

players

CELEBRATING MUSIC'S MOVERS



Clockwise from left:
Spears, Cardi B, Diamond,
Dr. Dre and the Euronext
Amsterdam stock exchange

2022 TOP MUSIC LAWYERS

The savviest legal counselors in the business are called upon to advise on familiar contracts and a surging tide of catalog sales but also IPOs, NFTs, Web3 and new ventures in the metaverse

WHEN MUSIC MEETS money, industry attorneys usually serve as matchmakers. *Billboard's* 2022 class of Top Music Lawyers — nominated by their firms and peers and chosen by our editors — are cast in more complex and challenging roles than ever.

In the past year, their behind-the-scenes work grabbed headlines with major publishing and catalog deals, live-performance agreements, a defamation case, a conservatorship battle and one very, very large initial public offering.

Among many other matters, attorneys on this list were involved with Neil Diamond's sale of his publishing and master recording catalog; Dr. Dre's performance with a who's who of hip-hop during the Pepsi Super Bowl LVI halftime show; Cardi B's successful verdict in a defamation claim; Britney Spears' release from a conservatorship that

controlled her life for 13 years; and Universal Music Group's massive September stock offering on the Euronext Amsterdam exchange.

For this year's Top Music Lawyers report, *Billboard* asked attorneys not only about their clients and achievements but also their top concerns for the music business. For those steeped in the law, the issue of racial equity and justice in the music industry, which exploded into awareness with the killing of George Floyd in May 2020, remains no less urgent.

Several attorneys have been involved in efforts to ban the use of rap lyrics in criminal prosecutions, and L. Londell McMillan, whose clients include Prince's heirs and the Westmore collective of Snoop Dogg, E-40, Too \$hort and Ice Cube, says: "There should be more senior Black executives in C-suites and more Black-owned companies doing business with global enterprises."

Meanwhile, the rapid expansion of digital op-

portunities have become so important to the role of these music lawyers that some may wish they had supplemented their law degrees with studies in computer science.

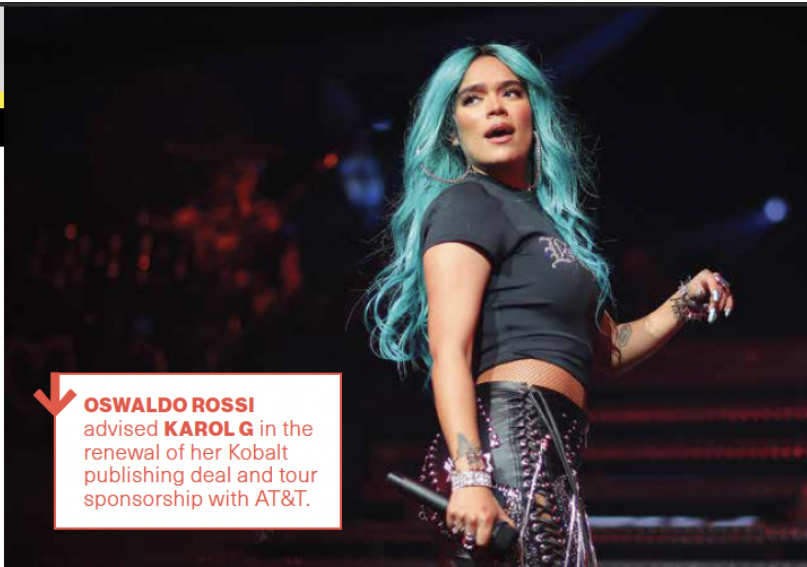
But as Ken Doroshov, chief legal officer for the RIAA, says, "In a time of constant innovation and a steady stream of 'next big things,' it's more important than ever that all platforms and services that use and profit from music obtain the necessary licenses and pay rights holders and creators for their work." Doroshov's counterparts at the National Music Publishers' Association are on the front lines of efforts to get digital platforms to properly license their use of music.

Richard Baskin of Simons Muirhead Burton in London adds that amid "significant opportunity within the creative industries... comes the concern around regulating and managing this growth on behalf of all."

