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KT Tunstall

Walk into any clothing store, mall or restaurant and there's a good chance you'll hear "Suddenly I See," the boisterous pop tune from Scotland's KT Tunstall.

The track has been *everywhere*, man – from rock radio to *The Devil Wears Prada* and TV's *Ugly Betty* – prompting 3½ million people to buy her debut record, *Eye to the Telescope*.

But money in the bank and international success doesn't mean Tunstall can rest on her laurels. If anything, she has more at stake than ever before. Her first challenge is the notoriously fickle British music press, who are eagerly waiting to see if her new record, *Drastic Fantastic*, will live up to its predecessor. And this has Tunstall worried. "I f*cking hate the whole review situation," she tells *Inside E*. "No matter how much you love what you've done, it really hurts when they don't like it."

Because her first record garnered near universal praise, she says she's not sure how she'll deal with some inevitably negative reviews. "I'm hoping my skin's grown a little thicker," she says. "If you have a great reception to the first album, you can be sure someone's going to have a problem with the second one."

Another obstacle Tunstall faces is making sure she avoids being pigeonholed as a one-hit wonder – not an easy task considering how ubiquitous "Suddenly I See" has become. "I'm sorry for that," she says only half jokingly about the single's popularity. In reality, it's likely her new disc will not only sell in the millions, but produce singles even more omnipresent than "Suddenly I See."

Drastic Fantastic is an exuberant rock 'n' roll record that's louder and more aggressive than her relatively calm, blues-tinged debut. What's really striking about the album isn't the increase in volume level, but songs like "Little Favours" and "Saving My Face" – two energetic tracks that'll satisfy both mainstream and indie fans – which exude a self-assuredness that was lacking on the Grammy-nominated *Eye to the Telescope*.

Despite the strength of the finished product, *Drastic Fantastic* almost didn't materialize. Three years of touring meant that Tunstall had virtually no time to write. And when it finally came to penning the new record, she was stuck, her self-esteem left in tatters. "With such a crazy timetable, my confidence was chewed because I wasn't prolific anymore," she says. "The songs that came out took weeks, if not months, to finish." The pressure of creating a worthy followup to her multi-platinum debut also hindered progress. "The scariest thing was that I'd repeat myself," she says.

Tunstall's newfound celebrity has brought other, unwanted demands – like being targeted by the paparazzi. While admitting she likes being "celebrated for being good at playing and singing,"



that's where her love of the spotlight ends. "I've not chosen to swan it up. Getting involved in extracurricular press is 100% a choice."

But the more successful Tunstall becomes, the more people will want to read about her non-musical pursuits, and that doesn't sit well. "I want to go to the pub with my friends and I want to go buy my groceries and go out looking like shit and not have anybody interested in me," she says, adding that the few times she's been caught in the paparazzi's bright flashes, she has felt "really dirty, like a fake."

It's not likely that Tunstall will end up seduced by fame. She's still an eager, down-to-earth musician whose idea of a good time is touring small American cities rather than hanging out with the Beckhams. "The good thing about success is that it means I can go to places like Annapolis, Maryland, which I thought was a typo, but it's actually a place, and sell out a show to 2,000 people. That's completely bizarre." ★



KT's second studio album is out September 18.