

TV streaming services are over saturated

By Solé Scott
Editor in Chief

Cable is said to be a thing of the past, but it was just repackaged as streaming.

Streaming began in the 1990s with RealNetworks and Microsoft, yet did not take off until YouTube was created in 2005.

Netflix was launched in 1997 and was a mail order delivery service that distributed DVDs. Netflix's current online platform was launched in 2007 and had numerous TV shows and movies to choose from.

Streaming was introduced as the internet became more prevalent and accessible to the masses.

Over time, streaming services such as Netflix, Hulu, Amazon Prime, Peacock, Max, Apple Music and Spotify have increased their rates so much that customers are still paying cable prices or more.

The CEOs of these companies have completely ruined the concept of watching shows, movies and listening to music on the go.

Customers now have to buy multiple services just to watch their favorite programs. It does not help that cable channels such as CBS and AMC created their own paid streaming apps.

Controversially, the Baltimore Ravens vs. Kansas City Chiefs game that premiered Thursday, Sep. 5 is the first of its kind to be exclusively shown

on Peacock and NBC.

Peacock Premium with ads cost a staggering \$80. The premium plus package that is mostly of ad-free cost \$140.

On Friday, Sep. 6, Green Bay Packers went against the Philadelphia Eagles in São Paulo, Brazil. The game was exclusively shown on Peacock.

Don't even get me started on the loss of free trials.

Streaming services used to offer a month-long free trial before a customer committed.

Now, most trials are a week long, which is not nearly enough time to make a long-term financial decision like that.

The point of streaming apps was to eradicate the rising cost of cable and limit ads, yet the opposite happened, and now apps cost more.

Music streaming apps are not exempt from this conversation, as they are run by a bunch of greedy capitalists.

Listeners must pay for Apple Music in order to listen to all music. Spotify has a free plan with ads that cost \$11.99 a month, yet not all artist catalogues are available.

Soundcloud has a free plan with ads but again not all artists catalogues are available unless you upgrade to premium and pay \$4.99 monthly plan.

This is unacceptable. Streaming companies need to stop price gouging. I do not know how much longer I can hold on to all my services, but I know is that I cannot afford to keep them all.

Kanye West album dissapoints

By Jay'Mi Vazquez
Managing Editor

Kanye West and Ty Dolla \$ign released the second album to their Vultures series titled "Vultures 2" on Aug. 3.

The album featured 16 tracks and unfortunately did not meet fans' expectations despite there being two delays within a five-month period.

The original plan for the Vultures series was to release three albums one month apart from each other, but that never happened.

The first part of the series, "Vultures 1," released back in February, became an overnight success, topping the charts at No. 1 for several weeks.

Songs like "CARNIVAL," "BURN" and "TALKING" made the first installment exciting, yet this new project lacked that same excitement.

The first track on the album titled "SLIDE" could

easily misdirect fans. This was the introduction to the project and is arguably the best song on the album.

The deeper fans got into the album, the quality of most of the songs grew lackluster, almost as if they were made with little to no effort.

"FRIED" seemed to be part two to the hit "CARNIVAL," but it sounded like West was not even trying.

He gave fans questionable verses with little to no substance, almost sounding like he did his verse in one take and left all the mistakes in the song.

The mixing quality on songs like "PROMOTION," "LIFESTYLE" and "RIVER" was terrible.

Some parts had certain artists' vocals louder than others, creating an unbalanced production.

Most of this album was a huge disappointment and not worth the wait.

The only redeeming quality of this album was its various features, from artists like Lil Wayne, Playboi Carti, Future, Don Toliver and others.

But even with the star-studded list of features, West somehow managed to put out an entire album that felt unfinished.

The song "530" had potential to be a good song. However, the quality of the uncleared sample makes the beat feel like it was produced not by West but by someone with little to no experience in beat production.

Another aspect of this album that was a disappointment was the use of artificial intelligence.

On the song "FIELD TRIP," West is not even rapping on the track.

Another artist, Vory, had his vocals used and intertwined with AI to make it sound like West.

The fact that West did not even take the time to come up with his own

vocals for a track feels lazy.

