

Industry Digest

FIRST HALF 2025



INDUSTRY HIGHLIGHTS H1 2025 **WIZKID** TOP **ALBUMS** OF 2025 TOP **SONGS** OF 2025 **FOLA'S RISE LAWRENCE OYOR MONAKY 5 YEARS OF TURNTABLE CHARTS** IN NIGERIA
THE **NIGERIAN MUSIC SCENE** IN 2025 THE INFLUENCE OF **TIKTOK** TRENDS ON MAINSTREAM MUSIC
THE GREATEST AFROBEATS STREET-HOP **ARTISTES** AFROBEATS **PRODUCERS** HIP-HOP/RAP **ARTISTES** AFROBEATS **MUSIC VIDEO** DIRECTORS **MUSIC EXEC**UTIVES **DJ**s **VJ**s **OAP**s
MUSIC **JOURNALISTS** CULTURE **PLATFORMS** AFROBEATS **SHOWS**
NEW PLAYERS IN MUSIC WITH JUSTIN UG & INI CASH **TURNTABLE RULES** ALBUMS ARE STRUGGLING **NIGERIA'S LOCA**L CONSUMPTION **IBEJI**I

All New Industry Digest

AUGUST 2025

TurnTable Charts

FROM THE EDITOR

In 2023, we launched the Industry Digest as a premium publication of TurnTable Charts, offering a monthly outlook on the ever-evolving Nigerian musical landscape.

Over the past two years, this product has provided data analytics, added context and nuances to trends, and amplified the stories of leaders and innovators shaping the industry.

We are proud to announce a rebranded version of the Industry Digest, which will now be a ***quarterly issue*** featuring even more robust data that provides insights into the albums, songs, artistes, and labels shaping Nigerian music.
The first issue of the new quarterly Industry Digest includes editorials and articles that add context to trends and individuals who shaped the first half of 2025.

In this issue, we also celebrate 25 years of Afrobeats with a list of some of the greatest artistes, songs, albums, platforms, executives, and media personalities who have played notable roles in the success and evolution of Nigerian music since 1999.

The rebranded quarterly Industry Digest coincides with our milestone of marking ***5 years of TurnTable***. It has been half a decade of collecting and aggregating Nigerian music consumption data. In this issue, we also outline the rules and guidelines that inform all the charts published by TurnTable.
We take great pleasure in our role as the leading platform in data aggregation and consumer education. The revamped Industry Digest solidifies our status as a leader in the music data and media space and reaffirms our commitment to the advancement of Nigerian music.

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INDUSTRY HIGHLIGHTS

FIRST HALF OF 2025

THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF 2025 HAVE BEEN MARKED BY PIVOTAL MOMENTS AND STRATEGIC SHIFTS IN THE NIGERIAN MUSIC ECOSYSTEM. ONE OF THE YEAR'S BIGGEST HEADLINES CAME FROM **SEYI VIBEZ, 2024'S MOST-STREAMED ARTIST**, WHO ENDED HIS LONGSTANDING RELATIONSHIP WITH DAPPER MUSIC & ENTERTAINMENT TO PARTNER WITH EMPIRE.

His debut project under the new partnership, Children of Africa – EP, delivered a career-best debut with **19 million on-demand streams (12,666 album units)** and produced his first No. 1 single as a lead artist, "SHAOLIN." He followed this with another chart-topper, "Pressure," reinforcing his superstar momentum. Shallipopi also left Dapper Music & Entertainment and made headlines with a high-profile signing to Since '93, the Sony Music joint venture credited with launching Tems and Tyla. His debut release under the label, "Laho," elevated him further, while his Plutomania Records imprint inked a distribution deal with ONErpm. The move yielded immediate returns: Famous Pluto's viral hit "Na Scra" and the accompanying Uzama The 3rd EP peaked at No. 2 on the Official Top 100 Albums Chart—ONErpm's highest charting project to date. The project also birthed the top ten hit "Ewo," a collaboration uniting Famous Pluto, Zerry DL, and Shallipopi.

Elsewhere, Wizkid's Morayo achieved a record-breaking rollout. Released just before the H1 tracking window, the album posted Wizkid's biggest debut in Nigeria and the second all-time, behind only Davido's Timeless. The project held the top spot on the Official Top 100 Albums Chart for **11 weeks**, spawning No. 1 hits "Piece of My Heart" and "Kese (Dance)."

Davido responded with his high-impact release, 5IVE, which claimed the **biggest album debut of 2025** with **33.96 million on-demand streams (22,640 album units)**. The album produced three No. 1 singles, including the six-week chart-topper "With You" featuring Omah Lay—the joint-longest No. 1 of the year so far.

Beyond the headline acts, emerging voices also made notable waves

Fido and Kunmie scored No. 1 singles while still eligible for the NXT Top Emerging Artiste Chart—a rare dual achievement. Fido's "Joy is Coming" and Kunmie's "Arike" resonated deeply with audiences, each becoming a signature anthem of the year. Others like Serotonin ("Venus"), Daecolm ("99"), Famous Pluto ("Na Scra"), and Gaise Baba ("No Turning Back II") also broke into the top ten of the singles chart while appearing on the NXT chart.

The Gospel genre has experienced a significant breakthrough in 2025

Lawrence Oyor earned three charting singles, including "Favour" and "We Will Be Many" featuring Sound of Salem, both peaking in the Top 40. His historic collaboration with Gaise Baba marked a watershed moment, debuting at No. 4 and becoming the highest-charting Gospel song in Nigerian chart history, surpassing Davido's "Stand Strong." Sound of Salem's Dominion EP also left a mark, peaking at No. 17 and maintaining a presence in the Official Top 100 Albums Chart for 17 consecutive weeks.

TurnTable's revamped Industry Digest will provide a comprehensive breakdown of consumer behavior, artist performance, and the data shaping music culture in Nigeria through the first half of 2025. On-demand streams used in this report refers to combined weighted streams from paid and freemium streaming platforms in Nigeria; Apple Music, Spotify Nigeria, YouTube, Boomplay & Audiomack. The streams are weighted according to paid or free tier systems, with the paid streaming platforms weighing more than the free ones.

BY
TURNTABLE CHARTS' EDITORIAL TEAM
JULY 2025



MID-YEAR/H1

TOP ARTISTES IN NIGERIA

Wizkid is the overall No. 1 artiste in the first half of the year with his studio album restating his status as a heavyweight artiste in the country. Asake, Davido, Seyi Vibez, and Burna Boy complete the top 5. Interestingly, Wikzid, who ranks as the overall No. 1 artiste in the country, does not place as the No. 1 artiste on either streaming or radio during the H1 period.



MID-YEAR/H1

TOP PRODUCERS IN NIGERIA

P2j is the overall No. 1 producer in the first half of the year, with his credits on 'Morayo' being responsible for his status as the biggest hitmaker of the year to date. P.Priime, Magicsticks, Blaisebeatz & Sarz complete the top 5.

TurnTable's revamped Industry Digest will provide a comprehensive breakdown of consumer behavior, artist performance, and the data shaping music culture in Nigeria through the first half of 2025

STREAMING
TOP ARTISTE

SEYI VIBEZ

Seyi Vibez is the most-streamed artiste of H1 2025 in Nigeria, slightly edging Wizkid as the most on-demand artiste in the country. The "Different Pattern" crooner tallied **360 million** on-demand streams in the country during the first half of the year, and **Wizkid** tallied 359.7 million on-demand streams as No. 2 on the list.

Asake with 290 million on-demand streams, **Davido** with 219 million on-demand streams, and **ODUMODUBLVCK** with 196.2 million on-demand streams complete the top five.

STREAMING
TOP PRODUCER

P2J

P2J tops the streaming list for producers in the first half of the year, while **TBM**, **P.Priime**, **Magicsticks**, and **Dibs** complete the top five.

STREAMING
TOP SONG

JOY IS COMING

The top two most-streamed songs in Nigeria during the mid-year of 2025 were by two artistes who had never appeared on any chart before this time in 2024.

Fido's "Joy Is Coming" is the overwhelming No. 1 with **68.6 million on-demand streams**, while Kunmie's ***"Arike"*** ranks at No. 2 with 41 million on-demand streams.

Lead singles for albums by veteran artistes follow at No. 3 and No. 4; ***"Funds"*** by Davido featuring ODUMODUBLVCK & Chike (40.7M) and ***"Kese (Dance)"*** (39.7M) while a single by the favorite for the highly coveted 'Next Rated' award Fola completes the top five – ***"who does that?"*** featuring his Dangbana Republik label boss, Bella Shmurda.



RADIO
TOP ARTISTE

DAVIDO

Davido is the biggest artiste on the radio in the first half of the year, racking up a highly impressive **6.77 billion in radio airplay** impressions during the first six months of the year.

Asake follows at No. 2 with 6.24 billion in radio airplay impressions – they are the only two artistes to surpass the 5-billion mark during the period.

Wizkid (4.84bn), Burna Boy (4.35bn), and Rema (4.15bn) complete the top five.

RADIO
TOP PRODUCER

BLAISEBEATZ

Blaisebeatz is the biggest hitmaker on the radio in the first half of the year, with his song credits accounting for **4.53 billion in radio airplay impressions**. **P2J** and **P.Priime** follow at No. 2 and No. 3 with 3.93 billion in radio reach and 3.92 billion in radio reach, respectively.

Sarz (3.81bn) and **Magicsticks** (3.45bn) complete the top five.

RADIO
TOP SONG

KESE (DANCE)

Wizkid's "Kese (Dance)" is the leading song on the radio so far in the first part of the year, with **1.62 billion in radio airplay impressions**. Fido's ***"Joy Is Coming"*** ranks at No. 2 with 1.25 billion in radio airplay impressions. These are the only two tracks to surpass the 1-billion mark during the period.

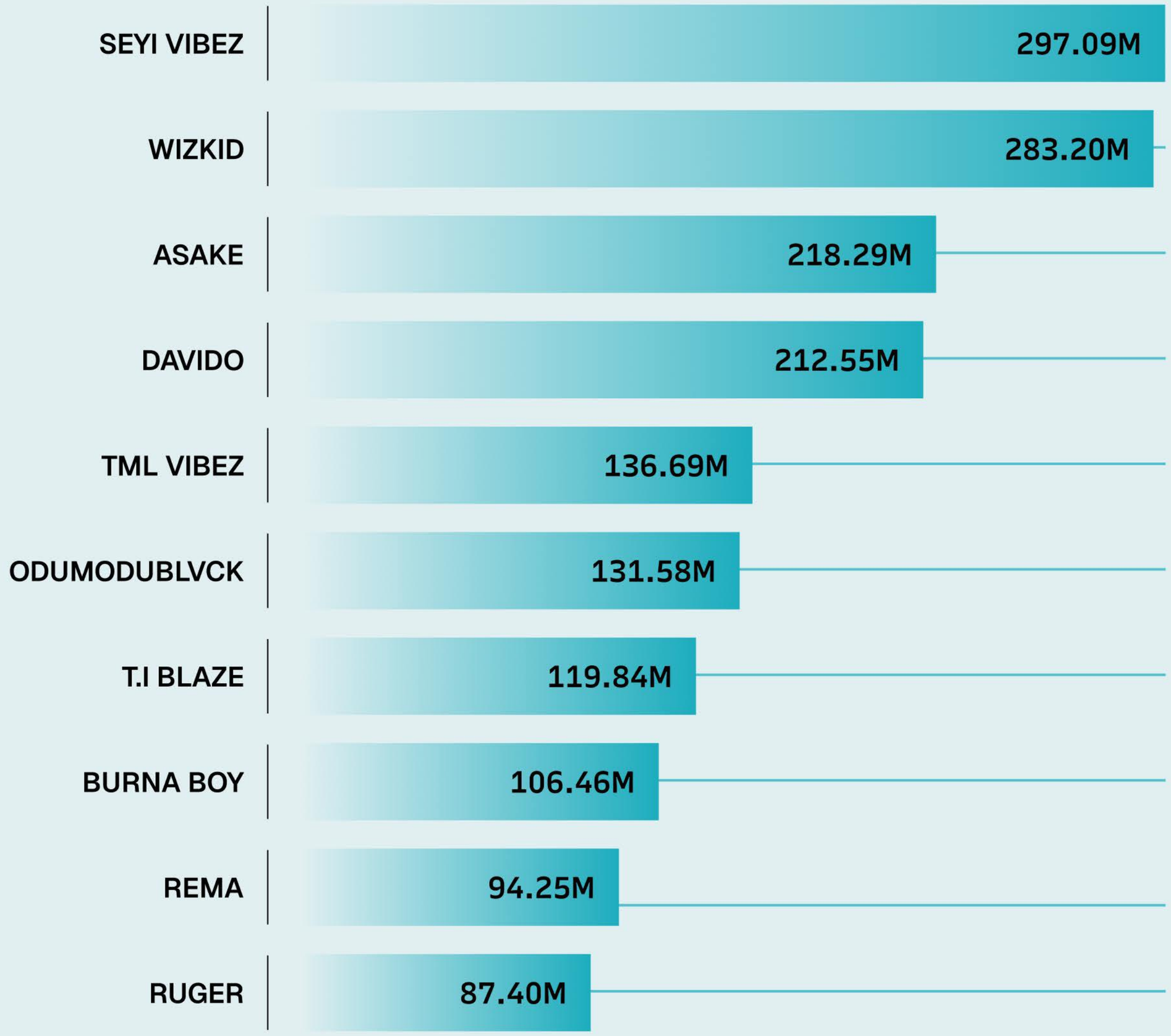
Rema's ***"Baby (Is It A Crime)"*** [967.5M], Ruger & Tiwa Savage's ***"Toma Toma"*** (957M), and Davido's ***"Funds"*** with ODUMODUBLVCK & Chike (941.8M) complete the top five.

TOP ALBUMS

Wizkid's ***Morayo***, originally released in November 2024, has sustained its momentum into 2025, emerging as the **most-streamed and best-selling album during the first half of the year**. The album has tallied 227 million on-demand streams in Nigeria, the equivalent of 151,333 album units sold in the country.

Davido's ***'5IVE'*** (173.5M), Asake's ***'Lungu Boy'*** (112M), T.I Blaze's ***'Shakur (Deluxe)'*** [111M], and Seyi Vibez's ***'Children of Africa – EP'*** (89.1M) make up the rest of the top five.

STREAMING | TOP 10 ARTISTES

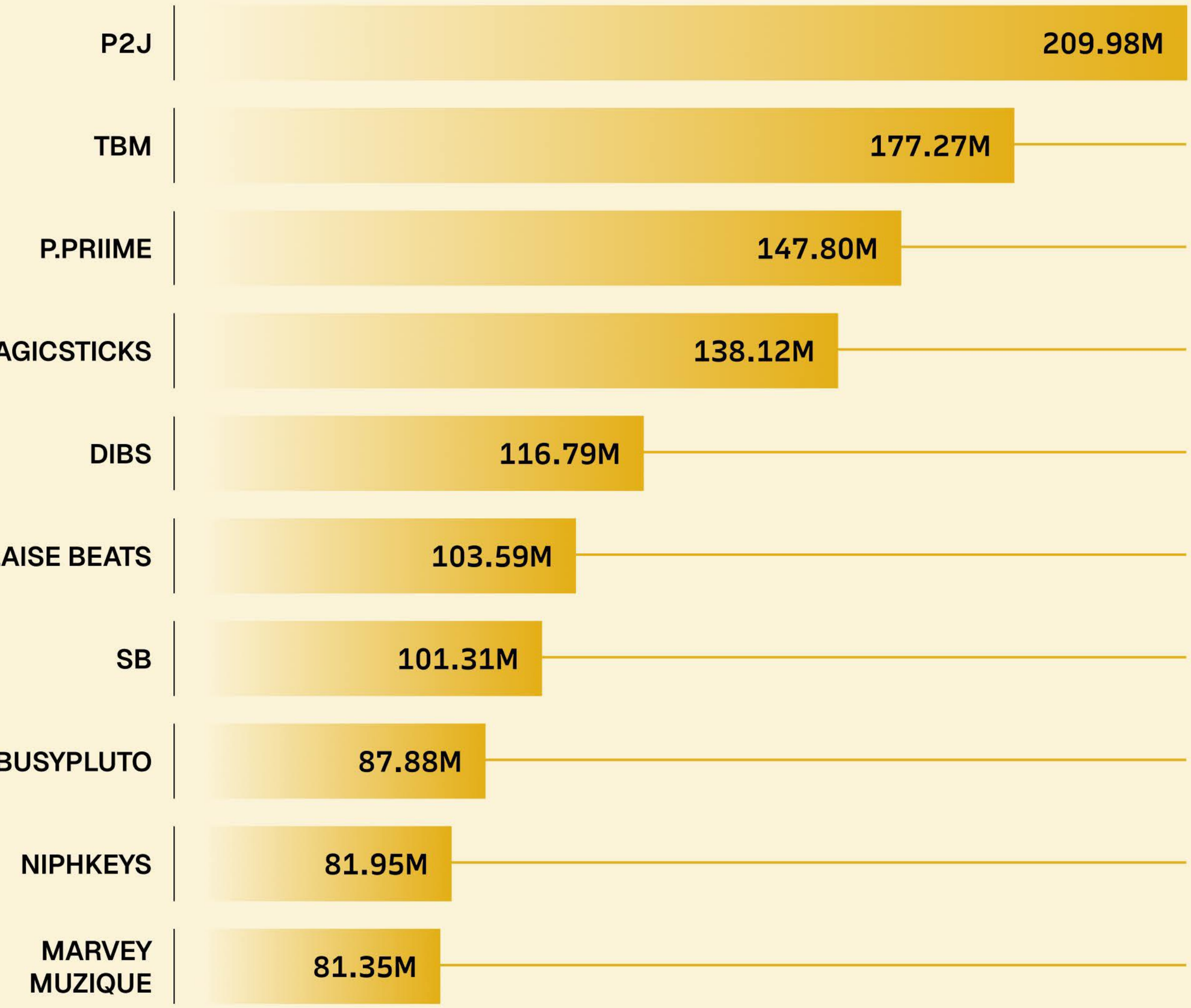


NEXT 10 ARTISTES

11	**Fola**	71.14M
12	**Bnxn**	68.96M
13	**Fireboy Dml**	57.95M
14	**Balloranking**	55.83M
15	**Zinoleesky**	53.65M
16	**Omah Lay**	50.79M
17	**Ayo Maff**	50.51M
18	**Llona**	49.65M
19	**Young John**	47.85M
20	**Black Sherif**	43.13M

TURNTABLE CHARTS

STREAMING | TOP 10 PRODUCERS

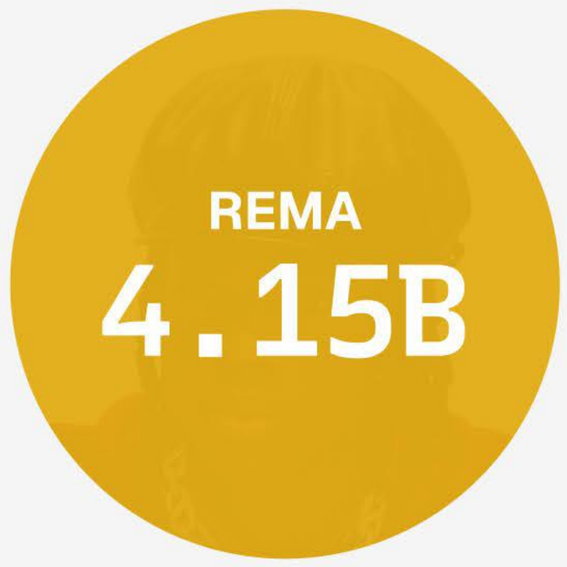


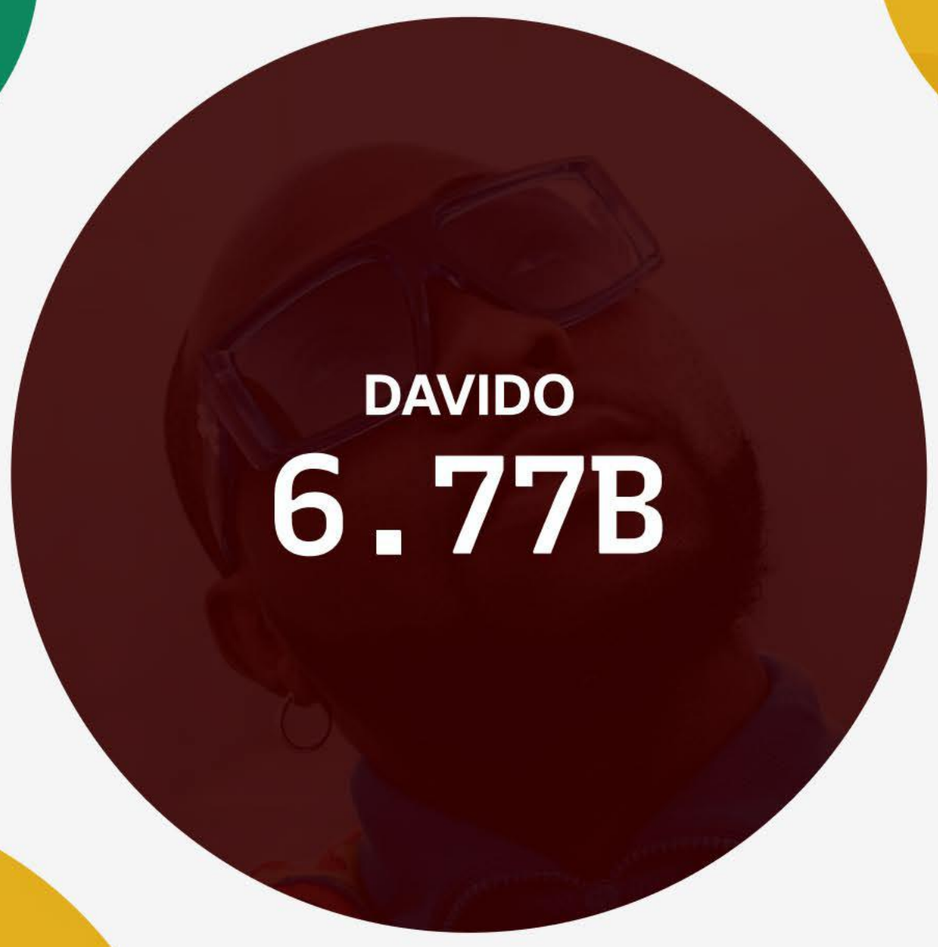
NEXT 10 PRODUCERS

11	**Larrylanes**	79.67M
12	**Semzi**	75.88M
13	**Sarz**	74.24M
14	**Choke_Boi**	70.98M
15	**Gaetan Judd**	67.47M
16	**Producer X**	64.48M
17	**Ucee**	53.28M
18	**Rexxie**	52.00M
19	**Kukbeats**	47.50M
20	**Tempoe**	46.37M

RADIO | TOP 10 ARTISTES



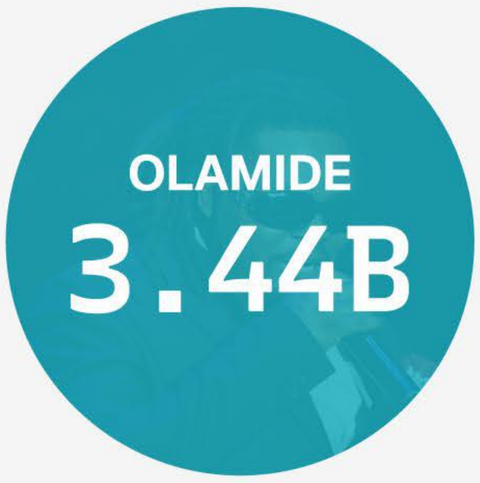


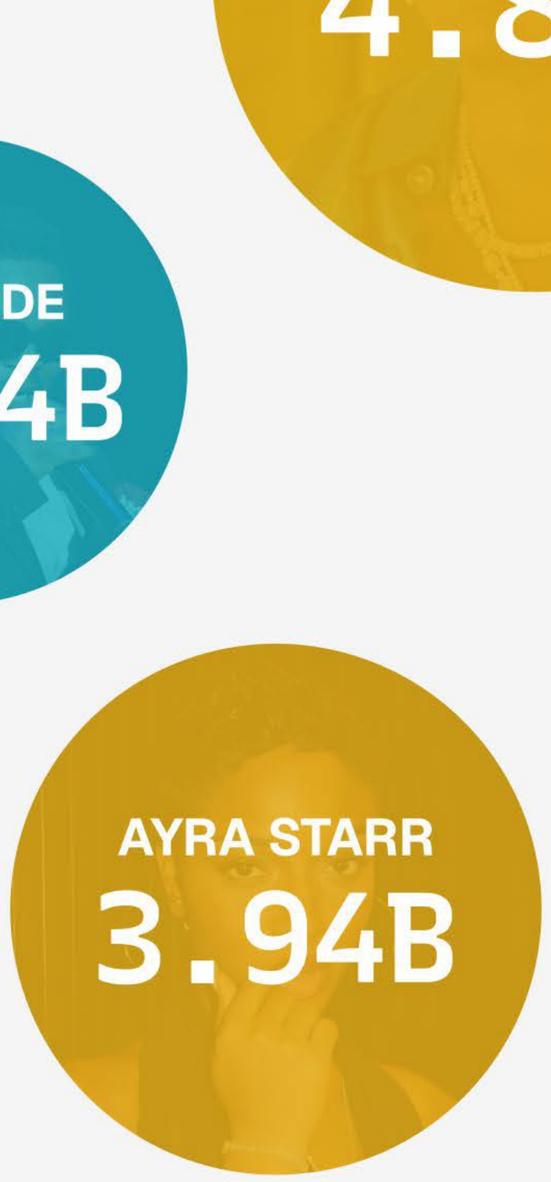






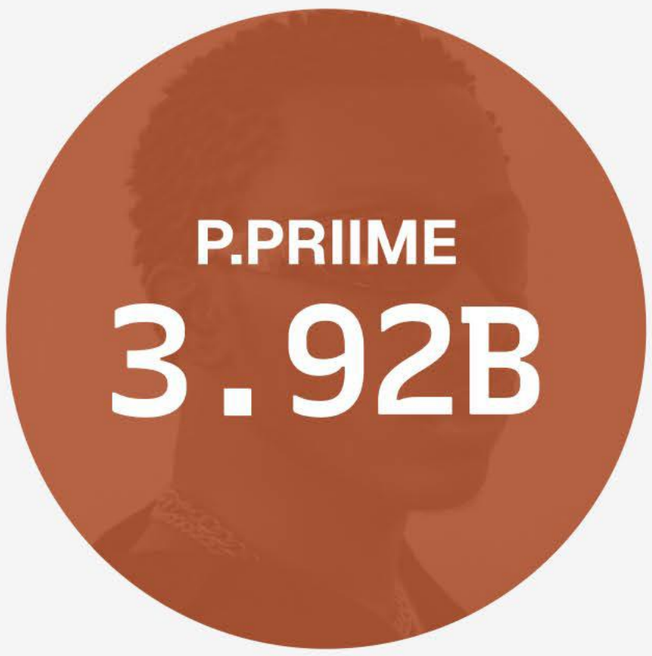






TURNTABLE CHARTS

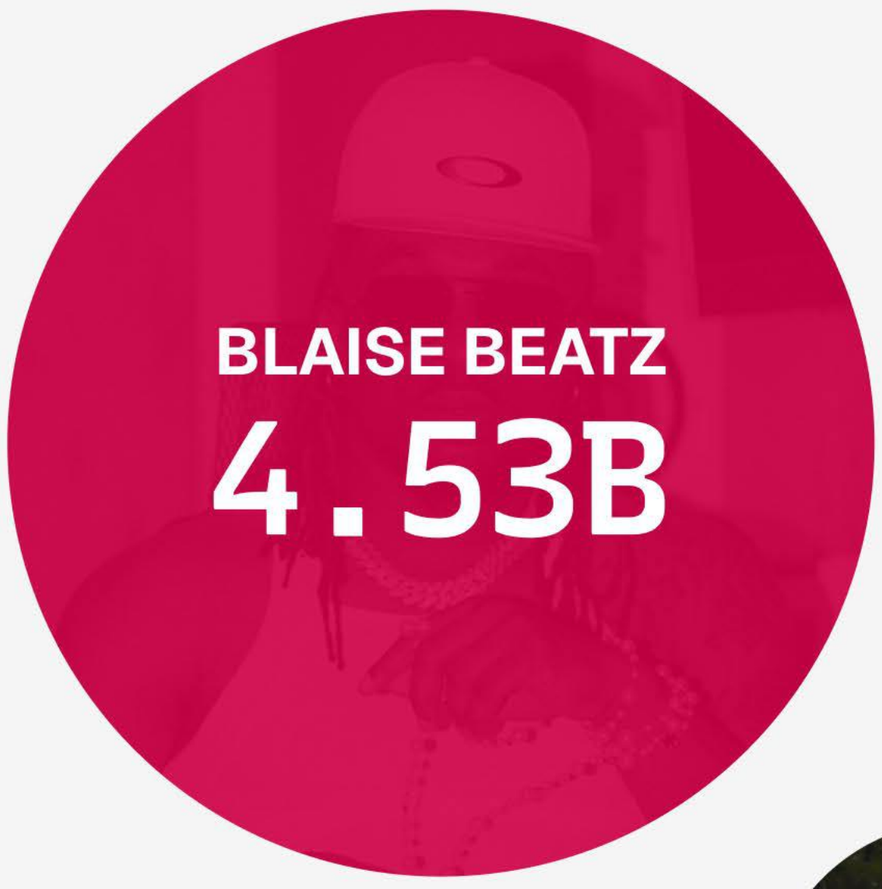
RADIO | TOP 10 PRODUCERS



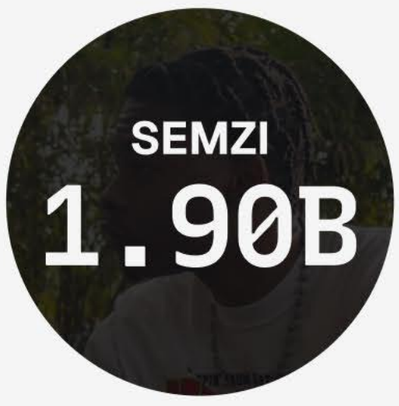






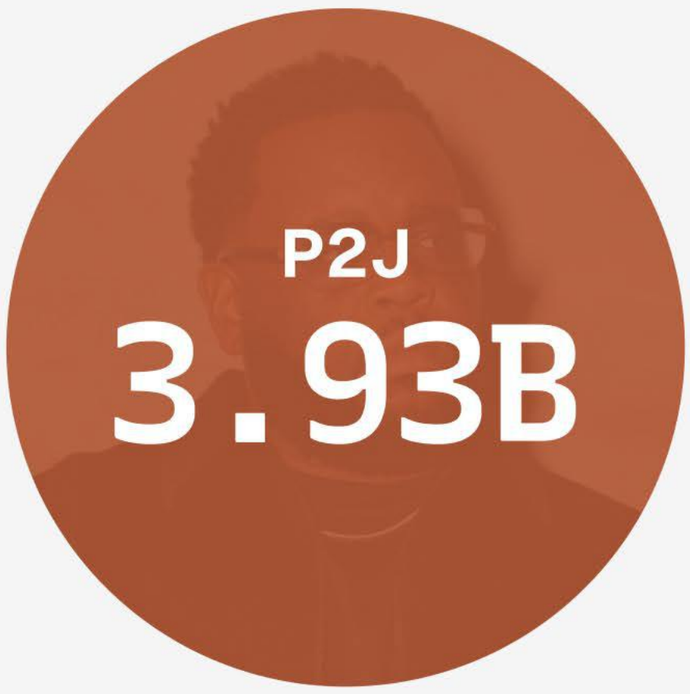












MARKET SHARE

NO. 1

EMPIRE is the leading company with a **24.68%** share of streaming in Nigeria during the first half of the year; **Asake (1st), Seyi Vibez (2nd) and Burna Boy (3rd)** account for over 32% of the total streaming volume of EMPIRE during the period.

