

Your Monthly
Music Forecast!

State of the Art:
*How art, music, and technology
collide to create immersive,
multi-sensory experiences*

GAYLE

Lauren Spencer-Smith

Niki

Jamie Miller

...and more!



memBrain

STORM REPORT

ISSUE NO. 76
FEBRUARY /
MARCH 2022



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Check out this issue's carefully curated playlists by clicking below:



ON THE COVER

Cordae. Photo by Raven Varona ©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?

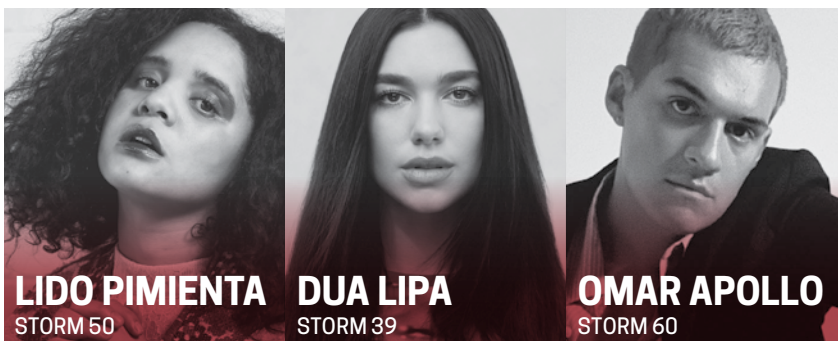
Music is the best way to sell products because it creates such a powerful emotional connection with an audience. The STORM Report provides our clients with a tool to harness the music that will be the most relevant to audiences in the near future, thereby becoming very useful for the enhancement of products,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

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

It's hard to believe, but 2022 marks the 10-year anniversary of The STORM Report. When we set out on this journey, our primary goal was to provide our clients with early warning radar for music artists that were bubbling under. Over the past decade, the music industry has exploded into a haven of endless possibilities for both listeners and creators, and we've evolved the report accordingly. While our list of emerging talent each month is still curated leveraging our own industry intelligence, we are now able to back up our recommendations with data science tracking social media, streaming, and other available sources. And while it is easier than ever to find, create, and distribute music, the worlds of music and tech have had, and continue to have, an often-fraught relationship. As a follow-up to our CES 2022 Report (available here), we explore how the music industry is flexing in the worlds of mixed reality, NFTs, and the metaverse, and the shape of things to come. As musicians seek new ways to engage fans and breakthrough in an increasingly crowded space, technology may prove to be a force for good after all. From a business perspective, building interactive fan experience could be the key to solving one of music's most pervasive problems: the lack of a direct channel of monetization between artists and fans.



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State of the Art:

How art, music, and technology collide to create immersive, multi-sensory experiences

By Grace Slansky

The past two years have brought the art world a technological boom, the likes of which we have rarely seen. This renaissance of sorts is ushering in a new era of visual possibilities, only improved by the integration of music.

As technology advances in aesthetic areas, artists—both visual and musical—are afforded more opportunities to create whole experiences. This time in creation is a master study in collaboration, across fields, genres, and individuals. Each piece works together to stimulate the senses, audio and visual hand in hand, in a way that was only made possible by recently embracing new tech with open arms. Although we are a music-focused publication, it is important to us to take a holistic approach when it comes to the future of creation. The arts as a whole have been pushed forward by technology, which provides creators with the tools to more easily express their creativity across disciplines and outside the confines of traditional genres.

Mixed Reality Bytes

While Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, and Mixed Reality technologies can hardly be considered brand new tech, they are finally catching on and expanding at the rate we once expected. After several years trying to find their footing, bug fixes, affordable VR headsets, and a willingness from audiences to try new experiences have brought the mixed reality conversation to the mainstream.

Starting off with an easy and palatable example, the popular game Beat Saber has brought VR participants quite literally into the music, keeping the beat with two virtual swords. This game, which is reminiscent of Guitar Hero, allows players to enter the metaverse with their favorite songs from Lady Gaga to Green Day, dipping their toes in the virtual water to explore a VR world with low stakes. By gamifying the experience, Beat Saber has created a space that motivates players to literally step into the music.

From there, there are almost limitless possibilities, and we are finally beginning to see just a few realized. While live performance took a definite hit the past couple years, virtual performance is finally gaining momentum. Take, for example, The Immersive Storytelling Studio at the National Theater in London, which is bringing musicals directly to fans' homes via Augmented Reality. In their most recent endeavor, the company created a hologram of singer Nubiya Brandon for "All Kinds of Limbo," which can be seen on the viewer's phone, projected as if she is standing right in front of you. Whether it be the bathroom or the kitchen, it is eerily realistic, creating a proximity to the experience that could be used by musicians and brands of all kinds in the future.

