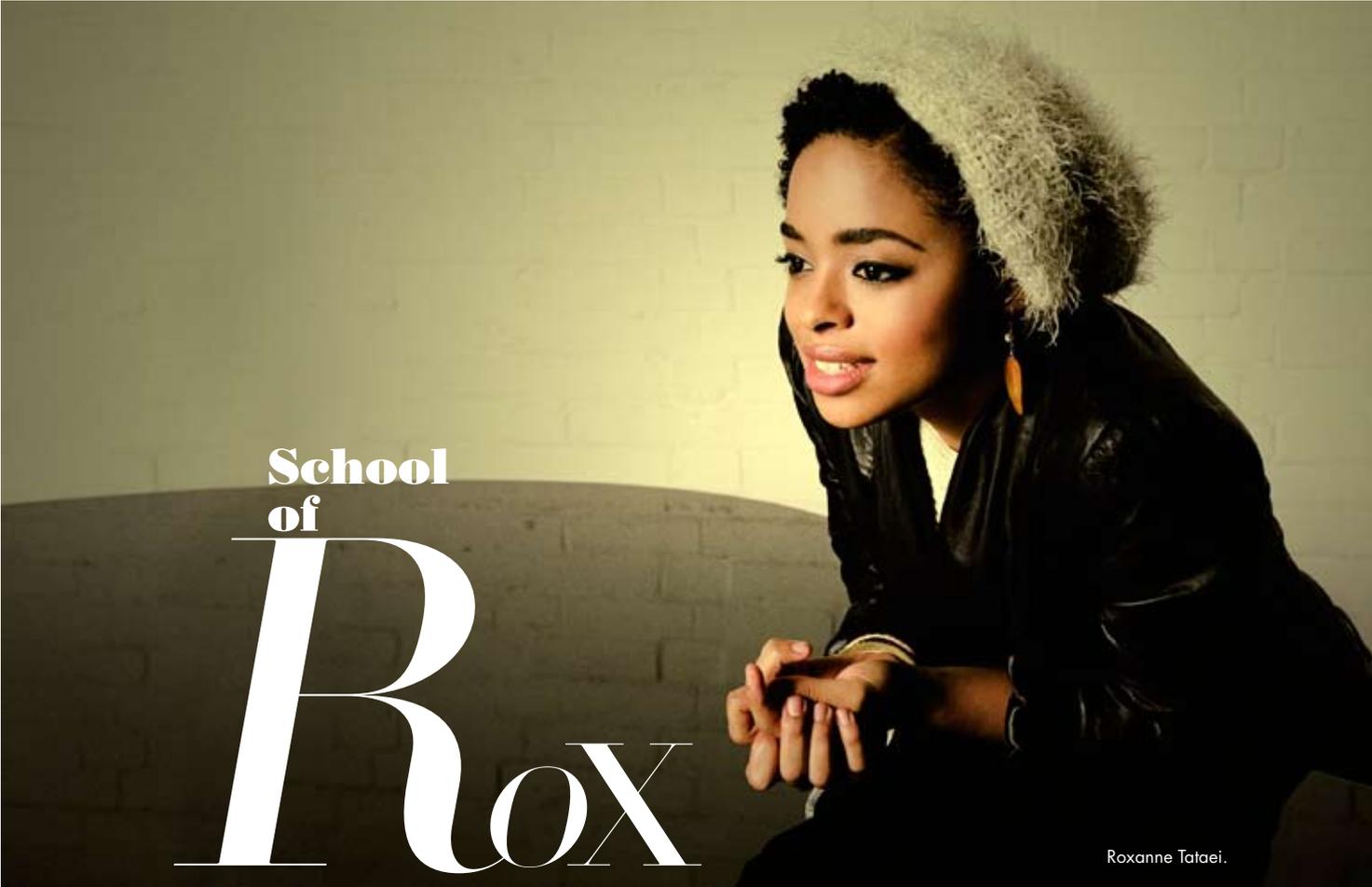


# BAZAAR MUSIC



School  
of  
**Rox**

Roxanne Tataei.

SINGER ROXANNE TATAEI, WITH FANS INCLUDING MARK RONSON, IS 2010'S GIRL MOST LIKELY. BY LEE SUCKLING

"It all started at church," says 22-year-old singer/songwriter Roxanne Tataei, whose soulful debut album, *Memoirs*, is out this month. "The choirmaster saw something in me from an early age," she adds, although shyness initially made her dread performing. "But I learnt to love it."

The half-Jamaican, half-Iranian south Londoner, known simply as Rox, has been called the "nu-soul queen". But she's quick to dismiss any talk that it's been a short rise to the top. "This didn't happen overnight," she insists, adding that she's been writing songs since she was 14. Nor did she jump at the first offer of a recording contract. "I met a lot of undesirable characters who wanted me to sign my life away with very little return, which clued me up on what [the music industry] was and how wary you have to be," she says.

At 18, Rox decided to "leave music for a while" and volunteer for a charity in Mexico. "I [wrote] loads of songs and came back feeling really hungry for music."

She was quickly signed by Rough Trade, the agency that propelled Welsh vocalist Duffy to stardom. A year of songwriting saw her album come together, with assistance from Grammy-winning "Commissioner" Gordon Williams, best

known for his work with Lauryn Hill and Amy Winehouse. *Memoirs* was completed with the help of producer Al Shux, the master behind the Jay-Z/Alicia Keys megahit, *Empire State of Mind*.

Rox seems destined for similar success, with her tour with British DJing royalty Mark Ronson drawing legions of new fans. Her sound is a mix of acoustic guitar-led pop with upbeat R&B and feel-good reggae. Lyrically, the songs are influenced by heartache. "Coming out of my teens, I met a guy I was completely in love with and he messed me around," she says, adding that songs such as her single, *My Baby Left Me*, were a "sort of therapy". "It's great when you can make something beautiful out of a horrible situation."

Rox's personal style, like her music, is a clash of retro and modern trends. "I love natural materials, like suede and leather, but I mix it up with a bit of pattern and the tribal thing," she says. "I'm particular about [what] I wear because this is going to say who I am," Rox adds. "[The music] does complement the styling. I don't think the tribal element is in there though — maybe that's for the second album." ■

Rox's album, *Memoirs*, is out on Rough Trade Records; [www.thisisrox.com](http://www.thisisrox.com).

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