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SACEM A G

**France turns up
the volume!**



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A WORD FROM

**Patrick Sigwalt**

Composer, Chairman
of the Sacem Board
of Directors

Had we been living at the start of the 18th century, we creators
would have been forced to rely on patrons or secure government
commissions in order to make a living from our art. In other words, we
would be living at the mercy of political and financial power.

175 years ago, Sacem's founders refused to accept this fate and chose
a different path. This year we will be celebrating 175 years of freedom.
The freedom to create, and to make a living from our creative work.
This legacy is an honour, but also a responsibility.

At a time when might is right, when technological hubris is shaking the
very foundations of our values, defending copyright law is an urgent
necessity. Inherited from the Age of Enlightenment and enshrined in
the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, copyright is not merely a
legal framework: it is one of the founding pillars of democracy.

It is one of the most egalitarian systems in existence, making
no distinction based on age, gender, religion or origin, and giving
everyone—from emerging artists to established stars—the same
rights, the same safeguards and the same promise of independence.

Today, we are faced with a crucial question: will creativity remain a
free expression of the human spirit, or will it become a commodity
controlled by a handful of tech billionaires?

Our works are the fuel for artificial intelligence, and it is by
establishing a clear framework based on informed consent that
innovation and culture can coexist and thrive.

This is why we, creators and publishers represented by all collective
management organisations, are calling for a united response and
asking for copyright to be inscribed on UNESCO's List of Intangible
Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Because what is at stake today goes far beyond the world of culture: it
is about the space we are willing to dedicate to freedom, diversity and
the indomitable human spirit.

A WORD FROM



Cécile Rap-Veber
Chief executive officer

In 1851, Sacem consisted of barely 100 creators, all based in France, at a time when copyright was still in its infancy. Today, it pays royalties to over 633,000 authors, composers and publishers around the world. Over the past 175 years, Sacem has weathered technological revolutions, major crises and seismic shifts in the industry. Its French-style copyright and collective management model has been criticised as outdated, even obsolete. And yet, it continues to thrive, becoming a leader in its field and an inspiration to the world. Because this model is based on a simple idea: when creative work generates value, this value cannot be extracted at the expense of creators themselves.

Yet this is exactly what we are witnessing today. A handful of AI companies have consolidated technological power and influence to a staggering degree, and now want to capitalise on the cultural "raw material" they have already exploited to fuel their growth. They plunder every available work to train their systems, without seeking permission or providing any transparency. Like a black box, they operate in total secrecy. A business model that one can only define as predatory. But just because works are "available" does not mean they are "free".

Since those in power are unwilling to transparently share their training data, and since they refuse to engage in meaningful negotiations, legal action appears to be the only way forward. This is precisely what the French Senate brought forth when, on 8 April, it voted in favour of the bill establishing a presumption of use of cultural content by AI providers: "Unless proven otherwise, a work protected by copyright is presumed to have been used by the artificial intelligence system where any indication makes such use plausible." A text closely aligned with the Voss report, adopted on 10 March by the European Parliament. While the legislative process is only just beginning, these two votes send out an important message. They are a clear reminder that regulation is not designed to stifle innovation. It is designed to protect it. It is designed to create a balanced framework for negotiation when one side holds most if not all of the bargaining power. AI systems need to exploit creative works in order to function. So be it. But rights holders are entitled to fair compensation and a contractual framework.

The battle for copyright may seem like a technical issue. In truth, it has everything to do with politics. All over the world, every culture is fighting for survival. Keeping culture alive is what allows any given country to assert its sovereignty. What will remain of human nations and civilisation at large if the world as a whole is flooded with synthetic content generated by AI companies that are controlled by a handful of individuals? We cannot risk waiting any longer. Governments must act. And Sacem is fighting alongside collective management organisations around the world for effective regulation so that creativity and innovation may truly flourish together.

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**"IT'S PRETTY
INCREDIBLE
TO KNOW THAT
PEOPLE OUTSIDE
FRANCE ARE
LISTENING TO
OUR MUSIC."**

JUSTICE

SONGWRITERS

Growing up in the 90s, Xavier de Rosnay and Gaspard Augé fell in love with British and American music. It was from this heritage that they distilled a style that got the whole world dancing. With Justice, French electro began exporting more than just music: it established a signature.

Behind the neon crosses and distorted amps lining their stages, the duo known as Justice – Gaspard Augé and Xavier de Rosnay – completely redefined "French Touch 2.0" in the mid-2000s. Heirs to Daft Punk and standard-bearers of the Ed Banger label, they delivered a raw, abrasive, rock'n'roll kind of electro.

Their music spread like wildfire across every border. *"The first track sold rather well overseas,"* smiles Gaspard Augé, referring to the Simian remix of "We Are Your Friends", a club classic worldwide. In its wake they toured the world, worshipped on dance-floors from Europe's biggest stages to Coachella across the pond.

With D.A.N.C.E. and Genesis, the duo expertly blended disco, rock and funk. Following up with Stress and Chorus, they cemented their reputation for dark, captivating electroclash.

Crowned at the Grammy Awards in 2019 for Woman Worldwide, ten years after their first Grammy for the remix of MGMT's Electric Feel, Justice have become a global benchmark in the genre.

Hyperdrama, released in 2024, was a turning point, an opening up to new influences. The duo collaborated with the psychedelic sensation from Australia, Kevin Parker (Tame Impala), American singer-songwriter and producer Miguel, and the virtuoso bassist Thundercat from LA.

But they never lost sight of what made them special, or the friendship between them. *"We're lucky to still be friends. We know each other so well, what the other needs to be happy,"* the two friends sum up. And the recipe works: they were awarded yet another Grammy in the Best Dance/Electronic Track category for Neverender.

Justice remains on a stellar trajectory, refining their art and collaborating with major sensations like Angèle (Nightcall) on What You Want. *"It's pretty incredible to know that people outside France are listening to our music,"* admits Augé. Justice exemplifies what makes the French music scene so seductive: it speaks to the world without ever losing that special *je ne sais quoi*...

VICTOR LE MASNE

SONGWRITER



**"I WANTED MUSIC
THAT TRULY
BROUGHT PEOPLE
TOGETHER."**

Victor le Masne has stepped out of the shadows of the recording studio and into the spotlight of the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games to conduct "one of history's greatest ceremonies". It was the perfect showcase for his boundless musical vision.

Born into a family of musicians, Victor le Masne grew up in a world of conservatories and sheet music. His family appreciated all styles: classical, pop, electronic – everything had its place. He refined his art without ever allowing it to become set in stone. Chapter One: Housse de Racket. After 15 years and three albums working alongside Pierre Leroux, Victor's synth-pop was polished like a diamond but never quite earned the success it deserved. His meeting with Philippe Zdar would change everything. The Beastie Boys producer and member of legendary duo Cassius taught him *"to let life into the songs"*.

Then le Masne stepped out of the limelight to become a producer, arranger and artistic director. With Downtown Music Publishing, he juggled sessions between London and the USA, collaborating with Juliette Armanet, Kavinsky and Justice. His greatest strength? Creating connections to embrace different musical worlds without flattening them. Joining Sacem *"felt like being part of a big musical family,"* he confides. It gave his work a sense of continuity.

The turning point came in 2024. Victor was approached by Thomas Jolly, artistic director of the 2024 Paris Olympic Games ceremonies, who invited him to join the team as musical director. An Olympian challenge over four ceremonies, crafted for a global audience. He composed Parade with a simple idea: *"An anthem that would unite and electrify people from all over."* Everything came together at the Conciergerie where Gojira and Marina Viotti broke all the rules. Metal, opera, and cultural heritage collided with masterful precision. *"I wanted music that was inclusive rather than divisive, that truly brought people together,"* as Victor le Masne put it. An explosive performance that earned them a Grammy Award.

Now based in Los Angeles, Victor le Masne is charging ahead, always in motion, always positioned at the crossroads of different worlds.



**"THE SONGS
DON'T JUST
REFLECT
THE SCRIPT,
THEY ARE
THE SCRIPT."**

CAMILLE & CLEMENT DUCOL

SONGWRITERS

March 2, 2025, Mick Jagger opens the envelope and announces: "And the Oscar goes to "El Mal". Come here and get it!" Fifty-six years after Michel Legrand, a French artist takes home the Oscar for Best Original Song.

