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VIRTUAL MUSIC FESTIVALS & 3 OTHER WAYS YOUNG GAMERS ARE CHANGING MUSIC'S FUTURE

GAMING IS INVADING EVERY ASPECT OF GEN Z'S & MILLENNIALS' LIVES—AND THE MUSIC THEY LISTEN TO (AND HOW THEY LISTEN TO IT) IS NO EXCEPTION...

Gaming takes up nearly as much of young consumers' time as watching TV. (Let that sink in.) So, the impact of this shift in their entertainment consumption on other industries can't be overestimated. They're buying fashion based on their favorite titles ([ahem, Moschino's *The Sims*-inspired line](#)), and they've been watching movies that star their digital idols for ages (lest we forget that *Tomb Raider* was a game before Angelina Jolie became Lara Croft).

But the music industry is where gaming's impact is starting to level up beyond gamers' wildest, most pixelated dreams. Video game soundtracks have millions of views on YouTube ([like this one](#)), the nostalgic favorite *Twisted Metal* has [inspired album covers](#), Nicki Minaj has [an entire song](#) celebrating *Street Fighter* character Chun-Li, The Weeknd just became [a major investor](#) in the esports organization OverActive Media, and the list goes on...

This new cultural conversation goes both ways: artists are drawing inspiration from the digital world, but they're also stepping into that world to meet young listeners where they're spending so much time. Video games have become a digital stage for stars, a place where artists debut new tracks and play virtual gigs that draw much bigger audiences than any IRL experience could. In our [State of Gaming](#) report, we found that 28% of 13-36-year-old gamers say that the titles they play have influenced the music they listen to, 35% have learned about music from games, and 29% have listened to a new artist they discovered in the digital world. Below, we break down four times young gamers gave us a glimpse at what the video game-influenced future of music might look like:

Fortnite's Livestreamed Concert

According to [Rolling Stone](#), over 10.7 million users tuned in at the same time for Marshmello's virtual *Fortnite* concert—that number is the equivalent of the entire population of New York City, and is three times bigger than the total turnout of the most popular concert ever. [BBC](#) reports that for ten minutes, DJ Marshmello spun his hits for a live audience of [young gamers](#) whose avatars danced along, bounced giant beach balls, and were catapulted into the air. Since the event, the set has racked up over 34 million views on Marshmello's YouTube channel, and has paved the way for similar livestreamed events to flood the gaming space. In-game concerts have been attempted before, as early as Duran Duran's *Second Life* universe launch in 2011, but the tech wasn't there to support the scale. Now, it is, and it's changing the music world.

Red Dead Redemption 2's Unexpected Song Drop

Famed R&B artist D'Angelo has a second hobby behind music: playing video games. Rockstar Games found that out when the artist's team approached the company about his interest in *Red Dead Redemption 2*, a title that has since made a name for itself by raking in an unheard-of amount revenue (more than any other entertainment under Sony's umbrella). But the artist wasn't even talking about music, yet—he would just come to the Rockstar Games office to play the in-development title for hours at a time. [Rolling Stone](#) reports that as the

game came along, D'Angelo agreed to collaborate on a song for the soundtrack. That song "Unshaken" became an unexpected hit when the game debuted, with players posting the bootlegged track via in-game footage. At first, the song was only accessible through the game, but now, videos of the recorded gameplay have racked up [millions of views](#)—showing how successfully an artist can use a popular game to debut new music.

Grand Theft Auto's Virtual Clubs

Grand Theft Auto gamers are going to digital clubs to listen to live DJ sets, reports [Rolling Stone](#). *GTA Online* isn't new to being a source of music discovery for gamers. Rockstar estimates that gamers have listened to 75 billion minutes of music on *GTA Online*, where players can tune in to 18 unique radio stations. But last summer, they added a new feature into the mix called "After Hours." [The Guardian](#) reports that the new feature launched with the announcement of four real-life DJs getting digital residencies within the game: Solomun, Dixon, The Black Madonna, and Tale of Us. *GTA* used motion-capture technology to put the DJs into the game, and added a digital recreation of a massive Los Angeles club for them to play in. Users can invite their friends to different digital clubs and bars (some are even player-run) to see their favorite DJs and listen to music in general.

Minecraft's Music Festivals

After seeing *Fortnite*'s massive success with their Marshmello concert, *Minecraft* took the concept to the next level. Enter: Coalchella, 21-year-old Max Schramp's first attempt to create an online music festival in *Minecraft*. [PC Gamer](#) reports the venture had a rocky start with tons of technical difficulties but still attracted over 2,600 virtual attendees and 27,000 listeners on Mixlr. Their next pun-intended attempt, Fire Festival, went more smoothly. [Noisey](#) called it "the best new music festival," and the lineup included big names like Charli XCX and Hudson Mohawke. It had two stages, an art gallery featuring IRL artists' scanned-in work, and drew in more than double the audience of the first attempt within the first few minutes. Most recently, a new player in the space URL Events ([headed by *The Walking Dead*'s Chandler Riggs](#)) hosted Pixel Fest, reports [Your EDM](#)—a sign that we should expect to see more in-game music festivals in time.

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