Last year, Singer-songwriter Madison Beer teamed up with Sony Music Entertainment and Verizon to bring fans to the front row of a groundbreaking virtual concert experience that reimagines live performance for on-demand viewing across digital platforms in incredibly lifelike immersive reality, proving the versatile capabilities of these advancements. This showcase, which took place in a meticulous recreation of the Sony Hall concert venue in New York City, used real-time 3D creation technology, something that was not possible in the very recent past, and since then has opened up a world of possibilities.

Samsung has already taken this technology and run with it, creating the Samsung Metaverse, which allows participants to attend concerts in this newly created world. While it may conjure feelings of a Ready Player One-like dystopian future, the reality is that it opens possibilities for a musical experience unburdened by the laws of physics and the weight of logistics. With not just concerts, but dance parties, fashion, and museums created specifically for this brand new world, we are entering uncharted territory with the distinct possibility to elevate the musical experience beyond our wildest dreams.

Roblox, the global online gaming platform, believes virtual concerts are opening up the world to a whole different kind of career for musicians. Having successfully hosted concerts with Twenty One Pilots and Lil Nas X, the platform has proven that these kinds of experiences are not only possible, but popular. Now, Roblox believes it will be possible for musicians to break on their platform and have entire careers within the virtual walls, essentially eliminating the need for touring. While this may be optimistic—or pessimistic depending on your view of tours—it is fair to say that there will likely be a Roblox superstar emerging in the near future. The goal is to democratize music, and make playing concerts accessible by removing the overhead of touring and performing live, meaning bands can play to their fans whether its five people or five million without it being prohibitively expensive.

NFTs Are Here to Stay

Now, the metaverse concerts, whether it be through Samsung, Warner Music, which has announced a partnership with The Sandbox to bring their roster of artists into a VR world, or some other verse yet to be created, are not necessarily open to everyone. This is where NFTs come back into play. Yes, the NFT is here to stay, but not just as a gorilla PFP or multi-million dollar auction. NFTs can serve as keys to unlock special content in the real world and the virtual one. They hold powers akin to a magic wand or Batman's toolbelt, allowing the owner to enter a certain restricted area of the metaverse in question or attend a concert!

While this facet of NFTs is just emerging, the NFT boom has already brought a significant improvement to the art world: legitimizing digital art. Digital art has been around for quite some time but it is only recently thanks to the rapid rise of NFTs that it is truly being acknowledged in fine art circles. Digital artists and their work are being welcomed by the likes of Sothebys and Art Basel, increasing awareness and exposure. Digital art is getting its moment in the sun, just like we saw with street art and contemporary art, and with it comes incredible possibilities for musicians. Street art tied in heavily with the rap movement, and now digital art makes its mark on EDM and pop, allowing for incredible otherworldly visuals for everything from album cover art to music videos.

Several musicians and bands have benefited from music NFTs. Justin Blau aka DJ 3LAU had an NFT drop in March last year called "Ultraviolet Collection" which had a world record sale of over \$11.6 million. This was from a single auction of only 33 unique tokens. The top NFT sold during this particular auction included an opportunity for the buyer to record a song with Blau. Similarly, Grimes (STORM #1) sold digital artworks in a collection called "WarNymph" which made around \$6 million in early 2021.

NFTs can also capitalize on the increasingly popular "remix" culture which encourages editing content to produce creative, derivative content. Musicians and other creators can incentivize remixes in ways that benefit them by leveraging "upgradeable NFTs" which essentially offer creators the ability to maintain control of spin-off creations— and perhaps most importantly, incremental profits. John Legend recently announced the launch of OurSong which has the stated mission of "building blockchain technology for the creator economy." The aim of the venture, more than anything else, is to remove apprehension for collectors and creators about how to trade (and make money from) NFTs.

Just like any collectible, music NFTs can come in a variety of different forms. Snoop Dogg recently set up his mansion and NFT collection in The Sandbox metaverse, offering everything from private parties to specially designed virtual items including his car collection, dogs, NFT art, and more. Live Nation recently introduced the launch of Live Stubs - NFTs that fans receive for free when they purchase a concert ticket. This brings back the nostalgia that fans have for collecting ticket stubs - but also opens up a new marketplace for collectibles. Over time, Live Stubs and similar NFTs can appreciate in time and be resold legally.

But perhaps the most powerful way that NFTs can and will empower musicians for the future is in the fact that they cannot be replicated. Even when someone buys an NFT and sells it, the musician who created it can still earn from the re-sales of their work. This will help to reduce the issue of musicians not earning from the sale of their work, or only earning low amounts from centralized streaming services. Streaming music using NFT-based technologies using decentralized platforms like **Audius** will also allow fans and music creators to easily share and stream music directly. We expect this to have a dramatic impact on streaming platforms like Spotify and Apple Music in the years to come.

Universe Meets Metaverse

While all of this can be experienced from the comfort of your own home, there are art, tech, and music integrations happening live and in-person as well. VR is immersive, but the real world can be as well. With advancements in green screen technology, volumetric capturing, display screens, and more, immersive experiences are drawing large crowds.

