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The 10 Biggest Music Law Stories of 2024: Diddy, Young Thug, Drake, AI & More

BY BILL DONAHUE

When it came to 2024's biggest legal battles in the music industry, the stakes couldn't have been much higher.

For Live Nation and Ticketmaster, the Department of Justice's antitrust case posed an existential threat; for Young Thug or Lil Durk, each facing criminal cases accusing them of blurring the line between artist and gangster, a life prison sentence loomed; for Michael Jackson's estate, court approval of the largest-ever catalog sale hung in the balance; for Miley Cyrus, allegations of infringement stalked the biggest hit of her career; for Drake, he put his reputation on the line to go to court over Kendrick Lamar's diss track.

And none of that even approached the scale of the legal debacle facing Sean "Diddy" Combs. After decades as a chart-topping artist/producer and one of the industry's most powerful men, the music mogul was hit with a flood of abuse allegations — first in the form of civil lawsuits, then in a stunning criminal indictment that could put him behind bars for life.

The ongoing rise of generative artificial intelligence technology like ChatGPT also continued to dominate the legal beat in 2024, as lawyers and lawmakers scrambled to deal with cutting-edge problems like deepfakes of Taylor Swift, fake vocals of the late

Tupac Shakur, and large-scale use of copyrighted music to train AI platforms. Federal prosecutors got in the mix, too, bringing a first-of-its-kind indictment over a streaming fraud scheme that had used a flood of AI-generated tunes to drain millions in royalties from deserving artists.

To get up to speed on all the legal developments of the year, here are *Billboard's* 10 big music law stories that struck a chord in 2024.

Drake Takes UMG to Court Over Kendrick Beef:

When Drake and Kendrick Lamar were [exchanging scathing diss tracks](#) in May — culminating in Lamar's knockout punch "Not Like Us" — nobody saw it ending in litigation. But six months later, Drake did the unthinkable: He hired lawyers and went to court over a rap beef. The allegations were leveled not against Lamar himself, but against Universal Music Group, the label that both artists have called home for the majority of their careers.

In his filings, Drake essentially accused the label of illegally prioritizing one of its top artists over another — both by using bots and payola to [artificially boost the song](#) and by allowing it to be released in the first

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place despite [“false” claims about pedophilia](#). He accused the label of “using the spectacle of harm to Drake and his businesses to drive consumer hysteria and, of course, massive revenues.” All that might be true, but the litigation was quickly perceived by music fans as Drake choosing to sue because he had lost a war of words. Will that decision be worth the risk of [harm to his reputation](#)? We’ll find out in 2025.

Diddy’s Downfall: There was no bigger legal story for the music industry in 2024 than the downfall of Sean “Diddy” Combs — a chart-topping artist and towering business figure who now stands accused of heinous sexual abuse. Starting with [a blockbuster lawsuit](#) late last year from ex-girlfriend Cassie Ventura, Combs faced a steady drip of civil lawsuits accusing him of sexual assault and other forms of wrongdoing. Then the other shoe dropped in September, when he was [indicted by federal prosecutors](#) on sex trafficking and racketeering charges, accused of running a sprawling criminal enterprise aimed at satisfying his need for “sexual gratification.”

The case centers on elaborate “freak off” parties in which Combs and others would allegedly ply victims with drugs and then coerce them into having sex, as well as on alleged acts of violence to keep victims silent. After being [refused bail multiple times](#), Diddy is set for a trial in May 2025; if convicted on all the charges, he could face a

potential life prison sentence.

Lil Durk Charged With Murder-For-Hire: Two years after the rapper Quando Rondo was ambushed by gunmen at a Los Angeles gas station, federal prosecutors charged Chicago drill star Lil Durk (Durk Banks) in October [with ordering the attack](#) — a stunning accusation for a superstar rapper who had reached No. 2 on the Hot 100 a year earlier. After prosecutors say Durk put out a “bounty” on Rondo as revenge for the 2020 killing of fellow Chicago rapper and close friend King Von, they claim a Durk-linked credit card was used to fly the attackers to carry out the deed — from which Rondo escaped but his cousin was killed.

Like the case against Young Thug and his group YSL two years earlier, the new case claims Durk and his “Only The Family” crew blurred the lines between hyper-realistic lyrics and actual criminal violence: “OTF is a hybrid organization that functions as a Banks-led music collective and a gang.” And like the YSL case, they’re already [citing Durk’s lyrics](#) to help make that case against him.

U.S. v. Live Nation: When the U.S. Department of Justice [filed a sweeping antitrust lawsuit](#) in May aimed at breaking up Live Nation and Ticketmaster, it was hardly the first time the concert giant was labeled a “monopoly.” Ever since the companies merged in 2010, they’ve faced criticism

over their huge market share in the world of live music — and that scrutiny dramatically increased after the [disastrous 2022 rollout](#) of Taylor Swift’s Eras Tour.

In taking those claims to court, the feds alleged Live Nation had subjected the live music industry to an illegal “flywheel” — reaping revenue from ticket buyers, using it to sign artists, then leveraging that repertoire to lock venues into exclusive ticketing contracts that yield ever more revenue. “It is time to break it up,” Attorney General Merrick Garland said at the time. Live Nation, meanwhile, is fighting back — arguing that the DOJ’s lawsuit is “disingenuous” and “distracts from real solutions that would decrease prices and protect fans.”

Artificial Intelligence — No Easy Answers: The booming growth of artificial intelligence continued to dominate the music law landscape in 2024. In January, a flood of sexually-explicit deepfakes of Taylor Swift were uploaded to X (formerly Twitter) — an ugly incident that [highlighted a lack of remedies](#) for such AI-powered fakery. In June, [the three majors filed lawsuits](#) claiming that market-leading AI music firms Suno and Udio had infringed copyrighted music on an “unimaginable scale” to train their models.

That case, which the AI firms have [argued is an abuse of intellectual property](#), is the music industry chapter of a broader legal struggle over whether such training

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FROM THE ARTISTS WHO
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Billboard's Year in Music: The No. 1s will wrap up 2024 with an extraordinary editorial package. Included will be year-end charts, interviews and analysis on the year's top artists, songs, albums and labels as well as the year's top producers, songwriters and publishers.

The year-end Billboard Boxscore charts will shine a light on the most successful tours and the top venues and promoters.

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constitutes copyright “fair use” — a literal trillion-dollar question that will take years to definitively answer. Elsewhere on the AI legal beat in 2024: Tupac Shakur’s estate [threatened to sue Drake](#) for AI cloning the late rapper’s voice; Tennessee [enacted a new law](#) banning such voice mimicry; and federal lawmakers [introduced similar legislation](#) that would do so on a national level.

Jackson Estate Battles Over \$600M

Sony Sale: More than 15 years after Michael Jackson’s death, his estate is still pending in probate court — and its attorneys saw plenty of courtroom action in 2024 surrounding Sony’s [massive \\$600 million deal](#) to buy half his music catalog. In March, the late star’s son Blanket [asked the judge](#) to stop his grandmother (Katherine Jackson) from using estate money to fund her ongoing efforts to block the deal — a request later [seconded by the estate itself](#) with filings that said she had already received more than \$55 million since the singer’s death. Then in August, a California appeals court [issued a final decision](#) rejecting Katherine’s objections and allowing the sale to move forward, ruling that Michael’s will had vested his executors with “full power and authority” to ink such transactions.

Young Thug Beats Atlanta Gang Case:

And just like that, it was over. More than two years after Grammy-winning rapper Young Thug was arrested as part of a sweeping Atlanta gang case, pitting prosecutors in America’s rap capital against one of hip-hop’s biggest stars, he [pleaded guilty in October](#) and was sentenced to serve just 15 years’ probation with no prison time — a stunning end to a legal saga that rocked the music industry.

A chart-topping rapper who helped shape the sound of hip-hop in the 2010s, Thug stood accused of being the kingpin of a violent gang that had wrought “havoc” on the Atlanta area for nearly a decade. But the case was [a mess from the start](#), featuring endless witness lists, procedural missteps, a jailhouse stabbing and a bizarre episode that saw a judge [removed from the case](#). After yet another irregularity sparked calls for a mistrial, [Thug’s attorneys saw their chance](#) to simply plead guilty and hope the judge would set him free — a gamble that paid off.

Miley Cyrus Faces Lawsuit Over

“Flowers”: One of the biggest songs of 2023 was the subject of one of the biggest copyright lawsuits of 2024. In a September complaint, Miley Cyrus was [accused of stealing key elements](#) of her chart-topping “Flowers” from Bruno Mars’ “When I Was Your Man” — an interesting claim, since the Cyrus track was clearly an “answer song” that overtly responded to the lyrics in the Mars song (fans speculated it was because “Your Man” was a favorite of her ex-husband Liam Hemsworth).

Does that kind of lyrical riffing amount to infringement? [Experts aren’t so sure](#). Adding to the intrigue was the fact that the case against Cyrus was filed not by Mars himself, but by a financial firm called Tempo Music Investments that bought out the rights of one of his co-writers. In her [first response to the case](#) in November, Cyrus argued that the total lack of involvement from Mars and two other co-writers was a “fatal flaw” that required the outright dismissal of the lawsuit. Stay tuned in 2025 to see how the judge feels about that argument.

Trump Faces Legal Backlash Over

Music Rights: Amid a contentious presidential election, [a slew of artists spoke out](#) against Republican candidate Donald Trump using their music during his 2024 campaign. Beyoncé, Celine Dion, the Foo Fighters, ABBA and Sinead O’Connor’s estate all criticized the former president’s use of their songs. The White Stripes went further, [filing a copyright lawsuit](#) claiming that Trump used “Seven Nation Army” in a social media video without permission. The estate of Isaac Hayes [did the same](#), suing over Trump’s alleged use of the late singer’s “Hold On, I’m Coming” at rallies and in videos.

First-Ever Streaming Indictment: After years of industry complaints about streaming fraud — the use of bots or other means to artificially boost traffic for certain songs — federal prosecutors finally took action in September. In a [first-of-its-kind indictment](#), the feds accused a North Carolina musician named Michael Smith of stealing \$10 million in streaming royalties as part of a “brazen fraud scheme.”

