

LOS ANGELES ITALIAN COMMUNITY

Debora Petrina with her *Roses of the Day* hits the Italian audience in Los Angeles

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On the occasion of an amazing performance, recently hosted by the Italian Cultural Institute, Debora Petrina presented to the Italian community of L.A. her latest album *Roses of the Day*, a combination of jazz, rock, electronic, and classical music. Petrina is appreciated not only in Europe but also in the U.S.A. for her unique and extraordinary work, as both a singer and musician. She is a complete artist, whose purpose is to convey emotions through her voice and her body. Thanks to her sophisticated artistic research, Petrina has been able to draw the attention of famous Italian musicians and composers, opening concerts for Gino Paoli and Cristina Donà, as well as of international artist David Byrne, the *Talking Heads*' leader, with whom she collaborated in her record *Petrina*. She also composes scores for movies and theater shows, and this is one of the reasons why Los Angeles was the perfect location to end her U.S. tour.

Debora, could you tell us more about your multidisciplinary artistic career?

I was born in a small city, which lacked artistic inspiration: there were neither music or dance schools nor shows. Nevertheless, since I was a child, I have always had an inclination for performing arts. I used to enjoy doing choreographies for my birthday parties using songs by Led Zeppelin, and then I started to take piano lessons. After a few months, I was admitted to the conservatory! This is how my musical journey began but, instead of continuing my classical studies as a pianist, I rather wanted to explore new sounds. Therefore, after some experiences abroad at the Ljubljana and Budapest Music Academies, I decided to change my course of studies and to explore more "niche" music genres. And yet it was only after the painful death of my father that I finally found my own way of communicating: I started to use my body and my voice by merging them together.

How could you explain the uniqueness of your performances?

Complexity is part of art because it is part of our

humanity. For instance, our body works in very a complex manner, and also our feelings are often contradictory. This human condition can be well represented by different means such as the voice, electronic music, dance, and piano.

You have recently presented your latest record *Roses of the Day* to the audience of the Italian Cultural Institute in Los Angeles. What kind of feedback did you receive?

It was an amazing experience. Even though some of the people in attendance were not familiar with this type of performance, in which the piano is mixed with electronic music and contemporary dance, their reaction was full of surprise and curiosity.

Have you ever been to Los Angeles before? What was your impression of the city?

It was my first time, so I was shocked by the L.A. traffic and long distances: I had to drive for 90 km to get to Sunset Blvd! However, as soon as I looked at it, I fell in love with L.A. with its breathtaking landscape and warm people, who are open to a dialogue without prejudices. I could also see that nowadays L.A. is playing an important role as an avant-garde center that attracts talents from around the world.

Do you believe that the L.A. Italian-American community has still a good feeling and connection with Italian music?

In L.A. I have met friendly people interested in my artistic journey, and I think that the work of Cultural Institutes worldwide is essential to provide the Italian communities with the opportunity to explore their cultural roots and to meet contemporary artists on the occasion of exhibitions and shows.

During the last months, you have performed extensively on the U.S. West Coast. Do you have a special connection with the area?

The U.S.A. in general calls to my mind youth, enthusiasm, and limitless experimentation. Most of the composers with whom I have worked and who have inspired me are actually Americans. In particular, California was the epicenter of a social and cultural revolution, which left an invaluable legacy in the history of music and mainly in the rock music that I



Artist Debora Petrina. Photo courtesy of Debora Petrina

listened to as child, such as The Who, Jimi Hendrix, and The Doors.

You collaborated with top artists the likes of David Byrne, leader of *Talking Heads*. Would you like to tell us how this happened?

David Byrne and I met by chance: one of my records ended up in his hands and he was intrigued by it. Afterwards, I found my songs in his web-radio playlist and asked him to feature in my album *Petrina*. He accepted. Sometime dreams come true!

What about your future plans?

At present I'm working on my next record, a project featuring only voice, piano, and live electronics. During one of my concerts in San Francisco, I met an artist with whom I will collaborate in November. This project will involve at the same time Berlin, Venice, and of course Los Angeles.



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