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Young, Gifted and Fly: Music's 18 and Under Club Is Exploding

Republic Records and Sony Music Nashville are among labels focusing on the teen set, as THR talks to the emerging artists in music's next wave, from Ramón Vega to Luh Tyler to Angelina Jordan and more.

BY MESFIN FEKADU  JUNE 9, 2023 9:30AM



In 2020, 18-year-old Billie Eilish's alternative pop album that was created in her Los Angeles bedroom helped her become the youngest act to sweep the top four categories at the Grammys.

A year later, the pop-rock sound of Olivia Rodrigo made her a global superstar and the poster child for modern teen angst. That same year, fellow 17-year-old The Kid LAROI topped the charts with his Justin Bieber-assisted banger "Stay." And in 2022, Yahritza Martínez, of the trio Yahritza y Su Esencia, was 14 when she wrote "Soy el Único," which became a No. 1 Latin hit and reached No. 20 on the pop charts.

Kanii



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Age 17

Genre Jersey club, R&B

Influences Michael Jackson, The Weeknd, Brent Faiyaz

How would you describe your sound? “My sonic identity can be described as a captivating fusion of dance, pop and R&B elements. Embodied within my music are vibrant and rhythmic pop production nuances, accompanied by smooth and catchy vocal melodies. Imogen Heap is a huge inspiration, especially her vocal production, and I try to incorporate the same level of care to my vocals.”

If you could open on tour for any artist, who would it be and why?

“The Weeknd. The world he has built around his artistry has created the same kind of ravenous fandom I aspire to create and cultivate.”

Where do you see yourself musically in five years? “Hopefully I am one of the biggest and youngest artists in the U.S. I hope to inspire the next generation of young artists, and I would love to win a Grammy.”