

Talent Spotlight

Where childlike wonder, an NYU coder, a certified plant queen, and eight other rising stars are creating ripples across culture.

February 2023

Talent Spotlight, Special Edition

Welcome to the February edition of Opus Agency's Talent Spotlight, brought to you by the Strategy team! This special edition includes a celebration of Black History Month, and the debut of our Opus Agency Playlists!

Get informed on what is happening in the world and pop culture.

Read the highlights on which cultural shifts, emerging trends, and consumer interests are influencing media and talent.

Check out emerging personalities and talent to keep an eye on and consider for future stage opportunities.



What's Ahead

**Black History
Month Spotlight**

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**Engagement
Trends**

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**Speaker and Host
Recommendations**

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Trends**

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February 2023

February is Black History Month

In honor of Black History Month, the February edition of this report will celebrate the significance and influence of Black culture, through:

- Recognizing the influence Black culture has had on shaping American culture, music, and media.
- Providing resources to celebrate and uplift the Black community.
- Spotlighting emerging Black personalities and talent.



Pop Culture Influence

How the Black Community has Influenced American Pop Culture.

Black Influence Goes
Mainstream in the US



How African Americans Have
Influenced Style and Culture



A Brief History of Trends That
Originated From Black
Communities

How Black Americans have
shaped cool globally



Black Culture And Its
Influence On Fashion



Musical Influence

How the Black Community has Influenced American Music.

How Black People Created
All Your Favorite Music



African American Influence on
American Music

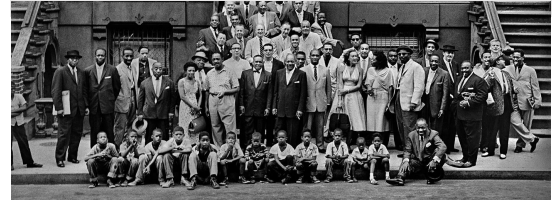


The soundtrack of history: How Black
music has shaped American culture
through time



A Timeline of African
American Music

Roots: The Impact of Black
Music on America and the World



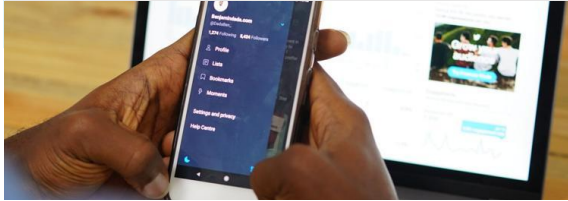
African American influence in
Rock and Roll and Pop music



Media Influence

How the Black Community has Influenced American Visual Media.

Black memes matter: How Black people drive social media culture



How That's So Raven Raised A Generation Of Black Girls Like Me

How Black People Built Social Media



Wakanda Forever and the 'Black Panther effect' on Hollywood

10 Groundbreaking African American Artists That Shaped History



How African American Art and Culture Blossomed During the Harlem Renaissance



Direct Actions

Black History Month provides an opportunity to reconcile with the past, pave the way for a more just future, and celebrate all the amazing figures who have taken their place in Black History. Below are a few additional resources to learn and take action.



GET INVOLVED

[PB-Resources](#)

A hub for social justice tools with a mission to fight for the Black community.



SUPPORT BLACK ARTISTS

[Digital Museum of Black Joy](#)

A digital archive and exhibition space meant to celebrate, cultivate, and circulate stories that center Black Joy.



CELEBRATE INTENTIONALLY

[38 Ways To Intentionally Celebrate Black History Month](#)

Actions to take to honor Black History and be a better ally

Engagement

Engagement Trends

What content and people are grabbing consumer's attention

AI Takeover

As uses for AI expand as the technology is adapted, AI is on track to play key roles in almost every sector and function to increase productivity, efficiency, and consumer experience. With Lensa's [AI selfie going viral](#), it is clear that there is an excitement around AI by consumers that will fuel this push into 2023.

Just for Fun

With 2022 being the year when 'permacrisis' reached popular vernacular, it makes sense that [72% of Gen Z worldwide](#) now name **having fun** as their number one value, and prioritize it when interacting with brands, influencers, and experiences.

