

The global eye needs a local body: Music Cities Network continues its co-creation programme for European Hip Hop and R&B artists with second out of four co-creation events hosted IRL Manchester during 07.-13.03.2022.

Press Release: 09.03.2022

The Link Up Euro Connection (LEC) is a 7-month programme of European co-creation & co-production between up to 48 participants, collaborating in 4 co-creation-weeks & performing at festivals in Aarhus, Berlin, Groningen & Manchester. The activities will result in a joint vision: the LEC Manual - On how to facilitate the development & professionalization of emerging artists in Europe. The 12 participants will co-create during the second LEC event hosted from Manchester during March 7. till 13. 2022.

Hip Hop and R&B culture is a global movement that encompasses a wide range of expressions from music, theater, dance, art to fashion, politics & business. Municipalities acknowledge that Hip Hop and R&B culture is undeniably intertwined with youth culture, but struggle to adapt and facilitate suitable programs for talent development and professionalization.

LEC's co-creation and co-production camps are organized by the transnationally acting Music Cities Network in partnership with the Hamburg Music Business Association in collaboration with the following partners:

- Noordstaat in Groningen, The Netherlands (January 28-30, 2022, digitally)
- Manchester Music City in collaboration with Brighter Sound and Contact, England (7-13 March 2022)
- Promus and Institute for X in Aarhus during the SPOT Festival, Denmark (3.-7. May 2022)
- Musicboard Berlin and Alvozay Collective during Fête de La Musique in Berlin, Germany (18-22 June 2022)

LEC has targets in three different fields:

- **Cultural:** Consolidate the understanding of the new European Urban youth culture and explore common transnational values, similarities and differences.
- **Economic:** Pave the way for new and innovative ways for artists to improve creatively. Professionalize and grow their network in Europe's Music Business.
- **Policy:** Design practicable solutions to bridge the gap between the informal methods of Urban artists and the formal methods of city leaders and music policy makers.

All results will be merged into the **LEC Manual** - On How to facilitate the Development and Professionalization of young Hip Hop artists in Europe targeted to municipalities, policy makers and project leaders to better understand their local Hip Hop scenes.

After the European Music Business Task Force (EMBTF), LEC is the second project by the MCN getting European recognition. The aims of both projects are to reflect on and **create future-proof frames for music within cities**. MCN is excited to contribute to **facilitating sustainable change** within the European music industry with these projects in the future.

Debra King (Director Brighter Sound, Chair of the Board Music Cities Network e.V.): "We are delighted to facilitate this new co-creation programme for aspiring European Hip Hop and R&B artists in Manchester. From a music cities perspective, we see a great value in supporting local scenes of music makers who enrich the cultural diversity in our cities. Through fostering transnational connections between the participating artists and on the policy level, this project will improve the coalescence of a European Music Ecosystem."

Sam Malik (Contact, local host LEC x Manchester): "We are honoured and super excited to be the local host for this amazing project. We are thankful to be able to bring these aspiring talents together at Contact and create new synergies and shape the future of the European Music Industry."

Please learn more about the exciting 12 artists, which have been selected out of 100 applications below. The participants for the two following LECs will be announced soon.

LEC is organized by the **transnationally acting** Music Cities Network in partnership with the Hamburg Music Business Association in collaboration with Gemeente Groningen, Noordstaat, Brighter Sound, Concept, Promus, Institute for X, MusicBoard Berlin, Alvozay and is co-funded by Creative Europe. After the European Music Business Task Force (EMBTF), LEC is the second project by the MCN, which is getting European recognition.

The Music Cities Network is a worldwide network between music cities dedicated to improving communication, collaboration, business, arts & policies. The MCN recognises that music is an important pillar of transnational culture, a universal art, and industry that strengthens social cohesion, local economies, and character. Therefore, the MCN shapes artist-, business- and city development through joint projects, research, publications and networking activities. The MCN shares strategies, policies and insights to inspire and develop our cities as music cities in all dimensions between our musical scene, economy, politics and tourism. The Network was initiated in 2016 and legally established in 2021. Founding members are Aarhus, Bergen, Berlin, Hamburg, Gothenburg, Groningen, Manchester, Nantes, Reykjavik & Sydney.



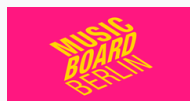
For more exchange, get in touch with [Lena Ingwersen](#), LEC Project Lead and Managing Director of the Music Cities Network.

