

MTV and AT&T Bring Craig Brewer's '\$5 Cover' Experience of the Memphis Music Scene Online and On-Air

New music drama series from MTV New Media and acclaimed director Craig Brewer offers a unique cross-platform look into Memphis

NEW YORK, April 30 -- Today, MTV, AT&T* and Craig Brewer, the director of the Academy Award winning movie "Hustle and Flow," have announced that "\$5 Cover," a groundbreaking, multiplatform new effort by Brewer and MTV New Media to document the modern Memphis music scene, will premiere on TV on Friday, May 1, with content also accessible online and via mobile phones in the coming weeks. By combining Brewer's expert storytelling with the content distribution savvy of MTV and AT&T, "\$5 Cover" gives music fans "anytime, any way" access to an insider's look at what's happening today in a city rich with musical history.

The centerpiece is a 15-episode series shot in Brewer's signature style that follows the professional and personal lives of some of the city's up-and-coming musical acts. Each episode contains a live performance, recording session or other musical component that is seamlessly integrated into the drama. AT&T will present the inaugural "\$5 Cover: Memphis" series, which premieres on MTV and MTV.com on May 1, with new episodes airing at midnight on Friday nights. MySpace will also host exclusive content and promotion for the series across various areas of the site.

"\$5 Cover" also includes a collection of content more than 70 pieces strong -- from mini-documentaries about the artists, interview footage and ringtones to photos, full tracks and tidbits about Memphis culture -- that will be accessible through broadcast, online and mobile platforms.

"MTV built its brand in music," said David Gale, Executive Vice President of MTV New Media, "and as with the launch of our channel almost 28 years ago, '\$5 Cover' allows audiences to discover exciting new music through the vision of some of the most innovative filmmakers working today." Gale, who was brought on to run MTV Films 14 years ago, says, "I see a logical transition for talented filmmakers like Craig Brewer to take their skills and apply them to great use in an era of continuous change, when audiences are demanding they be given content where they want it, when they want it and how they want it."

"'\$5 Cover' was a unique experience in the art of storytelling, a model that I think filmmakers in any city would love to utilize to showcase the artists in their community," said Craig Brewer, who created the series. "I love my city. And when it comes to music, Memphis is the best. But why couldn't we do the same thing in Detroit, Austin, Seattle, or London, with a passionate, local filmmaker, and a local music scene? It's the ultimate street cred."

Catching the Series

In addition to Friday night episode premieres, music fans can get their "\$5 Cover" fix throughout the week and around the clock with TV, online and mobile content.

- AMTV - AT&T will host a full "AT&T \$5 Cover Week" from 3 a.m. to 9 a.m., Mondays through Thursdays, that gives fans access to exclusive videos, interviews and short form segments.**
- MTV2 - A "Memphis"-themed week beginning May 4 will include short form series episodes airing nightly for three weeks at 11 p.m., along with the documentaries, music videos, and more.**
- mtvU - "\$5 Cover"-themed programming, packaged music hours, interstitials, and other short form efforts will be featured, driving fivedollarcover.com.**
- MTV.com and Fivedollarcover.com - Viewers can watch the content on demand, listen and download the music, learn about these artists and take a deeper dive into this fascinating scene.**
- AT&T mobile phones - AT&T wireless customers will be able to access content from the series in the form of Cellular Video (CV) clips, ringtones and content available through their mobile Web browsers.**
- MySpace - Exclusive content and promotion will be found on the \$5 Cover community at www.myspace.com/fivedollarcover. Additionally, MySpace users may stream music from the series for free on the site. Each artist being featured in the program will utilize their official MySpace profiles to promote the show.**

"Music is a powerful way to connect our brand with consumers, and unique properties like '\$5 Cover' give us a greater opportunity to show consumers how AT&T can enable them to stay connected to their passion for music," said Chris Schembri, vice president of media services for AT&T.

As the online partner for \$5 Cover, MySpace will promote the series across multiple verticals including the company's Music, Video and Entertainment hubs. As a means of spreading awareness of each episode to the site's more than 70 million U.S. users, MySpace will utilize the official profile pages of the featured artists to highlight content. MySpace is known for perpetuating and encouraging new music discovery, thus making this a great opportunity to expose users to various genres of music, from pop to hip hop to indie rock and more.

"MTV and MySpace share the common goal of providing the opportunity for people to discover new content, artists and music," said Angela Courtin, SVP of Marketing and Entertainment and Content for MySpace. "We are incredibly excited to join forces with them on this project and to really engage our community in the process."

Additionally, select content will be available on livefrommemphis.com and commercialappeal.com.

iTunes will have an exclusive window on download to own, with extra features presented in original packages specifically for those who want to own the series.

"\$5 Cover" Breaks Boundaries

An unprecedented level of collaboration--with deep support from diverse organizations--has contributed to the high level of credibility of "\$5 Cover."

