



**MUSIC & ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY  
EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION**

**PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
2022 INTERNATIONAL  
SUMMIT**

**OF THE  
MUSIC & ENTERTAINMENT  
INDUSTRY EDUCATORS  
ASSOCIATION**

**– MAY 16 & 17, 2022 –**

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May 16-17, 2022

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[www.meiea.org](http://www.meiea.org)

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Edited by Bruce Ronkin, *MEIEA Journal* Editor

# Studying Diversity in the Music Industry

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This paper was presented at the [2022 International Summit](#) of the  
Music & Entertainment Industry Educators Association  
May 16-17, 2022

<https://doi.org/10.25101/22.12>

View the Summit presentation at:  
<https://youtu.be/FkeITpCzDeo>

## Abstract

This paper reviews recent research initiatives that have been undertaken in the music industry to study issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion and the organizations that sponsored the studies. It examines which genres are studied most, and identifies additional genres worthy of study. Further, it suggests potential areas of future study that can incorporate participation from students at colleges and universities.

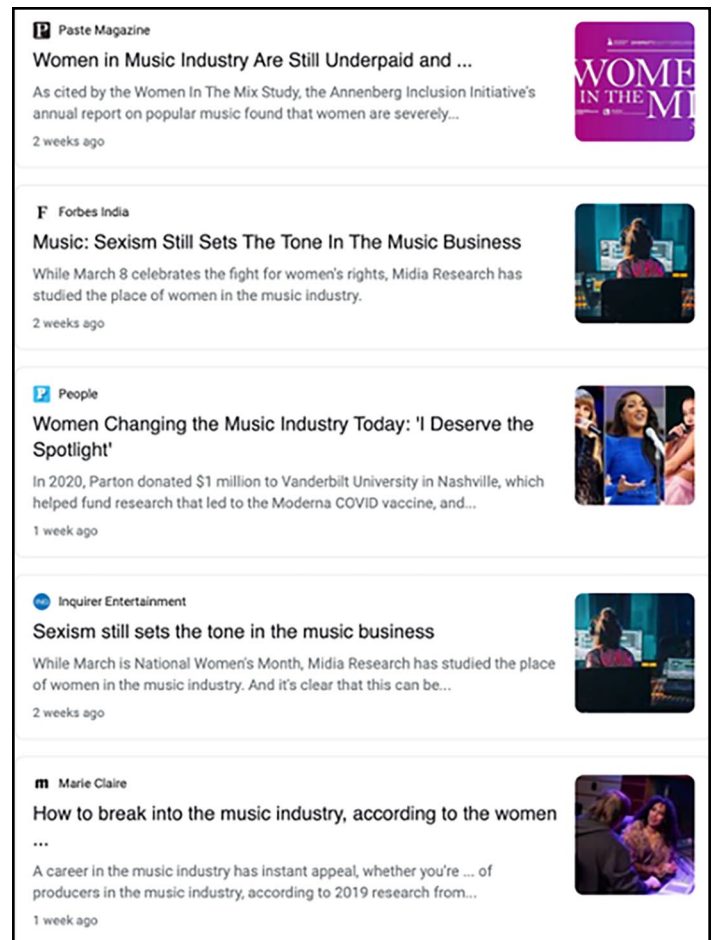
Keywords: music industry studies, diversity, equity, inclusion

## Introduction

In recent years, many efforts have been made to study the state of diversity and cultural equity in the music industry. When a new study comes out, a press release is issued and a litany of music industry publications print similar articles based on it, announcing the latest statistic culled as the most significant takeaway from each study, usually lamenting a lack of progress in music industry reform. That statistic finds its way into conference panels, programming, conversations—and hopefully into changes made in the music industry. While many initiatives are underway separately, it is necessary to look at all of the research together to gain context on progress made and yet to be made.

Most publicized initiatives to date have been structured, descriptive studies that measure representation of various aspects of identity within different genres, constituencies, organizations, roles, and fields. The primary intention of these studies is to gather information about where the industry stands at the time of each study, to assess the field in order to set benchmarks industry professionals can strive to transcend through focused efforts on progress toward greater inclusion in the music industry.

In some cases, statistics unknown before have become



known. Myths have been debunked or reinforced. New knowledge has sparked initiatives to be launched, companies to reflect, corporations to advocate, and new organizations to launch—with hopes that positive incremental results will be seen in subsequent studies. Increasingly, studies have been followed up annually or have been launched to cover similar time periods using kindred methodologies to their predecessors, enabling researchers to compare their findings with others, at least directionally.

Some studies deduce theories about why the results might be what they are, and how the industry functions in ways that make them so. Some recommend changes to improve diversity and representation in the industry. Even with all the studies spotlighting needs for change, the industry



continues to wrestle with “what to do” and “are we doing enough” questions, until more is learned that paves the way forward.

Thankfully, dedicated professionals continue the work of studying the industry—and more stakeholders are drawn to participate in the work each day. While there is more awareness about diversity-related research in the music industry, and research is happening in more areas of the industry, if we are to truly learn from what these studies tell us over time, it is important to acknowledge that diversity research in the music industry is not new. It has been conducted for decades from vantage points across many academic and practical fields. It has evolved and expanded—in scope, depth, areas of focus, who is performing the research, style, and methodologies.

There has been a diversity of opinion about the definition of diversity itself, how to identify it, how to measure it, and what it means to audiences, artists, and the industry. There have been waves of research across decades and generations that reflected the cultural values and music industry realities that were common when the studies were conducted, and time periods the research covered.

Notable time frames when significant research was conducted (i.e., several researchers or organizations published reports and articles studying diversity in the music industry on related themes) were:

- 1976-1978: researchers focused on the *variety of music* reaching mainstream audiences, primarily reflecting pop music trends in the music industry from the 1940s-70s. While these studies were not about “diversity” as we define it today, this work proposed frameworks for reflection on how industry systems affect what music reaches consumers.
- 1991-1996: researchers re-examined the work of researchers from the 70-80s, primarily focusing on A&R operating practices of major labels and the role independent labels (or sub-labels owned by majors) were playing in the rise of new genres reaching mainstream audiences.
- 2008-2012: researchers focused extensively on gender presentation and gender representation as well as globalization of access to music through digital platform adoption.
- 2018 to date: while previous studies were primarily conducted by academics and journalists, recent research has been driven more by music business sector trade organizations, nonprofits, or industry organizations partnering with academics, based on a shared perception of a “diversity crisis.” Some studies have been prompted by specific events or through strategic initiatives on the part of many organiza-

tions, discussed in this paper. For example, prior to the event of George Floyd being killed by police in 2020, most research focused on gender disparity. After George Floyd’s passing and increased cultural reckoning around systemic racism, more studies have included race and ethnicity. Nonbinary gender identities and disability are still emerging topics in research being conducted today.

There is one exception to that timeline worth noting. An academic named Alan Wells published on many of these issues throughout his career—much earlier than the rest of the industry. While there are some reasons for pause in some of his findings, it is interesting to observe the timing of the topics he has covered. That in and of itself is probably a whole other presentation!

While most research regarding diversity in the music industry was historically focused on analysis of sales and radio airplay charts, contemporary research uses those data sources in addition to incorporating surveys, focus groups, interviews, community town hall perspective gathering events, and other information collected by music organization task forces and committees with inside industry access and knowledge.

Contemporary studies are designed to foster industry dialogue and stimulate ideas. As stated in a 2021 report by Spanish researchers Lorenzo Porcaro, Emilia Gómez and Carlos Castillo:

What generally is shared among academic communities, but also public and private institutions, is the importance of fostering diversity as a tool to enhance creativity but also productivity [69], to promote pluralism and equality [70], to make people aware of different viewpoints and facilitate the public debate [36].<sup>1</sup>

Studies in recent years have increasingly focused not just on representation of diversity—but go further to measure indicators of inclusion, retention, advancement, promotion and actual equity.

### What This Paper Is and Isn’t

This paper was written for the May 2022 MEIEA conference of music business professors<sup>2</sup>—a gathering of educators who have spent the last two years innovating ways to teach about the music industry during a global pandemic. It is intended for a reader who has a desire to know about research that has been done on this topic, but has been unable to keep up with conversations and initiatives underway with everything going on in the world and in their classroom.

The purpose of this paper is to highlight some of the studies conducted within the last five years, and to consider the

mission-driven organizations committed to studying diversity in the music industry today. It is also the author's intention, by summarizing several studies in one paper, to draw attention to those studies and encourage colleagues in music industry higher education to respond if they detect that this paper is missing important studies, facts, points made, or if they would like to share opinions in response. One always hopes that in writing there will be dialogue, and in dialogue there will be learning that leads to improved ideas.

Some have been studying diversity in our industry for decades, and some are passionate newcomers to that research. It is not the author's intention to provide an exhaustive literature review of all studies on the subject, nor is it their intention to provide a thorough analysis of all major discoveries and points made in each study. While that would be a worthy endeavor, this paper is meant for music industry professionals, and academics who are educating present and future music industry practitioners, more than it is intended for researchers. (This is written with due respect and admiration to researchers, and with a promise of more writing to come on these topics that will be written with that audience in mind.) The author does not suggest that they are an authority on this subject—but rather that all of the humans who have dedicated hours, nights, and weekends to their studies are important voices to be listened to and shared with students seeking careers in music.

Finally, it is also important to remember that this paper focuses on organizations conducting research or those instrumental in the cultivation of research happening. It does not cover all research, and it does not at all scratch the surface of the vast number of incredible organizations and individuals advocating for change in the music industry every day. In some places in this paper, non-research organizations are mentioned to provide context for when research happened, how it happened, and how it might have led to more research being conducted. The author genuinely hopes no organization or individual will feel left out of this paper, but if one does, said author asks for understanding from the reader and invites dialogue, updates, edit requests, and suggestions with openness and humility.

## Key Takeaways About Research: What is Different Now



### 1) The way the word “diversity” is used in the music industry has changed

That change is relatively recent and evolving. In some cases, we still experience ambiguity around what a person

means when they say the word “diversity.” We know they mean a lot of people or things that are different from each other, but it is often used as a code word. Studying music industry diversity thirty years ago was very different than it is today. While one might say that is a sign of progress, from a research perspective it is challenging. It means we are still in the benchmark setting stage with respect to measuring representation of women and non-binary gendered folks, LGBT+ folks, people of color, and living with disabilities. We are still documenting and establishing the state of our “diversity crisis” in the music industry, which is the first stage of research.

### 2) Academia’s relationship with the music industry has changed

This is a very good thing for music industry diversity research! At one time, research was conducted from afar, without participation of music industry professionals. In fact, in some cases industry had disdain for research that was done. Now, quite often research is coming *from* the industry, with academics invited to participate to provide an added layer of rigor/objectivity. This is partially happening because a lot more educators are active participants in the industry now, and have professional connections. While not true of all institutions, it is true in many places that academia has been more accepting of industry practitioners in the classroom—with current knowledge being a valuable asset. It is also happening because the industry has been made more transparent through invention of the internet. Mass adoption of social media and networking sites have made it easier to identify and contact leaders at all levels of organizations in the industry. In short, just as artists have become more directly accessible to fans, industry has become more directly accessible to researchers!

### 3) There is real momentum for change, across the industry, on a global scale

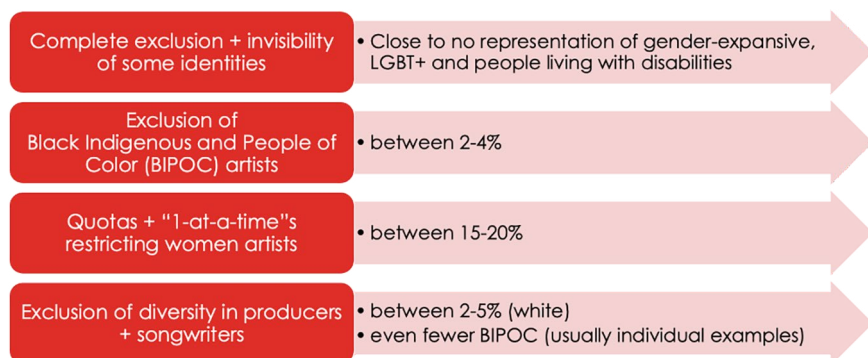
Research studies are not just coming from the United States. They are coming from Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, France, Portugal, South Africa, Japan, and beyond. We’re seeing research start to be undertaken beyond the top of the industry pop charts on *Billboard*. While my paper speaks most about the research that has been done in country and electronic music, it is expected we will see more studies of other genres that will lead to deeper understanding of the music industry as a whole. In full disclosure, this summer I will share results of research I have been conducting about Americana music.

- *Benchmarks are being set.* More studies are being repeated or share methodology with others to compare results and detect progress (or lack thereof).
- *Stories are being told.* More studies are including qualitative data—stories and experiences from

directly inside the industry to explore what can be done to change systems of hierarchy and exclusion in place.

## Highlights Across Studies

While it is impossible to compare studies directly given their differing methodologies, sources, and time periods, it is possible to characterize what has been learned across all of the studies at a high level based on the findings that are most consistent across all of them. Overall, all studies have continued to observe a consistent trend of exclusion with hopes new efforts will make a difference. There is complete exclusion of some identities. For example, studies are only starting to measure gender-expansive identities, and there is little representation of out LGBT+ artists and visibility of people living with disabilities. Across all studies, representation of people who are black, indigenous, and of color (representing other non-white races and ethnicities) ranged from 2-4% depending on the area of industry. Across all studies, representation of women (primarily white) seemed to be affected by spoken and unspoken quotas. Tokenism and the phrase “We have one already” came up again and again as a problem observed in studies—the notion that including one woman or person of color was inclusion enough. Naturally with that mentality prevailing in the industry, most studies found a range of 15-20% representation of women. Multiple studies looked specifically at the producer and songwriter roles, and identified between 2-5% representation—and even lower representation of BIPOC and other forms of diversity. Even though programs have been in effect for a few years to try to change this, the statistic continues to haunt the music industry. Corporations, small businesses, organizations, and sole proprietors must do more—and professors must do anything in their power to encourage and promote students who represent diversity who are aiming to pursue these careers.



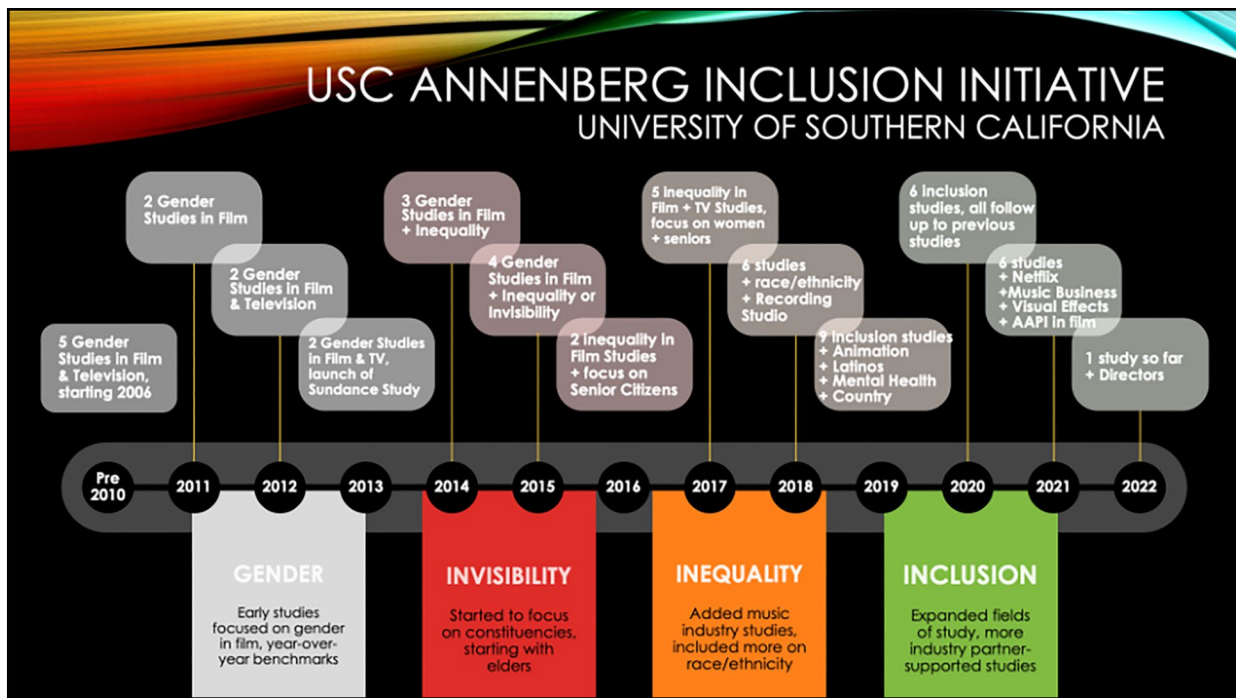
## Some Organizations and People to Know About (In No particular Order)

### USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative

While the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism at the University of Southern California was founded in 1971, The Annenberg Inclusion Initiative at USC was founded by Dr. Stacy L Smith in Los Angeles in 2005.<sup>3</sup> As her bio puts it, “She has authored more than 100 book chapters, articles and reports, along with 40 studies at AII on various aspects of entertainment, including annual studies examining inclusion in top-grossing films and popular music. In addition to being a prolific writer, Smith speaks routinely on issues of inequality in the media. Her TED Talk has been viewed more than 1.1 million times, and she has spoken at the United Nations, the White House, Sundance Film Festival, and the Toronto Film Festival. She has also testified before the U.S. Congress on inequality in the entertainment industry.”<sup>4</sup>

Annenberg’s most recent music report published in June 2021 “Inclusion in the Music Business: Gender & Race/Ethnicity Across Executives, Artists & Talent Teams” studies gender and race/ethnicity diversity among executives in the music industry. Just prior to that in March 2021, they released “Inclusion in the Recording Studio?” with funding from Spotify. These are not Annenberg’s first studies of the subject by any means. In fact, the recent release of “Inclusion in the Recording Studio?” is their fourth annual examination of the topic since they first broached it in January 2018. They have also released reports on Film, Animation, and other fields related to entertainment. While most reports center on the issue of gender representation, more recent reports also focus on race/ethnicity, LGBT, age, and people living with disability. A full list of studies from Annenberg can be found on their website.<sup>5</sup> (See the References section for links to all studies mentioned in this paper.)

Given Annenberg’s long history recording statistics pertaining to diversity and representation in the music industry, and that in essence little progress has been recorded year over year, it is no surprise that their most recent studies incorporate observations and recommendations about measures they think will make a difference. One can only hope, if music industry organizations heed their recommendations, their future study results will exhibit more measurable progress.



## Highlights From AAI's 2021 Reports

### “Inclusion in the Recording Studio? Gender and Race/Ethnicity of Artists, Songwriters & Producers across 900 Popular Songs from 2012-2020”

by Stacy L. Smith, Katherine Pieper, Marc Choueiti, Karla Hernandez, and Kevin Yao, March 2021

*Purpose:* “To assess gender and race/ethnicity of artists, songwriters, and producers across the 900 most popular songs from 2012 to 2020” and across GRAMMY nominations 2013 to 2021.”

*Findings:* The study found that women are underrepresented across three roles focused on in the study: artists (21.6%), songwriters (12.6%), and producers (2.6%). Over time, representation of women has been consistently low, never greater than 28.1%, in 2016.

- *Artists:* In 2020, women were only 20.2% of artists represented—that is lower than six of the nine years studied, including the first five years at the beginning of the study (2012-2016). Women were most represented in pop music (32%) and least represented in hip-hop/rap (12.3%). Few women were in bands or duos, most were individual artists. On the other hand, representation of artists of color is on the rise. “46.7% of artists were people of color across 900 songs from 2012-2020.” It is interesting that “most underrepresented artists were solo performers (60.9%), with fewer in duos (29.4%) or bands (20.9%).” Perhaps there is a correlation to be studied

there, given that trend was observed in both women artists and artists of color.

- *Songwriters:* Exclusion of women songwriters has increased. 2020 was the worst year for women songwriters, with 65% of songs studied not having any featured women songwriters. “87.9% of the songs on the Billboard Hot 100 Year-End Charts in the last 9 years were either devoid of women songwriters or included just one woman.” Women songwriters appeared most often in dance/electronic (20.5%) or pop (18.7%) music, and were least represented in hip-hop/rap (6.3%), R&B (9.1%), country (10.6%), or alternative (11.1%) music.
- *Producers:* The most shared result of the study is that women make up 2% of producers in 2020, which is lower than observed in the overall sample (2.6%). The study showed no progress for women in production, and in fact showed the number of women declined in 2020 from 2019. Further, the study observed none of the women represented in the Billboard Hot 100 Year End Chart were there as a result of the Women in the Mix pledge. The researchers acknowledged that doesn’t mean pledgers did not work with women, but it does mean they did not work on their most popular songs with women. “The only woman of color credited as a producer in 2020 appeared on the charts as a result of a seasonal hit first released in 1994.”
- *GRAMMYS:* Between 2013 and 2021, only 13.4% of individuals nominated for a Grammy® Award were women, but recent progress has been steep. In



2021, women reached a high with 28.1% of nominations. “Women were most likely to be nominated for the Best New Artist award, followed by Song of the Year.” They are less likely to be nominated for Record of the Year or Album of the Year. Only one woman was nominated for Producer of the Year during the time frame of the study. (Note: When Linda Perry was nominated for Producer of the Year in 2019, it was the first time a woman had been nominated in fifteen years, since Lauren Christy of The Matrix production team was nominated.<sup>6</sup>) The study dipped into addressing intersectionality, observing that 61.5% of women nominated over the time period were white. “In all but one category, women of color were less likely than their white counterparts to be nominated for a Grammy® Award.”

### Recommendations

The study’s concluding statement calls upon the music industry to “examine how its decision-making, practices, and beliefs perpetuate the underrepresentation of women artists, songwriters, and producers.” It makes the following points and recommendations:

- Women of color must be supported beyond the role of artist—that women of color must be included throughout industry roles.
- Improvement in GRAMMY nomination rates indicate the Recording Academy’s focus and steps taken appear to be making an impact for women, but more work needs to be done.
- “For artists starting work on new music, consider working with women in songwriting and producing roles.”
- The study identifies a few initiatives that should be supported: She Is The Music, Spotify’s EQL Residency, and Women’s Audio Mission

In the limitations section of the study, it is also noted that looking at genres other than the most popular ones from a mass audience perspective might reveal different results. While this study’s intention to research mass audience genres and categories is clear, studying all genres of music may lead to more insights about how inclusion can be fostered and achieved at the highest selling genres of music, too.

**“Inclusion in the Music Business: Gender & Race/Ethnicity Across Executives, Artists & Talent Teams”** by Stacy L. Smith, Carmen Lee, Marc Choueti, Katherine Pieper, Zoe Moore, Dana Dinh, and Artur Tofan, June 2021

*Purpose:* “To map the diversity of the U.S. music business across different positions of power.”

*Findings:* Overall, the study documented that “a lack of inclusion in the music industry is not the problem of one company or one sector.” The research suggests the diversity crisis in the music industry is system-wide and involves all of the industry. “Creating a more inclusive industry requires the insight, input, and effort of all.”

- At the CEO/President level, 86.1% of top executives were men, and 86.1% were white.
- At the nine major music companies, 100% of the top executives were white, only one was female.
- When they looked at executive boards by company type:
  - Music groups had “greatest share of underrepresented (26.3%) and Black executives (23.7%) on their executive boards.”
  - Radio and streaming companies were in the middle (underrepresented=17%, Black=2.1%, women=23.4%).
  - Live concert industry companies had the “lowest percentage of underrepresented executives (12.5%) and no Black executives, but the highest percentage of women in leadership roles (40.6%).”

### Recommendations

AAI identified the necessity that music companies get beyond performatism. They suggest that recruitment without corporate culture change may only attract employees who represent diversity but they will be set up for failure. They pointed out the impossible challenge diversity candidates have, especially if they do not exhibit behaviors that are consistent with the prevailing dominant white, male culture. Example: “Managers...may discount the skills and talents of women because their behaviors do not align with historically masculine attributes.” Further, AAI considers other research conducted that suggests environments that are “high in social dominance orientation” are likely to hire in ways that perpetuate the status quo. This bears further unpacking.

The following bullets are recommendations quoted directly from the study report:

- Adopt objective and measurable criteria for evaluations
- Provide flexible pathways to leadership roles
- Fast track executives and use cluster hiring
- Reduce environmental cues that trigger stereotype threat
- Identify sector-specific strategies for unique challenges
- Ensure the pipeline of diverse representatives reaches talent

## Annenberg Recommendation Highlights



Both AAI studies offered recommendations for the music industry calling upon the music industry to “examine how its decision-making, practices, and beliefs perpetuate under-representation” that music companies need to get beyond performatism. They suggest recruitment without corporate culture change may attract employees who represent diversity, but they will be set up for failure. They pointed out the impossible challenge diversity candidates and employees have, especially if they do not exhibit behaviors that are consistent with the prevailing white, male, dominant-focused culture.

Among limitations of their study, they noted that looking at genres other than the most popular from a mass audience perspective might reveal different results. They suggested perhaps the GRAMMYs showed improvement because that data included categories beyond mainstream music genres. It leads one to naturally question if studying mainstream music and mainstream genres represents a majority experience in the music industry overall.

### Berklee College of Music and Women In Music

Berklee’s Institute for Creative Entrepreneurship has been involved in multiple studies over the past five years, in partnership with other organizations. In March 2019, Berklee and Women in Music jointly released “Women in the U.S. Music Industry: Obstacles and Opportunities,” which they described as “the first study in the U.S. exploring the socio-economic landscape of women in the American music industry.” They acknowledge their study was designed to build upon existing work done by Women In Music Canada in 2015, which used a survey to gather information about “demographics, employment, career challenges, and job satisfaction among women.” This survey was answered by approximately 2,000 U.S. women across the music industry.<sup>7</sup>

Highlights from “**Women in the U.S. Music Industry: Obstacles and Opportunities**” by Becky Prior, Erin Barra, and Sharon Kramer, March 2019

*Purpose:* “To examine the socioeconomic landscape of women working in the music industry across the United States.”

*Findings:* The report summarized three primary truths as follows (the following three bullets are direct quotes from the study report):

- Women experience a number of challenges in the workplace.
- Still, a majority of women report satisfaction with their work.
- Women shared strategies to overcome barriers and improve inclusion in the music industry.

In the first category, *challenges*, women cited issues pertaining to gender bias, racism, unfair compensation, work/life balance, and restrained career advancement.

- 84% reported being treated differently based on their gender.
  - The occupations that cited this most were Artist Development and Management, Music Media and Journalism, Music Production and Recording, and Performance.
- 68% said gender “affected their employment”—the occupations that cited this most were Music Production and Recording, Performance, and Music Media and Journalism.
- “Women of color were more likely to feel they should be further ahead in their careers” and “they were less likely to be satisfied with their primary occupation.”
- “Women of color were more likely to be in entry-level positions, while white women were more



likely to be in senior positions.”

- Over half work more than one job; 25% hold three or more jobs.
- Self-employed/freelancers reported different treatment and that gender affected their employment more than other employment types (note: 24% of those surveyed were self-employed).
- Women from higher income ranges were more likely to have children.
- 61% of women said their careers were a factor in their decision to have children.

In the second category, *satisfaction*, 72% of women said they were extremely or somewhat satisfied by their primary job. 77% of women felt comfortable in their work environment. 64% felt supported at work.

- Income does play a role in satisfaction—65% of women in lower income levels expressed satisfaction compared with 86% in higher income levels.
- Comfort: Women over 50 years of age were more likely to feel comfortable in the workplace (83%) than women ages 18-24 (73%). White women were more likely to feel comfortable (79%) compared with women of color (72%).
- Support: Women, ages 18-24, were more likely to feel supported at work (71%); women in their 40s were least likely to feel supported (59%). White women were more likely to feel supported at work (66%); compared with women of color (58%).

## Recommendations

Regarding strategies to *overcome barriers* and *improve*



*inclusion*, half of the respondents offered recommendations. Those recommendations included:

- intentional focus on improving diversity and inclusion
- mentorship (92% of those who had mentorship said it helped their careers)
- internships (79% of those who had internships said it helped them)
- networking (54% said opportunities helped them)

However only 61% of respondents said they had been mentored, and only 54% of women said they had a music-related internship.

## The Recording Academy

The Recording Academy was quick to share results of both the Annenberg and Berklee studies in 2018 and 2019. In the fall of 2021, in an effort to build on the work of these predecessors even further, they collaborated with Arizona State University and Berklee to circulate a survey “to study the roles and realities of women and gender-expansive people working in the American music industry.”<sup>8</sup> The survey expanded on 2015 research by Women in Music Canada and 2018-2019 research by Berklee College of Music and Women in Music Global (see above). It “explores demographic characteristics, employment experiences, career challenges, job satisfaction, and pathways into the music industry for women and people with marginalized gender identities.” Results of the new “Women in the Mix Study” were released in March 2022<sup>9</sup> and first reported in *Billboard*.<sup>10</sup>

Highlights from “**Women in the Mix**” by Erin Barra-Jean, Mako Fitts Ward, Lisa M. Anderson, and Alaysia M. Brown, March 2022

*Purpose:* “To study the roles and realities of women and gender-expansive people working in the American music industry.”

*Findings:* The study found that women and gender-expansive people in the music industry are facing multiple challenges including overwork, underpay, multiple jobs, discrimination, lack of mentorship, nepotism, gatekeeper culture, sexism, restricted career advancement, family planning, burnout, and “the competing demands of creative vision and generating revenue.”

The findings of this study were very similar to the study done a few years earlier, indicating slight shifts but no major changes in the industry. There were some differences in response to the new study—respondents to the new survey were more diverse. While 77% of the earlier survey identified as white, 59% of responses to this new study identified as white. Response rate by Black professionals was 10% higher than in 2019. This in and of itself might be an indicator of meaningful change.

The study acknowledges major changes in the world since the previous study, stating:

The simultaneous shifts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the cultural impacts of the death of George Floyd and several other unarmed Black people at the hands of law enforcement, and the sustained work of grassroots campaigns and movements such as Black Lives Matter and Me Too have shifted attention towards the systemic issues our country faces with both race and gender. In 2022,

we are living in a world and industry that is not the same as the one we last surveyed in 2018. In this iteration of the study, we added questions about work during the pandemic and worked to ensure more participation by women of color and gender-expansive people.”

This study is one of the first to acknowledge “gender expansive” identities including non-binary, genderqueer, gender fluid, and agender people (3% of respondents).

- *Overworked, Underpaid:* 91% said music industry was their primary job, 57% have two or more jobs, 28% are working over fifty hours/week, 36% are making less than \$40,000/year. Respondents who own companies and are employees of companies reported higher earnings levels than self-employed/freelancers and those with multiple employment types.
- *Discrimination:* 77% felt they were treated differently because of their gender, 47% felt they should be further in their careers, 56% said gender had affected their employment in the industry—the occupations the citing this most were Music Creators and Performers (note: both of these statistics are slightly lower than the 84% and 68% in the previous Berklee/Women in Music study).
- *Satisfaction:* 78% felt satisfied with their jobs overall—those in Event and Tour Production and Management and Promotion were least likely to be satisfied (65%).

This study had similar findings to the previous study regarding comfort and support and solutions recommended by those surveyed.

- *Work/Life Balance:* Over 81% of women surveyed in the music industry said they did not have children. In comparison, according to the most recent report from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on this metric in 2019, 44.8% of women aged 15-49 had never had a child (a percentage that is slightly increasing each time it is studied).<sup>11</sup> Women at all levels expressed emphatically that their career had an effect on the decision whether to have children.
- *Support:* The report identified “a level of skepticism among respondents when it comes to the effectiveness of programs across the industry that intend to uplift historically marginalized communities” given that 48% said programs/group initiatives in their workplace had no effect (12% said they had negative

impact and 15% were unsure).

- *Mentorship:* “Despite 93% of respondents reporting that mentoring has contributed to their career, only 67% of them have had a mentor.”

## Recommendations

The study sets up a framework that action items should seek to address the following categories in order to effectively make change:

- Access to resources
- Access to opportunities
- Access to mentors
- Networking access and acumen
- Work/Life balance
- Intentional diversity and hiring efforts

The study’s recommendations strive to achieve more than one of each of the categories:

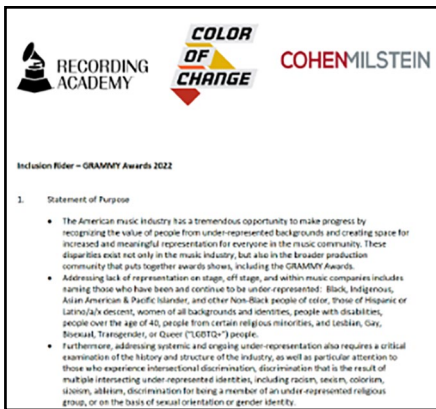
- More grant support
- More paid internships
- Recruitment pledges to get employers to commit to intentional diversity
- Mentorship initiatives
- Paid days off
- Support advocacy groups

The researchers did not suggest ways to measure effectiveness of the initiatives.

Strive for more...	By creating...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to resources</li> <li>• Access to opportunities</li> <li>• Access to mentors</li> <li>• Networking access and acumen</li> <li>• Work/Life balance</li> <li>• Intentional diversity and hiring efforts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More grant support</li> <li>• More paid internships</li> <li>• Recruitment pledges to get employers to commit to intentional diversity</li> <li>• Mentorship initiatives</li> <li>• Paid days off</li> <li>• Support for advocacy groups</li> </ul>

While “Women in the Mix” is the Recording Academy’s most recent research, it is not the only work they have done regarding diversity. The Recording Academy also worked in partnership with Color of Change as part of a the #Change-Music Initiative, and Cohen Milstein Sellers & Toll to study and then draft an Inclusion Rider for the 2022 GRAMMY Awards.<sup>12</sup>

The eight-page inclusion rider has nine main sections. It outlines the reasons the rider is necessary and speaks to dynamics of systemic prejudice that leads to underrepresentation in all facets of the music industry, and attests to the Recording Academy’s intentions to use the rider for all broadcasts. It introduces a notion that “On-Stage Positions” and “Off-Stage Positions” alike are equally in need of more diversity. And within on-stage positions pays particular attention to not just performers and hosts, but also announcers.



Highlights of the “GRAMMY Inclusion Rider” include:

*Purpose:* “Addressing lack of representation on stage, off stage, and within music companies.”

*Findings and Recommendations:* The eight-page inclusion rider has nine main sections:

1. *Statement of Purpose:* Outlines the reasons the rider is necessary and speaks to dynamics of systemic prejudice that leads to underrepresentation in all facets of the music industry, and attests to the Recording Academy’s intention to use the rider for all broadcasts.
2. *Definitions:* Clarifies terms including “underrepresented group(s).”
3. *Recruitment, Audition & Interview Objectives:* Explains process for Evaluation, Benchmarks, Recruiting Plan, On-Stage Positions (including Host, Presenters, Performers, and those in Background and Supporting Roles), Off-Stage Positions (including Development and Production, Design & Direction, Photography/Cinematography, Sound, Direction, Costumes, Stylists, Hair, Makeup), Accommodations, Gender-Neutral Facilities, Land Acknowledgment.
4. *Hiring Objectives:* Explains process for hiring, including a “No Quotas” clarification stating “Efforts to cast and hire qualified candidates from underrepresented backgrounds into On-Stage and Off-Stage Positions do not reflect quotas, but conscious efforts to overcome historical bias in the industry to move toward more equitable representation, while ensuring that all individuals cast and hired are qualified for their positions.”
5. *Confidentiality in Collection, Maintenance, and Use of Data:* Makes a point of keeping data confidential and anonymous, clarifies who will have access, while protecting the right to use the data for “research regarding diversity and inclusion in music and production.”

6. *Data Collection & Reporting:* States the importance of gathering data and information as a means to create “a culture of progress and accountability for advancing diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility.” In subsections, it explains that those hired should self-identify information collected, that U.S. Census designations for race, ethnicity and gender will be used, and who will be responsible for delivering a report. The data will include the number of people who auditioned, interviewed, or were considered for On-Stage and Off-Stage positions.
7. *Accountability or Compliance:* Suggests the means to hold the Recording Academy accountable includes a third-party company hired to analyze data and information gathered. It sets penalties of donation if the Recording Academy fails to satisfy the terms, including a list of potential organizations that could receive donations.
8. *Dispute Resolution:* Clarifies that the terms in contracts will govern conflicts.
9. *Expiration:* States that the rider is initially focused on the 2022 Grammy broadcasts.

One might ask how—after so many years of lagging behind—has the Recording Academy all of the sudden been equipped to mobilize on these initiatives? Some brief background on the Recording Academy’s efforts might be helpful to know. In March 2018, a task force was established by the Recording Academy to “examine issues of diversity and inclusion within the Academy and broader music community” and it began its work that May.<sup>13</sup> The Recording Academy task force’s December 2019 report documents their work, and in the process cites research they relied on including reports from McKinsey entitled “Why Diversity Matters” (Jan 2015) and “Delivering Through Diversity” (Jan 2018),<sup>14</sup> research from SourceMedia pertaining to sexual harassment in the workplace,<sup>15</sup> and many other sources of inspiration.

The team at the Recording Academy appears to be well versed in research done about diversity, equity, and inclusion inside and outside of the music industry. In all publications the Recording Academy circulates pertaining to DEI work and research, regardless of who their partners are in each publication, they consistently dedicated real estate in their writings to cite data, studies, articles, and substantiating evidence for the concepts and decisions they are making. In this way, they encourage readers to trust the results they are sharing, but also provide resources to educate oneself further about the topics. One interesting assignment for college students could be to read a Recording Academy report and then to source and read one of the studies the Recording Academy refers to within their study. In this way,

the Recording Academy is leading by example and providing breadcrumbs of sorts to encourage the industry to take an active role in their own education pertaining to diversity and social justice.

