

Arlo Parks

MA INTERNATIONAL MUSIC
MARKETING

TERM 3: CREATIVE ESSAY

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Arlo Parks is a singer/songwriter and poet based in South London. Her music touches upon many different genres, ranging from Indie Pop and Folk, through to R&B, Nu Jazz and Soul. Her debut album 'Collapsed In Sunbeams' (released on Transgressive Records) was released in 2021 to widespread critical acclaim. The debut managed to climb to number three in the UK album charts, highlighting her strong appeal to not only an Indie/R&B audience but also to the mainstream. Parks' debut was nominated for Album of the Year, alongside her personal nomination for Best New Artist and Best Female Solo Artist at the Brits.

Parks has an eclectic taste in music that spans numerous genres. Parks' influences include Frank Ocean, Elliott Smith, Radiohead, Sufjan Stevens, Phoebe Bridgers and Solange (Fenwick, 2021). She is well liked within the industry which is illustrated by the vast amount of fandom shown by current artists such as Phoebe Bridgers and Glass Animals (Pitchfork, 2021). Parks' popularity stems from her soft, poetic nature, her use of pop cultural references and her ability to create immersive worlds with her lyrics (Pitchfork, 2021). Her expressive lyricism has roots within her passion for poetry and the arts in general.

The structure of this essay shall be as follows; Firstly, the essay shall focus on what Parks is going to release, whilst also looking over her current iconography, branding and general marketing practices from her first album. The essay shall then focus on the three SMART objective that shall run through the entirety of the three-year campaign. Subsequently, the essay shall focus on the new release strategy, touching upon elements of her live tour, assets to support the release and how each of these supports her entire campaign.

It is important to first explain the justification of what is going to be released during the campaign. Every song on Park's album shall each be distinctive and have roots from within a particular genre. Each individual song will take inspiration from a particular artist that has had a distinct influence on Parks' life. These genres shall include but is not exclusive to: Indie, Folk, R&B, Pop, Hip-Hop and Disco. This is reflective of Parks' eclectic music taste, and will also counteract criticisms of her previous album, with claims that it was "relatively one-dimensional."¹ (Aswad, 2021) The justification to release the remixed album in the third year of the campaign that features artists from each respective genre is twofold; firstly, it is widely accepted that "fans always want something new"² (Occhino, 2020), and so offering them entirely new versions of songs they have already grown to love is a great way of captivating and engaging current fans; Secondly, bringing in new artists engages brand new audiences that previously may not have been reached within the niche of

¹ <https://variety.com/2021/music/reviews/arlo-parks-collapsed-in-sunbeams-album-review-1234895758/>

² <https://bandzoogle.com/blog/15-ways-to-get-more-music-fans>

Indie/R&B that Parks usually resides in. For example, bringing in Giggs onto a grime infused track may bring in fans of Grime music that previously may not have engaged with Parks' music. This will be extremely important when trying to expand Parks to brand new audiences, especially audiences based within the US/Australia.

Two clear audiences have been identified for the three-year album campaign. The first is 16/24-year-olds and would be typically described as 'Gen Z' generation. This generation has been summarised as a generation that "grew up with technology, the internet, and social media" alongside being "music-goers...(with) a motivation to contribute to the world and a desire for their own personalized experience"³ (Western Governors University, 2021). With this in mind, Parks' emphatic desire to express her innermost feelings within her lyricism directly appeals to this particular audience.

The other audience that has been chosen for this essay for Arlo Parks is 25- to 40-year-olds. These would typically be identified as YUPPIes and would fall into the category of 'millennials'. According to Indeed Millennials "value meaningful motivation, are free-thinking and creative and have a passion for learning". Parks' lyrics are free thinking, and her creativity is evident in a lot of her lyrics. Parks songs touch upon topics that some may not have thought about before, so this incorporates the idea of 'passion for learning' that Millennials have been identified as having.

Three objectives have been identified for this campaign. The campaign's initial goal will be to get Arlo Parks her first number one album. Her record charted well in the prior campaign; however this was primarily due to PR and digital marketing rather than a live campaign as this occurred during the COVID pandemic. As a result, given this campaign's extended UK/EU and US tour, hitting number one in the UK and gaining placement on the US billboard chart should be a realistic objective of this campaign.

