

**You Don't Own Me:
The Fragile Future of
Digital Music Access**

Alexander Stewart
UPSAHL
Chappell Roan
Knox
...and more!

**Your Monthly
Music Forecast!**

 memBrain

STORM REPORT

ISSUE NO. 97
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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.

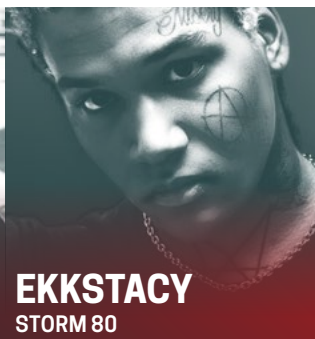
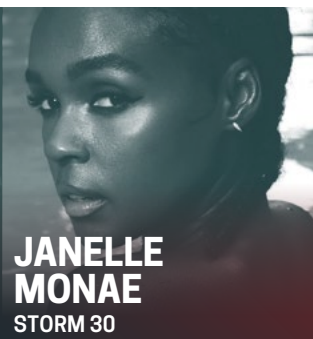
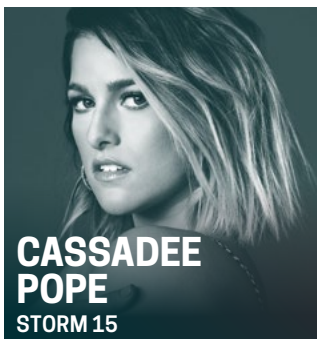
HOW DO WE RANK?

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.

STORM ALUMNI



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

In our 97th edition, we're excited to spotlight Kabeaushé, whose journey from Kenya to Berlin mirrors the diverse and vibrant spirit we strive to embody in each issue. As we gear up for SXSW, our pages this month reflect not just the 20 artists who've captured our hearts across genres, but also a broader narrative on the evolving dynamics of music consumption.

Amidst discussions on the ephemeral nature of digital content, highlighted in our feature "You Don't Own Me," we're prompted to reflect on the value of permanence in our musical experiences. This exploration subtly resonates with our own evolving narrative, where the allure of the tangible becomes increasingly significant in a digitized world.

As we navigate the interplay between the digital and the physical, our commitment to bringing you the most compelling stories and insights remains unwavering. Here's to the adventures that lie ahead and the stories yet to be told, in whatever form they may take.

Enjoy!



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YOU DON'T OWN ME: The Fragile Future of Digital Music Access

By Grace Slansky

In an era where digital convenience often eclipses traditional notions of music ownership, the recent decision by Universal Music Group to withdraw its catalog from TikTok serves as a stark reminder of the ephemeral nature of digital content. This move underscores a critical facet of the music industry's ongoing evolution: the ease with which digital music can be removed from the digital world, leaving fans and creators in a precarious position.

Ownership has undergone a profound transformation in the evolving music landscape, mirroring the broader shifts in how we interact with and value our cultural artifacts. In embarking on an exploratory journey through this dynamic terrain, we can better understand the importance of music ownership and what it means to own music in an age where digital technologies and their convenience coexist and often conflict with nostalgic yearnings.

Streaming has simplified access to music, offering unparalleled convenience. Yet, this ease comes with a caveat: the potential for music to vanish from our digital libraries without notice. The recent development involving Universal Music Group's withdrawal from TikTok exemplifies this vulnerability, highlighting the fragility of digital music access. When labels or artists decide to remove their

work from streaming platforms or specific recordings become unavailable, the limitations of digital ownership become starkly apparent. This action has led some to reconsider the value of music ownership, sparking interest in physical formats and novel digital solutions that promise more permanence.

Despite the dominance of streaming, there's been a notable resurgence in physical music formats, signaling a retro renaissance. Vinyl records, cassettes, and CDs are experiencing renewed popularity, driven by a desire for tangible connections to music that digital formats cannot replicate. This revival celebrates nostalgia and opens a dialogue on contemporary music consumption choices.

Vinyl's storied history and its recent sales surge, alongside the stabilizing presence of CDs and the niche appeal of cassettes, reflect a broader cultural appreciation for tangible media. These formats offer a sensory richness and a physicality that digital files lack, fulfilling a desire for a more immersive and personal connection to music.

Let's dive in!

RETRO RESURGENCE: VINYL, CASSETTES, AND CDS

The saga of vinyl records, born in the early 1900s, is a testament to the cyclical nature of cultural trends.

The introduction of the first commercial long-playing vinyl record by RCA Victor in 1930 heralded an era where the 12" LP at 33 1/3 rpm reigned supreme, providing a rich, immersive auditory experience unmatched by its successors. Yet, as the decades rolled by, vinyl saw its dominance challenged by the advent of cassette tapes in the 1960s and the rise of the Compact Disc in the 1970s. By the late 1980s, the shiny allure of CDs eclipsed vinyl, seemingly relegating it to the annals of history.

