



Dress Barbara Tfank; earrings Tom Binns; bracelet pebble london.com; all other jewellery Rita's own

◀ from singing in front of her classmates. All she knew was that when she did, the feeling was unlike any other. "I remember singing in a choir at a concert at the Royal Albert Hall when I was 11, and feeling amazed by the effect the music had on people. It was the most beautiful thing in the world. From that moment on, I couldn't imagine doing anything else."

That single-mindedness – along with her talent – was what Jay-Z picked up on when he first heard about Rita. She was en route to her best friend's graduation when she got the call from Roc Nation. "Next thing I knew, I was on a plane to New York in my Run DMC T-shirt to see Jay." Meeting the music mogul was intimidating enough, she smiles, "but that was nothing compared to the moment I met Beyoncé. She was my idol and suddenly there we were, sitting down together. She was the nicest, gentlest, most humble woman. There's something really calming about talking to her. She gave me the best piece of advice anyone's ever given me about this job: 'Keep your family close.'"

When you've been on tour for three months and you won't be going home for another three weeks, that's easier said than done. Do her mum, a psychiatrist, and dad, a pub owner, worry about what stardom might do to her? "No," she laughs. "All they worry about is whether I'm eating right. And whether I have enough contact lenses." Having watched Amy Winehouse's fate play out, does it worry her? "No," she bats away the notion with a hand. "What happened to Amy was such a tragedy, but do you know what I think? That some people – Elvis Presley, Marilyn Monroe, Tupac, Michael Jackson and Amy – deserve to be in a better place than anyone else. Those people are so great that they can't even be on earth."

A moment's introspection is cut short by a knock at the door. It's the hair stylist coming to say goodbye. "When are you going to get ►

HOW COOL IS RITA ORA?

The tunes. The style. The lipstick. Rita's not just the biggest name of 2012 – she's the pop star we've been waiting for, says Celia Walden ►

Photographs by Walter Chin Creative & Fashion Director Charlotte-Anne Fidler



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