

INSIDE

• **Split Decisions:** Olivia Rodrigo Has Given Up Millions in Publishing Royalties

• **Bonnaroo 2021 Festival Canceled**

• **Wave and Riot Games Bring Virtual Metal Band Pentakill to Online Stage**

• **In Its Debut Year, ARC Music Festival Is Featuring All Flavors of House in the Genre's Hometown**

• **CMA & ACM Respond to Bobby Bones' Claims About 'Manipulated' Awards Show Voting**

• **Walker Hayes' 'Fancy' Applebee's Ad Reinforces Brand Interest In Country Music**

• **BILLBOARD 200**
CLICK [HERE](#)

The Concert Business Was Expecting a 'Hot Vax' Summer, But It's a Hot Mess Instead

BY DAVE BROOKS

Back in March, veteran country concert promoter **Louis Messina** was thrilled when [George Strait](#) sold out his Aug. 13 and 14 comeback shows at T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas. On the nights of the concerts, however, Messina noticed that the no-show rate was a staggering 20%, far higher than the 1% to 2% he says is typical for the venue. And no-shows don't only mean less revenue from food and merchandise — they make promoters nervous about future ticket sales.

For over a year, Messina, who partners with AEG, had kept tours off the road, paying his staff \$9 million in salary without any revenue coming in (money he later recouped from the Shuttered Venue Operators Grant program). Now the concert business is back to work, but a significant number of fans aren't ready to show up.

"People's fears haven't subsided as much as we had hoped," says Messina, "and they're walking away from events." Breakthrough cases are driving concern about contracting COVID-19, even among the vaccinated, and concerts where attendees aren't required

to wear masks or prove they've been vaccinated pose even greater risks. (T-Mobile Arena doesn't currently require either.)

Since April, when [Bad Bunny](#) sold out an arena tour [in record time](#), promoters, artists and fans alike were expecting the concert business to return this summer, get back to normal by 2022 and thrive on pent-up demand. Instead, uncertainty is back: COVID-19 cases are rising, vaccines don't provide perfect protection, and parents of children under 12 may be worried about catching the virus at a show and spreading the delta variant at home. That uncertainty seems to be affecting demand: There's growing evidence that ticket sales are slowing for indoor arena concerts.

Messina's suggested solution: Require fans, artists and crew members who enter concert venues to show they've been vaccinated. "If we don't do something about this slowdown in the business," he says, "we're no longer going to have a business." But that's easier said than done, since there's still plenty of pushback

[\(continued\)](#)

 **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.

A photograph of Billy Joel in profile, looking towards the left. He is wearing a dark blue baseball cap with a gold star and the word "MASTERS" on it, and a small American flag patch. He is also wearing sunglasses and a dark jacket with a gold "W" logo on the left chest. The background is Fenway Park, with its green facade and red seats visible.

**BILLY
JOEL**

IN CONCERT

**AUGUST 4
SOLD OUT
2021**

ANOTHER HOME RUN AT FENWAY PARK

35,346 SOLD • \$4,798,694.00 GROSS

FENWAY'S FIRST EVER STADIUM RESIDENCY CONTINUES WITH 7 CONSECUTIVE SELLOUTS

THANK YOU

**BILLY JOEL
THE BILLY JOEL STAFF AND CREW
DENNIS ARFA**

FROM ALL OF US AT

**BOSTON
RED SOX**

► IN BRIEF

against vaccine and mask mandates, which have been highly politicized. Requiring vaccines is now banned by executive order or legislation in 20 states.

Still, hundreds of U.S. venues have already enacted such mandates and thousands more are on the way. In August, promotion giants Live Nation and AEG Presents said they would [require fans](#) to show proof of vaccination to attend shows at venues they own, as well as at concerts and festivals they produce. And most of the more than 7,000 independent venues that received government assistance under the Shuttered Venue Operator Grants program have joined regional groups that mandate vaccine requirements for concerts.

That still leaves most arenas and stadiums, though. In the United States, about 100 to 200 arenas and 30 to 50 stadiums host the vast majority of the tours that play venues of that size, and without a national mandate, promoters that want to book them face an array of state and regional regulations. New York and California currently require events of 5,000 or more to check the vaccine status of attendees, for example, while the governors of Texas and Florida have issued executive orders that ban such mandates. The touring industry can't resume at full scale without these venues, which account for up to \$10 billion in ticket sales each year, *Billboard* estimates.

"I can skip Texas and Florida if they don't

change their laws, but I cannot skip much more than that," says Messina. "This issue has been so politicized that it's impossible for some artists to take a side." That's especially true in genres like country, where some artists have significant conservative fan bases.

Part of the problem is that no one wants to play the heavy — especially to fans who have already purchased tickets. "It's even more difficult when the concert was announced without a vaccine requirement and we're trying to implement them after the fact," says Red Light Management founder **Coran Capshaw**. "There has to be a cultural moment when most people in the business overwhelmingly support this idea."

A concert-business vaccine mandate would significantly decrease the chances of fans contracting COVID-19 at shows, and potentially make ticket buyers more confident. But even that wouldn't provide the kind of 100% protection that some promoters were hoping would bring the pandemic to a definitive end. While vaccines provide significant protection against the kinds of serious COVID-19 cases that can lead to hospitalization or death, they don't offer complete immunity from contracting or spreading the virus. That means going to a concert still comes with some risk, which is affecting consumer confidence. Demand on the secondary market for [Dead & Company](#)'s highly anticipated 29-date

amphitheater/stadium tour that started Aug. 23 has plummeted as cases of the delta variant spike, according to concert data site TicketIQ, with prices for many shows dropping by 40%. [The Eagles](#), who can typically sell out a tour in days, took much longer than usual to fully sell their 21-date Hotel California tour.

A vaccine mandate is still a worthy goal — it could have significant public health benefits and reassure fans that promoters are doing everything they can to keep events safe. But there's an increasing acknowledgment that the idea the pandemic would end swiftly and definitively may have been wishful thinking.

"We're going to get to a point where we learn to live with the virus," says Capshaw, who thinks promoters will be able to incentivize fans to get vaccinated and use data to minimize viral spread. "We're having really good business out there." Capshaw believes that some of the tour cancellations attributed to COVID-19 may have less to do with caution than with soft sales in a crowded market. In some cases, when too many shows went on sale at once or there wasn't enough time to sell enough tickets to make the tour profitable, "tying it to COVID isn't appropriate. It's bullshit. We have enough challenges in this business; we don't need to do that."

The roaring comeback that some industry executives envisioned may not come to pass,

AUTHORITATIVE INTELLIGENCE.
DELIVERED DIGITALLY.

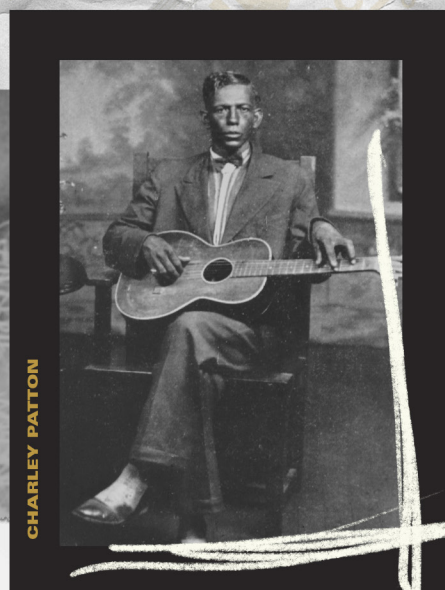
billboard

DIGITAL NEWSLETTERS

CLICK HERE
FOR FREE
DELIVERY



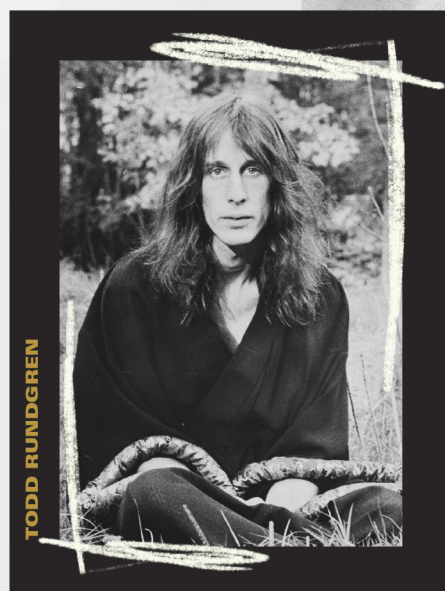
CAROLE KING



CHARLEY PATTON



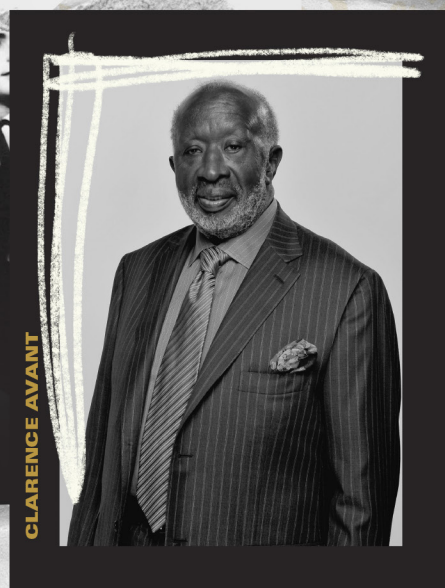
JAY-Z



TODD RUNDGREN



KRAFTWERK (RALF HÜTTER / FLORIAN SCHNEIDER)



CLARENCE AVANT

**CONGRATULATIONS CAROLE KING, JAY-Z, TODD RUNDGREN,
CHARLEY PATTON, KRAFTWERK (RALF HÜTTER / FLORIAN
SCHNEIDER), CLARENCE AVANT, AND ALL THE 2021 ROCK AND
ROLL HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES**



**SONY MUSIC
PUBLISHING**

► IN BRIEF

but Capshaw says that “early, well-attended shows” give him hope that a recovery is beginning. “I’m optimistic that the full picture will show we’re making progress.”

A version of this article appears in the Aug. 28, 2021, issue of [Billboard](#). 

Split Decisions: Olivia Rodrigo Has Given Up Millions in Publishing Royalties

BY KRISTIN ROBINSON

Olivia Rodrigo hasn’t been shy about sharing her musical influences on her [Billboard 200](#)-topping debut album, *SOUR*. And since its release, she’s been sharing with them a good deal too.

Last week, Olivia Rodrigo retroactively added [Paramore’s Hayley Williams](#) and [Joshua Farro](#) to the [songwriting credits](#) for “good 4 u” due to an interpolation of the band’s “Misery Business,” which hit No. 28 on the Hot 100 chart in January 2008. It was the second time since *SOUR*’s release that the 18-year-old Rodrigo has

added writing splits on her songs due to similarities between her work and other previously released songs. In July, Rodrigo [shared credits](#) on her second single, “deja vu,” with [Taylor Swift](#), [Jack Antonoff](#), and Annie Clark (also known as [St. Vincent](#)) for its reminiscence of Swift’s “Cruel Summer” from 2019’s *Lover*.