## MIDiA Research

Looking more at the independent music scene, in 2021 MIDiA (a U.K.-based research and market intelligence firm that reports on trends in music industry sales and consumption publicly, while serving clients privately as well) teamed up with digital distributors Tunecore and Believe on a study called “BE THE CHANGE: Women Making Music.” It is worth noting that Tunecore and Believe are both owned by Believe, and they both serve primarily independent artist and independent record labels, so one would expect this study to focus more on indie music trends than major label trends. The study primarily analyzed results of a survey circulated in February 2021 distributed online through “a variety of music industry associations, networks, and influencers working directly on issues faced by women creators.” They also conducted in depth interviews.<sup>16</sup>

Highlights of “**BE THE CHANGE: Women Making Music**” by Hannah Kahlert, Kriss Thakrar, and Srishti Das, March 2022

*Purpose:* “We asked a global community of female creators about their goals, challenges, experiences and inspirations. We wanted to build on and add to the excellent work already being done to better understand the uphill journey they face.”

*Findings:*

- This study digs deeper into cultural power dynamics and problems that arise from unbalanced power in the music industry. It explores perspectives primarily women respondents have about the music industry climate. While two thirds of respondents expressed a value that “success means being respected and recognized in their scene,” the likelihood of satisfaction and a sense of success is made less likely by the climate in which women are creating.
- 93% of women believe they “have to put up with far more difficulties and challenges than men.”
- 90% of respondents agreed that “The business treats female artists differently.”
- 81% of respondents agreed “It is harder for female artists to get recognition than male artists” and “almost two thirds of female creators identified sexual harassment or objectification as a key challenge, making it by far the most widely-cited problem.”
- “The majority of female creators feel excluded from composition and production.”

- “Many female creators, when asked what they thought has changed in recent years, agreed that transparency and discourse have improved—but many also hold the view that real, material change remains harder to pin down. Phrases such as ‘tokenism’ and ‘lip service’ are commonly used to describe some of the current changes in the industry.”
- A lack of female role models for independent creators was one of the challenges cited.
- The study points to a vicious cycle, “a spiral of perceived difference leading to lack of recognition, leading to lack of opportunity—spinning like a stuck record...”
- Multiple times, in different contexts, the report shares views of respondents who brought up being tokenized, and put in positions of competing with other women for a scarcity of opportunities—when organizations performatively “trying” to include women were only willing to include one or two women.
- The study drew a correlation between ageism and the circumstances female artists and workers face during common child-rearing and parenting years in their lives, suggesting that women are still presumed to be primary child caregivers.

## Recommendations

- The study recommends more flexible work schedule arrangements for parents of all genders.
- The study suggests that some of the remote and virtual working options that became prevalent during the pandemic are positive for increasing women’s participation in the industry. (Unfortunately, some of the other studies in this paper do not show that pandemic virtual collaboration opportunities had that impact on the representation of women in songwriting, recording and production, statistically.)

## Genre Specific Initiatives

Among the genres that have had studies specifically of their fields, country and electronic music are prominent—and their studies unpack more of the dynamics expressed in the MIDiA study. Sometimes significant events spark an increase in research activity. It helps to see these studies in context with when and why they may have happened.

For example, in 2018 at the 90th Academy Awards, Frances McDormand asked women to stand up and accept her Oscar with her during her acceptance speech. For most Americans, and for many in the entertainment industries, her speech was the first time they heard the words “inclusion rider.” Frances McDormand’s speech happened one month after Neil Portnow’s sexist “Step Up” comment at the GRAMMYS, six months after the *New York Times* broke



the news about Harvey Weinstein’s sexual harassment and assault, and less than six months after Alyssa Milano popularized the #MeToo hashtag on Twitter (though that movement started in 2006). The Recording Academy’s attention to diversity, equity and inclusion was in many ways sparked by that difficult moment in GRAMMY history. It’s no surprise that an inclusion rider would be among the first actions they took to remedy, repair, and strive to do better. Of course, research and the inclusion rider were only two of the many actions the Recording Academy took to further inclusion.

In country music, the “shot heard ’round the world” came in the form of public remarks from a radio consultant that tipped off a series of efforts to improve diversity in the genre.

### Beverly Keel and Change The Conversation

Change the Conversation<sup>17</sup> is not a research organization specifically, but it is important to acknowledge its role in the field due to its influence and the unique way it represents a coalition of leaders from multiple organizations active in the pursuit of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the music industry. Not only has Change the Conversation commissioned their own research, it has also greatly influenced organizations that have conducted research, and given them a forum to share knowledge and further dialogue and plans. Change The Conversation has been instrumental by unearthing questions from the country music industry community for researchers to pursue.

Change The Conversation was founded by three Nashville music industry leaders on the heels of controversial conversations about gender equity in country music:

- Beverly Keel - respected country music journalist and then Chair of Middle Tennessee State University’s Recording Industry program (now Dean of MTSU’s College of Media and Entertainment)
- Leslie Fram - Senior Vice President, Music Strategy and Talent, CMT Country Music Television
- Tracy Gershon - then head of A&R for multiple record labels within Concord Music Group (now a music industry consultant and leader of Brandi Carlile’s publishing company One Riot Music)

To summarize the climate from which Change The Conversation emerged, industry dialogue was sparked via a series of articles, panels, and events that transpired in 2014 and 2015. While a lot of discussion in the music industry is generally based on hearsay and common knowledge, in this time frame country radio went on the record about some strongly held beliefs that made it possible to study and verify what was fact and what was fiction. It happened something like this:

- November 8, 2014: Beverly Keel wrote an article in *The Tennessean* newspaper on the subject of women in country music deserving more radio airplay.<sup>18</sup> Around this time, Keel, Fram, and Gershon started planning Change The Conversation, but public meetings had not started yet.
- November 10, 2014: *Country Aircheck* (a country music industry weekly publication) published an editorial panning Keel’s article, saying she was making “wildly unsupported assertions” and “failing to contribute something meaningful on the subject.”<sup>19</sup> Though perhaps the most important sentence in the full-page article was this: “To be sure, the relative imbalance of male and female voices on the radio and in country music is a real phenomenon and worthy of serious discussion.” Of this article, Keel has said, “While I received numerous emails of support, especially from women, *Country Radio Aircheck*, an industry publication, wrote a full-page editorial slamming me, saying that there wasn’t a problem but now I was creating one, and that my column wasn’t worthy of my Columbia Journalism School education. Rather than being upset, I was thrilled and wrote them a thank-you email for continuing the conversation on the subject.”<sup>20</sup>
- January 2015: Keel, Fram, and Gershon invited women music industry executives and creators to Keel’s house for an informal meeting to discuss ideas and ways to address disparity in country music. At that first meeting, nearly thirty women outlined a mission for Change The Conversation and set the group’s initial goals.
- February 27, 2015: At a Country Radio Seminar (CRS) session entitled “Unlocking The Secrets to Successful Music Scheduling,” consultant Keith Hill compared radio to a salad with women as tomatoes and men as lettuce. He suggested to boost ratings, women should be played infrequently for added color but not substance, never back-to-back, and he claimed “women want to hear males.” While this pattern of scheduling and attitude toward women was regularly experienced by women, no one in radio had gone so blatantly on the record about it, and this event sparked open dialogue and debate across the country industry. This would come to be known as #TomatoGate and #SaladGate in the music industry community.

“If you want to make ratings in country radio, take females out,” said Hill. “If you play more than 15 percent female on [country] radio, your rating will go down.” (Keith Hill)

In follow-up interviews over the next two months, Hill continued to stand by his recommendations—further expanding on his rationale for advising radio stations to proactively limit the number of women artists played on country radio.

- March 2, 2015: The issue of *Country Aircheck* published after the Country Radio Seminar reported Hill's remarks factually as part of a recap of the conference's music scheduling session, but it did not point out the sexism and negative generalizations, or provide any alternative opinion on the subject.<sup>21</sup>
- April 2015: Change The Conversation held their second event at Black River Entertainment on Music Row. Featured speaker Dawn Delvo, from the Black River promotions team, talked about radio's role in breaking new artists.
- May 2015: *Country Aircheck* invited Keith Hill back to speak further on the subject in their May 26th issue.<sup>22</sup> Beverly Keel conducted a follow-up interview with Hill, and reported on his perspective in a May 28th story in *The Tennessean*.<sup>23</sup> Another article by Keel entitled "Sexist 'tomato' barb launches food fight on Music Row" appeared in *USA Today* and *The Tennessean* on the same day.<sup>24</sup> A few days later, Change The Conversation's next meeting was held at Creative Artist Agency. Laura Hutfless gave a presentation comparing the rate of women being played on country radio (15%) with the number of endorsement deals for CAA's female country artists (50%)—proving that equity is possible. Artists including Sara Evans, Kacey Musgraves, Miranda Lambert, Jennifer Nettles, Martina McBride, and Vince Gill went on the record in media interviews and on social media to express objection to sexism in country music.<sup>25</sup>

Women executive reactions were reported in *Country Aircheck's* June 1 issue—the tone of which, in retrospect, is fascinating to read. The coverage leads off by expressing



apparent surprise that Hill's remarks would be seen as offensive, punctuating the setup with the off-handed quip, "Go figure." In the same issue, the publication again checked in with Hill and published still more of his remarks.<sup>26</sup>

- June 2015: At a June 30 event held at a Nashville restaurant and sponsored by City National Bank, two researchers presented studies analyzing the state of women in country music. Jay Frank, owner and CEO of DigMark, presented about women artists on country radio and a ten-year trend of decline in representation. He focused on Top 300 singles, and raised various topics for discussion, including the situation for female songwriters. New York-based political economist Devarati Ghosh presented research that dug deeper into the methodology of radio research and posed new questions about how assumptions enunciated in Hill's February remarks may have come to be accepted among radio stations as having merit. In her presentation, Ghosh identified that, "The problem isn't the number of solo women being introduced by country radio, but that their success rate has declined significantly. In fact, the number of women being introduced at country radio has remained consistent for twenty years."<sup>27</sup> Ghosh was a regular writer under the pen name Deb B on multiple blogs, websites, and Twitter, and was cited in *Entertainment Weekly*, *Pitchfork*, and *The Guardian*. Her research was reported in *Billboard*, *The Boot*, and other media.<sup>28 29</sup>
- September 2015: Change The Conversation held an event at Ruby in Nashville sponsored by YouTube that featured Madeline Di Nonno, CEO of the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media, an organization at that time that had "amassed the largest body of research on gender prevalence in entertainment) and





Margaret Hart of YouTube. At the event, Di Nonno delivered the Institute's data pertaining to representation of women in film and television—not only the number of women and frequency with which they are hired, but also the nature of the roles they appear in, and how those roles change over the course of a woman's acting career.

Change the Conversation continued to hold meetings monthly with guest speakers to discuss, organize and change the plight of women in Country music.<sup>30</sup>

Martina McBride held a gathering for female artists and their managers at her studio. Other speakers have included Ali Harnell, Lou Taylor, Ann Powers, Holly Gleason, Ann Crawford, Femke Weidema, Shani Ghandi, Alex Kline, Jewly Hight, Marissa Moss, Dorothy Carvello, Jeannie Sealy, and events took on multiple formats.

- September 2016: Devarati Ghosh died suddenly of a heart attack,<sup>31</sup> a great loss to the community not only for her knowledge, but also for her commitment to data analysis in dialogue around change in the music industry. A graduate of Harvard and Stanford,<sup>32</sup> her research knowledge and expertise was highly valued in the community. While groups continued to meet, it was a couple years before follow-up research was conducted that would further Ghosh's impeccable work.

Perhaps in part because the radio consultant claimed to be speaking from credible research he conducted, and in part because the immediate backlash to Keel raising the issue in *The Tennessean* was a call for substantiation, advocates for women in country music responded with data. In turn, that drew more players into the field of diversity research in country music specifically. From 2018-2020, several studies were published. Most analyzed country popularity charts and radio airplay reports as a means to understand representation within the industry, and to confirm or deny what the Keith Hill was saying. They posed questions including:

- Were women actually programmed at 15% or less?
- If so, how long had that been happening?
- How did that change materialize over time?
- What could be studied to further understand the trend observed by Ghosh and others?

Essentially, a series of researchers working separately were all trying to piece together a picture, grappling with what Hill had said about women in country radio. The following is a summary of some of that work.

## Annenberg Country Charts Study

Turning their attention to country music for the first time in their research, Annenberg's "No Country for Female Artists: Artist & Songwriter Gender on Popular Country Charts from 2014 to 2018"<sup>33</sup> study looked at five hundred songs from the Year End Billboard Hot Country charts 2014 to 2018 including looking at artists and songwriters, and they reviewed ACM nominees in four categories. Annenberg used the same methodology applied in their other research to country music.

*Purpose:* "To provide a snapshot of how women are doing in country music as performers and songwriters." The study was sparked by a desire to confirm or deny a comment ACM host Reba McEntire made in a broadcast saying that representation of women was low but getting better.

*Findings:* Comparing results, they found that only 16% of artists in the chart were women. The average age of the top male solo artists was 42 years, while average age was 29 years for women. Only 15% of nominees for the top ACM categories were women. Only two women were nominated for Entertainer of the Year. Only 12% of songwriters nominated were women (two women).

Women were still underrepresented in the time period and the ratio of women in the chart did not appear to be getting better. Only 16% of artists were women. As can be expected, the top solo artists of both genders had multiple credits during the time period. However, top male artists had roughly twice as many credits than women—with 12 to 16 credits each, where top female artists had 6 to 9 each, and most top women only had 2 credits where men had at least 9. The researchers also observed a major age gap between the top men and women on the charts. Average age for men was 42—it was 29 for women, indicating a shorter career duration for female artists. None of the women in the top of the charts were over age 35. All but one of the men were over 40. Women were 15% of duos and 15% of bands across the time period. The number of women in bands did increase in the last year to 25% (up from 6% in 2017). 12% of songwriters were women across 200 songs. "Female artists were more likely to work with female songwriters than male songwriters." In the ACMs, only 15% of the nominees for Entertainer of the Year, Songwriter of the Year, Duo of the Year, and Group of the Year were women. Only two women were nominated for Entertainer of the Year in the time period—Carrie Underwood and Miranda Lambert. 12% of songwriters nominated were women. Only two women were nominated—Hillary Lindsey and Lori McKenna.

## Recommendations

Annenberg recommended the following actions to the Country music industry:

- Labels assess their recruitment, signing, and promotion practices.
- Radio stations examine the perceptions of decision makers (programmers and management), study their playlists, and devise a plan to address biases.
- Artists, companies, and philanthropists support advocacy organizations working to improve access for women.
- Music platforms use their data to study what listeners want, and examine their playlists and algorithms so women are not “systematically disadvantaged.”
- Promoters, touring and live entertainment companies examine their role promoting female talent, and study their audiences to “dispel myths about who supports male and female country artists.”

## Jada Watson and SongData

“The SongData Project explores the potential of using discographic and biographic data to learn more about how popular music genres form, develop, and evolve over time. We are developing approaches for using information about songs and artists to explore the connections between musicians and the broader socio-cultural and institutional frameworks that govern genres.”<sup>34</sup>

Founder Jada Watson, of the University of Ottawa, began writing on topics of diversity with research pertaining to The Dixie Chicks in 2010 and studying diversity in country music radio charts following TomatoGate in 2015.<sup>35</sup> In addition to appearing in the journals *Popular Music* and *Popular Music and Society*, the most recent studies to come out of the SongData Project have been cited as a source in several mainstream music industry publication articles, and Watson has presented her research in various settings. While early research focused on gender in country music, recent reports expand to analyze representation on country format radio through an intersectional lens by evaluating gender and race/ethnicity. While SongData has coded data for LGBTQ+ and non-binary gender identities, few recordings from artists with those identities are detected in the data sets. In her most recent report, it stated “just one Black queer artist has had a song played on the format.”

SongData published a report that “advanced an intersectional framework to focus on radio programming in 2019, and demonstrated the cyclic relationship between radio programming, chart activity, streaming algorithms and nominations for CMA awards within the industry. This report leveraged data from both Mediabase and Billboard charts.” Every way SongData looked at it “women occupy signifi-

cantly less space than men in country music” and it has gotten worse in recent years. While the late 1990s were strong for women artists in country music, the overall trend has been a decline in visibility and commercial country radio success. 10% fewer women debuting and 27% fewer reaching #1. Whenever female artists have had a peak year, it has been followed by immediate drops of 20% or more.

SongData’s 2021 research expanded their study to look at race and ethnicity in country music, releasing a report entitled “Redlining in Country Music” in March of that year. The 2021 report paints a picture of minimal airplay for BIPOC artists—less than 4% in most recent years. Of the 2.5% of airplay BIPOC artists received in a 19-year period overall, 96% of that airplay was for men, suggesting “a racial hierarchy exists.” In 19 years, only 13 Black artists and 3 Black women appeared in the data set. When looking at spins by daypart, most airplay for BIPOC artists happened in evenings and overnights—which the researchers described as “redlining,” a reference to real estate practices that obstruct people of color from purchasing homes in neighborhoods dominated by white people.

In a period of three years, SongData, led by researcher Jada Watson, put out several reports—three in consultation with Woman of Music Action Network, one with CMT, and four independently—leveraging data from country format radio’s weekly and year-end reports as tracked by Mediabase. Highlights provided in this paper attempt to span all reports authored by Watson from 2018 to date, including reports released by SongData independently as well as those in partnership with multiple industry and advocacy organizations.

A brief chronology of those reports is as follows:

- October 2018/2019: “Gender on the Billboard Hot Country Songs Chart, 1996-2016”
- April 2019\*: “Gender Representation on Country Format Radio: A Study of Published Reports from 2000-2018”
- August 2019\*: “Gender Representation on *Billboard’s* Country Airplay Chart: A Study of Weekly Charts from January 2018 to July 2019”
- September 2019: “Gender Representation on Canadian Country Format Radio: A Study of Published Reports from 2005-2018”
- December 2019\*: “Gender Representation on Country Format Radio: A Study of Spins Across Dayparts 2002-2018”
- Feb 2020^: “Inequality on Country Radio: 2019 in Review”
- March 2020: “Billboard’s ‘Hot Country Songs’ Chart and the Curation of Country Music Culture”
- March 2021: “Redlining in Country Music: Representation in the Country Music Industry 2000-2020”

\* Report released in consultation with Women of Music Action Network.

^ Report released in partnership with CMT Equal Play.

## Highlights of SongData's Studies

*Findings:* Every way SongData has looked at it, “women occupy significantly less space than men in country music” and it has gotten worse in recent years.

While the late 1990s were strong for women artists in country, the overall trend has been a decline in visibility and commercial country radio success—10% fewer women debuting and 27% fewer reaching #1 on the Billboard Hot Country Songs Chart. 71% of songs debuting from 1996 to 2016 were performed by males, with another 4% being from male-female ensembles. Reviewed over time, it was observed that every year female artists peaked (2005, 2008 and 2013) it was “followed by immediate drops of 20% or more.” Looking at the Top 10 of the chart, women artists decrease with only 20% of the songs and 22.5% of the artists. Reaching the #1 position on the chart has been less likely over time. 1998 was the only year when women had more #1 hits than men, and they came close in 1996 and 1999, but in 2000 there was a significant drop in women, from 2000 to 2012 men dominated the top position, and from 2013 onward there was yet another significant drop. Women all but disappeared from the #1 position from 2013-2016.

Women have dramatically decreased in spins, as reported in year-end Mediabase airplay reports, and are absent from the Top 10 in recent years. Top male artists had 3.3 million to 6 million spins, while the top female artists had 600,000 to 3.2 million spins. Weekly reports show women consistently with approximately 25% airplay, and they are found decreasingly less in higher sections of the chart (24.5% of Top 100, 13.8% of Top 10, 11.1% of #1s). “Male artists are programmed more than women in every year of this study period by an average of 58.6%.” When they looked at day parts, women had a lower ratio of airplay during periods known to be the higher listening time frames (morning, mid-day and afternoon).

SongData's reports speak to the way women artists are “pitted against each other,” are “forced to compete” for adds and airplay, and are “reluctant to criticize the system for fear of backlash.” They document the impact of a 13-15% of a station playlist quota that appears to have been adopted at most country radio stations. They speak to the quota country radio programmers adopted as a “self-fulfilling prophecy” because lack of airplay leads to no hits, and then a perception that women have fewer hits leads to less airplay. The reports call for “a larger study of the genre's narrative space” to understand more of the unspoken rules

about their brand images, messages, and language used in songs. They also call for inquiry into decisions made by record labels and those who develop the strategies for “how songs and artists are marketed within the industry.”

SongData uniquely breaks out data for solo artists, duos, and groups, which has led to more understanding of the impact on chart performance of the way acts are coded for radio station quotas.

In 2021, SongData expanded their study to look at race and ethnicity in combination with gender identity and sexual orientation in country music. The reports paint a picture of minimal airplay for BIPOC artists, but tiny increases over three periods of time since 2000 (less than 4% in most recent years). Of the 2.5% of airplay BIPOC artists received in a 19-year period overall, 95.7% of that airplay was for BIPOC men, suggesting “a racial hierarchy exists.” Black women have not reached the Top 20 of the chart. In nineteen years, only 13 black artists and 3 black women appeared in the data set. When looking at spins by daypart, most airplay for BIPOC artists happened in evenings and overnights—which the researchers deemed “redlining,” a reference to real estate practices that obstruct people of color from purchasing homes in neighborhoods dominated by white people. The study further looked at representation on major labels, reporting less than 4% of rosters were BIPOC, similar to the rate of radio airplay. It also reported on nominations at major country music awards shows:

- ACM 2000-2019: 2.3% of artists and 2% of songwriters and producers were Black or biracial.
- CMA 2000-2020: 1.6% were Black solo artists, just two songwriters of color were nominated.

## Recommendations

The following suggestions are direct quotes from SongData's December 2019 report that was written in consultation with Women of Music Action Network:

- *Radio:* Spin more women, more frequently.
- *Labels:* Sign and promote women with the same commitment, intensity, and resources as male artists.
- *Industry associations (CMA, ACM, CRS):* Set a standard for inclusion and representation throughout your mandate: update eligibility requirements for awards and honors to exclude ingrained bias and work with participating sponsors to develop diverse programming.
- *Promoters and Presenters:* Create and book diverse and inclusive tours, festivals, and experiences.
- *Management and Agencies:* Take the lead from Stacy L. Smith and her recommendations for the film industry: work with your artists to develop inclusion riders—demand diversity and inclusivity in the studio, on tour, and at festivals.<sup>36</sup>

- *Male artists*: Play an active part in this discussion and with the inclusion rider! Demand that your female colleagues have equal opportunity on radio, tours, festivals, and more!
- *Audiences and Advocates*: Hold the above businesses accountable for their choices and offerings.
- *Businesses and Organizations* who promote their products and services via radio or who sponsor events can demand more diverse and inclusive programming.

Almost three years and several studies later, Watson today shares concerns about these recommendations: “While this list pointed to the parts of the country music industry that need reform, the recommendations are surface-level critiques of the industry, suggesting that simply adding more women will fix the problems. This ‘add and stir’ model fails to address the systemic issues that arise in an industry built on white supremacist and patriarchal values.”<sup>37</sup>

With this comment, Watson not only models the ongoing self-assessment and reflection researchers must embrace as they learn more, but it also touches on a challenge that is present across all studies summarized in this paper. Each report venturing recommendations speak from both their findings and their own bias, given their identity and vantage point on the industry, the author of this paper included.

*Note*: For a solid grounding in early research about women in country music, there is a literature review of gender and country music culture in Jada Watson’s report published in *Popular Music and Society* in 2019. It also includes a brief history of country radio and a history of the Billboard Hot Country Songs chart and methodology, something absent from other studies reviewed here.

## Leslie Fram and CMT

Country Music Television (CMT) has been a major player, facilitator, and megaphone for all of the research that happened in country music, and they invested in more of it. Prior to Tomatogate, CMT was already grappling with challenges women faced in country music. As early as 2013, with leadership from Senior Vice President Leslie Fram, CMT launched an initiative called CMT Next Women of Country, a program spotlighting female talent in country music each year.<sup>38</sup> Consistent with that work, in February 2020, CMT began a campaign called Equal Play—a program in which CMT pledged “Equal Play” to women in its music video programming blocks.<sup>39</sup> As part of that initiative, CMT launched a platform to promote research corresponding with the spirit of the pledge, including analysis about country radio by SongData and about *Billboard* charts by Annenberg (described above).<sup>40</sup> CMT also commissioned an audience survey from Coleman Insights (described below).

In follow up, at the time of the writing of this paper, CMT announced CMT Equal Access, “an artist and management training initiative designed to foster and support marginalized communities underrepresented in the genre, including Black, Native and Indigenous, Latino, LGBTQ+ and women.”<sup>41</sup> Among other things, CMT has modeled a broadcast organization’s continued commitment to change—not only for their own company but for the broader country industry.

## Coleman Insights “Equal Play Radio Research”

In the fall of 2019, researchers Jessica Lichtenfeld and Sam Milkman of Coleman Insights worked in partnership with CMT to pursue the question of what country listeners want to hear. Results of that study were released in February 2020.<sup>42</sup>

*Purpose*: This study sought to confirm or deny the myth circulated by country music programmers that listeners did not want to hear female artists on the radio. It did this by surveying 1,000 radio listeners (age 25-54) who favored country radio.

*Findings*: Fans were aware that men got more airplay than women (72% of listeners say they hear more songs by men on country radio than songs by women). Fans wanted to hear more women on the radio (84% of listeners wanted equal play for female artists, 70% wanted there to be more female artists in country music). They also studied how respondents’ listening behavior might change if there were more or fewer women on the radio. The majority said they would listen the same, 28% said they would listen more, 11% said they would listen less.

Country music is not the only genre to dig deeper and research their specific communities.

## female:pressure FACTS

An ongoing project in electronic music—the FACTS survey—has been published five times, first in 2013, then updated in 2015, 2017, 2020, and now in 2022.<sup>43</sup> The authors’ names are anonymous. They refer to themselves in the report and related documentation as the “female:pressure Trouble Makers.” They gather and analyze data from female:pressure members and festival organizers. They also refer to festival program listings as it arises in several places in their findings. It is clear in their conclusion they have also conducted surveys and interviews with certain constituencies to gain more insight on specific topics. Theirs is the only study I read that included a significant focus on, and methodology for, non-binary inclusion in their study, something it appears they added in the 2020 edition.

*Purpose:* Study gender of artists performing at electronic music festivals.

*Findings:* While many of the studies abstracted in this paper have found little progress for women in music, the FACTS 2022 study “reveals a rise in the proportion of female acts from 9.2% in 2012 to 26.9% in 2020-2021.” Still, the study notes that representation of women and non-binary acts in electronic music remains imbalanced, and more work needs to be done. The study looks at segments of data, and observed some useful trends:

- When the researchers looked at festival size based on the number of acts performing (example: Very Small = fewer than 20 acts, Small = 20-29 acts, Medium = 30-45 acts, Large = 46-90 acts, Very Large = more than 90 acts), they found there was more gender balance in smaller festivals than large ones. Male acts dominated the larger the festival lineups.
- When they looked at festival size based on attendance, they saw a similar trend. The larger the audience, the more male-dominated the lineup. (However, it should be noted in this analysis that most of the festivals were categorized as “unknown” audience size.)
- When they looked at festivals based on the gender composition of their artistic direction team, there appears to be direct correlation with all male teams programming performer lineups that were 54.5% male, all female teams programming lineups that were 57.4% female. For teams that were mixed gender or unknown, their lineups were 52.8% and 64.3% male respectively.
- Festivals that receive public funding were found to have a higher percentage of female artists than festivals that do not get public funding, or for those where funding was unknown. While it was not stated in the study, this might suggest that festival sponsors could help encourage progress if they make inclusion a stated priority to festivals they sponsor.
- While one would hope that festivals being presented online might have made inclusion more possible, the research results unfortunately did not show that. Whether an event was online or onsite seemed to have no bearing on gender representation, though hybrid events showed more balanced representation for unknown reasons.
- Looking at the top ten festivals with strong female representation, the country with the most festivals listed for 2010-2021 was Germany. Looking at the ten worst festivals in terms of female representation, the country with the most festivals was the United States.

The report for this study also takes care to compare their findings with other studies from across the world. If you would like to read through, you will find this on page 30 of their report. Some, but not all, of those studies are included in this paper.

## Considerations

The report concludes with notes on “Additional Issues of Diversity,” which is incredibly insightful, and should be considered and applied in genres beyond electronic music. It is as if the researchers wanted to telegraph where they might go next in their studies, to gather more input from the community. They shared that they have consulted with artists of color to start to gather thoughts about how kindred research could be done regarding race/ethnicity. Many of the issues and dynamics they raise are noteworthy and should be considered by kindred researchers. Here are a few of many they outlined:

- Artists of color reported a “dependence on the goodwill of a relatively small number of gatekeepers in order to get booked.” I will add, for researchers, that goodwill (or lack thereof) may also play a role in our ability to obtain information.
- “The undervaluing and lack of acknowledgment of the work and contributions of women, artists of color, and gender minorities” is noted as a means by which white male dominance is maintained. I will add, for researchers, lack of credit or acknowledgment can also lead to lower statistics in our results than work that may be occurring in the marketplace.
- A gap in opportunities and ability to earn income is noted in the study. What is missing and not yet studied is the impact this has on artists’ ability to secure career-incubating business relationships with managers, business managers, agents, labels, publishers, etc.
- The study acknowledges a lack of knowledge about the state of inclusion with respect to artists and audience members living with disabilities.
- Concern was shared about the “white and Western framing of discussions about diversity and inclusion,” and the notion that, “Who researches might be as important as what is being researched.” The researchers ask us to walk our talk, and strive for inclusion in our own teams—acknowledging that research to date has been primarily driven by white people.
- Interviewees expressed a wish to be asked how they identify, rather than to be put in categories by researchers. I will add, it would be valuable if researchers were to gather that information from the

artists in a study to the extent possible, as a check and balance, to measure the accuracy of their work.

- One dynamic that was identified about tokenism is when artists are confused with someone else on the basis of appearance.
- Other issues raised for further study include slot hierarchy at festivals, visibility as a means of building credibility and leadership, ageism, and ableism.

## Recommendations

The study presents distinct lists of “Points of Action” for festival organizers, artists, journalists, policy advocacy groups and politicians, and festival attendees:

- For example, for festival organizers: “members of majority groups should actively show solidarity with minorities in the field;” festivals should consider a DEI committee; book more acts that represent diversity; delegate curating power; ensure your decision-making team is diverse; be transparent and intentional, publicly share that diverse representation is a goal; support local underground scenes and listen to local experts; ensure safe working conditions; create a certification program across festivals; adopt a Code of Conduct that includes a pledge to strive for a safe space and a provision for enforcement if someone discriminates.

## Side Note: Research and Anonymity

female:pressure FACTS is not the only music industry study to involve anonymous benefactors, researchers, or organizers. It raises a question of why people working in music industry diversity research would wish to remain anonymous, and the advantages and drawbacks of such decisions. Over the years, a lot has been written about anonymity in activism. While complete analysis of that topic is beyond the scope of this paper, there are some primary points that might be important to consider for anyone considering conducting music industry representation research work. It is important to keep these aspects in mind as researchers strive to collect clear, candid, direct, data to study, while also ensuring the integrity of the research process, the quality of data collected, and objectivity of analysis.

## Benefits of Anonymity

### Safety

In cases where one’s personal safety and/or career is at risk, it is understandable that someone would not want to put their name out there. When anonymous contributors conduct research about the music industry, their anonymity may be because those individuals have concern about their own jobs, livelihood, reputation, and networked connections. Some might worry for their personal safety.

### Objectivity

Some people feel their research will be read with more objectivity if the reader is not distracted by who wrote it. Especially in an insular music industry, this element can work for and against a study. When someone with longstanding credibility is at the helm, knowing who it is can make a significant impact. In many cases, however, researchers are considered “outsiders” not actively working in the industry—whose careers may be immune to damage if their findings are unpopular with people in positions of power with decision-making leverage.

### Focus

In an era where personal life and character attacks are often used in opposition, anonymity removes the risk that something about the researcher(s) will become a bigger story than the research itself.<sup>44</sup> Some advocates for anonymity say it ensures an activist stays focused on the collective good of successful work, and wards off the human temptation to seize a spotlight of attention for their own advancement, notoriety, and power.

## Challenges of Anonymity

### Accountability

When someone’s own name and reputation are not on the line, it is more difficult to hold them accountable or to substantiate their claims.

### Accessibility

If people have questions about the research, they do not know who to contact or ask. If people have information to share that might further the study, they do not know who to tell.

### Effort

Sometimes there is a worry that someone will not contribute as much or work as hard if their name is not on a project. Some suggest that personal gains are not always malevolent, but rather can be an incentive to do impeccable work, as long as the personal gain is aligned with the mission of the work.

### Conflict

A “mob mentality” can ensue when personal responsibility is not present, and lead to more disharmony and aggression than when people work together as identified individual humans. People have a natural tendency to become defensive in situations when anonymity is involved.

### Lack of Leadership

An additional consideration is the motivation and inspiration individual leaders provide. Many movements have visionaries known for having led them. If researchers are anonymous, they inhibit their own opportunity to lead. While they may find other ways to lead, it is important that



this facet be considered and the researcher’s decision be intentional.

Another concept to consider is unintentional anonymity that occurs in cases when studies are conducted by organizations in which a leader or senior manager in the corporation receives public recognition for their work on the study, but those who worked on elements of it are obscured and left off the list of authors, or absent when the research is presented. It usually appears to be an administrative or logistical issue—for example: there’s only room for so many names. Sometimes it is a protocol issue. When it comes to music industry nonprofit organizations, the Executive Director or President of the Board of Directors are the two individuals legally authorized to speak publicly on behalf of the organization. While that is a policy intended to ensure unity, it can also inadvertently obscure who actually did the work.

It is important that any academic working on research in partnership with corporations or music organizations have frank discussions about who is conducting, authoring, and funding the study. Further, if a person or organization wishes to remain anonymous, it is important that everyone involved understand why, respect whatever boundaries are created, and maintain that anonymity.

### Community-Organized Awareness Initiatives

In addition to formal research, there are many advocacy initiatives underway that conduct active research analyzing facets of representation in the music industry. In her book *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*, Adrienne Maree Brown describes organizing for change like the murmuring of birds. She says that all birds move individually but together, and provide cues to others about taking turns, shifting direction, and making progress on the journey. The following are just a few examples that might inspire college students.

Some organizations are founded with goals of growing awareness:

### Book More Women

Book more women started on Instagram as a way to graphically depict the way women are excluded from music festival bookings.<sup>45</sup>

### Black Opry

**Home for Black artists and Black fans of country, blues, folk, and Americana music.**

Black Opry is an organization creating awareness about just how many black artists are in roots music—a direct answer to promoters and music industry people who say they don’t know how to find diverse artists. “Black Opry is home for Black artists, fans and industry professionals working in country, Americana, blues, and folk music. Country and roots music have been made and loved by Black people since their inception. For just as long, we have been overlooked and disregarded in the genre. Black Opry is changing that.”<sup>46</sup>

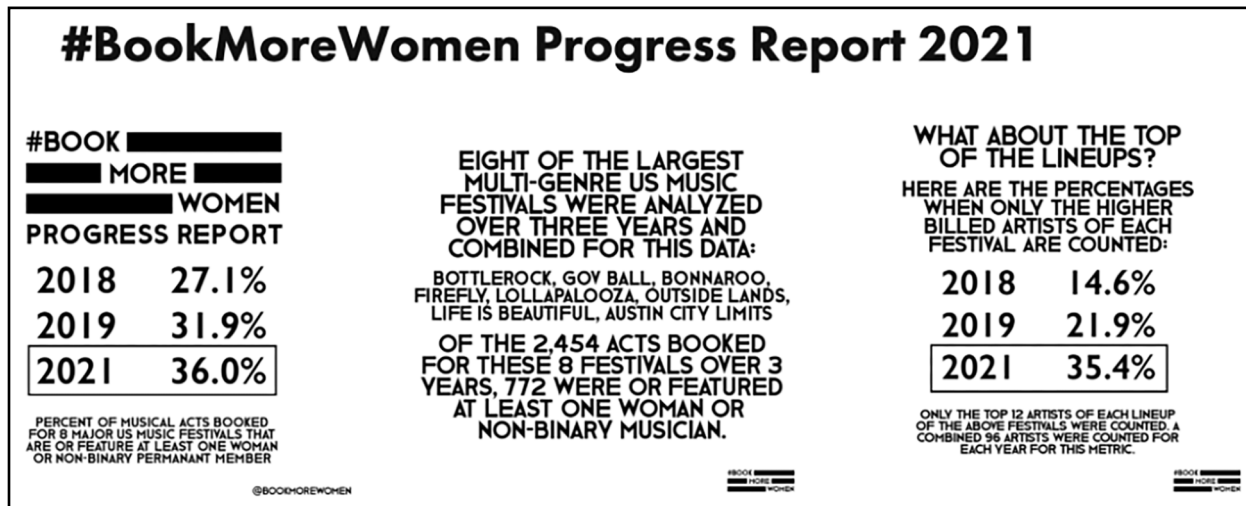
### Database Initiatives

To further awareness, several databases have been created to help people find diverse talent and professionals in the industry. These databases are collecting valuable information worthy of study. The following two database examples span many music genres.

