

Your monthly  
music forecast!

*Beyond Bitcoin: Blockchain and  
Crypto for the Music Industry*

*A Boogie Wit Da Hoodie*

*Juice WRLD*

*Jacob Sartorius*

*Clairo*

*Charlotte Lawrence*

*and more*

 memBrain

# THE STORM REPORT

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*Miguel ©Timothy Saccenti*

# ABOUT THE STORM REPORT

**STORM = STRATEGIC TRACKING OF RELEVANT MEDIA**

The STORM Report is a compilation of up-and-coming bands and artists who are worth watching. Only those showing the most promising potential for future commercial success make it onto our monthly list.

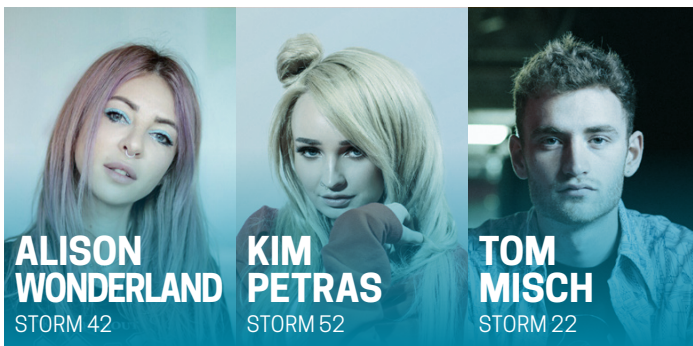
*How do we know?*

Through correspondence with industry insiders and our own ravenous media consumption, we spend our month gathering names of artists who are “bubbling under”. We then extensively vet this information, analyzing an artist’s print & digital media coverage, social media growth, sales chart statistics, and various other checks and balances to ensure that our list represents the cream of the crop.

*Why do we do it?*

Music is the best way to sell products because it creates such a powerful emotional connection with an audience. The STORM Report provides our clients with a tool to harness the music that will be the most relevant to audiences in the near future, thereby becoming very useful for the enhancement of products, promotions, and platforms.

## STORM ALUMNI



# A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

From CES to SXSW to the Cannes Lions last month, blockchain has continued to be a hot topic of conversation in 2018. This month’s “Eye of the STORM” article explores the various ways that blockchain is being explored and utilized by the music industry, an industry that is ripe for disruption in support of artists. Over the past few years, memBrain has explored the world of blockchain across a wide range of industries, particularly those where transparency and authenticity are of utmost importance. As the music industry continues to be disrupted by both digital distribution and artists’ desire to have fair remuneration for their work, the powers that be in the music industry must embrace and support these new tools and standards. Simply put, blockchain may well be the foundation of the music industry ecosystem of the future. Artists are also finding inspiration for new projects with the hope of a more fair and reasonable compensation model, and we believe that this holds the potential to usher in a new golden age of music—not just for its listeners—but for those who make it, as well.



Jennifer Sullivan  
President, memBrain  
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*Akon announcing plans for his cryptocurrency Akoin at Cannes Lions 2018*

# Beyond Bitcoin: Blockchain and Crypto for the Music Industry

*By Ian Hecht and Grace Slansky*

*Blockchain, Cryptocurrency, ICO*—Like it or not, these words have become more than buzz words and hot topics of conversation at dinner parties and business conferences; they are rapidly making their way into more and more aspects of our lives. And while not everyone is ready to jump on the bandwagon and commit to investing in cryptocurrency or becoming blockchain savvy, having a basic understanding of the key players has become a necessity—particularly for the music industry. To help you on your journey to blockchain enlightenment, we have compiled some of the most innovative companies exploring the intersection of this revolutionary technology and music.

## REDESIGNING STREAMING

The issue with the current streaming model is that there are too many intermediaries between your wallet and the artist's pocket. As the industry stands now, streaming payments are opaque and artists often aren't paid for their streams for over a year—if they are paid at all. The following companies are using the blockchain to remove the intermediaries, creating their own platforms with transparent and simple artist payment in mind.

**Choon**, **Inmusik**, and **Musicoin** are all similarly offering new streaming platforms for artists that incorporate blockchain and cryptocurrency. These platforms “tokenize” the music streaming and discovery experience by paying independent artists in their proprietary cryptocurrencies. Think of them like SoundCloud powered by blockchain technology—-independent artists upload their music to the platform and are paid directly daily based on the number of streams their music garnered. Blockchain technology has the benefits of being transparent, fast, and easily divisible, allowing artists to easily split earnings and receive them quickly. Streaming is free for listeners, and they can even earn currency themselves by creating popular playlists, listening to promoted songs, and supporting the community through useful comments and feedback.

