Berklee College of Music

The Italian Mystery (Ballads)

Reminiscences of Italian Ballads In American Culture

Degree of Master of Music in Contemporary Performance (Production Concentration)

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Abstract

This project is dedicated to the courage it takes to be able to look back at your past finding your true self. I chose to record four songs dear to me and my family to which I owe the knowledge of Italian music. Exploring this took me to understanding why I am here today and specifically why I chose music to be my main focus in life. I re-arranged and worked with the songs in a style that reflects contemporary American music and jazz which is what I analyzed more in depth during my studies in the USA, and currently in Spain. I modified its shape trying to leave intact the beauty of their innate long and romantic melodies. During this year and process I've learned a lot of techniques in terms of production of a musical work and established wonderful musical collaborations that I'm proud of. I finally presented my project during my showcases with musicians such as an Italian opera singer, an American rhythm section and a local bass player from Valencia, trying to incorporate as many influences I could and absorb them into my musical final result.

Keywords: Italian music, Drums, Arrangements.

Acknowledgements

I sincerely feel like sharing my deepest gratitude to the people who have been involved in this project throughout my academic year and who helped me during its process making of their contribution a must without which this simply wouldn't have been possible.

The incredible roster of teachers who have helped me going deeper into technology, composing and performing matters, the friends and musicians who have been so enthusiastic to be involved in this project simply for their curiosity in my ideas and in believing in something in which they had never worked before even though it could look obscure to them, and most of all for their deep love for music.

Thanks to those who were in love with Italian music before giving birth to this project and to those who felt like they had nothing in common to share with this music but eventually found similarities and love for it at the end of this journey. As its generally said music unifies people, it's a universal language that has the power of finding common grounds of culture that believe to be so different from each other but that finds out to be able to speak the same language through emotions at last. So I thank you all sincerely from the bottom of my heart for the love you shared.

Last but not least, my greatest gratitude goes to my loving family, without which I wouldn't have been able to get in contact with the greatest Italian music and composers and therefore to find the original character that lies beneath myself, that defines me as a musician and human being today. To my grandma who has always been the perfect host that all of us could have ever asking for, during those endless fall and summer days inside her family house playing records in her giant old furniture hi-fi.

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I believe it is truly because of your childhood experiences and heritage that you become what you are today.

1. Introduction

The first Beatles LP's that I heard at my grandmother's house, which was my family's favorite place on earth, caused me to fall in love with English beat music (that eventually led me to American music and the Afro-American jazz art form. However, my father would listen to his classical music records home.

And then I came across a smaller LP with a strange Italian character in the cover who seemed to look like a boy but could have probably been a girl who seemed to be wandering around doing nothing. It was Gianburrasca in the movie *Viva la papa col pomodoro (Hooray for the tomato sauce)*. To this date that is still my favorite cover of all times.

After almost twenty years of experience and many years living in the United States to examine in depth the wonderful American musical heritage and culture at Berklee in Boston and New York I came to the conclusion that was time for me to go and have a look back in the past, which is probably where I have always intended to look. Is it really true that no one can really reveal themselves as they truly are if they can't look back at their past and understand where they are coming from? I currently believe so.

The heritage of my country seems so important during the course of history and yet, I wasn't very knowledgeable about it. I always questioned why the language of music notation and of scores is in Italian for instance. I found an answer in the Gregorian Chants, which I studied in secondary school, inside the culture of Roman Catholic Church. Popular legends credits to Pope Gregory I The Great, because singing has always been part of the religious liturgy. At first it was beautiful monophonic simple melodies in search of total spiritual concentration, and more ahead in times were layered with polyphony in the Organum with the invention of all twelve modes.

Then the Madrigals were invented, the first songs portrayed around Italian poetry started in the 1300's in strophic forms where the lyrics were all based over the same music content and then evolved in the 1500's into more trough-composed chants where each stanza of the lyrics would differ in music and was usually sung by two to eight voices in polyphony and unaccompanied by any instrument. What we probably define today as songwriters were madrigal composers such as Count Gesualdo of Venosa, who portrayed the evilest of all characters with a diabolic aura and enchanted beautiful melodies wrapped around strange stories of evil treaty.

The invention of Opera in the 1500's Italian years of Renaissance unified the three most important forms of art which were poetry, music and theater, with an Italian word that simply translates in "work" from the first father of the Opera Jacopo Peri and his almost unknown *Dafne* to the acclaimed Claudio Monteverdi and the first opera to see the light *Orfeo*.

This took me to understand how the monk Guido D'Arezzo invented what we know as music notation nowadays with the invention of tetragram (a first edition of four-lines staff of our modern five-lines staff notation of the diatonic scale), and took the name of the notes from the initial syllables of the Latin Hymn *Ut Queant Laxis* that a scholar monk Paulus Diaconus wrote for Saint John Baptiste, finally naming them as Ut, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol, La, Sa. And there's also a proof in stone of this in the abbey of Pomposa a big church close to a place where I used to live in Italy; funny coincidences happen. This is the real reason why I think this music demands me looking back at where I'm coming from.¹

¹ Richard Taruskin and Christopher H. Gibbs, *The Oxford History of Western Music: College Edition* (New York: Oxford University Press; College ed. Edition, 2012).

² Felipe Liperi, Storia della canzone italiana: Nuova edizione, (Rome: Rai Eri, 2016), accessed

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Figure 1. Gregorian Chants, accessed May 20, 2019. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gregorian_chant

Figure 2. Name of Notes, accessed May 20, 2019. https://live.staticflickr.com/7003/6412549563_9891fde905_b.jpg

2. Background, Objectives.

My goals and desires have been the same since my early childhood in the island of Sicily, Italy, a place where the mixture of cultures created a melting pot in the last thousand years similar to America in most recent times. I wanted to spend my future career diving into the magic of music and becoming a performer and drummer for artists in as many different fields in this art craft.

With a Berklee education based primarily on Performance with concentrations in Music, Production & Engineering and Music Education I want to gain the chance to enter the world of music with the best background and tools provided coming from the most awarded sources of both education and performing fields. I also have a wide experience in connecting with people and working in social events as well as experience as co-assistant teacher for Berklee at the Umbria Jazz Clinics for the past 14 years.

That's why I also love traveling, where dreams become solid experience and studying eventually become your professional life. Being on tour is one of my favorite experiences, sharing my musical soul with other cultures and connecting musical ideas and purposes from all over the world. I will certainly make it as my first goal for my future career as a musician and performer.

A big financial sacrifice of my family, very few little hours slept trying to be the best student and musician have made what I am today, and they all link to a promise that I also made to my grandfather Giuseppe before his death.

3. Culminating Experience Project

My research took me back to the times when in United States jazz was becoming what we know today, but focusing on the situation of my native country as well. The journeys of all Italians in search of a better life had started even before the 1900's and whether someone came back and someone else never saw his beloved country again, the music of Italy had changed forever. Italian ballads and melodies were brought to the new world that in exchange gave Italy a wonderful gift with jazz and Afro-American culture.

