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## **OLIVIA RODRIGO**

Olivia Rodrigo is the biggest new pop artist of recent years. Her debut album, SOUR, was the second best-seller of 2021, hitting number one in 17 countries, while her debut single, *drivers license*, was the fifth biggest track of last year, reaching the top in over 20 countries.

After starring in Disney's hit show, *High School Musical: The* wanted *drivers license* to be the entry point to a much longer Series, she signed to Geffen Records in 2020. journey for her fans.

Sam Riback, EVP and co-head of A&R at Interscope Geffen "When we got into the creative process with her, we'd introduced her to some collaborators and it was already clear A&M, remembers: "All I Want came into the world via High School Musical and our A&R research team identified it as a that something special was building with [main writing partner/ producer] Dan Nigro. They just really went for it, kept adding song that was really moving. brilliant songs and creating what inevitably became SOUR.

"Then we found out Olivia was a 100% writer on the track, and that blew us away. We heard some more demos, some ideas she was working on, and we realized pretty quickly that she knew that leading with that would be a statement."

Gary Kelly, Chief Revenue Officer/Global Head of Streaming piece of left-of-centre pop." & Strategy, Interscope Geffen A&M, continues: "Everyone was really excited about that track from day one, especially in terms of partnerships with the DSPs. We went to them really early with it and were able to get the right playlisting globally – and then engage with fans. The centrepiece of the resulting campaign we watched it just blow up.

"From that point we were layering in the creator side of things, especially on TikTok. The song connected with fans immediately and they really ran with it. We were then able to co-opt all that into our campaign."

Nicole Bilzerian, EVP, Geffen Records, highlights the importance of the labels creative approach to marketing Olivia's vision: "From the start, a lot of the marketing around Olivia, whether that's videos, pictures, digital campaigns, all stems from her ideas and from who she is. We just try to sculpt and amplify that all on her behalf."

Kelly explains that as *drivers license* topped charts around the world, there was some healthy debate within the company as to which track to drop next - and when, with the decision ultimately taken to wait and give the track room to breathe, whilst helping Rodrigo to focus on an album. "We wanted the track to have its own lane for as long as possible, to keep the focus on what was a special moment in pop culture and make sure we put all our energy into getting drivers license heard in as many places as possible."

Riback says: "There was plenty of strategizing, but zero pressure. Olivia led the discussion, she knew the momentum was there, but she was always most interested in turning that momentum into a larger body of work rather than rushing a follow-up. She

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"I think the end result is a classic body of work, with a lot of different dynamics to it - all of which come from Olivia. She was something really special. Once we heard drivers license, we has a really strong point of view musically, and that's one of the things that attracted us to her. She has really interesting reference points, all of which goes into making SOUR a classic

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With touring impossible at the time of launch due to COVID, Geffen and Rodrigo's team had to come up with other ways to was SOUR PROM, a live event on YouTube watched by fans all around the world.

Bilzerian says: "SOUR PROM was Olivia's concept and she had a very specific vision of what each song should look like, with the prom theme as a through-line. She worked really closely with our creative team to develop and realise that vision.

Since SOUR's release in May 2021, it has received 16.9 billion streams to date, Olivia has been nominated for over 50 awards across the globe (including Album Of The Year at the GRAMMY Awards 2022), and things are showing no signs of slowing down.

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