

Ziffren Brittenham



John G. Branca



David Lande



David Byrnes

John G. Branca, one of the nation's preeminent music industry, entertainment and corporate attorneys, leads Ziffren Brittenham's music practice, which encompasses all facets of entertainment and media and represents many prominent individuals in film, TV, sports, live-stage, digital, literary and music, as well as financiers, production companies and programming services.

The firm represents such musical legends as **Michael Jackson**, **Carlos Santana** and **The Bee Gees**; superstars **Beyoncé**, **Travis Scott**, **Justin Timberlake**, **Shakira**, **Blake Shelton** and **Kelly Clarkson**; and next-generation music talent including **Selena Gomez**, **ROSALÍA** and **Olivia Rodrigo**. Ziffren's non-music roster includes A-listers **President Barack Obama**, **Michelle Obama**, **Tyler Perry**, **Lebron James**, **Dick Wolf**, **Sandra Bullock**, **Ben Affleck** and **Chadwick Boseman**.

JOHN BRANCA ON A TRIUMPHANT 2020:

"Of course, the pandemic has presented challenges unthinkable 18 months ago, but what is most remarkable to me about the last year has been the non-pandemic changes and evolution in the music industry. We have seen a flurry in the sale of important song catalogs, many of which I am proud to say the firm has been central to. The valuation of these catalogs has been at a high, which means songs and songwriters are valued more than ever. We've helped our clients make a judgment about timing, evaluation and potential partners. More and more, our team has worked to create ancillary revenue streams for our music clients, particularly in television.

"Unexpectedly, an entirely new revenue source, NFT, has been created, and we are presented with new challenges

and opportunities about which we are developing expertise to share with our clients. It is invigorating and intellectually challenging but immensely rewarding in many ways.

"It was extremely gratifying to see how favorably critics and the public viewed the **Bee Gees** doc this year, since much went into its creation and into the release of *Greenfields*. As the co-producer of the *Michael Jackson: ONE* show in Las Vegas and the MJ biopic and Broadway play we have in development, the work has been ongoing. I'm looking forward to once again putting Michael's music and the work done by the talented team of the producers, directors, choreographers, dancers, actors and other creators involved in these productions in front of his fans and the public. The **Estate of Michael Jackson** continues to develop projects that honor the life and music

of, in the memorable words of **Berry Gordy**, "the greatest entertainer who ever lived."

DAVID LANDE PARTNER

LOOKING BACK ON A ROLLER-COASTER YEAR, WHAT STANDS OUT IN 2020? "We are blessed with incredible clients and the opportunity to work on exciting deals for them. A few deals that stand out: Representing **Beyoncé** in negotiating an extensive partnership with **Peloton**—the first major deal between Peloton and an artist that encompasses a lucrative commercial opportunity and an important partnership that includes 10 HBCUs. Representing **Travis Scott** in connection with his new beverage venture, **CACTI** agave-spiked seltzer, in partnership with **Anheuser-Busch**. Representing **Selena Gomez** in the negotiation of a new multi-album recording agreement with **Interscope**. Representing **ROSALÍA** in significant endorsement agreements with **Nike** and **MAC**."

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE CATALOG GOLD RUSH?

"This is a unique moment in time fueled by lots of money chasing a limited number of deals. One of the exciting deals that we did in 2020 was the sale of **Shakira's** publishing

rights to **Hipgnosis**. In a world of negative real interest rates, investors are searching for yield in bond like investments, and the acquisition of IP rights and/or revenue streams fulfills this goal. For songwriters and owners of IP, it is an opportunity to obtain previously unheard-of multiples and favorable tax treatment.”

DAVID BYRNES
PARTNER

ON A ROLLERCOASTER

YEAR: “Talk about disruption. A year of shutdowns and tour cancellations evolved into diverse opportunities, including furniture lines, hard seltzers, fast food, gaming, strategically timed merchandise drops and TV, whether traditional or streaming. Clients figured out different ways to interact with fans and advance their brands in all those areas. For estates, it was business as usual, with the added element of a robust catalog-sales business and healthy streams.”

MITCH TENZER
PARTNER

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO AS THE BIZ RETURNS TO NORMAL?

“Dining out, visiting my son in college, eating sushi in Tokyo, driving the Amalfi Coast. It’s been a long year.”

KELLY VALLON
PARTNER

WHAT’S IMPORTANT WHEN ADVISING A RISING TALENT?

“When working with a rising star like Olivia Rodrigo, you’re starting with more of a blank canvas. It’s important to educate clients on the business as a whole, discussing specific legal issues and the concepts underlying them and making introductions to potential partners, vendors and collaborators. They’re often selecting partners and representatives with whom they’ll be working for a long time, so I want

to make sure they feel like they’re making the best decisions for themselves.”

HOW DID WORKING REMOTELY AFFECT YOUR PRACTICE?

“For me, this past year has been incredibly productive. There are perks like being able to work out in the middle of the day, but I miss seeing my colleagues and other friends in the industry. What I would give to go to a show!”

P.J. SHAPIRO
MANAGING PARTNER

ON THE DEMAND FOR MUSIC TALENT ACROSS TV/FILM:

“Music-driven content, both live-action and animated, has been a big value driver for film and TV companies. In animation, consider Beyoncé’s role in *The Lion King* or Justin Timberlake’s voice performance in *Trolls*. Justin followed that performance with his critically acclaimed role in **Apple’s Palmer**. On the live-action side, **Lady Gaga** burst onto the scene with a starring role in *A Star Is Born*, which resulted in landing a role in **Ridley Scott’s Gucci**. **Zendaya** dazzled audiences with her performance in *Euphoria*. **Selena Gomez** had a voice-acting role in *Hotel Transylvania* opposite **Adam Sandler**, and next she’ll co-star with **Steve Martin** and **Martin Short** in the series *Only Murders in the Building*. In both instances, Selena brings a unique and powerful demographic of viewers to the project who otherwise might not tune in.”

MATT JOHNSON
PARTNER

ON THE INTERSECTION OF ENTERTAINMENT SECTORS:

“This is an exciting time for celebrities and cultural influencers of all types. Musicians, athletes and artists are using their voices in new and



Matt Johnson



P.J. Shapiro



Mitch Tenzer



Kelly Vallon

powerful ways to shape public discourse and tell compelling stories. For example, **Drake** giving new life to London’s *Top Boy*; **LeBron James** creating compelling content to promote voting rights through *More Than a Vote*; **Barack** and **Michelle Obama** sparking dialogue through their *Spotify* podcasts; and **Sacha Baron Cohen** exposing the dangers of voting for **Trump** through the comedic genius of *Borat*. In each instance, we are moving beyond mere entertainment to educating and enlightening the public.”

IRINA VOLODARSKY
ON THE EFFECTS OF THE CATALOG BOOM:

“In terms of publishing acquisitions, it’s a validation of songwriters and music publishing, which has for decades operated under statutory pricing



Irina Volodarsky

structures that haven’t reflected its true market value.”

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO AS THE BIZ RETURNS TO NORMAL?

“Hopefully, an industrywide reassessment of how things can be done more efficiently and with more flexibility. And live shows.” ■