However, the narrative took an unexpected turn. Contrary to predictions of a digital-only future, the tactile appeal of physical music formats has witnessed a remarkable revival. Vinyl, in particular, has surged into cultural relevance, with sales in the UK climbing for the 16th consecutive year in 2023, marking a significant 11.7% increase to 5.9 million units. This resurgence is not just about numbers; the passionate releases from contemporary icons like Ed Sheeran, Lana Del Rey, and Taylor Swift, whose "1989 (Taylor's Version)" captivated vinyl enthusiasts and became the year's top seller. In the U.S., the vinyl craze reached a crescendo

with over 2 million albums sold in a single week of December 2023, a feat almost unheard of since sales tracking began in the early '90s.

This renaissance goes beyond mere nostalgia. It's a cultural movement that rekindles our relationship with music as a tangible artifact, allowing fans to physically hold a piece of their favorite artist's creativity. Vinyl collecting has transformed into a beloved ritual, a bridge connecting the past and present through the visceral act of dropping the needle onto a spinning disc.

While vinyl basks in the spotlight, CDs and cassettes have quietly carved out their niches in the music lovers' universe. Despite the digital onslaught, CDs have demonstrated resilience, with a steady, if modest, presence in the global market. The humble cassette, too, has found its fans, consistently selling over 100,000 units annually in the U.S., proving that even the most overlooked formats retain their charm and utility.

In essence, the revival of these physical formats speaks to a broader yearning for authenticity and sensory richness in our interactions with music. As we navigate the digital age, the story of vinyl, cassettes, and CDs reminds us that the essence of music transcends the medium, inviting us to explore the depth of our musical heritage and the infinite ways it can be experienced and cherished.

WHY NOW?

The reasons behind this resurgence are multifaceted. In an era where the digital landscape offers unprecedented convenience, the rekindled interest in vinyl, CDs, and cassettes speaks volumes about consumer desires for a more authentic, enduring music experience. Below, we have included the **top 10 reasons** this is happening now.

- **Digital Impermanence:** The ease with which digital content can disappear from online platforms underscores the ephemeral nature of digital ownership. This vulnerability has prompted reevaluating what "own" music means in the digital age.
- **Tangible Connection:** Physical formats like vinyl, CDs, and cassettes offer a real connection to music that digital files cannot replicate. This physicality fulfills a desire for a more immersive and personal experience with music.
- **Nostalgia and Authenticity:** The resurgence of interest in physical formats is driven mainly by nostalgia for a perceived more authentic music experience. This retro renaissance celebrates the history and cultural significance of these formats.
- **Artistic Expression:** Physical music formats provide a canvas for creative expression through sound, album artwork, and packaging. Digital formats lose this aspect of music consumption.
- **Sound Quality:** Enthusiasts often cite superior sound quality for preferring vinyl or CDs over compressed digital files, seeking an auditory experience closer to the artist's intended.
- **Collectibility and Value:** Physical music formats have a collectible aspect that digital files lack. Limited editions, colored vinyl, and special releases offer fans unique items that can appreciate over time.
- **Cultural Movement:** The revival of vinyl and other physical formats represents a broader cultural movement that values authenticity, history, and the tactile experience of music.
- **Artist Support:** Purchasing physical music formats is seen as a more direct way to support artists financially, as it typically offers higher revenue per sale compared to streaming.
- **Community and Identity:** Collecting physical music formats fosters a sense of community and identity among fans, with record stores, live events, and swap meets facilitating social connections.
- **Market Diversity and Resilience:** The interest in physical formats highlights the resilience and diversity of the music market. It demonstrates that consumers seek varied music experiences and are willing to invest in formats that give them a sense of ownership and permanence.

WHAT ABOUT STREAMING?

Still the most convenient and popular option, streaming services come with their own mixed bag. One of the biggest concerns is payout rates and the impact of streaming on artist revenue. There is a high variability in payout from platform to platform, highlighting artists' financial challenges in the streaming era, where platform choices can significantly impact earnings. Recent data from 2023 reveals varied per-stream payout rates by different streaming platforms. For instance, Spotify's payout ranges from \$0.003 to \$0.005 per stream, while Apple Music offers \$0.006 to \$0.008. Tidal pays one of the highest rates, ranging from \$0.0125 to \$0.015 per stream, and Napster tops the list with \$0.019 to \$0.021 per stream.

A crucial discussion in the industry is the shift from the pro-rata model to user-centric or fan-powered models. In the pro-rata model, royalties are divided based on the overall share of streams on a service. In contrast, user-centric models distribute royalties from each subscriber only to the rights holders of the music they listen to. This shift could provide a fairer payout to artists but comes with challenges, such as increased administrative costs and the need for a more nuanced understanding of these models.

