

Your Monthly
Music Forecast!

**MUSIC FOR
YOUR EYES:**
*The Power of
Artist x Musician
Collaborations*

Zoe Wees
JESSIA
Royal & The Serpent
Emmit Fenn
...and more!



 memBrain

STORM REPORT

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buzzworthy bands and artists on our radar.*

On the Cover:

Tayla Parks. Photo from Atlantic Records ©2020

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.

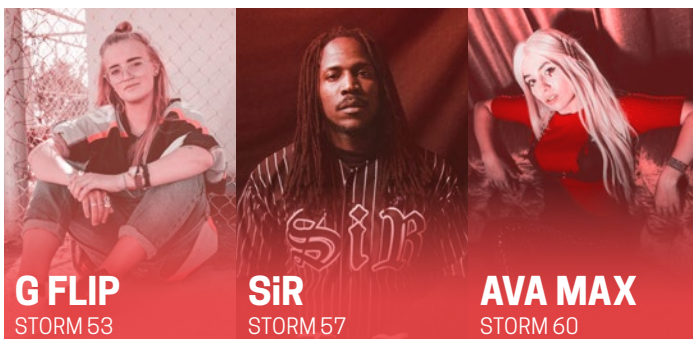
A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Musician have collaborated with visual artists for decades on everything from album art and concert posters to music videos and fashion collections. And from breakthrough collabs like the one between comic book artist Jamie Hewlett and Blur's Damon Albarn for the creation of the Grammy-award winning band Gorillaz in the late 90s, to Travis Scott performing as an avatar within the videogame Fortnite in 2020, the way that we think about art's role in music continues to evolve and grow. Of course it is also worth noting that in a competitive and crowded marketplace, visual art is yet another way for emerging music artists to rise above the din. This is an aspect of the music and art worlds we expect will grow in 2021 and beyond - and that's music to our ears (and eyes)!



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**EYE
OF THE
STORM**

*Billie Eilish and artist collaborator Takashi Murakami
Photo by Jordan Strauss/AP Images*

Music For Your Eyes: The Power of Artist x Musician Collaborations

By Grace Slansky

What do you think of when you hear “artist”? The STORM Report is dedicated to highlighting up-and-coming artists in the world of music, but these musicians are just one working part of the artistic puzzle. Often we take extra care to make distinctions between musicians and visual artists, but in reality, the two work hand in hand; particularly in the post-MTV era, where music is experienced not only sonically, but also visually.

The symbiotic relationship between visual artist and musician encompasses so much beyond the idea that both are creative outlets. Although there is a myriad of work that results from the crossover between musicians and painters, sculptors, cartoonists, etc., the most obvious is the harmonious relationship between album artwork and the album itself, the

musician and designer working together with the end result being one fluid experience. We’ve seen the effects of this for decades.

When you hear Velvet Underground, you will undoubtedly think of Andy Warhol. When you hear “Dark Side of the Moon” the iconic prism imagery no doubt comes to mind. What might not be at the forefront of your mind is the part that Hipgnosis—the moniker for design pairing Storm Thorgerson and Aubrey Powell—played in its creation. Although the art and the tracks work together to create the Pink Floyd experience, it’s thanks to Thorgerson and Powell that the album has such visual staying power. Just as with graphic designers and company logos, artists serve as a branding tool, creating a lasting impression for listeners by engaging more than just one sense.

This blending of artistic styles to create an album that ultimately has more staying power has been going on for decades, but it is not just the classics that have care, consideration, and collaboration behind their album artwork. Take for instance Don Toliver's *Heaven or Hell*. The highly popular 2020 hip hop, trap, and R&B album featured a handful of high profile musicians including Travis Scott, Offset, and Quavo, but one of the most memorable aspects of this very well-reviewed album is the western-style hand-painted artwork by illustrator Matt McCormick. With the album's strong and aggressive songs, the painting featuring a roadside sign advertising Heaven and a detailed broken-down car labeled Hell on a sparing background provides a delicate contrast, bringing well-thought-out juxtaposition to the album.

Collaborations between musicians and visual artists are mutually beneficial. Artist Isaac Pelayo has seen firsthand how powerful an image can be on both sides. A classically trained artist, 24-year-old Pelayo started his career honing in his hyper-realistic skills, painting like his Renaissance inspirations until one year ago. Although he had an established relationship with rapper Westside Gunn, he was in a rut, faced with painter's block, quarantine fatigue, and the reality that Westside Gunn already had all of his album artwork lined up for *Pray for Paris*, a project Pelayo had hoped to contribute to. With nothing to lose, he let go of some of his rigid ideas about painting and transformed a spare canvas into the first piece of "Street Baroque." The result of that one fateful night changed the course of his career forever. Finishing the piece, he texted a photo to Westside Gunn, who decided to incorporate it into the album despite previous plans and sold 100 prints almost immediately.

