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10 New Country Artists You Need to Know: January 2017

From a country-pop singer for the Snapchat generation to a heartland rocker with Texas cred

Sounds Like: Carly Rae Jepsen with a twang: "Call Me Maybe, Y'all."

For Fans of: Taylor Swift, when she was still country; a Sam Hunt "House Party" where the kegs are filled with cola, not Coors

Why You Should Pay Attention: Hailing from coastal Washington State, 18-year-old Bailey Bryan got her start singing in front of the local taco stand and using songwriting as an extension of her own teenage diary. She signed a publishing deal at only 15, moving to Nashville a few years later, though her breakthrough hit, "Own It," was born back in high school, when she was recovering from spinal surgery and wanted a reminder to embrace her quirks and imperfections. Although she shouts out Patsy Cline in the tune, she's as far from throwback as can be: this is country for the Snapchat generation, so lonesome they could [sadface emoji]. Luckily, Bryan's a whip-smart lyricist with a good grasp on how to capture emotion both melodically and online – enough so that Lady Antebellum's Hillary Scott nominated her as a Grammy Artist of Tomorrow.

She Says: As a young female artist in Nashville with pop sensibilities, you're bound to be compared to Taylor Swift. Bryan's fine with that. "It's definitely one of those things, like, 'Are you are saying that because I am an 18-year-old and I write songs?' But she is totally an influence of mine, and it's one of the best people you can be compared to," she says. "But I am also really passionate about hip-hop – Chance the Rapper and Drake are some of my biggest influences. I appreciate hip-hop because it's another genre where really honest storytelling happens."

Hear for Yourself: "I break things like hearts and iPhones," she sings on "Own It," her earworm of a debut single that's as motivational as it is zeitgeisty, with a music video filmed vertically – perfect for viewing on mobile platforms. M.M.