### She is the Music



She is the Music is focused on “increasing the number of women working in music.” While they have not released research study results in a traditional sense, they are actively gathering critical research data in their She Is The Music database.<sup>47</sup>



## Diversify the Stage

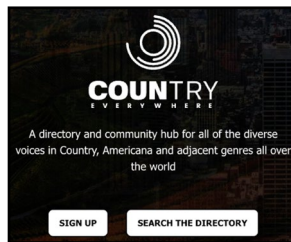
While DTS's work is focused primarily on organizing industry to pledge their intentions, and offering apprenticeship and mentorship programs focused on improving diversity in the music industry, particularly in tour-related roles, among their work is a DTS Workforce Survey & Research Project.<sup>48</sup>

**a network of industry professionals, working to establish more inclusive hiring practices and greater access to opportunities in live music, events, and touring industries for historically marginalized and underrepresented communities.**

The following is an example of a database covering a specific genre/area of the music industry.

## Country Everywhere

Community directory Country Everywhere's mission is to "foster the growth for all underrepresented and systematically excluded artists, industry folks and fans in Country, Americana and all adjacent genres."<sup>49</sup> They host, build, and maintain a database of artists with focus on three communities: Disabled, BIPOC and LGBTQIA+. The database can be searched for all of those communities or with focus on any one of them. It can also be searched by occupation (Artist/Band, Musician, or Songwriter) or by instrument. Artists, musicians, and songwriters in the database volunteer by adding themselves.



While these examples are not exhaustive databases, they are examples of what is possible if community members volunteer to be listed and database organizers ensure the quality of their data. Databases of these sorts have network effects—increasing in value when increased numbers of people participate. Over time, it will be seen if these databases continue and grow in their value as tools, or if they are replaced by other forms of networking stimulators.

## Pledge Initiatives

Finally, several pledge initiatives are underway—through which music industry professionals and artists make pledges to hire people from underrepresented groups.

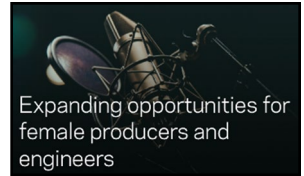
## Keychange

Keychange<sup>50</sup> was founded by the U.K. performing rights organization PRS. Promoters take the Keychange Pledge to achieve gender balance in their programming and presenting work.

**WE BRING UNDERREPRESENTED GENDERS IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY TO THE MAIN STAGE**

## Women in the Mix

The Women in the Mix pledge was created by The Recording Academy<sup>51</sup> in light of the first Annenberg report findings. The initiative focused on recruiting producers, artists, and other recording decision makers to pledge to consider women in engineering and production roles.



While the Keychange pledge reports significant impact in live music, the Annenberg study suggested the Women in the Mix pledge might not be having the same traction in the studio.

## International Examples

While conducting research for this paper, I encountered studies about diversity in music from across the world. Significant ongoing work in particular is being done in England, Australia, Canada, and the United States. While it would be impossible to summarize all of the research out there, here are a few studies hot off the presses that are worthy of discussion among music industry educators for use in English-speaking classrooms.

There are many initiatives happening in the U.K. and Ireland. Here are a few:

## UK Music

In 2015 UK Music established a diversity taskforce to "boost inclusion and diversity across the industry." Since 2016, UK Music has been conducting periodic "workforce diversity studies" focusing on measuring representation of gender and ethnicity across the British music scene. They have published reports in 2016, 2018, and 2020 in addition to their Equality and Diversity Charter, and a Ten-Point Plan.

**Equality across the music industry**

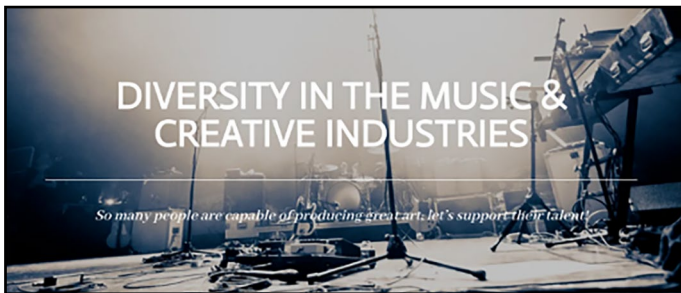
Diversity is not an option for music. It is a necessity. UK Music is committed to helping music companies diversify and adopt fair and inclusive employment practices.

Their most recent report in 2020 paints a picture of progress, with representation in several key categories increas-

ing, primarily among younger-aged professionals and at entry level.<sup>52</sup>

- Black, Asian, and other ethnic minorities aged 16-24 increased to 30.6% (25.9% in 2018).
- Entry level Black, Asian, and other ethnic minorities increased to 34.6% (23.2% in 2018).
- Women increased to 49.6% (45.3% in 2016), though Women aged 45-64 decreased slightly.
- At senior executive levels, Black, Asian, and other ethnic minorities increased to 19.9% (17.9% in 2018), though the study notes that percentage still signifies one in five senior executives.

### Vick Bain



U.K. music consultant Vick Bain has independently conducted a study called “Counting the Music Industry” which analyzes publishers and record labels, specifically with respect to gender disparity. Her study focused on measuring the gender gap of writers signed to publishing deals and artists signed to record labels, and it looked at pathways for girls and women into music and through the music industry ecosystem. She found that:

- “Just over 14% of writers currently signed to publishers are female.”
- “Just under 20% of acts signed to labels are female.”

Her report identifies barriers women must overcome to pursue and sustain careers in music, and makes recommendations for the industry as well as educational and governmental organizations.<sup>53</sup>

### Why Not Her? (Ireland and U.K.)

Vick Bain is also part of a collective of researchers and diversity activists called Why Not Her? led by Irish industry professional Linda Coogan Byrne, along with Winnie Amoaku and Margaret E Ward. Together, they work in a volunteer capacity to offer workshops, training, and mentorship programs. Since June 2020, a primary action they have taken is to compile a series of “Gender and Racial Disparity Data Reports.”<sup>54</sup>



### Attitude is Everything (U.K.)

Attitude is Everything is an organization focused on disability rights—and access to live music, both for audiences and for artists living with disabilities. They have published several reports on best practices and advice for presenters and industry, and are an excellent early resource if you would like to discuss disability rights in the classroom.<sup>55</sup>



### Two Major Canadian Studies Were Released During the Writing of This Report.

#### Canadian Independent Music Association (CIMA)

A major contribution of the CIMA and Breaking Down Racial Barriers study (which was internally reviewed in July 2021, but only just recently presented publicly in February 2022) is the notion that using the word “diversity” is a euphemism that is a way out for people who are uncomfortable referring to racism. It focuses specifically on anti-black racism, and contends that by lumping all intersectional issues together in research, we do none of the individual identities justice. This study was conducted differently from others reviewed in this paper. It was done entirely qualitatively, gathering its key learnings from a series of round-table discussions among Black artists and industry professionals.

Produced in conjunction with Breaking Down Racial Barriers (BDRB), the study “Anti-Black Racism in the Canadian Music Industry” received financial support from FACTOR, Radio Starmaker Fund, and The Government of Canada. In addition, CIMA and BDRB acknowledged contributions from ADVANCE, Canada’s Black Music Business Collective. The round-table discussion series on anti-Black racism was conducted over ten weeks from August to October 2020 and “featured first-hand testimonials and experiences of over 60 Black music industry professionals from across the country and provided a harrowing look into the systematic, systemic, institutional racism and oppression entrenched in all aspects of the music industry’s public and private sector ecosystem.”<sup>56</sup>





## Highlights of “Anti-Black Racism in the Canadian Music Industry” Findings

The report establishes some parameters, shares observations from testimonials, and recommends actions music professionals should take. Among the five central parameters, the first three are:

1. *“The Black Community is Not Homogenous.”*

The report acknowledges the many histories and pathways by which Black people have come to live in Canada, and reminds readers it is important to gather input from the Black community before any plans are started or executed regarding the needs of the Black community.

2. *“Black Issues Require Black Focused Solutions.”*

The report acknowledges the importance of all diversity initiatives, but identifies the reality that to make progress will require solutions that are focused on addressing anti-Black racism specifically, “based in the contributions which Black people have made, and continue to make to the music industry.”

3. *“Words Have Power.”*

The report addresses the frequency with which euphemisms are used to describe instances of anti-Black racism. It says “Labeling behaviors committed against Black people “prejudice,” “mistreatment,” or “discrimination” inadequately describes the scope and intensity of what is being experienced.” Further, it contends that the use of “BIPOC,” “POC,” “marginalized,” and other umbrella terms often used to gather or summarize multiple groups in one phrase not only dilutes the issue, but it allows “those uncomfortable with race to get out of saying the word Black.” The report emphasizes that Black is not a negative term, and identifies the notion of being “color-blind” or “not seeing race” as active erasure of culture.

Round-table participants expressed concerns in many areas including:

- Cultural appropriation
- Lack of diversity, inclusion, and equity on boards, committees, and key decision-making spaces
- Systemic exclusion from roles across and throughout the music and entertainment ecosystem
- Palatable Blackness, colorism, and shadism
- The impact of economic scarcity on Black community infrastructure building and development
- Systematic erasure of Black people and culture (lack of recognition, exclusion from spaces)
- Tokenism and “the parading of the Black employee”
- White fragility, white supremacy, white feminism

Please read the full report for the extensive list of concerns unearthed in the study. *Author note: it is difficult to summarize content that is meant to be read in the context of the full report, and all readers of this summary paper are encouraged to read all of the full reports cited, especially this one.*

The researchers found, from their conversations, that there is a high rate of Black people leaving the industry, or leaving Canada in order to pursue music industry careers.<sup>57</sup> The report identifies critical need for more research and data to quantify disparities in the industry, anti-racist policy making, media reform, and representation throughout the industry in thorough detail. Recommendations in the report center around the following areas of action:

- Individual work toward equity
- Creation of anti-black racism policies and training
- Collection, tracking, and public reporting of race-based data and key metrics
- Representation throughout the music industry ecosystem
- Black community partnerships, investment, and infrastructure support
- Pay equity, fair treatment and support
- Sharing of best practices

## Canadian Live Music Association

The Canadian Live Music Association’s report was published in March 2022, during the writing of this paper, and is evidence of how frequently new information is available on the topic. The full report is a 102-page book, and all are encouraged to read it in full. It educates on topics from racism to tokenism to “the problem with genre classifications.”<sup>58</sup> It covers challenges immigrants and descendants of immigrants face in live music, emotional labor, gate-keeping, power dynamics in funding systems, imposter syndrome, adopted whiteness, imposed whiteness, ways privilege come to bear in live music, decolonization of funding, and other relevant topics in diversity, equity, and inclusion not always covered in music industry research reports to



date. The full report includes stories of specific communities, cultural practices, and events that have led to exclusion as examples to help the reader see, understand, and apply findings from the study in their own organizations.

The Canadian Live Music Association announced results of a study called “Closing The Gap: Impact & Representation of Indigenous, Black and People of Colour Live Music Workers in Canada,” conducted with financial support from FACTOR, Creative BC, Ontario Creates, and The Government of Canada—and supported by a long list of advocates, supporters, buddies, and friends (which suggests there may have been levels of sponsorship of the study in funding and stakeholder investment design). The study leveraged “40 in-depth interviews with IBPOC live music workers across Canada, spanning various roles, genres, levels of experience, and identities” and a national survey regarding economic, health, and mental health topics for live music workers in Canada.

## Highlights of the Study

*Purpose:* “To provide evidence on the nature of inequalities experienced by IBPOC live music workers, and actionable policy recommendations that can in turn help to close the gap in representation and inequitable experiences in the live music community that vary along lines of race and ethnicity.”

*Findings:* The report establishes facts pertaining to inequities in the Canadian live music industry:

- “Gender diversity, sexual orientation diversity, and having disability is more common among IBPOC live music workers.”
- IBPOC are 25% of Canada’s population but only 16% of live music industry workers.
- On average, “IBPOC individuals in live music make \$11,700 less per year than white workers.” The study goes further to extrapolate “missing” GDP as a result of IBPOC exclusion, and projects if IBPOC representation in music matched the population, “there would be an additional 1,765 full time equivalents (FTEs)” jobs in the industry.

The report identifies sources of inequality in the industry:

- The study cites that IBPOC workers are “eight times more likely to be working a part-time job not related to the music industry” while “71% of white respondents report being able to work full-time in the music industry.”
- “IBPOC participants reported experiences of exclusion and tokenism with greater frequency than white participants” and cited tokenism as a “major barrier

to their sense of belonging in the live music community.”

- “The top four reported employment positions among white live music industry workers are gatekeeping positions: music venue owners, music promoters, live event producers, and music festival programmers.” “The unequal allocation of gatekeeping roles poses significant barriers for IBPOC workers, in terms of gaining access to audiences, and thus, revenue streams.”
- While Canada as a country is known for funding programs that support development of music artists locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally, IBPOC respondents to the survey reported access to funding as a significant barrier. Some of the reasons respondents cited for challenges securing funding were rules about what events and expenses are considered eligible, language barriers, and lack of awareness of funding systems, rules, and policies. Diversity and overcoming racism was not considered when organizations developed their eligibility requirements, and it is not considered in the way funders do outreach each funding cycle.

## Recommendations

The report’s authors identify opportunities they call “Sources of promise” for live music industry, government and funding bodies, and IBPOC workers. Kind readers are encouraged to read the report in full for all of the thoughtful suggestions made. Here is a selection as examples:

- *For live music industry (venue owners, promoters, agents, managers and festival organizers):* Increase representation of diversity in gatekeeper positions; disclose budgets showing aggregate pay to artists segmented by race/ethnicity and gender; also introduce similar transparency regarding staff pay; insist on inclusion/equity riders for festivals and concerts; feature artists from underrepresented groups in media promotion of festivals and concerts; mentorship programs for crew and tech staff; “offer performers financial compensation in lieu of complimentary alcohol.”
- *For government and funding bodies:* Include IBPOC representation on juries and in decision-making positions, especially when organizations are white-led; reform funding eligibility rules that exclude; insist on inclusion/equity riders for organizations that receive public funding; consult with IBPOC community members about issues related to genre “and explore strategies to add more flexibility within self-identification”; include advocacy groups like

National Indigenous Music Office or ADVANCE, Canada's Black Music Business Collective in dialogue when developing policies; provide translation services; include audio and video in applications.

- “Adopt a ‘more than one’ rule” to reduce tokenism and the pressure on a person when they are the only representative of their community on staff, boards, and leader roles.
- *For IBPOC workers:* many suggestions pertained to transparency in grants—for example, reviewing applications that include you as a collaborator, other suggestions include normalizing transparency measures like asking white peers and colleagues to cross-reference performance rates, “asking if your pay is equal to others doing the same work,” requesting that “space and time be provided for traditional, spiritual, and/or cultural practices.”

At the end, the report includes a full page of “Calls-to-Action for Presenters” contributed by Alan Greyeyes (sākihiwē festival/Ogichidaa Arts), illustrating the importance of listening to voices of those who represent communities that have been historically excluded and marginalized. Among his six requests are two I will share here because they illustrate themes common with other research in this paper, and also point to areas of further potential study in music inside and outside Canada:

1. “We call on music award shows, music presenters, music promoters, and music conferences to use every stage they have to show Canadians that Indigenous people are just as special and talented as their loved ones.”
2. “We call on music presenters to submit offers to Indigenous artists that give them the ability to put their best foot forward. In Marek Tyler’s words, ‘you know that you have given enough when it starts to hurt a little.’ (A teaching given to him by his mom, Linda Young).”

### Hack (by Triple J Radio, Australia)

Major Australian public radio station Triple J released reports compiled by Ange McCormack for the program Hack from 2018-2020.<sup>59</sup> Entitled “By The Numbers,” the reports focused



on Women in Australian Music. Like the electronic music study, McCormack’s most recent report showed progress. She used census data to gather that 29% of those who reported “music professional” as their job were women. One in five songwriters were women. Almost every festival stud-

ied showed improvement since their first report. In awards, women were still underrepresented. The percentages of board members and roles at indie labels improved, while artist managers held the same.

### The Road Ahead

Even after compiling summaries of all of these studies, this paper only scratches the surface of issues that professionals who represent diversity face working in the music industry. Having synthesized as many studies and reports from recent years as possible, the biggest finding from each and every one of them was that there is more work to be done.

To follow up these studies, the music industry and researchers dedicated to studying it must:

- Go deeper to analyze genres and understand subcultures within the music industry to learn more from areas where equity has been more possible, how to foster inclusion, participation, and advancement.
- Foster cooperation between music industry and research professionals, and cooperate to ensure the quality of research methodologies, participants, and data sources.
- Strive for inclusive leadership of, and participation in, the process of research. While this paper did not study the identities of the people conducting research and publishing articles about diversity in the music industry, that is a worthy area of follow-up study for the sake of transparency about who is leading and conducting the research. (Acknowledgment: Should a reader wish to conduct that research, the author of this paper is a white, forty-something, LGBT+ cisgender woman who does not have a disability at the time of publication.)
- Incorporate new methods in the work of music research, gathering more qualitative stories to get beyond euphemisms and myths so industry professionals can face hard truths and make meaningful change.
- Further define metrics that are strong indicators and set benchmarks for accountability and progress—and—follow up to measure those metrics on an ongoing basis.
- Rethink music industry culture and the way decisions are made to foster environments where many types of people can shine light on our collective future.



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While detailed links to many sources are provided in the endnotes, here is a handy list of links to studies reviewed in this paper, including a few research-fostering organizations mentioned.

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SongData (Jada Watson)

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# The Past, Present, and Future Influence of Popular Culture on the Music Industry

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This paper was presented at the [2022 International Summit](#) of the Music & Entertainment Industry Educators Association  
May 16-17, 2022

<https://doi.org/10.25101/22.13>

View the Summit presentation at:  
<https://youtu.be/RpxwOulghH8>

## Abstract

From the earliest days of the recorded music industry to the present, popular culture has played an outsized role in informing the production and sale of popular music products. Throughout the mid-late twentieth century, as successive generations of U.S. consumers adopted common trends that coalesced to define each generation's unique brand, the music industry responded by producing recorded music products that were aligned with this collective mass identity. The orientation of record industry product strategy toward American popular culture helped deliver the mass-appeal hits that powered the music industry for most of the twentieth century. The mainstream U.S. recorded music industry and popular culture thereafter became inseparable.

Until recent years, cultural trends were relatively easy for record companies to follow. Scant media choices and the limits of analog communication limited the scope of popular culture outgrowth. During most of the twentieth century, the trends encompassed within each generational expression of popular culture were both widespread among the population and enduring. In the advent of the digital communication revolution, consumers now communicate and interact with multitudes of trends at ever-greater rates of speed. As a result, popular culture has become fragmented and more difficult to track. Popular culture, once defined by prolonged, durable generational arcs, has become highly fragmented and more evanescent. In the age of digital communication, riding the waves of popular culture in order to produce mass-appeal hit records has become a more difficult feat for record companies to accomplish.

This research begins by examining the role that popular

culture had traditionally played in the production of popular music products over the course of the twentieth century. Mass-appeal hit records buoyed by popular culture's sturdy currents drove music industry profitability during most of this period. Now that those currents have become more dispersed and less predictable, what new strategies are being employed to ensure the music industry remains aligned with popular culture trends? This research examines those strategies, and offers insight as to how the music industry can respond to this evolving environment.

Keywords: music industry, popular culture, hit records



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# Product Placements in Rap Songs: An Analysis of the Inclusion of Brands in Rap Song Lyrics from 2006-2020

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This paper was presented at the [2022 International Summit](#) of the  
Music & Entertainment Industry Educators Association  
May 16-17, 2022

<https://doi.org/10.25101/22.14>

View the Summit presentation at:  
<https://youtu.be/-Jks4ZibRnI>

## Abstract

Since the late 1990s, the way in which recorded music is consumed has morphed from ownership to access, resulting in significant losses of revenue for record labels, music publishers, artists, and other ancillary businesses in the recorded music food chain. In effort to offset some of these losses, the aforementioned have sought out new revenue streams, one of which involves product placement in songs and music videos. Once considered “selling-out,” the practice of product placement is not only accepted but embraced today by both artists and the recording industry.

Rap music, the fastest growing genre in the United States, has been identified as referencing more product brands than any other genre. This paper presentation provides examples of some of the earliest product placement in Rap song lyrics, and analyzes the product categories most often intertwined with the lyrics of *Billboard* magazine’s top Rap songs from 2006 to 2020 in effort to understand the messaging.

Keywords: Rap music, product placement, recording industry



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**Ben Stickle** is an Associate Professor of Criminal Justice Administration at Middle Tennessee State University. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from Cedarville University and a Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy in Justice Administration from the University of Louisville. His research interests include policing, property crime, and emerging crimes. Stickle’s theoretical focus is



crime opportunity and rational choice, specializing in qualitative methods. His research has appeared in the *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, *Police Practice & Research* and *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, and *Policing: An International Journal*. He is the author of *Metal Scrappers and Thieves* (Springer), co-editor of *Policing Behavior, Hiring, and Crime Fighting: An International View* (Routledge), editor of *Field Studies in Environmental Criminology* (Routledge), and authored over twenty book chapters, reviews, and encyclopedia entries. Also, his research has garnered national and international reach, including over one hundred news reports, presentations in six countries, including at the United Nations in New York and Geneva, and across numerous practitioner outlets.

Stickle has over twenty years of experience in the criminal justice field, including service as a police officer, crime scene investigator, and private security officer. He is a two-time past president of the Kentucky Peace Officers' Association and a Kentucky Law Enforcement Council member. A graduate of the National Forensic Academy (Session XXII), Stickle holds multiple professional certifications and has served as an expert witness on police administration matters.



**Denise Shackelford** began her career in the music industry with Arista Records, a new company on the Nashville music landscape in the early 90s led by respected industry executive Tim DuBois. The label quickly made a name for itself in country music, launching the careers of such greats as Alan Jackson, Brooks & Dunn and Brad Paisley. There, she had the opportunity to be part of the label's unprecedented growth and success, serving first as a regional promotion manager, and later leading the promotional efforts for the company's sister label, Career Records. Following her tenure at Arista, Shackelford joined the artist management firm Spalding Entertainment, where she continued her relationship with Brooks & Dunn and also worked with the firm's other clients, including Jason Aldean, Ashley Monroe, Terri Clark, and Pat Green. In her capacity at Spald-

ing, Denise was involved with the firm's tour marketing and radio promotion efforts, ultimately earning the title of Executive Vice President. In addition to her other roles at Spalding, Denise acted as the management liaison for Kix Brooks (Brooks & Dunn) in his role as host of the long-running, nationally-syndicated radio program, *American Country Countdown*.

After obtaining her J.D. degree from Nashville School of Law in 2010, Shackelford launched The Primacy Firm, a boutique entertainment law firm catering to the needs of creative individuals and businesses. In 2011, she joined the faculty of Belmont University as an adjunct professor. In 2019, she accepted a tenure-track position with Middle Tennessee State University where she currently teaches Survey of the Recording Industry and Music Publishing. Shackelford currently serves as counsel for the Country Radio Broadcasters Board of Directors. She previously served as secretary for the Association of Independent Music Publishers Board (AIMP), and President of the SOURCE Board of Directors (a networking organization for female music industry executives), as well as a member of the Advisory Committee for Country Cares for St. Jude Kids. She is a member of the Country Music Association, Academy of Country Music, the Tennessee Bar Association, and the Nashville Bar Association. Shackelford is an alumna of the Leadership Music program class of 2010.

# Poor Man's Copyright: Intellectual Property and Cultural Depictions of the White Working Class in American Popular Music

Jason Lee Guthrie  
Clayton State University

This paper was presented at the [2022 International Summit](#) of the  
Music & Entertainment Industry Educators Association  
May 16-17, 2022

<https://doi.org/10.25101/22.1>

View the Summit presentation at:  
<https://youtu.be/inIKG8nBDR8>

## Abstract

The growing literature on cultural depictions of the White working class in American popular music has touched on issues of copyright, compensation, and residual ownership of song rights. This study expands upon existing work by conducting case studies on three influential figures in American music history: Stephen Foster, Woody Guthrie, and Phil Walden. Though each of these figures produced popular music in different historical and cultural contexts, the music they produced depicted—and was marketed to—the White working class. Interestingly, each of these figures also struggled to effectively assert and manage the copyrights in their respective works, both within formal music industry structures and to their audiences. Cultural perceptions and bias played a role in the challenges they faced, as did their own incomplete understanding of intellectual property. By situating male White working class musicians as simultaneously less privileged than industry elites and more privileged than other marginalized groups, this study may help to illuminate a greater understanding of the ways that race, gender, and class intersect in American popular culture.

Keywords: copyright law, music history, popular culture, popular music, production cultures

This paper is published in the *Journal of the Music and Entertainment Industry Educators Association* Vol. 22, No. 1 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.25101/22.1>.

*This project was funded by a MEIEA research grant.*



**Jason Lee Guthrie** is Assistant Professor of Communication and Media Studies at Clayton State University. Dr. Guthrie is a media historian with interests in the creative industries and copyright law. He enjoys teaching media production and co-creating with students. Readers may learn more at [jasonleeguthrie.com](http://jasonleeguthrie.com)



# The Effects of Improvisation Training in the Arts Entrepreneurship Curriculum

Monika Herzig  
Indiana University

Stan Renard  
University of Oklahoma

This paper was presented at the [2022 International Summit](#) of the Music & Entertainment Industry Educators Association  
May 16-17, 2022

<https://doi.org/10.25101/22.15>

View the Summit presentation at:  
<https://youtu.be/RLDZ4HGc5hQ>

## Abstract

Entrepreneurship education is a relatively new addition to academia with the first courses being offered in 1953 at New York University, followed by an initial small business management course at Stanford in 1954. Recognizing the need to prepare artists for sustainable careers, there has been a significant increase in arts entrepreneurship offerings over the past decades with an estimated 168 institutions with 372 arts entrepreneurship courses in the U.S. alone (Essig and Guevara 2016). However, research on content and effectiveness of curricula is still in its infancy. Furthermore, Levie (1999, 4) observed a focus on teaching about entrepreneurship through formal lessons with little focus on practical exercises. It seems there is not even a clear definition of the term arts entrepreneurship and arts entrepreneur (Essig 2017). However, Collins, Smith, and Hannon (2006) identified a set of traits held by successful innovators and entrepreneurs. They all displayed vision, creativity, intuitive decision-making, creative problem-solving, risk-taking, and the ability to learn from their mistakes.

Furthermore, Keith Sawyer [2003a] attributes entrepreneurial success to a problem-finding approach rather than problem-solving techniques. He defines the problem-finding approach as the process of searching for interesting problems in an improvisatory manner rather than starting with a detailed plan and then working towards successful completion. Similarly, entrepreneurship curricula promote the concept of a growth mindset defined as the belief that personal characteristics, such as intellectual abilities, can be developed. This belief is opposite to a fixed mindset assuming that abilities are fixed and unchangeable (Dweck 1999;

Dweck and Leggett 1988; Yeager and Dweck 2012).

The jazz metaphor as a tool to develop improvisational capacities and an entrepreneurial mindset is a frequent topic in the entrepreneurship literature (Barrett 1998; Hatch 1999; Lewin 1998; Weick 1998; Diasio 2016; Eisenhardt 1997; Kamoche and Kunha 2001; Walzer and Salcher 2003; Zack 2000). Duxbury (2014) identifies improvisation in organizations as a coping alternative in situations of extreme change and turbulence. Improvisational skills may be drawn from art forms that regularly engage in such behavior, e.g., jazz and improvisational theater, and capacity for improvisation can be trained. Limb and Braun (2008) provide evidence that certain parts of the brain get activated through improvisational activity, a process that can improve through deliberate practice. All traits identified previously in successful innovators (Collins, Smith, and Hannon 2006) are integral to the process of improvisation (Herzig 2015) and thus may be trained effectively by regular and deliberate engagement in the process of improvisation. Consequently, we implemented frequent improvisation exercises in the Arts Entrepreneurship classrooms at Indiana University and The University of Texas in San Antonio and tested the impact on levels of creativity and growth mindset. The students completed pre- and post-test questionnaires indicating their perceived levels of creativity. Statistical analysis indicated that improvisation exercises help improve levels of growth mindset/creativity significantly. However, there is a difference in level of students—graduate students are more resistant towards alternative teaching methods or stepping out of their comfort zones. Since courses were taught online during the Spring 2021 semester, we speculated that Zoom teaching may inhibit the possible improvement options/effects of exercises. Based on the results, we plan to refine the exercises for the Arts Entrepreneurship classroom towards effective teaching of creativity and ideation.

Keywords: arts entrepreneurship, arts entrepreneurship pedagogy, entrepreneurship, improvisation





**Monika Herzig** is the author of *David Baker – A Legacy in Music* (Indiana University Press), *Experiencing Chick Corea: A Listener's Companion* (Rowman and Littlefield 2017), and co-editor of *Jazz and Gender* (Routledge 2022). She is also the chair of the research committee for the Jazz Education Network and editor of *JAZZ* (Jazz Education in Research and Practice, Indiana University Press). Currently she is Professor of Artistic Research in Jazz and Dean of Music Education at the Jam Lab Private Music University in Vienna, Austria while on leave from Indiana University.

As a jazz pianist Dr. Herzig has toured the world, opened for acts such as Power of Tower, Sting, Yes, and her music has won Downbeat Magazine Awards and is featured on NPR and JazzWeek. Her awards include a 1994 Downbeat Magazine Award for Best Original Song, a Jazz Journalist Association Hero 2015 award, as well as grants from the NEA, the Indiana Arts Commission, MEIEA, Jazz Tours, the U.S. Embassy, among others. Herzig is a CASIO Artist.



**Stan Renard** is Associate Dean and Associate Professor and Coordinator of the Arts Management and Entrepreneurship programs in the Weitzenhoffer Family College of Fine Arts at the University of Oklahoma. Dr. Renard is also the Director of the Arts Incubation Research Lab (AIR Lab), a National Endowment for the Arts Research Lab. The lab's research team studies the intersection of the arts, entrepreneurship, and innovation at its incubation stage with a research agenda that intends to understand the economic potential of artists as non-conventional entrepreneurs and the impact of the digital divide upon arts-based entrepreneurs. In addition, he is a touring and recording artist, and the founder and arranger of the Grammy-Nominated Bohemian Quartet and the Executive Director of the Monteux School & Music Festival in Hancock, Maine. Renard holds a Doctorate in Musical Arts (DMA) from the University of Connecticut as well as a Doctorate in International Business (DBA) from Southern New Hampshire University. Previously held collegiate appointments include the University of Texas at San Antonio, Colby College, the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, the University of Connecticut, Storrs, Providence College, Eastern Connecticut State University, Southern New Hampshire University, and the University of California at San Diego. Dr. Renard is a member of the Yamaha Master Educator Collective, Music Business & Entrepreneurship Group.

# Integration Resistance in the Acquisition of Nashville Publishing Companies by International Firms

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University of Colorado Denver

This paper was presented at the [2022 International Summit](#) of the Music & Entertainment Industry Educators Association  
May 16-17, 2022

<https://doi.org/10.25101/22.16>

View the Summit presentation at:  
<https://youtu.be/FYLI6R2ASO8>

Read the complete dissertation at:  
<https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/doctoral/3060>

## Abstract

A qualitative case study was utilized for understanding integration resistance throughout the process of international acquisition and integration within the Nashville music publishing creative cluster. The general problem addressed was the integration resistance associated with the acquisition of small independent companies by international firms and the effects on employee satisfaction and productivity resulting in the reduction of firm performance and an increase in employee turnover. The purpose of this flexible design qualitative case study was to add to the body of knowledge on the failure of international acquisitions due to a decline in the productivity and job satisfaction of employees after a merger and acquisition. The first few research questions explored the experiences of employees throughout the acquisition and integration process and the factors associated with changes in job satisfaction and productivity. The final research questions explored if integration strategies were utilized and the effect that the Nashville market's culture had on the success of acquisition and integration. Sixteen one-on-one interviews were conducted which resulted in nine key themes. The discovered themes combined with the existing research helped to establish critical recommendations for successful acquisition and integration within the Nashville market. With the completion of this study, international firms wishing to enter the Nashville market through acquisition and integration should have a better understanding of the issues they will face. Lastly, the study's recommendations provide a framework and best practices

for acquisition and integration within the Nashville music publishing creative cluster.

Keywords: international acquisition, integration resistance, Nashville creative cluster, integration strategy, digital streaming

In his almost thirty-year career in the music business, **Dan Hodges** has worked for BMG Music Publishing, Rick Hall's FAME Music, and Murrah Music. As a songplugger, Hodges successfully placed songs on albums generating over 10 million units in sales in his career, including the hits "Where Would You Be" by Martina McBride and "I'm A Survivor" by Reba McEntire (TV theme for *Reba*), Billy Currington's ASCAP 2008 Country Song of the Year "Good Directions," and songs recorded by many other major label acts.



In addition to being a publisher, Hodges coproduced the XM radio top 5 hit "Mandolin Rain" for Josh Kelley and discovered and signed to their first publishing deals country hitmakers Josh Kear (multi-grammy winner and 2013 ASCAP Songwriter of the Year) and Chris Tompkins (multi-grammy winner and writer of thirteen #1 country songs), among other successful Nashville writers.

Since 2008, Hodges has operated his own Music Row-based publishing company, Dan Hodges Music, LLC. The company has enjoyed two #1's and had songs recorded by many Nashville country artists including Rascal Flatts, Martina McBride, Keith Urban, Brad Paisley, Chris Young, Reba McEntire, Lee Brice, and Kelsea Ballerini (her #1 "dibs"), to name a few. DHM also opened a virtual branch of the company in Australia in 2015, where it has enjoyed six #1 country songs and over thirty major label cuts in the

Aussie country music scene. Hodges has been a regular attendee of the international music publisher conference, MIDEM, which has led to subpublishing relationships all over the world and DHM songs being placed on major label acts in multiple countries including Italy, France, Sweden, Ireland, South Africa, United Kingdom, and Germany.

He earned his Doctor of Business Administration/International Business degree from Liberty University and has taught as an adjunct and lecturer at Belmont University from 2016-2022. In the Fall of 2022, he assumed the role of Associate Professor at the University of Colorado Denver.

# WTF are NFTs, Smart Contracts, and Tokens? How Blockchain Tech Disrupts the Music Industry to Empower Artists

Andrea Johnson  
Berklee College of Music

This paper was presented at the [2022 International Summit](#) of the Music & Entertainment Industry Educators Association  
May 16-17, 2022

<https://doi.org/10.25101/22.17>

View the Summit presentation at:  
<https://youtu.be/WOPdM9IlgJI>

## Abstract

WTF are NFTs? When society as a whole uses acronyms to express themselves...OMG, LOL or mho, there's something either completely amiss (teenagers are running the world) or tech has gotten a hold of us all (robots are running the world) Seriously, kids, you've gotta get hip to that tech—it literally changes your virtual reality.

A Non-Fungible Token or NFT is a unique digital identifier that can be used to authenticate ownership of a digital asset. Non-fungible means it cannot be exchanged for something identical to it. Whereas, a fungible (or exchangeable) token like Bitcoin or a dollar bill are all worth the same amount and can be easily exchanged (Coinbase). Every NFT purchase is essentially a limited numbered, “hand-autographed” item by the artist or a piece of original artwork.

The artist creates a work of art (music, film, album cover) and makes it available through auction on sites like [OpenSea.com](#) or [SuperRare](#) and sells it to the highest bidder. Smart contracts allow the artist to put their music up for sale or license and when a vendor wants to put it in a film or video game they go to the site, use their crypto wallet to authenticate who they are and purchase the product directly from the artist. The sale is verified on the blockchain and both wallets anonymize the purchasers but show the transaction on the blockchain. If you don't know WTF an NFT is, then this is the paper for you.

Keywords: non-fungible token, NFT, music licensing, digital assets, smart contracts, blockchain

## WTF are NFTs?

NFTs (or “non-fungible tokens”) are a special kind of crypto asset in which each token is unique—as opposed to “fungible” assets like Bitcoin and dollar bills, which are all worth exactly the same amount. (Coinbase 2022)

Every NFT is unique and thus creates value through its scarcity. Digital assets like artworks, recordings, music, in-game tokens, virtual real estate or digital pets can all be NFTs. (Kramer, Graves and Phillips 2022)

Every NFT purchase is essentially a limited numbered, hand autographed item by the artist. Valuable, right? Trent Reznor of NIN understood this tenet of marketing. In 2008, he released *Ghosts I-IV* as a limited edition Ultra Deluxe DVD/CD/Vinyl box set with a numbered book of lithographs (not unique) but Trent signed each one of the books giving fans a connection to his signature (creating value) and then made a YouTube video of him signing the books to authenticate his signature (so fans could trust that what they had was real). Here is a great video of him signing the books 2.500 times (<https://youtu.be/0AcGtmJoJOI>). He put them on sale on his website for \$300 in March of 2008, cut out his middleman (label) and made \$750,000 overnight (NIN 2008) (N. Anderson 2008).

He understood his fan base, and made a wide sales offering that included a free download all the way up to the \$300 Ultra Deluxe boxed set so *every fan* could be connected to him in a way *each* could afford.

