

# players

CELEBRATING MUSIC'S MOVERS



## 2024 TOP BUSINESS MANAGERS

The music industry's savviest financial advisers guide their clients in making more money, paying fewer taxes — and giving wealth away

BY THOM DUFFY // ILLUSTRATION BY BLAKE CALE

**S**TOCKS HAVE RISEN, interest rates have fallen, inflation has cooled, music catalog sales continue apace — and concert ticket prices have gone sky-high.

These are but a few of the financial factors affecting the fortunes of artists and executives who turn for money advice to *Billboard's* 2024 class of top business managers.

Nominated by their firms and peers and chosen by our editors, these advisers are no mere number-crunchers. The tasks they perform for their clients have never been more complex: negotiating concert tours, tracking licensing fees and streaming royalties, extracting equity in branding deals and selling or buying music catalogs. And that's in addition to more conventional chores like budgeting, filing taxes, guiding investments or estate planning.

In the wake of the election, with uncertainty on

many fronts, the best business managers must take a wide view as they advise their clients.

"There is a lot of political, economic and social unrest in the world right now," says Nathan Richman, a partner in Richman Business Management. "This makes planning a lot tougher than in past years. A tour or album cycle can have several unexpected changes that affect the budget."

Reggie Gooden, a managing partner at 360 Business Management, echoes that view: "Economic and political changes also directly impact the economics of the entertainment industry," he says. "These changes force smart business managers to give more conservative advice and to play defense as we enter uncharted waters in 2025."

The rise of artificial intelligence platforms has also drawn the attention of business managers. "The use of AI music generator tools, in particular, has driven heightened concerns around copyright

protection and the potential negative impact to royalty streams," says Thomas St. John, CEO of Thomas St. John Group.

As in previous years, we invited business managers to cite some of the more unusual investments favored by their clients. "It's all about weed — indoor and outdoor growing, dispensaries, manufacturing of edibles and hybrid gummies," says Tina Fasbender, president of Fasbender Financial Management.

Miller Kaplan partner Michael Kane recalls the client who declared, "I'm going into business with a friend of mine selling vintage wines. And if it doesn't work out selling it, we'll drink it!"

Other offbeat investments cited include funeral homes, vintage arcade games, baseball cards — and the high-end Mercedes-Benz G-Class SUV purchased by one client of ICONAC CEO Daniel Berrocal. The client "thought it was a better investment than saving for a house."

This year, we also acknowledge that one of the most important money moves can be giving it away. Business managers were invited to name the charities they personally support, often in response to dramatic needs.

"The hurricanes have devastated so many this year," says Becky Harris, president of Huskins-Harris Business Management. "I've worked with donations to small towns on the East Coast from many clients privately. Most of these tiny towns don't have the population to receive a lot of funds from the Red Cross, and they are in desperate need of private support."

**Ivan Alarcón**

CO-FOUNDER/CEO

VIBRAS LAB/ROCKVIBES LIVE

**Carolina Medina**  
**Juan Guillermo Rodriguez**  
**Laura Suarez**

PROJECT MANAGERS

VIBRAS LAB

Vibras Lab and affiliated company Rockvibes Live oversaw sales of more than 5 million tickets worldwide for its clients, Alarcón says, including for Karol G's *Mañana Será Bonito* tour, which sold over 2.3 million tickets, according to Billboard Boxscore. The achievement highlights the extraordinary strides by Vibras Lab, which Alarcón and partner Fabio Acosta launched in 2018 with a focus on Colombian talent. The firm also works with clients including Puerto Rico's Eladio Carrion, Colombia's Manuel Medrano and Mexico's Grupo Firme, Grupo Frontera, Peso Pluma and Carín León. "Each client is a big company that is centered on one person or a group," Alarcón says. "The biggest challenge is to make them aware of how important every decision they make is and how this can also affect them financially."

**MOST UNUSUAL CLIENT INVESTMENT**

"A client asked us for a collection of watches," Alarcón says. "Each watch [was] worth over seven digits."

**Belva Anakwenze**

FOUNDER/PRINCIPAL

ABACUS FINANCIAL

The continued growth of music streaming and its impact on revenue models, marketing strategies and artist development have remained vital focus areas for Anakwenze. "We have had to navigate the evolving streaming landscape to maximize artists' income," she says. The rise of social media platforms like TikTok as significant drivers of music discovery and virality has required business managers to adapt and develop new strategies for promotion, audience engagement and monetization. "These alternative revenue streams add to the complexity of tracking income and expenses," she adds, "especially by state or taxing authorities."

**PRESSING ISSUE** "With the growth of streaming TV and film production, there's been an increased focus on sync licensing as a revenue stream. As business managers, we encourage clients to place music in various media, including TV shows, films, commercials and video games. The challenge is that the royalties on these avenues have decreased over the last five years."

**José Aristizabal**

FOUNDER/CEO

CAMALEON

Camaleon, which plays a key role in the



**Ivan Alarcón, co-founder and CEO of Vibras Lab and Rockvibes Live, says his companies oversaw the sale of more than 5 million tickets worldwide for their clients' tours, including KAROL G's *Mañana Será Bonito* trek, which sold over 2.3 million tickets.**

careers of prominent artists like Juanes, J Balvin, Bomba Estéreo and Ovy on the Drums, has successfully constructed "ecosystems of companies to sign composers, producers and artists," Aristizabal says, noting that Camaleon has enhanced its clients' artistic and commercial possibilities by advising and supporting them across the label, publishing and management sectors. He says the firm ensures its clients' sustained success by helping them navigate economic uncertainties like inflation and rising interest rates, which pose significant challenges to cash flow, investment decisions and overall financial stability.

**CHARITY I SUPPORT** "Fundación Mi Sangre is a fantastic [nongovernmental organization] because it empowers at-risk Colombian youth to become community change-makers. They promote a culture of peace through creative expression, leadership development and educational programs, aiming to counteract the violence, particularly in conflict-affected regions."

**Angie Barajas**  
**Louis Barajas**

CO-FOUNDERS/BUSINESS MANAGERS

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT LAB

In the last 12 months, Business Management LAB has had the highest growth

rate in revenue and number of employees in company history, according to Louis Barajas. He attributes these achievements to the resurgence of the regional Mexican music genre — the company's clients include Ivan Cornejo, Yahritza y Su Esencia and Natanael Cano, all of whom have reached No. 1 on *Billboard's* Latin charts. As a result of Business Management LAB's success, Louis was recently reelected to serve as the National Certified Financial Planners' board director for another three-year term.

**PRESSING ISSUE** AI "is a big concern for the near future on music creation and copyright issues," Louis says. "Another big concern is artists who have sold portions of their music catalogs and have spent most of their money without proper financial planning."

**Harrison Bauman**

SENIOR VP/FINANCIAL ADVISER

BAUMAN WEALTH MANAGEMENT  
OF RAYMOND JAMES

Bauman Wealth Management continues to "better our service model for our entertainment clients," says Bauman, who cites "music catalog sales and how they are being structured" as the industry development most affecting his clients' incomes. "Clients need to stay invested for the long term and tune out all of the noise around

them; they need to [maintain] a long-term focus," he says. "[We] assisted clients with recent exits in illiquid investments." Among the most pressing issues for financial planners? "Interest rates and cybersecurity."  
**MOST UNUSUAL CLIENT INVESTMENT** "Chrome Hearts blankets," Bauman says, sold by the luxury purveyor of jewelry, accessories, shoes, fragrances and home goods whose stores are open — often only by appointment — in global capitals and outposts of wealth from Aspen, Colo., to St. Barts in the Caribbean.

**Tyson Beem**

CEO

**Christopher Fazzolari**  
**Shane Glass**  
**Todd Kamelhar**  
**John Menneci**  
**Melissa Morton**  
**Richard Mozenter**  
**Anton Pamer**  
**Mike Skeet**  
**Bill Tannenbaum**

MANAGING DIRECTORS

GELFAND RENNERT & FELDMAN

Strong collaboration between the varied practice groups within the firm, as well as among its global offices in the United States and the United Kingdom, make Gelfand Rennert & Feldman a top choice for business management in all facets of the music industry. Tax guidance, royalty examination, label services, tour accounting and other services provided

by management experts working together — as well as recent additions of principals from Glass Group and Goldman & Knell — have allowed GRF to stay ahead in the industry. "The combined efforts of the various groups and resources within GRF to service our clients is something we're very proud of," Beem says.

**CHARITY WE SUPPORT** "The Judy Fund," Beem says, "which was founded in 2003 in memory of Judy Gelfand, Marshall Gelfand's wife and Todd Gelfand's mother, and is dedicated to eliminating Alzheimer's disease."

**Marius Bercovici**  
**Trey Files**  
**Justin Kobay**  
**Venicia Mestey**  
**Bruce Seckendorf**

PARTNERS

LL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

"This year, we've achieved a remarkable 35% growth in our client base," which includes multiple Latin Grammy Award nominee Feid, Mestey says. The impressive growth came "largely due to referrals, which reflects the exceptional work ethic of our business management team," she adds. "We emphasize transparency in all financial dealings, ensuring our clients feel confident in entrusting their needs to us." As music consumers transition to subscription and ad-supported streaming models, Mestey encourages artists "to diversify their revenue streams, focusing on live

performances, merchandise sales and alternative avenues such as sponsorships and brand partnerships" to maintain financial stability in this evolving landscape.

**CHARITY WE SUPPORT** "The Heavy Hitters Foundation, which donates school supplies and holiday gifts and funds various after-school programs aimed at keeping kids off the streets in different boroughs of New York," Mestey says. "They [also] have rebuilt a basketball court at a school that opens to the community in the Dominican Republic after hours, providing a safe environment for children."

