

SPECIAL 775th ISSUE!

MUSIC CONNECTION

Informing Music People Since 1977™

2008 50

Innovators, Iconoclasts,
Groundbreakers
& Guiding Lights

Our Favorite
Signings
of 2008

Exclusive Report

A&R Survey

What the heck are they thinking?

25 New MUSIC
Critiques
Top of The Year

TIP JAR

Is There Life In The
MUSIC BUSINESS
After 30?



Q&A
METALLICA

LARS ULRICH ON:
Death Magnetic
Producer Rick Rubin
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17

50 Innovators Iconoclasts Groundbreakers & Guiding Lights of 2008

Compiled by *MC* Senior Editor, Mark Nardone

When *Music Connection* began to compile this exclusive list, we not only drew upon the magazine's own resources — our editorial staff, freelance writers and industry contacts — but via our Weekly Bulletin we invited 70,000 readers to participate. So we want to thank the thousands of respondents who contributed thoughtful and, in many cases, heartfelt nominations. As is the nature of such a list, it was not possible to include all who were deserving of recognition. And we do not expect you will agree with every choice we ultimately made. But this one-of-a-kind list, a result of many hours of deliberation and presented in no particular order regarding an individual's importance or accomplishment, is composed of people and entities who had an important impact on music and music-makers in 2008.

Shepard Fairey

Aside from his notorious prints of Che Guevara, Joseph Stalin and George Bush, graphic artist Frank Shepard Fairey has lent his vision to album covers by Black Eyed Peas, the Smashing Pumpkins and Led Zeppelin. Most importantly, in 2008, Fairey's anti-establishment art has become the official look of "Change," not just for those youth who rebelled against the Bush administration, but also for the masses that would vote for a young African-American for president. Shepard Fairey's ubiquitous designs have influenced a generation to become politically active. (www.studionumber-one.com)



Trent Reznor

Who'da thought the perennial prince of darkness would ever get all touchy-feely on us? But when it came to Nine Inch Nails fans, that's pretty much how Reznor rolled in 2008. With his self-released *Ghosts I-IV*, Reznor seized the opportunity to ignore the old-school label-marketing paradigm and go directly to his listeners with special offers and cool incentives. He sold the music online from \$5 per digital download on up to a \$300 Ultra-Deluxe limited edition package, which sold out all 2,500 copies (grossing \$750,000) in three days. A week later he reported more than 700,000 orders and downloads, and revenue of \$1.6 million. Reznor has showed that an artist's best move is to bond with the core fan to offer something smart and unique. (www.nin.com)



The Eagles & Irving Azoff

Kudos to this classic band, now touring in support of *Long Road Out of Eden* (their first album of new material since 1979), and their longtime manager Azoff for thinking of their fans. How?

By doing away with the standard, much-hated "convenience fee" that could easily have been tacked on to the price of each concert ticket. Does this

Irving Azoff

gesture, triggered by Azoff's recent rise to CEO of Ticketmaster ("Ticketbastard," to more than a few cash-strapped concertgoers), actually signal the emergence of a kinder, gentler, fan-friendly music industry? (www.eaglesband.com)

Nobuyoshi Sano

KORG DS-10

Composer/sound designer Nobuyoshi "sanodg" Sano, the musical genius behind many popular videogames, including several of the Tekken and Ridge Racer series, has expanded the world of music creation by designing software for the Nintendo DS, the ever-popular handheld gaming device, which allows users to have

access to a synthesizer right in the palm of their hands. In addition to the amazing linking capabilities, which offer musica opportunities no single synthesizer ever could, the KORG DS-10 puts powerful tools at the disposal of a whole new generation of music talent. Scary. (http://www.aqi.co.jp/product/ds10/en/index.html)



Lil Wayne

Perhaps no precedent exists for the 2008 success of this rapper (Dwayne Michael Carter, Jr.), who offered over 70 songs and remixes as free downloads instead of putting a new CD on the market. By giving his music away he kept his art in the public's ears and his fans happy. When he finally did release a full album, the fans rewarded him handily, making Wayne the biggest first week seller of 2008. The rapper's *Tha Carter III* sold 423,000 copies in its first day of release, according to *Billboard* magazine (citing figures from Nielsen SoundScan). With those numbers, Wayne posted the best sales debut of the year. He has killed the oft-cited warning that listeners will not buy what they can get free. (MySpace.com/lilwayne)