The second objective of the campaign is to consolidate and expand awareness of the Arlo Parks brand among younger audiences in the UK mainstream. Park's most popular platform right now is Instagram. However, this campaign will try to distribute content on numerous platforms that are popular with younger audiences, namely TikTok and Twitch. This will engage her Gen Z audience as previously discussed as they are the demographic that use the platforms the most. A comprehensive social media plan is crucial to achieving success as "social media remains a crucial place to be in the music industry. Not only does this content lead to more interest, but it is also the foundation of finding and keeping long-term fans." (College of Contemporary Music, 2021)

³ <https://www.wgu.edu/blog/who-is-gen-z-how-they-impact-workplace1906.html#close>

The final objective of the campaign is to broaden Arlo Park's fan base in order to raise her brand awareness amongst an older audience within the UK mainstream. The UK mainstream would be defined as "Pop, R&B and Soul, Dance, Rock, Hip Hop and Rap" (Statista, 2021) which is exactly the type of genres that Arlo Parks' album is going to be based upon and feature within the album when she releases it. Currently her fan base is comprised of sixteen- to twenty-four-year-olds, however this objective will aim to target twenty five to forty five year olds.

All of her campaigns will be based on the format of SMART objectives which were originally created by Doran in 1981. SMART objectives are defined as a "form of objective setting which allows managers and employees to create, track and accomplish, short-and-long-term goals" (Clearview, 2020.) The idea behind using SMART objectives is to boost awareness of the Arlo Parks brand and it has been proven by scientific studies that SMART objectives greatly bolster campaigns into higher success rates.

Three playlists have been pinpointed as key to gaining placement. Inside Transgressive there will be a streaming team who will be able to pitch Arlo's latest singles/albums to streaming partners as and when they release the song. This campaign has decided to focus most of its attention to Spotify and will offer them exclusives as a means of championing the platform. The importance of getting streaming platforms on board, and in particular Spotify, is summarised by Buzz Angle Music when they state that the importance of streaming partners is due to "the ease that streaming services provide. Over 28 million unique songs were played compared to the seven million songs that were purchased [in 2016]." Furthermore, "music streaming also makes it easier for us to discover new music and lesser-known artists because anyone can put music onto streaming platforms" (Butler, 2019) which is important for achieving the SMART objective of gaining exposure to a wider, more mainstream audience. Radio targets are also included in the presentation. Alongside streaming partners, gaining listeners through radio would also be a key contributing factor into achieving some of the SMART objectives previously mentioned in this essay. If you gain a prominent position within a particular radio stations playlist, they will spin you on repeat, and thus you are more likely to gain fans, and they are more likely to be redirected towards either listening to your music on streaming platforms or buying your merch, vinyl, cd or any physical products. As Radiomatters have said "Radio plays an important role for the music industry in helping new artists get discovered and established artists remain in the limelight." Furthermore, "49% (of people discover music on) AM/FM or over the air radio" (Radiomatters, 2017) With this campaign aiming to grow a mainstream audience, the radio stations mentioned on the portfolio have been carefully selected. Radio 1 listeners would typically satisfy the SMART objective of gaining a younger, more mainstream audience. Radio 2 may include some of the older Gen Z listeners.

It is important that the campaign features numerous impact points throughout the campaign to make sure that the campaign is sustained and continually going in an 'ebb and flow' movement. It is important that if the campaign starts to dwindle in any particular way that you release a piece of content that will start the fires again and keep the momentum and conversation going around Arlo Parks. With this in mind, this campaign shall utilise impact points that incorporate both physical and digital elements to them as this is key for a modern marketing campaign.

The social media campaign shall be a vital linchpin throughout the entirety of the campaign. As the College Of Contemporary Music state "Building a community of committed listeners and fans is one of the most important parts of establishing a musical act. Social media allows artists to find their audience among each platform's user-base. An audience comes from listeners and viewers who the musician attracts through their content." (College Of Contemporary Music, 2021) As the adage goes, 'content is king' and having invigorating content that is current, fun and inventive is very important for growing a fan base. Considering that "9/10 regular social media users partake in some music related activity" (Oahn, 2019), having a strong presence online has never been more important in a musician's career.

