



TABLE OF CONTENTS

4 EYE OF THE STORM

Brands Offering Helping Hands: Support for Up-and-Coming Artists

6 STORM TRACKER

Peach Tree Rascals, Blackpink, and Wolf Alice

7 STORM FORECAST

The Oscars of Fashion: The Met Gala 2021, Governors Ball Music Festival, H.E.R.'s Lights On Festival, and more!

8 STORM WARNING

Our signature countdown of 20 buzzworthy bands and artists on our radar.

ON THE COVER:

Audrey Nuna Photo by Khufu Najee ©2021

ABOUT THE STORM REPORT

STORM = Strategic Tracking Of Relevant Media

The STORM Report is a compilation of up-and-coming bands and artists who are worth watching. Only those showing the most promising potential for future commercial success make it onto our monthly list.

How do we know?

Through correspondence with industry insiders and our own ravenous media consumption, we spend our month gathering names of artists who are "bubbling under." We then extensively vet this information, analyzing an artist's print & digital media coverage, social media growth, sales chart statistics, and various other checks and balances to ensure that our list represents the cream of the crop.

How do we rank?

STORM has a new formula! Artists are now given a score out of 100 that takes several factors of music success into account, including streaming, social media influence, and industry support.

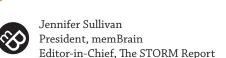
Why do we do it?

Music is the best way to sell products because it creates such a powerful emotional connection with an audience. The STORM Report provides our clients with a tool to harness the music that will be the most relevant to audiences in the near future, thereby becoming very useful for the enhancement of products, promotions, and platforms.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

One of the most rewarding parts of my job is connecting brands to music artists—particularly emerging artists who are on the brink of breaking. And it's no small feat to "make it" as an artist in 2021. Musicians today face a mountain of challenges—low revenue from streaming, expensive tours, cancelled gigs, and more. This issue of the memBrain STORM Report explores brands who have created programs that help young artists with financing, equipment, and marketing support when they need it the most. It's a topic that is near and dear to our hearts and so we hope that it inspires you are much as it's inspired us.

Enjoy!



fer Sulluar

STORM ALUMNI



STORM STAFF

Jennifer Sullivan *Editor-in-Chief*

Maya Coulter Assistant Editor

Grace Slansky Writer/Research

Michael Kyei Boateng. Lauren Farberman, Ava Blanchette Research

Robert Roxby Designer



Brands Offering Helping Hands:

Support for Up-and-Coming Artists

By Grace Slansky

he music industry is changing rapidly, with social media platforms increasingly playing a major role in how new artists are discovered. Digital technologies are powering a boom in bedroom pop, lo-fi styles, and what can only be described as TikTok-driven music careers—essentially removing much of the friction that existed with the music industry gatekeepers of yesteryear. And while it is exciting to have music creation and performance accessible to so many more people, the pool has become saturated with musicians seeking an audience. The recipe for success has changed, making it easier to start the journey but harder to stand out.

When we started The STORM Report in 2012, we were on a mission to elevate the profile of emerging artists for our corporate clients, giving lesser known artists a new platform to be discovered for possible partnership opportunities—and brands early warning radar for artists on the verge of breaking.

Over the past decade, brand partnerships have increasingly become more important to young artists—but like the industry itself, the shape of those partnerships has also evolved. Beyond inclusion of brand logos on banners, stages, and tour buses, or social media posts, companies are utilizing their resources and media dollars to lift up new musicians, giving them a leg up where they need it most.

Although the methods may vary from company to company, there is a steadily growing group of top brands using their influence to support burgeoning musicians, an effort in the name of collaboration and building long-term relationships. This kind of support is not limited to financial backing. Rather, it spans across industries, utilizing a variety of resources at each company's disposal, whether it be a food stipend from a fast food chain or merchandise from a clothing company. Below are some best in class examples of companies who have dedicated resources to supporting emerging artists in recent years.

