

FENDER ARTIST PLAYBOOK

A

The future is
in our hands.



BY ARI HERSTAND
ILLUSTRATIONS & DESIGN BY MORTIS STUDIO

INTERO

WHAT A YEAR

It's safe to say that 2020 was unlike any year in the history of the music industry. With the entire live music business shut down, artists got creative in how to engage with their fans and explore new revenue possibilities.

TikTok absolutely exploded in 2020 and continues to drive the cultural conversation. Livestreaming became a staple in every artists' performance arsenal with platforms like Twitch allowing emerging artists to build a fanbase and monetize that audience, while ticketed livestreams enabled more established artists to make quite a bit of money playing from home. In early 2021, NFTs consumed the conversation. Artists most people had never heard of earned millions on their NFT drops. And Clubhouse gave artists a platform to find an audience, without the stress of video.

It's safe to say that nearly every artist used the pandemic to reconnect with their artist self and explore possibilities previously untouched. Artists from all walks of life not only released a lot of music, but many artists actually launched their careers from the confines of their bedrooms.

One thing that has been abundantly clear this past year is that there is no longer one way to "make it" in the new music business. Quite frankly, there are as many ways to make a music career happen as there are musicians.

That is incredibly exciting, while also insanely daunting. Yes, artists theoretically can make a music career happen on their own, by themselves, with merely their phone, a decent mic and some wifi. But where to start? Who to engage for assistance? How much time and money does it take?

And 'making it' has completely been redefined. On the [New Music Business podcast](#), the final question I ask every guest is: What does it mean to you to 'make it' in the new music business. From artist managers and Grammy winners to music supervisors and influencer agents, the common theme is that 'making it' is merely defined as making a living doing what you love. Not getting signed. Not going viral. Not getting a billion streams. Simply, making a living doing what you love.

That's a bit more comforting.



That being said, there are key focal points in
2021 that I'm going to discuss
and explore with you in this

PLAYBOOK

**We are going to cover
4 specific avenues:**

1
**SOCIAL
MEDIA**

2
LIVESTREAMING

3
**RELEASE
STRATEGY**

4
**DIGITAL
MARKETING**





Fender Next Artist Stand Atlantic by Brandon Lung

Before we dig into these topics in depth, the most important thing that you can do - no matter where you're at in your career - is define your goals. Whether you're just about to release your first single or you've been at it for decades, you need to set goals so you know where you're heading.

With so many possible avenues to pursue in the new music business, there are no clear pathways to success. Every artist is different. Every artist has different strengths and weaknesses. Every artist has different dreams and desires.

There is no one way to make a music career happen. So! You need to make your way happen, in the way that only you can.

How do you do this?

Start with defining some SMART goals:

Specific
Measureable
Achievable
Realistic
Timebound



"I want to make a living with music" is not a **SMART** goal. Sure, we all do. But that kind of 'goal' gives you no guidance. An example of a SMART goal is: "I want to play a sold out show at the Echo in 6 months."

Specific: Concretely defines what you're aiming for: sell out a venue.

Measurable: *That's 250 tickets*

Achievable: *Very possible*

Realistic: *If you've never played a show in LA before, have no online following or traction, selling 250 tickets in 6 months is not realistic. If you've played LA a bunch and your previous show sold 100 tickets and you're starting to gain some traction online, then sure, 250 tickets is not that far fetched.*

Timebound: *6 months.*

Another example of a SMART goal is: "I want to get 1 million streams on Spotify in 5 months" or "I want to release my 5-song EP in 4 months" or "I want to make \$4,000/month livestreaming in 3 months" Once you know what you are aiming for, then you can reverse engineer it.

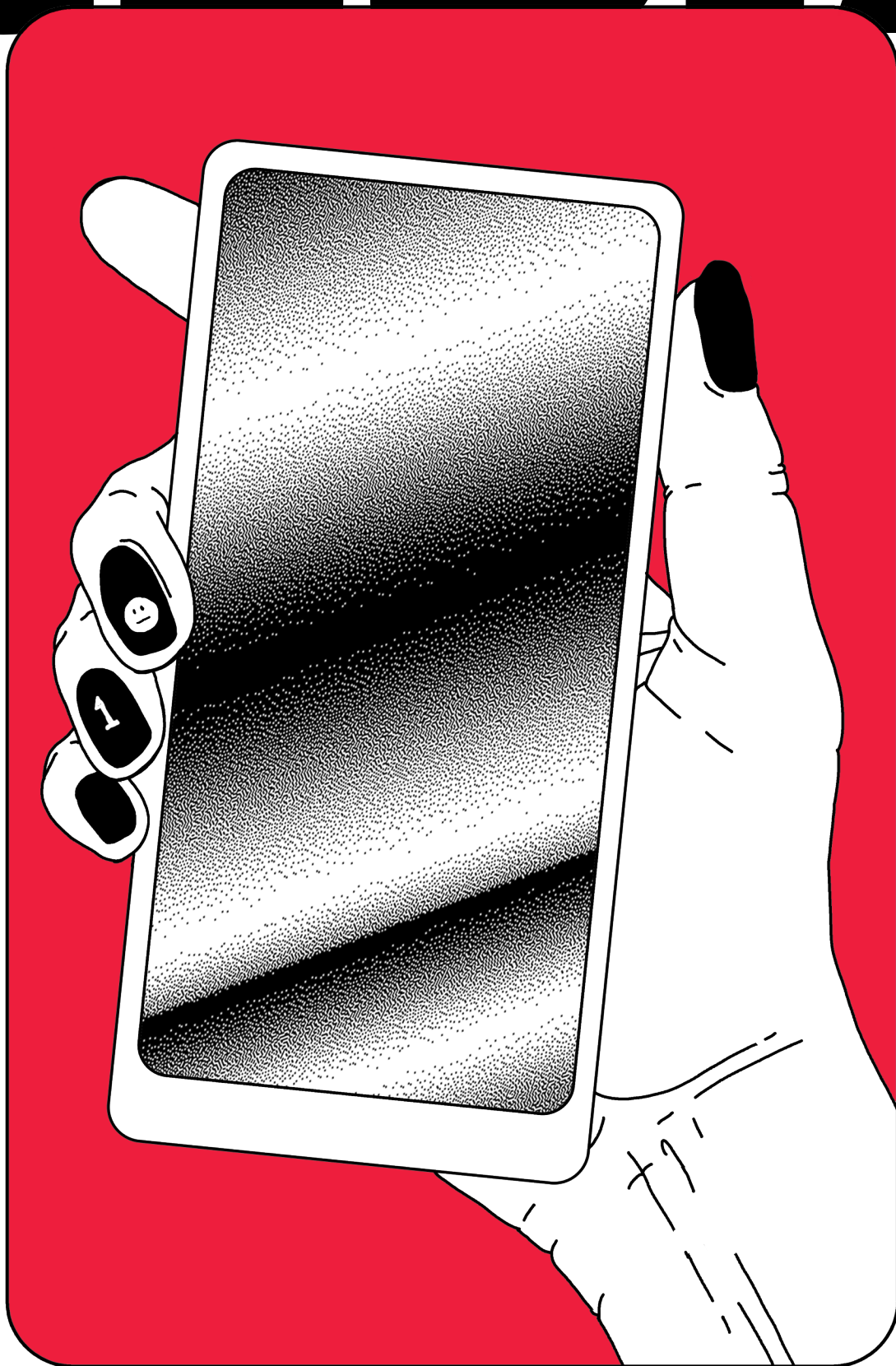
Using our Echo example, to reverse engineer this, it goes something like: find out who books the Echo. See what kinds of shows are on their calendar. Do you know any of those bands? If so, can you hop on any of those bills? Do you want to do a headline show or a co-bill? Do you have any connections to the talent buyer? If not, track down their email. Use Ari's perfect cold email approach from [How To Make It in the New Music Business](#) to reach out and get some holds. Once the date is locked, plan out your promotional calendar so every day you are working on selling 250 tickets.