Just when the world of jazz music was becoming the new most acclaimed cultural identity in United States, during the 30's in Italy with the song *Mille lire al mese (One-thousands Lire a month)* G. Mazzi was singing the dream salary of an Italian life in 1939, while A. Rabagliati was bringing passion and idyllic figures to his country with the song *Ba-baciami Piccina (Ki-kiss me baby)* in 1940. The three most important Jewish sisters of the history of Italy escaping from their Dutch origins came to our shores, and the Trio Lescano became an icon in our music with the hits *Tu-lipan* in 1935 (cover of the famous Tulip-Time sung by the Andrew Sisters), *Maramao perche' sei morto (Maramao why have you died?)* in 1939, *Pippo non lo sa (Pippo doesn't know*) sung with S.Fioresi in 1940, and "*Camminando sotto la pioggia*" (*Walking in the rain*) in 1941. Their Italian pronunciation was almost perfect but they eventually had to leave the country because of the arising of fascism regime and disappeared in the dark leaving the people without their favorite sisters.

Other important and famous songs in those days were certainly Lina Termini's *Ma L'amore no (But not for Love)* in 1942 and Wanda Osiris *Ti parlero' d'amore (I'll talk to you about love)* in 1944.

The song that was stuck in my mind the most (and will probably always be) is the one that my granddad used to sing to my grandma in very informal occasions during family lunches on a sunny Sunday, just like singing was really part of our culture for a lifetime. It's entitled *Parlami d'amore Mariu'* (*Talk to me about Love, Mariu'*) and is a song that changed the way Italians used to think about music being much influenced by American jazz and not only for how much my family loved it. Sung by the famous actor Vittorio Gassman in the 1932's movie *Gli uomini, che mascalzoni!* (*What scoundrels men are!*), despite having a fairly common rhythm for Italian music of Waltz time had already a brief verse merged into the song itself that anticipated the A main section, just like the standards from the Great American Songbook were constructed. This song became so popular it was the first one to be recorded in different languages and versions, including English by Gordon Cliff's *Tell me that you love me tonight* that also included the American standard by G. Gershwin *Love is here to stay* as the B-side as proof that American and Italian music connection had begun, and has been recorded in French language by Liz Gauty although the lyrics were modified with the title of *Le Chalande qui passé.*²

By the 1930's Italian music was more accessible to anyone regardless their monetary income, and started becoming something that everybody could really enjoy at best. This was the real change from the classical opera world, the fact that the music quality wouldn't' change much in favor of an art that now was accessible to all and everybody's interest in music grew substantially in Italy. People got more interested in the music of their country and that made them curious about music that was coming from other places as well, like the USA.

Describing how Italian composers think and where these melodies take their origins from is really an impossible objective, but there's always a very typical trait that all Italian music has

² Felipe Liperi, *Storia della canzone italiana: Nuova edizione,* (Rome: Rai Eri, 2016), accessed March 25, 2019, http://www.railibri.rai.it/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/9788893160674-2.pdf.

in common. The influence of Italian footprints in the world of music is so rich that a chord has been named after the Neapolitan southern Italian classical and folk-tradition, the Neapolitan chord is a major chord built on the lowered second (supertonic) scale degree, it's indicated by bII6 or simply N6 and often in first inversion, and contains an interval of a minor sixth between the bass note and the root of the chord. The sound that this chord evokes is so nostalgic, and full of dramatization whether it's for tragedy or passion that is immediately recognizable in an Italian craft and methodology of compositions.³ It's been in use in all music, from Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata (Op.27 No.2)* to the Beatles *Because* and American film composer John Williams in the soundtrack of *Indiana Jones (Raiders of the Lost Arch)* in most recent times.

Even *O Sole Mio*, probably the most recognizable and famous popular Italian song in modern history has a moment of dramatization in the harmony where from the IV major scale degree goes to the IV minor (which belongs to the scale of C minor) creating a sort of modal interchange. Listening to it you can feel the moment where the harmony and the melody together evoke the most dramatic moment to which all Italian composers aim towards.⁴

Italian Music has always been filled with spirit, from Vivaldi and his interpretation of *The Four Seasons* in music to Scarlatti who served as role for the changing neo-classicism from the Baroque era, from the Operas of Rossini and Puccini to Respighi's *Pines of Rome*, creating and blending together visual and acting with music.⁵

³ Barbara Murphy, "The Neapolitan Chord (Phrygian II)," Music.utk.edu, The University of Tennessee Knoxville, accessed March 23, 2019, https://music.utk.edu/theorycomp/courses/murphy/documents/Neapolitan.pdf.

⁴ "Music Theory: Examples of Neapolitan in pop music?," Reddit, accessed March 23, 2019, https://www.reddit.com/r/musictheory/comments/vz9hb/examples_of_neapolitan_in_pop_music_ill_start/

⁵ "Italian Classical Music," Italiamia, accessed March 26, 2019, https://www.italiamia.com/italian-classical-music/.

My first important project has been devoted to building my own band and arranging Italian songs blended into American fusion music, something that I've always been dreaming of.

The format of the groups featured both an opera and a jazz singer, piano and synths, electric guitar, trombone, alto sax, both acoustic and electric bass, and myself on drums. My love for classical and popular music and the times of electric experimentations with the sounds of rock from the 60-70's found a point of encounter in a mixed style of Jazz and the acoustic sounds.

This culminated with the production and recording of my tracks, which include compositions that will provide an overall idea of how this music drove me where I am today, and changed me from the inside.

I will certainly make of this project my first goal for my future career as a musician and performer.

Below are examples of Italian songs from the 30's that I have mentioned above showing their covers from movies and recordings.

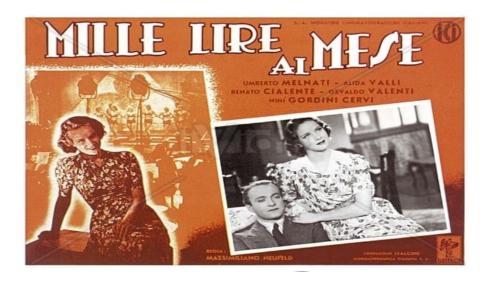


Figure 3. 1000 lire al mese, accessed May 20, 2019 https://list.lisimg.com/image/4568217/500full.jpg



Figure 4. Tu-lipan Trio Lescano, accessed May20, 2019 https://list.lisimg.com/image/5469002/500full.jpg



Figure 5. Parlami D'amore Mariu', Accessed May 20, 2019 https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/it/thumb/a/af/Parkamidamore.jpg/800px-Parkamidamore.jpg

4. Methodology

4.1 Plan of Actions

Time Management

- Rehearsals (Once every week)
- 4 Studio recordings sessions

4.2 Process

Recording Italian Ballads Project.

I selected musicians who were interested in getting to know something new and really believed in the project, who wanted to explore in depth Italian music and culture for their own knowledge. Finally I purposely changed different musicians for each track to create a different mood to best fit the specific situation and experiment with it.

The main process I chose to use is to select songs whose main themes were long, and try to stretch them in my own way keeping the long length and making it sound like an Italian ballad for the soulful and sentimental approach as well as playing at slow-medium tempos. Finally I purposely chose the arranging approach to play the long main themes of the songs just once at the beginning and not repeating them at the end, creating some codas that resemble the same melodies and giving space to the interludes and the solos.

