

# CLAIRDEE 21st Century jazz vocalist • educator • activist

"A whole lot of interpretive brilliance." –*Jazz Times*

"Sincerity, musical artistry, and heartfelt emotion in every soulful note." –*Pop Magazine (Berlin)*

"In the tradition of all great vocalists, Clairdee infuses her own unique style while always remaining true to the to the song itself." –*Nancy Wilson*

Soulful, swinging, and stylish, the music of San Francisco-based jazz singer Clairdee epitomizes jazz's empowering imperative. More than a masterly interpreter of lyrics with a lustrous, velvety tone, she is deeply informed by the music's departed masters. Clairdee puts a personal stamp on whatever she sings, a gift aptly described by the inimitable Nancy Wilson. "In the tradition of all great vocalists," Wilson said of Clairdee, "she infuses each song with her own unique style while always remaining true to the song itself."

Clairdee covers a lot of stylistic ground on her latest project, *A Love Letter to Lena*, which celebrates the iconic star Lena Horne, one of the 20th century's most consequent performers. Released in the winter of 2020, the critically hailed album is a profoundly personal tribute to the barrier-shattering Black actress, singer, World War II pin-up, and civil rights activist who died in 2010 at the age of 92. Clairdee says, "I learned a lot about Horne from my parents. Beyond her extraordinary talent and beauty, they marveled at her determination to stand up for what's right."

Clairdee's soulfully alluring vocal style has been featured in concert halls, festivals and nightclubs from Monterey, Edinburgh, Tokyo, Bangkok, Toronto, Paris, Moscow and St. Petersburg Russia, to New York, New Hampshire, San Francisco and points in between. In addition to leading her world-class touring band, she has performed with some of America's most notable jazz masters including Dick Hyman, Bucky Pizzarelli, Houston Person, Cyrus Chestnut, Ken Peplowski, Russell Malone, and the late Nancy Wilson.

As bandleader, arranger, and producer, Clairdee's discography includes four highly praised albums on her Declare Music record label.

A 2018 recipient of the Bay Area Jazz and Blues Artist Lifetime Achievement Award, Clairdee has a long track record as a passionate advocate for music education: San Francisco Conservatory of Music Professor of Jazz Voice, vocal instructor at UC Berkeley's Jazz Department, and San Francisco Symphony's Education Department. She serves as Artist Advisory Committee member for Bay Area nonprofit Jazz in the Neighborhood.

Since moving to the Bay Area in 1986, she's performed almost every style of music, from R&B and cabaret to country and soul. In the mid-1990s she decided to focus on jazz, honing a singular sound while working with jazz luminaries such as trumpeter Eddie Henderson, saxophonist John Handy, drummer Billy Higgins, and pianist Roland Hanna. She gained national attention when legendary artist manager and NEA Jazz Master John Levy built a show around her guitarist/vocalist Henry Johnson.

Whether she's celebrating Lena Horne or delivering a carefully honed program of standards, her aim is the same. "My mission," Clairdee says, "is to engage, uplift and build community through music –creating narrative that inspires beyond the stage."