his will. Learn more and apply at newdramatists.org/kleban-prize-musical-theatre.

Get your submissions in by May 15 (early

bird deadline) or June 15 at the latest for the annual World Soundtrack Awards, which will be held this year October, 14-16. Membership is not required for the Discovery of the Year Award, which celebrates the work of new and

unknown artists, and Belgian Film Composer of the Year. Learn more and submit your work at worldsoundtrackawards.com/awards/submissions.

PROPS

The historic **Pasadena Playhouse**—which gave rise to countless legendary productions and actors—celebrated its 100th anniversary with the reacquisition of its full campus, including the original 1925 theater, which spent five decades in private ownership, and the adjoining six-story **Fannie E. Morrison Building**, built in 1936 to house the renowned **College of Theatre Arts**. The April transaction



returned the entire property—also home to the **Carrie Hamilton Theater** and a restaurant space most recently occupied by **Bar Chelou**—to Playhouse ownership for the first time since 1970. The purchase capped a dramatic institutional turnaround under Artistic Director **Danny Feldman**, whose leadership helped earn the 2023 Regional Theatre Tony Award and record-breaking support at its annual gala. The purchase of the building was made possible by a \$15 million fundraising campaign with a lead gift from **Perenchio Foundation** matched by major arts philanthropists **Terri and Jerry Kohl**, with support from other major donors. For more, contact Peter Goldman at p.goldman@dcpublishity.com.



The nation's longest-running Asian American theater, **East West Players**, in collaboration with **Outside in Theatre**, launched a fundraising campaign to support the creation of **Lauren Yee's** groundbreaking play **Cambodian Rock Band**, which exceeded its initial \$15,000 goal in less than 24 hours. The campaign was born from overwhelming community demand and the opportunity to create a professional recording featuring four members of the play's original cast, including **Joe Ngo**. Funds will support the recording and digital release, with proceeds benefiting East West Players' mission to increase Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) representation in the arts. The **Chay Yew**-directed show ran through March 23. For

more, contact Peter Goldman at p.goldman@dcpublishity.com.

Sunset Blvd.'s Echo Park came alive on March 30 with **Busk-Aid-L.A.**, a street music benefit featuring both local and out-of-town artists for victims of the January wildfires in Los Angeles. The free event, organized by music veterans **Cary Baker** and **Liz Garo**, was presented in association with **Sweet Relief Musicians Fund**, which is donating proceeds to those most in need, and organized with help from the **Wild Honey Foundation**. Featured artists included **Dustbowl Revival**, **The Living Sisters**, **Ronee Blakley**, **Ruby Friedman Orchestra**, **Fernando Perdomo**, **Magically Delicious**, **E'nriched**

White, Dallas Don, and more performing at local establishments like The Echo and Masa. Learn more at sweetrelief.org/news/busk-aid-buskers-hit-the-streets-to-benefit-la-wildfire-victims.

On the 75th anniversary of legendary composer **Kurt Weill's** passing, acclaimed multilingual chanteuse **Ute Lemper** released a reinterpretation of his classic **"Speak Low,"** which was composed for the musical **One Touch of Venus** and inspired by Shakespeare's **Much Ado About Nothing**. The song was popularly performed by Weill's wife **Lotte Lenya**, as well as **Tony Bennett**, **Barbara Streisand**, and **Sarah Vaughan**. The reimagined **"Speak Low"** appears on Lemper's new album **Pirate Jenny**, which dropped on April 25 via The Audiophile Society and commemorates Weill's 125th birthday. Not her first time reimagining the work of an acclaimed artist, Lemper has impersonated **Marlene Dietrich**, **Édith Piaf**, and **Jacques Brel**, as well as collaborated with artists like **Tom Waits** and **Nick Cave**. For more, contact Luci Paczkowski at lpaczkowski@shorefire.com.

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

OUT TAKE



Pancho Burgos-Goizueta

Composer

Website: instagram.com/panchomusic
Most recent: *The Unbreakable Boy*

A **PIANO PLAYER** since he was a *Star Wars*-loving 15-year-old, Pancho Burgos-Goizueta knew he wanted to be a professional musician, but being born in Madrid and far from Hollywood, he never knew film scoring was a possibility until he enrolled at Berklee. Today, he has written music for a genre-spanning body of work, most recently for the Jon Gunn-directed *The Unbreakable Boy* in which Burgos-Goizueta provides a musical backdrop to reflect this emotional family drama about resilience, hope, and joy. "I'm an open-minded guy. If the film is well-done, I like to think of myself as versatile and don't mind the genre so much. It just makes me happy to make music that I care about," he says. "When I first discovered film music, it was visceral at the time. I love the magic of it. I used to say I consider myself more of a filmmaker that writes music, because music is such an integral part of it."

For *The Unbreakable Boy*, a true story about a young boy who faces life with Autism and Brittle Bones Disease, Burgos-Goizueta said he tried to approach the film's score through the lens of its protagonist—"a really happy kid who sees the best in every day, even in the more serious moments." Burgos-Goizueta, who has experience teaching piano to children with Autism, noted that his students tended to like repetitive notes, which he brought into his score with playful, childlike instruments like ukulele and glockenspiel that give the film a lighthearted ambience.

Apart from the usual advice—networking, seeking mentors—that all aspiring film composers should abide by, Burgos-Goizueta also imparts an important piece of wisdom he picked up in his career journey: "I graduated Berklee at 28, didn't get my first assistant job until 30, and wrote my first film at 34. I wish someone had said: don't wait. Just suck at it for a while. Ira Glass from *This American Life* has a segment on this idea. You just have to evolve and close that gap."

► KALI UCHIS DEBUTS NEW SINGLE "SUNSHINE & RAIN"

GRAMMY®-winning global recording artist Kali Uchis kicks off a new era of music with "Sunshine & Rain," the first single from her widely anticipated fifth studio album, *Sincerely*. The single sets up a lush soundscape, which Uchis' rich vocals coast over with ease. In the first verse, she unpacks the stabilizing effect of good love on her life. In the second, she wishes the same for the world—one she recently welcomed her first child to—vowing to be a source of peace for those that depend on her.



▲ NEW ORLEANS LEGENDS GALACTIC AND IRMA THOMAS SHARE DAZZLING REVAMP OF NANCY WILSON CLASSIC "HOW GLAD I AM"

New Orleans' one and only Galactic join forces with the legendary Soul Queen of New Orleans and GRAMMY® Award-winning singer Irma Thomas for their collaborative album *Audience with The Queen*. Their new single is a radiant revamp of the classic Nancy Wilson original "How Glad I Am" that sees organ peels filtering through a vocal harmony like light through stained glass, leading the melody into an almost country lilt. The 84-year-old Thomas' famously warm, blues-drenched voice retains the spotlight while Galactic brings their big, bold brand of hot New Orleans funk. Photo by Katie Sikora.



◀ THE WEIRD SISTERS KICK OFF LIVE SPACE DISCO PARTY NO WORRIES NO RULES TOUR

The Weird Sisters are redefining dance and party music with their genre-bending sound. The grooves are infectious, their shows are parties, and they keep things authentic by blending indie rock with electro-dance. The duo's Live Space Disco Party No Worries No Rules tour kicked off at Chicago's Cobra Lounge and came to a close in April with a hometown show at The Basement East in Nashville.



▲ ALICIA KEYS HONORS GRACIE ABRAMS AND HER TEAM OF WOMEN AT SHE IS THE MUSIC'S "WOMEN SHARING THE SPOTLIGHT" EVENT

She Is the Music honored GRAMMY®-nominated singer-songwriter Gracie Abrams and her team of women at the Women Sharing the Spotlight event at The Peppermint Club in Los Angeles. The powerful evening celebrated 50 impactful women in the music industry, each of whom shared their spotlight with another woman in the business.



▲ DAPTONE RECORDS ANNOUNCE THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION OF SHARON JONES *NATURALLY*

Daptone proudly announces a 20th anniversary reissue of *Naturally*, the famed album by Sharon Jones and the Dap-Kings. A new vinyl pressing will consist of a remastered 2xLP version that includes instrumentals for all tracks. 2005's *Naturally* was a pivotal moment in the history of soul music. The album has sold over 200,000 copies, with hit singles "How Long Do I Have to Wait" and "This Land is Your Land" streaming in the hundreds of millions—staggering figures for a wholly independent release. It was also the genesis for the Dap-Kings' collaboration with Mark Ronson and Amy Winehouse, the fruits of which having a lasting, indelible influence on soul, R&B, and pop music in general.



◀ CAMBODIAN ROYAL MUNI NORODOM GOES VIRAL WITH DEBUT PERFORMANCE AT "CELEBRATING CAMBODIA FESTIVAL," RELEASES NEW SINGLE/MUSIC VIDEO "BALLOONS," AND PREPS FOR DEBUT EP

Muni Norodom, a Cambodian royal, is a singer-songwriter, musician, actor, and descendant of King Norodom Sihanouk, an arts enthusiast. His debut performance at the Celebrating Cambodia Festival garnered over 3.5 million views and gained traction for his single "First Call." In his latest single, "Balloons," Muni questions whether to take or relinquish control while yearning for clarity and to feel grounded. The "Balloons" music video, directed by Michael J. Murphy, is out now. Muni is currently working on finishing his debut EP, exploring different sonic styles, and hitting more stages to bring his music to life.

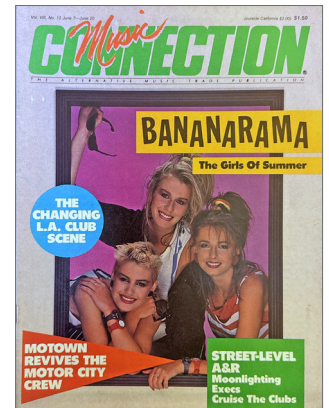
► LOS ANGELES PUNK BAND THE LINDA LINDAS WILL EMBARK ON 2025 SPRING HEADLINING NORTH AMERICAN TOUR FEATURING DATES WITH BE YOUR OWN PET AND PINKSHIFT

The Linda Lindas' second full-length album, *No Obligation*, further advanced their unironic, joyful, and exciting trajectory of mashing up L.A. punk with post punk, garage rock, power pop, new wave, and rock en Español. The album had been in the works for the last two years whenever the band weren't at school or touring. The world has watched these four musicians scream about injustice, sing about growing up, and exhibit the kind of altruism that is so meaningful to the punk scene. The Linda Lindas are here to defy expectations and challenge norms.



MUSIC CONNECTION

Tidbits From Our Tattered Past



1984 - Bananarama - #12

Bananarama, the legendary English pop group, graced the cover of our June 1984 issue. The trio—Sara Dallin, Siobhan Fahey, and Keren Woodward—had quickly risen to fame following the release of their debut single "Aie A Mwana" in '81, becoming symbols of empowerment in a male-dominated music industry. "We always had to fight, because we are girls. It's a very sexist business," Woodward shared. Yet, it was their refusal to conform to expectations that truly set them apart: "We simply enjoy what we do," said Fahey. Bananarama "helped redefine the role of women in pop music."



2008 - Taylor Swift - #4

On the cover of our February 2008 issue was pop icon Taylor Swift, after being nominated for Best New Artist at the 50th annual GRAMMY awards. Dan Kimpel spoke with then-GRAMMY President/CEO Neil Portnow. Portnow explained that after all entries are vetted, they undergo rigorous scrutiny by various screening committees. "We have days and days of meetings where the committees listen to all of that music and make sure it is put in an appropriate category," he said. "And as you can imagine, that is an imperfect science, and cause for a lot of debate about what belongs where."

Limited back issues available to order at musicconnection.com

Return of the



TOKIMONSTA

TOKIMONSTA IS AN ENIGMA.

The electronic artist born Jennifer Lee is gleefully awkward to nail down genre-wise, primarily because she's made it her business to blur and bend those boundaries with a sharp and open mind. The GRAMMY-nominated producer has, over the course of her 17-ish-year career, tapped into her listeners' every emotion; she's made them swell with joy and sway in a hypnosis-induced abandon. It's been a journey, for them and her, and an incredibly rewarding one.

When performing, her focus is intense. Yes, she'll play to the crowd when necessary—she certainly knows how to get a packed club bouncing when she wants to. But it's really all about the music. That's evident when listening to *Eternal Reverie*, her recently released opus.

There was a five-year gap between that and 2020's *Oasis Nocturno*, during which Lee stepped away from music to take care of her best friend during her final days. That's a profoundly life-altering experience for anyone to go through, and nobody would question her if the work that followed was overtly dark. Rather, *Eternal Reverie* evolved into a "tribute honoring her friend and the meaningful relationships that shape us all, with each

'I just don't want to do this anymore.' From the beginning when I decided I wanted to do music, I wanted to make sure that music, my love for music, came first."

The very same focus that we see during a Tokimonsta live set, the same attention to detail that we get from her recorded work, is evident in conversation. She's open, friendly, and intensely likeable. When conducting this interview via Zoom on a Friday afternoon in early April, she even admits that we caught her on a "chatty day." At the same time, it feels like every word she utters is carefully considered.

Behind her during the Zoom call, we can see a piano which she later clarifies is her "childhood piano" that she played when she was six years old at the urging of her parents.

"It wasn't my choice," she says with a wry smile. "So, like many kids, it's your parents who are just like, 'you should take piano lessons.' The lessons themselves were less important than getting me in front of the piano. I mean, the lessons are also important. It's helpful to know how to play piano when you make music, but I discovered that I had my own voice in music. When I was growing up, my family had this running joke that I could never finish

world, because we immigrated to this country for your being [Lee is second generation Korean American]. So in order for me to be here today, I had to jump through hoops of fire."

When she did start to veer towards electronic music and hip-hop, Los Angeles radio proved to be a magical source of inspiration.

"I discovered hip-hop—it was like Ice Cube and West Side Connection [Cube's supergroup]," Lee says. "Dr. Dre—that's the stuff that was playing on the radio here, especially at that time. So I discovered how much I loved hip-hop, but at the same time on the same radio station, on Fridays and Saturday nights after 10 p.m., that's when the club music would go on. As I got older, I was in the era of Napster, just downloading music. I had no idea who these artists were, and I discovered artists like Aphex Twin, but also drum & bass artists like Goldie. And I also discovered that I really, really like house music, and early Detroit techno. I used to go raving when I was in high school, like, sneak out of the house. Don't tell my mom."

The rave scene was inarguably infectious. Early events had a punk energy about them, driven by their novelty at the time. Older music listeners would claim that it wasn't "proper"

"My love for electronic music was very much shaped by rave culture. Internet culture is what allowed me to discover other genres."

track reflecting Tokimonsta's emotional and artistic journey during this poignant period," according to a statement.

"This is the longest length of time I've had between putting out anything and also not touring," Lee says. "So coming back, I was a little bit more apprehensive. There's always that concern. 'Oh, did everyone forget about me?' I haven't been very present on social media, and when the album came out, it's not like a different trajectory. I went full circle, and I really wanted to tap into my roots. I wasn't sure how people were going to feel about that too. But honestly, it's been so, so nice."

There are songs on the new album, notably the single "Enjoy Your Life," that are, at least on the surface, absolute bundles of joy. Lee says that any such vibe came about organically.

"It could be the nature of my approach that lent itself to be a tiny bit sunnier," she says. "This album is a result of me actually feeling very disconnected from music. Just being in the industry part—it does get exhausting, and yet often you'll have people that are like, 'I retire from music.' How do you retire from music? What must have happened for you to be like,

playing a piece from the start to the end. Mozart or Beethoven, I would just not play the whole thing. They attributed it to, I was not very good at piano. But why do I want to play the whole thing? This piece goes three pages, and I only like the first page of this music, and the rest is kind of garbage. And I decided that I just wanted to focus on playing the parts of this I thought were fun or that spoke to me."

When Lee started experimenting with creating electronic music, that mentality paid off. While chopping and sampling, she was clear minded about what she did and didn't like, what she wanted to use and what she left on the proverbial cutting room floor.

"I would also play my own melodies," she says. "And I was in a household that didn't encourage that. They were like, 'stop playing whatever you're playing. You need to play what your teacher told you to play.' And through all that, I really pushed to be the person I am today. Like no one handed anything to me, no one encouraged that. I didn't come in a family that's like, 'let's celebrate you in the arts.' I came from a family that's like, 'you need to be a doctor or a lawyer or do something that is worthwhile in this

music, but for teens, it was "their music."

"I'd go to raves when I was 15 or 16 years old," Lee says. "And I was like, 'wow, I fucking love this music and this energy.' And it was across the board from going to the jungle gentleman bass room and going to the house room, and occasionally dabbling in techno, and maybe taking a step into happy hardcore, and then stepping back. But really, my love for electronic music was very much shaped by rave culture. Internet culture is what allowed me to discover other genres."

That love for the music still shines through today, even if the new album was born out of an initial, understandable disconnect. With the pressure of a blossoming career weighing down, Lee decided to tap into her roots in order to rediscover her sonic identity.