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AGGI DiX (Aarhus, DK)



Aggi is much about the empowerment of yourself. Being a young artist she experiments with the many sides of what life has to offer and expresses it through her music. With a contemporary hip hop/neo soul approach, she mixes strong melodies with intricate rhyme schemes on top of modern drum loops, shit is smooth, shit is bangin'. With Aggi Dix's debut EP early 2021 and her latest follow up single 'God Was a Black Lady', she premiered on BBC6/Gilles Peterson and received airplay on the likes of Worldwide FM, NTS radio, Pinãta Radio (FR), P3 and P6 radio in Denmark. and managed to turn heads

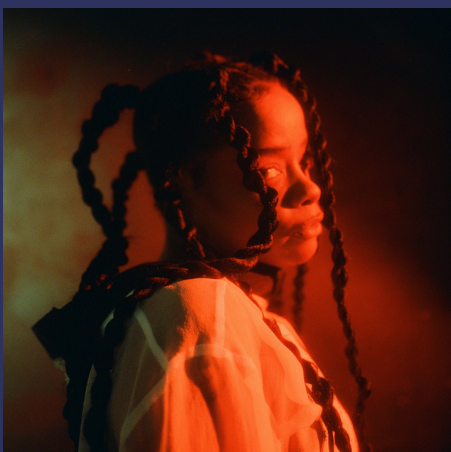


Frederik Locht (Aarhus, DK)



Frederik has been writing and co-producing songs since 2017. His songs are inspired by his own life and the life of the people around him, with the overall theme being love - often heartbreak. Making music and writing songs has been extremely therapeutic for him, and it has really helped him through some of the toughest times in his life. It has made Frederik more open as a person, and made him able to talk about some of the things that people usually wouldn't talk about.

Throughout the process he's gotten to know himself a lot better, expressing his thoughts and sensitive emotions in a song helped him grow as an artist. Frederik learned that being pushed outside your comfort-zone is not always a bad thing as it can actually give you that last push you never really knew you needed. Other than all that, he loves making music, and hopes to be able to live off of it some day.



Kya Kyani (Berlin, D)



Kya Kyani is a Berlin-based music artist. Being born in the Netherlands and having Surinamese roots, Kya grew up as an (Orthodox) Rastafarian being foremostly inspired by Reggae. At a young age she formed a gospel choir with her sisters and frequently performed to be able to do what she loved most. Coming of age and being exposed to a greater scale of genres, she was able to organically grow in her taste and style. Wherever there was an opportunity, Kya took her moment to bring her diversity and creativity to the table. "Although I'm a singer and songwriter, as a creative, I'm not confined to only that. My artistry stands for much more. I started writing at a very young age, even before I realised I had a voice. I used to write stories about everything I imagined doing when I grew up. Energy would flow through me and express itself through verse and rhyme."



Joash Gill (Manchester, UK)



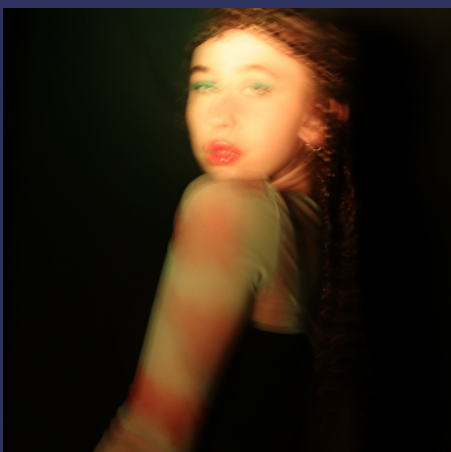
Joash is a 19-year-old producer and singer-songwriter, born and raised in Manchester and passionate about fusing cultures using his music. Over the past two years, he's been making South-Asian-influenced Hip Hop and RnB music and received regular radio play on BBC Asian Network and Radio 1. His most recent music video has reached over 70 thousand YouTube views and is still growing. Joash participated in one of Brighter Sounds previous projects 'Breaking the silence' in 2018 and recently completed an artist development course led by Sam Malik at Contact in Manchester; through which he's released his debut EP. Joash is an experienced performer and has opened for international acts such as Zack Knight and Imran Khan.



Obey Reilly (Groningen, NL)



Obey Reilly is an upcoming producer / songwriter from Groningen, but was born on an island called Curacao. Obey Reilly started making music at the age of 11 in his home studio using Adobe 1.5. Ten years later he started making beats on FL STUDIO 11. After a year he joined the collective DarkNimbuz. Obey Reilly's unique style of production varies between mellow R & B and heavy Trap based Dums & 808's that gives an eccentric experience while listening to his work. He worked mainly with local and international artists from France, Denmark, US. He would like to expand his network and make good music with different artists from all over the world. LEC could be a great way to achieve this goal.



