

Still Buffering 338: The Menzingers

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[theme music plays]

Rileigh: Hello, and welcome to *Still Buffering*: a cross-generational guide to the culture that made us. I am Rileigh Smirl.

Sydnee: I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Taylor: And I'm Teylor Smirl.

Sydnee: Uh, so we've been doing a lot of baking here.

Taylor: Ooh.

Rileigh: Oh?

Sydnee: Yeah, yeah. Well, I mean, it's holiday season. Also, Justin bakes when he's anxious, so... like, the combination of holiday baking and then anxiety baking... we just have, like, platters of baked goods all over the kitchen.

Taylor: I feel like that would be a really good, um, setup for a baking show. Anxious baking, you know?

Sydnee: Yeah?

Taylor: Just sort of, like... [laughs quietly] stress rant about why you're not happy that day and why you chose the recipe you chose to compliment your anxiety that you're struggling with.

Sydnee: I— okay.

Rileigh: I would watch that. 100%.

Sydnee: How do we find— now, there's two ways you get contestants for this show. Either, one, you have to find people who are already anxious about something and then bring them in to bake about it. Or you have to bring in

people who aren't already anxious and make them anxious [laughs] and then they'll start baking. Which way are we going?

Taylor: I mean, I just meant it just stars Justin McElroy as a constant—

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: It's like— it's like— you know, like a baking show, but those are always, like, soft lighting and pleasant music in the background. No. This is all just like, high stress, this man has a lot of anxiety but he's going to make a cake!

Sydnee: [laughs] A very intense baking show.

Raleigh: It's like *Cutthroat Kitchen*, but just one person baking and it's just Justin. Sabotaging himself. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: [laughs] Oh... [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: That makes me sad.

Taylor: You pictured it in your head, didn't you?

Sydnee: I know. I know. Well, I mean, it does help, though. 'Cause it soothes him.

Raleigh: Well, that's good.

Sydnee: There are a set of instructions. You can control the outcome. You have something nice at the end. It's predictable.

Taylor: I get that.

Sydnee: Yeah. That's why I don't like baking. There's too many instructions. You can't play with it.

Raleigh: You're a scientist. You should love baking.

Taylor: That's true.

Sydnee: I know. I don't— I've never liked— I don't like the idea that I can't just sort of, like, make it my own.

Taylor: No, but see-

Sydnee: I mean, you can. You can a little. I don't mean to say you never can, but...

Taylor: You can. You just have to, like, factor in the changes you make and sort of redo the math, and that's the fun part. Like, you can follow a recipe straight up or you can like, "Oh, I want to add a little bit of liquid volume, so I need to compensate for it somewhere else. Or I'm going to add this spice, so I'm going to supplement this out." That's the fun stuff.

Sydnee: We were helping the girls bake these mini muffins from a Disney Princess cookbook this morning, and Justin had started helping them. They were supposed to have blueberries, and we didn't have any blueberries, which the girls didn't really want blueberries in them anyway, so this all was working out for the best. And I was like, "Well, what are we gonna put in 'em? If we're not gonna have blueberries, like, what flavor?" 'Cause they're not, like, a flavor. Now it's just a muffin. Like a... I don't know what plain... sweet?

Raleigh: Just sweet, yeah.

Taylor: Sweetbread. [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: Yeah, sweetbread.

Sydnee: Plain muffin-flavored muffin. So I was like, "Well, we gotta put something in it." And Justin was like, "No you don't." And I was like, "Well, no, let's mess around with it and see if we can put something else in it."

And he, like, walked away. He was like, "Straight up, I'm leaving." [laughs] "I'm leaving. I'm leaving. I'm doing something else. I'm not assisting in this effort, in this perversion of the recipe that you're attempting." So we had to...

Raleigh: Now, I want to clarify, though. I know Justin didn't want a perversion of the flavors. But he did not wait for the muffin tin to be available to make these muffins.

Sydnee: No. It was supposed to be mini muffins, and we didn't have a mini muffin tin. We just have, like, a regular— a regleeur muffin tin.

Rileigh: Sure.

Sydnee: To say it the way my girls do. And so we, uh— instead of, like, using the regular muffin tin and just making fewer, he got out a Madeline tray. You know those— those are— for those not familiar, they're these cookies that look like... seashells.

Rileigh: Kind of, like, ovular. Kind of.

Sydnee: Yeah. They're, like, ridged.

Rileigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: They sell 'em at Starbucks. [laughs quietly]

Rileigh: Aren't they French?

Taylor: Yes.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: They sound French.

Taylor: They are.

Rileigh: Just like the little girl Madeline from the cartoon.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm, yes. So anyway, he had already greased the Madeline tray, so now we really drifted far from mini muffins.

Rileigh: From the original plot.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. Now we're making Madelines.

Taylor: Well, see, I would argue that I think I can follow his reasoning on that. I think he was considering the size, the approximate amount of liquid volume that

goes into a single mini muffin unit, and was subbing in the Madeline tray as an equal amount, so you can keep cook times the same.

Sydnee: Now, here's a secret he doesn't know.

Rileigh: [simultaneously] That does make sense.

Sydnee: It does make sense. It does make sense. And I will say, like, right before we came down to record, they were done, so they look great.

Rileigh: They look good.

Sydnee: I don't know how they taste, but they look good. And we did sub— so they were supposed to have a little cinnamon. Instead we upped the amount and subbed it out with pumpkin pie spice, so they have a flavor. And then Charlie wanted to add a little bit of vanilla, so we added, like, a quarter teaspoon of vanilla extract. So we'll see. But, um... but, uh... oh, I completely forgot what I was about to say.