The mutually beneficial relationship doesn't stop there. Westside Gunn has just opened his hybrid art gallery-swap shop-toy store, Buffalo Kids, and is taking Pelayo along for the ride, displaying 17 of his original pieces right off the bat. Thanks to his own inspiration and his partnership with the rapper, Isaac Pelayo has seen a meteoric rise, gaining support and adoration for the style he hopes to one day coin "Pelayoism." Isaac himself is an aspiring rapper, and thanks to his arsenal of skills, has taken to designing his own album artwork as well.

Isaac is certainly not the first to take advantage of his varying artistic skills. He's the next in a long line of very talented people who have been able to leverage their multi-talented nature to generate both the visual and audio aspects of a cohesive experience. Grouplove singer Hannah Hooper designs the band's cover art, painting intricate images of people with dotted paint that have helped to mold the group's entire aesthetic. She prides herself on being an artist and displays her work in galleries while progressing her music career. The "you can have it all" mentality is strong among musicians who are visual artists and vice versa.

Grimes (STORM 1 and 21 Cover Artist), who cannot be confined to a genre, has made a career based entirely on providing an experience. The musical experience is something otherworldly, but thanks to her visual artistry the experience goes beyond that. Grimes curates visuals for each album, creating something as unique as her music, but she too has taken the leap past album covers to the world of galleries. In 2020, when live music was put on hold, Grimes pivoted to the art scene, putting up not one but two virtual shows! When asked about the experience she said, "I made art ten, twelve years before I ever touched a keyboard. I see myself as a visual artist first and foremost, and I've always felt strange that people know me for music." And she's not the only famous musician to think this way. Joni Mitchell famously said she was a painter first and a singer second.

Perhaps one of the most prolific artists to collaborate with musicians today is Japanese contemporary artist and founder of the "Superflat" movement Takashi Murakami, whose vibrantly colored compositions have inspired collabs with Kanye West (most notable for his 2007 album *Graduation*, as well as for West x Kid Cudi's *Kids See Ghosts*), J Balvin, Pharrell Williams, and Billie Eilish. Murakami is an expert at blurring the lines between the elitist concepts of "high art" and commercial consumption, most clearly demonstrated by his collaborations with Louis Vuitton.

The artists elevate the musical experience, and in return the music industry has supported the artists. Musicians are some of the most prominent collectors, showing off their findings on social media and generally hyping up visual artists in a way only someone with their massive platform can. Swizz Beatz is the perfect example. Not only has he amassed a remarkable collection on his own, but he has rallied his friends and the industry behind him, most notably helping to popularize Basquiat among the Hip Hop scene.

Just as Basquiat imagery made its way to the heart of the hip hop movements, visual artists permeate music down to the very lyrics. Take David Bowie's "Andy Warhol" or Lady Gaga's "Applause" in which she sings, "One second I'm a Koons, then suddenly the Koons is me." We think of musicians as being at the forefront of pop culture, but visual art and the artists who create it is still hugely important. Music and art can work in perfect harmony to create an experience greater than the sum of its parts, giving audiences an added layer of depth to unpack. These cross-functional collaborations demonstrate how powerful stimulating multiple senses can be in creating something with true staying power.



STORM TRACKER

Tracking Our STORM Report Alumni!



JACOB COLLIER

(STORM No. 46)

With 4 GRAMMY nominations as performer, producer, engineer, and arranger, **Jacob Collier** is having a breakout year. Having demonstrated his talent across so many creative roles in the industry, Collier has proved he is a force to be reckoned with.



SAWEETIE

(STORM No. 53)

With so many hits in the last two years, its no surprise that **Saweetie** has made the 2021 Forbes 30 under 30 list. This is thanks in part to the launch of her jewelry company, ICY.



BAAUER

(STORM No. 1)

Brooklyn-based DJ/Producer **Baauer** found viral fame in 2012 with the "Harlem Shake." Now, over 8 years later, he has his first GRAMMY nomination. His album, PLANET'S MAD, is nominated for Best Dance/Electronic Album.

