



Rachael Sage



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Deborah Lopez

Rachael Sage's tenth album, HAUNTED BY YOU, is a song cycle about passion. As the NYC-based artist explains, "I fell recklessly in and out of love multiple times while writing this record. I broke a couple hearts...and I also had my heart broken pretty badly." Nonetheless, the crystalline-voiced singer/songwriter says she has no regrets, revealing she was "due to feel as deeply again as when I first started making music."

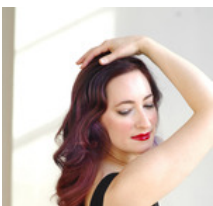
For Rachael, who is also a poet, actor, and visual artist as well as a longtime record label owner (she founded MPress Records in 1996), music has always been her primary form of self-expression. By the age of three she had taught herself to play the piano, and by her teens, she'd won the ASCAP Pop Songwriting Contest. Upon hearing Rachael's winning entry, legendary producer Tony Visconti (David Bowie, T. Rex) told her she was "extremely talented" and offered to produce her demo. While her parents pressed her to go to Stanford University instead, it was an encouraging moment that gave her the confidence to self-produce her first record, MORBID ROMANTIC.



On the milestone of her tenth album, Rachael admits, "I started writing songs to make sense of being bullied in school. I never envisioned music taking me around the world, or that one day I'd play the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Being part of the indie community is humbling though...it keeps you grounded." Rachael, who has collaborated with Phil Ramone and shared stages with Judy Collins, Marc Cohn,

The Animals, Shawn Colvin, and Sarah McLachlan, has had a prolific career both as a musician and entrepreneur. This year Rachael produced the fourth volume of MPress' annual charity compilation series, NEW ARRIVALS, benefiting homeless youth, while her label had its first Billboard charting and Grammy® nominated releases.

Unlike Rachael's previous albums, including 2009's critically acclaimed DELANCEY STREET, much of HAUNTED BY YOU was composed on guitar. "I pushed myself to pick up guitar to write this record because I was scared of it and took that as a cue." Rachael wrote the dozen songs on the album after separating from her boyfriend of four years, whom she describes as "the kindest, most balanced person I've ever dated. He was much more traditional than me though...touring slowly took its toll." Alone, reflecting on her breakup, the 3-time Independent Music Award winner found herself suddenly prolific.



Presented by Chip Duckett, Rachael will be performing at the newly re-opened Bon Soir at The Pink Elephant on Monday, June 25 at 8pm! At this invite-only show, Rachael will perform songs from her new album "Haunted By You" as well as some fan favorites!





remember feeling like a performing artist and creative person. But I did listen to lots of Broadway and Classical Music as a little girl, and that's what inspired me to play piano, initially. My mom took me to see "A Chorus Line" and "Oklahoma" and apparently I came home and played the scores by ear, much to the surprise of my tone-deaf parents! Some of the earliest pop material I can remember enjoying includes: Carole King, Billy Joel, Hall & Oates, Christopher Cross (yes!), Elton John, and The BeeGees. "Saturday Night Fever" was actually the first recording I bought with my mom. I'd dance around to it for hours, and make up crazy routines.

OK, here's the truth: I wanted to be a "Solid Gold Dancer," from the moment I started watching that show. I had a huge crush on one particular soloist but I never knew her name; maybe YouTube could help...I was also in love with Andy Gibb, of course, and after I saw him in "Joseph & The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat," he signed my program and wrote "follow your dreams, always!" That was definitely a moment. Soon after, I realized I didn't just want to be a dancer on "Solid Gold," but also a singer and a songwriter and hell, why not - a host! I guess I'm lucky my parents always let me watch it.

My dad also took me to see two movies that really impacted me, musically: "Coal Miner's Daughter" and "The Buddy Holly Story." I was instantly fascinated by the music business as I saw it depicted in those biopics, and those films definitely sparked my interest in touring. It just seemed like the most adventurous, interesting lifestyle to me - and I guess those movies planted that seed, for me.

My first foray into acting was imitating TV commercials. I'd mimic them for my family and make them laugh, it was my first party trick. By Junior High School I was obsessed with Meryl Streep and performed a monologue from "Sophie's Choice" at the talent show, and won. It was a bit of a turning point for me, because the reaction I got wasn't "congratulations." It was "thank you," or "thank you for sharing that with us..." from teachers, and even peers who had picked on me. Somehow, maybe because we'd studied about The Holocaust in Hebrew School, I really managed to connect with that material in a deep way even though I was twelve, I ended up bursting into tears on stage and it really rattled everyone. They were really a bit worried for me, I think!

Once I was in high school, I threw myself into every high school drama production I could, and really fell in love with performing Shakespeare. For my 16th birthday my family took me to see Shakespeare In The Park which was wildly inspiring and eventually led to my studying at The Shakespeare Lab at The Public Theater. Of course, all this time I was always still playing and singing my own songs, but I never saw any reason why I couldn't do it all. No one really tells you "there are only so many hours in the day" until your 20's...

Poetry is something I didn't start writing until later on, but it's a very different kind of process for me than writing lyrics, which I almost always write while simultaneously hearing the melody and rhythm in my head. Poems usually only come out when I'm literally bursting with some emotional (over)reaction or other. It's more of a safety-valve for me, and something I do involuntarily. I'm a lot more conscious and craft-oriented when it comes to writing songs.