As the duo discovered first-hand, California has two seasons of its own, stretching from autumn to spring: Indian summer and "awards season". It was an opportunity for them to learn the inner workings of a demanding American business sector. *"The suspense is just like a thriller movie,"* says Ducol with a smile, rushing from film screenings to meetings with voters. From their home base in Charente to the hills of Los Angeles, the duo have carved out a rare niche: writing music that drives the narrative. Their collaboration with Jacques Audiard on the Emilia Pérez soundtrack was a testament to their unique talent, pushing the traditional boundaries of the form. *"Working on a soundtrack while the film is still being edited is already a special kind of privilege, but being involved from the very start,*

right through to the end, is just exceptional," adds Camille. With this approach, the music becomes more than an accompaniment: it sets the tone. *"The songs don't just reflect the script, they are the script,"* summarises Clément Ducol, describing a drawn-out composition process that begins without a screenplay, driven by the dialogue between text and music. For over two years, the duo worked in isolation, refining each song to emerge with a work in which every note contributes to the drama.

Their approach reimagines the musical theatre tradition, drawing from Cabaret and reinventing the form in one fell swoop. *"We wanted something that felt natural, with fluid transitions from dialogue to song lyrics,"* explains Camille, praising Selena Gomez's performance. Today, the duo's appetite for risk and organic expression has found a global audience. The film's massive success proves once again that a film is built around three key figures: the screenwriter, the director and the soundtrack composer.

YOUSSOU N'DOUR

SONGWRITER

Youssou N'Dour, one of the most iconic voices on the African music scene, recently became a member of Sacem. The 64-year-old remains more dedicated than ever to life-affirming music rooted in Senegal and inspired by the world, working tirelessly to pass this passion on to future generations.



From his early beginnings with Star Band de Dakar, his first ensemble in the 1970s, to his legendary collaborations with Peter Gabriel, Neneh Cherry and Michael Brooks, N'Dour's style has never stopped evolving. Capturing the rhythmic trance of mbalax, layered with traditional instruments like the kora, balafon, and Fulani flute, his music is more than a signature—it is a manifesto. *"COVID made us stop and ask ourselves: what kind of world are we trying to build? This new album [Éclairer le monde] is a plea for peaceful coexistence."*

N'Dour is working to structure and protect his rich and broad repertoire: *"I started very young. Some of my older albums are lost to history... But this is my story, my heritage. Artists need to work with the right people to understand how music is made, and how you defend your rights as a musician. I am very connected to my home country. I made it a point to work with Sodav [a major Senegalese CMO] and now, thanks to Sacem, I can better manage my rights and royalties all over the world."*

N'dour wants nothing more than to share this musical heritage with younger generations. *"I bring them up on stage, I listen to their music, I share it. This spirit of transmission is important to me. If future generations leave it to machines, we risk a creative drought,"* he says defending amapiano – a South African blend of electro and piano – while tracing its origins back to Fela Kuti, Manu Dibango and Congolese rumba.

And what about mbalax? *"This is the sound of the local community, it has deep roots. But the future of Senegalese music is more than just mbalax. It's up to younger generations of musicians to do the work it takes to carry these rhythms into the modern era."*

**"YOU NEED TO WORK
WITH THE RIGHT PEOPLE
TO DEFEND YOUR
RIGHTS."**

LEGENDARY

Studio Ferber

STUDIOS

The pure sound workshop

BY ———— Marc Augier



© Inès Ziouane

For decades, artists have flocked to this address. Studio Ferber, with its oak floors and legendary mixing consoles, remains an inspiration to those seeking to capture sound in its purest form. Steeped in history, driven by passion, always with an eye to the future.

When Renaud Letang

first began working at Studio Ferber in 1993, the 22-year-old sound engineer was contracted to record and mix Alain Souchon's album *C'est déjà ça*, which included the hit single "Foule Sentimentale." *"I just fell in love with the sound quality,"* he remembers. *"It was so beautiful, I couldn't believe my ears. I immediately took my demo tape to the Guillaume Tell studio to listen to it there, just to make sure my ears weren't playing tricks on me."* But the sound was indeed just that good and thirty years later, the man who eventually became the studio manager is still in love with Ferber's acoustics.



RENÉ AMELINE, THE FOUNDER

The story begins in 1973 when René Ameline founded the studio in Paris's 20th arrondissement. Building on the success of the hit songs he recorded at Studio Davout for such artists as Esther Galil and the Poppys, and Michel Delpech ("Pour un flirt", which sold 1 million copies), the sound engineer went on to acquire an old factory space where irons were manufactured on Rue Ferber, tearing everything down but the walls. In this stunning space he designed a tastefully matte acoustic environment with wood-panelled walls, solid oak flooring, and high ceilings reaching up to 7 metres in Studio A with its 187 m² that can accommodate up to 60 musicians. This quality set-up immediately positioned Ferber at the cutting edge of music-making at the time. Some of their recording equipment was even tailor-made on site, and before long the studio boasted a Neve

series 82-84 mixing deck envied by professionals around the world. Some of France's top artists flocked to the studio, including Julien Clerc, Claude Nougaro and Marie Laforêt. Perhaps most importantly, producer Francis Dreyfus chose Ferber to showcase the artists of his budding record label, Motors, such as Christophe who recorded his album *Les Paradis perdus*, which included a homage entitled "Ferber endormi": *La séance est finie / Le dernier musicien est parti / Au milieu d'un studio / Endormi, je regrette / Ces lointains paradis / Paradis* (It's a wrap / The last musician gone / Alone in the studio / Sound asleep, longing for / The heavens in the distance / The heavens). With the advent of new synthesizer technology in the 70s and 80s, many studios were left behind. Ferber however was not one of them, managing to branch out into music



SERGE GAINSBOURG

for cinema, television and advertising. Gainsbourg, Dutronc, Lavilliers, Higelin, Karen Cheryl, William Sheller, Bijou, Jean-Michel Jarre, Cerrone, Juliette Gréco, Aznavour, Cabrel... From French music classics to the new wave of disco, the list goes on. And then there was jazz, with Francis Dreyfus producing such legends as Michel Petrucciani, Richard Galliano, Biréli Lagrène, to name a few. Studio A was busy as ever.

Renaud Letang, however, much preferred working in Studio B: "The booth has the most incredible neutral sound." It was in this very booth that he recorded "Clandestino" for Manu Chao in 1998, and went on to work full-time for Ferber. He became such a fixture that René Ameline designated the producer as his successor before passing away in 2014. Having snatched Ferber back from the clutches of property developers, Renaud Letang now runs the studios with his partner Mohamed Saadi and manager Jean-Christophe Le Guennan. Working with architect Pablo Gallego, he spearheaded the full restructuring of the studio: *"To create the perfect atmosphere, we blended a 1970s aesthetic with cutting-edge recording equipment,"* he says. *"I restored Ferber like a piece of antique furniture."*

They also restructured the business model to involve smaller booths, still boasting top-shelf equipment, which they rented out on a yearly basis. Ferber ended up opening eleven additional recording booths alongside the legendary Studio A, B and D (which was mostly dedicated to mixing). Scaling up as their reputation grew, the studio was a mainstay for both French artists (Alain Bashung, Vanessa Paradis, Philippe Katerine, Oxmo Puccino, Martin Solveig) and international creators, from Cat Stevens to Nick Cave, Iggy Pop and Black Sabbath. Ferber's success remains the stuff of legend: their booking schedule was said to be so packed that they had to turn down Prince in 2014, and their archives are rumoured to contain exclusive unreleased recordings of Nina Simone and Frank Zappa. From Clara Luciani and Jeff Mills in Studio A to Chilly Gonzales and Lianne La Havas in Studio B, Ferber is still making history. Their success extends even into music for cinema, with recent work for The Count of Monte Cristo and Emilia Pérez.

Gabriel Yared, Oscar-winning composer for The English Patient, recorded numerous soundtracks at Ferber Studio (The Lover, City of Angels, The Marmots, Message in a Bottle, Azur and Asmar). He remains one of the most loyal customers since the studio's earliest days in 1973: *"Ferber is like my adoptive family. I experienced some of my greatest joys right here in this studio,"* he says. *"I still remember working with René Ameline, a truly exceptional person, as well as other friends from the early days like Jean-Claude Dubois and Georges Rodi. I love the acoustics, the depth and warmth of their sound, and they have made an art of capturing every detail with remarkable fidelity. The Ferber sound has a signature, it has a soul you won't find anywhere else."* The studio now hosts film-shoots, concerts, even corporate seminars, diversifying its activities to remain at the forefront of the industry, and consistently ranks alongside Abbey Road in London and Electric Lady in New York as one of the most sought-after music studios in the world.



NICK CAVE & THE BAD SEEDS

The Music Lesson: An Insider View

BY — Stéphane Lerouge

A specialist in film music, he notably created the *Écoutez le cinéma* record collection at Universal Music France and curated the film music section of the Musée Sacem. He is also the co-author of the memoirs of Antoine Duhamel and Michel Legrand.