STORM FORECAST

Events And
Happenings
For Your Radar

SXSW FROM HOME!

March 16-March 20

In person festivals are still a ways away, but that doesn't mean your favorite events aren't happening. Thanks to the new online model, you can watch SXSW from your own home. Complete with panels, films, and of course musicians the entirety of the programming is available to watch anywhere you have a strong wi-fi connection.

ANTICIPATED ALBUMS!

2021 has promised us many long-awaited albums from our favorite artists, and the next month or so is bringing us a few of the big ones! On March 5th Kings of Leon's first album in almost 5 years, *When You See Yourself* is dropping. Then, on March 19th catch Lana Del Rey's *Chemtrails Over the Country Club*. April promises to bring Drake's new *Certified Lover Boy* with an official date yet to come.

ACADEMY AWARD NOMINATIONS

March 15

Award season is upon us! With the Golden Globes behind us and the GRAMMYS the award show buzz is in full swing. While we've got the actual shows on our calendars, don't forget about the Academy Award nominations, announced on March 15th. With so many wonderful original songs including "Fight For You" from STORM alum H.E.R. (50), we can't wait to see who's going to be up for the big award!

MUSIC DOCUMENTARIES FOR YOUR STREAMING PLEASURE

Blockbusters aren't the only movies that have shifted to a streaming release! Music documentaries are also available from the comfort of your couch! Garnering the most buzz is the Billie Eilish documentary, *The World's a Little Blurry* available now on Apple TV+, but that's not all! Demi Lovato's documentary series *Dancing With the Devil* is available on YouTube starting March 23rd and Questloves' *Summer of Soul (...Or, Why the Revolution Could Not Be Televised)*, a doc about the Harlem Cultural Festival is following shortly behind with a hulu release date on the way!

STORM WARNING

The 20 Artists On Our Radar

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 **Spotify** 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
-  Spotify
-  YouTube
-  Genre
-  Similar Artists

RANK	ARTIST	AUDIO/VIDEO	LABEL	TARGET DEMO	SPOTIFY MONTHLIES
1	ZOE WEES	 	Capitol	20-Somethings, Young Adults	7.5M
2	JESSIA	 	Independent	Teenagers, 20-Somethings	5.7M
3	ROYAL & THE SERPENT	 	Atlantic Records	20-Somethings, 30-Somethings, Professionals	2.2M
4	EMMIT FENN	 	TH3RD BRAIN	20-Somethings, Young Adults	1.6M
5	KENNYHOOLA	 	Arista Records	20-Somethings, Young Adults	1.2M
6	CAROLINE POLACHEK	 	Perpetual Novice	20-Somethings, Young Adults	1.1M
7	LØLØ	 	Independent	Teenagers, 20-Somethings	613K
8	TAYLA PARX	 	Atlantic Records	Teenagers, 20-Somethings, Young Adults	347K
9	SARAH BARRIOS	 	Visionary Records/ Arista	Teenagers, 20-Somethings	290K
10	MILCK	 	Atlantic Records	30-Somethings, Professionals	237K
11	CHINCHILLA	 	Independent	Teenagers, 20-Somethings	231K
12	SQUID	 	Warp Records	20-Somethings, 30-Somethings	215K
13	LUBALIN	 	Cult Nation	20-Somethings, Young Adults	190K
14	ARAYA	 	Independent	20-Somethings, Young Adults	188K
15	WALLICE	 	Independent	Teenagers, Young Adults	129K
16	PVA	 	Big Dada	20-Somethings, Young Adults	75.9K
17	TV PRIEST	 	Sub Pop Records	20-Somethings, 30-Somethings	74.4K
18	KEE'AHN	 	Independent	Teenagers, 20-Somethings, Young Adults	43.4K
19	SAY SUE ME	 	Damnably	20-Somethings, 30-Somethings	30.5K
20	ODDNOTE	 	Independent	20-Somethings, Young Adults, 30-Somethings	27.9K

1 ZOE WEES



"With a range that goes from raspy low to unbelievably powerful and sky high, Wees is an artist to watch right now, showing her artistic ability through both her incredible voice and handwritten lyrics."
—Camila Barbedo
POPSUGAR

**ROBERT'S
TOP PICK!**

🐦 1.9K 📘 17.3K 📷 256K 🎧 Indie Pop 🎵 Sia, Rihanna
German singer-songwriter Zoe Wees saw a meteoric rise to fame with her debut single "Control," which charted on Spotify's Viral 50 in several different countries. Her voice resonates as does the emotional tone of her work which is incredibly raw and insightful for someone who is only 18, stemming from her childhood struggle with benign rolandic epilepsy (BRE).
Photo by Phil Gladsome ©2021



2 JESSIA

 239  4.7K  21.5K  Pop

© Anne-Marie, Meghan Trainor

Another artist with a viral hit that has sky-rocketed her to notoriety, JESSIA has seen over 20 million Spotify streams on her song "I'm Not Pretty" in the less than three months since it dropped. Self-described as "unpolished and unapologetic," JESSIA is a pop-vocal talent relying on her own intuition and a fresh perspective.