3. What excites you about your upcoming concert at Bon Soir at The Pink Elephant on Monday, June 25? Firstly, the venue looks gorgeous - and of course, the fact that Chip Duckett is presenting...I love him as a person and really respect his taste in performers across the board, so it's definitely an honor to have been invited to play this series! I'm also excited to just be playing in an entirely new (to me!) venue, and hopefully, a bunch of new listeners. I'm not quite sure who'll be there, because the room is new to me, but I'm sure it'll be a fun crowd!

4. What do you hope audiences come away with after seeing you perform? I hope they come away feeling like they can do or say anything they want, that matters to them, with confidence, because they've just seen me do it. I like the idea of being someone who literally, sparks other people to be much more of who they actually are.

5. You just released your 10th album "Haunted By You." What does it mean to you to reach this milestone? It means I can finally tell my parents "this is what I'm falling back on." I do think there's something to be said for persistence even though I haven't figured out exactly what it is yet. Maybe that'd be a good theme to explore for my next record - unless I actually follow through on that Air Supply tribute idea...

6. According to press notes, "Haunted By You" chronicles the multitude of emotions you have felt with falling in and out of love. How do you feel the writing of this album helped you through this period in your life? Well, I think writing songs and creating in general is always helpful at just maintaining some semblance of sanity, for me. Part of why I ended my last long-term relationship was because I felt like I'd lost touch with my innate tendency to react to the world around me through creativity. I'd tempered a lot of those impulses to try to be more "present" in other areas but what I've realized is that ultimately, that's too big an adjustment for me to be making, and still expect to be happy.

My decision - and it really was a conscious one - to open myself up to a handful of intense affairs in the year after my relationship ended was a mixed-bag, because I didn't anticipate getting my heart broken as much as I did; I surprised myself honestly. But being able to channel all of that into music was incredibly cathartic at times, even euphoric. I really had wondered if I'd ever be that "emotionally raw" again, but alas, I had nothing to worry about!!

7. What do you enjoy most about touring the country to promote your music? What do you like about interacting with your fans at signings/concerts? My favorite thing about touring has nothing to do with promoting my music, really. I love touring because it grants me the opportunity to get up on a stage and try new things every single night. It's addictive, it's a high-wire and I'm sure that physiologically, it's akin to drugs. When I'm able to combine preparation with spontaneity and genuinely create moments where the audience becomes part of my act, and we're all making something together, it's pretty intoxicating.



anecdote about how your music or overall spirit helped them through a tough time, it's incredibly humbling. I suppose part of what I love about touring is also that duality between being in the spotlight, and getting to really have some intimate interactions offstage with people who come to the shows. It also helps me realize just how lucky I am to be doing something I enjoy, even when I hit my inevitable "lows."

8. In addition to singing/songwriting, you are a visual artist, poet, and actor. What have you learned about yourself from each of your endeavors? I've learned that I'm most relaxed when I'm "making stuff." It's who I am, to be creative...for better or worse. I say that because it does make it difficult to not be selfish in a relationship at some level, when you feel compelled to follow that muse. But in the big picture, it's so much better that I understand that now more than ever, and I think I'm going to avoid a lot of depression in the future, by being as honest as I can about it with anyone I love. In particular, creating visual art really calms me down...it's like mental yoga for me and helps me make sense of just about everything, because it's so subconscious; I just power through in most areas of my life, especially in running a record label which involves a lot of grunt work and stress. But when I'm painting or decorating clothes or decoupageing, everything else has to kind of recede into the background. I think the more art I make, the happier I'll be and that also applies to writing poetry and, hopefully more and more, acting which I have missed profoundly the last few years. Time-management is a big issue though, it's my biggest struggle in terms of balancing the business with being an artist.

9. What's the best advice you've ever received? "Don't listen to people who try to tell you how to make your music. Don't listen to your lawyer, or your manager, and especially your record label. Just write music that moves you, and the rest will follow." - Suzanne Vega, at Lilith Fair 1999 (where I was an opener)

10. If you could dream about anyone while you sleep, who would it be? I can, and I do! I took a lucid dreaming class in college. I often dream about acting alongside Phillip Seymour Hoffman actually. John Malkovich and Kate Blanchett have also appeared in my dreams. A few days ago I decided to dream about John Lee Hooker, with whom I became good friends while attending Stanford (I met him through my work at the radio station). I've always felt like there were some lingering things I wish I'd said to him, before he passed away, and I have a song about it. I wanted to sing it for him, so I was able to do that in my dream and hopefully he actually heard me...

BONUS QUESTIONS:

11. Favorite way to spend your day off? Going to the movies, and making arts & crafts!

12. Favorite way to stay in shape? Since quitting ballet many years ago (I used to be a professional dancer and attend School of American Ballet), I haven't really figured that out yet. I hate going to the gym and have a hard time doing any exercise consistently, so mainly I just don't eat a lot of crap – I'm



use the same moisturizer two nights in a row. Part of what I also like so much about touring is all the little samples at hotels, and that they're different everywhere we stay. I do enjoy the cinnamon-vanilla scent of Holiday Inn Express products...

I guess Noxema is a reliable classic for me. It really never fails to get my skin back in decent shape right before a big photo shoot, and of course, their commercials are so damn refreshing!

14. If you could have any super power, which one would you choose? I would choose the ability to scan technical manuals instantaneously and understand/implement them immediately with absolute confidence. I am the least techie person I know, and it's hindering. I will probably be the last human on the planet to get an iphone, or at least the last New Yorker. If I could casually glance at a Final Cut Pro manual and suddenly be a master video editor, for instance, I would feel pretty damn sexy and powerful! I promise I'd use my techie-abilities for the creative good!!!



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