

WHO'S NEXT

Randy Scott Slavin

RYAN STAR

HOMETOWN: Dix Hills, N.Y.
INFLUENCES: Leonard Cohen, Nine Inch Nails, Pearl Jam
ALBUM: *11:59*, out now
WEBSITE: rstar.net

RYAN STAR INHERITED HIS BIG BROTHER'S BARELY PLAYED guitar as a teenager, and was soon writing songs and making demos on a four-track recorder. By 14 he was selling recordings to classmates, and by his late teens he and some friends had formed a band called Stage. The group played local New York City nightclubs like CBGB, earning a deal with Madonna's Maverick record label. But a disillusioned Star left the band after the release of its 2003 debut album. "I couldn't fight the reality that I feel most myself when the lights are out and it's just me sitting at the piano or lying with my guitar," says Star, who went on to make his solo debut with 2005's *Songs From the Eye of an Elephant*.

In 2006 Star landed a spot as a finalist on the reality TV show *Rock Star: Supernova*, competing to become the lead singer of a

newly formed hard-rock supergroup including luminaries like Mötley Crüe drummer Tommy Lee. He didn't win, but he did convert a lot of new fans and retain what he calls his "indie-cred pride." "I stayed the course and was true every step of the way to who I am," he recalls, "and somehow came out alive and well on the other side."

TV continued to be good to Star over the next several years, as he found success getting his songs placed on several shows—he can currently be heard singing the theme song for the series *Lie to Me*. Now Star is at last making his major-label solo debut with *11:59*, produced by Matt Serletic (Matchbox Twenty, Willie Nelson). "Through this lengthy story of ups and downs, one idea has remained constant," he says, "and that is my passion for music."