

Minnesota Now (MPR) | Minnesota Now What's new in the Minnesota music scene? We asked 'The Local Show' host Diane Miller 01GWMW064Q2485K7TZ6VECXJZN

CATHY Well, you already know that we love music around here, especially music by Minnesota artists. And who better to
WURZER: talk about Minnesota musicians than Diane Miller. She's the host of a show called *The Local Show* on our sister station, The Current. And she spoke with our producer Melissa Townsend, and they started off with-- what else? Playing some music.

[BER, "YOUR INTERNET SUCKS"]

(SINGING) Hey, I know it's been nine months since we've spoken. It's not like I've been leaving the door open. But I'm sat here hoping that you're awake. Hey.

MELISSA Hey, Diane. Welcome to *Minnesota Now*.

TOWNSEND:

DIANE MILLER: Hey, thanks for having me.

MELISSA Oh, it's totally a pleasure to have you here. So that track we just played at the start was called "Your Internet

TOWNSEND: Sucks" by the artist Ber. Is that how you say it?

DIANE MILLER: Ber.

MELISSA Ber. Got it, B-E-R, Ber. So I understand she's had a fast track to stardom. Tell me about that.

TOWNSEND:

DIANE MILLER: She is absolutely crushing it, not even locally, but nationally. She's been performing all over the United States. And people are singing along to her songs because they're so well-written, and they really reach people's collective souls. I feel like there's so much you can relate to. And especially, she writes about heartbreak and relationships.

And this song in particular, "Your Internet Sucks," is such a burden to her ex. I think a lot of us who have ever been through something like that are kind of all bumping our fists in the air like, yeah!

MELISSA You go!

TOWNSEND:

DIANE MILLER: Yeah.

MELISSA But where is she from originally?

TOWNSEND:

DIANE MILLER: She's actually from Bemidji, Minnesota.

MELISSA Nice.

TOWNSEND:

DIANE MILLER: So yeah, the woody areas of Minnesota. And she's just been busy touring, and she's got a sold out show coming up at 7th St. Entry on Friday. But I think there might be tickets to her show the next day, opening for Lissie, who's based out of Iowa, who's also a really talented songwriter. And that's happening at Women's Club on April 1.

MELISSA Oh, that's great. So I know you have a lot of music for us today. Let's listen to another track.

TOWNSEND:

(SINGING) Sounds of blackness, y'all. Millennial.

The blackness. The blackness.

Come on, y'all.

Never say die. Hashtag you're gonna win. Come on.

Whoo!

When you feel like you're just scared--

MELISSA I just want to listen to this whole song. Let's not talk. Let's just listen.

TOWNSEND:

DIANE MILLER: They're great.

MELISSA So who is this?

TOWNSEND:

DIANE MILLER: This is Sounds of Blackness, who have been from the St. Paul, Minneapolis, Twin Cities area for 51 years. They're a legacy artist.

MELISSA Holy.

TOWNSEND:

DIANE MILLER: If you're familiar with Sounds of Blackness, one of their biggest hits was from 1991. It was called "Optimistic," and this song, "You're Going to Win"-- hashtag, "You're Going to Win," is kind of a reflection of "Optimistic." It has the same, like, feel-good, kick-your-boots-off and just have a feeling of hope and optimism, even despite all the setbacks we've had within the past how many years. And it was written by Jamecia Bennett, who was the lead vocalist of Sounds of Blackness. And Jamecia Bennett is the daughter of Paris Bennett, who was one of the original members of Sounds of Blackness.

They're an ensemble, a massive ensemble. If you keep listening to the track of vocalists, rich harmonies, and then also amazing, amazing instrumentalists. So yeah, Sounds of Blackness are absolutely legends of Minnesota, and I love it. Their new track is such a good feel-good track. In these times of just so much setback and PTSD, I want to read a quote that Jamecia Bennett, who wrote this song, said about the song.

She said, schools and workplaces are experiencing chronic absenteeism across the nation, as both children and adults struggle to cope with PTSD and the loss of faith in our leaders. People need to know, especially the young people, that their voices matter and that they are capable of greatness. Like, yes, so they're a group definitely dedicated to the sound of Blackness. So not just gospel, not just R&B, not just soul. Jazz, it's like the roots of mother Africa, basically, and bringing it to everybody. And roots music and the music of mother Africa is so important to the history of music in America, and they absolutely encapsulate that.

MELISSA Well, here, the much beloved Hippo Campus has new music out. Let's hear a little track from them.

TOWNSEND:

DIANE MILLER: Yeah.

[MUSIC - HIPPO CAMPUS, "KICK IN THE TEETH"]

- (SINGING) My neighbor Tommy bought a six pack. He's on his porch and really throwing 'em back. Says he'll get rich soon as his mom dies. Says falling in love ain't really worth his time. Think I need a little more than what he's asking for--

MELISSA Yeah, that's a whole different thing.

