

**The Sound of Music  
(Can Be Dangerous)**

Sub Urban  
Mimi Webb  
Coi Leray  
Justus Bennetts  
...and more!

Your Monthly  
Music Forecast!

 memBrain

# STORM REPORT

ISSUE NO. 74  
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*CKay. Photo provided by label ©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.

# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Like most fans, I love the visceral feeling that you can only get at a super loud rock show. "Turn it up to 11," the iconic quote from the 1984 film *This Is Spinal Tap*, is an example of how we associate louder as better when it comes to live shows. But the damaging, lasting effects of repeated exposure to loud music is well documented with more than half of music artists suffering from some form of hearing loss. Today, technology has evolved to the point where it is still possible to perform and enjoy hearing our favorite music live (and loud) without the inevitable lifelong damage to our hearing. This issue of the memBrain STORM Report explores how music artists, crew members, and fans are navigating going back to live, this time with a renewed focus on health and safety. As they say, "health is wealth!"

Enjoy!



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

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# The Sound of Music (Can Be Dangerous)

By Lauren Farberman



Photo provided by Ultimate Ears

“Hearing loss is a terrible thing because it cannot be repaired.”  
—Pete Townshend, The Who

As musicians prepare to embark on tours this fall, health and safety precautions have become paramount concerns for ensuring a smooth, long-awaited return to live music. And while vaccine mandates and mask requirements are at the forefront of these discussions, there is a safety concern that not enough of us are talking or thinking about: **hearing damage**.

As October is **National Audiology Awareness Month**, we decided that it was the perfect time to raise awareness for the importance of hearing protection in this month’s “Eye of the STORM” article. Hearing damage is a serious issue that is particularly widespread among musicians, crew members, sound engineers, and frequent concert attendees alike. Perhaps the most common form of hearing damage is tinnitus, which causes those affected to hear ringing, buzzing, or other noise in the ears. Today, an estimated 50M people in the US suffer from tinnitus.

Although tinnitus is often associated with hearing loss, it does not cause the loss—nor does hearing loss cause tinnitus. Up to 90% of people with tinnitus have some level of noise-induced hearing loss, primarily due to prolonged exposure to loud sound. And while 10%-15% of average people are afflicted with tinnitus, musicians are twice as likely to suffer from tinnitus and 400% more likely to have hearing loss due to exposure to unsafe levels of noise. For

artists, tinnitus and any form of hearing loss can be debilitating, physically, professionally and psychologically. Countless artists have come forward sharing their stories of how they live and perform with tinnitus including Chris Martin, Pete Townshend, Bono, Anthony Keidis, Ozzy Osborne, Grimes, and will.i.am.

Hearing loss in musicians can happen slowly and over a long period of time, often when having secondary symptoms such as tinnitus, damage to the eardrum, and other sound distortions have already set in. Inspired by the live show of real-life metal group Jucifer, the BAFTA award-winning and Oscar-nominated film *Sound of Metal* (2019) dramatized this trauma, depicting a heavy metal drummer’s life turned upside down when he began to lose his hearing due to ruptured eardrums which rendered him deaf. The award-winning film *A Star Is Born* also highlighted this industry problem through the lead character Jackson Maine’s physical and emotional struggle with both noise-induced hearing loss and tinnitus.

And this issue isn’t isolated to rock concerts or EDM festivals. In 2019, the Royal Opera House lost its appeal over the life-changing hearing damage to a viola player who worked in the orchestra. The judge stated that “the Convent Garden venue had failed to monitor noise levels in the pit and enforce the wearing of ear protection by musicians.” The viola player received £750,000 in compensation as a result.

Any noise that is above 80 decibels is harmful when there is prolonged exposure, yet most concerts sit at a noise level of over 100 decibels, which can harm not only concert-goers, but more often than not, musicians and their crew who are repeatedly exposed to these harmful volume levels. Humans shouldn't be exposed to that level of noise for more than 15 minutes without proper hearing protection.

