

Festival Della Canzone Italiana di New York - Five Singers from Italy and Five From the Rest of the World

Natasha Lardera (September 27, 2013)



A recap and a chat with Silvia Cecchetti, second place winner, an Italian singer with a long history of successes, such as participating to Italy's festival di Sanremo and touring with singer Andrea Bocelli.

The Resort World Casino of New York (Jamaica, Queens) welcomed the sixth edition of the Festival della Canzone Italiana di New York: five singers from Italy and five from the rest of the world competed against each other with brand new songs.

Every year, the competition is organized by the Associazione Culturale Italiana di New York, an organization that has been promoting Italian culture and language in the US for years. "Ours is an ongoing commitment motivated by our desire to put together an event that is not just entertainment but a bridge between Italy and the States... an international showcase of good music," organizers Tony di Piazza and Tony Mulè, said.



The winner was, for the first time ever in the history of the festival, a New Yorker. Arlette Roxburgh, a wonderful singer originally from the Caribbean who is married to an Italian and resides in Staten Island, sang the song "Vittoria" (Victory)... how appropriate... and her victory was also a great birthday gift for her!

Second place went to Silvia Cecchetti with "Il dopo te" (What comes after you). Silvia is an Italian singer with a long history of successes, such as participating to Italy's festival di Sanremo and touring with singer Andrea Bocelli. Third place to another singer coming straight from Italy, Clarissa Vichi, with the song "Aria" (Air).

The show was hosted, for the third year in a row, by the talented Benedetta Rinaldi of "Italia chiama Italia," a program that airs on Rai International. The festival was taped for Rai Italia and aired live on Radio Icn, in a special show hosted by Tony Pasquale.

Stefano Santoro has been directing production of the festival for a few years now and artistic direction was in the capable hands of Incanto Productions, a company specialized in bi-lingual music and theater productions. As always, the jury was made up of professionals and VIPs coming directly from Italy and also from the Italian Community here in NYC. The public was excited to see: Maria Nazionale, a Neapolitan pop singer, who has risen to fame thanks to her participation in the latest edition of the Festival of Sanremo with the song "È colpa mia" (It's my fault); Robertino, an Italian singer known mostly for songs he performed as a teenager in the 1960s. His most celebrated song is "Con un bacio Piccolissimo." Claudio Berardinelli, Italian music promoter, was also part of the jury along with the actors of Italian TV soap opera "Un posto al sole," Riccardo Polizzy Carbonelli, Alberto Rossi. Ilenia Lazzarin and Luisa Amatulli (the favorites of all Italian-American women who are fans of the show).

The festival was also a great opportunity for the show to tape a scene that will be featured in a future episode. Organizer Tony Di Piazza was taped handing out an Award to Michele Saviani, the character brought to life by Alberto Rossi.

The show also featured some comedy by comedians Antonio Pandolfo and Matteo Piazza and a performance by tenor Christopher Macchio. The other competitors were Lori Greco from Australia, Maria Ferraro, Salvo Greco, Nicol Zienna (who is only 16 years old), Barbara Giacchino, Anna Bugatti and Mario Damico who sang "Lacrime Napulitane" (Neapolitan Tears) while on the screen the audience could see images of Italian immigrants coming to the States.

I-Italy had a chance to talk to Silvia Cecchetti. She began her music studies with classical opera, then studied traditional Neapolitan Song. After graduating at CET (European Center of Toscolano) as pop interpreter, she had the opportunity to measure herself against great music professionals. Her successful participation in the Sanremo Festival in 94- she was among the top finalists in the "Young" category- brought her national attention and appearances on national television; in the same year she guest-starred in TV shows such as "Viva Napoli" and "Festival Italiano" and released her album "Silvia Cecchetti", produced by Lavezzi and Mogol. She performed in Italy, the States and Canada with Andrea Bocelli and Toto Cotugno and she continued working in the pop music field throughout the 90s. She also cooperated with the "Opera Quintet", a group of five exceptionally talented professional musicians members of Milan's Teatro alla Scala Orchestra, in a project dedicated to traditional songs of the 1900s. In 2011 she put on the show "150 years of Italian tradition: from Melodramma to Pop" with Sandro Cerino and Romano Pucci singing her ability in Belcanto and Jazz styles. She worked with a group of doctors and the Human-Voice association offering her new sound experience like singer and vocal coach and wrote the book "La voce dei 5 sensi" ed. Carish together with them. In cooperation with Osteopaths, Postirolologists, Acupuncturists, Anthroposophics she found a vocal methodology that respects the human being and the natural need of expression.

Tell us about yourself and your music.

I am not pop, I am not jazz... You cannot categorize me in any style. I am music. I have sung classic, jazz, pop... just name it. Making music is connecting with what is around you, it is being yourself, communicating with the world.

What do you say about this beautiful song that won second place?

"Il dopo te" is a brand new song; I wrote it with Luca Angelosanti and Francesco Morettini. I wrote it



in a moment when, still incredulous, I found myself staring at an empty picture frame. It used to have a picture of my wedding. I realized how everything goes on and how each and every moment we live comes back to leave behind only the taste of “nothing.”

How important was it to take part of this festival?

My wish is to export old Italian songs and present them in a new, modern way that still embodies the elegance and unparalleled quality of Italian style. I see the Festival Italiano as a great opportunity to promote this idea. Somebody wrote of me that I am “new tradition” because I have the ability to give a new expression to old Italian traditions... and this is the focal point of my music. I am sure the festival will help me in my mission.

How is the current music situation in Italy?

There is no room for music in Italy. Radio stations follow the laws of multinational corporations, while television is all about reality shows. The few clubs that are surviving obey to the law of “savings vs. quality.”

In the States there less spaces than before BUT there still is great respect for quality. What is Italy lacking? The possibility to communicate with someone higher than you. The only way you can do that is if you are introduced by someone else. In the USA people listen to what you have to say, and if they like your project they help you out no matter where you are coming from. This is what we call the famous “American opportunity,” you are always given a chance, no matter who you are.

“Il dopo te” is featured in Silvia Cecchetti's latest CD, “Tempi diversi” (available in the US) an album that features ten amazing songs sung by an amazing voice. From “Parlami d’amore Mariù” dated 1932 to “Il dopo te,” it shows the evolution of Italian songs in a completely different and modern way.

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