



Noga Erez photo by Dudi Hasson

↓ CASE STUDY

NOGA EREZ

Discussing how independent German label City Slang broke Israeli artist Noga Erez, Founder & CEO Christof Ellinghaus mentions “five years of not sleeping”, “a white knuckle ride” and “an unhealthy degree of expenditure”.

He also leaves you in no doubt that he enjoyed every minute and considers the entire process more than worth it.

Similarly, there is something of a reality gap when he talks of Noga’s subsequent success by saying “somehow it all fell together” – the throwaway phrase covering for five years of commitment and passion, slog and strategy, but most of all persistent evangelising based on belief in an artist.

It is also true, however, that, as with many A&R success stories, this one starts with a bit of luck. Ellinghaus recalls, “We were looking at another band, Son Lux, and while we were looking at some of their videos, we came across one by someone we’d never heard of, Noga Erez, doing one of their songs, *Weapons*.”

“We just fell for her and fell in love with her voice straight away. She played piano, she played in some jazz band, but she was also doing this beautiful, dark, Electro Pop. We flew to Israel, we met her, we saw a show and we did the deal.”

City Slang’s first move was to bring Noga to Europe to play shows, securing tour support slots and shows in major capitals such as London, Paris, Amsterdam and Berlin. “That gained more ground than streaming”, says Ellinghaus, with the major DSPs not that interested at first.

“We actually spent way too much”, admits Ellinghaus, “but we just thought this artist had everything: the talent, the songs, the looks, the attitude. She needs to be noticed, she has to connect... it didn’t connect!” Noga’s first album, *Off The Radar* [2017] garnered critical praise, but made little commercial impact.

Ironically, whilst the major streaming platforms still weren’t on board, it was the placement of a major Apple Music sync that helped sustain the campaign. “We took that money and we made more videos, played more shows, just continually re-invested.”

The turnaround started as Noga embarked on the recording of her second album, *Kids* [2021]. Ellinghaus says, “We did something we don’t usually do: as soon as she gave us a song, we made a video and we put it out. We just kept feeding content out there.

“Sometimes that’s what the job is. You have to shout, you have to create opportunities and stories. The radio is ignoring you, the streaming services are ignoring you, but you build a case that is undeniable.

“At the same time, we realised that we needed to be patient. We’d been too eager. It was for a good reason, because we were so passionate about the music and we believed so much in Noga, but we accepted that we would have to wait.

“In fact, that wait, and the fact that we kept supporting her, kept putting out everything she did, I think, gave her the confidence to explore her creativity even further, and that was what helped really find her own sound and her own voice.”



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CHRISTOF ELLINGHAUS
Founder & CEO, City Slang

Fuelled by the flow of content (and partly by the COVID pandemic), City Slang switched the marketing emphasis to the digital sphere and got traction on TikTok and Instagram. There was a live-streamed concert that built the momentum and, eventually, a slot on Jimmy Kimmel was secured, while Billie Eilish sang her praises on her Apple Music radio show.

Noga’s second album, *Kids*, came out in 2021 and, as Ellinghaus puts it, “from that moment on, somehow it fell together.”

He continues, “We finally got support from streaming services, Britney Spears posted a clip of her dancing to one of Noga’s tracks, it was a whole series of things just fell into place.”

There has since been a Missy Elliot collaboration on the remix of Noga’s song, *Nails*, and a support slot with Florence and the Machine at Madison Square Garden.

Both were at least partly made possible by Slang City doing a deal with Atlantic Records, who will distribute future releases. Ellinghaus says, “We’re at the stage where we need bigger guns and more connections. That’s what working with Atlantic can bring to the project and it will be interesting to see where we can take it from here collectively.”