

# Real Style

AUGUST 2018

**FLOWER**  
**POWER**  
**FASHION**

**HOT**  
**HANDBAGS**  
**AND**  
**LATEST**  
**BEAUTY**  
**TRENDS**

**PLUS!**  
**HOW TO THROW**  
**THE PERFECT**  
**END-OF-SUMMER**  
**PARTY**

**SINGER &**  
**THE WALKING**  
**DEAD ALUM**  
**EMILY**  
**KINNEY**

**WENDY**  
**MESLEY**

**CLAUDIA**  
**DEY**



# OH, EMILY

*THE WALKING DEAD* STAR IS OUT WITH A NEW ALBUM AND SHOW.

BY RODERICK THEDORFF

AT FIRST GLANCE, YOU MIGHT THINK THAT Emily Kinney is one of those actresses that might not get noticed. After all when she first appeared on *The Walking Dead* in season two as Beth Greene she wasn't much more than a bit player on a big TV series. As the show progressed though her role slowly grew, and after two seasons of playing the part she finally became a series regular. Her character became an essential part of the team, but it was more than her zombie fighting skills that got her noticed. It was her ability to sing.

"Between Seasons 2 and 3, I had been playing little clubs in New York," Kinney says. "A couple of writers came to one of my shows. They knew that I sang and could sing. I remember Glenn [*The Walking Dead* showrunner Glenn Mazzara] calling me and saying, 'Hey, I thought that there would be this nice moment. Can you sing this Irish family song, around the campfire? I thought it would be a nice, quiet bonding moment,

with you and your family.' I'm like 'Oh yeah, that sounds awesome.' So I sing that song in the third season, and then it sort of became a thing."

Singing was as important aspect of Kinney's character, because it helped Beth come out of her shy, introverted shell. "It became a way to sort of identify that character," Kinney said. "Since there were so many characters on *The Walking Dead*, I wasn't always going to be featured. It's a device to almost make you feel like you know that character and know where they are going to fit. It was great, because I like to sing."

Very shortly after Kinney started appearing on *The Walking Dead* in 2011, she released her first EP, *Blue Toothbrush*. With honest, open lyrics delivered in Kinney's signature sweet, soft voice, the EP made it clear she had a successful second career in music ahead of her. In 2015 Kinney released her first studio album, *This Is War*, which—despite the powerful title—was actually very whim-





sical and uplifting, veering more towards pop than her previous sound. And now on August 24, Kinney is set to release her latest studio album, *Oh, Jonathan*, one that is even more personal than her previous work.

“It kind of chronicles an off and on relationship I had for about three or four years,” Kinney says. “The kind of relationship where you start out dating, and maybe something happens and you kind of break up. Then, you date other people, break up and get back together. When we first met, I was working on *The Walking Dead*. There were other acting projects and I was moving around a lot. There was a lot of long distance, back and forth and confusion. All the songs are inspired by this person.”

As one would expect, writing an album about such a relationship was a very personal thing for Kinney, but one that she didn’t mind because it helped her get out of her shell. “I can be an introvert in some ways,” Kinney admits, “maybe kind of quiet in certain ways. I feel

like writing music is my way to sort of let people in. It’s my chance to say my side of the story or let people into how my brain is processing things, how my brain is working. I feel like music is such an opportunity for me to get to connect with people, when I can in real life be somewhat shy and somewhat introverted in certain situations.”

One of the things Kinney’s fans will notice right away is that *Oh, Jonathan* is a huge change from her previous work. Gone are the country twangs and folk sounds, replaced by more pop, synthetic beats. “Between my last album and this one, I definitely did some experimenting,” Kinney says. “In the past, I was very much more focused on the lyrics

and the melody, just getting them out. Whatever just felt natural, whether it was that folk sound or rock-ish feel, if it feels natural, just go with it. This time, I made a list of songs that I love and thought about ‘Now, why do I love those songs?’ Well, the first thing was, they really had impactful lyrics, very much a point of view. There was that, but then, I also noticed that in the instrumentation, there was a lot of space. I kind of went in experimenting, trying to figure out what sounds will give the words space. Before, I kind of felt that I was filling up things, like with lots of guitar. But this time, I felt like creating more of the vibe underneath, the atmosphere, creating atmospheric sound, and then letting the words really take on the main focus and the melody.”

Kinney’s musical talents aren’t just showcased in her solo efforts either. Last year she decided to start writing music with her boyfriend Paul McDonald, which turned into them performing live shows together as *The Sweet-*

*heart Deal*. “One thing that we would talk to each other about is we would get stressed about our individual careers,” Kinney says. “It kind of came from just wanting to have a project that was a little less pressure and more fun. He was out here in L.A. visiting me, and he started writing a song. Then he came in and said, ‘Oh, here’s this song that I wrote, what do you think of it?’ I told him ‘It’s good, can I write the second verse?’ Then we just started writing that way. At Christmas, we were bored and made a website. After we put up the website, immediately someone emailed us and asked us to play at Sundance. We were like, we guess we should. If people would ask us to play shows and festivals, we would.”

With her music career taking off, Kinney’s fans might be a little concerned that her acting career is slowing down, but that’s not the case either. She’s currently filming a new series for Netflix called *Messiah*, in which she plays a mother whose daughter has cancer. Her character is one of many who start believing a newcomer who shows up in town is the second coming of Christ, and in her case she hopes he can heal her daughter. While a lot of actresses view playing a mom on screen as a change to their acting career, Kinney doesn’t see it that way.

“A lot of time I play kids, as an actor, so my transition to adulthood has been a little slower in certain ways,” Kinney says. “I’m finally playing a mom on TV. I’m finally transitioning into more of this next chapter.” Still, the role isn’t all that different from her previous work. “It’s still a drama, a similar kind of genre and it’s supernatural. I would say the character is different than other ones that I have played though. Stacey is a little bit more impulsive than someone like Beth. I guess playing a mom taking care of a daughter, being an adult, having a husband and those kinds of relationships,

is definitely a different thing than I have worked on before.”

With her musical career and acting, Kinney’s life is in constant motion, but she does find time to relax in her own way. “I like reading, poetry and swimming,” Kinney shares. “I love going to the pool or going to the beach. I love being by water. I also really like walking. When I lived in New York City, I would just walk around a lot. I like watching silly TV. But even doing normal at home things is really fun for me. I always tell people I love going to the grocery store and planning out my meals.” Unfortunately, one thing she doesn’t do much of is watch her old show *The Walking Dead*. “I love the acting in it,” Kinney says, “but I turned into kind of a wimp. I will watch it and just like cry the full time. It’s not an enjoyable experience because it’s such a violent show.”

What is enjoyable is following Kinney’s career. From acting to singing, she keeps finding new ways to keep us entertained.

