

FOOD AND BEVERAGE

Hennessy inspires young talent, spotlights Ukrainian musician

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Hennessy spotlights Ukrainian band Onuka for US audiences amid war in Eastern Europe. Image credit: Hennessy

By NORA HOWE

LVMH-owned Cognac brand Hennessy is honoring Ukrainian tradition and pop culture in a nostalgic campaign aimed at inspiring emerging artists.

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The short film, starring electro-folk band Onuka frontwoman Nata Zhizhchenko, was part of a larger international music project last year, but as the conflict between Russia and Ukraine persists, Hennessy is resharing the campaign with U.S. audiences. By combining traditional folk with modern electronic music, Ms. Zhizhchenko pays homage to her family's past.

All I Need

In a nearly seven-minute vignette, Ms. Zhizhchenko expresses the magnitude of her family's influence on her own musical endeavors, and how important her grandfather was to the rich history of their family.

"I remember the house in Chernihiv where my grandmother and grandfather lived, in which they had a workshop where my grandfather created musical instruments," she says in the film. "The atmosphere was very creative.

"My grandfather would take a flute or a seven-string guitar and my grandmother would take a bandura from the trunk, and we would have musical evenings."

In a piece of archived footage of her grandfather speaking on stage, he expresses his admiration for his granddaughter, saying, "Natalka is my future."

Onuka is a Ukrainian electro-folk band

Footage of Ms. Zhizhchenko and her band playing energetically in front of vast audiences underscores the transformative nature of music, and of traditional folk music in Ukraine.

In making her music her own, however, the musician explains how she combines various elements to bring arguably opposing sounds together in harmony. She blends different genres from a number of eras to create an original sound.

By composing her music this way, Ms. Zhizhchenko confidently brings her grandfather into everything she does from recording to performing on stage.

"My past is reflected in me in the sounds of Onuka," she says. "It shows us from antiquity through the modern form."

The second half of the campaign features a music video for Onuka's "TY," which was released as part of their 2021 album *KOLIR*.



The campaign originally aired last year as part of an international grant project for young artists. Image credit: Hennessy

The "All I Need" project was launched in summer 2021 to shed a light on musical influence around the world, and support young artists through a grant awarded to those who draw on tradition in their music. The vignette with Ms. Zhizhchenko, however, has taken on more resonance amid the current climate.

Music and Cognac

There are few better pairs than music and Cognac, and Hennessy has made that blatantly clear with a multitude of campaigns and initiatives centered on the power of music and movement.

Last year, the brand tapped Grammy Award-winning rapper and songwriter Nas in a campaign celebrating Black legacy and excellence. In a short film, "Dear Destiny," Nas writes and reads aloud a letter he wrote to his daughter, in which he reflects on the rich history of Black culture.

The campaign also highlighted Hennessy's Never Stop Never Settle Society which invests and empowers Black entrepreneurs who make lasting impacts on their communities ([see story](#)).

More recently, the brand partnered with French choreographers and models Les Twins to develop an electric campaign built on creativity and expression through dance.

Hennessy took artistic innovation to a new level, using motion capture technology to replicate the energy and dance of Les Twins' live performance to translate into designs for each bottle ([see story](#)).

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