

A Music Ally Primer

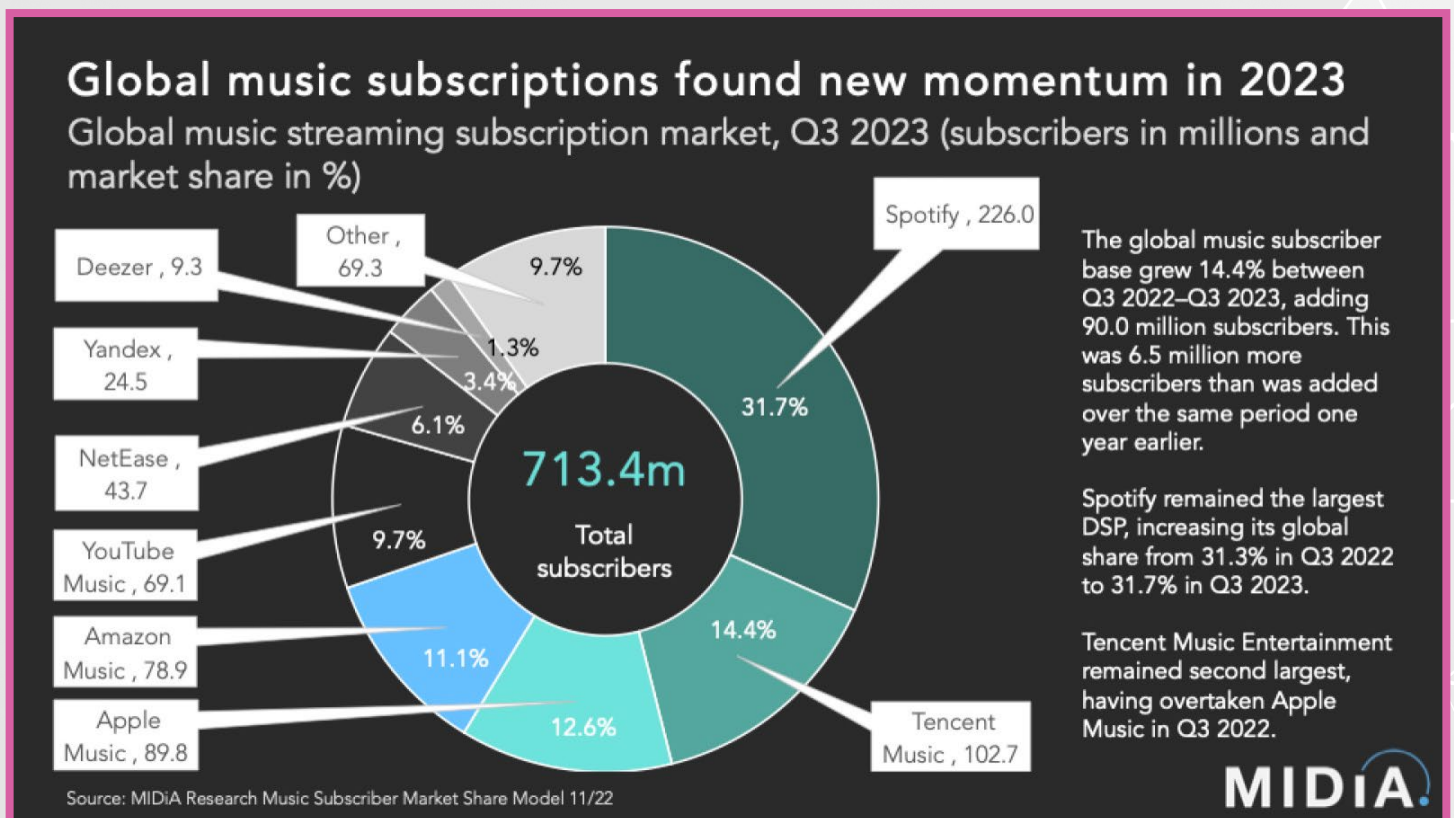
2024

Apple Music

Overview

Global Market Share and Subscriber Base

Apple Music has established itself as one of the most important global music-streaming services. However, it has not publicly announced its subscriber figures since June 2019, when it reached the milestone of 60 million. Since then, external estimates have varied. MIDiA Research estimates that in Q3 2023 Apple Music had 89.8 million subscribers. However, Goldman Sachs is more optimistic, estimating that it had 102 million paid subscribers at the end of 2022.



Market Share Revenue and Financial Performance

Apple Music's global market share also varies depending which analyst you talk to. MIDiA estimated that it accounted for 12.6% of global subscribers in Q3 2023, for example, but Goldman Sachs thought it had 17.3% at the end of 2022. MIDiA also estimated that Apple Music generated just under \$3bn in trade revenue for labels in the whole of 2021.

Like its rivals Spotify, Amazon Music and YouTube Music, Apple Music is benefiting from the wider growth in streaming and subscriptions. The service continues to set quarterly revenue records, although its all-time quarter (by revenues) was the first quarter of 2023.

Unique Opportunities

Apple Music offers a number of unique opportunities for independent labels and artists, including:

- **Integration with Apple's ecosystem:** Apple Music is tightly integrated with Apple's ecosystem of devices (iPhones, iPads, iPods, Macs, Apple Watches, and Apple TVs) as well as sister apps like Shazam and Apple Fitness+. This integration makes it easy for Apple users to discover and listen to music on Apple Music.
- **Strong focus on curation:** Apple Music is known for its strong focus on curation, and the platform's playlists are often
- **highly acclaimed.** This can be a valuable way for independent labels and artists to get their music heard by a wider audience.
- **Competitive Pay-Per-Stream Rates:** According to Billboard's music streaming royalty calculator, which launched in 2022, 1m streams on Apple Music generates payouts of \$8,537 compared to Spotify's \$4,830. The disparity is mainly because Spotify's average includes streams from its free, ad-supported tier, while Apple Music is premium-only.
- **High-Quality Audio and Platform Compatibility:** Like Amazon Music, Apple Music has made spatial audio a key selling point for subscribers. It supports Dolby Atmos, and has given the feature considerable promotion to users. In January 2023, Apple said that more than 80% of its global Apple Music subscribers were listening to spatial audio, with monthly plays of the format having grown by more than 1,000% since its launch.

