

Your Monthly
Music Forecast!

*Credit Where Credit is Due:
The Songwriters' Pact*

Eyedress
Fred again..
Fiji Blue
L'Impératrice
...and more!

 memBrain

STORM REPORT

ISSUE NO. 70
MAY - JUNE 2021



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*Our signature countdown of 20 buzzworthy
bands and artists on our radar.*

ON THE COVER:

Abhi the Nomad. Photo provided by management ©2021

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.

How do we rank?

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.

Why do we do it?

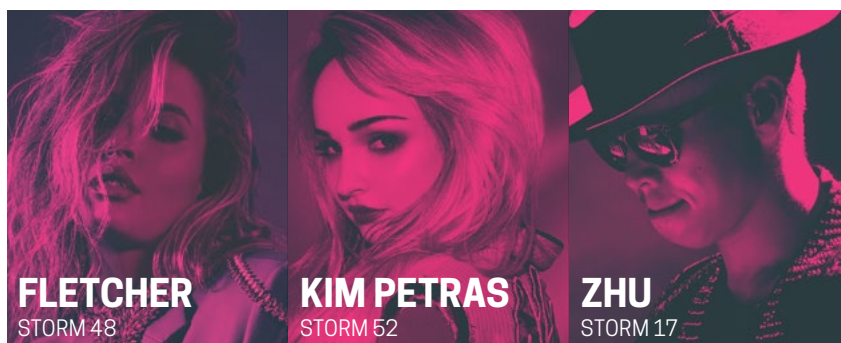
Music is the best way to sell products because it creates such a powerful emotional connection with an audience. The STORM Report provides our clients with a tool to harness the music that will be the most relevant to audiences in the near future, thereby becoming very useful for the enhancement of products,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

PLAYLISTS

Check out our issue's carefully curated playlists by clicking below



STORM ALUMNI



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

A friend recently referred to post-2020 as an era of "painful enlightenment." And while enlightenment suggests positive progress, the pain comes from those who are newly realizing their ignorance and of course, those who have long suffered (and are suffering) injustices.

In this month's Eye of the STORM article, we explore the foundation of "The Pact" - a growing movement to protect the financial rights of songwriters, particularly those who do not perform their own work. We dive into the history of what has caused songwriters to band together to demand their fair share; giving credit where (and only where) credit is due.

As The Pact states, "if we take the song out of the music industry, there is no music." We believe there is power in sharing information and we are proud supporters of songwriters.



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Credit Where Credit is Due: The Songwriters' Pact

By Grace Slansky

Music publishing is the business of monetizing musical compositions, the underlying works created by songwriters. In recent years, the conversation about the volatility of publishing as a source of income has taken the spotlight. And while many might assume these conversations are related to the literary world, book publishing has overall become more profitable as an industry—while music publishing has become less profitable and more controversial. Whereas performing artists have more effectively been able to build diversified careers with streaming acting as marketing fuel for live performances and endorsement deals, songwriters have continued to see their income horizons narrow.

The Beginning...

Often, when it comes to controversies, we jump into the discussion with the current state of affairs, negating the history in favor of a direct resolution approach. However, when it comes to music publishing, the history is both storied and crucial to understanding the latest conflict.

In the late 1800s, the only way to consume and share songs was to purchase the sheet music and play the tune on the piano. This ensured that songwriters were paid, as each was selling their own written sheet music. Then, in 1901, the player piano came onto the scene. This new and exciting technology—which evolved into the jukebox and much more recently streaming—had the sheet music inside. Suddenly, people were no longer purchasing a copy of each song for each piano player, and the songwriters were not being compensated. The U.S. Congress, an entity we don't often see dealing in the affairs of music, felt that the publishers had a monopoly on player piano rolls and stepped in.

