

The eMPathia Jazz Duo is Back in the US!

Tommaso Cartia (February 01, 2018)



After last year's success, Italian singer Mafalda Minnozzi and American guitarist Paul Ricci are back with a new U.S. Winter Tour and a new album - Cool Romantics. On Feb. 8th they will perform at Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò to commemorate 'Fat Thursday' in the week of the Carnival festivities.

[Mafalda Minozzi](#) [2] is a true ambassador of Italian music. Her universal musical language brought her to combine Italian melodies with rhythms from all over the world. In 2015, after a long solo career, both she and New York guitarist Paul Ricci formed the [“eMPathia Jazz Duo.”](#) [3] It's a successful partnership that brought them to perform on some of the world's most prestigious stages.

After a dazzling debut last year on the [Birdland's](#) [4] stage, where the duo was able to perform, for the first time in the history of the club, a rich repertoire of classic Italian songs, among others, Minnozzi and Ricci are back in NYC to bring their unique sound to the American audience. They have already repeated last's year success with a sold-out performance at the Birdland on Jan. 21st, and graced the stage of the [Luca's Jazz Corner](#) [5] - an exquisite jazz venue on the Upper East Side.



'When the Band Went By' at Casa Italiana

The next leg of their tour will see them at [NYU Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò](#) [6] with the concert "[Quando la Banda Passò](#)" - [When the Band Went By](#) [7], and a special guest, Brazilian percussionist [Rogério Boccato](#) [8]. Boccato plays in projects led by some of today's leading jazz players, among them Maria Schneider, John Patitucci, Fred Hersch, among many others. He has also collaborated with top-ranking Brazilian artists, such as Toninho Horta, Dori Caymmi, Moacir Santos, and Vinicius Cantuária. The percussionist is also featured on Grammy-award winning album "The Thompson Fields", with the Maria Schneider Orchestra, and also on two Grammy-nominated ones: Kenny Garrett's "Beyond The Wall" and John Patitucci's release "Remembrance", alongside Joe Lovano and Brian Blade.

The trio will celebrate '[Fat Thursday](#)' ([Giovedì Grasso in Italian](#)). [9] by revisiting the classic songs associated with [Brazilian Carnival](#) [10] that have become a part of Italian culture via the works of Sergio Bardotti, Wilson Simonal, [Toquinho](#) [11], [Vinicius De Moraes](#) [12], [Chico Buarque](#) [13] and others. Brazilian music is a musical territory that is very familiar to the eMPathia Jazz duo, and Brazil can be considered Minnozzi's second homeland. For the past twenty years she has been recognized as the official ambassador of Italian music in Brazil.

Paul Ricci has collaborated with big names in music like [Astrud Gilberto](#) [14], Bobby Sanabria, and Harry Belafonte. The musician found in Mafalda's voice the perfect instrument to express his passion for jazz, Brazilian, and African music. The duo already produced two significant projects: eMPathia in 2015, which was nominated for the Premio Tenco and Inside, which was produced by Grammy winner Jeff Jones in 2016.

As we wait to experience the duo's empathy live this winter, we had the chance to interview Mafalda Minnozzi about her life's story and her mission in music.

Mafalda's Origins

"I was born in Pavia," Mafalda told us, "But I subsequently moved to [Marche](#) [15], the region where my parents were from. At Pavia's Istituto delle Canossiane, I began getting involved in music. I used to sing in the chorus. There, I learned the discipline and how to listen. In reality, my mother, with her soprano voice, was the first to pass down a passion for music. Through singing, I tried to talk to my mother with whom I had a difficult relationship. Then I discovered [Caterina Valente](#) [16], an Italian singer who struck me when I was very young. I tried to emulate her. I liked the fact that she performed in so many different languages, as if they were a single language."

Around the World

As she likes to say, she was always "curious and in love with life." So guided by an insatiable hunger for artistic expression, Mafalda then moved from Marche to Rome. There, she studied music and dance. The singer was then ready to dive into great challenges and to present herself to the world. Her first recitals took place in 1986. She wrote them, and her husband, Marco Bisconti, directed them. Today, he is her producer. After this experience Mafalda packed her bags with classics from the Italian songbook, and she took them to Paris, Greece, and Germany.

