

"It doesn't matter where you live or go, you are the same, you are the Colour of Love."

by Dynelle Walkington

Swedish-Lebanese songstress Therése Neaimé was in Dubai last month and *LOUD* caught up with the artist to get the scoop on her life, debut album release and her take on Ben Affleck.

How did you get into the music industry?

I started as a dancer and then when I became a teenager I started to tour with different acts as a backup singer and dancer. It was a great experience especially because I would do my own thing later. I travelled a lot and then seven years ago, I decided to start and develop my dreams. I moved to Hollywood and I studied at a music institute for two years. I started to write my music, I was already singing but now I started to perform. I

got a band together, started to tour Los Angeles and San Diego.

You toured as a backup singer and dancer, who have you worked with?

I worked with some Swedish artists that were big in Germany, Mexico and the US. I worked with Pandora, Offspring and Papa D.

You took vocal lessons from world-renowned vocal teacher

Susanna Hulten, what was that experience like for you?

She has coached a lot of the big stars like ABBA and Robbie [Williams] and it was for one year and I was singing almost everyday, taking lessons every week. She is expensive but through all my dancing I saved a lot of money to go to her. You kind of need a record deal to go to her, she's very selective with who she takes. It was a great experience.

You worked with Ben Affleck in 2003 on the movie Push Nevada, what was that like?

It was fun. It was a dream come true to see how the big Hollywood actors work. I figured we would be on one side and he on the other, but he was really taking care of the others and making everybody seem



special and needed and important. He was great. He wasn't one of those actors that you see over there and it's just a brief hello. I'm sorry it wasn't longer. (Laughs.) For me it was a great experience.

You were the ambassador of The Foundation for Children with Cancer, tell us about your role?

Well because my mother died from cancer, I felt that I wanted to do something in return, a small good deed. They heard about my mother and they asked me if I wanted to get involved. Because I'm an artist I can get out there to people and talk about it in media. They thought I would be a good ambassador for the right reasons. We visit the hospitals for Christmas and different occasions maybe once a month. We gather celebrities and sometimes we sing for them, take them CDs or just talk to them. I take my two small Chihuahua's and the children love them. It's great to just make their day and make them happy. I wrote a song on the album initially for my brother, it's called *You*, and the Foundation have used it for their theme. It just basically lets them know that I'm here for you besides your parents.

You have a very busy schedule, how do you balance it all?

I don't think of it that way. I just love what I do. I think because I've worked long to get where I am I appreciate every moment. I think it's exciting, I don't feel like it's too much for me. I think when you have to work a long time for something you appreciate it more.

Your debut album *Living* was released in May this year, tell us more about the album.

I'm so proud of the album because it's been born over a long period of time. It includes the first song I ever wrote. Of course this has another production today but it was the first song I wrote when I moved to Los Angeles. I can really tell a story about every song on the album. There's a song for my mother, there is *Overwhelmed* for my father. There are songs about the future and living your dream and never giving up. The lyrics for me are really important and that's why this album is like a monument. The album is a success in itself. We did it!

Do you have any personal favourite tracks on the album?

Wow, that's hard. I would say probably *Colour Of Love* because it was the one that radio picked up on its own. They heard it as a demo and they started to play it and I was like okay, they like my music. At that point I was like we have to do this album now and we put it together. The song is really about situations, it doesn't matter where you live or go, you are the same, you are the *Colour Of Love*. The song is very special.

Do you think you are better received by your Swedish or Lebanese fans?

I think the album is universal and I think I get received equally by both. This to me is a cross-over album and that in itself is amazing to me. We didn't think like that when we did the song where it would be more received. I couldn't pick.

You own your own label, Future Records, what have you found has been the most difficult thing for you in terms of running it?

The good thing is that you don't have to wait for people, you can make your own decisions, but it is also difficult in a way because sometimes you still have to wait for other people's decisions. You can't do it all on your own. I think if you do your own thing your more dedicated and you can keep going but there are other factors and so you still have to wait, that is the most difficult.

What three things must you have when you go into the studio?

Well, my soul, my voice and my heart. That's it. (Laughs.)

Is there anyone you would like to collaborate with in the future?

I've been fortunate to work with some great people so I think I will use them on the next album. I'm dedicated to the

people who were there from the beginning and I'm not just going to say thanks and move on. I love them and I want to bring them with me on the journey. There are other great artists too like James Blunt, working with him would be great, Marc Anthony is great too. I wouldn't just pick one, there have been so many influences along the way like Jewel, Sadé, Joni Mitchell and Sting, it would definitely not just be one.

Can we expect to see you back in Dubai again?

I would love to come back. My wish is now to come here and perform live. It would be a dream come true. I've travelled a lot but I can see that Dubai is different. It's exciting. It's not a country it's an adventure. I'm pleased to be here.

What are your plans for the future?

We are going to start on the second album now. We are going to release a new single in Europe in February. The next step is to release this album in the US. So now I'll be taking it to all the minor radio stations with the Top 40 and in February to all the majors.

You're so busy when do you relax and what do you do to relax?

I have my two Chihuahuas, Armani and Boss, so I walk with them. I run and jog with my dad and I try to spend time with my friends.

