On March 13, Ta-Da! Catering owner Shelleylyn Brandler was out shopping in preparation for The Strokes’ highly-anticipated show the following night at the Forum in Inglewood, California. As the go-to backstage caterer for major venues, tours and festivals across the country, Brandler was concerned by the postponement of their gigs with Coachella and Stagecoach earlier that week, but still had a robust slate of jobs scheduled to serve crews at The Forum, The Greek, Staples Center, Dodger Stadium and more in the packed touring season ahead. Then the calls came flooding in.

“That’s when everything started really tanking and shutting down,” Brandler tells Billboard. “Within 48 hours, our calendar was wiped out.”

While artists and fans continue to find creative digital workaround to widespread tour and festival cancellations caused by the spreading coronavirus, the thousands of workers operating behind the scenes of the live music industry — from construction and production to artist crews and hospitality — are left without recourse.

“It’s hard for us because of all the people that depend on it — they work for us year after year, look forward to and count on it,” Brandler tells Billboard of the stacked spring-to-fall touring season at the heart of her business. She has offered to help support her 50 full-time and on-call staff members from her personal savings, but fears it won’t be enough. “The heartbreak for me is the guys who stay with us all year and count on the work to feed their families. They make good money and work hard because rock and roll is consistent. But the work’s just not there right now. It’s vanished. Stopped.”

Behind every headlining act is a delicate ecosystem of freelance tour managers, front-of-house directors, equipment techs, lighting designers, bus drivers, cooks, photographers and more supporting the multi-billion dollar global live music industry. Because of the gig-based nature of their work, most operate with little, if any, employment protections, depending on the increasingly busy spring and summer touring season that supports them year-to-year. But with live
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events canceled or postponed for the foreseeable future, much of this workforce now faces months of uncertainty and financial hardship after losing work they depended on in the wake of the industry’s winter off-season.

“How am I gonna pay rent? I don’t have a lot to fall back on,” says Austin Taylor, who runs merch for Los Angeles rock band Palaye Royale, which was suddenly forced to cancel summer European and U.S. tours. As the band spent the past six months recording a new album, Taylor supported himself with savings and by running the group’s online merch shop. But he was counting on the $7,000 he anticipated making on the tours ahead to replenish his bank account and stay afloat. Though Taylor will continue to helm the band’s online shop, he expects sales won’t be enough to sustain him as the economy worsens and the general public curbs spending in the face of the pandemic.

“I don’t know if I’m gonna be able to keep my place,” Taylor says, noting his only immediate option to supplement his income is to sell his clothing through resale website Depop. “And people aren’t going to be buying as many things because everyone is watching their money. Everyone is feeling it. It’s the first thing I see on Instagram everyday — all my friends dealing with the same problems. It’s more than just a paycheck, it’s an emotional thing too.”

Whether or not a crew gets compensated for a canceled event largely depends on the artist they’re working for. While large headlining acts may have insurance or contractual clauses in place that could help provide partial compensation, the majority of artists typically have verbal or emailed agreements with their crews, and must make a choice to pay them out of pocket if work is nixed. For mid-sized or independent acts who rely on tours and merch for income, many are simply unable to pay their touring players and crew for work lost.

“When you have something canceled this close to the tour dates, it really does affect you more because you block out that time for the work — a lot of us don’t have a Plan B at that point,” says touring and session guitarist Emily Rosenfield. “Stay-in-place is the right move, but having to delete $12,000 from my accounting spreadsheet — the next two-plus months of work — was pretty crushing.

“We’re pretty much independent contractors for all these things. It’s not like we can just get paid out if something goes wrong. There’s no real insurance on that. The vast majority of artists can’t or don’t want to be liable in these situations, and we don’t qualify for many government protections because we’re freelancers.”

On Monday (March 23), Senate Democrats blocked action on a $1.8 trillion economic stabilization package, citing the need for stronger protections for workers and restrictions for bailed out businesses. It remains unclear how far the new package will go to protect independent contractors and self-employed workers specifically.

The $100 billion coronavirus aid bill signed into law March 18 may offer some relief for gig workers. Those who are self-employed are eligible for a tax credit in the amount of up to two weeks of paid sick leave at their average pay, or up to 12 weeks of paid family leave at 67% of their normal pay. The law offers a broad definition of “self-employed on a regular basis”: If net earnings from self-employment have totaled at least $400 in at least two of the last three consecutive taxable years, a worker falls within this category.

Just how much this may benefit gig workers in the live industry remains unclear, as many have had significantly more than two weeks of work canceled and pay can vary from job to job. Further complicating matters has been California’s AB5 freelancing law, which went into effect in January and which music industry professionals say has made it harder to find steady work. They say the vague language of the law, which is designed to ensure large companies like Uber and Lyft provide employee benefits and other protections for their independent workers, doesn’t make sense for the live music industry — where an artist would be saddled with benefit and payroll costs for crew members, even if they are only with
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them for one event. Rather than providing a safety net in tough times, industry workers say, the law has only made gigs more scarce.

“Work has already been slower because no one seems to know what to do with this law, and then combined with what’s happening with coronavirus, it makes more sense for agencies and artists to cancel tours altogether,” says L.A. touring and session bassist Allee Futterer, who has lost all of her touring work and steadier in-town gigs at corporate events, weddings and theme parks for the foreseeable future. Though she has savings to live off of for the immediate future, Futterer says she’s more concerned about what the reality for gig workers will look like three to four months down the line.

“Right now is scary, but there’s no guarantee that everything will just turn around,” she says. “In fact, I think the opposite is more likely. I don’t think work will come back, or people will be able to pay the rates that they used to. It’s not about weathering the storm, it’s about finding a new normal. I’m asking myself things like, ‘Is music something I should keep doing, or should I do something that is more of a necessity and is ‘recession proof’?’”

Music industry institutions are continuing to advocate for protections that target the unique business of work in the field. Last week, the Recording Academy sent a letter to Congress in which chairman and interim CEO Harvey Mason Jr. asked policymakers “to protect our nation’s musicians, performers, songwriters, and studio professionals. Just as many large industries will be seeking support, you should not forget the smallest of small businesses: individual music makers who will not benefit from employer-based relief.”

The Music Artists Coalition also sent a letter to Congress on March 18, writing, “The music industry is facing an existential threat that is unprecedented — the touring business as we know it has disappeared without warning and without a safety net for hundreds of thousands of people.”

For now, gig workers in the live industry continue to brace themselves for an uncertain future. Many say they are counting on tours and festivals eventually being rescheduled, but that may come with its own set of obstacles as the industry scrambles to rejigger its calendar and compete with events already scheduled for later in the year.

“Even if a gig is postponed, you still have to make it to October,” says Elmo Lovano, a producer, musical director and drummer who is also the founder of the professional musician gig social network Jammcard. “A lot of those people who were gonna do that already had their year lined up, and were planning on doing work with other artists. The postponement of that cycle means that no matter what, you’re going to make half of what you were.”

In the meantime, workers continue to band together for support and share resources in their communities to chart a path forward.

“This is unprecedented, so I think we’re all waiting to see how it plays out while continuing to create purpose through art,” Rosenfeld says. “There’s no handbook for this kind of thing, regardless of what career or field you’re in.”

BMG Revenues Grow 10% as Owner Bertelsmann Says It’s ‘Well Prepared’ to Survive Coronavirus Crisis

BY RICHARD SMIRKE

LONDON – BMG parent company Bertelsmann says it is “well prepared to emerge safely” from the current coronavirus crisis with group revenues rising to €18 billion ($20.2 billion) in 2019.

BMG contributed €600 million ($672 million) to that total, a 10% rise on the previous year when revenues totalled €545 million ($611 million at the exchange rates of one euro for $1.1206 Bertelsmann said it recorded for 2019).

The record label and publisher’s operating earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization (EBITDA) were up 12.7% to €138 million ($155 million), according to Bertelsmann’s year-end financial report.

BMG is the first label to announce earnings since the coronavirus outbreak shut down large parts of the music industry.

Reflecting on the pandemic, Thomas Rabe, chairman and CEO of Bertelsmann, said the Germany-based media company had taken many measures to protect its employees’ health and well-being and was well prepared financially to weather the storm.

“We are profitable, have high liquidity, a comfortable equity ratio, and ratings continue unchanged in the investment-grade category. The broad setup of our businesses makes us less susceptible to economic fluctuations and allows us to continue investing in our future without compromising the substance of our business,” said Rabe in a statement.

As well as BMG, Bertelsmann’s media holdings include RTL Group, Penguin Random House, magazine publisher Gruner + Jahr and service provider Arvato. Rabe said its diverse portfolio had an even greater societal relevance now that large parts of the world are on lockdown.

“We provide authoritative information and entertainment to millions of people, who now face unprecedented disruption to their personal and professional lives,” said the CEO.

Breaking down BMG’s year-end results, looking first at it 138 million euros in EBITDA as a percentage of revenue, EBITDA margin now stands at 23%, up from the 22.4% in the prior year when EBITDA totaled 122 million euros ($137 million).

That EBITDA margin is higher than those of the three majors, with whom BMG is increasingly in competition with as the company evolves back toward becoming a major music company, a status it once had until it sold its music operation to Sony back in 2004.

Currently, BMG revenue breaks out too two-thirds music publishing and one-third for recorded music, which means its pub-
Who says radio’s dead? Although broadcast ad revenue is creeping downward, audiences are aging and streaming has surpassed the medium as a vehicle for music discovery. In its inaugural Deep Dive report, Billboard assesses the radio industry today and provides a glimpse of its future by comparing streaming and radio users, automobile audio usage, the growth rates of programming formats — and by looking at why labels and artists still need airtime even in a streaming world.

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lishing company has revenue of 400 million euros (almost $450 million), while its record label operations are 200 million euros (almost $225 million).

For the latter business segment, BMG has deliberately chosen a different path, concentrating more on established artists than the riskier and less financially rewarding business of trying to break hundreds of new artists in the same year, according to BMG CEO Hartwig Masuch. That helps insure a stronger profit he says, along with keeping a tight reign on the corporate cost structure.