The charges claim that Smith created

thousands of fake songs, then used an army of bots to play them billions of times on Spotify and other streamers. When he couldn’t create enough fake tracks to make the scam work, Smith allegedly turned to artificial intelligence, partnering with an unnamed A.I. music firm to produce grist for his mill and funneling money back in the form of percentage cuts.

The case is a big deal, because streaming fraud isn’t just stealing fractions of a penny from faceless tech giants; since royalties are calculated as [a percentage of a finite pie](#), every phony stream represents real money being diverted away from real artists. **B**

Billboard’s 2025 Power 100 Players’ Choice: Vote for Music’s Most Impactful Executive (Finals)

BY TAYLOR MIMS

Billboard’s peer-voted Power 100 Players’ Choice Award is back for 2025 and asking music industry members from all sectors to honor the executive they believe had the most impact across the music industry in the past year.

Voting is open to all *Billboard Pro* members, both existing and new, with one vote per member per round. Individuals who previously won the Power 100 Players’ Choice Award will not be eligible to win again.

The final round of voting is now live, with five nominees to choose from. This round of voting will close on Friday, Dec. 13, at 11:59 p.m. ET.

The Power 100 Players’ Choice Award will run alongside *Billboard’s* annual Power 100 ranking of the music industry’s most influential executives in the music industry, which will be revealed in January.

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A winner will be determined from this final round of voting, which concludes on Friday, Dec. 13, at 11:59 p.m. ET.

Billboard launched its first Players' Choice Award with the Power 100 list in January 2023, followed by the first Country Power Players' Choice Award that concluded in June of that year; the inaugural R&B/Hip-Hop Power Players' Choice Award in August; and the first Latin Power Players' Choice Award in September. In 2024, the peer-voted award expanded to also cover International Power Players and Top Music Lawyers. Previous Power 100 Players' Choice award winners include Universal Music Publishing Group's **Jody Gerson** and S10 Entertainment's **Brandon Silverstein**. 🗳️

Drake's Legal Filings Claim the Music Game Is Rigged. Sound Familiar?

BY ROBERT LEVINE

Even by the standards of a litigious business, Drake's recent legal actions against Universal Music Group and other companies look like odd filings.

On Nov. 25, [Drake](#) filed an action accusing UMG and Spotify of [acting to "artificially inflate"](#) the popularity of [Kendrick Lamar's](#) "Not Like Us"; the next day, he made a [similar filing against UMG and iHeartRadio](#), alleging that UMG's release of the song could also constitute defamation. The basic idea seems to be that "Not Like Us," Lamar's diss track against Drake, became so successful because *it was rigged*.

"UMG did not rely on chance, or even ordinary business practices," Drake's lawyers wrote in the first filing. "It instead launched a campaign to manipulate and saturate the streaming services and airwaves." The filings accuse UMG and its partners of acting

in ways that are fraudulent, including using "bots" and payola, but little proof is provided — a "whistleblower," an "inside source known to petitioner" and an assertion that Drake "learned of at least one UMG employee making payments to an independent radio promoter" who had agreed to pay stations. (The company has said in a [statement to Billboard](#) that "the suggestion that UMG would do anything to undermine any of its artists is offensive and untrue.")

These filings aren't lawsuits, but rather legal attempts to get information that might provide the basis for them. And since Lamar's success doesn't really come at the expense of Drake's — at least any more than any artist becomes popular at the expense of any other — it's hard not to wonder if Drake is just upset that, with "Not Like Us," Lamar seems to have won the long-running feud between them. That's a long story — [well-summarized here](#) — but Drake and Lamar basically traded diss tracks for hip-hop fans until Lamar's scathing "Not Like Us" topped the Billboard Hot 100. Drake is essentially claiming that UMG — for which both rappers record under different labels — cheated on Lamar's behalf. *It was rigged*.

Quick: What other famous person does this remind you of? Hints: When he wins, he revels in his success; when he loses, he blames it on unfairness and litigates. Yes, I'm going there: *Drake has become Trumpian*.

Before Team Drizzy throws bottles of Virginia Black Whiskey by Drake, Drake is a skilled rapper, a compelling performer, and a fantastic Drake — it's hard to compare him to other artists, both because he doesn't fit neatly into a genre and because his greatest talent is being Drake. (Drake the artist seems to be an exaggerated version of Drake the person, with the soap operatic conflict amped up and the more mundane parts edited out.)

Both Drake and Trump thrive on success and fandom — their fans root for them because they win and they win because their fans root for them. (Trump the politician seems to be an exaggerated version of Trump the person, with the cultural conflict amped up and the boring parts edited out.) Neither gets a ton of respect from critics,

but they are both popular beyond belief, and they love to win and then show off that they did. Drake's feud with Lamar became so compelling because each was a champion in his own way — Drake the unmatched entertainer, Lamar the iconic old-school lyricist. By scoring a No. 1 single with a diss track, an unusual achievement, Lamar essentially beat Drake at his own game.

Is this why Drake is filing legal actions? Most people file litigation for financial restitution, to get an injunction to stop something, or to win negotiating leverage. In this case, the first would be hard to calculate, the second involves practices that would be hard to prove and the third seems unlikely — why would Drake want out of the [UMG deal he signed in 2021](#), which includes publishing and merchandise rights and was described as "Lebron sized." The only thing we know about Drake's motive is that his second filing says he "brings this action for a discrete and specific purpose: to understand whether, and how, UMG funneled payments to iHeartRadio and its radio stations as part of a pay-to-play scheme." Perhaps, like Trump, he simply can't imagine the possibility that he would lose a fair fight.

[Does Drake have a case?](#) If UMG really had the power to make any song a hit, wouldn't it do so more frequently? If anyone thinks Drake hasn't received enough marketing or promotion — and I have yet to meet such a person — it's worth considering that some Spotify subscribers found the service's promotion of *Scorpion* so extensive that they [asked for a refund](#). This, too, has political echoes: If U.S. elections are as unfair as Trump claims, how can he trust the one in November?

Like Trump, Drake loves the one-upmanship drama of competition — but only, apparently, when he wins. Trump ran several campaigns based partly on the politics of insult comedy — his dog-whistle racism was obviously far worse — but he doesn't like to be on the receiving end of it. (The kind of thin skin that would be a personal fault in most is terrifying in the U.S. president.)

If rappers could pursue defamation claims for diss tracks, much less against the labels that release them, hip-hop never would have made it out of the Bronx. Lamar

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called Drake a certified pedophile, which is an ugly accusation, and a pun on Drake's *Certified Lover Boy*, but not an actual thing; the reason Drake looks bad isn't because people believe it but because "Not Like Us" is catchier and wittier than his own diss tracks. Drake certainly has the right to ask about music promotion practices — even in a legal filing. If no evidence of this emerges, though, he will need to seek satisfaction the old-fashioned way — by releasing a more compelling single. **■**

Billboard Arabia Music Awards to Launch as Part of the Inaugural Riyadh Music Week

BY BILLBOARD ARABIA

Riyadh is gearing up for a transformative moment in its cultural history with the launch of Riyadh Music Week, a landmark initiative by the Music Commission in partnership with MDLBEAST and SRMG.

Spanning Dec. 5-14, 2024, the spotlight shines bright on the first-ever [Billboard Arabia Music Awards](#) (BBAMAs)—the pinnacle of Riyadh Music Week and a historic moment for the regional music industry.

Taking place across multiple venues in Riyadh, the week kicks off on Dec. 5 with the fourth edition of XP Music Futures, featuring workshops, panel discussions and networking opportunities along with an evening program driven by regional party brands, promoters and record labels, showcasing emerging talents from MENA and beyond. On Dec. 8, the Global Music Makers Summit marks its first edition, where it will bring together leaders and global policy makers from the music sector's international bodies.

The week-long event will also host the

Music Cities Convention and Awards, taking place Dec. 8-10, bringing this prestigious global event to the Arab world for the first time. This achievement highlights Riyadh's growing reputation as a leading global destination for music and arts, with the Convention focusing on the pivotal role of music in urban development and its potential to shape the future of modern cities.

With the BBAMAs taking place on Dec. 11, the ceremony aims to not only celebrate artistic excellence but also expand upon the growing global *Billboard* network. The [Billboard Arabia Music Awards](#) represents a regional first, adopting a pioneering approach entirely based on listener opinions and data. This year's awards will honor over 40 categories, celebrating achievements such as Top Artist, Song of the Year, Best in Dialect Charts and Top New Artist of the Year, among other standout recognitions.

Riyadh Music Week will close out with the MDLBEAST's groundbreaking Soundstorm music festival, the loudest in the region, mixing international superstars on the same stages as homegrown local and up-and-coming artists. The week will also host a range of fringe events and performances by various artists taking place across several venues throughout the city.

As Riyadh Music Week unfolds, the series of events stand as a testament to the region's vibrant music scene and its aspirations as a burgeoning global music hub. **■**

Finalists Revealed for the First Ever Billboard Arabia Music Awards

BY HALA MUSTAFA

The first-ever Billboard Arabia Music Awards (BBAMAs) will take on Dec. 11 at the King Fahad Cultural Center in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. After a year of tracking trends on the Billboard Arabia charts, this landmark event will celebrate the most talented artists from

the Arab world and North Africa — those who have made waves on the charts and dominated streaming platforms worldwide. Throughout the year, Billboard Arabia's 10 charts have spotlighted listening trends across four key dialects and four musical genres, in addition to the flagship charts: Artist 100 and Hot 100.

Winners of the BBAMAs will be determined based on their performance on Billboard Arabia's flagship charts, such as the Hot 100 and Artist 100, as well as its four dialect-specific charts — Khaleeji, Egyptian, Levantine and Maghrebi — and genre-specific charts, including Arabic Hip-Hop, Arabic Indie, Shelat and Mahraganat. These charts are built on the trusted methodology that has defined the Billboard brand.

Beyond celebrating the year's leading artists and tracks, the BBAMAs will highlight the region's rich talent pool with an exciting lineup of live performances and unexpected collaborations. The event will feature a mix of established and rising stars from across the Arab world and its diaspora.

With over 40 award categories already revealed, the BBAMAs promise to be a comprehensive tribute to the region's vibrant music scene. Below is the full list of finalists for these awards. Stay tuned; more categories will be unveiled soon.

