CLARA BELLINO SHORT BIO

Following up on her successful CD Embarcadero Love, the delightful singer-songwriter Clara Bellino has emerged with This Is Happiness – Hand In Hand. Here most recent recording not only features her newest song “This Is Happiness” and a duet with the late legendary Bobby Sharp (best known for composing “Unchain My Heart”) but two videos and a documentary, making for a unique release by a major artist.

Clara Bellino was born in Paris and grew up in a small village of the French Alps. She spent a decade studying classical piano and guitar in a conservatory where she wrote some of her first songs. “I wanted to perform my own music and in France I felt as if I was stuck. The choices were to become a pop variety artist who had to have a hit in order to get on television, or to play classical or jazz. I felt that there were a lot more options to grow in music in the U.S.”

Clara moved to California when she was 17, took music classes at Foothill College, started her first group, and played bass in a reggae band. Since 1992 she has worked in many films (including starring as a singer in the 1993 feature film, Steal America) and commercials, and she has had extensive voiceover work, but music has always been her main passion. Clara recorded her first solo CD, Flying Monkey and in 2005 she recorded “Come And Stay With Me” for a compilation album (Juxtamusician) put out by a label from Austin, Texas. The single was also included in her next CD, Embarcadero Love.

Embarcadero Love, which Clara calls “soulful pop,” has distinctive and original versions of songs by Tom Waits, Smokey Robinson, William Barnes (the classic “Something Cool”) and Jackie DeShannon (“Come And Stay With Me”). Of greatest significance, this colorful set introduces six of Clara’s best compositions. Among the highpoints are her songs about the difficulties of a long distance romance (“Goodnight Baby”), the futility of war (“Peaceful Solution”), moving to another country (“Potential Criminal”) and the joy and adventure of living your own life (“Big Picture”). Throughout Embarcadero Love, the offbeat lyrics, highly original way of looking at life, quietly emotional vocals and fine backup band make this a memorable and very accessible set.

For the new CD, Clara at first wrote “This Is Happiness,” a song about the joy found in simple pleasures that will have audiences singing along. Although she had originally planned to release the song as a CD single, her friendship with Bobby Sharp led to the project being expanded. Sharp originally wrote “Hand In Hand” in 1947 and over 15 years later Nat King Cole expressed interest in it. However the song was never recorded and went undiscovered until now. “I wanted Bobby to be on the project. It was a pleasure working with him and he always had wonderful stories to share.”

The CD includes two versions of “This Is Happiness” and “Hand In Hand” (including a duet by Clara with Bobby Sharp), videos of both of the songs, Sharp’s pretty instrumental “Driftwood,” and a video documentary about the great composer who is now 87.

Clara Bellino, who performs regularly in Northern California, is a talent well worth discovering.