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**Michael Giltz**

Freelance writer

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## Music: Spread This Rumer -- 2012's Best New Artist Is Here

Posted: 01/31/2012 3:59 pm

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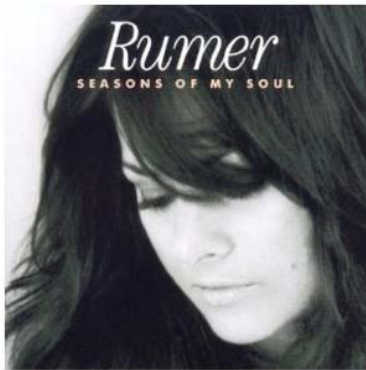
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**RUMER** -- SEASONS OF MY SOUL \*\*\*\* out of \*\*\*\*

The US is finally catching up with [Rumer](#). A critical and commercial success all over the world, Rumer's gorgeous debut album *Seasons of My Soul* is finally getting a proper release in North America. It's early days yet, but she's certain to be one of the best new acts of 2012 and the early buzz is proving it. The album hit #1 on the iTunes album chart and #3 on Amazon, thanks in part to a profile on CBS (the video is posted below).

With the pop smarts of Adele, the mellow vibe of Norah Jones, a voice and sound that echoes Karen Carpenter, and songcraft that follows in the footsteps of Burt Bacharach, Rumer's talent is built to last. With just one Top 20 hit in the UK (the gorgeous "Slow") Rumer sold out the Royal Albert Hall. When she performed a showcase in New York in 2011, the *New York Daily News* rightly named it one of the best live shows of the year. [If you're in Chicago, Toronto, Philadelphia, New York or Boston, make sure you catch her in the next week or so](#) while she's still playing intimate clubs.

If success is making her head spin, it doesn't show. In concert and in person, Rumer is sweet, funny, self-effacing and nice, even as she's clearly navigating the terrain and dealing with new issues like giving a string of back to back interviews. The first question is what to call her -- does she go strictly by Rumer or do friends call her by Sarah, her given name?

"I'm kind of both," says Rumer, chatting by phone from the UK about a week ago.

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"I don't mind if someone calls me Sarah. I just don't like it if people change it halfway through [a conversation]," she laughs. "I get confused."

Born in Pakistan to her English parents, Rumer spent her childhood there as the youngest of seven children. They always fell back on entertaining themselves so it was natural for Rumer to grab an instrument and sing or play. It was a sheltered, strange existence but also one that inspired a lot of creativity. When she was 11, Rumer discovered her biological father was their Pakistani cook. Her parents moved back to the UK and divorced. Later Rumer's mother suffered from depression (quietly alluded to in the second single "Aretha") and ultimately died from breast cancer.

Rumer wandered off into a commune based in a stately home and somehow wound up in the music business creating songs with a calm and sureness that belie the rather dramatic events of her early life. It's not so dramatic when you're living it, of course. That commune was more of a company than a cult, for example.

"It wasn't a cult, explains Rumer. "There's a man called Sir Richard Glyn. His family has owned thousands of acres of land since the 1400s. But he happens to be a hippie. He's this guy with long silver hair and he got married in Marrakech. It's like a hippie hotel. One week you get all these luminous people with yoga mats and then they leave and all these guys show up with giant gongs. Then they leave and you get the past life regression groups. And they're quite weird."

Things got even weirder when Rumer dove into music seriously.

"When I was about 18 I started to write a few songs where I thought, this is quite good," she remembers. "Later on I spent time learning structure and song writing. I've definitely done my apprenticeship. But I've done my apprenticeship part one. The first thing that you learn is that there's so much more to learn."

Obviously, she learned quickly. Rumer was in a couple of bands and even recorded a solo album under her given name of Sarah Joyce that was released in South Korea. But when she partnered up with Steve Brown, their collaboration proved magic. Brown is famous in the UK for writing songs for TV shows like *Spitting Image* and the massive West End hit musical *Spend Spend Spend*. Her record label thought Rumer was daft when she wanted to work with him, even though he's never produced an album before. The buzz surrounding their work was instantaneous.

Burt Bacharach flew Rumer out to his home so he could hear her sing and share some new songs. Elton John later invited her to be part of his annual charity show. And UK personality Jools Holland debuted her live on national television even before her album came out by giving Rumer a slot on his concert series where a string of musical acts all take turns playing music.

"It's quite interesting with live tv when you've never done anything like that before. Suddenly, it's 5, 4, 3, 2 1...live! It's like jumping off a building," says Rumer. "Especially because you have all these people from the record company saying, if she does a great job we'll jump up and down and decide she's the best thing ever. If she does a bad jump we'll go all quiet and moody. This position I'm in right now is kind of a conditional love nightmare."

Was the show itself intense? As a new artist whose album hadn't even been released yet, Rumer was surrounded by talented veterans.

"Nick Cave was on my right hand side and Brandon Flowers was on my left and Scissor Sisters was in front," she says. "It's lovely. There's a kind of folkiness to it because you've got all these other musicians there. It's a bit like doing an open mike night. If you watch the video of me singing "Slow" online, there's a point where I kind of look to my right, and that's me checking out Nick Cave because he's looking at me like, "Hmm." I caught him looking at me and thought, oh my god Nick Cave is looking at me!"



