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Follow the latest daily buzz with buzzFeed Daily Newsletter! By Sadie BellUpdated on 12/18/2019 at 1:30 PMBilly Eilish (en) Erica Goldring/FilmMagic/Getty ImagesBilly Eilish Erika Goldring/FilmMagic/Getty ImagesThe view of the best films and TV shows of the year, where the release of really good entertainment seems the ultimate, the amount of great, new music in this year seems endless. It's just about finding it. So after a deep dive through the release platform, cleaning the charts, looking at the most interesting, new names, and going back to the classic, fan-favorite artists, we bring you the 100 best songs of 2019, starting with a ranking of 10, and then another 90 gems that you should know. These 100 tracks are the ones we put on replay all year because of how good their beats are, the ones we had some good screams too, and the ones that somehow sounded unlike anything we've ever heard. Check them out below and then head to our best albums list to make a full deep dive into all the good music that came out in 2019.The Top 10 Best Songs of 2019Tyler, The Creator has steadily risen from the alt-rap collective Odd Future to the elusive leader of the bona fide, game-changing creative. While the rapper/singer/producer/designer's last few entries have struck a chord with critics and further cemented his iconic following, this year's IGOR is its crowning achievement. On the record, he takes on a persona to ease the pain of decay, while at the same time feeling most joyful of himself as he explains that he knows that you can find love again. His track EARF'U'AKE is a love song of 2019, a rap song that conveys the genre with a production that sounds as if it's pulled deep from the archives of the RCB. He sings that he thinks he has found love, and there is nothing in the song to lead you to believe otherwise. Jade Lilitri is very emo. He also fronts the best emo band today, Long Island's Oso Oso. He is so emo that his excellent album Basking in the Glow is about trying to give everything to go from darkness to light, and learn to love this side of life. One of the album's best tracks, The View, throws you into this emotional frenzy with its quixotic, upbeat drums and guitars. The sound actually lets you give the song a shallow listen when really spot in Lilytri's voice, as if he suppresses everything he really feels. It's how he makes revelations, how the song plays on - as he addresses the form of apathy (I was in love with him) before later realizing that living life separates the band from everything that makes him worthwhile. It is very touching to hear Lilitri come to this conclusion, and if you give up emo, nothing prevents you from also moving to ease. Those with hardened looks are used to people asking how we are able to keep it all together. But in fact, all breaks are at least a little, shit hits fan and some of us just better to wear collected collected This is what Philly Noise/punk band Mannequin Pussy is grappling with on the lead single Drunk II from their record Patience. The star song sounds like hysteria, as riffs wave enthusiastically, harmonies become more layered, and vocalist Marisa Dabis goes from escapist weeping to the penultimate, revealing the line: And everyone tells me: Missy, you're so strong, but what if I don't want to be? On Drunk II, the loudest band that continues to stun is that internal conflict is personified, an audible journey about how insane and exhausting it can feel to let go and really deal with what's going on inside. Without a peek warning, in the spring of 2019 Solange dropped her first release, When I Get Home Since Her Magnum Opus Recording, 2016's A Seat at the Table. Where the RBC singer illustrated her self-confidence on her latest album, Here, she metaphorically takes us to Houston, the place that shaped her to illustrate even more how the black community shines and informs her art. Almeda, a noticeably faster song for the downbeat recording artist, plays like a chilled 90s rap from her and featured artist Playboi Carti, preaching the resilience of her hometown (Black Faith still can't be washed/Not even that Florida water). It could be an anthem in a southern church, or just as likely to blow speakers out of cars passing by with windows down; The track is a very hot holiday. On her latest album, All Mirrors, indie icon Angel Olsen sounds like she wants to become a full-blown, stadium-sized pop star. She has to, and we all need to help the singer-songwriter on this journey, because she is one of the most powerful talents today. Her recording begins with Lark, who follows her odyssey of arrival in a place where she feels shameless in furiously pursuing it in her dreams. You can hear it in her waving voice over the orchestral section as she lays out to her former lover how their love was supposed to die. You say you love every part/what about my dreams, she asks - but she doesn't have to worry anymore because you can tell she's ready to thrive on her own. It's a masterpiece, and something that feels like a star stepping into her spotlight. You may have started 2019 without knowing who Billy Eilish is. Now, you have to be a boomer with no internet access and/or live under a rock so as not to know who the multiple Grammy-nominated teenager is. She's absolutely a mystery: a green-haired, half-go-boy, for whom Gen-See's children go crazy, but that's because she sings their truths. It is on Bad Guy, one of the biggest songs this year that it reinforces its innovative, somewhat bonkers but mostly genius status. It's 2019 pop at its best: a strange, dark calico-infused trap and spooky production as it can play into your nightmares. Eilish is a bad guy and you damn well should be afraid of this 18-year-old because it's how talented she is, which she proves to be a hit. Don't hide from her though, she's going to be going over pop. (Duh.) Some of the most popular up-and-coming hitmakers with the power plant's potential are fast crossing geographic and genre boundaries, and Spain's Rosala certainly fits that mold. The Latin Grammy Award-winning Best New Artist has paved its own lane, transforming flamenco music to date with a touch of RBC, and this year's Con Altura she immerses that sound into reggaeton with the help of Colombian artist and reigning crossover star J Balvin. Over a pulsating rhythm, Rosalia's wisply ferocious voice alternates verses with a confident Balvin to make for a thrilling, flirtatious track. Let the seductive staging and deep bass inevitably turn your hips into a turning - you won't be able to resist. Sometimes these are the simplest songs that make our heart feel the hardest, their lyrics bearing the exasperated weight of the final sigh after a long sob. This is what the British electronic recording artist/producer/dancer FKA Branch does and more on Cellophane, from this year to stunning MAGDALENE. At its core, the song is a piano ballad exploring the demise of its relationship with Robert Pattinson, a novel that propelled her into the public eye and was exposed as if it were cut wrapped in plastic. She will take your breath away in each of her airy gasps, desperate to understand what went wrong as she repeats a minimal verse, which, despite this, is difficult to digest: Didn't I do it for you? Why don't I do it for you? She can express not feeling enough on this track, but as an artist of this caliber, you can also feel her strength that she can withstand anything. Charli XCX has been named a pop futurist. Her songs are bold, and really sound like how you can imagine the music will be when we all live in space in the next century. (That is, if the rest of the pop music machine tries to take the risk it does.) Her collaboration for Charlie with French queer artist Christina and the queen demonstrates the lengths Charlie XCX is ready to go. The production consumes you with every chaotic beat, engineering as if your ear is pressed right up to the speaker, reflecting the appeals of artists to find relief in moments of anxiety. It's like a pop panic attack until it breaks down into a form of euphoria. There's just nothing like it on the radio. There's a joke among Charli XCX fans that she should be exhausted from carrying the weight of pop on her back - but from the sounds of it, she knows she can't get too tired. It must continue to move the genre forward. Los Angeles is literally on fire, and the rest of the world can also be, too. The American Dream and Hollywood fantasies, which singer-songwriter Lana Del Rey writes, begin to sit in the ashes, and even she struggles to put out the flames. Specifically, it is what it comes to realizing on The Greatest, singing, tongue in cheek, culture burning, and it was him, I had the ball. The whole song loves the blissful reverence for her dreams for the meaningless, quirky world of the world Past years brought to this day - her words are poignant, nostalgic and as she threw her hands in the air, laughing without care, as the 70s Laurel Canyon as the guitar plays. As the song begins to end, the piano fades to no if it is to-be-continued: She is not ready to give up on her dream yet, and she invites us to join her show to do tomorrow great. Where her past releases may have sounded like the perfect tribute to the icon whose feet she falls, she has become her own icon on Norman Fucking Rockwell! It is a vision we can all turn to in one way or another, its appeal to not allow the fire to overcome us and