

EVENTS/CAUSES

Mercedes-Benz hosts Evolution Tour to reach younger consumers

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Mercedes-Benz Evolution Tour

By NANCY BUCKLEY

Mercedes-Benz is hosting a summer and fall concert series across the United States featuring three rising artists.

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The concert series will be in major cities throughout the U.S. and each location will host a test drive of a CLA and GLA in a convenient nearby location surrounding the event. Mercedes-Benz's involvement with this concert tour will likely connect the brand with younger consumers.

"The assumed price-point for Mercedes-Benz skews older, so what better way to connect to the next generation of young professionals than to partner with some smart and awesome bands," said Sam Santarelli, executive vice president/creative at [Brightline Interactive](#), Alexandria, VA.

"I think Mercedes makes a strong argument that their cars are a blend of technology and art," he said. "Since music really is the blend between art and technology, Mercedes-Benz's argument is strengthened and maybe even won when the two are paired.

"Taking this pairing to nine cities gives Mercedes a footprint in all the major markets to

turn young potential luxury car customers into Mercedes-Benz customers, live and in-person. Plus, concerts are fun, but as we all know, they can be a bit 'dirty.' Add Mercedes to the mix and that fun time just got a lot classier, and who wouldn't want that?"

Mr. Santarelli is not affiliated with Mercedes-Benz, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Mercedes-Benz was unable to comment by press deadline.

Test drive tour

The Evolution Tour will have nine concerts in nine different cities across the U.S. The concert series will feature Alabama Shakes, Young the Giant and Mayer Hawthorne.

Test drives will occur during the weekends prior to the concert's arrival in each city. However, some test drive locations do not have a concert, such as Philadelphia, where during the weekend prior to the New York concert, the King of Prussia Mall in Philadelphia will host a test drive event.



Locations of the concert tour

The test drive will include a spin in the new CLA and GLA vehicles.

Mercedes-Benz's tour is aiming to bring together music, art and technology. Interested fans can enter to win tickets to any tour location by submitting a photo that captures the spirit of the tour or writing a note about why they should be at the concert.

The three artists are all relatively new artists. Mayer Hawthorne is a DJ, rapper, singer and producer from Michigan. Young the Giant is a California-based alternative rock band. Alabama Shakes was nominated for a Grammy for Best New Artist and Best Rock Performance in 2012, and is a rock band from Alabama.



Artists that will be part of the tour

Alabama Shakes will kick off the tour in New York at the end of July, and the series will continue through until the Los Angeles show on Nov. 6.

Reaching the youth

The use of musical events to showcase a brand is an effective way for luxury marketers to reach younger audiences. Sponsoring, hosting, taking part or outfitting an event a brand can create awareness in unusual settings.

For example, Italian fashion label Versace and French design house Givenchy boosted brand awareness through product placement on a world stage.

Both brands designed costumes for pop star Beyoncé Knowles-Carter for her Mrs. Carter Show World Tour, with their creations unveiled during the European part of her tour that began on Feb. 24. This gave the brands global exposure, both on-stage and online ([see story](#)).

Similarly, private aviation company XOJet partnered with Jazz Aspen Snowmass to offer its private-air concierge access service, likely in an attempt to increase visibility in a younger market.

The concierge access service allowed Jazz Aspen Snowmass National Council and Board members to fly to and from Aspen year-round for exclusive prices for any JAS music event or festival. Getting the attention of affluent tastemakers surrounding an event populated by a younger generation can appeal to both sets of demographics and increase visibility of XOJet ([see story](#)).

A music-driven event series will help Mercedes captivate the attention of younger consumers.

"Younger generations will gain familiarity with luxury brands which may lead to future brand affinity," said Chris Ramey, president of [Affluent Insights](#), Miami, FL.

"Planting seeds is essential for every luxury brand," he said. "Consistently courting coming clients is key to craving the car. Or, for that matter, any product you may be selling."

Final Take

Nancy Buckley, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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