

With Vinicio Capossela in the City

Alessandra Grandi (March 13, 2010)



@ the Italian Cultural Institute, @ the Poisson Rouge and @ Kestè with i-Italy. 3 moments of last week Vinicio Capossela's marathon in New York. And stay tuned for our video too...

Signore e signori, ladies and gentlemen, madames et messieurs... please welcome Vinicio Capossela!

The magician Christopher Magic Wonder introduces [Vincio Capossela](#) [2] to the audience, part of the tour during which the Italian singer will be performing in the US and Canada this spring. "Da solo", (On my own), is the name of the tour that is everything but lonely. Six musicians and a magician play on the stage with Vinicio Capossela, who performs as if he were eight people.

An eclectic and exciting entertainer, he moves on the stage, changing instruments, hats and the atmosphere between songs. He looks tireless.

Let's proceed with some kind of order in last week's Vinicio marathon. Our first meeting with the Italian songwriter (one of the most beloved from the audience, the critic and his colleagues) happened on Thursday March 4th at [Kestè Pizzeria](#) [3] on Bleecker Street, an unusual location that hosted the video interview with Capossela and, for this occasion, the almost entirely female i-italy crew.

Among pizza, wine and some interested Kestè clients, the artist told us what America means to him and what inspired him; which stories, people and countries inspired him to travel; his relation to the underground music scene and Italian-American culture; and finally, what survives of the American dream.

In the video interview, the singer/actor/writer generously answered our questions and showed his analytical and deep side. Out of this interview came portrait of a wise man who takes his time to think about his thoughts and looks deeply for the right words to explain his complex and articulate inner world.

All Vinicio Capossela's fans already know that he is a poet, the new as well as the old ones who have supported him from the very beginning in 1990, when he came out with the album "All'una e trentacinque circa" (Around one and thirty-five) that won the Tenco Award for Best new artist. Many other albums followed after that one: *Modi* (1991), *Camera a Sud* (1994), *Il ballo di San Vito* (1996), *Liveinvolvo* (1998), *Canzoni a manovella* (2000), *L'indispensabile* (2003), *Ovunque proteggi* (2006), *Niente sotto il sole* (2006), *Da Solo* (2008) and the last one, the collection of his greatest hits, *The Story-Faced Man* (2010).

Capossela is not only a musician; he successfully walks in the fields of literature, theatre, radio and cinema. Through different kinds of narration, he brings the audience on surreal trips, sometimes to a land of dreams, other times to a lost world of melancholy and loneliness.

We followed his New Yorker tracks on Thursday afternoon, when he presented at the [Italian Cultural Institute](#) [4] the documentary "The Face of the Earth", directed by Gianfranco Firriolo. A 50 minute road trip piece filmed during the travels that brought the songwriter in search of stories, landscapes, lyrics and music for the "Da Solo" album, this movie will be come out on DVD in Italy by Feltrinelli edition in April 2010.

... "Le storie amano muoversi sulle rotaie, come gli addii che portano lontano"... ("Stories love moving on tracks, as well goodbyes that transport one far away") Capossela is a storyteller. He doesn't like to define himself as a traveler, gypsy, or as an emigrant. He needs rites and roots to build his days. Yet I believe he can accept being defined as a "seeker". He seeks sounds, names, significance, stories, faces, feelings and small invisible miracles to be translated in poetry and shared with the world.

In the movie Vinicio talks about musical instruments as if they were characters of a fairytale; he also plays his songs and gives us his view of the world.

His passion for the circus and side shows acts presents itself again through the artist's fascination for those performances, which represent our need for wonder and our affair with the unknown.

With a curious eye, he spies the backstage of a side show in Austin, looking for those freaks that Diane Arbus once immortalized in her pictures, because looking at those "freaks" allows us see closer the hidden, freakish sides of ourselves. The stage often exposes those defects and distortions



that we always try to contain and hide, but can't stop looking at if someone else illuminates them for us.

"The face of the Earth" is a physical and emotional trip through the winters of the soul, the ghosts of the stage and the silence of America outside of its big cities. He found an open and bare country, populated by silence and disillusion; but he also found words that you would stop to read again and again, though they run fast on the screen. You drink them while you taste them.

At the end of the film screening, the large audience asks questions, seeking to know how the singer was received by the American people (he answered he was most welcomed), and what link he feels with the Pirandello infused poetic of masks. Interestingly, he said that "I wasn't inspired by Pirandello", instead "I've been inspired by the side shows in Austin, Texas, by the backstage of that misery, and by realizing that America is an empty theatre. I met people who haven't prepared what to say, and they simply told us what they wanted; there's no fiction in this movie, we only filmed what was happening and then we added our personal meaning to it." Vinicio then sang some songs at the piano.

The last leg of our travel behind Capossela in New York was his first concert of this tour on Friday March 5th at Le Poisson Rouge. Other concerts will follow in Canada, from Montreal to Toronto, and back to the States again: Chicago on March 10th, San Francisco on March 12th and Los Angeles on March 13th.

The two concerts in New York (on Friday and on Saturday) were both sold out. The club was packed with Italians and other non-Italian Vinicio fans. Vinicio Capossela's name, in fact, is becoming more recognized in American musical culture as well.

At Le Poisson Rouge, Mr. Magic Wonder presented the star and the show begun. There were ghosts on the stage, which played and sang behind the singer's voice, and masks, poems and conjuring tricks.

He performed songs from a dense and long career that is constantly expanding: Una giornata perfetta (A perfect day), Il Paradiso dei calzini (Sock's Heaven), Che cos'è l'amor (What love is), Dove siamo rimasti a terra Nutless (Where we are Nutless), Lettere di soldati (Soldiers' letters), Marajà, Brucia Troia (Burn Troy), Dalla parte di Spessotto (On Spessotto's side), Il gigante e il mago (The Giant and the Magician), Il ballo di San Vito (San Vito's dance), and L'uomo Vivo (The live man).

The emotions changed during the performance, starting from a romantic and melancholic opening to an explosive ending with everyone standing up, dancing and celebrating. Because Italian people are like this, they must stand up, participate, celebrate and live the music. We Italians have a singer/poet/writer who can read and write about life through joy and melancholy.

Ladies and gentlemen: Mr. Vinicio Capossela.

Related Links: http://www.viniocapossela.it/site/dasolo_en.php?lang=en [2]

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Links

[1] <http://iitaly.org/files/capo1268512011.jpg>

[2] http://www.viniocapossela.it/site/dasolo_en.php?lang=en

[3] <http://www.kestepizzeria.com/>

[4] http://www.iicnewyork.esteri.it/IIC_Newyork