**Daniel Berrocal**

FOUNDER/CEO

ICONAC

This year, Berrocal and his team implemented what they call the "profit first" method, which involves them setting up five bank accounts for each client. Revenue first lands in the income account, and then a percentage of that revenue is automatically distributed to the other four accounts, for profits, owners pay (net income to the client), taxes and operating expenses. This system ensures that clients — who include the electronic artists Subtronics, Of the Trees, Svdden Death and NGHTMR — get paid first and, Berrocal says, "get the most out of their career earnings." Berrocal notes that he and his colleagues also "have been early adopters" of AI. "Incorporating AI into our cloud-based accounting systems and workflows allows us to spend less time number-crunching and more time guiding our



**The business management firm of Gelfand Rennert & Feldman does not disclose its clients but received recognition in the credits of BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN's *Road Diary* documentary about The E Street Band's 2023-24 world tour.**

Miguel's 2023-24 tour has become the most successful ever for a Latin artist.

**RZO Lauds Live Triumph Of Luis Miguel**

**Bill Zysblat**

CO-FOUNDER/MANAGING PARTNER, RZO

**Tom Cyrana**

**Lia Sweet**

PARTNERS/MANAGING DIRECTORS, RZO

Among RZO's superstar clients, The Rolling Stones had their biggest live summer ever in 2024, with the *Hackney Diamonds* tour grossing \$235 million. Fellow client U2 announced plans in August for a film capturing the band's 40-show, venue-opening residency at the groundbreaking Sphere in Las Vegas that ran from September 2023 to March 2024.

But those not following Latin music may have missed the massive touring achievement of another client, Luis Miguel. "We've been with him for 20 years," Zysblat says. "But this year, in Latin America certainly, he blew it out."

In September, Miguel's 2023-24 tour became the highest-grossing ever among Latin acts, grossing \$318.2 million across its first 146 shows. The tour was co-promoted by Cárdenas Marketing Network, led by Henry Cárdenas, in partnership with Fenix Entertainment.

Cárdenas is "an excellent promoter," Zysblat says — high praise coming from a business manager with a five-decade perspective.

RZO earns this shout-out each year in *Billboard's* Top Business Managers list for its history, strategy and clientele. In 1975, Zysblat and the late Joe Rascoff began advising The Rolling Stones, and they formed RZO in 1988. To avoid any conflicts of interest, RZO solely represents artists. "No managers, agents, executives, labels, merchandisers or publishers," Zysblat has said.

In addition to The Rolling Stones, U2 and Miguel, those artist clients include Lady Gaga, Steely Dan, David Byrne, Shania Twain, Sting, Yoko Ono and the estates of John Lennon, David Bowie and Tom Petty. RZO began advising the Petty estate last year, often in discussions with Adria Petty, one of the singer's two daughters, who "knows what she wants to do," Zysblat says.

Clients come to RZO for the firm's experience. "It's not about patting ourselves on the back," Zysblat says. "But we're a great sounding board because I doubt there's a deal we haven't seen before."

For RZO's touring clients, "everything is selling better than pre-COVID," Zysblat says. But he expresses concern about ticket prices. Of dynamic ticketing, he says, "You don't want the scalpers to make the money. You want the artist to make the money." But as demand for tickets outstrips supply, prices rise. "There's no right answer."

But many years ago, Zysblat found one answer: not buying a ticket at all. In the mid-1970s, when Lynyrd Skynyrd and Small Faces (featuring future Rolling Stones member Ronnie Wood) were playing Asbury Park, N.J., "I just sat outside the fence and watched," he recalls. "Ironically, two years later, I was representing the Stones and Lynyrd Skynyrd." —T.D.

clients' financial decisions and delving deeper to set them up for long-term economic success."

**MOST UNUSUAL CLIENT INVESTMENT**  
"We recently had a client who purchased a customized [Mercedes-Benz] G-Wagon [with a base price of \$148,000], and they thought it was a better investment than saving for a house."

- Julie Boos**  
OWNER/CHAIRMAN/BUSINESS MANAGER
- Duane Clark**  
OWNER/PRESIDENT/BUSINESS MANAGER
- Jamie Cheek**  
OWNER/CEO/BUSINESS MANAGER
- David Boyer**
- Jen Conger**
- Carmen Romano**  
OWNERS/VPS/BUSINESS MANAGERS
- Erica Rosa**  
OWNER/VP OF ROYALTIES  
AND CONTRACT COMPLIANCE/  
BUSINESS MANAGER
- Paul Barnabee**  
DIRECTOR OF WEST COAST  
OPERATIONS/BUSINESS MANAGER
- Chris Hughes**
- Dan Killian**
- Betsy Lee**
- Jason Leiss**  
BUSINESS MANAGERS

**FBMM**  
Nashville-based FBMM, along with many other music industry companies, has stepped up to aid people affected by the devastation of Hurricane Helene this year. "I've been blown away by the entire industry's response to Hurricane Helene and all the initiatives raising much needed money and resources for those impacted. It's been deeply rewarding to play a small role in helping support these communities in need," Cheek says. The company is also on alert to help clients protect their work in the age of AI and pay close attention to ticketing. "We're looking at the number of states that allow nontransferable tickets," Cheek adds, "and the number of tools available to maximize value to artists, venues and promoters."  
**PRESSING ISSUE** "More and more private equity companies owning businesses that have historically been mom-and-pop shops, such as bus companies," Cheek says, "which also impacts touring."

**Charles Bradbrook**  
**Janice Lloyd**  
**Steven Wren**  
PARTNERS  
**SRLV**  
SRLV recently welcomed its 10th business manager partner, Tina Sunderland, as well as new members to its royalties and international teams. The U.K.-based company now has a full team dedicated to U.S.

matters. With over 30 years in business and reaching more than 50 countries, Bradbrook says clients have been "busier than ever" with world tours and residencies in the United States and Europe. "It's important to us that our services are inclusive and that we're helping a diverse spectrum of music talent, from superstars and heritage acts to independent and emerging artists."  
**PRESSING ISSUE** "The use of avatars as an alternative to touring is something our clients and particularly heritage acts have been exploring over the past year," Bradbrook says. "The economics of this must be worthwhile, though it's only feasible for the most well-known artists."

- Joseph Callaghan**
- Mark Carter**
- Simon Winters**  
PARTNERS
- Thomas Smith**  
PARTNER/ENTERTAINMENT  
INDUSTRY LEADER
- Scott Dunnachie**  
SENIOR MANAGER

**PRAGER METIS**  
Prager Metis' accounting practices have evolved greatly over the decades. "Over the past year, we've focused on creating diverse revenue streams from merchandise lines to exclusive VIP experiences," Smith says. "New brand partnerships or revenue opportunities arise through thinking about much more than just immediate rewards." Prager Metis, he adds, is always asking how a decision will affect a client's business in five or 10 years: "Thinking ahead allows us to build sustainable growth strategies for our clients, creating long-lasting success in an ever-changing market."  
**PRESSING ISSUE** "Advising clients to plan for their future careers and financial goals," Smith says. "Budgeting and conserving cash flow and clients' investments is our primary focus."

- Adam Caswell**  
DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT
- Roger Ramos**  
ACCOUNT MANAGER  
**FINEMAN WEST & CO.**

In the past year, Fineman West's royalty department has expanded its services by helping clients optimize and audit their royalty and other revenue streams. To do this, the firm — which represents artists including Kim Petras, Tyga and Aerosmith's Steven Tyler — has leaned into AI to increase "the speed and accuracy of data analysis, successfully recovering overlooked revenue and boosting catalog valuations," Caswell says. "Our mission is not only to provide clients with peace of mind but also to position ourselves as industry



**KIM PETRAS, who teamed with The Chainsmokers for the September release of the track "Don't Lie," is among the business management clients of Fineman West & Co.**

leaders and trusted partners for firms seeking specialized expertise in this area."  
**PRESSING ISSUE** "Market volatility and global inflation can significantly impact a client's perception of their net worth," Ramos says. "Consequently, managing cash flow becomes crucial to sustaining the client's lifestyle, particularly during periods of economic uncertainty."

**José Cruz**  
BUSINESS MANAGER  
**SOLUCIÓN ESTRATÉGICA**  
As new technology and business models shape the music business, Cruz says his firm has adjusted its services to respond to the needs of its clients. Among those the company works with is Ozuna, the Latin star whose

music video for "El Farsante" surpassed 1 billion YouTube views in May. "We are focusing more on the use of new technology tools to better customize customers' business road map-planning and strategies and to facilitate management decisions according to clients' specific requirements," Cruz says. As a result, he explains, Solución Estratégica can now "react and respond with more agility to the entertainment industry's constant changes and advise [clients] on the best practices and solutions to make better business decisions and allocate investments more strategically."  
**MOST UNUSUAL CLIENT INVESTMENT**  
"A startup wellness product with a nanotechnology-based manufacturing company in the U.S."

KIM PETRAS: GETTY IMAGES

# WE'RE CELEBRATING the BIG FOUR-Oh!



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**Lester Dales  
Paul Makin**

DIRECTORS

**DALES EVANS & CO.**

This year marks the 30th anniversary of London-based accountancy Dales Evans & Co., whose clients include Queen, Dua Lipa and Coldplay. In July, Coldplay's *Music of the Spheres* world tour surpassed a total gross of \$1 billion. "Due to the ways in which the finances of the live industry have been reshaped by COVID-19, we have had to become much more involved in assisting with [touring artists'] budgeting, cash-flowing and financial forecasting," says Makin, who joined the company in 1998. "This has been challenging at times; however, we feel our input has been crucial to ensuring that our clients are fully reaping the rewards of their activities in this area."