Song of the Year

"Fouq" by Assala Nasri
 "Guli Mata" by Saad Lamjarred, Shreya Ghoshal, and Rajat Nagpal
 "Ya Leil W Yal Ein" by Al Shami
 "Haygely Mawgow" by Tamer Ashour
 "Sabran" by Al Shami

Artist of the Year

Amr Diab
 Al Shami
 Nancy Ajram
 Sherine Abdel Wahab
 Ahmed Saad

Top Male Artist

Al Shami
 Dystinct
 Ahmed Saad
 Amr Diab
 Tamer Ashour

Top Female Artist

Nancy Ajram
 Elissa

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Assala
Sherine Abdel Wahab
Elyanna

Top Band

Cairokee
Massar Egbari
Miami Band
Sharmoofers
Al Massrieen

Top New Artist

Dystinct
Elyanna
TUL8TE
Siilawy
Al Shami

Highest Gainer

Amr Diab
TUL8TE
Angham
Al Shami
Tamer Ashour

Top Arabic Collaboration of the Year

Ameen Khattab and Essam Sasa - "Ehna Say'
Monharifin"
Assala Nasri and Ahmed Saad - "Sabb Far-
hety"
Nassif Zeytoun and Rahma Riad - "Ma Fi
Leil"
Saint Levant and MC Abdul - "Deira"
Tawsen and Ayoub Anbaoui - "Dawini"

Top Khaleeji Song

Adel Ebrahim - "Dl'nak"
Ayed - "Lammah"
Ayed - "Rdy"
Fouad Abdulwahed - "Kel Ahebek"
Fouad Abdulwahed - "Thaag El Ghamaam"

Artist of the Year - Khaleeji Dialect

Abdul Majeed Abdullah
Majid al-Muhandis
Ayed
Rashed al-Majed
Hussain Al Jassmi

Top Male Artist - Khaleeji Dialect

Ayed
Hussain Al Jassmi
Rashed al-Majed
Majid al-Muhandis
Abdul Majeed Abdullah

Top Female Artist - Khaleeji Dialect

Assala Nasri
Balqeem
Aseel Hameem
Shamma Hamdan

Oumaima Taleb

Top Egyptian Song

Wael Jassar - "Koul Waad"
Tamer Ashour - "Haygely Mawgow"
Assala Nasri and Ahmed Saad - "Sabb Far-
hety"
Assala Nasri - "Fouq"
Elyanna - "Ganeni"

Artist of the Year - Egyptian Dialect

Ahmed Saad
Nancy Ajram
Amr Diab
Tamer Ashour
Sherine Abdel Wahab

Top Male Artist - Egyptian Dialect

Tamer Ashour
Ramy Sabry
Ahmed Saad
Mohamed Hamaki
Amr Diab

Top Female Artist - Egyptian Dialect

Assala Nasri
Elyanna
Nancy Ajram
Elissa
Sherine Abdel Wahab

Top Levantine Song

Ali Saber - "Dawaat Ommi"
Al Shami - "Sabran"
Nassif Zeytoun and Rahma Riad - "Ma Fi
Leil"
Al Shami - "Wein"
Al Shami - "Ya Leil W Yal Ein"

Artist of the Year - Levantine Dialect

Al Shami
Elissa
Mahmod Alturky
Nassif Zeytoun
Nancy Ajram

Top Male Artist - Levantine Dialect

Al Shami
Siilawy
Nassif Zeytoun
Wael Kfoury
Mahmod Alturky

Top Female Artist - Levantine Dialect

Nancy Ajram
Myriam Fares
Elissa
Abeer Nehme
Rahma Riad

Top Magharebi Song

Soolkeng and DYSTINCT - "Y Dor"

Lartiste - "Zarzour"
Cheb Hichem Tgy - "Fatou Liyam"
Saad Lamjarred, Shreya Ghoshal, and Rajat
Nagpal - "Guli Mata"
Lazaro - "Mahboul Ana"

Artist of the Year - Magharebi

Zouhair Bahaoui
Saad Lamjarred
Dystinct
Cheb Khaled
Samara

Top Male Artist - Magharebi Dialect

Zouhair Bahaoui
Saad Lamjarred
Dystinct
Cheb Khaled
Samara

Top Female Artist - Magharebi Dialect

Manal
Hind Ziadi
Kawtar
Marwa Loud
Chaama

Top Arabic Hip-Hop Song

Muhab - Yazmeely
Draganov - 3dabi
ElGrandeToto and Hamza - Dellali
Stormy - Popo
ElGrandeToto - Blue Love

Artist of the Year - Arabic Hip-Hop

Samara
ElGrandeToto
Marwan Pablo
Stormy
Wegz

Top Arabic Hip-Hop Male Artist

Samara
ElGrandeToto
Marwan Pablo
Stormy
Wegz

Top Arabic Hip-Hop Female Artist

Raja Meziane
Hala
Perrie
Jara
Khtek

Top Indie Song

TUL8TE - "Mateegy A'ady Aleiky"
Al Shami - "Sabran"
Hamza Namira - "Reyah El Hayah"
TUL8TE - "Habeeby Leh"
Elyanna - "Ganeni"

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Artist of the Year - Arabic Indie

Siilawy
Muslim
TUL8TE
Elyanna
Cairokee

Top Arabic Indie Male Artist

Al Shami
TUL8TE
Siilawy
Mohammed Saeed
Muslim

Top Arabic Indie Female Artist

Zeyne
Emel Mathlouthi
Dana Salah
Ghaliaa
Elyanna

Top Mahraganat Song

Eslam Kabonga and Kalosha - "Elli Nefso Feya Beti Maytawehsh"
Eslam Kabonga - "Aywa Ya Habibty Wahashtiny"
Reda El Bahrawy and Muslim - "Lafena El Donya"
Hamada El Leithy and Amr Salama - "Tarek El Andal"
Reda El Bahrawy - "Aal Doghrey"

Artist of the Year - Mahraganat

Muslim
Essam Sasa
Hassan Shakosh
Ameen Khattab
Eslam Kabonga

Top Mahraganat Artist

Hassan Shakosh
Muslim
Essam Sasa
Eslam Kabonga
Ameen Khattab

Top Shelat Song

Mohammed Bin Grman - "Ma Gelt Lak"
Mohammed Bin Grman - "Alek Akhaf"
Abdullah Al Farwan - "Jamalek Gheer"
Nawaf Fraih - "Thalath Ayam"
Asad Albathari - "Makhboob Khelli"

Artist of the Year - Shelat

Nader Alsharari
Mohammed Bin Grman
Ghareeb Al Mokhles
Badr Alezzi
Abdullah Al Farwan

Top Shelat Song

"Alek Akhaf" by Mohammed Bin Grman
"Jamalek Gheer" by Abdullah Al Farwan
"Thalath Ayam" by Nawaf Fraih
"Al Makhboob Khelli" by Asad Albathari

HYBE Chairman Bang Si-hyuk Investigated by South Korean Regulators Over \$285M IPO Profit

BY GLENN PEOPLES

South Korea's Financial Supervisory Service is investigating HYBE and its chairman, Bang Si-hyuk, over allegations he earned \$285 million from the company's 2020 initial public offering through profit-sharing deals with three large shareholders.

HYBE, then named Big Hit Entertainment, went public in 2020 after building its primary act, [BTS](#), into global stars. The IPO [raised approximately \\$820 million](#) and confirmed HYBE's arrival as a major player in the global music business. But while the IPO was a success for the company, many individuals who bought shares for well above the IPO price lost money as the price retreated in the following weeks.

Last week, *The Korea Economic Daily* [broke the story](#) that Bang personally pocketed about 400 billion won (\$285 million) from agreements made with private shareholders STIC Investments, Estone Equity Partners and New Main Equity a few years before the IPO. Those agreements, according to the report, called for Bang to receive 30% of the shareholders' profits from their sale of Big Hit shares following the IPO. But if Big Hit failed to go public before an agreed-upon time, Bang would have had to repurchase the shares plus interest.

In a [statement posted to](#) HYBE's investor relations website on Friday (Nov. 29), the company confirmed the existence of a

shareholder agreement but dismissed the notion that Bang broke any securities law. "During the process of preparing for the listing, our company provided the relevant shareholder agreement to the listing underwriters, and the listing underwriters also reviewed the relevant shareholder agreement in accordance with the listing-related laws," the statement reads. "In this regard, we have determined that our company did not violate any relevant laws during the listing process."

A HYBE official provided more detail about the shareholder agreement in [a statement to The Korean Herald](#). Prior to the IPO, one of HYBE's investors requested to know the IPO timeline, which HYBE refused to share. Worried about unnamed uncertainties, the shareholder demanded a "put-back option," or a right to sell an equity at a pre-determined price and time. But HYBE "couldn't sustain itself under such conditions," this person stated, and Bang "took on the risk himself" and personally agreed to the option.

South Korea's Financial Supervisory Service was [quoted](#) in media reports as saying it's investigating HYBE and Bang for possible violations of the country's Capital Markets Act, including how a private equity fund acquired Big Hit shares prior to the IPO and whether Big Hit omitted information from its securities filing. The Korea Exchange stock market is also examining relevant documents for potential violations.

When Big Hit shares debuted on the Korea Exchange on Oct. 15, 2020, strong demand drove the share price from the 135,000 won (\$118) IPO price to 351,000 won (\$308) on its opening day. But Big Hit's price [fell 22.3% the next day](#) and dropped another 29% over the next two weeks, leaving many individual investors with losses. (The stock rebounded over time. An investor who bought at the peak on the stock's opening day could have sold for a profit had they waited one year.) *The Korea Economic Daily* article contended the drop-off was "largely driven" by the private equity fund's "massive selloff" of Big Hit shares after the IPO. **B**

Tyla Set to Perform at 2024 Billboard Music Awards

BY PAUL GREIN

Tyla is set to perform on the [2024 Billboard Music Awards](#).

Hosted by actress and comedian [Michelle Buteau](#), the 2024 BBMAs presented by Marriott Bonvoy is set to air Thursday, Dec. 12, at 8 p.m. ET/PT on FOX and Fire TV Channels, and on-demand on Paramount+, with performances also rolling out across Billboard.com and via @BBMAs and @Billboard social channels.

Tyla joins [SEVENTEEN](#) and [Teddy Swims](#), who Monday became the [first performers](#) to be announced for the show.

