



The Drake Effect

"Now the whole team here"

ALYSSA REID

WRITING ACROSS
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Alyssa Reid blows up

Songwriter takes greater control on *Time Bomb*

BY JIM KELLY

It's a music biz maxim: you have a lifetime to write your first album, but when it comes to making the follow-up, the clock is ticking. For **Alyssa Reid**, her sophomore effort turned out to be a ticking *Time Bomb*.

That's the name the 21-year-old, Toronto-based, pop singer-songwriter gave to her second album, released in February. But in truth, Reid took enough time to make sure the follow-up to her very successful 2011 debut, *The Game*, got all the attention it deserved.

And it seems to have paid off. The *Time Bomb*'s been exploding thanks to the singles "Satisfaction Guaranteed" (Top 10 in Canada) and "Running Guns," both of which appear on the album.

Reid worked on *Time Bomb* in Los Angeles, Miami and Toronto, collaborating with top-notch producers and songwriters such as Billy Steinberg (Madonna, Heart), Josh Alexander (Demi Lovato, Leona Lewis), **Thomas "Tawgs" Salter** (Walk Off the Earth, Lights) and **Jamie Appleby**, co-founder of her record label, Wax Records.

But this time around, Reid also took on a larger role, writing or co-writing every song on the album, and she felt more prepared to offer input, whereas on her debut album, she admits to being unsure of her footing.

"On my first album, it was my first time working with producers, first time working in a real studio with people who were trying to help shape me as an artist," she says. "Getting to make *Time Bomb*, I was definitely more free with my opinions, and I knew more about what I was doing. I knew what I wanted. I definitely think that came through."

Born in Edmonton, Reid wrote her first song at the age of seven. The singer's family moved to Brampton, ON, where she finished

high school and continued to focus on music, winning scholarships to attend performing arts schools in L.A. and New York City.

Then came the "Tube and the Bieb. In 2009, Reid posted a YouTube performance of the Justin Bieber hit "One Less Lonely Girl," but re-interpreted from a girl's perspective. The song, re-titled "One More Lonely Boy," went viral and drew the attention of Wax Records.

By 2011, still in her teens, she was working with some of the most successful producers in pop music on her debut album. Propelled by the double-platinum single "Alone Again" (featuring rapper **P. Reign**), an updated take on the 1987 No. 1 hit "Alone"

LESSONS LEARNED ALYSSA REID'S TIPS FOR SONGWRITERS

- Always be honest with yourself about your feelings. I think that makes the best songs, because people want to hear things that are real.
- In writing sessions, a lot of people don't share their ideas because they don't think they're good enough yet. Always put everything on the table, because even if you don't think the idea is there yet, someone can help you get it there.
- I heard this in a movie – *Country Strong* – where one of the characters says something like, "Don't be possessive about your publishing. A good song is a good song whether you write it or not."

by Heart, *The Game* launched Reid into the stratosphere internationally. The song sold more than a million copies worldwide. In 2012 it won a SOCAN Pop/Rock Music Award and garnered Reid a JUNO nomination for Best New Artist.

To build on that success, Reid knew she had to step up her game, and she feels the songs on *Time Bomb* do that by showing a greater emotional maturity. "Every single one of these songs is very personal to me," she explains, "whether it's a relationship with a family member, or a friend, or a boyfriend, or just something that I've gone through."



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On the title track, a tender ballad she wrote after a sleepless night, featuring just Reid's vocal and piano accompaniment, she lays her feelings bare. "At about five a.m., I went down to the piano and I just started writing," she says. "I think that was the first song where I really put myself completely out there." She kept the song's sparse arrangement and chose to name the album after the track because she felt it represented her best. "I know it was a risk to name the album after a song that's probably not going to be a single," she says, "but it felt important to me."

Taking risks. Following her feelings. The rookie from a few years ago wouldn't have dared such things. Is the singer who popped up out of a YouTube clip now blossoming into a *bona fide* pop artist?

"The success of 'Alone Again' was so big, I thought maybe I wouldn't be able to follow it up," Reid says. "But I find people are embracing me as an artist now more than just the song. I'm very grateful for that, and I'm really excited to continue on with this album and to see where it goes." **WMM**

FYI

Publisher: **Wax On Wax Off Publishing, Universal Music Publishing Group Canada**

Discography: *The Game* (2011), *Time Bomb* (2014)

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