Photo by Red Umbrella P.R. ©2020



3 ROYAL & THE SERPENT

1.4K 2.5K 18.7K

Alt Pop, Pop Billie Eilish, Tones and I

Royal & the Serpent is the moniker of New Jersey-native Ryan Santiago, a name she has explained translates "Me + My Ego." Her breakout hit, "Overwhelmed" is yet another example of the massive power of Tik Tok when it comes to making stars, with over 4.3 million videos set to the bouncy electronic beats and grounded lyrics. Photo provided by management ©2021



4 EMMIT FENN

🐦 2.3K 📺 11K 📷 33.1K 🎧 Alternative, Alt Pop 🎵 Jack Garratt, Sam Smith

Emmit Fenn is not only just a talented musician and producer with truly impressive piano and guitar abilities, but also prime example of adaptable and considerate artists. Possibly most impressive--which is difficult to determine when you're vying with his melodic tracks and instrumental prowess--is his dedication to engaging with his fans, even going to far as to put out an album of new songs every week for interested fans when his scheduled album release was delayed. Photo by Monroe Alvarez ©2020

5 KENNYHOOPLA



"On this debut EP, KennyHoopla dives without pretension into the thrill of spilling your guts on the page while taking on any genre or style that feels right. There's nothing to be sorry for."

—Will Richards
NME

🐦 8.9K 📘 8K 📷 43.2K 🎧 Alternative 🎯 Kings of Leon, Fall Out Boy

KennyHoopla takes the style of mid-00s indie, usually seeped in irony, and turns it into something incredibly earnest. With an ever changing process and little-to-no guitar base knowledge, the anthemic songs KennyHoopla brings us are even more impressive and truly indicative of his innate artistry. Photo by Brittany Young ©2021

6 CAROLINE POLACHEK



🐦 50.1K 📘 42.9K 📷 161K

🎧 Indie Pop, Electro-Pop 🎯 Dua Lipa, Dido

From a young age, Devon Gilfillian was drawn to music that stimulated his mind and made his body move. With that in mind he set out to make music, and has created just that. His tracks combine thoughtful lyrics with infectious grooves. If that's not enough to reel you in, he just released two christmas tracks so he's a seasonal listen as well!

Photo by Nedda Asfari ©2020



7 LØLØ

📺 1.2K 📺 5.1K 📺 23.7K

🎵 Indie Pop 🎵 Halsey, Taylor Swift

LØLØ brings to attention things listeners might not want to focus on, but she does it with such poignant lyrics and beautiful melodies that you can't help but listen again and again. Under the guise of candy-coated pop she sings as if Spotify is her own personal diary, and not a platform where fans can hear her songs millions of times.

Photo by Justin Alexis ©2020






**JENNIFER'S
TOP PICK!**



8 TAYLA PARX

 131.7K  136K  227K  Pop  Ariana Grande, Janelle Monáe

Hauskey--Andy to those who know him personally--is a writer, producer, and performer from Perth, Australia. Although he's releasing work that he hopes will change both his life and yours, his realistic outlook and casual demeanor are grounding. Described as Pop with a Purpose, Hauskey's music is relatable and catchy, and although he's hesitant to say so, it's going places. Photo by Joey James ©2021

9 SARAH BARRIOS

 N/A  29K  23.8K

 Pop  Duffy, Tones and I



Sarah Barrios is a singer and songwriter who is known for her infectious melodies and witty lyricism. With a retro quality to her voice and a modern approach to pop, Sarah Barrios creates compelling contrast in every song, attracting collaborations with musicians across genres and style including Bonnie McKee, Why Don't We, Gryffin, Gladius, Becky G, Aaron Zuckerman, and Bipolar Sunshine just to name a few.

