

CLAUDIA NYGAARD



SINGER / SONGWRITER / STORYTELLER

Claudia Nygaard's long legs hang over both sides of that same fence between country and folk music that Guy Clark and John Prine have straddled. Her sound is acoustic, and while her songs find their roots and rhythms in the Americana storytelling tradition, the melodies are passionate and emotional.

A former staff songwriter for Greenwood Music on Nashville's Music Row, Nygaard found that writing formulaic "radio friendly" love songs for the country music industry was not for her. Instead she chose to buy back her contract and songs, and write what was in her heart. She writes about real people and real life. "J.C.," the song that won her the New Folk songwriting competition at the 2004 Kerrville Music Festival, explores racism through the eyes of a child. In "Edna" the listener feels a protective tenderness for the mentally challenged woman with "hugs that don't let go". The steamy lyric of "What Her Girlfriends Say" paints a picture of the sensual desire a young woman feels for a working class man her girlfriends don't approve of, and the title cut of her CD "Somewhere Else To Go" pulls the listener into that aching loneliness created when a couple grows apart. Her music is also rampant with irreverent humor. In "I Don't Need A Man (I Just Want One)", and "Dumped By A Dweeb", Claudia delightfully pokes fun at the gender gap. She crafts songs that range from heartfelt to humorous, and she does so with a quick wit, an articulate point of view, and vivid imagery.

"The real strength of the material lies in the lyrics. Each song is a distinct and individual story..."
Paul Moser, Music Connection Magazine, Los Angeles, CA

"There is a womanly warmth in her tone that suggests some sentiments are based on experience... what comes over is a refreshing individuality..." Richard Kirk, Country Music Round-Up, UK

While Claudia's last recording "Somewhere Else To Go" was not released in the states, it did receive critical praise and extensive airplay overseas. Released by European record label Round Tower Music, the first single "I've Already Seen This Movie" climbed to the #4 position on the EMS (European Media Services) chart. It was also chosen the #1 Song Of The Summer by the Country Roads Radio Show in Marseilles, France. The follow up single "I Don't Need A Man, (I just Want One)" went to #11 on the EMS chart, while yet another song from the CD "What Her Girlfriends Say", climbed to the #9 position in Spain. The CD has also gathered wonderful reviews, both in North America and in several European music magazines including Country Music Roundup, Country Music International, and Southern Country. Richard Kirk of Country Music Round-up Magazine, chose Claudia's last CD as one of the top 12 recordings of the year for 2001. The magazine also chose Claudia for the cover and feature interview of the December issue. Nygaard is currently in the studio finishing her new CD, to be released in the US in the fall.

As a performer, Claudia Nygaard was once described by a Midwest booking agent as "a female Will Rogers without the rope". From her earliest gigs playing bars and restaurants, she learned that she could occasionally slip one of her own songs into the set if she could come up with an introduction interesting enough to capture the audience's attention. By the time she started playing fairs, her repertoire was half original songs and she had refined her stage patter to an art. 150 fairs later, her quick wit & relaxed stage presence is as much a part of her show as the songs themselves.

"Completely at ease on stage, Claudia had fun with her audience, telling stories and adding personal glimpses into her life..." Paul Moser, Music Connection Magazine, Los Angeles, CA

"Claudia was a smash hit with our audience. Her songs, her stories, her charming wit, and her engaging personality combined to provide all of us with a wonderful evening of entertainment." Kelson Slayman of "Folk at the Cannery" House Concerts on Dataw Island, SC

"I have been hosting concerts for 40 years and house concerts for the last twelve. I would have to say that Claudia Nygaard's house concert was one of the most personal and engaging of the audience that I have ever seen. She had them from the get-go to the encore. Her strength is in her conviction to the empathy her songs convey, and it shows." Paul Barker of "Barker House Concerts", Austin, TX

Claudia's voice is a sensual alto, praised for its "power and resonance" by Nashville music critic Robert K. Oermann of Music Row Magazine, and for its "full-texture" by Gene Harbrecht of the Orange County Register in California. She is also a strong rhythm guitarist with endorsements from Tacoma Guitars, Intellitouch Tuners, and D'Aquisto Strings.

MUSICAL ROOTS

The daughter of a California cattle rancher, it was in the adobe of the San Joaquin Valley that Claudia Nygaard's music took root. Growing up, she sang in school choirs, with the high school dance band, and in local musical comedy productions. Singing folk songs on her first guitar won her the Miss Santa Clara title, which led to TV commercials and modeling jobs. It also led to a job for two and a half years as the weather reporter on KNTV Channel 11 News, an ABC affiliate television station in San Jose, California. While at KNTV, Claudia completed a Bachelor of Arts degree in Theater from San Jose State University. She continued to work as the weather reporter until a giant layoff left her unemployed.

It was then she began singing with a country folk trio, performing at ski resorts in the winter, and on Cape Cod, Massachusetts in the summer. After three years in that trio, Claudia moved to Los Angeles where she won a talent show at the famous country music emporium "The Palomino". She and her band became well known in Southern California, winning honors two years in a row as one of the hottest bands in town in the Music Connection Magazine "Pick of the Players Poll". During this time, Claudia also won awards for her songwriting from the Los Angeles Songwriter's Showcase, The American Song Festival, and for both her singing and song writing from the Music City Song Festival. Encouraged by these successes, she made the move to Nashville, Tennessee. There, her writing caught the attention of Greenwood Music who signed her to her first contract as a staff songwriter, where she was able to polish her craft. She has now formed her own publishing company, Cattle-log Music.

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