

Your monthly
music forecast!

*Streaming, Superfans, and Success
in the New Music Economy*

Bazzi

Jordan Davis

Anderson East

Chloe x Halle

Nina Nesbitt

and more

 memBrain

THE STORM REPORT

ISSUE NO. 54
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H.E.R. (STORM No. 50) Photo by Timothy Saccenti ©2017

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.

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



A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

It is hard to believe that we are almost halfway through 2018 – and what a year it has been! On the heels of Coachella and heading into festival season, it is the perfect time of year for emerging artists to find new audiences. And music streaming has finally started to show some promise for driving real value for artists, but not in isolation. New digital platforms are emerging every day, offering musicians opportunities to monetize their music. Our guest writer this month, Chris Golinski, is a researcher and PhD candidate at UC San Diego and has contributed his own observations about what he calls the “New Music Economy.” He posits that there are now more opportunities than ever before for artists to build profitable careers. We will focus more on emerging digital platforms for music discovery and distribution in the coming months. In the interim, don’t forget to subscribe for future issues on the memBrain website.



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Photo by jjwithers

Streaming, Superfans, and Success in the New Music Economy

By Chris Golinski and Grace Slansky

Chris Golinski is a researcher and PhD candidate at the University of California, San Diego, where he studies digital music economies and music consumer behavior. His aim is to bring more revenue into the music economy and to the artists who make the music we love. Beyond research, Chris is active in advising artists, managers, record labels, and music tech companies on how to best navigate the digital music economy. He has a background in both music, having played drums since the age of ten, and finance, where he worked for multinationals HSBC and Deutsche Bank. Chris can be reached via email at golinski1@gmail.com.

Music streaming has finally borne out its promise of reducing piracy and bringing fans back to a legal and monetized music ecosystem. After stabilizing in 2015, music industry revenues saw double-digit inflation-adjusted growth in 2016 and 2017, thanks primarily to the increase in streaming revenue outpacing the decline in physical sales and digital downloads. The future looks even brighter and a recent Goldman Sachs report predicts that the industry will grow to an annual revenue of \$41 billion by 2030, fueled largely by paid streaming subscriptions.

However, while streaming holds the key to increasing revenue for the industry in aggregate, it has not yet been able to provide a viable income solution for artists. Notably, as total revenues from streaming increased from 2016 to 2017, payments per

stream on some services, such as Spotify, actually decreased during the same time period. The likely culprit is the fixed price of streaming subscriptions, which stay constant despite increasing consumption per user, leading to the same revenue being divided amongst a greater number of streams.

At the current Spotify per stream rate, an artist would need approximately 15 million streams per year to make the median US income, assuming they are a solo act and not accounting for the expenses of creating the music. Given the difficulty in securing a viable income from streaming, many artists are instead finding more lucrative opportunities by going directly to their fans.

THE DIRECT-TO-FAN REVOLUTION

I remember a conversation taking place soon after the launch of Napster about the possibility of technology allowing artists to sell their music directly to their fanbase without the need for an expensive distribution infrastructure. It took some time for this vision to become reality, but the first shots in the direct-to-fan revolution were arguably fired in 2007 by artists such as Radiohead, Nine Inch Nails, and Saul Williams, who not only released their work directly to fans but also innovated with pay-what-you-want pricing, in which fans decided how much to pay, and deluxe editions aimed at superfans. The following year, Bandcamp introduced a service that allows all artists to do the same by creating microsites through which fans can listen to and buy music directly. Since then, the number of platforms supporting direct-to-fan sales has grown significantly and includes crowdfunding sites such as Patreon, PledgeMusic, Kickstarter, and Indiegogo and connection portals such as Escapex and Superphone.

