

## MAFALDA MINNOZZI

A singer of international stature: the insiders say it, the public says it and the numbers confirm it. In 35 years of career Mafalda Minnozzi has performed over 1,000 concerts on three continents, has produced 18 CDs, 2 DVDs, dozens of video clips and more than 250 videos recorded on the stages of theaters, auditoriums and festivals to document a career built "live" . Her voice is featured on dozens of compilations and soundtracks of television series and films, in which she has also appeared as a composer.

For Mafalda, singing is a necessity. With determination and courage she placed music at the center of all her life's choices, considering it to be the most powerful tool of cultural integration. Around the music she has created encounters, collaborations and projects to which she has dedicated all her energies. The approval of the critics and the unfailing "standing ovation" of the public at each concert, have paid off and continue to constantly reward her for her dedication. Her very soul is in fact international, because she welcomes the spirit of the three countries in which she has written the main chapters of her history to date: Italy, Brazil and the United States.

### Her Italian Soul

Mafalda Minnozzi was born and raised outside of Milan and unlike her peers, she grew up listening to Piaf, Sinatra, Nat King Cole and Caterina Valente, fascinated by the sound and colors with which the voice can express itself in song. From there she began to listen to her own voice too, strong and in tune in keeping with her personality. As soon as she comes of age, she moves to Rome to challenge herself. She found the right stimulus with the maestro Gustavo Palumbo, with the choreographer Marco Ierva and with drama coach Roberto Marafante of Saverio Marconi's "Compagnia della Rancia". With a courageous "a cappella" audition she joins the cast of the Italy's RAI TV show "Uno Mattina" where she stays for two seasons as lead singer with the show's orchestra and with a second audition she conquers the stage of "La Cabala", at the heart of Rome's live music scene, frequented by the jet set, intellectuals and artists who enthusiastically applaud Mafalda's concerts. As her popularity grows she receives invitations to perform in Munich, Athens, Malta and Paris and by accepting them, she definitively chooses the path towards musical exploration to experience, share and live the music.

It was in these years that he learned to measure and control her voice and to embrace foreign languages, singing French chansons, American jazz and Bossa nova as well as the songs from Naples and from the Italian songwriters. By incorporating this vast repertoire, she formulated her very personal style that to this day, marks her unmistakable performances.

### Her Brazilian Soul

In January 1996 Mafalda travels overseas to Rio de Janeiro, for an offer she couldn't refuse: The Brazilian record label "Som Livre", on the recommendation of an international talent-scout, offers her a contract which includes the release of three albums and a series of concerts to launch her voice in Brazil. Accompanied by some of the most famous Brazilian jazz musicians such as Nico Assumpção, Raul Mascarenhas, Luiz Alves, Jurim Moreira, Armando Marçal and Luiz Avelar, Mafalda first conquers Rio De Janeiro's public, then the artistic community and finally the attention

of the national media, which all propel her to "revelation" status. The major Brazilian networks dedicate interviews, specials and concert appearances to her on the most popular programs. It is the beginning of an absolute reciprocal love with the Brazilian public that has lasted for 25 years.

In 1998, as she found an effervescent music scene open to meetings and collaborations, she moved her artistic base to São Paulo, where with her husband and manager Marco Bisconti, she founded MAMA productions, a record label and entertainment agency with which she laid the groundwork to organize her concerts throughout the country and the freedom to create projects that integrate her Italian origins with the Brazilian culture. The New York guitarist, arranger and producer Paul Ricci officially becomes part of her artistic world as musical director and together with him, Mafalda takes on all subsequent productions from then on until today. In Brazil, Mafalda realizes extraordinary collaborations, in studios and on stages, with Milton Nascimento, Leny Andrade, André Mehmani, Guinga, Ná Ozzetti, Toquinho and many others. With Samba legend Martinho da Vila, she records "Um Beijo, Adeus", a version of "Prima Dammi Un Bacio" that the song's composer Lucio Dalla himself classified as "pure poetry".