Instruments are Instrumental

For many artists, the first brand partnership deal that they will get is with a manufacturer of musical instruments and/or gear. And for instrument manufacturers, artists are an important asset—perhaps the most important asset—that they have. Music instrument brands like Gibson, Fender, Cassidy, Lowden, Roland, and Yamaha all have dedicated teams responsible for artist (and now "influencer") relations.

Yamaha has an application process whereby artists can apply to become a designated "Yamaha Artist" or "Yamaha Performing Artist/Clinician" which includes discounts on products, a presence on the brand's "Global Artist Website," and even consultation on future product designs. In exchange, artists are asked to mention and perform with products manufactured by the brand when in public—and keep the brand apprised of their career updates (such as new recordings, tours, publications, etc.).

In early 2019, guitar brand Fender developed a program called "Fender Next" to help emerging artists further their careers. Not only are they providing artists with state of the art gear including amps, guitars, pedals, and more, but they are aiding musicians in creating social media content to help them expand their audience and interaction. Fender is also utilizing its reach across platforms including their own social channels, sponsored spotify playlists, and their digital learning platform, "Fender Play," to give artists maximum reach at a pivotal moment in their careers. Although "Fender Next" is only two years old, it has already seen proven success with alumni like King Princess, Black Pumas, Phoebe Bridgers, and Wallows just to name a few. This year's group features 25 artists from diverse backgrounds with over 50% of participants identifying as female. Fender's commitment to not just elevating voice, but elevating diverse voices is part of what is making this project such a success.

Fuel for the Road

2021 marks the 15th year of Taco Bell's "Feed the Beat" program. As part of the program, the brand provides support for touring artists via Taco Bell gift cards, offers live appearance opportunities, features music in TV spots, and more. They have supported over 1,700 artists and bands since 2006, primarily by offering \$500 gift cards to touring musicians who apply. Over the years, the brand has reportedly given out a total of over \$850,000 in gift cards. With the motto "Free Food. Good Music. That's Feed the Beat," they offer no-strings-attached meal tickets to musicians playing live music out on the road. Less a traditional sponsorship than a no-strings-attached corporate subsidy, the program has become a secret weapon for any act that applies and hopes to turn a small profit from the razor-thin margins inherent to touring small venues and the occasional festival side stage. And while the program was

paused in 2020 for the pandemic, Feed the Beat is back for 2021 just in time for artists to get back on the road later this year.

Kellogg's Pop-Tarts has long partnered with musicians—from emerging artists to the hottest artists in the world, making music a core part of its brand marketing activations. Most recently, the brand has become the presenting sponsor of School Night, one of the most respected live music showcases in the industry. Artists including Lizzo, Billie Eilish, Gary Clark Jr, Dua Lipa, and hundreds more can point to their School Night showcase as one of their first big shows. Now streaming on Twitch and powered by Pop-Tarts, the reach of the showcase is even broader.

And of course you can't talk about touring musicians and not mention beer brands. Perhaps one of the most iconic brands to support music is Pabst Blue Ribbon (PBR), who have made supporting the arts and music community part of their mission for 170+ years. Most recently, PBR launched "Sound Society," which takes an active hand in lifting up emerging artists with a series of pop-up events that advocate for more engagement between musicians and fans. With a goal of celebrating fearless artists across America and seeking out alternative venues, the beneficiaries of this program are not just the musicians, but local communities and venues as well.

Another beer brand that has had an active role in supporting young music artists is Budweiser whose "Boiler Room" program includes a series of events around the globe, from Madrid to India, where electronic music has recently become one of the most popular genres. The company also created "My Way," a six part series of short films that takes a look at some of the amazing artists who have performed at the events globally. The program launched in 2016 and ran successfully for 3 years, with their last programming taking place in 2019. Now that international travel is once again possible, we hope to see some new integration between Budweiser and the global music scene.

