

Your monthly  
music forecast!

*New Politics:  
Using Music to Broach  
the Political Realm*

*Normani  
Tom Walker  
Justin Jesso  
Noah Kahan  
and more*

 memBrain

# THE STORM REPORT

ISSUE NO. 59  
NOVEMBER 2018



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**On the Cover:**  
YUNGBLUD. Photo by Andrew Whitton ©2018

# 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.

# A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

In perhaps one of the most heated mid-term elections in recent American history, and with so many broad reaching issues like immigration, union labor, and healthcare to consider, the music industry has stepped up its game to motivate eligible voters to get out and vote. As an example, Warped Tour, a festival primarily appealing to teens and young adults, has partnered for the past 3 years with nonpartisan nonprofit HeadCount to encourage young fans to register to vote. Spotify waded into to fray with custom mid-term playlists emailing all voting-eligible Spotify users over the age of 18 with messages encouraging them to go out and vote—linking to a playlist made for the user’s home state, highlighting music that’s uniquely popular there as well as a local polling locator. This month’s issue “Eye of the STORM” explores some of the various intersections between politics and music—and fundamental reasons why these industries have historically been so intertwined. Get out and vote!



Jennifer Sullivan  
President, memBrain  
Editor-in-Chief, The STORM Report

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# New Politics: Using Music to Broach the Political Realm

By Grace Slansky

**November is Coming...** And although that is an accurate calendar assessment, a notice of the fast-approaching Thanksgiving holiday, and a *Game of Thrones* reference, it is above all else a rallying cry to all of our eligible voters.

The midterm election on November 6<sup>th</sup> is an important one, and as such has become the focus of a variety of entertainment and news media. Although political involvement may not be the first thing you associate with your favorite musician, the music industry is by no means taking a back seat in the conversation. Although music and politics appear to be diverging worlds, the two have been intertwined throughout modern history.

## POLITICS IN MUSIC

Music has long been used as a platform for political agenda. In 1969, John Lennon's "Give Peace a Chance" begged listeners to consider alternatives to war and bigotry. In 1971 Marvin Gaye released "What's Going On," a resonant piece of music about the Vietnam War. Decades later during the George W. Bush presidential era, Green Day released "American Idiot." The riotous rock anthem has since been repurposed by some to address the current administration, going so far as to earn the 14-year-old song a place in the Top 40 just a few months ago!

Midway through George W. Bush's term in 2006, popstar P!nk brought fans "Dear Mr. President," recorded with the Indigo Girls. The ballad asked a series of questions pinpointing socio-political issues and moral dilemmas haunting many of the listeners and citizens of the United States. That same year, indie rock outfit Gossip released "Standing In The Way Of Control," a direct response to the proposed Federal Marriage Amendment which would have outlawed gay marriage in the US.

Fast-forward to this year and Childish Gambino's "This is America" which dramatically addressed what the artist described "as a reference to Americans' willingness to protect gun rights over people." Throughout the video, Childish Gambino (aka Donald Glover) addresses the idea of being a black man in America—deliberately juxtaposing decades of popular dance moves with all out violence and chaos for a visceral impact. Also this year, Janelle Monáe released her effortlessly catchy track, "Americans." Although the song does express some discontent with the state of the country, it has elements of national pride and hope for a better America in the future.

Like the optimistic side of Monáe's track, many other songs have focused on the positive attributes of our nation and the reasons to be proud of the country we live in. Music can be utterly patriotic, uniting lovers of a nation by using the greatest common ground, quite literally the ground they live on. Take, for instance, "The Star-Spangled Banner." Our national anthem is a resounding call to honor the wonderful aspects of the United States of America and give thanks for the "land of the free" that we get to live in. Lee Greenwood's "God Bless The USA" is the country singer's biggest claim to fame, gaining popularity at the definitive

showcase, the 1984 Republican National Convention. In more recent pop culture, Miley Cyrus's "Party In The USA" reminded a younger generation to dance about in celebration, teenage girls scream-singing, "Yeeeeeaaahh it's a party in the U-S-A!"

