

# The Coffee Stories

## Anita Rose Merando

with Steve Raleigh - guitar



Musical Memoir from Cold Spring and Beyond

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**Anita Rose Merando**

[CD Baby](#) 2014

Anita Rose, formerly of Seattle, sent me this wonderful double-CD album that combines her childhood stories of growing up in a strong, close-knit Italian family in upper New York state with her wonderful renditions of jazz standards.

I first met Anita in the late 1970s when she burst into the Seattle folk scene while touring nationally with David Baumgarten. For the next decade, she was a strong member of our folk community, hosting hoots and giving local performances.

A few years ago, she moved back to her roots in Cold Spring, New York where she now lives in her ancestral home, built in 1849. Anita and her brother, their parents and grandparents, all grew up in this same home, which was obviously full of love and the giving-and-sharing of a multi-generational Sicilian family. As you hear her spin her delightful childhood stories, it's not surprising that she chose to live again in the old family home.

The first thing to reach out and touch me was her incredibly strong voice, with its

deep and rich tones; it seems to come from her very soul. For many years I regarded Anita's voice as a fine example of the power of projection. She combines that voice with clear and careful diction. As she spins her tales, she speaks at once with an intimacy and warmth that is wonderful to hear. She occasionally launches into the familiar Italian words and phrases she learned from her grandfather. Family love and caring comes through loud and clear.

Her first story, "Why I Sing", tells of her mother's love of singing. It coincidentally becomes a warm testimony to who her mother was. Another tale, "Porch Music", tells of Saturday evening gatherings in the neighborhood, where friendship, food and music were shared. Listening to this well-told tale makes me wish I was there - I can almost smell the steaks grilling on the BBQ.

Interspersed between these stories are wonderful jazz songs, sung by Anita and accompanied by the simple and clean guitar work of her music partner, Steve Raleigh. Steve also produced, recorded and engineered this album. His very thoughtful and fluid guitar work reminds me of the jazz music I used to hear in the Seattle supper clubs of the late 1940s and '50s.

[Here is a link](#) to "THE COFFEE STORIES" website, which includes audio clips and e-mail and Facebook information. She welcomes your comments and would love to hear from old friends. If you wish to drop her a note, you can write her at P.O. Box 369, Cold Spring, N.Y. 10516.

This is an album I find myself returning to over and over. Believe me, it's mesmerizing.

[Bob Nelson](#)