culture. New Jersey rapper 070 Shake seemed to come out of nowhere just a few years ago, back in his teens. Now 21, the artist, whose real name is Daniel Balbuena, produces the woody, alt rap that caught the attention of Kanye West by getting a contract with his Def Jam imprint Getting Out Our Dreams and an appearance on 2018's Ye, as well as several other strong features on top of her own even stronger singles. She continued her ascent in 2019 with the Morrow track. She described the single as one to cry, which is a fair assessment as the wallowing song explores the paranoia of focusing on the fate of a relationship (I know it's hard to swallow / I don't know if I'll be here tomorrow). An interesting name in rap for her taste in sound, the deep, radiant voice of 070 Shake mixes well with low, downbeat production and cooling sound elements. Whether you're on indie Twitter or in experimental electronic music, there aren't enough hexes in the world to understand 100 hecs if you're not already familiar with them. For those who don't know, 100 hecs is a batshit electro pop duo produced by Dylan Brady and Laura Less. By no means is their music universal; it sounds like they went into the studio and just smashed on their keyboards until random sounds popped up and then decided the absurdist result was just insane enough to work. On songs like Money Machine, from their 1,000-hectare recordings, aggressive synths and minimalist beat support series to destruction roast straight from the first line: Hey, you're Lil' baby piss/ Do you think you're so damn cool?? Will be pounding the wind out of you. But it's a snitch, like the other 100 geeks' quirky brand of pop music, so it'll be on your feet, head pounding, in two and a half minutes. 1975 drunk fuck off, man. Frontman Matty Healey is vocal about being frustrated (like the rest of us) to live across the pond with the threat of Boris Johnson, while Donald Trump gaslights the US, and climate change turns everything into crap. Their 2018 album A Brief Inquiry Into Online Relationships may have been about trying to remain optimistic, but with the first official single of their upcoming album 2020, People, it's like they're screaming in our faces that we need to turn this forward-thinking into something revolutionary. It's a riotous punk take alt-group, and enough energy to send you straight to the picket line. The song begins with Healy's cry: Wake up, wake up, wake up / This Monday morning, and we only have a thousand of them left, and closes with Stop with the kids. Tensions will convince you that the time for anarchy is now. DC talent Ari Lennox brand neo-soul is pretty and feminine, but mixes the idea that being feminine means keeping quiet about dirty and personal. It's all part of intimacy. J. Cole's prodigy title track from her debut is a collaboration with the rapper, a sexy RBC number that literally ended up in the sheets reflecting her entire bedroom-eye sound. The subtle sounds produced discreetly, but her words and J. Cole's verse could not be more up front with their desires. It's as smooth as shea butter, and when listening, it's so puzzling that you can just smell it too. Ariana Grande promised fans that six months after the release of Sweetener, she would be back with a great musical, and the pop star came through with a thank you next. For many reasons (tragedy, public relations, major albums), pop has really become the universe of Ariana that we all just lived, and NASA, from thank you, next, takes us out of this world with a cheeky outer space song about the need for distance, but even its sound is too great for this stratosphere. Its production of RCB and the composition of synthesizers and bass may not sound atmospheric cosmological, but it is her new signature and illustrates the influence of her individual companion on the industry. At the beginning of the track, you can hardly hear: This is one small step for a woman, one giant leap for women of sorts - from NASA, thank you, the next, Ariana and everything she's been up to, it's true. Puerto Rican trap/hip-hop/rapper/reggaeton-artist Bad Bunny is an urban innovator, so it's no surprise that when rapper SoundCloud exploded, became the world's pappi and dropped his first studio album, the X 100pre (late December 2018), the long-awaited release became a true hit. While the entire record has impressive Latin trap numbers, Caro, who exploded earlier this year after his music release, is a statement from the recording artist: His music is uniquely Puerto Rico, but innovation nonetheless. Rapping about how he flips gender norms, and that everyone is valuable regardless of their personality, he brings something fresh to Latin rap. His flow shifts like a bombastic bass does before it becomes something of a ballad, allowing the song to take different forms - just like Bad Bunny

itself. Back in January, modern folk favorites Phoebe Bridgers and Conor Oberst joined forces and surprised fans with a duet project called Better Oblivion Community Center. Wrapped in their shared folk-rock empathetic songs, the project is intertwined in their togetherness, exploring their individual experience feeling inevitably alone. One such number is Dylan Thomas, admittedly more up-beat the track on the record with its bursting, twangy guitar solos and lyrics written in wit about the severity of feelings of helplessness in the current political landscape. In harmony they sing: I get greedy with this private hell/ I'll go alone, but it's just as good, and despite how insular they sound, in a subtly humorous song there's a certainty of knowing that many of us are struggling in the same fight. Big Thief had a great year. The indie-folk-favourite has released two major albums, both with great acclaim - which tests how the Brooklyn-based band consistently creates an organic, earthy world in everything they release. They may be known for fronting Adrienne Lenker's revelations of songs, but their lead single Not from their second album of the year, Two Hands, is all about the words remaining unspoken. She craft poems listing platitudes and details that life isn't about, but as a rock ballad builds and indulges in pure dreddies of cacophony, it's as if the band has left all that life is about to be felt right then. Alt-pop prodigy Billy Eilish has quietly become one of the biggest pop stars in the world because of her depressingly dark music - her vulnerable and candid lyrics are exactly what her young audience connects with. WHEN WE ALL FALL ASLEEP, WHERE ARE WE GOING? Xanny's track album epitomizes her writing prowess in the song dissecting her weakness in the face of her peers' drug use. Her muffled voice tragically swings with a reverb of bass that feeds in and out, and her brutal words (I can't afford to love someone who doesn't die by mistake in Silver Lake) will make you crumble. Xanny induces, and shows that there is no blowing smoke around the new popularitish's.black mid has quickly become one of the buzziest bands of the year. Their post-punk/noise/jazz/mind-changing music took off on the London Underground and got them a lot of talk and the best new bands of superlatives once they debuted at festivals in the US - and once their debut fell, they secured their position as one of the biggest, weirdest breakout acts only the coolest to know about. Disturbing guitars bounce erratically under rap, and as off as it all sounds, it's very interesting. 953 ends with a moment of madness, not unlike the madness that has developed around the band quite quickly this year - because, as you can hear, they are doing something more interesting than the rest. It's been a while since Bon Iver retreated into the woods, as his folk music moved toward folklore, but he never left the house that was built for him there. This is where he returns to his lovely me, I record, hey, mom who looks gentle and grateful back at his childhood memories, prompting him to challenge the woman who raised him. A simple concept, but one that with all Justin Vernon His angelic voice in the lower register sounds somehow even more different, and the production is so atmospheric that it can conjure up your own memories of youth. After years of singing in the church choir and self-produced mixtapes under the nickname Boogie, rapper Anthony Dixon of Compton and his viral successes became Eminem's co-familiar and deal with Shady Records. The record artist's first official record, Everything's for Sale, contains a number of mesmerizing rap tracks, led by the thrilling single Silent Ride. With a delivery song that dynamically picks up at a pace, Boogie talks about fighting inner demons and that ruthless voice that haunts your head. The stripped-down, Heaven-esque production feels on trend with the recent gospel of rap hit, which has entered the mainstream thanks to the popularity of Chance The Rapper, but the song stands out next to a major label talking traps to flood the airwaves that makes the rapper one to watch. You expect a certain joy of listening to Carly Rae Jepsen: Her 80s synth pop is childishly fun, and there's excitement in the way she moves her feelings. Its dedicated number Now that I've found you especially the kind of song you crave from it - synths and chorus that builds until it bursts into glitter and rainbow. The song has the kind of beat that you might expect to hear on the radio single by the main producer EDM, who called for a female vocalist, but instead its decadent drum machine and head-on-heeled