## MUSIC IN POLITICS

Just as politics makes its way into music, with songs of protest and patriotism each in their own right exploring the political climate of the time, music can play an integral role in the operations of politics. This most often occurs when a campaign chooses to associate itself with a particular song, playing it at rallies or in videos.

Songs promoting candidates—or attacking their rivals—have been around since George Washington's second term, but they weren't particularly useful until the election of 1840, when many of the laws that had allowed only landowners to vote were repealed. There was a sizeable influx of voters, but these new participants had little to no education. Music became an important part of getting one's message across to the masses.

Well over a century later, campaign songs were an integrated part of running for office. John F. Kennedy found success with a new version of Frank Sinatra's hit, "High Hopes." Years down the line, Ronald Reagan attempted to claim Bruce Springsteen's "Born In The U.S.A." for his campaign, but was met with significant resistance from Springsteen himself, demonstrating not just how important song choice can be, but how utilizing an artist's work can force them to come forward about their own political beliefs, which may or may not play in the candidate's favor. (Despite its seemingly proud title, the song was actually a condemnation of the state of the nation under Reagan.)

In 1992, Bill Clinton used Fleetwood Mac's "Don't Stop," and it was met with such positivity from even the band that, even though they were split up at the time, they reunited to play at President Clinton's inaugural ball. Almost a quarter of a century later, Hilary Clinton used "Fight Song" by Rachel Platten (STORM 27) to rally her supporters. The song was on the Billboard chart for a total of 39 weeks, and received plenty of radio play on top of the political media coverage.

## GETTING ACTIVE!

Although music is ingrained in politics and vice versa, it is still crucial to be proactive in using both platforms. The nonpartisan nonprofit **Rock The Vote** was created to help build the political power of younger generations. The organization was founded in 1990 by a group of music executives who engaged the youth of the nation with a "Censorship is Un-American" campaign made possible by MTV. Since then, Rock The Vote has been dedicated to building collective power by using art and pop culture to engage younger and younger audiences in politics. In 2016, along with 900 partners, they processed over 1.7M voter registrations. They

place particular emphasis on first-time voters and those who, due to a variety of circumstances, are less likely to register and turn out to vote. This commitment to making a palpable change in the voices that are heard is proof of the immense power at the intersection of art and politics. Each on their own may be powerful and immense, but together they gain a certain clarity and ability to instigate real change.

It's not just the executives who are getting involved. Musicians themselves are speaking out more and more about their own personal political beliefs. Artists are harnessing their personal platform and fanbase to spread messages they believe in, urging fans to engage in the political discussion. Most recently, we have seen Kanye West and Taylor Swift once again on different sides of a debate. However, this time it is not inherently self-absorbed. West, in a seemingly unrehearsed display on *SNL*, announced his support for President Trump and his intent to run for President of the United States in 2020. Swift, on the other hand, has come forward in support of the Democratic Party after years of silence regarding her personal political beliefs, even using her recent performance at the American Music Awards as a podium for encouraging fans to vote. Trump responded to Swift's apparent support for Democratic candidates by saying that he likes Taylor Swift's music "about 25 percent less." Although it is not edifying that we have yet another Swift-West feud gracing the media, it is worth acknowledging that the two musicians have brought even the gossip columns back around to discussing politics.

Music is an undeniably powerful tool, capable of making a campaign or spreading awareness of an issue. It evokes emotion, something many politicians strive for in their speeches, making it a valuable aspect of what musicians have to offer. Although we classify music as entertainment, and politics as something serious, the lines are not so easily defined. Instead of working to separate the two into categories that may seem easier to comprehend, it is more effective to celebrate the crossover, allowing two powerful forces in American pop culture to aid each other working towards a common goal: a better future. And, of course, don't forget to vote!



# STORM TRACKER

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



**JUICE WRLD**  
(STORM No. 55)

Future (STORM No. 36) and 19-year-old **Juice WRLD** rang in a new #1 on the Billboard Top R&B/Hip Hop Albums chart for "Future & Juice WRLD Present...WRLD on Drugs," giving Juice WRLD his first #1 on the list. Juice WRLD is rumored to have multiple collabs in the works with Lil Yachty and Marda Beatz.



