

# NORAH'S ARC

Jones' music and movie careers take off

**N**orah Jones has got a brand new bag—made in Hollywood, not Milan. Besides releasing *Not Too Late*—her third spectacular album of folksy, soul-tinged pop music—the undisputed queen of coffee-house blues is starring in the upcoming romance flick *My Blueberry Nights*. Carrying a new film (Jones takes top billing above Natalie Portman, Jude Law and Rachel Weisz) and penning and producing every song off *Not Too Late* means Ms. Jones has a lot to answer for.

**FLARE:** What makes *Not Too Late* stand apart from your previous albums? **Norah Jones:** It's closer to my personality. On the past few albums, I only wrote a few songs, but now these are *all* my songs. They come from my brain, my guts and my heart. People who I listen to now have influenced this album, [such as] Martha Wainwright and Joanna Newsom—[they are some] of the best young singers around. [So are] Feist, M. Ward and Cat Power.

**F:** One of your new tracks, "My Dear Country," touches on the topic of the war in Iraq. Was there any kind of ambivalence to address it after the Dixie Chicks backlash? **NJ:** No. It wasn't a concern for me. I don't think my song is something that should anger people,

even if they're on the other side of my fence. Unfortunately, the Dixie Chicks had to really suffer and got overly skewered—death threats are no joke. The world has been in such a heated state lately that it's hard not to be [truly] informed. As a performer, you should choose your words carefully. Someone like Nina Simone was really important because she didn't just sing love songs; she was involved with human rights and civil rights.

**F:** Your song "Not My Friend" is not a typical breakup tune. Have bad relationships informed your songwriting? **NJ:** They make for excellent songs! I try hard to be a good person and I'm not perfect. I have a temper, but I feel like I'm a better person today than I was five years ago because I'm more mature and can control my emotions. That song is about betrayal, and that is hard to get over, but I've always stayed friends with my exes. Maybe that's a testament to the kind of exes I have.

**F:** Making a movie when you are not a trained actor takes confidence. Was it daunting to be the star of the first film you've ever made? **NJ:** Tell me about it! I was *terrified* [even though] my director [Wong Kar Wai] is great at working with non-actors. He knows what he



wants and he'll tell you what he wants. There were some scenes where I had to cry—on command—beside Jude Law, which was kind of crazy. I feel like [my acting] is just as bold a move as those girls [Paris Hilton and Lindsay Lohan] releasing an album, you know? I am a little horrified about walking the red carpet. I have a better fashion sense now, but I'm going to try to avoid [the carpet]



## timberlake tour

Justin brings sexy back to Canada

"It's going to be an amazing show," Justin Timberlake boasts on the phone with FLARE, talking about his latest project, the world tour for *FutureSex/LoveSounds* that kicked off in January in San Diego. "The trick is to find a way to bring the vibe we've created with the club show to a [full-scale] arena." Judging by the amount of production involved with the traveling circuit so far—a 14-piece band, a crew of top-of-the-line backup dancers and a 360-degree multimedia video projection—JT has dreamed up the ultimate electro-fied stage on which to showcase his hits and fine-lookin' self. Canada will get ready to rock its body when Timberlake lands in Toronto on Jan. 30 and in Montreal on Jan. 31. —Alexandra Breen