Reverse engineer. March confidently in that direction. The number one reason why artists fail is not because they aren't talented. It's because they give up too soon. They try something once or twice, it doesn't bring them the desired results, so they say it doesn't work, then they move on to something else. Very few things work the first couple times you try.

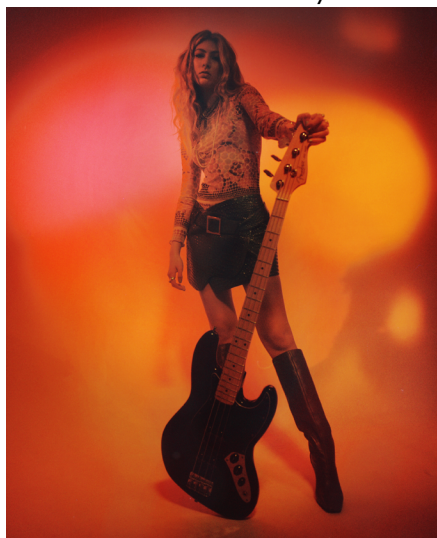
I see it all the time. Someone (who doesn't know anything about anything) says "oh you gotta be on TikTok! That's how you're going to make it." So you post a couple TikToks, get a handful of views, give up and say TikTok doesn't work and move on. Or "you gotta get on Twitch - this artist is making \$5K/month on there." So you go live on Twitch a couple times and play to no one, throw your hands up and say "Twitch doesn't work" and move on to try something else.

It takes people hundreds of tries to get it right sometimes. It takes tenacity and a willingness to try and fail. Artists use this start and stop approach when they don't know what they are aiming for. So set your SMART goals and dig in.

SOCIAL MEDIA



One thing that 2021 has brought with it, besides the reopening of live music venues (hooray!) is TikTok as the most dominant social media platform for the under 30 (ahem, 25) audience. We've all heard of the monster successes that took off from TikTok like Lil Nas X, Megan Thee Stallion, Olivia Rodrigo and Doja Cat, but maybe you didn't hear about all of the independent artists like Ritt Momney, Blu DeTiger, and Beach Bunny who all found an impressive audience via TikTok recently.



Fender Next Artist Blu De Tiger by Sophie Hur

When I interviewed Jack Rutter (Ritt Momney) on the [New Music Business podcast](#), he discussed how his success on TikTok got him an innovative licensing deal with Disruptor Records (under Columbia), but also how the "numbers" have been tough for personal perspective. Numbers don't feel the same as human beings. Even someone like him - with nearly a half a billion streams - still feels like he needs more. When you play the numbers game, you're never going to win.

David Potter of Stand Atlantic offered similar perspective [on the New Music Business podcast](#) when I had him on. He revealed how their numbers across the platforms aren't that impressive, but they can sell tickets. They have hard core fans who show up. He lamented how the pandemic has shifted their focus from connecting with their fans IRL (at a concert) to solely through the screen. And of course, it doesn't hit nearly as hard.

So as we get into this social media section, try to maintain this perspective and always, always, always remember your WHY. Why are you in music? It ain't for the numbers. Or, rather, it shouldn't be. What is your ultimate WHY?

Ok, back to TikTok!

Now, if you're an artist over 30, you're probably pushing back hard right now "Ari! Do I seriously have to get on yet another social media app? I'm just starting to figure out Instagram! COME ON!" Ok, deep breath. The answer is, no. Well, maybe.

It's all about your goals (refer to the intro). Many goals can be reached without TikTok. And honestly, many songs that blow up on TikTok are done so without the artist even being on the platform ([see Ricky Montgomery on the New Music Business podcast](#)). There are ways around this (see influencer marketing later on).

How long will TikTok be around? No one knows. Will it go the way of Vine? Possibly. Or will it be the next Instagram? Nobody knows at this point.



Fender Next Artist Ritt Momney by Adam Alonzo

The thing to focus on with social media in 2021 - and every year that follows - is you want to be where your fans are. Of course, you're asking yourself "what if I don't know where my fans are?" Sure, then experiment on all of the social platforms and see where you're getting the best response. If you're targeting an over 50 crowd, Facebook and YouTube should be your home. If your audience is 30-50, Instagram and YouTube are your bread and butter. If your audience is under 30, TikTok and Instagram are your bag.

This isn't to say that you need to ignore the others. Or even to say that you must focus all your attention on these platforms. This is a rough and dirty state of social media, 2021 edition.

But, above all, you need to do what inspires you. You're a musician, not a social media influencer. Remember that. You didn't get into music to have a million Instagram followers. Or TikTok Likes. You got into music to, I'm assuming, build a sustainable career playing music.

