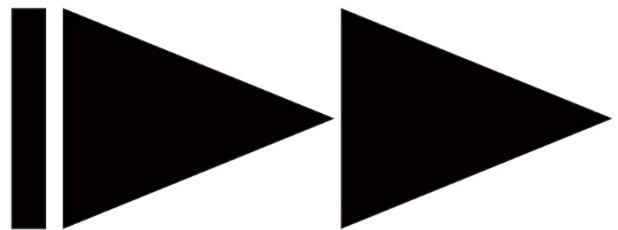


Blake Morgan Announces Major Expansion of His Artist-Friendly ECR Music Group with Sony Music Publishing Partnership

The celebrated musician and label founder also creates new opportunities for artists with unique Meridian imprint

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, USA, April 4, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- For Blake Morgan – acclaimed singer-songwriter, recording artist, indie-label owner, producer and artists’ rights advocate – 2024 marks an exciting new phase of creative and commercial growth for ECR Music Group, the unique, artist-friendly record label he founded in 2012. Morgan is announcing two levels of expansion for ECR: The Meridian artist-services imprint and a new global partnership with Sony Music Publishing.

“I’m calling this year ECR 3.0,” Morgan says. “To me, ECR 1.0 began more than a dozen years ago when I started this little label on my laptop. Next came version 2.0 when I brought imprints and smaller labels under our umbrella. Now we’re in a position to do a whole lot more for the emerging artists we sign and the records we put out with our Meridian artist services imprint, our exclusive, ongoing partnership with The Orchard and now with Sony Music Publishing, the biggest music publisher in the world.”



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He laughs and adds, "This is our coming-out party. When I started ECR, it was with the idea of running a label I'd want to be on – which, of course, I am. Now it's exceeding my dreams by leaps and bounds."

Those leaps and bounds are growing longer and higher. Since ECR entered into a distribution deal with The Orchard in 2018, the label's streams have exploded, recently passing the 10 million mark.

Artists who sign to Meridian will be able to realize their specific project-based goals via scaleable artist-services campaigns that include label promotion, advertising and marketing, press campaigns, TV and film licensing, social media management, playlist curation and promotion, concert booking, music publishing, merchandising, vinyl pressing, brand partnerships, web services, and premiere physical and digital distribution. As is the case with all ECR releases, artists will own 100 percent of their master recordings.

"I produce the records of artists who sign directly to ECR," Morgan says. "Artists come to me because we share an idea of the sound we want. Meridian is an opportunity for me to work with artists whose records I haven't made, but who want access to our infrastructure, our relationships, our reach, our distribution, our marketing, and our advertising. For a reasonable quarterly budget, they're able to invest in themselves and take advantage of a wide range of services."

Often called the "Han Solo of the music world" for his advocacy as both a label owner and an iconoclastic independent artist, Morgan sees his new partnership with Sony Music Publishing as an important extension of his mission. "I have full autonomy over artists and songwriters I bring under the hood of ECR Music Publishing with Sony Music, but I remain Han Solo on the Millennium Falcon with my dedicated small crew of people and a real armada of power behind me."

For Morgan, signing artists and songwriters is but one step. Nurturing and working a catalog of recorded music and compositions in a way that honors the artists is an essential next step. "It means fighting for the royalties that you're actually entitled to," he explains. "It means making sure that the placements on television and film are artistically in line with what that creator had in mind to begin with. For us to have a publishing division to match our recorded music division gives us a full-calorie of promotion and protection as a boutique indie powerhouse label."

Morgan's journey as a maverick record company owner began "out of desperation" after he fought his way out of a major-label deal. His debut, Anger's Candy, was a solid critical and commercial hit, but he realized that the only way to make music the way he wanted was by guiding his own ship. Rather than look for another record deal, he heeded the advice – a challenge, really – of his mother, noted American poet, writer and activist Robin Morgan, and went DIY. Calling his label ECR (initials for "Engine Company Records" after his affinity for New York City firehouses), Morgan took inspiration from musician-founded labels like Capital, Atlantic

and Motown. He notes, "In recent years, there's people like Ani DeFranco and Jack White – recording artists and producers who are label owners in the real sense of the word."

While building ECR true to his artist-forward vision, Morgan has enjoyed success on his own terms, issuing wondrous pop-rock gems like *Burning Daylight*, *Silencer* and *Diamonds in the Dark*. His most recent album, 2022's *Violent Delights*, wowed fans and critics alike. In its review, *The Aquarian* raved, "Laced into these 10 tracks being put out into the world (timely as ever, if you ask us) is joy, hope, and harmony in every sense of the word."

As a performer, he turns concerts into rapturous events, and he's amassed a loyal legion of fans on both sides of the Atlantic. Between 2016-2022, he ran up a record-breaking string of 30 sold-out performances at New York City's Rockwood Music Hall. In addition, in 2023 he debuted an Off-Broadway one-man show of songs and stories for a sold-out audience at The Green Room in New York City, where he will return on November 12 of this year.

When he's not recording his own music, Morgan has produced and recorded artists like Lenny Kravitz and Lesley Gore, and his all-hands-on-deck – producing, engineering, mixing and mastering – work for ECR artists has yielded close to 50 albums. Somehow, he's also found the time to take his advocacy for artists' rights to Capitol Hill. An advisor to the U.S. House of Representatives' Congressional Creative Rights Caucus and a member of the Creators Advisory Board for the Copyright Alliance, he's the founder of the grass-roots movement #IRespectMusic and has lobbied D.C. lawmakers for multiple pieces of legislation, including the new American Music Fairness Act.

"I'm just trying to do right for artists," Morgan says. "The middle-class artist is a concept I talk about. The people who make music deserve to be treated with dignity and should be rewarded fairly for the art they create. That's the battlement I'm out on. It's the same way with ECR. I want to do my part to leave the world with more good music than when I came into it, and one way I can do that is by fighting for artists and protecting them. It's worth everything I can do."

Blake Morgan - Photo Credit: Taylor Ballantyne

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