



**Nicole Balin, owner of Ballin PR, Author, cast member TV show “Big Freedia”**

Panel: Business Minded

A Beverly Hills transplant originally raised in San Francisco, Nicole Balin got her start in journalism in 1994 as an editor at *Parenting* magazine. After beginning a freelance career by moonlighting for *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Source Sports*, *Rap Pages* and *Blaze*, Balin decided to work closer to her passion: Hip Hop. In 1997, she left the world of child rearing periodicals to serve as an editor at *The Source*. Billed as the leading magazine of Hip Hop music, culture and politics, *The Source* set the standard for Hip Hop journalism for the better part of two decades.

In 2001, Nicole became an entrepreneur, founded her publicity firm, Ballin PR, and built a roster of musical clients that has included the Grammy Award- winning group Linkin Park, New Orleans Queen of Bounce Big Freedia, Moog Music, DJ Z-Trip, Zion I, Kool Keith, Too \$hort, Public Enemy, and Prince Paul, to name just a few.

In addition to her full-time work as a publicist, Balin has co-authored her first book, *Big Freedia: God Save the Queen Diva!* on Simon & Schuster which will be available on July 7, 2015. Her next memoir, *Confessions of a Hip-Hop Publicist*, is a book loosely based on her experiences in the Hip Hop music industry.

Finally, Balin will be featured as a regular cast member in season 4 of her clients hits reality TV show ‘Big Freedia: Queen of Bounce’ on Fuse TV this fall.

<http://ballinpr.com/>



**Amy Bauer, account manager StubHub**

Panel: Behind the Scenes

From Washington State, Amy Bauer got her start in the Music Business 8 years ago working at a world- renowned record studio called Bear Creek in Seattle that has produced critically acclaimed albums from artists such as Soundgarden, The Gossip, Metric, The Strokes, etc. She then spent the next 7 years building her reputation in marketing strategy and technology realms.

Amy worked at KEXP radio as an event manager. She was General manager of an indie record label called Loveless Records. Her duties included managing artists, album releases, marketing & PR campaigns and booking national tours including major festivals like Bumbershoot and SXSW. Amy founded and produced SXSeattle, an annual event at SXSW that features Seattle artists from “The City of Music.” Notable acts to play SxSeattle include Allen Stone and Macklemore & Ryan Lewis. She was hands on 2008-2011, and the event still happens annually, leaving her legacy at SXSW. Amy opened a 450-person live music venue for Seattle’s Hard Rock Café implementing a \$450K marketing plan for the event space. She was the Talent Buyer for over a year, which helped brand the new event space in a positive way. Amy then became the VP of Marketing to help rebrand record label Sarathan Records which included working with Fontana Distribution to develop digital and retail promotions, direct-to-consumer strategies, and key marketing programs to initiate fan interaction. In 2011, Amy made her move to the SF Bay Area doing marketing and branding in the music/tech side of the industry. She did Artist Relations at tech startup SwitchCam before moving to StubHub (service provider for buyers and sellers of tickets for sports, concerts, theater and other live entertainment events) as an account manager working with venues, promoters, festivals and artists.

Amy launched the San Francisco Bay Area chapter of *Ladies Who Brunch*. It started in LA ten years ago and it is a networking group for women in the music industry to foster and build relationships. The organization has over 1,000 women. Amy books event spaces and hosts SF gatherings. [www.stubhub.com](http://www.stubhub.com)



**Sunshine Becker, singer, musician, entertainer, teacher, business professional**

Panel: Music Notes

As a musician, Sunshine Becker has 20 years of performing experience on the road touring internationally and as a recording artist in the studio for artists such as Zigaboo Modeliste. She performs in venues as big as her back yard to Madison Square Garden.

Since 1995 Sunshine has been a core member of the highly acclaimed improvisational a cappella group SoVoSó (1997: Winner, Studio Album of the Year - "World Jazz A Cappella", Contemporary A Cappella Recording Awards). She is also the groups booking agent and arranges marketing, travel, etc for the ensemble.

Since 2009, Sunshine been singing and touring with Furthur, Phil Lesh and Bob Weir's band, a post-Jerry Garcia incarnation of the Grateful Dead.