Rileigh: [laughs]

Taylor: There's a secret. What was the secret?

Rileigh: There was a secret.

Sydnee: Oh. Oh! The secret! The secret. That was the se— oh, the secret. I forgot the secret.

Taylor: [laughs]

Rileigh: [laughs] It's so secret Sydnee forgot it.

Sydnee: It was so secret I forgot it. So we were— so we were ma— so the three of us were making them together, me and Charlie and Cooper, and we had done all the dry ingredients in one bowl, so we were doing the wet in the other bowl. So Charlie and Cooper had already gotten the egg in there, picked the shell back out that was in there...

Rileigh: Sure.

Sydnee: I made sure that was out. So that's in there. There's some vanilla in there. There was some milk in there. And then I was melting butter. And I melted the butter, and dumped it right in there without letting it cool much, and I as I did it I thought "Nooo! I'm scrambling the eggs!"

Raleigh: Oh no.

Sydnee: You gotta be careful adding a really hot thing to eggs.

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: 'Cause they cook.

Sydnee: 'Cause they cook. Uh, so they started whisking it up right away. And I can't guarantee there weren't little bits of scrambled egg in there. I am not— I don't think there were. There were still some little teeny bits of butter. Like, I actually pulled one of the little yellow bits out and ate it to see, like, "Is this egg or butter?" and it just seemed like butter. So I think—

Raleigh: That's a really gross experiment you did.

Sydnee: I— well, I was so worried that I had scrambled the eggs and I had made scrambled egg muffins.

Raleigh: Then they're breakfast muffins.

Taylor: Yeah, that sounds like a thing.

Sydnee: Well, but would also put pumpkin pie spice and vanilla in there. So I don't know how all that comes out.

Raleigh: Sweet eggs.

Taylor: Pumpkin pie spice egg muffins.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah, there you go.

Sydnee: They might have some scrambled egg in them, is my point. I don't know. Justin's gonna eat one and let me know, probably. [laughs]

[pause]

So... sorry about that.

Taylor: A unique creation.

Raleigh: Well, your kids like scrambled eggs.

Sydnee: Well, the weird thing is, Charlie was eating scrambled eggs while we were making them, and I had I thought like, "Did I scramble the eggs, or did Charlie... "

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: 'Cause she was sort of, like, eating them over the bowl as she was helping bake. [wheezes]

Raleigh: Sounds about right.

Sydnee: We're just a mess over here. We're just a whole big mess. Anyway... so I'll let you know in the next episode how the scrambled egg vanilla pumpkin pie spice Madeline muffins turned out. [laughs]

Taylor: Well...

Raleigh: If you're still talking about 'em a week from now they were either really good or really bad.

Sydnee: [groans]

Raleigh: No in between.

Sydnee: I don't like my chances.

Raleigh: Either just eggs, or the best Madeline muffins you've ever had.

Sydnee: We can give 'em to Dad. He'll eat 'em either way.

Rileigh: That's true.

Taylor: That's true. Even if he actively hates it, he'll eat it.

Rileigh: [through laughter] Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah. As long as there's not fruit in there. If there's fruit in it, he won't eat it. But there's not fruit in 'em, so... so it's fine. [laughs]

Rileigh: It's allowed.

Sydnee: Um... Tey, what are we talking about this week? [laughs] I don't have a transition from egg muffins.

Taylor: That's alright. Today, we are talking about one of my favorite bands, the Menzingers, specifically their 2012 release, *On the Impossible Past*.

Sydnee: Um, I don't know— it was strange to me. We say this a lot on this show. I don't know how I had never listened to any of this, Tey. It felt very similar to other bands that I was into, other music that I listened to in the past.

Taylor: Well, I would say it's because this was definitely a college band for me.

Sydnee: Hmm.

Taylor: This was— yeah. Like, the— I mean, I think their first album came out in 2006. Uh, so it would've been when I was already away. And then I was introduced to their music actually, like, right after I graduated. I lived in an apartment with someone who grew up with the members of this band. Who was from Scranton— the band's from Scranton, and I lived with somebody that knew them. And so at the time— I mean, this was, like, 2008, 2009— they were not big. Now they're very well established, they're on a major label, but at the time they were just still sort of a— a small band that had had, like, a somewhat successful independent release. And they would play shows in our living room. Like, I knew them as just—

Rileigh: Oh my gosh.

Sydnee: Really?

Taylor: —these nice boys from Scranton that would come and play a punk show in our living room, uh, 'cause we lived at, like, a punk loft, a building with a lot of units in it where everybody had shows. So, uh, yeah.

Sydnee: Did they take the train?

Taylor: Did they take the train?

Sydnee: From Scranton? [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Oh. Pro— maybe? I think they had a— I think they had a van.

Sydnee: You think they ever saw Bo Jiden on the train?

Raleigh: [laughs] I knew that's what you were gonna ask.

Sydnee: Yeah. Bo Jiden likes trains. I thought maybe he was on there at some point. With 'em.

Taylor: I don't know. I'm not sure.

Raleigh: I gotta be fully honest, guys. I watched The Office, obviously, when I was younger. And they're at Scranton in that show, that television program.

Sydnee: This is accurate.

Raleigh: And I thought they made it up to sound like— just like a standard, typical, like, small Pennsylvania town.

Sydnee: You didn't know it was a real place?

Raleigh: I didn't know it was a real place. And then Bo Jiden talked about it, and then I was reading about this band. I was like, "Aw, dang. There are lots of people from Scranton." [laughs]

Sydnee: Either that or it's a big conspiracy that everyone has made up. Even Taylor's in on it. [laughs]

Taylor: Yeah, yeah.