There are many pathways to this end. This is why setting up your SMART goals are so important.

If you despise TikTok, then no matter how hard you try to push it, you're not going to succeed at it. The internet sees through inauthenticity on social media very easily. You have to do what inspires you. So even if your audience is under 30, you could simply focus your posting efforts to Instagram and hire your younger cousin to run your TikTok (pay them in pizza and free tickets or whatever).

At the end of the day, it's not about crushing the social media algorithm. It's about building lifelong fans.

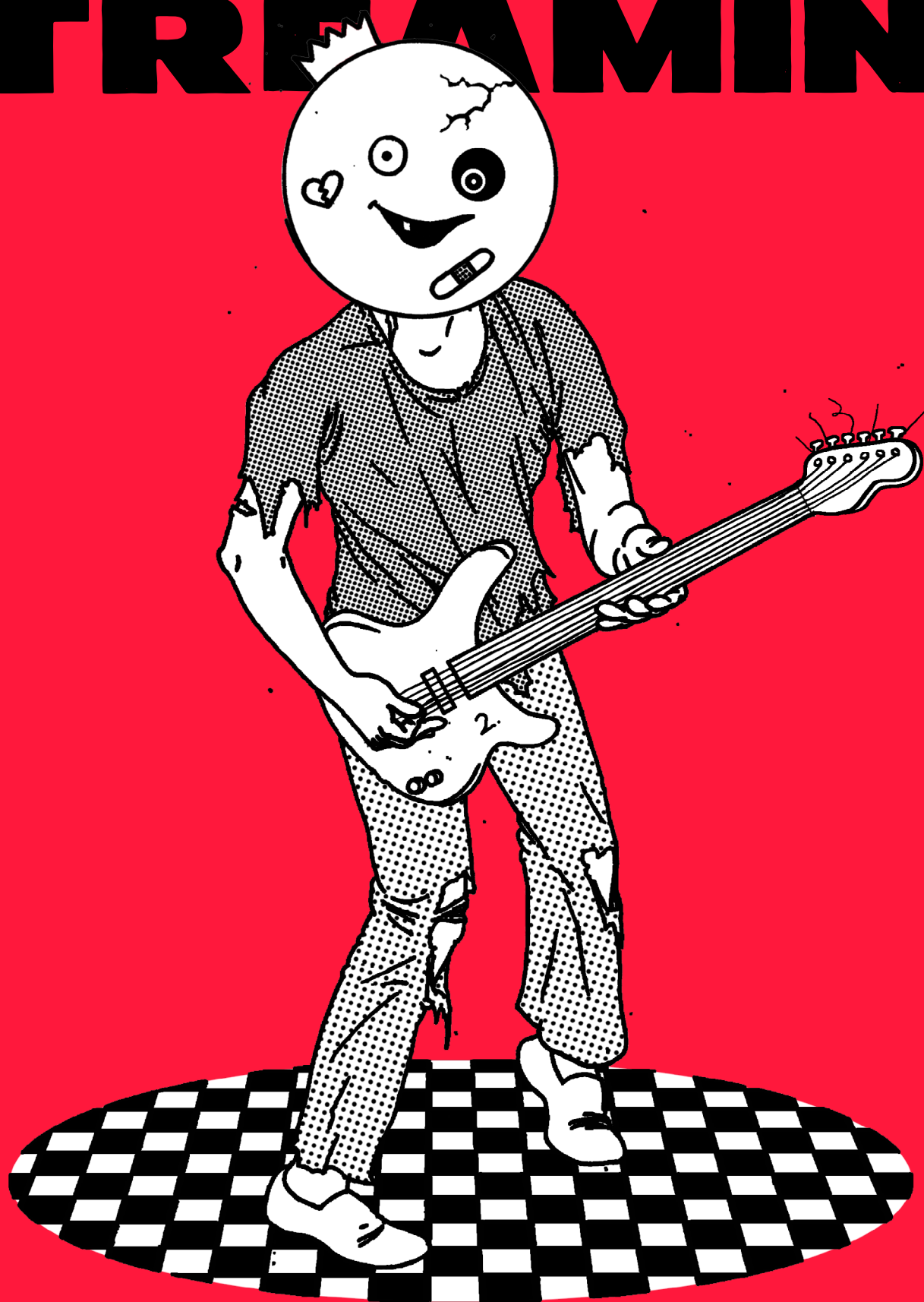
Social media can definitely help with this. But you need to be authentic (and consistent) with your approach.

Instagram has become the new website. When someone lands on your Instagram they need to get a feel for your brand. Who are you? What are you about? And they should be able to watch a few of your videos (with music) easily and quickly - Reels or IGTV are great options for this.

TikTok is more about a constant stream of personality. If you're naturally great on camera and can easily put together short, fun videos which convey your personality well, this may be for you. Or even if you just want to post acoustic videos of you playing your new songs, that sometimes works as well! Just make sure to include captions. This is key in 2021. That goes for every video on every platform. Captions are where it's at because most people are watching videos in their feed and Stories with the sound turned off. Inspire them to turn the sound on with captions (not by saying "SOUND ON" but with lyrics or statements that per



LIVE STREAMING



█ recently had the Head of Music at Twitch on the New Music Business podcast. He revealed the startling statistic that artists who make over \$50,000 from Twitch are doing so from just 183 fans. No, I did not forget 7 zeros. This ain't Spotify.

The reason being, is that many livestreaming platforms (like Twitch) have monetization built right into the interface. If you've tuned into any Twitch stream, you've most likely seen bouncing emotes, a tip jar or sub goal ticker. Twitch has gamified livestreaming (which makes sense because it started as a platform that gamers used to livestream themselves, you guessed it, playing video games).

Artists have not only taken to Twitch to make money, but also build a following. Ari's Take Academy instructor Clare Means makes her living livestreaming on Twitch, Facebook, YouTube and Instagram. She famously made a name for herself by being the most watched musician on Twitter's livestreaming platform Periscope (now defunct). Other independent artists like aeseaes, ortoPilot, Emily Henry, TheDapperRapper, Megan Lenius, Resurrection Fern, Raquel and countless others are earning very healthy livings livestreaming on Twitch.

But that's not to say that Twitch is the only livestreaming platform indie artists are using successfully. It's just the platform where you can grow the quickest starting from scratch. Facebook, YouTube and Instagram are best to livestream from if you have a dedicated following on there already. YouTube and Instagram now have tipping features built right into the app.

