

Pino Daniele & "His Way" to Play in NYC

Letizia Airos Soria (October 04, 2009)



The Italian Jazz Blues Icon performed for the first time in the US at the Apollo Theater. It was the right theater and the right audience -- a very important combination -- in a neighborhood like that of Harlem

It was a sold out at Harlem's historical theater, The Apollo. But this time it wasn't for Ella Fitzgerald, Stevie Wonder, or James Brown. An Italian artist -- Neapolitan to be exact -- charmed the audience by developing a musical fusion of blues, jazz, and rock.

Pino Daniele, the mediterranean blues man, after a duly timid start in the temple of African-American music, fastly warmed up and captured the attention of an audience whose participation constantly



grew, just as the notes of Bolero by Ravel do. The walls told the history of American music, but it was him who was playing on the stage, a unique singer in the genre both in Italy and in the world

As Pino Daniele said during his press conference at the Italian Culture Institute, playing in New York represented for him a dream that could come true only if he could play his music in a truly special place.

Thanks to Massimo Gallotta, the promoter that has recently brought Roberto Benigni and Enno Morricone to New York, all of this was possible. He had the right theater and the right audience -- a very important combination -- in a neighborhood like that of Harlem, which in recent times has rediscovered and reevaluated its history. A brave choice that had the right compensation in the success of the event.

During the concert the artist briefly retraced his career, singing songs that made him famous throughout generations, and that now are considered part of the history of Italian music. He performed pieces composed both in the distant and recent past, from "Quando", "Napul'è", "Nun me scuccia", "O Scarrafone" and "Yes I know my way" (the audience was waiting for this latter with particular yearning) to the most recent such as "Il Sole dentro di me" from the album "Electric Jam" (released in March by RCA/Song Music).

Right from the beginning of the first song, "Tu dimmi quando, quando" the atmosphere was vibrant, the emotions of the public - composed by Italians, Neapolitans and several curious Americans - were touchable. It was clear that the long wait and excitement of those present made of the performance an even more special event.

Pino also gifted his audience with a very intense moment when he arranged Puccini's "Nessun Dorma" with his guitar: this clever choice was clearly made to please a good number of Americans among the public, but the Italians appreciated it as well.

After the performance of "Napul'è" people could not refrain themselves from dancing. Even those who are normally quite and sober started shaking their bodies to the rhythm of Pino's music.

A number of talented artists accompanied Pino Daniele on the stage. We can't forget the arrangements of bassist Matt Garrison, percussionist Mino Cinelu, and keyboard player Gianluca Podio when they played songs such as "A me me piace 'o blues" and "Yes I know My Way."

Pino Daniele, who at the beginning of the concert looked almost shy and intimidated by the huge audience, in a few minutes enchanted the Apollo with his powerful music, and started playing with evident pleasure and transport.

Talking about the event a few days before, he said that he was not going to talk with the audience during the concert: "I do not like the musician who wants to be also an entertainer. I will show the public who I am with sincerity through my music."

Under the vaults of the Apollo Theatre everybody could feel his sincere and instinctive love for music, insomuch as we also saw a few Security guards dancing!

As he told us at the Italian Cultural Institute, Pino Daniele has always wanted to recount and show a different Italy and a different Naples through his music. However, we must reproach him that he should have done it long ago. Before his performance, indeed, very few people in the US had heard about him, and his outstanding music.

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