And not just for superstars.

"It's extremely rewarding that the real value of music industry [intellectual property], the artist and the artist's brand, is finally being realized," says John Frankenheimer, chair of music industry at Loeb & Loeb, one of the most respected senior attorneys in the music business. "But there's a responsibility to make sure that the midlevel, young and emerging artists are sharing in that as well." —THOM DUFFY

PHOTO: JEFFREY M. HARRIS; ILLUSTRATION: ISRAEL G. VARGAS



OSWALDO ROSSI advised **KAROL G** in the renewal of her Kobalt publishing deal and tour sponsorship with AT&T.

two white papers, a guide to livestreaming and a guide to the metaverse, that were offered for free on the Reed Smith website to support the industry during the COVID-19 shutdown. Sessa, who is co-chair with Pryor of the firm's entertainment and media industry group, serves as outside counsel to Concord Music and has advised on all of the company's numerous recent acquisitions. In addition to negotiating a wide range of deals for artists and companies, Love advises on the sale and acquisition of recorded music and music publishing assets, as well as rights issues related to digital distribution and new technologies. Among Shapiro's achievements, he handles all business and legal affairs for Avex USA. His clients include Rihanna, Kaskadee, Jon Bon Jovi (with Sessa), Bella Poarch, Saweetie, Anitta, Ali Tamposi, Lord Huron, Josie Maran, Grimes and Angelina Jordan.

Rollin A. Ransom

PARTNER/CO-LEADER OF GLOBAL COMMERCIAL LITIGATION AND DISPUTES PRACTICE, SIDLEY AUSTIN

Ransom is representing clients including Universal Music Group in a putative class action suit in which the plaintiffs are seeking to reclaim the rights to their recordings under the 1976 Copyright Revision Act. "This major litigation is ongoing and currently proceeding through discovery," says Ransom. The case potentially affects "legions of recording artists from the late 1970s and early 1980s who are looking to take advantage of this statutory provision to attempt to reclaim ownership rights," with later generations of artists to follow. "Commentators have described the matter as a 'ticking time bomb.'"

Berkeley Reinhold

FOUNDER/OWNER, REINHOLD GLOBAL
Reinhold Global's client list includes artists Marc Anthony, Thievery Corporation and

Spencer X (who has "55 million TikTok followers," she says); companies such as Live Nation, C3 Presents, Magnus Talent Agency and Sound Talent Group; and festivals including Austin City Limits, Bonnaroo, BeachLife, Lollapalooza and Global Citizen. For the 24-hour Global Citizen Live broadcast last September, Reinhold served as chief outside counsel with responsibility for artist contracts, as well as TV production and event production agreements. The concert, which featured performances by over 50 acts including Billie Eilish, Coldplay, Jennifer Lopez and BTS, raised over \$1.1 billion in commitments and pledges to fight poverty and climate change through the planting of 157 million trees worldwide. In Reinhold's view, "climate change" is the most pressing concern facing the music industry in 2022.

Elliot A. Resnik

PARTNER/CHAIR OF ENTERTAINMENT, MASUR GRIFFITTS AVIDOR

Resnik's clients include hip-hop duo Run the Jewels and music agencies All Things Go Music, Convicts Agency and Heard Entertainment. He also represents the National Independent Venue Association in its efforts to help revive the live-entertainment industry. He assisted the tourism agency NYC & Co. to secure the rights to music including Chic's "Good Times" to promote the post-pandemic reopening of New York. "I've never been happier to be able to see both the city and our live business back in full swing."

Jaimie Roberts

FOUNDING PARTNER, ROBERTS & HAFITZ

Harry Roberts

ATTORNEY, ROBERTS & HAFITZ

Roberts & Hafitz's clients include hitmakers such as The Chainsmokers and Robin Thicke, as well as Arthouse Records & Publishing, whose signee GAYLE topped the Billboard Global 200 in early 2022

with breakout hit "abcdefu." With major labels turning their attention to TikTok in an age of viral-made hits, the father-and-son team helped guide numerous rising talents through label bidding wars such as BoyWithUke, Ricky Montgomery, Chloe George and Liyisthatyou. Harry, son of founding partner Jaimie, says he is concerned with issues including "the low compensation paid to songwriters, particularly by digital streaming services."

