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SXSW

MUSIC AND ARTS FESTIVAL
MAY 13-15, 2022 | AUSTIN, TEXAS

LIL NAS X: A SUCCESS STORY

HOW THE STAR MADE HIS
WAY TO A HEADLINE ARTIST

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FKA TWIGS, DOJA CAT AND MORE

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SXSW: THE FUTURE OF ENTERTAINMENT



In 1986, Ronald Reagan was president. "Electronic mail" was used primarily by universities and the military. The Berlin Wall was standing. The Euro did not exist. Many phones used rotary dials to enter numbers. An Apple Macintosh computer with 128 kilobytes of RAM sold for \$5,500 (in 2015 dollars). 40 million music CDs were made and sold worldwide.

That same year, a small group of people in Austin, Texas began a series of long discussions about the future of entertainment and media. The meetings were in the offices of The Austin Chronicle, and participants were sworn to secrecy. A fundamental opinion shared by the group was that the local creative and music communities were as talented as anywhere else on the planet, but were severely limited by a lack of exposure outside of Austin.

Music was the uniting factor, but the group had a catholic taste for art and ideas. Inclusiveness and reaching for new things were core values. The solution being discussed was an event that would bring the outside world to Austin for a close-up view.

As the key ideas were formed, recognition grew that Austin was not the only city where this was an issue. For a local event to bring the world to Austin, it needed to have value everywhere. A name was sought that was not restrictive in its concept.

Finally, in October of 1986, the announcement of the first South By Southwest was made. The SXSW group expected initial resistance from the locals, but it was quite the opposite. Almost everyone wanted to be involved. Resistance would come later.

The first event, held in March of 1987, saw an expected 150 registrants swell to 700 on the opening day. As hoped for, Austin's charm won over the visitors, and SXSW took on a life of its own.

Growth was steady for the first seven years. For SXSW '94, often remembered for the Johnny Cash keynote/performance, two new events - Interactive and Film - were introduced. It would mark a fundamental shift in how the world viewed SXSW. Still early in the paradigm shift created by the

internet, the film and digital communities found a home in SXSW.

The event has changed in many surprising and meaningful ways since 1987, but at its core, SXSW remains a tool for creative people to develop their careers by bringing together people from around the globe to meet, learn and share ideas. (And maybe have a few once-in-a-lifetime experiences.)

— CEO Roland Swenson

SXSW Co-founder & CEO Roland Swenson

Photo by Salamonic



VISIT WWW.SXSW.COM FOR TICKETS

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT: LIL NAS X



December 3, 2018. That's when Montero Lamar Hill's life changed. But before his overnight music fame, Hill was an internet personality. He got his start on Facebook at just 13 years old, moved to Instagram and later gained a lot of momentum on Twitter.

After graduating from high school in 2017, Hill went on to attend the University of West Georgia for one year. That is, until he dropped out to pursue his music career. During this time, he moved in with his sister and worked at a Zaxby's and Six Flags Over Georgia.

It was in 2018 that he adopted the stage name "Lil Nas X," a tribute to the famous rapper Nas. In October 2018, Lil Nas X found the music that would soon become his debut hit, "Old Town Road." He bought the beat for the song anonymously through an online store from Dutch producer YoungKio for \$30. He recorded the song in less than an hour at an Atlanta studio, "CinCoYo" on their "\$20 Tuesdays." Using memes to promote the song on social media, "Old Town Road" eventually gained traction during the #Yeekaw Challenge meme on Tiktok in early 2019. It sat at #83 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart until it eventually shot up to #1. It also sat at #19 on the Hot Country Songs chart.

In March 2019, Lil Nas X signed with Columbia Records. That same month, *Billboard* told *Rolling Stone* they made the decision to remove "Old Town Road" from the country music charts, stating it

Lil Nas X holding two Grammy Awards for Best Music Video and Best Pop Duo/Group Performance for his remix of "Old Town Road" with Billy Ray Cyrus.