**SHAWN MENDES**  
(STORM No. 20)

20-year-old **Shawn Mendes** recently collaborated with Zedd for a remix of his new song "Lost in Japan" and created a video in tribute to his favorite Bill Murray film, *Lost in Translation*. Zedd even joined in on the fun, making an appearance in the karaoke room. A **behind-the-scenes video** was recently released via Billboard.com and includes some of the hilarious outtakes from the shoot.



**GRETA VAN FLEET**  
(STORM No. 50)

**Greta Van Fleet's** debut album *Anthem of the Peaceful Army* premiered atop both Billboard's Top Rock Albums and Hard Rock Albums charts with 87,000 equivalent album units earned, according to Nielsen Music. GVF is the first band since March 2013 to have a debut LP command the Top Rock Albums chart.



**ELLA MAI**  
(STORM No. 46)

**Ella Mai** has been confirmed to appear alongside Diana Ross, John Legend, Martina McBride, Bad Bunny, and Kane Brown at Macy's 92nd annual Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City on November 22.

Events and happenings for your radar.

## MACY'S THANKSGIVING DAY PARADE

Just like that, in a blink of an eye, it is time for the world's largest parade to make its annual return for its 94th time around NYC! This year's performers include STORM artists Ella Mai (STORM No. 46) and Bazzi (STORM No. 54) alongside legendary performers, such as Diana Ross and Martina McBride. Natti Natasha (STORM #57), Ozuna (STORM #48), and Migos (STORM #26).

## 'TIS THE SEASON

The holiday season is upon us and that means that it's already time to deck the halls and stuff those stockings! Black Friday is November 23, 2018, the day after Thanksgiving—and it is traditionally the busiest shopping day of the year. But this year, look for month-long promotions in-store and on-line with retailers like Target, Best Buy, Costco, and Amazon promoting their special offers earlier than ever before.

## TOP TOYS 2018

The biggest toy sellers (Target, Walmart, JCPenney and Amazon—RIP Toys “R” Us) have announced their hottest toys of the year—which are likely to be at the top of many family wish lists. Among the frontrunners are FurReal Critters (Munchin' Rex, Rock-A-Too and more), WowWee Fingerlings HUGS, L.O.L Surprise! Bigger Surprise!, Hatchimals (they're BA-ACK), and Sesame Street Playskool Friends Let's Dance Elmo. It's officially time to make that list and check it twice!

## JINGLE BALL ROCKS!

The annual iHeartRadio Jingle Ball Tour returns this year with stops in 12 cities, including Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York and more. For the past 22 years, iHeartMedia stations across the country have hosted Jingle Ball concerts in local cities that bring together top recording artists of the year all onto one stage. Different artists will perform at the various venues, including Shawn Mendes (STORM No. 20), Cardi B, Calvin Harris, Khalid (STORM No. 47), Dua Lipa (STORM No. 39), 5 Seconds of Summer (STORM No. 15), Camila Cabello, Marshmello (STORM No. 39), The Chainsmokers (STORM No. 14), and many more.

# 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
-  Instagram
-  SoundCloud
-  Spotify
-  YouTube
-  Genre
-  Similar Artists

# THE 20 ARTISTS ON OUR RADAR

Rank	Artist	Audio/Video	Label	Target Demo	Score
1	NORMANI	 	Epic Records, Syco, Syco Music, RCA Records, Roc Nation	Teenagers, Young Adults	45
2	TOM WALKER	 	Relentless Records	Young Adults, 30-somethings	43
3	JUSTIN JESSO	 	Ultra Records, LLC	Teenagers, Young Adults	39
4	NOAH KAHAN	 	Republic Records	Young professionals, 30-somethings	38
5	ZAK ABEL	 	Atlantic Records	Teenagers, Young Adults	38
6	BÜLOW	 	Republic Records	Teenagers, Young Adults	36
7	MR. EAZI	 	Universal Africa	Teenagers, Young Adults	36
8	DREAMERS	 	Hollywood Records	Teenagers	34
9	SASHA SLOAN	 	RCA Records	Teenagers, Young Adults	34
10	VÉRITÉ	 	Independent	Teenagers, Young Adults	33
11	KING COMBS	 	Epic Records BadBoy Entertainment	Teenagers, Young Adults	33
12	BEN&BEN	 	Sindikato, Warner Music Group	Young Adults, 30-somethings	31
13	KIM VIERA	 	Republic Records	Young Adults, 30-somethings	30
14	BLACK ATLASS	 	Republic Records	Young professionals, 30-somethings	29
15	GARDINER SISTERS	 	Unsigned	Teenagers	25
16	AIDAN ALEXANDER	 	Independent	Teenagers, Young Adults	23
17	CALL ME LOOP	 	M:UK	Teenagers, Young Adults	23
18	CONAN GRAY	 	Republic Records	Teenagers, Young Adults	21
19	DANSU	 	ThisTime Records (JAPAN)	Young Adults	17
20	STEFAN JAMES	 	Republic Records	Teenagers, Young Adults	17