The rehearsals were once per week, I realized that working with this frequency and keeping up this pace had a completely different final result compared to all the other works and

recordings I made in the past of my career. We tried few songs and doing that I could realize which ones could suit best according to my project and the experience and tastes of the musicians I chose to work with. It's a new experience to be able to have such long time to work deeply on your idea and wait long enough to develop them in a way that convinces you at best. I believe all artists and musicians have the issue of the never ending doubt hassle and they very often never seem to feel completely satisfied. This was the one I personally and still have and struggle with and this year made me more conscious and sure of my abilities and how to convey the ideas from myself to the other artists I'm working with at that specific moment. I finally recorded four tracks with revisited new arrangements of Italian ballads with:

- Research on Italian, American-Fusion music.
- Analyze of the era of the songs
- Rehearsals Plan (weekly)
- Recording, Production

Studio Recording

The studio the engineering and mixing part was the newest and most difficult to me since I had never worked so closely with a sound engineer before while in the mixing process of my own recordings. It all started with my first recording session for *Amarsi un po'*. The biggest challenge of this song was clearly the arrangement, a very unusual old Italian song based on the poetry of lyrics but also on a funk groove. Mixing the mellow sensitivity of the vocals with the groove and the modern electric sounds wasn't easy, trying to put the mics in the right place in order to have a very acoustic sound but at the same time trying to let the groove part come out strong, since it's part and main essence of the song as well. We cut and paste the ending from

different takes and it was difficult since the synth sounds switch from the piano sound pretty rapidly. We worked a lot on the thick sounds of the rhythm sections as well, blending the bass and drums well together since they're part of the main Intro section as well, like they were almost trying to speak to the audience. Reverb on the cross stick and on the snare and simple panning to give the vocal a centric perspective. No Overdubs were added and everything was played live. Being a funk tune that has kind of a pop-music vibe it's been very challenging to keep up with the groove along with the whole rhythm section but also an incredible feeling having all your band in the same room and while grooving being able to look at each other also sending signs with our eyes and facial tensions. It worked pretty well at the end but we had to sort it out before starting the recording, on how we'd interact visually speaking while playing together live, a great experience that I'll keep using in the next moves. Next big challenge came for the recording of the song Non dimenticar le mie parole which was essentially much more acoustic where I was trying to emulate more of a jazz sound and have a modern arrangement with some old style sounds keeping the mood of the tradition of the song. The instruments recorded were Piano, acoustic bass, trombone and drums. The biggest issue was the selection of drum set (jazz, funk, rock kits) and being able to interact well with a delicate and yet peculiar instrument such like the trombone. The issue was especially to be able to hear the instrument sound on our headphones, very particular instrument. Regarding the engineering and mixing sessions we worked along with Joyce in the station, a wonderful engineer new to this world, cutting frequencies on the cue ends. We have also worked putting the bell of the trombone closer or moving around the margins of the microphone. Acoustic bass sound is always a challenge as well but we did overcome it this time and it sounded good on our end on headphones. No Overdubs were made in the recording process of this song.

Mixing and Microphones

The biggest challenge for this Mix session was to try to give the acoustic instruments in the large room more room sound as possible, let the harmonics resonate throughout the piece and we worked a lot on that with Joyce working with the microphones capturing the sound of the room and a little reverb, that was my main objective. We also gave piano and trombone more presence adding a little saturation and very little compression, and working on the sound of the resonating toms of the drums adding tiny reverb and compression as well. Lastly, it was a great experience having to deal with a complete acoustic and raw type of general sound this time for this very old Italian piece that needed to reborn but at the same time I wanted to keep that romantic sound that has always had. Regarding the overhead mics of the drumset I think the largest issue was the mic choice I did at the beginning of my sessions, we used ribbon mics as the overheads. I would surely will try condensers next time, either the Neumann 184s or the Shure KSM141s which at the end resulted to be my favorites.

Groove Patterns

To me everything starts from the groove, as a drummer in my way of thinking it defines the real difference in modern times between a style of music and another and it is the key I used to rearrange this song bringing them a new vital process closer to American popular music such as funk, R&B and such. I start playing over a groove myself and improvising and bringing new ideas I then put them on paper and reflect them so that it matches with the rhythm of the melody.

Rhythmic patterns and hits

Hits in the arrangement of the song are a key factor to this, since it's where the groove matches the melodic and harmonic shape of the son effectively, they create movements and few expectations with a key element of surprise.

I constantly used these forms of arrangement in my next results and working with simple eightnotes and sixteenth-notes can drastically change the mood in which the song is being perceived from the listener.

Time Signature and displacement

Changing time signature through the arrangement can be another important key factor to the element of surprise I previously discussed. I used different time signature changes in my arrangement of the song *Quando* By Pino Daniele being careful not to move the romantic Italian factor and ballad mood of the song itself like it will be shown more closely later on in the results. The time signature change moves the expected perception of the listener making them aware than also a ballad can be rhythmically complex and challenging to follow, requiring attention for details on the arrangement side while listening.

Intro

Intro is the real initial key to the song so I always work on getting new ideas for a different intro that can present the clef of the song and the mood but always trying to work it out in a way that melodically or rhythmically changes a bit from the actual melody of the song so that it deflects the real expectation that a listener could have as a first impression. I worked on new intros for each of the songs I rearranged creating drum and groove patterns that

could present the song at best.

Outro

I obviously care as much as for intros as for outros. For these I always try to keep them going for longer times as much as I feel it being musical where the section is written down with ostinatos but can almost always serve as an improvisation part for some instrumentalist to say something personal about the song that just played.

Vamps

I often tend to create harmonic and rhythmic vamps through the solo section that brings away the listener for few moments from the initial key of the song creating a space where the soloist can feel freer for his improvising ideas but at the same time is a challenge to create something that resembles the tune in a different harmonic space where the chords slightly change from the ones of the song.

Melody

From the original melody I always try to change my own arrangement displacing primarily the rhythmic patterns of the notes but also sometimes trying to add some passing tones being very careful at not changing the mood of the melody.

I still believe melody is the most important and key part of the song and even though my rhythmic ideas might be advanced I always try to focus on the meaning of the melody and the general mood of the song for the rhythm and orchestrations to fit in a way that doesn't change much from the original idea of the composer, whether it may be a soulful-mellow meaning or a

more aggressive and punchier mood where the groove and the rhythm is the main factor.

I also worked into new arrangement ideas on two of my songs, *Non dimenticar le mie parole and Amarsi un po'* where I intentionally chose not to repeat once again the melody out of the song since they are long and I wanted to create an outro mood that could resemble the melody itself without being actually played once again from the beginning like it's normally usual. The first melody is longer so I tried to make the listener focus on the meaning and the song at the beginning and then leave him with something to think about and to imagine on the way out of the tune.

Harmony

I also do a reharmonisation of the songs in a way that changes the structure of the chords and the perspective of the listener so that it doesn't change the original mood of the melody but it does change something underneath to give the listener something new to adapt to. An important factor for this for me is to analyze the key chords of each song selecting the ones that to me most resembles and defines that song for what it is and I try to keep those chords intact just like the original, I firmly believe that these few key chords are really essential to the meaning of the tune just like a specific groove pattern can define instantly a song.

