

CASSANDRA ALLEN

The Mediterranean Experience



Avda. Profesor Lopez Pinero, 1 Palau de les Arts – Anexo Sur 46013 Valencia, Spain

Phone: 443-447-2985

E-Mail: caallen@berklee.edu Web: cassandraallenofficialpage.com

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Introduction

Hello, I'm Cassandra Allen, a vocalist from small town Jackson, MI. I come from an extremely musical family. I was blessed to be born into a family of very talented people, everyone in my family has the ability sing or play music. So music has been apart of me, since I was a child. I started singing at the age of 10. I began with the children's choir at Michigan State University.

This choir exposed me to the study of classical music, mostly choral music. Around the age of 18 I began individual study of the voice. One of my choir director said to me "you should really consider studying classical voice as a career goal". So at 18 that's when I decided to audition for schools to become an opera/recital performer.

My main focus was classical music. I eventually ended up getting a scholarship to study at Howard University under the tutelage of Ms. Charlotte Holloman, Here, I honed my skills and went on to perform at many different venues and win competitions. After graduating Howard University. I realized very quickly, to live and eat off of being a musician is a hard thing to do when you are starting out a career. So I eventually ended up getting a job at an advertising firm. I hated it! And had to find a way out. I knew my way out was to go back to my first love.

Music.

So, I search for a program that would expand my knowledge as a musician and offer me the opportunity not to just be a Classical Vocalist but a vocalist with verity of styles and genre's. So that's when I came across the Berklee school of music Valencia website. I felt I had struck gold. The contemporary performance program provided me all the elements I was looking from in a school.

Sense being at Berklee Valencia, This campus, it's students and the faculty , have inspired me to dig deeper into my musical ability. The faculty has pushed me beyond what I thought I was capable of doing and expanded my knowledge of music and the limitless possibilities there are when it comes to cultivating your musical goals.

Overview

Over the Christmas break I had the opportunity to explore my background and my findings were interesting. Turn's out I am a melting pot of different cultures ranging from Spanish to west Indian, west African to polish.

My findings have inspired me to focus my sights on music from for the mediterranean. In this project, I will be focusing on music for cape Verde, and specifically music performed by Cesaria Evora.

I will be recording a collection of songs in memory of the late great Cesaria Evora. I will be discussing the history of Cape Verde musical styles and what cape Verdeans are known for and the link between the styles and Cesaria Evora's career, I will also briefly discuss the African and Spanish rhythm and why they are so closely related.

At the end of my informational portion of the presentation. I will discuss each piece I recorded, Then play it for the viewing committee. I hope you enjoy. (*Please note: The overview portion of this paper is a brief outline of what is presented in the live lecture presentation.*)

Exploration

Sense my arrival at Berklee Valencia and being exposed to many different Genre's it has inspired me dig deep into the mediterranean culture, my heritage, and explore the possibility of singing different styles of music. Before, I go into the different styles of music, Let me tell you a little about the Island Country Cape Verde

Cape Verde

Cape Verde or (the Republic of Cape Verde), is an island country spanning an archipelago of 10 volcanic islands in the central Atlantic Ocean. Located 570 kilometres (350 miles) off the coast of Western Africa. The islands cover a combined area of slightly over 4,000 square kilometres (1,500 sq mi). Three (Sal, Boa Vista and Maio) are fairly flat, sandy and dry; the others generally rockier with more vegetation. So, Now that we know a bit about Cape Verde lets go into it folk music.

Morna

Morna is noted as one of the most popular genre of Cape Verdean music and is the national music of Cape Verde. Morna goes back about a 150 years, and is complex hybrid of African and European cultures. Some musicologists trace the genre back to a genre called the lundum (or lundu), from Africa, most likely Angola. It is a dance-song from the Bantu tribe, which spread through various regions of Africa, most likely Angola. It is a dance-song from the Bantu tribe, which spread through various regions of Africa. Slaves brought it to Brazil, where it was very popular among the elite and even became Brazil's first national dance. Lundum is related to the Spanish fandango and new world dances like the bolero. All of these include scarfs, castanets, and holding arms over the head. There was also a genre in Cape Verde called the choros, which are plaintive songs, like working songs.

Morna is therefore considered a cross between the lundum and the choros. Initially, morna did not have any romantic themes; they developed along with the genre.

