

billboard

December 17-24, 2016

The No. 1s

Photographed by Christopher Patey on Nov. 17 at The Foundry at SLS Las Vegas Hotel & Casino.



THE POP MEMORIALISTS

Lukas Graham

(FROM LEFT)

Morten Ristorp, Mark Falgren, Cameron Strang [chairman/CEO, Warner Bros. Records] and Lukas Forchhammer

"7 YEARS"

Radio Songs (4 weeks), Mainstream Top 40 (1 week), Adult Top 40 (3 weeks)

It took Warner Bros. Records chairman/CEO Cameron Strang three years to break Danish act Lukas Graham's Grammy-nominated smash "7 Years." The Copenhagen group — led by partial namesake Lukas Forchhammer, 28 — went quadruple-platinum with the wistful anthem, crowning several *Billboard*

airplay charts and peaking at No. 2 on the *Billboard* Hot 100. But not everyone thought it was the obvious runaway hit. "There is nothing in the song to make it a *Billboard* song — and that's why I'm thrilled it got that traction," says Forchhammer. "No matter what comes next, it will be swallowed up by the mother lode. But I'll take a quadruple-platinum single and a gold album in a year!"

STRANG Lukas is a brilliant, thoughtful writer, and he was making a very personal album. We all set a very high bar for what we wanted the band to accomplish.

FORCHHAMMER After meeting with Cameron, I canceled all the other label

meetings. I had an instant connection with the guy. He encouraged us to be broader in our songwriting. My father had just died and I remember he said, "Just like you can't make a memorable record that's only about partying, you can't make one only about your dead father." He was right.

STRANG Radio station KROQ [Los Angeles] was an early believer. *Conan* also took a chance and put them on the show last December after seeing them at a tiny showcase in Hollywood. Things turned a corner in January, after we had them play at our Burbank headquarters for key radio folks. Programmers were raising their hands while Lukas performed, signaling they were in.

—CHRIS WILLMAN