

# The Current

Impact Report—June 2023



## The Current's Carbon Sound Turns One

Donor support powers Minnesota Public Radio's (MPR) diverse musical programming, including The Current. Thanks to generous donors, The Current is able to bring listeners

the best authentic new music alongside the hits that inspired it and remains a resource for music lovers in Minnesota and around the world.

Launched in June of 2022 in partnership with KMOJ, **Carbon Sound** is The Current and MPR's service (HD2 digital music stream, website and app) dedicated to celebrating the depth, breadth and influence of Black musical expression through a diverse and eclectic mix of genres including hip-hop, R&B, Afrobeats, funk, electronica and more, with a strong emphasis on local music. The future of public media is digital, and it is diverse. Carbon Sound highlights artists who have shaped and will shape the future of traditionally African and African American music genres.

Carbon Sound honors the foundational role of Black music, artistry and culture throughout all genres of music. Carbon Sound is part of a new format for public radio to serve a historically underserved audience—young BIPOC music fans—and exists to form connections between those who believe that the power of music can help create a lasting harmony for all of us.



Carbon Sound staff, from left to right: content director Julian Green, host Sanni Brown and community engagement specialist Andre Griffin

### IMPACT AND HIGHLIGHTS:

Carbon Sound consistently amplifies diverse voices to, as its mission states, include and inspire with the help of its strong team including content director Julian Green; the voice of Carbon Sound Sanni Brown; and community engagement specialist Andre Griffin. Green brings a public radio background, and he built the music library for Carbon Sound and oversees content creation and output. He crafted the mission and vision of Carbon Sound and guided the project in its initial stages. Sanni Brown, a veteran Twin Cities DJ and trusted voice from KMOJ and The Current, is the host of **The Message**, The Current's hip-hop and R&B show. Brown brings more than 10 years of experience in radio at stations KMOJ-FM, KFAI-FM and 107.1 MyTalk to the role. Andre Griffin helps elevate and amplify local music and artists on the stream and airwaves, is active in the community and helps provide digital and physical spaces for artists and fans to engage and connect.

The three team members together bring qualities and backgrounds that fit perfectly into the future of public radio, and they represent the audiences Carbon Sound wants to serve and tie into the goal of reaching historically underserved audiences.

First-year highlights include:



#### Winning an Anthem Award.

The **Anthem Awards** celebrate purpose- and mission-driven work, and this year, honored Carbon Sound with a bronze award in the category of diversity, equity and inclusion: podcast and audio. “Our congratulations to Carbon Sound for winning an Anthem Award,” said Corporation for Public Broadcasting Vice President, Radio Jacquie Gales Webb. “Launched less than

a year ago, Carbon Sound is one of the newest Urban Alternative format stations that are drawing younger and more audiences to public radio.”

(<https://news.radio-online.com/articles/n43321/Carbon-Sound-Wins-Anthem-Award-Recognizing-Social-Impact>)

### REACH:

Developed a library of **more than 5,000 songs** from artists spanning local hip-hop and R&B to international sounds, representing artists from across the globe.

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**30% of the new music** featured on Carbon Sound is local music from Minnesota artists.

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**77% of users** on social media (Instagram) are 34 or younger, and the vast majority of listening is on The Carbon Sound App.

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Contracted with—and published the work of—**more than 20 BIPOC freelance content creators**, including 13 who identify as female or LGBTQIA+.

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Published **more than 120 editorial pieces** featuring Black or BIPOC artists. Of these, approximately 25% were local artists. To date, these stories and photo sets have received an **estimated 50,000 page views by more than 23,000 users.**

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MPR MINUTE

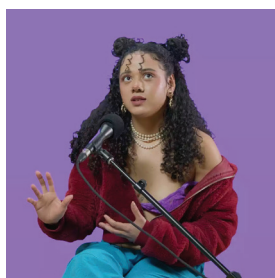
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## IMPACT AND HIGHLIGHTS: *continued*



Hosting the **Carbon Sound Residency** at the 7th Street Entry over two evenings in March that showcased six Minnesota acts.



Creating “The Lab” on Carbon Sound as a multiplatform content series amplifying local and national artists, including **Minneapolis-based artist Xina**.

Encouraging community engagement at local events, concerts and “**Coffee with Carbon Sound**”—a series of engagements at local cafes and Black-owned coffee shops.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

Carbon Sound is partially funded by a grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting with support from the Minnesota’s Arts and Cultural Legacy Fund and has been developed in partnership with Minneapolis community broadcasting station KMOJ’s HD2 station, 89.9 The Ice.



*The mission and the vision here are my passions. It’s showing the depth, breadth and beauty of Black musical expression and showing how it’s foundational to the whole canon of musical expression in this country.”*

– Julian Green, Content Director

*“My love of history and my love of my North Minneapolis community guides my work every day. I believe in abundance, we believe in abundance and I am so glad to be a part of bringing more abundance to the Twin Cities.”*

– Andre Griffin, Community Engagement Specialist



*What’s most important to me is that we’re bringing something to the community—we’re public media, we’re here to give more than we get. I want Carbon Sound to feel how I feel when I walk up on a barbecue I was invited to. I want it to be like that feeling of, “it’s safe here.”*

– Sanni Brown, Host

*“This partnership will help extend and help elevate what we’re doing on The Ice and beyond. Now listeners who are looking for a wider variety of Black music in the Twin Cities will have a destination to find all these different sources of programming.”*

– Freddie Bell, General Manager of KMOJ’s Center for Communication and Development (CCD) and KMOJ-FM, The People’s Station

