

INSIDE

- **Rod Wave Earns First No. 1 Album on Billboard 200 Chart With 'SoulFly'**
- **Revealed: Billboard's 2021 Top Music Lawyers**
- **Justin Bieber, Ariana Grande & J Balvin to Reap Millions in HYBE Deal to Buy Ithaca Holdings**
- **NMPA and RIAA Chiefs: Music Creators and Fans Deserve Better From Twitter (Guest Op-Ed)**
- **\$90 Million Lawsuit Against Live Nation Tests Unorthodox Legal Theory**
- **Taylor James, Justin Bieber's Longtime Tour DJ, Elevated to Pop Star's Personal A&R: Exclusive**

Lil Nas X's 'Montero (Call Me by Your Name)' Debuts at No. 1 on Billboard Hot 100

BY GARY TRUST

Lil Nas X launches at No. 1 on the **Billboard Hot 100** songs chart with "Montero (Call Me by Your Name)."

The song, **propelled** by its buzzy official video, is his second Hot 100 No. 1, after his breakthrough smash "Old Town Road," featuring Billy Ray Cyrus, reigned for a record 19 weeks in 2019.

The Hot 100 blends all-genre U.S. streaming (official audio and official video), radio airplay and sales data. All charts (dated April 10) will update on billboard.com tomorrow (April 6). For all chart news, you can follow [@billboard](https://twitter.com/billboard) and [@billboardcharts](https://twitter.com/billboardcharts) on both Twitter and Instagram.

"Montero," released March 26 on Columbia Records, is the 1,120th No. 1 in the Hot 100's 62-year history. It's the **51st single** to debut at No. 1, and Lil Nas X's first.

"Montero" drew 46.9 million U.S. streams and sold 21,000 downloads in the week ending April 1, according to MRC Data. It also attracted 1.1 million radio airplay audience impressions in the week ending April 4.

The track opens at No. 1 on the **Streaming**

Songs chart, where it's Lil Nas X's second leader, after "Old Town Road" ruled for a record 20 weeks, and No. 2 on **Digital Song Sales**. It was available in three versions in its first week: its original version; its "Satan's Extended Version"; and its "But Lil Nas X Is Silent the Entire Time" instrumental version (all sale-priced as of March 30 to 69 cents).

Lil Nas X's "Old Town Road" dominated the Hot 100 for **19 weeks** beginning on the April 13, 2019-dated chart. On the Aug. 3, 2019, survey, it spent its record-breaking **17th week** on top, passing the 16-week No. 1s "Despacito" by Luis Fonsi and Daddy Yankee, featuring Justin Bieber, in 2017, and Mariah Carey and Boyz II Men's "One Sweet Day," in 1995-96.

"Montero" is Lil Nas X's fifth Hot 100 entry, all of which have hit the top 40. Between his two leaders, he charted with "Rodeo," with Cardi B/Nas (No. 22 peak, July 2019); "Panini" (No. 5, September 2019); and "Holiday" (No. 37, November 2020).

"Montero" references Lil Nas X's real name, Montero Lamar Hill (and is the second Hot 100 No. 1 in

[\(continued\)](#)

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 63RD ANNUAL GRAMMY® AWARDS WINNERS!



JOHN PRINE

"I Remember Everything"
Best American Roots Song
and American Roots Performance



BOBBY RUSH

Rawer Than Raw
Best Traditional Blues Album



LORI MCKENNA

"Crowded Table"
Best Country Song



ALANIS MORISSETTE

Jagged Little Pill
Best Musical Theater Album

Member of



The
collective
voice of
independent
music

VISIT A2IM.ORG

and follow us on social
media @a2im

SOUTHWESTERN LAW SCHOOL
L O S A N G E L E S

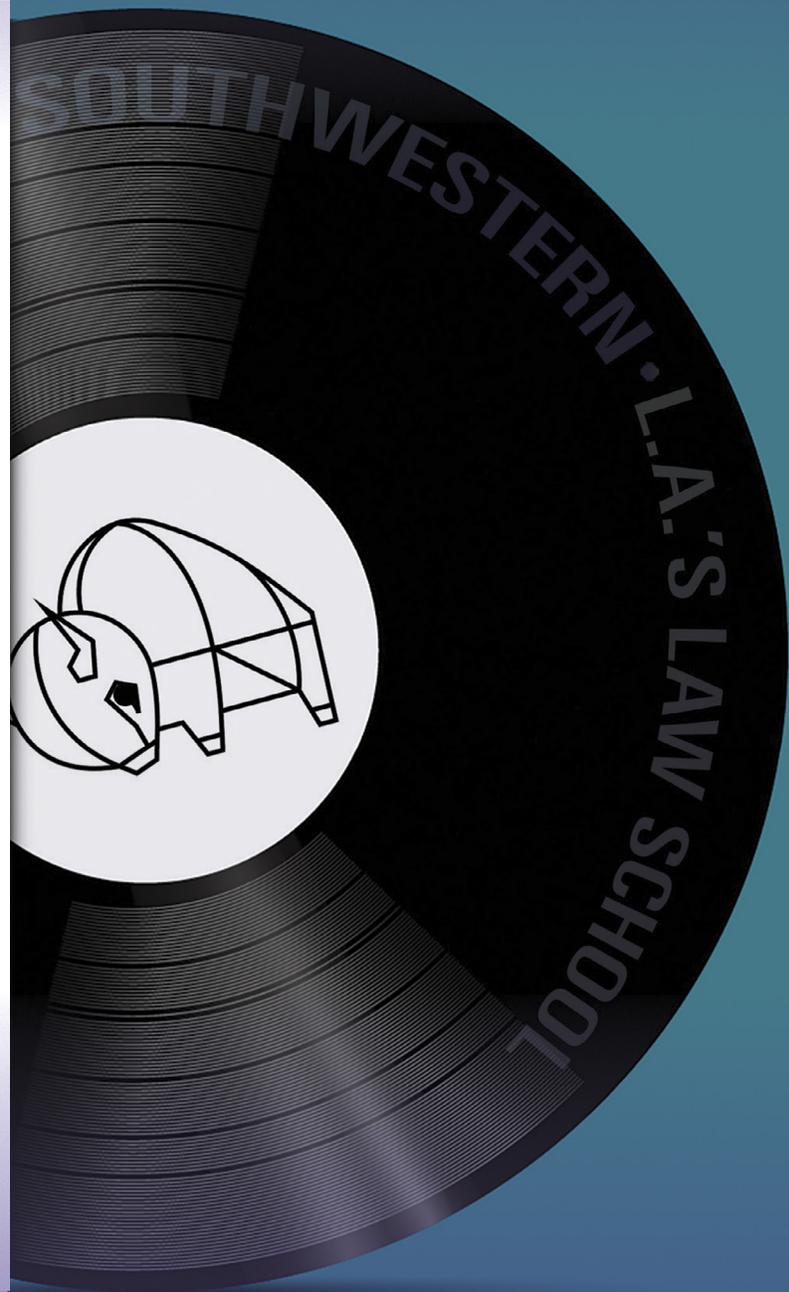
Home to the Donald E. Biederman
Entertainment and Media Law Institute
www.swlaw.edu/billboard

billboard



CONGRATS!

Andrew P. Paster '15
Brian L. Schall '91
Daniel M. Petrocelli '80
Erin M. Jacobson '09
Haley A. Golding '16
Heidy P. Vaquerano '08
Neville L. Johnson '75
Robert A. Jacobs '92
Robert J. Minzner '06
Scott H. Bradford '98
Simon Rust Lamb '07
Tamara Milagros-Butler '01



- Southwestern, a *Billboard* Top Music Law School

▶ IN BRIEF

less than a year to shout-out the name of the artist that recorded it, after “The Scotts” by The Scotts, Travis Scott and Kid Cudi). In a **statement** accompanying the release of “Montero” (whose profile was also boosted in the tracking week by the arrival of, and subsequent legal action regarding, his **#santanshoes** line), Lil Nas X wrote that the song “begs the question: do you truly love your neighbor as yourself, enough to call them by your own name?”

Justin Bieber’s “Peaches,” featuring Daniel Caesar and Giveon, drops to No. 2 a week after debuting **atop** the Hot 100. The song slips from No. 1 to No. 2 on Streaming Songs (27.1 million, down 12%) and falls 3-7 on Digital Song Sales (11,000, down 31%), while entering Radio Songs at No. 35 (23.2 million, up 92%), as it wins the Hot 100’s top Airplay Gainer award.

“Peaches” posts a second week at No. 1 on the multi-metric **Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs** and **Hot R&B Songs** charts, which use the same methodology as the Hot 100.

“Leave the Door Open” by Silk Sonic, the duo of Bruno Mars and Anderson .Paak, holds at No. 3 on the Hot 100, after hitting No. 2, and Cardi B’s “Up” slips 2-4, two weeks after **reaching** No. 1. “Up” adds a sixth week atop the multi-metric **Hot Rap Songs** chart.

Olivia Rodrigo’s former **eight-week** Hot 100 No. 1 “Drivers License” backs up from No. 4 to No. 5, as it spends a fourth week at

No. 1 on the **Radio Songs** chart (68.2 million, down 3%).

The Weeknd’s “Save Your Tears” retreats 5-6 on the Hot 100, after reaching No. 4, and Dua Lipa’s “Levitating,” featuring DaBaby, holds at No. 7, after lifting to No. 5.

The Weeknd’s “Blinding Lights” descends 6-8 on the Hot 100, after spending four weeks at No. 1 in April-May 2020. It adds a record-extending 56th week in the top 10, after it became the first song to total a **year in the bracket**.

The track ties for the fourth-longest overall stay in the Hot 100’s history and makes more history: It passes LMFAO’s “Party Rock Anthem,” featuring Lauren Bennett and GoonRock, for the most weeks spent on the Hot 100 among No. 1 hits.

Most Weeks on the Billboard Hot 100:
87, “Radioactive,” Imagine Dragons, No. 3 peak, 2012-14
79, “Sail,” AWOLNATION, No. 17, 2011-14
76, “I’m Yours,” Jason Mraz, No. 6, 2008-09
69, “Blinding Lights,” *The Weeknd*, No. 1 (four weeks), 2020-21
69, “How Do I Live,” LeAnn Rimes, No. 2, 1997-98
68, “Counting Stars,” OneRepublic, No. 2, 2013-14
68, “Party Rock Anthem,” LMFAO feat. Lauren Bennett & GoonRock, No. 1 (six weeks), 2011-12

24kGoldn’s “Mood,” featuring Iann Dior, repeats at No. 10 on the Hot 100, after eight

nonconsecutive weeks at No. 1 in October through mid-January. It concurrently leads the multi-metric **Hot Rock & Alternative Songs** and **Hot Alternative Songs** charts for a 31st week each.

Rounding out the Hot 100’s top 10, Pop Smoke’s “What You Know Bout Love” drops to No. 10 from its No. 9 peak.

Again, for all chart news, you can follow @billboard and @billboardcharts on both Twitter and Instagram and all charts (dated April 10), including the Hot 100 in its entirety, will refresh on Billboard.com tomorrow (April 6). 📺

Rod Wave Earns First No. 1 Album on Billboard 200 Chart With ‘SoulFly’

BY KEITH CAULFIELD

Rod Wave earns his first No. 1 album on the **Billboard 200** chart, as *SoulFly* opens with 130,000 equivalent album units earned in

TOTAL
IMMERSION

billboard
DEEP
DIVE

SUBSCRIBE TO BILLBOARD PRO FOR
ACCESS TO NEW REPORTS
AND THE ARCHIVE

ESSENTIAL ANALYSIS of the latest business topics and trends formulated to give industry players the competitive advantage in a rapidly changing market.

EXCLUSIVE QUARTERLY REPORTS that deliver in-depth, holistic reporting; case studies; and custom data designed to serve the industry.

A DEEP DIVE LIBRARY stocked with intelligence on fan data, song catalog sales, TV synchs, Africa’s burgeoning music business and the gaming industry’s embrace of artists.

DO WE HAVE ROYALTIES FOR YOU?



More than \$400 Million Distributed To Musicians and Vocalists

Royalties Distributed to Both Union & Non-Union Session Musicians & Vocalists For Their Performance on Songs Played on Satellite Radio, Non-Interactive Streaming Services, Webcasts, Other Digital Formats and Certain Music Performed on Film & Television

Find Out If We Have Royalties For You

www.afmsagaaftrafund.org



The AFM & SAG-AFTRA IPRD Fund is a 501(c)(6) non-profit organization - est. 1998
4705 Laurel Canyon Blvd., Suite 400, Valley Village, CA 91607
p. 818.255.7980 | f. 818.255.7985 | www.afmsagaaftrafund.org



▶ IN BRIEF

the U.S. in the week ending April 1, according to MRC Data. With the arrival, *SoulFly* also notches the biggest week for an R&B/hip-hop album in 2021 in terms of units earned.

Also debuting in the top 10: [NF's *Clouds \(The Mixtape\)*](#), [Carrie Underwood's *My Savior*](#), [Young Dolph](#) and [Key Glock's *Dum and Dummer 2*](#) and [AJR's *OK Orchestra*](#).

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 April 10, 2021-dated chart (where *SoulFly* bows at No. 1) will be posted in full on *Billboard's* website on April 6. For all chart news, follow @billboard and @billboardcharts on both Twitter and Instagram.

Of *SoulFly's* 130,000 equivalent album units earned in the tracking week ending April 1, SEA units comprise 126,000 (equaling 189.2 million on-demand streams of the album's songs — the largest streaming week of 2021 for an R&B/hip-hop set), album sales comprise 4,000 and TEA units comprise less than 1,000. *SoulFly* logs the biggest week for an R&B/hip-hop set released in

2021 in terms of units earned, surpassing the 88,000-unit launch of The Weeknd's *The Highlights* (Feb. 20-dated chart).

In total, *SoulFly* is the rapper's third charting album, and all three have reached the top 10, each peaking higher than the last. *Ghetto Gospel* topped out at No. 10 (Nov. 23, 2019-dated chart) and *Pray 4 Love* debuted and peaked at No. 2 (April 18, 2020).

The 19-track *SoulFly* album also handily outpaces the opening week of 14-track *Pray 4 Love*, which launched with 72,000 units.

SoulFly is just the second R&B/hip-hop album to hit No. 1 the last five months. The last R&B/hip-hop effort to lead the tally was [Playboi Carti's *Whole Lotta Red*](#), which spent one week at No. 1 on the Jan. 9 chart. Before that, the last R&B/hip-hop leader was [Pop Smoke's *Shoot for the Stars Aim for the Moon*](#), which spent its second of two nonconsecutive weeks at No. 1 on the Oct. 24, 2020-dated chart.

SoulFly was previewed by the tracks "Street Runner" and "Tombstone," which both debuted in the top 40 of the [Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs](#) chart. The former also launched in the top 40 of the all-genre [Billboard Hot 100](#) tally, giving Wave his third top 40-charting hit on the list.

[Justin Bieber's *Justice*](#) falls to No. 2 in its second week on the Billboard 200, earning 100,000 equivalent album units (down 35%). *Justice's* second-week decline was eased by the release of a deluxe edition of

the album on March 26, dubbed the Triple Chucks Deluxe, which added six bonus tracks to the album's original 16 tracks.

NF's *Clouds (The Mixtape)* starts at No. 3 on the Billboard 200 with 86,000 equivalent album units earned. Of that figure, 58,000 comprise album sales, 27,000 comprise SEA units (equaling 40.51 million on-demand streams of the album's songs) and less than 1,000 comprise TEA units. It's the rapper's third top 10 effort and fifth charting album overall. He previously hit the list with *The Search* (No. 1 in 2019), *Perception* (No. 1, 2017), *Therapy Session* (No. 12, 2016) and *Mansion* (No. 62, 2015).

Carrie Underwood's *My Savior* debuts at No. 4 on the Billboard 200, marking her ninth consecutive top five-charting album — the entirety of her charting efforts. The set starts with 73,000 equivalent album units earned. Of that sum, 68,000 comprise album sales (making it the top-selling album of the week), 4,000 comprise SEA units (equaling 5.32 million on-demand streams of the album's songs) and 1,000 comprise TEA units.

My Savior features Underwood covering traditional hymns such as "Amazing Grace," "How Great Thou Art" and "The Old Rugged Cross." The set was ushered in with a performance by Underwood on NBC's *Today* on March 26. *My Savior's* second-week on the chart will be supported by an Easter Sunday (April 4) virtual [live concert performance](#) by Underwood at the Ryman

DECISIVE INTELLIGENCE.
DELIVERED DIGITALLY.

billboard
DIGITAL NEWSLETTERS

CLICK HERE
FOR FREE
DELIVERY

billboard



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.

CONTACTS

Joe Maimone

201.301.5933 | joe.maimone@mrcentertainment.com

Lee Ann Photoglo

615.376.7931 | laphotoglo@gmail.com

Cynthia Mellow

615.352.0265 | cmellow.billboard@gmail.com

Marcia Olival

786.586.4901 | marciaolival29@gmail.com

Gene Smith

973.452.3528 | eugenebillboard@gmail.com

Debra Fink

213.448.5157 | debra.fink@mrcentertainment.com

Ryan O'Donnell

+447843437176 | ryan.odonnell@mrcentertainment.com

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

▶ IN BRIEF

Auditorium in Nashville, streamed from the star's Facebook page.

Morgan Wallen's former No. 1, *Dangerous: The Double Album*, falls 3-5 with 63,000 equivalent album units earned (down 5%). The set spent its first 10 weeks at No. 1 before dropping to No. 3 a week ago.

The Weeknd's hits compilation *The Highlights* moves 15-6 with 45,000 equivalent album units earned (up 89%). *Highlights* includes "Blinding Lights" and "Save Your Tears" – both of which are also on his last studio album, 2020's *After Hours*. On the new chart, the TEA and SEA units for both songs contribute to *The Highlights*, as a song's activity is assigned to the artist's album with the most sales in a week. (*The Highlights* sold a little over 2,000 copies in the latest tracking week, while *After Hours* sold under 2,000.) A week ago, the TEA and SEA for both songs were directed to *After Hours* (which in that frame outsold *The Highlights*).

Pop Smoke's former No. 1 *Shoot for the Stars Aim for the Moon* dips 4-7 with 38,000 equivalent album units earned (down 4%).

The teaming of rappers Young Dolph and Key Glock continues to be prosperous, as the pair score its second top 10 album together with the No. 8 arrival of *Dum and Dummer 2*. The twosome previously hit the top 10 with *Dum and Dummer*, debuting and peaking at No. 8 in 2019.

Dum and Dummer 2 bows with nearly 36,000 equivalent album units earned. Of that sum, 31,000 comprise SEA units (equaling 42.73 million on-demand streams of the set's songs), 4,000 comprise album sales and less than 1,000 comprise TEA units.

Dum and Dummer 2 is Young Dolph's third top 10, following *Dum and Dummer* and a solo project *Rich Slave* (No. 4 in 2020), and the second top 10 for Key Glock.

Dua Lipa's *Future Nostalgia* slips 5-9 on the Billboard 200 with 35,500 equivalent album units earned (down 1%).

AJR closes out the top 10 as the trio's new album *OK Orchestra* debuts at No. 10 with 32,000 equivalent album units earned. It's the second top 10 for the band, which previously hit the region with its last release, 2019's *Neotheater* (No. 9 on the May 11, 2019, chart). The new album was led by the

group's first top 10 hit song on the Hot 100, "Bang!", which peaked at No. 8 in January.

Of *OK Orchestra's* launch of 32,000 units, 18,000 comprise SEA units (equaling 26.17 million on-demand streams of the album's songs), 13,000 comprise album sales and less than 1,000 comprise TEA units. ■

Revealed: Billboard's 2021 Top Music Lawyers

BY BILLBOARD STAFF

Through it all, the deals did not stop. Nor did calls for greater fairness and equality, both within and beyond the music business.

Over the past tumultuous year, the leading music attorneys chosen for the 2021 edition of *Billboard's* Top Music Lawyers – nominated by their firms and peers and chosen by our editors – have played an essential role.

Those helping clients to buy and sell recording and publishing catalogs were busier than ever. Among the headline-grabbing transactions were Universal Music Publishing Group's acquisition of Bob Dylan's iconic catalog, Primary Wave's creation of a joint venture with Stevie Nicks after acquiring a majority share of her publishing copyrights and the buying spree of Hipgnosis Songs Fund, which brought the catalogs of creators from 50 Cent to Shakira under its wide umbrella.

Lawyers involved in the live-touring sector came to the aid of their clients by diving into an alphabet soup of pandemic relief packages: PPP (Paycheck Protection Program) and EIDL (Economic Injury Disaster Loan) administered by the SBA (Small Business Administration). That federal agency will open applications on April 8 for the \$15 billion SVOG (Shuttered Venue Operators Grant) program.

In Washington, D.C., one of the longest-running legal dramas in the music busi-

ness came to a surprising end when a U.S. Department of Justice official revealed in January that the DOJ had concluded its review of the decades-old consent decrees guiding the operation of ASCAP and BMI – without recommending change. The outgoing assistant attorney general for the antitrust division, Makan Delrahim, urged a fresh DOJ review of the consent decrees every five years.

Other concerns will not wait. The calls for racial and social justice heard across the nation, in the Black Lives Matter protests of 2020 and the recent condemnations of anti-Asian violence, have resonated within the music business legal community as well. On this year's list are firms that have shaken up their ranks to become more diverse while acknowledging more needs to be done.

"We have all been forced to reassess racism and social injustice," says Adam Van Straten of Van Straten Solicitors. "Stakeholders at all levels started taking the extremely necessary and overdue steps to support changes within the industry."

Perhaps the greatest support that the top music lawyers can offer to bring about change is to advocate for creators and clients as they speak out through their work.

"Use your platform to raise awareness of the causes you care about," says anti-discrimination litigator Doug Wigdor. "Whether it be politics, racial justice, women's rights, the environment, corporate malfeasance or some other issue, artists should embrace using the tools they have to fight for what they believe in."

Major Music Groups

Jeffrey Harleston

General counsel/executive vp business and legal affairs, Universal Music Group

Adam Barker

Director of business affairs, Universal Music U.K.

Saheli Datta

Executive vp/chief compliance officer and employment counsel, Universal Music Group

Steve Gawley

Executive vp business and legal affairs, Universal Music Group

Nicola Levy

Executive vp digital business and legal affairs, Universal Music Group

billboard

2021

I N T E R N A T I O N A L P O W E R P L A Y E R S

On April 24th, *Billboard* will publish its annual International Power Players list. This issue will profile the leaders in the global music industry including the label executives, concert promoters, managers, talent agents and lawyers, and recognize their achievements. Advertise and congratulate this year's International Power Players to reach an influential audience of decision-makers worldwide.

CONTACTS

Joe Maimone

201.301.5933 | joe.maimone@billboard.com

Lee Ann Photoglo

615.376.7931 | laphotoglo@gmail.com

Cynthia Mellow

615.352.0265 | cmellow.billboard@gmail.com

Marcia Olival

786.586.4901 | marciaolival29@gmail.com

Gene Smith

973.452.3528 | eugenebillboard@gmail.com

Ryan O'Donnell

+447843437176 | rodonnell@pmc.com

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

▶ IN BRIEF

Alasdair McMullan

Executive vp business and legal affairs/global head of litigation, Universal Music Group

Michael Seltzer

Executive vp business and legal affairs/head of commercial transactions, Universal Music Group

Magda Vives

Senior vp legal and business affairs, Latin America, Universal Music Latin America Entertainment

Reflecting on the past year, Harleston says he takes pride in how the UMG team — its labels, its publishing company and more — came together while working remotely “to not only respond to the impact of the pandemic on our artists and our staff, but also to embrace uncomfortable conversations and lead meaningful initiatives to address systemic issues around racial inequality and social justice in our own company, our industry and the world at large.” In response to calls for racial justice, UMG last June announced its Task Force for Meaningful Change, connecting 40 executives from its different labels and business units around the world, co-chaired by Harleston and Motown Records chairman/CEO Ethiopia Habtemariam. “We have much more work to do,” says Harleston. “But it was rewarding to see Universal Music come together in a way I hadn’t experienced in my almost 30 years.”