IAN'S  
TOP PICK!

# 1 NORMANI

📺 2.4M 📺 223K 📺 3.7M  
🔊 Pop  
© Ella Mai, SZA

22-year-old Normani got her start with girl group Fifth Harmony and has since gone solo. In 2017, Normani was a contestant on the hit reality TV show *Dancing with the Stars*. Her solo career took off after her feature on Khalid's song titled "Love Lies" which is on the soundtrack of the 2018 movie *Love, Simon*.

Photo by Dennis Leupold ©2018



2

## TOM WALKER

📺 14.8K 📺 57K 📺 68.5K

🔊 Indie Folk, Indie Pop, Indie Rock

🎧 X-Ambassadors, Banners

Scottish Relentless Records singer-songwriter Tom Walker has appeared on NBC's *Today Show* and was named as one of the new additions to the BBC Radio 1 "Brit List" in the summer of 2017. He has performed alongside George Ezra and The Script.

Photo by Simon Emmett ©2018

"Tom Walker is your new favourite singer."  
— GQ



3

## JUSTIN JESSO

📺 2.7K 📺 28K 📺 40.4K

🔊 Pop, Dance, Electronic

🎧 Nick Jonas, Max Schneider

Grammy-nominated vocalist Justin Jesso hit the charts earlier this year with his feature on Kygo's single, "Stargazing". He has performed alongside Kygo at places like Coachella and other music festivals.

Photo by Connor Brashier ©2018

4

# NOAH KAHAN

4.7K 13.3K 24.5K

Pop, Alt Rock

Vance Joy, Mike Posner



5

# ZAK ABEL

23.3K 41.2K 63.9K

Pop, Tropical, Soul

Alex Clare, Jack Garrett



Vermont native Noah Kahan began playing the guitar and writing music at the age of 12. He recently made an appearance on *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert* performing his single "Hurt Somebody" which features Julia Michaels (STORM No. 46).

Photo by Alaina Mullin ©2016

Previously an English Cadet national table tennis champion, Zak Abel is best known for his featured appearance on the UK top 20 hit "Unmissable" with Gorgon City which ranked No. 19 on the UK Singles Chart, #5 on UK Dance, and #16 in Scotland.

Photo by Charlie Cummings ©2018



## 6 BÜLOW

3.2K 5.5K 31.8K

Alt Pop Daya, Julia Michaels

Born in Germany, Canadian pop artist Bülow was discovered at a summer camp in 2016. She was given the title "New Artist of the Week" in November 2017 by Apple Music Canada.

Photo provided by Management ©2018

## 7 MR. EAZI

262K 505K 1.6M

Afrobeat Wizkid, Castro

Nigerian singer-songwriter Mr. Eazi is a pioneer of Banku music, which is a mixture of Ghanaian highlife and Nigerian chord progressions. Mr. Eazi is signed to Universal Africa. He recently accompanied J Balvin on his "Vibras" tour.

Photo by Emily Nkanga ©2018

## 8 DREAMERS

14.2K 20K 18.3K

Pop Rock, Alt Rock

Surfer Blood, Joy Division

Signed by Hollywood Records, DREAMERS an American pop rock trio based in Los Angeles. From small venues to arenas to music festivals like Lollapalooza, Bumbershoot, and Firefly, DREAMERS have opened for the likes of Stone Temple Pilots, Atlas Genius, Young Rising Sons, and New Politics. They are releasing a trio of EPs in 2018.