excitement about finding one is an energy only beholden to Jepsen. You may not know her name until now, but you've probably heard Caroline Polacek's music before. The singer topped mainstream indie pop group Chairlift in the early 2010s and went on to write for pop stars after the band disbanded following the release of their 2016 album. Luckily this year she went solo, creating a synth-pop that puts all her emotions on a platter, sounding somewhere between an angel and an AI, were the robots ever able to express love and loss. At Doors she sings in a bouncing falsetto, Back to the City, I'm just another girl in a sweater before the song turns into a fantasy as she imagines running through a row of doors for someone, or something - maybe it's someone she loves, or perhaps it's the artistry of the weird pop she's willing to continue. Often from behind the scenes, Welsh singer-songwriter Kate le Bon has become an important name in indie, producing major albums for artists like Deerhunter while recording stunning krautrock-inspired music of his own. Daylight Matters, the lead single from her solo album Rezzard, illustrates the breadth of her talent, while moving into a pop-minded, almost jazzy realm because of the piano. The track throws you under a mournful veil with a simple chorus: I love you, I love you, I love you, but you're not here, and its atmospheric sound just pushes you further into a longing, quizzical headspace. But he didn't himself tired, just gentle gentle Reflection. Thanks to dance punk music, four women of the Japanese band CHAI set out to redefine the concept of kawaii, or Japanese perception of mercy. For CHAI, which deviates from the increasingly internationally popular style of J-Pop, embracing lo-fi, art-rock sounds, each cut in its own way, whether conventionally appealing or not (the latter is especially embraced). CHAI presents this vision both acoustically and with their attitude, and the fashionista song is perhaps the best example of this. With its percussion, funky bass, and stylish tone, Fashionista literally sounds like music for the runway, but only if that catwalk has been presented in the most avant-garde fashion. Just as anyone can be cute, anyone can be a fashionista - and the sweet harmonies of CHAI on this hilarious single should have you feel like anything is possible, too. Brooklyn Charlie Bliss as a posh 90s viola who was candied; The band's frontwoman Eva Hendricks makes it particularly sweet by having one of the most identifiable, breathy voices in alt-rock today. Although despite being the power of pop, and tapping into the pop mentality even more on their album Young Enough, there's ferocity out there. Their Chatroom is an example of this abundance: a young track of loud drums and guitars that culminated in a moment of anger turned into a non-fucks-left-to-give, a reflection of what Hendricks said she personally felt after a toxic relationship and experience of sexual assault. You hear this shift in emotion in a growing song, its repetitive chorus so catchy that you feel it in your soul that you can always bite through the sour. Lately, there hasn't been a sticky, sweet indie rock that mixes harsh, dance guitar riffs with a harsh crunch. Cherry Glazerr, a fiery, garage-la-house outlet, fills that void, and the stuffed and finished track Wasted Nun finds frontwoman Clementine Creevy singing about female exhaustion over red hot, exuberant guitars. The song epitomizes the wasted feeling that a young woman is overlooked, but with expectations thrust upon her. It's crazy, but in a dynamic way that feels all too familiar. There's a reason pop artist Claire's bedroom of lo-fi music went viral (thanks, TikTok) and became the subject of major label offerings before she pledged to remain independent. Its soft sounds are like a reflection of isolation when you are left doing nothing but getting wet through your emotions. Where her original releases relied on the euphoria of the keys and exquisite gen-I reliability lyrics, the first single from her debut immunity is a bittersweet statement piece of her artistry. On the relationship coming to an end with feelings left unspoken, Bags feels seriously broken with her airy voice and poems like: He should probably keep it all to myself, know that you'd make fun of me. Concussion piano and repetitive guitars are trying to understand the consequences, and of course they can't, her vulnerability is deep enough to prove that she will pass. Club Night may consist of seasoned musicians from the Auckland DIY scene, but they might sound like a group of kindergartens bashing on a set of cool instruments - in a good way. The indie noise of the band sounds particularly clean and exciting when netted with frantic. Off their full-length debut, What a Life, The Way is Strange and Energizing, featuring riffs that gently play up to crashing and burning to be one in the same with the boyish howling of vocalist Josh Bertram. As the lessons we learn when we're little that sometimes get lost grow up, Bertram exclaims: We need education, compassion, or a scrap of empathy, making the path a noisy challenge from this group to an hour to always be kind. Brooklyn band Crumb occupies its own landscape, somewhere between jazz and psycho-rock. While the band was originally a way for vocalist Lila Ramani to turn her high school personal musings into professionally recorded tracks, they have since toured non-stop and are just going on the release of their first album, 2019's Jinx. Their single Nina perfectly embodies the magnetism of the band, with its fascinating synthesizers, elongated vocal tracks and trippy guitars, wrapping you into a neo-jazz dream. With Nina (and all their songs), Crumb takes you to another kingdom. Like any newborn, we must love and nurture DaBaby. The North Carolina rapper is the child of hip-hop: one of the best new acts this year, offering nothing but joy in the form of a raised South trap. As it should be, the rapper is as enthusiastic about himself and his career as the fans; BOP, from Kirk (his second LP of the year), cheerfully and excitedly spits bars about his promising future for a slinky, hot rhythm. It won't be the first pop you'll hear from him. The lead single by rapper Danny Brown from his record unknowhatsimayn looks like an unfiltered stand-up set or a deranged parody of Eric Andre's show in the form of a hip-hop song. His life is coming out of business in Detroit's career as one of rap's greatest alt stars, certainly it was a wild ride, and his brazen personality only made the journey all the more interesting. He covers this debauchery at Dirty Laundry, chronicling a series of funny sexcapades delivered in a snarky, funny tone over a 90s-bumping production from a tribe called quest-in--Tip. Brown sounds his best bonkers, and the climax, carried all the way to the final verse, slapping on it. Excellent for the sweetest song of 2019 goes to Dehd, a surf rock trio from Chicago made by site natives who previously lent their talents to bands like NE-HI and Lala Lala. Starting with the line: Fortunately, there are people in my life with the power to break my heart, Dehd can fill you with butterflies. This feeling persists, scuzzed out of the surfing sounds mirrored, which it feels like settling into the unpredictable anxiety of the new Their texts can depart as from time to time, wanting to hold on to what they have found (I want to be lucky), but in every melancholy guitar tone, you can free yourself from doubt because, in Dehd, love is alive. South Florida rapper Denzel Curry arrives. The recording artist has released a series of recordings over the past few years and has made a name for himself on the Miami stage and beyond, but now with his latest album, he's keen to show fans what the South is all about. Breezing through a line about luxury aspirations and friends dying too young over a piano sample, the track is perhaps on the soft side of Curry, but encapsulates his hometown experience too well. And that hymn choir singing: Jesus, please tear us away from evil / please pray for all my people, will have you climbing, find God even in the Sunshine State. Shoegaze band DIV kind of inadvertently strengthened the reputation for itself in indie music, as this band that inspired the indie band's aesthetic boy band in the 2010s. You know, a guitar band that is sick of skinny and dressed in oversized T-shirts and baseball caps. There's a lot more to the band in front of Cole Smith's zakari than watching, however; in recent years, Smith has become outspoken about his struggles with drug addiction. DIIV guitars are always intoxicating, especially when they sound disordered, which often feeds on tracks exploring Smith's recovery, but on their song The Deceiver, Blankenship, it feels as if it hints at a climate crisis (Earth is characterless/Blankenship/Children Lead the Scream). It's not easy to listen to because DIIV doesn't want to be a passive group; here, they're in disarray, and they've never sounded so cool. Dua Lipa's path has exponentially grown in the last couple of years, perhaps what many aspiring pop artists pine for: fame is just kind of falling to their knees. The British singer wanted to become a pop star, moved to London as a teenager, and... became one, record deal, diplo-collaboration, and all. Her dark, alternative pop has already produced stylish international hits like New Rules, but no release has yet felt like its sound is fully realized and hit as hard