



Adrianna Papell, Short Sleeve Sequin Gown,
Similar Looks Available at AdriannaPapell.com

Clairdee

The Gift of Music with Style & Class

Photography: Dmitry Loiseau
Hair & Makeup: Valerie Noble using Clinique & L'Oréal Hair

Adrianna Papell, Short Sleeve Sequin Gown,
Similar Looks Available at AdriannaPapell.com





Adrianna Papell, Cap Sleeved Gold and Leather Dress,
Similar Looks Available at AdriannaPapell.com

Adrianna Papell, Long Sleeved Sequin
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Adrianna Papell, Long Sleeved Lace Dress,
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Clairdee, you have been singing since you were young. When did you know that singing would be your career and who were your favorite singers?

Believe it or not, when I was about seven years old, I began to notice the transformative power of music. My older sister taught her five younger siblings all kinds of songs, from the latest pop tunes to Christmas carols. She also taught us about showmanship — to give our best to entertain the audiences. She was the musical director and accompanied us on ukulele, accordion or guitar. When we'd learned enough repertoire to perform a 15-minute program, she started taking us to convalescent homes, hospitals, and various churches to perform. We had so much fun and just seeing the smiles and hearing the laughter of the audience at the end of every performance was enough to convince me that singing was "it!". It felt good!

As a vocalist you have an incredible knowledge of The Great American Songbook. To what do you attribute your love of the classic standards and who are your favorite lyricists?

Growing up, I was completely mesmerized with the old Hollywood musicals that appeared on television. These musicals were a huge influence on me, featuring songs from what is known as The Great American Songbook. I was hooked! The Great American Songbook is the canon of the most important and influential American popular songs written from the early to mid-20th century, created for Broadway theatre, musical theatre, and Hollywood musicals. The beautiful thing, is that many of these songs were also adapted by a wide range of singers and instrumentalists in the jazz idiom, including Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Ahmad Jamal, Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday, Tony Bennett, and Nina Simone. I absolutely love that contemporary artists proffer new interpretations of the Songbook's timeless appeal, introducing younger listeners. Some of my favorite composers include George and Ira Gershwin, Cole Porter, Duke Ellington, Harold Arlen, Dorothy Fields, Harry Warren, Jimmy McHugh, Sammy Cahn, and Richard Rodgers. But, hey, I also LOVE a groove, and many of my interpretations — while maintaining the integrity of the composer's original intention — are groove-oriented.

You have worked around the world with your own band, symphony orchestras and swing bands. What is your favorite format and place to perform?

I enjoy all of it and feel so very blessed to be able to perform in all of these settings. Each of these formats have their own special nuances. The most important thing for me, is the story and how I can share that story, in a very honest and personal way. I must add, however, that because I grew up playing the viola in school orchestras, singing with an orchestra is THE ultimate performance experience. There's just something so sublime about hearing all of those strings supporting the melody that raises goose bumps. It's so incredibly beautiful.

You also find time to teach and mentor others and have been a teaching artist with the San Francisco Symphony's Adventures in Music program since 1997. How important is it for you to work with up and coming talent?

I believe that one's actions and example speak louder and more effectively than any spoken words. One of the greatest gifts we can give to another person, is our time. I am blessed to be surrounded by people who nurture, tutor and encourage me every day. I've had this all of my life and I'm more than thrilled to share my experiences. I want kids today to realize that life isn't a popularity contest. It's about authenticity, compassion, empathy, and connection. And, being present. If we all subscribe to the saying, "Each One Teach One," I believe our children will be happier, more creative, and less prone to violent behavior.

What advice would you give to aspiring singers?

First, take your time. In this digital age of instant gratification, it's easy to want to learn only enough to get by. Build your foundation first. When you have mastered the fundamentals of your craft, then, move forward to more challenging aspects of the music. While it is natural to mimic and imitate your idols, the more you listen and practice, you will find your own voice.

Second, as you are learning your craft thoroughly, find out what makes a good performance. This includes taking into consideration what roles others around you play. If you have a good understanding of what others do, you can appreciate how and why they do what they do, and how it affects you. And, even more important, treat everyone the way you wish to be treated.

Third, listen, listen, listen! In addition to listening to recordings, go to live performances. Rather than criticizing someone's performance, listen objectively. Close your eyes. Listen closely to the timbre, pitch and intonation, any modulations, and the phrasings. What can you learn from what you've heard?

Here is some information that was passed along to me by several veteran musicians. "Don't give everything you can do away in the first chorus. Allow the song to build. Otherwise, you have no where to go." BIG one. There's a reason it's called "Show Business." Take care of your business. Learn as much as you can about the business and without relying solely on someone else to take care of you. Need an example? Taylor Swift!

Lastly, sit down and thoroughly examine WHY you want a career in music. If it's solely for money or fame, you will face a lot of disappointments. Keep your ego in check and be honest with yourself about your abilities. As you assess your abilities, make the most of your strengths and continue to work on your weaknesses. Gather mentors and pay attention.

What projects do you have coming up for your fans?

I'm concurrently working on several projects. One, is a show and recording based on the groundbreaking singer, actress and activist Lena Horne. The first performance is set for March 12, 2016 in Concord, NH. I'm very excited! Additionally, I'm doing a lot more song writing these days and excited to share my new songs in 2016. Stay tuned!

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