Tyla's global hit "Water" hit No. 7 on the [Billboard Hot 100](#) in January. The following month, it was the inaugural Grammy winner for best African music performance. Her debut album *Tyla* reached No. 24 on the [Billboard 200](#) in April.

Tyla is a finalist for eight Billboard Music Awards: top R&B artist, top R&B female artist, top Afrobeats artist, top R&B album (*Tyla*), top R&B song and top Afrobeats song, where three of her songs are finalists – "Truth or Dare," "Water" and "Jump," the last-named title a collab with Gunna and Skillibeng.

As previously announced, [Zach Bryan](#), [Taylor Swift](#), [Morgan Wallen](#) and [Sabrina Carpenter](#) are the leading finalists for the 2024 [Billboard Music Awards](#).


This marks the show's return to FOX, which carried the show from its 1990 inaugural broadcast through 2006. In addition, Paramount+ will provide on-demand streaming of the show, while the free Fire TV Channels app will provide one-click access to fans using Amazon devices (Fire TV smart TVs and streaming media players and Fire Tablets).

The BBMAs will celebrate music's greatest achievements with exclusive original

performances, artist interviews, and award celebrations taking place from global locations and in the midst of sold-out tours. Sha-boozey will deliver a special performance from W Hollywood, part of the Marriott Bonvoy portfolio. Additional performers and special guests will be announced soon.

The BBMAs honors the year's biggest artists, albums, songs, producers and songwriters across multiple genres, as determined by year-end performance metrics on the *Billboard* charts. The eligibility dates for this year's awards are aligned with *Billboard*'s Year-End Charts tracking period, which measures music consumption from the charts dated Oct. 28, 2023 through Oct. 19, 2024.

The Billboard Music Awards are produced by Dick Clark Productions, which is owned by MRC. MRC and Penske Media are co-parent companies of Billboard.

The show is presented by Marriott Bonvoy, Marriott International's travel program and portfolio of more than 30 hotel brands. For more information, visit [MarriottBonvoy.com](#) 

YSL Trial Verdict: Young Thug's Co-Defendants Largely Acquitted In Atlanta Gang Case

BY BILL DONAHUE

An Atlanta jury on Tuesday issued a verdict largely acquitting Young Thug's two remaining co-defendants in the long-running trial of his alleged YSL gang.

After nearly a year of testimony, jurors found **Deamonte "Yak Gotti" Kendrick** not guilty on any of the slew of charges he was facing. They found **Shannon Stillwell** guilty on a single charge of possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, but not guilty

on any others.

The verdict, which will allow both men to walk free on Tuesday, is a major loss for the Fulton County District Attorney's office, which had accused Kendrick and Stillwell of racketeering, murder, firearms and drug charges – accusations that exceeded those leveled against Thug himself.

After the verdict was read, **Judge Paige Reese Whitaker** sentenced Stillwell to 10 years in prison but ordered him to serve only two, which were covered by time already served during the long-running trial. The remaining eight years of his sentence will be served on probation, the judge said.

The verdict came a month after Thug himself [escaped the case](#). After botched testimony from a state's witness sparked talk of a mistrial, Thug's attorneys rejected a plea deal with prosecutors and instead [opted to simply plead guilty](#) – a gamble that paid off when Whitaker sentenced him to just 15 years probation with no time served in prison.

Combined with Thug's exit, Tuesday's verdict marks the end of criminal trial that has captivated the music industry for nearly two years. Pitting prosecutors in America's rap capital against one of hip-hop's biggest stars, the YSL case has raised big questions – about the fairness of the criminal justice system; about violent personas in modern hip-hop; and about prosecutors using rap lyrics as evidence.

Kendrick and Stillwell were two of the more than two dozen men indicted alongside Thug in May 2022. In a sweeping indictment, prosecutors alleged that his "YSL" – nominally a record label standing for "Young Stoner Life" – was also a violent gang called "Young Slime Life" that had wrought "havoc" on the Atlanta area for nearly a decade.

The case, built around Georgia's Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) law, claimed that YSL committed murders, carjackings, and many other crimes. Prosecutors said Thug was "King Slime," operating as a criminal boss amid his rise to fame, but accused Kendrick and Stillwell of some of the most serious crimes – including carrying out the 2015 murder of rival gang leader Donovan Thomas that played a central

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role in the prosecution's case.

From the start, the YSL case was beset by delays. Starting in January 2023, it took an unprecedented 10-month process just to pick a jury. After the trial itself got underway in November 2023, prosecutors meandered through a vast list of witnesses that included more than 100 names. Earlier this year, the case was delayed for weeks over a bizarre episode that resulted in the presiding judge being [removed from the case](#).

Days before Thug pleaded guilty, several of his co-defendants either did the same or [took plea deals](#). But Kendrick and Stillwell rejected offers and opted to continue to litigate the case, leading to Tuesday's verdict.

Thought he trial is over, the YSL case isn't quite over. Several other defendants were separated from the case early in the proceedings and could face similar trials in the future. 📌

BMG Promotes Katie Kerkhover to Lead A&R Frontline Recordings Across North America

BY JESSICA NICHOLSON

BMG has promoted Katie Kerkhover to the role of senior vp of A&R, Frontline Recordings, North America. In the expanded role, Kerkhover will lead A&R teams at BMG's offices in Los Angeles, Miami, Nashville, New York and Toronto.

Kerkhover is currently based in Nashville, but will split her time between Nashville and Los Angeles. She reports directly to Jon Loba, president, Frontline Recordings, The Americas.

Kerkhover was previously promoted to vp of A&R, Frontline Recordings for BMG in Nashville in 2022, overseeing BBR Music Group's roster of artists on its imprints Bro-

ken Bow Records, Stoney Creek Records and Wheelhouse Records, in addition to scouting, signing and developing new talent for the roster. In leading A&R for BBR Music Group, Kerkhover has worked with artists including Jelly Roll, Lainey Wilson, Jason Aldean and Chayce Beckham, and is working with Blake Shelton's team on his upcoming BMG Nashville debut project.

Since joining BMG in 2020, Kerkhover has also worked in music publishing, serving as senior director of creative, where she managed BMG's Nashville roster of songwriters, including Stephen Wilson Jr., Emily Landis, Kurt Allison, Tully Kennedy and Beckham, among others, while also signing and developing new songwriters and artists.

Loba said in a statement, "When looking for the perfect candidate to lead A&R in North America and elevate our frontline efforts in multiple offices, we didn't have to look very far. Katie has quickly become one of the most accomplished and respected A&R executives in the business, with the track record to match. Like many of the best A&R executives, her background in publishing has served her well in building deep and trusted relationships within the creative community and helping artists realize their unique visions. Having seen firsthand her work with our Nashville roster, including with creatives on both coasts, I am so excited to see what additional magic she helps create for our BMG Frontline Recorded team." 📌

Troy 'Tracker' Johnson Launches TRACK mgmt With HARDY, Dallas Smith & More

BY MELINDA NEWMAN

Troy "Tracker" Johnson will launch TRACK mgmt in January following nearly 10 years with Big Loud Management.

The new full-service Nashville-based management company, a partnership with Live Nation, will launch with clients [HARDY](#), Dallas Smith, Jake Worthington and McCoy Moore, who follow him from Big Loud Management, as do artist managers [Emily Smith](#) and [Drew Magid](#). HARDY, Dallas Smith and Worthington remain on Big Loud Records. Moore is unsigned.

"It's been a long time coming for TRACK mgmt and now seems like the perfect time to make it a reality," Johnson said in a statement. "I'm beyond grateful for the Big Loud partners — [Seth England](#), [Joey Moi](#) and [Craig Wiseman](#) — for not only having a hand in my journey but also providing me with so much support. I'm excited to have Emily Smith and Drew Magid on the TRACK mgmt team. It's going to be a great start to 2025."

The move comes as Big Loud Management prepares to wind down by the end of next year. "Working with Tracker for over a decade, from the very beginning of Big Loud Mgmt, has been an incredible journey," said Big Loud partners England, Moi and Wiseman in a statement. "As Big Loud concludes its artist management venture at the end of 2025, we couldn't be prouder to see Tracker embark on his own entrepreneurial path. He and his team are more than ready for this moment, and we look forward to supporting TRACK mgmt in the years to come."

England says Big Loud's focus will re-

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main on its label and publishing divisions. “Prioritizing a greater work-life balance is something top of mind now that I am a father of two and need greater bandwidth,” he tells *Billboard*. “I will continue to lead our records and publishing divisions as their growth requires greater focus. This shift is a return to my first love. Continuing to foster close relationships with all management clients, it’s my privilege to help guide those not working with Tracker’s team to their next destination.”

Big Loud’s management roster still includes, according to its website, Jagwar Twin, Ashley Cooke, Lauren Watkins and Mackenzie Porter, among others. [Morgan Wallen](#) and Ernest both departed Big Loud Management earlier, though both remain on the label.

Prior to joining Big Loud Management when it started in 2015, Johnson worked in the music business in his native Texas beginning in the early 2000s and earned his nickname from being a tour manager who excelled at keeping track of things. Additional artists he has worked with include Wallen, Florida Georgia Line and Chris Young. 📍

ROSÉ & Bruno Mars’ ‘APT.’ Cozies Up to Sixth Week at No. 1 on Billboard Global Charts

BY GARY TRUST

ROSÉ and [Bruno Mars](#)’ “APT.” rules both the [Billboard Global 200](#) and [Billboard Global Excl. U.S.](#) charts for a sixth week. The song [debuted](#) as the stars’ second leader on each survey.

Plus, Kendrick Lamar debuts five songs in the Global 200’s top 10 and one in the Global Excl. U.S. top 10, all from his new

album, *GNX*; Mariah Carey’s “All I Want for Christmas Is You” dashes back into the Global Excl. U.S. top 10; and two other tracks debut in the Global Excl. U.S. top tier: G-DRAGON’s “Home Sweet Home,” featuring TAEYANG and DAESUNG, and Stromae and Pomme’s “Ma Meilleure Ennemie.”

The Global 200 and Global Excl. U.S. charts, which began in September 2020, rank songs based on streaming and sales activity culled from more than 200 territories around the world, as compiled by Luminate. The Global 200 is inclusive of worldwide data and the Global Excl. U.S. chart comprises data from territories excluding the United States.