That also followed Rodrigo granting Swift and Antonoff [writing credits](#) on the album cut “1 step forward, 3 steps back” before *SOUR*’s release for including an interpolation of Swift’s 2017 *Reputation* track “New Year’s Day.” (Fans have also noted similarities between the guitar riff on the album’s opener “Brutal” and [Elvis Costello](#)’s 1978 hit “Pump It Up,” but Costello [tweeted in response](#), “this is fine by me. It’s how rock & roll works” and will not be seeking writing credit.)

All of these interpolations have proven costly for Rodrigo. Although most of the album was written by Rodrigo and co-writer/producer [Daniel Nigro](#), the duo now cedes half of the publishing revenue for “good 4 u,” “deja vu” and two thirds of it for “1 step forward, 3 steps back” with these other writers who were likely inspiration but had nothing to do with the songs directly.

In the case of “good 4 u,” Williams and Farro now make just as much in publishing royalties as Rodrigo and Nigro, holding a collective 50% ownership of the composition.

The single to date has generated at least

\$2.4 million in global publishing royalties, *Billboard* estimates, accounting for streaming, sales, and some airplay activities from MRC Data, but excluding synchronization payments, radio airplay from outside the U.S. and general licensing. This means Williams and Farro share about \$1.2 million in royalties so far for “good 4 u,” the same amount also shared by Nigro and Rodrigo.

Although the addition of Williams and Farro was retroactive, sources say the Paramore team had been in touch with Rodrigo’s about the single prior to its release.

With “deja vu,” which earned at least \$1.3 million in worldwide publishing royalties (\$1.26 million of which was made in the U.S.), *Billboard* estimates, Swift’s writing team was retroactively granted 50% of the songwriting credit for the single. Swift has 25%, Antonoff has 20%, and Clark has 5% for the interpolation of their work on “Cruel Summer.” This totals out to be at least \$325,678 in global publishing royalties for Swift, \$260,542 for Antonoff, and \$65,135 for Clark. Rodrigo and Nigro split the remaining 50% of royalties equally, meaning both pocket at least \$598,575 each in total publishing revenue globally.

Though “1 step forward, 3 steps back” hasn’t reached the same level of success as the other two singles, it has still earned more than \$258,379 in publishing royalties, *Billboard* estimates. The song is one of the few from *SOUR* solely written by Ro-

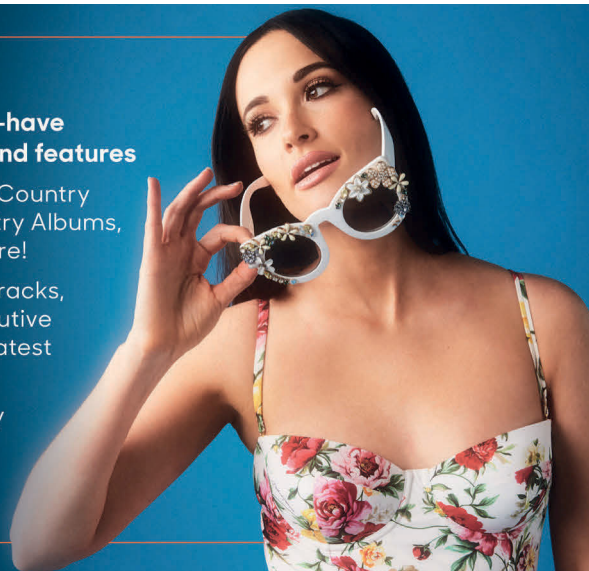
SUBSCRIBE TO

billboard
COUNTRY
UPDATE

The country music industry’s must-have source for news, charts, analysis and features

- EXCLUSIVE CHARTS including Hot Country Songs, Country Airplay, Top Country Albums, Country Streaming Songs and more!
- Weekly content including Makin’ Tracks, On The Charts, a roundup of executive moves and timely analysis of the latest country news and trends
- Expert insight and commentary by Tom Roland and Jim Asker

SIGN UP FOR FREE
DELIVERY EVERY MONDAY
[BILLBOARD.COM/NEWSLETTERS](https://www.billboard.com/newsletters)



WE'RE BACK, LIVE IN MIAMI

billboard
LATIN
MUSIC
WEEK

live in miami

SEPT 20 - 25, 2021

#BILLBOARDLATINWEEK

WWW.BILLBOARDLATINMUSICWEEK.COM

FOR SPONSORSHIP INQUIRIES:

MARCIA OLIVAL, MARCIAOLIVAL29@GMAIL.COM | MIKE VAN, MVAN@PMC.COM

► IN BRIEF

drigo. But after sharing those credits, she holds 33.34% composition ownership, while Swift also holds 33.34% and Antonoff holds 33.32%. So far, each have earned about \$86,000 from the song's publishing.

Combined, that adds up to more than \$2 million in publishing royalties given up by Rodrigo and Nigro. But aside from building good will with these other notable writers, Rodrigo has possibly avoided much more costly copyright infringement lawsuits with some of the biggest names in music. Previous infringement cases have ended badly for many defendants, namely [Robin Thicke's](#) "Blurred Lines" trial which resulted in a hefty penalty of [\\$7.3 million](#) (later reduced to around [\\$5 million](#)), paid to the estate of [Marvin Gaye](#) for the interpolation of "Got to Give It Up." The highest judgment for a copyright infringement case involving music in history, the "Blurred Lines" suit has been the impetus for many artists and writers in the last few years to settle disputes out of court.

Additional reporting by Ed Christman. [E]

Bonnaroo 2021 Festival Canceled

BY JESSICA NICHOLSON

This year's Bonnaroo Music & Arts Festival, which was slated for Sept. 2-5 at Great Stage Park in Manchester, Tenn., has been canceled due to waterlogged areas and flooded campgrounds, organizer's announced on Tuesday, Aug 31.

"We are absolutely heartbroken to announce that we must cancel Bonnaroo," organizers said in a [statement](#). "While this weekend's weather looks outstanding, currently Centeroo is waterlogged in many areas, the ground is incredibly saturated on our tollbooth paths, and the campgrounds are flooded to the point that we are unable to drive in or park vehicles safely.

"We have done everything in our power to try to keep the show moving forward, but Mother Nature has dealt us a tremendous amount of rain over the past 24 hours,

and we have run out of options to try to make the event happen safely and in a way that lives up to the Bonnaroo experience. Please find ways to safely gather with your Bonnaroo community and continue to radiate positivity during this disappointing time. WE WILL SEE YOU ON THE FARM IN JUNE 2022!"

All tickets that were purchased through Front Gate Tickets will be refunded in as little as 30 days, to the original method of payment.

Just Monday, Bonnaroo's organizers had announced they were [reducing camping capacity](#) at the event, due to rains from the now-downgraded Tropical Depression Ida. Bonnaroo is promoted by Live Nation.

Among this year's Bonnaroo performers were Deadmau5, Foo Fighters, Lizzo, Megan Thee Stallion, My Morning Jacket, Run the Jewels, Young Thug and Tyler, The Creator. [E]

Wave and Riot Games Bring Virtual Metal Band Pentakill to Online Stage

BY TATIANA CIRISANO

Virtual entertainment company Wave has turned artists like [The Weeknd](#) and [John Legend](#) into avatars to perform virtual concerts. Next, the company is working with a band whose members are avatars to begin with.

That would be [Pentakill](#), the chart-topping virtual heavy metal band created by games publisher Riot Games for its flagship title *League of Legends*. Today (Sept. 1), Wave and Riot Games are announcing a partnership that will begin with an immersive virtual concert from Pentakill on Sept. 8 premiering their new concept album *Lost Chapter*.

Dubbed *Lost Chapter: An Interactive Album Experience*, the event promises to let

audience members engage with the band and each other through live chat and voting, see themselves live onstage alongside Pentakill and influence the performance in real-time. The album will arrive on streaming services following the show.

"Riot Games is an ideal Wave collaborator as they have been an innovator in using music and emerging technologies to build and extend their worlds beyond games," Wave COO [Jarred Kennedy](#) said. "Wave has sat at the intersection of music and gaming since its inception, and we're excited to work with Riot to help shape the future of virtual performance."

The Los Angeles-based Wave has hosted more than 50 virtual concerts, called "Waves," with artists like [Dillon Francis](#), [Alison Wonderland](#) and [Tinashe](#), where artists perform as avatars in imaginative virtual settings. The company names Warner Music Group an [investor](#) and China's Tencent Music Entertainment a [strategic partner](#).

Meanwhile, Riot Games has been steadily making inroads in the music industry. In July, the company debuted Riot Games Music, a music label arm that will release projects from virtual stars including Pentakill as well as hip-hop group True Damage and K-pop girl group K/DA. The label's first official release was *Sessions: Vi*, a collection of music for gaming streamers to use in their videos without having to worry about copyright strikes.

Having released two albums, *I: Smite and Ignite* and *II: Grasp of the Undying*, Pentakill has reached the top 10 of Billboard's Hard Rock Albums chart, topped the iTunes metal and rock charts and scored features with metal musicians like [Tommy Lee](#), [Nine Inch Nails](#) alumnus Danny Lohner and Noora Louhimo of Finnish band Battle Beast.

"Wave is a great partner for us as we continue to expand our music efforts," Riot Games Music head Toa Dunn said. "We aim to push the envelope in storytelling and virtual artistry, and strive to break new ground in the virtual world for gamers and music lovers alike."

Lost Chapter: An Interactive Album Experience premieres on Sept. 8 at 4:30 p.m. EST at [wave.watch/pentakill](#). [E]



ON SALE | SEPT. 18, 2021

2021

NEW & RENOVATED VENUES

On September 18th *Billboard* will provide readers with an exclusive backstage pass into the newest and latest renovated venues around the world. This special feature will assess the architecture, production capabilities, sound, capacity level, fan amenities, and more that entice talent to these highly anticipated venues.

Take this opportunity to advertise your venue and reach key touring industry decision-makers as they plan tour schedules and map out must-play venues.