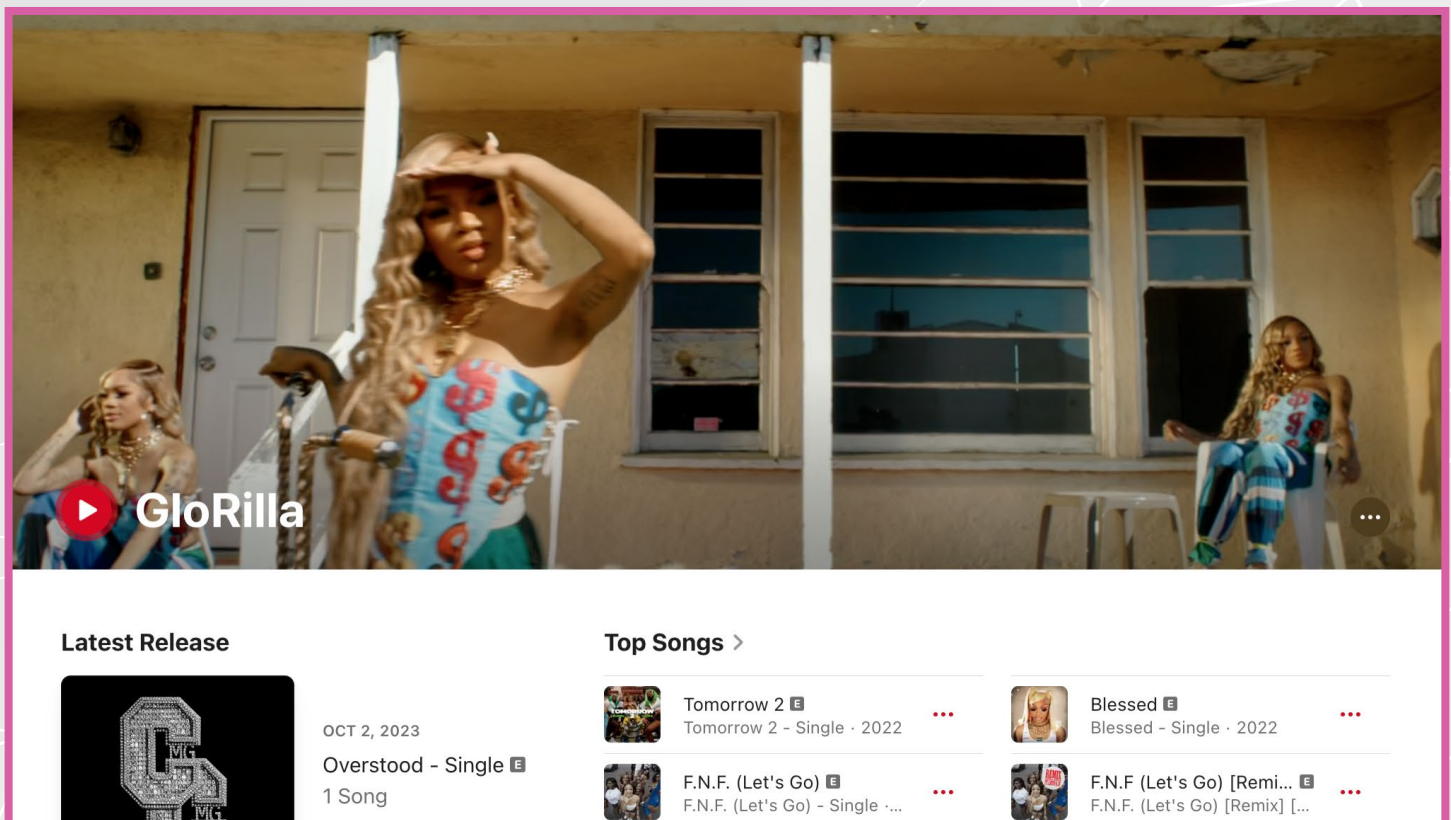
In January 2024 Apple Music confirmed plans for changes to its royalty calculations, giving a 10% boost in its formula to music catalogues available in the spatial audio format.

Marketing Best Practices and Strategies for Indie Labels

#1 Apple Artist & Album Motion Assets

A great opportunity to create a more eye-catching and engaging experience for listeners on Apple Music is to tap into Apple Music's Motion Assets - Apple Artist Page Motion Artwork and Apple Album Motion Assets respectively. These can't be uploaded directly via Apple Music for Artists, but can be delivered by labels / [distributors](#).

When it comes to the Artist Page Motion Artwork, be aware that this does not replace an artist's regular profile image which will still appear in various places across Apple Music. Artist Pages can be made from a variety of video footage, including content sourced from music videos, b-roll, and behind-the-scenes footage. Sometimes, content is filmed specifically for the Artist Page. You can find Apple Music's full guidelines for Artist Page Motion Artwork [here](#).



An album motion will appear on the Album Page on iPhone, iPad, and Mac, as well as on smart TVs. Motion on the album page is an opportunity to surprise and delight your fans with a beautiful and expressive moving version of your album art. Your album motion may also appear on the Listen Now tab, which is based on a user's music preferences. You can find Apple Music's full guidelines for Album Motions assets [here](#).

#2 Artist Biography

There are two ways to customise an artist's biography on Apple Music.

#1 Existing biographies

In some cases, there will already be an existing biography on an artist's profile, which tend to be sourced from the third party AllMusic. If you wish to provide feedback to this existing biography, you can contact AllMusic under content.music@xperi.com.

