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Drake Makes Historic Hot 100 Start at Nos. 1, 2 & 3, Led by 'What's Next'

BY GARY TRUST

The [lyrics](#) of [Drake](#)'s new song "What's Next" have proven prophetic, as the track debuts at *numero uno* on the [Billboard Hot 100](#) (aka, the "Hot one hundo"). He also becomes the first artist to enter the chart at Nos. 1, 2 and 3 simultaneously, as the song is joined by his "Wants and Needs," featuring [Lil Baby](#), new at No. 2, and "Lemon Pepper Freestyle," featuring [Rick Ross](#), new at No. 3.

The tracks were released March 5 on OVO Sound/Republic Records (packaged under the title "Scary Hours 2").

With "What's Next," Drake adds his eighth Hot 100 No. 1, while the three songs up his total to a record-extending 45 top 10s. Drake also joins The Beatles and Ariana Grande as the only acts ever to rank at Nos. 1, 2 and 3 on the Hot 100 simultaneously.

Meanwhile, the week's top four songs on the Hot 100 are all debuts for the first time in the chart's six-decade history — as, below Drake's three-song launch, Silk Sonic's "Leave the Door Open" enters at No. 4. The duo comprises [Bruno Mars](#) and [Anderson .Paak](#).

Plus, as it cedes the Hot 100's summit after eight

weeks at No. 1, Olivia Rodrigo's "Drivers License" takes over atop the [Radio Songs](#) chart.

The Hot 100 blends all-genre U.S. streaming (official audio and official video), radio airplay and sales data. All charts (dated March 20) will update on [Billboard.com](#) tomorrow (March 16). For all chart news, you can follow [@billboard](#) and [@billboardcharts](#) on both Twitter and Instagram.

Here's a look at Drake's unprecedented week with "What's Next," the 1,117th No. 1 in the Hot 100's archives, and his two other new entries. The song is the [49th single](#) to debut at No. 1 (and the second in a row, following Rodrigo's "License").

Streams, Airplay & Sales: "What's Next" opens with 49.1 million U.S. streams and 19,000 downloads sold in the week ending March 11, according to MRC Data. It also drew 11.9 million radio airplay audience impressions in the week ending March 14.

"Wants and Needs" arrives with 41.5 million streams, 17,000 sold and 2.1 million in airplay audience, while "Lemon Pepper Freestyle" starts with 32.1 million streams, 15,000 sold and 869,000 in radio reach.

[\(continued\)](#)



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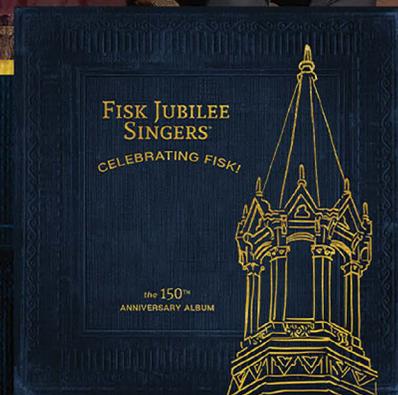
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As on the Hot 100, the tracks start at Nos. 1, 2 and 3, respectively, on the [Streaming Songs](#) chart, where Drake widens his lead for the most No. 1s (10) and top 10s (51). On [Digital Song Sales](#), they debut at Nos. 3, 4 and 5, respectively.

Drake's record arrival at Nos. 1, 2 & 3 / Top four all debuts: Drake is the first artist to debut at Nos. 1, 2 and 3 on the Hot 100 in the same week, while the arrival of Silk Sonic's "Leave the Door Open" makes this week's chart the first ever with four simultaneous debuts in the top four.

Previously, songs debuted at Nos. 1 and 2 simultaneously on the Hot 100 three times, and never by the same artist. Most recently, Ariana Grande's "Positions" and Luke Combs' "Forever After All" launched at Nos. 1 and 2, respectively, on the chart dated Nov. 7, 2020. Before that, Adele's "Hello" debuted at No. 1 and Bieber's "Sorry" started at No. 2 on Nov. 14, 2015, while Clay Aiken's "This Is the Night" and Ruben Studdard's "Flying Without Wings" entered at Nos. 1 and 2, respectively (reversing their finishes that season on *American Idol*), on June 28, 2003.

Beatles, Ariana & Drake: Drake, meanwhile, joins The Beatles and Ariana Grande as the only acts ever to rank at Nos. 1, 2 and 3 on the Hot 100 simultaneously. He's thus the first solo male to earn the honor.

Grande achieved the feat with "7 Rings," "Break Up With Your Girlfriend, I'm Bored" and "Thank U, Next" on the Hot 100 dated

Feb. 23, 2019. No such triple had occurred in 55 years to that point, since The Beatles did so for five weeks in 1964, that March 14, 21 and 28 and April 4 and 25, with "Can't Buy Me Love," "Twist and Shout" and "Do You Want to Know a Secret," respectively, on the last of those dates; on April 4, 1964, the group claimed the entire top five.

Drake's 8th No. 1: Drake notches his eighth Hot 100 No. 1 with "What's Next."

Here's a recap of all his leaders:

"What's My Name?," Rihanna feat. Drake (one week at No. 1, beginning Nov. 20, 2010)

"Work," Rihanna feat. Drake (nine weeks, beginning March 5, 2016)

"One Dance," Drake feat. WizKid & Kyla (10 weeks, beginning May 21, 2016)

"God's Plan," Drake (11 weeks, beginning Feb. 3, 2018)

"Nice for What," Drake (eight weeks, beginning April 21, 2018)

"In My Feelings," Drake (10 weeks, beginning July 21, 2018)

"Toosie Slide," Drake (one week, April 18, 2020)

"What's Next," Drake (one week to-date, March 20, 2021)

"Next" is Drake's fourth song to debut at No. 1 on the Hot 100, the most among male artists, following "God's Plan," "Nice for What" and "Toosie Slide." Overall, only Ariana Grande boasts more No. 1 beginnings, with five.

With his three latest entrances, Drake also

swells his record total to 30 career debuts in the Hot 100's top 10.

Most weeks at No. 1 among solo males: Drake extends his mark for the most total weeks at No. 1 on the Hot 100 among solo males to 51. Usher ranks second with 47.

Here's an updated leaderboard among all acts:

84, Mariah Carey
60, Rihanna
59, The Beatles
51, Drake
50, Boyz II Men

Drake ups record to 45 top 10s: Drake pads his record total to 45 Hot 100 top 10s, thanks to "What's Next," "Wants and Needs" and "Lemon Pepper Freestyle." Madonna ranks second with 38 top 10s, followed by The Beatles with 34.

Drake further extends his records to 119 top 40 Hot 100 hits and 231 entries overall.

Lil Baby, Ross reach top 10: With "Wants and Needs," Lil Baby adds his sixth Hot 100 top 10.

Thanks to "Lemon Pepper Freestyle," Rick Ross lands his second Hot 100 top 10, and highest placement, following his fellow featured turn on Drake's "Money in the Grave" (No. 7, 2019). Ross earns his 50th total Hot 100 entry, dating to his first in 2006.

Drake extends R&B/hip-hop No. 1 record: "What's Next" concurrently launches at No. 1 on on the multi-metric [Hot R&B/](#)

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Hip-Hop Songs chart, where Drake achieves his record-extending 22nd leader. Aretha Franklin and Stevie Wonder share the second-most No. 1s in the chart's history (20 each).

The track likewise debuts atop the multi-metric **Hot Rap Songs** chart, where it's also Drake's record-furthering 22nd No. 1.

Rounding out the record run of four simultaneous Hot 100 debuts, Silk Sonic's "Leave the Door Open" starts at No. 4. The song by the duo of Bruno Mars and Anderson .Paak begins with 23.5 million airplay audience impressions, 23.2 million streams and 27,000 sold, as it debuts at No. 2 on Digital Song Sales, No. 4 on Streaming Songs and No. 31 on Radio Songs.

The collab, billed on the Hot 100 as by Silk Sonic (Bruno Mars & Anderson .Paak), contributes to the chart histories of both artists, becoming Mars' 17th top 10 and Anderson .Paak's first (after he charted one prior entry, reaching No. 89 in February 2020 as featured on Eminem's "Lock It Up").

"Door" debuts at No. 1 on the multi-metric **Hot R&B Songs** chart, where it's Mars' third leader and Anderson .Paak's first.

Olivia Rodrigo's "Drivers License" falls to No. 5 after spending its first eight weeks on the Hot 100 at No. 1. Still, it rises 2-1 on Radio Songs (74.3 million, up 1%). It dips 4-9 on Streaming Songs (17.3 million, down 12%) and 5-11 on Digital Song Sales (7,000, down 23%).

"License," Rodrigo's first Radio Songs entry, hits No. 1 in its eighth week on the chart. It completes the quickest coronation in nearly two years, since Jonas Brothers' "Sucker" took over on top in its seventh week in April 2019. Among acts' first Radio Songs entries (in lead roles), "License" wraps the fastest run to No. 1 since Meghan Trainor's "All About That Bass" (seven weeks, 2014).

Cardi B's "Up" drops to No. 6 from its No. 2 Hot 100 high, as it wins the chart's top Airplay Gainer award (32.4 million, up 17%), and The Weeknd's "Save Your Tears" slips 6-7, after reaching No. 4, and his "Blinding Lights" falls 3-8, after spending four weeks at No. 1 last April-May. "Lights" adds a record-extending 53rd week in the top 10,

a week after becoming the first song in the chart's history to total a **year in the region**.

Ariana Grande's "34+35" slides 4-9 on the Hot 100, after it reached No. 2, and 24kGoldn's "Mood," featuring Iann Dior, backtracks 7-10, after eight nonconsecutive weeks at No. 1 in October through mid-January. The latter leads the multi-metric **Hot Rock & Alternative Songs** and **Hot Alternative Songs** charts for a 28th week each.

Again, for all chart news, you can follow @billboard and @billboardcharts on both Twitter and Instagram and all charts (dated March 20), including the Hot 100 in its entirety, will refresh on Billboard.com tomorrow (March 16). ■

Morgan Wallen's 'Dangerous' Spends Ninth Week at No. 1 on Billboard 200, Most Since 2016

BY KEITH CAULFIELD

Morgan Wallen's *Dangerous: The Double Album* logs a ninth week at No. 1 on the **Billboard 200** chart, all consecutively, after having arrived atop the list eight weeks ago (chart dated Jan. 23).

Dangerous now has the most weeks at No. 1 among all albums since **Drake's** *Views* scored 13 nonconsecutive weeks at No. 1 in 2016. *Dangerous* is also one of just four country albums ever to spend at least nine weeks in the lead.

Dangerous earned 78,000 equivalent album units in the U.S. in the week ending March 11 (down 6%), according to MRC Data.

The Billboard 200 chart ranks the most popular albums of the week in the U.S. based on multi-metric consumption as measured in equivalent album units. Units comprise album sales, track equivalent albums (TEA)

and streaming equivalent albums (SEA). Each unit equals one album sale, or 10 individual tracks sold from an album, or 3,750 ad-supported or 1,250 paid/subscription on-demand official audio and video streams generated by songs from an album. The new March 20, 2021-dated chart (where *Dangerous* is No. 1 for a ninth week) will be posted in full on *Billboard's* website on March 16. For all chart news, follow @billboard and @billboardcharts on both Twitter and Instagram.

Of *Dangerous'* 78,000 equivalent album units earned in the tracking week ending March 11, SEA units comprise 71,000 (down 5%, equaling 98.10 million on-demand streams of the album's songs), album sales comprise 6,000 (down 10%) and TEA units comprise 1,000 (down 14%). *Dangerous* is also the first album to string together nine weeks in a row at No. 1 since Drake's *Views* also notched its first nine weeks atop the list.

Dangerous is now one of only four country albums to spend at least nine weeks at No. 1 on the Billboard 200 — since the chart began publishing on a regular weekly basis in March of 1956. (Country albums are defined as those that have charted on *Billboard's* **Top Country Albums** chart.) *Dangerous* is also the only country set to spend its *first nine* weeks on the chart at No. 1. Ahead of *Dangerous* among country sets with the most weeks at No. 1: **Garth Brooks'** *Ropin' the Wind* (18 weeks, 1991-92), **Billy Ray Cyrus'** *Some Gave All* (17, 1992) and **Taylor Swift's** *Fearless* (11, 2008-09).

Pop Smoke's former No. 1 *Shoot for the Stars Aim for the Moon* rises 3-2 on the latest Billboard 200 with 40,000 equivalent album units earned (down 4%).

Pooh Shiesty's *Shiesty Season* hits a new chart peak, as the set climbs 4-3 with 32,000 equivalent album units earned (down 10%). It surpasses its previous high of No. 4, first achieved in its debut week (chart dated Feb. 20).

The Weeknd's *After Hours* moves 163-4 with just under 32,000 equivalent album units earned (up 331%). Meanwhile, his best-of compilation *The Highlights* falls 2-16 with 24,000 units (down 54%). The two albums share a pair of songs, "Blinding

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Lights” and “Save Your Tears.” On the latest chart, the TEA and SEA units for both songs contribute to *After Hours*, as a song’s activity is assigned to the artist’s album with the most sales in a week. (*After Hours* sold 3,000 copies in the latest tracking week, while *The Highlights* sold 2,000.) A week ago, the TEA and SEA for both songs was directed to *The Highlights* (which in that frame outsold *After Hours*). In turn, with the songs’ activity reverting back to *After Hours*, the album rises 163-4.

Lil Durk’s *The Voice* is steady at No. 5 with 31,000 equivalent album units earned (down 12%), **Dua Lipa**’s *Future Nostalgia* rises 8-6 with 29,500 units (up 1%), **Lil Baby**’s former No. 1 *My Turn* is a non-mover at No. 7 with 29,000 units (down 2%) and **Ariana Grande**’s former leader *Positions* dips 6-8 with just over 28,000 units (down 13%).

Rock act **Chevelle** scores its fifth Billboard 200 top 10 album as *Niratias* debuts at No. 9 with 28,000 equivalent album units earned. Of the album’s starting sum, a little over 24,000 comprise album sales, a little more than 3,000 comprise SEA units (equaling 4.45 million on-demand streams of the songs) and a negligible sum comprises TEA units. Chevelle previously hit the top 10 with *The North Corridor* (No. 8 in 2016), *La Gargola* (No. 3, 2014), *Sci-Fi Crimes* (No. 6, 2009) and *This Type of Thinking (Could Do Us In)* (No. 8, 2004). The new album was led by the single “Self Destructor,” which rose 3-2 on the most recently published **Mainstream Rock Airplay** chart (dated March 13). It’s the act’s 15th top 10. *Niratias* gives the Billboard 200’s top 10 its first debut after a three-week drought of new arrivals.

Rounding out the latest top 10 is **Luke Combs**’ former chart-topper *What You See Is What You Get*, shifting 9-10 with nearly 28,000 units (down less than 1%). **B**

iTunes Discounts Are a New Sales Strategy, Not Just a Cheap Trick

BY STEVE KNOPPER

To boost rapper CJ’s hit “Whoop-ty,” **Mike Sherwood**’s staff at Warner Records came up with a plan that might seem unusual these days: Sell it. As a 69-cent download, on iTunes. And — “Boom,” he says — “Whoop-ty” surged from No. 16 to No. 10 on the Billboard Hot 100 in mid-February.

It’s a streaming world: In 2020, digital downloads generated just 6% of U.S. recorded-music revenue, according to the RIAA. But since Apple returned 69-cent song sales to the iTunes homepage, some of the tracks involved have surged in sales. After a late-February “69-cent R&B Hits” promotion, Blackstreet’s “No Diggity” (featuring Dr. Dre) spiked 1,421%, to 8,000 sales, and The Temptations’ “My Girl” jumped 727%, to 5,000.

Those kinds of numbers won’t shift a label’s balance sheet, but they’re basically found money — especially for catalog hits like Tears for Fears’ “Everybody Wants to Rule the World” and The Mamas & The Papas’ “California Dreamin’.” “Maybe you can drive an impulse purchase for 69 cents,” says **Russ Crupnick**, MusicWatch’s managing partner.

Sherwood, who is senior vp streaming and revenue at Warner, says Apple has been “testing” more 69-cent sales since the holidays, although a source close to the tech giant says the labels set their own prices. The idea is to attract fans who still want to own music in a streaming world, as well as older consumers who haven’t yet subscribed to a streaming service. When the iTunes Store opened in 2003, Steve Jobs’ condition was a 99-cent price for all tracks, but labels negotiated for three pricing tiers — 69 cents, 99 cents and \$1.29 — in 2009. “We’ve always run promotional campaigns, particularly for

catalog tracks, at 69 cents,” says **Thomas Hesse**, a former Sony digital-music exec.

The 69-cent prices reappeared in December after disappearing for more than three years, and the new iTunes sales benefit from familiarity and simplicity. “Anywhere between 69 and 99 cents would have created confusion in what right now is probably a very effective and clean experiment,” says **Frank Luby**, a pricing consultant who has previously worked with major labels.

Downloads peaked in 2012, and iTunes is unlikely to make a substantial comeback the way vinyl has. A MusicWatch consumer survey shows that the percentage of the U.S. “internet population” that purchased a music download dropped from 10% in 2019 to 6% last year and download ownership has plummeted across all ages, most dramatically for 13-to-24-year-olds. “We’re talking about a rapidly diminishing population,” says Crupnick. “It reminds me of the bargain-bin days of DVDs.”

But 69-cent sales can still boost catalog staples or help promote newer hits, especially when they’re tied to marketing campaigns. The discount on singer Andra Day’s “Rise Up” coincided with a Super Bowl ad synch and her starring role in the recent Hulu biopic “The United States vs. Billie Holiday,” and its sales jumped 313%, to 10,000, for one week in February. And boy band Why Don’t We recently licensed “Fallin’ (Adrenaline)” to Fortnite and held a virtual concert event in Roblox before dropping the track price on iTunes. “Rise Up” leaped 313%, to 10,000 sales, over one week last month and “Fallin’ (Adrenaline)” jumped 258% to 2,000 sales. “With a group like this, fan engagement is really high,” says **Randy Phillips**, Why Don’t We’s manager. “Kids actually want to own the music, not just stream it.”

How long will these sales last? Probably as long as they stay lucrative. “It’s funny that we’re having this conversation in 2021,” says Sherwood. But “as long as it’s profitable, we’re absolutely continuing to support it.”

A version of this article originally appeared in the March 13, 2021, issue of **Billboard**. **B**



2021

TOP MUSIC LAWYERS

Behind every artist, songwriter and music producer is a trusted group of advisers who provide guidance, advice and negotiate deals. Billboard's 6th annual Top Music Lawyers list will recognize the biggest names and most prominent legal minds in the world of music and entertainment law. They are the deal makers behind the major contracts and lawsuits in the music industry.

This feature will also include a round-up of top law schools attended by the notable alumni on the Top Music Lawyer list.

Please join Billboard in congratulating this year's music power lawyers. Advertise and position your law firm to the decision makers in the industry who are always in need for the best legal counsel.

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Here Are All the Winners From the 2021 Grammy Awards

BY DENISE WARNER

It was a big night for women at the 63rd annual Grammy Awards. **Beyoncé** broke the record for most Grammy wins for a female artist, surpassing **Allison Krauss**. **Taylor Swift** became only the fourth artist and first woman to win album of the year for a third time. **H.E.R.** won song of the year for “I Can’t Breathe,” **Billie Eilish** won record of the year for “Everything I Wanted” and **Megan Thee Stallion** became the first woman rapper to win best new artist this century.

Jhené Aiko hosted premiere ceremony, where a majority of the winners were revealed.

Trevor Noah hosted the broadcast — with performances from Swift, Bad Bunny, Black Pumas, Cardi B, Megan Thee Stallion, Harry Styles and more.