"If I had to choose between having a healthy relationship with music and having a career in music, I would choose my healthy relationship with music," she says. "And it was starting to get to a point where I needed to do something about it. I was like, back in 2009, 2010, who was Tokimonsta? I didn't know as much as I do now, and I wasn't as experienced, but I was still

BY BRETT CALLWOOD • PHOTOS BY GABRIELLA HUGHES

carefree, and there was no pressure, because it wasn't making money doing music. I was just so exuberant and happy to be out there sharing my music at that time. So when I approached this album, even though I was in a sort of jaded complex, I was like, 'I don't want to be that. Who was I then?' And tapping into that allowed me to make this album."

Ultimately Lee says that the process of creating *Eternal Reverie* was a therapeutic one, reminding her that music can exude joyfulness while also being fun to create.

"It was really a very amazing process to be able to put this album together and be like, 'Okay, let's work with some breaks, and let's work with some samples,'" she says. "And weirdly, at the end of the day, the album ended up also sounding very L.A. I remember someone from New York was like, 'hey, this sounds like a very L.A. album' in the middle of winter, so obviously [it was] freezing there."

It's that unmistakable L.A. sunshine vibe that hammers home the idea that Tokimonsta was able to go back to the beginning, to the sheer love of creating the kind of music that she wanted to create, back when she was discovering the FruityLoops program (now called FL Studio).

"Once I got into college, a friend of mine started using this program called FruityLoops," Lee says. "I think the entry level is a lot more user friendly. It's a lot of blocks. You know, it's set up like a drum machine, and I got very proficient at it. FruityLoops was a significant part of my musical journey up until like 2012. I still love it, you know, even though I've switched over to Ableton. But at that time, I was making music purely as a hobby. I didn't have any friends that were in a scene. I was in uni—I went to UC Irvine, which was in Orange County, very far away from any culture. I was a fan of making hip-hop beats, and I just made them nonstop, until one day I actually met a person who was like, 'Hey, you should come to L.A., there's a bunch of other music producers and beat makers there,' and we just go to nights and play beats."

When asked to recall her first public set, Lee refers to L.A. "beat cyphers," at Project Blowed in Leimert Park, where budding producers would show up with burned CDs and play their beats over a small PA system.

"Your beats could only be, like, 30 seconds long max, and you would just go and play it," she says. "Everyone in that small room would just be like, 'Wow, this is fire.' People would take turns, and those were called beat cyphers, where you're going back and forth. That eventually did lead to things like, like beat invitationals and competitive beats. At that time, I was making music heavily rooted in hip-hop beats, until eventually I started incorporating more electronic elements, because I didn't work with rappers."

While Lee has grown to love and respect the art of DJing, she considers herself a producer—a creator of electronic music—first and foremost.

"If I had to choose one, I would choose making music all day," she says. "I don't know if it's weird to say this, but I think I'm better at making music than DJing. They're completely different skills. And that's why you have people that are excellent DJs. Excellent selectors don't necessarily make great music, or people that make your favorite songs, you go watch a set and you're like, 'wow, they can't mix.' So the good thing is, as a hobby and for learning, I really love the art of DJing. It allows me to express the selector in me."

In the 15 years or so that Lee has been creating electronic music professionally, perceptions of that particular musical spectrum (which includes a mass of genres and subgenres) have shifted dramatically. The "it's not real music if it doesn't have guitars and drums" and "it's all just bleeps and bloops" crowd have been effectively silenced as the music-loving world have caught on to just how artistically important, diverse, and dazzling electronic music can be.

"It has changed so much," Lee says. "I'll give you a good example—oftentimes we used to go to Las Vegas. A very common thing when you're young, you want to go drink, gamble, whatever. Maybe in 2010 when electronic music was just proliferating into the mainstream, where you had the Black Eyed Peas or those things that were considered EDM. It didn't matter if it was techno or drum and bass, it was EDM to people, and it would just be one genre of that playing in Vegas. Now, when I go to Vegas, the clubs are playing

a variety. It's like deep house, or you're seeing artists like Bob Moses or Rūfūs du Sol playing one club, and you have a Skrillex or something at a different club. There is now a variety, and obviously there's further sub genres, but this is mainstream clubs, right? Mainstream Vegas, and you're hearing a more diverse palette of electronic music being played."

It's also true that a large percentage of our favorite electronic artists at present are female. The likes of Alison Wonderland, Nora En Pure, Charlotte de Witte, and Whipped Cream (to name just a few) are consistently creating absolute magic across multiple electronic genres. It's a similar story to what is going on in hip-hop. We ask Lee, is this a golden period, or has the talent always been there but held back by institutional misogyny?

"I think it's a combination," she says. "Some of it is industry-preventative, not making it easy for women to thrive. Because of those barriers, a lot of women were very intimidated by trying to produce music, especially electronic music. It's not intuitive, it's much more technical. You do have to open a program, and I feel like when I started making music, I didn't have any mentors. I had no one to look up to. Now I see people like Alison, who's a peer, or Nora En Pure or Rezz. Once you have visibility, then you have a whole generation of younger women that are like, 'Oh, well, if I see Tokimonsta and Alison and all these people making fucking amazing music and throwing amazing shows, I too can do that.' When I grew up, there were no examples of that. I just wanted to make beats. And now that there's visibility, everyone knows that they can do it."

If young, female artists are indeed looking to the established likes of Tokimonsta for inspiration, *Eternal Reverie* provides plenty—a gorgeous album created by an incredibly talented artist. Recorded at her home studio in the main, using "Ableton, Rhodes, Moog Little Phatty, OP-1, a record player, guitar, various plugins, [and an] AKG C414 mic," this is the sound of an artist who has made peace with her place in the music machine. She's creating for herself—it just so happens that she has impeccable taste.

Visit tokimonsta.com for more.



Quick Facts

- Lee was diagnosed with Moyamoya disease in 2015, which results in arteries in the brain being constricted. She went through two brain surgeries and lost language skills for a period. The 2017 album *Lune Rouge* was her first following her recovery.
- After graduating from university, she worked for a video game publisher while making music in her own time. When she was laid off during the recession, she decided to focus on her music full time.
- The list of artists Tokimonsta has worked with is long and impressive. It includes Anderson .Paak, Earthgang, Isaiah Rashad, Selah Sue, and ZHU.
- She has done official remixes for the likes of Duran Duran, Sia, Beck, Odesza, and the Netflix show *Squid Game*.
- On the new album, the single "Feel It" features L.A. duo PARTYOF2, and showcases "her ability to craft boundary-pushing dancefloor anthems, blending house and hip-hop with infectious energy."

Electronic Music Roundtable

2025

By Brett Callwood

THE FUTURE, AS THEY SAY, IS NOW! The era of electronic artists being derided as “not real musicians” by those who prefer traditional instruments are well and truly behind us. The likes of the Chemical Brothers, Goldie, and the Prodigy are considered elder statesmen—“classic electronic,” if you will. Kraftwerk and Jean-Michel Jarre are pioneers. Contemporary artists are all over the mainstream, and we’re absolutely here for it. For this roundtable, *Music Connection* spoke to five electronic artists from various genres about their experiences in the industry up to this point.

BLOODY BEETROOTS

(Sir Bob Cornelius Rifo)

bloodybeetroots.com

How and when did you get started DJing and/or producing?

Who were your early influences?

I started producing back in '97 using prehistoric gear like an AKAI S950, and right about the same time, I started DJing at some local club in my tiny hometown in Italy. I was all over the place musically—hip-hop, drum and bass, breaks—pulling influences from DJ Shadow, Roni Size, Metalheadz, plus The Prodigy and Chemical Brothers. On the hip-hop side, I was always locked onto that East Coast vibe. Thing is, I was kind of a hybrid; I'd DJ one night, then switch it up another night, singing or playing bass and guitar in punk bands.

DJing and producing are such distinct skills—do you have a preference?

For me, DJing and producing are two sides of the same coin—both feed directly into the actual writing of music. I like starting from a real instrument before I hit production; it helps me tap into a raw, stripped-down power, and that's exactly how I like to express myself. Often, writing kicks off from something abstract—a bold title for a track that doesn't exist yet—and then it all comes together once I dive into production. That said, I love pushing boundaries and flipping classic formats. Even the TBB DJ set isn't your typical DJ show—it's way closer to a live gig, with the stage presence totally taking center stage and the gear fading into the background behind the performance.

How have perceptions towards electronic music changed since you started?

Electronic music's whole DNA is an evolution—constantly shifting thanks to pioneering producers who set a standard, smash it, and then build something entirely new. That's the wave that births new genres, crossovers; they morph through the years, turning into something totally fresh, always mirroring the times we're living in. Music is forever holding up that cultural mirror, and electronic music, especially, shows exactly where society's head is at.



On a similar note, how much has the quality of gear available improved?

Gear quality has leveled way the fuck up over time—what you can pull off now would've been pure sci-fi to me 20 years ago. We've jumped lightyears ahead, serving music-makers with endless ways to shape our artistic vision. But honestly, gear's always secondary to that raw, primal idea of music itself—that original spark doesn't need overthinking or fancy extras to come alive.

What gear do you use?

I mainly rock Ableton Live for all my productions, running on a solid UAD setup with some beefy external DSP—perfect for powering my analog emulation plugins. Got a bunch of guitars and basses (Fender, Gibson, MusicMan, Ibanez), plus a few analog outboards because I'm always hyped on gear with real knobs and circuits you can actually touch. As for synths, I've had all sorts, and my latest pickup's a Novation Peak—it gets the job done nicely.

Bloody Beetroots just released two singles—"This is Blood" featuring N8Noface and Teddy Killerz, and "KILLING PUNK" with Bob Vylan—building up to two EPs, Forever Pt.1 & Pt.2.

SACHA ROBOTTI

instagram.com/sacharobotti

How and when did you get started DJing and/or producing? Who were your early influences?

I started DJing in 1995, and producing more seriously in 2001 or so. I chose DJing/producing as my job, vocation, and lifestyle in 2006 and have been doing this ever since.

DJing and producing are such distinct skills —do you have a preference?

I love the “immediacy” of DJing, and I love the “timelessness” of producing! DJing can be so gratifying in the now, in this moment, especially when in front of a crowd that reacts to your music selection. DJing is also the way to test out my new productions, so I guess both go hand in hand. When I say producing is a more “timeless” activity, I mean that a production, once it's done and released, is out there in the ether, potentially forever or at least for some time, while it keeps creating highly personal or collective moments and memories every time someone listens to it.

How have perceptions towards electronic music changed since you started?

For me it hasn't changed all that much, I still “need” to make and play music for my own sanity.

I think the key for me in terms of longevity is to keep my spirits towards electronic music on a magical and fun level, rather than as a “job,” even though DJing has been my main income for the last 20 years. I strongly believed in PLUR and the unifying aspect of electronic music through all economic and social “classes.” I also remember when I started DJing in '95, techno/house were kind of made fun of and misunderstood, but at the same time, this music started reaching the public eye via events like the Love Parade, or in clubs in cities like Berlin, Frankfurt, Ibiza, London, Manchester, Paris, Amsterdam, Barcelona, Goa, among others, that regularly brought out DJs from Chicago, Detroit, N.Y.C. to spread this sound.

Fast forward 30 years: electronic music has become very popular, especially in the last decade, which brings a lot of new talent to the table via the internet and “democratization” of technology. It has developed into a whole ecosystem of people, both amateurs and professionals, building or trying to build livelihoods in this electronic music framework.

Electronic music has become a fully televised vehicle for ticket sales, clout, fame, virality, fun, and coolness, rather than a collective “underground” experience in nondescript spaces away from prying eyes and the establishment, or an artistic expression for nerds, freaks, the marginalized. Electronic music has been commodified, it has become a luxury good for people with money, in many ways. It's almost as if making and spending a lot of money at events is more important than pushing musical boundaries or doing this for creativity's sake, or for the community aspect.

On a similar note, how much has the quality of gear available improved?

Wow I mean, I played on some super nasty vinyl setups back in the day in some places that were very unsafe—basements, warehouses, breweries, disused facilities, with water dripping from the ceiling and shady electrics, the jankiest tables or booths, broken needles and monitors, gangsters in the room, obviously no fire exits etc.—you name it I've probably played on it. Vinyl, Final Scratch, the first CDJs, schlepping vinyl everywhere, burning CDs etc., there was a lot of heavy carrying involved. In comparison, it's a breeze now, I just show up with my USBs and a smile. I'd love to bring my vinyl collection over from Germany to the U.S. though, that's another project for this year.

What gear do you use?

I tend to keep my setup rather minimal these days and produce on the road a lot. My current studio setup includes an Apple laptop with Ableton live, UAD interface, Beyerdynamic headphones, Dynaudio speakers and sub. I work with a team, collaborate and travel a lot so I record music in different spaces and studios.

Sacha Robotti recently did a remix of “Groove Like That” feat. Taka Boom & Chaka Khan for Shaboom Records, and a release on Sweat It Out with Joplyn and SIAN called “Get Raw”! He's currently working on his debut album for Dirtybird Records / Empire that's going to be released this year. Stay tuned for tour dates!

KARABA

djkaraba.com

How and when did you get started DJing and/or producing? Who were your early influences?

I started producing music in 2020 during the pandemic—like a lot of people, I was stuck at home and finally had the space to dive into something I'd always wanted to explore. I'd already been DJing for a few years before that. Movement and rhythm have always been a big part of how I connect with sound, so DJing felt like an extension of my body language.

Early on, I was heavily influenced by artists like Black Coffee, Nitefreak, Shimza, and the whole Afro house/tech scene. I was also inspired by DJs like Honey Dijon, Folamour, and Jayda G—I love their sound and the worlds they've built around their



music. I also draw a lot of inspiration from my Congolese roots—the rhythms, drums, and energy I grew up with are deeply embedded in

how I approach both DJing and producing. Later on, I was mentored by Stephen Ramsay from Young Galaxy, who really helped me level up my production skills and start finding my own voice in the electronic space.

DJing and producing are such distinct skills —do you have a preference?

I don't have a preference—I love DJing just as much as I love producing. They're different outlets that let me tap into different sides of my creativity. DJing unleashes the fire in me, that high-energy side, and it's deeply connected to my background as a dancer. Production, on the other hand, lets me express a more vulnerable side of myself. Both have their own magic and balance me out in different ways.

How have perceptions towards electronic music changed since you started?

From my perspective, people are starting to realize just how much depth and culture is embedded in the scene, especially in genres like Afro house/tech. It's not just about the beats; it's about the story, the energy, and the community behind it. There's so much more to these sounds than what meets the ear, and I think people are beginning to appreciate that richness more now.

On a similar note, how much has the quality of gear available improved?

The quality of gear has always been pretty high since I started in 2016, but what's really exciting for me is the constant evolution of the CDJs. I love how they keep improving, especially when it comes to playing with acapellas and mixing multiple tracks at once—being able to juggle three tracks simultaneously really opens up a whole new level of creativity for me. It's all about the freedom to experiment, and the gear now supports that in ways that really elevate my sets.

What gear do you use?

I use a variety of gear, but my go-to setup revolves around the Pioneer CDJs, especially the latest models because of the flexibility they give me. For producing, I work mainly with Ableton Live and a few select plugins that help me craft my sound.

KARABA's third EP will drop in June. Look out for show dates.

ELI BROWN

[instagram.com/elibrownbeats](https://www.instagram.com/elibrownbeats)

How and when did you get started DJing and/or producing? Who were your early influences?

I was 10 when I first discovered rave music, and it's been my obsession ever since. My early influences definitely came from the bootleg cassette tapes that my sister would bring back from raves—it was drum & bass and jungle music that really caught my attention at first. I remember when Roni Size won the Music Prize in 1997, and the scene just exploded—I was completely obsessed. Carl Cox has also always been at the top for me as well—his sound has always sparked something quite special in me



DJing and producing are such distinct skills—do you have a preference?

For me, they really go hand in hand. I get a lot of inspiration when I'm playing shows, which drives me straight to the studio on my days off

to create new music or new edits for my sets. And it's really just around and around we go there—it's a total obsession for me.

How have perceptions towards electronic music changed since you started?

I think the scene has definitely blown up in recent years, especially techno, particularly in the U.S., social media has changed the way we all experience music. Honestly though, I don't think much has changed—

there's always been good DJs and there always will be, and that music will keep finding its way to people.

On a similar note, how much has the quality of gear available improved?

I don't think the quality has necessarily improved. For example, some of the classic synths and drum machines from the '80s and '90s are still relevant today and you can hear them in so many productions. I will say that the entry point to DJing and production has never been easier—you can download a free copy of Ableton and start producing on a laptop. In my opinion that's incredible. Freedom for anyone and everyone to create!

What gear do you use?

For creating I'm mainly in the computer—Ableton as well as a few synths like serum and sylenth, and of course loads of good samples. It's really not about what you have, it's what you do with it. Sometimes my best ideas come on planes when I'm using the most minimal kit and samples. Often, you have to work with the narrow perimeters you have, especially when you're heavily on the road, but it forces you to be really creative. I feel that sometimes having too many choices can make it harder.

Eli Brown just released his latest track, "Drip" with Eliza Legzdina, and recently made his Coachella debut.

CRANKDAT

[crankdat.com](https://www.crankdat.com)

How and when did you get started DJing and/or producing? Who were your early influences?