“The corporate cost structure has to make sense,” given that the growing digital segment of the business brings with it higher artist royalties, he said.

Last year, digital made up 56% of the label and publisher’s total revenues, up from 52% in 2018. Within that, the catalog portion—music 18 months or older—experienced a 78% year-over-year increase.

Hit albums by Kylie Minogue, Blanco Brown, Keith Richards, Jason Aldean, Dido, The Cranberries, Kontra K and Seeed helped drive growth in BMG’s record label business, which outpaced the market’s growth in several key territories.

One of those was the United Kingdom, where album sales by BMG artists were up 12% year-on-year. In the United States, BMG’s music streaming business grew 62%, although it did not provide comparable figures about album sales.

BMG’s publishing income also recorded organic growth in 2019, says the report, but does not provide a breakdown of sales by division. Billboard understands that BMG revenues are currently split at around 65% publishing and 35% records.

Songwriters signed to its publishing arm include AC/DC, Mick Jagger and Keith Richards, Roger Waters, Steven Tyler, Johannes Oerding, 21 Savage, Bring Me The Horizon, Juice WRLD and Lewis Capaldi, who all made “significant contributions to revenues.”

New publishing signings in 2019 included Neil Finn, Cage The Elephant and KSI, while Jagger and Richards extended their existing contracts with BMG.

Last year also saw the music company branch into artist management via a partnership with Shelter Music Group, launch its first new label imprint since being founded in 2008 (the jazz, classical and electronic focused Modern Recordings) and open an office in Hong Kong.

Breaking down its revenues by market, the U.S. contributed just over 50% of BMG’s yearly sales, followed by the UK (16.6%), Germany (7.7%) and France (5.7%), with Europe as a whole accounting for 40.9% and other territories, 8.9%.

The company said BMG averaged 883 employees during 2019, in 19 offices in 12 core music markets around the globe, including opening a branch in the past year in Hong Kong. Those employees are now all currently working remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic, while two team members have been diagnosed as positive with the virus, the company reports.

When the company re-started music operations back in 2008, it initially began growing through a series of acquisitions including buying Cherry Lane, Chrysalis, Mute, Sanctuary, Bug, and Broken Bow among other publishers and labels. In its year-ending report, the company said “BMG’s focus is on organic growth through the signing of additional artists and songwriters,” but added, “there may also be opportunities for selective acquisitions of music catalogs. To date, the company says it has invested 1.927 billion euros in building the BMG catalog.

The company pointed out that since BMG was relaunched, the company last year launched its first new label, Modern Recordings, aimed at fans of jazz, new classical and electronic music. Elsewhere in the portfolio, BMG is expanding its presence in production music, rebranding that division under the banner BMG Production Music; added artist management to its services portfolio, including entering into a partnership with Shelter Music Group.

Looking toward the future, Masuch says the company has increased its engagement in South America, which he says is a going forward priority. That will include trying to sign local artist down there but he adds that the consumers there “have an enormous appetite for Anglo-American repertoire.”

In order to insure that BMG revenue holds steady during the global economic downturn, BMG has increased its investment in digital marketing, according to the company.

The pandemic aside, the company said that “growing market penetration of subscription-based music streaming services offers significant opportunities to expand the recorded-music and music-publishing markets internationally.”

Risks to BMG’s future earnings growth mentioned in the earnings report include the cost of extending contracts with artists/authors and distribution partners and securing the recouping of advances.

Spotify, Tidal, Pandora & More Streaming Services Donate to MusiCares’ COVID-19 Fund

A mazon Music, Facebook, SiriusXM and Pandora, Spotify, Tidal and YouTube Music have all donated to MusiCares’ relief fund for music workers whose livelihoods have been impacted by the coronavirus crisis.

MusiCares, the charitable arm of the Recording Academy, launched the COVID-19 Relief Fund last week. It kicked off with an initial $1 million donation each from MusiCares and the Recording Academy, totaling $2 million.

Thanks to the donations announced today (March 24) from major streaming and tech companies, plus fundraising efforts from musicians like Alicia Keys and Better Than Ezra’s Kevin Griffin, that total has more than doubled, according to a representative. The funds will go directly to music professionals who lost income due to coronavirus-related gig cancellations, from artists to
The trio will forgo the remainder of their 2020 pay from now through the end of the year, and the rest of the staff will see proportionate reductions to their salary, with higher earners taking larger cuts.

“Like companies across the industry and our country, UTA is taking some immediate and painful steps to ensure we get through the current public health and economic crisis as strong as possible,” the agency said Monday in a statement. “In addition to aggressive cost-cutting measures, this includes asking our colleagues at every level to take pay reductions, structured so our most senior colleagues make the largest financial sacrifice.”

The measures are being taken in hopes of avoiding layoffs as a result of the dramatically slowed economy as the novel coronavirus spreads across the U.S. and around the world. Paradigm on Friday let go of about one-sixth of its workforce as a result of the industry’s near-shutdown.

“The understanding and support we’ve received from our colleagues has been incredibly gratifying, as is their recognition that these difficult steps are intended to ensure the long-term strength and viability of our company,” the UTA statement continued. “While we do not know what the future holds, we are committed to being candid and transparent about where things stand as we navigate these uncharted waters together.”

This article was originally published by The Hollywood Reporter.

UTA Implements Pay Cuts Amid Coronavirus Pandemic, Leadership to Forgo 2020 Salaries

By Rebecca Sun

UTA CEO Jeremy Zimmer and co-presidents David Kramer and Jay Sures have instituted companywide pay cuts to weather the coronavirus pandemic — starting with themselves.

Tokyo Olympics Postponed Due to Coronavirus Outbreak

By Associated Press

The Tokyo Olympics were postponed until 2021 on Tuesday, ending weeks of speculation that the games could not go ahead as scheduled because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The International Olympic Committee made the decision after speaking with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and local organizers.

The IOC said the games will be held “not later than summer 2021” but they will still be called the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

“In the present circumstances and based on the information provided by the WHO today, the IOC President and the Prime Minister of Japan have concluded that the Games of the XXXII Olympiad in Tokyo must be rescheduled to a date beyond 2020 but not later than summer 2021, to safeguard the health of the athletes, everybody involved in the Olympic Games and the international community,” the IOC said in a statement.

Before the official announcement, Abe said Bach had agreed with his proposal for a one-year postponement.

“President Bach said he will agree 100%, and we agreed to hold the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics in the summer of 2021 at the latest,” Abe said, saying holding the games next year would be “proof of a victory by human beings against the coronavirus infections.”

On Sunday, Bach said a decision on postponing the games would be made in the next four weeks. But pressure grew as national federations, sports governing bodies and athletes spoke out against having the opening ceremony as planned on July 24.

The decision came only a few hours after local organizers said the torch relay would start as planned on Thursday. It was expected to start in northeastern Fukushima prefecture, but with no torch, no torchbearers and no public. Those plans also changed.

“For the time being, the flame will be stored and displayed in Fukushima,” organizing committee president Yoshiro Mori said.

The Olympics have never before been postponed, and have only ever previously been canceled in wartime.

Organizers will now have to figure out how to keep things running for another year, while making sure venues are up to date for possible another 12 months. "A lot can happen in one year, so we have to think about
what we have to do,” said Toshiro Muto, the CEO of the organizing committee. “The decision came upon us all of a sudden.”

The IOC and Tokyo organizers said they hope the decision to postpone will help the world heal from the pandemic.

“The leaders agreed that the Olympic Games in Tokyo could stand as a beacon of hope to the world during these troubled times and that the Olympic flame could become the light at the end of the tunnel in which the world finds itself at present,” the IOC statement said. “Therefore, it was agreed that the Olympic flame will stay in Japan. It was also agreed that the Games will keep the name Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020.”

Indie Country Artists Make the Best Of An Uncertain Coronavirus Shutdown

BY TOM ROLAND

ASHVILLE — When the COVID-19 coronavirus forced the shutdown of the concert industry, independent Nashville artist Stevie Woodward got a double whammy.

Not only did she lose the steady, six-nights-a-week bookings in the Music City club scene that kept her afloat, she also faced the stark reality that one of her roommates, a nurse at Vanderbilt Medical Center, might well bring the bug home from work.

Woodward decided to make lemonade out of lemons and drove to Myrtle Beach, S.C., for an unexpected two-week vacation at her parents’ house.

“When am I ever going to get this time again?” she asks rhetorically. “If anything is good out of this situation, it’s that. It’s nice to just kind of be with family right now, especially at this chaotic time. You don’t know what’s around the corner.”

That uncertainty exists for every American as an invisible enemy expands its territory. It’s particularly acute in the music business, where freelancers are a large percentage of the work force. For arena headliners, even those who write their own songs, the cancellations are a problem. But for indie acts whose business model is almost exclusively built upon concert income, the unpredictability of the virus-related shutdown is brutal.

Nearly every artist has had their live shows postponed or canceled through the end of April, and some have lost as much as six months’ worth of concert bookings.

“I can [deal] with the March and April shows being pushed back or rescheduled,” says John King. “But when you get into, like, May — and is it going to go further into June and July? I mean, I would say 80% of our income comes from May to September. That’s kind of the sweet spot for touring.”

But that doesn’t mean that artists are sitting in the house twiddling their thumbs and watching their checkbook balances dwindle. Instead, they’re using the time to improve their craft, bone up on their marketing and social media skills, write songs and/or spend time with family that they cannot see when they’re on the road.

And in the most public retooling of their schedules, many are releasing new music and performing online. King launched a Friday-night Facebook Live series, Tunes From the Tub, on March 23, streaming from the best-lit room in his Columbia, Tenn., home. Kalie Shorr used the platform mykey.com for a cheekily titled March 22 livestream, The Social Distancing Tour Part 1.

“You never know how much money you’ll make,” she says, “but, like, $500 here and there, that can go a really long way when you’re struggling to adapt to this new landscape that we don’t know how long is going to last.”

