



## William (Bill) Hochberg

Partner

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“It’s all about the music,” says Bill Hochberg.

Not only does Bill represent music clients, he also writes about the business and law of music for [Forbes](#), [The Atlantic](#), [Wired](#) and other leading edge publications. And as an attorney specializing in music and media law, Bill handles transactional and litigation matters for some of the finest creative talents and most innovative companies in the world.

“I have a litigation background that informs my ability as a transactional attorney,” says Bill. “If I’m working on a record contract, I know what things might be a problem from a litigation standpoint.” Bill’s work has included representing the estates of Bob Marley and Curtis Mayfield in licensing, copyright, and international music law matters; Nashville songwriting icon Jeffrey Steele in establishing his Music Row publishing and production house; members of Guns N’ Roses and the Offspring in various group matters; Britney Spears on litigation related issues; and film composer Lalo Schifrin regarding distribution of his re-record of “Mission: Impossible” and other legendary scores. Bill’s clients have included award-winning recording artists, songwriters, producers, film composers, record labels, production companies, music publishers, talent managers, marketing companies, and the estates of pre-eminent creative artists, as well as up and coming creative talents who need a runway before they soar and excellent traffic control to avoid a crash.

### **Valuation of music copyrights and trademarks.**

Much of his work relates to copyrights and trademarks. “It’s often evaluations of music, such as how much are hundreds of millions of Spotify streams worth to a client, or how does an estate evaluate music assets, as well as issues between band and label or between band members themselves,” he says. Just as Bill’s trial experience informs his contract negotiations, so does his deal making skill avoid costly litigation. “There’s a lot of variety in what I do. Ultimately, it’s all about the music.”

### **Multifaceted knowledge of the music world.**

Bill, a musician himself, has a keen insight into the forces shaping changes in the music world, understanding the heart and soul of a musician and what their music means to them. Whether negotiating contracts or handling

litigation, Bill knows what needs to go right, what can go wrong, and how to straighten out matters when they go sideways.

For example, Bill's film composer and ad agency clients were sued by a company that had purchased ZZ Top's publishing rights. The company insisted it owned a "boogie riff" used in a TV commercial. Bill found that ZZ Top had been sued unsuccessfully 10 years earlier by blues legend John Lee Hooker for stealing that same boogie riff from him. ZZ Top argued that many artists had used the same riff before Hooker. "I just took ZZ Top's list of songs they used to defend themselves against Hooker's claim and then turned it on the company that had bought ZZ Top's catalog." That copyright infringement lawsuit was withdrawn two days before a hearing on Bill's motion to dismiss.

### **Using the law to help talented creators.**

Bill's successful track record as a contract negotiator and litigation strategist demonstrate his deep musical and legal knowledge and his keen interest in the creative process. "Copyright litigation is endlessly fascinating to me," says Bill. "Attempting to answer questions like, 'When is it original?' and 'What is fair use?' require more than just knowledge of the law. How your creative client came up with a song riff or lyric gets into psychology and how the mind works. It's a piping hot topic right now in the music business world and has repercussions on the creative community.

Bill's bottom line is his clients' bottom line. "My job is to negotiate great music deals and to protect their creative works," Bill says. "It's all about the music ... and getting my clients paid for the music."

### **Professional Affiliations**

- Appointed - Board of Overseers of the New England Conservatory of Music

### **Bar Admissions**

- California

### **Education**

- Northeastern University School of Law (J.D., 1990)
- Brandeis University (B.A., 1982)

## **Representative Experience**

- Represent Bob Marley music entities in various licensing deals and regarding international music law issues.

- Handled music rights clearance for the film “Blinded By The Light”, which included unconventional weaving of Bruce Springsteen’s lyrics and music into the motion picture from award-winning director Gurinder Chadha.
- Represent Jeffrey Steele, one of the top songwriters in the country, in establishing his successful music publishing and production house on Nashville’s Music Row.
- Represent Fifth Harmony pop group in various litigation-related matters.
- Represent Curtis Mayfield music entities regarding recording, publishing, copyright, trademark, and international music law matters.
- Defended singer Eddie Money in wrongful termination suit by former drummer, where appeals court found that a band leader has a First Amendment right to hire and fire band members.
- Represent Brazilian music publisher Fermata do Brasil in matters involving lyric translations and disputes regarding usages of well-known Bossa Nova and other Latin musical works.
- Represented Grammy-winning producers and songwriters the Stereotypes in dispute with former manager and business partner, with favorable settlement after litigation.
- Represented co-writer of the 50’s “doo-wop” hit song “Earth Angel (Will You Be Mine)” in federal copyright and contract dispute, obtaining summary judgment confirming client Gaynel Hodge’s co-authorship of the lucrative composition, preventing heirs of one of the other co-writers from denying Hodge his rightful songwriter credit and share of income.
- Represented GMAC Financing and others, defending against an advertising copyright infringement claim by a music publisher claiming it exclusively owned a common “boogie riff” used by the rock band ZZ Top in their hit song “La Grange”. As a result, the clients -- a composer, advertising agency and GMAC -- were free to continue using the “boogie riff” in a successful nationwide ad campaign.
- Represented Tom Werman, producer of three smash hit Motley Crüe albums, obtaining pre-judgment writ of attachment against the group in lawsuit for full payment of royalties and revenues.
- Represented world-renowned film composer Lalo Schifrin in establishing international distribution for his original film studio recordings and, in several cases, re-recordings of famous film scores.