PATREON

One of the greatest challenges of the creative life is not the lack of income per se, but the lack of a steady and dependable income. Patreon addresses this need by allowing artists to crowdfund a recurring revenue stream from their fans, which is paid on a monthly or per creation basis. While most direct-to-fan platforms rely on a transactional framework, in which money is exchanged for music or merch, the perks offered on Patreon are primarily symbolic and the fans pay to support the artist rather than to receive a tangible reward. A fascinating example is the Australian metal band Ne Obliviscaris, which is seeking to raise the Australian minimum wage from their fans for all members of the group. Currently, they are receiving \$9,137 per month from 1,036 of their fans, or \$8.82 per month per fan, which is almost the price of a monthly premium streaming subscription given to just one artist!

PLEDGEMUSIC

PledgeMusic was launched on the insight of founder Benji Rogers that fans want to participate in the creative process and not just consume music after it has been released. Originally positioned as a crowdfunding platform in which fans would support new works, it has morphed into a direct-to-fan music and merch store for superfans under the guidance of new CEO and industry veteran Dominic Pandiscia. Notably, the amount per transaction of \$55 on the platform outshines the \$15-20 consumers used to spend on CDs during the peak days of the music industry, and demonstrates that fans are willing to open their wallets if given the right opportunities. Pledge is also known for its product innovations, including offering handwritten lyric sheets to fans as perks for their support.

SUPERPHONE

One of the most fascinating new innovations in the direct-to-fan space comes from artist and entrepreneur Ryan Leslie. Frustrated with the difficulty of reaching fans through the noise of social media, Leslie created Superphone to enable artists to correspond with fans directly through text, where open rates are much higher than either email or social media. Notably, Leslie used the app himself to promote his most recent album and was able to make \$2 million from only 15,000 fans without any major label backing!

DIRECT-TO-FAN FOR ALL?

A question that I am frequently asked when discussing the direct-to-fan space is whether or not it can work for all artists. Sure, a DIY artist needs the money and can appeal to their fans through crowdfunding, but why would anyone give voluntarily to a famous pop star? I tackled this question in my research and found that, contrary to most expectations, an artist's popularity and genre of music have very little effect on the support given to them by fans. Examining sales data from Bandcamp reveals these effects to explain less than 2% of the variance in fan support. If popularity and genre do not matter, what does? It turns out that beyond the fan's level of engagement with the music, an artist's values and public persona do matter in the fan's decision to support them. Those seen giving back to the community or standing up for what they believe in are more likely to benefit from fan support than artists who appear self-centered or that receive negative publicity.

21ST CENTURY FAN CLUB

Direct-to-fan platforms are the fan club for the 21st century: a way for artists to connect with their superfans and effectively monetize their creative work. While streaming may be how we access music going forward, these platforms are giving artists a variety of options to generate the income that streaming is not yet providing. As we move forward in the transition to an access economy for music, I expect to see more artists and fans embracing these platforms as well as more innovative possibilities for connecting artists and fans appearing on the scene.

So how should artists monetize their work and earn a living in the new music economy? While streaming holds amazing potential in breaking down barriers to music access, the key to monetization for most artists resides with increasing engagement from their superfans, who are not only the most loyal fans but also the most likely to spend. My own research shows that the top 5% of fans are responsible for 25% of all music revenues, with some spending as much as \$1,000 or even \$2,000 annually on recorded music. By offering captivating products and experiences directly to these dedicated listeners, artists can now succeed beyond what was ever possible in the traditional recorded music industry.

STORM TRACKER

The STORM rages on for our alumni artists. Here's what they were up to this month!



POST MALONE
(STORM No. 30)

Rapper **Post Malone** (STORM No. 30) has broken the record for most Top 20 Hits at one time, previously set by The Beatles and tied by J. Cole. Not to mention, all 18 tracks off of his most recent album, *Beerbongs & Bentleys*, are on the Billboard Top 100.



5 SECONDS OF SUMMER
(STORM No. 15)

3 years since their last album, pop-rock quartet **5 Seconds of Summer** (STORM No. 15) is bringing us their full-length release *YOUNGBLOOD* next month. Keep an ear out for what is sure to be some catchy tracks.