I got into producing my sophomore year of high school (2012) when one of my classmates introduced me to Skrillex. After hearing dubstep for the first time—and already having an underlying affinity towards dance music that I didn't even know was "dance music" like Avicii and David Guetta—I remember Googling how to "make dubstep" and eventually came across the daw FL Studio. I was infatuated with all styles of EDM and had a lot of inspirations—Skrillex, Flux Pavillion, Zomboy, Zedd, Martin Garrix—the list goes on.

DJing and producing are such distinct skills—do you have a preference?

They're both awesome. I love producing cool stuff to DJ with and I love DJing for giving me the opportunity to play what I produce.

How have perceptions towards electronic music changed since you started?

Electronic music in general is different, but bass music—the lane I'm in—has become more mainstream (in the U.S. at least). It's still not as commercialized as some of the other subsets of EDM, but there are multiple dubstep festivals throughout the country that sell a ton of tickets. I wasn't as attuned to statistics like that when I first started, but I believe that culture was fractional compared to what it is today.

On a similar note, how much has the quality of gear available improved?

Gear for producing has become astronomically better. When I started, my maxed-out MacBook Pro could handle a decent amount of workload for the time, but it would get bogged down after 100 or so tracks—especially if a handful of those tracks were using CPU intensive plug-ins. Today, my maxed-out MacBook can run anything I throw at it. 300+ high-CPU tracks? No problem. What's crazy too, is that even my MacBook Air (which I only use for Rekordbox) can still handle around 200+ medium-CPU tracks. The Apple silicon is insane.

What gear do you use?

For producing, I use a MacBook Pro Max 16" and Ableton Live 12. I use Sennheiser 660S2 Headphones and Airpod Maxes interchangeably, and my audio interface is a MOTU M4. I also recently picked up a Stream Deck to speed up my Ableton workflow. This loadout is my preference because I can throw it in a backpack and take it anywhere in the world with me.

Crankdat is currently wrapping up the Get Cranked tour and will be performing at festivals throughout the summer.

Headrush Flex Prime

The new Headrush Flex Prime is a compact, all-in-one Amp simulator and Multi effects processor designed for live performance, studio recording, and practice. With Headrush Flex Prime, you get a wide variety of high-quality, ultra-responsive and realistic guitar effects, amp models, cabinets, and microphone emulations. For connectivity, FlexPrime includes a 1/4" guitar input, an external expression pedal input, two 1/4" TRS outputs, a 3.5mm headphone output, an auxiliary input, MIDI in/out, and a 1/4" stereo effects loop for external pedal integration. A USB-C port is provided for firmware updates, file transfers, and for using Flex Prime as a 24-bit audio interface.

The Headrush Flex Prime is the most compact model in Headrush's second-generation lineup, following up on the first generation Headrush MX-5. Like the second generation Headrush pedalboard and Headrush CORE, the user interface on Headrush Flex Prime has been extensively redesigned with a new icon-driven menu layout.



At the center of the Headrush Flex Prime interface is a four-inch high-resolution touchscreen which serves as the main hub for navigating menus, editing rigs, and accessing various features. Flex Prime has the same DSP capabilities as the larger Headrush Prime and Core models, supporting up to 14 effect blocks per preset with multiple signal paths. Compared to the larger Headrush Core and Pedalboard models, the Flex Prime's screen has a reduced number of physical controls, but the processing power and internal sounds and effects remain identical. A large main knob allows for quick overall volume adjustments while a rotary encoder facilitates scrolling through menu options and adjusting parameter values—a press-to-confirm function streamlines the editing process.

Using the Flex Prime is easy and intuitive, with the touch screen displaying essential controls such as the input block, signal chain, and output block details. Users can view the selected rig name, footswitch assignments,

and signal path visualization while accessing practice tools: a tuner, metronome, looper, firmware updater, global EQ, and much more. The top menu bar shows CPU usage, Bluetooth, Wi-Fi status, and rig name. Users can switch rigs by swiping down and selecting via the touchscreen or encoder knob.

Creating a new rig is as simple as selecting the "New Rig" button and customizing the signal chain. The hardware assign button allows you to rearrange effect blocks within the rig or create scene-based configurations. Changes can be saved as new rigs or updated within existing presets.

For hands-free control, Flex Prime includes three footswitches that can be assigned to

third-party impulse responses (IRs).

FlexPrime also offers extensive looper and performance capabilities, including up to five minutes of looping time with 20 minutes of overdubs per loop. Additional performance tools include a global EQ, multi-assignment footswitch functionality, and tools for creating and managing your setlists.

The Headrush Flex Prime, Core, and Prime boards come equipped with four brand new built-in synthesizer effects: Hybrid Synth, Electric Piano, DB-33 Organ, and Ambient Verve. These effects utilize Headrush's proprietary real-time polyphonic Pitch-to-MIDI tracking, allowing your guitar to be transformed into a wide variety of expressive synth sounds.

To enhance your workflow, a new Remote Editor tool enables full rig customization from a laptop or tablet. Connecting to the Remote Editor involves linking the Flex Prime to a local network, navigating to Global Settings, and accessing the tool via a web browser.



activate or deactivate effects blocks, scenes, or load factory or user created patches. Holding these footswitches grants access to additional functions such as changing footswitch modes, opening the looper, or activating the tuner. An onboard expression pedal further enhances playability, allowing dynamic control over various parameters such as volume or wah effects. These physical controls, combined with the touchscreen interface, provide a comprehensive and flexible platform for creating, editing, and controlling your rigs.

Flex Prime comes bundled with Headrush Amp Cloner and ReValver 5 software for macOS and Windows for precise audio cloning of amplifiers, distortion, overdrive, and other effect pedals. Using the new Headrush Super Clone feature, you are able to combine multiple amp or pedal clones in a single patch. Using the Headrush Flex Prime scene feature, you can assign multiple clones or super clones to one of the three footswitches. Additionally, the included ReValver Live software enables you to utilize your cloned gear in your DAW, integrating seamlessly with Headrush's FX library and

The interface includes several key features: the Edit Rigs Window, which organizes and categorizes user-created rigs with search functionality; the Setlist Window, which manages performance setups; and the Global EQ Window, which allows adjustments to system-wide frequency response.

Summing it up, the new Headrush Flex Prime delivers professional-grade sound processing power in a portable form factor, combining intuitive touchscreen control, advanced amp modeling, and seamless cloud integration. With powerful editing tools and versatile connectivity, it is an ideal solution for guitarists and bassists looking for an all-in-one effects processor for both live and studio use. The Headrush Flex Prime is a perfect size solution for your gig bag, and it's easy to load up a handful of your favorite tones and craft those into usable set lists for desktop recording and live gigs.

Headrush Flex Prime is available now for \$499.

For more details, visit headrushfx.com or subscribe to the official Headrush YouTube channel for demonstrations and tutorials.

Walrus Audio Canvas Clock

The Walrus Audio Canvas Clock is an essential utility for musicians who rely on having accurately synchronized tempos across multiple MIDI devices. Designed to unify an entire rig under one tempo source, the Walrus Audio Canvas Clock serves as the virtual conductor of your ensemble of pedals, synthesizers, and MIDI-enabled devices. Multiple MIDI inputs are provided with 5-pin MIDI DIN, 1/8" MIDI, and 1/4" analog clock outputs. The Walrus Audio Canvas Clock is designed to integrate seamlessly into a pedalboard setup, offering a sturdy and durable build that matches other Walrus Audio products.

Built with simplicity and efficiency in mind, the Walrus Audio Canvas Clock features a compact and minimalist physical layout. The front panel houses an easy-to-read LED display, ensuring visibility even in dimly lit environments. The Walrus Audio Canvas Clock interface includes a few tactile buttons for setting and adjusting the time. The power input and necessary connection ports are strategically placed to maintain a clean and organized layout. The Walrus Audio Canvas Clock enclosure is a small, pedalboard-friendly metal chassis, maintaining the sleek and modern design typical of Walrus Audio products.

The best way to think of the Canvas Clock is as a virtual conductor that seamlessly distributes clock signals to multiple effects and instruments. This can include a collection of vintage and modern MIDI devices, pedals, and synthesizers. The Walrus Audio Canvas Clock can transmit both analog and MIDI clock signals, allowing seamless integration of older MIDI gear with modern digital devices.

The Canvas Clock is not simply a timekeeper. It possesses the ability to send MIDI Program Change (PC) and Continuous Controller (CC) messages, allowing it to control various aspects of connected equipment beyond just tempo. This transforms the Walrus Audio Canvas Clock into a compact yet powerful MIDI controller.

If you have a complex MIDI setup, the Walrus Audio Canvas Clock can function as both

a timing source and a control unit, making the management of multiple MIDI controllers and footswitches a breeze. For musicians who rely on time-based effects—such as delays, tremolos, or modulation pedals—the Canvas Clock eliminates timing inconsistencies that arise from manually setting tempos across multiple devices, ensuring perfect synchronization during live performances.

The Walrus Audio Canvas Clock is designed to safeguard against errors that could otherwise disrupt the flow of your performance. By using Walrus Audio's Canvas Clock Editor web app, users can pre-program entire setlists and

practice sessions. Additionally, you can configure MIDI Macros to trigger specific MIDI commands when recalling certain songs, ensuring seamless integration with other MIDI devices. Metronome settings can also be customized, including adjustments for type, volume, and accent notes. Once you've made all your desired changes, save the settings within the web app. The Canvas Clock pedal will automatically update to reflect your modifications, ensuring your configurations are ready for use.

Beyond its role as a master clock, the Canvas Clock also includes a metronome output. This is useful for keeping an entire band in sync during live scenarios, where fluctuat-

ing tempos can lead to disjointed performances. The metronome output can also be routed to an in-ear monitoring system or sent to the front-of-house mix, ensuring that every member of the ensemble is locked into the same rhythmic framework.

Live performers will appreciate the Walrus Audio Canvas Clock's seamless song transitions, metronome integration, and the ability to pre-program entire setlists. Studio musicians, on the other hand, will find that the Canvas Clock enhances precision during recording sessions.

In summary, the Walrus Audio Canvas Clock is more than just a tempo control device; it is a refined tool for musicians who demand precision, flexibility, and

ease of use in their performances. By bridging the gap between analog and digital, providing comprehensive setlist management, and offering MIDI control functionality, it stands as a pivotal addition to any serious musician's setup.

Much more than just a simple MIDI utility, the Walrus Audio Canvas Clock simplifies workflow and makes integrating old and new MIDI gear a breeze. Whether in a live setting or within the controlled confines of a studio, the Walrus Audio Canvas Clock is designed to ensure that all your MIDI devices stay in sync in a studio or live performance situation.

The Walrus Audio Canvas Clock is available now for \$299.

Find out more at walrusaudio.com/products/canvas-clock.



assign tempos to each song in advance. This is great for touring musicians who need to transition between songs with precision, eliminating the need for manual tempo adjustments on stage. With your tempo locked in, each song can be recalled at the tap of a switch, eliminating the need for manual pedal adjustments. The Walrus Audio's Canvas Clock Editor also allows for the customization of footswitch functions, offering the flexibility to tailor controls to individual preferences.

Using the Canvas Clock Editor web app, you can create and modify up to 128 song slots, adjusting details like song names, meters, BPM, MIDI macros, and metronome start/stop preferences. Organizing your songs into setlists allows for smoother navigation during performances or

Noxgear's 39G Portable Speaker Brings the Joy of Music Everywhere

Listening to recorded music used to be a stationary experience. The audience was forced to remain wherever a record player or radio was located. That changed once portable players came to market, yet there were particular disadvantages with these devices. Boom boxes were heavy and cumbersome. The Sony Walkman and Discman Portable CD Player, while far lighter and easier to carry, required headphones or earbuds, which are often uncomfortable or impractical under certain circumstances.

With Noxgear's 39G personal speaker, these limitations disappear. The miniature device, which clips easily to clothing, offers hands-free music and phone calls on the go. The name reflects its weight; at just 39 grams, it's lighter than a pack of gum. It pairs with any Bluetooth device, including TVs, laptops, tablets, and smart watches. Such portability makes it ideal for runners, bikers, hikers, or anyone constantly

active outdoor lifestyles. They began in earnest searching for ways to continue their mission. "We looked at our market and current technology," says Walters from the operation's headquarters in Worthington, OH. "And it seemed like nobody enjoyed the experience of putting in earbuds. Also, it's not safe to go running with them." The duo set out to create the world's lightest and best-sounding external speaker.

Walters and Curran looked at then-current products similar to what they wanted to make. At the time, there wasn't much available in the size range they felt was achievable. Some portable players weighed a pound or more and used built-in handles. The only clip-on speaker out there featured poor audio quality and usability. In the end, the pair looked beyond existing alternatives and simply focused on creating the best device they could muster.

Building the 39G came with plenty of struggles, one of which was achieving decent bass.

ters thought the offer was a scam. "But I talked to the folks that operate the gift bags and they were amazing," he notes. "I'm honored to have them include us."

One reason for which creators might want a 39G is testing. If the device becomes even more popular, they'll need to know exactly how their final mixes come across on the tiny speaker. Plus, it's hard to deny the convenience of taking a call while loading gear in and out of a club or listening to rehearsal tapes while handling chores that require situational awareness.

Walters sees parallels between running a technology startup and selling oneself as an artist. "There's a lot of overlap there," he insists, stressing that both endeavors require savvy marketing. "What you're trying to do is tell a story and bring someone into the world of the brand." There's also endless experimentation. Just as technology companies are



moving from room to room. Its waterproof IPX7 rating means it'll survive inclement weather. Go ahead, take it in the shower and sing your heart out. It currently retails for \$79.95 on the manufacturer's website.

Bringing to life this novel gadget is Noxgear's cofounders, Simon Curran and Tom Walters. Both went to school for different fields of engineering, thus giving them the necessary knowledge to create such a product. The company started with the pair playing nighttime rounds of ultimate Frisbee. Recognizing they needed a way to see each other in the dark, they designed a wearable, light-up vest, the Tracer2 Visibility Vest, which they began selling. After that came the LightHound LED Harness for dogs, offering stylish outdoor safety for pups craving walks after sundown.

The entrepreneurs realized their passion rested in building products for people with

"That's a challenge," Walters insists, "because you need the air volume." Another important factor was battery life. The current iteration offers up to 15 hours of playtime depending on usage factors, such as the type of audio. Interestingly, testing shows that podcasts are often the most draining. Even today, they're constantly making improvements. Their newest is upgrading to the latest Bluetooth protocol.

Although Noxgear's focus centers on outdoor living, Walters professes himself a lover of music. He names Eric Church as one of his favorite artists. Also, he played guitar in a high school band and still noodles around on the instrument from time to time. Naturally, he hopes the 39G will find its way into the hearts of music makers. Others clearly see the potential, as it will be featured in the gift bag for the 2025 American Music Awards taking place on Memorial Day, Monday, May 26. At first, Wal-

constantly trying to figure out what products and advertising strategies resonate best, artists must tinker to figure out how to evoke the strongest responses from crowds, identify which tunes and set lists are most effective, and crack the riddle of seeming relatable while appearing larger than life.

Noxgear's CEO chalks the startup's success to maintaining its core values of transparency and honesty. They're principles anyone blazing a new path would do well to remember. "When you're trying to do something difficult, there's all kinds of uncertainty," Walters points out, suggesting that feeling slighted and having negative reactions in the face of opposing thinking will stymie progress. "That's my primary philosophy on business," he finishes. "And that's how we roll."

Visit noxgear.com.