This is something Mirus Gallery understands, having opened their Los Angeles location this year, with immersive art experiences on the docket. This month, they debut their show

with artist NYCHOS. While the immersive experience will run for months, the musical component changes, with visiting DJs and room for audio experimentation, highlighting how multiple senses can be engaged to elevate the music and the art at the same time.

It's not just event spaces getting in on the immersive opportunities. Musicians themselves are creating curated experiences much like the ever-popular Van Gogh Immersive Experience that allow fans to enter a physical world of their own creation, controlling multiple senses to create the ultimate experience. Just a few months ago, Coldplay brought "The Atmospheres" to four cities around the world. This custom built inter-galactic experience came as close to transporting fans as humanly possible, heavily curated to coincide with the 12 tracks of the band's latest album.

And are you ready for ABBATARS? In May 2022, iconic Swedish band ABBA will return for a digital, immersive concert experience, performing virtually via custom-built digital avatars. Rather than have the band appear as they currently are—each member is now in their late sixties or seventies—ABBA Voyage will feature them as they were in their '70s prime. Unlike CGI holograms we've seen of deceased artists like Tupac Shakur and Whitney Houston, ABBA spent five weeks being filmed by 160 cameras for motion capture as they performed the songs that will make up the show's 96-minute runtime.

This is just beginning to scratch the surface of art, technology, and music working hand in hand, but one thing is for sure. Entertainment is increasingly about the whole experience. While a good song or intriguing painting are both engaging, true lasting impressions come from collaboration and innovation.



PLAYLISTS

Check out this issue's carefully curated playlists by clicking below:



STORM TRACKER

Tracking Our STORM Report Alumni!



GLASS ANIMALS

(STORM No. 16)

Last month, Oxford quartet **Glass Animals** became the first British group to top Spotify's global songs chart with their synthpop single "Heat Waves," racking up 4.26M plays per day. The remarkable achievement is credited largely to the song's inclusion on the FIFA 21 soundtrack, its popularity in the video game "Minecraft," and various radio and TV syncs. The song has also had a surge in popularity with users on TikTok soundtracking their videos with the track.



LIZZO

(STORM No. 45)

Earlier this month, STORM Report alumna **Lizzo** debuted her song "Special" as part of a Logitech campaign alongside digital creator Bretman Rock and comedienne Elsa Majimbo. The singer also teased an upcoming album with a tweet stating, "Let the 2022 takeover begin." We are here for it!



CLAIRO

(STORM No. 55)

On the heels of releasing her new album *Slingshot*, **Clairo** has embarked on an extensive global tour February 16 - October 4 with openers Arlo Parks (STORM 71) and Widowspeak. Along the way, she will also be performing at various festivals including Governors Ball, Newport Folk Festival, and Kilby Block Party.

STORM FORECAST

Events And Happenings For Your Radar

THE LIVE RETURN OF SXSW

March 11-20

After being virtual the past two years, SXSW will be back largely in-person this March (with a smaller online component). SXSW's film lineup will include premieres of highly anticipated films such as *The Lost City*, *Bodies Bodies Bodies*, and *The Unbearable Weight of Massive Talent*, and TV series *Atlanta*. Some of the most buzzed about music artists this year include Wet Leg, Moonchild Sanelly, and Madison McFerrin.

SMOKIN GROOVES FESTIVAL

March 19

The sold out Smokin Grooves Festival will take place at LA State Historic Park and feature performances by neo-soul, R&B, and hip-hop artists including Erykah Badu, Nas, The Roots, Miguel, India Arie, and more.

THE 94TH ACADEMY AWARDS

March 27

The Oscars return to Hollywood's Dolby Theatre this year! Netflix's *The Power of the Dog* leads the nominees, with 12 nominations including Best Picture, Best Director, and more. Other top-nominated films include *Dune*, *West Side Story*, *Belfast*, and *King Richard*. Additionally, Beyoncé received her first Oscar nomination for her song "Be Alive" which was featured in *King Richard*.

IHEARTRADIO MUSIC AWARDS

March 22

Back for its ninth year, the iHeartMusic Awards will air live from the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles on FOX. The awards show celebrates the most-played artists and songs across iHeartRadio's various stations. Justin Bieber, Olivia Rodrigo, Doja Cat and Giveon lead with the most nominations this year.

THE BATMAN MOVIE RELEASE

March 4

Matt Reeves's long-awaited *The Batman* finally arrives to the silver screen in March. Originally, it was supposed to premiere in June 2021, then October 2021. The movie has an all-star cast including Robert Pattinson, Zoë Kravitz, Colin Farrell and Paul Dano.