Additionally, the impact of streaming payouts differs between new and legacy artists. Newer artists who understand and leverage the current streaming model may navigate these platforms more effectively. However, legacy artists who traditionally benefit from radio and TV often find streaming payouts less satisfactory. This disparity raises questions about how different generations of artists adapt and benefit from the evolving music ownership landscape.

THE DIGITAL TWIST: NFTS AND MUSIC OWNERSHIP

In the rapidly evolving intersection of music and blockchain technology, Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs) have emerged as a significant force, offering new music ownership and artist-fan engagement models. NFTs, unique digital assets recorded on a blockchain, present an innovative way for artists to monetize their work and for fans to obtain a verifiable stake in music or related content. Platforms leveraging blockchain's capabilities ensure artists receive fair compensation while providing fans with unique, direct, and interactive experiences. Such advancements redefine digital ownership and introduce a novel revenue stream for artists, allowing them greater control over their work. (We first covered this space in April 2021 in our *STORM* 69 issue).

The emergence of platforms like anotherblock, Labelcoin, and Tokenproof illustrates the shift towards democratizing the music industry through technology. anotherblock enables fans to purchase NFTs tied to streaming royalties, offering a new form of artist monetization and fan investment. Labelcoin acts as a revolutionary song exchange, allowing fans to invest in songs and share in their streaming royalties directly. Meanwhile, Tokenproof offers a unique solution by changing the way we manage event and concert tickets, allowing fans to

own their fandom and gain access to exclusive events through NFTs. These platforms highlight a move towards a more equitable music industry where the economic success of music is between artists and fans. Additionally, initiatives like Tune.FM leverages blockchain technology to provide a secure, scalable environment for artists to monetize music through streaming royalty micropayments and NFT drops, further underscoring the transformative potential of NFTs in the music ownership landscape.

Of course, NFTs have long been a source of controversy. From seemingly confusing technology to security breaches and environmental concerns, they are not without their careful considerations.

WHERE TO NEXT?

Amongst so many options, spanning physical and digital, another emerges. Smart-compatible physical music forms such as Muzlive's KiT Album emerge as a promising solution, combining the physical allure of traditional formats with the digital era's agility. Accessible from over 200 countries and officially tallied on several global music charts, this represents a pivotal moment in our music consumption saga. (Check out the article about this new format option in our May/June 2023 issue.)

In an era increasingly defined by digital collectibles, the advent of formats like the KiT Album is a testament to technology's potential to preserve our musical heritage in tangible forms. They serve as a vital counterpoint to the impermanence and malleability of purely digital media, ensuring that the artistry and expressions that resonate with us remain an enduring part of our personal landscapes.

This evolution in music ownership does not merely signal a shift in consumption preferences; it underscores a profound concern for the integrity of our cultural artifacts in a digital age fraught with volatility. The push towards tangible, resilient formats speaks to our collective yearning for authenticity and permanence amid the digital flux. It reflects a more profound understanding that while music's power to connect, inspire, and endure lies at the heart of our experiences, its preservation requires vigilance against the transience of the digital realm.

The journey of music ownership is more than a narrative of technological advancement—it reflects our struggle to maintain control over the artifacts that shape our identity and culture. As we embrace new formats and innovations, we're not just seeking novel ways to experience music but also asserting our desire to safeguard our musical heritage against the whim of a world where content can be all too easily altered or vanish. In diversifying our listening habits and supporting formats that offer a barricade against digital manipulation, we champion the enduring significance of music in the tapestry of human experience, ensuring its legacy endures for generations to come.

CHECK OUT

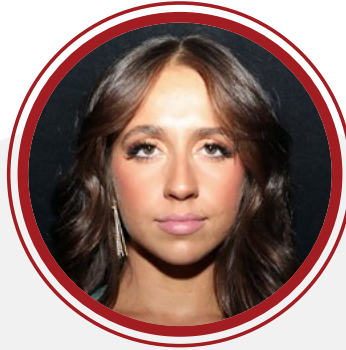
this issue's carefully curated playlists by clicking below:

 YouTube

 Spotify

STORM TRACKER

Tracking Our STORM Report Alumni!



TATE MCRAE

Tate McRae's (STORM 78) recent achievements have been extraordinary. Following the release of her sophomore album **Think Later** and the hit single "Greedy," which amassed over 700 million streams and topped Billboard's Global 200, McRae's profile has soared. Her dynamic performance at the NHL All-Star halftime show and role as a celebrity coach underscored her rising star. The momentum continues with the upcoming "Think Later World Tour," starting in Dublin on April 17th, showcasing her global appeal through to November.



LUKE COMBS

Luke Combs (STORM 43) has continued to captivate, not just with his iconic Grammy performance alongside Tracy Chapman but also with other milestones. His "Growin' Up and Gettin' Old Tour," is eagerly anticipated. Additionally, Combs is gearing up to release a new album, teasing tracks like "Noah's Arkansas," "Plant A Seed," and "The Man He Sees in Me." These songs hint at a deeply personal theme reflective of Combs' journey into fatherhood and personal growth, stirring excitement among his audience for what's to come with another year of impactful contributions to country music.