#2 Q&A prompts

If there is no existing biography or you wish you replace the bio provided by AllMusic, login to Apple Music for Artists and answer the Q&A prompts under Artist Content>Artist Profile. Note that Apple Music states that while submissions may be considered by their editorial team, publishing on Apple Music is not guaranteed. Follow these best practices to have a higher chance of getting published:

- Responses must be original.
- Responses must be accurate.

- Responses reflect the artist.
- All text should be written in complete sentences.
- Keep character limits in mind.
- Responses must be written in the first person and be conversational.

You can find the full guidelines [here](#).

#3 Additional Profile Customisation Features

Besides bios / Q&A prompts, there are a few additional profile customisation features available that we recommend using to leverage Apple Music's full suite of features. These include:

- Add origin, year of formation (in case of a group) or hometown and birthdate for solo artists, genre
- Identifying band members
- Highlighting artists the artist has collaborated with
- Showcasing musical influences
- Adding lyrics

All of these can be added under Artist Content > Artist Profile besides lyrics, which can be submitted directly to Apple Music

by going to Artist Content > Music and Videos, selecting a song and clicking the + Lyrics button next to songs that don't yet have lyrics. Make sure to familiarise yourself with the [lyrics formatting guidelines](#) before submitting.

#4 Pre-Adds

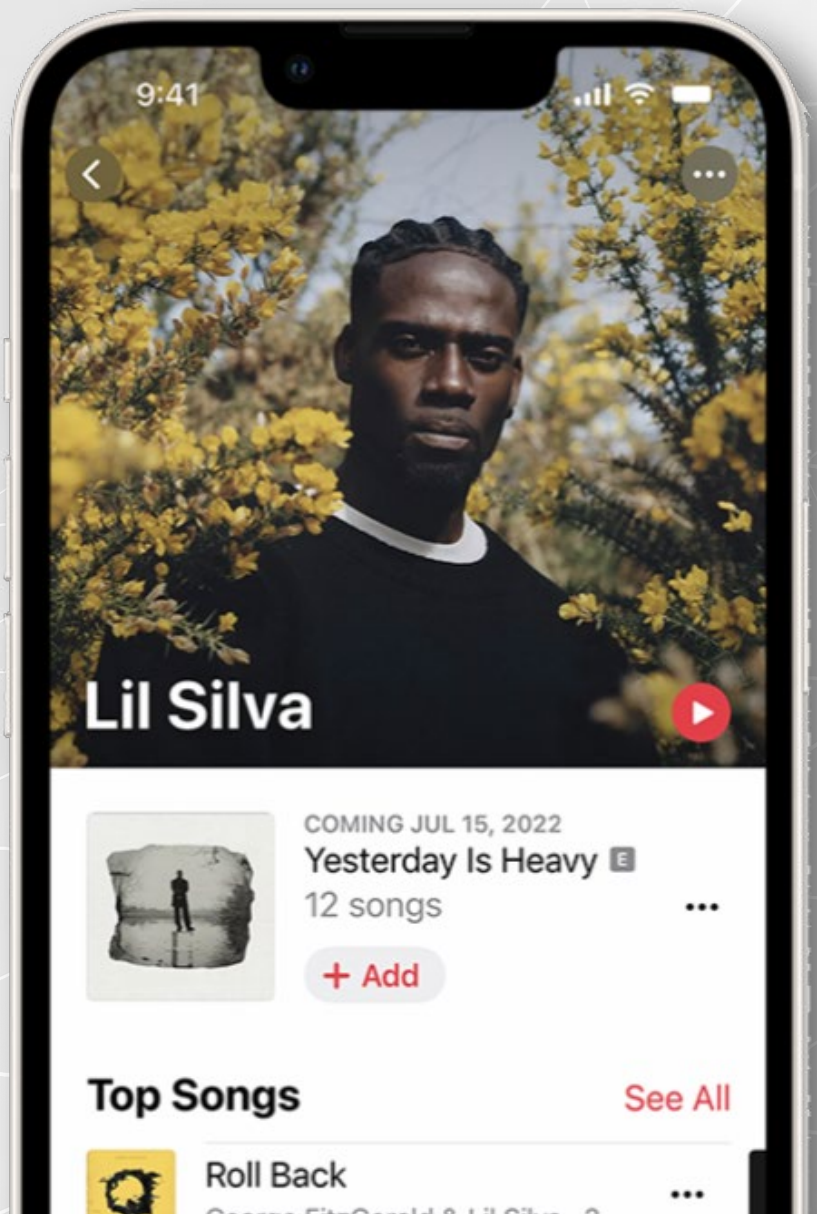
Similar to pre-saves on Spotify, Apple Music users can pre-add an artist's song or album on the DSP. The company has said that "releases with pre-adds saw significantly higher listens than those without, with increased numbers of fans coming back to listen to the album during the release week."

For albums, Apple Music offers a native pre-add experience which labels and distributors can add to a release. This means that any Apple Music user can find a + Add button next to the release, so artists can incentivise their audience to go ahead and take this action, at no additional cost.

To run pre-add campaigns for singles and albums, artist teams can rely on smart-link services such as Linkfire, or Feature.fm, Amplify.link, or Found.ee to do so.

#5 Promote Content

Within Apple Music for Artists, you will find a Promote tab that allows you to create assets to market albums, songs, music videos, and promote milestones such as being added to a playlist. You can select a song, album, or music video and then pick between two design templates where you can update the background colour, preview each layout, and choose which asset sizes you want to create so you can share the assets across different platforms. These Apple-branded assets are a good way to shout about achievements and do some tailored Apple Music promotion.

