

## CASE STUDY

# Rosalía

**'We were captivated by her from the very beginning!'**

Rosalía is a Spanish artist with her roots and heart in the folkloric culture of flamenco and who is fusing that tradition with other genres to take her own unique sound and style to the world.

She studied flamenco throughout her childhood and began performing as a teenager. As recently as six years ago she was teaching flamenco, championing music that is ingrained in Spanish culture classroom by classroom.

Now, in partnership with Sony Music, she is spreading the word rather more rapidly, and much more spectacularly, popularising and modernising flamenco all over the world, country by country.

Her first album, *Los Angeles*, was released in 2017, attracting some attention and critical praise. It was her second album, *El Mal Querer*, however, that was the real breakthrough, garnering global acclaim and topping the Latin Pop Album charts in the US. At the Grammy Awards 2020 (where Rosalía performed) it won Best Latin Rock, Urban or Alternative Album – the latest landmark in an ongoing journey.

Influential music media brand *Pitchfork* made *El Mal Querer* one of its top 10 albums of 2018 and perceptively described Rosalía as "less an ambassador for flamenco than the innovator of her own fascinating hybrid".

Jen Mallory, EVP and General Manager, Columbia Records, calls Rosalía "a unique artist in a league of her own, completely redefining pop music" affirming that "this type of music has literally never been done before" and admitting that "we [Columbia] were captivated by her from the very beginning!"

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**JEN MALLORY**  
EVP and General Manager,  
Columbia Record

She continues: "José María Barbat and Afo Verde signed her out of Sony Spain and then we up-streamed her to Columbia US after the *El Mal Querer* album cycle.

"Rosalía was a huge star in Spain when we signed her, and she was already developing around the world. Our primary focus at first



Rosalía photo by Peninsula.Work

was building her US footprint, both through press and US Latin radio. Through a series of small underplays in key markets we generated extraordinary buzz amongst key tastemakers and industry leaders. We were able to help her garner major opportunities and visibility in the United States quickly.

"Her first US media cover was *The Fader* magazine – by design. We wanted it to be a very cool, credible first cover before we went more mainstream. They were one of the early adopters covering her *Los Angeles* project, gave her significant space online, before she even released [lead single] *Malamente*. The media coverage expanded as she was picked up by *Pitchfork*, *New York Times*, *Billboard* and *Elle*."

She stresses that Rosalía sets the tone when it comes to her campaign and the agenda when it comes to her career – with Columbia her partner in making things happen. "Rosalía has a very specific vision for her creative, from fonts to choreography, and we have worked in sync with her to continue curating her artistry.

"She is one of the rare artists who is able to seamlessly balance her offline presence with her digital one. She takes what she does at her shows and her daily life and makes it easily palatable. Our digital team has been able to work with all of our partners (YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, etc.) to invest in her success early on, because she and her team are collaborative when it comes to using the platforms, but without ever compromising her artistic vision.

"We secured support with 'YouTube Premieres' for her videos, on playlisting, and social support – these results are apparent when

you look the performance of *Con Altura* (featuring J Balvin), which currently has over one billion views – as well as clocking up 2.6 million sales worldwide."

Last year Rosalía played at festivals including Lollapalooza, Glastonbury, Coachella and Primavera and followed up *Con Altura* with three more singles, including *Yo x Ti*, *Tu x Mi*, a collaboration with another Sony-signed artist, Puerto Rican reggaeton star, Ozuna.

Looking to the future, Mallory says: "Rosalía will continue to innovate and find new ways to fuse genres and work with new collaborators. There are lots of exciting opportunities coming her way as she continues to find partners and supporters that will help spread her artistic vision."



Rosalía photo by Berta Pflrsich