

The Blower's Daughter by Damien Rice

Rice first gained notice in America when “**The Blower’s Daughter**,” a single from his debut album “**O**” in 2002, played

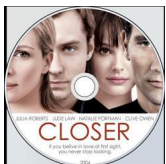
a pivotal role in the Mike Nichols film

“**Closer**”

in 2004. The movie follows two captivating women and two intriguing men as they sort out their very complicated relationships. The song is used twice in the movie to express the pain and confusion of love. (The music video is included on the Closer DVD.) This was Damien Rice's first single. It was first issued in Ireland in 2001 on his own label: Damien Rice Music.

The Blower's Daughter

What is a “*blower*”? It can mean a lot of things depending on the context but in this case, it is a telephone. In the UK, the precursor to the telephone was the speaking tube, which was a tube stoppered with whistles at both ends. To call the person on the other end, you would remove the stopper and blow into the tube, which would whistle for your party. When the telephone was invented, many in Britain continued referring to it as a “blower.”



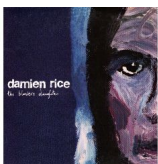
"Closer", DVD

Growing up in Kildare County, Ireland, Damien Rice found himself working at a call center in the late '90s. On one of Rice's calls, a woman answered the phone and began such a dialogue. As Rice told the story when he would introduce the song at concerts, he enjoyed speaking to this lady and became smitten. For months, Rice "followed the lead" by calling her during his shifts, where they would continue their increasingly intimate chats. Then one day she stopped answering. The woman was just a girl, maybe 16 years old. Crestfallen, Rice realized that when he had called, she was on summer vacation, and she stopped answering when it was time to return to school. She had been using him for entertainment, and Rice was devastated. "The Blower's Daughter" was the song he wrote about the incident.



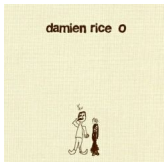
Damien Rice

Damien, the young man from Celbridge has been working on the album "O" for almost two years, and its release was greeted with enthusiasm and relief from a growing fan base who must have wondered if they were ever going to hear it. Damien Rice's debut full-length, "O", is nothing less than a work of genius, a perfect cross between Ryan Adams and David Gray and a true contender for one of the best albums of 2003. This Irish singer/songwriter works with impassioned folk songs that move from stripped-down to grandly orchestrated in a heartbeat.



The Blower's Daughter, single, 2001

The production is reminiscent of “Songs of Leonard Cohen” -- simple guitars, vocals, and then those swelling strings, all of which sound like they were recorded right in the same room. The cello, provided by **Vyviene Long**, is just one example of Damien's attempts to break away from a conventional instrumental formula of guitar, bass and drums. Rice's plaintive vocal, embroidered by the mournful solo cello, is suddenly brightened by an instrumental flourish and **Lisa Hannigan's** vocals--before just as quickly wafting on the breeze.



Damien Rice - "O", album, 2003

Hannigan is obviously Rice's secret weapon—for all of his considerable talent, Hannigan's presence really fleshes his ideas out. She rarely, if ever sings simple background vocals, instead offering countermelodies or completely different points of view. In “The Blower's Daughter”, Rice laments a romantic's apology: *'Can't take my eyes off of you'*. Simple enough, but the song really gains depth when Hannigan responds in almost ghostly fashion, *'Did I say that I want you to?'*

