



This file photo taken on February 24, 2017 shows French-Lebanese musician and composer Ibrahim Maalouf speaking while holding the trophy he received for the Best Original Music award for 'Dans les forêts de Sibérie' (In the Forests of Siberia) during the 42nd edition of the Cesar Ceremony at the Salle Pleyel in Paris. — AFP

TRUMPETER MAALOUF ACCUSED OF KISSING 14-YEAR-OLD GIRL

Star trumpeter Ibrahim Maalouf is being investigated by French police for kissing a 14-year-old girl while she was his intern, a justice official said yesterday. The incident dates from 2013 when the Franco-Lebanese musician, who has played with Sting and Elvis Costello, is alleged to have kissed the girl at the end of her internship. Prosecutor Laure Beccau said the inquiry centers on "sexual interference, which is different from sexual assault because it involves the consent of the minor". Maalouf, now 36, is alleged to have sent the secondary school student a text message asking her to send him a picture of herself naked, French daily the Parisien reported.—AFP



In this Sunday file photo, Lou Reed performs at the Lollapalooza music festival, in Chicago. — AP

Colombian stars Shakira, Vives accused of plagiarism

A Madrid court will look into allegations that Colombian superstars Shakira and Carlos Vives plagiarized part of their hugely popular Grammy Latino-winner "La Bicicleta", a court spokesman said Thursday. Music publisher MDRB filed a complaint in a commercial court in Madrid on behalf of Livan Rafael Castellanos, a Cuban singer known as Livam who alleges that the catchy tune copies parts of his own 1997 song called "Yo te quiero tanto" (I love you so). The complaint centres around an intellectual property problem, said the court spokesman.

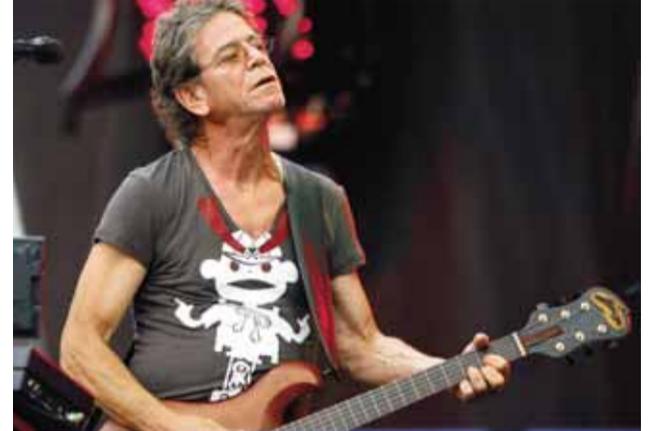
More specifically, it focuses on the songs' choruses, he added—both the melody and the lyrics. Shakira and Vives sing "que te sueno y que te quiero tanto" (I dream of you and love you so much), while Livam says "yo te quiero, yo te quiero tanto" (I love you, I love you so much). The court spokesman said the complaint was against Vives and Shakira—who lives in Spain—as well as producer Andres Castro and Sony Music. This is not the first time that Shakira has come up against allegations of plagiarism. —AFP

Lou Reed archive to go public at New York library

The New York Public Library has obtained the archives of Lou Reed, with plans to make the legendary underground rocker's legacy as open as possible. The city's free-to-the-public library system, best known for its imposing main building on Fifth Avenue, announced the acquisition Thursday on what would have been Reed's 75th birthday. "What better place to have this than in the heart of the city he loved the best?" Reed's widow Laurie Anderson, herself a prominent experimental musician, said in a statement.

"My dream has always been to make Lou's work completely accessible to the public. You don't have to have any special credentials," she said. The Lou Reed Archive includes some 3,600 audio and 1,300 video recordings as well as 300 feet (90 meters) worth of papers and photographs, according to the library. The New York Public Library immediately showcased the new collection with a selection of his notebooks and correspondence going on display to the public for the first time through March 20. Anderson had put together the Lou Reed Archive—which reflects his music but also features his other interests, including tai chi—after the rocker died in 2013 from liver disease.

