

# entertainment

## Neko Case blows away with "Cyclone"

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The melodic folk/indie rock singer Neko Case has been a part of the music scene as a solo artist since 1996 and her latest solo album *Middle Cyclone* proves the songstress knows exactly how to fine tune a fantastic record.

Case, who is also a member of indie rock group *The New Pornographers*, has an enchanting voice that rolls over every lyric with a soft, eerie tone that entrances listeners. *Middle Cyclone* boasts much of a bluegrass sound with pianos, banjos, and spongy drumming, but Case's fairytale-like voice carries the album to the next level.

In a recent interview with *Spin* magazine, Case explains the term *MiddleCyclone* as mezzocyclone, which is the column of air that rises and spins in a tornado. Her love for tornados stems from her childhood obsession for weather

and believing it is a living, breathing thing. Case poured her interest into lyrics and haunting melodies for her new release, and the outcome is a fantastic whirlwind of sound.

The first track on *Middle Cyclone*, "This Tornado Loves You," is about a tornado tearing through a state on a mission to find the love of his life: a young woman ("Carve your name across three counties/ Ground it in with bloody hides/ Their broken necks will line the ditch 'til you stop it, stop it, stop it, stop it/ Stop this madness/ I want you"). The powerful lines of the song are backed by music that literally sounds like a

cyclone swirling his destructive way to a town for its lover.

While most tracks on *Middle Cyclone* are about the inherent force of weather, Case also contributes other kinds of storytelling to the mix. Her unique writing style gives

her songs multiple meanings, allowing listeners to interpret Case's lyrics in a variety of ways. The third song, and the first single from the record, "People Got a Lotta Nerve," is full of double meanings, as are "Fever" and "Magpie to the Morning."

"Prison Girls" is, by far, my absolute favorite track on the album because of the goose bumps it gives me every time I give the song listen. Case's entrancing, prevailing voice glides over the heavy, hollowed drums that make "Prison Girls" so wonderfully melancholic and spellbinding. I can hear the bravery, independence, and depth in her proclaim, "Now's my chance/ I clasp my chest and declare unto my audience/ I love your long shadows/ And your gun powder eyes/ I love your long shadows/ And your gun powder eyes." The song is almost hidden at the end of the record because it is so hard to stop repeating each track before it. The first half of the album is absolutely hypnotizing.

Neko Case will be gracing Pennsylvania during her *Middle Cyclone* tour on Friday, April 10th at the Keswick Theatre in Philadelphia. The sold out show validates Case's incredible album, proving her listeners love *Middle Cyclone* as much as "this tornado loves you."



## 'F&F' delivers on the macho

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Do you consider yourself a man? Do you consider a souped up muscle car with a beautiful, bikini-clad woman dancing on the hood to be as American as baseball and apple pie? If you said yes to either of these (especially the second one) then you must go see "Fast & Furious" immediately; as in, close this newspaper and go see it right now. You can read the rest of the review while you're sitting through the 45 minutes of commercials.

"Fast & Furious" is the third sequel in the extremely popular franchise that started nine years ago with "The Fast and the Furious." Chronologically, this story takes place between "2 Fast 2 Furious" and "Tokyo Drift," picking up five years after former

police officer Brian O'Connor helped street racing god Dom Toretto escape the police. Now, Dom is pulling high speed heists in Latin America with his girlfriend Letty (Michelle Rodriguez) while Brian has become an FBI agent on the trail of a Latin drug kingpin. Fearing that being around him might jeopardize Letty's safety; Dom disappears only to resurface when he is told that his love has been murdered in L.A. by the same organization that Brian is trying to take down. Dom and Brian's paths soon cross again as they hunt down the people responsible for her death. Much vehicular combat ensues.

Walking into a film with the words "fast" and/or "furious" in the title you have some expectations: fast cars, hot women, and crazy action all drenched in testosterone. "Fast & Furious" delivers plenty of all of these. Dom's famous Dodge Charger from the first movie

makes its triumphant, wheelie-popping return as does Brian's Nissan Skyline from "2 Fast 2 Furious." The film opens with a high speed tanker heist and continues to assault you with crazier and crazier vehicular brilliance to the very end. For a franchise that built itself around street racing, it's a bit of a letdown that there is only one true street racing scene in the movie. Fortunately, it stands as one of the best in the series not just because of the intensity but the symbolic "rematch" between Dom and Brian during the last quarter-mile. The car scenes never get tired of pushing believability but it's doubtful anyone in the audience will notice; the intensity is ratcheted up so high that you'll have a death grip on the theater seat.

The biggest draw this time around is the returning cast. It's been a long time since we've seen

the old gang together and it makes the movie feel like something special. Vin Diesel hasn't played Vin Diesel this well in years; he commands every scene he's in and reminds us why he became such a big star in the first place. Dom Toretto is the character he was born to play, though now he is a bit older and more world weary. The love of his life has been murdered and he carries the guilt throughout the entire film; Diesel gives the best dramatic performance of the series. Paul Walker returns as cop-turned street racer-turned FBI agent Brian O'Connor. Walker fits right back into the character's shoes for his third outing, stupid dialogue and all. O'Connor's time on the run has made him a bit tougher and more street smart (though he's still not quite the street racing Jedi that Dom is). Jordana Brewster is given little to do as Dom's doting sister,

Mia; she serves as a plot pushing device. Every time the movie gets lost in itself, she always shows up to steer it back on course again while simultaneously providing eye-candy (she's such a good multitasker). She and O'Connor still have unresolved feelings for each other but their strained romance feels shallow compared to Dom's personal struggles. Rounding out the returning cast is Michelle Rodriguez returning as Letty and Sung Kang returning as Han from "Tokyo Drift", both appearing in the film's opening "Fast & Furious" feels like more than just another sequel; it is the culmination of the entire series. Fans have been asking for this for nine years and, finally, it has been delivered. In some ways, this is the best film in the entire series (even though the novelty has worn off). This is the kind of movie that deserves to be seen on the big screen.