**MOST UNUSUAL CLIENT INVESTMENT**

"We have a client who recently invested in a company that creates sustainable aquafarms," Makin says.

**Ed Eschleman  
Olga Goldovskaya  
Steven McMillan  
Corey Pelton**

DIRECTORS OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND FAMILY OFFICE SERVICES

**ARMANINO**

Representing some of the most prominent artists in the industry, as well as a range of clients in health care, law, private equity and other sectors, Armanino has recently

boosted its focus on the use of technology within the firm, freeing its advisers to offer more time to clients, particularly in the form of personalized financial and strategic advice. "This approach has allowed us to maximize [client] growth and success," Eschleman says. Financial literacy and planning remain the most critical challenges that Armanino addresses with clients, as the firm guides them to a clear understanding of their financial landscape.

**MOST UNUSUAL CLIENT INVESTMENT**

"My clients haven't made any wildly unconventional investments lately, but I've definitely heard some interesting stories from other business managers," Eschleman says. "I always get intrigued when I see a client exploring investments in professional sports clubs, which we've seen more of lately."

**Kella Farris  
Stephanie Self  
Catherine Moore  
Stephanie Alderman**

PARTNERS

**FARRIS SELF & MOORE**

After relocating last year to a 10,000-square-foot office in Nashville, Farris says it was another banner campaign for FSM's "artist-centric approach" that sets up clients for "long-term success." Farris was promoted from Country Music Association board president to board chairman for 2024, while Moore joined the board of Leadership Music. Self will serve a three-year term as board director for

the South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities Foundation. As the firm keeps expanding, FSM elevated Alderman to partner in October 2023, reinforcing FSM's "dedication to strategic growth and providing all-in, exceptional client service."

**PRESSING ISSUE** "The rise of streaming as the primary means of music consumption," Farris says, "alongside the disparities in payouts to artists, continues to be a key concern in discussions with clients."

**Tina Fasbender**

FOUNDER/PRESIDENT

**FASBENDER FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

Having run her own boutique firm for nearly four decades, Fasbender says one of her primary roles is serving as an "interpreter" for other business professionals so that a client "truly understands what's being discussed" and can make "informed decisions" about his or her career. "I coach and break down into digestible pieces estate planning, investment portfolio results and decisions, legal talk, retirement planning, financial implications of spending and income, and whatever arises that is white noise or confusing to the client," she says. Fasbender is increasingly helping clients parse the explosive growth of generative AI, which she says is like the Wild West and must be closely watched: "It's a major concern for me and my clients' long-term interests."

**MOST UNUSUAL CLIENT INVESTMENT**

"It's all about weed — indoor and outdoor growing, dispensaries and other retail options, [oil] extraction [and the] manufacturing of edibles and hybrid gummies."

**Marco Fonseca**

CEO

**RED MIND GLOBAL**

Fonseca's team at Red Mind Global was behind the planning and execution of Colombian band Morat's first global stadium tour, the 24-date Los Estadios run. Launched in June and making stops in Latin America, the outing reflected the continued growth of Latin touring worldwide. "This has been a major achievement for us," Fonseca says, "demonstrating our ability to manage large-scale events and collaborate effectively across regions, highlighting the importance of strategic planning and teamwork in the success of such a massive undertaking."

**CHARITY I SUPPORT** "I support the Wounded Warrior Project because of the deep respect I have for the men and women who serve our country, and I believe they deserve our support for the sacrifices they make."

**Reggie Gooden**

CO-FOUNDER/MANAGING PARTNER

**360 BUSINESS MANAGEMENT**

As a business manager, Gooden wears many hats to maximize his clients' assets. "Besides providing accounting, tax and business concierge services for elite entertainment and sports professionals," Gooden says, "our client roster has broadened to include international entertainment brands, management companies and high-net-worth individuals." Gooden has also become a licensed investment adviser representative, allowing him to better provide personalized wealth and investment advice at a very high level.

**PRESSING ISSUE** "Economic and political changes also directly impact the economics of the entertainment industry. These changes force smart business managers to give more conservative advice and to play defense as we enter uncharted waters in 2025 ... Rapidly evolving ways to monetize content across new and established platforms, as well as technological changes such as AI, have made me look at existing business models in a brand-new way."

**Sean Granat**

PARTNER/CPA

**COHNREZNIK**

"Businesses that have struggled to maintain their own financial and technology teams" can outsource these functions to CohnReznik, Granat says, including "back-office financial reporting and

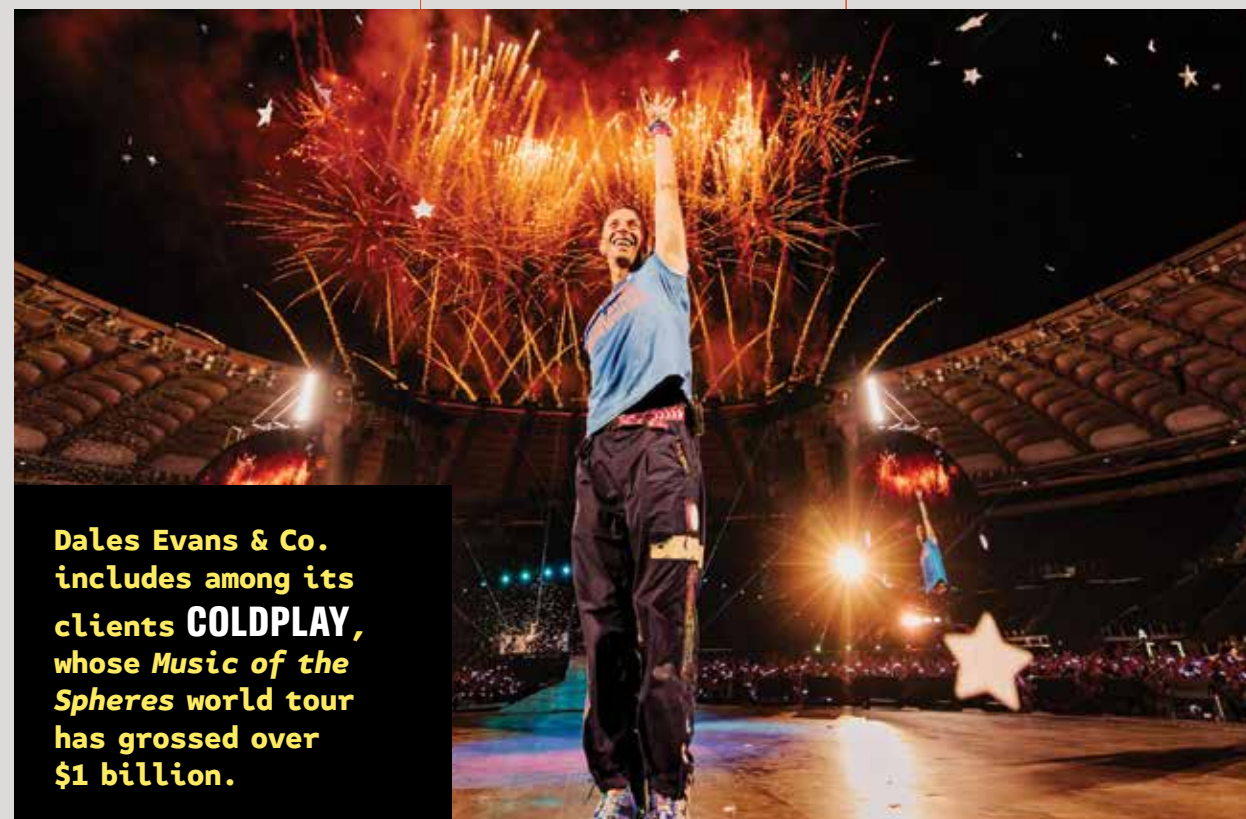


**LOUIS & ANGIE  
BARAJAS**

FEATURING

BM LAB TEAM & OUR AMAZING CLIENTS

Congratulations on an extraordinary 8 years on Billboard's Top Business Managers list! Your unwavering leadership, dedication, and passion for supporting the entertainment industry continues to set the standard.



Dales Evans & Co. includes among its clients **GOLDPLAY**, whose *Music of the Spheres* world tour has grossed over **\$1 billion**.

bookkeeping, cybersecurity, technology advisory and my area of expertise — tax planning and cross-border [advice]. These companies get the benefit of our expertise in many critical areas along with the efficiencies that outsourcing can bring to their bottom lines." Touring still generates the majority of income for many artists, and Granat helps clients manage their tour budgets by eliminating unnecessary expenses and improving operational efficiency. While the industry has seen an upsurge in private equity investment in catalog sales, Granat warns that although prices "are high, they are trending lower than pandemic-level totals."

**MOST UNUSUAL CLIENT INVESTMENT**

"While some have asked me about investing in their 'sibling's startup venture' or something similar, I continue to guide them in considering investments that are tax-efficient, generally low risk and focused on generating returns to them for future income once their performing or songwriting days are over."

**Becky Harris**

**PRESIDENT**

**HUSKINS-HARRIS BUSINESS MANAGEMENT**

Harris is eager to promote diversity in the industry, specifically in Nashville. "We were proud to help Angie K, one of CMT's Next Women of Country of 2023, get an album produced [and] find management and a booking agency," she says, adding that "we are working with K. Michelle as she puts out her [debut country] album." At the same time, Harris works to stay on top of technological advances that could help or hurt her clients. "It's a scary time when AI can be beneficial but can also create scenarios where a person's intellectual property can be stolen much like identity theft," she says.

