

Clara Bellino



Photo credit: Chet Helms

Clara Bellino



Embarcadero Love'

A versatile performer and recorded artist, Clara Bellino is a French Chanteuse who has the pop melodies and voicing of a young Terri Nunn of Berlin with a little Stereolab thrown in. Clara Bellino was dubbed by Chet Helms as the 'freedom singer'. Her organic style isn't only felt when you spend an afternoon with her at the beach or at a café. There's no reason why Clara Bellino shouldn't be on the same stages as Sade, Marianne Faithful, or French-born Angelique Kidjo. Her and her band are seasoned and you can see they've got shaking your booty at the top of their set list when you see them perform. A world traveler and born in France, she was shaped into a fine singer by her experiences on the road in the US and Europe. Her evocative lyrics stir the soul.

'Embarcadero Love' is a landing place for those who want to hear a well thought out mix of songs that are at once womanly and eclectic. The characters in the songs are reverential to the objects of their desire, to the world as they see them. There's a soaring quality in the melodies that makes lingering in their cleverness feel exceptional. You might get a sense that an album that starts with a song about a foolish man leaving his love during war - and leaving her to worry about her own protection and her own happiness in a time of need - would end up being a rock opera about wars like Al Stewart's 'Between the Wars.' As the songs meander in wartime in the first two songs and introduce a song about reconciled love, a torn heart still hopes that someday they will meet again and heal the tears. You can tell there's something about the madness of war that is important to the narrators in these songs. The characters in the songs that follow find themselves in an Odysseal wandering where we meet up with an immigrant who has become an American who accepts what that means, how difficult it is to fit in, and gains an understanding of what it means to have to make it in "Potential Criminal." This leads finally to a character who might not have liked rejection all that well and made her own "Big Picture" where everyone gets to be a lead character - even if it results in a story about characters just making do the best they can during a war.

Sitting at home or in your car listening to Clara's album lifts the spirit, like a chanteuse who sits in a bar and explains that even with a broken heart a larger world of possibilities exists, even if it means finding a way to conquer external love with the appreciation of more people with their difficulties. Spend song moments with them through the narrators in 'Embarcadero Love.'

Clara Bellino is catching lots of people's eyes on the local scene in San Francisco and you gotta hand it to her, she's got musicians playing with her one might only dream about. Young, statuesque, passionate and heartwarming.

The passion of Clara Bellino

What's the craft behind your songwriting - what inspires new material?

When a subject is pressing for me, I write a song. Songs for me talk directly to people but through songwriting, that's my craft. My experiences form my songs and then the ones I turn into songs are made into universal images. Sometimes I write about particular incidents, but I want them to relate to the feeling not the particular situation, so that people don't feel like outsiders. My songs are personal, but I give myself over to my songs emotionally, then I sing it for other people. Sometimes I dream about what I think about when I'm awake and what I observe. But I find in dream sequences, some of the best inspiration. In one of my dreams, I was in a casino town, and my lover had gambled away some very important things, and I had to realize that they couldn't even apologize for gambling things that meant more than the money they could have won. The compulsion to bet was too strong. I like to tell stories through characters.

What's a recurring message in your songs?

I think it's that each day counts no matter where you are. That's slightly philosophical, but I mean it. One of the things I've been given through my parents, was that we embraced life on a level that getting up every morning is always exciting for me. Joie de vivre. Not always attained, but it gave me bigger horizons, than if I had stayed in my valley my whole childhood. I got a sense of appreciation for all kinds of people and a curiosity for all kinds of people. I expect them to be different from each other. I'm so aware that people have a specific different path which explains why they see things differently. It might be about tolerance.

What's a new song you're working on?

"Crustacean Frustration." It's written by my friend Greg. It's about a time when I received a live crab, and I put it in a bowl. At 4 am I heard a clunk, opened the fridge, and it was moving around. I couldn't cook it live so when I woke up, I grabbed it and drove to the beach and tried to release it. A couple with a little boy, saw me as seagulls swarmed at me, they could smell the crab in the bag. I was releasing the crab, but they offered to take it and cook it. Off the crab went with the couple. But the lyrics are a lot funnier, you'll have to hear it.

The last song 'El Crepusculo' on 'Embarcadero Love' sounds so passionate, what is it?

The last song is about dusk. It's about a longing for love about a couple in the Mexico hills. He was approached to be a model and he promised her someday he would return for her after he makes his riches. We don't know if they walk into the sunset, she's still going to pine for him, if he never makes it back. It's uncertain whether they get together. It's unresolved and so full of love. It's a declaration of her professed love.

What are they saying about Clara Bellino?

“Clara Bellino brings much more than her amazing vocal talent to the stage. She also brings a sparkling personality that wraps her sweetness, vulnerability, humor and sensuousness into one very appealing package.

She is, on large stage or small, a complete performer.” ♥Greg Hoffmann

“It was fantastic, really good, something about it reminded me of New Orleans. The music was interesting, relaxing, different, enjoyable, wonderful. Good time music..”

♥ Kathy Meadows

“Clara Bellino is a beguiling chanteuse and presents an evening of lively music including sentimental ballads. Clara is a singing goddess that brought joy to my soul. Don't miss this great talent!” ♥Suzanne Locke-Webb

“I had the good fortune to hear Clara Bellino sing a couple of sets of her songs the other night on the Oakland-Alameda ferry....lovely voice, wonderful music and a great performance; super-fun evening!” ♥Ed Jones

“Haunting. These songs lodge in your soul.” ♥W. Graham Claytor

“We met on the Ferry last Friday and I thought you were better than GREAT! You also have a winner smile! Lights up a room or a boat! I had a bad day before I got on the ferry and then I heard you sing and saw your smile.”

♥Letitia Chigovanyika

“I would pay \$80 to see Clara perform before I would pay Bob Dylan \$5. If Tom Jones were playing, they'd have to share the bill!” ♥Maureen Ann O'Brien