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Clearly, things went well. The album is poised to go double platinum in the UK and now Rumer is set to introduce her music to America. If the songs you hear sound sturdy and well-crafted, it's no surprise. But these things take time.

"Each song for me is like a painting," explains Rumer. "It takes time. I try and let them emerge. I want them to have a soul; I want them to live forever. I let them grow naturally. I start with the sentiment, the emotion, the feeling and then gradually let the song emerge and structure it around that. I don't like to rush it. I definitely have some songs cooking but it takes as long as it takes."

So even though this music was recorded almost two years ago she's happy to keep living with these tunes. Rumer is in fact back in the studio, but she's recording an album of covers.

"I've always wanted to do this project," says Rumer about the album focused on Seventies songwriters, dubbed *Boys Don't Cry* and set for a spring UK release. "There's a part of me that admires people like Linda Ronstadt who can take songs and make them her own. They make great, great choices. I'm covering Leon Russell, Tim Hardin, Isaac Hayes, Richie Havens, Paul Williams, Jimmy Webb, P.F. Sloan. I love to learn and I love other people's work. If I were an actor I would never limit myself to just performing my own work."

And apparently she won't limit herself quite yet to just one man. Ask Rumer if she's dating anyone and she laughs.

"I've realized I'm the kind of girl who needs more than one man. I do! I realized that. I did the Albert Hall and about five of my ex-boyfriends were there...with some of their parents, which is quite hilarious. My friends were laughing about that. They said, 'Did you see Rumer's boyfriends all standing having a cigarette outside?' My little sister said, 'That's nothing. At her birthday picnic eight of them showed up and they all brought [mail].'

"I haven't got a boyfriend. I've decided that I'm not looking for a boyfriend anymore. I'm looking for a husband," she declares. "I'm 32. The next one's going to have to marry me. I'm going to find a nice American."

Here's the interview that aired on CBS:

*Thanks for reading. Michael Giltz is the cohost of [Showbiz Sandbox](#), a weekly pop culture podcast that reveals the industry take on entertainment news of the day and features top journalists and opinion makers as guests. It's [available](#) for free on iTunes. Visit Michael Giltz at his [website](#) and his [daily blog](#). Download his podcast of celebrity interviews and his radio show, also called [Popsurfing](#) and also [available](#) for free on iTunes. Link to him on Netflix and [gain](#) access to thousands of ratings and reviews.*

**Note:** Michael Giltz was provided with the CD and free tickets to a Rumer concert with the understanding that he would be writing a feature.

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**Rick Aiello**  
118 Fans

04:08 PM on 02/07/2012

I saw Rumer in Chicago and I was already a fan when I went in, but I'm an absolute groupie now. She was sensational. The best live show I have \*ever\* seen.

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**larstein**  
194 Fans

09:18 PM on 02/01/2012

It's about time.

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**ktano0**  
19 Fans

08:46 PM on 02/01/2012

It's no surprise that Burt Bacharach was interested in her...that song definitely had a "Walk on By" vibe to it.  
Very good...

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**Diane Sampson**  
20 Fans

01:19 AM on 02/01/2012

I saw Rumer in concert in San Francisco last week. She is amazing. If the American people have any taste whatsoever, she should really be a hit here. She is also a very warm and gregarious woman.

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**HUFFPOST BLOGGER**  
**Michael Giltz**  
*freelance writer*  
127 Fans

05:51 PM on 02/01/2012

Thanks for commenting. She really delivers in concert.

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**Diane Sampson**  
20 Fans

06:22 AM on 02/06/2012

I have formed a new Facebook fan group called "Rumer Worldwide Fans". You should join us!

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**professor**  
407 Fans

11:54 PM on 01/31/2012

Just another female singer with that middle-class deracinated voice that sounds just like all the others.

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**HUFFPOST BLOGGER**  
**Michael Giltz**  
*freelance writer*  
127 Fans

05:51 PM on 02/01/2012

Deracinated?

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**Diane Sampson**  
20 Fans

09:16 PM on 02/17/2012

I think he just likes to use big words even if he has no idea what they mean. It prevents him from sounding "middle-class", I guess. It also prevents him from sounding sane.

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**Diane Sampson**  
20 Fans

08:52 PM on 02/17/2012

Just what does a "middle-class voice" sound like as opposed to an upper class voice or a

lower class voice? Which class sings the best, professor?

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[garystartswithg](#)

*el sueno de la razon produce republicans*

1078 Fans

11:32 PM on 01/31/2012

Brit pop/Europop of any quality seldom makes it across the Atlantic. One of the most perfectly crafted pop songs of this century Kylie's All the lovers barely got recognized here while Ke\$ha was ripping Uffie and what's his idiot was remixing Daft Punk and pakaging it for Ameridhun audiences. I think you would have to be masochistic to want to try making it in the United States, one day you are a mouseketeer, the next day you are a meth addict.

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**HUFFPOST BLOGGER**

**Michael Giltz**

*freelance writer*

127 Fans

05:53 PM on 02/01/2012

Kylie Minogue never did quite make it in the US. But plenty of great Brit pop does make it here from the Beatles to Blur and Oasis to Adele of course. Some always slips through the cracks but I hope Rumer won't be one.

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