Sunshine recently started performing out with her own band, the Sunshine Garcia Band.

She also functions as an instructor for Young Performers International, a nonprofit children's performing arts company in San Francisco, leads ongoing workshops teaching the art-form of CircleSinging, and provides private vocal coaching.



**Jasmine Braxton, Esq.**

Panel: Business Minded

A North Carolina native and avid music lover, Jasmine is a passionate attorney with a strong background in music business and the law. Since starting her legal practice, she has focused on counseling artists, musicians, entrepreneurs, and investors in bringing traditional media to digital platforms in ways that are both lucrative and aligned with the values of her clients. Before practicing law, Jasmine worked extensively with leading music publishers and record labels placing music in film, television, and other media. She approaches her clients' interests on two levels; first from the perspective of an entertainment professional, and then as a lawyer advancing those interests.

Jasmine is a graduate of the UC Hastings College of the Law and holds a degree in Music Business from New York University. She is a member of the California Bar and a Certified Information Privacy Professional. Jasmine is also a participant in the California Lawyers for the Arts Modest Means Incubator Program.

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/jasminebraxton>



**Courtney Cherry, writer, media correspondent, publicist, business woman**

Panel: Business Minded (moderating)

Courtney Cherry is a writer, media correspondent, publicist and business woman all at the same time.

Courtney went on to San Jose State University. She has a burning desire to blend media, music and pop culture with her writing skills. Courtney is an independent contractor, writing and doing entertainment correspondence for *Swag Magazine CA*. She has conducted interviews with major artist such as Bone Thugs N Harmony, Goapele and Rodney O & Joe Cooley. Courtney has been a host on a weekly broadcasted television show “Around My Way.” She’s blazed the red carpet interviewing Golden State Warrior players and other celebrities including VH1 star Hazel E of the hit reality show “Love and Hip Hop Hollywood”. Courtney has been the MC at conferences and taped one-on-one interviews. She plans to pursue radio in the future as well.

Tapping into her entrepreneurial spirit, Courtney launched her own company, Cherry Public Relations Group. She represents a variety of clientele including artists, record labels and lifestyle brands. Courtney is also the West Coast Urban Brand Director and blogger for “Love and Hustle,” an up and coming independent clothing company.



**Jan D'Allessandro, EVP of Business Development and Strategy & General Counsel for Place**

Panel: Technically Speaking

Jill started her career getting a JD from Georgetown University (and graduating cum laude). She was in private practice in SF and NY before the internet became the place to be. She started

doing music deals for AOL in the 90s, including the acquisitions of Spinner and Nullsoft. She served as Vice President, Business Development and General Counsel of The Find, Inc., the leading search engine for shopping. She ran Business Development for Topspin Media and then Yahoo Sports, Entertainment and Jill is now the EVP of Business Development and Strategy & General Counsel for Place, a Palo Alto based start up that empowers organizers to unite people around interests, affinities and movements. Place built the platform for Lady Gaga's Little Monsters to connect.

<http://musically.com/2015/02/26/backplane-rebrands-place-opens-everyone/>



**April Duran, Founder of Rag House Records**

Panel: Behind the Scenes

In 2014 April Duran launched an all-female-all-genres indie label called Rag House Records. April also launched “So Cal 1st Annual Girl Fest” showcasing up to 21 female singers, female musicians and female influenced bands. April has worked the “She Rock Awards” at NAMM 2015 and will be working the “Girl’s Rock n Roll Camp Los Angeles” in summer 2015 as well as assisting in creating “Girls Rock Camp Inland Empire.”

April Duran graduated from SDSU in Management and completed the Music Business Program in Hollywood at the Musicians Institute. April lives in Los Angeles.

<https://www.facebook.com/raghouserecords>



**Kerry Fiero, Co-Founder Fiero Flair, Event Producer**

Panel: Music Notes (moderating)

Kerry is a passionate and enthusiastic event planner with 18 years in the Music Business. She is the co-founder and Event Producer for Fiero Flair, an empowerment company founded by she and her husband. *Girl Power! Women working in the Music Industry Conference* is the event nearest and dearest to her heart, but the organization produces numerous other events throughout the year with their mission Empowering people/ Elevating Minds.