NO. 2

Virgin Music follows at No. 2 with **18.96%** market share of streaming. The company's partnership with Dapper Music continues to yield results in Nigeria – two different albums by T.I Blaze & Tml Vibez topped the official albums chart in Nigeria during the H1 period of 2025. This marked the first chart topper for both artistes.

NO. 3

Dapper Music ranks at No. 3 with a **17.62%** market share of streaming. Albums released by Seyi Vibez in 2022, 2023 and 2024 account for the largest share of the company's streaming share but he is followed closely by Tml Vibez (18.47% to 17.09%) as the two biggest on its repertoire. T.I Blaze makes up the top 3 for Dapper Music.

EMPIRE & Virgin Music

MAKE UP 43.64% OF TOTAL STREAMING IN NIGERIA IN H1 2025

AN EMERGING DUOPOLY

EMPIRE & Virgin Music make up 43.64% of total streaming in Nigeria in H1 2025, signaling an emerging domination by the two companies in the country. 13 of the top 20 most-streamed artistes in Nigeria during the first half of the year release music under or distribute music through either of these two companies.

MARKET SHARE

GENRE

Afro-Pop & Street-Hop are the two most dominant genres in Nigeria during the first half of the year with *41.8%* & *31.4%* respectively.

RnB is a distant third with 10.2% while **Hip-Hop/Rap** ranks at No. 4 with 6.3% (Hip-Hop/Rap accounts for rap music by non-Nigerian artistes as opposed to any other genre by foreigners which is typically classified as 'International'). Gospel makes up the top five with 2.6%.

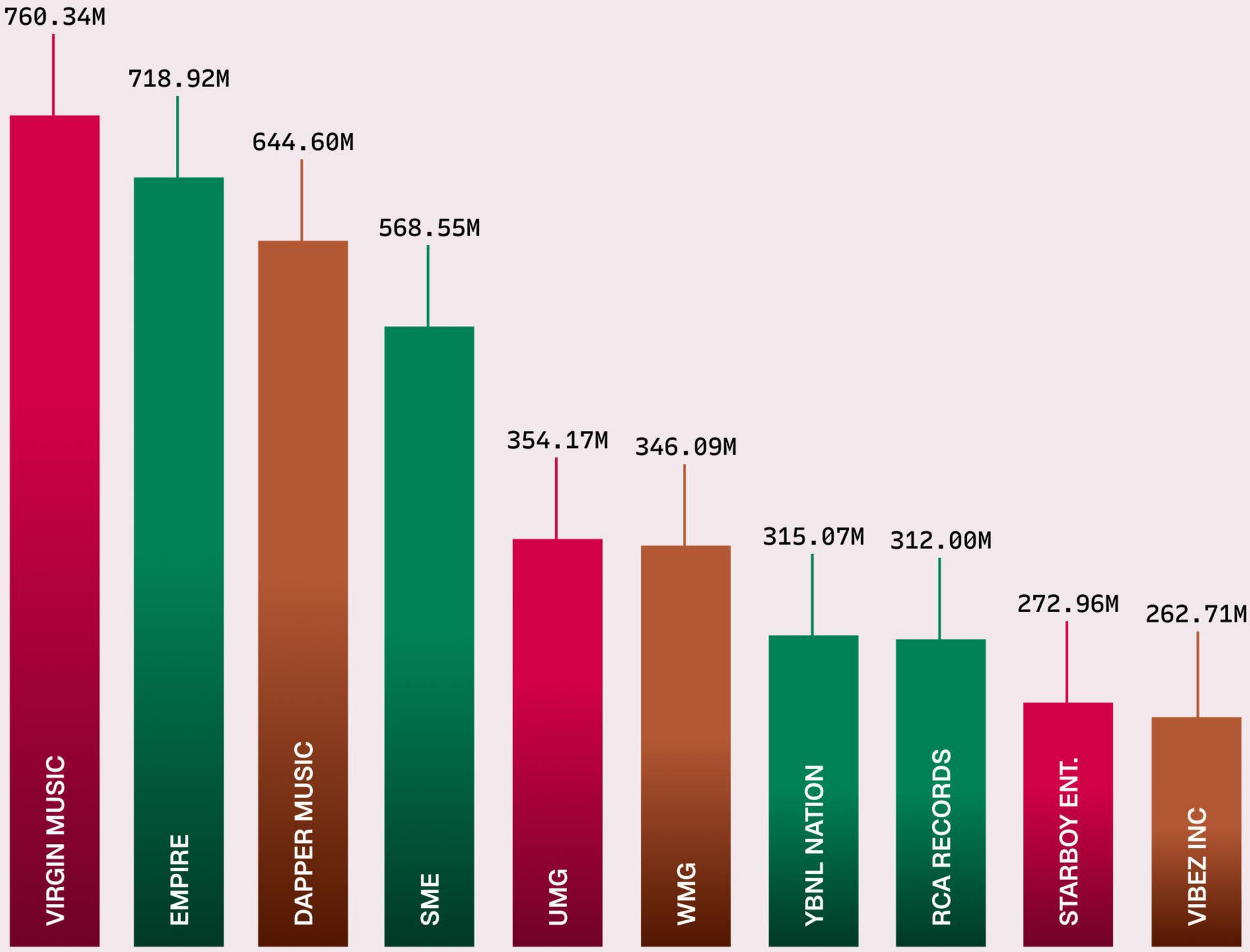
Davido leads the Afro-Pop genre with **8.25%** share while **ODUMODUBLVCK** rules Alternative & Hip-Hop/Rap genres with **17.44%** and **15.21%** respectively. **Seyi Vibez** leads Street-Hop & Traditional genres with **13.98%** and **21.44%** respectively. ODUMODUBLVCK & Seyi Vibez are the only artistes with the largest streaming market share for multiple genres.

Lawrence Oyor leads Gospel with **21.31%**, **Wizkid** is the No. 1 on the RnB genre with **18.40%** and **Burna Boy towers** over the Dance/EDM genre with **13.43%** thanks to his remix of "Tshwala Bam."

Bruno Mars scored two global hits in "Die With A Smile" with Lady Gaga & "APT" with ROSE – both tracks have sent him to the top of the 'International' genre market share in Nigeria with **17.54%**.

TURNTABLE CHARTS

TOP 10 LABELS | BY MARKET SHARE



NEXT 10 LABELS

12	**Columbia Records UK**	225.41M
11	**DMW**	212.55M
13	**Interscope Records**	140.38M
14	**Def Jam Recordings**	139.37M
15	**Ingrooves**	131.58M
16	**Native Records**	131.58M
17	**Mavin Records**	125.16M
18	**Spaceship Entertainment Ltd.**	116.96M
19	**Atlantic Records**	115.95M
20	**Jonzing World**	107.12M

TOP-PERFORMING ARTISTES | EVERY GENRE CATERGORY

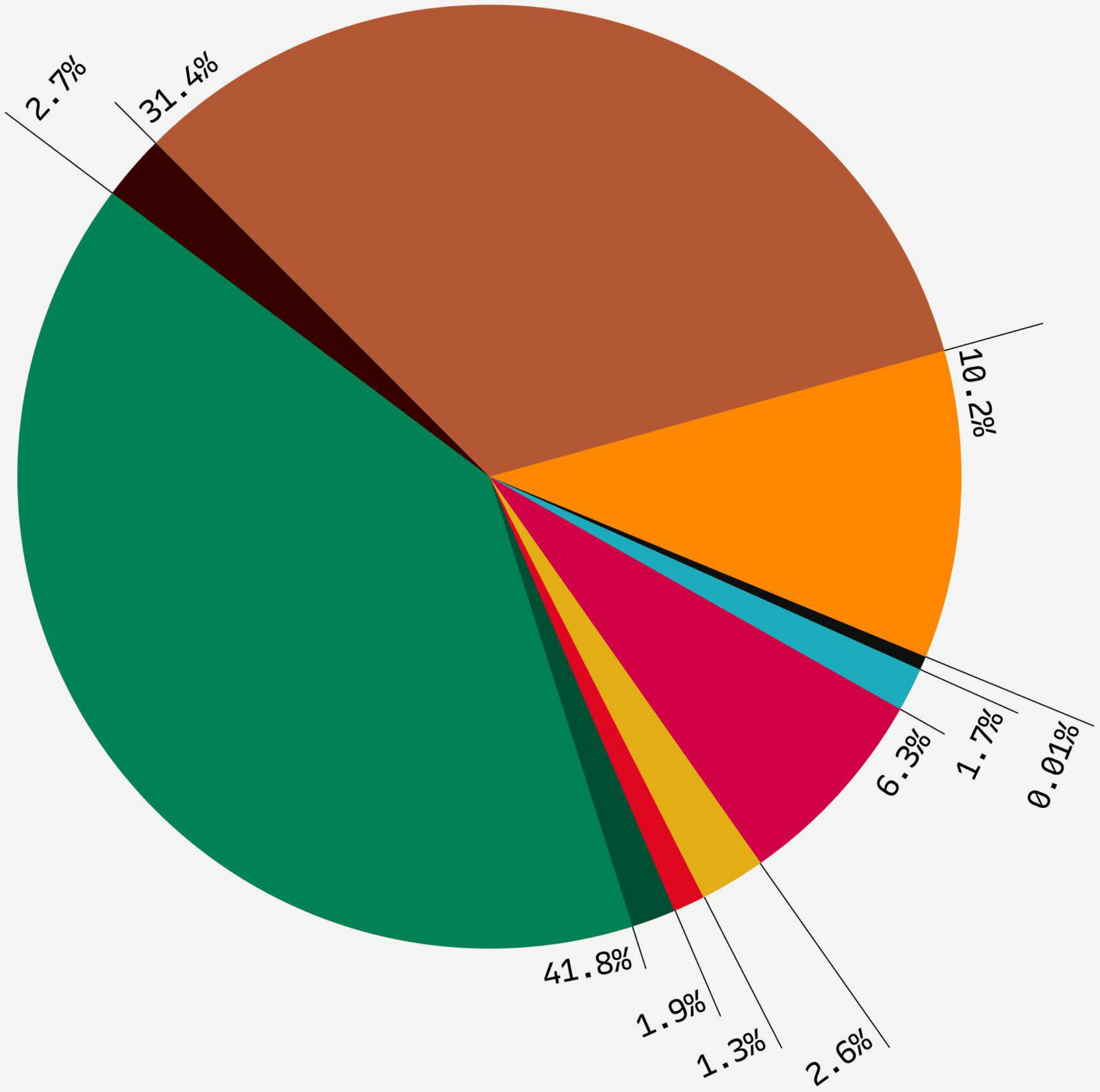
Genre	Artiste	Market Share
AFRO-POP	Davido	8.25%
	Wizkid	8.03%
	Burna Boy	6.04%
ALTERNATIVE	ODUMODUBLVCK	17.44%
	Bella Shmurda	17.33%
	Cruel Santino	16.90%
DANCE/EDM	Burna Boy	13.43%
	Titom	13.43%
	S.N.E	13.43%
GOSPEL	Lawrence Oyor	21.31%
	Mercy Chinwo	11.69%
	Sound of Salem	9.70%
HIPHOP/RAP	ODUMODUBLVCK	15.21%
	Black Sherif	7.02%
	Kendrick Lamar	6.59%
INTERNATIONAL	Bruno Mars	17.54%
	ROSE	10.97%
	Lady Gaga	9.38%
K-POP	G-DRAGON	31.29%
	TAEYANG	22.87%
	DAESUNG	22.87%
R&B	Wizkid	18.40%
	Rema	9.98%
	Kunmie	6.16%
STREET-POP	Seyi Vibez	13.98%
	Tml Vibez	8.50%
	Shallipopi	8.08%
TRADITIONAL	Wizkid	21.02%
	Seyi Vibez	21.44%
	Asake	13.98%

MARKET LEADERS | LABELS DOMINATING EACH GENRE

Genre	Artiste	Market Share
AFRO-POP	EMPIRE	10.37%
	WMG	5.94%
	SME	8.01%
ALTERNATIVE	65nation	10.87%
	TKM Ent.	10.87%
	EMPIRE	10.03%
DANCE/EDM	Heatwave Rec.	25.05%
	WMG	8.83%
	ADA	8.74%
GOSPEL	DistroKid	20.34%
	MAD Solutions	10.99%
	GNT Nation	9.97%
HIPHOP/RAP	UMG	10.36%
	WMG	5.88%
	Def Jam Rec.	5.94%
INTERNATIONAL	UMG	12.51%
	Interscope Rec.	13.81%
	WMG	10.36%
K-POP	Galaxy Corp.	33.36%
	EMPIRE	33.36%
	Starship Ent.	11.61%
R&B	EMPIRE	10.86%
	SME	8.31%
	RCA Records	7.00%
STREET-POP	EMPIRE	10.00%
	Dapper Music	18.19%
	Virgin Music	18.16%
TRADITIONAL	EMPIRE	14.11%
	YBNL Nation	13.02%
	Dapper Music	8.76%

TURNTABLE CHARTS

GENRE SHARE | BY TOTAL POINTS



Afro-POP
Traditional
Dance/EDM
Street POP
Gospel
K-POP
R&B
Alternative
HipHop/Rap
International

NO. 1 ARTISTE OF H1 2025

BY **IKEOKUWA AMONIMO**

NO. 1 ARTISTE OF H1 2025

Wizkid

AS THE CURTAIN FALLS ON THE FIRST HALF OF 2025, ***WIZKID EMERGES AS NIGERIA'S MOST CONSUMED ARTISTE ACROSS ALL PLATFORMS,*** *A TESTAMENT TO BOTH HIS ENDURING STAR POWER AND THE MASSIVE SUCCESS OF HIS LATE 2024 ALBUM, MORAYO.*

The project has carried its momentum seamlessly into the new year, dominating the conversation around music consumption, chart records, and cultural relevance.

Since its release in November 2024, Morayo has not only cemented itself as a fan-favorite but also set new commercial benchmarks. The album has tallied over 227 million on-demand streams, sold 151,333 album-equivalent units, and maintained a stronghold on the Official Top 100 Albums Chart for 31 weeks—making it the longest-charting album in Nigeria so far this year.

What makes this feat even more historic is the project's unmatched longevity and consistency. Morayo spent 11 weeks at No. 1 on the albums chart, spanning the tail-end of 2024 and well into 2025. It also etched a moment in TurnTable Chart history when it became the first and only album to occupy all top 16 spots on the Official Streaming Songs Chart in a single week—an unprecedented achievement in the streaming era.

Beyond the album itself, Wizkid's overall numbers in H1 2025 underscore his continued dominance. The superstar racked up 360 million on-demand streams (No. 2 across all artistes) and amassed 4.84 billion in radio airplay impressions (No. 3 overall). This dual-platform impact reflects his rare ability to appeal both digitally and through traditional radio formats.

The singles from Morayo also pulled significant weight. Within just two weeks of the album's release, "Piece of My Heart" featuring Brent Faiyaz and "Kese (Dance)" both ascended to No. 1 on the Official Nigeria Top 100. That same week, Wizkid became only the third artiste in Nigerian chart history to occupy four of the top five positions on the singles chart—though this particular milestone falls outside the H1 tracking window, it reinforces his stratospheric reach and impact.

With a combination of commercial dominance, record-breaking feats, and cultural relevance, Wizkid's run in H1 2025 reaffirms his status as a generational talent; a benchmark for longevity, excellence, and global influence in Nigerian music.

The superstar racked up 360 million on-demand streams (No. 2 across all artistes) and amassed 4.84 billion in radio airplay impressions (No. 3 overall)

FEATURE

BY **IKEOKUWA AMONIMO**

FOLA'S RISE

FROM "ALONE" TO INDUSTRY MAINSTAY

Few new voices in Nigerian music have made an impression as enduring as FOLA. His breakout single, "Alone" featuring BhadBoi OML, announced his arrival with raw vulnerability and sonic clarity.

The remix, featuring BNXN, only widened his audience and raised the stakes. But it was his debut project, What A Feeling, that laid the groundwork for his mainstream ascent. The EP debuted and peaked at No. 4 on the Official Nigeria Top 100 Albums chart — an impressive feat in itself. But its longevity is where FOLA truly distinguished himself: 25 consecutive weeks in the Top 10 turned him from a newcomer to a serious heavyweight. Industry observers and fans alike have since touted him as a frontrunner for the coveted 'Next Rated' award.

At the end of 2024, FOLA became the first artist signed to Bella Shmurda's Dangbana Republik. Their collaborative track "Who Does That?", off the same EP, debuted at No. 11 and peaked at No. 2 on the Official Nigeria Top 100. Since then, FOLA has delivered hit after hit: two Top 10 collaborations with Kizz Daniel, a second joint effort with BNXN titled "Very Soon" (peaked at No. 4), and "Get Better" with Zlatan, which climbed to No. 2.



Photograph of FOLA

FOLA's steady rise is powered by a tight-knit, forward-thinking creative team — one that believes in building not just records but moments. In this exclusive feature for TurnTable's Industry Digest, key team members break down the artist's evolution, the machinery behind his breakout, and what the future holds.



Photograph of FOLA

TURNTABLE CHARTS

FOLA'S RISE: FROM "ALONE" TO INDUSTRY MAINSTAY



TEAM TALK: INSIDE THE MACHINE DRIVING FOLA'S BREAKOUT

ON EVOLUTION AND SOUND

TTC

FOLA's "Alone" and the What A Feeling EP made a major impact last year and continue to resonate. How has his sound evolved since that breakout moment?

MELVIN Manager

"Alone" showcased FOLA's unique sound from the jump. Since then, he's only grown bolder with experimentation. If you listen to "Lost," it's sonically different from anything he's done — a sign that he's not just finding his identity, but expanding it.

MAYBREED Label Co-Founder

We've had FOLA around for about 3–4 years before the big break, so we've seen his evolution firsthand. He's still exploring. Trust me, the best of FOLA hasn't even landed yet.

SB Producer

He's more intentional now — you hear it in the melodies, the lyrics. He's found his core, but like every true artist, he's still refining.

ON TOURING AND EXPANSION

TTC

FOLA's recent tour was a big moment. What stood out?

MELVIN Manager

Standing on that London stage and hearing a crowd of thousands sing "Alone" — a song that almost didn't come out — was surreal. Everything from the setlist to the city selection was driven by data. This tour wasn't just for the now; it was an introduction to the European market. And we're not done.

TURNTABLE CHARTS

ON DISCOVERY AND MANAGEMENT

TTC

How did you first connect with FOLA, and how has managing him changed as his platform has grown?

MELVIN Manager

It started with a request for legal clearance years ago. We built from there. Today, the stakes are higher, but the vision remains the same.

TTC

What's the strategy behind securing high-profile collaborations like BNXN and Kizz Daniel?

MELVIN Manager

Honestly, they've all happened organically. That's why they fit so well. No forced chemistry, and that makes the legal and business end seamless.



Photograph
FOLA's Manager —
Melvin

ON PRODUCTION AND CRAFT

TTC

You produced both versions of "Alone." How did you approach each?

SB Producer

We didn't change the beat for the remix. BhadBoi brought emotion, BNXN brought finesse. Same foundation, different flavors — and it worked beautifully.

TTC

You're currently No. 2 on the Producer Top 100. What does that mean for you?

SB Producer

It means everything. Recognition among my peers validates the years of quiet work. It's opening doors, and pushing me to evolve.

TTC

"Lost" has a unique sound. What was your production approach?

SB Producer

Each section had to reflect a different emotion. I leaned on soft percussion, vocal textures, and transitions to make it feel like a journey.

TTC

FOLA blends soul with club-ready rhythms. How do you strike that balance?

SB Producer

Good music moves — whether in a club or a bedroom. I focus on keeping the soul intact. The rest flows.



Photograph of FOLA's Producer — SB

ON LABEL DYNAMICS

TTC

What made FOLA the right fit for Dangbana Republik?

MAYBREED Label Co-Founder

He's been on our radar. Even before "Who Does That," he and Bella had connected. We just waited for the right time — and that time is now.

TTC

What support system exists for him within the label?

MAYBREED Label Co-Founder

From Bella himself to the legal and management teams, the support is solid. Everyone's on the same page. It's a rare kind of alignment.

ON LABEL DYNAMICS

TTC

What's your personal favorite FOLA song?

MELVIN Manager

"Alone" and "Lost." Both were underdog releases that found massive success.

MAYBREED Label Co-Founder

"Who Does That?" with Bella. There's just something spiritual about it.

SB Producer

"Alone," no doubt. That was the moment everything changed.

TTC

How do you handle internal and public feedback?

MELVIN Manager

We stay open to feedback, but grounded in our vision. We're very intentional.

MAYBREED Label Co-Founder

We use a SWOT analysis approach — strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. It helps us decode feedback into strategy.



Photograph of FOLA's Label co-founder — Maybreed

LOOKING AHEAD

With momentum from multiple Top 10 hits, a growing fanbase at home and abroad, and a team aligned on all fronts, FOLA's trajectory continues to soar. The combination of talent, strategy, and instinct places him not just on the radar — but firmly in the conversation. And if the last year is any indication, FOLA's story is only just beginning.

GREATEST

OAPs

OF THE 21ST CENTURY

TURNTABLE IS THRILLED TO CELEBRATE THIS LEGACY WITH ITS DEFINITIVE LIST OF THE GREATEST OAPS OF THE 21ST CENTURY, HONORING THOSE WHO HAVE AMPLIFIED AFROBEATS AND INSPIRED MILLIONS.

FROM THE AIRWAVES OF **COOL FM, BEAT FM, RAYPOWER,** OAPS HAVE BEEN THE VIBRANT VOICES GUIDING LISTENERS THROUGH THE DYNAMIC SOUNDSCAPE OF AFROBEATS, CONNECTING FANS WITH THE GENRE'S MOST ICONIC TRACKS AND RISING TALENTS.

Lagos traffic is notorious. Most mornings, you're stuck in gridlock, watching your fuel gauge drop with no relief in sight. Yet, someone was always there to ease the frustration, whether in the morning, afternoon, or night: music's own broadcasters—on-air personalities (OAPs). From the airwaves of Cool FM, Beat FM, RayPower, OAPs have been the vibrant voices guiding listeners through the dynamic soundscape of Afrobeats, connecting fans with the genre's most iconic tracks and rising talents.

These charismatic hosts did more than play music—they curated experiences. With infectious energy, sharp wit, and deep knowledge, they kept listeners hooked, delivering the latest songs and the hottest news in Afrobeats. Through bold interviews and biting commentary, they pushed boundaries, helping elevate the genre to its global prominence today. Whether introducing new artists, hyping chart-topping hits, or sharing behind-the-scenes stories, OAPs shaped Afrobeats' identity and brought its cultural influence into sharp focus. Their shows were more than broadcasts; they were cultural touchstones, fostering community and pride in African music.

1	Kehinde "Kenny" Ogungbe
2	Dayo "D1" Adeneye
3	Ifedayo Olarinde 'Daddy Freeze'
4	Olisa Dibua
5	Oladotun Ojuolape Kayode
6	Gbemi Olateru Olagbebi
7	Tolu Oniru 'Toolz'
8	Osikhena Dirisu 'Osi Suave'
9	Steve Onu 'Yaw'
10	Chinedu Ani Emmanuel 'Nedu Wazobia'
11	Laura Monyeazo Abebe 'Moet Abebe'
12	Sheye Banks
13	Kemi Smallz
14	Tosin Bucknor
15	Kemi Adetiba
16	Dan Foster
17	JAJ Da Mecca Don
18	Douglas Jekan
19	Dami Elebe
20	Oreka Godis
21	IK Osakioduwa
22	Onome 'Big Tyme' Oyaide
23	Anita 'Omalicha' Isedeh
24	Kaylah Oniwo
25	Femi & The Gang
26	Buchi Laba
27	Melody Hassan
28	Marc Swagz
29	Jola Ayeye & FK Abudu
30	Quincy Jonze

NOTE The names featured in this list are presented in no specific order; each individual holds their own unique significance and impact.







GREATEST

Music Journalist

OF THE 21ST CENTURY

THE ROLE OF A MUSIC JOURNALIST IS OFTEN THANKLESS. IF YOU'RE DOING YOUR JOB RIGHT, YOU'RE BOUND TO RUFFLE FEATHERS.

We love to hate them, don't we? Those fiercely opinionated men and women who chronicle the pulse of our culture. The role of a music journalist is often thankless. If you're doing your job right, you're bound to ruffle feathers. You can't turn a blind eye to missteps or blunders by artists or their teams—you must document the culture. You can't skew reviews of projects to suit personal tastes or biases, nor can you sit on the sidelines. You must document the culture.

A music journalist's expertise is constantly tested, yet it may be the most vital of all. In many ways, it's a higher calling. They are our last frontier, our librarians, the custodians of Afrobeats' journey through past, present, and future.

TURNTABLE PROUDLY PRESENTS ITS LIST OF THE GREATEST MUSIC JOURNALISTS OF THE 21ST CENTURY.

1	Osagie Alonge
2	Ayeni Adekunle
3	Ayomide 'AOT2' Tayo
4	Motolani Alake
5	Joey Akan
6	Jide Taiwo
7	Chiagozem Onyekwena
8	Bayo Omisore
9	Victor Okpala
10	Ayo Jaguda
11	Mayowa Idowu
12	Ehiz Combs
13	Ovie Ofugara
14	Sesan Adeniji
15	Ify Obi
16	Dennis Ade Peter
17	Emmanuel Ichiban Esomnofu
18	Oris Aigbokhaevbolo (The OG)
19	Michael Aromolaran
20	Uzoma Ihejirika
21	Tami Makinde
22	Nelson C.J
23	Adeayo Adebiyi
24	Noble Igwe
25	Victor Okpala
26	Ogagus
27	Segun Akande
28	Wale Oloworekende
29	Tobi Ibironke
30	Tomiwa TooExclusive


Photograph of Motolani Alake


Photograph of Tami Makinde

NOTE The names featured in this list are presented in no specific order; each individual holds their own unique significance and impact.


Photograph of Osagie


Photograph of Joey Akan

INDUSTRY DIGEST / 17 - 18

BY **HONOUR AGHEDO**

WHY LAWRENCE OYOR COULD BE THE MOST VALUABLE VOICE OF 2025

It's 2025, and we're halfway through the year, a year already brimming with standout Nigerian music. Chart-toppers, viral sensations, and standout releases have flooded the scene. But as the question looms, "Who will be the Artist of the Year?" one name quietly continues to spark hearts, transform timelines, and fill churches and clubs alike: Lawrence Oyor.

A pastor and gospel artist, Oyor doesn't need mainstream hype to own a moment. Three of his four 2025 singles have swept across digital platforms like wildfire, each one carrying the weight of a movement.

I remember the first time I heard Lawrence Oyor's ***"My Daddy, My Daddy (Remix)" featuring Sunmisiola Agbebi***. It was my younger sister who played it, singing along with a joy that felt almost childlike in its intimacy with God. The lyrics, *"My Daddy, my Daddy, Your baby is singing / I will be singing and dancing, and shouting for the rest of eternity"*, carried a kind of devotion that momentarily lifted her out of the harsh realities of life in Nigeria.

There was an excitement in her tone, it felt like she had escaped the harsh realities of the country. I was pulled into Lawrence Oyor's world, which had a different relationship with God, filled with peace and reminding each one of us that we are God's favourite. This was my introduction to the beautiful sounds of the psalmist Lawrence Oyor.

Though *"My Daddy, My Daddy"* will turn three by December, in the fast-moving digital era, that feels like an eternity. Three years ago, Oyor had already built a name for himself as the Senior Pastor of the Davidic Generation Church, an extension of the Springs of Freedom Christian Centre in Ibadan, Oyo State. Though gospel music wasn't yet his full-time lane, those who knew him recognised his gift.

He didn't need constant noise to stay relevant, just songs powerful enough to silence everything else.

Fast forward to early 2025. I logged onto X (formerly Twitter), and my feed was flooded with posts about "Favour". At first, I paid little attention, assuming it was just another song boosted by prayer chains and fasting groups. But curiosity got the better of me. As soon as I pressed play, I understood the hype. From the marching drums to Oyor's commanding vocal lead and choir harmonies, ***"Favour"*** felt like a spiritual compass pointing toward something greater. Lines like "Favour, they are following me around" spoke to a generation in need of direction. The hook, "Favour! It surrounds me like a



TURNTABLE CHARTS

shield…", became a chant of hope across WhatsApp groups, Instagram reels, and family prayer altars. And it showed on the charts, peaking at No. 22 on the Official Nigeria Top 100, no small feat in a market dominated by secular genres (it peaked at No. 6 on the official streaming chart).

Then came ***"We Will Be Many"***, a collaboration with Moses Akoh and Sound of Salem, released on February 10. The song is a celebration of the lord that gives off a gyration feel as the production compels you to dance like King David danced while the message sings about making Jesus proud by becoming a vessel of His love, sacrifice, and mission.