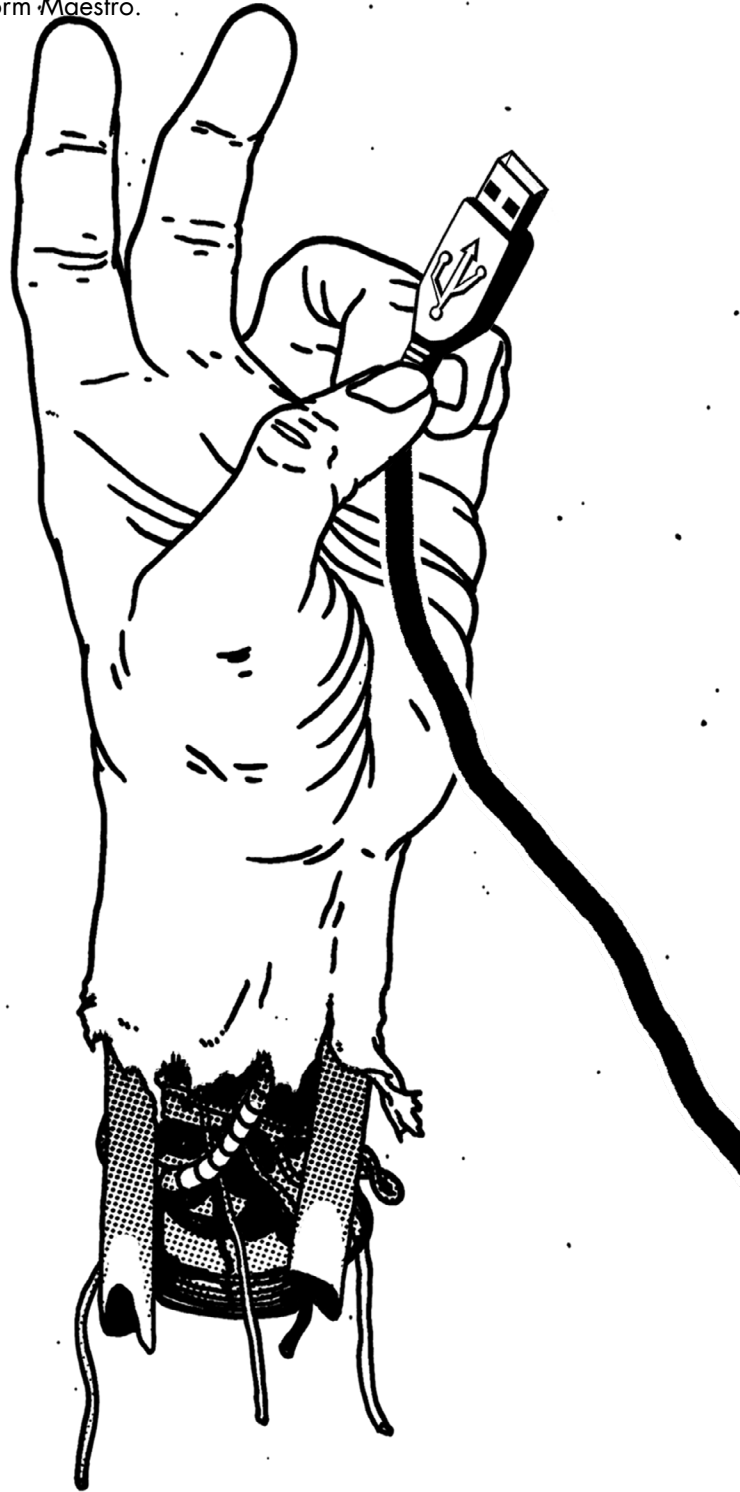
On every platform, to access their monetization capabilities you need to have history on the app to unlock these features.

If you have a bigger fanbase and don't want to give up such a huge cut to these platforms (Twitch and YouTube each take around 50%), and want to make your livestreams more of an "event" you can run ticketed livestreams. These require you to promote your livestream shows and sell tickets. Many platforms have tipping and a merch store embedded right into the livestream. And all have a chatbox for fans to interact with you (and hang with each other) during the show.

We saw this most prominently early on in the pandemic from the Uncancelled Music Festival which yours truly co-founded and teamed up with Fender to execute. Nearly 1,000 artists participated in this livestreamed festival including Waxahatchee, Beach Bunny, Cautious Clay, Snail Mail and Brian Fallon. This festival was hosted on Stage-It - which at the time (April 2020) was virtually the only ticketed livestream platform in existence.

Since then, so many platforms have popped up it's impossible to list them all. Bandsintown helped over 23,000 artists market over 87,000 livestreams over the pandemic and produced over 1,100 livestreams on Bandsintown PLUS, featuring performances by Chelsea Cutler, Liza Owen, Femi Kuti, Charli XCX, Fleet Foxes, Arlo Parks, Chromeo, Tank and the Bangas, Local Natives, Phoebe Bridgers and Rodrigo y Gabriela.

Whereas the Miami based, atl-orchestra Nu Deco Ensemble, put on extremely impressive, high production, multicam ticketed livestreams to their subscribers every couple months over the pandemic via the white-label platform Maestro.



