

Marco di Marco. All the Numbers of Italian Jazz

Marina Melchionda (July 07, 2010)



Italian jazz pianist and composer Marco di Marco recently performed at the historical New York jazz club "Birdland". A Knight of the Italian Republic for music merit, during his 40-year career he released 14 internationally acclaimed albums recorded in Paris, New York, Italy and London. As we met him, we found out more about his extraordinary life as a musician... and an accountant!

A concert at one of the most exclusive and historical Jazz clubs in New York. An intimate public including fans of this musical genre, Italian and American media operators, and people who just follow him and his trio whenever he comes to New York.

A stage illuminated by soft colors and surrounded by a deep and warm silence welcomed Italian jazz pianist and composer Marco di Marco on one of the first warm nights of the city summer.



Accompanied by [Harvie S](#) [2](bass) and [Ron Vincent](#) [3] (drums), two extraordinary musicians that have played with him during most of his American appearances, Mr. Di Marco performed his own original pieces and personal arrangements of traditional jazz pieces that have enriched the 14 albums he released during his more than 40-year-old musical career.

In recognition for his contribution to the international growth and promotion of Italian jazz, President Giorgio Napolitano named him Cavaliere della Repubblica Italiana, Knight of the Italian Republic, in 2007. On top of this prestigious honor, the Italian Ambassador to the United States of America, Giulio Terzi di Sant'Agata, presented him with a special award for his career at his concert at the "[Blues Alley](#) [4]" in Washington D.C. which immediately preceded the show in New York

Mr. Di Marco's performance at the [Birdland](#) [5] was a great occasion for us to introduce this extraordinary Jazz pianist, whose international fame is constantly increasing, to our American readers who happen not to know him yet.

Meeting him at our headquarters gave us the chance to discover not only a sweet, pleasant and at the same time sharp personality, but also the extraordinary story of a man divided between two careers, that of an accountant and that of a musician. He discovered his love for piano at a very early age just by chance and followed his passion despite a destiny that seemed to be pre-determined...

How did you manage to carry out two such different careers at the same time?

I started my activity as an accountant when I was 24, as soon as I got my degree in Economy and Commerce at the University of Bologna. My father was in the same profession and had a thriving activity, so I stepped in. I always had my music in my heart though, and I never abandoned my piano lessons and practicing.

Carrying on these two careers at the same time was not always easy but I just could not even think about leaving my passion behind me. Now that I've retired from my accountant activities two years ago, I can finally dedicate all my time to my music and my public. I started a new period of my life, which I inaugurated with a concert at the Sala Bossi at the conservatory of Bologna in occasion of my retirement. I will repeat the experience for my former colleagues at the [Teatro Manzoni](#) [6] on October 26 with a quartet from London and a saxophonist from New Zealand, who was also in my album "[Marco di Marco. My London Friends](#) [7]" that I released in 2004.

You discovered your love for music at the age of six. Was it love at first sight?

I started playing the piano following the footsteps of my sister, who is nine years older than I am. Since she practiced for about 7 hours a day, I did not have much time left to do my exercises however my teacher saw continuous improvements in my playing and persuaded my mother to let me continue my lessons.

I played classic music for 13 years, but when I turned 19 I fell in love with jazz and started giving my own concerts.

Maestro Giordano Noferini, who then became the director of the Conservatory of Bologna, finally introduced me to the world of composition and kept me under his wing for over 10 years.

You released your first album in Paris. What brought you to France?

I found Paris on my path when I welcomed the Georges Arvanitas trio with Jacky Samson and Charles Saudrais during their one week visit to Bologna. We played together at my place for the entire time that they stayed in that city and we were just a great match. Since we decided to make an album together, I left for Paris to meet them again in November. This is how my first album, "[Un autunno a Parigi](#) [8]", An Autumn in Paris, came to be. It was released in 1970.

Paris was my source of inspiration for the longest time. Just think that in only 6 years, from 1970 to 1976, I released four albums...

And then you discovered New York, or maybe New York discovered you...

My meeting with New York pianist [Jack Reilly](#) [9] opened a new horizon for me and became the first step that I took on this side of the ocean.

He found out about me by reading articles that appeared in important trade magazines such as [Down Beat](#) [10], and proposed a 12 -concert- tour in Italy to me. As our friendship grew and strengthened, we produced a two-piano- album in 1979 and then decided to perform in New York at



the Cami Hall and the Carnegie Hall in 1981. That was also the year of my first American album, "Marco di Marco Quartet in New York", with [Dave Tofani](#) [11](bass and flute), Jack Six (bass) and Tony Bedford (drums).

What did you bring to America as an Italian jazz player?

First of all, two ears and a soul to learn from my colleagues that have grown up with this music. As for myself, I brought my way of interpreting this genre, an Italian way, I would say. We Italians have a way to express our feelings, sensibility and sentiments that is different, warm, and melodic. This is a merit for which we are recognized, and that differentiates our jazz from that of all the other nations, including France.

What kind of feelings do you wish to hand down to your public?

In order to answer to this question, I need to quote my maestro Giordano Noferini who used to define me as "a great expressionist with the soul of an impressionist". I am humbled by this definition he gave me and by which he praised my capacity to communicate with the public and at the same time to absorb the emotions that it expresses. Sometimes I feel my audience so much that it moves me, and I end up crying silently.

Among all the artists that you met on your path and who somehow shaped your career, to which one do you feel you owe the most?

I think that the person who more than anybody else supported and encouraged me during all these years was Enrichetta Sansilvestri, my first piano teacher. Our relationship ended two years ago, when she died at the age of 95.

On that evening I had a concert at the Johns Hopkins University in Bologna and she was supposed to be in the audience. I had put a bouquet of flowers on her first row seat, but she died before the performance started.

When on that night I played the piece that I composed for her, "Enrichetta", I just broke down in tears. I was like a son to her, she was like a mother to me

Every artist looks at his albums like they were his own children, but is there one to which you feel particularly attached?

I am very proud of the latest album that I released, "[Event](#) [12]" (2006). It is the registration of a piano solo concert at the Carnegie Hall that I did not use for a long time, until a friend of mine decided to put it on CD. It was then that I realized what an extraordinary concert it had been, and I left immediately for London. When my audio technician and I finished working on it on the 28th floor of a skyscraper downtown, I just felt like melting for joy.

Mr. Di Marco stated that he feels kind of intimidated by this latest outstanding album, "it brings my jazz to its highest levels", but he is determined to go back to composing and give his audience the gift of more of his music. In the meantime, you can learn more about him by visiting [his website](#) [13]

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