What would a film be without music? When a director's vision meets that of a composer, an alchemy takes hold, sometimes tense, often miraculous, elevating the composer to the status of the film's third author. It is in this fragile space, where friction gives way to grace, that *The Music Lesson* unfolds.



French composer
Alexandre Desplat.



The Mexican director and screenwriter Guillermo del Toro.

The title makes it all sound very formal when the actual event is anything but. Launched in 2021, 'La Leçon de musique' is a collaborative initiative by Sacem and the Cannes Film Festival. Its goals? To shed light on the life and work of iconic composers: who they really are, how they write, how they navigate the world created by the film director, forge a new path to make their voice heard. A playful yet instructive format, built on a simple combination of film clips and, more often than not, a piano.

As the host of this now regular event, I know first-hand how much work is involved, a great deal of it starting as early as January to find the perfect guests and make sure everyone is where they are supposed to be when the magic happens. Famed Franco-Lebanese composer Gabriel Yared, for example, cleared his schedule just so he could join us on the show. Martin Scorsese, who happened to be in Cannes at the same time as his old friend and collaborator Howard Shore, literally invited himself onto the stage of *The Music Lesson* to talk to his brother in arms. Director François Ozon, who wasn't even nominated, came on as a special guest to celebrate the 25-year anniversary of his collaboration with composer Philippe Rombi.

And in 2025, Mexican director and magic-maker Guillermo del Toro halted the post-production of his hit film *Frankenstein* to sit down with Alexandre Desplat—a long-time collaborator he likes to call his "musical screenwriter".

The Q&A game, a popular feature of the show, is a window into the creative process of composers and directors, how they work together to translate one art form into another. Each Lesson has its own colour, its own poetry. Examples abound: the moment del Toro was moved to tears hearing Desplat whistle the theme of *The Shape of Water*; or the time Ozon unveiled an unmixed musical sequence of his film *The Crime is Mine*; or when Cécile Rap-Veber, CEO of Sacem, gifted Taxi Driver-director Martin Scorsese an original letter addressed by Orson Welles to musician Paul Misraki who composed the score of *Mr. Arkadin*. And how could we forget Gabriel Yared's timeless piano rendition of the theme song of *Betty Blue*? Or the edition when director Jacques Perrin recorded a video message to express his heartfelt gratitude to composer Bruno Coulais: "*Your music shed light on my own films and showed me facets I had never seen before.*" Four years earlier, del Toro expressed a similar view: "*Composers aren't there to add a bit of colour, they reveal new things entirely.*" This is what 'La Leçon de musique' is all about. Held at the Cannes Film Festival year after year, this Sacem initiative showcases the vital role played by music in cinema.

AROUND

The Ever-growing
Influence of
French Music



THE WORLD

FEATURE

BY ————— Olivier Richard

Aya Nakamura, Gojira, DJ Snake, David Guetta, Tagada Jones, Landmvrks

and countless others... French music is making waves across the globe. This growing and multifaceted success is a sign that music now ranks among our country's most outstanding achievements, alongside luxury goods and gastronomy.

The figures speak for themselves: French music is being exported on an ever-increasing scale. In 2024, live performances and recorded music generated €1.178 billion in international revenue, representing 16% of total revenue. Specifically, 29% of recorded music revenue comes from exports, compared with 6% for live performances. The data is unambiguous, French music is truly going global. What's more, this trend is affecting all aspects of music production, including music for film and television as well as sonic and audio branding.

THE OLYMPICS AS A CATALYST

The ultimate symbol of French music's global success was the unforgettable opening and closing ceremonies of the Paris Olympic and Paralympic Games in July and August 2024, a showcase of French artists performing live for an audience of 1 billion viewers. The ceremonies represented a veritable springboard for the artists involved and the French music ecosystem as a whole. For example: Aya Nakamura's streams increased by 40% abroad in the wake of the Olympics, while Gojira's rose by a staggering 129%. While the figures are impressive in themselves, the eclectic musical line-up also helped boost France's image on the world stage. The New York Times was blown away, writing: "With her performance, Aya Nakamura has redefined what it means to be French!" 11,000 kilometres away, Lu Ming, a comic book artist from Beijing, raved on WeChat: "Seeing a metal band open the Olympics was simply brilliant! Well done, France!" While the Olympics grabbed all the headlines, the international success of French music was the result of extensive changes brought about by the digital revolution, and groundwork by passionate professionals.

FLASHBACK

The globalisation of French music undoubtedly began with the success of French touch which took the world by storm around the turn of the millennium. French music has enjoyed a long-standing reputation since the Classical era (17th–19th centuries), but these exports appealed only to an educated, Francophile audience. In later years, French singer-songwriters from Maurice Chevalier to Édith Piaf, Yves Montand and Tino Rossi began to win over fans abroad with a new wave of pop music known as *variété française*. This brand of French pop enjoyed considerable success in Eastern Europe and Latin America thanks to Dalida, Charles Aznavour and a few other big names from the 1960s and 1970s national repertoire. But for most of the world, particularly the vast Anglo-Saxon market, French artists remained largely unknown. Of course some figureheads of the French underground, such as Richard Pinhas (electro) and Métal Urbain (electro-punk), were well

Sacem internationally

French music is expanding internationally... and so is Sacem! Caroline Champarnaud, Sacem Director of International Affairs, gives her take: "Around 28,000 of our members are based abroad, and Sacem manages online contracts in 230 countries. It works in two ways: either through a subsidiary or an office (Luxembourg, Monaco, Polynesia, Lebanon), or by signing a representation agreement with a local performing rights organisation. In 2024, international collections totalled €98 million, an increase of 5%. The film, TV series and animated film soundtrack sector is particularly dynamic. In addition to our collection work, we organise outreach initiatives to strengthen ties between our members and foreign artists. In 2025, we organised a songwriting workshop in Korea in collaboration with the Korean publisher CTGA Music. It was a magical collective experience, with French and Korean songwriters working hand in hand to write songs for K-pop artists. We organised similar initiatives in Nashville, focusing on folk and country music, and in Amsterdam, focusing on electronic music: a total of around sixty creators took part and produced around a hundred works! We intend to develop this type of initiative while continuing, of course, our work to forge closer ties with the international community, in order to keep improving our international royalty collections."

"The Chinese often associate French culture with romanticism; the same applies to music."

respected in the specialist corners of the Anglo-Saxon press. Rock bands Trust and Indochine, for example, managed to secure a loyal fan base in the late 70s and early 80s in places like the UK (Trust), Sweden and Peru (Indochine). One notable stand-out is Jean-Michel Jarre who enjoyed global success with his album *Oxygène* (1976) selling 18 million copies worldwide! This triumph earned the electro pioneer a series of historic concerts in China in the 1980s. Fifteen years later his spiritual successors, French touch legends like Air and Daft Punk, finally broke through into the international mainstream, themselves opening the door to dance artists such as David Guetta and DJ Snake. Nowadays, people all over the world are dancing to French beats.

THE INDIE AVANT-GARDE

Long before the big stages and award ceremonies, the real work was being done on the fringes, with independent labels and a growing underground scene that paved the way for all that came after. When Madonna collaborated with Mirwais 25 years ago, the French producer had long since moved out of the mainstream. Similarly, Gojira carved out a reputation as a heavy metal headliner almost exclusively abroad before filling arenas in France. Laurent Garnier and his peers were regular guests in clubs across five continents in the late 90s, whilst punk bands such as Les Thugs (Angers) and Burning Heads (Orléans) would regularly tour the United States. French soft power in the 1990s and 2000s emerged from the underground. The popularity of France's alternative-punk scene in Latin America is another fine example of this, with Manu Chao being just the tip of the iceberg. Versailles-based synth pop band Phoenix, clearly influenced by the French touch movement, proved the old adage that no one is a prophet in their own land by first finding success in the United States and winning the Grammy Award for Best Alternative Music Album in 2010 with

Marlon Magnée of the band La Femme at the MadCool Festival in Madrid on 7 July 2022.



© SOPA Images/SIPA



© Michal Augustini/Shutterstock/SI

Air at the Royal Albert Hall in London on 31 May 2024.

Wolfgang Amadeus Phoenix. Despite the fact that the Victoires de la Musique still do not feature a rock category, Gojira, Marina Viotti and Victor le Masne took home the Grammy for Best Metal Performance for their live shows at the Olympics (the band's fourth Grammy nomination).

