



Paolo Fresu (trumpet, flugelhorn, efx)  
Orchestra del Conservatorio di Milano  
Paolo Silvestri (conduction)

“Norma”

It is certainly not easy to bring together the scores of a true operatic masterpiece such as Vincenzo Bellini's Norma and the world of jazz. But, in the truest sense of the interpretation and free classical adaptation of the world of Afro-American music, in the same way that jazz appropriated around the middle of the last century the great heritage of American popular song, it seems possible and correct to have the freedom to revisit a piece of our musical tradition with the lens of the freedom of modern musical forms.

Paolo Fresu, a true omnivore of the contemporary musical art, pays homage with the greatest respect to Bellini's wonder and limits to one simple sentence the question of what this project is: "It is simply the reinterpretation, in an instrumental version where the trumpet takes the place of the voice, of some of the beautiful arias of Bellini's Norma, produced in Catania".

In short, the sound of a trumpet instead of the voice of Maria Callas, sublime and unparalleled interpreter of the score of the musician of Catania. "The trumpet becomes voice" has intelligently titled a Sicilian newspaper at the time of the premiere of this project. We think it is the most apt adjective to grant to this splendid adventure that Paolo Silvestri, conducting the project that can be declined with territorial orchestral ensembles, summarizes with these words:

*The project commissioned in 2017 by I Art - Sicilia Jazz Festival and the Orchestra Jazz del Mediterraneo in a first time included a review of the most famous arias of Vincenzo Bellini. It is during the work of arrangement that I instead matured the intention to create a modern version of Norma, leaving almost unchanged the melodies in their extraordinary beauty, often keeping the form similar to the popular songs of our time, without respecting the original sequence of songs but reworking the harmony and instrumentation in a jazz style.*

*The reference went immediately to George Gershwin's Porgy and Bess interpreted by Miles Davis and arranged by Gil Evans, and in particular to that orchestration with "deep" sounds more typical of the symphonic colors of classical music of the early '900 and the tradition of American big bands.*

*Also, in this solo work it is a trumpet, that of Paolo Fresu, who in some cases uses the Harmon mute and the flugelhorn, to which are entrusted the melodies and most of the improvised solos on part of the improvised solos on harmonic structures elaborated from the original pieces. (Paolo Silvestri)*

In short, "Norma", the masterpiece by Vincenzo Bellini, has been "rethought" according to the stylistic canons of jazz music thanks to an orchestral ensemble and the trumpet of Paolo Fresu. The melodies have been left intact, but the creative game is to expand the colors of artistic exploration. Given the result: something not for the curious and omnivorous only.



### **Paolo Silvestri**

is a composer, pianist, arranger and conductor. He has carried out numerous projects with symphony orchestras, which have often resulted in a record, meeting on these occasions musicians such as Gato Barbieri, Jimmy Cobb, Kenny Wheeler, Tony Scott, Stefano Bollani, Enrico Pieranunzi, Dulce Pontes, Ivano Fossati, Paolo Conte, Gino Paoli, Armando Trovaioli, Peppe Servillo, Sergio Cammariere, Barbara Casini, Fabrizio Bosso, Javier Girotto and in particular Enrico Rava with whom he has been collaborating since 1996. In these occasions he has conducted prestigious symphonic orchestras such as the Orchestra del Teatro Regio of Turin, the Orchestra del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, the Orchestra del Teatro Lirico of Cagliari, the Orchestra Regionale Toscana, the Orchestra Arturo Toscanini, the Roma Sinfonietta, the Orchestra di Roma e del Lazio, the Orchestra della Provincia di Bari, the Orchestra Filarmonica Marchigiana and important jazz orchestras. His latest album is entitled "Rava On The Road" with Enrico Rava and the Orchestra of the Teatro Regio in Turin, released in the fall of 2013 with La Repubblica and L'Espresso.

He has composed numerous film soundtracks and music for many theatrical, musical and dance performances including "Un Certo Signor G", by Giorgio Gaber, starring Neri Marcorè, which won the Biglietto d'Oro for the 2007/2008 season, as well as "Monsieur Malaussene" and "La lunga notte del Dottor Galvan" by Daniel Pennac, "Il bar sotto il mare", "Amlieto" and "La misteriosa scomparsa di W" by Stefano Benni. He teaches Jazz Composition at the Conservatory of Adria and at the Conservatory of Ferrara.

### **Paolo Fresu**

The village band and the major international awards, the Sardinian countryside and the records, the discovery of jazz and the thousands of collaborations, the love for small things and Paris. There are very few people capable of putting together such a collection of elements and transforming it into an incredible and fast stylistic growth.

Paolo Fresu has succeeded in a country like Italy where - for too long - jazz culture was as well-known as Shakespeare or the paintings of Matisse, where Louis Armstrong was little more than a freak in the insane showcases of Sanremo Festival and Miles Davis was discovered to be "black" and good well after his years of maximum creativity.

The "magic" lies in the immense naturalness of a man who, like few others, was able to transport the deepest meaning of his magical land in the most precious and free of the arts.

At this point of his long and fortunate career, it is no longer necessary to enumerate recordings, awards and various experiences that have imposed him at an international level and that make his music systematically and ecumenically loved: inside the sound of his trumpet there is the sap that has given lustre to the nouvelle vague of European jazz, the depth of a thought that is not only musical, the generosity that wants him "naturally" in the right place at the right time but, above all, the enormous and inexhaustible passion that has always sustained him.

Paolo's present is - as usual - turbulent, worthy of the omnivorous and creative artist that everyone recognizes in him.