

# POP FLASH.



In the beginning, there was “Video Games,” a pastiche of internet loneliness, longing, and fulfillment that all but turned Lana Del Rey into a star on the spot. As good as it was, even her first-ever song came loaded with controversy; after it went viral, Lana was [sued for using footage she found on YouTube but never had the rights to](#). And that wasn’t even the only controversy surrounding her debut track, the song also kicked off what would be a years-long label as an “anti-feminist” star in a climate when gender politics was suddenly everywhere in pop music.

Signed by Interscope Records but somehow saddled with an “indie” label through [a warm up show at DIY Brooklyn venue Glasslands](#) and an insane amount of sexist critical attention, Lana’s early career was a constant battle between authenticity and the glamorized fame of the “pop” world — so much so that [Spin magazine addressed the rumors in a three-part “deconstructing” essay](#) defending her artistic independence.

Now, more than six albums in, it’s become crystal clear nobody is running the show but Lana. And the metamorphosis from Lizzy Grant into one of the most vocal, controversial, beleaguered, and beloved songwriters in the pop world has been a bumpy one. Most recently, Lana has made headlines for comments about the artwork for her forthcoming record, *Chemtrails Over The Country Club*, but let’s face it — she’s always been embroiled in disputes and disagreements with how the media has portrayed her. Here’s a look at some of the incidents she’s dealt with over the course of the last decade, leading up to this week’s [political squabbles](#) and [magazine clapbacks](#).

— *Caitlin White, Uproxx Pop Critic, on Lana Del Rey’s endless [brushes with controversy](#)*

## NUMBER ONE STUNNERS



### OLIVIA RODRIGO

Wow, what a way to kick off the year — Olivia Rodrigo came in guns blazing, tears streaming, and other drivers clearing a path in her wake. "Drivers License" is the No. 1 song on the *Billboard* chart this week, which is seemingly the least important distinction it has earned since dropping on January 8th. It has [broken Spotify records](#) and completely floored the app with its performance, surpassing any and all expectations they have for new artists and [first day numbers](#) in the process. This is a windows-down torch song for the TikTok generation, that will get remade in their image a million times over before Olivia has even released her first EP. Congratulations to a new icon in the making, we're literally all rooting for you because having a pop culture moment that even comes close to eclipsing the current political terror is a bipartisan victory for everyone.

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## BUBBLING UNDER



## JAZMINE SULLIVAN

Jazmine Sullivan is doing more than bubbling under on her latest album *Heaux Tales*, she's bubbling up and shows no signs of slowing the simmer. One of the record's standout tracks "Pick Up Your Feelings" is the kind of kiss-off that inspires girls and boys alike to hit the brakes on that toxic relationship in their lives. While lots of breakups — and the songs narrating them — involve some sort of exchange of stuff (see: "Irreplaceable" for a classic example), Sullivan instructs her former lover to come get their emotions, too. The metaphor isn't lost on us, and the mix of sadness and confidence is a perfect antidote to January's sudden, sharp apathy. It feels good to feel, it feels even better to get that sh\*t gone.

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**REMEMBER WHEN**

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY, "7 RINGS"!



Wanna feel old? Ariana Grande's "7 Rings" is not celebrating its one year anniversary but its *two year anniversary* of being in the world as a lightning rod for conversations about hip-hop, appropriation, and pop music's place in the rap world. On January 17, 2019, Ari dropped the most rap-centric song she's ever done, and ignited a whole conversation that led to a quick remix with 2 Chainz — she thought the pink trap house used in her video was a clear homage to him, he thought it was a bit too close for comfort. Still, her speedy response and realization led to a new type of pivot when it comes to the conversation of pop stars in hip-hop, the idea that sharing the wealth is a far better outcome than cancelation that is never going to benefit anyone.

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**LOVE LETTERS**





## LANA DEL REY

Unfortunately, no matter how much Lana sticks her foot in her mouth when it comes to politics, socioeconomic policies, and her constant need to assert she's a victim in the music industry — even though she definitely *isn't* — when it comes to the music, she always delivers. The title track off her new album, "Chemtrails Over The Country Club," is so good it made fans who are irritated with her most recent tone-deaf faux pas invoke the "[punched wall](#)" meme from the 2019 film *Marriage Story*. Eerie, dreamy, and slightly tongue-in-cheek, it's the quintessential LDR comeback tune. "I'm not unhinged or unhappy, I'm just wild," she sings. God only knows where she'll go from here, but her moon in Leo will never stop looming.

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