Concert-goers have historically tried and mostly failed to sue for hearing damage over the years. The Black Crowes, Aerosmith, and even Justin Bieber have been sued for allegedly damaging the hearing of fans at their concerts. And while earlier cases saw plaintiffs awarded settlements, more often than not these types of claims were largely dismissed as not a matter for the courts as loud music at concerts are well known to cause hearing loss and damage and attendees are knowingly taking a risk. Today, most artists, event producers, and venues have an "at your own risk" policy, which means that bringing your own hearing protection is essential.

For fans, the most common and widespread form of ear protection is foam earplugs. Some of the pros of these are that they are inexpensive and easy to find. Unfortunately, earplugs only reduce noise by about -20 dB and their generic shape can take away from the listening experience at a concert. Wearing foam earplugs can shield your ears excessively, making it difficult to hear high frequencies, and it also produces something called the occlusion effect, which is where your own voice sounds booming and hollow while everything around you sounds muffled. Overall, while they are a good way to decrease background noise for sleep or work, they are not made for listening to music.

The next step up in terms of quality and fit for ear protection for concert-going are reusable higher-fidelity earplugs. There are multiple sizes available, but a perfect fit is still not able to be achieved. One unique quality is that they are made for listening to live music, and so the sound quality is much better than what one would get with foam earplugs. Many of these reusable earplugs that are advertised to music fans use filters that let more of the higher frequencies through, but reusable earplugs aren't durable enough to last a lifetime, just a few shows.

Frequent concert goers may want to look into the next step in ear protection, custom earplugs. The noise reduction and fidelity of custom earplugs is quite an improvement over both foam and reusable earplugs. Custom earplugs are a great option for those who are serious about protecting their hearing. Brands like Ultimate Ears (UE) offer **custom microsonic earplugs** that provide up to -25dB noise reduction, and filter all frequencies evenly to avoid the muffled sound that comes with lower quality earplugs. This superior noise reduction is achieved with custom earplugs because they create a better seal and reach further into the ear canal to block out sound. They are the most expensive option when it comes to earplugs,

but the superior protection makes up for the higher cost. While many options for prevention are available, the majority of concert-goers still do not wear ear protection. And with the average concert reaching noise levels as high as 130 decibels, there are also calls for event organizers to bring the noise level down to help prevent hearing damage for attendees. Lower volumes could also be beneficial on the technical side as sound engineers have a decibel threshold that they cannot exceed without distortion. The closer the concert volume gets to the threshold, the less room the engineers have to work with. Engineers mix with what is referred to as "headroom" referring to the distance between the nominal level and the loudness threshold the system can handle without distortion. When a musician's sound levels are too high, it limits the range engineers have for mixing the audio. Simply put, lower stage volumes can help produce a higher quality and balanced sound for concert-goers, as well.

In industrial settings, workers bombarded by the loud noise of machinery are now required to utilize earplugs and noise-cancelling headphones to protect their hearing. But for those who make music for a living, who need to hear subtle pitch differences and the complexities of a song, the option of muffling or muting the sound will not get the job done. And so how is an artist able to perform at a lower level while still hearing themselves, the band, and their cues?

The answer for many artists are in-ear monitors, or what the industry refers to as "IEMs." IEMs are custom molded and designed for musicians to hear with impeccable clarity and musicality, allowing for strong noise reduction while maintaining incredibly high quality sound. Products like **Ultimate Ears' UE Pro IEMs** offer up to -26 dB of passive noise isolation, which is achieved by the form-fitting seal that matches the exact contour of the musician's ears. They are designed to reach the second bend of the ear canal to completely shield musicians' ears from loud music, even in the loudest venues. Unlike earplugs, IEMs are handcrafted by professional engineers using a series of tuned drivers and crossovers for high-fidelity audio across a wide frequency spectrum. The frequency response from UE Pro IEMs is well beyond the range of human hearing. That means no aspect of the music is lost, and incredible quality is heard with pristine clarity.