**CHARITY SUPPORT** "I'm still a big supporter of St. Jude's and Vanderbilt children's hospitals. But, as the hurricanes have devastated so many this year," Harris has worked with multiple clients so they could make private donations to East Coast towns. "Most of these tiny towns don't have the population to receive a lot of funds from the Red Cross, and they are in desperate need of private support."

**Timothy J. Jorstad**

**CEO**

**JORSTAD**

In his role as an accountant, Jorstad collaborated with the law firm Manatt Phelps & Phillips to successfully defend Jefferson Starship in a royalty dispute with the group's former guitarist-songwriter Craig Chaquico. His firm and Manatt also worked together on the sale of the music catalogs of Journey and the estate

of John Lee Hooker to Hipgnosis and BMG, respectively. Meanwhile, Jorstad, whose clients include Jefferson Airplane, the Grateful Dead, Carlos Santana and Jimi Hendrix's estate, recently began co-managing the estates of George Winston and Journey founder Herbie Herbert. This year, Jorstad also worked with Live Nation, CAA and Full Stop Management as The Doobie Brothers launched a 50th-anniversary world tour.

**PRESSING ISSUE** "For our firm, aging artists and succession planning for the next generation is a big focus — thinking through sales of catalogs to help fund retirements and avoid family member battles over control of copyrights and rights of personality."

**Nicholas Judd**

**CO-FOUNDER/CEO**

**Nicholas Brema  
Graham Helser**

**BUSINESS MANAGERS**

**LEFTBRAIN**

Business management has become increasingly challenging in a fast-paced digital environment where artists are earning income from myriad sources. "Every year, the job gets harder — transaction volumes are higher, the complexity of deals is increasing, and our clients expect instant access to their financial information," Brema says. But Leftbrain has thrived, growing its staff by 50%. A highlight for Brema was watching one "high-profile client evolve from an immensely talented artist into a confident businessperson, making strategic financial decisions with clarity and purpose. Being part of that journey [and] seeing their growth firsthand was a privilege."

**PRESSING ISSUE** "The biggest shift we're seeing with the potential for real income growth is in brand partnerships — not just sponsorships, but true partnerships," Brema says. "Look at Fenty, R.E.M. Beauty and Rare Beauty — those are massive wins for the artists behind them. Some of our high-profile clients are exploring similar ventures beyond beauty, and the opportunities are incredible."

**Wayne Kamemoto**

**PARTNER/LEADER OF THE FIRM'S MUSIC PRACTICE**

**Maria del Pilar Lopez  
Sharon Sullivan  
Errol Wander**

**PARTNERS**

**CITRIN COOPERMAN ADVISORS**

"Our music practice continues to stockpile the best talent to service clients at the highest level, handling tasks in-house from catalog valuations, royalty audits, royalty management and tour accounting to day-to-day financial management," says



**Becky Harris, president of Huskins-Harris Business Management in Nashville, helped ANGIE K, one of CMT's 2023 Next Women of Country, get an album produced and secure management and a booking agency.**

Kamemoto, who leads Citrin Cooperman's music practice. And, he explains, "adding entertainment tax veteran Shawn Litchfield as a partner this year to our existing tax experts" has further bolstered the firm's capabilities.

**PRESSING ISSUE** "With the industry experiencing rising costs, proper budgeting for tours, recording and promotional endeavors is key," Kamemoto says. "Keeping clients informed of this and their finances in a way they can grasp is a must."

**Michael Kaplan**

**MANAGING PARTNER**

**Michael Kane**

**PARTNER**

**MILLER KAPLAN**

"I am proud to have been part of the team that advised and helped structure the biggest deal in music business history," says Kane, whose firm helped ink the Michael Jackson estate's deal to sell 50% of the artist's catalog to Sony Music. Looking ahead, he says the biggest issue for clients is AI, since the industry has "no idea" where the technology is headed: "We know that the content creators — the artists — are going to embrace AI and take it to new levels," Kane says. "The challenge is to help them monetize their efforts while protecting them from being stolen from."

**MOST UNUSUAL CLIENT INVESTMENT**

"A very prominent client sent me a bill for a

half-million dollars, and I said, 'What's this for?' " Kane recalls. "They said, 'I'm going into business with a friend of mine selling vintage wines. And if it doesn't work out selling it, we'll drink it!'"

**Michael Karlin**

**FOUNDING PARTNER**

**Wallace Fortune  
Kevin Kanegai  
Steve Landau  
Matt Segal**

**PARTNERS**

**NKSFB**

With seven offices throughout the United States and the United Kingdom and more than 650 employees, NKSFB works alongside top artists in music, film, TV, sports and other industries across its core competencies of business management, artist services, and tax and audit resources. This past year, company executives have helped clients navigate the market amid continued high interest rates. "Clients have been frequently asking me about interest rates and if they will be dropping soon and what this means for their current home loan [and] investments," Segal says. The firm is also keeping on top of the evolving streaming landscape. "In regards to streaming models," Segal says, "it's a matter of making sure that we're able to capture all payments through all the various platforms."



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**MOST UNUSUAL CLIENT INVESTMENT**

"A client once reached out to invest in a new type of potato chip brand," Segal says.

**Matt Klarberg**  
SENIOR CLIENT ADVISOR  
MAI CAPITAL MANAGEMENT

MAI Capital Management has prioritized developing its "holistic approach" to business management, according to Klarberg, whose clients include Nicki Minaj, John Summit, Kaskade and Tokischa. "We truly focus on the family office model, which encompasses a wide variety of financial and operational services for our clients," he says. In conversations with clients, Klarberg says, "the rise of artificial intelligence has been an interesting topic for the past year or so. I've seen many clients invest in what they believe is the future of music. Whether it's technology that produces music or platforms that consolidate and collect royalties, the future seems like it is here."

**PRESSING ISSUE** "It is more important than ever that business managers focus on long-term goals for clients rather than quick fixes or reactive decision-making. It's not a sprint, it's a marathon — we need to stay focused on longevity."

**Josh Klein**  
MANAGING PARTNER/CEO  
TKG BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

"Music catalog sales and evolving streaming models are definitely reshaping revenue streams for many of our clients, but we saw this coming," Klein says. "We're navigating these shifts to ensure long-term financial security. At the same time, we're keeping a keen eye on how AI is shaking up royalties and [intellectual property] rights." Since doubling its growth in 2023, TKG has "doubled the double," as Klein puts it. Nabbing "bigger clients, bigger deals [and] more moving parts" for the company during 2024, the firm has added new departments to its growing staff, including an in-house royalties team. But Klein says the firm's crowning achievement for the year wasn't rapid expansion, but rather how the teams kept the wheels turning as TKG evolved. "They still deliver like clockwork," he says. "That's what makes me proud — watching TKG thrive under pressure and seeing how far we can take this."

**MOST UNUSUAL CLIENT INVESTMENT**

"Funeral homes."

**Summy Kuti**  
FOUNDER/CEO/BUSINESS MANAGER  
OAK MANAGEMENT GROUP

Kuti and her team transform challenges into opportunities. "As the entertainment industry continues its rebound, with

touring costs skyrocketing and promoters tightening budgets, our firm helped clients maintain profitability," she says. A major focus has been expanding global tax services, particularly for international artists. "We've been able to successfully reduce tax burdens, enabling non-U.S. artists to tour profitably while expanding their creative reach in the U.S." Additionally, OAK has fostered strategic partnerships in publishing and licensing, particularly by bringing together clients in similar spaces. "This collaborative approach," Kuti says, "ensures shared costs, aligned incentives and — most importantly — mutual financial gain."

**MOST UNUSUAL CLIENT INVESTMENT**

"Some interesting/alternative client investments include rare 'cult' wines and spirits — think bottles of Pappy Van Winkle bourbon — nostalgic collector's items like original arcade machines and physical gold and silver bullion, likely taking advantage of inflation-driven asset value increases."

**Kristin Lee**  
FOUNDER/ENTERTAINMENT  
BUSINESS MANAGER  
KLBH

Lee says she is at her best when working as a "steady hand in the background" for the artists, athletes and actors she advises. This year, that steady hand has suited the firm she founded and leads: KLBH made foundational improvements such as adopting new technology, overhauling how it does clients' taxes and enhancing bookkeeping and account management. "These essential improvements," Lee says, "have positioned us well for the future."

**PRESSING ISSUE** "AI, like any technology, can be leveraged for successful ventures and projects if it is used wisely and responsibly. I am interested in how it can be used in our firm and with our clients, and it will remain an ongoing conversation internally and with our clients as it develops."

**David Levin**  
MANAGING DIRECTOR  
Ellis Beber  
Allison Krant  
Howard Krant  
Michael Nelson

**PARTNERS**  
DL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT,  
A DIVISION OF ADEPTUS PARTNERS

Levin says that due to the nature of his firm's clients — including John Legend, Chrissy Teigen, Hailey Bieber, Kodak Black, Madison Beer, BoyWithUke, Lake Street Dive, Raphael Saadiq, Live and Indigo Girls — "we have incorporated, through merger and acquisition, a multitude of tangential practices to our general entertainment business

management services that clients need outside of bookkeeping, accounting and tax preparation." The firm, he notes, has added separate divisions "for royalty accounting and administration, [music catalog] valuations, nonprofit work [and] auditing, and [we expanded] our general accounting practice, specializing in all areas of business and taxation."

**PRESSING ISSUE** "Keeping all clients in constant communication with their overall financial and tax position to make sure they try to live within a reasonable budget and save for the future," Levin says, "as we are all aware of the volatility of our industry."