Most Lasting Legacy of 2020 Will Be: “Our resilience. While the world was in quarantine and lockdown, artists found the most innovative ways to continue to create and share their voice with the world. From Andrea Bocelli’s inspiring Easter concert to Billie Eilish’s livestreamed show to Justin Bieber’s Valentine’s Day livestream, artists continue to persevere in a time when we need them the most.” —Harleston

Paul Robinson

Executive vp/general counsel, Warner Music Group

Brad Cohen

Senior vp/head of litigation, Warner Music Group

Jon Glass

Senior vp/head of digital legal affairs, Warner Music Group

Maryrose Maness

Senior vp/deputy general counsel, Warner Music Group

Trent Tappe

Senior vp/deputy general counsel/chief compliance officer, Warner Music Group

“In 2020, during the absolute worst of times,” says Robinson, 62, “we managed to go public, to grow our business — both organically and by doing more [mergers and acquisitions] and also by doing innovative licensing deals with emerging digital platforms — and to do our part for social justice and diversity, equity and inclusion. I’m proud of these successes and the efforts of our legal and business affairs team in supporting them.”

Most Lasting Legacy of 2020 Will Be: “A reminder to us to expect the unexpected. It would have been easy to think, given the growth our industry experienced from 2015 to 2019, that nothing could go wrong. This was a wakeup call. But having experienced 15 years of digital disruption and come out the other side, our industry is very adaptable.” —Robinson

Julie Swidler

Executive vp/business affairs/general counsel, Sony Music Entertainment

Stu Bondell

Executive vp business and legal affairs, international, Sony Music Entertainment

Wade Leak

Executive vp/deputy general counsel/chief compliance, ethics and privacy officer, Sony Music Entertainment

Jeff Walker

Executive vp/head of business and legal affairs, global digital business, Sony Music Entertainment

Susan Meisel

Senior vp/corporate deputy general counsel, Sony Music Entertainment

During the pandemic, while ensuring that Sony was “doing everything as a company to protect the health and safety of our people,” says Swidler, the company’s legal team was also working “to protect our artists’ works.” Sony took part in a multicompany industry action against internet service provider Cox Communications, and in January, a federal judge upheld a \$1 billion ruling against Cox for infringing 10,000 musical works. In the past year, says Swidler, Sony has closed

“several new podcasting joint ventures, partnerships and content deals,” and, in February, Sony’s attorneys worked on the company’s purchase of Kobalt’s recorded-music divisions, including AWAL, offering “another level of service to the independent music community,” says Meisel. At a time of social and racial reckoning, the legal team also was involved in creating what Walker calls “internal programming that responds to the needs of various populations in a year of tremendous challenge.”

What Young Artists Must Ask Their Lawyer: “They need to seek a lot of answers from their lawyers, especially around how they are making money. The [record-company] business affairs team should be able to explain every detail around a contract so that every artist understands how they are getting paid.” —Swidler

Streaming**Gabe Fleet**

Executive vp business affairs/chief music licensing counsel, iHeartMedia

Fleet, 40, helped iHeartRadio transition from in-person events, such as its annual music festival, to virtual programming and TV/streaming specials like *SeeHer*, *Hear Her* for International Women’s Day and *Living Black!* for Black History Month, featuring 21 Savage, Jhené Aiko, Kirk Franklin and Roddy Ricch. He also guided iHeartMedia’s investment in podcasts and expects streaming events to survive past 2020. “The most successful artists and companies,” says Fleet, “will be the ones who understand that things will never be the same as they were before.”

Most Lasting Legacy of 2020 Will Be: “Fewer cross-country flights for one 45-minute meeting and, hopefully, also more humility and empathy. This year was a good reminder that we’re all humans, with families and pets and messy offices and spotty Wi-Fi, and it was nice to see a change, where in addition to negotiating with each other, we also learned a little more about each other as people.”

Horacio Gutierrez

Head of global affairs/chief legal officer, Spotify

Eve Konstan

General counsel, Spotify

billboard



NOEL SCHAJRIS 20TH ANNIVERSARY TRIBUTE

Latin Grammy winner, singer, songwriter and pianist Noel Schajris, has sold more than 25 million records and 1 million tickets since his first solo album 20 years ago, some of his songs and albums had been appeared at the Billboard's top ten charts. He has earned international success with the legendary duet Sin Bandera where he and Leonel Garcia created some of the biggest hits in Spanish music history.

His music videos have more than 700 million views and his social media includes 9.5 million followers from more than 15 countries. As a recording artist, he has sung duets with John Legend, Brian Mcknight, Luis Fonsi, and Reik, just to name a few.

In 2020 he released the unique web www.NoelSchajris.fan which includes an online store, a fan subscription service and online shows. Mr. Schajris is considered to be one of the most important and celebrated artists in Latin music.

CONTACTS

Joe Maimone
201.301.5933 | joe.maimone@billboard.com

Lee Ann Photoglo
615.376.7931 | laphotoglo@gmail.com

Cynthia Mellow
615.352.0265 | cmellow.billboard@gmail.com

Marcia Olival
786.586.4901 | marciaolival29@gmail.com

Gene Smith
973.452.3528 | eugenebillboard@gmail.com

Ryan O'Donnell
+447843437176 | rodonnell@pmc.com

ISSUE DATE 5/15 | AD CLOSE 5/5 | MATERIALS DUE 5/6

▶ IN BRIEF

Kevan Choset

Associate general counsel/head of legal strategy, Spotify

Sofia Sheppard

Associate general counsel/global head of licensing and business development, Spotify

Spotify's lawyers had an eventful year as the streaming platform dramatically expanded its global reach, making its service available to 93 new countries since mid-2020, a move that "more than doubled the number of markets where Spotify is live," says Shepard, 45. "That work will continue as Spotify expands its available catalog globally throughout 2021."

Most Crucial Issue Facing Creators:

"With shows being canceled due to the pandemic, finding ways for artists and fans to connect online is more important than ever. It is essential that platform providers and rights holders continue to collaborate [to create] such opportunities and enable new revenue opportunities for artists, songwriters and composers so that they can earn a living off their art." —Sheppard

Antonious Porch

General counsel/head of people and culture, SoundCloud

Anne-Marie Chirema

Director of business and legal affairs, SoundCloud

On April 1, SoundCloud became the first streaming company to adopt a user-centric royalty system, which will allow musicians to get paid based on how individual listeners divide their attention, rather than on aggregate streams. Since performers have lost touring income during the pandemic, says Porch, 49, "there is an urgency now to help more artists," especially those who are independent and developing a career, in a more equitable manner. Establishing and maintaining an income, especially in the wake of the pandemic and general economic downturn, is critically important."

Most Lasting Legacy of 2020 Will Be:

"The explosive growth of creator-to-fan engagement across SoundCloud and many other social sharing platforms, propelled by the physical isolation during the pandemic." —Porch

Robert Windom

Chief counsel, content and services, Apple

Adam Blankenheimer

Senior counsel, content and internet services, NIOR COUNSEL, Apple

Elizabeth Miles

Director, iTunes and Apple Music legal, Apple

Brahim Ait Ben Larbi

Principal legal counsel, music publishing, Apple

Label and publishing colleagues contacted by *Billboard* endorsed the work in the past year of Windom, Blankenheimer, Miles and the London-based Ait Ben Larbi. (Apple has chosen to not participate in *Billboard* executive list features.) As the pandemic set in last spring, Windom reported that he and his team worked across divisions at Apple to create a \$50 million advance royalty fund to help independent labels weather the COVID-19 crisis. The action provided a onetime advance payment on future royalties for labels and distributors that earn over \$10,000 in quarterly revenue from Apple Music and have a direct-distribution deal with the streaming service.

Stephen Worth

Head of legal/associate general counsel, Amazon Music

Cyrus Afshar

Senior corporate counsel, Amazon Music

Khoury Cooper

Senior corporate counsel, Amazon Music

Nicolas Gauss

Senior corporate counsel, Amazon Music

Amazon Music embarked on a new endeavor in 2020: establishing a podcast division as the music industry embraced the format. The streaming platform is well-versed in launching new products after rolling out a high-fidelity service in 2019, but the podcast operation provided new challenges for Amazon Music's lawyers as it "touched on legal issues that were entirely separate from our music streaming business," says Afshar. "We worked diligently to make sure that Amazon Music's podcast experience exceeded [customers'] expectations."

Most Lasting Legacy of 2020 Will Be:

This past year "drove adoption of livestreaming in a way no other year could have. That's why we partnered with Twitch to introduce livestreaming to the Amazon Music app. Twitch has long been at

the forefront of connecting creators and fans through livestreaming experiences, and Amazon Music saw early on that this technology represented a new frontier for artists looking to combine live with on-demand streaming experiences. Even after the pandemic, we expect to see livestreaming play a significant role in the industry and are excited to see what creators do in this space." —Afshar

Live**Michael Rowles**

Executive vp/general counsel, Live Nation Entertainment

One of Live Nation's most urgent priorities as the pandemic struck, along with supporting its own employees, "was to create a vehicle to help sustain the countless individual contractors who work behind the scenes to make our industry possible," says Rowles, 55. To meet that need, Live Nation president/CEO Michael Rapino launched Crew Nation, with Live Nation contributing an initial \$5 million and matching the next \$5 million given by artists, partners and employees. "Our legal team was involved throughout that process, helping our affiliated nonprofit, Music Forward Foundation, work through issues as diverse as international tax consequences to the mechanics of screening applicants. That work was tremendously satisfying for all of us, and we're proud to be a leader in supporting the broader industry."

The Song That Got Me Through the Pandemic:

"'I Won't Back Down' by Tom Petty. I've always been a big Petty fan and was fortunate to catch him in one of his final performances at the Hollywood Bowl before he passed away. The title probably speaks for itself, but that sense of resilience in the face of adversity really resonates with me as we're all trying to get through to the other side of this pandemic."

Shawn Trell

Executive vp/COO/general counsel, AEG Presents

The pandemic had AEG "essentially in neutral for the last year," says Trell. That left some tough decisions to make, and the company was forced to furlough numerous employees and reduce salaries for others after keeping many on staff for months during

▶ IN BRIEF

the pandemic. (AEG began rehiring staff in March.) “What I have appreciated the most in how we have handled this situation is the human element and care for the employee base, which has been the most significant part of each major decision,” he says.

Most Lasting Legacy of 2020 Will

Be: “The havoc and hurt — financial and emotional — it has caused artists, employees and related third parties. The loss of jobs, work, connection and purpose has been monumental. Some will emerge better and smarter for having gone through it. But the scars will always be there.”

Music Publishing**Danielle Aguirre**

Executive vp/general counsel, National Music Publishers' Association

Even without the pandemic, it was going to be a challenging year for Aguirre, 43, as she led the NMPA's efforts in building the Mechanical Licensing Collective, which opened for business on Jan. 1 and will begin administering \$424 million in unmatched royalties that were turned over to it under the Music Modernization Act. The NMPA also continues to defend a 44% rate increase for songwriters that was approved by the Copyright Royalty Board but which is now under review, while Aguirre and her team are keeping abreast of new technology platforms like Twitch, Snap and TikTok that use music and need the appropriate licenses. “COVID-19 has energized new entrants to the market,” she says, “and they must understand that if they utilize music, they must pay music creators.”

The Songs That Got Me Through the

Pandemic: “I have been listening to the music podcast *Rivals*, and it has led me to relisten to many classics I hadn't focused on for a while. It has been fun and a great diversion to listen to the likes of Fleetwood Mac, Billy Joel, Guns N' Roses, N.W.A, The Beach Boys, Neil Young, Oasis, Nicki Minaj, Pearl Jam and more in the context of their music rivalries.”

Peter Brodsky

Executive vp business affairs/general counsel, Sony Music Publishing

Michael Abitbol

Senior vp business and legal affairs, digital, Sony Music Publishing

Jonas Kant

Senior vp business and legal affairs, Sony Music Publishing

Nicole Giacco

Senior vp business and legal affairs, Sony Music Publishing

For Sony/ATV Music Publishing, it was a year capped by rebranding as Sony Music Publishing, including a new logo and mission statement: “Every voice matters.” In step with that mission, the company partnered with Atlanta-based Silence the Shame to launch The Soundtrack of Mental Health. The initiative will provide mental health training and services to better support its songwriters and employees. “I'm proud to be a part of a team that takes these issues seriously and understands that actions speak louder than words,” says Giacco.

Most Lasting Legacy of 2020 Will

Be: “The resilience and commitment of creators and those in the industry pushing forward, pivoting and adjusting to continue making and delivering music.” —Giacco

David Kokakis

Chief counsel, business affairs, Universal Music Publishing Group/digital rights management, Universal Music Group

Michael Petersen

Senior vp business and legal affairs, Universal Music Publishing Group

UMPG's acquisition of Bob Dylan's iconic catalog of over 600 copyrights — including “Blowin' in the Wind,” “Lay Lady Lay” and “Like a Rolling Stone” — marked a historic moment for the company. But Petersen, 59, also points to the ability of songwriters and artists to “create amazing music remotely” as a 2020 legacy that will also have lasting impact. “This had been an ongoing trend,” he says, “but the pandemic made it the new normal.”

The Song That Got Me Through the

Pandemic: “‘Break My Heart’ by Dua Lipa. It makes you want to dance every time you hear it.” —Petersen

Scott McDowell

Executive vp/head of legal and business affairs, Warner Chappell Music

In addition to helping bring back Quincy Jones to the storied publisher's roster and representing the late rapper Pop Smoke to “advance his legacy,” McDowell's team has

mostly focused on how to deal with data: “Managing it and harnessing it for good.” This philosophy also applies to young artists' own budgets, as McDowell suggests they break down every dollar of their personal income and figure out “how many others take a piece of it along the way.”

Most Lasting Legacy of 2020 Will

Be: “Racial justice reckoning and the drive for diversity, equity and inclusion.”

Performing Rights**Christos Badavas**

Executive vp/general counsel, SESAC

Over the past year, Badavas, 51, oversaw his organization's efforts to implement the performing rights organization's shift to an entirely remote work environment during the pandemic. That move included ensuring licenses were signed and fees were collected from major licensees through channels that were not affected too significantly by the global disruption. SESAC also helped spearhead the music industry's efforts to support the CARES Act, which offered assistance for songwriters and composers whose livelihoods disappeared due to the coronavirus outbreak. “Ultimately, these efforts ensure that royalty payments to our affiliates are not interrupted and governmental aid is forthcoming during this unprecedented time,” he says.

Most Lasting Legacy of 2020 Will

Be: “The recognition of the responsibility the music industry has to ensure increased opportunity and, ultimately, full participation of Black Americans in the music industry. In other words, the responsibility to recruit and make room for new voices on the business side of music.”

Clara Kim

Executive vp/general counsel, ASCAP

Negotiations and signings of multiyear licensing agreements continued apace in 2020 between ASCAP and traditional media companies, major music streaming services and over-the-top media services. (OTT services provide audiovisual content through the internet instead of cable or satellite, such as Netflix or Hulu.) All of those deals were essential “to drive revenue and help secure the livelihoods and future for our members, especially in light of the pandemic,” says Kim. ASCAP also retained

▶ IN BRIEF

or acquired membership of scores of artists including Jackson Browne, Mariah Carey, DaBaby, Billie Eilish, FINNEAS, Madonna, John Mellencamp and Bernie Taupin.

Most Lasting Legacy of 2020 Will

Be: “There’s no doubt there is pent-up demand for live music experiences. But livestreaming and virtual events will be with us in some way for a long time.”

Stuart Rosen

Senior vp/general counsel, BMI

In January it was revealed that the Department of Justice had ended its protracted review of the consent decrees that govern how ASCAP and BMI operate, without taking action or revising those decades-old agreements. Yet BMI’s engagement with the DOJ “should be considered a success,” says Rosen, 61, “in that we avoided not only an expansion of the decree but congressional intervention in the form of compulsory licensing, both of which could easily have occurred.” Rosen praises BMI’s legal team during the pandemic for going “the extra mile in meeting the urgent needs of our affiliates and in addressing the concerns of our licensees.”

The Song That Got Me Through the

Pandemic: “Donny Hathaway’s [live] cover of Carole King’s ‘You’ve Got a Friend.’ The audience’s thrilling and complete takeover of the chorus reminds me of the community of live performance and what we’ve lost over this long, long year.”

Colin Rushing

Chief legal officer, SoundExchange

In the past year, SoundExchange maintained business as usual, “never missing a distribution at a time when our royalties are more critical than ever,” says Rushing, 41. “We moved to fully remote work basically overnight; thanks to our extraordinary team, we did so seamlessly. And because of the royalty rates and structures we’ve achieved in past rate settings, as well as the ongoing vitality of digital radio, our collections and distributions have remained basically steady.”

Most Lasting Legacy of 2020 Will

Be: “The rapid acceleration toward streaming and away from old-school broadcast FM radio — a platform that still pays artists nothing.”

Talent and Litigation**Kenneth Abdo**

Partner, Fox Rothschild

Tim Mandelbaum

Partner, Fox Rothschild

Michael Reinert

Partner, Fox Rothschild

Leron Rogers

Partner, Fox Rothschild

Heidy Vaquerano

Partner, Fox Rothschild

John Rose

Associate, Fox Rothschild

Over the past year, the music department at Fox Rothschild has doubled in size. “We have become one of the most diverse such groups among our peers,” says Mandelbaum. The firm has welcomed Rogers, Rose and Vaquerano to its ranks since *Billboard’s* 2020 Top Music Lawyers report. Among the artists and companies that Fox Rothschild has represented are 10K Projects, Trace Adkins, Blondie, Cash Money Records, Roberta Flack, Berry Gordy, Hanson, Hipgnosis Songs Fund, Kobalt, Kool & The Gang, Rick Ross, Toto, Universal Music Group, Kanye West, Stevie Wonder and Wu-Tang Clan.

Most Crucial Issue Facing Cre-

ators: “The ability of nonmainstream artists to survive in a streaming world dominated by a handful of top-charting artists.” —Mandelbaum

Jenny Afia

Head of entertainment and legal, Schillings International

Clients like Adele, Elton John and Madonna count on Afia, 42, to protect their reputations from media intrusion, with privacy a core concern of her practice. While that means she generally doesn’t share information about her clients, she recently won a high-profile case on behalf of Meghan Markle, the Duchess of Sussex, against U.K. tabloid *Mail on Sunday*, which speaks to her acumen, and has taken on social media as the next frontier in privacy battles. “It takes extraordinary bravery to stand up for your rights so publicly,” she says, “and I love helping empower people to do this.”

What Young Artists Must ask Their

Lawyer: “‘What are you going to do now to keep me safe in the future?’ If you want to have a successful career and a private life,

taking control of your privacy and reputation at the start is an absolute must.”

Lisa Alter

Partner, Alter Kendrick & Baron

Katie Baron

Partner, Alter Kendrick & Baron

In the past year, Alter Kendrick & Baron has represented multiple clients in complex music acquisition deals. They include Primary Wave, for the various interests in the catalogs of Olivia Newton-John, Stevie Nicks and The Four Seasons; Reservoir Media Management, for over 16,000 compositions from legendary music publisher Shapiro Bernstein; Nicky Chinn of the duo Chinn and Chapman in the sale of his copyrights; and Tempo Music Investments “in significant eight-figure deals,” says Alter. Among the firm’s clients are Chinn, Ray Davies, Foreigner, Kenny Gamble & Leon Huff, David Gilmour, Steve Miller and the estates of Ira Gershwin, Ben E. King, Anthony Newley, Billy Strayhorn and Jule Styne.

What Young Artists Must Ask Their

Lawyer: “‘How can I advance my career while still maintaining control over my work from both an artistic and legal perspective?’” —Alter

Peter Anderson

Partner, Davis Wright Tremaine

For Anderson, a litigator whose firm has successfully handled copyright-related suits for The Weeknd, Lil Nas X and Kendrick Lamar — and, with Helene Freeman, achieved a victory in the “Stairway to Heaven” infringement case for his clients Jimmy Page and Robert Plant — the pandemic has been a time of “teaching old dogs new tricks” as the action shifted from courtrooms to Zoom screens. “It has been a busy year,” he says. “Any kind of remote deposition before was a fairly rare thing. But the pandemic forced me and other lawyers to understand the technology and the procedures and actually use them. And I don’t think we’ll stop once it’s over.”

The Song That Got Me Through the

Pandemic: “David Gray’s ‘Sail Away’ reminds me that there will be a day when we go back to the beach, when we can sail away, take vacations, visit friends. It makes me feel better.”

Craig Averill

▶ IN BRIEF

Jeff Worob

Partners, Serling Rooks Hunter McKoy Worob & Averill

Worob counts among his clients Leon Bridges, Maroon 5 and Maggie Rogers, while Averill advises, among others, the FADER Label and artist-producer RAC, a pioneer in the lucrative realm of non-fungible tokens. “Throughout the wreckage of 2020,” says Worob, “it has been fun to help our clients develop new and interesting ways to earn while we’re all stuck at home, including with new technology like NFTs, as well as figuring out how to make more traditional income streams — like live shows — translate virtually.” As the firm closed deals for the recording and publishing catalogs of its clients, he adds, “it’s exciting to see so many nontraditional players come into the [music] space and appreciate the value.”

Most Lasting Legacy of 2020 Will

Be: “The need to constantly adapt. This year, we all learned to adapt or die. Creatives learned to make art anywhere and often by themselves, while managers, labels and other executives learned to sign, market and promote in new and really interesting ways.” —Worob

Andrew Bart

Partner/co-chair of the content, media and entertainment practice, Jenner & Block

As counsel for each of the three major labels, as well as SoundExchange, Roc Nation and the RIAA, Bart, 66, has played a leading role in protecting the copyrights of creators in the digital world. One highlight was the victory in November for the RIAA and record labels in its copyright infringement case against hip-hop streaming platform Spinrilla, which resulted in a summary judgment that Bart calls “a significant victory for content owners against an unlicensed music site.”

Most Crucial Issue Facing Creators: “Finding an economic path that permits them to create. Part of it is the pandemic, but part of it is that for 20 years, our legal system has facilitated a massive transfer of wealth from the creative community to the owners of distribution platforms.”

Richard Baskind

Partner, Simons Muirhead & Burton

The London-based firm services a client

roster that includes Nick Cave, Grace Jones, Alan Walker and First Access Entertainment and has advised on asset transactions like ICM Partners’ acquisition of Primary Talent International. Muirhead & Burton was named law firm of the year at the 2020 Music Week Awards. “We started the music practice when I joined the firm 10 years ago, so receiving this award from our industry peers was a great acknowledgment of the work we’ve done since then and the support we’ve had,” says Baskind.

What Young Artists Must Ask Their Lawyer: “About their rights, their intellectual property, their career and the business. It is really important that they have a clear understanding of the essentials. At the end of the day, it is the artist’s business.”

**David Beame
Brian Mencher**

Founding partners, Beame & Mencher

When the pandemic shut down the world last March, Beame, 46, and Mencher, 43, helped lead philanthropic client Global Citizen to one of its biggest years yet, including its pivot from in-person festivals to televised music events. Among those were *April’s One World: Together at Home* concert curated by Lady Gaga in support of front-line workers and October’s *Every Vote Counts*, promoting the get-out-the-vote campaign during the 2020 election. Their work touched upon many aspects of the music industry, including artist contracts and publishing clearances.

