

Lifestyle

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A visitor watches an installation made by the New York artist Daniel Arsham during the solo exhibition "Connecting Time" in the Modern Contemporary Museum (Moco) in Amsterdam on January 18, 2019. New York artist Daniel Arsham incorporates various disciplines into his work: architecture, design, sculpture, film and fine art. His solo exhibition at the Moco Museum runs from January 18 until September 30, 2019. — AFP

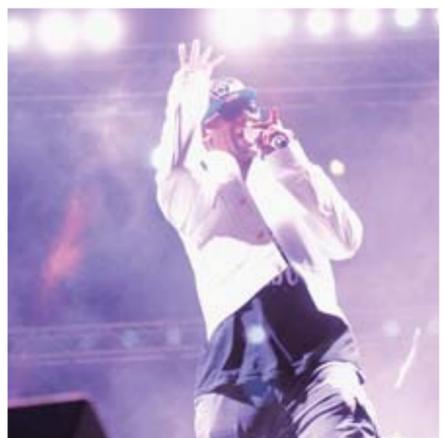
Sony Music drops **Erdogan** attends famed Turkish pianist's concert

US singer R Kelly

Sony Music has called it quits with embattled singer R Kelly, ending his contract with subsidiary RCA after a documentary aired accusing him of repeated cases of sexual abuse, media reports said Friday. While Variety and Billboard reported the breakup, Sony Music did not immediately confirm it when contacted by AFP. One woman who sued R Kelly, accusing him of sexual battery, knowingly infecting her with a sexually transmitted disease and false imprisonment, also says he has threatened her.

Women's rights attorney Gloria Allred told reporters on Monday that her client Faith Rodgers, 20, faced "efforts to intimidate and retaliate" from Kelly after she filed the lawsuit now pending in New York's Supreme Court. And just after Rodgers testified in the documentary "Surviving R Kelly" that aired this month, her lawyers say Kelly and his team created a Facebook page—which the social media giant removed within hours—seeking to discredit accusers including Rodgers, posting "private" photos of her.

But the singer of "I Believe I Can Fly" fame—who recently announced a new album—has seen his reputation more and more seriously hit. Calls for a boycott gathered pace in some measure thanks to the #MeToo and Time's Up movements and via the #MuteRKelly hashtag on Twitter. Spotify announced in May it would drop the singer from its curated "playlists." The last straw was the broadcast in early January of "Surviving R Kelly," a documentary in which several women accused the singer and producer, 52, of having sex with girls under the age of 16, and of having surrounded themselves with women whom he made sex slaves. — AFP



In this file photo R Kelly performs onstage at Which Stage during day 3 of the 2013 Bonnaroo Music & Arts Festival in Manchester, Tennessee. — AFP



This handout picture taken and released by the Turkish presidential press service, shows Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (right) shaking hands with Turkish pianist and composer Fazil Say at the end of his "Trojan Sonata" concert in Ankara. — AFP



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (right) presents a gift to Turkish pianist and composer Fazil Say at the end of his "Trojan Sonata" concert in Ankara. — AFP

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Friday attended a concert by world-renowned Turkish pianist Fazil Say who formerly accused him of being behind a blasphemy case which resulted in the pianist's acquittal. Erdogan, whose broad support base is made up of conservative Muslims, appeared in Say's concert "Trojan Sonata" in the Turkish capital Ankara, a presidential source said. Pictures from the concert revealed Erdogan attended the event with his headscarf-wearing wife Emine. The invitation to Erdogan came after the Turkish leader called the pianist over his mother's death.

Say, an atheist, is not so popular in conservative quarters. In 2016, a Turkish court acquitted him of blasphemy four years after he was prosecuted for Twitter posts that allegedly attacked Muslims. One of which was a retweet which said: "I am not sure if you have also realized it, but all the pricks, low-lives, buffoons, thieves, jesters, they are all Allahists. Is this a paradox?" The case against the charismatic pianist—who is also a renowned composer—set off alarm bells over freedom of expression under the reign of Erdogan's Islamic-rooted Justice and Development Party (AKP).

The government critic also previously accused Erdogan of being behind the case against him and in 2013 he called the charges "politically motivated". Say, 49, has played with orchestras across the world including in Berlin, New York, Tokyo and Israel and regularly gives sold-out solo recitals that often mix Mozart with Turkish traditional sounds. — AFP

Rising French rap star **MHD** charged with murder over deadly gang brawl

French rapper MHD, who shot to fame with a catchy blend of west African music and southern US-style hip-hop, has been charged with murder over a brawl that led to a youth's death, in the latest case to rock the French rap scene. The 24-year-old Parisian, who rose from delivering pizzas to become one of the hottest new rap talents in just three years, denies any involvement in the death of the 23-year-old man, who was stabbed and beaten on July 6. A police source

described the fight involving around a dozen youths as a "settling of scores" between gangs from Paris' 19th district, where Sylla grew up, and the adjacent 10th district.

MHD, whose real name is Mohamed Sylla, "denies any involvement in this brawl," his lawyer Elise Arfi said in a statement sent to AFP after he was charged on Thursday. "His presence at the scene of the incident remains to be proven." MHD, a contraction of Mohamed, is the self-proclaimed inventor of "afro-trap" music. The football-mad performer, who was born in France to Guinean and Senegalese parents, is best known for "Afro Trap Part 3 (Champions League)", a song in praise of Paris Saint-Germain football club, which has been viewed over 100 million times on YouTube.

Most of his music videos are relatively low-budget affairs, shot among the high-rises of the 19th district-of which he sees himself as a youth ambassador—and feature local youths in football jerseys dancing in the street. One of his albums is called "19" and the cover shows him pictured from behind wearing a football jersey marked MHD 19. Sylla prides himself on injecting African sounds and

slang into his lyrics. "I was listening to French rappers who peppered their lyrics with English words because they were inspired by American rappers," he told the Guardian newspaper in 2017. "I did the opposite. I thought, 'Wait a minute, I know Africa more!'" — AFP



In this file photo French band MHD performs in Carhaix-Plouguer, western France, during the second day of the 26th edition of the "Vieilles Charrues" music festival. — AFP