Within days of the concert shutdown, the earliest adapters scheduled a wave of livestream performances and released music. Emily Hackett issued “My Version of a Love Song” on March 23, taking advantage of all those consumers who are self-isolating and looking for entertainment to keep their spirits up.

“They’re still listening to music right now because they have nothing else to do,” she reasons. “So it’s at least comforting in that way to know, ‘OK, I can keep putting out new music.’”

Artists can keep creating new sounds, too. Woodward is talking about recording material in her downtime, King is pulling out unfinished songs for completion, and Hackett has fielded requests for cowriting sessions via Skype and FaceTime. She’s also intent on writing songs on her own, the way that many country songwriters did back in the day.

“Songwriters can do their jobs from anywhere,” says Hackett. “They can do this by themselves. If they don’t know how to write by themselves or they run into the challenge of writing yourself into a corner, then use that opportunity to send it off to somebody and say, ‘Can we cowrite in a new way?’”

This should be a good time to find unique sources of inspiration. As people connect from their isolated home with associates in separate isolated homes, they are likely to mine emotions and situations they have not previously experienced in quite the same way.

“We have things to write about,” says Woodward. “We can use this time to our advantage, and I think it’s really going to be a time for people, especially creatives, to reflect and sit back and be introspective and kind of learn about their creative process. If there’s a blessing in disguise in this, maybe it’s that.”

Finding the silver lining is going to be key as the days turn into weeks or, in a worst-case scenario, months before the virus’ spread is reduced. Indie artists by nature move toward hope, and the inventiveness required of them as freelancers gives them a set of skills that other professionals may not have had to develop.

“It’s such an irregular industry already,” observes King. “We’re kind of conditioned for something like this. I can’t tell you the amount of living room floors I’ve slept on or in a van — you know, just things to get by, scraping pennies together after a show that paid $50 in Athens, Ga. We’re kind of conditioned to live in these really tight,
Lil Uzi Vert Lands 22 Songs on Hot 100, Including All New Tracks on ‘Eternal Atake’ Deluxe Edition

BY XANDER ZELLNER

Lil Uzi Vert scores another massive week on Billboard’s charts, as the rapper lands 22 songs on the latest Billboard Hot 100 chart (dated March 28), including all 14 added to the deluxe edition of his new LP, Eternal Atake.

Sparked by the arrival of its expanded version, Eternal Atake logs its second week at No. 1 on the Billboard 200 with 247,000 equivalent album units, according to Nielsen Music.

Here’s a look at all 22 of Lil Uzi Vert’s songs on the latest Hot 100, 14 of which debut, encompassing the set’s newly-added tracks.

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<td>No. 19 (debut)</td>
<td>“Bean (Kobe),” feat. Chief Keef</td>
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<td>No. 26 (debut)</td>
<td>“Yessirskiii,” with 21 Savage</td>
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<td>No. 27</td>
<td>“Baby Pluto”</td>
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<td>“Lo Mein”</td>
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<td>No. 45 (debut)</td>
<td>“Lotus”</td>
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<td>“Silly Watch”</td>
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<td>“Wassup,” feat. Future</td>
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<td>No. 60 (debut)</td>
<td>“Strawberry Peels,” feat. Young Thug &amp; Gunna</td>
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<td>No. 62 (debut)</td>
<td>“Moon Relate”</td>
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<td>“I Can Show You”</td>
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<td>No. 68 (debut)</td>
<td>“Trap This Way (This Way)”</td>
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<td>No. 72 (debut)</td>
<td>“Leaders” feat. NAV</td>
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<td>No. 76 (debut)</td>
<td>“No Auto” feat. Lil Durk</td>
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<td>No. 82</td>
<td>“Homecoming”</td>
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<td>No. 83 (debut)</td>
<td>“Come This Way”</td>
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<td>No. 87 (debut)</td>
<td>“Got the Guap,” feat. Young Thug</td>
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<td>No. 89 (debut)</td>
<td>“Money Spread,” feat. Young Nudy</td>
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<td>No. 94</td>
<td>“Futsal Shuffle 2020”</td>
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Uzi charted 20 songs on last week’s Hot 100 in the first charting week for Eternal Atake. In the 61-year history of the Hot 100, only two other artists have charted at least 22 songs simultaneously. Drake has achieved the feat three times, and holds the record for the most concurrent entries, with 27 on the July 14, 2018 tally, when his album Scorpion debuted atop the Billboard 200. Lil Wayne then landed 22 songs on the Hot 100 at once as his LP Tha Carter V opened atop the Oct. 13, 2018-dated Billboard 200.

With 14 debuts on the latest Hot 100, Lil Uzi Vert has now charted 62 songs on the chart in his career.

In 2020 alone, Lil Uzi Vert has charted 14 of which debut, encompassing the set’s newly-added tracks.

Lollapalooza Delays Lineup Reveal as 2020 Festival Remains in Limbo

BY TAYLOR MIMS

Chicago festival Lollapalooza took to social media this morning to announce that it is holding off on revealing its 2020 lineup. The long-running festival is set to take place at Grant Park from July 30 - Aug. 2, but its fate is uncertain as organizers continue to watch the coronavirus crisis push events into the fall or later.

“Right around this time every year, we come together to celebrate the announcement of another incredible Lollapalooza lineup. For now, we are at home, taking care of each other, listening to music, and dreaming of summertime in Chicago,” the festival said in a statement attached to a four-minute sizzle reel of previous festival footage.

Around late March every year, the Chicago festival typically releases its lineup and allows fans to purchases passes for the four-day event. As of today, the lineup has yet to be revealed and tickets have not gone on sale to the public.

The statement continued: “While we stay in close contact with local officials, we are well underway with planning for Lolla to take place as soon as it’s safe for us all to be together in Grant Park.”

The festival promised updates on the festival’s future and possible lineup as soon as possible. Billboard reached out to representatives for Lollapalooza, but have not yet heard back.

Lollapalooza organizers have already been forced to postpone its festivals in Argentina, Chile and Brazil until later in the year due to the coronavirus.
Metallica is rescheduling their April tour dates and will no longer appear at the Danny Wimmer Presents spring festivals, due to the spreading coronavirus, it was announced Monday (March 23).

The iconic rock band had been scheduled to perform at DWP’s Epicenter May 1-3 in North Carolina, Welcome to Rockville May 8-10 in Florida and Sonic Temple May 15-17 in Ohio.

“As many of you know, in our nearly forty years of touring, we’ve had a few mishaps along the way; broken bones, trashed appendixes, a pyro mishap, backs thrown out, crazy weather, food poisoning (beware of the oysters!) and even one way next-level anxiety attack! None of it has ever stopped us, but this is obviously a very different time and leaving the house now literally means taking your life in your hands,” the band said in a release. “Unfortunately, in these surreal times that means we have to stay away from each other for the foreseeable future before we can start thinking about ‘Tallica family reunions around the world.’

Metallica was scheduled to perform in Chile, Argentina and Brazil throughout the month of April, but has moved the six-date trek to December. Tour support Greta Van Fleet has committed to attending the December dates once they are rescheduled, though the venues may change.

For fans in the United States, Metallica apologized for being unable to play the DWP festivals due to their cancellation, but said that they are still scheduled to play Louder Than Life in Louisville, which has now added a fourth day to the event and will run Sept. 17-20. Fans who bought tickets to the festival will have access to the newly added dates.

“We are crushed to say that Epicenter, Welcome To Rockville and Sonic Temple are being canceled due to the governmental restrictions on mass gatherings,” DWP said about the festival cancellations in a release. “We respect these directives and recognize they are in the best interest of the greater good, as well as the health and safety of our fans, musicians, partners, and staff. Before accepting this fate, we worked really hard to try to reschedule the festivals. Unfortunately, scheduling conflicts, venue availabilities and a number of other factors out of our control made postponing impossible. Make no mistake, each of these festivals will return in May 2021 bigger and stronger than ever!”

Ticketholders for the three cancelled festivals can seek a full refund from DWP, apply the ticket to the festival’s 2021 edition or exchange it for a pass to another DWP festival still scheduled to take place this year, including Louder Than Life, Bourbon & Beyond, Hometown Rising and After Shock.

“We have also arranged for many of the bands from Sonic, Epicenter and Rockville to play at Louder Than Life and will be announcing that as soon as we feel appropriate,” DWP added. “Because we were not able to reschedule the Spring festivals, we want Louder Than Life to be an inclusive celebration of all of those festivals. It’s not a perfect solution, but these are imperfect times. It is our sincere hope that we are all able to heal together with massive celebrations this Fall.”

Due to uncertainty surrounding the containment of coronavirus, for the time being, DWP said it will hold off on announcing lineups or putting passes on sale for its remaining festivals.

The 2020 Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction ceremony has moved from spring to fall. The event, which was postponed due to the worries about the spread of the COVID-19 novel coronavirus, will now take place on Nov. 7; it was originally scheduled for May 2.

The annual ceremony will still take place in Cleveland and honor Nine Inch Nails, Depeche Mode, the Doobie Brothers, T-Rex, Notorious B.I.G. and Whitney Houston.

The event will broadcast live from the city’s Public Auditorium at 8 p.m. ET on HBO, marking the first time the ceremony will be broadcast in real time on the network.

The New York Philharmonic canceled the rest of its season and a 10-concert European tour due to the new coronavirus, estimating it
will have $10 million in operating losses to its $87 million annual budget because of the pandemic.

The Philharmonic said the salaries of 106-unionized orchestra players will be cut to minimum scale for April and 75% of minimum scale through May.

Health benefits will be continued through the current contract’s expiration on Sept. 20. Due to declines in the financial markets, the Philharmonic said its endowment dropped from $210 million this year to less than $180 million last week.

Possible furloughs and pay cuts for its 113-person administrative staff are being evaluated.

The Philharmonic’s season at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts runs through June 13.

The six-city tour was to have been from April 30 to May 12. As part of an agreement with local 802 of the American Federation of Musicians, the philharmonic will be able to use its media archives on a free portal, NY Phil Plays On.

No decision has been made on whether to use its media archives on a free portal, NY Phil Plays On.