What Young Artists Must Ask Their Lawyer: “‘What does it mean to be the CEO of my career?’ A successful artist will lead with their creative vision and will back it up with smart business savvy. A good CEO is always bringing in and trying new opportunities and pushing the boundaries of themselves and the team around them.” —Beame

Jeffrey Becker

Partner/chair, entertainment and media law practice, Swanson Martin & Bell

Last November, the hip-hop community mourned the loss of fast-rising Chicago rapper King Von, whose estate Becker, 41, now represents and has seen grow, with an uptick in streams and [Billboard Hot 100](#) hits. Among his firm’s clients are a diverse roster of producers, such as BTS collaborator Vin-

cent Nantes, Lil Pump beatmaker Fizzle and Kim Petras producer Vaughn. Recent deals include the signing of singer-rapper Miles to Elektra Records and SoundCloud star Yung Divide to Epic Records.

What Young Artists Must Ask Their Lawyer: “‘What is the Mechanical Licensing Collective, and what do I need to do to make sure I am collecting all my publishing revenue?’ “

Jill Berliner

Partner, Rimon Law

Berliner, 63, whose firm represents Beck, The Chicks, Foo Fighters, Nirvana and The Smashing Pumpkins, was well prepared to weather the pandemic professionally, having long served her clients remotely. “We have been a cutting-edge virtual firm since Rimon was founded in 2008,” she says. Of late, she has reflected on the impact of this year’s loss of live events. “Once we have recovered from the pandemic,” she says, “the live-music landscape will have radically changed, but fans will be ecstatic to be able to see live shows.”

Most Crucial Issue Facing Creators: “Songwriters, producers and recording artists must find a sophisticated collection arrangement to capitalize on their work. Streaming is still evolving, rules are changing, and arrangements for collection of the fractions of pennies that fall between the cracks if a creator isn’t well-represented can amount to real losses.”

Audrey Benoualid

Partner, Myman Greenspan Fox Rosenberg Mobasser Younger & Light

Josh Karp

Partner, Myman Greenspan Fox Rosenberg Mobasser Younger & Light

Tamara Milagros-Butler

Partner, Myman Greenspan Fox Rosenberg Mobasser Younger & Light

Robert Minzner

Partner, Myman Greenspan Fox Rosenberg Mobasser Younger & Light

Oren Agman

Associate, Myman Greenspan Fox Rosenberg Mobasser Younger & Light

Steven Arnst

Associate, Myman Greenspan Fox Rosenberg Mobasser Younger & Light

Andranise Baxter

▶ IN BRIEF

Associate, Myman Greenspan Fox Rosenberg
Mobasser Younger & Light

Haley Golding

Associate, Myman Greenspan Fox Rosenberg
Mobasser Younger & Light

Lulu Pantin

Associate, Myman Greenspan Fox Rosenberg
Mobasser Younger & Light

Andrew Paster

Associate, Myman Greenspan Fox Rosenberg
Mobasser Younger & Light

Senior attorneys of Myman Greenspan Fox Rosenberg Mobasser Younger & Light, who previously have been recognized on the Top Music Lawyers list, collectively chose to step out of the spotlight for 2021 to nominate their rising colleagues — a decision *Billboard* endorsed by giving the firm the largest representation in this year's report. The firm represents some of the industry's hottest stars — Justin Bieber, Dead & Co., Ariana Grande, Jennifer Lopez, Brockhampton and Red Hot Chili Peppers, among others — as well as rising talent like CHIKA and Verzache, and its attorneys have guided deals such as Concord's acquisition of Pulse Music Group, Primary Wave's purchase of music assets from Disturbed and Godsmack and the sale of songwriter Sean Douglas' hit-filled publishing catalog to Vine Alternative Investments.

Charles "Jeff" Biederman

Partner, Manatt Entertainment, Manatt
Phelps & Phillips

Jordan Bromley

Partner/leader, entertainment transactions
and finance practice, Manatt Phelps & Phillips

Eric Custer

Partner, Manatt Entertainment, Manatt
Phelps & Phillips

Gary Gilbert

Senior partner, Manatt Entertainment,
Manatt Phelps & Phillips

Robert Jacobs

Partner/leader, entertainment litigation
practice, Manatt Phelps & Phillips

Lee Phillips

Senior partner, Manatt Entertainment,
Manatt Phelps & Phillips

Monika Tashman

Partner, Manatt Entertainment, Manatt
Phelps & Phillips

Echoing a common theme, Bromley says the biggest takeaway from 2020 is how "we came together to beat back a pandemic, show resilience and achieve meaningful and lasting change inside and outside our industry." At Manatt, that meant representing "buyers and sellers in more than \$1 billion in catalog transactions. We advocated for, achieved and delivered guidance," says Bromley, in connection with multiple federal pandemic relief channels including PPP, Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation, Mixed Earners Unemployment Compensation and the Shuttered Venue Operators Grant. "We have worked hand in hand with our artist partners in demanding social justice" through legislative efforts, he adds. The firm's partners represent a deep client roster that includes Pepe Aguilar, Paul Anka, Burt Bacharach, Dierks Bentley, Jackson Browne, Tracy Chapman, Death Cab for Cutie, Diplo, Dirty Projectors, The Drums, Eagles, John Lee Hooker, Major Lazer, Migos, ODESZA, Steve Perry, Sturgill Simpson, Thievery Corporation, Trap Nation, Brian Wilson, Neil Young and the estates of Rick James and Pop Smoke.

Joshua Binder**Jeremy Mohr****Paul Rothenberg**

Partners/co-founders, Rothenberg Mohr & Binder

Representing acts such as Chloe x Halle, Gunna, Kehlani and Marshmello, Rothenberg Mohr & Binder needed to figure out ways for their clients to push through the pandemic without live events. By shifting the focus to "more long-term strategies and working with clients and managers on catalog sales, virtual appearances and brand partnerships," says Mohr, the firm found its sweet spot, while also expanding the practice. "Music has been and will always be an incredible tool for emotional healing and bringing people together to effectuate social and other important change," he says.

The Song That Got Me Through the

Pandemic: "Bob Marley's 'Three Little Birds.' Impossible to listen to that song and not feel uplifted." —Mohr

Jason Boyarski

Partner, Boyarski Fritz

Boyarski's firm, which marks its 10th

anniversary this year, represents artists like Marc Anthony and Joan Jett, producers from Louis Bell to Tainy and companies including BMG, Disney Music and the fast-growing Create Music Group. His work as lead entertainment counsel for the Prince estate led to deals to bring his music catalog to TikTok and Peloton, and the distribution of the Grammy-nominated *1999 Super Deluxe Edition* through Warner Music. Boyarski, 46, also negotiated the sale of Bell's publishing catalog to Universal Music Publishing Group and the publishing/recording catalog owned by the estate of Donny Hathaway to Primary Wave.

Scott Bradford

Of counsel, DLA Piper

Bradford recently negotiated client Round Hill's high-level purchase of Triple Crown Records, which gave it over 150 titles. Representing clients like All Time Low, Fetty Wap and Panic! at the Disco, Bradford notes that artists and managers have been "super resourceful in figuring out solutions to the live-event restrictions" during the pandemic. "I have artists who are performing to thousands of fans via websites — they perform to way more fans through this method than they'd reach by touring for two months," he says. "Overhead is minimal, and they go home after each show. This will just provide a new delivery system for artists moving forward."

The Song That Got Me Through the

Pandemic: "R.E.M.'s 'It's the End of the World As We Know It.' Michael Stipe was just about 30 years ahead of his time on that one."

John Branca

Partner/head of the music department, Ziffren Brittenham

David Lande

Partner, Ziffren Brittenham

David Byrnes

Partner, Ziffren Brittenham

Among the highlights of a busy year, Branca notes the firm's "sales and acquisitions of some of the industry's most acclaimed and profitable music publishing rights," and Lande adds the sale of Shakira's publishing catalog to Hipgnosis. Lande also worked on the agreements for two Beyoncé projects that combined business

▶ IN BRIEF

and culture: her musical film and visual album *Black Is King*, which brought Afrofuturism to Disney+, and a multilayered partnership between Beyoncé and Peloton that highlights her music on the platform and includes Peloton's commitment to recruit interns and staff from 10 historically Black colleges or universities. Lande and Byrnes worked together on Travis Scott's deal with Anheuser-Busch InBev to launch an agave-infused hard seltzer, Cacti, this spring. "A lot of activity," says Lande.

What Young Artists Must Ask Their Lawyer: "Are you 100% on my side, or are your relationships so intimate with record labels that my needs will be sacrificed in the service of your relationship with the label?" —Branca

William Briggs
Alex Weingarten
Partners, Venable

"It feels important to highlight the work I did in representing the talented singer Kristina Buch in a sexual harassment case against Grammy Award-winning producer Noel 'Detail' Fisher," says Briggs. A Los Angeles Superior Court in late 2019 entered a \$15 million judgment against Fisher, whose credits, according to AllMusic, include work for Beyoncé, Drake and Jennifer Lopez. "In May 2018, Buch and another musician, Peyton Ackley, both made public the assaults by Fisher and obtained restraining orders against him," says Briggs. "Since those original complaints were filed in 2018, Buch and Ackley paved the way for numerous other artists to come forward. I am so proud to help my clients close this awful chapter in [their lives] and applaud [their] bravery in speaking out." According to court documents, Fisher is appealing the judgment. Venable's clients also include Steve Angello, Selena Gomez, Wiz Khalifa, Gucci Mane, Mandy Moore, 5 Seconds of Summer, Snoop Dogg, Spotify, Robin Thicke, Pharrell Williams, Stevie Wonder, Vevo and the estate of Tom Petty.

Most Lasting Legacy of 2020 Will Be: "The ability of artists to show creativity in how they monetize their content despite the halt to touring." —Briggs

Vernon Brown
President/CEO, V. Brown & Company

In a year filled with strife, Brown set out to offer some relief. In 2020, he worked on the deal between longtime clients Bryan "Birdman" Williams and Ronald "Slim" Williams, founders of Cash Money, and the city of New Orleans, in which the brothers donated \$225,000 to cover rent last June for the residents living in the city's subsidized housing program. Brown has continued his work in providing aid for important causes, all while brokering deals like a joint venture between electronic label Reckless Republic and Island Records.

The Song That Got Me Through the Pandemic: "Life" by Ludovico Einaudi. It's a beautiful, calming song. He's one of my favorite artists to listen to while I'm working or thinking."

Ed Buggé
Partner, Hertz Lichtenstein Young & Polk Carron

Joan Mitchell
Partner, Hertz Lichtenstein Young & Polk
Oswaldo M. Rossi
Partner, Hertz Lichtenstein Young & Polk
Jamie Young
Named partner, Hertz Lichtenstein Young & Polk

Marquis "Quest" Malloy
Associate attorney, Hertz Lichtenstein Young & Polk

With a client roster that includes Céline Dion, Keith Richards, Will Smith, Steely Dan and Gwen Stefani, along with Juan Luis Guerra, Nicky Jam and Will.i.am, the firm focused on campaigns and releases "that lifted people in lockdown," says Buggé, 34. Young represented the estate of Tom Petty in establishing an "operating structure and team to move forward" with posthumous projects, as well as representing Stevie Nicks in her partnership with Primary Wave. Buggé also cites the firm's work on MAG's production of Bad Bunny's album *El Último Tour del Mundo* and the partnership of Ari Lennox and Crown Royal to support struggling bars and clubs during the pandemic.

What Young Artists Must Ask Their Lawyer: "How can I best maximize my chance of success, and what pitfalls shall I look out for on that path?" —Young

Richard Busch
Partner in the litigation section/head of the

entertainment and intellectual property sections, King & Ballou

Busch, 54, is regarded as a tough litigator who has scored high-profile wins in the past for Marvin Gaye's family, Bob Gaudio, Bluewater Music and the Songwriters Guild of America. This year, he turned his focus to securing termination rights for country star Dwight Yoakam, who is seeking to reclaim his rights to recordings "Honky Tonk Man" and "Miner's Prayer," among others. These "very important termination-of-rights cases," says Busch, become an even more pressing concern as more artists near the statutory period for reclaiming their copyrights.

What Young Artists Must Ask Their Lawyer: "How do I ensure that my work is properly licensed, and how do I ensure not only that I am paid properly but also that I do not give away rights unnecessarily or in a way I will later regret?"

Candace Carlo
Attorney/partner, Kleinberg Lange Cuddy & Carlo

"Our firm has remained cohesive and strong throughout the pandemic," says Carlo. While working remotely, she and her partners "continue to provide a full spectrum of services" to musician clients, including Peter Dinklage, Toby Keith, KISS, Gene Simmons and Hans Zimmer. The firm's film and TV clients include Mark Hamill, Glen Keane, George R.R. Martin, J.K. Rowling and Sylvester Stallone.

The Song That Got Me Through the Pandemic: "I like the Billie Eilish-Hans Zimmer track 'No Time To Die' [the title theme of the upcoming James Bond film]. It's a fantastic pairing of talent and, given the pandemic, it's great advice — stay healthy and strong."

Rosemary Carroll
Michael Guido
Elliot Groffman
Gillian Bar
Rob Cohen
Ira Friedman
Renee Karalian
Partners, Carroll Guido Groffman Cohen Bar & Karalian

In the year leading up to Phoebe Bridgers' nomination as best new artist at the

▶ IN BRIEF

Grammy Awards, Carroll renegotiated the singer's administration agreement with Kobalt and set up her new label, Saddest Factory, through Secretly Canadian. Her client The Strokes won the Grammy for best rock album. In the past year, Guido helped guide agreements for Megan Thee Stallion, negotiated catalog deals for Mark Ronson and Richie Sambora, and spearheaded a label deal for Lee Daniels with Warner Music that includes the soundtrack to his film *The United States vs. Billie Holiday*. Groffman, with strong assists from partner Paul Gutman, worked on several publishing and master catalog deals, including the sale of Big Deal Music to Hipgnosis. His client Brandi Carlile won the Grammy for best country song for "Crowded Table," and ATO Records, another longtime client, celebrated the Grammy win for Brittany Howard for best rock song. Friedman worked with Guido on deals for 12 Tone, including Dolly Parton's *A Holly Dolly Christmas* album and, with Groffman, on a new deal for Tiësto with Atlantic Records. For both Olivia Culp and Demi Lovato, Cohen supervised the negotiation of new cosmetic ventures and also oversaw legal work for the documentary *Demi Lovato: Dancing With the Devil*. Bar "had a blast" working on deals for Jack Antonoff and Aaron Dessner, collaborators with Taylor Swift on her albums *evermore* and *folklore*, the latter of which won the album of the year Grammy. Bar also guided rising young client Rosie ("Never the 1") to her deal with Arista Records. For Julia Michaels, Karalian struck a new deal with Universal Music Publishing Group. She oversaw agreements for Playboi Carti and guided new projects for Kid Cudi, including album, film and sponsorship deals. The firm's deep roster of superstar clients also includes Arcade Fire, Sara Bareilles, David Byrne, Dave Matthews Band, Jonas Brothers, The National, Pearl Jam, Phish and Patti Smith.

Jacqueline Charlesworth

Principal, Charlesworth Law

Previously serving as a staunch advocate for songwriters as a partner at Alter Kendrick & Baron and playing a key role in the passage of the Music Modernization Act, Charlesworth set out on her own with her

eponymous firm, which officially opened its doors on Jan. 1, representing a cross-section of songwriters, artists, publishers and record labels. The firm has already added two new attorneys to its practice in its first two months of operation, and Charlesworth says she's "thrilled and deeply honored by the response" so far.

Most Crucial Issue Facing Creators: "For songwriters, it's the fact that the federal government controls their income through the Copyright Royalty Board and rate-setting processes. In the mechanical area, I know songwriters are hoping for some improvement under the new MMA standard in this next CRB proceeding. We shall see."

David Chidekel

Partner, Early Sullivan Wright Gizer & McRae

Chidekel recently has been working with SKUxchange to create new revenue streams for producers, promoters and performers of live and virtual events in music and sports. The platform uses "digital incentives embedded in augmented reality and virtual reality advertising provided by brands, and sponsors of such events, to attendees and viewers," he says. Among the acts that Chidekel represents are The Click Five, The D.O.C., Fall Out Boy, Cee Lo Green, Panic! at the Disco, Kevin Rudolf, Tool and members of Filter, Train and Wu-Tang Clan. He also works with independent labels such as Trustkill Records, Ferret Records, Good Fight Entertainment and Rise Records, and management companies such as Crush Music and Uppercut Management.

Most Crucial Issue Facing Creators: "How to most effectively and efficiently increase direct artist-to-fan engagement and activation — that is, to incentivize fans to interact with artists and purchase content, products and tickets to live performances and events — without the interference of unnecessary intermediaries."

Jay Cohen

Partner, Paul Weiss Rifkind Wharton & Garrison

Cohen started the year with a big win, brokering a settlement with Peloton on behalf of dozens of independent music publishers that accused the interactive fitness

platform of playing their members' works without securing mechanical licenses. "After getting an antitrust counterclaim against the publishers and the National Music Publishers' Association dismissed, we achieved a significant settlement of the publishers' copyright claims," says Cohen — and in February, Peloton and the NMPA announced they had reached a joint collaboration agreement to work together.

Most Crucial Issue Facing Creators: "Monetization for use of their works in the proliferating digital space."

Sandra Crawshaw-Sparks

Partner/chair of entertainment, copyright and media practice group, Proskauer

Anthony Oncidi

Partner/head of West Coast labor and employment practice, Proskauer

Proskauer's clients range from the Recording Academy, the RIAA and Live Nation to Madonna and U2, but Crawshaw-Sparks, 57, cites the firm's work with the Universal Hip-Hop Museum, which broke ground this year in the Bronx, as a recent highlight. Slated to open in 2023, the cultural center has been a pro bono client since 2016. "This — currently virtual — institution teaches the world about the key elements of hip-hop culture and documents the rise of hip-hop from its creation on the streets of the Bronx to becoming one of the world's most popular music genres," she says.

Most Lasting Legacy of 2020 Will

Be: "The ability to find revenue streams for creative output despite the global pandemic." —Crawshaw-Sparks

Sy Damle

Andrew Gass

Alli Stillman

Jonathan West

Joe Wetzel

Partners, Latham & Watkins

Latham & Watkins represent some of the biggest brands in music, including Spotify, Pandora, Live Nation, SoundCloud, iHeartMedia, Twitch and Triller. This year, the firm conducted "an entire trial before the Copyright Royalty Board by video conference to determine the statutory royalty rate for webcasting," says Stillman. "We're also proud of our work on behalf of the Digital Licensee Coordinator and its member

▶ IN BRIEF

digital music providers in the rule-making process to implement the Music Modernization Act,” which became effective on Jan. 1.

What Young Artists Must Ask Their Lawyer: “‘What is going on with NFTs?’ And, more generally, how best to take advantage of all the available outlets and platforms for gaining exposure and monetizing their works.” —Stillman

Doug Davis

Founder/principal, The Davis Firm

Kim Youngberg

Partner, The Davis Firm

The Davis Firm — whose clients include executives and artists DJ Cassidy (and his *Pass the Mic* series on BET), Jimmy Jam & Terry Lewis, Academy Award-nominated songwriter-producer Savan Kotecha, LL Cool J, DJ Snake, Swizz Beatz and Verzuz — made a key hire in November when Youngberg came aboard as a partner. For the past nine years, she had been general counsel at Screenvision Media. “Kim’s addition bolsters the growing film and TV practice, [which] experienced incredible growth in 2020,” says Davis. “Kim will be the seasoned pro with the experience to lead this division to be among the best in the business.”

Most Lasting Legacy of 2020 Will Be: “A large portion of the industry will never forget the lessons they have had to learn about diversifying their streams as a measure of income insurance.” —Davis

Lawrence Engel

Head of music group, Lee & Thompson

The London firm, whose notable clients include Craig David, Jessie J, Little Mix, Liam Payne, Harry Styles and Louis Tomlinson, focused in 2020 on becoming a more inclusive and representative place to work, says Engel, adding, “We’re really pleased with the young talent we have coming through the firm.” The pandemic year proved that “remote communication can work globally; it’s easier than ever for us to deal with our U.S. and international contacts.”

Most Crucial Issue Facing Creators: “How to get heard above the noise. Connecting their journey as an individual with their music and fans.”

Tim Epstein

Partner, Duggan Bertsch

Epstein is a key attorney in the live-music industry, representing major festivals such as Pitchfork, Riot Fest, Life Is Beautiful and Baja Beach Fest, among many others. And when live music stopped, his efforts escalated. “We are proud to have counseled our clients through this most difficult of years providing guidance and support on reconfiguring venues for new purposes, securing financing [from government and private sources], conducting livestreams, setting up drive-in shows and renegotiating existing contracts to meet the moment,” he says.

What Young Artists Must Ask Their

Lawyer: “The overwhelming majority of promoters and venues use friends and family and real estate and liquor license counsel for contracts in live performance. You should ask your lawyer: What other promoters, venues or buyers do you represent in this space, and what value add can you bring to my business?”

Simon Esplen

Managing partner, Russells

Jo Brittain**Chris Gossage****Gavin Maude****John Reid****Steven Tregear**

Partners, Russells

“Fair remuneration for writers and performing artists on streaming income” is the most pressing issue facing creators today, says Esplen, 57, whose firm represented Kobalt in its sale of 42 catalogs — including works by 50 Cent, Lindsey Buckingham and Steve Winwood — to Hipgnosis for \$323 million in November. The Russells music team also provides business and legal advice to a wide range of new and established acts, including Coldplay, Dua Lipa and Roger Waters, in addition to representing the estates of George Michael, Prince and Amy Winehouse.

The Song That Got Me Through the

Pandemic: “‘The Tracks of My Tears’ by Smokey Robinson & The Miracles, because it’s one of the greatest songs ever written.” —Esplen

Ilene Farkas

Partner/executive committee member/co-chair of the music litigation practice, Pryor Cashman

James G. Sammataro

Partner/co-chair of media and entertainment group, Pryor Cashman

Benjamin K. Semel

Partner, Pryor Cashman

Frank P. Scibilia

Partner/co-chair of copyright, music and digital media practice groups, Pryor Cashman

Donald Zakarin

Co-chairman of litigation department, Pryor Cashman

Pryor Cashman, as an adviser to the National Music Publishers’ Association, helped set up and now represents the Mechanical Licensing Collective, created under the Music Modernization Act to collect digital mechanical royalties in the United States. The firm is engaged in the latest legal rounds before the Copyright Royalty Board to establish rates that Spotify, Amazon, Google and Pandora pay publishers and, through them, songwriters. “Securing fair compensation [for creators] as the marketplace continues to move to an access model from the long-existing ownership model” is crucial, says Zakarin, 70. For litigation, Pryor Cashman represents Luis Fonsi, Ariana Grande, Ed Sheeran, the estate of Chris Cornell and the three major record companies and their publishing divisions.

The Song That Got Me Through the

Pandemic: “‘A Change Is Gonna Come’ by Sam Cooke, because we so needed a change in how we treat one another.” —Zakarin

Sid Fohrman

Partner/head of music industry team, Shepard Mullin Richter & Hampton

Fohrman has worked with high-profile clients like Spotify, Peloton and Vevo. But the recent accomplishment he is most proud of is the pro bono representation of American Song Archives: The Bob Dylan Center and Woody Guthrie Center in connection with the *Fire in Little Africa* project. The multimedia hip-hop collaboration commemorates the 1921 massacre in Tulsa, Okla.’s Greenwood neighborhood known as Little Africa that “included an exclusive license agreement with Capitol Music Group for release on Motown Records,” says Fohrman.

Most Lasting Legacy of 2020 Will

▶ IN BRIEF

Be: “The year live concert streaming broke through — juxtaposed with the reminder that the in-person live concert experience can never be replaced.”

