



Tweedy – consisting of Wilco lead singer Jeff Tweedy, left, and son Spencer Tweedy – are playing Portland's Crystal Ballroom on Saturday.

PHOTO BY PIPER FERGUSON

Spencer Tweedy is making music with his father – Wilco's Jeff Tweedy – and paying tribute to his mother, who is fighting cancer

Inspired by family

BY SUE ZALOKAR
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Last year, at 18 years of age, Spencer Tweedy learned his mother had cancer.

That sent him and the Tweedy family reeling. He decided to defer his acceptance to Wisconsin's Lawrence University for a year to be with his family during his mother's treatment. A year later, his mother is doing well – as well as one could hope for after months of chemotherapy and treatment for a chest tumor.

In an effort to process the negatives of his mother's treatment, Tweedy went to the music studio with his dad, Jeff Tweedy of the band Wilco, recording drum tracks for his father's new album. That's how Jeff Tweedy's long awaited solo album turned out to be a duo with his son. And so the band Tweedy was formed, and the album "Sukirae" followed. The album, released in September, was named in honor of Spencer's mother, using her nickname as the album title.

"Mom is kind of the center of everything," the younger Tweedy said. "I have no problem enshrining my mother in an album. It makes sense. She's number one in the whole operation."

The duo played its first show in Detroit just four days after Spencer Tweedy graduated from high school – with only four full band rehearsals under their belts.

I caught the young Tweedy in a moment of repose, preparing to begin the Tweedy tour with two hometown shows opening soon after this interview.

The duo will play to a sold-out house on Saturday, March 14, at the Crystal Ballroom in Portland.

Sue Zalokar: *Tweedy. That is quite a namesake. The name must come with some benefits ...*

Spencer Tweedy: Absolutely. I've felt guilty at some points in my life about the massive privilege that is afforded (me), being my dad's son.

My parents have raised my brother and I as a "normal" family – as normal as we can be with whatever status my dad has.

S.Z. *What is your earliest musical memory?*

S.T. Probably walking around as a really little kid at The Lounge Ax, the club that my mom used to run until it closed in 2000. I spent like every single day of my life there

until I was 4. So I have some memories of listening to bands during sound check and rolling around on the disgusting, liquor-stained and cigarette-littered floor.

S.Z. *Ah, the good old days, back when you were 4.*

S.T. Yes! Back when I was 4 and being babysat by the doorman at the club ...

S.Z. *What do you think of Wilco's music?*

S.T. I love it. People might think that I'm lying or getting paid to say that, or maybe I have to say that because my parents feed me, but I really do love Wilco's music. I have listened to all of their records a ton over the years. I am a Wilco fan even though I am part of the family.

S.Z. *That's awesome. Aren't we all Wilco fans, even if we aren't part of the blood family?*

S.T. Well, you're all kind of a part of the family too ... not to get too sappy.

S.Z. *What impact did Wilco have on your*

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