NFTs are like this. The artist creates a work of art (music, film, artwork) and makes it available through auction on sites like [OpenSea.io](#) or [SuperRare.com](#) and sells it to the highest bidder. The sale is verified on the blockchain





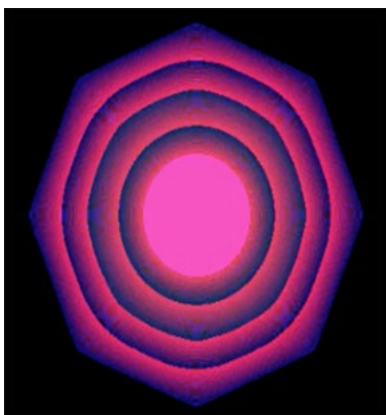
Ultra Deluxe Edition Packaging of *Ghosts I-IV* (Reznor 2021).

and both wallets anonymize the purchasers but show the transaction on the blockchain. Legit transfer of copyright (ownership) in a few easy steps!

Think about the early days of Sims or Second Life purchases. You used real money to decorate your virtual living room with a Monet inspired print, but so could everyone else. It wasn't unique. It was a "print" just like the print of the Pixies album cover you had on your wall in college. Ten bucks and every punk ass college freshman could be "cool". NFTs raise the stakes. You can purchase a one-of-a-kind, digitized piece of art that is authenticated by the artist when they officially upload it to the blockchain-based marketplace. Again, the ownership is authenticated and forever recorded on the distributed ledger. The art becomes an investment and the value increases as the artist becomes more popular.

Now fans are signing onto the Metaverse on sites like [Decentraland](#), and are spending real money to buy land, build their house, and decorate it with NFT artwork. Crazy right? The first NFTs weren't divided but now creators have learned how to fractionalize them through a smart contract. More on that later.

## The First NFT

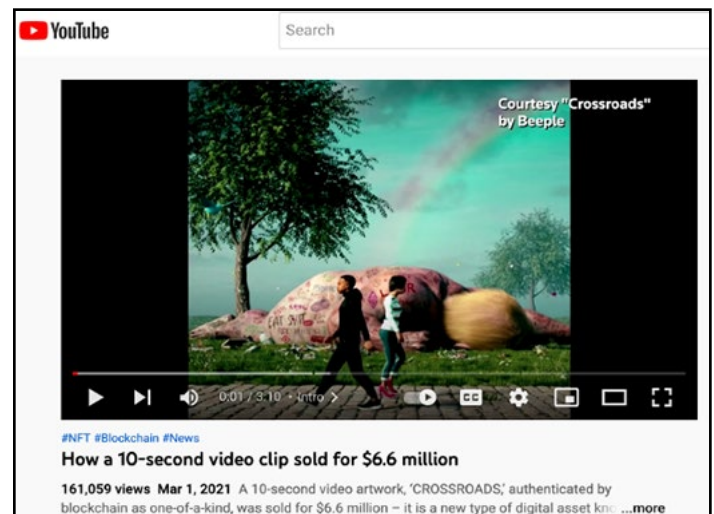


A still from the first NFT, *Quantum*, by Kevin McCoy (Ludel 2022).

This is the first NFT, minted (created) in 2014 by Kevin McCoy on the [Namecoin blockchain](#). He first called this a "monetized graphic" (Ludel 2022). He wanted to address

that digital art is "posted, downloaded, and reposted in a way that often cuts out the artist" so he created this digital art NFT so the artist and the creation would be connected and they would earn the income from the sale of their art. (Lindahl 2022). Ben Arnon, Co-founder and Co-CEO of NFT platform Curio sees NFTs and the link between web 2.0 and 3.0 meaning that monetization is in the hands of the owner rather than the platform, although of course the platform makes transaction fees from the sale. McCoy was actually sued by a Canadian company called Free Holdings when he sold *Quantum* through Sotheby's in the "Natively Digital" auction for \$1.5 million. McCoy created the NFT using Namecoin, a software platform that requires that members renew their ownership of their creations every 250 days (Escalante-del Mattei 2022). When the sale began to get attention, Free Holdings registered as the owners of the dormant Namecoin because of the metadata stored on their site. McCoy actually created a new, Ethereum-based NFT of *Quantum* to sell at the Sotheby's auction, so the claim that Free Holdings owned the metadata from the old Namecoin, and that he had sold *that* NFT, was unfounded. You can see how we are entering new intellectual property ownership terms with the invention of these new technologies.

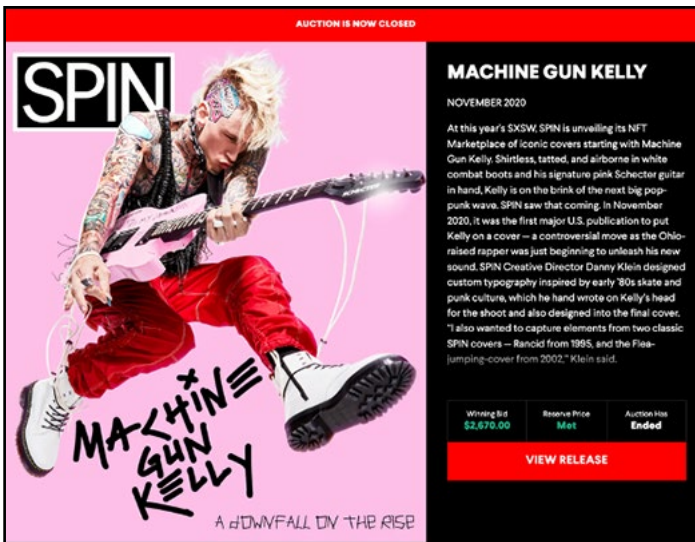
## Digital Art NFTs – Beeple



Screenshot of the Beeple ten-second video that sold for \$6.6 Million (Reuters 2021).

Once the NFT craze began in 2020, an artist known as Beeple sold his ten-second NFT video of a naked Donald Trump (see above) for \$67,000 to a Miami art collector named Pablo Rodriguez-Fraile. Four months later, in February 2021, this video exchanged hands again online for \$6.6 million (Reuters 2021). In addition to these sales, Christie's auction house offered a collage of 5,000 "all-digital" works by Beeple (aka Mike Winkelmann) and it sold for \$69 million on March 11, 2021 (Palumbo, Chung, and Ogura 2021) (Howcroft and Carvalho 2021).





Screenshot of *Spin* NFT of Machine Gun Kelly magazine cover, November 2020 (Spin 2022) (Spin Staff 2022).

### Magazine Covers Digitized as NFTs

Here’s another great example: magazine covers from *Spin*, digitized as an NFT. *Spin* magazine got into the NFT game at SXSW in March of 2022. It featured its own magazine covers as NFTs starting with this one of Machine Gun Kelly (Spin Staff 2022). Each of the magazine covers are made into a limited NFT with one going to the winning bidder, the second to the featured artist, and the third to the nonprofit of the artist’s choosing. Two additional copies are held in *Spin* and NAX’s treasury. AX, (Netzwerk Architekturexport) (Spin 2022). *Spin* worked with NAX, Algorand, and Rocket Insights to create the offerings.

Fans can buy the covers with a credit card (yes, not crypto), so it seems like this NFT exchange is actually Web 2.0—an internet website, rather than Web 3.0 which would be on the blockchain. I tried to see what was available for purchase on their site, located [here](https://spinnft.xyz/) (https://spinnft.xyz/) but there aren’t currently any NFTs available. Maybe legal is working on all of those image and likeness clearances for this new tech before they sell another one... lol.

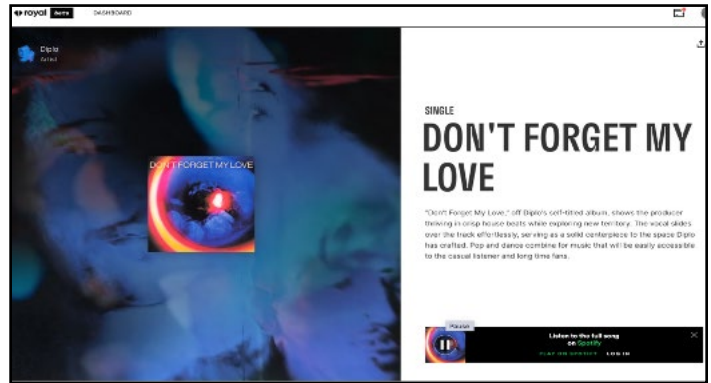
We’re excited to introduce these famous pieces as NFTs. It’s an easy entry point for fans to begin to collect scarce and coveted digital photography and memorabilia while providing artists a way into the space. (Jimmy Hutcheson, CEO of *Spin*) (Spin Staff)

### WTF Can I Do to Make Money with An NFT?

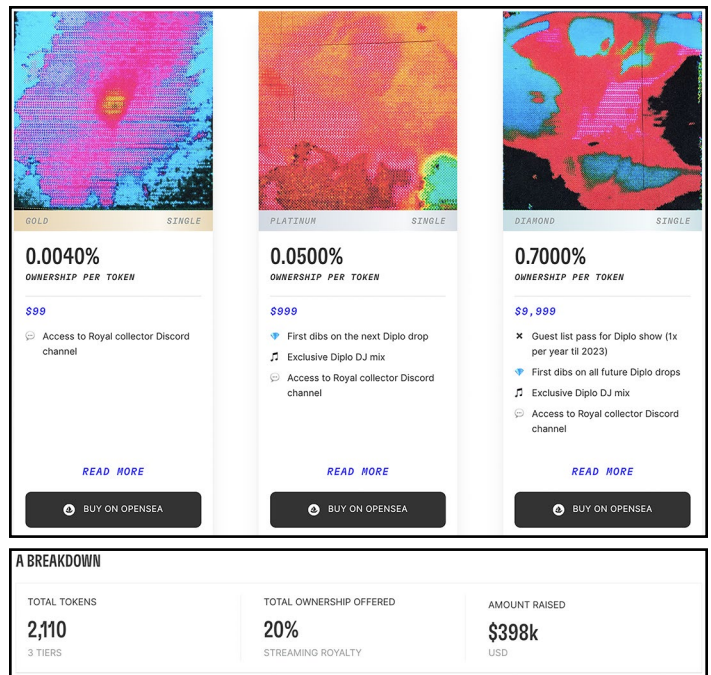
Ok, cool, magazine covers as art, music albums, short video visualizations that are basically a .gif. I get it, but how do I take my music copyrights to the next level? Enter Diplo and fractionalized and tokenized royalty shares. Show. Me.The.Money!

### Diplo “Don’t Forget My Love” Fractionalized Royalty Shares

Here’s an example of Diplo’s “Don’t Forget My Love” NFT which includes the song, a video visualization and a fractionalized ownership “share” of his streaming royalties from the song. It is for sale on the popular NFT Marketplace [Royal Markets](https://royal.io/editions/diplo-dontforgetmylove) (https://royal.io/editions/diplo-dontforgetmylove) (Royal Markets 2022).



Screenshot of Diplo’s “Don’t Forget My Love” on the Royal Markets NFT Marketplace (Royal Markets 2022).



Screenshots from Diplo’s “Don’t Forget My Love” Ownership Levels.

### NFT Marketplace – Royal Market – A Tokenized Song NFT

Here’s how it works: Royal Tokens give the investor a share of a song’s streaming income (not download, physical, or synchronization revenue) plus access to exclusive content and benefits. It does not give the investor any own-

ership of the actual PA (Composition) or SR Copyrights (Sound Recording). Ownership percentage and extras vary across each tier, and Royal notifies investors when royalties are available to claim after the artist gets paid. Typically, it's an 80/20 split with the artist keeping 80% and tokenizing 20% of the copyright. Here are the membership levels, and you'll note that the most valuable \$10,000 gives the fan the coveted "connection" with the artist with a guest pass to his show in both 2022 and 2023. The [discord channel](https://discord.com/) <https://discord.com/> at the \$999 level does offer some virtual connection as it is like a private online club with chat and video access to the star (Discord 2022).

### Royal Market – How's The Money Work?

So how does the money work? I found this great article on *Visual Capitalist* which outlines "How Many Music Streams Does It Take to Earn a Dollar?" (Routley, Deshmukh, and Conte 2019) and based on that, I calculated what each ownership tier will earn using the Spotify rate listed there of \$0.00437 (See below). Notice how many streams are needed for an artist to make minimum wage... more than 336,000 a month! to make \$1,472! Yeah, that's not going to pay your rent, is it? It's pretty sad because a report last year by *Music Business Worldwide* showed that only 13,000 artists worldwide make a living wage of at least \$50,000 a year (Ingham 2021). Big sigh... 250 streams on Spotify to make a dollar? Fractional ownership of the streams doesn't look that great to me, but let's dig into the numbers.

Streaming service	Avg. payout per stream	# of streams to earn one dollar	# of streams to earn minimum wage*
Napster	\$0.019	53	77,474
Tidal	\$0.0125	80	117,760
Apple Music	\$0.00735	136	200,272
Google Play Music	\$0.00676	147	217,751
Deezer	\$0.0064	156	230,000
Spotify	\$0.00437	229	336,842
Amazon	\$0.00402	249	366,169
Pandora**	\$0.00133	752	1,106,767
YouTube	\$0.00069	1,449	2,133,333

\*U.S. monthly minimum wage of \$1,472 \*\*Premium tier

How many streams to earn minimum wage (Routley, Deshmukh, and Conte 2019).

When you think about what your professors are doing on their weekends, it's crazy s\*\*t like this. Yeah, I love math, so I calculated it for you below. ROTFL. I'm crazy like that, and no, I'm not going to grade your paper that you turned in three weeks late. I've got important stuff to do like calculate royalties for an NFT I will never own.

### Diplo Fractionalized Royalty Payouts – “Don't Forget My Love”

“Don't Forget My Love” had 18,500,371 streams as of April 15, 2022. 18 million? Not bad! I multiplied that by \$0.00437 (Spotify payout rate from above) and the song has earned \$80,846.62. Now multiply that by the 20% going to the token holders and you have a whopping \$16,169.32. (Wha, wah—play trombone sound). Yeah, it's not real impressive, is it? Let's go through the calculations for each level to see how soon you're gonna get rich. Or not. You can thank me later for not allowing your head to explode.

To calculate the Gold Level, I took the payout percentage of .004 x 2,000 tokens which were sold at this level. I got 8% of the 20% payout which means that 40% of the income is being allocated to the Gold Level. Did you just lose your mind there for a minute? Yeah, me too. Here's the money, honey.

Total amount going to token holders x percentage share for that tier, gives you the total amount of money being distributed to those tokens. In this case, the \$16,169.32 is multiplied by the 40% of the payout designated to this level which is a whopping \$6,467.73. Divide that by the 2,000 tokens which were sold at this level and the income is a lovely \$3.23 per token. It was purchased at \$99. We've got a way to go until we recoup our investment.

$$\$16,169.32 \times .40 = \$6,467.73 / 2000 \text{ tokens sold at this level is } \$3.23 \text{ per token income.}$$

To calculate the Platinum Level, I took the payout percentage of .05 x 100 tokens and got 5% of the 20% payout, which means that 25% of the income is being allocated to the Platinum Level. Again, we take the overall payout of \$16,169.32 and multiply it by the 25% allocation to Platinum shareholders and get \$4,042.33. It is divided by the 100 tokens in the Platinum level which is \$40.42 income per token toward recouping the \$999 that you spent.

$$16,169.32 \times .25 = \$4,042.33 / 100 \text{ tokens} = \$40.42 \text{ per token (purchased at } \$999).$$

Finally, to calculate the Diamond Level, I took the payout percentage of .7 x 10 tokens and got 7% of the 20% which is 35% of the share going to Diamond Level token holders. The 35% share of the \$16,169.32 is \$5,659.25 and divided by the 10 tokens in the Diamond Level you have earned \$565.93 per token toward your purchase of \$9,999.

$$\$16,169.32 \times .35 = \$5,659.26 / 10 \text{ tokens} = \$565.93 \text{ (purchased at } \$9,999)$$

250 streams on spotify to make a dollar (\$0.00437)/stream

#### #10 song Don't Forget My Love

18,500,371 streams x \$0.00437 = \$80,846.62 Earned

\$16,169.32 (20% share going to tokens)

#### Gold (.004%) = 8% of 20% is (40% of the share)

\$16,169.32 x .40 = \$6,467.73 / 2000 tokens = \$3.23/token

#### Platinum (.05) = 5% of 20% is (25% of the share)

\$16,169.32 x .25 = \$4,042.33/100 tokens = \$40.42/token

#### Diamond (.7) = 7% of 20% (35% of the share)

\$16,169.32 x .35 = \$5,659.26/10 tokens = \$565.93

Calculations of gold, platinum, and diamond levels for Diplo's "Don't Forget My Love" fractional NFT (Johnson 2022).

Let's compare that to a song being synced in a major motion picture for \$1,000,000 and 20% of that income (\$200K) was given out token holders.

- **Gold Level:** 40% is \$80,000 divided by 2,000 tokens. Each token gets \$40
- **Platinum Level:** 25% is \$50,000 divided by 100 tokens. Each token gets \$500
- **Diamond Level:** 35% is \$70,000 divided by 10 tokens. Each token gets \$7000

Not bad. Finally, if we look at one of Diplo's other songs "Genius" recorded with Sia and Labrinth, which as of this writing has earned 351,110,928 plays, we can postulate that when "Don't Forget My Love" has had more time to gather plays—it will make similar income. The money looks pretty good.

#### Diplo "Genius" Fractionalized Royalty Payouts

We took these streaming numbers from the Spotify snapshot above. "Genius" had 351,110,928 streams x .00437 per stream and you get \$1,534,354.76 total income. 20% of that going to the shareholders is \$1,534,354.76 x .20 = \$306,870.95

#### Gold Level Calculations (40% Allocated)

\$306,870.95 x .40 = \$122,748.38

\$122,748.38 / 2000 tokens = \$61.37 per token

Gold Level has made back over half the money you invested on your \$99 token.

#### Platinum Level Calculations (25% Allocated)

\$306,870.95 x .25 = \$76,717.74

\$76,717.74 / 100 tokens = \$767.18 per token

You haven't quite broken even on the \$999 you spent for the token

#### Diamond Level Calculations (35% Allocated)

\$306,870.95 x .35 = \$107,404.83

\$107,404.83 / 10 tokens = \$10,740.48 per token

You are just barely breaking even for investment of \$9,999

If you look at his most popular song at that time which was "Where Are You Now" with Justin Bieber, it had 957,117,370 streams on Spotify (three times as many as "Genius"). If that song had been fractionalized as this one had been, the Diamond Level owners of that song would have earned \$29,278.22, almost tripling the return on their investment! So, this fractionalized NFT thing might not be bad at all. Jump on the bandwagon kids, mama needs a new pair of shoes!

#### Tokenized Song NFT vs. Fractional NFT

Cryptopunks and The Bored Ape Yacht Club are popular NFT artworks that have attracted the interest of celebrities and driven up the price, with some being sold individually for over \$11 million! (Bybit 2022) That's Beyonce money! The elite use them as social media avatars or "club keys" to private engagements, so we are not getting into the party in Ibiza anytime soon. This has kept mere mortals out of the crypto buying space because of the prohibitive price and has limited what an investor can do with their NFT.

The Bored Ape Yacht Club is one of the most prestigious NFT collections in the world. A collection of 10,000 NFTs, each depicting an ape with different traits and visual attributes, Jimmy Fallon, Steph Curry and Post Malone are among their star-studded owners. Right now, the price of entry is 52 ether, or \$210,000. (Van Boom 2022)

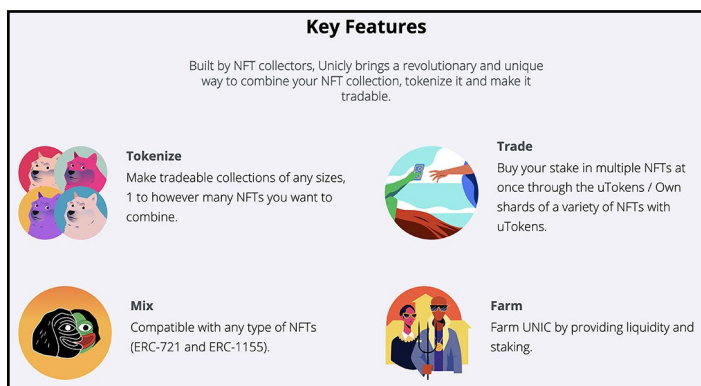
Fractionalized NFT (F-NFT) to the rescue! A tokenized song NFT like the Diplo song above gives investors the opportunity to share in the revenue from the success of a work, though not ownership of the copyright. A similar concept is a fractionalized NFT which gives partial ownership of a copyright, as well as the ability to earn income through sales of their fractional "share" of that intellectual property. (Bybit 2022) Think about it as an investment group for the Mona Lisa. The "property" whether it be a song, movie, or piece of art is fractionalized in a smart contract with a set number of tokens.

#### Where Can I Buy A Fractional NFT?

Oh, so now you are beginning to understand this investment thing, huh? You wanna get into the game? Three of the most popular investment platforms are [Otis](#), [Unicly](#), and [Fractional.art](#). All of them allow users to invest in fraction-

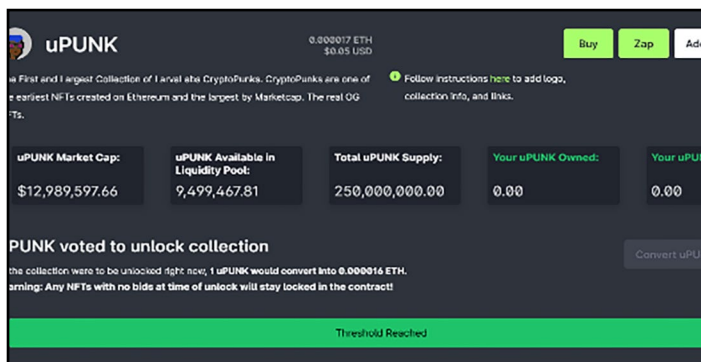


alized NFTs. Unicy allows investors to tokenize NFTs they already own, and Fractional.art allows creators to mint their own fractionalized NFT.



Key features of the Unicy platform NFTs (Unic.ly 2022).

Cryptopunks tokenized 50 of their 10,000 NFTs into 250 million uPunks tokens using the Unicy platform in April 2021 (Ibid). Mutant Cats tokens, called \$FISH, can be staked to earn 10 \$FISH per day or used to vote on the Mutant Cat DAO. *This is hilarious...*



uPunk tokenization of the 50 of the Cyberpunks 10,000 NFTs (Cyberpunks 2022).

## The Wide, Wide World of NFTs

### Sport NFTs – Tokenized Video of Tony Hawk

NFTs don't only pertain to music and art, you can also find them in sports. One of the many celebrities to get into the NFT space is skateboarder Tony Hawk. He released the last footage of him performing his famous 540-degree ollie as an NFT via Ethernity Chain. Check it out here on his Instagram page <https://www.instagram.com/p/CMitq3HJL-7/> (Hawk 2021).

### Music NFTs as Concert Tickets and Albums

In the music space, the Kings of Leon created three different NFT experiences for their fans in March of 2021 through the Yellowheart platform <https://yh.io/> (YellowHeart, LLC 2022). Meetsa Kasa from Blockade Games even posted a [video on how to purchase](#) them so fans could understand this new technology (Kasa).

First, they minted a tokenized NFT for their album *When*

*You See Yourself*. It included the digital album, the vinyl, and an animated album cover, which netted them \$2,000,000 (Dedezade 2021). The second NFT was a golden concert ticket auction to buy four front row seats to all of their concerts for life. The last NFT offer allows fans to “mint” (at their own expense) as many *When You See Yourself* NFTs as they want and at the end of March, that finite pool would become collector’s items (Gottsegen 2021).

Unfortunately, there was some blowback from fans in the comments about the gas fees on the Ethereum platform being more expensive than the album, which would impinge on the success of future music NFT offerings.



Complaints from fans on Kings of Leon NFT “gas fees” (Kasa 2021).

### Hollywood NFTs – “The Glue Factory”

NFTs are also being used to fund television and film projects in Hollywood. “The Glue Factory,” an animated web comedy voiced by Ted Danson, Patton Oswalt, Bobby Moynihan, and Bobby Lee minted 10,000 NFTs on the Ethereum blockchain and fans funded the series to the tune of \$3,000,000 (Lindahl 2022).

It even included input on the writing from fans. (A great way to connect with fans!) Token holders participated in various writing assignments through the Glue Factory’s discord server. The writers and showrunner Jon Barinholtz reviewed the ideas in a live video chat with the token holders.

We see that the engagement of the fans was key to developing the storylines but the staff writers said that the NFT owners proved that the show concept was valuable, had a fan base prior to the release, and could convince a network exec to “pick up the show.”

Chris Lindhal postulates that, “Initial tokens could be sold at a premium to others eager to be a part of the community. The earliest iteration of an NFT project is like a first-edition cult comic book that goes on to fuel TV shows and blockbuster adaptations.” Arnon said, “In the future, we’re really thinking that the NFT landscape will also be a breeding ground for the IP that ultimately makes its way into film, TV, and publishing.” So, this new NFT technology is lead-

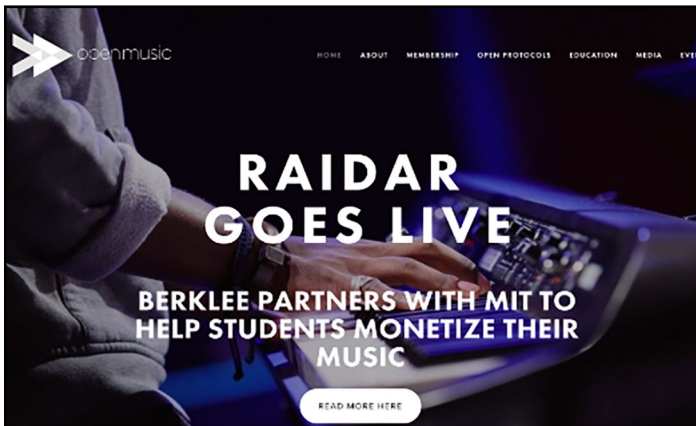


ing the way in funding the development of art as well as creating the content for more developed storylines in film and television.

### WTF is Sync Licensing on the Blockchain?

So where does that leave us in administering the intellectual property rights of these new media vehicles? We've seen how smart contracts within the NFT can allow artists to sell multiple units of art like a copy of an album, tokenized royalty streams from a piece of music or fractionalized ownership of a piece of art or song. What do we do when an artist wants to license a song for a film, a video game, a commercial, podcast, or television show? How do we automate it on the blockchain? Well, my colleague George Howard has been innovating a way to create a smart sync license so vendors can buy music from a catalog using their crypto wallet to authenticate who they are and purchase the music directly from the artist to put in their film.

### RAIDAR Music Platform – Smart Contract Beta



Berklee College of Music Announces RAIDAR Blockchain Platform (Open Music Initiative 2020).

In 2019, George Howard, Professor of Music Business at Berklee College of Music began working on a blockchain smart sync license by building the RAIDAR (Rights and Asset Information in Decentralized, Authoritative Repositories) platform with Berklee and MIT students (Raidar 2021).

RAIDAR would license songs from Berklee students to visual media students at Lesley University first and then make the platform available to outside vendors for music placement in games, podcasts, and virtual reality. RAIDAR was first built on the Ethereum platform but decided to move to the Algorand Blockchain in fall of 2022 to be carbon neutral. The platform works like a production music library with search tools for beats per minute, mood, genre, key, or hashtags. All of the music is owned 100% by the students, and RAIDAR does not earn any income from the sales. When a student filmmaker goes to the site, they can search for “guitar driven screamo with cookie monstah vo-

cal.” I’d like to see what comes up for that search! A list of songs meeting their criteria for genre, or instrument, or beats per minute shows up as a list. You can listen to each track to decide what you want to buy. The smart contract currently has only one rate of \$50, so when the song is selected and purchased, the film student will sign into their crypto wallet, pay the \$50 and receive a download of the song and a copy of the license iterating the terms. The music creator’s wallet will increase by \$50 and they just licensed their music, kept ownership of their copyright and didn’t have to pay anyone to do the administration! Eureka! They set it up once on the blockchain and now thousands of sales can take place without their intervention. By Jove, I think we’ve got it!

The goal was to create “a tool for artist education and career sovereignty.” (George Howard)

RAIDAR is supported by grants through Open Music, Algorand, and other investors. Read the [white paper](#) on OMI’s partnership with the Industry to create an “Open and Scalable Metadata Layer” (Hardjono and d’Avis 2019).

As I said at the beginning, the RAIDAR blockchain is still in beta, and is awaiting further funding and development for all of these payments to issue on the blockchain. It’s no longer a theory though because the first smart contract was actually launched on the Algorand blockchain eight months ago by my very own colleague George Howard.

### Dequency.io – The Smart Contract Realized

After Professor Howard got the Beta version of RAIDAR up and running he launched a new commercial sync licensing company called [Dequency.io](#). Dequency, “the soundtrack to the Metaverse” is a blockchain music platform (that works similar to a production music library) but is waaaayyy cooler! Musicians upload music for licensing and visual artists search the database to find music for NFTs and Metaverse content. Dequency licenses are minted on the Algorand blockchain to keep things low cost and carbon neutral and are paid for using ALGO coins. Check out the [marketplace](#) (Dequency.io 2022).

The smart contracts facilitate instant payments to creators and cut out the middleman to reduce administration fees in traditional music licensing companies. George says, “My favorite part of this platform is the proof-of-taste protocol. It allows ‘community members,’ or ‘Tastemakers’ to earn cryptocurrency by contributing to assessments of music quality, potential popularity, and relevance to the platform and community” (Dequency.io).

## WTF is the Metaverse?

### A Quick His/Her/Theirstory of Web 1.0, 2.0, and 3.0

To help you understand the Metaverse we need to talk about the transition from Web 2.0 to Web 3.0 (Li 2022). Web 1.0 was the invention of the internet for consumer use in the 1990s to 2000s with static websites and dial up bbs services that “hosted” online chats. If you were around then, you remember how laughable that “connection” was, and how desperate we all were to use this new technology. I can still hear the faint dial up tones squawking back at me as I waited to logon with my 9600 baud modem over my (not high speed) telephone line. It sounded somewhat like loud static followed by the backup sound that a construction truck makes. Here’s a YouTube video of the [sound](#) just to make you laugh and empathize with us GenXers who had to suffer through that difficult and trying time (Wilterminus 2008).

Once you were online, you waited in a virtual room (a black screen with orange DOS-based-looking script) for someone to show up and type “hi” to you. Yeah, kids, you don’t even know. Text only at first, which developed into some really great 8 bit ANSI graphics (much later on btw). We were totally “stoked” (to use an 80s phrase) to even have another person somewhere out there, on the other side of the world show up in a chat room to say “hi”. We talked about music, films, books and pretty much nothing just like you do today on “faceogram”. Here’s a great article from the [Atlantic](#) about the early days of dial up (Edwards 2016).

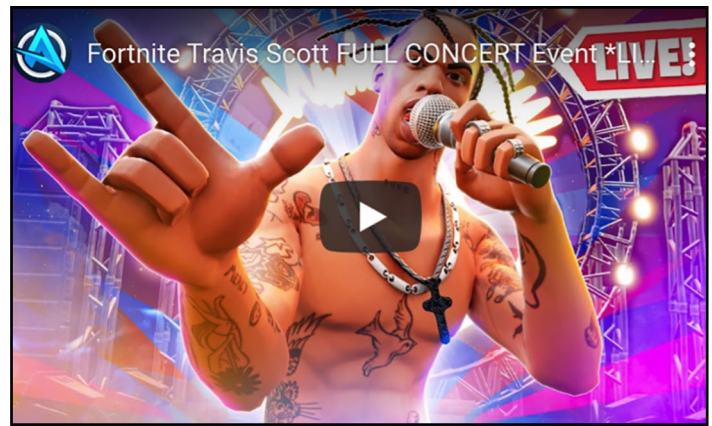
Oxford dictionary defines Web 2.0 as the “second stage of the development of the world wide web, characterized specifically by the change from static web pages to dynamic or user generated content and the growth of social media” (Oxford University Press 2022). It’s basically where we are now with the current version of the internet. Web 3.0 is the next generation of the web which is decentralized and open source (Li 2022).

### The Metaverse

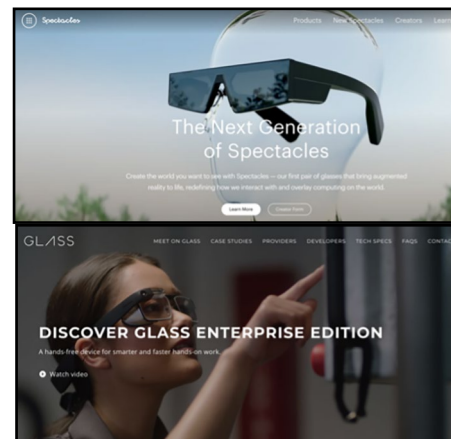
Facebook might have taken on the new name Meta but Facebook is *not* the Metaverse. Check out their take on it [here](#) (Meta 2021). The Metaverse is a broad term for the digital online economy that uses decentralized, blockchain-based programming and can include virtual or augmented reality (Ravenscraft 2022). Some would say it includes virtual concert experiences like Travis Scott’s performance in Fortnite, which you can watch here on [YouTube](#) (Dredge 2020).

It includes augmented reality which is a blend of real and virtual reality using tools like Google [Glass](#) (Google 2022) or [SNAP](#) (Snap, Inc. 2022) (Axon 2021). It enhances your daily life with an Instagram feed, phone calls, and messaging at the blink of an eye.

It could even be holograms with sensory suits interact-



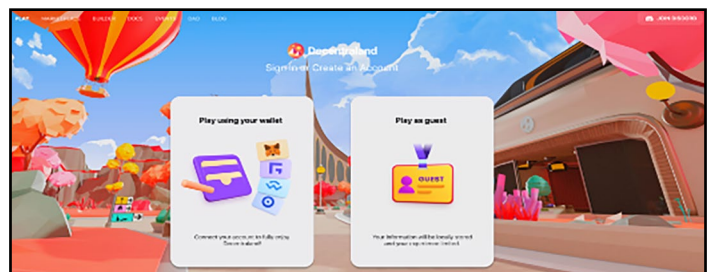
Travis Scott’s Metaverse performance on the Fortnite Platform. 12.3 million players joined him.



SNAP Augmented Reality Glasses (Snap, Inc. 2022) and Google Glass Live Video Stream Glasses (Google 2022).

ing in a shared space as if you are really there, or virtual games like Decentraland where users buy virtual real estate to build their virtual kingdoms (Decentraland 2022).

### The Metaverse – Decentraland

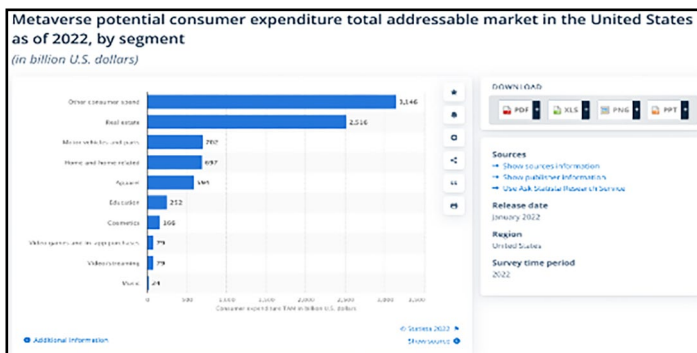


A screenshot of the get started page on Decentraland (Decentraland 2022).

Metaverse users access these lands through their computer or through virtual reality goggles like Oculus Quest 2.0 (Check out these top brands) (Denishman 2022). The [Decentraland](#) dApp users must buy MANA (Decentraland tokens on the Ethereum blockchain) to purchase virtual real estate within the game (Shahid, Decentraland (MANA) Coin: Overview 2022). The token has exact coordinates in

the virtual world to represent its location in the Metaverse. Players can also earn MANA in the game and use it to create or purchase NFTs, vote on the governance of the “land”, and buy collectibles for their homes. Think of it like Sims or [SecondLife](#) on steroids (Robin 2022).

Microsoft and Meta, along with [Nvidia](#), [Unity](#), [Roblox](#), and [Snap](#) are building these virtual worlds for us to live and play in with our friends (Ravenscraft 2022). These virtual real estate purchases are big business with NFT land sales over \$100 million at the close of 2021 (Bizouati-Kennedy 2021). The Metaverse market in the United States is on track to earn \$8.3 trillion (Alsop 2022).



(Alsop 2022).

## Creator Attribution – Creative Passport

### The Problem with Clearing Intellectual Property Rights in Web 1.0

Those of you working in the music licensing space since the 90s know how difficult it was to license a cover song, a sample, or a sync license before the copyright office came online. Yep, I was an intern at Island Records Miami in 1994 in the A&R department and cleared sample licenses. We had to listen to tracks and look at liner notes from previous records to figure out who owned a sample and who was the publisher of that composition. If we couldn't find them, we called the copyright office to have them look up the copyright owner and contact them on our behalf. I did this one time when we were trying to license a 1969 live reel-to-reel recording of a Fleetwood Mac concert we found in someone's closet. Long story short, one of the songwriters was living in an ashram in Nepal and had turned over all of his income to the organization, so the copyright office had to call to get their permission for us to create and distribute his song on the album.

We sent documents for the original signature by mail, and eventually the law allowed for fax signatures. That. Took. Months. If you worked on a television production, you had to send in cue sheets to the performing rights organizations by mail or fax. The same information was retyped into the PRO's database by another person (aka intern) who might have spelled the composer's name with one “T” or two.

Anyway, you would often end up with multiple writer and publisher accounts (just try searching Carole King in [BMI](#) and you'll notice there are accounts for Carole King, Carol King, and Carol King Goffin) (Broadcast Music Incorporated 2022). Songs not credited to the correct composer or publisher meant they didn't get paid their backend performance income when their song played on that network TV show. This, my friends, was licensing 1.0.

