

Please provide a short description of the business

Canyon Records of Phoenix, Arizona, producer and distributor of Native American music, is one of the oldest independent record labels in the music industry as well as one of the oldest cultural institutions in the state of Arizona.

Canyon Records was founded in 1951 by Ray and Mary Boley. For years they produced Native American recordings that were sold primarily to the Native American community. In 1984, Ray Boley made contact with Native American flutist R. Carlos Nakai, who signed on to the label and a new era in Native American music began. Nakai's soothing flute music had significant crossover appeal and led to the expansion of Native American music into mainstream retailing.

In 1992, Boley sold Canyon Records to Robert Doyle, who worked closely with Ray for more than a decade. During the next twenty-three years Robert and his staff expanded the roster, to record over 250 artists, performing traditional, contemporary and new music styles.

Canyon Records has earned the only two Gold Records for Native American music, both by Nakai, for Earth Spirit and Canyon Trilogy. The latter has reached Platinum Record status with sales of over 1,000,000 units. Additionally, Canyon Records albums have received a GRAMMY Award and 32 GRAMMY® nominations in four categories. Canyon Records has won four Indie Awards (the Grammy for independent record labels) and 33 Native American Music Awards (Nammys). Three Canyon Records artists; Nakai, composer James DeMars and musician-instrument maker William Eaton have received the prestigious Arizona Governor's Arts Award.

Describe how the nominee supports the development and growth of the arts in Arizona

Canyon Records has influenced and impacted the arts in Arizona for more than six decades. First and foremost Robert Doyle and Canyon Records have supported its roster of artists, developing, producing and showcasing their recordings, live performances, radio and TV appearances, and live streaming video throughout Arizona, the United States and the world.

Prior to Canyon Records, the few producers of Native American music did so primarily for scholars and academics, often with the intention of documenting the past. Ray Boley and Robert Doyle changed that. From the beginning the Boleys tailored their releases to fit the needs and requests of the Native community. In an era when Native Americans were little understood and often ignored, Canyon Records served as an important commercial outlet and supporter of the music, artists, culture, and community. Robert Doyle shared Ray's vision and further expanded the scope of artistic expression and growth in Native American and new music from the Southwest. His leadership and expertise brought together musicians and composers to record many cross cultural explorations, combining elements of classical, jazz, folk, and other music styles and traditions.

Beyond music, Canyon Records has furthered the growth and development of other art forms as well. The visual art works of Arizona and Native American artists from the U.S., Canada and other countries have been featured on Canyon Records albums, cassettes and CD covers, magazines, books, newspapers, and advertising layouts, throughout its' history. Canyon's website, Facebook and video streaming have created additional mediums for artistic expression.

## Describe the personal involvement of this business' executives and employees

President Robert Doyle (34 yrs), Director of Productions Stephen Butler (20+ yrs), Chief Financial Officer Marty Butler (40+ yrs), Director of Promotions Kathy Norris (19 yrs), and Director of Inventory & Distribution Lisa Minker (17 yrs) make up the present staff at Canyon Records. Their personal involvement and commitment is extraordinary, given the magnitude of the company's operations and accomplishments.

Robert Doyle's leadership and involvement began in 1992 when he bought the company from founders Ray & Mary Boley. From the beginning, Robert's relationship with Canyon's artists has been one of friendship and professional creative support. Going above and beyond, Robert has provided many artists with personal loans, gifts, and even health care. A true renaissance man, his talents as an entrepreneur, composer, photographer, writer, publisher, producer, and sound engineer have all contributed to the company's success.

Beyond job titles listed above, each employee wears many hats, and each is extremely efficient, creative and caring. Ask any Canyon Records artist, friend, associate or customer and you will receive an enthusiastic endorsement in reference to this capable team, often referred to as the 'Canyon Family'.

It's also important to mention extended 'Canyon family' members Jack Miller, Jeff Nagy and Chris Caspers, for their significant artistic contributions. Jack Miller, now retired, engineered and mixed the majority of Canyon's catalog, and is one of the finest recording engineers of our time. Jeff and Chris operate Nile Graphics who have created a majority of the art and graphics found on Canyon's releases.

## Why does the nominee merit the award?

Canyon Records has amassed an impressive resume that has earned the company an international reputation as an Arizona cultural institution and an independent record label icon. Producers Robert Doyle and Stephen Butler along with the Canyon staff have produced and distributed hundreds of recordings that showcase its' artist roster, garnering GRAMMY Awards and Nominations, NAMMY Awards (Native American Music Awards), two RIAA – Certified Gold Records and one Platinum Record, and world-wide sales in the millions of units.

As music writer Alan Diperna proclaimed, "What Motown was to Detroit and what Sun was to Memphis is what Canyon Records has been to Phoenix and the greater Arizona region. And unlike other legacy labels, Canyon is still going strong today."

Through the enormous changes that have occurred in the music and recording industry during the past decade, Canyon Records is one of the few independent labels to survive. This is a testament to the hard work, business tenacity, passion and devotion of Robert Doyle, and the entire Canyon 'family' of employees and business associates.

Canyon's history and presence has allowed hundreds of musical artists to begin and sustain a career. Most Arizonan's at one time or another have experienced the music, artistry and culture of the Canyon Records artists: on recordings, in the concert halls, at art fairs, pow-wows, museums, radio, television and the internet. And this musical impact goes far beyond Arizona. Canyon's music has been broadcast to every continent through radio, the Internet and its distributed recordings.

### **How long has the business supported the arts in Arizona, and what unique contribution has it made to its local community and/or Arizona?**

Founded in 1951, Canyon Records has supported the arts in Arizona for 65 years. Going back to the 1950's and 60's, when Ray Boley served as a trustee of the Heard Museum, Robert Doyle has carried on the legacy of supporting not only the Canyon Records musicians and their recordings and performances, but cultural organizations as well, including the Heard Museum, Heard Indian Fair & Market, Pueblo Grand Museum, Verde Valley Archaeology Center, and the Musical Instrument Museum, among others.

The company is unique, not only in Arizona, but in the world, as a producer and distributor of Native American music. While embracing tradition Robert Doyle and the company have gone further, supporting new explorations and collaborations. Imagine Hip Hop Native style, rock fusion, native jazz, new age music, world chamber music, music for yoga and meditation, Canyon has done it. Imagine a pow-wow drum and singing group teamed up with a symphony orchestra.

Robert commissioned composer James DeMars to create a piece for the Black Lodge Singers that was performed with the ASU Symphony that traveled all the way to Macedonia (sponsored by the US State Department). DeMars, a Governor's Arts Award Recipient, has also composed an inter-cultural opera, 'Guadalupe' and symphonies and concertos for Native American Flute and orchestra performed by the world-renowned R. Carlos Nakai and several major symphony orchestras in the U.S. All of these unique contributions would not have happened without Robert Doyle and Canyon Records.