Sydnee: Telling us about Scranton.

Rileigh: Teylor's one of the only people that knows if Scranton is real or not.

Teylor: Well, or maybe I've just— I've interacted with a lot of Scranton agents that I didn't realize, so I've been led to believe it exists.

Rileigh: Ohh.

Sydnee: Ooh. Now, listen.

Rileigh: Scranton agents. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: If you're from Scranton, we are not insulting you or your town.

Teylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: We live in West Virginia, and most people don't know it's a state.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Well, I live in West Virginia. You all don't anymore. But I do. And most people don't know it's a state! [laughs]

Rileigh: Well, we have towns called stuff like Big Chimney so, you know... I'm not one to judge your town name. I just genuinely thought it was a made-up place. [laughs]

Teylor: Well, it—

Sydnee: We have a place that's called Hurrican. It's spelled like Hurricane, but it's called Hurrican.

Teylor: I mean...

Sydnee: So.

Taylor: That's— that's in— that's everywhere. Like, I don't know. We got a street called Howston. It's spelled like Houston, but it's Howston. People get mad at you if you say it any other way.

Raleigh: Do you think it's one of those things, like Howston and Hurricane that people here or there just made up to make people not— that aren't familiar with the vernacular, like— "Oh, you're a tourist. You're not from here."

Taylor: Yes.

Sydney: Is that how we tell—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydney: —who the new people are?

Raleigh: That's what I'm saying. Like, you know someone's visiting if they ask you for directions to Hurricane. And I assume it's the same thing if, like, someone asks you, like, how to get to Houston. [laughs]

Taylor: Yep.

Sydney: There's something about that that fits so well. Just especially here where I'm like— where I can imagine the person saying, like, "[exaggerated southern accent] You're not from 'round here, are ya?"

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydney: [laughs] "Where you from, outsider?"

Taylor: I mean, as different as New York and West Virginia are— and they are in so many ways— I feel like in that sense, they are the same in that, like, "Oh. You're not from here. I need to know that you're not from here. [laughs] And you need to know that I know that you're not from here."

Sydney: "And I'm gonna be keeping an eye on you, 'cause I don't know what you're up to here."

Taylor: That's true.

[all laugh]

Sydnee: Well, anyway. I really enjoyed this music, and it was just— that must be what it is, is it was just the timing. 'cause I was thinking, like, I feel like you and I listened to a lot of music similar to this when we were living in the same place. And then, I don't know. I also have this sort of, like, black hole that is med school in my life that I didn't— like, no new things were introduced. No movies or music or TV. There's no, like, pop culture from those years that I really... I didn't engage with at the time. Some of it I found later. I'm not saying I don't know anything about those four years of my life, or even in residency, seven years. But, like, it was all delayed. So this would've been in those years.

Taylor: The lost years. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: My lost years. I did not learn about pop culture. I learned about bodies. Now I'm back to pop culture. Anyway, I really enjoyed it. I found it, like— you said it was punk music, and of course obviously it is. But I didn't expect it to be sort of like the lighter punk, the poppier punk.

Taylor: Yeah. You know, it's— I mean, I feel like there's a lot— when you say punk music, people think of one specific thing, and a lot of what qualifies is not that specific thing. It's not screaming and, like, two-minute songs. And this is very... like, as they've aged, their albums have definitely matured with them. And now I feel like they've settled into almost like a Bruce Springsteen vibe, which I feel like is still, like, the seeds of that are in this album. Like, I'm gonna tell you stories about— they all kind of tell stories. There's a lot about, like, small town people and, you know, regret and stuff. Like, there's a lot of what they grew into in this album. But it feels like a departure from what we think of as punk rock.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: Yeah. I think that's where my age shows, is because, like, I heard it and I thought "punk," but that's because my perception of punk I think is entirely, like, pop punk. [laughs quietly] Like Green Day, or like Paramore, even. Like, where it's definitely not quote-unquote "punk rock," but to me that's what it is. It definitely was— that's the first thing I thought of was Green Day, listening to it. Because that's one of the things I liked most about Green Day's music was that they tell stories, and it was not just, like, you know, like you said, yelling. [laughs quietly] No, and that's— this felt very much the same, that I could actually listen and hear stories, which is one of the things I like most about music.

Taylor: And this album I think most specifically does that. Like, so the albums before this— this is a bit— it's not a departure. I think it's just a big development. Like, their albums before they were a little bit— there was a lot more screaming. There was some occasional rap. They stopped doing that by this album. Which I think— you know.

Sydnee: Oh.

Raleigh: Oh my gosh.

Taylor: Um... so it does have a bit of that, like, operatic almost quality that Green Day songs have, you know?

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Yeah, yeah.

Taylor: Like— you're like, "Oh, I can see this as a musical." Like, this is— so it really was a little bit of a mold breaker for them, this album. And it's the first— it was declared, like, album of the year by a couple publications. Like, it was a big swing and a big hit for them.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Hm. Yeah. Um, so you knew all the band members personally?

Taylor: Well, I mean, they slept on our floor a few times. I made them coffee once with a coffee pot using a paper towel as the filter, 'cause we didn't have a coffee filter. [laughs]

Sydnee: Taylor.

Taylor: And that's— I just knew them as very nice boys that sometimes slept on our floor and were friends with my roommate.

Sydnee: So they were good house guests?

Taylor: They were, they were very polite, they were very nice. Uh, years later they would still, like... like, through my friend get me into their shows. Just, you

know, like, "Oh yeah." Like, we never, like— like, we hung out in large groups, but I do not have a personal relationship with these dudes.

Sydnee: But that was nice, though.