as Don't Start Now. It's funky as hell, and like a disco fantasy. With this, you want to follow the neon lights, and join Dua on the dance floor because she sounds confidently moved on and with the ball. ATL hip-hop duo EARTHGANG theatrically croons, just another day in those filthy, sweet streets of Atlanta to start their track UP - as if peeling back the curtain on a circus track that's about to play, and the charm of their hometown scene. Officially released on their new major debut label, Mirrorland, on J. Cole's imprint, the song is both a showcase of Southern sound perseverance and up-and-comers themselves. They mercilessly play with funk and keep you on your feet, swerving between fainting RCB and horrible, screeching bars. This is with the influence of OutKast, but pretty much relay how much these two following Atlanta artists look. EARTHGANG knows they're on up and up. There's an almost universal exuberance in speeding down the freeway, sitting next to someone you love. It never stops going away when you're young, with every car ride feeling as if it's the first since you've got your license. In Hanging Out of Cars from Philly's four-part debut album, Active Listening: Night On Earth, the band epitomizes this experience through their nervous, harmony-rich noise-pop. The empath, who quickly became a staple in the seeping Philly noise-rock scene, envelops you in loud, fuzzed-out sounds before they disappear to fill the space with a strange, cinematic production. Track and this exciting group die to pierce your speakers as if you are a teenager tracking your hometown highway once again. Emerging folk singer Faye Webster is a strange conglomerate of sound - folk, alt-country, RCB and even hip-hop - but it all deliciously meshes like a bite in a peach cobbler, and it makes sense that she's from the Atlanta indie scene. The 21-year-old's voice often sounds as if she's making statements too awkward to speak out, but the unbridled longing for Kingston is so romantic. As much as the sound of a Southern artist is very much one of the singer coming in 2019, that twangy guitar and jazz choir inspires images of 20th century couples dancing in their carpeted, wooden walled living room as the recording plays. Some things are meant to disappear, like posters in your childhood bedroom basking in daylight, tan, temporary tattoos, or relationships. The folk artist of the field medic knows this, no matter how painful it may be. The lead single from his last fade at dawn, Henna Tattoo, narrates a moment of realization that one he craves has eyes on someone else, and the halcyon moments of his time together disappear to no one. The song is a ceremonial number from a solo artist who makes clever folk music in variations of DIY aesthetics, hip-hop production, and Americana twang, though it sounds romantically worn as if he's playing with a spoiled cassette tape. The song is enough to convince listeners that the brand of Field Medic Folk is something a little more permanent. Giripool's Pretty From What Chaos Imaginary is a lovely, slowly burning ditty. And despite its name, it's how it's based on a not-pretty way it can feel going through the days of invalid dreaming and making an idol of someone who you end up coming to believe is pretty broken. When vocalist Harmony Tividad sings: I'm not a dreamer in my prime / I'm constantly not worth your time among the rest of her stream of consciousness songs in tandem with a dance group, a lo-fi signature, you can feel that your heart goes from light to incendiary. Like all that chaos on this song they're looking to understand what this sadness means but even then you you can hear them find beauty in disarray. Electropop experimenter Grimes became an indie icon with her 2015 record Art Angels. By no means has it been quiet for the past four years, however. Rather, she makes headlines for reasons that can only be described as crashing into simulations like dating Elon Musk and feuding with rapper Azealia Banks for locking her out of The Mask House. She began doubling down on music in 2019, and in the most majestic way that only a strange alien princess turned the sort of household name as she could. Her upcoming record is said to be a concept album about the anthropomorphic goddess of climate change (because, of course), and one of his singles released this year, Violence certainly covers that allegory with lyrics about complacency in abusive relationships. It's melodic and her breathy vocal sound is made to mirror the pop star's cookie cutter, making that deliberate toxicity all the more palpable. HAIM's Summer Girl sounds like a memory - as you constantly reminisce about July through heart-shaped frames and pink lenses. Instead of a guitar-centric funk song, the LA-based sister trio is known for, the single that arrived at the end of July is hushed and simmering as the afternoon sun shines on your shoulders. Danielle Haim's repetition of I'm Your Summer Girl, confirms her position in her lover's life, but the saxophone, her beautifully thoughtless du du du, and the shiver in her hindsight can only about catalysis her and tune in at a particular point in time, she hopes you'd look back on gently. But in the bridge as she declares: You go near, not behind me / Feel my unconditional love, it sure that this song to hold on to that summer feeling, even when it seems fleeting. You'd be lying to yourself if you weren't a little breathless hazy Styles. At least you're intrigued that it's a former member of One Direction, which makes him so freaky charismatic. The lead single from his album Fine Line, Lights Up is a good indicator: he fashionably replants the pop-rock of the 70s in 2019 with his vague, meaningless lyrics set in the rock star's crown. The song invites you to step into the light, which may mean radical self-image, but there may well be an initiation ceremony in its following due to how exciting you will find a young star to be. Just do it, just step into the light - Styles is an icon in creation. Nothing sounds more lush than Australian artist shoegaze Hatchie. Harriette Pilbeam produces a dream pop music that exudes romanticism in the form of crystal guitar and synth tones. Singer/songwriter from under quickly become this girl genre with her debut album Keepsake. Stay With Me, a single from the record, flickers with its disco-clad vibe as if it's meant to be crying over at the club. Synthesizers and Hatchey's muffled, melancholy voice make Stay With Me euphoric, as she recalls a novel that ended. The track makes you come undo with it, well. In his project Helado Negro Roberto Carlos Lange does what sounds like liquidated folk music. It's slow and meaty; electronic music has made peace. On Please won't please, with the tender This Is How You Smile, the recording artist making this soft place the world is worth soaring in. His soft voice in tandem with warm synths, Lange sounds golden as the power of his Latin origin, singing powerful poems like. Lifetime History shows, that Brown won't go, brown just glows, an ode to his Ecuadorian immigrant parents and cultural history. The track also glows. Every once in a while, the country produces a supergroup that goes beyond the big star, the arena-rock ethos that dominates the genre. In 2019, veteran Brandi Caryle teamed up with young star Maren Morris and songwriters Amanda Shears and Natalie Hemby to give the country a mega-band she lacked in The Highwomen. The take on the Highwaymen, a classic outlaw supergroup, consists of Johnny Cash, Waylon Jennings, Kris Kristofferson, and Willie Nelson, a 21st-century version of the essentially flipped 80s band of the eponymous Highway introduction man's song of their own for their record. Their sombre voices shine when they sing: We are tall women, singing stories still unspoken, and their lyrics make history out of the difficulties faced by all women. The band exists to show the club boys the genre they're in, and songs like this will make you believe they can do it. With the release of la plat-debut band HUNNY Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. In July, they were born in the world the only song deserved Saturday night/in/dream party/teen movie theme song status with their bleached collaboration, Saturday Night. (It's right there in the title!) Much like this new wave-y pop-punk band itself, the glitter, bubbly track is flawless - kind of made for bedroom dance parties. Vocalist Jason Yarger's angry stretch spits loveick pees (because you're all I want, and every word you mock sounds so beautiful to me/you have to die with me), and slides in mentions of Echo and Bunnyman and My So Called Life, but no song that was meant for the 90s teen series as much as it is. Pop stars are perfectly competent in creating hits; that's literally what they do. But the Latin phenomina J Balvin and Bad Bunny don't have to make a safe, formulaic song in order to be a snitch. The Colombian Reggaeton star has teamed up with a Puerto Rican rap artist to reset the unexpected oasis joint release this summer, and she's dripping heat like condensation on the glass of your mojito. KUE PRETENDES is a stand-up on the eight-track project, finding two complementary talents: Balvin crooning elegantly on the chorus and Bad Bunny's smoky rap bringing enough speed in the atmosphere to beat. about the torments of a lover who left you behind and comes back to torture you some those two know the art of seduction. It took more than seven years to hear new solo