Robert Plant

The hi-pitched hellion of classic rock turned down (at least for now) the easy money — an eagerly anticipated LZ reunion — to continue to pursue his new love, the well-received duet project *Raising Sand* with country/bluegrass siren Alison Krauss. In effect, Plant has proved to aging superstars and their fans that there's life and untold artistic satisfaction beyond your Greatest Hits. (www.robertplant.com)



Tim Westergren

An accomplished musician, Westergren founded internet radio station Pandora in 2000. In 2008, facing extinction at the hands of the powerful National Association of Broadcasters (which represents commercial radio's interests) Westergren spearheaded the successful grassroots campaign to get the House and Senate to ratify an agreement on internet radio royalties, thus ensuring the continued existence of internet radio. As Pandora's Chief Strategy Officer, Westergren is dedicated to helping talented emerging artists connect with the music fans most likely to appreciate their music. (www.pandora.com)



Rob Litowitz

He's a litigating attorney specializing in patents, trademarks and other intellectual property

rights. But beyond his career in law he put together a 2008 charity CD, *Interlude*, which features the talents of artists such as Chuck Prophet, Kelly Willis and Ana Egge. The proceeds of the disc are going to MusicCares, which makes sure musicians have their financial, medical and personal needs met in times of crisis. In addition his pro bono work, Litowitz also runs a foundation to raise money to fight Parkinson's, called ParkinSong. (www.finnegan.com/robertlitowitz)

Red Bull

The Austrian energy drink maker does more than send a hot-shot of caffeinated sugar to your cerebral cortex. The company has also become known for its dynamic music events, especially the Red Bull Soundclash, a high-concept endeavor that gives the audience an onstage collaborative performance in which two bands are judged via crowd response as they complete a set of assigned tasks. This mash-up results in a cohesive, "conversational" performance between the bands. (www.redbullsoundclash.com)



Rothbury Festival

"Destination festivals" have been popping up like a plague of dandelions the past few years. But this one, on an idyllic tree-lined mecca six miles from Lake Michigan, had an environmental mission (organizers set a "near-zero waste" goal for the festival) and, like Bonnaroo, was later rewarded for "Outstanding Greener Festival" by *agreenerefestival.com*. *MC* feature writer Gary Graff reported via *GoAndDoMichigan.com*: "Rothbury's well-publicized green initiatives were a hit with fans and artists alike — even Snoop Dogg was seen sorting his trash into compost, recycling and landfill trash bins." (www.rothburyfestival.com)

Ellen Page

For the 2008 Oscar-winning film *Juno*, this Canadian actress was so in-tune with her precocious, pregnant title character that Page asked the director to rethink his soundtrack choice of '70s glam rock in favor of something simpler, stripped down and sincere — the songs of quirky Moldy Peaches singer Kimya Dawson, which led to a commercial breakthrough for that alt-folk artist. (www.ellenpages.com)

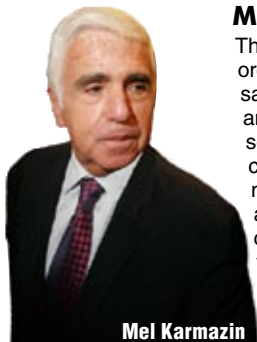


Bob Lefsetz

His LefsetzLetter — opinionated, often smashmouthed, but very persuasive — is received via e-mail by a broad spectrum of artists and execs and always pushes hard for artists' rights. Lefsetz not only brings an entertainment attorney's knowledge to the table, but his abiding passion for great music fuels his informed rants, which challenge the industry to stop whining and go boldly into the future. (www.lefsetz.com)

Mel Karmazin

The difficult merger he orchestrated between rival satellite radio services Sirius and XM keeps the form alive so it can continue to deliver compelling commercial-free music programming and a nagging challenge to commercial radio. It remains to be seen if the merger will offer more or less channels for new music, but the very survival of commercial-free satellite radio is a worthy compromise. (www.sirius.com)



Mel Karmazin



Jack Johnson

Jack Johnson

Singer/songwriter/surferdude, he's always been sincere about combining environmental activism with music. His summer 2008 tour was especially green, launching an All At Once online community so fans were able to find out about carpooling opps. Concertgoers also had the option of paying a \$1.50 fee to offset their carbon emissions on the way to the show. The artist's site stated, "go green or go home." (www.jackjohnsonmusic.com)

A2IM

The major labels may be in decline, but the indies are doing quite well, thank you. They even have The American Association of Independent Music (A2IM) "to promote sector opportunity and enhance the market share of its combined membership." What that means is A2IM stands up to the big, bad majors whenever there's a dispute. (www.a2im.org)



