

Italian Indie-Sensation Levante Debuts in the US

Natasha Lardera (March 10, 2015)



Like a hot wind blowing in from the East, Levante, born Claudia Lagona, is about to make her US debut at SXSW, the annual music, film, and interactive conference and festival held in Austin, TX, taking place on March 17 – 21, 2015. Showcase dates follow on Monday March 23 in Los Angeles at Genghis Cohen, and on Wednesday March 25 at The Standard, East Village in New York.

During the summer of 2013 her video, which features the young singer as a frustrated protagonist at a high-fashion party shouting out the song's hook "Che vita di merda" (What a shitty life), became a YouTube sensation in Italy approaching 2 million views — numbers typically unrealized by all but homegrown superstars — and became a powerful social media meme. The song was Alfonso and the singer is [Levante](#) [2], a 26 year old singer-songwriter still working as a café barista who was signed by leading independent [INRI](#) [3] label.



Levante's debut album "Manuale Distruzione" (Destruction Manual) entered in the Top 10 of the Italian charts in March 2014 and within one year the indie sensation is supporting headlining heroes Negramaro on their summer soccer stadium tour. Now, like a hot wind blowing in from the East, Levante, born Claudia Lagona, is about to make her US debut at [SXSW](#) [4], the annual music, film, and interactive conference and festival held in Austin, TX, taking place on March 17 - 21, 2015.

Showcase dates follow on Monday March 23 in Los Angeles at [Genghis Cohen](#) [5], the famous Hollywood Chinese restaurant that was the real-life inspiration for the famous Seinfeld episode "The Chinese Restaurant" and that launched the careers of singer-songwriters such as Sara Bareilles, and on Wednesday March 25 at [The Standard](#) [6], East Village in New York.

Back in Turin, Levante, who sings about everyday life — love, pain, friendship, joy, took the time to answer some of our questions as she prepares to come to the US.

How did you decide to call yourself Levante?

It was Levante that chose me. When I was thirteen a friend jokingly gave me that name. It started just like that and it became the most serious thing in the world, that's why I decided to give my nickname to my music.

Where do you find inspiration to make your music?

I find inspiration from life, often my life, but I love telling stories about others' lives too. I started making music because I felt an extreme need to do so. After the death of my father (when I was nine years old) I found the best cure in writing lyrics and composing melodies. Like in a secret diary where I could express everything, really everything through my music.

Did the cities of Catania, the city where you were born, and Torino, the city where you grew up, have any influence on you becoming the artist that you are today?

Catania and Torino are very different and distant from each other (geographically speaking), but they are also very similar in terms of sharing a deep passion. Catania gave me the fire, the anger and the strength... Turin made me grow well, taught me perseverance, discipline and the right way to deal with life. They still have a strong influence on me.

[Mina](#) [7], [Carmen Consoli](#) [8], [Tori Amos](#) [9] and [Janis Joplin](#) [10] are listed as some of your muses, what do you have that's reminiscent of them?

Oh God, I don't know if there's something in me that resonates of them but I'm pretty sure that their music gave me so much. I desired the precision and power of Mina's voice, as much as I loved Carmen Consoli and Tori Amos for their authenticity of being artists, for their lyrics and their rock appeal simultaneously refined. From Janis Joplin's rough voice I definitely got the unstoppable passion for music. BTW I do not think I'll ever be able to be like them, but at least I can dream.

How important was social media for you?

They are really important, they are the main way to communicate nowadays. Everything moves in, out and around social networks and like it or not, our lives cannot ignore that. Relationships of any kind often occurs through social networks unfortunately. That's why I love being so present and to get in real touch with my fans.



What are your expectations from these US dates?

This is a dream that I had never dreamed of, because I never thought of being able to sing in the United States. I hope to give all my best and to learn as much as I can from this new adventure. I'm deeply grateful for this opportunity.

How important is it for an international artist (in your specific case and Italian musician) to write and sing in English as well?

There was a time in my life when I used to write songs in English but I quit. I realized that I could not give one hundred percent of myself just because I'm not a native English speaker. I eat, I dream and I love in Italian, that's my life. I find it romantic and interesting to write and to sing in Italian expressing something to those are unfamiliar with my language. To Bring Italy in the world is not a limit for me but it's a feature that I really love. I hope that Italian music will be known by more and more people every new day.

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