Carlos Rodriguez-Feliz

FOUNDER/MANAGING ATTORNEY, RODFEL LAW

For client Rapetón Networks, led by Angel "El Guru" Vera, Rodriguez-Feliz says his RodFel firm negotiated a joint artist development venture with Yandel's label, Y Entertainment Records. The deal created Rapetón Approved in 2020, a platform "for increasing exposure for Latin artists from the start of their careers," he says. Rodriguez-Feliz — whose notable clients also include Lenny Tavárez, Cerebro (a producer for Sech) and Álvaro Díaz — handles all legal matters for Rapetón Approved, and was co-counsel for its deal with Warner Music Latina to "support the venture in reaching our goals with the artists that participate in the project."

Angela Rogers

OWNER, ROGERS LAW GROUP

For Rogers, who represents rappers Nardo Wick, Coi Leray, G Herbo, EST Gee and Tink, the most pressing issue facing the industry is streaming services' royalty rates for songwriters. As the Copyright Royalty Board works to set fair rates for mechanical streaming royalties, Rogers notes that "having more artists and songwriters advocate and be aware of what's happening will only help get the rates up." Music, though, isn't Rogers' sole focus: For visual artist Shantell Martin, the attorney negotiated an exclusive collabo-

ration with Adidas/MakerLab and a deal with the Boston Ballet for Martin's first choreographic work, *Choreographer*.

Oswaldo Rossi

FOUNDER/MANAGING PARTNER, ROSSI

John Baldivia

SENIOR ASSOCIATE ATTORNEY, ROSSI

Rossi, the former vp of business affairs at EMI Latin/Capitol Latin, represents a trove of Latin artists, including Karol G (for the renewal of her publishing agreement with Kobalt and tour sponsorship with AT&T) and Nicky Jam (for his partnership with La Industria Bakery and his European tour). Rossi also advised Noah Assad on his publishing administration agreement with Universal Music Publishing Group and Rich Music on its renewal of Sech's deal. His clients also include Paloma Mami, Manuel Turizo, Danny Ocean and the estate of Jenni Rivera.

Neema Sahni

PARTNER/CO-CHAIR, MUSIC INDUSTRY GROUP/ VICE CHAIR, SPORTS INDUSTRY GROUP, COVINGTON & BURLING

Jonathan Sperling

PARTNER/CHAIR, MUSIC INDUSTRY GROUP, COVINGTON & BURLING

Adrian Perry

PARTNER/CO-CHAIR, MUSIC INDUSTRY GROUP, COVINGTON & BURLING

Covington & Burlingon (along with co-counsel from Oppenheim + Zebak) represent both the record labels and the publishing companies of the three major music groups in copyright infringement actions against Charter Communications and Bright House based on their failure to take action against subscribers who they knew were pirating music. In another area of focus, Perry looks forward to the "exciting and novel opportunities for platforms, creators and rights holders" presented by NFTs and the metaverse, but is also wary of how they "present great challenges if not managed thoughtfully."

Diana A. Sanders

CO-CHAIR, MUSIC PRACTICE GROUP, RUSS AUGUST & KABAT

Stanton "Larry" Stein

CHAIR, MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT PRACTICE GROUP, RUSS AUGUST & KABAT

Ashley R. Yeargan

CO-CHAIR, FILM AND TV PRACTICE GROUP, RUSS AUGUST & KABAT

Stein and Yeargan are "currently representing Drake in a number of litigation matters, including prosecution of a right of publicity claim and defense of numerous cases filed in connection with the Astroworld festival," says Stein, adding that Sanders' work with offerings of security tokens and NFTs allows "for investments in companies that entitle investors to potential returns from music royalties." The firm's clients also include Post Malone and Roddy Ricch.