



strategy + support for
musicians creating change

Air Traffic Control

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SPOTLIGHT: Call To Action Music Videos

Current research shows that the numbers of Americans who are watching and sharing videos online via sites like YouTube and Vimeo has more than doubled over the last 5 years to a whopping 71 percent¹. Watching videos online now outranks social networking, online banking and other activities as the most frequent online activity.

As new features and capabilities are being added to video sharing sites including the ability to sell music, merch, tickets and more, it is clear the potential impact call to action music videos can have in raising awareness, generating funds or promoting action for a cause or issue an artist cares about--while at the same time promoting an artist's music and brand. What follows is a snapshot of some of the ways artists are using call-to-action music videos to raise awareness and monetary funds for an issue or organization.

Taking Action

“Neda” by Airborne Toxic Event (<http://bit.ly/vNaXAp>): An animated depiction of the last minutes of the life of the Iranian martyr known as Neda that ends with a call to action asking viewers to join in support of human rights by uploading a photo of themselves holding a sign that says “I am Neda” or by purchasing the video on iTunes to benefit Amnesty International: <http://idj.to/AmnestyNeda>.

“Amongst the Waves” by Pearl Jam (<http://bit.ly/rQVdBX>) The video features live footage with mixed media of the ocean, surfers and marine life and ends with clips of the recent oil spills, the message “only one ocean for all of us” and a link to pearljam.com/oceans. The dedicated “Oceans” page on the band’s website features over 14 different ways fans can take action on the issue.

“Mosh” by Eminem (<http://bit.ly/tOksRD>): An animated pro-vote video portraying Eminem as a powerful, rebellious figure who by using his voice and music has the ability to mobilize people who are fed up with the president. With his following uniformly dressed in dark hoodies, the group looks to be storming toward the White House but actually end up signing up to vote. The call to action is to vote and have your voice be heard.

“Make it Stop (September's Children)” by Rise Against (<http://bit.ly/vKB5ol>): The anti-bullying message video follows three different youth as they experience bullying. As these youth contemplate suicide in response, the video transitions to support videos from the popular “It Gets Better” Campaign that gives them hope and a reason to persevere. The video ends with a call to spread the word or take the pledge at the It Gets Better Project's website: itgetsbetter.org. Both the band and the organization also put out a joint press release about the video.

¹ <http://www.hypebot.com/hypebot/2011/09/who-is-watching-video-online-infographic.html>

“Body” by Thao and the Get Down Stay Down & directed by Dianna Agron of Glee (<http://bit.ly/uV7peY>): Released as an exclusive premiere on Oxfam America’s website and YouTube channel, the video starts with Thao and Dianna discussing their support of Oxfam and asking fans to click the link to take action in the fight against climate change, poverty and injustice. At the end of the video the url www.oxfamamerica.org/thao is displayed on the screen along with the call to add your voice and a note that reads “ten years is too long to address climate change.”

Raising Funds

“Just Can’t Get Enough” by The Black Eyed Peas (<http://bit.ly/ulJi33>): The video opens with a message of support for victims of the Japan Earthquake and Pacific Tsunami that reads, "This video was filmed in Japan one week before the earthquake. Our thoughts and prayers go out to all the people of Japan. We love you." It then closes with a link to the Red Cross donation page along with instructions on how to text a donation to the Red Cross.

“Help Is On Its Way” by Rise Against (<http://bit.ly/scxbRf>): Inspired by McIlrath’s time with ATC in New Orleans, the video depicts a dramatic and compelling narrative of Hurricane Katrina through the eyes of a family. The chorus of the song sings “Help is on its way” and in the last verse the band adds, “But it never came.” The final screen of the video encourages fans to contribute by saying “Send Your Help. www.riseagainst.com/activism”, which links to the donation page of local New Orleans organizations.

“White Knuckles” by OK Go (<http://bit.ly/uTTcwq>): This video features the band members using props and working with rescue dogs to do elaborate tricks. At the end of the video reads a message: “These dogs were lucky enough to find loving homes, but many others are still waiting. Help us support animal rescue efforts at the ASPCA. www.okgo.net/dogs” where fans are asked to give donations to the ASPCA.

Raising Awareness

“Immigraniada” by Gogol Bordello (<http://bit.ly/u3FEWf>): This video chronicles the day-to-day life of an immigrant as experienced by the eight members of this multi-cultural rock band and speaks to the double standards that immigration policies have. The bands members hail from Ukraine, Russia, Israel, China, Ethiopia, Ecuador and Trinidad, so the topic of immigration is one with which they're familiar.

“Coyote Song” by Bright Eyes (<http://bit.ly/qSVmpV>): This song was written exclusively for the Sound Strike campaign, a coalition of artists who boycotted Arizona after it passed the controversial SB 1070 bill. The video was filmed on the border in El Paso, TX, and tells the story of “two lovers separated by conditions that are out of their control, namely the government’s immigration policy.”

“Far Away” by Marsha Ambrosius (<http://vevo.ly/fTYjRf>): An emotional video that personalizes an array of hot-button topics, including bullying, suicide and gay rights. The video ends with a note about hate/bullying and suicide, asking for tolerance to empower people like her friend (featured in the video) who are struggling with abusive situations and includes a link and phone number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

“Tomorrow’s Industry” by Dropkick Murphys (<http://bit.ly/unqLr3>): The video was created in support of a local hospital worker’s campaign to join Local 1199 of the Service Employees International Union and delivers a timely social justice message supporting blue collar and frontline workers in Boston’s largest industry – healthcare. The video opens with a statement about the current situation and includes info on the issue throughout. The band members also wear SEIU t-shirts and a joint press release was issued to announce the release.

“Punch Drunk Grinning Soul” by Flogging Molly (<http://bit.ly/vzKnBN>): The video begins with a public service announcement for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) narrated by singer Dave King and Mike Regan, a distinguished Vietnam war veteran and the father of the band's fiddle player Bridget Regan. The video includes phone numbers and links to info on PTSD from the National Institute of Mental Health and the National Suicide Prevention Hotline.

“Mammas Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up to be Cowboys” by Karen O. of the Yeah Yeah Yeahs (<http://bit.ly/voZLkX>): Commissioned by The Chipotle Cultivate Foundation, the short film/video seeks to raise awareness about the economic hardships that family farmers face in the increasingly industrialized American agriculture system. The video ends with a call to action to participate in Chipotle's fundraiser for The Cultivate Foundation and FarmAid.

“I Get By” by Everlast (<http://bit.ly/riPloO>): By grafitti-bombing the city in posters, cleverly altering street signs, and using installation pieces that provide relevant commentary on the state of the American working class (a hydraulic shopping cart and a coin-operated horse ride modified to look like an oil pump), Everlast and his ski-masked crew address America’s current economic turmoil head-on à la political street artists such as Banksy and Shepard Fairey.

Air Traffic Control (ATC) exists to help musicians play an effective, unique and vital role in the promotion of social justice. Musicians and managers established ATC five years ago to assemble an experienced and trusted team of leaders, resources and tools that would help them to create more effective social change collaborations with each other and with social justice organizations. As a result, ATC became an artists’ air traffic control—one that develops capacity, efficiency, and coordination to produce stronger and more creative social change partnerships. For more information, please go to www.atctower.net