

## Chelsea Wolfe with Ioanna Gika – Live at Le National – October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019 – Montreal, QC.

It was raining heavily on October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019, in Montreal. The night was cold, dark and windy and a weird calmness was in the air. Some would say it was the perfect atmosphere for a Chelsea Wolfe show. If you agree, then there's a good chance you were at [Le National](#) that night, to watch Chelsea and her opener, Ioanna Gika, bring their beautiful, entrancing sounds to the city. And, well, if you weren't there, you basically missed one of the most incredible shows of the year.

Opening the show was Chelsea's friend and [Sargent House records](#) labelmate, [Ioanna Gika](#). She's a semi-recent signee to the label and last April, they released her incredibly beautiful album, [Thalassa](#). I was eager to see how her dream-pop sounds would translate live. As she walked on stage with her touring partner, multi-instrumentalist Aram, they exclusively played songs from that album, including "Messenger," "Out of Focus," "New Geometry" and "Ammonite." It was pretty obvious that everyone in the venue was completely vibing with the music as Ioanna put us in a trance with her interpretive dancing while simultaneously serenading us with her voice. The two standout tracks for me were "Roseate," an upbeat tempo, dance-y track, and "Swan," which has one of the most beautiful choruses I've ever heard. It was a perfect way to get the evening going and I hope Ioanna Gika eventually returns to Montreal as a headliner.

At 9:15pm, the lights dimmed and the ominous sound of a clock tower bell began to sound across the venue. I've never heard a crowd get quiet so quickly. Ben Chisholm (Chelsea's writing and touring partner) walked on stage first, and then [Chelsea Wolfe](#). In the middle of the stage was an elevated platform, surrounded by white branches and candle-mimicking lights. She took a deep breath and launched into the first song of the night, "Flatlands" from her first acoustic record, [Unknown Rooms](#). Many of the songs from that record have been buried away for years, but on this tour promoting her latest acoustic record, [Birth of Violence](#), Chelsea would dig up a few from that one, including "Boyfriend."

Her set was full of special moments. Every song she played from her new record, like "The Mother Road," "American Darkness," "Highway" and "Deranged for Rock & Roll" sounded incredible in the stripped down way she played them live. Chelsea also dug into her discography for older songs like "Pale on Pale" and "Cousins of the Antichrist." The most special moment of the evening for me was when she played "Sick" – a track from her 2013 album [Pain is Beauty](#). It was that record that locked me in as a fan for life. In that moment, it felt like I was the only person in the room, as Chelsea swayed to the music with several charms in hand, caressing and moving them in unison to the music.

As an encore, Chelsea once again played a song from *Unknown Rooms* called "The Way We Used To." It was her most raw performance of the evening. With no guitar in hand, she used a vocal effect to loop her voice multiple times, using it as a background melody as she sang the lyrics to this beautiful song. At this point in the evening, a staple of her set is to end with "Half Sleeper," but unfortunately, we didn't get to hear it. I'm not sure why she chose to omit it, as she's been playing it on every other date.

Chelsea's music and many of the artists on the Sargent House record label have a very special place in my heart. I almost can't describe it – I just know there's something about artists like Chelsea and Ioanna that connect with me (half of my 2019 top ten list consists of artists/bands from the label). The night

prior to the show in Montreal, my wife and I flew to Toronto to watch the same show. Seeing Chelsea Wolfe once is just not enough. The feeling of being serenaded by her acoustic guitar and voice is something that, in my opinion, almost no other artist can do as beautifully as she does. It's not just a show, but rather an experience. It was certainly [a different vibe from the last time Chelsea was in town](#), when she was touring her much heavier record, *Hiss Spun*. But a chance to see Chelsea in a stripped-down environment is not something to be missed. If she's coming to your town, go see her. That is all.

*Written by Dominic Abate*