Photo by Amanda Edwards/Getty Images



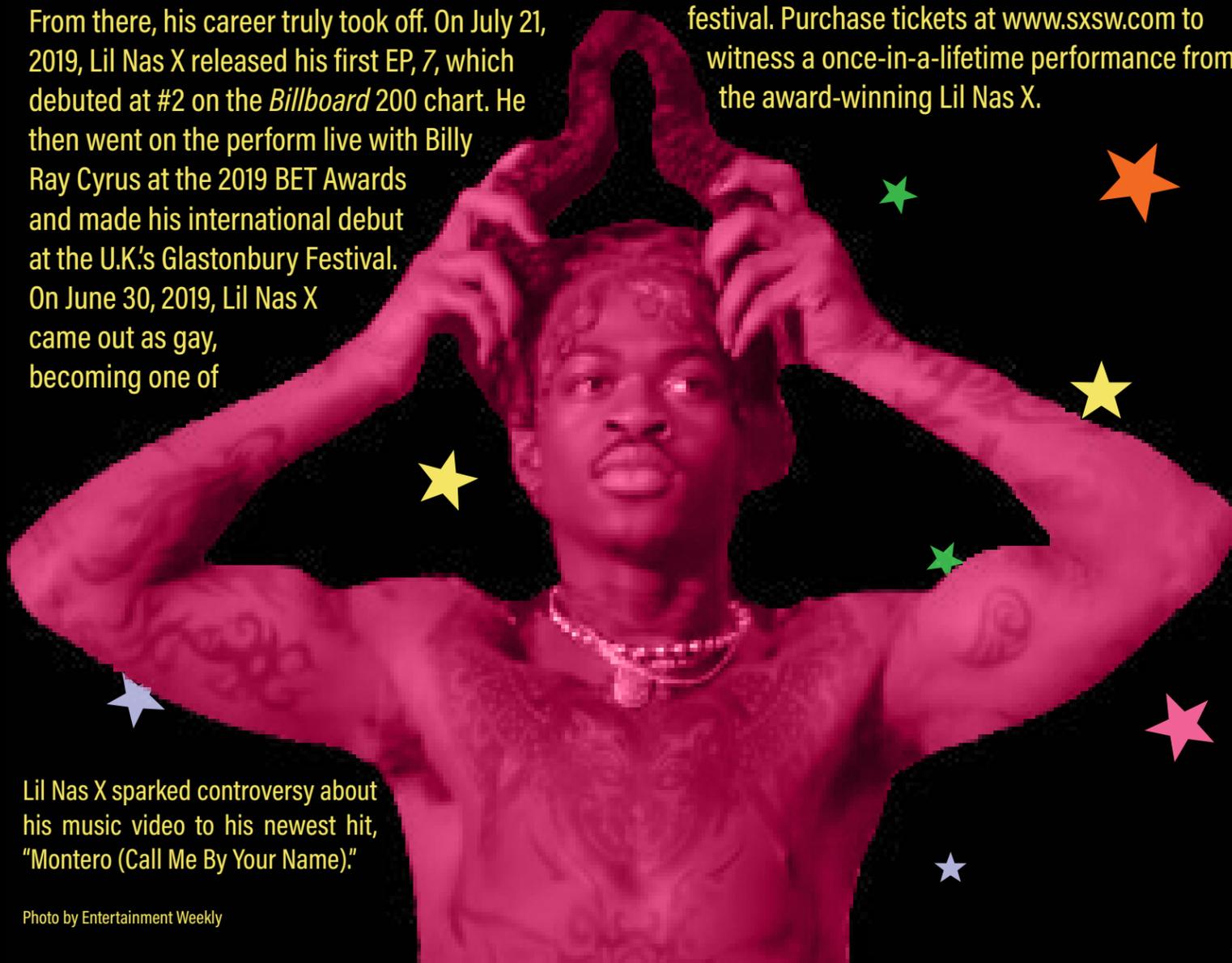
did not have enough elements to be compared to today's country music. Critics considered this decision to be rooted in racism; some media outlets claimed Lil Nas X's song was revolutionary, bringing attention to the deep-rooted cultural erasure of Black Americans in country music and the American frontier era.

