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An Intro to the Music Industry

Cameron Strang, *Warner Bros. Records*; Nate Ruess, *fun.*

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Warner Bros. Chairman and CEO Cameron Strang, along with singer/songwriter Nate Ruess of Fun., offer a brief overview of the music industry from the perspective of an industry executive and artist, respectively.



Transcript

A lot of people in the room are not that familiar with the music industry. We're certainly pretty familiar with the Silicon Valley entrepreneur ecosystem. Maybe you could give us a little bit of a tutorial about what it means to be a producer, manager, an executive and also an artist in the music industry. Cameron, you want to kick it off? Well, I'll start quickly. So the music business, the music business is really divided into major companies and independent companies. And now the major companies are really Warner Music Group-which I am a part of-Sony and Universal. And then there is a whole host of independent companies that are smaller than the majors. And generally, the business is divided in two: recorded music, which is the kind of the classic record business where we find artists, we make recordings of the music and we exploit that music however we can through CD sales, through downloads, through streaming, through licensing of all different types. And also the music publishing business which isn't the really the music publishing business, it's called the music publishing business because a hundred or two hundred years ago they used to publish sheet music but really today it's more probably the music licensing business and the song business. And that business is about owning and managing the underlying songs, the intellectual property of the songs themselves, the compositions themselves.

So every song is written by somebody and they own that song and then it's used in various ways. So that's the music business that we're in and then there's artists and managers and booking agents and lawyers. There is a whole industry of people that make a living, working around the music business and artist and songwriters. Great. What about from the artist's perspective? I am the exploited. It's a terrible word. So the lawyers... Exploit the music, not the artist. ... the managers, everybody, I create music, make art, write songs.

They are not mutually exclusive or together, art or music. And I like to do a little bit of everything and that usually means that eventually you have to go out on tour or do interviews or do other stuff like that. But the music industry, where I am at right now, is a great place because I have had opportunities, I've been on the radio, have sold music so to get to, I guess, dictate, have a little more of a hand in dictating what I do as an artist is - it's a great place to be.