Both the Embassy and Consulates of Italy in Brazil partner with her for concerts for major events dedicated to Italian music, cinema and sport, including the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympics. Mafalda was alongside the legendary Italian Film critic Tonino Pinto in the first edition of the Giffoni São Paulo Festival and is a spokeswoman for Italy's national tourism promotion campaigns in Brazil. Since 2003 she has been the correspondent from São Paulo for the RAI Radio 1 programs "Brasil" and "Stereonotte" with Max de Tomassi, where she reports live to tell of the musical and cultural news of the South American capital cities. Mafalda also received two important awards from Brazilian institutions: the Federal Government included Mafalda Minnozzi in the official list of the 500 most representative personalities of the country on the occasion of the event celebrating the 500th anniversary of the discovery of Brazil, and the Government of the State of Rio de Janeiro granted her honorary citizenship for cultural merits.

### **Her American Soul**

The "eMPathia Jazz Duo" project is the vehicle she created with Paul Ricci in 2014 to continue to follow her "inner voice" and amplify the jazz that is in both of their musical DNA's. Ricci's jazz guitar stimulates her to revisit and reinterpret the authors of the international songbook that she loves so much and the treasure chest of the vast repertoire that she has amassed over the years. The result is an original sound made even more surprising by the perfect synchrony that the duo has honed over hundreds of performances. It is precisely New York, the capital of jazz, that Mafalda chose as the place to put this new challenge to the test. The audience of the coolest jazz clubs in New York such as Birdland, Mezzrow, Zinc, Jazz Forum, Trumpets and Luca's are immediately conquered by the duo's talent and Mafalda's charisma. The first reviews in the specialized press describe it as a real revelation. The first CD "eMPathia Jazz Duo" (2015) recorded in Brazil was followed by "Inside" (2017) and "Cool Romantics" (2019), recorded in New York and produced by Grammy Award winner Jeff Jones.

The Zerilli-Marimò organization of New York University and an important reference for Italian culture in the United States, consolidates Mafalda's popularity by hosting her skillful mix of jazz, Latin rhythms and Italian passion for several concerts in their seasonal programs of prestigious cultural events before fascinated audiences.

Mafalda's voice, her "scat" and her performance style also attract the attention of the New York jazz community and create extraordinary meeting opportunities. Harvie S, Victor Jones, Art Hiraahara, Rogerio Boccato, John Di Martino, Essiet Okon Essiet, Will Calhoun, Eduardo Belo and Helio Alves all recognize and enhance the value of the project by participating as "special guests" in many of her concerts. In particular Harvie S, Jones, Hiraahara, Boccato and Ricci form the super-band with which Mafalda realizes two sold-out concerts at the Birdland Jazz Club that consecrate her among the most applauded singers in the "Big Apple".

### Summing up

The theme of travel has characterized Mafalda Minnozzi's entire career . Portugal (Casa da Musica), Germany (Jazzahead, Passau Jazz Fest), Peru (Lima Jazz Festival), Austria (Outreach Jazz Festival), Spain (Womex), Paraguay (Asujazz Fest), France (MIDEM) and the United States (APAP and Denver's Rocky Mountain Fest) are to be added to the list already mentioned. Among the musicians with whom she has collaborated, we should also remember Mario Pacheco from Portugal, Hugo Fattoruso from Uruguay and Sting's sax player Butch Thomas.

The Italian public has also had the opportunity to savor Mafalda's voice on the stage of Rome's prestigious "Casa del Jazz", the JazzMI Festival in Milano, Padova Jazz Fest, Udin&Jazz Fest, the European Jazz Expo, the Peperoncino Jazz Festival and various series and festivals in Naples, Florence, Grado and Macerata (Musicultura). To continue presenting her musical concept "without borders" she invited noted Italian jazz soloists Gabriele Mirabassi, Giovanni Falzone, Antonio Onorato, Giovanni Ceccarelli, and Daniele di Bonaventura to the stage as well as the New York personalities John Di Martino, Harvie S and Victor Jones, who she took with her on an Italian tour just three months before the start of the devastating pandemic.

