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Shelia M. Goss

BellaOnline's [Women In Music](#) Editor

Sumeet - A Singer to Watch out For



After enjoying **Sumeet's** CD, I was thrilled to be able to interview her. Sit back and take a moment to learn more about this up and coming star. Some of the things Sumeet says will surprise you. She's wise beyond her age.

How did you come up with the name Sumeet or is that your birthname?

Sumeet is my given birth name. It means 'good friend,' which is cool, because I try to be. Of course nobody could pronounce it correctly in school - I was mostly called Summit. Rather odd, considering my name is spelled exactly as it sounds. My teachers tried to call me Sammy for a while to make it easier, but come on, Sammy? I wasn't really feeling that!

Did you always know you wanted to be a singer?

Singing was something I just did before I realized it was what I wanted to do. Growing up where I did, on a farm on the outskirts of a little town in Canada, being the odd one out, the only non-white kid in school, I never really fit in. It didn't bother me, I didn't cry or wish I had friends, it was just how it was. So during recess instead of playing with the other kids, I would be putting on concerts for all my imaginary friends (yup, then I turned into the weird little Indian girl that talked to herself). I was constantly being sent to the principle's office for humming during class -

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something I swear I didn't realize I was doing- many a detention there. I had a puppy dog (my best friend) and I would put on shows for him all day, along with my imaginary crew which was always with me.

I was always singing. One of my favorite games was pretending I was in a singing competition in which I would play each contestant. There would be 15 contenders and I would sing each of them differently, remembering the style I made up for each contestant for every round. And regardless of how good they were, one of me won every time!

The first time I performed at a serious event my brother was MCing a university Culture show which ran into some technical difficulties. There were over 2000 people there and he had to kill about an hour while they fixed the problems. And so he called me out from the audience - me! A little, overly-skinny, high school kid to sing for the crowd. I was SO nervous! I sang from behind my brother at first, then got a little more daring and sang with my back to the audience. After a couple of tunes the crowd was giving me so much love I turned around and gave them love right back. It was incredible to me. That was my first taste and after that I just couldn't get enough. I came to realize music was the only thing that made me happy, the only thing I wanted to pursue in my life.

Who chose the songs for your CD and did you write any of the lyrics?

I chose the songs for the album along with the guidance of my manager/producer, Amil. I trust his opinion and advice over anyone, so between the two of us we fine tuned the choices and if there was any song either of us weren't feeling, it didn't make the album.

I wrote on most of the songs on the album although there are a few that were written just for me. I've been fortunate enough to link up with a great team out here and we work on all aspects of the album together, from writing to producing. It usually starts as an idea someone brings to the table and together we shape it into a song. I've learned how important it is to surround yourself with good people that believe in the same things that you do.

Of late, it's seems like you'll buy an album and it's only got a few good tracks on it, the rest are just fillers - and that's one of the reasons why the state of music is where it's at right now. We are all firm believers in good music, in musicianship, in heart and soul in every song - so if we don't feel a song delivers that, it's simply cut, no questions asked. Save the Music.

You've already collaborated with Elephant Man, who else would you love to work with?

Elephant man was great... I've been a fan of his for years so it was great when we got the opportunity to work with him. A dream of mine would be to work with **Prince**, the ultimate performer. Now that would be incredible! I'm in such awe of his skills, I'd probably just sit here, tongue-tied, watching him work. There's just so much to be learned from him! He would be my number one pick, hands down!

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What advice would you give other aspiring singers?

I would say above all, to remain true to yourself. I know it's a very cliché thing to say but it's so important to stay true to the melodies and tunes you hear in your head - that's what makes an artist and artist. You can't worry about whether radio will play it or if people will like it... if it's an honest extension of yourself it will stand out. There are no rules in a song, it doesn't have to be any which way. A lot of people try to make songs they think people want to hear, they hear what's 'hot' on the radio and try to do tunes like that but the radio is no guide! The radio just keeps playing the same stuff over and over and over again until it's grown on us and we have no choice but to think it's hot!

That's also why most of the songs we hear on the radio sound the same. There's hardly any musicianship in the music anymore. Everything sounds the same!

But then there are artists like **Prince**, or **Outkast** or **Erykah Badu**; they make music they believe in, they're not worried about the mainstream, and their albums are phenomenal, track for track. So that would be my advice to any aspiring artists out there - ignore those radio waves and just translate what you hear in your head, make sure every song means something to you. Save the Music.

Do you see yourself singing more ballads in the future?

Of course! Every R&B singer loves ballads! I do have some on the album, there's a nice mix of something for everyone. I'm not setting to write some ballads specifically, it's whatever moves you, how you feel, what the music says...but I'm sure I'll be singing more in the future. Ballads or up-tempo songs, music moves me.

What is a typical day like for Sumeet?

Let's see, a typical day. I wake up relatively early (kinda depends on how late I went to bed) and try and hit the gym for about an hour - got to keep the cardio up for stage shows! I'll get home and rehearse for at least an hour, usually more depending on what shows are coming up when, and then I'll work on whatever song I'm in the middle of recording for a bit. I try to follow a rough schedule to get everything in but most of the time it feels like there aren't enough hours in the day! I try to study the masters, **Aretha**, **Billie Holiday**, **Nina Simone**, every chance I can - there's so much to learn from them. I get beats from different producers, so I do a lot of writing and reference recording at home; there's always new material to work on. By 6ish I'm out of the house on my way to the studio where we'll stay until around midnight, later if it's a weekend, and after that I'll get home, unwind, listen to some tunes, eat a big bowl of mint chocolate chip ice cream and knock out for the night.

Who are some of your favorite singers?

Where to start! **Marvin Gaye** was one of the first artists that sparked my love of soul so he's definitely up there. I love the

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power that **Aretha** sings with, the sweetness that **Donny Hathaway** delivers with every note, **Nina Simone** and **Billy Holiday** with their distinct sounds... there's just too many! Artists like **Stevie Wonder, Jimmie Hendrix, Prince** – I'm so inspired by these artists that step away from the mainstream and sing their heart. Save the Music.

Thank you Sumeet for taking time out during the holidays to interview with me. You're a very talented young lady and I am honored to be able to interview you at this stage of your career. As long as you keep the spirit of music in your soul, you'll be around a long time. I'll continue to watch your career as it soars straight to the top.

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