



## CECILIA NOEL Biography

The tension builds before she ever sets foot on stage. Chairs are shuffled as men angle for a better seat. Women unfasten an extra button, knowing how hot this club will be before the night is over. Waitresses hustle to get their drinks served before they too get caught up in the show. And everywhere, the whispers. Isn't that Bette Midler? Jimmy Smits and Paul Rodriguez sitting by David Crosby? Dr. Dre, Al Jarreau and Maurice White are struggling to find seats, while Sinbad and Brian Setzer are squeezed in the very back. But where you sit and who you are doesn't matter anymore. Because the lights are dimmed, the music's starting, and the audience goes wild. The woman they've been waiting for has just come on stage, and Cecilia Noël is about to set the night on fire. The back-up singers soar with their edgy harmonies, and the ten-piece band riffs with the endless energy of a powerful beat, but every eye in the house is on Noël. She's fevered and flamboyant, she's exotic and erotic, but mostly she's an incandescent star.

She's been called the Latin Tina Turner, been compared to Janis Joplin and she's even been likened to Bjork, but there has never really been anyone like Cecilia Noël. Even her style of music is as original as her talent. With its powerful blend of African, Latin and Motor City rhythms performed against a pulsating beat pulled together by Noël's stunning vocal stylings, her music has earned its own category--SalSoul.

Critics fall all over themselves trying to describe her unique gifts. Her "performance is an exciting live celebration of life that should be a must-see," hails one writer. The L.A. Times lauds her work as "nearly flawless" and calls her music "arguably the most potent sound to emerge in years."

It's no surprise that Noël should be able to command a stage, since she's a direct descendant of Cacique-Sacha, one of the last chiefs of the Incan Empire. Her great-aunt, Rafaela de la Pasión, was celebrated as the Mother Teresa of Peru, and will likely be her country's next Saint. But it's her mother that Noël credits most for her success. Even while pursuing her own career as designer for a prestigious ballet troupe, Noël's mother encouraged her daughter to develop her talents. By the time Noël was five, she was working as a regular contributor to a children's magazine. Three years later, she was starring in "El Tio Johnny," a popular Peruvian television series. She spent her adolescence studying music, including violin, piano and conducting at top music schools in Argentina and Germany before returning to Peru to be the singer for a 22-piece big band.

Stan Getz caught her performance one night, and urged her to pursue a career in the United States. With his support, Noël moved to New York, where she added dance and acting lessons, and briefly worked as a go-go dancer to pay for them. But even in New York's competitive atmosphere, Noël's talents stood out. She was soon working as a studio singer, performing jingles for companies like the Gap, Coca-Cola and Sergio Valente, and establishing herself as a Broadway performer. She even briefly toured as a dancer for the



teen sensation Menudo. But her artistic gifts pushed her to the forefront again, leading to a regular stint at the Rainbow Room where she performed a blend of big band standards and Brazilian jazz favorites.

Her then-husband Tristan Imboden, the superstar drummer for the group Chicago, encouraged her to develop her songwriting skills, as did Hilton Rosenthal, the legendary producer of Johnny Clegg and Savuka, and one of the producers on Paul Simon's "Graceland" album. Rosenthal brought her to Los Angeles where her compositions became as acclaimed as her performances. She was soon writing with such top talents as Glen Ballard, Desmond Child, Junior Vasquez and Sheila E, and adapting Spanish or Portuguese lyrics for the likes of Carole King, Kenny Loggins and Billie Myers.

It's in her performances with the Wild Clams that Noël can finally bring it all together. The writing, the performing, the music that is like nothing that's ever been heard before. From the moment she formed the 14-piece band, they've been a smash success, performing everywhere from the Playboy Jazz Festival to their latest high voltage outing on "Vibe." Musicians clamor not only to watch Cecilia Noël and the Wild Clams, but also to perform with them. Audiences can expect to see Toni Basil performing as a back-up singer and playing the "güiro," or Sheila E. on percussion on any given night. But whoever is performing, Noël is still at the helm, and very proud to be the only woman who conducts her own band.

Noël continues to push her talents in every direction. She voices characters on the "Rugrats," "Santo Bugito" and HBO's "Spice City," and continues to perform on commercials for such companies as Miller Beer. But whether she's singing, acting, composing or conducting, audiences have already proclaimed Cecilia Noël the undisputed Queen of "SalSoul."