MTV and Brewer collaborated with the local newspaper, filmmakers, tourism bureau and film commissions to ensure that "\$5 Cover" has the authenticity and involvement of the Memphis community. Acclaimed photographer and documentary filmmaker Alan Spearman, of the city's Commercial Appeal newspaper, shot almost 150 hours of footage to make 12 mini documentaries providing insightful and remarkable portraits of the artists in the series. The Memphis Convention and Visitors Bureau brought on the founders of the popular Memphis-focused Web destination "Live from Memphis" (<http://livefrommemphis.com>) to produce dozens of shorts called "Flipside" to bring the viewer snapshots into the colorful local scene. Additionally, the Tennessee and Memphis Film Commissions supported the project with unique incentives and rebates to provide full support for this fledgling new form of entertainment.

Helping to generate pre-launch buzz, AT&T was the official sponsor of MTV's "Live and Mobile" at the 2009 South by Southwest music festival in March, during which MTV correspondents and "\$5 Cover" artists streamed live video to sxsw.mtv.com throughout the event.

A dedicated series blog at blog.fivedollarcover.com included behind-the-scenes video of performances at this year's SXSW festival, clips from a presentation at the Sundance Film Festival, cast profiles, and clips of the artists' professional and sometimes intimate moments.

MTV also recently released the Series' digital soundtrack and individual artists' tracks. The soundtrack will contain 15 songs including eight previously unreleased tracks from Two Way Radio, Al Kapone, Snowglobe, River City Tanlines and Valerie June. Additionally, ringtones of select songs will be available on AT&T phones.

Meet the Cast

These are the artists and stories that make up the heart and soul of "\$5 Cover":

Amy LaVere as Amy - Rock/Indie/Americana

Southern songstress whose petite frame is smaller than the stand up bass she plays. Sassy and talented, her voice is innocent and bewitching. She is ambitious, but when she gets romantically involved with band mates, her expectations fall short, creating yet another sad song.

Clare Grant - Actress/Former Playboy "Babe of the Month"

She is the garage-band poster girl - the drinking, dancing muse of all the rockers in Memphis. When Clare can't find love she goes to extremes. She has been known to party too hard and go home with the guys in the band, putting her friendships in jeopardy.

Ben Nichols as Ben - Rock/Southern Rock

Sexy as hell bad boy, and front man of Lucero. Ben is an old flame of Clare's (amongst many others). He is constantly touring with his band, but is in town long enough to turn Clare's world upside down. The kind of guy you wouldn't bring home to mom, covered in tattoos, all the women swoon over him.

Al Kapone - Rap/Crunk

Al is one of the originators of the Memphis underground rap explosion and a pioneer of the Dirty South Crunk/Buck style of Hip-Hop. He is a true performer and loves to work an audience. He mentors his son AJ, on the music game and records his flow between delivery jobs.

Kate Crowder of Two Way Radio - Indie Pop

Sweet and sincere, Kate is a mother and musician. Her voice is angelic and evokes a world filled with cotton candy, bubblegum and carnivals. Her lyrics, sometimes deep, are all about love.

Muck Sticky - Rap/Comedy/Alternative

He is known as Muck, Muck Sticky, the Sticky Muck, or the Nifty Mervous Thrifty. He is a tireless self-promoter and sincere ambassador of peace, friendship and personal empowerment. Muck has a crush on Kate but is unable to express his feelings for her.

Brad Postlethwaite as Brad - Indie/Pop

Slender with glasses and a beard, Brad is a musical genius; he seems to play with everyone in town and fronts a band called Snowglobe. Brad is dependable and knows his way around Packy's studio.

Valerie June - Folk/Rock

Valerie is a singer-songwriter, whose mysterious, melodic voice and eclectic, neo-hippie style transcends her down home southern charm and wholesome beauty. She lives in the same house as Amy, Clare and Wally and works at the local coffee bar, Java Cabana.

Alicja Trout as Alicja - Garage/Punk/Rock

Rock star and mother, Alicja is a bad ass, punk rock musical powerhouse and the subject of one of Wally's many documentaries. She demands everyone's attention when she is rocking out with her band River City Tanlines.

Harlan T Bobo - Rock/Indie

Harlan T Bobo's ironic, tortured lamentations have established him as one of Memphis's top singer-songwriters. At once humorous and sincere, Bobo's voice is much the soundtrack for a packed Saturday-night show as it is the Sunday-morning hangover that follows -- a love-weary, public diary of romance and loss.

Jack Oblivian of Jack O and the Tennessee Tearjerkers - Rock/Indie

The patron saint of many a Memphis musician, Jack "Oblivian" Yarber has spread his hard-driving punk rock anthems around the world with disaffected charm.

When he's home, the city's musicians come together for his shows -- both as fans and as students.

"\$5 Cover" was created by Craig Brewer (Hustle & Flow, Black Snake Moan). David Gale, (EVP, MTV New Media) is Executive Producer. Scott Bomar, Erin Hagee, and David Harris are producers, along with Jen Ringel as co-producer.

The format of the "\$5 Cover" series allows for the experience to be developed in other cities around the country and the globe, exploring music and culture from the point of view of filmmakers who are as knowledgeable and passionate about their local scenes as Craig is about Memphis.

The William Morris Agency brokered the deal on behalf of Craig Brewer. Brewer is managed by Brad Gross and is represented by attorney Carlos Goodman of Bloom Hergott Diemer Rosenthal LaViolette & Feldman, LLP.

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