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ALANIS MORISSETTE

TORE ONTO THE MUSIC SCENE 13 YEARS AGO with the love-scorned "You Oughta Know" from her record-breaking album *Jagged Little Pill*. Since then, words like *angst* and *angry* have peppered conversations, reviews, and articles about her, despite her subsequent attempts to show us her other facets. (Which just goes to show that a girl can't get angry without being labeled an angry girl. But enough about us.) There've been several happier follow-ups and even a spoof of the Black Eyed Peas' *My Humps*. Now she's trying to show us a softer side with a new album that documents her recent heartbreak. Sure, there's a smattering of angst here and there. But give the girl a break — at least she's letting her music talk for her instead of taking a baseball bat to his car. (Not that we know anyone who's done that.)

You Oughta Know

Yes, Alanis Morissette's newest album is about love lost and how that makes her angry. But there's more to it than that — a lot more.
By Kevin Raub

THE EMOTIONS INFUSED INTO *Flavors of Entanglement*, Alanis Morissette's first studio album in four years, may not seem new at first. The album's various tracks were inspired by Morissette's own various emotional heartbreaks — including her most recent public breakup, with actor Ryan Reynolds — and her slow recovery from those separations. But such raw emotions have long been a hallmark of Morissette's work. So what makes *Flavors* different?

Maybe it's that Morissette manages to be angry and sad, jubilant and defiant almost simultaneously on this album, which follows the demise of a relationship and the heartache and healing that follow, more or less in sequence. There's something else different, too: the sound. On *Flavors*, Morissette pumps up the alt-rock we're used to with a distinct touch of electronica. The song "Straitjacket," for example, is a droning tune that

evolves into a remix-friendly dance track. And "Giggling Again for No Reason" offers a head-spinning sound that would comfortably fit in a club.

This new sonic approach produces some expected results and, yes, even some surprises. Morissette is definitely fuming — again. But she also has plenty of nice things to say. And eventually, the album reaches a delicate climax with "Not As We," an introspective song about heartbreak and healing.

The singer-songwriter recently talked with us about her new sound and what the album means to her.

How she found inspiration in her breakup with fiancé Ryan Reynolds:

I really lost myself and unraveled during that relationship, and this record was my way of realigning. It felt very important to write this record, more so than others. Scary, always, but everything is scary to me.

A new album, a new songwriting approach:

Typically, I write about things that happened at least two to three months ago, or even that happened years ago. But in the case of *Flavors of Entanglement*, I wrote it in real time as opposed to while looking back. I was in the middle of a breakup at the time. The writing process itself served as life support for me.



Shiny, Happy Person

We've heard a lot about what makes Alanis Morissette mad. Here, she tells us what things make her happy.

Song: "Ave Maria" by Aaron Neville

Album: *Blue* by Joni Mitchell

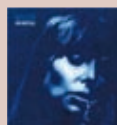
Acting performance: Kate Winslet in *Holy Smoke*

Concert: Rage Against the Machine in Europe in the mid-'90s

Breakfast cereal: Wheaties

Ice cream: Häagen-Dazs Dulce de Leche

Travel moment: Hiking in the Himalayas in Nepal



Vegetable: Arugula

Restaurant: Cielo at Ventana Inn in Big Sur, California

Road trip: Big Sur from L.A., every time

Mother's recipe: Gazpacho

Gift from a boy: I had designed this Kuan Yin necklace [Chinese goddess of compassion], and I got the actual finished version for Christmas.

Way to end a fight: Start validating the other person

Why she thinks this album might be more revealing than her others:

When I first started to write songs that were super-transparent, I was scared to do it. But I realized there really is no consequence. And if there is, it's usually positive. It's me letting someone who might happen to be listening to this alone in their room know that their humanity is okay. If you're lost, you're broken, you're attached, you're codependent — whatever you are, it's okay. We're all on our own journey here.

How she knows it's time to start working on a new album:

I'll start humming around the house. After a tour, when I'm really burned out, I stop singing altogether. When I start humming around the house again, I get this internal imperative, a giant "it's time to write" message in my brain.

On her new, electronica-influenced sound:

I realized that in the past, some of the sonic landscapes that were going with my subject matters didn't exactly match. Certain songs would be so feisty, ener-

getic, and wild, but then the production wouldn't have the same fire. So I wanted to work with someone whose communication through their sonic landscape was as vital and visceral as the lyrical content, and I felt like [producer] Guy Sigsworth could do that. But it's not like it's a salsa record or anything.

The new song that makes her cry:

"Not As We." That was the most broken moment. It had literally gotten to the point where I would drag myself into the studio. Denial is a fierce thing, and I was in denial for a very long time. That was the day the denial cracked.

On what her exes should think about her albums:

They need not worry. I think it has become evident over the years that I don't finger-point. I don't name names. I don't give addresses and phone numbers. I'm writing this for myself. I'm not writing it to out anybody or to seek overt revenge.

Revenge? Definitely not. She loves love:

I had never taken a full-blown year off from

committing to a relationship. I was always the serial monogamist. So, I took a full year off [after the breakup with Reynolds], and it was amazing ... and exhausting. That's hard for a love addict. It was hard for just a week.

A little explanation about the song "Straitjacket":

It's about when someone says they really want to make a relationship work but their actions don't follow through — or when they say they are in a relationship through thick and thin but then thick happens, they're not. I had to deal with that for years. It makes you feel like a crazy person; it's *crazy-making*. There's a distinct difference between being crazy-made and just being crazy, but we would need hours and hours to talk about that.

The cocktails she'd suggest you sip as you listen:

I would hate to write a record that has people saying, "Oh, it's her happy record," or, "Oh, she's just devastated." This album is a diary entry. Some of it calls for a quick tequila shot, and other parts, a gin martini.