BRANDY CLARK

Brandy Clark (STORM 43) is one of the most nominated women in the realms of Country and Americana music. Clark was awarded her first Grammy for Best Americana Performance, a triumph shared with Brandi Carlile. This accolade, celebrated during the pre-show ceremony, marks Clark's inaugural Grammy win, further solidifying her exceptional talent and contribution to the music industry. This victory not only highlights her skill as a singer-songwriter but also her influential presence within her musical genres.



EMILY BEAR

And we thought that performing on stage for Beyoncé's Renaissance tour was amazing! 22-year-old **Emily Bear** (STORM 63), a prodigious talent celebrated for her Grammy-winning work on "The Unofficial Bridgerton Musical," is co-creating the soundtrack for Disney's "Moana 2" with Abigail Barlow. Her contributions to "Moana 2," coupled with her recent Beyoncé tour experience, mark a pivotal phase in Bear's burgeoning career, showcasing her ability to transcend genres and platforms with her unique musical voice.

STORM FORECAST

Events And Happenings For Your Radar

LET'S ALL GO TO THE MOVIES

In the spring of 2024, audiences are set for a thrilling cinematic journey with several eagerly awaited releases. *Road House* (March 21, 2024) features Jake Gyllenhaal in a reimagined version of the classic action drama, directed by Doug Liman, where a former UFC fighter finds himself in deep trouble in coastal Florida. The beloved Ghostbusters franchise returns with *Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire* (March 22, 2024), bringing back many familiar faces for a New York-set supernatural adventure. Dev Patel's directorial debut, *Monkey Man* (April 5, 2024), is an action-packed thriller set in Mumbai, where Patel plays a vengeful underground fighter. And lastly, we are excited to see *Challengers* (April 26, 2024), starring memBrain STORM Report alumna Zendaya which explores the intricate dynamics between a tennis coach, her husband, and his best friend, offering a nuanced look at relationships and rivalries. Spanning action, adventure, supernatural comedy, and drama, these films promise to deliver unique cinematic experiences to moviegoers. Grab your popcorn!

I'D LIKE TO THANK THE ACADEMY

February 18, 24 & March 10, 2024

It's time to roll out all of the red carpets! The beloved BAFTAs on February 18, 2024 can be seen on BBC One at 12pm PST! Then, the SAG awards premier at 5 pm PST on February 24th, exclusively on Netflix. And rounding the festivities, the 96th Academy Awards take the screen March 10th at 4 pm PST with STORM alumni Billie Eilish (STORM 41) up for Best Original Song. Get ready to cheer for your favorite stars as they show up and show out this award season.

FESTIVAL FESTIVITIES

Festival season is here! The weather may not be on our side, but Punxsutawney Phil predicts an early spring, and these festivals certainly agree. EDC Mexico lights up Mexico City from Feb 23-25, featuring top EDM artists like Zedd, Steve Aoki, and more. Simultaneously, check out Skyline in Los Angeles on Feb 24-25 with performers like Carl Cox and Chris Lake and Noise Pop in San Francisco from Feb 22 to Mar 3, offering a diverse lineup including Bone Thugs-N-Harmony and Snail Mail, celebrating the Bay Area's musical culture.

IT'S SXSW 2024, Y'ALL!

March 8-16, 2024

SXSW 2024 in Austin, Texas, showcases a blend of music, film, and tech, featuring a lineup that spans genres and geographies. Set to perform this year are The Black Keys, STRFKR, and memBrain STORM alumni Flyana Boss (STORM 93) and Scowl (STORM 95). memBrain is excited to attend SXSW this year and eager to engage with the creative community and explore potential collaborations. To connect with us at the festival, please reach out at hello@membrainllc.com.

ON THE ROAD AGAIN

This month sees several exciting tours kicking off! First, Tyler Childers' "Mule Pull '24 Tour" starts its European leg on February 15, 2024, in Dublin, Ireland, before moving to the U.S. leg on April 5, 2024. Bad Bunny kicks off his "Most Wanted Tour" starting February 21, 2024, in Salt Lake City, promising an electrifying series of performances across North America until May 26, 2024, concluding in Miami. Then, Olivia Rodrigo is set to bring her GUTS World Tour to fans around the globe, starting February 23, 2024, in Palm Springs, California. The tour celebrates her second studio album, "GUTS," featuring a mix of North American and European dates.