Jessie Reyez

Paid in Memories

Fmly/Island

Producer: Various

Canadian singer-songwriter Reyez has already got five Juno awards on her shelf, and that's no surprise at all when listening to her third full-length studio effort. "My relationship with success has been a little convoluted for a long time," she says. She might have to get used to it because *Paid in Memories* is a powerhouse of a pop-R&B album. The whole album is like a bubble of thoughts and emotions lying just beneath her surface, which rose to the top and popped for our pleasure. - **Brett Callwood**



Rico Nasty

Lethal

Fueled By Ramen

Producer: Imad Royal

Rico Nasty establishes herself as a musical chameleon with her third studio album, *Lethal*. Her unique blend of rock and rap is a winning combination. This is Nasty's first album under the punk rock label Fueled By Ramen, known for its alternative and pop-punk artists including Fall Out Boy and Twenty One Pilots. Her distinctive rap skills shine in the in-your-face track "Teethsucker (Yea3x)," while "Son Of A Gun" highlights her experimental side with growling screamo vocals. Rico Nasty's cool persona shines throughout all 15 tracks. - **Jacqueline Naranjo**



Various Artists

Intelligent Recordings Drum n' Bass

1997-1999

Curious Electricity/Intelligent Recordings

Producers: Keltech, Serpico, Utopian, Kojack, Tom B, Solid Liquid Gas

This compilation album, assembled by Keith York's SoCal drum and bass label Curious Electricity, gives an insight into the '90s D&B scene in all its sludgy, modulated glory. The comp showcases various producers, from Keltech and Utopian to Tom B., and York's project *Solid Liquid Gas*. The album excels in its production quality, serving as a love letter to Intelligent Recordings and all the art it created, produced, and inspired. - **Cade Pinkerson**



Propagandhi

At Peace

Epitaph

Producers: Propagandhi, John Paul Peters

Hardcore Canadian punk-metal band Propagandhi has something to say in their eighth album, *At Peace*. The group returns with a relentless barrage of headbangers and unapologetic lyrical truths about the condition of our world. Frontman Chris Hannah relates the blistering beats to "The existential dread of eking out a life worth living in this completely failed society." This album delivers a raw, urgent plea for hope; it's a critique of societal decay, an acknowledgement of despair, and a call for resilience. - **Ruby Risch**



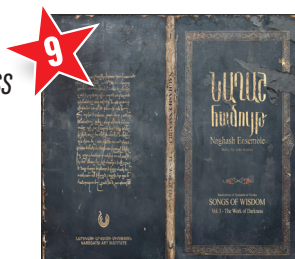
The Naghash Ensemble

Songs of Wisdom: The Work of Darkness Vol. 1

Naregatsi Art Institute

Producer: John Hodian

Their music has been described as "The sounds of Ancient Armenia re-imagined for the 21st century." Hailing from Yerevan, Armenia, this world class septet, led by composer/pianist John Hodian, has forged a unique identity over the past 15 years. Blending spirituality with neo-classical, Armenian folk, jazz, and post-minimalism, Hodian scores original music to sacred texts from medieval Armenian mystic poet Kostandin Erznkatsi. It's often dark and pensive, but vibrant and rhythmically intense as well. - **Eric Harabadian**



Dope Lemon

Golden Wolf

BMG

Producer: Angus Stone

Dope Lemon (Angus Stone) gets sonically vulnerable with a relaxed, fluid feel to his psych-rock sound. With loosely suggestive soundscape vibes and warm, solid instrumental base, Stone adds light syncopation and time-pulling, invitational lyricism, and vocal stylings that carry an easier, vaguer delivery than previous projects. Flavors of early Americana, ethereal pop, and hypnotic Bollywood with retro vocals, echo effects, and smooth loungey tracks add to Stone's seamlessly mixed, dreamy new record. - **Andrea Beenham**



Raging Speedhorn

Night Wolf

Spinefarm

Producer: Russ Russell

Formed in 1998, the legend of English extreme metal band Raging Speedhorn is as gloriously gnarly and wonderfully infamous as the cacophonous noise that they produce. This writer was once at an awards ceremony in London where they proceeded to mercilessly torment alt-rockers Placebo. Here, songs such as the snappy "Buzz Killa" and the super sludgy "The Blood Code" serve as a stark reminder that nobody pummels quite like this lot. - **Brett Callwood**



Cat Ridgeway

Sprinter

Cat Ridgeway Music

Producers: Cat Ridgeway, Mike Savino

Departing from her Americana roots, Cat Ridgeway lets loose with her latest album *Sprinter*. Ridgeway should embrace psychobilly and rock sounds more often, as she's suited for the tongue-in-cheek genre. The in-your-face punk rock explosion of "Epilogue" and fiery garage rock sounds of "Forced Actors" showcase Ridgeway's strength. The tracks are filled with interesting guitar riffs, banjo strings, and melodies that make you take another listen. Ridgeway is at her best when she speaks her mind and showcases her fiery and fun personality. - **Jacqueline Naranjo**





Kid Rose

Contact: therealkidrose@gmail.com

Web: linktr.ee/officialkidrose

Seeking: Label, Booking, Film/TV, Blog Promotion

Style: '80s Pop, Pop, Alt-Rock

Kid Rose is an artist who leans into nostalgia, blending the glitz of '80s pop with the sleekness of contemporary production. The era-mixing works but dialing back on the heavy vocal manipulation could turn these tracks into something comparable to what the Weeknd did with "Blinding Lights." There's a clear passion for retro aesthetics here, paired with a modern sensibility that gives the music a unique edge, though while the songs succeed in their vision, they don't reach the height of their influences. Kid Rose clearly has the ability to refine and elevate his sound, and it'll be interesting to see what he does next.

Production	7
Lyrics	6
Music	7
Vocals	6
Musicianship	7

SCORE: 6.6



Shari Puorto

Contact: shari.puorto@gmail.com

Web: sharipuorto.com

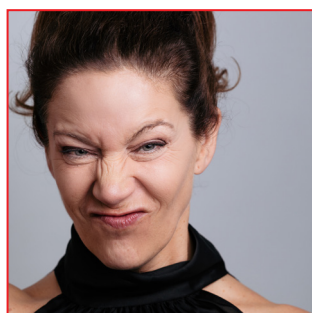
Seeking: Review, Bookings, Film/TV

Style: Roots, Rock, Blues

Blues-rock artist Shari Puorto has long been praised for her soulful voice and dynamic stage presence. "Hold On" brings a confident, bluesy grit with guitar chops that pay homage to '70s rock. Her voice is raw and authentic—she hits all the notes—but at times, the vocals feel more like another instrument in the mix rather than the driving force they could be. "In the City" blends soulful storytelling with more funk-driven instrumentation, while "Why Not Me?" leans into classic rock influences, delivering strong melodies but lacking a standout moment. Puorto's artistry is undeniable, and while these tracks don't fully capitalize on her vocal presence, they still offer a very solid, engaging listen.

Production	8
Lyrics	7
Music	8
Vocals	7
Musicianship	8

SCORE: 7.6



Heidi Vincent

Contact: trulyheidivincentsmusic@gmail.com

Web: heidivincents.com

Seeking: Review, Film/TV, Label, Publishing

Style: Pop-Rock, Country

While Vincent lists pop-rock and country as her genres, don't make the mistake of thinking that she's an empty, chart-hungry country hopeful. There are no superficial lyrics about beer and trucks here. Rather, she has a sultry, mildly melancholy voice that proves beautifully expressive. "Vancouver singer-songwriter Heidi Vincent launched her music career in the early '90s when K97.5 FM picked up her first song, inspired by personal tragedy." That fact that her music is so intimately inspired by her life absolutely comes across, resulting in sound that is wonderfully authentic.

Production	8
Lyrics	8
Music	8
Vocals	8
Musicianship	8

SCORE: 8.0



Nikki O'Neill

Contact: nikki@nikkioneill.com

Web: nikkioneill.com

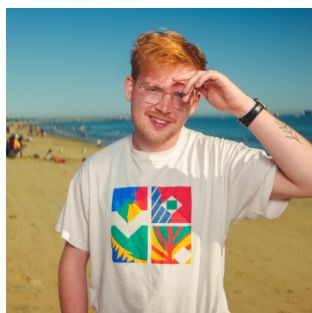
Seeking: Film/TV, Booking

Style: Americana, Soul

"I wanna be your breakfast cereal, and your favorite TV show," O'Neill sings on "All I Wanna be is Yours," before rhyming the title with "Let's skip the metaphors." Alright, we have to admit, that's pretty darn cute. She describes herself as an, "Americana singer-songwriter and guitar player, who's really into soul music, rhythm & blues, and gospel." L.A.-born, Chicago-based O'Neill clearly has a talent for dreaming up an insistent melody and matching it with relatable, enjoyable lyrics. She's also a gifted singer and guitarist, and the results of all that are a bunch of songs that we want to listen to again.

Production	7
Lyrics	8
Music	7
Vocals	8
Musicianship	7

SCORE: 7.4



Geepers

Contact: amanda@trendpr.com

Web: keepgeepin.com

Seeking: Label, Booking, Film/TV, Streaming

Style: Indie-Pop

Long Beach-based alternative indie-pop artist Edison Roberts is the creative force behind Geepers!. Each track is self-produced and his meticulous attention to detail shines through, resulting in a sound that's both polished and playfully unpredictable. There's a clear joy in the experimentation, "Lavender" is Geepers! at its core—vibrant, dynamic, and full of character. His tracks thrive on mood and texture—catchy enough to get stuck in your head, deep enough to make you wonder how they got there—mixing infectious beats with clever, ruminative lyrics to craft lush, dance-worthy soundscapes. A compelling listen.

Production	8
Lyrics	8
Music	7
Vocals	7
Musicianship	8

SCORE: 7.6



Emer

Contact: emersionmusic@gmail.com

Web: emerkinsella.com/album

Seeking: Booking, Management, Film/TV

Style: Crossover, Dreampop, Neoclassical, Cinematic, Strings

It's all about the atmosphere with Emer. Haunting vocals give way to ghostly strings, and the whole thing blends together into something that undeniably leaves a mark. Of the tracks that were submitted, "Concurrence" would appeal to fans of Pink Floyd and other psychedelic, progressive bands. But equally, lovers of traditional classical and orchestral music will find plenty to enjoy. Emer takes the listener on a journey, you'll feel immersed in their world, and by the end you won't know whether you're relaxed or traumatized. That swath of emotions is what makes Emer's sound so special.

Production	8
Lyrics	7
Music	8
Vocals	7
Musicianship	8

SCORE: 7.6

Music Connection's executive committee rates recorded music on a scale of 1 to 10. Number 1 represents the lowest possible score, 10 represents the highest possible score.

A final score of 7 denotes a solid, competent artist. For more information, see Submission Guidelines on the next page.



The Trout

Contact: rick@thetroutshow.com
Web: thetroutshow.com
Seeking: Sync Licensing
Style: Rock, Soundtrack, Indie, Pop, Soft-Rock

Rick Troutman, mastermind behind The Trout's new instrumental album *Aurora Dreams*, must have an entire orchestra at his disposal as his tracks are indefinably layered and intricate. There is no such thing as genre what it comes to Troutman—he makes his own rules. While "A Thousand Dreams Away" encapsulates the overall immersive feel of the album, "Oasis in the Night" solidifies Troutman's ability to defy any expectation—the song opens with robotic-like electronic pulses, then slips into a punchy jazz rhythm, then, he combines the two (along with other unique sounds) to form some inventive amalgamation. A rabbit hole worth falling into.

Production 8
 Lyrics X
 Music 8
 Vocals X
 Musicianship 9

SCORE: 8.3



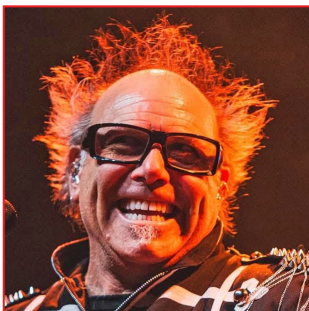
Lula the Magic Queen

Contact: lulatmq@gmail.com
Web: Spotify
Seeking: Booking, Review, Label, Radio
Style: Rock

Right off the bat, that's a great band name. Lula the Magic Queen? What does it mean? Who's Lula? Why is she magic? It's all so intriguing. Musically, LTMQ has a lot to offer too. The immediate reference point is grunge icons Soundgarden. Little bit Alice in Chains, little bit Stone Temple Pilots, but far too crunchy and heavy to recall Nirvana or Pearl Jam. This is gnarly grunge—they wallow in sludge with no small amount of glee. The production is a little shiny—we could have done with a few rough edges. But no matter, the songs are memorable enough.

Production 7
 Lyrics 7
 Music 8
 Vocals 8
 Musicianship 8

SCORE: 7.6



Stretch

Contact: stretch@stretchartist.com
Web: stretchartist.com
Seeking: Booking, Film/TV, Label
Style: Rock

It looks like rockers Stretch have been out doing shows with hair metal veterans Warrant. That, plus the band's sparkly logo (recalling British glitter legends the Sweet), might make one assume that Stretch is a bubblegum glam outfit. In fact, tunes such as "Firestarter" (not the Prodigy song) have a healthy crunch. Not quite industrial, but think *Generation Swine*-era Mötley Crüe. Mind you, "Flavortown" is blessed with the sort of chorus that Poison, Ratt, etc. would kill for. So glam, glitter and crunch, which is a heady brew. Ultimately, Stretch is a solid rock 'n' roll troupe with talent and enthusiasm galore. There's a lot to enjoy.

Production 8
 Lyrics X
 Music 8
 Vocals 8
 Musicianship 8

SCORE: 8.0



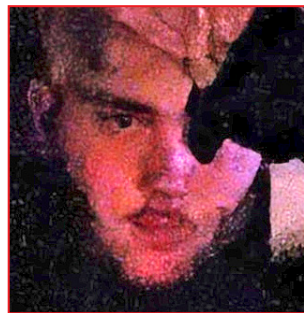
YBS Skola

Contact: lish@thelishagency.com
Web: ybsskola.com
Seeking: Film/TV, Label, Marketing
Style: Motivational Rap

Baltimore rapper YBS Skola describes his style as "motivational rap," which is perfectly appropriate. Besides the fact that the guy can pen rhymes like the rising star that he is, there's also a driving quality to his music that recalls Eminem's classic "Lose Yourself." The word "motivational" can sound so lightweight, in a new-age sort of way. But that's not the case here; YBS Skola's music makes you want to get off of your ass and do something. That's no small thing in a musical world that requires absolute commitment, and songs like "Slow it Down," "Dirty Soda," and "My Apologies" are certainly worthy of your attention.

Production 9
 Lyrics 8
 Music 8
 Vocals 7
 Musicianship 8

SCORE: 8.2



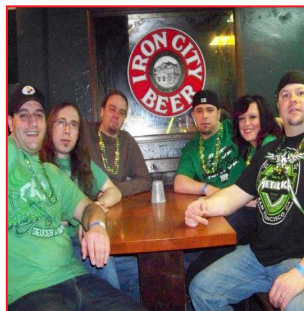
Yoduh

Contact: yoduhthechosen@yahoo.com
Web: soundcloud.com/yoduhthechosen
Seeking: Label, Booking
Style: Phonk, Rap

While Yoduh has a solid grasp of his style, his tracks lack the dynamism needed to truly elevate them. On "Level Up" Yoduh sticks to his flow like flies in honey, and it absolutely lands, though it leans heavily on a repetitive, one-note feel. There's an undeniable confidence in his delivery, even when the material doesn't fully rise to meet it. "Off A Benzo" offers a hazy, hypnotic energy, yet struggles to stand out in an oversaturated lane of melancholic rap. "Lost" brings a bit more emotional weight, with its moody production complementing his delivery, but doesn't quite push beyond familiar territory. A decent listen, but not a game-changer.

Production 6
 Lyrics 6
 Music 6
 Vocals 6
 Musicianship 7

SCORE: 6.2



Post Traumatik

Contact: posttraumatik@gmail.com
Web: Spotify
Seeking: Album Review
Style: Rock

Post Traumatik describes themselves as "Pittsburgh Rock 'n' Roll. Making you drink since 2008." While this writer won't be *driven* to drink by these tracks, there is definitely something about their sound that makes a pint and a mosh all the more appealing. Their music doesn't ask for permission—it kicks the door in and throws the party anyway. There is essence of Heart peeking through with these guys; the vocals don't hold back in the slightest, the guitar seriously shreds, and the bass pounds. In "Slow Creep" they sing "Gotta bad feelin', but it's alright," and that pretty much sums up their raw, reckless energy—embracing chaos with a grin and a riff.

Production 7
 Lyrics 7
 Music 8
 Vocals 8
 Musicianship 8

SCORE: 7.6

Token Lounge Westland, MI

Contact: ben@jaybickbooking.com

Web: jacksonstokes.com

Players: Jackson Stokes, guitar, vocals; Paul Brackens, bass; Ben Bicklein, drums

JACKSON STOKES IS the head road dog of this tried-and-true blues, rock, and soul trio. The St. Louis-based singer-songwriter/guitarist has earned his stripes, not only leading his own group, but as a member of the Devon Allman Project. In fact, Stokes is in the *Guinness Book of World Records* for touring 50 states in 49 days in 2023 with Allman and Donovan Frankenreiter.

Stokes and his trio are no strangers to the road either, as is documented on their 2023 EP *Passengers Volume One*. Their tight 30-minute set contained material from that album in addition to other originals that have quickly become fan favorites. Much of their original fare reflected deep soulful roots derived from a storied R&B tapestry that includes the artistry of luminaries such as Bill Withers, Marvin Gaye, vintage Eric Clapton, Al Green, J.J. Cale, and the Stax/Memphis sound.

"Whiskey" appeared to grab the crowd from the onset, with its funky syncopation, tight breaks and lively accents. After Stokes set the tempo, with his incisive and infectious wah-wah drenched rhythms, Brackens and Bicklein fell in with an inviting and in-the-pocket groove. That was followed by the



appropriately placed instrumental "Interlude." Stokes and company are masters of the extended jam, and this tune exemplified that to a tee. The audience got further engaged as the young guitarist turned up the heat with his tempered, yet flashy Clapton-based lead work. "I'd Rather" shifted gears, with some New Orleans-styled swagger. The song's blend of calypso and "first line" sensibilities supported a good song form. Brackens' walking lines coupled with Bicklein's snare work and Stokes' smooth solos made this a highlight. "Pick Me Up" provided further evidence of the band's diversity and musical depth. Stokes' country picking locked things

in, leading to an emotional breakdown where the leader thanked the crowd for supporting them and "feeding their souls" with the music. Their finale brought the house down with the song "Ride." It featured a heavy beat and a relentless bass line that supported a cool repetitive riff. The band's use of tension and dynamics was really brought to the forefront.