Although they are founded on the same basic model, each platform differs in terms of their features, processes, and current roadmap. Founded by Trance DJ

Gareth Emery, **Choon** is currently in public beta, meaning you can go stream songs on their website right now. Choon pays artists daily in their cryptocurrency, NOTES, and positions opposite to the major label model, seemingly wanting nothing to do with their library. **Inmusik**, on the other hand, plans to work with the major labels to create a blockchain copyright management solution that will fairly serve the industry. **Musicoin** is also in an early public beta. Unlike the others, it offers a “tipping” mechanism in which artists can earn extra \$MUSIC (their cryptocurrency) and rise up the leaderboard to gain visibility.

## INNOVATIVE PAYMENTS TO ARTISTS

There is a reason the “Starving Artist” archetype is such a popular one—it is increasingly difficult to make a living solely off of creative endeavors. The following companies are working to make music a more sustainable career, offering innovative solutions to today’s artist roadblocks.

Beta platform **Ujo** uses blockchain technology to create a transparent and decentralized database of rights and rights owners, automating royalty payments using smart contracts and cryptocurrency. It also allows users to buy songs and albums using **Ethereum**, with proceeds going straight to the artist instantaneously. Transparency is more important than ever now that we are used to having information at our fingertips. Ujo essentially tackles two of the biggest payout problems for musicians, while remaining a transparent source of information, making it a big player to watch. This innovative endeavor is a part of ConsenSys, a blockchain software company created by Ethereum-Cofounder Joe Lubin. ConsenSys develops and backs a variety of blockchain projects in fields as diverse as banking, energy, insurance, government, and more.

With the proven success of sites like **Kickstarter** and **GoFundMe**, it seems fitting that the next iteration of crowdfunding incorporates cryptocurrency. Enter **Fanmob**, the cryptocurrency-based crowdfunding platform. Artists can create their own tokens on the Fanmob app and fans can rally behind them, offering their support in the form of crypto to help fund their projects.

But it does not stop there. All-in-one style **SingularDTV** was created with the goal of a completely decentralized entertainment industry in which content creators retain control over their work and access to their profits. Its content portal lets creators crowdfund, upload, sell their content, create their own tokens, and share their work, with more features planned in the future. It’s like Kickstarter meets YouTube meets Spotify, with no intermediaries, all based on the Ethereum blockchain. Why limit yourself?

Los Angeles-based blockchain startup **Vezt** is about to launch in beta and has already raised than \$4.7 million and bought 30 hits by **Dr. Dre, Kanye West, Jay-Z, John Legend** and **Drake**. Through their platform, music fans and brands can purchase part-

ownership of these songs. Vezt will track and collect royalties in 137 countries and pay these to the artists and the investors, creating a system where music is both art and a commodity.

## HOW YOUR FAVORITE ARTISTS ARE USING BLOCKCHAIN

Although the technology is still young and largely misunderstood by the general public, popular artists are already jumping on the bandwagon.

Last month at the Cannes Lions Festival of Creativity, Pop/R&B star **Akon** announced that he will be launching his own personal cryptocurrency, **Akoin**. The singer has been cryptic about the details for product thus far, but he has been very clear about his goals. Akon hopes that future success of Akoin will allow him to launch “Akon Crypto City,” an entirely crypto-based 2000-Acre city in Senegal. He has previously stated that “blockchain and crypto could be the savior for Africa in many way, because [they bring] the power back to the people,” and it seems now he has the tools to begin acting on this. Keep an eye on the “Smack That” singer for what is sure to be an interesting journey.

Rather than using cryptocurrency to fund personal projects, **The Black-Eyed Peas** are taking advantage of the newly available technology to incentivize their fans. In partnership with **Sweet**, they have relaunched their website, turning it into a marketplace where fans can earn the digital token Sugar for performing meaningful social and user actions on behalf of the band. The BEPs are pioneers on the platform, and we can’t wait to see who follows suit.

We’ve known for a while that the music industry’s status quo is not working for most artists. The companies in this article are harnessing blockchain technology to make a difference, however it’s remarkable how similar many of their offerings there are. Time will tell how many will go on to become flourishing platforms, and how the major labels will react to these upstarts.



# STORM TRACKER

The STORM rages on for our alumni artists. Here's what they were up to this month!



