

# POP FLASH.



It's a strange dichotomy that a period away from a canceled tour that would have seen Taylor Swift creating her very own festival, as well as headlining some of the biggest international events in existence, could, in turn, bring so many people together. And just as it has been for her last four album releases, everyone from day ones to uninvested tourists held an opinion on where the Nashville songwriting great *should* be headed.

You can't get a Swift song cycle without some bemoaning her interest in contemporary pop textures, hoping for a step back closer to her mainstream country roots, despite the fact that her recent turn to outspoken political activism has all but burned that bridge (good riddance, I say). But for her fans, the ones that Swift speaks directly to through endless Easter eggs and social media outreach, there is the understanding that every step she takes is necessary for the journey.

There is never going to be a "back" — an artist like Taylor Swift only knows forward motion. And even with *Folklore*, the most timeless work she's ever created, a turn away from mainstream pop isn't as much of a statement as it is a necessity, reflecting the way the album was created and the times that it was created in.

— Philip Cosores, Uproxx Managing Editor of Music on [Taylor Swift's stunning new album, \*Folklore\*](#).

**NUMBER ONE STUNNERS**



## DABABY + RODDY RICCH

How many more things can I say about DaBaby and Roddy Ricch's monster hit "Rockstar" that I haven't already said in past columns? Quickly becoming this year's dominating hip-hop anthem, the song just hit it's seventh week at the No. 1 slot, though encroaching songs from chart behemoths like DJ Khaled and Drake — combining forces, no less — are looming. As is the impact of Taylor Swift's *Folklore*, an album full of songs that are guaranteed to at least make a dent in the chart. The next two weeks will really show if this track can hold up against serious competition, but something tells me it just might.

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**BUBBLING UNDER**



## ZEPH

She doesn't have a lot of music out yet, but Zeph has already amassed an impressive 300K+ listeners on Spotify, simply because what she has released is so immaculate. "Ways To Go" is beautifully depressing, a song about feeling stuck and trapped in what you're feeling, and therefore a release valve for the depression and stuckness a lot of us are probably experiencing in quarantine. It's the kind of soft, sweet folk-tinged singer-songwriter style that Taylor Swift just dipped her toes into, so if *Folklore* has been hitting the spot for you, her music probably will, too. Zeph — aka [Zephani Jong](#), on Instagram at least — is real about what she's feeling, freeing the rest of us to be honest, too. And if I'm being honest, "Ways To Go" will be on my comfort-songs playlist for the rest of the year, if not longer.

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## REMEMBER WHEN

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY, SOULJA BOY!



Where would pop music be without the influence of the unmistakable, undeniable, unforgettable DeAndre Cortez Way? Better known as Soulja Boy to the millions of fans and listeners all over the world who have tried to crank that, crooned “kiss me through the phoooooone” to their loved one, or simply repeated his vocal tag “soulja boy tell ‘em” to themselves incessantly because it’s so dang catchy. There was a moment in time when detractors wanted to dismiss Soulja as simply another product of the “ringtone rap” era, but the influence of his crooning and his embrace of using the internet to release his music makes him an occasionally unsung icon with reaching impact. And his influence becomes even more unfathomable when you realize he did all that as a teenager. Today, he’s entering a new decade and I’m betting he still has plenty of tricks up his sleeve. Happy 30th birthday Soulja, here’s to so many more.



CRANK THAT

## LOVE LETTERS



## JESSIE WARE

I understand that most of the weekend was probably dedicated to listening to *Folklore* and uncovering the many Easter eggs that Taylor Swift loves to pack into her albums. But, I implore you, once you come up for air, to make sure you don't miss out on the new album that Jessie Ware quietly released at the end of last month. With her smoky, dramatic vocals that sound gorgeous alongside all kinds of production, Ware went even more disco-electric on *What's Your Pleasure* than she ever has before, and the title-track is an addictive late-night jam that is perfect for dance parties at home or solo cruises through the city.

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**Follow the official playlist**

Curated straight from Pop Flash HQ and updated regularly.





A collaboration with Topsify



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