In 1909, Congress passed a law that said all publishers and composers must license their copyright and the federal government would set the price moving forward in an effort to standardize the monetization of songs. This meant that copyrights were protected and writers/publishers would be compensated for their work, but the rate was always determined by the federal government. The original rate was 2 cents per song, and over the last 100 years it has only increased to 9.1 cents, and even this was just to reflect inflation.

What began as an effort to prevent a monopoly and ensure that some compensation was guaranteed has morphed into an oppressive and outdated standard that limits the income capabilities of songwriters.

The Song Itself...

It goes without saying that the music industry has changed immensely over the last 100 years, but let's talk about simply the last few. The biggest change is the rise of streaming as the primary way to consume music. Streaming—which has not only become the most popular option in the last five years, but seen an even more impressive rise as an impact of the COVID-19 pandemic—has created a song economy.

Today, people are more likely to pick songs they like and stream those individually, with less regard for the album or even the artist. In fact, in a recent poll it was found that 60% of music subscribers state the song matters more than the artist, as compared to 29% who believe the artist to be more important. The song has become the most important commodity, but the creators of this very material are among the least compensated for their work. Recorded music rights holders are being paid

three times what publishers are. Songwriters stand to make about \$2 per 10,000 streams on Spotify while the masters owners (artist/label) will make 13 times as much with 0% of the publishing.

This imbalance has created several issues including, what a recent MIDiA report (“Rebalancing the Song Economy”) referred to as, “The Songwriter’s Paradox.” This is the theory that the song has become more important than ever, while the songwriters have less income and influence. With the increased importance of individual songs and the increased risk that songwriters will be fed up with the unfair imbalance, labels have turned towards a system that “weaponizes” songwriting.

In order to minimize risk, large labels are turning to an elite group of songwriters to write algorithmic hits that are the most likely to increase streams and the least likely to incur backlash. They are creating teams of songwriters most equipped for this, in some ways creating jobs for writers, but in other ways further taking advantage of these workers by splitting their small share of profits among more people and making it harder for smaller songwriters to break in. Songwriting has become both more exclusive and less profitable.

The Issue of Credit...

While songwriters are already getting the short end of the stick in many ways, a recent trend among songwriters and artists has pushed the issue even farther, possibly to a breaking point. Many artists have begun demanding as much as 50% of publishing royalties for songs that they had no part in writing. This means that not only is the income in question, but the actual credit for the work that songwriters do is as well.

Performing artists, who are already making a significant amount more than the publishers for streaming as mentioned earlier, also have several other streams of income surrounding their music. Songwriters only have publishing, and they are often asked to give it up to artists who have not contributed to the composition.

While larger and more established songwriters have more say in sharing or not sharing in the publishing, emerging songwriters have less control. For newer songwriters trying to build a portfolio, disagreeing with the people who have the power to make or break their career isn’t an option.

On the other hand, legendary songwriters like Neil Young, Stevie Nicks, and Paul Simon have recently packaged their entire catalogs for sale with massive paydays. Bob Dylan made a record \$300M from his catalog sale. Taylor Swift leveraged her stardom to leave Sony/ATV after 14 years in favor of a better contract (and more control of her catalog) at UMPG. But these examples are the exceptions, and not nearly the rule. There is a clear imbalance within the songwriting community, between

songwriters who perform their own work (building value in their music along with their overall brand) and those who write for others. So where does this leave the songwriters who work behind the scenes?

Enter The Pact...

With this strong-arming of songwriters to give up credit, publishing rights, and ultimately income to artists, many people have become rightfully angry and begun calling attention to these inequalities. The music publishing conversation has emerged in the public eye, thanks in part to *The Pact*.

The Pact has begun making headlines for both its mission and its success in exposing the antiquated practices of publishing. Although their vague name summons cult-like associations, the pact is a body of songwriters who are publicly banding together to make it clear that they “will not give publishing or songwriting credit to anyone who did not create or change the lyric or melody or otherwise contribute to the composition without a reasonably equivalent/meaningful exchange for all the writers on the song.”