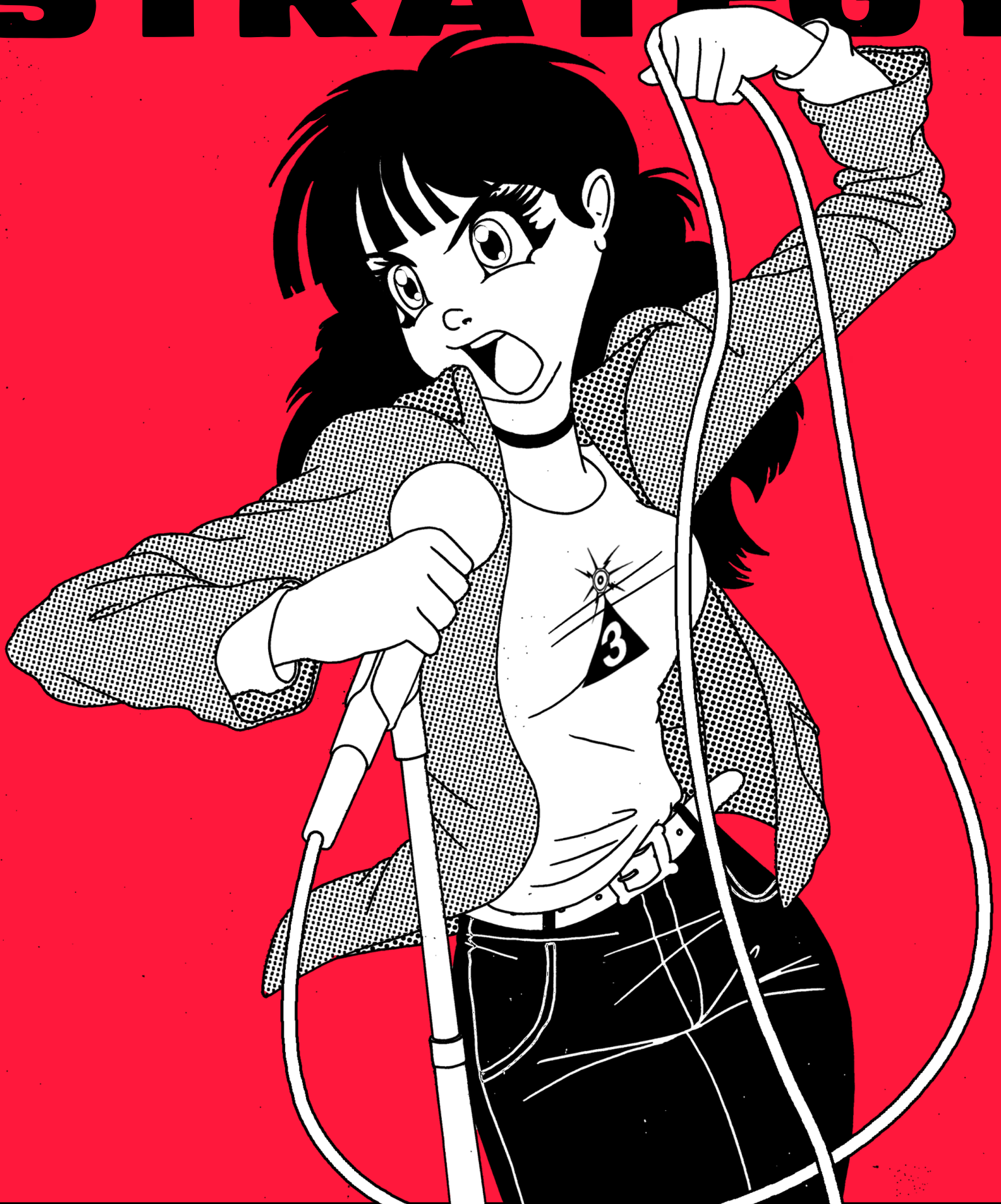


Fender Next Artist Alex Hall by Robert Chavers



Fender Next Artist Cain by Jonathan Chu

RELEASE STRATEGY



One thing that hasn't really changed in our post-pandemic world is that artists still release music. And people still listen to music. The ways in which people listen to music have evolved, but the most prominent ways that people are consuming music these days, of course, is through streaming from services like Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube, Amazon and the rest.

For ease, I've put together a release checklist that you can use for singles or albums.

Above all, the thing that will bring you the most success for your releases is lead time. What's lead time? It's the time you have leading up until the release.

Most labels, distributors and streaming services say it's best to distribute the song at least 5 weeks in advance of the release. This enables you to pitch to official editors and get all of the marketing and PR materials together.

Here is the official Ari's Take x Fender release checklist:

MAKE A TIMELINE

This should include all the elements below. A great song needs a great strategy. The most important thing you can do is know exactly what you have to do each day and each week leading up to your release and what to do after. Be specific and thorough. At the top of each week, you should already know exactly what you need to accomplish. Which photos and videos are you posting? What emails are you sending? What stories are you telling? Once you have it written out, make sure to use a system that will work for you so you execute with precision. Maybe it's the calendar on your phone, maybe it's post-it notes on your wall, maybe it's a fancy project management software. Whatever it is, stick to it. This is your roadmap to a successful release.

REGISTER YOUR PUBLISHING

If you want to make sure you're collecting all of your publishing royalties wherever they exist in the world, you're going to need an admin publishing company to help you collect these (if you don't have a publishing deal). Sentric, Songtrust, TuneCore Publishing, or CD Baby Pro Publishing are some admin publishing companies that any songwriter at any level can sign up for and get 100% of their publishing royalties collected. I compare and review all of these services on aristake.com

Most songwriters think registering with their PRO (ASCAP, BMI, SESAC, PRS, SOCAN, etc) is enough to get their publishing royalties. And most songwriters are wrong.

For every stream there are two publishing royalties earned: performance and mechanical. If you only have a PRO you're only getting about half of your publishing (songwriter) royalties. Admin publishing companies will collect ALL of your publishing revenue from around the world: mechanical and performance.

If you're scrappy and have a lot more time on your hands, you could register with a PRO and a Mechanical Rights Organization (MRO). In the States the only MRO is the Mechanical Licensing Collective (MLC). They will collect your mechanical royalties - for ONLY US streams. They won't help you collect mechanicals from around the world. To do that, you need a publisher (or admin publisher). If you're located anywhere else in the world, your local MRO and PROs may be able to help you.

I like to save myself the headache and simply work with an admin publisher to do all of this for me. That way I know that I'm 100% setup with one stop registration



Fender Next Artist North by Luis Mario Ariza

DID YOU KNOW: You can get paid for playing your original music live? Your admin publishing company can help you collect this money! Register With a Sound Recording PRO. Now that your publishing is squared away, you're going to want to make sure your master royalties are as well. SoundExchange is how you get paid for Pandora and SiriusXM (and all other digital radio) plays in the US. Other countries have their own "Neighbouring Rights Organizations." Find the one in your country and register for it.



REGISTER YOUR COPYRIGHTS

You can currently register 20 of your unreleased songs for \$85 with the US Copyright office. You can do everything at Copyright.gov. Make sure you're protected so when the future Pharell and Robin Thicke steal your song in 30 years, your kids will be able to sue for their retirement! If you don't register the copyright, you can't bring a suit.

