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Sadie Jean. Photo by Deanie Chen ©2023

# 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

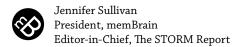
As we approach the close of another transformative year, this month's "Eye of the STORM" article should center around a topic that resonates more deeply than ever—authenticity. In a year marked by a whirlwind of discussions surrounding generative AI and its implications on human creativity, we find it imperative to shine a light on what remains irreplaceable—the unique voice of the artist.

This month, we were thrilled to interview Wendy Parr, a leader in holistic artist development. Her insights serve as a timely reminder that in the quest for originality and lasting impact, authenticity remains our North Star. With decades of experience and a portfolio of artists that ranges from emerging talents to Grammy winners, Wendy brings a nuanced perspective to the challenges and opportunities musicians face in an industry often driven by trends and commercial imperatives.

Her wisdom is not just relevant to artists; it extends to anyone striving to make a genuine connection in an increasingly noisy world. Whether you are an artist, an entrepreneur, or simply an individual yearning for something more meaningful, this article offers a compelling argument for why being truly yourself is not just good ethics—it's good business.

Please join us in thanking Wendy Parr for sharing her invaluable knowledge and reaffirming authenticity's critical importance in our lives and work. It's a conversation that offers much-needed clarity amid the noise and one that we are proud to share with you in the memBrain STORM Report.

Emjoy!



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## WE ARE WHO WE ARE:

Navigating Authenticity in Music

By Grace Slansky

n today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, we are inundated with a deluge of information, personalities, and content. As AI and generative technologies emerge as formidable contenders in the creative space, artists face an unprecedented challenge to their livelihoods and craft. Now, more than ever, authenticity isn't merely a buzzword; it's an imperative. In an age where algorithms can compose music and machine learning can generate artwork, owning your unique human identity becomes a powerful differentiator. As the lines between human creativity and machine-generated content blur, your authentic self is not just your greatest asset—it's your competitive edge.

In this highly competitive environment, artists, much like business startups, face the daunting task of setting themselves apart. But for artists, the challenge is multifaceted—it's not just about differentiating their sound in a crowded market, but also understanding their unique identity and the ethos that permeates their work. While forging one's path may seem like a solitary quest, the journey to authenticity often calls for expert guidance, much like a fledgling business requires a robust team.

This is where **Wendy Parr** comes into the picture. Once an artist and vocal coach, Parr has evolved her practice to adopt a more comprehensive approach. She engages not just with the vocal

talents but also with the very identity and creative process of the musicians she mentors. Through her innovative 'Parr Method,' she orchestrates a fusion of introspection, vocal mastery, and personal growth, empowering artists to not only find but also finely tune their authentic voice. In a world increasingly populated by machine-generated artistry, such human-centric guidance becomes not just valuable, but vital.

With over two decades of experience coaching top music artists like Melanie Martinez, Regina Spektor, Sara Bareilles, and Marc Bassy, as well as guiding A Great Big World from their first vocal session to a GRAMMY, Wendy Parr provides a unique perspective on artist development. She explores the nuanced relationship between authenticity and personal branding, advising artists on how to remain true to themselves while navigating ever-changing trends.

In today's digital age, where social media amplifies voices and creates a constant demand for new content, artists face the significant challenge of maintaining their authentic selves. Parr believes that, despite these pressures, the combination of authenticity and strategic marketing can become an artist's most powerful asset. She succinctly puts it as the need for artists to "market the shit out of authenticity."

Our recent interview with Wendy Parr in the memBrain STORM Report offers deeper insights into staying authentic in the complex world of music. Whether you're an up-and-coming artist, an industry veteran, or simply someone who values the core of human artistry, this conversation provides a comprehensive look into the soul of genuine musical expression.

#### Let's Go Back to the Start

Launching her artist career at the tender age of eight, Wendy Parr was ahead of the curve in immersing herself in the complexities of the music industry. After years of working with agents and vocal coaches, she realized she wanted a deeper understanding of her craft. As Parr reflects, "I learned early things I needed to work on, places I was strong, and areas in my creativity that needed work. I also found myself being given direction that was off track and didn't serve me. It was some of the misdirection I got that led me to be the coach I am—meeting artists where they are and empowering them to be true to their inner vision."

It was precisely this misguidance that drove her toward a career dedicated to cultivating authenticity in artists. Her own experience of receiving disparate advice—"Not to be gay, don't look like that, having one label love what I do, but not know what to do with an R&B 15-year-old Caucasian kid, another telling me I should go in the direction of an artist who was hot at the time"—highlighted the industry's gaps and shortcomings. These experiences catalyzed her commitment to help artists remain loyal to their true selves amidst the industry's fickle trends and often conflicting counsel.

