



**SELAH
SUE**



PERSONA

PERSONA.

The latin word used to describe the variety of masks that were worn on stage back then. Today, the word mainly evokes the idea of public image and the multi-faceted, and at times paradoxical, personalities of each and every one. **Selah Sue**'s choice of title for her third album is nothing random but rather carefully thought out. Sifting through all the personalities that she's adopted over the course of her life (the lover, the hedonist, the anxious soul...), the Belgian singer is on a quest to better understand herself through songs that are both sincere and enlightening, thereby making a triumphant return after a break of a few years. And to do so, she has enrolled the help of a prestigious cast including the ever-sharp rapper **Damso**.

If **Selah Sue** felt the need to take a time out, unwind and get fresh ideas, it has much to do with how her career got off to a flying start, with the overwhelming whirlwind of emotions that comes with it: a first self-titled album in 2011 (certified double-platinum in France), never-ending tours and festivals, headline collaborations (with the likes of **Diplo**, **Childish Gambino**, **Cee Lo Green**, **J. Cole**...), all leading to sales of over a million albums. Despite the popular and critical acclaim, including many awards and distinctions, the young woman would often share how she was battling with depression and be vocal about it, even supporting campaigns that shed light on the issue.

It seems that taking a step back did her the world of good. **Selah Sue** returned both appeased and stimulated by the road she had just travelled, ready to share all the experiences she had made along the way since the release of her sophomore album *Reason* in 2015. In that space of time, alongside her quest to understand herself better, the endearing artist, now in her thirties, became a mother to two children. These intimate disruptions fed her creativity, in the same way that all of the recent events we have all experienced have done, from climate change to the global pandemic.

It was precisely during the first lockdown, in May 2020, that **Selah Sue** put out the very acoustic *Bedroom EP*, inspired by maternity. A smooth and steady return to business, that also allowed her to put the finishing touches to what would later become *Persona*, a collection of more expansive songs, influenced by '90s hip-hop and soul, swinging jazzy bass lines, instant pop and pioneering R'n'B beats.

This third album was written, for the most part, during the pandemic. **Selah Sue** wanted her lyrics to reflect the introspective path that she had undertaken three years ago during a therapy involving dialogue, in which the different parts of a person's psyche are addressed separately. *"As I see it, it's clear that we all have multi-faceted personalities"*, says **Selah Sue**. - . *"In my case, the self-critical part is quite dominant - I always feel like I'm not up to the task. I see my 'personas' as if they were all riding as passengers on the same bus. As the driver, I'd love to have full control over the wheel but all these 'selves' have their own ideas about how the bus should be driven and push me aside to grab the wheel. Freedom of choice is lost. The goal is to become 'the manager of these selves', also known as the 'aware ego', who listens to each and one of them. Accept and love them. But not letting them take over full control."*

As she started working on new songs in her home-studio back in 2019, alongside producer **Matt Parad** and keyboardist **Joachim Saerens** (also father of her children), she noticed that she was writing from contradictory perspectives. It was by getting to grips and running with this concept, that the artist penned this unique album, shedding light on the many fragments that, pieced together, make her the person she is.

When lockdown struck, **Matt Parad** had to fly back home to California, with the interrupted recording finally completed thanks to subsequent back-and-forth between Brussels and Los Angeles. *"At home, I could focus better, and put more of myself in every song be-*

cause I felt perfectly comfortable and could quietly try things out", she explains.

With the help of modern technology, a host of collaborators was invited to chip in remotely, not least legendary jazz bass player **Marcus Miller**, **MonoNeon** (**Prince's** last bass player), the musician **Kadhja Bonet**, French rap's rising star **Benjamin Epps**, duo **305 Horns**, or even **Andris Mattson** from **Moonchild**. The impressive Belgian-rap king **Damso** also took part with a remarkable cameo on *I Wanted You to Know*, a captivating bilingual duo. All supported by a solid producing team (**Rodaidh McDonald**, **Candenza**, **Kwes**, **Bastien Doremus**) to steer the motley crew.

Now aged 32, **Selah Sue** has become a hallmark of the impressively lively current Belgian scene (alongside **Stromae**, **Angèle**, **Lous and The Yakuza**). *Persona* marks a fresh artistic start, while remaining true to the artist's essence: **Selah Sue's** tremendously characteristic voice, bathed in warm soul with intermittent bluesy cracks. A solar tone of voice, that hosts all of the singer's personalities, starting with her optimism, her explosive energy and her feverish rushes capable of lifting a whole crowd; but also her maturity, her shyness, her intimate misgivings or her mesmerising charm. It's by following **Socrate's** famous maxim "Know thyself", that **Selah Sue** could finally find her balance and keep going forward in the world, walking towards the light, sure-footed and more serene than ever.



SELAH SUE

NEW ALBUM PERSONA
OUT NOW

