



*summer*  
**HOT LIST**  
20 POP CULTURE  
musts of the season

Fashion Crowd Favourite:  
**JANELLE MONÁE**

It's easy to see why Karl Lagerfeld fell in love with 25-year-old Janelle Monáe, calling her "gifted" when they met backstage at one of her concerts. The singer-songwriter has an intense presence that echoes the Kaiser's own magisterial persona.

Clad in her trademark black and white and sporting a balloon-shaped pompadour during her recent gig at Canadian Music Week in Toronto, the petite 5'3" star is serious when chatting about her personal style. "It's a transcendent look," she says of her mostly black-and-white wardrobe before launching into her own Lagerfeldian love of luxe tuxes. "[Wearing them] allows me to bring out all the colours in my mind, my imagination and my music. There's power in simplicity... you can go anywhere in a tuxedo—whether it's 1954 or 2719—and never feel expired."

When it comes to her music, the Kansas City-born talent remains just as sharp. "Music is my weapon," she says. Indeed, the funk-laden tracks on her album *The ArchAndroid* are lethally good. "Songs can help you fight off feelings of inequality or oppression," she says. "I want my music to be the choice drug for people who have ever felt oppressed and depressed or those who just need some self-empowerment." In other words, expect Monáe's brilliant battle cries to score in clubs and on catwalks for years to come. —Elio Iannacci