CONTACT

Cynthia Mellow | 615.352.0265
cmellow.billboard@gmail.com

Joe Maimone | 212.493.4427
joe.maimone@billboard.com

Lee Ann Photoglo | 615.376.7931
laphotoglo@gmail.com

Ryan O'Donnell | +447843437176
ryan.odonnell@billboard.com

Marcia Olival | 786.586.4901
marciaolival@gmail.com

ON SALE 9/18 | ISSUE CLOSE 9/7 | MATERIALS DUE 9/8

billboard

► IN BRIEF

In Its Debut Year, ARC Music Festival Is Featuring All Flavors of House in the Genre's Hometown

BY KATIE BAIN

In the late '80s and early '90s, house music was forged in Chicago. In the Midwest metropolis, Frankie Knuckles and other musical pioneers created the genre that would, in time, travel over the Atlantic and mutate into a dizzying variety of sub-genres. These flavors of house — progressive, acid, tech house, big room and beyond — would, eventually, make their way back over the ocean to become the prevailing sounds of the modern mainstream U.S. dance scene.

This weekend, in its debut year, Chicago's ARC Music Festival will wrangle these many flavors of house onto a single lineup, for an event its founders hope will become a tentpole stop on the global dance music circuit.

Happening in Union Park this Sept. 4-5, ARC is being produced by the Chicago-based Auris Presents, a production company [launched in 2020](#) by partners Nick Karounos, a veteran venue owner and festival producer, Stuart Hackley, the founder of national event company Loud Crowd and John Curley, who hails from electronic promoter Paradigm Presents and who's been a staple in the Chicago dance music scene since the early '90s.

Planning for ARC began in May of 2020, with the producers initially putting together, Hackley says, "Something smaller-scale with a very niche — very underground European lineup. Then we took a step back and said, 'This is really cool, but is this the scale we want to do? We think we can go bigger.'"

The enhanced vision became to put on a

four-stage event with a roughly 20,000-person capacity that would represent the entire spectrum of modern house music, with an emphasis on the Chicago veterans who pioneered the sound — ones who don't always get the shine they deserve when playing other large-scale festivals.

"You see a lot of festivals that incorporate legends and innovators of a scene, and they're sometimes relegated to side stages or lower parts of a lineup — places where their impact in the culture of music is not properly reflected," says Curley. "That has to do with many things — artist billing, ticket sales, artist's profile size — but part of our mission was to take all the artists that are part of the Chicago house music community through the years, people without whom this sound would not be around, and put them right next to the larger artists that are playing this music nowadays."

Thus, a lineup that had initially featured stars of the European house scene is now crowded with Chicago legends, including Derrick Carter, DJ Heather, DJ Pierre and Gene Ferris, alongside current scene stars like Bob Moses, Camelphat, Fisher and Zhu, as well as underground house and tech house acts like The Martinez Brothers and the Michigan-born, Ibiza-based Seth Troxler (who will go back to back with Carter in a set Curley calls "a meeting of the Midwest minds"), and even the progressive sounds of Eric Prydz, who for the first time ever will be playing under all three of his artist names (Prydz, Pryda and Cirez D) at one event. Late night sets will happen at marquee Chicago venues including Spybar, Prysm and Concord Music Hall.

While its offerings are unique, ARC Music Festival does have competition, with the event happening on the same weekend as the longstanding Chicago electronic festival North Coast — which is taking place Sept. 3-5 at the waterside Huntington Bank Pavilion, and which this year features more than 60 acts, including headliners like Rezz, Kaskade, Griz and Louis The Child.

While it may seem dubious for a first-time festival to compete with a similarly sized and more well-established show featuring fellow house music stars, Curley and Hackley believe ARC will succeed, given that

it's offering a different type of experience predicated on less commercial sounds — on they hope will attract a mature type of dance music fan. They say ticket sales have come not only from Chicago and the greater Midwest, but throughout the United States and into Europe and South America.

And while they acknowledge planning a large-scale live music event during the pandemic and launching it amidst fluctuating city, county and statewide regulations around public health has been an unprecedented challenge, bringing ARC to life during COVID-19 has also made it possible for ARC to book acts that may have not been available if the regular touring season was happening in Europe.

"I do think that this year, you saw artists that decided to come over to the U.S. earlier than they would have in times when they may have had other plans," says Curley. "But I also think we're establishing ARC as a flagpole in this house and techno touring community. That was one of our goals — to build a flagship event artists can plan their years around."

Certainly the European element of ARC's lineup is a welcome addition to the Midwest market, which doesn't have the same number of house and techno focused events as New York and Los Angeles. (That said, over in techno's birthplace of Detroit, Movement Festival has been holding it down for the local scene and the global stars of the genre for annually since 2007.)

For Chicago, however, ARC represents both a full circle and an expansion, with the sound that was created in the city getting featured in all its forms at a site less than two away from The Warehouse, the venue where Knuckles drew early believers of the music, and from which the genre took its name. For artists who make the music and are coming to town to play it, that's a special opportunity.

"When they come to Chicago, they know they're coming into the birthplace of house music," says Curley. "They're excited about it, and you can see that in their sets." **B**

PROMOTION

ON SALE
OCT 8

2021

billboard LATIN GRAMMY® VOTER GUIDE E-NEWSLETTER

Billboard will publish its inaugural LATIN GRAMMY® Voter Guide E-Newsletter, showcasing the music and artist that made an impact during the eligibility period for the 22nd Latin GRAMMY® Awards.

This special issue will highlight the artists, producers and other creative professionals whose work is in contention this year, including for Record Of The Year, Album Of The Year, Song Of The Year, and Best New Artist.

Take this opportunity to remind the industry of the accomplished work that was released between September 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021, as the members of the Latin Recording Academy® prepare to cast their ballots for Latin's Music's Biggest Night®.

ON SALE 10/8
AD CLOSE 10/1
MATERIALS DUE 10/6



CONTACT:

Marcia Olival | 786.586.4901 | marciaolival29@gmail.com

***Special rates available for independent artists and companies.**

► IN BRIEF

CMA & ACM Respond to Bobby Bones' Claims About 'Manipulated' Awards Show Voting

BY JESSICA NICHOLSON

Radio and television personality Bobby Bones — host of the Premiere/iHeartMedia nationally syndicated radio program *The Bobby Bones Show* — took to social media on Sunday to allege that voting for the Academy of Country Music and Country Music Association Awards are “manipulated” by labels and that behind-the-scenes dealings at country labels affect which songs reach No. 1 and for how long, claiming that half of chart-topping country hits are illegitimate No. 1 hits. His comments have drawn considerable feedback in the country community and refutation from the awards shows.

In [one TikTok post](#) concerning country radio chart-toppers, Bones takes country record labels to task, saying, “Here’s the truth about No. 1 songs: It’s politics. They trade them out like baseball cards. A record label will talk to another record label and go, ‘OK, I’ll give you this No. 1 on this date; you give me that No. 1 on that date.’ Which really, it just should be the song that’s the most wanted, the most listened to, the song that people demand ... and so when you hear someone talk about a No. 1 song, I would say half of them aren’t legitimate No. 1 songs. They have to be good to get to the top 10. There’s a lot of research done into these songs. But when it gets to being a No. 1 song, it’s people going, ‘OK, I’ll give you this; you give me that.’ And it’s everybody trying to create as many No. 1s as possible, because everything’s the same. Everybody gets a participation trophy at No. 1.”

Though Bones did not say which specific songs he felt were undeserved chart-toppers, he did mention Luke Combs and Maren Morris as artists whose songs he felt should have had longer stints at No. 1.

“For example, a Luke Combs song could be No. 1 for 10 weeks, but because of politics, the label will go, ‘Ah, let’s let somebody else get in that spot,’ and they’ll move Luke Combs to No. 2 and he’ll sit there for a few weeks. The same thing with like a Maren Morris.”

Billboard reached out to several label representatives regarding Bones’ statements, though no labels would comment on Bones’ statements as of press time.

On Tuesday (Aug. 31), Bones returned to [TikTok](#) to say he was “surprised at all the controversy” his comments were causing and to highlight a story from today’s [Country Insider](#) that featured some anonymous radio sources agreeing with Bones’ assessment, while others disagreed or said the issue was far more complicated.

In a [separate TikTok post](#), Bones also alleged that bigger labels have an advantage when it comes to voting for winners for the CMA Awards and ACM Awards because of bloc voting and the ability to “manipulate” votes.

“Let’s say you work for Record Label A, which has 3,000 people that works there and they have an artist up for entertainer of the year, and Record Label B has 250 people that work there and they have an artist up for entertainer of the year,” Bones alleges. “Well, what Record Label A does is they organize everyone to bloc vote, so those thousands of votes go to their artists, and then Record Label B, that doesn’t have near the number of workers or voters, are kind of screwed unless somehow they get votes from everybody else. But bloc voting is done in the awards shows, but not illegal actually.”


He then goes on to praise the CMA and ACM organizations for trying to keep it “as legit as possible.”

Despite Bones’ assertions, both the CMA and ACM tell *Billboard* they have rigorous restrictions in place that prohibit bloc voting. The CMA caps all companies in terms of the number of voting members they can

have so larger companies cannot manipulate the vote. The organization also works with its accounting firm, Deloitte, to review voting patterns to determine if bloc voting has occurred, even within the limited voting members. If it has, those votes are eliminated. Furthermore, the majority of CMA members are individuals without company affiliations.

The ACM caps corporate accounts at 100 total members, regardless of the number of employees and inclusive of all imprints. Similarly to the CMA, a third party auditor monitors the voting process and any unusual voting patterns are flagged and investigated.

When contacted by *Billboard*, a representative for Bones said he had no other comments to add to his previous TikTok statements. An iHeartRadio representative did not reply to a request for comment.

—Assistance on this story provided by Melinda Newman 

Walker Hayes' 'Fancy' Applebee's Ad Reinforces Brand Interest In Country Music

BY TOM ROLAND

Since Aug. 23, the current Walker Hayes single, “Fancy Like,” has been in heavy rotation... on TV.

Following its release on June 4 and a summer blow-up led by TikTok [videos](#) that feature Hayes and daughter Lela dancing on the family’s front porch, the song emerged in an [Applebee’s commercial](#) during daytime hours and saw plenty of repeat action throughout the past week. It’s the latest development for an unlikely hit that topped *Billboard*’s Hot Country Songs chart on July 19 and continues to climb on Country Airplay, reaching No. 23 on the chart dated Sept. 4.

It’s also the latest installment in a parade of music-centered ads that the restaurant

ON SALE
OCTOBER
9

billboard

TOP LATIN POWER PLAYERS

*On October 9th, **Billboard** will profile the most influential people in Latin music, from record label executives, music publishers and management companies to radio and television stations and live entertainment*

Join *Billboard* in congratulating this year's Latin Power Players.

ON SALE 10/9 | ISSUE CLOSE 9/29 | MATERIALS DUE 9/30

TO ADVERTISE, CONTACT:

Marcia Olival | 786.586.4901 | marciaolival29@gmail.com

Joe Maimone | 212.493.4427 | joe.maimone@billboard.com

Lee Ann Photoglo | 615.376.7931 | laphotoglo@gmail.com

Cynthia Mellow | 615.352.0625 | cmellow.billboard.com

Ryan O'Donnell | +447843437176 | cmellow.billboard.com

*Editorial content subject to change.

