

AND THE SONG OF THE SUMMER WILL BE... THE ONE ABOUT TAKING A KNIFE TO THE HEART. YOU HEARD US.

RIHANNA
1 "TAKE A BOW"
 The reigning queen of the summer hopes to take the crown again, basically the same way she did last year. Like "Umbrella," "Take a Bow" has a big hook, an easy-to-understand central metaphor, and Rihanna's smooth voice. But is it the ear worm its predecessor was?

LEONA LEWIS
2 "BLEEDING LOVE"
 The undeniable chorus of this Simon Cowell protégée's debut single loudly and memorably declares, "You cut me open and I / Keep bleeding / Keep, keep bleeding love." It's the most romantic song ever about being stabbed.

LIL WAYNE
3 "LOLLIPOP"
 His sharp wit and innumerable mix-tape releases have already made him the blogosphere's most-revered emcee, but can he connect with pop audiences? This unsubtle oral-sex anthem sticks to the shallow end of his lyrical potential, which should make it even more inescapable.

USHER
4 "LOVE IN THIS CLUB"
 The award for Most Likely to Be Heard in a Club unquestionably belongs to this synth-addled paean to VIP-section coitus, whose chorus is as infectious as it is inadvisable.

COLDPLAY
5 "VIOLET HILL"
 According to reports, the sales of Coldplay's *Viva La Vida* could make or

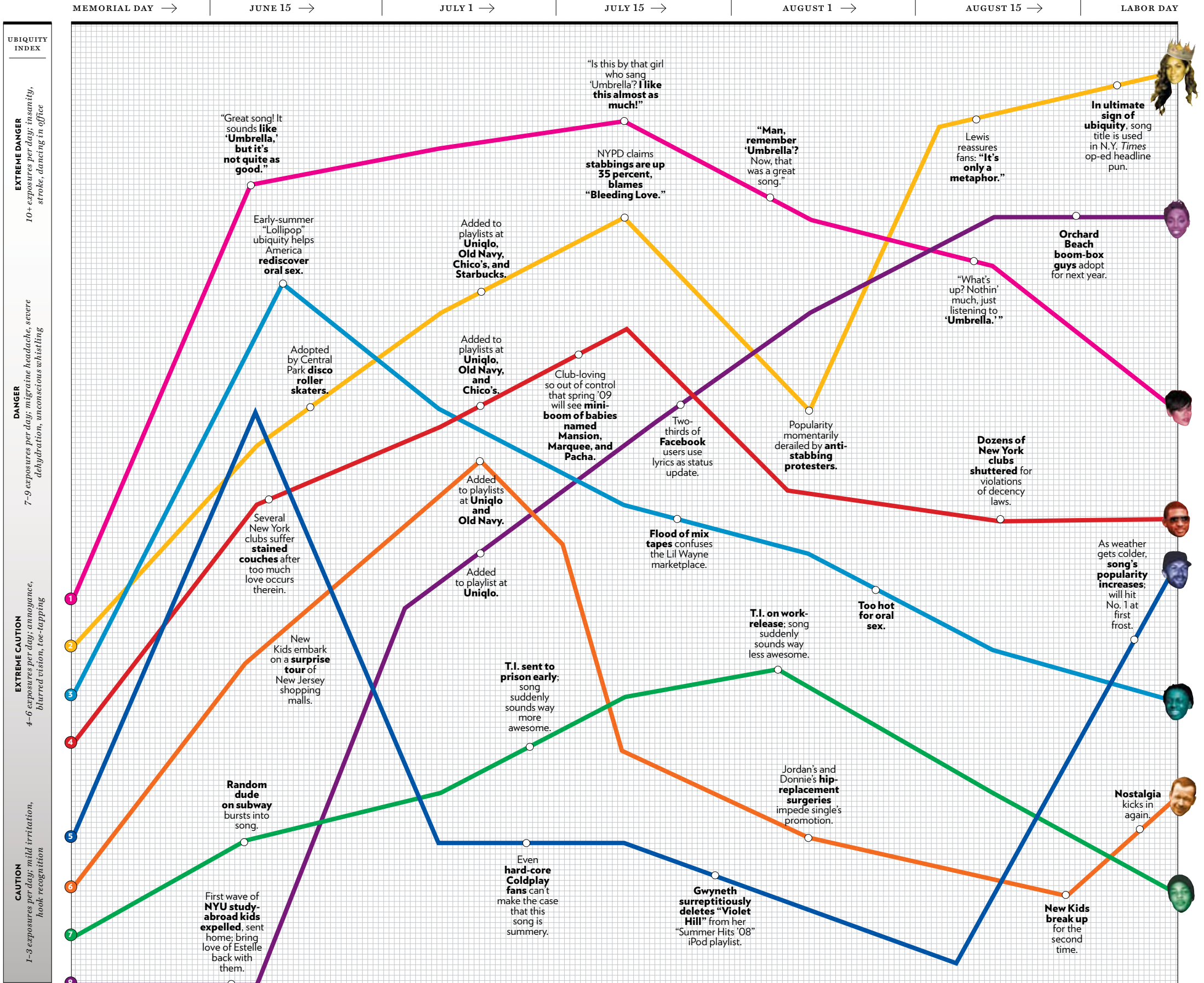
break its label, the hit-starved EMI—so it's imperative that the album's lead single perform well. Did we mention it's an angsty, experimental departure from the band's typical weepy, romantic piano balladry and features a barely discernible chorus?

NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK
6 "SUMMERTIME"
 Back after fifteen years on the shelf, these grizzled teen-pop prototypes hope to reenergize their original fan base—the people for whom the Jonas Brothers could never fill the void—with a summery, hook-filled track not much different from their late-eighties greatest hits.

T.I.
7 "NO MATTER WHAT"
 The promotion for Clifford Harris's new album, *Paper Trail*, might be complicated, slightly, by his impending yearlong prison sentence for a federal weapons conviction. Good thing this track—a catchy, slow-burning self-affirmation—pretty much sells itself.

ESTELLE
8 "AMERICAN BOY"
 Over a breezy keyboard line, Estelle—a saner, London-based Lauryn Hill—coolly convinces the titular Yankee (played by a half-singing Kanye West) that she's interested in more than just his weak U.S. dollars. It's a smash in Britain, but can it jump the pond? Man, we hope so.

LANE BROWN AND DAN KOIS OF VULTURE



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