Country music icon and actor Billy Ray Cyrus supported "Old Town Road" and featured on the April 2019 remix. After that, the song surpassed Drake's "In My Feelings" for the most United States streams in one week, accumulating over 143 million streams. By August 2019, the song had over one billion streams on Spotify alone.

From there, his career truly took off. On July 21, 2019, Lil Nas X released his first EP, *7*, which debuted at #2 on the *Billboard* 200 chart. He then went on the perform live with Billy Ray Cyrus at the 2019 BET Awards and made his international debut at the U.K.'s Glastonbury Festival. On June 30, 2019, Lil Nas X came out as gay, becoming one of

Lil Nas X sparked controversy about his music video to his newest hit, "Montero (Call Me By Your Name)."

Photo by Entertainment Weekly



few visible Black queer male artists.

Since his release of "Old Town Road," he has received nine awards for his single and remixed version with Billy Ray Cyrus at the BET Awards, the Country Music Awards, the Teen Choice Awards, the MTV Video Music Awards and the Grammys.

On March 26, 2021, Lil Nas X released the first song on his new album *Montero*, "Montero (Call Me By Your Name)" along with a music video. The video immediately sparked controversy among the Christian conservative population, as the video displayed vulnerable queerness.

Now, Lil Nas X will headline at the famous SXSW festival. Purchase tickets at www.sxsw.com to witness a once-in-a-lifetime performance from the award-winning Lil Nas X.

Run The Jewels is an American Hip-Hop duo consisting of El-P and Killer Mike. Their song "Legend Has It" brought them national fame.



Photo by Tim Saccenti

Doja Cat is an American singer, rapper, songwriter and record producer. Her album *Hot Pink* brought her worldwide success.



Photo by Wiki Commons

Megan Thee Stallion is an American rapper, singer and songwriter. After her debut album *Good News*, she reached #1 on the *Billboard* charts twice.



Photo by Arielle Bob-Willis for The New York Times

An American singer-songwriter, **Summer Walker's** debut album *Over It* hit #2 on the *Billboard* 200 chart and is certified platinum.



Photo by The Times U.K.

Disclosure is an English electronic duo consisting of brothers Howard and Guy Lawrence. Their debut album *Settle* was nominated from a Grammy in 2014. They have since gained worldwide success.



Photo by NME

SXSW 2022 FEATURED ARTISTS

Frank Ocean is an American singer, songwriter, record producer, photographer, and visual artist. He is one of the most acclaimed artists of today, with his two studio albums *Channel Orange* and *Blonde*.

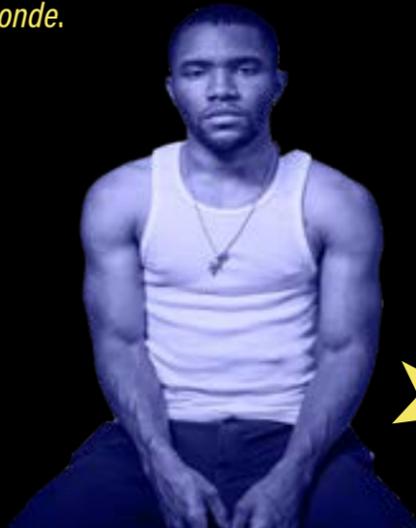


Photo by Viviane Sassen

A Canadian R&B singer-songwriter, **Daniel Caesar's** music is influenced by gospel and soul music. His song "Best Part" won a Grammy for Best R&B Performance.



Photo by Mindy Small

FKA Twigs is an English singer-songwriter, record producer, dancer, and actress. Her genre-bending album *Magdalene* received universal critical acclaim.



Photo by Dominic Sheldon

Donned "First Lady of Dreamville," **Ari Lennox** is an American R&B singer-songwriter. She was the first female artist to sign to J. Cole's label *Dreamville Records*.