In an *impassioned letter* that the collective released upon their conception, they explain that most songs have a beautiful story of collaboration, backed by the delicate ecosystem of the music industry, and they will no longer hand over a slice of the small income they make to artists who are already in the most prominent and profitable position. Furthermore, they will work together to eliminate this as a tactic for abuse, leverage, threats, and preying upon writers who are eager for opportunities. The group was established as a means to unify the songwriting community and fight back.

What Now?

While The Pact is an important and previously unthought of first step when it comes to supporting songwriters and acknowledging their importance in the music that we all love so much, it does not address the actual imbalance of income, which has been made significantly more prominent with the rise of streaming for music consumption.

The idea that this compensation process is not only regulated by the government, but that it has stood for so long without reevaluation is mind-boggling. It’s time to reevaluate the hierarchy of music creation, the financial structures that are in place, and the necessary changes as we move deeper into the world of digital consumption.

As The Pact put it, “If we take the song out of the music industry, there is no music industry.” It’s time to reconsider the ideals that make songwriters believe they deserve less and should be willing to sacrifice their integrity for a seat at the table. It’s time to embrace the collaboration of music.

STORM TRACKER

Tracking Our STORM Report Alumni!



THE WEEKND

(STORM No. 1)

A frequent feature in our alumni section, **The Weeknd** is continuing his banner year. He just won the iHeartRadio Music Award's top honor, song of the year for his long-reigning hit "Blinding Lights," and 10 awards at the Billboard Music Awards.



RUN THE JEWELS

(STORM No. 22)

Previous featured STORM artist **Run the Jewels** have just been announced as the headliner for Atlanta's Shaky Knees Festival.



JAPANESE BREAKFAST

(STORM No. 62)

Four years after her last album, **Japanese Breakfast's** newest work 'Jubilee' is dropping, following the recent success of her memoir *Crying in H Mart*.

STORM FORECAST

Events And
Happenings
For Your Radar

TRIBECA 2021

June 9-20th

The Tribeca Film Festival is almost here, after a year of digital programming, and they're getting ready for an exciting in-person event. With a curated selection of the best new films, Tribeca is already known as one of the biggest events for viewing all the most buzzed-about movies, but this year it's not just movies. There is also a large section of Tribeca Immersive, dedicated to debuting cool new experiences involving AR and VR.

THE SUMMER OF GAME SHOWS

After a year of binge watching, we're looking at a return to weekly programming this summer, and that starts with America's favorite competition shows! *American Ninja Warrior* and *America's Got Talent* premiere back to back on May 31st and June 1st respectively. Then, on June 2nd, *Masterchef: Legends* starts, followed by *Celebrity Family Feud* on June 6th, and *The Bachelorette* on June 7th. The competition is heating up!

THE BOWL IS BACK

A summer favorite for music lovers, the Hollywood Bowl is back with a full Summer 2021 season. Featuring Kool & the Gang, Christina Aguilera, and the Jonas Brothers among many others, LA residents are ready to safely embrace the historic outdoor venue.

THE RETURN OF ART! LA ART SHOW TICKETS ON SALE NOW

July 29-Aug 1st

After a year of digital experiences, the art scene and art events are coming back! Tickets for the LA Art Show, the most comprehensive international contemporary art show, have just gone on sale. Tickets are selling quickly, as people are eager to attend the festival and view the curated collection of recent works.