PICK YOUR DISTRIBUTION COMPANY

To get your songs on Spotify, Apple Music, Spotify, Amazon, TikTok and 100+ other DSPs (digital service providers) worldwide, you need a distribution company. There are many distribution companies out there who you can use. I keep an updated comparison article on many of these companies on aristake.com.

CREATE THE FOLDER OF ASSETS

Create a folder in your preferred cloud-based drive (Dropbox, Google Drive, Box) which can be shared with your team that contains:

Wavs of every song
(including instrumentals)

320kbps mp3s of every song
(including instrumentals, metadata tagged)

High-res album cover
(at least 3000 pixels x 3000 pixels)

Stems
(for remixes)
These are isolated vocals, drums, bass, guitar tracks.

Hi-res promo photos
(no bigger than 10mb per image)

Merch designs

Press release

Spreadsheet of playlists, influencers and press outlets to target

Text doc with credits
(break these down by song)

Short and long bios

All promo materials
(with original files to be able to update and edit)

Demos

All videos
(music video, BTS, ads, upcoming posts)

Text doc containing links to all shareable assets that you'll need to reference quickly.

CLEAR ALL LICENSES

If you are releasing a cover song or have samples in the track that you didn't create, you have to clear the licenses. For cover songs, most distributors will give you guidance on how to get the mechanical license (some distros do this for you - for a fee). If you used a piece of recorded music in your track that you didn't create from scratch, you have to make sure you're legally allowed to use it. Many recording programs (DAWs) allow you to use their sounds and loops, but if you took even a split second of a piece of someone else's recording, you need their permission. Don't think you'll get caught? Audio recognition software these days are incredibly powerful. Don't risk it.

CUE UP SPOTIFY FOR ARTISTS

You want to make sure to distribute your song at least 5 weeks before the release date. Once it is officially cued up for distribution, a couple days later it should be listed in your Spotify for Artists backend as an upcoming release. There is an option there to submit to the Spotify playlist editors. And this is how you make sure your song shows up in your followers' Release Radar and hits other algorithmic playlists on Spotify. To have success here you need to be clear about your long tail strategy. What support have you had? What press is coming? What can people expect from you for the next 6 months to a year? How often are you releasing music? What's your show history along with upcoming shows? What are some highlights that make you stand out from the noise? Spotify wants to know that you are an artist worth supporting. Spotify asks for this stuff and they will help artists they know have their stuff together. You're also going to want to cue up the Canvas (8 second silent video loops) for each song (which plays when someone streams your song on Spotify mobile).

Make sure to also set up Contributions so your fans are able to donate to you directly when they're on your Spotify profile - you get 100% of this money.



Fender Next Artist Amber Lucci

MAKE A LIST OF PLAYLISTS AND INFLUENCERS TO CONTACT

Make a list of user generated playlists that your music would fit on. I like doing this in Google Sheets and include as much info on the playlist as possible. Chartmetric can help with this. Research who the playlist creator is and contact them when your song is released and ask to be included. Start your message with their name and a compliment about the playlist. NEVER pay the playlister for inclusion. This is against Spotify's terms of service and will get your record removed.

If a playlister asks for money, you can respectfully inform them of this policy or simply forward their email to Spotify support (which will get that playlist removed).

When it comes to social media influencers, this is a totally different ballgame. You can contact users on TikTok and/or Instagram and ask them to use your new song in some of their videos. These don't have to be influencers with a ton of followers. The TikTok algorithm doesn't merely reward those with big followings. Videos from users with just a couple thousand followers regularly get millions of views - which can encourage others to use your song. Make a list of TikTokers who fit your brand and hit them up. You can pay for this - and many expect it.

This, unlike Spotify, is not against TikTok's terms.

If you have a bit of a budget, you could hire a company to do this for you - but that costs tens of thousands of dollars. And it doesn't always work. So I recommend just putting in the time and doing it yourself (with your friends).



Fender Next Artist Beach Bunny by Alea Viscus

PRIVATE SONG SHARING AND STORING

You need a private way to share new music with music supervisors, labels, agents, managers and blogs. Some of the most popular options to do this are Dropbox, DISCO, Google Drive and Box. Put both wavs and mp3s in there along with lyrics and any notes on the song. This will be the introduction of this project, so make sure whomever gets this link can understand the full picture. You only get one shot at a first impression! Get links for every song (make sure you click the Share button - don't copy the URL because it will make them login) and pop these links into your text doc in the Folder of Assets.

PUT THE RELEASE ON BANDCAMP

Bandcamp is the #1 independent music store. It is self-managed by you. You don't need to use a distributor to get on Bandcamp. You can go to [Bandcamp.com](https://bandcamp.com) and sign up for free. You can offer "name your price" downloads (they also have a streaming library). A fan once paid me \$200 for my album (set at \$5 minimum). Bandcamp now offers subscriptions and a physical merch store as well. This is an easy way to encourage your fans to pay you money for your music. You ain't going to be making much from streams, so encourage your fans to enjoy your music on Bandcamp.

REBRAND YOUR SOCIALS AND WEBSITE

Now that you have new photos, album cover and bio, use these assets to rebrand all your social sites and website. You are bringing an entirely new package to the world. Make it shiny, sparkly and tasty. And put a bow on it! It's a good idea to rebrand your website every couple years regardless if you have a new album or not. There are plenty of website builders that require no design or coding knowledge. They have beautiful templates to choose from and are very simple to use. I keep an updated comparison on aristake.com of some of the biggest website builders.

ENGAGE YOUR MAILING LIST

If you don't have a mailing list yet, start one. This is the most important fan engagement tool you have. Of course email is important, but text message marketing is becoming more widely used and increasingly a must-have. Mailchimp is great for email. Community is the #1 SMS marketing platform for musicians right now and enables you to build a text list and regularly engage your followers. Whereas email open rates sit at around 23%, text open rates are around 95%.