"My need to be aligned with my integrity encourages my support of others being true to themselves. And it makes for better art and a better world. Freedom to be yourself resonates with the heart and builds emotional connections. I want that in my life. I want a world that is connected, honest, vulnerable, and amazing. When everyone lets their weird show, no one is weird; we're all wonderful."

#### **Artists and Branding**

In an industry awash with varying opinions and external influences, Wendy Parr recognizes that trust is the bedrock of artist development. Living in a world of constant stimuli, she advocates for discernment and self-trust. "There is so much noise and input happening all the time—it's coming at you—in your hand, in your home. It's important to be conscious about limiting the consumption of things and choosing what we want to be influenced by," she says. Parr also encourages artists to broaden their creative horizons: "Go to a museum, watch a film—take in art that will bring your ideas for your art that is outside of the lane of music. And get quiet. Turn everything off often enough so you can hear your inner voice. Get into nature and move your body."

The journey to authentic artistry isn't meant to be a solitary venture. Parr emphasizes the role of a dependable support system: "I think having a support system is also important. Trusted friends and a team who ground you, push back, and tell you the truth with kindness. Have a home-cooked meal and conversation with. Community matters, so you feel supported."

As for the constantly changing trends in the industry, Parr reminds artists to rely on their own instincts and originality. "The artist IS the TRENDSETTER. That's the key. If you're following a trend, you're late, behind, and not the leader. If an artist allows themselves to weave the layers of themselves into their work and put that quirky, unusual ingredient into it that is so them, THAT'S the next trend. That's the innovation."

Parr also offers a straightforward way to assess the alignment between an artist and their work. "Evolution is our natural process, and we feel playful, passionate, and totally behind our choices. When we second guess, aren't sure, say yes to something but it leaves a pit in our stomach, we have to talk ourselves into it and find reasons why it will work—well, that's all out of our alignment. That's our head where fear lives; that's pressure and outside influences at work. When the music, idea, and creation have the artist all fired up, we're in a good place."

#### **The Parr Method**

Navigating the abstract journey toward authenticity can be challenging, but Wendy Parr offers a structured solution with The Parr Method. This program begins fundamentally with a Blueprint session. "The first thing I address with an artist is a CONVERSATION. We'll certainly sing in that initial session, exploring the artist's vocal capabilities. However, before diving into vocal goals, we discuss the artist's motivations for making music. We identify obstacles and dismantle limiting beliefs. The aim is to focus on what truly matters to them, trust their inner voice, and discard unserving beliefs. In doing so, artists can let go of perfectionism and better connect with their audience," says Parr.

Following this initial groundwork, Parr moves to vocal training. "The power of vocal training lies in aligning the vocal muscles. This helps the artist's authentic voice emerge, full of emotion and unique vocal qualities. Armed with confidence and an understanding of their instrument, artists are then empowered to engage deeply with their audience. This is where true freedom in artistry lies," she elaborates.

Parr also tackles the common challenge of defining an artist's musical sound, which she acknowledges can be a scattered journey. "Many artists grapple with defining their musical identity. It often takes a few albums to hone their unique sound, especially when their musical tastes are varied. That's why I developed a 3-step process called the Sound Chart. This tool helps artists analyze the music they love and distill it into essential ingredients that

serve as the blueprint for their sound. Sometimes the process involves revisiting music they once loved but abandoned due to external pressures. Rediscovering these elements often proves to be the special sauce that sets them apart," Parr concludes.

With all of this in mind, Parr created <u>Compass</u> a 6-month artist development program that dives deep into the artist's inner world - archetypes, childhood heroes, key moments in their lives – and then into visuals and design. The program provides the tools to discover and the guidance to put the discoveries into action.

"When the artist has the language to communicate to their team. To say, "This is the dart board. That is me!" The artist is the visionary. And that truth is what resonates with the audience. That's what creates super fans. That's what makes each element consistent and believable."

#### Collaboration is Key

Much of Parr's method is based on the idea that collaboration is at the heart of art. "The Artist's Circle was born out of my mentoring and being a resource, a support to so many artists. Seeing them all going through the same things at various stages of their development alone. And I thought you all didn't know that you're not alone. I just got to get artists in the same room talking about everything they're going through, so they can be a support system to one another. And as it grew, I discovered having creatives of all disciplines provided a wider lens of insights. The photographer literally sees things differently than the music artist and choreographer - so everyone brings their angle in, and everyone benefits from the various viewpoints. And everyone in the room is someone who could be on your next creative project."

