

# ARTIST, A PERSON OR A COMMODITY

Exploring the necessity of branding

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Abstract <p>Music industry is undergoing major changes and constantly developing. Major record labels do not play such a big and dominating role as they used to. Artists have multiple ways of making their works available for the audience without any outside help. Furthermore, launching extensive marketing campaigns may not result as hoped and many a time they prove to be waste of money, unlike in the past.</p> <p>The main reason behind this is the power shift in the markets. Today the audience has much to choose from and they have the power to decide what they put their money into. Hence, it is crucial to know what the audience really desires, which one interests them more: the product that the media has created or the real person behind the music. Four people from different sides of the music industry were chosen for interviews to discuss how an artist can reach attention, as well as branding and stage personas to discover how these practices influence an artist's career and if they could be taken advantage of in marketing.</p> <p>According to the interviewees, there is no particular marketing or branding strategy which would work with every artist. Instead, each artist should have an own unique one based on his/her strengths. Additionally, even though artists are able to launch their careers without outsourcing, using outside help is perceived useful. Moreover, the interviews revealed that the audience does not think that branding risks an artist's authenticity. According to the respondents, the audience actually expects some polishing to be done to the artist's image and sees it as an act of respect towards the audience.</p>		
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Tiivistelmä <p>Musiikkibisnes käy läpi suuria muutoksia ja kehittyy jatkuvasti. Suurilla levy-yhtiöillä ei enää ole niin tärkeää ja dominoivaa roolia kuin ennen, koska artisteilla on monia tapoja tavoittaa yleisönsä ja julkaista musiikkiaan ilman ulkopuolista apua. Suurien markkinointikampanjoiden lanseeraaminen saattaa osoittautua pikemminkin rahan tuhlaukseksi kuin menestykseksi.</p> <p>Suurin syy kyseiseen ilmiöön on voimasuhteiden muutos: päätöksentekovoima ei enää ole markkinoijilla vaan kansalla, sillä nyt ihmisillä on paljon vaihtoehtoja joista valita mitä he haluavat ostaa. Siksi on tärkeää selvittää mitä yleisö oikeasti haluaa, kiinnostaako sitä enemmän median luoma tuote vai henkilö musiikin takana. Neljä eri henkilöä musiikkiteollisuuden eri puolilta valittiin haastatteluihin keskustelemaan siitä, miten artisti voi herättää huomiota, brändäämisestä ja lavapersoonista sekä miten ne vaikuttavat artistien uraan ja miten niitä voitaisiin käyttää hyödyksi artisteja markkinoitaessa.</p> <p>Haastateltavien mukaan ei ole vain yhtä ainoaa markkinointistrategiaa, joka sopisi jokaiselle artistille. Sen sijaan jokaisella artistilla pitäisi olla oma uniikki strategia, joka perustuu hänen vahvuuksiinsa. Vaikka artistit voivat luoda uraansa ilman ulkoistamista, pidettiin ulkopuolisen avun hankkimista positiivisena vaihtoehtona. Haastatelussa paljastui myös, ettei brändääminen vaikuta artistin aitouteen negatiivisesti, päinvastoin jonkin asteista artistin stailausta jopa odotettiin sillä se osoittaa kunnioitusta artistin puolelta yleisöä kohtaan.</p>		
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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

Branding has divided opinions within the music industry as well as the views of the audience. Some say that branding affects the artist's authenticity and productizes the artist by taking the focus away from the music. The other half claims that an artist cannot possibly succeed without some branding, because, after all, branding makes the product which is to be sold, moreover, it creates the image of the artist and defines the artist. Furthermore, music business has changed, people have much to choose from and they expect to receive something more than just music. The music industry today is about selling and offering experiences to the audience. Today's music needs to have some featured attributes in order to make the customer buy it, people are looking for added value. Furthermore, the purchase decision does not depend only on the product itself but what the product can do or offer for the consumer. Branding is stated to help to differentiate the artists from each other and to offer added value to the artist and to the music. It could, therefore, be asked as to which one the product is, the artist or the music.

The aim of this thesis was to examine if the audiences accept artist branding and if the audiences do what the audiences expect from branding. In addition, the study reveals the insights of the music industry, what people from the different sides of the business think about branding and, furthermore, poses the question whether branding is necessary. This thesis is based on three different viewpoints: the audience's, artist's and management's. In order to answer the research questions, email interviews were conducted. For the purpose of gaining the full picture, the interviewees were chosen to represent the different angles mentioned above. Introduction to all the artists appearing in some form in this thesis can be found in Appendix 1.

## **2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND LIMITATIONS**

The primary goal of this thesis was to study the ruling attitudes towards branding in the music industry. Moreover, one of the aims was to discover the utility of artist branding and think of the question if an artist could succeed without a brand. Moreover, the audience's expectations of the artist in terms of branding were researched.

The hypothetical basis of the study was the constant debate whether or not an artist should be branded. In addition, it is widely claimed that the audience wishes authenticity from the artist and that branding compromises that. Furthermore, it has been said that boy and girl bands branded by record labels do not appeal to the audience anymore.

The study concentrated on exploring artist branding through emotions and perception, in other words, how people see and feel about branding, if it is acceptable or if it productizes the artist and takes the focus away from the music. Thus, the financial gain was left to a narrow consideration as well as comparing artists with and without branding.

Additionally, the territory in which the interviewees operate and have gained their experience affects the results, which means that the study may not be applicable in each of the different music markets, as the characteristics of the industry vary along the area. Thus, this study is restricted to Finland, Norway and UK only.

## **3 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **3.1 Introduction to Branding**

Branding is an important part of overall marketing. It aims to create additional value to a product, value that would differentiate the product from its rivals and make it appeal more to the consumers so that the product could gain perceived value in the eyes of the consumers. In other words, the product has the “it” – factor which makes the consumers appreciate it more and want to spend more money on purchasing it than on its competitors.

The purpose of branding is to create a brand. A brand can be defined as a name, term, sign, symbol, trademark, logo, sound, colour or package and product design (Zhenyi, 2001, 18). Originally brands were used to identify the manufacturer of the goods, to separate them from the other products, to communicate about the quality of the products, to provide legal protection and to help the customer with purchase decision (Zhenyi, 2001, 19). Nowadays, brands have much more meaning than being just names or logos. A brand represents all the associations, perceptions and feelings that a consumer has about a product. A brand represents what a product means to a consumer, and it is a basis for building a customer relationship. (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010). Some say that a brand is the most valuable of the assets in marketing that a company can have. Studies have revealed that a consumer is more likely to purchase a product with a brand than one without it (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010).

