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Music



TEGAN AND SARA'S LONG CON

Sara Quin and some famous friends take EW inside the making of *The Con X: Covers* (out Oct. 20), a star-studded 10th-anniversary tribute album that reimagines the band's seminal 2007 LP. BY NOLAN FEENEY

HIDDEN DRAMA

While *The Con* features some of Tegan and Sara's darkest, most gut-wrenching lyrical content to date, Sara Quin says she and her twin sister pursued upbeat arrangements and production to keep the 2007 album from feeling like "a f—ing funeral march." Many of the tracks on *The Con X: Covers* unearthed that gloom. "When I really examined the lyrics, it was so beautiful and sad," Sara Bareilles says of her version of "Floorplan." "I decided to use the ache of the sentiment to redirect the soundscape. I played it on my out-of-tune piano, added some programming and spooky backgrounds, and it all came together in less than 24 hours." The renditions gave Tegan and Sara new entry points into their own work. "There's anguish in [Bareilles'] version of 'Floorplan' that is maybe missing from mine

on the record," Quin says. "It was nice to have these artists push into the emotional core even more."

GIVING BACK

Tegan and Sara, both 37, grew up idolizing Cyndi Lauper and have covered multiple songs from her catalog throughout their career. Quin describes hearing Lauper's dancey take on "Back in Your Head," one of the project's digital bonus tracks, as "totally surreal." Says Quin, "It's fascinating when someone you've listened to since you were 4 sings your song." But Lauper was more than happy to lend a hand for the project, whose proceeds will go to the Tegan and

Sara Foundation benefiting LGBTQ women. "I love those girls," Lauper says. In 2008, she handpicked the duo to join her True Colors tour, which supported the Human Rights Campaign and other organizations; the success of the tour inspired Lauper to start the True Colors Fund, which aids homeless LGBTQ youth. "Tegan and Sara were there to help me when I was starting my foundation, and I thought it was quite apropos that I support them on this record as they launch theirs," Lauper says.

ROCKING OUT

After spending the first decade of their career toiling in the indie-rock world, Tegan and Sara have spent

the past few years transitioning to a more pop-oriented, keyboard-based sound. And while Quin jokes that she's totally over the guitar ("Tegan is so annoyed at me, we've been doing rehearsals for the tour, and I am not playing any guitar"), one artist—Ryan Adams—made her reconsider. Adams, who also covered "Back in Your Head," gave the song a supercharged, ax-heavy makeover. "When I heard that, I was like, 'Oh, I think I want to make a rock record again,'" Quin explains. Adams' involvement was also special given his early support of the band: He took them on tour in 2002 and covered them back in the day. "I look up to them, actually," he says. "Although not in person, as they are maybe the only people shorter than me in music."



Tegan and Sara will also embark on *The Con X: Tour* on Oct. 20