The Power of Live

Video content has dominated social media for the last few years, and now consumers are turning their attention to **live video broadcasts**. Almost [82% of audiences prefer live videos](#) across social media platforms, creating opportunities for people to bond with their favorite celeb, brand, or creator in real time.

Retro Revival

Retro is booming across a multitude of creative mediums and interests in an [effort to satiate the sentimental longing of the past](#). With [20% of US consumers](#) agreeing that they miss the "simpler times", the younger generation is [innovating in context to the past](#), taking cues and styles from various retro mediums to create something **freshly nostalgic** in modern design, music, and content.

Cultural Moments

Latest news in Media, Music, and Pop Culture.

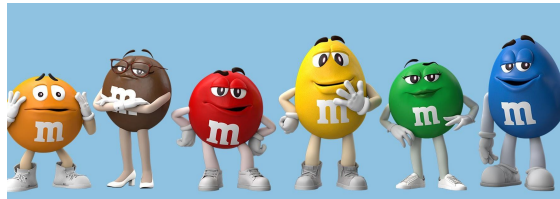
80th Annual Golden Globes Full List of Winners



Miley Cyrus Has Most Streamed Song on Spotify, for New Single 'Flowers'

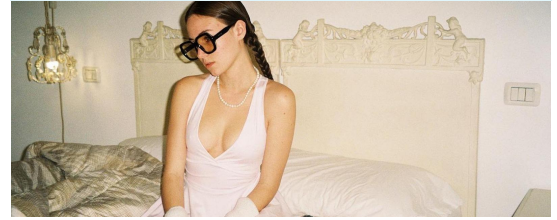


Shows of support and signs of unease mark the first NFL Sunday since Hamlin's injury



M&M's says it's replacing 'beloved spokescandies' with Maya Rudolph

The Sleaze Shift Is Coming



Beyoncé makes controversial live return at exclusive Dubai concert



Emerging Voices

Speakers & Hosts

Alexis Williams (she/her)

Industry of Focus: Technology and Media

Alexis is a NYU student and creative technologist specializing in developing web environments for multimedia projects. As a Black and Latina queer woman, Williams has a passion for working with nonprofits on social justice causes. Her project, [pb-resources](#), a **web based toolkit for the Black Lives movement**, has reached over 2 million users and has received worldwide recognition, a robust social media following, and resulted in discovery by model and tech entrepreneur, **Karlie Kloss**.

Williams' last few years have been a whirlwind of success, her resource page and partnership with Kloss launching her career as a **woman in STEM advocate and role model, social justice leader, fashion model** for top brands like **Levi's and Adidas**, **TEDx Speaker**, and **features in renowned publications** like Harper's Bazaar, Cosmopolitan, and Vogue. As a college student in her early twenties, Alexis has established herself as an emerging social justice activist and influencer, using her platform to enact social change, and is just getting started.

See for Yourself:



[Youtube](#)



[Instagram](#)



[Tik Tok](#)



[Website](#)



Christopher Griffin (they/she/he)

Industry of Focus: Content Creator and Entertainer

Christopher Griffin is a **content creator and educator** on all things plant parenting, with their content focusing on their over 200 'green gurls' habitating their Brooklyn apartment.

Being an educator at heart, Christopher started their Instagram account in 2016 as a way to share the **many lessons, lush adventures, and simple joys** that come with being a plant parent. Their social media presence, which boasts over **365k followers**, has been rooted in a journey of self-care, joy sharing, and community building all through the wonders of plants.

As a Black queer nonbinary femme, Christopher enjoys exploring creative and accessible ways to use plants as a **vehicle to incite further conversations centering on Black joy and resilience, LGBTQ+ advocacy, and the need to increase the visibility, representation, and empowerment of QTPOC in the lush world of horticulture**. Griffin has released a book 'YOU, GROW GURL', and has been featured in West Elm and HGTV Homemade as plant expert and host.

See for Yourself:

 [HGTV Feature](#)  [YOU, GROW GURL](#)

 [Instagram](#)  [Tik Tok](#)



Judner Aura (he/him)

Industry of Focus: Tech Youtuber and Content Creator

Judner Aura, aka **UrAvgConsumer**, is a **Brooklyn-based tech Youtuber** who showcases tech demo/reviews and budget-minded tech content for all- tech enthusiasts, novices, and even parents looking to provide tech for their kids. Aura has amassed an astounding **3.2 million Youtube subscribers**, through his calm, approachable demeanor, intellect, and a curated parasocial relationship on his social media channels.

