

sin city

GETTING A HEALTHY DOSE OF TORI AMOS

SINCE 1992, TORI AMOS has been making unflinching music that defies categorization. The 45-year-old singer/songwriter has earned legions of devoted fans with her soaring vocals, poetic lyrics, and frank sexuality. As the economic crisis has us anxious about the future, her haunting, perceptive music has never seemed timelier. *Abnormally Attracted to Sin* (Universal Republic), her 10th studio record, is a darkly sexy album loaded with heavy questions about spirituality, love, why we let others hurt us, and why we hurt ourselves. Her unique voice and signature piano-playing are familiar, but once again she pushes the envelope, stretching from smoky torch songs to tracks that call for a sunny summer day in a convertible with the top down. The deluxe version of the album comes with a DVD featuring “visualettes” for each song, gorgeous short films that bring the music to life. When I meet the iconic songstress, we talk about society’s new woes, femininity, and her killer heels.

Those are some fabulous shoes.

I am a shoe freak. I do worry as I get older and older, “Am I going to be able to sport this footwear when I’m 70, 80?”

You’ll just sit down more. Everyone needs fabulous shoes.

We do. Especially now—these are really tough times. I think the new record reflects that. I think people are being pushed to a place they haven’t been pushed to in years.

I’ve been reading that a lot of the jobs lost have been men’s jobs, so women have had to take on even more responsibility.

For so long we’ve equated men with being providers, a powerful trait. So if they’re not providing, how’s that going to affect their self-worth? One side of the partnership is feeling as if their whole life is valueless, and then the relationship gets strain put on it. I was seeing this everywhere during my travels. People are coming to terms with the idea that the world



as we know it is gone. We’ve associated money with power, so when you start to have very little money, do you feel like you have no power? Do you need to demean somebody else to feel powerful? Right now, in this new world, women are carrying a different sort of weight.

A song that really struck me on your new album was “Police Me”—it made me think of women who monitor and disparage other women. We have enough to deal with; I wonder why we do this to each other?

That’s a really good question. The word “feminine” is key for me. The intolerance that the feminist movement had—where was the compassion? Sometimes the meaning behind the word “feminist” doesn’t have any of the great feminine ideals in it. Nurturing, beauty: they became pejoratives. Who ever thought that we wanted to play the game like men do? I’m attracted to the sins of the patriarchy—how they have been able to control the masses for all this time—sort of like an investigative reporter. [SARAH JAFFE]