Maaïke Maria (Groningen, NL)



Maaïke Maria, originally from the Island of Terschelling, is the kind of artist that disarms you while at the same time challenges you emotionally. She focuses on what freedom of creativity means to her and expresses this with love through her music, body and visuals. In a mix of Alternative R&B, Electronic and Ambient music, MAAIKE MARIA creates a contrast between the natural and unnatural to translate her story, vision and feelings. The 20-year-old strives to be a voice of recognition in her journey to self acceptance and empowerment. Having had a difficult time with her health growing up, she knows what it means to find light in the midst of chaos and hopes to inspire her listeners to become the person of their dreams no matter what. Angelic and sensual yet groundbreaking, MAAIKE MARIA is the new and intriguing artist we didn't know we needed. Being coached by NOORDSTAAT Groningen, the emerging artist works towards the release of her first singles and visual EP in 2022.



Jadi D (Groningen, NL)



Jadi D combines Hip-Hop, Pop, & Rap together in cross-overs that she makes between the genres Hip-Hop & R&B. Her angelic singing voice isn't a reason for her not to spit some straight up bars as well. This singing MC will give you music that will make you want to dance your ass off! In 2021 Jadi D is participating in Eurosonic's 'Hit the North Talent Traject' in which she proves that she's well deserving claiming her spot on the Eurosonic Noorderslag festival 2022.

This year Jadi D's first R&B track got discovered by radio station FunX which gave her a platform as Artist of the Month, her release '5:55' got into Spotify's Slow Jamz Playlist and next to that she gave a very energetic show during the Popronde Tour 2021, which she will end with performing in the Melkweg, Amsterdam.



Alexander Moto (Groningen, NL)



For Alexander Moto, his artistry resolves around channeling his creativity in the most honest and transparent way, alongside perfecting his craft.

He makes sharp, self-reflective and often somewhat cryptic (Dutch) hiphop, in which he connects with his listeners by making them feel, think, reflect and learn themselves. After three EP's (2019 - 2020), Alexander Moto has released his debut album Radiostilte op Iselmar on the last day of 2020, with more albums well underway. Brought up in Frisia (NL), he has lived in the city of Groningen for four years now, imbedding himself in the Northern Netherlands rap scene during the course of these years. This scene also includes the city of Leeuwarden and other outskirts of the North. He has established a thorough network of musical cooperation and friendships. Alexander Moto strives to connect likewise with artists, rappers and writers from the other European cities in this program.



Tobi Bob Snoid (Berlin, D)



Tobi Bob Snoid is a 27 years old musician from Berlin. He grew up with hip hop and r&b music on one hand and classical music and cello lessons on the other hand. Later he studied songwriting and music production in Groningen where he got into electronic music and the live performance aspect of it.

Before covid Tobi was mainly focusing on playing live techno in clubs in Europe as "Klankveld". However, during the lockdown Tobi went back to his musical roots and linked up with local rappers and produced four albums with them, of which two are already released. Tobi's broad musical background helps him capture the musical idea of the artists he works with.



Riya (Manchester, UK)



After amassing close to half a million views, BBC Introducing Artist RIYA's debut 'Look My Way' has won the top 9% ISM song writing spot from over 30,000 applications, attracting the attention of numerous TV and Radio stations. With incredible producing skills, Riya draws upon her Bollywood influences both in her music and image as an artist, utilising rhythmic tabla percussion within her infectious dance-pop sound. Jack-of-all-trades, the young songstress writes, produces and independently releases all her original work. Scouted to perform live for the infamous Sofar Sounds, she's performed prestigious venues including XOYO, Troxy London, Tate Modern & The Macron Stadium. Set to release her debut EP this year, Riya has a bright future ahead.



Rosie Charles (Manchester, UK)



Rosie is a 21-year-old singer/ songwriter and producer from London, based in Manchester. She has been writing music for 10 years and has taught herself to play the Guitar, Piano, Bass, Drums, Ukulele & to produce music. Her music is heavily inspired by Jazz, and her biggest inspirations are Amy Winehouse and Erykah Badu. 6 months ago she independently released debut single 'lonely' which Rosie wrote and produced in her bedroom. The song now has over 135k streams and was BBC Radio London's track of the week! Rosie has also built a following of 45k on TikTok by posting music related content. Over the last year, she was scouted by BBC and MTV through her account and was asked to perform live on both TV shows where both performances received national press coverage. Rosie has also played solo sets at Latitude, Into the wild festival and will be playing Secret sessions festival next year. She also recently performed at Scala in London and performs regularly at multiple venues in Manchester.



Thor Knudsen (Aarhus, DK)



Thor is a 23 year old producer from Aarhus (DK), who mostly works within the genres of Hip Hop and a bit of R&B and House. He has worked with a variety of talented and professional artists, such as Omar, Josva and Artigeardit. Since Thor became active around 2016, he plus an abundance of up-n-coming local artists and friends started out mostly making beats. Since then he's learned to record and mix vocals to a professional extent. His goal is to be able to live off his music career within the next year.