"We Will Be Many" peaked at **NO. 26 IN NIGERIA**, and its viral meme presence on platforms like TikTok and Instagram amplified its reach. The song's message resonated: You matter. You are needed here.

Just days later, on Valentine's Day, Oyor dropped ***"Alignment Chant"*** as a wake-up call. His voice, part John the Baptist, part Apostle Paul, commanded attention while still feeling relatable, especially to young Christians searching for authenticity in their faith.

Last month, Oyor joined Gaise Baba on ***"No Turning Back II"***, a reimagined take on a classic gospel record. The chorus has been sung by many artists and church choirs, but Gaise Baba & Lawrence Oyor added an upbeat tempo and a fresh twist.

The song debuted at No. 4 on the official singles chart and has peaked at No. 2 on the official streaming chart. The track's viral reach, over 570K TikTok and 75K Instagram UGCs, proved Oyor's relevance not only in pews but in the palms of everyday Nigerians.

NO TURNING BACK II	
Debut	**NO. 4**
Peak	**NO. 2**
Tiktok	over **570K** UGC
Instagram	over **75K** UGC

His verse, *"Ahhh, I can never turn back o…"*, has become the voice of a modern revival. Davido's 2022 single "Stand Strong" with The Sunday School Choir is categorized as a 'gospel' song for charting purposes and has long held the title for the highest charting Gospel single ever in the country (No. 6 peak) – something a lot of fans of Gospel music will have a hard time accepting. "No Turning Back II" has since taken that spot with its massive launch on the chart.



When it was first suggested on the editorial call that Oyor could be the MVP of the year, I agreed, though we acknowledged that "MVP" here doesn't mean what it does in sports or pop culture. It's not just about volume or chart numbers. It's about relevance. About impact. About who spoke the loudest when people needed to hear something real.

What makes "No Turning Back II" particularly significant is how quickly it was adopted by church communities across Nigeria. In many Pentecostal and charismatic congregations, the song has become a staple during praise and youth programs. Fellow gospel artist Dunsin Oyekan had cosigned the record.

Peaking in the top 40 on the official singles chart for a country is highly significant, especially for gospel music in Nigeria. These rankings aren't just numbers, they reflect a shift in public consciousness.

With inflation at 23.7% as of April 2025 and the naira devalued to N1,600 per dollar, Nigerians are facing unprecedented financial strain. In times like these, many turn inward and upward for solace.

Gospel music offers comfort, clarity, and community. And Lawrence Oyor meets listeners exactly where they are.

His music preaches and reassures the listeners. "Favour" wraps arms around the weary. "We Will Be Many" invites believers into purpose. "No Turning Back II" strengthens resolve. Each song speaks directly to the struggles of everyday Nigerians, the longing for health, provision, and spiritual alignment.

Oyor's brand is also distinct. His signature headband, often inscribed with gospel affirmations, has become both a spiritual and visual marker. It's not fashion for fashion's sake; it's symbolism worn on the forehead.

His youth appeal is surgical: part mentor, part big brother, and part modern-day prophet. He's joyful, reverent, and unafraid to be loud for God.

The year is far from over, but if 2025 ends today, it might go down as the year Lawrence Oyor turned listeners toward the Lord, one single at a time.

GREATEST

DJs OF THE 21ST CENTURY

DJs were the gatekeepers, granting legitimacy to songs and artists with every track they championed. Their word was law.

In the early 2000s and 2010s, when the club scene reigned supreme, DJs were the undisputed influencers of music. They were the gods of the nightlife arena, where a few spins on a Friday night could transform a track into a certified hit. Those spins didn't just stop at the club—they opened doors to major opportunities. A DJ's endorsement meant invitations to high-profile shows, lucrative brand deals, and, ultimately, financial success. In many ways, DJs were the gatekeepers, granting legitimacy to songs and artists with every track they championed. Their word was law.

As the music landscape evolved, so did the role of DJs. No longer just the masterminds behind the decks, they emerged as pseudo-artists, curating the sound of Afrobeats by discovering top talents and often producing or releasing some of the genre's biggest hits. With an uncanny ability to stay attuned to the pulse of Afrobeats pop culture, they shaped trends, amplified voices, and kept the genre vibrant and relevant. From smoky club booths to global stages, their influence remained undeniable, bridging the gap between underground sounds and mainstream success.

It's important to note that the names featured in this list are presented in no specific order; each individual holds their own unique significance and impact.

TURNTABLE IS PROUD TO PRESENT ITS DEFINITIVE LIST OF THE GREATEST DJS OF THE 21ST CENTURY.

- DJ Jimmy Jatt
- Spinall
- Neptune
- DJ Xclusive
- DJ YK Mule
- Kaywise
- Lambo
- DJ Tunez
- DJ 4kerty
- DJ Consequence
- Yosa
- DJ Obi
- Aniko
- Crowd Controller
- Dope Caesar
- DJ Sixseven
- WeAreChemicals
- Sigag Lauren
- DJames
- Camron

GREATEST VJs OF THE 21ST CENTURY

VJs have been there to guide new listeners every step of the way. Whether you were watching an MTV, Soundcity, or Channel O countdown, VJs delivered the complete package, introducing you to the most creative and influential music videos of their time.

It's true, the landscape has changed. Music videos are no longer the dominant vehicle for promotion they once were, but make no mistake, they were arguably the leading pathway to Afrobeats over the past 25 years, and VJs have been there to guide new listeners every step of the way. Whether you were watching an MTV, Soundcity, or Channel O countdown (if you're truly in the know), VJs delivered the complete package, introducing you to the most creative and influential music videos of their time.

It’s important to note that the names featured in this list are presented in no specific order; each individual holds their own unique significance and impact.

TURNTABLE IS PROUD TO PRESENT ITS LIST OF THE GREATEST VJS OF THE 21ST CENTURY.

- Dadaboy Ehiz
- Djinee
- VJ Adams
- Pearl
- Moet
- Nancy Isime
- Samantha Walsh
- Special Spesh
- Kehinde “Kenny” Ogungbe
- Dayo “D1” Adeneye
- Jaj Da Mecca Don
- Denrenle Adun
- Stepahnie Coker
- Folu Storms
- DJ Jimmy Jatt
- Eniola Olanrewaju ‘Korty’
- Chinasa Anukam

THE GREATEST

Culture Platforms OF THE 21ST CENTURY

Journalists are the librarians, but the platforms are the library itself

Music journalists may document the culture, but they don't do so in isolation. Think of it this way: journalists are the librarians, but the platforms are the library itself.

Every time consumers have instant access to information—whether it's a curated list of the hottest new releases every Friday, exclusive announcements, in-depth interviews with their favorite artists, spotlight features on rising acts and executives, or insightful breakdowns of complex cultural concepts—it's because these platforms dedicate themselves to bridging gaps, telling our stories, and fostering connections.

It's important to note that the names featured in this list are presented in no specific order; each individual holds their own unique significance and impact.

TURNTABLE PROUDLY PRESENTS ITS LIST OF THE GREATEST CULTURE PLATFORMS OF THE 21ST CENTURY.

CULTURE PLATFORMS OF THE 21ST CENTURY	
1	Pulse NG
2	NotJustOk
3	TooExclsuive
4	HipHopWorld
5	Ovation Magazine
6	Bubbles Magazine
7	Linda Ikeji
8	The Net NG
9	360 Nobs
10	Jaguda
11	49th Street
12	Naijaloaded
13	NATIVE
14	Culture Custodian
15	WeTalkSound
16	MoreBranches
17	Bella Naija
18	Okay Africa
19	Jaguda
20	Album Talks

THE GREATEST

Afrobeats Shows OF THE 21ST CENTURY

Over the years, Afrobeats has delivered some of the most culture-defining shows of the past century.

It's true, the economy isn't great right now, but everybody loves Detty December. The midnight madness, the camaraderie, and, most importantly, the shows!
These electrifying performances are the heartbeat of Afrobeats, drawing thousands to celebrate music and culture.

Now, of course, our shows don't just happen in December—that was just a catchy segue. But over the years, Afrobeats has delivered some of the most culture-defining shows of the past century. Each event tells a unique story, showcasing the biggest stages and Afrobeats' brightest stars, creating unforgettable moments that resonate with fans and shape the cultural landscape.

> It's important to note that the names featured in this list are presented in no specific order; each individual holds their own unique significance and impact.

TURNTABLE IS PROUD TO PRESENT ITS LIST OF THE GREATEST AFROBEATS SHOWS OF THE 21ST CENTURY

AFROBEAT SHOWS OF THE 21ST CENTURY	
1	Star Trek
2	Rhythm Unplugged
3	Gidi Fest
4	Industry Nite
5	The Basement Gig
6	Homecoming
7	Nativeland
8	Palmwine Fest
9	OLIC
10	Star Mega Jam
11	Sprite Triple Slam
12	Lekki Sound Splash
13	Kennis Music Easter Fiesta
14	Afropolitan Vibes
15	Felabration

THE GREATEST

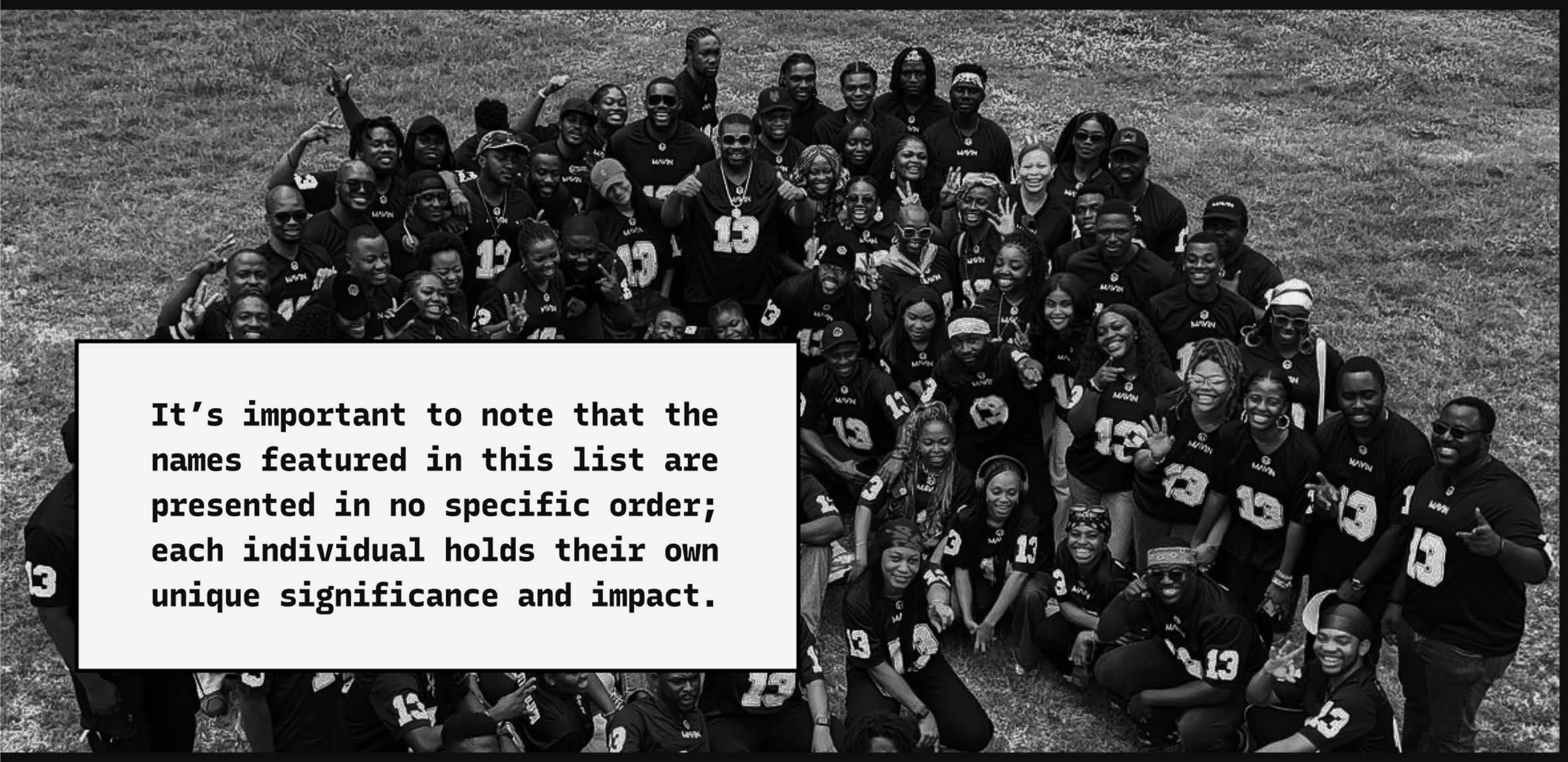
Music Execut

The Nigerian music industry has experienced exponential growth, driven not only by exceptional talents pushing the sound forward but by the brilliance of executives plotting strategy at board room table

A quick scroll through X (formerly Twitter) after a major PR move might make you think everyone works in the music industry. In an era where knowledge and expertise are democratized on social media, it's easy to overlook the intricate machinery behind the scenes, quietly ensuring the industry keeps running.

The Nigerian music industry has experienced exponential growth, driven not only by exceptional talents pushing the sound forward but by the brilliance of executives plotting strategy at board room tables, the keen instincts of A&Rs crafting global hits, the tireless efforts of managers handling every detail so artists can focus, and the sharp negotiations of lawyers securing the best deals possible.

Beyond the blinding lights, there's brilliant men and women in suits and ties, keeping those lights on. This list isn't about the brands—it's about the machine.



It's important to note that the names featured in this list are presented in no specific order; each individual holds their own unique significance and impact.

tives OF THE 21ST CENTURY

TURNTABLE PROUDLY PRESENTS ITS RANKING OF THE GREATEST NIGERIAN MUSIC EXECUTIVES OF THE 21ST CENTURY.

MUSIC EXECUTIVES OF THE 21ST CENTURY	
1	Kehinde “Kenny” Ogungbe
2	Dayo “D1” Adeneye
3	Michael Collins Ajereh (Don Jazzy)
4	Olamide Adedeji
5	Audu Maikori
6	Paul Okeugo
7	Abuchi Peter Ugwu
8	M.I Abaga
9	Olisa Adibo
10	Osi Asika
11	Kelvin Ochano
12	Jude Okoye
13	Steve Abeiko
14	Mobolaji Kareem
15	Osagie Osarenkhoe
16	Bankole Wellington
17	Tega Oghenejobo
18	Clarence Peters
19	Tobechukwu Melvin Ejiofor (iLLBLISS)
20	Sunday Are
21	Piriye Isokari
22	Olumide Ogunade (ID Cabasa)
23	Ezekiel ThankGod
24	David Adeleke (Davido)
25	Solomon Arueya
26	Damilola ‘Dapper’ Akinwunmi
27	Bugwu Aneto-Okeke
28	Oye Akideinde
29	Asa Asika
30	Bizzle Osikoya
31	Gbenga Adewusi
32	Charles Enebeli (D’ Prince)
33	Chris Obaino
34	Teejoe
35	Remi Ibitola
36	Ezegozie Eze Jr.
37	Ubi Franklin
38	Bankuli
39	Kevin Luciano
40	Ahbu Ventures
41	Lanre Dabiri (ElDee)
42	David Ughegho
43	Seni Saraki
44	Bose Ogulu
45	Cecil Hammond
46	Darey Art Alade
47	Deola Art Alade
48	Osita ‘Duke” Ugeh
49	Ola Ibironke
50	Ayo Animashaun

THE GREATEST

Afrobeats Pr

AS WE CONTINUE OUR TRIBUTE TO AFROBEATS IN THE 21ST CENTURY, TURNTABLE PROUDLY PRESENTS ITS DEFINITIVE LIST OF THE GREATEST AFROBEATS PRODUCERS OF THE CENTURY. TO COMPILE THIS LIST, WE CONSIDERED FOUR KEY CRITERIA: **LONGEVITY, COMMERCIAL SUCCESS BOTH LOCALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY, ARTISTIC MERIT, AND CULTURAL IMPACT.**

FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS LIST, THE TERM *"AFROBEATS"* ENCOMPASSES THE BROADER MUSICAL MOVEMENT, RATHER THAN THE SPECIFIC GENRE. ADDITIONALLY, WE FOCUSED SOLELY ON THE PRODUCERS' WORK BEHIND THE CONSOLE, EXCLUDING THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS AS ARTISTS OR EXECUTIVES.

1



Don Jazzy

Here's the thing about Don Jazzy: it's easy to conflate his success as a producer and music executive, as he's mastered both with unparalleled expertise. Throughout his career, he's achieved the same remarkable feat – launching and elevating the careers of the most influential artists in Afrobeats history.

His production credits during the Mohits Era are a testament to his genius. If his only claim to fame was his work on Wande Coal's seminal album "Mushin To Mohits", he would still rank among the top 5 producers on this list. The album is arguably the most sonically impactful debut of the 21st century. However, his influence extends far beyond that, with production credits on all of D'banj's albums from that era.

Furthermore, Don Jazzy's innovative spirit and collaborative mindset led to groundbreaking work with Mavin, as well as iconic international collaborations with Jay-Z and Kanye West on "Watch The Throne". While his commercial achievements are undeniable, Don Jazzy's most lasting impact lies in his instrumental role in shaping Afropop into the global phenomenon it is today.

For his staggering commercial success, artistic excellence, and groundbreaking cultural impact, Don Jazzy stands as the greatest Afrobeats producer of the 21st century and possibly, of all time.

2



Sarz

Sarz has been integral to a diverse range of artists across eras and genres, including Wizkid, Runtown, Niniola, Wurld, Lojay, and Obongjayar. His collaborations with the latter three are regarded as culturally significant bodies of work in modern Afrobeats. Additionally, his EP "Sarz Is Not Your Mate (SINYM)" is the most successful project of its kind in Afrobeats history. Also, by taking complete ownership of his work, Sarz pioneered the trend of producers being regarded as artists in their own right.

3



OJB Jezreel

The Nigerian music industry can often seem like a rat race. Producers can appear to be guns for hire, flitting from one artist to the next, trying to create a hit song and move on. Artistry is often secondary, and timeless music is all too fleeting. This was not OJB Jezreel's approach. Many producers have made significant strides for Afrobeats in its various eras this century, but OJB laid the groundwork at the very beginning.

Perhaps his greatest work is his solo production on the standard version of 2Baba's debut album, "Face 2 Face", arguably the greatest Afrobeats album of the 21st century. Although Afrobeats had achieved international success since at least the 1980s, "African Queen" marked the first sign of what was to come in the 21st century. His work with Ruggedman, Paul Play Dairo, and Kennis Music was instrumental in laying the groundwork for Afrobeats in the 21st century. While others may have taken the movement to new heights, OJB laid the foundation.

4



Pheelz

YBNL has undoubtedly played a pivotal role in shaping the music landscape in Africa, and a significant portion of that success can be attributed to Pheelz. He has been instrumental in crafting the sound of some of the label's most iconic artists. Pheelz produced nearly all of Olamide's early street-hop discography, Adekunle Gold's genre-bending Fuji-pop sound, and most of Fireboy's culture-defining debut, "Laughter, Tears and Goosebumps", as well as his genre-defying sophomore album, "Apollo". Notably, Pheelz has maintained his relevance for well over a decade, a feat few producers have achieved. If that's not genius, we don't know what is.

5



Masterkraft

A lot of producers on this list are celebrated for their diverse work across different artists and genres, and Masterkraft is perhaps the greatest example of versatility on this list. With one of the longest careers in the industry, Masterkraft's journey began at Kennis Music, where he honed his craft before collaborating with some of the biggest artists of the time, including Banky W, Lynxxx, and Bracket. He went on to work with a wide array of artists and genres, including Flavour (Highlife), Tim Godfrey (Gospel), and CDQ (street-hop). Masterkraft is particularly renowned for his unparalleled influence in the eastern part of the country, becoming the go-to producer for artists in the region.

Masterkraft's versatility and high-profile collaborations proved to be a dynamite combination. With a legacy spanning over two decades, Masterkraft has cemented his place as one of the most influential producers in Afrobeats history.

6



ID Cabasa

Every few months, whispers of the same argument resurface: who has the greater legacy, 9ice or Flavour? For Flavour, the evidence is overwhelming, with multiple accolades to his name. However, 9ice boasts “Gongo Aso”, one of the greatest albums of the 21st century, with its chart topping lead single of the same name, masterfully produced by ID Cabasa. Many producers on this list are recognized for their role in evolving Afrobeats and bridging eras and soundscapes. Like only two others on this list, ID Cabasa earns his spot for being a pioneer. His work with 9ice is iconic, but ID Cabasa’s impact extends further, with major production credits on

BY **OMA EMINA & HONOUR AGHEDO**

roducers OF THE 21ST CENTURY

Faze's best-selling album "Independent", Iyanya's debut,and especially, his contributions to Olamide's sound in his first two albums. ID Cabasa is the embodiment of an OG before IG.



P. Priime

A Sarz Academy graduate and former drummer, P.Priime's curiosity led him to build one of the most impactful production runs of the new Afropop era. His beats are sleek, futuristic, and emotionally rich, pushing the sound of Nigeria into new territory. P.Priime became a household name while still in his teens, earning early acclaim by crafting standout production on albums for Olamide (Carpe Diem) and Cuppy (Original Copy). Since then, he has ascended to become one of the most revered and in-demand producers during what many consider the most commercially explosive era in Nigerian music history.

His signature producer tag—"Giddem"—has become a sonic stamp of quality, a signal that something culturally potent is about to unfold. P.Priime's fingerprints are all over the 2020s' most influential projects: from Wizkid's Grammy-nominated Made in Lagos to Asake's genre-blending Work of Art, from the emotional vulnerability of Omah Lay's Boy Alone to the futuristic textures of Rema's HEIS. With each credit, P.Priime has not only proven his versatility but has also helped shape the evolving sound of modern Afrobeats; balancing street sensibilities with pop innovation, and pushing Nigerian production to global standards.



Cobhams

While many producers on this list boast significant commercial success, Cobhams Asuquo embodied the very essence of "MUSIC" in the 2010s. For music purists nationwide, Cobhams was the go-to collaborator, sought after for his exceptional craftsmanship. It's no surprise that he's worked with some of the most critically acclaimed artists of the 21st century, including Asa, Darey, Banky W, Timi Dakolo, and Omawumi.

A masterful creator of ballads, Cobhams played a pivotal role in popularizing what we now recognize as "conscious" music. His groundbreaking work with Asa on her debut album is widely regarded as the foundation of the genre. Moreover, Cobhams is a triple threat – an exceptional singer, songwriter, and producer who stands alongside the best in the industry. As far as legends go, it doesn't get much higher than Cobhams Asuquo.



Magicsticks

"Tune into the king of sounds and blues." That iconic producer tag has become synonymous with some of the most infectious, era-defining hits in Nigerian music. Magicsticks is best known as the sonic architect behind Asake's genre-blending dominance—where Afropop collides seamlessly with amapiano, house, and the textured vibrancy of Fuji music. His production isn't just about sound; it's about immersion, building entire worlds around rhythm, cadence, and mood. As a duo with Asake, they've crafted arguably the two most important albums in the 2020s in Mr Money With The Vibe and Work of Art – Magicsticks served as the sole producer of the former while he also served as a mix and mastering engineer for the latter, to go with his 10/14 credits.

From the streets to global stages, Magicsticks has helped sculpt a new language for Nigerian pop music—one that is deeply rooted in tradition but wildly progressive in its execution. His fingerprints are etched across an era where sonic innovation met cultural relevance head-on, ushering in a wave of music that feels both familiar and futuristic.

More than just a producer, Magicsticks has become a defining force in the modern Afrobeats movement, proving that behind every groundbreaking artiste is often a visionary sound designer pulling the strings. Since the launch of TurnTable Charts in 2020, Magicsticks has emerged as the No. 1 Producer on the Year-End Charts twice —2022 and 2023—holding the record as the only producer to achieve the feat multiple times.



Nelson Brown

You cannot talk about the origins of Afro-Pop without Nelson Brown. His legacy spans decades, from Lagos studio sessions in FESTAC and Apapa to birthing foundational sounds of the '90s. He laid the groundwork for icons like Plantashun Boiz, Sound Sultan, and Daddy Showkey.

Notable Productions:
Plantashun Boiz – Body & Soul
Sound Sultan – Motherland
Bigiano – "Shayo"



Young Jonn

You have to understand, "Story For The Gods" was everywhere in 2012. While the controversy surrounding Olamide's lyrics certainly contributed to its virality, people often overlooked the fact that Young Jonn's genius was the foundation of that record. However, by the time "Bobo" was released, any lingering doubts about Young Jonn's talent were quickly dispelled. At just 20 years old, he had produced the biggest song in the country, and his subsequent work with YBNL yielded some of the label's most iconic hits, including "Efejoku" and "Pepper Dem Gang". In 2016, he solidified his reputation as a versatile producer, crafting the year's biggest hit with Kiss Daniel's "Mama". Although his reign as a hit producer was relatively brief compared to his peers, Young Jonn's impressive track record speaks for itself: producing at least four of the country's biggest hits within a three-year span is a testament to his incredible potency.



Rexxie

"Street ti takeover!" was the declaration by Olamide, Reminisce, and Phyno in 2015. Years later, Rexxie fulfilled that prophecy. His beats became the soundtrack to the street revolution in Nigerian music. Like a tailor with perfect cuts, he designed sounds that elevated street-hop into mainstream success. From the rise of the Zanku movement with Zlatan to the Marlians era, Rexxie was the chef, and every record was a gourmet dish.

Notable Productions includes Chinko Ekun's "Able God," Naira Marley & Zlatan's "Am I Yahoo Boy," Burna Boy's "Bebo," Zlatan "Zanku (Leg Work)," Naira Marley's "Mafo and Victony's "Ohema"



13



Del B

When it comes to longevity and the sheer number of artists they've collaborated with, very few producers can match Del B's impressive résumé. Starting with D'Banj's breakout hit "Why Me" in 2006, Del B went on to produce an array of iconic and varied hits, particularly during the 2010s. Name a prominent artist from that era, and chances are you'll find Del B's credits somewhere in their discography. His notable productions include Wizkid's "On Top Your Matter", Kcee's "Limpopo", and Flavour's "Shake". Although his momentum slowed down in recent years, Del B's indelible impact on Afrobeats remains undeniable

14



Paul Play

Before digital was the norm, Paul Play was penning soul into every chord. A rare hybrid of producer and vocalist, his music felt like heartfelt love letters. He elevated Nigerian R&B and soul, making music feel like a long, sweet conversation with emotion. Notable productions include Tony Tetuila's "Omode Meta," his own tracks "Angel of My Life" and "Mo So Rire."

15



Shizzi

Davido is widely regarded as Afrobeats' most reliable hitmaker, and that's in no small part thanks to the creative genius of Oluwaseyi Akerele, aka Shizzi. The man with the magic fingers, Shizzi produced an impressive six tracks on Davido's debut album, including the hit single "Dami Duro". He would go on to produce some of Davido's most iconic hits, including "Gobe", "Tchelete", "Skelewu", and the international collaboration "Blow My Mind" featuring Chris Brown. When it comes to crafting hits, Shizzi is the go-to producer – his Midas touch is undeniable.

16



Blaisebeatz

If the last half-decade of Afrobeats had a sonic thread, Blaisebeatz was holding the needle. His production style—fluid, richly textured, and undeniably catchy—has evolved in real time alongside the genre itself, often setting the pace for what comes next. As Afrobeats stretched into new territories and tempos, Blaisebeatz was right there, crafting the blueprint. He's been behind some of the biggest hits and most defining records from Nigeria's top-tier artistes: Adekunle Gold's introspective anthem "Okay," Davido's emotionally resonant "FEEL," Asake's global smash "Lonely At The Top," and Kizz Daniel's cultural juggernaut "Buga (Lo Lo Lo)." Each production carries his hallmark blend of clarity and bounce—commercially magnetic yet musically layered. Blaisebeatz isn't just producing records; he's quietly shaping the emotional and sonic pulse of Afrobeats in its most expansive era yet.

17



Coublon

Most people know Coublon for his seminal work on Kiss Daniel's early hits, producing the chart-topping singles "Woju", "Laye", and "Good Time". However, his impressive discography extends far beyond that. He went on to collaborate extensively with several artists, crafting their biggest hits, including Yemi Alade's "Shekere", "Knack Am", and "Ferrari", as well as Iyanya's "Le Kwa Ukwu" and "Applaudise", and Tekno's "Duro" and "Wash". Coublon was a master at playing to his strengths, delivering hit after hit.

18



Andre Vibez

Andre Vibez, the son of Nigerian music legend Sir Victor Uwaifo, has been producing for over 15 years —but it wasn't until 2020 that his name truly broke into the mainstream. His breakout moment came with Omah Lay's "Ye Ye Ye," a sultry, genre-blending track that introduced his signature flair for balancing intimacy with mass appeal.

Since then, Andre Vibez has quietly become one of the continent's most consistent hitmakers, responsible for some of the biggest songs African music has ever produced. His collaboration with Rema and Ayra Starr on the global smash "Calm Down" & "Rush" marked a seismic moment—not just for Afrobeats' global reach, but for his own ascent as a cross-continental force. Known for weaving together elements of Afropop, R&B, trap, and highlife into smooth, emotionally resonant productions, Andre Vibez has emerged as a key figure in defining the sound of a new generation, bridging legacy and innovation with every beat.

19



J Martins

J. Martins stands as one of the foundational figures in the evolution of contemporary Nigerian music. As both a producer and artist, he played a pivotal role in shaping the pan-African pop sound of the late 2000s and early 2010s—merging highlife, Nigerian pop, and Francophone influences into a cohesive, celebratory style. His work on classics like "Good or Bad" (featuring P-Square and Timaya), "Jupa", and "Oyoyo" not only ruled dancefloors across West Africa but also laid the groundwork for the genre-fluid experimentation seen in today's Afrobeats. Beyond his infectious melodies and signature production style, J. Martins helped bridge regional sounds across the continent, making him a true cultural connector in the early wave of Nigerian pop globalization.

20



Tempoe

With Afrobeats, there's often an emphasis on rhythm and rich production. However, Tempoe revolutionized the game by championing a new sound fueled by melody and minimalism. The results have been stunning. Tempoe has quietly amassed one of the most bankable discographies in the business, with mega-hits like "Love Nwantinti", "Godly", and "Soweto" becoming some of the most streamed African songs of all time. This year, he already produced one of the most dominant songs in Davido's "With You" featuring Omah Lay – a song that will almost certainly become a classic in Nigerian folklore.

