

BEHIND THE LENS

# HIT VISION

BY TATIANA CIRISANO

This year, **Dua Lipa** hit the mainstream, **Drake** returned to reign atop the charts and **BTS** broke a K-pop record all thanks in part to standout music videos that boosted their already growing hits. Lipa's breakup anthem "New Rules" was transformed into an empowering ode to putting yourself first; Drake's summer jam "God's Plan" revealed the rapper's more benevolent side as he doled out his \$1 million video budget to unsuspecting fans and charities; and BTS treated its fan army to some of its most ambitious choreography to date. These three rising directors helped rake in the views — and, in the process, helmed their first music clips for songs that reached the top 10 of the Billboard Hot 100.



◀ **KARENA EVANS**  
**Drake, "God's Plan," No. 1**  
The 22-year-old **Director X** protégée, who created tropics-inspired videos for R&B artists like **SZA** ("Garden") and **SiR** ("D'Evils"), was handpicked by Drake for "God's Plan" and the female-celebrity-filled clip for his follow-up, "Nice for What," both of which topped the Hot 100. (Evans also has been spotted on a shoot for another Hot 100 No. 1, the rapper's "In My Feelings," though she won't confirm that she worked on the yet-to-be-released video.) "[Drake] is so brilliant and creative," says the Toronto native. "It starts from an idea from him, and we build that together."



**YONGSEOK CHOI**  
**BTS, "Fake Love," No. 10**  
Choi, along with his Seoul-based four-member music video directorial collective, is known for creating cinematic, elaborate K-pop videos. They're most famous for their tight-knit creative partnership with BTS, for which Choi, 37, headed up imaginative visuals for "Blood Sweat and Tears," "DNA" and "Fake Love." The lattermost made a historic Hot 100 debut in May at No. 10, the highest-ever position for a South Korean group. "There's an old saying: 'See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil,'" said BTS member **RM** of the "Fake Love" clip's dance routine. "We put that saying in the main part of our choreography [so that it's] more powerful than ever."



◀ **HENRY SCHOLFIELD**  
**Dua Lipa, "New Rules," No. 6**  
The self-taught London director, 37, has filmed dance-heavy visuals for **Stromae** and **AlunaGeorge**. His neon-splashed, tightly choreographed 2017 production for Lipa's "New Rules" made her the youngest female artist to reach 1 billion views on YouTube with a music video. By late January, the song cracked the top 10 of the Hot 100. "We sat around her kitchen table with cups of tea for hours and made up the video," recalls Scholfield, who followed with a monochromatic clip for Lipa's "IDGAF" that same month.

For our list of the 100 greatest music videos of the 21st century and more, go to [Billboard.com](http://Billboard.com).

City Girls' JT (left) and Yung Miami.



## UP NEXT CITY GIRLS

**FROM** Miami  
**AGES** Caresha "Yung Miami" Brownlee, 24; Jatavia "JT" Johnson, 25

**SURPRISE HIT** Yung Miami and JT met in eighth grade through a mutual friend. Hip-hop wasn't their immediate goal. "We just did that 'Fuck That N—a' song, and it took off," says Yung Miami of the in-your-face track, which arrived last December on Quality Control's *Control the Streets Vol 1*. "[Rapping] became important once that got popular."

**FAST FAME** The two, whose labelmates include **Migos** and **Lil Baby**, cemented their up-and-comer status with the debut mixtape *Period*, which trended on Apple Music upon its May release. Then, they hit the mainstream when **Drake** tapped them for backup vocals on his current Billboard Hot 100 No. 1, "In My Feelings." "My son is 5 and he's advanced, so he knows what's going on," says Miami. "He's like, 'Mommy, you got a song with Drake? It's so cute.'"