#### **3.1.1 Building a Brand**

Brand is a powerful tool, which means that it must be managed and developed carefully. The brand building process has four major strategy decisions: positioning, name selection, sponsorship and development. (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010)

**Brand positioning** can be done on three different levels. On the lowest level the brand is positioned on product attributes. In other words, the brand is based on the product’s abilities, in other words, what the product does. This is the lowest level of branding, because attributes are easily copied by rivals and consumers are not interested in attributes alone. What is more meaningful for the consumers is what



the attributes will do for them. The second level of brand positioning is to associate the brand's name with a desired benefit. The benefits can vary from the quality to the performance of the product. The third and strongest level of brand positioning is to position the brand on values and beliefs. This manner reaches and touches the emotional level of the customer. It is important to keep in mind the vision of what the brand represents and offers to the customers when positioning a brand. (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010)

**Brand name selection** is a complicated process during which the product's benefits, target market and marketing strategies are reviewed. In choosing a suitable brand name the six following factors should be considered. The first of the factors is that the brand name should describe the benefits and qualities of the product. The second factor is simplicity which means that the name should be easy to remember and pronounce. Thirdly, the name should be unique, original and able to catch attention. According to the fourth factor, the name should be extendable, so that it would allow expansion into other product categories. The fifth factor is that the name should be easily translatable into other languages. The sixth and the last factor is that the brand name should have legal protection, in other words, it should be capable of registration. (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010)

**Brand sponsorship** functions in four different ways, and the options are a national brand, private brand, licensed branding and co-branding. National brands are known nationwide unlike private brands which are also known as store brands. Private brands are created and owned by retailers and may exist only in certain stores or in a certain chain. With private brands retailers aim to compete with national brands by offering less expensive options to the customers. In licensing the permission of the usage of the brand is given in exchange of a fee. Licensing has highly increased in the past few years and proved to be a profitable business and a good option for creating an own brand name. Co-branding means that two already existing brands combine their powers for the same product. Usually co-branding happens when one company buys a license from another company to combine the brand with its own. Co-branding has increased lately and it is normally profitable for both parties. However, it might lead to complex legal problems if the other party does not fulfil the terms of

the contract or gives negative publicity to the other party. (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010)

**Brand development** can be done through line extensions, brand extensions, multibrands and new brands. Line extension means extending an established brand name to new colours, forms, ingredients, sizes or flavours within an existing product line. On one hand, line extension might be considered a low-cost and low-risky manner of introducing new products. On the other hand, some of the new products might cause the brand to lose its original meaning. Brand extension means that new or modified products in a new category are taken under the existing brand name. It is a fast way to gain recognition and acceptance from the customers. Brand extension, however, might fail, meaning that it may confuse the image of the main brand by harming the customer attitudes. Multi-branding is the act of introducing many different brands in the same product category. The major issue in multi-branding is that each brand may have a low market share and not be very profitable. The need for a new brand may occur when the power of the established brand is thought not to be strong enough or it is not appropriate for the product in concern. Much like with multi-branding creating a new brand might cause loss of funds when a company is trying to offer multiple brands at the same time. (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010)

### **3.1.2 Brand Equity**

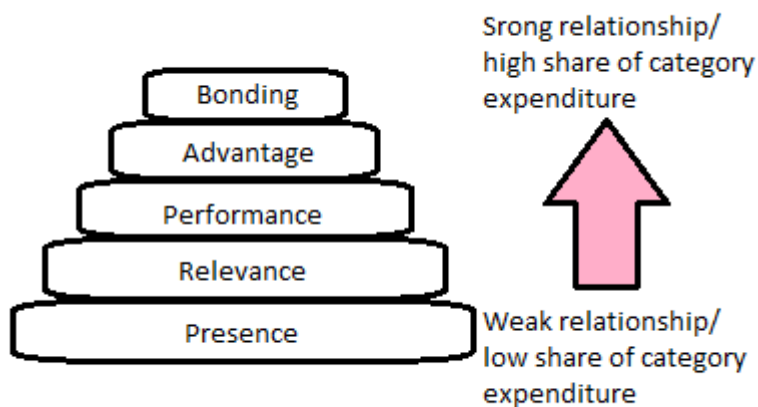
A brand's efficiency and effectiveness are measured as brand equity. If the brand is strong, it holds high brand equity. Brand equity is the effect that a brand name and the brand's marketing strategy have on the customers. Brand equity measures the brand's ability to catch customer preference and loyalty. For example, an advertising agency Young & Rubicam's Brand Asset Valuator measures brand power through four dimensions based on customer perception: differentiation; what makes the product different from its rivals, relevance; how consumers feel it meets their needs, knowledge; how much the customer knows about the brand, and esteem; how much the consumer respects the brand. The financial value of the brand is measured in a brand valuation process which targets to estimate the brand's total value. (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010)

David Aaker, who worked as a professor of marketing in the University of California, sees brand equity as brand awareness, brand loyalty and brand associations that may increase or decrease the value provided by the product. Aaker claims that developing brand identity is the beginning of brand management. Brand identity is defined as brand associations that represent what the brand is about and what the brand promises to the customers. Aaker's model consists of five steps of brand loyalty:

1. Presence: Do I know the brand, what do I know about it?
2. Relevance: What does it offer to me?
3. Performance: Is it what it promises?
4. Advantage: Does it have something better about it than its rivals?
5. It is the best and nothing compares to it.

The relationship between the customer and the brand grows stronger as steps proceed higher in the model. (Kotler and Keller, 2009)

#### AAKER MODEL



In brief, brand equity is the added value of a product which is reflected in consumer behaviour, how they feel, think and respect the brand and how they respond to it. (Kotler and Keller, 2009)

#### 3.1.3 Brand Management

Brands need to be carefully managed so that their value stays high. Marketing actions must constantly forward the meaning of the brand considering what products it represents, what customer needs it satisfies, what makes it better than its

rivals and what kind of image and associations the consumers should have about the brand. (Kotler and Keller, 2009)

Maintaining a strong brand is not all about advertising, the major factor that raises customer loyalty is the brand experience, its meaning, personal experiences with the brand, web pages and word of mouth. A brand should be reviewed at certain intervals in order to discover its strengths and weaknesses, whether it is still relevant and appropriate, what the brand means to the customers and if the brand receives enough support. (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010)

### **3.2 Branding in the Music Industry**

Nowadays the common view is that an artist equals a brand, artists do not only receive attention for their music but also for their clothing, whom they associate with, what kind of vehicles they drive and what drinks and food they consume. This is why sponsorships and endorsement deals are very common. From this monetary transaction point of view the main aspects of building a brand are cause alignment, authenticity, interdependence, direct relationships, searchability, interpretation, immediacy and personalisation. (McBride and Muhle, 2008, 25)