With years of Artist's Circle events under her belt, Parr is now bringing the experience to conferences and curating it online for more access.

"We all need support and understanding - to be heard and seen. Dealing with being lonely on tour, fame, burnout - when everyone can relate, you know others are going through it too - it's a burden lifted. People provide support to one another. Shared experiences

let us know we are not alone. And then solutions come - tools and insights are shared, and the artists find ways to help themselves with the various issues and struggles. Someone in the AC has been through what you're going through, and they talk about what they did that worked. Beautiful friendships emerge, and incredible artistic collaborations come from the connections made at the Artist's Circle. We all need family, a place we belong. The AC is that space for genuine connection among creatives."

#### **Looking Ahead**

In a world where change is the only constant, Wendy Parr's insights anchor us to a timeless truth: "Authenticity lasts. You either capture attention briefly and fade away, or you build a meaningful, long-lasting career. Authenticity is not just memorable—it's something you can continually build upon," she emphasizes. She also champions the enduring value of quality and consistency, remarking, "In a world awash with noise, excellence isn't a luxury—it's a necessity for sustained growth and impact."

Navigating today's fluid reality, two elements remain steadfast: the importance of being genuine and the compelling force of human connection. Whether you're launching a startup or releasing a debut album, the challenge is to stand out in a crowded marketplace. The same principles that fuel startup success—unique value and a dedicated team—drive artists who harness and amplify their true voice.

Wendy Parr's expertise underscores the non-negotiable role of authenticity in long-term success. This applies universally—from new artists vying for the spotlight to recognized brands desiring a deeper bond with their audience.

In an era where external pressures and fleeting trends are the order of the day, safeguarding one's unique essence becomes more than a strategy—it's a lifeline. Artists possess the transformative power to reshape cultural norms, but this is contingent upon preserving their genuine self. In this age of information overload, it's the authentic voices that not only break through but also leave an imprint that endures.

## **CHECK OUT**

this issue's carefully curated playlists by clicking below:









#### **SHYGIRL & TINASHE**

Shygirl (STORM 78) and Tinashe (STORM 3) have had quite a collaborative year. After Shygirl recruited Tinashe for a remix of her track "Heaven" earlier this year, it seems they've fallen into a groove. The pair are set to enchant fans across the US with their co-headlining tour. Having kicked off the concerts at the end of October, the pair of STORM alumni celebrate their latest releases -- Tinashe's captivating "BB/Ang3l" and Shygirl's sultry "Nymph in the Wild" EP.



#### FRED AGAIN..

At the end of October, **Fred again.** (STORM 70) launched his historic 8-show residency at The Shrine in Los Angeles: Night. The run marks the most consecutive shows a single artist has ever performed at the venue during its nearly 100-year history. With roughly 40,000 tickets sold and entirely sold out on the first night, it's safe to say the show is a success, demonstrating LA's unwavering enthusiasm for dance music.



#### **BRENT FAIYAZ**

On October 27th, **Brent Faiyaz** (STORM 57) unveiled *Larger Than Life*, the highly-anticipated successor to his 2022 chart-topper, *Wasteland*. The album boasts star-studded collaborations featuring the likes of Missy Elliott, A\$AP Rocky, Coco Jones, and Babyface Ray. Listeners dive deep into Faiyaz's signature soundscape as he showcases his unparalleled crooning prowess on standout tracks like "Best Time," "Wherever I Go," and "Forever Yours."

### STORM FORECAST

Events And Happenings For Your Radar

#### **COMPLEXCON**

November 18-19, 2023

The expertly curated festival of the future is back, bringing together the world's most influential brands and artists for an immersive and unforgettable weekend of style, sneakers, art, design, food, music, inspiration, and more. This year's line-up includes live performances from Kid Cudi and Lyrical Lemonade and a host of special guest DJ sets alongside not-to-be-missed collectibles and activations.

#### **MUSIC AWARDS**

November is a big month for music awards! Following the Country Music Awards on November 8th are the Billboard Music Awards on November 19th where there will be plenty of chances for artists to get well-deserved recognition. Don't forget, the middle of the month also holds GRAMMY nominations for a music awards show trifecta.

