

# CLAIRE MARTIN, OBE

## Biography

Linn recording artist and BBC Radio presenter **Claire Martin** has spent the last 30 years honing the craft of jazz singing. To worldwide critical acclaim she has established herself as a tour de force on the UK jazz scene gaining many awards, including winning the **British Jazz Awards** seven times along the way.

Thanks to jazz-loving parents, Claire grew up in a household full of great music. After leaving stage school she became a professional singer at 19 and two years later she realised her dream of singing at Ronnie Scott's legendary jazz club in Soho. Signed to the prestigious Glasgow based Linn Records in 1990, Claire has since released 20 CDs with the label, collaborating with musical luminaries including **Martin Taylor, John Martyn, Stephane Grappelli, Kenny Barron, Richard Rodney Bennett** and **Jim Mullen** on many of these recordings.

Claire has performed all over the world with her trio and, until his death in 2012, worked extensively with the celebrated composer and pianist **Sir Richard Rodney Bennett** in an intimate cabaret duo setting both in England and in America where they played to sell out crowds at venues including the prestigious Algonquin Hotel in New York City. Claire is also a featured soloist with the **Halle Orchestra**, the **Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra**, the **RTE Concert Orchestra**, the **Royal Northern Sinfonia**, the **BBC Big Band** and the **BBC Concert Orchestra**. Claire co-presented BBC Radio 3's flag ship jazz program 'Jazz Line Up' for seventeen years and during that time interviewed many of her musical heroes such as **Pat Metheny** and the late **Michael Brecker**. Her 2009 CD *A Modern Art* prompted Jazz Times USA to claim:

**“She ranks among the four or five finest female jazz vocalists on the planet”.**

Claire was thrilled to win both the 2009 and 2010 'Best Vocalist' category at the British Jazz Awards and toured extensively throughout the UK, Scandinavia, Russia and China, appearing with the **Royal Liverpool Philharmonic** and her world-class trio. 2011 proved to be an extraordinary year for Claire who made her debut at Lincoln Center in New York with Grammy® nominated pianist **Bill Charlap** and went on to perform for the third time at the famous Algonquin Hotel for a three week residency with Sir Richard Rodney Bennett. Their CD *Witchcraft* gained much critical acclaim and was “unequivocally recommended” by Jazzwise magazine.

At the Queen's Birthday Honours in June, Claire was delighted to be awarded an OBE for her Services to Jazz.

In August 2011 Claire recorded with legendary jazz pianist **Kenny Barron** and an all-star American line up for her fifteenth album for Linn records. *Too Much in Love to Care* received 5 star reviews and prompted the US magazine *Jazz Journal* to state that she is:

**“one of the finest jazz singers in the world today”.**

This album went on to win the ‘Best New Recording’ award at the 2012 British Jazz Awards. 2013 was spent touring the new material in the UK and Europe and embarking on a new show *The Two of Us* with conductor **John Wilson, Joe Stilgoe, Mark McGann** and the **Royal Liverpool Philharmonic**, celebrating the music of **Paul McCartney** and **John Lennon**.

In 2014 Claire embarked on a new and unique musical adventure with the Brighton based **Montpellier Cello Quartet**. With new arrangements especially written for her by Sir Richard Rodney Bennett, **Mark Anthony Turnage** and **Django Bates**, this new chamber jazz ensemble toured the UK promote a new album on Linn Records called *Time and Place*. The album was warmly received and **Clive Davis** of *The Times* cited Claire as:

**“our finest jazz singer”.**

2017/8 was spent touring and promoting her project with the ever popular entertainer, saxophonist **Ray Gelato** as well as appearing with the singer/songwriter Joe Stilgoe and continuing her long standing celebrated duo performances with singer/pianist **Ian Shaw**. Claire also joined forces with the brilliant **Tippett Quartet** in a 10 piece setting called ‘Hollywood Romance’ which played to sell out audiences at Ronnie Scott’s.

In 2018 Claire was the recipient of a **BASCA Gold Badge Award** for her exceptional talent in the UK music industry.

2019 was a bumper year for new releases and *‘Bumpin’* (Stunt Records) which celebrated the music of Wes Montgomery and featured the brilliant guitarist **Jim Mullen**, and *‘Believin’ It’* which was a trio album with Claire’s all Swedish group were both met with critical acclaim and *Jazz Views* wrote that Claire Martin was ‘the real deal’. *‘Believin’ It’* won the Jazzwise award of ‘Album of the Year’. During 2019 Claire joined forces with young up and coming arranger **Callum Au** to record with a full 82 piece orchestra and big band on an album called *‘Songs and Stories’* (Stunt Records). This recording won the **2020 Parliamentary Jazz Award** for ‘Best Album’ award and the arrangements were recorded for BBC Radio 2’s ‘Sunday Night is Music Night’ with the **BBC Concert Orchestra**.

Claire will release her new album *‘I Watch You Sleep’* which is a collaboration with the American conductor and pianist **Scott Dunn** and the **Royal Philharmonic Orchestra** in March 2023. On this they pay homage to their dear friend Sir Richard Rodney Bennett by recording his songs alongside songs that Richard loved to perform. Scott Dunn has written brand new arrangements for this project.

‘Remembering Richard’ will be Claire performing with her trio of **Rob Barron** on piano, **Jeremy Brown** on bass and **Mark Taylor** on drums recreating the songs from the album and touring the UK throughout the year.