

**SWEDISH SINGER
THERÉSE
NEAIMÉ
ON MUSIC,
MOTHERHOOD
AND
MIDDLE EAST
LIVING**



The singing sensation is set to release her new album next year and praised Dubai for being so supportive of her music. "My Lebanese background has meant my music always has a flavour of Arabia"

'The Middle East has been incredibly supportive of my music... I owe it to Dubai to show the rest of the world what a beautiful place this is'

Swedish singing sensation Therése Neaimé greets **HELLO!** at the door of her Jumeirah Beach Residence home carrying her best accessory yet, her blue-eyed baby boy.

Dressed in Ferrari World-emblazoned attire, 10-month-old Lucas puts his hands together every time he hears his mother's name, as does the firm following of worldwide fans looking forward to the release of the former dancer's second album in February next year.

Therése, who has her own record label called Future Records through Warner Music, has enjoyed chart success, particularly in the US, performed with the likes of British band Simply Red and worked with top Swedish songwriter Jörgen Elofsson – who has penned tracks for the likes of Britney Spears, Irish boy band Westlife and US singer Kelly Clarkson. She has also turned her hand to acting, working on a TV series alongside Hollywood hero Ben Affleck.

Splitting her time between homes in Sweden, LA and Dubai for the last four years, Therése, whose father is Lebanese, is keen to stay in touch with Arabic culture.

Her face glowing with excitement for her forthcoming album, **HELLO!** soaks up some talent at home with Therése Neaimé.

Tell us about your new album.

"It will be released worldwide in the spring and is a mix of international modern pop with an Arabian flavour. I think that music develops throughout a person's career so this album takes my music to the next level."

You write your own songs, where do you find your inspiration?

"My songs always tell a story. I find inspiration from everyday life, from my friends and family. I think the best songs are always songs that are honest."

What was your very first song about?

"My very first song was called How Could You Leave Me? I moved to Hollywood to study music and I wrote it in my studio there. I had left my boyfriend at the time to pursue my passion, so I wrote it from his perspective. It was a really tough song to write, but I was quite proud when it was featured in a Swedish movie called Language of Love."

When did you decide to pursue a career in singing?

"I studied music in Hollywood for two years in 1999 and for the next three years I played live with my band on the LA circuit. I was very fortunate to have one of my songs, Colour of Love, picked up by radio stations, and then it just happened."

Why did you give up dancing?

"I toured the world as a background dancer performing to audiences of around 20,000 people. It was really exciting, but once it was done I found myself wanting to express myself more. It was then I decided I wanted to pursue singing."

You shot two of your music videos in Dubai, what made you pick the city?

"The Middle East has been incredibly supportive of my music. This region has welcomed me and felt like I owed it to Dubai to show the rest of the world what a beautiful place this is. My Lebanese background has meant my music always has a flavour of Arabia, and so Dubai proved to be a nice reflection of that. The support Dubai has given me is invaluable."

Have you ever thought of singing an entire song in Arabic?

"I would love to. One of my dreams is to do a duet with a male Arabic singer. I've spoken about it a lot, but I guess I am looking for the right collaboration."

What has been your most memorable Dubai performance?

"It has to be the What's On Awards. I've been a headline singer at the event for the last three years and I love it. I sing in front of the crème de la crème of the industry. It's amazing."

Describe your music in three words

"Real, warm and international."

Tell us about your time spent with Ben Affleck.

"We worked together on a TV series called Push Nevada for Touchstone Hollywood in LA. He was great, he cared about everyone on set and I was actually surprised that he always arrived on time!"

What do you do to relax?

"My passion is my music, so to relax I will either learn or write a new song. I love to be around my friends and family, especially my son Lucas. He

travels with me, so he has learnt to be social and to dance. He's not afraid of people at all. Other than that, my friends sometimes surprise me with gift vouchers and tell me to go to the spa."

What is your personal motto?

"Don't put any limits on what you can achieve and you will be as successful as you want."

What are your plans for the future?

"To release my second album in the spring and keep spreading my music. I want to keep travelling the world with my music and to reach out to as many people as I can."

Do you have any advice for budding musicians?

"Believe in yourself and don't let anyone put you down. You have to create your own destiny to make a difference."

INTERVIEW: TANIA SHAIKH
PHOTOGRAPHS: FAROOQ SALIK

Therése, pictured with son Lucas (below) splits her time between her home country of Sweden, LA and her home in Dubai (left)