See the full list of winners, updating live, below:

Record of the Year

“Black Parade,” Beyoncé
 “Colors,” Black Pumas
 “Rockstar,” DaBaby Featuring Roddy Ricch
 “Say So,” Doja Cat
“Everything I Wanted,” Billie Eilish — WINNER

“Don’t Start Now,” Dua Lipa
 “Circles,” Post Malone
 “Savage,” Megan Thee Stallion Featuring Beyoncé

Album of the Year

Chilombo, Jhené Aiko
Black Pumas (Deluxe Edition), Black Pumas
Everyday Life, Coldplay
Djesse Vol. 3, Jacob Collier
Women In Music Pt. III, Haim
Future Nostalgia, Dua Lipa
Hollywood’s Bleeding, Post Malone
Folklore, **Taylor Swift — WINNER**

Song of the Year

“Black Parade,” Denisia Andrews, Beyoncé, Stephen Bray, Shawn Carter, Brittany Coney, Derek James Dixie, Akil King, Kim “Kaydence” Krysiuk & Rickie “Caso” Tice, songwriters (Beyoncé)

“The Box,” Samuel Gloade & Rodrick Moore, songwriters (Roddy Ricch)
 “Cardigan,” Aaron Dessner & Taylor Swift, songwriters (Taylor Swift)

“Circles,” Louis Bell, Adam Feeney, Kaan Gunesberk, Austin Post & Billy Walsh, songwriters (Post Malone)

“Don’t Start Now,” Caroline Ailin, Ian Kirkpatrick, Dua Lipa & Emily Warren, songwriters (Dua Lipa)

“Everything I Wanted,” Billie Eilish O’Connell & Finneas O’Connell, songwriters (Billie Eilish)

“I Can’t Breathe,” Dernst Emile II, H.E.R. & Tiara Thomas, songwriters (H.E.R.) — WINNER

“If The World Was Ending,” Julia Michaels & JP Saxe, songwriters (JP Saxe Featuring Julia Michaels)

Best New Artist

Ingrid Andress
 Phoebe Bridgers
 Chika
 Noah Cyrus
 D Smoke
 Doja Cat
 Kaytranada

Megan Thee Stallion — WINNER

Best Pop Solo Performance

“Yummy,” Justin Bieber
 “Say So,” Doja Cat
 “Everything I Wanted,” Billie Eilish
 “Don’t Start Now,” Dua Lipa
“Watermelon Sugar,” Harry Styles — WINNER

“Cardigan,” Taylor Swift

Best Pop Duo/Group Performance

“Un Dia (One Day),” J Balvin, Dua Lipa, Bad Bunny & Tainy
 “Intentions,” Justin Bieber Featuring Quavo
 “Dynamite,” BTS

“Rain On Me,” Lady Gaga with Ariana Grande — WINNER

“Exile,” Taylor Swift Featuring Bon Iver

Best Traditional Pop Vocal Album

Blue Umbrella, (Burt Bacharach &) Daniel Tashian
True Love: A Celebration of Cole Porter,

Harry Connick Jr.

American Standard, **James Taylor — WINNER**

Unfollow the Rules, Rufus Wainwright
Judy, Rene Zellweger

Best Pop Vocal Album

Changes, Justin Bieber
Chromatica, Lady Gaga
Future Nostalgia, **Dua Lipa — WINNER**
Fine Line, Harry Styles
Folklore, Taylor Swift

Best Dance Recording

“On My Mind,” Diplo & Sidepiece
 “My High,” Disclosure Featuring Amine & Slowthai
 “The Difference,” Flume Featuring Toro y Moi
 “Both of Us,” Jayda G
“10%,” Kaytranada Featuring Kali Uchis — WINNER

Best Dance/Electronic Album

Kick I, Arca
Planet’s Mad, Baauer
Energy, Disclosure
Bubba, **Kaytranada — WINNER**
Good Faith, Madeon

Best Contemporary Instrumental Album

Axiom, Christian Scott Atunde Adjuah
Chronology of a Dream: Live at the Village Vanguard, Jon Batiste
Take the Stairs, Black Violin
Americana, Gregoire Maret, Romain Collin & Bill Frisell
Live at the Royal Albert Hall, **Snarky Puppy — WINNER**

Best Rock Performance

“Shameika,” Fiona Apple — WINNER
 “Not,” Big Thief
 “Kyoto,” Phoebe Bridgers
 “The Steps,” Haim
 “Stay High,” Brittany Howard
 “Daylight,” Grace Potter

Best Metal Performance

“Bum-Rush,” Body Count — WINNER
 “Underneath,” Code Orange
 “The In-Between,” In This Moment
 “Bloodmoney,” Poppy
 “Executioner’s Tax (Swing of the Axe) — Live,” Power Trip

Best Rock Song

“Kyoto,” Phoebe Bridgers, Morgan Nagler & Marshall Vore, songwriters (Phoebe Bridgers)

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2021

PRIMARY WAVE 15TH ANNIVERSARY

On April 24, *Billboard* will salute Primary Wave Music on its 15th anniversary.

Founded in 2006, Primary Wave Music is home to some of the most iconic songwriters and artists across the history of recorded music including Bob Marley, Stevie Nicks, Frankie Valli & the Four Seasons, Smokey Robinson, Whitney Houston, Burt Bacharach, Olivia Newton-John, and many more.

With offices in New York, Los Angeles, Austin, Nashville and London, Primary Wave Music has embraced an entrepreneurial spirit, offering and executing proactive one-of-a-kind ideas, unique services and marketing campaigns for our artists. Primary Wave has earned a stellar reputation for being forward thinking and re-introducing classic artists and their music into the modern marketplace as well as nurturing young talent to become legends themselves. This success is based upon their team of seasoned and creative executives collaboratively working together closely with our artists as partners. As a company, Primary Wave strives for excellence in the pursuit of iconic artists and catalogs that not only reflect great artistry, but moments of culture.

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ISSUE DATE 4/24 | AD CLOSE 4/14 | MATERIALS DUE 4/15

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“Lost in Yesterday,” Kevin Parker, songwriter (Tame Impala)

“Not,” Adrienne Lenker, songwriter (Big Thief)

“Shameika,” Fiona Apple, songwriter (Fiona Apple)

“Stay High,” Brittany Howard, songwriter (Brittany Howard) — WINNER

Best Rock Album

A Hero's Death, Fontaines D.C.

Kiwanuka, Michael Kiwanuka

Daylight, Grace Potter

Sound & Fury, Sturgill Simpson

The New Abnormal, **The Strokes — WINNER**

Best Alternative Music Album

Fetch the Bolt Cutters, **Fiona Apple — WINNER**

Hyperspace, Beck

Punisher, Phoebe Bridgers

Jaime, Brittany Howard

The Slow Rush, Tame Impala

Best R&B Performance

“Lightning & Thunder,” Jhene Aiko Featuring John Legend

“Black Parade,” Beyoncé — WINNER

“All I Need,” Jacob Collier Featuring Mahalia & Ty Dolla \$ign

“Goat Head,” Brittany Howard

“See Me,” Emily King

Best Traditional R&B Performance

“Sit on Down,” The Baylor Project Featuring Jean Baylor & Marcus Baylor

“Wonder What She Thinks of Me,” Chloe X Halle

“Let Me Go,” Mykal Kilgore

“Anything For You,” Ledisi — WINNER

“Distance,” Yebba

Best R&B Song

“Better Than I Imagine,” Robert Glasper, Meshell Ndegeocello & Gabriella Wilson, songwriters (Robert Glasper Featuring H.E.R. & Meshell Ndegeocello) — WINNER

“Black Parade,” Denisia Andrews, Beyoncé, Stephen Bray, Shawn Carter, Brittany Coney, Derek James Dixie, Akil King, Kim “Kaydence” Krysiuk & Rickie “Caso” Tice, songwriters (Beyoncé)

“Collide,” Sam Barsh, Stacey Barthe, Sonyae Elise, Olu Fann, Akil King, Josh Lopez, Kaveh Rastegar & Benedetto Rotondi, songwriters (Tiana Major9 & EARTHGANG)

“Do It,” Chloe Bailey, Halle Bailey, Anton Kuhl, Victoria Monet, Scott Storche & Vincent Van Den Ende, songwriters (Chloe X Halle)

“Slow Down,” Nasri Atweh, Badriia Bourelly, Skip Marley, Ryan Williamson & Gabriella Wilson, songwriters (Skip Marley & H.E.R.)

Best Progressive R&B Album:

Chilombo, Jhené Aiko

Ungodly Hour, Chloe X Halle

Free Nationals, Free Nationals

*F*** Yo Feelings*, Robert Glasper

It Is What It Is, **Thundercat — WINNER**

Best R&B Album

Happy 2 Be Here, Ant Clemons

Take Time, Giveon

To Feel Love/d, Luke James

Bigger Love, **John Legend — WINNER**

All Rise, Gregory Porter

Best Rap Performance:

“Deep Reverence,” Big Sean Featuring

Nipsey Hussle

“Bop,” DaBaby

“What’s Poppin,” Jack Harlow

“The Bigger Picture,” Lil Baby

“Savage,” Megan Thee Stallion Featuring Beyoncé — WINNER

“Dior,” Pop Smoke

Best Melodic Rap Performance

“Rockstar,” DaBaby Featuring Roddy Ricch

“Laugh Now, Cry Later,” Drake Featuring

Lil Durk

“Lockdown,” Anderson .Paak — WINNER

“The Box,” Roddy Ricch

“Highest in the Room,” Travis Scott

Best Rap Song

“The Bigger Picture,” Dominique Jones, Noah Pettigrew & Rai’shaun Williams, songwriters (Lil Baby)

“The Box,” Samuel Gloade & Rodrick Moore, songwriters (Roddy Ricch)

“Laugh Now, Cry Later,” Durk Banks, Roget Chahayed, Aubrey Graham, Daveon Jackson, Ron LaTour & Ryan Martinez, songwriters (Drake Featuring Lil Durk)

“Rockstar,” Jonathan Lyndale Kirk, Ross Joseph Portaro IV & Rodrick Moore, songwriters (DaBaby Featuring Roddy Ricch)

“Savage,” Beyoncé, Shawn Carter, Brittany Hazzard, Derrick Milano, Terius Nash, Megan Pete, Bobby Session Jr., Jordan Kyle Lanier Thorpe & Anthony White, songwriters (Megan Thee Stallion

Featuring Beyoncé) — WINNER

Best Rap Album

Black Habits, D Smoke

Alfredo, Freddie Gibbs & The Alchemist

A Written Testimony, Jay Electronica

King’s Disease, **Nas — WINNER**

The Allegory, Royce Da 5’9”

Best Country Solo Performance

“Stick That in Your Country Song,” Eric Church

“Who You Thought I Was,” Brandy Clark

“When My Amy Prays,” Vince Gill — WINNER

“Black Like Me,” Mickey Guyton

“Bluebird,” Miranda Lambert

Best Country Duo/Group Performance

“All Night,” Brothers Osborne

“10,000 Hours,” Dan + Shay & Justin Bieber — WINNER

“Ocean,” Lady A

“Sugar Coat,” Little Big Town

“Some People Do,” Old Dominion

Best Country Song

“Bluebird,” Luke Dick, Natalie Hemby & Miranda Lambert, songwriters (Miranda Lambert)

“The Bones,” Maren Morris, Jimmy Robbins & Laura Veltz, songwriters (Maren Morris)

“Crowded Table,” Brandi Carlile, Natalie Hemby & Lori McKenna, songwriters (The Highwomen) — WINNER

“More Hearts Than Mine,” Ingrid Andress, Sam Ellis & Derrick Southerland, songwriters (Ingrid Andress)

“Some People Do,” Jesse Frasure, Shane McAnally, Matthew Ramsey & Thomas Rhett, songwriters (Old Dominion)

Best Country Album

Lady Like, Ingrid Andress

Your Life Is a Record, Brandy Clark

Wildcard, **Miranda Lambert — WINNER**

Nightfall, Little Big Town

Never Will, Ashley McBryde

Best New Age Album

Songs From the Bardo, Laurie Anderson,

Tenzin Choegyal & Jesse Paris Smith

Periphery, Priya Darshini

Form/Less, Superposition

More Guitar Stories, **Jim “Kimo” West — WINNER**

Meditations, Cory Wong & Jon Batiste

Best Improvised Jazz Solo

“Guinevere,” Christian Scott Atunde Adjuah,

▶ IN BRIEF

soloist

“Pachamama,” Regina Carter, soloist

“Celia,” Gerald Clayton, soloist

“All Blues,” Chick Corea, soloist — WINNER

“Moe Honk,” Joshua Redman, soloist

Best Jazz Vocal Album:

Ona, Thana Alexa

Secrets Are The Best Stories, **Kurt Elling**
Featuring Danilo Pérez — WINNER

Modern Ancestors, Carmen Lundy

Holy Room: Live at Alte Oper, Somi With
Frankfurt Radio Big Band

What’s The Hurry, Kenny Washington

Best Jazz Instrumental Album

On the Tender Spot of Every Calloused Mo-
ment, Ambrose Akinmusire

Waiting Game, Terri Lyne Carrington and
Social Science

Happening: Live at the Village Vanguard,
Gerald Clayton

Trilogy 2, **Chick Corea, Christian McBride**
& Brian Blade — WINNER

Roundagain, Redman Mehldau McBride
Blade

Best Large Jazz Ensemble Album

Dialogues on Race, Gregg August

Monk’estra Plays John Beasley, John Beasley
The Intangible Between, Orrin Evans and the
Captain Black Big Band

Songs You Like a Lot, John Hollenbeck with
Theo Bleckmann, Kate McGarry, Gary Ver-

sace and the Frankfurt Radio Big Band

Data Lords, **Maria Schneider Orchestra —**
WINNER

Best Latin Jazz Album

Tradiciones, Afro-Peruvian Jazz Orchestra

Four Questions, **Arturo O’Farrill and the**
Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra — WINNER

City of Dreams, Chico Pinheiro

Viento y Tiempo — Live at Blue Note Tokyo,
Gonzalo Rubalcaba & Aymee Nuviola

Trane’s Delight, Poncho Sanchez

Best Gospel Performance/Song

“Wonderful Is Your Name,” Melvin Crispell
III

“Release (Live),” Ricky Dillard Featuring
Tiff Joy; David Frazier, songwriter

“Come Together,” Rodney “Darkchild”

Jerkins Presents: The Good News; Lashawn
Daniels, Rodney Jerkins, Lecrae Moore &

Jazz Nixon, songwriters

“Won’t Let Go,” Travis Greene; Travis

Greene, songwriter

“Movin’ On,” Jonathan McReynolds &
Mali Music; Darryl L. Howell, Jonathan
Caleb McReynolds, Kortney Jamaal Pol-
lard & Terrell Demetrius Wilson, song-
writers — WINNER

Best Contemporary Christian Music
Performance/Song

“The Blessing (Live),” Kari Jobe, Cody
Carnes & Elevation Worship; Chris Brown,
Cody Carnes, Kari Jobe Carnes & Steven
Furtick, songwriters

“Sunday Morning,” Lecrae Featuring Kirk
Franklin; Denisia Andrews, Jones Terrence
Antonio, Saint Bodhi, Brittany Coney, Kirk
Franklin, Lasanna Harris, Shama Joseph,
Stuart Lowery, Lecrae Moore & Nathanael
Saint-Fleur, songwriters

“Holy Water,” We The Kingdom; Andrew
Bergthold, Ed Cash, Franni Cash, Martin
Cash & Scott Cash, songwriters

“Famous For (I Believe),” Tauren Wells
Featuring Jenn Johnson; Chuck Butler,
Krissy Nordhoff, Jordan Sapp, Alexis Slifer
& Tauren Wells, songwriters

“There Was Jesus,” Zach Williams &
Dolly Parton; Case Beathard, Jonathan
Smith & Zach Williams, songwriters —
WINNER

Best Gospel Album

2econd Wind: Ready, Anthony Brown &
group therAPy

My Tribute, Myron Butler

Choirmaster, Ricky Dillard

Gospel According to PJ, **PJ Morton — WIN-**
NER

Kierra, Kierra Sheard

Best Contemporary Christian Music
Album

Run to the Father, Cody Carnes

All of My Best Friends, Hillsong Young &
Free

Holy Water, We the Kingdom

Citizen of Heaven, Tauren Wells

Jesus Is King, **Kanye West — WINNER**

Best Roots Gospel Album

Beautiful Day, Mark Bishop

20/20, The Crabb Family

What Christmas Really Means, The Erwins
Celebrating Fisk! (The 150th Anniversary
Album), **Fisk Jubilee Singers — WINNER**

Something Beautiful, Ernie Haase & Signa-
ture Sound

Best Latin Pop or Urban Album

YHLQMDLG, **Bad Bunny — WINNER**

Por Primera Vez, Camilo

Mesa Para Dos, Kany García

Pausa, Ricky Martin

3:33, Debi Nova

Best Latin Rock or Alternative Album

Aura, Bajofondo

Monstruo, Cami

Sobrevolando, Cultura Profetica

La Conquista Del Espacio, **Fito Paez —**
WINNER

Miss Colombia, Lido Pimienta

Best Regional Mexican Music Album
(Including Tejano)

Hecho En Mexico, Alejandro Fernandez

La Serenata, Lupita Infante

Un Canto Por Mexico, Vol. 1, **Natalia La-**
fourcade — WINNER

Bailando Sones y Huapangos Con Mariachi

Sol de Mexico de Jose Hernandez, Mariachi

Sol de Mexico de Jose Hernandez

Ayayay!, Christian Nodal

Best Tropical Latin Album

Mi Tumbao, Jose Alberto “El Ruisenor”

Infinito, Edwin Bonilla

Sigo Cantando al Almor (Deluxe), Jorge
celedon & Sergio Luis

40, **Grupo Niche — WINNER**

Memorias De Navidad, Victor Manuelle

Best American Roots Performance

“Colors,” Black Pumas

“Deep in Love,” Bonny Light Horseman

“Short and Sweet,” Brittany Howard

“I’ll Be Gone,” Norah Jones & Mavis Staples

“I Remember Everything,” John Prine —
WINNER

Best American Roots Song

“Cabin,” Laura Rogers & Lydia Rogers, song-
writers (The Secret Sisters)

“Ceiling to the Floor,” Sierra Hull & Kai
Welch, songwriters (Sierra Hull)

“Hometown,” Sarah Jarosz, songwriter
(Sarah Jarosz)

“I Remember Everything,” Pat McLaugh-
lin & John Prine, songwriters (John
Prine) — WINNER

“Man Without a Soul,” Tom Overby &

Lucina Williams, songwriters (Lucinda Wil-
liams)

Best Americana Album

Old Flowers, Courtney Marie Andrews

Terms of Surrender, Hiss Golden Messenger

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World on the Ground, **Sarah Jarosz — WINNER**

El Dorado, Marcus King

Good Souls Better Angels, Lucinda Williams

Best Bluegrass Album

Man on Fire, Danny Barnes

To Live in Two Worlds, Vol. 1, Thomm Jutz

North Carolina Songbook, Steep Canyon

Rangers

Home, **Billy Strings — WINNER**

The John Hartford Fiddle Tune Project, Vol. 1,

Various Artists

Best Traditional Blues Album

All My Dues Are Paid, Frank Bey

You Make Me Feel, Don Bryant

That's What I Heard, Robert Cray Band

Cypress Grove, Jimmy "Duck" Holmes

Rawer Than Raw, **Bobby Rush — WINNER**

Best Contemporary Blues Album

Have You Lost Your Mind Yet?, **Fantastic**

Negrito — WINNER

Live At The Paramount, Ruthie Foster Big

Band

The Juice, G. Love

Blackbirds, Bettye LaVette

Up And Rolling, North Mississippi Allstars

Best Folk Album

Bonny Light Horseman, Bonny Light Horseman

Thanks for the Dance, Leonard Cohen

Song for Our Daughter, Laura Marling

Saturn Return, The Secret Sisters

All the Good Times, **Gillian Welch & David**

Rawlings — WINNER

Best Regional Roots Music Album

My Relatives 'Nikso Kowaiks', Black Lodge

Singers

Cameron Dupuy and the Cajun Troubadours,

Cameron Dupuy and the Cajun Trouba-

dours

Lovely Sunrise, Na Wai 'Eha

Atmosphere, **New Orleans Nightcrawlers**

— **WINNER**

A Tribute to Al Berard, Sweet Cecilia

Best Reggae Album

Upside Down 2020, Buju Banton

Higher Place, Skip Marley

It All Comes Back to Love, Maxi Priest

Got to Be Tough, **Toots & the Maytals —**

WINNER

One World, The Wailers

Best Global Music Album

FU Chronicles, Antibalas

Twice as Tall, **Burna Boy — WINNER**

Agora, Bebel Gilberto

Love Letters, Anoushka Shankar

Amadjar, Tinariwen

Best Children's Music Album

All the Ladies, **Joanie Leeds — WINNER**

Be a Pain: An Album for Young (and Old)

Leaders, Alastair Mooock and Friends

I'm an Optimist, Dog on Fleas

Songs for Singin', The Okee Dokee Brothers

Wild Life, Justin Roberts

Best Spoken Word Album (Includes Poetry, Audio Books & Storytelling)

Acid For The Children: A Memoir, Flea

Alex Trebek - The Answer Is..., Ken Jennings

Blowout: Corrupted Democracy, Rogue State

Russia, and the Richest, Most Destructive

Industry on Earth, **Rachel Maddow —**

WINNER

Catch and Kill, Ronan Farrow

Charlotte's Web (E.B. White), Meryl Streep

(& Full Cast)