music from British electronic/RCB scientist Jai Paul. It may not be a household name, but the two songs he released under his name blew up in the early 2010s, and their sly electro production is no doubt predicted where the music went for the rest of the decade. He didn't let the era go out without having another say though, sharing two singles including He, which represents what fans have been vying for since he blew everyone away back when he was downloading records on MySpace. Understated, gospel-like, and quiet, it's like an ever-changing electro anthem, and whether it's about a lover or spirituality, it becomes something pretty glorious. As she sings on the single zora, Chicago soul artist Jamila Woods weapon is her energy. Her music creates its own universe, extended by her poetry about beauty in blackness and her RCB sound, which goes into dimension parallel to Afrofuturism. This year's LEGACY! LEGACY!, she paid tribute to the black artists who inform her work by naming each track after them as the author of Theor Nel Hurston on the ZORA. The track glistens with keys intertwined with strings, like Woods singing with warm confidence, as if she had taken on the unapologetic spirit of the late great writer. When she utters a line: I dare you reduce my wave, I'm on a new plane, it's as if she sings with the elevated plane of existence that she and Hurston exist on, and one can only imagine how charming it must be if it sounds so good. Melina Mae Duterte's music dream pop project J.K. Som feels warm just as the afternoon light flows through the curtains does as it brightens the room. Superbike, from Anak Co, this year finds its swirling sounds more magnetic than ever. As if getting on a motorcycle and going to the picturesque horizon, it expands the width of beautiful guitars and takes them on a personal journey. She sings the final verse, will breathe until you are gone, with two minutes of instrumental left in the track; You will be left trying to inhale every bit of her shoegaze sweetness the rest of the ride. It's as if indie rock icon Jenny Lewis bumped into you, a former dear friend and lover, in a dive bar along the highway in Heads going to Roll, a track from On The Line. You can almost see the songwriter smiling at you from all over the bar with a tear in her eyes before she decides to pull up a chair next to you to return to all your distant, fond memories of kissing in cemeteries and disagreeing about everything from Elliott Smith to the Grenadines. The song is a masterpiece in songwriting and Lewis's unhappy voice conveys intimacy only true friends can offer. With his twangy guitar solo and slinky, stretched tone, the indie darling sounds like a country star on horseback riding in the sunset - a proper legacy of the status of former Rilo Kiley singer Jonas Jonas never left the consciousness of pop culture; Nick and Joe just kept making solo music (and stayed in trend based on their relationship with other mega-famous celebrities). But pop didn't know it needed an infusion of the revived family trio again in 2019. Instead of keeping up with their 00s pop, JoBros are now making the genre of defying pop that they probably already landed on eventually if they kept the band going. It's liberating and tasteful (p) upbeat, Happiness begins to lead sucker's single one of the most hilarious on the Hot 100 this year. It's been almost a decade since you got to the groove to a carefully crafted boy band, so it's about a damn time when you're giving up the bass line and swooning over Nick's falsetto mixed with these synths. ... and the best song title of the year goes to JPEGMAFIA. This is not the only praise owed to the experimental, alt-rapper track. Much like the artist's experience of moving to Los Angeles after a stint in Baltimore following his military deployment, his sound crosses borders and cannot be fixed - and Jesus forgive me... as zealous as they come. Over majestic synthesizers and piano, he oscillates between boastful prayers about his own success and the future of humanity. It's like combining its insane, genre-pushing sound, and you can't help but think that those glass sounds break on the track echo as it shatters expectations of what music might sound like. On the song, he raps, I put my soul in every bar and every verse and every rhyme - amen to this! It may seem that Lana Del Rey, suffering from loneliness, feels like no one understands her except the literary icons she prays to, but in fact, the songwriter knows that she reflects the timeless experience of a melancholic modern woman. Like the plots of Sophia Coppola's films or the writings of Sylvia Plath (the latter's name fell in the track), her Norman Fuck Rockwell! The album closer is one on this side of her and an unsatisfied, emotional woman longing for more of a life. But as bleak as self-referencing piano ballads, she hopes that this apathy is not eternal, and as desperate as it sounds, you believe her. Simply put: this is the pinnacle of Lana Del Rey and it's a beautiful thing. Giddy up - because the yeehaw agenda said: This city is not big enough for the two of us, and set about talking on the culture this year. And the breakout track from Soundcloud rapper turned major label-signee Lil Nas X is the soundtrack to an internet-dubbed yeehaw agenda. The rap/country track may have caused controversy after Billboard removed it from the country charts, but it prompted country prop Billy Ray Cyrus to offer help on a few verses as well as the Internet to be adamant about its support for the song, making it kick fuck up. This awesome bass is made for criminals, it has a certified hook, and with its cheeky western lyrics. Old Town Road is what should play like you gallop gallop Your horse is right on the ranch. Lil Uzi Vert's new! The 24-year-old emcee rapper started the year by announcing that he was forced to resign due to conflicts with his former label, but since he struck a deal with JAY's Roc Nation, he's come back hot as ever with Free Uzi. The track reminds listeners how young talent lit a fire that never stopped burning, its delivery so fast that it is hard to keep up with his snarky poems: The muted production is only fed to the level at which it is located. Free Uzi is right, because it would be a crime not to hear more from a young rapper who turns the genre temptingly dark. Self-love anthems are the constant of pop music... but no one has made themselves love this year quite like Lizzo. At Cuz I Love You's Juice, the hip-hop artist unapologetically advertises how incredible she is, and she makes the case to give you every reason to believe she's telling the truth. For a nostalgic, soulful funk beat, her track takes you back to the most indulgent era with its 70s styles, further informing his decadence and persuading you, too, to let go. Like Liszo, leave the boys in DMs and instead fall in love with a woman in the mirror and parade her on the dance floor. With jokes like I'm not a snack at all, babe, I'm all the hell of a meal, it may well inspire this kind of confidence in us all. Maggie Rogers, a folk-pop phenomenon who has been climbing the airwaves with viral success over the past three years, seems to want to bring back her narrative with her debut album Heard It in a Past Life. Her name has been attached to Pharrell's since the virtuoso played one of her songs at NYU in 2016, and he accepted her as a mentor. But the singer, who dances with space in her lyrics as 21st Century Stevie Nix and plays with electronic production with an ear for streaming success, should be heard as her own. It's on fire. The back track of the hilarious percussion feels primed for the festival finale of the song, but it's in the joyous delivery of Rodgers being woken up, in the conscious state of life, that she's heard as the brightest name in pop music that she is. In Burning, she lit a spark and you'll feel it too. A handful of pop artists in recent years have turned a blind eye to chewing gum music and turned their attention to sad knocks. It may sound like an oxymoron, but there's no better term for a track that sounds like pop and heartbreaking lyrics that are what crying in a club is all about. It may seem that the songwriter/producer has little to cry about for his latest award for his star-born co-contribution with Lady Gaga, Shallow, but here he brings a melodrama feeling shamelessly sad for the love lost with simplistic, sage pop feelings and brilliant production. The title track epitomizes the mood of the record: how the heart aches when the clock creeps closer to it to have our actions. Dance to this song alone in your room after the evening and it may overshadow you feeling sorry come morning. When Houston rapper Megan You stallion spits a verse, you should take a seat after that; its confident, sexually charged lyrics and delivering that powerful. Restoring what it means to be a Texan and taking responsibility for the explicit, the artist has been thrust into the mainstream for her debut record fever - and her empowering hot girl is something that everyone can get behind. The album track Cash Shit is an example of the pinnacle of her daring delivery, knowing that she deserves all the subtleties in life, and its deep bass only types her more. That's exactly what this real hot shit girl is all about. Megan You're a stallion literally reclaimed and dominated all season, groundbreaking (what has since become a social media phenomenon co-opted by brands) Hot Girl Summer. After