"MY SOUL" was the questionable final song on the album. The beat sounded unfinished, and the song ended abruptly, making for a terrible outro.

Overall, West showed he could not live up to his former title of "creative genius."

It is unfair to fans that once received "The College Dropout" to now get this monstrosity of an album from him.

Fans are saying that West should retire from music since he already made his impact instead of further tarnishing his musical reputation.

"Vultures 2" is the worst Kanye West album to be released by far.

Fans are now questioning if the third installment of the Vultures series will ever be released and if the quality of music will be any better than this.



"Vultures 2" cover art, featuring Kanye West holding a picture of Ty Dolla \$ign's incarcerated brother.



Kanye West and Ty Dolla \$ign during a listening party of the album.

Up-and-coming artist spotlight: Samara Cyn

By Jay'Mi Vazquez
Managing Editor

Serving looks and vibes, Tennessee native Samara Cyn is one of the best up-and-coming female rap and hip-hop artists in the scene right now.

Cyn began releasing music on Spotify in 2022 and has released eight full-length tracks since then. She has also released various freestyles on social media showcasing her lyrical abilities.

She seamlessly blends the ability to tap in-and-out of different genres, taking listeners on a journey with every song. The best way to describe her is as a neo-soul hip-hop artist.

Her unique voice and rap style reminds listeners

of Doja Cat, Smino, Erykah Badu and many others. But she sets herself apart from all of them because she is unapologetically herself, often laughing and just having fun on tracks.

In an interview with the Southern News, Cyn revealed that most of her influences are artists listeners often compare her to, saying she makes music that she wants to hear.

"I just go in and do what comes naturally based on my influences and experiences," Cyn said. "The creative just goes to those places."

She raps with a seemingly carefree approach. But she always delivers quality music with deep meanings.

Her ability to flow over diverse beats and deliver

thought-provoking verses is what sets her apart from other current female artists. Instead of talking about her looks, money, or drugs, she becomes a true poet, sharing stories with intricate rhyme schemes.

She released "green eyes freestyle" which gained over 2 million views on Instagram. Showing basic visuals and creative lyrics on the freestyles are what makes listeners go and check out her full-length releases.

This marketing scheme of short form songs and music videos is unlike what other artists do. It is a unique way to get people to wonder who she is, and when listeners dig deeper into her work, they are never disappointed.

Some of her best songs are "Moving Day,"

"Magnolia Rain" and "Chrome." Her melodic hooks and rap flow are what captivate listeners. It is a similar approach seen by other artists, but it feels fresh and unique every time she releases.

Her visuals always coincide with the topic of the song. She co-directs all her music videos, showing she's thinking creatively on how to present the music rather than having good songs with poor visuals.

"Most times, I can picture a visual while I'm writing the song. I can normally start off with that though, and it'll go from there," Cyn said.

She compared her music videos and songs to phases and lessons learned in her life, saying they serve as "visual

representations" of those experiences.

She also said her music videos often show symbolism, surrealism and ideas pulled from other art forms such as movies, paintings and other iconic music videos.

For example, the music video for "Katana" highlighted many ideas pulled from art and a visual representation of lessons she learned.

"Katana's video came about from a few different paintings from René Magritte and Frida Kahlo," Cyn said. "There was a lot of symbolism for duality and authenticity in it, which seemed to keep coming up in my life at the time."

She recently was featured on two different music YouTube channels,

one being "On The Radar Radio" where she did a two-minute freestyle. She was also featured on "A COLORS SHOW" where she did a live performance of her song "Chrome."

With her rising popularity, listeners should delve into her discography and experience her artistry flourish. She is planning on releasing a project titled "The Drive Home" at the end of October. She said the project is focused on acceptance and identity.

Before the project releases, she is planning on releasing a few more singles and a few more visuals to go along with them.

"The year is far from over. When 2025 hits, we going to do it all again, but better," Cyn said.



Samara Cyn showcasing her expressive personality during a photoshoot for her song "Katana."



The cover art for "Magnolia Rain," which features Samara Cyn crouched down with magnolia tree leaves surrounding her.