

human reality

Belgian-born singer-songwriter Ilse Gevaert has defied the “superficial” standards of the music industry to build a successful career while remaining true to herself. The US-based artist, who was born with only one arm, spoke to Anthea Skinner about the release of her first album, I am Human.

A complex and varied album, *I am Human* features a fusion of soulful lyrics and state-of-the-art production techniques with a full orchestral accompaniment.

“The album has so many messages,” says Ilse, “The lyrics are made to make people think. About their own life story but also about which direction we are heading as a society. It seems like we are drifting further and further away from

each other and becoming more lonely. The media is projecting the perfect image of what a man and woman should look like and we all end up feeling left out and starting to hide our true colors, the ones that make us so beautiful and unique. As an artist I try to capture these thoughts and feelings and create a moving experience because without that movement there cannot be change.”

The themes explored in the album - isolation, loneliness and accepting our true selves - are particularly relevant to the disability community.

“There are so many layers to feeling human. In a way I think every single person on this planet is disabled in some way. We all have our strengths and we all have our weaknesses,” explains Ilse, “I always thought it was unfair that I was looked at and treated differently, just because I only had one arm. I always felt like I wanted to be treated like anyone else, and I wanted to feel normal, just like anyone else. Not stared at or laughed at, or the worst one: see that people would feel sorry for me. I just wanted to be seen and accepted for who I was. It definitely made me stronger. That feeling of injustice turned me into a fighter. After

a long journey I finally see that loving yourself is key to happiness in life and to everything you wish to accomplish.”

Ilse’s urge to keep fighting has stood her in good stead in the often cut-throat music industry. After moving from Belgium to the United States, times were often tough for the young musician. She accepted any available work, from open mic nights to roles as backing singer, often sleeping on people’s couches with barely enough money to buy food, but Ilse was determined to make her dreams a reality.

“I was on a mission: music was calling me. That was my food, food for the soul,” she remembers, “I wasn’t sure if the music industry was going to accept a one-armed girl as a singer because it seems that that industry is becoming more and more superficial: in image as well as in sound and lyrics, but I followed my heart. I knew that I had to listen to my inner voice and do the right thing, no matter how hard it was. Someone had to dare to be real.”

Finally, her hard work has paid off, with *I am Human* featuring a talented production team including Grammy

Do you have a problem with your telephone or internet company?

The TIO can help.

Remember, before you get in touch with us, you need to try to fix your problem with your landline, mobile or internet company.

Call us: 1800 062 058*

Go online: www.tio.com.au



Interpreting service:
131 450



For more information,
visit: www.relayservice.gov.au

*Calls to our 1800 number from landlines are free. Calls from mobile phones may attract a fee, which will vary depending on your service provider. If you are calling from a mobile phone, let us know and we can call you back.



**Telecommunications
Industry Ombudsman**

Award winner Ricky Kej and composer Juliette Jones, who has previously worked with Pharrell Williams and Aretha Franklin.

For Ilse, working with producer Chiba Antoine, who also has a disability, was particularly helpful, "He convinced me that I should never worry about my arm being an obstacle in the music business and he always encouraged me to follow my path as an artist and stay true to myself.

"The music industry needs more people that are real. I think we are all tired of those plastic entertainers. We need music that we can feel. So don't let anyone stop you. Focus on the art and don't worry about anything else." 🌀



I am Human can be download from Ilse's website ilsemusic.com or from any of the major online music retailers. You can see her film clips on youtube.com/ILSERECORDS.



bespoke building design

bespoke adj. made to individual order; custom-made

Quality residential building design and architectural drafting services including new projects and renovations.

- solutions for individual needs -

QBCC Lic No 1257937



Moore Park Beach Motel (QLD)

Phone 07 4128 9065 or Mobile 0408 150 676

www.bespokesolutions.com.au