## Published Articles

- Author, "[The Record Business Is Partying Again, But Not Like It's 1999](#)," *Forbes*, April 11, 2019
- Author, "[9th Circuit quietly buries music law's inverse ratio rule](#)," *Los Angeles Daily Journal*, February 14, 2019
- Author, "[Around the World: A Primer on Global Music Copyright Laws from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe](#)," International Association of Entertainment Attorneys, October, 2016
- Author, "[Hip-Hop and the Liberation of Women in Kabul](#)," *Pacific Standard*, September 27, 2016
- Author, "[Why the 'Blurred Lines' Disaster Won't Be Reversed \(Even If The Verdict Is\)](#)," *Digital Music News*, September 12, 2016

- Author, "[Why Did the EC Give Sony's Acquisition of Sony/ATV Such an Easy Ride?](#)," *Music Business Worldwide*, August 4, 2016
- Author, "[Tips for lawyers looking to land in Havana.](#)" *Los Angeles Daily Journal*, March 22, 2016
- Autor, "[Consejos para los abogados que estan pensando trabajar en La Habana.](#)" - Spanish version of "Tips for lawyers looking to land in La Havana." *Los Angeles Daily Journal*, 22 de Marzo de 2016
- Author, "[Damn the C&D letters, politicians just want to Rock.](#)" *Thompson Reuters- Legal Current*, September 16, 2015
- Author, "[Walking the Bass Line: How Original Does a Riff Need to Be in the Post- "Blurred Lines" World.](#)" *Bass Musician*, April 1, 2015
- Author, "[When Robots Write Songs.](#)" *The Atlantic*, August 7, 2014
- Author, "[Just How Much of Musical History Has Been Lost to History.](#)," *The Atlantic*, September 26, 2013
- Author, "[Sometimes No Good Deed Goes Unpunished for Artists' Representatives.](#)," *Landslide*, January-February 2013
- Author, "[Artist Copyright Termination Could Be Complicated By Other Recording Professionals' Claims.](#)," *Billboard*, November 4, 2011
- Author, "[Land of the Rising Disc: Japan Outsell U.S. in CD Sales.](#)" *Wired*, November 2010
- Author, "[Guitar Hero, Rock Band and the Rock n' Roll Money Machine.](#)" *Wired*, August 2008
- Author, "[Copy Instruments, Not Music.](#)" *Wired*, July 2006
- Author, "[The Demo Memo: How a Superstar's early Recordings Can Lead to a Gold Mine or a Land Mine.](#)" *Entertainment Law Reporter*, June 2005

## Media

April 19, 2019

### **The "Stranger Things" Rip-Off Lawsuit Could Set a Perilous Precedent**

*Pitchfork*

March 1, 2019

### **UMG Rides Streaming Music Wave**

*Los Angeles Business Journal*

February 14, 2019

### **9th Circuit quietly buries music law's inverse ratio rule**

*Los Angeles Daily Journal*

October 24, 2018

### **Why Tracy Chapman Would Probably Win Her Lawsuit Against Nicki Minaj**

*Pitchfork*

October 1, 2018

**Led Zeppelin is taking “Stairway to Heaven” back to the Central District for a reunion show, following a 9th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals panel’s partial reversal of their infringement trial win**