4.3 Timeline

	December	January	February	March
1) The Scientist	Arranging	Rehearsals	Recording	Production
2) Amarsi un po'	Arranging	Arranging	Arranging	Rehearsals
3) Non dimenticar le mie parole	Arranging	Rehearsals	Rehearsals	Production
Italian music history	Research	Analyze	Transcription	Rehearsals
	Arranging			

	April	May	June	July
1) The Scientist	Completed			
2) Amarsi un po'	Production	Recording		
3) Non dimenticar le mie parole	Rehearsals	Recording		
Italian music history	Rehearsals	Production	Recording	
	Rehearsals	Finalizing	Recording	

5 Results

Song 1 – Amarsi un po' "Just some loving" (Battisti / Mogol)

Gaby Cotter (Vocals) Panama

Bailey Ehrgott (Guitar) Washington, USA

Adriano Tortora (Piano, Synths) Italy

Borja Flores (Acoustic bass) Spain

David Lo Cascio (Drums) Italy

Engineer : Leo Zhang, China

Form

Intro (Rubato) Intro (Rhythm section) A section B section Solo section (Piano) Solo section (Vocals) Coda

Introduction

The first song I chose is a composition by Italian songwriter Lucio Battisti and lyrics by Mogol and it's entitled *Amarsi un po' (Just some loving)* since myself and him both have the love for American music in common. Battisti was a true innovator of his times, especially in a very conservative country as Italy was in the seventies. He was in love with music from Motown and that is also the reason why I felt in love with his music. He was also a very folk songwriter in keeping his music faithful to the Italian concept of music in terms of long melodies whose main focus was to tell a story and keep a romantic mood, but adding some extra layers of syncopated synthesizers lines and funk and R&B grooves. He then chose to start recording his albums and do the mastering of his music in the USA adding some American musicians to his roster.

Lyrics and Rubato style

The lyrics of the original song by L. Battisti are so mellow and filled with words of love, just like most Italian music is, while the rhythmic concept and the shape of the form of his music is closer to American music of the 70's.⁶ The original version of *Amarsi un po'* is built upon a simple melody accompanied by a constant piano riff following it, and the whole song is structured with the exposition of the main theme that continuously repeat without any solo section or interludes of any kind and that's the reason why I felt in love with this song. The lyrics of this song were too powerful and meaningful to be taken off, so I chose to play my arrangement with a singer and with original lyrics. The meaning of the title talks about how easy often is just to show some loving, while instead loving in a deeper way and be able to keep a steady relationship and a fire burning for long time becomes so hard for people. I felt like the intention of the lyrics were so poetic that even singing in Italian for a Spanish audience would still show the power and the feeling of its meaning.

The first section of my arrangement is in rubato style where the synths follow the vocals.

⁶ "Ucronie Musicali: quando Battisti arrivo' primo in America," Icompany, accessed March 20, 2019, https://www.icompany.it/iblog/le-storie/550-ucronie-musicali-quando-battisti-arrivo-primo-in-america.

Groove and bass pattern

Then the main focus goes to drums only this time, bringing a groove with a sixteenthnote kick-drum pattern with no hi-hat involved to which a bass pattern follows on top blending with the groove and finally the piano completing the rhythm section. Finally the guitar enters playing funky single-lines along with the vocals. I chose to treat the bridge in a unusual way building it in 24 bars instead of the common 16-bars forms of the pop sections of the 70's. The original melody is harmonically simple so I chose to add ostinato kicks on the B section following the sixteen-note groove pattern to spice up rhythmically the melody. The groove keeps on growing thicker and funkier as the lyrics go on for the whole rhythm section and when it seems like it's about to explode the piano solo section enters changing the whole mood of the groove, and bringing the song back to his beginning soulful nature. Eventually a short vocals solo follows up bringing back the groove and introducing the final coda.

Instrumentation

Gaby Cotter who sang this tune worked really hard to study Italian phonetic and the lyrics of the song. Being from Panama she's a native Spanish speaker but it's still hard to get a perfect pronunciation in Italian language, and I understood she did an excellent job when some Italian who have listened to the track couldn't really tell that she was a foreigner. She followed perfectly the meaning of the lyrics of the song enhancing the parts that were emotionally stronger which in my opinion was the hardest thing to achieve in this song. I preferred acoustic bass to electric to keep a certain soft and mellow feel to the song even though is very much groove oriented. Adriano Tortora from Italy plays the piano and I chose him because of his musicianship and to keep someone in the band who would know the real feel of the original song from which

the others could follow along and absorb as much as they could.

The engineer Leo is an expert in the field an has been working in China for the past years. The drums was carefully recorded and all sounds are clear and in tone, even the smallest ones like the cross-stick on the rim of the snare, or like the over-harmonics of the cymbals. He managed to record vocals in the same room of all the other musicians in order to have a better impact on the following the feel of the song. I've been working with Leo often throughout the year in other projects at Berklee and I'm looking forward for future collaborations to come.









Amarsi un po' "Just some loving" (Battisti / Mogol)







AMARSI UN PO' (Just some loving)

Just some loving is like drinking breathing can be easier

a quick glance to you getting closer never part from each other no fear at all, no

Just a little loving is like blossoming it might keep you away from dying

no need to hide but showing ourselves you can reach to evade loneliness

But really loving each other, no participating is as difficult as trying to take off

how many obstacles on our way and suffering dejection and tears to become ourselves the real yourself

unified inseparables close but unreachables

nanananana naaaa nananananana naaaaa

Amarsi un po' – English translation lyrics

Song 2 – Non dimenticar le mie parole "Never forget my words" (Bracchi/ D'anzi) Max Holm (Piano) Sweden Stephan Tenney (Trombone) South Carolina USA Borja Flores (Acoustic bass) Spain David Lo Cascio (Drums) Italy

Engineer : Joyce Lindsey, Illinois USA

Form

Intro (Rubato)

A section (x 2)

B section

А

Solo section (Piano)

Solo section (trombone)

A section

B section

А

Coda

Introduction

It took me a while before I felt sure I could adventure myself in a song from the very old Italian repertoire that had another connection to American music. *Non dimenticar le mie parole* is one of those songs from the 1930's that had lots of traits in common with American music, from the verse in the intro to the popular song form AABA. It was in those years that the journeys of Italian to America were increasing and those ones who would come back home, especially composers, would bring back home to Italy a different musical approach heard form the American Songbook standards, and the typical American musical form of 32 bars.

This song was interpreted by many, like E. Livi, but in those times the Italian school of singing was primarily coming from the classical operatic world. The song would have the structure of a popular song being short, 32 bars and easily singable, but it was mainly interpreted from opera singers and so that created a mixture of contrast that was all typical Italian. Obviously this was a song that had lyrics but I chose to arrange it instrumentally in a way that would keep the melody simple and yet joyous because I believe this melody has a special warmth and a romanticism in itself and can be expressed in a good way even taking off the lyrics.

Groove and key

I treated my arrangement with a jazz approach playing swing and creating a intro in rubato style that would eventually recall the operatic world of the singers of that era but instead of sung which is how usually rubato style is approached I arranged it to be played by piano only. I changed the original key of the song C to Bb because to me is a key that has a sound closer to jazz. The tempo of the original song is written in cut time also because being performed by opera singers they were used for the band or the orchestra to follow them, rather than having a steady rhythm in which both the band and they would sing along following, like American music had in those times.

Drums introduce this piece as well playing two bars of drums only before the melody

comes in. I rearranged it so that the melody is being played in double time compared to the original with the rhythm section playing double time feel. The exposition of the head is divided between the piano on the first two A sections and the trombone entering in the B and the last A section. Piano and trombone solos follow, and then I decided to play a drum solo but this time following the form of the song in half time. So I played my solo in the first two A sections of the song treating the rhythm in half-time compared to how the song started and then switching back to the original tempo of 180bpm just before the melody would come back from the top of the tune.