SOFT POWER

Long confined to the domestic market, French pop artists are becoming increasingly successful abroad: Aya Nakamura and Zaho de Sagazan are now winning over international audiences alongside established talents such as Joyce Jonathan, who has been making impressive strides in the hugely lucrative Chinese market for over fifteen years. In 2024, the singer pulled off a major win by landing the top spot on the popular Chinese talent show *Ride the Wind* (乘风). French artists are now regularly booked for major international festivals like Coachella (California), with next year's edition set to feature trend-setters Oklou and Dabeull. Simon Jones, Senior Vice President of International Tours at AEG, the organiser of Coachella and the world's number two live entertainment company, says: "French artists have a long-standing reputation for excellence. They are incredibly versatile. We have seen this play out in the last five years with the global success of talents

such as Polo & Pan and Theodora, who is set to be the next superstar!" Yang Yu, international artist programmer for the Midi Festival in China, had the following to say: "The Chinese often associate French culture, and music, with romance. That being said, the vast majority of the Chinese public don't really listen to music from abroad. International music is mainly consumed by young people in big cities. And while France is synonymous with cuisine, fine wines, fashion, cinema and sport, we can sometimes make real magic happen with French musicians." Camille Contreras, the singer of the Marseille-based metal band Novelists, who is about to tour China for the third time, echoes this sentiment: "Chinese audiences are fantastic! They are incredibly kind. We're touring seven cities and playing in venues that just keep getting bigger and bigger" (with a capacity of up to 1,000 people, Ed.). Despite the fact that, like Novelists, an increasing number of musicians are touring abroad without the support of the *Alliance Française* and the *Institut Français*, these organisations continue to play a significant role, on a par with that of the CNM, as Yang Yu explains: "With *Croisements*, its multidisciplinary festival showcasing solo acts as well as bands, the Institut Français has succeeded in forging a genuine connection between young people in China and French music." Initiatives such as France Music Week and ICC Immersion play a huge part in cultivating the popularity of French music abroad.



Zaho de Sagazan, opening ceremony of the 77th Cannes Film Festival, 14 May 2025.

" Nowadays, with streaming, it's much easier to break into markets abroad. Knowing that people are listening to us in 120 countries is exciting! "

THE STREAMING EFFECT

The success of French artists abroad is also a result of the rapid growth of streaming services. Caroline Champarnaud, Head of International Affairs at Sacem, gives her take: *"The entire global repertoire is now easily accessible online—discovering new music has never been so easy. People who knew little or nothing about Francophone music can now listen to it at the touch of a button.* Our artists now have ten times the global reach they used to."Angelo Gopée from AEG echoes this sentiment: *"Streaming has made music globalisation a measurable reality. French artists no longer need to sing in English to conquer the world!* The most important thing remains the melody and the music itself." Marlon Magnée, former lead singer of La Femme, is a veteran of international tours. His band played 25 concerts abroad last year, and he is currently preparing for his latest album release with a string of concerts in Mexico. He recalls: *"We played gigs in the United States from the early days of the band. The fact that we sing in French never stopped us from being successful; fifteen years ago, that would have been a rare thing. Nowadays, with streaming, it's much easier to break into markets abroad. To know that people in 120 different countries are listening to our music is such a huge motivator! We can thank streaming services for that."* In his

view, French soft power is driven in large part by the success of French music. This is no more apparent than when fans tell him that his band inspired them to begin learning French. *"Korea is a great example to follow,"* he continues. *"K-pop truly put the country on the map in the most remarkable way!"* Wattie, frontman of Oi! band Lion's Law, just back from their South-East Asia tour, has a similar observation to make. *"When we played in Borneo, we were welcomed with open arms, it was incredible. Tickets in Jakarta cost just 2 euro, so there were thousands of people there. Every member of the audience we spoke to was interested in the French music scene."* Will the ever-growing success of French music bring French-speaking artists into the Top 10 of the IFPI's global artist rankings, like the South Korean group Stray Kids? Hopefully, this display of soft power will inspire other music professionals in France to expand their reach abroad.

THE FRENCH SOUNDTRACK

Another key component of French music production abroad is film and television music. Whether on the big screen or in adverts, the talent of French musicians gives shape to our collective soundtrack. An increasing number of international productions are calling on French musicians and their compositions for their soundtracks, even if their work ultimately receives relatively little media coverage. There are, however, notable exceptions such as the Oscar for Best Original Song, awarded to Camille and Clément Ducol in 2025 for their work on Jacques Audiard's Emilia Pérez. Or the exceptional filmography of soundtrack composer Alexandre Desplat, a two-time Oscar winner for Guillermo del Toro's *The Shape of Water* and Wes Anderson's *The Grand Budapest Hotel*. Also worth highlighting is the unique career of Michaël Boumendil, founder of the company Sixième Son, whose work is largely unknown outside specialist circles. A world leader in sound identity and musical design, Boumendil and his team have created sound identities for over 500 companies, including Etihad Airways and FC Barcelona. The man sometimes described as "the most listened-to French composer in the world" offered the following analysis: *"There is something very powerful about French music. It is the result of hard work by composers and musicians, but also by the communities they have built around them. It is this teamwork that makes it so special and popular all over the world."* A telling statement that says it all.

TOP 5

French artists most streamed internationally in 2025

1 David Guetta

2 DJ Snake

3 Daft Punk

4 Hugel

5 Indila



HIGHLIGHT

AFRO

27

26

BEATS

© Nupo Deyon Daniel



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TAKING ON THE WORLD

BY ——— Éric Delhaye

From Lagos to Paris, New York and London, Afrobeats is taking the world by storm, driven by artists such as Burna Boy, Aya Nakamura and Wizkid. With its talent, studios and record labels, Nigeria is the epicentre of a musical effervescence that knows no borders. Taking a closer look into a global phenomenon.

April 2025. Burna Boy is the first non-French-speaking African artist to headline at the Stade de France. "*Paris, I love you!*" exclaims the thirty-year-old Nigerian as Youssou N'Dour takes to the stage to honour him. Honoured in 2021 with a Grammy Award in the *Best Global Music Album* category for *Twice As Tall*, the Nigerian is now an established international superstar, from Melbourne to São Paulo via Montreal and Helsinki.

However, this triumphant evening, featuring a succession of special guests including Joé Dwèt Filé, Dadju and Werenoi, marked another major milestone: the recognition of Afrobeats. In 2026, this genre is now firmly established in the French music scene, nearly a decade after it gained international traction following the hit collab between Drake and Wizkid. At the forefront of this movement stands Burna Boy, an artist with a rich musical heritage. The roots of his story are deeply interwoven with those of modern Nigerian music: his grandfather, Benson Idonije, was the first producer for Fela Kuti, the creator of Afrobeat (in the singular, see box) in the 1960s. The records released by the “Black President” were instrumental in shaping Burna Boy’s childhood, a fact he acknowledges openly, though less for their artistic influence and more for their politics and spirit of rebellion. He calls himself the “African Giant”, after the title of his 2019 album, which featured collaborations with Damian Marley, Angélique Kidjo, the English singer Jorja Smith and the American rapper Future. Announced as one of two Nigerians (alongside Mr Eazi) on the 2019 Coachella festival line-up, he thanked the organisers on Instagram before adding:

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From Fela to Aya, from Afrobeat to Afrobeats

Many people still confuse Afrobeat with Afrobeats. That single ‘s’ makes all the difference: although both originated in Lagos, the two terms refer to two distinct styles. Afrobeat was created by Fela Kuti and his drummer Tony Allen, who, in the 1960s, fused West African music (notably Ghanaian highlife) with North American jazz and soul. Forged as a tool of resistance against the ruling powers, Afrobeat has continued to spread ever since, and countless bands keep the tradition alive outside its country of origin. Afrobeats clearly has links to its predecessor, having emerged in the following century, but its rhythms and instrumentation are markedly different, not to mention its political message, which has largely been diluted.

