



# IRASCIBLE MUSIC



SÉBASTIEN TELLIER (FR)

Album: Domesticated

Label: Record Makers

Release Date: 29.05.20

Web: <http://www.sebastientellier.com>

EPK: [irascible.ch/releases/sebastientellier/domesticated](http://irascible.ch/releases/sebastientellier/domesticated)

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There once was another Sébastien Tellier – “a lone wolf,” as the Parisian pop genius puts it. Then he fell in love. Then, came marriage. After that, came kids, till one day, the acclaimed synth-loving songwriter found himself alone in his home, entranced by a toaster. “Domestication is a universal subject, an experience we all go through,” he explains. “It’s a good life! I feel like I really exist now. That I’m more than just a wolf – there’s a warmth now, a purpose.” On the cult star’s sixth studio album, his first in five years, Tellier explores this topic in typically dreamy, lo-fi fashion. An airy, electronic adventure full of eclecticism and eccentricism, *Domesticated* is the French national treasure at his delightful best.

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Across a two-decade-spanning career – in which he’s been sampled by the Weeknd, worked with everyone from Jean-Michel Jarre to Mr Oizo and gatecrashed the Eurovision Song Contest in a golf cart – Tellier’s music has taken us to exotic places. He’s whisked listeners off to Brazilian jungles (2014’s *L’Aventura*), into imagined movies (2013’s *Confection*) and across spiritual realms (2012’s *My God Is Blue*). This release, however, focuses mostly on the mundane. “It’s about transforming the everyday into something extraordinary,” says Tellier. “I wanted to talk about how we are prisoners to domestic chores because, for humans, life doesn’t exist if we don’t endeavour. Life is a permanent struggle, and domestic chores are at the centre of that battle.”

There’s nothing chore-like about the eight songs on *Domesticated*, however. From echoing opener ‘A Ballet’ – its name a pun on “ballet” and the French word for “broom” – to the ‘80s electro slink of ‘Venezia’, the album is a joyous Franco-pop fantasia. Tellier rates it as his most melodically refined work yet. “I arranged all the music around my voice – vocal melodies first,” he says. “It’s an electronic record but it’s not driven by synths and drum machines going “durm, durm durm!” I put melody first. Rhythm in music is order. But melody is the humanity.”

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There are “oceans of beat-makers” out there, the 44-year-old suggests. “Computer experts, producers. I wanted to be alone on an island, away from this ocean. I wanted to be a melody-maker.” Becoming a melody-maker involved tweaks to his creative process. Every morning while working on *Domesticated*, Tellier would wake up and within twenty minutes be working on music – often on his sofa, singing thoughts as they appeared to him into an app on his iPad. “Between sleep and becoming fully awake, there’s this state where everything is hazy, like a cloud. That’s when the emotion of the day is most dramatic. If I start writing a song about a person I love, it’s super romantic. If I am writing about something I hate, it’s powerful, too,” he says. “I try to keep the feeling of the dream.”

The result is a floaty, emotive pop wonderland to immerse yourself in. From 200 songs composed for the album, he whittled the record down to eight. ‘Stuck in a Summer Love’ is one of his favourites. It’s “about being caught in the past,” he says, “the old teenager I was. It’s full of emotion, but also it’s like a caterpillar. She’s fat, and strong. I was very proud of that. It was always my wish to make a song like it, but I never found a way.” Elsewhere, there’s the enticing likes of ‘Atomic Smile’ – a song he describes as “very different, very unique. It talks about destruction and revolution but in a soft way. Which is key to my personality. I want destruction and revolution but without anyone to be hurt.”

The record reaches its denouement with ‘Won’, a Jam City and nit-produced gentle gem of a conclusion to *Domesticated*’s story. “The finale!” remarks Tellier. “There you have it: I’ve lost and life has won. I’m domesticated. Far from my wild, reckless teenage years, today I keep my living room tidy and make my bed. I know the names of household products at the supermarket, and I asked for a Dyson Hoover for Christmas. In the end, there’s something comforting in all of this, because all the endeavour makes you happy too, it’s not all tough. I have never been as happy as I am now that I’m domesticated. That primitive being who lived inside me as a teenager has fled and it’s better that way.”

Tellier’s teenage years feel like only yesterday. The troubadour was born in Le Plessis-Bouchard in 1975. His father, a music lover, made sure he was surrounded by harmony and magical chords from an early age: Pink Floyd albums and François de Roubaix soundtracks echoed around his childhood home, as Tellier took up music lessons (his father taught him guitar on Saturday afternoons). By age 20, he’d set his sights on a musical legacy of his own, writing down in a book ambitions that he wasted no time in realising. In 2001, he released his debut album, *L’incroyable vérité* via the influential Record Makers label. Soon he was on the radar not only of Daft Punk, who used one of its tracks in their film *Electroma* (Daft Punk’s Guy-Man de Homem-Christo later went to produce Tellier’s 2008 album *Sexuality*) but also into the affections of Sofia Coppola. Tellier’s track ‘Fantino’ ended up playing a pivotal part in the director’s acclaimed movie *Lost In Translation*.

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It was Coppola, in fact, who led him to the name of this album. “She found the word for me,” says the songwriter. “She said that I have the shape of an animal, a savage, with my big beard, but now I’m domesticated. If Sofia says I have to call my album that, I have to do it!” On the brink of this album’s release, he’s struck by a strange irony: this record about the mundane tropes of day-to-day life is about to pull him away from that existence, into the strange realm of touring and being on the road. “I can’t wait to play shows with these songs,” he says. “Being in the studio and writing music, you are in your brain. On stage you really have to use your body. My goal is to spend two or three years now spreading joy. A good life – a fireworks life.”

The “lone wolf” Sébastien Tellier may be gone. But on *Domesticated*, the brilliant, humourful master of melody Sébastien Tellier lives on, more riveting than ever.

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