



SWEET HARMONY: FASHION, MUSIC & RETAIL

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Retailers can take a lot from the music industry as boundaries between artists and retailers blur, finds Retail Focus.

'Bricks 'n' mortar retailers can up their game in terms of experience by being a little more rock 'n' roll,' says Alasdair Lennox, executive creative director, EMEA at FITCH. Lennox held a seminar at EuroShop earlier this month, discussing 'Shopkeeping to Thrill Seeking: What Retailers Can Learn From Music Festivals.'

'If you think about music festivals, they hold the power of visceral experience. Live gigs are about more than just listening to the music as you would from your living room: they are multisensorial and give the audience the chance to become immersed and engaged in the moment,' he says.

Lennox says stores need to start thinking of themselves as a performance space too. 'Rather than obsess about space metre-age and density of merchandise, metrics should be more about the time spent within the environment and frequency of customer return. Live music festivals have personalities that breed excitement and emotion. Why shouldn't retailers offer that similar experience? If they offer an experience that makes for lasting memories then this will undoubtedly leave customers coming back for more.

'Our founder, the late Rodney Fitch, was

quoted saying: "Retail is at the crossroads of culture and commerce". This quote nails it for me, as in I do not see any reason for a boundary or division between the music industry and retail industry. All artists need a stage: a podium, and what better way to showcase your talent, to perform and connect with your fans than by becoming part of their everyday lives? Merchandising and music have long had a connection. Think of live gigs, where you can pick up anything from branded t-shirts to mugs and even CDs. With so many artists now becoming household brand names, it makes perfect sense for them to move their brand into the retail space. It's the optimum showground for artists and can offer customers something close to a theatrical event on the high street. Brands and retailers can and should capitalise on the collective power of their customers - and this is what artists like Kanye West, The 1975 and Avenged Sevenfold have done with their pop-up stores. They've quite cleverly mobilised people and driven their desire to experience and interact with their products in-store,' says Lennox.

He cites Topshop Oxford Street as a great example of how fashion, music and

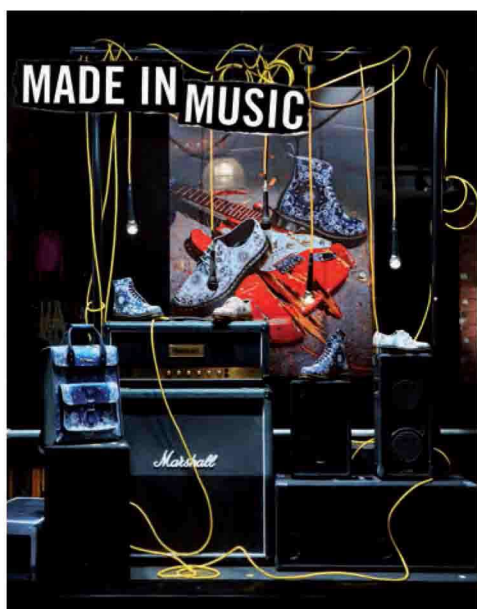
retail merge more within the physical space, with its live-streamed catwalk shows during London Fashion Week.

'As this starts to happen, mind sets will evolve and retailers will feel they have the right to become thrill seekers, brands will act more like rock bands and designers will facilitate it all. The future of bricks 'n' mortar will become the heartland for stirring emotions - much like the multisensorial music festivals we've come to cherish.'

A study by Harris Group found that 72 per cent of millennials prefer to spend more money on experiences than on material things. 'If retailers can offer something bigger than just a place to transact, they'll be able to pull in much bigger audiences,' says Ross Bailey, founder of Appear Here, which specialises in finding temporary spaces for brands. 'Already we're seeing the boundaries blur between artists and retailers, with singers like Justin Bieber partnering with fashion retailers to design exclusive tour merchandise and stores beginning to hold their own gigs in store. The success of these early projects suggests that we haven't seen the last of it.'

In February, grime artist Stormzy took over one of the retail spaces listed on Appear Here to host a secret gig, and there's another major artist currently looking for a store for his latest project. >

Above: House of Vans is purely an experiential space - you can't buy a pair of Vans but you can see intimate gigs there.



Bailey says there are three key actions that brands and retailers can take from the music scene when considering pop-ups:

1. Collaborate with like-minded brands. Not only does this help increase footfall, but it also turns the pop-up into more of an 'event.' The increasing popularity of music festivals over solo gigs is a great example of this.
2. Make it exclusive. The pop-up doesn't have to last for a long time. If anything, a shorter pop-up creates more hype and uses the idea of scarcity to encourage people to come into the shop before it's gone.
3. Connect with a key moment. In the music scene, artists will build the hype around an album launch, festival or upcoming anniversary. By attaching yourself to a big moment you can capitalise on the hype that's already built up around it and create a bigger experience as a result.

By partnering with other brands and creatives, Jamie XX was able to create a bigger story around the launch of his single and give fans a bigger experience of it.

