

THE NEW YORK INDEPENDENT

ARTS

CLAUDIA HAYDEN BLENDS GENRES BETWEEN MUSIC AND VISUAL ARTS (VIDEO!)



Claudia Hayden has made her mark in music and video production. (Photo: [Abhita Austin](#))

Who would have thought when her mother took her to see [Chaka Khan](#) (with Rufus) at LSU in 1978 (the Brothers Johnson performed, too), a musical prodigy would emerge. Hayden is a flautist, producer, composer, and live performer based in New York City

Renowned for her full-range, rich tone, technical expertise, and honed creativity, she bridges classical genres. A trailblazer, educated by the genre's pioneering artists in the American South; Claudia commands multiple styles with mastery her debut album, *Abstract*, was followed by her latest original work, [The Spirit Speaks](#), a sonically rich blend of Native American Flute, Jazz and free improvisation. Hayden also incorporates musical elements from her background and education at Southern University, an historically Black university. ([Jaguars on the Prowl](#))

[Claudia Hayden](#) is a media-multi-hyphenate who is as comfortable in front of the camera as she is behind it. The talented artist has had songs on the Billboard 100 and SiriusXM's much applauded jazz-station Watercolors. She has a new song, "Turn me Up" on Next Paradigm Music which will be released for Valentine's Day.



"A Gathering"
mixed media (35 x 50 in.)
Claudia Hayden

We talked for an exclusive interview for the New York Independent:

New York Independent: You're a triple threat of sorts; music, [video production](#) and [visual arts](#). Let's talk about music first: tell us about your journey with that:

Hayden: I'm a visual artist as well. I come from an artistic family, and never felt constrained by any of my many interests. As it relates to music though, I wanted to be like my older sister who played the flute, and ultimately fell in love with the instrument. I began studying flute and piano at eight years old. I was lucky to be able to study with some very talented musicians, including [Alvin Batiste](#) and [Kent Jordan](#), and was mentored by [Marc Cary](#), among others. I considered a classical music path, but when I heard [Hubert Laws](#) play jazz, that was it for me.

I began composing – my own tunes first, then for others, and started to forge my own path with improvisation and contemporary jazz since then.

New York Independent: I know your first concert was Rufus featuring Chaka Khan – tell us your about that event?

Hayden: I'm smiling as I think about how to respond...because some things change your life forever. I remember so many details about that concert: the moment my mom said she would get tickets, the anticipation of the event, but to this day, the sound of the music, the power and artistry in Chaka's voice, and the unbelievable energy of the band and the crowd, stand out above so many other experiences I've had. I still can't believe [The Brothers Johnson](#) were on the bill too!

New York Independent: In addition to Chaka Khan, who are your musical influences?

Hayden: I've mentioned **Hubert Laws** already, but like most artists, I have many influences, and am a fan of all genres. The artists that are in constant rotation on my playlist are: **Bobbi Humphrey, Chick Corea, Stevie Wonder, Kenny Loggins, Stevie Nicks, Earth, Wind & Fire, Johnny "Guitar" Watson, Antonio Carlos Jobim, Jean-Pierre Rampal, Rosa Passos, Djavan** ...and many others

New York Independent: How did your paths cross with [Next Paradigm Music](#)?

Hayden: A friend who is a singer invited me to one of her gigs in New York City, and [Jacob Webb](#) (Next Paradigm's CEO) was on bass! The band was on fire, and since my bass player wasn't available for an upcoming gig, I made sure I introduced myself to him. Afterwards, Jacob performed with my band many times, and years later, when he decided to start a label, he thought I would be a perfect fit. We've collaborated many times since then.

New York Independent: Your next release for them, "Turn Me Up" is out on February 14, Valentine's Day. Tell us how that record and date came to be?

Hayden: "Turn Me Up" came from one of the collaborations with Jacob. We're really proud of the tune and excited for people to hear it. It's about being your best self, for yourself, and others in your life. What better day to celebrate love and positivity than Valentine's Day?

New York Independent: Tell us about your production work. CBS, American Express ...

Hayden: I got my master's degree in television production, and I've been directing and producing projects for various corporations and clients for many years. In addition, I've composed music for HBO, NBC, the Discovery Channel, BET, and, Court TV.

New York Independent: Surely, your production work has helped with recordings; how do the two worlds intersect for you?

Hayden: As part of my profession, I have to keep up with the latest software, which includes ProTools and Ableton Live, Adobe Creative Suite, and more recently WireCast and VMix. As a result, music takes on a new dimension for me. My compositions and collaborations are more complex and infused with new opportunities in sound.

New York Independent: Your initial recorded work has been played consistently on SiriusXM's Watercolors. That must have been great to hear the first time ... right?

Hayden: Absolutely! It never gets old. In fact, I've taken so many screenshots on my phone and pictures from the dashboard in my car. It's really exciting.

New York Independent: Finally, your visual work ... how'd that come to be?

Hayden: [My father](#) was a sculptor, my mother is very creative, so I grew up around art. I feel it's in my DNA and I never considered myself just one thing. I am creative, and that takes on many forms.

New York Independent: Is a show of your work down the line?

Hayden: Yes, thanks for asking! I am planning a showing of my visual art with a live musical performance. Because of COVID, I don't have any dates, but they will be in both New York and New Orleans.

Check out her video below



[Claudia Hayden and band - Live at The Orpheum, New Orleans performing "Sincerely" written & composed by Claudia Hayden](#)