Russell Frackman

Partner, Mitchell Silberberg & Knupp

Christine Lepera

Co-chair, entertainment/IP litigation group; member of the governing board committee, Mitchell Silberberg & Knupp

Eleanor Lackman

Partner, Mitchell Silberberg & Knupp

Mitchell Silberberg & Knupp in the past year focused on bolstering its diversity and inclusion efforts. The goal, says Lepera, is “positive firm culture with social connection, designed to create safe places for our citizens to share their experiences and feelings during this time of crisis. In times of challenge we can rise to be better, and that is a good place to be.” Among the firm’s clients are Post Malone, Drake, Timbaland, JAY-Z, Eminem, Dr. Luke, Dark Horse songwriters, Warner Music Group, Universal Music Group, Kobalt, Prescription Songs, Tresona Music, Advanced Alternative Media, Fitz & The Tantrums and multiple other artists, songwriters and music companies.

The Song That Got Me Through the

Pandemic: “‘Whipping Post’ by the Allman Brothers. Sometimes that is how it feels during the pandemic — being tied to a whipping post — but it is the best groove ever.”

—Lepera

Leslie Frank

Partner, King Holmes Paterno & Soriano

Marjorie Garcia

Partner, King Holmes Paterno & Soriano

Howard King

Partner, King Holmes Paterno & Soriano

Jacqueline Sabec

Partner, King Holmes Paterno & Soriano

Laurie Soriano

Partner, King Holmes Paterno & Soriano

Peter Paterno

Partner, King Holmes Paterno & Soriano

Henry Gradstein

Of counsel, King Holmes Paterno & Soriano

“We had one of our busiest years ever in 2020,” says Soriano, who handled the sale of Calvin Harris’ song catalog to Vine Alternative Investments for a reported \$90 million to \$110 million. Paterno oversaw two song

catalog sales to Round Hill Music, for Goo Goo Dolls frontman Johnny Rzeznik and Bryan Adams’ songwriting partner Jim Vallance. As popular as these deals have become, says Soriano, artists need to ask “whether it is worth it to give up ownership in their music because of the benefits they get back in each offered deal.” The firm represents, among others, Dr. Dre, Metallica, Sia, Van Morrison, Calvin Harris, Carole King, Bon Iver, Frank Ocean, Steve Aoki, Zedd, Skrillex, Ghostmane, Juanes, Los Tigres del Norte, Gloria Trevi, Jesse & Joy, Jason “Poo Bear” Boyd, The Audibles, Alanis Morissette and Jerry Garcia Music Arts.

The Song That Got Me Through the

Pandemic: “‘Level of Concern’ by twenty one pilots. It exemplifies the creativity that sprung up all over while artists were in their basements trying to stay safe.” —Soriano

John T. Frankenheimer

Partner/chair of music industry practice group/chairman emeritus, Loeb & Loeb

Debbie White

Vice chair, music industry practice group, Loeb & Loeb

Derek Crownover

Co-manager, Nashville, Loeb & Loeb

Tiffany Dunn

Office administrative partner, Nashville, Loeb & Loeb

Loeb & Loeb had a busy year across genres and industry sectors. The firm represented Primary Wave in the acquisition of the Nicky Chinn and Mason Levy catalogs, guided Duran Duran’s agreements with S Curve/BMG, landed deals for Cannons with Columbia Records and Mills with Keep Cool/RCA Records, and renegotiated Melanie Martinez’s contract with Atlantic Records. In Nashville — where its clients include Luke Combs, Carrie Underwood, the estate of Otis Redding Jr. and the Grand Ole Opry — the firm advised Hillary Lindsey in the sale of her catalog and worldwide co-publishing deal with Concord and helped songwriter-producer Jeremy Stover and RED Creative Group close a catalog sale and co-publishing deal extension with Anthem Entertainment. On the international stage, White remains counsel to BTS and Big Hit Entertainment, and Loeb & Loeb continues to serve as outside counsel to China’s largest

media company, Tencent, in ongoing music, film, TV and gaming matters.

Most Lasting Legacy of 2020 Will

Be: “The unprecedented influx of sophisticated financial support throughout the industry, the maturation of financial models that not only enabled the largest companies to achieve astronomical valuations but also provided much needed capital for independent entrepreneurs and creatives to build new, forward-thinking models reflective of a more diversified music industry.” —Frankenheimer

Helene Freeman

Partner, Phillips Nizer

While its role in achieving a copyright-dispute victory for Led Zeppelin (along with co-counsel Peter Anderson) has drawn headlines, Phillips Nizer has a long history of representing music industry clients in litigation. It has offered advice to other music attorneys in the areas of contract interpretation, trademark and copyright ownership, and termination rights, says Freeman. In March 2020, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that Led Zeppelin’s “Stairway to Heaven” did not infringe on the copyright of the Spirit instrumental “Taurus.” One year later, Freeman says that the case “appears to have had a significant impact on music copyright-infringement litigation.”

Most Crucial Issue Facing Cre-

ators: “Whether the changes made by the Music Modernization Act will afford them a fair share of the revenue generated by digital exploitation of their music.”

Kenneth Freundlich

Founding principal, Freundlich Law

Freundlich represented a group of 15 musicologists who filed amicus briefs in such high-profile copyright cases as those involving Led Zeppelin’s “Stairway to Heaven,” Katy Perry’s “Dark Horse” and Pharrell Williams’ “Blurred Lines.” In the latter-most action, his brief warned of curtailing creativity “in the field of popular music, inhibiting songwriters by the threat of far-fetched claims of infringement.” The litigation firm also won dismissals for Pandora in a copyright infringement case brought by Wixen Music Publishing and for LyricFind in a lawsuit filed by Genius, both involving lyrics shared online.

▶ IN BRIEF

What Young Artists Must Ask Their

Lawyer: “How do I organize my ownership of content with co-creators, register and protect my content at all points of distribution and ensure proper payment for its use?”

Sasha Frid**Louis “Skip” Miller**

Partners, Miller Barondess

The firm’s founders stepped up “through the challenges of the pandemic,” says Frid, 44, on behalf of clients including Five Finger Death Punch, Journey, Mötley Crüe, Smokey Robinson, Nile Rodgers, Trey Songz and Rod Stewart. The experienced trial lawyers took on tasks including securing government loans, assessing tour cancellations and negotiating payment obligations. The firm is representing Robinson in a suit brought by the Motown legend’s former manager seeking past commissions.

The Song That Got Me Through the

Pandemic: “‘I Will Survive’ by Gloria Gaynor, because no matter how bad it gets, the human spirit always prevails and overcomes.” —Frid

Leah Godesky**David Marroso**

Partners, O’Melveny & Myers

Dan Petrocelli

Partner/trial practice committee chair/vice chair, O’Melveny & Myers

O’Melveny & Myers represents Global Music Rights — the performing rights organization for acts including The Beatles, Bon Jovi, Drake, Eagles, Post Malone, Bruno Mars, Ava Max, Shawn Mendes, Metallica, Nicki Minaj, Travis Scott, Bruce Springsteen, Harry Styles and Pharrell Williams. In ongoing litigation against the Radio Music Licensing Committee, says Petrocelli, the firm has defeated a motion to dismiss, “winning the argument that performing rights organizations are not per se antitrust violations and convincing the Department of Justice to weigh in on the artists’ side on [market-based] price fixing.” Godesky also continues to represent Kesha as the defendant in the suit brought against the singer by Lukasz “Dr. Luke” Gottwald for defamation, with the trial set for fall.

What Young Artists Must Ask Their

Lawyer: “Put it in writing!” —Petrocelli

Damien Granderson

Partner, Granderson Des Rochers

Guy Blake

Managing partner, Granderson Des Rochers

Elizabeth Moody

Partner, chair of new media practice, Granderson Des Rochers

Colin Morrissey

Partner, Granderson Des Rochers

Launched in 2019, Granderson Des Rochers identifies itself as “one of the most diverse transactional entertainment law firms in the country,” says Blake. “We built the firm to service the needs of a clientele as diverse as our partnership, associates and staff.” Those clients include A\$AP Rocky, J Balvin, blackbear, J. Cole, H.E.R., Lil Baby, NeYo, Paramore, Shaggy, Bernie Taupin, Hayley Williams and Young Thug, as well as Quality Control Music, Sessions, Live Triller and Wave XR. They are served by practice groups in the areas of music, film/TV, comedy, new media and technology, fashion, branding and entertainment finance. “Our mission is to continue to champion diversity and advance our professional and social objectives,” says Blake.

Most Crucial Issue Facing Cre-

ators: “Lack of control and ownership in their creations and lack of transparency as to the economics of how their content is monetized.” —Blake

Gary Greenstein

Member, Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati

Greenstein, 55, counts among his clients tech giants such as Google, as well as streaming service Pandora and artist-friendly music marketplace Bandcamp, which pays artists 80% to 85% of revenue from sales when fans buy music and merchandise through its site. Bandcamp in particular stood out during the pandemic, waiving its revenue share in favor of artists for all sales on the first Friday of each month, acknowledging the hardships brought about by the lack of touring opportunities. Greenstein also represents Feed Media Group, which aims to help businesses improve user experiences with music.

Most Crucial Issue Facing Cre-

ators: “The ability to grab a greater share of the amounts already paid by licensees for the use of music. If 70% of revenue is being

paid for the use of music by streaming services, why is more of that not flowing down to creators?”

Allen Grubman

Senior partner, Grubman Shire Meiselas & Sacks

David Jacobs

Partner, Grubman Shire Meiselas & Sacks

Kenny Meiselas

Named partner, Grubman Shire Meiselas & Sacks

The tens of millions of fans who watched The Weeknd’s Super Bowl LV performance on Feb. 7 saw Grubman Shire’s work in action: The firm negotiated the singer’s Pepsi halftime show agreement as well as his Mercedes-Benz endorsement deal that launched his single “Blinding Lights” to a historic run of over a year spent in the top 10 of the Hot 100. “The Weeknd and his team showed not only could new music be released successfully during the pandemic but that great music could serve as an inspiration to everyone suffering through the scary and uncertain days of COVID-19,” says Meiselas. Other power deals that the firm brokered include Bruce Springsteen’s Super Bowl Jeep commercial and Lady Gaga’s endorsement deals with Valentino and Oreo, as well as her starring role in Ridley Scott’s *House of Gucci*.

What Young Artists Must Ask Their

Lawyer: “The best way to protect their intellectual property and their creative works in a crowded marketplace where over 100,000 albums and singles are released per year.” —Meiselas

Pierre Hachar

Founding attorney, The Hachar Law Firm

With an international roster that includes Chayanne, Elvis Crespo, Leo Dan, Deorro, Gente de Zona and Saga WhiteBlack, as well as entertainment companies Loud & Live and 300 Entertainment, Hachar, 41, has spent the pandemic resolving immigration and touring cancellation issues resulting from travel restrictions and embassy shutdowns. The Miami-based litigator also launched Redcarpetlaw, a free online resource with legal information for underserved creative communities.

Most Crucial Issue Facing Cre-

ators: “Keeping up with technology, in

▶ IN BRIEF

particular as it relates to rights management through concepts such as non-fungible tokens and blockchain.”

David Hecht

Founding/managing partner, Hecht Partners

In its first year, Hecht’s firm achieved a milestone by assisting JaQuel Knight in copyrighting his iconic dance routine in the music video for Beyoncé’s “Single Ladies (Put a Ring on It).” He is believed to be the first commercial choreographer in pop music to obtain copyright registration for his work. “Choreography is not only entitled to strong copyright protection, but creators of choreography should be more fairly compensated for their contributions to music videos and live performances,” says Hecht, whose team specializes in intellectual property and represents other clients including dancer Aisha Francis and musicians 2 Milly and Leo P.

What Young Artists Must Ask Their

Lawyer: “‘How can I protect my creative expression and enhance its value?’”

Jonas Herbsman

Managing partner, Herbsman Hafer Weber & Frisch

Michael Frisch

Partner, Herbsman Hafer Weber & Frisch

Elliot Resnik

Senior counsel, Herbsman Hafer Weber & Frisch

Herbsman Hafer’s longtime client Terence Blanchard, the renowned trumpeter and Academy Award-nominated composer, in collaboration with librettist Kasi Lemmons, has adapted *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*, the memoir of *New York Times* columnist Charles M. Blow, as an opera that will open the 2021-22 season of the Metropolitan Opera this fall. “It is the first opera by a Black composer to be presented in the 137-year history of the Metropolitan Opera,” says Herbsman, 56. “As a firm, we are proud to be involved with this ground-breaking production. My father, who is 92, has had season tickets to the Met for close to 60 years, and I was the youngest member of the audience on a number of occasions growing up. I’m looking forward to attending with him.” Resnik helped another client, the National Independent Venue Association, to organize the Save Our Stages Festival with Foo Fight-

ers as headliners. The event raised nearly \$2 million and brought “greater attention to NIVA’s Capitol Hill advocacy efforts,” he says, which led to \$15 billion in federal pandemic relief for venues.

What Young Artists Must Ask Their

Lawyer: Explain what they are signing. “Young artists need to understand their rights, their obligations and where their income comes from. It isn’t enough to simply rely on your advisers. As the saying goes, knowledge is power.” —Herbsman

John Ingram

Head of music, Goodman Genow Schenkman Smelkinson & Christopher

Korean label JYP Entertainment, home to the girl group TWICE (which struck a strategic partnership in February 2020 with Republic Records), has engaged Goodman Genow to advise on “its music and entertainment affairs in North America,” says Ingram. The firm — which represents Virgil Abloh, Daniel Caesar, JID, JoJo Siwa, Bryson Tiller and Don Toliver — also secured record deals in the past year for Claire Rosinkranz with Republic and Sara Kays with Atlantic Records.

Most Lasting Legacy of 2020 Will

Be: “Never taking the ability to see a show for granted again.”

Lawrence Iser

Managing partner, Kinsella Weitzman Iser Kump

Howard Weitzman

Partner, Kinsella Weitzman Iser Kump

In December, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in favor of the estate of Michael Jackson, represented by Kinsella Weitzman, stating that its dispute with HBO must be arbitrated. A 1992 agreement granted a license to the cable network to broadcast Jackson’s performance. The deal included confidentiality provisions that contained a nondisparagement clause. The estate claims HBO violated that deal by producing the documentary *Leaving Neverland*. The federal appellate court found that the contract’s arbitration provision is still valid, 28 years after it was agreed upon. In addition to Jackson’s estate, the firm’s clients include Jackson Browne, Del Records, Nicki Minaj, Justin and Jeremiah Raisen, Reach Music Publishing, Roland Corporation and

Third Side Music.

What Young Artists Music Ask Their

Lawyer: “‘How can I protect my creations when collaborating with others?’” —Iser

Erin M. Jacobson

Attorney/CEO, Erin M. Jacobson

Jacobson does not disclose her client list but works with a variety of award-winning artists, estates, publishers and other music companies, including recent matters “involving Elvis Presley, Sam Cooke, Gene Vincent, The Crusaders, Ray Gilbert, Perry Botkin Jr., Frank Sinatra, Prince, The Ronettes and Johnny Burnette,” she says. In November, Jacobson published *Don’t Get Screwed! How To Protect Yourself As an Independent Musician* to help indie artists protect their intellectual property and maximize their revenue, especially in the absence of touring income.

What Young Artists Must Ask Their

Lawyer: “‘What am I signing?’ A lot of young artists come to me without a decent understanding of the contracts they’ve previously signed, despite being represented by other counsel for those deals.”

Neville Johnson

Founding partner, Johnson & Johnson

Johnson claimed a recent win in settling a class action suit for the Rick Nelson Company — the estate of the 1950s teen idol — against Sony Music Entertainment over deductions on foreign streaming royalties. A court filing in September put the amount of the settlement at \$12.7 million. And Johnson has found strength in numbers with other class action suits. “This has been a tremendous boon to the music industry as the clients could not afford individually to vindicate the rights at issue,” he says. “As a result, tens of thousands of musicians have been helped.”

Most Lasting Legacy of 2020 Will

Be: “The dominance of social media and new methods of promotion.”

Russell A. Jones

Attorney, Law Offices of Russell A. Jones Jr. and Associates

As the country looks forward to emerging from the pandemic, Jones sees 2020 as the year people learned “the importance of music in maintaining public morale.” Jones represents country stars Garth Brooks, Toby

▶ IN BRIEF

Keith, Tim McGraw and Trisha Yearwood, and those artists have been among those lifting the public mood by continuing to entertain: Brooks and Yearwood took requests on their CBS TV specials; McGraw served up a musical call for unity in “Undivided,” a duet with Florida Georgia Line’s Tyler Hubbard; and Keith has kept up fan morale with his Furniture Store Guitar Sessions, selfie videos where he covers a variety of well-known tunes.

What Young Artists Must Ask Their Lawyer: “‘What doesn’t the contract say?’”

Wale Kalejaiye
Associate, Sheridans

Since joining Sheridans in 2018, Kalejaiye, 30, has overseen global deals for trailblazing talent, including next-generation creators from Africa. Among the agreements he has guided: an international partnership between Universal Music Publishing Group and Spaceship Publishing for Nigerian Afrobeats megastar Burna Boy; a joint venture between Cruel Santino, another African superstar, and Interscope Records; and the appointment of London-based Nigerian fashion maven Mowalola Ogunlesi as design director at Yeezy GAP, Kanye West’s joint venture with the retail behemoth. His tip: an “obscene focus on treating each artist that I represent as a business.”

The Song That Got Me Through the Pandemic: “‘Bank On It’ by Burna Boy. The song is very spiritual and has a multitude of deep, meaningful messages about survival.”

Joshua A. Kamen
Founder/owner, The Law Offices of Joshua A. Kamen

Kamen, 42, takes pride in the deals his firm has struck on behalf of the next generation of talent. Besides helping close Arizona Zervas’ “monumental deal with Columbia Records,” Kamen also secured a licensing deal between 23-year-old songwriter Nija and Capitol Records. After “penning hit records for everyone from Ariana Grande to Cardi B to ZAYN, I’m proud to have helped her negotiate a partnership that will allow the world to hear her voice,” he says.

Most Lasting Legacy of 2020 Will Be: “The renewed interest across the business in social issues, racial justice and politics. I’ve also noticed that many younger

creatives are incredibly forward-thinking and becoming more actively involved in their business, which has encouraged established companies to consider unique deal structures and more artist-friendly arrangements.”

Jason Karlov
Partner/chair of entertainment, media and sports practice group, Barnes & Thornburg

Joel Katz
Senior counsel, Barnes & Thornburg

Barnes & Thornburg, which marks its 10th anniversary this year, has built “a multidisciplinary approach to practicing music law,” says Karlov, “whether you have needs regarding publishing, recording, merchandise, copyrights ... However you want to make money in this business of music, we have experience that caters to that topic. That’s hard to build across the board and something about which we are very proud and happy for our clients” — a roster that includes Michael Bolton, T Bone Burnett, Bob Dylan, John Fogerty, the Grateful Dead catalog, the NFL and Rufus Wainwright. Katz, the founding chairman of Greenberg Traurig’s global entertainment and media practice, joined Barnes & Thornburg in March. He reports that he continues to work with long-term clients including acts Little Big Town and Why Don’t We, industry organizations from the Recording Academy to the Country Music Association and Big Machine Records, and a number of executives including Sony Nashville’s Randy Goodman and Universal Music Group Nashville’s Mike Dungan.

The Song That Got Me Through the Pandemic: “‘Blowin’ in the Wind’ by Bob Dylan. The concept of universal change so aptly described by the lyric and the concept that life goes on eternally, even with abrupt change. The answer is just blowin’ in the wind.” —Katz

Lauren Kilgore
Partner, Shackelford Bowen McKinley & Norton

Kilgore, 39, whose firm’s clients include Dan + Shay, Tanya Tucker and Steve Winwood, says that throughout the pandemic, labels and publishers have been “aggressively” signing new talent. Her firm has been just as active in obtaining, negotiating

and closing such deals, with an eye on helping young artists retain as much ownership as possible. “It is rewarding to facilitate that process and collaborate with clients on ways to maximize artist and writer exposure,” she says.

Most Crucial Issue Facing Creators: “The missing revenue generated and the fallout from live performances are continuing to mount, with a devastating impact on large swaths of the business, artist branding and music consumption. The sooner we can safely bring back live music, the better.”

Christiane Kinney
President, Kinney Law

After closing \$36 million in catalog sales in late 2018 and early 2019 at a previous firm, Kinney went solo in 2020 just as the pandemic struck. She dove into the world of virtual reality and built the legal infrastructure for BRCvr, an official virtual Burning Man experience on behalf of client Big Rock Creative. She represents legacy artists in renegotiations triggered by rights terminations and heirs of legacy artists in seeking money they’re due. She has also represented LGBTQ+ business enterprise-certified public benefit corporations to help struggling LGBTQ+ artists during the pandemic.

The Song That Got Me Through the Pandemic: “‘Lean on Me’ by Bill Withers. So many people have been crippled by this pandemic — mentally, spiritually and financially. For me, some of that melts away whenever I hear that song.”

Mark Kraiss
Partner, Bray & Kraiss Solicitors

“Earth shattering” is how Kraiss describes the pandemic’s impact on the live-music business. But the shutdown also forced the industry to rapidly adjust how “it delivers live content, most notably by shifting to livestreaming,” he says. The livestreaming platform Drift, a Bray & Kraiss client, grew its business in 2020. The firm also represents a who’s who of the British music community, from The Rolling Stones to Ed Sheeran, Gorillaz, Elton John, Skepta and more. In a challenging year, says Kraiss, one positive note was in “continuing to provide business and legal support to our emerging young artists and writer clients as they continue to find ways of recording and releasing

▶ IN BRIEF

music during the pandemic.”

What Young Artists Must Ask Their Lawyer: “Should I be aiming to self-release music or sign a longer-term deal with an established label? And in either case, which manager would best look after my interests?”

Simon Rust Lamb

COO, Bulldog Digital Media; co-founding partner, Curiosity Preservation Society

Lamb counseled promoters of independent festivals on strategies for cancellations, ticket refunds, insurance and force majeure, the conditions that prevented parties from fulfilling contracts. He also worked with longtime festival promoter James “Disco Donnie” Estopinal Jr. to acquire his company Disco Donnie Presents back from dance conglomerate LiveStyle, making DDP the first promoter to return to indie status following the consolidation of the sector in the early 2010s. Lamb also completed a five-year goal of raising \$1 million for the nonprofits Film2Future and Pablove.

The Song That Got Me Through the Pandemic: “The Sierra Nevada alpine wilderness symphony: heavy, wall-shaking wind solos balanced with moments of deep silence.”

Greg Lapidus

Managing partner, Lapidus Root & Sacharow

Henry Root

Partner, Lapidus Root & Sacharow

Jeff Sacharow

Partner, Lapidus Root & Sacharow

Lynn Quarterman

Senior associate, Lapidus Root & Sacharow

Jerry Butler

Of counsel, Lapidus Root & Sacharow

Leigh Zeichick

Associate, Lapidus Root & Sacharow

The firm represents entertainment and media companies, executives, creators, technology companies, live-event producers and more, and during the recent boom in music-asset acquisitions, it has represented both buyers and sellers of high-profile music publishing and master recording catalogs, says Lapidus. “We’re proud of our work with the Disney Music Group that has helped bring some joy into our homes at a time when the world outside can seem bleak and whose work has helped us remember

that we can still come together in some way to make magical moments for our families and friends,” he says. The firm is also the longtime representative for Special Olympics in connection with entertainment initiatives like its *A Very Special Christmas* album series, launched by producer Jimmy Iovine in 1987. Since its debut, the releases have raised over \$130 million for the organization and its programs helping people with intellectual disabilities.

