CASE STUDY

TRAVIS SCOTT

Travis Scott photo by Daniel Sannwald

HIT-MAKING ARTIST, PRODUCER, AND SONGWRITER TRAVIS SCOTT IS RENOWNED FOR PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES OF CREATIVITY AND TAPPING INTO THE ZEITGEIST.

However, with the world locked down due to the pandemic, the visionary artist wanted to help his fans – if only just for a small moment – escape the strains born by a global pandemic by giving them a freeing and unforgettable experience in the virtual world.

So, he and his record label, Epic Records, part of Sony Music Entertainment and the wider Sony family, worked on bringing his vision to life.

"At Epic we're guided by the creators who influence and drive cultural moments and that includes leaders in technology, film, fashion, gaming, art, and content development, like Travis Scott," says Sylvia Rhone, Chairwoman and CEO, Epic Records. "We have the benefit of plugging into the broader Sony system and giving our artists endless opportunities, so they can create for any audience they want to reach.

"When Travis came to us with a vision of constructing a virtual concert, unbound by the rules of physics and science, where he could give fans a truly immersive experience, we knew we could help him make it happen. Despite being a global star he is still reaching new milestones. He is a creative genius and also a huge gamer, so it was very authentic and natural for him to be partnered with Epic Games to hold his concert on *Fortnite*."

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On the evening of 23rd April 2020, the combined creative effort of Travis Scott, Epic Records and *Fortnite*'s developers – titled *Astronomical* – was revealed to the world.

"It was an intense and ethereal experience for virtual concertgoers", says Rhone, "and shows just how in tune Travis Scott and the developers were from the offset, which led to its huge success.

"When Travis and the developers were collaborating, he could speak their language and respect their artistic process that went into each aspect of his creation. Everyone involved understood that making a connection between Travis's die-hard fans and *Fortnite* gamers presented a unique opportunity."

The concert was record setting, drawing 12.3 million concurrent players at its peak and a total 28 million unique players from around the globe who joined across five airings of *Astronomical*. Including repeat viewers, fans showed up for the event a total of 46 million times and of the five tracks performed within the concert game only one was new. Overall streams after the game were 372 million globally.

"Only a third of *Fortnite* gamers before the partnership said they were Travis Scott fans. However, it was all amplified and scaled by the fact we were in the midst of a pandemic and so much of the world was stuck at home. The launch of this activation became a family experience. I had parents calling me about the game because they had never heard of *Fortnite* before, so I do think this has now opened the door more permanently to new opportunities in the virtual world."

The effect outside of *Fortnite* on Travis Scott's popularity and entire catalogue was huge. *Sicko Mode* engagement increased 195% worldwide and the *Astroworld* album went back into the top ten. *Goosebumps* from *Birds in the Trap Sing McKnight*, an album that is four years old, increased 228% and his social buzz and engagement rose dramatically, too.

"We definitely exposed him to new audiences, and these are fans that will now stick with him forever. This was truly global and fueled a massive global following for him, in just three days. *Astronomical* illustrates the power of a true brand partnership that is an extension of both the game makers and the artist. That unique intersection was really the true success of the activation. But the only reason it worked was because it was authentic for him to do. He has clearly emerged as one of the leaders in this space as he keeps music in the centre of everything he does, effortlessly integrating his brand into any corner of culture he desires."