Clara Janés [encyclopedia entry]

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Janés, Clara (1940–)

Born in Barcelona, Spain, to an artistic literary family (her mother was a musician, her father, an editor) Janés is best known as a poet, although she has also published novels, essays, short stories, biographies and a travelogue. Her work reflects an artistic beauty and transcendence of the word in her efforts to refine language and to purify form. From existentialism and essentialism she progresses toward an affirmation of life (Vivir [1983; To Live]), from the erotic and mythical to a mystical communion with the cosmos. Following the publication of Las estrellas vencidas (1964; The Conquered Stars), Janés has produced over 25 poetic works. The most important volumes include Kampa (1986), which depicts the spiritual and literary relationship she develops with Czech poet Vladimir Holan; Creciente fértil (1989; Fertile Crescent), wherein her expression of love becomes an erotic one; and Rosas de fuego (1996; Roses of Fire, 2004), in which love sentiments assume a mystical dimension. She recently published La voz de Ofelia (2005; The Voice of Ophelia), a poetic, autobiographical work structured around her relationship with Holan and how that relationship influenced her work.

Janés possesses fluent command of many languages and has translated the work of Holan and other Czech, Hindu, Persian, Turkish, and ancient mystic poets. Her work has garnered major translation and literary prizes and has been translated into 18 languages. Janés continues to write, translate, and lecture.

Anne M. Pasero

Work By:


Work About:


Jara, Víctor (1932–1973)

This Chilean singer-songwriter, poet, actor, theater director, professor, political activist, and martyr played a major role in developing the Nueva Canción Chilena (New Chilean Song), a folkloric musical style that flourished from the 1960s until the 1973 military coup. The trend became the musical voice of the Unidad Popular (UP) government, which triumphed in 1970 with Salvador Allende’s election to the presidency. Paralleling UP ideals, the New Chilean Song movement sought to derail cultural and economic imperialism through the use of protest lyrics and traditional musical instruments, such as the panpipe, to emphasize Chilean and Latin American autochthony.

The Nueva Canción movement spread throughout Latin America, but Chile was home to the largest number of creators and performers. Among them, Jara and his compatriot, Violeta Parra, have become the movement’s icons. He won first place for his song “Plegaria a un labrador” (1969; “Prayer for a Worker”) at the Primer Festival de la Nueva Canción