More importantly, Tempoe has garnered widespread acclaim for his innovative artistry. In an era where songs felt overproduced and listeners were left feeling overstimulated, Tempoe's work felt like a breath of fresh air, yielding songs with astonishing longevity and timeless appeal. His influence on the Afrobeats landscape is undeniable. How could he not be here?

21



D Tunes

Between 2011–2015, D'tunes provided the soundtracks to weddings, club nights, and joy. If Iyanya and Sean Tizzle were LeBron and Kyrie, D'Tunes was their Kevin Love, the silent MVP behind every smash
Notable Productions:
Iyanya – Kukere, Your Waist
Sean Tizzle – Perfect Gentleman

22



Legendary Beatz

Production duos are a rare gem on the Afrobeats music scene, making it fitting that Legendury Beatz lives up to their name. They rose to fame with their work on Brymo's Headies award-winning "Ara", but it was their collaborations with Wizkid that catapulted them to widespread recognition. Legendury Beatz had already made a name for

themselves with hits like "Azonto" and "Caro", but "Ojuelegba" remains their magnum opus, widely regarded as the song that ushered in a new era of international acclaim for Afrobeats artists. Their success extends beyond Wizkid, with notable credits on Chidinma's "Emi Ni Baller", Mo'Cheddah's "Ko Ma Roll", and Simi's "Ayo". As far as names go, “Legendury” couldn't be more apt.

23



Sossick

Sossick’s beats hit like a heavyweight boxer, every kick, snare, and bassline lands with intention. From Dagrin’s CEO album to Eva’s "I Done Did It", his production doesn’t just back an artist, it fights for them. His work with Dagrin immortalized him as a legend of Nigerian hip-hop.
Notable Productions:
Dagrin – CEO (Album)
Gino – No Be God
Eva – I Done Did It

24



KDDO

KDDO (formerly Kiddominant) doesn’t just make beats, he engineers success. His production feels like a luxury car ride: smooth, precise, and destined for greatness. From Davido’s "Fall" to Chris Brown’s "Under The Influence", KDDO’s soundscapes whisper to the lyrics, guiding them straight to hit status.
Notable Productions:
Chris Brown – Under The Influence
Davido – Fall
Bas – Amnesia
Orezi – Rihanna

25



Spaxx

"I hold Spax for the camp’s sound." — Tec (Show Dem Camp)
Spax is the curator of sonic identities. Whether it’s SDC’s palmwine vibes, Tems’ dreamy textures, or Falz’s introspective flows in comic, Spax creates worlds. If an artist needs a sonic fingerprint, Spax is the architect.
Notable Productions:
Falz – Chardonnay Music
Tems – Love Me Jeje
SDC – Palmwine Music Series

HONORABLE MENTION

1	Selebobo
2	Spellz
3	Dokta Frabz
4	Niphkeys
5	London
6	Samklef
7	Kel P
8	Sess
9	K Solo

THE GREATEST AFROBEATS PRODUCERS OF THE 21ST CENTURY

THE GREATEST

Afrobeats Music Video Directors OF THE 21ST CENTURY

BY **OMA EMINA**

NIGERIA'S MUSIC INDUSTRY IS NO LONGER JUST A CONTINENTAL OWERHOUSE **—IT'S A GLOBAL CULTURAL EXPORT.**

From packed arenas in London to viral TikTok challenges in São Paulo, the sounds of Afrobeats, Afropop, and their many hybrids are reverberating worldwide. But behind the infectious rhythms and star-studded features lies a visual language that has played a crucial role in shaping the identity—and exportability—of Nigerian music.

That visual magic? It's the handiwork of an elite group of music video directors whose creativity, grit, and storytelling instincts have elevated the genre far beyond the studio.

Whether capturing the raw energy of the streets of Lagos, the mysticism of Yoruba folklore, or the futuristic glam of Afropop stardom, these directors are more than just cinematographers — they're cultural architects.

They don't just shoot videos; they craft worlds. Each frame becomes a timestamp in Nigerian music history, a visual echo of where the culture has been and where it's headed.

In this listicle, we spotlight some of the most influential Nigerian video directors—those who have redefined the visual aesthetics of modern African music, set trends across continents, and continue to shape the narrative of what Afrobeats looks like on the world stage.

They don't just shoot videos; they craft worlds. Each frame becomes a timestamp in Nigerian music history, a visual echo of where the culture has been and where it's headed.



Clarence Peters

A true veteran, The founder and CEO of CAPital Dream Pictures, a powerhouse production company specialising in performing arts, film, and video, Peters' influence goes far beyond directing.

His exposure in the entertainment industry began at a young age. By the tender age of 9, he was already unofficially contributing to Nollywood productions alongside his mother. This early exposure ignited a passion that propelled him forward. In 1998, he was already involved in a music video for an AIDS documentary, a project sponsored by Mobile. Since then, he has directed a staggering number of iconic music videos for legendary Nigerian artists like P-Square, Illbliss, Wizkid, 9ice, 2face, and the global afrobeat star Burna Boy. His work continues to shape the visual landscape of Nigerian music.

Portfolio: Burna Boy - Ye, Illbliss - Aiye Po gan ft. Terry G, Banky W - Yes/No



TG Omori

Born ThankGod Omori Jesam, PKA TG Omori or Boy Director has become one of the most sought after directors in Nigeria. TG started directing at 15 while overseeing stage plays in his school and church. By age 18, he made his first movie appearance in the nollywood drama “Papa Ajasco” but would eventually drop acting to focus on film making at the PEFTI Film Institute.

By 2019, TG Omori was rumoured to be responsible for around half of the videos on the summer 2019 charts Countdown on MTV, Soundcity, and Trace.

His larger-than-life visuals and knack for energy has made him one of the most sought after directors.

Portfolio: Asake’s “Peace Be Unto You”, Fireboy DML’s “Bandana”, Kizz Daniel’s “Buga (Lo Lo Lo)”



Dj Tee

In 2006, Banky W released his debut studio album, ‘Back in the Building,’ the lead single off the album was titled “Ebute Metta” was a “Rihanna - Umbrella” sample. The song and video made waves in Nigeria, placing Banky W as one to watch out for and a prospective king of R&B in Nigeria. “Ebute Metta” video was directed by DJ Tee, whose real name is Adetokunbo Odubawo. His entry into Nigeria’s music industry spiked the music video quality and many talents seeked his wizardry to execute their branding.

Portfolio: Shank - Julie, DJ Jimmy Jatt - Stylee, Olu Maintain - Yahoozee and Naeto C - U Know My P.



Sesan Ogunro (Sesan)

`The Afrobeats to the world wave has seen significant progress and impact with Nigerian artists surpassing 1 billion streams, selling out shows and winning awards that were prophesied. The groundwork of these impacts were planted about two decades ago but the paradigm shift was in two music videos, “D’banj - Mr Endowed (Remix) ft. Snoop Dogg” and “D’Banj - Oliver Twist”. Both videos were directed by Sesan.

This isn’t meant to downplay the efforts of other creatives behind the scenes but rather applaud the impact and attention to detail executed by Sesan.

Portfolio: D’Banj - Suddenly, Kahlo - Ginger, Olamide ft. Wizkid - Kana



Unlimited LA

Born Buari Olalekan Oluwasegun, Unlimited LA is a Nigerian music video director and cinematographer. He is a cousin to the Ace Music Video director DJ Tee. His first notable work was BlackMagic’s “Rainbow” which stood out for the experimentation and retaining the audience’s attention.

Unlimited LA's bold and innovative approach is on display in videos.

Portfolio: Reekado Banks - Katapot, Olamide - Wo, Black Magic - Repete.



Director K

In 2015, I saw my friends pick up photography for passion and for sustainability, every image stood out as they nurtured their style. I asked them individually “what was the best camera to start with for a newbie”, they all responded “the camera you are holding as they pointed to my phone.”

Director K started directing videos, he shot with his Iphone, with assistance from the internet, he shot a music video for a rising star C.O. Decoast with an Iphone. The Creative Art dropout turned Director now shines with Soul Train nomination, NAACP win and Best Music Video at The Headies.

With an eye for creating a unique intimacy with his visuals and a vast portfolio. Director K is heading for the top. With Director K’s success story, maybe I might just start shooting with my phone *wink*

Portfolio: Wizkid - Essence Ft. Tems, Rema - Calm Down, Teni - Case.



Jude Okoye (Jude)

More than just a director, Jude co-founded the music powerhouse P-Square. His understanding of music and translating them into brilliant storytelling videos complimented P Square’s branding and positioned them at the top in their peak.

Portfolio: PSquare - Do Me, No One Like You, Senorita, Get Squared, Personally, J Martins - Good Or bad.



Dammy Twitch

Dammy Twitch is a distinguished film director and photographer, celebrated for his work with top musicians and brands worldwide. Dammy Twitch's passion for video editing ignited during his school years. Initially, he honed his skills by editing videos on his phone, gradually advancing to more complex editing techniques on a computer. By the end of 2017, Dammy Twitch had officially launched his career in music video production under his personal brand. His breakthrough came with the first music video he directed for Burna Boy and Yonda in 2017, marking the beginning of his takeover.

Portfolio: Davido - Kante Ft. Fave, Tekno - Wayo, Flavour - Game Changer



Uzodinma Okpechi

Uzodinma Okpechi is regarded as one of the most versatile filmmakers out of Nigeria. With 20 years of TV/Film experience cutting across every aspect of filmmaking, having directed over 30 brilliant films and videos. From his first effort with 'Above Death' in 1998 to 'More Money,' 'Brave Men,' 'Rebels,' 'Eyes In The House,' and 'Turntables. Okpechi was nominated to receive the prestigious Hollywood "Excellence In Cinematic Direction" Award at the 2021 HWMFF grand event on Saturday for his psychological thriller, 'The Mystic River.'

Portfolio: Nkem Owoh - I Go Chop Your Dollar, Kamsi (Movie)



Meiji Alabi

Meji Alabi's name rose to prominence in 2014 with the release of Seyi Shay's "Murda" video. The clip, featuring Patoranking and Shaydee, wasn't just catchy; it boasted a refreshingly clean and polished aesthetic that set a new standard for Nigerian music videos. Alabi, a filmmaker, director, photographer, and co-founder of JM Films, was the mastermind behind this visual. Meji's talent wasn't a one-hit wonder. In 2016, he directed the music video for Maleek Berry's "Kontrol," a visual masterpiece that exuded elegance, fun, and maintained the high bar he established.
Since then, Alabi has consistently delivered music videos that push boundaries and achieve cultural relevance. Each release showcases his ability to explore new creative territories in the visual space.



Moe Musa

Known for his vibrant and colourful style, Musa made his directorial debut in 2009 as a freelance director, he later formed his own video production/media company, Mr. Moe Musa Productions where he produced, directed, and edited his breakthrough music video in 2012 for Fuse ODG featuring Wyclef Jean called Antenna. He worked with Maleek Berry - The Matter, Wizkid - Azonto and each video brought about a youthful energy that complimented the artists.

Portfolio: Olamide - Melo Melo, Korede Bello - Romantic, Starboy Ft. Wizkid & LAX - Caro, Davido - Skelewu.



Adasa Cookey

Adasa Cookey is a Multi-Talented Creative: He is a Nigerian-born music video director, cinematographer, commercial director, colourist, and filmmaker. Adasa believed strongly in his abilities and took a leap of faith by leaving his stable job to pursue his passion for video editing and directing. His big break came in 2012 with directing Burna Boy's "Like To Party" music video. The video showcased Adasa's signature style of capturing a summer vibe and inputting storytelling into his work.

Portfolio: Mavin All Stars - Adaobi, Adekunle Gold - Sade, Simi - Duduke.



Jyde Ajala

Jyde Ajala has become a force to be reckoned with behind the lens of the Nigerian Music scene. Collaborating with major artists like Omah Lay, Olamide, Asake, and Victony, Jyde isn't just shooting music videos, he's telling stories. Whether capturing the dreamer, or the epic scale of success, Jyde's visuals bring Nigerian music to life.

Portfolio: Asake ft. Olamide - Amapiano, Victony - Soweto



Avalon Okpe

Avalon Okpe, son of Reverend J.O.M. Okpe, was raised in Eastern Nigeria with a strong foundation of discipline thanks to his clergyman upbringing. Yet, his inherent creativity blossomed, leading him to a unique path. Driven by curiosity, Avalon ventured into entertainment. Under the guidance of Mr. Femi Abatan (Simple Fem), a renowned figure, Avalon honed his editing skills and filmmaker training in Enugu.

In 2011, Avalon's vision took shape with the founding of Tokindrumz Pictures. Attracting a stellar list of collaborators. He has worked with top-tier Nigerian artists like KCee, Phyno, Olamide, Flavour, Davido, Tiwa Savage, and many more. He has been honored with multiple awards, including NMVA's Best New Director (2015 & 2016) and the E-Celeb Award (2016).

Portfolio: Judikay - Capable God, Moses Bliss - Taking Care ft. Mercy Chinwo



Perliks

Perliks wasn't always destined for the director's chair. At 17, his path took an unexpected turn when his father, TELEMOON, a veteran in the world of Fuji music videos, mentored him into the industry. One day, an invitation to join his father on a shoot sparked a creative fire that would forever alter A Perliks Definition's trajectory.

Portfolio: Blaqbonez - Back In Uni, Bnxn - Gwagwalada

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Director Pink

In today's world, representation is key. It allows people to see themselves reflected in successful figures, fueling aspirations and shattering limitations. Director Pink, also known as Praise Onyeagwalam, embodies this message. A Nigerian music video director, cinematographer, and filmmaker, she's carving her own path in a dynamic industry.

Pink's journey began at a young age, around 15 or 16, when a passion for filmmaking ignited. Joining her church's video team, she remained laser-focused despite suggestions to explore other areas. Her focus paid off. Today, “Pinkline Films”, her own production company, shows the reward of hard work and self belief.

Director Pink's talent shines through her unique blend of artistic vision and commercial sensibility. Collaborating with both big names and rising stars, she's a director on the rise.

Portfolio: Qing Madi - Ole Ft. Bnxn, Chike & Mohbad - Egwu, Simi - Stranger, Niniola - All Eyes On Me.

17



Patrick Elis

When you ask OG Wizkid fans about the first official Wizkid video they watched, 9 times out of 10, they'll say “Holla At Your Boy,” directed by Patrick Elis. This video introduced Wizkid as the new kid on the block, combining Justin Bieber's appeal with Bow Wow's swag. Patrick Elis has a knack for storytelling that shapes how audiences perceive the artist.

Portfolio: Reekado Banks - Jeje, Flavour - Levels, Tiwa Savage - All Over

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Ademola Falomo

Ademola Falomo’s name is the cornerstone of the Altè music video scene, crafting visually stunning films for some of music's most respected voices.

Falomo's influence extends far beyond directing. Through his innovative startup, Family Inc., he fosters a supportive environment where independent filmmakers can hone their craft and push the boundaries of storytelling.

Portfolio: Tems - Try Me, Mr Eazi - Personal Baby, Boj - Abracadabra, Sant - Gangster Fear.

19

Godfather Productions

This production house has churned out some of the most memorable videos that shaped Afropop/Afrobeats. They provided international visual appeal. Founded by Micheal Uche Ogoke, Ogoke believes that it is up to Africans to showcase to the world what they are capable of because they have all it takes to produce content that can successfully compete with the best in the world.

Portfolio: flavour - Nwa Baby, Oyi remix, P Square - Do me(Production), Davido - Gobe, Burna Boy - Don Gorgon

20



Kemi Adetiba

Kemi Adetiba has worn many hats in the entertainment industry. She’s a true filmmaking powerhouse, Kemi Adetiba merges her skills as a director, writer, and producer to evoke emotions from the audience. Kemi began in radio (Rhythm 93.7 FM) before moving to TV (Mnet, Soundcity). After success as a presenter (Temptation Nigeria, Maltina Dance All), she transitioned to directing, studying at the New York Film Academy.

Her music videos, like Olamide - Anifowose, Bez - More and TY Bello - Ekundayo showcase her storytelling prowess.

Portfolio: Wizkid - Tease Me, Niyola - Toh Bad, Banky W - Lagos Party, Lindsey Abudei - Out The Box.

FEATURE

BY **IKEOKUWA AMONIMO**

THE GENRE-BENDER FINDING CANDOR IN CHAOS IN NIGERIA'S BUSTLING ALT-AFROBEATS SPACE



MONAKY STANDS APART

NOT JUST FOR HIS DEEP-TONED VOICE AND LYRICAL CADENCE, BUT FOR HIS ABILITY TO STRADDLE SOUNDS WITH DISARMING CONFIDENCE.

Born **Harrison Ekunwe** and raised in Benin City, **Monaky** began his music journey in 2021 with "The Goat" — a self-assured debut that flexed his storytelling chops and hinted at a penchant for fusing afrobeats with dancehall and alternative sonics.

The years that followed saw a string of promising releases, but it wasn't until 2023's debut album ***Patient Zero*** that his ambition came into clearer focus. Yet even that turned out to be the warm-up. In 2024, everything changed.

His breakout moment arrived with the moody, melodic hit ***'Chandelier'***, a song that spread like wildfire across TikTok and other platforms. The single debuted on the Official Nigeria Top 100, peaking at No. 32 and remaining on the chart for 17 weeks, while surpassing 15 million streams in Nigeria alone.

MONAKY STANDS APART



Monaky capitalized on that momentum with his sophomore album Candor, a genre-blending, emotionally textured body of work featuring Llona, Morrelo, Rhedi, and Dessy Carter. The project debuted at No. 20 on the Official Top 100 Albums and spent over 30 weeks on the chart, crossing 37.5 on-demand million streams (eligible for a Gold certification) domestically. In addition to his own work, Monaky has contributed vocals and writing to projects by Lil Kesh, Laime, 6UFF, and PaBrymo, solidifying his reputation as a versatile collaborator.

In this exclusive TurnTable's Industry Digest feature, members of Monaky's team — from managers to producers and promoters — give us a rare look at the inner workings behind "Chandelier," the creation of Candor, and how this rising force is building a world all his own.

"CHANDELIER" AND THE SHIFT INTO SPOTLIGHT

TTC

"Chandelier" became a breakout hit, especially on TikTok. How did the team react to that moment?

TEAM

We were excited — not necessarily surprised, because we believed in the song's potential. But seeing it resonate the way it did, especially organically, was incredibly rewarding.

FROM BEAT TO BUZZ: INSIDE THE PRODUCTION PROCESS

TTC

Take us into the creative process behind "Chandelier." What made it special?

SOLIDTHECREATOR Producer of "Chandelier"

"I woke up that day with a deep urge to create something different," says SolidTheCreator. "The first sound you hear — 'Who o?' — came to me instantly. I added percussion, then decided to get more personal. I literally used my monitor speakers as live drums. Once I added chords, I knew I had something special."

Monaky knew it too. The producer recalls playing multiple beats during a session before landing on "Chandelier." "He asked me to replay it. A week later, he called me and said, 'Solid, this one is my intro.' We recorded it shortly after, and we both knew — this wasn't just another song. This was a moment."



CANDOR: BUILDING AN ALBUM WITH INTENTION

TTC

What was the approach to producing tracks on Candor?

PRINCETON BEAT Producer, "Sabi Boy"

"I focused on authenticity. The challenge was blending an Afrobeats/Amapiano bounce with a pop-leaning melody — without losing Monaky's essence. Once we struck that balance, it all clicked."

SHUGA SAUND Producer, "Favourite Gurl" & "Gone Rogue"

"I approached the album with the intention of creating timeless music. I made sure the communication between myself and the artists shaped the creative direction."

DUMMEX Producer, "Habakkuk," "Cerebral," "Beholder," "Insoluble"

"Monaky's music fuses soul with an African groove — calm, layered, emotional. My biggest challenge? It was our first project together, so learning his sonic language took time. Plus, we lost some of the files mid-process and had to remake several tracks from scratch. But we pulled through, and the final result was worth every hurdle."





CHART MOVES AND MARKETING STRATEGY

TTC

How did “Chandelier” become such a viral success?

65NATION / APOLLOCOLLECTIVE Marketing & Distribution

“It was a mix of planning and belief. We structured a marketing rollout before Candor dropped. TikTok was a key platform — and Ditto Music backed our strategy with full support. Seeing it all unfold was exhilarating.”

TTC

What’s the focus moving forward?

65NATION / APOLLOCOLLECTIVE Marketing & Distribution

“We’re scaling up. Now that Monaky has a solid base, it’s about growing that fan ecosystem and building towards global traction.”

THE ARTIST’S INNER CIRCLE

TTC

What’s your dynamic with Monaky like?

DON KPASA Manager

“It’s built on mutual trust. I focus on the business side, and he delivers the product. I first met Monaky back in university when I helped promote one of his earliest songs. We’ve worked together ever since. He’s a once-in-a-generation kind of artist.”

COLLABORATION & CURATION

TTC

What do you look for when scouting collaborators for Monaky?

ARTIST AGENT

“Authenticity and chemistry. If it’s not organic, we don’t force it. Every partnership has to feel real — otherwise, we pass.”

STAGE PRESENCE & THE ROAD AHEAD

TTC

Should fans expect more shows soon?

BOOKING AGENT/PROMOTER

“Absolutely. We’re planning Monaky’s first headline show in Lagos and a tour rollout, both locally and internationally.”

TTC

What are the biggest challenges in securing shows for him?

BOOKING AGENT/PROMOTER

“Balancing value. A lot of promoters don’t yet align with the importance of DSP-driven growth. We’re also particular about show quality — from sound to set design — and that requires alignment with event organizers.”

BUILDING AN INDEPENDENT EMPIRE

TTC

How did TKM come about and what’s the long-term goal?

TKM ENTERTAINMEN Label

“TKM is Monaky’s own imprint. Being an independent artist has its challenges — but also its freedoms. We're working toward meaningful partnerships that can expand his reach globally while keeping creative control intact.”

FAN FAVORITES: THE TEAM PICKS THEIR TOP TRACKS

DON KPASA

“Final Destination”

DUMMEX

“Boomerang”

SHUGA SAUND

“Gone Rogue”

SOLIDTHECREATOR

“Chandelier”

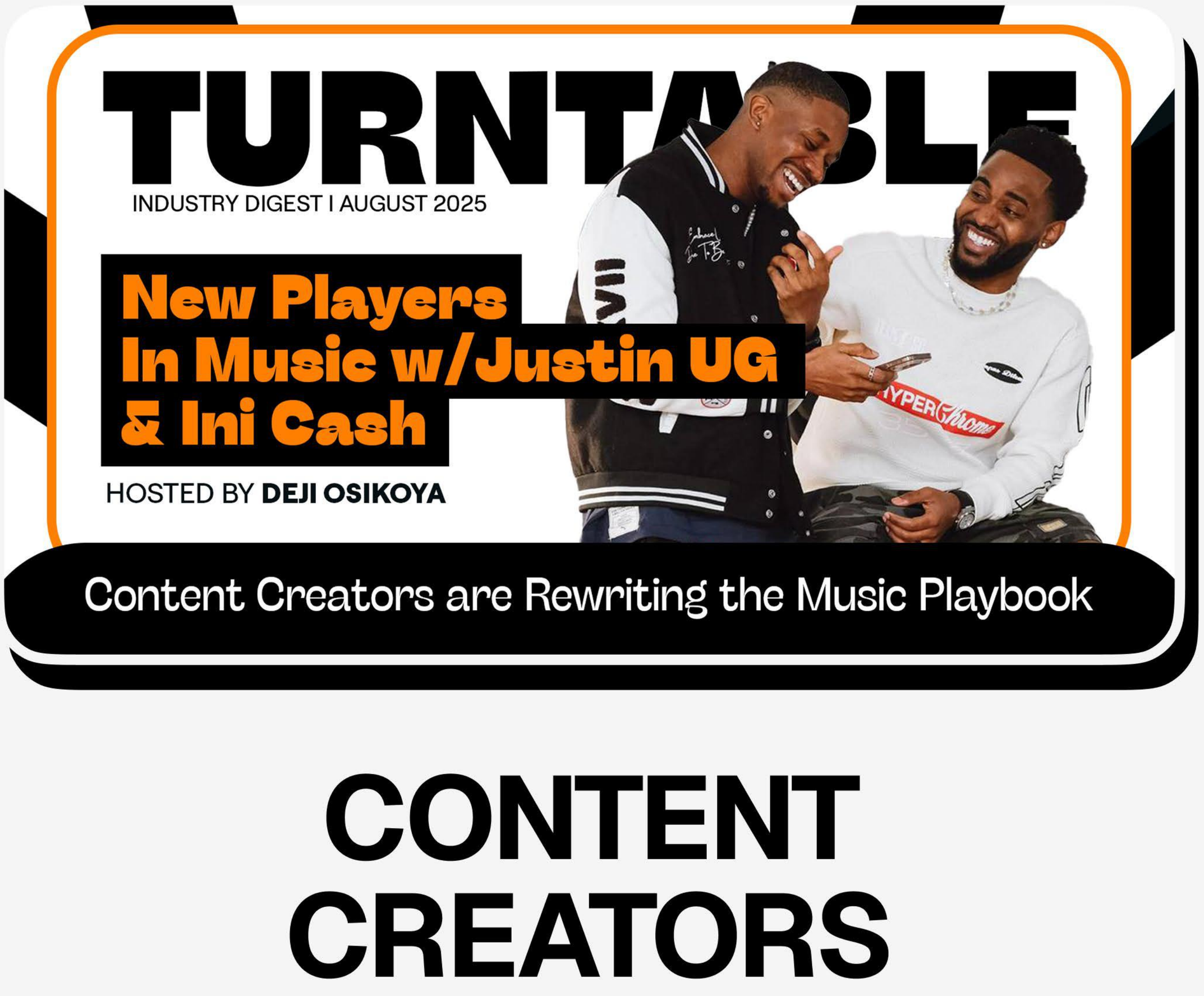


WHAT’S NEXT FOR MONAKY?

As 2025 unfolds, Monaky is poised to push even further — with new visuals, collaborations, and a growing footprint in Nigeria’s fast-evolving music landscape. With Candor, he didn’t just announce himself — he carved out a lane, proving there’s still room for intentional artistry in a hit-driven world. And if “Chandelier” was the ignition, the Monaky era is just getting warmed up.

BRO BANTS

NEW PLAYERS IN MUSIC WITH JUSTIN UG & INI CASH



CONTENT CREATORS ARE REWRITING THE MUSIC PLAYBOOK

HOSTED BY **DEJI OSIKOYA**

As part of the launch of TurnTable Media, a TurnTable vertical dedicated to all things music in media, the BroBants stars serve as the cover of the first issue of the creators-dedicated issue.

YOU CAN WATCH THE FULL INTERVIEW ABOVE

TURNTABLE CHARTS

TTC RULES

TURNTABLE RULES FOR VARIOUS CHARTS PUBLISHED BY TURNTABLE

A
SINGLES CHART

1. All singles from an album are eligible for entry on the singles chart – this includes interludes, intro, outros, memos, and more. However, an intro/outro/memo/interlude with a runtime less than 30 seconds will be ineligible for charting purposes.
2. A single can only have one entry; the release of a remix for a single will be credited as part of the original entry.
3. The original and remix of a single are combined for a single entry, and the version with the highest share of chart points is credited on a week-by-week basis.
4. In a case where the structure, melody, and lyrics of a single are altered for a remix, the remix will be credited as a separate chart entry and registered as 'Pt. 2' or 'Pt 3' and so on.

B
ALBUMS CHART

1. A title qualifies as an 'album' (LP/EP) if it has more than three singles and/or surpasses a 15-minute runtime.
2. When a song appears on multiple albums, the individual streams for the song in question will be allotted to the album with the biggest streams on a week-by-week basis
3. When the description of a title by DSPs differs from that of an artiste; Rule B1 takes precedent
4. Remix(es) of a song in an album will count as part of the album, in adherence to rule A3.

C
NXT EMERGING ARTISTE CHART

1. All artistes are eligible
2. Artistes become ineligible for must not have charted more than 2 songs on the singles chart.
3. An Artiste who has charted on both singles and album charts is not eligible to be on the chart.
4. Catalog artistes who have never recorded a singles chart/albums chart entry prior are ineligible to appear on the chart.

D
GENRE CHARTS

1. Genre charts have no limits provided the track meets the criteria to be classified as a song under that genre.
2. Genre classifications are determined by the chart department of TurnTable

E
TOP INTERNATIONAL SONGS

1. All songs by non-Nigerian artistes are eligible to appear on the chart.

F
TOP 100 RECURRENTS CHART

1. A song enters the recurrent status if it has spent 25 weeks on the Nigeria Top 100 and has fallen below No. 50, and if it has spent 52 weeks on the chart and falls below No.25.

TOP ALBUMS OF 2025 SO FAR

H1 2025 SUMMARY BASED ON STREAMING, SALES & CHART PERFORMANCE

BY **IKEOKUWA AMONIMO**

MORAYO
WIZKID
1
227M

Wizkid's **Morayo**, originally released in November 2024, has maintained its momentum into 2025, emerging as the most-streamed and best-selling album so far this year. With over 235 million streams, 151,333 units sold, and 31 weeks on the Official Albums Chart, Morayo continues to lead across major DSPs.

5IVE
DAVIDO
2
173.3M

Davido's **5ive** follows, currently ranked as the No. 2 album in the country in 2025. With 173.35 million on-demand streams, a 11-week chart run, and a No. 1 peak, it reaffirms Davido's star power.

LUNGU BOY
ASAKE
3
112M

Following at No. 3 is Asake's **Lungu Boy**, which, despite being a 2024 release, remains dominant. The album has amassed 112 million streams in the first half of 2025 alone and has now spent 47 weeks on the chart, reinforcing Asake's lasting impact.

SHAKUR
T.I. BLAZE
4
111M

Right on its heels is T.I. Blaze's **Shakur** (Deluxe) which stands out as a breakout performer. Earlier this year, it became the street-hop artiste's first ever No. 1 album in Nigeria. The album has recorded 111 million on-demand streams during the tracking period of H1 2025 and maintained a strong presence on the charts for 32 weeks.

CHILDREN OF AFRICA
SEYI VIBEZ
5
89M

In fifth place is **Children of Africa** by Seyi Vibez, his first project of 2025. Released in February, the EP has amassed 89 million on-demand streams and 59,000 units sold, marking a major comeback for the artiste the most-streamed artiste of 2024 and H1 2025.