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

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ekr2nIex040>

“APT.” tops the Global 200 for a sixth week with 160.6 million streams (up 21% week-over-week) and 20,000 sold (up 49% worldwide Nov. 22-28). The duet debuted with 224.5 million global streams and logged 207.5 million in its second frame, becoming the first title since the chart started to have amassed at least 200 million streams globally in multiple weeks.

“APT.” also now boasts six of the top seven streaming weeks on the Global 200 among songs released in 2024:

224.5 million, “APT.,” ROSÉ & Bruno Mars, Nov. 2

207.5 million, “APT.,” Nov. 9

176.8 million, “Fortnight,” Taylor Swift feat. Post Malone, May 4

162.2 million, “APT.,” Nov. 16

160.6 million, “APT.,” Dec. 7

146.4 million, “APT.,” Nov. 23

132.7 million, “APT.,” Nov. 30

Lady Gaga and Mars’ “Die With a Smile” holds at No. 2 on the Global 200, following eight weeks at No. 1, the most for any song this year, beginning in September. It drew 115.7 million streams (up 1%) worldwide

Nov. 22-28 and has tallied over 100 million streams globally in each of the last 13 weeks, the longest such streak since the chart began.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fuV4yQWdn_4

Lamar debuts five songs in the Global 200’s top 10, all from his album *GNX*, which [blasts in at No. 1](#) on the U.S.-based Billboard 200: “Squabble Up” (No. 3; 82.6 million streams), “Luther,” with SZA (No. 4; 78.1 million), “TV Off,” featuring Lefty Gunplay (No. 5; 74.9 million), “Wacced Out Murals” (No. 6; 60.9 million) and “Hey Now,” featuring Dody6 (No. 10; 48.8 million). Lamar ups his total to 11 top 10s since the Global 200 began. SZA adds her seventh top 10, while Lefty Gunplay and Dody6 each earn their first. (“Luther” samples Luther Vandross and Cheryl Lynn’s 1982 cover of Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell’s 1967 single “If This World Were Mine.”)

“APT.” concurrently commands Global Excl. U.S. for a sixth week, with 141 million streams (up 20%) and 13,000 sold (up 44%) outside the U.S. Nov. 22-28.

“Die With a Smile” holds at No. 2 on Global Excl. U.S. following eight weeks at No. 1 starting in September; Billie Eilish’s “Birds of a Feather” keeps at No. 3, after three weeks at No. 1 beginning in August; and Gracie Abrams’ “That’s So True” rises 5-4 for a new high.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yXQViqx6GMY>

Mariah Carey’s “All I Want for Christmas Is You” sleigh-rides 14-5 on Global Excl. U.S. with 38.1 million streams (up 33%) and 2,000 sold (up 40%) outside the U.S. The modern Yuletide classic, originally released in 1994, has spent 13 weeks at No. 1 dating to the chart’s start, tying Miley Cyrus’ “Flowers” (2023) and Harry Styles’ “As It Was” (2022) for the most frames on top. The carol holds at No. 9 on the Global 200, where it has spent a record 18 weeks at No. 1.

Three songs debut in the Global Excl. U.S. top 10, led by Lamar’s “Luther” (34.1 million streams outside the U.S.) It’s the rapper’s fourth top 10 on the chart and SZA’s third.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fLi0EJfi_vg

G-DRAGON’s “Home Sweet Home,” fea-


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turing TAEYANG and DAESUNG, opens at No. 7 on Global Excl. U.S. with 29.2 million streams and 8,000 sold outside the U.S. The track brings together the three members of BIGBANG, which as a group hit No. 3 on the chart with “Still Life” in April 2022. G-DRAGON and DAESUNG each reach the top 10 as soloists for the first time, while TAEYANG previously ranked in the region with “Vibe,” featuring Jimin (No. 9, 2023).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1F3OGIFnW1k>

Plus, Stromae and Pomme’s “Ma Meilleure Ennemie” debuts at No. 8 on Global Excl. U.S. with 32.3 million streams and 1,000 sold outside the U.S. Each act charts in the top 10 for the first time with the song from the second-season soundtrack to the Netflix animated series *Arcane: League of Legends*.

The Billboard Global 200 and Billboard Global Excl. U.S. charts (dated Dec. 7, 2024) will update on Billboard.com tomorrow, Dec. 2. For both charts, the top 100 titles are available to all readers on Billboard.com, while the complete 200-title rankings are visible on Billboard Pro, *Billboard’s* subscription-based service. For all chart news, you can follow [@billboard](https://twitter.com/billboard) and [@billboardcharts](https://twitter.com/billboardcharts) on both X, formerly known as Twitter, and Instagram.

Luminate, the independent data provider to the Billboard charts, completes a thorough review of all data submissions used in compiling the weekly chart rankings. Luminate reviews and authenticates data. In partnership with Billboard, data deemed suspicious or unverifiable is removed, using established criteria, before final chart calculations are made and published. 

NLE Choppa Partners With New Artist Collaboration App Feature

BY CARL LAMARRE

NLE Choppa is partnering with a new company that helps young artists collaborate with some of today’s biggest stars. Beginning today (Dec. 3), Feature, a new app created by industry veterans Jareiq “JQ” Kabara and Edward “Ed” Ponton Jr., will “streamline the artists-to-artists collaboration process from idea to file delivery.”


“I’m honored to represent a platform like Feature that makes it so easy to connect with other artists and make music together,” Choppa tells *Billboard*. “As someone who’s experienced major success from both my features on other artists’ tracks and their features on mine, having an app that takes the heavy work out of finding collaborators is invaluable.”

After carving out a fistful of Hot 100 hits, including “Shotta Flow” and “Walk Em Down,” Choppa will serve as Feature’s first global ambassador as they look to expand across genres to serve artists from different backgrounds and communities. The app allows artists to search for collaborators based on location, genre, and fees. Once a potential collaborator is found, the app provides a platform for negotiating terms, payments, and music file delivery. This process is designed to be as user-friendly as possible, allowing artists to focus on making music together.

“Our goal was to create a space where finding and facilitating artist features is as easy as possible,” says Kabara, who formerly served as an A&R for Janet Jackson. “We want artists to focus on making music together—while leaving the administrative and legal challenges behind.”

“Feature is a dream come true—a com-

munity exclusively for artists, free from middlemen and built on real, transparent connections,” says Ponton Jr, an experienced songwriter and now Feature’s COO. “It opens doors the industry once kept closed, creating opportunities for all. I thank God for this journey and the vision to bring something new to the independent music industry.”

With Kabara and Ponton Jr.’s combined experience and knowledge in the industry, they hope to reduce the stress rising artists experience when negotiating artist collaborations with the creation of Feature. Upon signing up, artists will get a one-month free trial with the promo code Feature01. The app will also be available to Android users next year, empowering even more artists to connect and create. 

CineVita Brings Live Cinema Soundtrack Experience to Hollywood Park

BY DAVE BROOKS

A new live experience for movie fans, combining cinema with famous film scores and soundtracks, is launching at Hollywood Park near SoFi Stadium in Los Angeles.

Launched by theatrical production group For The Record, CineVita is a first-of-its-kind “Live Cinema” venue, housed in the world’s largest Belgian Spiegel tent, measuring in at 15,000-square-feet. The traveling venue features 3,000 hand-beveled mirrors, hand-cut stained glass windows, and ornate wood-carved detailing and built by the **Rik Klessens** in collaboration with Emmy Award-winning designer **Matt Steinbrenner**.

CineVita opens Jan. 21, 2025 with debut show, *Tarantino | Pulp Rock*, celebrating the 30th anniversary of *Pulp Fiction* and *Quen-*

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tin Tarantino's cinematic universe with a high-octane 360-degree concert experience. Tarantino | Pulp Rock intertwines iconic scenes and soundtracks from all nine of Tarantino's films—*Reservoir Dogs*, *Pulp Fiction*, *Kill Bill*, *Jackie Brown*, *Death Proof*, *Inglourious Basterds*, *Django Unchained*, *The Hateful Eight*, and *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*—reimagined and performed by a live band and cast of exceptional artists performing songs including “Stuck in the Middle with You,” “Bang, Bang, My Baby Shot Me Down,” and “Girl, You’ll Be a Woman Soon.”

“For over a decade, I’ve watched For The Record grow into something truly special—an inventive, nostalgic celebration of cinema and music,” said actress and long-time supporter **Demi Moore**, noting she learned of CineVita from her oldest daughter.

“When Rumer first joined this talented group of artists, I saw firsthand the sense of community and creativity they fostered,” Moore added. “Now, with CineVita, that vision has reached new heights. The idea of stepping into a beautiful, handcrafted tent and escaping into the golden age of cinema is pure magic. It’s a nostalgic journey through our favorite films, but it’s also about something deeper—bringing people together to share a common experience, much like the movies have always done. I’m so proud to help bring this unique vision to life and service audiences across the country from LA to NY and beyond!”

The CineVita will remain in Los Angeles through mid-summer before embarking on a national tour across the United States. Following *Tarantino | Pulp Rock*, For The Record will bring to life additional signature productions from its catalog, paying tribute to legendary directors like **John Hughes**, **Baz Luhrmann**, **the Coen Brothers**, **Paul Thomas Anderson**, **Martin Scorsese**, **Robert Zemeckis**, and **Garry and Penny Marshall**. These shows—each a cornerstone of the For The Record legacy—will deliver unforgettable live cinema experiences to Los Angeles audiences before setting off to captivate the nation.

“Hollywood Park was envisioned as a premier destination for unforgettable events, and we are thrilled to add the world premiere of CineVita to this dynamic space,”

said **Jen Sandstrom** vp of programming and booking, SoFi Stadium and Hollywood Park. “This genre-defying experience will transport our community and visitors alike into the golden age of cinema through live performances, celebrating the arts and further establishing Hollywood Park as a vibrant destination.”

“As a theater kid at heart, I immediately saw the incredible potential of CineVita,” said **Whitney Kroenke Silverstein**, daughter of LA Rams and Kroenke Sports and Entertainment owner **Stan Kroenke**. “This project brings together so many aspects of my life—from my love for live performance to my commitment to using music as a vehicle for positive impact. Hollywood Park and SoFi Stadium provide the perfect backdrop for CineVita’s world debut. This project reflects KSE’s dedication to making Hollywood Park and Inglewood a vibrant hub for cultural events, and I’m thrilled to help make that vision a reality.”