Raleigh: That's very cool.

Sydnee: Yeah. It is—

Taylor: Actually— oh, go ahead.

Sydnee: Oh, no. I was gonna change topics, so go ahead.

Taylor: Well, I was gonna say, in the song "The Obituaries" where they sing about, um, a rooftop in Brooklyn that was covered in bad graffiti?

Sydnee: Mm-hmm?

Taylor: That is— that is my house they're singing about, my old house.

Sydnee: Aww. I remember that rooftop.

Raleigh: Wow.

Taylor: You've been in that— you remember that apartment. [laughs]

Sydnee: Oh, I remember that apartment. [laughs]

Taylor: That's— that's the one.

Sydnee: I remember we went in the summer, and I do not believe you had air conditioning.

Taylor: No. It was very— you got sick, or Justin got sick. One of you got sick.

Sydnee: I got sick. I got— I think it was a combination of dehydration and... maybe a hangover... [laughs quietly]

Taylor: That— maybe, yeah.

Rileigh: [sarcastically] What? That doesn't sound like you.

Sydnee: Maybe a hangover...

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: We were younger. We didn't have kids yet.

Taylor: A windowless, like, poorly ventilated room isn't great for a hangover.

Sydnee: [laughs] um, no. I was just thinking, and that sort of speaks to that. I'm imagining you making coffee with a paper towel filter, and I feel like that's so far from who you are. Because when you make things, when you prepare, whether it's drinks or coffee or food or whatever you're making, like, you always make something so good and thoughtful, and you pay such attention to, like, the detail of how you make things. Especially something like coffee. Like, it's hard for me to imagine you doing that now. Like, that was such a different Taylor that would make coffee with a... paper towel filter. [laughs]

Taylor: Indeed. Well, and I— that's—

Sydnee: "Indeed." [laughs]

Taylor: That's one of the things I like most about this band. You know, we've talked a lot about bands or artists that either age with their audience, or specifically keep trying to make music for the age group that they first hit it big with, you know? And there's a bit of discomfort either way. I don't know if there's a correct route, it's just which one you choose. And I think this is a band that has chosen to age with their music.

And that's one thing that I really like, is like, this album to me was very much like the height of my... I don't know, my gross punk days. Like, living in that apartment, you know. Just, I mean, just everything was disgusting. No one was a civilized human that I lived with, and I certainly wasn't. And I would never— you couldn't pay me to go back to those days. [laughs quietly] But I'm glad that they happened. And, like, now their more— their newer albums are a lot more mellow. You know, they're more reflective, they're kind of chilled out. Like, I have chilled out with this band's music, and I think the band itself, and that's cool.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: That is cool. That's a cool evolution to trace, to have music that can follow you through that way.

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: Yeah. Again, everything comes back to Taylor Swift.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: That's why I love Taylor Swift.

Taylor: [through laughter] What?

Raleigh: She was writing— she was writing for me when I was seven, and now she's writing for me when I'm 22. She gets me.

Sydnee: I don't know that I have an artist like that. Jimmy Buffett? [snorts]

Raleigh: [laughs] No, I think the difference there is Jimmy Buffett was never writing for your age demographic when you, you know, were deeply obsessed.

Sydnee: That's true.

Raleigh: When you were, like, ten.

Sydnee: That's what— when I was ten I was listening. I was like, "That's music for me," and it was music for people in their 30's.

[all laugh]

Raleigh: It was music for our father.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: [crosstalk] to "A Pirate Looks at 40" like "Yeah, that's for me." [laughs quietly]

Rileigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: That's for me. I'll be 11 next year. I can totally relate to that song.
[laughs]

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: I wish I was a pirate too, Jimmy. Anyway... [laughs] let me have my third cup of black coffee and then head off to second grade.

Rileigh: That does have to be special, though. To kind of not just have an album that's reminiscent, like, that reminds you of a time in your life, like, where you know what you were doing when that came out and you first heard it, but also has the same vibes and, like, feel of that time in your life. I feel like that has to have, like, a... I can see why that would be a meaningful album to you, to have it, like, correlate with both where you were and also have it bring about memories that fit the era, if you will.

Sydnee: Um, I want to talk more about the songs specifically on the album, but before we do that...

Rileigh: Let's check the group message.

Sydnee: Uh, so the holidays are coming up, and everybody's trying to figure out, what do you get your loved ones? I know that's always hard around here, because you never know. Like, Dad never tells us, other than socks.

Rileigh: He always wants socks.

Sydnee: He always wants socks. We can't all get him socks every year. That's too many socks. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: I mean, what if we did, to teach him a lesson?

Sydnee: You know... [laughs]

Rileigh: There you go. [laughs]

Sydnee: That is a direction we could go. Um, but maybe you don't want to just give your dad all the socks in the world, and you're looking for something new.

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Sydnee: Um, so Teylor, were there any particular songs or, you know, like we've kind of talked about, they do feel like stories. Like, independent little narratives and things. Were there ones that you particularly liked or that you connected with?

Teylor: You know, with this album it's I feel like almost every song. Like, I have just— I love. But some of the big ones for me— I mean, I think one of the biggest hits on the album is probably "The Obituaries," which is the one with that line about a rooftop in Brooklyn. Uh, and I think this is sort of symbolic of the time for me. The chorus of that song is "I will eff this up, I effing know it." And for some reason when I first heard I thought it was "I won't... eff this up. I effing know it." And I remember singing it that way at a show, and it was only afterwards that one of my friends was like, "I like how just, like— you're like, 'No, I'm gonna be positive. I'll put my own spin on it.'" I'm like, "Oh, I thought that was the lyric."