1. Morna – Instrumentation

The main instrument associated with the morna is the guitar, popularly called “violão” in Cape Verde. In its most simple form, a guitar is enough to provide the accompaniment for another solo instrument that can be another guitar, a violin (popularly called “rabeca” in Cape Verde), the singer’s voice or any other melodic instrument.

A medium-sized band may have, besides a guitar, a cavaquinho (that plays the chords rhythmically), a ten or twelve string guitar (popularly called “viola” in Cape Verde, that provides an harmonic support), a solo instrument besides the singer’s voice and some percussion instrument. A bigger band may have another guitar, an acoustic bass guitar, more than one solo instrument (violin, clarinet, trumpet, etc.) and several percussion instruments (shaker, güiro, bongos, etc.).

The strumming of the morna articulates a bass (played with the thumb, marking the accentuation of the rhythm) with chords (played with the other fingers, either in an arpeggio, rhythmically, or in a combination of both). morna can also be performed on a piano, with the left hand providing the bass and the accompaniment and the right hand providing the accompaniment and the melody.

1.2 *Morna – Structure*

Harmonic Structure

Morna obeys the cycle of fifths. The harmonic progression starts in a chord (the tonic) of a certain tonality, the second chord is the lower fifth (the subdominant), the third chord is the same as the first and the fourth chord is the upper fifth (the dominant seventh).

These chords — tonic, dominant seventh, subdominant — have in Cape Verde the popular names of “primeira”, A minor’s first Am “segunda” A minor’s second E 7th, and “terceira” A minor’s third dm, respectively of the tonality in question. The structure has been developed with passing chords as of more recent composers have changed the basic structure.

Melodic Structure

The melodic line of the *morna* varies a lot through the song, with ascending and descending note sequences, and within a bar the notes generally do not have the same length. One frequent characteristic of the *morna* is the syncopation.

There are several models of the form Morna uses for example: ABABAB, ABCBABC, ACBACB, AABCCB. The ABABAB form is what you will see here an example of later in the presentation.

Rhythmic Structure

In most cases Morna is characterized by a lento tempo with a two beat or four beat bar. Using a strophic form, more known as a repeating

1.3 Morna – And The Blues

Morna is often compared to the blues; there is little research on the relationship between the genres, though there are interesting similarities and significant cultural connections between Cape Verde and the United States.

The music is characterized by a slow tempo. The main instrument is a guitar. From my own interpretation of the two styles I've found Blues and Morna feed off one another. For example, the word (Morna) some think comes from it comes from the English word "to mourn". Others say it comes from the French word "morne", which is the name of the hills in French Antilles where chanson des mornes are sung. Most writers think, however, that the name is from the Portuguese "morno" meaning "warm", a reference to the way morna is sung. Like the blues Morna developed from an oppressed people expressing their sadness and longing for home and/or homeland. The blues a melancholic music of brown America folk origin, typically in a twelve-bar sequence. It developed in rural southern US toward the end of the 18th century, finding a wider audience in the 1940's as brown Americans migrated to the cities.

The urban blues gave rise to rhythm and blues and rock and roll. Blues carries with it the feeling of melancholy, sadness, or depression which is directly related to the same feeling of Morna.

2. Morna – *Musicians in the states*



Paul Gonsalves, a Cape Verdean from New Bedford, was one of Duke Ellington’s greatest tenor saxophonist players, He is most well known for being the instigator of one of the great stories of jazz history, when he blew a `legendary 27-chorus solo at the 1956 Newport Jazz Festival that threw the audience into fits



Bebop pianist **Horace Silver** was actually **Horace Silva**, son of a Cape Verdean father and an Irish-African mother. He didn’t foray too deeply into Cape Verdean musical territory, but did make some island references on two of his most famous compositions: “The Cape Verdean Blues” and the bossa “Song for my Father.”

Some 1st and 2nd generation Cape Verdeans were just as comfortable with jazz, blues and soul as they were with morna and coladeira, and some musicians could play it allso with all that information, I would like to take a min an talk about one of the greatest morna performers to date Cesaria Evora

2.1 Morna – Platform Star

Cape Verde and its national music morna has a tremendous history and with its influence it has produced an international superstar named Cesária Évora.

