



## Reportage of the AulosVox Duo Concert for Ennio Morricone

Written by Massimo Privitera



### *Flute and Soprano for Ennio Morricone...*

*Reportage of the concert of the Duo AulosVox held at the Auditorium of the "Goethe Institut" in Rome on 15 November 2023*

Don't be fooled by the title of this report, namely "Flute and Soprano for Ennio Morricone", which would instantly lead you to think that it was a concert solely paying homage to the two-time Oscar-winning Roman maestro, who passed away in July 2020, because that would be wrong. I confess to you, it is a typical click-bait title, as has been used very often for many years now on the web and on social media, with that addressed, immediate and simple communication that allows the distracted reader (but also the truly attentive one) to be immediately given attention and (perhaps) led to read the article, which with today's fast times and rhythms is not so wrong and aggressive. Now, this is revealed to you by the undersigned, who obviously decided on the title to give to this piece, not only for the reason just described but because the AulosVox Duo, who masterfully performed the dense program (quite unusual in the concert world, not only in Italy due to the type of instrument-voice combination) of absolute, ancient and

contemporary, inside the renowned Auditorium of the Goethe-Institut in Rome (in Via Savoia 15), is formed by the flautist Paolo Zampini and the soprano Silvia Capra.



The flautist has collaborated with Ennio Morricone as a soloist for many recordings of his soundtracks and in concerts around the world (from 1985 to the last one in January 2020), including recording the complete opera “Absolutely Ennio Morricone” together with two other historic collaborators of our Oscar winner, the pianist Gilda Buttà and the cellist Luca Pincini – I invite you to catch up on the episode dedicated to them of Soundtrack City ([part 1](#) e [part 2](#)) It's mine [review of the first album](#) aforementioned Morriconian –. Yet not only does this justify the title of the reportage, it is actually just a piece; in fact this is it

mainly arose from the fact that two pieces of absolute music by Morricone were included in the concert program: "Wow!... for a singer-actress who wants to do what she wants" from 1993, composed for an opera singer who used to say Wow! , as an exclamation of appreciation, every time at lunch or dinner in the home of the Roman Maestro (as pleasantly narrated by Zampini before the performance, a narration that both he and Silvia Capra did with great detail and brilliantly for each piece in the set list, something that does not always happen in 'serious' concert contexts of this kind, erring in my humble opinion, therefore additional applause to the two performers) and in the absolute first performance (an element that gave greater exceptionality to this Concert)

**"CinquantEnNico" for solo flute from 2013, dedicated to his friend Nicola Schittone**

who turned fifty on 20 September 2013. The title of the song, cheerfully invented by Morricone, if you have read well and above all noticed, coherently refers to the half century celebrated by his friend of Sicilian origin - a Dermatologist who has nothing to do with Ennio's professional musical world, however his great and passionate follower -, who for more than 40 years spent happy and relaxing moments with his family (his large one and that of Ennio) on holidays or in various public and professional events, cherishing extraordinary memories of their affectionate and special response friendship, and to the names of the Two (Ennio and Nicola or 'EnNico').



The AulosVox Zampini/Capra Duo - where 'aulos' stands, as explained by Wikipedia, for an ancient Greek musical instrument, of Lydian or Phrygian origin, made up of a wooden tube to which a mouthpiece in the shape of a small elongated bulb was adapted, with a simple or double reed, therefore a flute and 'vox' I'm not even going to tell you given the logical answer -, starting from these two Morricone pieces, he gave further demonstration, having arrived in the set list almost at the end of the Concert, of a mastery, intensity and interpretation (because to say execution would be too reductive and collective) well beyond the common performative sense of these types of live music, ensuring that such an emotionality is conveyed to the present audience - composed and semi-nourished, as well as receptively satisfied - between the sacred and the profane, between the serious and facetious, between the pleasure-loving and the introspective - bordering on the unicum already inherent in the compositions conceived by Morricone.