STORM WARNING

The 20 Artists On Our Radar

1 GAYLE

622K 37M

200K 940K Pop

Hayley Williams, Olivia Rodrigo Atlantic

17-year-old singer/songwriter GAYLE creates the kind of self-possessed pop music that's empowering for both artist and audience. Her debut single "abcdefu" has quickly proved a breakout hit, topping charts left and right with a viral stint that's been fueled by the creation of over 1.5 million TikToks using the track. Photo provided by management ©2022

ICON KEY

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

2 LAUREN SPENCER-SMITH



25K 13M

357K 2.8M Pop Mimi Webb, Taylor Swift Songster Records

Lauren is an 18-year-old Canadian singer-songwriter appeared as a contestant on American Idol in 2020. In 2021, she became further known when her self-released song "Fingers Crossed" went viral on TikTok. Photo by Micah Suarez ©2021

"The internet's favorite R&B singer."
—Noisey

MAYA'S
TOP PICK!



3 NIKI

5.5M **10M**

1.7M **319K** **R&B**
Beyonce, Jennifer Lopez
88Rising

Taking inspiration from the glossy R&B/pop of the late '90s, Indonesian singer, songwriter, and producer Nicole Zefanaya found early success on YouTube performing acoustic songs. Niki signed to 88rising and launched her debut album *Moonchild* in 2020. In 2021 she contributed the song "Every Summertime" to the soundtrack to Marvel's *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings*.

Photo by Publicist ©2021

ROBERT'S
TOP PICK!



4 JAMIE MILLER

785K **6.3M**

621K **2.5M** **Pop**
Sam Smith, Bruno Mars
Atlantic

Jamie Miller is a Welsh singer and musician currently based in Los Angeles. He featured on *The Voice UK* in 2017, where he came in third place. Following *The Voice*, he signed a deal with Atlantic Records and is currently working on his debut album and is set to tour with Jesse McCartney this summer.

Photo by Jessica Spohr ©2021

5 TOMORROW X TOGETHER

8.6M 5.5M



11.2M 15.3M K-pop BTS, ENHYPEN Big Hit/Republic

TOMORROW X TOGETHER, commonly known as TXT is a five-member South Korean boy band formed by Big Hit Music. Their latest release, an EP titled "Chaotic Wonderland" showcases their seamless cohesion as a group. Photo Provided by Big Hit ©2022

572K 6.7M Pop Punk, Rap Mod Sun, Machine Gun Kelly Atlantic

Born William Schultz, Sueco (fka Sueco the child) transitioned from beatmaker to artist when his debut single, "Fast," went viral on TikTok in 2019. Fueled by the traction, he continues to release hits, such as "SOS" featuring Travis Barker, "Hate U," "Paralyzed," and most recently "Loser" released earlier this month. Photo by FRANKHAVEMERCY ©2022.