### **MARVELOUS MOVIES**

Now that scary movie season is over, it's time to check out some new blockbusters heading our way. On December 5th, kick off the holiday season with Wonka, starring Timothée Chalomet as the singing, and dancing Mr. Wonka himself! On December 20th, get your superhero fix with Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom, where Jason Momoa takes on a new underwater challenge, once again directed by James Wan. And, on Christmas Day, Michael Mann's biopic Ferrari stars Adam Driver as Enzo Ferrari, depicting the tumultuous summer of 1957 when the former F1 racer, facing bankruptcy and personal loss, stakes everything on the perilous Mille Miglia race in Italy.

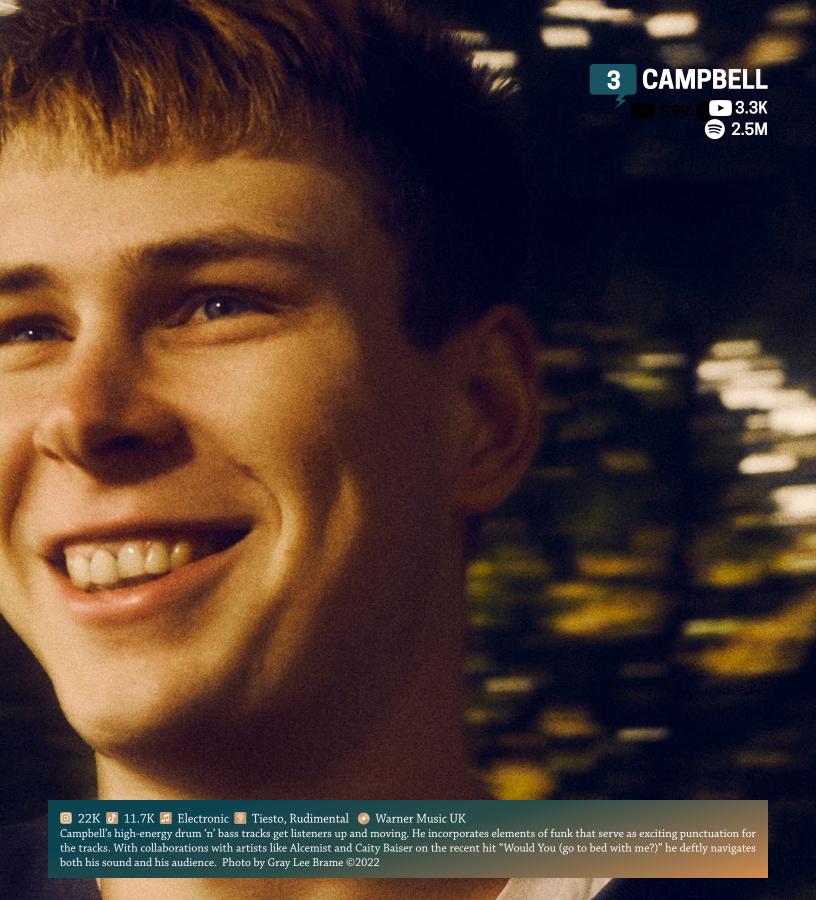
### **LONG AWAITED ALBUMS**

November 17, 2023

November 17th seems to be the day for highly-anticipated album releases. Fans will finally hear Nicki Minaj's first album in five years, and the rapper promises Pink Friday 2 will be worth the wait! That same day, Lil Wayne and 2 Chainz will release their follow-up joint album Welcome 2 Collegrove, which the duo have been teasing for years! The 17th also brings drops from Daft Punk, Dolly Parton, and Steve Aoki.











🧧 14.9K 🚺 64.4K 🗾 Pop 🔋 Montell Fish, Rowan Drake 📀 Independent

Writer/Producer Artemas describes his music as "a rainy day in the sunshine state," conveying the enthusiastically sarcastic attitude that is undeniably evident in his music. With bittersweet lyrics and empowering hooks that speak to listeners of all ages, Artemas writes memorable 90s-inspired anthems with a modern twist. Photo by Reuben Bastienne Lewis ©2023

© 21.7K 296.3K Country Sam Hunt, Luke Combs River House Artists/Warner Music Nashville
Fusing hard-rocking sonic aggression with the deep-feeling confessions of a country troubadour, Austin Snell is an emerging country talent who has forged his path with little regard for the rules. With distorted, dark-energy guitars, thundering drums, and a wounded vocal, he seamlessly blends blacked-out rock aggression with late-night country reflection. Photo provided by management ©2023





© 20.3K ♂ 7,360 ☑ Pop/Alternative № Alex Warren, Ed Sheeran № Dreamstart Music

Berlin-based artist clide merges impressive lyricism, lush vocals, and clean, dynamic production into his music. clide's songs carry an emotional narrative that ranges from dark days to luminous ones. Photo by Paula Koring©2023