THE MACHINE IS COMING
ODUMODUBLVK
6
82.8M

ODUMODUBLVK's **THE MACHINE IS COMING** is described as an album to rollout another album but that has not stopped from being successful – it became the rapper's second No. 1 album in the country and has totalled 82.8 million on-demand streams in the country during the first half of the year.

PAWON BOY VOL. 1
DJ 4KERTY & TML VIBEZ'S
7
82M

Dj 4Kerty & TML Vibez's **Pawon Boy Vol. 1** – the first ever collab project to reach No. 1 on the official albums chart — sits at No. 7 on the H1 2025 ranking. It has earned 82 million on-demand streams so far, with a notable 33-week chart streak.

WHAT A FEELING
FOLA
8
67M

At No. 8 is FOLA's **what a feeling**, which peaked at No. 4 upon release but has shown a lot of staying power in the upper echelons of the official albums chart on a weekly basis (It is the only project in the year's top ten best-sellers not to reach No. 1 on the weekly albums chart). It has earned 71 million on-demand streams during the first part of 2025 and remained on the chart for 30 weeks.

WORK OF ART
ASAKE
9
60M

Despite being released two years ago, Asake's **Work Of Art** is still among the year's top sellers, recording 60 million on-demand streams and selling 40,000 units in 2025 so far. The project is on an extraordinary run as it is now in its 107th week on the chart. It ranks at No. 9

TURNTABLE CHARTS

10

HEIS
REMA

52M

Rema's **HEIS** also remains commercially active, with 52 million on-demand streams in 2025 to complete the top ten for H1 2025. The album recently turned a year old with the highly charismatic artiste giving what he described as an author's note to give more insights into creating the project.

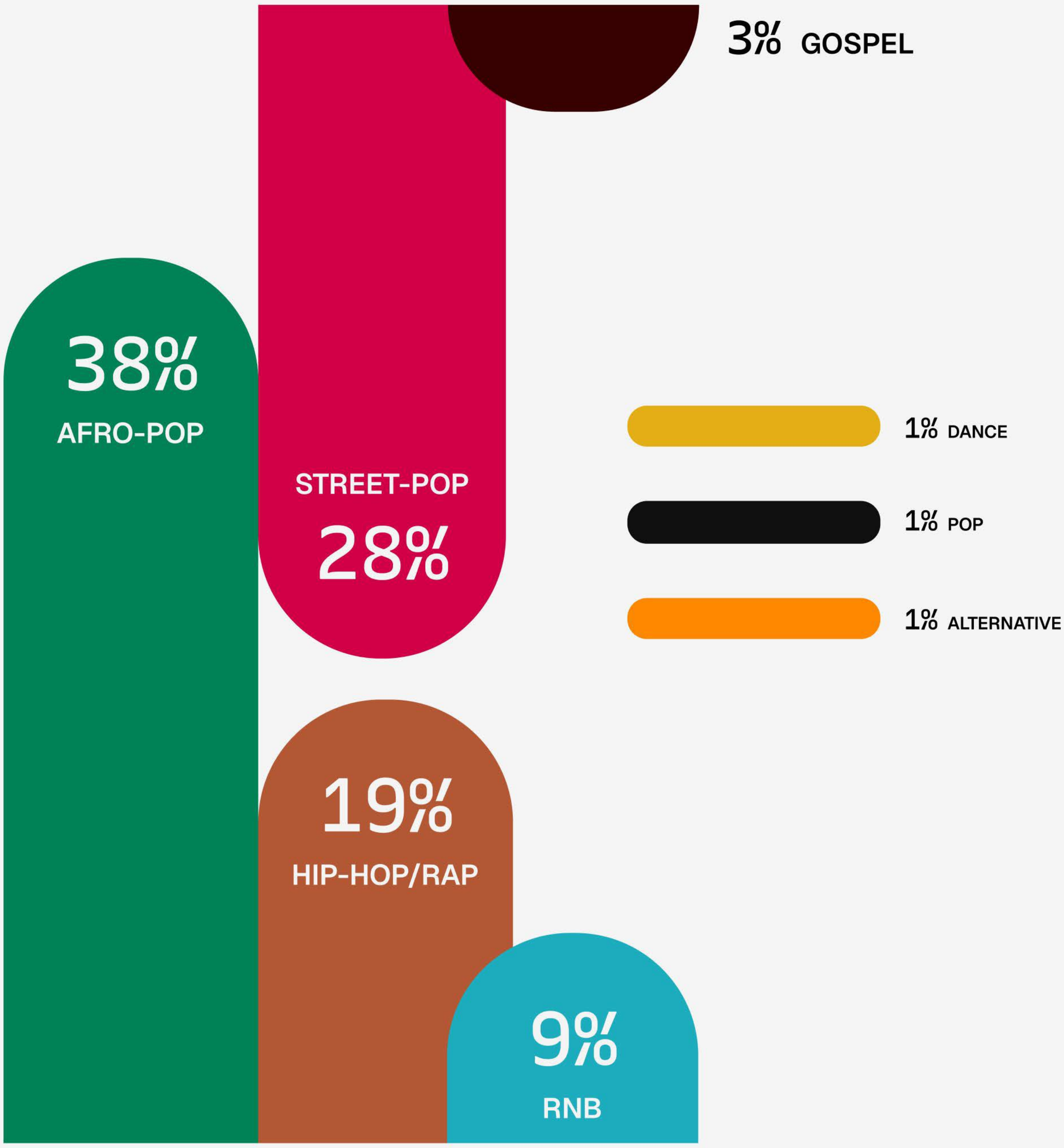
TOP 20 ALBUMS/PROJECTS OF 2025 (H1)

No.	Album	Artiste	Streams	Weeks	Units sold	Peak
1	Morayo	Wizkid	235M	32	151,333	#1
2	5ive	Davido	173.3M	11	115,533	#1
3	Lungu Boy	Asake	111.5M	47	74,666	#1
4	Shakur	T.I Blaze	111M	32	74,000	#1
5	Children Of Africa - EP	Seyi Vibez	89M	19	59,300	#1
6	THE MACHINE IS COMING	ODUMODUBLVCK	82.8M	14	55,217	#1
7	Pawon Boy Vol. 1 - EP	Tml Vibez	82M	32	54,666	#1
8	what a feeling - EP	Fola	71.1M	29	44,666	#4
9	Work Of Art	Asake	60M	106	40,000	#1
10	HEIS	Rema	52M	51	34,666	#1
11	Maffian	Ayo Maff	50.5M			
12	Homeless	Llona	49.6M			
13	Eziokwu	ODUMODUBLVCK	48.7M			
14	Jiggy Forever	Young John	47.8M			
15	Loseyi Professor	Seyi Vibez	47.2M			
16	Mmwtv	Asake	46.8M			
17	Zero Panic, Vol. 2	Balloranking	45.3M			
18	Gen Z	Zinoleesky	43.8M			
19	Boy Alone	Omah Lay	43M			
20	Blownboy Ru	Ruger	42.5M			



TOP 100 ALBUMS
OF MID YEAR 2025

GENRE DISTRIBUTION



TURNTABLE CHARTS

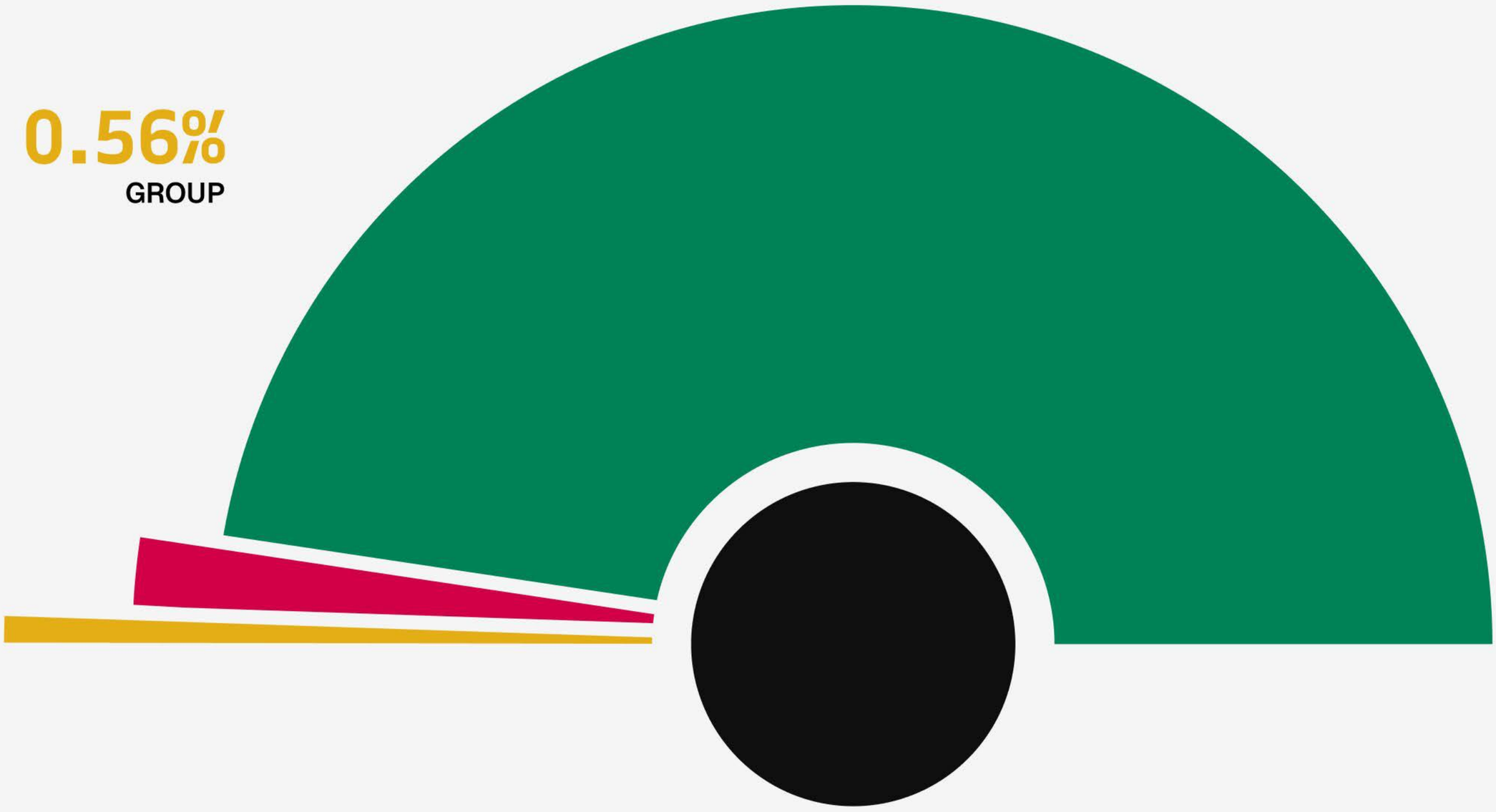
TOP 100 ALBUMS
OF MID YEAR 2025

GENDER DISTRIBUTION

1.30%
FEMALE

98.14%
MALE

0.56%
GROUP



TOP SONGS OF 2025 SO FAR

H1 2025 OVERVIEW OF
NIGERIA'S BIGGEST SONGS

BY **IKEOKUWA AMONIMO**

AS WE CROSS THE HALFWAY MARK OF 2025, **THE NIGERIAN MUSIC SCENE CONTINUES TO DELIVER A THRILLING BLEND OF CREATIVITY, GENRE-BLURRING EXPERIMENTATION, AND UNWAVERING AUDIENCE LOYALTY**. FROM HIGH-ENERGY DANCE ANTHEMS TO HEARTFELT BALLADS, THE YEAR'S MOST DOMINANT SONGS HAVE DEFINED THE MOOD OF PLAYLISTS, SOCIAL MEDIA TRENDS, AND NIGHTCLUBS ALIKE. WHETHER RELEASED LAST YEAR OR FRESHLY DROPPED, THESE TRACKS HAVE POWERED THROUGH THE CHARTS WITH STAYING POWER AND STAGGERING STREAMING NUMBERS.

No.1

JOY IS COMING
FIDO

Streams **68.6M**
Radio Reach 1.25bn

Fido's ***"Joy is Coming"*** leads the pack as the biggest song of the first half of 2025. The record topped the Official Nigeria Top 100 for a joint-record six weeks, fueled by its sheer relatability and cultural ubiquity. At a time when Nigerians were manifesting joy and positivity, the song became an anthem of hope. That resonance translated into numbers—68.6 million on-demand streams, making it the most streamed song of H1 2025, and 1.25 billion radio airplay impressions, placing it at No. 2 on radio.

No.2

KESE (DANCE)
WIZKID

Streams **39.7M**
Radio Reach 1.62bn

Coming in at No. 2 is Wizkid's ***"Kese (Dance)"***, the breakout hit from his latest project Morayo. The track dominated dance floors nationwide and reaffirmed the star's reputation as a certified hitmaker. It recorded 1.617 billion radio airplay impressions (No. 1 on radio) and 39.7 million on-demand streams, the fourth-highest streaming total for a single in H1 2025.

No.3

FUNDS
DAVIDO FT. ODUMODUBLVCK & CHIKE

Streams **40.7M**
Radio Reach 941.8M

What happens when Davido, ODUMODUBLVCK, and Chike unite over a Brenda Fassie sample? You get ***"Funds"***, the third-biggest song of the year so far. Originally released in December 2024, "Funds" spent three weeks at No. 1 and clinched the top spot on the Annual Detty December Chart. It became the second No. 1 single from Davido's 5IVE, gave ODUMODUBLVCK his fourth career No. 1, and Chike his second.
In the first half of 2025, "Funds" racked up 40.7 million on-demand streams (No. 3 on streaming) and 941.8 million radio impressions (No. 5 on radio).

No.4

LAHO
SHALLIPOPI

Streams **35.7M**
Radio Reach 907.7M

Street-hop anthem ***"Laho"*** by Shallipopi lands at No. 4, having gone from a viral smash to a cross-border sensation. In Nigeria alone, it tallied 907.7 million radio airplay impressions (No. 6 on radio in H1 2025) and 35.7 million on-demand streams (No. 6 on streaming in H1 2025). The rankings account for both versions of the track, including "Laho II" featuring Burna Boy. However, the original version contributed the majority of total chart points, making it the officially credited entry.

No.5

PITY THIS BOY
ODUMODUBLVCK FT. VICTONY

Streams **31.9M**
Radio Reach 811.8M

At No. 5 is ODUMODUBLVCK again, this time with ***"PITY THIS BOY"*** featuring Victony. The track pulled in 32 million on-demand streams (No. on streaming in H1 2025) and 811.8 million in radio airplay impressions (No. 10 on Radio in H1 2025). It's yet another feather in Victony's cap, marking his tenth top 10 appearance on the official singles chart with "PITY THIS BOY."

TURNTABLE CHARTS

No.6

WHO DOES THAT?
FOLA & BELLA SHMURD

Streams **37.3M**
Radio Reach 621.1M

Superstar Rema claims the No. 7 spot with ***"Baby (Is It A Crime)"***, a track that had the world's attention from the moment its snippet went viral. Though it posted a relatively modest 25.5 million on-demand streams (No. 18 on streaming in H1 2025) in the country, the track dominated Nigerian airwaves with 967.5 million radio impressions (No. 3 on Radio in H1 2025), whilst earning Rema his fifth No. 1 single in the country.

No.7

BABY (IS IT A CRIME)
REMA

Streams **25.5M**
Radio Reach 967.5M

Kunmie entered the charts for the first time earlier this year with a romantic slow-burn that quickly became a fan favorite – ***"Arike"*** lands at No. 8 on this list . The track spent five consecutive weeks at No. 1 on the Official Nigeria Top 100, driven by its poetic storytelling and emotional resonance. It recorded 41 million on-demand streams (No. 2 on streaming in H1 2025), while radio impressions totaled 382.9 million (No. 45 on Radio in H1 2025). Many listeners already regard it as the unofficial love song of the year.

No.8

ARIKE
KUNMIE

Streams **41.0M**
Radio Reach 392.9M

Landing at No. 6 is rising star FOLA with his biggest hit till date ***"who does that"*** featuring Bella Shmurda. As his second mainstream single, it marked a turning point in his career, amassing 37.3 million on-demand streams (No. 5 on streaming in H 2025) and 621.1 million radio impressions (No. 21 on radio in H1 2025). The song also peaked at No. 2 on the singles chart, making it FOLA's joint-highest chart entry to date.

No.9

TOMA TOMA
RUGER FT. TIWA SAVAGE

Streams **22.1M**
Radio Reach 957.1M

Rounding out the Top 10 songs for H1 2025 is Ruger's ***"Toma Toma"*** with Tiwa Savage, a sultry, percussion-heavy track that blends Afro-pop with island influences at No. 1. It garnered 22 million on-demand streams (No. 26 on streaming in H1 2025) and 757.1 million radio airplay impressions (No. 4 on Radio in H1 2025). The single earned Ruger his seventh career Top 10 and marked Tiwa Savage's highest chart entry to date, peaking at No. 2.

No.10

AWUKE
DAVIDO FT. YG MARLEY

Streams **20.5M**
Radio Reach 902M

Davido's ***"Awuke"*** featuring YG Marley lands at No. 10 for the biggest songs in the first half of the year. It was the first of three No. 1 singles off '5IVE' album and racked up 20.5 million on-demand streams (No. 31 on streaming in H1 2025) and 902 million in radio airplay impressions (No. 7 on Radio in H1 2025). With six months still left to go, the bar has been set high. These ten songs have already defined the rhythm of 2025 in Nigeria—charting, trending, and thrilling across platforms.

TOP 10 SONGS OF 2025 (H1)

No.	Song	Artiste	Peak	Streams	Radio Reach
1	Joy is Coming	Fido	#1	68.6M	1.25bn
2	Kese (Dance)	Wizkid	#1	39.7M	1.62bn
3	Funds	Davido ft. ODUMODUBLVCK & Chike	#1	40.7M	941.8M
4	Laho	Shallipopi	#2	35.7M	907.7M
5	PITY THIS BOY	ODUMODUBLVCK featuring Victony	#2	31.9M	811.8M
6	Who does that?	Fola & Bella Shmurda	#2	37.3M	621.1M
7	Baby (Is it A Crime)	Rema	#1	25.5M	967.5M
8	Arike	Kunmie	#1	41.0M	392.9M
9	Toma Toma	Ruger featuring Tiwa Savage	#2	22.1M	957.1M
10	Awuke	Davido featuring YG Marley	#2	20.5M	902M

BY **IKEOKUWA AMONIMO**

A CONCERNING TREND:

RECENT NIGERIAN ALBUMS ARE STRUGGLING TO DOMINATE THE OFFICIAL SINGLES CHARTS

Over the past two years, the Nigerian music scene has experienced a notable shift. **While albums still debut with major buzz and high streaming numbers, very few sustain a prolonged presence on the singles charts**. This evolving pattern raises important questions about the longevity, replay value, and cultural stickiness of today's album tracks.

The last album to truly dominate the charts across multiple tracks was Asake's ***Work of Art***. Upon release, the 14-track project saw 10 songs enter the top 20 including ***"Amapiano"*** (No. 2), ***"Basquiat"*** (No. 3), and ***"Sunshine***" (No. 5). Four additional tracks landed within the top 40. This level of chart saturation showcased more than hype and translates to lasting audience interest and cultural impact. Since then, no full-length project has come close to that performance.

2025 ALBUMS
BIG DEBUTS, FAST DECLINES

Davido - 5IVE

Davido's 5IVE opened strong with 33.9 million first-week streams and five songs in the top 20, including ***"With You"*** (No. 1) and ***"Offa Me"*** (No. 3).

However, by week two, only two tracks remained. In week three and four, just "With You" lingered in the top 10 and streams dropped to 12.1M and 9.7M respectively. Despite high anticipation, the project failed to maintain momentum beyond the opening week.

BNXN - CAPTAIN

BNXN's CAPTAIN had a slower start, with 6.4M first-week streams and only one top 20 entry (***"Very Soon***" at No. 6). This is owing to the release of the album on the final day of tracking week June 27 – July 3, 2025. Expectedly, the album gained traction in week two which was its first full week of release, with streams jumping to 16.9M and ***"Laye Mi"*** soaring from No. 25 to No. 7.

The jury is still out for CAPTAIN as it has only had four complete weeks of release and with the arrival of Burna Boy's No Sign of Weakness, the competition for attention in an already-saturated market becomes even stronger. As of now, the album continues to have two tracks in the top ten with "Very Soon" and "Laye Mi. – a positive sign that it might just be the one to buck the trend.

Joeboy - Viva Lavida

Joeboy's return with Viva Lavida underwhelmed. It recorded just 2.5 million streams in its debut week, with two songs (***"Taxi Driver"*** at No. 17 and ***"Free Of Charge"*** at No. 20) making into the top 20 of the official singles chart. The album fell out of the top 20 completely by week two.

OLAMIDE & BURNA BOY
BIG NAMES, MODEST STAYING POWER

Olamide - Olamide

Despite being the third-biggest full-day of 2025 and first-week streamed album all-time, Olamide's self-titled project didn't dominate the singles chart. ***"99"*** debuted at No. 1 and ***"Kai"*** (a pre-released single featuring Wizkid) at No. 10, but only "Billionaires Club" at No. 2 joined them in its first week of release. By week four, just three songs remained in the top 20 which indicates a steep drop for such a high-profile release.

Burna Boy - No Sign of Weakness

Burna Boy's latest project No Sign of Weakness marked a rare moment with no No. 1 debut/single in its first week for a major album by an A-lister. Six songs entered the top 20, led by ***"Love"*** (No. 4) and ***"Dem Dey"*** (No. 5). It has hard to call what No Sign of Weakness yet as it early days but there are both positive and worrying signs; "Love" made a rare surge to No. 1 by charting higher in its second week than in its first week but only three songs remain in the top 20 (despite the album being supported by five singles).



TURNTABLE CHARTS

2024 ALBUMS
WEREN'T MUCH DIFFERENT

Wizkid
Morayo

On the singles chart, Morayo stood out briefly, with an impressive outcome of 14 songs entering the top 20 in its debut week. However, soon enough just six songs charted in week two, two in week three, and three in week four. This mirrors the same chart fatigue seen in 2025. However, it is important to note that the album led the official albums chart for 11 weeks.

Ayra Starr
The Year I Turned 21

Ayra Starr's sophomore effort had a modest impact. ***"Bad Vibes"*** (No. 6), ***"Goodbye (Warm Up)"*** (No. 9), and ***"Commas"*** (No. 14) made the top 20 in week one. By week four, only the first two remained and both outside the top 10.

Tems
Born In The Wild

Tems opened with 4.8 million streams, with only two tracks — ***"Get It Right"*** (No. 13) and ***"Love Me JeJe"*** (No. 18) — cracking the top 20. "Get It Right" was the only one to chart in the following weeks, and the album dropped out of the top 20 entirely by week four.

REMA'S HEIS
A RARE EXCEPTION?

Rema's HEIS challenged listener expectations with its experimental sound, a factor that, despite controversy, helped it gain traction in week three. Only two songs debuted in the top 20, but by week three, momentum surged: "HEHEHE" rose to No. 3, "BENIN BOYS" held at No. 4, "YAYO" climbed to No. 6, and "OZEBA" entered at No. 11. By week four, four tracks remained in the top 10. It's one of the few recent projects to grow in chart power post-release







BAD VIBES | **6**

GOODBYE (WARM UP) | **9**

COMMAS | **14**





OPENED W/ **4.8M** STREAMS

GET IT RIGHT | **13**

LOVE ME JEJE | **18**

SHORT-FORM WINS
THE CASE OF KIZZ DANIEL'S TZA

Notably, the last project to have every track enter the top 20 was Kizz Daniel's TZA, a 4-track EP. In week one, "Twe Twe" (No. 2) and "Too Busy To Be Bae" (No. 17) entered – "Twe Twe" had already topped the chart for ten weeks before the release of the project. By week two, "Showa" (No. 4) and "Sooner" (No. 18) joined. Over four weeks, the EP maintained 2–3 songs on the chart consistently. This remains an impressive accomplishment for a short project that places a focus on whether or not shorter-focused releases are more impactful and replayable than full-length albums. "Showa" eventually peaked at No. 1 on the Official Nigeria Top 100.

His 2025 EP Uncle K: Lemon Chase fared well too; two songs "Al-Jannah" with ODUMODUBLVCK & Bella Shmurda and "Titi" featuring Fola debuted at No. 3 and No. 6 respectively. Two other tracks appeared in the top 20 that week. By week two, "Al-Jannah" rose to a new peak of No. 2 and "Titi" remained in the top 10 by dropping one spot plus one other track "Police" in the top 20. By week seven, the project had no song in the top ten with the highest being "Titi" at No. 15. However, it is important to note that several high-profile albums had dropped within that period.

Despite strong debut-week performances, albums are not sticking around on the singles charts like they once did. Even when streaming is high, few tracks show the staying power of past hits like "Amapiano" or "Lonely at the Top." What we're witnessing is a redefinition of what success looks like for albums in Nigeria. Is Asake's Work Of Art the last of its kind? Or are the audience better served with short-length projects like 'TZA - EP' and experimental ones like 'HEIS.' Or is the market too saturated for anything to truly stand out?

NIGERIA'S LOCAL CONSUMPTION IS THE **BIGGEST IN AFRICA & MIDDLE EAST**

BY **IKEOKUWA AMONIMO**

BUT WHILE ITS STREAMING MIGHT OUTPACE ITS EARNINGS, ITS GLOBAL IMPACT TELLS A BIGGER STORY

Halfway through 2025, **Luminate's H1 report** delivered some telling insights into global music consumption. One stat stood out: **Nigeria now holds the highest percentage of local music support** among all countries in the Middle East and Africa. According to the report, **61.3% of on-demand (audio + video) streams in Nigeria were from local Nigerian artists.**

This data affirms what many in the industry have long known. Nigerian audiences are fiercely supportive of their own. But in a market plagued by economic instability and weak monetisation structures, that support doesn't always translate to financial reward.

Over the past year, conversations around revenue disparities in Africa's music ecosystem have gained momentum. While South Africa often leads the continent in terms of music income, Nigeria continues to set the pace for cultural impact. In a recent interview with Joey Akan's Afrobeats Intelligence, Muyiwa Awoniyi (manager to **Tems** and **Lékáá Beats**) noted: "One million streams in Nigeria equals about $300."

The math is sobering. Despite being a hub of global Afropop influence, Nigeria's artists are not reaping financial rewards proportionate to their popularity. Yet, Nigeria remains the **melting pot of African music**, dictating what's hot and influencing what the rest of the continent, and even the diaspora, tunes into. And that influence is driven by unrelenting local support.

From the rise of the Uzama brothers (Shallipopi, Zerry DL, Famous Pluto) to the cultural dominance of ODUMODUBLVCK, Nigerian fans have played a critical role in amplifying their artists. It's not just about clicks and streams; it's about organic loudness. Street slang, meme culture, shared links, and TikTok freestyles. Nigerians push their stars to the world stage, even when the financial system doesn't reward them adequately.



The numbers speak to this growing consumption. IFPI's recent reports on Sub-Saharan Africa show year-on-year growth in recorded music revenues

- **2021**: REVENUE GREW BY **9.6%,** WITH AD-SUPPORTED STREAMING UP BY **56.4%**.
- **2022**: THE REGION LED GLOBALLY WITH A **34.7%** REVENUE INCREASE, LARGELY DRIVEN BY SOUTH AFRICA.
- **2023**: REVENUE ROSE **24.7%**, FUELED BY PAID STREAMING.
- **2024**: THE REGION HIT $110 MILLION IN RECORDED MUSIC REVENUES — A **22.6%** INCREASE.

In **June 2025**, a new report from IFPI revealed more precise (though still limited) figures for Nigeria:

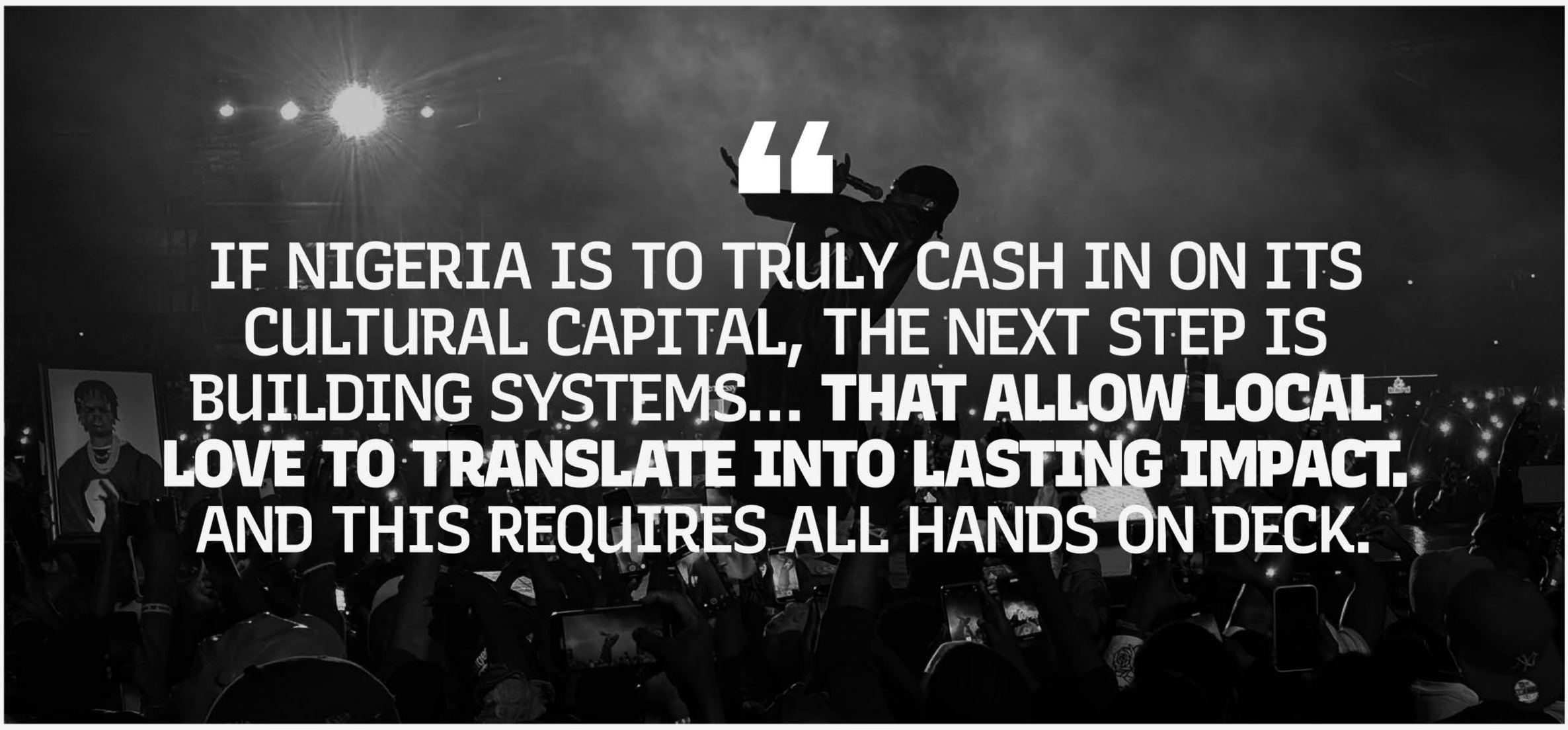
- **Subscription streaming revenues jumped by 206.4% to $5.2 million.**
- **Nigeria ranked 57th globally in total recorded music revenues, estimated at $11.1 million.**

While these numbers may appear promising, they pale in comparison to the sheer scale of consumption. For context, Spotify's VP of Music & Audiobooks, **David Kaefer**, highlighted Nigeria's growth as part of the platform's long-term investment strategy:

"A decade ago, there was a widely held view that you couldn't monetise certain markets. But today, places like Nigeria, India, and Brazil are showing that our investments are paying off."

