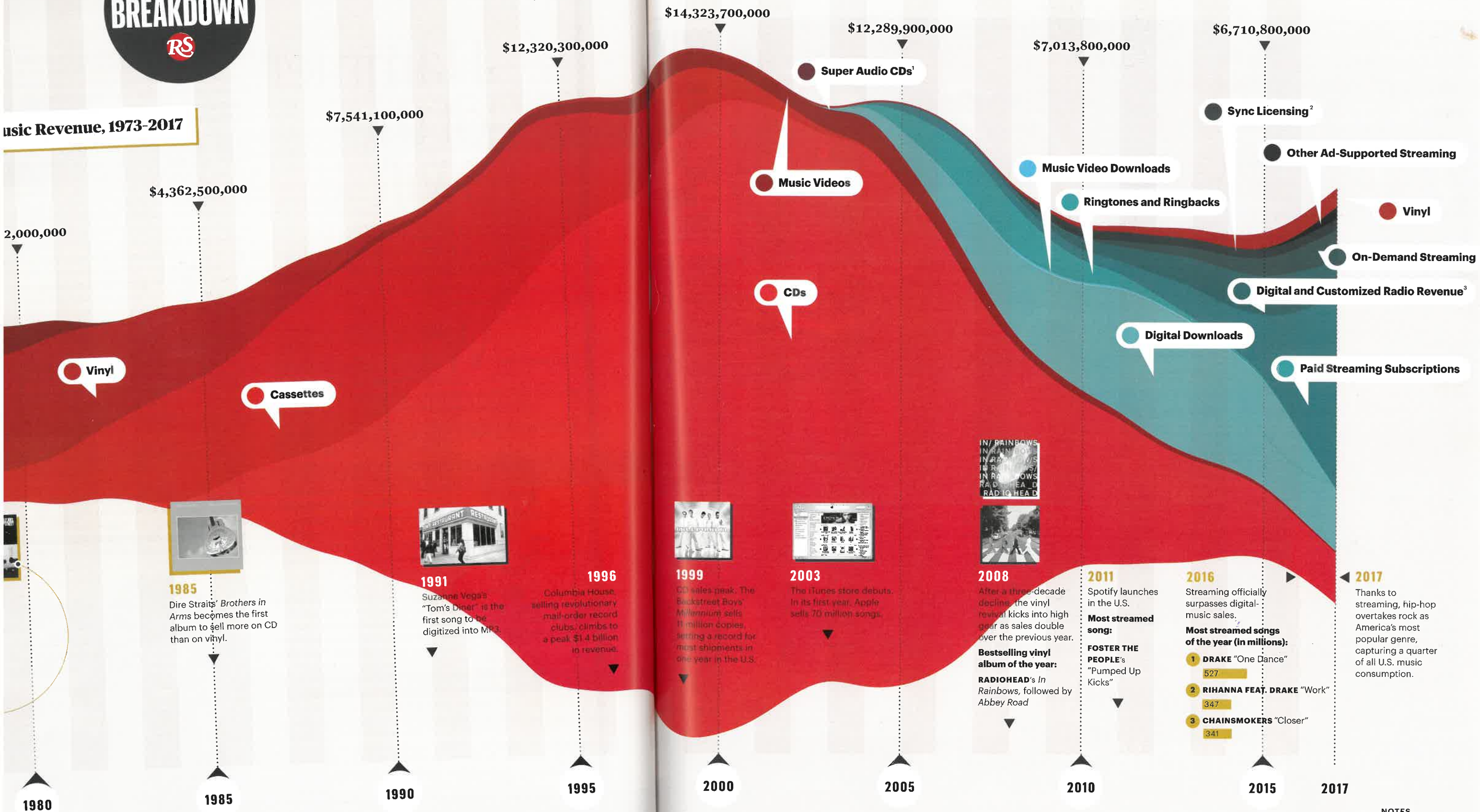


Music Revenue, 1973-2017



1985
Dire Straits' *Brothers in Arms* becomes the first album to sell more on CD than on vinyl.

1991
Suzanne Vega's "Tom's Diner" is the first song to be digitized into MP3.

1996
Columbia House, selling revolutionary mail-order record clubs, climbs to a peak \$1.4 billion in revenue.

1999
CD sales peak. The Backstreet Boys' *Millennium* sells 11 million copies, setting a record for most shipments in one year in the U.S.

2003
The iTunes store debuts. In its first year, Apple sells 70 million songs.

2008
After a three-decade decline, the vinyl revival kicks into high gear as sales double over the previous year.
Bestselling vinyl album of the year:
RADIOHEAD's *In Rainbows*, followed by *Abbey Road*

2011
Spotify launches in the U.S.
Most streamed song:
FOSTER THE PEOPLE's "Pumped Up Kicks"

2016
Streaming officially surpasses digital-music sales.
Most streamed songs of the year (in millions):
1 **DRAKE** "One Dance" 527
2 **RIHANNA FEAT. DRAKE** "Work" 347
3 **CHAINSMOKERS** "Closer" 341

2017
Thanks to streaming, hip-hop overtakes rock as America's most popular genre, capturing a quarter of all U.S. music consumption.

How the Music Biz Came Back from the Dead

story of an industry, in one chart

DON'T TIE YOURSELF to the sinking ship," Thom Yorke warned young artists in 2010. The vessel in question was the music industry: In the U.S. that year, recorded music coughed out \$7 billion in revenue, down from \$14.6 billion barely a decade before. The music business had once gloated about unstoppable growth - but after digital downloads began replacing physical records in the early 2000s, profits started tumbling down. It looked like a storm without end. Then, seemingly out of nowhere, a lifeboat appeared. Despite being painfully slow to embrace digital formats at the turn of the century, the industry went all in on streaming, and in 2016, revenue

rose by a double-digit percentage for the first time in two decades. Last year, it happened again. Services like Spotify, Tidal and Apple Music caught on so well with music lovers - 170 million people use Spotify alone - that they've lifted the industry's profits and confidence alike. Even big tech firms like Amazon and YouTube are getting in on the game by launching their own streaming platforms. Industry revenue in 2017 ticked back up to \$8.7 billion, and Wall Street projects it'll keep booming at the same rate in the next few years. Labels are striking new distribution deals left and right; veteran music analyst Mark Mulligan applauds the moment as one of "clear momentum."

The story of the music industry is a story of rise and fall and rebirth - of artists, formats and empires. Here, we've tried to sum up that tale in one chart. Using data from the Recording Industry Association of America, we've assembled 44 years of U.S. recorded-music revenue, unadjusted for inflation and omitting a few sources that were barely a blip on the industry's balance sheets (like CD-dispensing kiosks). Streaming's reinvigoration of the industry is obvious. But so is the explosion of other new ways people listen to music. "There's no longer a monolithic fan," Josh Friedlander, the RIAA's head of data analysis, says. That bodes extremely well for the business - if it can stay ahead of the curve this time. **AMY X. WANG**

NOTES
1 The Super Audio CD was a short-lived format in the early 2000s that tried, and failed, to supplant the compact disc.
2 Sync revenue comes from usage of music in other media, such as TV, movies and advertising.
3 Fees paid to artists and labels from radio services like Pandora and SiriusXM.