ELLA MAI
(STORM No. 46)

British singer-songwriter **Ella Mai** (STORM No. 46) has risen to the top of *Billboard's* Emerging Artists chart for the first time, thanks to the success of her recent EP *Ready*. Have a listen and see what everyone is buzzing about!



FATHER JOHN MISTY
(STORM No. 25)

In anticipation of next month's release *God's Favorite Customer*, **Father John Misty** (STORM No. 25) will embark on a world tour beginning this month. With 60+ tour dates, this folk-rock singer is likely coming to a city near you!

Looking Forward, Looking Back:
Coachella 2018

STORM FORECAST HI=LITES™

THE LATEST IN EXPERIENTIAL

Branded HI-LITES™ glasses were the hottest new trend at Coachella, with customized pairs handed out from stage by Perfume Genius and featured at Neon Carnival, Diddy's COMBSHELLA, Snoop's Roscoe's event, and more! And with coverage in dozens of publications from Cosmo to Buzzer, HI-LITES™ made a big splash!



IMMERSIVE ART

Each year we see the festival grounds—and our Instagram feeds—dotted with photogenic art installations. News substance's 7-story SPECTRA and Edoardo Tresoldi's mesh wire ETHEREA invited festival goers to explore inside. For a truly immersive experience, fans donned a pair of HI-LITES™ and watched the art happen right in front of their eyes!

COACHELLA HIGHLIGHTS, BROUGHT TO YOU BY HI=LITES™

HI-LITES™ are shaking up the experiential scene with glasses that convert ordinary lights into shapes—enabling brands and artists to essentially do augmented reality without the wires or costs.

SUPERB SETS

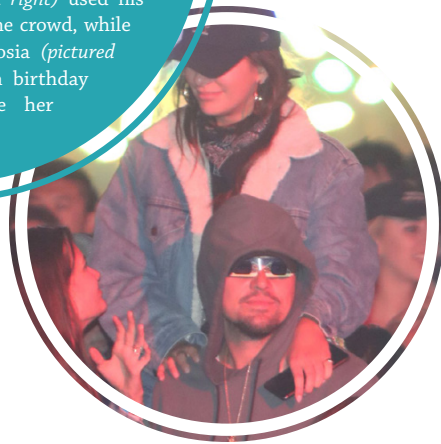
Tank and the Bangas (STORM No. 51) once again dazzled festival audiences, St. Vincent (STORM No. 16) captivated the audience with eerie animations, and Cardi B—6-months pregnant at the time—kept the party going with an incredibly high-energy set.

CELEBRITIES— THEY'RE JUST LIKE US!

Sure, the lineup was full of great musicians, but some of your favorite celebrities were just walking around among the fans! Actor Leonardo DiCaprio (*pictured right*) used his HI-LITES™ to blend into the crowd, while model Alessandra Ambrosia (*pictured left*) used her custom birthday pair to complete her outfit.

INTERESTED IN CHECKING HI=LITES™ OUT FOR YOURSELF?

Visit gethilites.com and use our STORM Report discount code **FRIENDSOFMEMBRAIN** for 10% off Custom Orders and Retail.*



*10% off of your first order from HI=LITES™. Offer valid through December 31, 2018. One use per customer. Valid both online and for custom orders.

STORM WARNING

THE 20 ARTISTS ON OUR RADAR

Listen to STORM REPORT artists on:



Watch STORM REPORT artists on:










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.


Click on the SoundCloud and YouTube icons next to each artist on the chart for featured audio tracks and video performances.

Also, check out our comprehensive Spotify playlist by clicking on the buttons above.