Pepsi has long aligned itself with music as part of its strategy to capture the youth market. From it's massive sponsorship deals (i.e. Super Bowl Half-Time Show) to commercial campaigns with everyone from Madonna to Beyonce, the brand has become the pinnacle of brand partnerships for artists for decades. In 2016, the brand opened a club in New York's Meatpacking District with interior design by Lenny Kravitz called the Kola House which showcased how integral music was to the Pepsi experience. Not only for superstars, Pepsi launched "The Sound Drop" to support the launch of a new artist with corresponding content 10 times throughout the calendar year—raising awareness early on for artists like Alessia Cara and Lukas Graham. Although their platform activity has fallen off in the last year, Pepsi have transitioned to an updated YouTube playlist, adding new music throughout 2020.

Fashion for the Future

Chucks (Converse) and Docs (Dr. Martens) have long been part of the music artists' wardrobe and so it's no wonder why both brands have created programs to support artists at every level. One of Converse's most notable initiatives for emerging artists is Converse Rubber Tracks Studio. Launched in 2011 as a single studio in Brooklyn, Converse Rubber Tracks has grown into an incredible program, offering up-and-coming bands recording time in 12 legendary studios. Since launch, many studios have joined, including the iconic Abbey Road Studios, Sunset Sound in Los Angeles, and Tuff Gong, along with three permanent studios in Brooklyn, São Paulo, and Boston. Their facilities have hosted nearly 2,000 bands and counting, with over 99 pop-up studios in 35 different cities. The program not only provides raw resources to the acts in the form of studio time, but education and empowerment as well. The selected acts record alongside a team of experienced producers and sound engineers during one or two-day sessions, with the artists retaining all the rights to their music.

Dr. Martens has likewise created a supportive presence that they've managed to sustain throughout the pandemic, altering their methods but maintaining the end result of uplifting new artists. "Dr. Martens Presents" is the umbrella term for a number of the brand's initiatives including live music and a digital platform for up-and-coming artists. Although there is certainly a skew towards musicians, this is actually an all encompassing program, including artists across mediums. With a podcast component, interview series, workshops across genres, highlighted artists on their website, and grants available, this is one of the most comprehensive displays of support we have seen.

Created in 2015, The Levi's Music Project brings together two core brand tenants for the Levi's brand—giving back never goes out of style and a heritage in music. The initiative starts with funding for music education, community-based programs,

and experiences with industry-leading musicians for the next generation, donating instruments, building facilities, and funding more teachers—but it is celebrated well beyond. It features content that is promoted by artists to their fans on social media, and press that highlights the partnerships. The program is replicated globally with toolkits that are provided to regional teams to activate locally. From the Levi's Music Prize in Australia (which has given over \$500K to artists and bands since joining forces with BIGSOUND in 2017) to a partnership with Justin Timberlake that saw the opening of a state-of-theart songwriting lab at Stax Music Academy in Memphis in 2019, Levi's initiative has completed 15+ projects in seven countries around the world.

But not every company is at Converse or Levi's scale. Smaller companies have also found ways to aid emerging musicians. Thread Society, a clothing company that sources premium fabrics from ethical providers around the world, has ties to musicians and artists through the world of merchandise. Selling merch can be extremely profitable for established musicians, but an expensive undertaking for those just getting started. Thread Society has sponsored Charlotte, North Carolina's concert planning and promotion company and sent out countless influence packages, helping many to get their start with their own personalized apparel. They have made it clear that they plan to stay involved in the music scene, especially on a local level, and are open to submitted partnership ideas.

Looking Forward

Music over-indexes across every audience group around the globe. By linking music with brand strategy, it becomes no longer a nice-to-have but a critical tool in building cultural relevance and driving tangible, effective business results. And while there are numerous brands dedicating marketing and media dollars to the benefit of emerging artists as micro-influencers and to invest in the long-term loyalty of future superstars, there is still room for more companies to step up and support.



Check out our issue's carefully curated playlists by clicking below







STORM TRACKER

Tracking Our STORM Report Alumni!

PEACH TREE RASCALS

(STORM No. 67)

Despite their viral success on TikTok and acclaim for their genre-bending approach to indie-pop, the **Peach Tree Rascals**' headline tour was cancelled in 2020 due to the pandemic—making their performance at Lollapalooza last month their first-ever live show. Not a bad way to start!



