

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

How music playlists are suddenly du jour with luxury brands

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Fondation Louis Vuitton. Image credit: LVMH

By DIANNA DILWORTH

Louis Vuitton, Gucci, Bottega Veneta and Alexander McQueen are among the luxury brands turning to music and entertainment to keep their audience happy and engaged.

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Marketers are using social media to release creative playlists and concerts and cooking videos to inspire consumers stuck at home in lockdown.

"Music, like fashion, plays an important role in helping us articulate feelings, moods, desires and beliefs," said Brian Lee, senior principal researcher at market researcher Gartner, Washington.

"The two are very interconnected as forms of human expression and fashion has always relied on music to help express itself," he said. "Music, like fashion, will help us capture and explain a pivotal moment in our shared human experience.

"On the surface, brands are trying to keep audiences engaged and happy. We are also seeing brands leverage their internal creative teams, prior collaborations and partnerships to extend that brand halo and provide brand fans with a peek behind the scenes into the brand's world, an activity that luxury consumers respond well to."



The Rose dress from Alexander McQueen's autumn-winter 2019 collection. Image credit: Alexander McQueen

Playlists

"British fashion label and Kering brand Alexander McQueen has created a Spotify channel to hear playlists inspired by Alexander McQueen shows and featuring their soundtracks: [http://on.AlexanderMcQueen.com/McQueenSpotify](http://on.AlexanderMcQueen.com/McQueenSpotify#NowPlaying) [#NowPlaying](#) 9 (see story).

Another Kering brand, Bottega Veneta, has created a playlist for its Bottega Residency featuring an artist and his or her top choices across different topics (see story).

Italian fashion label Gucci, also Kering owned, is giving consumers a virtual tour inside the kitchens of Gucci Osteria da Massimo Bottura, whose latest outpost opened recently two months ago in Beverly Hills, CA. The promotional email includes a new Gucci Podcast episode hosted on Spotify, which includes the history of Gucci Osteria da Massimo Bottura in Florence as well as the [Californian outpost](#) (see story).

"Connecting consumers with the music that drives a luxury brand's design team, or what brand partners listen to for inspiration, adds another experiential layer that can help improve brand recognition and recall," Mr. Lee said.

"Broadly speaking, music should align to brand values (ethos) and brand emotions (pathos)," he said.

"We've seen some examples of brands like Alexander McQueen creating playlists that correspond directly to inspiration behind shows and fashion show soundtracks. Others have given creative control to brand partners and creative directors, letting them be the voice of the brand in the same way they have before."



Fondation Louis Vuitton's Classe d'Excellence de Violoncelle, directed by Gautier Capuon. Image credit: LVMH

Laying the foundation

LVMH's Fondation Louis Vuitton curated a virtual concert series from its archives on the brand's social media pages over the past week.

Consumers could watch [#FLVfromhome](#) on the Fondation Louis Vuitton [Web site](#), [Facebook](#) page and [YouTube](#) channel to tune in.

"Observatory of Light. In situ work" by Daniel Buren, a Fondation Louis Vuitton work that ran from May 2016 to May 2017 kicked off the video series. The video retraced Mr. Buren's installation with Suzanne Pag, artistic director of the Fondation Louis Vuitton and Nicolas Paschal, the project engineer.

A video of minimalist music composer Steve Reich was also featured.

A concert of young cellists, Classe d'Excellence de Violoncelle, directed by Gautier Capuon was also included.

"Music will continue to instill the same feelings of hope and aspiration, motivate us to act (i.e. workout, call a friend or family member) or just help us feed thoughts of nostalgia," Mr. Lee said.

"While we must remain indoors and perhaps separated from friends and family, music allows us to retain some connection to others and help alleviate the distance and anxiety," he said.

Brand-owned social media accounts and Web site content are great vehicles for promotion of brand-owned content.

"Social media was already a large and growing part of brand marketing for luxury brands, and this pandemic has only heightened this need for brands to shift assets online onto digital channels," he said. "In theory, this shouldn't be too much of a stretch for brand marketing teams to execute."



Peloton had to settle a music licensing lawsuit over use of 2,468 unlicensed songs

Business decisions

Brands should ensure that they have the correct permission in place when creating these mixtapes to avoid any business issues.

Exercise equipment company Peloton recently settled a music licensing lawsuit with members of the National Music Publishers Association (NMPA) that sought \$300 million in damages from the interactive-fitness company's alleged use of 2,468 unlicensed songs.

This offers cautionary guidance brands should follow. A Spotify or iTunes partnership could be the best option to ensure that the artist is correctly paid.

"Brands should think twice before they select and play music in any branded promotional event, virtual or otherwise," Mr. Lee said.

"At this point in time, when budgets are already stretched thin, it's definitely not worth it for a brand marketing leader to not consult with their legal team," he said.