

## How they made it: True Stories of how Music's Biggest Stars went from Start to Stardom!

In past decades, record companies were talent-development resources. Instead, record labels bank on bands and artists who have already proven their worth.

Growing up in a major recording capital is no guarantee of success, but it is clearly a bonus.

Those who weren't blessed to be born in major music capitals, and didn't relocate to them, share an ability to tap into a local scene that blossoms into national, and international notoriety.

The momentum gained from independent, Do-It-Yourself ventures propels artists forward.

All of the profile subjects in this book experienced a breakthrough as a result of crucial timing.

A strong live show was key to the signing of many artists.

One fundamental truth unites every single subject in this book: they all continue to create enduring music that touches souls.

It's important, whatever path you're on, that you be who you are as much as possible.

The best advice to any aspiring musician is to just get out there and play. So many people say, 'You know, if I just lived in L.A. or something, I would be discovered,' but it's not true. It's really just getting out there. The more you do it, you get better and better at it every day. It's not who you know, it's just working hard and showing people what you can do in any situation you can find.

People are going to call you names because you're aggressive in what you want. But you can't be weak in this industry, because people will see that and they will run all over you. -Missy Elliot

The public wants to hear something that moves them and is emotional.

There are certain rules you can follow for the business, but as far as the creative side and just being yourself onstage, everyone is just doing their own thing. There is no right or wrong way to do it.

The road to success in the music business isn't all ups. It's up and downs. You've got to experiment and find the right chemistry- with labels, other song-writers. -The Neptunes

It took ten or eleven years to really have success. It was about the journey. A lot of great songs came out of that time...being excited and up and down and every other emotion you can fathom. -Phil Vassar

If you can go and fill a small coffee-house and get \$500 at the end of the night, you've made it. You never know when times are going to change, but as long as you can get a gig, it's the way it should be. -Rufus Wainwright

Each man creates his own destiny. It's up to you what you're going to do with your life. It's not up to anybody else. -Gretchen Wilson

### **CONSISTENCIES FOUND AMONGST THEIR PATH TO STARDOM**

#### **Toured**

- Built a grassroots following by endless touring
- Toured relentlessly, crashing on fans' floors
- Developed a fan base through touring
- Toured regionally to develop a fan base

#### **Performed a lot**

- Began performing at local events
- Connected with live audiences (colleges)
- Performed at every possible venue
- Built up his crowd through regular coffeehouse performances
- Traveled to perform for free in parking lots at DMB shows
- Began performing local
- Made her name doing local gigs
- Created their own performance venues
- Showcased nearly 40 times for labels
- Opened a show for a major touring artist
- Showcased at SXSW

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Developed a formidable live show  
Turned shows into events...

### Relocated

Relocated to LA  
Relocated to NYC and became part of a scene  
Relocated to a larger community and progressively larger audiences  
Moved to a city with a built-in college audience  
relocated to LA  
Relocated to Manhattan  
Relocated to Manhattan while still in her mid-teens  
Grew up in a music capital, LA  
Lived near a major music capital, LA  
Relocated to a city with a vibrant music scene  
Moved from her hometown to Toronto, a recording capital, then to LA  
Hails from a music center, Philadelphia  
Moved to Vancouver, a recording capital  
Was raised across the river from a major music capital  
Came from a secondary music capital, Philadelphia  
Moved to Nashville to pursue music  
Relocated to Nashville  
Moved to Nashville

### X factors

- **Never compromised** for the sake of safety... •had over **100 songs ready** to roll.
- Developed their own **mailing list** and promotional plan.
- came up in a college town.
- Signed to **an indie**... •was signed on the strength of a new musical trend.
- Built a strong national following via **the internet**... •was championed by a **manager**.
- launched their own company... •created her own musical style... •took control over her own recordings.
- Enlisted a street team to amplify grassroots support... •Used the Internet to win fans worldwide.
- Made alliances outside their local community... •Reinvented themselves with new musical reference points.
- Garnered local **radio support**... •Developed a style in tune with the times and with his own life's development.
- Endured rounds of rejection before garnering label interest... •signed to a **major for larger distribution**.
- Made an early ally with a powerful **music publisher**... •Organized around social-action issues...
- Was signed to a small indie label. •Exemplified a new **positive direction** in rap...
- Were signed to a label with a specific demographic... •was signed on the basis of a well-produced demo

### Strategic

Hooked up with management and producers  
Hooked up with two soon-to-be-prominent scene-makers  
Hooked up with a manager who hung in for seven years prior to her breakthrough  
Hooked up with a fledgling record label  
Hooked up with a rising producer  
Were together almost 15 years before achieving a breakthrough  
Were part of a larger cultural entity

Colleges are the world to come. You have a lot of interns that work at record companies that end up being vice president, heads of A&R or heads of marketing someday. If you want to do anything, go to colleges. That's where the hunger is.