“But I don’t appreciate my name being written in such small print on your poster. I am an AFRICAN GIANT and I will not be diminished by your tiny font and everything it implies. Please fix this immediately.” And this star in the making is not joking around... Fifty years after Fela Kuti’s first US tour, Burna Boy is set to take the music business by storm, sweeping the entire continent along in his wake

BIRTH OF A PHENOMENON

Starting in 1973, Fela Kuti made the Shrine – a debate venue and concert hall in Lagos – his headquarters and the epicentre of his musical experiments blending traditional and modern styles. The 1970s and 1980s saw the emergence of other Afro-fusion scenes across the continent, whether rooted in Congolese rumba or Senegalese mbalax. But it was in the Nigerian metropolis of Lagos in the early 2000s that Afrobeats was born – a fusion of West African polyrhythms with diverse influences ranging from hip-hop to R&B, dancehall and house music, pioneered by musical trailblazers Trybesmen, P-Square, 2Baba and D’banj. A new economy gradually took shape and the genre spread to English-speaking diaspora communities via social media, streaming platforms and DJ sets at parties where young people of African descent could reconnect with their heritage on the dancefloor. It was a powder keg of potential just waiting to explode. The spark that lit the fuse was a series of collaborations between Afrobeats artists and international superstars. The 2016 hit song “One Dance” by Nigerian artist Wizkid and Canadian rapper Drake opened the floodgates. Ed Sheeran, Selena Gomez and, of course, Beyoncé followed suit, the latter collaborating with Burna Boy, Tiwa Savage, Mr Eazi and Wizkid for her 2019 album *The Lion King: The Gift*. Since then, Afrobeats has been booming both musically and commercially. Alongside Burna Boy and Wizkid, rising stars such as Davido, Ayra Starr, Yemi Alade and Rema (with his global smash hit “Calm Down”) are drawing massive crowds of young, cosmopolitan music-lovers to their shows from Los Angeles to Tokyo, São Paulo and Paris. Their tracks are taking over streaming platforms and dancefloors the world over.

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London, with its strong Nigerian diaspora, home town of hit rapper and producer Skepta—the rising star who remixed Wizkid's "Ojuelegba" featuring Drake back in 2015—has become a transit hub helping Afrobeats reach Western audiences. The last step of the process was to cross the Channel into the hearts and minds of French audiences. Songwriter and producer Dany Synthé, the man behind Gims' 2015 hit "Sapés comme jamais" and MHD's first Afro-trap album in 2016, played a key role in this transformation: *"Before 2015, the singles coming out were all urban pop. There were pioneers before us, it's true, notably Bisso Na Bisso and Mokobé, but the genre really took off with Gims' 'Sapés comme jamais' and hit tracks by MHD. The singles released after that were much more Afro. We started a movement that allowed rap artists of African descent to reconnect with their roots. Audiences were lapping it up, and everyone jumped on the bandwagon. Nowadays, this style is no longer restricted to a small corner of the wider music scene, it's dominating."* Although Davido featured on his track "Too Good To You" as early as 2017, Dany Synthé (a former judge on M6's Nouvelle Star) has since observed something of a golden age for musicians from the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and South Africa, as well as those who draw inspiration from them: *"The foundation is Afro. From there, anything goes, because fusion is what this era is all about."*

FRANCE AT THE FOREFRONT

Dany Synthé was in Lagos in January to take part in the first Afrocroiser songwriting camp (see box). Julio Masidi was also there, a composer and producer of numerous hit songs, such as Aya Nakamura's "Copines" and "Jolie nana", a name with incredible star power driving these new Afro trends into the mainstream in France since her breakthrough in 2018. "From Congolese rumba to Angolan kizomba, Afro rhythms come in all shapes and sizes, but jazz and blues harmonies are always there," observes Julio Masidi, who comes from a gospel background. *Nigerian Afrobeats, being in English and therefore more accessible, is the most successful. Everyone is clamouring for this music and I'm incredibly proud, not just of Nigeria but the African continent as a whole.* It's fresh and spreading like wildfire right now." France is a particularly good example, with a thriving market and an appetite for collaborations among artists. Since Wizkid's feature on MHD's "Bella" in 2018, notable examples include Burna Boy on Dadju's "Donne-moi l'accord", Franglish on CKay's "Love Nwantiti", Ayra Starr on Aya Nakamura's "Hypé" and Ninho's "No Love", Tiwa Savage on Tayc's "African Sugar", Booba on Fally Ipupa's "Kiname", Tiakola on Wizkid's "Après minuit"... The list goes on. In 2025, the hit collab between Burna Boy and Franco-Haitian singer Joé Dwèt Filé, "4 Kampé II", emerged as one of the biggest hits of the year. With Ronisia, Naza and Franglish making waves at Afro Nation 2025, Portugal's major festival of Afro-diasporic cultures, it's becoming clear as day that Francophone music has a sunny future all over the world.

Driven by new and easily accessible production and distribution methods (social media and streaming), the Afrobeats phenomenon shows no signs of slowing down. With Lagos bringing together top artists to create and develop a highly efficient business ecosystem (studios, labels, distribution), Afrobeats is spreading like wildfire across both national and stylistic borders.



© Savant

Afrocroiser, a Week Devoted to Afrobeats

From 18 to 25 January 2026, Lagos hosted the first Afrocroiser songwriting camp. Co-organised by Mavin Records (the label of several Afrobeats stars) and Sacem, the event was partly funded by the French Embassy in Nigeria. The camp brought together renowned French songwriters (Dany Synthé, Julio Masidi, Ozhora, PSK, Renaud Rebillaud, Seysey, Shannon, Voluptyk) to spend a week working alongside their Nigerian counterparts – whose credits include hits such as Rema's "Calm Down", Ayra Starr's "Rush" and Davido's "Unavailable". Gathered in the label's studios, the artists explored exciting new avenues at the crossroads of Afrobeats and the French Afro, urban and pop scenes, producing around fifty finished tracks by the end of the camp. The new songs will be pitched to both Mavin Records' headliners and leading French-speaking artists.

INDUSTRY

THE ERA OF MEGA- SHOWS

Live Music on the Biggest Stages!

BY ——— Olivier Richard

The mega-show trend is taking over the world... Because bigger is always better, now more than ever artists are playing music concerts in the world's biggest stadiums & sports arenas. The industry is working around the clock to keep up with the public's insatiable appetite for live music that celebrates excess in all its forms.

Sixty-eight years ago, on 2 September 1957, Elvis Presley performed at Multnomah Stadium in Portland, Oregon, to an audience of 15,000 screaming fans. This was a historic event, the first time a rock star played in a sports stadium. Tickets were priced from 1.5 to 3.5 US dollars, equivalent to 17–39 USD today. Altogether, this adds up to 40,000 USD (447,000 USD today) of revenue for a single concert, a veritable fortune at the time. Nowadays, music artists will perform in packed stadiums and sports venues as a matter of course. In fact, the trend is picking up speed and fundamentally changing the live music industry. As the world's sixth largest market for music records in 2023 according to the IFPI (1), France is no exception. French and international artists are lining up to play venues in the country boasting capacities of over 10,000 spectators. These range from the famed Accord Arena in Bercy—massive venues known as “arenas” in France—to sports stadiums such as the Stade de France that can host up to eight times as many people.

While the music is coming from America, the UK, France, Nigeria, or Taiwan, the performances all have one thing in common: absolute excess. Taylor Swift's last tour, for example, required a fleet of 90 trucks to haul her concert equipment. But the #1 spot for excess goes to British pop-star Adele who offered Munich fans a 10-concert residency amounting to a total of 730,000 spectators.

For the European leg of her tour last year, Adele's concerts featured a literal theme park, Adele World, that had to be built and then taken down for every show. Waiting for the show to begin, fans could wander expansive beer garden with a cold drink in hand, watch opening acts performed on secondary stages, ride the Ferris wheel, belt out their favourite tunes in Karaoke bars, or visit a multitude of shops to pick out Adele-branded merchandise. The concert itself was no less excessive, the stage backed by a record-breaking 220-metre LED screen. Kirk Sommer, co-manager of American music agency William Morris, who represent Adele, is decidedly optimistic about the future of mega-shows. *“This event may very well mark the beginning of a new era in live music. There is huge demand for these one-of-a-kind experiences,”* he explained in 2024 during an interview with the Wall Street Journal. Data from the ‘Centre national de la musique’ (CNM or French National Music Centre) is crystal clear: in France, the demand for large-scale concerts has never been higher. From 2019 to 2023, the data shows a 14% increase in the number of musical events held in venues with a 6,000+ capacity.

" Adele's latest tour and the creation of the Adele World may mark the beginning of a new era. There is huge demand for these one-of-a-kind experiences. "

It is important to note that 2020 and 2021 were outliers due to COVID-19 lock-downs, and 2024 was also an unusual year due to the Paris Olympic Games monopolizing many of the capital's large venues. Despite this, the revenues declared by live-music producers in France paint a clear picture: mega-shows are on the rise. According to current financial data, sector revenue grew 21% in 2023 to reach a record-breaking 1.4 billion euro, 42% of which was generated by mega-shows (compared to 30% a decade earlier). This revenue stream is projected to grow even more in the coming years, with 21 concerts scheduled at the Stade de France over May–July 2026, and no less than 16 dates at Paris La Défense Arena this autumn, headlined by Céline Dion. And the rest of the country is following suit: the Orange Vélodrome stadium in Marseille, for example, will be hosting 6 concerts across 2026.