6 SUECO

370K 4.8M



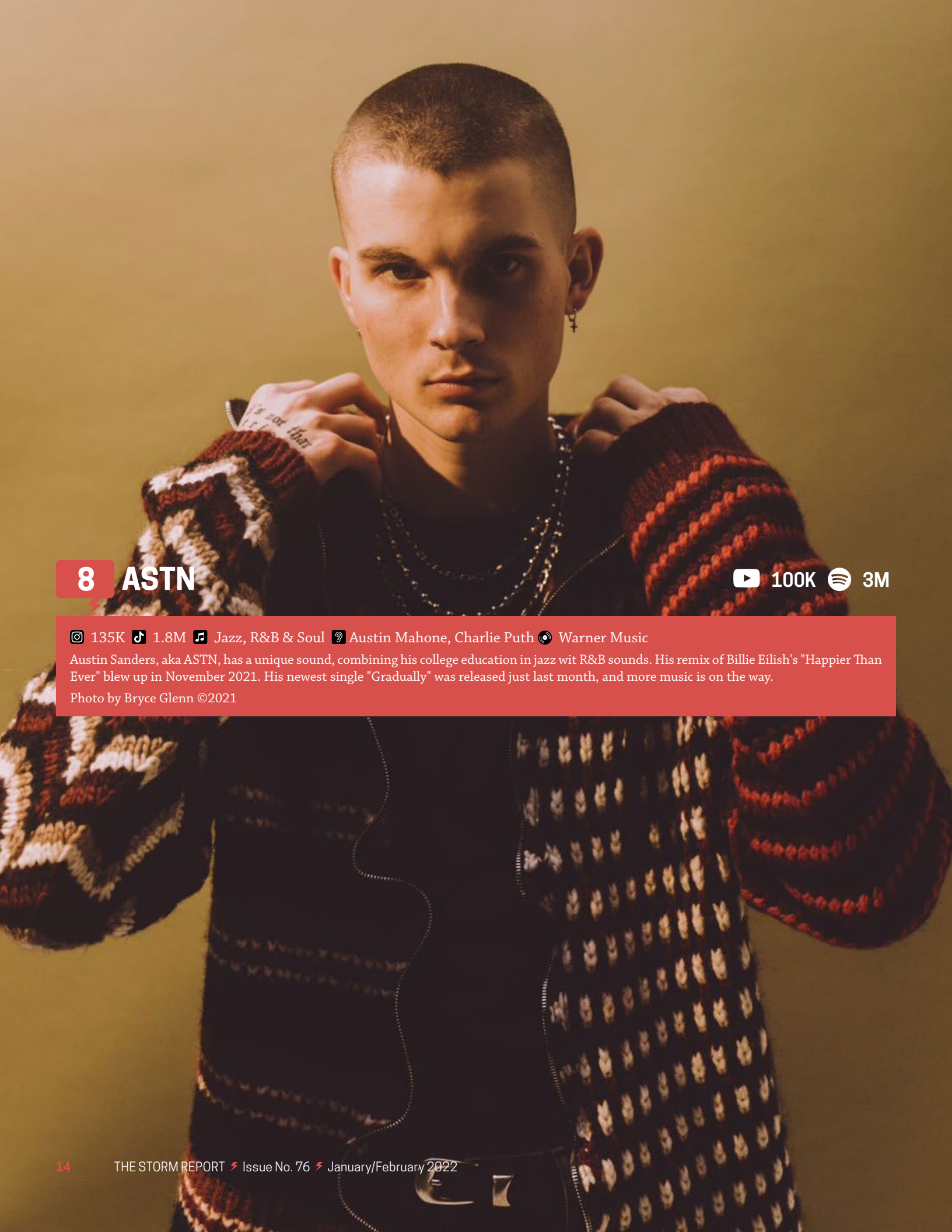
7 STUDIO KILLERS

684K 3.4M

75K 241K Electro-Pop Kim Petras, Years & Years Atlantic

Studio Killers is a Finnish-Danish-British electro-pop virtual band made up of four animated characters. During 2020, their 2013 single "Jenny" went viral on TikTok. They have released various "Jenny" remixes including a recent one featuring Kim Petras. Image provided by management ©2022





8 ASTN

100K 3M

135K 1.8M Jazz, R&B & Soul Austin Mahone, Charlie Puth Warner Music

Austin Sanders, aka ASTN, has a unique sound, combining his college education in jazz with R&B sounds. His remix of Billie Eilish's "Happier Than Ever" blew up in November 2021. His newest single "Gradually" was released just last month, and more music is on the way.

Photo by Bryce Glenn ©2021



JENNIFER'S
TOP PICK!

9 BRELAND

281K 2.8M

117K 470K Country, Hip Hop Florida Georgia Line, Nelly Atlantic

Known as "The Pen Point Guard" Breland has a complex sound, drawing from Gospel, R&B, Hip Hop, and Country music. He has written music for artists such as Ann Marie and Ar'mon and Trey. As a solo artist, he continues to create music with his genre bending sound.

Photo by ALAINA MULLIN ©2021



10 MICHELLE

7.7K 1.4M

16.4K 1K R&B Noname, Superorganism Atlantic

Michelle is a six-person collective made up of born-and-bred New Yorkers. The predominantly queer and POC collective makes music that features layered harmonies, vibrant percussion and punchy synthesizers that creates an intriguing depth to their sound.

Photo by Aysia Marotta ©2021





11 CALEB HEARN

▶ 23.5K 🎧 905K

📷 47K 🎵 1.3M 🎸 Singer-Songwriter 🎧 Ed Sheeran, Joshua Bassett 🎧 Real Reserves Records

Caleb Hearn is a 21-year-old singer-songwriter from North Carolina and a TikTok sensation. He is known for his emotional ballads featuring emotional and raw lyrics. Last month he released a track called "Damage" and he is set to release even more music this year.

