No musical talent, no problem—there are now apps for that

March 31 2020, by Marina Eckersley

Credit: Andrea Piacquadio from Pexels

A new social music app is pushing the boundaries of music creation by making recording artists out of novices with little to no musical training or traditional talent.

[Voisey](#) allows users to choose from a library of beats from around the world, submitted to the Voisey website by producers, and sing their own lyrics and melodies over them. Their vocals are run through in-app vocal effects including auto-tune. The app is designed to make anyone sound like a star.

In 2019 alone, 350,000 original songs were created on Voisey, says co-founder Olly Barnes. Today, the app is live on Apple's operating system in 22 countries. Producers, singer-songwriters and even average music fans can create professional-sounding, 60-second songs with collaborators from all over the world.

Production and distribution

While Spotify and other streaming platforms allow anyone to share their existing music with the world, Voisey takes it a step further by giving anyone with the app the ability to record and distribute a song on the platform in just minutes.

"I just write the song, I'm like, OK, I put that out … now I'm back to homework," says Voisey user and Spanish artist, Ana Mancebo, who is currently working towards her bachelor's degree in business in the United States. "You can pretty much make anyone sound like an artist."

Making music is innately human and it's certainly nice for anyone to be able to create it. But these companies aren't totally altruistic; they are money-making ventures, just like Spotify.

Voisey doesn't disclose their user base, but as of January 2020, downloads of the app were growing 60 percent week on week —all organic growth, without ads, according to Barnes. The [music industry](#) has its eyes and ears on Voisey too —the producing duo [Stargate invested in the app](#) in 2019.

Democratizing pop

Voisey is an app that allows anyone to be a star. The app takes cues from TikTok—users can easily swipe through videos, like, comment and share—but the focus is on writing and producing original music. According to Barnes, 91 percent of the songs on Voisey are originals.

Currently, the Voisey app is not monetized—creators are not paid for their content and the company isn't paid for their service. But a vast catalogue of original music—and people looking for fame—can certainly be lucrative.

And Barnes has big plans for monetization.

"If we're where music talent will crystalize for the first time, should we not see if we can help people bypass the traditional machine?" says Barnes.

He believes that much of the new music created on Voisey will be from first-timers who don't yet have a [music publisher](link) and aren't yet registered with performing rights organizations (the agencies that collect royalties on broadcast and performed music on behalf of the artists). The company is working on a program to non-exclusively administer music rights for some users on the platform. This means they could potentially take a fee.

[Of course, it has been argued that streaming royalties aren't enough](link). In the 2010s, streaming services were lauded for [democratizing music and bringing back revenue to record labels](link). Now, as we enter a new decade, it's becoming clear that this democratization has also created a [revenue stream](link) for music streaming services.

In 2018, [Spotify partnered with Distrokid](link), which charges $19.99 per

year per artist to upload unlimited albums and songs to streaming services. And now, [Spotify is rolling out paid promotion](link). There is money to be made from people who want to be artists.

Pay-to-play features

Rights administration is only a small part of Voisey's monetization strategy. The company is not currently disclosing the model, but Barnes says that it's inspired by "top-tier mobile games," and while the core experience will be free, they will charge for an "enhanced" experience.

Could this include charging creators for certain vocal effects? Or for more than a certain number of songs each month? Or for distribution on streaming platforms?

[Another new music creation technology, Boomy](link), is already doing some of the things that Voisey might aspire to.

Boomy helps users make music with artificial intelligence. Users choose from various musical themes and genres, click a button, wait for the artificial intelligence to work its magic and decide if they like what they hear. If they don't, they can just click "try again" and have something new created for them with the same theme or genre.

They can also choose to edit, which allows them to make simple changes like drag and drop sections of the song or change the tempo. More than 400,000 tracks have been created using Boomy, according to the counter on its website.

According to Boomy's website, with a free account, a user has access to limited downloads, saves and features, and can create and release one single to streaming services. But to unlock more features and increase downloads and saves, a user can sign up for plans from US$2.99 to $9.99

per month.

And 70 percent of Boomy users have never created a song before using the service, says Alex Mitchell, CEO of Boomy. But for a fee, Boomy will distribute the music they create and help them earn royalties from streams.

"There's an explosion in the streaming music environment, there's a ton of royalties that are going to be flowing into the music business …. We want to make sure that you can take advantage of that growth, even if you are somebody who traditionally has not had access to music education, music resources," says Mitchell.

Mitchell says that on average, royalties are around US$50 to $100 for the last couple of months.

Not too shabby for the creator, for as little as $2.99 per month and a few clicks-worth of their time. And not too shabby for Boomy, which in addition to upgrades, also takes a percentage of royalties from free users.

There is certainly still money to be made in the music business, but it remains to be seen if it is for the users of new music technologies, the companies behind those music technologies, traditional music business stakeholders or a combination of these.

This article is republished from The Conversation under a Creative Commons license. Read the original article.

Provided by The Conversation