A key part of the social media campaign will be making use of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Tik Toks ads. Targeted ads are crucial as Hootsuite points out when it says that "attracting impressions and engagement". Targeted ads can be based on geographical location, interests, or lookalike ads which are ads that target people that the algorithm thinks will like the content based on their own personal likes. According to Google one of the key benefits of using targeted ads is being able to reach "people who are interested in your products and services..(to) controlling costs and allowing real time updates on how successful each ad has been doing" (Google, 2021)⁴ For example, for achieving one of the key SMART objectives of targeting a younger audience, Tik Tok as a social media platform will be key. As Glenn Ginsburg says "For brands and marketers who want to reach Gen Z audiences, TikTok is rapidly becoming the de-facto platform to build a presence on" (Ginsburg, 2019). Therefore, achieving one of the objectives of trying to increase brand awareness amongst a younger target audience, especially one that is in the US, would be massively benefitted from a strong presence on Tik Tok. Having a strong presence on Tik Tok would then have a knock on effect on the streaming numbers on platforms such as Spotify, Deezer, Amazon and Apple Music, which would in turn satisfy another objective of the campaign in achieving a more mainstream audience.

Another key impact point of the campaign will be the physical product. This campaign shall feature a wide array of products that are available to purchase in order to maximise the awareness

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and organically grow Arlo Parks' fanbase, which strongly contributes towards achieving some of the SMART objectives previously outlined. As mentioned in the portfolio, this campaign shall feature an LP, an LP Boxset, Deluxe CDs, Tape and a Standard CD. This campaign shall also feature an exclusive D2C Indie coloured vinyl that shall be exclusively available to buy at HMV on release day. Also included in the boxset will be exclusive artwork hand drawn by Arlo Parks herself. These exclusive D2C Indie vinyl will come in four different colours. There are numerous decisions behind the physical that require an explanation and rationale. Firstly, the decision to have numerous versions of the album is due to the "growth of importance (of d2c sales of music) for many artists for some time now" (musically, 2018). The decision to have a variety of formats means that they can cater to every type of fan out there. This also plays upon the idea of offering exclusivity to the 'Uber fan' which in turn is based on the idea of scarcity marketing. This idea was put forward by Steenkamp in 2017 when he claimed that scarcity marketing is all about the idea of having "unfulfilled demand in the marketplace" (steenkamp, 2017), allowing the label to charge a premium price for their commodity. This also benefits the entire campaign as a whole as typically older people have more of a disposable income, and are more likely to buy these products. The idea of collectable items typically resonates with those that can afford to buy them.

Another key element of the physical release of Arlo Parks' album is the special edition 'golden ticket' vinyl that will be up for ballot via Arlo Parks' website. This will be sold exclusively through Banquet records and will coincide with Arlo Parks play two tours at Kingston Pryzm. The 'Golden Ticket' vinyl again appeals to the uber fan and will feature handwritten poems by Arlo Parks herself. These will exclusively be sold during the re-worked album in the third year as a means of elongating the campaign and making sure that fans are engaged and offered new products throughout the entirety of the three year campaign.

Another key impact point of the campaign will be Arlo Parks' brand partnership with The Tate Gallery. Brand partnerships are important because they allow you to tap into each other's relative audience without breaking the idea of authenticity which is essential to promoting an artist, especially one of the calibre of Arlo Parks and the nature of her songs and lyrics. As Hootsuite point out, Brand partnerships "enable you to harness the natural credibility of a new audience" (Hootsuite, 2020). The Tate, therefore, would be a suitable Brand Partnership for Arlo Parks as both Arlo Parks and The Tate's interests, audiences and taste co-align. The Tate has been said to be "a modern institution" (The Guardian, 2014) that would directly appeal to the targeted audiences highlighted previously in this essay. A brand partnership with the Tate exposes Arlo's taste for Art and emphasises her role as a modern day artist. Arlo will also design unique artcards that will be sold exclusively at her set at the Tate, which again in turn will appeal to the Uber fan and shall only

be ticketed to those in a ballet on ArloParks.com. Furthermore, the listening parties held at the Tate on release day of both albums (the standard and the remix album later) will contribute to the idea of authenticity. Overall, the Tate is a very public, well known institution in London and directly appeals to the audience that this campaign is trying to target. Therefore, a brand partnership with the Tate would help satisfy appealing to a more mainstream audience, one of the key SMART objectives in this campaign.

