



# ROSE CORA PERRY

Interview  
by  
Randy Skaggs

Of all the Indie artists I have been fortunate enough to meet through my online radio station, there is one who is a bit of an anomaly. Meet London, Ontario's Rose Cora Perry, former frontwoman of Anti-Hero, an alternative rock band dubbed as the '21st Century's Answer to Nirvana', by Coverzone magazine.

As a rock musician, she maintains a straightedge vegan lifestyle and continues to regularly lend her talents toward various non-for-profit and community events acting as an Emcee. Some of those organizations include VegFest London, London Defeat Depression and London's Run for Ovarian Cancer.

Her highly anticipated sophomore solo album is due for online release this November in which all proceeds from the sale of her disc are being directed to a non -for-profit organization (for more info and to order go to: <http://www.rosecoraperry.com/>).

Rose has evolved musically from her grunge frontwoman days. She continues to "bring the rock" with her live duo, a high energy duo with drummer Tyler Randall (formerly of Blind Mag and Swerve). I was fortunate enough to catch their live act here in Kingston at the 'Taste Of Kingston' festivities.

Her critically acclaimed debut solo album, "Off The Pages" was released in 2010 along with it's associated non profit organization 'Music Saves', which is aimed at helping troubled teens through the healing power of music. She's also an official spokeswoman for youth mental health issues on behalf of MindYourMind.ca, as well as a proud advocate of D.I.Y. ethics, straightedge culture, environmentalism, feminism AND veganism.

Rose has struggled with depression for most of her young life and how she faces it head on on a daily basis is an amazing story in itself. Rose hopes she can raise enough funds for MusicSaves, to conduct a nationwide tour speaking to troubled youth about her own high school struggles and how music proved an invaluable outlet for her: allowing her to not simply cope, but heal.

I recently sat down with this talented lady and

chatted about her career , how she handles her personal struggles and the organizations she so tirelessly works for.

***Rose, welcome to Q108 Kingston. Now, let's talk about a child prodigy here. A performer since the age of four, a writer since the age of seven and the CEO of a record company at the age of fifteen. Now, off the top of my head, I can't think of any other artist out there, and that includes The Beatles, The Monkees, The Rolling Stones, that have held such major accomplishments at such a young age. Is this something your parents guided you towards?***

Definitely not. My parents are not artistic at all(laughs). I will say that my business background definitely comes from them as I was raised by two entrepreneurs . That's definitely why I would have the inclination to start my business as a teenager for example because I understood the professionalism of releasing something on a record label as opposed to just putting it out there and not being taken seriously. In terms of musicality, I guess, you know, at a very young age I demonstrated some sort of ability so I got enrolled in all these different lessons to try and expand upon that. I started being expressive and writing and doing all those kinds of things. I commonly joke that I'm not really sure where I came from because my parents are both very, very much athletic and business people.

***That's what stands out for me, too, is the writing of songs at the age of seven. I couldn't even spell my own name then. Do you remember writing songs back then or what inspired you to sit down and start writing songs?***

Actually I have the transcription of the first song I ever wrote. It's hysterical. There's probably three or four key changes in it, as well as several tempo changes. Oddly enough, it was all that environmentalism and oil spills and wanting to save the world. It's like, for some reason as a young kid I knew I would become vegan and really, really care about animals and the environment.

***Amazing, Were the songs written in crayon on a sheet of paper?***

the Royal Conservatory where I did learn to read proper sheet music and all that stuff. So, it's written out on sheet music and all the little notes are drawn in with a pencil with little kid handwriting. It's quite funny.

***Now, I'm only scratching the surface hear with your list of accomplishments. You've performed at some of the world's renowned music festivals. You've graced the cover of magazines. Had some hits that made the top 100. And even attended the 53rd Grammy Awards in Los Angeles. What was that like?***

It was an interesting experience. Obviously it goes without saying it was quite an honor to receive an invitation but on the same token it was a bit heartbreaking because these people who are receiving these accolades and being rewarded . . . most of them don't write their own material. It was kind of odd to be sitting there in the audience celebrating the best so-called best musicians in the industry when they're not even legit musicians.

***Isn't that sad? That kind of shatters the balloon, doesn't it?***

Well, that was exactly it. So, I didn't really know what to take away from that experience because I'm sitting there thinking, well, okay, this is not . . . it felt like there was a bit of a disconnect. This is not really what I'm striving for. I'm striving to be recognized as a song writer, as an artist and this arguably the biggest celebration of those things. It's not even celebrating people who are songwriters. I'm not really sure how to reconcile that exactly.