SYMBOL KEY

-  Twitter
-  Facebook
-  YouTube
-  Instagram
-  SoundCloud
-  Genre
-  Similar Artists

Rank	Artist	Audio/Video	Label	Target Demo	Score
1	BAZZI	 	Atlantic Records	Teenagers, College Kids	92
2	JORDAN DAVIS	 	UMG Nashville	College Kids, 20-Somethings	80
3	ANDERSON EAST	 	Elektra/Low Country Sound	20-Somethings, 30-Somethings, Young Professionals	79
4	CHLOE X HALLE	 	Parkwood Entertainment, Columbia Records	20-Somethings, 30-Somethings, Young Professionals	78
5	NINA NESBITT	 	Island Records, Cooking Vinyl, Universal Music Group	Teenagers, College Kids, 20-Somethings	77
6	PARCELS	 	Kitsuné	20-Somethings, 30-Somethings, Young Professionals	65
7	COAST MODERN	 	300 Entertainment	20-Somethings, Young Professionals	64
8	ROSTAM	 	XL Recordings	20-Somethings, 30-Somethings	63
9	KHRUANGBIN	 	Late Night Tales	20-Somethings, 30-Somethings, Young Professionals	60
10	HATCHIE	 	Heavenly, Double Double Whammy, Ivy League Records	Teenagers, College Kids	51
11	MARGAUX AVRIL	 	Auto Production	Teenagers, College Kids, 20-Somethings	47
12	GOAT GIRL	 	Rough Trade Records	College Kids, 20-Somethings, 30-Somethings	46
13	RAIDEN	 	Renegade Hardware, Freak Recordings, Offkey Recordings, Transparent Recordings	College Kids, 20-Somethings	45
14	EZI	 	5Towns Records	Teenagers, College Kids, 20-Somethings	41
15	SOSUPERSAM	 	Soulection	College Kids, 20-Somethings	40
16	RIPE	 	Unsigned	20-Somethings, 30-Somethings, Young Professionals	37
17	GIRLI	 	Pink Plastic	Teenagers, College Kids	35
18	OKAY KAYA	 	Heavy Body Records	20-Somethings, Young Professionals	33
19	QUINN LEWIS	 	Independent	Teenagers, College Kids	26
20	CAITLYN SCARLETT	 	Ferocious Label Services, Jurassic Jukebox/lllstarz/Seismic	Teenagers, College Kids	23



"His passion is driven by an intellectual, almost spiritual connection to his work, something that shows both in the way he talks about his material as well as the dream-like sound of it."

— Taylor Weatherby,
Billboard

1 BAZZI

📺 104K 📺 38K 📺 442K

🔊 Pop, R&B

© Lauv, Bryson Tiller

Bazzi found viral success with his breakthrough single, "Mine," which landed on the Billboard Hot 100 in January of this year. In the months since then he has amassed over 19 million monthly Spotify listeners, making him 72nd in the world! With a rise that can only be described as meteoric, we can't wait to see what Bazzi will bring us next.

Photo provided by label ©

2

JORDAN DAVIS

7.9K 12K 31.9K

Country

© Sam Hunt, Thomas Rhett

Jordan Davis is taking the country world by storm! He is unafraid to blend elements of pop and R&B with classic country, and the result is undeniably catchy. His debut album *Home State* has been out for less than 2 months and he already has over 50 million streams on his track "Singles You Up."

Photo by Eric Ryan Anderson ©2018



JENNIFER'S
TOP PICK!

3

ANDERSON EAST

20.7K 76.3K 107K

Blues Rock

© St. Paul & The Broken Bones,
Sturgill Simpson

Singer-songwriter Anderson East prides himself on his unique fusion of R&B, soul, gospel, rock, and country. His grounded vocals and strong instrumentals only further demonstrate his ability to draw on a variety of influences and come away with unique and catchy tracks, evident in his most recent album *Encore*.

Photo by Joshua Black Wilkins ©2017





GRACE'S
TOP PICK!

4

CHLOE X HALLE

📺 132K 📺 767K 📺 1M

🔊 Pop, Acoustic Pop

© Solange, Elle Varner

Sister duo Chloe and Halle Bailey are a force to be reckoned with. They got their start when Beyoncé herself took notice of one of their videos. Now they are signed to her label, starring in Freeform's *Grown-ish*, and have contributed to Ava DuVernay's *A Wrinkle in Time* soundtrack. Take some time and listen to their debut album *The Kids Are Alright*.

