

## Interviews: Singer Rex Smith, Adult Film Star Seka Remember the 1980s

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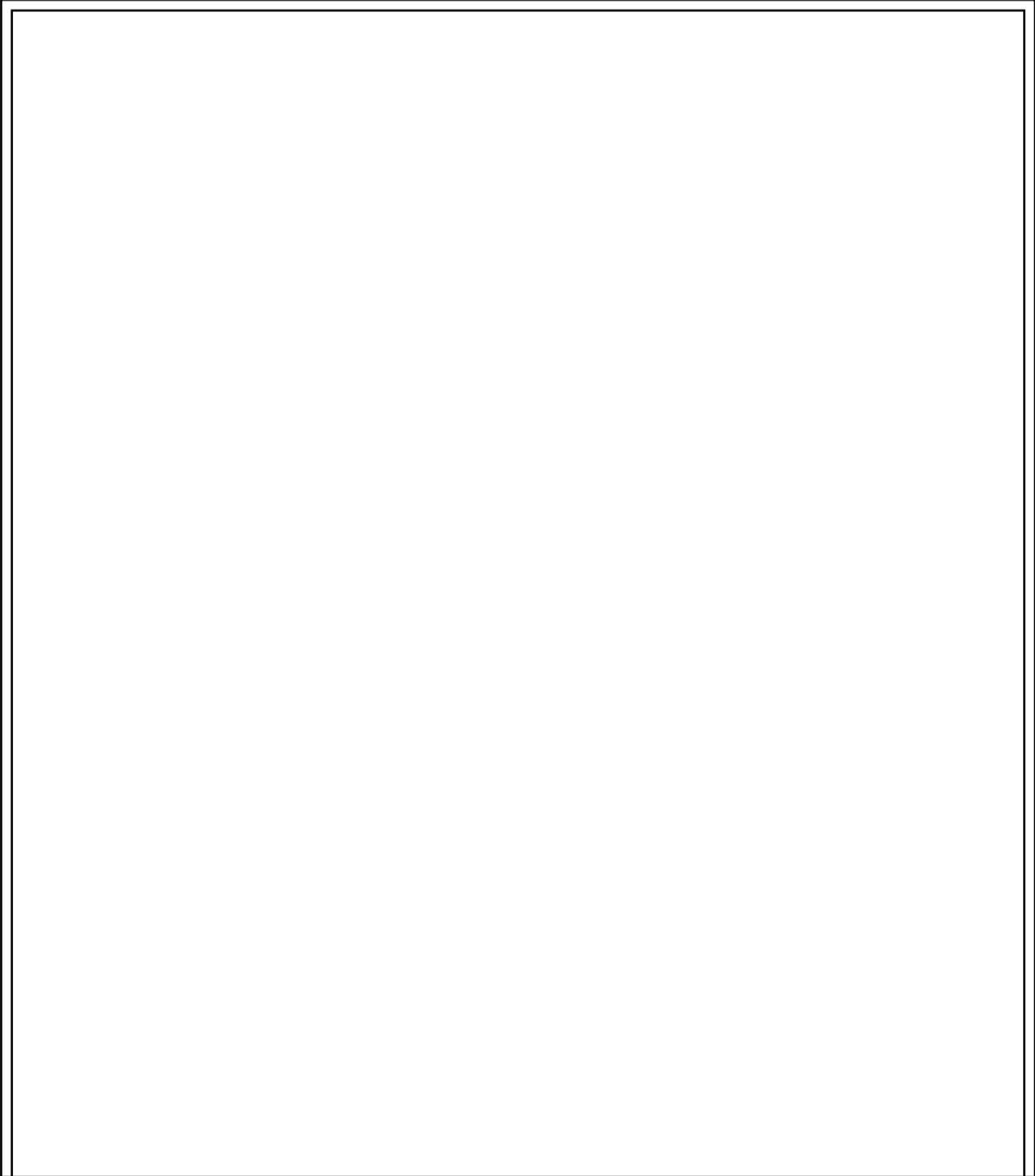
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CHICAGO – Two performers who made their marks during the latter days of the 1970s, and into the ‘80s are singer/actor Rex Smith and adult film star Seka. Even though they took different roads in their show business journey, they both were notable around the same time.