From the **cause alignment** point of view the audience needs more than just music from the artist, they search for added value. Added value is usually non-musical and supports the artist's social causes such as sponsoring cancer associations. Cause alignment can be a partnership in which a business provides funds to the cause and the cause provides exposure. This is not all about charity but also appealing to people's emotions to make them consume more. (McBride and Muhle, 2008, 26)

**Authenticity** means being one's true self, not developing a new identity that would be something the artist is not. It is about listening to the fans and offering them something different and meaningful. Authenticity is about building consumer trust, engaging and encouraging loyalty. (McBride and Muhle, 2008, 26)

**Interdependence** means a cause and effect relationship. In other words, every action has effects on everything around and results in other reactions. For example, illegal downloading increased when the major labels did not adapt to the digital changes fast enough. (McBride and Muhle, 2008, 27)

**A direct relationship** between artists and their audience can be built by being open, sharing experiences and mutually interacting in various ways. Interacting is now easier than it used to be and not limited by geographic realities. Having a direct relationship with the audience reinforces the loyalty of the audience. (McBride and Muhle, 2008, 27)

**Searchability** is about discovering information presented in as appealing a form as possible as fast as possible. All the web content the artist has needs to be user friendly. User friendliness increases pleasurable user experiences. Search friendly content means that the Internet user does not have to browse through an uncountable number of different websites, but that the interesting information is recommended to the user. For example, when a fan is listening to metal music, he/she receives suggestions of similar kind of music via the music provider. (McBride and Muhle, 2008, 28)

**Immediacy** means being the first in a queue, receiving the information first without having to wait. Offering first-hand information to the fans reinforces the artist-audience relationship. It is about making the fans feel important. It can be implemented through special fans-only offerings such as pre-tickets or special tracks on the CDs. (McBride and Muhle, 2008, 28)

**Personalisation** is about offering a better fan experience. However, it is not solely implemented by the artist but with the fans. Personalisation varies from foreign language lyric translations to offering music for video games. Crowd sourcing is yet another form of personalisation. This means, for instance, that giving the fans an opportunity to participate in creating album art makes them feel important. (McBride and Muhle, 2008, 30)

### **3.2.1 Personal Branding**

Personal branding, also known as self-branding, is the art of creating the best possible image about oneself and making lasting positive first impressions when meeting new people. Personal brands facilitate forwarding values, goals and characteristics. Personal brands are polished stories about an artist which are used as commercial messages and which can be viewed as 30 second pitches that reflect the

unique value of the person. Personal branding is about standing out of the crowd by being oneself, the best possible version of oneself. (Chritton, 2012, 4)

Personal brands are created around the history of the person concerned. The person needs to know what it is that makes him/her unique and separates him/her from the rest of the people. Then the person needs to begin to emphasise that factor in every aspect visible to others, such as business cards and profiles in social networking sites. This would also mean suitable graphics, colours and pictures that reinforce the wanted reputation and image. Maintaining the right image means constant monitoring and managing of one's profiles and behaviour. Personal branding is about combining what a person knows about him-/herself with what he/she knows about the target market, that is, the people the person wants to impress. (Chritton, 2012, 19)

**Lady Gaga** is seen one of the masters of personal branding. She has created her brand around surprise, giving people the unexpected, for example out-of-line clothing or untraditional performances. Her brand is all about entertainment as well as being of herself despite what others may say. Gaga follows four important aspects of personal branding. She is living the brand 24/7, therefore, she has never been seen wearing normal casual clothing in public. She creates her own publicity as she makes sure she is in the news whether it is about her stunts or strange interviews. She has defined herself without letting anyone else do it for her, meaning that, she has been open about her past which has allowed her to frame the revelations suitable for her brand. Finally, she is constantly changing her looks within her brand avoiding of the impression of being boring. (Chritton, 2012, 37; Celebrity Branding Agency [n.d])

Another example of personal branding is **Marilyn Manson**, whose personal brand has been built on the idea of shocking people and doing things that no one else would do as well as making people question the world around them (O'Reilly, 2006;TV total, [n.d]). During an interview on the O'Reilly Factor in 2006 Manson stated that the message he is delivering is to encourage people to be themselves and not be afraid of being different. Moreover, people should not take anything for granted. Manson explained his appearance by saying that everyone has a representation, and in order

to make people listen to a person, the person needs to look in a certain way (O'Reilly, 2006). Manson has also recognised the fact that all people are performing in some way (TV total, [n.d.]).

**Simon Cowell** has created his personal brand around his business. Cowell is known for being straight forward and sometimes ruthless when it comes to giving feedback to pop-star beginners. He also expects total commitment from people he works with. Cowell dresses always in the same fashion and, each one of his dressing rooms in studios around the world are exact replicas of his own dressing room at his home. (Chritton, 2012, 37; Gannon, 2012)

Some artists have added stage personas to their personal brands, meaning that they might have one or several aliases they use while performing onstage. Having an alias serves as a tool to create further meaning to the performances or facilitates delivering a specific message to the audience. A stage persona may help the artist to perform in a more relaxed manner in contrast to what the artist could do as him-/herself. However, stage personas do not only offer more aspects for shows but help to clarify boundaries between the artist's public and personal life, in other words, stage personas provide privacy.

**Beyoncé Knowels** is known for her stage persona Sasha Fierce. According to Beyoncé she needed Sasha to separate her own shy personality from the stage persona which enables her to perform freely and more sexily than what she could as herself. Beyoncé has stated that the reason why Sasha was created was that being someone else on the stage made it possible for her not to think back of or regret her actions so that she could always say that it was not her but someone else. (CmberriTV, 2010; Crosley, 2010)

Brian Hugh Warner is better known as his stage persona **Marilyn Manson**. Manson was created to pass the message of Warner's music because he had noticed that in order to make people listen to a person in a certain way the person needs to look in a certain way. For Warner performing as Manson is not limited only to being on the stage but also extends to the interviews. Warner has mentioned that for him separating his private self from his public self, Manson, and switching between those

two is very difficult. According to Warner's presumptions, he is performing all the time. (TV total, [n.d.]