► IN BRIEF

chain has offered in recent years. Those campaigns have tapped country titles by the likes of Glen Campbell, Toby Keith, Zac Brown Band and Sammy Kershaw alongside pop fare by John Sebastian, James Brown, Eric Carmen and Smash Mouth.

“I had no idea that people would actually hear the song, do the dance, spread the song like wildfire,” Hayes says of “Fancy Like.” And, he adds, “I had no idea Applebee’s would be so receptive.”

Applebee’s is hardly the only advertiser showing interest in country music. Just since the start of 2021, at least eight additional campaigns have featured country performances for their soundtracks:

Federal Express employed Willie Nelson’s “Always on My Mind”

T-Mobile launched an ad with Florida Georgia Line’s “I Love My Country”

Zillow incorporated the falsetto hook from Eddy Arnold’s “The Cattle Call” into a new commercial

Apple applied Kitty Wells’ “Searching (For Someone Like You)” to a haystack-themed spot

Ram Trucks introduced a Chris Stapleton cover of Al Green’s “I Am a Ram”

Squarespace inverted Dolly Parton’s “9 to 5” as “5 to 9” for an ad that debuted during the Super Bowl

Airbnb licensed John Denver’s “Thank God I’m a Country Boy”

Coors Light featured Johnny Lee’s “Lookin’ for Love”

That all comes atop other recent uses of country music for advertising, including The Highwomen’s “Crowded Table” in a Campbell’s spot, Carrie Underwood’s “Favorite Time of Year” in a Ring holiday ad, Miranda Lambert’s “The House That Built Me” with Masimo medical equipment and Hank Williams’ “Hey, Good Lookin’” in a Perdue chicken campaign.

“Especially now during the pandemic, and hopefully as we get post-pandemic, it brings out an element to people of normalcy,” says Applebee’s vp/chief marketing officer Joel Yashinsky of the country genre. “I think that speaking to normal elements of life is what people are looking for today. Country music artists are down-to-earth, salt-of-the-earth types of folks, and I think that’s something

people are looking for no matter where they live across the country.”

Plenty of observers expected the company would be looking at “Fancy Like” as a potential vehicle once it hit the mainstream. Walker, after all, celebrates the casual-dining brand and a couple of menu items in the first verse of the chorus. But when the commercial emerged, it actually went against the typical way of thinking in advertising synchronization.

“When it came on, I kind of laughed because there’s always these sorts of things that pop up, and they’re sort of like ‘unicorn’ moments,” says Warner Chappell Nashville director of sync licensing Katie Jelen. “Writers and artists will always use them as an example for like years to come. Here I am always telling writers, ‘Don’t write songs about brands because brands don’t want to use songs with their names.’ And then this song does what it does, which is, again, it’s a unicorn. It’s a perfect storm. I was like, ‘Oh, great. Here we go.’”

Hayes’ perfect storm is a personal story. Before their marriage, he and wife Lainey often had date nights at Applebee’s, and the family still visits regularly. Hayes actually had doubts during the vocal session about using that lyric, fearful it would actually hurt the commercial potential of “Fancy Like.” But he left it in because it related so closely to his own life. And that authenticity made a difference.

“There are lots of artists that do songs about other brands,” says Yashinsky. “This one came from the heart; it came with a history with his wife. We’re always looking for great songs that fit, with that sort of toe-tapping appeal that connects with our guests and makes people feel good.”

Artists haven’t always been looking for brands. In the late 1980s, Steve Winwood lip-synced then-current single “Don’t You Know What the Night Can Do?” in a Michelob ad. Music executives debated in a Billboard story at the time whether licensing songs for corporate use was a smart financial move or simply selling out.

“We’re selling out shows is what we’re doing,” says Hayes, noting that he recently sold out a club in San Jose, Calif., in four minutes that would have previously required several

days. “It’s completely mind-blowing that a song can do that.”

“Someone did a poll of Gen Z-ers recently and asked about the idea of selling out,” adds Jelen. “They didn’t even know what that was.”

The Hayes-Applebee’s relationship is a bit of an outlier. The lyrics spurred the company to put the Oreo shake, dropped from its offerings during the pandemic, back on the menu. Also in the artwork are a photo of Walker and Lainey, as well as a TikTok screen grab. Both parties have expressed openness to extending a relationship that’s mutually beneficial. Hayes’ country/hip-hop hybrid sound is connecting the chain to a variety of demographics, while the Applebee’s deal brought in cash when Hayes wasn’t touring – and the money comes in faster than performance royalties, which usually arrive about nine months after the actual broadcast date. Additionally, the TV airings reinforce a hook that was already getting good rotation on radio and streaming playlists.

“I definitely don’t think it’s going to hurt it, having it in the commercials, getting those spins,” says Hayes. “Careerwise, it’s a dream come true for an artist, especially of my status, to have this massive appeal and to get this many impressions. I mean, a management team or a booking agency would just kill for this much exposure.”

This article first appeared in the weekly Billboard Country Update newsletter. Click [here](#) to subscribe for free. **B**

► IN BRIEF

How G-Herbo's Newest Partnership With Republic Records Is Helping Him Give Back to Chicago

BY JEWEL WICKER

Damion Presson was still settling into his position as syp of talent relations at Republic Records early last year when, amid a global pandemic and lockdown, he decided he wanted to recruit Chicago rapper G Herbo to the label. At the time, Herbo was in a partnership with Epic Records and indie label Machine Entertainment Group, through which he had just released his third studio album PTSD.

"I happened to see Herb quite a bit on Instagram. I think because of the volume that I kept seeing him, repeatedly, I said, 'There's something here. I need to explore what this is and why I keep seeing him,'" Presson says. "He's the culture."

Presson, who previously worked as a marketing director for Reebok, [fostering partnerships](#) with entertainers including Kendrick Lamar, Cardi B, Future and Travis Scott, says he reached out to Machine Entertainment Group less than a year ago with the hopes of forging a partnership with the label and Herbo. "Hearing about how Machine Entertainment Group actually conducts business, they have a very unique way of looking at the business and how they interact and deal with artists. [They give] artists the autonomy to really be them and be true to their art," he says. "I was really attracted to the business acumen that these guys have, and the vision that they have set forth for Herbo."

Earlier this year, Herbo released 25 through Machine Entertainment

Group LLC / Republic Records. It's his first project under the new deal and was distributed by Ingrooves Music Group. The release, Herbo's highest-charting project to date, debuted at no. 5 on the Billboard 200 chart last month.

"It was [about] us being able to work with a company who had the relationships that were going to ultimately allow our partners to flourish," Machine Entertainment Group's co-founder Joseph "JB" Bowden says of the new partnership with Republic. "[Ingrooves has the] technology that will allow us to have a level of transparency with the artist that we work with to allow them to be able to understand themselves, not just as an artist, but as a business person."

One of the things that encouraged G Herbo to sign with Republic Records was the label's willingness to invest in the rapper's mental health and hometown initiatives. "I've never been an artist that caught a big record. I'm still working on [that]," he says. "By 'our way,' I mean [we get to focus] on just the importance of what I do for mental health along with my music." (Regarding that last point, he also notes his Swervin' Through Stress initiative, which is aimed at providing therapy services to Black people who have experienced trauma.)

With the label's support, the Chicago rapper and the indie label Machine Entertainment Group also plan to finally break ground on a 10,000 square foot multimedia center for local kids. The facility will occupy the shuttered Anthony Overton Elementary School in Chicago's Bronzeville neighborhood. Machine Entertainment Group's Bowden bought the building in 2014 through his Washington Park Development Group, according to [Chicago Reader](#). (Bowden's partner in the real estate development group is Ghian Foreman, who also serves as Chicago's police board president.)

The former school occupies four and a half acres and two buildings, which will be used to house various programming that will introduce local youth to DJing, merchandising, music engineering, and graphic design. The space is also set to include a tech incubator, as well as trade courses. Herbo and Machine Entertainment Group


say they hope the space will provide an outlet for kids to channel their energy and stay out of trouble.

"Having the ability to control our profit and loss statement allows us to make investments in things that allow us to help grow our own community and not sit back [waiting] for others to do it," Bowden says.

"Mentorship is at the core of what we're really trying to do," Mikkey Halsted adds. "[The kids will] be able to touch Herb, Joseph, me, our partner Ghian. They'll be able to touch Damion, and all the executives and heavy hitters that come in. It's really important just to be a beacon of hope in that community."

Herb says he views the programs aimed at Chicago kids, in addition to his mental health work, as a part of his larger purpose. "I want to be known as an artist that shows other artists, or just people in general, how to create [their] own legacy, and [their] own destiny when it comes to what [their] purpose is," he says.

And, he believes staying authentic to these passions will also lend itself to continued musical success, too. "I like to use the term escalator-style. I always grow slowly but surely," he says. "I feel like I'm going to grow and break as a global superstar being myself. I don't have to put myself in any uncomfortable environments or be some kind of artist that I'm really not. I feel I'm going to be able to have those big records that give me the global recognition that every artist wants."

Presson says he sees Herbo as one of Republic's next big artists, and a way for the label to increase its presence in hip-hop. "Republic has a long-lasting track record of global superstars [but] outside of Pop Smoke, we didn't really have anything in the hip-hop space — and I think that Herb brings something totally different," he says. "I think [25] is a breakout album. [It's] going to set Herb up for his trajectory to be in the same mentions as the Post Malones and Weekends. And, that's what we're here for. We're here to sign superstars." 

► IN BRIEF

Britney Spears' Attorney Demands Dad's Immediate Resignation From Conservatorship

BY ASHLEY CULLINS

Weeks after [Britney Spears'](#) father announced in a court filing he'd be willing to step away from her conservatorship at some point, the singer is again telling an L.A. judge that he needs to be removed as soon as possible.

In a supplemental petition to suspend and remove Jamie Spears filed Tuesday (Aug. 31), Britney's attorney argues that an Aug. 12 filing is further proof Jamie is concerned about his own well-being instead of his daughter's.

"The thrust of his response is that although (i) he expressly recognizes that a 'public battle' regarding his departure would not be in Ms. Spears's best interests and (ii) for that reason, he even intends to support 'an orderly transition,' his idea of 'orderly' is to hang on until someone first brands him 'father of the year' and awards him a gold star for his 'service,'" writes Rosengart in the filing, which is embedded below. "In other words, although Mr. Spears has, at last, been forced to recognize that it is best for his daughter if he departs now, he claims the right to drag his feet because it is best for him to cling to this conservatorship until he feels sufficiently-vindicated."