**ARIANA GRANDE**  
(STORM No. 3)

Following the success of her most recent single “The Light is Coming,” recently engaged popstar **Ariana Grande** (STORM 3) has announced the release of her newest album *Sweetener*, dropping August 17th.



**BEST COAST**  
(STORM No. 26)

Indie-rock outfit **Best Coast** (STORM 26) released their children’s album *Best Kids* just last month and it is receiving particularly positive reviews from the parents, uniting families over music.



**HANNIBAL BURESS**  
(STORM No. 33)

Comedian **Hannibal Buress** (STORM 33) has just announced a nationwide tour concluding at the [adult swim] Festival in Los Angeles in early October, so get ready to laugh at a city near you!



**MARSHMELLO**  
(STORM No. 39)

EDM star **Marshmello** (STORM 39) surprised fans by dropping his second album *Joytime II*, complete with a live-streamed Fortnite release party. Have a listen and see what all the hype is about!

### **GOOGLE'S NEW VOICE**

John Legend has a new gig. According to Google CEO Sundar Pichai, in the coming year users will be able to select the R&B legend (pun completely intended) as the voice of the Google Assistant in Google Home and Android products.

### **MAMMA MIA! HERE WE GO AGAIN**

Meryl Streep and Amanda Seyfried are back in the sequel to the popular musical *Mamma Mia!* Catch Colin Firth and Pierce Brosnan singing the hits of ABBA, in theaters July 19th.

### **PUMA X JAY-Z**

Not only did Jay-Z just bring fans new music with the surprise release of the album *Everything Is Love*, he's about to broach the world of shoes! The rap superstar has been named the president of PUMA Basketball and will also serve as creative director.

### **COLLECTIBLES AND COMICS GALORE**

A favorite month for many superhero and pop culture fans alike, July means it's time for San Diego Comic-Con. From July 19th-July 22nd get ready for limited-edition artwork, sneak peaks at your favorite shows, and the best activations of the year!

# STORM WARNING

Listen to STORM REPORT artists on:



Watch STORM REPORT artists on:










### STORM has a new formula!

Artists are now given a score out of 100 that takes several factors of music success into account, including streaming, social media influence, and industry support.

Click on the SoundCloud and YouTube icons next to each artist on the chart for featured audio tracks and video performances.

Also, check out our comprehensive Spotify playlist and YouTube playlist by clicking on the buttons above.

## SYMBOL KEY

-  Twitter
-  Facebook
-  YouTube
-  Instagram
-  SoundCloud
-  Genre
-  Similar Artists

# THE 20 ARTISTS ON OUR RADAR

Rank	Artist	Audio/Video	Label	Target Demo	Score
1	A BOOGIE WIT DA HOODIE	 	Atlantic Records	College Kids, 20-Somethings	84
2	JUICE WRLD	 	Interscope Records	Teenagers, College Kids, 20-Somethings	74
3	JACOB SARTORIUS	 	T3 Music Group	Pre-Teens, Teenagers	73
4	CLAIRO	 	Fader Label	Teenagers, College Kids	72
5	CHARLOTTE LAWRENCE	 	Human Re Sources	Teenagers, College Kids, 20-Somethings	70
6	LAKE STREET DIVE	 	Nonesuch Records	20-Somethings, 30-Somethings, Young Professionals	68
7	MADISON MARS	 	Spinnin Records, Musical Freedom, Hexagon Records	Teenagers, College Kids, 20-Somethings	66
8	RAYLAND BAXTER	 	ATO Records	20-Somethings, 30-Somethings	62
9	JAY SOM	 	Polyvinyl Records	Teenagers, College Kids, 20-Somethings	56
10	NICK HAKIM	 	ATO Records	20-Somethings, Young Professionals	55
11	THE INTERRUPTERS	 	Hellcat Records, Pirates Press Records, Epitaph Records	30-Somethings, Young Professionals	54
12	IVY ADARA	 	N/A	Teenagers, College Kids	42
13	RUTHANNE	 	N/A	College Kids, 20-Somethings	32
14	THE OCTOPUS PROJECT	 	Peek-A-Boo Records	20-Somethings, 30-Somethings, Young Professionals	31
15	ENSCHWAY	 	N/A	College Kids, 20-Somethings	30
16	TURQUOISE PRINCE	 	Indie Records	College Kids, 20-Somethings	28
17	ASUKAL	 	Screenager Records	Teenagers, College Kids, 20-Somethings	26
18	GEORDIE KIEFFER	 	N/A	20-Somethings, 30-Somethings, Young Professionals	24
19	SAM JOHNSTON	 	N/A	20-Somethings, 30-Somethings, Young Professionals	18
20	DOUG DELUCA	 	Doug DeLuca, 563338 Records DK	20-Somethings, Young Professionals	15





