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# Meet *Urban Influence Magazine's* 20 Hottest Influencers for 2008!



She's an in-demand country music sensation.

He is an awarding-winning portrait artist.

She's a committed AIDS activist with an inspirational story to tell.

He is a political strategist extraordinaire whose thoughts  
capture attention and provoke thought.

These young professionals are among *Urban Influence Magazine's*  
20 Hottest Influencers for 2008, an eclectic, inspiring and on-the-move  
assembly of entrepreneurs, new thinkers, corporate climbers and  
change agents who embody – and give new meaning to –  
the world of influence!

*Contributing writers:*

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Jacquelyn Kurio, Lauren Renschler, Nicholas Short,  
Carl McGowan and Monica Wood.*

## Rissi Palmer, 27

Singer-Songwriter

Nashville, Tenn.

### Why She's Hot

Palmer is the first black woman to score a hit on the country music charts in more than 20 years, and her self-titled debut release last year took the entire music world by storm. With her mixture of R&B and country western musical influences, she is poised to expand the country music audience in a manner not seen since Ray Charles bum rushed the genre nearly 50 years ago. Like many singer-songwriters, Palmer sang jingles, and even recorded songs for "Dance Fever." In 2000, she was approached by producers Jimmy Jam & Terry Lewis, who thought she could be a great pop artist, but she turned them down in order to stay true to her dream of being a country music star. Others caught on after her successful run on "Star Search."

After a television project, sophomore album, tour and newly signed IMG modeling contract locked up, she observed: "The music is my primary focus though. I think it's possible to overextend yourself, and I don't want to do that. I do want all the things that are associated with being a successful commercial artist, but I personally measure my success artistically, based on whether my music is moving forward and growing. I don't ever want to be stuck in a sound, or in a way everybody thinks I'm supposed to sound." UIM

*Photo by Kristin Barlowe*