*Los Angeles Daily Journal*

August 31, 2018

**The Ugly State of Kesha and Dr. Luke’s Never-Ending Legal Battle**

*Pitchfork*

July 30, 2018

**AEG Moves to Dismiss Class Action Claims Filed by Ozzy Osbourne**

*Los Angeles Business Journal*

April 25, 2018

**Baseball document, thought worth millions, spurs court fight**

*Associated Press*

February 22, 2018

**Does Frank Ocean Stand a Chance in His Lawsuit Against Longtime Producer Om’Mas Keith?**

*Pitchfork*

February 14, 2018

**Judge dismisses Taylor Swift 'haters' copyright case as too 'banal'**

*BBC 5 Live*

January 9, 2018

**Radiohead’s copyright infringement lawsuit against Lana Del Rey**

*BBC Radio 5 Live*

January 8, 2018

**Radiohead Has Strong Case in Lana Del Rey Copyright Dispute, Lawyers Say**

*Variety*

January 3, 2018

**YouTube’s unlikely peacemaker has a plan to make musicians rich**

*MSN*

December 15, 2017

**Beware: How Global One Management’s Questionable Practices Entangled Politicians, Child Actors And The Homeless**

*Deadline Hollywood*

October 9, 2017

**9th Circuit debates “Blurred Lines” verdict**

*Los Angeles Daily Journal*

August 4, 2017

**Post Burt Bacharach Interview on Change in Music Plagiarism Law**

*BBC 5 Live*

May 31, 2017

**Spotify settles mechanical rights spat for \$43.5M**

*Los Angeles Daily Journal*

March 16, 2017

**9th Circuit Defers to State Supreme Court for Pandora Appeal**

*Los Angeles Daily Journal*

January 19, 2017

**McCartney Won't 'Let It Be,' Sues Sony to Get Back Song Rights**

*Bloomberg*

November 7, 2016

**Flo & Eddie Court Battle Continues Next Week**

*Los Angeles Daily Journal*

September 27, 2016

**Record companies sue "streaming ripping" service provider**

*Los Angeles Daily Journal*

September 12, 2016

**Why the 'Blurred Lines' Disaster Won't Be Reversed (Even If The Verdict Is)**

*Digital Music News*

August 26, 2016

**The 'Blurred Lines' creators are still trying to reverse the Marvin Gaye verdict**

*Vice News*

August 4, 2016

**DOJ declines to modify consent decrees, angers PROs.**

*Los Angeles Daily Journal*

August 4, 2016

**Why did the EC give Sony's acquisition of Sony/ATV such an easy ride?**

*Music Business Worldwide*

July 27, 2016

**Why Donald Trump Can Keep Using Queen's 'We Are The Champions'**

*The Street*

July 23, 2016

**'Stairway' Verdict May Rein in Lawsuits Claiming Song Ripoffs**

*Bloomberg*

July 23, 2016

**A "Stairway to Heaven" Appeal Would be a Fruitless Climb, Attorneys Say**

*The Hollywood Reporter*

July 15, 2016

**Led Zeppelin Copyright Trial Hinges on Access**

*Courthouse News Service*

July 3, 2016

**Eddie Money, former Sacramento-based drummer entangled in legal fight**

*The Sacramento Bee*

July 2, 2016

**Madonna and 'Vogue' Producer Beat Infringement Appeal**

*The National Law Journal*

June 23, 2016

**Jury says Led Zeppelin did not rip off "Stairway to Heaven"**

*ARS Technica*

June 23, 2016

**Led Zeppelin victorious in 'Stairway to Heaven' copyright trial**

*Reuters*

June 23, 2016

**Page and Plant's Win in 'Stairway to Heaven' Case Seen as Bolstering Songwriters' Creative Rights**

*The National Law Journal*

June 23, 2016

**A 'Stairway to Heaven' Appeal Would be a Fruitless Climb, Attorneys Say**

*Billboard*

June 15, 2016

**Led Zeppelin members attend opening statements of 'Stairway' infringement trial**

*Los Angeles Daily Journal*

April 28, 2016

**Social media, drum breaks & Rock n' Roll**

*Reuters Legal Current Podcast*

April 15, 2016

**In 'Stairway' suit, 'Raging Bull' and 'Burred Lines' cast shadow**

*Los Angeles Daily Journal*

April 6, 2016

**Trumpet riff at center of "Vogue" infringement case**

*Los Angeles Daily Journal*

March 22, 2016

**Tips for lawyers looking to land in Havana**

*Los Angeles Daily Journal*

March 16, 2016

**Sony is betting on love for the Beatles lasting in a new \$750 million deal**

*Los Angeles Times*

March 1, 2016

**The Cuban-American Musical Detente: Inside A Native Son's 40-Year Road to Havana's Newest Festival**

*Billboard*

February 29, 2016

**How Record Labels Buy Social Media Love From Teenage 'Influencers'**

*International Business Times*

February 26, 2016

**Kesha Faces An Uphill Legal Battle With Dr. Luke, Experts Say**

*BuzzFeed News*

January 12, 2016

**Spotify hit by new \$200 million copyright suit**

*Los Angeles Daily Journal*

December 16, 2015

**Pandora hit with higher costs as royalty board hikes streaming rates**

*The Street*

December 16, 2015

**Pandora Can Claim Big Victory With Streaming Rate Decision**

*The Street*

December 11, 2015

**Whatever Happened to Political Campaign Theme Songs?**

*Reuters Legal Current Podcast*

October 17, 2015

**Music in Politics**

*KABC Radio*

October 15, 2015

**The Politicization of Music**

*PopZetter*

August 19, 2015

**How the Best Bands Break Through**

*PopZette*



July 9, 2015

**The Big Picture: 'Fair Play, Fair Pay' Vs. Local Radio Freedom Act**

*All Access*

June 11, 2015

**William I. Hochberg and Mitchell Manger Expand Greenberg Glusker's Music Law Practice**

*Greenberg Glusker Press Release*

April 16, 2015

**Livestream apps pose revenue threat to hot shows, sports**

*SFGate*

March 30, 2015

**The Meerkat Minefield: Legal Issues With Live-Streaming Apps**

*Billboard*

September 30, 2014

**EDM Superstars Krewella Mired In Legal Mess Involving DJ's Newfound Sobriety (Exclusive)**

*The Hollywood Reporter*

September 5, 2014

**Rod Stewart Sued for Reusing Image of the Back of His Head**

*The Hollywood Reporter*

February 25, 2014

**LMFAO's \$7 Million Fight With Ex-Manager Advances (Here's the Remix)**

*The Hollywood Reporter*