Aura stands out among other notable tech influencers through his relatability, describing himself as “**just a guy**” doing tech reviews, and living his life online. He uses his social media presence to connect with parents and families through showcasing his own, and building a parasocial relationship not just with him, but his tech-savvy partner, [UrAvgGf](#), with an impressive 42.8k followers of her own. Revealing his more “human” side and appealing to families makes Judner feel relatable to his viewers and stands away from other showy, expert tech influencers.

See for Yourself:



Leah Thomas (she/her)

Industry of Focus: Sustainability

‘Green Girl’ Leah Thomas is a celebrated environmentalist based in Los Angeles, CA with more than 400k followers across her channels. Coining the term ‘eco-communicator’ to describe her style of environmental activism, Leah uses her passion for writing and creativity to found and launch the non-profit **Intersectional Environmentalist**, a platform and resource hub that aims to advocate for environmental justice, provide educational resources surrounding intersectional environmentalism, and promote inclusivity and accessibility within environmental education and movements.

Leah has been named to several notable lists—including **TIME100 NEXT**, **INSIDER’s Climate Action 30**, **Marie Claire’s Creators to Watch**, **EBONY Power 100**, and **InStyle’s The Badass 50**—and is an established public speaker who has presented at Google, 1% for the Planet’s Global Summit, Dreamforce, and more. She recently published her new book, “**The Intersectional Environmentalist: How to Dismantle Systems of Oppression to Protect People + Planet**” that is out now.

See for Yourself:



Madison Utendahl (she/her)

Industry of Focus: Thought Leadership and Career Development

Madison Utendahl is a **storyteller, speaker, producer, video host** and the **Founder of Utendahl Creative**, the all female, Black owned, anti-trend design agency behind cutting edge brands like Simon Huck's [Judy](#) and Halsey's [About-Face](#), a *Forbes 30U30 recipient*, a **two time Webby Award winner**, and was on the founding teams of cultural phenomenons like *Refinery29's 29Rooms* and *Museum of Ice Cream*.

As a powerhouse entrepreneur, Madison has been invited to speak at Inbound, Vidcon, Yelp's Women in Business Summit and many more. Additionally, Madison can be found as an on-camera video host and creator of two Instagram original series: **The Elephant & Her Name Is**, and shares her successes, inspirations, and lifestyle content on her personal page to her 22k IG followers. As a rising star in creativity, branding, and social media, Madison's girlboss energy is an inspiration to women and will fuel her career further into 2023.

See for Yourself:



RECAP



Alexis Williams
Coder, Student, and Activist
alexisdenisew.com



Christopher Griffin
Content Creator and Author
[@plantkween](https://plantkween.com)



Judner Aura
Tech Youtuber
Watch on [Youtube](https://www.youtube.com)



Leah Thomas
Environmentalist and Author
greengirlleah.com



Madison Utendahl
Entrepreneur and Creative
madisonutendahl.com

Entertainment

Entertainment Trends

The latest in music, film, and social media

Moody Behavior

The segmentation of genres is being left behind as people now let their desire for personal exploration and expression drive their entertainment interests. [80% of Gen Z](#) said audio allows them to explore different sides of their personalities, and frequently let their mood drive what genres of music, film, or television they are interested in at the moment.

Digitized Experiences

There is no doubt we are advancing towards digitalization. People are in love with staying at their place and enjoying everything. Though it will never reduce the importance of a live concert, virtual listening parties, soft launches, and online events are an easier way to sell more content and address audience needs.

Winter Sounds

Winter is typically dominated by quiet, ambient, and poetic sounds, such as spoken word recordings, instrumentals, "mellow" subgenres, and music associated with particular countries.

Multi-Lingual Music

While it was traditionally thought that musicians across genres must sing in English to reach success, music streaming has changed the landscape significantly, leading to a multilingual music boom that will continue to flourish. This was hallmarked by [Bad Bunny](#), a multilingual rapper breaking records in ticket sales and music streaming in 2022.