Fewer industries have felt more specific and intense economic burden during the pandemic than live music. As tours and festivals slowly start to come back this fall, venues have adopted their own safety protocols amid evolving Covid-19 restrictions and local laws. With this renewed focus on wellbeing, and the evolution of wearable technologies designed for both enhanced performance and safety, it's time that artists and fans consider taking a more serious approach to hearing protection - on stage, backstage, and even in the crowd.



# STORM TRACKER

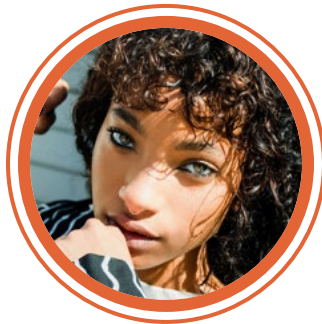
Tracking Our STORM Report Alumni!



## CL (FORMERLY OF 2NE1)

(STORM No. 1)

South Korean rapper, singer, and dancer **CL** (STORM #1) just dropped her highly anticipated debut album *Alpha*. Previously the lead of K-pop group 2NE1, she is ready to start her solo career. In advance of the album's launch, she released two singles, "Spicy" and "Lover Like Me." She also had a surprise cameo on Lil Dicky's hit show *Dave* earlier this year. Though she has already achieved huge recognition and success, she's surely showing that this is just the beginning!



## WILLOW SMITH

(STORM No. 24)

**Willow Smith** (STORM #24) has had a busy year, with no signs of slowing down! In July, she released her album *lately I feel EVERYTHING*, which showcases her pivot to pop punk and alternative rock. She is currently on what she is calling the *lifE* tour, and will be opening for Billie Eilish's *Happier Than Ever* tour next year. In addition to her booming music career, Willow is still co-hosting the Emmy-winning *Red Table Talk* (now in its 4th season), is the face of Mugler's "Alien Goddess" fragrance, and is the latest brand ambassador for **Ultimate Ears UE Fits**



## D SMOKE

(STORM No. 65)

Rapper and songwriter **D Smoke** (STORM #65) recently released his sophomore album *War & Wonders*. This album follows his first GRAMMY-nominated album *Black Habits*, and features artists including John Legend, Ty Dolla \$ign, Westside Boogie, and more. He will kick off his nationwide *War & Wonders* tour in November!

## STORM FORECAST

Events And Happenings For Your Radar

### AFI LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

November 11

The American Film Institute (AFI) will honor Julie Andrews with the 48th Lifetime Achievement Award on November 11th at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles. Andrews won an Oscar for her role in *Mary Poppins* in 1964, and has also won six Golden Globe Awards, two Emmy Awards, and two British Academy Film Awards throughout her career. The AFI's Lifetime Achievement Award is presented annually to an honoree "whose talent has in a fundamental way advanced the film art; whose accomplishment has been acknowledged by scholars, critics, professional peers and the general public; and whose work has stood the test of time." Past recipients include Denzel Washington, George Clooney, Diane Keaton, and Meryl Streep.

### MLB WORLD SERIES STARTS

October 26

Major League Baseball has had an exciting season, with stadiums packed full of people in sharp contrast to the COVID-era games during the 2020 season. The World Series is scheduled to start with the first game on October 26th with the potential seventh game wrapping things up on November 3rd. Although the Houston Astros are the current front-runners, anything can happen! Fans can tune into FOX to watch the series unfold!

### ASTROWORLD FESTIVAL

November 5-6

Named after his hit studio album, Travis Scott's ASTROWORLD Festival will take place November 5th and 6th at NRG Park in Houston, Texas. The two-day event will feature a hip hop and rap heavy lineup, with some reggaeton and rock. To no surprise, Travis Scott will headline the festival, and while the rest of the lineup has not been announced, rumored acts include Lil Uzi Vert, Megan Thee Stallion, Playboi Carti, and Young Thug. art installations for photo opportunities, and sponsored giveaways and merchandise.

