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5 RISING MUSIC ARTISTS GEN Z & MILLENNIAL FANS ARE MAKING FAMOUS

NEW ARTISTS ARE TAKING OVER THE TOP 40 AS GEN Z & MILLENNIALS DISCOVER MUSIC ON YOUTUBE AND STREAMING PLATFORMS...

Gone are the days when radio jockeys curated tastes. In our [Music Topline Report](#), 83% of 13-36-year-olds agreed “they play the same songs too much on the radio so I prefer to listen to music online.” These days, young music listeners have the entire internet to discover music, letting them digitally travel the world to find global bands and boost little-known acts via their dedicated listenership. Social media, YouTube, and suggestions from streaming services were all top ways that Gen Z and Millennials told us that they discover new music artists. Spotify was far-and-away young listeners go-to platform for listening to music regularly, but YouTube is looking to close the gap. They recently rolled out a service to [take over more](#) of Millennials’ and Gen Z’s listening time: YouTube Music, which includes ad-free music and downloads. Some are even looking to video games to find the next artist to add to their playlists; Rockstar estimates that *Grand Theft Auto* gamers have listened to 75 billion minutes of music on *GTA Online*, where players can tune in to 18 unique radio stations or invite their friends to digital clubs and bars (some are even player-run) to see their favorite DJs, according to [Rolling Stone](#).

As a result of music discovery shifting into the hands of anyone with internet access, the artists that rise to the top are changing. For one thing, listening no longer has borders: K-Pop has broken onto the U.S. charts. BTS’s record-breaking success paved the way for global genres to gain ground in the U.S, and specifically for other K-Pop bands and conventions (Kcon had 125,000 attendees this year) to rise. DJ Steve Aoki, who has collaborated with the [Millennial and Gen Z-favorite group](#), told [Rolling Stone](#) that streaming is driving the globalization of music by giving fans “such a large voice.” Fans today discover their favorite music via social media, YouTube, Spotify, and more, and use their listening power to propel acts to the top. For instance, organized fan campaigns that involved distributing U.S. Spotify logins internationally helped BTS rack up U.S. streams, putting them on the Billboard charts and on mainstream listeners’ radars.

We’ve put together a list of 5 unlikely artists that are topping the charts and changing the way we think about Top 40 music today:

1. Bhad Bhabie

Bhad Bhabie rose to fame for telling Dr. Phil, “cash me outside, how ‘bout dah?,” a saying that spiraled into [a viral song](#) and meme. But unlike many viral fame subjects, the 15-year-old rapper capitalized on the moment, turning her 15 minutes of fame into a full-fledged rap career. To be more accurate, [Hot New Hip Hop reports](#) that her manager had the idea to leverage her “plucky charm” to help her rise through the hip hop ranks. Now, Bhad Bhabie collaborates with the best of them, from YG to Ty Dolla \$ign. She has over 15.6 million Instagram followers, and regularly racks up millions of YouTube views. Her single "[Gucci Flip Flops](#)" currently has over 95 million views.

2. Blackpink

We couldn’t have a rising artists list without a K-Pop group. BTS may have paved the way, but Blackpink is hot on their heels, and is breaking records of their own. The all-female group is the

highest-ranked female Korean act ever, debuting at No. 40 on the Billboard 200. [According to Vulture](#), their music video, “Ddu-du Ddu-du,” was not only the most-viewed Korean music video within 24 hours of coming out but was second only to Taylor Swift’s “Look What You Made Me Do.” (BTS’s single “Idol” took back the title recently.) Part of the appeal is that the group is intentionally global, featuring a Korean-New Zealander and a Thai member; together, the act speaks four languages: Thai, Korean, English, and Japanese.

3. Ninja Sex Party

Ninja Sex Party is a band born on YouTube. [The Washington Post reports](#) that they’ve built a cult following by creating “inside jokes” that only their devoted fans are in on. The quirky band has amassed over 1.1 million subscribers on YouTube and millions of more listens on Spotify, their top music video has 12 million views, and their [Next Level Fandom](#) sings every word at their sold-out shows. Now, their appeal is going mainstream: Ninja Sex Party’s latest album was number two on Billboard’s rock album chart this year, beating out Imagine Dragons.

4. City Girls

This female rap duo can thank HBO show *Insecure* for some of its fast rise to fame. The show’s creator Issa Rae even went so far as to say that their music had “come to ‘really define’ its latest episodes,” [paraphrases The Cut](#). City Girls also saw an upswing in popularity when they were featured in Drake’s hit song “In My Feelings,” which sparked a [viral dance challenge](#). They were discovered just last year amidst difficult circumstances, and City Girls stands by feminist values. One of the execs who discovered them explains, “Miami and JT, they’re the voice for women who have voices, but don’t get to use them. They’re like, Oh I got a voice? Then we gon’ really let them have it.”

5. Lauren Daigle

Lauren Daigle comes from an oft-overlooked genre: Christian music. The singer’s most recent album, *Look Up Child*, sold over 115,000 units, which places it among the ranks of other top artists. In fact, it only fell behind Paul McCartney and Eminem’s albums, and was ahead of Drake, Ariana Grande, and others. But while most of the artists we’ve listed here can thank non-traditional listening for their fame, [Rolling Stone reports](#) that Daigle’s albums mostly sell physical copies (103,000 of the 115,000 mentioned above). Her success shows that Christian music is still making waves in the music industry.

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