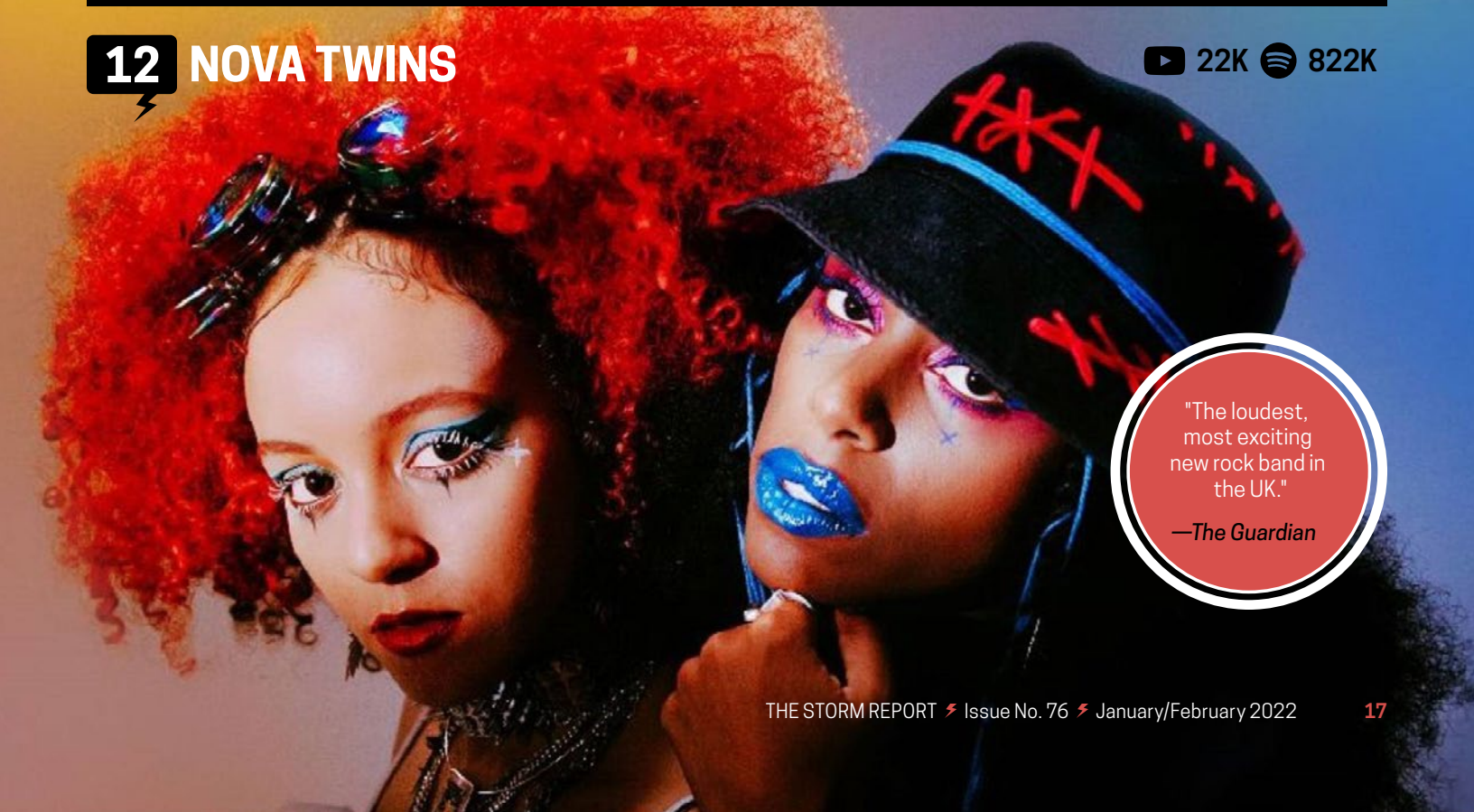
Photo Wesley Nysm ©2021

📷 55K 🎵 10K 🎸 Rock 🎧 Babes in Toyland, Rage Against the Machine 🎧 Marshall Amplification Plc

Nova Twins are a heavy alternative rock band consisting of vocalist/guitarist Amy Love and bassist Georgia South. Their innovative sound is characterized by powerful bass, guitar and drums, and extremely energetic vocals. Backed only by a touring drummer, they dredge remarkable sounds from their instruments in the style of Rage Against the Machine. Photo by Jamie Walters ©2021

12 NOVA TWINS

▶ 22K 🎧 822K



"The loudest, most exciting new rock band in the UK."

—The Guardian

13 ANZ

📷 20.3K 🎵 N/A 🎶 Dance/Electronic

📍 LCY, Nikki Nair 🎧 Ninja Tune

Anz is a DJ and Producer based in Manchester. She is renowned in the music world for her genre-spanning productions and mixes that are influenced by Electro, UK Garage, Jungle sounds and more. Her music is perfect for the club and is bright and unpredictable. and honest lyrics.

Photo by Melanie Lehmann ©2021

🎥 1.2K 🎧 478K





14 MIA RODRIGUEZ

📺 279K 🎧 448K

📷 175K 🎵 2M 🎶 Pop

🎤 Bella Poarch, Ava Max

🎧 Atlantic/City Pop Records

Mia Rodriguez is a 19-year-old Australian singer-songwriter who is taking the music scene by storm with her unapologetic attitude and infectious dark-pop sound. Named "Best New Artist" at the Rolling Stone Australia Awards, she is making waves as a global pop star

Photo by Giulia McGauren ©2021



LAUREN'S
TOP PICK!