### COMPLEXCON

November 6-7

ComplexCon is a curated festival of the current brands, people, and trends that are popular in pop culture. On November 6th and 7th, hosts J Balvin and Kristen Noel Crawley will lead the event at the Long Beach Convention Center. The event will have pop-up shops for merchandise from brands such as Adidas, Champion, and Crocs, as well as musical performances from A\$AP Rocky and Turnstile, among others.

### AMERICAN MUSIC AWARDS

November 21

The 49th American Music Awards (AMA) will take place on November 21st at Los Angeles's Microsoft Theater. Artists such as Billie Eilish, Lil Nas X, Doja Cat, and Kid Laroi are all rumored to be performing at the show. The AMAs will air live on ABC at 5 p.m. PT, and will also be livestreamed on YouTube and Hulu Live.

# STORM WARNING

The 20 Artists On Our Radar

1 SUB URBAN

4.5M 9.46M

## ICON KEY

- YouTube
- Spotify
- Instagram
- TikTok
- Genre
- Similar Artists
- Label



552K 3.4M Alternative/Indie Pop Grandson, Missio Warner Music

Daniel Virgil Maisonneuve, known professionally as Sub Urban, is a 21-year old American singer, producer and songwriter who cites artists like K. Flay, Cage the Elephant, and NoMBe as inspirations. Eerie instrumentals and haunted, vaporous vocals serve as key ingredients for Sub Urban's dour, EDM-tinged pop. Photo by Vixxion ©2021





## 2 MIMI WEBB

67.5K 6.7M

154K 1.2M Pop Miley Cyrus, Daya Epic Records

At just 21, British singer-songwriter rose to popularity with her 2020 single 'Before I Go' which blew up on TikTok. Her emotional vulnerability draws listeners into her music, and this raw emotion flows through her debut EP *Seven Shades of Heartbreak*, just released this month.

Photo by Frank Fieber ©2021



3

COI LERAY



1.1M



4.1M

📷 5.3M 🎵 6.6M 🎧 Hip Hop, Rap 🎤 Princess Nokia, Tierra Whack 🎧 Republic Records

New Jersey emcee Coi Leray delivers melodic sung/rapped verses over skittering beats and heavy base balancing uncompromising toughness with her charismatic attitude. At the 2021 BET Hip Hop Awards, she was nominated for Best New Hip Hop Artist and her debut album, *Coi*, is set to be released this Fall. Photo by Brian Ziff ©2021



**4 JUSTUS BENNETTS**  
🎵 17.6K 🎧 3.1M

📷 24K 🎵 444K 🎶 Pop, Rock, Rap 🎧 Jxdn, Chance the Rapper 🎧 Support Your Friends  
Justus Bennetts has quickly become known for his energetic pop-rock music, with anthem-like lyrics that are both relatable and catchy. His latest single "Bad Day," released last month, has all the makings of a hit, and just reached 14 Million streams on Spotify. Photo provided by Management ©2021



📷 711K 🎵 829K 🎶 K-pop 🎧 BLACKPINK, Dreamcatcher 🎧 High Up Entertainment, Kakao Entertainment  
An acronym for "Star To a Young Culture," STAYC is a K-pop girl group formed by High Up Entertainment who describes the moniker as a way to "reflect the act's aim of dominating pop culture." The group consists of six members, with each girl bringing her own flair to their upbeat pop songs. The video for their lead singing "ASAP" reached 20M views in just 9 days and their debut EP "STEREOTYPE" released last month and sold over 114,000 copies in its first week. Photo by High Up Entertainment ©2021

**5 STACYC**  
🎵 80K 🎧 2.6M

# 6 WIZTHEMC

18.8K 1.58M

LAUREN'S  
TOP PICK!



39.7K 15.5K Indie Pop, Rap Dominic Fike, Twenty One Pilots HomeMade Projects, LLC/TenThousand Projects South-African born and Germany raised artist WizTheMc is uniquely skilled at both singing and rapping. His music features a perfectly balanced mix of his smooth singing voice with his powerful rap verses. His latest single "Break" marks a shift into more melodic tracks, and will be featured on his next EP *Silence Feels Good*, set to release early next year. Photo by Khuju Najee ©2021.