What Young Artists Must Ask Their Lawyer: “Do I need legal advice before signing this document?” —Lapidus

Dina LaPolt

Founder/owner, LaPolt Law

LaPolt, 54, worked with Rep. Ted Deutch, D-Fla., to ensure songwriters, artists and other music industry professionals were eligible for unemployment benefits under the CARES Act during the early days of the pandemic. “By the time the bill passed, my voice was hoarse because I had been on the phone so much,” says LaPolt, who celebrated 23 years sober in March. “We’ve moved the [Alcoholics Anonymous] meetings to Zoom, and I’m attending meetings taking place all over the world. It’s great for me, but folks new to sobriety have really struggled with the isolation.”

Most Crucial Issue Facing Creators: “NFTs. I represent deadmau5, who was an early pioneer, and we’ve identified so many important legal issues, from the [intellectual property] embodied in the tokens to the regulatory issues of selling the coins on securities markets.”

Todd Larson

Benjamin Marks

Partners, Weil Gotshal & Manges

Last summer, Marks and Larson represented SiriusXM and Pandora in the six-week Copyright Royalty Board trial — held entirely online — to set per-stream royalty rates for programmed music webcasters for 2021-25. While the CRB continues to deliberate, Marks and Larson also represent clients including AEG Live, Entercom, iHeartMedia, SoundCloud, Facebook and Twitter in music licensing and other copyright-related matters.

Most Lasting Legacy of 2020 Will Be: “For all our advances in online and

virtual communication, live music — people packed in a dark, sweaty room dancing and singing along to their favorite band — remains the beating heart of the music business. We didn’t how much we missed it until it was gone.”—Larson

Shay M. Lawson

Managing attorney, Lawson McKinley

Lawson, 36, is an adviser for top hip-hop clients, brokering recent deals including Offset’s apparel collaboration with New Era and the recent credit for producer Sheldon Ferguson (Travis Scott, Lil Baby) on Lil Wayne’s *Billboard 200* No. 1 album, *Funeral*. And as advocacy chair for the Recording Academy’s Atlanta chapter — her second consecutive term — Lawson led local efforts for legislative COVID-19 relief for artists as well as the passage of the HITS Act with members of Congress. Additionally, Lawson is a partner of the Black Music Action Coalition and was recently elected to the board of Songwriters of North America.

What Young Artists Must Ask Their Lawyer: “For an easy-to-understand written breakdown of the terms of any deal. Most are so allured by the opportunity, they skip over critical details and terms that can impact the life span of their artistry.”

Bill Leibowitz

Founder/partner, The William R. Leibowitz Law Group

In a year that brought a surge of song-catalog royalties rights sales, Leibowitz did a number of big deals with big stars — and with the highest-profile acquisition fund of them all. “As the lawyer for Hipgnosis Songs Fund Limited, I closed some major acquisitions during 2020,” he says. Those included the catalogs of Blondie, Lindsey Buckingham, Jimmy Iovine, Rick James, Journey, Barry Manilow, Nelly, Mark Ronson, RZA, Richie Sambora and Neil Young. But the biggest issue, he says, is songwriters’ share of streaming revenue: “Without songwriters, there are no hit records, and it is terribly inequitable that they are the lowest on the totem pole when it comes to compensation.”

What Young Artists Must Ask Their Lawyer: “How do I structure my deals so I am building equity for the long term? And, in this regard, how do I maintain ownership of my intellectual property?”

▶ IN BRIEF

Jeff Levy*Partner, Ritholz Levy Fields***Chip Petree***Managing partner, Ritholz Levy Fields***Matt Greenberg***Of counsel, Ritholz Levy Fields*

For Levy, his firm's most significant accomplishment in 2020 was internal: holding weekly "all hands" Zoom meetings with each member of the staff. "It got us through the ups and downs everyone experienced due to the pandemic and political crises, and strengthened our firm's interpersonal relationships," says Levy, whose firm reps Brothers Osborne, Chris Stapleton and Downtown Music Publishing, among others. "Happy lawyers and happy staff create better experiences for our clients."

The Song That Got Me Through the Pandemic: "The New York Mets' cable channel theme song. Baseball's return gave me hope that one day things would go back to normal." —Levy

Robert Lieberman**Michael Perlstein***Partners, Fischbach Perlstein Lieberman & Almond*

Lieberman and Perlstein successfully negotiated the biggest songwriter music publishing catalog deal in the history of the music industry — selling the Bob Dylan song catalog to Universal Music Group — bringing in upwards of a reported \$400 million for the legendary singer-songwriter. But that's not all they did in the past year: They also guided the estates of Mac Rebennack (aka Dr. John) and Peggy Lee; corporate clients like GoDigital Media Group, Cinq Music, Strange Music and Wise Music Group; and artist-songwriters like Edie Brickell & The New Bohemians, Eddie Holland and Tech N9ne.

What Young Artists Must Ask Their Lawyer: "How do you make any money in this business?" Because if they are counting on streaming income, they should look elsewhere. The young artist needs to build a social base and do everything possible on a daily basis to build that social base." —Lieberman

Simon Long*Partner, Trainer Shepherd Phillips Melvin Haynes & Collins Long*

Long and his colleagues advised the Indian film production company and record label Tips Industries on the licensing of its entire catalog to Warner Music, "forming an alliance to better represent this repertoire of mainly Bollywood hits from the last four decades outside India," he says, describing the deal as "a strategic partnership with Warner Music for global exploitation of [the company's] music assets." The firm counts among its clients famed India film composer A.R. Rahman, as well as Eric Bibb, David Guetta and Wang Chung, and producers Marius de Vries and Mike Spencer.

Most Lasting Legacy of 2020 Will

Be: "Learning how to be optimistic, especially for British artists [post-Brexit] facing the loss of freedom of movement in Europe and crippling visa fees for touring in the U.S."

Kent Marcus**Jeff Colvin***Partners, Marcus & Colvin*

Marcus & Colvin navigated a turbulent year on behalf of clients including Jason Aldean, Black Pumas and Kings of Leon. The lattermost act has "been on the forefront of the developing NFT world and how this will shape the future of distribution of art," says Marcus, 51. But he adds that his firm's most important accomplishment was rallying behind partner Colvin after he and his 3-year-old son sustained serious injuries during the tornado that swept through Nashville in March 2020, leaving 25 dead and \$2.5 billion in damage. "Watching Jeff and his son fight like champions was an achievement far more important than any plaque," says Marcus.

What Young Artists Must Ask Their Lawyer: "The simple but loaded, 'Do I sign this?' But more so, 'Is this step back worth the potential of five steps forward?'" —Marcus

Doug Mark*Founder/partner, Mark Music & Media Law***David Ferreria***Partner, Mark Music & Media Law*

Mark Music & Media Law represents Billie Eilish, who has just released the Apple TV+ documentary *The World's a Little Blurry*, and Mötley Crüe, which has announced an upcoming stadium tour. Its client roster

also includes Benny Blanco, Danny Elfman, Epitaph Records, FINNEAS, Loma Vista Records, Rhiannon Giddens, Guns N' Roses, Public Enemy, Tegan and Sara, and Tool. "The music business is, fundamentally, based on the exploitation of intangible property rights," says Ferreria, "and one of our main duties as counselors and stewards of clients' business is to help them understand the ecosystem that has been built around their creative endeavors."

What Young Artists Must Ask Their Lawyer: "How their legal rights correlate to the monies they earn." —Ferreria

Angela N. Martinez*Attorney at law, Angela N. Martinez*

After spending months doing legal work on livestream concerts for her clients including Luis Fonsi and Pitbull, Martinez, 44, took the virtual stage in November to receive one of the Latin Recording Academy's Leading Ladies of Entertainment honors alongside Selena Gomez and Gloria "Goyo" Martinez. Marquee client Ozuna presented her with the award. "I was flattered to be honored alongside women I highly respect," she says. "I shared the moment with family and friends in my living room."

What Young Artists Must Ask Their Lawyer: "[Can they] really dig in from the beginning to ensure that they have corporate planning, tax planning and family planning to ensure that [artists] properly protect their assets?"

James E. McMillan*Managing partner, James E. McMillan*

McMillan's hip-hop-heavy client roster has included acts from 8Ball & MJG to Machine Gun Kelly, but the attorney put most of his efforts in 2020 toward his Art@War music label, which partnered with Atlantic Records in 2019. McMillan signed new talent, including Lebra Jolie, Prince Tae and Traetwothree, and focused not only on promoting his artists but also on "managing their personal challenges caused by the pandemic," he says. In order to offset touring losses, he found new revenue streams for his acts by linking with brands like Coca-Cola, LiveXLive and Fashion Nova.

What Young Artists Must Ask Their Lawyer: "What is the best way to create a sustainable career?"

▶ IN BRIEF

Ed McPherson*Founding partner, McPherson*

In the past year, McPherson's firm has represented its clients in multiple high-profile cases, including a class action suit against Universal Music Group over the 2008 fire that destroyed up to 500,000 master recordings; a suit by Dr. Dre's estranged wife, who claims she co-owns his stage names; and a multimillion-dollar copyright infringement action over Travis Scott's single "Highest in the Room," which debuted at No. 1 on the Hot 100 in 2019. "Getting sued for copyright infringement is inevitable these days if you have a hit song," says McPherson. "We recently won a motion for bifurcation in the case, staying all discovery on damages until liability is established."

What Young Artists Must Ask Their**Lawyer:** "How do I become an old artist?"**Mike Milom***Partner, Milom Horsnell Crow Kelley Beckett Shehan*

With a roster that includes Alabama, Russell Dickerson, Mickey Guyton, Emmylou Harris, Rascal Flatts, Keith Urban, the estate of Hank Williams Sr. and the Country Music Hall of Fame, business is brisk for Milom. "Our greatest achievement of the past year may have been helping our clients and their team identify and implement innovative ways to remain in the public eye and create new income streams as a temporary replacement for touring revenue. It's usually not sexy or publicist-worthy, but it is essential," says Milom. "Currently, we are helping several clients analyze and manage the new risks of post-COVID-19 touring."

Most Lasting Legacy of 2020 Will

Be: "While in-person appearances will return, the virtual performance and cyber connection with fans will continue to provide an important option, particularly for beginning and midlevel performers where travel expense renders many in-person gigs unprofitable."

Zia F. Modabber*Managing partner, California/media and entertainment practice group chair, Katten*

Katten As chair of Katten's media and entertainment practice, with clients including André 3000, Céline Dion, the Michael Jackson estate, Lil Nas X, Trent Reznor and

Usher, Modabber says he spent the past year addressing the challenges touring clients faced "to create the live experience in the post-COVID-19 world." Meanwhile, he protected Reznor's legal interests on projects such as the Golden Globe-winning score to Pixar's *Soul* and Nine Inch Nails' intellectual property.

What Young Artists Must Ask Their

Lawyer: "I strongly believe that young artists must know how to pay attention to their business so that if/when the fun stops, they won't be left wishing they had paid more attention."

Martin Ochs*Partner/head of music, Hamlins*

Navigating the licensing challenges created by the boom in livestream concerts has kept Ochs, 38, busy throughout the pandemic. Two of his long-term clients are the leading British collection societies PPL and PRS for Music, which launched a joint-venture company to administer public performance royalties in 2018. That partnership plays a "crucial" role in ensuring "the continued recognition and protection of creative rights," he says. Other clients include Northern Irish instrument maker Lowden Guitars and Universal Music Group's merchandise division, Bravado.

The Song That Got Me Through the

Pandemic: "'Only You' by Yazoo, because it was meant to be played at my wedding, which has been canceled twice during the pandemic."

Matt Oppenheim*Managing partner, Oppenheim + Zebrak***Scott Zebrak***Founding partner, Oppenheim + Zebrak*

Launched in Washington, D.C., a decade ago, Oppenheim + Zebrak represent major labels and their publishing companies in copyright infringement cases against internet service providers. In January, a federal district judge upheld the \$1 billion jury verdict for copyright infringement that the firm helped obtain for its clients against Cox Communications. Along with co-counsel at Covington & Burling, the firm is leading similar cases against two other ISPs, Charter Communications and Bright House, "that could further shape the landscape when it comes to ISPs turning a blind eye

to subscribers' repeated infringement of copyrighted music," says Zebrak, 50. They are also representing major labels in actions against FLVTO.biz and 2conv.com, two of the world's most popular stream-ripping services.

Most Crucial Issue Facing Cre-

ators: "There are many important issues, but the impact of online infringement remains at the top." —Zebrak

Ed Pagano*Partner, public law and policy practice, Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld***Casey Higgins***Senior policy adviser, public law and policy practice, Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld*

Akin Gump worked tirelessly amid the pandemic to support the newly formed National Independent Venue Association. NIVA's advocacy work led Congress to pass the bipartisan Save Our Stages Act in December, which provided \$15 billion in grants to live-entertainment venues, performing arts centers and movie theaters to survive the live-entertainment shutdown. "Live-music venues were the first to close and will be the last to reopen," says Higgins. "Without this support, venues in cities and small towns across America would have closed permanently."

Most Lasting Legacy of 2020 Will

Be: "Strong bipartisan recognition now exists in Washington that concerts and live performing arts create vital economic activity not only in our big cities, but in our small towns as well. This new appreciation for the economic benefits the industry provides in communities across America, coupled with its cultural contributions, will serve as a springboard for future efforts in Washington to support and grow the industry." —Higgins

Don Passman*Partner, Gang Tyre Ramer Brown & Passman***Gene Salomon***Managing partner, Gang Tyre Ramer Brown & Passman***Ethan Schiffres***Partner, Gang Tyre Ramer Brown & Passman*

The firm of Gang Tyre is said to represent superstars such as Adele, Taylor Swift and Stevie Wonder, and recently added Elton John to its client roster. Salomon has worked with Camila Cabello, Neil Diamond,

▶ IN BRIEF

Green Day, P!nk and R.E.M., among others, while Schiffres, who works with Anthony Ramos and Ludwig Göransson, negotiated Jeff Vaughn's move to the position of chairman/CEO of Capitol Music Group. "It has been a good year," says Passman, remarking that the pandemic "required artists to look inward and dig deeper emotionally" — much like Swift did with *folklore*, which won album of the year in March at the Grammy Awards. And although 2020 was not a year for book signings, Passman published the 10th edition of his must-read guide, *All You Need To Know About the Music Business*.

What Young Artists Must Ask Their Lawyer: " 'Protect me from getting involved in long-term agreements that I can't get out of if they don't work out.' " —Passman

Adrian Perry

Neema Sahni

Jonathan Sperling

Partners/co-chairs of the music industry group, Covington & Burling

The firm works with all three of the major music groups and their respective publishing companies. Sahni, 37, says she's most proud of the firm's work in response to the pandemic in the past year, both within and beyond the music industry. "This has ranged from advising life-sciences companies in their efforts to develop and produce therapeutics, vaccines, diagnostics and [personal protective equipment] to assisting entertainment companies as they navigated thorny contractual and employment issues in resuming operations," she says.

The Song That Got Me Through the Pandemic: " 'Lawyers, Guns and Money' by Warren Zevon. A song about misadventure seemed pretty exotic in the midst of lockdown, where a trip to the gas station was exciting." —Perry

Vince Phillips

Managing partner, Arrington & Phillips

Aurielle Brooks

Associate attorney, Arrington & Phillips

Phillips, 49; Brooks, 29; and their firm advocate for clients including Bow Wow, Fredo Bang, Kevin Gates, Lil Baby, Lil Keed, Mooski, Nard & B, Maaly Raw, RMR, Sukihana and YoungBoy Never Broke Again. In response to the pandemic and calls for social justice during 2020, says Phillips, "we

orchestrated sending thousands of boxes of fresh produce to grocery-desert areas in Kentucky during the civil unrest taking place throughout the nation."

Most Lasting Legacy of 2020 Will Be: "Even when everything else in the world stops, music carries on. Although other industries may have sadly become crippled from the trying times that came with 2020, the music business actually thrived, finding new ways to stream, monetize and reach passionate fans." —Brooks

Tabetha Plummer

Attorney, Plummer Law Group

Plummer's client list includes a wide swath of hip-hop and R&B artists spanning multiple generations, from Snoop Dogg and India.Arie to BJ the Chicago Kid and JoJo. A highlight of her work in the past year, however, involved advising Dwayne Abernathy — better known as the producer Dem Jointz — in the signing of 13-year-old Keedron Bryant after the teen's George Floyd protest anthem, "I Just Wanna Live," went viral, leading to a recording contract with Warner Records.

Most Lasting Legacy of 2020 Will Be: " 'Verzuz, D-Nice and the emergence of TikTok. Reprioritization of how to create and monetize content while touring is suspended.' "

Michael Poster

Partner, Michelman & Robinson

In October, Poster, 49, counseled Vine Alternative Investments in its acquisition of DJ Calvin Harris' song catalog for a reported \$100 million. However, the lawyer, who also represents music publishers Concord and Spirit Music Group, is especially proud of Michelman & Robinson's firmwide effort to provide its client base with "a daily flow of current, easily understandable information," free of charge, about economic relief programs and legal matters related to the pandemic. Says Poster: "We believe it is critical that they be well-informed about the pressing issues arising out of COVID-19"

What Young Artists Must Ask Their Lawyer: " 'Before I enter into a deal, what are the likely short- and long-term impacts of the transaction, and what can I do to change my position if those impacts are not what I anticipated?' "

Gregor Pryor

Stephen Sessa

Partners/co-chairs, global entertainment and media industry group, Reed Smith

Edward Shapiro

Partner, global entertainment and media industry group, Reed Smith

Reed Smith reports adding over 200 clients during the pandemic — including Grammy winner Jacob Collier and MelodyVR — while developing new tools for clients, including a livestreaming guide published within two weeks of the national lockdown in the United States and a tracker that logged regulatory trends affecting digital platforms. "The tracker assists our clients in identifying the complex intertwining regulatory initiatives currently in play and proposed across the U.K. and European Union," says Pryor, 46.

What Young Artists Must Ask Their Lawyer: "In the words of Janet Jackson, 'What have you done for me lately?' The best clients also ask: 'Based on your experience, what would you do if you were me?'"

Rollin A. Ransom

Partner, Sidley Austin

Ransom, 51, is co-leader of the global commercial litigation and disputes practice of Sidley Austin and managing partner of the Los Angeles office, and offers guidance to the RIAA and major labels. During the pandemic, he continued to serve as outside counsel to The Music Center — the Walt Disney Concert Hall, the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, the Ahmanson Theater and the Mark Taper Forum — as the L.A. venues moved to virtual events.

Most Lasting Legacy of 2020 Will Be: "Continuing to call attention to and honor the critical contribution of artists, songwriters, producers and other professionals [who are Black, Indigenous and people of color] to the historical and ongoing evolution of the music industry."

Berkeley Reinhold

Owner, Business and Law Office of Berkeley Reinhold

As a legal adviser to Live Nation, C3 Presents and music festivals like Lollapalooza, Reinhold saw her clients severely affected by the live-music shutdown of 2020. That's one reason why she takes particular pride

▶ IN BRIEF

in the TV and digital negotiations she worked on for Global Citizen — including the *One World: Together at Home* broadcast, which she says set two Guinness World Records: “the most musical acts to perform at a remote music festival, and the most money raised for charity by a remote music festival.”

Most Crucial Issue Facing Creators: “More than ever, it’s essential that creators be educated about their ownership rights and how these are licensed and conveyed. In addition to traditional deals, there are so many exciting new platforms and business models, and it is really important to understand how to best protect your rights when exploiting lucrative opportunities.”

Jaimie Roberts

Founding partner, Roberts & Hafitz

Harry Roberts

Attorney, Roberts & Hafitz

As boundaries between the entertainment sectors continue to blur, the father-and-son team are proud to foster the firm’s growth with multihyphenate entertainers. “While music has always been our core, our clients — and our firm — are now active across all entertainment mediums,” says Jaimie, pointing to Robin Thicke’s spot as a judge on *The Masked Singer*, Donnie Wahlberg entering his 11th season on *Blue Bloods* and various upcoming projects for The Chainsmokers’ production company Kick the Habit.

Most Lasting Legacy of 2020 Will Be:

“The continued growth of TikTok and its ability to catapult careers has sped up the shift of power away from major corporations and into the hands of creators.” — Jaimie Roberts

Carlos Rodriguez-Feliz

Founder/managing partner, RodFel Law

“A large part of our firm is dedicated to supporting and protecting emerging talent,” says Rodriguez-Feliz, 31. For client Rapetón Networks, the firm negotiated a joint venture with Yandel to create a platform “for increasing exposure for Latin artists from the start of their careers. I particularly enjoyed this opportunity to utilize my skills within the Latin music industry in the areas of technology, digital rights, music monetization and expanding artists’ global reach,” he says.

What Young Artists Must Ask Their Lawyer: “More questions. Emerging talent needs to learn how the music industry works and know the key players that they need on their team to successfully work with record labels, publishers, booking agents and other industry professionals.”

Angela Rogers

Owner, Rogers Law Group

Rogers says her law group expanded during the pandemic. The firm — whose clients include Pi’erre Bourne, Lil Durk, Jay Electronica, EST Gee, Shy Glizzy, Havoc, Lil Skies and Nardo Wick — “recently opened a television practice,” she says. “We now have an attorney specializing in television transactions so we can fully service our clients in both music and television.” She tells young artists who want to stay focused on their creative output, “I’m here to help them make a living doing what they love.”

Most Crucial Issue Facing Creators: “There are many distribution providers for independent artists that give access for them to upload their music directly. Therefore, it becomes highly competitive to stand out and get their music heard and marketed.”

Nick Rosenberg

Founder/principal, Rosenberg Law

In the past year, Rosenberg’s successes have included working closely with independent concert promoter Move Forward Music to negotiate a deal with Twitch; watching the debut of YouTube original series *Released*, hosted by Little Bacon Bear, after he encouraged her to audition for the role; and representing producers Rafeal “Audio Anthem” Brown and Anthony Kilhoffer as they landed credits on new albums from Nas and Kid Cudi, respectively. Aside from assisting current clients — a list that also includes his brother, radio/TV personality Peter Rosenberg, and rapper IDK — he’s helping educate the next generation of talent, talking with high school students over Zoom to discuss “some of the issues young creators need to think about as they begin their careers in entertainment.”

Most Crucial Issue Facing Creators: “The playing field for creators remains uneven. There are many powerful stakeholders that play a role in the record-

ed-music business with interests that are frequently at odds with other stakeholders. This has resulted in a complex system that makes it hard for creators to understand how they are getting paid for their work.”

Bobby Rosenblum

Chairman, global entertainment and media practice, Greenberg Traurig

Jay L. Cooper

Founder, Los Angeles entertainment practice, Greenberg Traurig

Jess L. Rosen

Shareholder/co-chair, Atlanta entertainment and media practice, Greenberg Traurig

Paul D. Schindler

Shareholder/senior chair, New York entertainment and media practice, Greenberg Traurig

Greenberg Traurig’s global entertainment and media practice led by Rosenblum is one of the preeminent legal teams in the music industry, with a stacked client list that includes major corporations and organizations like Spotify, TikTok, Live Nation and the Recording Academy, as well as artists ranging from Jennifer Lopez and Future to Kacey Musgraves and Miranda Lambert. The past year saw “the sale of many significant music publishing and sound recordings on behalf of artist clients as well as smaller companies, which has proved to be an important income stream, especially since touring income evaporated due to the COVID-19 pandemic,” says Rosenblum.

Most Crucial Issue Facing Creators: “Understanding the value of your work in new digital exploitations, particularly given the expanding use of music in innovative online media, such as social media, fitness applications and gaming.” — Rosenblum

Brian Schall

Chair, entertainment department, Wolf Rifkin Shapiro Schulman & Rabkin

Schall, 55, advised Christopher Braide on the sale of his catalog to Downtown Music Publishing in December. The deal involved his work with Sia — which includes titles from her breakout solo album, *1000 Forms of Fear*, and the soundtrack to her film *Music* — as well as hits he co-wrote for Beyoncé (“God Made You Beautiful”), Lana Del Rey (“Million Dollar Man”), Selena Gomez

▶ IN BRIEF

(“Camouflage”), Halsey (“Trouble”) and Britney Spears (“Perfume”). The firm also represents acts such as Illenium, songwriter Dave Bassett and production-songwriting duo Rock Mafia.