**Matthew Lichtenberg**  
PARTNER  
Paul Ta

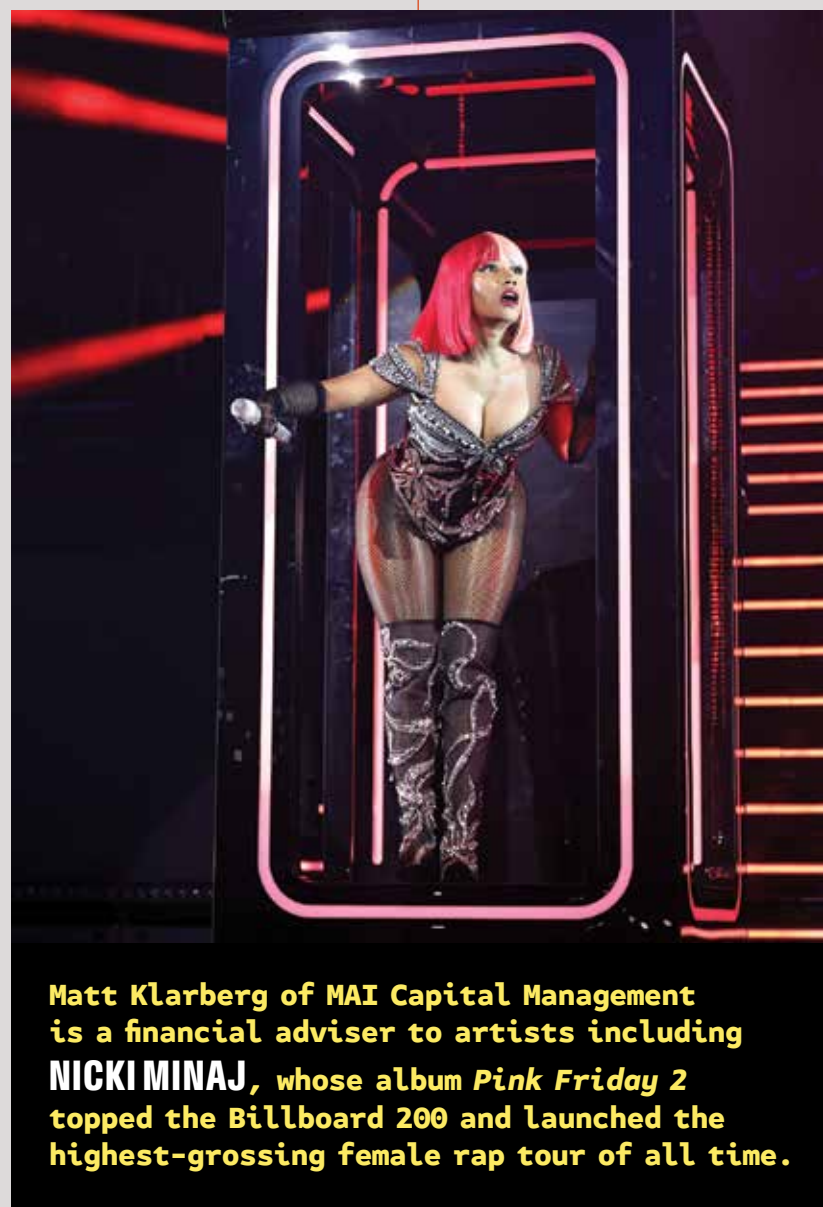
**EXECUTIVE**  
LEVEL FOUR BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Over the past year, Level Four has provided strategic guidance to clients

in the film/TV industry after the 2023 writers strike and has helped artists navigate the changing landscape of contract negotiations and financial and tax planning. While cybersecurity, AI and efficiency remain pressing financial issues, the Los Angeles-based company has also advised clients on tax implications of relocating to more "tax-friendly" states, a phenomenon that has gained momentum in recent years. "Our goal is to empower clients with the knowledge and resources they need to make sound decisions that best suit their financial futures," Ta says. Among other recent developments the firm is watching, according to Ta: "Catalog sales have moderated" while multiples — the amount a buyer will pay for a catalog compared with how much it earned in the previous 12 months — "have decreased due to higher interest rates."

**MOST UNUSUAL CLIENT INVESTMENT**

"Vintage baseball cards," Ta says.



**Matt Klarberg of MAI Capital Management is a financial adviser to artists including NICKI MINAJ, whose album *Pink Friday 2* topped the Billboard 200 and launched the highest-grossing female rap tour of all time.**

JANE HODARTY/GETTY IMAGES

JBALVIN x TEAM

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**6LACK**, who received a 2024 Grammy Award for best progressive R&B album, is among the business management clients of the firm PARR/3.

**Manuel López**  
CO-FOUNDER/CO-CEO  
SYMPATHY FOR THE LAWYER/MAAS

López's firm has been involved in financing "hundreds of festivals and concerts in Spain thanks to our counseling, management of the cultural tax equity, financial strategies, grants and sponsorships," he says. The firm has helped clients not only minimize taxation on tour revenue — international withholding tax has become a sticking point in many tour negotiations, he notes — but also "take advantage of Spain's privileged position as a bridge between Europe and Latin America in terms of investments and creation of subsidiary companies," López says. "We have become the key business partners of several top artists who built their careers independently and started moving really impressive figures. In these cases, we provide a first-class financial and legal team to manage and optimize the raw incoming royalty flows from the distributor, plus designing and

developing the business plan of their tours and big shows." **PRESSING ISSUE** "It is very difficult to find specialized personnel in the music business, and companies like ours must have the ability to train and develop talent internally."

**Derick Luna Ramos**  
FOUNDER/MANAGING MEMBER  
GLOCAL MANAGEMENT GROUP

The Puerto Rico-based boutique business management firm says it manages the financial affairs of three of the top 15 most streamed Latin artists, though it cannot name them due to client confidentiality. "We exemplify how effective business management can elevate an artist's career and maximize their revenue potential," Luna Ramos says. Demonstrating Glocal's capacity to drive substantial financial growth for its clients, Luna Ramos says, in the past year, "one of our most significant achievements has been the successful oversight of over \$150 million in gross revenue from various sectors, including live events, publishing, distribution deals and sales of catalogs."

**MOST UNUSUAL CLIENT INVESTMENT** "They have been evaluating opportunities in 'exotic real estate' and cannabis stocks. These alternative investments represent a shift in strategy for our clients, aiming to diversify their portfolios and explore potentially high-yield avenues in emerging sectors."

**Amir Malek**  
**Pam Malek**  
CO-PRESIDENTS, COLONY  
BUSINESS MANAGEMENT  
THE COLONY GROUP

Husband and wife Amir and Pam Malek were elevated to co-presidents of Colony Business Management in June. The firm, which counts Mötley Crüe and Slash among its clients, handled "all budgeting, finances and tax planning" for 2023's largest rock tour (it cannot name the client), "being mindful of increased cost of travel and international uncertainty," Pam says. She points to new streaming models with increased royalties as benefiting clients, as well as catalog sales that result in income taxed at lower rates for capital gains.

**PRESSING ISSUE** "Cybersecurity, bank fraud and email hacking have increased the risk of business managers," she says. "We have secured additional verification procedures to make sure our clients' finances are protected."

**Mike Merriman**  
FOUNDER/PRESIDENT  
**Bryan Gott**  
DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT  
**Brandon Russell**  
**Sunny Sanghera**  
EXECUTIVE ACCOUNT MANAGERS  
**Megan Goodrich**  
**Odette Moradians**  
SENIOR ACCOUNT MANAGERS  
PARR/3

As founder and president of PARR/3, a consulting firm that specializes in business management for entertainers and music companies — with clients including Louis Bell, Clairo, 6LACK, Alison Wonderland, Kehlani and LVRN Records — Merriman says he is especially proud of the growth of the firm's senior leadership ranks in the past year and their work managing all financial aspects of top-tier artists' careers. The members of his team "have each raised the bar in what it means to be a business manager: showing empathy in communication and extreme attention to detail at the same time," he says. The firm uses data "to encourage our artists and their managers and lawyers to make smarter deals. Now more than ever our clients are using their streaming and touring numbers to get the best deal terms, not just the biggest check."

**CHARITY I SUPPORT** "Noise for Now," Merriman says. "The fight for reproductive rights is extremely real and timely. Noise for Now helps musicians connect with and financially support grassroots reproductive justice organizations."

**Enrique R. Narciso**  
PRESIDENT  
ERN ADVISORS

As president of Miami-based ERN Advisors, Narciso has assisted high-profile clients in renegotiating existing recording deals while also lining up a new distribution agreement with a major label. His clients include Shakira, Maluma and Walter Kolm's WK Entertainment. He also played an integral role in negotiations for securing a world tour alongside Live Nation for another client. ERN advised clients on the sale of their catalogs before interest rates rose, with Narciso stating he was able to "obtain very high multiples ... There has been pullback since then, but this will correct in time as the legacy catalogs continue to generate significant value."

**PRESSING ISSUE** "Regarding AI, we think there should be protections for the artists as implemented in Europe. We are advising clients to be proactive and seek legal counsel regarding misuse of their [intellectual property]."