# 7 ALFIE TEMPLEMAN

80K 1.3M

"Bedfordshire's  
boy wonder."

—NME

- 110K 11.2K
- Alternative/Indie
- Declan McKenna, Gus Dapperton
- Chess Club

Since releasing his first EP at the age of 15, Alfie Templeman has grown into an alternative-pop force to reckon with; his loyal 1.3M monthly Spotify listeners agree. He's set to take his newest EP, *Forever Isn't Long Enough*, on tour across the U.S. and the U.K. starting in November.

Photo provided by management ©2021

**8** ELI.  187K  637K

 20.9K  355  Undefined  Khalid, SadBoyProlific  Unsigned

eli. is a 22-year old singer, songwriter and multi-instrumentalist from West Virginia known for his genre blending, often combining different sounds and styles into a single creation. His music is deeply personal and covers topics such as love, heartbreak, and betrayal. His latest single “in my dreams” was just released this month. Photo by Eli Lucas ©2021



**ROBERT'S  
TOP PICK!**



JENNIFER'S  
TOP PICK!

9

MAMMOTH  
WVH

81.4K 410K

15

65.6K N/A Alternative/Rock Foo Fighters, The Sword EX1 Records

Mammoth WVH is a solo project produced by Wolfgang Van Halen, son of guitar god Eddie Van Halen. Following the death of his father, Wolfgang formed the band and recorded his debut album—playing every instrument himself. Carrying on the virtuoso legacy of Eddie and Alex Van Halen, but with decidedly more alternative and grunge influences, Mammoth WVH is one of the most exciting new bands in rock today.

Photo provided by Management ©2021

69.3K 7K R&B/Soul Janelle Monáe, Lianne La Havas Warner Music, Atlantic Records UK

Laura Mvula is a British singer, songwriter and composer, who brings her background in both gospel and acapella groups to her music. Her songs have snappy jazz beats which perfectly compliments her full-bodied and soulful voice. Her latest album *Pink Noise* was released this summer.

Photo provided by Management ©2021



MAYA'S  
TOP PICK!

10

LAURA  
MVULA

83K 408K

15

# 11 JAKE WESLEY ROGERS

10.9K 390K

92.4K 278K Pop Elton John, FINNEAS Warner Records

Jake Wesley Rogers is unapologetically himself, making authentic music that is full of queer storytelling. His music is grandiose, energetic, and demands to be heard, putting an immediately smile on your face once you hear the passion in his voice. His latest release, an EP titled *Pluto* can be heard as he tours as the opening act for Ben Platt on a U.S. tour set to start early next year. Photo provided by label ©2021



A portrait of Luna Li, a young woman with long dark hair, wearing a light-colored, possibly pink or white, top. She has intricate face paint on her face, including white and yellow designs around her eyes and forehead. She is also wearing a nose ring and hoop earrings. The background is a soft, out-of-focus bokeh of warm colors.

## 12 LUNA LI

6.5K 325K

63.7K 28.6K Bedroom Pop, Indie Rock St. Vincent, Snail Mail Real Life Music / AWAL Recordings America

Luna Li, born Hannah Kim, is both a singer, multi-instrumentalist, and producer with music that showcases her extraordinary harp, violin, piano, drum, and guitar playing skills. Her music has a psychedelic undertone that makes it perfect for a study or relaxing playlist. Her latest EP *Flower (In Full Bloom)* can be heard this Fall as she tours as the opening act for Japanese Breakfast. Photo by Felice Trinidad ©2021

# 13 TZAR

789 252K



4.6K 16 Dance, Electronic BANKS, Dua Lipa Set Records

Originally from Moscow, Russia, TZAR got her start in L.A. by performing in the cities underground beat scene, and collaborating with renowned electric artists such as KSHMR and Djemba Djemba. Her music features 1980's inspired pop melodies and her latest release, a single called "I'm ok" is reminiscent of a 1980's dance anthem. Photo by @mark peaced ©2021

A portrait of Nina Chuba, a young woman with long dark hair, wearing a blue and black checkered sleeveless top. She is resting her chin on her hands, looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a textured, light-colored wall.