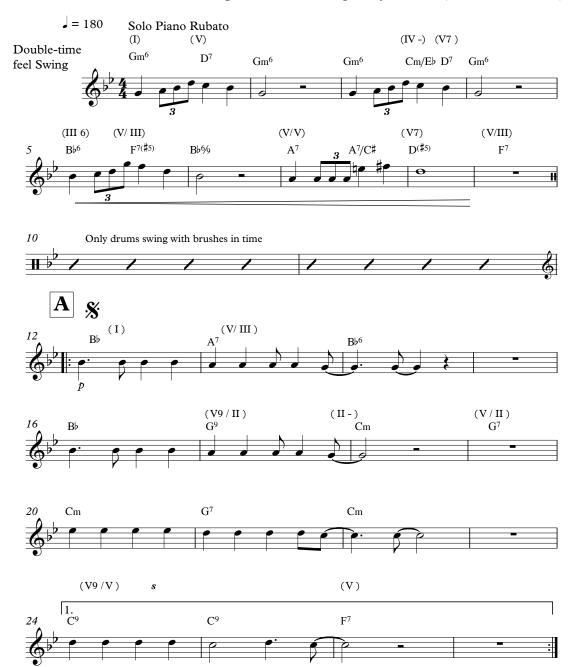
Instrumentation

I feel like Max Holm and Stephan Tenney, both scholarship recipients at Berklee Boston who were attending their semester abroad here in Valencia campus, really made any possible effort to embrace that kind of Italian spirit of singing a melody even coming from a complete different culture, as well as Borja the bass player who followed and matched the rhythm feel with me as much as possible, keeping the form still clearly understandable for the listener. Finally a coda follows that ends in the Bmajor13(#11) chord from the initial Bb major chord to give it a sense of infinite and endless feeling of unresolved , leaving the listener with the thought that the song could start again from the top when that is really the end of it.



Non dimenticar le mie parole (Never forget my words) - Arrangement

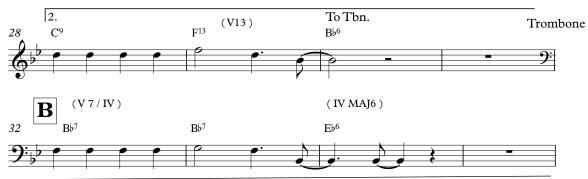
Arrangement by David Lo Cascio

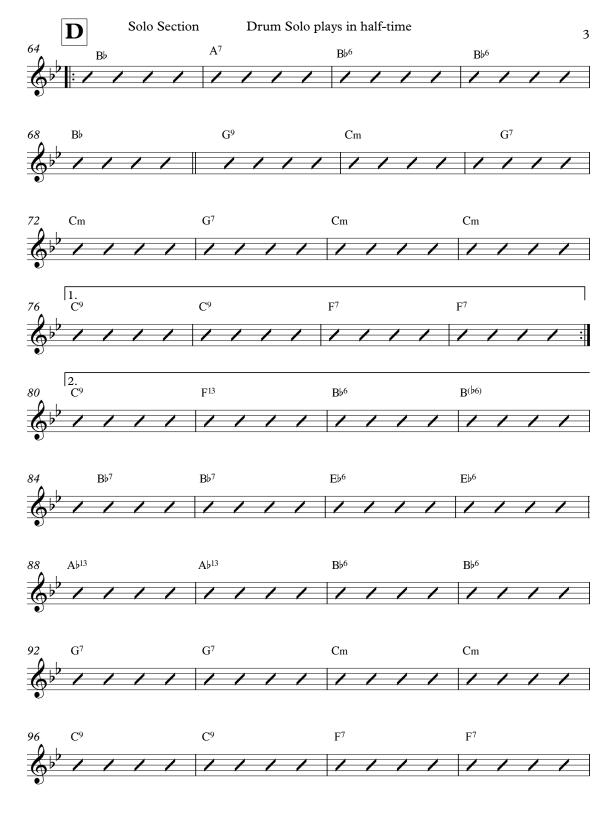


Non dimenticar le mie parole "Never forget my words" (Bracchi / D'anzi)











Song 3 – Quando (P. Daniele)

Form

Piano Intro
Intro (with different groove)
A section
Vamp with bass pattern
B section
Vamp with bass pattern
Solo section (over the form)
A section
B section
Vamp with bass pattern

Introduction

Coda

This is one of the most important songs in italian contemporary music and virtually everybody could easily sing along the first lines of these tune in my country. It's a ballad that talks about love but has a R&B influence on the rhythm since Pino Daniele, the author was one of the biggest fans of American music of that time (70's) and always would introduce little elements of funk and blues in each one of his songs. After his death few years ago Pino Daniele is now internationally acllaimed as one of the most important ambassadors of our music in the world and has collaborated with american musicians throughout his career, from jazz pianist Chick Corea to Wayne Shorter and drum legend Steve Gadd.

I tried to keep the romantic ballad mood of the original song choosing to let the piano improvise a solo intro for four bars. I changed the key from E- to B minor to give it a different taste to make it instrumental since originally the song has lyrics. Then the actual intro strarts created by a simple melodic pattern that introduces thetime signature change, key of my arrangement. A pick up bar of 4/4/ follows a ³/₄ bar and then immediately back to 4/4/ time, this doesn't give immediately actual time to the listener to realize of what's happening rhytmically speaking.

Groove

The groove intro is played by both toms and snare with the hihat pointing out the subdivision. I created a groove on the ³/₄ bar that resembles a folk music pattern where press roll on snare and toms are involved on sixteenth notes, while I chose to keep a more simple pattern in the following bar in 4/4/ time where only hihat and kick drum play. Same thing happens where the A section starts I kept the same pattern from the intro on the bar in ³/₄ time and created a more pop-music rhythmic pattern on the following bar in 4/4/ time that goes on to alternate the original mood of the song with something more folkloristic. I rearranged the whole B section in 4/4 time signature to give the listeners more breath and making it follow by the vamp section once again starting from the E-/D chord.

