

Hitting the right notes

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As general manager for Warner's publishing division, Vivian Barclay plays a vital role in the music industry

BY ERICA PHILLIPS

She started off spinning tunes at CKLN in Toronto. Now, as general manager of Warner/Chappell Music Canada Ltd. (the publishing arm of Warner Music), Vivian Barclay helps to determine what makes it onto the airwaves.

As GM, Barclay's job involves a little bit of everything: creative head, A&R (product management), dealing with songwriters, setting up songwriting sessions, and pitching songs to artists and music supervisors. As a publisher, her job is to first work with the song. She collaborates with artists such as Glenn Lewis, Jilly Black, Sankarson, Faber Drive and Simple Plan.

Over the last few years, the music publishing business has remained one of the most stable parts of the music industry by exploiting new rights over and above selling the actual CD. "It's a challenging time for everyone in the industry—business people and artists. The challenge is to dig deep and figure out what the public wants, while maintaining good art," Barclay says. The way people consume music has been one of the biggest changes in the industry. File sharing and digital use have had the most significant impact, but trends are also not what they used to be. For example, while dance music seems to be topping charts, Adele is still selling out concerts. "You never know what's going to stick," says Barclay. "The hits come from such different places. You have beautiful accidents."

Based on Barclay's family background, it's no surprise she ended up in the music industry. Her father was a musician and her mother was a painter. "I knew the entertainment field. I was raised in it," Barclay says. The Kitchener, Ont., native, who grew up in Jamaica, followed in her father's footsteps, training as a classical musician and attending art school at Philadelphia's Temple University for two years. Later, Barclay returned to Canada to study radio and television arts at Ryerson University. She fell in love with audio production, and was introduced to CKLN by former Toronto radio personality Jonico. Barclay started in production and went on to host her own radio show, playing slow jams from midnight to 2 a.m. Eventually, she became the station's program director. During her three years at CKLN in the mid-1990s, Barclay learned about the Canadian music scene and dealt with licensors, music promoters and others in the industry.

After her stint at CKLN, Barclay worked with Jones & Jones Productions, which led to her first job with Warner/Chappell, a three-month contract in royalties accounting. "It was so interesting to see the royalty cheques, connect the dots to see the song usage and the payments," she says. Barclay then took another job with Warner/Chappell in copyright, which gave her access to one of the biggest music catalogues. "At the time, I wanted to be a music supervisor and now I was going to be paid to learn catalog," she remembers. Doing freelance music supervision, whereby Barclay found music for television and movie projects, allowed her to combine all the elements of the music industry

that she loved. When Warner/Chappell moved its Canadian office to Los Angeles, Barclay went too. Two years later, Warner/Chappell re-established the Canadian office in Toronto, with Barclay taking the lead.

Today, in addition to her position at the label, she sits on various boards, including the Canadian Music Publishers Association, the Canadian Music Reproduction Rights Agency and CARAS' Musicowners (Juno Awards). As if that doesn't bring enough music to Barclay's life, she also teaches music publishing at Metrolinks Institute in Mississauga, Ont., and is one of the organizers of the annual all-female Honey Jam showcase. ■

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BOOM BYE BYE

A discussion on Homophobia within the Black Community

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1ST PANEL DISCUSSION BEGINS AT 6:00PM

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