Photo by Robin Harper

"Take Chloe and Halle Bailey at their word: as the title of their debut album claims, these kids are alright. At just 19 and 17 years old, the sisters have staked their territory as two of pop's most ethereal rising voices."

— Risa Bruner,
TIME

5

NINA NESBITT

📺 194K 📺 297K 📺 189K

🔊 Pop

© Julia Michaels, Bebe Rexha

Nina Nesbitt has fully embraced pop and the result is layered and infectious. Her most recent release "Somebody Special" stays true to her style, showcasing her vocal range and musicality. With several catchy singles and equally engaging remixes in the last few months, we can't wait for what is sure to be a compelling full-length album.

Photo by Wolf James ©2018

6

PARCELS

350 35.3K 18.3K

Funk Pop

© Jamiroquai, CHIC

Funk Pop quintet Parcels hails from Australia, but it was in Berlin that the band refined their complex sound. The group draws on the sounds of contemporary electronica and funk disco to bring listeners five-part vocal harmonies and spirited guitar.

Photo by Anna-Lena Krause, Olive Brown



7

COAST MODERN

8K 15K 15K

Indie Pop, Electro Pop

© Cage the Elephant, Grouplove

LA-based duo Coast Modern is made up of songwriters Luke Atlas and Coleman Trapp. Although their musical relationship started simply giving each other feedback on songs, it soon grew into a partnership that has churned out uplifting songs with millions and millions of streams!

Photo by Maeghan Donohue ©2017





8 ROSTAM

📺 394K 📺 8K 📺 44.8K

🔊 Alternative, Indie

© Ra Ra Riot, Local Natives

Rostam began his career working with the band Vampire Weekend, but since his departure in 2016 he has seen quite a bit of solo success. He released his debut album *Half-Light* was released last year, and he is already touring!

Photo by Alex John Beck ©2017



9 KHRUANGBIN

📺 7K 📺 46.6K 📺 28.9K

🔊 World, Soul

© Ohio Players; Earth, Wind & Fire

This Texan trio pulls inspiration from classic soul, R&B, psychedelia, dub, and world music. With such a diverse pool of influences it is not surprise that the resulting music is entirely unique. Check out their latest release *Con Todo El Mundo* for a taste of their distinctive style.

Photo by Mary Kang ©2017



10 HATCHIE

📺 1.2K 📺 5K 📺 4.3K

🔊 Synth Pop, Indie

© Mazzy Star, Middle Kids

Hatchie brings her listeners dreamy tracks that feel reminiscent of the early 90s. Last month the Australian singer-songwriter released her single "Sleep" to positive reviews. Check it out now!

Photo by Joe Argius ©2018



11

MARGAUX AVRIL

4.6K 27K 24.4K

Pop

© Rachel Platten, Sara Bareilles

French and American dual-citizen Margaux Avril beautifully blends influences from the two cultures. The musician/photographer/model is effortlessly elegant, something that is apparent from the first listen. Be sure to listen to her latest single "Drifting," released just a few weeks ago.

Photo by Adeline Mai ©2018

12

GOAT GIRL

32 11K 8.7K

Alt-Rock

© Garbage, Sleater-Kinney

Goat Girl hails from an up-and-coming South London music scene, where they were afforded the opportunity to hone their style in local familiar venues. There they became very comfortable with their own sound, a rare quality you can hear in each of their tracks.

Photo © 2018 SBCLTR PHOTO CREW

"At 19 tracks in length, their debut appears daunting but proves to be light and accessible, with plenty of offbeat wit and many an unexpected twist down gothic country roads."

—Eve Barlow,
Pitchfork



13

RAIDEN

📺 2.4K 📺 43K 📺 29K

🔊 Electro House, EDM

🎧 Fedde Le Grande, Nicky Romero

Raiden is an up-and-coming electro DJ hailing from Korea whose style can be intense or euphoric, depending on the track. Having played clubs and major festivals around the world, he is one of Asia's biggest dance music exports and is only growing in popularity..