### Licensing on the Web 2.0

When the copyright office came online in the late 90s we began to research ownership of songs and recordings digitally—but of course, not everything was there. They didn't finish digitizing pre-1978 copyrights until 2014! (U.S. Copyright Office 2022). I know what you are thinking... the internet didn't always exist? Yeah, no. Later in the mid 2000s, websites for the performing rights organizations like [ASCAP](#) gave licensing professionals the ability to search the owners of compositions, and finally in the mid 2010s curated databases like [Discogs](#) helped us find owners of recordings, while [Whosampled](#) helped us find owners of recordings that were sampled in popular songs (ASCAP 2022) (Discogs 2022) (Whosampled 2022). Still, television shows could fax, email, and eventually use [Cue Chronicle](#) websites that could send the data electronically in a batch to the PRO's (Cirilli 2019) Still there were problems. The television studio computer databases were set up differently and had different naming conventions than the PRO databases so the information didn't transfer correctly. Staff (e.g., interns) had to go back in and either key in the data or fix the “dirty” data that entered the database in the wrong category.

Don't even get me started on trying to transfer info from a U.S. television show to a foreign PRO in a different language. In the U.S. we call them “Publishers” but in France they call them “Editeurs.” Yes, when you imported the file from France, you had to link the two together and point one set of data to flow into each of the categories in your database (by hand of course for each batch of data) but again, humans, being humans, made lots of mistakes. I once had twenty-five gospel songs attributed to my account in ASCAP and only noticed it when I went online to check my latest registration of my *one* song. LOL, I noticed all of these songs registered to Andrea Johnson, but I hadn't written any of them. Several phone calls later, I am no longer a wealthy gospel songwriter from Nashville, but the right person is. Whew! Licensing 2.0 was easier but still required a lot of paperwork.

### Blockchain and Creator Attribution 3.0

Enter the effervescent and incredibly entrepreneurial Imogen Heap, who created the [Creative Passport](#), which in her words is “a Verified Digital ID for MUSIC MAKERS, where they can ACCESS, UPDATE AND MANAGE infor-



mation about themselves and their works, and share it with others (Heap 2021).



Imogen Heap wants to create a “fair trade” music industry (Kuo 2016).

Heap has innovated a way for creators to “sign” their work as soon as it is created so that it can be licensed, tracked, and compensated on the blockchain without an intermediary. Watch out record labels, we don’t *need you* to distribute and monetize our work and, oh by the way, we are keeping all of the profits and making micropayments to everyone on our team who participated in the creation of the work. Yassss!

Imagine creating your music, adding the metadata identifying you as the owner of the recording and composition and that information would be carried along the blockchain whenever your work is placed in film, TV, ads or anywhere. You would be paid immediately because the transfer of your content on the blockchain would identify you as the rights-holder. No more hunting down publishers on the PROs or looking for owners on [copyright.gov](http://copyright.gov), [Songfile](http://Songfile), or the [MLC](http://MLC). In addition, the creative passport unifies your profile, and can send your ownership data to your music distributor, PRO, manager, and team members so they always have up-to-date payment and contributor data.

## She Created Three Components of Her Creative Passport

### Music Makers

- Verified identity connected to your work with IPI numbers from your PRO
- Find collaborators on the platform nearby to write together

### Artist Representatives (Label, Collection Society, Distributor, Publisher)

- DDEX standardization between all representatives
- Increased accuracy
- Less paperwork

- Reduced administrative costs

### Music Services (Streaming Services like Spotify and Pandora)

- API for single signing (software that integrates platforms)
- Know Your Customer (KYC) compliance
- Clients can visualize current streaming numbers on your site

As she was building this, she worked with [DDEX](http://DDEX), “a standards setting organization focused on the creation of digital value chain standards to make the exchange of data and information across the music industry more efficient,” to insure that the metadata she collected about works used their naming protocols so it could be used worldwide (DDEX 2022).

### What is DDEX?

[DDEX](http://DDEX) created a standardized format for metadata to be exchanged between music industry partners like labels to distributors. Their format is free for all companies to implement in their businesses. Think of it as coming up with a naming convention for each piece of data that you are tracking. For instance, lyricist, composer, and publisher. This standard naming convention is used by all parties across the music industry, so that everyone’s databases import and export the information using the same categories.

They did this to reduce costs and human error in the transfer of this data between partners when music sales and payments are batched through royalty systems on streaming platforms for example. “Standardizing and automating these processes on Web 2.0 and now through blockchain on Web 3.0 will allow creators to receive higher payments for *all* of their work and receive attribution for that work through transparent decentralized systems” (DDEX 2022).

So there you have it! New technology to expand your mind and your pocketbook all while holding on to your rights as a creator, so *you* can monetize your art! Revolutionary! I hope that in turning the tech talk into layperson’s terms it has made this new Web 3.0 world accessible to you and your students. I’m happy to have done the heavy lifting, reading, and translating the scientific “babble” so your head didn’t explode trying to understand SHA256. I know, I know, we’ll revisit the “deep tech” in the next installment. Now, I encourage you try to mint a token, or an NFT, or hey, hire an engineer and an attorney to draft your first smart contract. Anything is possible in the Metaverse and now you have the knowledge to change your virtual reality!



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**Andrea “Ani” Johnson**, Associate Professor of Music Business at Berklee College of Music, is an international lecturer and consultant in music licensing, blockchain, and startups. Tapped to share her expertise on CNN “The Lead”, at MIDEM, InHolland University, and Berklee Valencia she has also published, “What’s Up with MXSup’s” in the *MEIEA Journal* and the *Music Business Journal*. Previously, Johnson worked with Chris Blackwell at Palm Pictures/Rykodisc and licensed over thirty albums for artists including Elton John, Parliament-Funkadelic, and Fleetwood Mac. Her work with Gloria Estefan included restructuring their financial systems and managing royalties for their Sony Music venture.

On campus, Ani is faculty advisor to Berklee’s Music Business Club and is an Equity Partner and a member of the Female Faculty Alliance which advocates for social justice issues on and off campus. She serves as faculty support to the student teams for the development of Berklee’s music licensing platform, Raidar, in conjunction with George Howard and teaches the Raidar Blockchain Practicum. Built *by* students *for* students, it hosts music from Berklee students, alumni, and faculty and allows them to license it for placement in films, ads, video games, and other media. Her music supervision company MonoMyth Media hires Berklee interns as music concierges, to pitch and place music from the Raidar catalog in local productions.

# Pandemic Disruptions: Emerging Themes and Stories Among Music Ecosystems

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This paper was presented at the [2022 International Summit](#) of the Music & Entertainment Industry Educators Association  
May 16-17, 2022

<https://doi.org/10.25101/22.2>

View the Summit presentation at:  
<https://youtu.be/Y8s480uwwC8>

## Abstract

COVID-19 disrupted our lives, in-person events, creative networks, and the ability to fully thrive in music communities around the world. Researchers had already identified that local music ecosystems were under stress due to structural and economic challenges. This study analyzes beliefs and local transformations after the first year of the current pandemic based on the stories from 128 subjects—music community participants, change agents, and local leaders around the world—who participated in twenty-six focus group panel sessions during a three-day virtual conference in April 2021 and nine separate and specific geographic focus group sessions, recorded March through September 2021. Through these recorded conversations, we gathered insights into their differing challenges, transformations, and emerging music organizations. These documented discussions generated real-time rich qualitative research about changes around the world. Through qualitative analysis of the resulting data, we identified themes, differing regional models, and areas for future research. We also created a video archive to support comparative research for anyone looking to gain insights into our transforming current music environments.

Keywords: music cities, music geography, COVID-19, resilience, creative and cultural industries, live music, venues, cultural policy, narrative analysis, comparative policy analysis, music ecosystem

This paper is published in the *Journal of the Music and Entertainment Industry Educators Association* Vol. 22, No. 1 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.25101/22.2>.

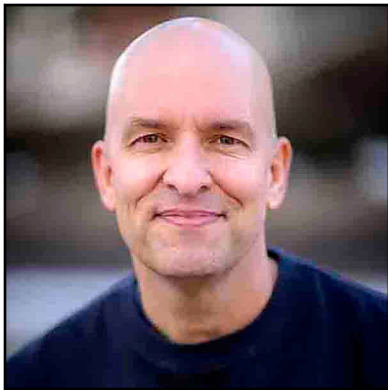
*This project was funded by a MEIEA research grant.*



**Gigi Johnson** teaches, advises, and produces multimedia events on creativity and technology through the Maremel Institute and at New York University in Los Angeles where she teaches on music in Los Angeles. In 2020 and 2021 with Storm Gloor, she co-founded the Amplify Music conferences, podcast, YouTube channel, and research with forty-five organizations. Dr. Johnson taught for twenty-two years at University of California Los Angeles, where she ran the Center for Music Innovation, built four industry-connecting programs at UCLA Anderson, and taught undergraduates, MBAs, and executives about disruption in the creative industries. Before UCLA, she financed corporate media, film, TV, radio, cellular, theatrical, and new media mergers and acquisitions at Bank of America for ten years. Johnson holds a doctorate in educational leadership for



change from Fielding Graduate University, an MBA from UCLA Anderson, and a BA in film/TV production from the University of Southern California.



**Storm Gloor** is an associate professor in the Music and Entertainment Industry Studies department of the College of Arts and Media at the University of Colorado Denver where he serves as the program director of the Music Business area. He was the recipient of the university's 2018 Excellence In Teaching award and the college's 2020 Excellence in Service award. Mr. Gloor's teaching experience includes courses such as Music Marketing, Music Cities, Music in the Digital Age, Introduction to the Music Business, and Artist Management. He is the faculty sponsor for all internships within the College of Arts and Media. Gloor earned his MBA at West Texas A&M University and is a past president of MEIEA.

# Public-Private Partnerships in Music Industry Education: A Mixed Methods Study of the Music Industry Technical Camp in Trinidad and Tobago

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This paper was presented at the [2022 International Summit](#) of the Music & Entertainment Industry Educators Association  
May 16-17, 2022

<https://doi.org/10.25101/22.18>

View the Summit presentation at:

<https://youtu.be/mYVTV9LjzIE>

## Abstract

The Music Industry Technical Camp (MITC) is a public-private partnership (PPP) designed by [DianJen](#) and delivered in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts in Trinidad and Tobago. Its focus is on providing intensive practical training on the business and technical aspects of the music industry to persons 18-65 years of age and comprises 90 hours of instruction delivered over a six-week period. Between 2014 and 2018, 89 participants graduated from the MITC, with several currently employed as full-time and part-time professionals in the local music industry. As the first program of its kind in Trinidad and Tobago, this paper pursues a comprehensive study of how the structure, curriculum, and instructional strategies of the MITC are aligned with the needs and achievement of graduates, the state partner, and the country's music industry from a holistic perspective.

Using a two-phase, explanatory sequential mixed methods design, a statistical quantitative result was obtained from a sample of graduates of the MITC. This was followed with interviews with a subset of individuals from this group to probe and explore the results further. The data suggests significant benefits when graduates apply their learnings to their careers. These include greater capacity to plan their careers or represent their clients, enhancements to their music business and production knowledge and skills, improvements to the business aspects of their career, and more confidence when venturing into new industry related ventures.

Keywords: music industry education, public-private partnership, MITC Trinidad and Tobago



Farley J. Joseph is an Adjunct Lecturer in Music Education at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine. Upon graduating with his Masters in Music Business with a concentration in Music Technology from New York University in 2012 he returned to his native Trinidad and Tobago and founded DianJen, a music industry training and consulting organization. Through this venture, his objective has been to provide unique and creative training opportunities in the business management and technical skills of the music industry. Leveraging strategic partnerships with local and regional government agencies he has helped over three hundred artists, producers, and other industry professionals in the Caribbean gain relevant industry skills and certifications.

# Voices of the Night: AM Radio and the Globalization of R&B

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This paper was presented at the [2022 International Summit](#) of the  
Music & Entertainment Industry Educators Association  
May 16-17, 2022

<https://doi.org/10.25101/22.19>

View the Summit presentation at:

<https://youtu.be/x80BKC7Zutc>

## Abstract

Mid-century R&B is a topic with a rich history of scholarship rooted primarily in the liberal arts. However, one relatively unexplored aspect is the impact of long-distance radio transmission on its movement into the mainstream of popular culture. A geo-scientific perspective reveals how this phenomenon, known as the skywave effect, is associated with AM as opposed to FM transmission, favoring nocturnal broadcasts in particular. This technical point of view informs existing discourses regarding cultural appropriation and the rise of the independent record labels. We invite a reading of the serendipitous broadcast of songs, voices, and recordings arising from marginalized communities against prevailing hegemony. The skywave effect reveals disruption of ideological and economical status quo as well as the propagation of late 1940s rhythm and blues music spreading over the following decades into new forms including Caribbean ska and early Rock & Roll.

Keywords: skywave effect, rock & roll, radio history, AM radio, music business, race records, ionosphere, twentieth century popular culture

**Paul Linden** has toured North America and Western Europe as a blues and roots-american artist. He has performed on *Austin City Limits*, CBS, NPR, and Mike King's award-winning documentary on Chicago Blues. Festivals and venues Linden has played include the Montreal Jazz Festival, Memphis in May blues festival, Atlanta's Fox

Theater, New York's Beacon theater, Portland's Roseland Theater, and the Fillmore West. He has worked with Bo Diddley, B.B. King, Jerry McCain, Nick Moss, Susan Tedeschi, and Kim Wilson. His research interests include interdisciplinary and theoretical approaches to music industry studies. A selection of publications includes "Entrepreneurship: Theory and Application in a University Arts Management Setting," "Translating Race and Genre in Popular Music," and "Malcolm Chisholm: An Evaluation of Traditional Audio Engineering." Linden's research has been cited in the most recent authoritative history of Fender amplifiers, *The Soul of Tone: 60 Years of Fender Amps* (Hal Leonard 2007) and *Vintage Guitar Magazine*. He is also a regular contributor to magazines like the *Tone Quest Report* and the French-based magazine *Blues & Co*.



# What's Knowledge Management Got To Do With It?

## The Secrets of Industry-Respected Music Business Degrees

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This paper was presented at the [2022 International Summit](#) of the Music & Entertainment Industry Educators Association  
May 16-17, 2022

<https://doi.org/10.25101/22.20>

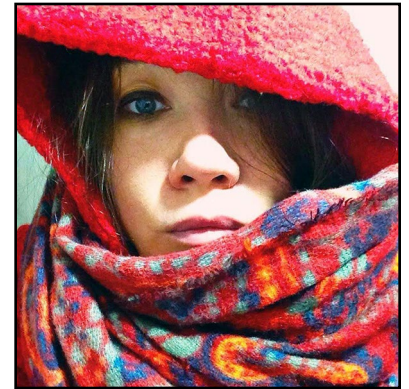
View the Summit presentation at:  
<https://youtu.be/LV71cAvYnmw>

### Abstract

Issues around industry-respected degrees are strongly linked with skills, employability, as well as industry knowledge. But what is considered as industry knowledge? What should a graduate know and be capable of doing? The lecture aims to introduce the roots of the opposition between music industry professionals and academics in their approach to “industry knowledge”. Most of the knowledge required in music business knowledge can be defined as tacit, while academics value scientific knowledge much more and because of that, some (mainly British) music industry courses tend to focus more on this science-based codified knowledge. This opposition explains the critique of music industry professionals about music business qualifications. This debate is not a new phenomenon: (general) management courses had to face the same criticism at their introduction in the nineteenth century both in Europe and in the United States. This presentation aims to compare the critique of these nineteenth-century management programs to the echoes of these British music business courses, explains why the approach of U.S. music industry programs makes them more labor market-focused than their British counterparts. The lecture also looks into the knowledge management notions called codified and tacit knowledge and their relationship to practical intelligence and how it is all linked to industry-respected degrees and employable graduates. Listeners will understand why it is extremely difficult to define music industry studies as a discipline itself, what makes designing an industry-respected, successful but also scientifically underpinned music industry program a very complicated task, and how we, sitting in the same boat of music industry education, are all linked to medical education.

Keywords: music business pedagogy, music industry pedagogy, music business degrees, music industry degrees

**Fruzsina Morcz** has been a music business professional for sixteen years and has worked in music business education in for nine years. She gained an Aesthetics and a Hungarian Language and Literature MA degree at Eötvös Loránd University of Sciences (ELTE). Later



on she attended the Music Business Management course at University of Westminster. While living in London, Morcz did her internships at world famous music business companies in London: World Circuit (the record label of Buena Vista Social Club) and the international booking agency The Agency Group. Later on she established the first higher education music business module at International Business School of Budapest and half a year later at Corvinus University of Budapest.

Morcz founded her own music business school, Zeneipari Hivatal, in 2013 to train adult learners. Graduates work for music business companies and bands including Sziget Festival, Artisjus–Hungarian copyright office, Seattle radio station KEXP guest and Eurosonic showcase talent The Qualitons, and the Budapest Showcase Hub festival.

Her industry interests are music business conferences in Europe, artist and band management, concert organizing and touring. Currently she is doing her PhD on the relationship between the U.S. and the European higher education music business courses and their relationship with the labor market at ELTE University, Faculty of Humanities, Doctoral School of Philosophy, Film, Media and Culture Theory Doctoral Program.



# An Artistic Framework for Adapting Existing Works of Electronic Music to Live Performance

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This paper was presented at the [2022 International Summit](#) of the Music & Entertainment Industry Educators Association  
May 16-17, 2022

<https://doi.org/10.25101/22.21>

View the Summit presentation at:  
<https://youtu.be/chTE25ZgsEw>

## Abstract

It is often difficult for electronic music artists to successfully navigate adapting their existing fixed media works to live performance because it is difficult to repeat the studio processes on the stage, there is a wider variety of instruments/technologies used in electronic music than other genres, and performance is not often considered integral to the training electronic music artists receive. This paper addresses this issue, discussing an artistic framework with three objectives for artists to consider to successfully navigate this adaptation: authenticity to the work, authenticity to the artist, and engagement. Four electronic music performances are reviewed, examining how they successfully navigate these objectives. These examples demonstrate the framework's validity and that its three objectives are key to a successful adaptation of an existing work of electronic music to live performance. Understanding this framework benefits artists, educators instructing artists, and those interested in culture and practices surrounding electronic music.

Keywords: electronic music performance, electronic music, live performance, performance authenticity, performance engagement, performance frameworks

## Introduction

This paper discusses an artistic framework for adaptation of an existing electronic music work to live performance. It does not provide a step-by-step or technical process, instead focusing on the artistic/conceptual elements and approaches. The framework provides a method for artists (the creator and performer of the existing work) to successfully navigate the artistic challenges encountered when completing this process of adaptation. It is important to provide this framework for artists because it is difficult to repeat the processes used in the studio on the stage, there is a wider variety of instruments/technologies used in electronic music than other genres, and performance is not often considered integral to the training electronic music artists receive.

The framework is focused upon three objectives seen as critical for artists to consider in this process, which will be discussed here. Four exemplar performances will then be reviewed including discussing how they relate to these three objectives.

As an electronic musician, who composes and then performs their own music in clubs and concerts in a variety of genres (pop, dance, beats, down tempo, etc.), I have gained insights through performing my own works and through observing performance adaptations of fixed media electronic music works by other artists. As a tertiary level educator in this field, I have gained insights through helping others realize their artistic goals when developing their own performance adaptations. Through synthesizing these sources of information, I have developed this framework and aim to share these insights.

## Conceptual Position:

### Defining Electronic Music

Simoni<sup>1</sup> defines electronic music as “organized sound that uses electricity as essential materiality in either the creation of the composition, the realization of the composition through performance, or both.” This is a useful definition here because it is aesthetically agnostic. This encompasses artists creating electronic music regardless of location, cul-

ture, time, virtuosity, size of ensemble, and stylistic qualities.

### Defining Performance and its Challenges for Electronic Music

Typically, electronic music is made in such a way that it initially cannot be performed live, and the audience has complete control of the listening experience. This is because electronic music is most often made with non-real-time processes, delivered to the audience as fixed media. However, live performance is conducted entirely in real-time. Here, that the creator is present and influencing the audience's experience of the music in real-time is the necessary distinction of *performance*. This point of difference makes the gulf between the fixed media and live renditions of the work significant, and increases the challenges of adaptation of the fixed media rendition of work to the live rendition of the work.

### Variations in Training

There are inherent differences in music practices and training across different disciplines and genre focuses. In the institutes where I have taught, instrumental training requires performance, but performing has historically not been required when training electronic music producers. This trend has left many electronic music artists without any formally taught skills in how to perform their original works live. Performance has often not been considered integral to the craft of electronic music production.

### Variations in Successful Exemplars

Particularly when artists lack formal training and resources, they will often look to their peers and idols hoping to emulate their successes. Electronic music performances often employ a wider variety of instruments/technologies than those found in other genres. This makes the process of independently reverse engineering a successful method of adaptation to live performance difficult, as the limited consistency makes it harder to find trends that indicate proven successful methods.

### Defining Performance Design

The method of performance adopted by an artist can be called the *performance design*, which includes components such as the technology employed, the tasks engaged with on stage, and how the artist presents themselves.

### This is Relevant to All Artists (Regardless of Constraints)

It's important to recognize that each artist undertaking the process of adapting existing works of electronic music to live performance may be impacted by different technical, logistical, and ability constraints. Examples of these constraints include access to equipment, performing ensemble, budget, stage size, and fluency with different instruments/

technologies. These aspects can be usefully conflated here as while each artist's performance design will be impacted by these constraints, the core task of translation still meets the same artistic challenges. The artistic challenge of adapting an existing fixed media work of electronic music for live performance is the focus here, regardless of such constraints. All artists are navigating the same artistic challenge to develop the best possible solution performing their existing works live within their means.

### The Challenge is a Creative and Artistic Challenge, Which Happens to Funnel Through Technical and Logistical Avenues

This process of adaptation is a creative and artistic challenge. Relevant literature<sup>2</sup> in this area largely focuses upon technology, not the process of realizing a creative and artistic outcome, but technology is there only to create an artistic outcome. I aim to address this issue by focusing on the creative and artistic requirements in making this transition. While the technology will be examined in the framework, it will only be done to identify a path to achieving this goal.

### The Three Objectives of the Framework

In this framework the artist has three central objectives when crafting their performance design to complete this process of adaptation:

- To be authentic to the creative identity of their original fixed media work
- To be authentic to their creative identity as an artist
- To provide an engaging performance

When adopting this framework, the artist's objective is to design for the most successful outcome in all three objectives. The artist should respond to each of these points when presenting a live version of their existing fixed media work. The success of the performance is reliant on the successful achievement of all three objectives. These three points will be discussed in detail below, including the value ascribed to artist and audience viewpoints on these objectives within this framework.

### Being Authentic to the Creative Identity of the Original Fixed Media Work

To be authentic to the creative identity of their original fixed media work, the artist must first have a clear understanding of what the creative identity of the original fixed media work is, which requires interrogating both the compositional materials and their artistic context.

The following diagram is designed to visually demonstrate how these elements (important to the process of live performance adaptation) contribute to the creative identity of the original fixed media work (see Figure 1).

Within the compositional material it is most important to identify the separation between the foreground and back-

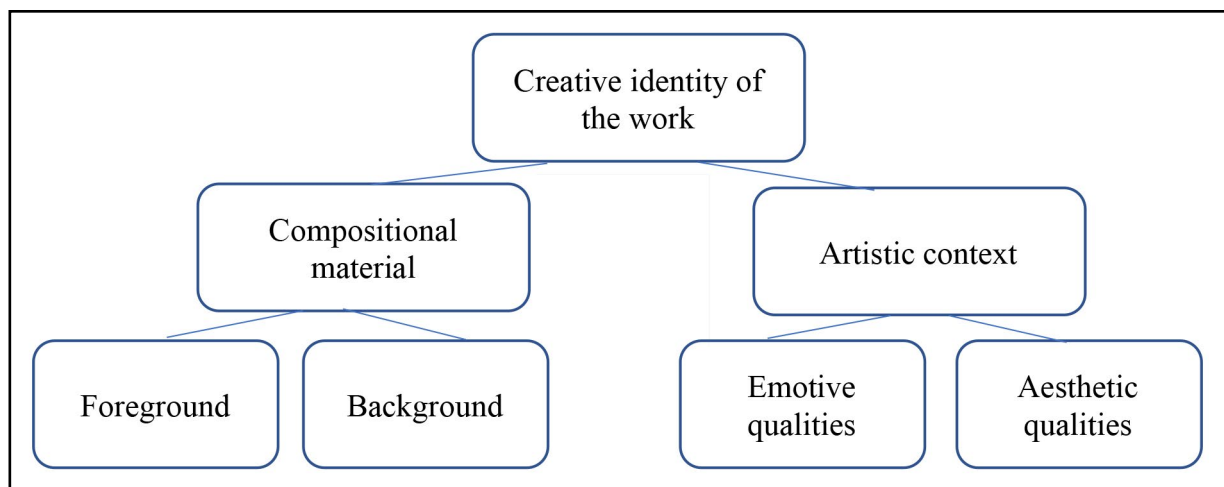


Figure 1. The creative identity of the original fixed media work.

ground. Identifying the focus of the attention (foreground) is important, and this should be highlighted by the performer on stage. For example, in many tracks that have a lead vocal part this should ideally be foregrounded when performed live on stage. As this is the focus of the audience's aural attention, it needs to be elevated to their visual attention to have the live rendition appear authentic.

Here, it is expected that the artist has already crafted the original fixed media work with a sonic hierarchy in mind. Additionally, it is expected this hierarchy is something that the artist would wish to maintain in the live performance adaptation.

It is also important to understand the artistic context found within the creative identity of the work. This is best understood as the emotive quality the artist wishes to inspire and the aesthetic qualities the artist wishes to associate with the work. These qualities are the result of the cumulative impact of the elements of the song's construction, including its compositional material. While some manipulations of the original material may be required or desired for the live rendition, if they were to significantly alter these qualities the performance would no longer be considered authentic.

When adapting for live performance authorial intent is critical for understanding artistic context. That is because the artist both created the original fixed media work and is responsible for the performance design. It is expected that they wish to uphold the qualities of the original fixed media work through the process of adaptation.

### Being Authentic to the Creative Identity of the Artist

Beyond the specific qualities of the original fixed media work, the live rendition must remain authentic to the creative identity of the artist. This requires the artist having a clear understanding of their creative identity.

As with the creative identity of the work, it is the artist's understanding of their creative identity that is most important here, above that of the audience's understanding. Live

performance is one part of the artist's broader avenues of presentation, such as the original fixed media work, press shots, album art, and interviews. In each the artist is seeking to present the identity that they wish an audience to see, navigating each craft to do so in the most authentic manner.

### Providing an Engaging Performance

When serving these aforementioned creative identities, the artist must not lose sight of the task of performance itself. It is the artist's responsibility and objective to provide an engaging performance for the audience.

Designing a performance to satisfy this need begins with an understanding of the audience. This includes an understanding of their cultural environment and expectations. These factors may influence designing for engagement, such as what equipment or gestures are suitable or expected within this context. Again, it is the artist's responsibility to understand the profile of their audience.

To facilitate audience engagement the artist must also consider the relationship between the visuals that an audience observes, and the music that they hear. This inclusion of a visual element is one of the most significant changes between the original fixed media and the live rendition. Kjus and Danielsen argue that electronic music artists in particular require a close look "at the more specific potential roles of technology in linking artists' intentions, [visual] actions and sounds."<sup>3</sup> They argue audiences will seek to make connections between these components, so artists must consider how they wish to facilitate this.

### Determining Success

Whether or not these objectives were successfully achieved is something both artist and audience can determine. Each defines success in their own terms and these terms do not necessarily share any relationship to one another. However, one's opinion does not necessarily out-

weigh the other, for example, an audience's dislike does not trump an artist's satisfaction or vice versa.

### Subjective Interpretations

Music is ultimately about conveying feelings, both in fixed media and live performance mediums. Consequently, the only interpretations of success that are possible are subjective. This includes the subjective viewpoint of an artist and audience determining whether the three stated objectives have been successfully reached.

However, only the artist is in control of how the performance is designed and rendered. This framework is designed to be used by artists in developing their own performance designs. An artist using this framework can design and render their performance to fit their own definition of success within the provided objectives. As has been previously explored, it is also the artist's job to possess an understanding of their audience. This understanding should allow them to achieve the greatest potential success from their own and the audience's perspective.

### Examples

Here we will look: at two versions of Imogen Heap's "Hide and Seek,"<sup>4</sup> Floating Points' "Anasickmodular,"<sup>5</sup> and the Sleeping Giants' "The Seriousness of Contentedness"<sup>6</sup> to help provide further understanding of the three objectives of this framework. Understanding how these artists achieved successful live adaptations will be explored to provide real world context and to aid artists in developing their own adaptations.

It is important to remember that it is no more or less valid to examine the methods of one artist over another regardless of resources, aesthetics, fame, or other attributes. The artistic process of adaptation is being completed by each performing electronic music artist regardless of style or stature. There are many other equally valuable examples across a spread of styles and aesthetics, such as the works of Suicide and Luigi Nono.

### Imogen Heap's "Hide and Seek"

The two different performances by Imogen Heap's song "Hide and Seek" are from different years, contexts, and utilizing different performance designs. The 2010 performance at Glastonbury<sup>8</sup> and the 2019 performance for NPR's Tiny Desk series.<sup>9</sup>

The original fixed media version of "Hide and Seek" is notable for being almost entirely focused on a vocal and accompanying digital harmonizer. In her 2010 performance<sup>10</sup> Imogen Heap performed by singing and using a wireless keytar which controlled the pitching of her vocal harmonizer. In her 2019 performance<sup>11</sup> she employed the MiMU gloves,<sup>12</sup> her signature gesture based controllers which Heap helped design and develop,<sup>13</sup> to control live capturing and manipulating loops of her vocal harmonies.

It is valuable to examine Heap's performance design for a vocal forward pop piece, as this is relevant to many contemporary electronic music artists. It is also valuable to examine the evolution of the performance of this song, and how the performance design was altered to satisfy the evolving desire of the artist and the needs of each context. In each instance the work successfully navigated the framework, demonstrating the malleability of solutions that produce a successful result.

### Creative Identity of the Work

Imogen Heap's "Hide and Seek" is an example of the artist understanding the creative identity of the original fixed media work. She remains guarded about the complete story behind its lyrics, but clearly understands that it is recognized as eliciting melancholy,<sup>14</sup> which each varied live rendition does not betray. This is achieved by retaining the foreground focus on the emotive vocal performance of the lyrics and avoiding arrangements which may significantly alter the energy or message (such as a radically different tempo). The work is also aesthetically characterized by the timbre of digitally manipulated vocal harmonies. Although the exact method of delivering them has varied they have remained present in each rendition. "Hide and Seek" without these two core qualities, the foregrounded emotive rendition of the lyrics and the accompanying digitally manipulated harmonies, would not be considered an authentic rendition of the work, for it would betray its creative identity.

### Creative Identity of the Artist

Imogen Heap identifies as an artist who works "at the intersection of music and tech."<sup>15</sup> This is best exemplified by her album *Sparks*<sup>16</sup> in which each song makes use of a different technological innovation.<sup>17</sup> Although she has explored different solutions she has never shied from the clear incorporation of technology in performance (including in the examples interrogated in this paper). The intersection with technology is important to her creative identity, thus live performances must not betray it to remain authentic.

### Providing an Engaging Performance

By using a keytar strapped to herself and orientated to face the audience in the 2010 performance,<sup>18</sup> Heap allowed clear visual engagement with the electronic processing of the harmonizer central to the song. In 2019,<sup>19</sup> she utilized the MiMU glove gesture based controllers for their ability to facilitate audience engagement in the performance of electronic music.<sup>20</sup> The enlarged gestures she employs when using the gloves create digital messages for controlling the sonic looping and manipulations of her harmonies while also providing the audience clear visual engagement with the technology powering the performance.



## Why Did Her Performance Design Change?

Though Heap's 2010 performance of "Hide and Seek" did have a successful performance design, she stated that much of the equipment she employed throughout her full sets felt not very expressive and visually unengaging.<sup>21</sup> The MiMU gloves were developed to provide greater visual engagement and amalgamate multiple pieces of technology required for different tasks throughout her shows. Since 2010, "Hide and Seek" also became adapted for the play *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* as part of its score,<sup>22</sup> for which Imogen Heap is the primary composer. This is a choral arrangement, and is part of the inspiration for the live reinvention.<sup>23</sup> Though the 2019 performance being examined is for a smaller audience at NPR, it should be noted that the same performance design was being employed at larger concerts around the same time period.<sup>24</sup>

## Floating Points' "Anasickmodular"

The original fixed media version of Floating Points' "Anasickmodular" is an electronica track characterized by stutters, sweeps, bleeps, and other electronica staples scattered amid sonorous synthesizer and string harmonies. The eclectic dance music track began life as a live improvisation, though it saw further editing and development before the fixed media version was completed.<sup>25</sup>

I will examine Floating Points' 2019 live performance of "Anasickmodular" at Printworks in London.<sup>26</sup> His solo operated performance design includes numerous pieces of performance equipment such as mixers, drum machines, synthesizer keyboards, audio processing units, and a Buchla modular synthesizer (the modular unit that is partial inspiration for this track title). The music is supported by audio reactive lights and projected visuals designed and operated by Hamill Industries.<sup>27</sup>

It is valuable to examine this performance design as it successfully navigated the framework and intersects with multiple important cultural references in contemporary electronic music, relevant to many artists undertaking this process of adaptation. This includes the authentic presentation of works within dance music genres, the inclusion of modular synthesizers, and supporting audio/visual components.

## Creative Identity of the Work

The improvisation process utilizing the Buchla synthesizer which helped develop this and other tracks from the associated album *Crush*<sup>28</sup> resulted in works characterized by Floating Points as "some of the most obtuse and aggressive music I've ever made."<sup>29</sup> This description highlights an important aspect of the emotive quality of the work. Demonstrating awareness of the importance of retaining this quality in the live adaptation, Floating Points has stated, "Hopefully, the live show would replicate that unhinged feeling."<sup>30</sup>

The live version preserves and enhances this quality in part by utilizing much of the same equipment. It also incorporates embellished abrasive audio processing such as bursts of intense distortion, sweeping resonant peaks, and stuttering loop buffers. Each of these elements allows this emotive quality to be authentically portrayed in the live rendition.

Floating points identified that the Buchla modular synthesizer is core to the creative identity of the work. As the development of the fixed media version of "Anasickmodular" began as a live, real-time, improvisation primarily focused on the Buchla, "Anasickmodular" is already fortuitously suited to live adaptation. However, modular synthesizers like the Buchla are notoriously temperamental, fragile, expensive, and often impractical to tour with but because its sound and its performance capabilities are essential to an authentic rendition, it was included in the performance design.

## Creative Identity of the Artist

In developing "Anasickmodular" and the album on which it features, *Crush*, Floating Points deepened his knowledge of the equipment it utilizes.<sup>31</sup> This process continued with the incorporation of some of this key equipment into the live adaptation and resulting solo performance design. This is a significant change from his previous performance designs which has incorporated more traditional instruments and a larger performing ensemble. Floating Points describes playing live as an "edifying and...important thing for me to do artistically."<sup>32</sup> He also states, "If I just did playback, it wouldn't be fun."<sup>33</sup> Despite the technical and logistical complexity making significant changes to his performance design can present, it is necessary for him to make such edifying alterations and utilize this equipment to remain authentic to himself as an artist.

## Providing an Engaging Performance

Like a lot of performance designs in the dance music and adjacent cultural spaces, Floating Points himself is not treated as a central visual point of focus. Printworks, like many clubs or festival venues where similar music is performed, has a large level space for the standing (and dancing) audience, with the artist on a raised stage. Compared to performance spaces like tiered seating concert halls, this makes visually engaging with a solo performer much harder. Consequently, lights and projected visuals designed and operated by Hamill Industries are integrated to provide a visually engaging spectacle. By being audio reactive and carefully operated to respond to dynamics and other cues from the musical material, they still facilitate the necessary cohesion of the two senses that provide an engaging performance.

While the lights and visuals provide a lot of the larger spectacle, Floating Points still tries to highlight the relation-

ship between his visible actions and the audible result. For example, he employs enlarged gestures by aggressively and rhythmically manipulating faders on his mixer. Though not responsible for playing the notes he is processing in this instance, the important correlation between sound and visual gesture is still effectively served. This demonstrates that so long as this correlation is achieved, there are many creative ways to utilize performance technology to provide an engaging performance.

### The Sleeping Giants' "The Seriousness of Contentedness"

To also provide personal perspective and insight, I will examine a 2019 performance of "The Seriousness of Contentedness" by The Sleeping Giants,<sup>34</sup> which is my own project with my collaborator Alex Gooding.

The original fixed media work is characterized by "busy layered live percussion, hip-hop inspired drum machines, jazz inspired chords, and reverb soaked ambience galore, all assembled into an electronica collage."<sup>35</sup> I will examine The Sleeping Giants' 2019 live performance of "The Seriousness of Contentedness." The performance design includes Alex Gooding on drum kit and myself using an Ableton Live focused laptop setup, controlled by two Push 2 control surfaces.

In addition to providing personal insight, it is valuable to examine The Sleeping Giants' performance design, which is successful within the framework, for its presentation of down-tempo hip-hop inspired music (such as those found in the beats and jazztronica genres), inclusion of additional members in a performing ensemble, inclusion of acoustic instruments, and use of alternative staging arrangements. All of which are relevant to many artists undertaking this process of adaptation.

