

Cesaria Evora

Wednesday & Thursday, October 17 & 18, 2001, 8 pm
Zellerbach Hall

Cesaria Evora, vocals
Ademiro Miroca, percussion
Fernando Andrade, piano
Anotonio Gomes Fernandes, saxophone
Luis Morais, saxophone
Joao Pina Alves, guitar
Aderito Pontes, guitar
Virgilio Duarte, bass
Antonio Pina Alves, cavaquinho
Carlos Monteiro, drums
Leonel Hernandez, violin
Julian Corrales Subida, violin
Daniel Rodriguez, cello

Tonight's program will be announced from the stage
and will be performed without intermission.

This evening's performance by Cesaria Evora is sponsored, in part, by Hear Music.

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and the Zellerbach Family Fund for their generous support.

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and by the California Arts Council, a state agency.

Cesaria Evora was born in Mindelo, on the Cape Verde island of Sao Vicente, off the coast of Senegal. Her father died at a young age, leaving behind his wife and seven children. Unlike her siblings, most of whom eventually emigrated, Cesaria remained firmly rooted to her birthplace. Mindelo, like most port towns, has a thriving night life. Music was everywhere—in the clubs, in the contredanse. However, the most popular styles were the coladera and the morna, a slow and rhythmic song form expressing nostalgia, love, sadness, and longing. With a voice conveying power, vulnerability, and an emotional affinity for this music, Evora quickly found a niche for herself as the “Queen of Morna.” She and her musicians traveled from club to club to make a living, depending on the growing generosity of their fans. But with the decline of the port in the late 1950s and independence from Portugal in 1975, trade in Cape Verde rapidly diminished, and most musicians emigrated to different parts of the world. Evora, however, chose to stay.

In the 1980s, José Da Silva, a young Frenchman of Cape Verdean origin, was captivated by Evora's singing and eventually convinced her to travel with him to Paris to record an album. In 1988, they made *La Diva aux Pieds Nus*, and in the ensuing years *Distino di Belita* (1990) and *Mar Azul* (1991). But it was *Miss Perfumado* in 1992 that made Cesaria Evora, at age 52, a star, with sales in France of more than 200,000 copies (and similar success from Barcelona to Montreal). With a relaxed manner and palpable self-confidence, Evora was widely embraced as “The Barefoot Diva”—a literal reference to her style on the stage, an ongoing sign of solidarity with the disadvantaged women and children of her country's streets. Fans worldwide were quickly smitten with her Cape Verdean version of the Blues.

Evora's Grammy-nominated, self-titled *Nonesuch* debut album was cited as “Best of the Year” by more than a dozen major US publications, including *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Boston Globe*, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Denver Post*, *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*, and *San Diego Union Tribune*. The bestselling 1995 release, which has consistently remained on *Billboard's* world music chart, recreates the dreamy atmosphere of the Cape Verdean nights with Evora's blend of intoxicating vocals and compelling lyrics. Since its release, the album has sold more than 150,000 copies in the United States, and achieved great success in Portugal and France, where it has gone double-gold.

In 1995, Evora made her first foray onto American soil, winning over discerning audiences with her unique flourish and generous spirit. Then, in 1999, her pivotal *Café Atlantico* recording saw her at the center of the same world music

revival that carried the Buena Vista Social Club and all of its members to mainstream notice. (Berkeley audiences will long remember Evora's breathtaking 1999 debut concert with Cal Performances.)

São Vicente, Evora's most recent release, is a worldly mix of cinematic strings, syncopated with the rhythms of the spirits of the world. But most important is the woman standing at its center. Cesaria Evora executes her craft here like she has never before, commanding at once attention and reflection with a seemingly effortless sense of style and understanding. The CD is also a collaborative monument, placing Evora among the talents of her peers and friends: Pedro Guerra, Chucho Valdés, Caetano Veloso, Orquesta Aragon, and Bonnie Raitt, who is featured on the track "Crepescular Solidao."

São Vicente is a testimony to Evora's rich heritage in Cape Verde, where mixed-race identities encourage a sort of cultural acceptance and development. Perhaps more importantly, though, São Vicente represents a milestone in Evora's own, charmed metamorphoses into an international musical ambassador capable of embracing the world—and never letting go.