**Harley J. Neuman**  
FOUNDING PARTNER  
NEUMAN + ASSOCIATES,  
A DIVISION OF NKSFB

"As our clients look to monetize their future income streams, we've continued to assist with the sale of those income streams in the most tax-efficient way," says Neuman, who counts Melissa Etheridge, Alicia Keys and Dave Koz among his clients. In the past year, Etheridge filmed her concerts for incarcerated women at



From The MAR Group

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the Topeka (Kan.) Correctional Facility for the two-part series *Melissa Etheridge: I'm Not Broken*, which premiered on Paramount+ in July; Keys' documentary, *Uncharted*, about the lack of access and opportunity the music business offers young Black and brown women, arrived on the platform in October. And in June, Koz was among the artists featured at the Henry Mancini Centennial Celebration Concert at the Hollywood Bowl. "As the music industry continues evolving toward a subscription model," Neuman says, "the sale of physical product, and even the recognition of royalties from streaming, has been affected. The resulting loss of income has resulted in an increase in catalog sales and increased live touring."

**PRESSING ISSUES** "Political uncertainty, higher interest rates, evolving business models."

**Glenn Nordlinger**  
FOUNDER/MANAGING PARTNER

**THE NORDLINGER GROUP**

Nordlinger says he feels it is his "main mission" as a business manager "to ensure that all of our artists feel a sense of having an experienced, professional, responsible, knowledgeable and responsive team around them all the time." As the music business evolves, Nordlinger says catalog sales have become a great option to get "useful infusion[s] of funds for long-term investment," even if the artist is young and still current. Through all the changes to the music business, Nordlinger says that the most pressing challenge of all is "maintaining a high profit margin on touring in the wake of ever-increasing costs."

**CHARITY I SUPPORT** "Underfunded areas of pediatric research, including research related to equality in health care for kids."

**Kerry O'Neil**  
**Alvin Hagaman Jr.**  
**Lgina Chaudoin**  
**Cheryl Harris**  
**Sam Powers**  
**Lynda Ragsdale**  
**Lillian Williams**

**PARTNERS**

**O'NEIL HAGAMAN**

The rising cost of touring production and logistics remains challenging for the live industry, leading artists and their teams to explore ways to make concerts more affordable for fans. "In response to increased competition for venues along with rising costs for labor, production and transportation, our artists [are] offering more ticket options while seeking to still offer affordable prices," Hagaman says. Meanwhile, he's keeping a close watch on the security and privacy of clients' data, which Hagaman says "is more chal-

lenging than ever with rising digital fraud and theft exposure."

**PRESSING ISSUE** "Developing and implementing successful streaming strategies continues to be a challenge for both artists and record companies," Hagaman says. "The impact for writers and publishers is also significant, with song revenue increasingly tied to streaming activity."

**Lateefah M. Parramore**  
FOUNDER/CEO

**THE LRW GROUP GLOBAL**

Parramore, whose clients include Sexy Red, founded The LRW Group in 2023 and hasn't missed a beat. "It's an exhilarating yet daunting journey, but ultimately rewarding," she says. "My goal was to build on a solid foundation in business management while enhancing the focus on the people component." As the firm's leader, she has done just that by offering "a comprehensive service model that harmonizes the client's business, brand, financial behavior and the emotional and spiritual connections that contribute to true wealth," or the four Bs, as the company states: "business, brand, financial behavior and bread — cash flow."

**CHARITY WE SUPPORT** "The LRW Group supports community-based nonprofit organizations by sponsoring micro

fundraisers every quarter. Two of our core charities are Artz4Life Academy based in Clearwater, Fla., and Silent Victims of Crimes based in Miami."

**Tony Peyrot**  
MANAGING PARTNER  
**Mark Pariser**  
PARTNER

**DUNN PARISER & PEYROT**

One key service that Dunn Pariser & Peyrot has provided for clients is assistance in catalog sales. "We have been able to provide them with the peace of mind that comes from having a well-diversified portfolio to provide for their future and their families," says Peyrot, whose clients include Peabody Award winner Kay Hanley (and her *Kindergarten: The Musical* co-creator Michelle Lewis) and Blue October singer-songwriter Justin Furstenfeld. Peyrot is also on the board of the Songwriters of North America — alongside original board members Hanley and Lewis — where he advocates for fair compensation for songwriters.

**PRESSING ISSUE** "There is an imbalance between demand and supply of

qualified employees — more demand than supply," Peyrot says. "We've had to hire younger candidates and invest in training them. We work hard to provide a good work/life balance, which has helped retain them."

**Michelle Richburg**  
PRESIDENT/CEO

**RICHBURG ENTERPRISES**

"Our work impacts not only the financial well-being of our clients by promoting good financial habits, tax management and investment growth, but also the communities they serve, creating a ripple effect of positive change," Richburg says. Among the firm's accolades is the 2024 Buddy White Project Community Service Award, which recognizes the firm's efforts in promoting financial literacy in underserved areas. Richburg also presented and spoke at the Business of Music panel for New York technology event Imsta Festa, echoing the company's mantra of responsible and strategic financial management.

**CHARITY I SUPPORT** "Community2-Community is a nonprofit service organization created in response to the [2010]

**SEXY RED, who staged her Sexy Red 4 President Tour this summer, is among the clients of Lateefah M. Parramore at The LRW Group Global.**



GILBERT FLORES FOR BILLBOARD

"We're all part of the same melody, and together we can create something beautiful."  
— Joni Mitchell

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earthquake in Haiti. We are dedicated to building self-sufficient communities by working with the community.”

**Murray Richman**  
**Nathan Richman**

**PARTNERS**

**RICHMAN BUSINESS MANAGEMENT**

The royalty-tracking system that Richman Business Management launched at the firm is a big achievement, Nathan Richman says. “With so many distributors paying out such a variety of royalties, it is imperative for the business manager to know what each individual artist is owed, what their current position is with that royalty company and make sure every dollar is being collected accurately and timely,” he explains, adding that the tracking protocols are allowing RBM’s artists to achieve “maximum value.” On the touring side, “we’ve been working with our artists and their team to create a very interactive, real-time road reporting and budget system,” he says. “This will allow the artist to see the profitability of a tour throughout and make adjustments as required.”

**PRESSING ISSUE** “There is a lot of political, economic and social unrest in the world right now,” Nathan says. “This makes planning a lot tougher than in past years. A tour or album cycle can have several unexpected changes that affect the budget.”

**Phil Sarna**  
**FOUNDER/SENIOR MANAGING DIRECTOR**

**Amy Gittleman Blom**  
**Tara Moore**  
**Patrick Templeman**

**PARTNERS/MANAGING DIRECTORS**

**Andrew Britton**  
**MANAGING DIRECTOR**

**Amy Hertz**  
**Eugene Lee**  
**Abner Monegro**  
**Hyun-Joo Park**  
**Molly Taylor**

**DIRECTORS**

**Juan Cumbe**  
**SENIOR MANAGER**

**PS BUSINESS MANAGEMENT**

Having recently opened an office in Nashville’s Wedgewood Houston neighborhood, PS Business Management affirmed its pledge “to be part of the music community and the larger Nashville community,” Sarna says. With additional offices in New York, Los Angeles and New Orleans, the firm represents a global roster of athletes and artists. Despite the challenge posed by lower streaming revenue, Sarna notes that artists “are discovering new ways to connect with fans and generate income through merchandise and fresh approaches to touring. As artists adapt to evolving consumer habits and explore new



**Jose Silva of Grupo Silva Global Business Management has specialized in guiding the finances of *música mexicana* artists including PESO PLUMA.**

opportunities, there’s a gentle optimism about finding diverse paths to success.”

**PRESSING ISSUE** “We’ve noticed an increased awareness and cost for wellness,” Sarna says. “Our clients place a high priority on this, and we have had to find new solutions and have budgets ready and in place to address these concerns.”

**John Shaheen**  
**MANAGING PARTNER**

**BUSINESS WEALTH & TAX MANAGEMENT**

“In the past 12 to 18 months, our firm helped clients open the most investment and brokerage accounts since the company’s inception eight years ago,” Shaheen says. The company, based in Encino, Calif., works with such clients as Thirty Seconds to Mars, singer-songwriter-producer Mk.gee and Nigerian artist Burna Boy, who won the top Afrobeats artist award at the 2023 Billboard Music Awards. “We also consulted on a diverse range of other investments, including real estate and venture capital transactions,” he adds. “We have been seeing greater collaboration between clients, managers, attorneys and agents helping structure agreements with more favorable terms, often leading to a greater profit split and/or ownership of intellectual property.”

**MOST UNUSUAL CLIENT INVESTMENT** “Mini cybertruck for kids.”

**Barry Siegel**  
**Bill Vuylsteke**

**SENIOR MANAGING DIRECTORS**

**PROVIDENT FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

As Vuylsteke sees it, “touring and catalog sales continue to be a strong source of

business” for his firm’s clients. “We have many acts on the road doing theaters to stadiums,” he says, while also noting that working in the live sector doesn’t come without its challenges. “It’s the ever-increasingly invasive and difficult tax mitigation, rising costs and lack of availability of vendors and personnel.” Outside of the live sector, he says that film/TV has returned as a viable source, even though it’s “not quite to pre-pandemic levels.” But, as Vuylsteke affirms, “Our five offices are as busy as ever handling all things entertainment.”

**MOST UNUSUAL CLIENT INVESTMENT**

“A mezcal producer owned and operated by women,” Vuylsteke says.

**Jose Silva**

**MANAGING PARTNER**

**GRUPO SILVA GLOBAL**  
**BUSINESS MANAGEMENT**

Grupo Silva has expanded in the Mexican market thanks to its expertise in organizing the finances of various *música mexicana* artists including Peso Pluma, Tito Double P and Jasiel Nuñez. In addition, the firm, which has also collaborated with Colombian urban artist Blessd, has developed the financial structures for independent labels including Cigol and Blessed (led by Gus Lopez and Carlos Nuñez) and Double P Records (managed by George Prajin). “Through the implementation of strategic initiatives,” Silva says, “Grupo Silva has provided effective cross-

border tax assistance between Mexico and the United States.”