### Creative Identity of the Work

The creative identity of "The Seriousness of Contentedness" includes a compositional foregrounding of extensively edited and layered single microphone recordings of Alex Gooding's performance on an acoustic drum kit. The resulting aesthetic quality of familiar, acoustic instrument timbres within inhuman execution presents a challenge for live rendition. The original fixed media work's collage-like assembly exemplifies the non-real-time approach that is often employed in creating electronic music. The decision was made for me to extemporaneously trigger and arrange the edited recordings as short loops and phases (in addition to other tasks I would accomplish during the piece). Alex Gooding would play drums live on top, though mostly focused on calmer backbeats through sections where the frenetic drum edits were present. This anchored the otherwise more unstable rhythm section. It also presented multiple appearances of Gooding's material from both performers,

as live drum kit performance from Gooding and through the loops I would trigger. This was an effective extension of the foregrounded compositional material and key aesthetic quality in the original fixed media work. This allowed the live adaptation to remain authentic to the creative identity of the original fixed media work.

The track's title speaks to its emotive quality, a tongue in cheek reflection on finding a balance between forceful efforts seeking happiness and sliding into relaxed and natural states of contentedness. The work is busy, detailed, and carefully crafted with serious intent. Yet such intent is to evoke feelings of ease, "pleasantry and peace within."<sup>36</sup> The live execution retains this emotive identity most clearly by juxtaposing the calm and confident gestures of Gooding's backbeat patterns against the more frenetic live manipulation of the edited drum samples. The dynamics and sonic complexity of the piece also oscillate between sections of simple phrases and those more aggressively layered and manipulated by improvisation from both performers. Such aspects allow the live adaptation to remain authentic to the emotive quality of the original fixed media work.

### Creative Identity of the Artist

The Sleeping Giants' creative identity is focused on the fusing of organic and synthetic sound sources into down tempo genre fusion pieces. The project is aimed at combining my and Alex Gooding's interests in genres such as jazz, hip-hop, and electronica. The mixture of conventional instrument timbres with synthesizer timbres and electronic music production techniques is important to this creative identity. In the live rendition, both performers visually balance the different musical cultures of influence by engaging with varied music performance equipment/instruments (the acoustic drum kit and electronic Push 2 control surfaces). This conversation of styles is exemplified by the staging, as both performers are seated facing one another. The musical material in "The Seriousness of Contentedness" and performance design highlights the abilities of each performer, meeting at the intersection of different genres. The creative identity's focus on these elements of stylistic fusion is authentically portrayed in this live adaptation.

### Providing an Engaging Performance

Visual engagement with the audience was considered in various details of this performance design. This 2019 performance was done in the round for a small audience.<sup>37</sup> Gooding's drum kit was unamplified and the PA which amplified my laptop audio was placed on the floor between us, with a speaker orientated at each performer. The goal was to make all the sound emanate from the center of the room. The decision to allow audience members to move around the performers was done to give us, the performers, the opportunity to visually engage with each other (as we were

facing one another) without shutting out viewing angles and visual engagement from the audience. We were also both seated, allowing a standing audience to easily see our actions operating our respective equipment/instruments. My main Push 2 controller (which I interact with most frequently) was placed on an angled stand (tilted away from my body) to be better seen by the audience. The room lights were brought low which visually focused on the light sources from our equipment. I am focused on engaging with the brightly lit surfaces of two Push 2 controllers, and a flexible clamped light was attached to Gooding's drum kit, the light illuminating the kit and reflecting from it, illuminating him.

### Comparison:

#### Links and Diversities Between the Three Works

Each of these three artists are navigating the process of adaptation with different goals, owing to varied creative identities of the respective works and artists. However, in understanding what defines the important qualities of a creative identity of a work, an artist, and providing an engaging performance within this framework we can see some similarities within each approach.

Each artist had to consider how the process of live adaptation would necessitate a focus on specific compositional material as the foregrounded content of the performance. Heap understood this to be her vocal performance, Floating Points understood this to be the Buchla, and we in The Sleeping Giants understood this to be the manipulated drum kit recordings. For Floating Points and The Sleeping Giants this meant making choices about what other elements would see less direct engagement by the performers in the live rendition, including some use of playback of recorded materials. When working with smaller ensembles or solo acts, particularly electronic music performers, this is a common consideration. However, the use of playback can be contentious among audiences,<sup>38</sup> as they may feel it may rob the performance of energy and/or authenticity. These examples argue that if the artist understands the foregrounded compositional material in the original fixed media work and ensures this remains foregrounded in the live performance, the presence or absence of playback or other required supporting elements will not disrupt the authenticity and success of the adaptation.

Understanding how the artist's performance design foregrounds elements of the compositional material can be intrinsically linked to retaining or enhancing emotive and aesthetic qualities of the original fixed media work. For Heap, the focus on her vocal performance also meant a focus on the emotive rendition of the text. For many artists with foregrounded lyrical material, this outcome would likely be the same. For The Sleeping Giants the aesthetic quality of collaged drum kit recordings from the fixed media work

became even further enhanced in the live rendition due to the triggered recordings being layered with additional live drum kit parts on top.

Though each artist examined here creates works within different musical subcultures, their attachment to music technology is a recurring theme when examining each of their artistic identities. While this technology is employed for varied creative purposes, each artist places importance upon the exploration of their equipment and continued learning of how technological innovation can enhance their ideas and projects in performance and composition. This goes some way to explaining the recurring theme of the artist's desire to update, innovate and change their means of performance, such as Heap's MiMU gloves and Floating Points' shift to a solo performance method. This can be a recurring theme for many electronic music artists; that working with music technology both in development of fixed media works and live performance designs is considered a significant and rewarding part of the practice. Consequently, interrogating their existing live performance designs and making changes over time may not just be a practical necessity for electronic music artists, but also an important part of remaining authentic to their creative identity.

Each performance examined here utilized varied technology, were staged in different performance environments, and are quite varied works. This has resulted in quite different methods of addressing audience engagement. However, what each performance design clearly addresses is the important correlation between the visual and aural senses in order to achieve engagement. Often this is accomplished by the performer making clear visual gestures that the audience can relate to in the resultant sound, such as Heap's keytar, her MiMU gesture controller gloves, and The Sleeping Giants' highlighted engagement with triggering sounds from a raised control surface. Even though there may be a technology-layered abstraction from the gesture to the sound that audiences may not entirely understand, the synchronicity still effectively serves engagement. In environments where gestures are harder for audiences to see, such as Floating Points' performance, correlation of sound, projections, and lights can be used to enhance a sense of engagement. However, Floating Points did still employ enlarged physical gestures that those audience members close enough may be able to perceive. Electronic music artists are not unique in having to consider how their performance is experienced by the audience members both at the front and back of the room. The Sleeping Giants made the audience choose what they saw by allowing them to move around the performers. This demonstrates that where the option to control the staging is present, artists can even eschew the proscenium convention and allow other avenues of visual engagement.

## Comparison Conclusion:

### Similarities and Dissimilarities

These four performances demonstrate the validity of using the framework to achieve a successful adaptation across a variety of styles of work. The similarities between these performances align with the three framework objectives: clear attention to the creative identity of the work and of themselves as artists, and providing an engaging performance for the audience. Dissimilarities include: genre, musical style, audience size and location, means of visual engagement, and technology. This shows that focusing on the three objectives listed can result in a successful adaptation from the fixed media work to the performed work.

### Conclusion

Conducting this research and writing this paper has been influenced by my own artistic practice and a desire to develop a greater understanding of this craft. I have personally experienced, and heard from other artists (such as those I encounter as a tertiary educator), that it is difficult to find a useful method when attempting to adapt existing electronic music works for live performance. This is due to the reasons explored earlier: the difficulty in repeating the processes used in the studio on the stage, the wide variety of instruments/technologies used in electronic music, and because performance is not often considered integral to the training electronic music artists receive. It is my hope that by interrogating the artistic challenges encountered when adapting existing works and providing this framework, that artists will feel emboldened to create their own successful performance designs. This success can be achieved by applying the framework objectives: authenticity to the work and artist, and engagement.

Possible futures for this work include its incorporation into a more prescriptive framework that deals with more step-by-step procedures and specific technical instruction. I have already begun including the framework in my own material as an educator and I hope to see others do the same. While the framework has a focus on the adaptation of electronic music works, this methodology could likely be incorporated into a larger framework with an interest in serving a broader profile of artist. Of course, its primary function is to serve artists, and I hope that it may reach those who benefit from using it to aid development of their own creative projects.

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# How Record Labels and Music Publishers Deal with Copyright Issues

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This paper was presented at the [2022 International Summit](#) of the Music & Entertainment Industry Educators Association  
May 16-17, 2022

<https://doi.org/10.25101/22.22>

View the Summit presentation at:  
<https://youtu.be/zP04XbS1SSc>

## Abstract

This paper examines how the music industry deals with certain copyright-related issues such as termination of transfer, copyright registration, copyright infringement claims, as well as some related contract issues.

Keywords: copyright, music copyright, termination of transfer, copyright registration, copyright infringement claims

## Introduction

If we think of the music business as a house, copyright law is the foundation. Everything that can be done with music is built on the rights created by copyright law. As an extension of this analogy, contracts would be the frame of the house. The music is the interior and exterior design elements, the decorations, and the comfortable furniture. In this article, we examine certain copyright and contract related issues and how the music industry is dealing with these issues.

## Overview of the Termination Process

Sections 203, 304(c) and 304(d) of the Copyright Act deal with the termination of transfer right. Section 203 pertains to grants executed on or after January 1, 1978,<sup>1</sup> and sections 304(c) and 304(d) pertain to works that existed prior to January 1, 1978, and for which grants or licenses for the renewal copyright were executed before January 1, 1978.<sup>2</sup> In addition to the Copyright Act itself, there is the Code of Federal Regulations (“CFR”) section 201.10, which provides the requirements related to the termination of transfer notice that must be sent to the party whose rights are being terminated.<sup>3</sup>

The procedures under sections 203 and 304 are not entirely identical, but they are fairly similar in that the termination can occur within a 5-year period and a notice must be sent to the original grantee or the current owner of the copyright. For the purpose of brevity, we will focus on section 203. Under section 203, termination can occur during a 5-year period that begins 35 years after the grant was executed, unless the grant includes the right of publication. If the grant includes the right of publication (which songwriter and artist agreements do), then the 5-year period begins at the earlier of 35 years after first publication or 40 years after the grant was executed.<sup>4</sup> Thus, in order to determine the date on which the 5-year period begins for a grant that includes the right of publication, the party sending the termination notice must know the date of first publication and the date on which the grant was executed. In addition, CFR section 201.10 provides that the termination notice should identify the grant. This, of course, means the terminating party

needs to have a copy of the grant. This is where things get difficult for songwriters and artists because most songwriters and artists do not have a copy of the grant. In addition, it is not always easy to locate the attorney who represented the songwriter or artist when the grant was executed to see if the lawyer has a copy. In many cases, the party preparing the termination notice finds themselves asking the music publisher or record label for a copy of the agreement.

### Termination and Record Labels

It is important to note that the termination of transfer right does not apply to a work made for hire. Also, most (if not all) recording agreements include language whereby the parties agree the masters are specially ordered or commissioned works as a contribution to a collective work, and, therefore, they are a work made for hire. This is done, at least in part, to avoid the termination of transfer right. In addition to this language in the agreements, the record labels register the copyright in the sound recording and identify the work as a work made for hire. In light of this, record labels take the position that the masters are not subject to the termination of transfer right. Thus, when a record label receives a termination of transfer notice, the label immediately objects to the notice on the grounds that the masters are works made for hire. The labels will also object for other reasons if those reasons are available to them (e.g., any other grounds for claiming the notice is not valid).

Another detail worth noting is that, with respect to works created by an independent contractor, the work made for hire definition specifies nine types of works that can be a work made for hire, and sound recordings are not one of the types of works. The types of works listed in the definition are 1) a contribution to a collective work, 2) as a part of a motion picture or other audiovisual work, 3) as a translation, 4) as a supplementary work, 5) as a compilation, 6) as an instructional text, 7) as a test, 8) as answer material for a test, or 9) as an atlas.<sup>5</sup> Sound recordings, obviously, are not included. This is why the contracts identify the masters as contributions to a collective work, a type of work that is included in the nine types of works listed in the work made for hire definition. To say the least, whether a sound recording qualifies as a work made for hire is debatable. To date, the record labels have avoided having that debate in a court of law. Several lawsuits have been filed, but they have been settled out of court. As mentioned earlier, the record labels object to any termination notice for sound recordings. After objecting, the record labels immediately attempt to negotiate with the artist (or the heirs) to reach an agreement that avoids litigating the issue of whether the sound recordings are a work made for hire.

### Termination and Music Publishers

Music publishers find themselves in a different position than the record labels in that there is no argument to be made related to the work made for hire status of the songs. The songs are not works made for hire, thus the grants are eligible for termination. A music publisher will, of course, object to a notice that is flawed. If the notice is not flawed, then the music publisher will decide whether to attempt to retain some rights in the songs. This decision is primarily based on the success of the songs. If a music publisher were to receive a termination notice for songs that do not contribute much to the value of the music publisher's catalog, then the music publisher would be less inclined to try to retain any rights. If the songs have been successful, the music publisher will likely try to retain some rights in the songs. Typically, the music publisher will be offering a more lucrative deal to the terminating party (e.g., an administration agreement whereby the publisher retains significantly less of the income from the songs).

### New Trend in Copyright Registration

An interesting policy shift among music publishers relates to copyright registration. In the past, music publishers would try to register every published song within three months after initial publication. The timing of the registrations, was, of course, driven mostly by the desire to ensure the music publisher would be eligible for statutory damages and attorney's fees in the event of a copyright infringement action. The realities of interactive streaming (i.e., low per-stream royalties and the relative ease with which independent artists can release music on the streaming platforms) have caused some music publishers to re-evaluate the practice of registering every published song. Because some releases may stand little chance of earning any significant money, some publishers are balancing the cost of registration (i.e., copyright registration fees and employee resources) against the estimated potential earnings and deciding whether registration is worth the cost. In addition to the cost analysis, some music publishers are having difficulty tracking all of the uses due to the fact that it is so easy for artists to release music. So, even publishers that try to register every published song admit that they may be missing some.

### Indemnification Provisions

Not only has there been a policy shift related to copyright registrations, some music publishers, as well as record labels, have modified policies related to the indemnification provisions in the agreements with songwriters and artists. Simply put, if there is a claim related to a breach of the agreement by the songwriter (or artist), the indemnification provision makes the songwriter (or the artist) responsible for any legal fees incurred by, and monetary judgments rendered against, the music publisher (or record label). The

change relates to language that, in the past, was not permitted by the music publishers and record labels but is now being included by some companies. The language limits the songwriter's (or artist's) liability under the indemnification provision to those claims that are either settled with the songwriter's (or artist's) consent or adjudicated to a final adverse judgment. This is a tremendous benefit to songwriters and artists, since they pay nothing if the claim is successfully defended.



**John Ouellette** is an assistant professor in the Department of Recording Industry at Middle Tennessee State University teaching, among other things, Entertainment Intellectual Property I and Entertainment Intellectual Property II. John is also an attorney whose practice focuses on entertainment and intellectual property law issues.

### Endnotes

1. 17 U.S.C. § 203.
2. 17 U.S.C. § 304(c) and 304(d).
3. CFR § 201.10.
4. 17 U.S.C. § 203.
5. 17 U.S.C. § 101.



# Georgia Rambler: The Life and Music of Benjamin Neely Plumb

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This paper was presented at the [2022 International Summit](#) of the  
Music & Entertainment Industry Educators Association  
May 16-17, 2022

<https://doi.org/10.25101/22.23>

View the Summit presentation at:  
<https://youtu.be/Hd9cclRoNfk>

## Abstract

Benom Plumb gives a thirty-minute presentation about his upcoming book, *Georgia Rambler*, a narrative adult nonfiction work, part memoir and part biography. The book takes readers through the lifetime and musical achievements of Benom's great-uncle, the famous musician, A&R man, and record producer, Benjamin Neely Plumb (1912-2000). Neely Plumb is a posthumous coauthor with his great-nephew Benom, because a large portion of the content comes from Neely's unpublished personal memoir. In 2016, Benom Plumb was given permission by Neely's surviving children to edit and publish the memoir in a book about their father's life and achievements. The memoir as presented in the book was written in Neely's own words in the early 1990s and later edited by Benom Plumb for publication (currently under review by the University Press of Mississippi). Neely personally takes the reader from his childhood in the deep south of Augusta, Georgia, where he led his first band, "Neely Plumb and His Georgia Tech Ramblers", until around 1967, a couple of years after signing Jefferson Airplane to RCA. During America's Golden Years of recorded music from the 1930s to the 1970s, one man was behind some of the world's most beloved and celebrated recordings, artists, and soundtracks—Neely Plumb. In the span of his nearly six decades in the U.S. music industry, Neely Plumb's credentials include touring and performing with Artie Shaw; recording and performing for RKO Motion Picture Studios; recording on tracks for Frank Sinatra and Bing Crosby; musical director, arranger, and conductor of Sheb Wooley's "Purple People Eater"; West Coast A&R Producer and Manager for RCA Victor signing The Monkees, The Limeliters, and Jefferson Airplane to their RCA recording contracts; and earning multiple RIAA Certified Gold Records producing the film soundtracks for *The Sound*

*of Music, Bye Bye Birdie, Franco Zeffirelli's Romeo & Juliet, The Good, The Bad & The Ugly, True Grit, and more.*  
This is his story.

Keywords: Benjamin Neely Plumb, music industry, A&R



Educator, author, songwriter, producer, and music business professional **Benom Plumb** has the music business in his genes. A music industry professional since 2006, Benom is the great-nephew to the acclaimed record producer, A&R man, arranger, conductor, and clarinetist, Neely Plumb ("Purple People Eater," *The Sound of Music*, Jefferson Airplane, Juan Esquivel, Neal Hefti's "Batman Theme"). Professor Plumb recently authored a book based on Neely Plumb's memoir titled, *Georgia Rambler: The Life and Music of Neely Plumb*, currently under peer review with the University Press of Mississippi.

Professor Plumb has published various articles about music industry topics and has been cited in the peer reviewed journals of Yeshiva University's *Cardozo Arts & Entertainment Law Journal*, University of Virginia's *Sports and Entertainment Law Journal*, and Fordham University's *Media and Entertainment Law Journal*. Professor Plumb has also been quoted as a music publishing and music licensing expert by American Public Media's *Marketplace*, the National Music Publishers Association, WNYC's *The Takeaway*, and *The Denver Post*.

Benom Plumb's creative music projects include a rock project under the fitting name, Professor Plumb, and an electronic/sample-based music project called, The Jolly Backbeat. Professor Plumb's rock music has been featured in The CW network TV show *Legacies* as well as in the PlayStation/Oculus virtual reality video game *Drums Rock*. The Jolly Backbeat's lo-fi instrumental track, "California Moon," received Spotify playlist attention with over 6,000 streams in the summer of 2021.

Before arriving at the University of the Pacific, from 2013 to 2020, Professor Plumb was Assistant Professor of Music Industry Studies at the University of Colorado Denver and worked concert merchandise for touring artists at Red Rocks Amphitheater such as Billie Eilish, Twenty One Pilots, and Kacey Musgraves. From 2007 to 2012, Plumb was Vice President of Licensing at Bluewater Music in Nashville. During his time at Bluewater, Plumb led all TV/Film music licensing projects, signing new talent, pitching songs to artists, finding publishing royalties, negotiating various business deals, and representing the company throughout the world at music industry events. Plumb earned his BM at the University of Texas, Arlington, and his MM in Music Business at the Frost School of Music, University of Miami.

# Independent Musicians' Touring Experiences Before and After the COVID-19 Shutdown

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This paper was presented at the [2022 International Summit](#) of the Music & Entertainment Industry Educators Association  
May 16-17, 2022

<https://doi.org/10.25101/22.24>

View the Summit presentation at:  
<https://vimeo.com/707656947/dc25d5d3a9>

## Abstract

Live performance has long been a consistent source of revenue for many musicians. However, with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, that consistent opportunity became non-existent for many musicians, who suddenly found venues shuttering operations and audiences staying home, adhering to safety protocols during an international health crisis.

Perhaps most particularly affected were independent touring musicians, who often lack financial support from well-funded record labels, and who may be associated with music genres that have been less commercially successful in recent years. Many independent musicians embark on self-funded and -booked tours in vehicles such as passenger vans, handle many of their own affairs without professional tour management or agency representation, and often operate via razor-thin profit margins. The rapid spread of COVID-19 in spring 2020 exacerbated what was already a challenging effort faced by many of these touring musicians.

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of independent touring musicians, both pre-COVID-19 and amidst the COVID-19 crisis, to offer recent perspectives on contemporary cultural production, live performances, and the future of such touring artists.

Research questions include:

1. What were some challenges facing independent touring musicians pre-COVID-19?
2. In what ways did independent touring musicians maintain their financial, social, musical, and personal well-being during the COVID-19 shutdown?
3. What are independent musicians' opinions of touring in the present, as restrictions are eased in several

regions across the United States and populations are vaccinated?

This qualitative study utilizes in-depth, semi-structured interviews with independent touring musicians, which are ultimately themed for presentation. The definition of independent is that the artist(s)—and their tour(s)—do not receive funding from any major label group. This study aims to advance knowledge in the popular culture arena, to provide a contemporary view of how independent musicians maintain their financial and personal viability during an ever-changing and unpredictable health climate. This study will also better inform the industry about recent issues and challenges in independent musicians' touring careers.

Keywords: live performance, touring musicians, independent musicians, COVID-19



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# Learning the Music Industry at YouTube University

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This paper was presented at the [2022 International Summit](#) of the  
Music & Entertainment Industry Educators Association  
May 16-17, 2022

<https://doi.org/10.25101/22.25>

View the Summit presentation at:  
<https://youtu.be/LgEhrBMOHUQ>

## Abstract

Have you ever watched a video on YouTube because you needed to repair a leaky pipe, fix a broken thingamajig, or learn a part for a last minute gig? It's safe to say that many people have "acquired" new skills by watching videos posted online. Long before YouTube, teachers often relied on videos as both primary and supplemental materials for their students. Now showing videos posted on platforms like YouTube have become routine practices in many classrooms.

About ten years ago, colleges and universities realized that they could expand their course offerings to anyone with an internet connection, which gave rise to the massive open online course (MOOC) movement. There has also been a growing interest in recent years in Open Educational Resources (OER), or freely available instructional materials. In many ways, YouTube already acts as an OER and serves as an informal "U.Tube." YouTube even aired a TV commercial in November 2021, "What Will You Learn?," that profiles people who used the platform to launch businesses and careers.

I often tell my music industry students that they could learn the majority of things I teach them on the internet. But I also wondered about the veracity of that statement. If you type "music publishing" into Google and limit the search to just videos, you get "about 75,300,000 results." The number jumps to over four billion when you search "all." Clearly there is no shortage of available "material." In this paper I examine select YouTube videos and other freely available sources related to the music industry as viable OER in an attempt to answer the question: is it possible for students to learn the business of music from material posted online?

Keywords: music business education, music industry education, YouTube, user generated content

The internet contains a vast amount of information about the business of music. I often tell my music industry students that they could learn the majority of things I teach them on the internet.<sup>1</sup> There are countless useful bits of information available on the internet, but if a student doesn't know how to sift through and evaluate the millions of available sources, who knows what they might encounter. Various browsers and search engines yield different results, further complicating the learning process. The official launch of YouTube in December 2005 opened the floodgates for user generated content (UGC) videos about nearly everything imaginable, drastically altering the way people across the globe acquire knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

Around 2010, colleges and universities realized that they could expand their course offerings to anyone with an internet connection, which gave rise to the massive open online course movement, referred to as MOOCs.<sup>3</sup> There has also been a growing interest in recent years in Open Educational Resources (OER's). OER's are freely available instructional materials that can also be remixed, revised, shared, and distributed with open licensing.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, no OER's have any materials related to the business of music.

Open courseware are collections of materials for specific classes that are offered with free access from the colleges and universities that created them. Coursera offers classes related to the business of music, with numerous options, many taught via Berklee College of Music. Some of the Coursera classes have fees attached to them.<sup>5</sup> Udemy offers quite a few business of music courses, including "Band as Business, Musician as Entrepreneur," a free course created by John Snyder, the founder of Artists House Music.<sup>6</sup> As the word massive suggests, millions of people have sat in on or participated in online classes offered through a variety of platforms. But not everyone, including our students, has the time, energy, or means to sit through hours of content in order to gain more knowledge. In the attention economy, UGC posted to YouTube provides viewers and students with a way to quickly search for answers to many questions.<sup>7</sup>

It's probably safe to assume that many people with internet access have acquired new skills by watching a video posted to YouTube. People can learn how to repair a leaky pipe, fix a broken thingamajig, or cram a part for a last-min-



ute gig from internet tutorials. In many ways, YouTube already acts as an OER and serves as an informal “U.Tube.” On November 10, 2021 YouTube ran an ad called, “What will you learn?” that profiled a mom, an army vet, and an engineer who used the platform to learn something new and then went on to launch businesses and careers.<sup>8</sup> At the end of the thirty second ad, the narrator’s voice asks simply, “What will you learn?” The conceit of the ad is that billions of people turn to platforms like YouTube to learn something.<sup>9</sup> For years, students at all grade levels have been visiting the internet and platforms like YouTube to learn (more) about the ideas and content already taught in brick and mortar classrooms or written in books. YouTube is the second most popular search engine, with 7.5 billion monthly visitors, second only to Google (YouTube’s parent company), with nearly 14 billion monthly visitors.<sup>10</sup> In general YouTube “viewers watch over one billion hours of videos on its platform every single day.”<sup>11</sup> Music industry students are among those billions.

Given the diversity of open-access materials, is it possible for students to learn the basics about the business of music from material posted online? My answer is yes, but with caveats. Long before the existence of YouTube, teachers often relied on videos as both primary and supplemental educational materials for their students. Now showing videos posted on platforms like YouTube have become routine practice in many classrooms. In this article I examine select videos posted to YouTube that attempt to explain music publishing as viable OER’s. By demonstrating how I selected and reviewed these videos, I provide practical ways teachers can incorporate informative, high-quality videos posted online into their coursework. One recommendation constructs a DIY “U.Tube” out of existing content. Overall, these suggestions offer students more meaningful experiences than they would receive by surfing YouTube’s offerings independently, without the benefit of an instructor’s guidance.

### Choosing My Sources and Methodology

For the purposes of exploring the intersections of YouTube videos and OER’s, music publishing is a valuable case study, but other areas of the music business could certainly be explored. Issues related to music publishing are multifaceted, meaning that a discussion of music publishing inevitably involves copyright, licensing, contract law, and a host of other related topics. I found music publishing a rich site to review just what some of the so-called internet “experts” have to say about the subject. I selected videos about music publishing for several reasons. First, music publishing lies at the heart of the business of music. As entertainment lawyer Thomas R. Leavens remarked, “Music publishing is the engine that drives the music industry. There

is not a transaction involving music that does not implicate publishing in some manner.”<sup>12</sup> Second, the connections between publishing and copyright are integral because of the bundle of rights granted under copyright law. In order to explain music publishing, the person doing the explaining must have a very solid understanding of copyright. For this project, I closely scrutinized the ways the various authors addressed (or didn’t address) the close connections between music publishing and copyright.

Music publishing is a complicated subject to teach, and often hard for students to comprehend. Several sources on music publishing served as the baseline for this research, including select chapters from *How to Build a Sustainable Music Career and Collect All Revenue Streams* by Emily White, and chapters from *All You Need to Know about the Music Business*, 10<sup>th</sup> edition, by Donald Passman, along with *Music Publishing: The Complete Guide* by Steve Winogradsky, and *Music Money and Success: The Insider’s Guide to Making Money in the Music Business*, 8<sup>th</sup> edition, by Jeff and Todd Brabec.<sup>13</sup> I regularly use these sources in my classes, assigning various chapters to students as homework and then pairing the reading(s) with a lecture and class discussion that typically involve showing a related YouTube video. When I encountered information in the videos selected for this article that seemed erroneous, I turned to these sources to fact check the data.

I used the rather generic phrase “music publishing” while searching for videos. By leaving my search term somewhat broad, I was able to cast a wider net in regards to content. Searching YouTube and Google on different browsers like Firefox and Safari yielded slightly different results. Although this study focuses primarily on videos posted to YouTube, I also searched Google because of the platform’s dominant position on the internet. But when I narrowed my search to just videos while using Google, the results were different from a YouTube search using the same term. And oftentimes, the “videos” related to music publishing suggested by Google were typically about “how to land a publishing deal” or more often than not websites that explained music publishing that also contained some type of embedded video, regardless of the video’s content.<sup>14</sup>

I selected the videos for this study based on the following criteria: 1) if the video explained music publishing, broadly speaking; 2) the video’s placement in the search; 3) the view count; 4) the length of the video; and 5) if a particular company or person that posted the video had what I considered “expertise” with music publishing.<sup>15</sup> YouTube users can enable search “filters” to help narrow the desired results. Although I did not incorporate these while searching, one search parameter is “duration.” The lengths are “under 4 minutes,” “4 - 20 minutes,” and “over 20 minutes.” In some instances, YouTube rewards shorter content. The

average length of the nine videos I watched was about 8 minutes, with the longest at 15:31, and the shortest coming in a 2:18. At the time of this article’s publication, the view counts ranged from just over 8,560 to over 164,000. Not surprisingly, one of the oldest videos, published in 2012, had the most views.<sup>16</sup>

An analysis of how YouTube selects videos for viewers is beyond the scope of this article, but I will briefly mention some of the determining factors for YouTube’s algorithms. According to Paige Cooper at Hootsuite, “The YouTube algorithm selects videos for viewers with two goals in mind: finding the right video for each viewer, and enticing them to keep watching.” The YouTube “algorithm” is actually “three related but slightly different selection or discovery systems: one that selects videos for the YouTube homepage; one that ranks results for any given search; and one that selects suggested videos for viewers to watch next.” Ultimately, “what affects [a] video’s view count is a mix of: personalization (the viewer’s history and preferences); performance (the video’s success); [and] external factors (the overall audience or market).”<sup>17</sup> The more I searched while during my research, the more refined and narrow my results became.<sup>18</sup>

Besides YouTube videos, there are many other freely available resources published on the internet related to the business of music and music publishing specifically. Companies such as CD Baby, Tunecore, Songtrust, and Symphonic Distribution offer various “survival guides” and “how-to” brochures and PDFs on their websites that touch on numerous music industry-related topics.<sup>19</sup> Some of these resources, like the 64-page “The Modern Guide to Music Publishing” from Songtrust, are quite good, providing detailed information written in non-legalese. As previously mentioned, if a student has never heard of these companies, they might not even know to look for these sources. For this article I focus on videos uploaded to YouTube because of the platform’s position as one of the world’s leading websites and search engines.

I attempted to maintain rigorous standards regarding which videos I watched throughout my research, but I hope to refine my methods as the project continues. Ultimately, I approached the selection of what videos to watch with the same mindset that might be held by a novice seeking more information about music publishing. Or to put it another way, I tried to think like one of my students while deciding which videos to watch, but always wearing my “teacher hat” when evaluating the content.

## Content Analysis

For my analysis, I selected nine videos; see Table 1. The race and gender of the people in the videos closely paralleled what occurs in the real world. Men narrated seven of the nine videos, or 77%, that I watched. Four videos only included or overwhelmingly showed white men; two videos featured only Black men; in one video, only a male voice could be heard. One video only featured a female voice; one video included interviews with both male-presenting and female-presenting people, all of whom appeared to be white. While my sample of videos is very small, the racial and gender analysis echoes the findings published in the June 2021 “Inclusion in the Music Business” study by the USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative.<sup>20</sup>

Large organizations and companies such as the Music Publishers Association of the UK (MPAUK), CD Baby, and Ditto Music, as well as individuals like Damien Keyes, Charles Cleyn, and Brandon Jackson produced the nine videos. I considered CD Baby, the MPAUK, and Artists House Music as experts in music publishing. The content of the videos ranged from exceptional to misleading. I defined exceptional content as a video that provided clear, factually accurate information about music publishing. Because the length (and quality) of the videos vary, I make suggestions about which content is best suited for in-class use or viewed as homework. All of the videos provide what I would characterize as an “overview” of music publishing, despite what the actual titles state. For the individuals and companies

Video Title	Company/Person	Length	Views	Date Uploaded	Subscribers (in thousands)	Total Views for Channel
Music Publishing Explained	MPAUK	9:37	164,650	8/2/2012	1.4	217,188
What Is Music Publishing?	CD Baby	6:23	134,743	3/28/2016	33.4	2,392,699
Music Publishing Explained   Music Publishing 101	The Modern Musician	4:02	84,625	9/5/2018	14.1	856,106
Music Publishing Explained   Different Types of Publishing Deals	KDMR Music	9:54	57,989	2/8/2019	31.0	1,127,081
The Ultimate Guide to Music Publishing	Damian Keyes	15:31	35,410	3/25/2021	186.0	12,756,450
An Introduction to Music Publishing	Artists House	8:55	25,210	3/2/2011	52.4	12,085,983
What Is Music Publishing	CD Baby Pro	2:18	22,697	5/18/2015	33.4	2,392,699
Music Publishing - Everything You Need to Know	Charles Cleyn	8:49	12,334	4/19/2020	87.9	12,204,553
What is Music Publishing?   How to Claim ALL Your Royalties	Ditto Music	7:24	8,560	6/9/2021	25.5	3,004,227

Table 1. Videos about music publishing uploaded to YouTube, arranged by view count for the selected video. All view counts as of June 23, 2022.

that uploaded the content, these videos served numerous purposes: first, as a way to “teach” their viewers or subscribers about music publishing; second, to demonstrate the “authority” and expertise of the creator or organization; and third, perhaps most importantly, some of these videos acted as long-form commercials to advertise all the other services that you could purchase from the authors.

Two music publishing videos repeatedly placed at the top of my search: “Music Publishing Explained | Music Publishing 101” posted by The Modern Musician, and “The Ultimate Guide to Music Publishing” by Damian Keyes. The Modern Musician, “a collective informative video channel for musicians to learn how the music industry works and how to earn money,” began uploading content in 2014.<sup>21</sup> This channel has a comparatively small number of subscribers, with just over 14,000, and a total of 856,106 views for all of their videos. The Modern Musician is curated by staff who work at ManageAdMusic, “a boutique one-stop shop for collecting performance royalties on music played in commercials.”<sup>22</sup> Damian Keyes has a “verified” or an “official channel of a creator.” “Verified” YouTube channels must have 100,000 subscribers. Keyes’ channel has 186,000 subscribers, and a total of over 12,750,000 views for all his videos. The description of his channel states that he provides “Musician/Business/Social Media Advice! [and] Daily tips for bands and musicians on how to have a long-term career in the music business.” Neither of these two specific videos have the most views of the nine I watched. But Keyes is what Ari Herstand would call a “constant creator,” someone who regularly posts to their channel.<sup>23</sup> The Modern Musician hasn’t posted any content to YouTube since early 2021. Their music publishing video, however, is just over four minutes long. Based on Cooper’s breakdown of how the YouTube algorithm works—the viewer’s history and preferences; the video’s success; and the overall audience—each of the videos by Keyes and The Modern Musician fit within the “expected” search results.

“Music Publishing Explained” by the MPAUK is a highly-produced video that utilizes interviews with numerous people, including several women, graphics, and background music. This nine-minute video covers quite a range of topics including the publisher-songwriter relationship, what publishers do for a writer, PROs, synch rights, publishing and classical music (the only video that does so), and the impact of the internet and technology on music publishing, stating that “The technology allows us to collect income from the most obscure places.” Considering the ever-increasing placements of music on digital platforms across the globe, this last point is particularly prescient. Oddly, this video never discusses copyright and only mentions “the mechanical right” in passing. Overall, the MPAUK video acts as a long-form commercial for the organization, and while

it’s informative, it’s content that educators would not likely use as a primary source in the classroom.

“What Is Music Publishing?” produced by CD Baby is a video slightly over six minutes that touches on numerous publishing concepts without providing much detail. Of course, CD Baby wants musicians to sign up for their publishing services provided by CD Baby Pro. The video relies on a voiceover and lots of graphics and text, and concludes with three “key takeaways.” First, publishers should know their six exclusive rights; second, protect your rights through agreements, and register the works with PROs; and finally, maximize your publishing revenue through creative placements and making sure you’re collecting from all sources. This video by CD Baby provides a brief summary of music publishing and is a good tool to use in a classroom because a knowledgeable teacher will fill in the gaps. The content for the CD Baby Pro video is comparable to the CD Baby video. But as mentioned at the outset of this article, a student or novice viewing these videos might not realize that any information is missing. I also found it odd that neither of the CD Baby publishing videos appeared in the top ten when searching YouTube, especially considering that CD Baby Pro acts as one of the largest “publishers” for DIY musicians who use the company’s distribution services. In short, I had to specifically search for this content.

“Music Publishing Explained | Music Publishing 101” by The Modern Musician was one of the highest placed videos when I searched YouTube. The four-minute video utilizes a voiceover by a female, the only video that does so, excellent graphics, and jaunty background music. Within the video’s first ten seconds, the voiceover proclaims, “First you need to understand music copyright and publishing. And it’s a tough nut to crack. Copyright is the most important asset you have as a musician.” This video goes on to address primarily the different types of publishers (administrators, independents, and major publishers), and what publishers do such as works registration, issuing licenses, royalty collection and various creative matters. This video, because of its brevity and tightly-focused content, provides a good overview of music publishing, and is one that I often use as a resource during class meetings.