The Song That Got Me Through the Pandemic: “‘Eat Sleep Rave Repeat’ by Fatboy Slim and Riva Starr. I changed the title to ‘Eat Sleep Work Repeat.’ Every day during the pandemic was the same, no matter what day of the week.”

John Seay

Partner, Carter + Woodard

Seay negotiated Priscilla Block’s recording and publishing agreements with Universal Music Group Nashville and Warner Chappell Music, respectively; Theophilus London’s recording agreement with Secretly Canadian; and of Montreal’s catalog agreement with Polyvinyl Records, among other deals. Seay, 41, says it’s more important than ever for artists to know their publishing and master rights, as “artists are aware of how valuable those assets are,” he says. “It’s not always practical to maintain ownership of those assets, but any transfer of rights should be entered into very carefully.”

What Young Artists Must Ask Their Lawyer: “‘Can you explain this agreement to me before I sign it?’ It’s easy to get caught up in the excitement of being offered a deal.”

Michael Selverne

Managing partner, Selverne & Company

Selverne, 61, hit a professional high point when he helped Round Hill Music launch a publicly traded song-catalog royalty fund — Round Hill Music Royalty Fund — on the London Stock Exchange. The lawyer-musician also honed his artistic muscle by co-producing and mixing the album *Be Still Moses* by Steep Canyon Rangers & Asheville Symphony (featuring Boyz II Men), which reached No. 1 on *Billboard’s* Bluegrass Albums chart last April.

Most Crucial Issue Facing Creators: “Innovation and sustainability. So much music is now a soliloquy with a producer in a room with Ableton talking to themselves. What keeps music fluid is the conversation between artists in the writing and recording process.”

Nyanza Shaw

Owner/managing attorney, Shaw Esquire

Shaw cites two independent clients who she says “thrived” during the pandemic with her guidance. She helped negotiate a Lexus brand deal for singer-actor Trevor Jackson and secured a seven-figure deal for rapper-mailman Bfb Da Packman with The Lunch Crew Company after a label bidding war following his viral hit “Free Joe Exotic” (featuring Sada Baby), which reached over 33 million views on YouTube. “Bfb Da Packman is such a talented, smart and super-hardworking artist,” says Shaw. “It is a pleasure to see him win.”

What Young Artists Must Ask Their Lawyer: “There is no risk in an artist soliciting a music lawyer’s advice. Most lawyers will not charge for an initial consultation, and if they do, then you probably shouldn’t be working with that lawyer.”

Daniel Shulman**Owen Sloane****Andrew Tavel**

Partners, Eisner

Eisner helped its clients earn money in areas other than touring “to compensate for the loss of live revenue,” says Sloane. Tavel says the music community showed up during the pandemic “when the country needed them the most, whether raising significant dollars for charitable needs or performing virtually in many different configurations to lift everyone’s spirits.”

Most Crucial Issue Facing Creators: “How to turn two minutes of TikTok fame into a long-lasting career. Success and sustain should remain the goal, not just that initial seven-figure check.” —Tavel

Simran A. Singh

Managing partner, Singh Singh & Trauben

Christopher R. Navarro

Partner, Singh Singh & Trauben

Singh Singh’s recent achievements include negotiating recording and publishing deals for clients such as Natti Natasha; Pina Records’ new album agreement with Sony Music Latin; Ozuna’s publishing deal with Kobalt and multi-album deal with Sony Entertainment; and Rauw Alejandro, Chris Jedi and Gaby Music’s publishing agreements with Warner Chappell. Singh, 42, also executive-produced the 2020 Netflix program *Selena: The Series*, which chronicled the life of the late Mexican American

star Selena Quintanilla and “was No. 1 in multiple countries, including the United States,” he says.

The Song That Got Me Through the Pandemic: “‘Baby Shark,’ because my son would make my wife and I dance to this every day during the lockdown.” —Navarro

Stanton “Larry” Stein

Partner/head of media and entertainment, Russ August & Kabat

Diana Sanders

Senior associate, media and entertainment, Russ August & Kabat

In September, Russ August & Kabat reached a settlement in an action brought against Vivendi, Universal Music Group and StudioCanal on behalf of *This Is Spinal Tap* co-creators Christopher Guest, Michael McKean, Rob Reiner and Harry Shearer. The suit related to “complicated copyright termination and accounting issues associated with the film’s sound recordings and soundtrack album,” says Stein. (The settlement amount was not disclosed.) The Los Angeles-based firm also represents Mary J. Blige, Simon Cowell, Drake, Post Malone and TikTok star Chase “Lil Huddy” Hudson.

What Young Artists Must Ask Their Lawyer: “What could be the long-term effects from the early agreements they sign.” —Stein

Rachel Stilwell

Founder, Stilwell Law

Stilwell — whose clients include songwriter-producer Darrell Brown, LeAnn Rimes and singer-songwriter Al B. Sure! — led advocacy meetings with members of Congress and representatives of the recording industry during the pandemic to argue for financial relief and fair pay for music creators. On behalf of the musicFIRST Coalition and the Future of Music Coalition, Stilwell offered comments to the Federal Communications Commission regarding discrepancies in music licensing between audio delivery platforms that were later cited in the FCC’s Communications Marketplace Report to Congress.

Most Lasting Legacy of 2020 Will Be: “Audiences’ pent-up demand to see live concerts — and the start of the implementation of the Music Modernization Act.”

Michael Sukin

▶ IN BRIEF

President, Sukin Law Group

Sukin Law Group has helped negotiate some of the largest sales in music publishing — including Universal Music Group's \$2.2 billion acquisition of Bertelsmann/BMG Music in 2006 — and the coronavirus did not slow it down. Sukin cites the May 2020 sale of “iconic, world-famous music publishing company Shapiro Bernstein,” which included over 16,000 copyrights and titles by The Beatles, Ella Fitzgerald and Frank Sinatra, to Reservoir “for maximum price at the height of the pandemic and the bottom of the stock market.” The firm has represented Charles Aznavour, The Rolling Stones, the estate of George Gershwin and the creators and rights holders for classic American musicals from *Man of La Mancha* to *Porgy and Bess*.

The Songs That Got Me Through the Pandemic: “Harry Chapin’s ‘All My Life’s a Circle,’ because it is, and George Gershwin’s ‘Rhapsody in Blue.’”

Ron Sweeney

Founder/owner, Ron Sweeney and Company/Digital Disruption Entertainment

Across four decades as a music attorney, Sweeney, 67, has represented Clarence Avant, James Brown, Jimmy Jam & Terry Lewis, DMX and Lil Wayne/Young Money, among others. In 2020, he stepped up as an adviser to the Black Music Artists Coalition, commenting last spring that he had initiated talks with the chairmen of every music company “to hold them accountable for the meaningful and sustainable changes required to end the systemic racism that exists in our industry.” At his firm, during the year of the pandemic, he said recently, “We realized we should work to live and not live to work.”

Most Lasting Legacy of 2020 Will

Be: “An artist must diversify so they are not dependent on touring income to support their lifestyles.”

Stephanie Taylor

Attorney/owner, Taylor Guttmann

Taylor’s firm reimagined the concert experience during the pandemic for The Caverns, a concert venue known for hosting Bluegrass Underground in a cave at the base of Tennessee’s Cumberland Mountains. “We worked as a team to create an above-ground,

outdoor amphitheater adjacent to the cave venue,” says Taylor, who guided the legal protocols for the endeavor, which already has booked multiple sold-out concerts in 2021. “The Caverns was among the first venues in the country to launch a pod-based model with four sold-out Jason Isbell shows.”

Most Lasting Legacy of 2020 Will

Be: “We will all forever cherish the live-music experience. I’m going to shed a tear or two next time I’m in a good bluegrass jam, sitting in a circle, fiddle in hand.”

Adam Van Straten

Principal, Van Straten Solicitors

Amid last year’s publishing-rights sales frenzy, Van Straten’s firm advised KT Tunstall and Leo Sayer on partial catalog acquisitions by Primary Wave. The firm “always finds time for emerging talent,” too, says Van Straten, and after Scottish singer Nathan Evans’ sea shanty renditions went viral on TikTok, the firm closed his record deal with Polydor in just 24 hours. “He was a postman one day and topping charts globally the next,” he says, adding of his firm: “Despite being small in size, we continue to punch above our weight and provide the key services that our clients require.”

What Young Artists Must Ask Their

Lawyer: “All young artists need clear, impartial advice from their lawyers as to how the business works so that they are better able to manage their expectations.”

Doug Wigdor

Founding partner, Wigdor

Wigdor, 52, represents former Recording Academy president/CEO Deborah Dugan, whose suit against the organization over her 2020 dismissal remains in arbitration negotiations. Dugan’s case helped bring about “a renewed focus on diversity, equity and inclusion,” he says. “Her complaint shined a spotlight on how women and people of color are often completely excluded from rooms where important decisions are made.”

Most Lasting Legacy of 2020 Will Be: “A renewed focus on diversity, equity and inclusion.”

Richard Wolfe

Senior partner, Wolfe Law Miami

With what he describes as a “self-deprecating” courtroom demeanor that jurors

“eat up,” Wolfe, 62, is a go-to litigator for top artists and executives when it comes to touchy cases. Recent achievements: He obtained a dismissal of claims against Yandel by his former manager and litigated complaints for Maluma, T-Pain, Wisin, independent label/management firm Big Ligas, catalog company Essential Media and Menudo’s trademark owner. Wolfe notes that his financial skills as a former certified public accountant come in handy for cases where “everything comes down to dollars and cents.”

What Young Artists Must Ask Their

Lawyer: “The difference between net and gross, and explain all the deductions to my revenue stream.”

Andrea Yankovsky

Founder, Yankovsky Law

Yankovsky helped launch the OutHouse Counsel program in 2020 to provide creatives with “the same kind of access to legal counsel that the big labels and publishers have in-house,” she says. “With ongoing, consistent counsel, we can take a much more proactive approach to deal-making, strategic partnerships and positioning, and packaging intellectual property.” The firm also closed a number of deals for its clients including Sonicy’s launch of its fan-funding platform for music creators, Jane Ira Bloom’s deals with NativeDSD and Immersive Audio Album, and Jim Anderson and Ulrike Schwarz’s agreement for recording and mixing the *Judas and the Black Messiah* score.

What Young Artists Must Ask Their

Lawyer: “All too often an artist or business only consults a lawyer when they think it really matters. Traditional hourly billing makes it even more difficult. Many law firms, including ours, are changing their billing practices so that starting out doesn’t mean second-rate legal.”

Helen Yu

Principal, Yu Leseberg

Yu reports that her firm handled legal agreements for songs contained on 25% of the top 20 most-sold albums of 2020. The tracks included Ariana Grande’s “Safety Net” and Eminem’s “Favorite Bitch,” which featured her client Ty Dolla \$ign. Another client, Jess Jackson, produced four songs

▶ IN BRIEF

for the late rapper Pop Smoke, along with 32 tracks from his posthumous release *Shoot for the Stars, Aim for the Moon*, which she says “went No. 1 worldwide and dominated the charts for half the year.”

Most Lasting Legacy of 2020 Will

Be: “How the music business became the voice of change in driving diversity and inclusion. It was always very male and white-dominated, but for real change to be implemented, we need to hire people of diverse ethnicities, gender, race and sexual orientation.”

Adam Zia

Founder, *The Zia Firm*

Among the client achievements that Zia, 42, celebrated in the past year were Machine Gun Kelly’s first No. 1 album on the Billboard 200 with *Tickets to My Downfall*, Starrah’s sharing the Grammy Award for best rap song as co-writer of Megan Thee Stallion’s “Savage,” Tierra Whack’s creating and starring in her own Apple commercial and Polo G’s sophomore album, *The Goat*, going platinum. He has seen his firm expand from “a solo practice to a rapidly growing boutique with a diverse staff that is inclusive of race, culture, gender and sexuality,” which Zia says has allowed it to “break the barriers and stigmas of what a music lawyer ‘looks like.’”

Most Crucial Issue Facing Cre-

ators: “Ownership and what role that plays in the deals artists make — from record deals to publishing deals to even brand deals, where the artist is creating designs and coming up with ideas and products.”

Leslie Jose Zigel

Partner/chair, *entertainment, media and technology industry group, Greenspoon Marder*

Zigel, whose firm represents a deep roster of Latin talent — including Ana Gabriel, Sergio George, Alejandra Guzmán, Arthur Hannon, Maffio, Mario, Pitbull, Carlos Vives, The Wailers and Wisin — kept active in managing pandemic protocol for TV and festival clients. He has been involved in projects such as the documentary *Jimmy Carter: Rock and Roll President*; John Leguizamo’s directorial debut film, *Critical Thinking*; Univision’s top-rated show *Enamorándonos*; and the III Points Festival planned for

October in Miami. “Adaptation must include novel strategies and partnership-building across the board, including with governmental agencies,” he says.

Most Crucial Issue Facing Cre-

ators: “Survival. Lockdowns have forced artists to adapt [with] new avenues for creative expression. However, adaptation must include partnership-building across the board.”

Contributors: *Rich Appel, Cathy Applefeld Olson, Megan Armstrong, Chuck Arnold, Katie Bain, Steve Baltin, Alexei Barrionuevo, Karen Bliss, Lars Brandle, Dave Brooks, Dean Budnick, Anna Chan, Ed Christman, Tatiana Cirisano, Leila Cobo, Jonathan Cohen, Mariel Concepcion, Stephen Daw, Frank DiGiacomo, Thom Duffy, Deborah Evans Price, Griselda Flores, Adrienne Gaffney, Gab Ginsberg, Josh Glicksman, Gary Graff, Paul Grein, Lyndsey Havens, Cherie Hu, J’na Jefferson, Gil Kaufman, Steve Knopper, Juliana Koranteng, Katy Kroll, Carl Lamarre, Joe Levy, Jason Lipshutz, Joe Lynch, Heran Mamo, Geoff Mayfield, Gail Mitchell, Mia Nazareno, Melinda Newman, Paula Parisi, Glenn Peoples, Bryan Reesman, Jessica Roiz, Claudia Rosenbaum, Dan Rys, Micah Singleton, Richard Smirke, Eric Spitznagel, Jaelani Turner-Williams, Andrew Unterberger, Christine Werthman, Natelegé Whaley, Jewel Wicker, Deborah Wilker, Nick Williams, Stereo Williams, Xander Zellner*

Methodology: *Nominations for Billboard power lists open not less than 120 days in advance of publication. (For a contact for our editorial calendar listing publication dates, please email thom.duffy@billboard.com.) The online nomination link is sent to press representatives and/or honorees of companies previously featured on any Billboard power list, as well as those who send a request to thom.duffy@billboard.com. Nominations close and lists are locked not less than 90 days before publication. Billboard’s Top Music Lawyers for 2020 were chosen by editors based on factors including, but not limited to, nominations by peers, colleagues and superiors. In-house counsel were limited to the companies shown. Otherwise, Top Music Lawyers focused on outside counsel. In addition to information requested with nominations, editors consider the attorneys’*

representation of clients with notable music industry impact. That impact is measured by metrics including, but not limited to, chart, sales and streaming performance as measured by MRC Data and social media impressions using data available as of Feb. 15.

Leading Law Schools Of The Top Music Lawyers

The most frequently cited alma maters of the 2020 class of honorees.

Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, Yeshiva University (New York)

Enrollment: 925

Columbia Law School, Columbia University (New York)

Enrollment: 1,244

Fordham University School of Law (New York)

Enrollment: 1,093

Harvard Law School, Harvard University (Cambridge, Mass.)

Enrollment: 1,740

New York Law School (New York)

Enrollment: 872

New York University School of Law (New York)

Enrollment: 1,379

Southwestern Law School (Los Angeles)

Enrollment: 611

University of California, Berkeley, School of Law (Berkeley, Calif.)

Enrollment: 986

University of California, Los Angeles, School of Law (Los Angeles)

Enrollment: 975

University of Southern California Gould School of Law (Los Angeles)

Enrollment: 590

Enrollments source: U.S. News & World Reports

This article originally appeared in the April 3, 2021, issue of [Billboard](#). 

▶ IN BRIEF

Justin Bieber, Ariana Grande & J Balvin to Reap Millions in HYBE Deal to Buy Ithaca Holdings

BY ED CHRISTMAN AND ALEXEI BARRIONUEVO

HYBE's \$1.05 billion deal to buy **Scotter Braun's** Ithaca Holdings will award Braun's artists and staff with more than \$40 million in equity, including shares to **Ariana Grande**, **Justin Bieber**, **J Balvin** and **Demi Lovato**, according to a corporate filing from HYBE, the publicly traded company formerly known as Big Hit Entertainment.

A total of 39 people, including Braun and Big Machine Label Group CEO **Scott Borchetta**, will receive shares totaling about \$161 million, based on the current exchange rate. Braun will get 462,380 (\$86.2 million), while Borchetta will receive 166,537 (\$31.1 million); and Grande and Bieber will each receive 53,557 shares, or almost \$11.0 million apiece, the company filing states.

Balvin will get 21,423 shares (\$4.1 million) and Lovato will receive 5,355 shares (\$1.06 million). The remaining 33 individuals listed are a mix of artists, executives and existing Ithaca shareholders.

This isn't the first time artists have received shares from HYBE. When the company went public last October on the Korean stock exchange, the seven members of BTS each got **shares valued at \$8 million**. But sources say the equity being awarded to Ithaca's artists is coming out of Braun's stake.

HYBE, the company behind powerhouse K-pop group BTS, said Friday (April 2) that it would pay \$1.05 billion in cash and shares to acquire Ithaca Holdings, in a move de-

signed to help the Korean company establish a strong U.S. presence in music and entertainment while also heightening its profile for American financial investors. According to terms of the deal, which is expected to close in about a month, Braun will join the board of HYBE and Borchetta will remain CEO of Big Machine Label Group.

The deal marries Big Hit Entertainment's management company and labels with Ithaca's entertainment holdings, which include the Big Machine label, the SB Projects management company and its interests in film and gaming through Mythos Studios and 100 Thieves Gaming.

Since going public in October, HYBE has leveraged the global sway of BTS to do a series of acquisitions of smaller labels, joint ventures and strategic partnerships with South Korean and U.S. labels, including with Universal Music Group. The deals have brought the company steadily closer to the U.S. market and to founder and CEO **Bang Si-Hyuk's** goal to build HYBE into an international entertainment conglomerate.

In February, HYBE and Universal announced the Korean company would create a joint label with Geffen Records and co-produce an American Idol-like show to search for the **next global K-pop boy band**. The new label will be run out of Los Angeles, where HYBE plans to open a newly expanded U.S. office later this year.

For HYBE, Ithaca Holdings will relieve pressure on the company to diversify its artist roster beyond BTS, which pulled in 97% of the company's sales in 2019, especially with required military service for the group's oldest members still looming in two to three years.

The Ithaca Holdings deal was announced after the Korea Stock Exchange close of trading Friday, in which HYBE's shares — which still trade under Big Hit Entertainment — closed at 243,000 KRW (\$214.97) per share, giving the company a market capitalization of 8.5 trillion KRW (\$7.27 billion), down slightly from the 8.7 trillion KRW valuation in its first day of trading on Oct. 15.

Besides paying with Big Hit shares, HYBE is using at least \$100 million in debt to finance the deal, according to a HYBE

filing. The stock shares likely come with a lock-up period, which means the recipients can't trade them until a certain specified date.

Financial music executives said they were stunned by the Ithaca valuation, especially after Braun and Ithaca's financial backer, the Carlyle Group, sold the crown jewel of the Big Machine labels — **Taylor Swift's** catalog — to Shamrock Holdings for an estimated \$300 million last November. That was 16 months after they bought Big Machine.

In the Big Machine acquisition, sources say Ithaca acquired 80% of the company in a deal that gave Big Machine about a \$380 million valuation, leaving Borchetta and possibly some of his investors with a 20% stake that was apparently converted into shares of Ithaca.

Besides the Swift catalog, the Big Machine labels also will bring HYBE music from **Florida Georgia Line**, **Carly Pearce**, **Lady A**, **Jennifer Nettles**, **Rascal Flatts**, **Sugarland**, **Sheryl Crow**, **Thomas Rhett**, **Tim McGraw**, **Brantley Gilbert** and the **Eli Young Band**.

Previously, *Billboard* estimated that Big Machine averaged about \$100 million in revenue over the period of 2015-18, with almost \$40 million in earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization. But since the Swift catalog generated so much of the revenue, she also was responsible for an outsized profit-margin contribution — almost three-quarters of overall EBITDA, *Billboard* calculated.

Since Borchetta sold Big Machine to Ithaca, prices for music assets have escalated considerably, with Universal Music Group achieving a 30 times EBITDA multiple from its deal with Tencent Music Entertainment. UMG is expecting an even higher multiple from its planned stock offering later this year.

Considering those multiples, *Billboard* projected that at the top end that could mean a \$950 million valuation for just Big Machine alone. But that was before Ithaca sold Swift's catalog to Shamrock Holdings for about \$300 million. Without the Swift catalog, Big Machine is worth half as much — anywhere from \$300 million to

▶ IN BRIEF

\$650 million. That means the rest of Ithaca's holdings in technology, film and gaming have contributed a significant portion of Ithaca's valuation.

Regardless, the Carlyle Group may emerge as the biggest winner in the deal. Ithaca Holdings and HYBE said Friday that Carlyle will sell its significant minority stake in Ithaca, after initially investing in the company in 2017.

Even before the Swift catalog was sold off, sources suggest Carlyle was the sole beneficiary of the \$300 million that Shamrock paid for the Swift catalog.

With Big Machine and SB Holdings, HYBE will significantly enhance its U.S. holdings. And the combined management and label rosters of Bieber, BTS and Grande will give HYBE more firepower in the entertainment lifestyle marketplace.

The deal could also mean that HYBE is inheriting a potential Swift headache. The pop star expressed her displeasure last year upon learning that Braun owned her catalog through the Big Machine acquisition. She said she had wanted, but was never offered, a chance to buy back her catalog. She subsequently denounced the deal and all those involved in it. She continues to own her own publishing. 

NMPA and RIAA Chiefs: Music Creators and Fans Deserve Better From Twitter (Guest Op-Ed)

BY MITCH GLAZIER AND DAVID ISRAELITE

Twitter is always thinking of new ways to communicate and connect. The most recent example came just last month when its CEO **Jack Dorsey** testified before Congress and probably was the first witness ever to

share his opening statement as a **19-entry thread**.

But in one important respect Twitter remains “old school” and stubbornly refuses to use even the most basic tools when it comes to combating piracy or helping music creators prevent theft of their works on its platform. Unfortunately, the company's efforts to innovate only seem to go so far.

Twitter may not have started out as a company that leverages and relies on music, but it's definitely grown into one. Today, the platform aggressively uses music to draw in users and promotes itself as a place where fans can connect directly and immediately with the stars they love. After Barack Obama, the next three **most-followed accounts** on Twitter are all recording artists and songwriters. Stars like Bruno Mars, Taylor Swift, Dionne Warwick, Arianna Grande, Lady Gaga, and Rihanna are among the most followed and engaged with on the platform.

Record companies and music publishers want this partnership to work and are proud to help power Twitter's success. We recognize artists and songwriters benefit greatly from being able to talk to their fans, share their work, and generate excitement and interest in great music in this way.

However, the viral immediacy and global reach of the Twitter platform presents a double-edged sword – one that cuts especially deep for artists, songwriters, and music rightsholders who see their work leaked, copied, distributed, and monetized on the platform with almost no recourse.

Last year music creators sent more than 2 million notices to Twitter of unlicensed and infringing appearances of copyrighted music on the platform – more than 200,000 of which dealt with the especially harmful presence of not yet released stolen songs.