1

## A BOOGIE WIT DA HOODIE

📺 10.2K 📺 282K 📺 2.5M

🔊 Rap, Hip Hop

© Lil Uzi Vert, Kodak Black

Bronx rapper A Boogie Wit da Hoodie uploaded his first track to the internet just two years ago, and since then he has amassed over 9 million Spotify monthly listeners. In just those short years he has worked with the likes of Kodak Black, Fetty Wap, Trey Sonz, and 21 Savage just to name a few.

Photo by Sarah Kelleren



2

# JUICE WRLD

164K 12K 1M  
Hip Hop, Rap  
© Travis Scott, Post Malone

Juice WRLD has skyrocketed to the forefront of the hip hop scene in a matter of months. After dropping his debut album *Goodbye & Good Riddance* this 19-year-old SoundCloud phenom has already secured himself a place as one of Spotify's Top 100 Artists in the world!

Photo by ASAP Nast

"His melodic rapping is assured, he spins off choruses without any difficulty, and the subject matter—nearly entirely heartbreak and drugs—is earnest. After listening to the project, with his arsenal of skills and sharply honed sound that lands somewhere between Lil Uzi Vert and Post Malone, it's only a matter of time before he has a hit on his hands."  
— Brendan Klinkenberg, *Complex*



3

# JACOB SARTORIUS

1.65M 1.2M 9.2M  
Pop  
© New Hope Club, Cody Simpson

Teen pop sensation Jacob Sartorius is a perfect example of what a powerful tool the internet can be for emerging artists. With millions of followers behind him and a hot new single "Hooked On A Feeling" released just a few weeks ago, Jacob Sartorius is one worth watching.

Photo by Noah Sahady ©2017

# 4 CLAIRO

📷 102K 📺 130K 📷 400K

🔊 Lo-fi pop, electro pop, Bedroom Pop

© Billie Eilish, Mallrat

Lo-fi princess Clairo hit it big with her two viral hits, 2017's "Pretty Girls" and this year's "Flaming Hot Cheetos." The bedroom pop star, born Claire Cottrill, writes songs that dive deep into the psyche of the teenage mind, and her millions of devoted followers only prove how necessary this kind of honesty is in music and art.

Photo by Brooks Sproul ©2018

**JENNIFER'S  
TOP PICK!**

"Pretty Girl" is the sound of a young woman realizing her own worth, and if you don't find that even slightly moving, to paraphrase The Virgin Suicides, you've obviously never been a teenage girl.

— Quinn Moreland,  
*Pitchfork*



# 5 CHARLOTTE LAWRENCE

📷 19K 📺 4.8K 📷 359K

🔊 Pop

© Dua Lipa, Demi Lovato

With her breakout songs "Just The Same" and "Sleep Talking" alone, Los Angeles teen Charlotte Lawrence has already racked up millions of streams. Her infectious melodies paired with strikingly honest and personal lyrics keep pulling us back for more. Check out her debut EP *Young* to experience it for yourself.

Photo by DPR ©2018

6

# LAKE STREET DIVE

318K 142K 75.3K

Southern Rock, Blue-Eyed Soul, Neo-Soul

Valerie June, Elle King

5-piece outfit Lake Street Dive is bringing the world blue-eyed soul that has us itching to sing and dance along. Lead singer Rachael Price's voice is grounded and full of retro tinges that keep listeners engaged and begging for more. With recent performances on both *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert* and *CONAN* this group is everywhere, and we couldn't be happier about it.

Photo by Shervin Lainez



"Rachael Price's voice comes at you like a muscle car of music history, blues and bebop detailing on a classic soul 'n' rock chassis, and her band's latest set comes with songcraft grown tighter and more polished, shrewdly conjuring retro pleasures per usual."

— Will Hermes, *Rolling Stone*

GRACE & CLAIRE'S TOP PICK!