“Technicolour idiosyncrasies in a way that never feels forced – think early Outkast beats at their most surreal.”
 ~Loud and Quiet

**ROBERT'S
TOP PICK!**

**ON OUR
COVER:
KABEAUSHÉ**

📸 3.6K 🎧 N/A
 🎵 Electronic/Industrial Hip-Hop
 🏷️ Tyler, the Creator; Santigold 🎧
 Monkeytown Records

Kabeaushé, the alter ego of 29-year-old Kabochi Gitau, a vital figure in contemporary music, embodying innovation and a genre-defying spirit graces the first memBrain STORM Report cover of 2024. Their artistic journey, characterized by an eclectic blend of pop, hip-hop, and electronica, mirrors the evolution of global music trends while maintaining a distinct personal identity. Kabeaushé’s music, particularly highlighted in their debut “The Coming Of Gaze” and the bold follow-up “Hold On to Deer Life There’s a Blcak Boy Behind You!”, showcases their transition from Nairobi’s vibrant scene to a broader, experimental approach now in Berlin. This geographical and musical transition marks Kabeaushé as a bridge between diverse sounds and cultures . Their performances, a fusion of music and theatre, captivate a global audience, showcasing the depth of their creativity and the breadth of their appeal. This choice underscores our commitment to spotlighting those at the forefront of musical innovation—artists like Kabeaushé who, through their unique sound and compelling performances, invite us into a realm where music transcends boundaries, promising an exhilarating journey into the future of global soundscapes.

Photos by Edwin Maina ©2023

📺 67K 🎧 19.6K



1 ALEXANDER STEWART



STORM WARNING

The 20 Artists On Our Radar

ICON KEY

- ▶ YouTube
- 🎧 Spotify
- 📷 Instagram
- 🎵 TikTok
- 🎵 Genre
- 🔍 Similar Artists
- 🏷️ Label

▶ 2.57M 🎧 5.1M

📷 1.9M 🎵 6.1M 🎵 Pop

🔍 Benson Boone, Alex Sampson 🏷️ FAE

Alexander Stewart's latest EP, "if you only knew," hits the zeitgeist with its raw dive into love, friendship, and the mental health struggles of our times all wrapped in a pop package that's as glossy as it is emotionally charged. With tracks like 'i wish you cheated' and 'he never will,' Stewart taps into the Gen Z soul with an authenticity that proves his musical versatility. His sound, a seamless fusion of pop's modern sheen with echoes of jazz's depth, trails a broad palette of influences, making him a standout voice for contemporary listeners. Stewart blends heartfelt narratives with a sound that oscillates between the intimately personal and the universally relatable—marking him as a pivotal figure for today's music scene and resonating deeply with a generation that values authenticity above all. Photo by Erik Melvin ©2023

📷 183K 🎵 1M 🎶 Alternative/Indie 🎧 Tones & I, Julia Michaels 🎧 Arista Records

UPSAHL, born Taylor Cameron Upsahl, has rapidly emerged as a distinctive force in pop music, blending edgy songwriting with a dynamic stage presence. Since her teen years, she's transitioned from local Phoenix talent to viral sensation with "Drugs," capturing audiences worldwide. Her debut album *Lady Jesus* and EP "Sagittarius" reflect her unapologetic persona, while her songwriting contributions for stars like Dua Lipa highlight her industry influence. UPSAHL's live performances, including her headlining North American tour and appearances at festivals like Lollapalooza, showcase her as a must-see artist. Her recent work, like the single "Monica Lewinsky," continues to push boundaries, proving UPSAHL's vital, evolving presence in music. Photo by Abeiku Arthur ©2024

🎥 322K 🎧 2.5M

2 UPSAHL



3 CHAPPELL ROAN

55.2K 1.4M

"Chappell Roan emerged in alternative pop music circles as though fully formed. Here were the cascading curls of fiery red hair. Thwack! The outré outfits that spackle on the spangle. Boom! And the infectious anthems that beg listeners to dance with abandon. Yeeeah!"

~Sofia Andrade,
Washington Post

GRACE'S
TOP PICK!

284K 193.2K Pop MUNA, King Princess Amusement Records

Self-described thrift store pop star Chappell Roan seamlessly weaves together the sounds of disco, country, and 90s pop to create her contemporary sapphic pop manifesto. She effortlessly switches between ballads and bops, painting a complete picture of the young adult experience by contrasting playful and witty songwriting with raw vulnerability. Her debut album, *The Rise And Fall Of A Midwest Princess* blends pop culture influences from cheerleader-inspired chants to her dreams of dancing at the Abbey to transport listeners. Photo by Ryan Clemens ©2023

@ 194K 🎵 179.6K 🎸 Rock 🎧 Ed Sheeran, Fall Out Boy 🎧 Atlantic

Ohio-born 26-year-old Knox is hitting the ground running in 2024 with his latest single "Here's To Us," a track that's quickly creating a buzz and showcasing his knack for melding deeply personal narratives with universally relatable pop melodies. Fresh off the heels of his emotive EP "I'm So Good At Being Alone?" which has already raked in over 10 million streams with standout tracks like "Not The 1975," Knox is taking his act on the road with a headline tour that's already boasting sold-out shows across the board. Having written for artists like Lanie Gardner, John Harvie, and Games We Play, he's quickly made a name for himself. Photo provided by management ©2024

