

Urban afro millennial 'internet artists' with real influence

 By [Bonga Mpungose Smanga](#)

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The term "internet artists" refers to music artists who are solely dependent on the internet to launch their music careers and distribute their music.

This new breed of music artists fully relies on online digital media without the backing and support of traditional media platforms to share music with fans and most without the backing of a major recording label either.

KFC through their KFC Soundbite Campaign is amongst the very few brands who've identified and successfully exploited this opportunity by building a music playlist geared at helping artists get exposure and become easier to discover by A&Rs, not just that but also grow their fan-base too.

I have taken it upon myself to go out and find the top 3 urban "internet artists" I strongly believe that brands need to work with if they want to engage with 18-24 afro millennials on campaigns because of the influence these artists have.

J. Molley

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gained popularity with his underground hit, *Hype* which currently has 144,000 YouTube streams, the popularity of *Hype* earned him features on DJ Speedsta's *I don't know*, Riky Rick's *Pick You Up Remix* and numerous other records with more established artists.

He also got "Unlocked" as a surprise act and feature artist at this year's annual Castle Lite Unlocked Concert with Chance the Rapper making him the youngest act to make an appearance on a show of that magnitude.

Fan engagements

J. Molley's debut studio album titled *Dreams Money Can't Buy* released on the 3 September 2017 currently has 284,000 streams with an average of 30,000+ streams per song these are phenomenal numbers for an independent artist.

He currently has 26,500+ Twitter followers and gets an average of 50-100+ retweets per post on his original posts and 66,800+ followers on Instagram with an average of 100+ comments per post and 30,000 + views per video.

Brand campaigns

Steers Respek Nation campaign

The Steers Respek Nation campaign was a Steers collaboration with *The Plug* an online urban magazine documenting hip-hop. The campaign was all about celebrating new age pioneers and J. Molley was profiled and celebrated as one of them.



Steers celebrates culture with launch of Respek Nation campaign

DNA Brand Architects 13 Nov 2017



Hip-hop artist, J. Molley. © Zkhiphani.com

Shane Eagle

The

first time the South Africans masses got introduced to “Shane Eagle” whose real name is Shane Patrick Hughes was through the Vuzu *The Hustle* TV Show, in season 1 and in partnership with KFC. The show’s objective was to find the next biggest South African hip-hop artist and Shane Eagle made it to the top 4 contestants and arguably the show’s most commercially successful contestant to date in its two seasons of airing.

Fan engagements

Shane Eagle’s debut studio album titled *Yellow* independently under his own label Eagle Entertainment released on the 31 August 2017 was reported to have done 1,1 million digital streams in November the same year just 3 months after being released and currently sits on 2 million streams to date.



Hip-hop artist, Shane Eagle © Zkhiphani.com

His album debut music video titled *Let It Flow* currently sits on 668,449+ YouTube views and 1083 comments. Shane currently has 325,000+ Twitter followers and gets 350-400+ retweets per tweet he posts. He 249,000+ Instagram followers and average 100-150+ comments per post. He has 194,000+ Facebook fans.

Brand campaigns

Mobicel Brand Affinity campaign

Shane Eagle was part of a Mobicel influencer campaign launched in December 2016. The campaign aligned the hottest youth influencers in the creative space making waves with the Mobicel brand where they appeared on a TVC.

Steers Respek Nation campaign

Shane Eagle was also part of the Steers Respek Nation Campaign profiled and celebrated as a new age pioneer alongside J. Molley and Pretoria based rapper TTGO who was on Season 2 of Vuzu’s *The Hustle*.

Ellesse clothing brand

Shane Eagle is currently a brand ambassador for heritage brand, Ellesse a deal he signed in February this year.

A-Reece

“A-Reece”,

whose real name is, Lehlogonolo Ronald Mataboge, first caught everyone’s attention when he released *Cassper’s Picture* a song inspired by South African rapper Cassper Nyovest independently recorded and published currently sitting on 120,000 YouTube streams.

He released the *Cutaways* EP on 29 September 2016, which consists of songs that didn't make the cut for his debut album *Paradise* and currently sits on 30,000+ streams. His debut album was later released on 21 October 2016 and topped the No.1 spot on iTunes just under 24 hours after its release.

Fan engagements

A-Reece left his label at the start of 2017 to pursue a career as an independent artist and just reached 1 million YouTube views on *Somewhere in Honeydew*, a music video he released independently in September last year. The song is followed by *On My Own* also release independently and sits on 205,000+ YouTube views and *A Real Nigga Tale* with 127,000+ YouTube views

A-Reece has 582,000+ Twitter followers and gets an average of 700-1000+ retweets per post. He has 210,000+ Instagram followers and an average of 100-150+ comments per post with 25,000+ views per video. His Facebook book fan page has 95,800+ followers and gets an average of 30+ organic shares per post.

Brand campaigns

Debonairs Awesome Foursome campaign

A-Reece was one of the influencers used on the Debonairs Awesome Foursome campaign Debonairs Pizza digital ran earlier this year in partnership with Zkhiphani.com to drive awareness around the Awesome Foursome Pizza.



Hip-hop artist, A-Reece © Zkhiphani.com



Debonairs Pizza launches 'Awesome Foursome'

Nahana Communications Group 11 Jan 2018



ABOUT BONGA MPUNGOSE SMANGA

Bonga Mpungose is the co-founder and New Business Director of FRESHAF a business to business and business to consumer branded content and content marketing specialist. The business has over 11 years of experience in the field with clients that range from SOEs to blue-chip private sector businesses. Fresh AF is also the publisher of Zkhiphani, SA Creatives and Mgosi it's own in house publications serving over a million-plus page-views and impressions across it's network on a monthly basis.

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