

Ed Sheeran rules Spotify in 2017

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Ed Sheeran, 26, has seized on the rapid growth of streaming during his rise to pop fame

English singer-songwriter Ed Sheeran dominated Spotify in 2017, with his latest album "Divide" played 3.1 billion times worldwide, the leading streaming service said Tuesday.

The ginger-haired pop guitarist was streamed more than any other artist in the year so far—not a surprise, considering his song "Shape of You,"

the fourth track on "Divide," reigns as Spotify's most streamed song ever.

Despite Sheeran's triumph, the Swedish-based streaming service said the larger trends of 2017 included hip-hop, with streams growing 74 percent over an already large base in 2016.

Hip-hop star Drake came in second on Spotify in 2017 and rapper Kendrick Lamar was fourth, with R&B singer The Weeknd, a protege of Drake, placing third.

Latin music also saw major gains, with streams more than doubling on the back of viral Spanish-language hits—most notably the worldwide sensation "Despacito."

Rihanna was the most streamed woman on Spotify for the third year in a row, despite her lack of major releases in 2017.

Sheeran, 26, has seized on the rapid growth of streaming during his rise to pop fame.

His success on Spotify, however, did not help him at the Grammys, with Sheeran shut out of major categories announced last week—a surprise to many watchers of the music industry's top prizes.

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