BLACKPINK

(STORM No. 63)

STORM alumni **Blackpink** released a new movie, *BLACKPINK THE MOVIE* earlier this month just in time for the 5th anniversary of the group's formation. They have also recently joined forces with Adidas to launch a new activewear collection called "R.Y.V." which stands for the empowering phrase, "raise your voice." The group will be part of Adidas Member's Week starting August 23rd.



WOLF ALICE

(STORM No. 10)

NME recently referred to STORM alumni **Wolf Alice**'s latest album *Blue Weekend* "another stone-called masterpiece that further cements Wolf Alice's place at the very peak of British music." Nominated for another Mercury Prize this year (they won it in 2018), Wolf Alice continues to be one of our favorite new artists of the past decade. The band have announced they are embarking on a North American tour this fall. Hope to see you there!

STORM FORECAST

Events And Happenings For Your Radar

THE OSCARS OF FASHION: THE MET GALA 2021

September 13

The annual Met Gala will be held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York on September 13th. This year's theme is the first part of a two-part series on American fashion set to continue in 2022. Part 1 is called, "In America: A Lexicon of Fashion," with Timothée Chalamet, Billie Eilish, Amanda Gorman, and Naomi Osaka serving as co-chairs for the event, and Tom Ford, Instagram's Adam Mosseri, and Anna Wintour serving as the honorary chairs.

GOVERNORS BALL MUSIC FESTIVAL

September 24-26

The Governors Ball Music Festival is celebrating the event's 10th anniversary this year, with the three-day festival to be held at Citi Field in New York City. This year's headliners are Billie Eilish, A\$AP Rocky, J Balvin, and Post Malone, with other featured artists including Megan Thee Stallion, 21 Savage, and Leon Bridges.

H.E.R.'S LIGHTS ON FESTIVAL

September 18-19 (Bay Area) October 21-22 (Brooklyn)

Curated by musical artist H.E.R., the twopart Lights On Festival will first take place in Concord, CA, with the event's East Coast counterpart to be held in Brooklyn, NY. In Concord, festival-goers can look forward to performances by Erykah Badu, Bryson Tiller, and Ari Lennox. The Brooklyn event will feature artists such as Chloe Bailey and Victoria Monét. Tickets for both locations are on sale now.

ROLLING LOUD FESTIVAL

October 28-30

After making a post-pandemic return this summer in Miami, the music festival Rolling Loud is making its next stop in New York City's Citi Center. The event is headlined by 50 Cent, J.Cole, and Travis Scott, with a special guest Bobby Shmurda. Rolling Loud will make its next stop in Los Angeles this December.

INSOMNIAC'S ESCAPE HALLOWEEN

October 29-30

Insomniac is hosting Escape Halloween in San Bernardino, California for lovers of Halloween and EDM alike. Escape Halloween is the nation's largest Halloween dance music festival featuring Halloween themed stages and art installations. Some of the biggest names in dance music are performing such as The Chainsmokers, Zedd, and DJ Snake.







20-year-old English singer and songwriter Sarah Faith Griffiths (known professionally as Griff) has gained immense popularity in the past year after Taylor Swift reposted her cover of "Exile." Griff's debut single "Mirror Talk," full of emotional, honest and uplifting pop lyrics, was released immediately after her school's final exams. Griff has her first tour through her home, the U.K., and the rest of Europe in the works.