Photo by Noah Barrios ©2020





10 MILCK

 10.5K  40.9K  38.5K  Singer/Songwriter  Sara Bareilles, Lady Gaga

Multi-instrumentalist and singer-songwriter MILCK sees music as a sanctuary, freeing herself from societal pressures and the internalized need to "be enough" that so many of us understand. Her life took a complete turn when a video of her singing at the Women's March in 2017 went viral and "Quiet" was named Billboard's #1 protest track of the year with echos from groups around the world. With such a meaningful start, MILCK continues to use music as a means of social justice, pouring out beautiful songs with poignant messages. Photo by Eric Williams ©2021

11 CHINCHILLA



🐦 591 📺 1.3K 📷 14.1K 🎧 Dance © Icona Pop, FKA Twigs

CHINCHILLA is mastering dancable beats and vocals strong enough to keep up. Her tracks feature grooves and rhythms that have you itching to get up and dance. To make dance music that is relevant even when clubs are closed is a feat in itself, let alone strikingly poignant and uplifting music like her latest track "The Lockdown Getdown." Photo by Josh Stiles ©2020



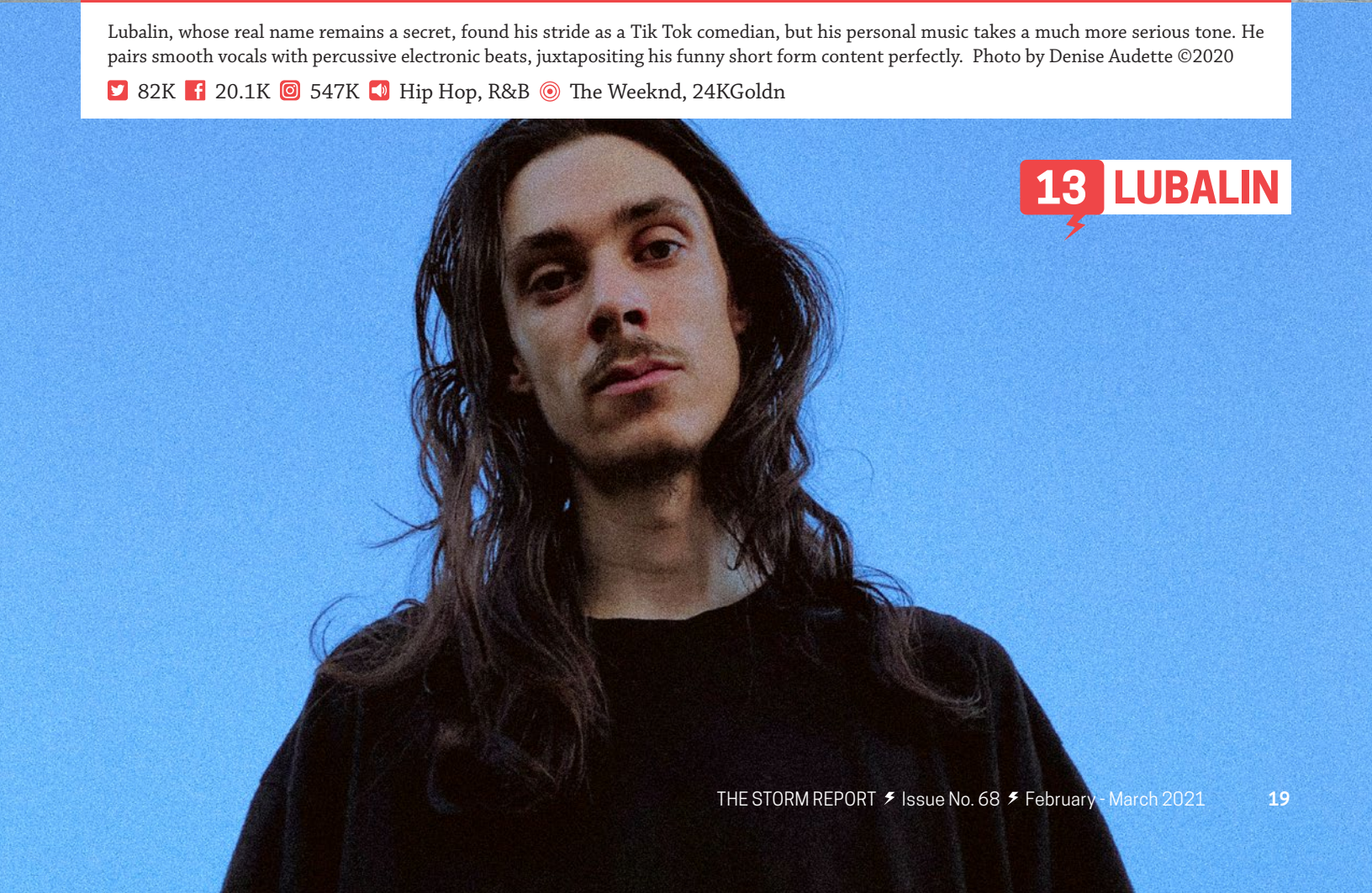
12 SQUID

7.6K 15.4K 19.3K Math Pop, Punk, Rock Sex Pistols, David Byrne

Described as "psyched-out math-pop, 70s post-punk, and a dash of David Byrne," it's safe to say that Squid provides a unique listening experience. Although it seems like they fill a very selective niche, the anthemic guitar and building intensity bring something more universal to the table. Photo by Photo by Holly Whitaker ©2020

Lubalin, whose real name remains a secret, found his stride as a Tik Tok comedian, but his personal music takes a much more serious tone. He pairs smooth vocals with percussive electronic beats, juxtaposing his funny short form content perfectly. Photo by Denise Audette ©2020

82K 20.1K 547K Hip Hop, R&B The Weeknd, 24KGoldn



13 LUBALIN



14 ARAYA

🐦 33 📺 16 📷 4.7K 🎧 Alternative © Russ, 6LACK

Thai-Chilean singer-songwriter Araya covers inclusivity and identity with serene vocals. After spending a year honing in on his musical artistry, his dreams are coming to fruition beginning with his debut LP *Atlas*, with lead track *Color Palette* paying special attention to the roll of design in his life, perfectly in line with this issue's article.

Photo by Siena Saba ©2020



🐦 N/A 📺 94 📷 4.3K

🎧 Pop, Chill Pop © King Princess, Clairo