TOWNSEND:

[LAUGHTER]

DIANE MILLER: Yeah, it is!

MELISSA What's going on with them? Tell us about that track.

TOWNSEND:

DIANE MILLER: Well, Hippo Campus is just another really popular group from Minnesota. They're known across the nation as well, and they're all such talented musicians. But Jake Luppen, the lead vocalist, is also such a talented songwriter. And they've been known as a very explorative indie rock group, but their latest single, "Kick in the Teeth," explores a little bit more of this alternative country vibe, which is kind of cool.

MELISSA Yeah.

TOWNSEND:

DIANE MILLER: Yeah, and that's kind of one of the reasons why I think they're so respected in the scene is they really push boundaries of their sonic elements, and are continuously putting out new music. They just released a new album this past year. It's called "LP3." They sold out the armory, which is an 8,000 cap venue. They put on a wild live show, so they're just one of those bands that is so fun to see and so riveting to see live, but then the recorded music is also so good. And they're doing so well right now that they're headlining Red Rocks in Colorado on May 2.

MELISSA Wow. That's a big deal.

TOWNSEND:

DIANE MILLER: Huge deal. Yeah, one of the most coveted venues to see in the United States to see a live act.

MELISSA Oh, wow.

TOWNSEND:

DIANE MILLER: And they're also going to be at Bayfront Festival Park, which is in Duluth, and that's going to be on June 24. And that also includes other local artists, Milo and Papa Mbye, so something to look forward to.

MELISSA Great, so as people begin their summer concert plans, better pay attention to that one.

TOWNSEND:

DIANE MILLER: Absolutely.

MELISSA Another track, there's also new music from local band Kiss the Tiger. Should we hear a little bit of that?

TOWNSEND:

DIANE MILLER: Yeah

[MUSIC - KISS THE TIGER, "THERE YOU ARE (BEAUTIFUL)"]

- (SINGING) I sit and watch TV while the rest you hear--

MELISSA Nice. Yeah, a little bop. I'm moving. Moving. [CHUCKLES] Tell me about them.

TOWNSEND:

DIANE MILLER: Kiss the Tiger is more of a band that has a real, real, rich following locally, especially in the Twin Cities. If you're in the know of the Minnesota Twin Cities music scene, you know about Kiss the Tiger. They're not as well known nationally yet, but they're so good, especially, I think they've developed a fan base, because of the live shows they put on.

And especially, like, the lead singer, Meghan Kreidler, is such a performer. She'll dance around stage, and she has an endless amount of energy. And just she's also a theater major in college. She went to the U of M, has acted at the Guthrie Theater performing Shakespeare. Like, she's just so talented, and they, of course, write really great rock and roll music. So that's what they do really well-- that are really heavily song-based music that you can sing along to, music that you can feel in your chest when they're out performing, or seeing them live at whatever venue, whether it's First Avenue's main stage. They've performed opening for bands like The Suburbs.

They've also, a couple of years ago, or at the Minnesota State Fair grandstand opening for Lake Street Dive, that single, "There You Are (Beautiful)," is just going to be a preview of more music to come from them.

MELISSA All right, we just have a minute left. You've got news on another upcoming show.

TOWNSEND:

DIANE MILLER: Yeah. Another upcoming show is going to be with an artist called Lamar, and he wrote a new song called "Home to My Baby." And he's performing on April 7 at Icehouse for a single release show for this song in particular called "Home to My Baby."

[MUSIC - LAMAR - "HOME TO MY BABY"]

- (SINGING) I was driving real slow down a one-way street, with the needle on empty, trying to make ends meet--

MELISSA That's "Home to My Baby," by Lamar and this is Diane Miller from the local show. Diane, it has been such a
TOWNSEND: pleasure to hang out with you.

DIANE MILLER: Same. All the feels.

MELISSA Now tell us about your show real quick. Plug "The Local Show."

TOWNSEND:

DIANE MILLER: Please. Yeah, "The Local Show" airs from 6 to 8 PM every Sunday on The Current 89.3. You can stream it at thecurrent.org. All my programs get archived to thecurrent.org, so if you go to the Currents menu and check out programs, and then click on "The Local Show," you can listen to any of my archived programs that have been part of The Current for almost two years now. Following in the footsteps of the great Andrea Swensen.

MELISSA Beautiful. All right, thanks a lot.

TOWNSEND:

DIANE MILLER: Pleasure, thanks.

MELISSA That's Diane Miller, and she said you can hear her every week on our sister station, The Current. She hosts "The
TOWNSEND: Local Show," airing from 6 to 8 PM on Sunday. You can find it online at thecurrent.org. By the way, arts programming like this interview on MPR News is made possible in part by the Minnesota Legacy Amendments Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.