Rosengart argues that Jamie is trying to redeem his image and use his remaining leverage to ensure the pending accounting is approved, which includes about \$2 million in fees to third parties including his attorneys.

"A 'transition' can just as easily occur while Mr. Spears is suspended, as opposed to while he lingers as conservator waiting

for his inevitable removal," argues Rosengart. "The only difference is that the former is in his daughter's best interests, while the latter severely undermines those interests."

In a statement to *The Hollywood Reporter*, Rosengart reiterated that the situation reeks of quid pro quo. "Britney Spears will not be bullied or extorted by her father," he says. "Nor does Mr. Spears have the right to try to hold his daughter hostage by setting the terms of his removal. This is not about him, it is about the best interests of his daughter, which as a matter of law, mandate his removal. Even putting aside the legal issues requiring his prompt removal, if he loves his daughter, Mr. Spears should resign now, today, before he is suspended. It would be the correct and decent thing to do."

A hearing on the petition is currently set for Sept. 29. Representatives for Jamie Spears have not yet responded to a request for comment.

This article was originally published by [The Hollywood Reporter](#). 

TikTok Teams With MACRO to Launch Incubator Program for Latinx Creatives

BY GRISELDA FLORES

TikTok and MACRO — a media company that represents the voice and perspectives of Black people and persons of color — have teamed up to launch a new incubator program called TikTok Latinx Creatives in an effort to help further grow the Latinx creative community on the platform.

The 10-week program announced ahead of Hispanic Heritage Month (Sept. 15 - Oct. 15) will focus on nurturing and developing 150 talented Latinx creators and music artists. "We're driven to spotlight and support Latinx talent with a platform that amplifies their voices and a community that is


moved by them," TikTok said in a statement. Colombian star [J Balvin](#) will be the premier speaker at TikTok Latinx Creatives.

MACRO will advise on the selection of speakers, programming content and professional and business-building opportunities for program participants. In addition, TikTok and MACRO will create a grant for a select group of Latinx creators and music artists.

"Building on the success of our MACRO x TikTok for Black Creatives program, we are thrilled to again partner with TikTok to identify and develop the next generation of Latinx entertainers," **Stacey Walker King**, MACRO's chief brand officer, said in a statement. "As a company, we have had much success in championing storytellers and giving them a platform to tell their stories and build businesses. We look forward to discovering new talents through this industry leading program."

According to TikTok, popular Latinx community hashtags — including #Latino, #Latina, #Familia, #Hispanic — generate "significant" community engagement and have accumulated more than 10 billion video views, which grew +185% since Latinx Heritage Month 2020.

Through TikTok Latinx Creatives, emerging creators and music artists will participate in educational events, workshops and community-building forums with Latinx entrepreneurs and celebrities across music and entertainment, culture and business. From now until Sept. 8, Latinx TikTok creators who meet the eligibility criteria can apply for the program [here](#). Finalists will be named later this month.

TikTok Latinx Creatives launches seven months after TikTok and MACRO announced TikTok for Black Creatives in February. According to TikTok, nearly two dozen creators who were part of the three-month inaugural program have gone on to music, film, and brand-related projects. 

► IN BRIEF

DJ Tay James, Justin Bieber's A&R, Talks Orchestrating Wizkid's 'Essence' Remix — 'We Played It Nonstop'

BY DARLENE ADEROJU

DJ Tay James is the A&R genius behind countless [Justin Bieber](#) records — including “Peaches,” featuring Daniel Caesar and Giveon, a Hot 100-topping collaboration which James helped coordinate. Most recently, James was the visionary that brought Bieber onboard to appear on [Wizkid](#)'s chartbusting “Essence” remix, alongside fellow artist Tems.

The remix to the global smash, which first dropped on Aug. 13 — nearly one year after the original “Essence” was released, in October 2020 — is rapidly scaling the charts. This week (chart dated Sept. 4), it climbs to No. 3 on Billboard's Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart, and No. 13 on the Hot 100.

DJ Tay James, whose personal success includes his own Las Vegas residency at Zouk Nightclub, has been working with Bieber for more than 10 years — thanks to his good friend DJ Boogie, né Ryan Marsh, who connected the duo in 2009. “They were looking for a DJ and the first person they called was [my friend Ryan],” James tells *Billboard*. “He was like, ‘Hey, I got the perfect kid, he just graduated from college’ and they gave me a call. I literally just graduated [from Hampton University] two months prior, and got the call to work with Justin.”

James, who works closely with Bieber's management team at SB Projects (which includes Scooter Braun and Allison Kaye) has been promoted to the official, personal A&R for Bieber, with the pop star's *Billboard* 200-topping album *Justice* mark-

ing his debut project in the new position this March. Most recently, James worked on Skrillex's newly released track with Bieber and Toliver, titled “Don't Go,” which dropped on Aug. 20 and debuts this week at No. 69 on the Hot 100.

Below, James breaks down his own foundation in music, and the making of Bieber's latest hit songs — including “Peaches” and the his feature on the “Essence” remix.

How did you start DJ'ing? Was it always your dream to become a huge A&R for a huge star?

My love for music started at such an early age. My father used to make mixtapes for his friends. He had a massive record collection. I fell in love with DJ'ing when I learned how to blend one record into the other, that unlocked something in my head.

I had to be beg my brother [to teach me]. Finally, one day, he came over and started blending two records. I was 12 or 13. Once he showed me that, I would literally do that day in and day out, in the morning before school and then after school.

Throughout high school, I was DJ'ing basketball games. I was an intern at a record label called Unruly Records, which is a big Baltimore, DMV-based [Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia] record label. I'm forever grateful for that experience... by the time I got with Justin, it was a blessing to use my DJ ear to help him with music.

Would you say being a DJ has benefited your work as an A&R?

The fact that I am a DJ — a world-renowned DJ, and I've DJ'd at almost every top club — I feel like with that experience alone, it allows me to have a different type of ear. And the fact that I'm still DJ'ing. I know what people want to hear, what they're vibing to — the new songs, new genres. And I'm also tapped in with DJs around the world, telling me what's working in the U.K., Australia or Europe.

For Justin for example, a lot of times when we're in the writing process, he'll just be like, “Hey, can you send me some beats?” So, I'll reach out to the producers that I work with. I'm able to sort out the beats and pick which ones I know that he would relate to, from knowing the different sounds and genres — whether it's Afro, reggaeton, emo-

rap, hip-hop, R&B, smooth R&B. Being able to be tapped in and know what people are moving to is a benefit to me.

How much of a role did you play in orchestrating Justin's feature on Wizkid's “Essence” remix? How was that collaboration born?

It's a great story. We were on our way to a birthday vacation weekend for Allison [Kaye], his manager. While on the plane over, I was like, “Yo, bro, this [‘Essence’] is one of the hottest records. I feel like you should listen to this.” I played it and instantly he loved it. That became the song of the weekend. We played it nonstop.

One of the guys who happened to be on the vacation with us was Mike G, Wizkid's agent. We went right to work, like, “Hey, I think Justin wants to hop on this, let's make sure Wiz is cool with this. Let's make sure we get Wiz's blessings.” Wiz was down.

When we got back to the studio stateside, the first thing Justin cut was [his verse on the] “Essence” [remix]. Me, him and Josh Gudwin, his engineer and A&R as well, got into the studio. Justin wrote the record within an hour, and he made the vocals. Justin wrote everything and laid it down. Justin's been in such a mode right now — it's amazing to watch.

This isn't the first time Justin has collaborated with an Afrobeats artist. Is this a new beginning for him musically, in terms of breaking into other international genres?

Remember we also did “Despacito” [by Luis Fonsi featuring Daddy Yankee], as far as doing international music. We also collaborated with Alpha P and Omah Lay on the “Peaches” [Masterkraft remix]. We had a record [called “Loved By You”] with Burna Boy on *Justice*, and now this new Wizkid.

It's something I know Justin is [proud of] — he loves all types of music. He's somebody that puts me on to everything to and that's why our relationship is so strong when it comes to music. We know what each other likes. He put me on to [Nigerian singer] Omah Lay. I never heard of Omah Lay until Justin came into rehearsals listening to him.

For Justin, it's like, “Let's shine a light on international artists. Why not if I can help out? I would love to.” Doing music with in-

► IN BRIEF

ternational artists, whether it's Afrobeats or reggaetón or any artist, helps shine a light to something that some of Justin's fans weren't listening to. It's a collaborative effort pushing crossovers of culture.

The “Essence” remix is beautiful, but there has been some backlash from some people. What are your thoughts on that and how do you respond to that?

Not everyone's gonna like everything that we do. All we wanna do is make great music and push the culture forward. There was some backlash, but at the same time there was a lot of great praises, especially in Nigeria.

The numbers speak. People love it. People are influenced by it. It'd be one thing if we did it out of the blue and didn't have the blessing of Wizkid, but we did. Wizkid was fully involved. He's the one that put the record together for us after we sent in the vocals. If it was something we did out the blue and we weren't tapped in like we are, I could [see that]. But at the same time, we're trying to push the culture forward. That's what we're doing — and going to continue to do.

A lot of people love the song for sure.

At the end of the day, it's about love and uniting people. If we can do that, if we can help bring people to something or help shine a light to artists who are killing it, who are doing their thing, why not?

Music is the catalyst of everything. It's all about uniting people. That's what the whole purpose of *Justice* was. *Justice* was an album where we took genres from all around the world and put it on one project, because it was a time of need. The world was hurting [during that time, in March] — so let's pull and bring everyone together.

You just answered one of my questions, which would've been, why now? It feels like right now Justin is going super international and diversifying his music.

Bieber is not known for just America. It's South America, Africa, the U.K., Australia, Japan. With someone who touches so many different parts of the world, I was so proud to be a part of a project that was able to bring everybody together. You have people who love certain parts of the album because it connects to them and the region or coun-

try they're in. Not being biased, but that's why *Justice* is one of my favorite projects from him.

Do you think fans can expect more Afrobeats from Justin? What can you tease?

[Laughs.] I know what we're working on right now, but I just expect Justin to help continue to push the culture forward any way possible. He's gonna be expanded to everything. That's what he does. He loves working with new music and new sounds. My job is to help direct him in the best way I can in navigating through this.

Why do you think it's important for people to know what goes on behind the scenes musically? For example, Justin's feature on the “Essence” remix, but many people only see the singer and don't know there's a lot of people who work on these projects.

At the end of the day, I always like to promote that it's a team effort, especially over here. I thank Justin, Josh, Allison, Scooter and all of our team for allowing me to be able to do what I do — use my ideas and help with the music and projects. I have the path to do it and I just thank them... We came together in the pandemic and made a great album, and we've been building off that momentum.

