

Cristiana Pegoraro: “Those Who Love Music Live Forever!”

Vincenzo Marra (November 04, 2010)



Illica is in its 7th year of activity. On November 10, 2010, they celebrate with illustrious guests: the talent of Cristiana Pegoraro, the vision of Anthony J. Tamburri, and the innovation of the Italy America Chamber of Commerce with Claudio Bozzo. Below you will find interview with Cristiana Pegoraro

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It is a lazy summer afternoon...one of those afternoons that only those who know Rome can truly appreciate. It is the end of August and in [ILICA](#) [3]’s Rome office, somewhere between a bored Piazza Campo de’ Fiori and an ever vain Piazza Navona, a cool breeze blows. It is [Cristiana Pegoraro](#) [4], a splendid almost forty-year-old from Terni who floats like a butterfly. She will be the star of ILICA’s 6th Annual Cultural Event. To be more precise, the real star will be her art which represents Italy’s



thriving musical culture. Cristiana is one of the world's best concert pianists. We will take advantage of her presence in the United States, where she will be holding a series of concerts, to have her all to ourselves on the evening of November 10, 2010.

Who is Cristiana Pegoraro?

I was born in Terni and when I was still in kindergarten I began studying piano. This was in the mid-70s and from that moment on I never stopped playing resulting in my passion becoming my occupation.

Where does this passion come from?

I am certain it is in my DNA thanks to my grandfather who, self-taught, played both the piano and the violin. I also must thank my parents who, despite being a lawyer and a company CEO, always encouraged me in my decision to pursue a career in a field so different from their own.

Who else do you need to thank for becoming "Cristiana Pegoraro"? After all, you did so much more than merely learn how to play the piano!

I met my first piano teacher when I was 5. I loved to play the piano and my teacher advised my parents to encourage me because she felt that I possessed a rare passion for this art. I have had numerous teachers...Austrian, German, Italian, but if I must remember one name in all of my

professional career, it must be that of my Russian teacher, Nina Svetlanova. God gives us all special talents but it is through sacrifice and hard work that this talent becomes excellence supported by passion. It is difficult to work without passion because passion is the key to working cheerfully. When I play, I feel alive and complete and therefore I have fun. I had as much fun when I left to study at the conservatory as when, at age 16, I left to study in Vienna. There, I was always the youngest and everyone played better than me. It became a sort of game for me to improve because I always knew I could do it better. Then I moved on to study in Salzburg, Berlin and New York, always with the same fighting spirit. Talent isn't enough: in life you need to have character and you must persevere because it is only with these qualities that you can be victorious when you face the many down sides and the many doors that seem to close in front of you, even when you believe that you have finally mastered an art.

Do you still encounter these difficulties today?

I was just going to get to that! Today, you must fight harder because the competition is more fierce and of better quality and you can only come out on top by proving that you are the best. This is the reason that the choice to live as an artist is one that is rooted in passion. If I don't play for more than a week (and in the past 20 years it has happened only a couple of times!) it seems as though my fingers are tangled and my reflexes are slower. Playing the piano is like training for the Olympics...if you don't practice every day, then you should probably change profession.

How does one go about becoming a composer?

If you are alluding to my 40 compositions (2 Cds: "La Mia Umbria" and "Musical Journey") then I must tell you that it is all inspiration. One morning I woke up and I thought, "Now I want to try and write a piece!" Then I wrote two pieces, then three! I kept composing until it became a way to express myself, to keep me company. It became a way to stay connected to the audience that loves me and to whom I owe my life to... Speaking of which, my audience has always appreciated my "romanze". I don't go and compare myself to Chopin or Mozart, but when I play their immortal pieces I can only interpret what their great minds conceived. When I play my music, I know why I harmonized those specific notes and I know what I want to communicate to my listeners. I can only hope that 200 years from now someone will still listen to what I have written today!

I have listened to Ithaca and to other pieces that you have composed but I was particularly moved by your interpretation of Astor Piazzolla...



I love South American and Cuban music in general and I

believe that Astor Piazzolla represents the classical modern composer that, in rewriting the Tango Nuevo, did not want to devastate the hundred year old Tango tradition. His intuition fascinated me and since Piazzolla only wrote pieces for the bandoneòn, I asked myself how a long note (which is typical of the bandoneòn) could translate on the piano, which does not have notes that vibrate. I am the first person in the world to invent a technique through the use of the pedal and a way of touching the keys that allows me to play Piazzolla on the piano. International critics have encouraged me and the public finds these pieces fun and if you say you like these pieces as well, I will try to play some Piazzolla at the ILICA C'È.

I will consider it a personal gift! I was curious to know, of all the emerging markets, if there are countries where your concerts have a considerably larger following.

Music is universal and the ability and the competence to listen to it is strictly tied to the emotional sphere. Certainly where there exists a historical culture of music that includes concerts, you will find a public that is more open to this type of experience. For example, in Old Europe, (Austria, Germany, Hungary, and all of the countries of the former USSR) there still exists a type of ideal public that fully participates to the emotions of the artist. This, however, does not exclude interest from countries that up until recently were considered to be outside of the traditional circuits. I am referring to Asian countries such as Japan, Korea, China as well as Arab countries where by speaking with the public, one is able to generate genuine interest. It is our job as musicians to render music more comprehensible and it is for this reason that in my concerts I speak with my audience and explain what I will play and why. Perhaps the world's next Mozart will come from one of these countries! After all, music has always existed and the evolution of Europe has taught us that no one can hold a monopoly on anything for long.

On November 10 in New York, ILICA will hold its sixth annual intercultural event. There will be people of all nationalities but 70% of them will be of Italian origin. Does it make a difference to you knowing that you will play for a familiar audience?

I hope that I don't offend anyone by saying that any audience can be familiar despite their origins. Music is a universal language that speaks to everyone and the fact that I am proud to be an Italian must always drive me to do my best so that those who are drawn to Italians may become enriched. In turn, we can enrich ourselves by being close to those others. My teachers have been Italians, Germans, Austrians, and Russians and I shared my scholastic experience with Asians, Arabs, Africans and people from all over the planet. Human beings are in tune with music and it is with music that they can find their greatest form of expression. We play instruments when one of us is born. We play them when we get married and their sounds accompany us on our final journey. Those who love music live forever!

More info on <http://www.ilicait.org/> [5]

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