

MEETING SINGER [ESTELLE VALENSUELA](#) FOR THE RELEASE OF HER DEBUT ALBUM

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Translation: Vanessa Elliott Darling

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Can you introduce yourself to our readers?

I am both a linguist and a singer. My main job is to work with language interpreters, but singing has been a life-long passion of mine. After many years of practice, this passion is finally bearing its fruit with the release of my debut album. I'm the singer song-writer of this album but I have worked and relied on composer-producer **Martin Häne**, who wrote the music based on my texts. And since I knew exactly what mood to bring to my titles so that they would be in harmony with the lyrics, I was able to influence his creative work.

Has singing always been part of your life?

I've been taking singing lessons for the longest time. It all started with lessons at the [Centre du Marais](#) in Paris with **Selima Al Khalaf**, who still teaches there. I then had to leave for Germany for my first job but I kept taking rigorous singing lessons. When I arrived in Zurich,

my current hometown, I kept on dedicating myself to singing lessons, and also developed an interest in song-writing.

How did this debut album come to life?

It is the result of my personal journey. It was born at a time of my life when I felt it was ready. I attended several writing workshops; Some in Paris and one in Switzerland, organized by **Francis Cabrel**, it was the Swiss version of the "[Rencontres d'Astaffort](#)": Over the course of a week, we gathered amongst writers, composers and singers to create songs and a full concert eventually performed in Geneva. Also, my son was born, which means not being available for much else. Forced to leave singing behind because of parental duties, I wasn't sure how to pick things back up when I decided to dedicate myself to it again. Taking singing lessons is one thing, just like working out, but it was time to push things further. The next step became obvious: I was supposed to write my very first album. My main goal was to introduce myself via this album, to create and present something wholesome, way beyond a simple EP. I am not interested in half measures; I want to give it my all.



The title of this album is “Droit Devant” (Straight Ahead). Does this have anything do to with the way you approach life?

Most definitely. We all have to face obstacles at some point in life, some harder than others. I am, I have and I will; those are life hurdles but you have to keep moving forward. Even though I may sometimes feel I've hit rock bottom, there is always that wakeup call, that little voice in me encouraging me to move on, because life always brings something positive. I believe that's the optimistic side of me.

Tell us more about the musical inspiration behind your debut album!

I've always been drawn to powerful voices of female singers that brought true meaning to the music scene: amongst them are **Patricia Kaas** and **Édith Piaf**, but also **Lara Fabian** and **Whitney Houston**. Even though my music revolves around the pop genre, my intention was to bring—musically speaking—the influence of the traditional French music of the 90s and the beginning of the 2000s. That said, beyond pop and French music, I also brought in different interesting musical styles that speak to me: jazzy tones, summer-like tunes, electronica, ballads...



What did you want to talk about on this album?

The most important thing for me was to come up with meaningful lyrics and to say things in the most pleasing way possible. I'm not sure I achieved that goal but I certainly tried. This album was also a way to introduce myself, to tell my audience who I am and where I come

from. I grew up in the Bordeaux area, and even though I've been living abroad for a long time, I'm still very much attached to that place. The title "**D'Où Je Viens**" (*Where I come from*) was essential to me and had to be on this album. "**Droit Devant**" is about optimism; One of my songs in German is an invitation to enjoy the present, whereas the second one is about being authentic, to drop the mask.

Most of your songs are in French but there are some in English and German. What do these languages represent to you?

French is my mother tongue; I am fond of it because that's the language I grew up with and through which I can best express myself. But it's also a very romantic and poetic language, and I love writing in it. German on the other hand is a passion. I feel a very strong bond to Germany, where I spent a fair amount of time during my youth. I guess I am drawn to its more rigid grammatical structure that requires discipline, the same discipline that's needed when you sing. As far as English goes, it's an international language that targets a very wide audience. Its universal aspect and musicality are both interesting to me.



"La Maudite" and "Mesdames" more specifically are in line with Celine Dion's vocal energy level. Is she one of your reference artists?

Absolutely! She's been the one since the beginning. I discovered **Céline Dion** when she sang "**Ziggy**". I think I was 8 years old and I was already moved by her voice, which I rediscovered later, not even recognizing her when she sang in English. When you're touched

twice by the same voice, that's a feeling that tends to stay with you. **Céline Dion** is without a doubt a source of inspiration for me.

Who is Nicolas Samier, with whom you sing a duo?

I love collaborative work and therefore wanted to take a shot singing a duo. I like exchanging ideas, experience, because for that matter, it allows me to move ahead in life! **Nicolas Samier** is a friend who happens to also be a very good composer. He showed interest for the lyrics I made him read, we talked a bit about music, and voilà! "**Enfin Plus Qu'Un**" was born.



In a few words, how would you best sum up "Droit Devant"?

That's a tough question! I would say optimism, cheerfulness, live in the present.

What's next for you?

My next upcoming project is to sing this album live, which should be very soon. Recording this album was a first step but I now want to bring it to life on stage. My goal is to book a few dates in locations around Zurich; I would love to book a date in Germany and a few in France, probably around the Bordeaux area. Videos will be posted on YouTube and I'm scheduled to shoot a video this summer.

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Droit devant - Showcase

*Droit devant (Video clip)
Lyrics: Estelle Valensuela Music: Martin Häne
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