And I feel like that represents [through laughter] a lot of what my life was like at the time. Like, "I won't eff this up." No, actually your line is "I will."

[all laugh]

Sydnee: Aww. [laughs]

Taylor: Oh, it's alright.

Sydnee: No, I like that. Maybe— you know, maybe you were doing that subconsciously. Like, intentionally, you didn't know. You needed that. Your brain needed that.

Taylor: It's good that I didn't know, yeah.

Sydnee: That dose of positivity. Yeah, what were the— I didn't know— I was trying to figure out. What were the— were there singles? Was this after— was this still during singles? Did we do singles at this point in history?

Raleigh: What are singles at this point? I don't know.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: I think there were singles. I want to believe. I mean, I don't remember. At the time, I mean, I just— we just— the album released and we all were listening to it, because it, you know, came out as a whole. And I had heard some of the songs already, 'cause they were playing some of the songs before they released the album at their shows. But I think— I mean... I don't know. I mean, the first song, "Good Things," I love that song. I think that's great. It's just such a great start to the album.

Sydnee: I like that one. I liked the second one, "Burn After Writing."

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah, I liked that one a lot. I also liked "Casey" a lot.

Raleigh: Um, Wikipedia, by the way, is telling me that "The Obituaries" and "Gates" were singles.

Sydnee: Mm.

Taylor: Okay, that makes sense. Yeah, "Gates" is a great song. "Gates" is such a good just, like— it's a, you know, classic sort of sad boy love song, but it still... I don't know. Carries a lot of— carries a lot of weight for me. I love "Gates."

Rileigh: I liked that on a lot, because I like very typical sad boy love songs, I think.

Sydnee: Yeah.

[all laugh]

Taylor: "Gonna walk up to your gate and throw my lonely soul away." Like, alright. I get that.

[all laugh]

Rileigh: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Well, there's always been sort of like a— something like that, which is not— that's not a pretentious statement. Like, it's just a very kind of raw, honest, um... I always appreciated that. Especially about a lot of these— this kind of punk. 'Cause I never got into as much of what I think of the more yelling type punk. [laughs] I always— like, I knew it existed. I knew it was out there. I knew you knew about it. I didn't really— it wasn't my exact, you know, preference, and so I never knew much about that world. But this kind of stuff I knew a lot more about, 'cause I enjoyed it. I liked listening to the lyrics and figuring out, "What are you talking about and what are you feeling?"

And I like that kind of... I didn't have a feeling or a thought, and then take it and sit down with it and parse it out into something that would be, like, very flowery or fancy or, like, try to add some larger words in there to show off. Like, I wasn't trying to make this the most poetic thing ever. I just said the thing I feel.

I think there's something really lovely about that. And I feel like you can get moments of that in this music where it's like, "This is exactly how I feel, and I don't have to make it sound any prettier than this." I enjoy that.

Taylor: Just, like, accurate details. And I mean, some— like, sometimes it's like— I don't know. For some reason— one of the lines that—I'm not... I think—I think younger, far more emotional, dramatic Taylor— there's a line in "Sun Hotel," and it's just "I will leave you alone and you will leave me alone," and he sings it back and forth. But you understand that the implication is "I won't bother you, I will leave you alone, and you will leave me alone, you'll abandon me." And that, like— I feel like that's very powerful, like, writing. You're singing it with the intonation that you understand that you're saying— you mean that in two different ways, you know?

Sydnee: Yeah. That is really powerful.

Raleigh: I think that's why— that's a good point, because it's a good line but also it explains some of the moments where it feels very reminiscent of, like, almost like an *American Idiot* type operatic musical jukebox-esque album. Because that's another moment that's very much like— it depends on the intonation and, like, the surrounding context, and it's not just like, you know, words that are being sung over and over again. Like, it has deeper meaning that's explained through more of the other aspects of the music than just, like, you know, what you're hearing, if that makes sense.

Taylor: I don't think that they've ever called this any sort of, like, a concept album. But I feel like— and I don't— you know, I don't know if that's maybe me putting it on it, but I do think there is a throughline story to this whole album, you know? Like, it builds... I feel like it's a lot. I mean, even from the title on, like, "*On the Impossible Past*," because there's a lot of reflection, both at, like, good times, sad times, losses, you know. And I feel like that's— like, the whole album does sort of— it is the story of looking back at your past, all the stuff that hurt, and all the stuff that just feels incomprehensible, and trying to put words to it. And there is a narrative, you know.

Sydnee: And I always feel like— I don't know if that was a time period where bands were more likely to do that. I don't know if this is a genre thing. I wouldn't say it is, because so many different types of artists will do an album where— and they don't— like you said, they don't even have to call it a concept album. But you can feel that this is on a theme, that this was a complete narrative, or it is exploring a certain idea, even if it's not said that way. And I always feel like those are the most— those are the ones that... get you. You know, that, like, touch you the most. And, um... it's why I liked Kelly Clarkson's Christmas album last year so much.

Taylor: [laughs] It told a story.

Sydnee: It was a Christmas album about loss! And— and— and hopefulness, and, like, relationships falling apart and what you're left with, and what you can hope for. [laughs] But a Christmas album.

Raleigh: And so many people were like, "Dang, Kelly. It's Christmas. This is a little sad."

Except for Sydnee, who was like, "Yes, Kelly! I want to cry during Christmas."

Taylor: "You know what the Christmas season didn't have enough of? Divorce songs."

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: Well!

Taylor: [crosstalk].

Sydnee: Well!

Taylor: You got a whole album full? Amazing!

Raleigh: That's all we need. That's what [crosstalk] needs.