XXL MUSIC SHOWS: A THRILL UNLIKE ANY OTHER

What used to be a rare occurrence has become commonplace: stadium shows are now consistent money-makers for industry leaders such as Live Nation and AEG in the USA, or independent French company Gérard Drouot Productions (GDP). For Angelo Gopée, who runs the French branch of Live Nation, the mass appeal of mega-shows is a direct result of today's music consumption figures, which have never been so high. *“With streaming services and social media, listening to music and discovering new artists has never been so easy. Music streaming truly exploded during the COVID-19 lock-downs: isolated as they were, people simply couldn't get enough of it. The trend continued even after the lock-downs lifted, and now people are still hungry as ever to see their favourite music played live on stage.”* Matthieu Drouot, manager of GDP, had the following to say: *“The success of stadium concerts can be explained by the fact that they deliver a truly unforgettable experience. A huge concert by U2 or The Rolling Stones will be the kind of event a fan will remember for the rest of their lives. And I've also noticed that these bigger shows generate a great deal of word-of-mouth.”*

This boom in live music is also the result of economic factors: with the collapse of the music record industry, artists have lost a major revenue stream. Now more than ever, musicians must play live shows just to break even. As a result, competition has become fierce in the sector. Arnaud Meersseman, director of AEG France, explains the situation: *“Artists are competing with each other and must work hard to differentiate themselves with shows that take music entertainment to new heights. Because mega-shows cost a fortune to produce, there is an economy of scale at play: it is financially sound to schedule one or two dates in a stadium rather than a long concert tour in a string of smaller venues. This is also why it is important for musicians to organise world tours. Many thought the trend would slow down after the post-COVID surge, but demand remains at an all-time high, in fact it just keeps growing.”*

While demand may be soaring, it is by no means infinite. This reality became starkly apparent with the very public fall-out of Jennifer Lopez and the Black Keys cancelling their planned stadium tours due to meagre ticket sales. In industry talks, these colossal flops were explained away by other factors: J. Lo's latest album was a commercial failure, and she hasn't had a hit song in a decade.



SOARING PRICES, SOARING ROYALTIES

"Royalties collected and distributed to artists will be directly proportional to concert revenues. The more expensive the event tickets, the more royalties are paid out to the artist. In 2023, Sacem collected 1.5 billion euro worth of royalties of which 158 million were garnered from live performances. The share of these royalties from mega-shows amounts to 16 million euro," explains Stéphane Vasseur, Sacem's Network Director.

Thibault Fouet, Sacem's Director of Members, breaks it down: "Live music is booming, and this growth is paying off for creatives. In 2024, 113,000 rights holders received royalty pay outs for live performances, that is to say a 45% increase compared to 2019"

In hindsight, it is obvious that The Black Keys' managers grossly overestimated the public demand for concert tickets. But despite these commercial failures, it is clear as day that music-lovers around the world are hungrier than ever for mega-shows. And this high demand is all the more impressive given the stratospheric increase in ticket prices. A show ticket for one of the top 100 global music tours sold on average for 131 euro in 2023 (+ 23% compared to 2022 – Pollstar data). Arnaud Meersseman explains: *"Big concerts seem to sell out almost instantly. Supply is struggling to keep up with demand, so prices keep getting higher, which is quite unusual during an economic recession."*

But beyond the law of supply and demand, soaring ticket prices can also be explained by other factors: economic inflation, heightened security requirements (as a result of the November 13 terrorist attacks in 2015), new environmental regulations and standards, the rising cost of set-design and special effects, and higher artist fees. "Artists these days will commonly charge

" Big concerts seem to sell out almost instantly. Supply is struggling to keep up with demand, so prices keep getting higher, which is quite unusual during an economic recession. "

fees reaching 5 million euro," says Angelo Gopée of Live Nation. The potential adoption of dynamic pricing in France—a system of adjusting prices according to demand in real time, which was hotly debated in the wake of the prohibitively expensive Oasis reunion tour—is expected to drive the price of concert tickets even higher in the near future. For Arnaud Meersseman of AEG, "There are good and bad sides to this system. On the one hand, if concerts become luxury products, we are essentially gate-keeping culture for the benefit of the rich. On the other, artists and producers can ensure fair valuation of their product, which would otherwise be devalued by music piracy."

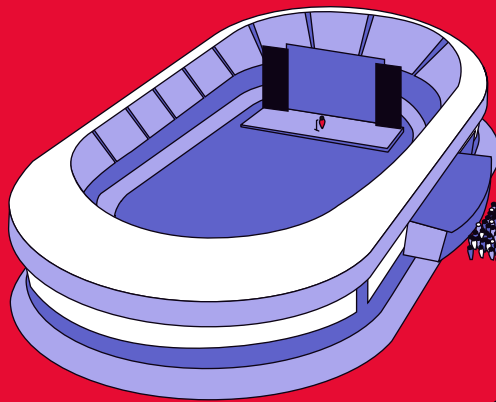
BIG THRILLS WITH A HIGH PRICE TAG

Despite the colossal investments of production companies, mega-shows are not always as profitable as they may seem. As Matthieu Drouot working with GDP explains: "With a ticket price of 120 euro on average, a Bruce Springsteen concert at the Stade Vélodrome in Marseille will generate about 8 million euros in revenue. This sounds like a lot when compared to my annual turnover (about 70 million euro). But these concerts typically aren't as profitable as a gig at a smaller venue such as, for example, one of France's Zénith concert halls. Big shows cost a fortune when it comes to production and especially marketing. A musical event at the Stade de France takes days to set up and a whole day to take down, while a concert at the Zénith

will have artists and their gear arriving the morning of the show and clearing out right after the performance. This means while these huge concerts turn a decent profit thanks to the sheer scale of generated income, a tour with 25 dates in smaller venues will ultimately provide a much better return on investment."

Headline acts play these stadium

concerts because they make a lot of money, but also because they allow for greater artistic freedom. As Arnaud Meersseman explains: *"These shows give artists full control of the production, which is not the case when they perform during festivals or in smaller venues. During festivals, they need to share lighting plans and sound engineering with other artists. And in smaller venues, they must adapt their show to the location itself."* Laurent de Cerner, Deputy CEO of Paris La Défense Arena, which is the largest indoor concert venue in Europe (45,000 seats), shares his experience: *"I was the acting manager of the Olympia for nine years. We hosted a wide range of concerts, but set design was always limited due to space restrictions. In a concert hall like La Défense Arena, Pink can walk all the way from one side of the room to the other. This gives artists complete freedom in their artistic choices. The audience is guaranteed to see a show of the highest calibre."*



MEGA-SHOW VENUES ARE MULTIPLYING IN PARIS

The opening of two new large-scale venues in the Paris region is a clear sign that the mega-show sector is healthy as ever. With a capacity of 9,000, the Adidas Arena near Porte de la Chapelle has been in operation since February 2024. And in September 2024, Tremblay-en-France saw the inauguration of the Arena Grand Paris with a whopping 7,000 seats. These venues will be hosting a range of shows alongside music concerts, from sporting events to stand-up comedy.

THE ROLLER-COASTER OF LIVE MUSIC

The "Hollywoodification" of live music is not without risk. Audiences do not have infinite disposable income, and the success of mega-shows may be at the expense of smaller concerts and festivals, a pattern which mirrors the domination of American blockbusters in the global box-office. Sacem's Director of Members, Thibaud Fouet, comments on the situation: *"A significant amount of live music consumers will choose to invest in one or two big concerts instead of five shows by less well-known artists in smaller, cheaper venues. We need to be careful to avoid consolidating and concentrating access to live music which would spell disaster for budding artists."*

The first victims of mega-show popularity are broad-based music festivals that are unable to compete and have seen their spectator numbers dwindle inexorably. Today, these types of festivals are struggling: even after selling out 90% of their tickets, 44% of these generalist events were not able to break even in 2023 (data from the 'Centre national de la musique', or French National Music Centre). Many factors can explain this, but one major cause is the proliferation of large-scale concerts. If we take for example Ninho: the artist's last 2 concerts at the Stade de France sold out in record time (with prices reaching 659 euros for private concert boxes!) but at this year's We Love Green festival, their performance drew very few spectators.