Brandon Jackson from KDMR, or “Keep Dreaming, Make Reality,” produced “Music Publishing Explained | Different Types of Publishing Deals.” Jackson is one of two Black men featured in the videos I watched. The video, impressively done in one take, shows Jackson casually speaking into the camera for nearly ten minutes, and only utilizes graphics at the end. The video’s length allows Jackson time to go in-depth about numerous topics related to music publishing, including advances, a topic that most of the other videos don’t cover. At one point, he soberly states, “if the [publishing] deal looks too good to be true, it probably is.”

This video offers a very solid overview of music publishing, allowing a teacher plenty of space to elaborate on what Jackson covers.

“The Ultimate Guide to Music Publishing” by Damian Keyes is the longest video I watched, fifteen-and-a-half minutes long, although the last few minutes feature him advertising his numerous other services. The 2021 video, which is a bit “jumpy” in terms of editing (but typical for “constant creators”), primarily shows Keyes talking, while occasionally utilizing graphics and stock video footage. The video’s production will likely appeal to students because they are used to viewing content made in this style. Overall, it’s a quality production, and Keyes covers many current topics related to publishing like artists selling their catalogs and the numerous ways a songwriter might land a publishing deal. Oddly, considering the length of the video, Keyes barely discusses copyright or licensing. For educators who don’t want to use up valuable classroom time, I suggest pairing either of the videos by Jackson or Keyes (or most of the videos discussed here) along with a reading from one of the print sources mentioned above as a homework assignment.

“An Introduction to Music Publishing” uploaded in March 2011 by Artists House Music provides the best overall breakdown of the subject. This video is an excerpt from the Udemy “Band as Business, Musician as Entrepreneur” course. George Howard, from Berklee College of Music, does the majority of talking, but the video includes footage of entertainment lawyer Donald Passman. The overall organization and content covered in the video is outstanding. The video makes it clear what is “basic” information, such as whenever a song is “fixed” in a tangible medium a copyright is generated and that “publishing is concerned with the registration, exploitation, and collection of this copyright.”<sup>24</sup> As well as the “key points” of music publishing, including the different types of royalties. Near the end of the nearly-nine-minute video, a graphic on the screen states, “even as the business changes, publishing will be at the center; you must understand publishing.” Some viewers, however, may get turned off by the extremely dated quality of the video (it looks like a VHS tape uploaded to YouTube). And like the CD Baby videos, I had to specifically search for this content. Some educators might not want to allot nine minutes (or longer) of precious class time to showing a video. So, like the videos by Jackson and Keyes, teachers could pair the Artists House video with a reading as homework to help reinforce concepts and ideas about music publishing.

“What is Music Publishing? | How to Claim ALL Your Royalties” uploaded by Ditto Music in June 2021 is the most recent video I watched. This was also the only other video hosted by a person of color. Similarly to the videos posted by CD Baby, Ditto *really* wants viewers to sign up

for their publishing services. Ditto’s video didn’t appear when I searched YouTube, but it appeared near the top of the search results when I searched Google using the term “music publishing.” The seven-minute video provided very good information, delivered with a very chill vibe.

Charles Cleyn posted “Music Publishing - Everything You Need to Know.” The no frills video primarily shows Cleyn speaking into the camera from a home studio. Cleyn has the second highest subscriber count, nearly 88,000, for the channels I researched, and his videos have collectively been viewed nearly 11 million times. Like Keyes, he’s a constant creator. The most useful part of Cleyn’s video was when he discussed songwriting advances and that songwriters don’t receive writers royalties until their songs recoup. Unfortunately, portions of the content in Cleyn’s video was wrong and misleading, particularly his discussions about PROs and synch licensing.

## Conclusion

According to Google, its “mission is to organize the world’s information and make it universally accessible and useful.”<sup>25</sup> On its surface, this statement sounds wonderful. But Google also commodifies and optimizes results. Savvy YouTube content creators understand how to “game” the algorithm to ensure that their videos appear at the top of a given search. And as previously mentioned, “An Introduction to Music Publishing” uploaded by Artists House Music, the video that I felt included the best information, was nowhere near the top of the search results.

So why should educators care about content related to the music industry posted to YouTube? First, our students are already going there for information, and have likely been doing so long before they ever stepped into our classrooms. And they will continue to do so. Second, many of the music industry videos I’ve watched on YouTube are very good, but some of them also provide misleading or incorrect information. As I’ve already discussed, YouTube’s algorithm suggests videos based on numerous criteria, and accuracy of information is not one of them. So here’s what I’ve been doing, and maybe some of you already do this, too. I created a music industry YouTube playlist. Basically, it’s a curated playlist of the videos that I use in my classes that cover topics such as copyright, music publishing, PROs, music marketing, and recording contracts.<sup>26</sup> My goal is to compile a comprehensive playlist of video tutorials related to numerous topics about the business of music from what I consider reliable sources. In essence, I’m hoping to curate my own open courseware using YouTube’s freely accessible material. Artists House Music’s YouTube channel already includes dozens of informative videos related to the music industry. Unfortunately, Artists House hasn’t posted a video in at least five years, and much of their content is now dat-



ed.<sup>27</sup> An organization like MEIEA, with its broad network of music industry educators and professionals, is poised to fill that void and create and curate a very robust list of “open-access,” online video resources.<sup>28</sup>

An alternative to what I proposed above combines digital literacy, critical thinking, and music industry knowledge. Instead of “experts” curating a list, students could seek out videos and then evaluate them based on numerous criteria such as accuracy of information, production value, and length. For example, a teacher might assign a reading on a specific music industry topic, and using that chapter as their baseline, students are then asked to find and grade/rank three to five videos. This process could be repeated throughout a semester (or longer), ultimately generating a robust list of videos that students or anyone could return to in the future. Or better yet, students could create their own brief videos about specific music industry-related topics.

To answer my own research question: is it possible for students to learn the business of music from material posted online? Of course, the answer is yes, but with a qualification. First, the amount of available information is overwhelming, so where does a novice begin? Second, if a viewer has questions related to the video’s content, there is often no one to ask or the viewer comments go unanswered. Navigating the shifting terrain of the music industry requires a guide. I feel that one of my jobs as a music and entertainment industry educator is to provide students with high quality resources both in and outside of the classroom. And in some cases, that includes directing them towards prescreened content posted to YouTube.

## Endnotes

1. I would like to thank Catherine Hughes for reading through and providing helpful comments on drafts of this article.
2. Paige Leskin, “YouTube is 15 years old. Here’s a Timeline of How YouTube was Founded, Its Rise to Video Behemoth, and its Biggest Controversies Along [the] Way,” *Business Insider*, updated May 30, 2020, <https://www.businessinsider.com/history-of-youtube-in-photos-2015-10>.
3. For more information about MOOCs, see <https://www.mooc.org/>; <https://www.edx.org/>; all accessed June 6, 2022.
4. Some commonly used OERs included the Open Textbook Network and its Open Textbook Library, based

at the University of Minnesota, see <https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks>. The OER Commons is a public digital library of open educational resources, searchable by subject and education level, see <https://www.oercommons.org/>. OpenStax, based at Rice University in Houston, offers peer-reviewed, openly licensed textbooks in multiple subject areas, which are available in free digital formats and for a low cost in print, see <https://openstax.org>. All accessed June 1, 2022.

5. Searching for “business of music” on the Coursera website yields over one hundred results, but not all suggested classes are related to the music business. See <https://www.coursera.org/search?query=business%20of%20music>, accessed May 26, 2022.
6. “Band as Business, Musician as Entrepreneur,” *Udemy*, <https://www.udemy.com/course/bandasbusiness/>, accessed May 25, 2022.
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# Blockchain, NFTs, and the Future of Content Creation and Distribution of Entertainment

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This paper was presented at the [2022 International Summit](#) of the Music & Entertainment Industry Educators Association  
May 16-17, 2022

<https://doi.org/10.25101/22.26>

View the Summit presentation at:  
<https://youtu.be/DfOotNxVTus>

## Abstract

The current excitement surrounding the introduction, implementation, and exploration of Web3 blockchain technology is poised to carry the creative industries into new frontiers of creation, distribution, and monetization. Blockchain opens the door to an entirely new structure for engaging with digital entertainment. While there is notable adoption hesitation from sectors moored in older and established technologies, entertainment creatives are uniquely positioned to establish a foundational foothold in the Web3 world. From custom currencies and decentralized finance to NFTs and the metaverse, blockchain represents a seismic shift in the way creators will be able to conceptualize their own work and engage with audiences around both the physical and digital worlds.

This session explains the foundational basis of blockchain technology and examines the unique structural aspects that separate it from traditional creative platforms. It also explores specific Web3 leverage points that artists can exploit in order to be fiscally and creatively successful in the burgeoning creator economy. The session also provides examples of blockchain technology implementation in real higher education student projects and coursework.

Keywords: blockchain, Web3, NFT, creator economy

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# Same Song, Different Verse: Evolution of the Entertainment and Music Industry in the COVID Era

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This paper was presented at the [2022 International Summit](#) of the  
Music & Entertainment Industry Educators Association  
May 16-17, 2022

<https://doi.org/10.25101/22.27>

View the Summit presentation at:  
<https://youtu.be/bQNV0XXdjfk>

## Abstract

This paper examines the evolution of the following entertainment and music industry themes that emerged in 2020 and have lasting effects today with respect to our important entertainment and music business: 1) force majeure and related clauses in contracts have proven to be critical and are now highly scrutinized by attorneys and agents; 2) the plain language of insurance policies is of utmost importance when determining adequacy of coverage, and policies are now more restrictive and expensive; 3) livestreaming started as a method of survival for artists during the pandemic but has become its own standalone sector that carries new significance; and 4) new social media platforms are more relevant to our industry than ever before, chief among those being TikTok.

Keywords: COVID-19, pandemic, force majeure, contract law, insurance, insurance disputes, litigation, alternative dispute resolution, livestreaming, concerts, touring, live events, social media, TikTok, Clubhouse, corporate collaboration

## Introduction

At the time of this writing, two years and almost four months have passed since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States. During the pandemic, our entertainment and music industry has evolved from shutting down venues and canceling all in-person shows to requiring proof of negative COVID tests and vaccine cards to some entertainers and business owners being back to “business as usual,” all while operating in our new “normal.” Since the summer of 2021, we have seen many artists and their teams return to life as we once knew it, at least for the most part. This paper analyzes the evolution of the entertainment and music industry in the COVID-19 era while focusing on four important themes: 1) contracts, 2) insurance, 3) livestreaming, and 4) social media.

## Contracts

While our industry struggled to wrap its mind around the realities faced in 2020, artists involved in anticipated tours immediately dusted off their contracts (or their agents and lawyers did so) to determine the parties’ rights and obligations. Prior to the pandemic, many agents and lawyers glossed over the so-called “boilerplate” sections toward the end of performance contracts. However, since the pandemic, a great deal of effort has been put into ensuring that clients have a way “out” of the contract in the event of a cancellation for reasons beyond the parties’ control.

Force majeure and related clauses are utilized to deal with unforeseen circumstances (i.e., things that no one expects to happen...until they happen). Since 2020, attorneys drafting contracts are paying special attention to whether a force majeure clause makes sense to be included in the contract, and if so, the precise language that should be included within such clause. For example, if an artist is signing a contract for an event that is happening later in the year, the artist’s



attorney or agent should protect against the artist having to return a deposit to the purchaser in the event of cancellation for reasons beyond the control of the artist. On the other hand, the purchaser should take the opposite approach and ensure that the contract calls for return of any deposits in the event of a cancellation for reasons beyond the control of the purchaser. Force majeure and related clauses should be specifically tailored to fit the needs of the individual parties. To avoid the need for dispute resolution, parties on both sides now understand the importance of carefully drafting the contract to ensure that goals are achieved while thinking through every possible scenario.

Relatively few force majeure clauses drafted prior to COVID-19 specifically list “pandemics” or “epidemics” as a force majeure event. For this reason, many litigating parties have had to rely on “catch-all” provisions, such as “or other similar causes beyond the parties’ control.” A recent Second Circuit decision signals that New York courts may interpret catch-all provisions broadly to excuse nonperformance as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In *JN Contemporary Art LLC v. Phillips Auctioneers LLC*, Phillips was an auction company that agreed to auction a piece of art at its event scheduled for May 2020. The parties’ agreement contained a force majeure clause stating that, “In the event that the auction is postponed for circumstances beyond our or your reasonable control, including, without limitation, as a result of natural disaster, fire, flood, general strike, war, armed conflict, terrorist attack or nuclear or chemical contamination, we [i.e., Phillips] may terminate this Agreement with immediate effect.” According to the Court, the COVID-19 pandemic was the same type of event as those listed in the plain language of the clause, and therefore, Phillips’ nonperformance was excused. The Court’s decision suggests that force majeure clauses that omit “pandemics” and “epidemics” may nonetheless apply to COVID-19 where such clauses list other social disruptive events such as natural disaster or terrorist attacks alongside sufficient catch-all language.

Moving forward, we will continue to see not only emphasis placed on contract language regarding cancellations but also language related to dispute resolution. Over the past two years, we have seen that litigated contract disputes can take years to resolve, resulting in an openness to requiring mediation or other types of alternative dispute resolution.

## Insurance

Another area that has always been important, especially with live touring, but achieved a new level of significance during the pandemic, is insurance. Business managers and owners have routinely monitored their insurance policies but are now consciously taking extra precautions to ensure that they are adequately protected. Commercial property

and business interruption insurance policies, along with production and event cancellation insurance, are customary policies for entertainment industry stakeholders, but throughout the past two years, we have seen such policies change their terms.

The actual language of an insurance policy is the primary focus in any insurance dispute. Various types of exclusions typically exist for any given policy, and those exclusions are clearly defined within the language of the policy. Since 2020, courts have been flooded with insurance-related lawsuits that involve policyholders arguing that losses related to COVID-19 should be covered by the particular policy. Because litigation can take years to complete, many of these insurance-related cases remain undecided. However, one key takeaway is that many insurance companies are now expressly excluding COVID-19 losses from coverage within the language of new policies. Ideally, a music venue, promoter, or other stakeholder would be able to secure communicable disease coverage; however, this type of coverage can now be extremely difficult to get and very expensive.

As expected, protecting against event cancellation has become harder than ever. Insurance companies suffered enormous losses in 2020 due to shutdowns. As a result, rates increased in 2021 as availability declined. For 2022, event cancellation coverage premiums have been estimated to increase by at least 20 percent. Umbrella and excess liability insurance premiums, along with property insurance premiums, are estimated to have similar increases. More than ever, promoters and venue owners are expected to have substantial COVID-19 policies to show insurers that venues are safe.

Now and in the future, stakeholders must prudently review the language of their policies to fully understand what is covered. Just as we must think through every possible scenario when drafting a performance contract, the same should be true when securing insurance coverage.

## Livestreaming

In addition to tightening up their post-pandemic contracts and insurance coverage, artists who survived the pandemic by relying upon livestreaming as a way to connect with fans have come to realize that livestreaming has become its own standalone sector of the industry. The year 2020 was projected to produce the first \$12 billion year in touring revenue worldwide but ended up generating \$1.2 billion, resulting in a 90 percent loss. Amidst grieving the loss, artists and stakeholders had no choice but to pivot to livestreaming as a way to make up for lost income.

Our industry quickly saw that livestreaming has a broader reach than any in-person show because in-person shows have capacity limits and geographical constraints. Adele’s “One Night Only” event in Los Angeles in late 2021 was

livestreamed on platforms such as Hulu and YouTube TV and amassed more than 10 million viewers. Kanye West and other artists have developed exclusive brand partnerships centered around a livestream performance opportunity. West had a special studio performance that was streamed exclusively on Amazon-specific platforms, such as Amazon Prime Video, Amazon Music App, and Amazon Twitch channel.

While livestreaming shows has been around for many years, as our industry evolved throughout the pandemic and in-person shows reopened, artists continue to use livestreaming as an ancillary tool to allow fans access to their shows. For example, Dead & Company announced that they are kicking off a U.S. tour this summer and have partnered with [nugs.net](https://nugs.net), a well-established live music streaming service, to bring fans live streams of every 2022 summer tour performance. A front-row seat via livestream can be purchased at [nugs.net](https://nugs.net) for \$29.99 for HD quality and \$44.99 for 4K.

With music festivals back in full swing, Hulu will serve as the official streaming platform for C3 Presents' three largest festivals in 2022: Bonnaroo, Lollapalooza, and Austin City Limits. Charlie Walker from C3 Presents stated, "The demand for live music is at an all-time high and the live experience has never been more connected to digital. By expanding our partnership with Hulu, even more fans will be able to tune into each of these incredible festival experiences in real-time and enjoy live performances from their favorite artists with the fans on-site."

Our industry recognizes that livestreaming will never be a replacement for in-person touring; however, it can and will continue to be its own standalone sector and a useful tool for creating partnerships and connecting with fans.

## Social Media

As our entertainment and music industry stayed at home during the peak of the pandemic, our habits and daily routines changed. What started as social distancing and working from home resulted in an increased craving for connection. Social media became a critical component of our lives. Not only did social media usage and patterns increase and change during the pandemic, the type of content being shared also changed, which led to the emergence of new types of platforms.

The platform that many of us came to know all too well during the pandemic was Zoom. Other platforms that rose in popularity during the pandemic included Facebook Rooms, YouTube Shorts, Google Hangouts, WhatsApp, Clubhouse, and TikTok.

After a successful launch in 2020, Clubhouse lost steam and its users lost interest. However, audio-only features remain a focus for companies like Facebook and Twitter as

audio is another way to diversify the type of content that reaches fans.

For the music business, TikTok has hands-down been the most significant newer platform. TikTok arrived in the U.S. in 2018 and became an essential promotional tool for artists and labels in 2020. A unique theme that makes TikTok particularly important for our industry is that songs that trend on TikTok often chart on the *Billboard Hot 100*. TikTok usage also drives streams as 67 percent of TikTok users are more likely to seek out songs on DSPs after initially hearing them on TikTok. Catalog music has also resurged as a result of TikTok. For example, Fleetwood Mac's "Dreams" re-entered *Billboard Hot 100* after a 43-year absence, and Celine Dion's "It's All Coming Back To Me Now" came out 25 years ago but set streaming records in early 2022 on Spotify and YouTube after lip-syncing videos trended on TikTok. TikTok was the number one most downloaded app in 2021 and has more Gen-Z users than Instagram. In September 2021, TikTok surpassed 1 billion active monthly users and shows no signs of slowing down any time soon.

Consumer behavior data shows that TikTok users are more likely to spend money on music. For example, 40 percent of active TikTok users pay a monthly subscription for music, compared to 25 percent of the general population. Further, 17 percent of TikTok users buy artist merchandise monthly, compared to 9 percent of the general population.

In August 2021, Atlantic Records artist Gayle released a song called "ABCDEFU." The song did not take off until months later when the sign language sub-community of TikTok began creating UGC (user generated content) focused on the song, resulting in the song sitting at number one on the *Billboard Global 200* chart for eleven weeks. Nina Webb, the head of marketing at Atlantic, credits the sign language community for the song's success.

With social media continuing to drive many aspects of our entertainment and music industry, stakeholders will continue using these platforms to increase fan engagement while bearing in mind that artists must find a healthy balance between making music and cultivating their online presence.

## Conclusion

The entertainment and music industry has certainly evolved in the areas of contracts, insurance, livestreaming, and social media over the past two years following the COVID-19 outbreak. We have seen stakeholders focus on the language of contracts and insurance policies like never before and businesses and brands look to livestreaming and social media as ways to connect deeply with fans. Through the uncharted times that have unfolded and evolved, the entertainment and music industry continues to rise to the occasion and develop creative business solutions to existing processes in the protection of long-standing relationships.

Our industry has always relied upon imagination, inspiration, and interconnectivity, so it comes as no surprise that our creators and stakeholders remain committed to working together tirelessly and passionately in 2022. After all, we have seen the shift our industry has made over the past two years and move forward with a sense of comfort in knowing we are all part of the same song, only on a different verse.

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# To Form a More Perfect Union: Reconstituting the Business of Record Labels

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This paper was presented at the [2022 International Summit](#) of the  
Music & Entertainment Industry Educators Association  
May 16-17, 2022

<https://doi.org/10.25101/22.28>

View the Summit presentation at:  
<https://youtu.be/u5qCAc61Wvo>

## Abstract

The Constitution of the United States is one of the most significant documents ever written in world history. Since 1787, it has served as the cornerstone of American democracy and as an aspirational model for democracies around the globe. Although the technical and logistical aspects are delineated in the seven articles and twenty-seven amendments, the guiding principles of the Constitution are contained in the short preamble.

It reads:

We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Much like the thirteen former colonies that would go on to form the United States, today's music business is emerging from a transformative revolution (albeit technical, not violent). And modern record labels are faced with the daunting task of reconstituting themselves for survival. Their survival is threatened from without by constantly evolving technical and social disruptions. But record label survival will soon be threatened from within as artists increasingly explore and embrace independent methods of fan engagement and monetary participation. Fortunately, the preamble to the Constitution can be applied not only to help labels survive, but to thrive.

To form a more perfect union (with artists), modern record labels should establish justice by abolishing the practice of deeming master recordings as works made for hire. Record labels should offer contracts based on just and transparent

royalty computations. Labels should restrict recording contracts to terms no longer than seven years. Additionally, labels should keep any re-record restrictions to reasonable limits.

To form a more perfect union, modern record labels should ensure domestic tranquility (with artists) by drafting plain language contracts. Contracts should be based on fair dealing, aimed at creating equitable partnerships. Any so-called 360 deals should require active participation on the part of the artist.

To form a more perfect union, modern record labels should provide for the common defense by protecting artists' rights when negotiating streaming (and other third party) deals. Labels should lobby, generally, for initiatives that benefit artists as well, such as the American Music Fairness Act.

To form a more perfect union, modern record labels should promote the general welfare by supporting artists' physical and mental health. Labels should also cease exploitative practices tied to race, gender, and power imbalance.

To form a more perfect union, modern record labels should secure the blessings for liberty (for labels and artists) by supporting artistic freedom, micropublishing, and emerging technologies such as non-fungible tokens.

These are broad principles record labels should employ to rethink, rebalance, and reconstitute today's music business. Otherwise, as the growing populace of recording artists continues to arm itself with technological advances, the revolution will be democratized.

Keywords: record industry, record labels, recording contracts, music business

## Background

The Constitution of the United States is one of the most significant documents ever written in world history. Since 1787, it has served as the cornerstone of American democracy and as an aspirational model for democracies around the globe. Ratification of the Constitution was critical to



the survival of a newly formed democracy that could have easily fractured due to regional, cultural, and demographic differences. Drafted in the years following a violently transformative revolution, the Constitution laid out a general framework of covenants between a corporate federal entity and its member states, the people. Some provisions were included to foster trust. Other provisions were included as checks when trust may be absent. Corporate powers are specifically enumerated with all other powers being reserved by the people. Although the technical and logistical aspects are delineated in the seven articles and twenty-seven amendments, the guiding principles of the Constitution are contained in the short preamble.

It reads:

We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America. (The U.S. Constitution)

Much like the thirteen former colonies that would go on to form the United States, today's music business is emerging from a transformative revolution (albeit technical, not violent). And modern record labels are faced with the daunting task of reconstituting themselves for survival. Their survival is threatened from without by constantly evolving technical and social disruptions. But record label survival will soon be threatened from within as artists increasingly explore and embrace independent methods of fan engagement and monetary participation.

It's no secret that the U.S. music business can be treacherously disappointing to many aspiring artists and creatives. It only takes a cursory glance at headlines from newspapers and trade press to find stories of artists suing their labels over conflicts concerning ownership of sound recordings, term limits, creative freedom, and underpayment of royalties. For decades, the domestic music business has been a tightly controlled marketplace where entry, promotion, and, ultimately, success have been determined by a handful of (now just three) major media corporations. These record labels have employed onerous contract clauses to keep recording artists locked into long-term agreements that are often tilted heavily in favor of the companies. Such burdensome covenants have caused the breakdown of many promising music careers. Journalist Hunter S. Thompson is quoted as saying, in part, "The music business is a cruel and shallow money trench...where...good men die like dogs."

In many cases, artist "failure" can be traced to faulty contract provisions that stifle artistic expression and innovation

or fail to adequately motivate artists to consistently perform due to financially opaque terms. And in some cases, even where a contract may seem fair when taken at face value, the relationship may nonetheless fail due to more subjective omissions. The diamond industry uses the four C's (cut, color, clarity, and carat weight) as a somewhat objective gauge to determine a gem's inherent quality (and the subsequent fifth C, cost). However, no matter how impressive the rating of the four C's, the diamond alone won't predict whether the relationship will be mutually beneficially or whether it will last. Similarly, favorable contract terms aren't the best predictor of a happy relationship between artist and label. As with any marriage, the ultimate barometer of long-term bliss is commitment, the ultimate C.

Because of persistent pressure for corporate labels to achieve returns on investments, commitment on their part isn't guaranteed and often only directed toward artists who garner immediate success after an album's release. And once initial success is realized, many artists face burdensome contract requirements designed to keep them in place, constantly producing new works in the pursuit of profits. However, control may be slowly shifting away from centralized corporate labels towards a decentralized landscape where artists have direct supervision over ownership, rights, monetization, and fan engagement.

Developing production technologies, emerging distribution platforms, crowd and alternative funding sources, and unfiltered fan curation channels offer modern recording artists unprecedented control over their careers. This perfect storm, of sorts, provides an excellent opportunity for record labels to reassess their business models and adapt in anticipation of a revolution that will usher in an artist-favored future. Fortunately, the preamble to the Constitution can be applied not only to help labels survive, but to thrive.

### Establish Justice

To form a more perfect union (with artists), modern record labels should establish justice by abolishing the practice of deeming master recordings as works made for hire. Copyright law provides, in certain circumstances, that copyrightable works can be owned by parties that didn't create the work, such as employers or those who specially commission a work with the written understanding that the work is to be considered a work made for hire. In such cases, the hiring company owns all rights in and to the work and the artist/creator is typically paid a fee in exchange for their services.

Record labels have historically and routinely claimed that sound recordings are considered works made for hire under artist recording agreements. As such, artists aren't considered the rightful owners. However, the Copyright Act only lists nine categories of works that could be eligible for work

for hire status: a contribution to a collective work, part of a motion picture or other audiovisual work, a translation, a supplementary work, a compilation, an instructional text, a test, answer material for a test, or an atlas (U.S. Copyright Act of 1976). Although Congress could have explicitly included sound recordings, it did not. Record labels have used the theory that sound recordings are contributions to a collective work as the basis for considering them works made for hire. However, this logic is flawed.

The Copyright Act defines collective works as encyclopedias, periodicals, and anthologies. These are typically works compiled from the efforts of several disparate authors into a related theme. This outlines a very different concept than most music albums that are generally a singular expression of a sole artist's vision. Further, the term collective work wouldn't apply in cases of single releases that aren't contributions to an EP or album.

The Copyright Act specifically lists parts of a motion picture as a category of works eligible for work made for hire status. In the legislative history, Congress is noted as justifying this inclusion because motion pictures are generally exorbitantly expensive to produce and there are typically tens of parties who could potentially claim an ownership interest including the production company, film producer, director, actors, editors, and the screenwriters. Since a list of potential claimants could be difficult to ascertain while the entire burden of costs would likely rest with the production company, Congress determined work made for hire status would be appropriate for parts contributed to motion pictures.

This rationale doesn't apply appropriately in cases of sound recordings. Unlike movie productions, albums are typically produced by a limited number of participants including the record label, artist, music producer, and recording engineer. The list of potential claimants is much more discernible. Although music albums can be expensive to produce, their costs are typically fractions of movie budgets. Lastly, an overwhelming percentage of recording contracts provide that all monies spent on an artist's behalf are fully recoupable (50% in some expenditure categories) from any future artist royalties which may come due during the contract term. Nearly every recording artist ends up being responsible for paying the full cost of their sound recordings before they receive any monies from the record label beyond the initial signing advance. In fact, the more successful an artist's unit sales are, the more times over they end up paying for sound recordings they may never own.

The Copyright Act of 1976 established a termination mechanism that would allow authors the opportunity to recapture rights in works they had previously alienated through the operation of a grant between 35 and 40 years after the date of the grant. The right of termination applies

to all post-1978 copyrightable works except works made for hire since, in those cases, there is no "grant" of ownership between creator and commissioner. Since 2013, the earliest year that previously transferred works could be recaptured, multiple legacy artists have served their former labels with notices intending to effect termination of earlier copyright grants. In most cases artists, such as Prince, have avoided expensive and uncertain lawsuits by negotiating settlements for the transfer of sound recording ownership or more equitable royalty payments (Gardner 2019).

However, over the last three years artists have filed three lawsuits against major labels seeking to regain ownership of their sound recordings. Plaintiffs in *Waite v. UMG Recordings, Inc.*, *Johansen v. Sony Music, Inc.*, and *Yoakam v. Warner Music Group Corp.* have all alleged that the labels ignored their legitimate notices to terminate the copyright grants and continued to exploit plaintiff's sound recordings illegally. In each case, the defendant record labels asked the courts for declaratory judgment stating that since the sound recordings were considered works made for hire within the meaning of U.S. copyright law, termination of the grants was not legally available or proper. In each case, the applicable court declined to grant declaratory relief deeming sound recordings as eligible for works made for hire status. With the dismissal of a few issues, the cases have been allowed to proceed.

Singer Dwight Yoakam settled with Warner Music Group in February 2022, but *Waite* and *Johansen* are still pending. Should the courts decide against plaintiffs and determine that sound recordings are eligible for work for hire status, recording artists would lose all ability to automatically recapture rights in their sound recordings, barring any successful appeals. Should courts decide for the plaintiffs the immediate repercussion for labels would be the potential loss of sound recordings made between 1978-1987 with a new class of potential terminations each subsequent year. Under the current termination provisions in copyright law, labels would still enjoy 35 to 40 years of exclusive rights in sound recordings.

An equitable solution would be to grant record labels consensual liens in the sound recordings that artists create and own. In cases where artists recoup the recording costs of their sound recordings, the liens would be removed after a period (e.g., ten years) and/or after a specified ROI is realized by the label. In cases where artists do not recoup the recording costs, the label would be entitled to a lien until the statutory 35- to 40-year termination window has lapsed, assuming the artist serves proper a termination notice between two and ten years prior.

In the absence of an adverse court decision or act of Congress that classifies sound recordings as ineligible for work for hire status, it may appear that record labels have little in-

centive to adopt the consensual lien approach. However, if artists increasingly follow Taylor Swift's re-record actions after the expiration of their record deals, labels could find themselves in possession of sound recordings with much less value and market potential. Taylor Swift will not likely be an anomaly. Although Ms. Swift's tremendous success and resources have undoubtedly enabled her to impressively re-record several of her earlier albums with impeccable precision, technological developments and affordability provide artists with shallower pockets similar opportunities to re-record their albums with satisfyingly convincing results. If artists aren't given the opportunity to own their original sound recordings, many will simply opt to re-record them after the initial deal has lapsed and the re-record restrictions expire.

Over the years, many artists have challenged the legitimacy of record deal term durations. Most recently, recording artist Gabriella Sarmiento Wilson, professionally known as H.E.R., sued her record label, MBK Entertainment, arguing that the company is in violation of California Labor Code §2855 which generally prohibits personal services contracts from running longer than seven years (Draughorne 2022). However, §2855 was amended in 1987 to specifically exclude recording contracts. The Free Artists from Industry Restrictions (FAIR) Act was introduced into the California legislature to repeal the §2855 amendment, but it failed to pass the California State Senate's Judiciary committee on June 28 (Newman 2022).

Presently, most recording contracts specify that artists recoup expense at the net artist royalty after numerous deductions. Since current royalty calculations pay a lion's share of record royalties to the label, a significant ROI for the company is already embedded into the contract terms. An equitable relationship should require record labels to offer contracts based on transparent royalty computations. Though the percentage would still likely favor the companies, transparency would help to foster deeper trust between artists and partner labels.

In the spirit of developing trust, labels should also eliminate antiquated terms and provisions to the extent they may still be present in contracts. Outdated provisions for packaging deductions, new technologies reductions, breakage, and free goods do not make sense in a largely digital landscape. Additionally, in the age of real-time metrics and reporting, reserve and liquidation clauses should be considered excessive. In cases of 360 deals or when artists have concurrent deals with a label and its affiliated music publisher, mechanical royalty reductions and controlled composition caps aren't justifiable under the current rationale that publishers should accept the reductions to contribute to the financial success of an album.

## Ensure Domestic Tranquility

To form a more perfect union, modern record labels should ensure domestic tranquility (with artists) by drafting plain language contracts. Use of archaic terms and legalese not only makes contracts more difficult for the lay person to understand, it also increases mistrust between artists and labels. It's understandable many artists may feel that lawyers draft contracts in convoluted fashion to ensure their job security while simultaneously ensnaring unsuspecting artists. But a well-placed heretofore, hereinbelow, or notwithstanding isn't necessarily about job security or trickery.

Most legalese has developed out of a business necessity to make contract language as specific as possible. The language may be convoluted, but it is precise when drafted well. One repeated saying about legal communication is, "In everyday communication, we can assume people will try to understand what we are saying. But in legal communication, we can assume the other party will try to misunderstand what we are saying." Accordingly, much legalese has developed as an attempt to avoid ambiguity, at least among those trained to decipher it.

Ideally, both parties entering into a contract should be able to read it for themselves and understand all its provisions. However, entertainment contracts, especially recording agreements, tend to be intricate patchworks of interdependent conditions that are difficult to follow without years of experience. Even plain language contracts won't eliminate the need for artists to retain independent legal representation to review, explain, and negotiate the terms contained within them. But they will provide the basis for greater trust between the parties which is necessary to lay transparent foundations for more equitable, broad-based partnerships.

Due to the current state of sagging physical and download sales, record labels are likely to continue structuring new artist agreements as so-called 360 deals for the foreseeable future. However, any such contracts should establish comprehensive partnerships between artists and labels that require option-based investment and active participation on the part of the label. Labels should acquire rights beyond traditional record royalties (i.e., publishing, touring, and merchandise) only after paying additional advances as consideration for the newly optioned right. Record labels should take active roles in exploiting and managing the various facets of 360 deals as opposed to simply siphoning passive income. To the extent that any third parties such as music publishers or merchandise companies should become involved, the record label's participation share should be prorated so as not to put the artist in a worse position than if they were dealing directly with the third-party company.

## Provide for the Common Defense

To form a more perfect union, modern record labels should provide for the common defense by protecting artists' rights when negotiating streaming (and other third party) deals. Record labels have routinely left artists out of front end advances they receive for catalog licensing deals. Similarly, artists were largely left out of the revenue shares labels negotiated with streaming giants such as Spotify. Although labels eventually agreed to share proceeds from the sales of their streaming shares with artists, it took considerable amounts of pressure from superstars such as Taylor Swift to bring labels to compromise (Sweney 2018). When labels strike a catalog deal with, or an ownership stake in, a streaming company, if artists aren't allowed to share in the advances or sales of revenue shares, equity should require that artists receive larger royalty percentages on streams of their songs subject to any such deals.

Labels should eagerly support initiatives that benefit artists and themselves such as the American Music Fairness Act (H.R. 4130). Aimed at inducing American broadcasters to pay royalties for the public performance of sound recordings, this bipartisan legislation would benefit the interests of artists and their partner labels. The measure also seeks to close a loophole that allows foreign broadcasters to forego paying the royalty since there is no reciprocal requirement in the United States.

## Promote the General Welfare

To form a more perfect union, modern record labels should promote the general welfare by supporting artists' physical and mental health. It has been widely reported that mental health issues leading to illness, hospitalizations, and death have experienced a sharp increase over the past two years of the COVID-19 pandemic (Lang 2022). Uncertainty and isolation have taken heavy tolls on the psychological well-being of millions of people the world over. Uncertainty has plagued the music business and its recording artists well before the global pandemic surged in 2020. However, once the live music sector was shut down completely, significant revenues and livelihoods were certain losses.

Industry publication *Pollstar* reported that the live music sector was expected to lose approximately \$30 billion in revenue in 2020 due to coronavirus closures (Gensler 2020). It was also reported that Live Nation alone lost \$319.2 million in revenue that same year (Shaw 2021). Although performers' revenue slumped, songwriters and artists who write songs apparently fared better in 2020 as the National Music Publishers Association reported a 9.6% growth in publishing revenues, topping \$4 billion (Cristman 2021). Overall however, musicians still face precarious futures. To protect their investments in artists, labels should take an aggressive

approach towards supporting mental health initiatives in the music business.

Sony Music Entertainment appears to be taking the lead in this regard with the 2021 launch of Artists Forward. The global initiative is comprised of three programs aimed at supporting legacy artists with fresh starts, supporting new artists with access to information, and supporting all artists with access to mental health professionals (Artists Forward: Sony Music Entertainment 2021). Artist Assistance is one of the three programs and it is designed to give Sony artists access to free, confidential counseling services to help with issues such as anxiety, grief, and depression. Sony Music Publishing has duplicated the Artists Forward program as Songwriters Forward for its signed writers.

Labels should also actively partner with independent organizations that provide mental health and wellness assistance to musicians. Sony Music is a participating partner with Silence the Shame. Founded by industry veteran Shanti Das, the nonprofit seeks to educate communities about mental health resources by eliminating the stigma surrounding seeking help (Silence the Shame 2022).

MusiCares is a long-standing charity of The Recording Academy that raises money to provide relief funds to musicians, industry professionals, and their families in times of need. Grantees receive funds to help with various financial, medical, and personal emergencies (MusiCares 2022). Other notable organizations working to give musicians access to mental health care include We Rise LA, Backline, Nuçi's Space, Phantogram and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, and Music Minds Matter (Output.com 2022).