As a traveling storyteller, Minnozzi then continued her journey around the world until she discovered Brazil. Love at first sight turned into a twenty-year career. Here she would meet Paul Ricci, and the United States would also open its doors to her. "Paul and I met in Rio de Janeiro, and we never left each other. He became the artistic director of my work. I enjoy not only the sense of freedom but also the discipline that he works with. I learned so much from him; he's a great musician and a great person. Paul was able to bring the great tradition of American jazz to a land that really loves this style of music, Brazil, and to combine it with Brazil's own rhythms.

Music as a Life Mission

Mafalda's long career was rich with important encounters such as those with Italian singer [Lucio](#)



[Dalla](#) [17], Milton Nascimento, Guinga, Martinho Da Vila, to name a few. However, she was never greedy for success. For her, music is a mission: to recount the lives of others through her own voice.

“I lived through the great life of everyday people, as Chico Buarque and Cole Porter told through their music. Artists are tools in the hands of an art that is given to them from birth. You don’t become an artist; you don’t learn to sing or to play. Talent is natural. Then you can improve it and study later on. You’re born with a gift, and you need to thank Mother Nature for it. I am a bit agnostic, but I feel that I’m a very spiritual person. I’m very Franciscan in many ways. I believe in the values of brotherhood, exchange, forgiveness, and sticking together.”

Mafalda has a wholesome approach to her career as a singer, and she has always wanted to preserve this purity without making any compromises. In a recording industry that continuously tends to limit an artist’s expression, Minnozzi chose to stay away from certain market trends. This is why the singer founded her own record label and manages every single detail of her career, from the clothes she wears on stage to the promotion of her CDs.

“I was always true even if it hurt me. Being true to myself caused me to lose some professional opportunities. But music is born to make people stick together and to tear down walls. Music was born to be free. It’s a universal language that everyone can speak and understand.”

Ambassador of Italian Music

Publicizing Italian music around the world is another important mission on Mafalda’s artistic journey. The singer is impressed by the enthusiastic feedback that the public gives her when she proposes songs by Umberto Bindi, Paolo Conte, [Luigi Tenco](#) [18], Ivano Fossati, and other great Italian singer-songwriters. She was also amazed by how Italy seems to have forgotten about this immense musical heritage. “Bringing Italian music to venues like the Birdland is not simple. I’m bringing a language that the audience doesn’t understand, but this classic Italian repertoire was appreciated. I don’t understand why we Italians don’t believe in our culture and in our past”.

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U.S. Winter Tour 2018

02/08/2018

CONCERTO “QUANDO LA BANDA PASSÒ” CASA ITALIANA ZERILLI-MARIMÓ, NEW YORK CITY

02/13/2018

CONCERTO “QUANDO LA BANDA PASSÒ” LUCA'S JAZZ CORNER, NEW YORK CITY

02/15/2018

EMPATHIA JAZZ DUO PLUS ART HIRAHARA AL MEZZROWMEZZROW, NEW YORK/NEW YORK (USA)

02/21/2018

EMPATHIA INTIMATE LUCA'S JAZZ CORNER, NEW YORK CITY

03/02/2018

EMPATHIA AL TRUMPETSTRUMPETS JAZZ CLUB, MONTCLAIR/NJ (USA)

03/04/2018

EMPATHIA PLUS FRIENDS JAZZ FORUM ARTS, TARRYTOWN/NY (USA)

03/09/2018

CONCERTO COOL ROMANTICS ZINC , NEW YORK CITY (USA)

For more info check out the eMPathia Jazz Duo website here [>>](#) [3]



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- [2] <https://www.mafaldaminnozzi.com/home-page/>
- [3] <http://www.empathiajazz.com/empathia-jazz-duo-4/>
- [4] <https://www.birdlandjazz.com>
- [5] <http://www.lucasjazzcorner.com>
- [6] <http://www.casaitaliananyu.org>
- [7] <http://newyork.carpediem.cd/events/5675585-quando-la-banda-pass-when-the-band-went-by-at-nyu-casa-italiana-zerilli-marim/>
- [8] <http://rogerioboccatto.com>
- [9] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fat_Thursday
- [10] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brazilian_Carnival
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