

Happy birthday Russell Watson

Today marks the 42nd birthday of British tenor Russell Watson. The "People's Tenor" has more to celebrate than most 42-year-olds, having successfully battled two brain tumors.

A benign tumour was discovered in 2006 and was removed in November of the same year. In October 2007, however, medics discovered that the tumour had reappeared and was, in fact, bleeding into the singer's brain.

Watson underwent emergency surgery within a week and then went through rehabilitation and radiotherapy before making a complete recovery.

Watson's debut album - *The Voice*, which mixed classical arias and covers of pop songs - was released in May 2001 and was followed by four more albums. A fifth was planned for late 2006, around the time the singer's benign brain tumour was removed. Amazingly, the album release was delayed by just four months by the surgery: *That's Life* was released on 5 March 2007.

Watson was born in Salford, Lancashire where he left school with no GCSEs and began work as a bolt-cutter. It wasn't until he was asked to sing *Nessun Dorma* at a working men's club that he discovered his classical singing voice. He'd been supplementing his income by singing MC Hammer cover versions at nightclubs!

Two brain tumours within a year is enough for anyone to cope with but, when they happen to someone in their early 40s, recovery shows real fighting spirit. That's why we're happy to wish Russell Watson a very happy - and healthy - birthday.



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