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The last time...

Therése Neaimé

The half Lebanese, half Swedish gypsy-pop princess talks to *Andy Buchan* about acting alongside Ben Affleck, her latest US Top 40 hit and her thoughts on Dubai



The last time I came to Dubai I thought...

It felt like a magic place, so much contrast. The ancient desert and mountains right next to cutting-edge high-rises, all different kinds of people and the friendliness of them all, the souk meets the city in the best possible way – it was my first time in Dubai, and I didn't want to leave.

The last compliment I got was...

From someone who thanked me for the power of the messages in my songs – that my lyrics were such an inspiration to her and that it made her believe she could aim for her dreams and really make a difference. That's the best possible compliment I think anyone could ever get.

The last time I got involved in politics was...

During my work as an ambassador for the Swedish organisation Children With Cancer.

The last time I was on the front cover of a magazine was...

The Arabian Woman Magazine May

issue. A wonderful honor!

The last thing I want people to know about me is...

Will remain the last thing [laughs].

The last time I cried was...

When I watched a movie about mistreated animals on The Discovery Channel. Having my own two small Chihuahuas, I guess I'm extra sensitive when it comes to animal cruelty.

The last song I loved was...

'Hurt' by Christina Aguilera.

The last book I read was...

Anybody Out There? by Marian Keyes.

The last time I met Ben Affleck was...

In Los Angeles while working together on the TV series *Push Nevada*.

The last song I had in the US Top 40 was...

With my song 'The Future', which climbed to an incredible No.13 and stayed there for several weeks. ●

Therése Neaimé plays live at Chi on Saturday May 12. Entrance is free and the doors open at 9pm.

Reviews

Dinosaur Jr. *Beyond*

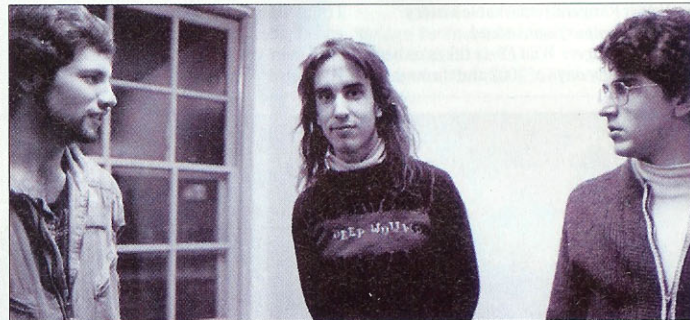
★★★★★

The received wisdom regarding rock reunions is that they suck. Yet in recent years, powerful new work by the Stooges, Mission of Burma and the New York Dolls has begun to change that perception. These days, when a crusty old rock alum from the 70s or 80s hits the road, fans expect something decent.

The first album by the original lineup of Dinosaur Jr. in nearly two decades doesn't defy that newfound optimism. Casually tuneful and drenched in guitar fuzz, *Beyond* sounds like a logical extension of 1988's *Bug*, the last disc the band released before singer-guitarist J Mascis fired bassist Lou Barlow, who went on to indie-rock renown as the frontman of Sebadoh. Mascis made Dinosaur Jr. records for years following Barlow's departure, but though he greatly increased the

group's commercial fortunes (as well as its sonic scale), he never recaptured the scrappy garage-punk energy of its early work.

Until now. As with the Stooges' *The Weirdness*, these 11 tunes (including two by Barlow, both of which could be Sebadoh songs) seem entirely unconcerned with upholding the band's protogrunge legacy; there's none of the tentativeness or bet-hedging that so often bogs down reunion efforts by Big Important Artists. You just hear Mascis in his element, peeling off absurdly long guitar solos and somehow making his reedy Neil Young falsetto come off as pretty rather than funny. The result is no mind-blower, but naysayers will have to look elsewhere. Maybe try the Jesus and Mary Chain. *Mikael Wood. Available to download from www.emusic.com.*



Wilco *Sky Blue Sky*

★★★★★

It might be insensitive to mention it, considering Jeff Tweedy's recent stint in rehab, but the new Wilco album sounds like it was made to be heard in an altered state. As on 2004's *A Ghost Is Born*, *Sky Blue Sky* eschews much of the in-studio avant-roots trickery that defined *Yankee Hotel Foxtrot*, the vaunted 2002 disc that transformed Wilco from a nice alt-country act into 'The Band Responsible for Saving Art Rock'.

But whereas Tweedy still shoehorned bits of structural weirdness into his songwriting on *Ghost* (check 'Spiders [Kidsmoke]' a ten-minute krautrock jam), here he seems content to dip into a free-flowing river of mellow 70s country-rock, unburdened by any anxiety over his underground cred. The result is unapologetic Sunday afternoon drinking music, the kind of thing that seems to accrue beauty with every bottle.

Opener 'Either Way' is an early highlight, and typical of the album as a whole, with Tweedy mumbling his sensitive-dude poetry over gently fluttering guitars, creamy organ and Glenn Kotche's nimble soul-groove

drumming. 'Impossible Germany' stands out too, especially if you've ever wondered what the Grateful Dead would sound like with Lee Ranaldo on lead guitar. In fact, Tweedy's and Nels Cline's guitars often take center stage on *Sky Blue Sky*; more than once, the singer cedes a song's primary melodic hook to the instrument, which only increases the album's lawn-chair profundity. *Mikael Wood. Available to buy from www.amazon.com.*

