

# THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

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Thursday, August 29, 2013 | A21

## HEARD & SCENE



BY MARSHALL HEYMAN



While the beverage company Vitaminwater was doing some market research it discovered close to five million tweets that used hashtags related to life being “boring.”

It seems that even though—or perhaps because—there’s far more stimuli everywhere than there’s ever been, especially on the Internet, our threshold for boredom has greatly decreased.

**‘I always like cool juxtapositions,’ said Mr. Scott. ‘It’s not a place where you’re supposed to yell.’**

“There’s this massive conversation about people being bored,” said Ben Garnero, Vitaminwater’s brand manager. “There’s more boredom than ever.”

Mr. Garnero added that it became the goal of the drink “to address the boredom epidemic, to hashtag ‘make boring brilliant.’”

This spring, the company launched an initiative called “Brilliance uncapped” at a Salvation Army campsite in, not

so randomly, Boring, Ore. There was a concert featuring, among others, B.o.B, Santigold and Matt & Kim. It was televised live on Fuse.

Vitaminwater hopes to attack ennui in other specific pockets of the country, too.

This summer, it brought its battle strategy to New York City, what Mr. Garnero called “the most exciting city in the United States, arguably.” But, of course, people get bored here, too, “doing those menial tasks you have to do every day.”

You know, waiting for the subway, going to the bank, hitting the post office, seeing the same people at the same parties night after night.

With the music magazine the Fader, Vitaminwater decided to stage six semi-impromptu but very intimate concerts, with sometimes only 30 or so invitees. They did this on Monday nights, which Vitaminwater decided was the most boring night of the week. They also did so at mundane locations, with the idea of giving boredom a shock to its system.

Solange Knowles, often known simply as Solange, performed at an Atlantis laundromat in Brooklyn. Earl Sweatshirt performed at an auto body shop downtown, and Travi\$ Scott and Trinidad Jame\$ performed at a credit union on the Lower East Side. In September, B.o.B will perform in a library and an artist

still to be announced will do a set at an art gallery.

“A lot of these artists do the same kind of thing over and over,” said Andy Cohn, president and publisher of the Fader. “This kind of performance ratchets them up a notch. It’s off the beaten path. It gets them excited.”

Messrs. Cohn and Garnero said they do “scavenger hunts” to reach out to influential types to get them to the

venue. “Our goal is for a large percentage of the audience to be ‘super fans’ who are excited to be in a room with 30 other people listening to this music,” said Mr. Cohn.

He explained that the venues weren’t particularly hard to book and production costs were relatively the same as for more concert-friendly venues. At the credit union on the Lower East Side, “as of 3:58 p.m., you could have cashed

your check. At 4, we started changing it into a concert venue.” By 8 o’clock, attendees were crowd surfing. Beside the addition of sound systems, the venues have remained largely intact.

While Solange was performing at the laundromat in Brooklyn, a couple came down to get their laundry out of a machine.

When they discovered a concert in progress, “They

said, “This is the best laundry trip we’ve ever made,” recalled Mr. Garnero.

“I always like cool juxtapositions,” said Mr. Scott of doing a set at a credit union. “It’s not a place where you’re supposed to yell or go in with a big boom box. To be able to break the rules is kind of fresh. It’s what music should do.”

Mr. Scott, who is 21, said he is a “legit Vitaminwater fan. I wouldn’t have done it otherwise.”

His variety of choice is XXX, which is acai, blueberry and pomegranate-flavored.

Bobby Ray Simmons Jr., who goes by the stage name B.o.B, also likes the XXX flavor, he said.

“I drink it after performing, when it’s time to replenish,” he said.

Mr. Simmons said he likes to find alternative venues in which to perform.

“I’ve performed in rec rooms and Apple stores,” he said. “Thinking outside of the box is always something I’ve tried to do. When you’re in a really big venue, it’s hard to connect. I like it up close and personal.”

As for how boring it was to actually drop into Boring, Ore., Mr. Simmons said he wouldn’t say it was the most boring experience of his 24-year-old life so far.

“Maybe my 11th-grade history class was more boring,” he said.