

# LIFE

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2016

Phuket News



World famous ZUMA to open pop-up in Layan

➤19



Muay Thai is getting classy at Outrigger

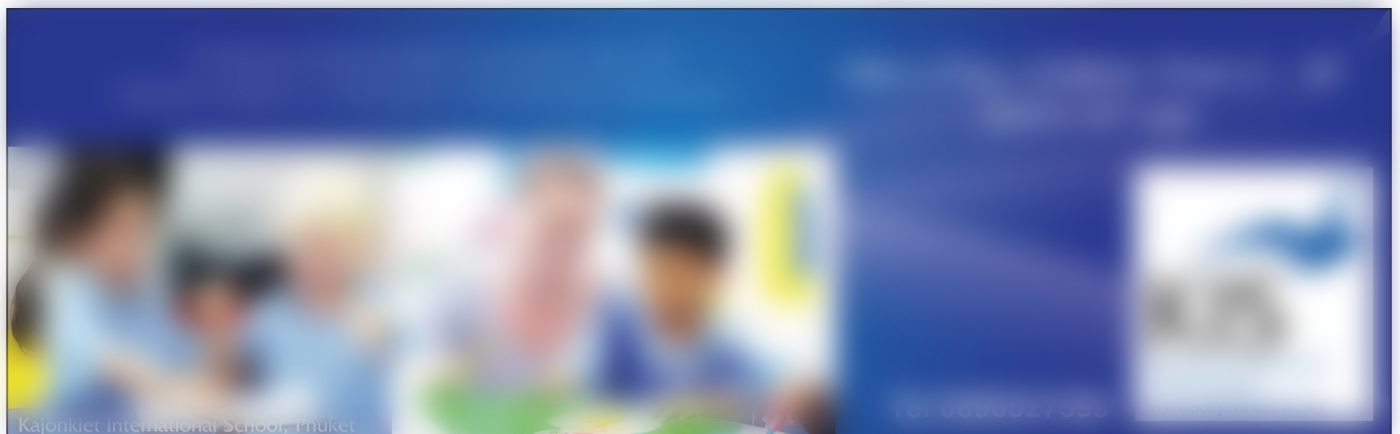
➤20

## NATURAL TALENT



**Phuket's Vicki Keily  
talks about her  
debut album 'Mercy'  
and her passion for  
animal rights > P17**

Songs from Vicki Keily's new album 'Mercy' are up for consideration in four categories for the 2017 Grammy Awards. Photo: Adriano Trapani



Kajonidet International School, Phuket



# A true passion project

Local singer-songwriter Vicki Keily could be up for a Grammy award

**T**he Phuket News recently spoke to Phuket-based singer-songwriter and animal rights activist Vicki Keily whose new album *Mercy* is in consideration for the Grammy awards. We spoke to Vicki about her nomadic musical life and her passion for animal welfare, which sees her regularly travelling to Japan to fight against the global captive dolphin industry.

**First of all a little background. Where were you born and where did you grow up?**

I was born in Toronto to Irish parents, and spent the first nine years of my life there. We moved to Saudi Arabia when I was nine years old, and lived in Riyadh for many years. During this time I went to boarding school at the age of 13 in Loreto Abbey, Dublin, Ireland, and I continued my third level education there in Theatre Studies and Acting at the Gaiety School of Acting.

I did my Drama Teaching Diploma at The Royal Irish Academy of Music. I then formed a band called The 42s with some of my guy friends and we gigged all over Ireland for many years. It was a fun punk rock vibe. I also did solo singer-songwriter gigs.

**Who are some of your favourite musicians and how they have influenced you?**

Wow, tough question... So many! Growing up I was engrossed with Irish traditional music as I said, but my Dad also loved The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, Bob Dylan and Neil Young, just to name a few. In my teens I was obsessed with Guns N' Roses, The Pixies, The Ramones, The Clash, Alanis Morissette, Sheryl Crow, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Nine Inch Nails, U2, Green-day, and of course Nirvana. I was a rock



Vicki is passionate about animal welfare issues.

chick through and through.

**What brought you to Phuket and how long have you been here?**

I came to Phuket after living in Hong Kong for eight years. I got divorced there after having two children and life is very expensive in that city. We had a family home here in Phuket and I really love being around nature. I feel very connected to Thailand, we have been here almost three years now and love it.

**I understand that you are in consideration for four categories in the Grammy awards, it must be exciting news, what is the process?**

Now I am just sending my album out to as many people who might be NARAS members (Grammy voters) as possible, and promoting myself on social media. My manager Don Lichterman in NYC, and my record label Sunset Records are also pushing me big time, of course, with their connections. I am getting lots of radio play around the globe so that is awesome. I can't believe this is happening to be honest.

I am also an animal welfare activist and work for the Ric O'Barry Dolphin Project as a Cove Monitor in Japan. I wrote this album to help raise money for Dolphin Project whom I volunteer for in Japan to try to end the brutal slaughter of hundreds of dolphins there every year. They eat the meat there, but the main issue is captivity, and Taiji in Japan is the biggest seller of captive trained dolphins in the world... so I go there to try to stop it. I wanted to raise awareness and thought I would use my music to do that. I never in a million years thought I would get to be considered for the 59th Grammys. It is very overwhelming and humbling.

**Is 'Mercy' your first album? What would you say are some of its themes and influences?**

It is my first album yes, although I have been writing it for years. Some of the songs I wrote in my early 20s, and it has been a work in progress since then. About four of the songs I wrote this year, but the rest are over the last 15-20 years. My themes without planning them to be this way, are fighting injustice, having faith in yourself, standing up for what is right, and a couple about love.

I recorded my album with the abundantly talented Gary Crause at Legend Studios. Gary did a stellar job producing my album, as did the outstanding musicians Mike Mitchell, Rob Cooke and Blaze Crause on all my tracks. Thank you so much guys! You made my dream a reality.

**Where did your passion for animal welfare start and how does it influence your music?**

I don't just work for Dolphin Project, I also try to create awareness about all animals, and treating them compassionately. I was the one who started the campaign earlier this year to rescue the Orangutan "Milo" from Phuket Zoo. I started a petition, and we created massive global awareness. The zoo dumped

her in the jungle, and we got her to the rescue centre, where she lived three months, but unfortunately died of a stroke after a while due to many underlying problems from her mistreatment at the zoo.

I feel that my music allows me to express my need to right the wrongs of the world. I am so passionate about justice being served, and I always root for the underdog. I see so much abuse here in Thailand unfortunately, with the elephants, the monkeys, the crocodiles, you name it! I wish I could do more. My music helps me release my frustrations and I hope it strikes a chord with people when they listen to it.

**Where can people listen to and buy your music?**

You can buy it on iTunes and hear it on Spotify. Please purchase it, as proceeds of the sales go directly to Ric O'Barry Dolphin Project, to help with our ongoing and crucial work at Taiji Cove in Japan, the Solomon Islands, and wherever dolphins are in trouble in the world.

**Thank you so much for taking the time to talk to us Vicki and good luck with the Grammy awards next year, I'm sure everyone in Phuket will be hoping you win.**