The trio of Stokes, Brackens, and Bicklein are a combo of the highest order. Their interplay is seamless and rooted in joyful extended jams, tuneful melodies, and a spirited, danceable feel. Whether it's performing for 50 or 5000 people, this band delivers the goods, with huge grooves and bluesy dividends. — **Eric Harabadian**



Cat's Cradle Carrboro, NC

Contact: jake@luckybirdmedia.com

Web: lizlongley.com

Players: Liz Longley, guitar, piano, vocals

JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT the '60s were firmly in the rearview—your tie-dye retired, incense sticks buried in a drawer, and your *Eve of Destruction* vinyl surrendered to the local donation bin—you realize you did keep that worn copy of "The Times They Are A-Changin'." Maybe,

just maybe, you knew this moment was coming.

So light one up, cue the nostalgia, and if you still believe a song can save a soul—say "Boy Howdy" to the irrepressible Liz Longley: a child of the '60s in spirit, sired in the '90s, and slinging heartache, humor, and hooks off the stage in the Back Room at Cat's Cradle in 2025.

Let's get this out of the way: the "singer-songwriter" label is heavy. It can feel like running a mile in tight shoes—claustrophobic, overused, and vaguely apologetic. But if you've lived in it long enough, worn it

threadbare, and kept the soul intact, it becomes something else entirely. And Liz Longley? She's wearing it like it was tailored.

Longley took the stage to a packed room of 50-somethings and wide-eyed newcomers alike—salt-and-pepper veterans of life's long haul, drawn in by word-of-mouth and whispers of something real. What they got was a masterclass in less-is-more. Tall, blonde, and mildly dangerous with a capo, Liz didn't come to shred—she came to connect.

Armed with a guitar, some open tunings, and a voice that could knock the wind out of you, Longley delivered songs that were unmistakably hers—but also, eerily, yours. Her opener "100x" slid effortlessly into "Camaro," then "Trouble," all from her gut-punch of a new record, *Funeral for My Past*. It was personal, powerful, and pristine—like opening a love letter you forgot you wrote to yourself.

Liz Longley's show was an echo of the greats—Bobby Zimmerman, Phil Ochs, Dave Van Ronk, and yes, a touch of Nina Simone—but everything came filtered through her own groove-blender.

What made this evening unforgettable was its emotional aftershock. Longley leaves space in her songs—for you, your story, your grief, your joy. It's not background music. It's not sonic wallpaper. This was a transmission. It lingered in the room, and in the crowd, long after the last note.

This wasn't just another folk night in a college town back room. This was a surgical strike to the soul—with melody as scalpel, lyrics as salve. — **Eric Sommer**



The Novo Los Angeles, CA

Contact: inge@goldatl.as

Web: caravanpalace.com

Players: Zoé Colotis, vocals, clarinet; Arnaud de Bosredon, guitar, synth; Charles Delaporte, bass, d-bass, synth-bass; Martin Berlugue, trombone; Lucas Saint-Cricq, saxophones; Romain Theret, vibraphone, keyboards

SHARING MUSIC FROM 2015's <*_> and last year's *Gangbuster Melody Club*, along with a few from *Caravan Palace* (2008), *Panic* (2012), and *Chronologic* (2019), Parisian

group Caravan Palace delivered an upbeat, energetic, and danceable show at downtown L.A.'s Novo. Kicking things off with a Django Reinhardt-esque intro before slipping into a heavy backbeat with deliciously thick horn lines (trombone and baritone sax) on "Wonderland," the engaged, mellow crowd of mixed ages, ethnicities, and persuasions, danced away to the tightknit performance in a near-capacity room.

A fabulous baritone sax opened "Reverse," with syncopated lyricism and continued guttural horn notes. "Raccoons" brought robotic sound, fabulous bass lines, and ongoing call-and-response action from the

crowd. Tight horn solos, incredible soli horn sections, playful clarinet runs, and lovely harmonies between instrumentals and multiple layered vocal sections showcased the group's incredible uniformity and relaxed, natural interaction (likely the result of their 15+ years together). The highlight of the night was their reimagined dance mix cover of Lead Belly's "Black Betty," which delivered an incredible trombone/baritone sax dancing soli section and more vocal interaction from the crowd (on 'bam-be-lam').

From retro synth work and '70s vibes, vintage vocal effects, grungy horn sounds, and various muted instrumentals, to grinding slow jams, deep ethereal EDM, and old-school swing (which included spontaneous lindy-hoppers within the crowd), Caravan Palace brings an eclectic combination. With personality to spare, the group appeared to be having a blast sharing their French electro-swing sound behind a jovial, theatrical stage performance that included smoke machines and extensive lighting.

Sharing positive, magnetic energy, Caravan Palace delivers a live show vibe that blends hipster swing pop with a lowkey dark rave feel. Ending the night with the crowd's hands in the air, jumping in unison, Caravan Palace knows how to connect a room. Vibey, endlessly fun, and palpably electric, this group is the ultimate talented party band to create a joyful and inspiring, bouncy atmosphere. - **Andrea Benham**

Saint Andrew's Hall Detroit, MI

Contact: virginia@strongworldmanagement.com

Web: thewarandtreaty.com

Players: Michael Trotter Jr., vocals, piano; Tanya Trotter, vocals; Max Brown, guitar, band leader; Jonathan "Bam" Homes, drums; Tom Davis, bass; Terrance "Slim" Holmes, Hammond organ; Chris Collier, guitar; Taylor Shuck, banjo, guitar

THE WAR AND TREATY blended Saturday night and Sunday morning when the married Americana duo performed at St. Andrew's Hall in Detroit—one of the several places it calls home—on its *Plus One* tour supporting its new album of the same name.

Michael and Tanya Trotter began performing together in Albion, MI, back in 2014, and Detroit was the first major market to embrace War and Treaty during its independent days; they even recorded a live album at the now-closed suburban club Otus Supply. And even though the couple now resides in Nashville and is a major label success—a three-time Americana Music Honors and Awards recipient now nominated as the Country Music Association Award's Duo of the Year for a third consecutive time—a hometown exuberance drove the 95-minute show that was also being recorded for future release.

It was all about the love coming from and to the stage as the Trotters and their six-member band tore through 15 songs of its passionate blend of soul, rock, country, and gospel. The show drew primarily from the *Plus One* album



but also featuring hot covers of Creedence Clearwater Revival's "Proud Mary" and Zach Bryan's "Hey Driver," on which the War and Treaty are featured. Hard-rocking sweat and gospel fervor combined throughout the night, from stomping renditions of "Tunnel Vision," "Are You Ready to Love Me?," and "Blank Page" to the vintage Memphis flavor of "Five More Minutes."

And "the church of the War and Treaty" was fully sanctified when the Trotters journeyed deep into the crowd during a lengthy take of "Love Like Whiskey," hugging and high-fiving fans who were so respectful that, at points, Michael had to reach out and draw them into his embrace.

An emotional rendering of "Home"—preceded by redemptive sermon about his past substance issues and time in the U.S. Army—left Michael choked up and inspired to sing a bit of the spiritual "Swing Low Sweet Chariot," which Tanya answered with "His Eye is on the Sparrow." That set the tone for the night's closing numbers—extended, powerhouse versions of "Down to the River" and "Can I Get an Amen" that left both the performers and audience wrung out but filled with soul-affirming spirit—and proof that home is indeed where the heart is and not necessarily where the bodies reside. - **Gary Graff**

Peacock Theater Los Angeles, CA

Contact: kelly@kelleemackpr.com

Web: ceipa.net

Players: Ado, Atarashii Gakko!, Yoasobi

JAPANESE MUSIC AND CULTURE was celebrated as *matsuri'25* brought three of the most influential contemporary acts—Ado, Atarashii Gakko!, and Yoasobi—to one stage. Organized by the Culture and Entertainment Industry Promotion Association, this one-night sold-out event aimed to support and drive the fundamental globalization and sustainable growth of the Japanese music industry, with the purpose of bridging the gap between Japanese musicians and U.S. audiences.

J-pop duo Yoasobi, composed of producer Ayase and singer-songwriter Ikura, kicked the night off with an energetic set of their biggest hits. The duo was accompanied on stage by a live band that elevated Ikura's lively vocals. The group is known for its infectious melodies and vibrant visuals. Ayase and Ikura are natural on stage and really know how to pump up their fans with their words and interactions. Yoasobi's music is often used in anime and movies—their most popular being *Oshi no Ko*'s theme song "Idol"—so it was no surprise that they had the entire venue dancing and chanting along to every tune.

If anyone could pull off a one-of-a-kind set, it's the four-member girl group Atarashii Gakko! Everyone screamed in surprise as Rin,



Suzuka, Kanon, and Mizyu appeared from the venue aisles wearing their signature school uniforms and holding big white flags over their heads. The quartet stole the night with their impressive dance choreography (which was created by the members themselves!) and chaotic theatrics. For "Arigato," each member performed holding a broomstick—playfully using it like a microphone stand or a fake guitar. While for the viral hit "Otona Blue," the group let loose with their signature head-shaking dance. Atarashii Gakko! does a good job at letting each member shine in the spotlight. Together is when the magic happened as the group's harmonies were the real showstoppers.

Closing the night was one of the biggest solo artists in Japan: Ado. The singer-songwriter began her career uploading cover songs to YouTube from her bedroom, before making her major debut in 2020 with the hit single "Usseewa." No photos or recordings of any kind were allowed for Ado's set as she keeps her identity anonymous. The singer performed inside a cage-like box coined the "Ado Box" where her body is hidden in-between the darkness of the shadows. Ado has incredible vocal prowess and stamina. *Matsuri'25* was filled with electrifying music and a lively atmosphere, demonstrating that Japanese music can succeed here in the States. — **Jacqueline Naranjo**



Cat's Cradle Carrboro, NC

Contact: ken@bighassle.com

Web: pattersonhood.com

Players: Jay Gonzalez, keys, guitar; Lydia Loveless, bass, backing vocals; Brad Morgan, drums; Ben Hackett, keys, guitar, horns; Patterson Hood, guitar, electric piano, vocals

HOW IS IT THAT whenever Patterson Hood pulls into a new musical truck stop, it's not to tank up? Because somehow, after 29 years on the road, his tank is still full...? Huh?

This time out, Hood and Co. walked on to Sam the Sham and The Pharaohs, cranking over the house PA, a perfect intro as they opened with the title song off their latest release, *Exploding Trees and Airplane Screams*. Throwing it straight into the adoring crowd at Cat's Cradle, the title track of Hood's latest record came roaring off the stage like a duel-carburettin' boot-blasted whirlwind, launching this rhythm roller-derby outta the gate like a toupee in a hurricane!

Hood's signature "Aw, shucks" demeanor belies the powerful nonchalance of his

storytelling, which was on bare knuckle display. His intros feel like you're catching up with an old friend outside Walker's on College Avenue in Athens, GA—warm, defiant, and disarmingly personal.

The near-capacity crowd at Cat's Cradle couldn't have cared less about the lineups' storied history. They erupted in "Trucker Tornado Thunder" as Hood and The Sensurrounders hit the stage and Sam the Sham faded out. "Heavy and Hanging," with its unmistakably Clash-like intro, was a groove-laden beast, beautifully setting up "Pollyanna." Meanwhile, the unbalanced yet intriguing "Uncle Disney" stitched the middle of the set together with a quarter note quilt.

A highlight? There were so many, but try this one on for size: imagine Hood sitting at the stage's edge with his '38 Gene Autry guitar in hand, singing straight into the heart of the storm.

Tonight, Hood was high on the groove train, riding a transcendent setlist that bounced from the confessional "Van Pelt Parties" to the brooding "Last Hope," a ghostly homage to Athens, Birmingham, and the wreckage of dreams, lives and whiskey'd excuses strewn along Route 20. "Pinocchio" and "Uncle Disney" rose up with bombastic Hoodery, while "Pollyanna," stripped of pedal steel, was a somewhat softer, intimate moment.

He closed the night full circle with "Airplane Screams," the second half of his new album's title. By the end of the night, one thing was crystal clear: Patterson Hood remains an American musical hero. — **Eric Sommer**



Iridium New York, NY

Contact: monica@thinkpress.net

Web: andymckee.com

Players: Andy McKee, harp guitar, baritone guitar, standard guitar

PLAYING TO A SOLD-OUT audience, guitar guru Andy McKee showcased his unique mastery of fingerstyle guitar, which allows for a variety of musical styles including classical, folk, jazz, and blues, creating his own rich, textured sound. McKee melds his technical prowess with his own original creations while incorporating works of other composers.

His current tour marks 20 years since the release of his debut album *Art in Motion*. McKee's launch into the public eye in 2005 began with the album's release where its featured work, "Drifting," subsequently went viral on his YouTube channel. Other songs soon followed suit. McKee has received acclaim from renowned artists such as Josh Groban, Prince, Lee Ritenour, and David Foster, some of whom he has had the privilege of touring with.

The set kicked off with "Art of Motion" on standard guitar, an Americana-like, driving piece where McKee is covering the chords and melody alternately, followed by his arrangement of Tears for Fears' "Everybody

Wants to Rule the World."

McKee shared plenty of personal notes adding backstory and context to his guitar and songwriting journey. About halfway through the performance, just when you think it's not possible for the bar to be raised any higher, McKee unveiled his harp guitar, an instrument unfamiliar to many in the audience. Although it comes in various forms, it's defined by its harp-like open unstopped strings with at least one unfretted string lying off the main fretboard. It was on this instrument that we heard "Into the Ocean," inspired by a trip to California where he first encountered the beauty of the Pacific Ocean, as well as "The Friend I Never Met." Finally, switching to baritone guitar, he played several more pieces including his arrangement of the "Mii Channel Theme" by Kazumi Totaka. He then came full circle, closing the show with the song that started it all: "Drifting."

Though his musicianship is beyond reproach and his compositions sublime, expanding the repertoire to include a couple of more widely known songs might even further his connection with the audience, especially for those new to his music.

Andy McKee is essential listening, not only for guitarists, but for any instrumentalist trying to up their game. If you're simply a fan of the guitar, you won't want to miss one of his performances. He is a reminder that passion, blood, sweat, and tears make for great artistry.

— Ellen Woloshin

Redwood Bar & Grill Los Angeles, CA

Contact: @jirokamikazi

Web: jirokamikazi.bandcamp.com

Players: Jiro, vocals, bass; Alex Kane, guitar; Dez Cadena, guitar; Tim Jimenez, drums

THE AIR WAS BUZZING in Downtown Los Angeles on a Sunday night in March. Electricity was dancing from the high-rise rooves, an uneasy blend of revitalization and steadfast decay the backdrop, and punk should-be hero Jiro was performing at the Redwood Bar & Grill.

For the uninitiated—get initiated! Japanese bass-master Jiro was a highlight in Richie Ramone's band for a while—a Tasmanian devil of blonder-than-blonde hair and the most infectious smile in punk's oh-so-cynical history, all tied up with a let's-fucking-go bow.

All that remains the case, and Jiro's solo band allows us the opportunity to fully focus on the man. He deserves the attention; he's a rabid frontman—a snowball of kinetic energy that rolls over you and then fully encompasses you. You become a part of his show, whether you choose to or not. But you quickly realize that you really fucking like it. Then you grow to need it.

He's aided by a veritable supergroup of rock 'n' roll reprobates. A rogue's gallery of wizards and beasts. Alex Kane has a musical rap sheet longer than his luscious locks. With "Life Sex & Death (LSD)," he and his Chi-Town brethren smeared the hair metal landscape with glorious filth. His band AntiProduct repeated the feat across the pond. He's played with former Dictator Handsome Dick Manitoba,



Enuff Z'nuff, Shark Island, Starz, all of the surviving Ramones, and many, many more.

Dez Cadena is best known for his time with hardcore icons Black Flag, and he spent a considerable amount of time in the Misfits before the horror punks reformed the original lineup. Drummer Tim Jimenez was in the Rave-Ups, arguably best known for the song "Positively Lost Me," which appeared on the *Pretty in Pink* soundtrack.