**CHARITY | SUPPORT** “I serve on the board of directors for the Carlos Beltran Baseball Academy Foundation, where we promote education among youth through sports, enabling them to achieve their goals of studying and playing in the NCAA or MLB.”

**Tony Smalls**

**PARTNER/ENTERTAINMENT SPORTS AND MEDIA INDUSTRY LEADER**

**Buwa Ijirigbo**

**DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT**

**MACIAS GINI & O’CONNELL**

By integrating their business management skills across other areas of their full-service accounting firm, Smalls and Ijirigbo have delivered greater value to their clients. “Some of our newer consulting services like catalog advisory and royalty accounting have delivered important results for clients,” Smalls says. “One recent achievement was uncovering an eight-figure missed royalty adjustment for a musical artist.” They aim to bring added value to traditional business management services including international and domestic tax services, financial accounting and consulting.

**MOST UNUSUAL CLIENT INVESTMENT**

“As long as I’ve been doing this, nothing surprises me or strikes me as ‘unusual’ anymore,” Smalls says. “If I had to pick one, I’d say buying a zoo.”

**Bichota**  
RECORDS

felicita a

**Vibras Lab**  
BELIEVE IN DREAMS



**IVÁN ALARCÓN**  
**JUAN GUILLERMO RODRÍGUEZ**

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**Alex Smith**  
PARTNER-IN-CHARGE  
OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT  
**Justin Sroka**  
PARTNER

**MANN GELON GLODNEY GUMEROVE YEE**  
Mann Gelon Glodney Gumerove Yee has continued to build out its roster of entertainment clients and its business management team. The latter follows last year's addition of staff specializing in royalties, touring and insurance. As for addressing industry developments — such as AI, new streaming payment models and music catalog sales — that are most affecting clients, Sroka says, "We've been able to implement some tech-based royalty solutions that have been helpful to

track, analyze and identify missing royalties." And he's emphatic about the most challenging issue that business managers face: "Cybersecurity!"

**MOST UNUSUAL CLIENT INVESTMENT**  
"A client bought a canceled check from the original Apple corporate checkbook signed by Steve Jobs," Sroka says.

**Thomas St. John**  
CEO  
**Marlena Kaplan**  
COO

**Jason Brookbanks**  
GLOBAL HEAD OF DEAL ADVISORY  
**THOMAS ST. JOHN GROUP**

The team at Thomas St. John Group has had a busy year as it has continued to build the firm's tax, accounting, audit, valuation and investment domains. Recently, the team appointed Matt Ellis, formerly of Deloitte, to helm its U.K. operation and expand its capabilities across the Atlantic. The business managers have also been busy advising clients on catalog deals and AI-related concerns. "The

use of AI music generator tools, in particular, has driven heightened concerns around copyright protection," St. John explains, "and the potential negative impact to royalty streams."

**PRESSING ISSUE** "Advances in technology, particularly AI solutions, continue to commoditize the historically traditional business management landscape — i.e., bill payments, bookkeeping," St. John says. "These advances have applied increasing pressure on business managers to bring added value to clients through heightened technical specialization, greater analytical insights and flawless delivery across our services."

**Charles Sussman**  
PRESIDENT  
**SUSSMAN & ASSOCIATES**

Sussman's focus over the past year has been "the diversification of royalty income for clients in the current market," he says. "There has been a significant shift to more digital royalty income, which has affected clients' income streams." His Nashville-based firm's clients include Bon Jovi, Cheap Trick, Miley Cyrus, Guns N' Roses, Bette Midler, Megadeth, Jessica Simpson,

Steve Winwood and the estate of Olivia Newton-John. While catalog sales and rights acquisitions have increased due to streaming and improving catalog valuation, financial challenges remain, including "increased costs involved in releasing music and planning a successful tour, along with elevated insurance premiums in the market."  
**MOST UNUSUAL CLIENT INVESTMENT**  
"[Writers] buying co-writers' shares of copyrights."

**Lou Taylor**  
FOUNDER/CEO  
**TRI STAR SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT GROUP**

Among Tri Star's myriad accomplishments, Taylor takes special pride in helping clients realize their business ideas. To transform these concepts into successfully functioning entities, Taylor and her team work with clients (the list of whom the company keeps confidential) to establish infrastructure, hire in-house teams, launch the brand and/or product and consult financially. All of this together ensures "the project has a structure that will stand the test of time," Taylor says.

**CHARITY I SUPPORT** "In our beloved music community, the Black Music Action Coalition is a cause that is very important to me. The advocacy work BMAC has been able to accomplish for the community since its inception in 2020 is immense, from its accelerator programs to mentor programs alongside its advocacy work to address systemic racism within the music business."

**José Juan Torres**  
FOUNDER  
**TORRES**

Torres' boutique firm — whose client list includes Bad Bunny, Residente, Rauw Alejandro, Camilo, Mora, iLe and music company La Buena Fortuna — has prioritized strategic partnerships to expand its presence in the Latin market. The company has an internationally active roster, and as such, Torres finds his most pressing issue is "the volatility and complexity of revenue streams" due to the evolving landscape of streaming payments and digital platforms. "Streaming services often provide inconsistent payouts, which makes it crucial for business managers to navigate various compensation models while maximizing income from both traditional and new sources," says Torres, who focuses on diversifying income streams to ensure long-term financial stability and is actively advising clients to use direct-to-fan platforms.

**CHARITY I SUPPORT** "[Bad Bunny's] Good Bunny Foundation, Fundación Rimas, [Rauw Alejandro's] Pamara Project

NELSON BARNARD/GETTY IMAGES

**MILEY CYRUS, whom Chappell Roan praised as an inspiration at the 2024 Disney Legends ceremony in August, is among the business management clients of Charles Sussman of Sussman & Associates.**



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Billboard Top Business Managers 2024

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on being named to Billboard's  
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Thank you to our entire team for continuing the tradition of unparalleled, people-first service.

Cheers to all of this year's honorees!

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Foundation and Correa Family Foundation. I support these charitable organizations not only as a member of the board of directors but also because I share their missions, values, commitments and the communities they serve."

**Sally Velazquez**  
PRESIDENT/BUSINESS MANAGER  
**Tracy Miller**  
VP OF OPERATIONS/BUSINESS MANAGER

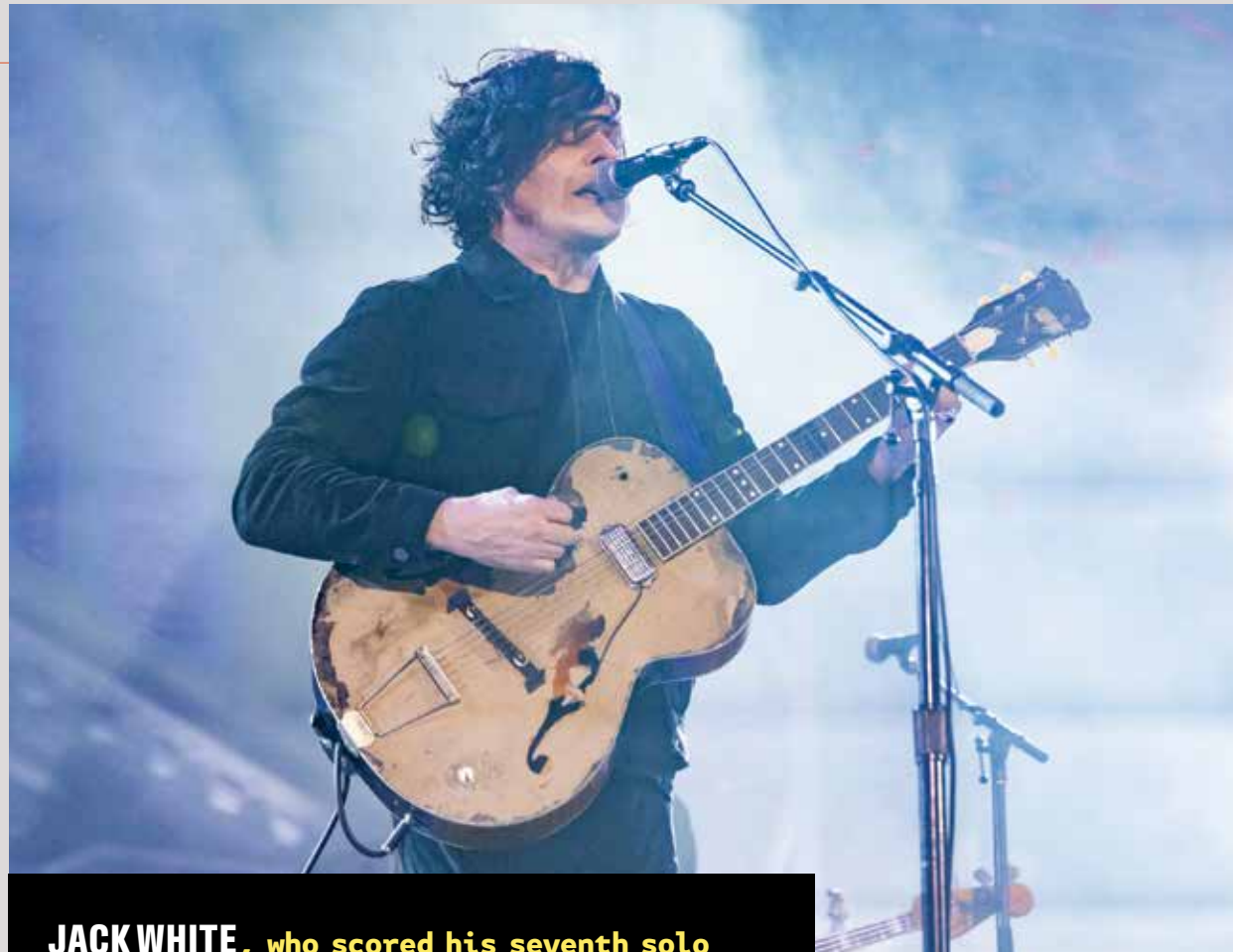
**EMPOWER BUSINESS MANAGEMENT**  
Miller says she and her team at Empower Business Management have "revolutionized" how they manage the finances of their clients thanks to AI. More specifically, Empower has supported clients — a roster that includes Tinashe and 21 Savage — through touring cycles where they've applied new technology to optimize budgeting, track expenses and "ensure profitability at every stage of a tour," Miller explains. "The ability to optimize finances, protect cash flow and create long-term stability is absolutely essential, and that's where we've been making a real impact for our clients."