The philharmonic will be able to use its media archives on a free portal, NY Phil Plays On.

The Philharmonic said it plans to return to The Woodlands in June 2021 and that fans can seek a full refund from festival ticketer Elevate.

Fans can also hold on to their ticket to use for Firefly 2021. Check out the festival’s full statement below.

Billboard has reached out to representatives for Firefly for further comment.

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African Jazz Great Manu Dibango Dies in France at 86 of Coronavirus

**BY ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Manu Dibango, who fused African rhythms with funk to become one of the most influential musicians in world dance music, died Tuesday (March 24) with the coronavirus, according to his music publisher. He was 86. The Cameroon-born saxophonist, who gained international fame with his 1972 song “Soul Makossa,” died in a hospital in the Paris region, Thierry Durepaire said.

Dibango was hospitalized with an illness linked to COVID-19, his official Facebook page said last week. “Soul Makossa” was one of the earliest hits in the nascent world music scene, including a catchy hook copied by some of the world’s biggest pop stars.

In 2009, Dibango filed a lawsuit against Michael Jackson and Rihanna, claiming they had stolen his music in “Wanna Be Startin’ Somethin’” and “Don’t Stop the Music,” respectively. Jackson settled out of court. Funeral services were to be “held in strict privacy” followed by a tribute “when possible,” Tuesday’s announcement said.

Funerals in France have been limited to 20 people in the closest circle of the deceased because of a lockdown to try to slow the spread of COVID-19. Dibango is survived by four children.

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Texas’ Ubbi Dubbi Dance Festival Has Been Postponed Due to Coronavirus

**BY KATIE BAIN**

The annual dance festival Ubbi Dubbi, which was scheduled to happen in Arlington, Texas, on April 18-19, has been canceled due to coronavirus. The festival was scheduled to host a barrage of dance acts including Kaskade, Gryffin, Illenium and Camel-Phat.

“We looked at multiple options to produce a safe event during the Summer, but thought it was best to concentrate on providing a supersized event in the Fall,” reads a statement from event organizers that was released today (March 21).

Instead of canceling completely, Ubbi Dubbi is joining up with the October Texas festival Freaky Deaky for a show called Ubbi Dubbi Gets Freaky Deaky. This event is on the calendar for October 30-31, 2020 at the Houston Raceway Park. The lineup will be entirely new and not composed of artists that had been set to play Ubbi Dubbi. Both Ubbi Dubbi and Freaky Deaky are produced by longstanding dance music promoter Disco Donnie Presents.

Fans who purchased tickets for Ubbi Dubbi are able to transfer them for the October event, or receive a refund.

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Firefly Festival Cancels 2020 Edition Due to Coronavirus

**BY TAYLOR MIMS**

Firefly Music Festival in Dover, Delaware has announced the cancellation of its 2020 edition due to coronavirus. The four-day festival was set to take place at The Woodlands of Dover International Speedway from June 18-21.

“At the direction of state and local authorities and federal guidelines amid the COVID-19 pandemic, we are saddened to confirm the cancellation of Firefly Music Festival 2020. We take the safety and health of our fans, staff and community seriously and we urge everyone to follow the guidelines and protocols put forth by the public health officials,” the festival said in a statement on social media.

Firefly 2020 was set to see performances from Rage Against the Machine, Billie Eilish, Halsey, Khalid, Blink-182 and more.

“We are deeply disappointed by this difficult decision, one that impacts our fans and our incredible team of performers, crew, vendors and our community in Dover, Delaware,” the statement continued.

Firefly said it plans to return to The Woodlands in June 2021 and that fans can seek a full refund from festival ticketer Elevate.

Fans can also hold on to their ticket to use for Firefly 2021. Check out the festival’s full statement below.

Billboard has reached out to representatives for Firefly for further comment.

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Dolly Parton’s Dollywood Delays Opening Due to Coronavirus

BY HERAN MAMO

On Tuesday (March 24), Dolly Parton’s Dollywood announced it’s delaying the Pigeon Forge, Tenn.-based theme park’s seasonal opening and suspending all operations at the DreamMore Resort and Spa indefinitely due to the coronavirus crisis. Dollywood’s Smoky Mountain Cabins remain open at this time.

“The coronavirus crisis is unprecedented, and based on the ever-changing developments, we are constantly re-evaluating our options and hoping to open in May,” Dollywood President Craig Ross said in a statement on the official website. “We are looking daily at all of our options to present an exciting and entertaining 2020 season that is a great experience for our guests, but our first priority is the safety of our hosts and guests.”

Dollywood vows to continue consulting their medical experts and abiding by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines until Guests with resort reservations and tickets while Dollywood remains temporarily closed can contact 1-800-DOLLYWOOD to reschedule their visits.

‘It’s *NSYNC’s World, We Just Live in It’: An Oral History of ‘No Strings Attached’ Selling a Historic 2.4 Million First-Week Copies in 2000

FOLLOWING our billboard staff-picked list of the 100 greatest songs of 2000, we’re writing this week about some of the stories and trends that defined the year for us. Here, we flash back to late March of that year, when one of the biggest groups in pop music released their much-anticipated sophomore album — and set a record-breaking mark for runaway success that stood for 15 years to come.

Twenty years ago, pop heartthrobs *NSYNC set an industry standard with their sophomore album, No Strings Attached. The LP sold a whopping 2.4 million copies in its first week in March 2000, doubling the record their boy band contemporaries the Backstreet Boys had set the year before with their own blockbuster sophomore effort, Millennium.

For *NSYNC, the timing of their second full-length release couldn’t have seemed more perfect: Big pop acts were beginning to take over the music industry, with the prior few years seeing the rise of boy bands, as well as teenage darlings Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera. CD sales were at an all-time high, as artists of all genres (Dixie Chicks, Kid Rock, Santana) were reaching diamond status around the turn of the century; meanwhile, MTV’s Total Request Live was at its peak, giving those young stars a platform to connect with fans (and promote the hell out of whatever project was coming next).

But while the scene was set for *NSYNC, the new millennium marked a period of uncertainty for the group, as they were coming off of a highly publicized legal battle with their initial label, Trans Continental/RCA Records, and now-disgraced mogul Lou Pearlman. The fivesome — Lance Bass, JC Chasez, Joey Fatone, Chris Kirkpatrick and Justin Timberlake — sued Pearlman for defrauding, nearly losing their group name (and $150 million) before a judge ruled in their favor in November 1999. The decision allowed *NSYNC to sign with Jive Records, an independent label that was home to Spears and, ironically, the Backstreet Boys.

Though the signing may have felt risky to fans, it was actually the smartest move *NSYNC could’ve made. They were now with the label that knew exactly how to market a huge pop album in a landscape where the audience was clearly ready for more. The *NSYNC guys weren’t sure what their fan base was going to look like post-legal battle and signing with their “rival” label, but those at Jive knew the magic they had with No Strings Attached.

“It was a marketing dream come true,” Barry Weiss, who was running Jive at the time (he’s now co-founder of independent label RECORDS), says of NSA. “It set the course for word-of-mouth, fan engagement, direct-to-fan [marketing]. It was sort of like a social media explosion without social media, driven by mainstream news and brick-and-mortar publicity. It was the culmination of the pop explosion.”

No Strings Attached also marked the beginning of the downward spiral of album sales, though, as MP3-sharing website Napster ignited the early days of file-sharing and subsequently burst the big pop sales bubble. And while their fellow pop heavyweights came out strong in their first weeks over the next year (Spears’ Oops… I Did It Again sold 1.3 million; BSB’s Black & Blue earned 1.59 mil; Eminem’s The Marshall Mathers LP bested both with 1.76 mil), *NSYNC’s 2.4 million first-week feat proved untouchable, even by the group themselves — their third LP, 2001’s Celebrity, couldn’t quite crack the 2 million mark in its first week, selling 1.88
IN BRIEF

Below, Weiss and his former Jive colleagues Tom Carrabba (senior VP of sales and marketing and general manager) and Janet Kleinbaum (VP of artist marketing), “*NSYNC’s former manager Johnny Wright, then-MTV News editor-in-chief Michael Alex, then-Trans World Entertainment buyer Mark Hudson and “NSYNC’s own JC Chasez break down how No Strings Attached landed such a historic sales week — one that only Adole could break.

“The marketing campaign was the lawsuit.”

Johnny Wright: One year before this album came out, we had recorded the song “ Bye Bye Bye”; it was one of two songs that we had done with [Swedish pop superproducer] Max Martin and his team. At that point, Max and his team were kind of in a quagmire, because they didn’t know what was going to happen [with the lawsuit] and they really didn’t want to let us have songs [they had written for us].

We had an opportunity for a TV show called the Radio Music Awards, so I pleaded with Max and his team, like, “Look, this could be the final time that the fans see the group. If we lose this lawsuit, let us perform the song — no harm, no foul.” But in the back of my mind, I knew if we performed it, it would be etched in the fans minds as our song. So over the course of this court battle, people were replaying the performance. Fan base strength started growing, and this was kind of like the flagship song as everybody was getting news on the court battle from MTV.

Barry Weiss: [The album] was delayed multiple times [because of the lawsuit]. The delays led to the build up of anticipation for the album. It was kind of gasoline on fire: They had come off a 10 million-selling album [1998’s N’Sync], and they had bumped this album for six to nine months — the release date was publicized and moved back numerous times, which actually heightened the anticipation for the album. Ultimately, the marketing campaign was the lawsuit. It was the best publicity we could have had.

Wright: As soon as they won the rights to their name and we said that we are signing with Jive and we’re going to put an album out, people wanted to see, “What are they going to do? What are they going to say? We already heard this ‘Bye Bye Bye’ record that we can’t buy right now, but we want that.”

JC Chasez: We literally thought our career was ending, and then all of a sudden it wasn’t. We’d been given a second opportunity as a band. We were very enthusiastic, but also under an incredible amount of pressure to get this thing out, because we were afraid we were going to be forgotten. I know that sounds silly to some people, but at the time, when you’ve been told so many things by people who had status and positions of power — we were genuinely worried.