Photo by Dana Trippe ©2018

"Vocalist Nick Wold's romantic lyricism draws on classic 90's rock nostalgia with it's anthemic sensibilities and irresistibly catchy pop-fuelled hooks."  
—Born Music Online

JENNIFER'S TOP PICK!



## 9 SASHA SLOAN

9K 5K 42.6K

Rock, Pop

King Princess, Kailee Morgue



Sasha Sloan is a singer-songwriter from Boston, MA. who has written and appeared on tracks with Kygo, Odesza, and King Henry. Sasha began songwriting at 10 and her passion drove her to attend Berklee College of Music in her late teens.

Photo provided by label ©2018

## 10 VÉRITÉ

18.3K 49K 40K

Indie Pop, Alt Rock, Electropop

Ryn Weaver, Phoebe Ryan



Kelsey Byrne, famously known as Vérité, is a singer-songwriter from NY. Her self-released 2014 single "Strange Enough" reached number one on Hype Machine and got her to become the #1 Most Viral Twitter Artist of the week during the release week. She has toured all over the world including events like SXSW, Firefly, and Lollapalooza.

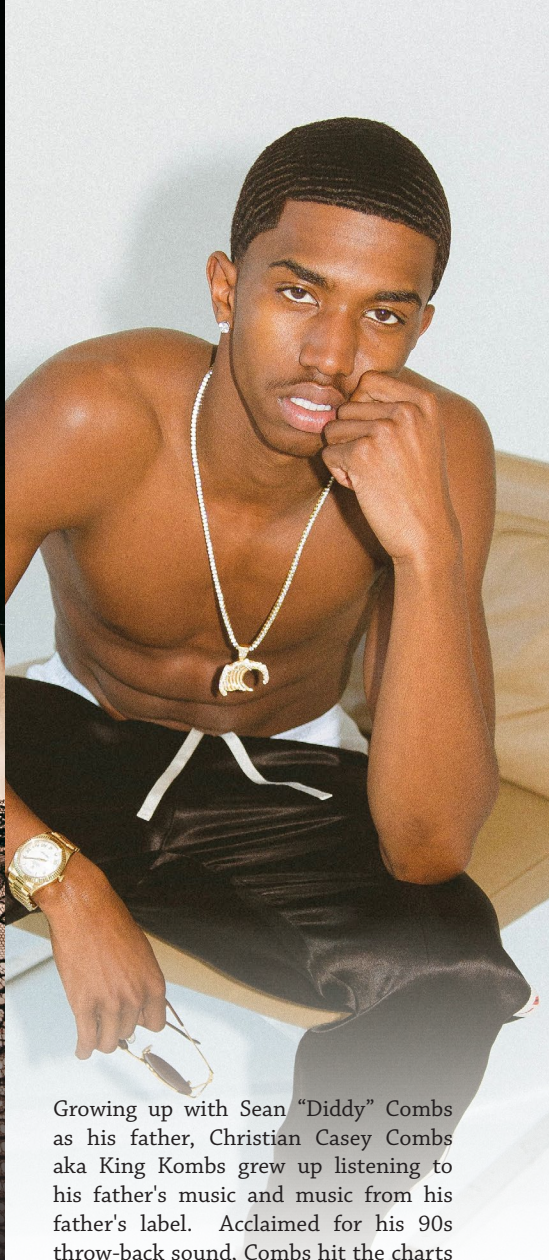
Photo by Eric Ryan Anderson ©2017

## 11 KING COMBS

33.3K 94K 1.5M

Hip-Hop, Rap

Mase, The Notorious B.I.G.



Growing up with Sean "Diddy" Combs as his father, Christian Casey Combs aka King Kombs grew up listening to his father's music and music from his father's label. Acclaimed for his 90s throw-back sound, Combs hit the charts with his Chris Brown-featured track titled "Love You Better" which has 6M+ streams on Spotify. Also a sought-after model, King Combs is a spokesperson and brand ambassador for Ciroc, Dolce & Gabbana, Tommy Hilfiger, among other brands.