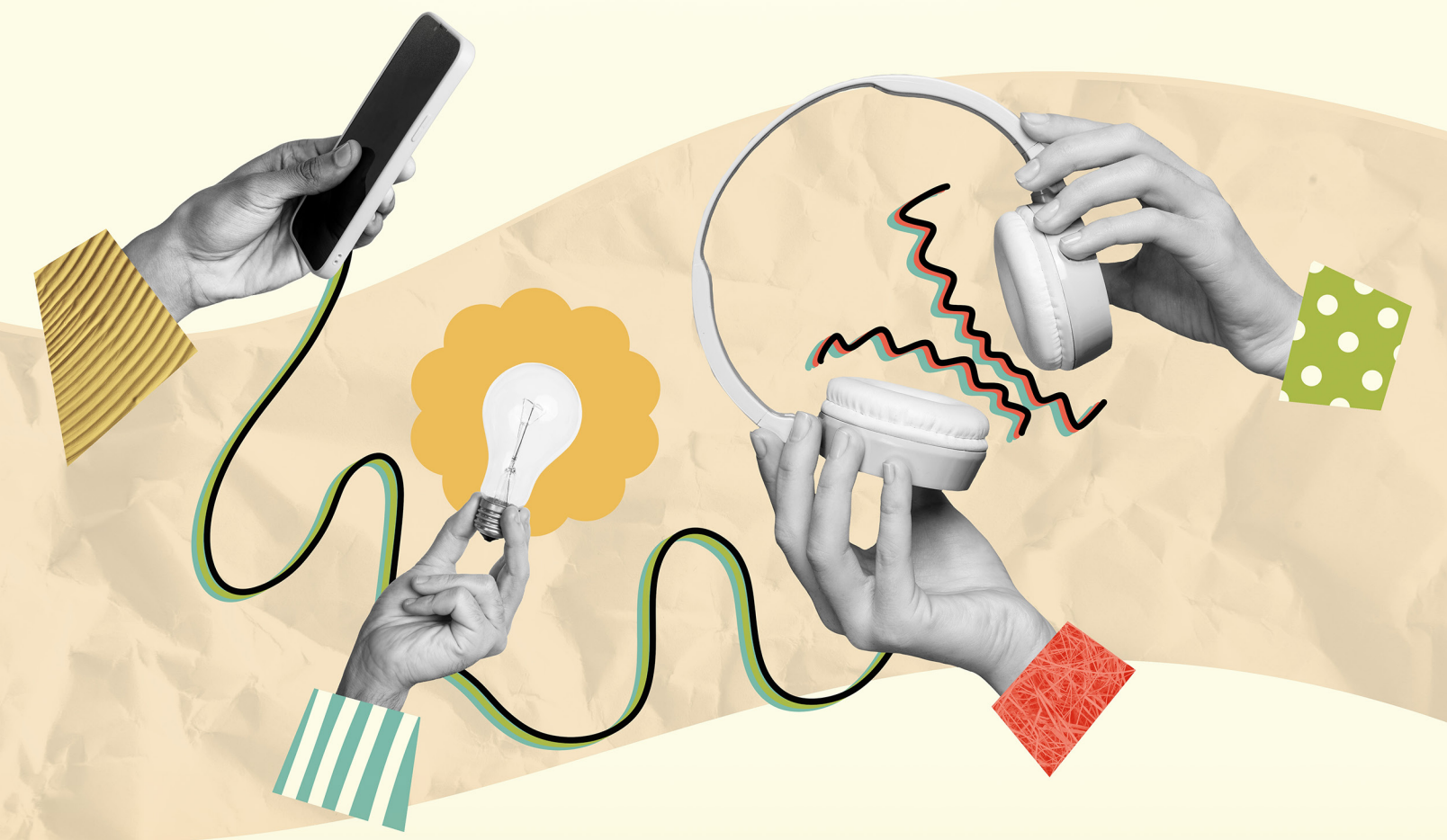
That's the band, and what a band! Kane never stops moving and/or cajoling the crowd into getting involved. He and Jiro are wonderfully exhausting; they give the show their everything,

so the least the crowd can do is reciprocate. Meanwhile Cadena, sporting a button-up shirt and business spectacles, glares at the crowd like an adrenalized Ron Mael (Sparks).

The songs are as stellar as the showmanship—all Ramones sing-along brilliance, played as fast as humanly possible. It's simultaneously loose and precise, and the Ramones covers ("Cretin Hop," and a couple more) plus Black Flag's "Rise Above" round off what was already a magnificent set. Later, Mickey Leigh's Mutated Music performed (Leigh is the brother of Joey Ramone), making this a solid night for da bruddahs! — Brett Callwood

2025

Guide to Digital Resources



FROM LIVESTREAMING CONCERTS FROM HOME STUDIOS

to interacting with fans directly on social media platforms, the music industry increasingly lives online. Every entry in this Guide to Digital Resources & Social Media was nominated by your fellow music-makers—*Music Connection* readers like yourself. Be sure to check out the newly added categories, such as Beat Selling Websites, Music Sales Tracking, Online Instruction, Film/TV Licensing, and Monetized Video Posting.

SOCIAL MEDIA & DIGITAL MARKETING TOOLS

BITLY

Web: bitly.com

Services: URL Shortener, Custom Branded URLs, API & Link Management.

CANVA

Web: canva.com

Services: Graphic-design tool website. Design presentations, social media graphics, and more with thousands of beautiful layouts.

CINDERBLOCK

Web: cinderblocktv

Services: Video streaming app that is built for music videos, concerts, interviews, etc.

CROWDMOUTH

Web: crowdmouth.com

Services: Crowdmouth is a direct-to-fan platform empowering creators to engage, monetize and grow their audiences.

FLYTEVU

Web: flytevu.com

Services: Full-Service entertainment marketing company based in Nashville, TN.

HOOTSUITE

Web: hootsuite.com

Services: Social media marketing and management platform. Helps you keep track and manage your many social network channels. It can enable you to monitor what people are saying about your brand and help you respond instantly.

Fee: Professional - \$49/mo.

LINKMY.PHOTOS

Web: linkmy.photos

Services: Instagram photos and captions are currently not linkable. The only place where you can add a link to your website is through the URL in your Instagram bio. Link My Photos has created the destination for your Instagram bio. Your personalized Link My Photos page displays all of your clickable photos to help your followers get to the content and products that you post.

Fee: Free, Shutterbug - \$4.99/mo., paparazzi - \$9.99/mo.

MAGROOVE

Web: instagram.com/magroovemusic

Services: Magroove was founded by musicians for musicians, offering a radically simple, transparent, and affordable method for independent artists to seamlessly distribute their music to more than 40 streaming services, engage in direct-to-fan commerce, and access tools for website development.

MAILCHIMP

Web: mailchimp.com

Services: Email marketing tool that allows you to send emails to hundreds or thousands of recipients all at once. It is essentially a tool you can use to create and manage mailing lists and newsletters, as well as automate your email campaigns and collect leads.

Fee: Free; Grow - \$11, \$17/mo.; Pro - \$299/mo.

NUMBER ONE MUSIC

Web: n1m.com

Services: A music portal dedicated solely to the development and exposure of indie artists/bands

SIMPLY GIGANTIC

Web: simplygigantic.com

Services: PR Agency

SPROUT SOCIAL

866-878-3231

Web: sproutsocial.com

Services: Social media management and optimization platform for brands and agencies of all sizes. Gives you a single hub for social media publishing, analytics and engagement across all of your social profiles.

Fee: Standard - \$89/mo.; professional - \$149/mo.; Advance - \$249/mo.

UNSPASH

Web: unsplash.com

Services: Database of high-resolution, watermark-free images that are free for use.

UTOPIA-HEARTBEAT

Web: instagram.com/utopiaheartbeat

Services: Cross-platform music data analytics, career recommendations to increase revenues.

VENTURE MUSIC

Web: venturermusic.com

Email: info@venturermusic.com

Clients: Universal Music Group, BMG, Red Light Management, Quartz Hill Records, Flobots

VERTIGO

Web: viberate.com/artist/vertigo-361

App: ertigo-music-stream-together-live-ios.soft112.com/#google_vignette

Services: Fans can access artist content on Vertigo from anywhere, no app download required. Artists can further boost streams and sync any content to subscribers' accounts. Independent Artists/Bands.

WEB DESIGN

BANDZOOGLE

Email: support@bandzoogle.com

Web: bandzoogle.com

Features: Unlimited support, free domain name, premium hosting, unlimited bandwidth, mobile-ready themes, music player, SEO tools, tour calendar, EPK's, more.

Fee: Lite - \$8.29/mo.; Standard - \$12.46/mo.; Pro - \$16.63/mo.

NING

855-233-6436

Web: ning.com

Services: Social integration, custom design, 24/7 support, basic features toolkit, monetization options

Fee: Basic - \$25/mo.; Performance - \$49/mo.; Ultimate - \$99/mo.

SQUARESPACE

Email: support.squarespace.com

Web: squarespace.com

Features: Modern templates, adobe image editor, audio collections, social sharing, email campaigns, product merchandising

Fee: Personal - \$12/mo.; Business - \$18/mo.; Commerce - \$26/\$40/mo.

WIX

Web: wix.com

Features: Design freedom, SEO, mobile optimization, unlimited fonts, media galleries, custom domain name, social tools, customizable music player, music selling options, stats.

Fee: Free version available; Combo - \$14/mo.; Unlimited - \$18/mo.; Pro - \$23/mo.; VIP - \$39/mo.

WORDPRESS

Web: wordpress.com

Features: Custom domains, mobile friendly, built-in social sharing, in-depth stats, search engine optimized

Fee: Free; Personal - \$4/mo.; Premium - \$8/mo.; Business - \$25/mo.

LEGAL SERVICES/ADVICE

ARRANGEME

Web: arrangeme.com

Services: Copyright services

AUDOO

Web: audoo.com

AVVO

Web: avvo.com

Services: Ratings, reviews and disciplinary records for lawyers in every state. Get free legal advice, find the right lawyer, and make informed legal decisions.

FREE LEGAL ADVICE

Web: freeadvice.com

Services: Comprehensive legal and insurance advice, articles, answers, videos and news.

LAWCHAMPS

866-653-3017

Web: lawchamps.com, instagram.com/lawchamps

Services: Instantly matches consumers with solo attorneys based on budget. Clients and attorneys can instant message, call & video chat with members only app.

LAWHELP.ORG

Web: lawhelp.org

Services: Created for people living on low incomes and the legal organizations that serve them. LawHelp.org provides referrals to local legal aid and public interest law offices, basic information about legal rights, court forms, self-help information, court information, links to social service agencies, and more in your state.

LEGAL SERVICES LINK

844-529-3279

Web: legalserviceslink.com

Services: Anonymously post your legal needs quickly and for free. Lawyers interested in helping you contact you via email. Review the emails and select the best lawyer for you.

LEGALZOOM

800-773-0888

Email: support@legalzoom.com

Web: legalzoom.com

Services: Online legal help on business, intellectual property, contracts & agreements, legal advice.

MUSIC CONNECTION

Web: musicconnection.com/industry-contacts, weekly-bulletin.com/pdf/industrycontacts/Jan25GuideAttorneys.pdf

NOLO

800-631S-5158

Web: nolo.com

Services: Answers to everyday legal and business questions, lawyer directory

UCLA SCHOOL OF LAW'S MUSIC INDUSTRY CLINIC

Email: mic@law.ucla.edu

Web: linkedin.com/company/ucla-law-music-industry-clinic

Services: Free 30-minute consultations to individuals who need legal advice relating to their careers in the music industry

VOLUNTEER LAWYERS FOR THE ARTS

212- 319-2787 ext. 1

Email: vlany@vlany.org

Web: vlany.org

Services: VLA provides legal services to low-income artists and all non-profit arts organizations in every artistic discipline.

FUNDRAISING/FINANCIAL MATTERS

ARTISTSHARE

Email: support@artistshare.com

Web: artistshare.com

Services: Operates as a record label and business model for artists which enables them to fund their projects by allowing the general public to directly finance, watch the creative process, and in most cases gain access to extra material from an artist.

Fees: 5% fee on contributions raised in addition to third party credit card processing fees (3-5%).

BEATBREAD

Web: beatbread.com

Services: The pioneering music funding platform that enables artists to access growth capital while maintaining control of their careers and ownership of their music.

CENTTRIP

Web: centtrip.com

Services: global fintech providing expense management and card payment technology, has launched its platform, app, and card in the United States, to change the way music and entertainment industry manages tour and team expenses.

FUNDLY

Web: support.fundly.com/hc/en-us/categories/200398977-fundly

Services: Crowdfunding site for online fundraising. Raise money online from friends, family, colleagues, donors, and other supporters via email, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google, and social media networks.

Fees: Platform fee of 4.9% per transaction in addition to payment processing fee of 3% + 30 cents per transaction.

GOFUNDME

Web: gofundme.com

Services: For-profit crowdfunding platform that

allows people to raise money. 0% platform fee.

Fees: Fees vary based on country. United States is 2.9% + 30 cents per donation.

INDIEGOGO

Web: indiegogo.com

Services: International crowdfunding website. Indiegogo allows people to solicit funds for an idea, charity, or start-up business. Indiegogo charges a 5% fee on contributions.

Fees: 5% of funds raised in addition to processing fee of 3% + 30 cents per transaction. Bank may charge additional fees depending on currency and bank account location.

JACKTRIP FOUNDATION

Web: jacktrip.org

Services: The JackTrip Foundation Equipment Grant supports nonprofit arts, education, and technology organizations, as well as individuals applying through organizations. The funds are for purchase of equipment for network arts projects to further innovation and access in this cultural work.

KICKSTARTER

Web: kickstarter.com

Services: Crowdfunding platform for creative projects. A home for film, music, art, theater, games, comics, design, photography, and more.

Fees: Kickstarter fee of 5% of total funds raised in addition to payment processing fees of 3% + 20 cents per pledge. (Pledges under \$10 have a discounted micropledge fee of 5% + 5 cents per pledge).

MUSIC BENEFACTORS/EXPLORER 1 MUSIC GROUP

Email: contact@explorer1music.com

Services: We work with recording artists, indie labels, publishers, venues, and other music businesses to sell debt and equity securities to investors. The capital raised is used to help fund their businesses.

PATREON

Web: patreon.com

Services: Membership platform that provides business tools for creators to run a subscription content service, with ways for artists to build relationships and provide exclusive experiences to their subscribers, or "patrons."

Fees: 5% of successfully processed fees in addition to an effective payment processing fees that may vary based on transaction amount and method of payment and a fixed fee. These average around 5% and 30 cents per transaction. There are also Payout fees for moving your funds from your Patreon account to your bank account.

PLUMFUND

Web: plumfund.com

Services: Free to fundraisers and donors. There are no transaction fees for organizers or contributors, and no setup fees.

Fees: Third party fee of 2.8% + 30 cents deducted from each transaction.

ROYALTY EXCHANGE

1-800-718-2269

Web: royaltyexchange.com

Services: Online marketplace/auction platform where investors & owners of royalty streams can buy royalties and sell all types of royalties.

Fees: Commission is collected after auction at rate determined prior to listing from sellers. Third

party fees for transfers depend on bank account, location, and method of payment for buyers.

SOUND ROYALTIES

Email: info@soundroyalties.com

Web: soundroyalties.com

Services: Offers music professionals non-credit based financing and funding without having to deal with banks or traditional lenders.

MUSIC REVIEW/OPINION /FEEDBACK

FLUENCE

Email: contact@fluenceapp.com

Web: fluenceapp.co

Services: Makes curators directly accessible to artists/promoters through their platform.

MUSIC CONNECTION

(LIVE REVIEWS, NEW MUSIC CRITIQUES)

Email: contactmc@musicconnection.com

Web: musicconnection.com/reviews/get-reviewed

Services: 12 recorded artists and 7 live performances are selected to be reviewed by *Music Connection* staff from artist submissions every month. Unsigned Artists only.

REVERBNATION

(CROWD REVIEW)

Email: support@reverbnation.com

Web: reverbnation.com/band-promotion crowd_review

Services: Artist feedback from targeted sample, data analytics.

SONGCHECKS

Web: songchecks.com

Services: Songchecks is a curated platform for Producers, Mixers, Bands, and Songwriters of all levels and locations to get affordable written feedback on your songs from the world's best music talent.

SONGU.COM

Web: songu.com

Services: Provides multi-level song writing courses developed by award winning songwriters, song feedback, mentoring, one-on-one song coaching, cowriting, unscreened pitching opportunities and more.

TUNECORE

(FAN REVIEWS)

646-651-1060

Web: tunecore.com/artist-services

Services: Artist feedback, data analytics.

GIG FINDER

AIRGIGS

Email: help@airgigs.com

Web: airgigs.com

Services: platform for hiring professional session musicians, vocalists and audio engineers online. Songwriters, music producers, bands and creatives can hire talent to enhance their existing productions, or they can produce an entire song from composition to mastering completely online.

GIGMASTERS

866-342-9794

Web: gigmasters.com

Services: Event services booking platform. Hire local musicians, DJs, bands, photographers and speakers for special events.

GIGSALAD

Web: gigsalad.com

Services: Find and book everything from bands, musicians, and DJs to entertainers, speakers and event services.

REVERBNATION

Email: support@reverbnation.com

Web: reverbnation.com

Services: Online platform that provides marketing tools and opportunities for musicians, artists, and bands to manage their careers.

Fee: Free; Basic: \$12.95/mo.; Premium - \$19.95/mo.

SONICBIDS

Email: support@sonicbids.com

Web: sonicbids.com

Services: Connects bands, music promoters and major brands through an online platform. Engage new fans, discover new music and find gigs.

Fee: Sonicbids Basic - Free; EPK Pro - \$5.00; Gig-Seeker Pro - \$19.99

SOUNDBETTER

888-734-4358

Email: info@soundbetter.com

Web: soundbetter.com

SONG SUBMISSIONS /PLACEMENTS

ADAPTR

Web: adaptr.com

Services: An all-in-one platform to easily add hit music to your apps and digital experiences.

MUSIC CONNECTION

Web: musicconnection.com

MUSIC GATEWAY

Email: support@musicgateway.com

Web: musicgateway.com

Fee: Influencer - \$22/mo.; Adventurer - \$7.50/year; Game Changer - \$37/mo.

Services: Music industry marketplace where you find music industry jobs, receive daily job postings worldwide, start collaborations, send your demo submissions and more.

MUSIC GORILLA

201-796-8742

Email: info@musicgorilla.com

Web: musicgorilla.com

Services: Submit your music to film, TV, songwriting and major label showcase opportunities. Get heard by a wide range of industry pros from music supervisors to internet radio hosts to major label A&R.

