

CASE STUDY

Billie Eilish

'A four-year overnight sensation'

Billie Eilish is one of the most important and interesting pop stars of her generation. She is the winner of the 'big four' Grammys (the first time the quadruple has been achieved in nearly 40 years). She is the artist who wrote and recorded a zeitgeist defining, multi-Platinum album in her bedroom - with her brother, Finneas O'Connell.

John Janick, chairman and CEO of Universal's Interscope Geffen A&M Records, remembers the very start of Eilish's extraordinary journey. "It probably sounds crazy, but honestly, from the moment we met her, we knew she was special. Her music came to us via an A&R person here, but it also got to Justin Lubliner, who runs Darkroom Records, who we have a JV with. It happens very rarely, but sometimes, an artist comes in, and you just know.

"Nevertheless, everyone involved took their time, because she was only 13 when we first met her, and we wanted Billie, her mother and father, to be completely comfortable. All our conversations were about putting no pressure on her and no one being in a rush. This was going to happen at some point. You could see it growing almost week by week and that allowed us to plot 12-18 months out, confident about where her and Finneas' talent would take us."

One example of this considered approach was the decision to hold Billie back from the Grammys in 2019. Janick continues, "We knew we'd have *WHEN WE ALL FALL ASLEEP, WHERE DO WE GO?*, which was going to blow people away and properly announce this incredible new talent.

"With such an important body of work and after years of artist development we crafted a meticulous plan laying out the next 12 months. Billie had shown us that; she gave us confidence. We had our targets and implemented the plan which included a global arena tour, the Vogue cover, we knew we'd have announced the Bond song, and the Oscars performance. All of which we had in place prior to Grammys 2020."

All of these touch points were part of a global strategy to realise Billie's potential, explains Steve Berman, vice-chairman of Interscope Geffen A&M Records: "From the outset, everything was about Billie as a global artist. She had these incredibly rich, beautiful



Billie Eilish photo by Kenneth Cappello

