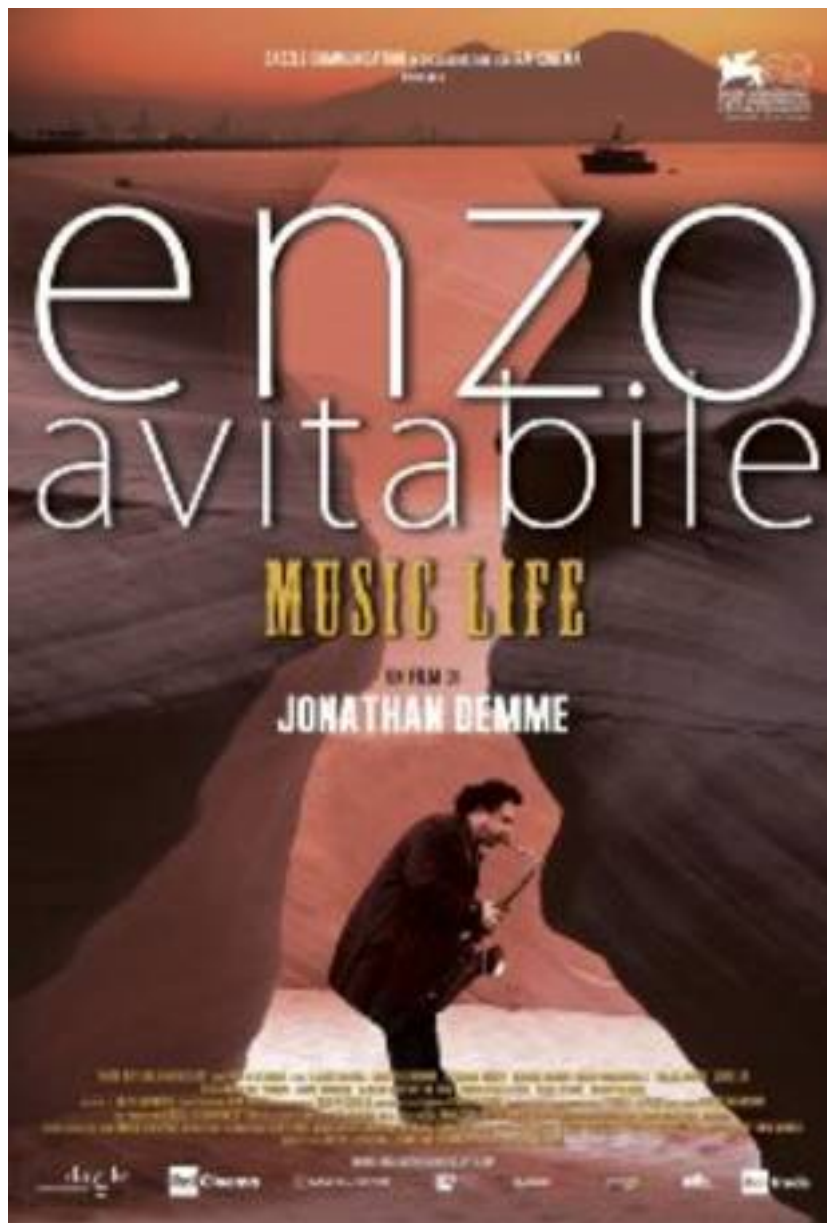




## Enzo Avitabile - Music Life

Roberta Michelino (October 09, 2013)



Now in New York Cinemas, Enzo Avitabile Music Life, a documentary film directed by Jonathan Demme, produced by Davide Azzolini for Dazzle Communication and co-produced by Antonio Monda, is a must see. The film tells the story of the Neapolitan multifaceted artist, Enzo Avitabile. His eclectic background is explored through the streets of his native Naples. We asked Antonio Monda



for some details.

He's Neapolitan, he has a thorough musical knowledge and his repertoire includes ethnic, jazz fusion and soul music. Hollywood's spotlight has illuminated his pathway and he has made of music the heart of his life. We are talking of Maestro Enzo Avitabile, a talent we have lots to say about.

He has played with artists from, and in, all corners of the world, from Iran to Spain, all the way to Palestine, to imprint in our memory the troubled history of the Palestinian population and the courage of Vittorio Arrigoni. He has collaborated with the likes of Pino Daniele, James Brown, Tina Turner, Maceo Parker and Edoardo Bennato.

One of his greatest gifts is that he still is humble and sensitive, untouched by the commercial rationale of the record business. And it so happened that Jonathan Demme, the celebrated director of *The Silence of the Lambs*, *Hannibal* and *Philadelphia*, by pure chance listened to his radio program titled "New Sounds for Naples." He was entranced by one of Maestro Avitabile's songs and so he decided to work on a documentary film about him. *Enzo Avitabile Music Life* is about the musician's life and his relationship with the city of Naples.

Some scenes were shot in the Marianella neighborhood, the area where Maestro Avitabile was born and raised, a hood that sadly is known for violence, drugs and the power of organized crime, a social disease that subtly marks the fate of many people.

The message that leaks out the of the film's images is one of hope, of redemption and of silent rebellion. Often, in such difficult social contexts, unexpected excellence may emerge. Enzo Avitabile is a remarkable example of this. Jonathan Demme unveils his soul, and not just his musical one, and walks into his all Neapolitan daily life.

We asked Antonio Monda to give us some details about this film, a film that has just arrived in New York City's cinemas.

### **How did Jonathan Demme and Enzo Avitabile meet?**

Davide Azzolini, who is the director of the Napoli Film Festival, asked me to moderate an event there. When I called Jonathan to ask him to participate to the festival, he told he would come only if I'd introduce him to Enzo Avitabile.

I couldn't believe my ears! Enzo is an artist I truly admire, but I had no idea he was known in America as well. During the festival I found out that Jonathan knows all his music and, obviously, Enzo was both incredibly happy and surprised.

Then Davide Azzolini thought of producing the film and he asked me to become associate producer.

### **Why did the director decide to shoot this film, including in such a tough neighborhood as Marianella?**

Jonathan knew Naples only superficially. He had gone there just to participate to the festival and he fell in love with the city for its beauty and contrasts. Yet thanks to Enzo, he's got to know the city's Parthenopean side.

### **How do music and cinema communicate with each other?**

Jonathan is one of those great directors who are specialized in music. Think of "Philadelphia," or



“Stop Making Sense;” these are, as many other films of his, characterized by an amazing soundtrack. This specific film, is the portrait of a great musical personality, just like in the documentary of Neil Young.

### **Why would you suggest this film to the American public?**

Because it marks the discovery of a remarkable character by an Oscar winning director.

### **How do you think the American public would react to the realistic image of Naples the director captures in the film?**

Jonathan Demme tries to understand the character as he is discovering the city. This is the most striking aspect of the film: as he gets to know the different facets of this multifaceted artist, someone who has mastered both popular and classic music, who creates new instruments and brings together different sounds, he also gets to understand Naples and its contradictions. The description of the Marianella neighborhood is one of the most beautiful and emotional moments of the film.

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