**CHARITY I SUPPORT** "I place a strong emphasis on financial literacy and empowerment, which is why I support Leading by Example Foundation, founded by 21 Savage," Miller says. "I've seen firsthand how understanding personal finance can change lives."

**Rit Venerus**  
FOUNDER/SENIOR MANAGING DIRECTOR  
**Butch Gage**  
**Dan Goscombe**  
MANAGING DIRECTORS  
**Sarah Dellimore**  
**Amy Self**  
DIRECTORS  
**CAL FINANCIAL GROUP**

As Sphere opened in Las Vegas, creating an enhanced concertgoing experience for fans, Cal Financial Group worked behind the scenes on Dead & Company's 30-date residency that ended in August. The shows grossed \$131.8 million and sold 477,000 tickets. "While residencies are not new, the team had to blend a very dynamic show and audience with the uniqueness of Sphere and Las Vegas," Self says. "It was an incredibly rewarding experience and amazing team to be a part of." The team's clients also include Dave Matthews Band, Jack White, Rainbow Kitten Surprise, boygenius and Maxwell.

**MOST UNUSUAL CLIENT INVESTMENT** "We've had some clients look at actually buying catalogs instead of selling them to try and preserve some artists' legacies that are meaningful to them," Self says.



**JACK WHITE, who scored his seventh solo top 10 release on the Top Album Sales chart in August with *No Name*, is one of the business management clients of Cal Financial Group.**

**David Weise**  
FOUNDING PARTNER  
**Jaime Masuda**  
**Rob Salzman**  
PARTNERS  
**DAVID WEISE & ASSOCIATES,**  
**A DIVISION OF NKSFB**

A division of the NKSFB global network, David Weise & Associates maintains a client base that reaches across the music industry — the firm recently guided international tours for several big-name artists and remains active in negotiating catalog deals among other ventures including TV, film and sports. With over 20 years of business management experience, Weise has learned the importance of focusing on both client and colleague feedback, particularly in a time of light-speed technology advances. "It may not seem like a great achievement during these changing times, but the achievement is listening," he says. "Listening to your clients but also listening to your employee colleagues to achieve an environment to meet everyone's goals."  
**PRESSING ISSUE** "The ability of our firm to work internally to expand and protect our clients' intellectual property,"

Weise says. "Also, knowing when to extend out to other resources externally to help us in protecting our clients on all of their rights to always achieve best practice in an ever-changing world."

**Dan Weisman**  
PRINCIPAL  
**Adam Sansiveri**  
SENIOR MANAGING DIRECTOR/SENIOR VP/CO-LEAD OF SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT  
**Stacie Jacobsen**  
SENIOR VP/CO-LEAD OF SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT  
**BERNSTEIN PRIVATE WEALTH MANAGEMENT**

Of all the messages Bernstein financial advisers have been preaching to their sports and entertainment clients, Weisman says the most important one has been "Cash isn't necessarily king." As many of their clients live in high-tax states, they have prioritized moving clients' available cash into suitable long-term investments to improve the 5% return they have grown comfortable earning since 2022. "We've been making it a point to educate our clients and their professional partners, many of whom are

on this list, about what a risk-adjusted return actually looks like," Weisman says.  
**MOST UNUSUAL CLIENT INVESTMENT** "One of our clients has invested in and co-founded The Sprouting Company, which aims to get a sprouting kit into every home in America," Weisman says. "The product and packaging are beautifully designed, and he's gone all-in on sprouts."

**Kris Wiatr**  
PRESIDENT  
**Sarah Hamner**  
**Kim Olson**  
**Valerie Shelton**  
SENIOR VPS  
**WIATR & ASSOCIATES**

While serving clients such as Parker McCollum, Chris Stapleton, HARDY, Michael Fleetwood and Billy Gibbons is of primary importance, Hamner points out that it's also essential to keep talented staff at the firm. "The business is so niche as it is, not just tax preparation and bookkeeping; it is specialized and nuanced," she says. "Sourcing staff with the skillset and/or desire to learn can be a challenge, and retaining talent can be even harder." Wiatr & Associates boasts some employees who have been with the firm, which launched in 2009, for 10 to 15 years.  
**CHARITY WE SUPPORT** "Our firm works very closely with Music Health Alliance," Hamner says, "an organization whose mission is to create a safe

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2024

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and confidential place for the music community to gain the best health care and health insurance solutions through defined and transparent health-care advocacy services with an emphasis on the prevention of illness and overall physical and mental wellness.”

## Dwight Wiles

PRESIDENT

## Robert Taylor

VP

## Kevin Dalton Steve Eggart

BUSINESS MANAGERS

WILES + TAYLOR & CO.

Throughout 2024, Eggart says he has noticed an increasing desire among artists on his firm’s client roster to remain professionally independent of major music companies — and that they’ve been “having incredible success” as a result. It’s a trend supported by a June report from MIDiA Research, which found that only 6% of artists surveyed were interested in signing a deal with a major label. Without a traditional label deal, Eggart says more responsibility falls squarely on the shoulders of business managers in accounting for producers and mechanical royalties, as well as budgeting for manufacturing and marketing costs. “There can be a great upside financially to self-releasing,” Eggart says. “However, on the flip side, it also comes with increased risk and added financial obligation.”

**PRESSING ISSUE** “As touring is the most profitable dynamic of most artists’ income streams,” Eggart says, “even more attention needs to be paid to lease and rental agreements, labor costs and production expenses to maximize profitability.”

## Colin Young

FOUNDER/DIRECTOR

CC YOUNG & CO.

Music streaming yields massive amounts of digital information that must be parsed so that songwriters and artists are paid what they deserve. “Our analytical capability progression of big data has enabled the most successful record and publishing streaming royalty audit claims,” Young says. He identifies the management of songwriters’ publishing income and artists’ recording income as the most pressing issue facing business managers. “More capability needs to be applied in identifying shortage of digital units and the application of the wrong rate.” In April, after 2020 testimony from Young on how more equitable payments could be achieved, a U.K. Parliament committee report called for a “fundamental reform” of music streaming to address what it describes as “pitiful

returns” for songwriters and publishing rights holders.

**CHARITY I SUPPORT** “Earth Percent [the music industry climate foundation co-founded by Brian Eno and others]. I love trees. Earth Percent’s agenda is pursuance of improvement through legislation. If anyone is going to save my trees, it will be them.”

## Mark Zelasko

PRESIDENT

LEVEL GROUP/DOVETAIL SERVICES

This year marks the 10th anniversary of Level Group, growing from a one-person operation founded by Zelasko to two companies with over 75 staff members and representing more than 100 artists and various sectors of the music business from producers to labels, booking agencies and management companies, as well as trusts and charities. “I’m most proud of our team for the ways that we’ve gotten better every step of the way,” Zelasko says, calling Level Group and Dovetail Services (created for nonartist clients) “truly a full-service opera-

tion” that helps clients run their businesses “efficiently” and create “long-term wealth.” He is also proud of providing employees with “a superb work environment and career path.”

**PRESSING ISSUE** “The future of AI along with augmented reality and virtual reality have tremendous implications for the future of entertainment. How music catalogs might be utilized in that environment is fascinating and exciting.”

## Bill Zysblat

CO-FOUNDER/MANAGING PARTNER

## Tom Cyrana Lia Sweet

PARTNERS/MANAGING DIRECTORS

RZO

See story, page 54.

## CONTRIBUTORS

Trevor Anderson, Cathy Applefeld Olson, Nefertiti Austin, Katie Bain, Karen Bliss, Anna Chan, Leila Cobo, Janine Coveney, Stephen Daw, Angel Diaz, Elizabeth Dilts Marshall, Bill Donahue, Thom Duffy,

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## METHODOLOGY

Nominations for Billboard’s executive lists open no less than 150 days in advance of publication, and a link is sent to press representatives by request before the nomination period. (Please email [thom.duffy@billboard.com](mailto:thom.duffy@billboard.com) for inclusion on the email list for nomination links and for how to obtain an editorial calendar.) Billboard’s Top Business Managers for 2024 were chosen by editors based on factors including, but not limited to, nominations by peers, colleagues and superiors, as well as music industry impact of cited clients. That impact is measured by metrics including, but not limited to, chart, sales and streaming performance as measured by Luminate and social media impressions using data available as of Sept. 25. **b**

**CHRIS STAPLETON, who won male artist of the year at the 2024 Academy of Country Music Awards, draws on the business management expertise of Kris Wiatr of Wiatr & Associates in Nashville.**

