

April 2, 2012

Dear Marina Bartoli,

Thank you very much for interviewing to “City Mouse”- TLV local magazine.

We would love to introduce you to the Israeli audience -in preparation for “**Felicja Blumental Festival** at **Tel Aviv Museum of Art** (14-19 May 2012).

The following questions relates to your show in the festival and focus on your feminine perspective:

1. What led you to choose the authentic materials to the show. I would love to hear about the preparation, influences and special research that were made as part of the process.

The aims of the “Amoroso Foco” Ensemble, which I formed together with my colleague Michael Leopold (lute, baroque guitar), and with which I will perform at the F.Blumental Festival, are basically two. The first one is to choose arias that are rooted in the idea from the “Camerata de' Bardi”, a group of Italian humanists, artists and intellectuals who met in late Renaissance Florence and rejected the complex polyphony of the time, trying to recreate an ancient Greek form of musical drama known as monody, which paired a single melody with chordal accompaniment. They strongly believed that the words were the guiding force behind the music and consequently wanted the text to be clearly understood by the listener.

The second aim of the “Amoroso Foco” Ensemble is to bring lesser known (but beautiful) works to light.

These are the two basic guiding principles for our show’s material choice, together with the theme “passionate love” around which all the program is shaped (the title of our concert is “Love in the 16th and 17th century!”).

2. What is your favorite Musical composition in the show and why?

My favorite composition in the concert is “Canta la cicalotta” by Stefano Landi (1587-1639): a very moving and sweetly melancholic aria which I am going to sing accompanied by Michael’s lute. It describes a man who is so much in love that he would like to die while he is singing, as happens to the little cicala of the title (“cicalotta”) that dies happy, while singing under the sun, so hot that it burns her.

In the Aria there is an absolutely wonderful musical moment that often brings me to tears: when the man exclaims sighing “S’io morissi cantando, o me beato!” (= Oh, what bliss if I were to die singing!).

3. How do you see women's role in the classic & world scene today? Do you feel the position/status of singers today is different - in comparison to earlier years?

I come from Padua, an old university town with an illustrious academic history, where the first woman in the world received a doctorate degree: her name was Elena Lucrezia Cornaro Piscopia and she was born in 1646!

I come from a country, Italy, where one of the most important scientist is a woman: the Nobel prize winning Rita Levi-Montalcini, still working at about 103 years old!

Those two courageous women had to struggle against the prejudices of their time, when there was no possible alternative to the traditional role of wifehood or motherhood. Fortunately today many single women can use their time focusing on improving their skills and abilities to contribute to society in many different ways. Getting married and having children is certainly beautiful, but it is not our only possibility and goal: there is an alternative, which is equally important and satisfying as the other.

Talking about the position of female singers today: yes, I definitely think it is different in comparison to the past. The freedom women enjoy today allows us to travel a lot alone and often manage our career ourselves: in the past the female artists –when they were not substituted by men- always had to be accompanied by mothers, husbands or managers (my University dissertation was about the artistic career of a 19th-century virtuosa, the violinist Metaura Torricelli, who was always waited upon by others during her tours around the world).

Now we are our own escort, and we are greatly helped in this by electronic devices. Sometimes it is hard, of course, but loneliness is not so heavy if one has a supporting family behind them and true friends with whom it's always possible to keep in touch and meet.

4. Have you ever being in Israel? I would love to hear about your impressions / expectations.

I have never been to Israel before and I am very excited about my first visit there.

Our prime minister, Mario Monti, was in the Middle East some days ago and I followed his meeting with Israeli President Shimon Peres and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu with deep interest.

I can't do without thinking of your country as an example of ability in dominating an arid desert and growing plants, fruits and flowers from the sand: if you can do that, in the same way you can help younger generations to express their skills in art, science and everything else! I am thinking about the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, that assembles the offspring of different nations: excellent players who collaborate to make wonderful music. I also think of Itzhak Perlman, Pinchas Zukerman, Daniel Oren: they are some of the greatest classical musicians in the world and they all come from Tel- Aviv or the older Jaffa. And then there is the pop singer Noa, whom I love both for her artistic excellence and her contribution to peace and international understanding.

I come to Israel pushed by a deep curiosity: I have the opportunity to visit an extraordinary land and at the same time enrich my musical experiences.

5. Do you have any tips for young singers?

As I am a young singer myself, I find it a little hard to provide tips for other singers. What I personally find important is to never stop studying, both technically and intellectually. We have to learn as many foreign languages as we can, so as to be able to clearly pronounce, deeply understand and therefore interpret the texts of the arias we are singing. I also think we must always be very curious of all forms of art, take inspiration from nature and attend live performances as often as possible (concerts, ballets and the theatre): the more we absorb the more we can elaborate- as artists- in a personal and creative way.

Thank you again for the time and cooperation.

Best regards,

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