***Did you get to perform?***

No! (laughs) I was definitely not up on stage with Lady Ga Ga or Katy Perry.

***You're also the former frontwoman of the major label band, Anti Hero. How long were you with them and how successful did that band become?***

Anti Hero was together about 3 1/2 to 4 years and we released our 1st album in 2005 and it got re-released when we got signed to Universal. We toured around North America quite successfully. We played Warp tours two years in a row. We got

to open for some major bands like Priestess, Jakalope and Die Mannequin. We did some awesome stuff while we were together as a band but sadly, like a lot of musicians seemed to find themselves...just kind of gave way to drug use and that kind of thing and it ended really, really, bad. That's never been my agenda. I'm only about the rock and roll. I'm not about the sex, the drugs and all that other stuff that goes along with it. I'm sure you can appreciate it didn't really end all that well.

***That's sad to hear. Has rock always been the genre you've been involved with?***

It hasn't been because, as I said I started out as a classically trained vocalist and originally I kind of wanted to pursue a career in New York on Broadway. Rock found me by accident. I was performing at a talent show and this girl comes up to me saying that she plays guitar and we should form a rock band.

Initially I scoffed at her because it's not at all how I saw my future. It was kind of a freeing experience, to be honest, when I gave it a try because unlike classical music which is so regimented by the book and you have to sing the notes as written on the sheet and only do the dynamic as it's written out. Rock is all about attitude and freedom and expressing yourself and, you know, not having limitations in that way. I guess there was a rocker in me wanting to get out because I've kind of been doing it since I was 15 (laughs).

***Did it destroy your vocals at first doing the higher pitches and things like that? Did you have to go through any other training or were you able to just let loose?***

I had to relearn how to sing. I didn't want to damage my voice in any regard because there are so many terrible stories about singers with incredible ranges that end up getting gross on their vocal chords. Then they lose octaves, the consequence of not singing properly or pushing themselves too hard. And so initially when I tried to sing rock in the early days I was definitely going far to nasily because I was struggling to find my own originality.

I definitely experimented, especially in the Anti





Anti Hero days with adding some grit and a bit of growl to my voice to but I always tried to be careful about pushing my voice to far because I didn't want to damage my vocal chords.

So I would say with the new album I'm releasing this fall I've really been able to amalgamate my classical training, that background with my rock sensibility and find a happy medium between the two. But it's taken me a long time to figure out how badly I want to sing rock but still incorporate the fact that I am a legitimate singer. I'm not just somebody who screams all the time.

***What's the biggest crowd you've ever performed in front of?***

About 500,000 people, actually, as a solo artist in 2010 at Pittsburgh's Three River Regatta. I was up there just with my acoustic guitar and it was as intimidating as hell. It was awesome to be able to say I did that and that you know I did as a solo artist too. Part of me really wishes I could have celebrated something so awesome with my

former band because we really did deserve that kind of thing. But as I said, it fell apart really badly and so, I went solo still picking up pieces of my broken heart from all those experiences and I needed to just go for it.

***Were you nervous at all?***

I was. It's because I had been performing with a band for so long to this point I honestly forgot how it felt to be up there by myself. So I started getting that crazy wobbly leg syndrome where you're getting more bravado out of your voice then you intended because your legs are shaking tremendously and you have no control over them.

***Besides your very impressive resume, what I really like is the tireless and unselfish work you do with young people. Bck in 2010 you launched your critically acclaimed solo album 'Off The Pages' along with MusicSaves, a non profit foundation. Can you please tell us about the album and what MusicSaves is all about?***

Sure. So, like I said, on 2010 I was still very much recovering from my band experiences which weren't ideal in terms of how they all fell apart. I was going through a real emotional time and I was fairly convinced that was probably going to be the last album I that I would ever make. It was very experimental, it was very,very wierd.

I played everything just live off the floor and I decided that all the proceeds I raised from the sale that I wanted to put into somethong good because I wanted to be able to give back and show my appreciation for all the great successes that I've had. Even though it didn't end that great with my band I'm still very proud of what we were able to accomplish. So, I was thinking about all my different experiences and things that really resonated with me the most.

What really, really inspired me the most when I was a teenager to write seriously and pick up a guitar for the first time and everything. I will use music as a form of cathartist to deal with my own personal struggles in my life. So, even though I started writing really, really young I would say I didn't start seriously songwriting until I was in my 1st band.