She began her career in the music industry as a personal manager, first working with a nationally recognized management company, to having her own company, Strive Management. For over a decade she guided and directed the careers of signed and independent music acts in the R&B and Jazz genres including touring with several of the groups. Kerry's music industry endeavors also included managing Biscuits & Blues venue (SF); booking Maxwell's Lounge venue(Oakland); marketing and artist liason for the California Music Awards show; production work on music videos; working at an entertainment law firm; operations for a company doing backstage ambiance for the biggest concert promoters and festivals; and as the artist liaison at SFJAZZ concert hall. For the past 9 ½ years, Kerry has been an Adjunct Professor at San Francisco State University's Music/ Recording Industry Program where she teaches Applied Strategies: Breaking Into The Music Business, Music Marketing, Event Marketing and Music & Entertainment Event Management and oversees the internship program.

<https://www.facebook.com/fiero.flair>



### **Zakiya Harris, Music Artist & Entrepreneur**

Panel: Technically Speaking (panelist and moderating)

Zakiya Harris is a Changemaker, working at the intersections of entrepreneurship, education & creative transformation. Zakiya is a co-founder of nationally recognized projects Impact Hub Oakland, Grind for the Green, Hack The Hood, Earthseed Consulting, and a Fellow of Green For All and Bold Food. As a programming strategist for Impact Hub Oakland, she facilitates support and scholarships to mission driven entrepreneurs dedicated to accelerating possibilities for a better world. She is also the Chief Education Officer of Hack the Hood, a technology program for low income youth of color and winner of the 2014 Google Impact Challenge. *Adventures of a Shapeshifter* is her debut album blending the genres of Soul, Electronica, Hip-Hop and Afro-Beat music within her repertoire. She performs with her band Elephantine.

<http://www.zakiyaharris.com/>



**Karen Jones, former General Mgr A&R at Warner Bros Records**

Panel: Behind the Scenes (moderating)

Karen Jones is the founder and CEO of KJEM Consulting, an entertainment and business management consultancy providing services to high profile industry professionals, independent labels, artists, producers, songwriters, internet radio stations, graphic artists, and small businesses.

She has over 30 years experience as an A&R professional in the music industry, starting her career at Motown Records where she worked with artists such as Stevie Wonder, Rick James, and Teena Marie.

From there she went to Warner Bros. Records where her work ethic, efficiency, and ability to get any job done with excellence moved her quickly through the ranks to General Manager & Associate Director of the A&R department. She oversaw the administrative and creative aspects of the label's Urban Music division and its affiliated labels (Reprise, Sire, Qwest, and Cold Chillin'). While at Warner Bros. Records Karen worked with a myriad of record breaking artists, producers, songwriters, and industry leaders including Club Nouveau, Al B. Sure!, Karyn White, and Chante' Moore, Siedah Garrett, Prince, George Clinton, Big Daddy Kane, Biz Markie, Kool G Rap, Tevin Campbell, Ice T, Quincy Jones, Teddy Riley, Sir Jinx, Dr. Dre, Russell Simmons, Andre Harrell, Sean "Diddy" Combs, L.A. Reid, Babyface, Jimmy Jam, and Terry Lewis.

Karen is the editor of music industry icon Jay King's "Passport to the Music Business," a series of pocket books on how to understand and navigate your way through all aspects of the music business in easy to understand layman's terms. The titles currently in print cover distribution, royalties, and publishing.



## **Jiayi Liao, founder JYL Entertainment**

Panel: Technically Speaking

Jiayi Liao has 10 years of in-depth international experience in the dance music industry from journalism, event production, to marketing. After being an influential music journalist in China and got 400,000 views a year on her articles, Jiayi founded JYL Entertainment in 2006, successfully brought more than 50 artists to 5 major cities in China and the United States. JYL Entertainment has provided event production and marketing services by using integrated marketing strategy to connect venues and artists with fans. After moved to San Francisco, Jiayi continued producing events in California and China, executing online marketing campaigns on web, social media, and E-mail to drive engagement and audience and ticket sales within multiple marketing channels. Before graduating from SFSU, Jiayi joined Spundae and managed online promotion for weekly events and festivals. Since 2013, Jiayi has been working at Insomniac Events' festivals across the United States and Mexico that attracted more than 1,000,000 attendees. Jiayi holds a MBA from San Francisco State University along with a Master in International Business from University of Nice, France.