Unable to perform live during the pandemic, Mafalda found other means to make her music travel for her. The album "SENSORIAL - Portraits in Bossa & Jazz", produced in New York, entered the prestigious Jazzweek USA charts reaching the top 100 for 34 consecutive weeks and today boasts over 2,500 performances on American jazz radio stations such as WBGO, KUVO, WUCF , WCLK, WDNA, JAZZ / 24.

In the wake of its critical and public success, "SENSORIAL - Portraits in Bossa & Jazz" is remastered for Italian release in Feb. 2021 with the addition of two bonus tracks in a "Deluxe Special Edition" to a rousing critical acclaim from the Italian press. The album is also submitted into the 2021 Latin Grammy edition to compete in 7 different categories, including that of "Best Latin Jazz Album".

Mafalda follows SENSORIAL in April 2021 with a new album entitled "To Naples - Port of the Soul" which sees her for the first time with the Brazilian pianist André Mehmari in a tribute to the Neapolitan song tradition with a very modern approach. As a jazz improviser and classical composer, Mehmari masterfully blends Naples with the samba, baião and afoké cultures of his roots in a perfect synthesis. Mafalda's intense and creative voice recall her ancestral links with Italian melodrama and French cabaret in a stylistic blend that uses the voice as an element of instrumental jazz for yet another declarative statement.

In the months that followed, Mafalda felt it was the right time to produce two new albums in a collection of songs that she often included in her concerts but had never put on record.

Recorded during the pandemic in an intimate setting and accompanied solely by Paul Ricci's jazz guitar, Mafalda released *PRIMAVERA* (June, 2021) and *ESTATE* (September, 2021). Both albums were recorded live in the studio and were also captured on video for a powerful emotional experience that allows the viewer to feel the sense of adventure and surprise that defines Mafalda's music on stage as well as in the studio.

Later in the same year, Mafalda continued her prolific output with "CINEMA CITY - Jazz Scenes From Italian Film". Released in the North American market on the first of October, 2021, this was a dramatic departure from the intimacy of her previous duo albums. It was a true maiden voyage for her in that, for the first time, she embraced and dedicated an entire album to the suggestive and exclusive world of Italian film music with her inimitable jazz-inflected improvisational style.

Mafalda powerfully digs deep into her roots and soul to reveal to her own and to all audiences, the refined originality that composers such as Stelvio Cipriani, Henry Mancini, Renato Rascel, Carlo Rustichelli, Nino Rota and Ennio Morricone brought to the world of film soundtracks.

"Cinema City" was conceived and recorded in Brazil in the midst of the pandemic. The disturbing reality of living in such a dramatic situation and the forced hiatus from the stage, gave Mafalda time to reflect, acting as catalysts of positive energy for this creative project with strong personal motivations. "I sang these songs interpreting them as scenes from my own life because they are indeed an intimate part of my life and in some cases they even reshaped my destiny. Just as the character Totò from "Nuovo Cinema Paradiso" reviews his life through clips from the films he grew up with, I also re-lived my past, conjuring up intense emotions rooted inside me", comments Mafalda. In fact, in a storybook twist of fate, due to the success and popularity of this Oscar winning masterpiece with its inseparable Ennio Morricone soundtrack, Rio de Janeiro's famous "Paradiso" club was conceived and it was from there that Mafalda's first invitation to Brazil from Rome started a new cycle in her storied career.

Mafalda Minnozzi's passionate simplicity and the spirit with which she approached the creation of "Cinema City" are evident in each track of the album, revealing a skillful balance between the virtuosity and natural eclecticism of jazz with the cosmopolitan sensibility of world music.