📺 12.6K 🎧 1.1M

4 **KNOX**



5 LAUREN WATKINS

4.35K 1M



37.2K 40.1K Country Miranda Lambert, Sheryl Crow Big Loud Records

Drenched in authenticity and rife with addictive barstool charm, Nashville-born and bred songbird Lauren Watkins writes, breathes, and lives country music. Honing in on a sound that's both reverent of the genre's roots and in lockstep with where it's headed next, she recently introduced her take on country music with a double shot debut: seven-song set *Introducing: Lauren Watkins*, released in April, and six-song sequence, *Introducing: The Heartbreak*, both of which are out now. Photo by Luke Rogers ©2023

214K 1M Pop Stephen Sanchez, Michael Bublé Independent

Austin Giorgio's pop-based music production is influenced by jazz and blues, and when paired with his velvety vocals it creates a distinctively warm sound. He has found social media fame with his tracks that BookTok can't get enough of which draw inspiration from dark romance novels and have garnered over 50 million views so far. Photo provided by management ©2024

6 AUSTIN GIORGIO

83.6K 845K





**MATTHEW'S
TOP PICK!**

41.6K 1.1K Rock Linkin Park, cleopatrck Pinefarm Music Group

The rock band Dead Poet Society formed suddenly, even before they had a name in mind, by joining forces just 48 hours before their first gig. Pulling influences from late-'90s an early-2000s rock and pop punk, Dead Poet Society lands somewhere between metalcore and alt-rock, with live shows that maintain the energy the band first channeled in college. Photo by Chandler Moyer ©2023



8 MEG SMITH

5.7K 775.8K

10K 24.3K Pop Lilyisthatyou, GAYLE Independent

Brooklyn-based Meg Smith commands a compelling voice in the alt-pop landscape, weaving a modern twist into 2000s pop nostalgia. With influences from Hannah Montana and Taylor Swift to Paramore and Green Day, Smith's music resonates with fans for its catchy hooks, witty lyricism, and emotive storytelling. Her singles, such as the introspective "Emotional Punching Bag," range between vibrant anthemic tunes to deeply personal narratives. A graduate of NYU's Clive Davis Institute, Smith's debut EP, featuring tracks like "Cool 4 U" and "Cross My Heart I Hope U Die," highlights her versatility and knack for crafting songs that feel both timeless and of-the-moment. Recently, she released "All The Things You'd Ruin," further solidifying her position as an artist to watch with her unique blend of insightful lyrics and infectious pop bops. Photo by Margaret Leyva ©2023



**JENNIFER'S
TOP PICK!**

9 JHARIAH

📷 44.2K 🎵 111.6K

🎵 Alternative

🎧 Amine, System of a Down

🎧 Independent

Brooklyn-based musician and polymath Jhariah's upcoming Second LP, a manifesto for new music culture, occupies an array of genres, including dance-punk, emo, prog rock, hardcore, pop, hip-hop, Latin dance, and more, capturing the essence of a Gen-Z odyssey against a backdrop of personal and societal challenges. His music while deeply rooted in his diverse influences and upbringing, offers a unique narrative that shoqs all the complexities of modern identity and the universal quest for success. Embarking on "The Tooth Pact Tour 2024," Jhariah is set to bring his dynamic live performances across North America, and promises an immersive experience of boundary-pushing spirit. This tour is a testament to Jhariah's vision for a future where music transcends traditional genres and reflects the multifaceted nature of its audience.

Photo by Max Durante ©2023

🎥 5.92K 🎧 489K

10 CHIKORUSS

6.23K 477K



46.4K 46.1K R&B/Soul SiR, Giveon 300 Entertainment

At just 20 years old, Rusith Pathirana, known professionally as Chikoruss, is quickly establishing himself as a standout artist in the R&B genre from Montreal. With his latest release, "In 2 Deep," Chikoruss showcases his adeptness at blending modern R&B with the rich, soulful undertones reminiscent of the genre's early 2000s heyday. Chikoruss explores themes of love, desire, and complexity within relationships while engaging listeners with his lyrical vulnerability and compelling melodies. Photo by Randijah Simmons ©2023

604K 5.1M Pop SNOW WIFE, Kim Petras Independent

TikTok sensation Chrissy Chlapecka blends hyperpop's energy with 2000s pop nostalgia inspired by icons like Britney Spears and Lady Gaga. Her music, rich in satire and empowerment, speaks to self-love and queer identity, resonating widely. Her hit "Alpha" combines catchy lyrics with critical social commentary, aligning her with pop royalty while pioneering a fresh, impactful sound. Critics and fans alike have drawn parallels between her sound and pop legends, signaling her potential to shape the genre's future with her innovative approach and charismatic persona. Photo by Michael Arellano ©2024