STORM WARNING

The 20 Artists On Our Radar

1 EYEDRESS

YouTube Spotify 4M



13.8K 40.1K 97.3K Indie Rock, Noise Pop Joy Division, The Psychedelic Furs Lex Records

Eyedress is the alias of Filipino artist Idris Vicuña, the former lead guitarist of Bee Eyes. While his music has been around for a bit, Eyedress's success is the result of a viral TikTok trend, skyrocketing the track to over 70 million streams on Spotify. Photo by Jocelyn Arceo ©2021

ICON KEY YouTube Spotify Spotify Monthlies Twitter Facebook Instagram Genre Similar Artists Label

2 FRED AGAIN..

YouTube Spotify 3.6M



🐦 N/A 🎧 2.4K 📷 47.3K 🎵 House, Dance, Electro-Pop 🎶 Sofi Tukker, Jamie xx 🎧 Atlantic Records UK

Fred again.. describes his music as 'Actual Life,' pulling samples from obscure YouTube clips to personal FaceTime conversations to create dancefloor-inspired tracks. Fred makes his music on the go, bringing his laptop anywhere inspiration might strike. Photo by Will Smith ©2021



3 FIJI BLUE

Spotify YouTube 2M

1.4K 1.7K 10.7K Chill House Harry Styles, Nick Jonas Independent

Fiji blue uses melancholy lyrics and an edge of hope to guide their fans through their own vulnerable moments. They combine danceable production and R&B influence to create a genre-less sound that they call "sad boy chill house." Photo by Tommy Brannigan ©2021

5.1K 77.6K 88.1K Pop, Disco Parcels, Chromeo Independent

This French Pop and Disco band is made up of 6 members. The group's latest album "Tako Tsubo" is full of old-school danceable tracks that will make you want to get up off your chair and groove. Photo by Théo Gosselin ©2021

4 L'IMPÉRATRICE

Spotify YouTube 1.9M

GRACE'S TOP PICK!





5 TEDDY SWIMS

🎧 📺 🔍 1.1M

**ROBERT'S
TOP PICK!**

🐦 18K 📘 1.5M 📷 378K

🔊 Soul, Funk, Country, R&B

🎵 Jordan Davis, St. Paul & The Broken Bones

🎧 Warner Records

Teddy Swims is a singer-songwriter from Atlanta, Georgia. Two years ago, he began touring as a hip hop artist, but has since pivoted and expanding, creating music with influences ranging from country to soul to funk and everything in between. Photo from Warner Records ©2021