Rex Smith and Seka appeared at the Hollywood Celebrities & Memorabilia Show (now called “The Hollywood Show”) in 2011, and HollywoodChicago.com sent photographer Joe Arce to take some Exclusive Photos, and they both sat down for interviews about their different but era-intersecting resumes.

### Rex Smith, Singer of “You Take My Breath Away”

Rex Smith is familiar to anyone who remembers the summer of 1979, when his pop hit “You Take My Breath Away” peaked at number 10 on the Billboard charts. The song originated in a TV movie called “Sooner or Later,” in which Smith also starred. His follow-up 1981 hit was a duet – “Everlasting Love” with Rachel Sweet – that included a popular video in the early MTV era. The versatile performer was also the original Danny Zuko in the Broadway version of “Grease,” and had the role of Frederic in the stage and screen versions of “The Pirates of Penzance.” Smith has stuck with the stage since then, and has several albums and numerous soundtracks to his credit.





Rex Smith at the Hollywood Celebrities &amp; Memorabilia Show, Chicago, March 2011

*Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com*

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Your video for ‘Everlasting Love’ is a totally awesome 1980s classic. What did you do with the headband you wore in during that shoot?

**Rex Smith:** [Laughs] Yeah, that headband! Where is that headband? [laughs] Recently, I was in a Broadway show, and a gentleman came up to me and wanted to make amends for stealing my Walkman some 32 years ago. I told him that wasn’t just any type of Walkman, it was given to me by the president of Sony and was the prototype for that product. The guy who stole it is now a fully realized show business player, and told me at the time he was at my house and had never seen anything like the Walkman, and stuck it in his pocket. So maybe that’s what happened to the headband. I picture somebody coming forward and saying, ‘you know, the headband was on your coffee table and I took it.’ So I’m still looking for that headband. [laughs]

**HollywoodChicago.com:** So what came first, the TV movie ‘Sooner or Later’ or the song ‘Take My Breath Away’ and how did the director of that movie end up writing the song?

**Smith:** They were simultaneous. At the time, my band ‘REX’ was opening for bands like Lynyrd Skynyrd and Ted Nugent. That group is on a couple of the six albums I’ve made that were recently re-released. ‘You Take My Breath Away’ was produced by Charlie Calello, who was the “Fifth Season,” and producer of the group “The Four Seasons.” I went in there and the vocal on that track was the second take, with the first being just for sound levels. After that second pass, Charlie told me to come in, he thought that we had it.

When I got into the booth, Charlie pushed on six faders [controls on the sound board] and took out six background singers that he told me he hired to cover all the bases, and said he didn’t need them anymore. After listening to the song about halfway through, I told everyone I had to go to the bathroom. I locked myself in, and I actually started crying, because I knew I had a hit. I saw the ball going right over the green monster.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Beyond your hits, what style of music has really made a difference for you in your life, and how did you honor it in subsequent recordings over the years?



Album Cover with Head Band for 'Everlasting Love'  
Photo credit: Wounded Bird Records

**Smith:** I've spent the last 30 years of my career on Broadway, 650 shows of 'Sunset Boulevard,' 'The Scarlet Pimpernel.' 'Pirates of Penzance,' even going back to 'Grease,' it's a language that I know. I've probably spent more time singing than talking. I've been involved with 30 piece orchestras, and crews of a 120 people at 8 o'clock in the morning. It's something that can't be replicated today, the business is just so different.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Your years on the Broadway stage are legendary. When you took over as Danny Zuko in "Grease" just as the movie was getting popular, what did you make sure you did differently than John Travolta?

**Smith:** I already started the role before the film came out, and after the film opened, I got a call telling me that we had sold 300,000 original cast albums. The impact of that phone call left me in a state of wonderful shock.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** In the development of the Pirates of Penzance, what appreciation did you develop for the original Gilbert & Sullivan version and how did the cast best honor them?

**Smith:** We treated it like the ink wasn't dry on the musical. I was still young and inexperienced as to what the Broadway thing was. Linda Ronstadt, Kevin Kline and I were the ultimate Reeses Peanut Butter Cup. You take a guy from the Julliard School [Kline] and mix him with Linda and a guy who toured with Ted Nugent and it came out as lightning in a bottle.

