

IAN VAN DAHL

Mike Scott

Ian Van Dahl burst into the European consciousness in 2001 when debut single, 'Castles In The Sky' became the soundtrack to the summer. With its beautiful trance chords and perfect sunny lyrics, it encapsulated feel good pop-dance crossover music, and sparked a burning debate – why would such a pretty girl be called Ian?

In fact, Ian Van Dahl is a collective, fronted by the impossibly beautiful singer/songwriter Annemie Coenen, and also comprising producers Christophe Chantzis, Erik Vanspauwen, who together with Annemie is responsible for the first album, and Peter Luts and David Vervoort. At their live shows, Annemie is supported on stage by two to six dancers, renowned for their energetic bordering on acrobatic routines.

"Ian Van Dahl was just a project name," laughs Annemie. "The record company wanted something that sounded a bit Dutch or Flemish - it wasn't until the track got really big that we realized Ian was a male's name – everyone in the UK was expecting a man and looked really surprised when I turned up for gigs!"



Born in a small village, Herk-De-Stad in Belgium in 1978, Annemie had always loved singing, but got her first real taste of the music scene when she joined a dance band aged 17. "We played on a big stage, which was my first real singing experience. It was in a theatre, so the audience was sitting down and it was very quiet. There was just a piano, and I had to sing live; I was so

nervous. I had written the song myself, and when I performed I got a really positive reaction; it made me think 'wow' – I really enjoy this!"

However, the idea of a small town teenager scoring a recording contract seemed like a pipe dream, and the naturally creative Annemie, who was already showing a flair for art and fashion design, set her heart on attending the highly prestigious fashion school in Antwerp. The prohibitive fees led her to take up a host of jobs – everything from working in a factory, a carwash, and a shop selling outrageously expensive clothes, to working with a doctor. Then a friend, horrified at how hard Annemie was striving, dragged her off to Ibiza to chill out. The visit extended to two summers, converting Annemie from an alt-rock chick to a club disciple. "I couldn't believe how many different styles there were within the dance scene, and I was getting bored with listening to mainly rock

music. I was clubbing everywhere, I loved Space, Pacha, Privilege, Amnesia, and I made so many friends over there".

On her return, Annemie recorded a demo "for fun really, I didn't expect anything to come from it". But it found its way into the hands of Stefan Wuyts, a label A&R, who was looking for a vocalist for the song 'Castles In The Sky' by new Belgian act, Ian Van Dahl. Immediately drawn to the mellow style of her voice, he called her into the studio to try out for the role.

After one audition, Stefan and the rest of the group knew they had found their singer. Everyone who's kept an eye on the top of the charts in the past few years will know the rest - 'Castles In The Sky' blew up on international dance floors and went on to storm single charts around the world. They'd pulled off a global hit with their debut release and were suddenly being talked about by everyone from Smash Hits to Mixmag. They then set straight to work on a debut album, 'Ace', and having discovered Annemie's ability to write strong lyrics, went on to include eight of her songs on the release. Anyone who thought the act was a one hit wonder were proved spectacularly wrong when the album went Gold in the UK alone after just three weeks, and spawned two more Top 10 hits, 'Will I' and 'Reason', and Top 15 single 'Try' – not bad going for the young Belgian singer's first professional venture.

Reviews

To Kool Chris "Absolute Dance Vol.1" -Mix CD
Renegade Records / Toucan Cove
House / Trance

This Chicago DJ drops a non-stop mega mix of over 30 tracks, which keeps this CD hype from start to finish. To Kool Chris rocks this mix CD hard!

DJ Keri "Can U Feel It?" -Mix CD
Madacy / Toucan Cove / GPR
Progressive House / Trance

Vocal turntablist DJ Keri makes her Toucan Cove debut with a brand new mix

CD. The former Ms. Louisiana with Choctaw Indian, Creole and German roots explores the diverse musical genres that form the basis of her truly imaginative repertoire.

Holmes Ives ft. Avalon Frost "8 Letters" -12" single
Shinichi Records
House music

Holmes Ives drops an atmospheric beauty that rocks da House!!
With Avalon
Frost's catchy vocals, this track is sure to get your attention.

Modulations: Cinema For The Ear – DVD
MusicVideoDistributors.com

Interviews are scattered throughout the film with DJs and producers such as

Carl Cox, Derrick May and The Prodigy. They speak of topics on how noise and sound are the inspiration for their music, how it all started, how they named the music and much more. If you're hardcore into Electronica, this is a must have. Get it at:
MusicVideoDistributors.com