

At the Olympics with Francesco Renga

Marina Melchionda (March 03, 2010)



Interview with Italian renowned singer Francesco Renga, who presented his new album "Orchestra e Voce" in Vancouver on the occasion of the 2010 Olympics Winter Games. The production features a collection of historical Italian songs rearranged in collaboration with Maestro Celso Valli, and is part of an international project that will see Francesco performing on the main international stages

The [Vancouver Winter Olympics](#) [2] not only gave Italian athletes a gold, a silver, and three bronze medals to bring back home, but was also an occasion to export the best of the country's musical tradition through the voice of one of its most talented and expressive interpreters.

On Saturday February 27 Italian singer [Francesco Renga](#) [3] gave a concert to present his latest work, "Orchestra e Voce" ([Universal Music](#) [4]), "a collection of songs from my childhood memories, the pieces that shaped my career", as he told us when we spoke with him. The performance was the result of a collaboration between [CONI](#) [5] (Comitato Olimpico Nazionale Italiano - Italian National Olympics Committee) and [Radio Italia Solo Musica Italiana](#) [6]., its official partner, and was held at [Casa Italia](#) [7], headquarters of the Italian athletes participating to the Winter Games.

Released in 2009 and first presented at the [Teatro Quinto](#) [8] in Madrid, "Orchestra e Voce" is a collection of pieces by [Domenico Modugno](#) [9], [Mina](#) [10], [Don Backy](#) [11], [Pino Domaggio](#) [12], [Gianni Bella](#) [13], [Patty Pravo](#) [14], [Mario Del Monaco](#) [15], and others. Reinterpreted in a modern



key and adapted to Francesco's almost lyrical voice, the album features the partnership of Maestro Celso Valli, famous also for his collaborations with some of the greatest names of the Italian music panorama, such as [Mina](#) [10], [Ornella Vanoni](#) [16], [Renato Zero](#) [17], [Adriano Celentano](#) [18], [Jovanotti](#) [19], [Andrea Bocelli](#) [20], [Giorgia](#) [21], [Laura Pausini](#) [22], [Eros Ramazzotti](#) [23], and [Vasco Rossi](#) [24].

"I feel attached to all of the pieces collected in the album", Francesco told us. "Since they all represent a moment of my private or professional life, I feel a deep sense of pride when I perform them. If you ask me which one is my favorite, however, I would say 'L'Immensità' by Don Backy. It kind of mirrors my own walk of life".

Sì, io lo so, tutta la vita sempre solo non sarò e un giorno io saprò d'essere un piccolo pensiero nella più grande immensità.....di quel cielo (Yes, I know, I won't be alone all my life, and one day I will know that I am just a small thought in the greatest immensity of the sky). As Francesco quotes a strophe of the song with his typically upbeat voice, we ask him about his concert in Vancouver. "It's one of the first times that I bring my album abroad. After my tour in Italy, I will start travelling throughout the world to bring these pieces of history of Italian music to our co-citizens living in other countries, to those who love Italian music, and also to all of the people who don't know much about it, but are open to new discoveries. Vancouver is a starting point in this big project, and I am fully satisfied with it".

In this freezing Canadian city, Francesco found a warm and enthusiast welcome that reawakened his pride for his country of origin, and his roots: "Wherever I go in the world, I feel glad to be an Italian. People of any nationality look at us with admiration; they think we are one step forward in every field of art, and love to spend time in our company. Sometimes we Italians forget how lucky we are from this point of view. In Italy, the problems are many, and life sometimes is so difficult that it ends up overwhelming our spirits. But then you get fresh air abroad, and come back with new energy and inspiration".

Among the pieces collected in the album there are "Meravigliosa" and "Angelo", the song winner of the 2005 edition of the [Sanremo Festival](#) [25], the greatest music competition in Italy. Francesco debuted on the stage of [Teatro Ariston](#) [26] in 2000 with "Raccontami", a piece that gave him notoriety and made of him one of the most successful and loved Italian contemporary singers, especially among new generations. His participation in the Festival's 2002 edition with "Tracce di Te" (Traces of you) and in 2009 with "Uomo senza età" (Man with no age), confirmed this trend.

He participated to Sanremo also this year, but this time as a "guest of honor". Aside of "Angelo", dedicated to his daughter Iolanda, he also performed "La Voce del Silenzio" from "Orchestra e Voce", for an affectioned public.

"As in every edition, I hear pieces and voices that I like, and others that I don't. The Festival remains an important opportunity for all of those in search of a niche in the Italian musical panorama. My only concern is that it is becoming more and more a TV show than a music competition. The fact itself that the winner of this year's edition had participated in a talent show before, and is mostly known by the big public because of this, worries me in a double way.

Not only, in fact, am I concerned that not everybody is given the same opportunities, but I also think that this kind of popularity could keep young talents from studying and putting effort in improving themselves and their music. They might think that they have already arrived somewhere without having even started".

According to Francesco, challenge, practice, and study are the keys to becoming a good and sophisticated singer. "Since music has always been my first and greatest passion, I never payed much attention to the world of sport. Being here in Vancouver, however, taught me a very important lesson: from athletics you can learn the values of sacrifice, conquering, and self-discipline. I recognize the important role that sport can play in the life of people, especially for the youth of today's world, that in many cases take too much for granted and are not willing to work as the should to reach their goals".



Francesco was also impressed on how the Italian community of Vancouver "united under one flag" to support its athletes. "I will never forget the emotions I felt when we celebrated [Giuliano Razzoli](#) [27], who won the golden medal after the second run of the Men's slalom. It was so similar to what happens in Italy when the national soccer team plays, and people crowd the streets and squares of the whole country to share their joy in an explosion of flags and colors".

Francesco went back home with a suitcase full of memories and energy, ready to present to his Italian fans an album in which "he is not only accompanied by an outstanding orchestra, but his voice becomes an orchestra itself", as critics recently stated. After touching the main Italian music stages, "Orchestra e Voce 2010" tour will move abroad, accompanying Francesco's wonderlust throughout the world.

We couldn't leave him without the promise of a date in New York. "I only came there a few times and for very quick stops. But I am craving to live and discover much more of this city, and meet its flourishing and rich Italian and Italian-American communities. My international tour won't miss that stop, I promise!".

Related Links: <http://www.francescorenga.it> [3]

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- [27] <http://www.razzoli-giuliano.it/Biografia-di-Giuliano-Razzoli.html>