CUE UP THE ADS

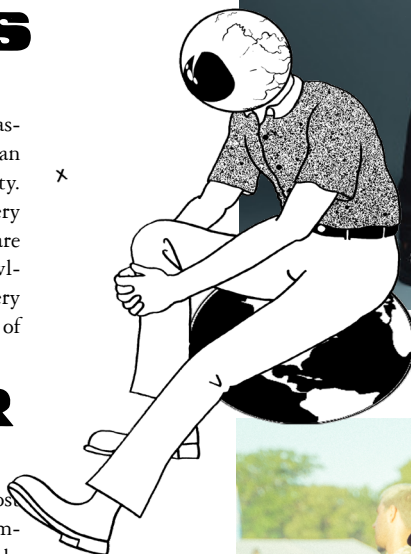
Digital marketing is now a must for every release. Instagram, YouTube, Facebook and TikTok ads are part of every record label and artist manager's release strategy. It should be part of yours too. Most spend around 50% just on ads. No longer is money being spent on PR, it's now being devoted to advertising. Running social media ads (for around \$10/day) is single-handedly how Lucidious went from 100 monthly listeners to 500,000 monthly listeners (and 100 million streams) in 3 years. Cue up those ads. You can learn how to master this in the Ari's Take Academy course: Streaming and Instagram Growth taught by Lucidious.

TRACKABLE LINKS

Smarturl, Feature.fm, Show.co all have ways for you to create custom links that you can use to track clicks on whatever you're promoting. They also enable you to create Spotify pre-save campaigns and a link tree style album landing page where the fan can choose their preferred DSP. Read a comparison of the services on aristake.com. Also, add a one click, landing page link, like linktr.ee, to your Instagram, Twitter, TikTok and other social platforms' bio section where you want to send people to learn more about you.



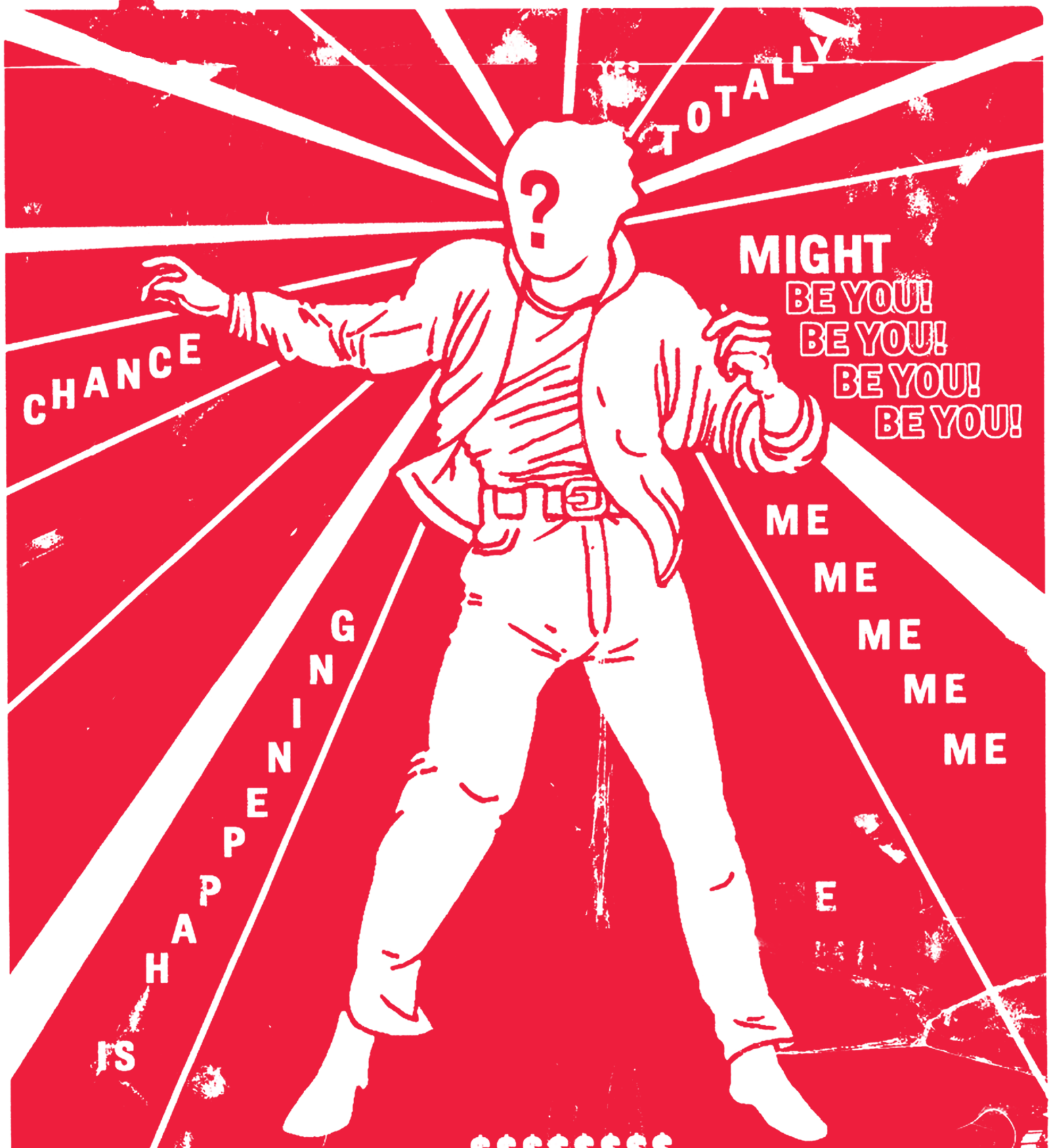
Fender Next Artist Pick by Amazing Kid



Fender Next Artist Pick by Devan Nana



DIGITAL MARKETING



If the last year proved one thing to the music community, it was that artists' revenue cannot solely come from live performance. When the entire live music industry shut down, artists, managers, promoters and labels had to get creative at how to bring in additional revenue.

Spotify revealed that in 2020 there were 13,400 artists who made at least \$50,000 just from Spotify with 2,000 of those artists making over a half a million dollars.

The thing is, this didn't just magically happen. And it wasn't solely because of Spotify editorial playlists.

The main way that artists - of every size - make money from streaming (and grow their fanbase) is through digital marketing.

Digital marketing, in this day and age, means social media ads and paid influencer campaigns.

Social Media Advertising



Let's first start with social media ads and then we'll dig into influencer campaigns.

Facebook still has a stranglehold on the digital marketing space. Owning Instagram (and all of its data and reach) Facebook Ads Manager is the most powerful advertising platform in the world. And anyone has the ability to use it starting at just \$5/day.