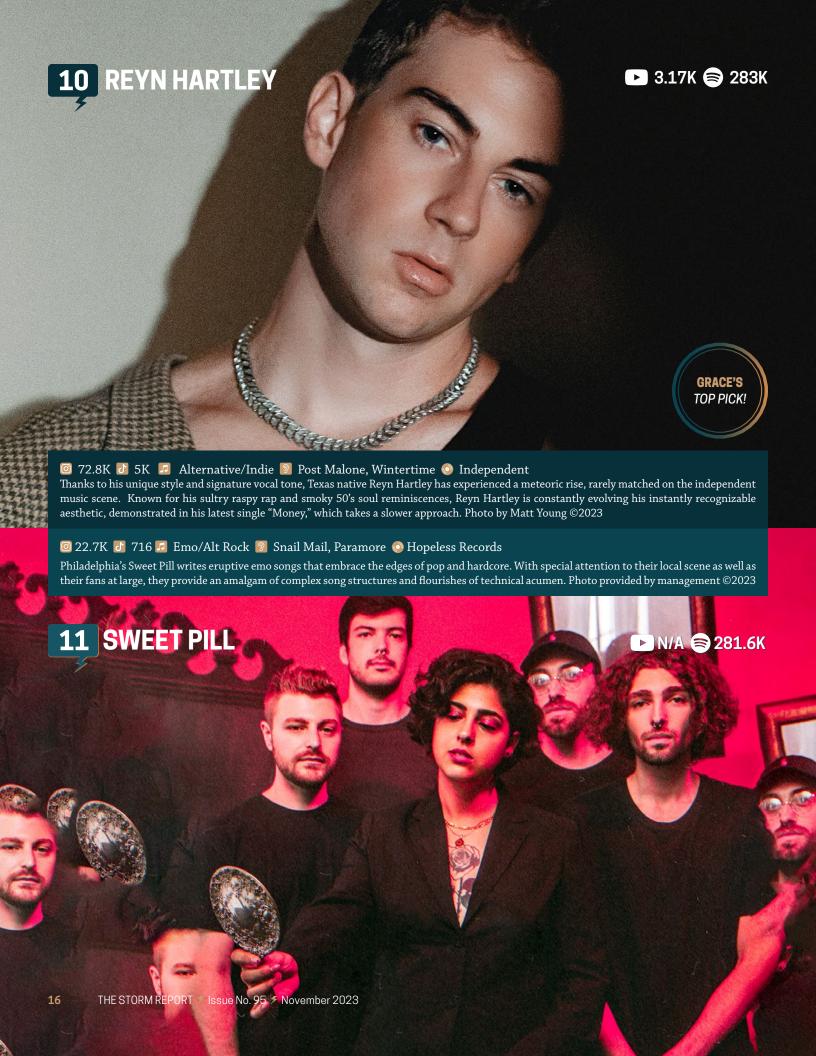
⑤ 559K ₺ 1M ₺ K-Pop ⑥ New Jeans, TWICE ② JYP Entertainment, Republic Records
Formed under K-pop powerhouse JYP Entertainment and Republic Records, VCHA is a first-of-its-kind, LA-based, global pop girl group molded through the reality competition show A2K. The group comprises six members: Lexus, Camila, Kendall, Savanna, KG, and Kaylee. With a name based on the Korean word meaning "shine the light," the group believes in authenticity, togetherness, and the idea that we are all special because we are all different. Photo provided by JYP Entertainment ©2023





② 294K ♂ 211.7 K ♬ Noir-Pop ② Dove Cameron, MARINA ◈ Artista Records

Maiah Manser is a Los Angeles-based, vocalist, producer, and visual artist who builds bridges between the worlds of automation and nature. Inspired by fantasy aesthetics, her arrangements combine with hauntingly powerful vocals to create a chilling sensation that is at once thundering and ethereal. She is currently working on an EP for next year called 'Fourth Fall.' Photo by Alex Stoddard ©2023





## 13 MARYJO



- **16K 168.8K**
- ☐ 113K 1.3M Singer-Songwriter
- Sabrina Carpenter, Dove Cameron
- Atlantic Records

21-year-old maryjo has phenomenal vocal command— often drifting from full-throated belting to a gorgeously fragile delivery inflected with cracks. The young singer/songwriter is now quite the powerhouse, despite her lifelong fear of singing in front of others, infusing each song with depth and emotion. Photo by Sarah Rodriguez ©2023



## 16 MEERNAA











Thanks for reading! See you next month.