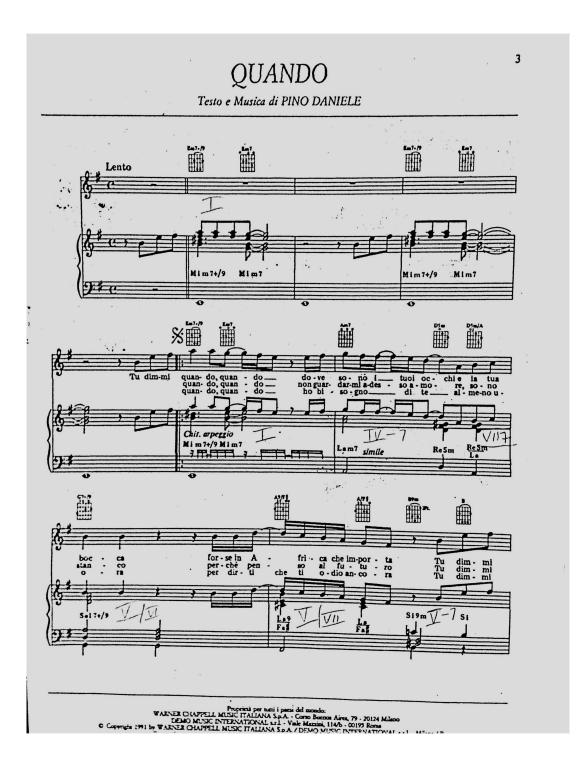
Vamp

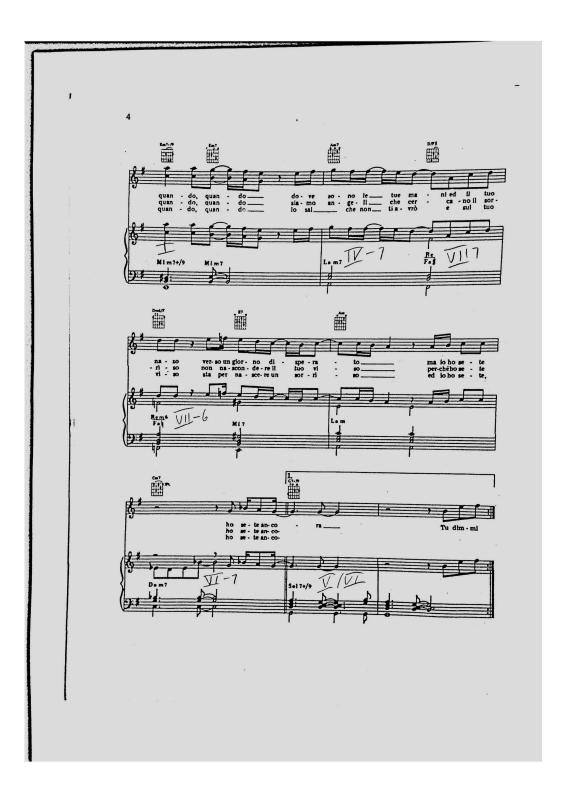
I created a vamp after the first A section that resembles the intro but it's not the same, I composed a simple melodic pattern to which belongs a bass groove and I finally gave the

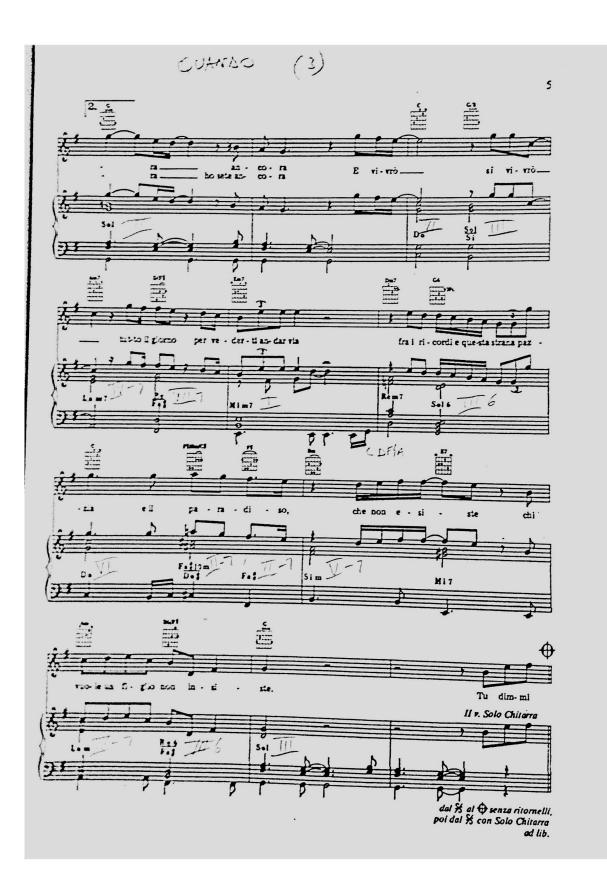
musicians a 4 bars pattern where no melody is happening that has to be filled with an instrumental improvisation leading back to the second A section. The solo section is over the form of the song and is followed by a 4-bars vamp just like in the A section.

Coda

I chose to repeat the A and B sections of the melody after the solos and from then going into the vamp again where one of the soloists could start improvising again going through the actual 2-bars pattern coda where a new short solo section can happen. That goes to the final bar of the end that comes back to the melody in ³/₄ time signature to create a new prospective in perceiving the time of the song and ends in the downbeat of the following bar with 4/4 time signature.