She is the best internationally known morna singer from São Vicente Island who sings primarily in Cape Verdean Creole. Cesaria, better known as the “barefoot diva” has sung mornas in concert all over the world. The morna "Sodade" was her first international hit, the first hit for a non-French song in France, and marked the beginning of worldwide fame for morna. The Portuguese term saudade is complex and infamously difficult to translate, related to homesickness, nostalgia, longing, sadness, and regret. The expression of "sodade" is integral to Cape Verdean music.

The first major morna composers and performers were Manel d'Novas and B. Leza (Cesária Évora's uncle). In later years, Os Tubarões brought Cape Verdean music beyond Cape Verde's borders, setting the stage for the rise of performers like Évora, Tito Paris, Ildo Lobo, Lura, Teófilo Chantre, and Maria De Barros. Morna and other styles of Cape Verdean music are also played in Cape Verdean immigrant communities abroad, especially in New England in the US, Portugal, the Netherlands, France, West Africa, and parts of Latin America. *(For Video interview with Cesaria Evora Please See Presentation Slide 12 that goes along with this paper.)*

My Works

Here are the Top 3 recordings I will discuss. The Complete layout of all the songs are on my website Cassandraallenofficialpage.com

Sodade

Angola

Besame Mucho



Why? Sodade

I decided to recording Sodade because, when I first heard the piece it gave me chills and I knew the moment I heard the piece, I wanted to explore the origins of this music. This piece is the reason why I decided to explore the Mediterranean.

What is different about my arrangement?

I used mid-eastern percussion (Baca, Cajon, Shakers) Instruments as well as traditional cape Verde instruments along with multiple vocal overdubs using major 2nd and 3rd, minor 2nd and 3rd, and Perfect 4th harmonies. I decided to make my recording with more of an intimate feel, yet continuing with the integrity of a traditional Morna style. Using 3 elements Voice, Guitar and Percussion.

Why? Angola

I decided to record and Angola because allot of the music from Cape Verde is directly linked to Angola. The music from Angola and its people have influenced the world, and I thought it was important to include a piece dedicated to the country.

What is different about my arrangement?

I decided to use Congas, multiple voice overdubs using major 2nd and 3rd minor 2nd and 3rd, and Perfect 4th harmonies. When listening to this arrangement one has to be encompassed by the percussion. The percussion is the meat of this piece. (why?) Because like previously

discussed earlier in this paper, Morna is a music that is derived from a music called Lundum or (Lundu) which comes from Africa and Africans are historically known for their incredible rhythmic talent and ability. So, that's what you will feel and hear in this piece. The percussion, the rhythm rules in this particular arrangement.