Best Comedy Album

Black Mitzvah, **Tiffany Haddish — WIN-**

NER

I Love Everything, Patton Oswalt

The Pale Tourist, Jim Gaffigan

Paper Tiger, Bill Burr

23 Hours to Kill, Jerry Seinfeld

Best Musical Theater Album

Amelie, Original London Cast

American Utopia on Broadway, Original Cast

Jagged Little Pill, **Original Cast — WIN-**

NER

Little Shop of Horrors, The New Off-Broad-

way Cast

The Prince of Egypt, Original Cast

Soft Power, Original Cast

Best Compilation Soundtrack for Visual Media

A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood, Various

Artists

Bill & Ted Face the Music, Various Artists

Eurovision Song Contest: The Story of Fire

Saga, Various Artists

Frozen 2, Various Artists

Jojo Rabbit, **Various Artists — WINNER**

Best Score Soundtrack For Visual Media

Ad Astra, Max Richter, composer

Becoming, Kamasi Washington, composer

Joker, **Hildur Guðnadóttir, composer —**

WINNER

1917, Thomas Newman, composer

Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker, John Wil-

liams, composer

Best Song Written for Visual Media

"Beautiful Ghosts," (From *Cats*), Andrew

Lloyd Webber & Taylor Swift (Taylor Swift)

"Carried Me With You," (From *Onward*),

Brandi Carlile, Phil Hanseroth & Tim Han-

seroth, songwriters (Brandi Carlile)

"Into the Unknown," (From *Frozen 2*),

Kristen Anderson-Lopez & Robert Lopez,

songwriters (Idina Menzel & Aurora)

"No Time to Die," (From *No Time to Die*),

Billie Eilish O'Connell & Finneas Baird

O'Connell, songwriters (Billie Eilish) —

WINNER

"Stand Up," (From *Harriet*), Joshua Brian

Campbell & Cynthia Erivo, songwriters

(Cynthia Erivo)

Best Instrumental Composition

Baby Jack, Arturo O'Farrill, composer (Ar-

turo O'Farrill & the Latin Jazz Orchestra)

Be Water II, Christian Sands, composer

(Christian Sands)

Plumfield, Alexandre Desplat, composer

(Alexandre Desplat)

Sputnik, **Maria Schneider, composer (Ma-**

ria Schneider) — WINNER

Strata, Remy Le Boeuf, composer (Remy Le

Boeuf's Assembly Of Shadows Featuring

Anna Webber & Eric Miller)

Best Arrangement, Instrumental or A Capella

Bathroom Dance, Hildur Guðnadóttir, ar-

ranger (Hildur Guðnadóttir)

Donna Lee, **John Beasley, arranger (John**

Beasley) — WINNER

Honeymooners, Remy Le Boeuf, arranger

(Remy Le Boeuf's Assembly Of Shadows)

Lift Every Voice and Sing, Alvin Chea &

Jarrett Johnson, arrangers (Jarrett Johnson

Featuring Alvin Chea)

Uranus: The Magician, Jeremy Levy, ar-

ranger (Jeremy Levy Jazz Orchestra)

Best Arrangement, Instruments and Vocals

Asas Fechdas, John Beasley & Maria

Mendes, arrangers (Maria Mendes Featur-

ing John Beasley & Orkest Metropole)

Desert Song, Erin Bentlage, Sara Gazarek,

Johnaye Kendrick & Amanda Taylor, arrang-

ers (Säje)

From This Place, Alan Broadbent & Pat

▶ IN BRIEF

Metheny, arrangers (Pat Metheny Featuring Meshell Ndegeocello)

He Won't Hold You, **Jacob Collier, arranger (Jacob Collier Featuring Rhapsody) — WINNER**

Slow Burn, Talia Billig, Nic Hard & Becca Stevens, arrangers (Becca Stevens Featuring Jacob Collier, Mark Lettieri, Justin Stanton, Jordan Perlson, Nic Hard, Keita Ogawa, Marcelo Woloski & Nate Werth)

Best Recording Package

Everyday Life, Pilar Zeta, art director (Coldplay)

Funeral, Kyle Goen, art director (Lil Wayne)

Healer, Julian Gross & Hannah Hooper, art directors (Grouplove)

On Circles, Jordan Butcher, art director (Caspian)

Vols. 11 & 12, **Doug Cunningham & Jason Noto, art directors (Desert Sessions) — WINNER**

Best Boxed or Special Limited Edition Package

Flamin' Pie (Collectors Edition), Linn Wie Andersen, Simon Earith, Paul McCartney & James Musgrave, art directors (Paul McCartney)

Giants Stadium 1987, 1989, 1991, Lisa Glines & Doran Tyson, art directors (Grateful Dead)

Mode, Jeff Schulz, art director (Depeche Mode)

Ode to Joy, **Lawrence Azerrad & Jeff Tweedy, art directors (Wilco) — WINNER**

The Story of Ghostly International, Michael Cina & Molly Smith, art directors (Various Artists)

Best Album Notes

At the Minstrel Show: Minstrel Routines From the Studio, 1894-1926, Tim Brooks, album notes writer (Various Artists)

The Bakersfield Sound: Country Music Capital of the West, 1940-1974, Scott B. Bomar, album notes writer (Various Artists)

Dead Man's Pop, **Bob Mehr, album notes writer (The Replacements) — WINNER**

The Missing Link: How Gus Haenschen Got Us From Joplin to Jazz and Shaped the Music Business, Colin Hancock, album notes writer (Various Artists)

Out of a Clear Blue Sky, David Sager, album notes writer (Nat Brusiloff)

Best Historical Album

Celebrated, 1895-1896, Meagan Hennessey & Richard Martin, compilation producers; Richard Martin, mastering engineer (Unique Quartette)

Hittin' the Ramp: The Early Years (1936 - 1943), Zev Feldman, Will Friedwald & George Klabin, compilation producers; Matthew Lutthans, mastering engineer (Nat King Cole)

It's Such a Good Feeling: The Best of Mister Rogers, **Lee Lodyga & Cheryl Pawelski, compilation producers; Michael Graves, mastering engineer (Mister Rogers) — WINNER**

1999 Super Deluxe Edition, Michael Howe, compilation producer; Bernie Grundman, mastering engineer (Prince)

Souvenir, Carolyn Agger, compilation producer; Miles Showell, mastering engineer (Orchestral Manoeuvres In The Dark)

Throw Down Your Heart: The Complete Africa Sessions, Béla Fleck, compilation producer; Richard Dodd, mastering engineer (Béla Fleck)

Best Engineered Album, Non-Classical
Black Hole Rainbow, Shawn Everett & Ivan Wayman, engineers; Bob Ludwig, mastering engineer (Devon Gilfillian)

Expectations, Gary Paczosa & Mike Robinson, engineers; Paul Blakemore, mastering engineer (Katie Pruitt)

Hyperspace, **Drew Brown, Andrew Coleman, Shawn Everett, Serban Ghenea, David Greenbaum, Jaycen Joshua & Mike Larson, engineers; Randy Merrill, mastering engineer (Beck) — WINNER**

Jaime, Shawn Everett, engineer; Shawn Everett, mastering engineer (Brittany Howard)

25 Trips, Shani Gandhi & Gary Paczosa, engineers; Adam Grover, mastering engineer (Sierra Hull)

Producer of the Year, Non-Classical

Jack Antonoff

Dan Auerbach

Dave Cobb

Flying Lotus

Andrew Watt — WINNER

Best Remixed Recording

"Do You Ever (Rac Mix)," Rac, remixer (Phil Good)

"Imaginary Friends (Morgan Page Remix)," Morgan Page, remixer (Deadmau5)

"Praying For You (Louie Vega Main Remix),"

Louie Vega, remixer (Jasper Street Co.)

"Roses (Imanbek Remix)," Imanbek Zeikenov, remixer (SAINT JHN) — WINNER

"Young & Alive (Bazzi vs. Haywyre Remix)," Haywyre, remixer (Bazzi)

Best Engineered Album, Classical

Danielpour: The Passion of Yeshua, Bernd Gottinger, engineer (JoAnn Falletta, James K. Bass, Adam Luebke, UCLA Chamber Singers, Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra & Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus)

Gerswhin: Porgy and Bess, David Frost & John Kerswell, engineers; Silas Brown, mastering engineer (David Robertson, Eric Owens, Angel Blue, Metropolitan Opera Orchestra & Chorus)

Hynes: Fields, Kyle Pyke, engineer; Jesse Lewis & Kyle Pyke, mastering engineers (Devonté Hynes & Third Coast Percussion)

Ives: Complete Symphonies, Alexander Lipay & Dmitriy Lipay, engineers; Alexander Lipay & Dmitriy Lipay, mastering engineers (Gustavo Dudamel & Los Angeles Philharmonic)

Shostakovich: Symphony No. 13, 'Babi Yar,' **David Frost & Charlie Post, engineers; Silas Brown, mastering engineer (Riccardo Muti & Chicago Symphony Orchestra) — WINNER**

Producer of the Year, Classical

Blanton Alspaugh

David Frost — WINNER

Jesse Lewis

Dmitriy Lipay

Elaine Martone

Best Orchestral Performance

Aspect of America - Pulitzer Edition, Carlos Kalmar, conductor (Oregon Symphony)

Concurrence, Daniel Bjarnason, conductor (Iceland Symphony Orchestra)

Copland: Symphony No. 3, Michael Tilson Thomas, conductor (San Francisco Symphony)

Ives: Complete Symphonies, **Gustavo Dudamel, conductor (Los Angeles Philharmonic) — WINNER**

Lutoslawski: Symphonies Nos. 2 & 3, Hannu Lintu, conductor (Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra)

Best Opera Recording

Dello Joio: The Trial at Rouen, Gil Rose, conductor; Heather Buck & Stephen Powell; Gil Rose, producer (Boston Modern Orchestra)

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Project; Odyssey Opera Chorus)

Floyd, C.: Prince of Players, Wiliam Boggs, conductor; Keith Phares & Kate Royal; Blanton Alspaugh, producer (Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra; Florentine Opera Chorus)

Gershwin: Porgy and Bess, **David Robertson, conductor; Angle Blue & Eric Owens; David Frost, producer (The Metropolitan Opera Orchestra The Metropolitan Opera Chorus) — WINNER**

Handel: Agrippina, Maxim Emelyanychev, conductor; Joyce DiDonato; Daniel Zalay, producer (Il Pomo D'Oro)

Zemlinsky: Der Zwerg, Donald Runnicles, conductor; David Butt Philip & Elen Tsallagova; Peter Ghirardini & Erwin Sturzer, producers (Orchestra of the Deutsche Oper Berlin; Chorus of the Deutsche Oper Berlin)

Best Choral Performance

Carthage, Donald Nally, conductor (The Crossing)

Danielpour: The Passion of Yeshua, **JoAnn Falletta, conductor; James K. Bass & Adam Luebke, chorus masters (James K. Bass, J'Nai Bridges, Timothy Fallon, Kenneth Overton, Hila Plitmann & Matthew Worth; Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra; Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus & UCLA Chamber Singers) — WINNER**

Kastalsky: Requiem, Leonard Slatkin, conductor; Charles Bruffy, Steven Fox & Benedict Sheehan, chorus masters (Joseph Charles Beutel & Anna Dennis; Orchestra Of St. Luke's; Cathedral Choral Society, The Clarion Choir, Kansas City Chorale & The Saint Tikhon Choir)

Moravec: Sanctuary Road, Kent Tritle, conductor (Joshua Blue, Raehann Bryce-Davis, Dashon Burton, Malcolm J. Merriweather & Laquita Mitchell; Oratorio Society Of New York Orchestra; Oratorio Society of New York Chorus)

Once Upon a Time, Matthew Guard, conductor (Sarah Walker; Skylark Vocal Ensemble)

Best Chamber Music/Small Ensemble Performance

"Contemporary Voices," Pacifica Quartet — WINNER

"Healing Modes," Brooklyn Rider

"Hearne, T.: Place," Ted Hearne, Steven Bradshaw, Sophia Byrd, Josephine Lee, Isaiah Robinson, Sol Ruiz, Ayanna Woods &

Place Orchestra

"Hynes: Fields," Devonté Hynes & Third Coast Percussion

"The Schumann Quartets," Dover Quartet

Best Classical Instrumental Solo

Adès; Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, Kirill Gerstein; Thomas Adès, conductor (Boston Symphony Orchestra)

Beethoven: Complete Piano Sonatas, Igor Levit

Bohemian Tales, Augustin Hadelich; Jakub Hrůša, conductor (Charles Owen; Symphonieorchester Des Bayerischen Rundfunks)

Destination Rachmaninov - Arrival, Daniil Trifonov; Yannick Nézet-Séguin, conductor (The Philadelphia Orchestra)

Theofanidis: Concerto for Viola and Chamber Orchestra, **Richard O'Neill; David Alan Miller, conductor (Albany Symphony) — WINNER**

Best Classical Solo Vocal Album

American Composers at Play - William Bolcom, Ricky Ian Gordon, Lori Laitman, John Musto, Stephen Powell (Attacca Quartet, William Bolcom, Ricky Ian Gordon, Lori Laitman, John Musto, Charles Neidich & Jason Vieaux)

Clairières - Songs by Lili & Nadia Boulanger, Nicholas Phan; Myra Huang, accompanist *Farinelli*, Cecilia Bartoli; Giovanni Antonini, conductor (Il Giardino Armonico)

A Lad's Love, Biran Giebler; Steven McGhee, accompanis (Katie Hyun, Michael Katz, Jessica Meyer, Reginald Mobley & Ben Russell)

Smyth: The Prison, **Sarah Brailey & Dashon Burton; James Blachly, conductor (Experiential Chorus; Experiential Orchestra) — WINNER**

Best Classical Compendium

Adès Conducts Adès, Mark Stone & Christianne Stotijn; Thomas Adès, conductor; Nick Squire, producer

Saariaho: Graal Théâtre; Circle Map; Neiges;

Vers Toi Qui Es Si Loin, Clément Mao-

Takacs, conductor; Hans Kipfer, producer

Serebrier: Symphonic Bach Variations; La-

ments and Hallelujahs; Flute Concerto, José

Serebrier, conductor; Jens Braun, producer

Thomas, M.T.: From the Diary of Anne Frank

& Meditations on Rilke, **Isabel Leonard;**

Michael Tilson Thomas, conductor; Jack Vad, producer — WINNER

Wolf, L.P.: Fire and Flood, Matt Haimovitz; Julian Wachner, conductor; Blanton Alspaugh, producer

Best Contemporary Classical Composition

"Adès, Concerto for Piano and Orchestra," Thomas Adès, composer (Kirill Gerstein, Thomas Sdes & Boston Symphony Orchestra)

"Danielpour: The Passion of Yeshua," Richard Danielpour, composer (JoAnn Falletta, James K. Bass, Adam Luebke, UCLA Chamber Singers, Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra & Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus)

"Floyd, C.: Prince of Players," Carlisle Floyd, composer (William Boggs, Katie Royal, Keith Phares, Florentine Opera Chorus & Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra)

"Hearne, T.: Place," Ted Hearne, composer (Ted Hearne, Steven Bradshaw, Sophia Byrd, Josephine Lee, Isaiah Robinson, Sol Ruiz, Ayanna Woods & Place Orchestra)

"Rouse: Symphony No. 5," Christopher Rouse, composer (Giancarlo Guerrero & Nashville Symphony) — WINNER

Best Music Video

"Brown Skin Girl," Beyoncé — WINNER

"Life Is Good," Future Featuring Drake

"Lockdown," Anderson .Paak

"Adore You," Harry Styles,

"Goliath," Woodkid

Best Music Film

Beastie Boys Story, Beastie Boys

Black Is King, Beyoncé

We Are Freestyle Love Supreme, Freestyle

Love Supreme

Linda Ronstadt: The Sound of My Voice,

Linda Ronstadt — WINNER

That Little Ol' Band From Texas, ZZ Top 

2021 Grammys: A Stripped-Down Broadcast, All-Female Big Four and The Most Enjoyable Show in Ages

BY ANDREW UNTERBERGER

Appropriately for an event billed as “Music’s Biggest Night,” the Recording Academy has long gone for size and scale when it comes to the presentation of the Grammys: The biggest artists, the biggest collaborations, the biggest spectacles, even the biggest tributes. Over the years, the results have often been entertaining, and occasionally downright historic — [Aretha Franklin singing Pavarotti](#) in 1998, Eminem [joining forces](#) with Elton John in 2001, P!nk [taking to the skies](#) in 2010 — but just as often, they’ve felt forced, over-indulgent, or simply too much.

“Too much” was never likely to be the case in 2021, when the Recording Academy had to delay their marquee night an additional month and change to March, just to be able to hold the ceremony at all. And not only would this be the first Grammys put on in the socially distanced era of COVID-19, but it would also be the first done under the guidance of new show producer Ben Winston, following the 40-year run of predecessor Ken Ehrlich. Most of the greatest moments in Grammy history were conceptualized or organized by Ehrlich, but a tribute to the departing producer in last year’s ceremony — [a star-studded performance](#) of *Fame*’s “I Sing the Body Electric” — was also emblematic of the messier parts of his stewardship, particularly the tendency to pursue overstuffed super-teamings that valued star power and novelty over general coherence and relevance.

There were no such unexpected X-meets-Y collaborations at the Grammys on Sunday night (Mar. 14), nor were there any out-of-nowhere mega-homages to past greats (aside from a handful of tasteful mini-tributes interrupting the In Memoriam segment) or where-did-they-come-from appearances by artists without a clear tie to the proceedings. Whether as a result of creative choice, circumstantial necessity or both, you instead got what you might actually expect from the Grammys if you had no previous knowledge of their long-oversized ambitions: the most-nominated artists performing their biggest hits of the year, with awards occasionally given out in between. And the result was the most enjoyable, least exhausting Grammys in ages.

The tone was set for the night in the opening segment, which featured back-to-back-to-back performances from Harry Styles (a lightly funk-ed-up “Watermelon Sugar”), Billie Eilish (a quietly spellbinding “Everything I Wanted”) and Haim (an absolutely ripping “The Steps”), with only minor traffic-directing intrusion from host Trevor Noah. The open setup of these outdoor Grammys — held just outside the Staples Center — allowed for all three acts not only to fire off immediately after one another, but also to build on one another’s energy, giving the feeling more of a South by Southwest-like mini-music festival than a grand award-show gala. The show also smartly cut back to the prior performers — still lingering around their own sets — grooving to the new performances, building a communal spirit and a looser, more intimate feeling than you can really get with reaction shots of stars locked into their assigned seats.

And that was sort of the vibe for the night: With both a smaller assembly and less overall emphasis on shock and awe, the evening’s proceedings and participants felt connected in a way you just don’t often get from major award shows. There was a real thrill in watching Dua Lipa put on a typically show-stopping medley of *Future Nostalgia* smashes “Levitating” and “Don’t Start Now,” and then seeing Bad Bunny and Jhay Cortez (hot off their own “Dákiti” rendition) sitting on the stage in the wings, excitedly applauding for her like they were cheering

on their classmate who just went after them in the high school talent show.

All night, the show’s principals couldn’t really escape each other — which occasionally resulted in uncomfortable moments, like Trevor Noah announcing that Beyoncé had just tied the record for most Grammy wins by a singer, with Queen Bey (having just accepted her and Megan Thee Stallion’s best rap song win for “Savage”) still visible in the background, surprised and visibly annoyed at not being able to get off the stage already. But even at its most awkward, the show was still refreshing — since Noah’s sporadic over-excited megaphoning aside, the show did such a good job of letting the music and performers simply speak for themselves.

Aside from the fewer-frills presentation, the Grammys helped put another big prior stumbling block behind them this year. Three years ago, then-Recording Academy president Neil Portnow [answered a question](#) about the disproportionately limited number of female artists among Grammy winners and nominees with an answer that encouraged female artists to “step up” in order to receive such recognition. The response was widely perceived as both patronizing and ignorant to the struggles women face to receive equal representation in the music industry at large, and brought long-simmering frustration with the Grammys’ handling of diversity among its constituents and honorees to a rapid boil.

While the issue of gender equality within the Recording Academy (and at the Grammys specifically) has hardly been solved since 2018, progress has been made each year, with higher concentrations of female nominees across the 80-plus total categories, and in particular more wins for female artists in the marquee “Big Four” categories (album of the year, song of the year, record of the year and best new artist). And after Billie Eilish became the first female artist to sweep the Big Four in 2020, history was again made this year, with four different lead women taking home the honors — Megan Thee Stallion, best new artist; H.E.R., song of the year (“I Can’t Breathe”); Taylor Swift, album of the year (*Folklore*); and again, Eilish, record of the year (“Everything

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I Wanted”). There’s still a long way to go, but after a 2018 where only one woman total was nominated between the record and album of the year categories, it feels like the outrage has at least been properly heard.