## 14 NINA CHUBA

📺 11K 🎧 221K

📷 25K 📺 234K 🎵 Pop/Rap 🎧 Billie Eilish 🎧 Mag Musik

Starting as a child actor, Nina Chuba has stepped into her own spotlight, creating music that is self-described as “genre-defying.” Her music explores sounds such as rap verses, electronic beats, and pop hooks, all of which are clear in her second EP, *Average*, released this summer.

Photo provided by Rico Zartner ©2021

A portrait of Maple Glider, a young woman with dark hair and a nose ring. She has a small, sparkly butterfly sticker on her lower lip and is resting her chin on her hand. The background is dark and moody.

## 15 MAPLE GLIDER

📺 1.6K 🎧 218K

📷 7.5K 📺 30 🎵 Pop/Singer-Songwriter 🎧 Phoebe Bridgers, Lucy Dacus 🎧 Partisan Records/Pieter

Tori Zietsch, the singer-songwriter behind Maple Glider, produces music with a deep intimacy to it, achieved through personal reflections in her lyrics. Her velvety vocals perfectly pair with the acoustic guitar and gentle piano that is present in most of her songs. Her debut album *To Enjoy Is the Only Thing* was released this summer, and is full of gentle and soothing tracks. Photo provided by Bridgette Winten ©2021



16

HAIVA RU  1.2K  168K

 2.8K  834  Alternative/Indie  Wallace, Genevieve Stokes  ARTIST theory

Based in Santa Barbara, Haiva Ru makes extremely catchy songs that pull listeners in. Her haunting vocals mixed with beat-driven melodies create a dreamlike soundscape that makes you feel lost in her music. Released earlier this year, her debut album *Bloom Baby Bloom* is the perfect mix of higher and lower energy tracks. Photo by Chase Denton ©2020



 423K  N/A  Alternative R&B  Jhene Aiko, Tinashe  One Umbrella

Jordana's music effortlessly spans across genres, from electronic to indie-folk. Her voice is soft but that does not stop her from delivering powerful vocals, like on her recent track "Push Me Away," a collaboration with Magdalena Bay. She is currently touring the U.S. with TV Girl. Photo by Mel Mercer ©2021

# 18 HANNAH JADAGU

64 57.6K

3.1K 67 Alternative/Indie  
Dayglow, Phoenix Subpop

Having relied on her iPhone 7 and Garageband iOS to produce her very first single, Hannah Jadagu is just as resourceful as she is inventive. The 18 year-old singer, songwriter, and producer from Mesquite, Texas, successfully draws inspiration from her artistic peers and personal life to build honest narratives that, in her words, truly “bop.”

Photoby Alex Kabundji Spring ©2021



# 19 ALEXA ROSE

441 14.3K

"An enchanting new Appalachian voice wraps her rambling mind around a dream; it sounds like the soul child of Bob Dylan and Dolly Parton."  
—NPR

2.8K 27 Roots, Americana Joni Mitchell, Gillian Welch Big Legal Mess Records

Singer/songwriter Alexa Rose combines the mountain music of her Allegheny homeland with folk, rock, country, and pop to put her unique stamp on American roots music. Her 2019 release "Medicine for Living" received critical acclaim and her sophomore effort "Headwaters", released earlier this year, explores diverging avenues of Americana with songs inspired by the likes of Patsy Cline, John Prine, and Joni Mitchell.

Photo by Kendall Bailey Atwater ©2021



20 5.8K

# 20 MAGNUM DOPUS

2K 1 New Wave/Psychedelic The Smiths, Joy Division Space Mall Records

Magnum Dopus is an American indie rock band that has an unmistakable 80's New Wave influence. Taking inspiration from Joy Division, The Smiths, and David Bowie, the band has made a strong run in the Memphis music scene—garnering notoriety for their hooky and memorable tunes. Photo by Kim Ford ©2021