Sydnee: You gotta find your niche. You gotta find your— what's the— what's the gap in the market! What question are people not answering?

Raleigh: Think she'll do it again this year? More Divorce, Part 2.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: [laughs] She's making albums just for me.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm. Why do you— now, wait a minute. [laughs] This is not for you. You're happily married!

Sydnee: I know, I am. I don't know. I don't wanna get divorced. I hope I don't get divorced. I have no interest in that. But... [laughs] but I really enjoy an album about divorce!

Raleigh: But if it had to happen, you have the soundtrack.

Taylor: You just like to know that you're ready.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Well— but, I mean, it's the same thing— yeah, that's true. Like, I am prepared. I always like to be prepared for things.

Taylor: [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: Um, but I— you know. It's the same idea as, like, listening to songs like this that sometimes are about, like, heartbreak or longing or loss or, like— like, being alone. Those sorts of ideas. Like, I don't necessarily feel that now. But it's nice to remember how you felt... I don't know. It's nice to be in a different... you know, time really is... [laughs] a construct. And, like—

Taylor: [laughs] Where are we going?

Sydnee: You can experience—

Raleigh: What's happening?

Taylor: We are taking off.

Sydnee: —all moments.

Taylor: Let's just go with it.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Taylor: Take a little ride with Sydnee here.

Sydnee: Instead of thinking of yourself as moving through time, think of time as moving through you, is what I would propose. And, like, at any point you can be at a different moment in your own timeline, if you consider the fourth dimension

of time, which our brains can't conceive of well, but you can try. And anyway... songs like this are useful for that. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Me— memory. Sort of.

Raleigh: Memory.

Sydnee: [laughs loudly]

Raleigh: Time moving through you is Sydnee's way of saying "when you remember things."

Taylor: Right.

Raleigh: That happened in the past. [laughs]

Taylor: The fourth dimension is— is— is memory.

Sydnee: I'm talking about so much bigger than that!

Taylor: Okay.

[all laugh]

Raleigh: Um, I do think, though, that especially, like— and I'm 22 as I'm saying this. I know it sounds silly. But I feel like when you look back on when you're younger, you always had bigger feelings at some point several years in your past than you do now. You know what I mean? Like, your feelings get really big at some point, and then they peak, and then after that it's like, you've had so many feelings they start to not feel like those big feelings.

Sydnee: [laughs] That's the most depressing thing you've ever said to me.

Raleigh: No! I don't— I don't mean like happiness. I mean like whenever— like, this one thing would make you sadder than you've ever been when you're, like, 16, you know? Like your first breakup or heartbreak or whatever is, like, devastating. And then five years later, nothing is ever that devastating again. If that makes sense.

Sydnee: You have things to compare it to.

Rleigh: Yes, exactly. You have more life experience, so you're able to, like, handle feelings in a more moderate way.

Taylor: Yes.

Rleigh: And I like listening to music from when I was, like, of an age where everything was awful all the time and all my feelings were so big that I was listening to music that's talking about how every heartbreak or, like, fight you have with a friend or whatever is, like, the end of the world. 'Cause it's like, man. I used to have some really big feelings about things, and now I'm a more well-rounded adult, I think. [laughs]

Taylor: Well, I agree. I feel like youthful emotions are— you know like when you— when you slide in the softball game and you get a strawberry?

Sydnee: Mm-hmm?

Taylor: Just got the big— it's when you skin all the leg off— er, all the skin off your leg. And it's like, that's like— youthful emotions are like that. Like, you just got— everything hurts. It's just right there on the surface. And you don't— you didn't become deadened. You didn't lose anything when your skin heals. That's how you're supposed to be. It's just you're sort of born a raw nerve. Your emotions come forward as like a raw nerve, and they've got to kind of adjust. They have to learn that pain happens sometimes and you recover from it.

Rleigh: That was a much better way of saying "I had big feelings." [laughs]

Taylor: No, no.

Rleigh: No, that's exactly what I meant. Like, yes. Everything is so intense the first time it happens. And then, you know, you have that to help you through it when you're older.

Sydnee: I mean, it probably has something to do with the fact that your frontal lobes aren't fully formed at that point.

Taylor: Sure, yeah.

Rleigh: I mean, mine's still not.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: Don't I have, like, three more years?

Sydnee: Nah, yours isn't completely done yet, either. No, but—

Raleigh: Still cookin'.

Sydnee: But, I mean, in all seriousness, it is true that that changes. And... you mi— I always call it— 'cause, like, sometimes when I'm really stressed out and I have a lot of things that I'm trying to do at the same time, and then I'm also trying to, like, be a human. And, you know, relate to people I love and care about in normal human ways. I'll say that everything's coming in really loud right now.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: And it's hard for me to cope, 'cause it's all coming in so loud. And there is— while that is— usually I'm saying it in kind of a negative way, there is something nice about knowing I can still feel things that way. You know? And I think music like this, it helps you connect to that ability, to let things come in loud and just have that reaction to them. And sometimes it's not... healthy. [laughs] But it's nice to know you can still feel that way.

Taylor: Well, I think that, like, the kind of— the time period in my life that this album sort of freezes in place was a time period of such highs and lows. Of, like, the highest highs, the most fun, ridiculous, like, just... parties, and outings, and, you know, just like what— just living completely irresponsibly, but also having a lot of fun. And then incredible lows. Like, incredible anxiety, incredible sadness, incredible confusion and loss. And that's— you know.

I'm okay with the fact that now I feel like everything's a little bit even keel, you know. There are days that are less good, there are days that are better, but it— yeah, I agree. Like, I listen to this album and I remember that— you know, that person that I was, and all those people that were around it. And even, like, that time period is so tied to, like— like, there are people from there that aren't— that aren't here anymore, you know? And they are forever in these songs, like, singing them with me, and that's really cool to always have.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: It is. You're talking about the process we go through when we stop fighting the Babadook...

