

Quiet force

歲月靜好

On his second solo album, alternative-rock legend J Mascis showcases a softer side without losing his edge, writes Dorothy So

另類搖滾傳奇J Mascis 推出第二張個人專輯《Tied to a Star》，以柔和但不失個性的聲音打動了Dorothy So

When you've built your career around decades of amped up guitar rock, what can you still do to shock your listeners? For Dinosaur Jr. frontman J Mascis, the answer is to go mellow. Like its predecessor, *Several Shades of Why* (2011), Mascis' second solo effort, *Tied to a Star*, sounds decidedly different from his band's output, prizing lilting acoustic melodies over the sort of distorted, loud-and-proud sound that established Dinosaur Jr. in the alt-rock circuit in the 1990s.

It's not that the 48-year-old rocker has resigned to aging quietly; *Tied to a Star* may be subdued but it's still undeniably powerful. It also provides an arena for Mascis to remind us of his virtuosity with an axe. He picks at the guitar with incredible dexterity on opener *Me Again*. And while the album is mostly unplugged, he injects electrified solos where appropriate, as in the up-tempo *Every Morning*.

The album also highlights Mascis' soulful, world-weary vocals. His falsetto floats above the heavy steel-string strumming of *Heal the Star* and, on the evocative track *Wide Awake*, his voice melds beautifully with guest singer Charlyn Marie Marshall's haunting alto.

Some Dinosaur Jr. fans may have trouble adjusting to Mascis' softer sound, but if there's one thing that *Tied to a Star* proves, it's that it takes a truly confident and experienced musician to turn down the volume.



J Mascis proves that less is more on *Tied to a Star*

J Mascis在新專輯《Tied to a Star》中表現含蓄之美

幾十年來一直以激昂的結他搖滾撼動歌迷的音樂人，還能用什麼打動樂迷的心？搖滾樂隊Dinosaur Jr.的主音J Mascis的答案是：用軟功。Mascis第二張個人專輯《Tied to a Star》的音樂路線，與2011年推出的第一張專輯《Several Shades of Why》相似，都是以輕快的木結他旋律為主，與樂隊的作品截然不同。在1990年代令Dinosaur Jr.在另類搖滾樂壇闖出名堂的變形失真、響亮而自信的風格，在Mascis的個人專輯中消失於無形。

這位48歲的搖滾樂手並非因為年紀漸大而失去活力，新專輯《Tied to a Star》的曲風雖然柔和，但毫無疑問仍然充滿力量。Mascis還藉此提醒我們，不要忘記他精湛的結他彈奏技術，在專輯中打頭陣的作品《Me Again》，展現了他靈巧非凡的指法。專輯中幾乎所有歌曲都是用木結他伴奏，但在適當的地方會加入令人振奮的獨奏，節奏明快的《Every Morning》便是其一。

新專輯也突顯出Mascis情深而對塵世感到厭倦的歌聲。在《Heal the Star》裡，他的假音在鋼弦結他的聲音上飄浮；在引人共鳴的《Wide Awake》中，他與女歌手Charlyn Marie Marshall沉厚的聲音美妙地融合在一起。

部分Dinosaur Jr.的樂迷對Mascis的柔和歌聲，可能一時之間不能適應。不過《Tied to a Star》證實了一件事：只有真正充滿自信而且經驗豐富的音樂人，才會無懼「軟化」。