RCA Records

Yes, major labels have been repeatedly bitch-slapped, and deservedly so, for failing to stand by their up-and-coming acts. That's why it's only fitting to commend RCA Records for

sticking by the commercially struggling yet critically acclaimed Kings of Leon for four albums and counting. (www.rcarecords.com)

Brian Eno

From his daring Roxy Music days through eccentric solo albums and ambient excursions, to mega-success with U2 and most recently Coldplay's 2008 release *Viva la Vida or Death and All His Friends*, this producer/artist continues to exert a powerful mojo. What's more, 2008 saw Eno reunite with David Byrne for the duo's first collaboration (*Everything That Happens Will Happen Today*) since 1981's *My Life In The Bush of Ghosts*. (www.enoshop.co.uk)



Brian Eno

David Israelite

As President/CEO, National Music Publishing Association, he has significantly raised the lobbying profile of songwriters and publishers with tangible results in Washington. "Although we face such an enormous fight," says Israelite, "we have an incredible advantage — we represent songwriters, without whom the record labels and digital music services could not exist." (www.nmpa.org)



Tess Taylor

Tess Taylor

Taylor is on a mission to educate and inspire both artists and execs. Her National Association of Record Industry Professionals and the Los Angeles Music Network are top-notch and brilliantly executed. She and the company have consistently offered networking opportunities for artists, industry folks and hopefuls in Los Angeles, New York, Phoenix,

San Francisco and London. In 2008 her events focused on new business models. (www.narip.com)



Brendan Okrent

A tireless champion of young songwriters, this ASCAP exec organizes The Lester Sill Songwriting Workshop. Okrent also started ASCAP's "Quiet On The Set" showcase (in N.Y., L.A., Miami, at SXSW in Austin and at the Folk Alliance Conference). These showcases have been a potent proving ground for emerging talent. (www.ascap.com)



Tena Clark

Tena Clark

A songwriter, producer and visionary entrepreneur, Clark is a force of nature. As CEO/DMI Music and Media Solutions she has established an entertainment powerhouse through music branding, a recording studio, a music library, a record company and new media and marketing. One of the few female producers working today, she has produced for Natalie Cole and Dionne Warwick. She recently wrote a song performed by Leanne Rimes for the TV series *Desperate Housewives*. This multitalent continues to show how women can take the reins and be a force in the music industry. (www.dmiworldwide.com)

ReverbNation

Under its Founder/VP Artist Development Lou Plaia, ReverbNation has built a reputation as a site that helps indie artists get their music exposed to the world. For bands, famous and obscure, looking for a cheap, easy way to get their albums into online music stores — and to track their sales revenue against their promotional efforts — ReverbNation offers a potent and cost-effective avenue. In 2008 the popular site celebrated its 200,000th band member. (www.ReverbNation.com)



Nancie Stern

President, Music Resources, Inc. Stern's company specializes in music clearances & licensing for all media, and is a leader in resolving thorny sample clearance issues (she has worked on albums for Tupac, Eminem, 50 Cent and many more). Over the last few years, her focus has been in the area of New Media and Technology where she helps her clients to develop viable music-

driven business models that many industry vets won't touch. While Stern has a hard nose and a keen eye for the kind of legalese that can cripple a project, she's also known to have a soft heart when it comes to animal rights, actively supporting The Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act (PETS Act, H.R. 3858) that passed into law in 2006 (a law that protects pets in federal evacuation plans), and many other animal rights issues. She is also a longtime practitioner of the Buddhism of Nichiren Daishonin and an active member of the SGI-USA (the largest lay Buddhist organization in the world). (nstern@musicresources.com)

Delia Orjuela

A keen judge of up-and-coming talent, this Assistant VP, Writer/Publisher relations, Latin Music, BMI, consistently brings in strong artists and songwriters to take part in the organization's "Acoustic Lounge" events. Some of the many writers and musicians she has signed and worked with since she joined BMI include Los Tucanes de Tijuana, Molotov, Charlie Zaa, Café Tacuba, Rogelio Martínez, Innis, Kinky, Lupillo Rivera and Juanes. (www.bmi.com)



Delia Orjuela



Steve Schnur

Steve Schnur

Schnur spearheads the music supervision of the sports-oriented games franchises *Madden NFL*, *Tiger Woods* and *NBA Live*. The *Madden NFL* soundtrack has launched artists that include Good Charlotte, OK GO, Franz Ferdinand, Avenged Sevenfold, Yellowcard, Dashboard Confessional, Jet and Ozomatli. The highlights of the *Madden '09* soundtrack continue the trend of introducing unknown artists, with 12 newbies that include the Fashion, Innerpartysystem, Izza Kizza, Trivium, Kovas and Tyga. (www.ea.com)

