



## PIGEONS & PLANES

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# 25 Artists to Watch in 2025

The way 2025 is going so far, it's hard to feel confident about any predictions (other than chaos). Trying to anticipate what technological advance will shake the music industry next requires pulling from a mind map of buzzwords like AI and generative. Here are a couple of cold hard facts, courtesy of Luminate's 2024 year-end music report:

There are over 200 million songs on streaming services, but around half of them have 0-10 listens.

There was an average of 99,000 songs uploaded to streaming services every single day in 2024.

In many ways, it's a deeply depressing landscape, especially for new artists hoping to break through, find their audience, and build a sustainable career. On the other hand, at any moment any one of those 99,000 songs is there to be discovered and obsessed over. We'll keep doing our best to listen to as much new music as humanly possible, but when it came to building this feature we were looking for much more than the latest viral track or recent buzz.

Case in point, many of the artists on this list have been making music for 5-10 years, giving them a solid foundation for greatness in 2025. There are some wild cards and surprises in here too, so read on for 25 Artists to Watch in 2025.

**Alemeda**



**ALEMEDA**

**25 ARTISTS TO WATCH IN 2025**

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*PHOTO BY BRIANNA ALYSSE*

Not even the bots could conceive of a story like [Alemeda's](#). Born in Ethiopia and raised between Arizona and Addis Ababa, the singer/songwriter was raised in a religious household that didn't always look fondly on pop music. She ran away from home at 17 and started taking music seriously ("[heart attacks were had](#)"). When Alemeda started recording music in college, the closest studio was an hour away and had to be booked between two different jobs.

Slowly but surely, the long bus rides produced a string of singles. Alemeda was finding her sound, exploring R&B, alternative, and even a dash of drum & bass, all backed by her intensely personal lyrics and powerhouse vocals. "Gonna Bleach My Eyebrows" was both the breakthrough and the exception, an understated, sample-driven dance track that opts for bells and hi-hats over the usual distorted guitars.

Regardless of the genre, Alemeda's songs are often direct addresses, stories of heartache and emotional turbulence that ebb and flow with her wide-ranging delivery: one second she's is hushed and reverent, the next, a hurricane-force gale, all righteous indignation and level-clipping vocals. "I love hateful songs on the happy beats," she told [Polyester](#). "I'm someone that laughs through bullshit and pain."

Recently, Alemeda's name is nearly always followed with an addendum: as TDE's newest member, the Arizona-raised singer/songwriter has been under more scrutiny since she shared the news of her signing in fall 2024.

But the connector is a bit of a misdirect, because Alemeda represents something new for the label made famous by Kendrick, Schoolboy Q, and SZA. She's in a different lane, evidenced by the remarkable range of 2024's *FK IT* EP. There are seething, acidic punk anthems ("Don't Call Me" and "I hate your face"), lovesick country ballads ("Not Asking For Much"), and perky pop-rock to round it all out ("I already dug your grave"): all on show in her Medium Sized Backyard performance. The bases are covered, the way is paved, and next year, we'll see where Alemeda takes her victory lap.—[Graham Corrigan](#)



ALEMEDA

MEDIUM SIZED  
BACKYARD

**Bktherula**



# BK THERULA

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PHOTO BY AYMANE ALHAMID

A phrase that describes Bktherula's career up to this point: continuous improvement. The Atlanta-bred rapper blew up as a teenager on the tail-end of the Soundcloud era with "[Tweakin' Together](#)," but has managed to push her sound forward with every ensuing project. *NIRVANA*, the follow-up to her 2020 debut, takes on warped psychedelia; 2021's *LOVE BLACK* mixes rage with moody disruption; and the two *LVL5* albums, Bk's most realized projects to date, put her own stamp on [emerging sounds in rap](#).

Being so versatile has put her in an interesting spot. By not ever sticking to one sound, Bk has built a loyal base of fans who are excited by the growth she shows with each drop. A byproduct of this, though, is that she exists in a space between the mainstream and the underground. Too consistent to be a hidden gem, too unpredictable to be a chart-topper.

2025 may not be the year Bktherula scores a #1 hit, but there's a good chance it's the year she puts out her best music yet. Her next album, *LUCY*, is on the way.—[Millan Verma](#)