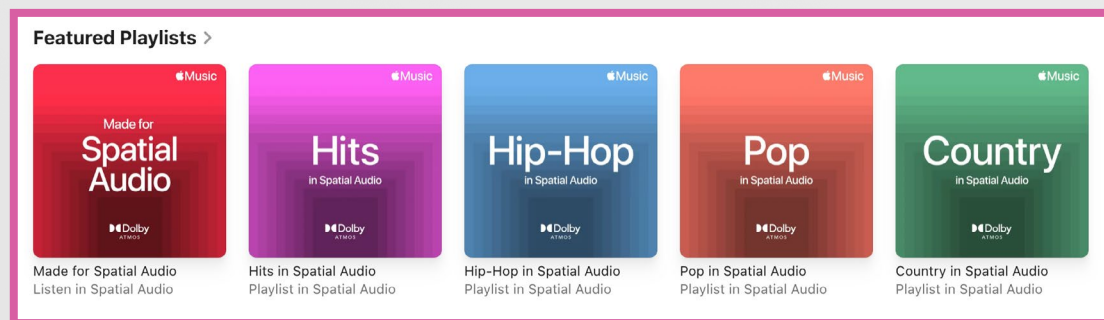


#6 Dolby Atmos Spatial Audio

Apple loves spatial audio, and it loves its label partners to make their music available in the format. It has a selection of genre-focused spatial-audio playlists to feature tracks made available in Dolby Atmos. In January 2024, Apple confirmed plans for higher royalty payouts for spatial audio, providing a financial incentive for labels to support the format.

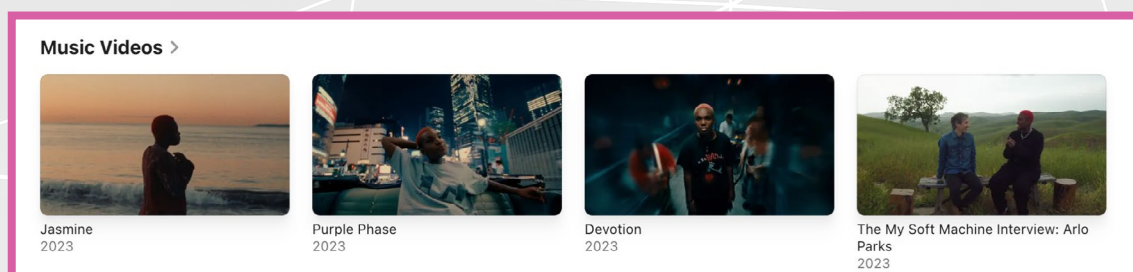
Other benefits include:

- Provide fans with a new, spatial listening experience on Apple Music
- Boost editorial opportunities available on Apple Music Spatial Audio playlists
- Opportunity to re-promote catalogue



#7 Music Videos

Apple Music has included a catalogue of music videos since the spring of 2018, living in a dedicated section under Browse. Lyric videos, live performances and exclusive Apple Music videos can also be found here. Delivering music videos to the service therefore gives an additional opportunity to connect with its subscribers. In 2020, Apple also launched Apple Music TV, a free 24-hour curated stream of music videos and content available within Apple Music and the Apple TV apps. It launched in the US first, expanding to the UK and Canada the following year. You can see a list of Apple Music's preferred distributors that can distribute music videos here.



Opportunities for Indie Labels

#1 Up Next

Up Next is Apple Music's monthly artist program, designed to spotlight and support emerging talents in the music industry. Each month, the service's editorial team chooses an artist for promotion, including featuring in the 'Up Next' playlist; getting a short-film documentary; an interview on Apple Music's flagship radio station; and a slot on US late-night chat-show Jimmy Kimmel Live!.

The program, which is into its seventh year, has included artists such as 6lack, Daniel Caesar,



H.E.R., Greta Van Fleet, Khalid, Billie Eilish, Bad Bunny, Juice WLRD, Megan Thee Stallion, Burna Boy, Clairo, Jessie Reyez, Victoria Monét, Conan Gray, Holly Humberstone, beabadoobee, Arlo Parks, Tate McRae and more

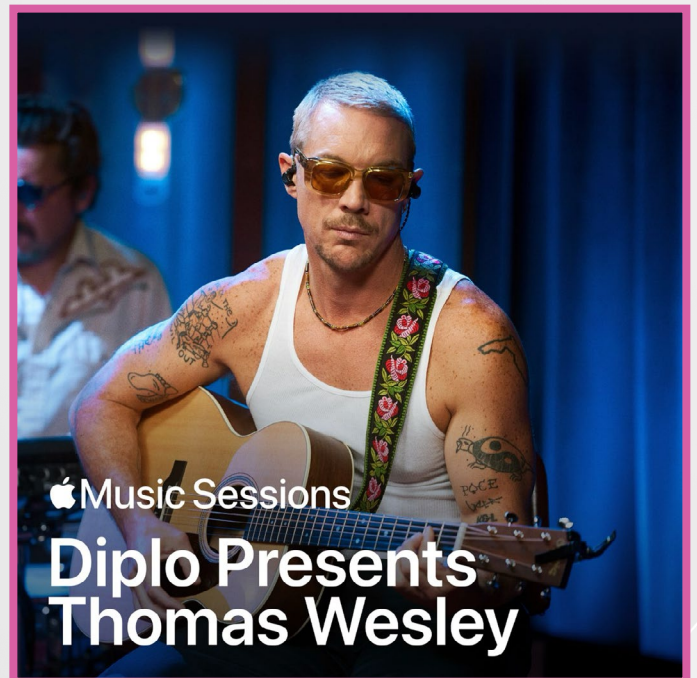


#2 Radio shows

Apple Music features numerous radio shots with celebrity hosts, handpicking the best of new music. The Matt Wilkinson Show includes global premieres and interviews, as well as a regularly updated playlist of the best artists signed with indie labels.