### **3.2.2 Expectations About an Artist's Brand**

**The audience** forms its opinion about an artist's personality mainly according to the image the media presents. However, as the audience wishes authenticity from the artist, the public image should not differ greatly from the person off stage. Thus, the artist's image should not be fully designed by marketers but be based on the true personality of the artist. In addition, the audience appreciates the fact that the artist is able to be open, to "put him-/herself out there". An interesting point is that the audience wants an artist who is an ordinary and humble person and who does not feel superior to others but still is slightly mythic, as well as possesses some undefined "star quality" in order to be interesting enough to follow. The most difficult characteristic to define is charisma. It can be seen as self-confidence, presence, capability of making the audience experience different emotions and passion for the artist's own work. (Kainulainen, 2004, 31)

The appearance of the artist is not a priority to the audience, albeit the artist's own style and neat looks are appreciated while performing. Choosing the clothing according to the event is important, it shows that the artist values and respects the audience by dressing up in an appropriate fashion. The artist's personality must be considered when choosing the right outfit, as the looks need not only fit to the occasion but also to the artist's image. (Kainulainen, 2004, 36)

**From the artist's** point of view the artist should be true to him-/herself as well as true to the audience, and not to make an effort of being something he/she is not. The artists must be the same person on and off stage, furthermore, the artist needs to act naturally both privately and in public. The artist ought to meet the audience's expectations, and that is why the artist's image should not differ much from the authentic personality so that the audience would not be disappointed. The artist must be easy to approach for the audience, and yet, "a star" and not a wall flower. The artists know that in order to consider and respect the audience, they need to take care of their appearance. The audience notices the polished look because after all, the audience prefers to watch a performer dressed up neatly. The clothing is also



a big part of the image of an artist as well as the performance. (Kainulainen, 2004, 32)

**From the manager's** point of view an artist should have charisma and personality that stands out, the personality comes before any musical skills. Nevertheless, possessing some basic technical skills is recommended. What matters is the way in which the artist reaches the audience and catches its attention as well as the atmosphere the artist manages to develop around him/her and, moreover, the capability of making people feel. The key to success is to listen to the audience's wishes and to meet their needs by offering them what they want. However, offering the audience something unexpected aids maintaining its interest. The artist should have strong a contact to the audience as well as to the fellow musicians. The artist should not be left in-to the shadows by his/her marketing, and in everything else that happens around the artist, the artist should be the main aspect of the act. (Kainulainen, 2004, 32)

### **3.3 Previous Research**

On the global level branding is a very popular topic of commercial publications. Nevertheless, the number of academic studies concerning only artist branding is quite limited. Most commonly branding is covered within marketing publications, which means that the viewpoint is on selling a product not a person. Furthermore, very little research has been conducting on the attitudes and necessity of artist branding.

The most important studies for this thesis were the theses of Kainulainen (2004) and Tähtinen (2010) as well as Haaranen (2005). Kainulainen's thesis focused on finding the answer to the question 'What is a good schlager singer like?' from three different perspectives: the artist's, the audience's and management's. The research for Kaninulainen's thesis was conducted by interviewing people during music festivals.

Tähtinen (2010) explored the Finnish music industry. He studied artist branding in two Finnish independent record labels. The study was conducted while Tähinen was personally observing the everyday life in the two companies. As his research

methods Tähtinen used interviews. Haaranen (2005) also studied artist branding in the Finnish music industry, but in the major labels and the focus was on marketing.

Apart from the Finnish studies, there is a study made by McBride and Muller (2008) called Meet The Millennials: Fans, Brands and Cultural Communities. The paper includes many views of artist branding and how it appears in the music industry. McBride is the CEO of Nettwerk Music Group and Muller works at a strategic consultancy company called TAG Strategic.

## 4 METHODOLOGY

After familiarising with the available sources, it became clear that the most productive and reliable way of gaining the required information was to conduct interviews. Moreover, when considering the revelation of the dominating attitudes towards branding within the industry, interviewing was the only possible method as they cannot be found in the related literature.

The interviewees were chosen based on their own experience in the music industry, and their relating educational background as well as on the grounds of their personal interest in the subject. In order to gain a full picture, the interviewees were selected to represent different sides of the music business: the audience, the artists and the management. Thus, a qualitative research method was considered to be the best for the empirical part of the inquiry.

The interviews were conducted by using email questionnaires. The usage of email was noticed to be the most effective way of communication due to the distance, different time zones and the busy schedules of the interviewees. Having the answers in a written form also enabled re-reading them which allowed the answers to be treated in a proper manner. The employed interview method was a structured open-ended questionnaire, because there is always a possibility with fixed or multiple choice questions that the interviewees cannot express themselves clearly and accurately. Although the questionnaire was structured, having it in email enabled the interviewees to answer the questions in their own desired order which meant that the interview could also be regarded as thematic. The email form also permitted the interviewees to modify the answers several times and within a longer time period unlike in face-to-face interview situations.

## 5 INTERVIEWS

### 5.1 Interview Structure

As the chosen interviewees were from different sides of the industry with different backgrounds, not all the posed questions were the same. However, the thematic structure of the interviews was identical. The primary theme of the inquiry was branding, and each of the questions attempted to discover the necessity of it as well as the attitude of the interviewee towards it. The interviewees were asked about how an artist can draw attention, about positive and negative sides of branding, stage personas and about marketing an artist, as branding is mostly conducted for marketing purposes.

The structure of the interviews was divided into four different themes:

1. How to draw attention
2. Should an artist have a brand
3. Perceptions of stage personas
4. How to market an artist

The answers were divided into different themes with key a point approach, which means that the analysis is not based on single words but the main idea of the answer which can be summarised into a few of words. Then after this open coding and axial coding were conducted, meaning that the themes were classified into higher abstract level categories. The third phase was to discover the relations between the different categories. The final object of the analysis was to discover the importance between the relations of the categories on which to base a theory. Therefore, the theory created is called a grounded theory as it was built on the material.

The language used was mainly English, because each of the interviewees felt comfortable with communicating with it and capable of expressing themselves with it. However, if a need occurred for using Finnish for explaining and clarifying the answers, it was perfectly possible and acceptable. The transcribed answers can be found in appendix 2.

## 5.2 Interviewees

The first interviewee was Emmi Leppänen representing the audience's opinion. Leppänen is a long-term fan of Japanese music and spends a lot of time and money on following her favourite artists. Leppänen travels on a regular basis to Japan and to other countries to attend the concerts. Leppänen has studied Japanese as well as Asian culture and music industry.

Jonas Aaltio is a lead singer of Newdeadline. Aaltio represents the artist's voice in the research. Aaltio's band has gained a stable fan base not only in Finland but also abroad by exploiting the Do It Yourself (DIY) methods without outsourced branding or managing assistance. Aaltio has several years of experience of working as a musician and building up a career in the music business, as well as drawing attention, performances and fans for the band while not forgetting the overall marketing of the band.

Ville Leppänen works as the CEO of The Animal Farm, a London based music company, which offers services such as record producing, artist management and label running. Leppänen has a history as a song writer, as a member of a punk band and as a producer. He has a long experience of the industry and interacts with music industry professionals and beginner musicians on a daily basis. Currently there are over forty artists working with the company.

