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**POP
LIFE.**



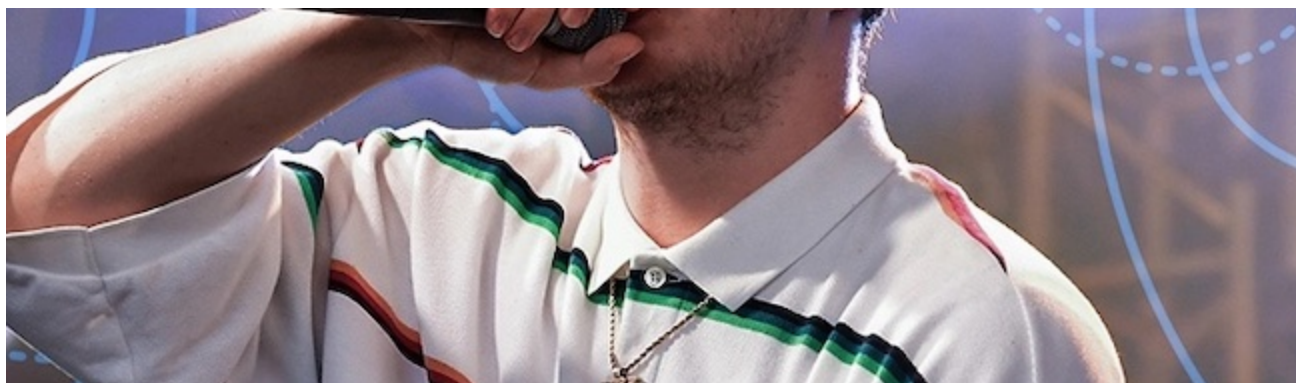
You'll find tracks that creep into the seven- or eight-minute range on Ethel Cain's debut album, *Preacher's Daughter*. Muted sermon soundbites, the thick buzz of bees or the incessant hum of flies, and her own languid vocals build out worlds of sound that are so dreamy and dark they remind casual listeners of Lana Del Rey. But even if Cain's singing style is languorous like Lana, a deeper excavation of her lyrics — and Cain's own backstory — will help newcomers understand the comparison stops there. Perhaps what connects the two women is an insistence that pop can sound however they want it to; if they build a sound and stick to it, listeners will fall in line. And on those terms, Lana is a logical precursor for the rise of Cain's sprawling sound.

Growing up in the rural town of Perry, Florida as the oldest of four, Cain's born-again Christian background included homeschooling and threats of hell when she began to vocalize her queerness. After surviving her teen years, in part thanks to internet portals like Twitter and Tumblr, Cain formally came out as transgender at the age of 20, changing her name to Hayden Silas Anhedönia and landing on the persona of Ethel Cain shortly after. "I love overkill — I'm nothing if not dramatic," Cain told *The New York Times*, which recently published a freewheeling profile that collects the artist's personal life data into a cohesive narrative for the first time. "It's over-the-top American melodrama, it's *Thelma & Louise* and the most ridiculous, psychotic, psychedelic things."

— Caitlin White, *Ethel Cain Deftly Builds Pop Songs Out Of Fire And Brimstone On The Sprawling 'Preachers Daughter'*

NUMBER ONE STUNNERS





JACK HARLOW

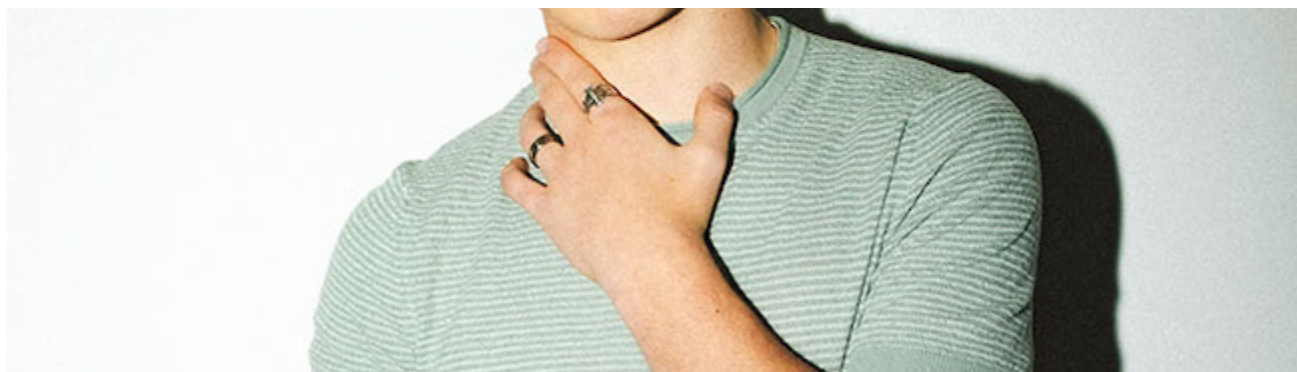
It's only been about two years since Jack Harlow's viral hit "Whats Poppin" earned him international attention and a spot on *XXL*'s Freshman Class roster. Since then, the rapper has time and time again proven commitment to his craft, releasing two albums alone in 2020 and climbing to the top of the charts with his Lil Nas X collaboration "Industry Baby." Now, his hit track "First Class" represents Harlow's status as a certified star, acting as his first solo track to hit No. 1 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart.