Emerging Talent

Barteens Strange (he/him)

Barteens Strange, is an American musician based in Washington D.C., whose experimental fusion of alternative, indie, R&B, and folk sounds one of a kind among his peers, and has earned him recognition in recent years.

Originally started in the 2010s in the group, Stay Inside, Strange's solo debut with his 2020 album, 'Live Forever' jump-started his career, landed him on year-end lists, got him signed to 4AD, and hired as the opener for Lucy Dacus' 2021 tour.

On the heels of success, his most recent 2022 album, 'Farm to Table' did not disappoint, delivering Strange's signature blend of unique rock sounds, and a captivating story of family and life. 'Farm to Table' earned recognition by Rolling Stone, Pitchfork, and earned Strange the title of 'one of the hottest names in alternative rock' by NPR. As Strange gears up for 2023, there is no question that his rise to stardom will continue to soar through the year.

See for Yourself:



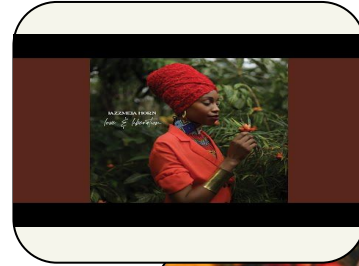
Jazzmeia Horn (she/her)

New York-based performer Jazzmeia Horn is a gifted jazz vocalist with an inventive, vocalese-influenced style that transports jazz listeners new and old to another place of tranquility and peace, with the New York Times accurately describing her as having a “proud traditionalism that keeps her tightly linked to the sound of classic figures like Nancy Wilson and Betty Carter, but a vivacity of spirit and conviction that places her firmly in the present.”

This spirit has brought Jazzmeia Horn world-acclaim in recent years. Horn's profile rose significantly when she won Newark's 2013 Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Competition and the Thelonious Monk International Vocal Jazz Competition In 2017. As part of her Monk Competition prize, she released her debut full-length album, **A Social Call**, which garnered her first Grammy nomination as did her her sophomore album, **Love & Liberation**.

Following her unrelenting momentum in the Jazz Music scene, Horn delivered her first big-band recording, the Grammy-nominated **Dear Love**, in 2020, which is progressing Horn's rise to stardom even further, and building her reputation to be one of the best modern Jazz musicians of our time.

See for Yourself:

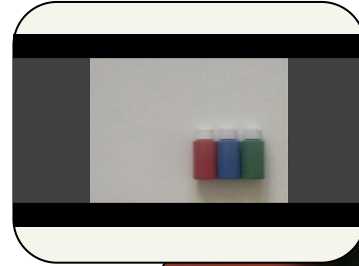


Mah Moud (he/him)

Toronto-based Eritrean singer-songwriter whose experimental, rich sound and lyrics reveals Mah Moud to not only be a gifted musician, but an innovator and storyteller in the music industry.

Following EPs that received recognition by Vice and CBC, Mah Moud recently made his highly anticipated full-length debut with 'abdalla', in 2022. The immersive, experimental production reinforces that it is a sonic journey as much as it is an opportunity for him to bare his soul, and life journey through lyrics. The launch of 'abdalla' has informed much of his online presence, developing an elusive, yet **cryptically childish online persona** and aesthetic that connects deeply with the inner-child of his audience. With a unique sound and perspective, Mah Moud is most definitely an artist to watch in 2023 and beyond.

See for Yourself:



Moses Sumney (he/him)