Linda Lundberg has studied in the Degree Programme in Music and Media Management and interned at The Animal Farm. Currently she works as Administrative Assistant at Music Expo Norway situated in Oslo and working with artists daily. Lundberg possesses both experiences of working in the music industry as well as the related theoretical and practical educational background.

## 6 FINDINGS

### 6.1 How to Draw Attention

An artist has an opportunity to stand out from the others, if the music appeals to the audience. Moreover, the artist's music has to differ from that of others and to be recognisable in order to draw attention. The image of the artist should be carefully considered as the audience forms its opinion not only based on the music but also based to the appearance of the artist. Additionally, appearing on the pages of different publications arouses attention. It also seems that publicity is what matters, not so much whether the rumours surrounding the artist are positive or negative. If the news about the artist is sufficiently interesting, the audience may read it which, in turn, might lead them to seek the artist's music. However, regardless of the publicity around the artist, the key factor is that the artist stays honest to him-/herself and is willing to pour his/her heart into the work. Being original and being able to stand behind the music is what allows long lasting careers to be born.

According to Emmi Leppänen, there is a variety of ways how an artist can catch the audience's attention. Music itself is one of the most important ways of arousing interest. If one hears an interesting piece of music which stands out in a public place such as a shopping centre, it is likely that the song is searched from the Internet afterwards. Another way to gain attention apart from the music is to gain access to the pages of one of the gossip magazines. If the news concerning the artist manages to be intriguing enough, it may result in a desire to familiarise with the artist's work. The news can be either negative or positive, the key is that it needs to be "catchy" so as to make a person read it through. Moreover, Leppänen continues, the word of mouth is a very effective way of marketing a new artist.

Emmi Leppänen explains how it is important to pay attention to the visual side of the artist. It is one of the biggest factors in gaining the attention. However, it is not only the appearance of the artist that matters because also the visual marketing material plays a major part. The posters should be designed carefully with consideration of how the different parts, the colours and the text are placed. If the visual marketing material does not appeal to the audience, they might not pay attention to the artist regardless of how good the music is.

In his interview Jonas Aaltio stated that if an artist does everything in the chosen way, he/she has better chances to attract attention when compared to other artists who might be similar. Eventually, reaching fame requires faith, luck and knowledge of the current issues in the business. It all begins with following the way which feels right to follow, whether it means staying in the underground genre or selling oneself to mainstream channels. If the chosen path feels right, it is easy for the artist to be extremely honest about themselves and have the opportunity to build something far bigger and long lasting than when trying something half-hearted.

## **6.2 Branding**

According to each of the interviewees, branding was seen mainly as a positive factor. For example, Emmi Leppänen thinks that branding helps the artist to draw attention and might facilitate increasing the fan base and gaining success. The artist's brand must be suitable and fit to his/her. A brand which is created and has no characteristics of the artist's real authentic self is experienced fake and unappealing. This, in turn, might work as an impediment for seeking new fans. It is expected that the brand of the artist develops, changes and is up dated. The artist's brand is accepted if the artist accepts it and is able to stand behind it. However, the decision of the need for branding should come from the artist rather than from a record label.

Moreover, according to Leppänen, branding is experienced as a good way to attract attention, to gain new fans and success for new-comers as well as already established artists. However, if the audience feels that the brand no longer fits the artist's real personality and is just made up, it sheds a negative light on the artist. From the audience's point of view the artist's brand should develop, change and be updated as well as be reinforced with time. Artist branding does not influence the authenticity of the artist in the eyes of the audience, if the artist is able to stand behind it and accept it. Different boy bands and girl bands made by the record labels are experienced false.

Aaltio states that if the artist feels that there is a need for branding and that branding could aid the artist to achieve the goals set, then branding could be an option. However, the need of branding should be decided by the artist. Sometimes after the branding is executed, the goals are affected and maybe even forgotten, nevertheless,

whether to go for branding or not, the decision should come from the artist.

Branding has its advantages because it offers new tools for creating shows and music, allows new ways of expressing the art and the artists, reaches the audience in a different manner and offers continuity to the artist as well as generates revenues. However, it also has its disadvantages as it might decrease the artist's creativity as well as flexibility, originality and credibility. In addition, it might cause difficulties for the artist to stay true to him-/herself.

According to Aaltio, there is a possibility that branding might affect the artist's authenticity. He sees branding as an outside force influencing the artist, meaning that the artist no longer has all the decision power in his/her own hands. This may lead to decreased authenticity when the artist becomes a mirror that reflects what is desired. Nonetheless, this is not the case every time as branding consists of numerous factors. Eventually, Aaltio sees that the aim of branding is to create point of view from which the artist is perceived. If branding is done, for example, to increase the artist's authenticity, it might prove to be extremely beneficial to the artist's image.

According to Ville Leppänen, an artist should be branded because the brand is what others feel about the artist's product. In addition, the brand should be understood within the context of what the artist is. This is how the brand does not compromise the artist's authenticity. The brand of an artist is built on the basis of his/her popular songs and recordings of the songs, successful live performances, attractive appearance and an interesting story behind the artist. All the previously mentioned factors make the artist more interesting to the audience, and combined they also define how the audience feels about the artist. Without a strong brand there is little context around the art, it is about having a context and "...a vibe, without them a song is just a song".

Lundberg thinks that at the same time as the **artist** is trying to become noticed, he/she **becomes branded**. Artists have certain ways in which they represent themselves, in other words, how they act and look. Moreover, when an artist sells the merchandise and the products have the artist's name on them, the artist is selling the brand. According to Lundberg, there are various types of artists: some of



them concentrate mainly on their art and may require only slight branding. Then there are “the show artists”, who aim to create a concept, a product or a brand, around them. This is something that would sell outside of music market, in addition to distributing their music. The show artists, such as Lady Gaga and Justin Bieber, have a great deal more related to their image than just their music. Hence, there are artists who succeed with their music and artist who succeed because of their brand. Neither one is the wrong approach, there is a market place for both, and both types can still have great music.

Lundberg also states that it is hard to avoid branding to some extent as it appears everywhere. The level of branding depends on the goals of the artists. In other words, they have to decide if they want to be remembered for their music or costumes. Branding has both advantages and disadvantages because artists can easily become labelled with their brand, which can have a negative effect on their personal life. An artist will be remembered for his/her brand not only during the musical career but the rest of the artist’s life. Artist can be easily judged by their past. However Lundberg sees that it can be viewed as both positive and negative depending on the goals of the artist because it does not matter whether people speak negatively or positively about the artist. What matters according to Lundberg is that “...at least they are talking, which means that the business flows, and moreover, an interesting brand brings in money”. Furthermore, the main aspect is that a good brand means that the artist has a strong personal ‘thing’ that only the artist is known for.

