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Sent: Friday, August 1, 2014 12:28 AM
To: ATR-LT3-ASCAP-BMI-Decree-Review <ASCAP-BMI-Decree-Review@ATR.USDOJ.GOV>
Subject: From BMI songwriter Danielle Brisebois regarding Consent Decree

To whom it may concern:

My name is Danielle Brisebois. You may remember me from the original cast of Annie on Broadway, or as Stephanie on the culturally important series All In The Family and Archie Bunkers Place.

Since my days as a child actress, I have devoted myself to something I love so much - songwriting. I have been fortunate enough to write some songs that have touched the masses such as Unwritten (sung by Natasha Bedingfield) and Pocketful Of Sunshine (also sung by Natasha Bedingfield) Currently I have written songs for the indie hit film "Begin Again" including "Lost Stars" sung by Adam Levine.

Those are the songs you may know - but it takes writing 1000's of songs to get to those few gems. That takes time. And a good songwriter knows that you have to devote yourself to the craft. Like any skilled tradesman or woman - you have to devote yourself to something to be good at it. And that means you need to earn a living off it. And not just a living that supports a single person living in a one room apartment - a living that can enable you to have at least a middle class life and send your kids to college one day. Most songwriters are not shrewd business people - they are believers in hope and strive to help those who need that hope feel it even for just a minute. A moment of escape. That is something that is very important - as the founders of Pandora, Spotify, etc know all too well as they are making billions off the hope that songwriters devote themselves to bringing to the world. How is that fair? They are running a business that is dependent on the skills of artisans but don't want to enable the artisans to have a decent life where they can afford to put food on the table. They just want the fruits of their labor but don't want to pay for the seeds.

Music is what feelings sound like.

Feelings are what let us know that we're human, that we're alive. In a world where someone is always at war with someone else - where there is always an "Us" and a "Them" - one thing that unites us is that we are all human, and we all have feelings, and therefore, we all need music.

Music is the closest thing that we have to Time Travel - it has the ability to emotionally transport an anxiety-ridden working man back to a simpler time like his senior prom, or an unraveling woman suffering from Alzheimer's back to her wedding night.

Everyone has a favorite song. A favorite song is like that friend who is always ready to selflessly celebrate a triumphant occasion with you, or who knows exactly what to say at two o'clock in the morning when you're worried and you can't sleep. The reason that your favorite songs even exist at all, is because someone poured their heart, soul, and time into creating them. The person who wrote your favorite song did not get paid to write it.

On a more personal note, music has been my passion - my livelihood - since the seventies when I was a child in New York City. I took dance lessons right across the street from the Brill Building and Colony Records. I used to go into Colony just to hold their sheet music in my hands, and I remember the way it always said "Music and Lyrics by..." at the top.

I also vividly remember 1977, sitting underneath the piano during rehearsals for the original production of the Broadway musical, "Annie," while the show's creators, Martin Charnin and Charles Strouse wrote iconic songs like "Tomorrow." Those lyrics and melodies would go on to become lifelines for people all over the world, and they continue to inspire today.

I have invested my entire life into the notion that music is important. It's something special - a little bit of magic in real life. It has been proven to me over and over and over again that that is the case. So it's a mystery to me why business people have now taken priority over the creators of the music itself - why the individuals who are responsible for giving life to songs in the first place, are being disrespected and forced to take a backseat. If it continues on this way - if things don't change so that songwriters are paid fairly, according to fair market value - then songwriters will no longer be able to afford to write songs. And if songwriters can't afford to write songs, then eventually, new music will cease to exist. It sounds dramatic - unrealistic even, but it is a reality that we as songwriters, have been forced to realize already.

That is why we are pleading with the Department of Justice to assist us in protecting the rest of the world from having to face a world without music.

Thank you for taking the time to hear what I have to say.

And I urge you to try to imagine your daughters sweet sixteen, your first dance at your wedding, your son's Bar Mitzvah, the summer that changed your life, christmas, etc without the songs that you played for those moments. How valuable are those moments to you? Priceless I would imagine. So why would you think it would be ok to treat the co-creators of those moments like they are worthless. Songwriters have a real value in this world. Just try to celebrate something important in your life without a song - I bet you've never done it.

Think about those songs and imagine telling the creators of the songs that helped you create those memories that they can no longer get paid for their work. Would you ask for the dinner for free? The venue? The dress? The Suit? So why the music?

Think about it.

Then do something about it.

Danielle Brisebois