Company's website: <http://jylentertainment.com/>



**Christina Luna, The Luna Company, Inc.**

Panel: Behind the Scenes

Christina Luna is the Founder to The Luna Company, Inc., an artist management and entertainment service company based out of San Francisco, California USA. The Luna Company specializes in artist management, entertainment and marketing services for the international Asian market. Christina has been in the entertainment industry for over twelve years working with several artists and clients in a booking, consulting or management capacity. She has experience in artist development, album production, event management, industry negotiations, marketing campaigns, public relations, and tour management. Christina's event portfolio includes events encompassing festivals, record release events, corporate events, concerts, artist showcases, and television productions. The roster today includes clients such as ACTS, Clarissa Ocampo, Melissa Polinar, Ramiele Malubay, and more. Brought up by the Filipino American community, Christina works to prepare top Asian American music artists to be the forefront of new emerging markets globally. Christina's personal mission is to help others in all industries

reach their potential by doing what they love to do, while having a long term positive impact always in mind.

Christina Luna holds a Master's of Science in Management from Notre Dame de Namur University and a Certificate in Social Enterprise and Impact Investing from the Monterey Institute of International Studies. She has been featured on several publications, speaks at several events and conferences in the United States and in the Philippines. She is recognized as a part of 100 Most Influential Filipina Women in the World under the category Emerging Leaders.

<https://thelunacompany.wordpress.com/>



**Sundra Manning, musician, producer, songwriter, arranger**

Panel: Music Notes

Sundra Manning is a highly sought after Hammond B3 Player, Pianist, Keyboardist and Producer, respected for her wide ranging musical versatility. She has toured around the world sharing her lovely gift of music; and has received Grammy Nominations and Gospel Academy Awards for her music. She creates music that inspires all. Sundra brings a funky, fresh and gritty approach to the Hammond B3 Organ, Piano and Keyboards that is unique and special.

Sundra has played with legendary musical greats such as The Monkees (Peter Tork), Larry Graham, Bobby Womack, Prince, Raphael Saadiq, Rachele Ferrell, Ledisi, The Roots, Michael Franti & Spearhead, Gill Scott Herron, India Arie, Maceo Parker, Cindy Lauper, Michelle Shocked, Martin Luther, Mike Phillips, The Braxton Brothers, J. Spencer, Sheila E, Miguel Migs, Cody Chestnut, Tramaine Hawkins, MC Hammer, Joan Osborne, EnVogue, Walter Hawkins Choir, 5 Blind Boys Of Alabama, James Cleveland, Earnest Pugh, Legally Blynd, Jennifer Holiday, Vanessa Bell Armstrong, Marvin Sapp (Commission), and many more.

Sundra has recorded, written and/or produced with Raphael Saadiq, Peabo Bryson, Ledisi, Braxton Brothers, The Roots, Mike Phillips, Will Downing, Wendy Lands, Lalah Hathaway, JW, Maysa, Shelby J., EnVogue, Michael Franti, Miko Marks, MeShell Ndgeocello, Brenda Vaughn, Michelle Shocked, Martin Luther, LaToya Lucket (Destiny's Child), Pete Escovedo, Paul Jackson, Jr., HBO films, Sony Pictures, Bose Corp, Pottery Barn, PBS, Lane Bryant, William Sonoma, Kohls, Sharper Image, Pottery Barn Kids, Oracle Corp, KPIX-CBS 5, Warner Pictures, KTVU-Fox 2 and Young & The Restless (CBS Soap Opera).

Sundra is a Graduate of San Francisco State University (B.A., Economics and B.A. Broadcast/Audio Production). She performs, produces and records music and is available for accompaniment, touring, songwriting collaborations, film scoring, vocal production and studio recording / music production.