Robert Weingartz

His AirPlay Direct provides indie artists with the digital promotional tools that are readily available to the major labels. In a



period where digital companies are popping up and charging the artist just to upload a picture and bio, his is a free service that allows one to do that plus service any broadcast media. (www.airplaydirect.com)

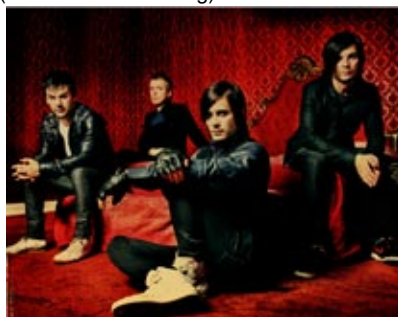
Guitar Hero / Rock Band

A two-headed musical monster, these video games (both originally developed by Harmonix, Inc.) may be responsible for a whole rash of rock & roll brats who will become the new warriors in the fight to keep loud guitars on the charts. Aside from inspiring kids, these games have become a great way to sell a band's back catalog, as well as an amazing vehicle to break new bands, probably even better than MTV and radio. New widgets and "sharing" technology now promise to allow players to create and play original music. "Buy" buttons enable the immediate purchase of music, adding "ch-ching" to the arsenal of gaming sound effects.



30 Seconds To Mars

The alt-rockers' song "A Beautiful Lie," from their new album of the same name, spawned a groundbreaking video that took the band to Greenland to raise awareness for global warming, and eventually resulted in the formation of their environmental non-profit site. (www.abeautifullie.org)



AC/DC

When it was just hard rock, AC/DC rocked hard; when they called it grunge, they wore their old jeans and fit right in; and now as kids play *Rock Band* they're aping Angus Young's licks and kicks. The band's recent album, *Black Ice*, debuted at No. 1 in 29 countries, while *Back In Black* continues to sell over the Double Diamond mark (with over 22 million copies sold). (www.acdc.com)



Freddie Ravel

He's a motivational speaker/musician (Madonna, Al Jarreau and many others) who has created a unique program that uses a keynote speech-and-concert mash-up called "Tune Up to Success." Yamaha, Wal-Mart and most recently NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center have hired Ravel to energize their work force. (www.freddieavel.com)



Freddie Ravel

Travis Allen

Owner & CEO of My Record Label, he's an artist who has worked with Dolly Parton, Diamond Rio and Garth Brooks. Allen developed My Record Label as a pro-artist site where indie artists can receive tools ranging from marketing and branding to product creation, including music EP's, full albums, music videos and EPKs (electronic press kits). The site is free to sign up and the takes no money from artist earnings. (www.myrecordlabel.net)



Brian Austin Whitney

Starting with 60 members in 1998, Whitney has grown the Just Plain Folks Music Organization to over 52,000 members in 160 countries. In 2008, the org's awards competition reportedly received over a half-million songs and 40,000 albums from 160 countries in over 100 different genres of music. Whitney has kept participation in the awards free. (www.jpfolks.com)



Brian Austin Whitney



Karen Taylor

Taylor, a singer/songwriter, has worked to honor others for their outstanding talents through her 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, The HUSH Foundation, by developing and producing high-profile, star-studded events that honor legends and provide a way for celebrities to "give back." The proceeds from these events go out to the community to support children with terminal, infectious and disabling diseases and to support pediatric HIV/AIDS and Pediatric Cancer. What's more, Taylor reportedly does it all without governmental, private, or public funding. (www.thehushfoundation.org)



Michael Laskow

Michael Laskow

Has continued to reinvent his 16-year-old A&R company TAXI to serve his membership in a changing industry. In 2008, Laskow offered more film/TV opportunities and advice, resulting in hundreds of placements and thousands of dollars in revenue for members, of which Laskow takes not a

penny, save for membership and submission fees. He also supplemented the 2008 Taxi Road Rally (free to members) in Los Angeles with more opportunities for musicians to get their songs heard by industry reps, and even have songs rewritten by pros on the spot before an audience, all for no charge to members. Attendee feedback about the recent Rally was unanimously positive. (www.taxi.com)

Panos Panay

Panay founded Sonicbids as a small business to help musicians save money on sending press kits through the mail, and bookers save time and space receiving them. Today a Sonicbids EPK has become the industry standard in receiving applications for conferences, contests and other opportunities for musicians. The company has exclusive partnerships with SXSW, CMJ, et al, and in 2008 upgraded its services and applications to create an even more efficient online space to promote. Over the past year more than 60,000 deals have taken place between bands and music promoters using Sonicbids. (www.Sonicbids.com)