It's already been a few weeks since the arrival of Harlow's latest album, *Come Home The Kids Miss You*, and "First Class" still strikes a chord with listeners. Continuing his reign at No. 1, it's now the third week the song has topped the charts — and it's clear why. Not only does it feature a catchy refrain tailor-made for TikTok, but it acts as a way to showcase the rapper's witty flow and low, rich vocal delivery.

LISTEN

BUBBLING UNDER





BENSON BOONE

If you're one of the 7 million viewers still tuning into *American Idol*, you may recognize the name Benson Boone. The 18-year-old teen heartthrob auditioned for the show, won a golden ticket to Hollywood, and was told by judge Katy Perry he could "win it all." But instead of competing on *American Idol*, Boone instead decided to kickstart his music career himself.

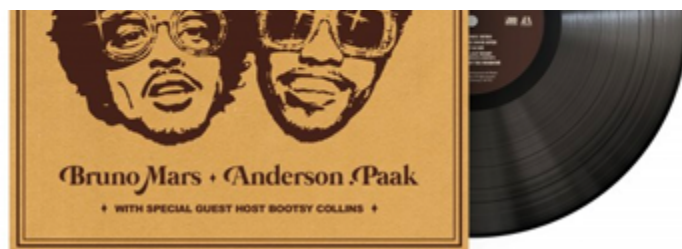
After leaning on his steadily increasing TikTok audience (he now has nearly 3 million followers) and linking up in the studio with Imagine Dragons singer Dan Renyolds, Boone went viral with his debut 2022 single "Ghost Town." His latest single, "In The Stars" is his version of a somber piano ballad. Leaving room for his stunning vocals to shine, Boone sings a mournful reflection on life and loss

[LISTEN](#)

CHECK OUT

SILK SONIC — 'AN EVENING WITH SILK SONIC' (WEBSTORE EXCLUSIVE)





Silk Sonic's debut album *An Evening With Silk Sonic* may have dropped last fall, but it's undoubtedly the perfect summertime record. Including their smash-hit songs "Leave The Door Open" and "Smokin Out The Window," this exclusive vinyl features an insert with a gold velvety finish and also includes the bonus track "Love's Train."

PICK IT UP

REMEMBER WHEN

R.I.P. DONNA SUMMER



This week in 2012, the pop world lost the musical legend Donna Summer. The iconic singer first rose to fame in the '70s, later becoming known as the "Queen Of Disco," as her music and soaring vocals helped define the era of music.

Throughout her career, Summer landed an impressive total of 42 songs

on the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart and she was the first-ever artist to have three consecutive double albums to top *Billboard* 200 chart. At the time of her death, Summer had been awarded five Grammys and sold over 100 million records worldwide, making her one of the best-selling music artists of all time.

LISTEN

LOVE LETTERS



HARRY STYLES

This week, pop music discourse was (rightfully) dominated by Harry Styles' third studio album, *Harry's House*. Previewed by just one official single, the energetic TikTok hit "As It Was," *Harry's House* sees the former One Directioner leaning into disco-infused ballads. Flowing between tender, acoustic guitar-driven tunes like "Matilda" and "Boyfriends" to sprawling synth-led bops like "Cinema" and "Daydreaming," *Harry's House* puts Styles' versatile songwriting on full display.

To build anticipation for his *Fine Line* follow-up, the revered pop star

got creative with his marketing. Addresses began appearing, pointing to exclusive pop-up shops in major cities in countries around the world, prompting Styles fans to line up for hours for a chance to get their hands on exclusive merch.

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