

# POP LIFE.



With the world in a near-constant state of chaos, the appeal of shimmering, joyful pop music is stronger than ever. It might not necessarily change the reality of our sometimes dark news cycles, or the bouts of anxiety plenty of us are facing, but music has always worked best as a wonderful balm. And, at the moment, no one is offering a stronger antidote for the pain than women in pop music. Even when they're singing and writing about difficult things, these are the artists who are making the world a better place with their voices.

— *Uproxx* pop critic Caitlin White on [the female pop stars poised to break out in 2022](#)

## NUMBER ONE STUNNERS



## ADELE

Life's easy, when you're Adele. Even when the singer is detailing yet another heartbreaking, grief-inducing tale of love gone wrong, she's always doing it with the most poise of anyone. Her leadoff single "Easy On Me," from the upcoming album *30*, remains at the top slot on the charts for the third week in a row. During its debut week, the song was No. 1 by a landslide, and remains the biggest song on the planet even after everyone has had plenty of time to hear it, not once, not twice, but at least three times. This is grocery store pop, and it's not slowing down anytime soon. Songs that simultaneously appeal to grandmas, moms, babies, *and* your pastor? Well, that's a skill not even Drake can compete with. Adele will likely be reigning over the charts for the rest of the year, so get your ballad emotions ready.

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## BUBBLING UNDER



## LAUREN JAUREGUI

If you were a Fifth Harmony fan, then all the solo material currently being released by the group's former members is a balm. And though it isn't as viral as Normani's "Wild Side" collaboration with Cardi B, nor as Latin pop and hip-hop heavy as Camila Cabello's offerings, Lauren Jauregui's debut solo project *Prelude* is not one to miss. On the brief, seven-song EP, which Lauren is releasing independently, she flexes her incredible vocals and leans into rap features of her own with help from 6lack and Vic Mensa. Still, even with those guest features, the overall tone of the project is restrained, orchestral pop. On *Prelude*, Jauregui has created a world all her own, which is all any fan could ask from her.

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Benson Boone  
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**REMEMBER WHEN**

**SELENA GOMEZ — 'STARS DANCE'**



After the endless back and forth between Justin Beiber and Selena Gomez, it was beginning to seem like the two exes might never fully get over each other. That is, until seven years ago when Gomez nailed just how toxic the dynamic was for the two teen stars with "The Heart Wants What It Wants." Back in 2014, Selena wasn't really seen as an adult pop star who could carry a career past her Selena Gomez And The Scene days or the lackluster performance of *Stars Dance*, but this song was part of what turned the critical tide on her music. Delivering a heartbreaking live performance of the track at the AMAs that year, this was also the first step for Selena when it came to separating her identity from the fan-adored "Jelena." A year later, she'd set the record straight with *Revival*, and take her place as one of the best modern pop stars of her generation.

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**LOVE LETTERS**





## CHARLI XCX

Pretty much every time Charli XCX releases a new song, it's going to end up in this column. When she released a single that features fellow left-field pop songwriter/producers Christine and the Queens and Caroline Polachek? Well, ladies and gentlemen, that's a shoo-in. "New Shapes" is an '80s retro kiss-off that turns Blood-Orange-circa-*Cupid-Deluxe*-synths into the backdrop for an anti-love song that's still spiked with longing. Come for the almost abrasive, always defiant Charli hook, stay for the incredible vocal runs from do-or-die dramatist Caroline Polachek. This slots very well next to "Good Ones," and bodes even better for Charli's next massive record.

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