Taylor: [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: ... and we let the Babadook live in the basement and feed it periodically.

Taylor: Okay. [laughs] Yeah. [stammering] Yeah.

Sydnee: It is! [laughs]

Raleigh: I have come to the conclusion that there is a— a bodysnatcher that has taken Sydnee's place in this episode, and this is not Sydnee—

Sydnee: What?!

Raleigh: —our sister, 'cause there are some things you've said the past few minutes I'm just like, "What?" [laughs]

Taylor: Or is Sydnee— is Sydnee, um— has Sydnee enjoyed any, um... you were talking about all the baking that you've been doing. Have there been any special baked treats?

Raleigh: Hmm.

Sydnee: [dejected] No... no. Nothing fun this morning.

Taylor: Okay.

Sydnee: And all our mimosas from yesterday are gone. [laughs]

Taylor: Alright.

Raleigh: I wonder how that happened? [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs] Well... well, you know, there was a lot to get through.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: No, I don't know. I mean, I think it's what we've kind of been talking about. Music— this music reminded me, even though I hadn't heard it— it's weird, because I had never listened to this music before. I don't even think I had stumbled across these songs, which is strange, too. But again, you were listening to this in the time of my life that I wasn't listening to any music, really. Um, but it took me back to those days. It took me back to, like, standing in the YWCA.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: You know? In, like, my— my little babydoll t-shirt with some sort of ironic thing on it. And my— although by then— I was gonna say my giant jeans, but by this point I was wearing the skinny jeans with the Chuck Taylors, 'cause that was the thing. Skinny dark jeans and Chuck Taylors. I was probably intentionally wearing my glasses instead of my contacts. 'Cause that was, like, a cool thing. And, like, feeling so cool 'cause I was at a show.

"I'm at a show. A show." [laughs quietly] 'Cause, like, my boyfriend's band is playing with a couple other... somebody's boyfriend's bands, and... you know. [laughs] It took me back to that. Even though I had never listened to this music, which is a cool thing.

Taylor: Well, and that's one thing that I like about, like, you know— I chose this album because I feel like it's sort of... it's the one that a lot of— it's their big album. I mean, they've had a lot of really great releases since then, and the more recent ones as they've kind of had the same sort of mellowing, I appreciate it because it— you know. Now, like, I get where they're at now. But yeah, looking back on this album, it is— it's just like, it's frozen in time. It is this. It is [laughs] like... highs and lows. I mean, I think it even helps. Like, 'cause you know, there's a lot of— I think when we think about our young years where we're making lots of mistakes, we're learning a lot of things all at once and a lot of it's painful.

It's easy to look at those years with regret. Like in, you know, what did I do? What did I do for ten years? You know, I— I worked crappy jobs and lived paycheck to paycheck, and lived in disgusting places. And it's nice to kind of have a way to parse it out. Like, it doesn't have to all be good or all be negative. It's just it was life, and it was necessary to get to where I am now. And that's— you kind of file it away. [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: But it's still— but I would say, too, it also makes me think that it exists somewhere. Like, it didn't stop. You know what I mean?

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: It didn't end. It's just it's somewhere else. Like, it's still existing.

Raleigh: In the multiverse?

Sydnee: Well, you know. [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: I'm serious. In the other universes?

Sydnee: I am sort of hinting at a multiverse.

Raleigh: Sure.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Just another universe where I'm still listening to this album.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: It is the only album in that universe.

Taylor: That's fine. It was probably the only album in my universe for a while.

Sydnee: See?

Raleigh: I get that. I've been there.

Sydnee: Um... when you approach 40 you'll start sounding like this, too. That's all I'm saying.

Taylor: [laughs] Well, and like— like, I don't know. I mean, like, their most— well, is that? I don't know. I'm trying to think. Some of their more recent songs. Like... they still— they still make me feel— like, it's— it's weird to know that there are people out there that are writing songs that are grappling with the same feelings you're feeling with, as somebody in your— like, well into your 30's,

looking back and being like, "What did I do?" Like, that was— I can only now— I feel like their softening is like, now their songs really only reflect on the past in a sort of... loving, sad way. Which is kind of, I think, where we get with the past, you know?

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: And it's wild to see that paralleled in this band that I... crossed paths with in a tiny way, that these dudes are out there writing songs about "Oh man. I'm looking at 40 and I am tired." [laughs] Like, still don't really know what I'm doing, but I'm used to not knowing what I'm doing at this point, so that's good. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. It's rough though.

Raleigh: It's like "A Pirate Looks at 40."

Taylor: Hey. A punk looks at 40. [laughs]

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: There we are.

Raleigh: I would listen to that.

Sydnee: Full circle.

Taylor: Listen to some of their new albums, actually. That's kind of what it is.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: well, that was very— see, what a nice little— it all came back around. That was lovely.

Raleigh: Thank you, Tey, for—

Sydnee: That was one for the books. [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah, for showing us this. Because I had not ever heard of them, and I feel like a lot of times you all bring albums that I did not know I had heard, but,

like, there are at least one or two songs that like, "Oh yes, I have heard this before." I genuinely I don't think had ever heard any of these, and I genuinely enjoyed all of it, so thank you.

Sydnee: I would say the same, yeah.

Taylor: I'm glad. Well, thank you so much for listening. And if you liked this, I've got more of their music that I would recommend. They have a newer song called "Bad Catholics."

Sydnee: Mm.