Which isn’t to say the 2021 Grammys get A’s across the board for being progressive. The institution’s always-complicated relationship with Black music of course got more fraught this year with The Weeknd’s [surprise shutout](#) from the nominations, compounded by the pop superstar announcing last week that he would be [pulling his music](#) from future Grammy consideration in response. Hip-hop in particular remains an area where the Grammys are forever playing catch-up: performances from Megan Thee Stallion, DaBaby, Roddy Ricch and Lil Baby were undoubtedly some of the evening’s strongest and most powerful, but only Megan actually heard her name called to the winner’s circle — while Nas, a veteran MC, took home an informal lifetime achievement award in the best rap album category for his lukewarmly received *King’s Disease*, after losing in his first 13 career nods. (It was also telling that Pop Smoke, easily one of 2020’s most impactful recording artists of any genre despite his murder last February, was not only ignored in the year’s nominations, but recognized during the broadcast with no more than a slide in the In Memoriam tribute.)

Still, this year felt like an important step taken by the Grammys; both in the variety and diversity of its biggest winners, and in its remembering (or discovering) that the show doesn’t have to build a Tower of Babel-like monument every year to reach the heavens of recorded music, one that usually ends up toppling and leaving everyone confused. The Grammys already have the greatest argument for the music industry’s greatness right in front of them, in the form of the year’s biggest and most important artists. They just need give those artists the stage and let them do their thing — and as long as the Recording Academy keeps improving their efforts to make sure the right winners are being recognized by the trophies handed out in between those performances, “Music’s Biggest Night” won’t need to do anything else to prove its largesse. **■**

Columbia Records’ Jenifer Mallory on Navigating a ‘New World’ of Breaking Artists & NFTs

BY DAN RYS

In May 2013, thousands of people descended on the small Australian town of Wee Waa for the global album launch of [Daft Punk’s](#) *Random Access Memories*, a dance party on a giant LED floor that marked the first time anyone heard the French duo’s Grammy Award-winning release — even though the DJs never planned to show. For **Jenifer Mallory**, then vp international marketing for Sony Music, the event was “one of the most impactful, pivotal campaigns I’ve ever worked on in my career,” she says. “They taught me everything about building a narrative and doing things that create conversation. It was one of those things that changed me forever.”

Less than a decade later, the world is a very different place — for starters, Daft Punk has [announced its retirement](#) — but the lessons Mallory took from that campaign have become even more valuable since the pandemic forced artists to experiment with new ways to connect with fans. As executive vp/GM of Columbia Records, a position to which she was promoted in September 2018, Mallory oversees marketing, plus digital, promotion, publicity, sales, licensing and brand partnerships for the record industry’s oldest label. And over the past year, she has helped to guide a young, digitally savvy staff through a once-in-a-century pandemic while adapting to a changing marketplace that can now shift at the whims of proprietary algorithms.

Alongside chairman/CEO **Ron Perry**, Mallory has molded Columbia into a more nimble operation that caters to its legacy artists ([Bruce Springsteen](#), [Bob Dylan](#), [AC/DC](#)) and superstars

([Adele](#), [Beyoncé](#), [Harry Styles](#)), while breaking a new wave of genre-blending MCs like [Polo G](#), [Lil Tjay](#) and [Lil Nas X](#) and tapping into the burgeoning international pop market through a partnership with Korean megastars [BTS](#) and the signing of Spanish dynamo (and Grammy winner) [Rosalía](#).

The principles of marketing and promotion remain steady, but strategy shifts at a breakneck pace. “As soon as you feel like you’ve figured out something that really has an impact on consumption or as a way for an artist to break through, it no longer works when the next thing crops up,” she says. “It’s a constant learning curve. And by the way, once we come out of quarantine — God willing — it’s all going to change again.”

You have been in your current role for two and a half years. How has Columbia evolved during that time?

Ron has brought a lot of incredible new and fresh energy. Probably the biggest shift in the industry over the past three years is the necessity to move quickly. Starting with A&R, there is an urgency to find artists and quickly sign them, and that bleeds over into marketing and digital. Every day and night, our teams scour the internet for live-time conversations on culture that are happening and try to insert our artists and their music into them. We’ve spent a lot of energy revitalizing the digital team at the company. Ron is incredibly internet-savvy and understands how critical it is, especially now in lockdown, to utilize the internet to drive artist narratives.

In addition to that, we’ve put a lot of focus on diversifying the roster, and hired a lot of new people — a diverse, young staff with female leaders. Ideas can come from anyone, no matter what your rank or what department is. The vibe is level in a great way.

How has the marketplace evolved?

There’s a huge emphasis on singles versus albums. With all of these global short-form video platforms — Reels and Shorts and TikTok — kids identify with a song long before they even know who sings it. So, at Columbia we’re constantly trying to balance that with making sure we focus on artist development and driving fans back to either a larger body of work or a larger artist narrative. [The Kid Laroi](#) is a great

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example of that: He put out several songs over the course of the last 18 months, but we used press and interviews in the right places online to make sure that his story wasn't just about one song.

The connection between fan and artist has never been more critical. There's so much noise in the marketplace right now with the pandemic, politics and all the different music coming from every corner of the world, it's important that the tracks Columbia releases are coupled with a story that makes fans of the music want to connect with an artist. Songs are easier to break in a way, because you have so much more access to consumers, but that access is giving thousands of artists the same ability to connect. So, you have to be that much more savvy at it.

I used to run international for Sony overall — all three labels — and in the last 18 months, even though I haven't gotten on a plane in so long, I've never felt more connected with our markets overseas. The streaming and promotional platforms have really leveled the playing field, and there's no passport control for music anymore. The internet doesn't know borders, and it's wild. You have BTS taking over the Billboard Hot 100 chart in America, and between them and Rosalía, songs that are not sung in English are breaking through in English-speaking markets. It's thrilling.

How has that changed the way you break artists globally?

Streaming has a lot to do with it. Access is now available to every fan around the world. And, specifically at Columbia, our philosophy is it's important to think globally. For Harry Styles, for example, we started the last album campaign in Australia. We did a cryptic, sniping campaign and über-fans down there found it and took to Twitter. That's the first place people saw it, and that was intentional. Because while we think globally, it's important to market locally. Connecting our acts to fans in local markets is imperative. You need local activations to knit these fan bases around the world together.

The most recent example would be our AC/DC campaign, where we started sniping that there was a new album coming outside

of **Angus Young's** old high school in Sydney. We were very thoughtful about starting it in a targeted way that makes sense for the band, not just buying random pieces of media. What that does is get all this earned media. News sites and papers will pick it up. It's those little idiosyncrasies that really make the difference now.

I can imagine that opens up possibilities but can also make it hard to decide on strategies.

We start with the artist and where they fit in culture and what is true to their story. One example is Bruce Springsteen. We put out *Letter to You* during quarantine, which, without Bruce touring behind the record, was a little daunting. What really drives his story is that he's an incredible live performer. So we had to get creative about mobilizing his fans in a digital world. And one thing we did was a Bruce emoji. We weren't the first to think of this idea, but it was very purposeful in the way it was designed. We took it from the *Born in the USA* album cover, where he's holding the guitar and his arm is up. We thought it captured everything that Bruce is — a rock star. It garnered so much earned media — *The Late Show With Stephen Colbert* brought it up to him when they interviewed him; all the morning news shows brought it up to him; NPR did a feature on it. If we had actually bought media across all these platforms, it would have been incredibly expensive. Instead, we did something that was true to his brand and unexpected, and it drove the narrative.

When you approach a campaign for a new artist, where do you start?

The importance of community building is critical. Look at what the Reddit community did to the stock market a couple weeks ago. These communities are so powerful, and whether it's on Reddit or Twitter, Discord, Twitch, Clubhouse or Roblox, we have to find the fans. But we also have to make sure that it feels authentic to the artist. So an artist who's not a big gamer doesn't make a whole lot of sense on Fortnite or Twitch. It's also important for artists to make every effort to connect with their fans. BTS and Harry Styles have some of the strongest fan bases in the entire world, and it's their efforts that ultimately help drive their songs

up the charts.

We have teams of people learning about the new thing every week. Now you've got these **NFTs** [non-fungible tokens, a method for buying and selling media], which are adding new angles and layers to artistry. We've seen a lot of artists selling their creations on the internet for millions of dollars, but this could add more dimension to the industry because there's more opportunity for artists to sell components of their art now. We don't really know how it's going to evolve, but we're excited to explore it with our artists. It's a whole new world.

A version of this article originally appeared in the March 13, 2021, issue of [Billboard](#). 

Drake's 'What's Next' & Olivia Rodrigo's 'Drivers License' Rule Global Charts

BY GARY TRUST

Drake's "What's Next" debuts atop the [Billboard Global 200](#), while Olivia Rodrigo's "Drivers License" posts a record-breaking ninth week at No. 1 on the [Billboard Global Excl. U.S.](#) chart.

Drake debuts two more songs in the Global 200's top 10: "Wants and Needs," featuring [Lil Baby](#), at No. 2, and "Lemon Pepper Freestyle," featuring [Rick Ross](#), at No. 4.

Plus, Silk Sonic, the duo of [Bruno Mars](#) and [Anderson .Paak](#), enters each chart's top 10 with "Leave the Door Open" and [Justin Bieber](#) also debuts his latest song, "Hold On," in the top 10 of each tally.

Billboard's two global charts (the latest of which are dated March 20) [began](#) last September and rank songs based on streaming and sales activity culled from more than 200 territories around the world, as compiled by MRC Data. The Billboard Global 200 is inclusive of worldwide data and the Billboard Global Excl. U.S. chart comprises data from

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territories excluding the U.S.

Chart rankings are based on a weighted formula incorporating official-only streams on both subscription and ad-supported tiers of audio and video music services, as well as download sales, the latter of which reflect purchases from full-service digital music retailers from around the world, with sales from direct-to-consumer (D2C) sites excluded from the charts' calculations.

Drake Debuts at Nos. 1, 2 & 4 on Global 200

Drake's "What's Next" debuts at No. 1 on the Billboard Global 200, becoming the first song to soar in at the summit by a solo male, with 70.7 million streams, the week's top global streaming sum, and 22,000 sold worldwide in the March 5-11 tracking week.

As Drake earns his first Global 200 No. 1 (dating to the chart's inception [six months](#) ago), he also becomes the first artist to debut, or rank, in the top two spots simultaneously, as his "Wants and Needs," featuring Lil Baby, enters at No. 2 with 56.3 million streams and 19,000 sold globally.

Drake additionally debuts at No. 4 on the Global 200 with "Lemon Pepper Freestyle," featuring Rick Ross (44.7 million streams; 18,000 sold).

Drake's three new songs were released March 5, packaged under the title "Scary Hours 2."

Amid Drake's triple entrance on the Global 200, Silk Sonic debuts at No. 3 with "Leave the Door Open." The track starts with 54 million streams worldwide and 38,000 sold, the latter the week's top global sales sum.

Rounding out the Global 200's top five, Olivia Rodrigo's "Drivers License" drops to No. 5 after spending its first eight weeks on the chart at No. 1, a record reign so far.

Elsewhere in the Global 200's top 10, Justin Bieber's "Hold On" enters at No. 8 with 40.5 million streams and 19,000 sold worldwide. The song starts as Bieber's fifth top 10, a record total he and Drake now share.

'License' Logs Record 9th Week Atop Global Excl. U.S. Chart

Olivia Rodrigo's "Drivers License" rules the Billboard Global Excl. U.S. chart for a record-breaking ninth week, with 36.8 million streams (down 7%) and 5,000 sold

(down 13%) in territories outside the U.S. in the March 5-11 tracking week.

The song rewrites the mark for the longest lead yet on the Global Excl. U.S. chart, surpassing the eight-week command of BTS' "Dynamite," logged nonconsecutively in September-January. The Weeknd's "Save Your Tears" holds at its No. 2 Global Excl. U.S. best, and his "Blinding Lights" keeps at No. 3 (after reaching No. 2), while BTS' "Dynamite" is steady at No. 4.

Silk Sonic's "Leave the Door Open" swings onto the Global Excl. U.S. chart at No. 5 with 31.2 million streams and 11,000 sold outside the U.S. Further in the Global Excl. U.S. top 10, Justin Bieber's "Hold On" begins at No. 9 (28.6 million; 5,000 sold).

The Billboard Global 200 and Billboard Global Excl. U.S. charts (dated March 20) will update on Billboard.com tomorrow (March 16). For both charts, the top 100 titles are available to all readers on Billboard.com, while the complete 200-title rankings are visible on Billboard Pro, *Billboard's* subscription-based service. For all chart news, you can follow @billboard and @billboardcharts on both Twitter and Instagram. 

Snubs & Surprises at the 2021 Grammys

BY PAUL GREIN

Every year's [Grammy Awards](#) has its share of snubs and surprises. This year was no exception.

Take a look:

Snubs: [Roddy Ricch](#) was nominated in six categories and lost them all. Phoebe Bridgers and DaBaby were nominated in four categories and were likewise shut out. Post Malone, who was nominated for album, record and song of the year (but nothing else, a bad sign), lost in all three of those categories. Posty has amassed nine Grammy nods in his career, with no wins yet.

Surprise: [H.E.R.](#)'s "I Can't Breathe" took song of the year over several songs that were

thought to have a better chance of winning, namely Beyoncé's "Black Parade," Taylor Swift's "Cardigan" and Billie Eilish's "Everything I Wanted." The topicality and timeliness of "I Can't Breathe" carried the day.

Surprise: [Billie Eilish](#) took record of the year for the second year in a row, for "Everything I Wanted." She won last year for "Bad Guy." Eilish is the first artist in Grammy history to win record of the year twice before turning 20 and before releasing a sophomore album. I think it's safe to say the voters really, really like her.

Surprise: [Anderson .Paak](#)'s "Lockdown," a non-album single that wasn't a hit, won best melodic rap performance, beating three hits that topped the Hot 100 ("Rockstar" by DaBaby featuring Roddy Ricch, Ricch's "The Box" and Travis Scott's "Highest in the Room") and another that reached No. 2 ("Laugh Now, Cry Later" by Drake featuring Lil Durk).

Snub: [Jhené Aiko](#) hosted the Premiere Ceremony, at which the vast majority of Grammys are presented, but didn't get to take home a Grammy. Her *Chilombo*, though nominated for album of the year, didn't win in its home genre category, best progressive R&B album. It lost to Thundercat's *It Is What It Is* — which is probably pretty close to what Aiko is saying about her Grammy night experience. Tiffany Haddish, who was asked to host the Premiere Ceremony (but declined when she was told she wouldn't be paid), won her first Grammy for best comedy album for *Black Mitzvah*.

Surprise: "Better Than I Imagine," a track by [Robert Glasper](#) featuring H.E.R. & Meshell Ndegeocello, beat Beyoncé's "Black Parade" for best R&B song — even though "Black Parade" was nominated for song of the year. Beyoncé has won best R&B song four times, more than anyone else.

Surprise: [Jojo Rabbit](#) won for best compilation soundtrack for visual media over the blockbuster *Frozen 2* and the currently buzzy *Eurovision Song Contest: The Song of Fire Saga*. The eclectic soundtrack for *Jojo Rabbit* features tracks by The Beatles, Ella Fitzgerald, Tom Waits, Love and Roy Orbison, among others.

Snub: It may not be a snub, but it's a disappointment to many that [Mickey Guy-](#)

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ton lost best country solo performance for “Black Like Me.” She was vying to become the first Black female country solo artist to win a Grammy. She lost to Vince Gill, who picked up his 22nd Grammy for “When My Amy Prays.”

Semi-surprise: Billie Eilish and **Finneas** won the award for best song written for visual media for a song from a film that still hasn’t been released — “No Time to Die” from the James Bond movie of the same name. Their song beat two songs that were nominated for Oscars last year: “Stand Up” from *Harriet* and “Into the Unknown” from *Frozen 2*. *No Time to Die* was originally scheduled for release in November 2019. It was postponed several times, first because of the departure of Danny Boyle, the original director and co-writer, and then because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The film is now scheduled for release on Sept. 30 in the U.K. and on Oct. 8 in the U.S.

Surprise: Legendary children’s host Mr. Rogers beat two legends of Black music — Nat King Cole and Prince. Well, sort of. *It’s Such a Good Feeling: The Best of Mister Rogers* won best historical album, topping the Cole retrospective *Hittin’ the Ramp: The Early Years (1936-1943)* and the Prince reissue *1999 Super Deluxe Edition*. Prince’s classic album was nominated for two 1983 Grammys but lost both to Michael Jackson in the year of *Thriller*.

Mild Surprise: *Linda Ronstadt: The Sound of My Voice* won best music film, topping a field that included Beyoncé’s *Black Is King*. This is the 11th Grammy for the beloved Ronstadt, one of the top female singers of the rock era. Beyoncé won last year for *Homecoming: A Film by Beyoncé*.

Surprise: Gillian Welch & David Rawlings’ *All the Good Times* won best folk album, beating the final studio album by the late Leonard Cohen, the poignantly titled *Thanks for the Dance*. Cohen died in November 2016. 📌

Beyoncé, Taylor Swift & Other Record Setters at the 2021 Grammys

BY PAUL GREIN

Beyoncé won four Grammys at the 63rd annual Grammy Awards on Sunday (March 14), pushing her career total to 28. That enables her to tie Quincy Jones as the living person with the most Grammys and to pull ahead of Alison Krauss (27 Grammys) as the woman (and vocalist of either gender) with the most. Only the late classical conductor George Solti (31 Grammys) has won more Grammys than Queen Bey.

Yet critics will point out that Beyoncé was again shut out in the “Big Four” categories — album, record and song of the year plus best new artist. After all this time, her only “Big Four” win is song of the year for “Single Ladies (Put a Ring on It),” 11 years ago.

Beyoncé took best music video for the second time with “Brown Skin Girl.” She first won in that category four years ago for “Formation.” The award also went to Wiz-Kid and Blue Ivy Carter, the nine-year-old daughter of Beyoncé and Jay-Z. Blue Ivy is the second-youngest Grammy-winner in history, following eight-year old Leah Peasall (who with her sisters was featured on the *O Brother, Where Art Thou* soundtrack).

Women had a stellar year at the Grammys. Female artists won for album of the year (**Taylor Swift**), record of the year (**Billie Eilish**) and best new artist (**Megan Thee Stallion**). In addition, two of the three writers of the song of the year winner, “I Can’t Breathe,” are women.

Swift’s *Folklore* won album of the year. It’s her third win in the category. She’s just the fourth artist in the Grammy history — and the first woman — to win album of the year three times. She follows Frank Sinatra, Paul Simon (counting a Simon & Garfunkel album) and Stevie Wonder.

But *Folklore* was passed over for best

pop vocal album, losing that award to **Dua Lipa**’s *Future Nostalgia*. *Folklore* is just the third album of the year winner that lost in its “home genre” category. Arcade Fire’s *The Suburbs* won album of the year even though it lost best alternative music album to The Black Keys’ *Brothers*. Mumford & Son’s *Babel* won album of the year even though it lost best Americana album to Bonnie Raitt’s *Slipstream*.

Eilish won record of the year for the second year in a row with “Everything I Wanted.” She won last year for “Bad Guy.” Eilish is just the third artist in Grammy history to win in this top category two years running. She follows Roberta Flack (“The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face” and “Killing Me Softly With His Song”) and U2 (“Beautiful Day” and “Walk On”).

H.E.R.’s “I Can’t Breathe” was a surprise winner for song of the year. It’s the second time in three years that the winner in that category has been a comment on the state of race relations in the U.S. Childish Gambino’s “This Is America” won two years ago. “I Can’t Breathe” beat another song that comments on race, Beyoncé’s “The Black Parade.” Oddly, “I Can’t Breathe” wasn’t nominated for best R&B song — though it was entered in the category. H.E.R.’s co-winners for song of the year are Dernst Emile II and Tiara Thomas.

Megan Thee Stallion and classical producer/engineer David Frost each won three Grammys on the night. Megan is the first female rapper to take best new artist since Lauryn Hill 22 years ago. She’s the first Black woman from any genre to win in the category since jazz star Esperanza Spalding 10 years ago.

Two-time winners included Fiona Apple, Billie Eilish and Finneas, H.E.R., Kaytranada, Maria Schneider and two musicians who died in the past year — John Prine and Chick Corea.

Harry Styles won his first Grammy, in or out of One Direction, for “Watermelon Sugar,” which took best pop solo performance. To win here, the sexy smash beat record and/or song of the year nominees by Doja Cat, Billie Eilish, Dua Lipa and Taylor Swift. Styles’ camp didn’t enter “Watermelon Sugar” in either of those marquee

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categories, opting to instead enter his other big hit from last year, “Adore You.” The win here for “Watermelon Sugar” suggests that they may not have gone with Styles’ strongest contender in the top categories.