Still, the limitations of the Nigerian market are real. The country's **economic downturn** and the steep devaluation of the Naira (now trading at **₦1600 to $1**) have severely weakened consumer purchasing power. For most fans, streaming on paid platforms remains a luxury, not a norm.
There is now a growing need to educate audiences about what streaming pays, and how success in music goes beyond numbers. As Nigerian artists dominate global playlists and stages, context is critical: popularity does not equal prosperity.

If Nigeria is to truly cash in on its cultural capital, the next step is building systems, from better licensing to fairer revenue splits, that allow local love to translate into lasting impact. And this requires all hands on deck.



TurnTable Charts is

FIVE IMPACTFUL YEARS OF TELLING THE NIGERIAN STORY

TURNTABLE CHARTS

BY **IKEOKUWA AMONIMO**

5 YEARS OF TURNTABLE CHARTS IN NIGERIA

LANDMARK MOMENTS SINCE LAUNCH

JULY 2020 — **JULY 2025**

Since its launch in July 2020, TurnTable Charts has become a cornerstone of the Nigerian music industry, transforming how success is measured, reported, and celebrated. Over the past five years, what began as a pioneering effort to centralise music data in Nigeria has become the gold standard for tracking consumption across streaming, airplay, and digital platforms. As the charts celebrate their fifth anniversary, TurnTable's history documentation is visible.

Asake
Only a few artistes have defined this era more than Asake, who holds the all-time record for the most No. 1 singles in Nigeria with 13 chart-topping songs to his name. In 2022 alone, he secured six No. 1 hits which is the most ever by an artiste in a single calendar year. Asake also extended his dominance with Lungu Boy, now the longest-running No. 1 album in the history of the official album charts. On the albums front, Seyi Vibez has become the most successful artiste in that category with five No. 1 albums.

Davido
Several milestones have also highlighted the range of impact within Nigerian music as Davido delivered a remarkable feat by having three No. 1 songs in three successive weeks ("FEM", "Holy Ground" ft. Nicki Minaj, and "The Best" ft. Mayorkun), all on his A Better Time album. His 2023 album Timeless broke records for the biggest debut sales week of any album ever tracked in history. His single "FEM" was also the first track in Nigerian music history to complete a clean sweep and top every major chart category (radio, streaming, TV, and singles) simultaneously. Kizz Daniel's "Cough (ODO)" followed in similar footsteps, recording the biggest single-week streaming numbers for any song to date.

Female Artistes on the Charts
Female representation has been limited to occasional appearances at the top of the charts charts, but Ayra Starr has stayed an exception to that trend. She remains the only female artiste with multiple No. 1 singles, currently standing at four. Beyond Nigeria's borders, Ed Sheeran became the first international act with multiple No. 1 songs, with "For My Hand" with Burna Boy and Fireboy's "Peru (Remix)". Gyakie, meanwhile, achieved a dual milestone when "Forever (Remix)" featuring Omah Lay made her both the first female and the first non-Nigerian African artiste to top the official singles chart.

Genre Diversity
Other chart milestones have been equally significant for genre diversity. Gaise Baba & Lawrence Oyor's "No Turning Back II" earned the title of highest-charting gospel single in the country's history, while Olamide's "Rock" became the first song by a Nigerian rapper to reach the summit. The rap lane also saw Wale and ODUMODUBLVCK make history as the first pair of rappers to collaborate on a No. 1 single on the Official Nigeria Top 100 chart.

As TurnTable Charts nears its sixth year, it continues to evolve alongside the industry it monitors. There are more record-breaking milestones to be documented and shared.

THE GREATEST

BY **WONU OSIKOYA (WO), HONOUR AGHEDO (KH), TOMIDE MARV (TMARV), ADEAYO ADEBIYI (AA)**

AFROBEATS STREET-HOP ARTISTES OF THE 21ST CENTURY.

Nigeria's street-hop scene is a vibrant, unfiltered reflection of grassroots culture, where raw talent, hustle anthems, and infectious street slang collide to create some of the country's most influential music.

Born out of different hoods, street pop has molded Afrobeats' evolution in many ways, giving rise to cult heroes and viral superstars. From the early days of DaGrin's street-hop dominance to the rebellious energy of the Marlian movement, and the viral chaos of Portable's Zazoo Zeh, these artists have turned local slang into national catchphrases and street dances into global trends. Whether it's Zlatan's Zanku revolution, Mohbad's emotional street tales, or Small Doctor's motivational anthems, each act on this list represents the voice of many different parts of the streets — unapologetic, relatable, and undeniably impactful.

With that being said, **we take a quick dive into Street pop culture over the last 2 decades as we crown 25 of the greatest Street-Hop acts Nigeria has witnessed** including the pioneers, hitmakers and game changers who have turned passion into a profession and turned their struggles into success stories.



Olamide

Nigerian street pop cannot exist without the name Baddo. As a matter of fact, Baddo has paved the way for so many people on and off this list. Dominating the market is one thing, but dominating the mainstream market consistently since the early 2010s till now while reinventing and reshaping is the reason why Baddo is sitting pretty at the very top of this list. When Olamide Adedeji but popularly known as Olamide, Baddo or the Voice Of The Streets stepped into the scene in 2010 with the record **"Eni Duro,"** he broke in with authentic street representation, rapping and flowing while merging Pidgin and his native dialect Yoruba, together, connecting directly with the streets and its roots.

For time, he has always rapped about the struggles, hustle and street culture in Nigeria, particularly in Bariga, Lagos — a part of the city majorly populated by struggling Nigerians who just as Olamide hope to make it out of the hood someday. Bariga has minted stars such as Lil Kesh, Viktoh etc. with Olamide being a significant part of their respective journeys. Over the last 10+ years, he has released an album every other year, popularizing Yoruba Rap in mainstream Nigerian music, blending indigenous languages with street slangs, making it cool to rap in Yoruba while setting the tone and inspiring a new wave of artists like Zlatan, Mohbad, Seyi Vibez and so many others. His influence can simply not go unnoticed. Although his discography is packed with Street pop hits such as **"Wo!" "Bobo," "Eyan Mayweather"** and more, he has successfully dabbled in Afrobeats, Hip-Hop and even Gospel-inspired records such as **"Omo Ologo".**

Many say Olamide is one of the greatest A&Rs in Nigerian music today and can I doubt that? Absolutely not. Since setting up his record label YBNL in 2012 , he has gone forth to produce stars such as Fireboy DML, Lil Kesh, Adekunle Gold, Asake and so many more. Unlike some artists who lose touch after fame, Olamide stays connected to his roots, frequently referencing his Bariga upbringing and supporting underground artists; now, a Baddo feature can not only change the trajectory of your career as an artist but can also set you up for life with his mentorship and collaborations shaping the sound of modern Afrobeats and Street Pop.G

Olamide flexes his musical prowess across many different forms especially through songwriting, not just for himself but for many others. With writing credits on records such as Tiwa Savage's "49-99"

TURNTABLE CHARTS

and Fireboy's "Everyday," as well as many of Asake's records, his pen speaks for him in rooms he isn't even seated in.

A decade long career is not something you see everyday especially in this part of the world but Badddo has not only proven it's possible; he has proven it's possible to do that while still lifting others around. Morphing from artist, to Record Label owner to Music Business Executive, it's safe to say Olamide is a living legend whose legacy has been shaped by his zeal, passion and commitment to Afrobeats, Street pop and Nigerian music and its culture.

BY **WO**



Asake

"It's time for you to go show the world what you're really about," Olamide chants at the end of the record **"Trabaye"** on Asake's debut EP, 'Ololade Asake' clearly affirming to the audience that Mr Money will be here for a while. Little did we know that Asake would take the whole world by surprise.

Asake is a testament to the possibilities of everything Afrobeats is, can and will become. For the first time in the history of Nigerian music, we see an artist blending Afrobeats, 'Piano, Fuji, Street Pop, Hip Hop, all together while performing music in Yoruba, delivering energetic styles that resonate perfectly with music consumers across different parts of the world. His use of catchy hooks, street lingo, log drums and Yoruba-infused lyrics is what makes his music instantly recognizable and memorable.

When Asake released "Mr Money" in 2020, he garnered the attention of a handful of fans and listeners. He followed this up with a remix featuring Zlatan & Peruzzi and although he captured the attention some, the record moved faster than the artist. In early 2022, Asake signed a recording contract with Olamide's YBNL and the rest has been history. In the last three years, he has conquered stages across the world that only a few of the greats can boast of. He sold out the 02 Arena, London, in minutes — an unprecedented feat for a relatively new artist.. Over the past few years, he has gone ahead to play and sell out shows at arenas such as the Barclays Center, Madison Square Garden and even the 02 Arena on multiple occasions.

In the span of 3 years, Asake has released 1 EP and 3 studio LPs with his next album already on the way. His debut album 'Mr Money With Vibe' quickly broke records, becoming one of Afrobeats fastest selling albums of all time. To keep the momentum going, he followed up with this Sophomore album and my personal favorite body of work of his, 'Work of Art,' a 14-tracker that consistently showcases his range as a singer, songwriter and music genius across 40 minutes. Completing his Trifecta, in 2024, he released his 3rd studio album 'Lungu Boy,' with international collaboration from Central Cee, Travis Scott, Ludmilla, Stormzy and more, solidifying his place on the global front.

Since his breakout, Asake has maintained a high release frequency, dropping hit after hit without losing quality. His ability to capture the essence of Nigerian street culture while pushing Afrobeats to the global front makes him one of the greatest Street pop acts. His sound, work rate, and influence solidify his place in Afrobeats history forever.

BY **WO**



Phyno

Many may say "Ghost Mode" was the foundation for Phyno and they won't be wrong. Teaming up with Olamide, two street talents, both rapping in their indigenous languages and in turn putting his city on the map solidified his place in the room of Nigerian Street-Hop.
When Chibuzor Belson Azubuike popularly known as Phyno stepped into the music scene with what might not as at then been the loudest voice, it was impossible to ignore. Long before "street pop" became a defined genre in the Nigerian music space, Phyno already set the tone by fusing indigenous language from a part of Nigeria many felt didn't have what it took to hit the mainstream audience, combining gritty beats and unfiltered storytelling through rap . He was crafting something different; street anthems laced in Igbo proverbs and infused with unique traditional instrumentals.

His influence helped lay the foundation for many other indigenous artists we see from Eastern Nigeria such as Zorro, Jeriq and more . From Owerri to Aba to Ojuelegba to Mushin, Phyno's music travels not only to show the songs' popularity, but the unapologetic Eastern Nigeria identity at its core. Phyno continues to bridge the gap between the streets and the studio, telling stories that truly resonate with the Igbo people; their story.
Tracks like "Fada Fada", "Alobam", "Connect" went on to not just be hits but statements to the importance of Phyno in the genre that is street pop, further being a defiant reminder that street music in Nigeria doesn't belong to just one city, it's a cultural movement across the many different tribes, and culture in this part of the world.

BY **WO**



Timaya

Few names in Nigerian music carry the weight and resilience of Timaya. As one of the country's most enduring acts, his longevity is a testament to his ability to evolve, not just as an artist but as a storyteller, leader, and cultural force. Emerging from the creeks of the Niger Delta, Timaya fought to be heard on his terms. He began his journey as a backup dancer and artist, navigating through genres like rap, reggae, and eventually afropop, proving that versatility was not just a trait but a survival tool in a rapidly shifting industry. His 2005 debut album, 'True Story', was not just a breakout moment; it was a loud cry from the heart of Nigeria's marginalized communities. Recorded during a period of personal struggle, the album captured the anger and anguish of a generation shaped by injustice.

One of the standout track "Dem mama" was a history lesson, recounting the 1999 destruction of Odi, a riverside community in the Niger Delta, where security forces razed the town in retaliation for the killing of eight policemen. Scores were killed, homes destroyed, and the scars remain. With over eight projects to his name, Timaya has grown far beyond the rage of his early years. He's now a father, a mentor, a label head, and a savvy businessman. His evolution from the fiery Egberi Papa of Bayelsa, AKA the people's champion and voice of the voiceless, to the smooth, confident Papi Chulo reflects both brand evolution and artistic maturity. Where Egberi Papa was protest, Papi Chulo is pride, a chilled-out daddy who still carries the stories of his roots.

BY **WO**



9ice

Few artistes have left as indelible a mark on Nigeria's music landscape as 9ice, the legendary singer whose raspy vocals, rich Yoruba lyricism, and authentic street sensibility helped shape the very DNA of modern Nigerian music. Rising to prominence with his era-defining hit "Gongo Aso" in 2008, 9ice didn't just capture the sound of the streets– he was the sound of the streets. His music spoke directly to the lived realities, hopes, and struggles of everyday Nigerians, blending traditional proverbs, folk influences, and street slang into timeless melodies. In a time when Nigerian music was still finding its global footing, 9ice brought a raw, homegrown authenticity that resonated far beyond class or region, earning him critical acclaim and commercial success.

At the core of 9ice's enduring legacy are his iconic albums, which not only defined his career but also helped shape the soundscape of Nigerian music in the late 2000s and beyond. His breakthrough project, "Gongo Aso" (2008), remains a cultural touchstone—an album that delivered back-to-back hits like the title track "Gongo Aso," "Street Credibility," "Party Rider" and "Photocopy." The album wasn't just successful; it was seismic, earning him multiple awards including the coveted MTV Africa Music Award and MOBO Award, while becoming an anthem for everyday Nigerians. He followed this triumph with "Tradition" (2009), an album that reinforced his knack for weaving proverbs, traditional rhythms, and relatable storytelling into modern soundscapes. Subsequent projects like 'Bashorun Gaa' and 'Versus' further showcased his versatility and lyrical depth, solidifying his place not just as a hitmaker but as an artiste committed to preserving and evolving indigenous music within the framework of Afrobeats. These albums continue to inspire and influence a new generation of artistes who view 9ice's discography as both blueprint and benchmark.

BY **K-D**



Daddy Showkey

Once upon a time, Ajegunle stood as the cornerstone of Nigerian music, a breeding ground for unrefined talent, where voices rose from the streets and spoke truth to power. At the forefront of this movement was Daddy Showkey, a sonic storyteller whose music told tunes of pain, injustice, hope, dreams and the realities of ghetto existence. Blending Galala with reggae-infused grooves, Daddy Showkey crafted a sound that resonated deeply with those living on the margins, a soundtrack to their struggles and survival. But Daddy Showkey was more than just an artist. He was a voice in the wilderness, John the Baptist of Ajegunle, preaching truth to a generation trapped in cycles of poverty and neglect. You won't be farfetched if you called him "The Ghetto Prophet," his lyrics served as both a mirror and a warning, reflecting the harsh conditions of his community while calling for change.

Now, it's 2025, and the issues that fueled the wave of conscious music from Ajegunle in the mid-'90s remain not only unresolved but even more glaring. Slum schools continue to suffer from chronic underfunding. Health infrastructure teeters on the edge of collapse. Crime rates soar. And parents who once dreamed of escape during their childhood now watch helplessly as their children face the same dead-end streets. The country's still on fire and in dire need of plenty of water.

BY **KH**



Zlatan

The word ZANKU has gone ahead to become a staple across Nigerian popular culture today for so many reasons and it's all thanks to Zlatan. Consistently dishing out street anthems since breaking into the mainstream conversation till now is one of the reasons why Zlatan will always be relevant. From his unpredictable rap performances to his notable adlibs, Zlatan is a human adrenaline rush with energy that can simply never be recreated or replicated. Before viral challenges existed, he had the whole country dancing Legwork, creating a cultural earthquake to the point where he had even Beyoncé pick up the Zanku Legwork dance.

His music is the soundtrack of survival, blending Yoruba street slang with infectious beats that just constantly make you want to move and groove. harder than reality. Tracks such as "Lagos Anthem" and "This Year" have become survival guides, wrapping the chaos of Lagos life into addictive hooks that even traffic-hawkers rap word-for-word. Zlatan weaponizes joy, turning struggle into a reason to move your feet and that's the reason why the streets look up to him.What makes him even more legendary is his Midas touch for street alchemy. He is constantly transforming raw, unfiltered hustle into platinum hits. His collaborations are effortlessly engaging. From igniting Burna Boy's "Killin' Dem" to sparring with Davido on "Osanle." Even when he's flexing on "Yeye Boyfriend" or clowning on "Ale Yi," his lyrics carry the wit and wisdom of a wise street pop sensation.

While others fade, Zlatan evolves; morphing from dance king to rap phenom, yet always staying true to his roots. Zlatan isn't just Nigeria's street pop king, he's its hype man, its underdog hero, and the living proof that talent mixed with sheer audacity can turn street dreams into global anthems. The streets made him, but he built his own empire through consistency, hard work while staying true to Zlatan.

BY **WO**



Reminisce

Baba Hafusa or Reminisce stands as one of Nigeria's greatest street pop acts due to his lyrical prowess, authentic street narratives, and influence on the ever evolving evolution of indigenous hip-hop and street-hop music. Emerging from the streets of Ogun State, Reminisce carved out a niche for himself by blending Yoruba rap with street-centric themes, making his music both relatable, engaging and nothing short of culturally significant.

His breakout hit, ***"Kako Bi Chicken"*** which took the scene by storm showcased his ability to craft witty, hard-hitting verses while addressing everyday struggles, earning him a loyal grassroots following. Beyond just music, Reminisce became a voice and a representation of the streets, using his platform to highlight societal issues with a raw, unfiltered delivery. His collaborations with legends such as Baddo cement his role as a key figure in Nigeria's street pop movement.

When he's not dishing out hard hitting street lingos, he's showing off his talent through acting roles. His ability to settle into many different roles on screen comes from his authentic, charisma and larger than life personality — qualities that very much also define the music he puts into the world. It's easy to tell that his success as an actor comes from his dedication to mastering his craft. His background in storytelling through music translates seamlessly into his acting, allowing him to command scenes with the same confidence he brings to his verses.

What sets Reminisce apart is his consistency and versatility, seamlessly transitioning from rap to street-pop anthems without losing his edge. Albums such as 'Baba Hausa' and 'El Hadj' are packed with street classics like "Ponmile" and "Asalamalekun," which resonate deeply with fans across Nigeria's urban and suburban areas. His signature deep voice, Yoruba-infused flows, and unapologetic lyricism make him a timeless figure in the genre. Even as newer acts dominate the scene, Reminisce's influence remains undeniable-his blueprint can be seen in the works of many contemporary street-hop artists. By staying true to his roots while evolving with the times, Reminisce has secured his legacy as one of Nigeria's greatest street pop icons.

BY **WO**



Naira Marley

Nothing could have prepared Nigerians for the run of hits **Naira Marley** unleashed on the mainstream in 2019. Not even the rapper could have predicted the level of dominance and sheer influence his music would wield, yet he was absolutely prepared for it. Relying on his fluid rap skills, colorful use of Nigerian street lingo, Afrobeats technique, and the influence of the UK rap scene, Naira Marley delivered a sound that dominated speakers around the country.

His explicit writing, swashbuckling delivery, electrifying dance moves, party-starting production, and counter-cultural and aspirational lifestyle combined to create **The Marlian Movement** that swiftly won a fanatical following across the country. In 2019, Naira Marley's **Marlian Fest** was so packed that fans scaled the gates to catch a glimpse of the star whose music had the country in a chokehold. In December of the same year he was reportedly paid 60 Million naira by a Bank for a show. He also closed the Lagos State End of the Year concert that had in attendance some of Afrobeats' biggest stars.

His lyrics formed part of everyday lingo. His philosophy became a school of thought, and he had other stars mirroring his style. He forced secondary schools to enact regulations that compelled students to wear belts. He had young adults daring establishments in the defiant spirit his Marlian Movement fueled. He was at odds with the government and guardians' fear for his influence on their ward. Such was his impact in Nigerian street hop and pop culture.

BY **AA**



Terry G

Describing Terry G is no simple task; the word that comes closest is enigma. A multi-talented singer, songwriter, and producer, he reigned over Nigeria's pop scene from 2007 to 2013, carving out a space that was uniquely his own. Labelled as weird and different by some, Terry G wore those descriptions like a crown, masking profound musical genius beneath an eccentric exterior. He understood music at its core, how to bend it, reshape it, speak directly to the body and make it move. Radio stations had no choice but to play him because audiences demanded it. His peers knew this, too, which is why Terry G became the go-to featured artist for a hit record. As Illbliss once recalled, a distributor at Alaba Market told him outright: "If you want this record to move, get Terry G on it." With Terry G on the hook, Illbliss' career skyrocketed into the limelight.

Everything Terry G touched turned to gold. His iconic "Free Madness" was born out of a freestyle he recorded while crafting beats for the artists waiting to record on the beat at the studio. It was moments like these that proved how deeply he breathed music; every record he released became a fan favourite, writing his name into Nigerian pop culture. Visually, he was impossible to ignore, with dyed hair, facial piercings, and a literal bell to signal that it was time to rage. He brought an energy that set him apart from his contemporaries. In hindsight, Terry G was alté before alté entered the

TURNTABLE CHARTS

mainstream lexicon, a pioneer of individuality, creativity, and sonic rebellion.

BY **KH**



Seyi Vibez

The evolution of Nigerian street pop would be incomplete without the voice of the trenches, Seyi Vibez. Where artists like Baddo laid the blueprint, he has picked up the baton with a fresh spiritual grit, taking street music to soul-stirring new heights. Bursting out of Ikorodu, Lagos, Seyi Vibez did not rise through the industry machine; he rose from sheer belief, raw hunger, and deeply emotional, personal storytelling.

Seyi Vibez first broke out in 2019 with the record "Anybody," it was not just a song– it was a cry from the heart, echoing through the streets and reaching the ears of people who needed hope. Blending Yoruba, English, and Islamic chants with Fuji-tinged melodies and street prayer, he brought something rare: vulnerability in street music like no one had experienced before. His sound isn't just about vibes; it's a spiritual experience rooted in pain, survival, and destiny.

In an industry that often rewards polish over pain, Seyi Vibez has kept it raw. He has built a cult-like following not just from hit records, but from how deeply his music connects. Songs like "Chance (Na Ham)," "Kun Faya Kun," and "Different Pattern" don't just bang, they resonate and loudly, at that. With multiple projects in under two years and a signature sound that is now becoming a blueprint for others, Seyi has proven that authenticity, consistency, and faith can take you from Ikorodu to the world. Each record feels like a spiritual check-in: equal parts motivational speech and street scripture. In the age of digital attention deficit, his hits stick because they speak. They hit the trenches and the charts with the same force.
He has had defining moments and not just viral ones, but emotional milestones. His quickfire album runs in 2022–2023 **(with projects *like Billion Dollar Baby* and *Thy Kingdom Come*)** were not just prolific; they were cathartic. His melodies became mourning songs, his lyrics tattooed on the hearts of fans grieving, grinding, and growing. He turned pain into power– loudly, vulnerably, and unapologetically.Seyi Vibez did not just join the wave; he became the wave.

His sound, a gritty blend of Fuji, trap, Afrobeats, and spiritual chants, has become the blueprint for a new generation. His lingo ("Na Ham," "Ogo Forever") has pierced the culture, infiltrating captions, street slang, and TikTok algorithms. Artists now borrow his cadence, producers chase his sonic texture, and the streets scream his ad libs. Pop culture now orbits his frequency.

The emotional weight of his discography ensures it will age like fine wine. His work ethic, too, hints at long-term dominance and definitely not a flash, but a fire that refuses to go out. In under three years, he has delivered a discography that speaks louder than hype. From 'NSNV (No Seyi No Vibez)' to Memory Card, Thy Kingdom Come, and Vibe Till Thy Kingdom Come, he has treated EPs & LPs like therapy sessions. Each project peels another layer of his purpose.

While Seyi Vibez may not be the industry's typical media darling, he commands the cosign that matters most: the streets. But it does not stop there. Heavyweights like Wizkid, Olamide, Burna Boy, and even international eyes have acknowledged his rise. He's not the industry's child, he's the street's Messiah. From Ikorodu to the world, Seyi Vibez didn't ask for a seat at the table, he built his own altar.

BY **WO**



Patoranking

When Nigerian Dancehall music icon **Timaya** introduced Patoranking to the mainstream with their hit collaboration 'Alubarika,' the talent the youngster possesses was so undeniable that even the staunchest cynic would have taken out a wager on his future success. Patoranking's music pays homage to a long list of stars whose talents were forged in the Konto music and Gyration sound crafted in the inner city area of Ajegunle, Lagos state.

He wouldn't only contribute to the legacy of Konto music but also take it to a bigger level thanks to his emphatic talent that allowed him to skillfully deploy Afrobeats influences, which he combined with Dancehall elements. When he won the Headies Next Rated prize in 2014, it was a huge endorsement he would live up to, thanks to his music that delights, educates, elevates, and conveys sonic richness that was embraced by an international audience.

His music impacted the mainstream and won him hearts on the streets. His chart-topping collaborations earned him a place in Afrobeats' global push. And as for awards, not many can boast of an MTV Africa Music Awards (MAMAs) Song of the Year and Headies Record of the Year prize.

BY **AA**



Bella Shmurda

Bella Shmurda is a raw, unfiltered prophet of the streets, turning pain into poetry and struggle into anthems. Hailing from Ibadan with a voice that crackles like burning firewood and lyrics that cut straight to the soul, he emerged as the voice of a demographic of the streets drowning in Nigeria's harsh realities. When the record "Vision 2020" arrived, it was more than a song; it was a cry of frustration, a prayer for survival, and a battle hymn for every hustler fighting to escape the trenches. Records such as like "Rush" also didn't just dominate playlists—they became survival manuals for the streets, blending street pop grit with haunting melodies that stick like glue.

Bella Shmurda has a distinct ability to weave tragedy into triumph, transforming personal loss into universal anthems. When he sings about betrayal, police brutality, or the hunger for success, it's not performative, it's very much autobiographical. His 'High Tension' EP was a masterclass in street storytelling and even as his sound evolved, collaborating with stars like Olamide, Wizkid, and long term friend Omah Lay, he never lost his street essence. Bella's music is a mirror, reflecting the blood, sweat, and dreams of Nigeria's forgotten corners.

Bella is a street poet, a rebel, and a beacon of hope all at once. In cases where others chase trends, Bella builds his own lane, fusing Fuji-infused rhythms with street-hop grit, stringing together a sound that's unmistakably his. His live performances are near-spiritual experiences, with crowds screaming every word like gospel, proving his connection with fans goes beyond the DSPs.

His cult-like fan base consistently shows that Bella is indeed a Hometown hero, showing the possibilities of making it, no matter who you are or where you come from. In a world where street pop often glorifies the hustle without honoring its casualties, Bella keeps it real, reminding us that survival isn't just about money, it's more so about humanity. Bella isn't just one of Nigeria's greatest street pop acts, he's an unshakeable and an immovable voice in Afrobeats today.

BY **WO**



Lord of Ajasa

With his quick-witted Yorùbá idioms, humorous one-liners and catchphrases, long before street-pop became established, Lord of Ajasa laid the blueprint in the early 2000s as one of Nigeria's first rappers to boldly embrace his mother tongue. At a time when English-heavy rap dominated, Ajasa's hit "Ma Yi Lo," didn't just sound different; it sounded like home.

His style wasn't watered-down or overly polished, it was rooted in culture. In doing so, he created a lane for indigenous rap, inspiring a generation of artists like Dagrin, Olamide and Seriki to rap unapologetically in Yoruba. Lord of Ajasa gave street expression legitimacy. He proved that local stories could exist within popular soundscapes. While his mainstream visibility may have waned, his legacy is stamped in every street anthem that carries both grit and language pride.

BY **TMARV**



Lil Kesh

Lil Kesh is undoubtedly one of the greatest musicians Nigeria has ever been blessed to witness, and this is all thanks to his radiating energy, pioneering influence, and a string of anthems that defined a whole generation. Bursting onto the scene in the mid-2010s under YBNL Nation, Lil Kesh quickly became a street sensation with his breakout hit "Shoki," a record that did not only dominated airwaves but also birthed a viral dance that took the entire culture by surprise. His music perfectly captured the raw, unfiltered essence of the Lagos streets, blending Yoruba slangs with catchy hooks and melodious beats. Tracks like "Efejoku" and "Gbese" further went on to cement his reputation as an icon, resonating with fans who saw their

struggles, hustles, and triumphs reflected in his lyrics. Lil Kesh's ability to craft club bangers while staying true to his grassroots roots set him apart, making him a central figure in Nigeria's street pop movement.

Beyond his musical talent, Lil Kesh played a pivotal role in shaping the sound and culture of modern Nigerian street hop. His debut album 'YAGI,' changed everything for him, ganerning the audience who may not have initially been paying attention. His collaborations with industry heavyweights, including Davido, Patoranking, and Phyno, showcased his versatility and broad appeal. Even after leaving YBNL to establish his own label, YAGI, he continued to dish out hits, proving his lasting power in an ever-evolving industry. Lil Kesh's influence extends beyond music-his fashion, slang, and unapologetic street persona inspired a wave of young artists who saw him as a blueprint for success.