7

# MADISON MARS

6.6K 104.3K 30.5K

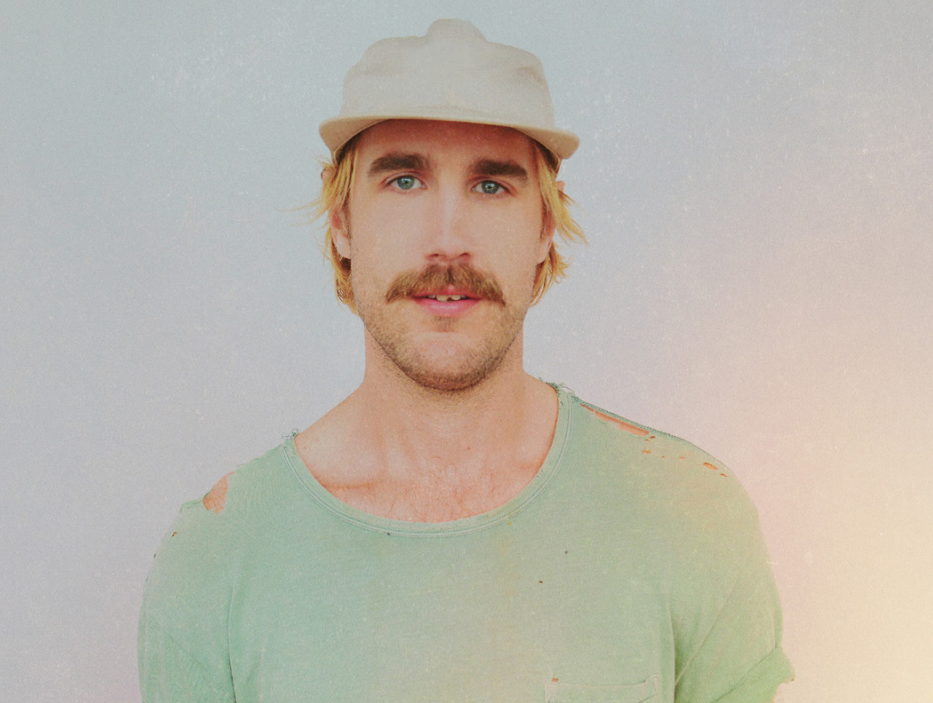
Future House, Big Room House, EDM

Don Diablo, Martin Garrix

Madison Mars is rapidly climbing the EDM charts in popularity not only with fans but also with headlining acts playing his unique future sound. With steady releases on some of the genre's biggest labels, including Spinnin', Musical Freedom, and Atlantic Records, expect to hear Madison Mars' music at festivals around the world all summer long!

Photo by Madison Mars ©2017

IAN'S TOP PICK!



8

## RAYLAND BAXTER

7K 21.2K 21.6K

Americana, Southern Rock

Jamestown Revival, The Avett Brothers

Rayland Baxter is constantly on the road, touring to bring his music to fans everywhere. His soothing guitar and deeply self-reflective lyrics make him that rare combination of relatable and just out of reach. Keep an ear out for his upcoming album *Wide Awake* out on 7/13!

Photo by Shervin Lainez



9

## JAY SOM

9.6K 16.5K 14.5K

Dream Pop, Indie

Soccer Mommy, Alvays

Jay Som is the pseudonym of songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Melina Duterte, who cycled through a variety of names before using the Wu-Tang Names Generator and settling on this moniker. The California native creates the kind of bedroom pop with a lilting melody and lo-fi quality that we have seen become so popular in just the last year. With such a relevant sound, it is safe to expect even more success from this emerging artist

Photo by Ebru Yildiz ©2017



10

## NICK HAKIM

7.3K 23.1K 20.1K

Alternative/Indie

Hiatus Kaiyote, Mac DeMarco

Singer-songwriter and producer Nick Hakim credits a variety of musical influences for his unique style, stating 10 prolific artists as the inspiration for his debut album *Green Twins*. Since that release he has continued to look at music as a way to blend cultures and histories, his most recent track "Vincent Tyler" included.

Photo by Shervin Lainez ©2017



## 11 THE INTERRUPTERS

📺 15.9K 📺 108K 📺 73K

🔊 Ska, Punk, Pop-Punk

© blink-182, Bad Religion

Four-piece outfit The Interrupters is comprised of lead vocalist Aimee Interrupter and the Bivona brothers Kevin, Justin, and Jesse. The group's music is equal parts jarring and infectious. Check out their most recent album *Fight The Good Fight* released just last month, featuring the effortlessly catchy single "She's Kerosene."