All-female collabs won for best pop duo/group performance and best rap performance, both for the first time in those categories. “Rain on Me” by Lady Gaga with Ariana Grande took the pop award. “Savage” by Meghan Thee Stallion featuring Beyoncé took the rap award. These were two of four all-female collabs to top the Hot 100 in 2020.

Dan + Shay won best country duo/group performance for the third year in a row with “10,000 Hours,” their hit collab with Justin Bieber. This is Bieber’s second Grammy and it comes in a very different category from his first – best dance recording for “Where Are Ü Now” a collab with Skrillex and Diplo as Jack Ü. Bieber is the first artist in Grammy history to win Grammys in both dance and country categories. As for Dan + Shay, they won in this category the last two years with “Tequila” and “Speechless.” This third win puts them in a tie with Little Big Town for the most wins in the category.

John Legend won best R&B album for the third time for *Bigger Love*. He previously won for *Get Lifted* (2005) and *Wake Up*, a collab with The Roots (2010). This ties Alicia Keys for the most wins in the category.

Beyoncé wasn’t the only artist to move up the list of all-time winners. The late Chick Corea won his 24th and 25th Grammys for best improvised jazz solo for “All Blues” and best jazz instrumental album for *Trilogy 2*. Jay-Z won his 23rd Grammy for best rap song for “Savage.” Vince Gill won his 22nd Grammy for best country solo performance for “When My Amy Prays.” Kanye West won his 22nd Grammy for best contemporary Christian music album for *Jesus Is King*.

Two music stars finally won their first Grammys after losing many, many times. Nas, with 14 career nods, finally won for best rap album for *King’s Disease*. Ledisi, with 13 nods, finally won for best traditional R&B performance for “Anything For You.” But mastering engineer Chris Gehringer, after losing both of his nods this year (record and album of the year for his work with Dua

Lipa), is now 0-15 at the Grammys.

Brittany Howard won best rock song for “Stay High.” She’s the first woman to win in that category for writing a song without a male co-writer(s) since Alanis Morissette won 22 years ago for “Uninvited,” her song from the *City of Angels* soundtrack. Two years before that, Tracy Chapman won for “Give Me One Reason.” This is Howard’s second win in this category. With her former Alabama Shakes bandmates, she won five years ago for “Don’t Wanna Fight.”

Miranda Lambert took best country album for the second time with *Wildcard*. She first won in that category six years ago with *Platinum*. Lambert is the second female solo artist to win twice in that category, following Kacey Musgraves.

Fiona Apple’s *Fetch the Bolt Cutters* won best alternative music album. Apple is the third female solo artist to win in that category, following Sinéad O’Connor (*I Do Not Want What I Haven’t Got*, 1990) and St. Vincent (*St. Vincent*, 2014). Apple also won best rock performance for “Shameika.”

James Taylor’s *American Standard* won for best traditional pop vocal album. Taylor won best pop vocal album 23 years ago for *Hourglass*. He is only the third artist to win in both of these categories. The first two were Joni Mitchell and Lady Gaga. Mitchell won best pop album for *Turbulent Indigo* (1995) and the trad pop award for *Both Sides Now* (2000). Gaga won best pop vocal album for *The Fame Monster* (2010) and the trad pop award for *Cheek to Cheek* (2014), a collab with Tony Bennett.

Jagged Little Pill, a musical based on Alanis Morissette’s classic 1995 album, won for best musical theater album. It’s the third winner in that category that was based on a classic rock album. *The Who’s Tommy*, the 1993 winner, was based on The Who’s 1969 album. *American Idiot*, the 2010 winner, was based on Green Day’s 2004 album.

Snarkey Puppy became the first three-time winner for best contemporary instrumental album for *Live at the Royal Albert Hall*. Larry Carlton and Booker T. Jones have each won twice in the category.

David Frost won producer of the year, classical for the seventh time, tying Steven Epstein and Robert Woods for the most

wins in the history of the category. Frost is the son of Thomas Frost, who won the 1986 award in the category.

Andrew Watt won producer of the year, non-classical. His production work during the year included Dua Lipa, Post Malone and Ozzy Osborne. This was the first nomination in the category for Watt, 30. Last year’s winner, Finneas, was also a first-time nominee in the category. He was even younger – just 22 – when he won. **B**

Fito Páez, Grupo Niche, Natalia Lafourcade Win Grammys Latin Categories

BY LEILA COBO

Three Latin acts representing wildly different musical styles – Argentina’s **Fito Páez**, Colombia’s **Grupo Niche** and Mexico’s **Natalia LaFourcade** – were the early winners for the Latin categories at Sunday’s (March 14) Grammy Awards.

For veterans Páez and Grupo Niche, who’ve been making music for literally decades, this was their first-ever Grammy, and their joy was palpable in acceptance speeches from their respective countries.

“Thank you to my war team! It’s an incredible hour for me. I’m so nervous,” said Páez, whose *La conquista del espacio* won in the heavily contested best Latin rock or alternative album field, beating out Bajofondo’s *Aura* and Lido Pimienta’s *Miss Colombia* (Pimienta also performed beautifully in the Grammy Premiere Ceremony).

“I was very nervous,” Páez told *Billboard* over the phone minutes later. “There’s different music ‘schools’ in the world. I grew up with the American school,” added Páez, one of the great pioneers of melodic Argentine rock that bears British and American influences.

“So to have that school give you a pat on

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the back is a great honor. A great honor that exceeds the award itself. It's as if the entire country had enveloped me in its arms."

For Grupo Niche, perhaps Colombia's most emblematic and symbolic salsa band, the win was fraught with emotion. The group, founded in Cali 40 years ago, won in the best tropical album category for *40*, an album that pays homage both to its anniversary and to its late founder, Jairo Varela, who died in 2012.

"It's the first album we recorded that doesn't include Jairo's songs," said producer, composer and arranger José Aguirre, who spoke with *Billboard* on the phone from Miami after the win. "It was a risky bet. But if I can give this album a name, it would be 'respect.' Everything in it, I did thinking about Jairo: the arrangements, the production, the composition. There isn't a second in the album where he's not there. Fans wanted the group to record new music, but to preserve the sound. This wasn't about me. It's about Grupo Niche."

In the also highly contested best regional Mexican music album, the winner was Natalia Lafourcade for *Un canto por México, Vol. 1*, an homage to Mexican traditional sounds. Lafourcade had previously won a Grammy in the best Latin rock, urban or alternative category for *Hasta la raíz* in 2016.

The best Latin pop or urban album category, meanwhile, wasn't awarded at the premiere ceremony, leading to speculation that the winner may be Bad Bunny, who is performing at Sunday night's primetime broadcast. But of course, nothing is ever certain when it comes to the Grammys.

Another early Latin winner in a non-Latin category was Kali Uchis, the featured artist on Kaytranada's "10%," which won the Grammy for best dance recording.

The Latin category awards were announced by comedian Bill Burr, who at one point quipped: "All the feminists must have been saying, 'What is this white male doing this Latino stuff?'" Not to worry, Bill. Latinos do have a sense of humor too.

The 63rd annual Grammy Awards will air live on Sunday (March 14) at 8 p.m. ET/5 p.m. PT on [CBS](#), [Paramount+](#) and [Grammy.com](#). Online viewers can also stream CBS with free trials on [fuboTV](#) and [Sling TV](#).

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Kaytranada Is the First Black Artist to Win Best Dance/Electronic Album Grammy

BY KATIE BAIN

Kaytranada won for both best dance recording and best dance/electronic album at the 2021 Grammys on Sunday (March 14) — and made history in the process.

The Haitian-Canadian producer took home the best dance recording award for his Kali Uchis collab "10%" from his 2019 album, *BUBBA*, which itself won best dance/electronic album. This latter win made the 28-year-old artist the first Black producer to win in the category since it launched in 2004. He is also the first openly gay producer to win in this field.

"A lot of young kids who aspire to be musicians probably have the same inner struggles as me, being Black and gay just [trying to] fit in," the producer [told](#) *Billboard* ahead of the event. "It could be inspiring to them. That's why I want to win — that's who I'm going to dedicate it to."

"thank u from the bottom of my heart," the producer tweeted following his wins announced during the Premiere Ceremony. During the live telecast later in the evening, Kaytranada was also up for best new artist, an award went to Megan Thee Stallion.

Over in the best remixed recording, Kazakh producer Imanbek won for his edit of Saint Jhn's "Roses," which became a global hit when Imanbek, then a railway worker, [uploaded the remix](#) to the Russian version of Facebook. It went on to go viral, get licensed and became one of the most ubiquitous dance tracks of 2019 and 2020. **B**

'NFTs for People': BitClout Sells Coins Based on Celebs Without Their Permission

BY MICAH SINGLETON

Over the past few months, music stars have been scrambling to cash in on the latest craze in collectibles by selling art, merch and even albums in the form of [non-fungible tokens, or NFTs](#). But this week, the phenomenon became more confusing than ever for the music industry, when many of the top artists went on sale as pseudo-NFTs themselves.

The culprit: BitClout, a new platform that promises to allow creators and musicians to monetize their celebrity. The decentralized social network and marketplace has been quietly bubbling under the radar, with backers rumored to include big-name venture capital firms. Over recent weeks, the platform had uploaded the top 15,000 influencers from Twitter and issued coins for each, allowing early site users to buy and sell them. Prices for the coins of celebs like Billie Eilish and Elon Musk soared.

In a [FAQ](#) published on the site before it was taken down Friday afternoon — due to "overwhelming support," a note on the now-empty website states — BitClout describes itself as a social network that allows users to "speculate on people and posts with real money." BitClout claims to be a fully open-sourced project that built a custom blockchain using architecture comparable to Bitcoin with "no company behind it" that will allow users to purchase a new asset class called "Creator Coins" for accounts on the site, which includes celebrities, musicians, and influencers.

"They were on there mostly without their permission," a source tells *Billboard*. Current users can buy and sell coins that will increase and decrease in value depending

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on the “social clout” of the user the coin is based on, or how the user behaves in public. Anyone who signs up for the site can mint their own coins, celebrity or not.

The FAQ describes these “Creator Coins” as an asset “tied to the reputation of an individual, rather than to a company or commodity.” Effectively this means if a celebrity does something great and more people buy their Creator Coin, the value will go up; if they fail publicly or commit an offensive act, the value of their coin could decrease.

“It’s NFTs for people,” a source close to the situation tells *Billboard*.

To buy creator coins, users need to purchase BitClout cryptocurrency, which can only be acquired with Bitcoin, a move that will surely limit its initial audience. The price of BitClout “doubles for every million BitClout sold,” the paper states, a move designed to promote scarcity and increase the value of BitClout as more people buy into the influencers on the network.

Before the site was taken offline on Friday (March 12), there was a countdown timer ending at 12 p.m. PST, when BitClout was scheduled to relaunch, a plan that did not go smoothly. A source who used the network described it as “a mess, search was broken, it was incredibly buggy.” On audio-chat app Clubhouse, scores of artists, managers and executives spent the rest of the day trying to make sense of what had happened and debating whether early investors were wasting their bitcoin — or whether the platform might hold promise for the music community.

Despite the glaring question around how BitClout will get away with using the names and likenesses of 15,000 celebrities without permission, the social network says it will allow those influencers to claim their accounts simply by tweeting their BitClout public key, which will give them full access to their accounts, as well as a “percentage of the creator coins associated with their profile,” according to the [FAQ](#).

It’s safe to say that gamifying the social behavior of thousands of celebrities would have a massive impact on society in unpredictable ways: one act’s misguided tweet could cost its fans serious money, adding yet more pressure to the already high-

stakes world of social media for those in the limelight. But for now, the biggest question is whether it is legal for a social network to monetize potential users before they even sign up. **B**

56th Annual ACM Awards Return To Nashville

BY MELINDA NEWMAN

Shortly after the Academy of Country Music Awards took place last September in Nashville — five months later than in their traditional April slot and 1,800 miles away from their usual Las Vegas home — ACM CEO Damon Whiteside and the Encino, Calif.-based organization’s board of directors decided to keep the 2021 edition in Music City.

“We had a really good template,” he says. “Even though April seemed like a long time away, we thought, ‘Let’s not put artists at risk with travel. Let’s just repeat that success again.’” That means the 56th annual ACM Awards, set to air April 18 on CBS and Paramount+, will be held again at three historic Nashville venues: the Grand Ole Opry House, the Ryman Auditorium and The Bluebird Cafe.

“We learned that being able to change locations, especially when you don’t have the ability to show the audience reactions and the audience between performances, is an important factor,” says Whiteside. “We like creating a bit of visual variety.”

However, he is hoping the coronavirus pandemic has eased enough for all performances to be live, unlike the September event, when the show combined live and pretaped performances. At press time, Whiteside was also hoping to have all acts accept their awards in person, as well as have a small audience in all three venues, if possible.

After 2020’s delay, Whiteside says it was “really important to get back on cycle

because that April window has traditionally worked really well for us. People are expecting us in April.”

With the return to the same venues only seven months later, the academy wanted to make sure the show felt fresh. 2020 host Keith Urban, who is up for two awards, will return, but this time with Mickey Guyton, who’s nominated for new female artist, as cohost. That idea emerged shortly after last year’s show when Urban backed Guyton on piano while she performed “What Are You Gonna Tell Her.”

“I’m sitting with the executive-producer team at dick clark productions and we were watching that live performance, and we literally had goose bumps watching her just blossom onstage like that,” remembers Whiteside. “It was so powerful watching Keith play piano for her. We were so moved by it. Literally right after that, we were like, ‘We’ve got to ask her to host with Keith next year.’ We let the show cool and gave it a little time to breathe, but we were thinking about it from then.”

Guyton is the first Black artist to co-host since Charley Pride in 1984. There are other signs that Whiteside hopes point to broader inclusivity in country music.

For the first time, every single of the year nomination features a woman artist: Miranda Lambert, Gabby Barrett, Carly Pearce (with Lee Brice), Ingrid Andress and Maren Morris. (Morris and Chris Stapleton lead all artists with six nominations.)

“We have come a long way when the five most focal singles of the year are female, when you figure there’s been so much discussion about the lack of females at radio and just the lack of female content and presence in general in the country music industry,” says Whiteside.

In addition to Guyton, three other Black artists — Jimmie Allen, Kane Brown and John Legend (for a duet with Carrie Underwood) — are nominated in various categories. “That’s really exciting and a big step in the right direction because we didn’t have any [Black artists nominated] last year,” says Whiteside.

For the third time in four years though, none of the nominees for entertainer of the year are women. And among the 2021

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contenders, four are the same as last year — Luke Bryan, Eric Church, Luke Combs and Thomas Rhett — with Stapleton replacing Underwood, who tied with Rhett for the win in 2020.

“It’s hard to get into voters’ minds, but certainly all of these gentlemen had major, major years. I can’t even imagine one of those who shouldn’t be on this list,” says Whiteside. “That’s not to say I don’t think there are some female artists that deserve to be there too, because I absolutely do. I think it just speaks to the fact that we have a really competitive environment right now.”

According to the eligibility requirements, success at radio, consumption and music videos, as well as artistic merit and songwriting, are among the criteria. However, voters tend to heavily rely on live performance as a major indicator, usually nominating artists who regularly sell out arenas.

Whiteside says the awards committee did discuss whether to modify the criteria this year, given that artists were able to tour for only the first two months of the eligibility period (Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 2020), but decided not to alter it because there were so many other factors involved in judging the category.

One artist who will not be involved this year is Morgan Wallen. After a video emerged Feb. 2 of the budding star using the N-word, the academy took the extraordinary step of announcing it was pausing his involvement and eligibility for the 2021 awards. The organization had to act fast, as the second-round ballot was set to hit Feb. 10.

“We felt that it could be a huge detriment to country music and to our industry if the following week a ballot came out with an artist that was in the spotlight with this negativity associated with it,” says Whiteside. “If we’re dedicated to diversity and inclusion efforts — which we are as an organization — how can we just turn and look the other way in this case?”

Whiteside adds that Wallen’s suspension “is not forever” and that voting criteria has not been changed, but to keep him on the ballot “would have really cast a very dark shadow on our awards ballot ... and we felt we can’t do that to all the other artists who

are so deserving to be part of this awards cycle.”

This year’s show ends the academy’s current deal with CBS. “We remain hopeful that we’re going to have a renewal very soon,” he says, “but we’re still in our negotiating period.”

Looking ahead to 2022, with the pandemic hopefully on the decline, Whiteside says a return to Las Vegas is under consideration, but “we’re strategically looking at where we should take the show. Being that we moved to Nashville, these last two years really showed us that we can be nimble. We have an open playbook at this point.”

Country Music Community Benefits From \$3.5 Million Raised By ACM’s Lifting Lives During Pandemic

Musicians affected by Nashville Christmas bombing among many aided by charity.

Lifting lives, the Academy of Country Music’s philanthropic arm, has distributed \$3.5 million directly to individuals in the country community through its COVID-19 Response Fund. More help is on the way.

“In terms of putting money into people’s hands who need it — to feed their family, to pay rent, whatever that looks like — we’re uberfocused on fundraising right now,” says ACM CEO Damon Whiteside.

Lifting Lives usually replenishes its coffers through various Party for a Cause events surrounding the ACM Awards. However, the most recent in-person events were staged in 2019, and the likely inability to gather in person due to the pandemic left the academy to consider other solutions.

“We’re still keeping the possibility out there of a Party for a Cause live event, but knowing that it might be unlikely, we’re also out to market with some virtual event concepts,” says Whiteside. The academy will also highlight Lifting Lives “in and around the show wherever we can,” he says, including providing nominated artists with a “toolkit” so they can promote the nonprofit in interviews and social media.

For the second year, Nashville will host the April 18 awards show. To thank the town for its hospitality, Lifting Lives will donate \$25,000 to Music City Inc.’s foundation for their Nashville Christmas Day Explosion Relief Fund. The money will go to local

musicians who are out of work due to damage to downtown venues from the Dec. 25 bombing.

This article originally appeared in the March 13, 2021, issue of [Billboard](#). □

Nice Work If You Can Earn It: Raleigh Music Group’s 5th Anniversary

BY ED CHRISTMAN

While the principals of Kobalt, Big Deal and other music publishers are making tens and even hundreds of millions of dollars selling to investment funds like Hipgnosis and Primary Wave during this booming period for song catalog sales, Raleigh Music Group co-founders Peter Raleigh and Steven Storch continue to conduct their publishing business using the traditional and unflashy principles on which they built their company. “We don’t chase deals, and we ain’t in the business of outbidding people,” says Storch. “We sell our company as one that’s going to deliver service, and we win deals based on what we do.”

Established in 2016, Raleigh Music Group provides creative and administrative services to a portfolio that includes work by legendary composer George Gershwin and rock’n’roll icon Elvis Presley. The Gershwin catalog includes songs from the 1951 film classic *An American in Paris* and the 2012 Broadway musical *Nice Work If You Can Get It*, as well as such Great American Songbook entries as “Let’s Call the Whole Thing Off” and “Summertime.” Presley titles include “Can’t Help Falling in Love,” “All Shook Up” and “Jailhouse Rock.” Other song catalogs administered by Raleigh include works by Hugo Peretti, co-writer of “The Lion Sleeps Tonight”; R&B icon Bo Diddley; boxer-poet Muhammad Ali; 1970s rock band America; and contemporary artists Baby Goth and

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Hollis Brown, as well as producers Eric Hudson and Ezra.

Raleigh's global royalty collection network operates in over 75 countries and includes offices in New York and Los Angeles. The publisher's contemporary songwriting catalog contains 60,000 songs, and the company says it's still diversifying as it moves into production music while also mining rock, pop, R&B, hip-hop and even country. "We want to provide great service to great catalogs and also sign new songwriters who can develop the standards of tomorrow," says Raleigh. Storch calls the company "a throwback to what traditional music publishing used to be."

Collectively, the partners have 40 years of experience in the music publishing business: Raleigh's prior credentials include stints at Cherry Lane Music and BMG before a five-year run as head of copyrights at Imagem. There he met Storch, who at the time was the company's CFO. Before that, Storch had worked for over 16 years at Sony, where he started out as a financial analyst, then moved into CD manufacturing, sales and budget/revenue projections in various roles at Sony Music, Sony International and culminating in CFO at Sony/ATV.

The two executives, who mark their fifth year in music publishing in March, discussed their strategy for the administration of estate catalogs and their "high-touch, high service" approach to A&R, which prioritizes close relationships with their clients.

What made you decide to start your own company?