6 CIAN DUCROT

610K

5K 12K 86K Pop, Indie Pop Shawn Mendes, Liam Payne Interscope Records

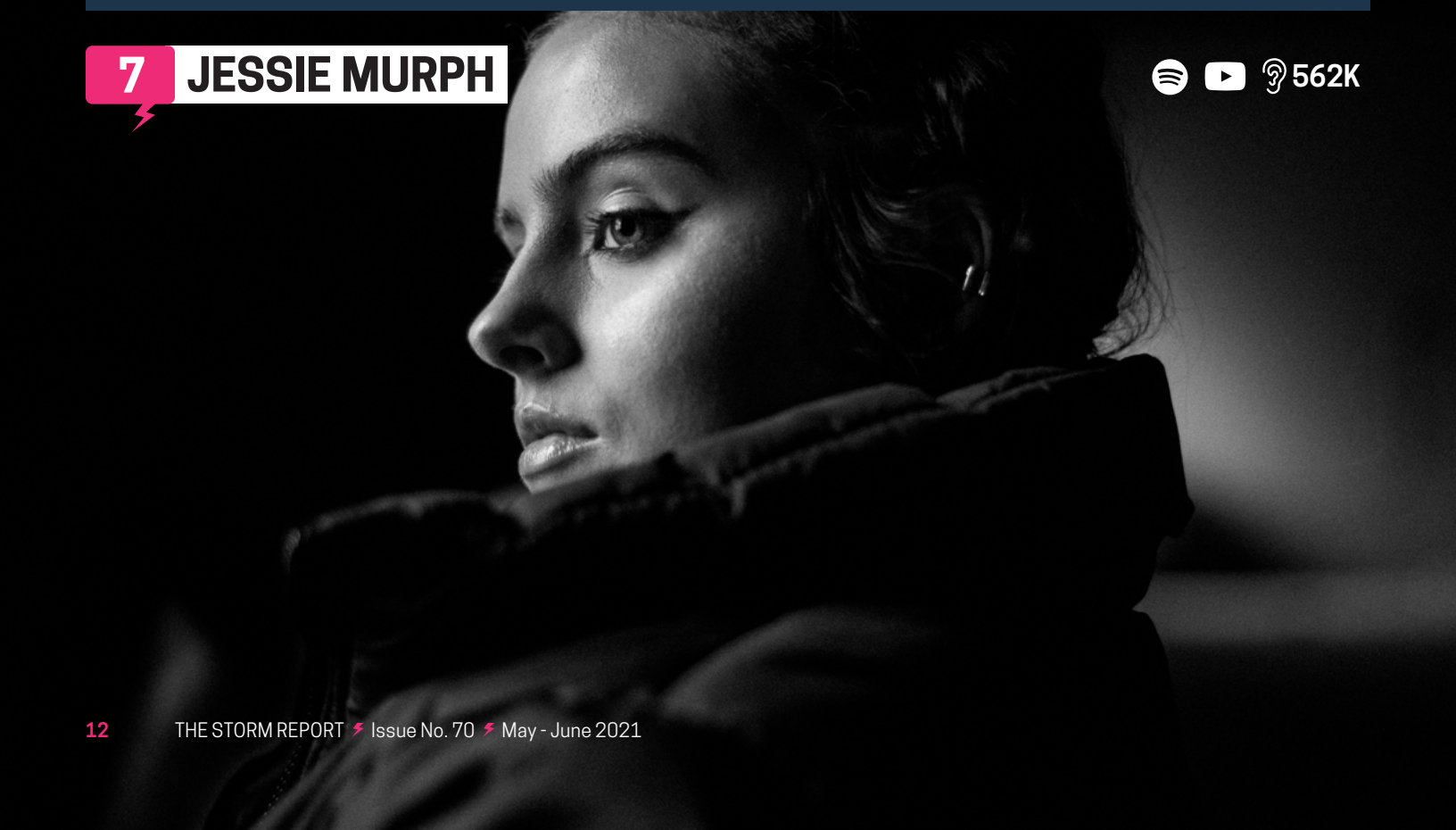
Irish singer-songwriter and producer Cian Ducrot came onto the music scene just last year and has already amassed quite a following. In a short period of time he's gone from busking in Cork to being signed by the same label as Billie Eilish. Photo by Jennifer McCord ©2021

16-year-old Jessie Murph got her start on TikTok, and with 3.7M followers and over 65M likes, that's one heck of a way to kick off a career in the music industry. Although she only has two singles out, each have millions of streams on Spotify! Photo by David O'Donohue ©2021

721 1.3K 366K Pop Rita Ora, Anne-Marie Columbia

7 JESSIE MURPH

562K





8 THOMAS HEADON

518K

13.7K 2.9K 95.2K Indie Pop, Hip Hop, Bedroom Pop James TW, Ed Sheeran Independent
Melbourne-raised producer and artist Thomas Headon has accomplished quite a bit already in his year-long career. With groovy bass, hazy guitar, and vocals that float above the music his songs are both catchy and engaging. Photo by Paige Warton ©2021

73 2.6K 9.5K Folk The Chicks, The Staves INDEPANDANT
This female power trio has mastered the art of melodic and heartfelt harmonies. The group is committed to making quality music that spreads a message of self-acceptance and love. Photo by Caity Crone ©2021

9 TROUSDALE

370K



10 AMY ALLEN

395 691 42.5K

Indie Rock, Folk

Jewel, Jax

Warner Records

Very fitting for our issue about songwriters, Amy Allen write both for herself and for some of the biggest musicians in the world. She has been on the Forbes "30 Under 30" list and called "Hitmaker of the Month" by Variety, and now she's using her talents for her own personal music, which is reminiscent of the American troubadours that have come before her.




