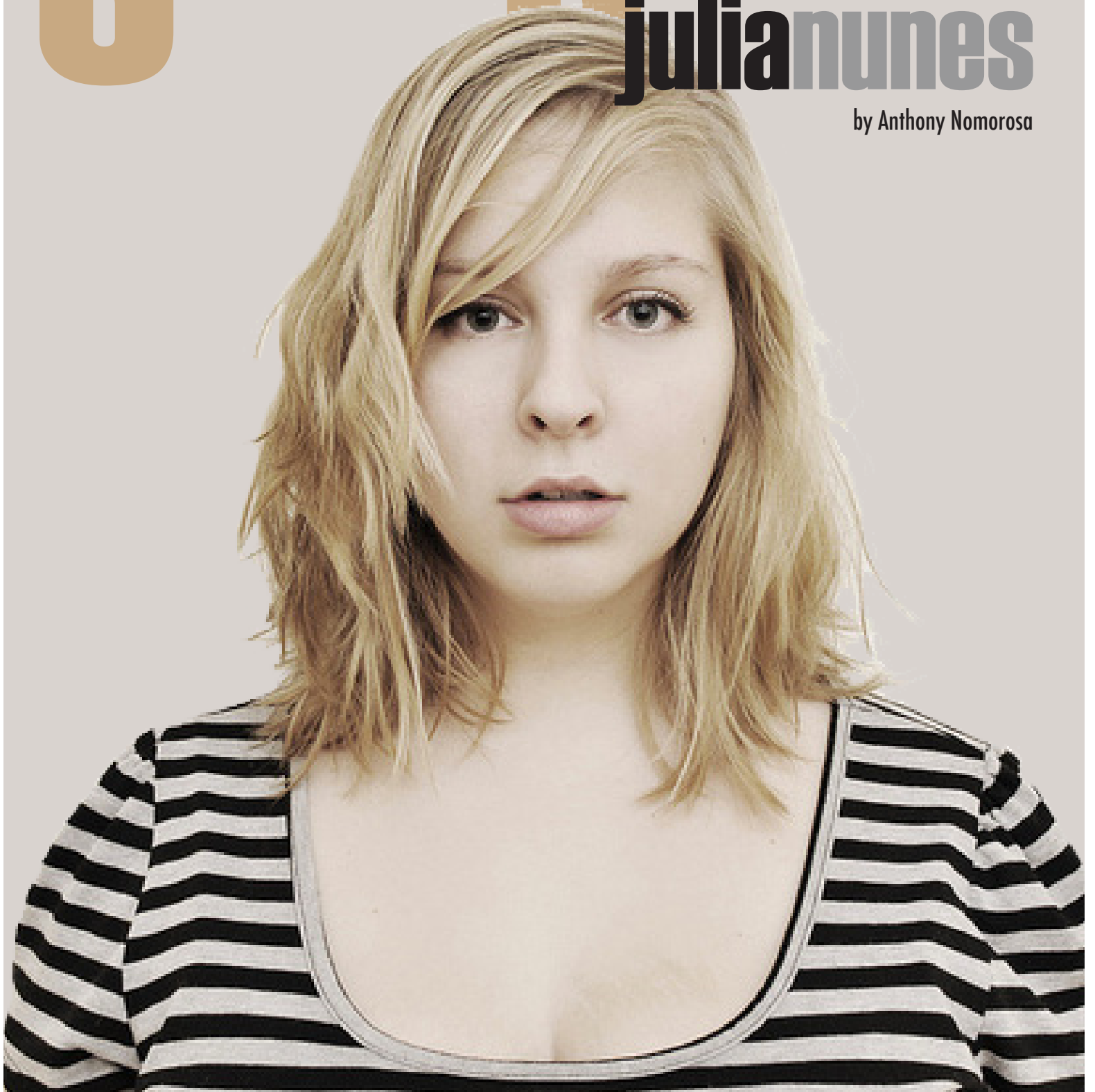


Social Status

julianunes

by Anthony Nomorosa



The Dream

of all true musicians is to be granted the opportunity to share their art and passion with the world. Since the birth of rock ‘n’ roll, the only way to have this chance was through record labels. However, the countless acts that are signed by these labels, only a fraction of artists actually succeed. Record companies bank on the few superstars in order to market them to the public and be able to benefit financially. Unfortunately, the main objective of most record labels is to turn a profit, so the victims of this cutthroat industry are the artists themselves.

With the exception of independent music labels, almost all the means of performance and distribution of the artists are controlled by giant media corporations. Without the “helping hand” of the record companies to give artists a boost in the industry, they were invisible and out of luck – until now. With the rise of social media, independent musicians are

given the ability and opportunity to establish a career and share their passion without the aid of domineering record labels. In the case of one such musician, Julia Nunes has been able to utilize YouTube to achieve that dream.