15 SARAH AND THE SUNDAYS

▶ 6.4K 🎧 368K

📷 11K 🎵 45K 🎸 Indie Rock 📺 Bleachers, Arctic Monkeys 🎧 AWAL Recordings
Sarah and the Sundays is an alternative band based out of Austin, TX, comprised of five roommates. After their breakout track "Moving On," they focused on live shows and built a strong online audience. Their sophomore album *The Living End* solidifies their sound that is bright and zesty. Photo provided by Management ©2021

📷 24K 🎵 1K 🎸 Alternative/Indie 📺 Portishead, Mitski 🎧 Original Sin
24-year-old Dora Jar is a singer-songwriter who refuses to be defined. Each song she has releases has a distinctive and alluring sound. A bedroom pop artist who isn't afraid to walk her own path, has a vision to be as expansive as honest of an artist as she can. She is opening for STORM Report alumni Billie Eilish and Holly Humberstone on tour this year. Photo by Morgana Van Peebles ©2021

16 DORA JAR

▶ 1.7K 🎧 366K



"Dora Jar is the Gen Z musician your favorite Gen Z artists adore."
—W Magazine

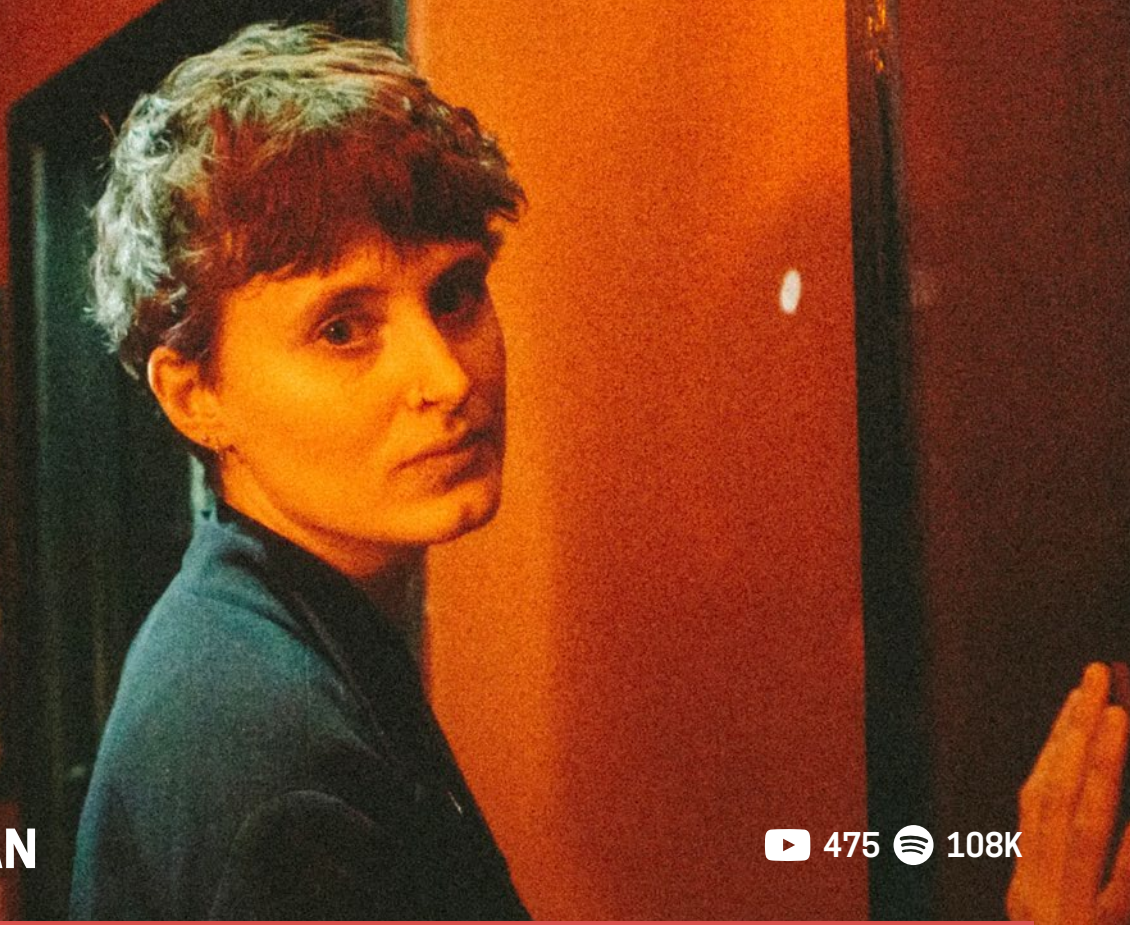
17 PRIYA RAGU



17.4K 296K

45K 44K R&B/Soul/Pop M.I.A., Lauryn Hill Warner Records UK

Swiss-Tamil musician Priya Ragu is forging a rarely-represented path, and crafting a collection of genre-amorphous hits in the process. A kaleidoscopic blend of South Indian and Sri Lankan instrumentation, slick Western electronica and pop, and intoxicating R&B and soul, Ragu's songs aren't just multicultural—they're a family affair, featuring dynamic production from her talented rapper-musician brother, Japhna Gold. Photo by Jenny Brough ©2020



