

Ron Sexsmith – Bio

Ron Eldon Sexsmith was born on 8th January 1964 in St. Catharines, Ontario, a town located near Niagara Falls. A music fan from an early age, when he turned fourteen Ron formed his first band. Three years later he began working as a solo performer at the Lion's Tavern in nearby Port Dalhousie. Initially Ron performed popular cover songs, but as the years passed he would include more obscure material in his sets. Eventually Sexsmith turned his hand to composing original material. Married at the age of twenty-one, his first son, Christopher, was born in 1985, and the Sexsmith family relocated to Toronto soon afterwards.

"Out Of The Duff" was a cassette only release featuring songs by Sexsmith on one side and a performer called Claudio on the other, and was followed by a collection titled **"There's A Way."** He eventually formed The Uncool and their debut album **"Grand Opera Lane"** was named after a small alleyway in Toronto's financial district. An eleven song collection the album was co-produced by Bob Wiseman of Canadian country rock band Blue Rodeo and The Uncool. While the sessions commenced in December 1987, the project took over three years to complete due to Wiseman's touring and recording commitments with Blue Rodeo. The album was initially issued on cassette only, and apart from Ron, The Uncool consisted of Steve Charles [bass, piano, backing vocals] and Don Kerr [drums, percussion]. All the songs were penned by Sexsmith, except **"The Laughing Crowd"** a Sexsmith/Wiseman co-write. Ron Sexsmith's second child, Evelyne, was born during 1989.

Sexsmith was subsequently signed to a solo deal by Interscope Records, a subsidiary of Universal Music, and his self-titled debut album was helmed by Mitchell Froom – production of one track was credited to Daniel Lanois. Froom also took the helm for **"Other Songs"** and **"Whereabouts."** In 1998 **"Other Songs"** won the Roots & Traditional Album of the Year Juno. Steve Earle and Ray Kennedy produced **"Blue Boy,"** Ron's final Interscope release. Sexsmith's marriage ended in 2001 and his current partner [ok, second wife] is Colleen Hixenbaugh. A musician, she's a former member of By Divine Right and half of the duo JackAndGinger [respectively, Hixenbaugh and Paul Linklater]. Signing next with Nettwerk Records, **"Cobblestone Runway"** was produced by London-based Swedish-born producer Martin Terefe. Sexsmith first worked with the Terefe when he accompanied Shea Seger on **"Always,"** a cut from her debut album **"May Street Project"** [2001]. The following year, produced by Terefe, Ron performed the title track on the tribute album **"This Is Where I Belong: The Songs Of Ray Davies and The Kinks."** **"Rarities"** a collection of 'demos, single B-sides and unreleased tracks,' was issued in Canada by the imprint Linus Entertainment.

A note on the rear cover of the **"Retriever"** liner dedicated the album to the memory of Elliott Smith, June Carter Cash and Johnny Cash, and the collection was once again produced by Terefe. In 2005 Sexsmith won a Songwriter of the Year Juno [the Canadian version of a Grammy] for **"Whatever It Takes,"** a song on the latter recording. **"Destination Unknown,"** according to Sexsmith was a collection of "misfit songs" and this Everly Brothers style recording was credited to him and longtime friend/drummer/cellist Don Kerr – who also produced the disc. **"Time Being"** marked a reunion with producer Froom [Elvis Costello, Crowded House, Suzanne Vega, Paul McCartney]. **"Destination Unknown"** and **"Time Being"** were V2 Music releases in the U.K. while in the States they were, respectively, issued by Thirty Tigers and Ironworks Music [the latter being Kiefer Sutherland's label]. **"Destination Unknown"** scored Juno nominations for Roots & Traditional Album of the Year and Songwriter of the Year. Sexsmith contributed a guest vocal to **"Lo Mismo Que You [If Only]"** a track on the [Alexis Puentes led] Alex Cuba Band album **"Humo De Tabaco"** which won that year's Juno for World Music Album of the Year.

"Exit Strategy Of The Soul," produced by Terefe, was released by the North Carolina label Yep Roc Records in the late summer of 2008. Sexsmith's songs have been covered by numerous artists, including Rod Stewart, Nick Lowe, Curtis Stigers, and opera star Anne Sophie Van Otter.

Discography :

with The Uncool - **"Out Of The Duff"** [1985] ; **"There's A Way"** [1986] ; **"Grand Opera Lane"** [1991] : as Ron Sexsmith & Don Kerr - **"Destination Unknown"** [2005] :

Solo - **"Ron Sexsmith"** [1995] ; **"Other Songs"** [1997] ; **"Whereabouts"** [1999] ; **"Blue Boy"** [2001] ; **"Cobblestone Runway"** [2002] ; **"Rarities"** [2003] ; **"Retriever"** [2004] ; **"Time Being"** [2006] ; **"Exit Strategy Of The Soul"** [2008] :

Arthur Wood

Kerrville Kronikles 08/08.

[690 words]