Why? Besame Mucho

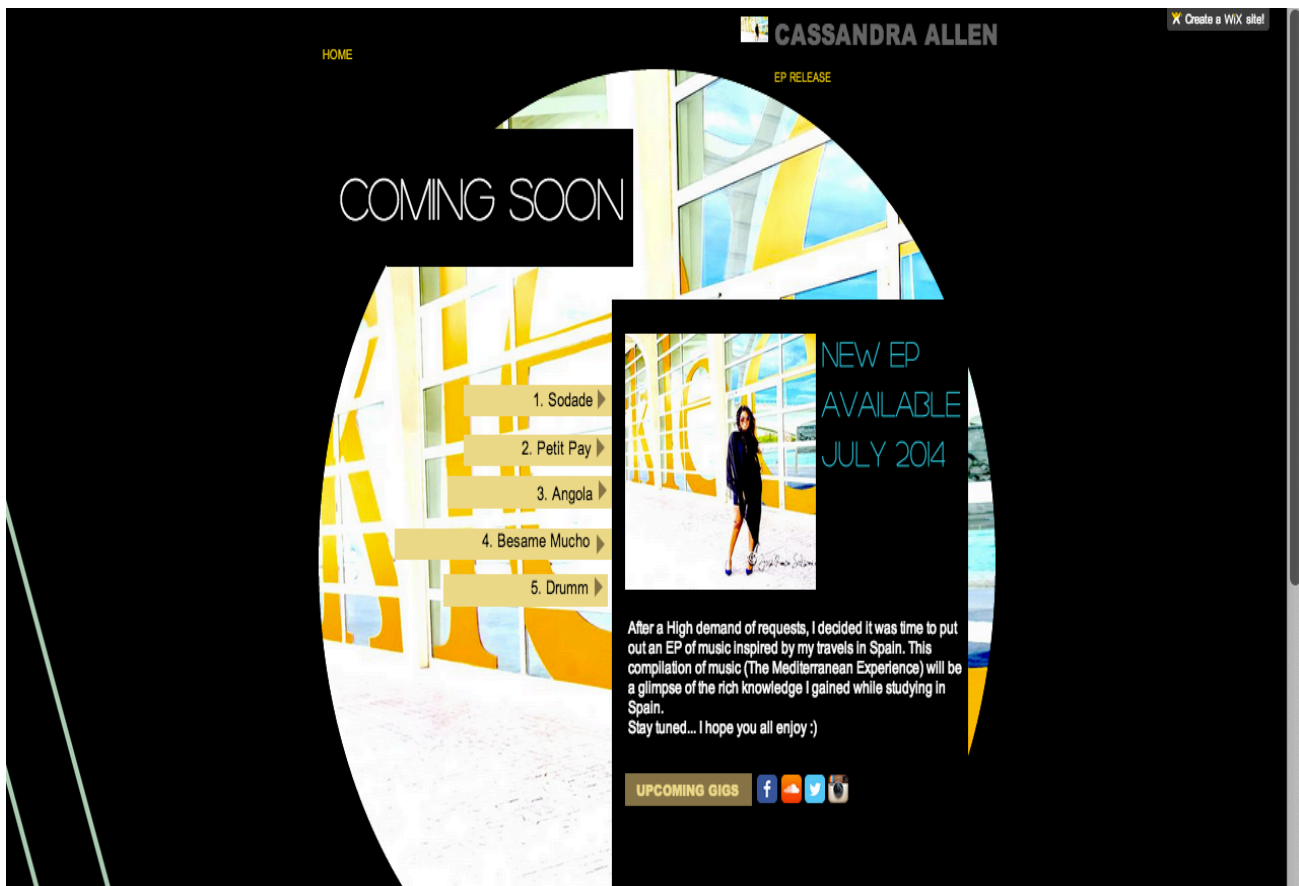
Besame Mucho is a piece I've always loved and is one of the first pieces, I had the chance to record and engineer. I was able to receive a new perspective on the recording process and became better equipped with my ability to engineer.

What is different about my arrangement?

This piece stays fairly close to the classic way of performing this piece (Voice and Guitar) I added different harmonies by overdubbing my voice and adding variations of malizma's throughout the piece. I decided I wanted this piece to keep close to the classic style because it embodied the classic morna sound using only guitar and voice. Being that this piece is originally a bolero it completely relates to Morna because of the history of morna. The Bolero is taken from the African music Lundum or Lundu which is now consequently called Morna. In turn leaving the Bolero and extended form of Morna now called the Bolero.

Professional Package

Below is a screen shot of my website, there you will find listening samples of my work, you will also be able to find out more about me by clicking on to my Biography page, in addition you will be able to view a gallery of photos and take a look at my video's and recent news. Preparing this package was extremely important to me because, in a highly competitive field you have to put your best foot forward and preparing a package was the first step to success. Please feel free to visit my site CassandraAllenofficialpage.com.



Conclusion

In Conclusion, I have had a great musical journey while living here in Spain, I've gotten the opportunity to learn how to record music/engineer sessions, compose music, and create music video's.

I've gained the knowledge of all aspects of the recording process, applying the technic and technological ability to each session and mastering all multi-layered aspects of the recording process, including post production and pre-production operations. Throughout the course of the year I've been exposed to music industry operations and have procured information that will aid me in the future. This year will be a year I will never forget, I am thankful for being able to work with such talented musicians, and being able to explore many different genres of music. This journey specifically related to this CE is the work of cesaria Evora. I believe her work and her music, is a reflection of her travel, family and longing for home but, knowing that she needed to take the journey for hopes of a better and prosperous life.

Which consequently is a direct reflection of my travel and exploration here in Spain, I came to grow and learn in hopes to better my knowledge and provide a prosperous life for my future and I have accomplished just that. This is the reason this project and this experience here a Berklee Valencia means so much to me, because It's not just about me, but its about my family and my future and being able to get the tools I need to succeed to give back, while at the same time doing what I love.

I've had a year I will never forget and I'm excited for future endeavors.

Thank you Berklee Valencia!

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