

Samantha James Interview - Interview with Samantha James

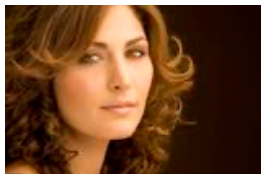
By DJ Ron Slomowicz, About.com Guide

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Voted to be one of the "Next 100" in Urb magazine, Samantha James has exploded onto the electronic dance music scene with the number one club chart hit "Rise." Working with producer Sebastian Arocha Morton (aka ROCAsound), her recently-released debut CD is a tasty mix of electronic sounds, tropical beats, and world vibes that showcase her sultry vocals and soulful songwriting. Lovers of the West Coast Om vibe will definitely be grooving to the songs "Deep Surprise," "Angel Love," and "Rise" for a long time to come.



Samantha James

www.myspace.com/SammyJmusic

DJ Ron Slomowicz: This past weekend, I drove around listening to your CD "Rise." Its like the perfect chill CD. How long has it taken to put it together?

Samantha James: It's been a two-year process, actually.

RS: The title track "Rise" was a big buzz record at the 2006 WMC.

Samantha James: Right, so that was about two years ago. We had been working on the song months prior to that. It's been a while now in the making and I'm so glad that it's finally done. I can't believe that this was all happening, it's kind of surreal.

RS: When you're working on music do you write a song first or do you work with the producer on a track?

Samantha James: We collaborate on a track together, or he would start a beat and then I would come in. We'd either come up with a melody together or he'd give me the track to take home with me and I'd usually listen to it in the car on the way home and I'd just start coming up with the melody and write lyrics to the melody. It would either be us in the studio together creating a beat or him sending me off with a beat that he created himself and me coming up with the melody, or us doing it together.

RS: When you say 'he,' who is he?

Samantha James: He is Sebastian Arocha Morton and he's a phenomenal producer that you might know as ROCAsound. As you can tell, I've been blessed to be able to work with this man because he's incredible. He started off doing remixes back in the day and then went on to produce songs for Sting, Counting Crows, Vikter Duplaix(CHECK SPELLING OF NAME) and a group that I'd loved a really long time called Fila Brazilia. He's an amazing musician who went to the Berklee School of Music. Although this album is a very electronically-driven album, he is a trained musician who plays the piano and every instrument that you could imagine.

RS: I really get the Fila Brazilia connection on the CD – it has a mellow, tropical feel in places and a real electronic groove in others.

Samantha James: I'm such a lover of electronic music and our intention when we were making the CD was to make songs with that electronic foundation that were real songs. Songs that could kind of cross over into a different scene of music listeners and not just stay in the electronic dance world. We made a point of it for the format of the songs to be traditional with a chorus, verse, hook, and B section.

RS: Electronic music that is actually songs and not tracks, what a concept.

Samantha James: There are a lot of electronic and house tracks where there are vocals and songs, but I don't know if they're formatted as real songs.

RS: What's the electronic music that you like to listen to?

Samantha James: It started off for me when I used to go to house club when I was a teenager. I loved listening to like Mark Farina and a lot of the Om music, which is kind of crazy because I am now part of the Om family. I listened to Donald Glaude and all of the DJs in the late 90s. I started listening to Fila Brazilia, Kruder & Dorfmeister and Thievery Corporation. Portishead was an influence for me as was Morcheeba and the Sneaker Pimps. I loved Everything But the Girl, Tracey Thorn is one of my idols. Another woman that I looked up to was Lady Miss Kier from Deee-Lite, whom I love more than you know.

RS: I notice that Deee-Lite is a common thread among just about ever female artist I speak to. What about Lady Miss Kier was so inspirational?

Samantha James: First of all, she's an amazing artist, both lyrically and vocally. She sang really fun songs and when you'd hear a Deee-Lite song, you'd want to get up and dance or sing along. There was just something about her that was so unique. I don't think anybody had ever really done what

people out there rooting for you. When an artist says I do this for my fans or because of my fans, I never understood that until this point in my career because they really play such a huge role in your wanting to sing and your desire to get up on stage and to create music. I want to say to them that they are definitely a huge reason why I love doing this and thank you for your positive energy and all of your amazing support.

Posted October 5, 2007

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RS: "Rise" recently hit number one on the Billboard Club Chart. How did you react when you found out about that?

Samantha James: There's no words to describe having one of your songs make it to number one on Billboard it's kind of a surreal feeling. I was shocked but I was also kind of relieved. After years and years of making music, something finally became a success for me.



Samantha James - Rise
OM Records

RS: You definitely got the indie cred with Urb Magazine calling you one of the "Next 100."

Samantha James: Absolutely, oh my god, that was amazing. This has all be so crazy for me to be completely honest. When you're an artist and you've been working with music for seven to eight years and then all of a sudden overnight people start to recognize it, love it and say wonderful things about it, it's such a humbling experience. There's no words to really describe the way that you feel when it finally starts to happen and everything starts to finally come to life.

RS: With the Enchanted Life, was there a specific story behind that song?

Samantha James: I wrote that song with Vikter Duplaix and we wanted to write a song about being in love and finding a person that you connect with and just going for it with no inhibitions. The song is about realizing that tomorrow isn't promised to anybody and that you shouldn't really hold back in any way when you find that person that you have a connection with. That song was inspired by love and finding that person for me and the one for you.

RS: What was it like recording "I Found You" with Celso Fonseca?

Samantha James: It was amazing, it was incredible. Meeting him was such a big deal for me because I love his music so much. That experience was also surreal and the whole process has been surreal for me. It was incredible and like a dream come true for me. He's an amazing man and an amazing musician and it was magical,

RS: With this album, are you going to be touring at all with it?

Samantha James: Absolutely, we're trying to figure out right now a tour schedule. We did some shows in San Francisco and Los Angeles for the release and I think it's going to be more like an organic-type process. We're trying to plan a tour but I think that it's going to be based upon how people respond to the album and where people want me to perform.

RS: Will you be performing with a live band?

Samantha James: We are putting a band together – a live electronic band. That's what I really want to do - a full show with a live band and a DJ.

RS: The Om sounds has a real West Coast vibe to it. How do you think your music is going to translate across the country?

Samantha James: I'm hoping that's what it does. Our intention when we were making the album was that it was eclectic enough and worldly enough to cross over to all different types of music listeners.

RS: What kind of responses or feedback are you getting from your fans on MySpace?

Samantha James: Amazing feedback, I've been receiving some of the most amazing messages from some of these people, I can't even believe it. Especially with my song Rise, I'll have people write me telling me about experiences that they've had in their lives where Rise has helped them through a traumatic or difficult situation. It's so crazy to think that I have fans, they write me amazing messages and I'm blown away every day by the things that people write to me.

RS: What would you like to say to all your fans out there?

Samantha James: Thank you for your support and for giving me such positive energy. The comments on MySpace and the response I've had from my fans has definitely helped me so much along this process. It's not the easiest thing to break out as a new artist, and it definitely helps when you have

people out there rooting for you. When an artist says I do this for my fans or because of my fans, I never understood that until this point in my career because they really play such a huge role in your wanting to sing and your desire to get up on stage and to create music. I want to say to them that they are definitely a huge reason why I love doing this and thank you for your positive energy and all of your amazing support.

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