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ALBUM REVIEW | POP

Ingrid Michaelson, 'Human Again'

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Ingrid Michaelson is nothing if not self-aware. "I'm always falling over and over again," she sings on the incongruously jaunty "Black and Blue," "It's what I need to do." But when the New York singer-songwriter swears she'll recover from the bruises to her heart, you believe her. (And not just because she got married recently.) Much this album is given over to that theme. It is the sound, in many ways, of a woman sifting through the wreckage to find the black box, learn from the mistakes contained on it, and finally claim her power.

While she does not completely suppress her friendly pop edge, there is a welcome thread of determination running through the 13 tracks, which vary from languid and contemplative to fidgety and pulsating, many featuring lush and insistent string arrangements. Whether taking tentative steps to move forward on the plaintive piano ballad "I'm Through" - her voice beautiful in its bereftness - or jabbing back with a no-retreat-no-surrender stance on "This Is War," Michaelson is a savvy interpreter of her interior landscape in a way that should resonate with listeners. (Out now)