11 CHRISSY CHLAPECKA

61.2K 332.4K





5.2K
310K

12 BAILEN

31K 5.4K Indie Folk The Lone Below, JOSEPH Fantasy Records

BAILEN, an American alternative music group from NYC, is formed by the sibling trio of Daniel, David, and Julia Bailen. Their music seamlessly blends folk-rock with contemporary pop, underpinned by the group's striking three-part vocal harmonies. With a background steeped in classical music, thanks to their classically trained parents, BAILEN's sound is richly informed by an eclectic mix of influences, including Simon & Garfunkel, Joni Mitchell, and The Band. The band's debut album *Thrilled To Be Here* was produced by Grammy-Award winner John Congleton and followed by their 2023 album *Tired Hearts* in avant-garde-pop evolution. In 2024, BAILEN released a deluxe edition of *Tired Hearts* and is ready to captivate audiences with a national headlining tour, indicating an ongoing commitment to connecting with fans. Their shows testify to their dynamic presence and the deep bond that enhances their musicality. Photo by Deryne Keretic ©2024

41.9K 4.4K Alternative/Indie Dora Jar, Sasami Easy Life Records

Ontario-based duo Softcult blend atmospheric guitars, energetic percussion, and bittersweet vocals to create their signature hazy, antagonistic sounds. Comprised of twin sisters Phoenix and Mercedes Arn Horn, Softcult's sound is built upon a desire to resist and relieve the pressures of existing in a patriarchal world. Their biting lyricism expresses their frustrations with greedy corporations, misogyny, and sexual assault. Photo by Kaylene Widdoes ©2023



13 SOFTCULT

31.1K
310K

14 V.I.C

27.3K 211K



102K 847K Rap/Hip-Hop J Cole, Dave Independent

V.I.C, born Victor Oluwatwoju, is a promising artist from Southampton, England, making waves with his unique blend of rap and viral tracks like "Two Sides" on TikTok. His career took off on the platform, where his account has garnered substantial attention, leading to the release of his debut EP "Bedroom Chronicles". His presence on the FIFA 22 game soundtrack with "A Teen" highlights his growing influence and the universal appeal of his music. Known for his viral success on TikTok, V.I.C represents a fresh voice in the industry, blending genres and engaging a global audience. Photo by Ruben Bastienne ©2021

108K 102.4K Pop Punk Paramore, Veruca Salt Fueled by Ramen

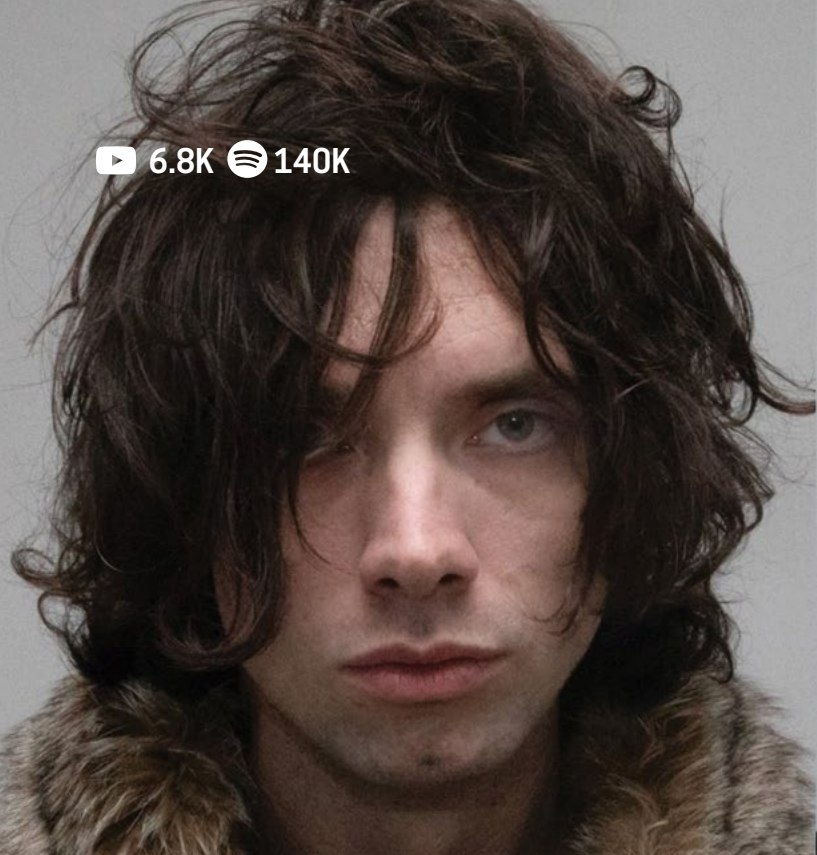
Daisy Grenade, the dynamic NYC duo, catapulted into the spotlight with their sophomore EP, "CULT CLASSIC." Their distinct blend of power-punk and bubble grunge, combined with unapologetically feminine angst, has crafted morbidly catchy anthems that resonate deeply with their growing fanbase. Renowned for their viral TikTok hits and opening for bands like Fall Out Boy and Waterparks, their sickeningly sweet bops pack a punch. Their extended version of "Cult Classic," featuring the assertive single "Riot," underscores their rebellious spirit and feminist power, further solidifying their status in the alternative music scene. The future promises more tours and the potential release of their first LP. Daisy Grenade stands at the forefront of a new era in pop punk, eagerly watched by fans and critics alike for their next electrifying move. Photo by Jamie Rice ©2023