Photo provided by label ©2018



12

## BEN&BEN

📺 156K 📺 186K 📺 55.3K

🔊 Indie Pop, Folk, Pop 📄 Shawn Mendes, IV of Spades

Led by twin singer-songwriters, Paolo and Miguel Guico, the band was formerly called The Benjamins. Today, Ben&Ben is an indie folk band signed by Warner Music Philippines which consists of 9 members with fans around the world thanks to YouTube.

Photo by Oscar Villadolid II ©2018



# 13 KIM VIERA

1.7K 4.9K 32.1K

Pop

© Jennifer Lopez, Shakira

Puerto Rican singer, Kim Viera's mother was a backup singer for famous Latin artists and her father ran a live production company. Kim most recently gained attention for her collaboration with Daddy Yankee on her new single titled "Como". Kim is also the vocalist behind the single "Tribe" on the *Pitch Perfect 3* soundtrack.

Photo provided by management ©2018

# 14 BLACK ATLASS

6.8K 22K 46.3K

Dance, Electronic

© The Weeknd, James Blake

Canadian singer Alexander Fleming, famously known as Black Atlass, is the new face of Fashion and R&B. He is the mastermind behind the *Fifty Shades Freed* song "Sacrifice" featuring Jessie Reyez (STORM No. 46).

Photo provided by management ©2018

**NATALIE'S  
TOP PICK!**

"Signed by his idol The Weeknd and often thinking "What would my favorite film directors do?", Black Atlass stands poised to bring R&B to another dimension in 2018."  
— *The Prelude Press*



15

## GARDINER SISTERS

📺 19.4K 📺 274K 📺 38K

🔊 Pop © Cimorelli

North Carolina's Gardiner Sisters are best known for their covers and mash-ups of today's latest hits. The sisters have over 80 million views on YouTube and are one of the most popular independent music artists on Spotify with over 120 million plays.

Photo by Jordynn Buehner ©2017

16

## AIDAN ALEXANDER

📺 251K 📺 11.8K 📺 906K

🔊 Pop © Charlie Puth, Ruel

Aidan Alexander began his career as an actor, starring in movies, such as *Red Wing* and TV shows like *Baby Doll Records*. With his debut single and EP "I Don't Love You" drawing inspiration from a variety of artists including Robyn, Fleetwood Mac, Frank Sinatra, and Lorde, and a strong social media following, Aidan is a multi-talented pop star on the rise.

Photo by Nick DeLieto ©2018



17

## CALL ME LOOP

📺 1.6K 📺 8.2K 📺 5.7K

🔊 Pop © Charli XCX, Halsey

Georgia Buchanan, better known as Call Me Loop, is a singer songwriter from the UK who writes songs best when she is in heartbreak or sadness. Despite the context of her music, her songs are very upbeat and pulls you out of that funk you are in.

Photo by Misha Meghna ©2018





18

# CONAN GRAY

📺 171K 📺 N/A 📷 410K

🔊 Indie Pop

© Troye Sivan, Declan McKenna

19 year old Conan Gray began his career on YouTube. His content is focused on covers of famous songs and also his daily life through vlogging. He produces his videos with messages about feeling liberated to be himself.

Photo by Amy Geis ©2018





"Like a more subtle, but not less funky, Two Door Cinema Club...as far as indie pop goes, this is an absolute winner."

—Indie Shuffle

19

## DANSU

📺 98 📱 1.8K 📷 349

🔊 Indie Pop

© Two Door Cinema Club, Walk the Moon

DANSU is an indie electro pop group from Amsterdam who have toured Canada, Sweden, Germany, and the Netherlands. Their catchy music has made it to Spotify's Global Viral Top 50 and Fresh Finds playlists.

Photo by Maurits Nienhuis ©2018

20

## STEFAN JAMES

📺 32.4K 📱 16K 📷 41.8K

🔊 R&B/Soul

© Khalid, The Weeknd

20-year-old R&B singer, songwriter and producer Stefan James recently released his debut single "Situation" on Republic Records, contrasting delicate instrumentation against Stefan's signature R&B falsetto. His music reflects dealing with addiction and substance abuse, as well as the tragic loss of his older brother.

Photo provided by management ©2018

"I've been there. When you're feeling down, just put a couple of my songs on and cry or smile. Whatever you have to do to get through that moment. You're not alone."

—Stefan James

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