### **6.3 Stage Personas**

There are different opinions about creating a stage persona for an artist. According to Emmi Leppänen, a stage persona should be with an artist right from the beginning of the artist’s career so that it becomes accepted as a part of the artist. If a stage persona is developed in the middle of an artist’s career, it might irritate and confuse the audience. However, if there is a good explanation for creating a stage persona at a later point of an artist’s career, such as drawing borders to separate personal life and public life, it might become accepted which means that the artist does not necessarily end up losing fans.

Quite in the contrary, Aaltio thinks that creating a stage persona during an artist's mid-career might provide inspiration and brand new view points for the artist for creating new music. Stage personas are usually seen as functional tools for artists, if they aid the artists to "loosen up in their skin" while performing. In addition, if an artist experiences that a stage persona could provide new meanings for performances which the artist could not provide to the audience as him-/herself. Moreover, stage personas are used as tools for delivering specific messages when an artist believes that nothing else could reach the audience in a desired way and present the message.

According to Ville Leppänen, it is probably true that every artist has a public persona. The personas are created mixing real and imagined characteristics of an artist as well as exaggerating artist's personal traits. Performing on the stage is a hard work and an artist must be comfortable and relaxed while being on the stage in order to perform well and discovering the artist's public persona facilitates that.

Lundberg states that creating a stage persona for an artist, especially for extremely popular artists, is understandable. Stage personas might help artists to separate their personal life from their public life. Moreover, some artists appear to be different people while they perform on stage than they are privately. Hence, a stage persona helps an artist to relax while performing on stage. Lundberg also thinks that it might be easier to some artist to face the audience if they pretend to be someone else, but that if it works depends on the artist.

#### **6.4 Marketing**

When combining the answers of each of the interviewees for the question 'What is the best way of market an artist?', the answer is that at first, an artist's strengths should be found. In other words, what does the artist do better than anyone other artist or what is that the artist has than the other artists do not possess. According to Aaltio, the second step is to emphasise that specific character which separates the artist from others or to practice that unique skill the artist solely possesses so much that it becomes competitive. It does not matter whether "the thing" is pretty eyes or extraordinary guitar playing skills, it must be ensured that the audience notices it.

The character or the skills that differentiate an artist from other artists can be used as a basis for the marketing strategy.

Emmi Leppänen explains that the traditional media: radio, press and TV, is still experienced very effective tool for reaching audience. However, marketing should not be everything for everyone but something for everyone meaning that after deciding on the artist's desired image, the right audience to which the artist's marketing will be targeted should be considered as carefully as suitable marketing tools and channels. According to Leppänen, the Internet has become one of the most effective marketing channels as it reaches a great number of people. Especially social media platforms are experienced to have high influence on their users as the world of mouth is one of the most powerful ways of marketing. Furthermore, an artist is experienced to have credibility when a person recommends him/her to his/her friends. For that reason it is not only highly effective way of marketing but also affordable for an artist to have people to share his/her material on social media platforms

Aaltio states that the best way to market an artist is to find skills which the artist masters. Then the skills need to be optimised into a level which is competitive and comparable to the other artist but still separates the artist from the competitors by uniqueness. The skills can be used as a base for building a strong marketing strategy. Every artist has strengths and weaknesses, in addition the little areas of expertise are the ones to differentiate. According says that " if the artist sucks, he/she should try to suck the most, if the artist is a good lyricist, he/she should be the best one, if the artist has pretty eyes, he/she must make sure that everyone sees them, using these nuances as basis for well executed marketing, can provide the needed edge".

Ville Leppänen explains that the difficulty about making living with arts is that an artist needs to "put him-/herself out there" in order to make anything of value. Moreover, dealing with inevitable rejection is a very personal process. Therefore, the best way to market an artist is to encourage him/her to write extraordinary songs and make splendid recordings.

## **7 DISCUSSION**

The purpose of this thesis was to discover the necessity of artist branding and examine the current dominating attitudes within the music industry about branding, furthermore, if an artist should be branded. In order to be as comprehensive as possible, views from the different sides were of business needed. The audience's point of view grew to be very important as in every business, it is not all about creating and selling products but of knowing how the audience sees the product, moreover, how they feel and think about it.

However, there is not business between a management and the audience if there is not an artist. That is the reason why the artist's opinion had a significant role in this study. It is important to know how artists perceive and experience branding, after all, the artist is the one to be branded. Therefore, knowing how artists think of how branding would influence to the artist's career, facilitates the decision making process when considering the possible need for it.

As the management usually is the party taking care of the business, its opinion is important if an artist wants to succeed. The management possess knowledge of how the business works as well as how to take full advantage of the characteristic or the skill which separates the artist from others. Often times the management is capable of viewing the full picture of what needs to be done at the same time when considering details and the long term influence of actions taken on the artist's career.

### **7.1 Theory and Reality**

Most of the studies focus on building and managing a brand, leaving the reason for branding and its effects on an artist's career to very narrow consideration.

Furthermore, the number of similar academic studies is very limited and the amount of studies addressing the necessity and influence of branding is small. It is as important to know if an artist should be branded or could he/she do without it.

Both the theory and the interviews support the fact that branding can be beneficial to an artist's career. Even though, the audience appreciates authenticity of an artist, it also expect s some polishing to be done to the artist's appearance as it shows

respect towards the audience. This itself is a form of branding. Therefore, it seems that an artist cannot avoid branding because at the moment the artist's name is written in a specific manner the artist has a brand. Moreover, artists have a certain way of behaving or moving which can be regarded as their trademarks, brands. Furthermore, brands can be built on some of the artist's physical features. For example Justin Bieber's hairdo was his trademark at the beginning of his career which is the lowest level on brand positioning, meaning that the brand is based on some of the artist attributes or abilities.

According to both, the theory and the interviews, the brand must develop in unison with the artist, in other words, brands require management. For instance, when Bieber needed more grownup image the hairdo changed. The brand can also be developed through multibranding, meaning that products or services apart from music can be joined under an artist's name, such as a fragrance or a clothing line as long as the new product fits to the artist's image.

In every case, it must be kept in mind that if a brand is not carefully managed it might have severe consequences. For example, a name of an artist may be too similar to some other artist's name and cause confusion. In addition, multibranding may result as confusion if a brand extension is not suitable regarding the artist's image. Especially sponsorships as well as endorsement deals require careful deliberation so that negative context and associations could be avoided. Nevertheless, not only forces influencing outside may effect in an undesirable manner to an artist's image but if the brand is not suitable for the artist and he/she is not able to adapt to it and it seems too made up and does not appear believable.