What truly makes Lil Kesh one of the greatest is his resilience and adaptability. While many may fade after a few hits, he has consistently reinvented himself, exploring new sounds while staying rooted in the streets that made him. His more recent records such as "Don't Call Me" and "Vanilla Bottega," demonstrate his growth as an artist, blending street sensibilities with mainstream appeal. Whether as a hitmaker, or a cultural trendsetter, his legacy lives on not just in his own discography but in the countless artists he inspired, solidifying his place as one of the greats.

BY **WO**



Oritsefemi

Already a community star thanks to his "Elewon (Flog Politicians)" and "Unfadable" hood classics, Oritse Femi released his "The Musical Taliban" album (featuring hit track "Double Wahala") in 2012 to spread his legend outside Ajegunle, to the mainstream, nationwide. Always armed with hasty production that stays in the moment, distinctive, ringing voice and wise-guy lyricism, Oritse Femi commits to financial emancipation and social commentary in equal parts.

The success and peak after "Money Stop Nonsense" put a doubt on his recent releases, even when he tried to rebrand as a "Corporate Miscreant"—but it's undeniable that Oritse Femi has already managed to impact street-pop music.

BY **TMARV**



DaGrin

Before his demise in 2011, Dagrin embodied Nigerian rap at its most compelling. He was a dedicated rhymer who detailed the aspirations of the proletariat and deployed a loud and fire-crackling voice that nevertheless evoked hard-knock life. He put on for the ghetto, although armed with the superiority complex of a militant.

He released two projects but "CEO" is his most successful and acclaimed due to "Pon Pon Pon", a bazooka-sized anthem produced by Sossick. Just as swag and hits are important, premonitory single cuts like "If I Die" where he raps, "If I die, make you no cry for me / E je n sinmi, e jo, e je n mi (Let me rest, let me breathe)" bring him face-to-face with his mortality. For all his streetwise and bravado, he was able to see beyond his immediate environment. He was a talent that made his untimely death a tragic one.

BY **TMARV**



Baba Fryo

When R&B imitators and foreign-flavoured pop had the reins of the mainstream, Baba Fryo rose from the streets of Ajegunle to deliver a breakout hit "Dem Go Dey Pose." With its infectious beat and social commentary, he unabashedly declared class awareness and street pride. Baba Fryo's music embraced the Galala, a sound that blended dancehall, reggae, and local pidgin English and set the tone for what would evolve into today's street-pop.

With an eye-patch reminiscent of Slick Rick, Baba Fryo stood at the intersection of street culture and music, becoming a symbol for the average Nigerian youth adding through the deep waters of hustle, hardship and survival. He helped give Ajegunle its reputation as the birthplace of authentic Nigerian ghetto music, a sound that remains embedded in Afropop DNA. In today's wave of street-pop artists from Zinoleesky to Bahdman Niko, and the dancehall-afropop hybrid Ruger, Baba Fryo's impact is evident.

Alongside his contemporaries in the Ajegunle music scene, Baba Fryo helped craft a sound and identity that felt deeply communal. Their music was their identity, from the hairstyles to the dance moves and fashion. Their influence stretched far beyond the boundary, reverberating across the entire country.

BY **TMARV & KH**



African China

African China is one of Ajegunle's finest stars, whose work advanced street music by simply capturing the pulse of the street. His evergreen single 'Mr President' has given him a constant voice in Nigeria's struggle for sociopolitical justice. A message he continues to promote over two decades later. His music gave many listeners an entry point into street music and his mainstream success was one of the major firsts for street artists. When he shot he video for his single 'London Fever' in England, it was not only a rare sight in Nigerian music but also a rarer one in the Ajegunle axis where he grew up.

Although he's known for being a street prophet like other Ajegunle-born stars whose music documented the harsh reality of life in the inner city and the need for socioeconomic justice, African China's music had a wider range. His message of justice, love, and community is housed in his discography that includes the popular albums ***'Crisis'*** and ***'Mr President'***.

BY **AA**



Danfo Drivers

The year was 2005, and the Konto music duo Danfo Drivers had both school children, market women, bankers, and civil servants referring to themselves as Danfo Drivers.Although their stories weren't relatable to every listener, their originality, melodies, and dance moves connected with both the young and old who sang along to the tracks on their album ***'Danfo Drivers'***.

What distinguished the late **Mad Melon** and his partner **Mountain Black** was how they boldly embraced their socio-economic realities as drivers of Lagos' famous yellow commercial bus (danfo). The duo shared tales of the hustle and bustle that shape a fast city and what they do to survive the rat race. They took the street right into the living rooms of middle-class listeners who all became Danfo drivers. They brought everyone under the intoxicating smoke that filled the small hotel room they shot the video of their track ***'Sensimilia'***. And they united listeners of all creeds and ages with ***'Iya Mi'***, an ode to a mother's priceless love.

While Danfo Drivers' stint in the mainstream was short, they gave street pop and Konto music mileage in the mainstream through a classic album that remains instantly recognisable decades later.

BY **AA**



Mohbad

To talk about later Ilerioluwa Oladimeji Aloba or Mohbad as we all know him is to speak about a young king whose reign shook culture before he could be crowned. He wasn't just another random street-hop artist with no uniqueness, he was the voice you heard in the cracks. Though his journey was tragically cut short, what he left behind refuses to be silenced. Mohbad, in his prime, knew how to make the street jump and the roof fall. His breakout on "KPK" with Rexxie became an unforgettable takeover. The record hit so hard it echoed across continents. He had the kind of voice that sat right in the middle of a beat and could unfortunately not be ignored.

From his public label drama to his deeply emotional freestyles, his life often felt like a documentary unfolding in real time. His death sparked a cultural reckoning, not just mourning, but a movement. People just as myself were beyond sad; they were angry, awakened. That tells you everything about his relevance to culture. Mohbad's sound was raw Lagos energy– spiritual, street, vulnerable. He bled pain and power into every bar. Phrases like 'Imole'; his popular nickname, became synonymous with light, hope, rebellion. He was both the soundtrack

and the language of a generation navigating depression, betrayal, and survival. You did not just hear Mohbad, you surely felt him.

He unfortunately did not get the years, but he made the impact; impact strong enough to make him make this list. The power of Mohbad is that his voice echoes even louder in death. His songs became tributes and his name a cultural staple.

For someone who had barely scratched the surface of what he could do, Mohbad's catalog still consists of hit such as 'Ask About Me', 'Backside', 'Peace', and even freestyles like 'Beast and Peace," records which paint pictures of an artist who was versatile, intentional, and unfiltered, making music with nothing but pain, praise, pressure and poetry. He came up under Marlian Music, but his light refused to be boxed. Despite the challenges, he had the respect of artists and fans alike. Olamide acknowledged him. The streets claimed him. Social media crowned him. After his passing, it became clear: Mohbad wasn't waiting for industry validation, he already had the people. And when the people ride for you, that's the ultimate cosign. His music lives, his message echoes and his light lives on, shining the brightest.

BY **WO**



Mr Raw AKA Nigga Raw

By the mid-2000s, Nigerian hip-hop was transforming, particularly in how it embraced local dialects. Artists like Lord of Ajasa, Jazzman Olofin, 2 Shotz, and Big Lo were among the early pioneers who used humour-laced rhymes and party-themed beats to make hip-hop accessible to a broader audience. Their music leaned into comedy as a vehicle for light social commentary, helping to establish a niche but growing fanbase for homegrown rap.

Enter Mr. Raw (formerly Nxgga Raw), an artist who took that foundation and built something deeper. His 2005 album Right & Wrong marked a turning point, especially with the track "Obodo". While the song featured the popular comedic persona Klint Da Drunk, it diverged sharply from the usual humorous fare. Instead, Mr. Raw delivered a narrative of life in Nigeria. He opens the track recounting a harrowing experience with police brutality, then weaves through themes of national insecurity, economic instability, and corruption, all told with a matter-of-factness with storytelling.

His sophomore album, 'Everything Remains Raw', expanded on this identity. Merging hip-hop, R&B, and humour, Mr. Raw showed a versatile sound while maintaining the personal and socially conscious stories in a language that resonated with everyday Nigerians pidgin) and empowering the Igbo rap community.



Small Doctor

Small Doctor is a street ambassador that treated music as an art to be expressed and performed with gratitude for new purpose and fresher starts. The Agege-born artist spotlights the street's joyful bright sides, proving himself as a vessel pushing to manifest a new look for Fuji-pop fusion. He's the street savant that relays his exposure and diffuses older music entwined with Two-T hard-knocking, hyperfast beats that had him lauded for being a refreshing renaissance of new street-pop.

Widely celebrated as one of the leading voices of Nigeria's street-hop movement, Small Doctor has carved out a legendary status with his infectious energy, streetwise lyrics, and undeniable charisma. Bursting onto the scene with hits like "Penalty", which became a nationwide anthem, Small Doctor brought the raw sound of Agege to mainstream audiences, blending fuji influences with pulsating beats and relatable, often humorous storytelling. His music resonates deeply with the streets, giving voice to everyday struggles, aspirations, and the vibrant spirit of Lagos life. Through his consistency and authenticity, Small Doctor remains a pivotal figure in the evolution of street music, inspiring a generation of artistes who see the streets not as a limitation, but as a powerful launchpad.

BY **TMARV & K-D**



Zinoleesky

Zinoleesky has carved his name into the heart of Nigeria's street pop scene by merging effortless melody, raw lyricism, and an unshakable connection to the streets that birthed him. Emerging from the trenches of Agege, Lagos, his music, a very interesting mix of street rhythms and soulful introspection feels like a late-night conversation between hustlers dreaming of better days. His genius lies in his ability to make struggle sound so soothing, turning pain into poetry and street realities into irresistibly catchy hooks. He produces anthems that take over the streets, dominates the charts and still resonates with the hearts of the masses. Hits like "Kilofeshe" and "Rocking" only further proves this point. He crafts anthems of resilience.

I believe what sets Zinoleesky apart from his peers is his refusal to conform. He's a street poet with a honeyed voice, a rare combination in a genre often dominated by aggressive energy. In the conversation of versatility, he surely can't be counted out. Tracks like "Mapariwo" and "Yan Yan Yan" showcase his versatility, shifting from laid-back serenades to high-energy bangers without losing his signature cool. Even as he rose under Marlian Music's banner, Zinoleesky never diluted his sound; instead, he elevated it, collaborating with heavyweights like Naira Marley and Lil Kesh while staying rooted in the raw, unfiltered essence of his beginnings. His music doesn't just resonate: it lingers, like the scent of rain on Lagos dust.

Zino is simply a cultural architect, shaping the sound and spirit of modern street pop. Beyond the music, his laid-back persona and sharp fashion sense have also made him a style icon, inspiring a wave of young artists who see him as the blueprint for staying true while leveling up. Staying true while crafting a movement is a challenge but Zinoleesky pulls that off effortlessly. A movement where the streets don't just survive, they thrive, they dream, they glow while at it. He's a quiet revolutionary, turning whispers into waves. The new age of street pop will always be accommodating and appreciative of Zino because his talent differs from anything the culture has ever experienced in its history.

BY **WO**



Portable

In the future, movies will be made about Portable's career, and generations who didn't get to experience it in real time would wonder if most of it is true. That is the complexity, defiance, and obstinacy that shape his career. A man to whom little his given in a society that takes more than it gives, Portable rode into the mainstream on the shoulders of the greatest street hop star, Olamide Baddo, and used this opportunity to carve a niche for himself.

He is one of the many stars who would have been making Fuji music if Afrobeats didn't exist, and these cultural influences are most prominent in his music, which he uses to share his every thought without care or concern for whose Ox is gored. His newsmaking antics have won him as much admiration as ire from colleagues and fans. He never misses an opportunity to be in the news, nor is he reluctant to turn every viral moment into music.

Portable doesn't make this list by the quality or impact of his music. Instead, he squeezes himself into the list of great street hop stars by simply being more vehemently street than everyone else. And it's this daring spirit, obstinacy, and defiance that he would be remembered for.

BY **AA**

HONORABLE MENTION

1	Marvelous Benji
2	CDQ
3	Slim Case
4	Mr Real Idowest
5	T.I Blaze
6	Zoro
7	2T Boys
8	X-Project

THE GREATEST

HIP-HOP/RAP ARTISTES OF THE 21ST CENTURY.

BY **HONOUR AGHEDO & WONU OSIKOYA**

Nigerian hip-hop has evolved from its early days of imitation to a thriving, culturally rich genre that blends indigenous languages, global influences, and street authenticity. The debate over who deserves the title of the Greatest Nigerian Rapper of All Time (GOAT) is endless, but certain names stand out based on catalogue, impact, delivery, hits, and imagery.

But who truly deserves the title of Greatest Nigerian Rapper of All Time (GOAT)? Is it the lyrical titan who elevated wordplay to an art form? The street poet who gave a voice to the voiceless? Or the hitmaker who blurred the lines between rap and pop while staying true to the craft?

To answer this, we must consider impact, catalogue, skill, longevity, and cultural influence. After deep analysis, debates, and respect for pioneers and new-school disruptors, here's our definitive take.



Olamide

Olamide Adedeji, a.k.a. Baddo, is a cultural movement. Rising from Bariga, Lagos, Olamide didn't wait for validation. His debut album Rapsodi (2011) immediately positioned him as a street-level storyteller with high lyrical dexterity in Yoruba. The follow-up, YBNL, proved he was more than a fluke; it was a coronation.

What makes Olamide great isn't just his prolific output (dropping near-annual albums for a decade) but his role as the voice of the streets. "Eni Duro", "Durosoke", "Bobo", "Wo!!", "Science Student", every hit became an anthem in markets, clubs, and campuses alike. He popularised the idea that indigenous rap could chart and conquer.

As the founder of YBNL Nation, Olamide also played kingmaker, launching the careers of Fireboy DML, Lil Kesh, Adekunle Gold, and Asake. From hard street bars to dancehall bops and introspective cuts, Olamide has done it all without abandoning his Yoruba roots. Commercially dominant and culturally critical, Olamide is arguably Nigeria's most influential rapper ever.



M.I Abaga

If Nigerian hip-hop had a Mount Rushmore, M.I. Abaga's face would be carved first. When Talk About It dropped in 2008, it wasn't just an album—it was a cultural reset. M.I.'s effortless flow, witty punchlines, and polished production set a new standard. Tracks like "Crowd Mentality" and "Safe" weren't just rap songs; they were manifestos for a generation hungry for homegrown excellence.

His follow-up, MI 2, combined storytelling ("One Naira") with crowd-pulling braggadocio ("Action Film"), while Chairman (2014) reaffirmed his dominance. MI wasn't just lyrical, he was deliberate. His wordplay was studied. His projects were sequenced with narrative precision. As Chocolate City's former CEO, he played both artist and executive, mentoring acts like Ice Prince, Jesse Jagz, Brymo, and Koker. In terms of technical skill, consistency, leadership, and cultural elevation, MI may be the only Nigerian rapper with a legitimate claim to "GOAT" status from all angles, critical, commercial, and creative.

MI proved that rap wasn't just about bars, it was about building legacies.



MODENINE

Catalogue: 5 Mixtapes, 6 collaborative Projects, 9 albums.

Modenine is a lyrical juggernaut, widely regarded as Nigeria's most technically skilled rapper. His debut, Malcolm IX, set the tone with dense rhyme schemes and socially conscious content. With songs like "Cry," he proved he could make emotionally resonant tracks without diluting his complex style. His legendary beef with Ruggedman cemented his place as a bar-for-bar heavyweight. Though he never fully broke into the mainstream, Modenine influenced an entire generation of emcees and elevated the bar for what lyrical hip-hop could look like in Nigeria.



Phyno

If Olamide is the godfather of Yoruba rap, Phyno is his Igbo counterpart. Born Chibuzor Nelson Azubuike, Phyno became a household name after switching from production to the mic. He exploded with "Multiply", "Parcel", and "Ghost Mode (featuring Olamide)", a song that did what few had done before, bridging east and west with seamless linguistic chemistry.

Phyno raps almost exclusively in Igbo and Pidgin English, embracing his dialect unapologetically. His debut album No Guts No Glory (2014) is a landmark in Nigerian hip-hop, delivering bangers like "Man of the Year" and "Alobam". His later hits like "Fada Fada" and "High Way" expanded his range into pop dominance, all while retaining lyrical sharpness. Phyno helped build a pipeline for Eastern Nigerian artists to flourish. Alongside Olamide, he made local language rap commercially viable and culturally aspirational. In the Igbo rap ecosystem, there's before Phyno and after.

TURNTABLE CHARTS



Ice Prince

Ice Prince is a North Star in Nigerian hip-hop. As part of the seminal Choc City crew, he brought melody, mass appeal, and lyrical finesse into perfect balance. His breakout track "Oleku" became a pan-African anthem and one of the most remixed Nigerian songs ever. With ‘Everybody Loves Ice Prince’, he merged pop hooks with rap authenticity. Nominated twice for BET Awards and a former VP of Chocolate City, Ice Prince remains a pivotal figure in making hip-hop aspirational and accessible.



Eedris Abdulkareem

If Nigerian rap ever had a punk phase, Eedris Abdulkareem was its frontman. His record "Jaga Jaga", a scathing indictment of government failure, so enraged then-President Obasanjo that it was nearly banned. Eedris didn’t just rap; he weaponized it, calling out corruption ("Tell Your Papa", 2024) and clashing with 50 Cent (many claimed this was the cornerstone that prioritised NG artists).

Eedris proved rap could be a megaphone for the masses, paving the way for Falz’s "This Is Nigeria" and today’s socially conscious MCs.



Ruggedman

Few figures in Nigerian hip-hop are as influential—or as disruptive—as Ruggedman. Bursting onto the scene in the early 2000s, Ruggedman helped redefine what it meant to be a rapper in Nigeria, pushing the genre from underground circles into the mainstream spotlight. His breakout single “Ehen,” a bold critique of the status quo, not only called out prominent names but also marked a seismic shift in the industry’s lyrical standards. With his fearless lyricism, razor-sharp delivery, and unapologetic authenticity, Ruggedman quickly became both a fan favorite and a lightning rod for controversy—exactly what rap needed at the time.



Eldee

ELDee is a pioneer, both as an artist and as a visionary. As a founding member of Trybesmen, he helped craft one of Nigeria's first commercially viable hip-hop acts.

His solo debut Long Time Coming (2004) proved he could stand alone, delivering introspective storytelling and cross-genre finesse. But eLDee’s influence extended far beyond the mic. As the head of Trybe Records, he nurtured a generation of talents like Sarz, Eva, Sheyman, 2Shotz, K9, laying the foundation for what would become a new wave of Afropop-meets-rap hybrids.

Long before it was the norm, eLDee was merging Afrobeats with hip-hop, setting the template for the genre's future. He was also one of the first to broker artist-brand collaborations, like the iconic Sprite Triple Slam, bridging the gap between culture and commerce. eLDee wasn’t just ahead of his time; he created the runway others are now flying from.



Falz

Catalogue: 12 projects (2 mixtapes, 2 collaborative EP, 1 solo EPs, 1 live album, and 6 Studio albums)

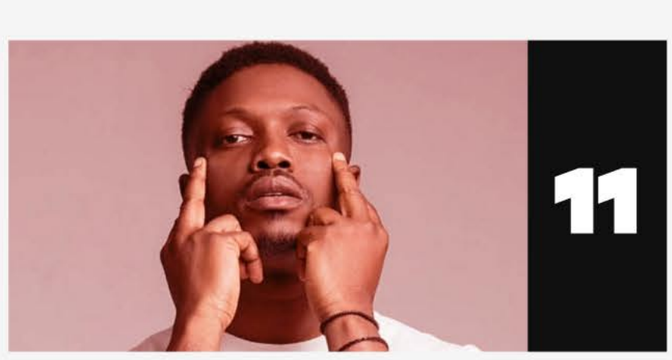
Delivery: Humour, storytelling

Falz is the rare artist who turned humour into a weapon of change; Starting as the quirky class clown, Falz quickly evolved into one of Nigeria’s most versatile rappers. His breakout hit "Marry Me" opened the floodgates, but it was “This Is Nigeria”, a biting social commentary track—that proved his cultural power. With a catalogue that spans six albums and multiple EPs, Falz blends law, wit, and street smarts in ways that make you think while you dance. His social advocacy and AMVCA wins only add more layers to his impact.



Reminisce

What sets Reminisce apart is his consistency and versatility, seamlessly transitioning from rap to street-pop anthems without losing his edge. Albums such as ***‘Baba Hausa’*** and ***‘El Hadj’*** are packed with street classics like ***"Ponmile"*** and ***"Asalamalekun,"*** which resonate deeply with fans across Nigeria's urban and suburban areas. His signature deep voice, Yoruba-infused flows, and unapologetic lyricism make him a timeless figure in the genre. Even as newer acts dominate the scene, Reminisce's influence remains undeniable-his blueprint can be seen in the works of many contemporary street-hop artists. By staying true to his roots while evolving with the times, Reminisce has secured his legacy as one of Nigeria's greatest street pop icons.



Vector

Vector, a.k.a. Vector Tha Viper, combines sharp lyricism with philosophical depth. Emerging in 2010 with ***"Kilode,"*** he quickly set himself apart with **‘State of Surprise,’** a debut album that showcased both technical skill and storytelling. Subsequent projects **like Lafiaji (2016)** and **Teslim (2022)** solidified his legacy as one of Nigeria's most reflective and experimental rappers. His hits—***"King Kong," "Angeli," "Alaye Jor Jor"***—blended social commentary with mainstream appeal.

Vector’s lyrical depth is matched by his off-mic contributions. As an entrepreneur and community advocate, he uses his platform to foster artistic discourse and champion underrepresented voices.



Show Dem Camp

SDC—consisting of Tec and Ghost—have reshaped the idea of what Nigerian rap can be. With their Clone Wars series, they showcased cerebral bars and sociopolitical commentary, while their Palmwine Music projects blended rap with highlife and soul to create a genre-bending, lifestyle-driven sound. SDC are the elder statesmen of alté rap, bringing conscious lyrics to lush, laid-back soundscapes. They’ve become curators of a vibe, advocates for storytelling, putting you on to new cats, and guardians of culture in a scene often obsessed with quick hits.



Naeto C

Luxury and rap have long been intertwined, but only a few embody that fusion with the effortless charisma of Naeto C. His industry breakthrough came with “Sitting On Top”, backed by Ikechukwu and the powerhouse of Storm Records. It wasn’t long before “You Know My P” cemented his arrival, a track that highlighted his sharp diction, effortless flow, and deep affinity for elite production. Naeto C didn’t just rap; he narrated the high life with finesse, painting vivid scenes of Lagos opulence with style and sophistication.

His debut album You Know My P (2008) delivered the timeless hit “Kini Big Deal”, a record that became a cultural touchstone. With its Hausa-inflected hook and Yoruba-accented chorus, the song blended linguistic versatility with confident lyricism. Naeto didn’t need to shout, he moved with aura. Each release exuded elegance and intent, positioning him as a stylish outlier in a genre often fueled by grit.



Zlatan

Beyond the bangers, there’s an unexpected depth to Zlatan’s journey, one that makes his confidence feel earned, not forced. His lyrics often disguise pain in celebration, and his catalogue tells the story of someone who never had a backup plan. Songs like “Omo Olope” and “Cho Cho” aren’t just feel-good moments; they’re timestamps of a man rising through the ranks, one viral moment at a time. He’s not afraid to experiment either as we have seen him incorporating Fuji, Apala, and even drill elements into his sound while still retaining that unmistakable Zlatan energy. What really sets Zlatan apart is his ability to create movement- literally and figuratively in fact. Whether it's a new slang, a viral step, or a fresh crop of emerging street talents under his Zanku Records imprint, Zlatan knows how to spark waves and share the spotlight.
While others fade, Zlatan evolves; morphing from dance king to rap phenom, yet always staying true to his roots. Zlatan isn’t just Nigeria’s street pop king, he’s its hype man, its underdog hero, and the living proof that talent mixed with sheer audacity can turn street dreams into global anthems. The streets made him, but he built his own empire through consistency, hard work while staying true to Zlatan.



A-Q

Born Gilbert Bani, AQ is a towering figure in Nigerian hip-hop’s intellectual wing. Emerging during the "Golden Era" of the early 2000s, he resisted the lure of pop and built a discography rooted in lyrical precision, conceptual albums, and social critique. With over 19 projects—including standout works like God’s Engineering and Ethos. AQ has carved out a legacy as one of Nigeria’s most consistent and thoughtful rappers.

Beyond the mic, AQ is a multifaceted executive and sound engineer. He played a pivotal role in Blaqbonez’s rise and has held senior roles at Chocolate City and Platinum Plugz, where he helped integrate music distribution with radio and TV rotations. His entrepreneurial spirit extends to Blvck Melon (a joint venture with Africori) and ConnectHead, a marketplace and ecosystem for the music value chain. AQ’s contributions span bars, boards, and blueprints, making him one of the most respected minds in the Nigerian rap scene.



Illbliss

Illbliss (Tobechukwu Ejiofor) is the bridge between Nigerian hip-hop’s golden era and its modern struggles. A relentless lyricist with Igbo pride at his core, he carved his path with albums like Oga Boss and IllyChapo X, blending street wisdom with industry insight.

His impact? Preservation. He co-signed artists like Phyno and kept the culture alive. Today, he’s both elder statesman and critic, a reminder of rap’s roots in an era of fleeting trends.



ODUMODUBLVCK

From underground cipher king to Arsenal FC’s adopted anthem-maker ("Declan Rice"), Odumodublvck is rewriting the rules. His "Okporoko rap"—a fusion of UK drill, Igbo lyricism, and punk energy—has made him Gen Z’s rebel icon. But with fame comes friction: critics slam his brash persona and misogynistic bars (***"Cast"***), while fans hail him as rap’s needed disruptor.

Is he the "Rap God" he claims? Time will tell. But one thing’s clear: Odumodublvck is dragging Nigerian hip-hop into global conversations, one track at a time.



Dagrin

Da Grin changed everything. Before him, Yoruba rap existed, but he made it transcend class and culture. With just two albums, including C.E.O. and the era-defining single “Pon Pon Pon,” Da Grin broke linguistic and social boundaries. He proved that language wasn't a barrier but a bridge. His storytelling reflected the lives of Nigeria’s underrepresented majority, and his music carried the kind of street wisdom that rarely made it to mainstream speakers. Though his life was tragically cut short, Da Grin’s impact on indigenous rap is still reverberating today.



Blaqbonez

In a world where Afro-pop, street pop and hip-hop collide, Blaqbonez stands out as a revolutionary force. With his razor-sharp lyricism, unapologetic persona, and genre-bending sound; he has redefined what it means to be a hip-pop artist. From his early mixtapes to his chart-topping albums, he has consistently pushed boundaries, proving that no matter where Nigerian rap, Street Pop and Hip Hop collide, they can work together and his ability to balance street credibility with mainstream appeal makes him one of Nigeria’s greatest hip-pop acts.

One of Blaqbonez’s defining traits is his lyrical prowess. While many artistes rely on catchy hooks and repetitive phrases, Blaqbonez delivers intricate wordplay, clever punchlines, and thought-provoking narratives. His 2021 album ‘Sex Over Love’ was a masterclass in storytelling, blending humor, vulnerability, and street wisdom. Whether he’s bragging about his rap skills or dissecting societal issues, Blaqbonez does it with a finesse and an aura that sets him apart.

Blaqbonez’s influence extends beyond his own discography. He has inspired a new wave of Nigerian rappers to embrace individuality and push boundaries. Before him, many believed that commercial success

in Nigeria required abandoning hip-hop for Afrobeats, but Blaqbonez proved that rap could thrive if done with creativity and charisma. Beyond his music, Blaqbonez has mastered the art of persona and branding. His self-proclaimed title as the “Best Rapper in Africa" is a statement of intent and he backs it up with relentless work ethic, viral antics, and a knack for staying relevant in a fast-paced industry.

Ultimately, Blaqbonez’s greatness lies in his refusal to be boxed in. He’s a rapper who can go bar-for-bar with the best, a hitmaker who dominates charts, and a cultural provocateur who keeps the industry on its toes. His music resonates because it’s authentic, whether he’s celebrating his come-up, clapping back at critics, or reflecting on love and life. In a landscape where many artists fade after a few hits, Blaqbonez continues to evolve, pushing the envelope with each release. He’s not just one of Nigeria’s greatest street hip-pop acts; he’s a visionary shaping the future of the genre.



Erigga

Erigga, a.k.a. Paperboi, is Warri’s foremost hip-hop chronicler. More than a rapper, he’s a storyteller whose music feels like gritty screenplays drawn from the Niger Delta’s streets. Known for his hard-hitting Waffi Pidgin bars, Erigga emerged with Okorowanta and gained national traction with A Trip To The South. His lyrics oscillate between vulgar and vulnerable, comedic and cutting. A true street poet, Erigga has created a distinct sub-genre of Nigerian hip-hop rooted in raw authenticity.



Jesse Jagz

Jesse Jagz was never just MI's younger brother; he was a polymath. As a rapper, producer, and genre-bender, his debut Jag Of All Tradez in the early 2010s introduced a soundscape that blended rap, reggae, Afrobeat, and dancehall. A core member of the Choc City movement, Jesse helped put Jos on the map and brought a sense of avant-garde artistry to Nigerian hip-hop. He’s remained a cult favourite, revered for both his production genius and his poetic, often esoteric, lyricism.



Sasha P

Sasha P, born Anthony Yetunde Alabi, is often hailed as Nigeria’s first lady of hip-hop —and for good reason. She caught national attention with her standout verse on Trybesmen's "Oya" and followed up with her debut album First Lady in 2006. Tracks like “Adara” showcased her ability to balance lyrical weight with emotional depth.

More than just an emcee, Sasha was a trailblazer: the first Nigerian female artist to perform at the World Music Awards (2008) and the first to win Best Female at the MTV Africa Music Awards (2010). Her legacy is a testament to what happens when lyrical prowess meets cultural leadership.



Weird MC

Weird MC is one of the unsung heroines of Nigeria's early 2000s hip-hop era. Her two most recognisable hits are "Ijoya" and "Allen Avenue" became cultural staples, but her influence goes far deeper. As a woman who embraced an androgynous image and bucked industry norms, Weird MC opened doors for artists who didn’t fit into traditional molds. Her sound fused Afrobeat and hip-hop with electrifying energy and unapologetic lyricism. In many ways, she was ahead of her time offering visibility, guest verses (Busy Body remix), and voice to a new kind of female emcee.



