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tegan+sara

The sexy duo on romance,
fame and their unbreakable bond



TEGAN AND SARA COME
CLEAN ON ROMANCE RUMORS,
HOW THEY STILL GET ALONG
AND WHAT'S ON THEIR
MYSTERIOUS NEW ALBUM.

WORKING GIRLS

BY JANELLE SORENSON AND MELANY JOY BECK

TEGAN AND SARA ARE OFTEN REFERRED TO AS THE DARLINGS OF INDIE MUSIC. BURSTING ONTO THE SCENE IN 1998 AS EAGER TEEN ROCKERS, THE CANADIAN DUO HAVE BLOSSOMED INTO HIGHLY ACCLAIMED LYRICAL MUSICIANS. WITH SEVEN ALBUMS UNDER THEIR COLLECTIVE BELT AND POISED FOR NUMBER EIGHT, TEGAN AND SARA NOW CONTEMPLATE MOVING IN THE DIRECTION OF UNDENIABLE GREATNESS.

"I wake up in the middle of the night with my jaw clenched and my teeth aching from stress and anxiety," says Tegan Quin, on the hotly anticipated follow-up to their 2009 record, *Sainthood*. "We have 35 songs written and we're just going to kind of wing it and see what comes from that. Thematically, we've been challenging ourselves not to write so much about relationships and love, but maybe change the perspectives we're writing from."

Tegan and Sara's hard work culminated last November in *Get Along*, a series of three films accompanied by a live album. The ambitious project acted as a veritable capstone to their 13 years of music making. Their next step, however, has the two at a crossroads as they prepare to make the final transition from the teenage indie rockers we know and love to full-fledged pop stars.

After a slew of collaborations, with various artists from Theophilus London to DJ Tiesto to Morgan Page, the

upcoming album promises to be a departure from the sound Tegan and Sara fans have come to expect.

"I don't want this record to feel like anything we've ever done before," says Sara Quin. "I think stylistically each album has changed, but I want this to be the biggest leap. We're making a high-fidelity record with a pop sensibility. We want

to push the envelope, to keep ourselves interested, and to help grow our audience."

"It's a pretty diverse, pretty schizophrenic group of songs," Tegan agrees. "I'm not really sure what we're doing."

After using familiar names like Howard Redekopp (The New Pornographers) and Chris Walla (Death Cab for Cutie) on *The Con* and *Sainthood*, the duo are looking outside their inner circle to find a new producer for the project. "What we're really trying to do is make an undeniably great record," says Tegan. "Is it going to sound like a Tegan and Sara record? Of course," she laughs. "We're still in the band."

"I've forced myself to write some pop songs, some dance songs, and to not be overly precious about lyrics," Sara says, reflecting on the process of preparing new material for the studio. "I've done anthemic, obvious melodies. I've forced myself to write songs that are longer than two





