

## WHO'S NEXT



Heidi Ross

## LAURA JANSEN

**HOMETOWN:** Los Feliz, Calif.  
**INFLUENCES:** Joni Mitchell, Queen, Barbra Streisand  
**ALBUM:** *Bells*, out now  
**WEBSITE:** laurajansen.com

LAURA JANSEN HAS DONE QUITE A BIT OF MOVING around in her life—from her birthplace of Breda, Holland, to Brussels, then Zurich, Connecticut, Tennessee and California. Along the way she studied at a music conservatory in Holland and at Berklee College of Music in Boston before finally launching her musical career in the Los Angeles area. Throughout her many travels, her constant companion has been her piano. “Music was my solace,” she says, “the place I went when I didn’t understand the world.”

Once she settled on the West Coast, Jansen began making her name with a regular gig at influential Hollywood venue the Hotel Café. Singer and songwriter Joshua Radin caught her show there and invited her to join his band in 2008. “That was amazing,” she says. “I’d never played outside of Los Angeles, and

he gave me a boost and a huge shot of confidence.” She eventually landed a solo deal in the Netherlands, where she released her debut album, *Bells*, to great success in 2009. A cover of Kings of Leon’s “Use Somebody” became her breakthrough hit overseas. “The Kings of Leon guys can buy more cars because of the amount of airplay it got,” she jokes.

Still, the focus of *Bells*—which got a U.S. release in March—is on Jansen’s original songs. “I write and play music to work stuff out,” she says. “If you’re a performer, part of that is a public process—which is weird, that there’s an exhibitionism to our therapy. But to me that’s much more effective than popping some pills and talking to a shrink. It feels really good to get it out, and it feels even better to play the songs and look out at an audience and see someone whose face is saying, ‘I totally get it.’ That in itself is healing.”