Tarantino | Pulp Rock is directed and adapted by **Anderson Davis**, with music supervision and arrangements by **Jesse Vargas**, choreography by **Sumie Maeda**, and costume design by **Steve Mazurek**. CineVita’s design team includes lighting design by Emmy Award-winner **Mike Berger**, and sound design by Tony Award nominee **Joshua Reid**.

The Moët & Chandon VIP Experience at the CineVita will feature premier seating, table service, complimentary champagne and European-inspired treats, curated by DLS Events to complete the full sensory journey. With every seat in the house offering an exceptional view, CineVita makes this groundbreaking experience accessible to everyone.

Tickets for this limited engagement go on sale to the public on Friday, December 6 at 10 a.m., with a special pre-sale starting today, December 3. Performances begin on January 21.

Tickets are available at TheCineVita.com. Performances are Tuesday-Sunday at 8PM. Matinees on Saturday and Sunday at 3PM. Ticket prices range from \$49-\$225. VIP packages are also available. CineVita is located at 1248 S. District Drive in Inglewood, CA near The Shops at Hollywood Park. 📍

Stephen King Sends His Maine Radio Stations to the Dead Zone After 41-Year Run

BY MARC SCHNEIDER

Stephen King is killing off his cluster of money-losing radio stations in Maine, announcing on Monday (Dec. 2) that WZON, WKIT and WZLO will cease operations in the Bangor area on Dec. 31 after 41 years under his and wife Tabitha’s ownership.

The wicked prolific author bought WLBZ in 1983, renaming it WZON in homage to his 1979 novel *The Dead Zone*. The station was sold in 1990 but re-acquired by the Kings three years later. Despite King’s passion for radio and his efforts to maintain local and independent stations, the three stations have consistently lost money, with King personally covering the deficits.

WZON is on the AM dial at 620 and plays “Retro Radio,” while WKIT 100.3 FM is branded as “Stephen King’s Rock Station” and WZLO, at 103.1 FM, is “Maine’s Adult Alternative.” The company operates under the name The Zone Corporation.

King, who was in his mid-30 when he got into radio, cited financial losses and his advancing age — a healthy 77 — as reasons for the shutdown. He expressed pride in being a local owner and gratitude for the staff and local advertisers who supported the stations.

“While radio across the country has been overtaken by giant corporate broadcasting groups, I’ve loved being a local, independent owner all these years,” said King. “I’ve loved the people who’ve gone to these stations every day and entertained folks, kept the equipment running, and given local advertisers a way to connect with their customers. Tabby and I are proud to have been a part of that for more than four decades.”

General manager **Ken Wood**, who has

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been with the stations for 10 years, acknowledged the end of an era but appreciated the Kings' commitment to local broadcasting.

"Independent, locally owned radio stations used to be the norm," said Wood. "There're only a few left in Maine, and we're lucky we had these three as long as we did."

A news release states that Zone Corporation is closing but doesn't specify if they're looking to sell the stations. This potentially means they could stop operations under a Special Temporary Authority from the FCC, which lets them follow regulations while possibly finding a buyer.

Since getting into the terrestrial radio business in 1983, King has written over 50 novels, including well-known works such as *It*, *Misery*, *The Dark Tower* series, *Pet Sematary*, *Under the Dome*, *Skeleton Crew*, *The Green Mile* and *11/22/63*, among many (many) others.

Read the full announcement from Zone Corporation:

When internationally known author Stephen King first entered the radio business in 1983, it was with the enthusiasm and love of a lifelong rock and roll fan and as a listening member of the greater Bangor community.

He also was a young man of 36 with a lifetime of creativity ahead of him. Now, in good health but feeling his 77 years, King says it's time to "get his business affairs in better order," and that means saying good-bye to the radio stations that he personally has kept afloat and on the air all these years.

"While radio across the country has been overtaken by giant corporate broadcasting groups, I've loved being a local, independent owner all these years," said King. "I've loved the people who've gone to these stations every day and entertained folks, kept the equipment running, and given local advertisers a way to connect with their customers. Tabby and I are proud to have been a part of that for more than four decades."

In those four decades, however, the stations consistently have lost money. The amounts have varied from year to year but have been significant. King personally has covered those losses.

Flagship station WZON, which first went on the air in Maine in 1926 as WLBZ, was purchased by the Kings in 1983. The call let-

*ters were changed to WZON, a nod to Stephen King's best seller *The Dead Zone* and a rock and roll format was instituted. The station never made money and for a time, even surrendered its commercial status to become a donor supported enterprise. In 1990, the station was sold, only for the Kings to re-acquire it three years later and bring back the commercial model.*

Ken Wood, General Manager of the stations for the last ten years is certainly sad to see the end but said he's grateful for the Kings' ownership and proud of the local voices that have a place in Maine's colorful broadcast history. "Independent, locally owned radio stations used to be the norm. There're only a few left in Maine, and we're lucky we had these three as long as we did," said Wood.

The stations of The ZONE Corporation are WZON (620 AM), WKIT (100.3 FM), and WZLO (103.1 FM). Broadcasting operations are expected to cease on December 31st. 📺

'Wicked' Is More Popular Than Ever: Broadway Cast Album Hits Billboard 200 Top 40 for First Time

BY MARC SCHNEIDER

The original Broadway cast recording of *Wicked* reaches the top 40 of the [Billboard 200](#) albums chart for the first time, nearly 21 years after its release in December 2003. The set jumps 79-33 on the chart dated Dec. 7, following continued buzz generated by the recently released film adaptation of the long-running stage show.

The Broadway show, which opened in New York in October 2003, launched with Kristin Chenoweth and Idina Menzel in the lead roles of Glinda and Elphaba (played by Ariana Grande and Cynthia Erivo in the film).

Wicked is just the seventh musical cast album to reach the top 40 of the [Billboard 200](#) in the last 25 years, following Bruce Springsteen's solo show *Springsteen on Broadway* (2018) and the original Broadway cast recordings of *Dear Evan Hansen* (2017), *Hamilton: An American Musical* (2015), *If/Then* (2014), *The Book of Mormon* (2011) and Disney's *The Little Mermaid* (2008).

The new *Wicked* film opened in U.S. theaters on Nov. 22 and has [earned](#) more than \$260 million at the U.S. and Canada box office. Its soundtrack debuts at No. 2 on the [Billboard 200](#), marking the highest [debut](#) for a soundtrack of a big-screen adaptation of a stage musical.

In the tracking week ending Nov. 28, as reflected on the Dec. 7-dated [Billboard 200](#) chart, the *Wicked* Broadway cast recording earned 22,000 equivalent album units (up 60%) while the *Wicked* film soundtrack starts with 139,000 units.

The [Billboard 200](#) chart ranks the most popular albums of the week in the U.S. based on multi-metric consumption as measured in equivalent album units, compiled by Luminate. Units comprise album sales, track equivalent albums (TEA) and streaming equivalent albums (SEA). Each unit equals one album sale, or 10 individual tracks sold from an album, or 3,750 ad-supported or 1,250 paid/subscription on-demand official audio and video streams generated by songs from an album. The new Dec. 7, 2024-dated chart will be posted in full on *Billboard's* website on Tuesday, Dec. 3.

The original Broadway cast recording of *Wicked* had previously peaked at No. 66 on the [Billboard 200](#) in March of 2014. Chenoweth and Menzel starred in the Broadway show from its opening through July 2004 and January 2005, respectively. *Wicked* has continued to play on Broadway since its premiere in 2003, and with more than 8,100 performances, it is the fourth-longest [running](#) show in Broadway history.

The original Broadway cast recording of *Wicked* also spends a 350th nonconsecutive week at No. 1 on *Billboard's* [Cast Albums](#) chart, which ranks the week's top-selling musical stage show albums. *Wicked* has the second-most weeks at No. 1 on Cast Albums since the list began in January of 2006. The

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original Broadway cast recording of *Hamilton: An American Musical* leads the pack with 411 weeks at No. 1.

The *Wicked* cast album also debuts on the [Top Streaming Albums](#) chart at No. 38, where the *Wicked* movie soundtrack debuts at No. 4. 📺

Barry Manilow Books Lifetime Las Vegas Residency at Westgate Resort & Casino

BY GIL KAUFMAN

Barry Manilow has been a long-time staple on the Las Vegas scene. But on Tuesday (Dec. 3) the “Copacabana” made it permanent with the announcement of a lifetime residency at his longtime home: the Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino.

“It’s been an incredible journey performing at the International Theater,” said Manilow in a statement about signing on the dotted line to continue his long run at the resort’s International Theater. “David Siegel and the Westgate team have been like family to me, and I am deeply grateful to have the opportunity to call Westgate home for the rest of my career.”

Earlier this year, Manilow set a new Sin City record when he passed Elvis Presley’s run of 636 performances at the venue.

“Barry Manilow is a generational artist and a dear friend,” Westgate Founder & Executive Chairman David Siegel added. “Over the years, we have built a personal and professional relationship that is truly special, and I am honored to offer Barry the opportunity to perform at Westgate for a lifetime.”

Manilow launched his “The Hits Come Home” residency at the Westgate Hotel in 2021, marking the third Vegas hotel at

which the “Mandy” singer has had a residency. He set up shop at the Las Vegas Hilton from February 2005 to December 2009, during which he had two shows, “Manilow: Music and Passion” (which was filmed for a Primetime Emmy-winning PBS special) and “Ultimate Manilow: The Hits.”

He followed with his “Manilow Paris Las Vegas” at the Paris Hotel & Casino at Las Vegas in March 2010, which ran through Dec. 11, 2012.

Manilow will be back on stage at the International this week when he kicks off his annual run of “A Very Barry Christmas” holiday shows on Thursday (Dec. 5), followed by gigs on Dec. 6, 7, 12, 13 and 14. Tickets are on sale now [here](#) for the 2025 shows, which will take place on Thursdays and Saturdays at 7 p.m. and Friday at 8 p.m.

Manilow performed across the U.S. this summer as part of his Last Concerts tour, winding down with a series of five shows at New York’s Radio City Music Hall in October.

Check out the 2025 International Theater dates below.