Wright: Our biggest fear was [that “NSYNC was] out of sight, out of mind. And that if we won our name and we were coming back, would they even care? Because [fans] had the opportunity to flip to the Backstreet Boys, and the Backstreet Boys had just come off of selling a million records in the first week.

“Backstreet Boys sold a million records in the first week… how do we do that?”

Janet Kleinbaum: There was a lot of worry that there would be too much competition between Backstreet Boys and “NSYNC, and we wouldn’t be able to handle it. But in fact that wasn’t true — we knew exactly what needed to get done, and we were able to identify the uniqueness in each group and, work with them that way.

Tom Carrabba: We had history with the Backstreet Boys, and we had our finger on the pulse on the pop audience. We anticipated we’d probably be doing the same as the Backstreet Boys’ [first week], like 1.2, 1.3 million. Retail knew that there was pent-up demand for a boy group, so it was a lot easier to pitch the project than it was initially with the Backstreet Boys. When it got to “NSYNC, all those roads were kind of paved already for a teen sensation pop project, so we were ahead of the game.

MTV embraced it, radio embraced it, retail embraced it. The velocity was a lot stronger going into “NSYNC’s No Strings, because the concept was proven with another group, and they saw that it could work. So our theory was, we had all the believers, we had the whole team pulling in the same direction — the question wasn’t, “Is it going to be big?” The question was, “How big?”

Weiss: They premiered “Bye Bye Bye” on the American Music Awards in early January. That was the fuse that lit [further anticipation for the album], because it was such a smash hit single, which was exactly what the audience was waiting for. The single exploded on impact — it exploded at radio, it exploded at retail, the video exploded, everything about it was firing on all cylinders. There was so much pent-up demand, that everything just kept stoking the fire.

Kleinbaum: [The American Music Awards] showed maturity and growth as performers and as a group. It wasn’t just another pop boy band getting together to sing. This was legitimate. This was real.

Wright: We knew we had a hit record. And with the response from the video — [MTV’s] TRL had the countdown to the number one video in the country, and we got that spot. So I think that we were very comfortable with knowing that we had a hit single. But they’re competitive guys, and in the back of their minds it’s like, “Backstreet Boys sold a million records in the first week — that was major. How do we do that? Can we do that?”

Kleinbaum: It was really just a matter of trying to stay focused on their audience and how to best get to them. MTV was one of our prime partners for that, but it was a lot of television and a lot of media opportunities. It was magazine covers [of publications] going to their core audience. Their promotional schedule was so hectic and so cram-packed with work to do to support the album. And at the same time, they were preparing for the tour. They worked so hard, they were busy every hour of every day. It was nonstop and they were willing, ready and able — and they always had a great attitude.

Michael Alex: “NSYNC really knew how to play it. They were media-friendly, and they didn’t get precious about it. They certainly are responsible for all the earned media they got. Their audience is rabid, and they made sure their audience had access.

Carrabba: We had fan lists — we accumulated hundreds of thousands of names and addresses. We were documenting
everything and utilizing it. So everytime we went back to the market, we had an army of people we could contact.

Kleinbaum: We sent snippet cassettes and snippet CDs and other pieces of info [leading up to the release].

Wright: We had a deal with Verizon Wireless, and one of the things that we wanted to make sure of was the date of the album [March 21] would be locked in people’s minds. Whether there was a pop-up display or a poster that was on the front of every store front at Verizon, we made sure that our date was locked in. And when the guys did interviews, they constantly talked about the date.

That became very key, because no matter where you turned around, if you heard anything or saw anything on *NSYNC, you saw the [release] date. We also had a big deal with Chili’s; we did the Baby Back Ribs commercial and at the end of that commercial they tagged the date. That was our big plan: We were going to drive this date in your head, for you to know that’s the date you need to purchase our album.

“It was just *NSYNC mania that day.”

Wright: Two days before the album release, we started hearing [that] stans from across the country were lining up outside of their record stores — Times Square, Chicago, LA — to buy the album. We started to get that feeling, “Oh wow, they still love us.” But still never to the effect of, “We’re going to sell a million records in a day.”

In the first hour that we started [our appearances on release day], Tom [Carrabba] says to me, “Hey, we’re at 150,000 records.” Three hours later, we’d crossed the half a million mark, and I’m like, “Oh my God, maybe we’ll be able to match or beat the Backstreet Boys’ record.” Then at like 6 o’clock, he says to me, “We’re over a million records in the first day.” So not only do we tie Backstreet Boys for the week, we got that number in one day, and of course we had the whole rest of the week to go. So no one really knew where it was going to get.

Weiss: I was with my family at Beaver Creek [Resort in Colorado] when the album came out, and my phone was going crazy with what was going on back in New York with the album release. I remember running into Strauss Zelnick, who was the head of BMG Music at the time, and I started extolling how amazing the sales orders were coming in because he was our distributor — but I forgot that he was part of BMG, who had lost the group to us. I was like, “Strauss, you can’t believe it, the *NSYNC sales are going crazy!” And he’s looking at me like, “You f—king a—hole.”

Kleinbaum: It was just *NSYNC mania that day. Every, every city, every town, every fan went to their local place to get that album. I was getting calls and notes from every, all my colleagues at all different record labels. It was incredible. Nobody has seen anything like that before.

Weiss: What we came to find as well was people were buying multiple copies. Families were going and buying the CD in duplicate and triplicate. It was just a phenomenon.

Carrabba: Once we were looking at the first day trends, everything escalated immediately. I was with Johnny with the boys as they’re doing their MTV promotion, and my phone’s ringing off the hook. Everybody’s calling me saying, “Tom, Target just ordered another 75,000. Walmart’s coming in for another 60,000.” I said, “Johnny, I don’t believe what’s going on here.” Johnny always said this was going to be bigger than the Backstreet Boys, and he was right.

Wright: We were at the Virgin Megastore, and I was telling the [*NSYNC] guys the numbers, and they were shaking their heads like, “Okay” — in the midst of that, they had a thousand signatures they needed to sign. So, it was like, “Oh cool, cool, yay, yay.” It probably wasn’t until the next morning when everybody was eating breakfast, and we reflected on the day before, that it all really started to sink in.

Chasez: We were pushing hard to put this record together, and the day it came out it was a relief at first. Then it became a matter of every hour somebody saying, “Hey you guys have sold a hundred thousand [copies], amazing!” Then it was 200,000, and by the end of the day we hit a million. We just never expected anything like that. We were just blown away by the whole thing.

Alex: You know the expression, “Don’t believe the hype?” The hype happened. When the album dropped, it just sort of supercharged everything that was already going on. Everything was, “Okay, it’s *NSYNC’s world and we just live in it.”

“I felt like we re-ignited the music world a little bit.”

Carrabba: Back in the day, you’d usually do 50% [sales] on your first day. So when we saw the 1.2 million after the first day of sales, I said, “This is gonna hit 2.” Unless there was a product/inventory issue, which I knew there wasn’t going to be one. After days two and three, there was already indication that 2 million was gonna be in our grasp. The reorders kept coming in.

Mark Hudson: We were working around the clock. We’d be coming in around 6:00 in the morning and staying until 8:00, 9:00 at night, doing whatever to make sure and then consistently hassling the distribution to fill the orders.

Carrabba: Since we’d had the Backstreet Boys experience, we kind of knew percentages of how much [certain retailers would] take, so we were kind of ahead of the game there. Whatever we initially built in for physical copies, we made sure we had a lot more at the depots in the right places and the right distribution centers.

We also made sure we had enough paper, booklets, cases, CDs — so if we had to turn on a dime to a manufacturer, we could do that. We were prepared to get the product out there when the buzz was there. The good news with the Jive team was that we were independently owned, and we had our own financial guidelines internally. Major labels maybe would’ve had restrictions, because they didn’t want to over-invest [and make too many albums]. For us, there was no hesitation.

Hudson: Pop music wasn’t really our wheelhouse. We did much better with things like metal, hardcore rap, extreme music. We ended up selling over 200,000 units [of No Strings Attached] in that first week. That was a very healthy market share of right around 9%. Normally we wouldn’t be that kind of market share on a pop record — we were usually about 4 or 5%.

Carrabba: There was a magical guy at Jive at the time, his name’s Gerry Kuster, he was head of production. Drop-shipping was one
of Gerry’s tricks, [which] is pretty much going from the manufacturer right to the store. We were drop-shipping directly to stores and other distribution areas — so they could move quicker on us, they didn’t have to wait.

Alex: I mistakenly thought, “Here’s this group, and they’re going to imitate and try to ride on the Backstreet Boys’ coattails.” I had no expectation that they were going to blow them away. It was a great wake up call. It raised the numerical bar and changed everyone’s opinions. Anyone who poo-pooed boy bands, forget it. They were running the show.

Carrabba: We didn’t go out to break a record, we just wanted to do the best we could do. It made me feel like there’s a real market out there, and there was a real untapped audience out there that we could kind of go back to. I felt like we re-ignited the music world a little bit.

Kleinbaum: We had a champagne toast in our marketing meeting [after the 2.4 million became official]. It lasted about five minutes, and then we got back to business.

Weiss: We had to focus on getting “It’s Gonna Be Me,” the next single, prepared and ready to go and the next video ready. I think we were just like, “Business as usual, keep our heads down and make sure we maximize this.”

Chasez: Those [2.4] million albums come with a responsibility. It’s like, now the pressure is really setting in. The pressure before was “Would we ever get to sing again?”

In a matter of seven days we’d created an expectation — we did it, but now we have to deliver on another level. It’s always work.

[Laughs.]

“We beat Goliath.”

Wright: God bless Adele — she smashed our record with 3.4 million in the first week [with 25 in 2015]. I spoke to Justin and Joey [after she broke the record], and Justin was like, “Yo, she’s the s—t. She deserves it.” It was refreshing to know that there was still a fan base out there that would buy great music. But no one will ever be able to replace the energy and how the whole thing went down with [No Strings Attached].

Weiss: It’s kind of like a baseball player who tips his hat to the person who wins the championship in career home runs.

