

Cesaria Evora

Written by bluelover

Sunday, 18 December 2011 20:37 - Last Updated Saturday, 21 March 2015 15:29

Cesaria Evora

Cesária Evora, the voice of longing, dies aged 70. The singer who brought the Portuguese-creole songs of her native Cape Verde to the world apologised to her fans for retiring earlier this year.

She is known as the country's foremost practitioner of the *morna*, which is strongly associated with the islands and combines West African percussion with Portuguese *fados*, Brazilian *modhinas*, and British sea shanties. Nicknamed the **"Barefoot Diva"** because of her propensity to perform without shoes.

Cesaria Evora

Evora was born on 27 August 1941 in Mindelo, São Vicente, Cape Verde. When she was seven years old her father died, and at age ten she was placed in an orphanage, as her mother could not raise all six children.



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"I started singing in the neighborhood where I lived, just with my friends...It was just to amuse ourselves," she told Rhythm Music. She began performing in various bars in Mindelo, and took up morna at age 16 after a romantic involvement with a guitarist.



Mindelo, Sao Vicente

According to Nonesuch Records, *"With a voice conveying power, vulnerability and an emotional affinity for this style, Evora quickly found a niche for herself in Mindello's musical life and through committed performances gained a distinguished reputation as the 'Queen of Morna.'"* Evora's frequent accompanist at the time was the well-known clarinetist

Luis Morais.



Luis Morais

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"In Cape Verde ... I used to sing for tourists and for the ships when they would come there" she said in the San Francisco Bay Guardian.

"That's why I always thought that maybe if I made it, people from different countries would love my music."



Cesaria Evora

Her big break came in the 1980s when she met **Jose da Silva**, a Frenchman originally from Cape Verde who became with her singing. Da Silva convinced Evora to go to Paris with him to record some of her music for his Lusafrica label.

"Because I couldn't find anyone to help me out in Cape Verde, I had to start recording in France in 1988,"

she told the New York Times.



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Jose da Silva

That year she recorded ***La Diva aux Pieds Nus***, then followed with ***Distino di Belita*** in 1990, and ***Mar***

Azul

in 1991. Her 1992 album,

Miss Perfumado,

made her a major star in France and Portugal, and sold over 200,000 copies in France alone.

This recording featured two of her most popular songs,

"Sodade"

and

"Angola."



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Her international fame grew, and she toured Europe, Africa, Brazil, and Canada, with stops in the United States to perform for Cape Verdean audiences. In the fall of 1995, she mounted her first large-scale American tour. Her 1995 album, ***Cesária***, was released in more than a dozen countries and brought Evora her first Grammy nomination. She later won the "Best World Music Album" Grammy in 2004 for her album

Voz D'Amor.

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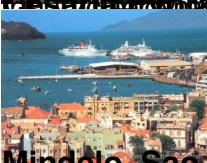
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Mindelo, São Vicente