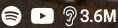
Photo by Zachary Chick ©2021





Emilia Mernes, stage name Emilia, is an Argentine singer, songwriter, dancer, model and actress signed to Sony Latin. Formerly the lead singer of the group Rombia, Emily is considered a rising star in Latin Music known for writing and performing fresh tracks with cool urban beats. Her latest single, "Como Si No Importara" has over 22M streams on Spotify. She has collaborated with popular Latin artists such as Ana Mena and Nio Garcia, and is managed by Walter Kolm Entertainment (the same as Maluma). Photo provided by management ©2021

6 JOSHUA BASSETT



✓ 252K f 31K © 2.9M Nindie, Pop Shawn Mendes, Harry Styles Warner Records

Joshua Bassett stars in High School Musical: The Musical: The Series, and has shown he is just as talented in singing as he is in acting. Joshua is authentically himself, after coming out as a member of the LGBTQ+ community this year after being at the center of the news due to his relationship with his co-star, Olivia Rodriguo. Bassett channels his strong vocals and deep emotions into his popular singles such as "Lie Lie Lie" and his upcoming release "Never." Photo by Pierre Crosby ©2021











■ ■ 91.1M

🗾 11.5K f 18.8K 🎯 38K 🚺 Punk, Rap, Rock 🗾 PVRIS, Imagine Dragons 📀 Creature Records

Based out of Brighton, Yonaka is a British rock band. Their music combines heavy riffs and high energy vocals, and the band brings this energy to stage, as they are known for their explosive live shows. This fall they are kicking off a European tour. Photo by Dave East ©2021

💟 3.3K 📑 3.4K 🎯 11K 🚺 Dance/Electronic 🎜 Robin S, Thea Austin 📀 3V Method Records

Multi-genre artist Kaleena Zanders brings an explosive stage presence to her shows, earning comparisons to '90s House vocalists like CeCe Peniston, Robin S and even Whitney Houston. A singer, songwriter, and producer, Kaleena has a combined 100M Spotify streams and has been the cover star for Spotify's Mint and Dance Rising playlists. By fearlessly putting social and political issues at the forefront of her music, Kaleena hopes to create music reflective of its time and reach her audience on a deeper level. Photo from 3vmethod ©2021



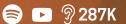












💆 2.3K 📑 973 🎯 10.5K 🜒 Pop 🎜 Ariana Grande, Julia Michaels 📀 3V Method Records

Los Angeles-based pop singer/songwriter OSTON is another TikTok success story. After posting her song "Lie About You" on the platform, she received over 2M views - going viral almost immediately. The song then accumulated 1M global streams in its first month across streaming platforms. OSTON has since appeared on Songland, performed at Lollapalooza, released her new EP Am I Talking Too Much?, and is going on tour with Jordy.

Photo by Lauren Nieves ©2021





🗾 505 🖪 1.7K 🔘 6K 🚺 Indie, Bedroom Pop 🎜 Olivia Rodrigo, Billie Eilish 💿 Every Eight Hours

Emilia Ali's music can be described as indie bedroom pop, reminiscent of Billie Eilish. Her latest EP *Girls Like You* features soft vocals and gentle beats with lyrics relatable to young girls. Photo by Jasmine Oh ©2020

🗾 1.3K f 2.9K 🎯 15.1K 📢 Bedroom Pop, Alt-Rap 🎜 PRETTYMUCH, X 📀 Hollywood Records

Lady Blackbird's music quickly energizes her listeners with the help of her soulful vocals and emotional intensity. She has been called "The Grace Jones of Jazz" and is a recent signee of BMG. She is set to release her debut album Black Acid Soul in September, featuring her fresh take on jazz, with the artist's bold, unmistakable voice. Photo by Christine Solomon ©2021





music. Her voice is deep and rich, and her music is filled with vulnerable and honest lyrics, as her songs talk about her experiences with selfdiscovery and growing up. Photo by Alexandra Waespi ©2020

🗾 2.3K <mark>f</mark> 6.3K 🤘 6.5K 🚺 Rock, Post-Punk 🔼 CAKE, Talking Heads 📀 Exact Truth Punk is certainly making a comeback, and the Nottingham based band Do Nothing expertly mixes Hip Hop and Punk with their strong vocals and steady rock beats. The band has gained popularity in the last year from putting on energetic live shows in their hometown, and this fall they are kicking off a U.K tour to promote the release of their first EP, Glueland. Photo from Flat Cap Music ©2021