Feb. 13 – 15, 20 – 22

March 27 – 29

April 3 – 5

May 8 – 10, 15 – 17

June 12 – 14, 19 – 21

Sept. 11 – 13, 18 – 20

Oct. 9 – 11, 16 – 18

Nov. 6 – 8, 13 – 15

Dec. 4 – 6, 11 – 13 📺

Kendrick Lamar Scores His Sixth No. 1 on Streaming Songs Chart With ‘Squabble Up’

BY KEVIN RUTHERFORD

Kendrick Lamar has his sixth No. 1 – and third of 2024 – on *Billboard*’s [Streaming Songs](#) chart, as “Squabble Up” debuts atop the Dec. 7-dated ranking.

“Squabble Up” bows with 52 million official U.S. streams earned in the week ending Nov. 28, according to Luminate.

Each of Lamar’s No. 1s also debuted at the top of the list, third-most of any act behind [Taylor Swift](#) (seven) and [Drake](#) (15). Both acts are also the only artists ahead of him on the all-time No. 1s ranking since Streaming Songs’ 2013 inception (Swift with nine total rulers, Drake with 20); Lamar sits in a tie for third all time with [Ariana Grande](#) and [Justin Bieber](#).

Lamar first reigned in 2017 with “Humble.,” followed by leads as a featured act on [Lil Wayne](#)’s “Mona Lisa” in 2018 and on “N95” in 2022. 2024 marks the first time he’s led more than once in a year, with “Squabble Up” joined by his own “Not Like Us” and [Future](#) and [Metro Boomin](#)’s “Like That,” on which he’s also a lead artist.

In all, Lamar occupies the entire top nine of the Dec. 7-dated Streaming Songs and 12 of the top 17. That gives him 32 career top 10s, good for a tie for fourth all time with [21 Savage](#) and [The Weeknd](#) (Drake leads all acts with 99).

Lamar becomes the first act not named Taylor Swift or Drake to make up the whole top nine of Streaming Songs; Swift (Nov. 5, 2022; Nov. 11, 2023; May 4, 2024) and Drake (Sept. 18, 2021; Nov. 19, 2022; Oct. 21, 2023) have done so three times apiece.

As for having nine songs in the top 10, La-

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mar joins a list that also includes 21 Savage and [J. Cole](#) in addition to Swift and Drake.

Concurrently, [as previously reported](#), “Squabble Up” debuts at No. 1 on the multimedetric [Billboard Hot 100](#), one of seven songs from new album *GNX* in the top 10, while *GNX* itself [bows at No. 1](#) on the [Billboard 200](#). 📺

Kendrick Lamar’s ‘Not Like Us’ Is Apple Music’s Top Song of 2024

BY RANIA ANIFTOS

With 2024 coming to an end, Apple Music and Shazam are looking back on a great year in music.

Apple Music released its year-end charts on Tuesday (Dec. 3), with Kendrick Lamar coming in at No. 1 on the Top Songs of 2024: Global list with “Not Like Us.” Coming in at second place is Benson Boone’s “Beautiful Things,” with Sabrina Carpenter’s “Espresso” and Shaboozey’s “A Bar Song (Tipsy)” hitting No. 3 and 4, respectively. Taylor Swift’s “Cruel Summer” completes the top five. With 39 songs on the list from female artists, it’s the biggest year for women in the chart’s seven-year history.

Additionally, Boone’s “Beautiful Things” leads the 2024 Global Shazam chart, with more tags on the platform than any other song this past year. Teddy Swims’ “Lose Control” hit No. 2, while FloyyMenor and CrisMJ’s breakout single “Gata Only” arrived at No. 3. At No. 4 is CYRIL’s remix of Disturbed’s “The Sound of Silence,” followed by Artemas’ “i like the way you kiss me.”

Check out the full list of year-end charts [here](#).

If you’re looking to check out your personal music-listening habits of 2024, Apple Music’s Replay 2024 experience is now available for subscribers, via the Apple Music app or [website](#) on desktop. All insights

can be shared on social media or messaging platforms.

In addition to learning your top songs, artists and albums of 2024, users can also find out if they’ve made it in to the Top 500 or Top 1000 listeners of any of their favorite artists or genres; the date they first listened to their top song, artist and album; their monthly listening habits and more. Fans can listen to all their most-played songs from 2024 with Replay 2024 mix.

Artists can also share insights celebrating their year with Replay for Artists. 📺

Jelly Roll Ties Pretty Reckless’ Record as ‘Liar’ Lifts to No. 1 on Mainstream Rock Airplay Chart

BY KEVIN RUTHERFORD

Jelly Roll has now gone 4-for-4 atop *Billboard*’s [Mainstream Rock Airplay](#) chart, rising to No. 1 on the tally dated Dec. 7 with “Liar.”

With the coronation, all four of Jelly Roll’s Mainstream Rock Airplay entries have reached No. 1. He first led with “Dead Man Walking” in 2022, followed by “Need a Favor” in 2023 and “All My Life,” with [Falling in Reverse](#), this July.

Jelly Roll’s feat of sending four initial Mainstream Rock Airplay chart entries to No. 1 equals the record [first set](#) by [The Pretty Reckless](#), which reigned with “Heaven Knows,” “Messed Up World,” “Follow Me Down” and “Take Me Down” in 2014-16.

Concurrently, “Liar” bullets at No. 7, after hitting No. 6, on the all-rock-format, audience-based [Rock & Alternative Airplay](#) chart with 3.7 million audience impressions (up 7%) in the week ending Nov. 28, according to Luminate.

Like “Need a Favor,” “Liar” is a dual

rock and country radio single, as the latter rises 30-26 on the latest [Country Airplay](#) survey. Last year, “Need a Favor” became the first song in *Billboard* history to top both the Mainstream Rock Airplay and Country Airplay charts.

In addition to its all-format radio reach (10.9 million impressions), “Liar” drew 6.7 million official U.S. streams and sold 3,000 downloads Nov. 22-28.

“Liar” is the newest single from *Beautifully Broken*, Jelly Roll’s 10th studio album. The set debuted at No. 1 on the [Billboard 200](#) dated Oct. 26 and has earned 603,000 equivalent album units to date. The set’s “I Am Not Okay” topped Country Airplay for three weeks in November. Also being promoted to pop and adult radio, “I Am Not Okay” holds at its No. 8 best on the Dec. 7-dated [Adult Pop Airplay](#) chart. 📺

Dexter and the Moonrocks’ Debut Hit ‘Sad in Carolina’ Tops Alternative Airplay Chart

BY KEVIN RUTHERFORD

Dexter and the Moonrocks’ first entry on *Billboard*’s [Alternative Airplay](#) chart, “Sad in Carolina,” rises a spot to No. 1 on the Dec. 7-dated ranking.

“Sad in Carolina” is the Texas rockers’ first song on any *Billboard* chart. They’re the second act to earn a first Alternative Airplay No. 1 in 2024, following [Myles Smith](#), whose “Stargazing” topped the Sept. 28-dated survey, and the first band with an introductory leader since [Bad Omens](#) ruled with “Just Pretend” in September 2023.

As “Sad in Carolina” also first made any *Billboard* chart when it debuted on Alternative Airplay on the Aug. 3-dated list, Dexter and the Moonrocks achieve a feat akin to

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recent Mainstream Rock Airplay No. 1 act [The Funeral Portrait](#), whose “Suffocate City,” featuring [Spencer Charnas](#), likewise sparked its first *Billboard* appearance when it debuted, followed by its coronation in November.

Concurrently, “Sad in Carolina” bullets at its No. 11 high on the all-rock-format, audience-based [Rock & Alternative Air-play](#) chart with 3 million audience impressions (up 4%) in the week ending Nov. 28, according to Luminate.

“Sad in Carolina” is from the act’s *Western Space Grunge*, released by in July. The group’s first release since signing to Severance/Big Loud Rock has earned 8,000 equivalent album units to date. The band’s drummer, Ryan Fox, describes its sound on the band’s [website](#) as “country with twang and grunge with a bite,” inspired in part by [Johnny Cash](#)’s cover of [Nine Inch Nails](#)’ “Hurt” and singer-songwriters [Zach Bryan](#), [Tyler Childers](#) and [Noah Kahan](#). “When you take that sound and plug it into amps with electric guitars, you get Dexter and the Moonrocks.” **B**

Kendrick Lamar Rules ARIA Charts Again with Surprise Album ‘GNX’

BY JESSICA LYNCH

Kendrick Lamar has done it again. The Grammy-winning rap visionary surprised fans with the release of [GNX](#), which made a No. 1 debut on the [ARIA Albums Chart](#).

This latest achievement cements Kendrick’s reputation as a chart titan in Australia, marking his third No. 1 album *Down Under*, following the critically acclaimed *To Pimp a Butterfly* (2015) and *Mr. Morale & The Big Steppers* (2022).

The album’s arrival couldn’t have come with better timing—or sharper edges. Fresh

off a public feud with Drake, Kendrick used *GNX* to double down on his artistry, showcasing a bold mix of sharp lyricism and genre-pushing production. Fans responded in droves, sending four tracks from the album—“Luther,” “Squabble Up,” “TV Off,” and “Wacced Out Murals”—straight into the top 20 of the [ARIA Singles Chart](#), alongside six others breaking into the top 50.

GNX also delivers a nostalgic nod to Lamar’s chart-topping history. His past hits like “Humble” and “All The Stars” have left a lasting impact in Australia, and *GNX* proves he’s still got the magic touch, blending vulnerability with the kind of braggadocio only K. Dot can pull off. And with his highly anticipated [Super Bowl LIX Halftime Show](#) performance just around the corner, the rap icon is only gaining momentum.

While Kendrick commands the spotlight, Rosé isn’t letting her reign slip away quietly on the [ARIA Singles Chart](#), with her chart-topping collaboration with Bruno Mars, “APT.,” returning to No. 1 for a fourth non-consecutive week, while Rosé’s new single, “Number One Girl,” debuts at No. 61 this week. With her solo debut album, *rosie*, set to drop next week, fans are already bracing for another record-breaking chapter in her career.

Billie Eilish’s “Birds Of A Feather” climbed to No. 31, while Sabrina Carpenter saw multiple entries, including “Taste” at No. 4 and “Espresso” at No. 11.