I remember sending [Sony Music Group CEO] Rob Stringer a text saying, “Congratulations” because it was amazing. Who would’ve ever thought — it was even harder to do 3.4 million Adele albums than it was to do 2.4 million *NSYNC, because nobody was buying physical anymore. Maybe that would’ve been 5 million back in the day, who the hell knows.

Kleinbaum: [No Strings Attached] made everybody understand what was possible. It also proved that boy bands were not just boy bands — they were real, legitimate artists that could sing great songs and perform the heck out of those songs.

Hudson: It was just one of those indefinable things. They were talented, they were personable — but there are lots of bands that are talented and personable that don’t sell records like that. They had a record company that worked very hard; they had a distributor that worked very hard; great publicity; they made great videos and great records. Everything came together for them, and they certainly took advantage of it.

Wright: The biggest thing we did is, we beat Goliath. Goliath wasn’t just Lou — [*NSYNC] fought against RCA Records and Sony, which was the big Goliath. We all can look back on those days and say “Man, this is great.”

It’s a beautiful ride, and it’s not over. I don’t know when the “to be continued” will be, but there’s just too much love for the group out there for them not to fully give the fans something in the future. If the five of them decided to get back together and announce a tour or a release of a record tomorrow, I can tell you with confidence that it would be successful, and people are ready and would want to see it happen — more confidence than I could tell you about what was going to happen with No Strings Attached.

Spotlight: Darkroom Founder Justin Lubliner on Billie Eilish’s Breakthrough & What’s Next

BY TATIANA CIRISANO

When Darkroom Records founder/CEO Justin Lubliner was trying to break into the industry in college — interning at Def Jam Records, offering A&R consulting to Republic Records and running an electronic music blog in his spare time — seasoned executives tended to give him the same advice.

“I would get, ‘You need to focus. You can’t excel in a bunch of different roles in the music industry at once,’” says Lubliner as he paces in the backyard of his West Hollywood home. “And I wholeheartedly disagree with that advice.”

Lubliner, 29, has since built a reputation for proving long-standing industry beliefs wrong. His second-ever signee to Darkroom, which he founded at age 24, was teenaged dark-pop superstar Billie Eilish — who scored the second-largest sales week for a 2019 album with her March debut, When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go? In an industry where streaming and singles are considered the golden ticket, Eilish has landed hits across multiple radio formats and, along the way, defied every notion of what a pop star should wear, sound like and sing about.

At the Grammy Awards in January, Eilish became just the second artist in Grammys history (and the first woman) to take home the Big Four awards: album, record and song of the year, plus best new artist. “I was that kid in the crowd who was going absolutely nuts every time she was called,” Lubliner says.
Even at his young age, Lubliner has been chasing this kind of success for more than a decade. Growing up in New York City, he DJ’d at teen nights and retail stores to earn spending money for sneakers and vinyl records, and soon began managing local DJs himself. He sparked a friendship with the son of former Island Def Jam Music Group chairman/CEO L.A. Reid in high school, and spent many afternoons hanging out at the Def Jam office, where he once witnessed Jay-Z and Kanye West stop by, and where he later interned.

“My interest in music, business and DJing all came together when I saw L.A. Reid in his office with these massive stars,” Lubliner remembers. “I had this light bulb moment of, ‘That’s what I want to do.’”

He headed west to attend the University of Southern California’s music business program and launched a dance music blog called — “don’t make fun of me for the name,” he jokes — Chubby Beavers. As the blog took off, he built relationships with managers and agents, one of whom promised him a job after college and then offered the position to one of Lubliner’s best friends instead. “I was super upset and depressed about it,” Lubliner says, but it taught him a lesson: “I decided that I’m never going to rely on anybody besides myself to be successful.”

He started by launching Darkroom from his college dorm, initially as a marketing and public relations firm for EDM artists. At the time, he was consulting for Republic of A&R team led by Rob Stevenson and, eventually, his Universal Music Group industry contacts led him to Interscope Geffen A&M Records chairman/CEO John Janick. Janick offered Lubliner the opportunity to make Darkroom an Interscope label imprint and Lubliner signed their first client, DJ and producer Gryffin.

“I always wanted to work with a superstar,” Lubliner says, but not just for the glory. “I thought that if I could focus on a small roster, and talk about one or two things versus 20, I could do a really great job. And I wanted to work with an artist with a true vision.”

When Eilish’s ethereal, emotive breakthrough “ocean eyes” took off on SoundCloud in late 2015, Lubliner felt he had found his future star. “Billie is one of the first artists in a long time to be incredibly self-sufficient,” he says, noting that Eilish writes and records most of her music with just one collaborator: Her brother, Finneas O’Connell, who also produces her music. “Because of that, [her music is] so uniquely her, and people really connect to that.”

Lubliner says that every decision over the past four years was part of a meticulous strategy for “making sure that people identified her as a real artist with a unique identity, putting out a body of work.” Instead of prioritizing singles, the team focused on helping establish an identity for each individual track off her debut album, forging crucial relationships with Spotify, Apple Music and YouTube Music along the way. For example, Spotify launched a Los Angeles pop-up for the album, which included a separate multi-sensory room for each song.

That’s when Lubliner’s early impulse to get involved in every facet of the music business, despite warnings from his peers, paid off. “I had 10 years of experience failing every Which way, getting money stolen from me and trying five different businesses — learning how to be a marketer, a publicist, how to oversee creative projects,” he says. “When I started with Billie, it really clicked in.”

It worked: Of the album’s 13 songs (plus its 14-second intro track), 12 landed on the Billboard Hot 100 chart simultaneously. The project moved 312,000 equivalent album units in its debut week, helping Eilish become the first artist born in the 21st century to score a No. 1 on the Billboard 200 albums chart.

Lubliner is eager to give credit to the rest of Eilish’s core team: Interscope Geffen A&M’s Nick Miller (international marketing and promotion), Chelsea Dodson and Michelle An (creative), Spencer Moya (digital marketing) and Hannah Gold (marketing); publicist Alexandra Baker; co-managers Danny Rukasin and Brandon Goodman and day-to-day manager Laura Ramsay.

“People make fun of us, because we show up to events [as] a huge group,” he says. “It’s just because so many people love and appreciate the project, and want to be there.”

Now, Lubliner is getting back into early-stage artist development with the Santa Monica-based label’s newest signees: Swedish producer Oliver Malcolm, whose debut single “Switched Up” landed in the upper echelon of Spotify’s New Music Friday playlist last month and has now surpassed 1.5 million streams on the platform, and songwriter-producer Max Leone, who released his second single “Cautious” last month and is now working on a debut EP.

Lubliner plans to keep his roster small. “I really only like to do one or two artists at a time, because I put my all behind it,” he says. How does he know when it’s time to sign? “If I can’t stand on a megaphone on a rooftop and tell everybody in the world that an artist is my favorite artist ever, I don’t want to work with them.”

In the meantime, he’s continuing to chase opportunities for Eilish with the same hunger as he did four years ago. On Feb. 13, she released the brooding “No Time to Die,” which will serve as the theme song for the latest James Bond film of the same title.

“I went through my musical renaissance at 14, where music had the biggest impact on my life. I definitely saw a lot of that in Billie,” Lubliner says. “I believed in her identity and vision. We’re both kids, at the end of the day.”

**SPOTLIGHT:**

**When you’re coming up** don’t be afraid to reach out to someone to ask a question or look for opportunities. The worst outcome is they say no and you move on. The best result is they say yes. In life, you won’t get anything you want without asking for it. On another note, if you say you’re going to do something, you do it. People respect those who deliver on their promises.

**The best advice I’ve received** is that long-term success is much better than short-term success. You should make plans for three to five years down the line and base your decision-making on how it will affect your long-term future.

**Something most people don’t understand** is it takes a long time to achieve your goals. Nothing of long-term value is built overnight and patience is a valuable skill you can develop (even though I’m terribly impatient). However, being patient does not
mean being reactive and waiting for things to come to you. Always be proactive.

It’s good to have mentors. If you don’t, seek out someone who you admire and buy them a cup of coffee just to be able to ask them questions. There’s always someone who is willing to offer advice. Great advice can be crucial to your growth and development in whatever you do.

A good idea is to identify your strengths and weaknesses. Once you’ve identified both sides, you should surround yourself with people that can complement your strengths and help lift up your weaknesses.

What’s tough is there will never come a time where you have to stop pitching your artists. No matter how big your artists get or how small they start, you always need to be talking about them and convincing other people why they should work with them to proactively get opportunities.

Spotlight is a Billboard Business series that aims to highlight those in the music business making innovative or creative moves, or who are succeeding in behind-the-scenes or under-the-radar roles. For submissions for the series, please contact spotlight@billboard.com.

The Weeknd’s ‘After Hours’ Is Heading to No. 1 In the U.K.

BY LARS BRANDLE

The Weeknd is racing to the summit of the U.K. albums chart with After Hours (Republic Records/XO).

The Canadian R&B singer leads the midweek survey with his new set, which earns more downloads and streaming equivalent sales than any other title.

After Hours leads the Official U.K. Chart Update, with a lead of almost 6,000 chart sales ahead of the second-placed set, Morrissey’s latest I Am Not A Dog On a Chain (BMG).

Featuring the U.K. chart-topping single “Blinding Lights,” After Hours is on track to become The Weeknd’s (real name Abel Tesfaye) second chart leader in the U.K., following 2015’s Beauty Behind The Madness, and his fourth consecutive top five.

After Hours should get a boost with the release this week of a “deluxe” edition, featuring four new remixes and a live version of “Scared to Live,” captured during his stint on Saturday Night Live, and the release of a gory new video for “In Your Eyes.”

Also, a new collection of David Bowie rarities Is It Any Wonder? (Parlophone) starts at No. 4 on the midweek chart, just one position ahead of Slow Readers Club’s The Joy of the Return (Modern Sky), new at No. 5.

As fans remember the late Kenny Rogers, the country legend is on track for a return to the albums chart. Rogers’ 1999 release All The Hits & All New Love Songs (EMI) is at No. 6 on the midweek chart and could become Rogers’ first Top 10 record since August 1985. Rogers passed away last Friday (March 20), aged 81.