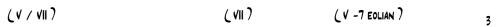


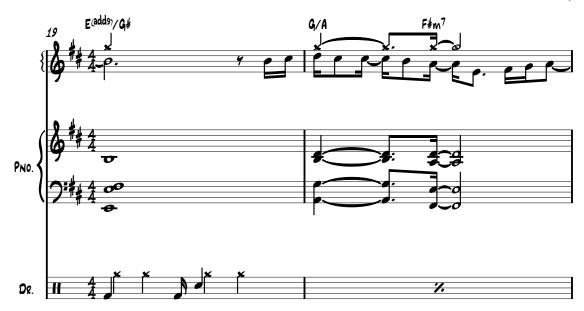


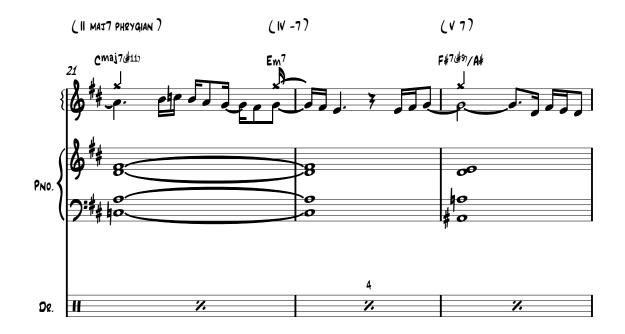
QUANDO ARRANGEMENT - DAVID LO CASCIO







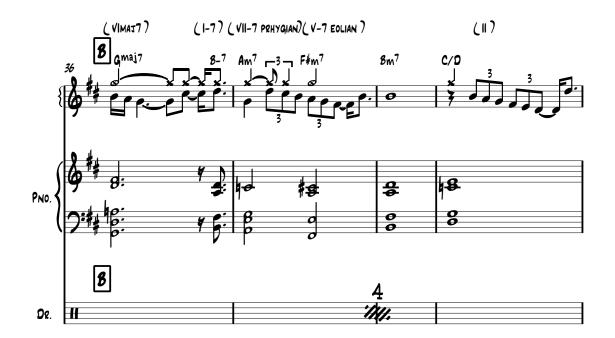






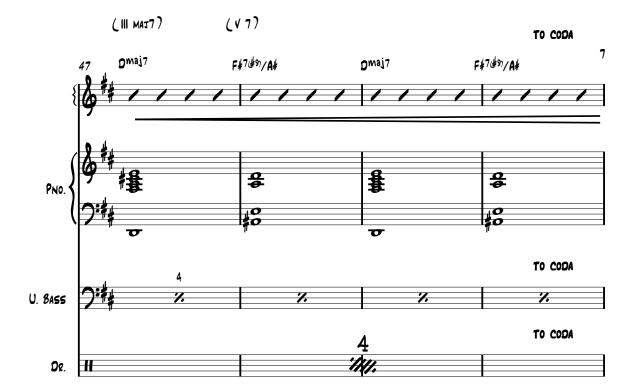


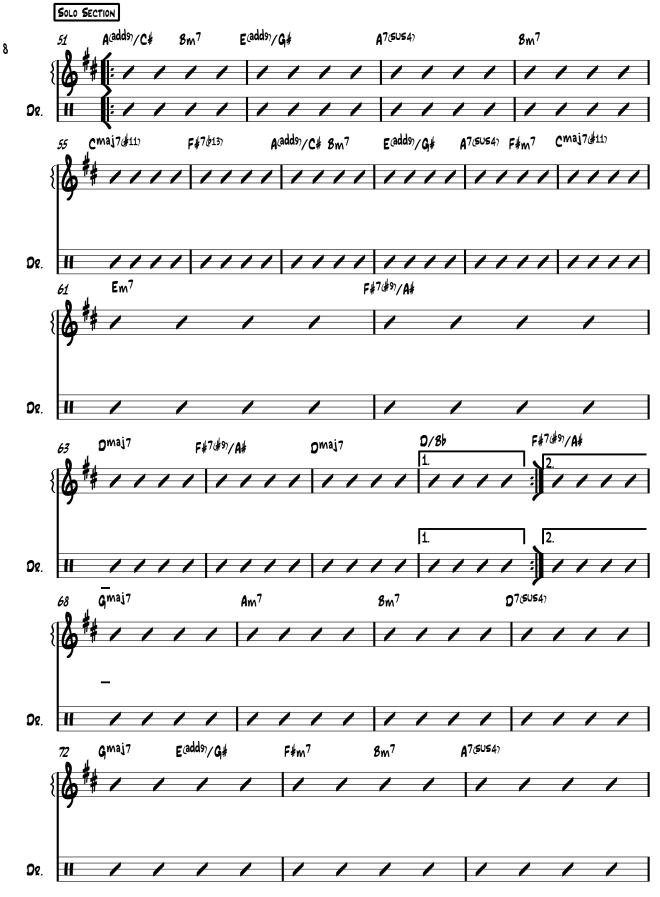


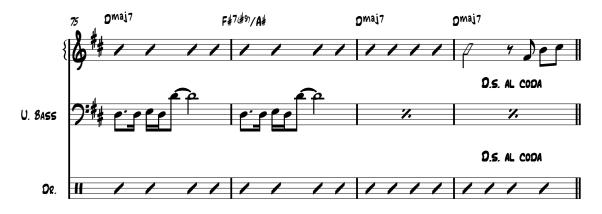


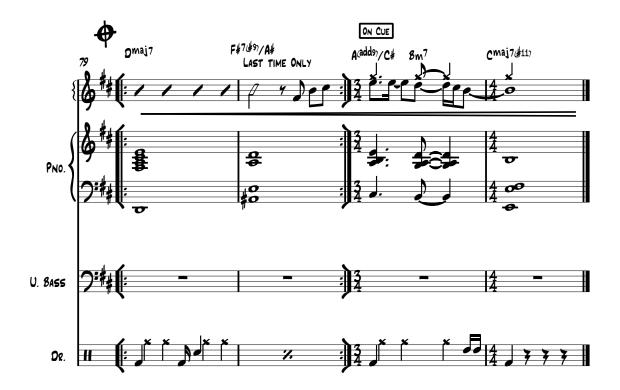












Song 4 – L'amore (Mina)

Form Intro A section B section C section Solo section A, B , C section

Coda

Intro

Mina is probably the most famous of all contemporary Italian singers and that's why I chose this song to rearrange. Her nickname in the 60's was the "tiger from Cremona" because of her aggressive and impeccable vocal technique and her birthplace in Italy, she has been considered for many years as the greatest Italian singer of the contemporary pop musical scene. I purposely made an instrumental arrangement out of this song because the sung melody is so popular that to me it would sound too obvious with a singer resembling the original. The rhythmic twine between drums and bass is made for keeping the arrangement interesting without cutting the original mood though. I think the long and complex melody speaks by itself and virtually everybody who knows the original song could think of it and reestablish himself in the mood of the tune. This one is also a ballad with a simple but sophisticated groove that gives a lot of space for drums to vary from the initial groove pattern. I created a triplet-feeling drum pattern that resembles the Mediterranean and Africans to which a bass pattern that has a more eightnotes feel is attached. I purposely mixed the drums and bass pattern to fit together even though they are based on different rhythmic approach and feel. This groove wants to confirm that eightnotes and triplets feels can coexist together if approached in the right and musical way.

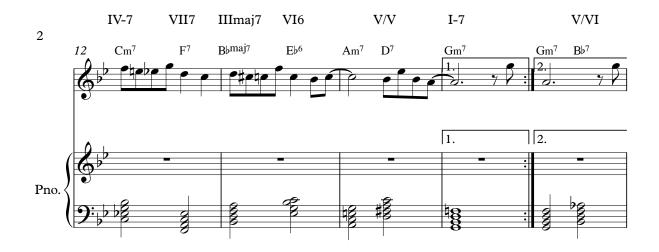
Groove

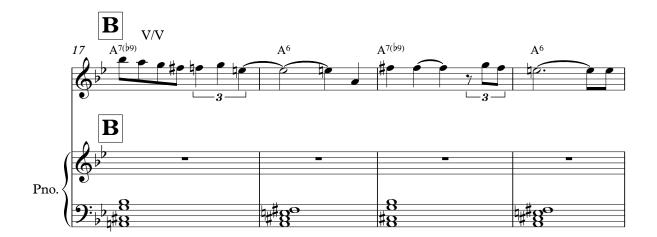
The triplet-feel groove continues on the A section becoming simpler to match better with the rhythm of the melody. In the B section the bass pattern of the Intro comes back matching with the melody of the bridge and introducing the following C section with kicks on the melody.

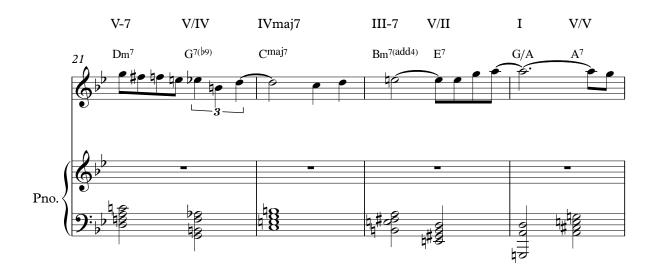
Development

The C section starts with piano only for the first 2 bars introducing the melody that comes back with all instruments once again that goes to the solo section. This time I created a section for the soloists that sounds more like a vamp and moves away for a little from the form of the song, believing that the initial intro and melody were too long to becoming a solo section and wanting to change the romantic mood of the melody into something more groove oriented during the solos. It moves around the bass pattern of my initial intro section on a vamp of Gmaj7/A and Dmaj7/A chords where the drums is finally free to improvise and develop more into the triplet-feel tangled groove pattern while the soloist is playing around it. After solos goes back to the A, B and C section of the melody that goes right into the coda which is the same section where the solo section happens, it repeats twice and ends with a sixteenth note of the eight bar of the coda.