Therefore, based on previously mentioned findings, it can be stated that branding, when carefully built and managed, offers added value to the audience as branding brings more depth to an artist's works and the music is no longer solely music, it has a deeper meaning. However, the audience is not the only party profiting from branding, it offers tools for the artist to create and offer meaningful experience to the audience. Additionally, branding facilitates the marketing process of an artist which benefits the management. Briefly, a strong brand results as long term revenues.

## **7.2 Conclusions**

Branding is widely exploited in the music industry and the common perception is positive. It can be said that an artist cannot avoid some level of branding. However, an artist does not necessarily need outsourced assistance to conduct branding. Branding occurs somewhat automatically along an artist's overall image with or without further marketing. A brand is built on the artist's attributes and is something that only the artist is uniquely known for. People have many options to choose from today, that is why they need to be offered more than just music. People are not only looking for a product, in this context an artist or music. They evaluate what the product can offer to them. In case of music business, the music itself is only a part of the deal, the whole package is about being able to deliver experience for the audience and branding adds value around the artist and music.

## **7.3 Limitations**

This thesis explored the utility and necessity of artist branding in the music industry from three different viewpoints, the audience's, artist's and management's. Nevertheless, when generalising the result, the limited number of the interviewees must be taken into consideration. In this study there were four people representing three different groups of people.

Moreover, the fact that each of the interviewees operate within the territory of Europe may have influenced to their answers as the character of music business varies regionally, UK has the biggest markets in Europe but it still differs significantly from the markets in USA, Latin America, Africa and Asia. Therefore, the results may not be applicable or be valid in different areas.

## **7.4 Suggestion for Future Research**

This research studied the utility of branding through experiences and added value. Moreover, the focus was on how people feel about branding and perceive it. This study could have been done by considering how profitable branding is financially through case studies or by resolving whether artists with outsourced branding are more successful than artists favouring DIY-methods.

Furthermore, having more people to be interviewed would enable this kind of study to be generalised on wider scale. Additionally, to obtain several people from one area would increase the comparability. In addition, expanding the research area to the previously mentioned districts would make a quite inclusive study and produce more reliable results.

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## APPENDIX 1

### Artist Introduction

This section will introduce all the artists used in the examples or appearing in other ways in the dissertation. The aim is to familiarise the reader with the artists so that understanding the topics and theory facilitates. There can be found six different well known people from music industry, them being Lady Gaga, Marilyn Manson, Simon Cowell, Beyoncé Knowels, Britney Spears and Michael Jackson.

**Lady Gaga** is an American singer/songwriter. Gaga's success begun when she released her first studio album *The Fame* in 2008. The album sold over 15 million copies worldwide. Gaga made history with her third studio album which first single release became the fastest selling single in history to reach sales of one million copies. Apart from the music Lady Gaga is well known trend setter. Gaga has also considered to be the seventh in the list of the world's most powerful women. (Ladygaga.com)

**Marilyn Manson** a.k.a Brian Hugh Warner is an American musician and actor who became famous due to his anti-Christian messages in the songs. Before Mason begun to make music, he was an entertainment journalist working for a local magazine in Florida. Manson is well known from his original style: he often wears a stylised or decorated contact lens in one eye, wears heavy make-up and having bizarre music videos. (IMDb.com)

**Simon Cowell** is known to be a judge in different music competition shows such as UK's Pop Idol, American Idol and X-Factor. Cowell is known for being brutally honest with his feedback. Before his TV career Cowell worked as A&R representative at EMI. In 2007 Cowell was ranked to be the 6<sup>th</sup> on the list of most powerful people in the world. (IMDb.com)

**Beyoncé Knowels** has done and still continues to do a remarkable career as a singer and as a songwriter. Knowels started her career 2009 when a girl group Destiny's Child was formed. Later on Destiny's Child became the top-selling female group of all time. Knowels' first solo album was launched in 2003 and simultaneously reached the number one place of the charts in US and in UK. Knowels became the first

African-American woman ever to take the ASCAP the PopSongwriter of the year. Apart from the music Knowels has starred in a couple of different films. (Beyonceonline.com)

**Michael Jackson** started his career as a singer at the age of six first performing with his brothers in Jackson 5. In the 80's Jackson was already a well selling solo artist and still today continues to one of the most selling artists in the history and is often referred as the King of Pop. Jackson is also known for having had a rare skin disorder which effects to the skin's colour pigmentation. Jackson died in 2009 for cardiac arrest. The cause of the arrest was over dozing of drugs given to him. (IMDb.com)

**Justin Bieber** is a Canadian singer/songwriter. He participated in the talent show at the age of 12. His mother posted the performance in to YouTube. The performance gained many views resulting as a record deal for Bieber. (IMDb.com)

## APPENDIX 2

### Interview Answers

#### *Emmi Leppänen*

There are a variety of ways how the **artist can catch the audience's attention**. Music itself is one of the most important ways of arouse interest. If one hears an interesting piece of music which stands out in a public place such as a shopping centre, it is likely that the song is searched from Internet afterwards. Another way to get attention apart from the music is to get to the pages of some gossip magazine. If the news concerning of the artist manage to be intriguing enough, it may result in getting familiar with the artist's work. The news can be either negative or positive, the key is that it needs to be catchy to make a person to read it through. Moreover, the word of mouth is very effective way of marketing a new artist. It is also very important to pay attention to the visual side of the artist. It is one of the biggest factors that can get the attention. However, it is not only the appearance of the artist that matters, also the visual marketing material plays a huge part. The posters should be thought carefully, how the different parts are placed, the colours and the text. If the visual marketing material does not appeal to the audience they might not pay attention to the artist regardless of how good the music is.

Social media has become a major platform **where people find music**. It works as a jungle drum when people recommend artists for their friends and share music videos and songs as well as new of artists. Internet itself is a huge marketing tool. Many times the audience finds a new artist by coming across to him/her accidentally on some website of noticing a banner or some other kind of advert on a web page. Nonetheless, the more traditional media like radio, magazines and TV still play strong part, and channels as The Voice and different music publications are mentioned to be important players when looking for new music. However, it is said that some platforms have too many ads that cause overload which results in people accidentally ignoring potentially good artists.

**Branding** is experienced as a good way to get attention, to gain new fans and success for new comers as well as already established artists. However, if the audience feels

that the branding is no longer fitting to the artist's real personality and is just made up and over the top it brings a negative light to the artist. From the audience's point of view the artist's brand should develop, change and be updated as well as reinforce within time. Artist branding does not influence to the authenticity of the artist in the eyes of the audience, in case that the artist is able to stand behind it and accepts it. Different boy bands and girl bands made by the record labels are experienced false. Stage personas are also accepted among the audience. However, the acceptance comes with a couple of conditions.

