

POP FLASH.



You know her from “Sweet But Psycho,” but Ava Max is so much more than a one-hit-wonder — as proven by her fantastic debut album, *Heaven & Hell*, out last Friday. Max’s debut for Atlantic Records is pure bubblegum-snap maximalism, pop bliss from the heights of love realized and the depths of love lost. And it’s loaded with plenty of sexual innuendos (“Naked”), threatening breakup cliffhangers (“Take You To Hell”), and party-despite-it-all anthems (“Salt”). Then again, not sure a song called “Naked” is an innuendo, but one of the best parts of Ava’s songwriting is just how straightforward it is, she’d much rather get complicated with clicky ‘80s beats and unexpected hooks than lyrical poetry. If you’re looking for a rollercoaster pop album full of breathy, powerhouse vocals and sparkling production, *Heaven & Hell* will be your early fall sermon.

— Caitlin White, Uproxx Pop Critic, on Ava Max’s debut album *Heaven & Hell*

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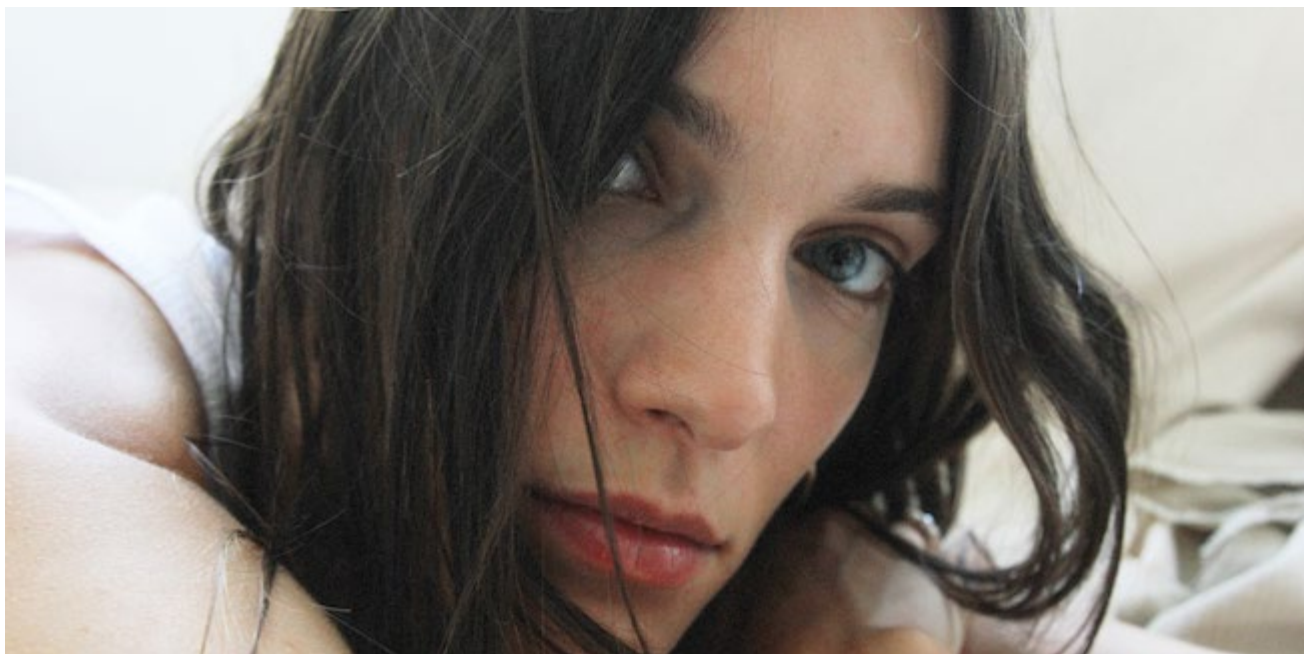


CARDI B + MEGAN THEE STALLION

Yes it's true, BTS had a monumental month with the blockbuster hit "Dynamite." But even all that Korean pop firepower couldn't keep Cardi B's drip from engulfing every other song on the chart. "WAP" is back on top this week, with Megan Thee Stallion and Cardi more than ecstatic that they regained the throne. It might be September, but "WAP" is easily the song of the summer-into-fall, an empowering, ball-busting strut, a celebration of all things female, and a banger that won't be kept down, no matter what.

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BUBBLING UNDER



CHARLOTTE CARDIN

Montreal has been a hot spot for musical talent for a while now, what with the Pop Montreal festival and a rich history via the Montreal Jazz Festival. Charlotte Cardin is more pop than jazz, but she manages to incorporate quite a bit of funk and thrill into her new single, “Passive Aggressive,” a sendup of a bad lover who couldn’t communicate with force, whether it was positive or negative. Luckily, Cardin’s joy at getting out from under her former wet blanket beau translates into a smeary, sexy track that channels early ‘90s emotionalism like The Corrs with layered vocals and wordless riffs that say more than any charged up kiss-off ever could. Consider this Cardin’s take on Beyonce’s “Best I Never Had.” If you like what you’re hearing, look out for her full debut album, *Phoenix*, dropping in February of next year.

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REMEMBER WHEN

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, HILARY DUFF!



Though she hasn't put out an album for about five years, I have a feeling Hilary Duff is about to make a comeback. She's celebrating her 32nd birthday on September 28, and though the child star has been focused on a family of her own — and getting remarried to fellow musician Matthew Koma, who she reportedly met while working on her last album — Duff is due for the millennial-pop-revival that Miley Cyrus has been trying to execute. Now that her young fans are also in their mid-thirties, it's time for a grown and sexy pop album that reestablishes her as the musical force she is. What could be a better birthday present than getting back in the studio? I mean, if the cover of Third Eye Blind that she and Koma did for RAC's latest album is any indication, more collabs with her new partner could be a great jumping-off point.

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LOVE LETTERS



REMI WOLF

Remi Wolf's kiss-off earworm "Monte Carlo" was already blaring nonstop from my car radio on every late-night drive, but a recent remix from Tune-Yards made the inescapable pop-trap hit even more weird, glitchy, and unexpected. If you're a fan of fuzzy pop and sing-song hooks anchored with falsetto, autotuned moments and eerie beats, then "Monte Carlo" is for you. It's a song that feels like it shouldn't quite work, and at first doesn't seem that serious, but wait until you wake up with random snippets of the nonsense lyrics circling your head. This track is an epic in the making, just give it a few more weeks to rev up — and the remix will get even more ears on it than before.

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