Photo from Warner Records ©2021

289K







11 PRIYA RAGU

 931  1.7K  26.1K

 R&B

 Rihanna, Kehlani

 Warner Records

Priya Ragu's work is her personal combination of R&B and influences from her Sri Lankan heritage. The result is unique, helping her rise as an important artist to watch in a sea of incredibly talented female powerhouses.

Photo from Warner Records ©2021

   197K

 186K

12 BUDJERAH

118 6.1K 8.7K Pop, R&B, Soul James Blake, Usher WM Australia

18-year-old Budjerah grew up around music, singing at church and playing instruments with his family. He has taken his experience with gospel and soul and used it in his current work, blending these with contemporary pop and R&B. Photo by Ming Nomchong ©2020

Kings Elliot creates stunningly poignant pop-noir songs, pulling influences from the world around her and tackling the immense subject of mental health. With three singles in the last year, each growing in popularity, she is definitely one to watch. Photo by Christopher Espinosa Fernandez ©2021

890 535 9.3K Pop Banks, Lana Del Rey Independent

 170K

13 KINGS ELLIOT

14 MADELINE THE PERSON

🎧 📺 🔊 133K





🐦 232 📘 223 📷 24.3K 🎧 Pop, Indie Pop, Folk 🎵 Joni Mitchell, Taylor Swift 🎧 Warner Records







Madeline the Person has had struggles in her life, but she's turned to music and color to cope. She writes bittersweet tracks and the clarity of her voice is striking. She takes on both the pretty and ugly parts of the world, all while covering herself in vibrant colors.

Photo from Warner Records ©2021







**BOATENG'S
TOP PICK!**



15 **DASHA**    113K

 213  550  11.4K  R&B, Pop, Electro Pop  Ariana Grande, Alessia Cara  Quadrio Records
Dasha has found mainstream success through TikTok with several of her videos going viral and garnering millions of views and likes. Her debut EP was released just two months ago and shes already amassed over one million streams. Photo by Tanner Deutsch ©2021

16 PORSH BET\$    97.2K

 78  62  1.5K  R&B, Bedroom Pop, Indie Pop  Daniel Cesar, Justin Bieber  Independent

LA-native Porsh Bet\$ incorporates funk-tinged guitar, hip hop basslines, and alt-pop inspired vocals to create tracks that are R&B-influenced but amount to so much more. Photo by Jaime Hafner ©2021





17 MALLORY MERK    81K

 N/A  66  65.1K  Pop, R&B  Selena Gomez, Julia Michaels  Warner Records

Mallory Merk is a songwriter that conveys a very real account of growing up in America. Although she talks about vulnerability, but never from a place of victimhood. Photo from Warner Records ©2021



18

ACEBERGTM



61.6K

 1.3K  971  43.3K  Rap, Hip Hop, R&B  Jason Derulo, Lil Nas X  Sir Justine World Entertainment

Born Ikechukwu Okoronkwo, rapper and singer AcebergTM has been writing his own music since age 15. He dropped his first official single under his new moniker in July 2020 and it has amassed over 7 million streams across all platforms. His debut EP dropped last month, keeping his momentum going and making the start of what is looking like a long and successful career. Photo by SJW Entertainment ©2021

19 ADMT

93 1.8K 17.7K

Indie, Indie Pop

Passenger, James Bay

Human Re Sources

ADMT invites his listeners to take a journey with him, as his music evolves and progresses, always coming from an honest place. The Yorkshire-based musician creates catchy melodies over soulful rhythms, making listeners want to keep listening.

Photo by Declan Creffield ©2020

30.5K





🐦 41 📘 4.6K 📷 12.9K 🎧 Hip Hop 🎵 Frank Ocean, Glass Animals 🎧 GoodBuzz

Why-Axis is on his way to record success in the Irish Hip-Hop game. The singer/songwriter/rapper/producer is only 22, but he has been at the forefront of the hip hop revolution in Ireland, and we cannot wait to see what happens next. Photo by Rebecca Fahey ©2020