Peter Raleigh: We were at Imagem for five years when it was put up for sale [to Concord]. I always wanted to start something like this — it was just the question of finding the right business partners. When I met Steve, I thought, "Let's take it to the next level." The industry was changing. We could see that when catalogs were acquired, only the top songs were taken care of. The rest of the catalogs were neglected. We saw a niche that we could offer: bringing value, service and monetization to great catalogs.

How did you finance the business at first?

Raleigh: We asked our longtime clients if

we could have their business. I have known Susan Aberbach, one of the owners of the Elvis Presley catalog, for 23 years. I had met her in my days at Cherry Lane, and I had done a lot of work for her, including reclaiming 400 copyrights. I thought I could get her business, and she responded, "You already have my business, but can I invest in your company?" That took our breath away. We could not have started the company without her and her partner Richard Mincheff's support.

What percentage of your net publisher's share comes from administration as opposed to publishing?

Steven Storch: When we began, we were 100% administration, but as we have grown, we have been able to acquire more copyrights — through small acquisitions of existing songs as well as co-publishing deals that we have with artists and songwriters. So our NPS [also known as gross profit] now is approximately 50% administration and 50% ownership.

What deals have you cut recently?

Raleigh: We met some of Denise Rich's people at the Songwriters Hall of Fame Awards. We finally met with her and did a presentation with the Raleigh team. A week later, we negotiated a deal. She is one of the most prolific songwriters of the 1990s. Her songs are the modern standards of the last 20 or 30 years. For a writer of her stature to trust us with her catalog — that's a huge milestone. We worked hard to acquire that catalog.

What is your A&R philosophy?

Storch: The company is client-centered, and they appreciate our expansive experience and our high-touch, high service approach. We recognize that a lot of the business is changing, and we feel that our niche now, to a certain extent, is independent artists and songwriters. It's becoming a very important and growing sector. That's where we really focus our A&R.

I can see what you do for classic catalogs, but what do you bring to independent artists and songwriters?

Storch: A lot of the independent artists and songwriters don't necessarily have a lot of experience and don't have big teams around them. Peter and I can teach them

the business and fill in the gaps for them, whereas a larger publisher wouldn't have the resources, time or focus. We nurture these artists.

Raleigh: We found one of our younger artists, Shawn James, on the internet and signed him to an administration deal. He is developing an incredible catalog of future standards. One of his songs, "Through the Valley," is in a Sony video game, *The Last of Us Part II*. James is an example of crossing boundaries. He doesn't have a top 10 song on radio, but he has great songs and a loyal fan base.

Where are you focusing your A&R?

Raleigh: We are interested in signing producers and top line songwriters because both are equally important.

Storch: The most successful companies in publishing have a little bit of everything, so we are interested in music from all genres to create the most rounded and diverse portfolio. It's good to have ownership, administration and co-publishing deals. We are also looking for strategic partnerships. We recently did a joint venture with Kevin Jonas, who is the father of the Jonas Brothers. This joint venture will give us exposure to country music in Nashville, where we always wanted to be.

What about the Wall Street interest in buying catalogs? Have you gone there?

Storch: We bought a writer's share from one of the writers of "Bawitdaba," the Kid Rock song. It has been used in so many TV shows that it turned out to be a good acquisition. We own a piece of the Madonna song "Superstar." We're happy to see the value for songs increase through acquisitions. Private equity buyers should hire us to help them buy and administer the catalogs. We sit back and observe, but it is so far outside our purview. It's not what we do; it's not in our mindset.

What kinds of deals are attractive to you?

Storch: Our interests are pretty much all over the board, but we don't chase deals and we ain't in the business of outbidding people. We don't try to win on the highest advance or the lowest fee rate. But we are not afraid to pay a big advance if we believe in the artist and the structure of the deal is

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flexible. We sell our company as one that's going to deliver service, and we win deals based on what we do. We have a service mindset that is different from a lot of other companies out there.

What are the highlights from your first five years?

Raleigh: Some of the big synch licenses that we landed with big brands. Wrigley's Extra gum used Elvis Presley's "Can't Help Falling in Love" in ads for four years. We are really proud of that license, which helped elevate the copyright of that song.

Storch: Every time we see one of our contemporary artists or songwriters get a synch in a TV show or movie, it's incredible. We got one of our young writers, Eliza Shaddad, a synch as the end title to the first episode of a new Netflix series, *Behind Her Eyes*. The producers wanted a custom use of "Please Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood," and we arranged for her to go into the studio. She had the right sound for it. It's something we totally put together for her. In that deal, we retained the master. She is an up-and-coming developing songwriter. That placement will be very important to her career. In addition to the catalog, we will have contemporary songwriters pumping out today's hits — that's our challenge now. To keep the balance of the catalog.

How has the coronavirus pandemic affected the firm?

Raleigh: It really hasn't impacted us the way it has other companies. We are doing the business of publishers, getting songs placed and doing synch licensing.

Storch: Even though we saw television and film production slightly slowed down, we still did a lot of business with reality shows — like *The Twelve Days of Christmas*, *America's Got Talent* and *The Voice*. Commercials were still very strong for us. Advertisers were looking for classic songs. People were looking to be comforted by nostalgia, and we have it. Last year was still our best year ever.

What are your goals now?

Storch: To keep building by carefully signing songwriters and new catalogs. We have a business that actually works. We are not beholden to a private equity [company] or financial sponsors. We do have a close

relationship with our bank, Pinnacle [Financial Partners] and Andy Moats [executive vp/music entertainment director]. Andy knows our background and has worked with us in the past, so it's like an old-time traditional banking relationship with us as trusted clients. We are lucky to have that.

With prices the way things are now, are you concerned that your heritage catalogs might decide to up and sell?

Storch: We have worked with the heirs of the copyrights we represent for many years. They have special relationships with their catalogs and have decided to retain control of the songs so that they are looked after in a way they are comfortable with. But what we are doing is proactive estate care for our clients by making sure the songs are being promoted. Whether they want to keep them for future generations or sell them, we will help them build value.

This article originally appeared in the March 13, 2021, issue of [Billboard](#). 

2021 Oscar Nominations: See the Full List

BY GIL KAUFMAN

The nominees for the 93rd Academy Awards were announced on Monday morning (March 15) by [Nick Jonas](#) and Priyanka Chopra Jonas.

The leading nominee was director David Fincher's *Mank*, which chronicles the life screenwriter Herman J. Mankiewicz, which scored 10 nods. A wide array of other films each earned six noms: *Sound of Metal*, *Minari*, *The Trial of the Chicago 7*, *Judas and the Black Messiah* and *The Father*.

Riz Ahmed was nominated for best actor for his role as a drummer dealing with hearing loss in *Sound of Metal*, where he'll face off against the late Chadwick Boseman (*Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*), Steven Yeun (*Minari*), Gary Oldman (*Mank*) and Anthony Hopkins (*The Father*). The nominations included a historic first for the Oscars when

two women were tapped in the best director category, Chloé Zhao for *Nomadland* and Emerald Fennell for *Promising Young Woman*.

This year's Oscars, which were pushed back by two months due to the COVID-19 pandemic, will take place both at Union Station and their usual home, Hollywood's Dolby Theatre, on April 25.

Best Picture

The Father
Judas and the Black Messiah
Mank
Minari
Nomadland
Promising Young Woman
Sound of Metal
The Trial of the Chicago 7

Best Director

Another Round, Thomas Vinterberg
Mank, David Fincher
Minari, Lee Isaac Chung
Nomadland, Chloé Zhao
Promising Young Woman, Emerald Fennell

Best Actor in a Leading Role

Riz Ahmed, *Sound of Metal*
Chadwick Boseman, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*

Anthony Hopkins, *The Father*
Gary Oldman, *Mank*
Steven Yeun, *Minari*

Best Actress in a Leading Role

Viola Davis, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*
Andra Day, *The United States Vs. Billie Holiday*

Vanessa Kirby, *Pieces of a Woman*
Frances McDormand, *Nomadland*
Carey Mulligan, *Promising Young Woman*

Best Actress in a Supporting Role

Maria Bakalova, *Borat Subsequent Moviefilm*

Glenn Close, *Hillbilly Elegy*
Olivia Colman, *The Father*
Amanda Seyfried, *Mank*
Yuh-Jung Yoon, *Minari*

Best Actor in a Supporting Role

Sacha Baron Cohen, *The Trial of the Chicago 7*
Daniel Kaluuya, *Judas and the Black Messiah*
Leslie Odom, Jr., *One Night in Miami...*
Paul Raci, *Sound of Metal*

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Lakeith Stanfield, *Judas and the Black Messiah*

Best Original Song

“Fight For You,” *Judas and the Black Messiah* — music by H.E.R. and Dernst Emile II, lyric by H.E.R. and Tiara Thomas

“Hear My Voice,” *The Trial of the Chicago 7* — music by Daniel Pemberton, lyric by Daniel Pemberton and Celeste Waite

“Husavik,” *Eurovision Contest: The Story of Fire Saga* — music and lyric by Savan Kotecha, Fat Max Gsus and Rickard Goransson

“Io Si (Seen),” *The Life Ahead (La Vita Davanti A Se)* — music by Diane Warren, lyric by Diane Warren and Laura Pausini

“Speak Now,” *One Night in Miami...* — music and lyric by Leslie Odom, Jr. and Sam Ashworth

Best Original Score

Da 5 Bloods, Terence Blanchard
Mank, Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross
Minari, Emile Mosseri
News of the World, James Newton Howard

Soul, Trent Reznor, Atticus Ross and Jon Batiste

Best Adapted Screenplay

Borat Subsequent Moviefilm
The Father
Nomadland
One Night in Miami...
The White Tiger

Best Original Screenplay

Judas and the Black Messiah
Minari
Promising Young Woman
Sound of Metal
The Trial of the Chicago 7

Best Cinematography

Judas and the Black Messiah, Sean Bobbitt
Mank, Erik Messerschmidt
News of the World, Dariusz Wolski
Nomadland, Joshua James Richards
The Trial of the Chicago 7, Phedon Papamichael

Best Animated Short Film

Burrow
Genius Loci
If Anything Happens I Love You
Opera
Yes-People

Best Live Action Short Film

Feeling Through

The Letter Room

The Present

Two Distant Strangers

White Eye

Best Animated Feature Film

Onward

Over the Moon

A Shaun the Sheep Movie: Farmageddon

Soul

Wolfwalkers

Best Documentary Feature

Collective

Crip Camp

The Mole Agent

My Octopus Teacher

Time

Best Documentary Short Subject

Colette

A Concerto is a Conversation

Do Not Split

Hunger Ward

A Love Song for Latasha

Best International Feature Film

Another Round, Denmark

Better Days, Hong Kong

Collective, Romania

The Man Who Sold His Skin, Tunisia

Quo Vadis, Aida?, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Best Achievement in Sound

Greyhound

Mank

News of the World

Soul

Sound of Metal

Best Film Editing

The Father, Yorgos Lamprinos

Nomadland, Chloé Zhao

Promising Young Woman, Frederic Thoraval

Sound of Metal, Mikkel E.G. Nielsen

The Trial of the Chicago 7, Alan Baumgarten

ten

Best Visual Effects

Love and Monsters

The Midnight Sky

Mulan

The One and Only Ivan

Tenet

Best Makeup and Hairstyling

Emma

Hillbilly Elegy

Ma Rainey's Black Bottom

Mank

Pinocchio

Best Production Design

The Father

Ma Rainey's Black Bottom

Mank

News of the World

Tenet

Best Costume Design

Emma

Ma Rainey's Black Bottom

Mank

Mulan

Pinocchio

The 2021 Oscars will air on ABC on April 25 at 8 p.m. ET. 

Leslie Odom Jr., Trent Reznor & Atticus Ross & More Oscar Music Nominee Newsmakers

BY PAUL GREIN

When the nominations for the 93rd annual Academy Awards were announced bright and early on Monday (March 15), [Leslie Odom Jr.](#) was nominated for best supporting and best original song for *One Night in Miami...*; this is the fourth consecutive year that someone has been nominated for songwriting and acting Oscars in the same year.

Mary J. Blige, Lady Gaga and Cynthia Erivo accomplished the feat in the three previous years. Prior to Blige's achievement for *Mudbound*, no one had ever been nominated in these two categories in the same year. Odom co-wrote his nominated song, “Speak Now,” with Sam Ashworth.

Two actresses are nominated for best actress for playing real-life music stars: [Andra Day](#) is nominated for her playing jazz legend Billie Holiday in *The United States vs. Billie Holiday*, while [Viola Davis](#) is nominat-

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ed for playing blues singer Ma Rainey in *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*. This is the first time that portrayals of two real-life music personalities have been competed in the same category since Tom Hulce's portrayal of Mozart competed with F. Murray Abraham's portrayal of Antonio Salieri in *Amadeus* 36 years ago.

Forty-eight years ago, Diana Ross was nominated in the same category for her portrayal of Holiday in *Lady Sings the Blues*. Holiday is the first entertainer to be the subject of two Oscar-nominated performances.

This is the third consecutive year that a portrayal of a music icon has received an Oscar nomination. Rami Malek won best actor two years ago for playing Freddie Mercury in *Bohemian Rhapsody*. Renée Zellweger won best actress last year for her performance as Judy Garland in *Judy*.

Trent Reznor & Atticus Ross have two nominations for best original score — *Mank* and *Soul*. They collaborated on the latter film **with Jon Batiste**. Reznor & Ross are the first composer or composing team with two nominated scores in the same year since Alexandre Desplat had double nominees six years ago. The French composer won for *The Grand Budapest Hotel* and was also nominated for *The Imitation Game*. (Desplat narrowly missed out on a nod this year for his score to *The Midnight Sky*.)

Diane Warren and John Legend each had two songs on Oscar's shortlist of 15 finalists for best original song. One of Warren's songs made it, but both of Legend's fell short. Warren landed her 12th Oscar nomination in the category for co-writing "Io Sì (Seen)" from *The Life Ahead*. She is only the ninth songwriter in Oscar history to amass 12 or more nominations for best original song. (She has yet to win.) "Io Sì (Seen)" is the first song heard in the film in a language other than English to be nominated since "Loin De Paname" from *Paris 36* in 2009. Warren co-wrote the song with Niccolò Agliardi and Laura Pausini.

H.E.R., D'Mile (Dernst Emile II) and Tiara Thomas are nominated for best original song for "Fight for You" from *Judas and the Black Messiah*. The songwriting team won a Grammy for song of the year last night for "I Can't Breathe." They are the first songwrit-

ers in 35 years to **achieve this feat**.

James Newton Howard received his seventh nomination in a scoring category for *News of the World*. Howard has yet to win an Oscar.

Terence Blanchard received his second nod in three years for *Da 5 Bloods*. He was nominated two years ago for his score to another Spike Lee film, *BlacKkKlansman*.

Here are the five nominees in each of the two music categories, followed, in each case, by key shortlisted contenders that fell short.

Best Original Song**Nominees**

"Husavik"

Savan Kotecha, Rickard Göransson & Fat Max Gsus

Eurovision Song Contest: The Story of Fire Saga (Netflix)

"Fight For You"

H.E.R., Dernst Emile II & Tiara Thomas
Judas and the Black Messiah (Warner Bros)

"Io Sì (Seen)"

Diane Warren, Laura Pausini & Niccolò Agliardi
The Life Ahead (La Vita Davanti a Se) (Netflix)

"Speak Now"

Leslie Odom, Jr. & Sam Ashworth
One Night in Miami... (Amazon Studios)

"Hear My Voice"

Daniel Pemberton & Celeste
The Trial of the Chicago 7 (Netflix)

These five songs were selected by the Academy's 376-member music branch from 15 shortlisted songs in the category. All Oscar voting members will vote to determine the winners, which will be announced on April 25.

Key shortlisted songs that fell short:

"Turntables"

Janelle "Django Jane" Monáe, Nathaniel Irvin III & George "George 2.0." A. Peters II
All In: The Fight for Democracy (Amazon Studios)

"See What You've Done"

Mary J. Blige, Nova Wav & DJ Camper
Belly of the Beast (Independent Lens)

"Wuhan Flu"

Sacha Baron Cohen, Anthony Hines & Erran Baron Cohen
Borat Subsequent Moviefilm: Delivery of Prodigious Bribe to American Regime for Make

Benefit Once Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan (Amazon Studios)

"Never Break"

John Legend, Nasri Atweh, Benjamin Hudson McIlidowie & Greg Wells

Giving Voice (Netflix)

"Loyal Brave True"

Jamie Hartman, Harry Gregson-Williams, Rosi Golan & Billy Crabtree

Mulan (Disney+)

Best Original Score**Nominees**

Da 5 Bloods (Netflix)

Terence Blanchard

Mank (Netflix)

Trent Reznor & Atticus Ross

Minari (A24)

Emile Mosseri

News of the World (Universal)

James Newton Howard

Soul (Pixar)

Trent Reznor, Atticus Ross & Jon Batiste

These five scores were selected by the Academy's 376-member music branch from 136 scores that were eligible in the category. All Oscar voting members will vote to determine the winners.

Key shortlisted scores that fell short:

The Midnight Sky (Netflix)

Alexandre Desplat

Tenet (Warner Bros.)

Ludwig Göransson

The Little Things (HBO Max/Warner

Bros.)

Thomas Newman

Mulan (Disney+)

Harry Gregson-Williams

The Trial of the Chicago 7 (Netflix)

Daniel Pemberton 

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H.E.R. & Co-Writers Land an Oscar Nod the Morning After Winning Grammy For Song of the Year

BY PAUL GREIN

H.E.R., D'Mile (Dernst Emile II) and [Tiara Thomas](#) received an Oscar nomination for best original song on Monday (March 15), the morning after they [won a Grammy](#) for song of the year. Adding to the degree of difficulty here, the accolades are for two different songs. Their Oscar nomination is for "Fight for You" from *Judas and the Black Messiah*. Their Grammy win was for "I Can't Breathe," which became an anthem of the Black Lives Matter movement.

This is the first time in 35 years that a songwriter or songwriting team has received an Oscar nod in the same awards season that they won a Grammy for song of the year for a different song.

[Lionel Richie](#) was nominated for an Oscar on Feb. 5, 1986, for "Say You, Say Me" from *White Nights*. (The ballad went on to win the Oscar). Twenty days later, on Feb. 25, he won a Grammy for song of the year for "We Are the World." He and [Michael Jackson](#) co-wrote that humanitarian anthem, which was one of the first socially conscious songs to win a Grammy in that top category.

That feverish period was in many ways the pinnacle of Richie's long career. Richie was 36 at the time. H.E.R. is much younger now — just 23. Thomas is 31. D Mile, who wasn't on hand last night to accept his Grammy, is 36 — the same age Richie was when he hit the awards show jackpot.

On one other occasion, a songwriter or songwriting team received an Oscar nod

in the same awards season that they won a Grammy for song of the year for a different song.

[Henry Mancini](#) and Johnny Mercer were nominated for an Oscar on Feb. 24, 1964, for writing the title song from *Charade*. On May 12 of that year, they won a Grammy for song of the year for the title song from *Days of Wine and Roses* (which had won an Oscar the previous year). ▣

Maren Morris, Chris Stapleton & Other Top 2021 ACM Nominees

BY PAUL GREIN

Among the contenders for the 56th Academy of Country Music Awards, 14 creators — 12 artists and two producers — earned nominations in three or more categories: Maren Morris and Chris Stapleton lead the field, with six nods each, while Miranda Lambert received five, and Jay Joyce, Ashley McBryde and Thomas Rhett each earned four.

Maren Morris

Six nominations, including single of the year

Morris' "The Bones," which topped *Billboard's* [Hot Country Songs](#) chart for 19 weeks, is nominated for both single and song of the year. She received two nods in the song category as artist and co-writer. "The Bones" was the second single from her 2019 album, *Girl*. Morris is also nominated for female artist (which she won in 2020) for the fifth straight year and video of the year for "Better Than We Found It." Her sixth nod is as a member of The Highwomen, a supergroup that also features Brandi Carlile, Natalie Hemby and Amanda Shires, which is up for group of the year for the second time.

Chris Stapleton

Six nominations, including entertainer of the year

Stapleton's fourth solo album, *Starting*

Over, entered [Top Country Albums](#) at No. 1. It also scored a nomination for album of the year, earning him two nods as both artist and co-producer. His first three solo albums were also nominated in that category. *Starting Over's* title track/lead single, which reached No. 4 on Hot Country Songs (thus far), is nominated for song of the year, giving Stapleton two nods as artist and cowriter. The Kentucky native is also nominated for entertainer of the year for the third time in four years and male artist of the year for the sixth time in a row.