The company's response to date has been totally inadequate. In many cases it takes days or longer to even get a response – which is unacceptable in any case, but especially insufficient in the case of pre-release leaks that steal an artist's one chance to introduce the world to their music when and how they choose. With pre-release leaks, takedowns must come in seconds or minutes, not days.

While Twitter's response to takedown

notices fails to meet its legal obligations, even worse is the company's refusal to take affirmative steps to more effectively police its own platform and find unlicensed music before it is widely circulated and without waiting for a rightsholder to do the work and notice the infringement for them. No one can see better than Twitter what happens on its system or has the access and technical capacity to address problems at the speed and scale of the network.

There is much Twitter could do to address this problem:

License Music & Pay Music Creators Like Others Do. Most fundamentally, it could license music and pay creators for the songs and recordings that it distributes. This is what many other services have done and it is the single most important thing the company could do to meet its obligations to artists and songwriters.

Better Content Protection Tools. It could introduce more effective automated tools and content protection technologies to find and take down unlicensed copies of works even before they are published on the system and without forcing artists, songwriters, and their representatives to scour the five hundred million tweets that are posted to the platform every day.

Stop Demanding Exorbitant Payments From Creators for Content Protection. Twitter demands massive payments from music creators simply to access the company's own data flow to be able to spot and flag the enormous amounts of unauthorized content on the platform. Twitter could easily provide an API with sufficient capacity and speed to allow for monitoring at scale, just as it provides to other users like researchers who it hopes will help publicize and vouch for the company's operations and to third party vendors who sell Twitter analytics. Incredibly, despite many requests it has refused to provide it to music creators without charge. Charging music creators for access to the data they need to find infringement of their own work is just another Silicon Valley shakedown – moving fast and breaking music.

Music creators and fans deserve better. Mr. Dorsey's tweeted testimony included a desire “to create better outcomes for every-

▶ IN BRIEF

one” who uses the service. We take him at his word – and look forward to serious and immediate changes in the company’s approach to unlicensed music on the platform.

David Israelite is the President & CEO of the National Music Publishers’ Association (NMPA). The NMPA is the trade association representing American music publishers and their songwriting partners. Mitch Glazier is the Chairman and CEO of the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), the trade organization that supports and promotes the creative and financial vitality of the recorded major music companies. □

\$90 Million Lawsuit Against Live Nation Tests Unorthodox Legal Theory

BY DAVE BROOKS

Do the legal protections that prevent Live Nation from retaliating against venues for not using Ticketmaster also protect venues that reportedly owe money to the global promoter?

A Cleveland venue owner and promoter is testing this unorthodox legal theory in a \$90 million lawsuit against Live Nation filed earlier this week in District Court. In 2019, the Cleveland venue ended its booking agreement with Live Nation in an apparent dispute over money owed to the global concert promoter.

In a civil complaint heavy on insinuation and light on details, lawyers for Masonic Temple owner **Lance Beaty** argue that Live Nation is now retaliating against the Cleveland venue by intentionally not bringing suitable tours and shows to the 2,300-cap venue and playing them instead at venues owned by Live Nation.

Dowd says a recent extension of the 2010 DOJ settlement governing the merger of Ticketmaster and Live Nation should be

applied to his client’s dispute, effectively forcing Live Nation to bring shows to the Masonic Temple.

To most people working in the concert industry, Live Nation’s decision not to bring shows to a competitor is a standard business practice. Dowd, however, is so confident in his case, he’s asking for an injunction forcing Live Nation to pay a \$90 million judgement to Beaty before any witnesses have been called or hearings have taken place.

The consent decree was originally drafted by lawyers within the Obama administration seeking to preserve competition in the event ticketing space. Critics of the law argued the consent decree had too many loopholes to be effective. Over the next decade, Ticketmaster expanded its marketshare faster and wider than any of the company’s competitors, leading to hundreds of complaints about Ticketmaster’s aggressive expansion, but only generated a handful of actual violations.

Beaty is not the first attorney to point out the consent decree that followed the merger was drafted to address a very specific concern of competitors like AEG and indie promoter Jam Concerts, who worried that Live Nation would retaliate against venues that didn’t sign ticketing deals with Ticketmaster by intentionally withholding concerts from the venue. It’s not clear how that applies to Masonic Temple, which is a Ticketmaster client and stayed with the ticketing company after its booking agreement collapsed.

Dowd thinks the consent decree – which was amended and extended by the Trump administration in 2019 – applies to all of the company’s business relations and forces Live Nation to continue bringing shows to markets where it has lost money or had disagreements with local promoters.

“On at least two occasions, representatives of Live Nation have stated to a representative of TempleLive’s current booking agent, that Live Nation will not book any acts there based on false statements and/or conditions that would impose co-promotion requirements with the LVN parties,” Dowd writes.

In one instance, Dowd said a local representative of Live Nation was approached by TempleLive’s talent buyer about bring-

ing shows to the venue. The Live Nation rep said “he would have to confer with his employer. He then reported to TempleLive’s [talent buyer] that Live Nation would not book any acts with TempleLive because it ‘owed money to Live Nation.’” As a result of the 2018 dispute, TempleLive has been “left to compete against Live Nation (and others) for artists, tours, and events” Dowd wrote in the complaint, noting “Live Nation controlled other tours and artists that would have been suitable acts to perform at TempleLive” but opted to play venues owned by Live Nation instead.

Beaty is suing Live Nation for tortious interference and breach of contract, arguing that the concert promoter’s decision to explain its reasoning to TempleLive’s talent buyer for not bringing shows to the Masonic Temple was intended “to disparage Plaintiff’s goodwill and reputation in relevant markets.” Dowd also argues that Live Nation’s claim that TempleLive owed Live Nation money was false because Live Nation released TempleLive of any outstanding claims when the two companies reached a settlement ending their short-lived booking agreement.

Billboard reached out to Dowd and Beaty for comment and was told “the allegations in the Complaint speak for themselves.” Billboard also reached out to Live Nation and was sent the following statement: “As TempleLive is well aware, following the settlement in 2019 where Live Nation released TempleLive from additional financial claims we walked away from our booking partnership and are under no obligation to continue to book events at the venue. We wish them all the best.” □

▶ IN BRIEF

Taylor James, Justin Bieber's Longtime Tour DJ, Elevated to Pop Star's Personal A&R: Exclusive

BY KATIE BAIN

Twelve years ago, Taylor James was hired as Justin Bieber's tour DJ for the then-YouTube star's second-ever show. Bieber and James, along with two dancers and a road manager, played waterparks as the young singer began his ascent to pop's apex.

Now, James has risen to Bieber's inner circle in his new position as the superstar's personal A&R. This role, James says, will "allow me to bring my DJ experience into the studio and look for songs that work with Bieber's style and sound." James will work closely with the team at SB Projects, including Bieber's longstanding managers Scooter Braun and Alison Kaye. It was in fact Braun himself who hired James for that early Bieber show.

"Tay James has been a support system for this team since day one," Braun tells *Billboard*. "His energy has always lifted all those around him."

"What is more is his ability as a DJ to understand what moves an audience and that translates in to A&R," Braun continues. "To see him come in to his own during this album process has been a true highlight. This body of work would not have been possible without his input. He is just scratching the surface of his record making abilities and I personally could not be happier or prouder of my friend."

James entered the personal A&R role while Bieber was recording his latest album, *Justice*, during 2020 and early 2021. "As an A&R," James says, "I am part of the first line of testing and decisions, which proceeds into becoming singles and or

albums." He also served as personal A&R for expanded edition of *Justice*, along with Bieber's [new *Freedom EP*](#), both of which have dropped since *Justice*'s release on March 19.

"For this album," James says of *Justice*, "I was continuously on the search for new beats and artists that I thought would work well with Bieber's vision. When I have a good sound or recommendation I would send it to a group chat with the Bieber team — Justin, [longtime studio engineer] Josh [Gudwin], Allison and Scooter — and we would all decide on what would go ahead in the album that best represents Justin."

As A&R, James' daily duties include researching new opportunities, sitting in on studio sessions, listening to new beats and interfacing with myriad members of Bieber's team — including his band, his music director Bernard Harvey, Gudwin, guest producers like Skrillex, and others who contribute to the process.

"Bringing Tay in on the A&R process made it easier for me to execute delivery for the album," Gudwin tells *Billboard*. "Communication and reliability are two big things that are needed when dealing with artists, producers, songwriters and their managers. There is also a lot of dealings and internal affairs that happen behind closed doors, so there is a big factor of trust involved. Trust on the artist's side and trust on the teams side. He has both covered."

Along with serving as DJ for all of Bieber's world tours over the past decade-plus, James has also DJ'ed all of Bieber's birthday parties, private parties and company parties, and was also behind the decks at Justin and Hailey Bieber's 2019 wedding celebration. He'll also hold down his original role of tour DJ for Bieber's upcoming *Justice* tour, which is expected to hit the road as soon as public health permits. In the meantime, he'll keep his ears to the ground for future hits.

"The great thing about the Bieber team," James says, "is that we are always working and looking for inspiration, and new possible singles or different strategies to execute music." **B**

Michael Rapino, Other Live Nation Execs Partially Forfeit Bonuses Due to COVID-19

BY DAVE BROOKS

Live Nation chief executive **Michael Rapino** is forfeiting approximately \$4 million in stock after missing revenue targets at the concert promotion company due to the pandemic, according to a report filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Rapino will forfeit 47,778 performance-based restricted shares of the company, which has been trading at an average of 16% higher than the company's pre-pandemic period when the stock first crossed the \$76 per share marker. The forfeited stock was issued in 2020 in lieu of cash payments for bonuses earned in 2019, due to "cash savings initiative in connection with the global COVID-19 pandemic," according to Live Nation's [2020 annual report](#).

Live Nation President **Joe Berchtold** and chief financial officer **Kathy Willard** also forfeited restricted stock today due to the revenue miss. A spokesperson for Live Nation told *Billboard* that regular stock and cash payments were also reduced as part of the adjustment. In April, Rapino announced he was reducing his salary to \$0 as part of a cost-savings initiative at the company brought on by the pandemic.

In 2019, the company's compensation committee agreed to pay Rapino a \$6 million cash bonus if the company achieved an adjusted operating income of \$875.0 million, and between \$6 to \$12 million if he hit between 100% and 110% of the AOI target. Rapino ended up hitting 109% of his target AOI (\$942 million) for a cash award of \$11.4 million, which he deferred until the end of 2020. The final breakdown detailing what Rapino took in cash and stock options will be detailed later this month in Live Nation's annual proxy statement. **B**

▶ IN BRIEF

Latin Alternative Music Conference Announces Panelists & Performers For 2021 Virtual Event

BY GRISELDA FLORES

The Latin Alternative Music Conference has announced panelists and performers for their 2021 virtual event set to take place May 4-7.

For the second edition of its “Wonder Women of Latin Music,” this year’s honorees and panelists include Sony Music’s Maria Fernández, ASCAP’s Gabriela González, Universal Music Spain’s Alicia Arauzo, YouTube’s Sandra Jimenez, Warner Music Latin’s Gabriela Martinez and The Orchard’s Laura Tesoriero.

Other panels include “The Creative Process in Pandemic Times” featuring artists [Carla Morrison](#), [Guaynaa](#), Eduardo Cabra, Alizzz, Aureo Baqueiro and Universal Music Latin’s Aldo González. The “Afro-Latino!” panel includes producer Sergio George and artists Mabiland, Fidel Nadal, Carlos Alomar, La Dame Blanche and Akapellah.

The touring panel will focus on the topic of “Post Pandemic Touring” with CMN’s Henry Cardenas, OCESA’s Andrés Sánchez, WME’s Richard Lom, Seitrack’s Javier Montemayor, PopArt Music’s Diego Sáenz and Electric Feel Entertainment’s Austin Barmak. Other panels set to take place are “Publishing and Opportunities,” “Rompan Todo Y Ahora Qué?,” “Streaming Strategies,” “Digital Marketing and Promotions” and “Exploring Alternative Revenue Sources.”

Showcasing performers for this year include Vanessa Zamora, Silvana Estrada, Los Master Plus, KHEA, YENDRY, Niña Dioz, among many others.

Like last year, the 22nd annual LAMC will

offer free registration for panels, workshops and showcases. For the latest on the LAMC’s schedule and to register, click [here](#). 

Morris ‘B.B.’ Dickerson, Founding Member of War, Dies at 71

BY ASHLEY IASIMONE

Morris “B.B.” Dickerson, a founding member of the band [War](#), has died at the age of 71.

B.B. Dickerson, bassist and vocalist for the funk rock band, passed away peacefully at a Long Beach, Calif., hospital on Friday (April 2) after a long, undisclosed illness, a representative confirms to *Billboard*.

Dickerson, who was born in 1949 in Torrance, Calif., and got his start on the bass guitar at the age of 12, helped develop War’s signature sound co-writing and playing on tunes like “The Cisco Kid,” “Why Can’t We Be Friends,” “Low Rider,” “Summer” and more.

He also sang for the band, and his lead vocal can be heard on War’s hit “The World Is a Ghetto.”

War peaked on the *Billboard* charts in 1973 with the album *The World Is a Ghetto* (which went to No. 1) and the single “The Cisco Kid” (No. 2).

Before forming War, Dickerson had performed in a group called The Creators along with his uncle Howard E. Scott. The Creators split during the Vietnam War, and while Dickerson was away in Hawaii, his uncle played with a band that became known as The Nightshift. Dickerson joined them upon his return. That group eventually morphed into the original lineup of War with Eric Burdon, with the track “Spill the Wine” launching War’s career.

Notably, Dickerson was onstage in London in 1970 when [Jimi Hendrix](#) joined War for what would end up being his last public performance before he died.

Dickerson is survived by his mother, his uncle and his children.

Donations in his name can be made to [MusiCares](#). 

Got NFT Ideas? Guy Oseary, Ashton Kutcher, Mark Cuban and Snoop Dogg Are All Ears

BY GLENN PEOPLES

Several well-known figures in music, entertainment and sports are putting \$1 million into NFT business ideas in a new contest called [NFTs:](#)

[The Pitch.](#)

Guy Oseary, Madonna’s long-time manager and a frequent investor, will be joined by actor-investor **Ashton Kutcher**; Dallas Mavericks owner and investor in the TV show *Shark Tank*, **Mark Cuban**; and rapper **Snoop Dogg**. In addition, NFT innovators Whale Shark, Metakovan and 3LAU are also judges.

The contest will consider any idea or existing product, says Oseary, who invests in startups with Kutcher through their venture fund, Sound Ventures.

“Someone might have a little bit of financing. They may have a deck. They may have an idea scribbled on a napkin. In order to support the ecosystem, it’s not just going to the top,” he notes. “You’ve got to support the little guys, too.”

Without giving specifics, Oseary says he has already invested in “a lot of the greatest NFT platforms on the marketplace.”

Applications are open from Monday (April 5) to April 12. Finalists will be notified on April 16. Then on April 21, 30 finalists will join the judges for virtual pitch sessions. Some number of winners will share a pot of about \$1 million; the size of investments and terms given will vary.

▶ IN BRIEF

NFTs are “non-fungible” tokens — unique, unlike a cryptocurrency or fiat currency — that have been attached to digital goods such as visual artwork and digital trading cards. Eye-popping sums raised by musicians such as Deadmau5, Shawn Mendes, Grimes and 3LAU, who made \$11.6 million from 33 NFTs, have created a level of hype not seen since Bitcoin exploded into popular consciousness in 2017. Other artists quickly piled into NFTs — among them [Kings of Leon](#) and [The Weekend](#) — by selling such items as audio-visual works and digital artwork on platforms such as [OpenSea](#), [Rarible](#) and [Nifty Gateway](#).

A key difference between an NFT and a physical item is the data that’s permanently stamped onto the former. When an artist mints an NFT, they embed data into a “smart contract” that dictates the amount an artist will receive when the NFT is resold. In this way, NFTs are “the exact opposite” of the current trend of artists “selling off their life’s work, which is just ridiculous,” says Oseary, referring to the current trend of songwriters selling their catalogs to a new generation of well-funded investors such as Hipgnosis and Round Hill. A songwriter might get a handsome payday today, but they won’t share in any profits if the investor sells their catalog at a gain.

Fortunately for artists, says Oseary, NFTs and smart contracts have “normalized the idea of taking care of artists in the future. That’s what I love about it, that it’s not even questioned.”

DMX Hospitalized in New York

BY MITCHELL PETERS

D[MX](#) has been admitted to a New York hospital following a reported drug overdose.

The 50-year-old rapper, whose real name is Earl Simmons, was rushed to a hospital in White Plains, N.Y., on Friday night (April 2) after experiencing a heart attack triggered by the OD, TMZ [re-](#)
[ports](#).

On Saturday, DMX’s representatives confirmed to *Billboard* that the rapper is currently hospitalized, and as of Saturday night, DMX is on life support, reps said.

A source had told TMZ earlier in the day that the Yonkers-bred MC — who has a [long history with drug abuse](#) — had “some brain activity,” while another source said he was in a “vegetative state.”

On Sunday it was announced that the Ruff Ryders to the Rescue Foundation will have a prayer vigil for DMX outside of White Plains Hospital (41 East Post Road, White Plains, N.Y.) on Monday (April 5) at 5 p.m. ET. Representatives ask that those attending “please be respectful of the hospital and its staff.”

In early 2019, DMX was [released from a West Virginia prison](#) after serving a one-year sentence for federal tax evasion. Later that year, he canceled a series of scheduled live performances and [checked himself into rehab](#) for substance abuse.

DMX’s decades-long career includes five No. 1 albums on the [Billboard 200](#), starting with his 1998 debut, *It’s Dark And Hell is Hot*. He has also landed 15 songs on the [Billboard Hot 100](#), including “Party (Up in Here).”

In addition to a successful career in music, the rapper has also established an extensive acting career, starring in such films as *Belly*, *Romeo Must Die*, *Exit Wounds*, *Cradle 2 the Grave* and *Last Hour*.

Editor’s note: *A previous version of this article reported an update from reps that DMX was breathing on his own and not currently in need of life support. However, it was later communicated to Billboard that DMX is still on life support as of Saturday night (April 3).*

‘New’ Nirvana Song Created 27 Years After Kurt Cobain’s Death Via AI Software

BY HERAN MAMO

Twenty-seven years after the death of [Nirvana](#) frontman [Kurt Cobain](#), his sound is continuing on thanks to artificial intelligence software.

[Lost Tapes of the 27 Club](#) is a musical project that utilizes AI to analyze up to 30 songs per selected musician who struggled with mental health issues and died at the age of 27 — including Cobain, [Jimi Hendrix](#), Jim Morrison and [Amy Winehouse](#) — and write and perform “new” songs in their signature style as part of one album. Over the Bridge, a Toronto-based organization aiming to raise awareness about mental health within the music community, created the Lost Tapes of the 27 Club.

“Drowned in the Sun” mirrors Cobain’s songwriting and guitar skills via computers while tapping Eric Hogan, the lead singer of the “ultimate tribute” band to Nirvana, [Nevermind](#), for vocals. In an interview with *Rolling Stone*, Hogan traced similarities between Nirvana’s seminal albums *In Utero* and *Nevermind*, the latter of which is the namesake of his cover band, and the latest Nirvana-esque track he recorded in Cobain’s style.

“[‘Drowned in the Sun’] is accurate enough to give you that [Nirvana] vibe, but not so accurate to where someone’s going to get a cease-and-desist letter,” Hogan claimed. “If you look at the last quote-unquote Nirvana release, which was ‘You Know You’re Right,’ this has the same type of vibe. Kurt would just sort of write whatever the hell he felt like writing. And if he liked it, then that was a Nirvana song. I can hear certain things in the arrangement of [‘Drowned in the Sun’] like, ‘OK, that’s kind

▶ IN BRIEF

of an *In Utero* vibe right here or a *Nevermind* vibe right here.' ... I really understood the AI of it."

Sean O'Connor, who serves on the board of directors for Over the Bridge, explained to *Rolling Stone* that his staff uses Google's AI program [Magenta](#) to analyze the compositions of these artists' previous songs as MIDI files that the computers use to create new hooks, vocal melodies and rhythms. For the lyrics, O'Connor & Co. use a generic AI program called an artificial neural network to analyze artists' lyrics so the program can use a few words as a jumping-off point before finishing the rest by guessing the cadence and tone in a "trial and error" process.

But O'Connor explained why the Nirvana-esque recordings were among the hardest to produce. "You tended to get a wall of sound," he told *Rolling Stone*. "There's less of an identifiable common thread throughout all their songs to give you this big chunk of catalog that the machine could just learn from and create something new."

Regarding Cobain's death by suicide nearly three decades ago, Over the Bridge goes beyond honoring the legacies of The 27 Club members. The nonprofit organization encourages music industry professionals to seek necessary mental health help by providing resources on its [Facebook page](#) and setting up peer support group meetings over Zoom for musicians, local/road crew and more.

Listen to "Drowned in the Sun" below.

If you or anyone you know is experiencing suicidal thoughts and/or distress, the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) is available 24/7 at 1-800-273-8255. **D**

Alabama Shakes Drummer Says He's Innocent of Abuse Charge

BY ASSOCIATED PRESS

The drummer for Grammy Award-winning rock band [Alabama Shakes](#) says he is innocent of child abuse charges filed against him, his lawyer said Friday.

Steven William Johnson, 35, was arrested last week after being indicted on charges of abuse of a child.

"Steve Johnson maintains his innocence on all of these allegations. And that's what they are, allegations," his attorney Nick Lough told *The Associated Press*.

The indictment listed no particulars about the charge beyond the criminal statute definition of child abuse to "willfully torture, willfully abuse, cruelly beat or otherwise willfully maltreat" a child under the age of 18 years.

His attorneys have filed a court motion seeking more information about the accusation. Lough said they have reason to believe the charge may involve what he described as a "spanking" incident.

Court records show that in 2019 a criminal complaint was filed against Johnson accusing him of hitting his son with a belt causing bruises on his buttocks and thighs. The case was later dismissed.

The latest indictment was returned in October. However, Lough said the arrest this month came days after Johnson had his parental visitation rights restored in court.

An arraignment date is set for April 7.

Johnson previously pleaded guilty in March 2020 to violating a domestic violence protection order in Limestone County. He received a suspended sentence of a year in jail, with 24 months on probation.

The Athens, Alabama-based band has been on hiatus since 2018, when lead singer Brittany Howard decided to focus on her [solo project](#). **D**

Event Designer Bobby Garza in Austin, in a Pandemic: September Live Return a Big 'If'

BY STEVE KNOPPER

When the concert business shut down last March, **Bobby Garza** abruptly shifted from putting on live events to tearing them down — his company, Austin-based Forefront Networks, had to cancel the California food-and-music festival Yountville Live later that month. In early April, his life changed even more dramatically: Forefront furloughed 30 percent of its staff, including him.

As part of Billboard's efforts to best cover the coronavirus pandemic and its impacts on the music industry, we will be speaking with Garza, a 43-year-old former Forefront creative team leader who used to be general manager of festival producer Transmission Events, every other week to chronicle his experience throughout the crisis. As of early January, he is now vice president of programs and community outreach at the Long Center, a performing-arts facility in Austin, which, among other things is working on dispersing emergency SAVES grants worth tens of thousands of dollars to struggling local concert venues. (Read the latest installment [here](#) and see the full series [here](#).)

With so many people getting vaccinated, how optimistic are you these days that we'll return soon to concerts and festivals with big crowds?

I saw a news article today that said 30% of Travis County residents have had at least their first shot. The state is opening up to any adult who wants to get a vaccine. One cool part about what's happening in Austin, and I hope it's happening elsewhere, is the local government here did something smart

▶ IN BRIEF

and started to use event producers and event workers to give them a crowd-management plan so they can get these vaccines done quicker.