I struggled with a lot of things like depression and an eating disorder. I was kind of, let's say, the loser at my high school. I got picked on a lot and bullied a lot. So, when you're a teenager trying to find your own way, your feeling self conscious.

You don't necessarily have the right coping mechanisms in place to know how to deal with all those stresses. You need some sort of outlet to turn to so that you don't take it out on yourself or others or turn to something terrible. So, songwriting was that for me and I acknowledged how important songwriting had been in my life in terms of overcoming these things.

So, MusicSaves was born because I wanted to be able to impart on to other kids who had gone through similar things or going through similar things how music really, really is a beautiful and wonderful way to connect with others. And a really positive way to express yourself and express those feelings that are often gone unspoken and you feel like nobody else gets you. It's a good way to be able to channel those energies to prevent you from doing something

destructive. The goal is to raise enough proceeds so that I can do a tour across campuses, like high schools across Canada both doing a seminar talking about my story and how music helped me and saved me in that capacity as well as performing songs.

I'm still trying to raise enough proceeds to do that because, obviously, touring is extremely expensive. I will say with my first album, 'Off The Pages', I did sell out all the copies and all the proceeds went into a fund. I'm still waiting on that fund. It's a work in progress. It's difficult in today's era to be able to sell any form of music because people just kind of steal it.

Even if you're trying to do something really good and give it back, it's an expensive endeavor. So, it's something that I'm working on, something that I hope will come into fruition. But in the meantime what I've tried to do in order to honor the cause is I've donated my time as an emcee to a lot of non-for-profits.

I've spoken openly about my own struggles with depression at a variety of special events as well as written articles on it as a way of still trying to honor the cause. I'm hopeful I'll be able to raise enough funds to actually, you know, to bring the MusicSaves to the world to save lives.

***You're also the official Emcee for London, Ontario's Walk and Talk for mental health?***

Absolutely. That's one of the causes I've been involved in from the ground up. They started a couple of years ago and I signed on as the Emcee and I've done it now since it started. It's a really, really, really terrific cause because it's all about creating dialogue and breaking down the stigma of mental health and creating a safe place for people to be able to share their stories without judgement.

Without fear of repercussion. Just knowing that other people on the room connect and understand with what they are going through or what they have experienced. Were all there to help support each other. I've been the Emcee, as I said, in that capacity since the beginning. This past year I actually got up on stage and shared my own personal story too. Which was really an emotional experience for me and I was glad I was

able to do that and relate to people on a more significant way as well.

***I can understand how difficult that must be for you. Where do you draw the strength from to be able to get up on a stage and share all that with other people?***

I think it's a lot scarier to think about then once you actually do it. I think we all have ways of helping each other and connecting with each other in life.

I think that if by telling your own story can make a difference for just one person that will change the whole world. As an artist, even with my songwriting. Even though a lot of my stuff is inspired by dark experiences that I've gone through, I've always tried to leave my listeners with a sense of help.

Yes, I get it. I get what you're going through. I get that you've experienced darkness in your life but there is light at the end of the tunnel. It's always kind of been one of my artistic missions to help others with what I do.

It's difficult to think about 'Oh, my gosh. I'm going to self disclose some really, really intimate details about my life to a room full of complete strangers. But if you think about the potential outcome of saving somebody and helping them and being able to relate to them, it's totally worth it.

***Are a lot of the songs you write based on personal traumas that you've gone through?***

I try to write about a variety of issues. A lot of them, obviously, are based on my own life experiences (laughs). Yes a lot of it is coming from personal trials and tribulations but then I also like to make commentary on social issues that are going on in the world.

Sometimes I delve into the realm of politics or just issues I feel need addressing in general. On my last album it wasn't based on my personal experiences but experience that I'd seen friends go through, that are very near and dear to me.

I wrote a song all about abusive relationships which was, obviously, a pretty heavy hitting topic



<http://www.rosecoraperry.com>



music as a universal language to connect and relate with people.

Rose has three visions she hopes to achieve as an artist:

I think that if you touch on these issues and somebody hears it and they are going through that experience, they feel validated and they feel okay knowing that they're not alone.

- 1) to inspire
- 2) to provoke thought
- 3) to relate

That's what music has always done for me.

Judging by her dedication to her music and her tireless work helping those in need, she has definitely achieved those visions.

That's why I think it's important not to just write the lovey, dovey, bubbly, you know, happy stuff all the time.

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Not to say there's anything wrong with that. I think that we often times forget the power music has as to completely change your world and completely change your perspective.

### MusicSaves with Rose Cora Perry