Panos Panay

Melodyne with Direct Note Access (DNA)

Manufactured by Celemony, Melodyne is considered by pro engineers to be the best vocal tuning software, and the addition of DNA allows the manipulation of the notes in a chord. (www.youtube.com/watch?v=bdwNiaUQWjg)



DJ Z-TRIP

Phoenix, AZ-born Zach Sciacca was one of the first to become famous for spreading his mix-tape on MP3 as opposed to vinyl, CD or cassette. He has contributed to video games, collaborated with Supernatural, MURS, Chuck D and others — and he has opened up for the Rolling Stones — but it's his mixes, either for his own www.djztrip.com or other websites, that get people talking. Why has he been so influential in 2008? Well, over 150,000 people downloaded his "Obama Mix" (www.djztrip.com/obama) in just three weeks. If the message is in the music, then that's a lot of messengers. (www.djztrip.com)

Alexandra Patsavas

Not only does this prolific picker of tunes continue to give unsigned artists huge breaks in her role as Music Supervisor of popular TV series, she takes the time to speak at panels across the country as well. Patsavas, via her own music company Chop Shop Music Supervision, has marshalled the music for *The O.C.*, *Grey's Anatomy* and *Gossip Girl*, often calling upon unsigned or non-mainstream performers. Her work on *Gossip Girl*, for example, brought in many N.Y. bands (to fit the show's setting). Chop Shop Music Supervision became its own music label, Chop Shop Records, in 2007 after a deal was struck with Atlantic Records. The label's mission: to mainly sign indie rock bands. (www.myspace.com/chopshopmusic supervision)



Alexandra Patsavas

Musicians Institute

Originally formed as a school for future guitar heroes, MI has mushroomed into a remarkably full-service contemporary music college that prepares students for careers in the music industry as both performers and professionals. MI's Music Business Program has become so popular that it has its own building. MI's "Hiring Hall" is where students get to audition for national acts looking for players; many have joined artists such as, Pink, Mariah Carey, Nine Inch Nails and others in the studio and on the road. (www.mi.edu)



Ian Crombie

Crombie is a major champion of songwriters and has successfully led a songwriter organization with a 26-year history. His West Coast Songwriters Association weekly calendar of songwriter opportunities is amazing. WCS events take place throughout the West Coast, from as far south as Hollywood to as far north as Portland, OR. (www.WestCoastSongwriters.org)



Ian Crombie

Jannel Rap

This singer/songwriter turned grief into action by founding GINA (Greater Information Now Available) For Missing Persons in honor of her sister, Gina Bos (also a musician), who vanished after her performance at a show on Oct. 17, 2000, in Nebraska. GINA has expanded its reach worldwide and its website profiles missing persons and provides resources for the families of the missing. (www.411GINA.org)



Jannel Rap

Bill Pere

Founder and Executive Director of L.U.N.C.H. (Local United Network to Combat Hunger), the Connecticut-based Pere is using the power of popular music to produce positive social action. His benefit concerts, which have involved more than 2,500 young singers and musicians, have reportedly raised almost \$1 million for social services across the U.S. In 2008, Pere and



Bill Pere

a group of young artists performed with the original Harry Chapin Band at the Shubert Theater in New Haven, CT, raising almost \$20,000 to help the hungry and the homeless. (www.billpere.com)



Derek Sivers

Derek Sivers

You thought Derek Sivers was a visionary when he had CD Baby, which he sold this year to Disc Makers? Check out his site to see what he's doing now. Keeping a totally open mind, Sivers continues to act as a guiding light for up-and-coming artists and his site has a variety of interesting areas for musicians. Heck, Sivers



might be interested in partnering up with you. (www.sivers.org)

Billy Mitchell

The organization he founded, SAPPA (Scholarship Audition Performance Preparatory Academy), is a music and arts preparatory program for youngsters in under-served communities. Its mission is to deliver a musical experience through workshops and clinics and work in partnership with tutorial, mentoring and instructional programs. (www.sappa.net)

Joey Stec

Joey Stec, founder of Sonic Past Music, is dedicated to releasing digitally restored hidden gems from classic rockers such as Rick Springfield, Les Emmerson and Randy Meisner. Without Sonic Past, these records would never be heard and the artists who've long since been tossed aside by the majors would not have the opportunity to profit from their efforts. (www.sonicpastmusic.com)



Joey Stec