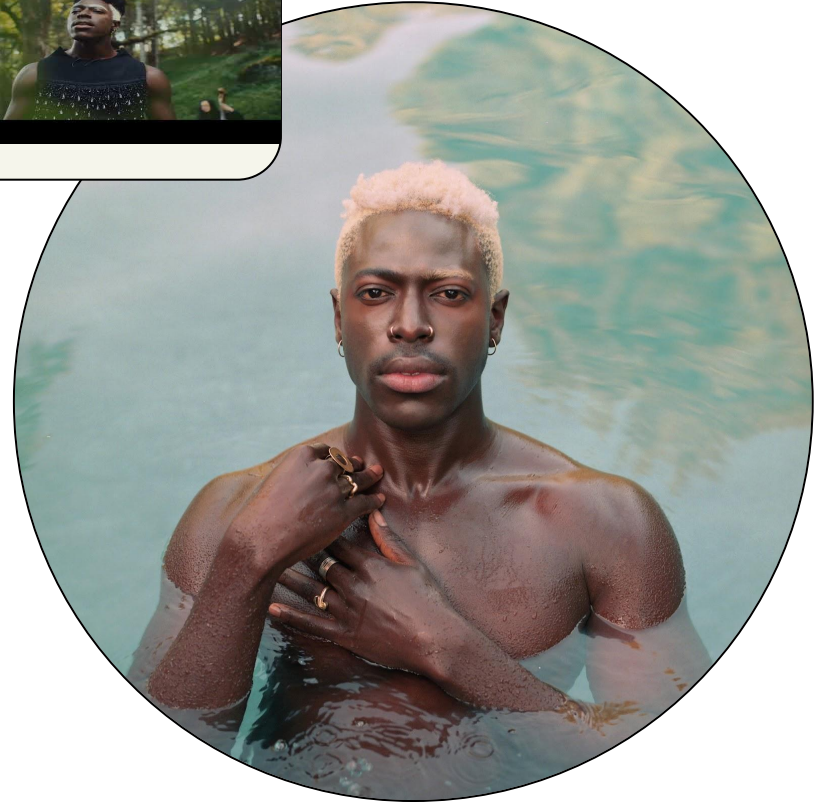
Moses Sumney is a Ghanaian-American singer, writer and multidisciplinary artist based in Los Angeles, CA. His music is a mixture of Soul, Neo-Jazz and sophisticated Pop harmonies.

His debut studio album, *Aromanticism*, was released in 2017 to critical acclaim. Since emerging onto the scene Moses Sumney has performed around the world alongside forebears like David Byrne, Karen O, Sufjan Stevens, Solange, James Blake and more.

Sumney stands out not just for his music, but has made a name for himself in almost every creative medium- music, fashion, film, and writing. His albums and performances are pieces of art that creates a multisensory experience to be immersed into.

His latest directorial project “Live from Blackalachia” encompasses a live album, a performance film and a photographic exploration in the mountains of North Carolina, which takes the audience on a journey about not just reclaiming nature, but re-integrating into it.

See for Yourself:



Vincent Bugozi (he/him)

Vincent Bugozi is an African World Pop artist based in London, England with a focus on creating positive music and energetic live performances. With highly energetic and feel-good live performances, they perform a combination of Afrobeat, Reggae, AfroCuban, and Pop that people can't help but smile and dance to.

As the headman and namesake of his band, the group wears bright floral and African prints from head to toe, and made a name for themselves in London for their energy, charisma, and identifiable look.

From playing small venues around London, Bugozi brought his name to the world stage in 2022, when he performed on a new UK Singing Competition Show, [Walk the Line](#). Since then, he has leveraged his growing social media following to promote his music and personality, creating inspirational and 'Billy on the Street' style content to grow his audience of 10k. With a modest start, Vincent Bugozi's trajectory and momentum will continue to grow in 2023, and spread his message of love and community through his music.

See for Yourself:



RECAP



Barteess Strange
Alternative Rock Fusion Artist
[Listen on Spotify](#)



Jazzmeia Horn
Modern Jazz Artist
[Listen on Spotify](#)



Mah Moud
Experimental Indie Artist
[Listen on Spotify](#)



Moses Sumney
Baroque Pop/Rock Artist and Filmmaker
[Listen on Spotify](#)



Vincent Bugozi
Afrobeat Musician/Artist
[Listen on Spotify](#)

Check Out Our Playlist!

With the February Report, we are launching our Spotify and Youtube playlists to showcase our emerging talent picks, curated by the team at Opus Agency!

Head to our [Talent Reports Page](#) to listen now.



February 2023

Talent Spotlight

Thank you for checking out the February edition of Opus Agency's Talent Spotlight!

To learn more about how to support the Black community, get smarter on Black History, or find crowdsourcing support funds, check out [Alexis Williams'](#) resource page, pb-resources.com!

Want More?

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Questions, comments, feedback?

Contact:

TheTeam@opusagency.com



Thank You.