This enthusiasm permeates the entire record and is shared by its musical director, New York guitarist and arranger Paul Ricci, the Brazilian musicians who accompanied Mafalda in the studio, namely Tiago Costa (piano), Sidiel Vieira (acoustic bass), Ricardo Mosca (drums) and by the special guests who participated in the recording of the album: Dave Liebman (soprano sax) in "Love Theme - Nuovo Cinema Paradiso", Graham Haynes (flugelhorn and cornet) in "La Dolce Vita" and "Amici Miei", Art Hirahara (organ) in "Anonimo Veneziano" and "E La Chiamano Estate", Luca Aquino (flugelhorn) in "Nella Fantasia" and Jorginho Neto (trombone) in "Arrivederci Roma".

Rounding off the always challenging year of 2021, Mafalda realized two important projects that further reflect her multi-faceted talents.

She produced, directed and edited two documentaries involving the importance of the cultural bond between Italy and Brazil. The first "Dia Da Italia" is a behind the scenes story of her performance in the official re-inauguration of the famous Christ the Redeemer statue overlooking Rio De Janeiro in October, 2021 and the other "Italia Nel Cuore dell'Avenida Paulista" (Jan, 2022) is a short film documenting the process or renovation of the Italian Consulate in Sao Paulo.

Always in the mix between Italian and Brazilian cultures, both on the screen and on stage, Mafalda will appear in two prestigious films in 2022, doing what she does best. Singing! “The Chisels Are Calling” (Street Singer Productions) is a documentary about the life of legendary luthier John Monteleone and features the likes of Mark Knopfler, Ben Harper and Mafalda Minnozzi, who performs a classic song from Naples with her guitarist Paul Ricci.

Also slated for release in 2022 is a film by the iconic Italian director Enrico Vanzina dedicated to the rich tradition of Roman song where Mafalda’s jazzy interpretation of “Roma Nun Fa’ La Stupida Stasera” stands out in its charm and beauty.

## QUOTES

*“As a singer, her technique is sublime; she sings not simply with ease, but with faculty, as only very few singers in the world can do ”- Raul Da Gama (Latin Jazz Network-Canada)*

*"The vibe on the recording is uplifting and evokes the aesthetic of Joao Gilberto beautifully. He's smiling from the beyond." - Bobby Sanabria - 8x Grammy nominee and radio host at WBGO - Latin jazz Cruise*

*“Mafalda Minnozzi has the stature of an international artist ... she is a sensitive interpreter, supported by an outstanding vocal technique, also good in scat ... she is able to express herself in both perfect Portuguese and perfect English ... she dominates the stage with his fascinating stage presence and his powerful and flexible voice, rich in a thousand nuances “- Gerlando Gatto (About Jazz – Italy)*

*Thanks to her experiences with jazz music in Brazil and Italy, both countries influence her way of singing ... every interpretation is deep and sensitive. This is jazz to fall in love with, the free flight of a bird in a big sky ”- Debbie Burke (Jazz Author – USA)*

*With her sensitive and deep voice, Mafalda conveys an apparent innocence that is pure sensuality ... she masters "scat" and vocals bringing us back to the best moments of Brazilian music ... the energy of jazz, with Brazilian rhythm and Italian spirit, they give life to a captivating work ”- José Ramon (La Habitación Del Jazz – Spain)*

*She has a beautiful concept for each song and is a wonderful artist. I am fascinated by her way of improvising and interacting ”- Gene Bertoncini (American jazz guitar legend - New York)*

*Mafalda Minnozzi literally thrills the audience with jazz classics” - Carlos Calado (Folha de São Paulo – Brazil)*

*Mafalda Minnozzi's voice has a joyful sound ... Her "open"notes are round and full ... she sings the Bossa Nova with energy and sincerity and enchants with her perfect intonation and fluent Portuguese” - Dee Dee McNeil (Musicalmemoirs's – USA)*

*An extraordinary revelation. Mafalda Minnozzi is fantastic! ”- Humphrey Inzillo (La Nacion – Argentina)*

*Mafalda Minnozzi combines Brazilian Bossa and New York City Jazz in a sensual experience of humor, melody and even a little melancholy” - Travis Rogers Jr. (The Jazz Owl - USA)*