

Lady Gaga to debut songs on online game FarmVille

May 11 2011, By RYAN NAKASHIMA and BARBARA ORTUTAY ,
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Singer Lady Gaga poses for photos during a press conference to promote her new album "Born this way" Mexico City, Friday, May 6, 2011. (AP Photo)

(AP) -- Lady Gaga is turning to an unusual method to cultivate her fan base: The pop icon is releasing songs from her new album on a section of the popular online game "FarmVille" before they can be heard anywhere else.

The singer, known for her outrageous styles and hits such as "Poker

"Face" and "Bad Romance," will allow singles from "Born This Way" (due out May 23) to be heard within a specially-created farm, called "GagaVille," in the game. Players will have to complete tasks to hear one exclusive new track per day streamed online from May 17 to 19. Starting on May 20, players will be also able to unlock additional songs that aren't exclusive.

"FarmVille" is one of the most popular games on Facebook, played by about 46 million people worldwide each month. It lets players tend to virtual farms by harvesting crops, tending to livestock and decorating cottages to earn points. Its creator, Zynga, makes money by selling virtual items, such as seeds or cows or farm sheds, in the game.

"GagaVille" will be short-lived. Zynga says it's running the special only until May 26 to celebrate the debut of "Born This Way." The company wouldn't say whether Lady Gaga picked "FarmVille" to debut her songs or if Zynga concocted this unusual promotion, which will feature magical unicorns, sheep on motorcycles and other Gaga-inspired items on "GagaVille."

Zynga spokeswoman Amy Sezak said "FarmVille" has massive appeal, just like Lady Gaga, whose first single from the new CD, also titled "Born This Way," debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100 charts. Many people who play "FarmVille," it turns out, are also fans of Lady Gaga on their Facebook pages.

The parties wouldn't disclose any financial terms, or even comment on whether money was being exchanged. Clear Channel Radio, which is also part of the promotion, will stream the songs in "FarmVille" through its iHeartRadio service, which will pop up once players unlock the special songs.

"GagaVille" is a sign that artists are going where the fans are, and that is

on Facebook, Twitter and playing online games. By being part of the Gaga deal, Clear Channel is trying to ensure it won't be left behind. As part of the promotion, the company plans to announce special codes on 148 of its radio stations that will unlock Gaga-inspired virtual items in "FarmVille."

"We know that our listeners are spending a lot of time with social games, and we're going to be wherever our listeners are. So this kind of social, immersive experience is a great way for us to further engage with our listeners," said Bob Pittman, chairman of media and entertainment platforms for Clear Channel.

This is the first time Zynga has received exclusive tracks from artists in a game and the first time it's created a whole farm dedicated to an artist. In December, the company partnered with Dr. Dre to release a track from his album "Detox" in the game "Mafia Wars."

The San Francisco startup is no stranger to Lady Gaga. Earlier this year the artist (along with Dr. Dre and others) helped Zynga raise money to support earthquake relief in Japan and she donated \$1.5 million of her own money to add to what players raised.

"Lady Gaga is as passionate about her fans as we are about our players," said Zynga's Raquel DiSabatino, director of entertainment and media, who described the relationship with the pop star as a partnership. "This really was a great meeting of the minds to create an innovative and playful experience for those folks."

Zynga is also giving away a download of the full album to fans who buy \$25 game cards through electronics retailer Best Buy Co. Inc. Buyers will also be entered into a drawing to attend Lady Gaga's next video shoot and get a virtual unicorn to decorate their farms.

The company is also offering virtual [Lady Gaga](#) goods to players who earn points in its other games, as well as offering a chance to receive concert tickets and signed albums through one of its games.

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Citation: Lady Gaga to debut songs on online game FarmVille (2011, May 11) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-05-lady-gaga-debut-songs-online.html>

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