

Central Cee: Drill Star [B2]

Il rapper venticinquenne è il volto (e il ventre) più famoso della drill, il genere musicale urbano che offre ai giovani britannici una via di fuga dalla precarietà e che sta trionfando in tutto il mondo.

Central Cee is the biggest star of UK [drill](#), a music genre derived from hip-hop. Drill was an underground scene in the UK until Central Cee helped to push it into the mainstream with [catchy](#) tracks like Loading and Day in the Life. [Nicknamed](#) 'Cench', Central Cee's birth name is Oakley Neil H.T. Caesar-Su.

FINDING MUSIC

Central Cee was born and raised in London's Shepherd's Bush, a suburb of West London famous for its music venues, but also its high violent crime rate. His mother is of Irish origin and his father of Chinese and Guyanese origin. Cench grew up poor and briefly sold drugs to make money. A quiet, reflective young man who suffered from periods of anxiety, he started writing poetry like his mother, and then moved on to music.

MIX TAPE

The twenty-five-year-old rapper began recording at the age of fourteen. He was influenced by his father's music collection and started out with auto-tuned hip-hop. Hearing it everywhere, he soon tired of it and switched to [drill](#), giving it his own, unique R&B [twist](#). He [self-released](#) his first mixtape "Wild West" in 2021, which debuted at number two on the UK Albums Chart. His second mixtape, "23", came out a year later and went straight to number one. His 2022 single Doja became the most-streamed rap song by a UK artist on Spotify. "Somebody tell Doja Cat, that I'm [tryna indulge](#) in that," the song goes, and rap star Doja Cat herself said she found it funny.

BRIT AWARDS

After [picking up](#) three Brit Awards — for Best New Artist, Best Song and Best British Hip Hop, Rap, Grime Act — he [broke into](#) the US with a concert in New York's Irving Plaza in 2022. British [slang](#) often [stymies](#) American audiences, but Cench guides them through it with explanations in freestyle rap. That same year, his Still Loading Tour took him from Chicago, US, through Canada and Europe, and back home again to his biggest-ever [gig](#) at Alexandra Palace in London.

STREETWEAR

He released 'Split Decisions' in June last year, a [jointEP](#) with [fellow](#) UK rapper Dave to mark their 25th birthday (they were born [one day apart](#).) The two stars [delve into](#) their childhood struggles on the track Our 25th Birthday, but it was Sprinter that became Central Cee's first number one hit. It will not be his last: Cench is just getting started and not just in music, either. He now has his own streetwear brand, SYNA World, having modelled for Tommy Hilfiger and others. Central Cee's rising trajectory is a [rags-to-riches](#) story in the making.

THE LOW-DOWN ON UK DRILL

UK [drill](#), or British [drill](#), evolved along a [circuitous](#) route. Its origins [lie](#) in American hip-hop, which gave rise to trap and then Chicago [drill](#). In the mid-2010s, it inspired rappers across the Atlantic, in the London suburb of Brixton, who were also influenced by [grime](#) and gangster rap.

[Sliding bass drums](#) and [off-beat high-hat](#) rhythms were accompanied by minor scale melodies, to produce a dark yet energetic [rawness](#). Today, it is the most popular rap genre in the UK. Drill in general was an [outlet](#) for [disenfranchised](#) young gang members who rapped about their [hardships](#).

In the UK, its aggressive lyrics so disturbed authorities that it was blamed for a rise in knife crime in 2018. The Metropolitan Police [singled out](#) 1,400 UK [drill](#) videos and removed thirty from YouTube for inciting violence. An academic study, however, said it provided a much-needed escape for urban

youth and called the move counterproductive and street [illiterate](#). If it was “street [illiterate](#)”, it is because UK [drill](#) has its own, unique [slang](#). The word ‘[drill](#)’ itself refers to fighting and a ‘[driller](#)’ is a shooter or gang member. ‘Mandem’ is a group of guys, ‘paper’ is money, ‘road’ as an adjective means street-smart and a ‘scram’ is a gun, but a ‘scrum’ is a good-looking woman – and so on. Central Cee helped popularise the genre and mitigate its [bad rap](#) (excuse the [pun](#)!). He is probably the best-known among UK [drill](#) artists. Others include Dave, Digga D, Stormzy and Bandokay, but there are women, too, such as Miss Lafamilia, Shaybo and the self-proclaimed “Queen of Drill”, [Ivorian Doll](#).

Glossary

- **one day apart** = con un giorno di distanza
- **lie** = trovarsi
- **drums** = bassi
- **stymies** = ostacolare
- **gig** = concerto
- **fellow** = collega
- **disenfranchised** = emarginati
- **grime** = sporcizia, lerciume
- **hardships** = difficoltà, avversità
- **singled out** = individuare
- **delve into** = addentrarsi in
- **rags-to-riches** = dalle stalle alle stelle
- **bad rap** = ingiusta reputazione
- **pun** = gioco di parole
- **drill** = trapano
- **self-released** = auto-pubblicare
- **bass** = bassi
- **high-hat** = charleston
- **rawness** = crudezza
- **circuitous** = tortuoso
- **Sliding** = scorrevole
- **broke into** = iniziare di colpo a fare qualcosa
- **slang** = gergo
- **joint** = congiunto
- **EP** = extended play (disco della durata di circa 25 minuti)
- **tryna** = provare (trying to)
- **indulge** = accontentare
- **illiterate** = analfabeta
- **twist** = giro, svolta
- **picking up** = prendere
- **off-beat** = poco convenzionali
- **outlet** = sfogo, uscita
- **Ivorian Doll** = bambola ivoriana

- **catchy** = orecchiabili, coinvolgenti
- **Nicknamed** = soprannominare