posting extensively about what Hot Girl Summer means (dress as you want, live a life like betting doesn't matter, and do whatever feels good, whether it's leaving men reading or sending that wtd text yourself), she's finally released a self-titled single to define the movement after teasing it all season. It's chilly and carefree, and Tu Dolla Sign puts a swoon-worthy hook, but the real pleasure comes in the form of Meg and Nicki Minaj in alternating, satisfyingly explicit bars. It soundtracks Summer '19, and shows how hot the track can be when artists squash an unnecessary trail that female rappers should be pit against each other. Miley Cyrus is a pop star who's hard to pin. A girl from Nashville became famous, portraying Hannah Montana, who inadvertently blurred her own identity and taste, with poisoning the country twang and love of pop and hip-hop. Her releases have jumped around, from hip-hop to rock experimentation, which she's received a fair amount of criticism for - but in 2019 she made music that laid out in all iterations herself. The mother's daughter is a rock opus singer. She states how strong she is in a woman, a feeling that has been drilled into her by her mother, even if it means she is brash and a little nasty. Produced by frequent collaborator Mike Will Made It, the rap production may streamline the track, but sung in her rasp, it's her version of the radio-rock anthem in 2019. The album is closer to the indie pop band MUNA record saves the world sounds as if there was a sequel to Lady Bird, and it came in the form of a song. This means that even with its specificity - moving to New York, cutting off your hair with blunt scissors, dancing to the LCD Soundsystem at a party - his come-of-age story will return to your own experience, and light up a sense of relief in you. LA three-piece makes sincere, weird pop, and their entire album about their lifelong travels grows beyond trauma as it will be good, Baby make you believe that their music be a form of form if you heard this after leaving the house for the first time, there's no doubt you wouldn't feel as if everything would be fine. On her debut album Miss Universe, London-based singer-songwriter Nilefer Janya plays the role of a mental health phone operator. Yanya, who grew up a classically trained musician and hotly haunted industry after several Buzzy Soundcloud releases, kicks off her semi-concept album by presenting it as a hotline for the fictional WWAY HEALTH, where she'll be on the other line, taking care of your deepest problems. But her remedy is to be a receptive therapist to reveal to you your own scattered anxieties, like the first official album of the track, In Your Head. Over the excitable pop-rock and sparking electric guitar she so well owns, Janya worries that her feelings are nothing more than projections, her getting out of control. That's what makes the rising pop singer Miss Universe - we identify with all her hysteria, which is so flawlessly paired with a new wave. In her music, you can hear how Chicago rapper Noname relies heavily on her background in slam poetry. On Song 32, she puts her poems with the colloquial word of clarity and endurance, and even pays an ode to her growth stating: Started getting money from writing haiku. The recording artist has long been a staple of Chicago, working with Chance the Rapper before breaking through last year with her triumphant record Room 25. With each release, Noname illustrates that she quickly rises to the title of one of the best raps. The track in particular follows a chilled, jazzy rhythm with little reggae influence, but her lyrics are about colonialism and her personal journey to success that really stands out. Once the song is built, she repeats the line: I am America at its best and you would be a fool not to believe it. When the boy band and the girls band break up, Justins and Beyonce balances eventually revealing themselves when they find more solo success than they ever did within the group. Camila Cabello may have left Fifth Harmony before the pop outfit officially went on hiatus (and she certainly did well for herself), but when Normani dropped Motivation, she put forward a compelling case that she was the real star of the band. Inspired by the Y2K music she grew up on, the romantic number is part pop music bubblegum and part of the aughts of RBC in the styles of Destiny's Child and Ciara. It sounds blissful and nostalgic, and you can hear in her voice that Normani is motivated to be the next big pop star. It can be a long way to feel worthy of love. That's what Boston's Ellen Kempner, who makes music like Palehound, recognizes the pain of irrational thinking through the most serious means in Worthy, a single from Black Friday this year. Lo-fi artist does what she does best song, her Elliot Smith-esque muttering and alt-country guitar tones the perfect relay for the form of reflection. She can sing about cruelty you can spew on herself, but in her poetics you recognize that we hope love will one day convince that the feeling will subside. We came out of poverty, dude, we don't have thang, Chicago rapper Polo G rap on his mega-hit Pop Out. And the truth the song speaks doesn't just stop there. He is full of cruel and grim revelations about his criminal life, but instead of talking as if he had left them in his past, he is actually about how they made him the artist he is. It's a dense but melodic party track, coupled with its story of how to quickly spit a drill-style rapper, so it makes sense the song was a true winner - but the fact that its lyrical content soared into mainstream rap speaks volumes about what makes this particularly special hit. Depression sucks. It's an unbearable weight, in more ways than one - but no matter how hard it is to fight, the Brooklyn-based riot grrrl band Pom Pom Squad is here to first acknowledge the validity of a sense of emptiness and then stomp on your throat in full force. The band led by Mia Berrin has been a regular in the Brooklyn indie scene for the past few years, playing the show non-stop and igniting tears suited to fans with their vulnerable, lashing punk. Heavy heavy finds Berrin struggling to cope (It becomes heavy telling everyone I'm okay), her guitars and vocals spiral out of control to reflect her inner self-deployment. The track is wrapped in a promiscuity of femininity and how painful it may be to rationalize sadness as a woman, but, boy, does it pack a punch. Since the 2016 election, several mainstream media outlets have reacted to the results by launching a series of stories exploring the disaster and demands of conservative middle America. Rock band Priests did the same on their record Seduction of Kansas - except for them it's more of a mix-up disease than something worth rationalizing. The DC-based band grew out of punk, and held on to this political attitude back in their work, albeit with a condensation to art-rock that can be heard delightfully in their album title track. Built on the eerie elements of disco and cultural references sung mockingly by vocalist Katie Alice Greer, the song is a camp attack on the heart of the country. This is the music of resistance that must be in the memory. Albany-based party punks Prince Dad and Hyena have made their rounds in the East Coast emo scene, playing insane gigs from their friends' basements and DIY spaces. But what they probably really like to be propelled into outer space, leaving this hole is an excuse for reality behind. It's the mentality that fuels their post-teen existential crisis/escapist what to do if a rocket pelted me into space with the concept album Space Thrill Seekers. The lead single, Lauren (Track 2), captures this best, and so that it is childish, relatable, and not completely devoid of positivity. The song follows the crisp howed of frontman Corey Gregory Gregory how the world feels pitted against you, how much it sucks when you friends leave you to rot in the summer, and how lonely it is to be, well, alone. But Gregory and the live thrash band show, as long as you have someone close and dear, this world doesn't have to be one to make a quick exit from. You may remember in 2017 a video of a woman throwing soup at a man who shouted racist slurs on a New York subway that went viral. If you're into rap, you can also remember that the woman behind the heroic soup toss was Brooklyn-based rapper Princess Nokia, who fans and blogs identified after the video blew up on Twitter. On her 2019 single, a soulful, horn-laden number, the artist addresses the incident and delves into her activism. She's known for angry bars, and even invites the hardcore/pop-punk mentality into her music, but here she sounds question-fact, as if to say she stands for justice because she feels beholden, not for fame. She raps, I'm on a train throwing soup/racist men make threats / I'm not a gangster, but I can tell you that I love throwing my hands at racists, bigots and scum, and links hate domestic violence. She knows that someone has to stand up for her girls and strangers on the train, so that the person can also be hers. Toronto punk pUP never got over the teenage angst. Instead, the four-person band, which has released solid punk albums since 2013, just keeps angry with age. On the lead of one from Morbid Stuff, frontman Stefan Babcock starts weeping: Just like children, I've been navigating my way through the mind-blowing reality of a fireless existence. This is how he settled into a relationship at 16, and