The Recording Academy has also recently launched initiatives aimed at addressing gender inequities within the organization, with the coveted Grammy Awards which it hosts, and in the industry at large. In the wake of the rapid expansion of the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements, The Recording Academy has enhanced its diversity, equity, and inclusion programs to better examine and address women's issues (Recording Academy 2022).

Record labels should cease exploitative practices tied to race and gender. They should also proactively introduce measures to eliminate power imbalances, which are cited as the root of sexual harassment and sexual assault (MacKinnon 1979). A recent study by the USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative highlighted the lack of progress for women, underrepresented, and Black executives (Smith, et al. 2021). The study notes that across 101 music companies only 19.8% of executives were from underrepresented populations, 7.5% were Black, and 35.3% were women. By comparison, the researchers found that over the preceding nine years leading up to the study, almost half (47.8%) of the songs on the



Billboard Hot 100 Year-End Charts were from underrepresented populations.

A second study by the USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative found that over the ten-year period leading up to 2022, women were credited as songwriters on only 12.7% of top releases (Hernandez, et al. 2022). Over the same decade, women garnered only 2.8% of the 1,522 production credits on top releases. The dearth of representation of women, Blacks, and underrepresented populations in the board room and studio control room serves to perpetuate endemic problems within the music business that ultimately have negative impacts on society.

Lack of board room representation can lead to ill-informed decisions on which projects to green light and the size of correlating budgets. This can lead to an emphasis and overreliance on culturally generic (or inaccurately tone deaf) projects that miss the mark with consumers. One study suggests that the movie industry may lose up to \$10 billion each year due to lack of diversity among studio executives and creatives (McKinsey & Company 2021). The researchers recommend that to address inequities in the film business, movie studios should take steps including setting specific hiring targets for underrepresented populations, recruiting outside New York and Los Angeles, recruiting from historically Black colleges and universities, and providing greater transparency in reporting DEI and employment data from their organizations. Record labels should follow similar recommendations to enhance their products' connections with consumers and to maximize profits.

Lack of creative representation implies that most songs that reach top chart potential are crafted by a few select individuals or teams that are more than likely white men. This lopsided makeup can lead to misrepresented or inauthentic images of women and underrepresented populations in songs and music productions. This may have broader social implications as well. Studies suggest that lack of representation can lead to psychological stresses in populations who experience underrepresentation or negative portrayals in media. One study found that when young children were exposed to television programming, Black girls and boys and white girls demonstrated lower levels of self-esteem whereas white boys demonstrated higher levels of self-esteem (Martins and Harrison 2012). A plausible explanation for the disparity may be that children who witness negative portrayals of themselves, or no portrayal at all, may be made to feel invisible or insignificant in the broader cultural narrative (Levinson 2020). Record labels should examine the content of their releases and plot more equitable and ethical representation in songs and visuals.

## Secure the Blessing for Liberty...

To form a more perfect union, modern record labels should secure the blessings for liberty (for labels and artists) by supporting artistic freedom, micropublishing, and emerging technologies such as non-fungible tokens. Due to the speed and efficiency of internet communication, today's fans have unprecedented access to their favorite recording artists. Much of this access is unfiltered and unfettered. Arguably, the music business ecosystem has reached a point where fans across social media channels such as TikTok and Instagram expect to have candid access to artists' lives and often expect to have some input into artists' career decisions.

Fanbases such as Beliebers, KatyCats, the A.R.M.Y, and the Navy have the collective power to register big sales and streaming numbers. The Swifties have the collective will to send re-recordings of nine-year-old projects back onto the charts (Caulfield 2021) and the BeyHive has the collective influence to move over 800,000 first-week copies of a "secret" album release that received no premarketing (AP via Denver Post 2013). Certainly, these are the fanbases of the industry's biggest superstars. But the principle works for smaller major label artists and indies as well. Vested fans make the difference.

Empowering artists with more artistic freedom will permit them to present their authentic selves rather than considering profitability first. Artists should be encouraged to create and deliver art that is responsive to fans' desires and not subject to labels' release windows, or worse, tech companies' insatiable appetite for daily content to feed advertising algorithms. Yes, it will take rethinking marketing cycles. No, not everything will be certified gold or platinum by the RIAA. But that should be a desired difference between art and content. Repositioning music releases as art instead of content should lead to deeper, long-term connections with fans where they feel a shared responsibility to the success of artists they support.

Rap artist Nas recently partnered with Royal to allow fans to invest in his work by purchasing microshares of his song publishing. Fans receive a limited digital asset similar to a non-fungible token (NFT) that is trackable with each stream of the song on the internet. Other notable artists such as Big Boi from the duo Outkast, The Chainsmokers, Diplo, and 3LAU are also offering shares of their published works direct to fans. According to Royal, since offering fans the chance to purchase limited digital assets of 3LAU's song "Worst Case," the song has attained an implied value close to \$12 million with fans owning roughly half of that amount (Stassen 2022).

Although the general frenzy surrounding NFTs may be tapering off (Milmo 2022), owning microshares of songs should prove to be viable into the future as a crowdsourced music publishing model. Labels should examine the use

of the microshares model as a method of subsidizing the making of records by allowing fans to shoulder potential burdens of costs and losses in exchange for profits and the chance to own a small piece of their favorite art.

## Conclusion

Developing production technologies, emerging distribution platforms, crowd and alternative funding sources, and unfiltered fan curation channels offer modern recording artists unprecedented control over their careers. Should record labels continue to practice outdated methods to control artists and siphon profits for themselves, artists will increasingly find ways to resist. By applying the altruistic principles found in the preamble to the U.S. Constitution, record labels can reconstitute themselves into true partners with artists, enjoying lasting and mutually beneficial relationships. These are broad principles record labels should employ to rethink, rebalance, and reconstitute today's music business. The time is right for record labels to reassess their business models and adapt in anticipation of a revolution that will usher in an artist-favored future. Otherwise, as the growing populace of recording artists continues to arm itself with technological advances, the revolution will be democratized.

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# Value for Value and Podcasting 2.0: A New Opportunity for Music Distribution

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This paper was presented at the [2022 International Summit](#) of the Music & Entertainment Industry Educators Association  
May 16-17, 2022

<https://doi.org/10.25101/22.29>

View the Summit presentation at:  
<https://youtu.be/nqPUkx4o88Y>

## Abstract

Musicians have been creating crowdsourcing campaigns to make up for the collapse of the record industry. In addition to being censorship-resistant, Podcasting 2.0 offers new opportunities that bypass credit cards and in-app fees charged by technology companies by using the potential of the Lightning Network to send micropayments.

Keywords: podcasting 2.0, crowdsourcing, crowdfunding, Value for Value, Lightning Network, Bitcoin, micropayments

## Traditional Crowdsourcing

The proliferation of the internet contributed to the collapse of the record business. The loss of revenue from album sales has not been made up with fees paid by streamers, and musicians continue to look for alternative income streams. One way to do this is to go to fans directly with crowdfunding campaigns. Amanda Palmer spent five years dressed up as a bride offering flowers to passersby on the street. She put that experience of asking for support to good use in her successful crowdfunded campaign (see Figure 1) for the Dresden Doll's album *Theatre Is Evil* in 2011, which became the first to raise over a million dollars.<sup>1</sup> In a 2013 TED talk she talked about the art of asking: "I think when we really see each other we want to help...I think people have been obsessed with the wrong question, which is 'How do we make people pay for music?' What if we started asking, 'How do we let people pay for music?'"<sup>2</sup> The subject of this paper is a way of asking for support available through new Podcasting 2.0 technology and the Value for Value model.

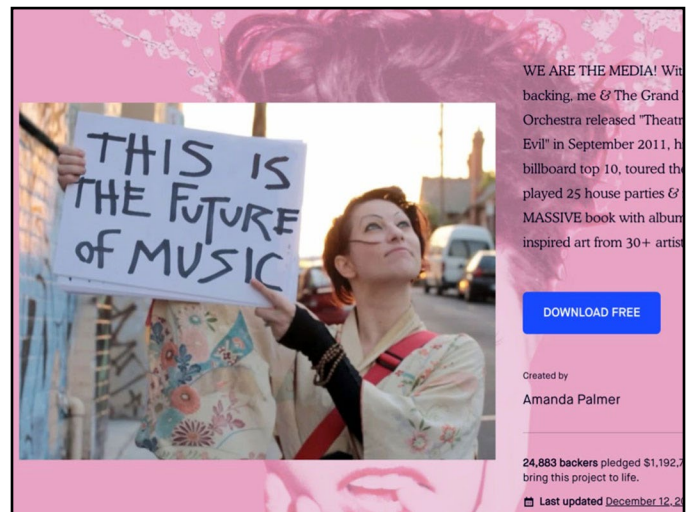


Figure 1. Amanda Palmer's Kickstarter campaign in 2011 was the first to raise over a million dollars for the development of an album.

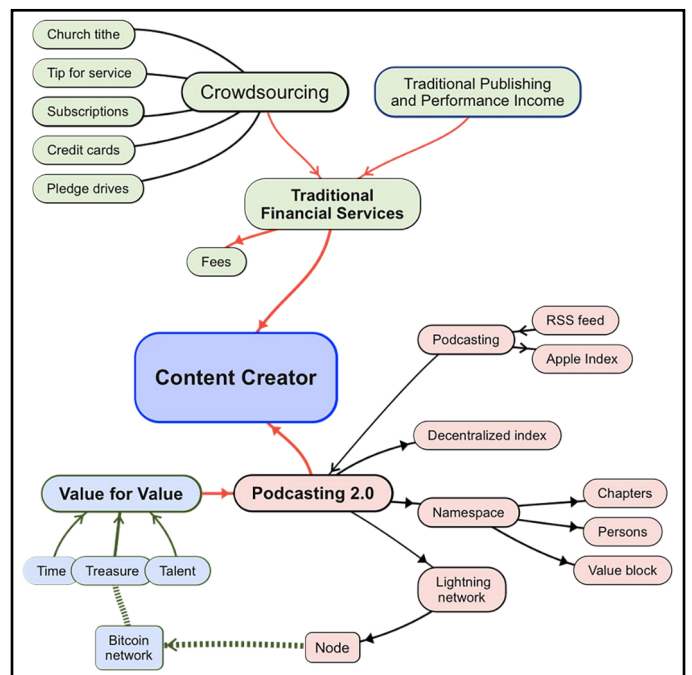


Figure 2. A mindmap showing some of the features of Podcasting 2.0 and Value for Value.



## Crowdsourcing

Figure 2 shows some of the avenues for crowdsourcing in the past, including the church offering plate, tips in the service industry, Patreon subscriptions, and pledge drives on public television. Non-cash donations that go through the banking and credit card system are subject to fees that take a bite out of the money that would otherwise go to content creators. Chinese software giant Tencent has funneled hundreds of millions of dollars from fans to artists and opened the way for Apple mobile apps to allow tipping. In the United States platforms like Twitch, YouTube Live, TikTok, and Facebook Live make it possible for presenters to earn thousands of dollars from their audience. A significant part of crowdsourcing revenue is eaten up by the tech companies. Apple and Facebook take about 30 percent of the donations that flow through their apps. Tencent takes a whopping 70 percent, and PayPal and Patreon from 3 to 10 percent. Podcasting is still in its early days, but offers an opportunity for musicians to retain a larger share of what their fans send them. Podcasting 2.0 offers a new opportunity to support content providers with much lower transaction fees since it allows users to send funds directly to those they wish to support in the form of Bitcoin micropayments.

The porn industry has been a driving force in many areas of tech, including VCRs, affiliate programs, user-friendly payment systems, video compression, streaming services, and the speed and bandwidth of the internet itself. It is faced with many of the same problems as musicians in terms of the abundance of free content and they have been looking for other income streams like podcasts and interactivity. Figure 3 shows part of a screen with a highlight added to the “Give GOLD” button. Viewers are able to watch and interact with a performer through comments. Research has shown that impulse buying increases when the time delay is reduced between the moment of enjoying the product and payment. Having the payment button in close proximity increases the likelihood of a payment from the audience. Amazon noticed that many items were being left in shoppers’ carts, and the implementation of the “Buy Now” option on the product pages has increased sales.

## Podcasting

In 2000 Adam Curry came up with the idea of podcasting, and two years later had convinced Dave Winer to add it to the RSS specification. An RSS file is a text file that defines where the various assets are for a piece of digital media. It includes information such as the name of the episode and the addresses of where graphic, audio, and video files are hosted on a server on the internet. Curry made an index of where all the RSS feeds were stored, which could then be accessed by podcast playing apps. Steve Jobs asked him if Apple could get a copy of the index, which was then built

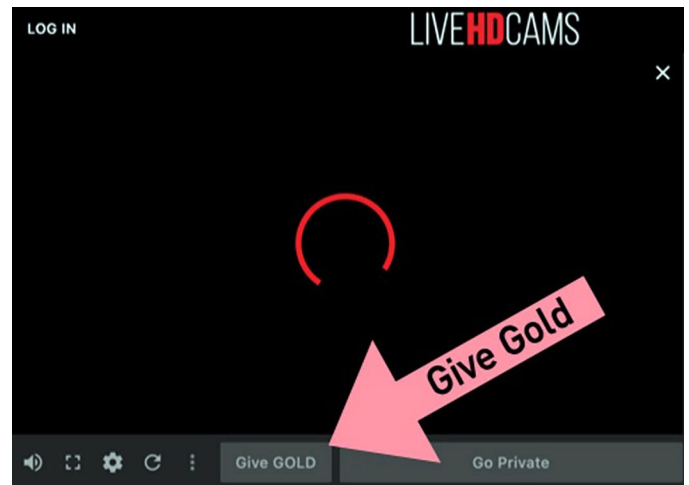


Figure 3. The tipping button is right underneath where the performer would appear.

into iTunes in 2005. For over a decade Apple did a good job of keeping it updated while making it available to other apps so that they could access the podcasts described there.

Writing an RSS feed by hand is not for the faint of heart. Podcast hosting companies often offer their podcasters a software utility to help format a podcast’s details into the proper machine-readable format. I use the podcast hosting company JustCast for my podcasts. Figure 4 shows a part of its RSS generation process. After uploading the jpg thumbnail of the cover art for my album *Peace Pieces* the host shows what the artwork URL address will be for the file.

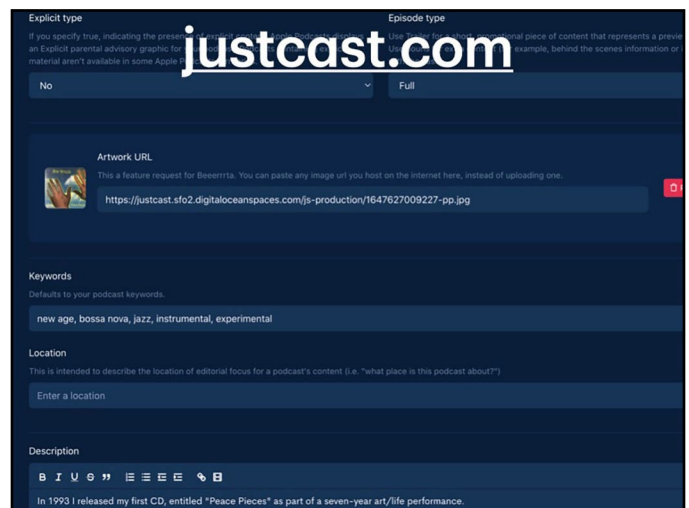


Figure 4. Using the JustCast utility to create an RSS feed for *Peace Pieces*.

After the user finishes loading in all the various assets the software compiles the information into an RSS feed. Figure 5 highlights the URL address for the artwork in the RSS file which tells the podcast player where to find it at the point where it is supposed to be displayed by the podcast player.

```

<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<rss version="2.0" xmlns:itunes="http://www.itunes.com/dtds/podcast-1.0.dtd" xmlns:atom="http://www.w3.org/2005/Atom" xmlns:dc="http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/" xmlns:podcast="https://podcastindex.org/namespace">
  <channel>
    <title>Peace Pieces</title>
    <link>http://robertwilley.com</link>
    <description>
      <![CDATA[<p>In 1993 I released my first CD, entitled "Peace Pieces" as part of a seven-
      <li>Roland Sound Canvas module</li><li>Yamaha KX76 keyboard controller</li><li>Korg Wavestati
      <li>Panasonic SV-3700 DAT recorder</li></ul><p><br></p><p>Software:</p><ul><li>Studio Vision
      Instruments (Robert Willey)</li></ul><p><br></p><p>The sounds and processes had a big effect
      half the album's songs. It allowed the user to set boundaries on random events that varied
      working in this environment comes through in the recordings. The era ended when my Macintosh
      Apple's operating systems. The other important piece of software, Studio Vision also went by
      could be linked together, resulting in clear jumps from one texture to another. The computer
      <a href="http://willshare.com/willeyrk/creative/papers/ALGIMP/" rel="noopener noreferrer" tar
      <br></p><p> Apple Macintosh
      Yamaha KX76 controller</p><p> Mackie mixer</p><p><img src=
      tone module</p><p> Lex
      </description>
    </channel>
  </rss>

```

Figure 5. The RSS feed file contains the names and locations of all the assets, including the address of the cover art (highlighted). The file is stored on the host's server and read by podcasting apps.

### Podcasting 2.0

Over the years, the number of podcast RSS feeds in Apple's index gradually increased. In 2018 they de-platformed Alex Jones by removing him from the index, which had the effect of taking him out of Apple podcasting, but also made it impossible for users of other podcast player programs to find his work. In 2020 Adam Curry, Dave Jones, and their partners decided to add new functionality to podcasting that would make it resistant to censorship and not be dependent on companies like Apple, Google, Spotify, or Amazon that can change the terms of service and disrupt a podcaster's business. It is risky to build a business on another company that can change who can participate and how they will be compensated. Podcasting 2.0 was built on a decentralized index that now has over four million RSS feeds listed. New features were also added by adding new namespace tags that can be used in RSS feeds, three of which appear in Figure 6. Podcast episodes can now be divided into chapters, each with its own artwork. The people involved in the production can be defined as persons, and the value block specifies to

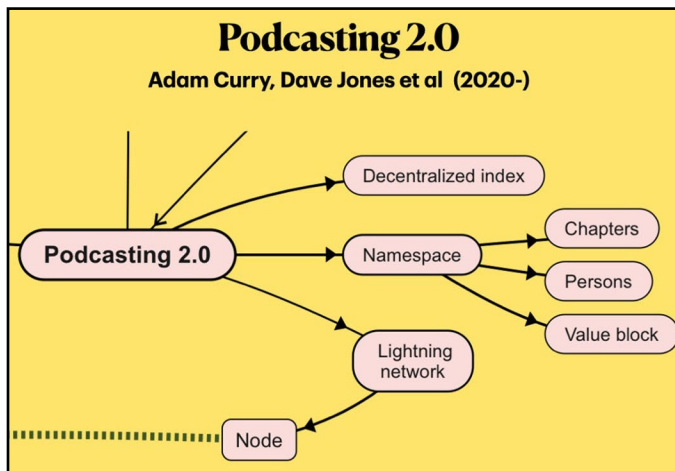


Figure 6. Podcasting 2.0 includes new namespace tags like chapters, person, and the value block.

whom and in what percentage each participant will be paid from revenue.

The <medium> tag extends the types of media that can be recognized in a podcast, such as music, documentaries, audio books, newsletters, and books. Chapter art is displayed in a Podcasting 2.0-enabled app, making it easier for listeners to search for and jump to locations of interest (see Figure 7).

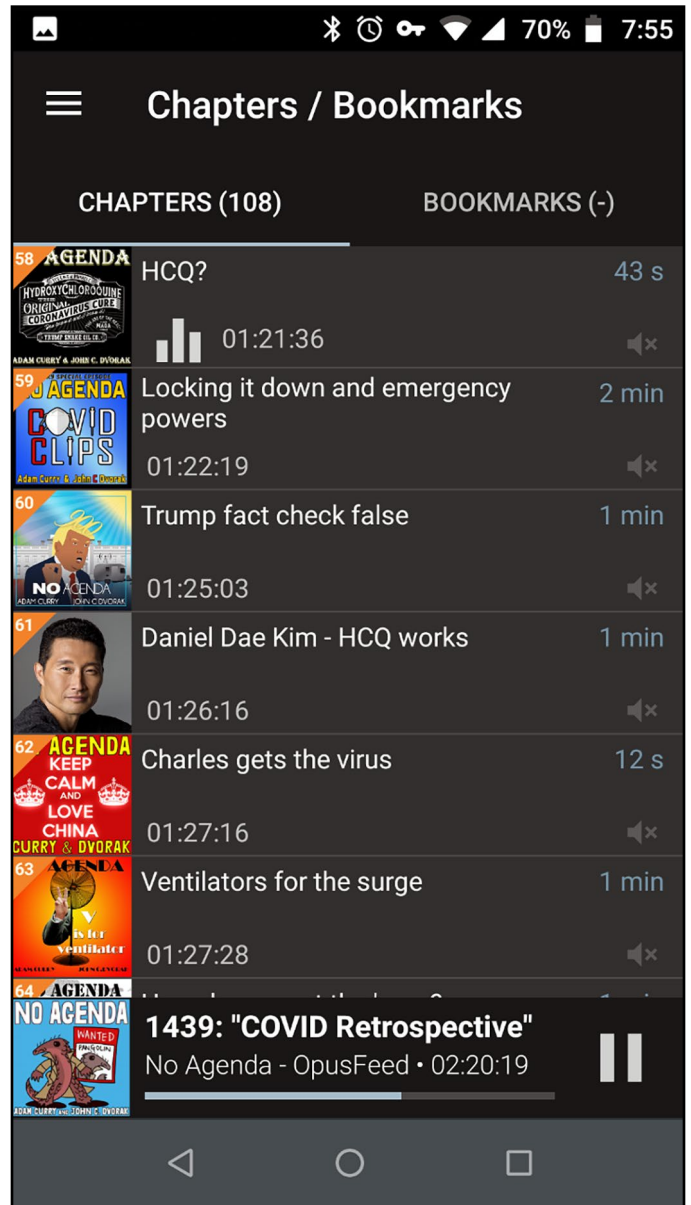


Figure 7. New namespace tags include transcripts, chapters, and soundbites. Clicking on a chapter marker will cause the player to jump to specific points in the program.

While listening, the new artwork pops up at the point each new chapter starts (see Figure 8).

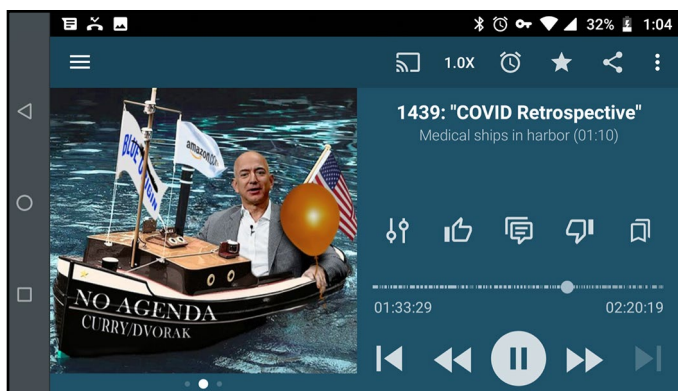


Figure 8: The chapter art pops up in the player, facilitating a richer media experience.

## Podcasting 2.0 Apps

Podcasting 2.0 incorporates a payment system using Bitcoin, the programmable money system that runs natively on the internet. A fee is offered to miners to record each transaction on the blockchain ledger, and it takes up to ten minutes to settle. Podcasting 2.0 takes advantage of the Lightning Network, a second layer that runs on top of Bitcoin to allow secure off-chain transactions. The choice of using Lightning turned out to be a wise one, since it has continued to grow in popularity. The Lightning Network charges much lower fees and settles transactions more quickly, making it ideal for creating a system of micropayments, which has many positive features for musicians getting support from their fans. A micropayment transaction of a few cents would be absorbed by the process of writing it to the Bitcoin ledger. Lightning is much faster and cheaper.

The `<valueRecipient>` tag can function like a mini contract, making it easy to create splits among composers, performers, engineers, producers, artists, programmers, guests, and anyone else with whom one wants to share revenue. In the future it could offer a way to untie the Gordian Knot of impediments to sampling, where samples could be licensed from record companies and composers. In the meantime, Podcasting 2.0 works best with original content since no agreement is in place with SoundExchange or other agency to license copyrighted material from publishers and record companies.

Able Kirby and Sir Spencer decided to record an album, *Stay Awhile*, as a proof of concept for utility of Podcasting 2.0 to distribute music. They discuss their process of collaborating remotely on recording the tracks and their vision for decentralized music on the podcast AbleKraft (see Figure 9).

Figure 10 shows the `<valueRecipient>` block from the RSS feed where the split is defined. Each recipient needs to have a Lightning node to send payments to. The community is looking for ways to simplify the onboarding of musicians making it easier to create Bitcoin wallets and nodes. I have



Figure 9. The Podcast Index's listing of *Stay Awhile* shows graphically the 50/50 royalty split between its creators.

created a website [MusicCasting.org](http://MusicCasting.org) to share what I have learned in the process of setting up a node and linking it to my podcasts.

```
<podcast: value type="lightning" method="keysend" suggested="0.000010000">
  <podcast: valueRecipient name="AbleKirby"
    address="02f1962328552371769881a9f49c192c0df261f3e0bdf4cd68a4f6d449cc6fd4ad"
    split="50"/>
  <podcast: valueRecipient name="SirSpencer"
    address="03ecb3ee55ba6324d40bea174de096dc9134cb35d990235723b37ae9b5c49f4f53"
    split="50"/>
</podcast: value>
```

Figure 10. This `<value>` block specifies a 50/50 split and includes the address of each participant's Lightning node public key in order to correctly route their share.

A list of modern podcast apps that are implementing the new 2.0 features can be found at [newpodcastapps.com](http://newpodcastapps.com) (see Figure 11). [CurioCaster](http://CurioCaster) was the first to work in a browser, making it easy to try out the new features without installing any new software.

Compatible apps		
<a href="http://newpodcastapps.com">http://newpodcastapps.com</a>		
Podfriend app, podcast player, open source	Chapters, Funding, Location, Person, Sat Streaming, Search, Transcript, Value	Web, Windows
CurioCaster app, podcast player	Alternate Enclosure, Boostagrams, Chapters, Funding, Sat Streaming, Search, Transcript, Value	Mobile, Web
Fountain app, podcast player	Boostagrams, Chapters, Person, Sat Streaming, Search, Value	Android, Web, iOS
mp.money app	Alternate Enclosure, Chapters, Funding, Search, Transcript, Value	Web
Castamatic app, podcast player	Boostagrams, Chapters, Funding, Sat Streaming, Search, Value	iOS
Breez app, podcast player, open source	Chapters, Sat Streaming, Search, Value	Android, iOS

Figure 11. The top of the list of Podcasting 2.0-enabled apps.



## Value for Value

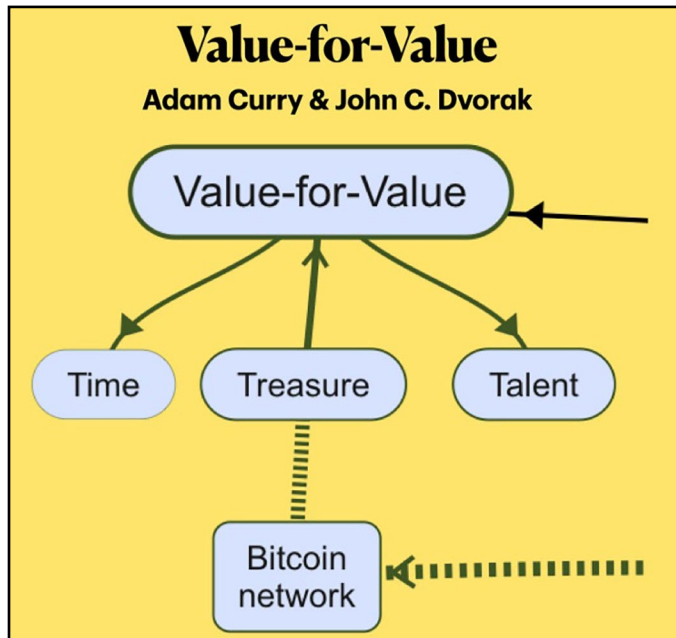


Figure 12. Value can be sent as time, treasure, or talent.

John C. Dvorak and Adam Curry developed and have used the Value for Value concept to support their *No Agenda* podcast for over a decade. They decided to go directly to their listeners instead of relying on advertising in order to be free of censorship. The pitch basically goes, “We don’t want to use paywalls to try to limit access or to rely on advertising. We give you our content for free and ask you to decide how much value you have received from it. Put that into a number that is meaningful to you, and send that to us in the form of time, treasure, or talent.” An example Curry sometimes uses for comparison is the cost of a pair of movie tickets and a tub of popcorn. He laments that iTunes priced every song at 99 cents, and says that the Beatles’ song “She Loves You” is worth much more than that to him. In addition to the financial support that has allowed them to support themselves and their families, they have also received donations in the form of time and talent, resulting in a rich media experience that incorporates the audio clips, jingles, and remixes that their “producers” send in, and benefit from the skills from people who maintain their servers, create chapter markers, a mechanism for submissions of episode and chapter art, a merch store, a meetup site, and a platform for chatting during the live broadcasts.

Podcasting 2.0 apps allow the users to set a nominal default rate of support to content creators. While you are listening, you can automatically be streaming fractions of Bitcoin in the background, which can easily add up to exceed what one would earn from Spotify. CurioCaster allows listeners to “boost” them in two ways. A “sat” (satoshi) is worth one hundred millionth of a bitcoin. With the preferences set as

in Figure 13, a listener has set their preferences to stream 100 sats (about 2 cents) a minute, and if they feel the urge to send more at some point can click on the “Boost” button to send 1,000 sats (20 cents), along with a “Boostagram” comment. Comments can be made privately to the hosts, or available cross platform to listeners using any other podcast player app.

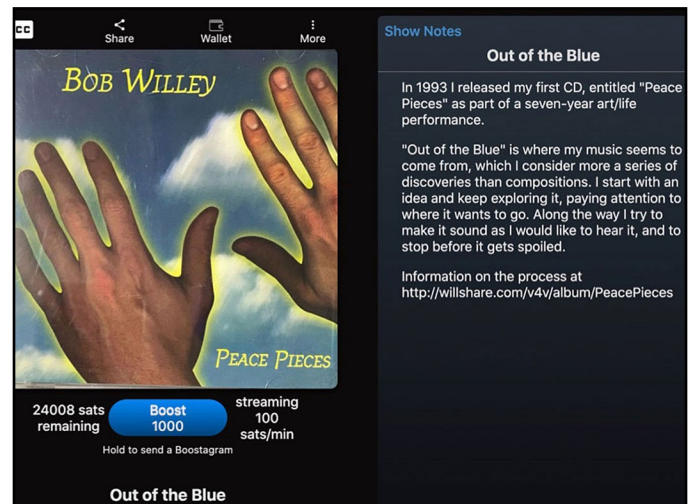


Figure 13. CurioCaster gives the listener an option to continuously stream sats and intermittently send an additional boost.

## My Podcasting 2.0 and Value for Value Projects

During the past year I have been transitioning my business to the Value for Value model. Now deep into my Golden Decade as a senior citizen, time and energy are at a premium. I don’t want to go anywhere I don’t want to go, wear clothes I don’t want to wear, be around people I don’t want to be around, or rent my time doing things I don’t want to do. I only want to do the things that I love doing, that engage my individual combination of skills and interests. When taking on side jobs to my academic work, I don’t agree to do things that I won’t love to do, and in those cases any financial reward is just a bonus. Instead of quoting a fee, I ask people to consider what value they are getting, and to give me that, and find that it is usually close to what I in the past would have asked for, and I am willing to work, in effect, on a sliding scale for people who don’t have money in the bank. I am also open to the possibility of encountering people in the future who will be in a position to offer more. Gaining confidence in asking for support will be necessary to make the system profitable.

I have repurposed four albums of music already released on BandCamp and Spotify, and am starting new podcasts—one of playalong tracks, and another on how to develop independence playing Brazilian rhythms on drumset. [The video presentation](#) of this paper demonstrates how “boosts” are sent from Podcasting 2.0 apps and are received on my RaspiBlitz Lightning node (see Figure 14).





Figure 14. My RaspiBlitz: a combination of a \$50 Raspberry Pi computer, free software, and \$150 hard drive combine to create an online cash register and payment processing system.

I invented a web app to help people sing songs together by synchronizing lyrics on cell phones and am asking users to send support through PayPal, checks to my P.O. box, or Bitcoin to my Lightning node.

I created a website to help onboard musicians to Podcasting 2.0 and Value for Value ([MusicCasting.org](https://musiccasting.org)) with links to these projects and the resources I used to create and manage my node, and to the service providers that I am using, like Voltage (for a second node) and JustCast (podcast host). In addition to financial support, I welcome the time and talent of others to help develop the SongSync app, and to contribute additional background tracks.

The info screen on the RaspiBlitz indicates its public key address on the Lightning Network (see Figure 15).

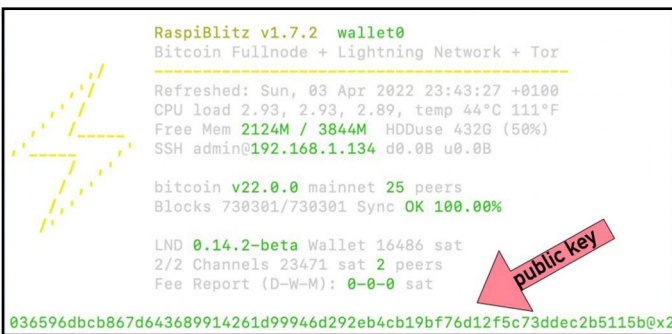


Figure 15. The RaspiBlitz display shows my public key.

The public key is added to an RSS feed using the host's authoring utility (see Figure 16). The RSS authoring utility writes an RSS feed, which now includes the public key for the node where donations will be sent (Figure 17). Helipad is a software program that runs on the RaspiBlitz to monitor boosts as they arrive (Figure 18).

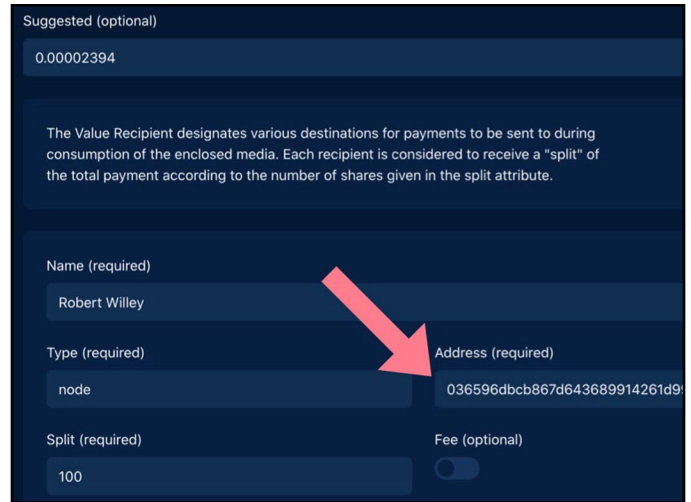


Figure 16. The public key is put into the JustCast utility program to create the RSS feed for my podcasts.



Figure 17. The utility writes the public key for the node into the RSS feed for a podcast.

value_msat	value_msat_total	action	sender	app	message	podcast	epi
3092	4850000	5000000	2	"Dr Dub"	"CurioCaster"	"A thousand points of light!"	"Peace Pieces" "So
3048	9500000	10000000	2	*	"CurioCaster"	*	"Peace Pieces" "So
31618	9500000	10000000	2	*	"CurioCaster"	*	"Into the Blue" "Me
3475	4750000	10000000	2	"Robert"	"CurioCaster"	"1000 from curiocaster"	"Peace Pieces" "No
36030	4900000	5000000	2	"@rkwilley"	"Fountain"	"Go Music 2.0! from Dr. Dub"	"Peace Pieces" "Ou
11388	1173000	1234000	2	"SirSpencer"	"CurioCaster"	"Test boost!"	"Peace Pieces" "No

Figure 18. Helipad reports on the boosts and comments as they are received on the RaspiBlitz.

### A New Opportunity

Bitcoin can be an investment opportunity and store of value, especially for those who bought in during its early days (see Figure 19). While it may still be part of a long-term investment strategy, a bigger opportunity for us today may be to become involved in businesses that are built on it. I am now spending hundreds of dollars to earn pennies, but am operating nodes to have a concrete place to organize new concepts and develop a vocabulary about servers, nodes, liquidity, and fees, and see it as cost-effective in comparison to paying services like PayPal and Mastercard.



Figure 19. People who bought Bitcoin before 2021 have enjoyed a big run up in value.



**Robert Willey** teaches music industry and songwriting, and has written books about Creole Fiddle, Brazilian piano, Music Production, Music Industry, Music Appreciation, and the History of Rock and Roll. More information at [rkwilley.com](http://rkwilley.com).

## Endnotes

1. Amanda Palmer, “Theatre Is Evil: the album, art book and tour,” *Kickstarter*, Dec. 12, 2018, [www.kickstarter.com/projects/amandapalmer/amanda-palmer-the-new-record-art-book-and-tour](http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/amandapalmer/amanda-palmer-the-new-record-art-book-and-tour).
2. Amanda Palmer, “The Art of Asking.” *TED Conferences, LLC*, Feb. 1, 2013, [www.ted.com/talks/amanda\\_palmer\\_the\\_art\\_of\\_asking?language=en](http://www.ted.com/talks/amanda_palmer_the_art_of_asking?language=en).



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