Taylor: It's about growing up as a bad catholic that I think you both would appreciate. [laughs]

Raleigh: Oh, gosh. I do need to listen to that. [laughs]

Sydnee: We gotta listen to that next, yeah.

Taylor: It's a really good song.

Sydnee: We definitely were that. Alright. Well, what's next, Raleigh?

Raleigh: Oh, gosh. Okay.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: Well, next week is our first episode in the month of December. The holiday month.

Sydnee: Uh-huh.

Raleigh: So there's no new Vanessa Hudgens movie for us to watch this year.

Sydnee: [sighs]

Taylor: Oh no.

Raleigh: But instead, Netflix gifted us with something perhaps even better. And that's a Lindsay Lohan Christmas movie called *Falling for Christmas*.

Sydnee: I'm very excited.

Raleigh: I just— I didn't— I genuinely wanted to watch it anyways, so.

Taylor: You have already watched it, right?

Raleigh: I have not.

Taylor: Oh. 'Cause, see, I want— I want there to be a Vanessa Hudgens, like, appearance. I feel like every Christmas movie they make should have one. Like, she's just a different character.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: She's required, yeah.

Taylor: [laughs] I want a multiverse of her in the holiday world.

Raleigh: Every time she's in one, though, she has to be, like, an extra version of herself.

Taylor: Yes.

Raleigh: So, like, she— now there's been three of them. Now there needs to be a fourth that's also related to them, but not her.

Sydnee: An exploration of time and space using Vanessa Hudgens in holiday movies as an example. I love this.

Raleigh: That's my thesis.

Sydnee: Let's make this happen.

Taylor: Sydnee, have you been reading, like, quantum physics or something? What's going on?! [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Rileigh: I knew you loved Benedict Cumberbatch, but I didn't know you got fully sucked into the multiverse.

Taylor: No, I think I figured it out. Rileigh, this is a Sydnee from the future.

Rileigh: Ohh.

Taylor: Or from some other universe.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: And that's— she's trying to hide and pretend that she's our Sydnee, but she's not, and that's why she's talking about all this stuff. We're onto you.

Rileigh: This is not our Sydnee.

Sydnee: What did I do with the other Sydnee?

Rileigh: [laughs] I don't know!

Sydnee: Uh-oh...

Taylor: Check the muffins.

Sydnee: Check—[laughs]

Rileigh: That's what I was gonna say, check the muffins! What's in the muffins?

[all laugh]

Rileigh: What's the flavor?!

Sydnee: Sometimes— sometimes Cooper will yell, "It's people!"

Taylor: [laughs]

Rileigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: "Soylent green is people!" and she doesn't know what that is. It's just something Pop taught her. And so sometimes she yells it and I'm like, "This is gonna freak people out." [laughs]

Raleigh: I hope she does that at school lunch one day.

Taylor: Absolutely.

Sydnee: "It's people!" [pause] Well, thank you, Taylor. [laughs]

Taylor: Thank you.

Raleigh: Yes.

Sydnee: For introducing us to the Menzingers. It was excellent. I would highly recommend it, wherever you listen to music. I never know where to tell people to listen to music. It's just on my phone somewhere. I look for it on my phone.

Taylor: Well, and I should— just 'cause it's timely— they just actually released an album of B-sides called *The Possible Past* that correlates to *The Impossible Past*. So that's the new album release. You can get the vinyl of that. It's also on streaming services, but yeah.

Sydnee: There you go. Well, get that. Um, thank you listeners. You can go to Maximumfun.org and check out lots of other great shows that you would enjoy. You can tweet at us @stillbuff. You can email us at stillbuffering@maximumfun.org. And thank you to The Nouvellas for our theme song, "Baby You Change Your Mind."

Raleigh: This has been your cross-generational guide to the culture that made us. I am Raleigh Smirl.

Sydnee: I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Taylor: And I'm Taylor Smirl.

Raleigh: I am still buffering...

Sydnee and Taylor: [very out of sync] And I... am... too.

[theme music plays]

Sydnee: Don't tell Justin or the girls. I want to break it to 'em easy.

Raleigh: What? That— that it's people?

Sydnee: [laughs quietly] That I'm from the future.

Raleigh: Oh.

Taylor: We have no loyalty to future Sydnee. [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Past Sydnee was a mess. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Are you like a Terminator, Sydnee?

Raleigh: Ooh.

Taylor: Have you come back in time to... are you gonna—

Sydnee: Wouldn't it be terrifying if I just melted into one of those liquid puddles like in *Terminator 2* right now?

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: Wouldn't that just be, like, absolutely horrifying?

Raleigh: [crosstalk] that was really specific to bring up.

Taylor: Sydnee, you know the first rule of podcasting is no visuals. You know, nothing that you have to [crosstalk].

Raleigh: No visual [crosstalk].

Sydnee: [laughs] Okay. I'll do it when we make a video later.

[all laugh]

[music plays]

Dan: Hey! I'm Dan McCoy.

Stuart: I'm Stuart Wellington.

Elliott: And I'm Elliott Kalan.

Dan: Listen. You like podcasts, right? Sure you do, don't try and lie to me. You're listening to one right now. So why not try a different one called our one, *The Flop House*?

Stuart: Uh-huh. And on *The Flop House*, we watch a movie and talk about it, and then sometimes we also do other stuff.

Elliott: It's all meant to be funny and fun, and we think you'll have a good time. And just to be clear, the name of the podcast is not Our One: *The Flop House*. It's just called *The Flop House*.

Dan: [laughs]

Elliott: I do a lot of correcting Dan.

Dan: *The Flop House*: a lot of correcting Dan.

[music and ad end]

[chord]

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