Congratulations on your DJ residency in Las Vegas. How proud of yourself are you and what's the most fulfilling part about it?

I appreciate it, thank you. Being a kid from Baltimore and being able to go from being a local DJ to being a DJ that DJs around the world to finally getting a Vegas residency is probably one of the pinnacles of my career, honestly. As a DJ, it's something that everyone strives to get. It's nice, it's a great feeling. I feel truly blessed.

As Justin's personal A&R, what's the biggest way you've seen him grow as an artist?

He's been in such a mode and I love seeing his energy. He literally wakes up, eats breakfast, comes to rehearsals for two to three hours, leaves to go to the recording studio and makes music. He gets done around 6:00 or 7:00 p.m., goes home and spends time with his wife [Hailey Bieber]. He's in such a mode and I love watching him

kill it.

He's writing a lot of this new music he's working on right now. It's amazing to see him grow as an artist and I'm excited for everyone to hear what we've been working on. It's gonna be pretty dope. I'm excited to get back on tour, which starts in February. There's a lot of things coming up and I'm happy to get to it. We're just blessed and I love what we do.

Did you think Justin Bieber's “Peaches” would be such a success? How much of a role did you play in orchestrating that song?

Yes. I knew it was gonna be a hit. When we start working on a project, sometimes we start a year or a year and a half in advance. “Peaches” we worked on in the middle of the pandemic, I wanna say maybe eight months before the song came out. It was done by August or September 2020.

With this particular record, after I first got it back from Justin and Harv, us as a group, our team, our family, we were all dancing to this song at our own private events within ourselves. Just seeing friends and family's reaction to the song let me know this might be a hit.

Also, I think people forgot what real, live instrumentation sounds like — and we've been able to capture that sound on *Justice*, especially with this song. A lot of music in this day and age is heavily 808-produced, a lot of synth sounds. People forgot what a real guitar, bass, or drums sounds like. With “Peaches,” I feel like it embodies of all of that. The producer of “Peaches” — shoutout to my boy Harv — he's also Justin's musical director and we've been working with Justin for 10+ years. He was able to put this record together and help define what the summer was for us this past summer, and I feel like “Peaches” is that record.

As far as me, my job was coming in when I talked to Scooter [Braun] and Allison [Kaye] and explaining that “Peaches” is a strong single, and should be one of the premiere singles for the album. They put their trust in me and believed the same thing. We went back to Def Jam and told them “Peaches” was gonna be the single. And look what it did.

Did you also play a part in choosing Daniel [Caesar] and Giveon to be on the song?

► IN BRIEF

Justin's idea was bringing Daniel Caesar on. I connected Justin with Giveon, and he and Giveon worked on "Peaches" together. They've been working on a few other songs together as well, and when "Peaches" came around it was the perfect match. Justin had the great idea of putting Daniel on — so now you got two of the top R&B acts on one record, with a pop superstar who can sing R&B as well. I feel like all three of them together just meshed and blended very, very well.

Were there any other artists you thought would be a good fit for "Peaches," or was it always those three you imagined?

I thought it was perfect for them. When I first heard the record it was with Giveon and Justin. Justin felt like it would be special if we add Daniel to the mix and he was right.

I was looking at the charts and it says the "Essence" [remix] is No. 16 on the Billboard chart, up 28 spots, new peak and this was earlier this week, and it's only gonna get better and better. That goes back to what I was saying with being able to shed light and push the culture, influence people and bring a brand new audience to Afrobeats that probably wasn't paying attention to it, or didn't know what Afrobeats was. Now, you have a whole influx of people who are gonna have eyes on Wizkid and Tems and listen to and support their music. That's what it's about, being a culture narrator.

I love seeing the exposure and mainstream attention for Wizkid and Tems, Afrobeats and in your words, the culture. I definitely think the "Essence" Remix will keep climbing the charts. Do you think it'll make it to No. 1?

Man, it'll be a blessing if it hits top 10. If I'm not mistaken, it'll probably be the first Afrobeats, Nigerian record to do that. If that happens, that's a blessing in its own. ■

R. Kelly Trial: Non-Fan of Singer Describes Still Falling Prey to Him

BY ASSOCIATED PRESS

A woman who wasn't a fan of [R. Kelly](#) ended up getting exposed to a sexually transmitted disease after he enticed her to join him on the road, she testified on Tuesday at the R&B entertainer's sex-trafficking trial.

The witness, taking the stand without using her real name, said she was 19 when her older half sister invited her to a Kelly concert in San Antonio in 2017. Her sibling was a fan of his music, she said, but "I was not."

The sisters were invited to a backstage after-party — the beginning of a brief relationship that had elements also described by other victims alleging sexual abuse by Kelly when they were still in high school. Kelly paid for woman's flights and hotel rooms to his concerts in cities where he demanded sex from her in hotel rooms and other locations.

A prosecutor asked whether he told her he had herpes or wore condoms. "No, he did not," she responded. Earlier in the trial — now in its third week — the jury heard Kelly's personal physician describe treating him for herpes for several years and from another woman who claimed he gave her herpes from unprotected sex.

Kelly, 54, has repeatedly denied accusations that he preyed on victims during a 30-year career highlighted by his 1996 smash hit "I Believe I Can Fly." His lawyers have portrayed his accusers as groupies who are lying about their relationships with him. ■

Bob Marley and The Wailers' 'Capitol Session '73': How the Lost Footage Came to Light

BY PATRICIA MESCHINO

In 1989, British filmmaker, archivist and historian Martin Disney was asked by Polygram — who had recently purchased Island Records — to sift through extensive footage of Bob Marley and The Wailers in preparation for the Marley documentary *Time Will Tell*. While combing through piles of footage in various formats, Disney was especially intrigued by a three-minute segment of 16mm black and white film, without sound or labeling, featuring an early '70s performance by The Wailers.

No one seemed to know where or when this performance was taped or if additional footage existed, so Disney embarked on a fact-finding mission that spanned over two decades. He learned that British producer Denny Cordell — who co-founded Shelter Records with Leon Russell in 1969 and owned a state-of-the-art mobile broadcast unit — was involved. Cordell passed away in 1995, so Disney tracked down his son Barney, who remembered The Wailers being around his father in Los Angeles. His son recalled a session his father filmed with The Wailers at the Capitol Records' Tower, but Barney had never seen the footage. Disney continued his search, traveling to New York and California, eventually retrieving seven and a half hours of film from the four-camera shoot Cordell had organized. Disney and editor Tim Dollimore spent several months collaborating over Zoom, painstakingly repairing, syncing and condensing seven hours of material shot from two cameras and a live mix from four cameras into a cohesive 60-minute presentation.

► IN BRIEF

Their diligence has unearthed a momentous artifact: Bob Marley and The Wailers' *The Capitol Session '73*, which will be [released](#) on Sept. 3, via Tuff Gong and Mercury Studios, on CD/DVD, CD, 2 LP colored vinyl and digital audio formats; it will stream exclusively via the Amazon Prime hosted music documentary channel, The Coda Collection.

"For over two decades I have been tending, researching and gently waving the banner for prepping the seven hours of Capitol footage for the release it so richly deserves," said Disney, who has worked on almost every film made about Marley as a researcher, producer, or consultant. "As we were editing, we felt like no time had passed, it sounds so fresh. In a way the film made itself, we just pushed it, to get that feeling right and show how raw, ad hoc, and relaxed it all was."

The year 1973 marked a turning point in The Wailers' trajectory: they released their first albums for Chris Blackwell's Island Records, *Catch A Fire* (April 13) and *Burnin'* (Oct. 19), which were essential in expanding the international fanbase for reggae after the landmark Jamaican film *The Harder They Come* and its soundtrack, released the previous year. Two of The Wailers' three founding members exited the group in 1973, Bunny Livingston (later Wailer) in April and Peter Tosh in December. The Wailers were booked for 17 dates opening for Sly and The Family Stone beginning in October 1973, but they only performed on four shows before they were fired because they didn't connect with Sly's audience. Stranded in Las Vegas, The Wailers called Jamaican attorney Gus Brown who brought them to San Francisco, where they performed a pair of shows before reaching out to Cordell and traveling to Los Angeles. Shelter Records had released The Wailers' first U.S. single, "Duppy Conqueror" (misspelled as "Doppy Conquer"), one of the songs they performed on *Capitol Session '73*, highlighted by Bob's mesmeric vocals and the band's indelible reggae beat, as seen in this exclusive clip.

The Wailers closed-door shoot at L.A.'s Capitol Tower took place on Oct. 24, 1973. The lineup consisted of Bob Marley and

Peter Tosh on lead vocals and guitars; The Wailers' mentor Joe Higgs on percussion and backing vocals; Earl "Wya" Lindo on keyboards; and brothers Carlton Barrett and Aston "Family Man" Barrett on drum and bass, respectively. The Barrett brothers played with Bob until his death in 1981. Family Man, now 74, who stopped touring with The Wailers after suffering a series of strokes in 2017, is the only surviving member of this extraordinary ensemble.

The Wailers were still a vocal trio at the time (with Island's release of *Natty Dread* in 1974, Marley received top billing and from thereon, The Wailers referred to his backing band) but Marley is undeniably the film's focal point. He takes commanding lead on nine of the twelve songs selected from *Catch A Fire* and *Burnin'*, conveying a range of moods: playful on "Stir It Up", anguished on "Burnin' and Lootin'" and meditative on "Rasta Man Chant," with all three Wailers seated, playing conga drums, delivering inspired, soulful harmonies; Marley and Tosh share lead on "Get Up Stand Up," the enduring protest anthem they co-wrote.

"This film is like a master class with Bob in charge. Bunny left The Wailers in England, Peter was already plotting to leave, so Chris Blackwell identified Bob as being the right front man, the driving force," comments Disney, who is also film's executive producer, alongside Barney Cordell. "Denny created a wonderful session, with a small, appreciative audience enjoying a private performance from six of Jamaica's greatest musicians and the sound at Capitol is just fabulous."

"One of the most fascinating things for me was gaining insight into these human beings who were at a pivotal point in their lives," adds Dollimore. "Everyone in that configuration of the band went on to do amazing things musically, but there were also many tragedies. [Marley succumbed to cancer in 1981 at 36; Peter Tosh and Carlton Barrett were murdered five months apart in 1987.] It's fascinating to see them when they weren't ginormous, but they knew that they were on to something." **B**

Justin Bieber to Perform at 2021 MTV Video Music Awards

BY MIA NAZARENO

Justin Bieber is set to take the stage for a performance at the 2021 MTV Video Music Awards airing live on Sunday, Sept. 12, the network announced Wednesday (Sept. 1).

