

LOVE CONQUERS ALL

YAMAGATA'S TWO-SET RELEASE FOCUSES ON PICKING UP THE PIECES

Breakups are hard.

Be it the severing of a personal relationship between lovers or the end of a business relationship, most people make it through to the other side of a breakup after healing from the separation. No one knows that process better than Rachael Yamagata.

Yamagata detailed this process in two parts on her second full-length album *Elephants...Teeth Sinking Into Heart* back in August 2006, yet it wasn't released until October 7th of this year. The reason for her hiatus can be attributed to behind the scenes setbacks, eventually resulting in a business breakup.

After touring for 2004's *Happenstance*, she went in the studio with Nebraska-based producer Mike Mogis, known for his work with several bands including Bright Eyes and Rilo Kiley. "We finished in August of 2006, then there was business red tape," Yamagata said. After a split with a manager and other industry issues, Yamagata said she went through a lot of regime changes on the business side of her career. She returned to the public eye performing in a brief tour with Mandy Moore and worked with "Love Song" author Sara Bareilles. She eventually realigned with Warner Bros. Records, and now has released her new album, which pushes business affiliations aside and analyzes more personal breakups.

Yamagata used her affinity for human interactions to pen a two-part score for breakups. Although the initial idea wasn't to create two sides, Yamagata said the music called for it.

"By the end, we had really

Photo courtesy Rachael Yamagata



created two very distinctive vibes," she said. "Because I had been writing a lot on guitar I developed a fondness of guitar driven rock songs. I didn't want to interrupt the sequence of the record by putting a rock song in between these cinematic ballads on the first part."

Yamagata said the different arrangements illustrate two themes that are part of the evolution of a relationship and breakup. The nine tracks on *Elephants* are, "sensitive, internal and show more heartbreak," while the five tunes on *Teeth Sinking Into Heart* are a reclaiming of independence after experiencing that heartache.

Elephants opens with a poignant poem metaphorically comparing a relationship with

wild animals, which Yamagata almost whispers over the elegant music.

"I was outside running down a mountain and these lyrics just started coming to me," she said. "I had been going through a tough time in a relationship and at the same time I was outside and experiencing nature. I just kept repeating them over and over again until I got back to the house."

When she sings vulnerable lyrics like, "If the elephants have past lives, yet are destined to always remember, it's no wonder how they scream" and "And how dare that you say you will call, when you know I need some peace of mind," Yamagata sets the tone for intimate tracks that reflect heartache.

Teeth Sinking Into Heart

RACHAEL YAMAGATA

WHO'S WHO

Rachel Yamagata (vocals, piano, guitar)

FORMED

2002 in Chicago, IL

LABEL

Warner Bros. Records

LATEST RELEASE

Elephants...Teeth Sinking Into Heart (2008)

ON THE WEB

www.rachaelyamagata.com

picks up on the other side of that grief with renewal of independence as the healing process begins. Yamagata said these "more defiant" and sometimes "tongue in check" pieces like "Sidedish Friend" and "Don't" will bring energy to her live performances.

Despite some criticism and cynicism, Yamagata is actually very hopeful in relationships. She said that she isn't necessarily dwelling on heartbreak.

"It's more of a purging, to identify so you can move on from it. That's what I do when I write. I write, so it maintains me as a hopeful person, a hopeless romantic," she said.

As she remains a hopeful person and a champion for happy endings, Yamagata said she will most likely continue to write about relationships in general, not necessarily breakups.

"I am mostly fascinated with any kind of human interaction," she said. "I'll just keep studying people."

—Sarah A. McCarty