The **stage persona** should exist right from the beginning of the artist's career, the audience accepts the stage persona at the same time with the artist, and the stage persona should fit to the artist's real character. If the artist suddenly in the middle of his/her career decides to create a stage persona it may irritate and confuse the audience so much that they might stop supporting the artist which would have a crucial influence to the artist's career. Nevertheless, if there is a good explanation for the stage persona, such as the artist developing clear borders for separating the personal life from the public, the stage persona might be accepted.

In the audience's opinion, the social media is the **best way to market** the artist. It gives the artist credibility if one of the social media users recommends the artist. However, it is acknowledged that there is not only a one perfect way to market all the artists. It is suggested that at first the artist should have a clear brand and an image, then decide what type of audience the artist is going to be aimed at and then choose the most suitable marketing channels. It should be something to everyone, not everything to everyone. In other words, targeting the artist to the right kind of audience is the key to the success.

### ***Jonas Aaltio***

If the artist pours everything into the chosen way, he/she has better chances to **stand out** when compared to other artists who might be similar. Eventually standing out requires faith, luck and knowledge of current issues of the business. It all begins with following the way which feels right to follow, whether it means staying an underground act or selling oneself to mainstream channels. If it feels right, one is always the most honest to oneself and has the opportunity to build something far

bigger and long lasting than if the artist tried something but did not put his/her heart into it.

In case the artist feels there is a need for **branding**, that branding could aid the artist to achieve the goals set, then the branding could be an option, however, the need of branding should be decided by the artist. Sometimes after the branding is executed, the goals are affected and maybe even forgotten, nevertheless, whether to go for branding or not, the decision should come from the artist. Branding has its pros, it offers new tools for creating shows and music, it allows new ways of expressing the art and the artists, it reaches the audience in a different manner, and it offers continuity to the artist as well as brings in revenues. However, it has its cons also, it might decrease the creativity of the artist, as well as flexibility, originality and credibility, and it might cause difficulties for the artist to stay true to him-/herself. There exists a possibility that the branding might effect to the artist's authenticity. Branding is an outside force which is influencing to the artist, meaning the artist no longer has all the decision power in his/her own hands. This may lead to decreased authenticity when the artist becomes a mirror that reflects what is desired. Nonetheless, this is not the case every time as branding consists of numerous factors. Eventually, the aim of branding is to create the view in which the artist is perceived. If the branding is done to increase the artist's authenticity among other things, it might prove to be the best thing ever. Also, the need for management should be decided by the artist. If the management cannot bring in anything useful in order to get closer to the goals, then the artist should do it by him-/herself. However, seeking outside help might, relieve stress and be good for the artist's psyche not having to do everything by him-/herself.

Having a **stage persona** is a right thing to do if the artist feels that performing as a different persona or character provides means to deliver something more than performing as him-/herself. This is a case of changing the original context in which the artist has been operating. Often stage personas are used as a medium to deliver a message which could not be delivered by anything else. Creating this kind of music or other context which makes the artist feel need to be someone else in order to fully deliver the right message, is a highly interesting phenomenon and it can be a

fresh angle to derive inspiration from for an artist who has been creating material for a longer period of time.

**The best way to market** the artist is to find characteristics that the artist does best. Then honing them into a level which is competitive and using them as a base for creating marketing. Everyone has their strengths and the little areas of expertise are the ones to differentiate. If the artist sucks, he/she should try to suck the most, if the artist is a good lyricist, he/she should be the best one, if the artist has pretty eyes, he/she must make sure that everyone sees them, using these nuances as basis for well executed marketing, can provide the needed edge.

### ***Ville Leppänen***

The **artist should be branded** because the brand is what others feel about the artist's product. In addition, the brand should be understood within the context of what the artist is then the brand does not compromise the artist's authenticity. The brand of the artist is built from great songs and recordings of the songs, great live performances, great look and a great story behind the artist. All the previously mentioned factors make the artist more interesting to the audience, they combined also define how the audience feels about the artist. Without a strong brand there is not much context around the art, it is about having a context and a vibe, without them a song is just a song.

It is probably true that every artist has some kind of **public persona**. The personas are created mixing real and imagined as well as exaggerated personal traits. Performing on the stage is a hard work and the artist must get loose in his/her skin in order to perform well and finding the artist's persona aids in that.

The difficult thing about making living with arts is that the artist needs to put him-/herself out there in order to make anything of value, and dealing with inevitable rejection is very personal process. So, the best way of market the artist is to encourage the artist to write great songs and to make great recordings.

### ***Linda Lundberg***

At the same time the **artist** tries to become noticed, he/she **gets branded**. The artist has a certain way he/she represents him-/herself, in other words, how the artist acts

and looks. Moreover, when the artist sells the merchandise and the products have the artist's name on them, the artist is selling the brand. There exist various types of artists, some of them concentrate mainly to their art, the music and may require only a bit of branding. Then there are "the show artists", the show artist aim to create a concept around them, a product, a brand, something which would sell out side of music market, in addition to distribute their music. The show artist such as Lady Gaga and Justin Bieber, have a lot more going around them than just their music. So, there are artist that succeed with their music and artist who succeed because of their brand. Neither one is a wrong approach, there is a market place for both, and both types can still have great music. Furthermore, it is hard to avoid branding to some extent as it appears everywhere. The level of branding depends of the goals of the artist, what the artist wants to be remembered for, the music or the costumes. Branding, has it pros and cons, the artist can be easily become labelled with his/her brand which can have a negative effect to the artist personal life. The artist will be remembered from his/her brand not only during the musical career but the rest of the artist's life. The artist can be easily judged by his/her past. However, it can be viewed as both, positive or negative, depending on the goals of the artist. Whether, people speak negative or positive about the artist, at least they are talking, which means that the business flows, moreover, an interesting brand brings in money. Not forgetting the main thing, having a good brand means the artist has a strong personal 'thing' that only the artist is known for. Additionally, branding does not necessarily compromise the authenticity of the artist, it depends on what the artist is looking for, and does the artist want to have a big show with stage personas or does the artist want to emphasise some of his/her features. Moreover, the best way to market the artist is to find a right target market as well as suitable marketing tools.

Creating a **stage persona** for the artist, especially when talking about major acts, is understandable. The stage personas might help the artist to separate the personal life from the public life. Also, some artists seem to be different people while performing. So, the stage persona helps the artist to loosen up on the stage. It might be easier to some artist to face the audience if they pretend to be someone else. But then again, it depends on the artist.