"It takes a while to see a life as a whole and now that the first step of the archive is complete we can step back and begin to see some dazzling new patterns in the work Lou made in his long and intense life as an artist," she said. Reed revolutionized the music world with The Velvet Underground and later as a solo artist, infusing into rock an aesthetic sensibility from the modern art world. Starting with the 1967 debut album "The Velvet Underground and Nico," which was produced by pop art master Andy Warhol, Reed took up lyricism on subjects such as drug use and sexual fetishism that then were rarely touched by musicians.



In this Sunday file photo, Lou Reed performs at the Lollapalooza music festival, in Chicago. — AP

The establishment of the Lou Reed Archive, whose financial details were not disclosed, comes amid a push to preserve the legacies of major musicians. Bob Dylan last year reached an agreement to keep his archive at the University of Tulsa in Oklahoma, already a hub for the works of pioneering folk singer Woody Guthrie. Bruce Springsteen more recently agreed to set up his archive at Monmouth University near his working-class hometown in New Jersey. — AFP

Ed Sheeran still thinking out loud, mostly about love

Ed Sheeran has spoken of not wanting to be defined by "Thinking Out Loud," his 2014 love song whose viral success made him one of the world's elite pop stars overnight. His strategy to beat "Thinking Out Loud," it turns out, works two ways—writing even more ballads in hopes of outdoing his mega-hit, and also branching out musically in startling new directions. The British songwriter yesterday put out his third album that is forecast to be one of the 2017's top-selling releases "Divide," which, like Sheeran's other works, is named after a mathematical symbol. Through the 16 songs, Sheeran alternates between his now signature sound—acoustic pop with roots in classic soul—and tracks that, by chance or design, may make some of his fans scratch their heads.

The now 26-year-old surprises from the get-go on "Divide" by becoming a rapper. In a narrative style reminiscent of top rappers such as Kendrick Lamar, Sheeran turns his song into a mission statement as he muses on his newfound fame. Rapping of a lifestyle of drinking, smoking and drugs, Sheeran says: "I guess it's a stereotypical day for someone like me / Without a 9-to-5 job or a uni degree / To be caught in the trappings of the industry."

Tapping into Ireland and Ghana

On "Galway Girl" and "Nancy Mulligan," Sheeran veers into Irish traditional music, with the second song an endearing and consciously retro telling of his grandparents' love story. In the album's most unexpected turn, Sheeran sets his guitar pop to Afrobeat rhythms in a collaboration with the Ghanaian-British artist Fuse ODG on "Bibia Be Ye Ye." Fuse ODG wrote on Facebook that Sheeran worked on the song with him in Ghana and that the chorus means "all will be well" in the Twi language. But on much of "Divide," Sheeran focuses on what he has become known for—earnest love songs, now seemingly dedicated to his girlfriend Cherry Seaborn, a friend from his childhood in Suffolk. "Perfect" and "Hearts Don't Break Around Here" are like "Thinking Out Loud" guided by little-adorned guitar and seem equally destined to become favorite wedding first-dance songs. Sheeran closes the album in darker territory with the ballad "Save Myself" as he swaps guitar for piano and wonders, with an angst that turns suicidal, whether his love is required.

Success, but doubts

When it comes to business, at least, Sheeran has every reason to expect success. He has already topped the monthly listener chart on leading streaming service Spotify after releasing the first two singles off "Divide" including "Shape of You," a minimalist dance track about picking up a woman at a bar. The ginger-haired singer, who has admitted that he does not have a typical pop star physique, struggled in his early years. He busked in London and moved to Los Angeles with little plan other than to play open-mic nights.

His career enjoyed a jolt when he was taken under the wing of pop superstar Taylor Swift. "Thinking Out Loud" became the first song played half a billion times on Spotify, although the record has been repeatedly broken. Yet Sheeran acknowledges his doubts. On "What Do I Know?" he recalls his father's warnings not to discuss politics. But Sheeran—who delayed "Divide" so it would not be overshadowed by the US election—notices the tumult around him. "I'm just a boy with a one-man show / No university, no degree," he sings. "Love can change the world in a moment. But what do I know?" — AFP



This cover image released by Atlantic Records shows, 'Divide,' the latest release by Ed Sheeran. — AP