Meanwhile, the race to the Official U.K. Singles Chart crown is led once more by Saint Jhn’s “Roses” (B1/HitCo/Ministry Of Sound), the current title holder. “Roses” is No. 1 on the midweek chart, with a lead of nearly 4,000 chart sales over The Weeknd’s “Blinding Lights.”

The Official U.K. Singles and Albums Charts are published late Friday, local time.

3 Reasons Lil Uzi Vert Could be Headed for Album of the Year Grammy Nomination

BY PAUL GREIN

There are three reasons to think that Lil Uzi Vert’s Eternal Atake, which tops the Billboard 200 for the second straight week, could wind up with a Grammy nomination for album of the year. The first is its huge commercial success. As my colleague Keith Caulfield reported on Sunday, the album earned 247,000 equivalent album units in the U.S. in its second week, down a mere 14% compared to its debut week.

The album also has a high score (88) at Metacritic.com, a review aggregation site. Finally, there’s Lil Uzi Vert’s Grammy
track record: He was a double nominee three years ago: for best new artist and best rap performance (for his featured role on Migos’ “Bad and Boujee,” a No. 1 hit on the Billboard Hot 100).

Grammy voters were resistant to rap and hip-hop for many years, just as they were resistant to rock in the ’50s and ’60s. It’s the nature of the establishment to be wary of new sounds that are threatening to upset that established order.

In the years before 1995, when the Grammys instituted a nominations review committee to determine the final nominees in the Big Four categories (album, record and song of the year, plus best new artist), just one rap album was nominated for album of the year: M.C. Hammer’s 1990 blockbuster Please Hammer Don’t Hurt ‘Em. That album logged 21 weeks at No. 1 on the Billboard 200, which is, to this day, the longest run on top for a hip-hop album. That probably wasn’t the only reason Grammy voters embraced the album. Hammer had an entertaining (read: non-threatening) persona. And the album’s key hit, “U Can’t Touch This,” was based on a familiar hit, Rick James’ “Super Freak.”

Fugees’ The Score (1996) was the second rap album to be nominated for album of the year. Its key hit, “Killing Me Softly,” was also familiar to Grammy voters. Roberta Flack’s classic version of that song was the 1973 winner for both record and song of the year. Lauryn Hill, Fugees’ sole female member, had the third hip-hop album to be nominated for album of the year — and the first to win the award: her 1998 solo debut, The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill.

The next two rap albums nominated for album of the year were Eminem’s The Marshall Mathers LP (2000) and OutKast’s Stankonia (2001).

In 2002, for the first time, two rap albums were nominated for album of the year in the same year: Eminem’s The Eminem Show and Nelly’s Nellyville. Two rap albums were also nominated the following year: OutKast’s Speakerboxxx/The Love Below (which won, the most recent hip-hop album to do so) and Missy Elliott’s Under Construction.

It took a full decade before two rap albums were again nominated for album of the year in the same year. Rap albums nominated in the intervening years were Kanye West’s The College Dropout (2004), Late Registration (2005) and Graduation (2007), Lil Wayne’s Tha Carter III (2008) and Eminem’s Recovery (2010).

In 2013, both Kendrick Lamar’s Good Kid, m.A.A.d City and Macklemore & Ryan Lewis’ The Heist were nominated. Lamar was nominated again two years later for To Pimp a Butterfly. Drake received his first album of the year nomination in 2016 for Views.

In 2017, there were again two rap albums in the running for album of the year: Lamar’s DAMN. and Jay-Z’s 4:44. The two rappers competed head-to-head in a whopping seven categories that night. Lamar won five of those showdowns; Bruno Mars won the other two. Jay-Z went home empty-handed, despite eight total nominations. Understandably, he wasn’t pleased. He vented his frustration in “Apeshit,” a track on The Carters’ 2018 album Everything Is Love, in which he exclaimed, “Tell the Grammy’s I— that 0-for-8 sh—.”

Lamar, meanwhile, became only the third rapper (following West and Eminem) to land three album of the year nominations as a lead artist. In 2018, the first year that there were eight nominees for album of the year, rap accounted for a record three nominees: Cardi B’s Invasion of Privacy, Drake’s Scorpion and the Black Panther soundtrack (for which Lamar was nominated as a featured artist, co-producer and co-writer).

Last year, the only hip-hop release nominated for album of the year was Lil Nas X’s 7, an eight-song EP with a brief 18:44 playing time. Incidentally, the Grammys classified it as pop (it competed for a nomination for best pop vocal album, though it was passed over for a nod in that category).

Eternal Atake isn’t the only rap album with a good shot at an album of the year nomination this year. Roddy Ricch’s Please Excuse Me for Being Antisocial, which has amassed four non-consecutive weeks at No. 1 on the Billboard 200, is also a strong candidate. West’s gospel album Jesus Is Love, which also debuted at No. 1, could get extra consideration for being a passion project. If it is nominated, West would become the first rapper nominated for four of his own albums.

Two other rap albums by past nominees in this category — Eminem’s Music to Be Murdered By and Lil Wayne’s Funeral — have reached No. 1 on the Billboard 200 in this eligibility period (Sept. 1, 2019 through, presumably, Aug. 31, 2020). Reaching No. 1 is not a requirement for an album of the year nod, but it never hurts.

Other hip-hop releases that have topped the Billboard 200 in this eligibility period are DaBaby’s Kirk, YoungBoy Never Broke Again’s AI YoungBoy 2, Trippie Redd’s A Love Letter to You 4, JackBoys’ JackBoys and Lil Baby’s My Turn.

Note: Post Malone’s Hollywood’s Bleeding, which has logged four non-consecutive weeks atop the Billboard 200, is a very strong candidate for an album of the year nomination, but many see the artist as more pop than rap these days. His previous album, beerbongs and bentleys, was nominated for album of the year and was entered for best pop vocal album, though, like 7, it wound up not getting a nomination in that category. That may well change this year.

Drag Community Mourns the Death of Nashom Wooden After Reported Coronavirus Diagnosis

BY STEPHEN DAW

According to a number of posts from friends and peers on social media, Nashom Wooden — who was well-known in New York City’s queer nightlife scene as drag queen Mona Foot — has died. While the cause of death has not been officially confirmed, many have claimed that the star had tested...
positive for the coronavirus, including the star’s longtime friend, Project Runway designer Geoffrey Mac.

“I lost my best friend today from the coronavirus, Nashom Wooden,” Mac said through tears in a video posted via Instagram on Monday (March 23). “I just want to make sure everyone out there stays healthy and takes care of each other because the virus is really real. I’m just so sorry.”

Club king Mario Diaz also shared a post in honor of Wooden, remembering their time together in the nightlife scene. “A beautiful gorgeous creature, an amazing artist and a friend for 25+ years,” Diaz wrote. “When I think of you I will always see that beautiful smile. When I think of you I will always remember the powerhouse that was Mona Foot!”

Wooden became well-known in the New York queer nightlife scene as Mona Foot starting in 1989, according to a 2017 interview with Paper Magazine. Wooden said he learned his makeup skills from none other than RuPaul herself and performed for years around various gay clubs in New York before ultimately retiring his character — only to bring Mona back for a performance at Wigstock 2018 as Wonder Woman.

Along with being known for his Mona Foot character, Wooden also achieved some success in the music business as one-third of The Ones, an early 2000s dance trio that saw one of their singles, “Flawless,” peak at No. 4 on Billboard’s Dance Club Songs chart.

Stars from all across the New York City scene shared messages of love following the news. See what they had to say below:

Detroit Jazz Festival Moves Forward ‘Full Steam Ahead’ for 2020

BY GARY GRAFF

Things are proceeding “full steam ahead” for the 41st annual Detroit Jazz Festival despite the novel coronavirus pandemic that’s forced the postponement and cancellation of so many other music events.

Herbie Hancock, Robert Glasper, Pharoah Sanders, Bob James, the Manhattan Transfer, Take 6 and artist-in-residence Dee Dee Bridgewater are among the big names that will play at the world’s largest free (as in no-charge) jazz festival during Labor Day weekend, Sept. 4-7, in downtown Detroit. Bridgewater will perform each day including sets with the Woodshed Network Ladies and Bill Charlap. Bridgewater will also be part of Kurt Elling’s “Big Blind,” a narrative two-hour piece that will also feature Ben Vereen and others, and she’ll close the festival leading an all-female big band.

Other DJF highlights include: Keyon Harrold presents Jazz and the Birth of Hip-Hop with Elzi, Georgia Anne Muldrow and Chris “Daddy” Dave on Sept. 5; A Dave Brubeck 100th Anniversary Tribute with the Brubeck Brothers, Jerry Bergonzi and the Detroit Jazz Festival Orchestra and Choir, Sept. 6; Fly Higher: Charlie Parker @ 100 with Rudresh Manathappa and Terri Lynne Carrington, Sept. 6; a pairing of Eddie Daniels and Bob James, “Exploring New Worlds,” Sept. 7; and two performances by Abdullah Ibrahim with the Detroit Jazz Festival Orchestra on Sept. 6 and with Ekaya on Sept. 7.

“We ARE a jazz festival; Everything falls from the jazz tree, from the jazz perspective,” DJF president and artistic director Chris Collins told Billboard in making the announcement, online rather than at its usual luncheon rollout. A performance by Bridgewater scheduled for Monday night was also canceled. “Everything is very much based on the history and language of jazz and the community sensibilities of sophisticated improvisation.

“But it’s also about evolution, which is a tenant of jazz music itself. It’s an ever evolving, living, breathing art form. Every year we try to reflect that in the programming.”

Collins added that DJF organizers are “keeping a very close eye on and reacting to” developments in the pandemic but feel the best course of action is to proceed on pace. No artists, he said, have canceled their appearances, and he raised the possibility that the DJF may add performers who lost gigs at European and North American festivals that have been affected by the pandemic.