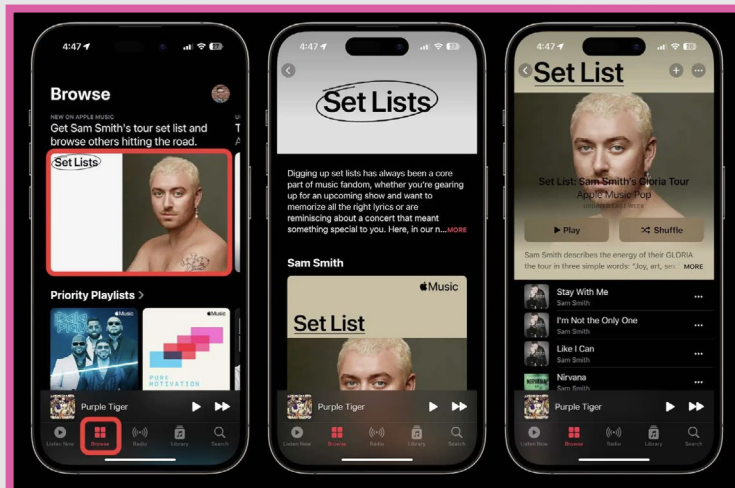
#3 Apple Music sessions

Produced in Apple Music's studios located across the globe, Apple Music Sessions offer artists a platform to reinvent and perform their own hits from their music catalogue, as well as creative covers of beloved songs. The performances are made available as spatial audio tracks and music videos within Apple Music. Having started in Nashville, the series expanded to London in October 2023.



#4 Set Lists

A new section within Apple Music called 'Set Lists', highlights a selection of major tours, complete with playable setlists, and integrated within Shazam's concert discovery tool. Although this currently only is available to a handful of superstars, we expect the feature will roll out to more artists in the future.



#5 Apple Music Live

Apple Music Live is a recurring series designed to give artists the biggest possible platform to flaunt how they connect with audiences and how their songs translate to live performance. The video of the concert is available for subscribers globally as a livestream or on replay for a period of time.

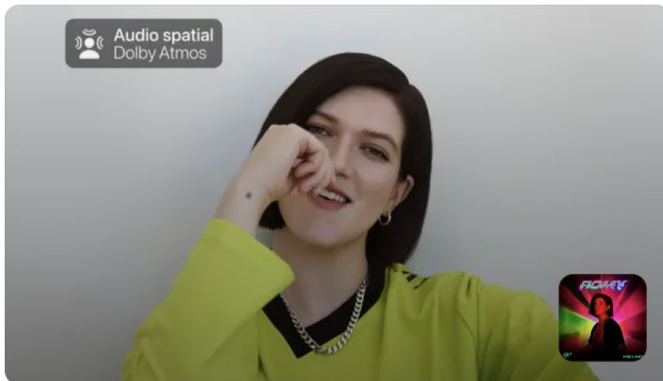


#6 Pride

Every year around Pride month, Apple Music aims to amplify the profiles of LGBTQIA+ artists on a dedicated page, featuring curated albums, celebrity takeovers, topical radio shows and guest DJ sets.

Pride

NEW ALBUM
Mid Air
Romy



NEW EPISODE

Dreya Mac

MNEK chats with the London rapper and plays Robyn.



Last Night a DJ Saved My Life >



Pride 2023 (DJ Mix)
salute



Pride 2023 (DJ Mix)
Horse Meat Disco



Pride 2023 (DJ Mix)
DESIREE



Pride 2023 (DJ Mix)
Goth Jafar



Pride 2023 (DJ Mix)
Kaleena Zanders

On the Radio >



Dreya Mac
MNEK chats with the London rapper and plays Robyn.



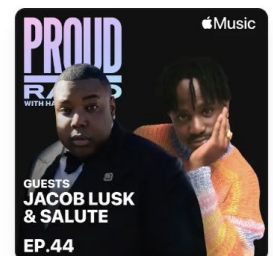
Maddie Zahm and Joe Winter
Maddie breaks down her debut album, plus Proud



Adam Mac
The artist talks about his album Disco Cowboy.



Cat Burns
MNEK speaks to the singer-songwriter.