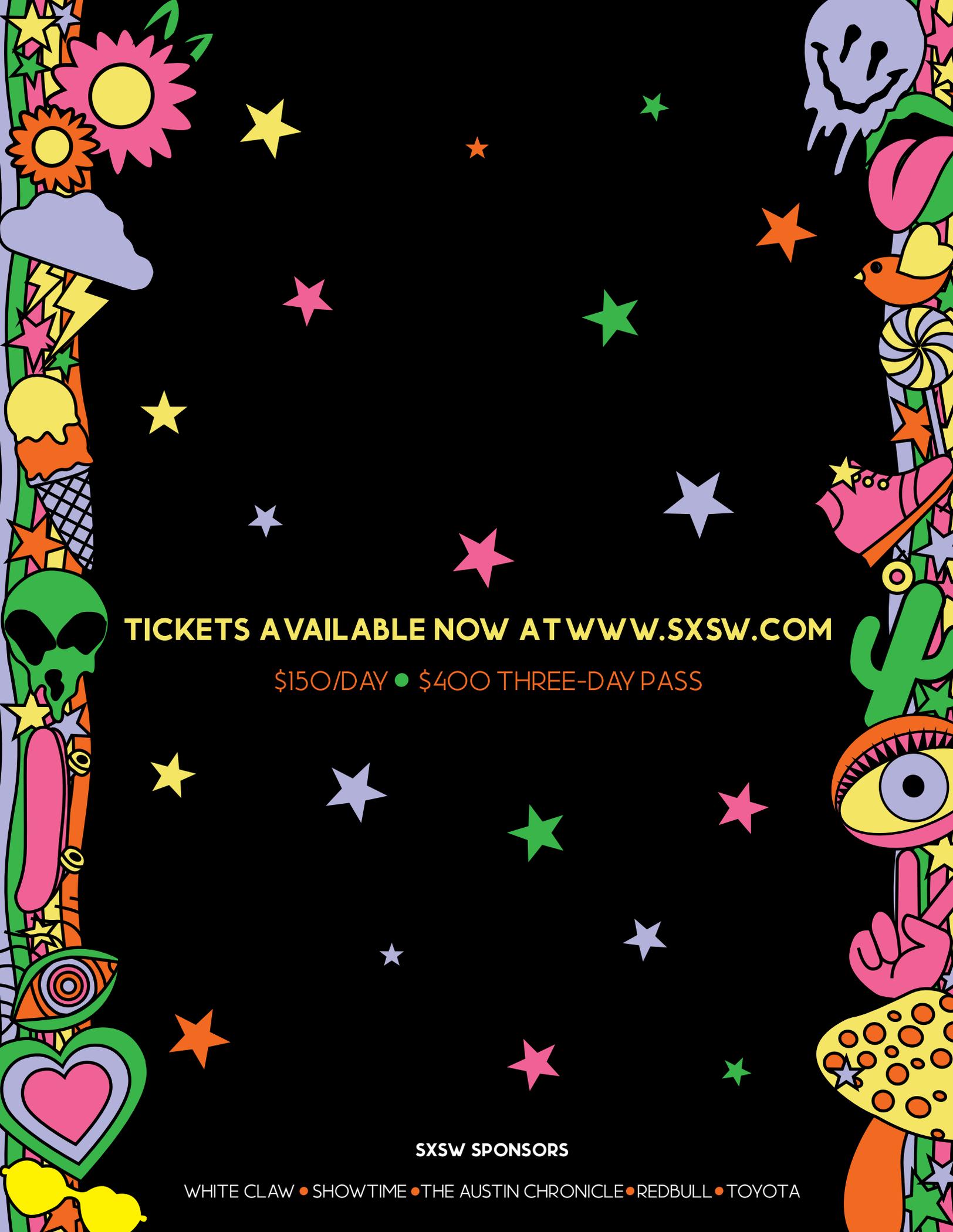


Photo by COLORS Studio

Thundercat is an American bassist and singer-songwriter is a Grammy award-winning artist, known for his work on Kendrick Lamar's *To Pimp A Butterfly*. He has since released 4 studio albums.



Photo by Carlos G



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