Many professionals, including Matthieu Drouot, have noted that music fans in the 15-24 age range will consistently choose big concerts over festivals. *"Young music fans are more likely to pick a stadium concert over a festival to see their favourite bands. For one thing, they know they will be seeing the full show, rather than the abridged versions that are often performed at festivals. They also like knowing that the show will be a comfortable experience, particularly those hosted by indoor 'arena' venues, unlike outdoor festivals where the weather can make such a big difference."* For many in the business, this new trend in consumer behaviour can be explained by the growth of taste-based communities in modern culture. Drouot goes on to say: *"Unlike many broad-based festivals, those that cater to a core music genre, such as Hellfest, have shown time and again that they can avoid the pitfalls of the consolidation trend."*

This potential collapse of the generalist model is becoming a real concern even for well-established festivals such as Coachella, which struggled to sell out one of their festival dates, a rare occurrence indeed. For Matthieu Drouot, *"when people go to a concert to see their favourite band, many would rather be surrounded by an audience of*

true fans like themselves." The major success of Golden Coast, the latest urban music festival that took place last autumn in Burgundy, illustrates this trend perfectly. *"Nowadays, music discovery algorithms help people find new artists much more easily, and this contributes heavily to taste-based community-building,"* says the head of GDP.

Angelo Gopée from Live Nation, has a different take on the matter: *"I don't agree with the conclusion that algorithms tend to make the audience less open-minded when it comes to music variety. With 'Discover' streaming playlists, every week the audience can quickly browse new artists, new genres... As a result, we produce mega-shows that feature a wide range of artists, from K-Pop to Haitian Kompa."*

" Young music fans are more likely to pick a stadium concert over a festival to see their favourite bands. For one thing, they know they will be seeing the full show, rather than the abridged versions that are often performed at festivals. "

Whether or not this community-building is a positive development, big music venues such as Paris La Défense Arena are leaning heavily into the social media game. *"We made some big investments to improve the concert experience,"* explains Laurent de Cerner, the manager of the venue. The Arena management team have implemented a 360° communication strategy with WiFi terminals distributed throughout the venue, real-time information feeds, and major social media campaigns to capture increasingly international audiences. Indeed, mega-show spectators routinely travel from abroad to catch a show by their favourite bands. For Taylor Swift's latest tour, Swifties poured into France from the five continents to see their idol on stage—a growing trend can be traced back to the success of these "bigger is better" concerts.

Despite the limited number of actual venues of this scale, the future is looking bright for the mega-show sector. Big venues are becoming so popular, it won't be long before the calendars are booked out by artists years in advance.

Angélique Kidjo

BY ——— Angèle Chatelier

As the first African female artist to have her name on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, Angélique Kidjo is known around the world for her savvy blend of traditional African music, jazz, funk, and pop. She agreed to sit down with SacemMag to answer a few questions for a game we call "The Very 1st Time". Do you remember:

The first time you were moved by music?

Angélique Kidjo I think I was still inside my mother's belly. Her name was Esther Kpassa. She was a singer herself, and she passed this love of music on to me. According to my father, I started singing before I could even speak. By 6 years old, I knew that music would be my life. In a last-minute decision, I replaced a young singer for a performance at the Palais des Congrès in Cotonou in my home country, Benin. They just gave me a costume and thrust me on stage. I was shaking like a leaf! I couldn't see a thing in the blinding stage-lights but I just pretended I was safe and sound at home and sang my heart out. When the audience gave me a standing ovation at the end, I was absolutely giddy.

The first time you heard your voice on the radio?

AK Mirian Makeba was always one of my greatest inspirations, and when I was starting out, I adapted one of her songs, "Les trois Z" (The Three Zs) for the national radio in Benin. That's how I first made a name for myself. When I heard my voice for the first time, it was completely surreal.

Your first time working in a recording studio?

AK My father met Cameroonian producer Ekambi Brillant during one of the artist's tour dates in Cotonou. Brillant agreed to work with me. I decided to use the funds from my student loan to finance my first record, *Pretty*. I only had one day to lay down every single vocal track, including the chorus. I walked into the studio at 8AM and didn't leave until it was done! That night, I was exhausted from the strain, my throat was on fire. But when I held that record in my hands for the first time, my heart was beating wildly. I put everything into that album. Seeing it for the first time was a truly magical moment.

Your first trip to the USA?

AK It was after the release of my album *Logozo* in 1992. I landed in Miami and was amazed at the

sheer size of the roads in that city, with people coming and going everywhere. I was staying with Joe Galdo, the album producer, and when I walked into the studio, I still remember the tables were piled with doughnuts! But one trip to the USA I will never forget was for my first Grammy Award nomination in 1994. I was nominated for the music video of my song "Agolo" alongside the Rolling Stones and the Pet Shop Boys! I said to myself: "What am I doing here at the Grammys? This is insane." I had no reason to expect that this crowd would like my music, it was really encouraging. I wanted to lead by example because I know that without a healthy culture, countries just fall apart.

The first time you received a royalty payment by Sacem?

AK I left for Paris when I was just 23 years old to escape the communist dictatorship in Benin. Signing up to become a Sacem member was one of the first things I did upon arriving in the country. They showed me how to register my musical works properly. The first time I received a royalty payment, I felt so vindicated. It felt like all the sacrifices my family had made to get me here had finally paid off. At the time, I could barely afford to pay for my classes, or even decent food and clothing. That first Sacem cheque changed everything: I was living with my brother at the time, and I could finally help him pay the rent, and paid my own music school fees.

Your first concert?

AK My brothers had a band so, back home, music was all around me. I grew up learning things like the difference between a bass and a guitar. When I went to see them play live, I would wonder: "Why are people coming all this way and paying to see them play? I get to see it at home for free!" Watching their musical journey was a major inspiration, but I also just had this very curious nature: I wanted to learn everything I could about music and how all these instruments worked together.

Explore
the museum



HOW A FRENCH SONG CONQUERED THE WORLD

In 1967, at the height of the yé-yé era in France, a French song about love in all its bitter-sweet glory crossed borders and changed the course of destiny. This is the story of a melody written in Megève that spawned a number of unique titles, from "Comme d'habitude" to "My Way", which went on to become one of the most widely sung anthems of the 20th century.

It all began in Megève in February 1967 with the composer Jacques Revaux, already known for his collaborations with Michel Sardou, Johnny Hallyday, Richard Anthony, and Dalida.. In less than two hours, Revaux composed four tracks on the guitar, including "For Me", a provisional title used when the song was registered with Sacem. These four melodies were recorded as a demo in London, and the lyrics entrusted to a little-known young writer, David Jones, who would later go on to become David Bowie. Having been rejected by several producers, a frustrated yet determined and inspired Bowie recycled the harmonic structure to create "Life on Mars?".

