

THE JW VIBE

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Music That Sticks To My Soul **CLAIRDEE, A Love Letter to Lena**

February 26, 2020, Jonathan Widran



A 2018 winner of the Bay Area Jazz and Blues Artist Lifetime Achievement Award, San Francisco based internationally renowned jazz and R&B driven singer Clairdee grew up admiring not only the musical genius of Lena Horne, but also the legendary performer’s commitment to civil rights and dignity for all people.

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From a Latin-fired arrangement of “Old Devil Moon” to a thoughtful reflective spin through “I Got A Name,” Clairdee and pianist/arranger Jon Herbst choose wide-ranging chestnuts from the Horne catalog. The emotional core, however, emerges from two classics written for Horne by her friend Billy Strayhorn, the sultry and optimistic “Maybe” and the tender and plaintive “Something to Live For.” She wraps the set with a rousing gospel tinged original “Stand Up,” which incorporates elements of a speech from Sen. Cory Booker to make its potent points about social justice.

Clairdee weaves an incredibly narrative through line - and lays a foundation for her live performance of this material with spoken word pieces delivered impeccably by actress/director/playwright Margo Hall about Horne’s life, including quotes from Lena herself. Helping illuminate Clairdee’s connection to her muse and her vision for the project are the compelling and insightful liner notes of veteran journalist A. Scott Galloway. This is one love letter you’ll fall deeply and madly in love with!