One thing I did learn, on the first day of rehearsal. I told Kevin Kline, 'I don't care who she is, I'm asking Linda Ronstadt out.' Kline told me, 'Let me give you some advice as a Broadway veteran, you don't want to go out with your leading lady. It's an open ended run and things might not last, and you still have to face her in the show.' I thought he was right. Then after lunch Linda came up to me and said, 'Hey, Kevin just asked me out.' [laughs] That's what I learned about Broadway.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** What type of performance – Broadway, television or as a rocker – best defines you as a showman, and which one best defines you as closest to who you really are?

**Smith:** I've had an interesting career in television, but I'm not the type of person who wants to hang out at the crafts services table waiting for a shot. I think it's the 30-piece orchestra and leading a company in a Broadway effort, I love that responsibility and I get the best of all worlds.

★ Seka, Adult Film Star

Dorothea Patton, better known to the world as Seka, was an actress in X-rated films during the classic "Boogie Nights" era of that genre. Born and raised in Virginia, she got into the pornography business by running several adult bookstores with her second husband in the early 1970s. Some nude modeling led to films in Los Angeles, where she adopted the name of Seka, after a female blackjack player she knew from Las Vegas. She made about 200 films until 1982, but stopped doing them when the industry began to change. She has maintained the business of being Seka since then, and was a popular fixture on Chicago radio in the late 1990s.





Seka at the Hollywood Celebrities & Memorabilia Show, Chicago, March 2011  
Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

**HollywoodChicago.com:** When is the last time you thought about being Dorothea Patton, and who was the biggest influence on her?

**Seka:** I think about her everyday, because I am her everyday! [laughs] Well, I'm Seka right now for the show, but in everyday life I am Dottie. My grandmother Bessie May was my biggest influence when I was growing up.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Since you knew the real John Holmes, what did you think of the way he was portrayed in the film 'Wonderland'?

**Seka:** I didn't know John in that way, I'm not saying he wasn't that way, but that's not how I knew him. Also I never hung out with anyone I worked with, I did the films or photo shoot, and I went home. I really didn't want to associate with the people in the industry.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Speaking of film adaptations, in your opinion, what did Boogie Nights get right about your era, and where was it inaccurate?

**Seka:** I can't ever imagine that we dressed that poorly. [laughs] I look back at my old pictures and films, and it was just costumes. Did we really dress that badly in those days? It was fairly accurate, and I've heard that Julianne Moore was playing a version of me. They did contact me to talk about it, and I asked them what they were going to pay me. They said they weren't going to pay me. Well then, I told them I'm not talking to them.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** You were one of the first woman to direct a porn film. What was the first thing you wanted to do different when you were at the helm?



Seka in 'Careful, He May Be Watching'  
Photo credit: Seka.com

**Seka:** I wanted it to be more from a female’s perspective. As much as I love men, we as women want to see something, too. Basically that was it. Women are different in point-of-view, sensitivity and their interpretations of things. I think I accomplished that in the film, ‘Careful, He May Be Watching’ [1987].

**HollywoodChicago.com:** What is your favorite memory of your days in Chicago and time on the radio here?

**Seka:** It’s Chicago itself, there is no other place in the world like it. I miss living here so much. The time on the Loop [Chicago FM station] because [DJ] Kevin Matthews basically got me there. I worked also with Steve Dahl and Garry Meier, Teenage Radiation [Dahl’s rock band] and all those guys. Matthews told me I had a great voice for radio, so I asked him to make it happen. And he did. I credit Kevin for that part of my career.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Since you are a survivor in an era of filmmaking that stands alone in its strange originality, what has the show culture lost with the snowballing and proliferation of internet pornography?

**Seka:** There are no stories anymore. You open it up, it’s just sex. There is no foreplay or set-up. Those early films are like a great meal – if it looks good, it’s going to taste better. [laughs]

*The “Hollywood Celebrities & Memorabilia Show” is now “The Hollywood Show” and will be in Chicago on March 24th and 25th, 2012. [Click here for details.](#) [15]*



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