“I’m looking forward to this as a shining light at the end of the summer and a challenging time, and one where we all gather around together to celebrate the beauty of the music, the city, the artistry. I think joyous information needs to get out there — especially after some challenging information.”

In addition to the DJF lineup, Collins added that the Detroit Jazz Festival Live app will begin webcasting performances starting this week on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, at least this week and possibly beyond. Check here for more info.

The full announced DJF lineup includes:

Friday, Sept. 4
2020 Artist-in-Residence Dee Dee Bridgewater and the Woodshed Network Ladies Herbie Hancock

Saturday, Sept. 5
Matthew Whitaker Quartet
Kenny Barron Trio
Alicia Olatuja – “Intuition: Songs From The Minds of Women”
Etienne Charles – Creole Soul
David Binney Angeleno Quartet
Keyon Harrold presents Jazz and the Birth of Hip Hop with special guests “Elzi”, Georgia Anne Muldrow and Chris “Daddy” Dave
Pharoah Sanders: Icon
The Summit: The Manhattan Transfer Meets Take 6
Kurt Elling’s Big Blind; featuring Kurt
Elling, 2020 Artist-in-Residence Dee Dee Bridgewater, Broadway Legend Ben Vereen and others

**Sunday, Sept. 6**  
Michael Mayo Quartet  
Roberto Fonseca (100%) – YESUN (70%)  
Alfredo Rodriguez & Richard Bona Sextet  
Abdullah Ibrahim and the Detroit Jazz Festival Orchestra  
Anat Cohen Tentet/Musical Director, Oded Lev-Ari  
Sean Jones: “Dizzy Spellz”  
The Dave Brubeck 100th Anniversary Tribute; featuring the Brubeck Brothers, Jerry Bergonzi, the Detroit Jazz Festival Orchestra and Choir, and others  
Fly Higher: Charlie Parker@100 Co Music directors: Rudresh Mahanthappa & Terri Lyne Carrington  
Gregory Porter  
**Monday, Sept. 7**  
Abdullah Ibrahim & Ekaya  
Joey Alexander Trio  
Jimmy Greene Quintet  
Eddie Daniels and Bob James; Exploring New Worlds  
Omar Sosa & Marialy Pacheco Piano Duo  
Robert Glasper  
2020 Artist-in-Residence Dee Dee Bridgewater and her all-female big band

**IN BRIEF**

Finneas Launches New Podcast With Girlfriend Claudia Sulewski

**By Rania Aniftos**

In Finneas’ words, “If you spend long enough social distancing, you start a podcast.”

That’s right, the 22-year-old crooner and his girlfriend, YouTube star Claudia Sulewski, are keeping themselves (and their fans) entertained amid the coronavirus crisis by starting their own podcast. The series, titled We Bought a House, is fitting, as the couple recently moved in to a new home together.

“Claudia and I have been talking about doing this for MONTHS and we’re so excited to launch ‘We Bought a House,’” Finneas shared on Instagram, adding that the duo will be releasing new episodes every Monday. From the teaser shared, Finneas and Claudia will be touching on every topic from the worst thing about living together to Olive Garden’s breadsticks.

See their announcement below, and check out the first episode, “We bought a house and we can’t leave it,” [here](#).

**Jake Owen Tops Country Airplay With ‘Homemade,’ Celebrating the ‘Most Important Thing in Life’**

**By Jim Asker**

Jake Owen earns his eighth No. 1 on Billboard’s Country Airplay chart as “Homemade” lifts 2-1 on the list dated March 28, increasing by 7% to 36.1 million audience impressions in the week ending March 22, according to Nielsen Music/MRC Data.

“There is so much going on in the world right now and I don’t take any of this for granted,” Owen says of his eighth Country Airplay leader. “‘Homemade’ has such a new level of meaning to me. I think we all can relate right now to taking the time to focus on the people and small, daily moments that really matter, the ones that make your home, at the core, the most important thing in life.”

Owen continues, “I know a lot of my team and fans are celebrating this moment from home with me right now, and I’d like to thank Big Loud Records and the rest of the people that work so hard every day to get my music out to the fans. And, thank you to the fans for embracing me the way you have for the past decade.”

Here is a recap of Owen’s seven prior Country Airplay leaders: “Barefoot Blue Jean Night” (two weeks at No. 1, September 2011); “Alone With You” (two, April 2012); “The One That Got Away” (one week, December 2012); “Anywhere With You” (one, July 2013); “Beachin’” “(one, July 2014); “American Country Love Song” (one, September 2016); and “I Was Jack (You Were Diane),” his nod to John Mellencamp’s four-week 1982 Billboard Hot 100 No. 1 “Jack & Diane” (one, August 2018).

“Homemade” completes Owen’s longest trip to No. 1, 42 weeks, passing the 29-week trek to the top for “The One That Got Away.”

“Homemade” was penned by Ben Goldsmith, Jared Mullins, Drew Parker and Bobby Pinson and released as the third single from Greetings From… Jake Owen, which debuted and peaked at No. 8 on Top Country Albums in April 2019, becoming Owen’s seventh of 11 top 10s.

**Powfu & Beabadoobee Each Earn First Hot 100 Entry With ‘Death Bed’**

**By Xander Zellner**

Powfu and Beabadoobee make their first career visits to the Billboard Hot 100, as their collab “Death Bed” debuts at No. 71 on the chart dated March 28.

The song opens with 10 million U.S. streams, 2.1 million in radio audience impressions and 2,000 downloads sold according to Nielsen Music/MRC Data.

The track was produced by Otterpop and co-written by Powfu (real name Isaiah Faber), Beabadoobee (real name Beatrice Laus) and Oscar Lang.
“Death Bed” concurrently debuts at No. 36 on Rock Airplay with 1.7 million audience impressions (up 319%) and No. 39 on Alternative Songs.

The tune, released on Robots and Humans/Columbia Records, samples Beabadoobee’s 2017 song “Coffee” (released on Dirty Hit).

As previously reported, Roddy Ricch’s “The Box” tops the Hot 100 for an 11th week, The Weeknd’s “Blinding Lights” lifts to No. 2 and Harry Styles’ “Adore You” ascends to the top 10.

**Blake Shelton & Gwen Stefani Hit Country Airplay Top 10 With ‘Nobody But You’**

Lake Shelton and Gwen Stefani’s “Nobody But You” pushes 12-10 on Billboard’s Country Airplay chart (dated March 28), gaining by 14% to 22.6 million in audience in the week ending March 22, according to Nielsen Music/MRC Data.

Shelton scores his 34th Country Airplay top 10, a run that started in 2001 with his launch track “Austin,” which dominated for five weeks, becoming his first of 26 No. 1s.

Shelton ties Brad Paisley for the 10th-most top 10s in the Country Airplay chart’s history, which dates to 1990; George Strait leads with 61. “Nobody” follows Shelton’s prior top 10, his Garth Brooks duet “Dive Bar,” which peaked at No. 6 on the chart date March 7.

Stefani, Shelton’s real-life love, hits the top 10 in her first visit to the Country Airplay, expanding upon her already versatile chart history.

As a soloist, Stefani reaches the top 10 of a 10th format-focused airplay chart, following Adult Contemporary, Adult Pop Songs, Alternative Songs, Dance/Mix Show Airplay, Mainstream R&B/Hi-Hop, Modern AC, Pop Songs, Rap Airplay and Rhythmic Songs. She also boasts a robust chart history fronting No Doubt.

Meanwhile, Shelton and Stefani add their second top 10 on an airplay chart: “You Make It Feel Like Christmas” hit No. 9 on Adult Contemporary in 2018.

**Benee & Gus Dapperton Hit Hot 100 For First Time With ‘Supalonely’**

Benee and Gus Dapperton earn their first career entry on the Billboard Hot 100, as “Supalonely” (on which Dapperton is featured), debuts at No. 88 on the chart dated March 28.

The track opens with 9.3 million U.S. streams (up 13%) and 2,000 downloads sold (up 20%) in the tracking week ending March 19, according to Nielsen Music/MRC Data.

It also drew 1.3 million in radio reach in the week ending March 22, as it nears the Pop Songs airplay chart.

The song was produced by Josh Fountain and co-written by Fountain, Benee, Dapperton and Jenna Andrews.

Benee (real name Stella Rose Bennett), 20, hails from Auckland, New Zealand, and signed to Republic Records last spring.

Her EP Stella & Steve, which houses “Supalonely,” debuted on last week’s Billboard 200 at No. 160 and rises to No. 138 on the latest ranking with 7,000 equivalent album units. It concurrently pushes 10-7 on Alternative Albums.

“Supalonely” also earns Dapperton (real name Brendan Rice), 23, his first chart entry. The New York native (and AWAL Records signee) previously appeared on the 13 Reasons Why Season 2 soundtrack with his song “Of Lacking Spectacle.” The set reached No. 26 on the Billboard 200 in June 2018.

**Kelis’ New Netflix Show ‘Cooked With Cannabis’ Debuts on 4/20, Obviously**

Kelis long ago proved to be as good a chef in the kitchen as she is in the studio. But next month, she’s bringing her culinary skills to a higher level with the debut of her weed-infused Netflix series Cooked With Cannabis.

The series, co-hosted by the “Milkshake” singer and Portland chef Leather Storrs, will feature professional chefs working against the clock to whip up a tasty themed three-course meal with sticky icky as the special ingredient.

And it debuts on April 20, of course.

“Anyone that knows me, knows how much I love my Netflix, so this is a dream come true,” the singer wrote in an announcement post. “Interestingly, this was one of those things that I didn’t go looking for, it kind of came to me. As a chef, I was intrigued by the food and as an everyday person, I was interested in how powerful this topic is in today’s society. In this country, many things have been used systematically to oppress groups of people, but this is so culturally important for us to learn and grow together. I hope you all will tune in, it’s definitely going to be a good time!”

The singer, who has not released an album since 2014’s Food, recently appeared on the UK version of The Masked Singer. This is not her first foray into food TV, either, coming on the heels of her 2014 Cooking Channel series Saucy and Sweet and the release the next year of her first cookbook My Life on a Plate.