Lord of Ajasa

His style wasn’t watered-down or overly polished, it was rooted in culture. In doing so, he created a lane for indigenous rap, inspiring a generation of artists like Dagrin, Olamide and Seriki to rap unapologetically in Yoruba. Lord of Ajasa gave street expression legitimacy. He proved that local stories could exist within popular soundscapes. While his mainstream visibility may have waned, his legacy is stamped in every street anthem that carries both grit and language pride.



Terry Tha Rapman

“You think say na beans to burst 16...”

Known as Mr. Joe Spazm, Terry Tha Rapman was the bridge between Nigeria’s underground rap scene and its mainstream breakthrough. From his early work in Tha Rapmanifestation to the iconic single “Na Beanz,” he pushed Northern Nigerian hip-hop into the spotlight. His branding acumen (e.g., the BANS merch) mirrored moves of global moguls like Pharrell and Jay-Z.

Lyrically sharp and consistently active from the 2000s onward, Terry proved that the North could hold their own in Nigeria’s hip-hop narrative.

HONORABLE MENTION

1	Ikechukwu
2	2 Shotz
3	JeriQ
4	Nigga Raw

FOUR KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE NIGERIAN MUSIC SCENE IN 2025

BY **HONOUR AGHEDO**

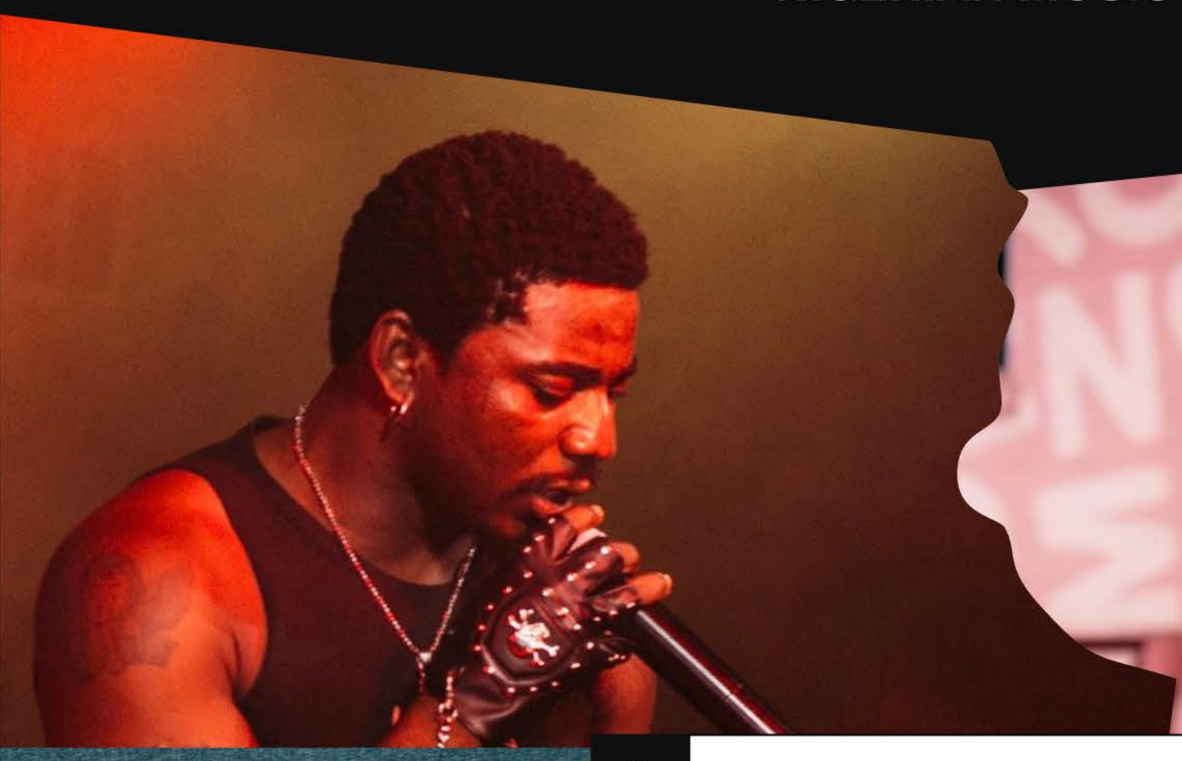
Halfway through 2025, Nigeria's music industry is pulsing with a new kind of energy; fiercely dynamic, emotionally rich, and genre-fluid.

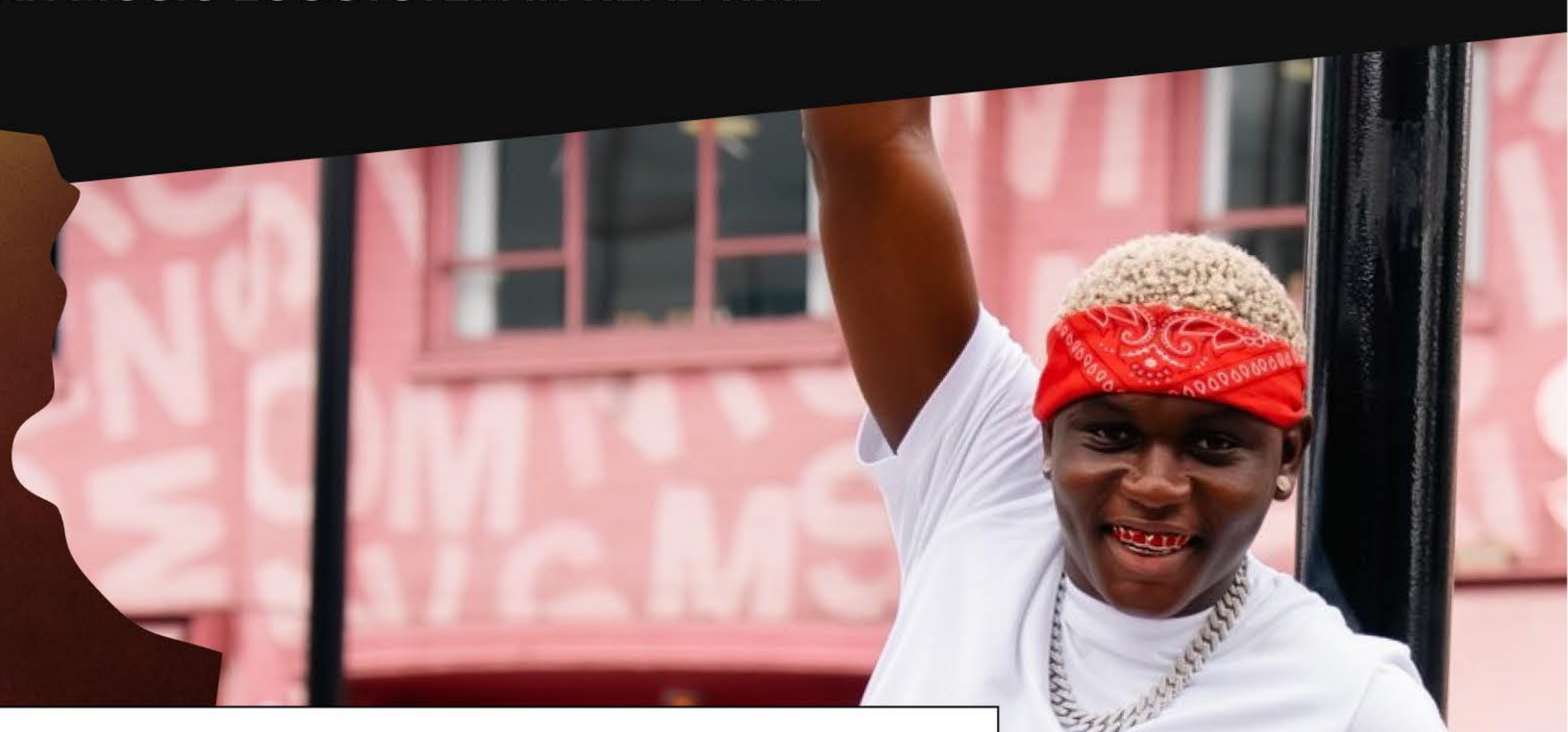
The year has seen the rise of daring newcomers, the resurgence of decade-old anthems, and the expansion of genre boundaries as streaming and social media continue to democratize discovery. Legacy acts are recalibrating their grip, while a new generation isn’t just knocking on the door, they’ve kicked it wide open.

SIX MONTHS IN, AND NIGERIA’S SONIC FRONTIER IS REWRITING THE RULES

- Industry Digest

HERE ARE FOUR MAJOR TRENDS SHAPING THE NIGERIAN MUSIC ECOSYSTEM IN REAL TIME





1

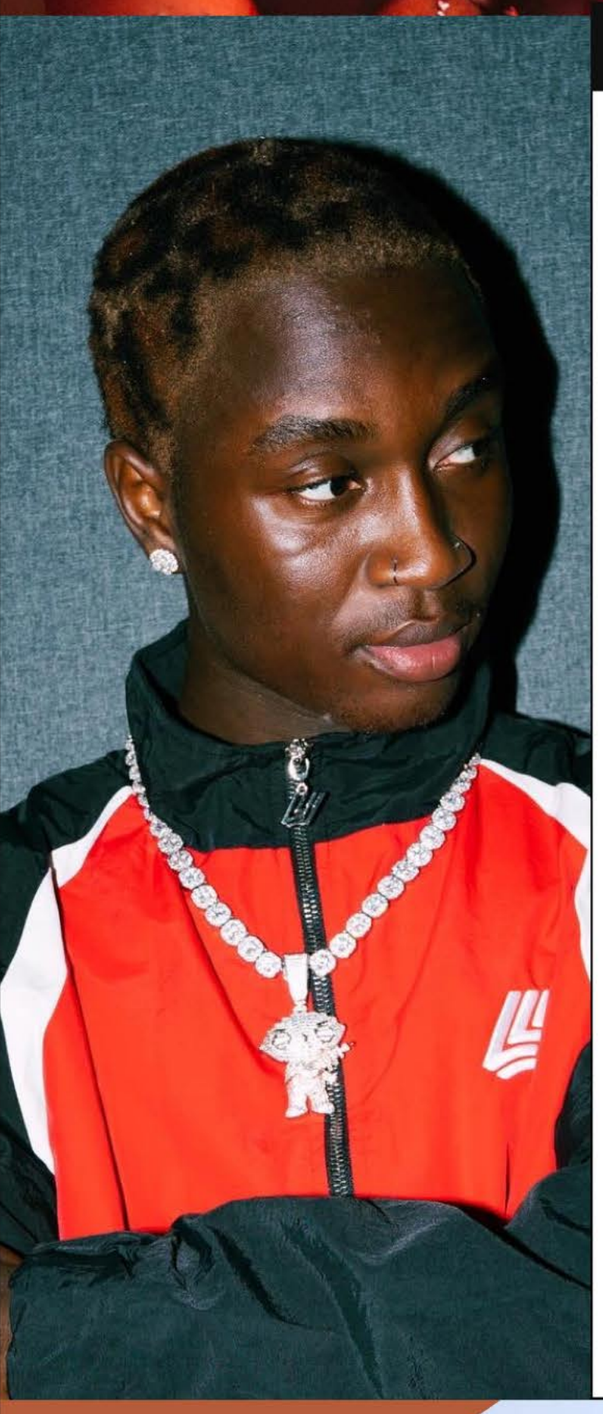
THE NEW GENERATION HAS OFFICIALLY ARRIVED

TML, Llona, Kummie, Fido & Ayo Maff Are Leading the Charge

These aren't just emerging names anymore—they're defining voices in today's Nigerian soundscape. TML and Ayo Maff have fast become the soundtrack of the streets, weaving pain, purpose, and perseverance into music that resonates deeply with everyday Nigerians. They've turned underground hustle into mainstream traction, powered by viral moments and magnetic charisma.

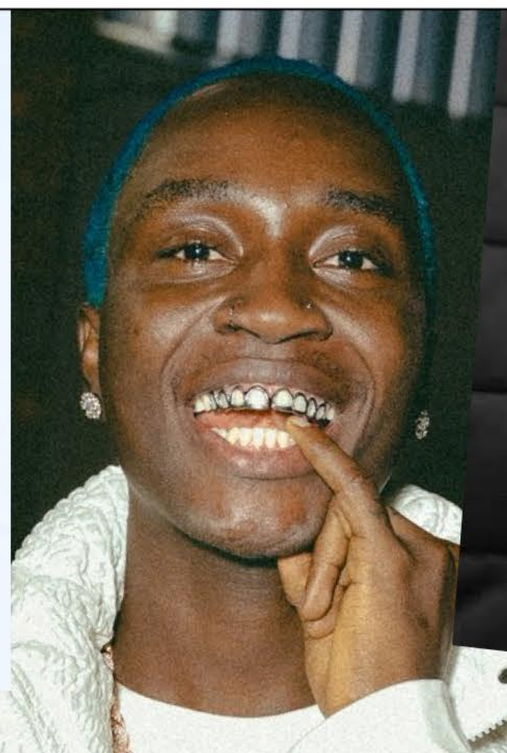
Llona, on the other hand, is spearheading a more introspective wave. His debut project HOMELESS isn't just an album—it's a statement. Building on the foundation laid by Omah Lay's Boy Alone, Llona adds cinematic depth and raw vulnerability, offering listeners a guided tour through loss, depression, and redemption. Now on a nationwide tour, he's bridging the gap between digital virality and real-life presence.

Fido's year has been defined by subtle but consistent momentum. After breaking out with ***"Awolowo,"*** he delivered an even more impactful follow-up, ***"Joy Is Coming"***—a rousing anthem of hope and triumph that has quietly become a street favourite. And then there's Kummie—the tender voice in an increasingly hard-edged space. With his breakthrough track ***"Arike,"*** followed by his debut EP Before We Became Strangers, Kummie has breathed new life into Nigeria's R&B scene, merging vulnerability with lush instrumentation and a soft-spoken presence that stands out amid the noise.













2

THE CHARTS ARE MORE FLUID THAN EVER

Genre Diversity Is at an All-Time High

The Official Nigeria Top 100 is no longer the exclusive domain of mainstream Afrobeats. In a trend that's gaining steam, artists across R&B, gospel, alternative and electronic are reaching No. 1 faster than ever before.

- **14 artistes** have topped the official singles chart with their first chart entry since 2020.
- Kummie's ***"Arike"*** (Week 141, June 7–13, 2025) became the most recent to top the chart.
- Gospel music continues its crossover moment—Lawrence Oyor's ***"Favour"*** peaked at No. 22, and Spotify reports a 40% YoY increase in gospel streaming activity.

House music is surging as well. Events like **Element House**, **ILE IJO**, and more have transformed nightlife into a genre-bending playground, with DJs like **Blak Dave** and **Yosa** evolving into marquee performers.

In short: Afro-Pop is still dominant—but it's now part of a broader, more experimental mix. The algorithmic age rewards sonic risk-taking and emotional honesty, and audiences are responding accordingly.

3

NOSTALGIA IS THE NEW CULTURAL CURRENCY

Old Hits Are Being Reborn in Real Time

In a trend driven by TikTok and nostalgia-fueled DJ sets, classics from as far back as the early 2000s are roaring back into public consciousness.

- Seyi Vibez's ***"Different Pattern"***, Asake's ***"Work of Art"***, and Shallipopi & ODUMODUBLVCK's ***"Cast"*** have all continued to dominate playlists and online conversations deep into 2025.
- Catalogue streams surged for tracks like Davido's ***"Dodo"***, reignited by viral dance challenges.
- Tems' ***"Love Me Jeje"*** (2024) not only introduced a new generation to Seyi Sodimu, but also gave the original song a second life.

Even Skales' 2014 banger ***"Shake Body"*** found new resonance when **Barcelona's football prodigy Lamine Yamal** used it for his content during Spain National Team's camp duties, sending the track soaring back into global streaming charts.

Lesson learned? Catalogue management is more important than ever. In today's attention economy, every old song is a potential new hit.

4

SAMPLING IS MORE THAN TECHNIQUE—IT'S CULTURAL BRIDGING

The Old Inspires the New, in Real Time

Sampling isn't new to Nigerian music. But in 2025, it's being used less for trend-jacking and more for **cultural storytelling**. Sampling has become a respectful nod to the past—a way to loop in older generations while still pushing sound boundaries.

Recent highlights include:

- **Davido & Omah Lay's "With You"**, sampling Bright Chimezie's "Because of English"—a highlife classic reinvented for Gen Z ears.

- **Tiwa Savage's interpolation of Tamia's "Into You"**, breathing new soul into early 2000s R&B.

- **Darkoo's flip of P-Square's "Busy Body"**, which turned the nostalgic club jam into a modern fusion of Afropop and drill.

Sampling is now less about reuse and more about recontextualization. It allows today's artists to acknowledge their roots while expanding their sonic footprint across generations and continents.

FINAL THOUGHT

As we hit the midpoint of 2025, one thing is undeniable: Nigerian music is undergoing a renaissance—driven by fearless new voices, fluid genre lines, and a hunger for storytelling that's both personal and global. The baton is being passed, but not dropped. The ecosystem is richer, the competition stiffer, and the audience more attentive than ever before.

The question now isn't who's next—it's who's ready for forever.

BY **IKEOKUWA AMONIMO**

THE INFLUENCE OF TikTok ON MAINSTREAM MUSIC – TWO PEAS IN A POD

From the beginning of time, sound has been humanity's most primal means of connection. Before instruments, before radios and televisions, there was the simple transfer of melodies and hums from parent to child, often mothers soothing their offspring with tunes passed down through generations. It was simple, accessible, and timeless. Even centuries later, that tradition lingers, although the modes of transmission have evolved dramatically.

First came instruments, broadening the spectrum of sound. Then came radio, and with it, the ability for music to reach beyond immediate surroundings. Television added the visual layer, and eventually, the internet blew the gates wide open. Suddenly, music knew no borders, and listeners were no longer limited by geography or language. Instead, they found themselves immersed in the sounds of cultures oceans apart.

And then came TikTok.

Yes, that app—the one your younger cousins can't stop talking about, the one that has you glued to your screen long past your bedtime, humming lyrics you didn't even realize you knew. TikTok isn't just an addictive social media platform; it's an undeniable force in today's music industry. The app has become a launchpad for new music, a rediscovery zone for old classics, and a cultural touchstone for global music consumption.

It's not just personal. TikTok has transformed industries. From fashion to film, and especially in music, it has revolutionized how songs are discovered, shared, and consumed.

A 2021 study underscored this impact: **over 47% of TikTok users reported adding new songs to their streaming playlists after discovering them on the app**. A whopping **75%** discovered new artists through TikTok, and **63%** heard songs for the first time there. Perhaps most telling: **72%** of users now associate specific songs directly with TikTok itself.

The data tells a powerful story, but so do the songs. The app has breathed new life into classics and propelled fresh tracks into the mainstream.

Just last October, Enya's "Only Time" made an unexpected comeback alongside beloved Nollywood soundtracks like Dekumzy ft. Slow Dog & Desperate Chicks' "Who Get Dat Thing," Wande Coal's "So Mi So," and Adewale Ayuba's timeless "Koloba Koloba."

At the same time, contemporary hits dominated TikTok's sonic landscape: Smur Lee's ***"Juju,"*** Rema's ***"Azaman,"*** Monaky's viral ***"Chandelier,"*** Fido's ***"Awolowo,"*** Pa Salieu's ***"Big Smile,"*** Joeboy and Qing Madi's ***"Adenuga,"*** Skepta and Portable's ***"Tony Montana,"*** Fireboy DML's ***"Change Your Life,"*** Ayra Starr's ***"Woman Commando,"*** and Victony's ***"Tiny Apartment,"*** among others.

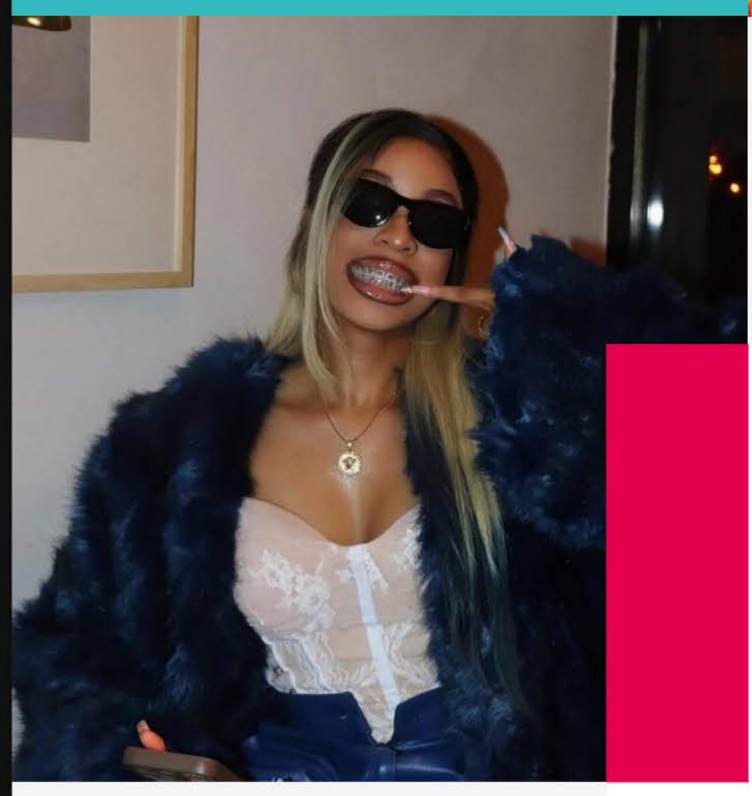
The momentum continued into 2025 with dance challenges and viral trends for songs like Fido's "Joy is Coming," Teni's "Money," Papa San's "Maddy Maddy Cry" (1992), Lawrence Oyor's "Favour," Kunmie's "Arike," Qing Madi's "Favorite Psycho," BLNDE's "Omo To Sexy," and Asake's rejuvenated "MMS."



And we’re only halfway through the year. The TikTok-to-mainstream pipeline shows no signs of slowing down.

The app has not only amplified the reach of music but has also introduced audiences to lesser-known talents. Mannywellz, for example, saw his music skyrocket thanks to TikTok. Since 2023, songs like "Take It Easy" and "Better With You" featuring Pink Sweat$ found viral success, and in 2024 alone, his tracks "Looking for God," "Ouu Wee" ("Chocolate and Caramel" trend), and "Masterpiece" (the "Muah Challenge") gained massive traction. Similarly, Nigerian-born Tega Ethan’s "They Don’t Have a Clue" captured widespread attention, proving that the platform offers not just fleeting moments but genuine career boosts.

For some, TikTok has revived careers; for others, it has served as the catalyst for breakout success. In a few cases, it has created once-in-a-lifetime viral moments. Regardless of the outcome, one thing is clear: TikTok has reshaped the music landscape.



Of course, not everyone views this transformation through rose-colored glasses. Some critics argue that TikTok prioritizes fleeting trends over musical quality, pushing artists towards formulaic hits designed solely for virality. Others lament the pressure it places on musicians to constantly create content rather than focus solely on artistry.



Yet the undeniable truth remains: TikTok has bridged the gap between artists and audiences, offering unprecedented access and immediacy. It has democratized music discovery in ways traditional media never could.



So while debates over authenticity continue, millions of users keep humming those sticky hooks, perfecting their dance routines, and creating memories one video at a time. Music and TikTok are, for better or worse, forever intertwined.

“LOVE LIVES HERE TOO”

BY **IKEOKUWA AMONIMO**

WHEN THE ANGELS SANG THEIR CHORUSES IN HEAVEN, SURELY IBEJII WAS ONE OF THEIR LEAD VOCALISTS.

Though he was born in the Western world, the storytelling musician has deep love for his Yoruba heritage, weaving his personality, music craft, and very being from within. Ibejii’s background is a seamless fusion of the old and the new. His anonymity, as he tells it, is a matter of coincidence not a grand plan. All that was naturally occurring because he’d rather focus on spotlighting his music rather than himself.

As a piper, he has chosen to dictate his own tune. The ‘Intermission’ project that brought him to fame and earned him his first Headies Award nomination and award was born out of his will to capture the story of a night that will continue to linger in the minds of many for decades to come. However, Ibejii is more than a storytelling activist; he sings of love, pain, nature and most importantly, the experiences that bind us all as humans. Simply put, what you feel, Ibejii feels but he takes it a notch higher, transforming these raw emotions into beautiful music that resonates with you and him alike. He taps into the deepest feeling you often ignore, abandon, or leave unexplored. From “Gonto” single to the life-after-lockdown reflections of ‘POST-19’ to the emotion-packed ‘Yellow Vanilla’, Ibejii continues to unravel new layers of his artistry.

In an exclusive interview with TurnTable, Ibejii opens up about his creative journey, music roots, love for the visual arts, and inspirations fueling his sound.

TURNTABLE CHARTS

IBEJII ON MYSTERY, MUSIC, AND MAKING SPACE FOR AFRICAN SENSUALITY

TTC

When people hear the name ‘Ibejii,’ what kind of music should they expect? And what’s the story behind the name?

IBEJI

I was born a twin, and when I began my music journey, the name became my alter ego. It allowed me to embody two sides of myself, traditional and contemporary. My music draws from the orísun (source) of Yoruba culture while also tapping into broader global influences. That duality is core to my identity as an Ìbejì (twin)—I stand in both worlds, merging heritage and modernity. The name brings those two parts of me together.

TTC

You began your career as a mysterious figure. Why did you make that decision?

IBEJI

It was instinctual. I’m more comfortable behind the scenes. I always wanted the music to be front and center, not the musician. To me, music is a storytelling tool, and I wanted the story to have a louder bang than the storyteller. The mystery wasn’t intentional. It just happened. I let the music go out into the world while I stayed back, guiding it quietly. That choice created the mystery around me, but it wasn’t the plan.

TTC

You’re also a talented visual artist, and your artwork often appears on your album covers. How does that visual creativity influence your sound?

IBEJI

For me, it’s all about storytelling; whether through writing, music, or visual art. I’ve been writing since I was young, and I see all my creative expressions as extensions of that narrative instinct. Music takes people on emotional journeys. Visual art, though, is more intentional. You have to say a lot with very little space. Whether it’s through lyrics or brushstrokes, I hope people feel a consistent identity throughout everything I create.

TTC

“8 Billion People” is a standout track. What inspired it?

IBEJI

I was in North America, driving through a beautiful landscape, feeling at peace. I had just won the Headies Award for Intermission, a project born from the sorrow of the Lekki tollgate incident. That award came at a raw time, and it meant a lot. As I drove, I was filled with gratitude, not just for recognition but for love. The idea that, in a world of almost 8 billion people, someone could choose you—just you—felt profound. That sense of intimacy inspired both the song and the visuals. It’s a celebration of being seen, being loved, and knowing that you matter to someone.

TTC

What should fans expect in 2025?

IBEJI

This year is for the fans. I’m touring. Starting with a show in Ada, Ghana, then Paris and London in March. I’m also releasing a new project called Lagos Shuffle. If Tribal Marks was the landing, then Lagos Shuffle is the takeoff. It’s a continuation, a rebirth of Nigerian identity through a contemporary lens. It’s soulful, it’s nostalgic, and I can’t wait to share it with the world.

TTC

Let’s talk more about Intermission, which earned you that Headies win. What was your vision for it?

IBEJI

Intermission was written the night of the Lekki tollgate tragedy. It broke something in me, not just because of the violence, but because of the lost opportunity. That protest was young people showing love for their country, wanting to be heard, wanting to help shape Nigeria. I had hoped the government would recognize that. When that hope was crushed, I poured my feelings into Intermission. It wasn’t meant to be commercial; it was my cry, my plea, my wail. The fact that people heard it and embraced it still touches me deeply.

TTC

Your latest album Yellow Vanilla explores themes of love and sensuality. What inspired that direction?

IBEJI

Love in pop culture is rarely painted Black. It’s Paris, New York, blonde hair, red roses. But what about love in Abeokuta? In Ibadan? Love lives here too. I wanted to shift that narrative and explore sensuality—African sensuality—in a respectful, tender way. People often asked why I didn’t make love songs, and the truth is, I do feel love, just like everyone else. Yellow Vanilla let me dive into that world. It’s soft, vulnerable, and deeply human. Tracks like “Pink Pineapple,” “Chocolate Hour,” and “Love Lives Here” are all about embracing that gentle side of our existence. I want people to know that we love here too.

TTC

You’ve collaborated with talents like Wavy the Creator and Wellyt. Who’s still on your dream list?

IBEJI

Jacob Banks. His storytelling and voice take me to Marvin Gaye territory. It’s soul, it’s human, it’s honest. Then there’s Omah Lay. I’m obsessed with melody, and no one in this generation uses melody to move you quite like he does. I don’t even need to understand what he’s saying; his voice carries emotion in ways words sometimes can’t. Working with him would be a dream.

TTC

Your lyrics are rich and poetic. What inspires your writing process?

IBEJI

Life. Simple as that. It could be a conversation, a voice, a city skyline. I just spent time in Ibadan and someone told me, “They’re not brown roofs; they’re golden roofs.” That perspective shift inspired me. I’m constantly absorbing; textures, colors, voices, feelings. I don’t create things from scratch. I draw from the beauty around me and reimagine it through art.



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Wonu Osikoya, Honour Aghedo, Tomide Marv & Adeayo Adebiyi

The Greatest Afrobeats Producers Of The 21st Century

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Oma Emina & Honour Aghedo

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The Greatest Afrobeats Music Video Directors Of The 21st Century

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The Greatest DJs of the 21st Century

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New Players in Music with Justin UG & Ini Cash: Content Creators are Rewriting the Music Playbook

Hosted by
Deji Osikoya (video only)

TurnTable Rules for Various Charts Published by TurnTable: How the Charts Work

A Concerning Trend: Recent Nigerian Albums Are Struggling to Dominate the Official Singles Chart

Hosted by
Ikeoluwa Amonimo

Nigeria's Local Consumption is the Biggest in Africa & Middle East

Hosted by
Honour Aghedo

"Love Lives Here Too": Ibejii on Mystery, Music, and Making Space for African Sensualit

Written by
Ikeoluwa Amonimo

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TurnTable Charts

TurnTable is the only standard music chart operating in Nigeria, with over 5 years of data collection across the relevant music platforms in the country. Our aim is to tell the Nigerian story through the lens of data, solving a longstanding problem in the music industry of the country