Photo by Bo Sung Kim ©2017

14

EZI

📺 3.3K 📺 5K 📺 19K

🔊 Pop, Alt Pop

🎧 Haley Kiyoko, Billie Eilish

Born Esther Zynn, pop songstress EZI is effortlessly cool. The first signee to Steve Madden's record label seems to fit in perfectly among the cutting edge fashion. Her debut album *Afraid of the Dark* is a 5-song look at the singer's relationship with herself and is definitely worth a listen.

Photo by Ian Evan Lam ©2018



15 SOSUPERSAM

📺 16.2K 📺 10.9K 📺 71.7K

🔊 R&B, Pop

© Tinashe, Keri Hilson

SOSUPERSAM has taken full advantage of what the music scene has to offer, playing underground clubs, fashion events, and music festivals alike. Not only is she a member of the music collective Soulection, which allows her to perform regularly worldwide, she co-founded and DJs the R&B party "143" in Los Angeles which is now an established and sought-after event series.

Photo by alexandra gavillet ©2018



16 RIPE

📺 N/A 📺 16K 📺 8.9K

🔊 Dance, Funk

© Vulfpeck, War

Ripe is made up of seven self-described "musical soulmates" who refuse to accept a single definition of dance music. Their tracks are made with joy in mind and it radiates to their listeners. Check out the album *Joy in the Wild Unknown* dropped last month.

Photo by Chris Anderson ©2018



17 GIRLI

9.4K 8.3K 31.1K

Pop, Punk

© M.I.A., Lily Allen

GIRLI makes chaotic pop punk tracks that touch on human relationships without a filter. Her blunt lyrics and aesthetic style keep fans on their toes. Check out "Play It Cool" to hear her cheeky genre-bending music for yourself.

Photo provided by Publicist ©



18 OKAY KAYA

2K 3.2K 23.5K

Alternative, Lo-Fi Pop

© Norah Jones, Joni Mitchell

Kaya Wilkins--known to the music world as Okay Kaya--is a runway model, actress, and singer-songwriter. Her haunting and soulful ballads touch upon culturally-relevant issues in a way that resonates long after the song is over. Look for her debut album later this year.

Photo by Okay Kaya ©2018

19

QUINN LEWIS

751 1.2K 3.8K

Pop, R&B

© Charlie Puth, Sam Smith

Aussie Quinn Lewis is committed to releasing honest music with personal lyrics and catchy melodies. The singer blends elements of R&B and pop, a combination that seems to flow through him effortlessly. He is currently rolling out a handful of singles, including his latest "Weekend Luv."

Photo by Sam Frawley ©2018



20

CAITLYN SCARLETT

1.4K 1.7K 5.2K

Electro Pop, Indie Pop

© Hailee Steinfeld, Halsey

It is impressive that independent artist Caitlyn Scarlett is gaining so much recognition for her own songs, landing on New Music Friday playlists worldwide, but she is also in high demand for her writing. Just last year she joined the Rihanna writing camp at the request of Roc Nation, and since then she has been churning out compelling tracks!

Photo by Orlando ©2017



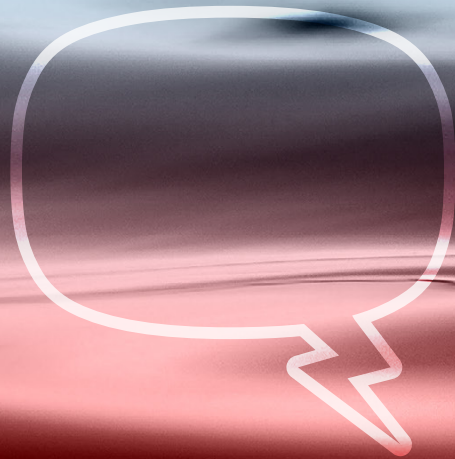
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