Miranda Lambert

Five nominations, including single of the year

Lambert's "Bluebird" is nominated for single, song and video of the year. It's this year's only work to be nominated in all three of these categories. In the song of the year category, Lambert is nominated as both artist and co-writer. "Bluebird," from her seventh studio album, *Wildcard*, became her first solo No. 1 on [Country Airplay](#) in eight years. She is also nominated for female artist of the year — a category she has won a record nine times — for the 15th consecutive year. Lambert's five current ACM nominations bring her career total to a whopping 68, the record for a female artist.

Jay Joyce (producer)

Four nominations, including album of the year

Joyce is competing with himself for album of the year. He is nominated for producing Ashley McBryde's *Never Will* and Brothers Osborne's *Skeletons*, both of which reached the top five on Top Country Albums. Joyce won the 2012 award in that category for co-producing Eric Church's *Chief*. The Nashville native is also nominated for single of the year for producing Miranda Lambert's "Bluebird" and producer of the year for the sixth time. He has won in that category in every even-numbered year dating back to 2012.

Ashley McBryde

Four nominations, including album of the year

McBryde's second album, *Never Will*, which reached No. 5 on Top Country Albums, is nominated for album of the year — her first in that category. McBryde is also nominated for female artist for the second

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time in three years and song of the year as both artist and co-writer of “One Night Standards,” the lead single from *Never Will*. The single reached No. 17 on Hot Country Songs. The Arkansas-bred singer-songwriter was nominated for song of the year in 2020 for “Girl Goin’ Nowhere.”

Thomas Rhett

Four nominations, including entertainer of the year

Rhett, who tied with Carrie Underwood for entertainer of the year at the last ACM Awards, is nominated in the category for the second year in a row. He is also nominated for male artist of the year for the fifth time. He won in that category in 2016 and 2018. Rhett’s other nods are music event of the year for “Be a Light” and song of the year for “Some People Do,” which he cowrote for Old Dominion. “Be a Light,” which features Reba McEntire, Hillary Scott, Chris Tomlin and Keith Urban, reached No. 7 on Hot Country Songs.

Ingrid Andress

Three nominations, including single of the year

Andress’ “More Hearts Than Mine,” which reached No. 5 on Hot Country Songs, is nominated for single of the year; she is nominated both as artist and co-producer. The exquisite ballad, the lead single from her debut album, *Lady Like*, is this year’s only single of the year contender that was produced or co-produced by the artist. The Denver native is also nominated for new female artist of the year for the second year in a row. (The ACM Awards, unlike the Grammys, allows artists two nominations in new artist categories.)

Eric Church

Three nominations, including entertainer of the year

Church is nominated for entertainer of the year for the third time and male artist for a fourth. He’s also nominated for music event of the year for “Does to Me,” his hit duet with Luke Combs. The North Carolina-bred star was the ACM’s new solo vocalist of the year for 2010. In a unique move, he is set to release three studio albums in the space of a week: *Heart* is due April 16, followed by *&* on April 20 and *Soul* on April 23.

Luke Combs

Three nominations, including entertainer of the year

Combs is nominated for entertainer for the second year in a row, male artist — which he won in 2020 — for the third year in a row and music event of the year for the first time for “Does to Me,” his duet with Eric Church. The collaboration, which reached No. 1 on Country Airplay, was featured on Combs’ **Billboard 200**-topping sophomore album, *What You See Is What You Get*. Combs and Church are competing for both entertainer and male artist of the year.

HARDY

Three nominations, including new male artist of the year

Michael Hardy — who uses the moniker HARDY as a recording artist — is nominated for songwriter of the year for the second time in a row. He’s also nominated for new male artist and for music event of the year for “One Beer,” which features Lauren Alaina and Devin Dawson. “One Beer,” the lead single from Hardy’s sophomore album, *A Rock*, reached No. 1 on Country Airplay. Hardy was nominated in four categories last year, mostly for his work on Blake Shelton’s “God’s Country.” (Dawson was one of Hardy’s collaborators on that song, which earned them both an ACM win as co-writers of the single of the year.)

Dann Huff (producer)

Three nominations, including album of the year

Huff is nominated for producer of the year — which he has won three times — for the 11th time. He is also nominated for album of the year as a co-producer of Kane Brown’s EP *Mixtape Vol. 1* (which reached No. 2 on Top Country Albums). Huff has won album of the year twice, for co-producing Keith Urban’s *Be Here* (2004) and Carrie Underwood’s *Some Hearts* (2006). Huff’s third nod is for music event of the year as producer of Thomas Rhett’s all-star charity single, “Be a Light.”

Carly Pearce

Three nominations, including single of the year

Pearce received two nominations for “I Hope You’re Happy Now,” her collaboration with Lee Brice. The track, which

reached No. 1 on Country Airplay, was the second single from her sophomore self-titled album. It is nominated for single and music event of the year. Pearce is also nominated for female artist of the year for the first time. The Kentucky native was nominated for new female artist of the year for both 2017 and 2018.

Matthew Ramsey

Three nominations, including song of the year

Old Dominion’s Ramsey co-wrote the band’s “Some People Do,” which is a song of the year contender. The third single from the group’s third studio album, *Old Dominion*, reached No. 28 on Country Airplay. Ramsey also received two nominations as part of the group: Old Dominion is nominated in the song of the year category as the artist, and it’s also nominated for group of the year for the sixth time in a row. The Nashville quartet has won the award the last three years running.

Keith Urban

Three nominations, all for music event of the year

Urban, who hosted last year’s ACM Awards, has competing entries for music event of the year. He’s nominated as both artist and co-producer on “One Too Many,” his collaboration with P!nk, and as a featured artist on Rhett’s “Be a Light.” “One Too Many,” the third single from *The Speed of Now Part 1*, reached No. 13 on Hot Country Songs. Urban has won this category three times, for “Start a Band” (with Brad Paisley), “We Were Us” (with Miranda Lambert) and “The Fighter” (with Carrie Underwood).

*This article originally appeared in the March 13, 2021, issue of **Billboard**. [↗](#)*

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Oscar Guitián, Latin Urban Music Pioneer, Dead at 52

BY LEILA COBO

Oscar Guitián, the cigar-wielding producer, promoter, record executive and manager who was one of the early impresarios of Latin urban music, has died. He was 52.

The cause was complications following a kidney transplant a few months ago, confirms his longtime friend **Walter Kolm**. “He was a great friend,” said Kolm. “A brother of life.”

A Cuban American, Guitián was one of the pioneers of Latin urban music. Back in 2003, before Universal launched its own urban imprint, it entered into a joint venture with Guitián Brothers Music, the label founded by Guitián, who was then its CEO. Guitián, whose brother was Cuban hip-hop artist Don Dinero, signed a slate of acts that included 90 Millas, El Boodah and Mr. Haka.

“Guitián Brothers is the next generation,” Guitián told *Billboard* at the time. “The same thing that happened in 1980 with urban music is happening with Spanish [urban music] now.”

His words were prescient. In the next five years, Latin urban music exploded and reggaetón took over the Billboard charts. Today, it’s the dominant genre for Latin music.

Through it all, Guitián remained a forceful figure in Latin Music. Beyond running Guitián Brothers, he acted as an independent promoter for Universal Music Latino artists from 2003 until 2011.

“My brother was the first Latin urban executive in the game,” wrote Don Dinero on an Instagram post. “He created a Latin hip hop market when all Latinos had to listen to was tropical music [...] He was the Latin Russell Simmons with a twist of Suge Knight.”

Baby Rasta, one of Guitián’s early sign-

ings, remembered him as someone who advocated for him in myriad ways.

“You helped me even when you were on your death bed,” he wrote on Instagram. “You interceded for me when you realized I was getting robbed even though I owned my music and my albums [...] My dream of having an independent label came from you [...] I’m sorry I wasn’t able to dedicate an award to you or give you that Rolex you always joked about. Tomorrow I’ll smoke a cigar and say goodbye to a great Cuban friend.”

At the time of his death, Guitián was working on a new artist, AFM The Sky. His first single “Regálame Una Noche,” entered the tropical charts in October.

Guitián is survived by his wife and three sons, Sebastian, Santino and Oscar Jr., who is now the general manager of Kolm’s WK Records.

“We as a family and individually will continue to carry on his legacy and love for the music business,” said Oscar Jr. in a statement to *Billboard*. **B**

Ontario Government Injects \$2 Million Into Canada’s Ailing Music Sector

BY KAREN BLISS

The Government of Ontario says it will inject \$2.5 million (USD \$2 million) into the struggling Canadian music industry by investing in two non-profit groups.

The Canadian Live Music Association (CLMA) will receive \$500,000 (USD \$400,000) to aid the live industry all over the province, **Lisa MacLeod**, Ontario’s Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture, announced today (March 12).

The provincial government will also provide \$2 million (USD \$1.6 million) in

COVID-19 relief to the Unison Fund, the Canadian music industry’s emergency charity, which provides financial assistance and counseling services for musicians and industry members.

Amanda Power, Unison’s executive director, said over the past year the charity had received a 3,021% increase in applications for emergency financial aid and a 208% increase in urgent mental health crisis intervention calls.

While both CLMA and Unison serve the Canadian music industry nationwide, the funds will go specifically towards aiding Ontario artists and industry members.

Prior to the pandemic, the live music industry contributed about \$3 billion (USD \$2.26 billion) to Canada’s GDP and supported 72,000 jobs, according to the CLMA. By the fall of 2020, a [CLMA member study](#) found that live music businesses had lost 92% of their revenue and had depleted their cash flow.

Since the pandemic began, the Ontario government has previously provided the music sector with financial aid totaling \$17.55 million (USD \$14 million), including to the Ontario Music Investment Fund (OMIF), Celebrate Ontario, the Reconnect Festival and Event Program, as well as digital content, such as Ontario.Live and Music Together.

“It’s clear we need to do much more,” MacLeod said. “We are now optimistic for a post-COVID-19 reality, one that includes music, the arts, culture and sport, and welcoming people back when it’s safe to do so.” **B**

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Strictly Discs in Wisconsin, in a Pandemic: 'The End Might Be in Sight'

BY CHRIS EGGERTSEN

In October 1988, **Angie Roloff** and her husband Ron opened Strictly Discs in Madison, Wisconsin, after Ron left a career in the biomedical research field to pursue his love of music full time. Nearly 31 years later, the couple made the difficult decision to shutter in-store operations due to COVID-19, roughly a week before Gov. Tony Evers forced a mandatory shutdown of all non-essential businesses. After the Wisconsin Supreme Court **overturned** Evers' stay-at-home order in May 2020 — ruling it “unlawful” and “unenforceable” — the Roloffs and their employees reopened the store and have kept it running ever since.

As part of *Billboard's* efforts to best cover the coronavirus pandemic and its impacts on the music industry, we will be speaking with Roloff regularly to chronicle her experience throughout the crisis. (Read the previous installment [here](#) and see the full series [here](#).)

What's changed for you since the last time we spoke?

Well, I've taken to calling it like six degrees of vaccination, as far as knowing people who have gotten one or two doses. And the news on [the late May] availability of vaccines for anybody who wants it I think has been a real game changer for most of us here at the shop this week.

Who's able to get a vaccine in Wisconsin at this point?

Everybody that's 65 and older. And then they moved it down to some frontline workers, [including] some grocery workers. Certainly pharmacy and health care workers qualify. The thing that's different in Wisconsin, even from some of our neighboring states, is in how they've set up who qualifies.

Some folks under 65 with preexisting conditions have not yet become eligible. So there's some head scratch[ing] on that, but they have to come up with some sort of guidelines. And they've just started vaccinating teachers in a concerted large scale effort, so that's also great.

Do you have any clarity on when you might be able to get the vaccine?

I don't. Technically, I believe we fall into the category of 1C, and they're vaccinating 1B right now. But then you hear...for example, a longtime customer who is retired military, the VA hospital had extra vaccines. So even though he's not over 65, they called him, he went in yesterday and got a dose. So there's lots of situations like that where, you know, a pharmacy may have some extra doses at the end of the day so they offer it up to customers or acquaintances or other people rather than wasting it. So I think it's a little bit all over the place.

Obviously states like Texas and Mississippi have opened things up completely, but have you seen a loosening of any other restrictions in the past few weeks in Wisconsin as cases have started to go down?

They've started to talk about some gatherings inside and outside, and some of those regulations have increased as far as the size of those, depending on whether or not food and beverage is served. I haven't followed that real closely, but there haven't been any changes for retail, and I think they're just starting to talk about some changes perhaps to restaurants and bars. But in our [record store] coalition, there's two stores in Texas, and we happened to have a Zoom town hall. They were both on it, and it's really scary for them down there.

Especially in the beginning of the pandemic, I would ask you if you'd had any incidents with customers in the store over the mask requirement. Over the past year, have you had any serious incidents like that?

Very, very few and far between. For the most part, when we have asked folks to either wear a mask or wear a mask appropriately, covering both their nose and mouth, people have been very agreeable. In the last week, we've had a couple of calls from folks

asking if we require masks, and at least in one of those situations the customer said, “Well, I'll come in when the mask mandate is lifted.” Which is fine. They clearly for whatever reason didn't want to wear one. But you know, we're certainly not loosening our stance on any of that.

Well, that was nice of them to call first. They could have just showed up.

That's very true.

I was trying to think of things to ask you about today, and there was one thing that did strike me. I don't know if there's anything to this, but TikTok has become this huge driver of streaming activity for older songs. Like you had the [Fleetwood Mac](#) situation where “Dreams” was in that viral TikTok, and then streams surged, it got back on the Billboard charts, the album was back on the charts. I'm just wondering if you've seen any sort of activity that was driven by TikTok as far as physical sales in the store?

Well we've always sold a lot of Fleetwood Mac's *Rumours*. I will say, this holiday season, I think the [impact of that video](#) was palpable. You could really feel people going for that album because of that.

Did it seem like even younger people who maybe wouldn't have necessarily been familiar with Fleetwood Mac were buying it too?

Absolutely.

What's been selling well for you lately?

All new records it feels like, recently. Lots of hip-hop and soul, but then classic catalog is really selling at an incredible rate. I think that's reflective of an even younger demographic getting into vinyl. So they might be buying [Billie Eilish](#) and [Harry Styles](#), but they're also buying [the] [Beatles' Sgt. Pepper](#) or [The Beach Boys' Pet Sounds](#) or the Fleetwood Mac record.

One of the records that's been kind of a sleeper now for months is the [Black Pumas](#) record. You know, they won a Grammy last year, they're nominated for Grammys this year...But that album just comes across the counter it feels like four or five times a day on the weekend. They only have the one album, but it's been really well received. Their manager, who is now based in Austin, Texas and has his own promoting company

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used to be an employee of ours. So I always get a little joy when someone buys it.

Is there anything else you wanted to mention?

I think this is the first time in this process of us talking that I do feel optimistic. I should knock on some wood right now. But it feels like maybe at least part of the end might be in sight.

I agree. I've been feeling pretty good lately. The cases are still high obviously, but knowing that vaccines are here, and with Biden saying that everyone will have access by May, is really encouraging.

Me too. Because even the last estimate of end of summer, or August, that feels so far away. I know we can keep doing what we're doing...but end of May feels like that'll be here in no time. We know it's not going to be a return to whatever normal was, but to be able to have supper with some friends, or as a group take our masks off when the store is closed, would be like a small victory. 📌

J Balvin Adds Karol G, Jhay Cortez, Tainy, Rauw Alejandro & More to Neón in Las Vegas

BY LEILA COBO

J Balvin will be joined in Las Vegas by [Karol G](#), [Jhay Cortez](#), [Rauw Alejandro](#), [Jowell & Randy](#) and producers [Tainy](#) and Sky Rompiendo in September for a weekend of experiences and performances he's dubbed his "Neón Experience."

Also included in his roster of events will be DJ Alex Sensation, Cornetto, DJ Pope, Agudelo888 and Matt Paris and La Gabi, the first two artists Balvin signed to his own label.

The Neón Experience will take place in Las Vegas during Mexican Independence

Weekend, September 16-19, which traditionally has been a huge weekend for Latin music in Vegas, typically featuring big stars playing arena shows.

Balvin's event, coming in the wake of the pandemic, is something else entirely. Capped at just 3,000 tickets, the three days and nights of events are being curated by Balvin and will include a headlining concert with him. Different "experiences" will take place in various locales in the new Resorts World Las Vegas, including its entertainment venues Zouk Nightclub and Ayu Dayclub.

The centerpiece of the event is a 90-minute concert headlined by Balvin where, for the first time, he'll sing the songs from his *Colores* album live.

"It's the first event we've announced since the pandemic," says manager Fabio Acosta, noting Balvin's last concert was more than a year ago. "He will curate the entire weekend, down to the artists and themes. It's the first time we do an event like this."

Neón is produced by [Pollen Presents](#), an event production company that develops and produces "experiences" in different locations around the world. They include two upcoming Latin music events: Nicky Jam Jamworld, taking place May 13-16 in Miami, and Ozuna Cancún fest, taking place May 20-24 in Cancún. 📌

Latina Power on Spotify: Cardi B, Kali Uchis & Karol G Among Top Female Acts This Week

BY LEILA COBO

While Latin music has long been topping global streaming charts for the past couple of years, it's more often than not the guys who've risen

to the top.

This week, Spotify charts show a different trend. For the week of March 5-11, four Latin women were among the 10 most-streamed female artists on Spotify. They include [Cardi B](#), who came in second only to [Miley Cyrus](#), followed by (in order) [Kali Uchis](#), [Karol G](#) and [Shakira](#). They placed ahead of the likes of [Beyonce](#), [Lana Del Rey](#) and [Nicki Minaj](#).

On the overall chart, Cardi came in at No. 12 among the most streamed artists of the week, followed by Kali Uchis, Karol G and Shakira and Nos 13, 14 and 15.

This may be the first time in recent memory that so many Latin female artists place so high simultaneously on the chart. The placement is particularly notable for Shakira, Kali Uchis and Karol G, who sing predominantly in Spanish.

Shakira, a mainstay in the upper echelons of all charts, saw her positioning boosted by the continuous success of "Girl Like Me," her collab with [The Black Eyed Peas](#), which placed at No. 38 on this week's Spotify 200 chart. On her end, Karol G has three songs on the Spotify 200 — "Bichota," "Location" and "Tusa."

And Kali Uchi's success comes on the heels of her surprising hit single "Telepatía," which placed at a stunning No. 3 on this week's Spotify 200 chart. 📌

Maldita Vecindad's Eulalio 'Sax' Cervantes, Virtuoso Saxophonist, Dead at 52

BY GRISELDA FLORES

Eulalio 'Sax' Cervantes, a virtuoso saxophonist and co-founder of iconic Mexican rock band Maldita Vecindad y Los Hijos del 5to Patio, has died of COVID-19 complications. He

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was 52 years old.

The news of his death was [confirmed](#) on Sunday (March 14) by his wife, Jessica Franco Landero, who wrote that Sax had “transcended from earth to find refuge in the arms of God. He begins to enjoy eternal life to interpret the best celestial notes for you and all of us. Rest in peace, our beloved Sax.”

Sax, born in San Luis Potosí, began his career at the early age of 11 playing the saxophone and clarinet in a youth orchestra. After playing at local events and parties, he moved to Mexico City in the mid-'80s where he'd eventually become a founding member of Maldita Vecindad comprised of front-man Roco, Sax, Pato, Aldo, Pacho, Tiki and Lobito.

Their second album, *El Circo* (1991), produced by Gustavo Santaolalla, marked a before and after in the local *rock en español* scene in Mexico where the majority of the popular rock music was then coming in from countries such as Spain and Argentina. Featuring anthemic songs such as “Pachuco,” “Kumbala,” “Un Gran Circo” and “Solín” — all co-written by Cervantes and powered by his saxophone — the band went on to record four more albums where they deftly fused genres such as ska-punk and *danzón*. Their last one, *Circular Coleccionado*, was released in 2009.

Most recently, just days before he passed, Sax released a solo song titled “Otros Nosotros” on March 5.

“When we met you I don't know how old you were but you look so young, adolescent. With your hair, your smile, your sax and your incredible talent that flowed every time you played your instrument,” wrote Santaolalla on Twitter. “Your contribution to popular Mexican music, as you once said it, will only be rightly measured as time passes, but the emotion in what you did is still present in the thousands of hearts of a generation that grew up listening to you. Working with you was gratifying.”

Panteón Rococó's saxophone player Misael Oseguera also remembered Sax — who sometimes would play two saxophones at the same time as seen in the video below — writing, “He'd always fight with his band members in order for me to go onstage to

play with them. I owe him so much. You'll always be present.”

See other reactions below: [📺](#)

Recording Academy Chief Comments on Beyoncé Declining to Perform at the Grammys

BY ASHLEY IASIMONE

Beyoncé, the artist with the [most nominations](#) at the 2021 Grammy Awards, will not be taking the stage to perform on Sunday (March 14).