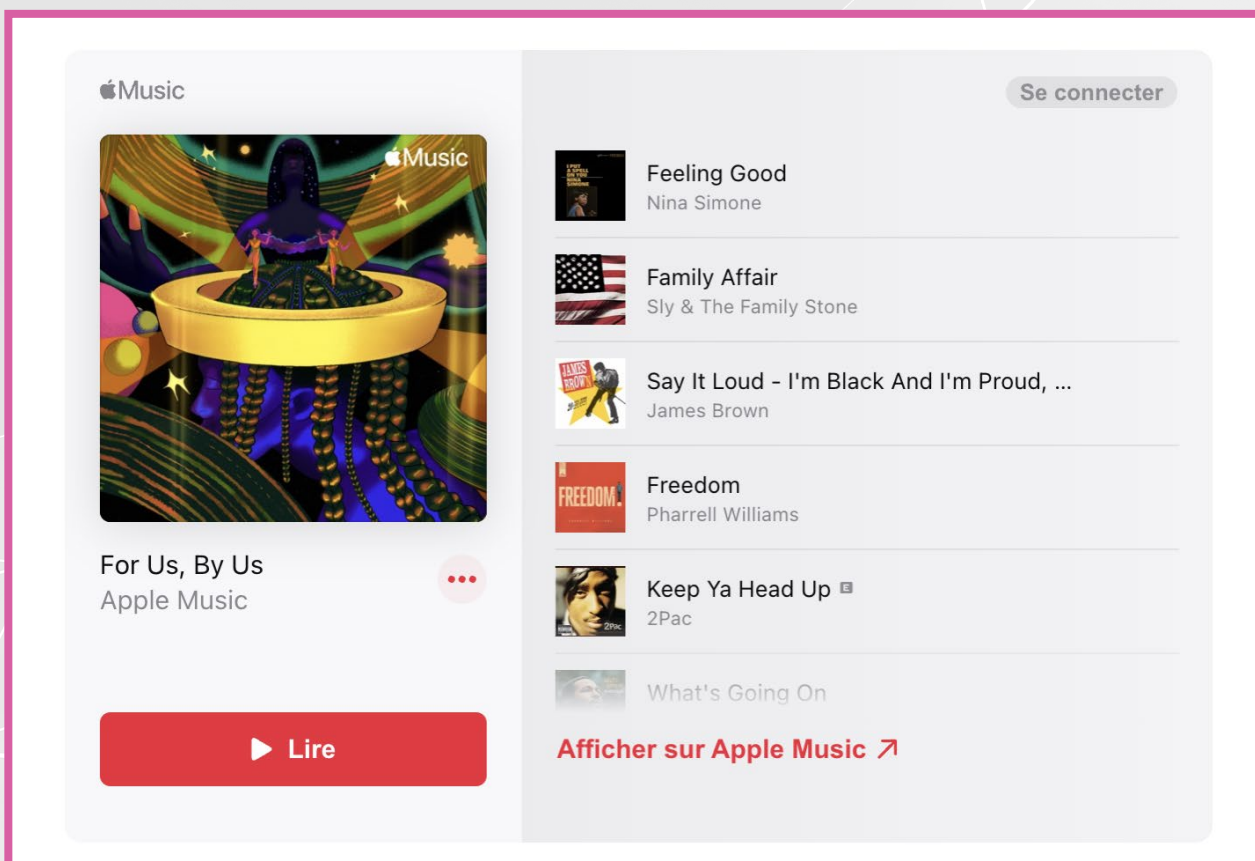
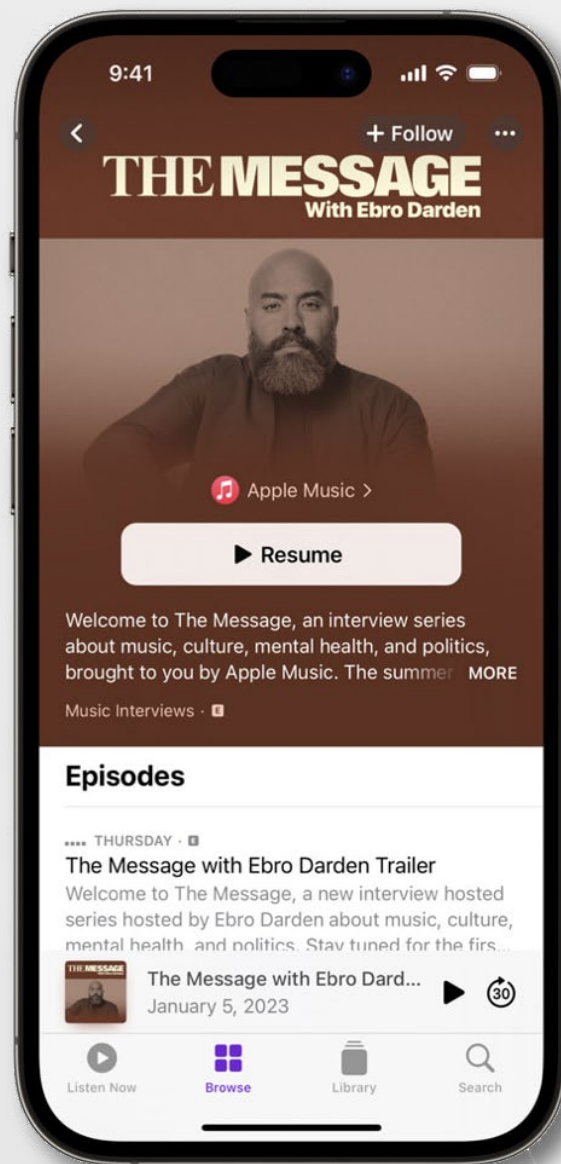


Jacob Lusk and salute
Hattie talks to Gabriele's frontman and meet

#8 Black History Month

Annually, Apple Music launches a campaign in honour of Black History Month. This initiative includes special episodes of 'The Message' on Apple Music 1, featuring in-depth discussions led by Ebro Darden, Apple Music's head of Hip-Hop and R&B editorial, alongside various guests. These radio episodes delve into contemporary topics related to Black health and wellness, while also shedding light on the historical context, accomplishments, and significant contributions made by Black individuals to culture.

Additionally, music programming on Apple Music's Browse, Genre, and Radio pages highlight various interpretations around the themes of Movement, Black Love, Celebration, and Peace. Apple Music TV also has full-day takeovers with music videos inspired by the campaign. Apple Music also underscores the ways that Black artists have contributed to music and culture through its For Us, By Us playlist.



Inspirational Case Study

Parcels “Day/Night” Album Release (Because Music)

Berlin-based Australian band Parcels released their sophomore album in 2021. For this release, their label Because Music took advantage of the majority of the features built into Apple Music, creating an exciting release experience for users of the streaming service.

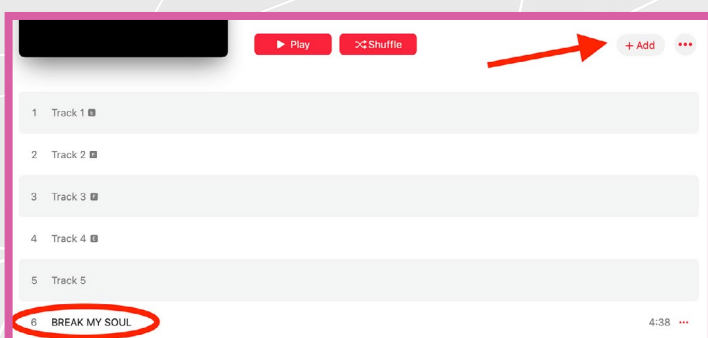
“Day/Night”, a bold double album following up from the band’s self-titled debut in 2018 was truly two records in one. This was clearly demonstrated on the vinyl release, but presenting this format on streaming is not necessarily as straightforward. In this regard, Because Music used the nuances of release features available on Apple Music.

The “Waterfall” release strategy is common practice on Spotify,



but things work differently on Apple, where they have a built in “Pre-Add” which “allow listeners to hear one or more songs from a release before it is available for streaming on Apple Music.”

