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hype

FRESH FACE *Serena Ryder* RYDING HIGH SERENA RYDER EMBARKS ON HER FIRST HEADLINE TOUR ACROSS CANADA

Serena Ryder's been around for a while. She's played at several major music festivals, toured Australia with Steve Earle, opened for Aerosmith and has four albums under her belt. So when she was awarded the prize for Best New Artist at the 2008 Juno Awards, we were surprised. Ryder doesn't seem to mind.

"The big thing was that I was recognized and supported by my peers," says the 25-year-old singer-songwriter. "A majority of them want me to continue doing what I've been doing. And to be thought of as someone who is new in their career, with possibly the best yet to come, is the compliment I got from that."

Ryder released her fourth studio album in Canada last November. *Is It O.K.* marks the end of a painful personal chapter for the young artist. "I had just lost one of my dearest friends as I was writing the record. It was a full-on time and I had never experienced anything like that," she says. "I was in it and not trying to get out of it. Not trying to say, 'When is this going to end?' And I think as soon as I got to the point where I didn't ask 'When is this going to stop?' that's where the light came in and where I felt I could breathe again."

Is It O.K. marked her introduction to the US, as the record's release last February was her first south of the border. She recorded the album in Santa Monica, in the same studio where Fleetwood Mac made *Rumours*. "[The studio] was crazy-amazing, with so much history in the walls. And the musicians played with the best of the best."

On the horizon for Ryder is a collaboration with Kevin Drew of Broken Social Scene and Toronto-based band The Beauties on some cover singles: "We're doing a bunch of crazy rocking-out songs for the UK, because that's really their scene – doing covers of current songs the way that you would sing them."

Serena Ryder says that her Juno win last year changed something in the ether for her. Armed with a title that's been previously bestowed on huge recording artists like Avril Lavigne, Michael Bubl  and Feist, she prepares to embark on her Canadian tour. "It's going to be my first tour bus tour – ever. My own tour bus!"

FOR TOUR DATES,
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