Photo by LisaJohnson

## 12 IVY ADARA

📺 923 📺 5.5K 📺 11.4K

🔊 Pop

© Tove Lo, Lorde

Ivy Adara is a singer-songwriter from a land down under. Not only has she collaborated with some of pop's top producers and amassed over 40 million combined songs as a songwriter, her personal singing career is also taking off. Her most recent single "Currency" was featured on New Music Fridays in 8 countries not to mention several pop playlists globally. This pop up-and-comer is currently working on her debut album, so keep a lookout!

Photo by Taylor Niemi ©2018



13

# RUTHANNE

10.2K 4.4K 13.7K

Pop

Christina Perri, Alicia Keys

RuthAnne has already had success as a writer, even winning the ASCAP Songwriter's "Best Pop Song" Award. However, now embarking on her own solo career as a performer, we are seeing a whole new side of this artist. Her melodic songs and impressive range are soothing to the ears and poignant to the heart. Not only should we expect more powerful ballads and quality singles, RuthAnne will be opening for Alanis Morissette live this summer in the UK.

Photo by Barry McCall



14

# THE OCTOPUS PROJECT

5.7K 21.3K 4.5K

Electro Pop

El Ten Eleven, A Flock of Seagulls

The Octopus Project produced hook-heavy self-dubbed electro-psych-pop like you've never heard before. Rotating a wide array of instruments including drums, guitars, electronics, and a Theremin, the group has a unique sound that has made them the ideal regulars on the music festival circuit.

Photo by Rachel Staggs ©2017



## 15 ENSCHWAY

📺 2.5K 📺 15K 📺 8.5K

🔊 Trap, Future Bass

© RL Grime, San Holo

Australian producer Enschway uses modern sounds to produce a unique blend of trap and future bass. His songs vary from lighthearted and upbeat to aggressive and dirty, making him an exciting name to watch as he builds his catalogue.

Photo by Sam Evans ©2016

## 16 TURQUOISE PRINCE

📺 82 📺 6.6K 📺 5.4K

🔊 Hip-Hop

© Miguel, Usher

Turquoise Prince has created a persona for himself, referring to this particular character as his flamboyant and more feminine side, while also taking on the moniker Lolesio The Courageous for his masculine side. He is all about balance, and it shows in his music, with melodic phrases countered by jarring and calculated lyrics.

Photo by Cole Bennetts ©2018







# 17 ASUKAL

📺 N/A 📺 582 📷 1.6K  
🔊 Electro Pop  
© Olivia O'Brien, Hailee Steinfeld

Asukal, which is Tagalog for sugar, is the creation of artist and producer Raquel Undheim. True to the name's meaning, Asukal's electro-candy-pop tracks are sweet and jittery, giving off a light and carefree sound even when the subject matter is very honest. This creates a juxtaposition that creates depth worth listening to beyond the catchy pop nature of her tracks.

Photo by Stephanie Dimiskovski ©2017

"Through every detail, down to the record's name, Purity evokes a sense of a "tarnished" innocence that speaks to finding power in vulnerability."  
— Stephanie Dimiskovski, *Vogue*



# 18 GEORDIE KIEFFER

📺 421 📺 N/A 📷 3.8K  
🔊 Pop  
© Peter Gabriel, Jamiroquai

Geordie Kieffer is making moves. The LA-born musician is set on infusing the scene with his incomparable vibe complete with grit, groove, and sexual satire. The self-described "Agro Pop wizard" has a sound that is simply something you've never heard before, inspiring fist fights and flirtation, anger and elation and straight up melodic infatuation.

Photo by Molly Adams ©2017

19

## SAM JOHNSTON

📺 292 📺 428 📺 1.1K

🔊 Blues, Neo-Soul

© St. Paul and The Broken Bones, Benjamin Booker

Texas-born Sam Johnston takes the phrase "bigger is better" to heart. The singer-songwriter effortlessly incorporates big guitar breaks, big vocal displays, and big-picture subject matters into his track, while managing to keep the music dynamic, a real feat.

Photo by Rachel Fleming ©2018



20

## DOUG DELUCA

📺 296 📺 2.3K 📺 5.6K

🔊 Neo-Soul

© Anderson East, The Record Company

Multi-instrumentalist and vocalist Doug DeLuca is making a name for himself in Los Angeles. With a series shows at some of the coolest venues, he has built quite the following. With both a devoted following and quite a bit of media exposure, including features from *Buzzbands* and *Grimy Goods*, we expect an exceptionally quick rise in popularity from this intelligent artist with a noteworthy, retro sound.

Photo by Zach Bell Photographer ©2018



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Thanks for reading! See you next month.