

RACHAEL SAGE

"CHANDELIER"



"Pop music isn't crafted as carefully and expertly as this anymore, and Sage is the stitch between the great rock and pop traditions of the past and what those traditions have wrought in the hypermodern world of the present." — Billboard.com

"This album is more about fragility," says Rachael Sage of the elegant **CHANDELIER**. "A lot of my other albums tried to portray myself as being really resilient, but on this record I cared more about whether the music would uplift someone or just leave them stuck or hopeless."

CHANDELIER, Sage's eighth CD since her 1996 debut, is embedded with all the charm and beauty for which Rachael Sage is known. It arrives two years after her last album, a period in which she toured consistently—she's typically on the road 150-200 days a year—including her second tour of England and her first junket to Japan. Recorded at the Carriage House in Stamford, Connecticut, the basic tracks for the album were done at the end of 2006, with layers of instrumental textures and backing vocals overdubbed during intermittent respites from the road.

As with *THE BLISTERING SUN* in 2006, **CHANDELIER** was produced by Sage, recorded by her longtime collaborator John Shyloski (moe., Bill Evans, Johnny Winters) and mixed by Kevin Killen (U2, Peter Dinklage, Elvis Costello). The core performers were Rachael on lead vocals and keyboards, along with her live band, The Sequins: cellist Dave Eggar (Coldplay, Evanescence), drummer/percussionist Dean Sharp (Moby, Jane Siberry) and trumpeter Russ Johnson (Norah Jones, Aretha Franklin). They were augmented by A-list guests including guitarists Shane Fontayne (Bruce Springsteen, Sting, Marc Cohn), Ben Butler (Dar Williams, Erasure), Jack Petruzzelli (Rufus Wainwright, Gavin DeGraw) and Adam Levy (Norah Jones, Tracy Chapman); bassist Todd Sickafoose (Ani DiFranco); drummer Doug Yowell (Duncan Sheik, Suzanne Vega); accordionist/organist Rob Curto; percussionist Trina Hamlin; and violinist/violist Allison Cornell (Joe Jackson, Cyndi Lauper). **CHANDELIER** also benefits from more backing vocals than previous Sage albums, which were deftly provided by Gregory Douglass, Rachael Davis (Ellis Paul, Melissa Ferrick), Noe Venable (Ani DiFranco) and Dorothy Scott.

Sage recorded 22 basic tracks for the record, with many of the songs inspired by a situation involving a friend suffering from severe depression whom she wanted to help, but couldn't. "I was really desperate to make an album that somehow could find hope," she reveals, "even though I wasn't sure that I could create art that could do that for someone else. To get to that point I had to write a bunch of songs about how powerless I felt." *SITE-SEEING* wound up as the only song on the album which directly speaks to that issue.

CHANDELIER was initially conceived as a two-disc opus with powerlessness as the central theme. And then a new awareness took over. "At a certain point I started abandoning particular songs," Sage explains. Recognizing that many of the tunes were merely highlighting the problem without helping, she reassessed the big picture. "I had about nine songs when I realized that the direction of the album had shifted and, thankfully, I started to let go of this feeling of helplessness. And when I started doing that I realized how much work I had to do on myself in certain areas; at that point I wanted to make an album that was less about feeling like you can't do anything and more about hope."

A lifelong entertainer, Rachael Sage taught herself how to play piano and guitar, and how to sing—"I never sang other people's material," she says, "I would just sit at the piano and it would come out based on what I was writing." She's been playing, singing, songwriting, acting and/or dancing practically her entire life.

(continued on reverse)

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A resident of Manhattan's Bohemian East Village, Sage is a former college radio DJ who has, at various times, paid the bills by writing commercial jingles, working as a movie extra and doing graphic design work. Not one for blending in, Sage is typically adorned in bright, vibrant colors, hand-painting some of her own clothing—which she also did with her keyboard—and she's smitten with baubles, trinkets and sequins.

Ever the over-achiever, she is an award-winning songwriter (the prize list is lengthy, capped by Grand Prize in the 2001 John Lennon Songwriting Contest), she won the New York area Lilith Fair Talent Search and since 1996 she has run her own record label (MPress Records).

Sage's graceful, mellifluous piano, breathy, pitch-perfect vocals and dynamic style have invited comparisons to Laura Nyro, Patti Smith and Tori Amos; her music is ingrained with a bold, dramatic flair, while cellos, horns and understated guitars pepper her piano-based songs. "Every time I make an album I joke that it will be the first time I don't play any piano," she offers, "but because I had toured behind the bulk of the songs on Chandelier already I was connected to the way that I was playing and singing them, and because they have such a nice piano there at the Carriage House I couldn't resist."

CHANDELIER eventually became a 13-song, single-disc affair book-ended by VERTIGO, which was inspired by a lying adulterer who she briefly dated, and the title track, her take on the notion of appreciating what you've got. There's also a song she wrote to perform at a wedding (WISHBONE), one that came from her father's suggestion to write something suitable for The Ed Sullivan Show (ANGEL IN MY VIEW) and one which she wrote for her old friend, bluesman John Lee Hooker (BLUE LIGHT). Her first-ever recorded instrumental is included (BELOVED), as is only the second cover song to appear on a Rachael Sage album (Jump's MEXICO). There's a song about meeting someone at a funeral (INVINCIBLE), MY WORD speaks to the frustration of being typecast and HUNGER IN JOHN is about a few ex-boyfriends who went from rags to riches. CORINNE was inspired by a conversation with a stranger in a hotel restroom and she spontaneously penned MOONLIGHT AND FIREFLIES in a tent.

In the end, **CHANDELIER** may be about fragility, but it's also her strongest offering to date.

— JIM NELSON

CHANDELIER will be available nationwide May 6, 2008. For an updated tour schedule and Rachael's complete discography, visit www.rachaelsage.com.

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