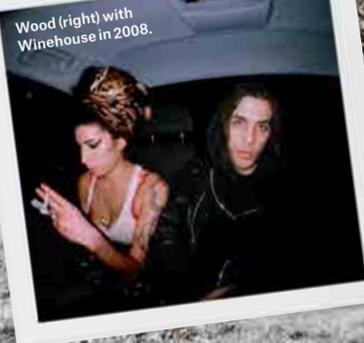
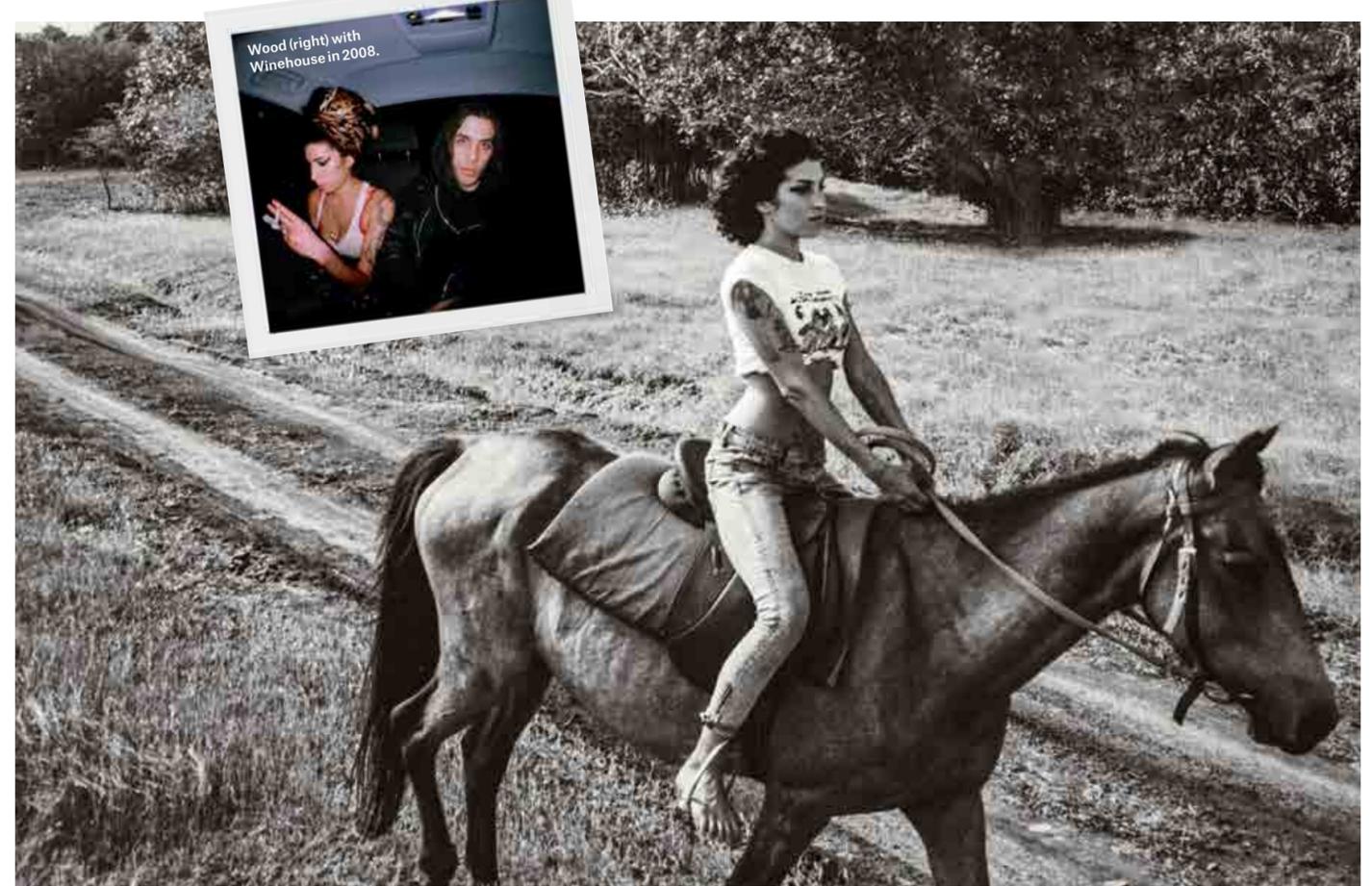
**HISTORY BUFFS** "People like to maintain classiness and carry themselves in a way, so I feel like we're an alter ego for girls," says Miami of the duo's explicit lyrics, reminiscent of those by pioneering female rappers. They've remade **Salt-N-Pepa's** 1986 anthem, "I'll Take Your Man," and will record their own version of **Lil' Kim's** all-female posse track, "Not Tonight (Ladies Night Remix)."