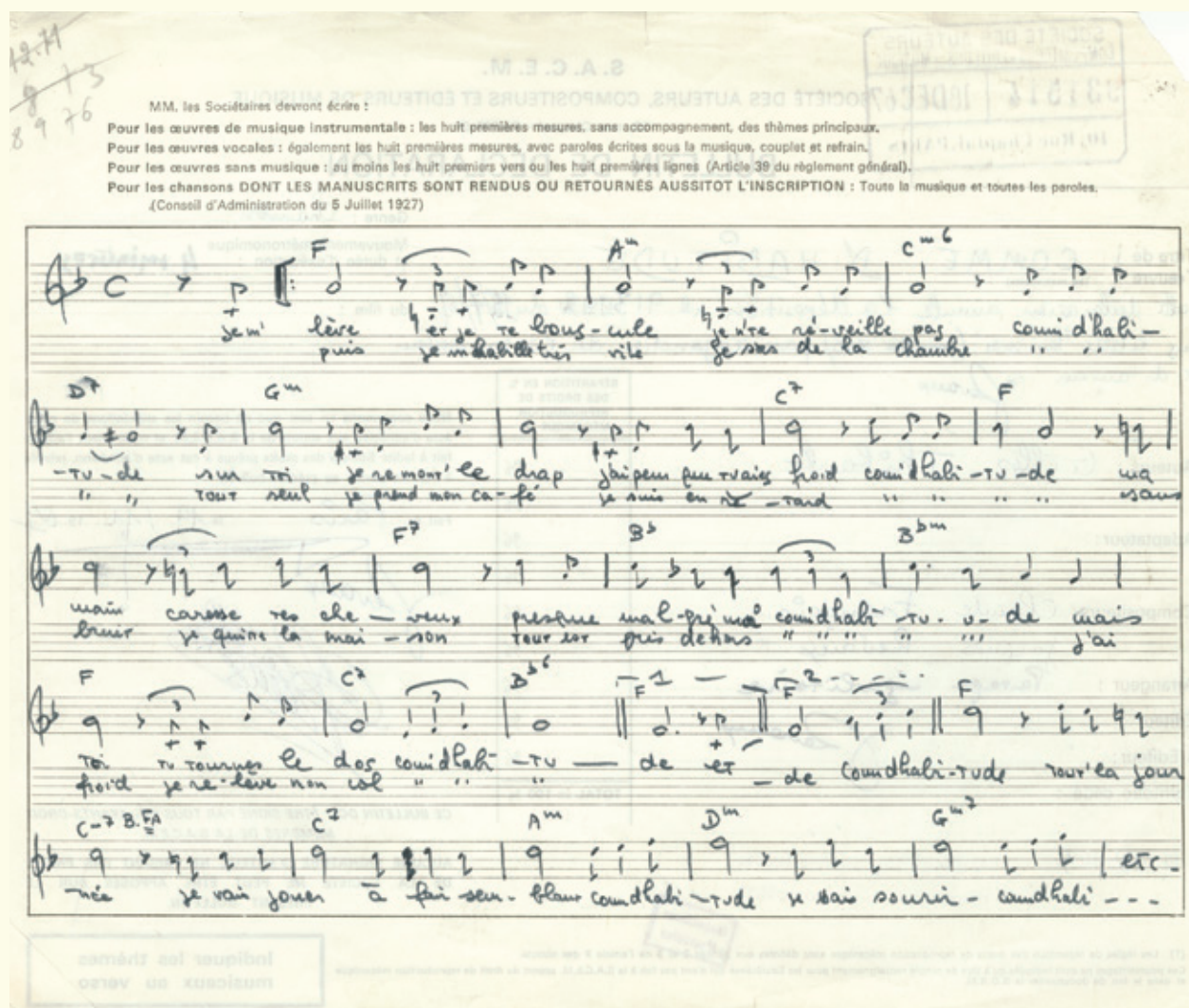
By May '67, the project had been turned down by several stars of the time, until it was taken up by Claude François and lyricist Gilles Thibaut and turned into something completely new: a story of love gone cold, the icy mechanics of repeated gestures. *"I believe this song will touch many hearts because it's talking about something deeply true"*, said Claude François. "Comme d'habitude" struck a chord and became a massive hit in France in 1967.

Then came singer-songwriter Paul Anka, a 28-year-old musician with a decade of critical acclaim already under his belt. He was so taken with the record that he quickly secured the rights to adapt it. In New York, he changed the narrative once again: no longer the story of a breakup, the song became instead a tribute to a life well lived: *"I did it my way."* Anka wrote the retrospective lyrics with Frank Sinatra in mind, who then went on to record it (in a single take!) on December 30, 1968. In 1969, "My Way" took off: it reached number 27 in the US charts in March and spent a record-breaking 75 consecutive weeks (122 in total) in the UK Top 40. The rest, as they say, is history: Elvis Presley turned it into powerful swan song near the end of his career, Sid Vicious gave it a dynamic twist in 1979. Tom Jones, Nina Simone and Luciano Pavarotti all made it their own, as did Yseult at the closing ceremony of the Paris Olympics. Looking at the sheet music for "Comme d'habitude", something becomes crystal clear: woven into the notes that touched hearts across America... the melody is quintessentially French.

Celebrated all over the world, the success of "My Way" boggles the mind: a billion albums sold and over 3,000 spin-off versions. Fifty-nine years after its creation, the song remains one of the most exported titles in French music history.

"I believe this
song will touch
many hearts
because it's
genuine."

CLAUDE FRANÇOIS



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Score "Comme d'habitude"
Lyricist: Gilles Thibaut
Composers: Claude François et Jacques Revaux
Collection: Sacem archive document
Year: 1967

Protecting our members

At Sacem, social protection is more than a commitment—it's part of our identity. We support our members throughout every chapter of their lives and careers, offering accessible, personalized support and services tailored to their unique needs.

"I've been a Sacem member for several years here in the US. In 2025, we switched to the health plan that they offer. It has been a smooth and easy seamless transition. In general, we've had a great experience with Sacem, I think they do a great job supporting artists and tracking down your royalties around the world."

TREE ADAMS, COMPOSER

Health

Under the leadership of Angela Alves, Head of Social Protection and Professional Training at Sacem, the year 2025 saw big changes in Sacem's health insurance offering in the United States. In partnership with E-SAFECARE and the ELEVATE WELLNESS association, Sacem now offers a tailor-made package at a group rate, with premiums that can be up to 30% lower than those usually found on the market, allowing members to choose the health plan best suited to their needs. This health programme is backed by two leading health insurance companies in the United States, CIGNA and PHCS, which provide coverage across the US territory and guarantee a standard rate regardless of age or state of residence. Additional options include dental and vision, accident coverage, and other specific plans. E-SAFECARE can also recommend insurance for travel or hospitalization outside the USA.



Available via the Sacem member personalised portal on sacem.fr

Solidarity

Founded in 1951 and recognised as a charitable organisation since 1953, the Comité du cœur embodies Sacem's long-standing tradition of solidarity. Confirmed, professional or permanent Sacem members may choose to join the association to support fellow authors and composers when life takes an unexpected turn. Funded entirely through member contributions and individual donations, the Comité du cœur provides financial assistance to creators in serious difficulty — offering not just aid, but reassurance that no creator is ever left alone.



More information about the Comité du cœur and how to get involved is available on its dedicated website: comiteducoeur.org/en/

Pensions

Sacem's mutual aid allowance scheme (RAES), open to all members, reflects Sacem's solidarity-centric social model by providing creators and publishers with supplementary income at the end of their careers. It embodies a long-term commitment to creators, ensuring that solidarity continues beyond active professional life and recognises a lifetime of creative contribution.

Training

Sacem is committed to providing continuing education opportunities to members through training programmes tailored to the needs of authors and composers. By supporting skills development and professional adaptability, these programmes help creators strengthen their careers and navigate an ever-evolving creative landscape. 577 000 € allocated to training initiatives in 2025 through our aid programme and partnerships with training organisations

Angela Alves, Head of Social Protection and Professional Training at Sacem, oversees these programmes designed to support creators throughout their careers:

"At Sacem, social protection is about creating lasting security for creators. Health coverage, pensions and training are not extras — they are essential pillars that allow our members, wherever they live, to focus on what matters most: creating."

FACT CHECK

In the era of post-truth, when fact and fiction can be difficult to tell apart, rumours and preconceptions about Sacem are going around unchecked. It's time to set the record straight.

~~Sacem~~ ~~only works~~ ~~with French~~ ~~artists~~

Some may be tempted to think that Sacem, like the pre-Internet Minitel technology of the 1990s, only exists in France. Think again! Much like luxury and gastronomy, the decidedly French institution Sacem has a truly global reputation.

As of 1 January 2026, 12% of its 252,000 members hail from abroad, with 177 different nationalities represented. Sacem has signed 150 cross-licensing agreements with other collective management organisations such as ASCAP (United States), GEMA (Germany) and JASRAC (Japan), and in this manner represents musicians from around the world. Internationally, things work the other way around: 126 collective management organisations have signed licensing agreements to represent Sacem's repertoire in their own territories.

All told, in 2025, Sacem paid out royalties to 663,000 creators for the distribution of their works worldwide. With online streaming on the rise—generating 730 million euro in 2025, representing 43% of collected royalties—Sacem has evolved into a fully-fledged data company. Last year, Sacem processed over 700,000 billion streaming events via the URights platform. It is important to note that, as the manager of its own repertoire, Sacem's remit for online content extends beyond national territory. With extensive processing capability and surgical precision, the organisation can identify each individual stream, its exact duration, and even the type of subscription it originates from.

In 2024, revenues for music distributed from abroad reached 749 million euro (+15% in a single year), out of a total of 1.601 billion euro in collected royalties. In this manner, Sacem continues to build on its global reputation as a leader in collective copyright management. Ultimately, Sacem's expertise, while made-in-France, has truly global reach in helping creators get the recognition and revenue they deserve.



Sacem members & guests, Songwriting Camp in Nashville, December 2025



PLL, Revelation of the Year, Sacem Indian Ocean Award, 4 June 2025



David El Sayegh, speech at the European Parliament, 30 January 2025



Sacem members, Songwriting Camp in Lagos, January 2025



Cécile Rap-Verber, SXSW London, 4 June 2025



Jodie Foster and Cécile Rap-Verber, Opening speech at The American French Film Festival, 28 October 2025



Caroline Champarnaud, Music Biz in Atlanta, 14 May 2025



Cécile Rap-Verber, Le Code Podcast, Beatmakers Special, 20 June 2025

There are so many opportunities for us to meet.

INSTA SACEM

2026

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