**Jill Meniketti, Artist Manager & Author**

**Girl Power! Keynote speaker 2015**

Jill Meniketti manages a popular rock band that continually sells out tours worldwide and has sold over 4 million records. She takes pride in belonging to an elite set of women who double as band managers and rock star wives (a la Sharon Osbourne). Jill is the author of her debut novel *Welcome to Groove House*. Jill also writes a blog called Behind the Art that features women in the Music Industry. [www.JillMeniketti.com](http://www.JillMeniketti.com)



**Paula Reina, Founder & Lead Principal VRE (Velvet Rhythm Entertainment, LLC)  
Divisions: VRE Rights Management/VRE Music Publishing**

## Panel: Behind The Scenes

Paula Reina has 16 years of experience in the music industry and is the owner and founder of Velvet Rhythm Ent, LLC (VRE). VRE is a *Music Rights Management* and *Music Publishing* company in San Francisco. Paula is also the owner of Beme Branding Marketing Group (BMG). BMG is an all-inclusive *Marketing, Branding, and Advertising Agency* for the entertainment music industry, product branding, and service realm. Some of BMG's clients include Morris Day & The Time, Hitman Records, Transamerica, Total Care Plus, Cumulus Media Networks, and many more.

Paula holds a Bachelor's of Science in Business with a Concentration in Marketing from Golden Gate University. She is also an alumni and completed the San Francisco State University Music/Recording Industry program (with an emphasis in music business). With experience in marketing, artist development, promotions, sales, and artist management; she has had the opportunity of being an employed member at leading record labels such as Universal Music Group, Interscope, Island Def Jam, and former entertainment company The Musicland Group- currently known as Transworld Entertainment.

<http://www.velvetrhythm.com/>



**Julie Rix, Audio Engineer**

## Panel: Music Notes

With 27 years of experience in the concert industry, Julie is familiar with all aspects of the live music scene. Working at venues (Kuumba Jazz Center and more) to large festivals (Monterey Jazz Festival, Art + Soul Festival, and more), she developed a stellar reputation as a sound engineer and continued working with equal excellence in all aspects of the industry including: Event Planning, Venue Management, Booking, Production Management, Operational Development, Marketing, Audience Building, Volunteer Management and Budget & Finance.

From the strategic big picture to the nuts and bolts, Julie's creative thinking, understanding of the industry and a friendly calm approach has been a welcome addition to thousands of shows.



**Stephanie Sales, Esq., INgrooves**

Panel: Technically Speaking

Stephanie Sales began her career in the music industry in 2005 as an assistant talent manager for Royal Artist Group. There she managed a number of jazz, jam and indie rock bands such as The Headhunters (Herbie Hancock, Mike Clark), Robert Walter's 20th Congress, and Garage A Trois (Charlie Hunter, Skerik, Stanton Moore).

Stephanie attended law school at Santa Clara University, where she concentrated her studies on intellectual property. During law school she interned at IODA, a digital music distributor, and the Electronic Frontier Foundation. She has also worked on the copyright team at YouTube. Stephanie is currently Associate Counsel at INgrooves, focusing primarily on music distribution and publishing. <http://www.ingrooves.com/>



**Asya Shein, Founder and Publisher of Fusicology**

Panel: Business Minded

Asya Shein is the Founder and Publisher of Fusicology.com, the source for progressive soul music & culture since 2003; The hub for new music, artists + content for the urban alternative movement, calendar listing of events across North America. Along with maintaining the desktop and mobile versions, Fusicology has iPhone/iPad and Google Play apps; Asya published the Wordpress/PHP website, email newsletter, manage lifestyle marketing, social media, sales partnerships and biz dev. Outside of technology and content development, Asya has worked on many experiential campaigns and has vast experience in event production, project management, sponsorships & deck building along with 2 decades of experience with music artist relations. The site, commemorating its 12 yrs in the fall of 2015, has high-open rate email blasts and a popular

mobile app providing event listings, new music, curated videos & content multi-cultural urban progressives. Asya would describe herself as an "online marketer, community builder and lover of soulful music, branding & technology." [www.fusicology.com](http://www.fusicology.com)



**Victoria Theodore, pianist, composer, singer and music instructor**

Panel: Business Minded

Victoria Theodore has been a keyboardist and background singer in Stevie Wonder's band since August 2007. She has traveled around the world with Stevie, performing for President Obama, Queen Elizabeth, accompanying Stevie and other musical icons of every genre, is featured in Stevie's DVD "Live At Last", and can be seen in the documentary "Twenty Feet From Stardom". In 2013, Victoria was hired to perform as keyboardist and singer in Arsenio Hall's Posse 2.0 for the Arsenio Hall Show.

