

Manhattan is Waiting for Battiato

Roberta Michelino (September 30, 2013)



Iconoclastic Italian singer, songwriter and composer Franco Battiato returns to New York City after a four year absence for a concert appearance on Wednesday October 9 at Highline Ballroom

Sicilian singer, songwriter, film director and composer, Franco Battiato, is one of the most complex and eclectic artists in the Italian scene. His music is characterized by the harmonious pairing of different and numerous music genres. This mingling makes his style unique and inimitable, as it successfully blends together progressive rock, experimental music from the 70s, pop and ethnic music, electronica and even a sprinkle of opera.



His lyrics are impregnated with his passion for Theoretical philosophy, esoterism and Oriental meditation. During the 70s he was really into experimental music and electronica. His first album "Fetus," released by the label "Bla, Bla" was a real success. In part due to his use of the analog synthesizer VCS3, he was able to reproduce innovative and distinguished sounds, sounds the audience of the time had never heard before and that were captivated everybody.

In 1981 he released the album "La Voce del Padrone" with which he earned a coveted spot in Rolling Stone Italia's classification of Italy's best 100 albums of all time. Several songs appearing in this work have become legendary in the Italian music scene: among them we find "Cuccurucucù, Centro di Gravità Permanente, Gli Uccelli, Bandiera Bianca." This last song is a rant against the vacuity of television, against a society that is prostrated in front of "His Majesty, aka Money," and against the frivolity of the music of the time.

Following his meeting with Manlio Sgalambro, a Sicilian philosopher close to the school of thought of Nietzsche and Cioran, he started a new phase, his eclectic singer-song writer phase. The most famous result of their collaboration is one of Battiato's most famous songs, "La Cura," dignified love confession whose meaning can be interpreted in several different ways. His latest music endeavor, titled "Apriti Sesamo," was released in 2012. In it, the dichotomy Battiato-Sgalambro is even tighter and more recognizable.

Through the songs in the album Battiato becomes the spokesman of a state of general malaise caused by a political scene that is always more and more corrupt and by a society that is monopolized by a capitalistic economy. The only way out a world that is sinking in disgrace is to find refuge in spirituality and in the hope that society can still redeem itself. At the core of each song there is man and his transforming personal quests that are crystallized in a universal and metaphysical dimension.

In Battiato's songs, there is no lack of love words for his birth land, the region of Sicily. His lyrics often capture the slow and unforgiving passing of time that is not accepted with desolation and despair, but with the awareness that moments can be relived through memory.

Battiato's career is also characterized by his involvement with cinema; the mean of communication is different, yet the artist himself asserts that music and film basically speak the same language.

Battiato himself told i-Italy "I have always been an admirer of talent, but I admire free men even more. I see music as the Messenger of divine codes, it can influence and help mankind evolve... furthermore when paired with images it can become explosive." His latest film is a fascinating biography of Haendel, the composer from the 1700s, that was loved in Rome, Germany and London.

This is not the first time Battiato plays in New York, and his opinion on this big city is that nobody here gets to feel lonely. His concert will be an anthology of his greatest successes along with some experimental music from the 70s.

Regardless of social protests and provocations, Battiato is a curious artist who has never abandoned the humanistic sphere, invading the most innermost corners of intellect through meditation, religions, literature and the most various musical experimentations. The frenetic and sleepless city of New York is awaiting for the singer's performance; he is an artist who has turned his philosophical quest for "un centro di gravita permanente" ("a permanent center of gravity." This is a quote from one of his songs) into a successful artistic production.

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Wednesday, Oct 09, 2013 8:00 PM EDT (6:00 PM Doors)

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