The "Peaches" singer is the newest addition to a growing lineup of big acts, which includes Olivia Rodrigo, Lorde, Shawn Mendes, Kacey Musgraves, Machine Gun Kelly, Chlöe, Twenty One Pilots, Lil Nas X, Camila Cabello, Foo Fighters, and Doja Cat, who is also doubling as host for the awards show.

Bieber's last performance at the VMAs was six years ago, when he sang a rendition of his 2015 hit "What Do You Mean?" This year, the pop star is anticipating a big comeback on stage while also leading the way with seven nominations, including the artist of the year; best pop; collaboration of the year for "Peaches" featuring Giveon and Daniel Caesar; and video of the year for his collab with DJ Khaled and Drake on "Popstar."

While Bieber released his sixth studio album *Justice* in March with lead single "Peaches" debuting at the top of the [Billboard Hot 100](#), he currently is enjoying his [fourth week](#) at the top spot on the chart thanks to his track "Stay" with rising star The Kid LAROI.

The awards show will be broadcast live at 8 p.m. ET/5 p.m. PT on Sunday, Sept. 12, from The Barclays Center in Brooklyn. The event will be executive produced by Bruce Gilmer and Jesse Ignjatovic, co-founder of Den of Thieves.

Fans can still vote for their favorite acts on [mtv.com/vma](#) until this Friday, Sept. 3. **B**

► IN BRIEF

SiriusXM and SoundCloud Debut Hip-Hop Channel 'SoundCloud Radio'

BY DARLENE ADEROJU

SiriusXM and SoundCloud have teamed up to launch SoundCloud Radio, a hip-hop channel that will air through Sept. 30. The limited-engagement channel will air hit songs from the genre that have appeared on SoundCloud, plus new music, with a focus on tracks by artists who first made waves via SoundCloud, including Megan Thee Stallion, Roddy Ricch, Trippie Redd and more.

SoundCloud Radio is available [online](#) or on the SXM mobile app. From Sept. 8 thru 17, the station will also be available via satellite and in vehicles, on SiriusXM channel 105.

SoundCloud Radio will also air music from newly emerging hip-hop acts, including Rico Nasty, Lil Tecca, YoungBoy Never Broke Again, Don Toliver, Lil Tjay, Rod Wave, Denzel Curry, Fase Yoda and many more.

"With [hip-hop show] *The Lookout by SoundCloud* driving new music discovery for artists, we are hyped to be partnering once again with SiriusXM on the launch of SoundCloud Radio," **R. Caiaffa**, interim head of music at SoundCloud, said in a statement. "The influence of SoundCloud's young, diverse community of artists and fans in breaking music is unmatched and SoundCloud Radio is one more way to share their influence and incredible talent with even more fans."

Louisiana rapper Fase Yoda, who recently released his single "[Butterflies](#)," said in a statement, "I've been working so hard for the last few years and to hear the first song I ever drop on the radio [playing on The

Lookout by SoundCloud on SiriusXM] was mind blowing."

"SoundCloud is always looking out for us new artists and I can't wait to watch other fire and deserving artists get the same opportunity for radio exposure," he added. **B**

Doobie Brothers Postpone Four Reunion Shows After Positive COVID Test

BY GIL KAUFMAN

The [Doobie Brothers](#)' anticipated reunion tour with singer Michael McDonald has been paused after a handful of dates due to a positive COVID-19 test in their touring entourage. The band announced on Wednesday (Sept. 1) that the next four dates on their outing have been postponed after a "member of the touring personnel has tested positive with COVID-19."

The postponement affects upcoming scheduled gigs in Clarkson, Mich. (Sept. 2); Burgettstown, Pa. (Sept. 4); Toledo, Ohio (Sept. 5); and Cincinnati (Sept. 8), with the band saying all four will be rescheduled, with new dates to be announced soon.

To celebrate 50 years since the band's formation, founding members Tom Johnston, Michael McDonald, Pat Simmons and John McFee announced a reworked 2021 North American tour after the original reunion outing scheduled for summer 2020 was pushed back due to the coronavirus pandemic. Instead, the tour kicked off on Aug. 22 with a gig at the Iowa State Fair, and lasted through five more dates before McDonald was unable to join them on Tuesday night at the Minnesota State Fair.

According to the *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*, opening act Dirty Dozen Brass Band also canceled, though the fair did not give any details on the change in lineup. The paper reported that two songs into Tuesday

night's show, Doobie's co-founder singer-guitarist Simmons told the audience that McDonald wasn't feeling well.

"He's recuperating and isolating. We hope to have him back in a week or so," Simmons reportedly said. "He's had his vaccine. But the show must go on." Singer-guitarist Tom Johnston told the paper last week that the band is traveling with a COVID compliance officer, and that all band members and crew are vaccinated.

Assuming the pause only lasts four shows, the band is slated to next hit the stage on Sept. 9 at the Blossom Music Center in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio. The announcement from the Doobies came a day after another veteran act, Kiss, was forced to postpone upcoming tour dates after both original members singer-bassist Gene Simmons and singer-guitarist Paul Stanley, [tested positive for COVID](#).

See The Doobie Brothers' announcement below: **B**

Not So 'Sour': Olivia Rodrigo Returns to No. 1 on Artist 100 Chart With Vinyl Release

BY XANDER ZELLNER

Olivia Rodrigo returns to No. 1 on the Billboard Artist 100 chart (dated Sept. 4), ruling for a sixth total week, helped by the Aug. 20 vinyl release of her debut LP *Sour*.

The set revisits the No. 1 spot on the [Billboard 200](#) for a fifth week on top, with 133,000 equivalent album units earned in the week ending Aug. 26, according to MRC Data. It sold 76,000 vinyl albums in the tracking week, marking the second-largest sales week for a vinyl album since MRC Data began electronically tracking sales in 1991.

► IN BRIEF

Rodrigo concurrently places four songs from *Sour* on the latest [Billboard Hot 100](#): former No. 1 “Good 4 U” at No. 3, by “Deja Vu” at No. 8, “Traitor” at No. 28 and “Brutal,” a re-entry at No. 89.


The Artist 100, which began in 2014, measures artist activity across key metrics of music consumption, blending album and track sales, radio airplay, streaming and social media fan interaction to provide a weekly multi-dimensional ranking of artist popularity.

Among other Artist 100 chart moves, Tomorrow X Together re-enters at No. 4, a new peak, thanks to the deluxe reissue of its LP *The Chaos Chapter: Freeze*. The set re-enters the Billboard 200 at No. 8 (47,000 units) after debuting at its No. 5 high in June.

Lorde re-enters the Artist 100 at No. 5 as her third LP *Solar Power* launches at No. 5 on the Billboard 200 (56,000 units). She last appeared on the Artist 100 in 2017, reaching a No. 3 best.

Trippie Redd also returns to the Artist 100, at a new No. 6 career high, as his LP *Trip at Knight* opens at No. 2 on the Billboard 200 (81,000 units).

Plus, late R&B singer Aaliyah debuts at No. 14 on the Artist 100 driven by the Aug. 20 reissue of her 1996 sophomore LP *One in a Million*. The previously out-of-print album earned 26,000 units in the tracking week and re-enters the Billboard 200 at No. 10, a new peak.

For all chart news, you can follow @billboard and @billboardcharts on both Twitter and Instagram. 

Twenty One Pilots Score Ninth Alternative Airplay No. 1 With ‘Saturday’

BY KEVIN RUTHERFORD

“Saturday” becomes [Twenty One Pilots’](#) ninth No. 1 on *Billboard’s* [Alternative Airplay](#) chart, rising 2-1 on the Sept. 4-dated survey.

Each of the duo’s No. 1s has ruled since November 2015, dating to “Stressed Out.” That’s almost double the sum of the runners-up in that span; as [Cage the Elephant](#) and [Imagine Dragons](#) follow with five leaders each in that nearly six-year stretch.

Twenty One Pilots move into sole possession of the sixth-most No. 1s in the history of Alternative Airplay, which began in September 1988. [Red Hot Chili Peppers](#) lead all acts with 13.

Most No. 1s, Alternative Airplay
13, Red Hot Chili Peppers
12, Green Day
11, Linkin Park
10, Cage the Elephant
10, Foo Fighters
9, Twenty One Pilots
8, U2
6, Imagine Dragons
6, R.E.M.
6, Weezer


“Saturday” follows Twenty One Pilots’ eight-week leader “Shy Away” in May and June. Additionally, each of the band’s last five non-holiday offerings has reached the chart’s summit, beginning with “Chlorine” in April 2019; among that run, last year’s “Christmas Saves the Year” peaked at No. 32.

“Saturday” is the most popular day in an Alternative Airplay No. 1 song title, joining [Panic! at the Disco’s](#) “Say Amen (Saturday Night)” in 2018. It one-ups its predecessor day, as [The Cure’s](#) “Friday I’m in Love”

led in 1992. Honorable mentions for the next two days chronologically; acts [The Sundays](#) and [Happy Mondays](#) each notched a No. 1 in 1990 and 1991, respectively.

“Saturday” holds at its No. 5 high on the all-rock-format, audience-based [Rock & Alternative Airplay](#) chart with 4.2 million audience impressions, according to MRC Data. It also rises 40-36 in its second week on [Adult Alternative Airplay](#). It bullets at its No. 28 best on [Adult Pop Airplay](#) and rises 31-29 on [Pop Airplay](#), the first song from the band’s latest album, *Scaled and Icy*, to cross over to the pop radio tallies.

On the multi-metric [Hot Rock & Alternative Songs](#) chart, “Saturday” returns to the top 20 (21-19, after reaching No. 16). It drew 8.4 million audience impressions across all radio formats and 1.9 million U.S. streams and sold 500 downloads in the week ending Aug. 26.

Scaled and Icy, Twenty One Pilots’ sixth studio album, which houses “Saturday” and “Shy Away,” debuted at No. 1 on the Top Rock Albums and Alternative Albums charts dated June 5 and has earned 204,000 equivalent album units to date. 

Bad Bunny Scores His 15th No. 1 on Latin Airplay Chart With ‘Yonaguni’

BY PAMELA BUSTIOS

[Bad Bunny](#) captures his 15th No. 1 on *Billboard’s* [Latin Airplay](#) chart as “Yonaguni” takes over atop the Sept. 4-dated survey.

The win follows the song’s dominance on the multi-metric Hot Latin Songs chart (which merges airplay, sales and streaming data) for five weeks in June and July. It also became Bad Bunny’s fourth top 10, reaching No. 10, on the all-genre [Billboard Hot 100](#) [chart](#).

► IN BRIEF

The Spanish-language “Yonaguni,” with added Japanese lyrics (as the song is named after the western-most island of Japan), lifts 4-1 on Latin Airplay with by a 19% increase to 11.6 million audience impressions in the week ending Aug. 29, according to MRC Data.