In a new interview with the *Los Angeles Times*, interim Recording Academy CEO and president Harvey Mason Jr. indicated that Beyoncé declined an invitation to appear onstage during this year's ceremony.

“It's unfortunate, because she's such a big part of the Recording Academy,” he commented. “We absolutely wish we had her onstage.”

Ben Winston, executive producer of the Grammys, was also asked by the publication about Beyoncé's absence: Viewers “might” find it strange that she's not there, he said when prompted.

Beyoncé is nominated for a total of nine awards at this year's show. “Black Parade” earned her nods in the record of the year, song of the year, best r&b performance and best r&b song categories. “Savage” with Megan Thee Stallion is up for record of the year, best rap performance and best rap song. Beyoncé's “Brown Skin Girl” earned a nod for best music video, and *Black Is King* is a contender for best music film.

A number of artists have criticized the Grammys in recent years, including The Weeknd, who vowed to boycott the show

moving forward after his hit album *After Hours* and its smash “Blinding Lights” were snubbed in this year's nominations. After tweeting that “the Grammys remain corrupt” and that he went from planning to perform to being “not invited” in November, he [recently said](#), “Because of the secret committees, I will no longer allow my label to submit my music to the Grammys.”

Kendrick Lamar, Drake and Childish Gambino reportedly [declined invitations](#) to perform at the Grammy Awards in 2019.

The 2021 Grammy Awards are airing on Sunday (March 14) at 8 p.m. ET/5 p.m. PT on CBS, Paramount+ and Grammy.com. A full list of all the performers and presenters who are set for the telecast can be found [here](#). [📺](#)

Halsey Is Selling Her Artwork for the First Time in NFT Auction

BY HERAN MAMO

Halsey is turning her nightmares into art with the NFT series “People Disappear Here,” she announced Friday (March 12).

The series will be released on [Nifty Gateway](#), a marketplace where some of the biggest NFT collectors have congregated, on Wednesday, March 17. The collection breathes life into animations of seven characters from Halsey's original “People Disappear Here” painting soundtracked to eerie music, as well as the digital animation of the full original painting. The original physical “People Disappear Here” artwork, which was hand-painted and signed by the *Manic* singer, will be up for auction.

“The characters are all inspired by figures that occurred in a series of sleep paralysis nightmares I had at home during the quarantine. After seven years of bed surfing hotel rooms around the world, adjusting to my own pitch black cave in California had a little bit of a learning curve,” Halsey said

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in a statement. “From toddler TV programming evil dentists, a child born with massive claws who scratched her way out of the womb, to a woman who stood at the foot of my bed and demanded I watch her masturbate. They were memorable to say the least. I’m excited to be sharing them in a space that prioritizes artist integrity, and in a market that perpetuates the value of intellectual property.”

She [joins the likes](#) of Grimes, Shawn Mendes, Kings of Leon and many more artists who have been selling their digital collectible works as NFTs, or non-fungible tokens, that exist exclusively on a blockchain. NFTs are popular among people interested in cryptocurrency, but the phenomenon has [quickly grown into a mainstream norm](#) within the music industry.

Halsey’s NFT collection marks the first time her visual art has been available for sale to the public. She painted the cover of her *New York Times* best-selling poetry book, *I Would Leave Me If I Could*, and in September 2019, she released a [time-lapse video](#) of herself painting a larger-than-life version of her *Manic* album artwork with “Graveyard” playing in the background.

Part of the proceeds from Halsey’s “People Disappear Here” NFT collection sales will benefit [My Friends Place](#), which assists and supports homeless youth in LA, and [Carbon 180](#), which is dedicated to building a world that removes more carbon than it emits.

Watch the “People Disappear Here” trailer on Halsey’s [Instagram Story](#). 📺

Megan Thee Stallion & Fashion Nova Donate \$100K to Breonna Taylor Foundation on Anniversary of Her Death

BY ASHLEY IASIMONE

A year after Breonna Taylor was shot and killed by Louisville police raiding her home while she was in bed, [Megan Thee Stallion](#) has announced that in partnership with Fashion Nova, she is donating \$100,000 to the foundation created by Taylor’s mother, Tamika Palmer, in her daughter’s honor.

“A year ago today Breonna Taylor was tragically taken from her family and friends,” Megan wrote on Instagram Saturday (March 13).

She continued: “Breonna’s name continues to be a catalyst for change and a powerful reminder that justice has still not been served. Fashion Nova and I are proud to give \$100,000 to the @breonnataylorfoundation created by @tamikalpalmer to honor the memory of her daughter.”

“The core mission of the foundation is to support economic, social, and racial justice through police reform and government accountability. The foundation also seeks to help young people to realize their full potential, empowering them to participate in political processes and achieve better health, with mentorship programs for high-school girls, after-school initiatives, and educational support,” Megan said.

The rapper — who slammed Kentucky Attorney General Daniel Cameron last fall in her [performance on SNL](#) that advocated for the protection of Black women — previously announced that she was collaborating with Fashion Nova for their Women on Top initiative, which is pledging \$1 million

in support of women-led businesses and organizations. Megan [made the announcement](#) on International Women’s Day (March 8).

See Megan’s latest post, in tribute to Breonna Taylor, [on Instagram](#). 📺

Lil Nas X, 24kGoldn & More Receive Song Breaker Awards at Inaugural TikTok Event

BY CEDRIC THORNTON

As we are amid the industry’s biggest weekend that will culminate with the Grammy Awards on Sunday (March 14), all eyes are focused on the artists making the music. On Saturday night, TikTok premiered the inaugural Song Breaker Awards, partnering with Logitech to honor creators who utilize the app to showcase their talents.

TikTok creators Larray and Sienna Mae Gomez, serving as co-hosts, kept the show moving with their engaging dialogue. As Gomez explained at the top of the program, the Song Breaker Awards are given to the “top creators who are changing the face of music.”

The co-hosts were given the amplifiers award, which is presented to emerging artists whose music broke big on TikTok. The other winners of this award were Avani Gregg, Madi Monroe and Michael Le. Le accepted his award by saying, “I just want to say thank you to my supporters, my family and my friends for making it happen and of course, TikTok for doing this.”

The recipients of the originator award, given to creators who started the trends, dances, and challenges, were Brian Esperon, Jalaiah Harmon, Keara Wilson and Cowboy Cale, who said, “I really, really appreciate all my fans, my supporters, cause without y’all,

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this really wouldn't be possible."

Haley Sharpe, another originator award recipient, gave a special shout-out in her acceptance speech. "Thank you to [Doja Cat](#) for being super nice to me and inviting me to be in the 'Say So' music video." "Say So," a No. 1 hit on the [Billboard Hot 100](#), is a Grammy nominee for record of the year.

Three other creators won individual honors. Tia Stokes won the breakthrough award while [Curtis Waters](#) and [Surf Mesa](#) took home song breaker awards. Surf Mesa's "ily (I love you baby)," featuring Emilee, reached No. 23 on the Hot 100.

[24kGoldn](#) performed his current song "3,2,1" and his top-charting Hot 100 hit "Mood" before being presented with his artist breaker award by Grammy-winning rapper [Lil Nas X](#). "Thank you, Nas, thank you everybody at TikTok and Logitech, more importantly, thank all the fans out there for showing love and going crazy!" 24kGoldn said in accepting the honor.

Lil Nas X, who is a "creative collaborator" with Logitech, has given credit to the TikTok community for helping his 14-times platinum single "Old Town Road" reach the top of the Hot 100.

24kGoldn also presented Lil Nas X with his ground breaker award, which the rapper happily accepted. "Thank you everybody at Logitech, thank you to Goldn, it's amazing," the rapper said.

Lil Nas X even got in a double plug. "Please play my next song 'Montero (Call Me By Your Name)' and Goldn's album, *El Dorado*, [out] March 26th." ("Montero" is Lil Nas X's real first name.)

The show was a surprisingly short 32 minutes — about one-seventh of the expected length of Sunday's Grammy Awards. 📺

Meet the 2021 Latin American Music Awards' New Artist of the Year Nominees

BY JESSICA ROIZ

The 2021 Latin American Music Awards (Latin AMAs), led by nine-time nominees [Karol G](#) and [J Balvin](#), are taking place in April.

Honoring some of the most influential Latin artists of today — as voted by fans — the ceremony includes 25 categories including pop, urban, tropical, regional Mexican, and the newly added category of favorite virtual concert.

One of the coveted awards of the night is the new artist of the year. Newcomers Camilo, Eslabon Armado, Los Dos Carnales, Myke Towers, Natanael Cano, and Rauw Alejandro are up for the 2021 title. Vote for your favorite nominee [here](#).

Other top nominees for the awards include Bad Bunny with eight nominations, Ozuna with seven, and Anuel AA and Camilo with six noms each.

The 2021 Latin AMAs, hosted by actress Jacqueline Bracamontes, will air at 7 p.m. ET on Thursday, April 15, from the BB&T Center in Sunrise, Florida, via Telemundo.

In anticipation of the 2021 Latin AMAs, *Billboard* highlights each of the new artist of the year nominees. Get to know them below:

Camilo

[Camilo](#) is currently making the rounds with his sophomore studio album, *Mis Manos*, which, according to him, "is an exploration of all sides of my identity." The innovative rhythmic set — with collabs by Los Dos Carnales, El Alfa, Evaluna, and Mau & Ricky — dropped 11 months after *Por Primera Vez*, which debuted and peaked at No. 5 on *Billboard's* Top Latin Albums chart and at No. 1 on Latin Pop Albums.

Eslabon Armado

Mexican teen trio [Eslabon Armado](#) — comprised of Pedro Tovar, Brian Tovar, and Gabriel Hidalgo — has captivated the industry with their traditional *sierreña* music and romantic lyrics. Their debut studio album, *Tu Veneno Mortal*, released under DEL Records, scored the Mexican-American trio their first top 10 on *Billboard's* Top Latin Albums, arriving at No. 9 chart-dated May 16, 2020.

Los Dos Carnales

Norteño group, composed of brothers Poncho Jr and Imanol Quezada, were signed to regional Mexican label AfinArte in 2019 after being "discovered" by El Fantasma, who reached out to them in 2018 to collaborate. With their single "El Envidioso," the duo earned their first top 10 on the Regional Mexican Airplay chart (dated July 11, 2020) and later claimed their first No. 1 on the chart dated Sept. 5, 2020.

Myke Towers

[Myke Towers](#) has come a long way since his debut studio album in 2016, which put his rap skills and underground hip-hop sound on the map. With his sophomore album *Easy Money Baby*, Towers earned his first leader on the Top Latin Albums chart debuting at No. 1 on the Feb. 10, 2020, survey. The Puerto Rican rapper has collaborated with artists such as Bad Bunny, Becky G, Wisin, Nicky Jam, and most recently, Selena Gomez.

Natanael Cano

[Natanael Cano](#) is leading the rising trap corridos movement, shining the spotlight on his distinguishable corridos tumbados melodies and lyrics about having swag and running the streets. Cano debuted at No. 34 on *Billboard's* Emerging Artists chart (dated Jan. 18, 2020), thanks to four breakout singles on the Hot Latin Songs including "Soy el Diablo," in collaboration with Bad Bunny.

Rauw Alejandro

Born Raúl Alejandro Ocasio Ruiz in Carolina, PR, [Rauw Alejandro's](#) essence is inspired by Elvis Presley, Michael Jackson, and Chris Brown, as well as Daddy Yankee, Wisin & Yandel, and Ozuna. In 2020, the urban star, alongside Colombian pop crooner Camilo, entered the Hot Latin Songs Top 10,

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with “Tattoo (Remix)” peaking at No. 8 on the chart dated Aug. 15. 📺

Kirk Franklin Apologizes After Profanity-Laced Phone Call With Son Goes Viral

BY MITCHELL PETERS

Kirk Franklin has issued an apology after an expletive-filled phone call with his estranged son went viral online.

The 51-year-old gospel singer [took to social media](#) on Saturday (March 13) to share a video of himself expressing regret over a scornful phone conversation with his son Kerrion Franklin. During the heated call, which Kerrion leaked on [Instagram](#), the Grammy-winner is allegedly heard yelling that he’d “put my foot in your a—” and “break your neck” if he was ever disrespected.

In his minute-long apology, Franklin — whose name was trending Sunday on Twitter — explained that he’s had a “toxic” relationship with his 32-year-old son over the years and that he’s attempted to remedy their problems through counseling and therapy.

“Recently, my son and I had an argument that he chose to record. I felt extremely disrespected in that conversation and I lost my temper, and I said words that are not appropriate,” the singer said. “I am sincerely sorry to all of you, I sincerely apologize.”

Franklin added that his son failed to play a part of the conversation that included the artist calling the family therapist to help intervene.

“I’m not perfect, I’m a human and I’m going to make mistakes, and I’m trying to get it right,” the singer said in closing. “Please keep me and my family in your prayers.”

Watch Franklin’s full apology below. 📺

Australia’s Chart Release Day Moves Forward to Friday

BY LARS BRANDLE

Every day, Australia enjoys the sunrise before most other countries. There’s a new dawn for the country’s official music charts, too, which are moving forward one day for a Friday publication.

Starting from this Friday (March 19), the weekly ARIA charts will be published at 5pm, a full 24 hours earlier than usual.

With the shift, Australia will be the first major market weekly charts available anywhere. “We hope this will provide more opportunities to promote the Australian market and local artists,” says a rep for ARIA, which compiles the charts.

The moves won’t introduce any changes to ARIA’s chart week, which rolls from the start of Friday until the end of Thursday, while the data submission deadline for chart information providers remains in place for 10:30am on Friday.

In a typical chart week, the rankings would be tallied by late Friday and that information would be kept under lock and key until Saturday evening. Now music fans and the industry will have earlier access.

“Local and international artists will be looking to us first to see whether they have secured that coveted No. 1 spot at the top of the charts,” comments Annabelle Herd, CEO of ARIA.

In lockstep with the release date switch, ARIA has teamed up with [TikTok](#). Going forward, the short-video app will break the news first each week on the ARIA No. 1 album.

The trade body published its first survey — then the Countdown Chart — on July 10, 1983. [Bonnie Tyler’s](#) “Total Eclipse Of The Heart” led the first singles chart and [Michael Jackson’s](#) blockbuster *Thriller* was the first No. 1 on the albums chart. The sin-

gles chart evolved in November 2014 with the inclusion of on-demand streams, and the albums chart followed suit in May 2017.

Today, [ARIA’s suite of charts](#) capture sales and consumption from over 600 retailers and digital music services. 📺

Zayn Fires Off at Grammys Again, Says ‘I’m Fighting for Transparency and Inclusion’

BY ASHLEY IASIMONE

Zayn fired off at the Recording Academy once again, this time on the night of the 2021 Grammys. “@recordingacad are moving in inches and we need to move in miles,” Zayn tweeted just ahead of the awards show on Sunday (March 14). “I’m keeping the pressure on & fighting for transparency & inclusion. We need to make sure we are honoring and celebrating ‘creative excellence’ of ALL. End the secret committees. Until then ... #f--thegrammys.”

Billboard has reached out to the Recording Academy for comment.

Earlier in the week, he [criticized the Grammys](#) over its voting process, tweeting “f-- the grammys” and claiming that “unless you shake hands and send gifts, there’s no nomination considerations.” (See the Recording Academy explain the Grammy Award voting process [here](#).)

Zayn — who has yet to receive a Grammy nomination, either as part of One Direction or for his individual work, and whose most *Nobody Is Listening* album was not eligible for this year’s awards due to its Jan. 15, 2021 release date — [said this week](#) that his comments were “not personal or about eligibility but was about the need for inclusion and the lack of transparency of the nomination process and the space that creates and allows favoritism, racism, and network politics to influence the voting process.”

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The 2021 Grammy Awards aired live on Sunday at 8 p.m. ET/5 p.m. PT on CBS, Paramount+ and Grammy.com. **B**

Kings of Leon Crowned on U.K. Chart With ‘When You See Yourself’

BY LARS BRANDLE

Kings of Leon are back on the U.K. chart throne with *When You See Yourself* (Columbia), their sixth No. 1.

The Followills' new LP was the best-selling album of the week on CD, downloads and vinyl, powering it to a No. 1 debut on the [Official U.K. Albums Chart](#).

According to the OCC, 65% of its first week chart sales total came from physical formats.

KoL's previous leaders in the U.K. are: *Because of the Times* (2007); *Only By The Night* (2008); *Come Around Sundown* (2010); *Mechanical Bull* (2013); and *Walls* (2016), their last album.

Also debuting this week is [Gabrielle's](#) seventh studio album *Do It Again* (BMG), new at No. 4. It's the British soul singer's third Top 5 and her highest-charting album in two decades, since her career retrospective *Dreams Can Come True* peaked at No. 2 in 2001.

Meanwhile, [Zara Larsson's](#) third studio album *Poster Girl* (Black Butter) bows at No. 12, new wave outfit [Japan](#) return to the chart with the reissue of their 1980 album *Quiet Life* (BMG). It arrives at No. 13, easily eclipsing the set's previous chart peak of No. 53.

Veteran Scottish alternative rock outfit Arab Strap bag their highest chart position with *As Days Get Dark* (Quiet Action), new at No. 14; Aussie Britpop revivalists [DMA's](#) see their *Live At Brixton* (Infectious Music) start at No. 17; and *Against The Wall* (7HZ Productions), the debut album from Glasgow rockers Mason Hill, begins its

chart journey at No. 19.

Over on the [Official U.K. Singles Chart](#), Olivia Rodrigo continues her streak with "Drivers License" (Interscope), which now enters a ninth week at No. 1.

There wasn't much in it. "Drivers License" led Nathan Evans' No. 2-placed "Wellerman" (Polydor) — the leader on the midweek chart — by just 742 chart sales.

"Drivers License" is now the longest-running No. 1 debut single in 15 years, since [Gnarls Barkley's](#) "Crazy" chalked up nine weeks at the summit back in 2006, the OCC reports.

Finally, Dutch EDM star [Tiesto](#) has an equal chart best as "The Business" (Atlantic) rises 4-3, while [Drake](#) bags the two highest debuts, as *Scary Hours 2* tracks "What's Next" (OVO/Republic Recordings) and "Lemon Pepper Freestyle" featuring [Rick Ross](#), open at No. 4 and No. 6, respectively. **B**

Kings Of Leon Rule Australia's Albums Chart With ‘When You See Yourself’

BY LARS BRANDLE

Kings Of Leon are crowned on Australia's albums chart with *When You See Yourself*, the American rockers' fourth leader.

When You See Yourself opens at No. 1, ahead of [Dua Lipa's](#) *Future Nostalgia*, up 4-2; and [The Wiggles' We're All Fruit Salad!: The Wiggles' Greatest Hits](#), new at No. 3.

KoL previously topped the [ARIA Albums Chart](#) with *Only By The Night* (September 2008), *Come Around Sundown* (October 2010) and most recently with *Mechanical Bull* (September 2013).

Also new to the ARIA Albums Chart this week is [A Day To Remember's](#) *You're Welcome*, at No. 9. It's the American post-hardcore band's second Top 10 on the ARIA

Charts, having hit No. 1 with their previous album, 2016's *Bad Vibrations*.

The Smith Street Band return to the chart with *Unplugged In Wombat State Forest*, the Melbourne rock band's third live release in 12 months. It's new at No. 11 on the national all-albums survey, and it's this week's best-seller on the [ARIA Vinyl Albums Chart](#).

Veteran Australia singer and songwriter [Pete Murray](#) impacts the chart for the first time since 2017 with *The Night – EP*, which starts at No. 22.

Rising Australian funk/hip-hop artist Genesis Owusu makes his ARIA Top 50 debut with *Smiling With No Teeth*, bowing at No. 27. The Canberra artist collected ARIA Award nominations for best soul/R&B release in both 2019 and 2020.

Over on the [ARIA Singles Chart](#), [Glass Animals](#) enter a third week at the summit with "Heat Waves" while [Drake](#) has the highest debut on the latest survey with "What's Next," new at No. 7.

It's one of three new Top 40 entries on the chart for the Canadian hip-hop giant, as "Wants And Needs" drops in at No. 15), and "Lemon Pepper Freestyle" is at No. 26.

Meanwhile, Silk Sonic, the new project of [Bruno Mars](#) and [Anderson .Paak](#), make an early splash on the Australian chart. The single "Leave The Door Open" finds an opening at No. 13. The pair performed the track Sunday (March 14) at the 2021 Grammy Awards.

Finally, [Justin Bieber](#) has another Top 20 hit as "Hold On" arrives at No. 19. The track is lifted from Bieber's [forthcoming album release](#) *Justice*, which has already yielded the three hits "Holy" (No. 4 in September 2020), "Lonely" (No. 11 in November 2020) and "Anyone" (No. 5 in January 2021). **B**