**KEEPING MOMENTUM** Though JT began serving a two-year prison sentence on fraudulent credit card charges in July, Miami will continue solo and plans to tour as City Girls in August and release another mixtape by year's end. Says Miami: "I got to hold it down and keep the City Girls moving." —BIANCA GRACIE

BOOKMARKED

# Amy's Other Side

BY STEVEN J. HOROWITZ



Wood (right) with Winehouse in 2008.

"There was familiarity between us — right off the bat," says photographer **Blake Wood**, recalling when he met **Amy Winehouse** at mutual friend **Kelly Osbourne's** house in 2007. For the next few years, the 33-year-old stuck by Winehouse's side at the height of her fame, capturing a rarely seen angle of the singer beyond the paparazzi's eyes. His candid shots of Winehouse make up the 150-page book *Amy Winehouse* (out Aug. 8 on Taschen America), which he hopes will change the perception that her life was only troubled. "She had so many strengths," says Wood. "I want people to see that light that she was and just let go of the rest."

▶ "We were on our way to this horse trail and waiting for others to come [in St. Lucia in 2009]. She was feeling good and really free. We went down this private path that led to this cove; there was nobody there. It was a favorite place that we loved to go. I think the horses were healing in themselves and symbolized a sense of freedom."

BACKSTORY

## GETTING RICH OFF HOT 100-TYPE BEATS

Three years ago, producer **Taz Taylor** started collaborating with friends he had met online. "I was like, 'Let's build something to take over the internet.' That was the first goal," says the 25-year-old. He didn't take over the web, but he did form his own label, Internet Money, and the group of beatmakers is dominating music-streaming services, producing hits in 2018 for artists like **Juice WRLD**, **Rich the Kid** and the late **XXXTentacion**.

collective's 15 full-time members followed a familiar path to ubiquity, selling "type" beats — instrumentals in the styles of mainstream hip-hop artists — online to aspiring rappers.



The crew's home in the Hollywood Hills.

But they've surged past a sea of competitors, securing credits with **Drake** (*Scorpion's* "Blue Tint," a No. 30 hit on the Billboard Hot 100), **Rich the Kid** ("Plug Walk," No. 13) and **XXXTentacion** (the **Trippie Redd**-assisted "Fuck Love," No. 28). Mira notched a

"We didn't have anything else going for us," says Taylor of the team's grass-roots start. "We were making [\$30,000], \$35,000 a month from selling beats and drum kits. It just worked." In April, Internet Money secured a joint venture with Alamo Records and Interscope Records, and in May, it purchased a new Hollywood Hills mansion. Six hitmakers live there at any given time, and Taylor invested over \$50,000 for an in-house studio. He wants the world to see the family atmosphere he has crafted and hopes to land a reality show on a cable network. "I'm not in this to be a **Metro Boomin'**," he says. "I'm in this more to be a **Jimmy Iovine**." —MICHAEL SAYONARA



Taylor (left) and Mira.

Fronted by Jacksonville, Fla., native Taylor and Virginia-bred **Nick Mira**, 17, the

Hot 100 hit on his own, producing on Juice WRLD's No. 3 hit, "Lucid Dreams."