

The Artist Cites A Musical Evolution

LOS ANGELES - „It’s really becoming more fun now because I have more confidence in what I’m doing and I’m sure about my style and my voice,“ said an upbeat Laura Branigan.

Indeed, the young Atlantic recording artist has come a long way since her first solo showcase at Manhattan’s Reno Sweeneys in 1981. Ironically, at such a young age and with such a bright future ahead of her, Laura Branigan can now be considered a „veteran“ recording artist.

„I’ve really found my style,“ she remarked. „It was hard, for a while, I was all over the place and I really didn’t pull it all together. Now I think I finally wrapped it all up.“

Laura Branigan’s penchant for the stage began at her high school in Brewster, New York and led her to the American Academy of Dramatic Arts acting school in Manhattan. Upon graduation she hit the streets, auditioning for roles in various musicals. She received her first break when Leonard Cohen, who she has often cited as one of her musical influences, hired her as back up singer on a four month European tour.

Upon her return to the states, Branigan developed a solo act, blending her own songs with those of Barry Manilow, Billy Joel and Steve Wonder. She landed the two week engagement at Reno Sweeneys and packed the place every night.

One of the patrons of the Sweeneys shows was Atlantic chairman Ahmet Ertegun who signed Branigan to the label after a rare personal audition. „I was still new and lacked direction,“ she recalled. „But Ahmet heard something out there that he felt could be brought out.“

Atlantic president Doug Morris selected producer Jack White who had experienced previous success with Steve Wood’s debut album. The combination of White and Branigan clicked and her first LP yielded Branigan’s smash single „Gloria“. „Gloria“ would propel Branigan to the top of the charts, a place she would come to know better with each successive release.

The one constant in the musical evolution of Laura Branigan is the emotional intensity of her songs and delivery. „Emotion is definitely the key,“ she remarked. „I feel the emotional intensity has remained the same throughout my career but again, I now have more of a handle on it. It’s just maturity I guess.“

One place where Branigan’s emotional intensity is admired is at the club level. „I still have that allegiance to the clubs,“ she commended, „I came out of the clubs and have always tried to make solid emotional dance music.“

According to the singer, her new single „Spanish Eddie“ is perfect for the dance clubs. But, she added, „It’s not just to make people dance. There is a lot of feeling behind the song.“

It now appears that after just two weeks of release, dance clubs are not the only ones that are receptive to the single. Radio has been quick to add the cut and from every indication, Branigan has hit to her credit.

The new album, „Hold Me“, released last week is a strong collection of ballades, mid-tempo tunes and rockers. According to Branigan, „the album is such a growth from the other albums. I really feel it’s the direction I want to go. My voice is definitely stronger and the material is just incredible. I honestly don’t feel there are any fillers.“

One of the most amazing aspects of the career of Laura Branigan has been her international appeal. „The international side of me is very important,“ she said, „Even when I began, I didn’t record an album just with the United States in mind. I’ve always thought internationally. Usually an American artist will become a

big star and they go over there and no one knows them. It was somewhat easier because I build both audiences for the same time.“

The singer credits her producer, Jack White with helping her establish „an international sense“ and noted , „with this album we have some great stuff for Europe that will also be great for the U.S.“

Among the new facets of Laura Branigan’s career is a new stage show with elaborate lighting and new set design. It also marks the first time the singer has enlisted the help of a choreographer. Branigan has spent countless hours working on dance steps under the watchful eye of Brad Jeffries. Jeffries is also responsible for the choreography in Branigan’s „Spanish Eddie“-video, recently filmed in the Silverlake district of Los Angeles.

Among the projects planned for the near future is the beginning of a film career for the young singer. Though details can not yet be revealed due to contractual regulations. Branigan is scheduled to start shooting her first film in the fall on location in Australia.

„I’m really excited about the future.“ she remarked enthusiastically. „Things have really come together.“

By David Adelson
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