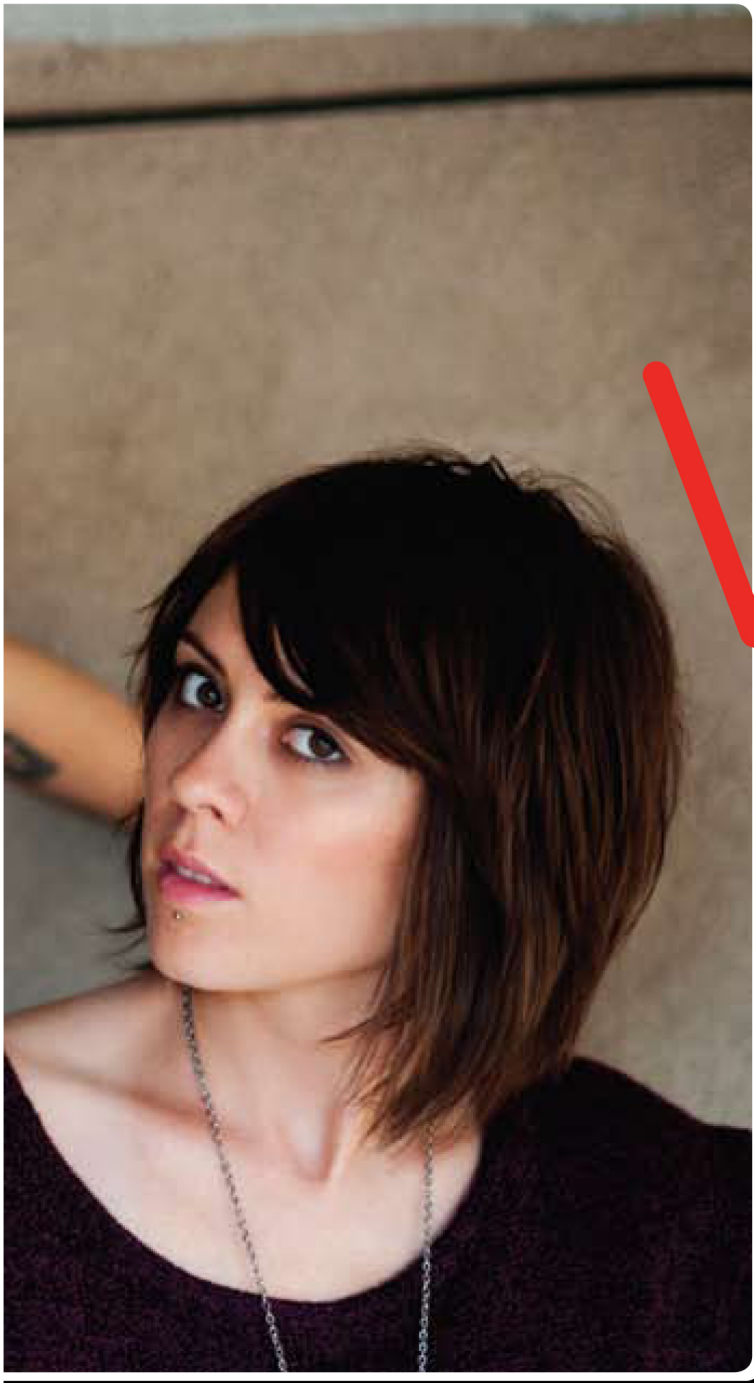
minutes, and songs that make me uncomfortable.”

Both Tegan and Sara are excited about the idea of expanding their empire while relishing the comfort of hitting a more stable phase in their 13-year career. “I live in a grown-up house,” says Sara. “And I swear to God I have arthritis in my wrists. I’m old. I’m an adult lady,” she says, in contrast to the perception of fans and critics alike that the two are still just a couple of angsty teens. “It’s the idea that we’re living in a constant state of emotional distress, and in reality our life is about business and traveling and paying bills and making sure the people who work for us have health insurance,” Sara says. “If you want to imagine me and Tegan in teenage bedrooms, with music posters and crying, then go for it. We did that... when we were 17.”

Gone as well are the days of pining over girls. Both Quin sisters are now happily partnered. “I’ve been with the same person for three and a half years,” Tegan says. “Most people know that I’m dating Lindsey Byrnes, who is the photographer that takes all of our photos.”

Tegan admits that her early relationship with Byrnes was the inspiration for some of the most emotionally fraught material on their record *The Con*. “It’s her fault I can’t write sad songs [anymore],” jokes Tegan, on finding love with Lindsey. “But it’s also her fault I wrote all of those sad songs.”

Despite wild speculation, Sara continues to play it cool, keeping the true identity of her ladylove a secret. At least for now. “Something that’s happened to me in the past is that I dated Emy Storey [Tegan and Sara’s longtime



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creative director], and it was such a public relationship. People came to expect that when the next person came along she'd be in all of the videos and she'd be there with me [as well]."

Though several celebrity gossip blogs have identified Sara's girlfriend as MTV talent coordinator Stacy Reader, the quieter Quin neither confirms nor denies the rumors, only saying that her current partner "is a more behind-the-scenes kind of gal. She is a grown adult woman with a life, and I'm sure she appreciates her anonymity and privacy to remain intact," adding, "I don't expect she'll be a public figure anytime soon."

In an increasingly Kardashian world, Tegan and Sara have always walked a fine line between being accessible to their fans and maintaining their personal privacy. "It's

basically like we're prostitutes," says Sara. "We're exchanging emotions for money, and that immediately puts us in a different world than most people. We are asking people to invest, to get on board, and we have to share ourselves. It's part of the negotiation."

That negotiation has proven successful for the duo. With legions of loyal fans, critical acclaim, and their personal lives on lock, it's easy to say that the future for Tegan and Sara is bright, even as it is heading into uncharted territory. "We have the strength of this team, and we have that bond," says Sara on the band's staying power. "However dysfunctional our relationship would seem at times, after this many years most people aren't able to do it. So we must be doing something right." To their fans and family alike, it's clear that they are. (teganandsara.com) ■