

LAURA LOVE BIOGRAPHY

“(Laura Love) will shake the world. The clincher is her live show...She’s that rare artist who can slip from sensitive folk to hip-hop without skipping a beat.” -Utne Reader



The media and even her own record label have struggled to define this inimitable musician’s colorful style, which embraces bits of the blues, bluegrass, jazz, folk, gospel, reggae, and country. However, Laura Love has sometimes called her music “Folk-Funk,” “Afro-Celtic,” or “Hip-Alachian.” Regardless of how she is described, Laura has an indisputable and uncanny knack for enthraling audiences from all walks of life, from octogenarians who line up to hear straight-ahead bluegrass to the pierced-and-tattooed set to middle-aged parents.

The New York Times proclaimed, “Her music is exuberant. ... She conveyed the fervor of someone reaching out with an almost frenzied joy to seize the strands of a confusing life and weave them into a coherent, life-affirming vision.” Simple and yet revolutionary, Love has been called “startlingly original” by *Billboard* magazine.

“Her music is spare, yet striking. Her voice is ripe, supple, strong, and impossible to ignore.” A rare recording artist who is authentic and deeply rooted, Love exhibits timeless and diverse appeal. Drove of fans throughout North America, Australia, and Europe apparently agree. Her CDs have repeatedly made *Billboard*’s annual Top 10 lists. She has played for massive crowds at various festivals and venues, including New York’s Carnegie Hall, San Francisco’s Great American Music Hall, Royce Hall in Los Angeles, Washington Center for the Arts in Olympia, and the Aladdin Theater in Portland, Oregon. Her festival appearances include the Newport Folk Festival (RI), Telluride Bluegrass Festival (CO), Strawberry Festival (CA), Merlefest (NC), Kate Wolf Festival (CA), Falcon Ridge (NY), Boston Folk Festival, Women in e-Motion (Germany), Port Fairy, Brunswick, Blue Mountain and Adelaide Fringe Festivals (Australia), and nearly every music festival in Canada including Montreal Jazz and the Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Mariposa and Winnipeg folk festivals.

After releasing five independently produced CDs from 1990 - 1995, Laura spent a decade working with major and boutique record labels. Her Mercury/Universal releases, co-produced with multi-Grammy winner Joe Chicarelli, were critically acclaimed and increased her sales from 2,000 a year to 60,000 a year, but alas, highly diverse and unique artists are not easily marketed above ground and Laura was lost in the corporate shuffle of the big leagues. She was perfectly happy to be dropped from Mercury after her second album and

move on to smaller labels more suited to her values and aesthetic. Laura released four CDs from 2000 – 2005 on Rounder/Zoe and KOCH, all still in production.

In 2007, Laura decided it was time to return to her roots. She resurrected her old label, Octoroon Biography and released the lovely and heartbreaking *NēGrass*, her bold collaboration with Grammy and IBMA award winners Tim O'Brien, Tracy Nelson, Barbara Lamb, Rob Ickes, Scott Vestal, Jeff Autry and Mike Bub. Produced in Nashville by fiddler Barbara Lamb, *NēGrass* has been named the **Best CD of 2007** in the Alt Country category by the Indie Acoustic Project. A warm acoustic collection of original and traditional Negro spirituals, field hollers, bluegrass and folk songs, Love's *NēGrass* explores her family's history as she imagines what life might have held for her great grandparents as they were freed from slavery in Texas toward the end of the Civil War.

In the spring of 2009, Laura releases her 11th CD, on Octoroon Biography. This is a collaboration with her duo partner, Orville Johnson, who is an acknowledged master of country blues slide and picked guitar and dobro. Orville, who toured with Laura through most of 2008 has a league of his own fans and this release was inspired by popular demand from both of their fans. For more information on Orville, please visit www.OrvilleJohnson.com.

In addition to her musical accomplishments, Love wrote a harrowing but hopeful memoir, which was published by Hyperion Books in 2004. *You Ain't Got No Easter Clothes* chronicles her chaotic childhood with a suicidal and schizophrenic single mother. When her mother was confined to mental institutions, Love and her sister bounced around living in orphanages, foster homes, convents, and homeless shelters. Their biological father – jazz saxophonist Preston Love who worked with the Count Basie Orchestra, Lena Horne, Billie Holiday, and Ray Charles – was not present in Laura's life, busy with his career and his wife and five other children. Although wrenching, the tale of survival is laced with Love's trademark wit and sharp humor. The book was followed by an album that carried the same title and was widely well-received.

On stage, Laura's voice soars into the stratosphere while her side-men and women back her up with layered harmonies and stellar instrumental support, usually in the form of acoustic guitars, mandolin, fiddle, banjo and the occasional accordion. When she tours, Laura has her pick of a handful of the most respected musicians in their fields. She performs as a duo, trio, quartet or quintet depending on the nature of the event.

The same determination and strength that helped Love endure her tumultuous upbringing shine through in her joyful performances and brilliant recordings, inspiring Acoustic Guitar magazine to describe Laura's "...highly original style she calls Afro-Celtic: an improbable but irresistible hybrid of hip-grinding rhythms and folk melodies, electric funk bass and Appalachian-inflected vocals...It's a new sound, for sure, but one that clearly shows its roots, making the band equally welcome in rock clubs and on bluegrass/Americana stages..."