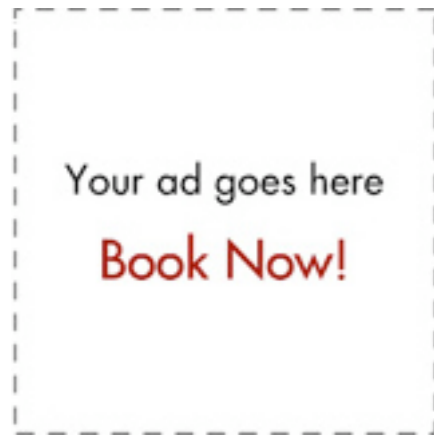


An Onymous Poll

on average, how often to you go to watch movies at a theatre?

- once a week
- once a month
- once every three months
- once every six months to a year



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If You Can Make It There ...

Clara Lofaro returns to Toronto to play Indie Week, the fest that launched her career

By Andrew Horan

Winning the 2006 Indie Week Competition was a pivotal moment in Clara Lofaro's career. After graduating from Boston's Berklee School of Music, the Toronto native settled in the music community in Brooklyn, NY where she built up a loyal fanbase. Which was great, but she wanted to take that all-important next step.

"I had some very faithful fans but then I started to think, 'wait a minute, these are my faithful fans, where's the next step and are these people my faithful fans because they've watched me grow and are committed to me or because I really do have something that people like to hear and effects people and that moves people,'" Lofaro recounted.

She decided to enter the competition, silently telling herself that if no one was affected by her performance that she would reconsider her decision to pursue a career in music. Clearly people were moved because she went on to win the competition, beating out 450 other entrants. It was an especially poignant victory for Lofaro because it was in her hometown.

"It wasn't just winning for myself, it was for all those people who have supported me since I took the risk to try this and it just felt so satisfying for myself and for my fans and family and friends and everyone who was there, I could just see how gratifying it was for everyone," she said.

Since then, things have taken off for her. She's gone on to play several music festivals in NYC, including a performance at this year's sold out Bamboozle Festival at Giants Stadium, her voice can be heard on Disney's 'What Next?' commercial airing after the Super Bowl and she also opened for Fleetwood Mac's Stevie Nicks.

"It was a true honour for me because I think she's absolutely amazing," Lofaro said.

Though she'd ideally like to divide her time between Toronto and NYC, she's blunt in her assessment of whether or not she would have had the same opportunities afforded to her had she opted to return to Toronto.

With the state the music industry is in right now, she doesn't think that a Canadian artist without a major label backing them has much of a chance in North America, let alone internationally.

"It's not where just someone with a lot of talent works hard and keeps sending their stuff out will get recognized," Lofaro explained. "It's a lot of groundwork that you have to cover on your own -- on the business as well as the personal side -- and I don't know that I would have learned as much and covered as much ground."

Given the red-hot state of Canadian indie music right now, she doesn't shy away from telling people that she's a Canuck. And despite the challenges she's faced, she found the community she's become a part of in Brooklyn to be inspiring.

She also admitted that she's performing in Toronto and the GTA more than NYC these days.

"The more (time) I spend in downtown Toronto, every time I come home I feel like it's more and more cultural and more and more experimental and I just love the scene in Toronto too," Lofaro said enthusiastically.

"It's kind of like, what do you do when you're in love with two people at the same time? I don't know! You try to break it off and hope the other person doesn't find out about the other!" she said, laughing.

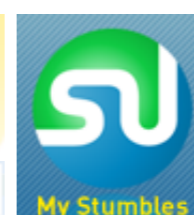
She's returning to Toronto to play the festival that launched her career last year with a gig at The Reverb (651 Queen St. W) on October 12th where she will be headlining with a solo set.

"I'm going to be letting my voice be the connector between me and the audience instead of a lot of fancy gadgets -- it's gonna be very cool!" she exclaimed. "It's gonna be intimate but powerful I hope, it's just going to be me and my keys and my loop pedal."

Indie Week takes over several venues around Toronto from October 10th to 13th as the upstart festival enters its fourth year. The line-up features bands from Canada and around the world.

It all kicks off on October 9th with a pre-party at The Reverb. There will be an industry panel at the Gibson Guitar Room (1205 King St W) on October 13th. The festival also wraps that day with competitions at the El Mocambo (464 Spadina Ave.) and Horseshoe (370 Queen St. W). The top artists from Indie Week 2006 will compete for prizes.

Indie Week 2007 runs October 10th to 13th. Wristbands are available at the doors to the artist showcases for \$10. For a complete list of bands, venues and panel times, head to the festival showcase; www.indieweek.com



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