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“This album felt like a direct reflection of my currently scattered state of mind” – an Interview with Tamar Berk

August 18, 2023 Paul Atkinson 39 Views 0 Comments alternative, indie, interview, music blog, Music discovery, New Albums, new music, new music friday

Today sees the release of noted indie darling Tamar Berk's third solo album, *tiny injuries*. Following the release of her acclaimed sophomore record *Start at the End* which was nominated for Best Pop Album and Best Pop Artist at the San Diego Music Awards, the new album finds Tamar redefining herself in the wake of her dad's passing, and what she finds often isn't flattering, as she works her way through grief and into acceptance.

Tamar and Matt Walker (Smashing Pumpkins, Garbage, Filter) produced *tiny injuries* at Tamar's home studio, with Sean O'Keefe (Fallout Boy, Plain White T's) handling mixing. Guitar, piano, synth, organ, bass, and percussion were among the instruments Berk played throughout the record. There's also a great guest list on *tiny injuries*, including Allen Hunter from The Eels, Rob Wrong from Witch Mountain, Christopher Marsteller from The Loons, Matt Thomson from Maita, Chris Davies from The Penetrators, Everett Kelly from the trumpet, and Matt Klooster from Smashmouth.

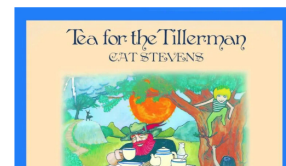
We caught with Tamar as she prepared for the release to talk about the album, how music can help the healing process and where is the best place to live.

Hi Tamar! How's everything going right now?

Things are going well just working really hard to promote my new album and painting and enjoying the summer heat!

What classic album cover is your current mood?

Hmmm....this:





Your fantastic new album “tiny injuries” is out on August 18th. When and where did you write and record it?

I started working on the first song immediately after my second album *Start at the End* came out in June of 2022. I work in my home studio and put together a basic outline of the song including some programmed drums, guitars, bass, keyboards and vocals. Then my drummer and co-producer Matt Walker (Morissey, Garbage, Smashing Pumpkins) works on the drums in his home studio in Illinois and sends me his tracks which I incorporate into my earlier version. Then if the song needs lead guitar I kind of think about the style and who might be best suited for the track and give them a ring and they do the same! They record their part and send it back to me which then I put into the final production. For this album I actually had an incredible trumpet player Everett Kelly record this sick solo on track 4 “Permanent Vacation” and I even had Mike Klooster (Smashmouth) play some down and dirty Farfisa on track 8 “Walking Hurricane.” I’m very lucky to know all these great musicians! Then after I do all that I can, I send the tracks to Sean O’Keefe (Beach Bunny, Fall Out Boy, Plain White T’s) who mixes the songs beautifully!

tiny injuries
Tamar Berk
Saved on Spotify

Track	Artist	Duration
1	if u know, u know	03:27
2	sunday driving	03:58
3	what's become of me, my friend	04:32
4	permanent vacation	03:17
5	cash out	02:54

It deals with the grief of your father's passing – did you find the process cathartic?

My second album *Start at the End* deals with his death very directly. That album was cathartic but definitely darker. What I found with this album *tiny injuries* is that the fallout from his death is still affecting me in lots of ways and some really negative ways. I feel like I'm in an existential crisis which I think a lot of people go through after someone they love dies. I also find that I'm less patient and really just don't have time for bullshit. This album felt like a direct reflection of my currently scattered state of mind. I feel like I'm all over the place some days and the album helped me focus and actually see the magnitude of my sadness. Music is always cathartic for me.

If you could only listen to one record, what would it be?

That definitely changes week to week! This week I'm very much into Cat Stevens "Tea for the Tillerman" which you can see by the album cover I chose! That album is truly his breakthrough album with so many beautiful classics. My favorite is "Father and Son."

Over the last few years, you've been fairly prolific releasing three albums. Does songwriting come easily to you?

I've written songs since I was a little kid...always hearing melodies in my head. Hearing melodies and rhythms comes easily, but writing good songs is something I work really really hard at. I have hundreds and hundreds of songs and some of them are embarrassing and will never see the light of day! But my philosophy is to write all the time and write everyday because for every 5 bad songs you might come out of it with one good one.

You've been in a number of different bands before becoming a solo artist – which records in your back catalog should we search out?

I'm pretty proud of my album *Superfans* by Starball. The album is full of power pop songs with so many hooks and it's got a very 90s vibe! You're bound to find a song you dig!

Starball
Superfans · Starball

Track	Artist
1	Better Be - Starball
2	Good Mechanic - Starball



Cleveland, Chicago, Portland or San Diego – where has been your favorite place to live?

Hmmmm good question! Well, Cleveland was my childhood and there's lots of baggage but I had good times for sure! Chicago was great to be in the music scene and I had an absolute blast but the winters were hell!!! Haha! I like San Diego for the beautiful weather and people I've met, but I would have to say Portland made the biggest impact on me musically and I also met some of my most favorite people ever while living there. I loved living there.

You have a couple of local shows in San Diego planned this month – will you be touring the album further afield at some point?

Yes! My album release show is/was Saturday August 5th at The Casbah in San Diego and then I'll be playing the IPO (International Pop Overthrow) festival in San Diego on August 19th at The Black Cat also in San Diego. I'm working on doing some out of town dates.



What would go on your signature pizza and what would it be called?

I love literally all pizza so maybe it would be a garbage pizza because I'm really good and taking a bunch of leftovers from the fridge and making an incredible meal... haha. So yeah! That makes sense. 😊

What do you have planned for the rest of 2023 and beyond?

Currently, I'm working really hard promoting this album. I'll probably do a fourth video at some point and maybe release some singles. Albums take a lot out of me and sort of take over my life and relationships. It's hard for me to separate so I'm going to rest a bit and paint and try to enjoy the downtime.

Cleveland native Tamar Berk started on the Chicago indie garage-rock, psychedelic and punk scenes, emerging as a founding member of the groups Starball and Sweet Heat, releasing albums on such cult indie labels as Thick Records, Minty Fresh and Kill Rock Stars. She formed the electro-punk duo the Countdown with her husband, releasing music on Invisible Records. After relocating to Portland, OR, Tamar performed and recorded in 60's inspired band The Pinnacles and '70s-influenced Paradise while she continued to write her own songs. Since moving to San Diego, Tamar has launched her solo career with *The Restless Dreams of Youth* in 2021, *Start at the End* in 2022 and *tiny injuries*, due to be released on August 18th. Despite any lingering self-doubt, Tamar Berk has found her sweet spot.

You can find out more about Tamar and her music on her [website](#) and follow her on [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) for all the latest news.

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