“Yonaguni” marks Bad Bunny’s fourth Latin Airplay leader without another artist among his compendium of 15 No. 1s. It follows three in 2020: “Vete” (one week at No. 1, March 14), “La Dificil” (one, August) and “Yo Perreo Sola” (two, June).

Bad Bunny first led Latin Airplay for a week in February 2018 as featured on Becky G’s “Mayores,” also his first chart entry. He logged his longest stay at the summit to-date with “Mia,” featuring Drake, for six weeks starting in December 2018.

Over on [Hot Latin Songs](#), “Yonaguni” remains at No. 4, led by 7.6 million U.S. streams in the week ending Aug. 26. 📺

Lorde Lands Third Alternative Albums No. 1 With ‘Solar Power’

BY KEVIN RUTHERFORD

Lorde makes it three-for-three atop *Billboard*’s [Alternative Albums](#) chart, as *Solar Power*, her third studio album, becomes her third No. 1.

Solar Power bows atop the tally dated Sept. 4 with 56,000 equivalent album units earned in the Aug. 20-26 tracking period, according to MRC Data.

The set follows Lorde’s previous No. 1s *Pure Heroine* (15 weeks on top, from its debut in October 2013) and *Melodrama* (one week at No. 1 in its debut frame in July 2017).

The new album concurrently starts at No. 5 on the all-format [Billboard 200](#), where *Pure Heroine* hit No. 3 and *Melodrama* led for a week.

All but one of the 13 songs from *Solar*

Power grace the [Hot Rock & Alternative Songs](#) chart, paced by “Mood Ring,” which reaches a new No. 11 high thanks largely to 4.3 million U.S. streams in its first full tracking week; it was released Aug. 17. The top newcomer to the list from the album is “The Path,” which debuts at No. 25 (2.7 million streams).

Solar Power’s title-track lead single hit No. 6 on Hot Rock & Alternative Songs in June, becoming Lorde’s sixth top 10. It crowned the Adult Alternative Airplay chart for two weeks in August and hit No. 10 on the all-rock-format, audience-based Rock & Alternative Airplay chart. 📺

Chvrches Leads Maisie Peters, Kanye West In U.K. Albums Chart Race

BY LARS BRANDLE

It’s tight at the top of the U.K. albums chart race, as the latest from [Chvrches](#) leads news releases from Maisie Peters and [Kanye West](#).

Chvrches’ fourth studio album *Screen Violence* (Virgin) rules the [Official Chart Update](#), and is the best-seller on physical formats in the first half of the chart cycle.

If *Screen Violence* keeps its momentum, it’ll give the Scottish electronic outfit a first-ever leader and fourth Top 10.

Close behind on the chart blast is Maisie Peters’ debut studio album *You Signed Up For This* (Gingerbread Man), new at No. 2.

Meanwhile, Kanye West’s long-delayed *Donda* (Def Jam) album comes in at No. 3, a solid start despite its late release on Sunday (instead of the typical Friday drop), and the fact it’s not available in physical formats.

According to the OCC, *Donda* is leading on both downloads and streaming, and if it can lift to the top spot when the chart is published this Friday (Sept. 3), it’ll mark

West’s third U.K. No. 1 album.

Closing out an all-new midweek Top 5 is [Halsey](#)’s fourth studio effort, *If I Can’t Have Love I Want Power* (EMI), and [Becky Hill](#)’s debut *Only Honest On The Weekend* (Polydor), respectively.

Just 2,000 chart sales currently separate the Top 5, the OCC reports.

Also aiming for Top 10 bows are Toyah’s *Posh Pop* (No. 9 via Edsel) and a five-disc boxed set of [The Beach Boys](#)’ *Feel Flows: The Sunflower & Surf’s Up Sessions 1969-1971* (No. 10 via UMC).

The Official U.K. Albums Chart is published late Friday local time. 📺

Danny Gokey’s ‘Jesus People’ Debuts at No. 1 on Top Christian Albums Chart

BY JIM ASKER

Danny Gokey attains his third No. 1 on *Billboard*’s [Top Christian Albums](#) chart as *Jesus People* blasts in at the summit on the Sept. 4-dated survey. In its first week, ending Aug. 26, the set earned 10,000 equivalent album units, with 9,000 in album sales, according to MRC Data.

Gokey’s last LP before *Jesus People*, *Haven’t Seen It Yet*, opened at its No. 2 peak in April 2019, becoming his fourth of five top 10s. His holiday set *Christmas Is Here* peaked at No. 9 in December 2015.

The singer-songwriter’s first studio set, 2010’s country effort *My Best Days*, debuted and peaked at No. 3 on [Top Country Albums](#) and No. 4 on the [Billboard 200](#).

Meanwhile, Christian alt-rock outfit Switchfoot posts its 11th Top Christian Albums top 10 as *Interrobang* enters at No. 6 with 4,000 units (3,000 in album sales). It’s the San Diego-based band’s first album since *Native Tongue*, which debuted at its No. 2 peak in February 2019.

► IN BRIEF

Switchfoot has charted 16 entries on Top Christian Albums beginning in 1999, including six No. 1s. Its first leader, *The Beautiful Letdown*, ruled for 38 weeks in 2004-05, fueled by the top 20 **Billboard Hot 100** crossover hits “Meant to Live” and “Dare You to Move.” **B**

Shawn Mendes Joins TV Adaptation of ‘Life Is Strange’ Video Game as Executive Producer

BY BORYS KIT

Legendary’s TV adaptation of Square Enix video game *Life Is Strange* is getting a bit more musical.

Award-winning singer-songwriter **Shawn Mendes**, along with Andrew Gertler, his partner at Permanent Content, have come aboard to oversee music for the series, which is being developed by Legendary Television and dj2 Entertainment.

Also coming onboard to kick-start the project, which Legendary picked up in 2016, a year after the game was released, is Anonymous Content, the banner behind buzzy series *True Detective* and *13 Reasons Why*.

Strange isn’t exactly what comes to mind when Hollywood tackles video games. The game isn’t a first-person shooter or epic sci-fi fantasy, but rather a series of compelling, story-driven adventure games that feature a universe where everyday protagonists wield supernatural powers while dealing with real challenges, real relationships, and real emotions.

The story for the first game centered on photography enthusiast Max Caulfield, a high school senior who discovers she can

rewind time while saving her best friend Chloe Price. The pair soon find themselves investigating the mysterious disappearance of fellow student Rachel Amber, which uncovers a dark side to life in their town, Arcadia Bay.

Gamers responded to the adventure game, which has now become a franchise with sequels and spinoffs. It has also won several awards, including the 2016 BAFTA for best story and the inaugural Peabody Futures of Media Award. The newest entry, *Life Is Strange: True Colors*, will release on Sept. 10.

Mendes and Gertler will executive produce via their production banner, Permanent Content, while Joy Gorman Wettels and Zack Hayden will exec produce for Anonymous.

They join dj2’s Dmitri M. Johnson, Howard Bliss and Dan Jevons.

Legendary Television and AC Studios will serve as co-studios on the project, with Legendary Television acting as lead studio.

Strange is being developed through the first-look deal between Legendary Television and dj2 Entertainment. The two companies are working on previously announced television series *My Friend Pedro* and the anime series *Tomb Raider*, the latter being made for Netflix.

Mendes is known for his **Billboard Hot 100** top five hits such as “Stitches,” “If I Can’t Have You” and “Señorita,” his No. 1 duet with girlfriend Camila Cabello. He and his manager Gertler created their TV and film production company Permanent Content as a joint venture with Anonymous. The company produced *In Wonder*, a documentary for Netflix centered on Mendes on a world tour. The company is also working on a youth changemaker docu-series and a feature titled *Aku*.

Mendes is repped by AG Artists.
*This article was originally published by **The Hollywood Reporter**.* **B**

Lil Nas X Honored as The Trevor Project’s Suicide Prevention Advocate of the Year

BY STARR BOWENBANK

Lil Nas X has yet another accolade that he can put under his belt. On Wednesday (Sept. 1), The Trevor Project announced that the “Industry Baby” rapper is its inaugural Suicide Prevention Advocate of the Year award, an honor that recognizes notable figures within the LGBTQ+ community that are open about their sexuality, struggles with mental health, and their ability to fearlessly celebrate their queerness.

“Thank you so much to The Trevor Project for this award and for all they do for the LGBTQ community,” Lil Nas X said in statement. “Discrimination around sexuality and gender identity is still very real, and our community deserves to feel supported and totally free to be themselves. I often get messages from fans telling me about their struggles with depression and suicidal thoughts, and it made me realize that this was something bigger than myself. If using my voice and expressing myself in my music can help even one kid out there who feels alone, then it was all worth it.”

The Trevor Project, launched in 1998, provides crisis intervention and suicide prevention resources for LGBTQ+ youth.

Earlier this year, Lil Nas posted a series of videos to his TikTok page describing what his life was like before fame, and shared his personal struggles with his mental health. “In 2017 I became the first [in] my family to get into college. During college I was depressed, had no friends and my grandmother passed. I started going to the doctor a lot in fear that I would die soon... hypochondria,” **he shared**.

► IN BRIEF

Lil Nas added that his life became tumultuous after his sister kicked him out of her house, and his brother was sent to the military. He also explained that his music wasn't performing well at the time, but when he released "Old Town Road" — which spent 19 [record-shattering weeks](#) on the [Billboard Hot 100](#) and went on to become the only song to ever receive a [14-times platinum](#) certification — his personal troubles continued.

"I got news that my mom wasn't doing so well in rehab with her addiction," [Lil Nas wrote](#). "Also me and my boyfriend broke up. During this time old town road was still killing it while I was... spiraling. I found myself in a hotel room contemplating ending it all. But I didn't."

Amit Paley, CEO and executive director at The Trevor Project, commended Lil Nas X for his bravery with sharing his personal journey, and explained why the rapper deserved the honor.

"The Trevor Project is thrilled to honor Lil Nas X with the Suicide Prevention Advocate of the Year Award," said Paley in a statement. "His vulnerability in his journey to self-acceptance and expression has created space for candid conversations around mental health and sexual identity, signaling to LGBTQ youth that they are not alone. The Trevor Project's research shows that over 80% of LGBTQ youth say that LGBTQ celebrities positively influence how they feel about being LGBTQ, further affirming the cultural impact of Lil Nas X being proud of who he is and an ideal recipient of this inaugural award."

The organization shared the news of Lil Nas X receiving the award on their social media accounts. "We're thrilled to honor [@LilNasX](#) with our Suicide Prevention Advocate of the Year Award," the organization wrote on Instagram. "Throughout your career, you've shown up as an outspoken and unapologetic advocate, using your platform to shed light on mental health issues many LGBTQ young people face."

See The Trevor Project's announcement below. 