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# Keep up with Sofar Sound's Rising Stars

Learn more about the up and coming musicians rocking our shows



(Photo by: Louisa Stickelbruck) (Bastille performing at the Sofar Sounds x War Child charity event in London.)

NEW YORK- On Sofar Sound's 10th year we have shows in 431 cities around the world (Sofar Sounds). We pride ourselves in hosting 20,000 shows over the past decade with artists like [Billie Eilish](#), [Hozier](#) and [Leon Bridges](#) (Cirisano). Along with big names, there are thousands of other talented artists whose full star power grace our dynamic stages every night. These artists are the foundation of Sofar and at every venue they spread the magic of the rare live event experience. That is why we have been focused on providing them with new opportunities for growth and allowing them to build industry connections.

Partnerships & Operations Director at Sofar Sounds NYC, Stephanie Mitchell, spoke on how the audience's accessibility to the artists leads to connections. She states, "There are only about 70 people at each show so audiences have a much easier time going up to the artist. They can actually introduce themselves and maybe make friends. They're also sitting in a room full of

people that obviously have an interest in adventure and discovering new things. So I think you're more likely to make longer connections".

Mitchell also stresses the importance of seeing all artists as equals. "Our artists are all awesome and they should be treated with the same kind of respect. We want to balance out the genres as well as the level of artists. Some are maybe a little further in their career and some are new but we still think they deserve a platform and an audience to play in front of as well".

We believe that music is the universal language which is why we have successfully expanded internationally. It is not just the artists that are part of the element of surprise but the spaces in which the show is taking place. Sofar has now put on 20,000 events in 60 countries (Cirisano).

Mitchell noted, "It's a really fun way to get to know the city you are at or are visiting on a much more intimate level. I, through experience, have honestly just been blown away by the amount of amazing talent that there really is out there in the world." Many of these artists aren't well-known and that's exactly the point.

## Get to know Sofar Vets:

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London-based Greek indie-pop star **Leon of Athens** is currently on a U.S tour promoting his album 'Xenos'. The Sofar vet aka Timoleon Veremis has played 10 Sofar shows, many of which were international. He has played in Greece, England, U.S, and plenty more.

Veremis has faced obstacles pursuing his passions stating, "To be able to create art even when you have to live off music is difficult." Keeping up with today's need for

quick releases is also a challenge he faces adding, "The industry demands releases every few months and you're not always ready to release something to the world, something good."

Performing with Sofar, Veremis has been able to positively face some of those headaches. "Sofar helps young artists to play. It gives you an audience. Most of the shows have many people so you can play in front of a new audience. If they like you they follow you and become fans. Also makes you a part of an independent music community around the world."

But playing a Sofar Sounds gig is no easy feat. The veteran performer admits that the intimate and quiet space make him more nervous than any other show. “For me personally I get more nervous than 2,000 people shows. When it’s a very big show you see many people and in Sofar Sounds the place is very quiet and you’re more exposed. But it is a very beneficial challenge.” Adding, “It’s different you *can’t hide which makes your light shine*”

Veremis has even gotten to connect with fellow artists getting to meet Grammy award-winning artist Moby performing at a Sofar Sounds show in New York last year.



(<https://www.facebook.com/leonofathens/photos/ran-into-mr-moby-at-our-sofar-sounds-new-york-gig-tonight-bigrespect/10156419366319134/>)



Another Sofar all-star vert who's been able to connect with audiences and brands is **Russell Elliott**, a 23-year-old R&B artist currently based in Brooklyn, NY.

(Picture: Hallie Liang)

Elliott credits Sofar with creating new partnerships and providing gigs. “They've featured me in their [collaboration with ASOS](#) and hosted me in cities all over the U.S. It's a fantastic way to build a community around your music in new places.”

Elliott is truly a Sofar gem and is no regular artist. He describes his music as “Dusky 90s R&B sex jams in a world where occult, sinister, femme energy reigns supreme.” And before a

Sofar show, Elliott's get-ready routine is pretty set. "A whole lot of hours behind the piano. Tea. Whiskey. Ritual."

The young star has been performing for as long as he can remember but found his groove about five years ago. "I've been performing forever but really I wouldn't say I was hesitant to pursue a career in music. It's been challenging but we've made it work so far" Elliott expresses.

On April 27th, Elliott performed a stripped-down rendition of his single 'Savage' at the Moto Spirits Distillery in Brooklyn, NY. Elliot also performed other songs from his 2018 EP 'Split Ends'. The atmosphere in a Sofar sounds show is a different energy for Elliot. He adds, "Sofar shows are definitely a different vibe than the rowdy clubs I'm used to playing. They're way more intimate. I love how intently people pay attention to lyrics."

(<https://open.spotify.com/album/6ZZBpgwX4vyEzbqu4kFWke> )

The closeness between the audience, giving the artist their undivided attention creates an undeniable connection. Elliot concludes, "When you attend a Sofar show, you're so close to the music and artists....in a way that you couldn't be elsewhere. I think people respond to the closeness of it all and feel like *they're getting something special*. Which they are!"



**Tiger Darrow** has also been introduced to new audiences and artists in her Sofar gigs. "Working with Sofar has helped me gain better relationships with music lovers who enjoy my work, and to me, that's more important than anything else."

"Getting to meet people after I perform, who have truly listened to my words, and hearing them talk about their shared experiences and how my songs have affected them is the greatest validation a songwriter can receive" Darrow

expressed.

Darrow has been a performer since the age of two when she started learning to play the violin. With an artistic family being a performer felt extremely natural. "I've always been met with nothing but support in my pursuit of the arts. In fact, I never felt any hesitation as a musician until I moved to New York, where the cost of living is so much higher than in Texas that I questioned if I was doing the right thing." Elaborating, "It's draining and can be a struggle sometimes, but I still wouldn't have it any other way."

Darrow has struggled with some of the challenges with today's changing music industry. "People rarely buy records anymore, so making income off of your art as an independent artist is getting harder and harder with how low streaming royalties are."

Performing intimate shows has allowed her to always remember her love for writing lyrics. But the intimacy of Sofar gig isn't easy for Darrow. She articulates, "For me, preparation for a Sofar is a confusing combination of fretting over making sure the performance is perfect because I don't want to let a captive audience down." She's able to learn from this challenge adding, "An attentive audience offers performers the opportunity to learn how to make mistakes gracefully."

Performing these shows Darrow has been introduced to fellow talent. "I'm a fairly shy person, so I'm always especially impressed with musicians who engage the attendees at Sofars like Kate Yaeger, whose energy is absolutely contagious at her shows."

Darrow concludes, "Sofar removes all barriers between the listener and the performer and *creates a connection and bond between the two in a way that clubs and bars simply cannot.*"

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Show attendees have expressed how they've been able to discover music and continue following the artists after the shows. 20-year-old Ruth Ann Vazquez attended a show in February at an apartment in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. "Each of the artists was unique and one of the artists I saw I still listen to this day. Everyone who performed was all so talented and from out of state." Vazquez not only built a connection with the artists but the other attendees. "What I loved most was seeing how powerful music is and how it can bring people together. I enjoyed how the host would prompt questions and topics for people to discuss between sets. Not only were we discovering new artists, but I also had the opportunity to talk to new people with similar interests."

Sofar is successful because it provides musicians with a safe space to perform their music to listeners who are only projecting positivity. With so much talent the possibilities are endless with possible new directions for the company. In general, the goal is to be in more cities around the world and hosting more shows and thus creating more opportunities for emerging artists, like the ones mentioned, to perform.

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