Fee: Free to sign up.

MUSIC OPPS

Web: musicopps.com

Services: Music opportunities for independent and unsigned artists

MUSIC XRAY

Email: support@musicxray.com

Web: musicxray.com

Fee: Submission fee set by the Industry Professional, and an additional \$10 just for the

first submission of that song.

Services: Submit your songs to music producers, publishers, supervisors and managers for marketing, music licensing, label roster, publishing, distribution and more. Your track goes directly to the decision makers: no middle-men, no prescreeners, just a direct link between artist and Industry Professional.

SUBMITHUB

Email: jason@submithub.com

Web: submithub.com

Services: Share songs with music bloggers, record labels, radio stations, Spotify playlists and YouTube or SoundCloud channels.

TAXI

818-222-2464

Web: taxi.com

Services: Helps songwriters, artists, and film/TV composers get their music to record labels, music publishers, music supervisors and music libraries.

THAT PITCH

Web: thatpitch.com

Fee: Monthly - \$0-\$39; Annual - \$390

Services: Pitch unlimited music to ads and major motion films.

BEAT SELLING WEBSITES

AIRBIT

Web: airbit.com

Services: Buy, sell and license tracks.

Collaborate with other producers. Sell sound kits. Customize your own beat store with the Infinity Store feature.

Fee: Basic Free; Gold - \$8.33/mo.; Premium - 16.66/mo.

AUTO-BOUNCE

Web: auto-bounce.com

BEATSTARS

Web: beatstars.com

Fee: Free; Marketplace Plan - \$9.99/mo.; Pro Page Plan - \$19.99/mo.

Services: Post, sell and buy beats online. Create your own custom beat selling website with themes and domain with the Pro Page plan. Earn ad revenue when people stream your music on SoundCloud and Audiomack.

BOPPER

Web: boppermusic.com

Services: Ad music licensing platform Bopper has come to an agreement with all of the rights holders it represents to pre-clear tracks for use in brand content productions on Tik Tok, YouTube, Instagram and Twitch. A safe and easy way for brands to license music from independent recording artists for immediate use in digital advertising.

BRIDGER

Web: bridgermusic.io

Services: Bring independent songwriters towards copyright by offering them an innovative and easy solution to collect their royalties generated on digital platforms.

SOUNDCCLICK

Email: support@soundclick.com

Web: soundclick.com

Services: Stream, download, buy and sell beats on a social media platform that includes photo albums, video uploads, blogs and message boards.

TRAKTRAIN

Web: traktrain.com

Services: Invitation only platform to sell, buy and listen to instrumentals. Paid creative assistance and track mixing available.

SONG COMPETITIONS

GREAT AMERICAN SONG CONTEST

Email: info@greatamericansong.com

Web: greatamericansong.com

Summary: Open to songwriters, lyricists & music composers worldwide. This annual event is designed for amateur and semi-pro songwriters only. Individuals who earn over \$10,000 annually from song publishing royalties are not eligible.

Prizes: Grand Prize Winner receives \$1,000 cash in addition to a free membership to TAXI Independent A&R, free one-year Platinum Membership to SongU.com and more.

Fee: \$35 per song.

INTERNATIONAL SONGWRITING COMPETITION

615-251-4441

Web: songwritingcompetition.com

Summary: Annual song contest that provides opportunity for both aspiring and established songwriters to have their songs heard in a professional, international arena. 71 winners will share in the cash and prizes.

Categories: AAA (Adult Album Alternative), AC (Adult Contemporary), Americana, Blues, Children's Music, Christian, Comedy/Novelty, Country, EDM (Electronic Dance Music), Folk/Singer-Songwriter, Instrumental, Jazz, Latin Music, Lyrics Only, Music Video, Performance, Pop/Top 40, R&B/Hip-Hop, Rock, Teen, Unpublished, Unsigned Only, and World Music.

Fee: \$25.00 per song or category.

JOHN LENNON SONGWRITING CONTEST

888-884-5572

Email: info@jlsc.com

Web: jlsc.com/about.php

Summary: The JLSC is open year-round and features two Sessions - with 72 Finalists, 24 Grand Prize Winners, 12 Lennon Award Winners and 1 "Song of the Year." The Contest is open to amateur and professional songwriters who submit entries in any one of 12 categories.

Fee: \$30.00 per song.

LEE RITENOUR'S SIX STRING COMPETITION

Email: ritsguitar@aol.com

Web: sixstringtheory.com

Summary: The Six String Theory Competition, hosted by Grammy winning guitarist and producer, Lee Ritenour, is a biennial competition that accepts performer applications for guitar, bass, piano/keyboards and drums, and offers winners performance opportunities and scholarships, as well as prizes from sponsors.

MUSIC CITY SONGSTAR

Email: mcscs@musiccitysongstar.com

Web: facebook.com/musiccitysongstar

Summary: A songwriting competition for up-and-coming writers and musicians in all genres.

Prizes: The Grand Prize winner receives money, an invitation to perform their song at an exclusive event and instruments.

MUSIC CONNECTION

Web: musicconnection.com

NASHVILLE SONGWRITERS

1710 Roy Acuff Pl

Nashville, TN 37203

800-321-6008

Email: reception@nashvillesongwriters.com

Web: nashvillesongwriters.com

SKIO MUSIC

Web: skiomusic.com

Summary: Download free stems and win official releases, collabs, plugins and more.

SPLICE

Web: splice.com

Fee: Must sign up to Splice Sound for \$7.99/mo.

Summary: Remix contests. Win official releases, collabs, plugins and more.

UNSIGNED ONLY MUSIC COMPETITION

615-251-4441

Email: info@unsignedonly.com

Web: unsignedonly.com

Summary: Unsigned Only is designed for solo artists, bands, and singers all over the world who are looking for exposure, recognition, and a chance to be noticed by industry professionals. Open to all artists who are unsigned to a major record label.

Prizes: Grand Prizes \$20,000, mastering services, music distribution and more.

Fee: \$35 per song.

USA SONGWRITING COMPETITION

Web: songwriting.net

Summary: Open to all amateur and professional songwriters and anyone regardless of nationality or origin.

Prizes: Winning songs receive radio airplay. Overall Grand Prize winner will receive \$50,000 worth of cash, merchandise, and services.

Overall 2nd Prize winner will receive \$9,000 worth of merchandise. Overall 3rd Prize winner will receive \$6,500 worth of merchandise.

Categories: Songwriters can enter in 15 different song categories such as: Pop, Rock/Alt, Folk, R&B, Hip-Hop, Jazz, Instrumental, etc.

Fee: \$35.00 per song.

ON THE ROAD: LODGING

AIRBNB

415-800-5959, 855-424-7262

Web: airbnb.com

Services: Find hosts with extra rooms, entire homes and unique accommodations.

COUCH SURFING

Email: support@couchsurfing.com

Web: couchsurfing.com

Services: Arrange homestays, offer lodging and hospitality.

HOTEL TONIGHT

Email: help@hoteltonight.com

Web: hoteltonight.com

Services: Last minute hotel deals, discounted room rates.

INDIE ON THE MOVE

Email: info@indieonthemove.com

Web: indieonthemove.com

Services: Show and tour booking, Music Venues Database, QuickPitch Emailing, College and University Show Booking Database, Bands Directory, Show Availabilities, Classifieds.

Fee: Free; Premium - \$9.99/mo.

PRICELINE

877-477-5807

Web: priceline.com

Services: Discount rates for travel-related purchases including airline tickets, hotel stays, cars, cruises.

ARTIST COLLABORATIONS

AIRTABLE

Web: airtable.com

Services: Shared database/spreadsheet

Fee: Free; paid membership (\$10/mo.-\$24/mo.).

AUDDLY

Email: info@auddly.com

Web: auddly.com

Services: Allows music creators to collect their song data and make it accessible for the business side, in order to secure transparent and correct credits and payments for everyone involved.

AUDIOBRIDGE

Web: audiobridgeapp.com, facebook.com/audiobridgeapp

Services: Mobile recording studio, tool for mobile music collaboration. Communicate directly with your collaborators with dedicated chat-rooms for every session. Keep track of your entire history of edits in one place with both real-time and delayed collaboration.

AVID

Web: avid.com

Services: Provides information on all digital solutions for capturing, creating, editing and distributing digital media.

BANDHUG

Web: bandhug.com/videos/updated

Services: Bandhug is an international music platform that fosters collaboration between musicians and the globe.

BANDLAB

Email: hello@bandlab.com

Web: bandlab.com

Services: Social media network for musicians and fans with unlimited cloud based storage.

BANDMIX

877-569-6118

Web: bandmix.com

Services: Online classified network for connecting local musicians and bands.

Fee: Free or premier membership \$12.95/\$17.90mo.

BEATSTARS

Web: beatstars.com

Services: Digital production marketplace that allows music producers to license and sell

beats and give away free beats.

Fee: Free or Unlimited for \$9.99/\$19.99mo.

DOWNWRITE

Web: downwrite.com

Services: Downwrite is a platform for the co-creation of music for fans and artists. It allows fans to bring a personal experience, idea, or occasion into the creative realm of an artist, who through their unique talent, transforms the shared experience into music.

DROOBLE

Email: team@drooble.com

Web: facebook.com/droobleofficial

Services: Social media network for musicians with promotional features, also allows users to submit reviews of other users music for payment.

FRETTIE

Web: frettie.com

Services: Connect with other songwriters from around the globe. Frettie is a valuable songwriting community made up of students, professionals and hit songwriters who are all eager to learn, discover, give feedback and connect with each other.

INTROBOT

Web: introbot.co

Services: App for musicians, filmmakers, actors, models, photographers, writers, dancers, artists, designers, and people with ideas, to collaborate with people from around the world who have the skills to realize their creative idea.

KOMPOZ

Web: kompoz.com/music

Services: Social network platform for musicians, to share, collaborate, distribute music and crowdsource production/ performers

Fee: Free or premier membership (\$5/mo.; \$10/mo.; \$20/mo.).

MUSIC LAUNCH HUB

Web: musiclaunchhub.com

Services: Global music network where working musicians and the next wave of music professionals, come together to better navigate their future in music.

MUSICIAN'S CONTACT

818-888-7879

Email: info@musicianscontact.com

Web: musicianscontact.com

Services: Connecting musicians and bands together for over 45 years, from club and casual groups, to traveling bands, to concert and recording acts.

MUSIVERSAL

Web: musiversal.com

Services: Access to world-class session musicians, vocalists, producers, and audio engineers.

Fee: \$49/mo.; \$490/yearly.

OFFTOP

Web: offtop.co

Services: Mobile recording studio to rap and sing over beats. Explore a library of fresh instrumentals, record freestyle or written verses, and share your rap or song with the world.

PROCOLLABS

Web: procollabs.com

Services: Online music collaboration service

that gives you access to experienced and talented songwriters, musicians, audio engineers, and music producers from all around the world.

Fee: Free or premier membership (\$20/mo.; \$50/mo.; \$95/mo.).

ROLI

Web: roli.com

Services: Makes the process of producing music interactive. The social platform helps music producers share music projects in source format, perfect for remixing, collaborating, learning from, and gathering feedback from others in the global community.

SLACK

Web: slack.com

Services: Collaborative hub for work colleagues with features such as messaging, file sharing, screen sharing, searchable history, and integration with other filesharing/messenger apps. Organizes conversations between work colleagues into a streamlined layout.

Fee: Paid membership (\$6.67/mo.; \$12.50/mo.).

SONGSALIVE!

Web: songsalive.org

Services: Largest global songwriters squad. A non-profit organization supporting, promoting and educating songwriters and composers worldwide.

SONGSPACE

Web: songspace.com

Services: Helps music creators and publishers collaborate, pitch, track and share song projects and playlists.

Fee: Creator - \$8/mo.; Business - \$15/mo.; Plus - \$28/mo.

SONGTOWN

Web: songtown.com

Services: A virtual music "town" where creative people gather to be encouraged, educated and inspired. Writers of all genres, from all over the world come to SongTown to find other creative cowriters, to learn how to improve their craft from #1 hit songwriters and publishers, and to be mentored by successful music industry pros.

Fee: Platinum Annual \$197/year; Diamond Fast Track \$649/year; Monthly \$24.99/mo.

SONGWRITER LINK

Web: songwriterlink.com

Services: Songwriting collaboration website that makes finding the perfect co-writer faster. It's the only website that uses matching engine technology—the same kind as dating websites—to help find you exactly the type of songwriters you're looking for.

SOUNDATION

Web: soundation.com

Services: This feature unlocks many unique opportunities for Plugin manufacturers and sample pack and beat marketplaces to have a slick way of showcasing their products and allow site visitors to try them out. Producers and other creators engage their audience in a new way by letting them actively listen to or remix their creations.

SOUNDSTORMING

Web: soundstorming.com

Services: Helps musicians to connect,

collaborate, and promote themselves using their musical ideas, riffs and fragments.

SOUNDTRAP

Web: soundtrap.com

Services: Online recording studio/DAW with collaborative features, plugins/ drumtracks, autotune, other audio engineering features. Also educational features.

Fee: (Free; \$7.99/mo.; \$11.99/mo.; \$13.99/mo.).

SPLICE

Web: splice.com

Services: Musicians use Splice to find sounds, get gear, enter contests, discover projects and connect with one another.

STUDIOTRAXX

Web: studiotraxx.com

Services: Provides instant access to a vast global network of musicians-for-hire who are ready to work and collaborate via the web. Private collaboration areas are also available to those who don't need to find and hire musicians but simply need an efficient way to manage files across partners.

TUNEBLADES

Web: tuneblades.com

Services: Empowers both professional and non-professionals to quickly resize and remix songs to match any duration, remove vocals from songs, and stream indefinitely for live presentations or programs.

TULLY

Web: tullyapp.com

Services: Recording artists and songwriters can play, write, and record song ideas all within one application. Artists can share their projects with their engineer before studio sessions, allowing instant access to the audio file, lyric sheet, and recording ideas. All your files are organized and stored to the cloud, keeping all your creative work safe in one location.

VAMPR

Email: support@vampr.me

Web: vampr.me

Services: App that helps you discover, connect and collaborate with fellow musicians, the music industry and music lovers alike.

VOCALIZR

Web: vocalizr.com

Services: Created to connect professional singers and producers world-wide. Community of producers looking for talent.

Fee: Free or Pro Membership (\$9/mo.).

MUSIC SALES TRACKING

CHARTMETRIC

Web: chartmetric.io

Services: Music data analytics company. They combine hundreds of thousands of real-time data points across iTunes, Spotify, Youtube, Google, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram in order to make sense of the increasingly complex landscape of the music industry.

CRYPTO.COM

Web: crypto.com

Services: Cryptocurrency tracking app, and has

recently expanded to covering and paying NFTs for artists and audiences.

MAYKI

Web: mayk.it/#stations

Services: Virtual studio where you can create music on demand with our team of producers.

NEXT BIG SOUND

Web: blog.nextbigsound.com

Services: Provides online music analytics and insights, tracking hundreds of thousands of artists around the world. As part of Pandora, they deliver powerful analytics tools used by music makers, labels and marketers looking for data and insights about artists and their fans.

RCRDSHP STUDIO

Web: app.rcrdshp.com, facebook.com/rcrdshp/videos

Email: newsletter@rcrdshp.com

Services: A curated digital collectibles platform, built by and for the electronic music industry, and validated by technologies like the blockchain and non-fungible tokens.

SONGTRUST

Web: songtrust.com

Services: World's largest global royalty collection service, Songtrust streamlines the music publishing administration of 1,000,000+ songs.

SOUNDCHARTS

Web: soundcharts.com

Services: A full-stack solution (database, desktop, mobile apps & API) that brings together real-time and historical music consumption data, (social, charts, playlist, airplay monitoring) to improve project management, reporting and artist scouting.

WIO PRO

Web: wiopro.com

Services: Empowers entertainment stakeholders to track the airing of movies and television episodes, vital information that drives the payment of guild residuals, composer royalties and profit participations.

ONLINE INSTRUCTION

ARI'S TAKE ACADEMY

Web: aristakeacademy.com

Services: Multiple individual courses available, created by indie musician and music business author Ari Herstand. Courses range from topics such as managing tours to streaming and social media growth.

BERKLEE COLLEGE OF MUSIC

Web: berklee.edu

Services: Multiple online degree and certificate programs. Interactive 12-week courses. World-renowned faculty and classmates.

HIFI LABS

Web: hifilabs.co

Services: HIFI Labs' Web3 Artist Cohort is a free virtual three-week immersive program that helps connect emerging musicians with the resources they need to further develop and launch their next music project using Web3 tools.

LESSONS.COM

Web: lessons.com

MELOPHY

Web: staging.melophy.com

Services: Melophy is a teaching site by artists for artists to organize calendars, live lesson streams to individuals and groups of students, and schedule virtual performances, all while promoting artists' music.

MUSICIANS INSTITUTE

Web: mi.edu/programs/mi-online

Services: Access to acclaimed curriculum and supportive interactive course content. Certificates in guitar performance and artist/entrepreneur/production and Associate degrees in guitar performance and music business.

MUSIC CREDITS DATABASES

DISCOGS

Web: discogs.com

Services: Discover new music. Track your collection. Contribute to the database.