Rising alt-pop star Wallace has found success on her first track, a lo-fi bop called "Punching Bag" that was recorded in just one day. Although her catalogue is far from vast, the promise behind her lyrical depth and nuanced outlook on friendship makes Wallace one to watch!

Photo by Taylor Fitzgerald ©2021

15 WALLICE



16 PVA

🐦 919 📘 2.6K 📷 3.4K 🔊 Dance, Indie, Techno 🎧 Kraftwerk, Electric Six

PVA touts themselves as a genre-hopping passion project, and the fire that united the group is evident in their truly unique songs. This three piece builds to a crescendo over and over again with blocky synths, autotuned vocals, and motorik drum loops, making them a more accessible taste of what one might expect the underground techno scene has to offer. Photo by Slow Dance ©2021

Four piece band TV Priest dropped their debut album this year taking a major step towards becoming one of the big names in modern rock. With punk influences, pulsating grooves, and musical risks, the band strives to be not just timely but a little bit ahead of the times, keeping listeners engaged and on the edge of their seat waiting to see what is coming next. Photo by Dan Kendall ©2020

🐦 703 📘 1.4K 📷 1.5K 🔊 Rock, Alt Rock 🎧 Cake, Joy Division

17 TV PRIEST





18 KEE'AHN

🐦 249 📺 3.1K 📷 7.7K 🎧 Soul 🎵 Alicia Keys, Leon Bridges
YouTuber Cami Petyn has broken into the world of music and she is not looking back. Two years ago, she took her first voice lesson and since then she has honed her skills and songwriting to boot. With melodic vocals and percussive backing tracks, Cami Petyn is ready to make her mark on the indie pop scene.

Photo by Kee'ahn ©2020



19 SAY SUE ME

🐦 3.5K 📺 10.8K 📷 9.1K 🎧 Indie, Surf Rock 📍 Peach Pit, Wolf Alice

Say Sue me are a Surf Rock-inspired indie band from Basan, South Korea. An interesting combination to be sure, but one that works effortlessly just like the members of the band do. Inspired by their hometown, the group's unique yet somehow familiar style gives them global appeal, touring across Europe and Japan and playing SXSW. Photo provided by management ©2021

Oddnote is rock music born out of Nashville and it has that rock n' roll quality that is simply infectious. Catchy guitar riffs and strong vocals make up the backbone for this energetic and frankly nostalgic sounding outfit fronted by Arman Asadsangabi.

Photo by Citizen Kane Wayne ©2020

🐦 N/A 📺 N/A 📷 3.4K 🎧 Rock 📍 Arctic Monkeys, The Strokes

20 ODDNOTE



GRACE'S
TOP PICK!