18 INDIA JORDAN

475 108K

10K N/A Dance/Electronic Pretty Girl, Kelly Lee Owens Ninja Tune

India Jordan is emerging as one of the most exciting new producers and DJs in England. They have spent the past few years securing down residencies where they play their high-energy and fast-paced dance music. Photo by Prexactly ©2021

371K 11.1M Pop JVKE, PRETTYMUCH Atlantic



Born in the Faroe Islands, Reiley has gone from small town musician to making a global impact with his music. He has an exuberant presence as seen on his active social media and a traffic-stopping strong voice. His latest single *Let it Ring* features the first ever licensed sample of the official iPhone ringtone and has already garnered 12M streams. Photo provided by management ©2021

19 REILEY

74K 79K





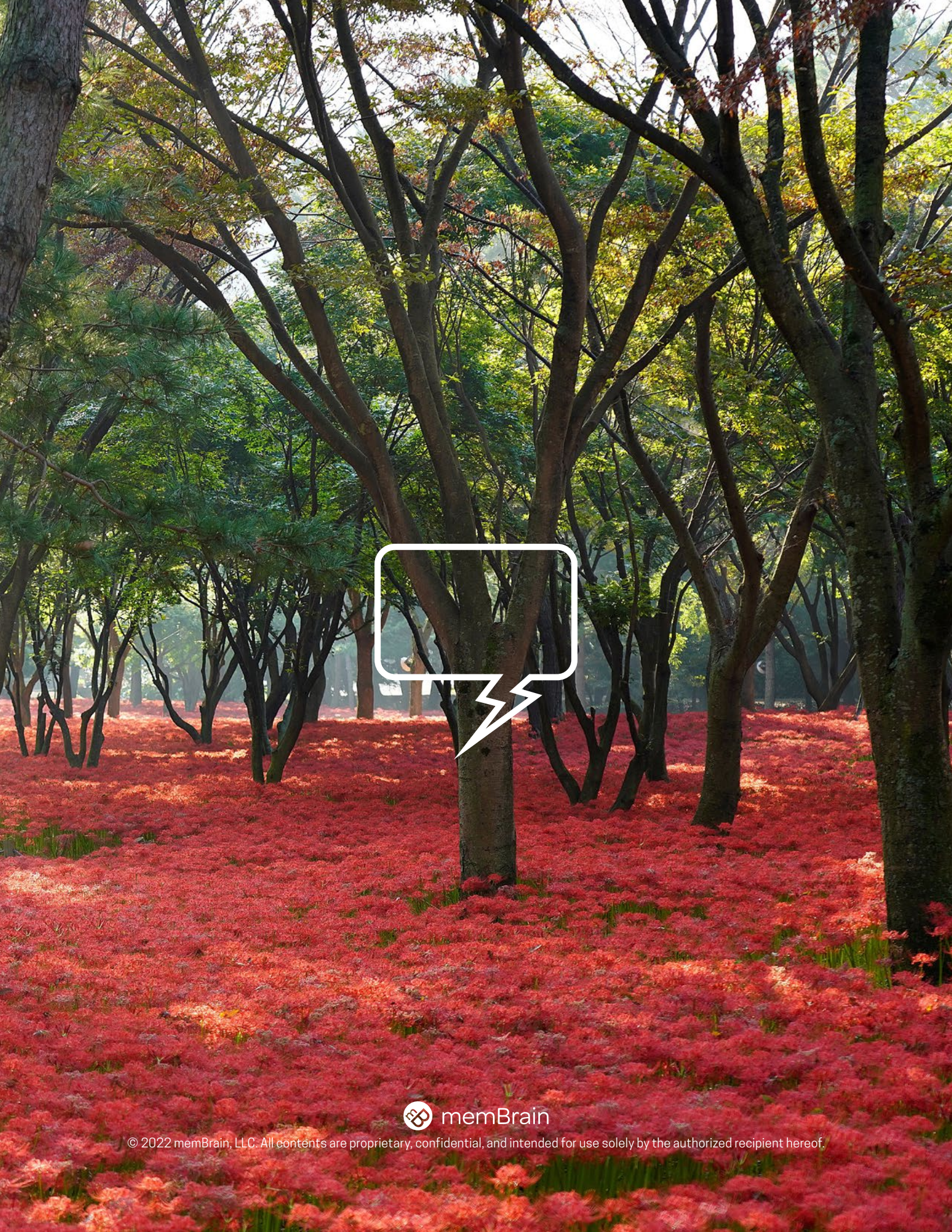
 724  20K

20 XIUHTEZCATL

 110K  537  Hip-Hop  Supaman, The Halluci Nation  Unsigned

Xiuhtezcatl pushes the envelope of what Hip Hop can look and sound like. He is a musician as well as an activist, entrepreneur and cross-cultural icon. He is bilingual and his music features both Spanish and English as well as thought-provoking lyrics. He has collaborated with artists such as WILLOW and Jaden and uses his art to challenge systems of injustice and re-envision the future.

Photo provided by management ©2021



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