Arlo Parks will also partner up with leading charities, namely 'Create' and 'Women's Aid'. Having a partnership with two organisations that are directly related to Arlo Parks would be beneficial in pursuing the goal of achieving authenticity. As Taylor Vinters claims "A partnerships between a brand and charity can be mutually beneficial. They are a great way to promote and raise awareness of a specific cause, and a brand can benefit from better public engagement and higher sales" (Taylor Vinters, 2017)⁵ Thus, having a brand partnership with two great chairites such as 'Create' and 'Women's Aid' is beneficial to everyone. For Arlo Parks, she gets to promote a worthwhile cause, whilst also gaining access to another audience that she may not have had access to before. Furthermore, those that typically follow charities would typically be typecast as those within the demographic that would like Arlo Parks as previously discussed. On the other hand, sales will massively increase as people flock to buy the album as it contributes towards a good cause.

The final impact point, and what can be deemed as 'The Tipping Point' would be the live element of Arlo Parks' campaign. 'The Tipping Point' refers to Malcolm Gladwell who described it as "that magic moment when an idea, trend, or social behaviour crosses a threshold, tips, and spreads like wildfire" (Gladwell, 2000). The live tour will satisfy all of the criteria of the SMART objectives named in the campaign, or more precisely appealing to music fans, drawing in new crowds and also attracting a more mainstream audience as Arlo Parks plays bigger venues. Furthermore, one of the objectives of this campaign was to 'break America' whilst also growing a fanbase in Australia. Thus, going out on a live tour of the US and Australia, alongside promotion on radio stations and general press in each country, will greatly satisfy the objectives of the campaign and grow Arlo's fan base. The size of the venues mentioned in the portfolio are huge and allow many fans to see Arlo Parks play live, a natural strong point of her artistry.

In celebration of the release of her remix album coming out in the third year, Parks shall also go out on a small, intimate gallery tour, dubbed 'Friends of The Tate'. One song shall be recorded from each gig, that will stop off in art museums from around the UK, culminating in the Tate Gallery in London. The entirety of the tour, and all the tours mentioned previously, play upon the notion of

⁵ Taylor vinters brands and charities

the 'experience economy' and directly appeals to the younger target demographic. Going out on tour "drives awareness about a brand and its products and services" whilst also leads to customers to buy merch, cds or any of the LP vinyl boxsets as previously discussed. This idea plays upon the 'Marketing Funnel' and creates a life-long fan out of the customer, thus more likely resulting in the purchasing of items.

Overall, Arlo Parks stands in good stead to press on from her meteoric rise. There is clear scope for delving further into a mainstream audience, and further developing her popularity amongst the two target audiences defined previously. The SMART objectives laid out in this campaign will help her reach these goals, with a strong physical campaign also boosting the objectives being satisfied. The live tour and brand partnerships with The Tate Galleries alongside charities will also help her reach these goals.

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Personal Development Plan

Target	How	Outcome	When By
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Improve my communication skills	Practice running through exactly what I'm going to say in a presentation and then write out notes on what to say in them before the actual presentation. I found it important not to write out all of the words though because then I might trip up and not be a clear communicator.	my ability to communicate both verbally and in my writing has vastly improved since doing the postgraduate.	The end of my postgraduate
Improve my writing ability	Write a foundation and then a development and now a creative assignment	I now feel that I have improved my writing ability.	The end of the postgraduate
Improve my creative ideas	Read a lot of other marketing campaigns	After this project I am now very creative with my ideas.	The end of my postgraduate
Improve my creative skills on canva	Using canva, practice creating one sheets, creating posters, creating logos, developing anything on canva.	I now feel that I have vastly improved my capabilities to really utilise Canva as a tool for creative projects	The end of my postgraduate
Improve my ability to work towards a deadline	Make sure that I carefully plan out when deadlines are, when I think particular pieces of work are going to be finished, what the work will entail, how much work,	I am now more deadline driven and my ability to comprehend how long projects are going to take me. My ability to work out exactly what needs to go in a piece of writing	The end of my postgraduate

	research and preparation I think that its going to take me.	and how long this will take me has massively improved.	
I should take more initiative in my work and rely less on what other people have informed me	By being confident in my own ability and believe that whenever I put my mind to it I can do anything. If I start to believe this I will then believe in myself more and then won't be as worried as getting things wrong and will then take more risks in my work and using my initiative.	Since doing this postgraduate I have managed to be more creative and take my own initiative on projects. This has led me to come up with interesting ideas in my campaigns that I previously would not have thought about.	The end of my postgraduate