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ENTERTAINMENT LOCAL

Grande Prairie's Tenille steps into the 'Light'



By Diana Rinne, Grande Prairie Daily Herald Tribune
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Grande Prairie Tenille's sophomore album *Light* was recently released.

It's been 10 years since Grande Prairie's Tenille Nadkrynechny had the chance to get up on stage and sing with Shania Twain at a concert in Edmonton.

"I would really like to be a famous singer. That's my dream," she said in 2003.

Now 19, the young singer-songwriter is well on her way to achieving that dream, celebrating the release of her second album, *Light*, and hitting the road for a cross-country *Play it Forward* tour.

"It's so awesome to have the opportunity to have it out there and for people to listen to the songs," said Tenille in an interview last week as she prepared to hit the road.

"It was such an amazing process watching it come together and being a part of the different processes from writing the songs to watching them come alive in studio, being part of the artwork and then holding the finished product...it's pretty overwhelming," she

said.

Light is Tenille's sophomore album, following on the heels of Real, which was released the summer of 2011.

"It's a lot of personal growth," she said of the new record. "I think the first album was more a documentation of some of the first songs I had ever written. It included Home Now, and Wendy and Pictures on a Crooked Wall, and a lot of those were some very first documentations for me. It's important for me to keep a documentation of that teen era in my life, and now I just hope there is definitely a growth in perspective and a different time in my life.

"It's more the leaving home and growing up and facing those kinds of emotions and the different things that come a long with that."

Tenille had a hand in every song on the album with the exception of her first single Dear Heart, which was a song brought to the table by her producer.

"I just totally fell in love with it and wanted to share it," she said.

The song was also turned into the first video from the album.

"It was so much fun! It was a really full day but everybody had such a positive energy, it was amazing. It was so cool being part of that," she laughed.

Special song

While it is tough to pick a favourite on the album, Tenille noted One Last Look Around has a special place in her heart. The song, which she co-wrote with Calgary songwriter Troy Kokol, focuses on the love story of her great-grandparents.

"I'm inspired by their love story. They are incredible. She's been struck with dementia for the past eight or so years and it's been so hard watching them go through that. I guess as a coping mechanism I wanted to be able to write a song about it and just see if I could write a song from her perspective thinking if she could step away from her disease for four minutes and 17 seconds, what would she say to him," she explained.

While Tenille said she loves to write on her own, the process of co-writing has been a huge learning experience over the last few years.

"I've had the opportunity to work with a lot of talented writers. I think the more that you do something hopefully the better you get at it. In writing with some of these other writers, it's almost like a mentorship and you learn a lot from their techniques and their perspective and ways of approaching things and I definitely think it provides such a cool opportunity to grow when you're in an environment with those people," she said.

"Every time you pick up a pen to write a tune, or a guitar, I think it's got to be a step forward from the last and I still think there is a very, very long way to go but it's an exciting journey."

Tenille embarked on another journey last week, hitting the road for her second Play It Forward school tour, this time setting out across the country for 12 weeks on the bus.

"It's the longest I've been away from home," she laughed.

The tour started in B.C. and heads east to Ontario before returning home to Grande Prairie in mid-June.

"Then the plan is to head out after the Canadian Country Music Awards in the fall, and continue on from Ontario east, so I'm really excited to see that part of the country as well."

Message for kids

With the Play It Forward Tour, Tenille and her band hit schools across the country bringing a message of 'finding your spark, igniting your passion, chasing your dream, and making a difference in the world.'

"I'm really excited to gain some experience and really get to hear these kids' stories, it's so amazing at these schools learning about the amazing leadership that we have," she said.

Joining Tenille on the tour will be Bethany Earl on percussion and lead guitar, and Catherine Brown on keyboards and fiddle for part of the tour. Then Kate and Jason Leussink of Peace River will join the tour for the second half.

The Play It Forward Tour and events such as the Big Hearts for Big Kids fundraiser for the Grande Prairie Youth Emergency Shelter she has organized for the last four years, are as integral to Tenille's life as her music and she's become known for her philanthropic contributions.

"It's such a huge part of my life and I'm really grateful for that. I was raised by an amazing family who completely taught me to believe in the power of giving back and I'm so proud to have that as a huge value in my life," she said.

"Music is such an outlet to reach out to people and I believe that the combination of having that passion for music, and moreso having that passion to make a difference with it and connect to others, is really that passion that I want to get out there.

"Things like Big Hearts for Big Kids and the Play it Forward tour are so fuelling for me to continue to be encouraged by and to feel that passion."

Tenille was honoured as the youngest recipient in history to be presented with the Slaight Music Humanitarian Award at the 2012 Canadian Country Music Awards. In 2012 she was also recognized by the Grande Prairie & District Chamber of Commerce – Business Excellence Award for "Young Entrepreneur of the Year" and recently in early 2013 received the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal.

Following this great honour, Tenille also received The Alberta Country Music Association's Award for "Female Artist of the Year" for the second year in a row and also was awarded with the 2012 "Fan's Choice."

As the accolades roll in, the young singer-songwriter is quick to note the impact the local community has had on her career so far.

"I just want to send out a huge thank-you to the Grande Prairie community for their amazing support. I am just so proud to be a Grande Prairie girl and really grateful for all their love and belief in getting me where I am," she said.

diana.rinne@sunmedia.ca

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