When the album became available pre-release, it was clearly divided into “Discs” 1, 2 and 3 where “Disc 3” consisted of the 4 “Single Versions” of tracks to be released before the full album as “Instant-gratification tracks”. This meant that users were driven to pre-add the entire album once, and were notified each time a new single was released. This built up to the album release, where



Disc 1		
1	Light	6:14 ...
2	Free	5:28 ...
3	Comingback	5:11 ...
4	Theworstthing	3:04 ...
5	Inthecity (Interlude)	1:57 ...
6	Nowlcaresomemore	3:00 ...
7	Somethinggreater	5:21 ...
8	Daywalk	3:40 ...
9	Outside	7:13 ...
Disc 2		
1	Shadow	3:02 ...
2	Neverloved	4:11 ...
3	Famous	4:50 ...
4	Icallthishome	1:09 ...
5	LordHenry	5:32 ...
6	Thefear	3:27 ...
7	Nightwalk	6:47 ...
8	Reflex	4:44 ...
9	Once	4:40 ...
10	Inside	3:03 ...
Disc 3		
1	Free (Single Version)	3:39 ...
2	Comingback (Single Version)	3:36 ...
3	Somethinggreater (Single Version)	3:29 ...
4	Famous (Single Version)	3:24 ...
5 November 2021 23 Songs, 1 hour 36 minutes © 2021 Because Music		
RECORD LABEL Because >		

the content from “Discs” 1/2, Day/Night, were finally released. This included album versions of the 4 pre-release singles, creating excitement for fans in being able to listen to these new versions in context of the album. Hitting play on the album would then take the listener on a journey of all three discs, including getting to hear the 4 “single versions” at the end of the album. This of course also drove an additional 4 streams for every listen of the album.

Another feature they used to help communicate the double album was Apple’s “Album Motion” feature for animated artwork which made the album art “come alive” and really showcase that this is indeed a double album. Below this engaging artwork there is also an “Album Description” where they were able to detail the background of “Day/Night”. This solid release strategy made an impact with fans on Apple Music.

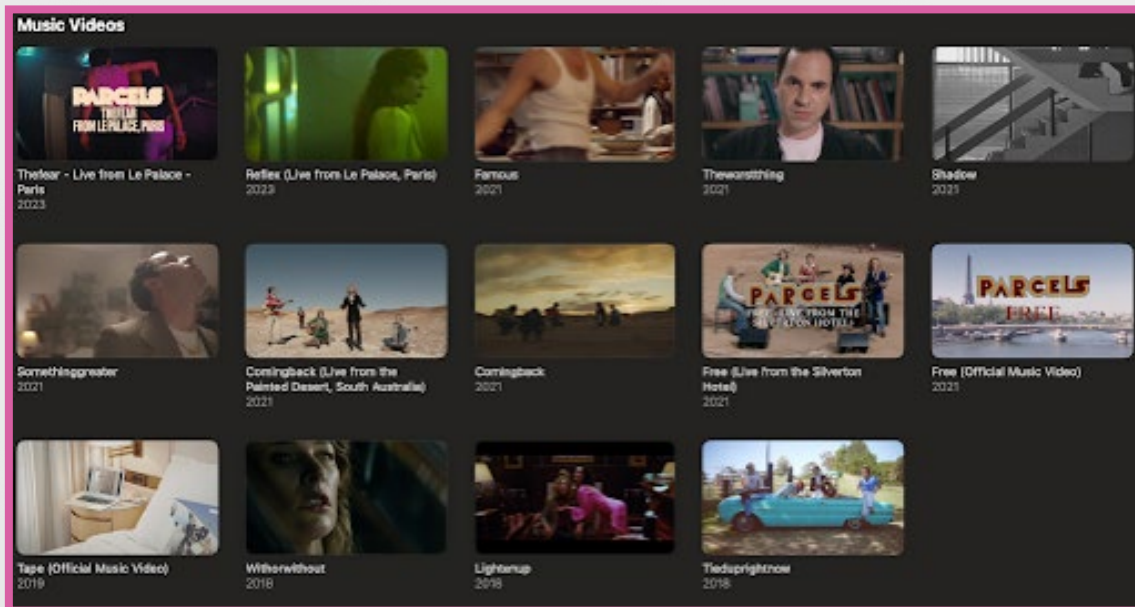
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Day/Night

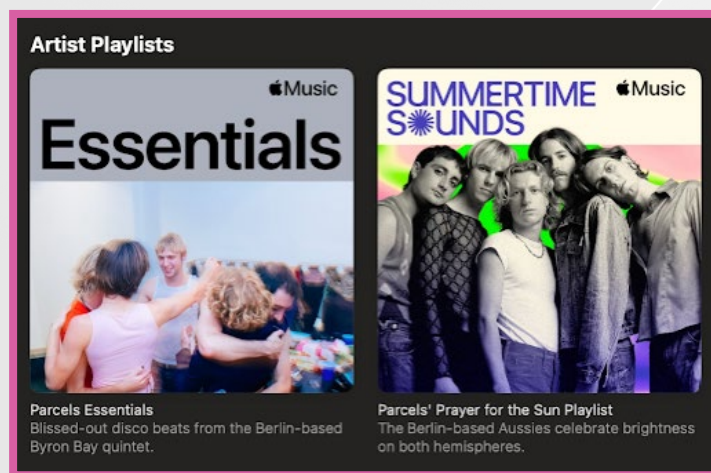
Parcels · 2021

With attention spans seemingly shrinking by the day, brave is the band that's prepared to release a sprawling 19-track double album. Oh, and did we mention it's a concept record based on the circular nature of life? And that it's inspired by Parcels' experiences while writing in a forest on the east coast of Australia at the start of 2020, when catastrophic bushfires were followed weeks later by horrific floods? So far, so bold. Musically, there are elements common to *Day/Night* and the band's self-titled 2018 debut—the Daft Punk-esque smooth funk of “Somethinggreater” and the sweeping '70s disco-soul of “Famous” and “Free”—but *Day/Night* is also a more introspective proposition (“Thefear”, “Nightwalk”). The swooning strings that envelop much of the album add a cinematic flair, which is fitting given that the band approached the album as though they were soundtracking a movie. Whittled down from more than 150 demos, *Day* is a lighter, softer side to *Night*'s deeper, darker tones, but they combine to make an album that is bursting with ambition and creativity, life-affirming upbeat moments and inward-looking solitude.