Julia Nunes’ Internet popularity exploded after being featured on YouTube’s homepage with her acoustic original Into the Sunshine. However, she is best known

for her fun-loving attitude paired with ukulele covers of popular songs, layering multiple harmonies by multi-tracking she edits them into a video. Nunes originally uploaded

“...in 2008 at 19 years old, Julia... was invited to tour with Ben Folds...”

Subscribe this!

Julia Nunes’ YouTube subscribers after shows.

194,829 subscribers

113,604 subscribers

23,661 subscribers

1,000 subscribers

Jan 2008

Apr 2008

Jun 2009

Apr 2011



videos onto YouTube because she wished to avoid sharing her music with her friends. But by 2008 at 19 years old, Nunes, a college student at the time, was contacted by Ben Folds because of her whimsical cover of “Gone” and was invited to tour with him on the East Coast. Shortly afterwards she was invited to play at the Bonaroo music festival two years in a row, performed shows in Western Europe with Greg Holden, and toured with Ben Kweller last fall, and is now currently touring with Ian Axel. Julia Nunes’ follows, fans, and YouTube subscribers alike grow with every show and every collaboration.

In order to record her second album, I Wrote These, Julia enlisted the aid of another pair of YouTube bedroom musicians, Pomplamoose. Pomplamoose, a bastardization of the French word for grapefruit, is made of of two other collaborating YouTube personalities, Nataly Dawn and Jack Conte. Pomplamoose is so pro-

With every tour and collaboration,

Julia Nunes’ fanbase grows.

Julia Nunes rocking the melodica.

One of the many instruments

that she is able to play.

social media as a medium to create music as a living that they have rejected many offers from traditional record labels and have been chosen to represent YouTube’s partner program “Musicians Wanted.” This program gives the means for independent musicians, like Julia Nunes and Pomplamoose, to “quit their day job” and focus on writing music and uploading onto YouTube. The more views, “likes,” embedded links, and subscribers their channel has, the more the musicians are rewarded for it. YouTube has taken the position to support user-generated content and in doing so has given musicians the ability to expand their audiences while having the financial freedom to work independently without answering to the whims of the over-demanding record companies.

Artists utilize Twitter themselves to update their fans on upcoming shows, on any songs that they are writing and releasing, and on any merchandise they plan on giving away or selling, such as art, clothing, and Pomplamoose branded soap. The fans themselves can respond with any questions they may have or any request for a specific cover of a song or possibly a request to perform in their area. Pomplamoose considers Twitter to be the most reliable way to contact them for a more immediate response because of how easily accessible the site is from almost any current, wireless medium (Wertheimer, 2010). Julia Nunes, however, relies more on YouTube and Facebook to reveal any important announcements. She mainly utilizes Twitter to maintain a more intimate relationship with her fans making listening to her music feel more personal and authentic. Nunes herself relies more on YouTube than Twitter because as she uploads videos she provides a face to her fans that she addresses directly through question and answer video weblogs at the end of her songs.

The reasoning behind artists like Pomplamoose’s and Julia Nunes’ success within social media is because the cost of the digital distribution of their music is virtually non-existent. All of

From the Internet to the Stage

Following Julia Nunes through her social media experience.



these social networking sites such as YouTube and Twitter are completely free to use. The record companies have controlled music distribution before social media existed. They were the gatekeepers musicians had to associate themselves with in order to have access to the radio, touring venues, and retail stores. Social media mainly acts as the substitute for radio and publicity in order for artists to perform shows. Although, programs like YouTube and iTunes allow for artists to distribute their music without a label. iTunes songs are normally \$0.99, where seventy percent goes directly to the artists. Considering how the distribution costs are virtually non-existent, \$0.69 per song is not too bad. Digital distribution, through programs like iTunes, allow musicians to bypass the costs of the production of actual CD's and waiting on retail stores to sell their music

The channels in which musicians and their audiences were able to communicate with each other used to be very limited. Record labels owned the gateways of production, promotion, and distribution. With the dawn of social media and social networking sites, artists are given the opportunity to succeed without being subjected to the capitalistic exploitation of those record companies. Napster began the cycle by providing users with free content. YouTube gave musicians the ability to

"... with the dawn of social media... artists are given the opportunity to succeed without... exploitation of record compaines."



share their music online. Twitter gave audiences the ability to give feedback to the very artists that they followed and supported. Apple's iTunes gave artists a low-cost, digital distribution method that audiences are not afraid of paying because they know they are supporting the artists directly without record companies filtering their revenue. All of these resources are available to all aspiring, independent musicians as long as they are talented and have a lot of heart and time to dedicate themselves to social media. Communities exist as long as artists persevere and find them for because of them artists have potential to succeed without being exploited and taken advantage of by the archaic market model and the record labels that have dominated it. ■

YouTube channel: [youtube.com/jaaaaaaa](https://www.youtube.com/jaaaaaaa)

Twitter: twitter.com/JuliaNunes

Website: www.junumusic.com