What have you noticed, given your expertise, about the logistics of what the vaccine process has done right and wrong?

Everybody I've talked to that has gone to get a vaccine has talked about how good and efficient those things are. The biggest liability is the people who believe they don't need to get a vaccine. I understand everybody has to make personal choices about what they believe, but it just creates another consideration, when we have to think about bringing thousands of people together.

If you have a festival of 25,000 people, and 1,000 aren't vaccinated, how much do you have to worry about liability as the organizer?

I wouldn't go so far as to say "liability," but I think there's a reputational aspect to some of that stuff. You don't want to be the place where there was some kind of super-spreader event.

What is your own vaccine plan?

I'm going to get a shot next Saturday.

AEG and Live Nation are starting to rehire their staffs again — that's an optimistic sign, right?

Yes. I would agree with that 100%. A lot of people are thinking September. Not to be completely Debbie Downer, but I think there's a big "if" — like capital-I, capital-F — on some of that. If the trend continues and we can have people continue to be vaccinated, I would love to see bigger-scale events that don't have so much anxiety tied to them.

Big "ifs" aside, if you assume September is when everything returns, what do you have to do right now?

Booking stuff is going to be the hardest. I always thought that when stuff goes back to "normal," there's going to be this race to secure as much as you can lock down. For these bigger festivals that need to draw, that's going to be a race to find the biggest, baddest acts.

When shows finally come back, are more and more artists going on the road? Will the [Stones](#) tour with [Beyonce](#)?

I mean, I think so. There are going to be a lot of folks that have a strong desire to get out and perform again. And artists, broadly speaking, are taking it on the chin right now. There's going to be a need for people to go out and try to make money and connect with their fanbase and that's an incredibly valuable thing and I'm sure it's hard.

Do ticket prices go up?

I hope not, but anytime there's stronger demand than there is supply, it makes it more expensive.

What are the Long Center's conversations like on this subject, about what happens in September, or whenever?

We've been talking to other people in our industry with rooms in the same space, trying to appropriately plan for that level of booking. What's hard is this idea that we'll probably plan for capacities relative to some measure of social distance. Last week, CDC released guidelines — in schools, instead of 6 feet [apart], it can be three feet. If we advise that same level of guidance, it gives us more capacity. But we're still planning on limiting capacity right now in the hope we'll be able to say, "Hey, we don't have to do that any longer." But that changes the economics of a deal incredibly, where you could lose money in one instance, and then in the other you could make a little bit. So it's pretty risky right now.

How are your kids?

My oldest, Gael, who is 14, got into the high school that he wanted! And my youngest, Mauro, who's 10, got into the program that my oldest is aging out of, which is a math-and-science-based magnet school. I feel like we closed a really important chapter in their education and it's only a slight bummer that they're doing it from home. It's cool to see them still succeed and thrive in this space. 📺

Jason Aldean Announces Socially Distanced Shows at Bonnaroo Farm: 'We're Going to Turn It Up'

BY GIL KAUFMAN

Jason Aldean cannot wait to get back on stage after the yearlong COVID-19 pandemic concert freeze. The country icon announced that he'll be playing a pair of socially distanced shows as part of the Concerts on the Farm series on the Bonnaroo festival site in Manchester, Tenn., in May.

"FINALLY!!! They are turnin the boys loose in May. LETS FKIN GET IT!" Aldean wrote in an [Instagram post](#) Monday (April 5) announcing the gigs under the banner "Jason Aldean: Live at the Bonnaroo Farm." The shows will take place on May 14 and 15.

"You could've asked me to play a gas station at this point and I would say yes," Aldean said in a [statement](#) on his website about the limited-capacity gigs in which fans will be grouped in four-person pods placed six feet apart. "So being able to set up the full show with all the band guys plugged in is going to make for a really good time. We're going to turn it up — there's nobody out there to bother — and make up for some lost time, for sure."

[Aldean Army](#) members are able to purchase tickets early on Wednesday (April 7) at 11 a.m. ET, with \$1 from each ticket going to the Bonnaroo Works Fund.

Attendees can set up chairs and blankets inside their pods. Masks are required on the concert grounds, but can be removed once concertgoers are inside the pods, whose prices range from \$99-\$450. Other upcoming Concert on the Farm performers include Billy Strings, Jon Pardi, The Avett Broth-

▶ IN BRIEF

ers, and, on Sept. 2-5, this year rescheduled Bonnaroo Music + Arts Festival.

See Aldean's announcement below: [📺](#)

4 Black Artists to Perform on 2021 ACM Awards: Here's the Full Lineup

BY PAUL GREIN

The Academy of Country Music is doubling down on its message that country needs to be more welcoming to artists of color by booking four Black artists to perform on the 56th ACM Awards on April 18.

Mickey Guyton, who is set to co-host the show with **Keith Urban**, is performing, as are **Kane Brown**, whose *Mixtape Vol. 1* is up for album of the year; Americana duo **The War and Treaty**; and gospel great **CeCe Winans**, who is expected to team with **Carrie Underwood** to perform "Great Is Thy Faithfulness," which they recorded for Underwood's current gospel album, *My Savior*.

The War and Treaty, a husband-and-wife duo consisting of Michael Trotter Jr. and Tanya Blount, was named emerging artist of the year at the Americana Music Honors & Awards in 2019.

As previously reported, a record four Black artists were nominated for ACM Awards this year — Guyton and Brown as well as two artists who were not on the ACM's "full superstar performance lineup" — Jimmie Allen and John Legend.

The other performers set to appear on the show are Kelsea Ballerini, Dierks Bentley, Lee Brice, Brothers Osborne, Luke Bryan, Kenny Chesney, Eric Church, Luke Combs, Dan + Shay, Ryan Hurd, Jack Ingram, Alan Jackson, Elle King, Miranda Lambert, Little Big Town, Ashley McBryde, Maren Morris, Carly Pearce, Jon Randall, Thomas Rhett, Blake Shelton, Chris Stapleton, Urban, Underwood and Chris Young.

Notably absent from the performer lineup — though of course it's not a surprise — is Morgan Wallen, whose *Dangerous: The Double Album* spent its first 10 weeks on the Billboard 200 at No. 1. The ACM made headlines in January when it barred Wallen from the nominations process and from appearing on the ACM telecast for one year for his use of the N-word.

This will be Brothers Osborne's first performance on the show since T.J. Osborne came out as gay in February, a move that elicited [widespread support](#) in the country community.

The ACM Awards appear to be following the lead of the Grammy Awards, which also announced its "full performance lineup" [in one fell swoop](#), rather than parceling it out piecemeal, as is the norm with award shows. (Despite their assurance that that was the complete lineup, the Grammys [soon added](#) Silk Sonic, the retro-soul project consisting of Bruno Mars and Anderson .Paak.) Time will tell if the ACMs also held back one or more names for a surprise.

For the second year in a row, the ACM Awards will be broadcast from three iconic Nashville venues: the Grand Ole Opry House, Ryman Auditorium and The Bluebird Cafe.

In a joint statement, dick clark productions and the ACM stressed that COVID-19 concerns are paramount. "The health and safety of the artists, fans, industry, staff and partners involved in the ACM Awards is the number one priority. All guidelines set forth by national, state and local health officials will be closely followed and implemented during the production along with additional safety measures to be instated by dick clark productions and the Academy of Country Music."

The Country Music Association experienced a [nightmarish scenario](#) in the aftermath of the 54th annual CMA Awards on Nov. 11. Country legend Charley Pride, who received the Willie Nelson Lifetime Achievement Award and performed at the show, [died from COVID-19](#) on Dec. 12. It's unknown when and how he contracted the virus, but it's a tragedy no awards show wants to see happen again.

R.A. Clark, Barry Adelman and Linda Gi-

erahn are executive producers of the ACM Awards. Damon Whiteside, CEO of the ACM, is executive producer for the ACM.

The show is set to air live on Sunday, April 18, from 8-11 p.m. (live ET/delayed PT) and from 7-10 p.m. Central Time on CBS. It will be available to stream live and on demand on Paramount+.

To promote the show, producers rounded up video of the first ACM Awards performances from many of the artists in this year's lineup, including a very young-looking Dierks Bentley. It can be found [here](#). [📺](#)

Here Are All the Winners From the 2021 SAG Awards

BY DENISE WARNER

The pandemic might have kept the 2021 SAG Awards from being a typical affair, but the night was still a celebration for the best of in movies and TV.

Schitt's Creek and *The Crown* were among the television winners — for best ensemble in a TV comedy and best ensemble for a TV drama, respectively. Daniel Kaluuya (*Judas and the Black Messiah*) won best male actor in a supporting role in a motion picture and Youn Yuh-Jung (*Minari*) earned best female actor in a supporting role in a motion picture.

Ma Rainey's Black Bottom earned a pair for awards — Viola Davis for best female actor in a leading role in a motion picture and the late Chadwick Boseman for best male actor in a leading role in a motion picture.

See a full list of winners below:

Cast in a Motion Picture

Da 5 Bloods

Ma Rainey's Black Bottom

Minari

One Night In Miami

Trial of the Chicago 7 — **WINNER**

Male Actor in a Leading Role in a Motion Picture

Riz Ahmed, *Sound of Metal*

Chadwick Boseman, *Ma Rainey's Black*

▶ IN BRIEF

Bottom — **WINNER**

Anthony Hopkins, *The Father*

Gary Oldman, *Mank*

Steven Yeun, *Minari*

Female Actor in a Leading Role in a Motion Picture

Amy Adams, *Hillbilly Elegy*

Viola Davis, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* — **WINNER**

Vanessa Kirby, *Pieces of a Woman*

Frances McDormand, *Nomadland*

Carey Mulligan, *Promising Young Woman*

Male Actor in a Supporting Role in a Motion Picture

Sacha Baron Cohen, *The Trial of the Chicago 7*

Chadwick Boseman, *Da 5 Bloods*

Daniel Kaluuya, *Judas and the Black Messiah* — **WINNER**

Jared Leto, *The Little Things*

Leslie Odom, Jr., *One Night in Miami*

Female Actor in a Supporting Role in a Motion Picture

Maria Bakalova, *Borat Subsequent Moviefilm*

Glenn Close, *Hillbilly Elegy*

Olivia Colman, *The Father*

Youn Yuh-Jung, *Minari* — **WINNER**

Helena Zengel, *News of the World*

Ensemble in a Drama Series

Better Call Saul

Bridgerton

The Crown — **WINNER**

Ozark

Lovecraft Country

Male Actor in a Drama Series

Jason Bateman, *Ozark* — **WINNER**

Sterling K. Brown, *This Is Us*

Josh O'Connor, *The Crown*

Bob Odenkirk, *Better Call Saul*

Rege-Jean Page, *Bridgerton*

Female Actor in a Drama Series

Gillian Anderson, *The Crown* — **WINNER**

Olivia Colman, *The Crown*

Emma Corrin, *The Crown*

Julia Garner, *Ozark*

Laura Linney, *Ozark*

Female Actor in a Television Movie or Limited Series

Cate Blanchett, *Mrs. America*

Michaela Coel, *I May Destroy You*

Nicole Kidman, *The Undoing*

Anya Taylor-Joy, *The Queen's Gambit* — **WINNER**

Kerry Washington, *Little Fires Everywhere*

Male Actor in a Television Movie or Limited Series

Bill Camp, *The Queen's Gambit*

Daveed Diggs, *Hamilton*

Hugh Grant, *The Undoing*

Ethan Hawke, *The Good Lord Bird*

Mark Ruffalo, *I Know This Much Is True* — **WINNER**

Ensemble in a Comedy Series

Dead to Me

The Flight Attendant

The Great

Schitt's Creek — **WINNER**

Ted Lasso

Male Actor in a Comedy Series

Nicholas Hoult, *The Great*

Dan Levy, *Schitt's Creek*

Eugene Levy, *Schitt's Creek*

Jason Sudeikis, *Ted Lasso* — **WINNER**

Ramy Youssef, *Ramy*

Female Actor in a Comedy Series

Christina Applegate, *Dead to Me*

Linda Cardellini, *Dead to Me*

Kaley Cuoco, *The Flight Attendant*

Annie Murphy, *Schitt's Creek*

Catherine O'Hara, *Schitt's Creek* — **WINNER**

Stunt Ensemble in a Comedy or Drama Series

The Boys

Cobra Kai

Lovecraft Country

The Mandalorian — **WINNER**

Westworld

Stunt Ensemble in a Motion Picture

Da 5 Bloods

Mulan

News of the World

The Trial of the Chicago 7

Wonder Woman 1987 — **WINNER** 🏆

At 2021 SAG Awards, Actors of Color Swept All Four Film Acting Awards (Yes, That's a First)

BY PAUL GREIN

For the first time in the 27-year history of the SAG Awards, actors of color swept all four film acting awards. The awards were presented on Sunday (April 4). The late Chadwick Boseman won outstanding performance by a male actor in a leading role for his role in *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*. Viola Davis won the equivalent award for a female actor for playing blues great Rainey in the same film.

A third Black actor, Daniel Kaluuya, took the award for outstanding performance by a male actor in a supporting role for *Judas and the Black Messiah*. And Young Yuh-jung, who was born in South Korea, took the equivalent award for a female supporting actor for her work in *Minari*.

Last year, all four SAG winners for film acting — Joaquin Phoenix, Renée Zellweger, Brad Pitt and Laura Dern — went on to win Academy Awards.

Boseman, who died of colon cancer in August, is the first posthumous winner in the lead actor category at the SAG Awards. Moreover, he's just the fourth actor to win a posthumous SAG Award in any individual performance category. He follows Heath Ledger (male actor in a supporting role for *The Dark Knight*, 2008); Jerry Orbach (male actor in a drama series for *Law & Order*, 2004); and Raúl Juliá (male actor in a miniseries or television movie for *The Burning Season*, 1994).

When the 93rd annual Academy Awards are presented on April 25, Boseman is likely to become the third actor to win a posthumous Oscar. The first two were Peter Finch

▶ IN BRIEF

(best actor for *Network*, 1976) and Ledger (best supporting actor for *The Dark Knight*). No woman has ever won a posthumous acting Oscar.

Davis' win marks the third year in a row that an actor has won a SAG Award in a lead category for playing a famous singer. Rami Malek won two years ago for playing Freddie Mercury in *Bohemian Rhapsody*. Zellweger won last year for playing Judy Garland in *Judy*. Malek and Zellweger both went on to win Oscars. Davis may well join them, though she is thought to be in a close race with Frances McDormand for *No-madland* and Carey Mulligan for *Promising Young Woman*.

The SAG Award for outstanding performance by a cast in a motion picture went to *The Trial of the Chicago 7*. The 10 actors who share the award, including Sacha Baron Cohen, Joseph Gordon-Levitt and Michael Keaton, are all men. It's the first time the winning acting ensemble in this category has included no female actors.

Last year's winner of the cast award, *Parasite*, went on to win the Oscar for best picture. But the two awards don't always go hand-in-hand. Of the 25 previous films to win the SAG Award for outstanding performance by a cast in a motion picture since the category's inception in 1995 (the awards show's second year), 12 went on to win the Oscar for best picture, 12 were nominated for best picture but did not win, and one wasn't even nominated for an Oscar for best picture. (That was [Mike Nichols'](#) 1996 farce *The Birdcage*.)

Gillian Anderson and Catherine O'Hara each won two SAG Awards on the night. Anderson won for outstanding performance by a female actor in a drama series for playing Margaret Thatcher in *The Crown*. In addition, she shared in the award for outstanding performance by an ensemble in a drama series. In addition to winning for outstanding performance by a female actor in a comedy series for playing Moira Rose on *Schitt's Creek*, O'Hara shared in the award for outstanding performance by an ensemble in a comedy series.

Jason Bateman won outstanding performance by a male actor in a drama series for the second time in three years for his work

on *Ozark*.

The awards were presented in a briskly paced, one-hour show that aired on TNT and TBS. The cast of *Ted Lasso* opened the show with an awards-themed sketch. AJR's "Bang!" a top 10 hit on the Billboard Hot 100, was used to soundtrack a montage early in the show. 📺

Skegss Ride to No. 1 In Australia With 'Rehearsal'

BY LARS BRANDLE

Surf-rock trio [Skegss](#) secure their first No. 1 on Australia's albums chart as *Rehearsal* (Concord/Universal) opens at No. 1.

Hailing from Byron Bay, Skegss enjoyed a No. 2 peak with their debut from 2018, *My Own Mess*, which was nominated for best rock album at the ARIA Awards. *Rehearsal* goes one better, as it starts at the summit of the [ARIA Albums Chart](#), the sixth homegrown album to lead the survey in 2021.

Rehearsal is the best-selling vinyl album of the week, placing it at No. 1 on the ARIA Vinyl Albums Chart.

Skegss' "good time energy is exactly what we need right now and doubly good that a Byron Bay group tops the chart this week," says ARIA CEO Annabelle Herd, referencing the last-minute cancelation of [Bluesfest last week](#) due to COVID-19 concerns.

All that good time energy is enough to bump [Justin Bieber's](#) *Justice* 1-2, while [Ev- anescence](#) bag their fifth ARIA Top Ten entry with *The Bitter Truth*, new at No. 3. Amy Lee and Co. have ruled the ARIA Chart on two occasions, with *Fallen* (February 2004) and *The Open Door* (October 2006).

[Dua Lipa's](#) *Future Nostalgia* continues to find chart steam, holding at No. 4; while U.S. rapper [NF](#) is flying high with *Clouds* (The Mixtape), new at No. 5. It's NF's second Top Five effort following *The Search*, which peaked at No. 3 in August 2019.

[Faith No More](#) frontman [Mike Pat-](#)

[ton](#) makes another chart appearance in the Land Down Under, this time with his "supergroup" Tomahawk, whose latest LP *Tonic Immobility* bows at No. 18. It's the followup to *Oddfellows*, which just snuck inside the Top 40 following its release in February 2013, peaking at No. 37.

Ten years after [Tame Impala](#) announced their arrival to the world stage, [Kevin Parker's](#) psychedelic-rock outfit returns to the ARIA Chart with *InnerSpeaker*, their debut album. *InnerSpeaker* reenters the survey at No. 19 off the back of its [10th anniversary reissue](#). The album debuted at No. 4 following its release in May 2010.

Over on the [ARIA Singles Chart](#), [Glass Animals'](#) "Heat Waves" continues its hot streak as it enters a sixth week at the summit. The last British group to reign over the Singles Chart was [Clean Bandit](#), who also logged six straight weeks in box seat with "Rockabye" in a stretch from December 2016 to January 2017.

Also, Sydney rapper Masked Wolf leaps to a career high as his viral hit "Astronaut In The Ocean" lifts 7-5.

Finally, [Lil Nas X](#) has this week's highest debut with the controversial release "Montero (Call Me By Your Name)," new at No. 16. It's the second single released from the American rapper's forthcoming debut album, *Montero*, due out later in 2021. 📺

Lil Nas X' Montero' Battles With Nathan Evans' 'Wellerman' For U.K. Chart Crown

BY LARS BRANDLE

L[il Nas X](#) will need to see off the challenge of a sea shanty to secure a second straight week atop the U.K. singles chart.

The U.S. rapper's "Montero (Call Me By

▶ IN BRIEF

Your Name)” is out front in the early stages of the chart week, though not by much.

“Montero” leads the First Look chart, which gauges the popularity of singles based on sales and streams after the first 48 hours, with Nathan Evans’ “Wellerman” just 500 chart sales behind in second place.

Riton x Nightcrawlers’ “Friday” featuring Mufasa & Hypeman is another 700 chart sales behind at No. 3, according to the OCC, and is still very much in the race.

Joel Corry, **Raye** and **David Guetta** could snag a spot in this week’s Top 5, as “BED” lifts 7-5 (up 19-13), while new releases from Ava Max (“My Head & My Heart”) and the **Bruno Mars** and **Anderson .Paak** project Silk Sonic (“Leave The Door Open” up 23-17) make their moves for a Top 20 spot.

The Official U.K. Singles Chart is published Friday evening, local time. **■**

The Weeknd Donates \$1 Million for Hunger Relief in Ethiopia

BY ASHLEY IASIMONE

The Weeknd has announced that he is donating \$1 million to hunger relief in Ethiopia. The money will provide two million meals to those in need of food aid amid the **ongoing conflict** between the government and the Tigray region.

“My heart breaks for my people of Ethiopia as innocent civilians ranging from small children to the elderly are being senselessly murdered and entire villages are being displaced out of fear and destruction,” he wrote on Instagram on Sunday (April 4).

The Weeknd added, “I will be donating \$1 million to provide 2 million meals through the United Nations World Food Program and encourage those who can to please give as well.”

The crisis in the Tigray region has brought on thousands of deaths, and mil-

lions of people have been displaced.

The Weeknd, whose real name is Abel Tesfaye, was born in Canada but is the son of two Ethiopian immigrants.

In June, he **donated \$1 million** to help those affected by the coronavirus pandemic, **as well as \$500,000** to nonprofit organizations committed to racial equality. He also **pledged \$300,000** to victims of the explosion in Beirut, Lebanon, in August.

See the singer’s statement about his latest generous donation on Instagram **here**.

Donations to help with hunger relief in Ethiopia can be made on the **U.N. World Food Program’s website**, which explains that “the outbreak of conflict in Tigray last November coincided with the peak harvest period, leading to lost employment and incomes, disrupted markets, a rise in food prices, and limited access to cash and fuel” and that the organization is “aiming to support 1.4 million of these vulnerable people before it’s too late.” **■**

Blake Shelton, Chris Stapleton, Urban, Underwood and Chris Young.

Notably absent from the performer lineup — though of course it’s not a surprise — is Morgan Wallen, whose *Dangerous: The Double Album* spent its first 10 weeks on the Billboard 200 at No. 1. The ACM made headlines in January when it barred Wallen from the nominations process and from appearing on the ACM telecast for one year for his use of the N-word.

This will be Brothers Osborne’s first performance on the show since T.J. Osborne came out as gay in February, a move that elicited **widespread support** in the country community.

The ACM Awards appear to be following the lead of the Grammy Awards, which also announced its “full performance lineup” **in one fell swoop**, rather than parceling it out piecemeal, as is the norm with award shows. (Despite their assurance that that was the complete lineup, the Grammys **soon added** Silk Sonic, the retro-soul project consisting of Bruno Mars and Anderson .Paak.) Time will tell if the ACMs also held back one or more names for a surprise.

For the second year in a row, the ACM Awards will be broadcast from three iconic Nashville venues: the Grand Ole

Opry House, Ryman Auditorium and The Bluebird Cafe.

In a joint statement, Dick Clark Productions and the ACM stressed that COVID-19 concerns are paramount. “The health and safety of the artists, fans, industry, staff and partners involved in the ACM Awards is the number one priority. All guidelines set forth by national, state and local health officials will be closely followed and implemented during the production along with additional safety measures to be instated by Dick Clark Productions and the Academy of Country Music.”

The Country Music Association experienced a **nightmarish scenario** in the aftermath of the 54th annual CMA Awards on Nov. 11. Country legend Charley Pride, who received the Willie Nelson Lifetime Achievement Award and performed at the show, **died from COVID-19** on Dec. 12. It’s unknown when and how he contracted the virus, but it’s a tragedy no awards show wants to see happen again.

R.A. Clark, Barry Adelman and Linda Gierahn are executive producers of the ACM Awards. Damon Whiteside, CEO of the ACM, is executive producer for the ACM.

The show is set to air live on Sunday, April 18, from 8-11 p.m. (live ET/delayed PT) and from 7-10 p.m. Central Time on CBS. It will be available to stream live and on demand on Paramount+.

To promote the show, producers rounded up video of the first ACM Awards performances from many of the artists in this year’s lineup, including a very young-looking Dierks Bentley. It can be found **here**. **■**