Elsewhere on the ARIA Chart, Australian talent is making its mark. Sydney rockers RedHook broke into the top 20 with their sophomore effort “Mutation,” debuting at No. 15, while Alex the Astronaut’s “Rage and All Its Friends” landed at No. 19, marking a triumphant return to the charts. **B**

Band Aid’s ‘Do They Know It’s Christmas?’ Fronts Race For U.K. No. 1

BY SOPHIE WILLIAMS

Band Aid’s “Do They Know It’s Christmas?” is leading the way for No. 1 on the [U.K.’s Official Singles Chart midweek update](#) (Dec. 2), following the release of its 2024 Ultimate Mix.

Released to mark Band Aid’s 40th anniversary, the new version was produced by Trevor Horn [Spandau Ballet, Pet Shop Boys] and features vocalists from the 1984 original, 2004’s *Band Aid 20*, and 2014’s *Band Aid 30*. All three versions have topped the charts in the U.K., as did 1989’s *Band Aid II*.

Over the past few decades, the charity single has raised over £140 million (\$178 million) for the Band Aid Charitable Trust, which seeks to benefit causes such as poverty in Africa. It was written by Bob Geldof and Ultravox’s Midge Ure following a *BBC* report into famine in Ethiopia, and has since become one of the U.K.’s best-selling singles of all-time.

All three previous incarnations of the song contribute to the Ultimate Mix, which features a wealth of artists including George Michael, Sting, Chris Martin, Ed Sheeran, Sam Smith, One Direction, Bono and Sinéad O’Connor, among others.

The push for the top spot follows the release of “Do They Know It’s Christmas?” on physical formats this past Friday (Nov. 29), with proceeds benefitting the Band Aid Charitable Trust. The CD and vinyl variants also feature the original, 20th and 30th anniversary editions and 1985’s Live Aid version from Wembley Stadium.

The song and music video’s depiction of Africa, however, has drawn criticism over the years.

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Following his decision to turn down featuring on the 2014 version of Band Aid, earlier today (Dec. 3), British-Ghanian Afrobeats artist [Fuse ODG further clarified his stance via The Guardian](#). “While the British public’s generosity in 1984 was genuine, and the aim of Band Aid was to address a specific humanitarian crisis, the way it depicted Africa did more long-term harm than good,” he wrote. “It inadvertently contributed to a broader identity crisis for Africans, portraying the entire continent as one monolithic, war-torn, starving place.” Ed Sheeran previously said that Band Aid were using his vocals without permission and that he otherwise would have declined to be involved again.

Elsewhere, Gracie Abrams’ “That’s So True” – which has remained at the summit for the past four weeks – stands at No. 2, followed closely by ROSÉ and Bruno Mars’ “APT” at No. 3. “Defying Gravity” by Cynthia Erivo and Ariana Grande, the emotional centerpiece of the recent *Wicked* soundtrack, comes in at No. 6.

A festive theme continues throughout the Top 10, with three more Yuletide hits heading towards the top of the chart. Wham!’s “Last Christmas” is on track for its first Top 5 appearance of 2024 at No. 5, Mariah Carey’s “All I Want For Christmas” appears at No. 7, and Brenda Lee’s “Rockin’ Around The Christmas Tree” is currently at No. 9. **B**

Indigo Girls to Receive Lifetime Achievement Award at 2025 International Folk Music Awards: Full List of Nominations & Honorees

BY PAUL GREIN

3 5 years after [Indigo Girls](#) won a Grammy for best contemporary folk recording for their eponymous debut album, the duo will receive a lifetime achievement award at The International Folk Music Awards. The awards show will take place in Montreal on Feb. 19, the first night of the Folk Alliance International (FAI) Conference.

The duo, consisting of Amy Ray and Emily Saliers, received a second Grammy nod 35 years ago – best new artist. They lost to a flashier duo, [Milli Vanilli](#), whose award was later revoked on the grounds that they didn’t perform on their album, a charge never leveled against Indigo Girls, who went on to receive five more nods for best contemporary folk recording.

Lifetime achievement awards will also be granted to Lesley Riddle, the African-American musician who gathered songs for the Carter Family with patriarch A.P. Carter and taught Mother Maybelle Carter guitar techniques; and *Songlines* magazine which is celebrating 25 years of covering global roots music.

Flamy Grant, [Sarah Jarosz](#), Kaïa Kater, [Nick Lowe](#), Crys Matthews and [Allison Russell](#) are competing for artist of the year. Kater is also in the running for album of the year for *Strange Medicine*, which features guest spots by Allison Russell, Aoife

O’Donovan, and Taj Mahal.

Two of the other album of the year nominees, Aoife O’Donovan’s *All My Friends* and Sierra Ferrell’s *Trail of Flowers*, are current Grammy nominees. *All My Friends* is nominated for best folk album; *Trail of Flowers* for best Americana album. *All My Friends* was inspired by the passage of the 19th amendment and the evolving landscape of women’s rights in America over the past century.

New recordings released between Oct. 1, 2023 and Sept. 30, 2024 were eligible in the best-of-the-year categories (song, album, and artist).

The People’s Voice Award, which is presented to an individual who unabashedly embraces social and political commentary in their creative work and public careers, will be presented to Gina Chavez.

OKAN, the women-led, Afro-Cuban roots and jazz duo, will be honored with The Rising Tide Award.

The Spirit of Folk Awards will be presented to: Tom Power, Canadian musician and broadcaster, best known as the host of *Q* on CBC Radio One and a member of the folk band, The Dardanelles; Alice Randall, a songwriter whose songs have been recorded by Johnny Cash (among others) and founder of production company Midsummer Music; longtime Folk Alliance Region Midwest pillar Annie Capps; and Quebec’s Innu Nikamu festival, which has exemplified commitment to the promotion and preservation of Indigenous culture for more than 30 years.

The Clearwater Award is presented to a festival that prioritizes environmental stewardship and demonstrates public leadership in sustainable event production. This year’s award will go to the River Roads Festival in Easthampton, MA.

“The recipients and nominees reflect the richness, breadth, and cultural impact of folk music to speak to various experiences of our moment,” Jennifer Roe, FAI executive director, said in a statement. “After all, folk music is the music of the people. I can’t wait to see some of these artists on stage in Montréal!”

The Awards take place on the first night of FAI’s 37th annual conference, which takes place February 19–23, 2025. The conference

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will be held at Montreal's Queen Elizabeth Hotel, site of John Lennon and Yoko Ono's famous 1969 Bed-In for Peace. All conference attendees will have access to attend the IFMAs.

Here are the nominations in the three "Best of 2024" categories plus this year's special award winners.

Nominations**Artist of the Year**

Flamy Grant
Sarah Jarosz
Kaia Kater
Nick Lowe
Crys Matthews
Allison Russell

Album of the Year

Sierra Ferrell, *Trail of Flowers* (Rounder Records)
The Heart Collectors, *The Space Between* (Spins the Gold Records)
Kaia Kater, *Strange Medicine* (Free Dirt Records)
Aoife O'Donovan, *All My Friends* (Yep Roc Records)
Ordinary Elephant - *Ordinary Elephant* (Berkalin Records)
Susan Werner, *Halfway to Houston* (self-released)

Song of the Year

"Tenzin Sings with Nightingales," written by Tenzin Choegyal, performed by Tenzin Choegyal and Michael Askill
"How I Long for Peace," written by Abena Koomson-Davis, Peggy Seeger, Rhiannon Giddens, performed by Rhiannon Giddens, Crys Matthews, and the Resistance Revival Chorus
"Woman Who Pays," written and performed by Connie Kaldor
"\$20 Bill (for George Floyd)," written by Tom Prasada-Rao, performed by Dan Navarro & Janiva Magness
"Ukrainian Now," written and performed by Tom Paxton & John McCutcheon
"Love Letters," written by Julian Taylor, Tyler James Ellis, performed by Julian Taylor

Honorees

Lifetime Achievement Award - Living:
Indigo Girls
Lifetime Achievement Award - Legacy:
Leslie Riddle
Lifetime Achievement Award - Busi-

ness: *Songlines Magazine*

People's Voice: Gina Chavez

Rising Tide: OKAN

Clearwater Award: River Roads Festival (Easthampton, Mass.)

Spirit of Folk: Tom Power, Alice Randall, Annie Capps, Innu Nikamu festival

Folk Radio DJ Hall of Fame Inductees: Archie Fisher (BBC Scotland), Mary Sue Twohy (SIRIUS XM), Taylor Caffrey (WRKF-FM, Baton Rouge, La.), Matthew Finch (posthumous, KUNM-FM, Albuquerque, N.M.), Chuck Wentworth (posthumous, WRIU-FM, Rhode Island) **B**

BBC Radio 6 Music Festival to Return to Manchester in March 2025

BY SOPHIE WILLIAMS

BBC Radio 6 Music Festival will return next spring, having found a permanent home in Greater Manchester.

Scheduled to take place between March 26-29, 2025, the four-day event is set to bring a mix of live performances and DJ sets to venues across the region. The news was announced live on air this morning (Dec. 3) by broadcaster Nick Grimshaw, who is currently covering the 6 Music breakfast show while regular host Lauren Laverne is recovering following treatment for cancer. Laverne is due to return to the show in the new year.

Throughout the festival, the 6 Music team will be broadcasting live from MediaCity U.K. in Salford. Current presenters include [Iggy Pop](#), Huw Stephens, Mary Anne Hobbs and former London night czar Amy Lamé.

The 6 Music Festival is the station's flagship event, and is aired across a number of BBC radio, television, and online channels. Since 2023, it has taken place in Greater Manchester, while previous iterations of

the festival were hosted in different cities annually across the U.K. including Cardiff, London, Glasgow, Liverpool and Newcastle.

In a press release, Samantha Moy, Head of BBC Radio 6 Music said: "We're really proud that our festival brings listeners truly unique performances from the artists they love, alongside a celebration of the fantastic acts that are emerging from Greater Manchester – and 2025 will be no different. We're so looking forward to bringing the whole station to Greater Manchester again and for four days of incredible live music."

The line-up for the 2025 edition of the 6 Music Festival will be announced in February. The 2024 event saw performances from headliners Young Fathers, Gossip, and The Smile, while the likes of CMAT and Hak Baker also made appearances across the weekend.

In January 2014, the BBC launched the 6 Music Festival in Manchester with headliner Damon Albarn. In the years that have followed, the event has seen sets from world-renowned acts including Depeche Mode, Fontaines D.C., Father John Misty and Neneh Cherry. **B**