As a freelance musician, and through her work with Stevie Wonder and Arsenio Hall, Victoria has performed with legendary artists such as Sting, Prince, B.B. King, Gladys Knight, Tony Bennett, Esperanza Spalding, John Mayer, and Bay Area legends such as Sheila E., Ledisi, Dwayne Wiggins (Tony! Toni! Toné!) and Tony Lindsay (lead singer for Santana).

Victoria is a highly sought pianist, composer, singer and music instructor, respected for her wide-ranging musical versatility. Her debut album of original music will be released in 2015!

Victoria Theodore received her Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Arts degrees in Classical Piano Performance and Computer Music from Oberlin College / Conservatory of Music, and her Master of Arts degree in Classical Piano Performance from Stanford University.

<http://www.victoriatheodore.com/>



**Brenda Vaughn, renowned vocalist, recording artist, event planner**

Panel: Music Notes

Born in Mississippi, Brenda Vaughn relocated to Oakland, CA. Brenda's first love was music and she began singing Gospel at age 4. Brenda was a mother by age 15 – and while getting major accolades from the music community- life was a struggle when she had two more children and needed to support her family while pursuing her music career. Brenda found work in Japan as a back-up singer, solo artist and as the featured voice in many Japanese commercials. Brenda received one triple platinum and two platinum awards for her coordinating work with Japan's Ki/oon /Sony Music recording group The Gospellers. In addition to singing, Brenda produced/co-produced/coordinated special events with many major recording artists such as Cece Peniston, Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis, Ann Nesby, The BET Presents Motown Talent Search, Brian McKnight, Kashif and the "Sunday Gospel Brunch." Brenda formed a production company called "Sistuh To Sistuh." In 2007 Brenda Vaughn received the Living Legend Award at "The Bay Area Black Music Awards" and received her own day, December 12, which is declared *Brenda Vaughn Day* in Oakland, CA. In 2010 she received another proclamation award by the city.

In addition to her musical endeavors, Brenda has long been involved in charitable work.. In 1992, she established the "Sistuh to Sistuh Awards," an organization that honors female vocalists for their contributions to the California Bay Area music scene. In 2009 she put together a collective of singers based in America and Japan to record a song for Darfur. In 2011 after the Tsunami and massive earthquake in Japan Brenda worked with UNICEF and served as an ambassador to deliver letters back and forth to the abandoned Japanese students. Since 2012 Brenda has been involved each summer in the Otis Redding Foundation music camp and will be performing at the Otis Redding Tribute in September 2015.

Brenda also used her musical gifts in the political arena. In 2008 Brenda organized a group of American musicians based in Japan and recorded the song Obama song (World of Friends) to celebrate Senator Obama's historic candidacy. She also worked on helping American musicians all over Japan register to vote. In 2009 Brenda was invited to sing at one of the inauguration parties singing with Sam Moore, Brenda Russell, Elvis Costello and Sting. She was later that year personally invited to hear President Obama speak in Tokyo.

In 2015 Brenda returned to the Bay Area after a long residency performing at a hotel in Singapore, plus performances in Taiwan and Beijing, to direct and book musical entertainment at Geoffrey's Inner Circle in Oakland and take charge of initiatives to bring new life to Oakland's music scene. Brenda orchestrated a star-studded benefit for singer Rosie Gaines. Currently she is

putting together, through her Sistuh to Sistuh organization: *Women Who Jam: the next generation* on June 30 together with NABFEME (National Black Female executives in Entertainment). As a renowned singer, songwriter, vocal coach, event producer, booking agent, and mother, Brenda stays busy and yet is inspired to always carve out time to help the community through music and help the music scene with the community. Brenda Vaughn is *a living legend*.