

10 Questions: An Interview with Rachael Sage

Today we chat with Award-winning New York vocalist [Rachael Sage](#) who comes to the 2010 Edinburgh Fringe with her group, The Sequins. This pop, rock and folk Diva oozes down to earth charm as she chronicles her life through her beautiful vocals. Her new recording "Delancey Street" is a joy to listen to. So if you fancy an evening of vaudevillian art-pop, storytelling and friendly chit-chat go see Rachael Sage at [C Central](#) from the 18th to the 30th August at 10.45 each evening.



1. What inspired you to become a singer, song-writer, musician, and comedy cabaret artist?

When I was 3 years old, my parents took me to see the Broadway show, "[Oklahoma](#)". Apparently, I came home and played the entire score by ear on the piano, with one hand (*I hadn't figured out how to use my left hand yet*). They sort of freaked out, because neither were musical, but they felt they had a responsibility to see just how far this "gift" could take me, so they took me to see "[A Chorus Line](#)" next. The same thing happened, plus, after seeing that particular show, I also took to dancing incessantly around the house and eventually, memorizing all the routines from "Solid Gold" on TV – some of which were a bit sexy for a 3-year-old – and the rest is sort of my personal history, I suppose!

I eventually was enrolled in ballet classes locally, which ultimately took me to the New York City Ballet's **School Of American Ballet**, (where I danced in ballets like "Coppelia" by George Balanchine, "Circus Polka" by Jerome Robbins, and "Celebration" by Jacques d'Amboise). Sometimes I realize that I performed in ballets by 3 of the greatest choreographers/dancers ever all before I was 13, and the fact that now my idea of exercise is doing arm-chair push-ups in the airport is certainly comedy-inspiring!

These days, I would say that I do a combination of singer-songwriter fare, cabaret and comedy. My show is a reflection of all the experiences I've had through the years, as an independent touring musician, former ballerina, and member of a very intense, Eastern European Jewish extended family.

2. What's your show about and where are you taking your show after the Edinburgh Fringe?

My show is about the myriad of ways that people complain, i.e. "kvetch". "Kvetching" is a Yiddish word – and as all Yiddish words are, it's a very colorful, wide-ranging descriptive and most people will recognize its most common usage by virtue of the preamble, "oyyyyyyyyy!"

I've made 9 albums of original music, and I owe a lot of my lyrics to the fine art of "kvetching". It's much easier to write a decent lyric when there's some angst involved. One of the things I'll be doing at Fringe is collecting "kvetches" from my own audiences, and composing spontaneous compositions based on their inevitably amusing complaints.

After Fringe, I'll be taking my show on to England and Ireland, where I'll also be releasing my brand new album, "Delancey Street", on September 13th!

3. What are you most proud of?

My collection of wearable art. It's taken my a long time to glue all those rhinestones all over my wardrobe!! That, and perhaps...my persistence. I've been releasing albums longer than I've been allowed to vote, and all I ever wanted to do when I was little was be a recording artist, and hopefully, a great songwriter. Thankfully, this journey has permitted me to do much more: dance, since, act, run a record label, and now, return to Edinburgh Fringe for not one, but 2 weeks of "mishugas"! I'm definitely proud of that...



4. If you had a chance to work with anyone of your choosing, who would it be?

Elvis Costello is my dream collaborator. His music has scored more of my life-moments than any other artist (including a plane en route from Russia that almost went down while I was listening to "**Spike**" in headphones), and I've seen him live more than a dozen times. The sheer ability he has to take risks and venture into new terrain as a musician – to push himself beyond what he's done before – is staggering to me, and the fact that he's done it all well, and with the charisma only he has, as a singer and composer, is what keeps me involved in his world. He's the most consistently surprising musician I've ever encountered, and I have more respect and admiration for him than I could possibly express without writing a song about it!

5. What kind of questions do you most like to be asked about your work and why?

I liked to be asked the kinds of questions that I was raised not to answer, because, apparently, I'm "inherently belligerent".

6. Do the reviewers of Fringe shows do a good job?

They do a brilliant job! I just wish they'd stop focusing on the substance of what their reviewing, and get back to the surface, i.e. who is wearing the best costumes, who's dating whom within what productions, etc. But that's just a personal preference...

7. What do you feel about the current state of Arts funding available?

I feel "*feh*" about it! That means "unimpressed", but that's all the Yiddish I'm gonna give you for free until you come to my show.

8. Which three famous people would you invite to dinner and why [dead celebrities included]? And what tasty treat would you prepare?

Buddy Hackett, because my mother always thought his comedy was "way too dirty for kids to hear" growing up – and what my mother thinks is dirty, I'd love to study; **Victor Bulgakov**, because he's my favorite Russian writer and I'd like to seek his blessing to musicalize "Master & Margarita"; and of course, **Daryl Hall of Hall & Oates**, who are without a doubt the greatest American pop duo alive today.

I'd never make anyone I respected suffer through my own cooking though, so I'd do some shopping at some of my local Jewish deli's like "**Russ & Daughters**" and perhaps "**Katz's**" (I live on the Lower East Side). Everyone likes bagels, even dead celebrities!! For dessert, perhaps some **chocolate "rugulah"**...

9. What do you do to relax?

I'm not sure. I don't think I ever relax. Is that inadvisable? I thought artists were supposed to work hard all the time, to become successful!

10. What would be your dream come true?

To win an **Oscar** and a **Razzie** ("Worst Of" awards) in the same lifetime. I just want people to vehemently disagree about me, dammit!