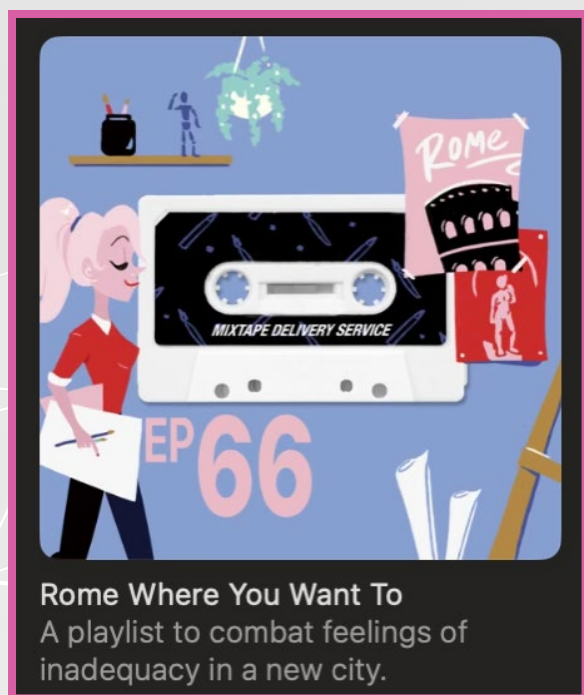
Because Music also tapped into a number of the other features native to Apple’s streaming service, including releasing all the music videos from the album on the service.



They also have playlists on the service, including an “Essentials” playlist for new fans looking into discovering the band’s catalogue, which spans across the albums and a number of early EPs, and leads with a single from the new album. They also feature a “Summertime Sounds” artist playlist on their profile, once again leading with a single from the latest record “Day/Night” and then continuing into a selection of songs by other artists, showcasing



the tastes of the band. The band also featured on Apple Music radio station Rome Where You Want To, which is hailed as “A playlist to combat feelings of inadequacy in a new city.” And in 2022 the band released a follow up remix EP entitled “Day/Night - Remixed” where they featured some of France’s best including DJ and producer Folamour, The Reflex and Justice’s Gaspard Augé alongside their Berlin-based cohorts Manqo. All of these activities worked pre- and post release of “Day/Night” to build excitement and keep up momentum on Apple Music.



Results & Key Learnings

1. Utilising Platform-Specific Features: Leveraging the unique features of streaming platforms like Apple Music can significantly enhance the release experience. Because Music demonstrated a keen understanding of Apple Music's capabilities and utilised features such as Pre-Add, Album Motion, and Album Description to engage users and highlight the uniqueness of the double album release.

2. Strategic Release Planning: The "Waterfall" release strategy, commonly employed on Spotify, was adapted for Apple Music's Pre-Add feature. By strategically dividing the album into discs and releasing single versions as instant-gratification tracks, Because Music effectively built anticipation and encouraged users to pre-add the entire album, leading to increased engagement and streams upon release.

3. Maximising Content Visibility: Making full use of Apple Music's ecosystem, Because Music released music videos from the album on the platform, curated playlists to cater to different audience segments, and secured placements on Apple Music radio stations. This multi-faceted approach ensured maximum visibility and engagement with Parcels' music across various channels within the platform.

4. Artist Collaboration and Remixes: Collaborating with renowned artists and producers for remixes and EP releases post-album launch extended the lifespan of the album's promotion. By featuring remixes from prominent figures like Folamour and Gaspard Augé, the band expanded their reach and appealed to diverse audiences within the electronic music scene.

5. Consistent Post-Release Engagement: Sustaining momentum and excitement beyond the album release date is crucial for long-term success. By maintaining an active presence on Apple Music through curated playlists, radio features, and additional releases like remix EPs, Because Music effectively engaged fans and kept the band's music relevant in the streaming landscape.

In summary, the success of Parcels' album release on Apple Music was attributed to a combination of innovative release strategies, effective use of platform-specific features, comprehensive content sharing, and strategic post-release activities. This case study underscores the importance of tailoring music release strategies to the unique features and audience of each streaming platform.

Conclusion

This primer has provided independent labels with an up-to-date overview of the opportunities they can tap into on Apple Music. It remains one of the biggest streaming services globally, even with intense competition from Spotify, Amazon Music and YouTube Music. It is part of a strong family of services and hardware, from iPhones, iPads and Macs to Apple TV+, Apple Arcade, Shazam and more.

Although Apple Music for Artists doesn't offer as many features as Spotify or even Amazon Music for Artists, it still offers a lot of promotional opportunities and tools for its label partners and their rosters. Artists actively engaging with Apple Music, cultivating a dedicated listenership on the platform, position themselves as prime candidates for the emergence of fresh opportunities, whether that's through playlisting, the Up Next program for upcoming talent, live sessions or radio program interviews.

Tools & Resources

- [Report: Global music subscribers grew to 616.2m in Q2 2022:](#)
- [MIDiA: Music subscriber market shares 2023](#)
- [Billboard Presents the Royalty Calculator: See What Your Streams Are Worth](#)
- [Apple confirms plans for higher royalty payouts for spatial audio](#)
- [Apple Music Preferred Distributors](#)
- [Apple Music Album Motion Partner Guidelines:](#)
- [View guidelines for artist profile](#)
- [Review guidelines for submitting lyrics:](#)
- [Apple Music: Pre-Adds](#)
- [Promote Overview: Apple Music for Artists](#)
- [Apple Music YouTube Channel](#)