

MAFALDA MINNOZZI & PAUL RICCI



THE STYLE

Looking back at the countless attempts to describe Jazz in the ensuing generations since that trumpet from New Orleans set north, drum beats are probably most commonly cited as a reference. How then do we use the term Jazz in the case of a vocal and guitar duo?

The eMPathia Jazz Duo comprised of vocalist Mafalda Minnozzi and guitarist Paul Ricci answer that question with spontaneous melodic variations improvised around a popular song while uniquely arranged harmonic templates shift accordingly to the pacing and breathing of the moment.

Each signature performance is not unlike those songs from the days when Jazz emerged from the popular song via a soulful story told with individual expression.

Drawing from the vast experience of both the duo's artists, their present day popular song is expanded to include classics from Brazil, Italy, France and the U.S.A.

THE ARTISTS

Italian born singer Minnozzi has an impressive recording career predominantly in Brasil where for over 20 years she has made a name for herself via 12 CD's, 2 DVD's, numerous major network TV appearances and noted duets with the likes of Milton Nascimento, Toquinho, Martinho Da Vila, Paulo Moura, Leny Andrade, André Mehmari and Guinga to name a few. Her extensive touring throughout Brazil has established her as a remarkably charismatic and powerful stage performer with a vocal extension and versatile timbral palette that blurs the line between singer and improvisational soloist.

From her command of Portuguese and the credibility and respect she earned from inside the Brazilian music scene, Mafalda was granted the artistic license to sing Bossa Nova there in many of the theaters and clubs traditionally reserved for that genre, winning over some of the most demanding musicians and audiences.

For the commanding ease with which she interprets the French "chanson" and some of the most refined songs from the American songbook, the noted veteran Italian Jazz critic Gerlando Gatto has compared Mafalda to the French born Italian diva Caterina Valente so popular worldwide in the 50's and 60's *"...Mafalda is a truly cosmopolitan artist who sings in various idioms with full command of each and with extreme creativity... Caterina Valente comes to mind"* (A Proposito de Jazz – May 2016)

Completing the duo is Paul Ricci, a NY guitarist who has worked mostly in Brazil for the past 20 years but comes from the NY scene as far back as the 80's playing with Jaki Byard, Mike Clark, Harold Vick, Dennis Irwin, Larry Willis and countless other noted sidemen. Also experienced in Brazilian, Latin and African music he collaborated with Astrud Gilberto, Edison Machado, Dom Um Romao, Bebel Gilberto, Bobby Sanabria, Harry Belafonte and recorded with Steve Jordan, Randy Brecker, Anthony Jackson and Manolo Badrena among others. He performed with Astrud Gilberto at the historic 1991 tribute to Stan Getz at the Hollywood Bowl to in an all star band including Roy Haynes, Gary Burton, Kenny Barron and George Mraz.

For his performance alongside pianist Jaki Byard at NY's Blue Note the critic John S. Wilson wrote in the New York Times: *"...guitarist Paul Ricci established a fresh basis for "Lover Man" with a fascinating unaccompanied introductory solo..."* (NY Times, November, 1986).

His experience and inventive use of all these rhythms on jazz, acoustic and baritone guitars result in an impressive and powerful orchestral concept on guitar that together with Minnozzi's experience in popular song result in something truly their own.

Management & Booking: MBM Management / MAMA Prod. Art

General manager: Marco Biscanti bismarco60@gmail.com

+39 338 7243261 (mobile IT c/WhatsApp) /// +55 11 99999 4244 (mobile BR c/WhatsApp)

www.empathiajazz.com /// www.youtube.com/empathiajazzduo

MAFALDA MINNOZZI & PAUL RICCI



THE PROJECT

In 2015 Mafalda Minnozzi and Paul Ricci, as the eMPathia Jazz Duo, put their respective musical experiences together in a special meeting of cultures and influences to present a sound that immediately captured the imagination of their audiences at their debut shows in Italy, Brazil and the USA. They completed three CDs in only three years as evidence of the great "empathia" that has inspired and continues to inspire these two artists whether in the studio or onstage. From their first album EMPATHIA Jazz Duo (MPI/EGEA 2015) and INSIDE (MPI/ONERPM 2016) on up to their most recent COOL ROMANTICS (MPI 2018), the duo has grown through their eternal search to find the essence of each composition in their repertoire resulting in an unmistakable sound. The three productions therefore represent a perfect trilogy that documents the evolution of their sound that was pre destined.

With enthusiasm and sincerity combined with unquestionable technical ability and an extraordinary dramatic element, the eMPathia Jazz Duo fascinated and won over the audiences at their presentations in Rome (Casa Del Jazz, Alexanderplatz and Villa Celimontana Festival), Milano (EXPO 2015), Torino (Jazz Club Torino), Ancona (Ancona Jazz Summer Festival), Lisbon (Estoril Casino), Porto (Casa da Musica), Bremen (Jazzahead Clubnight 2017), Munich (Vogler) and finally in New York where their shows were applauded at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Zerilli-Marimó foundation at New York University and in various jazz clubs such as Zinc Bar, Luca's Jazz Corner and the legendary Birdland.

Grammy award winner Jeff Jones, also noted for his well documented collaborations with Wynton Marsalis, recorded and produced the two most recent CDs by the duo in his New York studio. The COOL ROMANTICS CD will be released January 2018 in NY at the Jazz Congress/Jazz Connect encounters in NY as well as at the noted jazz clubs Birdland (January 21st) and Mezzrow's (February 15th).

"As its name suggests, eMPathia Jazz Duo basically shares one jazzy heart. With a background in Brazilian and Italian jazz, both regions inform their songbook...each song is thoughtful, considered, two strands of the same silk intertwined. This is jazz to fall in love by, the soaring of a songbird in the big blue note-filled sky."

Debbie Burke (Jazz Author)

"They create an orchestra between the two of them. It's not one person and the other, it's in between them."

"Jedi Master" Jeff Jones (Grammy winning producer)

"They have these beautiful arrangements and concept for each song and they're both wonderful interpreters. I'm amazed at the stuff Paul does harmonically and linearly all by himself and the way Mafalda improvises and reacts"

Gene Bertoncini (NY Jazz guitar legend)



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