

billboard

December 20, 2014

2014 YEAR IN MUSIC



Photographed by Smallz + Raskind on
Oct. 9 at The Line Hotel in Los Angeles.



THE UPSTARTS

[FROM LEFT]
 TY STIKLORIUS, TROY CARTER,
 NICOLAY "NICO" SEREBA,
 VINCENT "VINZ" DERY, J. ERVING,
 MEGHAN TRAINOR

MEGHAN TRAINOR:
 "ALL ABOUT THAT BASS"
 8 WEEKS ON BILLBOARD HOT 100;
 3 WEEKS ON MAINSTREAM TOP 40

NICO & VINZ: "AM I WRONG"
 4 WEEKS ON RADIO SONGS

A LITTLE MORE THAN A YEAR AGO, Culver City-based music management firm Atom Factory was synonymous with two people: Troy Carter and Lady Gaga. But after the company's signature artist split in November 2013, it was incumbent upon all the principals, including co-presidents J. Erving and Ty Stiklorius, to deliver their next hit act. In 2014, Atom Factory had four: Meghan Trainor, 20 ("All About That Bass") and John Legend, 35 ("All of Me") spent multiple weeks at No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100; Norwegian duo Nico & Vinz, both 22 ("Am I Wrong") topped the Radio Songs chart; and the DIY approach Lindsey Stirling, 28, took to her EDM-inflected classical netted her a simultaneous No. 1 debut on Independent Albums, Classical Crossover Albums and Dance/Electronic Albums with *Shatter Me*.

TROY CARTER, Atom Factory founder: Last year, when people came to Atom Factory, a lot of it was on me to be able to deliver. I had to show up to every meeting; the focus was on me. And this year, I think the focus has been on us. We all understand that we're only as good as the talent we represent.

MEGHAN TRAINOR I came to my session with producer Kevin Kadish with a list of titles, and immediately I was like, "Let's do booty! And thickness! Like, it's about the bass, not the treble," and he was into it. When you have a session, it's like a blind date — you meet a stranger and make nice with them. He was telling me how he loved '50s stuff, and I told him how I listened to Frank Sinatra before every session. He started making this beat to make it modern, and I started the first verse freestyle because I was like, "I rap." When a little white girl walks in and says, "I'm a rapper," they don't actually want you to rap. But he was all about it.

VINCENT "VINZ" DERY, Nico & Vinz: We come from a place that's far away, so the U.S. No. 1 is a big thing to dream about.

NICOLAY "NICO" SEREBA, Nico & Vinz: Like we sing in the song, it's about having the guts to follow your dreams and what you want to achieve.

—ANDREW HAMP