15 DAISY GRENADE

4.48K 155K



"Daisy Grenade's 'Cult Classic' is a sparkling pop punk explosion."
~Atwood Magazine



6.8K 140K

16 THE HELLP

22.1K N/A Dance/Electronic Aphex Twin, The Dare Atlantic

The Hellyp, an innovative indie-electronic duo from Los Angeles, has made significant strides in the music industry with their unique sonic and visual artistry blend. In 2023, they released a short film for their track "California Dream Girl," marking a pivotal moment in their career with sold-out shows and critical acclaim for revitalizing the indie sleaze movement. Noah Dillon and Chandler Ransom Lucy's diverse talents in photography, videography, and modeling contribute to their distinct aesthetic, garnering a dedicated following and sparking conversations around social media's and contemporary culture's impact on art. As 2024 unfolds, The Hellyp's meticulous approach to music production and critical engagement with modern trends continue to position them as influential cultural commentators and artists to watch. Photo provided by management ©2024

8.8K 1.1K R&B/Soul D'Angelo, Moses Sumney Human Re Sources

Lekan, a first-generation Nigerian-American from Columbus, Ohio, is redefining the R&B scene with his unique fusion of classic and contemporary sounds. His music is deeplyrooted in traditional R&B and is enriched with elements of soul, pop, and trap to offer up a fresh perspective on the depths of love, desire, and human connection, while creating a healing experience through their vulnerability and relatability. Photo by Lamont Roberson ©2023



1K 115.6K

17 LEKAN



18 ANNIE BOSKO

5.8K 105K

📍 131K 🎵 368K 🎸 Country 🎧 Shania Twain, Faith Hill. 🎧 Stone Country Records

Annie Bosko, a beacon of '90s country twang reimagined for today's playlist, is more than just a nod to nostalgia. She refuses to be boxed by the bro-country wave and blends soulful narratives with a badass, boots-on swagger. With roots as a farmer's daughter and a resume that boasts backing vocals for the likes of Adele and songs for Willie Nelson, Bosko's story is one of relentless pursuit, marked by her move to Nashville, where she carved out her own niche. Her trajectory from karaoke bars to country's revered stages, like the Grand Ole Opry, isn't just a career timeline; it's a blueprint for making music that matters and resonating with fans and newcomers alike who crave that fearless sound steeped in tradition yet always moving forward. Photo by Ford Fairchild ©2023

📍 2.5K 🎵 418 🎸 Alternative/Pop Rock 🎧 Maroon 5, Fall Out Boy 🎧 Independent

With their infectious and diverse sound, LVVRS, from South Louisiana, has already made a significant impact in music and film. Their appearance and musical contributions to the 2023 film *The Iron Claw* underscore this versatility, showcasing their music and spotlighting their ability to weave into the fabric of cinematic storytelling. Coupled with the anticipated release of their debut EP, "Midnight Fantasy," and their history of engaging performances across the South, LVVRS has proven they're more than just a band—they're a multifaceted entertainment entity. Their syncs for shows like "Temptation Island" and "The Ultimatum" further seal their status as an act to keep an eye on, blending traditional rock roots with a modern flair that's uniquely their own. Photo provided by management ©2023



19 LVVRS

622 11.8K



2.49K 11K

17.7K 103K Rap/R&B Miguel, Russ Independent

Canadian rapper-singer LUM, renowned for his genuine storytelling and musical versatility, has rapidly emerged as an artist to watch, marked by his compelling journey from overcoming personal adversities to achieving significant milestones. In 2023, LUM was spotlighted as Amazon Music's breakthrough Canadian artist, a testament to his growing influence and ability to resonate across genres with his relatable and emotionally rich narratives. His notable tracks, such as "4 Sho" featuring Dom Vallie and "Temptation," demonstrate his skill in crafting catchy yet profound music that speaks to love, life, and resilience. His story and artistic vision position him as a pivotal figure in contemporary music, with future projects eagerly anticipated for their potential to solidify his impact further. Photo by Justin Abernethy ©2024



Thanks for reading. See you next month!