decided it was a good fit for the music PUP does: reverberations and raucous drums also create a chaotic, feverish tone throughout the track. But no matter how moody and restrained their guitar sound is, it's a damn good time. On Kids, it's about finding someone who is as angry as you are (I don't care about anything but you) - admittedly a less horrible experience than wallowing in isolation. It stings, but there is joy here too. DC rapper Rico Nasty knows she's an icon on the rise - her aggressive, sweet rap and bold energy are too big to keep down. Shortly after the release of last year's excellent major label Nasty, the recording artist returned with another mixtape, Anger Management, this time collaborating with frequent partner and trend producer Kenny Beats, who lent his talents to act as JPEGMAFIA and Vince Staples. Her vocal prowess and feminine fury shine especially on Hatin, a track that unapologetically samples JAY-I Dirt off the shoulder. Her signature rasp is as imperious as ever as she even cheerfully flips the chorus of samples, spic: If you feel like a boss bitch, go. No man will keep her from reaching the top. Give it a couple of years, and Rosale will be one of the biggest Around the world. Spanish star flips flamenco flamenco Misionaria, in her double EP Fucking Money Man, is first written in her Barcelona native Catalan language, and it hits the jackpot. The translation sees dollar signs and subtler things in life on the singer's mind, but even as she rises to pop dominance, cynicism to her tone over an upbeat song. Fucking money, man, she boasts between dreams of making rain; the catchiness of the song only mirrors the infection that is capitalism. It is a self-destructive habit of women often: measuring their self-esteem based on their relationships with men or their sexual history. While some women take responsibility for their choices as well they should, for others it is more difficult like something to make a light or a mask. Brooklyn singer-songwriter Samia, written on verses to the song Lasting Friend - the 90s-Liz Phair-ish number about how she let the boys touch her tits at lunchtime in high school - hovers somewhere in between. The song is just one of the artist's up-and-coming anthem; She has been breathing energy in the Brooklyn rock scene lately with her lively, witty personality and poetics. But here alone, you can tell she's the one to remember as her ferocity positions herself as one of the next great songwriters of tomorrow. The bedroom recording artist-turned-indie hero (Sandy) Alex G is the narrator. You turn to his music to project your own calculations onto the characters he wrote in his stories and find solace in them. It only makes sense that eventually the songwriter will turn to one of the most famous works of folklore, the Tales of the Brothers Grimm, for inspiration. The first single from his beautiful Sahara House, Gretel deftly reimagines the fairy tale as a means of fighting for one's own happiness. The instrumental introduction sounds like the titular character's escape from the indulgent house of candy, but in the end, the warm guitar and repeated line: I don't want to go back / Nobody's going to push me to the track, you're out of the woods and according to the storybook ending you write for yourself. You may not yet know her name, but it's possible that you've heard SASAMI before. The work of a Los Angeles multi-instrumentalist throughout the recording of contemporary indie staples like Cherry Glazerr, Vagabond, and Wild Nothing, but now it's time for her own synth-wielding, dream pop debut. SASAMI finds its strength in softness, in sound moments that one might overlook, but instead strike like lightning, and in the softness of her voice singing brokenness. Her debut album song Free (with harmony from songwriter Devendra Banhart) may seem simple and quiet, but it carries weight, as in the reflected moments of the guitar echoing the demise of the relationship with the lyrics. And as solemnly bland as the track seems, SASAMI proves that sometimes things have to end for us to feel free; In the I sounds calm. Saweetie is extravagant (and forward) if nothing else - which is why LA La He's already the boss. She has exploded in just a few years with Instagram freestyle and dropping her luxurious GRL breakout on Soundcloud, and this year she laid out exactly what she wants and deserves, as any hip-hop princess should, with My Type. The fast track has a basic aughts-like beat as she describes her type of person: eight-digit, eight inches, Lamborghini keys, maximum cash type and class. It's delightfully extra, and flips men objectifying women in music on their heads as she sets the bar of standards for those who even look her way. You know she can get what she's after (even if no one is so deserving of her). Skulbyov has a list of complaints. It took a minute to hear from collaborator Kendrick Lamar and the main TDE signee to release a solo work after his 2016 career-defining Black Face recording, but that doesn't mean the introspective, fierce LA rap rapper out of things to say. In fact, this year at Numb Numb Juice, he rified on that bitch shit he can't stand, whether other men talk directly about women or refuse to support the effort of up-and-coming hip-hop contemporaries. In less than two minutes, he glides in and out of the injured rap on the thrilling singing of the song made menacingly challenging the bass in the background. You'd like him to keep whining, and it's never going to end. Singers and songwriters originally from New York have long lamented the painful changes of their beloved urban jungle. At Seventeen, folk star Sharon Van Etten contributes to this tradition. Her smoky voice sounds reflective, wretched over how the streets she used to rack up so confidently now look, and the Springsteen-esque rock track only further plays in its nostalgia. But Van Etten, whose became something of an indie legend, admits that New York's legacy is that it belongs to everyone who decorates it like a circadian rhythm, that the new killed 17-year-olds will occupy the same block she once felt as if she owned (I used to pay for free, was it just a dream/ Now you're half shy, thank you so carefree / But you're only half-shy/ But you're only seventeen. Shawn

Mendes (more or less) has made a career out of being a sweet boy. The young pop star probably broke a million hearts around the world just because he's, you know, pop star Shawn Mendes, but his songs about getting his own heart broken are always able to clean them up again, since he feels like he can be your own high school sweetheart. If I Can't Have You is another love song from a young hitmaker, and it's almost too much to make a pop song. As Mendes is almost driven to madness over his lover, the song gets injected with saccharine electro sounds and basically explodes into the final rum com sequence as it runs through the city/airport/what you have to it. God, let this boy get a girl! six years that felt like an eternity since the release of Night time, My Time, Sky Ferreira finally returned an alternative pop artist released her her her The album was highly acclaimed back in 2013, but hit a label roadblock after a roadblock during the production of her sophomore effort. With Downhill Lullaby, though, she emerged from the darkness to spell upon us once more. The terrifying track follows a violin that sounds as if it's taken from a fairy tale, and Ferreira's voice weighs low with an obsessive bass, marking the singer's transition from her new wave space to something much more gothic. In a way, it sounds as if she made a deal with the devil by refusing to sacrifice her artistic integrity, and now, like a princess of the underworld, she drags listeners down with her - and it's a journey we all have to die to take. One of the sharpest rock songs of the year definitely goes to Boston pop punk/activist hometown heroes Somos. Their track My Way to You from prison this year on the Hill finds the group pondering how they hope their relationship with loved ones turn out when life reaches its last hour. For a band known for the saucy sounds of punk, it's as if that number was pulled from another ethereal dimension with its synths and chorus that builds like the final cinematic sequence of a classic film when the hero works in the arms of one they love. And all this is played out with special grief, given that the band's founder and guitarist Phil Haggerty died before the official release of the album. A lovely emo ballad, and a reminder to forever work your way to those you love. The third eye of the blind Semi-Enchanted Life came out in 1997. It's a melodic alt-rock anthem, and du du dus will never cease to be the subject for singalong. Portland-to-Philly Transplanting Strange Ranger in Leon, from his new album Remembering the Rocket, could basically be a dead bell ringer for a semi-enchanted life. Both songs are also more or less about the mid-20s rut, Strange Ranger more innocently troubled by the horror of falling in and out of love (I gave up love / I gave up wanting love), never finding the end of a painfully cyclical picture. The challenges are universal, but there's something cute about how this sound stays the same as the rising guitar band desperately tries to hold back the indie-rock charms. And Leona isn't really gloomy; its ba da da das inspires that you will feel confident again and this melody will carry you through. Love and sex have long been at the heart