American heavy metal band Avenged Sevenfold held pop-ups in New York, Los Angeles and The Vlauder Lauder General Store in Camden Market to coincide with The Stage World Tour and its two concerts at The O2. The pop-ups stocked a variety of merchandise and limited-edition items, as well as offering fans a meet and greet with the band.

Several artists have their own fashion lines - artist Paul Weller and retailer Phil Bickley have collaborated on Real Stars Are Rare; Beyonce's Ivy Park and Liam Gallagher's Pretty Green to name a few.

The latter is a great example of fashion and music collaboration. Founded in 2009 by former Oasis frontman Liam Gallagher, the brand unites people through a love of music and fashion. The three-storey Carnaby Street store is named after a track by The Jam, and includes a vinyl section and events space.

Carnaby Street has its roots firmly in the music world, including the Swinging 60s and the punk movement in the 80s, home to Mods, Skinheads, Punks and New Romantics. Music stars including Jimi Hendrix, The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, The Kinks and style icons Brigitte Bardot and Elizabeth Taylor were all Carnaby Street regulars in the 60s.

Legendary hip-hop record store Deal Real opened its doors in 2002 on Marlborough Court. The venue hosted the likes of Amy Winehouse, Kanye West, Mark Ronson, John Legend, Mos Def and Lupe Fiasco. It became London's epicentre for hip-hop and urban youth-culture, responsible for showcasing, supporting and nurturing a wealth of burgeoning talent, many of whom went on to attain mainstream success. Deal Real was brought back to life in 2015 with the Deal Real Legacy pop-up shop at 14 Newburgh Street.

In 2012 Carnaby London collaborated with The Rolling Stones to celebrate the band's 50th anniversary. Today, Carnaby Echoes, a walking tour app, traces the vibrant music history from the opening of Jazz club Murray's on Beak Street in 1913 through to the present day.

Adidas Originals on Foubert's Place had a signing with Stormzy in February and has strong ties to Kanye West, launching his

Pop-ups work well for artists, and are usually timed around an album launch and tour. 'The music industry has found a new fan experience. By making merch a bigger part of the whole experience they've created a new, more accessible way for artists and bands to connect with their fans. Physical stores are another outlet for them to explore their creativity and bring their inspiration behind their music to life. These physical spaces give fans another glimpse into their world and what they stand for,' says Bailey.

Stores are also a more accessible way for fans to reach them than concert tickets. Kanye West's Life of Pablo pop-ups only lasted for 24 hours, but they launched in prime shopping destinations in 21 cities around the world. It took the Life of Pablo tour, quite literally, to the streets.

The pop-up Jamie XX launched to promote his hit single 'Good Times' is also a good example of how a retail experience can work well for artists. The team turned a small boutique on the Kingsland Road into a kaleidoscopic record store to promote Good Times. The success of the store was helped by collaborations with local businesses, as well as the launch of an in-house pop-up radio station featuring some of Jamie's popular contemporaries.



Yeezy boosts in the flagship store in person. It has also collaborated with Rita Ora and Pharrell Williams.

Meanwhile, Dr. Martens is opening a new store in Camden Market in April. The brand's designs were first sold in the area at The British Boot Company shop, which became a favourite haunt of bands such as the Sex Pistols and Madness. The new 371 sq m space will house its European flagship store, a virtual footwear experience, a mini museum with rare pieces from music legends, and a live music lounge. Dr. Martens has partnered with speaker maestros Marshalls on a custom-designed space for a constantly changing series of gigs and events.

For Dr. Martens' latest windows, Harlequin Design drew inspiration from the new Bandana collection along with authentic speakers, amps and electrical equipment from Marshall paying homage to the long-standing history between the brand and the music industry.

House of Vans under Waterloo Station is a noteworthy experiential space with strong music links. The venue is purely an experiential space - you can't buy a pair of Vans there but you can see intimate gigs and watch films.

'There is a need to give our consumers a physical touch point to our brand. An experience that enables them to truly feel part of something which is incredibly important to an inclusive brand like Vans. Music is incredibly important to the brand and is deeply rooted into our DNA,' says Janine Hearn, senior brand marketing manager at Vans.

Topshop and Topman embraced the music festival scene by opening a sensory balloon room inspired pop-up for the Wanderland Music and Arts Festival in the Philippines. The pop-up was designed in house in collaboration with SFD, subsequently working with manufacturers in the Philippines to produce and install on site at the festival. Visitors were encouraged to take selfies with the balloons and share on Instagram. Freebies at the booth included tote bags with five limited-edition designs, sweet treats, refreshments and a Topshop and Topman magazine.

The future of fashion, music and retail is an exciting one, bringing fans closer to their idols in a more accessible, experiential and memorable environment on the high street. **RF**

Left from top: Harlequin's latest collaboration with Dr. Martens draws inspiration from the new Bandana range along with authentic speakers, amps and electrical equipment from Marshall paying homage to the long-standing history between the brand and the music industry.

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Carnaby Street has its roots firmly in the music world, spanning as far back as the 1950s.

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Below: Pretty Green on Carnaby Street is named after a track by The Jam and includes a vinyl section and events space for live music.

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