We've seen extremely impressive stories from independent artists like Lucidous who went from 1,500 monthly listeners and a few thousand streams to 500,000 monthly listeners and 150 million streams in just 3 years

- without appearing on any official Spotify editorial playlists - solely utilizing Facebook/Instagram advertising. And artists like Tekashi 6ix9ine claiming a number 1 Billboard Hot 100 hit (the first completely independent artist to do this) similarly by using digital marketing tactics (this song "TROLLZ" was distributed by Create Music Group who revealed that nearly 65% of their marketing budget was spent on digital marketing and 35% was spent on creative content like the music video and other creative assets for this release).

Even though Apple's iOS 14 update completely turned Facebook's ad platform on its head - reducing its effectiveness and raising prices for advertisers, there hasn't emerged a better and more effective method in the advertising space. YouTube is a close second, but every marketing expert out there will reveal that YouTube ads are not as effective as Instagram Story ads at generating paid streams from the premier DSPs (like Spotify and Apple Music).

At Ari's Take Academy, we've had 1,000 students testing out Instagram and Facebook advertising methods over the past three years and have discovered that by spending \$5-15 a day, completely independent artists are seeing a return on their investment about a year into their advertising journey. Now, this is a very loose timeframe and varies tremendously from artist to artist. For instance, some artists, by using digital marketing, send so much traffic to their Spotify profile, rapidly gaining followers and listeners, that it triggers Spotify's algorithms, placing these artists' songs into "personalized" algorithmically generated playlists such as Discover Weekly, Daily Mix, Radio and Release Radar which inevitably ping Spotify playlist editors.

Whatever you do, dedicating a healthy proportion of your marketing dollars for Facebook/Instagram advertising is still a smart bet. YouTube is a close second and can be worthwhile if you have videos to promote.



Influencer Marketing



Now, influencer marketing is an entirely different beast. What influencer marketing means is, basically, paying people who have large social media followings to use your music in their videos. But the way that TikTok works is that these influencers don't even need that large of followings to be effective.

A couple years ago, influencer marketing meant paying people with huge social media followings to promote something (think Fyre Fest). Now, with TikTok as the dominant force in social media music discovery, the algorithm doesn't merely reward videos from creators with large followings, but rather videos which perform well amongst the test audience. This is why we see videos go viral every day from creators who have meager followings.

So! How you can use influencer marketing to your advantage - even with a very limited budget - is by making a list (I like to use Google Sheets for this) of every TikTok creator ("influencer") who makes videos that feel like your music and then hit them up (Instagram DM works just fine) and ask them to make a video with your song. On this Sheet include: Name, TikTok username, Instagram username, Followers on TikTok, Followers on Instagram, Price per video, Contacted (checkbox), Video created (checkbox).

You'll have to pay most of them something. But \$10-\$50 per video is standard. Because you don't know which video from which creator will pop off, it's best to implement a "more is more" strategy and go wide, not tall. Meaning, it's a better use of your budget to spend \$1,000 on 100 videos from TikTok creators with smaller followings - but still consistently great content (at \$10 a pop) versus \$1,000 on one video from a larger creator. Why? Well, that larger creator's video may flop. And now you're out \$1,000.

Think of TikTok as buying lottery tickets. You never know which video the algorithm is going to reward. So it's better to buy 100 lottery tickets than one. Capiche?

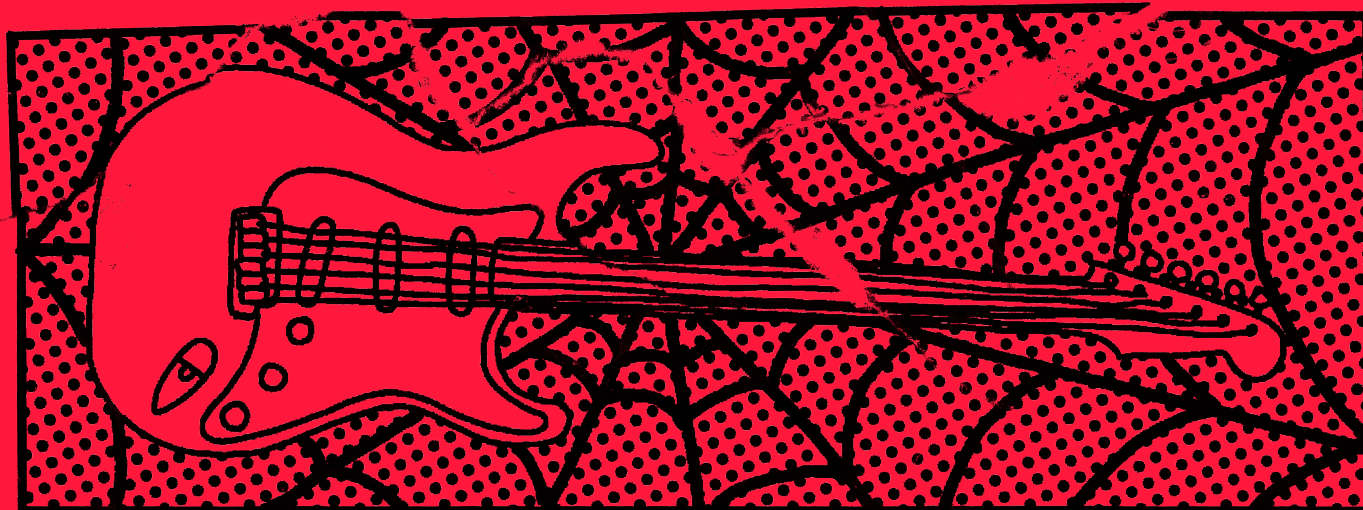
And! Not to mention, that TikTok now pays for music used in videos. How do you get paid? Well, TikTok pays (your distributor) per video NOT per stream. You will get paid more if you get 1 million streams from 10,000 videos than if you get 1 million streams from 1 video. That's just how it works.

CONCLUSION

This **PLAYBOOK** is by no means the end all be all for your artist journey. It's meant to help give you a starting point and some guidance if you choose to pursue these avenues. If you need more assistance or guidance, check out my book *How To Make It in the New Music Business* or aristake.com for the latest tips and tricks for navigating the industry.

We're all in this together!

Ari Herstand is the author of the best-selling book *How To Make It in the New Music Business*, the founder of music business institute Ari's Take Academy, the host of the New Music Business podcast and a Los Angeles based musician.



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