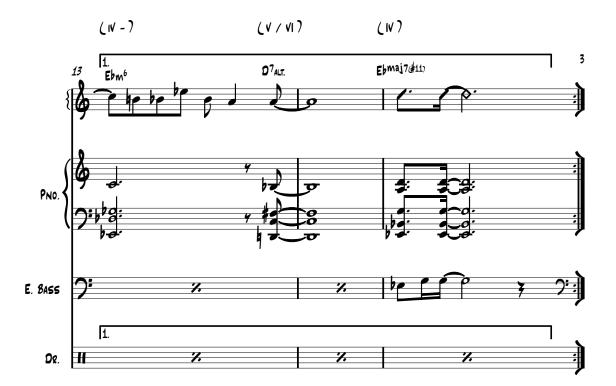




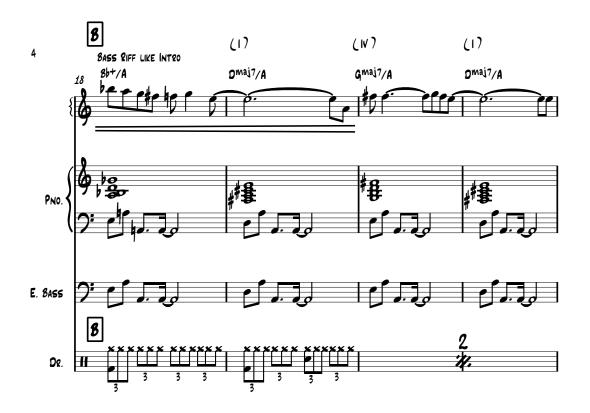
L'AMORE Arrangement - David Lo Cascio



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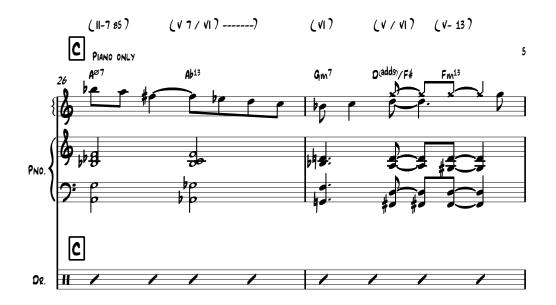




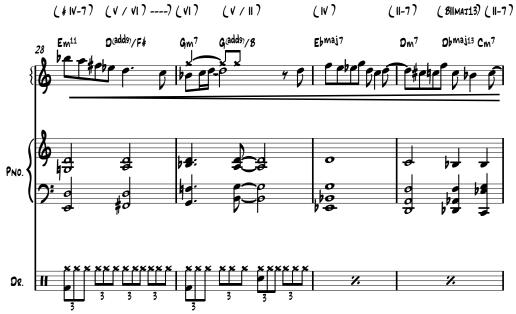


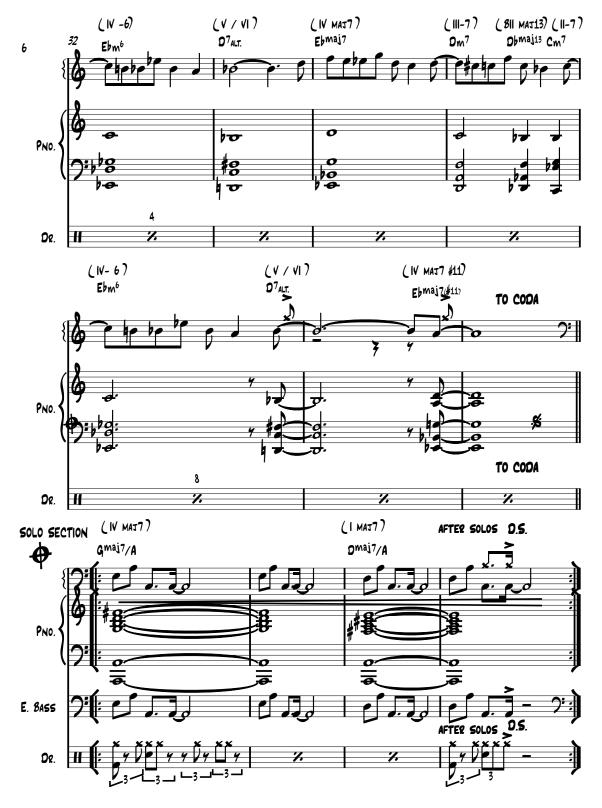






BAND COMES IN





6.Professional Plan

• Session Man

My love for the recordings from the '70s gave me a very radical and specific idea of the great sound of the great albums such as Pink Floyd and Genesis in English music, Eagles and Michael Jackson in American pop culture, I also consider myself a studio musician and lover and I'm focused on making my career out of it. I absolutely love being at the disposal of artists musical ideas, make of their dream a specific sound and work on it. I love being in other people music ideal situations and make the best out of what they're asking for their music to outcome, I consider myself patient and friendly and most important respectful of all musical ideas from whoever kind of musician, no matter what background they are coming from. I love to experiment, I always loved experimental music, since my very early childhood with Pink Floyd in Rock and Keith Jarrett in Jazz. I'm sure that this project that is bringing me back to my roots is going to help my future recording career giving me a more specific sound that, taking advantage from my Mediterranean roots, is going to make myself more recognizable as an individual artist. Working in recording with as many songwriters and musicians I can as well as on my own project will bring me more strength and professionalism to take on as a drummer in recording studios becoming a musician who can select and carefully choose what to do regarding a specific moment in music.

• Tour

That's where I see myself in the near future, sharing my musical soul with other cultures, and loving to get to know musical ideas and purposes from all over the world. This project will be the most important objective for the future tour organizations here in Spain and eventually

leading back to USA as well. I'm going to project this musical effort in a tour as soon as possible looking for a tour manager. A Berklee alumni would be a good choice among the Global Entertainment and Music Business program. I've been searching for theaters and venues in Spain from the Berklee library guides and I already worked on multiple clubs and venues around Valencia that I can contact to begin my tour from here. I will personally try to reach out to as many venues as I can and I will use the help of a tour manager to complete the processing of a tour.

• Music Education

The Music Education system has always fascinated me, and having taken lessons with virtually the best teachers in the current world at Berklee College of Music and at Manhattan School of Music in New York and having participated in more than 50 clinics around the world the meaning and purpose of education in music has come clearer to me nowadays which is sharing my musical knowledge step by step and getting from each individual student the best at what they're interested in, in whatever kind of musical field or genre they might fall in love with. I'm willing to become a Music educator in History of Music, Drums and Percussions and Arranging. More ahead in the future in Music Education another goal would be to help people who do not have the possibility to have a proper musical education, it is my way of seeking to help where we all could find a wonderful talent who will serve a purpose for the music. I'm already arranging to send my CV to public schools and conservatory and look for the licenses that I need being a foreigner. European laws are helping out but I still need to take courses on valencian language to be able to work legally in most of schools here. Private schools are also a good option for me having been able to give master classes to Seda jazz school of Valencia while attending my Master's degree.

7. Conclusions

This is a project involving Italian music from the beginning of the XX century. My knowledge of American jazz music brought in me the idea of blending these two type of music together in terms of arrangements and sounds. As far as I've been able to research nobody else in this country (Spain) is currently working on a similar project as this will be a unique musical idea to evolve in recording and tour projects. Just like American jazz guitar icon Bill Frisell of modern fusion era experimentations of the last decades this same music reminds me of far distant classical echoes from my past and my native country and still gives me an image of the wide American vast lands and their unique sounds. I'm positive about the fact that this master program has certainly helped me to better focus on the idea of these sounds that I've always been in search of. One of the future objectives will also be to present the project and participate in renown venues around the city of Valencia bringing my heritage to Spain which is still close as being Mediterranean but with a different stylistic approach.

Quote by Victor Hugo:

"Music expresses that which cannot be said and on which it is impossible to be silent."

"To my Grandma, Nonna Maria"



Figure 6. Rita Pavone Viva la pappa col pomodoro, Accessed May 20, 2019-06-03 http://www.canzoneitaliana.it/media/wysiwyg/speciali/storie/vivalapappa.jpg

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