The soprano Capra, comparable in terms of stage presence, elegance and beauty to Audrey Hepburn in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, with a crystalline, dense and caressing voice throughout the concert, interpreted with her mouth closed, "ridiculously" and with a recitative touch of feminine irritation as a noblewoman of the 19th century, joking lovingly on stage with the flautist, who tried to slip away in his acting role as a sought-after nobleman, the piece (all written on sheet music, even if it seemed improvised on the spot) "Wow!... for a singer-actress who wants to do what she wants", sparking jovial hilarity among the audience and toning down the serious and melancholy tones of the previous compositions already completed. Zampini in the unpublished "CinquantEnNico", for solo flute, created an intimate performance empirical, like Morricone's piece itself which knows how to be ancient and modern at the same time, vertical and horizontal at the same time, Mediterranean (like the dedicatee of the piece) and with western cinematic flashes, typical of the first Ennio for Leone. A composition, like a good portion of those of Morricone's absolute music, not easily rendered immediately, which must flow sensationally in a reiterative manner, in order to grasp all its intrinsic value. A moved Nicola Schittone, present in the Auditorium to listen to the premiere, like all those present, of the piece dedicated to him, sitting near the writer - because from the same guest given the strong cinemusical and territorial friendship that unites us - it was almost petrified by the emotional tension that finally, 10 years after the composition of the piece, saw the light of performance in the hometown of his Ennio, by one of his most precious and illustrious soloists.



Apart from Morricone with these aforementioned pieces, the program narrated works for solo soprano, for solo flute (or flutes) and for both written by Luciano Berio (1925 – 2003), Hildegard of Bigen (1098 – 1179) – considered the first composer in the history of cultured music –, Barbara Strozzi (1619 – 1677), Claude Debussy (1862 – 1918), André Caplet (1878 – 1925), Albert Roussel ( 1869 – 1937), Paul Hindemith (1895 – 1963) and Kaija Saariaho (1952 – 2023), who recently passed away. All classical compositional figures, highly and nobly authorial, systematically underperformed - with the exception of Hindemith, Berio and Debussy (obviously leaving out Morricone who is a special case for his triple sound value between absolute music,

popular and applied to images and the immutable international fame achieved) – which the Duo brought to the stage of the Goethe-Institut for the University Concert Institution (IUC) with an excellent, transporting and clear participation, intention and performance dissemination, despite the complexity of some compositional pages which are not immediately usable upon first listening, of their dating and (at least on the staff) what certain estrangement for an audience less and less accustomed to this music, not for all musical palates, even more niche than that for film, still erroneously believed to be so, and instead deserving of wider global popular acceptance.



Between songs of lost love and infinite anxiety (Strozzi with “L'Eraclito amoroso” for voice and flute, Roussel with “Deux poèmes de Rosard” and Caplet with “Écoute, mon coeur” for voice and flute), funeral supplications (by Bigen with “O magne Pater” for solo voice), fragments of style (Hindemith with “8 Stücke” for solo flute), sadly contemplative adagios (Debussy with “Syrinx” for solo flute), illustrative and melancholic pages at the same time (Saariaho with “Changing Light” for soprano and flute), what struck the writer with such visceral depth was the piece

opening "Altra Voce" by Luciano Berio, for mezzo soprano and alto flute and Live Electronics by Yeshi Silvano Namkhai and Martino Piccoli Mazzini: a long and dangerous composition for those who perform it, with a contrapuntal play between vocal and singing peaks and flautist, which border on (or rather reach the summit of) dissonance, leading the listener to a kind of alienating dream journey

– The final sequence of Kubrick's "2001 A Space Odyssey" comes to mind, almost obscuring all other possible thoughts or visions related to the song, the one in which the protagonist David finds himself on Jupiter in front of the monolith and enters in a new dimension of spacetime, that four-dimensionality of the incorporeal and only spiritual ascetic ego that leads him before God and the real consciousness of the Universe - which Zampini/Capra reveal to our ears with a dazzling, stunning and astonishing dynamic, known later note, vocalism after vocalism, flute after flute. Not a concert of music for images, as you have well read, yet music full of images.



*Heartfelt thanks to Nicola Schittone and his daughter Simona Schittone, to the duo Silvia Capra and Paolo Zampini for their precious availability and great courtesy and to Giovanni D'Alò for his jovial and convivial participation, as well as to Mr. Tonino for making us live in the his winery a magical moment among the notes of Morricone performed by Zampini's intimate flute.*