GENIUS

Web: genius.com

Services: Wide collection of song lyrics and musical knowledge.

MUSICBRAINZ

Web: musicbrainz.org

Services: Open music encyclopedia that collects music metadata and makes it available to the public. MusicBrainz captures information about artists, their recorded works, and the relationships between them.

TOUR DATES CALENDAR

BANDSINTOWN

Email: support@bandsintown.com

Web: bandsintown.com

Services: Music website billed as a "platform where artists and fans connect." The site allows users to receive notifications about tours and bands playing in the user's area. It also has tools for artists to manage tour dates.

LYTE

Web: lyte.com/events

Services: Lyte is a platform that enables event organizers, venues and artists to enhance their ticketing, ensure shows are full and keep fans happy. Lyte provides a safe, official reservation system and allows fans to return their tickets to the official point of purchase for a fair price.

SONGKICK

Web: songkick.com

Services: Provides concert discovery services and ticket sales for live music events.

LIVE STREAMING

DREAMSTAGE

Email: support@dreamstage.live

Web: dreamstage.live

Services: A streaming platform where musicians of all genres perform and interact with fans worldwide.

STAGEIT

Web: stageit.com

Services: Artists perform live, online shows from their laptop that are never recorded or archived. Fans are encouraged to ask the artist questions, request songs, and even chat with other fans during the show. Virtual tip jar available on every show.

TWITCH

Web: twitch.tv

Services: Site primarily focuses on video game live streaming, including broadcasts of eSports competitions, in addition to music broadcasts, creative content, and more recently, "in real life" streams. Content on the site can be viewed either live or via video on demand.

YOUKNOW

Web: younow.com

Services: Discover talented broadcasters, watch live streams and video chat live with people from around the world.

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Web: cafepress.com

Services: Create and sell your personalized designs on t-shirts, bags, mugs, posters and many more unique gifts.

AKA

Web: galleryaka.com

Services: AKA is an independently owned & operated retail boutique and custom printing company based in San Diego, California.

BANDS ON A BUDGET

866-471-3868

Web: bandsonabudget.com, merchly.com/
facebook.com/bandsonabudget

Services: Prints custom merchandise for all types of businesses and brands, with a large majority of its customers being up-and-coming musicians. With products varying from shirts to stickers, banners to tour posters, BandsonaBudget.com can help you cover all of your bases in one shot, eliminating the need to deal with different companies.

BIG CARTEL

Web: bigcartel.com

Services: Build a unique online store, sell your work, and run a creative business. Perfect for clothing designers, bands, jewelry makers, crafters, and other artists.

CUSTOM INK

800-293-4232

Web: customink.com

Services: American-based online retail company that makes custom apparel.

DISC MAKERS

Email: info@discmakers.com

Web: discmakers.com

Services: Disc Makers is the world's largest CD, DVD, and Blu-ray manufacturer for independent musicians, filmmakers, and businesses. They offer duplication, replication, printing, graphic design, audio mastering, DVD authoring, worldwide distribution and more.

FIVERR

Web: fiverr.com

Services: Online marketplace for freelance services including digital marketing, graphic design, music, audio, and more.

KILLERMERCH.COM

Web: killermerch.com

Services: Full-service branding agency, global merchandising, product development.

MERCHCAT

Email: info@merchcat.com

Web: merchcat.com

Services: Merch sales, inventory management, track payments and get real-time reports.

MERCH.LY

866-522-4012

Web: merchly.com

Services: Custom t-shirts, hoodies, bags and more, customized with your band logo or design.

PRINTFUL

818-351-7181

Email: support@printful.com

Web: printful.com

Services: On-Demand order fulfillment and warehousing service. Products include: clothing, accessories, and home & living items for online businesses. It's free to set up, with no monthly fees or minimum order.

REDBUBBLE

Web: redbubble.com

Services: Online marketplace to print on-demand products based on user submitted artwork.

RUSHORDERTEES

2727 Commerce Way

Philadelphia, PA 19154

Web: rushordertees.com

Email: sales@rushordertees.com

Services: Screen printing, embroidery, delivery.

SHOPIFY

Web: shopify.com

Services: Shopify is a commerce platform that allows anyone to easily sell products. Shopify offers a professional online storefront, a payment solution to accept credit cards, and the Shopify POS application to power retail sales.

Fee: Basic Shopify - \$29/mo.; Shopify - \$79/mo.; Advanced Shopify - \$299/mo.

SONGLORIOUS

Web: songlorious.com

Services: Employs a stable of hundreds of musicians who create customized songs for anniversaries, birthdays, and yes marriage proposals. Customers simply fill in details for their song, choose a genre song length and in four days-time a certified musician will send back a customized song ready to share. Cost for the song starts at \$90.

SPREADSHOP

800-381-0815

Email: help@spreadshop.com

Web: spreadshop.com

Services: Create and sell custom merchandise on your own online shop for free.

SQUARE

Web: squareup.com/us/en

Services: Financial services, merchant services aggregator, and mobile payment company.
Fee: Charges 2.75% per swipe.

STICKER MULE

Web: stickermule.com

Services: Custom stickers, labels, magnets, and more. Get free proofs, free shipping, 4-day turnaround, and 24/7 customer support.

TEEPUBLIC

Web: teepublic.com

Email: help@teepublic.com

Services: Largest marketplace for independent creators to sell their work on high-quality merch.

VISTAPRINT

866-614-8002

Web: vistaprint.com

Services: Design and order custom printed marketing materials, signage, t-shirts, hats, pens.

ZAZZLE

Web: zazzle.com

Services: Allows designers and customers to create their own products with independent manufacturers, as well as use images from participating companies.

MUSIC DISTRIBUTION & FILM/TV LICENSING

AIMI

Web: aimi.fm/about

Services: World-class artists have collaborated with the platform to present original compositions and Experiences, oftentimes they provide an album's length of material. Aimi's unique AI proactively chooses the right pieces of audio to play at the right moments, constantly rearranging and repurposing segments, to generate brand new presentations of these artists' material.

AMUSE

Email: support@amuse.io

Web: amuse.io

Services: Strategic planning, marketing, financing, branding and PR, 50/50 profit.

AWAL

Email: info@awal.com

Web: awal.com

Services: Global distribution, marketing and release management, A&R, funding, playlist promotion, radio & PR, YouTube monetization, and music data and insights through the AWAL App.

BEATBREAD

Web: beatbread.com

Services: BeatBread's mission is to empower artists so that they can own their art and control their careers. We give more artists access to funding and more choice to select the promotion, marketing, and production partners that best fit their unique needs.

BEATCHAIN

Email: enquiries@beatchain.com

Web: beatchain.com

Services: distribution, insights, marketing
Fee: Free sign-up; \$14.99/mo.; \$19.00/mo.

CD BABY

800-289-6923

Web: cdbaby.com

Services: Digital distribution, sync licensing, publishing administration, CD/vinyl sales.

DISTROKID

Email: support@distrokid.com

Web: distrokid.com

Services: Distribute cover songs legally, get paid when other people use your music on YouTube, unlimited backups, instant Spotify verified checkmark, manage your Apple Music page, get your credits & lyrics into stores, Spotify pre-save.

DITTO MUSIC

Web: dittomusic.com

Services: Distribution service offers unlimited releases to all major online stores on an annual subscription basis. Non-exclusive deals with artists keeping 100% of their royalty earnings. Record label services including PR, social media and playlist pitching to independent artists.

FWAYGO

Web: fwaygo.com

Services: Built by music artists and powered by fans, the platform provides a first-of-its-kind music discovery experience for consumers as well as a disruptive business model enabling undiscovered artists to increase both their exposure and their earnings by avoiding the exploitative music ownership, royalty and streaming revenue policies of traditional labels and streaming services.

LANDR

Email: contact@landr.com

Web: landr.com

Services: AL mastering, collaboration workflows, artist-friendly distribution, promotion tools, free samples, stats.

Fee: \$24.99/mo.; \$207/yr.; \$149.99/yr (upfront)

OCTIIVE

Email: support@mondotunes.com

Web: octiive.com

Services: Distribution, marketing, mastering, licensing opportunities.

ONERPM

Email: support@onerpm.com

Web: onerpm.com

Services: Music distribution, marketing, business intelligence, rights mgmt. & publishing, etc.

QOBUZ

Web: qobuz.com

Services: Offers high-quality sound and unlimited listening, anytime, everywhere.

REPOSTEXCHANGE

Web: repostexchange.com

Services: Offers SoundCloud monetization, content protection, and upgraded profile features to musicians and podcasters on the platform.

REVELATOR

Web: revelator.com

Services: State of the art full-stack copyright management platform for independent artists, labels, and distributors to distribute to music digital platforms, manage revenue reporting and royalty settlement to all rights holders.

REVERBNATION

Email: support@reverbnation.com

Web: reverbnation.com

Services: Opportunities, digital distribution, site builder, fan reach, crowd review, gig finder, sell direct, electronic press kits.

RIGHTSHOLDER.IO

Web: rightsholder.io

Services: A simple music rights search engine designed with music licensing & synchronization professionals in mind.

SONGTRADR

424-744-8190

Email: support@songtradr.com

Web: songtradr.com

Services: Free sign-up, online music licensing, free submission to music licensing opportunities, unlimited music storage, non-exclusive licensing.

SYMPHONIC DISTRIBUTION

813-907-3128

Web: symphonic.com

Services: Video distribution, publishing administration, neighboring rights, marketing, video marketing, sync licensing, web and graphic design, YouTube "website monetization" and SoundCloud monetization.

SYNC SONGWRITER

Web: syncsongwriter.com

Services: Selectively licenses music with licensing agents. The goal of the site is to teach you how to get your songs into TV and film.

THE ORCHARD

Email: communications@theorchard.com

Web: theorchard.com

Services: Distribution, marketing, data analytics, performance rights, accounting.

TUNECORE

Web: tunecore.com

Services: Vinyl pressing and distribution, physical copies of your music, guaranteed plays on services like Deezer and 8track, engagement stats, custom artist website using designs tailored for musicians.

UNITEDMASTERS

Email: info@unitedmasters.com

Web: unitedmasters.com

Services: Distribution, marketing, analytics.

Fee: \$100 monthly payment made through paypal, UnitedMasters keeps 50% of royalties.

MONETIZED VIDEO POSTING

DROPP TV

Web: droppgroup.xyz

facebook.com/droppeverything

Services: Dropp Tv unleashes the power of the creator through an innovative blend of art, technology and e-commerce creating a new mode of digital interaction.

SONGFLUENCER

Web: songfluencer.com

Email: info@songfluencer.com

Services: Strategically pairs songs, artists, and brands with key tastemaker influencers on music-forward social media platforms.

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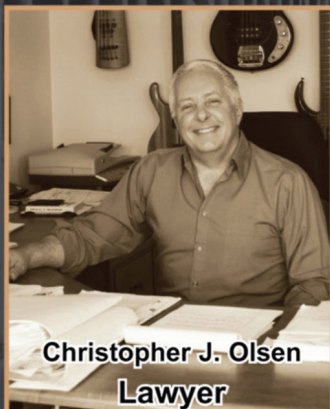
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The Healing Power Of Music

When I was given the opportunity to write a piece for this column, a singular two-word phrase popped into my head: Music Heals. Over the course of my nearly 60-year career as a stage performer and recording and touring artist, I have seen the power of music and the simple delivery of a great song impact for the good and bring healing to both countless individuals and to multitudes of people in need of hope and recovery.

Though I've experienced this phenomenon countless times over the course of my life, there's a very recent, raw example that comes to mind. While many shows throughout Los Angeles were cancelled in the wake of the tragic Palisades and Eaton fires in January, I was grateful to be one of the guest stars in one of the shows that was not—the performance of Don B. Welch's gospel play *Heavenbound* on January 11 at the Wilshire Ebell Theatre.

The show is about six ordinary Christians who have passed on, meet in a place called "almost-in-heaven" and have to audition for the Beams of Heaven Gospel choir, which requires a life testimony, a song, or both, based on how one lived their life on Earth. On stage, I could feel the energy of the audience, the excitement and relief to have something joyful to take their mind off current circumstances and lift their spirits. And their gratitude that we performers were there to help them through and heal from a dark week, where everyone seemed to know someone who had lost their home and all were experiencing some level of anxiety. Talking backstage to some great lady performer friends from over the years who had come out to see me made me cry with joy. It was a cathartic evening on so many levels.

I have always had a strong desire to lift people's spirits and impact their emotions in a positive way with my own music. This was the impetus behind the title track to my latest album (and 28th overall!) *Imagine*. Written by Rahni Song (music) and Chantel Hampton (lyrics), the song offers an inspiring vision of global love and unity during this particularly challenging sociopolitical era.

The chorus speaks to my desire to help lift people who are suffering, to help them conjure in their minds a better world: "Can you imagine...a place of peace/Imagine if love filled every street/No more hate/We'd all be free/Imagine how pure this world could be." In one interview I did, I said it was about having paradise on Earth.

My first tip to those like me who are singers looking for songs that can help people heal and look beyond present circumstances is to, above all else, feel a personal connection with the song. It has to resonate on a spiritual and emotional level with you before it can move others. Not just the lyrics, either. I felt an immediate connection to "Imagine" when my daughter Charli Huggins, head of The Gallery Entertainment, first brought it to me as an instrumental. The music itself touched something deep even before she tapped Chantel to write the beautiful lyrics. To me, it was the perfect match of melody and poetry,

a message the world needed to hear. I'm not a songwriter, but for those who are, think about the emotion of the music and the importance of a great resonant mood setting melody—and not just the message of the words you are writing.

"Imagine" is not the first time I've recorded a healing song that shares the same title as a more iconic track. When I tell folks about "Lean on Me," they think of Bill Withers' classic, but as a huge Aretha Franklin fan, who was very much inspired by the Queen of Soul as I started my career, I always checked out the B-sides. The B-side to "Spanish Harlem" was a song by Van McCoy (of "The Hustle" fame) also called "Lean on Me." I knew I wanted to record a version of it, with Van producing. It's on my 1976 album *This Is It*.

Its message of being there for someone in their time of need and dreaming the impossible resonated deeply during a time where I needed healing in my life. It was right after I had major surgery. While healing physically,



I began spending time with my mom after years of being consumed with my career and not spending much time together. She was divorced, alone, and isolated at the time and me being there was healing for her as well. My second tip would be to imagine yourself being in a vulnerable position in your life, either from a past memory or something that may occur in the future, and how the song would hit you in that moment—and how necessary that moment would be in your healing and overcoming.

A third tip for those who want to sing or write a song that has the power to heal is to not be so self-conscious about writing on that specific theme. Sometimes just a beautiful romantic love song or, in my case, even a decades old disco hit can lift the spirits of someone in need of healing at a specific moment. One of my neighbors recently told me that she was having a terrible morning, feeling depressed about everything on her way to work. It sounds like one of those times we can all relate to where we could use a healing

touch wherever it may come from. She turned on the radio and heard my version of the Bee Gees' "You Stepped into My Life," which was a Top 20 Billboard R&B hit in 1978. She told me she lit up when it came on and she sang along—by the time she arrived at work, she was in a totally different, much elevated mood. That's the healing power of music in action.

I have a fourth tip for those who want to write or record a healing song that has the potential to become a generational anthem. Once you have the song, think about building an amazing team to make things happen. A song that comes to mind is "Greatest Love of All," which was a minor hit for George Benson years before Clive Davis put Whitney Houston together with great producers and promoters and created one of the era-defining songs. Ditto "We Are the World," which was written by Michael Jackson and Lionel Richie, produced and conducted by Quincy Jones and recorded by the premiere pop artists of that time. Whatever circumstance you're writing or recording in, make sure you have a great group of industry pros to take the song to the next level—and beyond!

About Melba Moore

While best known for her seemingly nonstop flow of hit albums and singles throughout the '70s and '80s, Melba made cultural history long before that, beginning her performing career as Dionne in the original cast of the musical *Hair* while becoming the first Black woman to replace a white actress (future film star Diane Keaton) in a featured role on Broadway. In 1970, the same year her debut album *I Got Love* earned her a Best New Artist GRAMMY nomination, she won a Tony Award for Best Performance by a Featured Actress in a Musical for her portrayal of Lutie Belle in *Purlie*—a role she would later reprise in the 1981 TV adaptation for Showtime. Soon after the success of *The Melba Moore/Clifton Davis Show*, she signed with Buddha Records, where she scored the Top Ten Billboard dance hits "This Is It" and "Make Me Believe in You" and the GRAMMY nominated Top 20 R&B smash "Lean on Me."

Signing to Capitol in the early '80s, Melba enjoyed a second prolific decade of success with Billboard Top Ten R&B albums like *Never Say Never* and *A Lot of Love*, and many hit singles, including "Love's Comin' At Ya" and the No.1 hits "A Little Bit More" with Freddie Jackson and "Falling," a hypnotic ballad featuring one of the longest held notes (nearly 20 seconds!) in recorded history. In addition, Melba's 1985 hit "Read My Lips" earned her a third GRAMMY nod (for Best Female Rock Performance), making her only the third Black artist after Donna Summer and Michael Jackson to be nominated in a rock category.

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