of the RCB, but in 2019 it felt like a new crop of singers appeared to put sexuality on their own terms at the forefront of their songs. Summer Walker is one of the Atlanta-based singers leading the charge, and her breakthrough song Girls Need Love is simultaneously testament to that energy while simultaneously calling sexual double standards (Girls can never say what they want it/Girls can never tell how), and delightfully blunt. The song may have first fallen in the fall of 2018, but after Drake wind of one of Walker's music videos and reached out to her as fan, she asked him to jump on the track for a remix, making the song even more pure in its longing. If it weren't presumptuous to canonize the LA DIY scene, well, today, Surf Curse would be a canon. From Nick Rattigan and Jacob Rubec (who hit the stage in other projects), the duo does jangly, arty indie rock the way Los Angeles does best. Nothing has ever sounded so good and representative of their floating scene than this year's Disco though. The whole song feels as if it draws a party scene - built on fast-paced drums and guitars - but its lyrics describe nothing more important than the moment of locking one's eyes across the room and dragging them onto the dance floor, where it's only you two, and rhythm. It doesn't sound like a disco in the slightest, but it sure is a movie like the party we all have the time to invite. After a production stint for the likes of Kanye West and Travis Scott, Tame Impala frontman Kevin Parker has finally lent his talents back to the psychedelic Aussie band that started it all for him. The band's first release since 2015, Patience is just as pop-minded as the perfectionist album that catapulted them to mainstream success (and caught Rihanna's attention), albeit a strange reentry now that the band has caught the world's attention. Trading guitars for piano and bongos, one might imagine a track lighting the dance floor on a singles cruise, but its disco intonation is a true joy to surrender. Of course, cyclically lamenting the passage of time and its weight on you as an artist. what do you do when you chill out an Australian band that has become one of the biggest bands in the world, but Parker's ingenuity remains in producing the song and it's a welcome return from the band. Taylor Swift had a mixed rollout leading up to the release of what turned out to be a brilliant lover. First she released ME!, which borders on children's music, and then it fell you have to calm down, a frivolous sort of dis-track/sort-of-political anthem. It was all an extremely confusing move from one of the most controversial pop stars - but even non-Swifties should remember that she is also one of the best pop songwriters of our time. So enter Archer, the third single, which unfortunately doesn't spark as much conversation as her first two... maybe because it's good. The synth-pop song slowly builds up as Swift blames herself and the wars she started or were called up (I was the archer I was the prey / Who could ever leave me, darling? but who can stay?). It may not be a battle cry or a breakup anthem exploding along the love front line, but it feels like a mega-star at its most vulnerable and will call back the now old songs of hers, which has since become Swift's gun. Tierra Whack is one of the (if not then) most innovative names in hip-hop right now. Philly-bred rapper flips his songs into a kind of alt-pop art, her backing tracks with noisy, cartoonish qualities. Rarely does she take into account her great aesthetics: for example, her debut album, Whack World, was a 15-minute visual album odyssey inviting others into her obscure world. This year she dropped only a child who is just as interesting and continues to classify her as a bold name in music; On the track, she stresses that she doesn't have time for people with baby-only syndrome to smartly sing rap songs about the inherited coldness of those who think of anyone but herself. Behind the stripped-down production of children's, warped keys, the lyrics of Waq and her sly voice shines, and even as she puts you in her place, Tierra Whack is always a pleasure to hear. Swedish pop singer Tove Lo catapulted to fame with her 2014 hit (Stay High). Where many pop acts today deliver caustic, brutally honest melodies more and more, it has always been the second nature of Tove Lo. She will post her post-breakup depressive episode for you, just as she is thrilled to exclaim that she needs a quick and casual connection. This duality persists on Sunshine Kitty with songs like The Chilled, Tropical Glad He's Gone. The beat swings as she tells her friend jokes and tell the fuck you to fuck the boy. It's an unfiltered, sunny attitude and sound that will lift your spirits like a girlfriend she comforts. After a five-year hiatus and much speculation, Vampire Weekend has finally returned (without founding member Rostam Batmanglij) with their excellent double record of Father Bride. Although the album is full of certified bops that carry you back to the innocent days when you first fell for the band, This Life encapsulates the band in its prime. The song at first listen sounds the resonance of Brown Eyed Girl and has the same acoustic frivolity of Van Morrison's song, though it dances with duality: the kind of baroque melody you'd expect from a vampire weekend while exploring the unfortunate simplicity of a relationship running its course... and life does the same. It's delightful and cynical, witty self-criticism frontman Ezra Koenig does best. While the band may have drilled into fans of the tantrums of mortality and passing time throughout their discography, another truth in this life is that vampire weekends are forever comfort. In the spring of 2017, the Los Angeles-based indie rock band Wallows exploded after sharing their first single, Pleaser. Partly that was because actor Dylan Minnett, who stars in the Buzz-worthy Netflix series 13 Reasons Why, fronts the band and season 1 series just dropped, but also because the 60s guitar tone, surfing rock-influenced band is really good. A group of three childhood friends finally released their first full-length Nothing Happens this year and it was well worth the wait. Are you bored yet? It's a faithful earworm. SoCal has long been influenced by the sounds of the new wave of the 80s and John Hughes's romanticism, all of which Track. His pristine keys and drum machines especially sound, as if the song could have fed the airwaves around '86, and nothing has ever sounded so quintessential to the soundtrack of a high school dance scene than when the bedroom pop singer Clairo duo kicked in. It sweeps you off your feet with synths and violins that feel like moment lights drop in the theater before the penultimate, final big-screen kiss. Even when the song is designed to bring you to earth through radical reality checks, that's what we've been watching when we're little just fiction, cinema as an untouchable, celestial body in itself. Veyes Blood has been an indie/alt favorite act for quite some time, but this is her Oscar score. Kentucky White Reaper probably grew up listening to a lot of Van Halen, the Ramones, and Slim Lizzie, and a lot of other pop rock bands. The band, who called themselves The World's Best American Band with their 2017 album, are imbued with nostalgia for stadium rock music that they somehow make the sound brand new with some kind of sexual filth and tactful fun. This year they refined their sound as if lubricating their engine to really go full steam, making their song maybe the right golden example of the only music deserving of midnight parking hanging. Chicago alt-country band Whitney made a jaw drop on their 2016 debut, and this year's Forever Turned Around was just as easily snug up. Their sound is just so beautiful. Used to be lonely, from a new record, it's fine as well looking at loneliness and how liberating it is once it subsides. At first there is a trace in the voice of drummer/vocalist Julian Ehrlich, as if he are afraid to talk about the end of his lonely existence, but the multi-layered composition grows with horns, piano and guitars, and there is no room for isolation. At the heart of the song is an acoustic guitar that recalls how someone improvised a melody while sitting by a fire before it grows into a full jam-seist. It's as if Whitney wanted to inspire this camaraderie, the togetherness of a few parts the group knows best. It's interesting to imagine how much fun Young Thug has. Between the jet-setting front row at Fashion Weeks around the world, the style icon/rapper beats the studio with Childish Gambino, Travis Scott, and other top-level rappers creating hits in minutes. He promised to share the fun with the rest of us by creating party tracks on his first studio album, So Much Fun - and what he did with Hot (feat. Gunna) . In his signature spot, he raps about knowing how well he got it (all lit, I love when it's hot) and that beat over a snake charmer like enough to exude a life of luxury in listening. If you ever get the opportunity Through the city in a limousine (preferably in slow motion) with champagne popping, make it will be this track. Need help finding something to watch? Sign up here for our weekly Streamail newsletter to get streaming recommendations delivered directly to your inbox. Sadie Bell is an entertainment editorial assistant at Thrillist. She tweets about music in @mssadiebell. @mssadiebell.

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